

Interview: Bill Pollock

Founder of No Starch Press

By HispaBrick Magazine®
Pictures by No Starch Press

I can remember the first book of LEGO® ideas I had in my childhood. Its reference was 6000 and told the story of a couple of minifigs traveling to the medieval and the Space Classic worlds. It's amazing how many times I read that book and how many hours of entertainment it provided me. Since a few years ago the world of publications on LEGO has experienced an explosion in quantity and variety. Today we talk with Bill Pollock, founder of No Starch Press, one of the publishers that have opted stronger by AFOLs books written by AFOLs.

HBM: Tell us about the origin of No Starch Press and your position in the company.

BP: I founded No Starch Press in 1994 after having been fired by from positions at McGraw-Hill and W.H. Freeman. My goal has always been to publish fewer, better books.



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HBM: In the last couple of years there has been an explosion of books about LEGO bricks. What made No Starch take the decision to include LEGO books in their catalogue?

BP: LEGO books are not new to us. I've been publishing LEGO MINDSTORMS books since the early 2000s, beginning with Joe Nagata's LEGO MINDSTORMS in 2001 and Jin Sato's LEGO MINDSTORMS in 2002. In 2003 we released Getting Started with LEGO Trains, and we released the best-selling Unofficial LEGO Builder's Guide in 2005. We publish books to satisfy the needs and desires of our readers and over the years we've responded to increasing requests for more great books for LEGO fans.

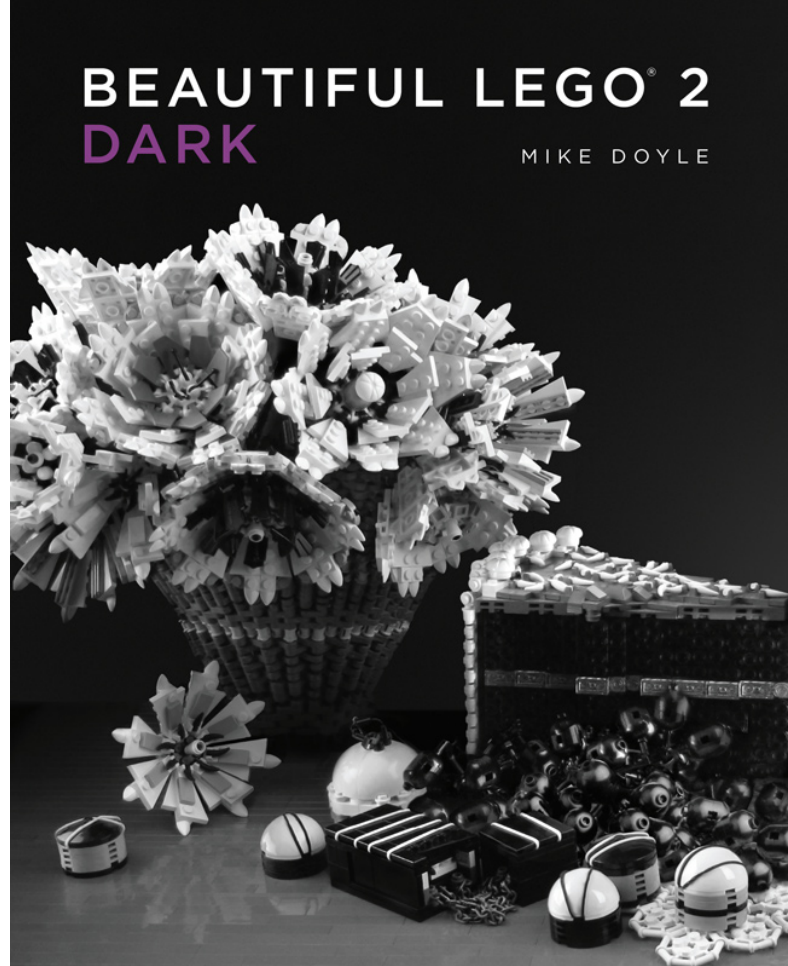
HBM: How many books about LEGO do you currently have in your catalogue?

BP: We have about 25 active LEGO titles in our catalog at the moment, with a few more on the way.

HBM: Approximately what percentage of ideas for LEGO books eventually turn into a product in your catalogue?

BP: I don't know. Maybe 10%?

HBM: Which are more successful, books about LEGO Technic and MINDSTORMS or more visual books that show LEGO models of different themes?



BP: As I write this, the MINDSTORMS and Technic books are the winners, but books like LEGO® Neighborhood are hot on their heels.

HBM: Was it a surprise for No Starch that these books are so successful? Were you aware of the existence of such a large online community around this hobby?

BP: No, this was not a surprise. I've been going to LEGO fan events for about 15 years.

HBM: What are the main characteristics No Starch looks for in new books about LEGO?

BP: We look for people who are really expert in a particular area, who are passionate, and who are able to share that passion with their readers. We read and edit every line of everything that we publish and we will often rewrite if necessary.

It takes us a very long time to produce and edit our LEGO titles so we need to make sure that whatever we publish will lead the market in order to make that investment worthwhile.

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