

## LEGO® BRICKS: A CELEBRATION!

An exhibition at Scandinavia House salutes the Danish innovator the LEGO Group and explores how learning through play can unlock the imagination



LEGO® DUPLO® bricks. Image courtesy of the LEGO Group.

This summer, to mark the 60th anniversary of the LEGO® brick, the American-Scandinavian Foundation presents an exhibition saluting the LEGO Group as a leader of learning through play, **LEGO® Bricks: A Celebration!** Featuring sculptures, mosaics, and interactive play zones by renowned LEGO® Certified Professional artist Sean Kenney, the exhibition will also include an overview of the LEGO Group’s history and educational mission, as well as a variety of children’s workshops at Scandinavia House from **April 28 through August 4, 2018.**

Free play is how children develop their imagination and is the foundation for creativity. It is the LEGO Group’s philosophy that ‘good quality play’ enriches a child’s life, and lays the foundation for later adult life. Along with young builders, many architects, designers and artists use the LEGO brick to create new worlds of their own. On view in the exhibition are an array of sculptures and wall pieces by Brooklyn-based artist Sean Kenney, featuring iconic architecture, patterns inspired by the Moorish tiles of southern Spain, and a series of works dedicated to exploring the interconnectedness of nature. Accompanied by descriptive panels, viewers can discover the myriad ways the LEGO brick can be used, and an interactive play zone—featuring 30,000 loose LEGO bricks—will inspire builders of all ages to explore the creative potential of their imagination.

The exhibition will coincide with the presentation of the Distinguished Public Service Award to the LEGO Group at the annual ASF Gala on May 10, 2018. It has been organized by the American-Scandinavian Foundation for presentation at Scandinavia House, with partial support from the LEGO Group.

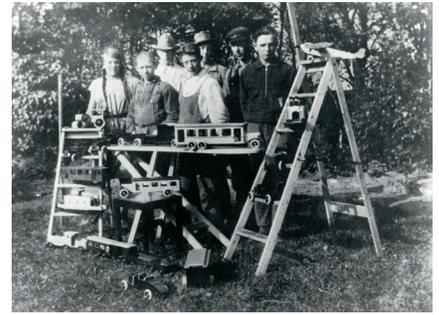
- WHEN:** April 28, 2018 through August 4, 2018
- WHERE:** Scandinavia House  
 58 Park Avenue  
 New York, NY 10016
- EXHIBITION OPENING:** Saturday, April 28  
 3 PM—5 PM
- GALLERY HOURS & ADMISSION** Tuesday through Saturday, 12—6 PM, free  
 Wednesdays, 12—7 PM, free



Sean Kenney, *Chrysler Building*, 2011. Image courtesy of Sean Kenney.

## OVERVIEW: LEARNING THROUGH PLAY

Most Scandinavians have grown up with what is often called the “Nordic ideal” — that is, to offer their young children a “good childhood.” In fact, to cultivate this value, in most Nordic countries children are not encouraged to enroll in any form of structured academic instruction before age seven. Instead, children are given opportunities to learn by playing and to play by learning. Young children learn about their world by exploring familiar surroundings by themselves and with others in joyful settings, with freedom to choose what to do and how long to do it. This child-centric approach has demonstrated success in preparing children for more structured learning experiences as they grow older, either self-directed or as part of formal school curricula.



LEGO® product line, 1932. Image courtesy of the LEGO Group.

Since the company was founded by carpenter Ole Kirk Kristiansen in Billund, Denmark in 1932, the LEGO Group has been committed to children’s creativity, and to play and learning, as demonstrated in their company name: “LEge GOdt” (Play Well). It has been a leader in early childhood development through its emphasis on re-defining play as a central arena for learning. “Play” can mean many kinds of experiences, from play that gives children the freedom to explore and discover with minimal constraints, to play that is more guided or structured. The nature of a child’s play activity will vary — depending on age, context and culture — and their skills will increase in complexity. However, the basic structures of these skills are present right from early infancy, and are supported and strengthened by high-quality play experiences.

In 1955, Godtfred Kirk Christiansen, the son of Ole Kirk Kristiansen, launched the LEGO® System in Play. Determined to concentrate on the system’s basic idea, Godtfred Kirk set out to create a small and manageable number of elements. In 1958, the LEGO® brick launched with the coupling principle we know today, opening up to endless building possibilities. Designed on the principle that all blocks should interlock and be interrelated, that system became the foundation of the modern-day LEGO® System in Play.

## ABOUT SEAN KENNEY

Award-winning artist Sean Kenney ([www.seankenney.com](http://www.seankenney.com)) has used LEGO toys to create exhibits, portraiture, children’s books, home decor, and commissioned work for high-profile clients, major corporations, and venues around the globe for over 12 years. He has authored eight best-selling inspirational children’s books, and his exhibit *Nature Connects* has broken attendance records around the world since 2012. Sean and his work have been acclaimed by *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Washington Post*, *The Chicago Tribune*, *PBS Arts*, *BBC Arts*, *NHK Japan*, *Slate*, and countless more. He lives with his wife and two young children in Brooklyn, New York.



Sean Kenney, *Back From the Market With Mom*, 2018. Image courtesy of Sean Kenney.

## THE AMERICAN-SCANDINAVIAN FOUNDATION

The American-Scandinavian Foundation (ASF) promotes firsthand exchange of intellectual and creative influence between the United States and the Nordic countries: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden. A publicly supported American nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization, ASF has an extensive program of fellowships, grants, intern/trainee sponsorship, publishing, and cultural activities. Headquartered in New York City, ASF has members throughout the United States, and alumni and donors worldwide.

**For more information:** [amscan.org](http://amscan.org)

## SCANDINAVIA HOUSE

Scandinavia House was created by the American-Scandinavian Foundation to promote the artistic and intellectual influence of the Nordic countries. As the leading center for Nordic culture in the United States, Scandinavia House offers enriching programs that illustrate and illuminate the culture and life of the Nordic countries. The diverse programs include exhibitions, film series, concerts and other performances, readings, lectures, language courses, and activities for kids and families.

**For more information:** [scandinaviahouse.org](http://scandinaviahouse.org) | Facebook | Twitter @ScanHouse

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