

# Great creators of the world: Nannan Zhang

By HispaBrick Magazine®

Pictures by Nannan Zhang

Known the world over for his science-fiction creations, as a blogger for The Brothers Bricks and for being the driving force behind Creations for Charity (keep your eyes peeled for the August issue), no AFOL will need more information to know whom we are talking about.

**Hispabrick Magazine:** Name?

**Nannan Zhang**

**HBM:** Age?

**NZ:** 24

**HBM:** Nationality?

**NZ:** I was born in China and I am now living in the US.

**HBM:** What do you do normally?

**NZ:** I am a medical student in Dallas.

**HBM:** When did you first start building with LEGO®?

**NZ:** I started building at age 9 when I came to the US.

**HBM:** When did you start posting your models online?

**NZ:** I started posting my creations on MOCpages and Brickshelf in 2004. The online community offered me lots of inspiration and the opportunity to share my creations with others.

**HBM:** What is the last set you have purchased?

**NZ:** Kai's Fire Mech.

**HBM:** What is your favorite commercial LEGO building theme?

**NZ:** My first LEGO sets were from the Wild West theme, so that's my favorite.

**HBM:** What is your favorite LEGO element and why?

**NZ:** I really like the transparent purple pod from the Galaxy Squad sets; it's a unique piece that can add a lot of character to a sci-fi creation.

**HBM:** Which part would you like LEGO to produce?

**NZ:** I want LEGO to make a transparent minifigure torso and legs so I can create a cloaked minifig.

**HBM:** How many hours do you spend building with LEGO?

**NZ:** I rarely have time to build when I'm at school so probably a day or two every several weeks.

**HBM:** What do your family/friends think about this hobby?

**NZ:** My friends and family accept my hobby but they don't understand it as well as a LEGO fan, but that's to be expected and I'm fine with that.

**HBM:** Do you draw or pre-designs before you start building?

**NZ:** I just imagine the creation in my head before I build it, and I build based on the natural progression of the model, which can end up very different than how I first envisioned it.

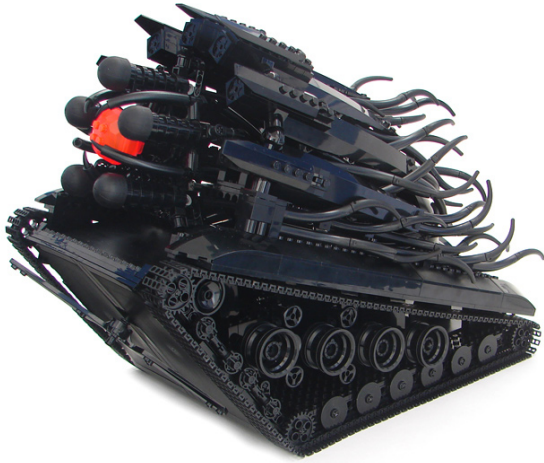
**HBM:** What is your favorite theme for building?

**NZ:** Sci-fi, most notably spaceships and dioramas.

**HBM:** If you had to choose one among all your creations, which one would you choose and why?

**NZ:** I really like the blue and red spaceship that I made a year ago. I think it's very unique and memorable.





**HBM:** If we see photos of your creations in the years 2007/2008 in Flickr, what do you think are the main changes in your building style?

**NZ:** In my early years in the online community, my builds were mostly monotonous grey spaceships and black alien creations. I wanted to be associated with a monotone style, but I eventually realized that there are limitations to working with just a few colors. I tried incorporating more color and the results surprised me. Now color is one of the biggest factors when I plan a creation.

**HBM:** The increase of AFOLs and lines like Star Wars™ create new possibilities not imagined before by LEGO®. What do you think about the old school LEGO and the new LEGO?

**NZ:** As long as LEGO keeps making new parts in new colors I'll be happy. I don't buy sets to build them; I only buy sets for

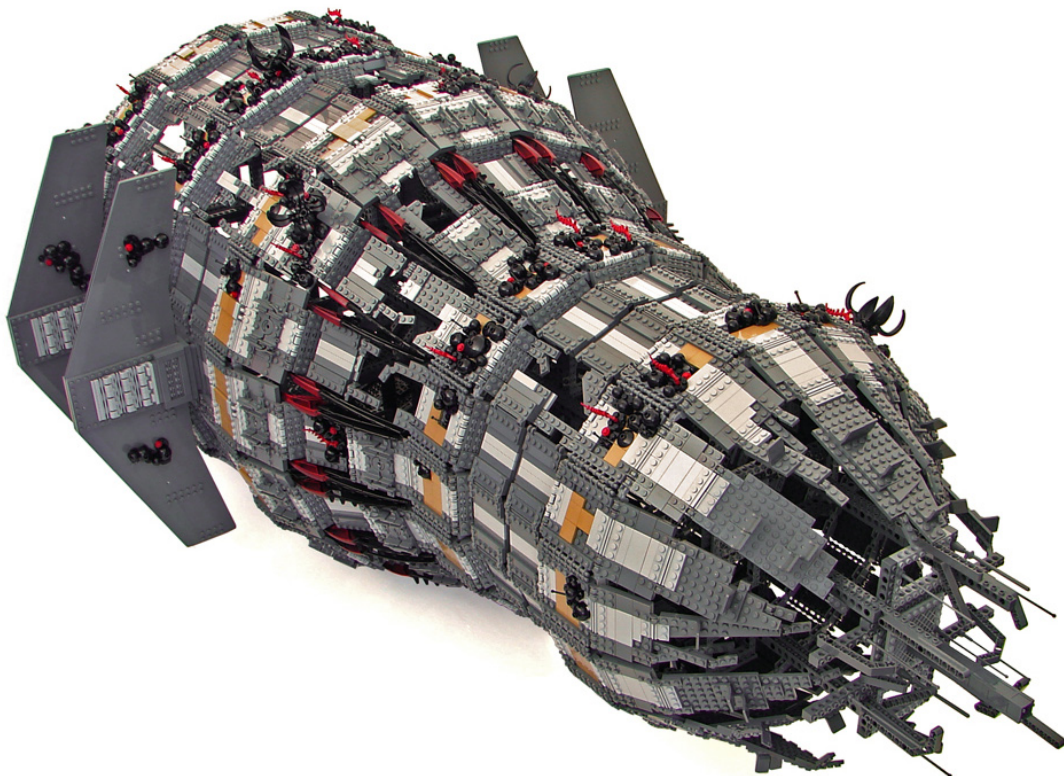
parts. Therefore I really enjoy themes like Chima and Friends that are great for their new colors and interesting parts.

**HBM:** What do you think about the use of non-official parts (stickers, modified parts, non-LEGO elements,...)?

**NZ:** I'm fine with using stickers and custom LEGO-compatible accessories from, but most of the time I still build with official LEGO elements.

**HBM:** How did your collaboration with TBB start? When you decide to highlight the MOC of any creator, do you rely solely on your personal tastes or do you think about creations that the readers will like most?

**NZ:** I joined TBB in late 2007 when I offered to help them blog more creations. My standards for blogging have gone up over the years from seeing so many creations. I blog things that are







interesting and unique to me. Sometimes I also blog creations where it appears that the builder has put in a lot of effort.

**HBM:** How did your collaborations with Tyler Clites come about and do you guys have anything planned for the future?

**NZ:** I asked Tyler if he wants to build a sci-fi diorama with me for Brickworld 2010. We each built half of the project and I traveled to his house to put it together before we headed off to display the creation. It was a huge success and we collaborated on 2 more projects afterwards. We currently have one in the works that I think will be our best so far. Hopefully we'll finish it this year!

**HBM:** How did The Blitz'ard Collaboration come about? What were the main challenges in establishing this collaborative project?

**NZ:** This was a flash mob collaboration organized by Sean and Steph Mayo (Siercon and Coral). The idea was to have about a dozen builders each build a scene depicting a race of polar bear warriors and post them all at the same time. We organized it within a private Flickr group and worked on our builds separately and at our own pace. All it takes is a motivated leader and some interested builders and a flash mob collaboration will be a piece of cake to organize, and it's fun too!

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