

# Light, Movement, Perspective, LEGO!

## Why Every Gear Geek Should Visit “The Art of the Brick”

Matthew Jaster, Senior Editor

**The Art of the Brick (AOTB) is a LEGO exhibition combining art, science and innovation to inspire visitors of all ages currently on display at the Museum of Science and Industry (MSI) in Chicago.**

“At their core, art and science are both about observation, exploration, and creativity. At MSI, we believe wonder and awe lives at the intersection of art and science and welcome the opportunities to open that thinking to guests,” said Anne Rashford, director, features experiences, public programs and business development at MSI.

LEGO, of course, has introduced many *Gear Technology* readers to the wonderful world of engineering, manufacturing and art. This latest exhibition features more than 100 incredible works of art made from millions of LEGO bricks.

Rashford sees the exhibition as a perfect example of STEAM learning—where innovators have carefully placed ‘the Arts’ in between Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematic skills.

“What we see in AOTB is the coming together of both STEM, and the Arts—which creates an opportunity for people to see the direct connections between the two in a form that resonates with them. It’s a great example of how STEAM helps spark creativity through the arts while showing a parallel with STEM learning,” Rashford said.

Outside of receiving a crash course in LEGO innovation, visitors walk away with a better appreciation on how to work through real life problems by offering a creative environment to drum up solutions.

Rashford believes any student interested in science, engineering and manufacturing would gain valuable insight walking through AOTB.

“The more exposure students get to STEM related activities, content, or opportunities, the more likely they are to be confident in pursuing the field as a career. When you can show how STEM and Arts can collide, it allows them to see the variety of ways the two can coexist and complement each other,” Rashford said.

She’s not surprised by the initial success of the exhibition. In the past, MSI developed an exhibition with LEGO Master Adam Reed Tucker, called Brick by Brick.

“Adam was an architect and the focus of his work and the exhibit was on architecture, design and engineering. The exhibit was so popular we extended it three times. What




Nathan Sawaya works on a LEGO sculpture for The Art of the Brick exhibition.

surprised me most was that the audience was multigenerational—LEGO is timeless and its appeal is universal, just like AOTB,” Rashford added.

Behind the scenes, MSI is engaged in a variety of programs to support STEM education. The museum’s nationally recognized education programs, the “Welcome to Science Initiative,” were created to inspire and motivate children to achieve their full potential in the fields of science, technology, medicine and engineering.

“The ‘Welcome to Science Initiative’ creates learning experiences both inside and outside the classroom and removes barriers that exclude youth from participating. Providing access is critical—MSI places a priority on serving schools and neighborhoods with predominantly low-income student populations and reaching youth who are underrepresented in STEM fields,” Rashford said.

Contemporary artist Nathan Sawaya is the ‘master builder’ behind the AOTB exhibition. It’s the first major museum exhibition to use LEGO bricks as the sole art medium.

LEGO versions of Van Gogh’s “Starry Night” and Da Vinci’s “Mona Lisa” are fan favorites but Rashford prefers the Chicago-specific sculptures Sawaya incorporated such as Fly Boy ([hebrubrantley.com](http://hebrubrantley.com)), MSI’s creation of One Brick Studio (an interactive LEGO build experience) and Pernicieum ([pernicieumcollection.com](http://pernicieumcollection.com)). 

AOTB runs through September 5, 2022, at MSI in Chicago.

[msichicago.org/visit/tickets](https://msichicago.org/visit/tickets)