

## THE ART OF THE BRICK<sup>®</sup>

The World's Largest Display of LEGO<sup>®</sup> Art Will Debut  
in Downtown Tampa on Friday, June 23

The exhibition features 100 incredible artworks made out of LEGO bricks  
by award winning artist Nathan Sawaya

TAMPA, Fla. — May 22, 2017 —Vinik Family Foundation invites Tampa Bay to experience THE ART OF THE BRICK, a captivating exhibition featuring artworks made exclusively from one of the world's most recognizable toys, the LEGO<sup>®</sup> brick, by award winning artist Nathan Sawaya. THE ART OF THE BRICK debuts on Friday, June 23, at 802 East Whiting Street (formerly District 3) in downtown Tampa. THE ART OF THE BRICK is free and open to the public. Tickets or advanced reservations are not required.

Designed to inspire ingenuity and creativity, THE ART OF THE BRICK is the world's largest and most elaborate display of LEGO brick art featuring more than 100 artworks. The collection features original sculptures, as well as re-imagined versions of iconic art masterpieces, made entirely from LEGO bricks. Examples include Vincent Van Gogh's *Starry Night* and Leonardo Da Vinci's *Mona Lisa*. Additionally, the exhibition features a gallery showcasing an innovative, multimedia collection of LEGO brick-infused photography produced in tandem with photographer Dean West.

Visitors will have the opportunity to get up-close and in-person with the fan favorite, *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 experience a 20-foot-long T-Rex dinosaur skeleton made out of bricks and come face-to-face with a giant skull. The public will also be invited to construct their own creations in The Brickyard, a hands-on and interactive build space within the exhibition.

“THE ART OF THE BRICK takes LEGO bricks somewhere you wouldn’t expect and shows you things you have never seen before,” said artist Sawaya. “A goal with this collection of art is to demonstrate the potential of imagination and the power of creativity.”

THE ART OF THE BRICK is the first major exhibition to use LEGO bricks as the sole art medium. Sawaya transforms LEGO bricks into tremendous and thought-provoking sculptures, elevating a toy to the realm of art. Sawaya’s devotion to spatial perfection and his conceptualization of action, enables him to transform a child’s toy into art.

Vinik Family Foundation, the charitable organization that brought The Beach Tampa to AMALIE Arena in August of 2016, is the driving force behind this exciting exhibition. THE ART OF THE BRICK has visited over 80 cities worldwide; this is the first time it has visited Tampa Bay.

“Nathan’s inspiring story and unique perspective of art is what makes this exhibit a “can't miss” for all ages this summer,” said Jeff and Penny Vinik. “Our hope is that everyone in our community will be able to experience this incredible exhibition up-close. Art is both impactful

and inspirational, and we hope to continue share world class cultural events like THE ART OF THE BRICK with Tampa Bay.”

THE ART OF THE BRICK will be on display at 802 East Whiting Street from Friday, June 23 through Monday, September 4. The exhibit will be open Wednesday through Sunday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

For more information, including how to plan your visit, special group instructions and more, please visit: [ArtoftheBrickTampa.com](http://ArtoftheBrickTampa.com).

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To schedule a media preview of THE ART OF THE BRICK, please contact Jessica Eckley at [jessica@eckleymedia.com](mailto:jessica@eckleymedia.com) or 813-484-9080.

Interviews can be scheduled with Jeff and Penny Vinik, and artist Nathan Sawaya.

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#### **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](http://www.nathansawaya.com). For more information about THE ART OF THE BRICK, visit [www.brickartist.com](http://www.brickartist.com).

#### **ABOUT VINIK FAMILY FOUNDATION**

Vinik Family Foundation (VFF) is a private foundation created and managed by Jeff and Penny Vinik. Founded in 1997, VFF has donated over \$60 million to nonprofits working in the areas of education, human services, healthcare and the arts. VFF is especially dedicated to broadening the public’s understanding of art through inclusive, interactive exhibits and installations. In August of 2016, VFF presented The Beach by Snarkitecture in Tampa, Fla. An immersive art installation featuring a 10,000 square foot, all-white beach environment with an ‘ocean’ of 1.2 million recyclable white balls, The Beach was held in AMALIE Arena and free to the public. VFF’s CEO, Jim O’Connell, joined in 2016.