ESSAY

Black Miami's Resiliency: A Photographic Essay

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Germane Barnes creates a narrative of Black Miami architecture through the medium of photography.

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Black Miami architecture is not unique, in that one can find many examples of scattered-site housing, shotgun-style homes, and low-rise multi-family housing developments across America. However, what is unique to Miami is the littoral urbanism found in the Deep South that requires a significant commitment to the sustainability of local ecologies. The initial housing stock of black migrant labor was composed of single-family shotgun homes and cracker vernacular-type bungalows. Densely organized in the Central Negro District of Miami and Coconut Grove respectively, these historically black architectural typologies revealed many inherent innovations seen in site-specific design. Raised floors and porches, central corridors, and passive cooling are all components of historic black Miami architecture that contemporary Miami has rebranded as climate resiliency and environmentally-friendly design. Unfortunately, today many of the historic architecture remnants are no longer present, and what is left is government-sanctioned housing developments, which reduces the impact and influence of blacks on the build environment.¹

Allapattah Neighborhood. Photo credit floridabaptisthistory.org/2017/08/14/miami-allapattah/.

¹ Unless otherwise cited, all photographs are courtesy of the author.

Allapattah Neighborhood, 2019.

Photos Clockwise L to R.
Hampton House, Brownsville. Photo credit Brownsvillemiami.com/history.
Lincoln Memorial Park, Brownsville. Photo credit Brownsvillemiami.com/history.
Interior Residence, Brownsville. Photo credit Brownsvillemiami.com/history.
Ann's Cleaners & Laundry, Brownsville. Photo credit Brownsvillemiami.com/history.

Liberty Square, 1937. Image courtesy of HistoryMiami.

Liberty Square, 2019.

Miami Gardens, 2019.

West Coconut Grove, 2019.

West Coconut Grove, 2019.

Opa-locka, FL, 1959. Image courtesy of HistoryMiami.

Opa-locka, FL, 2019.

Overtown, Miami, FL. Image courtesy of HistoryMiami.

Overtown, Miami, FL, 2019.

Little Haiti, Miami, FL, 1983. Image courtesy of HistoryMiami.

Edison Courts Little Haiti, Miami, FL, 1947. Image courtesy of HistoryMiami.

Competing Interests

The author has no competing interests to declare.

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