

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THE WORLD'S LARGEST DISPLAY OF LEGO® ART IS COMING TO OMSI
*Oregonian artist returns home with an international record-breaking exhibit
made from millions of LEGO bricks*

PORTLAND, Ore. (January 17, 2017) – *THE ART OF THE BRICK*, a captivating exhibition of intriguing works of art made exclusively from one of the most recognizable toys in the world, the LEGO® brick, opens at the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry (OMSI) on February 18. The critically acclaimed collection of creative and inspiring pieces constructed using only LEGO bricks is created by renowned contemporary artist Nathan Sawaya.

THE ART OF THE BRICK is the world's largest and most elaborate display of LEGO art, featuring more than 100 works of art. This exhibition has toured the globe, breaking records and becoming both an art and pop culture phenomenon along the way.

The collection features Sawaya's notable original pieces, as well as re-imagined versions of some of the world's most famous art masterpieces such as Van Gogh's *Starry Night* and Da Vinci's *Mona Lisa*. The exhibition concludes with a spectacular and innovative, multimedia collection of LEGO brick infused hyper-realistic photography produced in collaboration with award-winning photographer Dean West. Visitors will have the opportunity to get an up-close view of the iconic, *Yellow*, a life-size sculpture of a man ripping his chest open with thousands of yellow LEGO bricks cascading from the cavity. In addition, visitors will come face-to-face with a 20-foot-long T-Rex dinosaur skeleton made out of bricks. Inspired by his origins, Sawaya will also create and display a brand-new Portland-themed piece especially for the exhibition at OMSI.

Sawaya's creations comprise the first major museum exhibition to use LEGO bricks as the sole art medium. Raised in Veneta, Oregon, Sawaya transforms the popular plastic construction toy into amazing showcases of creativity, innovation, and fine art.

"I'm really looking forward to bringing this collection of art to Oregon for the first time. It's where this incredible journey with LEGO began. I use LEGO bricks as my medium because I enjoy seeing people's reactions to artwork created from something with which they are familiar," says Sawaya. "Everyone can relate to it since it is a toy that many children have at home. I want to elevate this simple plaything to a place it has never been before."

In *THE ART OF THE BRICK*, visitors will have the opportunity to try their own hand at LEGO brick ingenuity. OMSI has created a 1,500 square-foot "free-build" LEGO and DUPLO® play area for all ages. The play area will feature a variety of engineering, design, math, architecture, physics, and biology challenges, as well as helpful tips for young builders just getting started.

"This exhibition is one that opens the door to a variety of complex topics through a simple toy most of us played with as children," said Nancy Stueber, OMSI president and CEO. "It shows that art and science are very much linked together, and this exhibit is a fun and whimsical way to make both accessible to audiences of all ages."

THE ART OF THE BRICK runs from February 18, 2017-May 29, 2017. Tickets to this exhibit, which include general museum admission, are \$19.75 for adults, \$13.50 for youth (ages 3-13), and \$15.00 for seniors (ages 63+). Prices for OMSI Members are \$6.00 for adults, \$4.00 for youth, and \$5.00 for seniors.

First Tech Credit Union is the major sponsor of *THE ART OF THE BRICK* at OMSI. For more information, visit www.omsi.edu. For more information on Nathan Sawaya and the history of *THE ART OF THE BRICK*, visit www.brickartist.com.

About OMSI

Founded in 1944, the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry (OMSI) is one of the nation's leading science museums, a world-class tourist attraction, and an award-winning educational resource for the kid in each of us. OMSI operates the largest museum-based outdoor science education program in the country and provides traveling and community outreach programs that bring science learning opportunities to schools and community organizations in nearly every county in Oregon. OMSI is located at 1945 SE Water Avenue, Portland, OR 97214. For general information, call 503.797.4000 or visit omsi.edu.

About Nathan Sawaya

Nathan Sawaya is an acclaimed contemporary artist who creates awe-inspiring artwork out of a toy. His art focuses on large-scale sculptures using only LEGO bricks. Sawaya was the first artist to ever take LEGO into the art world and his touring exhibition *THE ART OF THE BRICK*, has entertained and inspired millions of art lovers and enthusiasts around the world. CNN heralded, "*The Art of the Brick* is one of the top must-see exhibits in the world!" Originally from Oregon, when it came time for college, Sawaya moved to New York City, attended NYU and became a lawyer. But after years of million dollar mergers and corporate acquisitions on Park Avenue, Sawaya realized he would rather be sitting on the floor creating art than sitting in a boardroom negotiating contracts. He walked away from the law and took an artistic risk on LEGO bricks.

Now, Sawaya is an author, speaker, and one of the most popular, award-winning contemporary artists of our time. For more information about Nathan Sawaya and his artwork, visit www.nathansawaya.com. For more information about *THE ART OF THE BRICK*, visit www.brickartist.com.

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