



Modular Integrated Landscaping System (VII)

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Why aren't there any MILS rules for City or Train layouts?

This is, probably, the most frequent question. And it is also the easiest one to answer. When I started working on the rules for creating modules I didn't have any trains or City sets. As a matter of fact, when we started working on it as a group, no one thought of applying it to City or Trains, since our initial idea was to use it only in collaborative displays among members of HispaBrick Magazine®.

There are several people who have started working on them and they have created some very interesting proposals that are perfectly valid. And that is the idea, as it would be impossible for us to cover all the possibilities, especially those that include themes we don't build in. At the moment, we are trying to compile all the ideas and modules that people send us in a Flickr group so everyone can consult them:

<https://www.flickr.com/groups/2014993@N20/>

What system do you use for storing and transporting modules?

That's a really hard question to answer as it depends on many factors. Evidently, the most logical thing is for each person to use the system that best fits their modules, containers and preferences. This is very different from one person to another.

In my case, I build all my modules in two sections of 16x32 because I didn't have any 32x32 baseplates when I started out, but lots of 16x32. The advantage of 16x32 sections is that they are easier to store. For storage I use cardboard boxes from IKEA (27x36x20cm) which are the perfect size for those modules. I place basic modules, which are perfectly flat, in the lower part and then add modules by type: rivers, roads, relief,



etc.



MILS

Modular Integrated Landscaping System

In this way the flat modules, which support more weight, aren't damaged. In addition, in the space that remains on one side of the box I can place a 16x32 section with a certain thickness, like a bridge or a section with rock.

For mountain and hill modules (sections of 16x32) I use a larger box, because of their weight. I stack the modules like a Tetrix game vertically. I prefer not to use smaller boxes that would only hold one or two sections, since that would force me to buy more and more boxes as I build more mountains or hill modules. After filling up the available space I add some cardboard and place more modules on top. This is a really heavy box, because these are the modules that contain most parts. The boxes I use for transport also serve to store the modules when they are not used in a display, so they are always ready to be taken to the next event.



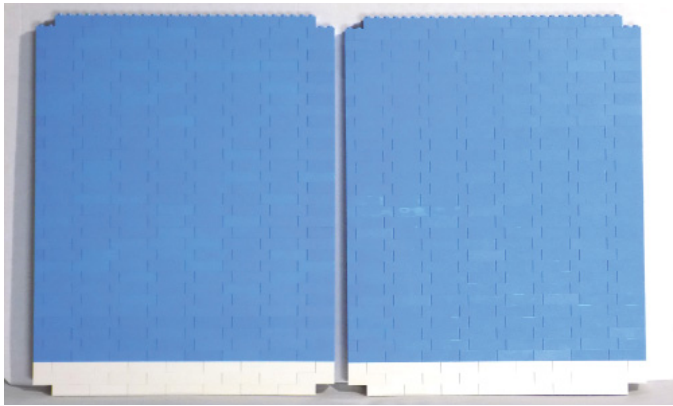
I have also seen AFOLs carry modules in boxes that were prepared like a CD rack so each module is supported on rails. The problem with this solution is that it only works for flat modules, since modules with some height would take up too much space. In addition, the space the rails take up diminish the storage capacity, even though they are very practical for taking out a single module without having to empty the whole box.

Anyway, I still think it is a system that is very personal; it's not the same if you need to transport 30 flat modules or 10 mountain modules and in each case your requirements are going to be different. It also depends a lot on how you build your modules, as 16x32 sections take up a different space as 32x32 modules.

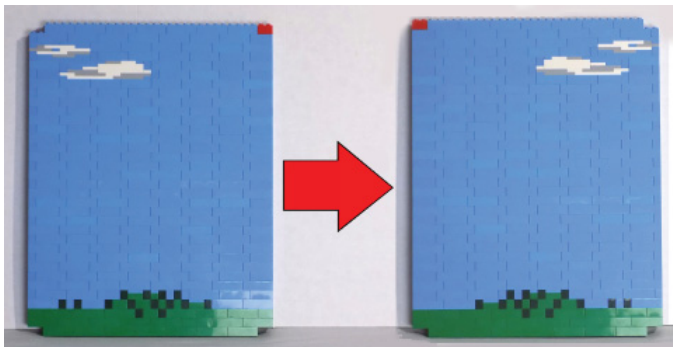
Can you explain how the back panels work? Why do you say they are interchangeable and reversible?

The idea is really simple and is based on the same principle as the MILS modules: combining panels in such a way that, without modifying them, you can create different backgrounds by simply changing the the position of the panels or turning them over.

As these modules are brick-built the mosaic you see on their front face also shows on the back. If the landscape is a simple horizontal line it doesn't matter how you place the panel; the result will always be the same.

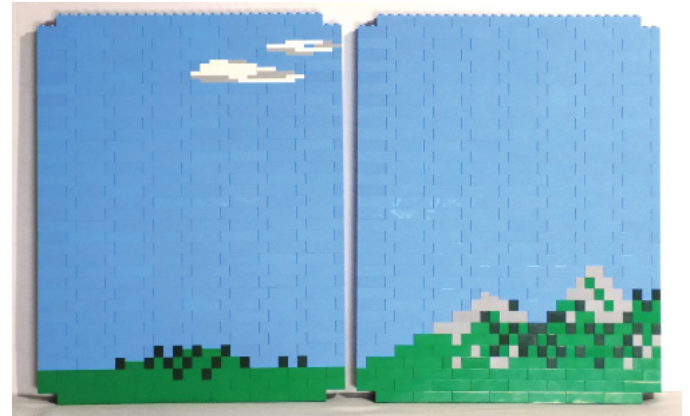
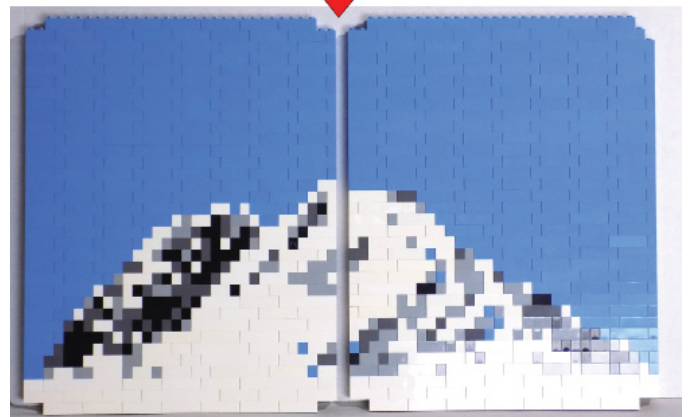
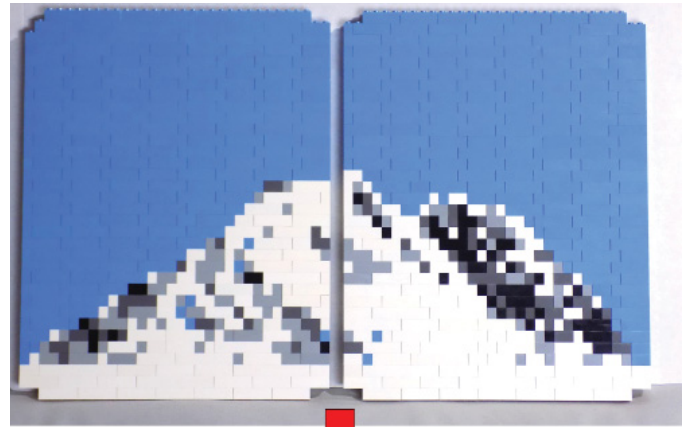


If the panel has some small details, like trees, rocks or small hills in the distance, when you turn the panel you will see how the position of the elements of the mosaic has changed, and so the landscape looks slightly different. The important thing is that horizontal lines on either side of the panel match to keep the landscape coherent.



But what happens if the landscape we draw in the mosaic contains horizons at different levels or that take up several panels? You only need to make sure that the panels that have elements with a different horizon match. And if that element takes up more than one panel, the mosaic only needs to have the default height for the horizon on the outsides of the group of panels. That way, if you turn over the whole group of panels you get a modification in your landscape.

In addition, the panels can be used on the sides of the layout, where the height of the horizon is less critical. This way you can make many combinations of panels, either changing their location or turning them over to create a different background for each layout.



Finally, these panels are still made up of bricks, so they can be changed easily, adding new details to the mosaic.

A simple trick is to print the mosaic design on paper, each panel on a separate sheet, with a normal print on one side and a mirror view print on the other. That way you can easily see the result even before you start building.

How many parts do you need for a base module?

The simplest base module with minimal consistency could be made of the following layers (from the bottom up): a 32x32 baseplate, 4x Brick 2x2 for the corners, 8x Technic Brick 1x4 and 8x brick 2x4 plus 4 plates 16x16. That's 25 parts, but it may not be the cheapest combination as 16x16 plates are quite expensive. It isn't very sturdy either as there is a lot of space between connection points.

However, there are people who prefer to close the edges and use many more support pieces, because they use smaller plates to cover the same surface.

In my case, I use the biggest possible plates whenever possible as that makes for a firmer module, but I add many support pieces to avoid bending when I place a heavy construction on the module. I also like to close the edges to make the modules look nicer.

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