

energy,

fraction of the cost

ARCHITECTURE

Interview: NY architect Maziar Behrooz talks container homes

By [Bridget Borgobello](#)

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The Insta House shipping container conversion is now available for purchase in the U.S.

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Sturdy, convenient to transport and relatively cheap – these are some of the factors that have made the conversion of [shipping containers](#) into modern living and working spaces an ever growing trend. Maziar Behrooz of MB Architecture is no stranger to this process.



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The Manhattan-based architect's initial foray into this arena – the Container Studio – was originally conceived as a backyard Art Studio and sees the

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clever use of two standard shipping containers perched over a 9 foot (2.7 m) tall foundation wall/cellar. Spread across two levels, the 840 sq ft (78 m²) design delivers ample light and space to the interior in sharp contrast to its dark charcoal facade.



MB Architecture recently finished enhancing the Container Studio prototype to offer a prefab container home under US\$100K. The upgraded Insta House is created from four recycled shipping containers (two on top of two) to create a comfortable, high-ceiling, low cost home. Each house is retrofitted in a factory-setting, before being delivered and erected onsite within seven days.

The 960 sq ft (89 m²) Insta House is now available for purchase in the U.S. and as standard comes fitted with sliding windows, electrical fixtures and all wall, ceiling and floor finishes. The basic model will set you back US\$99,800, including delivery.

We recently caught up with Behrooz to chat about the container conversion

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process.

What inspired the original idea for the Container Studio?

We had a limited budget and my research showed that by using containers we could get a lot for little money. At the same time, the boxy shape of the containers lends itself very well to an art studio.

How long did the project take to complete?

In terms of actual building time, because this was our first one, it took a few months. We learned from this and are now pre-fabricating the studio in a factory setting and can install them on any site in the U.S. in less than a week.

What are the key sustainable features?

Clearly the container itself is a recycled product that would otherwise go to waste. In this particular installation, the ground around the lower level helps maintain an even temperature in the space, therefore reducing energy costs.

What are your favorite design features of the home?

Its simplicity.

How do you envision the future of small homes?

Home sizes are getting smaller for a variety of reasons. For me, it is interesting to see how apartment buildings could be modified so that they could become an amalgam of small homes rather than repetitive generic spaces.

What can we expect to see from MB Architecture in the future?

We are working on a number of projects. In New Orleans, we have developed a prototype for a pre-fabricated computer lab/library that will be installed in different neighborhoods for youth and local communities to use. We are also working on a number of residential projects. And our pre-

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fabricated Insta House is being considered for people who were displaced by the recent hurricane.

Source: [MB Architecture](#)

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