



L'Ànec Blau 2008

# 2<sup>a</sup> HISPABRICK

Trobada Nacional d'Ationats de LEGO®

**ànecblau**  
SEMPRE OBERT PER A GENT OBERTA

*Sábado 6 de Diciembre*  
de 15 a 20 h

*Domingo 7 de Diciembre*  
de 11 a 20 h

Exposición  Creaciones Singulares

*Actividades Infantiles*

Concursos 

*Entrada Gratuita*

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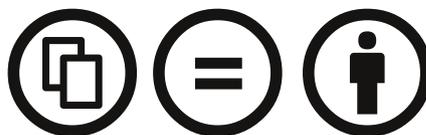
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his  
pabrick  
magazine

003



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Lluís Gibert  
LEGO® Ambassador

## Dear “hispalugians”,

At the time we are launching this issue 003, we will be celebrating Hispabrick 08, a new goal achieved by this community, which is to establish a project that began last year with strength and that is becoming the point (physical) of encounter of the Community in our country.

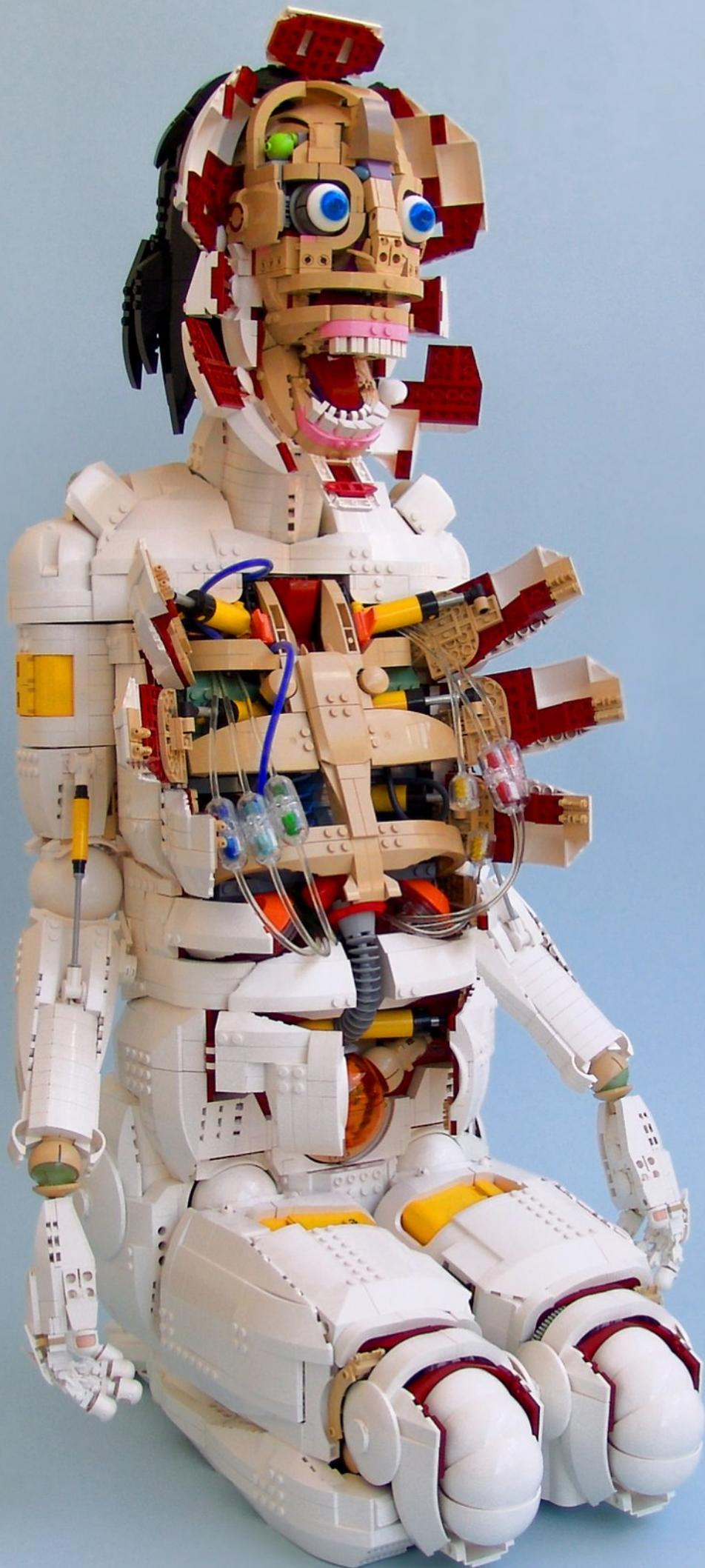
Also, with this number 003, Hispabrick Magazine, is reaching a goal, but we do not know if we will be able to uphold it. This goal is the launching of 2 separate editions, one in Spanish and a second one in English. Since we launched the Magazine, our goal has been to have a magazine by and for Spanish fans of LEGO®. That objective continues 100% valid today. Our priority is to publish the Magazine in Spanish.

The fact that we are launching an English edition, is the fruit of the selfless collaboration of many of the Spanish AFOLs. They have sent their articles in both languages, or they have made translations into English. That's why maybe the translation of these articles is not perfect. We are sorry for that but we hope you understand this fact and you also enjoy the Magazine. We are grateful for this effort, which allows the Community HispaLUG to be known beyond our borders, and shows throughout the Community what is happening in Spain (and how well it is done).

We hope you enjoy this issue 003 and we are awaiting your articles, comments, suggestions, etc ... at the e-mail address [info@hispabrickmagazine.com](mailto:info@hispabrickmagazine.com)

Ah! And Happy Hispabrick





# THE DOLL

## Three times Three

Text & images arvo

It is rather curious how some of the so called futuristic designs that tend to draw our attention are in a way or another based on really old concepts...

... right now when information is more accessible than ever, it's almost impossible not to notice; everything is "connected".

**TheDoll** is our latest MOC and it is a clear example of this.

It seems like our "building indigestion" with IRONMAN didn't last for too long. For us, handling an unnecessarily big building size was a change of pace. We even had an unspoken pact about "never setting foot on those grounds again".

"... we mustn't use that much time to nail an idea..." , we said.

It didn't even take us two weeks until we started fantasizing again, with an image that fascinated us since the first time we saw it. "GHOST in the SHELL", its world, its characters... its music! ... it simply traps you.

We have always said we wouldn't build anything that already has a good MOC in existence, and there are tons of them about GITS: helicopters, weapons, the famous tank (and awesome ones!)... and even though the movie offers you much more than that, we never felt the need to add anything...

... not until we bumped into GITS2!, where "she" appeared for the first time.

Pale, small, almost naked, sitting in that dark alley, thoughtful, while holding a soldier's severed head on her lap. Her agility or her brutal strength (which was simply a survival instinct) didn't surprise us. Not even the mix of evil and innocence of the scene...

... but the way she faced her end. A state that was just as dramatic as aseptic, incapable of resurfacing, with the exception of that frail line that seemed to come out of her mouth:

"... help...h... help..."

An SOS message that didn't stop until she ripped her cold bio-mechanical body with her own hands. Some kind of "programmed retirement", an explosion of colour, a final gift

We really desired it. Quite a lot. Even though the visual references of the doll (gynoid) were scarce, we had all we needed... the will to build it with LEGO®.

### GITS2 vs BELLMER

Nothing can escape the Internet.

Eager to find any useful information for our project, we ended up finding "it".

That weird silhouette, schemed and simplified upon disfigurement, had been imagined and created by Hans Bellmer 70 years before. An obsession, designed and redesigned until the point it turned into an unfinished distortion... which he even took to parties (that guy really knew how to have fun!)

We don't even want to start thinking about the amount of designs and pieces we attribute to certain people without even knowing the origin of the idea... Is this important? Who is the owner of the idea? Is there one, or many?... the one that "creates" it... or the one that "improves" it?

It is true that we got carried by an "orphan" image, but in any case it wouldn't be honest to dismiss the work done by the GITS team. Who can resist that?

The say "building a house from the roof down" is not the way... and it isn't, or at least it shouldn't be...

... but that's the way we built this MOC, "from top to down".

### BUILDING, in gerund.

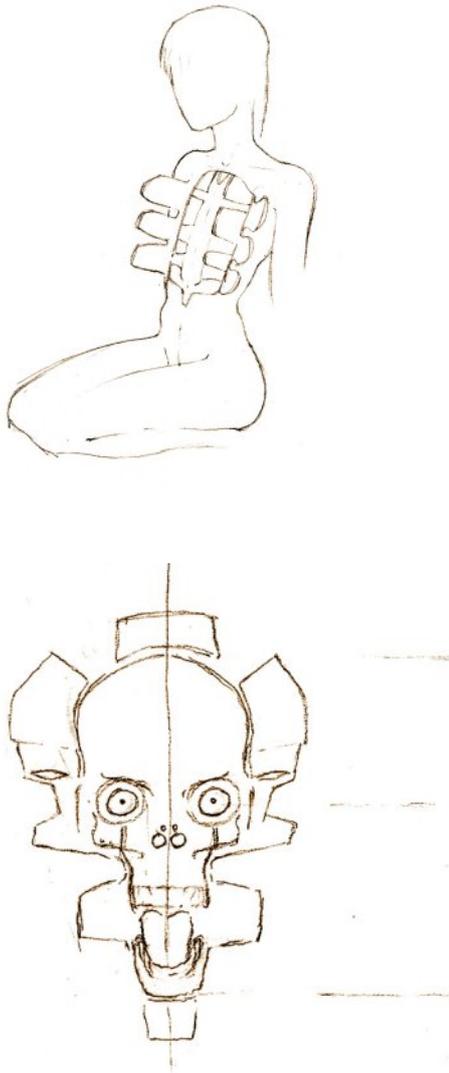
Perhaps we should have brainstormed it from start to end, dose it, and gather ideas... and pieces. But really, do you know many people who just test the water with their foot before jumping into the pool? We only know one...

We didn't even think (or remember) the inconveniences of building something of that size... we just started with it.

From the very beginning we suspected there was a lack of visual references for the gynoid, and that we'd have to resort to our imagination for many of the parts. But achieving that open face, her hair, or the flower she was adorned with... turned into some kind of challenge (one with capital letters), as if it was our final goal.

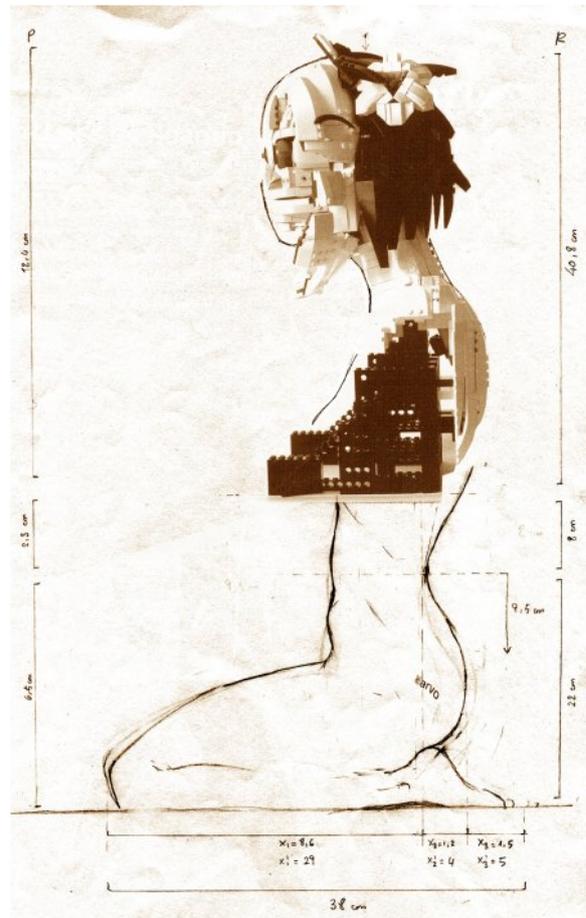
There were no doubts about the main colours. The images were clear, and the combination of White-Tan-Dark Red all along the body seemed obvious. Also some colours here and there would end up giving that "cartoon feeling"...

... even if they were lime or orange pieces, the contrast was assured.



The head shows a similar structure to that used on IRONMAN, with a Technic-nerve through the neck that connects to the body. There are minifig parts, radar dishes, hoses, hinges, arches... fiber optics for placing the teeth, and horns for the eyebrows. The hair is removable, which eased the building process, and contains some of our favourite details. The hair tufts (with a rather Japanese looking style) and the flower.

Having the head's size helped us measure the rest of the body and its proportions giving us a glimpse of the figure we wanted; a slight disproportion between the legs and body, characteristics reminiscent of an infant's body, which some adults still have.



The calculator doesn't lie

From the first sketches, we saw the necessity of building an efficient structure, far from what we had improvised (our expertise). It had to be solid but with enough space to house all the necessary inner details... and most of all... modular! giving special care and attention to the connection points.



Upper left: The main difficulty of this system is connecting without being in the way

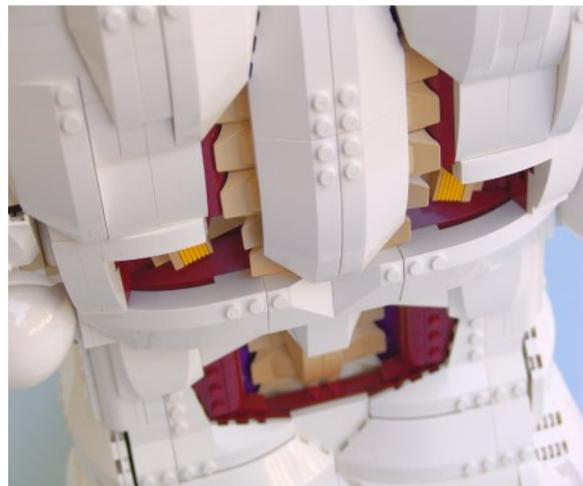
Down: Its configuration is similar to that in IRONMAN, with big shoulder blades, and a visible spine through the two openings in the lower part of the back.

## ...THE REST

After finishing the head, we needed some sort of "receptacle" that could hold the head and at the same time be the beginning of the inner structure of the torso (our next goal). This structure kept growing, being modified according to our necessities. And we guess you don't need any mention of the work it meant, especially when it grew to a size where we didn't know what pieces we had or what we were looking for... and when we say that LEGO® should have an "Undo button" we are not kidding!.

The structure is "hyper-mega-super-dimensioned" and its section is adequate (and would have been enough like that), but not happy with it, we added Technic-bricks or brackets in all the outer sides to make sure nothing would happen to it. And if we sum the stabilizing effect that the weight has, we made TheDoll into something like an antithesis of IRONMAN.

The hardest things to make in this structure were the "openings" in the back. In our first version we didn't have any. The back was flat... but at the last minute we decided to add them and leave the image and meaning of the back to the eye of the beholder.

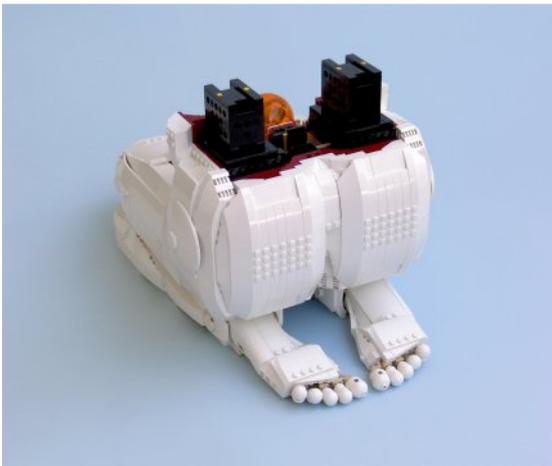


As we mentioned before, the torso (open) was our "next stop". One of the most important aspects that we had to manage and deal with was the "width". In the sketches where we reflected the proportions, we forgot a small detail... "What about the front?"

Building an adequate width for the whole MOC wasn't the only vital thing we had to take care of. We had to do so with the inner width as well. It wasn't easy finding the final position for the "doors" (it is likely they don't match the original model's but its number and distribution helped us find the "image" we were trying to evoke) Anything could have happened... there were so many angles that it was almost impossible to cover them all... and that's how it happened. Only the colourful inside made us forget about that detail.

And the reason is that colour had to be the "centre" of the MOC. We included cylinders and pneumatic tubes, fiber optics, radar dishes, wedges and panels of colours that went along the original palette without getting eclipsed...

We knew we would have to build some sort of pedestal for the torso, just like we did with the head. And like with the previous one, it had to be in the inner structure of the supporting part (in this case the legs). We took care of the joining by building two "super-studs" that go deep enough into the torso to guarantee a firm connection without them impeding further building or already existing parts. Their shape is triangular and mimics a real pedestal.



Up: Everything, or almost everything, is built with Technic-Bricks. The torso sits on top of tiles found in the super-studs that connect with its interior.



Up: The cylinders hold the doors and are only shown as a detail. The ribs are presented as dividing lines between the spaces and colours. The rest of the elements are simply there for decoration without covering anything important



The limbs were built using very different logic. While the arms allowed some freedom with their poses, the legs required a specific flexing point.

Besides the hands and feet, we would like to highlight the 6x6 Sphere in the elbows (with the new mudguards holding them) or the long and thin cylinder that dictates the movements of the arm (lovers of "the famous saga" probably have recognized it easily!)

In the legs, without any doubt, the knees (they were one of the parts we built first since we needed a reference for the rest... looks like some sort of sea shell, doesn't it?) and again, the 6x6 Spheres under the hips (it was necessary for them to show up, to give a sense of articulation)



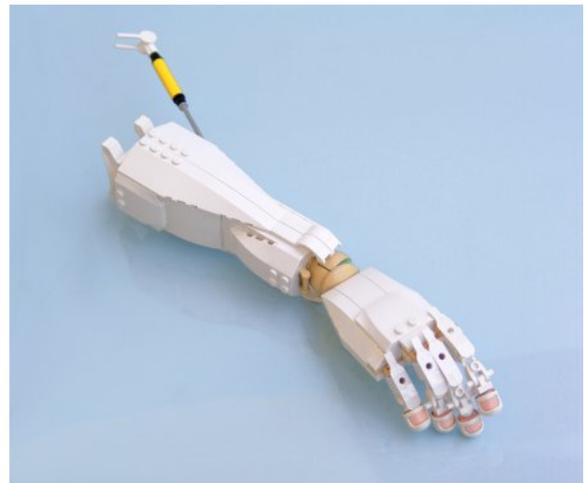
Up: It was crucial that the new mudguards could actually hold the 6x6 sphere. The cylinders imitate those of a single piece.

For building the hands we had a good reference with IRONMAN, even though the bigger size of TheDoll made us rethink the way to achieve the fingers. We especially wanted to be able to bend and angle the fingers individually (the effect is visually attractive and gives the hands a more realistic and natural feeling). One of the problems was to find pieces of reasonable sizes for each finger... but actually, a combination of pieces was the solution... and the skys were the protagonists there. We used helmets on the finger tips and that gave them the "nail effect" (half of certain "sidereal saga" is there for sure!)

For the feet, it was very different. The toes are really important (the helmets reappear here), but both shape and position are more important for the final look. We made a couple of versions but due to the location and position in relation to the whole thing (under the lower back) any changes affected the body structure as well.

After 8 months building, it's hard not to imagine all the MOCs that we could have built or planned instead... but even with that, we like to think of this as a collection of many mini-MOCs, from the flower to the embryo, from the hand to knee, the hair, the hips... or the teeth and ribs...

... we forgot to do some stuff and left some other things and colours to try, but we definitely got what we were looking for, a doll. ■



Up: You just have to put away the arms off a minifig to make it look like a thumb, coincidence?

Down: There are many geisha-like poses, but we thought this one was the most aesthetically appealing.



# Bricks & Books. A LEGO® library

The life of an AFOL is not only building LEGO: there are always some initiatives to expand our collection - and reduce the space we have for it - with other 'stars' of the LEGO universe. The recent launch of the spectacular catalogue 'LEGO Collector' is a good reason to do a review of books related to LEGO. Most of them are in English, but some titles can also be found in Spanish to start a library to complete, in words, our passion.

Text & Image: Antonio José Fernández

**L**EGO® has long ceased to be a simple toy and become a broad and diverse passion. There is a multitude of initiatives that revolve around the bricks, developed or licensed by the company, or by fans. So around the LEGO universe communities emerged, commercial sites and information on the Internet, clothes and objects, and short films, artwork and dozens of publications in the form of magazines or books. And this copy of Hispabrick Magazine is a good proof of that.

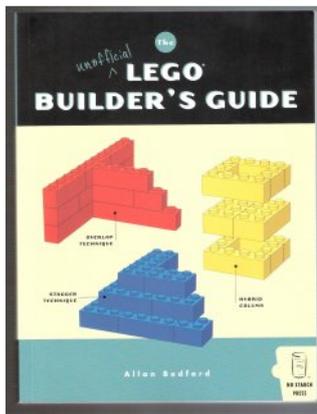
The shelves, at least those of the virtual-bookstores are full of titles and intentions of various genres, from tales of adventures by minifigs and other characters, to the recently appeared exhaustive catalogue of all sets created by the Danish company, instruction books, robotics, principles of construction and, of course, LEGO's own history, of the company and their creators.

All this without forgetting that in these first 50 years of LEGO, the influence of these bricks has grown so much, that it is increasingly mentioned in novels and, of course, in essays on design, and the simplicity of the principles and foundations of the LEGO toy is now subject of study for anyone who wants to develop his career in the world of industrial design. I am not trying to make an exhaustive catalogue in printed works related to LEGO, but publishers and authors have published materials in three major

areas: books **of** LEGO, with instructions, patterns and techniques of construction published by the company or by amateurs; books **about** LEGO, essays and stories about the company or the toy; and, finally, works **with** LEGO, those of fiction in which the bricks occupy a significant part of the plot or the argument.

### **Ideas and suggestions**

Almost since the company began manufacturing bricks it included books in its catalogue with suggestions, ideas and instructions for new models since the first one was published in 1960. Without the duplicates -the same book but with different references-, there are more than 20 books of these suggestions, some of them frankly extraordinary, as in Technic ideas 8891 or 7777 that collects ideas and railway layouts. The arrival of Internet -yes, my friends, the web has not always existed: Peeron or Brickshelf appeared in 1998 and Bricklink in 2000 - ended the books of suggestions from LEGO. The last of the official books so far appeared in 1997 with the reference 697. It is A4 and horizontal, has 44 pages including an index, the detailed instructions for ten models, a sheet with stickers and 16 pages of photographic suggestions. For DACTA, being a more professional line, LEGO has published a dozen books for educators; a line that began in 1972, with



Upper left: LEGO published four books of suggestions of Technic and one of railway ideas.

Up: The four books of instructions and suggestions that were commercialized in Spain.

Left: The most complete guide of construction techniques

'Thinking with LEGO®' (16,197).

In the Spanish market, usually poorly stocked, both 697 and references 221 (1974), 222 (1976) and 260, which also included a sheet with stickers to further customize our models, which appeared in 1990, could be found.

But the explosion -what we might call the Big Brick- of the universe of LEGO® comes with the start of the century, enabling supporters to develop and write their own books, which in just 10 years are on track to exceed one hundred titles in various genres, especially programming guides and Mindstorms NXT, with about thirty works, including a 'Mindstorms for dummies'. Among the ideas for books published outside the company, there are several in English, good for their quality and thematic.

A classic for builders is the 'Unofficial LEGO Builder's Guide' by Allan Bedford. Published in 2005, which is a comprehensive guide on building techniques, scales and suggestions. The book includes several templates and designs for working-level and a very useful brickopedia.

The second of those titles is essential in my view: 'Getting Started with LEGO Trains' by Jacob H. McKee. Although the models and ideas are of American railways, suggestions of construction, the foundations and the general considerations are well worth a look. The same thought applies to 'Virtual

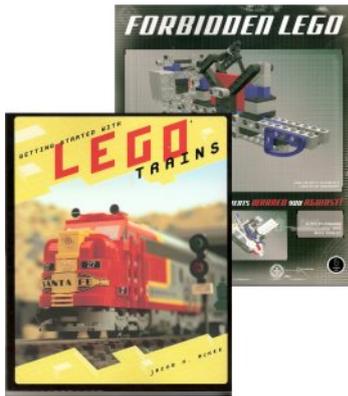
LEGO' by Tim Courtney, Steve Bliss and Ahui Herrera, an excellent guide for beginners including a cd-rom on LDRAW and the rest of the programs to build from the computer.

The last book of suggestions which I recommend is also the most fun. It is 'Forbidden LEGO' by Ulrik Pilegaard and Mike Dooley. The subtitle explains everything: build the models your parents warned you against! This is a collection of tricks, techniques and tips for building Technic models a step beyond the cars or the bulldozers, cutting and manipulating the bricks. The book includes detailed instructions for making five models, from an innocent aircraft launcher until a cannon for ping pong balls or a tiles gun.

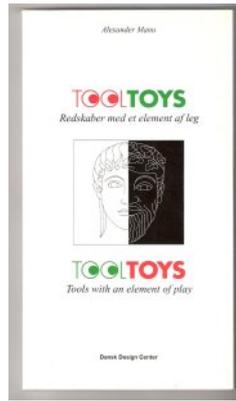
### Essays and guides

Since LEGO left wood and metal to switch to plastic, their successful formula and design elements of the bricks as a game of infinite possibilities has not failed to appear in textbooks and essays about design and ergonomics. The first was, of course, in schools in industrial design from Denmark, where it is a case study. An example of this consideration we find in 'Tool Toys', a 1995 book by Alexander Manu that investigates the relationship between design, tools and games.

But in 1987, Donald Norman, one of the founders of



The books of suggestions published by fans are usually very specialized, like these of trains and prohibited assemblies



The design manuals, like this Danish, use as case of study the LEGO products



in this essay on functional tools and designs, the LEGO bricks are used in experiments on ergonomics

ergonomics, the science that studies how to build more functional devices or mechanisms, explained in his book 'The psychology of everyday objects', how the LEGO® bricks were a model of intuition and ease of use even without instructions. Norman used a Minifigs scale motorcycle of 13 parts in an experiment, to prove that if a structure is well designed, anybody can build something without instructions, only with the enough cultural references to know what a motorcycle is, for example. Out the manuals and design texts, there are several books with the company and its products as protagonists. The first, and now sold out, is 'El mundo de los juegos LEGO' ('The world of LEGO games'), published in Spanish by Editorial Everest in 1981. This guide "explains how the factory works from the moment the plastic arrives until it comes out in a box full of bricks. It is very interesting and educational," as Lluís, the LEGO ambassador in Spain, tell us. The second, also published in Spanish, is The Big Book of LEGO by Ediciones B ('Ultimate LEGO Book' by D&K). Although it was a 2000 book, it is still possible to find a copy of this big and spectacular book, full of photographs and very useful to show what you can do with LEGO. In English, the major reference work is Henry Wienczek's 'The World of LEGO Toys', published in 1987. Wienczek makes a wide and interesting tour of the LEGO world that begins with a phrase that any AFOL could subscribe: "If one of the powers of magic is the power to transform, then it is hard not to put LEGO bricks into the category of things touched by magic. [...] A few bricks can become almost

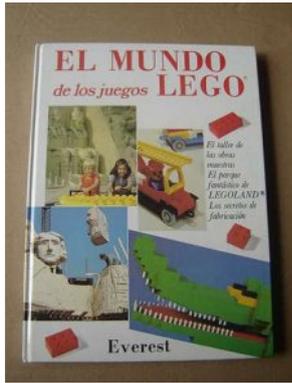
anything." The book also includes instructions for building seven models.

I do not want to close this category without mentioning the small park's Travel Guide to LEGOLand Billund, the essential travel guide to travel around the park and, after returning home, to remember it.

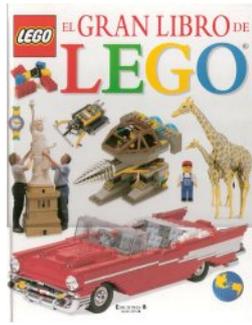
#### LEGO fiction: a new genre

If there is a work that demonstrates the influence and the role that LEGO occupies in our society it is the novel *Microserfs*, by the American author Douglas Coupland. Originally published in 1995, it is the bedside book of the first generation of Internet inhabitants and survivors of the technology bubble of the late twentieth century and also the amusing story of a group of geeks or fans of technology, and their adventures as creators and shareholders of a company based on the Internet, after leaving their jobs at a large corporation called 'Microserf' easily identifiably.

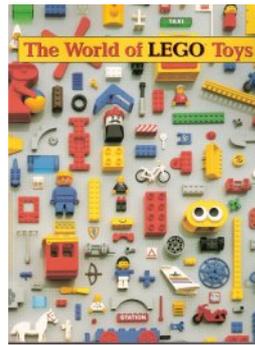
And what is the link between LEGO and the dotcom companies? Well, one could be how the money is spent to decorate their offices, but let Coupland explained: "[...] on the front of us... the most enclosing sculpture that I have seen in my life, a whole world of LEGO: hundreds of 50 x 50 studs grey plates placed on the floor and walls, all covered by tiny brass screws. On the plates, skyscrapers, animals, mazes and railways had been built, standing on the walls, folding the corners, going through holes. The colours were striking: pure LEGO®. [...] The universe that was built was the



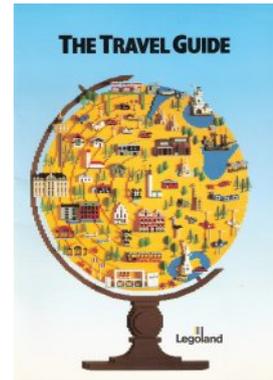
This is the first book about LEGO published in Spain and today out of print



Of this guide of the LEGO world and its parks still copies can be found



One of the best studies about LEGO world



In the LEGO Park of Billund (Denmark) it was possible to purchase this small but useful guide about the facilities at the end of the last century

merger of a Guggenheim and a Toys-R-Us.”

Apart from the more serious literature, bricks, minifigs, Bionicle characters in various adventures are published in various formats. In English we can highlight the adventures of Jim Minifig Spaceborn ‘The unknown galaxy’ and ‘The kidnappers of the marshy planet’, both of 1987 and with an attractive tintinesque look. LEGO has also published books of stickers and puzzles, games with Duplo, with characters from the series Fabuland, Rock Riders, Exo Force and Castle. There are books available devoted to Star Wars, Batman, Indiana Jones and the unclassifiable Brick Testament, based on a holy book of Jews and Christians, but narrated in LEGO bricks.

And it is precisely those children's books that are most abundant in Spanish. The list was led by the 9 titles in the collection of Bionicle Adventure Editorial Nowtilus and they are easily available. Planeta also has 3 books ‘Learn with LEGO Duplo’. Unfortunately, all the six titles of the collection Labyrinths which Ediciones B published in 1999 and allowed to build a huge city joining all the books, are sold out.

### Books without readers

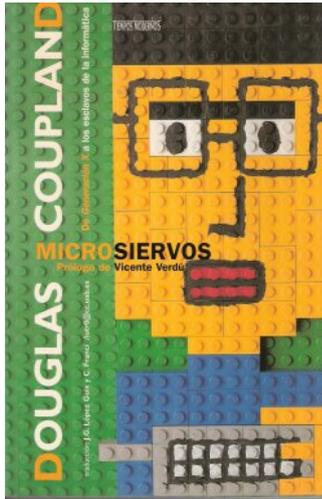
What is the acceptance of these ideas books among the fans? Without wishing to make a thorough survey and at least among the Spaniards, the fact is that there is not much interest in LEGO form, beyond curiosity. Even the bigger collectors, as Rick, or Lluís don’t have more than half a dozen titles. Although there are also those who, like Car\_mp, confess their “weakness for the old ideas books”, a sentiment he

shared with the author of these lines. Despite the general indifference, this year, there are few AFOLs who have resisted the publication of LEGO Collector regarded as an indispensable tool.

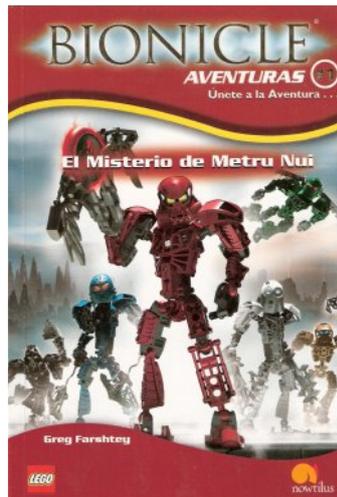
But in terms of books, there are those who recognize they value “a lot more the plastic of the bricks than the cold cellulose”, as our colleague Manticore. The truth is that the Web has become the key source of inspiration, as explained Legotron: “If I want to admire new designs, I find the Internet as the great book of resources I always wanted to have”. The Arvo brothers also recognize the role the web occupies in their inspiration: “With the web, the ideas no longer seem to be printed.”

### The definitive catalogue?

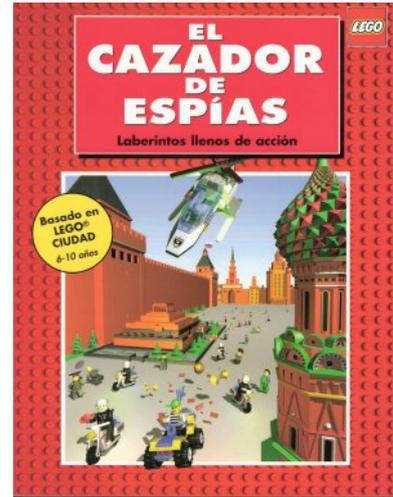
Finally, I can not finish this article without commenting this monumental ‘LEGO Collector’, which emerged after months of rumours and some delays. During the summer, the German publisher Fantasia put up for sale this book in two editions: a special, numbered one with a brick and a memorial Minifig, and a plain one. This catalogue has been made in collaboration with the company and to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the appearance of the toy. It consists of 800 pages in English and German to qualify for full consideration of all references developed by LEGO in recent years, and most of them with their corresponding image. The book is organized by year and every set is accompanied by a card with the most relevant data: name, number of parts, markets and years in which it was distributed and any uniqueness. The tab



The LEGO bricks arrive at Literature with this novel of the American Douglas Coupland



The Bionicles are the protagonists of a collection of nine brief novels for young readers

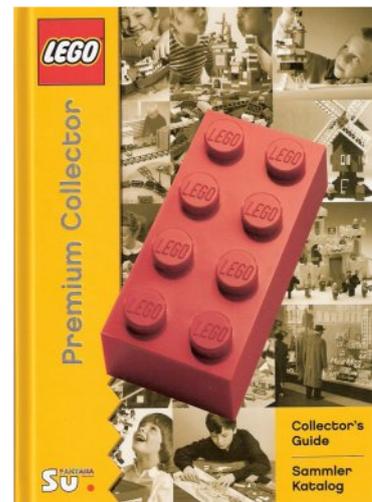


The books of this collection of six titles, today out of print, allowed to construct a great city to develop games with figures



Besides DUPLO books for smallest readers, LEGO has published coloring books

The most complete and exhaustive catalogue of LEGO products, that does appeared a few weeks ago, is already an essential classic one



includes a valuation based on the rarity of the set, established without doubt based on the number of copies that arrived on the market. It also includes a numerical index that tracks a particular product for their reference and also a complete catalogue of boxes with extra pieces. You can also find in its pages sheets with all key chains minifigs marketed by LEGO®.

This book strives to be essential and with high quality in either of its two versions, but has few details beyond comprehension, especially in the photographs. Missing some images sets of forty years ago is perfectly understandable, but, frankly, it is hard to believe that LEGO does not have an image of a box of 2007 -for example, 66221, page 689-

distributed in North America. Nor it is clear to me why the key chains are included but other merchandising are excluded such as these officers and interesting.■



## LEGO® Pirates

"(...) But, if you let me choose just one of these lives, then I choose the limping pirate, with a wooden leg, a patch over his eye, and a wicked face, the old rogue, the captain of a ship with a flag showing two shinbones and a skull. (...)"

Text & images Gobernador

In his album "Física y Química" Sabina show us clearly that the world around pirates has a special attraction, something different, something that, in some way or another, seized our attention when we were children... or not so young and let us dream with those lifestyle, maybe attracted by that halo of liberty and adventure which has always wrapped the world of pirates.

Piracy is as old (referring to the sea piracy, not to the piracy which is persecuted by some association

related with royaltys) as navigation. There were pirates in the ancient Greece, in Rome, in the middle ages, the Renaissance and in the Modern times, and also nowadays.

LEGO, conscious of the feelings awoken by anything related with piracy, decided in 1989 to start a theme that is undoubtedly recalled in a special way for the great quality of this sets.

The pirate world that LEGO gave us is centered in the Golden Age of piracy, that took place in the



Atlantic and Pacific oceans between the XVI and XVII centuries. LEGO® represented amazing ships and astonishing buildings, as well as exotic islands and lots of characters that still today remain in the memory of any AFOL.

We'll make a chronological voyage through the different stages of the pirates theme, all the sets, because some of the sets weren't sold in Spain since its beginning in 1989 to his end in 1997, though some sets were reedited.

### The beginning

The cover of the 1989 catalogue, in both versions, showed us what was the most exceptional new product, the pirates theme. In the Spanish version, we can see how the traditional themes (Space, City and Castle) are watching the new theme's disembark. In the English version we can see Captain Roger and one of his henchman ready to bury a treasure.

With these sets the two main groups appeared: on one side the pirates, commanded by captain Roger and on the other side the imperial soldiers, led by the governor.

One of the main new features came with this theme's minifigs, which were the first ones to abandon the traditional smiling face with two little black eyes, and started showing beards, moustaches and sideburns of different colours, as well as patched eyes. Also captain Roger was the first maimed minifig, with a wooden leg and a hook instead of a hand.

In the first stage two ships appeared, which set a

landmark, above all the "Black seas barracuda, 6285", a set reedited in 2002 and considered a LEGO legend.

These ships brought lots of new pieces, from hulls to masts, including also cannons and different accessories.

The ships were wonderful reproductions of true sailing ships, and included great details as the figurehead and the forecandle.

One of the other new sets that remained in our memory, despite not being included in the Legends series, was the "Eldorado, 6276", the governor's fortress, a solid building in a lonely island, with an authentic colonial scent, and it's one of the two sets in which the governor's minifig was included.

Other remarkable sets were edited in the first batch, "Forbidden island, 6270" and "Sabre island, 6265", among others.

The imperial guard, dressed in a beautiful blue uniform with three different ranks. The governor, with his two-horned hat, his golden epaulettes and the magnificent frock coat, then the officials, with a three-horned hat, golden epaulettes too and a blue frock coat and finally, the soldiers, with a black uniform, red epaulettes and blue frock coat.

The pirates were dressed in a more sailor way, with several coloured jackets or striped shirts and various headscarves and three-horned hats, except Captain Roger, who showed off an elegant black uniform, with brown epaulettes and a two-horned hat with the skull and shinbones.

Pirates remained unchanged in the following years, very different from the Imperial guard which, in the year 1992 changed its uniforms, from blue to red,

Last page: El Black Seas  
Barracuda

Right: Eldorado



and the epaulettes, from red to blue. Also a new rank appeared, the Admiral, with a brand red uniform and white gloves.

In this stage new ships appeared, as the "Skull's eye schooner", the biggest ship manufactured to date by LEGO®. At the same time the "Imperial flagship, 6271", smaller than the "Caribbean Clipper", but with a slimmer line, also introduced a compass and a system that allowed operating the rudder properly. In the group of buildings we have to highlight the "Imperial trading post, 6277", a perfect complement for the "Eldorado Fortress". The fortress showed us a mainly militar building, but the trading post was a harbor with lots of elements in common with the merchant sailing, like the small house or the ship included in the set with lots of details, despite its small size.

Pirates and soldiers, soldiers and pirates, no matter the color the uniform, all had to do with the world powers sending their armies from the metropoli to protect their interests from the pirates. But in a closer view, there is an odd thing in this Caribbean equation, and it's nothing but the first inhabitants of these latitudes.

In 1994 LEGO introduced the Islanders in the Pirates series, representing the members of an unidentified american tribe, but according to their dresses and complements, it was not risky to suppose they were from somewhere in the Pacific, maybe from a Polynesian island.

The nemesis of the new characters were not the colonial troops, maybe too busy with the gold and its transport to the old Europe, but the pirates in their effort to fetch the gold guarded by the Islanders.

Among the best Islanders sets we found the "Enchanted Island, 6278", which is maybe the most representative of what the new sets brought to the serie, with tribal monuments, a catamaran and an assorted selection of the new minifigs, as well as a new base. At the end, a new animal which will be shown in other series, the green crocodile, sharing the design of the upper jaw and tail with the dragon of the Castle series which appeared the year before. The Islanders only contributed with new sets to the catalogue of 1994. In 1995 the new sets of the Imperial Guard yielded a lovely set "Imperial Outpost, 6263", practically unseen in Spain, due to it's difficulty to be found. This colonial type building is the swansong of the Imperial Guard.

In the other side, the Pirates had lots to be shown, and in the year 1995 they cheered up the catalogue with the "Skull Island, 6279" showing another lair of the Captain Roger, with an impressive smiling skull shaped entrance.

When speaking about pirates, we speak about Caribbean and South America, and we imagine English soldiers, pirates and aborigines running around the place, but we miss another notable presence: the Spanish. Coming to this point, there is a little controversy over the last statement, because some people hold the opinion that there are Portuguese troops. LEGO, in the whole Pirates series, defines no national army, but it's not foolish to think that are Spanish troops, maybe with the uniforms of the XV and XVI century instead of the XVIII uniforms carried by the Imperial Guard. Among the sets of the new arrived, we have to mention that they are not so numerous, the "Armada



flagship, 6280" shines with his own light. It is a middle-big sized ship, and we can consider it like a small jewel. It has two masts and a new sail arrangement, with a beautiful white hull and three minifigs wearing "morrións" (the famous conquerors helmets) and stylish uniforms, one of them with a bright armor plate.

In the year 1996 we can taste the up-to-date biggest ship, "Red Beard Runner, 6289", with different mechanisms in the masts and forecandle.

At the end, in the year 1997 the Pirates series made their last appearance in the LEGO® universe, but its farewell let us a good taste: a small collection of minifigs "Buccaneers, 6204", with four characters, a skeleton and a treasure chest. Also we had a small ship, the "Cross Bone Clipper, 6250" that resembled the "Renegade Runner, 6268" and a big set, the "Pirates Perilous Pitfall, 6281", a pirate base with a huge boulder, a trap and a vessel at the shore.

Sometimes we hear rumours of the possible return of the Pirates series, which would be a reason for huge happiness among the serie's fans, because 11 years later LEGO has developed its designs and bricks and it's easy to imagine how the new Pirates series could match any of their predecessors.

And as a final word, if you enjoyed the pirate's world and have some curiosity to see some of the previously mentioned sets in a different way, please

visit the pirates photonovel (in Spanish) weekly published at Hispalug (<http://www.hispalug.com/foro/index.php?topic=3908.0>)

Consulted documents:

- o LEGO, Collector's guide. 800p, Fantasia, 2008
- o ARMERO, Álvaro, Piratas, corsarios y bucaneros. 345 p, Editorial Libsa, 2003.

Special thanks to:

- o Queen of the Bricks, to make the photographs of the article, for saving me from my "Dark Ages" and for all the rest...■



## The LEGO® Minifig or Life doesn't end at 30

Text car\_mp

Text & Images The LEGO® Group

In 1973, Godtfred Kirk Christiansen, son of the company founder, challenged designers to add a new playing dimension to the LEGO® building experience. This led to the first LEGO figures, built from a combination of classic bricks and figure parts, that appear in the the LEGO Family line, which included a dad, mom, grandmother, daughter and son. In 1975 a smaller figure with a simple head, no face and an rigid body was introduced. Kjeld Kirk Kristiansen, grandson of the company founder, developed a "System within the LEGO system" that brought themes to LEGO play. The idea of the minifig arose from the necessity of a more realistic, moving figure that had more role playing ability for children. The minifig was developed by LEGO designer Jens Nygaard Knudsen and his colleagues, who designed nearly 50 different prototypes before the company executives chose the present minifig. A patent was

filed in 1977, and the first minifigs were manufactured and put into sets on the morning of August 25, 1978.

The first minifigs appeared in play sets of the Town, Space and Castle themes. Several different minifigs were introduced – a police officer, a fire man, a street worker, space figures, knights,... The first female minifig, a nurse, arrived two months later. The most popular one to date is the police officer, with 41 different versions appearing in 104 sets. On its 30th birthday the minifig population reaches over 4 billion, making it 3 times larger than the population of China.

The body of the minifig consists of nine parts: two arms, two hands, two legs, a hip, a torso and a head. The minifig is the same height as 4 LEGO



bricks, 1 ½ inches, and weighs 1/10 of an ounce. The standard minifig has just over 970 degrees of movement. The classic LEGO® minifig was given the iconic yellow skin tone and happy facial expression to reflect the non-specific and vital quality of a child's imagination.

The LEGO minifig is the second most important LEGO design after the classic LEGO brick, which celebrates its 50th anniversary this year. Globally, 3.9 minifigs are sold per second (122 million per year) and there are more than 8 quadrillion possible combinations of minifigs that can be made using all the different parts LEGO has produced over the last 30 years.

A lot has been said about the more or less realistic proportions of the minifig. What is clear is that it has given rise to the so-called "minifig scale", limiting the proportions of innumerable constructions. Although many creators design in very different scales in which a minifig would not fit, most of them have found new uses for the parts of a minifig, some obvious ones, others very imaginative, so it's very difficult to find someone in the LEGO world who is indifferent to the minifig phenomenon.

Although over the years the minifig has undergone aesthetic changes, some of them more appreciated by fans than others, the essence and the compatibility have remained intact. This compatibility, one of the pillars of the LEGO System, has turned the minifig into an international icon and into the star of animation films, video games,... and soon in a

virtual world in Internet. You may think that the minifig has lost part of its innocence as it has changed its face or its colour,...but the times change. On the one hand children want to be able to reproduce the world around them more accurately, on the other hand the economic situation and the signing of agreements for famous licenses have forced the minifig to evolve. After all, LEGO System allows you to choose your favourite lines and the used parts market allows you to keep playing with the good old fashioned lines.

A new culture has developed around the minifig, sometimes without any relation with the LEGO bricks (you can find collectors exclusively of minifigs) and although it is in its 30s, it stays young and without any problems with oxidation and free radicals. What is its secret?

LEGO is celebrating the 30th birthday of the minifig with the GO Miniman GO campaign, with activities and contests. You can find all the information at [www.GominimanGo.com](http://www.GominimanGo.com) ■

**1978**-The first minifigures are introduced to the Town, Space and Castle building themes.

**1989**-The new Pirates line introduces good and bad minifigures with beards, frowns and eye patches. Some minifigures are even fitted with peg legs and hooks for hands.

**1990**-The minifigure ghost is introduced in the new Castle sets

**1993**-Pink minifigures with the new Paradisa sets.

**1995**-The LEGO® skeleton is the second specialized minifigure to be created. The minifigure travels underwater in the Aquanauts line.

**1996**-Minifigures roam west for the first time with LEGO Western.

**1997**-The minifigure comes to life in the computer game "Panic on LEGO Island."

**1998**-Johnny Thunder, embarks on his first adventure, exploring the pyramids in Egypt.

**1999**-The minifigure makes its first appearance as a licensed character in the new LEGO Star Wars™ sets.

**2001**-LEGO Studios sets allow the minifigure to be the star of fan-made movies.

**2002**-Shorter legs are added to the mix (Yoda minifig). Harry Potter characters come to life with double-faced heads

**2005**-The minifigure makes its CGI primetime film debut on Cartoon Network in LEGO Star Wars™ Revenge of the Brick. The minifigure becomes electrified with the introduction of the light-up lightsaber

**2008**-30 years and good health, thank you.



**2000**-LEGO Soccer produces new minifigures that are spring-loaded for tabletop game action. Jar-Jar Binks from the LEGO Star Wars™ line is the first minifigure created with a molded head.

**2003**-The minifigure population expands to be more authentic to its real-world likeness, including authentic skin colors and hair styling. LEGO Basketball

**2006**-The minifigure gets a new hairdo with the addition of neon-colored, rubber EXO-FORCE® wigs.

## Building trees (II)

Every construction that includes vegetation must count on good trees that emphasise the set

Text & images Legotron



Trees' green tones add a high visual value to constructions and diorama. So, the bigger and leafy the tree, the bigger the visual impact it will rise as you watch it.

This time we'll focus on building a bigger tree than the one seen on the first article. We're looking to mimic a straight trunk tree with branched foliage in the top half; for example: pine trees. These trees are 10 to 30 meters high (30 to 90 feet), and they feature a leafless lower trunk part. At minifig scale, it means a height around 20 to 60 bricks. For our needs, we'll follow the lowest height, for using the least number of pieces. These kind of trees require a big quantity of branching, so it is advisable to have a large pool of pieces that could be used as foliage. We are going to build a tree as a single element, on a small plate, but integrating it in a diorama or any other construction will follow the same procedure, just putting the trunk's tree on the desired place instead of the mentioned plate.

### Needed material.

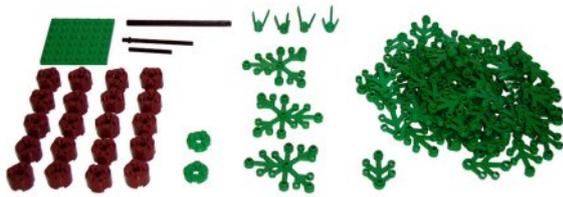
This is the part list that we are going to use for building the pine tree, referenced as it will be found at Bricklink web portal.

For the base:

- A 6x6 plate, green
- Three to four green plant flower stem for decorating the base

For the trunk, given a 20 bricks tree height:

- 20 brick round 2x2 brick, brown
- 2 plate round 2x2, green, for branch snapping
- A technic axe 8L, any color, for securing the trunk's lower half
- A bar 4L lightsaber blade, any color, for strengthening the trunk
- A bar 6.6L with Stop Ring, any color, for strengthening the trunk



## Building

We'll begin with the base. We'll put the round 2x2 bricks at the plate 6x6 center, inserting the technic axle through them. This first trunk section's length, with no foliage, could vary as for the technic axle length, but it's better that it nears half tree's height, so it would be more visually appealing. So, the taller the tree, the more number of leaves we'll need to give a healthy look. Also, it should be stated that tree's base should be proportional to its height and foliage, to provide stability. The top round 2x2 brick must be connected in a way that only part of the technic axle stands inside the brick, so there's enough space to connect the next element. For the next trunk section, we'll join two round 2x2 bricks with the 4L lightsaber blade bar, then we'll insert a round 2x2 plate, three round 2x2 bricks, and two plant leaves 5x6, alternating them any way we prefer, but leaving a round brick as the last element, as we can see in picture #2. Next, we'll fit the 6.6L with Stop Ring bar, supporting the cap with the last round brick of the trunk, and we'll add another plant leaves 5x6, hiding the cap. We'll connect this trunk section with the other one, so we'll obtain the lower part of the trunk. On the protruding 6.6L bar we'll alternate round 2x2 bricks or groups of 3 or 4 plant leaves 4x3 connected with the round bricks' studs, to the desired height. It could be added more 4L bars if needed. To close trunk's building, we'll put a round 2x2 plate with a couple plant leaves 4x3 in its center. We'll connect this last part in its place, and we'll have a finished trunk.

This next phase will define the tree's look, and it consists in adding plant leaves 4x3 to all branch endings. Varied tree foliage can be done; denser in the upper part, or in the lower part, or even. We'll build an uniform foliage. Setting the leaves is a delicate task, and it's better to accomplish it methodically, so as we'll be arranging the foliage it will become harder to reach the hooking points of the

new leaves without unattaching the attached ones. For this example, we have chosen to add two or three plant leaves 4x3 to each hooking point, looking for a very dense tree crown but not so broad. It's better not to chain more than 4 or 5 plant leaves, because these pieces fold under the weight and eventually loosen. It would be better to use technic plates 2x4 for the trunk, and to attach on them 1x8 plates, or bigger, for the branching.

Finally, we'll add some plant flower stem on the base, or any number of parts that could simulate plants, flowers or even stones, and we'll obtain a totally custom tree.

## References:

[1] Unofficial LEGO® parts sale portal:  
<http://www.bricklink.com> ■

# LDraw Tutorial (III)

If you lose time looking for the pieces that you need, this issue will be very useful to you

Text Jetro

Images Jetro and Philo

## Frequently used pieces

The left pane of MLCad gives you access to all the parts in the Parts Tree (in the top part) and images of the parts included in each category (in the bottom part). This Parts Tree by default only has a limited number of frequently used categories (Brick, Baseplate, Plate), whereas the rest of the parts are grouped in alphabetic order in the "Other Parts" group.

However, it is possible to personalise the organisation of the Parts Tree in such a way that those that we use frequently are easily accessible at all times. To this end there are two tools which I will now describe.

## Favorites

The Favorites folder of the Parts Tree can contain a copy of all the pieces you are going to need at a certain time. There are two ways to add parts to this folder. The first is by locating a part in the Parts Tree, right clicking on the name of the piece (doing so on the image will only increase or reduce the size of the image) and choosing "Add To Favorites". The part will now appear in the Favorites folder, as well as in its original location.

A second way of adding all the pieces we need is by editing the MLC\_Favorites.txt file which is located in the folder where MLCad is installed (by default C:\LDraw\Apps\MLCad). This plain text file contains a heading [FAVORITES] followed by a list of all the pieces that are in the Favorites folder. You could have several files, each detailing the contents of a single set you would like to base a particular construction on (e.g. the inventory of the NXT) and manually substitute the contents of the MLC\_Favorites.txt file with that of the set you want to use.

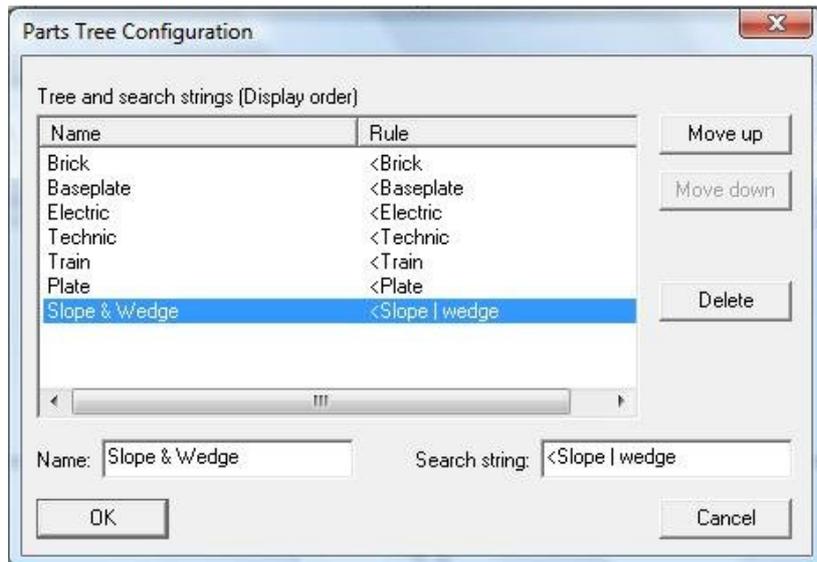
In order to eliminate a single piece from the Favorites folder you need to right click on the name of the piece and select "Remove From Favorites". The part will continue to be in its normal place. You can also erase the whole content of the Favorites folder by right clicking on the name of the folder and selecting "Clear Favorites".

## Creating New Categories

Another way of getting a better access to certain pieces is by creating new entries in the Parts tree. As usual, there are several ways to go about this. One of them would be going to **Settings > Parts Tree > Tree Configuration...** The window that opens allows you to modify the names of the existing categories, change the order in which they appear and add new categories. In order to add a new category you need to write a **Name and Search String**. As you can see in the list of existing categories, each STRING must start with < and you can use the special characters | (meaning 'or') and & (meaning 'and') in order to make a more specific selection. Slopes and wedges, for example, are often used together, and you may want to create a category that includes both. If you write "Slopes && Wedges" as the name and we use the "<slopes | wedges", in the parts tree you will see there is now a new category with all the pieces whose names include either one of the string values.

If you want to create a category that includes all the bricks that have hinges and fingers the STRING would be "<hinge & brick & finger".

Contrary to what happens when you include parts in the Favorites folder, in this case it isn't possible (or very complicated) to select a number of individual parts, and the parts that appear in the new category are no longer available at any other location (except Favorites if you choose to include them there).



## Models

Who said a part can only be a single element? If you want to reuse a sub-assembly or keep it handy for future use, you should save it in the **LDraw\Models** folder. All the elements that are saved here appear in the Parts Tree under Models. Keep in mind that if you use them in a new construction, in order to be able to see all the parts correctly, all the sub-assemblies you have used from the Models folder need to remain available there. Otherwise, when the file is loaded it will give you an error message because the part it tries to load is no longer available. If you want others to see your virtual creation, you need to make sure you include a copy of all the files from the Model folder you have used in the same folder as the main file.

## Document

Just like the Models folder, Documents contains sub-assemblies, but in this case only those that are contained in the MPD file you are viewing. This way, instead of having to worry about placing all the necessary files in the same folder, everything is contained in the same file. However, these sub-assemblies cannot be easily used in new constructions. Sub-assemblies that are saved anywhere on your hard disk can be imported into an MPD file through the file menu **"Multipart > Import model"** which will insert a copy of the sub-assembly in the MPD file.

## Grouping Parts

Even if you work with sub-assemblies, at times these can be so complex that it is necessary to work with a selection of the parts as a single unit. At other times you may want to move several parts at the same time. Grouping parts is really easy. You could try to select the parts you want to group by clicking on the

graphical location of each while maintaining the Ctrl key pressed, but you will soon notice that some parts cover others and you can't reach them. For this reason it is better to select them in the parts list (keeping the Ctrl key pressed). After selecting all the parts you wish to group, go to Edit > Group > Group (or Ctrl+G), write a name for the group and click OK.

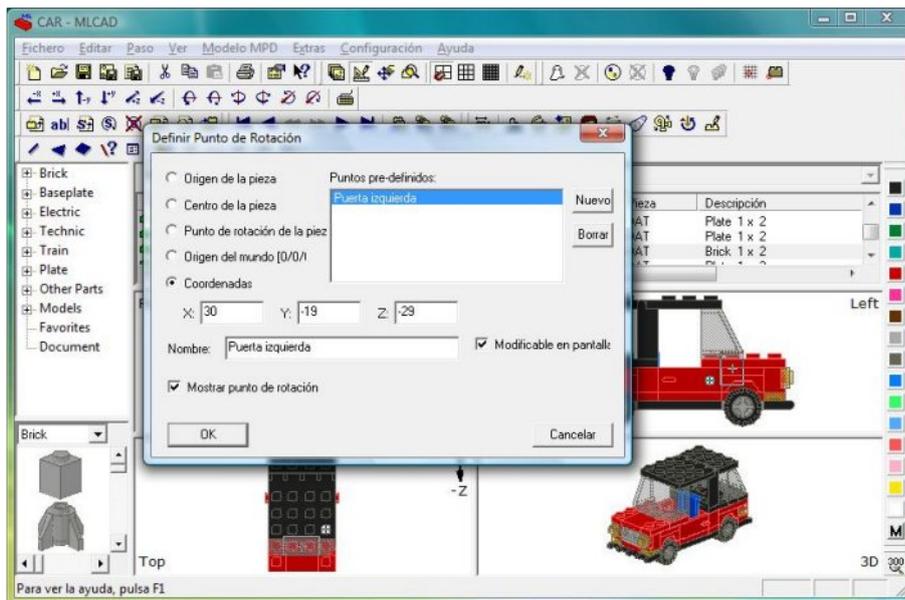
You will notice that the selected pieces now appear on a single line which shows you the type is GROUP, there is no information on the position, rotation or number of the part, but you so see the name you selected for the group.

If you need to change or move a single piece you will have to undo the group in order to be able to access it. To this end, select the group and go to Edit > Group > Ungroup. Each part will reappear in the same place of the parts list it was before you created the group.

## Turning parts ... or groups

In the first part of this course I explained about turning parts using the arrow icons in the elements bar or using keyboard shortcuts and I that in order to improve the precision of turns you need to select the right grid. But there is another important factor to be considered: the rotation point. By default the rotation point is the one predefined for the part (usually the centre of the top face) and in groups it is the default rotation point of the first piece that was selected when creating the group. However, this is not always the most convenient point in order to easily fit the part or group.

In order to change the rotation point, first select the part or group you wish to turn. Then go to Settings > Rotation Point... In the window that now opens you can choose between several options. The first one (Part origin) is especially useful if you have made some changes that you want to undo in an easy



way. To see exactly where the rotation point is located you can mark the checkbox next to "Show rotation point" towards the bottom of the window (this won't take effect until you close the window). If you select "Custom point" you will also be able to mark the checkbox "Allow on-screen change" which allows you to drag the rotation point to the most convenient location. Keep in mind that, since we are working with a CAD system that only allows modifications in two directions in each pane, you will probably need to move the rotation point in at least two panes to get to the ideal location. To finish off, you can assign a name to the position, which allows you to easily reuse the location later on.

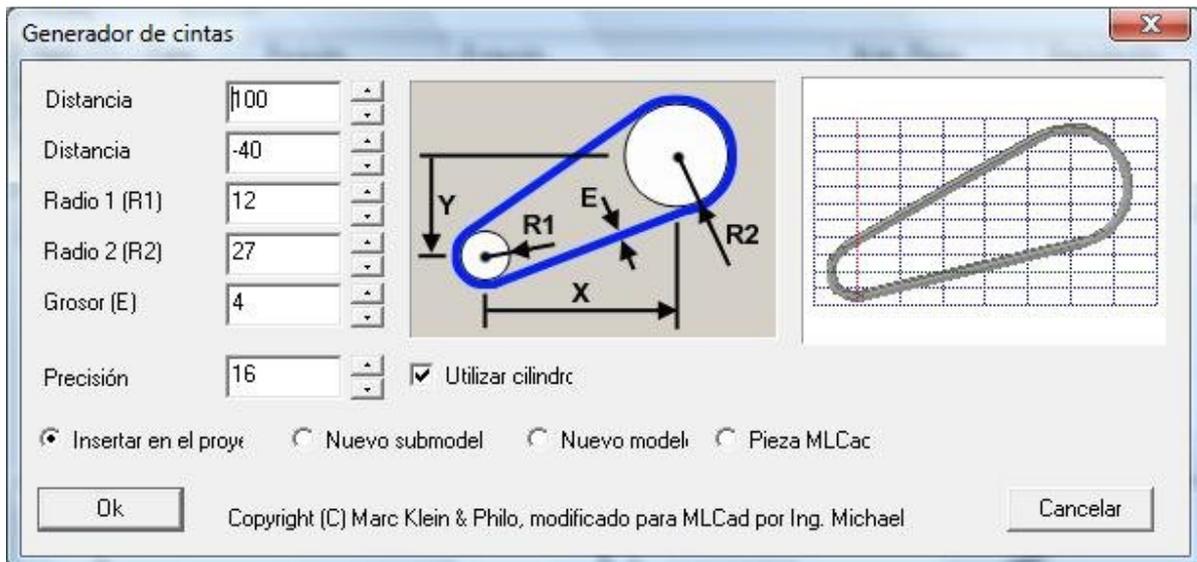
Another way of locating the ideal rotation point is by using a helper part you can download from [http://www.holly-wood.it/files/Helper\\_Her.zip](http://www.holly-wood.it/files/Helper_Her.zip) After importing the piece into the LDraw library, the piece will show up under Other parts > H since its name is "Helper – Easy Rotation". Just like with the rotation point, you will need to adjust the location of this piece in at least two panes, but it may be easier to do since the piece is bigger. There's an additional advantage to using this method: you are using a part

and the rotation point of a group is always that of the first part you select. So if you select this piece first you are sure to get the rotation point you needed. The part isn't located in the most convenient location o the Parts Tree and in a later tutorial I will explain how to put it in a more appropriate category.

### Flexible parts

Up to now we have seen how to locate, insert and turn parts with a defined shape. But there is also a small number of LEGO parts that don't always present the exact same shape: belts, treads, tubes...How can you include these in an LDraw file? Let's start with rubber belts. MLCad includes a tool for generating simple rubber belts in a fast and easy way. You can open this Rubber Belt Generator by going to Extras > Generators > Rubber Belt... or by clicking on the seventh icon of the Extras bar.

The first field is for the horizontal distance between the axis of the pulleys you are using and the second for the vertical distance. The next two values are for the radius of each of these pulleys. Philo has created a small table with the radius of the parts



	Technic pin	8
	Technic bush 1/2	8.5
	Micromotor pulley	13
	Technic wedge belt wheel	30.5
	Technic pulley large	46.5

most commonly used for this task and for a belt thickness of 4. This is the fifth value you can enter into the generator. Finally you can enter a value for Precision, to indicate the number of segments to be used for half a circle.

If you unselect "Use cylinder" the generator will create belts with a square section. If selected the belt will be generated using the 4-4cyl.dat primitive.

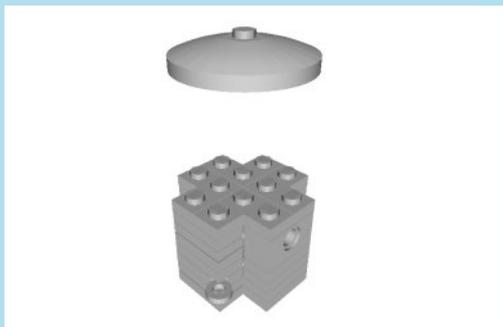
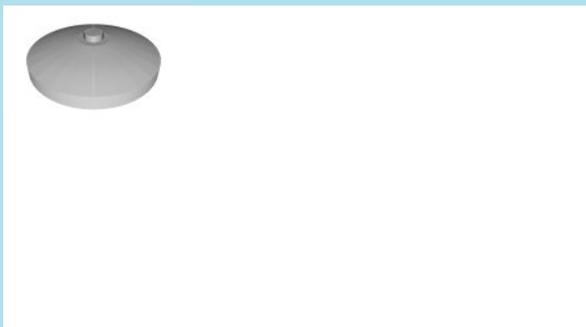
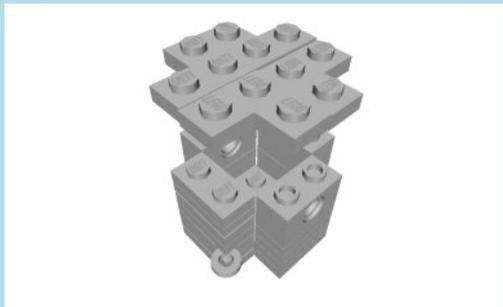
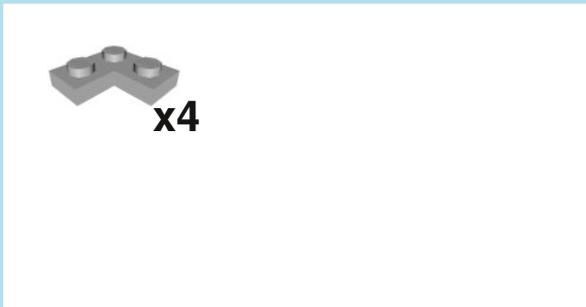
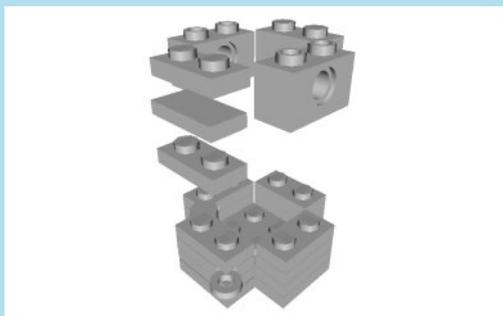
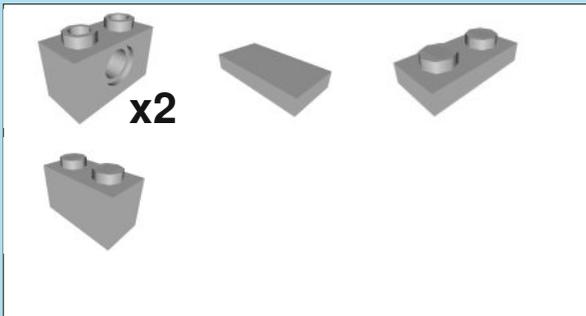
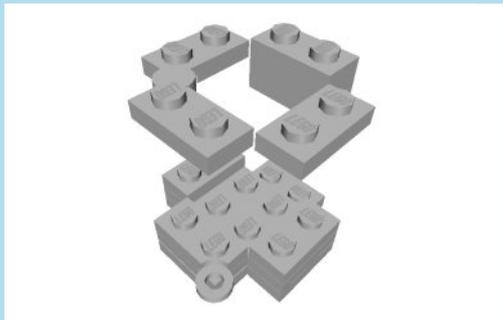
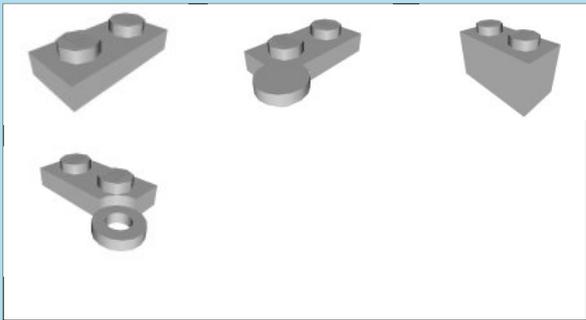
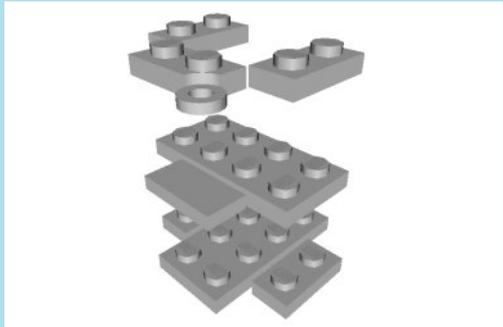
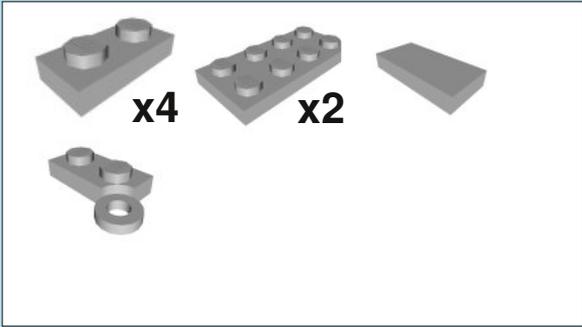
All units in this window are LDU (a 1x1 brick is 20 ldu wide and 24 ldu high without counting the stud), the same scale that is used in the rest of MLCad. To find out the distance between two centre points, place the cursor over the first and write down the x, y and z values that appear in the bottom left corner on the status bar. Do the same for the next centre point and you will be able to calculate both X and Y distance for your belt.

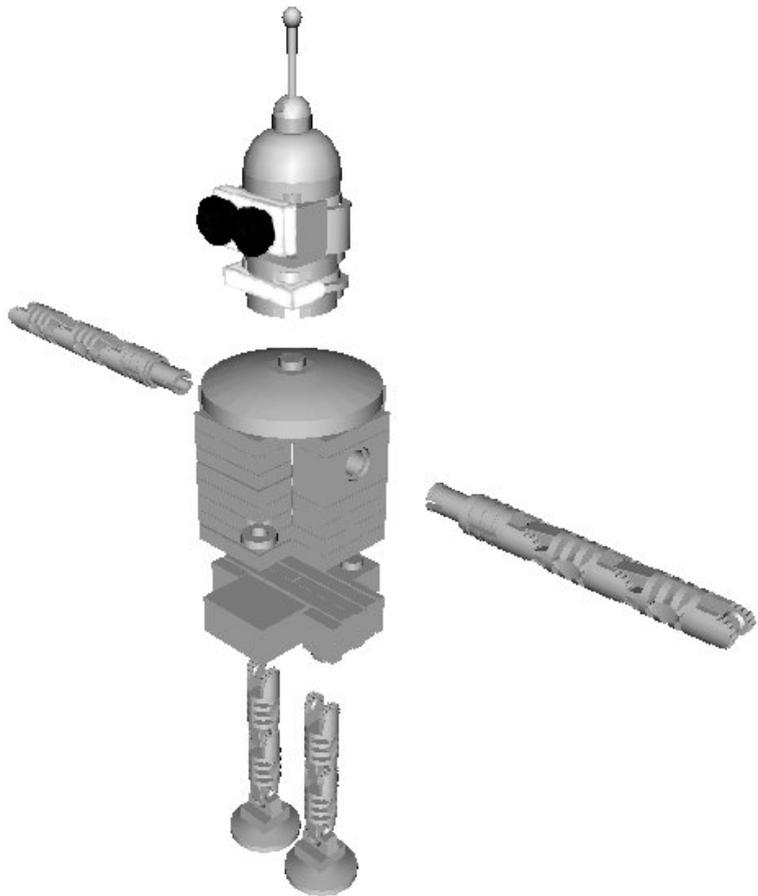
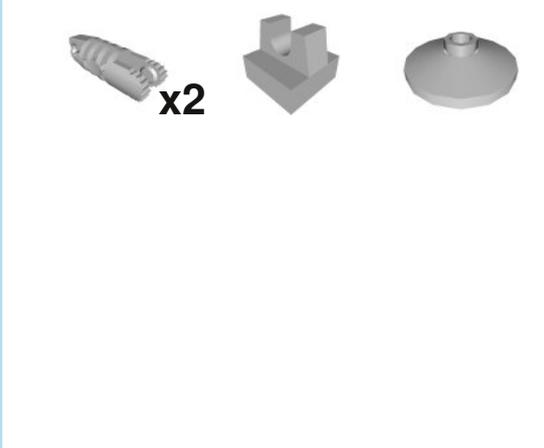
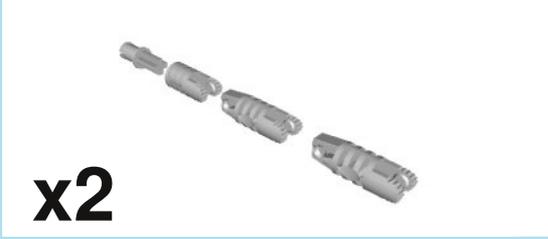
Belts generated in this way can be inserted directly into your LDraw file. If you do so you will see a total of 34 pieces appear - 32 for a full circle (provided you haven't changed that value) and 2 straights. You can also insert it as a new submodel (like in an MPD

file) or as a new model (save whatever you were working on before because a new file will be opened). However, the easiest way to use it is as an MLCad Part which you can handle like any other part.

This generator only allows you to create simple belts, around two pulleys and in a single plane. Sometimes you may need more complex belts or other flexible pieces. In the next part of this tutorial we will have a closer look at how to do that. ■











## Interview Tormod Askildsen

### Head of LEGO® Community Development

Text Hispabrick Magazine

Text & images Tormod Askildsen

**Hispabrick Magazine:** First of all, congratulations for your 25 years in the company. What feelings do you have after all this time working in The LEGO group?

**Tormod Askildsen:** I felt good, because the LEGO Group is back on track. I also felt good because I deeply support the current direction of the company i.e. focusing on our core (the brick, the building system and the LEGO community) and respecting our heritage. I took some time to think back and be proud of my own accomplishments for the company as well

**HM:** How did you start in the company?

**TA:** I started in the LEGO Group back in 1983 as a marketing trainee. Spent almost two years working in 7 different departments.

**HM:** And which functions have you developed in all these years?

**TA:** I joined LEGO Education (called the Institutional Department at that time) in 1986 as assistant product manager. Over the next 10 years I worked on product development and general marketing. Responsible for products such as DUPLO Early Simple Machines, Ethnic DUPLO people and LEGO Dacta Control Lab. Started a "home learning" project in 1995 which led to the development and launch of LEGO Mindstorms in 1998. Started FIRST LEGO League with FIRST in the US in 1998. Started LEGO Community Development in 1999 and have spent most of my time working with LEGO Fans of all ages since then, only with a "break" of around a year where I worked on the LEGO Factory project.

**HM:** Which are the objectives of LEGO Education?

**TA:** LEGO® Education is determined to deliver experiences that engage a passion for learning in students and teachers. LEGO Education experiences are motivating, fun and relevant; and always best experienced together with others

**HM:** Why did The LEGO Group decide to launch a Robotic theme?

**TA:** Two projects came together around 1996. One was the evolution our work with robotics technology which started in the early 1980es. The first LEGO Education robotics product “LEGO Technic Control” launched in 1986. Our collaboration with the MIT Media Lab, led to the “intelligent LEGO brick” concept in the early 1990es. At the same time we worked a lot on understanding what really motivated kids to learn. Not only in the classroom, but also in a home environment. We concluded, among others, that technology played an important role. By marrying these two projects – we developed LEGO Mindstorms..

**HM:** And were you involved in the main development?

**TA:** Oh yes, from around 1989 to 1998.

**HM:** You are Head of the LEGO Community Development since the beginning of this year. Which tasks do you have to do in this position?

**TA:** : Well I came back early this year, but I have been engaged with Community Development since we launched LEGO Mindstorms in 1998. My team and I have a broad variety of tasks. We spend most of our time interaction with the AFOL community, supporting fan driven initiatives, visit fan events and help making connections between fans and fan groups. We also spend a significant amount of time facilitation connections and collaboration projects between AFOLs and colleagues across the LEGO Group. In addition we run programs like LEGO Ambassadors, LEGO Certified Professionals and LEGO Universe Partners. We also make efforts to reach other groups of LEGO fans among parents, teachers and teenagers (our focus is on the age group 13 years and older).

**HM:** When did The LEGO Group discover that there were communities of adults who still build and play with bricks?

**TA:** I think this was in 1998 when we launched LEGO Mindstorms and found out that the majority of the sets were purchased by adults.

**HM:**How did the company discover that the worldwide fan communities were so important to take the decision to create a special department for them?

**TA:** Several things happened since 1998 and the following years. We started to discover that AFOLs posted amazing LEGO models online, some of them brilliant. Around 1999, we had the first face to face

discussions with AFOLs who provided input to LEGO Direct products. With the launch of LEGO Star Wars in 1999, adults also amounted for a significant share of sales. Then we discovered more and more online groups and events which started to pop up, like BrickFest in 2001.

**HM:** And which were the first objectives of this department? Are these objectives actually the same?

**TA:** Hmmm – the objective of building relationships with fans and fan groups has not really changed. What has changed or rather evolved over the past 10 years is our knowledge about the AFOL community and more clarity in which value the LEGO Community brings to the LEGO Brand and business. This means that we work more focused today than we did in the beginning. I would say that we see the major value drivers as “inspiration” (fan created LEGO models and events inspire a lot of people), “innovation” (fans constantly innovate and want to share their ideas with both other fans and with us) and “publicity” (fans drive a lot of publicity which we believe help spreading the LEGO message online and offline). In the LEGO Community team, we see it as our job to stimulate these activities by building relationships with our fans and support what they do the best we can..

**HM:** Are communities important for the growing of the company (and not only in economical terms)?

**TA:** We consider the LEGO Community to be quite essential in growing the LEGO brand and business – keeping in mind that the LEGO Community is broader than the AFOL community. It consists potentially of everyone who, for different individual reasons, like LEGO products and experiences for what they are.

**HM:** What does The LEGO Group think about the growing number of AFOLs meetings around the world?

**TA:** Community is about connecting likeminded people. Meetings online and offline helps grow the community. So yes, that is great.

**HM:** Are profitable to the company the big sets focused to AFOLs?

**TA:** Yes, although they represent a small share of overall sales

**HM:** What did The LEGO Group learn from the bad economic times from the past?

**TA:** That we need to be extremely cost conscious. But also that bad economic times does not seem to affect sales of LEGO products so hard as many other toys. We believe this might be because in bad times, people stick to good quality and brands they trust and are familiar with.



**HM:** LEGO® Ambassadors. Why?

**TA:** Essentially to build bridges between the AFOL community and people in the LEGO Group. The current cycle of LEGO Ambassadors represent 47 LEGO User Groups so they also help us keep track of what is going on in the community almost on a daily basis. Btw – for my 25 year anniversary, I got this wonderful greeting from the LEGO Ambassadors (picture attached)

**HM:** How LEGO Ambassadors interact with the company?

**TA:** We use an online discussion forum which is hosted and operated by the LEGO Group. All discussions are open and LEGO Ambassadors can and should share what is being discussed with the larger community. In some cases, LEGO Ambassadors are invited to work with us on “Top Secret Projects”. In this case they will have to sign an NDA for that specific project. But we are also inviting AFOLs who are not LEGO Ambassadors to work on these kind of projects.

**HM:** For many fans, become a LEGO Ambassador would be an honour. It seems an important figure in the community and they make an important task, but how does the LEGO Group see the Ambassadors internally?

**TA:** : The awareness of the LEGO Ambassador program is increasing inside the company. To keep spreading the word, the LEGO Community team

shared the profiles of all LEGO Ambassadors on the LEGO intranet so all employees could read about them. We have also sent letters to all LEGO Group offices where there are LEGO Ambassadors and suggested that they contact their local LA and explore collaboration opportunities.

**HM:** Another important collaboration with the community is to launch Factory Sets “Designed By LEGO Fans”...

**TA:** : Yes, I was involved in all these sets. It was a great experience for all involved I think, but I also know that several fans discovered that there is a huge difference between building MOC and designing a LEGO set. There are plenty of rules, processes, and limitations which most experienced as pretty frustrating.

**HM:** Spanish community is really young (2 and ½ years). Which is your opinion of our community?

**TA:** Great community! You have achieved a lot in very short time, this magazine for one. There are also several Spanish fans who are exceptionally talented LEGO builders.

**HM:** Is now Spain in the map for the company (knowing that LEGO bricks are not a top seller in our country)?

**TA:** Spain has always been on the map. I remember spending months back in the mid 1980es on a project with special focus on Spain. One of the



things we found out at that time was that a huge part of sales was concentrated in the 3 major cities, Madrid, Barcelona and Bilbao. But yes, the Spanish AFOL community contributes nicely to put Spain on the map and I think you are driving a lot of value.

**HM:** And now, some short questions. Did you play with LEGO® bricks when you were a kid?

**TA:** Yes

**HM:** Your most-liked LEGO Theme

**TA:** LEGO Mindstorms, LEGO Technic, LEGO Star Wars, - there are many actually

**HM:** One which you don't like

**TA:** Except from LEGO Star Wars I have never really been big time into the other Licensed products.

**HM:** Your favourite set

**TA:** Well, I got my old VOLVO as LEGO Factory set last year. I love it!

**HM:** Your favourite MOC

**TA:** I'm not building MOCs myself. Among the 3 mio.\* LEGO MOCs on BrickShelf, MOCpages and Flickr, there are so many I really like – I cannot pick one.

**HM:** Do you want to say anything else?

**TA:** I'm done – talked far too much!

**HM:** Many thanks for your time and your answers.

**TA:** Thanks for inviting me to this interview, I enjoyed it. Need to get back to my business plan. ■

\*Estimated number of LEGO MOCs on the net.





## LEGOworld™ 2008

### Paradise within reach

Text Iluigib

Images Iluisgib and Adri

Event: LEGOWorld 2008

From 16 to 21 of October at fair Ijsselhallen in Zwolle (Holland)

Visitors 70000

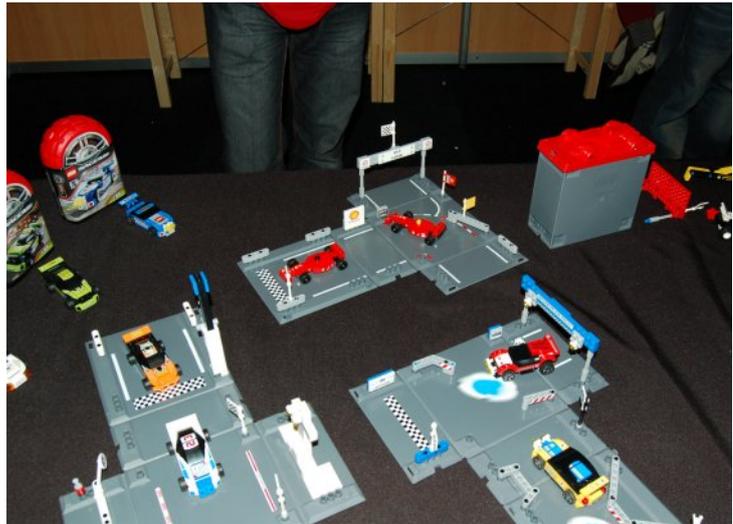
Next edition from 22 to 27 of October 2009 at Zwolle (Holland)

**T**erminal B. El Prat Airport (Barcelona). 5:30 in the morning of Oct. 18, 2008. I start to run. The check-in terminal of the airline with which I have to flight has changed and I have to run to terminal C. At the end I leave the luggage and get to the gate. This little anecdote was almost the only thing that went "badly" during the trip to LEGOWorld in Zwolle (Netherlands).

I came to the fair Ijsselhallen in Zwolle at 10:40 in the morning, after two hours by plane, and an hour and a quarter by train. There I met Adri, his mother, his

cousin and a friend who had arrived the day before. They spent it to visit Amsterdam. After that, we entered conveniently accredited to a paradise made with LEGO® bricks with our luggage and our illusions. It was full of visitors. During the six days of the event, there are a total of 70,000 paying visitors attending, at a rate of 10,000 per day (from 10 to 17h), and one evening open from 18:30 to 22.

The first hall we found, was where the fan clubs of LEGO showed their creations. It was the largest of the 6 halls which housed the event. Added to the



hundreds of MOCs, layouts and inventions of all kinds, there were some booths where you could talk with the designers of the different lines of LEGO®, and take a look to some new sets of 2009. For example, we could see some new boxes LEGO RACERS 2009. Added to a RACERS micromodel, the box unfolds and becomes a road. Then you can fold it again and store the model inside. There were also a number of stores (which are also in Bricklink) who sold loose bricks and sets, especially a lot of older ones. There were also several official Pick-a-brick shops and a Megastore of a Dutch toy chain, with all sets 10% discounted and some really interesting offers.

The other halls were more for "children" with building activities of all kinds, exhibition of models, some

similar to the models of the LEGOLAND parks. Saturday was a day, mainly for "public relations". We did not have the showground (previously booked) until the end of the day so we could admire all the models there, and talk with everyone.

We had a special closeness to the friends of BELUG (who I already met last year). They exhibited a CITY layout, 23 meters long. It is difficult to describe in words what we saw there. Thousands of details of all kinds decorated the huge diorama, with a dozen trains running, including the French TGV, in its traditional version (orange), Atlantique (blue) and La Poste (Yellow). The trains were running at 3 levels. There was also a beach, a haunted house, a theme park of Star Wars ... In my opinion, the best layout of the whole event by far.



We also saw smaller layouts of other LUGs and / or AFOLs. The CITY theme was the predominant over the others, though Technic, among the giant cranes, models and the GBC dealt a significant place. At lunchtime, we met Jan Beyer and we had a pleasant conversation. He confirmed that he would attend again the HispaBrick event.

After lunch, we made a visit to the shops that were there and we exercised our consumerist rights. Who can resist shopping in a place where they only sell our beloved brick? We, at least, no!

At about 4 pm our BeLUG friends borrow us a bit of their space for HispaLUG's first presence. We were able to mount a slot track and the cars began to whirl continuously... until 6 pm (1 hour after closing the show) when we all left the compound to go to dinner!

We arrived at the bungalows on a free bus rented by the organization (they were 17 km from Zwolle). It was an idyllic site, amid a green setting. Each of them had 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms and kitchen/dining room. What a luxury. The dinner was about 1 km from there, and we had to make that journey on foot. Adri and I started to walk and engaged in an animated conversation. When we had walked about 25 minutes, we realized we had taken the wrong way! It was getting dark so we walked faster and we arrived at the restaurant around 20 minutes late, but with a ravenous hunger, after so much walking. After dinner, there was a show dedicated to all AFOLs. But the language barrier made us abandon early.

The next morning we began with the talks with a boy, who we met at the bus route the evening



before, and with whom Adri made friends. At the hall, we set the table so that HispaLUG had its first (and I hope not last) official presence at the event. Assembled in a hurry, at 10 (opening hour) all our stuff was in place. We arrived on time exhausted but happy. Everything was in order. On behalf of our community there were:

- A house made by Adri
- Slot cars made by lluisgib - MOCs with lights added made by lluisgib
- 3 models of the arvo brothers

Children loved the slot cars, as they were allowed to play with them, and that attracted them a lot. Adri's house was very successful among seniors, who stopped to observe the many details that had. Hispabrick Magazine was also present with the two issues that have appeared so far. The magazines

caused some excitement among the public and a lot among AFOLs. They appreciated the effort of translation into English and some ventured that in the future, their LUG would also have a magazine. The hours passed so fast. It was an intense day and soon it was 5 pm, and we had to go to the station to take the train back to Schiphol, where Adri and his family would take a plane to Madrid, and I myself back to Barcelona. On the train we were reviewing photos and recalling what happened at the weekend. Upon arrival at the airport, Adri realized that he had forg ... Well, that is another story■



## Star Wars™ Death Star™

### How to turn a film into plastic bricks

Text lluisgib

Images lluisgib and LEGO® System A/S

**Set:**10188 Star Wars Death Star

**Pieces count:** 3803

**Including:** 24 characters, trash compactor monster, Tie advanced, 12 film scenes, Hyperlaser

**Recommended Retail Price:**399,95 € / 399,99 USD

It is the first time that I face a Set of this size. 3803 pieces in a set that any fan of Star Wars™ must have in their collection. The Death Star II is a set with scenes of the classic trilogy (Episodes IV and VI. Always inside the star) that reproduces many of the most mythical passages of the saga. Fights, action,... everything can happen within the Death Star.

#### The Death Star™ in the Star Wars™ Universe

The Death Star was a space station of the Galactic Empire. It was a titanic sphere of greyish color, which

had a diameter of 120 kilometers. In its upper hemisphere it had a laser capable of destroying whole planets.

The interior of the Death Star had 84 levels of operation, each one with a surface of 1,428 km. Each level included 357 zones.

It had a crew of 25,984 stormtroopers, 87,001 imperial officials, 368,685 assistants and more than 100,000 pilots and civilians. The construction began during the beginning of the Galactic Empire.

Its mission was to destroy the planets of the rebel alliance, which did not want to join the Empire, as well as to be a control centre of the imperial troops. An improvised operation of the Rebel Alliance managed to destroy the Death Star that was orbiting the Yavin planet, with the intention to disintegrate it. Only 30 fighters (15 Y-Wing and 15 X-Wing) executed a dangerous operation trying to shoot the station in its unique peak, discovered thanks to the



planes of the station that carried the droid R2D2  
 Figures of the Ship:  
 Type: Space Battle Station  
 Affiliation: Galactic empire  
 Armaments: 15.000 turbolasers, 700 tractor beams projectors, 1 hyperlaser, 7,000 TIE fighters, 4 military attack cruiser, 20,000 military ships and 11,000 combat vehicles  
 Diameter: 120 km  
 Crew: 774,000 crew, 87,001 officials and 378,685 assistants.  
 Speed: 300.000 km/s

**The LEGO® model**

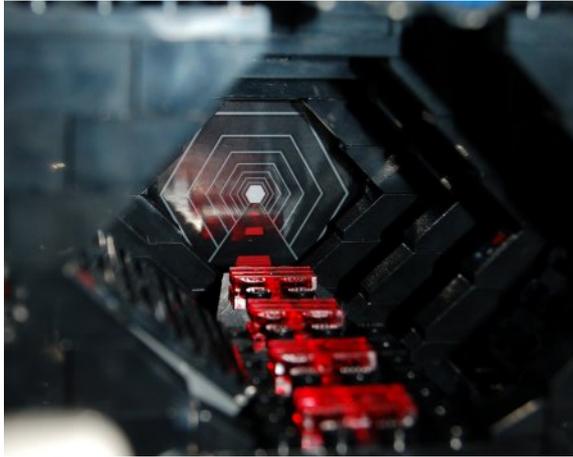
The first surprise when you open the box is the size of the instruction book (it really is a book). Used to the smaller manuals with stapled pages, or in several issues, the fact of finding a manual with 263 pages, about 2 kg of weight and bound in spiral, is quite a shock.  
 The bags of pieces are distributed in four cardboard boxes, which give consistency to the outer box. The gross weight of the box is about 9kg.  
 The second surprise (and I have to recognize that

was a little more disagreeable) is to find no logical order in the bags of pieces nor is any specific numbering used follow the assembly passages. Partly it can be comprehensible that a set of this magnitude requires an extra effort in its assembly. But when you are in front of 3803 pieces upon the table, without any order but their size, you begin to shake a little.  
 The “solution” that I chose was to place all the bricks and plates of bigger size in a great box, and the smallest ones in trays with separators. It helped to put a little order to the initial chaos.

**Minifigs:**

The Set comes with 25 characters (24 minifigs/droids and the trash compactor monster). Some minifigs are available in others sets. Others, however, appear for the first time in this set:

- Luke Skywalker™ (dressed Stormtrooper™)
- Han Solo™ (dressed Stormtrooper),
- Assassin Droid™
- Interrogation Droid
- Death Star Droid
- 2 Death Star Troopers™



In this set, the LEGO® company has recovered the chromed laser sabers that already appeared in the first years, giving it a touch of quality. Another difference is that the R2-D2 appears with the gray head (instead of white like in the other sets) that also gives it realism.

The set of minifigs is a good sample of the main characters in episodes IV and VI.

The pieces of the minifigs are distributed in many bags among the 4 boxes, reason why it was difficult to me to build them in one go. Some of the pieces (as the body of Chewbacca™) appeared later during the assembly of the model. Although it might seem something wrong, I was excited to find the piece when I did not expect it. After all, it gives a little emotion to the building process

### The scenes

The model is mounted from bottom to top, in one go. You are mounting each one of the floors and their accessories at the same time. In this way you see all the functionalities (they are many) that are incorporated. I will detail some of them, which I

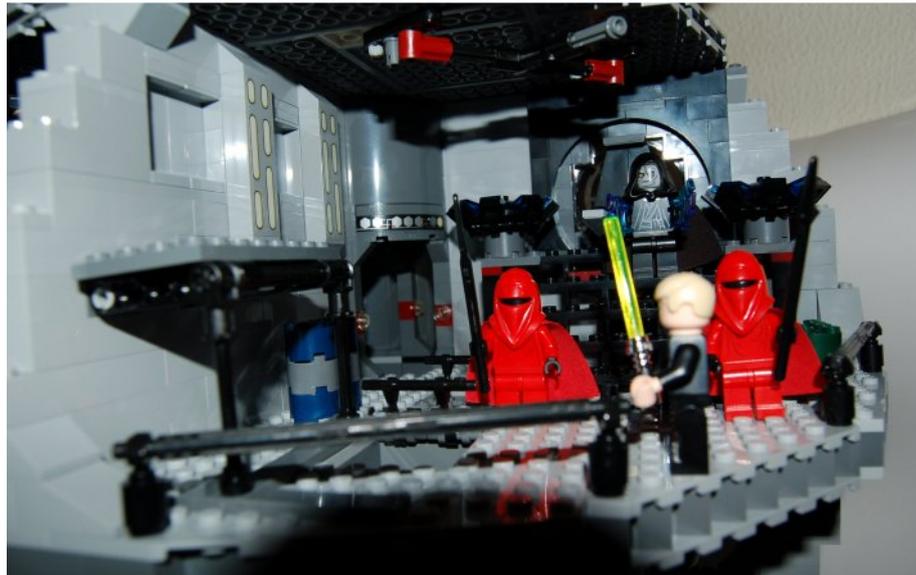
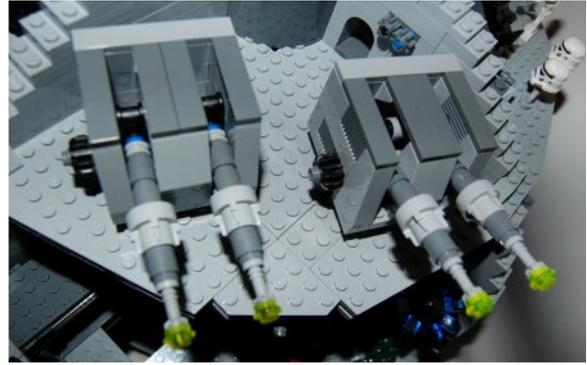
consider especially interesting and significant.

First of them (in the lower level) it is the trash compactor, the one from the rescue scene of Princess Leia of the jail and that finishes in the waste basket of the star. In the model the walls of the compactor can move to squash the characters. Also they have incorporated elements which act like trash and the masts that the characters use to try to stop the compactor walls. There is a small hollow from the plant above (the jail) that simulates the place where the characters escape towards the compactor.

It is reproduced in another section of the level the gap where Luke and Leia arrive in their attempt to escape, and which they must cross using a rope. The gap is very well reproduced, with the stickers that simulate the lights of each floor, and the accesses at different levels.

The intermediate level is where the more famous scenes and elements from the saga are.

First of all, we find the Hyperlaser, the weapon that allows the star to have its destructive power. It is mounted in a very original way and there are points in which the used technique has surprised me (I am still wondering if all the techniques are "legal"), but



the result is impressive. It has control panels and horizontal and vertical movement. Also there is the sliding door, which gives access to the control room. Alongside, there is the area of the jail. There you can find the control area of the cells, the cell in which is locked up Princess Leia and the floodgate of escape to the trash compactor. It is remarkable to how the design simulates a long corridor of cells with the use of smaller and smaller concentric arcs, until it finishes in a sticker that simulates that set of arcs. In the ceiling there is a monitoring camera that moves by all the level.

The other two "rooms" of the second level are the Throne Room of the Emperor and the hangar of the Tie Advanced. In the first room two imperial guards are looking after the security of Palpatine™ Emperor. The lights surrounding the throne are very original. In the second room, there is a TIE Advanced, with an arm that holds the fighter, and an access area in the floor with an elevator to reach the lower floor. In the upper level, there are also four scenes. One of them is a repair zone for droids. It is quite detailed, with his tools, their stretcher and "spare parts" for droids.

The Imperial conference hall is the place where the

Emperor and his subordinates meet to discuss the Empire strategy. There are seven chairs, a round table that can be lifted to find a laser Blaster underneath.

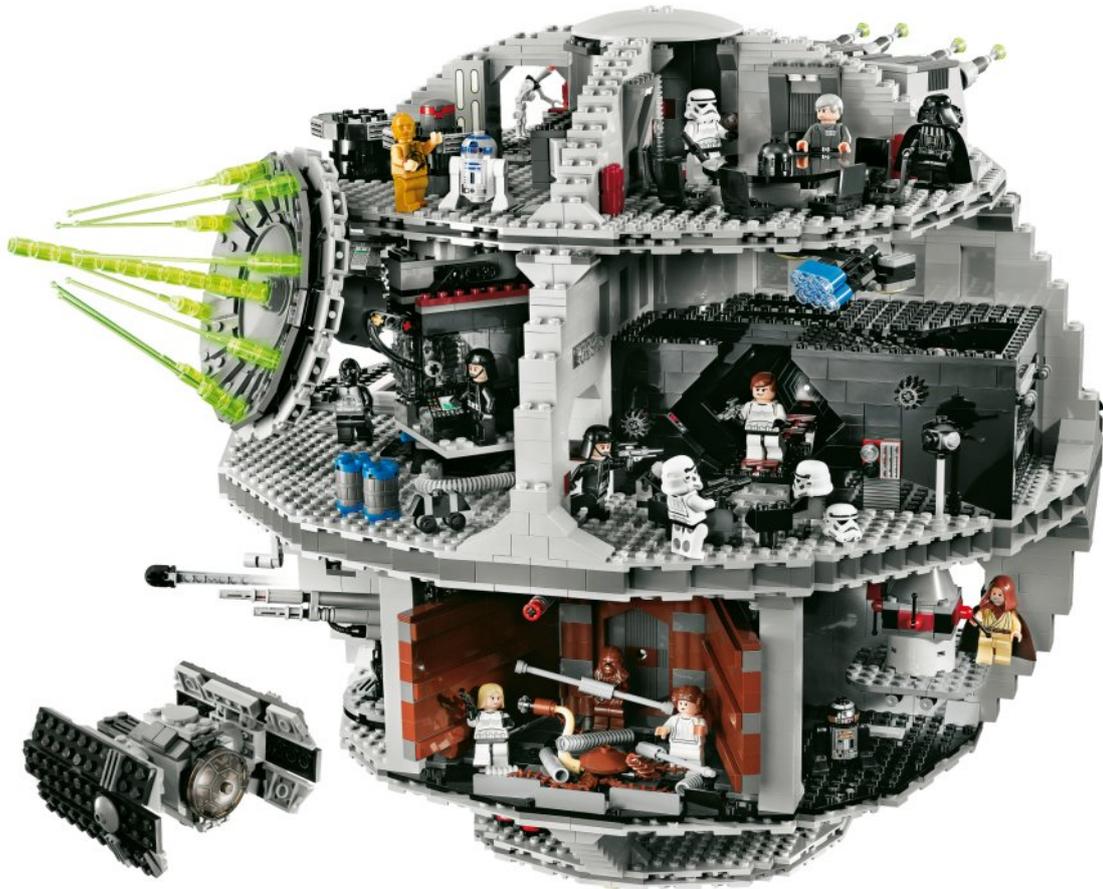
The other two rooms are the hyperlaser control room (where you can control horizontal and vertical movement, and where the objective is visualized), and a room with two laser towers with horizontal and vertical movement.

Finally, in center of the star, an elevator allows to connect several of the rooms of the three floors.

### The Set

It would be easy to say that it is a very well designed set and with a wonderful level of detail. But this time it seems to be the true. It is really difficult to find a failure in the design. Each one of the rooms have been thought up and designed with a care that, whatever that you look you remain astonished. It is possible to think that this is an exhibition set, but with its multiple mechanisms and interconnections between rooms, it is possible to recreate part of the film in a quite faithful way.

The assembly is a little hard. It is divided in 193



steps, but many of the steps have several subgroups inside, which gives a false sensation about how you are really advancing in the model. Although the pieces are not inside numbered bags, the instructions show in each step the pieces that you need, which facilitates the assembly, since you can choose the necessary pieces, before executing it. As a curiosity, when I finalized the assembly, I had to review the steps looking for the right place for three pieces. I could find all.... except one, but in the end I discovered that it was an extra piece (a grey 1x4 plate). With this anecdote I want to warn that there is a moment where you can't see pieces in the instructions and it is easy to forget something.

### Conclusions

It is a set for the lovers of Star Wars™, although its price can be a problem for some people. It reproduces mythical scenes from the saga. The selection of minifigs will make the most avid collectors happy. It has a multitude of mechanisms and movable elements, which give the set some playability. Also the care in many details is great, like the chromed laser swords, the lights surrounding the

Throne or the jail.

About cons, only to mention the way in which the pieces in the box come, that demands an exercise of previous order.

Thanks to:

Jan Beyer, LEGO® Community Development Manager and LEGO Iberia S.A., Joachim Schwidtal and Rosa Seegelken

Bibliography:

[www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org)■



## Alternative models: 7645

When being kids our parents gave us our first LEGO® set, we all faced the same challenge: our own constructions starting off with a limited number of bricks

Text car\_mp

Images LEGO® System A/S and car\_mp

**Set:** 7645 MT-61 Crystal Reaper  
**Line:** Mars Mission  
**Piece Count:** 600 pieces  
**Recommended Retail Price:** 59.95 € / 49.99 USD



Without any doubt, the essence of LEGO® is the possibility to build your own creations.

I guess we all remember our beginnings, when we were much younger and our families were in charge of all the presents we would get. That time when we could build everything with just four pieces... a gun to shoot our dear sister, a monster, a motel for our minifigs to spend the night in while we slept... With this issue we are starting a new section where we will show alternate models built using only and exclusively parts of a single set. We will try to show creations completely different to the original ones LEGO offers us, incorporating those parts with limited uses and giving them new ones if possible. But enough talking, here is our first set:

Set: 7645 MT-61 Crystal Reaper  
 Line: Mars Mission  
 Piece count: 600 Pieces  
 Recommended Retail Price: 59,95 € / 49,99 USD  
 Comments on the official model: Numbered bags for the building process. Many Technic parts, and a small palette of colours (mainly black and white). It comes with an alien ship, a small truck, and a treaded vehicle, the top part of which is a detachable

spaceship and the bottom part a small laboratory. The set is easy to build and fairly playable. It gets positive points for the inclusion of the instructions to motorize the set using Power Functions, and negative ones for the fact that the alien in the vehicle's laboratory doesn't really fit that well.

**Alternate models:**

**Flower:** to break with the theme and taking advantage of the front piece's shape (the white bionicle masks next to saw blades).

**Base:** Small provisional base. The only thing it adds worth mentioning is the use of the treads at the gate's bottom, and for shaping some compartments. This last use of the treads can be seen on the rest of the models. Since the treads allow shaping, we can replace with them the use of bricks and plates, which are rather limited in this set.

**Spaceship:** Provisional ship meant to go along with the previously mentioned base. Underneath it has some sort of hose for refuelling other ships. It was fun building this one.









## Great creators of the world: Brian Kescenovitz

With Adrian Florea we began a series of articles where the own interviewed recommends us one of his favourite creators for the following issue

Text & images Brian Kescenovitz

**Hispabrick Magazine:** Name?

**Brian Kescenovitz:** Brian Kescenovitz (aka mondaynoodle)

**HM:** Age?

**BK:** 35

**HM:** Nationality?

**BK:** American

**HM:** What do you do normally?

**BK:** I'm a stay at home, homeschooling dad with six kids. When I do manage to find a little time to myself, I usually try and build, but I also do a bit of video gaming. Actually, gaming was my big hobby before I got back into LEGO®...I'm a geek through and through. Video games, Dungeons & Dragons, toy collecting, collectable card games, radio controlled cars...I've done them all at some point in my life. All the geek staples, except for computers (which I'm not that proficient with) and comic books, which I somehow managed to steer clear of.

**HM:** When did you first start building with LEGO?

**BK:** I've had LEGO for as long as I can remember. I stopped building somewhere in my early teens, but thankfully kept all my bricks. Then, in late 2006, I discovered MOCpages, and got the building bug again..

**HM:** Your first set?

**BK:** I'm not positive, but the set I remember best from my childhood is #497, the fabled Galaxy Explorer.

**HM:** And your last set?

**BK:** # 4993 The Cool Convertible is the most recent set I've purchased, but actually, I get most of my parts through Bricklink.

**HM:** Your favourite commercial LEGO building theme?

**BK:** Hmm...right now, probably the Indy line, primarily because of the colors it uses. I had high hopes for the Exo-Force line, and some of it turned out to be pretty interesting, but in the end it just got a little to wacky for my tastes.

**HM:** Your favourite non-official building theme?

**BK:** Without a doubt, Mecha. More specifically, I like the western "walking tank" style of mech, often typified by the Battletech/Mechwarrior universe, as opposed to the more humanoid shaped, eastern, "Gundam" style of mecha. Some of my recent builds cross the line a bit more though. For instance, the WAR DOLL was directly inspired by the mechs in the video game "Lost Planet" which was made by Japanese developer Capcom.

**HM:** What inspires your creations?

**BK:** Oh, I find inspiration in lots of different places. Most commonly from art I find online or from video game or film content. I also like to check used book stores for cool art books, role playing and miniature gaming manuals with good pictures, etc. Sometimes, inspiration comes from more unusual sources like the silhouette of one of my kids toys laying on the floor or, more often than not, one of my kids actual



LEGO MOCs. I tend to be very focused on form (especially in my mechanically oriented MOC), so anything with an interesting shape can inspire me.

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

**BK:** I have a sketchbook that I draw rough concepts in, though it usually does not go much beyond that. Occasionally I will flesh them out, but only once has a completed piece of concept art actually resulted in a finished MOC. It's something that I plan on doing more often though, because it seems to help focus me better. I'm generally an extremely slow builder, so anything that can help expedite the process is a welcome addition. But you know how it is...sometimes you just start putting bricks together, and things seem to flow with no rhyme or reason as to why it's working...it just does.

**HM:** How do you face the process of building your ideas? Do you have a fixed and predefined idea of a MOC which takes form during the building process? Or do you start building with parts directly and that brings you to a final design? To sum up: do the parts define the MOC, or does the MOC decide which parts you are going to use?



**BK:** Well, it's a little bit of both actually. I usually have a general idea of what I'm going to build and how it might look, but frequently, the final MOC is considerably different than what I had originally envisioned. So in that sense, the parts define the MOC more often than the other way around. For instance, my Dawn Forge MOCs are almost exclusively dark grey, so I'm very familiar with the dark grey pallet of pieces. Whatever parts are available in that color (and that I have on hand) is largely what determines the pieces I use, and consequently effects the final look of the MOC. Of course, there is more to it than that, and I make conscious design decisions independent of piece selection, but I think there are certain parts that I tend to gravitate toward using over others. Whether this tendency breeds proficiency or staleness in a MOC is open to debate, but I suspect it's probably a bit of both.

**HM:** What is your favourite LEGO® element and why?

**BK:** It's pretty tough to pick just one, but the ubiquitous cheese slope and grill tile have to rank fairly high on the list. Some other favorites would be the 75° 2x1x3 inverted slope, the 1x2-2x2 bracket, the 4L bar, and the good old fashioned headlight brick

**HM:** Which part would you like LEGO to produce?

**BK:** A 1x1 brick with a stud on one side (the technic brick/half pin trick is just too loose), a 2L bar, and a true olive drab brick color.

**HM:** How many hours do you spend building with LEGO?

**BK:** It varies wildly. Sometimes I'll build for five or six hours a day (after the kids are in bed) for a few days, and then I might not build for a week. I'm trying to

figure out a more reasonable and reliable building schedule, but it's difficult considering how chaotic things can get around my house.

**HM:** What does your family think about this hobby?

**BK:** My kids, of course, love it and are building all the time, either with me or by themselves. My sixteen year old daughter, on the other hand, is not especially fond of it, but that's only because I occasionally recruit her help with sorting. Fortunately, my wife has always been supportive of my little "hobbies" and LEGO is no exception. I've tried to get her into it as well, but her spatial relation skills seem a little...lacking. (Oh boy, am I going to hear about that one...)

**HM:** Home schooling is not a concept that is widely known in Europe. Since LEGO is a very didactic toy, what role do LEGO bricks play in the education of your children? Has it helped to communicate with them? Have you ever tried working on an aspect of their personal development by playing with LEGO bricks?

**BK:** While I've never really used LEGO as a direct, hands on educational aid, I have noticed its effect on my children's proficiencies in things like spatial relationships and three dimensional geometries. Their grasp of three dimensional problems and their ability to visualize them is really quite remarkable for their ages. It also shows up in their artwork, where three dimensional space stations are the norm instead of stick figures.

**HM:** Usually it's children who show their parents their creations while the parents merely observe. In your case things may be the other way round, and for now their creations aren't quite as complex as yours, but are any of your children following in your footsteps? How are they doing as far as MOCs are concerned?

"Will the minifigs  
ever take revenge?  
Probably not..."





**BK:** I know I'm just coming off as "Proud Daddy" right now, but some of the things they build really are amazing. I've taught them some basic SNOT techniques to help them get beyond the standard "brick on top of brick" thinking, but really, they come up with innovative shapes and connections all on their own. Sometimes they try and imitate my creations, but as I mentioned before, more often than not, it's me drawing inspiration from them.

**HM:** One interesting aspect of your MOCs is that you create complex geometric shapes that at first glance appear to be impossible to create with LEGO® bricks, like long bending curves and the use of large spheres and cylinders (Lucy, War Doll, Ephram's Garden...). In many the stud completely disappears and they appear to be made in a mold. Is creating clean and perfect curves an obsession in your models?

**BK:** I wouldn't say curves are an obsession since many of my MOCs are distinctly angular, but a clean and realistic look is frequently my goal. Often, this means building studless or nearly studless, but only because it usually contributes to the polished look of the final product, and not simply for the sake of building studless. I've seen many MOCs that utilize studs in an effective manner and actually enhance their appearance. More often than not though, if you are striving for that realistic, "cast from a mold" look (like I often am), it usually means going mostly studless. .

**HM:** Lucy is a great MOC. Not only because of the level of detail and building technique, but because of the scene and composition (the height of the base, columns, a minifig escaping). Ephram's garden follows a similar pattern: minifigs trying to escape from a monster. How did you imagine these scenes, where do they come from? Will you ever create a MOC in which the minifigs take revenge and might win?

**BK:** That's a good question. I'm not quite sure why I always have the minifig fleeing in fear from a terrible fate. I guess I'm just not a big fan of happy endings...or at least not in my imaginary worlds. My favorite author is master of horror and the macabre, H.P. Lovecraft, and the endings of his stories are rarely uplifting but frequently soul chilling, so that may have something to do with it. Lucy was actually inspired by some artwork I found online, and Ephram's garden was inspired in equal parts by the movie "Dune" and the purple worm from Dungeons & Dragons. See...I told you I was a geek. Will the minifigs ever take revenge? Probably not...

**HM:** The increase of AFOLs and lines like Star Wars create new possibilities not imagined before by LEGO. What do you think about the old school LEGO and the new LEGO?

**BK:** Well, I certainly enjoy the ever expanding selection of parts that results from all the new sets. Each new piece helps to expand the possibilities that



are available to builders. The actual licenses like Star Wars, Batman, etc. are less important for me since I really only buy sets for the parts they contain, but my kids would probably beg to differ. They love the Star Wars sets, and I've heard many AFOLs who say that it was the Star Wars line that brought them back into the hobby, so from that angle, the new LEGO® seems to be an unqualified success. Sometimes though, there is just no substitute for good old fashioned plates and bricks, so as long as these don't disappear entirely, I can embrace the new. One thing I wouldn't mind seeing is a greater focus on the AFOLs with more UCS style sets with a higher degree of detailing and less focus on playability. They wouldn't necessarily need to be huge like some of the UCS stuff is. How about a small, highly detailed space ship or mech, designed to be more of a desktop model, sold exclusively at LEGO stores and on their website, and aimed squarely at AFOLs. LEGO, if you're listening, I've got a few mech designs I want to discuss with you...

**HM:** Any other comments you would like to share?

**BK:** Hmm...I guess I'll end with the advice I give to people who ask for building tips. Here goes...

1. Take your time - It's not always fun to put that extra level of polish on a MOC that you could call done right now, but it's almost always worth it.

2. Build within your collection - Spending your time perfecting a smaller MOC makes more sense than forcing out a huge one that you just don't have the pieces to do right. Save that big one for next year.

3. Set it aside when you need to - If you get stuck during a build and it just doesn't seem to be coming together, set it aside for a week or so and work on something else. Frequently, when you come back, you'll look at it with a fresh set of eyes that may help you decide what direction it needs to go.

4. These guidelines work for me - They may not suit your building style at all, and if that's the case, feel free to call me an idiot and ignore them completely. Happy building!

Thank you very much, Brian, for your collaboration. ■

# 50 years of the LEGO® Brick

1932 - Ole Kirk Christiansen is a master carpenter and cabinetmaker in Billund (Jutlandia) He begins to make domestic utensils and wood toys.

1934 - He organizes a contest between his workers to choose the name of the company. The chosen name is LEGO®, that is an abbreviation of the Danish expression Leg Godt (I play well).

1942 - A fire destroys the factory of LEGO with all the plans and designs. Ole Kirk works to remake everything that had been burned until re-floating the company.

1947 - They buy the first machine in Denmark for plastic injection and begin to make toys of this material.

1949 - His son Godtferd, who works with Ole in the company, establishes the bases of “pieces of automatic union” that would be the precursors of the present pieces of LEGO.

1955 - The first boxes of the system LEGO denominated Town Plan appear in the market. The philosophy was based on the desire to have a line of toys that could be combined, as opposed to the individual toys, that allowed to spark the imagination of the children and to develop their creative impulse.

1958 - The 28 of January of 1958 LEGO asks for a patent for the system of union of its bricks. This date marks the beginning of the System LEGO as we know it at the moment. The current bricks are compatible with 1958 bricks.

1961 - LEGO “invents” the wheel  
1966 - LEGO launches the first system of trains with electrical motors of 4.5 Volts. LEGO invents the DUPLO brick.

1968 – The First LEGOLAND Park is open at Billund (Denmark). The park is a combination of reproductions of landscapes in miniature of different countries from the world, with attractions for the children.

1974 - The “Maxifigs” appears, human figures made with bricks.

1977 - The Technic line appears with more complicated models for advanced users.

1978 - The LEGO minifigure appears (the one that we know at the moment). It is considered the second most important design of the company, after the LEGO brick.

1979 – LEGO launches LEGOLAND Space.

1984 – LEGO launches LEGOLAND Castle.

1989 – LEGO launches LEGOLAND Pirates.

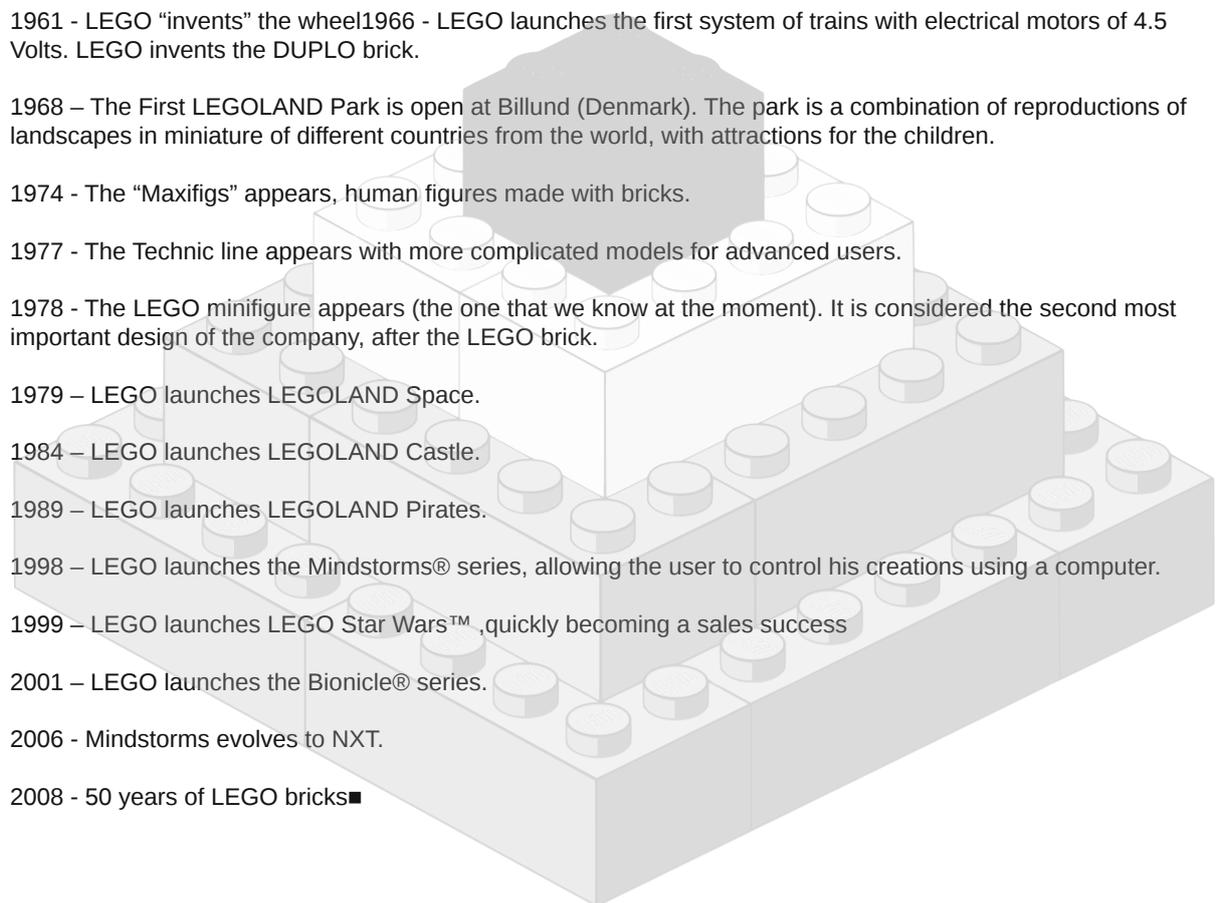
1998 – LEGO launches the Mindstorms® series, allowing the user to control his creations using a computer.

1999 – LEGO launches LEGO Star Wars™, quickly becoming a sales success

2001 – LEGO launches the Bionicle® series.

2006 - Mindstorms evolves to NXT.

2008 - 50 years of LEGO bricks■



# Desmontados

by Arqu medes



- GREY?! WHAT DO YOU MEAN GREY?! IT'S GOLD, JOSEPH! GOLD BROUGHT FROM THE MOST REMOTE MINES OF AFRICA! IT IS A TOKEN OF POWER AND ROYALTY. WE COME FROM A FAR WAY LAND TO PRESENT YOU WITH THESE GIFTS, WE HAVE BEEN LED HERE BY THE STARS THEMSELVES, AND...

- SURE, NO, THAT'S ALL GREAT... DOESN'T COME IN DARK GREY EITHER, THOUGH? WE COULD DEFINITELY DO WITH SOME GREY, YOU SEE...

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## In the next issue

You will find all regarding Hispabrick 2008, so that you can remember (if you were there) or live (if you were not there) everything that happened there. The Arvo brothers will make a special collaboration and Pirates will disembark 20 years after.

The whole team of Hispabrick Magazine wishes you Merry Christmas and we wish for a 2009 plenty of bricks for all.

Don't forget that now you can find the latest about the magazine and some surprises in Internet at [www.hispabrickmagazine.com](http://www.hispabrickmagazine.com)



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magazine

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