

## Bird's-eye view

Martha Calderón of artchitect.com creates stunning, accurate architectural floor plan illustrations using Adobe® Photoshop® CS2 software



When architects and developers for residential, commercial, recreational, and institutional projects move into the sales cycle, many turn to Martha Calderón of artchitect.com. She's a master at creating illustrations of architectural floor plans that are used as sales tools in showrooms, ads, on the web, and in other promotional materials. Calderón transforms traditional floor plan blueprints into gorgeous bird's-eye views of developments, replete with immaculate detail. Her tool of choice is Adobe Photoshop CS2 software.

“Photoshop CS2 lets me combine artistry and technology to create clean, aesthetically attractive, and technically accurate floor plan illustrations,” says Calderón. “The creative flexibility of Photoshop CS2 lets me create exceptionally beautiful illustrations more efficiently than ever before.”



Martha Calderón uses Adobe Photoshop CS2 to transform blueprint floor plans of proposed developments into broad and impressive bird's-eye views that convey the proposed development's span and structure while remaining technically accurate.

“Clients tell me my illustrations created in Photoshop CS2 are cleaner, brighter, and easier to understand than those created primarily in a CAD or 3D program. Best of all, the Photoshop CS2 illustrations preserve all the precise technical measurements and proportions of each project.”

Martha Calderón,  
architectural illustrator,  
artchitect.com

### Photoshop CS2 from the ground up

A licensed architect who understands the needs of architects and developers, Calderón has developed a unique illustration style for architectural floor plans. Many architects use Photoshop only for retouching renderings previously made with 3D or computer-aided design (CAD) software, but Calderón takes it one step further.

She takes the CAD files clients send her and imports the files into Nemetschek VectorWorks software, where she makes minor adjustments before converting them to Photoshop CS2 files. From this point on, Calderón only uses the original CAD files as a template; she draws everything from the ground up in Photoshop CS2.

Calderón's clients rave about the results. “Clients tell me my illustrations created in Photoshop CS2 are cleaner, brighter, and easier to understand than those created primarily in a CAD or 3D program,” says Calderón. “Best of all, the Photoshop CS2 illustrations preserve all the precise technical measurements and proportions of each project.”

### Clearer in the mind's eye

Calderón's realistic, beautiful architectural floor plan illustrations allow clients to more accurately portray to their customers and the public how completed projects will appear. Her illustrations bring projects to life by including details such as landscaping, docks, and table umbrellas—or in the case of inside residential drawings, items such as countertop and floor materials.

Since founding artchitect.com in 1995, Calderón has created an extensive library of architectural and

design elements, including furniture, textures, and landscape objects such as trees and bushes. To make her drawings come to life, she uses Photoshop CS2 to combine elements from her library with the CAD template she created from the client's files. Calderón transforms traditional floor plan blueprints into high-quality color illustrations while maintaining the technical specifications of each project.

“The ability to work with almost endless libraries of objects and textures in Photoshop CS2 makes me far more efficient,” says Calderón. “This is just one example of how Photoshop CS2 saves a lot of time on complex processes that could be even more complicated and less interesting if they were done with other software, such as 3D applications.”

Calderón's library of architectural and design elements is now more useful than ever, because she organizes it using Adobe Bridge, the next-generation file browser application that comes with Photoshop CS2 and the Adobe Creative Suite 2. Using Adobe Bridge, Calderón can organize, sort, and search her library or view thumbnails to quickly view and locate exactly what she needs. The combination of accuracy, detail, and beauty keeps Calderón's clients coming back for more. Several companies contract with artchitect.com, not only in Colombia, where Calderón is based, but also in Australia, the United States, and Central and South America.

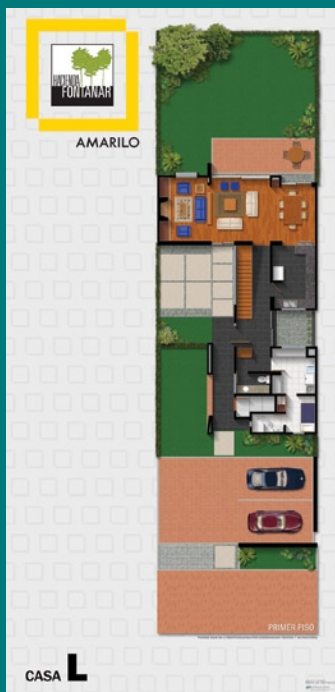
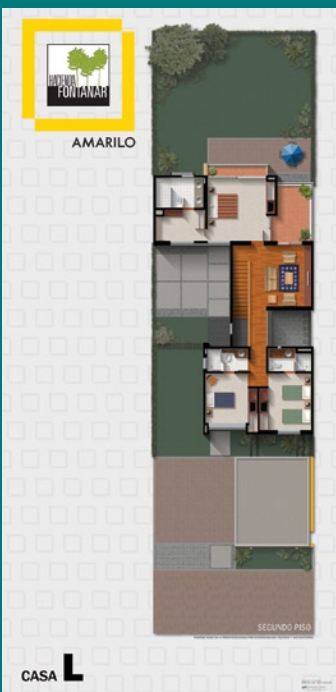
### Quality is job one

Quality is a distinctive characteristic of Calderón's illustrations. In 2001, her work won the National Association of Photoshop Professionals' Photoshop Illustration and Best of Show Guru Awards.





Calderón's illustrations depict specific details, including parking spaces, cars, shrubs, and rocks on a walkway. At the same time, unlike some extremely photo-realistic drawings, the illustrations she creates in Photoshop CS2 are warm, engaging, and inviting.



### Company

**artchitect.com**

Bogotá, Columbia

[www.artchitect.com](http://www.artchitect.com)

### Challenges

- Transform traditional floor plans into gorgeous, overhead views
- Add details and textures to give people a better understanding of a planned development
- Maintain technical accuracy while creating floor plan illustrations that are easy to understand
- Work faster and more creatively

### Solution

- Generate floor plan illustrations using Adobe Illustrator® CS2 and Photoshop CS2 software
- Start with blueprints to uphold specifications; draw using Photoshop CS2
- Take advantage of Smart Objects, Smart Guides, and other features in Photoshop CS2 to work more efficiently
- Sort and find objects and textures using Adobe Bridge

### Benefits

- Improved organization of project elements and designs
- Worked faster while enhancing visual appeal of illustrations
- Maintained technical accuracy
- Garnered rave reviews and repeat work from clients

### Toolkit

- Adobe Creative Suite 2.  
Components used include:
  - Adobe Acrobat® Professional
  - Adobe Bridge
  - Adobe Illustrator CS2
  - Adobe InDesign® CS2
  - Adobe Photoshop CS2
- Nemetschek VectorWorks
- Apple Power Mac G5 running Mac OS X



While technically accurate, Calderón's depictions of architectural spaces also communicate the atmosphere of the architecture using textures, colors, and other elements.

Calderón continues to produce exceptional work. In 2005, for instance, one of her biggest illustration projects was Hacienda Fontanar, a residential complex of 1,000 homes in Colombia. Calderón created large-format images of the various homes offered, as well as the complex's site plan at different construction stages. The images were displayed in the developer's showroom.

For all of her projects, Calderón appreciates the many new features in Photoshop CS2 that keep her organized, help her work faster, and maximize her creativity. Smart Objects, for example, enable her to insert numerous houses or other small objects into her floor plan illustrations. If she wishes to change all of them, she can change just one and have the change ripple through to any other linked images. Calderón also uses the Smart Guides tool in Photoshop CS2 to select, align, group, and simultaneously move multiple layers on a document. She finds Smart Guides particularly helpful because her work typically contains dozens of layers.

"Photoshop CS2 provides the perfect combination of technical accuracy and creative freedom," says Calderón. "I can layer in textures and objects to make illustrations realistic or more artistic, depending on what the client needs. And if I don't have an object that I need, I just imagine it and draw it using Photoshop CS2."

### The full lineup

In addition to using Adobe Photoshop CS2 day in and day out, Calderón uses other components of the Adobe Creative Suite 2. Illustrator CS2 software is her primary tool for adding lines or other vector artwork to floor plan illustrations. She uses Adobe InDesign CS2 software to create and update her portfolio and generate presentations that she exports to Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF). She also uses Adobe Acrobat Professional software to create and distribute Adobe PDF files to clients for review.

"I love Adobe software, it's that simple," says Calderón. "I spend many hours a day using Photoshop CS2 and other components of the Adobe Creative Suite 2. I wouldn't have it any other way."

"I spend many hours a day using Photoshop CS2 and other components of the Adobe Creative Suite 2. I wouldn't have it any other way."

Martha Calderón,  
architectural illustrator,  
artchitect.com