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Spring 5-2016

# The sacrifice of space: transgressive tactics for micro-apartments 

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The Sacrifice of Space: Transgressive Tactics for Micro-Apartments

A Capstone Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the Renée Crown University Honors Program at Syracuse University

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May 2016

Honors Capstone Project in Architecture
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#### Abstract

The following Capstone Project is an architectural thesis on today's prevalence of microapartments. After identifying a contention, the project created a design solution in an attempt to mitigate the problem. The result was a semester of research, as well as a semester of design iteration. This was represented in multiple ways, such as through drawings, models, and books. With the help of a primary advisor, in addition to a committee, the thesis was developed through a series of presentations and meetings. The following is a culmination of that effort, resulting in over one hundred pages of work in architectural education.


## Executive Summary

This thesis contends that people are willing to live in small spaces for big payoffs. Why else would someone respond to a Craigslist ad for a 100 -square-foot apartment? ${ }^{1}$ Why else would someone live in a room the size of Ikea furniture? The answer can be found outside, with significant urban amenities within walking distance.

The site is NYC, the epicenter of micro-housing. The thesis follows young professionals that live in spaces exemplary of tenement housing. It doesn't matter though, as one exclaims, "My living room is Central Park!" ${ }^{2}$ As a result, micro-apartments near urban points of interests were studied. It's here that the thesis discovered a design solution to an existing housing crisis.
"There are 1.8 million one- and two-person households and only one million studios and one-bedrooms to meet this housing demand," states the City's website. ${ }^{3}$ In response, Mayor Bloomberg announced the adAPT NYC competition, encouraging the private sector to submit designs for micro-apartments. In the end, nArchitect's My Micro NY won the competition. The project will be the first micro-apartment building in NYC, demanding rents of $\$ 2,000-\$ 3,000$ for 260 - to 360 -square-feet rooms in Kips Bay. ${ }^{4}$

But problems exist with this solution. Not only is the project nowhere near affordable for young professionals, but also it's located on the periphery rather than adjacent to urban amenities. This thesis proposes an alternative, with micro-apartments infiltrating desirable

[^0]neighborhoods like the Upper West Side. By redesigning residual spaces for alleys, driveways, fire escapes, and windows, the project provides affordable housing near important urban spaces.

Real estate developers, economic forces, and government sanctions are all creating micro-apartments. Few things are left to fight back, such as building codes and the ADA. Despite this, tenants of micro-apartments contribute more to the life of the city than their more affluent counterparts. They rarely travel or stay indoors, opting instead to enjoy local urban attractions. However, some might argue they do so by residing in spaces unsuitable for living. Using various modes of representation through a satirical perspective, this thesis creates a design solution that mediates between these two perspectives.




















## "Centräl Pärk is my liv. room."




























 'SSATAวİd As a tenant of one of these luxurious apartments, you'll enjoy all the benefits it has to offer. A toilet right at the foot of your bed? A sense of privacy only
no windows can provide?? The lack of a kitchen to clean up?!?

Located a mere 5 minutes from Lincoln Center, these GINORMOUS 85 sq. ft. studio apartments are
TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE.
Look no further, as we have a solution!







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## no windows can provide?? The lack of a kitchen to clean up?!? <br> As a tenant of one of these luxurious apartments, you'll enjoy all the benefits it has to offer. A toilet right at the foot of your bed? A sense of privacy only


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Located a mere 5 minutes from Central Park, these GINORMOUS 85 sq . ft. studio apartments are TOO













Located a mere 5 minutes from Lincoln Center, these GINORMOUS 100 sq. ft. micro-apartments are TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE.
Where's the bathroom?? WHERE ISN'T THE BATHROOM?!?
As a tenant of one of these luxurious apartments, you'll enjoy all the benefits it has to offer. A shower sticking out on the front of the building? A sense of privacy only no doors can provide?? The lack of a kitchen to clean up?!?

PRICELESS.
At this point you may be wondering how much one of these gems cost. A mere $\$ 800$ a month will allow you to call one home. CALL NOW!




＇150日
I＇m a reporter with Curbed NY．I just came across this ad on Craigslist and I＇m wondering if you have some time to talk about these listings？
https：／／newyork．craigslist．org／mnh／abo／5555402953．html
Hi ，

 I am interested in your apartment to rent. I am available on Saturdays and Sundays to view the apartment, or during the week after 6 pm . I am looking to


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Hello
To: 2ssp9-5554034272@hous.craigslist.org
AMAZING MICRO-APARTMENTS
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http：／／newyork．craigslist．org／mnh／abo／5558171900．htm｜

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To：4dqjz－5558171900＠hous．craigslist．org




$\$ 800 / 1 \mathrm{br}$ - 100ft ${ }^{2}$ - INCREDIBLE MICRO-APARTMENTS (Upper West Side)


Are you a young professional? Have you dreamed of living in New York City?? Are you broke?!?
Look no further, as we have a solution!


Located across the street from CENTRAL PARK, these GINORMOUS $100 \mathrm{sq} . \mathrm{ft}$. micro-apartments are TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE.
Who needs a living room?? CENTRAL PARK IS YOUR LIVING ROOM!!!
As a tenant of one of these luxurious apartments, you'll enjoy all the benefits it has to offer. A bathroom in the hallway? A sense of privacy only no doors can provide?? A lack of storage that requires pockets?!?

## PRICELESS.

At this point you may be wondering how much one of these gems cost. A mere $\$ 800$ a month will allow you to call one home. EMAIL NOW!
 Original craigslist post:
hrtp://newyork
About craigslist.org/mnh/abo/5555402953.htm
httt:///craigslist.orail:about/help/email-relay
əuoud! Kum woj luas
http://newyork.craigslist.org/mnh/abo/5555402953.html
Very interested please call to schedule appointment $\square$ thank you INCREDIBLE MICRO-APARTMENTS
To: fjxbw-5555402953@hous.craigslist.org


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http://newyork.craigslist.org/mnh/abo/5554034272.html






Areyou youg profesional Have youdramed ofliving in New York City? Are youbrokel?
Look no further, as we have a solution!


| 1BR/sharedBa | $100 \mathrm{ft}^{2}$ |
| :--- | :--- |
| available now |  |
| listed by: Michelle LaVaughn Robinson Obama |  |


| cats are OK - purrr |
| :--- |
| dogs are OK - wooof |
| apartment |
| no laundry on site |
| no parking |

Located around the corner from CENTRAL PARK, these GINORMOUS $100 \mathrm{sq} . \mathrm{ft}$. micro-apartments are TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE.
Who needs a living room?? CENTRAL PARK IS YOUR LIVING ROOM!!!
As a tenant of one of these luxurious apartments, you'll enjoy all the benefits it has to offer. A shower in the hallway? Your neighbor's window in your bedroom?? Strangers continuously walking through your personal space?!?

## PRICELESS.

At this point you may be wondering how much one of these gems cost. A mere $\$ 800$ a month will allow you to call one home. EMAIL NOW!



never had a lease before so what will be the process on getting one of the units? what are the requirements?


 My name is and I saw your post about microapartments. I wasn't able to see any numbers at the listing you posted so I am emailing you instead. I am currently renting a
room in east village but am planning to move in june or july. I am not really in a rush. I also want to find the place that suits most if not all of my preferences. That is why I am
! H

Original craigslist post:
hntt://lnewyork.craigslist.org/mnh/abo/5554034272.html
About craigslist mail:
httt:///raisglist.org/abouthelp/email-relay
Please flag unwanted messages (spam, scam, other):
Thank you, and, have a nice day.
That's a California number, but, I'm back here in New York, searching for my new home. Please, give me a call at your earliest convenience:



Please flag unwanted messages (spam, scam, other):
http://newyork.craigslist.org/mnh/abo/5554034272.html
About craigslist mail:
:Isod is!||S6!edo reu! 6
http://newyork.craigslist.org/mnh/abo/5554034272.html
sociable.Thanks
I need to be in elevator building or first three floors because of mobility issues. I can move in May 4th. I am also gay with a partner. We are both quiet, clean and
 adds another monthly (tax returns to verify) nontaxable income. Being nontaxable my gross is my net income. To compare apples to apples, my gross income My income is primarily nontaxable monthly (have had for 7 years and am qualified for life-time benefits). I also do part-time work here and there that

AMAZING MICRO-APARTMENTS
To: 2ssp9-5554034272@hous.craigslist.org

Please flag unwanted messages (spam, scam, other):

: isod isus6ieл reul6uo
http://newyork.craigslist.org/mnh/abo/5555402953.html


To: fjxbw-5555402953@hous.craigslist.org




Look no further, as we have a solution!


| 1BR/sharedBa | $100 \mathrm{ft}^{2}$ |
| :--- | :--- |
| available now |  |
| listed by: Elizabeth Woolridge Grant |  |


| cats are OK - purrr |
| :--- |
| dogs are OK - wooof |
| apartment |
| no laundry on site |
| no parking |

Located around the corner from the 72 nd street subway stop, these GINORMOUS 100 sq . ft . micro-apartments are TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE.

## Where's the bathroom?? WHERE ISN'T THE BATHROOM?!?

As a tenant of one of these luxurious apartments, you'll enjoy all the benefits it has to offer. A bathhouse in the hallway? Being able to touch both sides of your room at the same time?? The sense of safety that comes with living in a space directly adjacent to a fire escape?!?

## PRICELESS.

At this point you may be wondering how much one of these gems cost. A mere $\$ 800$ a month will allow you to call one home. EMAIL NOW!

Please flag unwanted messages (spam, scam, other):
http://craigslist.org/m/98efdb60153a506a99c847eb86b03eded763073e.2

Was very excited to come across the ad - hope to hear from you soon.

[^1] I'm a college graduate currently working in the food industry. Great credit and rental history, very respectful and easy to get along with. Late 20 s male. No pets and nonsmoking. Happy to
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siəd ou əлеч I
My annual income is $\square$.

I'm looking for a landlord that will accept a one shot deal.
Hello my name is and I am interested in renting a 1 or 2bdrm apt
INCREDIBLE MICRO-APARTMENTS
To: fjxbw-5555402953@hous.craigslist.org






[^0]:    1 "\$795 / 100ft ${ }^{2}$ - room \$795 all included shared bath (Harlem / Morningside)," Craigslist Incorporated, accessed March 28, 2016, https://newyork.craigslist.org/mnh/abo/5508758162.html.
    2 "A Brief Tour of a 100-Square-Foot New York City Apartment," The Village Voice, accessed March 28, 2016, https://vimeo.com/136234729.
    3 "adAPT NYC Request for Proposals," The Official Website of the City of New York, accessed March 28, 2016, http://www1.nyc.gov/site/hpd/developers/adapt-nyc-rfp.page.
    4 "Micro apartments are finally coming to New York - and that's good news for renters," Business Insider, accessed March 28, 2016, http://www.businessinsider.com/micro-apartments-are-good-for-new-york-2015-2.

[^1]:    help with chores.

