

# ByDESIGN

An Online Journal of Exceptional Achievement

**James  
Rojas**  
Urban Planner,  
Community  
Activist &  
Artist

**Lalo  
Alcaraz**

Shares Chicano  
Wisdom at  
UC Berkeley  
Commencement

***Vickie Waters***  
*Latina Leadership  
at Olgivy*

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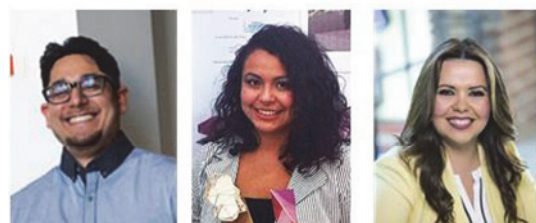
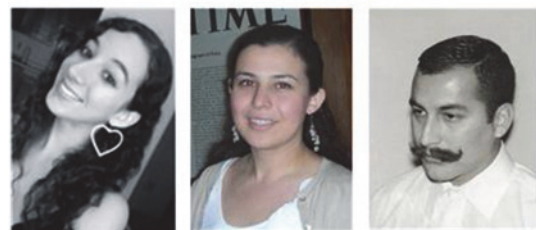
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**4<sup>th</sup> Row:** Abel Morales, Leslie Valencia, Vickie Waters

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### ByDESIGN Celebrates 4th Birthday with this Issue!

ByDESIGN turns 4! The first issue in May 2011 was a one pager with a commentary written by Oswaldo Lopez noting how the e-zine would leverage the web as a communication tool. The first article was entitled: "Workshop Emphasizes Need for Larger Latino Presence (at CED)" which became the rallying call for CASAalumni and ByDESIGN.

Since then, past issues have included cover stories on the only Black executive producer on network TV, the first woman Dean at CED in 50 years, CED alums who have made significant contribution to the practice of design, an Emmy Award winning Asian woman film maker, and the only syndicated Chicano cartoonist in the US. And we've recognized the scholarship and work of CED students/alumni of color.

Many thanks to our volunteer staff and our growing list of contributing writers. Collaborating, we will work to improve the content of future issues and the caliber of the publication. Stay tuned!

- BD Editorial Team

### Inbox

*Emails From Our Readers*

Hi Roy,

Thanks for the opportunity to contribute. Your efforts and success with the scholarships and ByDESIGN magazine are both impressive and inspiring.

Keep on keeping on.

Best,  
Chuck Turner  
**Community Design Center**  
San Francisco, CA  
March 28, 2015

*This note means a lot to our editorial board. For those who may not know, Chuck Turner is a pioneer of community design. We hope to do a cover story on him in a future issue of ByDESIGN.*

- BD Editorial Team

### ON THE COVER:

The cover image of James T. Rojas was photographed by Michael A. Hernandez on June 17, 2015 in Oakland CA at a *Place It: Community Visioning through Civil Rights, Art & Play* workshop.

## Visionary Action in Planning, Comedy and Writing

By D. Oswaldo Lopez, AIA, LEED GA



I am indeed amazed at this milestone for us at ByDESIGN. Four years to this date we are still finding incredible stories and reporting on individuals that are embarking on amazing career endeavors that are cutting edge and visionary in their action.

The James Rojas story is an example of how one person can truly influence the environment and help those around them create true change by a process that creative urban planners can bring forth. You will be mesmerized by his story and the creative efforts of his work.

We also share the incredible story of Lalo Alcaraz, a true comedic genius in the vein of a Chicano version of a “Will Rogers” but only better in my personal opinion. His insight and humor in telling of our times today is a journey of a mind that will make us think deeply behind the message of his humor. For in that humor is truth in today’s ever changing or unchanging times - dependent upon your viewpoint of today’s world. Enjoy the world as presented and illustrated by Lalo Alcaraz.

And last, but not least, we celebrate the award winning efforts of Lauren Hernandez. A truly gifted staff writer at ByDESIGN we are all proud to call our colleague.

Lauren, you are really a gift to us and to your readers. Congratulations on your recent awards. We look forward with great honor in your continuing contributions at ByDESIGN.

This edition of ByDESIGN is pleased to present James Rojas, Urban Planner, Community Activist and Artist. His past and current career is a story that has been long in the making and worth telling. You will be witness to a true visionary leader in the field of Urban Planning, not only in his local community of Los Angeles but of his influence on people all over the world from Brazil to Germany.



**James Rojas**  
jamestrojas@gmail.com  
Shot in Oakland, CA  
Photo: © 2015  
Michael A Hernandez

## CONNECTIONS

### Latina Leadership at Oligivy

By Diana Marquez



Ms. Vicky Waters is truly exceptional. She is a successful business woman, wife, mother and an advocate for the Latino community.

During my interview with her, Vicky shared her story about how she got to where she is and provided advice for anyone who wants to pursue a career in journalism or public relations.

Vicky was born in Mexico City and raised in North Carolina by encouraging parents who always advised their daughter to find something that she loved and to pursue it with passion. So she did: Vicky always knew she wanted to be a journalist. She remembers: “Ever since I was young, I wanted to be in TV news, be a reporter.” Furthermore, she always dreamed in joining the Univision news team. Vicky explained: “Univision kept us (her family) connected to Mexico.” North Carolina didn’t have a big Latino community, so Univision was a small taste of “home.” She wanted to be a part of that team, be the person to ask the tougher questions and an informant for her community.

After graduating from North Carolina State University, Vicky did not know anything about the news and TV business, but she knew that she wanted to be in the industry. So she started applying for jobs everywhere she could.



**Vicky Waters, VP  
Public Affairs  
Lead of West Latino**

She is also part of the executive team at the firm that inspired the HBO series “Mad Men,”

Her drive, her confidence and her energy are inspirational and truly contagious. Vicky is the VP and West Coast Latino offering leadership at Ogilvy Public Relations. Her professional experience includes working for Univision and La Opinion. Most recently, she was California Governor Jerry Brown’s Appointee at the Department of Parks and Recreation, where she served as Deputy Director of Public Affairs. In that position, she was part of the Executive Team and served as the official spokesperson for a Department with 280 state parks and 3,500 employees.

She was advised to take unpaid internships, but Vicky applied only to paid positions, because “I didn’t want to do things for free. I wanted to be paid for my work”. Eventually she found a job operating the morning news cameras. This allowed her to get first-hand experience with TV news, but she always kept her goal in mind.

“ Ever since I was young, I wanted to be in TV news, be a reporter . . . Univision kept us connected to Mexico. ”

## Latina Leadership: continued

By Diana Marquez

She applied to all the Univision stations in the country, sending applications and calling people. After a one year search, Univision offered her a job as the 10-o-clock news anchor in Corpus Christi, TX. Vicky welcomed her new responsibilities with commitment. Vicky knew that it was her job to communicate important issues to her community and to do the best work that she could. She applied to all the Univision stations in the country, sending applications and calling people. After a one year search, Univision offered her a job as the 10-o-clock news anchor in Corpus Christi, TX.

Vicky welcomed her new responsibilities with commitment. Vicky knew that it was her job to communicate important issues to her community and to do the best work that she could.

After Univision, she moved to Sacramento to work for "La Opinion" as a political correspondent. She had no experience working for a newspaper, but she knew that she would "figure it out". Vicky remembers: "I always felt that if someone took a chance on me, that I could do it".

Vicky's professional goals kept changing with time, but she always kept a good relationship with everyone that she worked with. She emphasized "Always keep good relationships and make sure that you are known for the quality of your work".

When she started a family, her goals and priorities changed. She wanted to be a mom who was present and active in her family's life, and at the same time keep working. She resigned her job at La Opinion, called her old contacts and offered her services as a consultant. It was her good relationship with her professional contacts that helped her during this time. To her surprise, the work came in faster and more abundant than she thought.

After her son started school, she became the California Charter Schools Association's Director of media relations and then the Director of Public Affairs & Communication of the Department of Parks and Recreation.

**About the Author:** Diana Marquez received her BA in Architecture from the College of Environmental Design at UC Berkeley in 2006. (dmarquez@gmail.com)



“Always keep good relationships and make sure that you are known for the quality of your work.”

While at the Department of Parks and Recreation, she got a call from Ogilvy. They asked Vicky to help them address the Latino cause and Latino communities. Vicky was surprised and delighted to join their team, and she believes that this position allows her to do the things that she's always tried to do: Ask the tougher questions and be an informant for her community.

Vicky's advise for anyone that wants to follow her footsteps were clear: "Evolve, learn, listen to people; and always: Have a goal".

Vicky's goals kept changing with time, and she wasn't always sure how to achieve them, but Vicky stayed confident and worked hard. As a reward, Vicky has been not just received, but invited to perform an important job with the Latino community. And I am sure that we can expect more great things from her.

“Evolve, learn, listen to people; and always: Have a goal.”

Vickie Waters, VP Public Affairs  
Lead of the West Latino Offering  
Ogilvy Public Relations  
vicky.waters@ogilvy.com



### About Ogilvy

Ogilvy is one of the largest public relation companies in the world. Focusing on the Latino market, the firm's vision is:

***"Everything we do as an agency must – from inception – include, recognize, understand, and appreciate the significance influence of the diverse Latino community in the US."***

Ogilvy has an extensive global presence, with many teams and disciplines allowing the firm to successfully counsel the world's largest brands and organizations. Service practice areas include:

- Brand Marketing
- Social@Ogilvy
- Healthcare
- Public Affairs
- Social Change
- Content
- Technology
- Corporate

Ogilvy is a worldwide firm with a network of 105 offices, including 22 offices in North/South America (Headquartered in New York), Europe, Africa and Middle East (Headquartered in London with 46 offices) and Asia Pacific (headquartered in Hong Konk with 28 offices).



## Urban Planner, Activist and Artist

By Lauren E. Hernández, Staff Writer; Photography by Michael A. Hernández



*James Rojas, PLACE IT! founder, has redefined the process of urban planning and design in the built environment. The former Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transit Authority project manager developed a methodology that provides the community the opportunity to lend its perspective in a process ordinarily exclusive to the well off and well funded.*

*Rojas is fueled by civic engagement and encourages guests of his model-building workshops to express their needs by producing urban areas with film canisters, Lego's, wood blocks, plastic Easter eggs and myriad of other items.*

*Rojas marries the urban planning process with the community in an attempt to further understand the collective needs and desires of the public. Art production is Rojas' chosen medium as an innovative way to tackle absent community involvement in the traditional planning process.*

### How did your career evolve to where it is today as urban planner, community activist, and artist?

Watching LA burn during the 1992 civil unrest changed my urban planning career. As an urban planner I felt helpless however I also felt that as urban planners we created these land-use, and social inequities.

I had just graduated from MIT in urban studies and though I would get a municipal job and live happily ever after. However watching the fires, looting, and guns I realized how fragile cities are. Dystopia can happen when people's lives are not respected. I left LA, joined the Peace Corps and was sent to Eastern Europe to help build a civil society after the fall of communism. I received on-the-ground training and came back to LA with a new energy to challenge the status quo.

I worked for (LA County) Metro during the day developing rail, bus, pedestrian, and bike projects. After work I began to meet and organize with mainly Latinos on the issues of mobility, open space, health, and because of my research, the Latino built environment or urbanism. We formed the **Latino Urban Forum**, which was a think-tank of Latinos to help navigate the technical world of policy. We worked on a variety projects from pedestrian safety to a jogging path around a cemetery.



One of our hardest tasks I had in these various capacities was how to engage people in the community visioning process to create projects, plans and movement?

Photo © 2015 Michael A. Hernández



James Rojas, Photo taken at the Natural History Museum:  
Photo © Tim Adams

Through using art and play I discovered I could engage people in the planning process quickly, and happily. I recognize the beauty in a piece of art, but have learned the most important part of the art is the process that created it. Like art, urban planning is the process of how we create our cities. My newly found art practice applies the creative process to urban planning. My method helps people investigate how their memory, experience, and imagination shape their environment and how we as planners can capture this information to inform public projects, plans and policies.

Above all, I am committed to the idea that people's imagination and creativity — based in their on-the-ground knowledge about what does and does not "work" in their communities — can shape their future. This is how Latinos shape their communities.

### What was the catalyst for developing your unique methodology employing interactive model building workshops engaging the public in the planning and design process?

Since I can remember I helped my grandmother to create her *nacimiento*, or nativity display, during the Christmas season. She would use house hold objects like rocks, sand, mirrors, cotton balls and real plants to create this large eight foot long tableau portraying the nativity which are common in East Los Angeles where I grew up.

She gave me a shoebox filled with small objects to play with when I was three years old. The objects were buttons, old jewelry, bottle tops, and other things she collected from around the house that most people would ordinarily discard. Because I had very few toys I cherished these knick-knacks. I began collecting objects myself. As a kid my pockets were always full of stuff I'd find on the sidewalks or playground.

“ Through using art and play I discovered I could engage people in the planning process quickly, and happily. I recognize the beauty in a piece of art, but have learned the most important part of the art is the process that created it. ”

## Urban Planner, Activist and Artist: continued

By Lauren E. Hernández, Staff Writer; Photography by Michael A. Hernández

Just like most children who played with dolls and cars, I would spend hour's recreating what I saw and experienced in the built environment. Because these objects were random, I was forced to use my imagination. Popsicle sticks were streets; salt and pepper shaker tops were building cupolas. Through this process of inquiry I was able to begin to understand the physical conditions that shaped the built environment.

It was not until I opened Gallery 727 on Spring Street in Downtown LA that I realized what urban planners could learn from artists. I explored the intersection of art and urban planning through collaborating and learning from artists and curators. Art engages the audience through their senses. I wondered how planners could be like artists and deeply engage the public through their senses.

For artists and public, the building blocks of a city comprised more than simply structures, streets, and sidewalks but equally personal experiences, collective memories and narratives. These elements less-tangible, but no-less-integral, elements of a city that transform mere infrastructure into place. Artists saw their work as expression and representation; I saw their work as reframing community engagement and a visioning process.

I began displaying my models in the gallery. It was received well by the public. My models caught the attention of Doreen Nelson who developed Design Based Learning, based on John Dewey's pedagogy theories. She encouraged me to take her DBL course at Art Center. Her method educates students by using their hands, creative thinking to build model cities and 3-dimensional models as a way to teach students math, sciences, English, and other subjects.

I thought why not apply these methods to urban planning? I began to rethink my city models not as a static piece of art but an interactive tool to get people to react to it visually and touch it by projecting their ideas on it. The "eureka" moment came when I shared this tool with the public art practice. The public went through this same process of inquiry and design.

As a community organizer I was frustrated with the lack of input from Latino/as on plans, projects and civic matters. I started to run the hour-long workshops and building models to engage, educate, and empower Latinos in the planning and design process. I began working with local artists, architects, and advocates who needed a new approach to engage their clients, patrons, and constituents in designing buildings, advocates or social practice art.

I have facilitated over four hundred community visioning workshops partnering with schools, advocates, art institutions, and municipalities. These workshops are used either as a standalone activity or as the primer for long term planning, project development, or articulating policy. All the workshops have been successful in revealing people's connection to place, and transformative for the participants because they learn something about themselves, the built environment and each other.

### As an urban planner, what are the findings of your research regarding Latino culture and its influence on their environment and the environment at large? (Latino Urbanism)

As great numbers of Latino immigrants settle into US cities and move into suburban homes, they bring with them attitudes towards housing, land, and public space that oftentimes differ from how these cities and homes were originally designed, constructed, planned, and zoned. The vast majority of America's suburbs and single-family housing were built in the last century with values and spatial requirements that meet the social, cultural, design, and economic needs and dreams of America's working and middle class.

As part of the Spanish's Law of the Indies, which was used to colonize the new world through settlements, the central location of plaza and the placement of important religious and government institutions made them the center of civic, cultural, and social life. Many Latinos in the US come from rural places of Mexico or Latino America where social, cultural and some extent economic life, still revolves around the local zocalo or plaza.

When Latinos move into a single-family home their cultural living patterns combine with the American spatial forms to create what I will term "Latino Urbanism." These new urban interventions offer cultural, economic and environmental solutions to the residents' needs as they customized and personalized their homes and communities. Every change Latinos make to their homes and community, no matter how small, has meaning and purpose, which represents the struggles, triumphs, everyday habits and beliefs of the working class residents.

The beauty of Latino urbanism cannot be measured by any architectural standard but in life's experiences, expressions, and adaptations. It represents Latinos' manipulation and adaptation over their environment through creative expression based on need both physical and mental.

Photos ©2015 Michael A. Hernández



## Urban Planner, Activist and Artist: continued

By Lauren E. Hernández, Staff Writer

### Can you give us examples of your findings?

The American front yards became a space for cultural identity Latinos. Nowhere else in the home is Latino use of space so illuminated and celebrated than in the enclosed front yard which functions like a plaza. The plaza is one of the most enduring and most missed spaces for many Latinos from Latin America.

Depending on the practical needs of the owners, the use and design of the front yard vary from elaborate courtyard gardens reminiscent of formal plaza to working spaces. The enclosed front yard allows for greater use and personalization of that space. Many things that looked like clutter from outside the fences became as organized and detailed as objects in a room: such as a potted planta on a table, a set of chairs, and a shrine of the Virgin of Guadalupe. The enclosed front yard acts like a room without a ceiling and a zone for interaction.

The fences enclosing them have greatly changed the appearance of the visible expanse of land created by the front lawn. Enclosed front yards are so dominant that they have altered the residents' behavior patterns, and the general physical characteristics of the neighborhoods. These fences break down the auto centric scale of the street. The fences from mini-street walls and help promote pedestrian activity and social interactions.

The green continuous park-like setting that symbolizes the American front yard in the suburb has been cut up into individual slices in many Latino residential neighborhoods. These "slices" create diversity, and allow individuality and sociability to take place more readily.

The appearance of the front yard is the standard for acceptance in many middle class neighborhoods. In Latino neighborhoods the acceptance is not based on appearance of the front yard but through physical and social contact with the neighbors. The Latino front yards are not anonymous spaces but are personal vignettes of the owner's life.



Los Angeles River Visioning, Making LA

Photo © Victoria Bernal

“Latinos are transforming inner-city neighborhoods and suburbs into sustainable, vibrant places with their imaginations, bodies, and very little resources. As the Latino population grows in the nation, so does this pattern language.”

### What will your findings contribute to affecting changing how we currently plan and develop our cities and neighborhoods?

As self-reliant Latinos migrate into the American City; they bring a palette of cultural lifestyles that in sustainable ways alter our city's physical environment and infrastructure to meet their diverse social, economic, cultural, and physical needs. Latinos are transforming inner-city neighborhoods and suburbs into sustainable, vibrant places with their imaginations, bodies, and very little resources. As the Latino population grows in the nation, so does this pattern language.

Latinos often retrofit elements of the built form to satisfy their economic and social needs: outdated gas stations become *taquerias*, defunct rail yards become parks, large abandoned manufacturing plants become *mercados* and front yards become plazas. Streets are an integral part of the community fabric because they bring people together by allowing for mobility and social exchanges. Latinos tend to walk, bike, ride public and are retrofitting the auto-oriented built form to make it pedestrian friendly through their behavior patterns.

These every day activities bring people together and integrate human needs with mobility. Latinos become "Eyes on the street," as Jane Jacob stated. Whether sitting on the front porch or fixing a car, eyes provide a sense of safety and promote walking as a viable transportation mode for neighborhoods. By marrying mobility and community needs, Latinos create a sustainable transportation system that is not based on fossil fuels but on the encounters of friends and neighbors.

Latinos transform staid, auto-oriented urban neighborhoods and suburbs into hubs of lively pedestrian and commercial activity through their legal or illegal DIY (do-it-yourself) urban design interventions to commercial and residential streets. Moveable objects (props), and graphics add a second layer of architect to the Latino landscape that support human activity in public space. The props range from objects to sit on, talk over, and play with. These props allow residents to use the outdoor space by giving them flexibility and freedom over their environment. From graffiti, store signs, and murals, the use of paint helps Latinos to inexpensively claim ownership of space or express themselves. The use of graphics adds a strong visual element to the urban form. Buildings are kinetic because of the flamboyant words and graphics used. Many building areas cover from top to bottom with graphics. These props, graphics and murals scale down the auto-oriented landscape to a pedestrian scale.

Latino growth is occurring at a time when US is conflicted between two urban development models — developing compact cities and preserving undeveloped spaces, or increasing urban sprawl. Latino Urbanism offers a new model for sustainable redevelopment of our suburbs from the ground up.

## Urban Planner, Activist and Artist: continued

By Lauren E. Hernández, Staff Writer

**You've worked in Mexico, Canada, Europe, and South America. What are the differences/similarities on how people in other places do community-visioning?**

People at the core are similar and generally want the same things in the built environment. However we expect people to be different at face value through their color of skin, income, race, geography, etc. Therefore I explored the universal findings on how people think about themselves psychological (thru memories, life stories, art, and play) and how that translates into the physical world in order to design better cities.

What I have learned is that people are all urban planners and have something to offer in the planning process. People hate being told what to do, they need to be heard, and they need to be validated! They all want to have a good time, bond, learn from each other and want to play.

For the public community visioning is shaped by their emotions, experiences, memories, and how these elements are woven into the built environment. Places are a physical place of reactions, and a mental space of imagination. Cities have their own nonverbal spatial and visual languages that residents use more intuitively than they would a planning vocabulary. Having participants build solutions with objects rather than asking them to describe their world in technical language makes it possible to communicate this experiential knowledge.

Validating people's lived experience is critical to engaging and integrating underrepresented communities into the urban planning process. Having them reveal who they are, where they come from, and what they value is the first step in building key relationships.

The process brings residents, friends, family and strangers together to interact to create a sense of place and to build the social and planning capacity needed to understand and participate in community planning. The convergence of these ideas makes community visioning efficient, productive, transformative, meaningful, and even joyful.

My method transcends all racial, social, gender, economic, language and professional barriers. It creates a safe space for all participants to express themselves by taking into account how spatial information is process through the gender, age, and culture of the participants.



*Reimagine Rotterdam: 4th International Architecture Biennale Rotterdam: Open City Constructed with Interboro Partners, NYC.*

This democratic method makes sure no one has the upper hand in the planning process, builds shared values by peeling away differences, holding them respectfully, and building consensus.

### **What does Latino Urbanism mean to you?**

I became frustrated while sitting in my MIT's Introduction to City Planning Class. The professor lectured and showed slides of good and bad cities. Most of the good places he examined were well maintained with beautiful architecture, the right scale etc. and were mainly located in Europe or East Coast. The bad place was LA's suburban built environment. I grew up in LA and new it was more than just freeways; he did not mention the Latino communities of East Los Angeles where I was raised. Despite its gang problems, freeways, and informal urban design practices, it was great a place. However, at that time I wasn't able to articulate why.

“My advice (to students) is to listen, observe, and connect with people. Use your education and combine it with your intuition to help others improve our communities.”

After doing some research on the topic I found there was nothing written on this place besides the typical demographic data, so I decided to examine and uncover the secret of what created that sense of place in East LA. I didn't know what to expect or find.

With a new set of eyes, in 1989 I set out to rediscover my community with a camera in hand during MIT's six-week Christmas break. I drove around Boyle Heights and East Los Angeles visiting familiar places, family, and friends trying to figure out what made this place special.

I was finally able to articulate what it meant to be Latino through the spatial and visual language of the built form in my thesis "The Enacted Environment: The Creation of Place by Mexican and Mexican Americans in East Los Angeles"

This new knowledge helps every Latino articulate their spatial needs and how this might impact land use, mobility, and zoning.

This research gave the Latino community and new understanding and tool to articulate their spatial, social, economic, and cultural needs. Because the Latino community needed a narrative, a story, why we are different, what is the physical difference? This research became that.

### **What advice would you give students becoming urban planners and architects who may someday work to improve our communities?**

My advice is to listen, observe, and connect with people. Use your education and combine it with your intuition to help others improve our communities. While Latino urbanism and Place It were developed to serve the Latino community these ideas and tools have universal appeal.

**About the Author:** Lauren Hernandez is a state and national award winning journalist. She currently works as a writer and researcher at the *Silicon Valley Business Journal*. She's donated her time to write for by ByDESIGN for three years. Her articles and video stories have appeared in the Mountain View Patch, Los Altos Patch, San Jose State Spartan Daily, and the Santa Monica Mirror. dearlhernandez@gmail.com, follow her on Twitter @LaurenPorFavor



## Innovative Participation-based Urban Planning

By Roy R. Hernández



PLACE IT! is a design- and participation-based urban planning practice founded by urban planner James Rojas. It uses model-building workshops and on-site interactive models to help engage the public in the planning and design process.

Through the PLACE IT! process participants are able to learn about the role of planning and design in shaping how we

live, and to translate their dreams and ideas into physical forms and models. From these physical results and their accompanying stories participants generate plans, drawings, and policy recommendations for municipalities, NGOs, and elected officials.

The following images provide examples of the PLACE IT! participatory design process.

### Professional Career

**Place It**, Manager, Los Angeles CA 2010-Present

**Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transit Authority** (Metro), Project Manager III, Los Angeles, CA, 1997-2010

**Clean Air Action Group, United States Peace Corps**, Environmental Advisor, Budapest, Hungary, 1993 - 1996.

### Leadership

Co-Chair and Co-Founder, Latino Urban Forum, Los Angeles, CA 2000 – present

### Military Service

US. Army Military Service, Europe October 1982- October 1986

### Awards & Recognition

- 2015 Planning Advocate Award of Excellence from the California chapter of the American Planning Association
- 2012 California Community Foundations Emerging Artist Award
- 2009 American Planning Association Los Angeles Educational Project Award

### Education

Masters of City Planning (MCP) & Masters of Science in Architecture Studies (SMarchs) Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1991.

Bachelor of Science in Interior Design Woodbury University, Burbank, California, 1982.

### Place It

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www.placeit.org



**Top:** PlaceIt! interactive model in Caracas, Venezuela, created in LA by Venezuelan architects

**Bottom:** PlaceIt! interactive model on Hollywood Boulevard, Los Angeles



**Top:** Place It! interactive model, Berlin, Germany

**Bottom:** PlaceIt! interactive model at World Urban Forum in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil



### Articles by James Rojas

- Latino Vernacular: Latino Spatial and Cultural Values Transforming the American Single-Family House and Street. November, 2014.
- Front Porch Placemaking: The Latino Connection to the Street. September, 2014.
- Latino Placemaking: How the Civil Rights Movement Reshaped East Los Angeles. March, 2014.
- The Path of Most Resistance: Latino Pedestrian Safety. July, 2011.
- Latino Urban Forum's James Rojas Supports Permitting L.A.'s Street Vendors. June, 2008.
- LA To TJ 2008 Mobile Conference: Moving, Goods, People, and Ideas. June, 2008.

### James Rojas in the Press

- The Agile City: Making Many Small Plans. By Matt Carmichael, June, 2013.
- Una Placita: Mercado's Virgin de Guadalupe Shrine Creates a Social Space From a Parking Lot. By Kris Fortin, February, 2012.
- On Tough Blocks, Divine Glitter. By Patricia Leigh Brown, December, 2002.
- All That's Holy, and Then Some. By Mary Rourke, December, 2002.
- Joggers Seek a Smoother Trail Near Cemetery. By Hector Becerra, August, 2001.
- Urban Landscapes: Front & Center. By Jose Cardenas, September, 1999.

## ByDESIGN Writer Receives State & National Awards for Journalism Excellence

By D. Oswaldo Lopez, AIA, LEED GA



Our editorial board is pleased to announce that Lauren Hernandez, our ByDESIGN lead staff writer, has been recognized with several awards for excellence in journalism.

On May 9th, 2015, Lauren Hernandez was awarded the prestigious Cordel W. Koland Scholarship Award in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at San Jose State University.

This prize was awarded for her exceptional and prolific writing, publishing an astonishing 53 articles and 10 multimedia packages (broadcast stories) in one semester. This was followed up by an exceptional job as the executive producer of the Spartan Daily and the Liaison for the Update News, the broadcast component of the Journalism and Mass Communications Department at San Jose State.



**California Newspaper Publishers Association**

In addition to this honor, Ms. Hernandez was recognized by the California College Media Association and was honored by the California Newspaper Publishers Association for 2nd Place Best Editorial Commentary for her article, *"Labor Exploitation Must Come to an End."* The first is a statewide award and the latter a national award in journalism.

ByDESIGN salutes Lauren for her talents, attention to her craft, and most importantly for her continuing contributions to the success of ByDESIGN as an ongoing publication. Needless to say, we are proud of her contribution and volunteer devotion to ByDESIGN and making the publication it has grown to be. She was there at the very beginning of our first publication and words escape our editorial board in honoring her properly.

Lauren, we salute you!! You make us all incredibly proud to name you as our colleague here at ByDESIGN. We are blessed to have you. Congratulations!!!



**California College Media Association**



**CNPA Above:** Hernandez chats with Steve Lopez, LA Times columnist, about her editorial on labor exploitation.

**CNPA Below:** May 9, 2015. Hernandez poses for with Steve Lopez and Brandon Chew, fellow Spartan Daily reporter, who received first place for News Photo Journalism.



**CCMA:** Lauren Hernandez poses with Richard Craig, Spartan Daily Advisor/Journalism Professor celebrating the recognition.



**CCMA Best News Series** winners including Nicholas Ibarra, Lauren Hernandez, Jenny Bennett and Austin Belisle.

**CCMA:** February 28, 2015. Spartan Daily winners of CCMA awards for a variety of journalism categories. Competition divisions are: daily, weekly and non-weekly newspapers, online publications, magazines and advertising, best social media, best online ad and best online editorial.



## ByDESIGN & CED Host Awards & Guest Speaker

By Lauren E. Hernández, Staff Writer, Photography by Michael A. Hernández



Students, alumni and faculty filed into the Wurster Gallery on April 1, 2015 to participate in the 5<sup>th</sup> annual CASA Alumni awards. Attendees listened to San Francisco City Architect Edgar Lopez's journey from Guatemala to U.C. Berkeley as a Spanish-speaker, and followed his path to a design professional and manager of an architecturally booming city.

Wurster Hall has been home to the awards ceremony for four years now, and once again offered a location for five College of Environmental design students to receive recognition amongst their peers. One honored students slipped out through mid-ceremony due to a design studio, which demonstrates how their commitment to the craft has fueled their recognition in the college.

### Recipients Comment on the Awards

#### What does it feel like to get this recognition?

**Abel Morales:** It feels great. I feel like I have an excellent community and network behind me. I've spent a lot of time to try to put myself out there and support the youth or folks who are going to school. I've always believed in giving back. Even if I haven't had support, I definitely feel like I have it now. I didn't have a lot of Chicano or Latino architects to get me when I was a student. A lot of that was just through my own volition and drive. At some point, I recognized that I needed that. I think what CASA, and having such a strong alum, and ByDesign, and your father Roy - what he's doing with Charles, Oswaldo and even Edgar Lopez and Ann Cervantes - what they're doing is really giving myself and some of the younger generation of designers a support network. I'm very appreciative of that.

**Garcia Hernandez:** it felt really good to know that your work is appreciated because we work so hard and there is so much people that you think are better than you and had so many more opportunities than you and they've come so prepared. To know that you've done something good, it feels good.

**Itza Torres:** 'At first I thought I really wasn't going to get it. it felt really good to get recognized for the amount of work we put in in class. So much thought goes into these projects. It was really great to get it. being here at Berkeley its super competitive, so there's a lot of talent so to be picked from that talent? It feels really good.'

**Matthew Almendarez:** 'It definitely felt good. I know this past year I worked really hard on the best projects I produced and that I put on the CASA website. So I felt really proud just because I worked really hard on those projects and for them to recognize it is an honor.'



**Above:** Charles Higuera and Roy Hernandez review work submitted by recipients of the CASA Alumni Awards, which culminated with speaker Edgar Lopez, Architect of the City and County of San Francisco - "The 3 Billion Dollar Man." Our sincerest thanks to Jennifer Wolch for her continued support.



**Top Left:** Vanessa Hernandez  
**Top Right:** Abel Morales

**Middle Left:** Adrian Garcia Hernandez  
**Middle Right:** Itzel Torres

**Bottom Right:** Matthew Almendarez



#### Donors & Recipients

ThirdWave Corporation	Los Angeles, CA		2,000
Charles Higuera	UC Berkeley CED	BA Arch 81, M Arch 79	500
David R. Diaz	UCLA, UCB CED	Ph D Urban Planning, MCRP CED	250
Edward S. Richter	CSU LB, Cal Poly	MBA, BA Arch	100
Susam Hagstrom	Univ. Minnesota	MA Ed Phycology	100

**2,950**

#### Martin Del Campo Awards

Abel Morales	UC Berkeley CED	MArch '15	1,000
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#### Bob Esparza Awards

Matthew Almendarez	UC Berkeley CED	BA L. Arch 16	350
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#### Antonia Escobar Memorial Prize

Venessa Hernandez	UC Berkeley CED	BA Urban Studies 16	1,000
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#### Merit Awards

Itzel Torres	UC Berkeley CED	BA Architecture / Public Health	300
Adrian Hernandez	UC Berkeley CED	BA Sustainable Env. Design / Forestry	300

**2,950**



**L to R:** Jennifer Wolch (Dean, CED). Adrian Garcia Hernandez, Edgar Lopez, Unnamed, Itzel Torres, Unnamed, Vanessa Hernandez, Charles Higuera, Roy Hernandez, Abel Morales, Tom Buresh (Professor, Chair of Architecture)

## ByDESIGN / CED Host Guest Lecture & Awards Ceremony

By Lauren Hernández, Photography by Michael Hernández

“ I always look forward to the CASA Alumni awards events. It's something that I think has enormous value. ”

Dean Jennifer Wolch

What do you like about architecture?

**Adrian Garcia Hernandez:** I like that you have the ability to influence lives. Buildings are where we spend most of our lives, so just to know someone will be living there or interacting with that space, it feels good to have an impact on how they live and how they appreciate it.

**Itza Torres:** It's just very different from what I expected it to be. I came in as a freshman not really knowing much about architecture, just that I wanted to incorporate art and science. Now being here I've noticed that there is so much to it. What I really like about it is that the more I'm learning about it, the more I see that it connects a lot with the community and that's something that is very important to me.

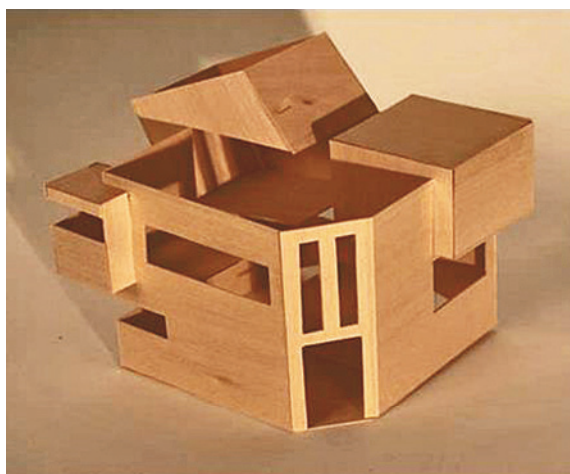
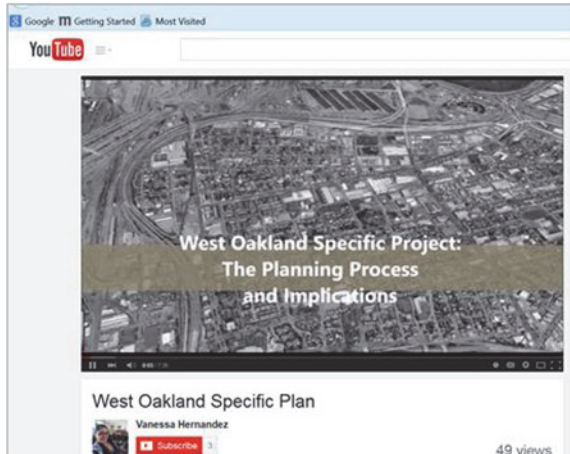
**Matthew Almendarez:** The design process; how we have to incorporate our context to the site and influence our design into it. Architecture is not just the building, it's the environment as well. I love that connection.

“ I think it's generous of them to even think about doing this because they see how much we struggle, especially for architecture since the expense is so great. ”

Adrian Garcia Hernandez



**Above:** CED, UC Berkeley alumni Ross Ojeda, Roy Hernandez, Anne Cervantes and Charles Higuera.



**Student projects from top to bottom:**

**Abel Morales:** March '15, BA Arch

**Vanessa Hernandez:** BA Urban Studies '16

**Matthew Almendarez:** BA Arch '16

**Itzel Torres:** BA Arch/Public Health '18

**Adrian Garcia Hernandez:** BA Sustainable Environmental Design / Forestry

Why she's studying urban studies?

**Vanessa Hernandez:** Creating policies that help people live life. I've seen my community change a lot; I wanted to know why? There are a lot of policies and design that goes into the way that we live, so wanting to know the root cause of that and how I could be in a profession that can enact change in how people live in urban places.

I'm from LA originally, from Hollywood near Koreatown where gentrification displaced my family. Last fall my mother was homeless while I was still here in school. Her apartment where we lived for 14 years, called a New York-esque apartment, went from something we could afford to something nobody in our neighborhood could afford. It hurts.

Thoughts on the awards event?

**Jennifer Wolch:** I always look forward to the CASA Alumni awards events. I think they're very meaningful to the alumni who have raised funds to help support students through scholarships, but I also think its very meaningful and very important for the students – both the ones who are recognized and those who are also the other students who meet each other and meet alumni, to see the trajectory of the careers that alumni have been able to carve out for themselves. And also make connection that are really going to foster them and their work over time. It's something that I always look forward to and I think has enormous value.



**Above:** Roy Hernandez and Jennifer Wolch share a conversation about the event.

## ByDESIGN / CED Host Guest Lecture & Awards Ceremony

### Part 2: Edgar A. Lopez “The 3 Billion Dollar Man”

The following provides a partial transcript of a recording made of the captivating presentation given by Mr. Lopez.

#### Assimilation to U.S. culture, experience at Berkeley:

I came to the U.S. after high school and I was hating every minute of it because I couldn't speak the language, I couldn't connect. It was my brother and I living by our selves. He was 21 and I was 18 - two young adults trying to figure things out, trying to learn the language, trying to learn the culture. I felt learning the language easier than adopting the culture.

So I went to community college for about 18 months and I applied to UC Berkeley and was accepted. By the time I got to Berkeley, I had been in the U.S. for a little over two and half years. So again, real struggle with language, with being a young adult, learning to cook - you can imagine, the constant change in my life. When I came to Cal, two and half years before I was in high school that had one library and it was a pretty pathetic library. When I came here, there was 20 plus libraries. The whole concept of the amount of resources that you have here at your disposal was amazing.

#### Advice to students:

It may feel like it's difficult to find a first job, but I would urge you to not give up and to really stay with what your passion is. If you stick with it, you will have fun.

**Abel Morales:** *Listening to Edgar was great. He showed his path and how difficult it was. He did overcome difficulties and challenges – his mother passing away and having to come here to the states, and learn English while he was at Berkeley. Hearing a story like Edgar's, and how he's risen to the top, gives the Latino community a role model to look up to.*

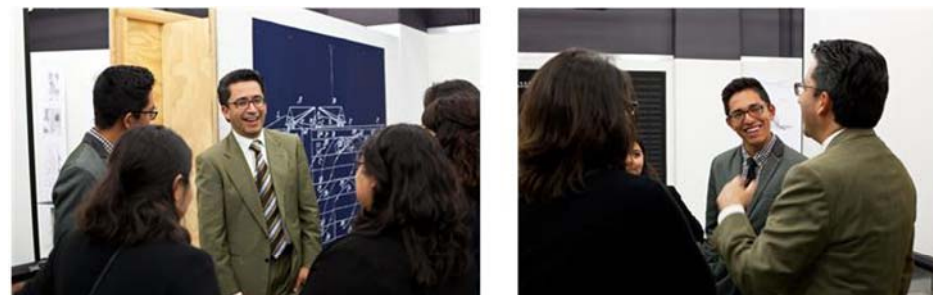
**Itza Torrez:** *I learned a lot today, especially since that's what I've been trying to look into. I know now that I want to work in the public sector. I talked to him afterward and he told me how he engages the community with his projects. He's a very well-rounded person and someone who is very admirable.*

**Vanessa Hernandez:** *It was good seeing a Latino doing good work for what the community needs, and working in spaces that promote community bringing artists and places that all can be proud of. Seeing someone like that in a position of power is really great. It was great to hear him.*



**Top:** Edgar A Lopez, City Architect and Deputy Director of Public Works, Department of Public Works City & County of San Francisco, managing a \$3B construction portfolio, addresses captivated students.

Below: CASA members enjoy connecting with Edgar Lopez who provides career advice on working in the public sector.



**Dean Jennifer Wolch:** *I thought it was a fascinating talk. His story coming from Guatemala during the civil war, having to adjust instantaneously to a completely new context, language, everything, and within just a couple years to be able to come to the best public university in the world – and succeed and do well, and have such a remarkable career. He is someone who through both his immediate design of work and involvement of particular projects and his management of a very large staff leaves a huge imprint on the city. By the time his career is over and even now, he's had just an enormous role in shaping the everyday lives of thousands of San Franciscan's and improving the built environment. And that's really what we hope to prepare our students to do when they graduate from CED.*

The following letter validates that the efforts of CASAalumni/ CED are having a real impact. We believe in all students from our communities. It's our responsibility to give back and help!

“ Querido Roy,

I wanted to share some really amazing news!

I was admitted and just accepted my offer to the M.Arch program at Princeton!! I was deciding between that and the Architectural Association in London. I still have an interview tomorrow afternoon with the Bartlett at UCL in London.

I wanted to thank you and the whole CASA alumni for giving us so much support during and after our education at Berkeley. During my time in school, I was going back and forth on whether I was even good enough to complete my undergrad degree and really did not think I had what it took to complete the program. It was after the CASA awards in the spring of 2012, when I was surprised to find out that I won a scholarship, that I started to believe in myself. Once that started, I found myself winning other awards and next thing you know I was the speaker at graduation!

I still cannot believe I'm headed to Princeton this fall. I will forever be thankful to you and the rest of the CASA Alumni for believing in me and igniting a fire in me that has gotten me this far.

Ivan-Nicholas, BA Arch '13, CED ”



## ***Housing is a Human Right, Personal Statement for Admission to M.A. City Planning, CED, UC Berkeley***

By Leslie Valencia

*The College of Environmental Design (CED) is consistently ranked as one of the most prestigious design schools in the U.S. and world. QS (<http://www.topuniversities.com>) recently ranked CED # 4 in the annual World University Rankings for Architecture/Built Environment - from a field of 800 top universities in the world. Admission to graduate school at CED is exceeding competitive, only a small percentage of applicants are accepted. So it is with great pleasure that we recognize, and celebrate, Leslie Valencia's admission to CED in Fall 2015. No one knows what planning contributions she will make in the future, but we are confident they will be substantial. The following is her statement of intent. **BD Editors.***

Graduating from Sylmar High School the same year it was classified the "worst" low performing school in the Los Angeles Unified School District inevitably made me nervous about my interest in a field where minority women are significantly underrepresented. It wasn't until I found myself at dinner with the Dean of the College of Environmental Design at UC Berkeley, and with Philip Freelon of The Freelon Group, that I realized I had a place in the field of architecture and urban planning. I was there as an active undergraduate board member of the Chican@/Latin@ Architecture Student Association (CASA) and was pleased to participate in the cross-cultural discussion of how design can be used as a tool of empowerment.

It has now been 3 years since I graduated from UC Berkeley and I am proud to say that I am returning this fall for a Master of City Planning.

In graduate school I plan to vigorously address the suburbanization of poverty and the implications that it will have in the field community development, housing policy and affordable housing. In 2005, the American Community Survey revealed that for the first time, more families under the poverty line lived in the suburbs of major metropolitan areas than in central cities. This research has inspired dialogue among planners in topics surrounding transportation and job sprawl, but I would like to expand on the topic of affordable housing, multi-family housing, and the many forms of homeownership that may or may not work better in working class suburbs.

Having been raised in a low-income suburb myself, it is in my interest to understand how housing policy and design can affect disadvantaged communities, and given the growing economic disparity in the US, the issue I will explore will only continue becoming more acute.

I currently work as a Project Associate for The Urban Homesteading Assistance Board (UHAB) where I provide training and technical assistance to residents of low-income, resident controlled shared equity housing cooperatives in New York City. The Housing Development Fund Corporation (HDFC) model, if implemented properly, would work great in working class suburbs where homeownership options are very limited. The implications that housing cooperatives will have on existing zoning laws

“ As a first generation Xicana, I feel that it is important for us to continue to take our place in academia while adequately representing our communities. ”



in the surrounding suburbs; however, requires further research.

Prior to UHAB I served for Habitat for Humanity NYC through AmeriCorps where I designed and managed murals for public housing community centers and participated in the 2014 AmeriCorps Build-a-thon in Wake County, North Carolina.

While my work experience has been very gratifying, acceptance into the Masters of City Planning program at UC Berkeley will allow me to get a better understanding of housing policy on a regional, national and international level and will naturally introduce me to housing solutions outside of the realm of cooperatives (i.e. non-profit development and economic development). It will also provide me with the opportunity of exploring innovative policy approaches to housing that could help address the suburbanization of poverty.

Attending graduate school is important to me because it provides the intellectual platform that we sometimes need in order to create new and sustainable knowledge/research. Through that platform, I hope to be able to work towards a future that includes safe, affordable, and adequate housing for disadvantaged communities while addressing inequality through sensible design. I also aspire to design and develop projects that keep the user in mind i.e. taking note of race, sex, gender and culture and exploring how those elements can contribute to the planning and development of the project. With the help of my colleagues, previous professors, and through the mentorship of CASA alumni Roy Hernandez, I was able to discover my passion in affordable housing development and get into one of the most competitive programs in the country. As a first generation Xicana, I feel that it is important for us to continue to take our place in academia while adequately representing our communities.

“ I hope to be able to work towards a future that includes safe, affordable, and adequate housing for disadvantaged communities while addressing inequality through sensible design. ”

## LALO ALCARAZ Shares Chicano Wisdom at UC Berkeley Commencement

The following commencement speech was given by Lalo Alcaraz at the College of Environment Design, UC Berkeley on Sunday May 17, 2015. Alcaraz is the leading Latino political satirist in the US, with the first nationally syndicated politically themed Latino daily comic strip, "La Cucaracha." He is an author, illustrator and radio co-host of KPFK talk show "The Pocho Hour of Power." His latest effort demonstrates his limitless creative capacity, as the producer and writer of the upcoming Fox Television animated show "Bordertown," by the makers of Family Guy. Lalo is currently a faculty member at Otis College of Art & Design in Los Angeles.

This is what Lalo had to say as a precursor to publishing the transcript of his commencement speech:

*I was honored to speak to my alma mater, but especially to the same college of graduates where I sharpened my love of architecture and design. Public speaking and doing improv on microphones is not difficult for me, but this occasion did give me a few butterflies inside. I was returning, not as an architect, but not as a complete failure either. I wanted to share my good news: I made plans for my life after Berkeley, but life had other, also worthy plans for me.*

### Here's the commencement speech in its entirety:

Hello Wurster Hall Class of 2015!

Good evening graduates and long suffering families.

CONGRATULATIONS PARENTS! YOU'RE ALMOST FREE.

And graduates, it won't cost you anything: how about the loudest most tremendous cheer for your families?!

Good, NOW this is sounding like the Chicano/Latino graduation! Next year, may I suggest mariachis?

I am so honored to be here to share this amazing milestone with you, and I'd like to thank the College of Environmental Design. Both of my alma maters have finally realized I'm an alumnus, I guess I made it.

I have to admit, at the reception at Wurster Hall I did feel a little out of place. It's been so long since I've been immersed in Architecture. Wurster is so much nicer now! I mean, you have lasers now! Most of the professors I worked with are gone now, but I did find Jean Paul (J.P.) Bourdier, and I told him "J.P.! You look the same!" He grabbed my arm and he said, "Lalo, you have changed."

After reading a couple of books worth of commencement speeches, I found that there's four major mainstay commencement joke areas I must hit in my speech, so let me get those out of the way.

- Thank you for allowing me the privilege of delaying your long awaited great moment by about 20 minutes, though it will feel like 45.
- And you graduates are all so young and beautiful and because of that I hate you SO much.
- I gave this whole speech a long and thoughtful consideration, as I was writing it on the walk over from the parking garage and
- I don't believe in Commencement Speeches, because all they are is some speaker talking about themselves and then giving lame advice. So instead I will recount to you my life story and offer some words to the wise.



*Lalo Alcaraz exhibits the well known sense of humor listeners of the "Pocho Hour of Power" KPFK radio program are accustomed to hearing.*

Welcome Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning!

Welcome to the first class of Sustainable Environmental design majors (there's like six of them), Urban Studies & City Planning, the slightly odd, adventurous-but-never-satisfied Individual Majors, and last but not least, ARCHITECTURE!

To M. Arch students, who wear blue astronaut-like jumpsuits instead of robes: May I suggest adding capes?

All of you have achieved so much. Years of procrastination have finally paid off. And you have so many lives ahead of you. But for now, congratulations on putting this life to bed.

When I was a student here back in, oh, let's just say I had finally finished my graduate thesis a year late and many of you had just learned how to babble incoherently, which also happens when you finish a graduate thesis a year late.

I applied to be the student commencement speaker for the CED graduation. I didn't win the spot, even though I had a somewhat powerful, political speech audition, in which I probably called for the hiring of more Professors of Color, and more admission diversity — stuff like that.

I promise you, I NEVER vowed that, "One day, I will give the CED Commencement Speech, I'll show you!" But here we are. So, OK, I'll take it.

In high school, my art teacher made me her TA, and would fill my head with visions of attending private art schools someday, like Cal Arts, Art Center and Otis College of Fine Art & Design. I didn't know I was a poor little cholo who could not afford even bus fare to one of those high-end schools but I wanted to go so badly. Years later, Otis College of Fine Art & Design invited me to teach illustration, which I did for over two years. Another goal caught up to me.

## LALO ALCARAZ Shares Chicano Wisdom at UC Berkeley: continued

A cartoonist named Allen Saunders once said, (and John Lennon sang it) "Life is what happens while you are busy making other plans." I see it as the slightly less defeatist but quite not as catchy: "The best plan is being yourself."

I came to Berkeley, but not as an undergraduate. I never would have made it here, at the number one public school on the planet. I wasn't ready.

I barely made it into the undergraduate ranks at San Diego State University. I grew up on the border in San Diego in a series of shacks and apartments on the wrong side of the tracks. My parents were hardworking but poor and lightly-educated Mexican immigrants.

My father died in a drunk driving accident when I was 13. Even before that life at home was not easy. I endured the sunny, mellow and easygoing racism of 1970s San Diego. I didn't have a school support system at home.

Before I completely lose you, I'd like to acknowledge that I attended my own Chicano/Latino graduation right here in Zellerbach Hall in 1990, and that in about that spot right there in the middle of the stage, my mom stood and held her beaming face when the roaring crowd acknowledged her. In about two weeks it will be the first anniversary since she passed away.

So, anyhow, thanks to both my mom who kept me fed and alive, and to artists and teachers who saw my potential, I was able to develop as an artist.

I grew up seeing how unfairly and harshly my housekeeper mom and gardener dad were treated by their American bosses, and I grew angry because of it. This grew into a desire to write and draw things that stood up for the rights of immigrants, Mexican or otherwise. The underdogs.

Drawing and creativity runs on my mom's side of the family, and so I was able to use that to express my anger, and develop that into a semi-lucrative career of poking fun at powerful jerks and morons, and to promote social justice.

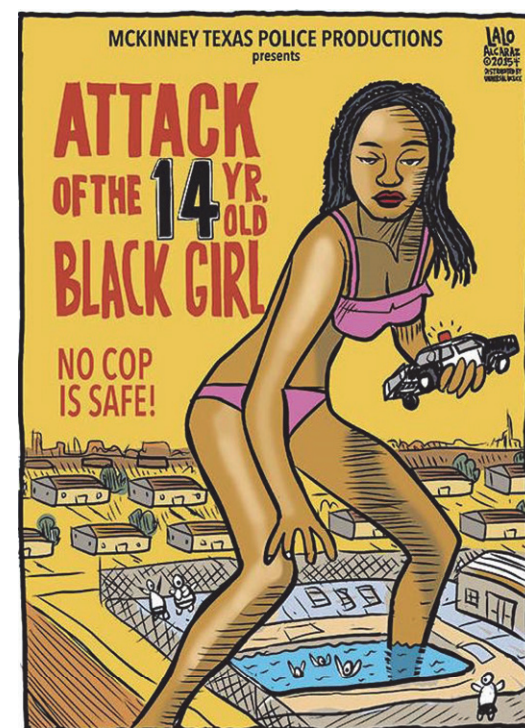
I have to say, annoying the greedy captains of industry and their political lackeys is its own reward.

Like every other editorial cartoonist, I was the cartoonist for my college paper, The Daily Aztec. My nickname at the paper was, I kid you not, "Please Forward My Hatemail." It was the Reagan Era, and a great time to skewer conservative politicians. Almost as easy as the George Dubya Bush Years.

At SDSU I studied Art & Environmental Design, and my exposure to the architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright, Buckminster Fuller and the insane Walking Cities of Archigram inspired me to want to change the world through Architecture & Design. I applied to grad school.

I was accepted into UCLA's Architecture program, and UC Berkeley's three-year M. Arch program. Berkeley was farther from San Diego than UCLA, so that's where I went. Parents, you know what I'm talking about. In my home, we have a 200 mile radius rule for college. That's not a limit, that's the minimum distance.

I practically lived at Wurster Hall, drafting and making endless presentation drawings. I have to say I was pretty awesome at making study models. I wish my physics and engineering abilities had been as sharp as my foam core cutting and hot glue gun skills. I was pretty badass with balsa wood and cardboard scraps. If only making functional buildings was as simple as making beautiful study models.



One of the best things I did here was to work as a TA for Lars Lerup, Professor Emeritus here and Dean Emeritus of the Architecture School at Rice University. Lars was, as they say in Sweden, "cray cray." He is a funny dude.

One day, in front of dozens of students in our class, ED1 I believe, Professor Lerup, who would crack jokes about my Chicano identity while I cracked jokes about his Swedish heritage, drew an imaginary circle in the air with his hand and told the students:

"This is what YOU know. This is your world. You students, are in the middle, and you see everything inside. Now, LALO, because he is a Chicano, he has one foot inside this circle, and one foot outside. He can see EVERYTHING in your world and everything else OUTSIDE your world!"

I was blown away by this. He affirmed my dual Chicano identity to me, but also to the whole class. It was a pretty cool experience.

So what were my valuable lessons in architecture?

- Study models helped me think on my feet.
- Crit sessions taught me how to defend my work in public.
- Teaching showed me the value of helping others learn.

Yet I did not become an architect. I went to Wurster Hall to study architecture, and came out a satirist. As the great Mahatma Gandhi once wrote, "OMFG?" (I then looked to the heavens and kissed my fingers and raised them to salute Gandhi.)

Life has other non-architecture related plans for you architects. About 50%, actually. And also for the rest of you. It's true, they did research! And it's OK.

On campus I started performing in front of building takeovers and constant protests. I started a sketch comedy group called the Chicano Secret Service, and also a satire 'zine called Pocho Magazine.

At Berkeley I also met my future wife, who most days curses the day I followed her to L.A., and she's sitting right over there with our presently well-behaved children.



## LALO ALCARAZ Shares Chicano Wisdom at UC Berkeley: continued

After graduation, I moved to Los Angeles to try to get into the entertainment industry. Then the L.A. Riots happened, and that led me to drawing editorial cartoons in the LA Weekly, and from that, my daily strip La Cucaracha was born.



I became a graphic novelist and New York Times bestseller, I wrote film scripts for studios, and last year was hired as Consulting Producer and Writer for an upcoming primetime animated television show which has just been officially added to the Fox TV lineup.

That show is called Bordertown and is Executive Produced by Seth MacFarlane of Family Guy, and has a record number of Mexican and Mexican-American characters, five Latino writers, three Latino producers and lots of Latino voice talent. This show is so brown it should be on Telemundo! But it's on Fox!

Please watch it. I have kids that are all going to go to expensive colleges.

As long as you stick to what you are about inside, you're going to be fine. Sometime plans will follow you.

We didn't come here to Wurster struggle just to be employable. We came here to learn. We came here because we are curious, special people. We came here because we care about what our environment can look and behave like. We came here to make everything better.

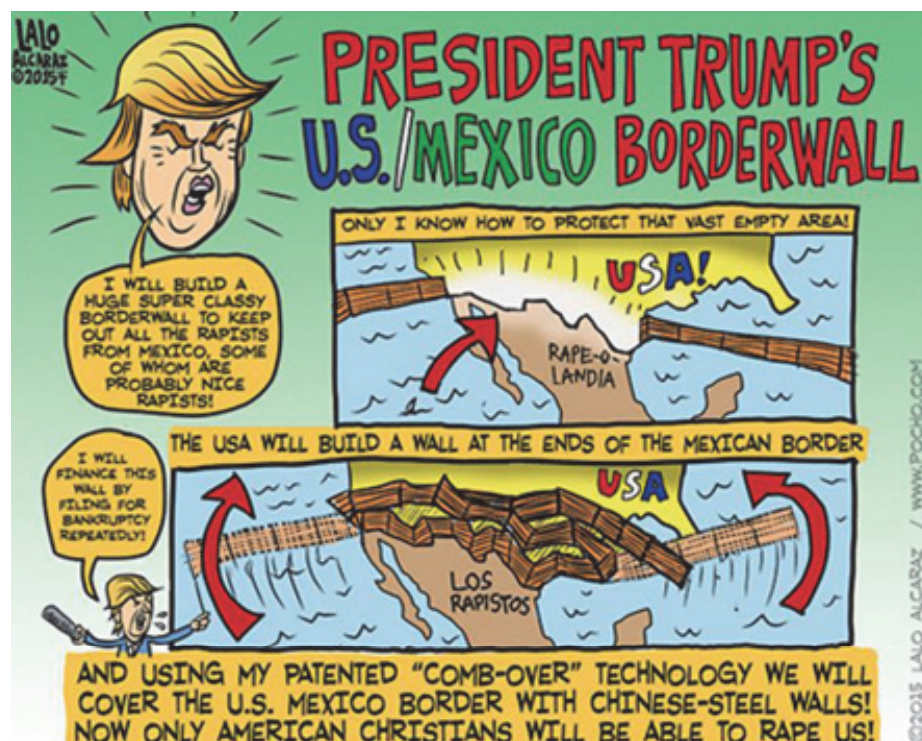
Life will always throw obstacles and opportunities in your way. Some of these you should find a way around, some are to be driven straight through, like a flaming barrier in Mad Max Fury Road or some other current movie reference in which people drive through crap. Explosions will happen. Water will become worth more than gold!

So, I don't have any words of wisdom from the point of view of an architect, other than as planners and designers, you should all strive to achieve or accommodate for social justice when you can. There's a lot of people out there who need your help in providing for their families and having a decent quality of life.

(Impromptu rant, I think it happened here.) By the way, I just spent a weekend in the Pine Ridge Lakota Indian Reservation in South Dakota, doing cartoon workshops with kids, and I have to say it's another world. They are a wonderful people, but this community has lots of problems and issues that need addressing, and it's a crime the way they have been marginalized. And it's within our borders of the United States. I urge you graduates to go spend some time there, or at any reservation around the country, they deserve our help. There. that's my commercial for the Lakota people.

Berkeley changed my life. Berkeley has changed our lives, and probably in ways we can't even imagine yet.

I started out trying to become an architect, but it didn't work out that way. But I'm still doing what I've always wanted to do, which is fight for social justice. My favorite hate letter of all time reminds me of how great it is to be a political cartoonist.



One reader was so angry with me he told me to QUOTE: "GO BACK TO AFRICA." He hated me so much he wanted me to go back to the cradle of humanity, one million years!

And cartooning does offer lessons we can all use in life, such as:

- Communicate your message clearly.
- Punch UP and take the powerful down a notch, they deserve it. Don't ever punch DOWN - down at the poor and the powerless, nobody likes that except our friends at Fox News.
- Know when your piece is done. When it feels like it's time to move on, it usually is.
- Always sign your work. Stand up for it. It's your freaking work... and...
- You can often turn in stuff after the deadline (this is the least helpful thing cartooning has taught me, maybe you should ignore it, it works for cartoonists though).

It's guaranteed that life will mess with you, but you will be fine as long as you stick to your plan, and the best plan is TO BE YOU.

There's a saying I once heard: La vida es dura pero es bella. Life is hard, but it's beautiful.

So don't worry. Right now it's all beautiful. Celebrate your life.

I will leave you now with something a wise old Mexican philosopher once said, "May the odds be ever in your favor."

THANK YOU, GOOD LUCK AND LET'S ALL GRADUATE!



## Ancient Monuments and the Digital Age

By Abel Morales

### Monumentos

I rode in a green cab that I picked up in D.F., headed to the ancient city of Teotihuacan. I had just finished a tour of La Plaza de las Tres Culturas, El Zocalo, and the excavation of Templo Mayor earlier, which left me feeling inspired.



This trip in 2001, and another 13 years later, were pilgrimages for me, Mexico's ancient ruins were my Mecca.

On the way to the site, I had a mixed appreciation of the Main Cathedral, having been built from the very stones that comprised the Templo Mayor, a profound gesture to signify that the Empire had fallen to the Conquistadores. I imagined what a powerful message a preserved Templo Mayor would signify and came to realize that the pyramids, designed, engineered, and built by ancient Mexica (Aztec) hands, were reminders of our design heritage, and pervasively meaningful in a design and urban studies sense, not merely symbols.

That day as I entered into Teotihuacan, through the Avenida De La Muerte, the shared feeling of awe was palpable. The Pyramid of the Sun, had a looming presence, it's strong angles sitting heavy on the site, a powerful reminder of a mysterious empire, whose people's

true identity alluded even the Aztecs. Imagine the moment the Mexica came across this place, finding it abandoned, their reaction must have been similar to mine, in awe of it's magnificence, inspired by it's powerful message.

In terms of architectural excellence - the pyramids of Teotihuacan are peers with those of Giza. The base dimensions of the Piramide del Sol almost identical to that of the Great Pyramid (760' & 756' resp.), though shorter in height (216') compared to it's Egyptian cousin (455') due to the multi-tiered, Talud-Tablero style of construction. This construction type also being a signifier of an advanced appreciation for engineering by these ancient people, a developed style whose expression evolved with the Templo de Quetzalcoatl.

The layout and alignment of these ancient structures were purposeful and held religious, agricultural, and cultural significance. In Teotihuacan the alignment of the main circulatory axis, Avenida de la muerte set by the Piramide del Sol, whose orientation related to a 260 day canonical and agricultural calendar, also seen in a majority of Mesoamerican sites. (Sprajc. pg. 2). The East-West sunrise and sunsets were observed from the top of the pyramid, the city itself acting as a datum, an armature for the Teotihuacan daily ritual, rather than a purely celestial reference. As Ivan Sprajc concluded in his paper for the Latin American Antiquity, the confluence of significant alignments "revealing that astronomical practices had a paramount role in



**Left Top & Bottom:** Pyramid of the Sun & Moon Sketches © 2001 Abel Morales



social, religious, and even political life of prehispanic societies." (pg. 6, Vol. 11, No.4, 2000). At the end of the Avenida, the main circulatory spinal cord, lay the second largest structure, La Piramide De La Luna, the visual anchor of the Avenida de la Muerte. Walking down this procession toward La Luna, I was left speechless, in amazement of both the power of this site, and the mysteries it held.

“The idea that these ancient structures were relevant, pervasively meaningful, and must be protected for future generations, was reinforced by my trips to Teotihuacan and Montalban (Oaxaca).”



**Above:** Scanning by bouncing lasers off the surface on an ancient architectural structure; the sculptured Serpent Heads of the pyramids of Quetzalcoatl, Teotihuacan, Mexico. Image © Cy-Ark



**Above:** Ancient monument digitally scanned, an example of point cloud 3D model result of the western front of the pyramid of Quetzalcoatl, Teotihuacan, Mexico. Image © Cy-Ark

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## Ancient Monuments: continued

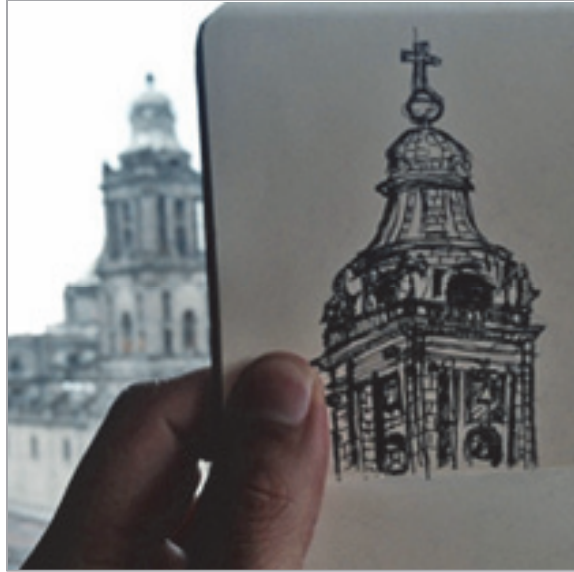
By Abel Morales

### Digital and the Ancient

The recent discoveries at Temple of Quetzalcoatl, aka the temple of the Feathered Serpent in Teotihuacan, are exemplary of the rise of high technological advancements in archeology. Robots armed with lasers beams and cameras, act as our proxy, able to go where no human can. The exciting discovery of a tunnel and secret chambers under the Temple were part luck, part tech. A storm's heavy rain accidentally opened up the entrance near the base. Archaeologists sent robots through a small tunnel, images were sent back revealing metallic powder lined cavern walls reflecting the robots' light. This tunnel opened to a chamber laden with golden metallic ferrite spheres, and in late '14 I read of the discovery of 50,000 + artifacts being uncovered further down the chamber, a huge find! Most recently a significant amount of liquid mercury was observed, which could be a precursor to finding sacred burial chambers of Teotihuacan royalty. Mercury holds religious significance, as the "... shimmering, reflective qualities of liquid mercury may have resembled "an underworld river, not that different from the river Styx," (Headrick, The Guardian).

In light of the purposeful devastation of World Heritage sites in Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan by extremists, we as architects and designers are called to another service, to the understanding and protecting of these ancient sites. These structures are not only physical records of our history, but also a source of inspiration to future generations of designers. Organizations such as Cy-Ark are emboldened in their mission to digitally preserve world heritage sites.

Their use of high tech laser 3D scanning has evolved, creating



**Top:** La Catedral, Zocalo, Mexico City Sketch © 2001 Abel Morales

**Bottom:** Frida Kalo's house designed by Juan O'Gorman, Sketch © 2001 Abel Morales



“ Their work leverages technology to create digital replications that can keep the architectural data saved into perpetuity, even if the physical structures turn into dust. ”

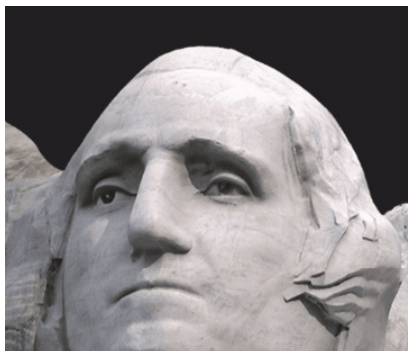
precision digital replications, keeping the architectural data saved into perpetuity, even if the physical structures turn into dust. Intense tourism, foot traffic, and climate change are growing threats to these heritage sites, so we must all be proponents of conservation.

As I stood atop the pyramid of the Sun, I wondered, what kind of cultural capital would we, Latino design students have facing the jury, ready for our projects to be torn asunder, yet armed with the knowledge that the blood of master builders flows through our veins? My studio experience was enhanced by these trips, my ideas, and my design process felt empowered. In fact, one of my final projects in studio used observations of Teotihuacan as a design gestalt, it's impression indelibly ingrained in my imagination.

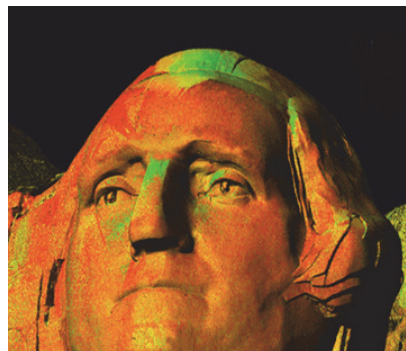
As I left the pyramids to go back to D.F., I ruminated on the layers of significance that these buildings embodied, our ancestors daily rituals represented in the layout, alignment, and architecture of the city, acting as an armature for their lives. The question arose: How can we as designers empower our own design process through knowledge and appreciation for these ancient structures? How can we best protect them for future generations?

If you travel, and make your own pilgrimages to these ancient sites I feel confident that you'll be inspired, your curiosity only temporarily satisfied. You'll be waiting for any word of new discoveries. Though the world may be waiting for further proof of our ancestors' genius, we will already know that we are the sons and daughters of Master Architects of the ancient world.

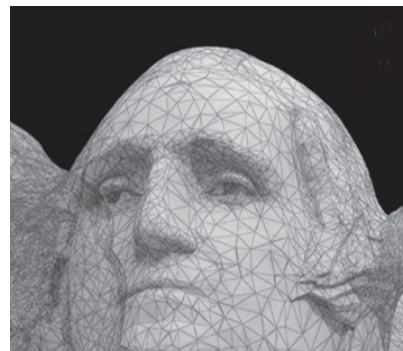
## Cy-Ark's 3D Imaging of the World's Cultural Heritage



**CyArk uses technology to capture detailed 3D images of the world's significant cultural heritage sites (example shown above) before they are lost to natural disasters, destroyed by human aggression or ravaged by the passage of time.**  
www.cyark.org



**Step 1: Create a Point Cloud**  
Bouncing laser light off the surfaces, 3D scanners measure millions of points a second, accurate to a few millimeters to create a 3D data set, or point cloud. Colors represent the intensity of reflection from the surface.



**Step 2: Generate a Wire Mesh**  
Individual data points are joined together via small triangles, connecting each of the dots and forming a wireframe. These triangles are used to form a solid surface from the points, which creates a solid 3D model.



**Step 3: Finished 3D Model**  
The 3D model generated from the point cloud is then colored using photographs taken of the surface of the structure. The result is a photo-real 3D model which can be used to further study the monument and used for conservation/education.