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Architecture

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California
Los Angeles
Micro
Apartments
Micro Units

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Is LA the Next City to Go Micro?

In the US, high density cities like New York, San Francisco and Boston are the likely candidates for micro-apartment booms. Their steep property values, limited land and solid public transportation infrastructures make them ideal for small housing. But other large cities are increasingly entertaining compact living as a solution for growing their housing capacity in a cost effective and environmentally responsible manner. Two exhibitions that just opened in Los Angeles, a city that has become synonymous with car-fueled sprawl, are looking at how that city might include micro-apartments in its future.

An exhibition at the [WUHO Gallery](#) called "How Small Is Too Small?" is presenting Los Angelinos the opportunity to discuss and evaluate the viability of micro-living. The show is organized by the [LA Forum](#) and curated by architects Katrina Stoll Szabo and Takako Tajima. Like the [Making Room](#) exhibition in NYC and the [What's In?](#) exhibition in Boston, How Small features a mockup 300 sq ft apartment where visitors can experience firsthand what micro living feels like. Unlike those two other shows, How Small's mockup is a bit rough around the edges. An [LA Times](#) article describes the structure like this:

To create a feeling of transparency and an understanding of the structure, the micro-apartment has no drywall; instead, untreated dimensional lumber frames the elements, and fixtures such as toilets, sinks and counters have been made from fiberboard, helping to illustrate the flexible nature of the layout. Visitors can move about the floor plan, which feels spacious with sparse white Ikea furnishings.

It also seems like a much cheaper way of building a temporary exhibition (not that anyone asked us). In fact, the minimally furnished space was intentionally designed to be highly customizable. Szabo told [Architizer](#) "We're trying to show an alternative, so that if someone has their grandmother's chair and their cousin's full-size bed, that's something they can bring to the unit."

This ability to bring existing furnishings to small spaces is something we've [discussed before](#), and strong arguments can be made for a more open floorplan like How Small's.

A concurrent exhibition at WUHO called [BY-Right/BY-Design](#) explores the relationship between built design and high design. From the [LA Forum](#) site:

Created by Liz Falletta, the exhibition pairs common, basic residential types by builders and real estate developers with examples of projects designed by noted architects working at similar scales, times, and locations. The pairings are then linked to contemporary examples that bridge lessons from the past with ideas for how L.A. can further densify and develop to meet new challenges.

The exhibition looks at examples of architecturally significant multifamily housing in the LA area that might point toward the future of smart, high-density growth.

The pairing of the two exhibitions creates an interesting conversation. On one hand, How Small looks at general trends in building, asking what constitutes an adequate home and how small housing might fit into the context of Los Angeles' future. [BY-Right/BY-Design](#) looks at how the injection of high design might inform new building, as housing size is just one part of growing the city in a smart way. Design does matter.

The shows run through August 4th.

Photos by: Luke Gibson for Architizer

- [Event: Museum Exhibit Dedicated to Small Space Living](#)
- [Big Apple Gets Small Apts in adDAPT NYC Competition](#)
- [The Yankees/Red Sox Rivalry of Micro Apartments](#)
- [Very Brief History of LifeEdited](#)
- [X Marks the House](#)

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