

Review: The Art of LEGO® Design

By car_mp

Pictures courtesy of No Starch Press

The Art of LEGO® Design
by **Jordan Schwartz**
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Editorial: No Starch Press

This time No Starch Press has sent us a book with a novel approach within the variety of books on LEGO that are now commercially available. Jordan Schwartz, the author, is known for being one of TLG's youngest designers, and in this book, with the help of other geniuses of creation with LEGO, he shows us the creative process that accompanies the construction of a MOC.

In the first part, as an introduction, he talks about inspiration and gives us tips on textures, colors, scales, ... and a quick introduction to some elements of the LEGO palette that he

considers essential for its features. In the second part, he talks about some of the most recurrent themes in building MOCs. Some geniuses with parts (many have already been featured in this magazine) help Jordan explain his creative process in the areas that have given them greater fame, like Katie Walker, Iain Heath and Tyler Clites, to give some examples.

Veterans in building will find a different way to see their hobby, as they will see it through the eyes of other creators. And seeing something we know from other angles is always positive. New techniques, new ideas, new inspiration. Keep in mind that in no case this is an in depth guide for each theme, as an entire book could be written about most of them.

The newcomers to this world will find it a good source of tips, tricks and models to find inspiration in.



The Art of LEGO® Design

Creative Ways to Build Amazing Models



Jordan Schwartz





This is, without a doubt, an original book in its theme, fun and with lots of useful information. Definitely a great book for inspiration at all levels.

Now a brief interview with the author, Jordan Schwartz on his book.

HBM: How did the idea for the book come about?

JS: I had the idea for this book when I realized that there are few “how-to” LEGO® books on the market that are not instruction books. The fact that these other books give instructions for specific models is not a flaw; on the contrary, learning techniques by physically performing them is a great way to develop building skills. (In fact, this book offers some instructional information too!)

But there are people who don't learn best by following instructions. That's why my book focuses on methodology – that is, I explain not only “how” but also “why” builders create models as they do. I had the opportunity to interview some of the most talented builders from all over the globe, and their thoughts on their individual model building processes really hammer home the book's philosophy. There are infinite ways to build any one thing, and you should build what you want to build, how you want to build it, not just how instructions may say you should!

HBM: In your opinion, which is the main difference between this book and other idea books?

JS: As opposed to pretty much every other LEGO book on the market, my book focuses on models that often don't look like they're built from LEGO. The best examples of this are the chapters that discuss how to build with textile and rubber LEGO elements; that's a first for a LEGO book!

What's more, the book does not discuss how to build a dinosaur, but rather how to build a dinosaur that looks real, organic, and ready to get up and stomp away. It's not enough to simply build a dinosaur – the book aims to help people build the best dinosaur possible!

The book also ends by discussing a few of the most important facets of the online LEGO community, including how to photograph your models, the best

places to post them online, and where to buy elements in the aftermarket. This information isn't common in other books, and I hope that it will help less-initiated AFOLs get more involved in this terrifically fun community of ours!

HBM: Can a beginner take full advantage of the book or is a certain level as a builder needed?

JS: Absolutely! This was a question the folks at No Starch Press and I mulled over when we first started discussing the possibilities for this book over two years ago. We were very careful not to make a textbook!

I think the book is a nice balance between simple ideas and advanced ones. The Art of LEGO Design also appeals to kids because it's loaded with great, full-color photographs of fantastical and inspiring models. A child[JG1] might not want to build, let's say, a LEGO octopus from rubber tires, but he or she might still appreciate the model itself and be inspired to make an octopus in a different way.

HBM: What do you think of the many books on the LEGO world that are emerging in recent years?

JS: I love the diversity of LEGO books that have been coming out over the past few years. “LEGO” seems to be becoming its own genre! Someday, perhaps...

But the quantity and quality of the most recent LEGO books (No Starch is responsible for a great many of these!) is a great thing for the community. Not only do they provide important, helpful, and entertaining content to AFOLs, they're also, at the very least, helping non-AFOLs understand just what the LEGO community is and what it's all about. (And at the most, they're helping bring non-AFOLs into the community!)

HBM: Are you considering the possibility of a continuation to this book?

JS: It is a possibility, though it's not something I'm working on presently. The book will be translated into German and Korean though, so we'll see how the book is received in those languages and in English. If there's a demand for more, then I'm certainly open to the possibility!

Thanks to No Starch Press and Jordan Schwartz for the book and graphic material.

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