Experiential Design – Rethinking relations between people, objects and environments

• Paper / Proposal Title:
Architecture for a Hero’s Journey: Liberal Arts School Outside the Boundary in La Puntilla de San Lázaro, Old San Juan Historic District, Puerto Rico

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• Abstract (300 words):

Throughout history, art, literature, architecture, and cinema have been used to convey meaning. We can find a correlation between them. They are narrators of feelings, ideas, events and, as such, they help memorialize the past, foster identity and preserve culture. A common theme in many of their narratives is the story of heroes. This project presents an architecture designed for the everyday hero and their educational journey.

This project proposes a liberal arts school (Escuela de Artes Liberales de la Puntilla) that inspires, challenges, and surprises its students and visitors with its architecture. This higher education facility is intended to be inserted in the historic district of La Puntilla de San Lázaro in the Old San Juan Historic District of Puerto Rico, a site existing at the outskirts of the capital, closed off from the fortification walls that were built to protect it. The Escuela de Artes Liberales de la Puntilla responds to the everchanging setting of San Juan and Puerto Rico itself. It rises as a space that welcomes the juxtaposition of three elements: the heroes, the boundary, and the city. After the devastating hurricanes of
Irma and María, the emigration of young professionals, and the ongoing threat to our public education system a school of liberal arts in the capital is just what it needs.

Designing a liberal arts school, that can marry the experiential narratives of heroes, while preserving the rich history of a site such as La Puntilla de San Lázaro was not an easy task. The biggest challenge was detaching the project from the conventionalities of the architecture profession and focusing on decision-making that would further embrace the multiple journeys. The liberal arts school in La Puntilla de San Lázaro encourages everyone to embrace the liminality of the boundaries and discover the narratives hidden within.

**Author(s) Biography (200 words each):**

Isaac Alejandro Manguel Martinez is an adjunct professor in the School of Architecture and Engineering Technology at Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University. He holds a Master of Architecture from the same institution and a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Design from the University of Puerto Rico. Isaac is particularly interested in the complex interconnections of disciplines, such as film, philosophy, literature and art, with architecture and urbanism. As a teaching assistant, he supported the school by facilitating historic preservation strategies and documentation for the community of Apalachicola, Florida. Moreover, he developed workshops for undergraduate students in programs such as Rhinoceros 3D, Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Illustrator. His other work experience includes a summer internship in the Advanced Planning Group at JACOBS, Atlanta. In addition, he has contributed with his skills in a variety of projects for local firms in Puerto Rico. He has been involved in various international architecture competition, including his team’s finalist proposal for Eleven Magazine’s Moontopia 2016 competition. In 2017 he had the opportunity of participating in TSL Canoa, an event that brought together Latin-American architecture students, architects and locals in a collaborative effort to rebuild the community after being ravaged by an earthquake the previous year.