





Alien

“It is those creative thoughts that most strongly boil in the hearts of men that end up becoming the most incomprehensible and incomplete works, bastard daughters of the ideal of perfection”, Giger’s Alien.

Text and images by arvo

Provided we didn't misinterpret the quote by the crazy Abdul Al-Hazred (which is more than likely), it serves to illustrate what we feel when we have a close look at our Aliens...

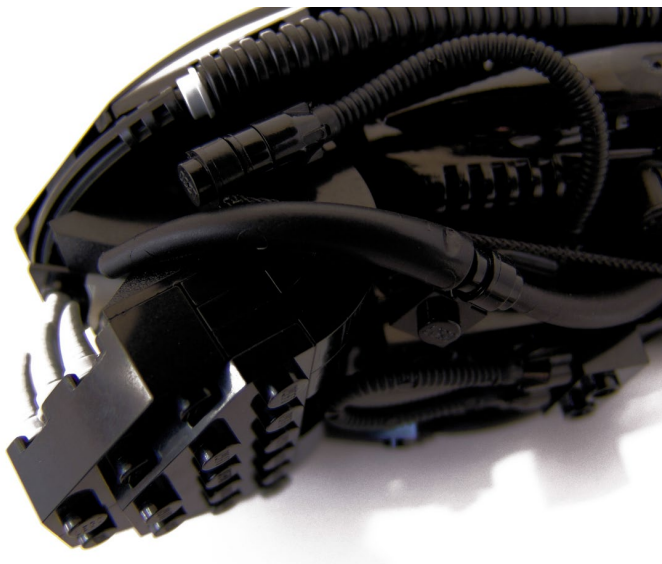
But let's start at the beginning... the idea of creating an Alien started to take shape after we finished the Kaneda motorbike, a construction that surprised us and which we have often used as 'canon' for our projects.

We have already commented at some point that this creation is in itself a summary of our style, or rather, the style we aspire to, but maybe its most important achievement has been to make us do more and more bizarre things, like in this case the Alien...

It should be said that there have been a multitude of references to the Alien theme on Brickshelf for a long time. Some are really portentous, as in the case of Bryce, an artist when

it comes to combining rare elements, capable of creating biomechanoid textures in the purest Geiger tradition... he is the author of the Alien Queen we all know.

The high level of detail and the indiscriminate use of Bionicle elements make Bryce's creations a real exception on Brickshelf, which is full of mostly small-scale models. This left a more than obvious gap for us to fill, as we wanted something detailed, but using a specific range



of pieces... the ones we like!

What we have not mentioned before is that we started to build the adult Alien before the Chestburster... as a matter of fact, at one time we had a kind of hybrid which consisted of the black infant shape with two rudimentary arms, faithful to the famous scene from the film. The kind of arms the original Chestburster has were not included in the final MOC because of the lack of stature in the final pose of the figure where they would have been barely visible... a pity, but also a saving in parts!

The early builds were very unfruitful. One of our nephews, upon seeing the unfinished head lying on a bed, thought it was a telephone... we of course politely invited him to leave the room. The early look of the model was somewhere between cradle phone and Amazonian slug. In fact, this had us worried at the beginning, to the point where we considered cancelling the project altogether... until we hit upon the jaw design.

While watching the movie we realised the Alien has a strong jaw, emulating that of the Habsburgs from Spain (but much less hostile of course...) and finding this trait encouraged us to continue. We had

the essential part: the expression of the creature.

From that moment we worked on the rest of the body of the Chestburster, experimenting with the repetition of different types of elements, and looking for textures that would provide the desired biomechanoid effect.

As you can see, the selected elements were hoses, logs, curved slopes, minifig heads, etc. The placement of the curved tubes on the sides was particularly problematic. The way we see it, these elements don't integrate well with the rest, but we liked the effect they provided so we decided to turn a blind eye.

It was harder to decide what to do with the tail...

The movie doesn't provide enough material to get a good idea of the shape of the Chestburster, but looking at some reproductions we were surprised (and appalled) to discover that it looks like a caterpillar... gross.

So, in fact it wasn't our intention to represent the moment the Alien makes its bloody (and legendary) appearance, but it was the best way

we could think of to hide its horrible shape. Now we are happy to have presented it in a pool of blood. It made the MOC more colourful than expected... and certainly more original.

And what happens when an Alien grows? Well, besides bad coffee and a penchant for practical jokes on starships, aliens turn... black!

The use of black was a big problem. As we were used to being the queens of colour, we couldn't get used to working in this gloom, but we started to see it not as an isolated construction but as something that would become part of a collection of Aliens. And in a way, as a rarity in the series.

Many times, thinking about creating new MOCs related to the movie (with the intention of definitely putting the subject behind us) we have been tempted to cover the complete life cycle with an egg and a Facehugger. It would be logical, but there are so many attractive references in the movie that we haven't decided yet. Well, there is something that is very clear, but before we start on that project we will have to find a middle man to sell our kidneys on the black market.



Getting back to the subject, once we built the head and checked the size the creature would be, we had to decide in what position we would build it. We had a phone conversation in which I expressed my preference for a squatting position with the arms stretching out menacingly. This was based on the scene where Dallas finds the creature in one of the air ducts.

But we settled on something very different from that original idea – representing the Alien like a feline in a waiting attitude, facing its prey, patiently waiting in one of the dark corners of the Nostromo, and guided by the killer instinct of this lethal creature. That is really the vision of the Alien that fascinates us – that of a being whose threat does not allow for any hope.

If the position was inspired by the movie, we couldn't forget about poor Giger. He conceived the Alien as a slender creature, elegant in its movements and of course... without slime! It is evident they didn't listen to him in Hollywood.

We especially wanted to emphasise the slender figure. Anyone who is familiar with Giger's work, knows about the characteristic slenderness of his creatures. It is a very 'Giger'

thing, and we wanted to exaggerate this in our Alien, but we found serious limitations in the size of the Technic beams in the legs. They were crucial to making the creature stand up, but they prevented us from building its thighs as thin as we wanted. However, the result was close enough to the idea we had in our minds and we were not up for too much change when we got there.

Regarding the rest of the construction, there isn't much to say. You all know we are not eager to talk about our 'techniques' but frankly, we don't feel like we have brought anything new to the table, nor anything different from what others do. We all know how to build using brackets, how to change directions, use SNOT and such villainies. We find it hard to believe that in this small world, in which a build of a certain level has a period of validity of no more than a few days, it would be especially important to talk about building techniques. Especially if, as we said, there isn't anything out of the ordinary that deserves mention.

To finish off, we will reveal that these Aliens aren't really our favourite builds. We have a hard time seeing anything particularly unique in them and we seem to concentrate only on the mistakes we committed with

them. This may change over time, but it is frustrating to see something as clearly improvable, and to know that the solutions irrevocably require starting from scratch.

That's the worst part of 'big' builds: they appear destined to be a big collection of failures due to the terrible difficulty of rectifying their mistakes. But we don't discard the possibility of rebuilding any of our bigger MOCs, especially these Aliens.

It would be an opportunity to know if we can get further with them and at the same time remove the dishonourable label of bastard sons...

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