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Pinay architect designs \$4-M sustainable Mall

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Arizona, USA -- August 11, 2006 – US-based Filipino architect Lira Luis, a nominee for the upcoming Philippines 21 Young Leaders Forum this September, designs a \$4- Million dollar (PhP 204 Million Pesos) shopping mall drawing inspiration from her Filipino culture.

The Mall at the trendy and upscale Arrowhead Town Center, owned and operated by the prestigious Wescor, will be an alternative and sustainable design solution uncommon to commercial buildings today. It puts a shine on the role of the building's skin on thermal comfort. It employs passive systems of sustainable strategies in a building located in the Sonoran deserts of Arizona. The Mall will house restaurant and retail spaces that will express simulated experiences of its environment.



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 The first mall in the world designed like a bahay kubo (nip hut) just opened in Arizona.

Architect Luis gets her inspiration from the bahay kubo: "I have utilized strong design elements, the stilts, which are ubiquitous in native houses in the Philippines. The rest of the design elements are anchored from this, creating a series of double-acting features of sunshade-and-signage that engages a casual observer's attention."

As one crosses the threshold of the site, the shade-and shadow patterns will be generated by its skin, a simple interplay of hat channels made to look like blinds, and acting like sunshades and trellises. These are then raised on stilts that are angled, which give the impression of movement and activity. The focus on activity is an important element in any restaurant or retail environment as a way of capturing its intended market.

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Architecturally, it is an attempt towards a solution for excessive solar exposure while giving information to the public-- allowing the public to enjoy a unique outdoor dining experience while conveying that there is more to explore in the building, like shopping.

The palette for the building consists of colors found in the palettes of a natural painted desert Mesa that include varying tones of ochre and brownish-blacks. These will be articulated in the colors of the slender columns that are abstractions of slender palm trees ubiquitous in the Philippines. To complete the ensemble, an interplay of forms by way of sloping roofs and walls suggest a welcoming gesture to anyone who will be driving by the Arrowhead Towne Center complex and see the Retail Building.

Architect Luis, who launched her audio book "FRANKly Speaking: It's the WRIGHT Way" this summer, studied Organic Architecture and Sustainable Strategies while at Frank Lloyd Wright's Taliesin. She is the first Filipino architect to graduate at Taliesin since it was established in 1937. Her audio book is available at Powerbooks, Fully Booked Magnet Café and Amazon.com.

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