



# Great creators of the world: Thorsten Bonsch

By HispaBrick Magazine®

Pictures by Thorsten Bonchs

When you mix imagination together with creativity, constructive techniques and add high-quality photography, the result rarely disappoints. Our guest in this issue never disappoints.

**HispaBrick Magazine:** Name?

**TB:** Thorsten Bonsch aka.Xenomurphy

**HBM:** Age?

**TB:** I prefer to lie about it, but since this is an interview, I don't want to lie. My answer is, I'm not 30 anymore.

**HBM:** Nationality?

**TB:** German

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

**TB:** I'm working as a digital media designer and sometimes in the area of audio-visual design.

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

**TB:** My brother is seven years older than I am and he used to play with LEGO when I was born. Since he loved to romp





around outside the house, the old wooden drawer full of gnawed bricks were mine most of the time. I started building as soon as I could reach the drawer, maybe when I was two or three years old. I remember I never had any interest in swallowing the precious small parts – take that, overcautious society.

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

**TB:** Coming back from my dark ages was a slow process. Before they began, the internet as we know it didn't even exist, so there was no chance to post anything online. My dark ages were never completely dark and although other things became more interesting between 1985 and 2005 – like new and old

friends, men and hobbies like film-making, painting, writing etc. – I bought a small set from time to time. In December of 2005, I started recreating LEGO® parts in a 3D software in default of lots of bricks, but realized that it was not the same as building with the real stuff.

It took me over four more years to get enough bricks and courage to post my first MOC in March, 2010.

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

**TB:** The CLS-89 Eradicator Mech from the Galaxy Squad series, but only because I needed some parts for my latest MOC. The last set that I purchased, because I liked the set itself, was the Haunted House from the Monster Fighters series.

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

**TB:** I'll always be a fan of the classic space series, that one left an indelible mark during my childhood. Talking about more recent themes, I'm also a fan of the Monster Fighters series and the licensed themes Harry Potter™ and Lord of the Rings™/The Hobbit™.

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

**TB:** Architecture, often in combination with superheroes or horror, whereas I like both, architecture and interior architecture. Then again, I can get excited about everything, as long as I need it to build something from my non-LEGO-interests, like Doctor Who or H. P. Lovecraft.



*H. P. Lovecraft*



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

**TB:** Any brick with at least one stud at its side. Building in different directions – not just from bottom to top – allows me more creative freedom.

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

**TB:** Oh, that is easy: A single stud that is twice as high as a regular stud. They could be used to connect plates, tiles etc. in opposite directions. And a higher version for bricks.

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

**TB:** Of course that depends on if I'm working on a project or not. But once I got bitten by the bug, I spend easily 3 hours a day during the week (3 to 4 days) and 8 to 10 hours a day during the complete weekend. It is an obsession, as long as the idea behind a new MOC is good enough.

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

**TB:** Surprisingly, they really love it. My father is very proud of me, though every time he visits me, he says: "Amazing work, son, but don't you think you have enough bricks now?" He doesn't know that you can never have enough bricks. When friends come over to my place, they always want to have a look at what is going on in my LEGO lair. After I showed my coworkers some of my MOCs online, even they stopped thinking that I'm a nutcase.

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

**TB:** That depends on the size and complexity of the project.

I'm a very visual person and can imagine a final MOC before I even put two bricks together, but if I'm not familiar with a theme or if it is too complicated, I draw scribbles, sometimes dozens of them.

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

**TB:** In case you mean which MOC I'd take along to a deserted island, I must say my Arkham Asylum MOC, because it contains the most parts, hahaha. But my most favorite MOC at the moment is Lovecraft's Study, because of all its interesting little details and, more important, because I tried to capture a certain atmosphere and I think I managed to do it. It is a horror MOC of some kind, but I wanted to avoid the classic gothic feeling, you know, dark castle, shadows, thunderstorm etc. Instead I tried to come up with the typical 80s horror movies mood – bright, warm summer days outside and a certain unpleasant silence inside the sun-drenched room.

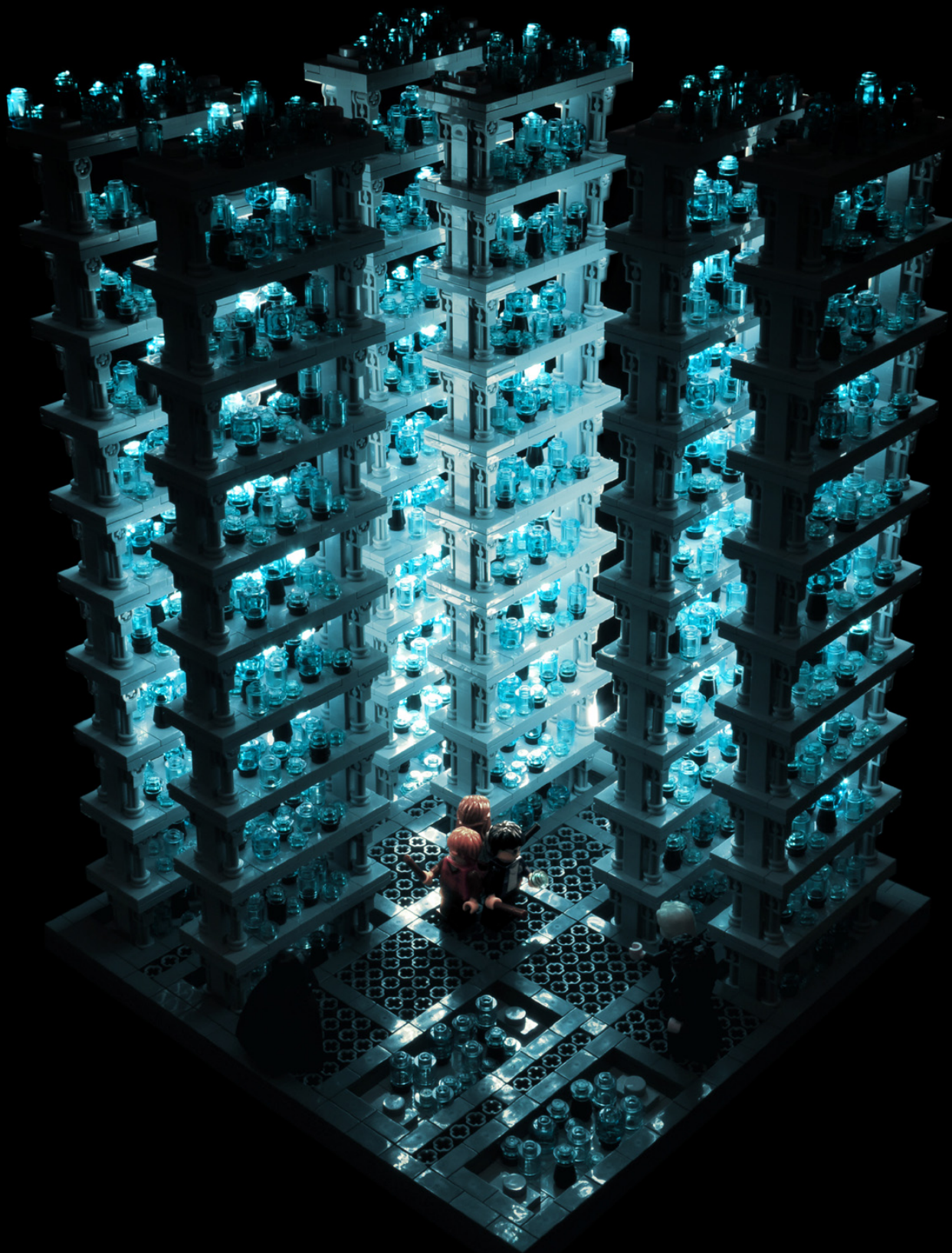
**HBM:** What do you think about the use of non-official parts (stickers, modified parts, non-LEGO elements ...)?

**TB:** Calin (\_Tiler, [www.flickr.com/photos/55943031@N02](http://www.flickr.com/photos/55943031@N02)), a friend of mine, once called me a purist customizer and I think he is right. I like to customize minifigs if it suits the whole creation, but apart from self-made decals, I'm only using official LEGO and third party products, when they are good. Look at my version of the Green Goblin for example. I used an original wizard's hat and Yoda's head to get what I wanted. As long as the result looks professional, I don't have a problem with it. Other than minifigs and their accessoires, I try to avoid non-official or customized parts. Of course there is always an exception of the rule: I once varnished a complete MOC in dark blue: The TARDIS from Doctor Who. I'm still glad I did it, because it looks perfect in my opinion.

**HBM:** Setting and lighting are a fundamental part of your creations, together with the magnificent quality of the pictures. Is the story your MOCs tell more important to you than the MOCs themselves?

**TB:** No, I think both are equally important, because one doesn't really work without the other. Brilliant photos of, let's say, a clone on a plate might be nice for a catalog, but are boring as hell. On the other hand, blurred and grainy photos of a fantastic MOC are also a pain in the gluteus maximus to look at. Especially as a judge in LEGO contests it is hard to ignore bad picture quality and to judge only the creation.





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For me, a MOC that doesn't tell a story is missing something. In order to tell a story, you need to capture the right mood and you do this by setting the right lighting. It is really hard, but it pays off.

Millie (Leda Kat, [www.flickr.com/photos/82815892@N07](http://www.flickr.com/photos/82815892@N07)) another good friend of mine, once said this: "Photography is just another medium to express your art. Remember how much effort and time and technique you put into creating your MOCs and apply that dedication to photographing them. The only way the greater world can view your MOCs is by a photograph of it."

She is absolutely right and I have nothing to add to this.

**HBM:** You are working on a book about your Arkham MOC in which you will give information about the making of with sketches, designs and ideas that were discarded, detailed pictures, etc. What has led you to take the extra step of sharing not only your creation, but also the creative process?

**TB:** The strong feeling that everybody likes what I like, hahaha. No, really, I've always been a huge fan of movie making-of material and behind-the-scenes stuff, at least before CGI became a standard. Real handicraft and special effects always impressed me, sometimes more than the finished movie. As a creative person, I think you can learn much more from watching the artistic process than watching the final result. Taking pictures of my work in progress and discarded designs also is like writing a diary. When building larger MOCs, it's

good for your motivation to see the steps of your progress and the mistakes you made.

And when I started posting the first few behind-the-scene shots, people liked it and asked for more. Or they just want to read my diary, hahaha.

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