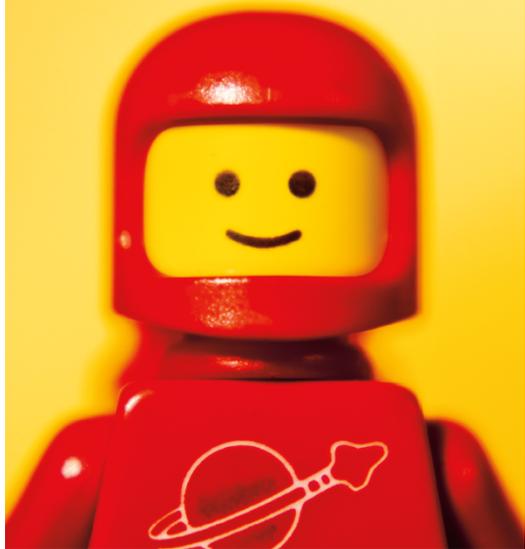


The Cult of LEGO



“The Cult of LEGO”

Review by Chris Bolton

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With all that has been going on over the last few months for the Tennessee Valley LEGO Train Club I haven't had an opportunity to share my review of the new No Starch Press book “The Cult of LEGO”. The book was written by John Baichtal and Joe Meno. John Baichtal is the author of the popular GeekDad Blog and frequent contributor to MAKE Magazine and Joe Meno is the editor of the Brickjournal Magazine. From the first few pages of this book, it's obvious that Baichtal and Meno are not only passionate about LEGO but their goal was to present what attracts so many adults to the hobby of creating with LEGO bricks. One of the most interesting aspects of the book is that it appears that the intent is to explain

the LEGO hobby to potentially skeptical outsiders who might otherwise look at LEGO as merely a toy. By first explaining the history and philosophy of the LEGO Group and also the thought process that goes into the development of the plastic bricks, the book begins to illustrate how the unassuming LEGO brick can become so powerful.

This book isn't about the LEGO Group however and it isn't even really about the LEGO bricks themselves, this book is about people and Baichtal and Meno spend much of the 12 chapters presenting interviews and commentary from a wide variety of adult fans of LEGO (AFOLs). There are short quotes from random AFOLs and longer question and answer sessions such as a wonderful interview with LEGO NXT Zoo creator Fay Rhodes. I found it fascinating to read about Ms. Rhodes NXT educational program and how she seeks to inspire children, especially girls, with the field of robotics. In addition to Ms. Rhodes, a number of other female AFOLs are highlighted providing a unique perspective for a product that is targeted toward males.

Other topics in the book highlight minifigures, architectural and creative building styles, AFOL club meetings and conventions, and even LEGO beyond the brick (i.e. video games, movies and other media). The key is in each topic, the focus is not on LEGO itself but on the builders and enthusiasts and how LEGO has influenced and enriched their lives. To look at almost 300 pages of beautiful illustrations and read the stories of how LEGO is used in the world, it is really amazing. There are pictures of models so detailed it's hard to even distinguish that the model is made of LEGO bricks and other devices and machines that boggle the mind with their complexity and sophistication.

This is truly the kind of book you can hand to the uninitiated and ask them to read so as to glean some understanding. I guarantee the next time you start talking about your LEGO hobby they will have a whole new appreciation for the obsession that is LEGO!