

Oraculo del Pacífico

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Costa Rica, America Central

The only country without an army since 1949, is an example of democracy and development in central America, where it is possible to have an alternative life style.

Idyllic beaches, majestic volcanoes, verdant rainforests and amazing wildlife - Costa Rica is Central America's eco-tourist hot spot. Among Latin American countries, Costa Rica ranks 4th in terms of the 2007 Human Development Index, and 48th worldwide. Costa Rica is ranked 5th in the world in terms of the 2008 Environmental Performance Index, up from the 15th place in 2006. In 2007 the government of Costa Rica stated that they want to be the first country to become carbon neutral by 2021.

Costa Rica has a population of 4,133,884 of which 94% are White/Castizos/Mestizos, 3% are black, 1% Amerindian, 1% Chinese and 1% other.

View of the beach of the Ballena National Marine Park.

The park goes for more than twenty five kilometers, from Tortuga Beach to Bahia Uvita, protecting most of the coast.

The islands and the mangroves going south are also protected by internacional agreements.



View of one of the five waterfalls on the farm.

Most of the confluent of the Rio Balso come from springs on the preserved land of the project. The water for the houses come from those springs too, making it autosufficient with the most important resources, water...



Ojochal, Osa, Puntarenas

On the South Pacific coast of Costa Rica exists a virgin forest known for its natural richness and its exquisite situation between the sea and the mountain range. The advice of specialists indicates that we are in the presence of one of the largest biodiversity in the world, as published by UNESCO in the Patrimony of Humanity.

The coastal mountain range goes from sea level to 1200m within 3km from the beach. The new “Costanera” road makes it easy to get to the capital city and with the opening of an international airport in 2010 Ojochal will be only minutes from major destinations.

Advanced civilizations once inhabited this land and some traditions remain despite the Spanish colonization. The Borucas, a native population who flee to the mountain when the conquistadors arrived, have a tale of surviving through time and “metissage”. The Guaemis, an other native population living between Panama and Costa Rica, are known for their traditional crafts and dresses.

A new culture emerged with the settling of farmers of Spanish descendants and their adaptation to the land. Nowadays due to tourism and the arrival of foreigners the context is changing again. A responsible investment is needed for an ecological development.



West view from the mountain preserved area.

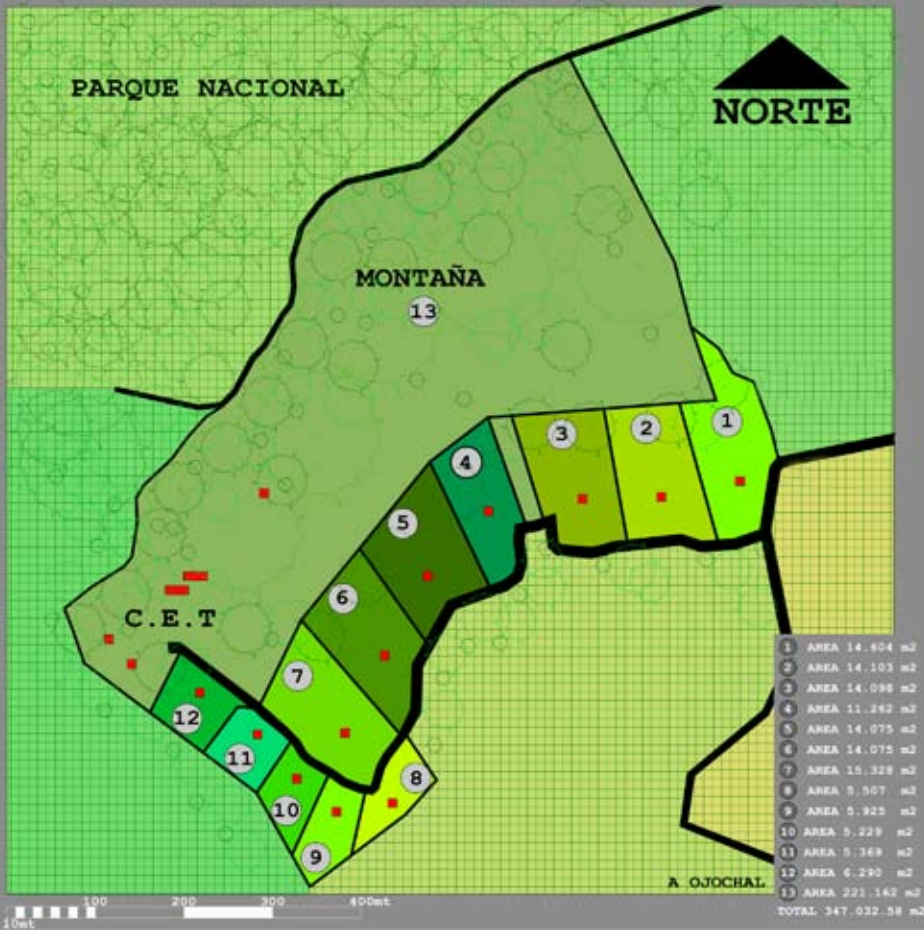
The distance to the coast is less than two kilometers in straight line, and four kilometers by the road.



South view from the mountain preserved area.

The project goes from 300 meters to 700 meters above sea level. The houses being in the lower more accessible part and the preserved area in the virgin mountain above.





To create a Center for Tropical Studies (C.E.T.), and save the ecosystem, we designed preserved areas and habitats, to enjoy a better quality of life in tropical constructions, with natural materials and renewable energies. The owners will have access to the mountain reserve and the sea through the Rio & Mar facility.

On this land, for the past 40 years a farmer has lived auto sufficiently with his family. Times have changed. The demand for land in the area by foresters and developers has increased, fragmentation of the farm has started and the family is dispersing. Action is needed now to direct the development towards durable and integrated objectives preventing the destruction of the ecosystem.

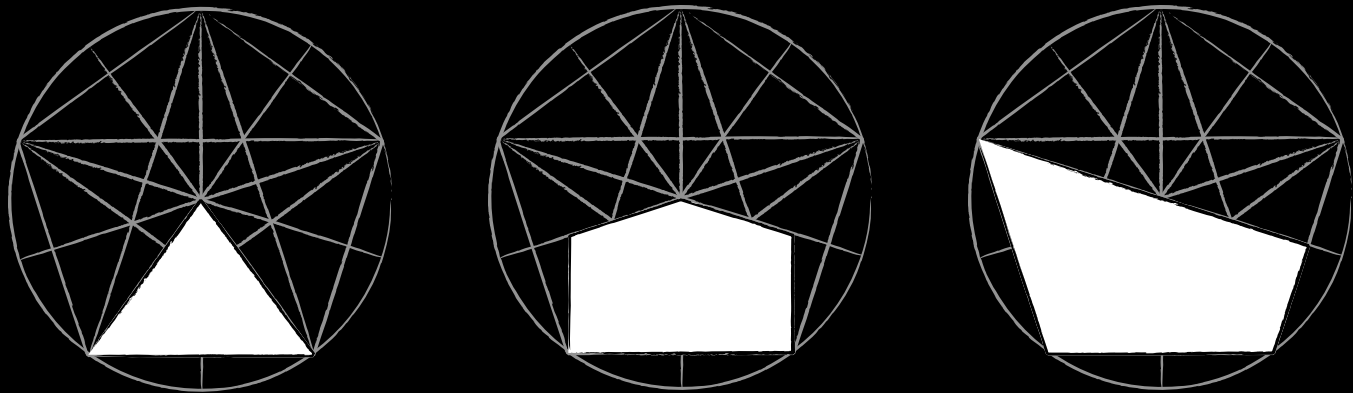
Through extensive studies of this particular environment, we designed modular houses that will adapt to the different lots keeping an overall aesthetic.



Ecoarc is using traditional techniques as well as inventing new ways of building with natural materials to find alternatives for the “Urban Exodus”. A concept that we created after seeing the historical phases of “Rural Exodus”, when population fled the country side to go to the cities because of the industrial revolution, and now the one of the information revolution, populations returning to the less populated areas.

The studies we underwent are donated to the C.E.T. and will become part of an ecological knowledge database that is to be used in the making of the project. For every lot sold we will give a donation to the C.E.T. to monitor and protect the reserve. The owners will have access to the documentation as well as the facilities of the center.





The evolution of our designs goes from the ancient “Palenque”, the talamanca cosmic house, to the banana plantation house, to a new modern solution.

Our inspiration range from the ferns developing alike butterflies coming out of their chrysalides and the spherical conception of the universe of first people, to high tech efficient intelligent eco-houses.

We find alternatives for housing, making every construction unique. With the use of natural geometry, organic design and the Golden Mean proportion we integrate irregularities of the land, for the creation of a habitat of well being that grows naturally, using noble materials.

Also, we intend to replace the human being at the center of the architectural preoccupations, demystifying vernacular building technics and ancient knowledge, creating inhabited temples for human development.



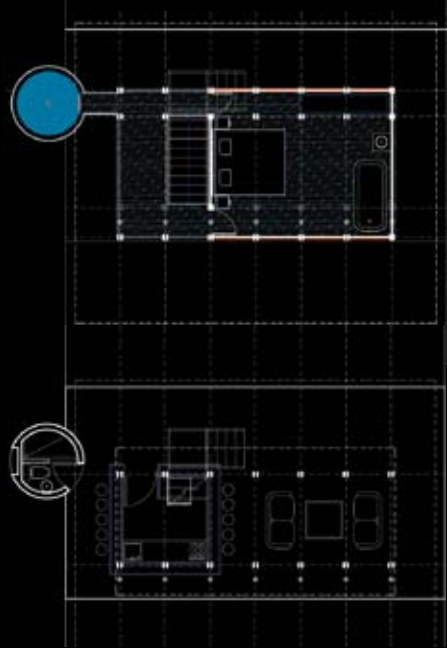
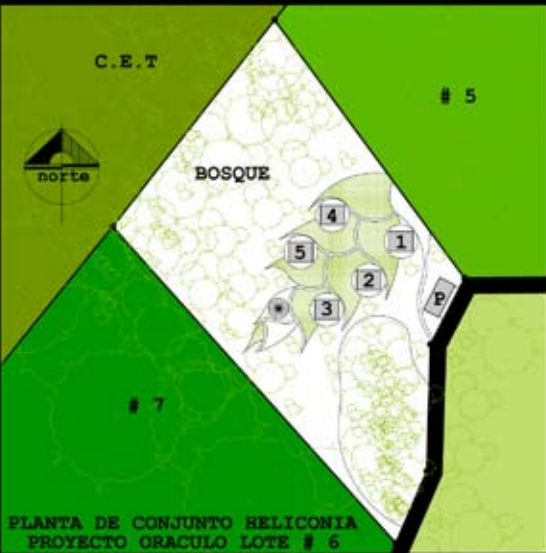
Dienergetic concept
between solid and light
elements

Solid : natural earth,
stones of the site,
earth bags, natural
grout, bricks, adobe,
ceramics...

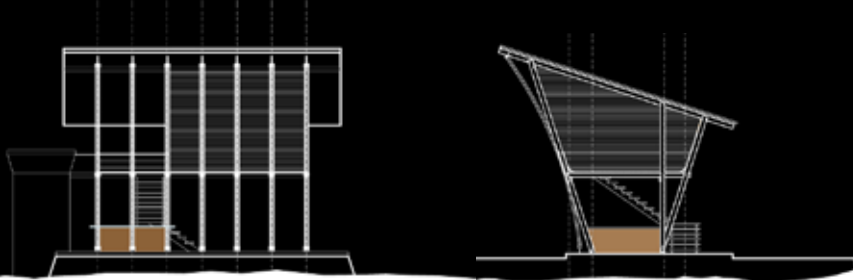
Light : metal, glass,
wood, bamboo, tex-
tiles...

We try to use as much
as possible renew-
able materials, like
recycled steel in the
footings, reforestation
woods and bamboo
from plantations. The
products used to cure
the materials are non
toxic and biodegrad-
able. The construc-
tions use renewable
energies and have eco-
logic waste systems.



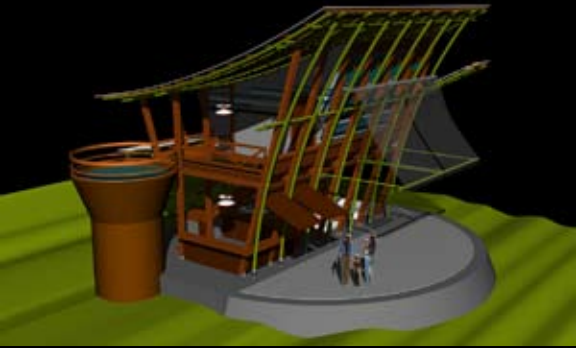


Inspired by the vegetation , in this case the heliconia flowers native to this region, we designed a complex of five villas on a lot of one and a half hectare, sharing a pedestrian access and common areas. Each villa has a private garden of approximately five hundred square meters for privacy. To be self-sufficient the villas use solar energy but are also connected to the grid for now.

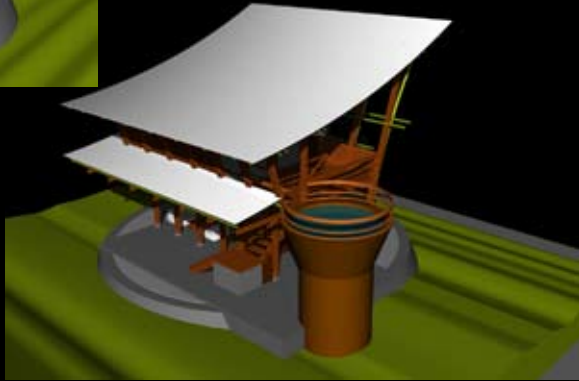


I. Villas Heliconias

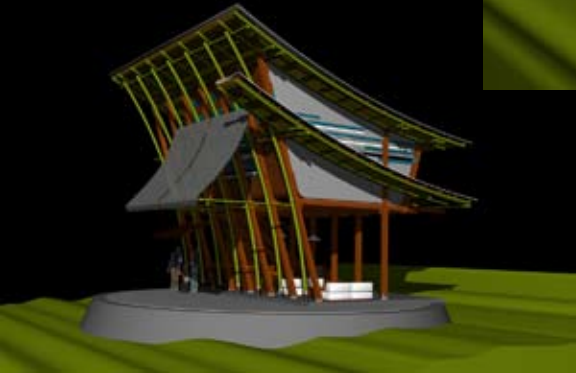
1st floor 53 sq. meters
2nd floor 36 sq. meters
cover of 143 sq. meters
private garden average
area 500 sq. meters



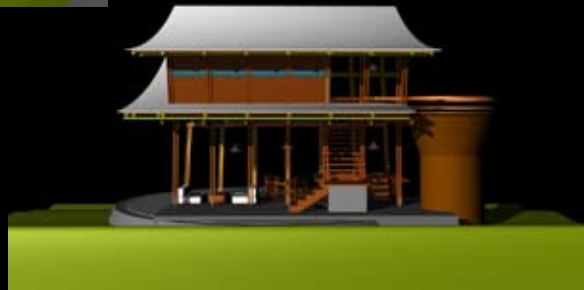
The terrasse is shaded by retractable fabrics that can close totally during rainy season.



Solar panels and water heaters on the overhang roofs.

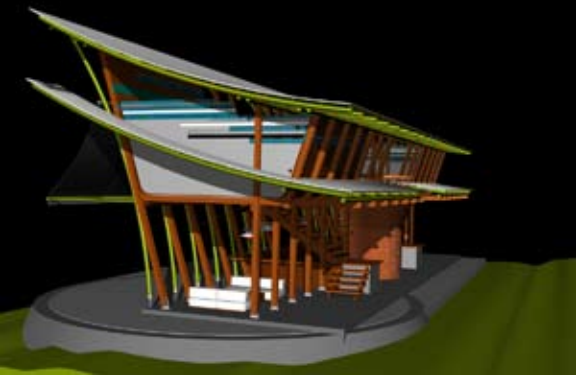
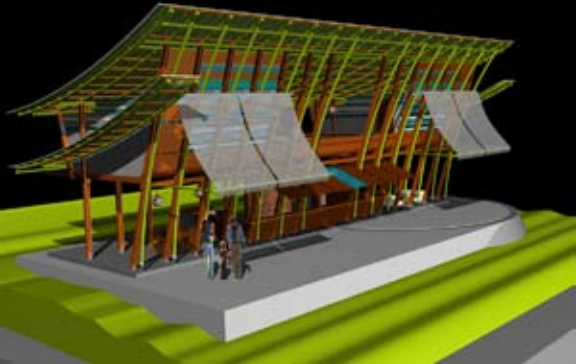


Rain water catchment tower with a jacuzzi on top, bathrooms and septic tank underneath. When it rains you can even take a natural shower...



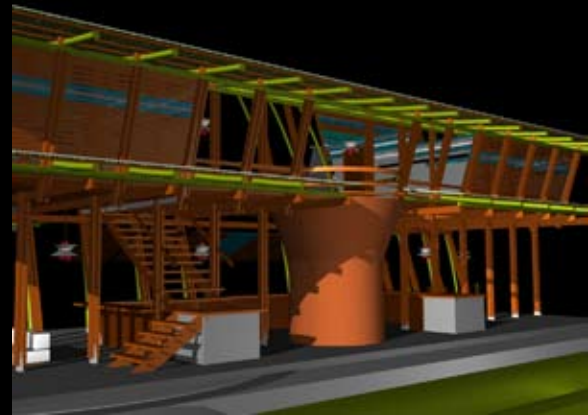
II. Casa Passiflora

1st floor 167 sq. meters
2nd floor 59 sq. meters
cover of 298 sq. meters
private garden average
area 1500 sq. meters



We use a modular construction system so that the houses can grow in size, according to the lot, respecting proportions and overall aesthetic.

Depending the needs of the inhabitants the spaces can be adapted and customised.



III. Casa Musacea

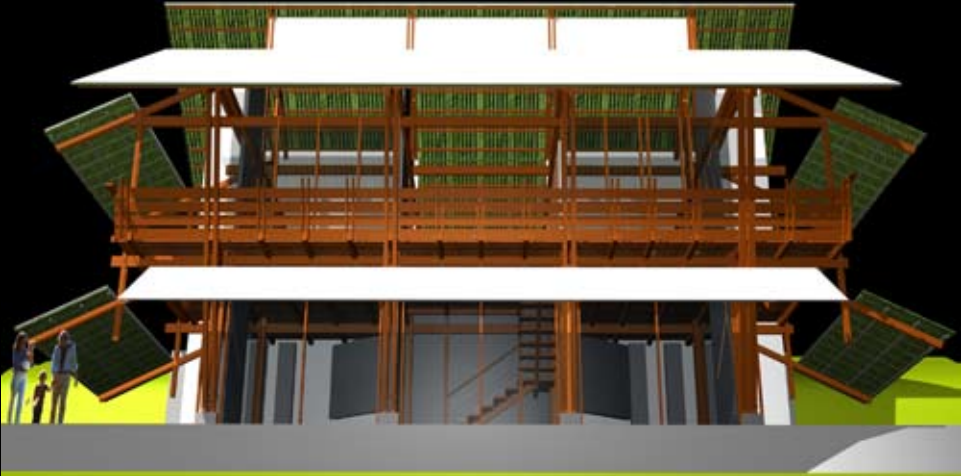
1st floor 157 sq. meters
2nd floor 104 sq. meters
cover of 362 sq. meters
private garden average
area 2000 sq. meters



A more spacious and traditional house, using the same module but developing it in other ways.

Thicker materials: a different proportion for a different experience of the space.

With a car porche behind the second floor, and the entry way thru a curved passage leading to the upstairs terrasse, letting a more private floor underneath.



Some of the buildings that we made to that day...



Casa Oficina, house and architecture studio, next to the Ballena Beach, Osa.

Casa Corail, a luxury house, looking over the Terraba river mouth, Osa.





Casa Cana, small house, using bamboo as structure. In the mountain next to the project.

Casa Dragon, an ecological house with a Asian feel. Situated in the central mountains of Costa Rica.





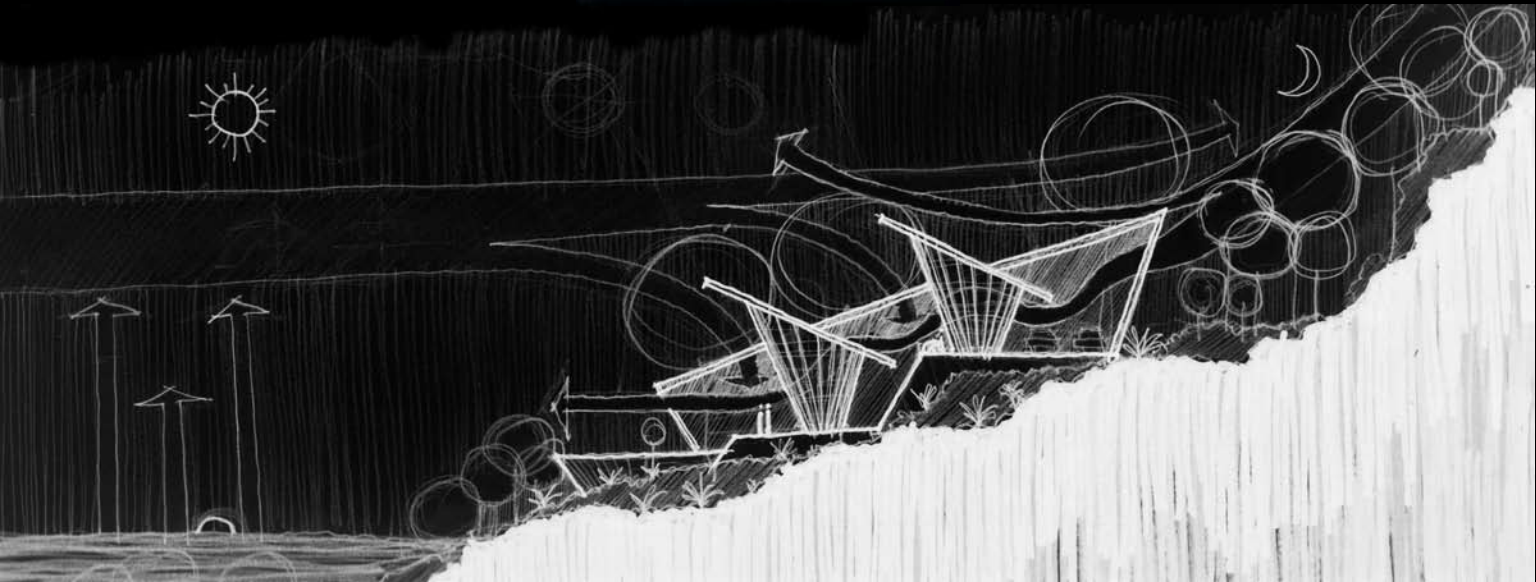
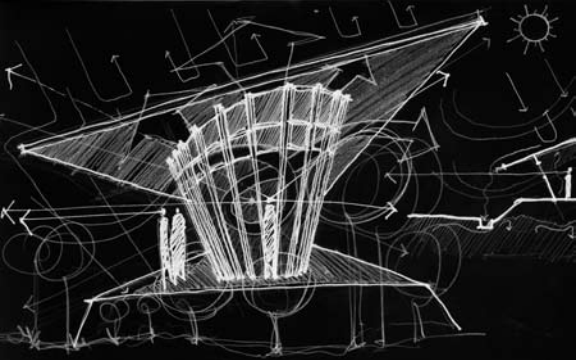
Cristian Navarro Rivera

Architect incorporated at the “Colegio Fedrado de Ingenieros y Arquitectos de Costa Rica”. After studying at the “Universidad de Costa Rica” and the “Universidad Autonoma de Central America”, he graduated at “Universidad Central de Costa Rica”. He designed and built over 40 houses as today, and 9 governmental projects. As a teacher he gave classes of graphics at the “Universidad del Valle”, theory and design at the “Universidad Central de Costa Rica” He also has a chair at the “universidad Creativa”, teaching artistic, architectural and computer drawing. His artistic activity as a painter got him national and international prices, like “premio Marc Aurelio Aguilar de pintura 1995”, “premio Brazil Arte 1996”, “premio Habit Art, contemporary art 2002” shown at the MOMA in New York. He is part of the artistic group ARTEOLOGIA.

Perceval Gay Spriet

Hands on learning Architect, with activities in Costa Rica, France, Germany, United States and Canada. Started Working at the age of 15 in an architect office in north Québec, and graduated from the “Collège St-Laurent” in mathematics and music. Then he went to study technical drawing at the “University of British Colombia” and was an ecological activist in the protest to save the last temperate rain forest of north America. After being accepted at “Frank Lloyd Wright school of architecture (Taliesin West)” where he stayed for a short time due to philosophical differences, he went and studied hands on in ARCOSANTI, learning to build from models to actual mega structures. He then went to Costa Rica to design and build an ecological house, being a prototype for an ecological village in the south pacific mountain range of Costa Rica, that lead him build houses for several clients. He’s also part of the multi media group called On,..







"Architecture for a sustainable future..."