

Miami Beach – Holocaust Memorial

Eine große und beeindruckende Holocaust- Gedenkstätte ist ausgerechnet in Miami Beach. Es wurde am 4. Februar 1990 eingeweiht.



In Memory of Six Million Martyrs...

In the fall of 1984 I asked a small group of Miami's Holocaust survivors to join me in developing the idea of building a permanent memorial to the memory of the six million Jews who perished from the hands of the Nazis. It seemed only fitting that a community with one of the largest Holocaust survivor populations in the world follow the lead of Philadelphia, Atlanta, San Francisco and Detroit in erecting a Holocaust memorial that would stand as a permanent reminder to future generations of Nazi persecution, as well as a symbol of the world's indifference to genocide.

The Holocaust Memorial Committee was formally established a year later as a private non-profit organization. Its objective was to organize a permanent committee, locate a potential site, develop ideas for the scope and design of Memorial, and determine ways and means of financial support for the project.

With full cooperation from the City of Miami Beach Commission, the present site at Meridian Avenue and Dade Blvd, was designed to receive the memorial. Kenneth Treister, architect and sculptor, was entrusted with interpreting the Holocaust into a structure which would memorialize its victims, serve as solace to its survivors, and also inform with factual representations in pictures and words of this century's greatest man crime.

The Holocaust Memorial took over four years to be built, reaching its final stage at dedication ceremonies on Sunday, February 4, 1990, with Elie Wiesel, Nobel laureate as guest speaker.

The visitor of the Memorial will at first be met by a visual sensation of contrasting elements: the brightness of the luminous Jerusalem stone, which represents the basic building material for the Memorial, and the stark, somber black granite, which lines the walls; another contrast is offered by the stillness of water in the reflecting pool with its majestic lily pads of uncommon dimension, and the azure sky reflecting its patterns in the water, almost competing with the somber reminder of the site's purpose – the reflecting shapes provided by the Memorial's sculpture.

Two parts of a semi-circular black granite wall provide two important components of the memorial: on the visitor's right begins the journey into the universe of the Holocaust. In the first three panels of the granite wall, I presented a short but concise history of the event, from 1933 through 1945 and followed it up with a chronological pictorial depiction of Holocaust events and experiences, accompanied by textual explanations and maps.

Interrupting this pilgrimage is an enclosed shrine-like space leading to a narrow passage. The decreasing ceiling height of the tunnel creates the feeling of a diminished self, while the names of the most infamous death camps stare out of the narrowing walls at the visitor.

The sight that awaits the sojourner stuns the eye. A large circular plaza paved in pink-hued Jerusalem stone is surrounded by a high solid wall lined with shining black granite. The multiple reflections in the many granite panels mirror the central object of the plaza – a 42-foot-high bronze sculpture, designed by Kenneth Treister and cast in Mexico City by Fundacion Artistica. The sculpture depicts close to one hundred figures in different family groupings. They cry out with anguish, they tell of pain, of despair, of life and of death in a man-made hell. Topping the sculpture is a hand evolving from an arm bearing the ultimate mark of man's dehumanization, a number which became man's identification, cancelling his real human identity.

Upon emerging from this visit to what would seem to the contemporary visitor another planet, one returns via the tunnel, proceeding to the left hand segment of the black granite semicircle. Here, one faces the Memorial Wall – a painful reminder of the numbers of human souls whose lives were cut down. A multitude of names, many in groups of ten or more bearing the same family name, of children, parents and grandparents, from different towns and countries in Europe. Not unlike the Vietnam Memorial, this Holocaust Memorial wall serves many of the survivors as the only real link with their loved ones, a sort of surrogate gravestone, a place where they can at least see the names of a loved one carved in granite to remain as their memorial. In addition to the thousands of names already being etched into the wall, more names will be accommodated as they are submitted.

Filled with thoughts and emotions, the visitor now returns to the area surrounded by the calming reflecting pool. Having completed the physical journey, one is now ready for one's inner journey. Here, at the pool, the visitor can contemplate and reflect upon his or her innermost thoughts, feelings and emotions. At the end, one leaves experienced at unusual epiphany...

THE MEMORIAL WOULD THUS HAVE SERVED ITS PURPOSE

Dr: Helen N. Fagin





Inschrift

"Then in spite of everything I still believe that people are really good at heart. *Anne Frank*



In der Gedenkstätte gibt es zehn Schwerpunktbereiche. Ein Rundgang endet bei der letzten Skulptur:

The Final Sculpture: ... The journey ends. The final sculpture depicts the same mother and two children who started the journey... now dead... framed by the words of Anne Frank: "Ideals, dreams and cherished hopes rise within us only to meet the horrible truth and be shattered."

Die Fotos sind entstanden bei einer Reise nach Florida im Jahr 2016.

Udo Dittmann

Links zum Holocaust Memorial in Miami Beach

https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Miami_Beach_Holocaust_Memorial

<http://holocaustmemorialmiamibeach.org>

http://www.helmutvoss.de/usa_florida_miami_beach_holocaust_memorial01.html