Project Details:

Site: Playa Avellanas, Guanacaste, Costa Rica
Type Of Project: Residential (Coastal)
Total Area: 100m2 of which 48m2 are terrace
Total Cost: 40,000USD
Project Dates: 2008-2009
Client: Helen Saxe Fernandez
Architect: Benjamin Garcia Saxe
Structural Engineering: Benjamin Garcia Saxe
Installations Engineering: Benjamin Garcia Saxe
Contractor: Self Build (by the Architect)
A FOREST FOR A MOON DAZZLER

My mom and I never had a place we could call home. We met on the streets, always dreaming of a place we could be together. She stayed in the city in order to find comfort in my closeness. I never stopped dreaming of a place where she could find happiness.

Torn apart by the city, she has moved to the forest in search for home. She has found the moon and the sun and they dazzle her every day. She has found beauty in her own cycle of living and her presence in this world. She no longer needs others to compare and measure her happiness.

My mom began to construct the place for her dwelling with scrap wood and plastic bags. She placed her bed on a corner where she could have a direct view of the moon whilst going to sleep. She has told me that that watching the moon reminds her of me.

Perhaps because of her memory of the city, she is afraid that someone will come to disturb her solitude. She has asked me to complete her dream of living safely in the forest, but I know she believes this is a ways for us to always be together.

Inspired by her routine I have given her an internal protected forest of bamboo. At night the cone-like surface of her new home opens to the moon and reminds her that it is me who is holding it in space as she goes calmly to sleep.

Architect Benjamin Garcia Saxe
Structure and Space become Architecture when human emotions are expressed through them. Sincerity and depth of emotions can raise the most humble dwelling to the level of great architecture. "A Forest for a Moon Dazzler" is a project that holds an ocean of meaning for just two individuals - a mother and a son - but because their story reverberates through the experiences and aspirations of all mothers and sons, it becomes equally meaningful for all who hear the story of architect Benjamin Garcia Saxe and his mother.

That is why when Benjamin narrated his story at the World Architecture Festival (WAF) in Barcelona this year it was answered by applause like no other project at the festival received. Because while all other projects appealed to the aesthetic sense and to our intellect, Benjamin’s project touched our hearts directly. And that is why this little two-room retreat in the woods became the category winner in the House category at the WAF.

Benjamin’s house is a devotional offering to his mother. A mother who longs to be with her son but cannot be for reasons that are beyond her control.

"My mom and I never had a place we could call home," says Benjamin. "We met on the streets, always dreaming at a place we could be together. She stayed in the city in order to find comfort in my closeness. I never stopped dreaming of a place where she could find happiness."