

# NM House, Pantano de San Juan, Madrid

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Winner of an open public competition, “Arrivals” is a public art + infrastructure project at the Mosher St. Underpass in Holyoke, Massachusetts. The project transforms a key gateway between downtown Holyoke and an adjacent residential neighborhood into a safe, inviting, and creative attraction. The intention of the project is to contrast the singular image of the city with the multiple voices of residents’ arrival stories, and in doing so, capture Holyoke’s rich immigrant and migrant experience. The \$35,000, CDBG-funded creative placemaking project is a direct response to the immediate context of its site, which is adjacent to the historic gateway to the city-- H.H. Richardson’s former train station.

Completed in August 2015, the project consists of a thirty-foot long LED-lit wall of digitally fabricated perforated panels that depict a historic Main Street scene which represents Holyoke’s past as an industrial city producing textiles and paper. Set within the wall are three “story boxes” comprising excerpts of Holyoke resident’s arrival stories. The stories, gathered through a series of public engagement sessions at different venues throughout the city, capture a diverse cross section of residents—from those who were born here in the early part of the twentieth century to those who have recently arrived. Importantly, the story panels’ are in Spanish and English, which speaks to the current Latino/a demographics of adjacent neighborhoods, inviting participation in the public domain of a city that has not always been accessible.

“Arrivals” operates in many ways. As public infrastructure, it lights a formerly desolate underpass, providing a safe physical connection between a lower income neighborhood and the city’s central business district. As public art, it reflects the many voices and the many cultures that have shaped, and continue to shape, Holyoke’s past, present and future. As a public engagement process, it provides a model for creating community receptivity for creative placemaking—and the collected stories included on the project website create the capacity to be an ever-evolving archive as a community resource. As a local production, its perforated panels and LED lighting highlight the advanced capabilities of regional fabricators. Finally, the project also signals municipal commitment to reinvestment in the neighborhood and aims to galvanize support for the future development of the historic, but now unused, H. H. Richardson train station.

Since its founding in 1848, Holyoke has long been home to successive waves of immigrants and migrants. For over 150 years, people from Ireland, Canada, Italy, Germany, Poland and Puerto Rico have flocked to the “Paper City” to create a better life for themselves and their families, and with each successive wave of immigrants and migrants, its new inhabitants have redefined Holyoke. This project acknowledges that those diverse voices influence both the historic and the contemporary understanding of public space in the city. The work seeks not to simply beautify the underpass site, but to use art as a means to connect

the aesthetic, historic, social and everyday perceptions of public art and public life.



# NM house



single family house at Pantano de San Juan  
San Martín de Valdeiglesias Madrid Spain



elevation and site plan



structure:  
wet and dry works

section

first floor

ground floor

tectonics



unfolded interior elevation

unfolded exterior elevation

At the top of the plot and occupying a clearing in a pine forest, the NM House on a granite cliffside for towers, the horizon and the panorama.  
An original pentastereopis was deformed and adjusted to a more convenient and efficient formfactor. The result of this adjustment is a volume with its truncated corners and a folded roof, forming a valley on its diagonal.  
The weekend house program is resolved on two levels. The lower level concentrates the common areas: living and dining room, a kitchen and toilet, plus two outdoor patches as potential extensions of the house. The higher level or mezzanine is equipped with two bedrooms and one shared and fully equipped bathroom.  
The works were divided into two phases:  
The wet phase concerned the house layout made in reinforced concrete. Oriented Strand Boards (OSB) were used as the formwork, to have its wooden chips texture printed on the concrete's outer surface, characterizing its materiality, halfway between pine bark and shavings growing on granite.  
The 'dry phase' regarded the house's interior furnishing, conceived as a large wooden cabinet on metal substructure.  
The same OSB boards were used as the finished mold for the inner face of the cut, except for the inner side of the roof, which was kept in the same leaved concrete.  
The holes left by the formwork in the concrete walls were sealed with stainless steel balls, which reflect the sun and moon's light, producing flashes during the day and subtly punctuating the darkness in the night.

