

Ocho Olas School

Oscar G. Lucero

Age: 17

East Haven High School,
East Haven, CT and
Educational Center for the
Arts ACES, New Haven, CT

Jury comment:

“Oscar’s model explores what a learning environment could be through its use of compact, layered space and the juxtaposition of typically unrelated spaces. The model is a work of American folk art that re-imagines the nature of ‘school’ as we know it.”

Oscar Lucero has communicated his ideas about the ideal learning environment through the construction of an evocative and whimsical model constructed from plywood, moss, pvc pipe, a fish tank, cardboard, lights, burlap, and other materials. It even contains live fish. The model portrays a school that is intimately tied to nature, and it allows for activity at every level, both above and below ground. It is in marked contrast to his real high school in New Haven, which was “made of cement and is fenced.”

Attention is paid to creative interior spaces, such as an underground auditorium that has an enormous aquarium as backdrop—a space where students can study both theater and marine ecology. Oscar’s intention is to create a learning environment that contains “quiet, spacious, stimulating natural spaces because they are more helpful to learn in.”

Inspired by...



Mayan Temple



Soviet
Architecture



Louis Kahn



“ I like to build models and work with my hands.
The challenge of designing structures is like a puzzle. ”

-Oscar Lucero