

Career and the profession

Three exceptional projects from Black architects

By Greg Menti

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STAX MUSEUM & ACADEMY, SOULSVILLE CHARTER SCHOOL, MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE BY SELF + TUCKER ARCHITECTS

According to the [2021 AIA Demographic Report](#), less than 2.5% of AIA membership identifies as Black or African-American. A recent National Council of Architectural Registration Boards demographics survey states that 1.9% of architects in the United States are Black, with Black women making up only .5% of total architects across the country.

Though Black architects currently represent a small portion of the profession, their work impacts communities across the country. During Black History Month, AIA is showcasing projects by Black architects around the U.S. to celebrate their exceptional work. Stay tuned for a second part later this month!

Jimmie Tucker, FAIA, NOMA and Juan Self, AIA, NOMA, Self + Tucker Architects

Stax Museum & Academy, Soulsville Charter School, Memphis, Tennessee [Image above]

The goal of this project was to create a soul music campus centered on a replica of the original building that contained the Stax recording studio, including the classic Stax theater marquee. The museum examines the history of Stax and its impact on the music world. The music academy is located to the west of the museum and provides a state-of-the-art learning environment, complete with classrooms, lecture halls, acoustically refined band and choir rooms, music technology labs and a recording studio. The STAX Museum and Academy serve as anchors in the cultural and economic revitalization of this historic neighborhood in South Memphis.



CLEVELAND PUBLIC LIBRARY- HOUGH BRANCH, CLEVELAND, OHIO BY MOODY NOLAN

Jonathan Moody, AIA, NOMA, Moody Nolan

Cleveland Public Library – Hough Branch, Cleveland, Ohio

At 8,000 square feet, the Cleveland Public Library – Hough Branch is small but its impact in a predominately African American community on the east end of Cleveland is massive. The design was inspired by the mythical Sankofa bird in Ghana, which has its head looking back but feet firmly facing forward to the future. The new branch houses digital workstations, public meeting rooms, an after-school art creation zone, a teen area, and much more.



LAW HARRINGTON SENIOR LIVING CENTER, HOUSTON, TEXAS BY SMITH & COMPANY

Terry Smith, AIA, [Smith & Company](#)

Law Harrington Senior Living Center, Houston, Texas

The nation's largest LGBTQ-affirming seniors community comes as the result of long labor. After seven years of fundraising, design collaborations, meetings with community stakeholders, and the construction process, the Law Harrington Senior Living Center was completed in 2018. This affordable living center features 112 one- and two-bedroom independent living apartments with full kitchens and washer and dryers for low-income individuals and couples who are 62 years and older.

Do you have a notable project by a Black architect that you'd like to share? Please submit the project to gregmenti@aia.org.