

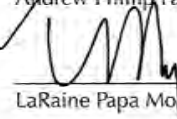
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Designing for the People of Barahona

Architecture as the identification of place in order to resolve social and cultural issues within the Dominican Republic

A Thesis Statement Submitted to the Faculty of the Architecture Department
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At

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By

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“By expanding the population we serve and the services we offer, designers can play a significant role in addressing the most critical issues we face in the world today.”

- Expanding Architecture: Design as Activism



creating new pathways in architecture

Acknowledgments

I would first like to thank my mum, dad and sister for supporting my decisions and opinions throughout my educational career. Thank you to my dear friends and professors who have constantly reminded me of the person I strive to be. Special thanks to Celeste Guichard for becoming apart of my project. I would also like to thank the people whom have enabled me to see through my own eyes what the world has to offer me and what I can offer the world through architecture.

I am very blessed to have had the opportunity to work in the Dominican Republic this year alongside Children of the Nations, and to have met some of the most amazing, caring and loving people that I know will be in my life and memories forever. I would like to thank every child that has touched my heart, you have truly changed my life forever. Special thanks to Manuela, Iris, David, Julio, Pedro, Yohanny, Joselito, Vanessa, Renzo, and Yeudy. You all have made my dreams possible and have never failed to enable myself to reach unknown possibilities.

Con gracias y amor por siempre

In Loving Memory of "Guy"
***My Grandmother who showed me the path to
following my most daring dreams.***

Abstract Statement

Within third world countries such as the Dominican Republic, it becomes clear through observation that architecture can only exist through permanence, stability, and common efforts of a community. Knowledge enables power, and providing knowledge through the proposed design of a community complex in Barahona, Dominican Republic, will create permanence and stability needed with the Batey communities (migrant labor camps). Through the design and creation of a newfound common ground, the social, cultural, and economical problems will be allowed to resolve between the Haitian and Dominican inhabitants of Barahona.

To become a designer within the 21st Century, we need to become aware of the current demographic and environmental trends. "The gap continues to grow between what millions of people need and what the current system of housing and building provides. For that reason, change is inevitable." (Expanding Architecture: design as activism) A clear connection is needed to form between the architect and the user, creating the existence of activism within third world countries. Without this connection forming a bond within these communities, architecture cannot truly exist. Through the exemplification of this project the possibility will become apparent to provide hope and guidance to other Bateys in surrounding areas within the Dominican Republic.

The design of a community complex will be located within a 144-acre site, and will house facilities that are greatly needed within the Bateys and Barahona. Upon the completion of this thesis, it is expected that the designs will be carried through to construction. The process of this thesis will allow step-by-step phases, enabling the people of the Bateys and Barahona to acquire the architectural knowledge needed within their communities. As humans we have the right to dwell and the right to live on this earth. Thus architecture will become the bond between the existing cultural and social in differences between the people of the Dominican Republic. Architecture will become the identification of place.

Ethics and Responsibility

'Designing for the People of Barahona' as a thesis for the degree of masters in architecture involves working within the professional environment along with an actual client. The code of ethics and professional conduct supplied by the American Institute of Architects directly relates to all aspects within this thesis and recognizes the importance of the responsibility of myself as an architect. The code "addresses responsibilities to the public, which the profession serves and enriches; to the clients and users of architecture and in the building industries, who help shape the built environment; and to the art and science of architecture, that continuum of knowledge and creation which is the heritage and legacy of the profession." (2007 Code of Ethics & Professional Conduct)

Within the general obligations of Canon I, it states that one should consider the social and environmental impact of their professional activities. This is one the main considering factors within this thesis as the project involves working within another country, in which importance of remaining a neutral party becomes primary. The Dominican Republic contains many social and environmental issues and therefore to implement a worthy design to solve these issues, the professional activities of myself and professional activities need to withhold the code of ethics because they are visible to the people of Barahona. Through the design of this thesis there is the need to strive to improve the professional knowledge and skill within the area of Barahona and specifically the Bateys and Barrios. Through numerous site visits and educational classes provided by myself to the community it is important to raise the standards of aesthetic excellence, architectural education, research, training and practice. The design of the community complex will allow for these factors to develop and evolve for the children of Barahona. This aspect of the project is the most important as the community complex will become the home for the non-profit organization 'Children of the Nations' to evolve as an organization and to provide the necessary needs of education and training for the children. Working within a foreign country as a foreigner to the United States myself becomes a challenge

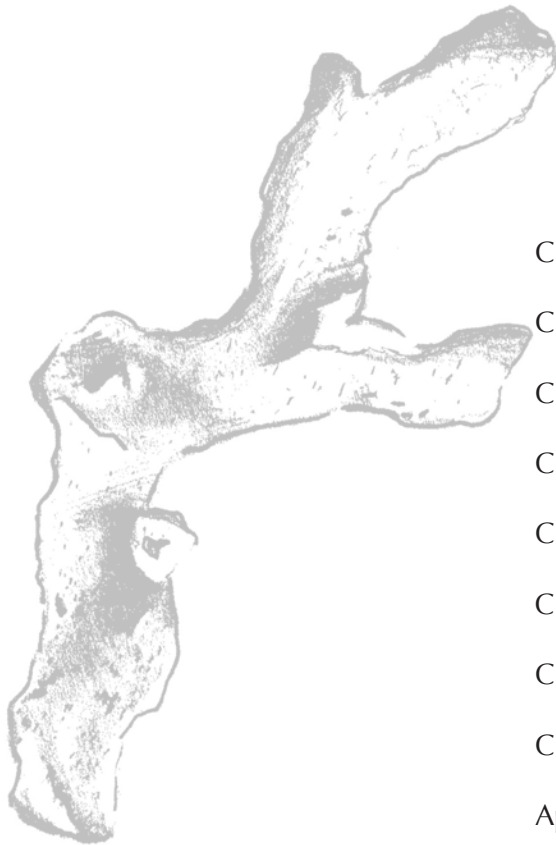
at some points within this architectural journey. The code states the importance of maintaining and conserving the natural and cultural heritage whilst striving to improve the environment and quality of life within it. This is important pertaining to myself working within a foreign country, but more importantly the need to conserve the people of Barahona's cultural heritage. The people of the Dominican Republic come from a long history of social, cultural and economical problems that have the opportunity to be resolved in the future. Striving to improve the quality of life for the individuals within the Bateys, Barrios and Barahona is the ultimate hope and goal post-design of the community complex, in order to bring fourth opportunities, knowledge and skills to the families and communities. Of course working within a country such as the Dominican Republic, human rights' becomes one of the biggest issues to tackle. Theses issues directly pertain to the Haitian population within the country, and specifically the living conditions of the families within the Bateys. Fighting against the stigma is a factor that will be tackled through this thesis, but is only an issue that can be changed by more than just the implementation of architecture to solve a small percentage of these countrywide issues.

Within the obligations to the public of Canon II, the importance of serving the public interest within the personal and professional activities becomes directly related to this thesis exploration. Since July 2009, numerous trips to the Dominican Republic have enabled myself as the architect to become immersed within the cultural, social and economical aspects of this region. Thus allowing the personal and professional aspect of this thesis to be explored under the guidance of 'Children of the Nations'. Within this canon, public interest services are stated, suggesting members to render public interest professional services, including pro-bono services. Pro-bono services defined as those rendered without expecting compensation, including those rendered for indigent persons, after disasters, or in other emergencies. The premise of this thesis began with the personal need and

want to work within a third world country, in which the services of an architect could be offered for a year in order to produce an architectural design that could help towards fighting the constant battle against poverty. Working alongside 'Children of the Nations' has allowed for this thesis to become a defining process towards a large architectural project that will be implemented into this area suffering greatly in places such as the Bateys and Barrios. All trips and on-site has been conducted through this organization, pro-bono, in order to take this thesis to new heights and to allow for myself as an architect to explore the career within a different cultural, social and economical context. With all the work conducted in Barahona, myself as the architect has accepted my civic responsibility to the adults and children, in order to ultimately improve the public appreciation and understanding of architecture and the functions and responsibilities of myself as the architect.

Finally within the obligations to the environment of canon VI, it states that members should promote sustainable design and development principles in their professional practice. This is important within this thesis in regards to the outcome of the design of the community complex. The discussions with 'Children of the Nations' and the people of Barahona have made clear the need for sustainable design within the Bateys and Barrios. These families and communities live off what the earth provides for them, whilst at the same time lacking in the basic needs that can be thus provided by the sustainable design and development principles. As the architect it is important to realize the responsibility of the environment and to advocate sustainable building and site design. The design of the community complex will encompass these aspects, as it is necessary to teach and implement new methods in the Bateys and Barrios. The construction and operation of sustainable buildings will be the outcome of this thesis allowing for the communities to take influence. This thesis strives to help the families within these communities through the design and construction of this community complex.

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