

University of Oregon. Arch 484/584. Architectural Design Studio. Winter 2019

Gerry Gast.

**Education as a Path to Community Development:  
A Public School for the Pies Descalzos Foundation. Barranquilla, Colombia**



Institución Educativa Flor del Campo. Colombia. Giancarlo Mazzanti. Architect

**Introduction:**

This studio will focus on a public school for 1,700 Pre School thru High School students in the El Bosque neighborhood of Barranquilla, Colombia for the Pies Descalzos Foundation of Bogota, Colombia.

The project presents an opportunity for students to contribute ideas toward the design of the school which is expected to be built within the next two years. Construction funding has been secured by the Foundation and site acquisition nearly completed at the time of this posting.

The studio will document and publish a monograph of design proposals that will be presented to the Pies Descalzos Foundation in April.

A trip to Colombia may be organized during Spring break. It would include Cartagena, the famed Colombian city known as “the jewel of the Caribbean, visit to the site in Barranquilla, a meeting with Pies Descalzos officials in Bogota and finally to Medellin to see recent neighborhood regeneration examples.

**Key issues** to be addressed in the studio and project:

- Design of a public school to serve children of another culture - a marginalized community in the coastal port city of Barranquilla, Colombia.
- Design in response to new approaches of education and teaching that are changing the design of schools and educational facilities throughout the world. Schools are challenged to address a broad range of new learning philosophies in the education of children.
- Design of a building in a hot coastal Caribbean climate that presents challenges for energy conservation, natural ventilation and carefully designed daylighting. This will challenge students to design a building in a different climate zone with demanding environmental conditions and need for extremely low energy consumption.

### **The Pies Descalzos Foundation**

The Pies Descalzos (Bare Feet) Foundation, started by the Colombian recording artist Shakira, builds schools in the most disadvantaged neighborhoods of Colombia. During the past two years I’ve had the opportunity to work with the Foundation on the design of two schools and a “Design Ideas” Workbook for schools. One of the schools was the subject of the design thesis of three M Arch students at the U of O. The work with Pies Descalzos has taken me to Colombia three times a year during the past two years. During the term, we plan to hold Skype conferences with the client to discuss the project.

Pies Descalzos plans to build three new schools in the near future in Barranquilla, Cartagena and Quibdo, Colombia, including the school in Barranquilla that is the subject of this studio. The Foundation has asked us to study the project.

Students in the studio will be requested to document final drawings in metric, co-title drawings in Spanish and provide written statements in both English and Spanish. The latter guidelines have been easily managed by previous students who worked on the Pies Descalzos projects.

Pies Descalzos and Shakira have been honored with several awards and recognitions by the United Nations and other global organizations for their work. Shakira met with former President Obama during his visit to Cartagena to attend an Organization of American States meeting of Presidents.

Additional information on the Foundation may be found on their website:  
<http://www.fundacionpiesdescalzos.com/en/>



Pies Descalzos students (left). With founder Shakira (center), students, staff and Foundation Executive Director Patricia Sierra (right).

You are encouraged to view the following videos which describe Pies Descalzos mission and schools:

Video: Opening the Cartagena School: 4 ½ minutes  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J8Ve8Cs3AAA>

Video: building the Cartagena school (groundbreaking):  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mOg8JWxdkyA>

Docudrama: Narrated by Shakira on founding of the Pies Descalzos Foundation (28 minutes)  
In Spanish with English subtitles: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yGaHpg8wWlQ>  
This is a true story that describes Shikira's motivation in starting the Foundation.

Video: Building the Cartagena School. 10 minutes.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LHAKVbOfHlw>

6 minute version of the above:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RR\\_JLDLg01g](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RR_JLDLg01g)

Video: Pies Descalzos Foundation  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gSpcWS\\_4RF0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gSpcWS_4RF0)

## **The State of Global Public Education**

Public education throughout the world is experiencing a revolution in thinking as educators, policy makers, parents, students and the public debate the most effective means of preparing students for an uncertain global future.

A leading researcher and voice on the subject, Tony Wagner of Harvard University, author of *"The Global Achievement Gap"*, *"Most Likely to Succeed"* and *"Creating Innovators: The Making of People Who Will Change the World"*, has identified a wide range of factors that create excellent schools. Wagner's documentary film *"The Finland Phenomenon"* takes an in-depth look at public schools in Finland, ranked by the United Nations as # 1 in the world. Other educators and researchers have produced similar findings. Wagner's film will make you want to become active in public education.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VhH78NnRpp0&list=PLzsi\\_E489-gUXFVuciYEqO3AyrPMVAjxP](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VhH78NnRpp0&list=PLzsi_E489-gUXFVuciYEqO3AyrPMVAjxP) )

## **Schools as Community Development**

In many communities of the world, rich and poor, public schools have become new community centers where neighborhood libraries, recreation centers, adult education and meeting spaces are combined with traditional school programs. "Open schools" are a growing movement despite what we read about security concerns. Students are not confined to classrooms, or even the school building. High school students are engaged in their communities through volunteer and internship opportunities. Community members engage the school through mentoring, volunteer teaching and the use of school resources.

Pies Descalzos Foundation emphasizes its schools and programs as community development. Parents and grandparents are served in teaching programs. Nutrition, physical health, mental health, exercise/sports and community food production are integrated with programs.

### **"Next Generation Schools.org"**

During the past two years I've had the opportunity to work with Portland Public Schools (PPS) and the community of school advocates in Portland. We sponsored the design symposium *"Next Generation Schools"* in April 2016 which brought international speakers to Portland and was attended by over 300 participants. In 2017 we organized a lecture and charrette by Colombian architect Giancarlo Mazzanti, the designer of several prolific schools in marginal neighborhoods of Colombia.

### **John Weekes, FAIA. Principal, DOWA/IBI Group. Portland.**

We are honored to have the participation of John Weekes as a lecturer and visiting studio critic during the term. John has designed several award-winning schools in the region and is a renowned school design consultant around the world. Recent projects include the Rosa Parks Elementary School in Portland, Sandy High School, Wilsonville High School, Redmond High School and, most recently, Trillium Elementary School in West Linn, Oregon. Trillium challenges assumptions about a public school. It has "learning neighborhoods", "learning studios" and no corridors.



Rosa Parks Elementary School. Portland (left). Sandy High School (right). John Weekes FAIA. DOWA/IBI Group. Architect

## Project Monograph

A project monograph / portfolio presentation is prepared as a final product of the term.



Strawberry Vale School. Victoria, BC. Canada. Patkau Architects. Vancouver, BC. Canada



Institución Educativa Flor del Campo. Cartagena. (right)

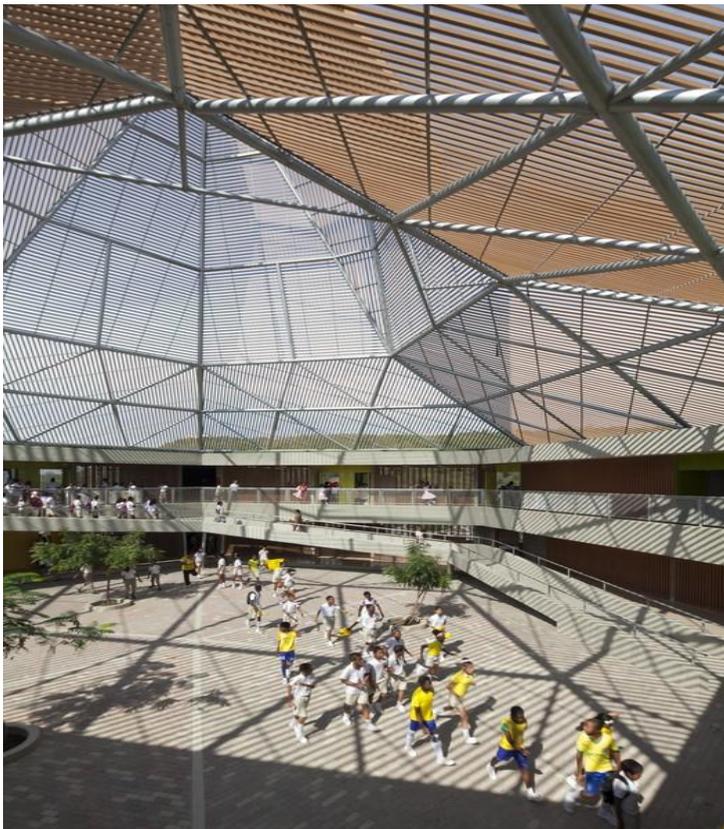
## Contact / Info

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Gerry Gast is an architect / urban designer and member of the University of Oregon Architecture faculty. He served for several years as Visiting Associate Professor in the Program on Urban Studies at Stanford University, where he developed and taught the two core courses in urban design. He is a founding principal of Gast Hillmer Urban Design in the San Francisco Bay area. Recent projects include design of the new Stryiskyi Park campus for the Ukrainian Catholic University in Lviv, Ukraine. Professor Gast is currently working with the Pies Descalzos Foundation of Colombia on schools in marginalized neighborhoods of the country.

Other professional work includes School Site Redevelopment Studies for the San Francisco Unified School District, "Uptown District" (a mixed use urban development of 313 dwellings and neighborhood retail center in San Diego's Hillcrest neighborhood), the San Diego County Government Center master plan on the downtown waterfront, the Oregon Science and Technology Park (OSTP) in Gresham –Troutdale, Oregon, and citywide urban design studies for several cities in California.



Shaded Plaza Centro in the hot Caribbean sun.

Pies Descalzos School. Cartagena, Colombia.  
Giancarlo Mazzanti, El Equipo Mazzanti. Architects