

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."*

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