

# “Constraction”

By HispaBrick Magazine®

Pictures by the creators

Reviewing these six years of magazine I realized that we have never talked about Bionicle and Hero Factory. It is true that I am not a fan of the line, but I do not believe that this is a lesser line either or that their parts are like a lower breed in LEGO® bricks. We have to recognize that they penetrated within an important market sector for LEGO and they definitely attracted more than one fan to the dark side of the brick. The gameplay of their action figures, and the format in which they were sold, made them a success theme.

To try to fix this undeserved oblivion, I asked the same questions to some of my favorite builders, whose models are a clear example that what matters is not the parts, it's how you use them.

You will see that their answers are very similar, giving a clear view of the advantages and disadvantages of building with Bionicle and Hero Factory parts.

## DViddy (Patrick Biggs)

**HBM:** Why do you build with Bionicle, Technic and Hero Factory parts vs. more basic parts?

**PB:** I was already a fan of LEGO when Bionicle began in 2001, but I was captivated by the storyline that came with Bionicle. I became involved in the online Bionicle communities, and even though I own a large number of system parts as well, I use them to supplement my “constraction” (a portmanteau of “construction” and “action figures”) builds. I find the “constraction” elements suit my desire to build models that display character and range better than pure system builds do. And on top of that, I really like action figures, and building my own is exceptionally rewarding.

**HBM:** How do you plan your creations with that kind of parts that, a priori, are less versatile?

**PB:** Planning is a rather vague concept for me. I usually have a singular idea, such as: “I will build a character who is blue but also sort of demonic” and I just go from there. I don't plan which parts will be used where normally, I just build through trial and error. Generally I will start with the head of a MOC and work downward, as I find the head establishes the character and visual flow of the rest of the figure. But from there, it is entirely: “will this piece work here? No. How about this one? Kind of. Okay, but how do I connect it? Let's figure this out.”



Catwoman by DViddy

Vayland Dragon by DViddy



Horizon Dragon by DViddy

**HBM:** What are the main problems and advantages you find when building with such parts?

**PB:** The main problems are really that the overall AFOL community has yet to fully embrace these parts, so buying Hero Factory armour shells in bulk is very difficult. If a “construction” part didn’t also appear in a system set somewhere, it can be very hard to buy enough to build the MOC I envisioned. As for advantages, I find, again, that these parts are more durable for figures, and create both more organic sculpting than system parts (as seen in my dragon photo), but also lend themselves well to more robotic elements as well. In general, they just lend themselves better to building individual characters, as opposed to the LEGO staples of vehicles, buildings, and landscapes (none of which are as possible with “construction” parts).



**HBM:** What were the main challenges you found in these models?

**PB:** This might sound silly, but I get stuck on legs a lot. Since I tend to build head down, I usually have a complete MOC from the waist up done, and then find myself stumped on legs. The muscular system on humanoids can be hard to interpret on figures made out of these pieces, when coupled with the desire for a large range of motion.



### [Rhymes\_Shelter] (Vlad Lisin)

**HBM:** Why do you build with Bionicle, Technic and Hero Factory parts vs. more basic parts?

**VL:** My first LEGO® sets were from Bionicle series, so I think it's main reason why i'm, still building from that sets, but I love to combine system and bionicle\hf parts, it always helps me when i'm wanted to make very difficult angles in my moccs.

**HBM:** How do you plan your creations with that kind of parts that, a priori, are less versatile?

**VL:** If it's not a contest model - it's pure improvisation. I'm always go with the flow, the only thing I can keep in my mind is approximate scale and colors. I always use same parts, because I have very small collection of them.

**HBM:** What are the main problems and advantages you find when building with such parts?

**VL:** I can't say about problems, because I think if you have problems with using pieces - you have problems with your imagination and skills. I love such parts because I can do organic creations, from LEGO® system it's really more difficult in same scale. But again, i can't do it without LEGO system.

**HBM:** What were the main challenges you found in these models?

**VL:** I always have only 1 challenge - lack of pieces. It's my main and biggest problem. I always have time, aspiration and ideas for mocs. But usually I don't have enough pieces ( you can see it on Rafiki).

I always started with head, but in 90% i don't have pieces for body to make it on same lvl as head.



Annie Leonheart by Arkov

## Arkov (Micah B.)

**HBM:** Why do you build with Bionicle, Technic and Hero Factory parts vs. more basic parts?

**MB:** Part of it is the availability of parts - since Bionicle and Hero Factory are the awkward member of the LEGO family, it's a lot cheaper to find discount parts and old sets. But more than that, I find that the flexibility of the parts lend themselves much easier to creating pose-able, expressive characters that would be unwieldy and stiff with traditional system bricks at the same scale.

**HBM:** How do you plan your creations with that kind of parts that, a priori, are less versatile?

**MB:** A lot of it is trial and error, to be honest. If I find myself trying to replicate an existing character I look for parts that match the general texture or shape of their key features and try to build neutral shapes around those. In general building, it's just a matter of working out the colours, then gathering as many parts as I can and trying them one-by-one until I find something appealing.

**HBM:** What are the main problems and advantages you find when building with such parts?

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**HBM:** What were the main challenges you found in these models?

**MB:** For the Gundam, the biggest problems were the shoulders. The shoulders had to be made out of system in order to cover the joint system and I didn't have a lot of white parts to work with. It took three or four different tries to get it right, with quite a bit of help from Patrick (ahava516 on flickr). For Annie, the biggest problems were the arms - brown Bionicle parts haven't come in sets since 2006! I finally had to resort to the system parts to get the right texture I wanted.



CLR-X1105 Enhanced Aerial Strike Gundam Mark IV by Arkov

## Retinence (Mike Nieves)

**HBM:** Why do you build with Bionicle, Technic and Hero Factory parts vs. more basic parts?

**MN:** I use the broad range of special parts. The only criteria I use is for them to have similar features. Since I make creatures and animals, I prefer to use curvy parts. Bionicle and Hero Factory have an array of curves to choose from. The only downside is their lack of versatility in connecting them. That's where Technic comes in; When combined with certain System parts, Technic can create the strongest, minimalistic skeleton possible. Combining all these features means I can work with details that are impossible for basic parts.

**HBM:** How do you plan your creations with that kind of parts that, a priori, are less versatile?

**MN:** Transition parts are always needed to give the special parts some form of versatility. I learn new techniques to connect the transition parts to special ones. When planning, I need to place special parts first, figure out a skeleton to hold them all together, and then find the perfect transition piece.

**HBM:** What are the main problems and advantages you find when building with such parts?

**MN:** The problems with special parts are the lack of connection possibilities. The advantages are the shapes and patterns they can create that are impossible with basic parts.

**HBM:** What were the main challenges you found in these models?

**MN:** The models I create are meticulously built until everything is as close to perfect as I am capable of. Every part is important. Replacing any part means reworking major sections over again. Many times choices have to be made between the strength of the model and the details in it. However, the end product is always worth the time invested.



Tiger by Retinence



Rapidash by Retinence

You can find more about these creators at their galleries:

Dviddy: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/12923530@N02/>

Rhymes\_shelter: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/62087062@N07/>

Arkov: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/36302428@N05/>

Retinence: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/38246614@N02/with/6558076009/>

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