

The Joy of Building in Microfig Scale

A presentation for BricksWest™ 2002

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With contributions from
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Agenda

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What is Microfig Scale?



- Scales
- Miniland
 - Minifig
 - Microfig**
 - Stickfig
 - Nanofig
 - Picofig



Microfig--anything smaller than minifig scale. May assume that a person is the size of a 1x1 cylinder brick.

Stickfig scale--a variant of microfig building in which scale persons are minimized or disregarded.

Microfig scale is roughly 1:115 -- 1 stud equals about 1.5 feet.

Microfig scale

Nano=1 billionth. Pico=1 trillionth.



A Quick History of Microfig Building

1949: Automatic Binding Bricks introduced.
Imaginative building required.

1960's-1970's: Microfig building is the default.
Was imaginative play at it's peak?

Late 70's: The arrival of both the armless and normal minifigs “accidentally” marked the “end” of microfig building. The new figures provided a context for scale.



1998

The 90's: Promotional ferry sets and advent calendars among the few places where microfig building has “survived.”

Last few years: Jeremy Sproat has served as the most active fan and supporter of microfig, and around two dozen others have posted works on the web.

1957



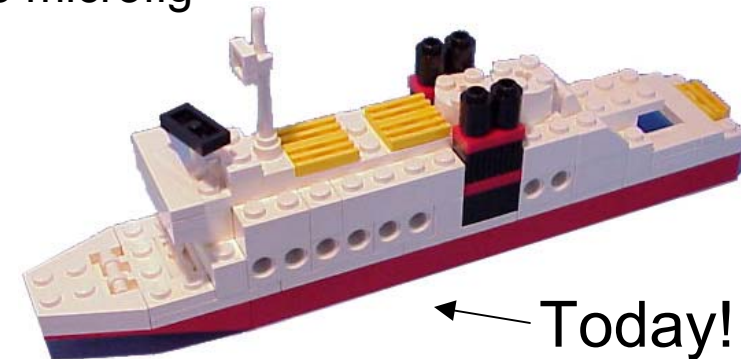
1973



1977



1992



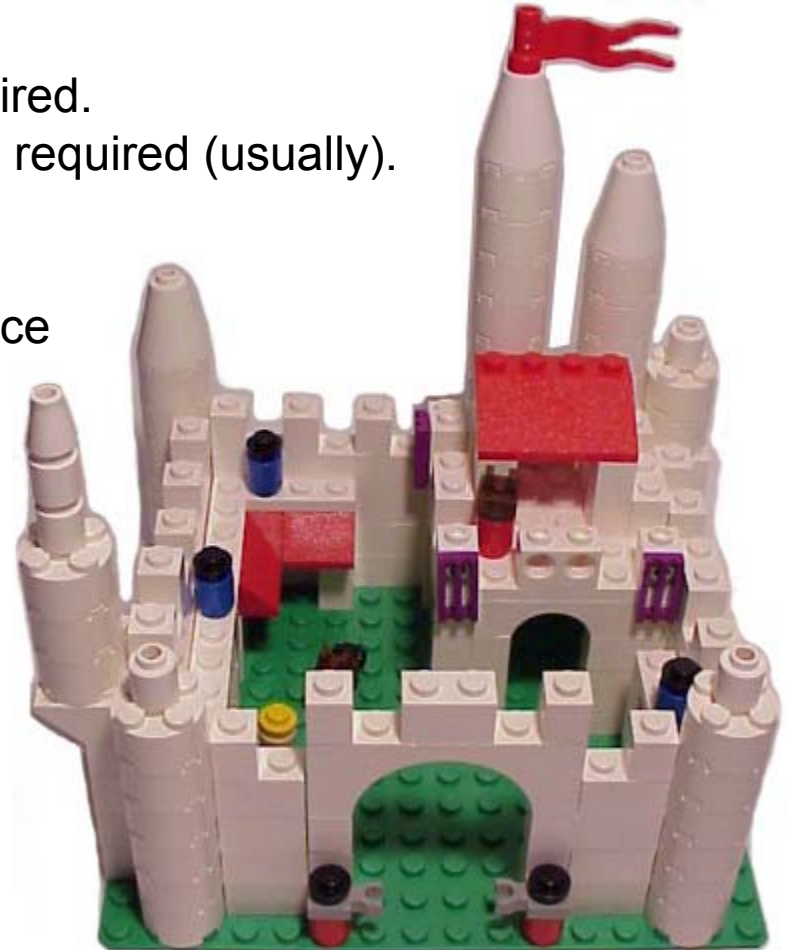
The Benefits of Building in Microfig Scale



- You don't need a huge collection of bricks or elements!
- Fewer bricks = lower cost.
- Minimal storage and display space required.
- Small scale building = less building time required (usually).

- Easy to transport.
- Returns builder and viewer to the essence of imagination.
- Allows you to produce a creation on the spot for family or friends.

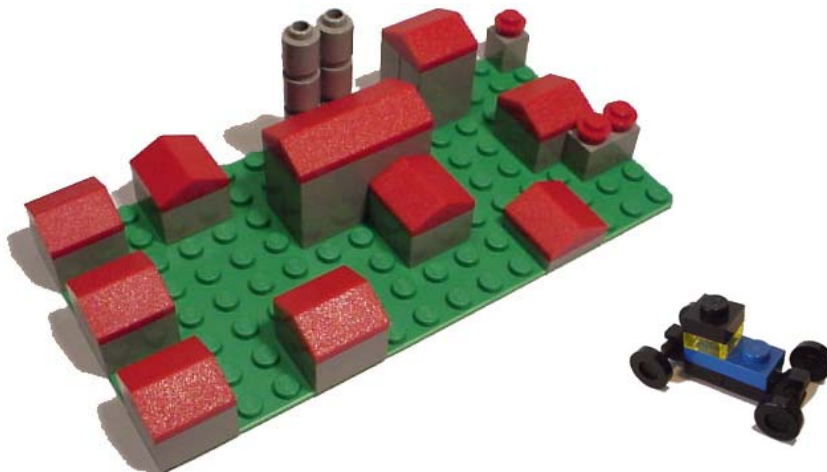
- A great outlet for seemingly useless parts.
- Great for construction doodling.
Watch it on TV, build it afterwards.
- Fun eye candy. People seem to really like microfig because it's different.



Microfig Building Applications

(More benefits, part one...Why try it?)

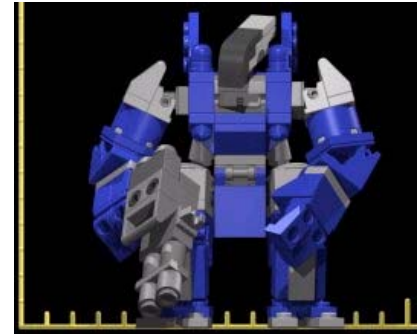
- A great complement to Miniland scale creations (or to make minifig giants).
- Dioramas can be constructed rather than mere components.
- Great for setting the location for a scene or for use as a LEGO® map.
- Great for contest entries and shows in which creations are displayed in eye level museum cases or glass enclosures.



Microfig Building Applications

(More benefits, part two...Why try it?)

- Great for forced perspective or distance.
- Easy to duplicate an item to include as a fleet, a flock, convoy, army, etc.
- Great for mocking up a larger model in quarter scale, etc.



Microfig dumptruck



A covey of attack helicopters.



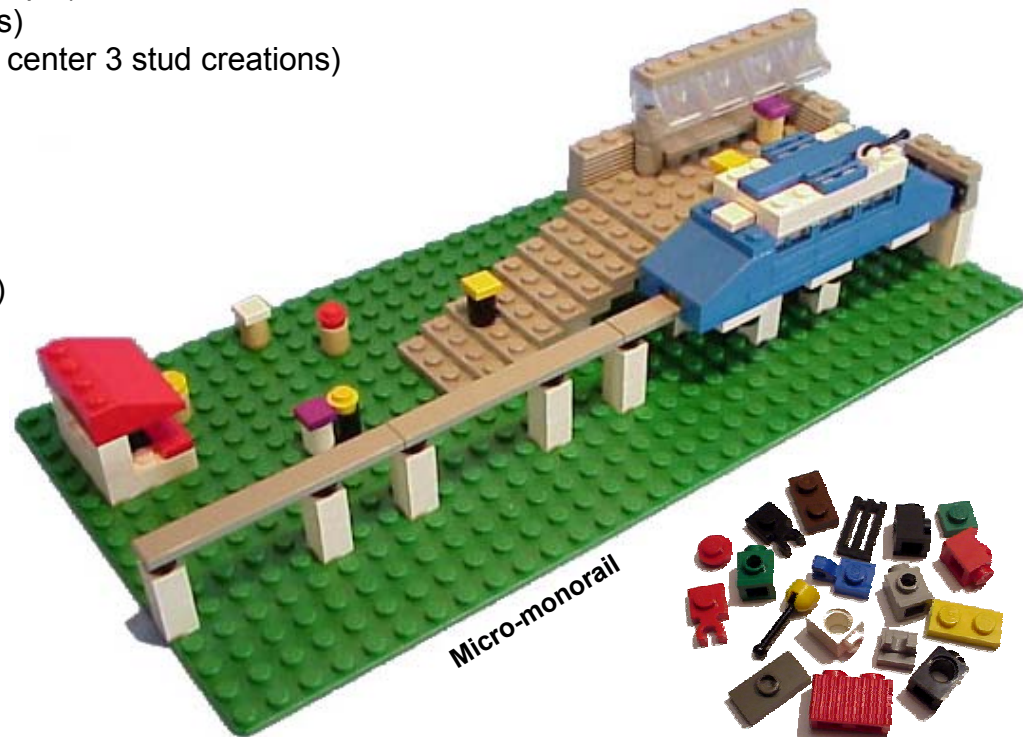
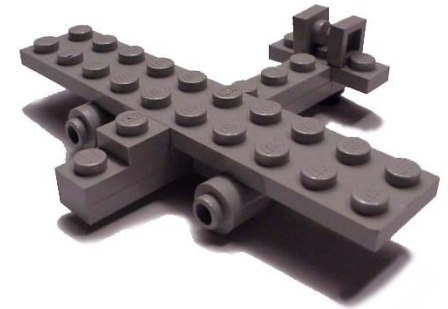
Red Mecha

All images and creations on this page are courtesy of Jeremy Sproat.

25 Essential Elements for Microfig Building

(and some known uses)

1. Green base plates (Great for an acre or two of building)
2. 1x1 round cylinders (Persons, structures)
3. 1x1 brick with 4 side studs (A common centerpiece for vehicles, robots, etc.)
4. Control sticks/levers (Guns on battleships, hats, domes on vehicles)
5. 2x2 tiles (A variety of uses)
6. 2x2 trans. slopes (Windshields, sun roofs, etc.)
7. Micro wheel sets from advent calendars or minifig dollies (Wheels)
8. 1x1 with 1 side stud (A variety of uses, including people)
9. 1x1 plates and transparent plates (A variety of uses)
10. 1x2 tiles with 1 center stud (Many uses, mostly to center 3 stud creations)
11. Roof tiles (Roofs, car hoods, deflector shields)
12. 1x1 tiles (Many uses; hats, vehicle details, etc.)
13. Grille tiles (Detailing, hay bales, vehicle parts)
14. 1x1 bricks (A variety of uses)
15. 1x2 plates. (Foundation, base structure use).
16. 1x1 round plates (Numerous uses; people details)
17. 1x2 bricks with grooves. (Building details)
18. 1x1 with side clips (People details)
19. 2x2 and 2x4 roof slopes (For microfig roofs)
20. 2x2 cylinders (Silos, mecha arms and legs)
21. Small spruce trees (Landscaping)
22. 2xX plates (Foundation, base structure use)
23. Antenna elements (Antennas, weapons, tools)
24. 1x cones (Chimneys, people, exhaust nozzles)
25. Your imagination.



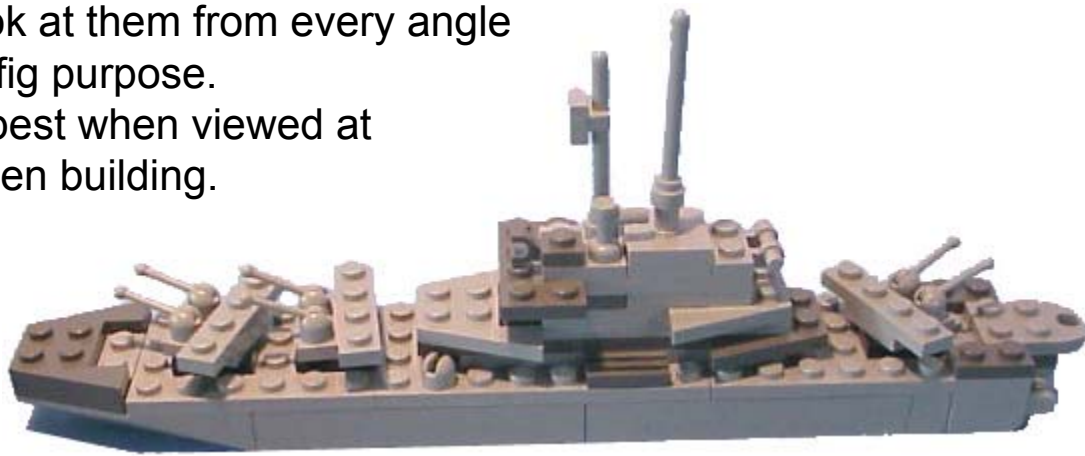
Tips and Tricks for Micro Scale Building

- Cylinders need additional detail to “look” like people. Add 1x elements.
- Look at an object and determine what is its defining component. Make sure you include the defining component(s) in your creation.
- Don’t worry about exact scale. It can’t easily be done and will drive you nuts trying.

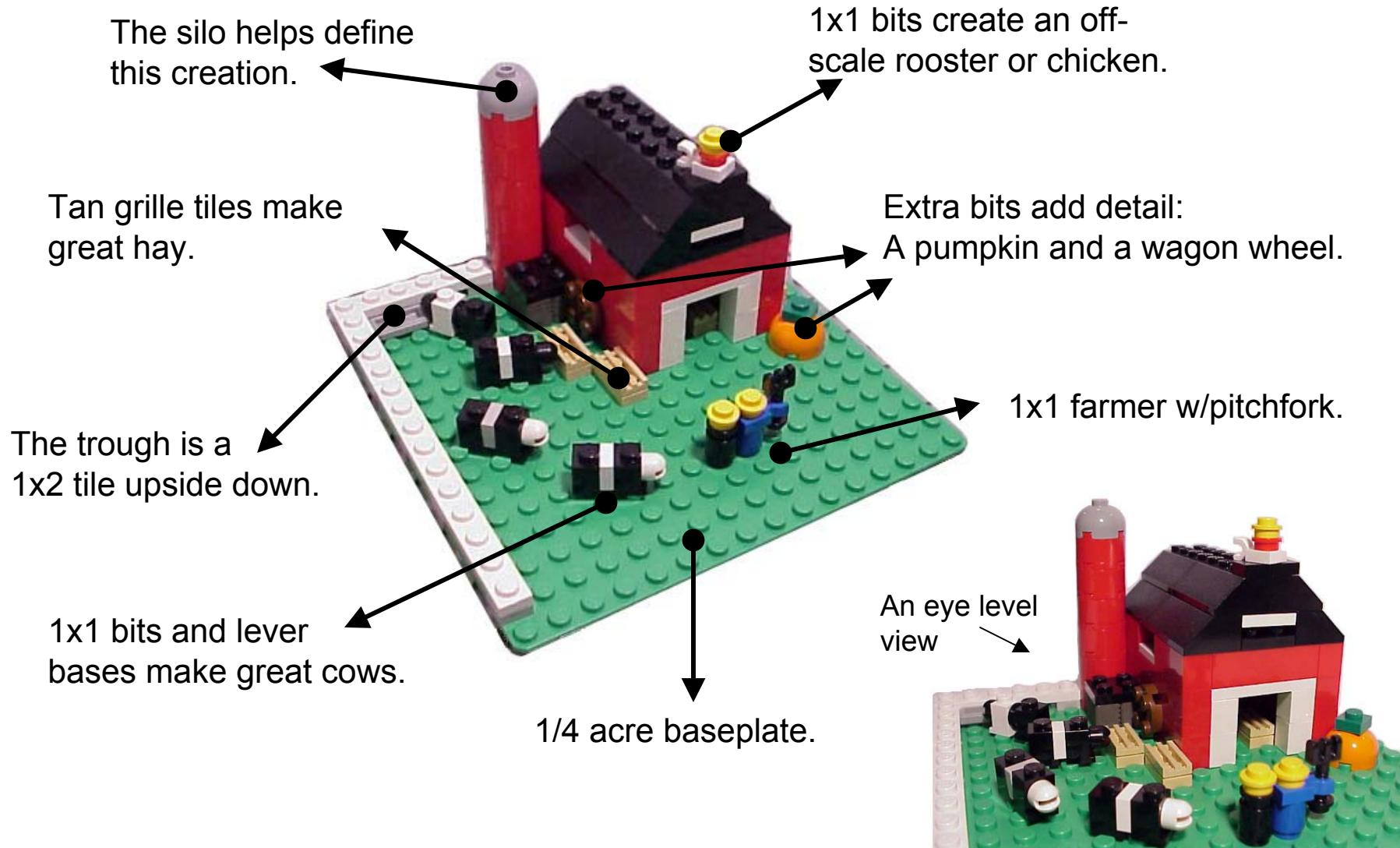
- Extra bits, more often than not, add realism rather than take away.
- If you build air or sea transportation items, scale becomes less important as ocean and sky are vast.
- Diversify. Note that this presentation includes some of everything, castle, town, mecha, ships, etc.

- Inspect your parts and try to look at them from every angle to see if they can serve a microfig purpose.
- Microfig creations tend to look best when viewed at eye level. Keep this in mind when building.

(See these tips applied on the next page)



Tips and Tricks: Visualized



Summary

1. Microfig modeling is imaginative and fun, and accommodates builders at all skill levels regardless of the size of their brick collection.
2. The applications and benefits of building in microfig scale are many.
3. Small and unusual elements are ideal for use when building in microfig scale.
4. The popularity of microfig scale building is on the rise.



Essential Microfig Sites and Creations

Jeremy and Barbara Sproat. A little of everything. <http://www.io.com/~jsproat/>
Jeremy Sproat Brickshelf: <http://www.brickshelf.com/cgi-bin/gallery.cgi?f=3426>
Brian Muzas: Microthedral <http://www.brickshelf.com/cgi-bin/gallery.cgi?f=3331>
Shiri Dori: Chess set, tiny city: <http://www.brickshelf.com/cgi-bin/gallery.cgi?f=442>



Chris Maddison: tiny castle: <http://www.brickshelf.com/cgi-bin/gallery.cgi?i=33394>
Greg Majewski: Wipeout Model: <http://www.brickshelf.com/cgi-bin/gallery.cgi?f=8172>
Steve Batch: Microfig Star Wars items: <http://www.brickshelf.com/cgi-bin/gallery.cgi?f=8563>
Daniel Jassim: Many microfig spaceships: <http://www.brickshelf.com/cgi-bin/gallery.cgi?f=2932>

Cale Leiphart: Microfig semi truck: <http://www.brickshelf.com/cgi-bin/gallery.cgi?f=5573>
Mladen Plejic: Spacecraft and Mecha: <http://www.brickshelf.com/cgi-bin/gallery.cgi?f=5988>
Jason King: Micro Tie Fighter: <http://www.brickshelf.com/cgi-bin/gallery.cgi?f=6686>
Geordan Hankinson: Mini-Treefort/military diorama: <http://www.brickshelf.com/cgi-bin/gallery.cgi?f=6770> and <http://www.brickshelf.com/cgi-bin/gallery.cgi?f=6867>



David Perry: Spacecraft: <http://www.brickshelf.com/cgi-bin/gallery.cgi?f=3418>
Mark Sandlin: Microfig space carrier: <http://www.brickshelf.com/cgi-bin/gallery.cgi?f=1936>
Paul Hartzog: Micropolis: <http://www.brickshelf.com/cgi-bin/gallery.cgi?f=9508>
John Neal: 2 and 4 stud wide trains: <http://www.brickshelf.com/cgi-bin/gallery.cgi?m=J-2>

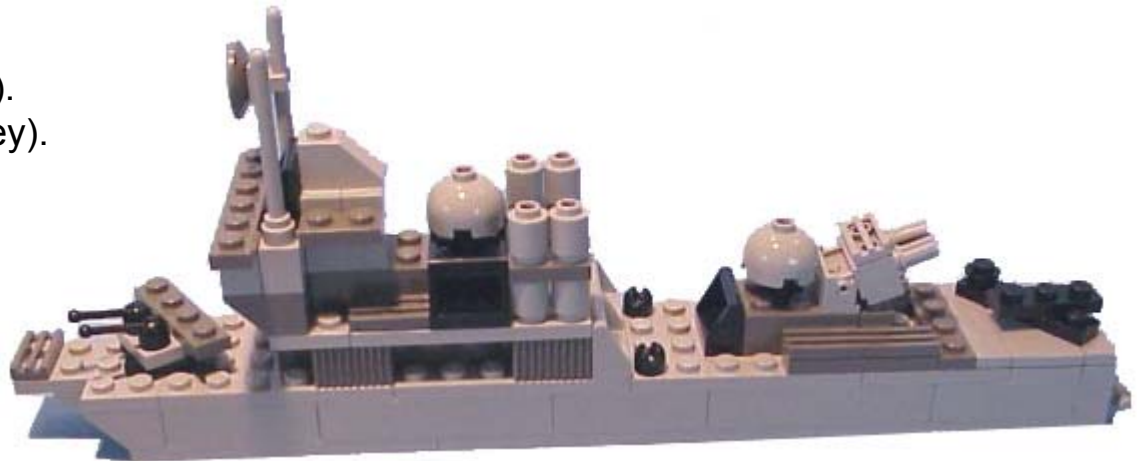
Don Bruce: City of Colditz: <http://www.brickshelf.com/cgi-bin/gallery.cgi?f=2037>
Shiri Dori: City of Helfire: http://www.geocities.com/shiri_lego/Helfire.html
Chris Tracey: Minifig train layout: <http://www.lugnet.com/town/~163/ideas/trainlayout/>
Brendan Powell Smith: Mini-skyline: <http://www.brickshelf.com/cgi-bin/gallery.cgi?f=4890>

This list is not exhaustive.

Catalog of Items on Display

All items created by Ashley Glennon unless otherwise noted.

Ninja temples: Version 1 (tan), 2 (blue), 3 (blue, nano).
Dark entrance.
Barnyard/Farm.
White castle.
Gray chateau castle.
Monorail (see slide 7)
Nanofig World Trade Center.
Log Cabin.
Tiny Torch Inn Part One (small). Part two (bigger and furnished).
Micro mountain and space needle.
Cruise ship.
Battleship.
Missile Cruiser.
Blue trawler.
Military tanker.
The Enterprise (by Wayne Hussey).
Two space ships (by Wayne Hussey).
Small train (Dan Parker)
Large train.
Space Bots.
Misc. vehicles.
Gray bomber plane.
Desert ruins and cacti.



Building Exercise

(x-style fighters visit the star of death)

Group One

1. Build the item in your baggy by following the photo-instructions.
2. If parts are missing, please do your best to improvise.
3. Give your finished creation to a member of Group Two for placement on the base creation.

Group Two

1. Add additional detail to the base creation and adjust scale if needed by widening or changing depth of trench, etc.
2. Receive creations from Group One and place on the base.

Once complete, everyone should pose with the final creation for a photo. The photo(s) will be placed on the SEALUG website.
[Please do not take the creations with you.]

Original x-style fighter concept was created by Steve Batch.

The star of death trench was created by Dan Parker.