



## Displaying MOCs For Public Events

By AC Pin

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During the last five years I've been more active in bringing out my MOCs for public events, shows and displays. Who wouldn't feel proud when seeing the public's reactions upon viewing their MOCs? Especially when other AFOLs mention that seeing them in real bricks gives them a better perspective and appreciation after years of seeing them only in online pictures.



Theed Hangar with two posters from the BrickJournal magazine displayed in the background at the Morris Museum exhibit

Based on my actual experiences, here are several things to consider when deciding to display your MOCs at public events.

### Event Type

The various brick conventions have become very popular around the world. They cater well to the needs of AFOLs, as they're organised and promoted by individuals who are usually AFOLs themselves. These events should be at the top of your list if you're a first-timer, as they often include many other AFOL oriented activities in addition to MOC displays. General toy or train conventions are a mixed bag but may be the next best thing if no brick conventions are available in your area. Be aware that the public attendees at such events may not respond in the same way as those attending brick conventions. Museums, libraries and other institutions offering public exhibits are also opening up their doors to AFOLs, providing further venues where your MOCs can be featured. Charities, bookstores and other smaller personal events typically last only a few hours and may not be as organized as the rest.



Ten MOCs at the Morris Museum exhibit



Seven MOCs at the Philly BrickFest

## Fees

Brick and other conventions usually have registration fees which can vary in cost. Museums, libraries and other institutions are typically by invitation only, and rarely require any fees to be paid. And of course smaller personal events for displaying MOCs will not involve fees.

## Venue/Location

Conventions typically offer the largest venues, followed by museums and libraries, and then personal events with the smallest space. No matter which venue is chosen, be sure to learn the layout including where your MOCs will be displayed. The proximity of the parking lot to the entrances of the venue will also affect ease of loading and unloading. Safety restrictions may be in place depending on the venue and promoters, so be sure to follow them if they exist. Ask yourself these questions: How far do you have to travel to the venue/location? How will you transport your MOCs? Will you need accommodation for the whole event duration?

## Duration, Setup, & Breakdown

Conventions usually last for several days with public access over the weekend. Museums and libraries can last for weeks or even months depending on the nature of the exhibit. Smaller personal events usually run for just a few hours in the day. Consider your setup/breakdown time for your MOCs at any event. You do not want to bring a large scale MOC that needs over an hour of setup/breakdown at an event lasting only a few hours. At bigger venues, you'll have to make sure you arrive and setup your MOCs during the allotted times. It usually pays to be there earlier rather than later, unless you've already arranged and reserved a spot for your MOCs with the event organizers. These venues usually have ample facilities with tables, chairs, stanchions, table cloths, etc. all provided. If your MOCs have any special requirements, such as adjoining tables or power etc., be sure to arrange this in advance with the organizers. Try to be organised and systematic in setting up and breaking down your MOCs so that you can have more time to engage with other AFOLs and event activities.



Akai Shiro Castlegrounds followed by Geonosian Arena



Breakdown of Theed Hangar back into the three containers



Completion of the setup of Theed Hangar

## The Public

Generally brick conventions have the most captive audience, and this is where you'll have the greatest opportunities for person-to-person interaction. Be prepared to answer the exact same questions about your MOCs over and over again (i.e. How many pieces? How long did it take to build? How much did you spend? etc). Museum and library exhibits are usually encased and protected, with the public coming and going at their leisure, though I've made it a point to visit the displayed MOCs every now and then. Sometimes side events for visitors to meet the builders/creators may be scheduled depending on what has been agreed upon. For smaller personal events don't expect people to be as knowledgeable as you are with the brick. And avoid leaving your MOCs unattended, as accidents and thefts have been known to happen in the absence of ample protection and security. Get to know the AFOLs at neighbouring displays so you can easily take turns watching each others MOCs when you need a break.



Public access at the Morris Museum exhibit



Public access at the Philly BrickFest with the Grass Plains Battle in the foreground.

## Others

Museums and libraries usually require loan agreements to be signed before and after the exhibit. Be prepared to have a short description of your MOCs, cost for insurance purposes, and a one paragraph bio describing yourself as the builder. You'll also be giving the institution rights to make use of any pics taken of your MOCs during the exhibit. Protection and display areas for your MOCs will depend on what the institution can provide. Do not hesitate to ask and negotiate on what's best for your creations.

## Summary

Bringing your MOCs to public events can be the most rewarding experience for an AFOL, and will be less stressful when you've been able to plan out in advance by taking into consideration all the above-mentioned factors. Exhibiting at larger venues also means that bigger MOCs can be displayed to more easily grab the public's attention and attract large crowds – like Akai Shiro Castlegrounds (6 x 8 regular baseplates), Theed Hangar (2 x 4 large baseplates), Geonosian Arena (3 x 6 regular baseplates) and Grass Plains Battle (4 x 8 regular baseplates). For this same reason, smaller MOCs are usually grouped together for more visual appeal rather than displaying them individually. If the smaller MOCs are in the same theme and scale as the bigger MOCs, then they can be displayed alongside each other, as Duel Of Fates (1x2 large baseplates) and Queen Amidala Overlooks (1 regular baseplate) go beside Theed Hangar.



The Duel Of Fates and Queen Amidala Overlooks displayed alongside Theed Hangar at NYC PlayFair

Bring out your best MOCs and provide additional information or materials to go with them in the display. Theed Hangar has been featured in the LSW Visual Dictionary, BrickJournal and Blocks magazines with two upsized posters (24"x36") displayed in the background. Queen Amidala Overlooks has one poster displayed together, while Duel of Fates has won a Brickee award that is displayed with it. Lastly, Droids Building Droids has won a Eurobricks contest and displayed together are the fifteen droids prize pack. These add-ons can give your MOCs more wow factor. I've often required anywhere from four to eight tables (30in x 8ft) depending on the venue/location to space out my MOCs. Also, take your time to go over your MOCs after the setup is completed to make sure that everything is complete, stable and clean. Enjoy every moment that your MOCs are in the spotlight and make the most of the opportunity to speak with your fans.

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