LEARNING ABOUT THE LIBRARIES VIA CREATIVE PLAY: THE RUTGERS ART LIBRARY LEGO PLAYING STATION

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@MCLotts
ABSTRACT

In September of 2014 the Rutgers University Art Library implemented a Lego® playing station to help stimulate creativity and innovation within the library, as well as a new way to connect with Design students. The author will discuss a collaborative project with 100 freshmen from the Department of Landscape Architecture who experienced the Lego Playing Station as a means to stretch their design & information literacy skills and to learn more about the libraries.
OUTREACH, ENGAGEMENT, MAKING, CREATIVITY & INNOVATION IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES.

Creativity & Making can stimulate broader conversations among patrons and Library employees about the value of the libraries.

Making spaces can be scholarly, fun, affordable, and a new way to engage w/patrons and connect to communities.

I’m trained as a painter & installation artist and I spent many hours in college working in academic libraries.
LEARNING & MAKING SPACES

• We are more likely to learn or come back when we are having FUN!

• Creativity, making, & engagement helps build critical thinking skills & these are skills that are applicable to library research.

• Creativity, making, and engagement can create community.

• Cross-Disciplinary collaboration is a must.

• Low cost, easy to take up & down, small space to store
HOW IT ALL BEGAN

• I2C2 conference in Manchester, UK

• LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY®
  http://www.seriousplay.com/

• Participants built models about their work existence and the challenges faced in our everyday work lives in libraries.

• Began thinking about how I could get my hands on A LOT of Legos
LEGO WORKSHOPS
RUL FACULTY & STAFF

• Team building & learning hands on
• Creative thinking about library resources & spaces
INSTALLATION

• Installed in August 2014
• Used existing table & chairs
• Created signage & comment box
• All Legos were upcycled for project
Check out Rutgers Today https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iZHhlwoy9Yc
Block party
Rutgers University Art Library
September 10, 2014 12-1pm
Art Library Lego® Playing Station Celebration
Refresments will be served.
A special exhibit of Lego models on the theme of libraries on display for reception only!

Come Create & Play!
Visit the Lego Playing Station at any time during regular Art Library fall hours of M-Th 8:30am-10pm, Fri, 8:30am-5pm, Sat, 10-5pm, Sun, 2pm-10pm. If you have questions about this project please contact Art Librarian, Megan Lotts at: megan.lotts@rutgers.edu or (848)932-7189.
Like the Rutgers Art Library on Facebook

Scarlet Knight Days, models created by library faculty, library staff, graduate students, and undergrads
LEGO CHARACTER CONTEST

Create a Character Contest – Win a PRIZE!

NAME:
Please submit your entries to Art Librarian, Megan Lotts, at the Art Library on Voorhees mall no later than October 15th, 2024. All entries will be displayed in the Art Library. Email questions to McLotts@Liberty.edu.

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CREATE YOUR IDEAL LIBRARY...
WIN A $20 GIFT CARD

- Stop by the Rutgers Art Library Lego Playing Station and create a model made with legos depicting your Ideal Library.

- Post an image of your model to the Rutgers Art Library Facebook page or email your image to megan.lotts@rutgers.edu

Submit your image no later than midnight on Monday December 1, 2014. All entrants names will be entered into a drawing and one winner will be randomly chosen. If you have questions about this contest please contact Megan Lotts Art Librarian at megan.lotts@rutgers.edu
CREATE YOUR IDEAL LIBRARY CONTEST

Mason Gross Printmaking class.
Art Library Lego Playing Station Assignment

Throughout the semester we have heard multiple lectures and discussed the theme “starting over”. For this assignment you and your partner will meet at the Lego Playing Station located in the Rutgers University Art Library.

You and your partner will work as a team to create a lego model that you think best depicts the theme “starting over”. As with most of our in-class group work I will not be giving you any parameters for this assignment. To find a solution think back to the lectures and activities that you have taken part of in the course. You may want to create a shelter or space to live in if you had to “start over” or you may want to go conceptual and use a theme or topic from the lectures such as extinction, justice, sustainability, apocalypse, etc...This project is meant to build critical thinking skills as well as an opportunity for you to work as a team. Please note this assignment is due no later than Monday Nov. 3rd at noon.

Once you have created your lego model please submit an image of the model and no less than 100 words of why you and your partner created your model to: @megan.lotts@rutgers.edu. For extra star points, post an image of your model to the Rutgers Art Library Facebook page.

If you have questions contact me at @megan.lotts@rutgers.edu or stop by my office in the Art Library.

“Thank you so much! My partner and I were playing with the legos for at least two hours. I even snapchatted my lego model to all my friends.”

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In January 2015, team building Lego workshop with 6 Academic Coaches for a Lego introduction to the library & Info Literacy skills
RUTGERS DAY
BUILDING KNOWLEDGE THROUGH IMAGINATION
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Art Library Lego Playing Station comments from box &amp; email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Would Play Again&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;A Masterpiece&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;I love you, thank you&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;More Legos&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;I wish Alexander Library had Legos too&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;THIS IS AWESOME!! Great Idea&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Legos are noisy&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;wish the Legos weren't at my favorite table&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;I never see anyone use these legos and they take up valuable space to study. I would most prefer to use this table to study. Thank you for your time.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;This is so cool&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Bus Stop + Voorhees Mall + Art Library. More people flow to bus stop and building than to the beautiful aspects of Voorhees Mall”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“it is a way to quiet to feel comfortable rummaging through buckets of legos. I love this idea though”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;THANK YOU FOR THIS :)&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;This idea is AWESOME! You guys should think of adding PUZZLES! Those are awesome too. They'd be destressful and not make too much noise&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Cube tower! It's fun because I had to do math to work with the ½” base LEGO measurements.&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;I think this is great!&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;I LOVE Legos&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;sometimes I just need a break&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;I came to the Art Library for the Legos&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;can I book my child's birthday party at the Art Library?&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;we loved the Lego contest, please let us know when you have more&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Thank you so much! We were playing with the legos for at least two hours. I even snapchatted my lego model to all my friends.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Legos are AWESOME!!&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RUTGERS LANDSCAPE DEPARTMENT

• The department is a 30 minute walk from the Art Library
  • They are an inter-disciplinary department
  • They students have minimal research skills & need help
  • Chair of the Department is PRO Libraries

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EDA COURSE

• Environmental Design Analysis introductory course
  • Taught by Chair of LA, Dr. Laura Lawson
  • 100 freshman
MY 30 MINUTE LECTURE

• Conceptual overview of the physical space of the Art Library
• The kinds of resources available in the Rutgers University Libraries
  • A brief intro to the Art Library Research Guide
  • An intro to the Art Library Lego Playing Station
• How to contact me, their library liaison, to seek research assistance

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EXERCISE 2: PUBLIC LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS:
TRACES, BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS, MAPPING, AND IMAGINING

• Observe 3 location on campus, one being the Art Library

• Who are the employees, who are the patrons and what is the flow of the space

• Create a model at the Art Library Lego Playing Station

• Write an analysis of the experience

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OUTCOMES & ASSESSMENT

• The student papers
• How many students I met (candy & library swag)
• Monitor the Facebook page for images
• Reference questions from LA Dept.
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE EDA COURSE
ART LIBRARY LEGO PLAYING STATION
ART LIBRARY LEGO PLAYING STATION
ART LIBRARY LEGO PLAYING STATION

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SINCE THIS COLLABORATION...

• I have started holding reference hours in Blake Hall 2 hours a week
  • Served as a member of an LA faculty search
  • Have seen an increase in reference questions
  • LA has seen an increase in student bibliographies
CONCLUSION

Art Library Lego playing station has explored & expanded conventional research functions of an academic library through encouraging creative and problem solving techniques associated with Art & Design.
CONCLUSION

Legos can be an international 3-Dimensional language that uses hands on active learning to communicate and build critical thinking skills, as well as an activity that makes people happy.
CONCLUSION

Art Library Lego Playing station has been a catalyst for building bridges and making connections with students, faculty and staff on the RU campuses, which has led to a greater understanding of the possibilities of an Academic Research Library and how the act of making and implementing a culture of creativity can influence library patrons.

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One of the most interesting parts of this project is coming into the Art Library every day to see what has transpired at the table. Some days it appears that a group of grubby young children have been let loose at the table and Legos strewn everywhere, including the floor. Other days the author finds elaborate models that tell stories about the students, their lives, their imaginations, and their dreams.
WANT TO LEARN MORE...


**Fall 2014** Lotts Megan. “Implementing a Culture of Creativity: Pop-up making spaces and Participating Events in Academic Libraries.” College and Research Libraries News

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QUESTIONS

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