

# Lisa De Bode - Micro-Flats Appealing For World's Urban Poor

*aljazeera.com*. As urban areas expand and housing prices soar, "living small" becomes more popular in global cities.

Can two people live together in a space of about 28 square metres? Two women from Brooklyn got a taste of small-space living by camping in a micro-home at the Museum of the City of New York last week, drawing attention to the consequences of urbanisation around the world.

At a time when more people than ever before are living alone - one out of seven adults in the United States - and housing prices are soaring, policymakers are experimenting with tiny solutions to a big problem.

The museum's micro-flat, which measures some 30 sqm, is part of an exhibition called "*Making Room: New Models for Housing New Yorkers*", and features space-saving furniture and under-counter appliances. The flat's bed converts into a couch, the chair can become a stepladder, and the television moves sideways to reveal a bar.

Challie Stillman, design director of Resource Furniture, the distributor of the appliances, and her partner Lina Franco, a former estate agent, arrived Friday evening for a 24-hour stay in the unit.

*"A lot of people in NYC already live like this,"* Franco told Al Jazeera. *"It was very much like being at home,"* she said, recounting the experience of having six friends over for a Mexican dinner in the mini-flat Friday. *"But I think it can be a bit too small for two people."*

*Read*

*more:*

<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2013/08/201382210555954288.html>

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# The Organisation For Economic Co-operation And Development (OECD)

The mission of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is to promote policies that will improve the economic and social well-being of people around the world.

The OECD provides a forum in which governments can work together to share experiences and seek solutions to common problems. We work with governments to understand what drives economic, social and environmental change. We measure productivity and global flows of trade and investment. We analyse and compare data to predict future trends. We set international standards on a wide range of things, from agriculture and tax to the safety of chemicals.

We look, too, at issues that directly affect the lives of ordinary people, like how much they pay in taxes and social security, and how much leisure time they can take. We compare how different countries' school systems are readying their young people for modern life, and how different countries' pension systems will look after their citizens in old age.

Drawing on facts and real-life experience, we recommend policies designed to make the lives of ordinary people better. We work with business, through the Business and Industry Advisory Committee to the OECD, and with labour, through the Trade Union Advisory Committee. We have active contacts as well with other civil society organisations. The common thread of our work is a shared commitment to market economies backed by democratic institutions and focused on the wellbeing of all citizens. Along the way, we also set out to make life harder for the terrorists, tax dodgers, crooked businessmen and others whose actions undermine a fair and open society.

Read more: <http://www.oecd.org/about/>

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# Aarefa Johari - Home Sweet Home

*www.hindustantimes.com*. August, 18, 2013. Technically, tailors Sheetal and Shankar Malkar live in a slum. But to look at their home, you would never think it. The couple rebuilt their cramped 150-sq-ft room in Bhandup's Sai Vihar settlement last year, turning it into a two-storey structure with their workspace and store on the ground floor and a bedroom-cum-kitchen above.

In true Konkan style, the tiny balcony lends a splash of bright colour.

As a notified slum, Sai Vihar's residents are eligible for housing in Slum Rehabilitation Authority (SRA) buildings, but they say the home they now have is better in design and construction quality.

*"A flat would never allow us a separate workspace,"* says Sheetal, 36.

The Malkars' home was built by Amar Mirjankar, a popular informal contractor in the area.

He has no formal training in engineering or architecture; in fact, he grew up in the Sai Vihar slum and has studied only till Class 10. But for 13 years, he has designed and built numerous concrete homes in the area.

*"I make homes based entirely on the residents' personal and professional needs. The focus is on maximising space and keeping costs low,"* says Mirjankar, 38, who worked with a network of informal masons, electricians, plumbers and painters to build the Malkars' house for R4.5 lakh.

Read more: <http://www.hindustantimes.com/Mumbai/Home-sweet-home>

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# Ruban Selvanayagam - Rents In

# Rio De Janeiro Slums Soar Ahead Of The Olympics

theguardian.com. Investment in Brazil's favelas has reduced crime but locals fight forced evictions.

In preparation for the 2014 World Cup and South America's first Olympic Games in 2016, Rio de Janeiro has attracted large investments - not only in the games themselves but, perhaps more importantly, in overcoming the massive divides in living standards in the city.

Following a series of largely unsuccessful attempts spread over decades, it would seem the various projects driven by the government-led growth acceleration program, as well as police pacification initiatives in which police patrol neighbourhoods they previously avoided to bring down crime rates, may finally be achieving the desired effects. Great news for the city's residents, who have longed for such a transformation.

But there is another side to this story. Rio de Janeiro's previously no-go neighbourhoods have now evolved into real-estate hotspots, where land beneath favela homes has become a goldmine.

Read more: <http://www.theguardian.com/rents-rio-janeiro-soared-olympics>

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## dpr-barcelona - Housing The Remnants Of Capitalism

A few days ago we found the project [let's talk about garbage](#) through a [tweet by @alucidwake](#) and immediately two things caught-up our attention, the renders of such a big slum project and the quote *"the land (and people living there) has been put up for sale by the city authorities."* The people has been put for sale?

We have been [writing recently](#) about capitalism and his close and deep

relationship with architecture, and this project is a clear example of this fact. Dharavi is one of the largest slums in the world, with an estimated population between 600,000 and over 1 million people. This land, according to the architects' research, is worth [over 2.3 billion dollars](#), because the slum generates profits worth 500 million dollars, supplying the whole of Mumbai with necessary products and goods. In this context, [UGO architecture and design](#) has proposed a new facility based on a structure without a prescribed function, with blocks for residential uses to the south and a recycling part to the north, only divided by two corridors, and with the ground floor space serving mainly to supply garbage from the dump.

Assuming that we were moving on arena of speculations, it was not surprising that this project was the start point of a deep and intense [open discussion on facebook](#), with more than fifty comments, including several references in a thought-provoking debate. That's why we want to keep the debate alive and decided to bring here some of those thoughts, arranging them as a form of collective writing, born from the exchange of ideas between a group of architects and thinkers which engaged the conversation.

Read

more: <http://dprbcn.wordpress.com/2013/08/19/housing-remnants-capitalism/>

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## **You Deserve To Know**

Film was shot in 2009 in Kibera, one of the biggest African slums. The story unveils the positive side of the slum, showing the power of information and people's grassroots initiatives. Six social initiatives of local innovators, are trying to change the face of their dwelling place. Those engaged with the projects work and live in Kibera and might be described as humble leaders in this one million-people society. Their only resources are ingenuity, talent and engagement.