

Title	<b>Strange Fruit: Peace and Justice Center for Dialogue</b>	09/03/2021
	by <b>Rebekah Mireles</b> in <b>2021 Design Awards</b>	id. 21151887
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## Original Submission 09/03/2021

Project Name	<b>Strange Fruit: Peace and Justice Center for Dialogue</b>
Project Category	<b>Conceptual</b>
Project Location	<b>417 Caroline St, Montgomery, AL 36104</b>
Owner at Completion	<b>N/A</b>
Size in Square Feet (SF)	<b>12,454</b>
Date Completed	<b>Conceptual</b>
Firm Name	<b>Rebekah Mireles</b>
Firm Address	<b>University of Houston 4800 Calhoun Rd Houston, TX 77004</b>
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Architectural Design Team	<b>Nastassia Chua Sharon Lott Rebekah Mireles</b>
Associate Architect	<i>n/a</i>
Client or Developer	<b>N/A</b>
Client's Project Manager	<i>n/a</i>

Contractor	n/a
Structural Engineer	n/a
MEP Engineer	n/a
Civil Engineer	n/a
Other Important Consultant(s)	<b>Sheryl Vazquez (Professor)</b>
Photographer	n/a
Project PDF	<a href="#">AIA_Houston_Strange_fruit.pdf</a>
Image for the Publication	<a href="#">AIA_Image.jpg</a>
Sustainability Checklist	<a href="#">SustainabilityChecklist-V2.pdf</a>

## Project Description

The murder of George Floyd has forced America to reckon with its ongoing issues of systemic racism. Inserted beneath the void at the center of the Peace and Justice Memorial in Montgomery Alabama, a Center for Dialogue provides a space for difficult conversations on race. The design evolved from the flowing movement of people along the margins. A processional path extends the ramp of the existing Memorial and spatializes African-American existence along the margins of American society in the wake of slavery. This path houses the spaces of the program - becoming the lobby, the exhibition, and pooling finally into the reflection space and auditorium. The project is inspired by Abel Meeropol's "Strange Fruit," as the memorial itself represents the lynchings in the poem, our design focuses on the burden of history on the tree itself. The Center's structure and roof marks the negative imprint of the weight a tree carries from lynchings and embodies the burden of racism that the American people need to carry. This semi-submerged architecture echoes spaces African-Americans have had to carve out of the American landscape for self-liberation without disturbing the symbolic representation of the interior courtyards of final resting places. A symbol of life and hope, the green roof contrasts with the hanging sarcophagi that stand in for the bodies of the lynched along the periphery of the Memorial. The space is designed to produce more energy than it would need to sustain itself and to capture and store water to irrigate the green roof.

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