LEGO® is much more than just a toy—it’s a way of life. The Cult of LEGO takes you on a thrilling illustrated tour of the LEGO community and their creations. You’ll meet LEGO fans from all walks of life, like professional artist Nathan Sawaya, brick fi  lmmaker David Pagano, the enigmatic Ego Leonard, and the many devoted AFOLs (adult fans of LEGO) who spend countless hours building their masterpieces.

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Whether you’re a card-carrying AFOL or just thinking about that dusty box of LEGO in storage, John Baichtal and Joe Meno’s magnificent look at the world of LEGO will inspire you to take out your bricks and build something amazing.

John Baichtal is a contributor to MAKE magazine and Wired’s GeekDad blog. He has also written for legendary tabletop gaming magazines Dragon and Dungeon, as well as Kobold Quarterly and 2600: The Hacker Quarterly.

Joe Meno is the founder of BrickJournal, a print and online LEGO® fan magazine. He has organized and run LEGO fan events, acted as an advisor on LEGO projects, and helped design LEGO sets.

This unofficial book is not endorsed or authorized by the LEGO Group.
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A sampling of the LEGO Group’s vast minifig selection decorates a LEGO store in Florida.

The Minifig Turns 30
In 2008, the LEGO Group celebrated the minifig’s 30th anniversary. Though the minifig’s year of origin is debatable since a version with fixed limbs came out a few years before the movable minifig we know today, this anniversary marked a special milestone that transcended a mere marketing event. “The minifig is as iconic as the basic brick and as much a critical component of the LEGO System of Play as its studded cousin,” said Andrew Becraft, co-editor of the fan blog The Brothers Brick (http://www.brothers-brick.com/). The minifig has been used to add humanity to LEGO models, to lend scale, and even as an art form in itself. LEGO wouldn’t be the same without it.
Minifig Facts

With such an impressive history, it’s only natural that the LEGO Group would come up with a myriad of facts and statistics that tell the story of this remarkable little creature:

More than 4 billion minifigs have been manufactured, with nearly 4 figures sold every second, for an average of 122 million per year.

The first minifig was a police officer. To date, 41 different cop minifigs have been enclosed in 104 sets.

More than 4,000 different minifigs have been released since 1978, including those with subtle differences in color, with 450 head designs alone. Mathematicians tell us that this means more than 8 quadrillion different combinations are possible.

The first minifigs with noses drawn on their heads were Native American figures in LEGO Wild West.

The first female minifig was a nurse. The ratio of male-to-female minifigs is 18:1.

The minifigs’ trademark vacuous smile did not change until 1989, when the Pirates line introduced other facial expressions as well as such lovable deformities as eye patches and hook hands.

The year 2003 marked the first year the minifig’s yellow coloration changed to a more realistic flesh coloration.

The only way to make a completely nude minifig is to use the torso and legs from a classic LEGO Space astronaut.

Angus McLane’s loveable 'Dudes instantly spawned a trend.
One day Angus McLane, an animator for Pixar, watched an episode of the G.I. Joe TV show and decided that he wanted to build a miniland figure of one of the characters, Snake Eyes. He wanted to build small (due to a lack of space) and ended up building at a size only slightly larger than a minifig. As he played around with the bricks, he came up with the more “deformed” appearance that is the CubeDude's signature look: a cubical head presented in such a way that one angle serves as the face. He built about a half-dozen characters before he began sharing them online, and they were an immediate hit. Since the debut of McLane's models, dozens of LEGO fans have tried their hands at creating CubeDudes, but McLane is still considered the grandmaster. To date he has built over 100 CubeDudes, most of them recognizable figures from TV and cinema.
The LEGO builders featured in Chapter 4 take pride in accurately re-creating real-world phenomena. Ultimately, their accomplishments are measured in terms of their technical skill and faithfulness to the original item. But what about building beautiful models of things that exist only in one’s imagination?

When building from the imagination, anything is possible. Builders don’t need to limit a project to what can be found in the real world or limit it to depicting technology that could actually function. Some builders draw inspiration from movies, dreams, or simply conversations. Others crank up the music, grab a pile of bricks, and just create. Still others take a more methodical approach, sketching out entire fleets of vehicles before placing a single brick.

Guy Himber’s “Cabinet of Curiosities” evokes the Renaissance tradition of collecting natural marvels and odd discoveries in a cabinet, except that this cabinet is also a robot!
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"The Cult of LEGO—this is the only membership requirement is clicking two pieces of plastic together and wanting to click more. Now we have a book that justifies our obsession."
—Jason Plotkin, designer for LEGO and LEGO.com

"A crazy fun read from cover to cover, this book deserves a special spot on the bookshelf of any Lego fan with a rebellious streak."
—Luke Mullan, senior global community manager, LEGO

"An excellent book and a must-have for any LEGO enthusiast out there. The pictures are awesome!"
—Chad Gillaspie, author of Forbidden LEGO

"I defy you to read and admire this book and not want to doodle with some bricks by the time you're done."
—Gareth Branwyn, editor in chief, MAKE: Online

"This fascinating look at the world of devoted LEGO fans deserves a place on the bookshelf of anyone who's ever played with LEGO bricks."
—Chris Anderson, editor in chief, Wired

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Page after page of full-color photos showcases the fantastically creative and complex models built by the LEGO Community. You’ll admire the life-size replicas of these iconic structures, such as the Hangar Deck from the movie Star Wars: A New Hope, a 22-foot-long WW II battleship, a MINDSTORMS®-powered monster chess set, and a remote-controlled Jawa Sandcrawler (with moving conveyor belt). Visit the conventions where LEGO fans gather to socialize and show off their work. And discover the serious side of LEGO, used in therapy, prototyping, and team-building.

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