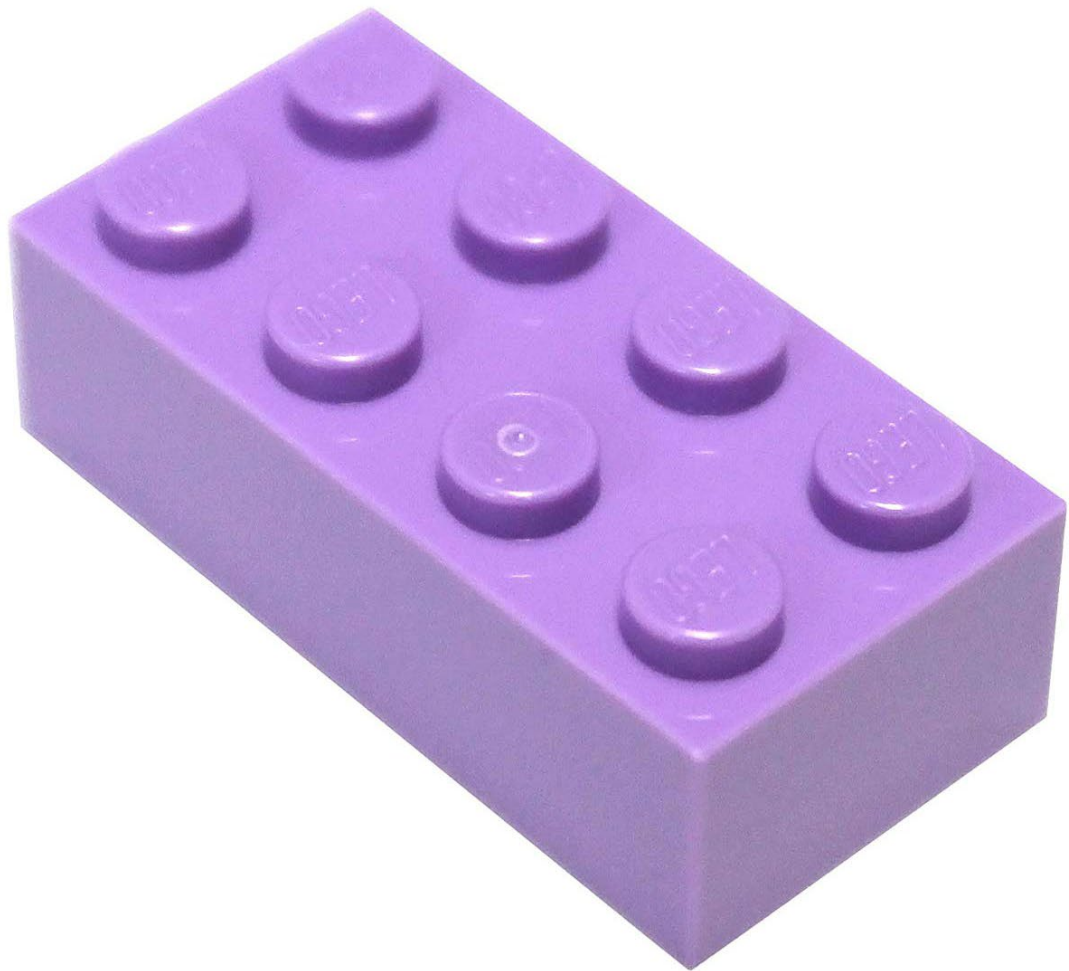


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HISPA BRICH MAGAZINE®



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HispaBrick Magazine®

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Editorial

Regina Mateos Rodilla



This issue of HispaBrick Magazine® is dedicated especially to us, women and what it means to be an AFFOL.

Rather than bring out the differences that exist between us - boys and girls - builders, fans or collectors, I well know that this 'F' we add celebrates the polyphony of different features of our natures.

LEGO® has always promoted itself as a toy that inspires the builders of tomorrow in an inclusive and extremely honest way. Proof of this is that already in the seventies one of their catalogues included a letter urging parents not to put limits on the imagination of their children – “let them create whatever appeals to them” – trying to steer clear of the sexist stereotypes and ideology of the time. In the eighties, little Rachel Giordano featured in one of their tenderest publicity campaigns holding up her creation, in a picture that managed to demonstrate how the pride of creating and the way kids play is not subject to gender. It would

be the very same Rachel who, thirty-three years later, replicated that same picture to contribute to the launch of the LEGO® Friends theme.

The company has always been committed to equality, with a strong voice and, above all, in a natural way; with minifigs of fathers who look after their baby or independent mothers with an intellectual look.

The LEGO® Ideas platform has already winked at working women on two occasions: recently with a tribute to STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) professionals in the set 21312 *Women of NASA* created by Maia Weinstock and another in 2014 *Research Institute* (21110), designed by Ellen Kooijman, which celebrates the role of women in science, presenting a paleontologist, a chemist and an astronomer.

So then what is hidden behind that 'F'? I am certain you will find the answer in the pages of this issue. You will also find many captivating stories that we hope you will love and will tell you a little more about us.

Maybe it is true that you guys are more into functionality, realism, action or scale. Or maybe it is a misconception that girls put more value on aesthetics, colour range and detail in constructions. Whatever the case, we invite you to discover our similarities and celebrate our differences. Because together we are stronger; together we are *more* LEGO®.

#



What is it like to be an AFFOL?

by Regina Mateos Rodilla



When my great friend Lluís offered me the opportunity to write for this issue of HispaBrick Magazine®, I felt a profound sense of gratefulness and responsibility. I was full of excitement, but at the same time I was filled with a dose of guilt. How could I silence the voice inside me that screamed “there are more deserving AFFOLs than you”?

Like prince Hamlet holding a skull with both hands, I have spent many hours turning over pieces between my fingers and thinking of what it means to be or not to be a good fan.

If an AFOL is someone who is active in the community, who belongs to a LUG, or who flies the flag of their hobby at every opportunity, then I am a terrible failure. I have always lived my LEGO® hobby in an abnormally independent way. But of course the word fan has almost as many meanings as there are ways to combine two two-by-four bricks.

Being a fan is occasionally putting up with people saying “what a freak”. It is explaining why you keep asking for toys for Christmas. It is suddenly talking in jargon that nobody else understands, having a lifeline in bad times, and creating a link that connects you instantly to people you hardly know.

Being a fan is having and craving knowledge and, above all, doing everything with great enthusiasm.



Reception at Åstvej (Billund)

Then I smile and think: Yes, I'm a good AFFOL!

The ultimate test, as with so many things in life, is the confirmation that comes from the outside: the feeling that the word LEGO® is part of your identity. That your friends, loved ones or coworkers call you, write you or are reminded of you each time they see the logo or read news that includes white letters over a red background.

We all know the feeling that LEGO® has marked our life and in mine it has (almost literally) been my rudder.

I am also sure you all remember the first set you ever had. I don't know specifically. What I do know is that it was my reward for not crying when I got vaccinated and that it was a Fabuland set that came off one of the shelves of a bookshop called Independencia in the city of León (Spain).

That name turned out to be an omen, because the independence I lacked up to then would be rewarded many years later with a plane ticket to Billund.



Loose parts and memorabilia at home

I am a collector – and one of the type that keeps their boxes in perfect condition and avoids mixing parts in an almost obsessive-compulsive way. The kind that knows all the reference numbers by heart and has three backup copies of an Excel inventory they cherish. The kind that didn't have a dark age and had the tremendous fortune to get a place on the 2007 Inside Tour del 2007 as a gift to myself when I graduated. Of course, back then enlisting was a matter of a simple email and not the famed online race against the clock it became later; and that has been the source of so many anecdotes and conversations among those who have participated in later editions. When registration opened in 2015, the first one hundred and forty registered in less than four minutes!

Participating in the Inside Tour was a turning point. There wasn't a single moment in those three days that I wasn't profoundly happy. Camilla Torpe, the Event Manager, creator, and organiser responsible for that tour (and for all the tours before the LEGO® House opened) received me at the LEGOLAND hotel and we had breakfast together. That was an honour not bestowed on all participants, and I think she was touched by the fact that I had set aside two days to explore a village with two streets. From the moment we had coffee I knew our relationship would be special.

The tour was full of surprises. With all the online testimonials from other fans who have attended a tour, there may be little you won't already know. Otherwise, don't hesitate to

take a look at the great reviews by Fuddruckus[1], Huw[2] or MeganL[3] on Brickset, the one by drdavewatford on gimmeLEGO@[4], or the one on the Tia blog[5].



LEGO® Inside Tour 2007 Group Photo

I passed through the innermost parts of the colourful offices at Havremarken with the same enthusiasm, breathing a dream: a model workplace, an exemplary nordic idiosyncrasy and hundreds of corners that would be the delight of any fan.



Åstvej (Billund)

And what to say of the factory on Kornmarken or the assembly line at Åstvej! These were very intense days. We discovered the history of LEGO® while weaving our way through the intricate architecture of the Idea House (which you can visit in HBM006). We saw the Vault which holds a copy of every retail set ever made. We bought more than we should, strolled through LEGOLAND® (which you saw in HBM007) and we shared some great moments and anecdotes with other participants in the group and with designers from different projects, who answered our innumerable questions and explained how the sets that make it to our hands are made.

Back in Spain, my only goal was going back. I managed to do so thanks to a scholarship from the Leonardo da Vinci program which offers the possibility of an internship in European companies that take in postgraduate students. Thanks to Camilla, Jette Orduna and Helle Winding (in charge of the Idea House and the press and events department respectively) I went back to Billund to live a dream.





LIT Team (LEGO® Inside Tour)

PR & Events was a box of surprises that offered Kirsten (my Danish fellow intern) and me a new experience each day. Our first 'uniformed' event was the final of the First LEGO® League in Scandinavia. I still remember Camilla, microphone in hand, urging me to congratulate the winners in Danish. I barely knew how to give my address in Danish. I must have gone redder than the Dannebrog itself!

Another event that took up an important part of our time was Børnenes Drømme By. The translation and the concept coincide in urging kids to build the city of their dreams. Thousands of boxes overflowing with LEGO® elements and bare yellow tables travelled with us throughout Denmark, Mexico and Italy. Even today (under the name Build the Change) this event continues to inspire children around the world to use their imagination and creativity in a social context while respecting the environment.

In addition to supporting the PR & Events department, on other occasions we would help out the guys over at Serious Play when they facilitated a workshop, or we would organise press notes in the Idea House. I was also lucky to help the New Business Group team, a greenhouse that opened its doors to new business ideas that could be considered; it was the birthplace of LEGO® Architecture, CUUSOO (which became what we now know as LEGO® Ideas), and the collaboration between LEGO® and MUJI, creating sets that combined paper and bricks.

I fondly remember a day when Børsen, a national Danish newspaper, wanted to photograph LEGO® fans for an article about the coming digital age, and they challenged Hans Burkhard Schlömer and me to play at a children's table at the office entrance. Who would have thought Hans would soon go from fan to designer and become the author of the UCS Millennium Falcon!



Picture of Regina and Hans for Børsen newspaper

Justin Ramsden, a die-hard fan from early childhood and participant in the first Inside Tour in 2004, would also become a famed Senior Designer.

Without daring to include my name among theirs, I believe that for any of us it would be impossible to describe what it means to pass over to 'the other side'. Nor to describe the butterflies you feel the day they give you your employee card. Did you know those show different colour bricks depending on what areas you are authorised to access?

Knowing that I was touring with people who might feel just like me was almost a pipe dream. I would read the Brickset forum and answer the emails the Insiders would send us, together with Sanne my coworker and mentor, to try to make sure their experience was also unrepeatable.



First Inside Tour Regina worked on - 2008

I was a guide on ten tours with thirty-five participants in each one. Camilla and Sanne were the queens of logistics, and I was the one who would advocate the whims of the fans in an irresponsible excess of empathy. I believe we all remember the surnames of each participant and we would love to share another moment with every one of them. So many unrepeatable moments and so many anecdotes: children who fulfilled their dreams through the Make a Wish foundations, couples who celebrated their honeymoon after a LEGO® themed wedding, tears in the vault, dozens of LEGO® tattoos, and even a participant who was allergic to plastic!

The few challenges that arose – like the tour that had participants from fourteen different nationalities – solved themselves through the mere fact that we all shared the same passion, living it in different ways.

When I had to return to Spain for personal reasons, I knew I left behind a dream come true. I returned with many lessons learned, about hygge, professionalism and endearing moments. I smile when I remember dinners with Lami, Mads, Adam, Jamie and Anders; the day my blender broke down and two minutes later I had an impeccable new one made from LEGO® Technic® that could whisk egg whites at two speeds; the visits to LEGOLAND Windsor and Günzburg (seen in HBM010); the days of LEGO® World in Oslo and Copenhagen, rainy afternoons in Skærbæk or sunny mornings browsing Danish antique markets with Brian in search of wooden toys or old cars made by LEGO®; walking on the foundation of the LEGO® House, or any of the times I spent with Jette, Sanne, Ana, Julie, Jan, Tormod, Kim, Freddie, Astrid, Sinne, Peter Line, Kasper, Kirsten, Lis, Morten or Gary.



With the CEE Team at LEGOLAND

But someone said you should always have more projects than memories, and I tried to apply this principle to my non-LEGO® life as well. I wrote my thesis on the importance of play when learning English as a foreign language and on the LEGO® Serious Play method. I use LEGO® sets and elements every day when I teach, I drive my friends crazy creating themed displays at Christmas and even now, twelve years later, I am still in touch with the people who were on my Tour (Jean-Luc and Peter), and with many of those who participated in the

tours I coordinated (Ray, Ronny, Manohar, Rafa, Rosa, Megan, Michael, Stacy, Morten, Jennifer, Tsang, Svein and many others). Camilla is my Danish danesa and inseparable friend; and LEGO® House is the perfect plan for 2019.

I believe, in the end, being a fan is allowing the passion to have a place in your life, wherever it may lead you. If you are reading this, you know what it means. And that makes you special. Treasure those moments, defend your passion and, come what may, don't let anybody drive you away from what makes you happy.

#



Regina's minifig

- [1] [https://brickset.com/article/36714/2018-LEGO-inside-tour-report-\(1\)](https://brickset.com/article/36714/2018-LEGO-inside-tour-report-(1))
- [2] <https://brickset.com/article/6692/review-LEGO-inside-tour-part-1>
- [3] <https://brickset.com/article/15387/LEGO-inside-tour-2015-report>
- [4] <http://gimmeLEGO.blogspot.com/2013/06/LEGO-inside-tour-2013.html>
- [5] <http://tiexp.com/my-experience-on-the-LEGO-inside-tour-a-unique-experience/>



Regina with her mother at an AFOL event

Great creators of the world:

Sachiko Akinaga

Although there aren't many AFFOLs in Japan, there are some excellent builders that promote the LEGO® brand across the country and build great creations. Sachiko is a good example of a committed AFFOL and her work is well known around the world.

by HispaBrick Magazine®

pictures by Sachiko Akinaga

Name: Sachiko Akinaga

Age: 53

Nationality: Japan

HispaBrick Magazine®: What do you do normally?

Sachiko Akinaga: I am a freelance graphic designer and a brick artist. I make stuff with LEGO®, sometimes I hold LEGO® workshop events.

HBM: When did you first start building with LEGO®?

SA: I guess around the age of four.

HBM: When did you start posting your models online?

SA: It was Sept 9th 2001. That's when I started my website 'Let's LEGO®'. (<http://www.lets-brick.com/index2.html>)

HBM: Are there many AFFOLs (Adult Female Fans of LEGO®) in Japan?

SA: There are not many AFFOLs in Japan, so I hope that our numbers will increase!

HBM: You are doing a lot of activities across Japan. Could you explain how you establish those collaborations?

SA: I usually receive a request from a company that has accessed my website 'Let's LEGO®'. For that I show my work or my LEGO® events on my website as my achievements.

HBM: What is the added value of LEGO® for those collaborations?

SA: They expect the advertising effect due to the catchy impression of LEGO® models.

HBM: What is the last set you have purchased?

SA: It's the Friends set 41130 (Amusement Park Roller Coaster) which I bought for my niece. And then for myself, a BrickHeadz 'Anna & Olaf Building' (set 41618)! I made my sighead with this! (My Sighead model: http://www.lets-brick.com/eng/my/62sigfig/fra_e.html)





Copyright (C) 2011, Sachiko Akiyama - Let's LEGO

HBM: What is your favorite commercial LEGO® building theme?

SA: They are LEGO® City and LEGO® Creator. I've loved the city series since I was a kid, and Creator is very exciting!!

HBM: What is your favorite theme for building?

SA: It's animal models. And I like to build in my own style in any theme.

HBM: What is your favorite LEGO® element and why?

SA: I love the 'block effect' of LEGO® bricks. It has a fun look. Also high quality! And I like to be able to shape my imagining world with LEGO®.

HBM: Which part would you like LEGO® to produce?

SA: I would like to get a 1x1 panel.



HBM: How many hours do you spend building with LEGO®?

SA: When I am building something, I am building for about 10-14 hours a day.



Copyright (C) 2010 Sachiko Akiyama - Let's LEGO



HBM: Is it difficult in Japan to be a LEGO® fan?

SA: I guess it is easy !:D

HBM: What do your family/friends think about this hobby?

SA: They've said that playing with LEGO® is a really wonderful hobby ever since I was a kid. LEGO® is very creative hobby!

HBM: Do you draw or create pre-designs before you start building?

SA: It depends on the situation. When I make a commissioned work, I often paint or design before I start to build. but when I make something for me I usually don't draw or create pre-designs.

HBM: What is your preferred building technique?

SA: A simple building style that eliminates waste is the best for me.

HBM: If you had to choose one from among all your creations, which would you choose and why?

SA: I would choose 'The Animal Musicians' because It is my favorite model. I

like to build creations that make you feel happy when you see them. (The Animal Musicians: http://www.lets-brick.com/eng/my/33musicians/musicians_fra.htm)

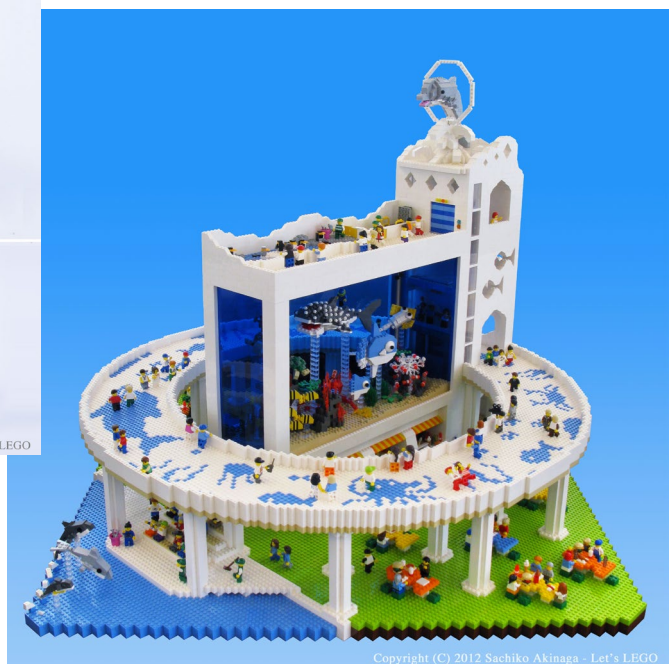
HBM: What do you think about the use of non-official parts (stickers, modified parts, non-LEGO® elements...)?

SA: I don't care about their use. I sometimes make and use my own original stickers. For example, company logos etc... And I won't make any modified parts, but I won't oppose their use. It must be fun! On the use of non-LEGO® elements etc., I think that effective use can be a good thing! I have used blue acrylic boards for my aquarium model before. (Seaside Aquarium: http://www.lets-brick.com/eng/my/c1212_aquarium/fra_e.html)

HBM: How would you encourage other women / girls to build with LEGO®?

SA: First I'll show her my pretty LEGO® work and let her know the fun of LEGO®! And I will inform her that various cute products are on sale – Friends, Disney, etc... After that, I'd like to encourage her to try to build a cute product first.

#





Great creators of the world: Mariann Asanuma

by HispaBrick Magazine®

pictures by Mariann Asanuma

Mariann Asanuma became the world's first female freelance LEGO® Artist and LEGO® instruction author in early 2007. The first book – How to Build a Round Ball with Square Bricks! – shows readers the techniques and theory of how a Master Model Designer creates a LEGO® ball. Her second book – Beyond the Ball – shows how to add color and design to your LEGO® creations.

Through her series of books, 'Building Secrets from the Masters', Mariann hopes to teach the reader a new way of thinking about LEGO® model-building and design. She understands all aspects of LEGO® building and design and would like to impart that knowledge to the next generation.

HispaBrick Magazine®: Name?

Mariann Asanuma.

HBM: Age?

MA: 41.

HBM: Nationality?

MA: American.

HBM: When did you first start building with LEGO®?

MA: In 1983.

HBM: When did you start posting your models online?

MA: I think in 2005 on Brickshelf.

HBM: What is the last set you have purchased?

MA: Some LEGO® Movie 2 polybags.



HBM: What is your favorite commercial LEGO® building theme?

MA: Forestmen.

HBM: What is your favorite theme for building?

MA: That's tricky, as I have several favorites – mosaics, Miniland-scale, Architecture...



HBM: If you had to choose just one from among all your creations, which would you choose and why?

MA: My MGM Miniland Lion which is on display at LEGOLAND California.

HBM: What is the largest creation you've made?

MA: Also a tricky one – my largest building is the Cathedral of the Madeleine, my largest sculpture of a person is the flute-playing Pirate at LEGOLAND California, my largest insect is a 4-foot ladybug also at LEGOLAND California, and my largest mosaic is a 5-foot-square Google Chrome logo.



HBM: What is your favorite LEGO® element and why?

MA: The cheese slope, as it has so many uses and has changed mosaic building forever.

HBM: Which part would you like LEGO® to produce?

MA: An inverted cheese slope and a corner cheese slope.

HBM: How many hours do you spend building with LEGO®?

MA: I'm not really sure. It depends on whether I have a commission or not, and can be from 40 to 80+ hours a week.

HBM: What do your family and friends think about this hobby?

MA: They support me, and usually think my job is cool.

HBM: Do you draw or use predesigns before you start building?

MA: Sometimes. I like to use brick paper – LEGO® graph paper. It helps, especially with my portrait mosaics. I also use Photoshop and Illustrator to help figure out the design.

HBM: What do you think about the use of non-official parts (stickers, modified parts, non-LEGO® elements, etc.)?

MA: I use them where needed. I stopped worrying about official versus unofficial due to working at LEGOLAND California as a Master Model Builder. I always try to find a way to do it in all LEGO®, but if I need to modify or add other materials to my build to make it look the best it can be, I'll do that.



HBM: What inspires you to create your layouts and MOCs?

MA: Whatever takes my fancy, or if someone asks me to build something. I've done some very interesting builds over the years because I build professionally.

HBM: What plans do you have for future builds?

MA: Well, there's a lot of 'dream' builds that I have a running list of – usually it depends on time and whether I have enough available space to actually build them.

HBM: So far, you are the author of the Model Building Secrets Books, 'How to Build a Round Ball with Square Bricks!' and 'Beyond the Ball'. Can you tell us where fans can find these books?

MA: You can find them either on my website (www.modelbuildingsecrets.com) or at www.foldedfancy.com. At the moment they are only available as E-books.

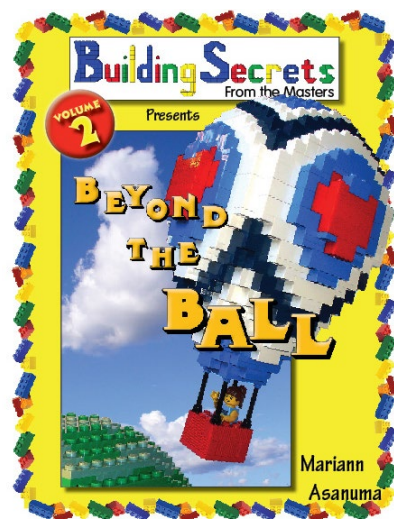
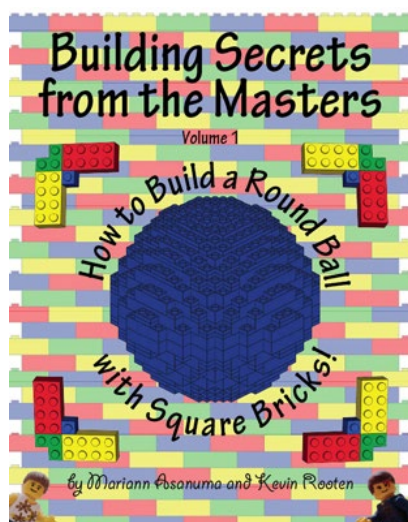


HBM: How do you see the evolution of the FFOL (Female Fan of LEGO®) phenomenon over the last couple of years?

MA: It has been growing. Women are starting to realize that LEGO® is a fun hobby; a lot of the time it had been thought of more as a 'boy's toy'. The Friends line as well as the Modulars and other larger builds have drawn women in too. There's some like me who never stopped, never had a dark age, but finding people, especially women like that are rare.

I was more into Castle and City when I was younger, and I'd consider myself more of a tomboy growing up. But if I'd had the Friends or Modulars I would have loved those too. It helps that LEGO® has so many more colors than when I was a kid. I remember when there were only six colors that LEGO® was made in. Now there are dozens and dozens of colors. There's also so many more hundreds of elements that didn't exist when I was younger. All the new colors and elements add so much depth and variety in what is possible now compared to even ten years ago.

#



Great creators of the world: Alice Finch

by HispaBrick Magazine®

pictures by Alice Finch



Alice Finch started building with LEGO® again when her kids needed a building companion. She realized that building isn't just for little kids- it's creative, inspiring, and incredibly fun for big kids too. Her first model was Hogwarts Castle, which accidentally grew to be 400,000 bricks big. In her LEGO® room in Seattle, WA, she continues to build models both great and small. She also contributes to collaborative projects since she thinks building has great potential to bring people together. Her work has been published in many books and she is a featured builder in the documentary, A LEGO® Brickumentary. She travels all over the world, giving talks, demonstrating building techniques, and teaching builders of all ages how to use bricks to make the world a better place.

HispaBrick Magazine®: Name?

Alice Finch

HBM: Age?

AF: 44

HBM: Nationality?

AF: American

HBM: What do you do normally?

AF: Everyday is different and is more like a multi-armed juggling act than a typical 9-5 job. I am heavily involved in volunteering in my kids' schools and community and have, especially these last few years, spent a lot of my time and energy helping in many community projects. On a typical week, I may do all of these: teach an art lesson in my son's classroom, work on the Fine Arts annual showcase event, assist with first year band students, strategize with the gun violence prevention committee, develop social justice curriculum for the middle school or a LEGO® Serious Play workshop for elementary school kids, collaborate on a new social justice awareness project, run an after school LEGO® club, part in a new kit for the shop on my website, plan a workshop for our newly founded Women's Brick Initiative, build a MOC for an ArchLUG collaborative display, experiment with ideas for a new batch of models for my next book, and if I'm lucky, find a few minutes to do personal building. I decided a while ago that I would put my big personal projects on hold as there were so many important issues needing my attention right now – things that I can use my mix of experience as a teacher, builder, and social activist to address. This is why I haven't built a big model in a while – I've been using the brick to try and educate people about the many pressing issues of our time that seem to get more urgent by the day.

HBM: When did you first start building with LEGO®?

AF: I picked the brick up again as an adult in 2011. I was building with my kids and decided to build a MOC of my own. As soon as I decided to have my own projects, I had so many ideas of what to do that I started a few, some of which I still have tucked away under dust cloths. I was trying to find my building stride and it was good to try a few different things until I found a good fit. I found it with Hogwarts.

HBM: When did you start posting your models online?

AF: The first model I posted online was my Hogwarts Castle in 2012. A friend of mine, Carlyle Livingston, helped me with the massive task of taking photos, and then my husband helped with cleaning up the backgrounds in photoshop. It was quite an undertaking to try to figure out how to do all of this with such an enormous model with both exterior and interior shots. Once I did post the photos, the internet noticed, and I was completely overwhelmed by the response – I simply couldn't respond to the influx of emails fast enough.



HBM: What is the last set you have purchased?

AF: Most of the sets I buy these days are for my kids, but the last set I purchased for myself was the new microscale Hogwarts. I was asked to do a review of it so I ran out to the LEGO® store, which fortunately is only about 5 miles away from my house, picked one up and then spent the next couple of days building. At a certain point, we just run out of room to display all the MOCs and sets we've built, so not everything stays built or on display. Seeing as I'm partial to things related to HP, we managed to squeeze it into our display space.

HBM: What is your favorite commercial LEGO® building theme?

AF: It is hard to choose just one, but now that Harry Potter sets are back on the shelves, I'd have to say HP. It is great to have the diversity of characters available, as this is so key to that world. Diagon Alley is arguably my favorite set of all time as I think it was a significant leap in set design and it is one of the few 'location' sets that was complete – walls and roof, and not just the front side.

HBM: What is your favorite theme for building?

AF: In general, my favorite theme is architecture, but not in the sense that LEGO® uses it. I'm interested in any and all things architectural, and that includes fantasy. I really enjoy the challenge of building accurately based on a model, but that model can come from a book or a movie as easily as off the street.

HBM: What is your favorite LEGO® element and why?

AF: The 32028 1x2 plate with rail is easily my favorite part. Architecture is often monochromatic, and any chance I have to add texture or a shadow, this is a go-to way to do it.

HBM: What do your family/friends think about your hobby?

AF: When I started building as an adult again, my parents did think I was a bit daft to be putting so much energy into building Hogwarts. All it took was them seeing Hogwarts in person to understand what it was all about. My husband and kids build, so they have understood from the beginning that this is what I do, even though I didn't know it until it happened. I also have a fabulous circle of friends who don't think it is even the slightest bit strange. No explanation is necessary to justify my house being in an ever-changing state of chaos due to the piles of bricks, sets, and MOCs in enormous cardboard boxes, and new projects in various stages of completion.



HBM: Which part would you like LEGO® to produce?

AF: How about interior and exterior corners for plate with rail? I can't think of the number of times I could have used these!

HBM: How much time do you spend building with LEGO®?

AF: This is a difficult question to answer because it varies widely by day and week. A slightly easier question might be how much time I spend thinking about or working with LEGO® since I am constantly developing workshops and projects using bricks but not necessarily building with them. The answer to that would be all day, every day!

HBM: Do you draw or pre-designs before you start building?

AF: I pretty much exclusively build with the brick in hand as I find the trial and error process to be key to experimenting and finding the best solution for a particular model. I do lots of studies where I'll build a window 3 different ways and try them all out until I decide which one works or looks best. The one exception to this is when I'm traveling. When I'm on a flight or in a place where I don't have my bricks, I will sometimes take graph paper and draw out some ideas that I don't want to forget. These are usually iterations on a theme or ramblings inspired by what I'm seeing as I travel. For example, when I was working on my book, I drew many different types of window decorations as I traveled in Washington DC to capture the huge variety of windows treatments I saw as I walked through the city.





HBM: If you had to choose one among all your creations, which one would you choose and why?

AF: Hogwarts was really my first model, and so there is a lot of experimentation and development of my own style and techniques built into it. There wasn't a lot of visual reference material available at the time I was building, since the 'making of' type books weren't really a thing yet. I read all the books again and watched the movies for every detail I could find. I even went to the HP Studio tour in London to see what I could glean from the set models. All this research then had to be converted to brick form, and since I hadn't really done much free building since childhood, I had to reacquaint myself with exactly how to turn my vision of Hogwarts into bricks. A whole lot of them: 400,000 bricks, give or take a few. What started as just the Great Hall, grew a kitchen, then a common room and boat house, and then... at that point I realized that this project might end up being enormous, and well, after a year of building, it did. Building Hogwarts was really the beginning of this LEGO® adventure for me and so it has a lot of meaning not just for me but also for the rest of my family.



Displaying Hogwarts also made me aware of the local and global AFOL community, and how this hobby connects people all over the world. Sadly, it also exposed me to the jealousy of other builders in my own community, the sexism of the broader population, and how this hobby can often tear you down as much as it can inspire. These challenges made me aware of how LEGO® can be so very much more than an art medium or a hobby with a fan club. It can be the starting point for making people aware of prejudice, kindness, injustice, creativity, and a whole lot more.



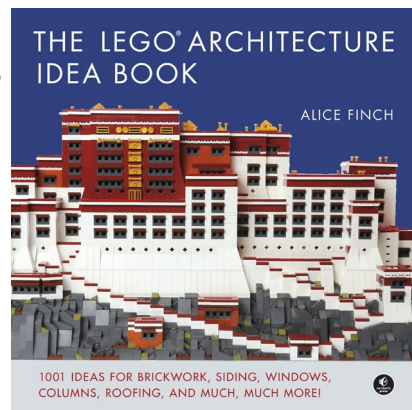
Rivendell, which I built the next year with my friend, David Frank, was the first major collaboration I'd ever done. I'd found my building groove by then and I was ready to stretch myself again. This time the challenge was finding the right style for the elegant architecture and integrating it into the dramatic and lush landscape. It was a great experience and I think we both inspired each other to grow as builders, but because the project is no longer together, it is also a bit sad. So, to make a long answer short, building Hogwarts changed the trajectory of my life – as a builder, AFOL, parent, and teacher, and it led me into social justice advocacy.

HBM: What do you think about the use of unofficial parts (stickers, modified parts, non-LEGO® elements, etc.)?

AF: I see the brick like any other art medium and find that I use the potion bottles or printed bacon tiles or battle axes when they work well in a model. The accessories are great as they offer interesting parts for a broader variety of themes beyond what LEGO® makes, and I enjoy the challenge of finding crazy ways to use the unusual parts. I've used third-party claws as grass and gun mounts in windows, but I do tend to avoid clone bricks. They just aren't as good in quality and I don't approve of the clone companies scavenging ideas and producing identical sets, so I give them a wide berth.

HBM: So far, you are the author of a few books. Can you tell us what we will find in your last book 'The LEGO® architecture idea book'?

AF: As far as I know, this is the first LEGO® reference book of its kind. The goal is to show many different possibilities and for you, the builder, to take the ideas and make them your own, by adjusting the color, shape, parts, scale, or any other aspect to match your needs. There really are over 1,200 models in the book, and all of them are meant to get you thinking. What about this, or that, or a combination of both. If it isn't clear how a technique is achieved, there is a 'how to'



example. All of the key parts are labeled with part numbers so you can easily look them up.

Throughout the year of building, I was also taking photos, and since you probably all know how hard it is to take good photographs of LEGO®, you can understand how huge the task was for photographing 1,200 models from multiple angles. Somehow, we managed to wrangle all the examples into chapters and sections, and like most things, the effort was worth it, even if it was ten times more work than I thought it would be. This is hopefully the first of many idea books, as I have lists of many more ideas to get people building better. It takes a bit of courage to transition from building with instructions to building what you envision and to step up the level of detail in your MOCs. This book is for those moments when you need a wall, but don't know how to make it interesting. Or when you are pondering what that technique was that you saw but can't remember what it was. It is my hope that this book will provide the support and inspiration for people of all ages and experiences to become more detailed, more creative, more innovative builders.

Patterned Walls



HBM: How do you see the evolution of the FFOL (Female Fan of LEGO®) phenomenon over the last couple of years?

AF: I think it is fabulous! I haven't been in this hobby that long, and yet it already has changed dramatically from being a few female builders to quite a few. We still have plenty of room to grow, but it is really fabulous to see women joining in.

HBM: The Women's Brick Initiative... can you explain more about this?

AF: The Women's Brick Initiative was created by three of us in the LEGO® world as a way of supporting all women who are creative with the brick, whether this be through modeling, photography, minifig collecting, or jewelry design. We realized that even though the numbers of women are growing, we still can use a positive, supportive place, where we can ask questions, find a mentor, and be inspired. This year, we are expanding our outreach by workshops within existing conventions where women and girls can try out something new and meet like-minded women.

One of the things that inspired us was the list of ten characteristics that LEGO® created in 1963 to guide their design process. Second on the list is design toys for 'girls and boys.' We want to bring back the focus on girls and women, and are dedicated to supporting and inspiring them.

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Curved Walls





April 2nd, 2019 will be the 5th anniversary of 2x4 Day, a Fan-Created Global Day of LEGO® Brick Play. I am Patricia (Trish) Tsoiasue, and I am the LEGO® fan who created it.

HOW TO CELEBRATE 2x4 DAY

The rules are simple. Celebrate 2x4 Day on April 2nd (written 2/4 in European notation) of each year by building with LEGO® bricks and sharing on the internet. This is the most basic way to celebrate. It's meant to be easy and inclusive. If you choose to celebrate with a larger event, as some groups have done, that is certainly acceptable and welcome. Adding a hashtag (#2x4day) and joining the Facebook group 2x4Day is a great way to tie in your celebration to the greater 2x4 Day community.

WHY 2x4 DAY WAS STARTED

It was 2014 and as an Adult Fan of LEGO® (an AFOL) and the LEGO® User Group (LUG) Ambassador for the Long Beach LEGO® User Group (LBLUG) I was suddenly given access to a new tool for networking with other LUG Ambassadors around the world. It's called the LEGO® Ambassador Network (the LAN). The LAN is a forum for those entrusted with maintaining the relationship between the LUG and The LEGO® Group. Some of the rights and responsibilities of the position are the sharing of information, supporting group participation in local LEGO®-based activities and networking with other Ambassadors. I am a community organizer of grassroots communities. This was right up my alley. Without the LAN, I would not have visualized starting or had the support to start 2x4 Day, 'A Fan-Created Global Day of LEGO®(r) Brick Play'.

HOW 2x4 DAY WAS STARTED

Using the LAN I was able to initiate a discussion with other LUG Ambassadors, and found support from Sever Alicu of Brickenburg in Romania and Varo Obregon in Peru. Walter Vega of Peru also joined us on the Facebook page. I took the approach that 'international' required at least two different countries, so we were set! Brickenburg and two LUGs in Peru (Lima LUG Peru and Club Peru) participated with major celebrations. Long Beach had a cosy celebration that we held at the Long Beach Sea Base. We had a small weekday gathering of free activities, put together with what we had on hand. Mixed playbrick, a lot of pink and white brick that I was putting together for a girls' building club and set building. Everything was awesome!

GROWING 2x4 DAY

It was much easier the second year, and it continues to be easier each year we celebrate. Rather than give a year-by-year narrative, I am sharing the names and affiliations of those who celebrated with us in years 2-4, either by sharing their celebration on the Facebook page, on the LAN or by helping the celebration we presented in Long Beach. Some of these I found after the event had passed, but they celebrated, so I



Jenny Tate

mention them. If you celebrated and your name is not listed, please accept my thanks and also my greatest apologies for the omission. Without global participation, you can't have a 'Fan Created Global Day of LEGO® Brick Play'.

United States: Denver LUG (DENLUG), Rochester LUG (RLUG), the New England LUG (NELUG), OC LUG, LUGOLA
Guatemala LUG
Mexico LUG
Greece LUG (Gricks)
Belgrade, Serbia (TehnoLUG, LUG Kolege and BEOKOCKA)
Club LEGO® Concepcion - Chile
Australia (Jay's Brick Blog)
BC, Canada (VICLUG)
Italy LUG (ITLUG)

I would also like to thank Kerry and Jack O'Connell, Jenny and Ray Tate, Robinne Ponte, Eric Tetangco, Master Model Builder Brian Heins, Steve and Skye Graves, my niece Paula and many others in LUGOLA and the Long Beach LUG.



Dave, Trish, Jenny, Ray, Jack, Robinne and Kerry

THE FIFTH YEAR

2019! That's this year! What will it look like? Who will celebrate it? Will you?

Here's what Long Beach is planning: We will align with the Long Beach ROBOTech, a local robotics celebration during National Robotics Week in the United States. The celebration will be on Sunday, April 7th at Long Beach City College. We expect to share the many cool new things that I am doing with Competition Robotics (FIRST LEGO® League and the World Robot Olympiad), as well as lots of special 2x4 Day activities. I expect we will have Master Model Builder Brian Heins present again. Somewhere along the way, our kids started selling their MOCs and I expect that they will again create Make and Take activities. This year we'll host the Great Ball Contraption (GBC) Flash Mob. This is a repeating mechanical engineering learning opportunity with a focus on GBCs. It's a new project I've started to support Multi-National tour groups visiting Long Beach. We've engaged with China, but we also want to include Japan, Mexico, Peru, Trinidad and Guatemala. Why those countries? Well... because we know folks who are in those countries. Or folks who know folks in those countries.

But those are other projects. Other stories for other days. I have asked for write-ups from other groups that celebrated, and have a couple of other narratives to share from Ivan Angeli and Suzanne Eaton.

Patricia (Trish) Tsoi-A-Sue is an Adult fan of LEGO® (AFOL) and is a developer of socially responsible grassroots

communities in Long Beach, California. She believes in the power of play, has many hobbies and interests, and lots and lots of ideas. She is trained in LEGO® Serious Play and the Creative Problem Solving Institute's methods of intentional creativity. The communities she has created and in which she takes most pride are the Long Beach LEGO® User Group, Makersville and the (new) Leading Edge Multi-National Games, which she prototyped in 2018. She is the inventor of the Community Lemonade Game, a mechanism for path finding and problem solving that she plays. She's convinced that one day you will play it too. You can find her experiential videos on her Squigglemom YouTube channel (please subscribe!), and sometimes she's blogging on Squigglemom.net.

Suzanne Eaton from the New England LUG provided the following information on the NELUG celebration:

Our club and community have really enjoyed this day each year. In case it's helpful, below is a bit of info about how our club has celebrated:

The '2x4 Day' idea came to NELUG through our ambassador, Tom Atkinson, after his having seen Trish's thread on the Ambassador Network. Our club received a shipment of 2x4 bricks from LEGO® and we planned a casual group get-together, to see what we could build with them. Members were encouraged to bring their entire family for a relaxed creative exploration plus pot-luck lunch and pizza for dinner.

Each year this has evolved a little bit, to include groups of children in the vicinity. But it's basically a drop-in play date

for both kids and adults. Most of the event planning has been done by myself and my husband (NELUG member, Dave Eaton), because we host this day at our condo community club house. The event is always free of charge, but invitations are limited, due to space constraints. It's not always held on April 2, because our members are more available on weekends. So some years it's been off by a few days. It's a well-liked event and always well-attended.

Dave and I have created a number of activity stations that utilize the 2x4 brick: a bean-bag toss and Hex-bug maze race, for example. We also give access to our 1x1-brick mosaic kits, LEGO® DUPLO, LEGO® Soft Blocks, and coloring sheets. The adults tend to build larger-scale sculptures (bridges, trees, animals, etc.) into the evening. One year we scaled-up Ollie, the LEGO® Dragon, using 2x4 bricks. Another year, Jeremy and others built a giant 2x4 brick, complete with LEGO® logo on studs. That year, children worked together to build a life-sized Minecraft Creeper. They had mass-produced scaled-up 2x4 bricks which an adult then placed into position (as the Master Builders do at official events). Tom Atkinson has displayed his 2x4 brick collection a few times, which includes many old and rare items. I and others have made 2x4-brick-themed edible snacks (chocolates, cookies) and wall decorations. And we usually have LEGO® movies running on a large TV.

This year, our 2x4 Day may be bigger than usual and combined with our club's 20th Anniversary celebration! We are still looking into planning this.

Ivan Ivan Angeli – Beokocka:

We are Beokocka – resistance is futile, you must join the fun! Joking aside, we are RLUG from Belgrade, Serbia, a group of silly enthusiasts that only need a reason to get together and throw an AFOL party – so 2x4 Day was perfectly in line with our agenda – to have fun.

Our AFOL parties are more AFOL-oriented, so everything you can find in a pub, you will find at our parties – and using 2x4 Day is a great incentive to build something at those parties. And you know what? Having a first hand real-life socially-oriented event is the best way to celebrate this great hobby and all the wonderful things it brings.

So, 2x4 Day has become part of our annual party calendar, and we invite you, if you are in the neighborhood, to come and join us in 2019!

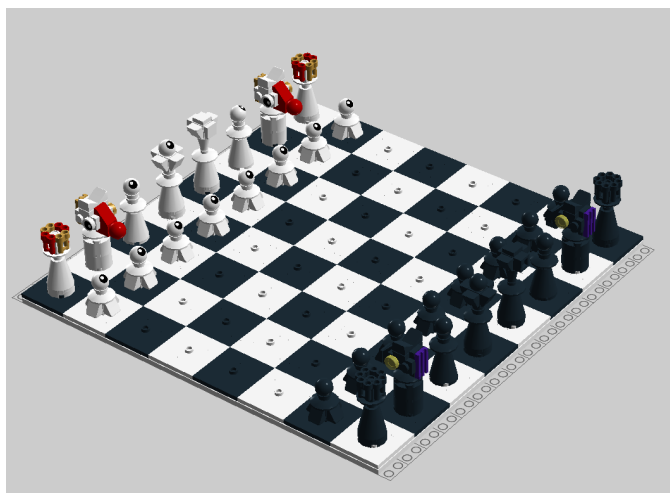
We warn you, it will be loud, happy and involve a ton of bricks ;)

About the 2x4 Day Booklet

For the Long Beach celebration in 2017, I asked several leaders to contribute to a booklet that we would use during the celebration. It was an opportunity to commune on a Multi-National product. At the Long Beach event, we laid out a Quest for the visitors to use, and the concept of a Book of Answers that provided the answers to the Quest. I fully intend to publish at least that book, and follow it with other books that share celebration ideas for future years. Until then, that booklet is currently available for purchase at <http://www.squigglemom.net>.

Suzanne Eaton provided a crossword puzzle and solution. Spiros Geropoulos provided a visual build. Eric Tetangco provided a number of activities. NZ Fawkes provided a photo of his Chess set.

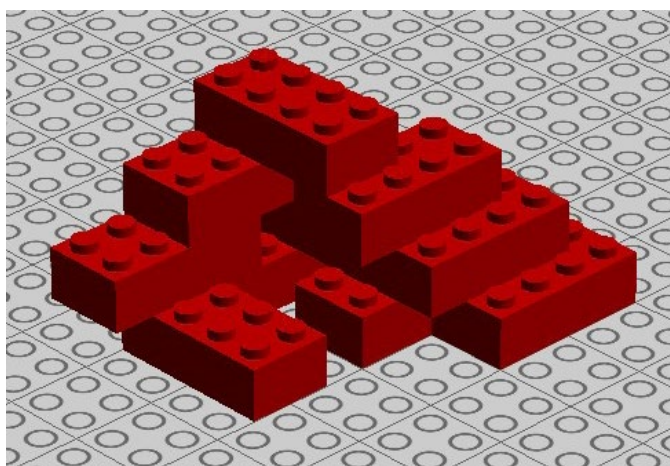
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Design by Enzo Purewal aka NZ Fawkes



Tom Atkinson's extensive 2x4 (photo by Suzanne Eaton)



Spiros Geropoulos



Interviews

SiP Interviews

by Karine Linder

Women in toy photography are not a minority and can produce some exciting pictures. I've asked two women who have inspired me a few questions about their relationship with toy photography and LEGO®.

Natasja, aka @by_a.n.n.a, lives in the Netherlands, where she works as a shop assistant in a big supermarket. She lives with her husband, two kids and a lot of LEGO®! You can find her work on her Instagram account: @by_a.n.n.a.

Júlia, aka @lady_brick, lives in Spain and she works as a web & graphic designer. She loves to travel, and her main hobby is photography. You can find her work on her website (<https://www.photoinstants.com/>) or on her Instagram account @lady_brick.

Karine Linder: How did the adventure of toy photography begin?

@by_a.n.n.a: I do not know exactly how it happened but there has always been LEGO® in the house, even when I was small myself, and now with my children. One of my hobbies is photography and one day they both got together. I first started to make jewelry from LEGO® bricks: earrings, key rings, bracelets, rings, and necklaces, but that was only a phase. I then switched to shooting photos of LEGO® minifigures.



@by_a.n.n.a

@lady_brick: My adventure started in 2011 when a small Wall-E arrived at home. I bought it because it reminds me of Johnny 5 and it's a lovely toy. With Wall-E, I discovered this fantastic great little world of toy photography. The plastic toys don't complain about the time that I spend to take the perfect photo, they are good for practicing photography techniques, and help me to relax my mind.

I did some 52-week projects, posting one photo a week for a year on my website. Every year the main character changed: Wall-E, Danbo, Batman, Stormtroopers, action figures and finally, LEGO®. The minifigs, sets, and accessories are a source of inspiration and also an addiction. My collection has grown a lot in a short time and BrickLink was a great discovery



@lady_brick

since in Barcelona, until the end of 2018, there were no LEGO® Stores.

KL: What is your connection with LEGO® toys?

@by_a.n.n.a: LEGO® has always been in my life. It started when I was a little girl. My mother has saved all my LEGO® from that time for me, even a few sets of Fabuland because they were my favorites! My children have grown up with it, and there are already a lot of LEGO® sets built in our house!

@lady_brick: It's funny because when I was a child I always played with Playmobil. I tried to create stories with them but it's not the same. I don't know why, but LEGO® expands my creativity and it's easy to create stories with them. It offers a wide range of minifigs, with accessories for all of them and if I want any scenery, I need only create it. What more could I ask for?

KL: What are your favorite LEGO® toys? Minifigs? Minidolls? Bricks? What is your favorite LEGO® theme?

@by_a.n.n.a: I love the Minifigs series in the blind bags. But one of my favorite characters is the Joker! And Benny of course – he always makes you smile when you see his face ;) I think the new sets of the LEGO® Movie 2 are totally fantastic! And I can't wait to see the movie. Oh, and the blind bags with the new minifigures...You get inspired immediately!!!

@lady_brick: I definitely love the Minifigs and I have a lot of them. I should blame LEGO® and their continuous launch of amazing series of Minifigs. My favorite theme is Star Wars, of course. I'm a Star Wars fan and the LEGO® sets are amazing. I enjoy creating different stories from the usual ones with the stormtroopers. They also have their little heart of plastic and they were the first LEGO® Minifigs that I bought. So, may the force be with you!

KL: What is your main creative process? Starting with the minifig or with the location, an idea, etc?

@by_a.n.n.a: I Think all three; it just happens. Take the new minifigures series: you have Dorothy, the lion, the tin man, and the scarecrow. I look at them and an idea immediately pops up. I also like to make my own background by drawing and painting it. I have already finished my backgrounds for the Wizard of Oz figurines! Now I'm waiting for the Minifigures to arrive!

@lady_brick: I usually explore social media for inspiration. Sometimes I draw a sketch or write some lines to remember the idea. I think details are important and for this reason, I try to collect all the things that I will need for my ideas. Then, I prepare the set. I think about the composition and the lighting. I like to move the camera lens to the eye level of the minifigs – it helps to dive into the scene and makes it more credible. Almost all my photographs are done at home and for this reason, I have all the time in the world. But it's totally crazy because sometimes I spend more time setting the scene than taking the photo.

I like making people believe that a small toy made of plastic is alive. That's the important point and the thing that I try to show with my photography.



@lady_brick

KL: What is the best place for you to take pictures? Outdoor, indoor, a specific location?

@by_a.n.n.a: I generally take my photos inside the house. On my closet, in the living room. Sometimes in my backyard.

@lady_brick: In fact, I don't have any special or best place to take pictures. At home, I have all the time to do it while being calm and relaxed. Also, in winter I usually do more photos indoor and in summer it's more outdoor photos.

KL: Do you take your toys with you when you travel?

@by_a.n.n.a: Always! I always take a minifigure with me when I go somewhere: to work, when I go shopping or eat out... I usually don't take a photo, but the idea that I would not have them and cannot take a picture when I want to would be terrible. When we go on summer holidays, I always take a box of minifigures and accessories with me!

@lady_brick: Yes, I do. Wall-E always comes with me in all my travels and, like a little celebrity, he has his own Instagram account (losviajesdewalle). Also, according to the destination, I take with me a few minifigs.

KL: Any goal for 2019?



@by_a.n.n.a

@by_a.n.n.a: To do my best to make even better photos! And to keep having fun!

@lady_brick: Nothing special, just to continue taking a lot of LEGO® photos :)



About the interviewer

I'm Karine Linder, alias @eatmybones, a member of the Stuck in Plastic crew. My main subject is a family of skeletons, but I started shooting minifigs with Stuck in Plastic. I'm close to starting my own LEGO® minifig collection!

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Interview: LEGO® Minifigures

by HispaBrick Magazine®

pictures by HispaBrick Magazine®, newelementary.com, bricklink.com and LEGO® System A/S



Austin Carlson and Tara Wike

HispaBrick Magazine®: Can you please tell us your name and position in the company?

My name is **Tara Wike** and I am a design manager. I act as creative lead for the LEGO® Minifigures project, which I have done for the last seven years, since series five, and I also work with other parts of the company, consulting on anything that has to do with the minifigure.

I'm **Austin Carlson**. I am the graphic designer for the minifigure Collectible series, but I have worked on multiple projects in the five years I have worked here. My main focus is designing the minifigures. I am also part of a bigger team that is focussed on decoration and my responsibility is looking those over and making sure that the minifigure is well protected and stays within the brand identity.

HBM: What does the minifig mean to LEGO®?

TW: To me it is our way of communicating with the world what

our brand values are. It's our personality; it is the way we bring life to our sets and the way we connect with kids. It helps start stories; it inspires them to build.

AC: The main thing is they are story starters. LEGO® can be played in multiple different ways. Sometimes you don't need minifigures and sometimes you do. To me it feels like it gives a face to the product. And it gives kids a starting point to make their own stories.

HBM: Why did LEGO® decide to make a minifig series that was completely independent of the sets?

TW: It just hadn't been done before and we saw a need. People really love the minifigure – some so much that they are interested in collecting them. It also gave us an opportunity to make some characters that might not make it into some of our normal sets. Iconic characters all the same, but that maybe wouldn't fit into the CITY universe or that wouldn't be a natural fit in some of our other play themes.

HBM: What process does a collectible minifig go through from concept to production?

TW: Of course it starts as a daydream. Usually as a post-it note.

AC: A whole series of post-it notes!

TW: Yes, a vast grid where we are trying to figure out what the whole line-up looks like. We try to make sure in a classic series that we have something for everyone, so we get a good mix. Once we feel strong about the concept, quite often it will require a new element. That's the first thing we focus on. It takes time to design an element and build the mould, so we will start there. Usually we have a sketch that Austin and I will collaborate on. That is forwarded to the element sculptors who sculpt whatever new elements need to be made. Meanwhile Austin is working on refining the graphics and the colours. We are the first people to have our hands on it, but then it goes through a million other groups doing all of the important business stuff behind the scenes: making sure we have all the parts that we need, that everything is going to get delivered to the right place so it can get packed in time to make it onto the shelves in all the stores that want it; forecasting and business models and all the stuff I am happy I don't have to deal with. But usually the process takes more than a year. Sometimes we can turn things around quicker if we wish to, but that's sort of the tradition.

HBM: You say you have been around since series five. Do you know much about the earlier series?

TW: I was an element designer and so I was involved since series two on the project, but I have been the creative lead since series five. And I am familiar with the background of series one.



LEGO® Collectable minifigures Series 1

HBM: The first series contained a mix of minifigs that for the most part fitted in with different LEGO® themes. How were those minifigs chosen?

TW: There were some that we had always wanted to make. There was a cheerleader in series one and there wasn't any set we could put her in. As far as the other ones are concerned, it was a new concept for us so we were testing the ground. We didn't have the ability to make a whole bunch of new moulds. We had to work with a lot of existing parts so we wanted to make things that made sense and probably we were hoping (and we still do) that our characters can find a role in other sets. Because even though we have our own little bubble in the universe, we hope that cactus girl can make her way into

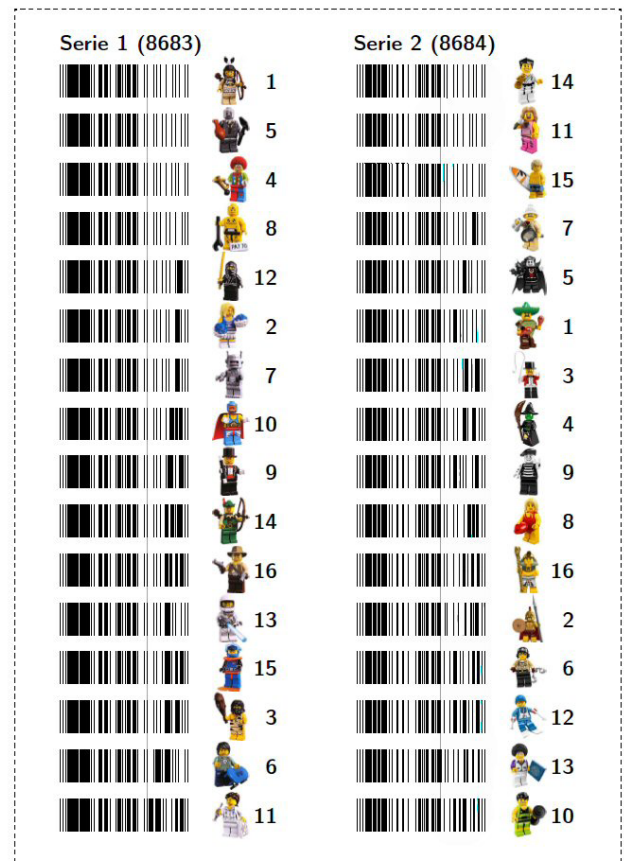
a CITY set somehow and that that is how kids will play with it. I think we were testing the new concept to see what people would do with these characters and what we could do with what we had.

HBM: Series 1 was a big success. Did you expect it would be?

TW: Let's just say some people did and some people didn't ^_^.

HBM: After that there has been a noticeable diversification in the themes. Where do you get the ideas for each series of minifigs?

TW: For the classic series we had an initial brainstorming session back when I started as design lead and I am still drawing from that. We basically pooled a bunch of sculptors and graphic designers and other designers and had a massive brainstorm. We came up with a pool of some 500 characters that we wanted to do, some better than others of course. We also try to draw from current events and things we see happening in the world. We have a lot of insights into what kids are into so we try to make sure it is relevant for the kids. We all have pet characters we like to do: we love to do the costume characters, we like the excuse to make a new animal, so we will try to get our way with those things and add some personal touches. So it's a mix of inputs. We always go for as iconic a character as possible. We want a kid to be able to look at it and say "oh, that is a ..." in one or two words. So there are some obvious ones and there are some other ones that we find a way to fit, because we love it and we think it works really well as a minifigure.



Original image credit: <http://bricks.inof.de/docs/minifig-barcodes/minifig-barcodes-compact-b.pdf>

Barcodes of Series 1 and Series 2

HBM: Series 1 and 2 had a barcode that indicated what figure was in each bag. Was that a mistake?

TW: As a company we pride ourselves on having extremely high quality, and part of that is being able to have traceability. So if something goes wrong and we discover down the line that there is an issue with one of the characters we need to have some way to go back and fix it if that is the right solution. It has always been a struggle between us and other people in the project as to how cryptic we want to be with these things, because the element of surprise is a major part of the product experience. We want the average consumer to be surprised. We know that there are sleuths out there and also at a certain point we started making elements like the Aztec headgear in series 7 where we knew everybody would be able to feel that. But it was so cool and we still wanted to make it and how big a deal is it really? And from doing market runs, where we go out and see how the product is sold in the real world, we know that there are a lot of specialty toy shops where they go ahead and open the bags and sell them pre-assembled, and so while we do try and preserve that surprise aspect we are also realistic and know that people will find a way to get the character they want. And we don't really want to prevent that either.

AC: I mean, after we stuck a dolphin in a bag, that's like the biggest and most obvious element...



Original design of the elephant costume minifigure

HBM: When you do the graphical design for a minifig how many sketches do you make?

AC: It goes back and forth. You can see here the elephant I drew out originally. Depending on if I need some clarity to describe an element to the sculptors, I might do multiple takes of hand-drawn sketches before I start turning it into a design on the computer. Sometimes I work straight from the computer if I have a very strong vision already in my head, but usually it starts out on paper.

HBM: How many designs do you prepare to choose from for each series of 16 minifigures?

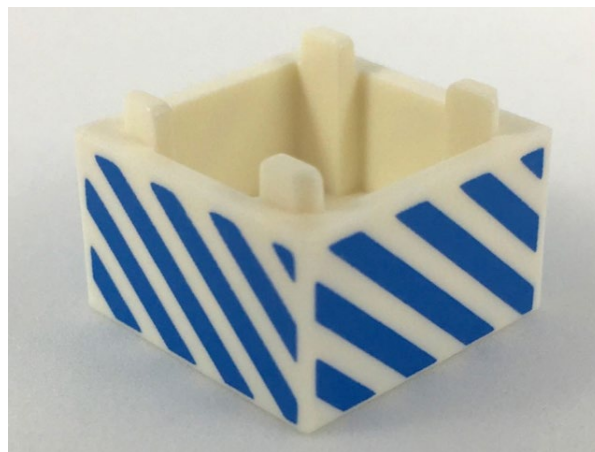
TW: Usually we are pretty confident about the 16, after we go through the post-it note grid process. For the stuff we are working on now we are actually trying a more agile approach where we are designing more than enough minifigures and then picking the winners. That's a new process for us. But usually we know what we want to make and then we go ahead and make them.

HBM: Are the ones that are not chosen discarded or saved for another series?

TW: If it's a good idea they are saved for another series. Sometimes it just doesn't make sense because we have too much of one category or we don't have enough or we don't have the ability to make the piece we need for that character, but it's not because it's a bad idea.

HBM: What capacity for new elements/moulds do you have?

TW: We can usually do about 12-16 per series. But it varies wildly and there are a lot of factors involved that are out of our control, so we work with what we get and fight for more if we really need it. We are pretty fortunate. Most projects aren't allowed to use that many new moulds. We are aware that that is the novelty we can bring with these characters so we try to really make the best of it and make elements that are super iconic and useful and will get the fans excited as well as the kids.



Gift box from Series 18

HBM: When you create a new element, do you take into account that it can be used in other sets?

TW: Yes and no. There are some that we know won't be used in other sets, like the corn-on-the-cob guy – you are not going to build that into the next Millennium Falcon – but there have been certain other elements like the gift box, which we made because it was the birthday series celebrating 40 years of the minifigure. That is a very useful element and I know other designers in the company are really excited about having this element for hidden compartments, built into walls, etc. Or this hip connector car piece that seems very special, but it was designed to work as well in System as possible, so I wouldn't be surprised if we see this popping up elsewhere too. It depends on the nature of the element. Sometimes we accept that it is going to be a specialty and novelty item, and other times we make it as universal as possible.



Car piece from Series 18

HBM: When you design a new element, do you take into account the complexity of the mould or do other people take care of that?

TW: We consider it. They know that we are going to be making some tricky elements at some point. Over the years we have been able to make more 2K, that is two-component moulds, two plastics in one shot. Those are of course a bit trickier to design, but we are so pleased with the quality we get from this that we are allowed to make a few of them. The company values design highly so they are willing to make these more complex moulds in order for us to get what we need for the right expression for the character. We use those moulds wisely, spend them wisely. We have to think about our ability to make enough parts and afford what we are putting in the bag, so we can't go totally extravagant. That will come back to us – the

engineers will come back and say “you know we can't make this, right?”. We have to be realistic, but fortunately the graphic designers are amazing at knowing how something needs to be made to be optimally decorated, the sculptors are amazing at knowing how to get things in and out of a mould in the best way, and so we always have a wide variety and complexity of moulds.

HBM: When you draw the sketches, are you aware of these complexities?

AC: Yes. The good thing is that what we call ‘the LEGO® style’ is based around all these restrictions, so when I go to draw that I am trying to draw in the LEGO® style already, so hopefully the transition isn't too big. Even with the sketch of the elephant here (see previous page), although the mould has changed with respect to the sketch, it didn't change a whole lot. We added tusks, we moved the nose up a little bit, but it was still keeping in mind the LEGO® style which would be easier for the engineers to make.

HBM: Do you usually have to modify the sketches based on the feedback you get? Or do you keep in mind what you need to do to avoid this kind of rework?

AC: What happens is that I make conceptual sketches and then the sculptors look at it and start altering these based on what the engineers need to do.

HBM: What are the most complicated elements you have created?

AC: There are quite a few.



Tara Wike and Austin Carlson during the interview

TW: The one I still have anxiety nightmares about is the bagpipe from series 7. It's got all these long skinny pipes connected with ropes, sticking out in every direction and then you play it by putting it under your arm, which the minifig can't do. So, we needed to think how we could make something the minifig can hold, and make it look like he or she is playing this crazy-looking thing. I actually bought a toy bagpipe to play with and look at and figure out how to do it. It took me about two months to figure out how we could do it, how to make it mouldable, how to make it printable, how to make it look like what it is and still look like a LEGO® piece, and for it to be obvious how to play with it. I'm not saying it is the world's best element, but I am pleased with how it came out. In the end that wasn't the most complicated mould, probably. That would probably be one of the 2K ones, but that's the engineers' job so you'd have to ask them.



Bagpipe from Series 7

AC: Sometimes the most simple thing is not easy at all!

TW: That's true. When I worked on the hockey stick, getting the appearance of the spiral wrapped tape around the handle was really complicated to mould. I designed the piece in probably one day, because I knew what I wanted it to look like. But then working together with the engineers it took months of scratching our heads and thinking how we were going to make this thing.



Mr. Gold from Series 10

HBM: What do you think of Mr. Gold?

TW: I think it was an incredibly effective marketing campaign. It still comes up internally all the time. "What's going to be our next Mister Gold?" But I have mixed feelings. It's difficult to get really high quality with the chrome effect and of course all the parts can't be chromed. From a design quality perspective, we struggled to really love that character. And then it is a trade-off: there is the thrill of the chase, but there is also a lot of disappointment. It was something we kind of had to try, and I'm not sad we did it, but I'm not saying we will ever do it again.

AC: What we did better was the chase element from the classic series. It is still a chase, but it is more available and not as hard a thing to find compared with Mr. Gold. I have seen plenty of kids posting "I got this", and the fact that it is easier for them means they can share it so much better.

TW: And we don't want it to become this super-elite exclusive thing. We just wanted to have a little fun. What was fun for me was to check the website and see where people had found it all over the world. We had a lot of fun with that.

HBM: Many minifigs include small references to the designers or 'Easter eggs'. How do you decide these references?

TW: Whoever brings me coffee... No, it's all in good fun. If we have space to do something that can have a little back story to it, for example we had a designer called Luis who really loved space marines, so when we did space marines we put his name on it, just to show him a little love and let him know we appreciate him. Others are more tongue-in-cheek, like the race car driver. We had Nick Groves on there because he was another LEGO® designer and he didn't have his driver's license at the time, so we made him the race car driver. Now we try to make them a little more generic. There was a time when we put name tags on people, but then we realised that limits the possibility to army-build with them so we scaled that back a bit. But we always try to get inspiration for facial expressions from live sources.



*Race car driver from Series 3
with N. Groves reference in the belt*

HBM: Is it easier or harder to design minifigs that are related to a licence?

TW: It really depends on the license. There are some characters that lend themselves really well to our style. We made a decision, for example, with the Simpsons, to go with sculpted heads, so we were able to be really true to the IP. But when we did the printed graphics for them it was a slightly simplified version of what we were already doing. Their characters are yellow, our characters are yellow – I don't want to say it was easy, because there were a lot of sculpted pieces that were really complex, but it wasn't too hard to get the style right. Though I remember it was a struggle to get the comic book guy to look chubby enough with a flat minifig torso. Then there are other ones, like some of the ones we did for Disney in 2016. Some of those were more of a struggle. As partners they were easy to work with, but translating the character from reference to minifigure depends a lot on the character. Pixar characters in general are very stylised, and that has a lot to do with roundness and bulbousness which we don't have a lot of in the minifig. It can be quite challenging to make that fit together.



LEGO® Collectable minifigures - The Simpsons Series 1

HBM: How did the idea for 'Fairy Batman' come about? How did DC react?

TW: I don't know if that came from us. When we do movie-related minifigures, a lot of that comes from the studio, so it is driven a lot by the story and what works well in the story. Of course, they know that people will want to get their hands on a physical copy of the characters that are in the movie. I think that one was included for laughs on-screen and then we had the parts to make him, so why not? But I think he was universally embraced.



Fairy Batman

HBM: Which is your favourite minifig?

TW: I have a lot of favourites, but I always go back to the sailor in series 4. I just love that he is monochromatic and has this basic face, but the wink is so kitschy and great and fun. It spans the styling from retro to modern really well. I love the simplicity of that character.

AC: I would have to say mine is even further back, meaning the minifigs from the 80s and 90s. They were so generic. You had one single logo and that was it, and of course there is a lot of play in that. I like putting in a lot of detail, but at the same time I love the simplicity. Other than that, I love the majority of the minifigures!

TW: This line of the birthday series – there's a lot of love in it. We put our whole heart into this. And we had so much fun with it. I can't even pick a favourite of that series.

HBM: And your least favourite one? (Please be honest and answer!)

TW: I'll limit myself to the series I have worked on. For me there was the green alien head guy with the eyeballs that look up. It just grosses me out. The sculptors and designers did a great job on it, but I have a personal reaction to that figure. I cannot even look at it. There's another one that frustrates me when I look at it. We somehow didn't think of giving our Sherlock Holmes character a cape and we didn't realise until it was too late. I love the head, the decoration and the colours, but every time I see it I think "Why didn't we add a cape?".

HBM: Do you accept ideas from fans for minifigs?

TW: We get sent stuff all the time and it's really funny because if something is a good minifigure idea it is likely going to come from more than one place. I can't recall if there was anything that came in from an external source that we hadn't already considered, but it gives reinforcement to the idea. We don't have an official channel for receiving suggestions, but we still get lots of suggestions.

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Several parts created by the Minifigs Team

20 years of MINDSTORMS

by Anika Brandsma

images by Anika Brandsma



In 1998 the first MINDSTORMS kit was launched on the market, the RCX. The aim of this product? To inspire kids with the magical world of robotics and teach them how to build and program their own robot.

That's exactly what MINDSTORMS did for me. My MINDSTORMS story started 10 years ago when I was in high school. All my life, I have been building with LEGO® and in 2008 I convinced my dad to buy a MINDSTORMS NXT with me. From that moment on I have never stopped building robots with LEGO®.

The first robot I made was the Coffee Assistant, a machine that puts sugar in your coffee and stirs it with a spoon. Since I wanted to share my LEGO® creations with the world before taking them apart, my dad and I started our YouTube channel called "Vuurzoon". There I received a lot of nice comments from all over the world on my Coffee Assistant, and that motivated me to build more robots.

© 2014 Bart van Eijden

After sharing videos on YouTube, my dad and I decided we wanted to do live demonstrations of our robots for the public, so we started joining local events with our creations. At our first event we showed our Duck and Bad Rat, which was a collaboration between me and my dad. I designed a duck that lays eggs in a nest, while the rat build by my father steals the eggs from the nest. Kids loved to see our animals move around.



Through meeting new people at the local events I became a volunteer at several robotic competitions, such as FLL and WRO. This is also the point where my hobby became an international one, since I was asked to show my robots at events all over the world, for example in Abu Dhabi and more recently in Shanghai.

When I was 18 years old I had to decide what I wanted to do after high school. This was a very easy question for me: I wanted to design robots! So I went to university to become a mechanical engineer. During my studies I kept on building with my MINDSTORMS bricks. In my spare time I also worked as a volunteer at a local robotics club, where I taught kids about building and programming their own robots with LEGO®. By teaching and challenging these kids I showed them that robots don't have to be difficult and can be a lot of fun.

At the end of 2017 I graduated as a mechanical engineer. My final project was about CACC (Cooperative Adaptive Cruise Control), a method to prevent traffic jams using communication between cars. And of course my experimental set up was built out of LEGO®. Using MINDSTORMS, I was able to make eight vehicles drive behind each other in a circle without colliding.



After graduation I started working as a mechanical engineer at an electronics and mechatronics company in the Netherlands. It was LEGO® MINDSTORMS that got me interested in technology and has made me the mechanical engineer I am right now.

Last year (2018) marked 20 years since the MINDSTORMS theme was launched, and therefore LEGO® opened a temporary exhibition on MINDSTORMS at the LEGO® House in Billund. I was invited to send one of my robots to Denmark to be part of this exhibition. This robot is a combination between LEGO® Friends and LEGO® MINDSTORMS to show the world that robotics and technology isn't just for boys.

For this robot, I took Olivia's robot lab (3933) and powered the small robots with MINDSTORMS motors to make them move. It was a great honor to be part of the 20 years of MINDSTORMS exhibition.



After many robots and many experiences I'm still full of inspiration and ideas. And I hope to inspire many kids with all my future creations.
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From Parent Volunteer to a Passion for LEGO® Robotics

by Asha Seshan

FIRST LEGO® League is a global robotics competition for students between the ages of 9 and 16. Students build and program an autonomous LEGO® MINDSTORMS robot to complete different tasks on a table filled with LEGO® models. In addition, they complete a research project and display teamwork skills. These three aspects are called Robot Game, Project and Core Values. FIRST LEGO® League, along with MINDSTORMS, celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2018. Just in the last year, the program had over 38,000 teams. However, FIRST LEGO® League impacts far more than the children involved in it.



Cheering on other teams at a FIRST LEGO® League International Open, May 2015.

My involvement in FIRST LEGO® League began in 2010 as a parent looking for something interesting related to coding and engineering for my children. I was invited with my family to attend a state championship FIRST LEGO® League event at the National Engineering and Robotics Center (NREC). NREC, all by itself, is a source of much inspiration. It is the lab where CHIMP (CMU Highly Intelligent Mobile Platform) and autonomous cars in the DARPA Grand Challenge were born. Add to that, about 600 excited students solving challenges related to the human body and using LEGO® to solve these challenges. My children and I were hooked.

My children decided that FIRST LEGO® League and LEGO® robotics was something they wanted to try for themselves. Hence, in the fall of 2011, they inaugurated a team called, Not the Droids You Are Looking For, with me as their coach. I had little idea at the time about what it would involve, or that 8 years later, even without a team, I would be still involved in the program.

In my first year, I was learning along with my team. I soon learnt that being a coach in FIRST LEGO® League is more the role of a facilitator. It did not take long for my team to know more than I did. That was fine. I took a step back and let the children drive the team. They went on to win the Champion's award at an International Open in 2015 and then at the world

level in 2018. As I watched them progress year after year, and saw them take skills they learnt and did even more with them outside the competition environment, I realized the power of this program. It was more than just a competition. It had given them the direction they needed.



Part of the MINDSTORMS Expert Zone at WRO 2016 in New Delhi, India, November 2016.

FIRST LEGO® League is 100% volunteer driven. Without volunteers, your own team would have no event to go to. I began by volunteering to judge in 2012 at local events. As my children were invited to world-level events, I started meeting volunteers who were so passionate that they inspired me to do even more. Starting in 2015, I started volunteering to judge at international events. I judged at World Festival in St. Louis, Razorback Open in Arkansas, and Mountain State Invitational in West Virginia. This year, I will be volunteering at World Festival Detroit and will return to the Mountain State Invitational.



Asha with with co-judge from Brazil at World Festival 2015.

In 2015 my sons, who run EV3Lessons.com, challenged me to contribute something to their site. I decided that I could provide a coach's perspective. Coach's Corner was born. It was a way to capture tips for coaches. I regularly solicit articles from fellow coaches on topics ranging from fundraising to team facilitation. I also write several of the articles myself.



With Dutch FIRST LEGO® League Champions team in April 2018 in Detroit. The Dutch team gave me a T-shirt and adopted me as their honorary coach.

In 2017, my sons began a Facebook Group called FIRST LEGO® League: Share & Learn. The purpose was to create an online community for coaches to support each other. This

group has 4000 members now, and is the most active online community for FIRST LEGO® League that I know of. As with any online community, it needs some adult moderation. That's where I come in. I am the lead administrator for the group. Today, it is a vibrant community of coaches, volunteers, referees, and organizers. There are now four Share and Learn groups, one for each program in FIRST, all affiliated with each other.

As a result of my involvement with MINDSTORMS and FIRST LEGO® League, I was asked to join both the MINDSTORMS Community Partners (MCP) and the LEGO® Engineering Design Group Educators (EDGers) a few years ago. During my year collaborating with the EDGers, I created a series of articles called "Meet the Creator" about amazing LEGO® builders around the world who inspire students and educators and use LEGO® robotics as part of their curriculum. This series of articles was an enormous success and achieved its purpose. They can be seen on the LEGOEngineering.com website.

It is only natural to get involved in the activity that your children participate in. In my case, it was LEGO® MINDSTORMS and FIRST LEGO® League. Although my children have now retired from FIRST LEGO® League, I still play a part in running the Facebook Group and mentoring rookie coaches through the program. I would say that what started out as simply enabling my children's hobby turned into a passion – a passion to use LEGO® robotics to spread STEM, and help other children also be inspired and find their paths.

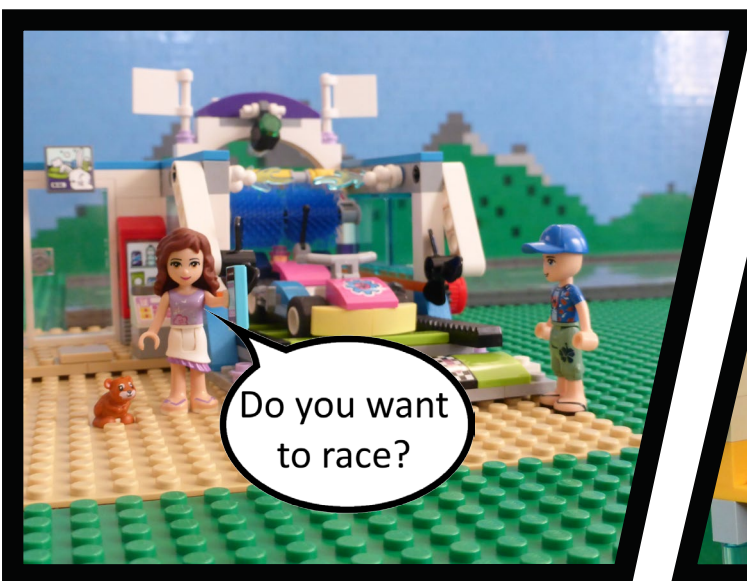
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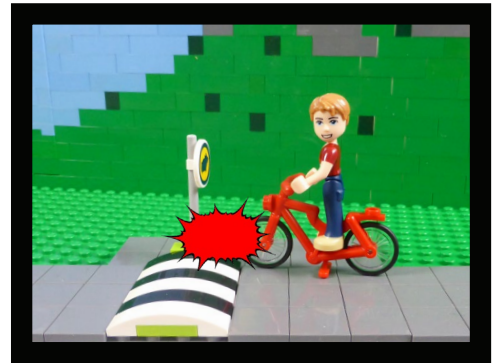
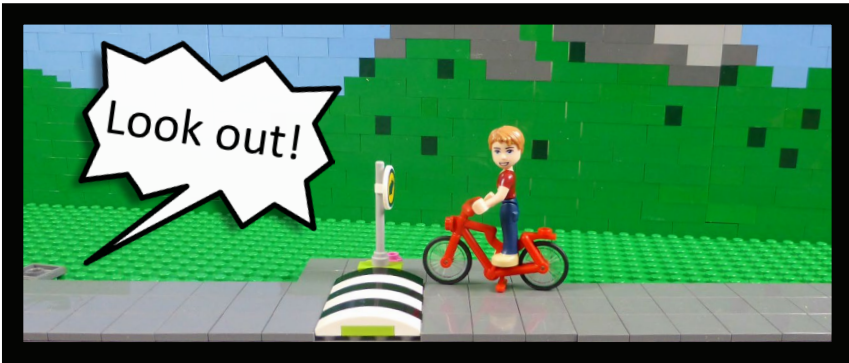


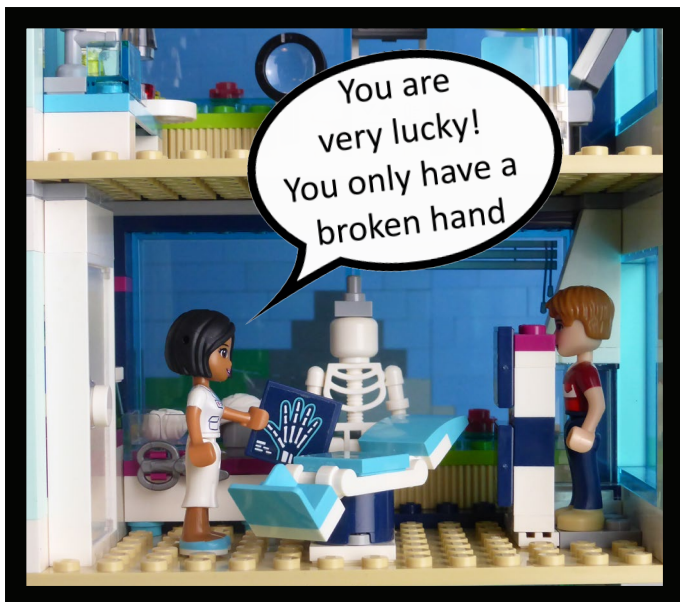
With all the Ohio volunteers at FIRST LEGO® League moments after Sanjay and Arvind became World Champions, World Festival 2018.

The Day of the Race

By Evelyn







Evelyn doesn't know (or conceive) a world without LEGO®. That's what happens when your father is an AFOL. Friends has had a special impact on her, although she also loves Creator sets . if it's a dinosaur so much the better. For an 8-year-old girl, she has a very definite idea of her future which involves being part of the HispaBrick Magazine® staff. She would also love to train her own dragon (or dinosaur). I'll let you be the judge of which of the two is more likely to come true. She is distraught at the thought that LEGO® Elves has been discontinued. She looks forward to finding out what other themes will feature minidolls.

The story as told in these images was imagined, staged, photographed and layed out by Evelyn, with some minimal help in the way of applause and some technical assistance. The backdrop used in the images is part of our MILS. If you don't know what that is, it's high time you started reading our back issues :D

We would like to thank LEGO® for the sets used in this review: 41318 - Heartlake Hospital, 41340 - Friendship House, 41348 - Service & Care Truck and 41350 - Spinning Brushes Car Wash as well as a few extra bits and pieces.

Although this is not exactly a review, our very positive opinion of these sets is neither endorsed nor approved by LEGO®.

#

Jessica Farrell – The Inside Story

by Eduard Petrač (Kockice)



Jessica's workspace

When an opportunity presents itself and there is the chance for a nice chat, who could resist? Jessica is from Ireland and you may know some of her well-known MOCs like Her Majesty's Theatre in London, Tomb Raider or Jurassic Brick. Yes, today we are the company of Jessica Farrell, an extremely versatile and talented builder and FFOL (Female Fan of LEGO®).

KOCKICE: Jessica, it's always a pleasure. For our readers, can you reveal something about yourself?

Jessica Farrell: Well, I'm still in my forties, but let's face it: First Generation AFOLs are getting older! (I wonder if TLG will make special Duplo sets for us when we are too old to see and hold system bricks!)

I am a horticulturist by trade and for 20 years I have run the family business, which is a garden nursery. However, over the last two years, my time spent on LEGO®-related activities has increased so much it feels like my hobby is now my profession (or the other way around).

K: Most AFOLs have some story about getting back to LEGO®, maybe you can share yours with us?

JF: I've loved LEGO® since I was four years old but I had a terribly long Dark Age. I didn't start building again until I started getting really jealous of my children's Christmas presents! The passion quickly resurged and by 2014 I was happily building

MOCs, letting my children play with them for a while and then breaking them up again. Then a chance meeting with an AFOL in a UK LEGO® store introduced me to the world of LUGs. I didn't own a computer back then and I had never done a Google search but a helpful LEGO® employee found Brick.ie, the Irish LUG, for me. Once I had gathered up enough courage to show up at a meeting, I was hooked. The members of Brick.ie were so welcoming and encouraging, I felt a sense of belonging straight away. The rest, as they say, is history!

K: Looking at your models, nature is sort of universal and very well captured being a horticulturist, but everything else also has the "How did she do that?" effect.

JF: All the females in my family are artists, spanning four generations. I inherited some of the talent but never found my medium until I started building with LEGO® as an adult. I had been taught an artist's appreciation of colour, form and style in all things, so that sense of beauty must now be in every model I build. I am, of course, inspired by nature since I have worked outside in nature all my life. Most of my work has some organic element to it but I am driven to create beauty beyond the natural form. I want people to see my work as art; to feel something more than just "Hey, that's cool!" and to somehow be enriched, enchanted or inspired by the experience. When I plan a MOC, I never use digital design tools and rarely make drawings beyond quick sketches. For the first few days I look like I'm in a trance



Plant Monster Invasion

because all these mental images and mathematical calculations are going on inside my head. It often feels like I've already built the MOC before I even start it!

K: We already mentioned Her Majesty's Theatre in London (which is now owned by Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber!), Jurassic Brick, and Tomb Raider – plus Fortress of Solitude – such astonishing models and in a wide variety of themes!

JF: Variety is the spice of life; I like my work to be as varied as possible. If what I'm building now is completely different than what I built before, then I'm developing new skills and meeting new challenges. Before I start a build, I do considerable research on the subject, so I end up learning a lot of new things, too. I prefer to be a little scared when I start something new. The thrill and fear (what if I won't be able to pull it off this time?) is a powerful motivator.

K: Those models must demand quite a big collection.

JF: Of course, building such a variety of MOCs means I need to have a massive LEGO® collection! I can't just collect certain colours or types of parts, I need to have lots of everything. My LEGO® room is highly organised and every piece is sorted by colour and type, but all the drawers are overflowing. My dream is to have a studio where I can build without constantly bumping into boxes!

K: Is there a MOC that you can say was the most challenging one?

JF: My most challenging MOC to date was definitely the Sub-Tropical Swimming Paradise, a 2.5m x 1.5m model commissioned by Center Parcs to promote the opening of their new resort in Ireland. I was assisted by my son, Faolán, who is also an avid builder.

We had to work from blueprints and CAD illustrations (the real building wasn't built yet) and getting the shape of the structure correct was a real challenge. It had to be curved around, sloped downwards and slanted outwards. The main wall had to be mostly trans-clear panels and the interior fully viewable so there was no way to hide any support structures. Then there were all the curved and spiralled water slides and, to make it even more difficult, everything had to come apart into easy, transportable sections so we could assemble it all in front of a camera crew in less than 15 minutes! The overall model was way too big for the LEGO® room so we built in sections until the final few weeks when we had to lay it all out on the kitchen floor. That was really stressful because everyone was afraid of falling over it or spilling coffee on it! Even so, looking back it was a great experience. And, of course, as part of our work Center Parcs had to send us to one of their other parks for several days' research...

K: How did you find that experience, collaborating with Faolán? Would you be willing to try and go outside the family for a collab?

JF: The Center Parc commission was the second model Faolán and I worked on together (not including TV). The first was Plant

Monster Invasion, a crazy build filled with action and humour. Collaborating was not easy as we disagreed over a lot of things and our building styles are very different but I sincerely believe the model would not have been as good as it is without the collaborative effort. I don't think I would do a collaborative build outside of the family, though, because if there was disagreement I wouldn't be able to pull the parent card!

K: We have seen you being part of the LEGO® Masters series on Channel 4. It seems that it was a lot of fun. What's your experience with the show? Would you do it again?



Fortress of Solitude



Center Parcs Sub-tropical Swimming Paradise

JF: Being part of LEGO® MASTERS was a fantastic opportunity and a great bonding experience for myself and Faolán. It was not easy; in fact, a lot of it was quite stressful and all was certainly not as it seemed on TV. The best part was the behind-the-scenes camaraderie with the other contestants, some of whom are now good friends. Would we do it again if we could? No, but we are still glad we did it!

K: You mentioned that the hobby is becoming your profession. From hobby to doing commissioned work, how is that? Do you get a lot of enquiries?

JF: Yes, as I mentioned before, my hobby is rapidly turning into a job! That's not a bad thing; I'm used to being self-employed, working with stuff I love. It's not easy and building for a client is a very different experience than building purely for fun. Deadlines are stressful and one has to be very conscious of cost. Eight out of ten enquiries evaporate once a potential client realises just how expensive and time consuming it is to build an impressive model. Regardless, I build my commissioned pieces to the same standard and self-imposed rules as my other MOCs and there must always be beauty in the work. My least favourite part is most commissions have to be glued. That's not fun at all and the rest of my LEGO® collection gets very frightened when it sees the Kragle!

K: AFOLs can meet you on international gatherings. Any favourite event?

JF: Yes, I go to as many international AFOL events as I can. I love them all and it would be impossible to pick a favourite! The international fan community is like one big family and the fan events are like family weddings where we all get to meet, catch up and celebrate!

K: Any inspiring words for getting more females into LEGO® as a hobby? Maybe a few thoughts or a vision of the future LEGO® community.

JF: When I was a child, many people thought it was odd for a girl to like LEGO® so much. It was definitely a boy's toy. It's great to see that view disappearing and, whether you love the minidoll

or hate it, there's no denying that girls are now being drawn into the fold. This is a good thing and I think the next generation of AFOLs will be more evenly balanced between the sexes. As for the future of the AFOL community in general, well, I hope that the international gatherings continue and, on a local level, LUG meetings still take place. Although social media certainly helped get the community to where it is today, I'd hate for social media to replace the real life social event. And seeing a great MOC 'in the brick' is so much better than just seeing it on Flickr! Then there's the Duplo for old AFOLs to look forward to...

#



Santiago de Compostela Cathedral

LEGO® Eiffel towers

by Iva Pavlic



Among the most instantly recognizable structures in the world, the Eiffel Tower, following its release in the Creator Expert theme from 2007., has been launched as an Architecture Landmark as well in 2014. Five years later, it's back underneath the Architecture Skylines roof, as a part of Paris.

About Eiffel Tower

Eiffel Tower has been built on Champs de Mars in Paris - constructed in 1889 as an entrance to the World Expo that took place there. It got its name after Gustav Eiffel whose company designed and built it. The basic idea of a tower with four main supporting "legs" was invented by Maurice Koechlin and Emile Nouguier, and Stephen Sauvestre added the truss arches underneath the first platform atop the skeleton in order to make it more monumental, and also added other decorative elements. The Tower's construction is rather simple: four main support

legs that form a square in its base are connected at the height of 300m, with three platforms in the middle. It consists of 18038 iron parts that took two years, two months and five days to mount and secure.

The tower was supposed to be demolished 20 years after its construction. One of the main requirements of the tower was its easy disassembly. Gustave Eiffel decided to keep the tower, arguing its value in communication and scientific usage, such as meteorology, physics and astronomy. Its role in communication infrastructure today is rather huge: it hold 120 antennas and a television emitter that raised the total height to 324 m.

10181 Eiffel tower

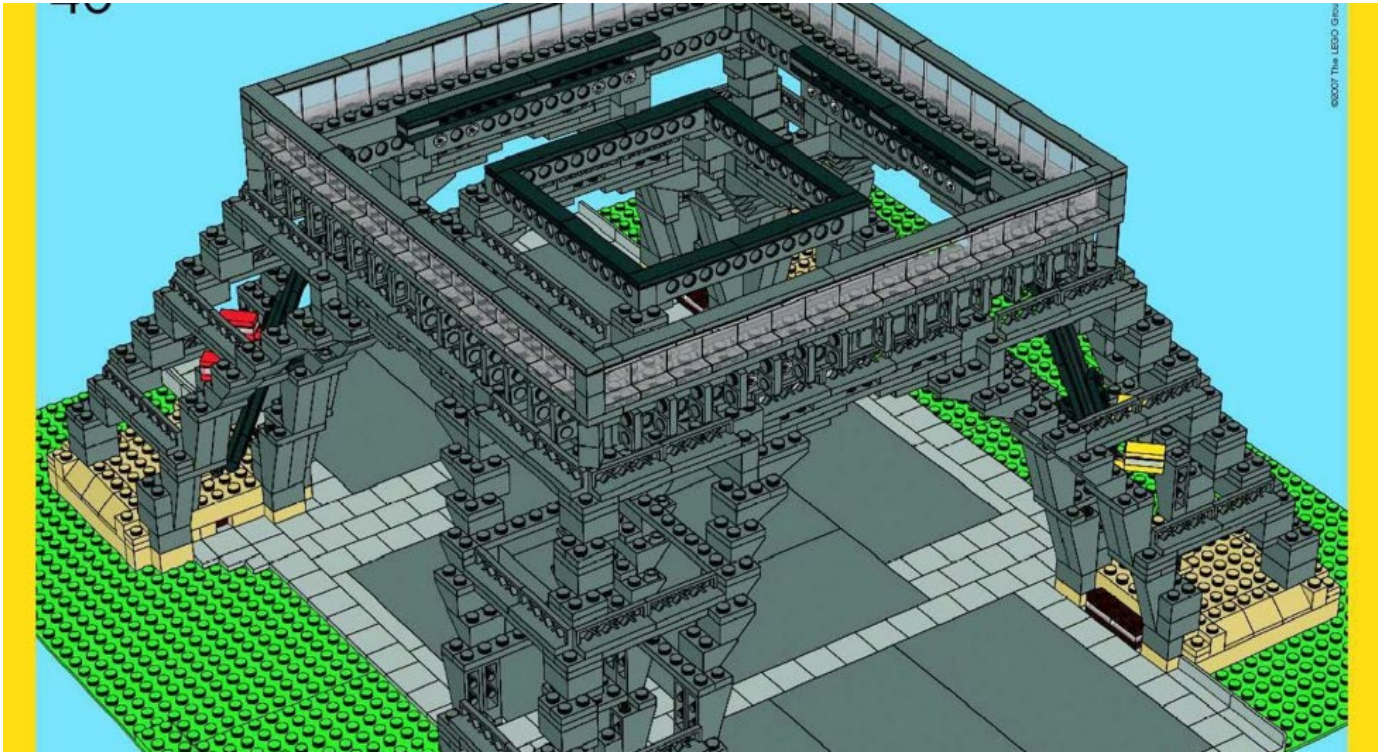
In the 10181 set, the Eiffel Tower was built in the 1:300 scale resulting in its total height of as much as 108 cm. This set was released in 2007 and consists of 3428 parts.

Its construction begins with the square beneath the tower using tiles, and then proceeds to the first half of the foundation. The foundation is constructed so that the each leg connects inverted slopes and bricks, connected with fences from the outside and plates from the inside. Four main supporting struts are interconnected with two discrete, simple arches built from plates with fences at the top. Atop the arches, there is a brick with sideways Technic holes with a cascade of 56 1x2 plates turned sideways which represents the first platform. At that very spot, in the real Tower, the names of 72 notable French scientists, engineers and mathematicians have been inscribed, e.g. Fourier, Foucault, Dumas, Daguerre and others. Eiffel decided to dedicate that part to scientists only because of a large resistance from the contemporary artists to building the tower, and plenty of criticism aiming at its looks.

The platform is surrounded with 60 trans clear 1x2x2 panels, and built from nine connected 8x8 plates with central mesh. Four supporting struts for the next platform protrude from each of the corner plater. The second platform, again, has its brick-built construction with sideways Technic holes, and this time, 32 1x2 plates turned sideways. This platform has a regular 1x4x1 fence around its perimeter. It's built using four aforementioned 8x8 plates, but without any holes in their centers. Four vertical 2x2x6 columns rise from its corners, and two 1x1x6 additional columns per each corner. This kind of construction goes on five-fold, after which the two thinner columns connect into one of the following five stories. The top, just underneath the third platform, has been built from 1x1 brick columns held together with fences, and from the second to third platform, there is a column in the middle with the elevators, built from 58827 mesh columns. The third platform protrudes outward from the tower shaft. This transition has been lovely modeled by using two vertical hinges at an angle, holding the platform. Just like on the real thing, at the top there is a broadcasting antenna and the French flag.

The model has been designed in a modular fashion - it's simply disassembled into three parts, separating at the platforms.

Bricks set into staircases and plates may look a bit rough at first sight and certainly do not portray the elegance of the smaller models, but have a strong, heavy look just like the the real thing,



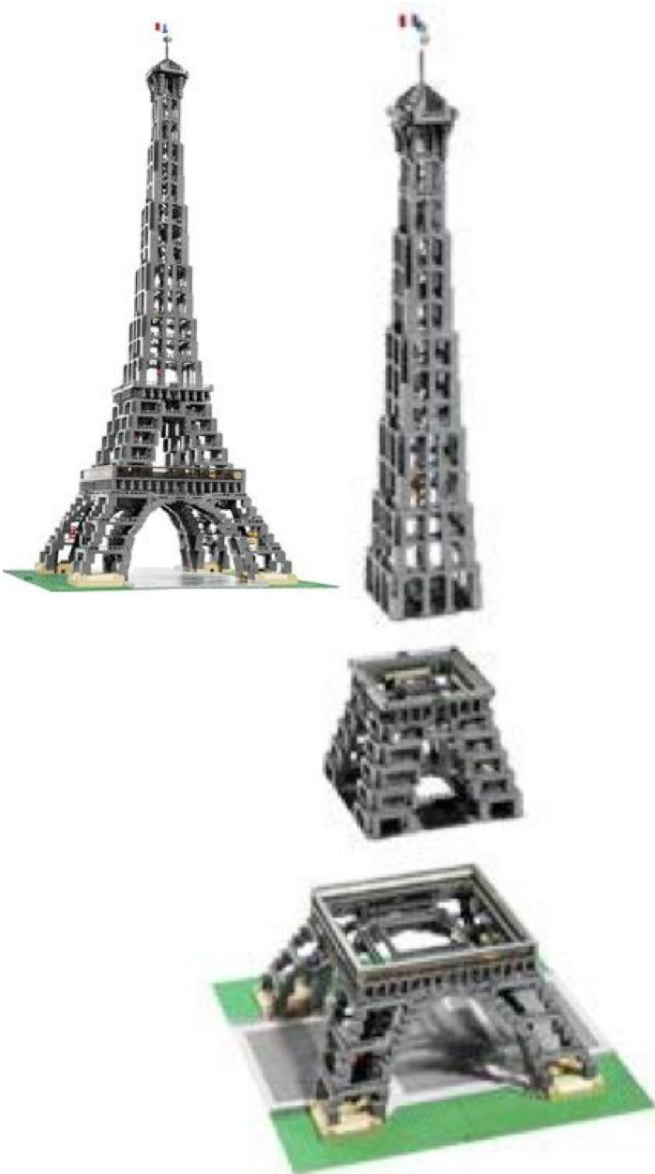
Page 40 from the instruction booklet for 10181: first platform of the Tower with vertical plates and fences around the entire perimeter

yet meshy enough to emulate truss support structs. The dark grey of the fences contribute to that image.

21019 Eiffel tower

The 21019 set was released in 2014 as a part of Architecture Landmarks theme and consists of 321 parts. It is 31 cm tall.

The construction begins just like in the previous set, with the square underneath the tower, but proceeds, interestingly, with the first platform, which is actually a 8x8 plate with mesh, as used for the platforms in the 10181. The platform edges have been nicely done with sideways tiles featuring grilles. The second platform comes atop the first one, resting on the central column, but also on the corner support struts, built from tiles



The same detail in the real Tower: columns with names of various scientists around the platform with the fences



and clips with handles. Only once the both platforms have been constructed and put together, the four main support legs proceed. The third platform is only given a hint of: on the 1x1 slopes, there is a tile with octagonal frame, with a 2x2 hemisphere atop it, and an antenna on the top. Again, the shape of the topmost platform which protrudes from the tower body and has a hemispherical shape, has been modeled realistically.

A very simple supporting structure, while perhaps not representing the feel of the truss construction, imitates the parabolic shape of the arches well using various non-right angles - therefore



making the entire set look very true and elegant. An additional nice detail are arches underneath the first platform, using curved soft axles.

21044 Paris

The 21044 set got release in early 2019 as a part of Architecture Skylines theme and brings along 649 parts. Apart from the Eiffel Tower, other landmarks of Paris are present: Arc de Triomphe, Champs-Élysées, Tour Montparnasse, Grand Palais and Louvre.

The Eiffel Tower is only 22 cm tall in this set, making it the smallest of the three sets. The construction itself is rather similar to the 21019. One could almost say that the successful building concept did not need to be changed: the supporting structure is again built from plates and tiles with grilles, connected together with clips to platforms (albeit a bit smaller here). The sideways grille tiles make up for additional detail. It's again interesting to observe how the arches underneath the first platform have been constructed: by using transparent circular elements for a pilot cockpit, with a truss print. The French flag appears here again, seen for the last time in the set from 2007.

The other Skyline models are typically between 3 and 8 cm deep, while the Paris Skyline being 11 cm deep to support the Eiffel Tower's wide base.

Contrary to the 10181 set, that put the trussy tower construction in its primary focus, and thus emphasizing the engineering aspect of the Eiffel Tower, the later sets have rather refocused on its looks and parabolic arches construction, which is to be expected due to the much smaller scales. We see such an Eiffel Tower in the postcards, as a form of parabolic shape.

All three LEGO® towers use grey parts. The real Eiffel Tower gets repainted every 7 years with 60 tons of paint to prevent it from rusting. To remain in harmony with the sky of Paris, it gets painted a bit lighter at the top and progressively darker at the bottom. However, it is not really grey - the original paint has been brownish-red, and from 1968 onward, it gets painted in a shade of bronze color, now known as the "Eiffel Tower brown".

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Reviews

Review: 10264 - Corner Garage

text by Delia Balsells

images by Delia Balsells and LEGO® System A/S

Set: Corner Garage

Set number: 10264

Parts: 2569

Minifigures: 6

Recommended price: 179,99€ / \$199,99



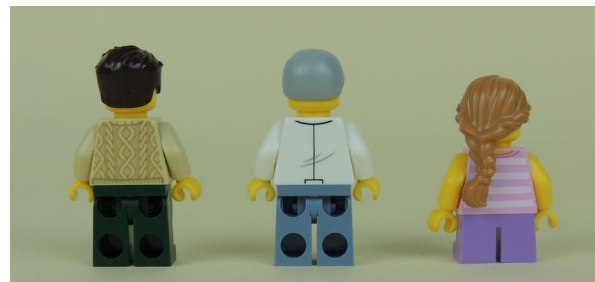
I am Delia Balsells; I'm 38. My relation with LEGO® began the moment I met an AFOL – you might say it all began out of love (for an AFOL, not for LEGO®). I don't remember playing with LEGO® when I was little and I'm pretty sure my parents never

bought me a LEGO® set. Now I like LEGO® because it is a toy that helps children to create anything they can imagine and teaches them how to read instructions for a chosen set.

This Creator Expert set looks quite interesting at first glance because it represents a scene from a real city, a building on a corner with a petrol station and different themes on each floor which is what makes the set attractive.



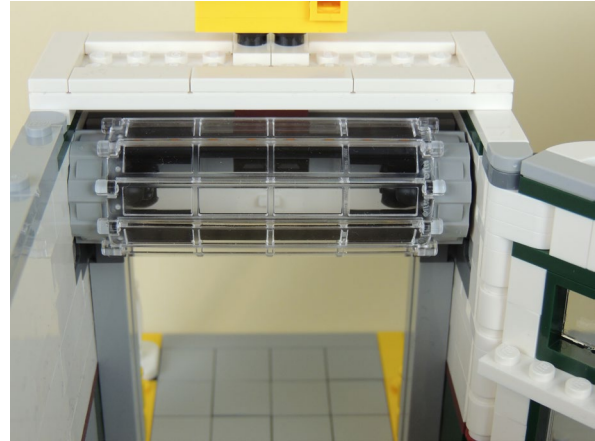
The set comes with six minifigures: two mechanics (one is a girl), a biker girl, a veterinarian, and a girl and a man (who appear to live on the top floor). I like how each minifig has clothes that clearly show who they are or how they fit into their scene in the set. The mechanics in blue overalls, the girl on the bike with her jacket, the girl with short legs and braid, the doctor with a torso showing a stethoscope, and the man from the flat in casual clothes. No less interesting are the different expressions on the faces of the minifigures. I like that each has its own look and is always connected to the character. The one I like best is the girl. She is very cute with her big braids, girly face and freckles. Finally, I loved the hat with ponytail for the female mechanic.





Building the set goes through six stages:

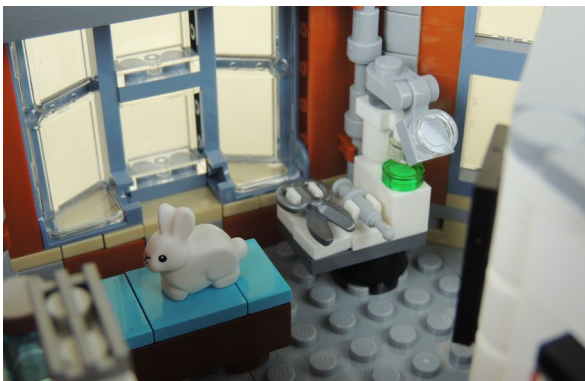
- 1- The base of the building with some details for the car repair shop, and the minifigures.
- 2- The remainder of the details for the car repair shop as well as the walls that enclose it, together with the large vertical garage door. This includes the minifigure of the biker and her very good-looking blue motorbike.



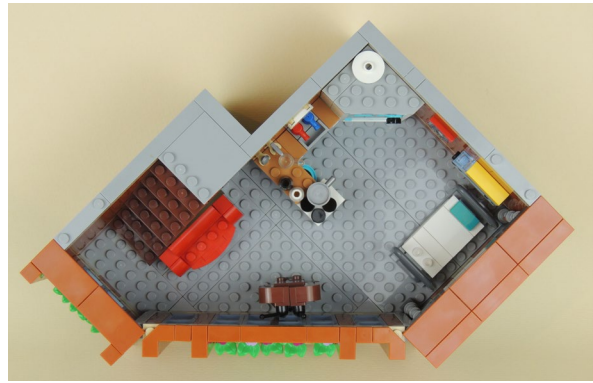
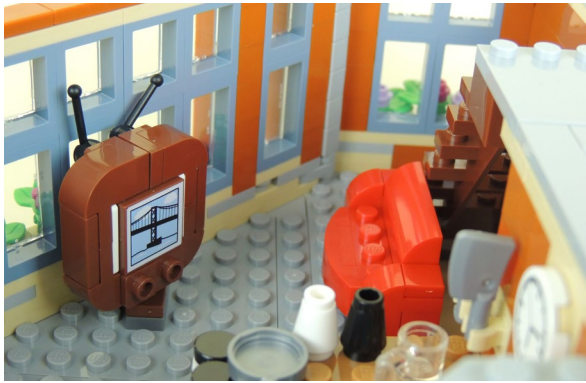
3- Construction of the petrol station and the tow truck.



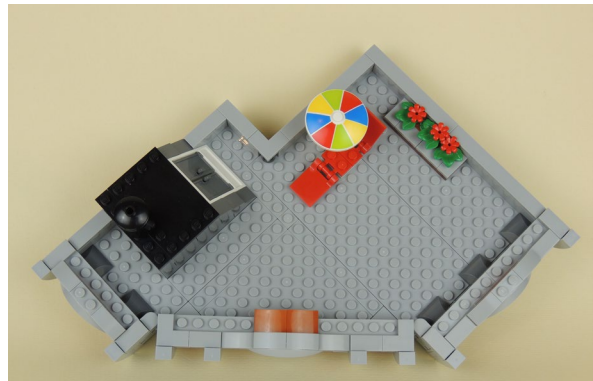
4- Construction of the first floor – the veterinary centre – which comes with two minifigures (the vet and a girl). You see the difference between the doctor's office and the waiting room.



5- Construction of the second floor which houses a small apartment with furniture, electrical appliances and decoration.



6- The final step: building the flat roof with a deck chair and some flowers.



For a person like me, who is not a passionate fan of LEGO®, the fact that the set has so many details which are quick to build and look very real is what most appeals to me. In my opinion, the set has a good number of real-life objects which keep you interested in continuing the build, although there are also some tough moments, but more on that later.

Among the details I enjoyed the most are the fish tank, the car lift for changing wheels in the mechanics' shop, the petrol pump, the motorbike, the flexible lamp on the doctor's desk as well as the medical tools, the toilet tank, the TV and the toy in the man's apartment. As I mentioned, I like these details because they are quick builds, and with little effort you get great results that look quite realistic.



However, there are also parts in the construction process that get very tedious. For example the base and the walls of the the building. These are very repetitive and you have to take care not to use the wrong part because the walls interleave in different ways. I did like the windows and doors. I like their design and especially that of the large garage door which is very well built and fun and easy to use.



I also loved the animals that are included in the set (a parrot, a dog, a fish, a frog, and a rabbit). I was especially attracted to the rabbit which is very cute. The parrot has a nice colour combination. The fish tank is located between the doctor's office and the waiting room and is quite ingenious although I would have liked some kind of mechanism to make the fish move.



The various plants and flowers add some colour to the set and bring life into this city building. The tree at the entrance is an interesting build and the result is quite lush.

The lamps near the entry to the garage and next to the main door (the blue one) are original and built with just a few pieces. I like the large window for the petrol station as this allows you to see inside and see all the little details. The sign over the door is curious and very representative of what is inside as it shows a hanging wrench which means 'repairs' wherever you go.



Finally there is the tow truck. Truth be told it is well built and has many details – the doors open, a minifig can sit inside, the rearview mirrors look great with just a few pieces and the wheels and bumpers are robust. The most interesting part is the mechanism that lifts and lowers the crane and is activated by a worm gear.



To sum up, this is not the best set for someone like me, who doesn't really enjoy spending many hours building with LEGO®. It takes quite a long time to finish all the walls and there aren't too many details there. It takes quite a while before you finally get to the good stuff and start building the parts I like.

Something that could be improved (in my opinion) is adding more furniture in the man's flat and some additional details in the waiting room at the vet's clinic. The roof is rather boring with just a deck chair and some flowers. A small porch with a table, some plants and a washing line would give it a bit more life.

#





FFOLs (Females Fans of LEGO®)

by HispaBrick Magazine®

HispaBrick Magazine®: Name?

Barbara Hoel.

HBM: Nationality?

BH: USA.

HBM: How did you get started with LEGO® bricks?

BH: I got started building MOCs when my daughter was 3 years old and I retrieved the box of LEGO® bricks from my childhood for her. I immediately began building houses for her to play with and never stopped. That was 22 years ago. When she graduated from college, four years ago, I joined a LUG and showed my MOCs for the first time in public.



Four Seasons of Parks, 2016

Autor: Barbara Hoel (Hartland Bricks)

www.flickr.com/photos/hartlandbricks/



HispaBrick Magazine®: Name?

Vesna.

HBM: Nationality?

V: Slovenia.

HBM: How did you get started with LEGO® bricks?

V: I got back to building with LEGO® in January 2010 after being given the Creator 3in1 set 4956 House (www.brickset.com/sets/4956-1/House) for Christmas from my boyfriend.

Ever since, I enjoy building sets and MOCs, and I find both the building and sorting relaxing to counteract the daily stress at work.



Dragon mountain, March 2017

Autor: Vesna (1982redhead)

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/redhead1982/>

The Dragon Mountain by Redhead1982



HispaBrick Magazine®: Name?

Jasmine L.

HBM: Nationality?

J: USA.

HBM: How did you get started with LEGO® bricks?

J: As a child, I started creating houses with my first set, which was actually a LEGO® board game. My next sets were of the Creator and Winter Village themes and those inspired me to continue by creating architectural builds.



Tea Room, December 11, 2017

Autor: Jasmine L (Razzle Jazze)

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/132924540@N02/>



HispaBrick Magazine®: Name?

Anuradha Pehrson.

HBM: Nationality?

AP: USA.

HBM: How did you get started with LEGO® bricks?

AP: I grew up in India and at that time LEGO® was not available there.

When I was 8 or 9 years old, a relative had bought a Systems Set from Europe for my younger brother as a gift but he was too young to play with it, I thought :) So I took it from him and built with it for many years. Just that one set gave me inspiration to build several different little things. The beginning of MOC's for me.



Then came my dark ages and in 2001 I moved to Seattle. One day while walking on the street I saw a toy shop with several boxes of LEGO® stacked up. I remembered my love for the brick and immediately went in and bought a couple of Creator boxes, went home and started MOCing again, and have not stopped since then.

Japanese Rice Plantation, September 2017

Autor: Anuradha Pehrson

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/anupehrson/14120040404/in/album-72157644486108756/>



HispaBrick Magazine®: Name?

Deborah Higdon

HBM: Nationality?

DH: Canada.

HBM: How did you get started with LEGO® bricks?

DH: I started building as an adult in 1999, buying bricks for my nieces and nephews, and then going to their house to build with their bricks. in about 2000, I started buying bricks for myself, and returned to the hobby i loved as a little child, because i wanted to be an architect back then. now i use the bricks to realize all the creations i have in my mind.



LEGO® Gingerbread Village, December 2018

Autor: Deborah Higdon

www.flickr.com/photos/buildingsblockd/



HispaBrick Magazine®: Name?

Fernanda Rimini.

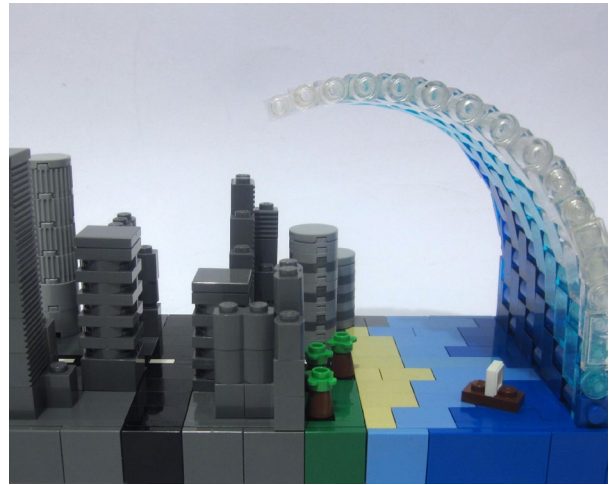
HBM: Nationality?

FR: Italian.

HBM: How did you get started with LEGO® bricks?

FR: I'm Italian but I've lived in France, the USA and now the UK and, I have to confess, I'm a nuclear scientist. But I don't make bombs or any other kind of weapons. I like loud music, very loud. It helps me relax. Heavy metal music for me is the perfect soundtrack to an afternoon spent building with LEGO®.

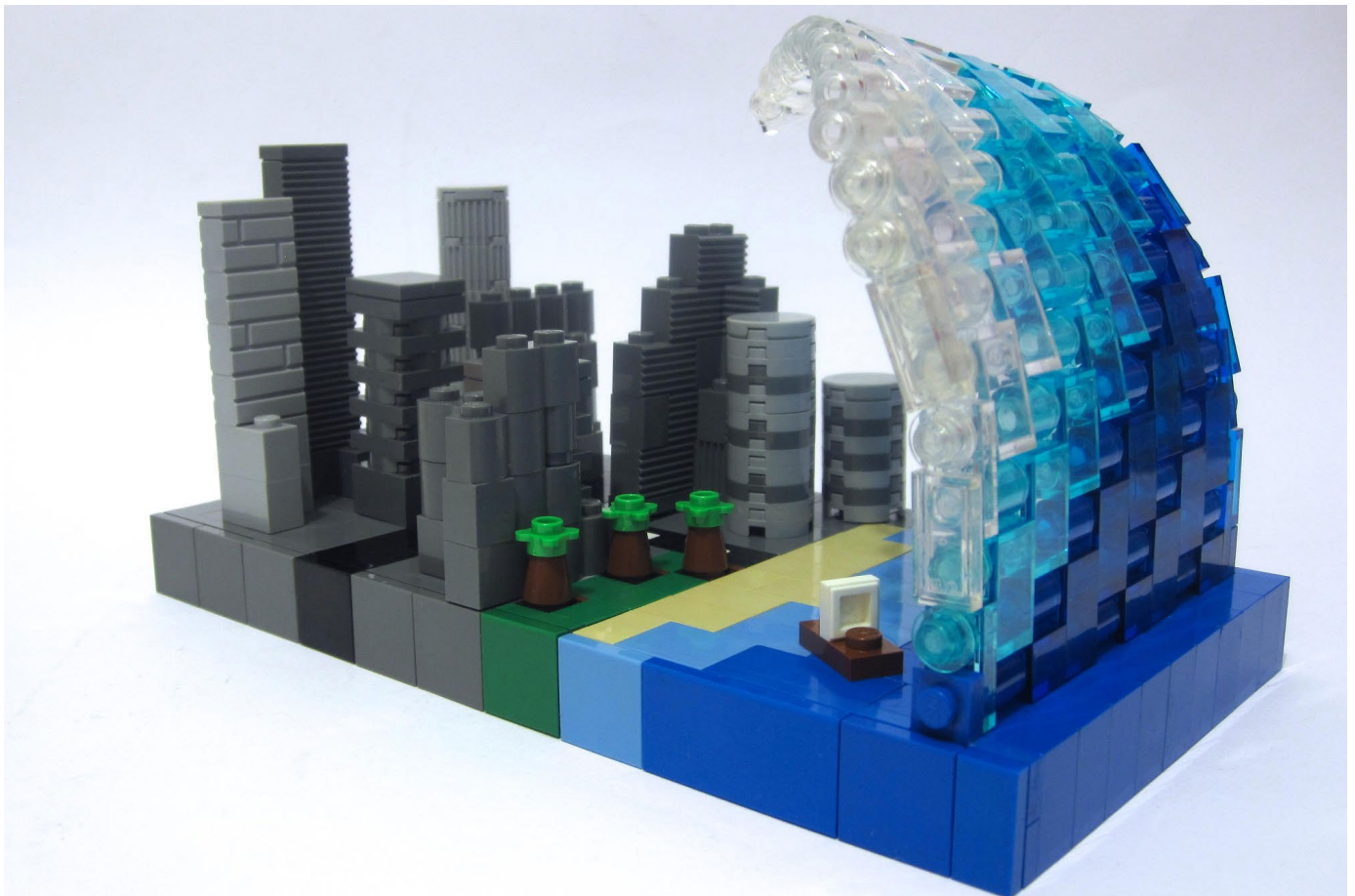
Like most people, I built LEGO® when I was little. Then I grew up and I re-discovered the bricks with my own children. I think, like most AFOLs, I realized soon that I was more interested in building than they were but I kept up the pretense of playing LEGO® for them for few years. Then I gave up pretending, moved most of the LEGO® boxes to a space of my own. I build with LEGO® when I need to relax, switch off, normally at weekends.



Tsunami!

Autor: Fernanda Rimini (@fgr62)

www.flickr.com/people/53534482@N02/



HispaBrick Magazine®: Name?

Klementina Kos

HBM: Nationality?

KK: Croatian.

HBM: How did you get started with LEGO® bricks?

KK: My love for the LEGO® came accidentally. When I was a little girl I didn't pay a lot of attention to LEGO® bricks. Later, hanging out with two friends, who already had a lot of LEGO® bricks, I started to build some models out of curiosity and boredom. So the three of us decided to establish the first LEGO® club in Croatia. We also made a website and a forum, which was brought us more and more fans every day. Later, when we noticed that this whole idea was becoming more and more serious we decided to do an exhibition.



After a few years I moved to Germany, where I am finishing my studies, but my LEGO® bricks are with me of course. There is a special corner in my apartment for my LEGO® and also for new projects I am working on.

I am happy to have been able to visit exhibitions in Switzerland, France and other countries. Croatia is full of young LEGO® talents and many of them amaze with their creations outside Croatia too. I happily remember "LEGO® World 2011" in Denmark, where I met a lot of foreign builders with great creations.

It is nice when, after a hard day or at weekends, you take the LEGO® bricks in your hands and let your imagination do the rest. That is the magic that cannot be "described" just with bricks. I simply enjoy it and I am pretty sure that this love will last forever.

My Summer Adventure

Autor: Klementina Kos

<http://www.moc-pages.com/mocs.php?id=16805&sort=fans&order=desc>

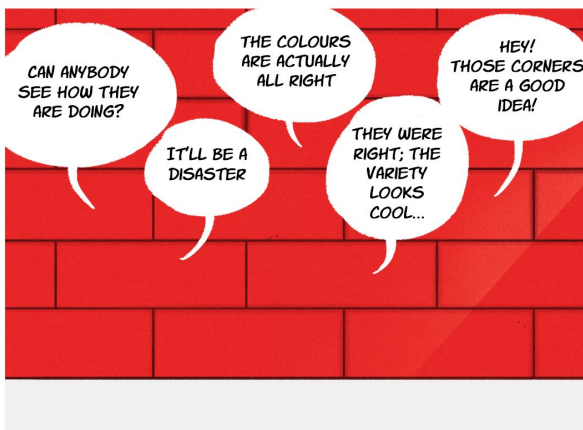
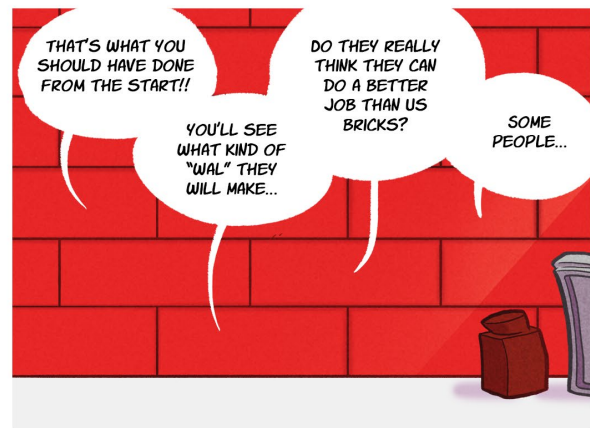
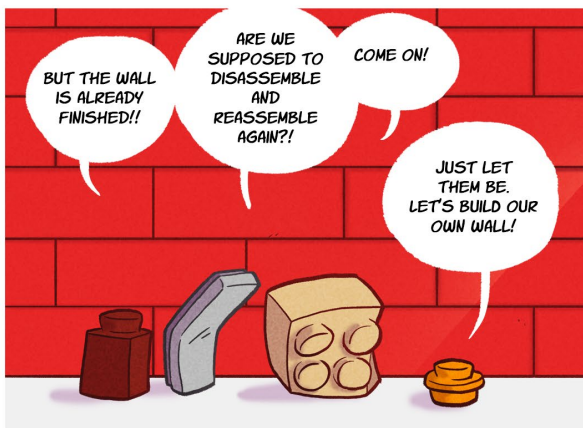
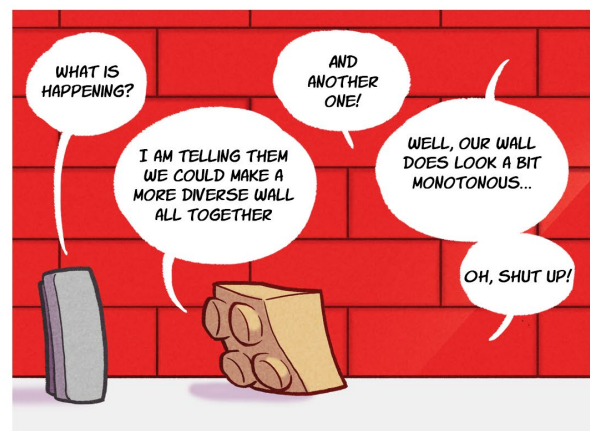
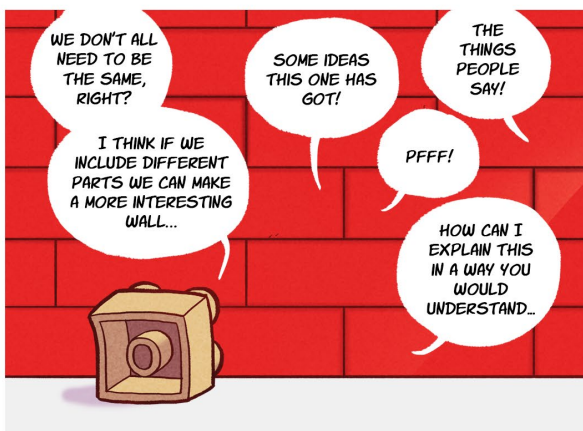
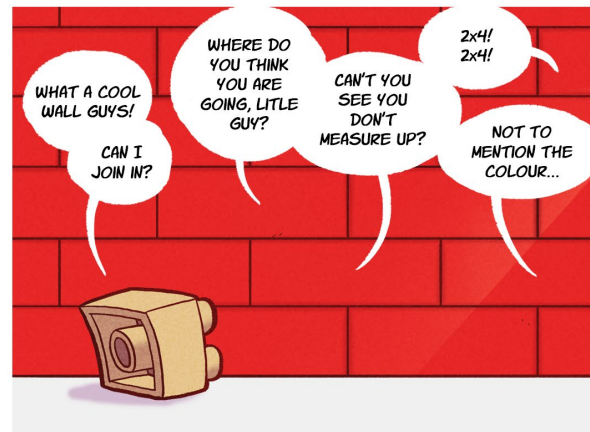
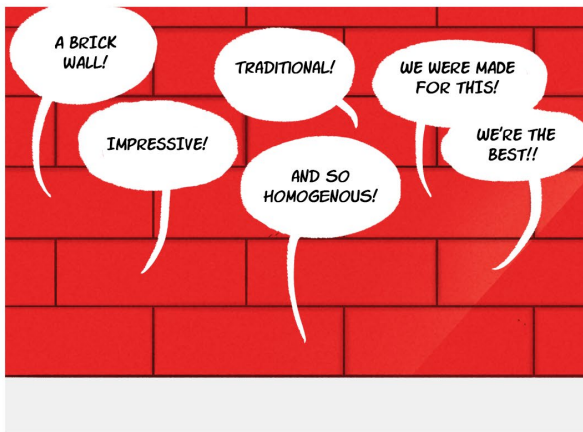


Benny's Corner by Luigi Priori

Spacegirl Power



Desmontados by Arqu medes



Arqu medes

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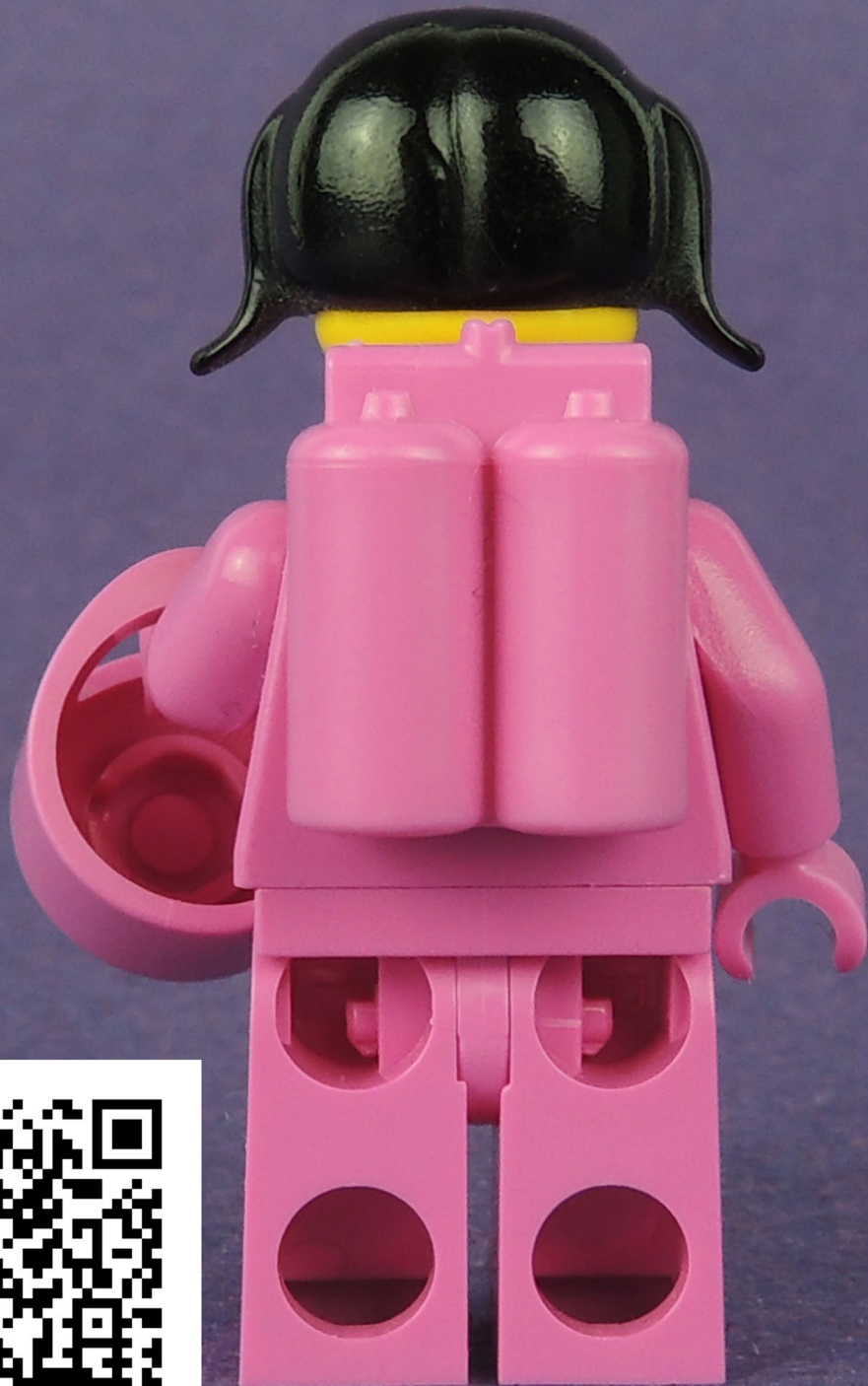
If your native language is not Spanish or English, don't worry, we will find a solution. Contact us now!

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#

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Asha Seshan	http://www.robotmak3rs.com/Asha-Seshan/
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José (Satanspoet)	http://www.brickshelf.com/cgi-bin/gallery.cgi?m=satanspoet
Klementina Kos	http://www.moc-pages.com/mocs.php?id=16805
Lluís Gibert (lluigib)	http://www.brickshelf.com/cgi-bin/gallery.cgi?m=lluigib
Luigi Priori	https://www.flickr.com/photos/priovit70/albums
Mariann Asanuma	http://www.modelbuildingsecrets.com/
Oton Ribic	https://www.kockice.hr
Patricia Tousaine	http://www.squigglemom.net
Regina Mateos Rodilla	
Sachiko Akinaga	http://www.lets-brick.com/
Stuck in Plastic	https://www.stuckinplastic.com/
Vesna	https://www.flickr.com/photos/redhead1982/
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