

About the Artist: Nathan Sawaya

In 2004, Nathan Sawaya came to national attention as a talented artist when he won a nationwide search for a professional LEGO® Master Model Builder. Since then, he has been garnering accolades, as well as fans, with his colorful and whimsical artwork made entirely of the popular children's toy.

Born in Colville, Washington and raised in Veneta, Oregon, Sawaya has a unique artist's eye for creating awe-inspiring images and sculptures out of the square and chunky building blocks.

It was an expected beginning with an unexpected outcome. It started on Christmas 1978 when he unwrapped his first set of bricks. It wasn't long before the living room was transformed into "LEGO City" complete with miniature boats, firehouses, restaurants, mansions, skyscrapers, train stations and a lake. There were even brick helicopters hanging from the ceiling.

Sawaya's childhood dreams were always fun. He drew cartoons, wrote stories and perfected magic tricks. Of course much of his playtime centered on the LEGO City in his parent's living room. For more than twelve years the LEGO City flourished. This is where Sawaya's imagination soared and consequently, fine-tuned his future art form.

Many years and millions of bricks later Sawaya's creations are of a much grander scale.

A 7-foot-long replica of the Brooklyn Bridge, a life-size tyrannosaurus rex, a 6-foot-tall Han Solo frozen in carbonite, Curious George, Alfred Hitchcock and Lindsay Lohan are all now immortalized in plastic -- thanks to Sawaya.

His work is obsessively and painstakingly crafted and is both beautiful and playful. Sawaya's ability to transform LEGO bricks into something new, his devotion to scale and color perfection, the way he conceptualizes the action of the subject matter, enables him to elevate an ordinary toy to the status of art.

Sawaya's art form takes shape primarily in 3-dimensional sculptures and oversized mosaic portraits. Some of his favorite pieces of art include a huge black and white self portrait and a gigantic Monopoly box.

He continues to build daily with the brick medium while accepting commission work from individuals and corporations requesting works of art and tradeshows looking for unique, eye-catching exhibits.

Sawaya will enjoy his first solo art exhibit in the Spring of 2007 at the Lancaster Museum of Art. The Art of the Brick will be the first major museum exhibition in the U.S. to focus exclusively on the use of LEGO building blocks as an art medium.

In addition, his work is also in collections including:

- The Strong National Museum of Play in Rochester, NY
- Time Warner Center public art display in New York, NY
- Qwest Field public art display in Seattle, WA
- LEGOLAND California in Carlsbad, CA
- FAO Schwarz in New York, NY
- The Toy Museum in Bellaire, OH
- The Dreier Collection in Santa Barbara, CA
- The National Museum of the Marine Corps in Quantico, VA
- The New Orleans Public Library public art display in New Orleans, LA

Sawaya has also been featured on multiple media outlets including CBS's The Late Show with David Letterman, NBC's Today Show, MSNBC's Countdown with Keith Olbermann, ESPN's Cold Pizza, ABC'S Jimmy Kimmel Live, Newsweek, the Los Angeles Times, Hollywood Reporter and Newsday.

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