

The Puerto Rico Pavilion
Once Upon Three Femisites
[Había una vez y dos son tres feminisitos]

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Film: *Once Upon Three Femisites*, 2025,
Directed by Regner Ramos and Nosveran Studio

Textile Piece, Collaborating Artists:
Ezra Delgado de León, Rubén Rolando,
Eduardo Texidor

Partners:
T-Mobile Puerto Rico,
University of Puerto Rico

Sponsors:
Premios Influencers,
The VintFresh Market,
The Pecking Order,
NovoSkin MedSpa
Fideicomiso para la Facultad de Arquitectura

On Google Maps, coordinates 18.422853140019132, -66.25171902057353 mark an empty plot of grass labeled “Alexa”, categorized as “Sculpture”. But the site is void of any physical sculpture, only emptiness. The Puerto Rico Pavilion tells the story of that particular geo-point on the map, by weaving together three seemingly innocent, disconnected sites—a McDonald’s bathroom stall, a roadside tent, and Facebook—layered with inequality and tragedy.

On February 24, 2020, a homeless, Black, trans woman called Neulisa “Alexa” Luciano was hunted and murdered in Toa Baja, Puerto Rico. The reason: a photograph taken of Alexa in a McDonald’s restaurant was uploaded to Facebook by a netizen claiming she was a man using a hand mirror to look at child genitalia under the stalls. The post went viral. Digital trolling ensued, fostering a hostile environment that escalated threats against her.

That same night, Alexa was found dead by her roadside tent. Her murder sparked widespread

outrage and grief within the LGBTQ+ community. A video circulated the internet, documenting Alexa’s final hours as three young men yelled “la loca” [the crazy woman] at her, taunted, threatened, and shot at her multiple times with a point gun. They were tried and convicted for crimes related to the case, such as conspiracy to commit a hate crime and obstruction of justice.

“Había una vez y dos son tres feminisitos” / “Once Upon Three Femisites” evokes the story of Alexa’s final 24 hours by revisiting, re-presenting, and reimagining the formal languages and the very materialities of the three sites that bore witness and enabled this hate crime to take place. Slightly elevated over the floor, the Puerto Rico Pavilion is an artifact placed awkwardly in the gallery, as if the absence of the “Sculpture” marked on geo-point 18.422853140019132, -66.251719020573— an intentional conceptual anchor, reinforcing the theme of absence and the digital remnant of a missing “sculpture”—is explained by its presence in the Triennale.

Using the warmth of natural wood, reflection of mirrors, shimmer of copper tubes, gentility of fabric, and artificiality of fluorescent lighting, the pavilion sits somewhere between a public toilet and a tent. Draped over the structure are textiles intervened with marks, scribbles, symbols, patches, and imagery. The result is an intervention that does not simply envelop the structure but infuses it with voices that speak, layering presence onto absence, materializing the unseen, and making visible the ways in which community, memory, and resistance can be woven into space.

It uses the natural rawness of these materials and the compelling form of the pavilion to tell the world a terrible story of how different inequalities converge in Puerto Rico: queer-ness, gender, race, homelessness, and mental health. The pavilion’s scale aims to bring visitors a sense of both spectatorship and intimacy, provoking conversation on the responsibility we as citizens—of both physical spaces as well as digital ones—have over our actions. Accompanied by a short film uploaded on Facebook, and narrated by Yolanda Arroyo-Pizarro, the Puerto Rico Pavilion tells the story and sparks thoughts on how gendered architectural spaces and digital platforms can amplify real-world violence, inviting visitors to envision futures that honor inclusivity and confront systems of oppression.

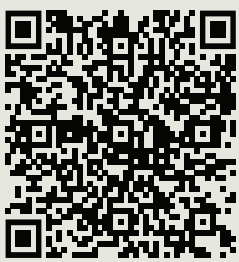
The “Había una vez y dos son tres” in the title draws from a familiar Puerto Rican idiom—the colloquial way to begin telling a story—

infusing the pavilion with both cultural specificity and conceptual depth. It reflects how gendered violence is rarely a single isolated act but rather the culmination of multiple intersecting inequalities—acts that escalate, amplify, and converge in specific spaces. The addition of “feminisitos” bridges the personal and the spatial. By playing on “feminicidio” [femicide] and “sitios” [sites], the term redirects attention from abstract ideas to the very places where acts of violence unfold, making them visible, tangible, and undeniable.

The pavilion, through its material choices and spatial narrative, becomes a resistant space—rejecting neutrality and actively confronting the architectural, social, and political conditions that perpetuate exclusion and violence. By inviting reflection and dialogue, the Puerto Rico Pavilion serves as both a call to action and a provocation for designing futures where architecture no longer turns a blind eye to inequalities but instead cultivates dignity, safety, and inclusion for all.

Alexa’s murder underscores the urgent need for increased protection, legal reforms, architectural advocacy, and societal change to combat hate crimes and ensure the safety and dignity of queer, transgender, and homeless individuals in our archipelago.

As of today, five years later, nobody has been tried or convicted for the murder of Neulisa “Alexa” Luciano.



See the film on Facebook using the QR code.
Follow the project on Instagram:
@cuirtopia, @regnarama

Let architecture be a soft thing, with spaces that fold, move, and protect; like silk draping, layering, and breathing; like a door swinging open to welcome in. No one should have to beg the world for shelter. To make space is to love. The walls we inherit do not have to be the walls we keep. Wood holds warmth. Copper carries memory. Light bears witness. Mirrors reflect not who we wish to be, but who we are: situated and fractured and yearning and becoming and radiant and mourning. From that wound, we must build, not only spaces, but responsibilities we carry together.

