



NOVEMBER 01, 2012

AMERICAN AIRWAYS

AMERICAN AIRLINES + AMERICAN EAGLE

There's Nothing She Can't Do

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ALICIA KEYS is back
and sounding
better than ever

LEGO MASTER
Meet the man whose
toy sculptures
are lifelike

+

FAITH, TRUST & PIXIE DUST

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(Pg. 22)

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TWICE MONTHLY



Art Lover

THOSE OF US who can't so much as draw a stick figure are, perhaps, the best judges of art. That's a strangely subjective statement about a strangely subjective profession: art critic. Yet the rationale is rather straightforward, being that if you can't do what someone else can do, you can appreciate and feel affection for his or her talent. At the same time, though, that makes us very dangerous art critics, for the minute we do something imitatively artistic, we think it's bad art because, well, we can do it, so it can't be that tough.

I didn't always have such a mature artistic view. No, there was the time I denounced almost the

entire second floor of the Art Institute of Chicago. At six and 10 years, I was a moron. A cretin. Now a worldly 36, I'm here to say that not much has changed. But my outlook on art has.

Twenty years ago, I was on a field trip with the other cherubs from Northwestern University's National High School Institute. We pseudo-intellectuals toured the Art Institute of Chicago and critiqued every painting as though we were Robert Hughes' irreverent prodigal children. I was the worst of the bunch because when we got to the abstractionists on the second floor, I made this very smart statement: "That's not art. I can do that."

Ah, petulant child. Such ignorance can be expected, if not forgiven. I thought about this scene and my it's-not-art-if-I-can-do-it position a year ago in Sydney. I was on assignment for *American Way* (see our Sept. 15, 2011, issue) and about to take that 16-hour Qantas flight from Sydney to Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport. My photographer and I were in the Qantas International First Lounge prior to takeoff. I stood in the center of the place and marveled at one of the lounge's walls, which was a menagerie of indigenous Australian vegetation. There were plants and grasses and flowers growing right out of the wall. I thought it was just so classy, so artistic, that I stood there for almost an hour and studied all the different types of plant life, until my cretin photographer piped up, "Adam, it looks like your yard in Texas when you forget to mow."

That was my turning point. And because it took me 20 years to have my turning point vis-à-vis art, I'm still a moron and a cretin — just a more sophisticated cretin than my photographer. These days, I

view art through a much more objective lens, and I also realize that art doesn't only exist between the hallowed halls of places like the Art Institute of Chicago, although that building and the works it holds are art themselves. These days, I realize that art exists just as readily in airports across the country (page 24) as it does growing out of the wall of the Qantas International First Lounge in Sydney. And these days, I realize that I can't even do things that I think I can do, like make something remotely artistic out of my favorite childhood toy (page 26).

Objectively speaking, every single story in this issue of *American Way* is artistic. If there wasn't an art to the way the folks at Disney design their parks, do you really think that the Magic Kingdom (page 22) would be the most visited theme park on Earth? If Alicia Keys (page 42) wasn't the consummate artist with her lyrics, her musical scores and her voice, would she have won 14 Grammy Awards? And if there wasn't an artistic component to *American Way*, would you, our passengers, have made us America's most-read and most-decorated in-flight magazine? Would you be reading this right now?

Enjoy what is undoubtedly one of the more artsy issues of *American Way*. If we did our job, you'll come back for more, either on a plane or online. If we didn't, let us know so that we can do better — and avoid being displayed on the second floor of the Art Institute of Chicago.


ADAM PITLUK
 Editor

THAT LEGO LOOK: This portrait of Adam (above and right) by LEGO artist Sean Kenney is decidedly better looking than the real-life Adam.



Enter for a chance to win 50,000 AAdvantage miles when you vote for your favorite Road Warrior Contest finalist. See Pg. 40 for details.

-  **Want to talk to Adam?** Reach him at editor@americanwaymag.com
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