

From abstract to concrete

I am Barbara Camelia; I am an Architecture student at Florida International University. Since I was a child, I have always been attracted by colors and forms. My imagination constantly flying away, wondering about precious places and weird creatures that used to draw in the walls of my house. That avid desire for the new thing was also boosted thanks to my grandpa. He was a Spanish immigrant that moved to Venezuela when he was young due to harsh circumstances. However, he carried with him a long tradition of pottery that passed from generation to generation in his family, which gave him the opportunity to prosper in his new life. During my childhood, I used to visit him at his factory where he would show me the process, from the material collection to shaping the clay, and finally, the cooking method in order to produce blocks and other construction materials made out of clay. Later, we used to walk through the loading area, carefully explaining how those materials would travel their way across the country so other families could build their homes too. He was so passionate while he was talking about his job, and how it also kept his family memories alive even though he was far from them. Consequently, he transmitted all that love for construction to me. I was fascinated by the fact that he could transform his ideas into something bigger than himself, providing materials that would be turned into buildings that later would be a part of somebody's life.

As I grew older so did my desire of being part of a community, just like my grandpa did. I started to gain a new perspective about my surrounding, always asking myself what I could do in the future to help. Sadly, the situation in my country forced me to go away, searching for a better future and new opportunities that were impossible to find in Venezuela. Again, I looked back at my family, learning how they helped themselves to grow out of difficult situations through their hard work and perseverance. So, I took all those values and I moved to the United

States with a goal in mind, and that was to build something for myself. I have always dreamed about being independent, so I could give back to my family the love and support they have always provided me. They have constantly encouraged me to explore my own ideas and gave me the tools to develop useful skills. That's how I found my vocation for Architecture, because it allows me to use my creativity in meaningful ways. As a result, my ideas will be more than illusions, or a drawing on a piece of paper, they can turn into something people can touch and feel. It connects construction with powerful thoughts that can be turned, not only into something beautiful, but together they can improve society.

Since I started Architecture School, I have been assigned with a variety of design problems that have stimulated my creativity and improved my skills as a designer. During this period of time, I have transitioned from abstract analysis to precedent studies in order to development design solutions for specific sites, also allowing me to see new problematics within my society that could be potentially solved through construction. Along this process, I have encountered myself thinking about what inspires me as an architecture student and what are my future aspirations. I have always thought about architecture as a way to improve society in a beautiful manner. Architecture allows me to shape spaces that can meet modern necessities, increase social interaction, and even inspire feelings. When I visualize a space, I image all its potential in order to create the best experience for the users. We live in a modern society avid for new challenges and always in motion. For me, architecture is an essential factor in social productivity where functional designs that can allow people to explode their potential in a mindful manner while improving their lifestyles.

However, projects and ideas, as powerful as they can be, they are not enough. Architectural designs and construction must work together in order to reach their maximum

potential. At any scale, construction allows abstract concepts to become a part of the real life. I have experienced the beauty of construction in every project and model I have developed since I started Architecture School. That magical moment when something that once started as a distant thought in my head, later turns into a tangible object, a model that is the culmination of a process and the physical expression of an idea. Even though those projects are not likely to be built in real life, I still enjoy each part of the designing process. Specially, I pay close attention on how materials could work together in order to create beautiful spaces and develop the structure in the most efficient way at the same time. Certainly, that is my vision of Architecture in its greatest form, the successful combination of art and science that brings ideas to a concrete reality responding to social needs.

In the future, I would like to make the most out my knowledge, not only to create beautiful spaces but to shape society positively. Architecture means so many different things to me. It is shelter and safety, it is beauty, it is history, it is culture and it is legacy. I want to be able to transmit the power of architecture through construction, so other people can open their eyes to new possibilities. Because that's what architecture means to me, a concrete way of experiencing the world in all its bright colors.