

**Afrofuturist artwork made of one million LEGO® bricks, on view at Wereldmuseum Amsterdam from 31 October:
*Building Black Civilizations – The Nile 3025 CE***



© Ekow Nimako - *Kumbi Saleh 3020 CE* (100,000 LEGO® bricks)

On 31 October, Wereldmuseum Amsterdam will open a new temporary exhibition featuring an impressive Afrofuturist artwork by Ekow Nimako, made of one million black LEGO® bricks: *Building Black Civilizations – THE NILE 3025 CE*. This new and to date largest architectural work by the internationally renowned artist also marks his debut in the Netherlands. Nimako's work has previously been exhibited in museums and galleries in Toronto, New York, Paris, Dubai, Seoul, London, San Francisco, Vienna and at the Berlin Biennale. By bringing the artist to the Netherlands for this temporary exhibition, Wereldmuseum offers a unique and creative experience for both art enthusiasts and LEGO® fans.

With *Building Black Civilizations*, Wereldmuseum and Ekow Nimako present a powerful and playful Afrofuturist artwork, almost seven metres in length, that visualises the rich history and possible futures of Black civilizations along the Nile. Futures in which African societies thrive—strong, visionary, and uninterrupted by colonialism. Visitors will gain a broader perspective on a shared future and, through an additional interactive space featuring more than 80,000 recycled LEGO® bricks, are invited to ignite their own creativity and quite literally add their own piece to the exhibition. Let's go – LEGO®

Building Black Civilizations - *The Nile 3025 CE*: a monument to the future

With *The Nile 3025 CE*, artist Ekow Nimako adds a new work to his series *Building Black: Civilizations*. This series of sculptures, comprised of thousands of black LEGO® bricks, is a powerful tribute to the richness of African history and creative force. Earlier works in *Building Black: Civilizations*—such as the exhibition *Journey of 2000 Ships*—explore mythical and historical narratives surrounding the legendary 14th-century expedition of Mansa Abu Bakr II. A key work in this series is *The Bay of Banjul (The Abdication of Abu Bakr II)*, a landscape that refers to Banjul as the presumed departure point of the fleet. Other highlights include *Asamando* (approx. 150,000 LEGO® elements) and *Isla Ewi* (approx. 200,000 elements). Nimako also created *Kumbi Saleh 3020 CE*, a utopian metropolis measuring three square metres and comprising around 100,000 LEGO® pieces, which served as the centrepiece of his exhibition at the Aga Khan Museum and has since become part of its collection.



© Ekow Nimako - *Journey of 2000 Ships*

In Nimako's latest work, *The Nile 3025 CE*, on view from 31 October at Wereldmuseum, a visionary landscape unfolds along the Nile. From Lake Victoria to the Mediterranean Sea, Nimako envisions a connected Africa—borderless, flourishing, and collective. The nearly seven-metre-long sculpture, made from one million black LEGO® bricks, consists of abstract forms that evoke cities, spiritual dimensions, and civilizations.

With his work, Nimako invites the audience to explore powerful questions: What if African civilizations had never been interrupted by colonialism? What if Black history, creativity, and architecture were the foundations for how we understand the world today? And what if we could envision entirely new futures—shaped by different

stories, values, and perspectives? Through his deliberate use of black LEGO® bricks, Nimako taps into the power of play and imagination. He weaves together architecture, historical sources, and speculative storytelling to sketch futures where Black civilizations take centre stage—free from the gaps, erasures, and exclusions that characterize the colonial archive.

Building Black Civilizations – The Nile 3025 CE challenges visitors to rethink the past, see the present anew, and imagine futures that may once have seemed impossible.

Interactive exhibition—Building is making, and making is something we do together.

What if we could not only imagine the future, but also build it? In *Building Black Civilizations - The Nile 3025 CE*, Ekow Nimako and Wereldmuseum Amsterdam invite visitors to do exactly that. The exhibition is designed as a theatrical, darkened space, that creates focus and minimizes distraction. No objects from the museum's collection are shown—intentionally. By removing historical references, the exhibition creates an open space where visitors can freely imagine new futures. The design supports this, encouraging creativity and interpretation.

Visitors are first given insight into Nimako's creative process through original sketches and a 'making of' film. At the end of the exhibition, they are invited into a specially designed space to contribute to the building process. Thousands of black LEGO® bricks are spread out on a long table. Everyone is welcome to join in—young or old, seasoned builder or curious visitor. What you create is entirely up to you: a bridge, a mountain, a prayer room, or a house. Each addition is left in place for the next visitor, an invitation to co-creating and to co-making futures. The result is a collective composition—a living artwork that evolves continuously throughout the duration of the exhibition.

The exhibition is thus an ode to making in the broadest sense: to the creative process, to play as a serious form of thought, and to the idea that the future is not fixed, but something we can build together.



© Ekow Nimako with *Maame Wata*, from the exhibition *Power* at OCAD.

Photo: Nick Lachance / Toronto Star

Afrofuturism – Worlds yet to exist

Afrofuturism is an aesthetic practice and philosophical approach that reimagines the past, present, and future of African societies and their diaspora through technology, speculative imagination, spirituality, and art. It is both a genre and a way of thinking in which Black narratives are not pushed to the margins but instead shape the future. Think of futuristic cities built on African mythology, sculptures that intertwine technology with ancestral knowledge, and worlds where Black identity is not constrained but celebrated and liberated.

The work of Ekow Nimako resonates strongly with this. With thousands of black LEGO® bricks, the Ghanaian-Canadian artist creates mythical sculptures that are as futuristic as they are spiritual. His work offers an alternative narrative in which Black civilizations are not reduced to elements of colonial constructs, but are celebrated as sources of ancient knowledge, creativity, and resilience. For Nimako, building with LEGO® is both a serious form of future-thinking and a playful invitation to co-create new worlds.



© Ekow Nimako

Public programme: Ekow Nimako in dialogue with the city

The collaboration between Ekow Nimako and Wereldmuseum began when Wayne Modest, Director of Content at Wereldmuseum, first encountered Nimako's work. He was excited to see the parallels between Nimako's artistic approach and the museum's efforts to rethink and rewrite historical narratives, to explore speculative practices that imagine different kinds of histories and futures, and to explore the aesthetics and power of everyday life. This shared vision led to a partnership. Nimako created *Building Black Civilizations – The Nile 3025 CE* exclusively for this exhibition and will be present in the Netherlands for the diverse public programme surrounding the opening, organised in collaboration with partners from across the city.

Artist Talk during Black Achievement Month

On Thursday, 30 October 2025, the Research Center for Material Culture (RCMC), the research institute of the Wereldmuseum, will host a special Artist Talk with Ekow Nimako. The event takes place on the occasion of the exhibition opening and in the context of Black Achievement Month.

During this talk, Nimako will discuss his work, the ideas and intentions that inform his practice, and his vision of making and Afrofuturism. The programme consists of a presentation by the artist, followed by a public Q&A. The discussion will be moderated by Rita Ouédraogo, co-founder and curator of Buro Stedelijk. Doors open at **15:00**, with a welcome drink on arrival. At **15:15**, attendees will be welcomed by Marieke van Bommel, Director of Wereldmuseum, followed by Nimako's Artist Talk, which concludes at 17:00.

Afterwards, visitors are invited to view the exhibition *Building Black Civilizations – The Nile 3025 CE*, which remains open until 18:00.

Location: Wereldmuseum Amsterdam, Linnaeusstraat 2

Admission: Free of charge, but advance registration is required via the website of Wereldmuseum Amsterdam

Meet & Greet the Artist: Ekow Nimako

On Saturday, November 1, during Museumnacht Amsterdam, Ekow Nimako will lead three inspiring and hands-on LEGO® building sessions. The artist will share his working methods, sources of inspiration, and techniques, and invite participants to contribute to building a future living environment — a more just and equitable world, closely aligned with the mission of Wereldmuseum. This activity aligns seamlessly with the interactive character of the exhibition and offers a unique opportunity to learn directly from an internationally renowned artist.

This public activity demonstrates that *The Nile 3025 CE* is more than just an artwork. It is a platform for encounter, dialogue, and co-creation. Together, we build a future where play, imagination, and representation take center stage.



© Ekow Nimako

Rethinking the future—Brick by brick

The Netherlands is currently at a point where its colonial past and the structural inequalities that stem from it are receiving increasing attention. Dialogue is underway, but far from finished. In this context, the collaboration between artist Ekow Nimako and Wereldmuseum Amsterdam is more than an artistic encounter: it is a meeting of cultural imagination and social engagement. to spark dialogue, inspire reflection, and invite collective reimagining of a more just and inclusive future.

Wereldmuseum Amsterdam has deliberately chosen a decolonial approach and actively works towards a more just world. By inviting artists such as Nimako, dominant histories are questioned, and new perspectives are brought to light—not as additions to an established canon, but as starting point for us to better understand the world around us. The exhibition *The Nile 3025 CE* dovetails with the museum's mission: to inspire global citizenship by fostering an open view of the world and contributing to a more equitable and just society.

This vision also resonates in the practical aspects of the exhibition. The thousands of LEGO® bricks with which visitors contribute to a collective future are second-hand and rented—a form of reuse that reflects the principle of circular use and the reshaping of existing materials.

This exhibition and the collaboration are not an endpoint, but rather an invitation: to think freely, build creatively, and imagine together a future in which underrepresented stories form the foundation of what is yet to come. The exhibition at Wereldmuseum Amsterdam opens to the public on 31 October and will run until 8 March 2026.

An artist of international stature

Ekow Nimako (Ghana/Canada) is internationally recognised as a pioneer in the use of black LEGO® bricks as a medium for contemporary art. Since 2012, he has been creating sculptures that have been exhibited worldwide and acclaimed by media outlets such as CNN, BBC, VICE, WIRED, and France24. His collaboration with The LEGO® Group was honoured with a D&AD Award. What began as childhood play in front of the television evolved into an artistic mission: shaping a future in which Black experiences and narratives are at the centre. His work uniquely combines technique, spirituality, imagination, and playfulness.

Interview opportunities

Ekow Nimako is in the Netherlands for the occasion and will be available for interviews upon request.