



Press release on the special exhibition

Building Blocks – Creating Worlds Through Play

22 February–26 October 2025

Nothing more than small blocks ... yet they can effortlessly create entire fantastic worlds. Building is an ancient human practice that spans cultures, generations and social divides. So, it's no wonder that building blocks are one of the oldest toys in the world. Around the globe, children continue to stack blocks, reconstructing familiar worlds or inventing entirely new ones. It is a universal activity that brings people together and makes the world "graspable" in every sense of the word.

The 19th century marked the first time children began building with blocks according to a set of instructions – thanks in part to German pedagogue Friedrich Fröbel, the "father" of the kindergarten. Historical building sets reflect the trends, educational ideas and values of their time, as well as the challenges they faced. During peacetime, for example, the illustrations on the lids of the sets depicted everyday scenes such as railways, bridges and carriages. Wartime brought changes in both imagery and materials: scrap metal replaced wood, for example.

The late 1940s saw the introduction of plastic building blocks, offering new possibilities. Unlike wooden and stone bricks, which relied on friction or gravity, the slight flexibility of plastic allowed the blocks to fit together precisely and securely. This made it possible to create much more complex and durable structures.

Building blocks can be used over and over again and combined in almost endless ways. Playing with them helps children develop their cognitive and motor abilities. The precise assembly of blocks boosts visual and spatial thinking as well as fine motor skills. Overcoming challenges and working on complex projects teaches patience, perseverance and problem solving. As a result, building blocks not only stimulate the imagination but also build confidence in one's own creative abilities.

Play stations in the exhibition encourage visitors to build, tear down, transform and reinvent – allowing them to forget the world around them just long enough to create their own.

Accompanying events

Saturday, 22 February 2025, 10am–6pm

Exhibition opening

Play with giant foam building blocks

Saturday/Sunday, 22/23 March 2025, 10am–6pm

Play with 10,000 wooden blocks

Saturday/Sunday, 5/6 April 2025, 10am–6pm

Play with Geomatrix, magnetic building elements

Wednesday, 23 April, 2pm–6pm

Thursday, 24 April, 2pm–6pm

Friday, 25 April, 2pm–6pm

Saturday, 26 April 2025, 10am–2pm

Anker Stone Building Sets – building with Ines Schroth, operations manager at Ankerstein GmbH

Sunday, 18 May 2025, 10am–6pm

International Museum Day

Play with Biobolo – 2,000 colourful building tiles

Wednesday, 21 May 2025, 2pm–5pm

Swiss Reading Aloud Day

Immerse yourself in stories read by professional storytellers

Saturday/Sunday, 21/22 June 2025, 10am–6pm

Play with Cas Holman's Rigamajig

Saturday/Sunday, 28/29 June 2025, 10am–6pm

Build a fantasy hut

Saturday/Sunday, 5/6 July 2025, 10am–6pm

Build a Giga tower

Sunday, 31 August 2025, 10am–4pm

Summer party

It's time for our legendary summer party – with arts and crafts, games and food. Come along and bring your friends!

Saturday/Sunday, 6/7 September 2025, 10am–6pm

Build with giant building blocks

Sunday, 14 September 2025, 10am–6pm
Wednesday, 15 October 2025, 10am–6pm
Saturday, 18 October 2025, 10am–6pm
Star Wars workshop

Saturday/Sunday, 11/12 October, 10am–6pm
Build a fantasy hut

Saturday/Sunday, 25/26 October, 10am–6pm
Build with 10,000 wooden blocks

Basler Ferienpass (Basel Holiday Pass)

Registration www.basler-ferienpass.ch

For dates and information visit swmb.museum

Workshop

Every Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday, 13.30–5.30pm

Shuttle bus Spielzeug Welten Museum Basel–LEbrickGO Binningen

On the first Sunday of every month, a shuttle bus runs continuously between 2pm and 6pm to and from LEbrickGO in Binningen. Rides are free with an admission ticket.

Tickets

CHF 7,-/5,-, no extra charge for special exhibitions.

Entrance is free for children under 16. Children up to 12 years of age only when accompanied by an adult.

Opening hours

January to November: Tuesday to Sunday 10am–6pm

Special opening hours, see www.swmb.museum

Images and further information on the exhibition

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Images: www.spielzeug-welten-museum-basel.ch/de/museum/medien.html

Exhibition texts are available in German, French, English, Italian and in plain language. The whole museum is wheelchair-accessible.

Sign up for our newsletter if you would like to receive information on our exhibitions and events:

news@swm-basel.ch

About the Spielzeug Welten Museum Basel

A doll plays in the toy grocery shop, teddy bears race one another in pedal cars, an entire amusement park is set into motion at the push of a button ... With more than 6,000 objects, the Spielzeug Welten Museum Basel (Toy Worlds Museum Basel) is unique across the world in its abundance and quality. Accommodated in a building from 1867, it lies in the very heart of Basel. Its cheery, lovingly arranged display windows have meanwhile become famous far and wide: they attract visitors of all ages and are an invitation to discover a world full of wonders. Several times a year, special temporary exhibitions on a wide variety of topics beckon visitors on a foray into new cultural realms, shining a spotlight on the unknown and placing the exhibits in a – sometimes surprising – historical context.