



## Jesus Benavente & Jennifer Remenchik || Arts In Context

An interview with Austin Museum of Art's 15 to Watch artists, Jennifer Remenchik and Jesus Benavente, and curator Andrea Mellard.

Andrea Mellard: Jesus Benavente and Jennifer Remenchik are the one artist team in the exhibit and they sent in a proposal to basically live in the museum. They wanted to construct a tiered domestic structure that on the bottom looks like a working class apartment or first dorm, and on the top it's high end design. You can tell that there's a class difference between the two spaces. They spent two weeks performing and living in the space. And on the one on the top is relaxed and leisurely but isolated and the one on the bottom is free to move around but busy and meeting all of the needs of the person on the top. Together the performance shows the ways that socioeconomic class both divides and interconnects us.

Jesus Benavente: A lot of these ideas are born organically. We were just bouncing things off each other, and there was this call for the New Art in Austin, and we thought 'we want to do something.'

Jennifer Remenchik: Yeah, and we wanted to do something sort of like, over the top, like they'd have to be crazy to let us do it.

JB: And crazy not to.

JR: Yeah. (laughs)

AM: I was drawn to Jesus Benavente and Jennifer Remenchik's proposal because I just wanted to see them take over the museum and the space in a new way. A lot of artists have lived inside of a museum before but what really struck me about the way they wanted to use the space with the project Parallel is that it's a statement about the ways that we are dependent on one another and the way that social class divides us.

JB: I mean this piece wouldn't be this piece if it wasn't for Jennifer, and I think she'd say the same thing about me.

JR: Yeah.

JB: Because...

JR: We bring different strengths.

JB: Yeah.

JR: And for something like this there's so much coordination that it would have been really hard to do on your own, also it's nice to have somebody that you're thinking with, especially because we have done so much work together and we know a lot about how each other thinks. It's nice to have somebody to brainstorm with outside of your own head all the time, where we're figuring things out together and don't just have to rely on ourselves.

JB: And there's a lot of good balances, in terms of, like, I tend to be really physical and ra-ra-ra, big bold splashes, and Jennifer's much more detail-oriented so you get that good balance where you get the big physical boom but you've also got all these nice little details that fill in all the gaps.

JR: I think the main thing we want to do is start a conversation, you know?

JB: And hopefully that's what people do.

JR: Yeah.

JB: They go home and they can talk about this.