



Model construction: a dream career as a LEGO model designer

Before LEGOLAND Deutschland opened its gates in 2002, 140 model designers in the Danish town of Billund (headquarters of the LEGO Company) were hard at work for three years planning, building and finally transporting the new models to Günzburg. Today, fifteen years later, no less than 56 million LEGO bricks have been assembled throughout the park. At the neighbouring LEGOLAND Holiday Village, almost another four million bricks have been used. There isn't any predefined training or career programme to work as a LEGO model designer. What is important is imagination, manual and technical skills, along with an ability to visualise things in three dimensions.

Development steps – from the LEGO brick to the completed model

The work of a model designer starts with a drawing of the model. Photographs or blueprints are used as a basis. The classic way is to transfer even the tiniest detail to special LEGO drawing paper, where one square represents exactly one LEGO knob. However, the specialists now usually work with a program called Brick Builder, which was developed especially for LEGO. This program can display the planned parts of the model on the computer in a LEGO brick look, which is particularly helpful in constructing complex shapes and curves. In addition, graphic programs create 3D views, which are uploaded into Brick Builder then.

In the next step, the designers calculate how many bricks of which colours and shapes they will need for a future project and then assemble the model brick by brick. Making corrections to the final models is relatively difficult since all of the bricks are glued together and then painted with a special UV paint, in order to help the LEGO models last longer. Consequently, prototypes are also built for especially difficult models. The completed model is then displayed in the park, where electricians and mechanical technicians ensure that the LEGO model appears as realistic as possible, using special animations such as lights, movement and sound. Therefore solely in the MINILAND 30,000 meter cable were laid. The gardeners provide the icing on the cake with the lovingly planted sceneries which make the miniature world look even more authentic. Every day they ensure that the plants do not grow out of scale. Among other things, 800

MINILAND trees are trimmed every four weeks. Only commercially available LEGO bricks are used for the miniature models.

For the newest MINILAND area High Five, for example more than 400,000 LEGO bricks were used to build models of five of the tallest skyscrapers in the world. It took 13 model designers more than six months to create replicas of the Burj Khalifa (Dubai), Ping An Finance Center (China), Shanghai Tower (China), Makkah Royal Clock Tower Hotel (Saudi Arabia), and One World Trade Center (USA). The highest building, the Burj Khalifa, which stands a towering 828 meters in the original, is truly a giant LEGO model, at a height of more than 5 metres.

What happens when something breaks down?

There is still a lot to do after a model is completed. Every morning, technicians and model designers walk through the miniature world and check if everything is in order. Where needed, the models are cleaned with a broom and co. Sometimes they even take out small repairs, as at times rabbits, birds and other animals visit the MINILAND in the night and leave their marks. They also check if the vehicles follow the lanes on the ground and if the ship's rubber bands are hooked up properly, so they do not drift off course. Also the gardeners and the cleaning team are working diligently, to ensure that everything is tidy and ready for the park opening at 10 o'clock AM.

Plenty of work despite the winter break

During the winter break, the LEGO specialists are still very busy. Buildings and structures have to be thoroughly cleaned and the water in the miniature canals and pools must be drained off. This makes up approx. two million litres of water. All animated models, such as moving cars and ships, are brought back to the model workshop to protect them from the elements, so the inhabitants of the miniature world do not have to stay outside during the cold season. Even if MINILAND slips into its hibernation there is a lot to do for the model designers. At this time of the year news models for the coming LEGOLAND season or other parks are built. The MINILAND is brought back to life for the park opening in spring.

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Media information and graphic materials can be found at www.LEGOLAND.de/Presse.
Broadcast-quality footage is available for download at www.LEGOLAND-Videogalerie.de.

Note to editors:

The LEGOLAND Deutschland Resort was opened on 17 May 2002 in the Bavarian town of Günzburg and is one of the most popular amusement parks in Germany. Information on the LEGOLAND Deutschland Resort can be found at www.LEGOLAND.de. Tickets and accommodation packages can also be booked online at this address.

2017 Season: 1 April to 5 November

LEGOLAND Deutschland Resort is a part of Merlin Entertainments Group. Information can be found at www.merlinentertainments.biz.