



## Minifig: A Cult Object (II)

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*Minifigs: Iluisgib and LEGO® CEE Team*

In the last HispaBrick Magazine® we took a look at the special minifigures coming from commercial actions made by LEGO® or other companies. In this second part we are going to see the most exclusive, rare and difficult to get minifigures, the nightmares of all collectors.

### Exclusive Minifigs from fairs and conventions

This is where the level of difficulty becomes higher. Mainly in the USA, there are several Comic conventions, like the Comic Con in San Diego or in New York where everything related to Super Heroes, Star Wars, Star Trek and any other geek theme is present. Another place to promote LEGO is on the International Toy Fairs, like the ones in Nürnberg (Germany), London (UK) or New York (USA).

In 2005, at the Nürnberg Toy Fair, LEGO offered its customers a Darth Vader minifig with a lightsaber that actually lights up, a novelty that year. On the polybag you could read "56 International Toy Fair Nürnberg 2005". The minifig itself is the same one that appeared in the Tie Fighter set (7263). The value of the minifig is in that it is still in the well closed bag. Is the MISB madness promoted directly by LEGO? Who knows...?

In 2005 at the New York Toy Fair there was a special invitation for a few VIPs. (around 100) for a special event called

"LEGO Star Wars VIP Gala": I have no idea what happened at that special event, but the invitation, instead of paper was a Star Wars minifig on a pedestal made of pieces and a commemorative plaque glued to the pedestal.

In 2008 the promotion was repeated with a curious box which was internally divided in two, and it contained the two main characters played by Harrison Ford: Han Solo from Star Wars and Indiana Jones. Each character had its own setting. Again there were 100 made.

In 2009, to commemorate the 10th anniversary of LEGO Star Wars, the invitation was a Chrome Darth Vader in a plastic box, specially made for the event. This box featured a large "09", the logo of the 10th Anniversary and the slogan "10 Years of ruling the toy". Again, 100 units were made.

After this the Cubedudes were in fashion for a couple of years, and in 2012 the minifigs returned to New York in different formats: a polybag of Shirtless Darth Maul (5000062) and an accreditation with 2 minifigs, Captain America and Iron Man with a printed mask on his face. The circulation of Darth Maul was considerable, but of the accreditation with two minifigs there were only 125.

In 2013 the exclusive minifig was a funny Yoda with a t-shirt saying "NY I Love". This minifig was launched because of the release of the "Yoda Chronicles".



Another source of rare and exclusive minifigs are the Comic Cons in San Diego and New York.

In 2008, at Comic Con San Diego an exclusive pack of two minifigs was given out with Batman and the Joker. It appears that, because the minifigs are normal with an exclusive packaging, the rarity isn't enough to make the price and desirability of this pack soar.

In 2009 there was alteration in the force. LEGO® offered 6 displays with 3 Star Wars minifigs each. % had a production run of 300 and each convention day a different one was given out. The sixth had a larger run (1500) and it is my understanding these were handed out during all the days of the convention, but I have no confirmation of this fact. Like the year before, since the minifigs are standard, the value on the collectors market is "contained".

In 2011 madness broke out again for two reasons: LEGO announced an unprecedented agreement with the two main publishers of Comics (CD and Marvel) and at the Comic Cons preliminary minifigs were handed out, which also gave access to a contest related to these minifigs. The minifigs for Comic Con San Diego were Batman and Green Lantern (his only appearance in LEGO so far). At Comic Con New York Superman was added to the two from San Diego. These minifigs came on a card that announced the appearance of Superhero sets and the rules of the contest as well as the logo of Comic Con.

In 2012 the promotion was repeated with more minifigs like Bizarro, Venom, Phoenix Jean Grey and Shazam Captain Marvel in San Diego and a special minifig of The Ninja Turtles and Shadow Leonard in New York.

### Exclusive Minifigs from LEGO Events

In 2005 there was a new "type" of minifig, which was related to an event organised by LEGO fans. The Dutch LUG De Bouwsteen, organiser of the Fan Zone at LEGOWorld Zwolle, made a limited edition of 1000 minifigs with its logo on the front and the LEGO logo on the back. Each of these minifigs came with a certificate of authenticity and a serial number.

In 2008 another similar action was undertaken. In this case it was a "standard" minifig (if you count a minifig with flesh hands and a yellow head "standard"). Again the LEGO logo was on the back, but in this case the LOGO of De Bouwsteen and of LEGOWorld were on a blue skateboard that came with the minifig. The official series was 750 numbered minifigs, although at LEGOWorld 2008 they could be bought without the serial number for a few Euros.

The next minifig of an "official" event I know of is of the Fan Weekend that is celebrated in Skærbæk (DK) each year at the end of September. I started going to this event in 2009 and got the first 3 commemorative minifigs of that event. These minifigs were made by a printer, with the permission of LEGO, and were only given to exhibitors at the event. The second was given in 2010 and the third in 2011. The minifigs included the LEGO logo and the year of the event, in addition to other logos.

Also in 2009 LEGOWorld Copenhagen was started. From the very first year a commemorative minifig for the event was made. The exclusive part is actually a torso with a reference to the event and the year on the front and the LEGO logo on the back. Each year this has been the same and so far there are 6 different torsos (from 2009 to 2014).

Although it can only be obtained at this event, the "exclusiveness" of this minifig is relative, as thousands of torsos are distributed at the event. In other boxes there are different types of legs, heads and hair pieces to complete the minifig so there is no standard model.

Other events that are less well known in Europe also have minifigs, like "The Big E" in the USA. I don't know the details of this fair, but it must be important and it has its own special minifig.

### Internal Minifigs from LEGO

This is the holy grail of rare and exclusive minifigs. These are the minifigs that are not available through any of the more





or less regular distribution channels. Collectors dream about these models and they would do anything to get their hands on at least one.

The best known of these minifigs are the ones used as business cards. Some LEGO® employees have a minifig that has the LEGO logo and their name on the front, and their phone number and email address on the back. The head and face are chosen to be as similar as possible to the employee. I suppose the one that is most sought after must be of the owner of the LEGO company, Mr. Kjeld Kirk Kristiansen, followed by the CEO, Mr. Jørgen Vig Knudstorp, and the rest of employees. It is curious to see how when you have a certain access to these employees, they are absolutely delighted to give you their minifig. Who wouldn't? Sometime I think one of the many reasons why I would like to be a LEGO employee is having my own minifig / business card. Some websites have highlighted these "cards", even defining them as "the most original business cards in the world".

In addition to these minifigs there are some internal (or exclusive) events that have their own minifig. For example, the LEGO Inside Tour, a 3-day visit to the company for the extremely reasonable price of €1800... The "Havremarken" moulding shop and the "Idea House", the private LEGO museum in Billund, also have their own minifigs. All these minifigs are of limited production runs, hard to get, and extremely expensive on the collectors market.



### Custom Minifigs

The fans couldn't escape this fever and over the years personalised minifigs for events, webs or clubs have been made by fans. Obviously these minifigs are not official and do not have the LEGO logo, but that doesn't make them less interesting and they are equally desirable. The personalizations started with stickers. Although this is the "home-made" method, it made it possible to have commemorative minifigs for events. Little by little these custom minifigs were perfected and more or less automated methods were used. The first of these I learned about was a minifig our editor Carlos brought me from BrickWorld 2008. It was a blue minifigs and the logo of BrickWorld and the year were engraved. Shortly after that the method for printing the torsos was found, which allowed the designs to become more and more spectacular. Many clubs and fans made their own minifigs and the exchange of these minifigs helped strengthen the ties between AFOLs and clubs.

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