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Architectural Constructions of Memory & the Ruin in Post-1989 Berlin

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Introduction

The Wall

At 10:42 am on the 9th of November, 1989, Hanns-Joachim Friedrichs, a well known German anchorman announced on Tagesthemen, a major West German television news program: "This ninth of November is a historic day. [East Germany] has announced that, starting immediately, its borders are open to everyone." The broadcasted information had come from an apparently confused Guenter Schabowski, member and spokesperson for the East German party who was handed a piece of paper with the announcement moments before a press conference earlier that day. The announcement sent thousands of East Germans, who were watching the programming illegally, out of their homes and to the Wall where they demanded the guards let them through. Before long, Eastern and Western Germans were climbing up and dancing on the top of the walls.[1] This is the moment considered to be "the fall of the Berlin Wall." In reality, the dismantling of the Wall took about two years to complete and in the meantime citizens nicknamed *Mauerspechte* (wall woodpeckers) hacked away at the wall to take home souvenirs.[2]

This process of dismantling the Berlin Wall went beyond a simple brick by brick deconstruction of the structure itself and became in fact a larger cultural and political project for the unification of Berlin that was inextricably woven with the urban fabric of the city. The Wall had a profound interruption not only in the lives of Berliners, but in the city's urban fabric. Private and public institutions such as museums and churches were to be involved in the

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[1] Mary Elise Sarotte, "How an Accident Caused the Berlin Wall to Come Down," *The Washington Post,* November 1, 2009.

[2] "Berlin Wall," History.com, accessed November 1, 2015, http://www.history.com/topics/cold-war/berlin-wall.

unification process, which I argue is still underway, as well as a myriad of different individuals including city officials and citizens. Although scholars in numerous fields have focused on the politics and global impact of the event, an examination of the ways in which the event triggered a reconfiguration of urban space and its civic monuments is still to be examined.

This thesis delves into the question of memory politics in post-1989 Berlin and the impact it had on the built environment and architecture. Within this context I discuss architectural restoration as a medium for political and social messages that shapes the collective memory. In my definition of restoration, I understand any project that attempts to preserve a memory, even in cases where a new construction undertakes the role of fabricating it. I compare two such "restorations" of memory to elucidate the inextricable relationship between space and memory in the creation of the post-1989 German identity. In particular, I focus on the idea of the ruin and how these two projects instrumentalize it for the reconfiguration of memory both physically and theoretically.

The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 left a scar and a ruin not only in Berlin's politics but in the population and in the city's urban fabric. Throughout this project, the term ruin will be understood through both the literal definition, a destroyed piece of infrastructure and the more theoretical notion, that which remains of something that has been lost. As the city of Berlin took steps, spearheaded by the Senate and public institutions, to rebuild and shape a united identity, they would turn to architecture to deal with memories of trauma and articulate reconciliation in space. Within this endeavor, the Berlin Wall in its destructed state figured itself as an emblem of ruin in the eyes of the population, architects, and senate, and would become a tool with which Berlin could configure memory through and around.

Although this project will focus on museums as case studies, these constructions of memory, both privately and publicly funded, go well beyond the museum program. The category encompasses any project that attempts to preserve a memory, regardless of its specific program. For example, within this category of constructions of memory I consider sculptural memorials such as Peter Eisenman's Memorial to the Mudered Jews of Europe (Figure 1.1) as well as religious buildings such as Rudolf Reitermann and Peter Sassenroth's rebuilding project of the Chapel of Reconciliation (Figure 1.2.)

This endeavor of architectural constructions of memory throughout Berlin congregated around the ruin of the Wall. A map of Berlin today shows that these post-1989 architectural constructions of traumatic memories are concentrated around the space that the Wall once occupied, a physical attempt to sew together the two Berlins and to fabricate unification at the border in terms of the built environment (Figure 1.3). The ghost of the Wall became a space of fixation and perhaps of displacement, seen as scar to be mended, stitched up by architecture in the hopes that healing this wound might heal the rest of the city's traumatic history. These projects had a cultural agenda, aiming to construct memories that the entirety of Berlin, if not Germany, should share, recalling the terrors of war or dictatorship and using the Wall as both a symbol and a space of fixation in the hopes of reconstructing the united identity of Berlin that had been severed by the Wall.

The Berlin Wall constituted a massive material object that organized the everyday life of Berliners. The German Democratic Republic (GDR) erected the Berlin Wall in 1961 dividing the city into East and West and officially preventing "western fascists" from coming into East Berlin, but more candidly, preventing East Germans from migrating to the West. The German Democratic Republic controlled the East, the Soviet sector, and the Western Allies controlled the

West, consisting of the American, British, and French sectors. The Wall began as a barbed wire fence, later secured with concrete, but it soon acquired an architecture of its own, to become known by 1975 as "Border Wall '75" (Figure 1.4). It consisted of two separate reinforced concrete walls, one east and one west each twelve feet tall and one hundred miles wide. A no-man's land known as "the Death Strip" lay in between, a expanse of soft sand, bright floodlights, and car barricades. Along the top of the Wall, which cut through 192 streets, was a concrete sewage pipe, placed there to thwart any efforts to climb over.[3] The Eastern wall was an ominous grey color as citizens were not permitted anywhere near it, while the West Berliners decorated their wall with colorful graffiti art. During a time in Berlin where on every corner one turned there was a bombed out building standing as ruin, the Berlin Wall developed a spatial character of its own and stood as an unbreakable construction.

The Wall acutely interrupted the lives of Berliners. About 100 citizens who attempted to cross the wall were shot dead but more than 5,000 did make it across successfully by digging tunnels underneath it, driving vehicles straight through it, flying hot air balloons above it, or jumping out of buildings.[4] Crossing the border was completely impossible for the first two years.[5] East Berliners with jobs in West Berlin lost them and many were separated from their friends and families. Later, in 1963, West Berliners were granted permission to visit family five times a year in the East.[6] Meanwhile, East Berliners lived in fear. Watching or reading any type of the West's media was illegal and the Stasi, the Ministry State Security in the East, effectively

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[3] "Berlin Wall."

[4] "Berlin Wall."

[5] David Clay Large, *Berlin* (New York: Basic Books, 2000), 457.

[6] Large, 457.

enforced the law with eyes everywhere. With the construction of the Wall, daily life for both sides was completely altered.

Not only did the Wall interrupt the lives of Berliners but also the urban fabric. "They are cutting up a city, cutting into living flesh without anesthesia," Heinrich Albertz, Governor of West Berlin between 1966 and 1967, described it as the Wall went up.[7] The Wall changed the physical make up of the city beyond its immediate surroundings. As it was being constructed, the Wall incorporated buildings that lay in its path into itself, sometimes bricking-up the windows and other times simply knocking the building down. More than that, the construction of the Wall disconnected the networks of the city, cutting off U-Bahn and S-Bahn lines. The result was 16 *Geisterbahnhöfe,* "ghost stations," closed and abandoned stations created by the division of the metro systems (Figure 1.5). West Berliners who boarded the train would slowly ride through said stations to see armed soldiers patrolling. What were once orientating markers of the city, places of encounter and transportation, were now desolate and eerie spaces of fear and idleness.[8]

Furthermore, the Wall changed both East's and West's conceptions of space. It ran up the center of the city but what most forget or do not know is that it continued around to encircle all of the allied territories in Berlin, detaching West Berlin from the rest of East Germany that surrounded it. It was a peculiar case being that those who were caged up were the ones who were free.[9] But in others ways the West Berliners suffered as much as the East Berliners. Many were plagued by *Mauerkrankheit* (Wall-sickness), a term used to describe the claustrophobia caused

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[7] Large, 451.

[8] "#18/25 Ghost Stations – the Wall Underground," visitBerlin, September 29, 2014, accessed November 23, 2015, http://mauer.visitberlin.de/en/868-ghost-stations/

[9] Large, 455.

by the Wall and their enclosure by East Germany. In fact, the suicide rate was higher in West

Berlin than in the East, which has been attributed by scholars and journalists such as David Clay

Large to the presence of the Wall.[10] While West Berliners were keenly conscious of their

surroundings and would look through smalls holes in the wall or stand on ladders above it just to

get a glimpse of the other side, East Berliners on the other hand tried to blot them out, publishing

maps that represented the West as white space as the proximity of freedom nagged them (Figure

1.6). From these anecdotes one can see that the way each side conceived of their own and the

other's space was starkly different.

Both East and West Berlin employed modern architecture as the visual language of their

regimes, while also investing in preservation and restoration projects for their historic buildings.

In terms of new architecture, West Berlin was more flattened from the bombings in World War

II than the East, so starting from ground zero the West searched for a new visual language that

would situate them in the modern world. They tended more towards the mid-century modern

international style of the time, siphoning a lot of money into new buildings to provide spaces for

their cultural institutions.[11] Most notable was the Kulturforum, a collection of cultural buildings

built on what used to be the Wall's no-man's land by famous modern architects such as Ludwig

Mies van der Rohe and Hans Scharoun (Figure 1.7).[12] The international style perpetuated West

Berlin's modern and global image through its futuristic, streamlined, and decontextualized

aesthetic. The West also made urban planning attempts to re-center the city by trying to create a

"downtown" just south of Tiergarten where new, western influenced commercial construction

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[10] Large, 469.

[11] Large, 471.

[12] Large, 471.

boomed.

The East on the other hand employed a monumental visual language to communicate its image of an omnipresent power to be feared. Very early in their rule, knowing the significance of architecture in relation to memory, the GDR sought to erase pre-socialist memories by destroying historical monuments. The Prussian *Berliner Stadtschloss* is an example of this, demolished in 1950 by Walter Ulbricht, East German Head of State, to build an imposing marble and gold-tinted glass representation of the Regime, the *Palast der Republik* (Palace of the Republic) in 1976. The GDR's early destruction of the Royal *Stadtschloss* and construction of a monumental marble and gold reflective monolith for parliament was an embodiment of the socialist image the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED party) wanted to present (Figure 1.8).[13]

Most importantly, both the East and West invested in architectural preservation as a medium to create narratives for themselves. Architectural preservation was a growing field in Germany along with the rest of Europe since the early 19th century but it took on a new role during the divide. The country found that the old practices could no longer be applied to such a different landscape where once significant historic buildings had taken on even more meaning.[14] In West Berlin the administration understood the significance and symbolism of historic architecture in Berlin and employed architectural preservation as a medium to communicate similar ideas of endurance and modernity as it did with new architecture. In 1959 for example, in the newly formed shopping district south of the Tiergarten, the 1880 Wilhelm Kaiser Memorial

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[13] "Palast, Tacita Dean," Tate, accessed November 23, 2015, http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/dean-palast-t12212/text-summary.

[14] John H. Stubbs, *Time Honored: A Global View of Architectural Conservation: Parameters, Theory and Evolution of an Ethos* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2009). 233.

Church, a bombed ruin from World War II, was preserved, and around it Egon Eiermann designed a new church (Figure 1.9). The design incorporated West Berlin's futurist modern architectural styles, an arrangement of honeycombed glass and concrete buildings to surround the ruin. The new Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church would now stand in the new city center, its burnt and broken appearance would remind the passersby of the traumatic memory of the war, but it would also represent perseverance of the old rising out of the new.[15] West Berliners were using preservation as a medium to construct memories and messages even before the Wall came down.

Likewise, the GDR used architectural preservation to perpetuate the same monumental image of their regime as their new architecture did. In 1952 for example, before the Wall even went up East Germany conserved the *Zeughaus* (Prussian Armory) and opened it as the German History Museum.[16] The conservation of the *Zeughaus* is a clear effort by the GDR to string its narrative along with Prussian history. During the divide the East's administration used the built environment that already existed to propagate its narratives through architectural preservation just as the West's did.

However, in the aftermath of 1989 architectural preservation took on yet a new role. This time the objective was not to engage with the construction of competing identities representing the capitalist and communist system of social and economic organization, but rather to produce unification and reconcile the past with the present, pointing to a future. The Wall as a ruin began to configure itself as a central element in these restorations and conservations of buildings and

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[15] Large, 470.

[16] John H. Stubbs and Emily G. Makas, *Architectural Conservation in Europe and the Americas* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2011), 198.

sites. These preservation projects began to cluster near the space of the former Wall and the ruins of the Wall were decidedly incorporated into the sites both physically and theoretically to shape narratives and experiences. These new narratives often consisted of memories of World War II and Nazi Germany, traumatic events that united Berlin, both and East and West, which seemed so disparate at the moment, had once shared. The Wall was a scar that Berliners could stitch up in their daunting process of unifying East and West, but rather than erasing it they would preserve it, using it as a tool to configure their memories around.

Due to the physical and mental disruption in the city's identity and the urban fabric that the Iron Curtain wrought, the process of unification to follow the fall of the Wall was not as clean and joyous as some have come to remember it; integration and renewal was a menacing task. The problems to be encountered were anticipated by Willy Brandt, the former West Berlin mayor from 1969 to 1974, who expressed his concern about integration declaring, "[a] great deal will now depend on whether we—we Germans on both sides—prove to be equal to this historical situation."[17] Berliners knew it was not as simple as erasing a boarder—the Wall had had a profound impact on the city and its people. The East had stood still, frozen in the 1960's while the West rapidly westernized.[18] Like two siblings separated at a young age and forced to live under the same roof again, they were two disconnected states faced with the task of melding into one. As described above, the physical space of city they once knew was not the same anymore and Berliners felt a disassociation from their built environment.[19]

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[17] Large, 530.

[18] "Living in a Divided City: West-Berlin," visitBerlin, accessed November 23, 2015, http://www.visitberlin.de/en/article/living-in-a-divided-city-west-berlin.

[19] Stubbs and Makas, *Architectural Conservation in Europe and the Americas*, 210.

In his book on united Berlin's memories of the division, Dirk Verheyen describes the double whammy that the Wall's erasure presented to the city that was already dealing with the memory of the Third Reich, termed by scholars as *doppelte Vergangenheitsbewältigung,* "double mastering of the past."[20] This term refers to two traumatic moments in their history that Berliners now had to come to terms with. The heavy task of rehabilitating from World War II which once belonged to East and West separately, was now a task of dealing with the wounds of the War as well as the scars of the Wall together.

From very early after the fall of the Wall, Berliners strove to connect the two disparate sides through the urban fabric. One early effort to integrate the two sides of Berlin was Gunter Demnig's *Stolpersteine* (stumbling blocks). Based on the tradition that non-Jewish Germans before the Holocaust used to say upon stumbling on the pavement "there must be a Jew buried here," in 1992 Demnig began engraving commemorative bronze stones with the names of victims of National Socialism and literally laying them into the urban fabric, the pavement, of both East and West Berlin. *Stolpersteine* are an early exhibition of the pursuit to unite and integrate the East and West using shared memories of before the Wall, specifically World War II.

Despite efforts to integrate the two sides of Berlin, the intention was never to erase the memory of the Wall with its deconstruction. Instead, the Wall remained a symbol in the minds of Germans. A number of German films right before and after the fall placed the Berlin Wall as a central element or even character in their plots. *Wings of Desire,* directed by Wim Wenders and released a year before the fall of the Wall in 1988, focuses on two angels who wander the streets of Berlin listening to the thoughts of divided Berlin citizens. The angels, and the movie as a

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[20] Dirk Verheyen, *United City, Divided Memories?* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2008), 6.

whole, serve to collect and preserve the memory of the Wall, even before it fell. It follows the thoughts of those who have been separated from loved ones by the Wall, chronicling the deep disruption the Wall had on the lives of Berliners. This movie, which places the Wall as a central protagonist in its story, indicates that Berliners had no intention of wiping the image of the Wall from their minds. Instead, as the movie illuminates, there was a strong desire to bear witness to and record the division and the effect it had on the city and its citizens. As traumatic as the Wall was, it had a strong presence in their lives and Berliners held on to it.

Another film that situates the Berlin Wall as a protagonist in its plot is *Good Bye, Lenin*. *Good bye Lenin's* timeline straddles the existence and subsequent fall of the Wall. Directed by Wolfgang Becker and released in 2004, the movie tells the story of a teenaged boy, Alex Kerner, whose mother, a loyal SED party member, falls into a coma right before the fall. After her awakening, as Berlin experiences an incredibly rapid westernization, Kerner attempts to keep the news from his mother for her health. The movie, in an often comedic tone with Kerner searching endlessly for his mother's favorite East German pickles in a new world filled with Coca Cola and Burger King, bears witness to what a fundamental change the Wall and the fall of it had on the city and its people. Even more notably as this film was made after the Wall had fallen, its placement of the Wall as a character in the plot with great effect shows that Berliners were not ready to let go of the memory of the Wall. These popular culture examples, which place the Berlin Wall at their centers, exemplify the German people's will to bear witness to the Wall, not to forget it, and keep it as a strong a symbol in their minds. It is not surprising then to find that in its unification process and identity rebuilding, Berlin incorporated the ruins of the Wall into its new and newly restored constructions of traumatic memories. In this project I examine two

architectural constructions of memory that use the ruin, an emblem formed by the fall of the

Wall, to configure memory.

The correlation between memory and architectural space in Europe is not a new concept.

In 1984 French historian Pierre Nora in his essay "le lieux de mémoire" coined the term "sites of

memory," "where memory crystalizes and secretes itself," in his study of French history and

identity.[21] Nora understands "memory not as a remembrance but as the overall structure of the

past within the present."[22] With this structural emphasis, Nora highlights the distinction between

history and memory and argues the importance of places that embody the later as they illuminate

collective identity.[23] Other theorists likewise understand memory collectively, such as French

philosopher Maurice Halbwachs. In Halbwach's *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire* (1925) and

La mémoire collective (1950),[24] he coined the term "collective memory," arguing that every

single one of our memories is situated in relation to a larger social group's.[25] Understandings of

both of these idea, "sites of memory" and "collective memory," are key to my argument about

Berlin.

Theorists have also already touched on the topic of memory and architecture specifically

in Berlin. In his book *The Ghosts of Berlin: Confronting German History in the Urban*

Landscape, Brian Ladd deals with the interrelationship of Berlin's tumultuous past and its built

environment. "Memories often cleave to the physical settings of events" he argues, and with the

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[21] Pierre Nora, "les lieux de mémorie," *Representations* 26, Special issue: Memory and Counter Memory (Spring, 1989): 7-24.

[22] Pierre Nora, *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), xxiv.

[23] Pierre Nora, *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*, xxiii.

[24] Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

[25] Eleni Bastea, *Memory and Architecture* (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 2004), 8.

understanding that buildings and monuments in Berlin are the most significant remnants of its

past, he spends the pages of his book exploring "how these structures are seen, treated, and

remembered" in order to shed "light on a collective identity that is more felt than articulated."[26]

Brian Ladd's emphasis on the urban fabric of Berlin in relation to the city's past is important for

my understanding of post-1961 Berlin.

The connection between trauma and memory has been explored by Jenny Edkins in her

book *Trauma and the Memory of Politics* (2003). Edkins delves into the practices of trauma,

memory, and witness and situates her exploration within the larger context of power, the social

order, and the individual in the contemporary Western World.[27] "After traumatic events, there is

a struggle over memory," she states, setting up her examination of what exactly constitutes

trauma, the symptoms it produces, and its relationship to memory. Edkins' study of traumatic

events is useful in my understanding of how trauma manifested in space became the milieu of

competitive interests and narratives, a battlefield through which the collective memory of Berlin

and Germany's history was designed.

Chapter One studies the restoration of the Neues Museum in 2008 by David Chipperfield

Architects in collaboration with Julian Harrap Architects and commissioned by the government

backed institution, the Staatliche Museen Berlin (Berlin State Museums) (Figure 1.10). This

chapter examines an architectural construction of memory that erects a didactic and easily

digestible narrative memory for a modern, international consumer by what I have termed

"Resolving the Ruin." After destruction by bombs in World War II, the original Neues Museum

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[26] Brian Ladd, The *Ghosts of Berlin: Confronting German History in the Urban Landscape* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1997), 2.

[27] Jenny Edkins, *Trauma and the Memory of Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 9.

by August Stüler, built between 1843 and 1855 stood as a nonfunctioning ruin for nearly seven

decades, until Chipperfield and Harrap won a competition held by the Staatliche Museen Berlin

for the museum's restoration. Despite Chipperfield's and the institution's surrounding of the

project with scientific and objective rhetoric, the emphasis on the material and concrete objects

as the communicator of history and the framing and streamlining of these all point to the fact that

this memory was constructed for the institution's own motives of situating themselves proudly in

the history and urban fabric of the city. This restoration illuminates the way in which the ruin

may be physically used and manipulated in architecture to construct memories that communicate

institutional ideals.

This salvaging of the material objects of the past and creating spectacles to display and

experience them in comes from an understanding that the past is only concretely manifested in

materials. This emphasis on the physical ruin comes out of a category of architectural

preservation beginning in late 19th century England that begs the monumentalizing of ruins.

These theories began with John Ruskin, English art critic, who in response to more stylistic

restorations of the time, led by Eugéne Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc in France, called for a more

sensitive treatment of historic structures.[28] The restoration of the Neues Museum will be situated

in relation to these theories as well as other theories and perspectives on the ruin in order to

better understand the choices made in the project.

Chapter Two examines a restoration of sorts in the sense that it attempts to restore a

memory to the city of Berlin, Daniel Libeskind's Jewish Museum Berlin designed between 1988

and 2001 (Figure 1.11). This chapter looks at an architectural construction of memory that

attempts to construct an experiential memory for a more emotional reaction by forming what I

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[28] John H. Stubbs, *Time Honored: A Global View of Architectural Conservation*, 84.

have termed the "New as Ruin." The Jewish Museum Berlin attempts to represents the Jewish

people, identity, and loss. Designed and built between 1988 and 2001, straddling the moment of

the fall of the Wall, the Jewish Museum went from being conceived as just an extension for the

already established Berlin Museum, to a fully formed museum in its own right that would situate

Jewish identity within united Berlin. In a deconstructive effort to shift the emphasis in

architecture away from its concrete elements, Libeskind reconfigures memory into space. In his

giving shape and meaning to the void, he forms memory within that which is lost and no longer

exists, the essence of a ruin. This project will reveal that memory and history need not be limited

to the physical materials we have from the past by constructing a ruin theoretically in space.

This deconstructive effort comes from a desire to rethink the way we conceive of

architecture. Deconstructivist architecture was formed in the convergence of a philosophical

movement began by philosopher Jacques Derrida and a sect of the field of architecture led by

Peter Eisenman and Bernard Tschumi.[29] These thinkers were concerned with disturbing pure

forms and finding stability in the pleasures of unease. The Jewish Museum Berlin will be

discussed in terms of these theories in order to better understand the design gestures made in the

building by Libeskind.

Finally, the Conclusion will take a look at one more architectural construction of memory

and its literal use of the ruin of the Wall. The Topography of Terror Documentation Center, built

between 1889 and 2006, presents a third and most literal use of the ruin of the Wall as a tool to

configure memory through and around (Figure 1.12). This very direct use of the ruin in post-

1989 Berlin will lead into a final comparison of the Neues Museum and the Jewish Museum and

a discussion of what the examination of these two projects may teach us.

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[29] Phillip Johnson and Mark Wigley, *Deconstructivist Architecture*, (New York: Museum of Modern Art/Little Brown and Company, 1988), 7.

This thesis uses a comparative methodology because of its ability to highlight tensions and their complexities in the two compared case studies. Although there is an obvious third instance, amongst others, of the ruin being configured into an architectural construction of memory in the Topography of Terror Documentation Center, the use of the ruin in this building is quite straightforward and in a sense trivial when discussed in relation to the Neues Museum's and Jewish Museum's multifaceted uses. A third case study risks neutralizing or defusing the tensions and complexities in these two buildings which stand so directly and complicatedly in opposition to each other. Rather, a deeper analysis of these two architectures' strong and contrasting uses and conceptions of the ruin conveys the depth of their design gestures, both when they succeed in their attempts as well as when they fail or contradict themselves.

This thesis came out on my time spent in Berlin last year during which I could see and feel the divide in the city despite the lack of the physical Wall. There are a number of different ways the split is still experienced today: as a recently published satellite image of difference in street light bulbs explains the divide was a deep interruption in the city that is still physically there today (Figure 1.13). But this is not without attempts to reconcile the two sides. The process of unification is still ongoing and these architectural constructions of memories after 1989 present a fascinating effort to architecturally produce unification along the scar of the Wall using the ruin, a personal interest of my own, to do so.

Chapter One

Resolving the Ruin

I.   Introduction

The Neues Museum, along with four other museums, stands on a small strip of land in the

Spree River in the center of Berlin as part of a larger urban structure known as Museum Island

(Figure 2.1). Along with the Alte Nationalgalerie, and the Pergamon Museum, the three

museums form a public institutional triad around a large courtyard. The neo-classical façade of

the Neues Museum is ordered, repetitive, and symmetrical; a parenthetical composition framed

by two strong projecting corners and central entrance that organizes the view and leads the

visitor inside the museum (Figure 2.2). The southeast corner of the main elevation, once

completely eradicated by bombs, now stands in contrast to its northeast twin as a simplified and

streamlined version of its former self (Figure 2.3). On the rest of the façade, darkly soiled bricks

fade in and out of cleaner and newer ones, with the latter weaving in and out of lighter and

darker beiges themselves, creating a sense of continuity, an imperative of the architect David

Chipperfield, who sets past and future in dialogue by intervening in the very materiality of the

building during its restoration.

The Neues Museum's exterior becomes even more interesting from up-close as one

notices the holes and pock-marks that litter the exterior of the building, circular divots or

indentations quite clearly left from the mark of a bullet (Figure 2.4). They are haphazardly

clustered and scattered across the façade of the building, resulting in a weathered and textured

exterior that, even more explicitly than the soiled bricks, endows the building with a sense of age

and endurance. Here, the drama of the ruin, which has been argued for in ruin-theories since the 19th century, is strongly felt. The building, having witnessed more strife and grief than many of its visitors, appears heroic and wise. The sixty-year old bullet holes invite the visitor to touch them and affectively connect with the history of the site. A violent and scary history that may have in the past been difficult to imagine is rendered real, present, and tangible.

The restored Neues Museum was reopened to the public in 2009. The Neues Museum was first constructed in 1841 by the Prussian court architect Friedrich August Stüler (Figure 2.5). One-hundred years after Stüler's Neues Museum's opening, the museum and the island on which it stood was desecrated by World War II bombs. The Neues Museum stood as a ruin for nearly sixty years, an emblem of the terrors of war and a symbol of Berlin's ambivalence toward its own problematic history (Figure 2.6). The Staatliche Museen Berlin commissioned the competition in 1993 with the end goal of refashioning the Neues Museum as well as the Museum Island as a whole, into a modern institution, a symbol of rebirth and reconciliation coming out of a divided time. David Chipperfield Architects won the competition to restore the Neues Museum. The product of Chipperfield's restoration, an interesting project in its streamlined treatment of the ruin and manipulated memory for the institution, is the subject of analysis in this chapter.

As will be apparent with an even closer comparison between Stüler's original didactic educational landscape vision for the organization of the museum, the floor plan was one of the main elements of Stüler's vision that Chipperfield implemented. Chipperfield's choice to restore Stüler's narrational spine to the Neues Museum brings forth questions of how architecture constructs meaning through spatial narratives. Although the architect and institution were interested in preserving the narrative arch, they changed the objects within this arch that had

previously composed it; the decoration and the exhibited items within the galleries today is not so precisely preserved as the restoration does not follow to the letter Stüler's orginal design. Chipperfield takes some creative liberties in the Neues Museum's restoration. In investigating the architectural gestures where he diverges from the original plan, I will explore the new construction of memory and narrative put in place.

Chipperfield's restoration theory is of particular importance in understanding the memory that the Museum as a space and institution sought to establish. Chipperfield asserts that he treated architecture as research in the Neues Museum: uncovering what was there, deciding on a case-by-case basis what could remain, and then stabilizing it.[30] For him, restoration ought to be scientific, and hence he understood the construction of memory as the subject matter of history as a science. However, as is made clear in Chipperfield's streamlined treatment of the ruin and resolved presentation of history, this air of objectivity produced by Chipperfield and the institution was merely a public relations tactic.

The Neues Museum presents an interesting case in the examination of post-war constructions of memory in Berlin on one level because of this scientific rhetoric that has shrouded it from public doubt as Chipperfield's streamlined framing of the ruin in fact seems to simplify and resolve a rather complex history. Furthermore, the Neues Museum's restoration has yet to be analyzed in its very central role within the larger urban restoration and as a pawn in the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin's public relations game. An analysis of these elements of the Neues Museum's restoration will illuminate the way in which an architectural construction of memory in post-1989 Berlin took the emblem of the ruin that had been produced by the fall of the Wall and employed it to institutional ends.

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[30] Arron Betsky, "The Just Rightness of David Chipperifeld: Dense Minimalism," *El Croquis* 120 (2013): 33.

II.   The Restoration of the Neues Museum

A closer look at the Neues Museum's history and Chipperfield's choices of what to keep

and frame and what to do away with further illuminates his motives in the restoration. Built

between 1842 and 1859, the initial Neues Museum was designed by distinguished Prussian court

architect Friedrich August Stüler. Stüler studied under one of Germany's most prominent

Prussian architects, Karl Friedrich Schinkel. He traveled through France, Italy, and Russia,

before becoming Hofvauinspektor (Royal Buildings Inspector) in Berlin and director of the

commission for the Berliner Stadtschloss, just feet away from his soon to be erected Neues

Museum. He tried his hand in architecture in Russia before returning to Berlin in 1842 when the

King, Frederick William IV granted him the commission for his next museum and the title of

Architekt des Königs (Royal Architect). It was concurrent with this title that Stüler was granted

the commission for the Neues Museum.

The king's new museum was conceived as functionally an annex to the Altes Museum in

an attempt to contain the overflowing royal collection. The Altes Museum, the first museum to

be built on the little island in the Spree by Stüler's mentor Karl Friedrich Schinkel, was

revolutionary in that it brought art viewing into the public sphere (Figure 2.7). The monumental

and classical Altes Museum represented a new intersection of the bourgeois and the state,

underlined by its location across from both the Cathedral and Palace. Its curatorial approach still

hung on to the vestiges of cabinets of curiosities as the collection was organized by medium and

hung and placed in rows.[31]

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[31] Michael Eissenhauer et al., eds., *Museum Island Berlin*, Ed. for the Staatliche Museen Berlin, Preußischer Kulturbesitz (Munich: Hirmer, 2012), 150-151.

Stüler took his mentor's revolutionary ideas on the museum a step further, conceiving of the Neues Museum as a response to the Altes Museum's curatorial approach. He departed from the more crowded display techniques and placed art in contextually embellished galleries. This curatorial approach was designed to bring a global and chronological coherence to each of the types of art on view that placed Germany at the center of it all, as a microcosm of global art production. A polychrome, hieroglyph painted room for the Egyptian tombs for example (Figure 2.8) or an ionic column lined room for the classic works created an environment and atmosphere for the collection to be contextually experienced in (Figure 2.9). Both the Neues Museum and the Altes Museum were designed to function as educational landscapes—moving through them one could survey the art of the world and mentally place Berlin at the center of it. But, the two did so in vastly different ways: while Schinkel's Altes Museum was a strong classical frame, unaltered by the items within it, Stüler's interior architecture reflected its collection, making a shift of emphasis towards the objects themselves rather than the museum as institution. With the addition of the Neues Museum to little strip of land in the Spree River, the island was royally decreed by Friedrich Wilhelm IV as a new "sanctuary for art and science."[32]

The Neues Museum, which had been closed since the beginning of the war in 1939 with much of its collection moved off the island, suffered the worst damages of all the museums during bombings in 1943 and 1945.[33] It was subsequently left uncovered and unprotected to the weather until the turmoil of the war had died down (Figure 2.10).[34] In the years after the War in

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[32] Eissenhauer et al., eds., *Museum Island Berlin*, 156.

[33] "About us: History of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin," Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Preußischer Kulturbesitz, accessed February 26, 2016, http://www.smb.museum/en/about-us/history.html.

[34] "Revamped Neues Museum Finally Opens in Berlin," *Spiegel Online*, October 16, 2009, accessed February 26, 2016, http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/nefertiti-gets-a-new-palace-revamped-neues-museum-finally-opens-in-berlin-a-655577.html.

divided Berlin, Museum island not only presented a large undertaking in terms of cost, but also one in terms of achievability as the restoration of the Neues Museum would be a large and arduous task. The Neues Museum, with the worst damage of all the buildings, stood as a dilapidated, decaying ruin for decades with minimal attempts to conserve or even protect the building by the GDR administration, which only timidly began to take protective measures on the ruin during its last years.[35] This was largely due to the fact that the Island's collection was separated by the Wall. Objects resided on East or West depending on where they were moved prior to the War. Art that resided in the West was under the control of the Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz (Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation), while the art that remained in the East with the Neues Museum was under the control Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. But, with the fall of the Berlin Wall the city was presented with the opportunity to unite the two collections, the two institutions, and ultimately to unite East and West Germany as a whole.[36]

The restoration of the Neues Museum commenced under the leadership of the Berlin based firm David Chipperfield Architects in collaboration with restoration specialists Julian Harrap Architects six decades after the bombing. The product of this restoration, the Neues Museum as it exists today, is a fading palimpsest of a memory of all of the Neues Museum's forms: a conglomerate of Stüler's design, the bombed ruin, and the modern architecture. As Chipperfield repeatedly describes his work on the Neues Museum scientifically, he tries to do away with his subjectivity in the restoration, but upon closer examination the architect-restorer with the approval of the overseeing Staatliche Museen zu Berlin seemed to frame and simplify

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[35] Thomas W. Gaehtgens, "The Berlin Museums after Reunification," *The Burlington Magazine* 136 No. 1090 (Jan. 1994): 14-20.

[36] Eissenhauer et al., eds., *Museum Island Berlin*, 32.

the history of the Neues Museum, presenting a more resolved memory for a larger public.

Framing is one of the largest design gestures that Chipperfield makes in his restoration of the Neues Museum and it takes place on a number of different levels. After encountering the tactile exterior of the Neues Museum, upon entering the museum on the ground floor the visitor is placed in a rectangular, infinity-loop-shaped floor plan and immediately faced with the decision of which direction to proceed: into the gallery to their left, the gallery on their right, or up the stairs (Figure 2.11). From the first moments spent within the building there are pre-conceived and set-in-stone narratives to follow. The museum is organized in a strong and lucid framework of two wings, north and south, which are centralized around two courtyards, the Greek and Egyptian courtyards respectively that cut through the entire three-story building (Figure 2.12).

David Chipperfield has spoken on this emphasis on the frame before. In an interview by Alejandro Zaera with Chipperfield in *El Croquis*, the architect explains,

> My feeling is that the rituals of daily life are what you want to build architecture around. I don't see architecture in itself as the centre of attention. I always think about the frame in which you should be able to live your life, whether it's reading a book in the library, cooking a meal in a house, or working at your desk in an office.[37]

Chipperfield's understanding of architecture as most importantly the framework for everyday life may explain in part his decision to stick so closely to Stüler's original framework, the floor plan. Chipperfield's belief that architecture is the frame of activity discounts the idea that architecture may be a symbol or a monument. This may explain his disregard for individual emotional experience within the space of the building.

Stüler's original vision was for the viewer to move through the museum in an infinity-

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[37] Alejandro Zaera, "A Conversation with David Chipperifeld," *El Croquis* 120 (2013): 17.

loop precession so that the galleries, all of different size, shape, and thematic decoration,

unfolded in a chronological order (Figure 2.13). Upon entering in 1855 when the museum was

first opened, the visitor began their tour of the museum by turning left into the Northern

European antiquities room, titled the Hall of the Fatherland, which was followed by the South

Vestibule, and then the Vaulted Room, the first of three exhibition rooms for the Ethnographic

collection. After then walking through the West Vestibule, the Egyptian Collection, and the non-

European cultures (i.e. pre-Columbian Americas, Africa, and Oceania), the visitor would land

back in front of the Main Staircase (Figure 2.14).[38] The second and third floors shared the same

infinity-loop shape. Moving along in history, the second floor housed more recent cultures like

the Medieval Room and the Greek and Roman Rooms, and on the third floor was the most

modern collection in the museum, the *Kupferstichkabinett* (Copper Engraving Room Study

Room) where sheets of European and non-European decorative and ornamental forms could be

used for teaching.[39] This organization of the museum and its collection created a hierarchy of

cultures that emphasized the standing of Prussia. It placed the Prussian antiquities in the Hall of

the Fatherland on the same level as Egypt. It then placed the secondary cultures in their eyes on

the second floor. This hierarchy played into 19th century Prussian nationalist sentiments quite

well. After each lap, the viewer returned to the Main Staircase, which through its monumental

murals depicting the history of humans painted by Wilhelm von Kaulbach reinforced this very

linear conception of history which Stüler was constructing. Stüler's very didactic floor plan was

essentially functioning as a spatially mapped textbook or an educational landscape of sorts.

Chipperfield maintained this floor plan and gallery organization almost to a tee,

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[38] Eissenhauer et al., eds., *Museum Island Berlin*, 162.

[39] Eissenhauer et al., eds., *Museum Island Berlin*, 131.

recreating the Main Staircase and keeping many of the gallery names the same and in the same

place (Figure 2.15). The Hall of the Fatherland, the Ethnographical Room, the Tomb Room, and

the Mythological Room, remain where they once were in Stüler's museum on the ground floor,

along with some modern additions like the museum shop and café. On the second floor the

Greek Room, the Roman Room, and the Medieval Room, all remain in place. Chipperfield

thereby maintains the 19th century narrative of German history in the Neues Museum that was

originally meant to play into nationalist sentiments.

Chipperfield went so far as to reconstruct Stüler's floor plan in the southeast and

northwest corners which were completely eradicated in the bombings (Figure 2.16).

Chipperfield's decision to stick to Stüler's didactic floor plan so closely suggests that he believed

the linear narrative and promenade of the museum to be one of the most important elements to

preserve and restore. This insinuates that the memory which Chipperfield was after and which

the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin approved was similar to Stüler's original objectives with this

floor plan: a historical educational landscape which placed Berlin and Museum Island as its

nucleus. By restoring the 19th century German narrational spine to the Neues Museum,

Chipperfield managed to create a historical framework for his more interpretive choices and

resolving gestures within in the restoration.

Chipperfield's strong will to frame does not stop here in the Neues Museum, but rather,

takes the form of a framing of the ruin within the spaces. In the same *El Croquis* interview, the

interviewer describes Chipperfield's style as the most purely modern and lacking of any

references in comparison to his contemporaries, stating to the architect himself, "It strikes me

that from all of them; your work is probably the most extreme in terms of pure manipulation of

the modernist language, devoid of programme, cultural references, and even expressionist traits."

In regards to program, in this building Chipperfield does seem to be reiterating the 19th century

Prussian program. But, the architect speaks to this characterization of his style's lack of anything

extra, asserting his ideology of architecture as framework for life and adding that sometimes, "if

it is about making a framework, you might end-up with very little."[40]

This phenomenon of ending up with very little in pursuit of a framework manifests itself

clearly within the Neues Museum. The decoration within the galleries varies greatly in terms of

how much of Stüler's Neues Museum remains and when it does it is usually framed by

Chipperfield's streamlined architecture. Quite often, Chipperfield surrounds the old with a new,

streamlined version of long, smooth, rectilinear shapes. This streamlined architecture has its own

problematic connotations.

In her book, *Eugenic Design: Streamlining America in the 1930's*, Christina Cogdell

argues a connection between eugenics and the emergence of streamlined design in the United

States based on the three formative principles of eugenic ideology—efficiency, hygiene, and the

ideal type. Cogdell's argument asks us to rethink the implications of Chipperfield's use of a

streamlined style in the Neues Museum, suggesting that as Chipperfield streamlined the

architecture of the building, he also effectively streamlines the history of it, offering the visitor a

more straightforward or resolved version of it.

One exemplary instance of this is in the Egyptian Courtyard. In one of the most iconic

spaces of the museum, fading and chipped frescos of archeological sites from Stüler's museum

adorn the eastern wall (Figure 2.17).[41] But these landscapes, which once were integrated into the

fabric of the building itself as frescos, are now more like paintings being exhibited than actual

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[40] Zaera, "A Conversation with David Chipperifeld," 17.

[41] Eissenhauer et al., eds., *Museum Island Berlin*, 103.

parts of the architecture as Chipperfield constructs a grid around the paintings within the space with frosted glass railings and square, concrete columns. Similar to the exterior of the building, light and dark bricks fade in and out of each other, confusing any sense of what is Stüler's and what is Chipperfield's version of the museum. With the nod of the head and a few gestures towards this space's history—the same name of "Egyptian Courtyard" and the same display of Egyptian tombs—the once vibrant polychrome, hieroglyph painted, columned gallery is now a quite muted, modern space with modern materials and no ornamentation.

Chipperfield's restoration theory is seeped in systematic and scientific language, using words such as "research" or "case-by-case basis" giving the impression that his restoration was objective and the only solution. Although Chipperfield argues that each choice was scientifically carried out and that old and new were treated equally in the restoration, the balance between the two which Chipperfield says he tried to strike is not achieved. As brickwork weaves in and out of old and new without indication and original paint fades and flakes seemingly randomly, Stüler's Neues Museum feels as if it is lightly fading into Chipperfield's new, modern, simplified one, and Chipperfield's new architecture is the clearly the dominant superstructure. This scientific rhetoric seems to be clouding over a more interventional restoration than one may realize, as the history of the museum is made more digestible for the everyday viewer, or perhaps consumer. A comparison of Chipperfield's descriptions of his work on the building with the actual design gestures made will illuminate the disconnect between the two.

David Chipperfield firm's official website describes their work as the only solution—facing the difficult decision of whether to reconstruct or start fresh with the Neues Museum, the team chose what they called "the third way," salvaging original material and constructing a modern fabric around it:

> When considering the way forward, it was clear that the ruin should not be interpreted as a backdrop for a completely new architecture but neither was an exact reconstruction of what had been irreversibly lost in the war seen as an option. A single continuous structure that incorporates nearly all of the available damaged fabric while allowing a series of contemporary elements to be added became the preferred path, often described as 'the third way'. [42]

The language in this project description is quite systematic or scientific, asserting that the team had resolved to the only viable option. They saw themselves as finding a middle-ground between new architecture and an exact reconstruction, constructing a continuous structure by salvaging as much original material as possible and weaving in the new, reflecting the old without imitating it. As *El Croquis* describes in its description of the project, Chipperfield's goal was to create a setting for the remaining fragments of the museum without denying their condition of conservation.[43] The team understood their tactic as multidisciplinary, utilizing conservation, restoration, and re-creation and "respecting the historical structure in its different states of preservation," as the website description explains.[44] But upon closer examination, it becomes clear that around these stabilized original fragments, Chipperfield interwove the ruins with a streamlined, elemental, modern aesthetic, and words such as "multidisciplinary" and "respect" begin to sound like buzzwords.

This desire to find a middle-ground comes from an ideology seeped in historicism that asserts the equality of every moment in a building's lifetime. Rather than choosing one moment in the building's history, a middle-ground could honor each and every one. Although this middle-ground satisfies the ideological need to honor each moment in history equally, this

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[42] "Neues Museum, Museum Island Berlin, 1997-2009," David Chipperfield Architects, accessed February 26, 2016, http://www.davidchipperfield.co.uk/project/neues_museum.

[43] Zaera, "A Conversation with David Chipperifeld," 86.

[44] "Neues Museum, Museum Island Berlin, 1997-2009."

technique detracts from the deepness each of these moments, only skimming the surface of each one. Is a middle ground ever possible, and if so, does it in effect serve to neutralize or numb a whole and significant meaning for the building?

Despite his preaching so, Chipperfield's middle-ground is not to be found in the museum. Rather, the Neues Museum's restoration endows the ruins of the old museum with a fleeting or fugitive quality. In other words, one gets the feeling that the old is fading away into the more dominant new. Jonathan Keates describes the building as a palimpsest, "a surface on which any number of texts have been written but only imperfectly erased," or a "phagocyte building" as one gets the impression that the new is frozen in the midst of digesting the old.[45] In this subsuming of the past there is no sense of an equal treatment between old and new, the history is just a distant "presence," like that of a ghost, rather than a recreation. This fleeting or subsuming quality is most evident in the decorative wall paint and title work within galleries like the North Dome Room, the room dedicated to one of the museum's most famous objects, the Nefertiti Bust (Figure 2.18). Here, as the blue, green, and red paint on the walls is left in its fading and chipped condition and as the white wall is visible below, the old feels as if it is in the midst of fading away. One can barely make out the vanishing painted figures in the dome's coffers and the floor tiles appear to be sinking into the building like quicksand as the pattern is left unfinished.

While on the interior of the Neues Museum, Chipperfield decides to let the ruin fade into the background or frame it as art, on the exterior he seems to ennoble it in his choice to keep the bullet holes and pock-marks left by World War II. This idea of ennobling the ruin is not entirely new. The field of architectural restoration has deeply grappled with and theorized ruins and their

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[45] Jonathan Keates, "The Neues Museum: The Art of Survival," in *Neues Museum Berlin* (Berlin: Buchhandlung Walter Köenig, 2009).

value since the early 19th century. During the 19th century this interest in ennobling the ruin gained steam as preservation theorists led by British art critic John Ruskin argued for a sensitive approach to preservation, favoring the conservation of a building it in its current state, whatever that may be. These theories were in direct reaction to the rise of more creative, stylistic restorations led by French architect-restorer Eugene Emmanuelle Viollet-le-Duc.[46] In Ruskin's chapter on memory in his book *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, the art critic describes the glory that lies in the ruin:

> The greatest glory of a building is not in its stones, nor in its gold. Its glory is in its Age, and in that deep sense of voicefulness, of stern watching, of mysterious sympathy, nay, even of approval or condemnation, which we feel in walls that have long been washed by the passing waves of humanity.[47]

Here, Ruskin attributes the glory within the ruin to its age. Ruskin is pointing to the power in something having lived longer than oneself, its endurance and its accumulative wisdom having been witness to so many "waves of humanity." Extending his ideas, Ruskin refutes the notion that the value in an old building lies in its actual physical composition, in its stones or gold, but rather in its more ephemeral characteristics, its "voicefulness" and "sympathy." Looking at this ruin theory in relation to the restoration of the Neues Museum, Chipperfield's choice to leave the exterior of the building in its raw form in many places may be drawing on these ephemeral characteristics of the ruin, tugging on the heart strings of visitors, drawing them in. Yet, Chipperfield's affective approach which invites interaction and imagination on the exterior of the Neues Museum does not seem to transition into the interior as one is stuck in a strict frame and presented the ruin in a framed manner.

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[46] John H. Stubbs, *Time Honored: A Global View of Architectural Conservation: Parameters, Theory and Evolution of an Ethos* (Hoboken, N.J.: John Wiley and Sons Inc., 2009).

[47] John Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (Dover Publications, 1989).

Chipperfield's Neues Museum is a cleaned up version of the ruin: its crumbling north-west corner is reconstructed, its fallen columns are re-erected, the tree growing out of its bombed staircase is removed. Chipperfield has eliminated the any state of decay, trading it in for a polished and digestible version. Despite Chipperfield's saying so, this was not the only option in the restoration. There was an opportunity for Chipperfield to preserve the Neues Museum as the ruin that it was for sixty years of its life. In multiple interviews, Chipperfield mentions how important this form of the Neues Museum was to its life.[48] In the *El Croqui* interview Chipperfield says "Although it has suffered for some fifty odd years it has become a most beautiful ruin, time has matured it and it has become a recognised architectural monument in its own right." Rather than preserving the building in in beautiful ruined state, Chipperfield thought the best life for the Neues Museum in the future would be to modernize it. This refashioning of the Neues Museum into a modern museum is far from the objective restoration that Chipperifield preaches and has a lot to do with its embedding of this building within the larger urban restoration of the Museum Island on which it stands and its overseeing organization motives.

III.   The Urban Restoration

The Neues Museum's restoration is in fact the main component of a larger ongoing project, "the Master Plan *Museuminsel,*" funded by the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. The need to undertake a restoration of the entire Museum Island became increasingly clear right after the fall of the Wall and the unification of Berlin's art collections. In 1990 discussions about the future of

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[48] Grainne Shaffrey and Sandra O'Connell, "Interview: David Chipperfield: The Other Voice of Architecture" *Architecture Ireland* 255 (Nov. 2010), 60-62.

Museum Island between the East, the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, and the West, the Stigtung Preaussischer Kulturbesitz, began to harden and the two organizations joined forces. Three years later, in 1993, the Museum Island Architectural Competition was announced.

As the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin's website explains, this plan envisioned the Island as a "thematic whole," while also acknowledging each building's autonomy. For Chipperfield the Master Plan's most important and perhaps most difficult problem was "assum[ing] the double task of first preserving and rehabilitating the tradition of the buildings in their character as solitary and historical exhibition buildings, and secondly fulfilling the demands of a modern, visitor-oriented display presentation."[49] This objective of striking the perfect balance between old and new that was preached by Chipperfield is apparently also essential on a larger scale for the entire island in the Master Plan. The major components of the plan besides the Neues Museum's restoration include a new visitor center and a connection of all five museums on the island with an above- and below-ground "archeological promenade."[50]

To fully comprehend the significance of the Neues Museum's restoration and the memory it constructs within this Master Plan, it is important to understand the museum's role within the larger institution of Museum Island. In 1859 the Neues Museum was the second museum to be built on a small strip of land within the Spree River in the center of the city. The first was the Altes Museum built in 1830 by Karl Friedrich Schinkel opposite from the Berliner Stadtschloss (Berlin City Palace) across the Lustgarten (Royal "Pleasure Garden"). The Altes Museum held the Prussian Royal Court's quickly growing collection of antiquities, and with the recent establishments of museums in powerhouse European countries, including the British

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[49] Eissenhauer et al., eds., *Museum Island Berlin*, 8.

[50] Zaera, "A Conversation with David Chipperifeld," 86.

Museum in London in 1753 and the Louvre in Paris in 1793, the museum represented Germany's

haste to enter the world's stage.[51]

Before 1841 when plans for Stüler's Neues Museum were announced, the Museum Island

as an entity did not yet exist. It was with the addition of the Neues Museum that the Island was

deemed "a sanctuary for art and science" by the King. Furthermore, the Museum Island was "the

site of the origin and development of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin." The Staatliche Museen

zu Berlin (which today, after the unification of the city is a branch of the Stiftung Preußischer

Kulturbesitz) is both a federally and state funded institution founded in tandem with the Museum

Island. The institution would come to oversee the Island and its museums as well as eleven other

museums around Berlin.[52] Hence, architecture gave birth to an institution in Berlin, and from its

origins, the Neues Museum served a purpose much larger than other museums of its kind as it

played a key role in the formation of one of Berlin's most internationally reputable

organizations.

The Neues Museum triggered further urban development, resulting in an urban

museological core right at the center of Berlin. Between 1876 and 1930 three more museums

were added to the Museum Island— the Alte Nationalgalerie, the Bode Museum, and the

Pergamon Museum in chronological order. The Altes Museum is renowned as Schinkel's

masterpiece and the holder of the largest antiquities collection, while the Alte Nationalgalerie,

built in 1876 by Johann Heinrich Strack, houses the 19th century German and European painting

collections. The Bode Museum, on the other hand, built in 1904, is re-named after and known for

its original director and former general director of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, German art

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[51] Gaehtgens, "The Berlin Museums after Reunification," 14-20.

[52] Eissenhauer et al., eds., *Museum Island Berlin*, 7.

historian and curator Wilhelm von Bode, who is said to have propelled the Berlin royal art

collection into the larger art world. The youngest out of the five, the Pergamon Museum is

essentially a museum for architecture, built in 1930 by Alfred Mussel for the specific purpose of

housing the German archeological excavation finds in Pergamon and Asia Minor.[53] Finally, the

Neues Museum is the Egyptian and Prehistoric collection holder, its Nerfertiti Bust being its

largest attraction.

The five museums nestle within one another on this small island, the Bode Museum's

trapezoidal plan fitting perfectly into the tip of the land mass and the other museum's filling the

space either parallel or perpendicular to each other (Figure 2.19). There were a number of above

ground connections, such as colonnades, which connected some of the buildings, all of which

were destroyed in 1945.[54] With its neo-classical architecture and its tightly packed and organized

plan with both private and public space, the island draws strong similarities to the Roman Forum.

In this connection, and in the way that one must "enter" the island over one of the five bridges,

Museum Island puts in place a narrative of an immersive knowledge-building experience with

imperial undertones. However unique in its own particular collection, each of these museums

serves a political and ideological message of dominance for the institution and thereby for the

State. Together, as the Island and its museum represent a microcosm of the world within the city

center, they situate the island in a global scale, implicating Berlin's centrality in the global arena.

The Neues Museum specifically, falls into these intentions in its culturally categorized

collection. In light of these political and ideological motives present on the Island since its

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[53] "Museum Island," Berlin.de, accessed February 26, 2016, http://www.berlin.de/en/attractions-and-sights/3560564-3104052-museum-island.en.html.

[54] Eissenhauer et al., eds., *Museum Island Berlin*, 42.

origins, the restoration of the Neues Museum would likewise come to take on the larger urban

and internationally scaled mentality.

The Staatliche Museen zu Berlin had a very monumental vision for the project as evident

in the competition. There were in fact two rounds of submissions in the competition for the

Neues Museum's restoration commission, the first of which brought no decision. The Staatliche

Museen zu Berlin's website describes the first round entries as "not satisfying," but more

candidly, the committee compiled for the competition initially awarded the commission in the

first 1994 round of submissions to Italian architect Giorgio Grassi.[55] Grassi's submission was

considered reserved in comparison to the other submissions. His design called for a

"complet[ion] of the missing wing of the Neues Museum in the severe stereometric forms of

Italian rationalism."[56] He hoped to link the Neues Museum and the Altes Museum with an open

colonnade, and his new visitor center would be small and modest and "subordinate itself to the

existing historical buildings." The open colonnade appears as an attempt to tie together the

complex with neoclassical traditions. His submission seemed in line with the more conservative

Ruskin-esque preservation approach in his simple desire to fill in the blanks of the ruined Neues

Museum and be weary of overshadowing the history of the Island. By looks of his renderings

submitted in the competition, which includes indications of reconstructions in yellow, Grassi

planned to be very candid about what was new and what was old, a symbol of honesty in the

eyes of Berliner's as well as an emblem of a clear split between the past and the future (Figure

2.20). But, perhaps this proposal did not seem, in the eyes of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, to

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[55] "Masterplan Museuminsel, A projection into the Future," Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz, accessed February 26, 2016, https://www.museumsinsel-berlin.de/en/buildings/neues-museum/.

[56] Eissenhauer et al., eds., *Museum Island Berlin*, 39.

live-up to the monumental vision that they had in mind or achieve the seamless integration of the

old Museum Island into the future. Moreover, this design would not make the type of splash and

garner the type of recognition the institution was looking for and the decision on Grassi was

subsequently revoked by the institution, who preferred internationally acclaimed architect Frank

Gehry's entry which was placed forth.

Gehry's submitted design was much more invasive and included a New York

Guggenheim-like spiral staircase which brought a German institution in formal dialogue with the

U.S. one, a parallel that was not favorable at the time (Figure 2.21). [57] His design consisted of a

plethora of organic and deconstructivist forms which ultimately changed the entire profile of the

Island from neoclassical and orthogonal to modern and organic. This is apparent in his

renderings for the competition (Figure 2.20).[58] His plan for Museum Island would surely garner

the recognition the Staatliche Berlin sought but perhaps also some negative reactions from the

more conservative crowds. Gehry's design, and even just his name on the project, would have

surely transformed the Island into a place of internationally acclaimed architecture but only with

the sacrifice of the site's history. The fact alone that the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin revoked the

committee's decision on Grassi's more reserved plans for the Neues Museum shows an

underlying desire from the institution to make a splash with this project, to significantly change

or draw attention to the museum and the Island as a whole. Their preference for Gehry's invasive

design underlines this even more.

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[57] Ellis Woodman, "David Chipperfield Architects' Neues Museum Berlin," *Bdonline*, March 6, 2009, accessed February 26, 2016, http://www.bdonline.co.uk/david-chipperfield-architects-neues-museum-berlin/3135293.article.

[58] Eissenhauer et al., eds., *Museum Island Berlin*, 40.

It wasn't until a second round of submissions that David Chipperfield Architects, the runner-up in the first competition, was granted the commission for the Neues Museum's restoration in 1997. Chipperfield's first round submission proposed a complete reconstruction of the Neues Museum, a skywalk connection between the Neues Museum and the Altes museum, and a new building behind the Neues Museum. In contrast to his competitors' submitted renderings, Chipperfield's shows no indication of what is old or new in his design. It is unclear what his intervention on the island is (Figure 2.20). The choice of Chipperfield's proposal was a choice of continuity over difference by the institution. Additionally, his streamlining intention is already apparent in the black and white rectilinear lines and lack of indication of bricks or ornamentation of the buildings or of any contextual landscaping included in both Grassi and Gehry's.

After carrying out revisions on his first round submission, Chipperfield's design stuck much closer to the Stüler's Neues Museum's typology than his competitors while still architectonically reconfiguring some of the spaces (Figure 2.22).[59] Chipperfield's proposal seemed to fit the bill of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin of an exciting and note-worthy project for Museum Island with less chance of backlash from the more conservative public. His design would become a symbol in the public sphere of both an allegiance to their past and a bright future, a safe choice that would still garner the attention the institution sought. The attempt to strike this balance between safe and monumentally new may account in some way for the uneven distribution of emphasis on the old and new and the candidness through which they are presented by Chipperfield, in his decision to ennoble the ruin on the exterior but streamline and frame it on the interior.

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[59] Eissenhauer et al., eds., *Museum Island Berlin*, 41.

In terms of organization, David Chipperfield Architects would be the general coordinator of the entire project while different architectural firms would be responsible for work done on individual museums, Additionally, Chipperfield would be in charge of the largest endeavors: the restoration of the Neues Museum and the construction of the new visitor center.[60]

From the start the Neues Museum was the nucleus of the Master Plan. The competition was initially advertised to competitors as "the planning for the restoration of the Neues Museum and the construction of annexes and connection buildings to unite the archaeological collections of the Staatlichen Museen." This indicates that submissions were centered and focused on the restoration of the Neues Museum and the additional buildings on Museum Island would function to unite the Neues Museum with the rest of the Island.[61] Here, one can see a conscious effort to create a narrative by the Staaliche Museen zu Berlin from the start. At this point, other museums on Museum Island had already received minimal conservation treatments on the damages they suffered from the war and although the Master Plan stipulated that each of the buildings on the Island would undergo some renovation within the plan, the hallmark of the plan would be the Neues Museum. The Neues Museum's central role within the Master Plan placed the restoration of the museum in an urban scale as the plan would not only target the museums themselves but the urban fabric on which they stood, a 21.25 acre piece of land in one of the most affluent neighborhoods in Berlin.[62] The Staatliche Museen zu Berlin understood that to treat the museums individually would be to neglect the exponential power of the museums together, i.e. the Island

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[60] "Museuminsel Berlin: Master Plan Museuminsel," Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Preußischer Kulturbesitz, accessed February 26, 2016, http://www.smb.museum/en/museums-and-institutions/museumsinsel-berlin/master-plan-museumsinsel.html.

[61] Eissenhauer et al., eds., *Museum Island Berlin*, 38.

[62] "Museuminsel (Museum Island), Berlin," UNESCO, accessed February 26, 2016, http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/896.

as an entity and work of art in its own right. Hence, a narrative of exponential power for the

Staatliche Museen zu Berlin was being constructed from the start.

In that same year, this eminent Master Plan became one of the biggest components of the

Staatliche Museen zu Berlin's application for and awarding of the Island as a UNESCO World

Heritage Site.[63] On one level, this title was a way to secure funds for the rest of the Master Plan,

on another level this title would expand the reach of the already present relationship between

architecture and urban fabric beyond Berlin and to the rest of the World. The naming of the

Island as a UNESCO World Heritage Site may also be seen as related to the institution's desire

to drive visitor numbers, which will become even more evident in an examination of the

archeological promenade construction. UNESCO's rhetoric on the site emphasizes the Island as

a direct product of the Enlightenment and the subsequent formation of the museum as a social

phenomenon.[64] UNESCO describes the museums on the Island as embodiments of "the evolution

of approaches to museums design over the 20th century." Rhetoric like this embeds an even

greater amount of significance and responsibility in the Neues Museum than it already had,

expanding its reach and relevance from Germany to the entire world.

In other words, while the restoration of the Neues Museum began modestly and focused,

the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin really began in 1999 to monumentally employ the restoration

project, and subsequently the Master Plan, as a tool for international recognition, a staple of the

Island's original objectives. So what exactly was the narrative that the institution was attempting

to construct on the world's stage?

The Staatliche Museen zu Berlin published a book in 2012 titled *Museum Island Berlin.*

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[63] "Museuminsel Berlin: Master Plan Museuminsel."

[64] "Museuminsel (Museum Island), Berlin."

The book, a compilation of essays written about the island's history, importance, and future written by Staatliche Museen zu Berlin employees, museum professionals, and art historians, heavily emphasizes the Island's programmatic objective as a "German educational landscape." Not only is there an entire essay entitled, "Berlin's Museum Island—A German Educational Landscape," by Peter-Klaus Schuster, a former director general of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, but this phrase and idea is scattered throughout the 416-page book, an artifact in its own right. In the preface, the book describes the experience of Museum Island right when it had been formed: "the spirit and the body were able to wander from prehistory to antiquity and up to the art of the 9th century with encyclopedic broadness and scientific depth, just as father of the Enlightenment had envisioned."[65] Quite literally, as the Island situated itself in the very urban fabric of Berlin, implanted in a landmass in the center of the city, it aimed to construct this "German educational landscape" to be experienced by the German population and its visitors.

The book also mentions that the Island was designed to serve a purpose of international public relations for Germany. It was in the context of the after-math of the Wars of Liberation and the defeat of Napoleon, that the progressive king, Friedrich Wilhelm III, looked to shift the Prussian state from a military state to a cultural one in the eyes of the world.[66] Museum Island served this purpose through its internationally significant collections which attracted international visitors. More subtly, the Island's formal resemblance to the ancient Roman Forum conveyed a message of world power and dominance. One essay describes the Island when it was formed as "a veritable temple city of art and culture."[67] Arguably, this international relevance is

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[65] Eissenhauer et al., eds., *Museum Island Berlin*, 7

[66] "About us: History of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin."

[67] Eissenhauer et al., eds., *Museum Island Berlin*, 14.

still a major objective for the institution, with the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin claiming its status today to be of "world-class."[68] From its origins to the present-day, Museum Island, and the Neues Museum within it, has been rhetorically situated in larger urban and international scales. It is not surprising that the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin sought to reconstruct and reemphasize this educational landscape narrative in the Master Plan. One way in which they did so was in the construction of the Archeological Promenade.

IV.   Archeological Promenade

The Archeological Promenade takes the notion of a German educational landscape to the extreme. The promenade was created in 1988, under the leadership of David Chipperfield after he was awarded the commission for the Neues Museum in collaboration with the Museum Island Planning Group. The Museum Island Planning Group wanted to recreate the connecting structures, above-ground colonnades, that had been lost in the bombings, in order to preserve the "fundamental character of the ensemble as a group of solitary buildings with varying times of origin," the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin book describes (Figure 2.23). But the institution and Chipperfield took this a step further than the original above-ground colonnade by designing a comprehensive Archeological Promenade that would link the Altes Museum, Neues Museum, Pergamonmuseum, and Bode-Museum through one below-ground walkway in that order.[69]

The Staatliche Museen zu Berlin found unifying the island to be an essential element in the restoration from the start of this process when they announced their competition as "the

[68] Eissenhauer et al., eds., *Museum Island Berlin*, 7.

[69] Eissenhauer et al., eds., *Museum Island Berlin*, 42.

planning for the restoration of the Neues Museum and the construction of annexes and connection buildings to unite the archaeological collections of the Staatliche Museen."[70] The promenade, which is still being constructed in stages with the renovations of the individual museums, is described by the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin as uniting the island spatially as well as thematically. With the retention of the original individual museum entrances, the Archeological Promenade would be "an additional service for visitors that links the collections not only functionally but also in terms of content."[71] The Staatliche Museen zu Berlin make the argument in their book that the Archeological Promenade is a non-invasive method of connection the museums as opposed to the skywalks included in Chipperfield's competition submission which would have meant interventions in the monuments themselves.[72] But this explanation does not address the question of why the institution found this unification of the museums on the island so essential in the first place.

On one level, this Archeological Promenade would construct a didactic and pedagogical narrative in space for the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin even further than the walls of the Neues Museum. In this context, one might wonder why the group chose the word "archeological" to describe it—is this a reference to the objects encountered within the museum, many of which found in German archeological excavations throughout history, or a description of the procession itself, a discovery-filled dig beneath the Island's landscape. Either way, this is another instance of scientific jargon being used to make a very subjective choice appear more objective.

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[70] Eissenhauer et al., eds., *Museum Island Berlin*, 38.

[71] Eissenhauer et al., eds., *Museum Island Berlin*, 43.

[72] Eissenhauer et al., eds., *Museum Island Berlin*, 43.

Although Chipperfield's restoration of the Neues Museum framed the ruin, making it more resolved and digestible for the modern visitor, the Archeological Promenade would construct the visitors' experience of the Island even further. The experience of the cultural objects within the museums and the experience of the history, the War, are collapsed into one strictly planned experience.

Existing only on the basement level of all the museum's, freed of all other uses according to the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, the Archeological Promenade will not pass through any actual galleries themselves, but rather will serve as a tunnel between each of the museums. As the island digs itself deeper and deeper into the urban fabric of Berlin, the institution's goal of creating an immersive educational landscape and experience is even further achieved. Moreover, the construction of this Archeological Promenade would serve to even further carve out a significant space in the urban fabric of Berlin. In doing so, the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin would refashion the restoration of just one building into a restoration of the city itself.

This desire to integrate into and dominate the existing urban fabric of Berlin is not entirely new. In the 1950's and 60's in West Berlin, the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin constructed the Kulturforum, a complex of modernist style cultural buildings (Figure 1.7). Internationally acclaimed architects such as Mies van der Rohe and Hans Scharoun were commissioned to design the buildings, which would come to house programs such as the Berliner Philharmonie, the Neue Nationalgalerie, and the Berlin State Library. The construction of the Kulturforum on the large plot of land just west of Potsdamer Platz, may be seen in this light as a similar ploy by the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin to construct a narrative in the very urban fabric of the city, perhaps one of recovery and perseverance in the aftermath of World War II. In both cases, the projects are situated on an urban scale as they carve out a space in the city's fabric. This urban

scale perhaps serves to make the projects' messages larger or deeper or more monumental. And if the message is one of rehabilitation of a city and its identity, doing so in a large sweeping motion, taking on more of the city at one time by targeting groups of buildings rather than individual buildings, would certainly give the feeling that they were covering more ground than they would be by taking it one building at a time.

The idea of an architectural promenade, pioneered by Le Corbusier, had been a central topic of modern architecture.[73] One can attribute this engagement with modern architectural language to the institution's preoccupation with turning the Neues Museum and Museum Island into a modern institution. Le Corbusier and his collaborator and cousin Pierre Jeanneret described the architectural promenade and its importance in 1937:

> You enter: the architectural spectacle at once offers itself to the eye. You follow and itinerary and the perspectives develop with great variety, developing a play of light on the walls of making pools of shadow.[74]

With this in mind, it would seem that The Staatliche Museen Berlin and Chipperfield were hoping to achieve a similarly strict itinerary of staged spectacle in the Neues Museum as Le Corbusier's description of the promenade explains. Their Archeological Promenade assumes a guidable and easily manipulated viewer who would act essentially as the architecture's puppet.

The Staatliche Museen zu Berlin was aware that Museum Island was already a major tourist destination in the city. For example, the Pergamon Museum, just steps away from the Neues Museum, draws 850,000 visitors per year, more than any other museum in Germany.[75] In

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[73] Flora Samuel, *Le Corbusier and the Architectural Promenade* (Brikhäuser, 2010).

[74] Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret, translated by T.Benton, *The Villas of Le Corbusier 1920-1930* (London: Yale, 1987), 4.

[75] "Museum Island."

light of this, one cannot discount the institution's awareness of the Neues Museum's touristic and

economic potential and these potentials' influence on the Master Plan. With this in mind, it is

clear that the Master Plan has elements that are geared towards driving up visitor numbers in

their preoccupation with "experience." Scholar Barbara Kirchenblatt-Gimblet writes about

modern museums' recent conscious shift in focus from their artifacts to "experience." She points

out that today museums are convinced that visitors are "no longer interested in the quiet

contemplation of objects in a cathedral of culture. They want to have an 'experience,'"[76] Put in

this context, not only would the addition of the promenade to Museum Island serve to unify the

island into one entity, it would contribute to the visitor experience as the promenade would guide

the visitor through the museums with ease. The Staatliche Museen zu Berlin states on their

website that the idea behind the promenade was that the visitor could experience the collections

as "a spatial continuum,"[77] an homage to historic chronology, but in reality this promenade has

little to do with historic integrity and more to do with visitor experience and numbers.

Even clearer in this drive to spike visitor numbers, Chipperfield planned to design a

modern visitor center, which is currently under construction, in an empty plot of land between

the Neues Museum and the Kupfergarben Canal. In examining some of the Master Plan's

choices it is clear that this project is not entirely about preserving the memory of Museum Island

in the way the 19th and 20th century Prussian Kings and architects envisioned it, but is also

concerned with the refashioning of the museum in a modern context, conveying a loud message

of recovery and perseverance and simultaneously driving visitor numbers.

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[76] Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "Destination Museum," in *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums, and Heritage* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

[77]"New Entrance Building, Museum Island," *El Croquis* 120 (2013): 94.

V.   Conclusion

The Archeological Promenade is the last piece of evidence in the narrative memory that the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, with the help of David Chipperfield, sought to construct through the restoration of the Neues Museum and the island on which it stood, Museum Island. Drawing from Le Corbusier's idea of an architectural promenade as a physical experience unfolding in space, through spatial narrative, the architect and institution actively construct a context for memory and make a place for Germany within a larger world narrative. Despite the shrouding of the restoration in scientific language, the restoration was apparently quite subjective. Although Chipperfield ennobled the ruin in some sections, he more often than not streamlined and framed the ruin within the museum, presenting the viewer with a resolved history, more easily digestible for the modern, everyday, and often non-German consumer. Chipperfield managed to maintain the narrational spine of the Neues Museum, a cultural history of the world which placed Berlin at the epicenter, emphasized even further by the construction of the Archeological Promenade through the island.

Chipperfield's streamlined treatment of the ruin utilized it for institutional purposes, taking Berlin's complex emblem of the ruin which had been produced by the fall of the Wall and reducing it to its narrative and didactic properties. In other words, Chipperfield and the Staatliche Museen Berlin resolve the ruin in the Neues Museum and thereby the memory which it presents. This case study points us to the fact that designing and constructing memory is often not an objective or unbiased matter, but rather bound with ulterior motives, reminding us that the narrative, history, and memory we are presented with is often not the only one.

Chapter Two

New as Ruin

I.   Introduction

The Jewish Museum in Berlin appears as a broken distorted line on the landscape. The diagonals created by the zinc sheets give the building an appearance of collapsing into the ground, subsumed by the city. The at once very cold and ominous zinc-clad structure, turns sad and pitiful upon discovery of the gashes in its skin. The building looks wounded or scarred as slits cut through its façade, a structure slashed to the verge of crumbling down. The interior is filled with sharp corners, titling floors, and cold empty voids. The visitor experiences this space very differently than they would a Classical or Baroque building. There is no feeling of flow or glide, no moments of awe or content, but rather it is an arduous task, a disturbing one. He or she must actively, both physically and emotionally, work their way through the discombobulated structure. The building reads as ruin.

The Jewish Museum cuts quite literally with its zinc-clad façade and zig-zag shape, into the urban fabric of the city (Figure 3.1). The museum is composed of two different structures: an old Baroque U-shaped building and an angular line-shaped extension. The exterior of the extension building is zinc-clad and shines brightly in contrast to its neighboring Old Building (a title which the institution itself uses) to the north and neighboring concrete tower to the south. Standing amidst a late nineteenth-century tenement building and a 1980's Internationale

Bauausstellung residential and office building, and its Baroque neighbor, the extension appears

at odds with its environment (Figure 3.2).[78]

Upon closer examination, one can see that the façade is composed of many sheets of zinc.

The vertical edges of each of the sheets, which are clearly articulated, are at right angles to the

street, but the horizontal lines are off-set and run across the façade more diagonally, giving the

structure a slanted feeling. Diagonal slashes litter the façade, literally cutting away the zinc

cladding (Figure 3.3). These slashes, which are lined by the nails fastening the metal, are the

windows and light slits one finds on the interior of the building. The phenomenally randomly

placed windows and light slits show no indication of what the inside of the structure looks like,

but they are not arbitrary at all—like much of the formal elements in the Jewish Museum they

are derived from a very direct symbolic meaning.

From the very first announcement Libeskind's design was pegged as too overtly symbolic

of Judaism and the Holocaust by those who were committed to the implementation of a

connected yet separate extension of the Berlin Museum that would house the Jewish Collection

amongst other collections. In other words, those who did not want it to be an outright Jewish

Museum were uncomfortable with Libeskind's inscription of Jewish identity in the design.

The Jewish Museum Berlin was opened to the public in 2001. Berliners flocked to the

building, visited by nearly 350,000 people even when empty, establishing it as a landmark right

away.[79] The reactions from the press and the architectural community likewise were more

interested in the building itself than the exhibitions within, often commenting on how the

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[78] Jan Bitter, *Daniel Libeskind: Jewish Museum Berlin: Museum Building Guides* (Barcelona: Ediciones Poligrafa, 2011).

[79] Steven Erlanger, "A Memory-Strewn Celebration of Germany's Jews," *New York Times*, September 10, 2001.

architecture seemed to bury the objects exhibited within the museum. In an article published by

the New York Times about the opening of the museum in 2001, the very first line explains just

that:

> The tortured history of the life and destruction of Germany's Jews was on display
> tonight, as prominent politicians and cultural figures turned out for the opening of
> a new museum, in a building so strongly symbolic and emotionally disorienting as
> to overshadow the exhibit it houses.[80]

Criticisms of the Jewish Museum would continue to point out the uneven relationship between

the architecture and the curatorial approach (Figure 3.4). In a more recent review of the building,

Howard Jacobson describes some visitors' reactions and his own opinion saying,

> Some admirers of this building wished it had been its own museum and not an
> exhibition space. I agree with them. This is no reflection on the permanent
> collection, which is inventively, not to say turbulently, displayed. In that
> desperately interactive manner which is now de rigueur in all museums, it tells of
> the deep and tragic relatedness of Jews to German culture. But it's hard to be
> convinced that it enjoys any genuine rapport with the building.[81]

While the museum may have dropped the ball on the curatorial approach, this shift of the

museum's focus from the objects which lies within the building to the building's architecture

itself is not surprising: it falls in line with the theoretical reversal that Libeskind strived for of the

line to the space in between. In an attempt to render Jewish identity through architecture,

Libeskind decides to shift the emphasis of the museums from objects to the structure itself, and

in particular the space within. In doing so he reverses the role of the void from its usual

definition of something completely empty, devoid of meaningfulness, to something meaty and

significant. What is not there becomes more important than what is—a comment on the

significant portion of the Jewish community lost in the Holocaust, which Libeskind has

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[80] Erlanger, "A Memory-Strewn Celebration of Germany's Jews."

[81] Howard Jacobson, "An Afterthought of Violence," *The Guardian,* October 11, 2007.

discussed, as well as perhaps on Jewish faith. But on an even deeper level, through this reversal, Libeskind comments on history itself, asserting that the memory of a traumatic event may be recreated through the space within a structure. And if not that, a lost space through which a history or memory may be remembered or recreated, then what is a ruin? It is in this reversal that, not only through formal elements, but through conceptual ones, Libeskind constructs the new as ruin.

This chapter will first take a look at Daniel Libeskind's approach to deconstruction and how deconstructivist architecture resonates with memory, history, and the ruin. After a more in depth formal analysis of the Jewish Museum and Libeskind's design gestures and theoretical approach to the architecture, it will become clear that in this building Libeskind constructs the new as ruin. An interesting comparison to Chipperfield's anti-theoretical approach in the restoration of the Neues Museum, these two buildings both use the ruin in post-Wall Berlin constructions of memory in quite different ways.

II.   History of the Jewish Museum

The history of the Jewish Museum offers an understanding of the ambitions and expectations of the different parties involved in this architectural construction of memory. A previous Jewish Museum in Berlin, established in 1933 in the central neighborhood of Mitte, was shut down by the Nazi state in 1938 (Figure 3.5).[82] Mitte, specifically the street on which the Jewish Museum resided, Oranienburger Straße, was known in the 19th and 20th centuries as the

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[82] "Jüdisches Museum Berlin: Zwei Jahrtausende Duetsch-Jüdische Geschichte," (Berlin: Stiftung Jüdisches Museum Berlin), 1, accessed April 8, 2016, http://www.jmberlin.de/main/EN/Pdfs-en/About-the-Museum/History_Museum/Museumsgeschichte_EN.pdf.

main Jewish area of the city, home to a few Jewish schools and the Neue Synagogue, which was destroyed by bombs in the war and has since been restored.[83] In the years directly following the war, discussions of reopening or building a new Jewish museum were sparse in a Berlin that was still cleaning up the rubble and a Jewish community that was still coping with loss. When the time would come to build a new space for Jewish history and identity, it would not be built in the historical Jewish section of the city, but rather the architect would inscribe all of Berlin's geography into the building itself that would reside is completely different part of town.

In 1962, a year after the erection of the Wall, an interest in bearing witness to the past seemed to spark in the West. Concurrent with the establishment of the Berlin Museum, a museum dedicated to the history of Berlin at large, there was also a strong desire to account for Berlin's German-Jewish history. The Berlin Museum was opened in the Kammergericht, the former Supreme Court building, on Lindenstaße. The placement of the Berlin Museum in the home of the highest state court shows a desire to ground historical museums of this sort in the past and make a connection to Berlin's roots. Other museums of this type in Berlin chose to do the same, such as the Deutsches Historisches Museum in the former Zeughaus (Armory). This tendency makes the fact that the Jewish Museum would not solely upcycle an old historic building in Berlin all the more significant, perhaps a refusal to cling onto the past and a desire to look to the future. Nonetheless, the Jewish Museum would use the Kammergericht, which they fittingly refer to as "The Old Building," to ground themselves to history in some way.

In 1971 the Berlin Museum hosted an exhibition titled "Achievement and Destiny" celebrating the 300th anniversary of the Jewish Community of Berlin. It was in this moment that

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[83] "History," Stiftung Neue Synagoge Berlin – Centrum Judaicum, accessed April 15, 2016, http://www.centrumjudaicum.de/en/geschichte/.

the board of the Jewish Community of Berlin, the Berlin Museum, and the Senate of Berlin came

together to discuss a separate museum in Berlin dedicated to German-Jewish history. The

"Society for a Jewish Museum" was formed by these three groups for this task in 1976.[84]

From the very beginning there was interest in using ruined architecture—in the most

basic sense of the word as the remaining pieces of something that was destroyed.[85] The original

plan for the new Jewish History museum was to reconstruct the Ephraim Palais, a Baroque style

palace once belonging to the Court Jew Veitel Heine Ephraim (Figure 3.6). This Palace, once in

East Berlin, had been dismantled in 1936 to make way for a street's extension and its façade

now, in 1976, was stored in West Berlin just across the street from the Berlin Museum. During

this time, the Society began to accumulate a collection for the eminent Jewish Museum. This

reconstruction of the Ephraim Palais plan was later nixed in 1981 by the Berlin Senate, deciding

instead to return the façade to East Berlin in an exchange of goods of sorts.[86] Nonetheless, this

initial idea to use a previously dismantled building for the Jewish Museum exhibits an early

interest in the ruin as visual language in the new Jewish Museum, perhaps as a way to inscribe

history and memory in the site.

Instead of the reconstruction, in 1988, a year before the fall of the Wall, the West Berlin

Senate announced a competition for the design of the new museum for Jewish History.

Interestingly, the competition called for an "extension of the Berlin Museum with a Jewish

Museum Department," rather than for a Jewish Museum in its own right.[87] The participating

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[84] "Jüdisches Museum Berlin: Zwei Jahrtausende Duetsch-Jüdische Geschichte," 1.

[85] "Ruin," Merriam Webster, accessed April 8, 2016, http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ruin.

[86] "Jüdisches Museum Berlin: Zwei Jahrtausende Duetsch-Jüdische Geschichte," 8.

[87] "Jüdisches Museum Berlin: Zwei Jahrtausende Duetsch-Jüdische Geschichte," 3.

parties agreed that the new Jewish Museum would be an autonomous yet connected part of the

Berlin Museum, emphasized by its prospective placement as an extension to the Berlin Museum

housed in the Kammergericht. But, the new extension would not be dedicated solely to the

Jewish collection, rather it would also house the History of Theatre department and the coin

collection. This concept, referred to by the participating parties as the "integrative concept,"

stipulated that the Berlin museum and the new Jewish Museum integrate their collections yet

afford the Jewish Museum autonomy. If this sounds murky and contradictory, that's because it

was. Due to its vagueness, the term triggered interpretative conflicts. Even the Jewish Museum

itself describes this "integrative concept" on its website as having contained "many vague

phrases and compromise formulae concerning…the question of the organizational independence

of the Jewish Museum in the Berlin Museum."[88]

This element of the Jewish Museum's narrative illuminates the many ways in which the

Senate and its supporting parties conceived of Jewish history and its place in Berlin at the time.

In other words, the debate about the position and independence of the Jewish Museum in Berlin

was in reality a debate over the position and autonomy of Jews and Jewish identity in Berlin—

were they an extension to Berlin or autonomous sect of it. This "integrative concept" conceived

of the Jewish Museum as nothing more than an extra vestige to the already established Berlin

Museum, an asterix to Berlin's history, not only dedicated to Jewish history, but a space for other

over flow topics such as the coin collection. This conception situated Jewish history almost in the

manner of a ghetto, placed in a separate and isolated area on the outside of the city. On the other

hand, if one is to understand the extension plan as conceiving of Jewish identity as a vestige to

that of Berlin's, one may also understand it as a prosthesis of sorts, a new limb to replace one

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[88] "Jüdisches Museum Berlin: Zwei Jahrtausende Duetsch-Jüdische Geschichte," 4.

that has been lost. This was one of the most fundamental functions for the Jewish Museum: to

somehow fill the gap in Jewish identity that had been left by the Holocaust. In this sense, the

situating of the Jewish Museum as an extension to the Berlin Museum worked well. In the end,

as a prosthesis does, the Jewish Museum would become more important and essential to the

whole of Berlin and eventually would take over the Old Building for its own purposes.[89]

In this plan to make the Jewish Museum an extension to the Berlin Museum, the initial

interest in using the ruined façade of the Ephraim Palace fell to the wayward. In a larger sense,

the prospect of using the project as a way to mark Jewish identity through architecture was

floundering, that is until the fate of the Jewish Museum fell into the hands of Amnon Barzel,

newly appointed "Head of the Jewish Department," who took advantage of the loose

interpretability of the "integrative concept" by deciding to do away with the murkiness of the

project and establish a fully formed and autonomous Jewish Museum. Barzel's push for an

autonomous Jewish Museum led to his eventual resignation and the Senate's asking of former

US Treasury Secretary, Berlin-born W. Michael Blumenthal. Blumenthal followed in Barzel's

footsteps, eventually being the one to establish the Jewish Museum as an autonomous museum,

becoming its new Director in the process.[90] This push and pull between an extension for

overflow versus a dedicated museum in a way reflects the difficulty in attempting to represent

Jewish history and identity in Berlin. The question was if Jewish history deserves its own

separate space, separate narrative, separate voice, or if separation reinforced the segregation and

exile from society the Jews have so arduously attempted to overcome.

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[89] "Jüdisches Museum Berlin: Zwei Jahrtausende Duetsch-Jüdische Geschichte," 7.

[90] "Jüdisches Museum Berlin: Zwei Jahrtausende Duetsch-Jüdische Geschichte," 7.

A museum in its own right, rather than a small section of an extension shared with other departments, the Society for the Jewish Museum needed an architecturally significant building to house it. Josef Paul Kleihues led the committee which was in charge of choosing the architect for the project. Kleihues, a notable German architect at the time, was largely interested in re-inscribing traditional forms into new architectures. His *Block 270* in Berlin, designed in 1971, was a crucial work that re-established the closed-block plan of Berlin's streets after the war (Figure 3.7).[91] Out of 165 entries submitted for the competition, Daniel Libeskind's design, titled "Between the Lines," was chosen in 1989 by the committee. It was just a few months after this that the Wall fell.[92]

At the time of the competition, Daniel Libeskind was living in the United States. He came from a tradition of architects who sought to completely reimagine the way we think about architecture. His name was connected to the deconstructivist architecture movement, having worked with architects such as Richard Meir and Peter Eisenman and participated in MOMA's monumental exhibition *Deconstructivist Architecture*. Born in Poland, he and his family immigrated first to Israel in 1957 and then to America in 1959, eventually settling in the Bronx, New York. After studying music in Israel and New York he decided to become an architect, studying at Cooper Union in New York City with architects like John Hejduk who were profoundly interested in form and representation in architecture. Libeskind did his post-graduate work in the history and theory of architecture at the University of Essex in England and in 1988 he was one of seven architects exhibited in a MOMA exhibition, *Deconstructivist Architecture*,

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[91] "Residential Block, Block 270, Vinetaplatz Berlin," Kleihues + Kleihues, accessed April 8, 2016, http://www.kleihues.com/index.php?aid=10&lang=en.

[92] "Jüdisches Museum Berlin: Zwei Jahrtausende Duetsch-Jüdische Geschichte," 3.

which served to establish him as an acclaimed international architect. After winning the commission for the Jewish Museum, about the reach the peak of his career, Libeskind picked up his family and moved to Berlin to dive into the project. His role in the deconstructivist architecture movement is important in understanding the Jewish Museum's architecture as a ruin.[93]

Prior to the Jewish Museum Berlin, Libeskind was largely known for his drawings, such as *Micromegas* (Figure 3.8) or *Chamber Works* (Figure 3.9).[94] These works were formal explorations for Libeskind in which his fascination with the line as both a geometrical and representational form began to develop as he used axonometric practice to re-conceptualize a sensibility of space.[95] His in-depth studies of the line in two dimensions in these drawings would come to influence Libeskind's design gestures in the Jewish Museum in three dimensions and therefore it will be equally important to examine these early drawings in the analysis of the building.

When the wall came down just a few months after Libeskind's design was chosen, and the politics so jarringly shifted in Berlin, a debate arose in the Senate of whether to go through with the project for the Jewish Museum. The debate was centered around the question of whether or not the $68 million dollars to be spent on the Jewish Museum would be better spent in another way in the face of this political shift, perhaps on schools and apartments with the influx of East European Jews after the fall of the Wall. City leaders wondered whether or not two dedicated

[93] "Daniel Libeskind," Studio Libeskind, accessed April 8, 2016, http://libeskind.com/people/daniel-libeskind/.

[94] Donald L. Bates, "A Conversation Between the Lines with Daniel Libeskind," *El Croquis* 80, *Daniel Libeskind 1989-1996* (1996): 21.

[95] José Luis González Cobelo, "Architecture and its Double: Idea and Reality in the Work of Daniel Libeskind," *El Croquis* 80, *Daniel Libeskind 1989-1996* (1996): 33.

centers to Jewish Culture were necessary in the city, particularly in the aftermath of the

expensive restoration of the Neue Synagoge on Oranienburger Staße. This second question of

course upset a big fraction of the population as it brought up the issue of city's attitude towards

Jews and the Holocaust.[96] This debate brings up the often forgotten economic nature of building

projects as the different parties in the city grappled with the question how much money should be

spent on the construction of a memory and how many constructions of that memory does one

city need. It is questions like these that point to the social, political, and economic issues that

inevitably lie beneath an architectural construction of memory.

In 1991 the Berlin Senate decided to proceed with the project, but the unification of

Berlin's institutions after the fall of the Wall posed further hurdles for the Jewish Museum's

realization. With the combination of East and West came the unification of their musicological

institutions and their collections; the West-Berlin Berlin Museum and the East-Berlin Märkishes

Museum combined to become the City Museum Foundation. In this centralization of collections,

the Jewish collection went from being a rather large portion of West Berlin's holdings to a

comparably smaller portion of a combined East and West holdings. The Jewish Museum's

exhibition space was threatened as it was forced to fight for attention with the newly acquired or

returned collections.

Moreover, in this fight to be relevant in this new situation, proponents of the museum

began to inscribe this narrative of unification into the architecture. Daniel Libeskind, for

example, announced that his project anticipated a unified Berlin.[97] Evidently, unification had

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[96] John Tagliabue, "Jewish Wing for Berlin Museum in Jeopardy," *New York Times,* August 7, 1991.

[97] Daniel Libeskind, "Between the Lines: Extension to the Berlin Museum, with the Jewish Museum," *Assemblage* 12 (Aug., 1990): 21.

proposed a shift in focus for the Jewish Museum: should the museum be about Jews or Jews in

unified Berlin? In a larger sense, this moment dredged up questions of how Jews and Jewish

identity would figure into the imminent unified Berlin. In the end, those proponents of the Jewish

Museum Berlin persevered and on the anniversary of Kristallnacht in November 1992, they laid

the foundation stone of Daniel Libeskind's Jewish Museum.[98]

III.   Deconstruction & Libeskind

It is important to lay out the basic programmatic function of deconstruction in

architecture in order to understand the design gestures within the Jewish Museum and the

statement it aims to make in Berlin. In realizing that Libeskind was not just arbitrarily distorting

this building, but rather deliberately torturing pure forms both geometrically and conceptually

into a ruin, one can really understand the statement that he was making about the ability of

architecture to evoke an experiential memory through impurities and the pleasures of unease.

Deconstruction was a term initially founded and defined by the French philosopher,

Jacques Derrida as "a way of criticizing not only both literary and philosophical texts but also

political institutions."[99] Beyond its critical use, in essence, Derridean deconstruction in the field

of philosophy was focused on rethinking the difference that divides self-consciousness and

sought to prevent violence and promote justice.[100] The term deconstruction would go viral

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[98] "Jüdisches Museum Berlin: Zwei Jahrtausende Duetsch-Jüdische Geschichte," 3.

[99] "Jacques Derrida," Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, last modified March 19, 2014, accessed April 4, 2016, http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/derrida/.

[100] "Jacques Derrida."

throughout other fields such as literary criticism and art theory, but most importantly it would

take a strong hold in architectural theory.[101]

While Peter Eisenman's first houses designed in the late 60s and early 70s are considered

by some historians as some of the first deconstructive buildings in essence, the Parc de la Villette

competition in Paris in 1982 was the first large scale forum for deconstructivist architecture.

Specifically, Bernard Tschumi's winning entry in the competition, on which he collaborated with

Jacques Derrida and Peter Eisenman, brought forth questions of movement, time, and events in

architectural design. Their drawings for the competition exhibited an unprecedented separation

and breakdown of the different ordering systems of the park: lines, grid, and programmatic space

(Figure 3.10). These architects were beginning to rethink architecture, breaking down structures

and the discipline itself, thereby creating an ambiguity in the field.

An exhibition in 1988 held at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City would

theatrically frame this movement in architecture, bringing forth the potential of deconstruction

for architectural practice. The exhibition established deconstruction as a formal architectural

language in the field as well as the architects who experimented with it and included Libeskind's

1987 *City Edge Competition* in Berlin (Figure 3.11). The show, titled *Deconstructivist*

Architecture, was organized by architect and director of the Department of Architecture, Phillip

Johnson, in association with Mark Wigley, at the time a visiting professor at Princeton

University. It was the third architectural exhibition at MOMA dedicated to compiling the latest

developments in architecture, effectively claiming a style as the future of the world's

architecture.[102] Johnson and Wigley claim at the forefront of the exhibition catalog that the

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[101] "Jacques Derrida."

[102] The Museum of Modern Art, "Fact Sheet: Deconstructivist Architecture," March 1988, accessed April 8, 2016, https://www.moma.org/momaorg/shared/pdfs/docs/press_archives/6526/releases/MOMA_1988_0029_29.pdf?2010.

Deconstructivist Architecture exhibition did not share the grand ambitions of the 1932 *Modern Architecture* exhibition at MOMA of claiming the future of architecture, but rather that "it is a confluence of a few important architects work of the years since 1980 that shows a similar approach with very similar forms as an outcome."[103] Firstly, this preface to the catalog does not acknowledge the central positon of MOMA as an institution of cultural production. Secondly, the claim seems to deny any agency, ignoring the fact that the architects involved with deconstruction were very actively breaking down, rethinking, and reordering the field of architecture as we knew it in the 1980's.

MOMA selected projects that shared a commitment in exploring form beyond questions of function, playing with the pleasures of visual unease.[104][105] The *Deconstructivist Architecture* catalog compares a "pure," "perfect," "singular," and "clear" highly compositional image of a ball bearing with a "jagged," "deformed," "disquieting," and "dislocated" snap-shot image of a scrappy structure built into a mound of sand in the desert (Figure 3.12). Johnson points out that the deconstructivist phenomenon in architecture exists in the contrasts between these two images: the turn away from the conception that stability and order arises from geometric purity and towards the ability to disturb our thinking of form.[106] Libeskind's gestures in the Jewish Museum quite clearly attempt to disturb our thinking of form in his distortion of the line and his shift in focus to the void. This phenomenon, of stability and order arising from disturbed forms, relates directly to the use of the ruin as an architectural construction of memory—finding an

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[103] Johnson and Wigley, *Deconstructivist Architecture*, 7.

[104] Johnson and Wigley, *Deconstructivist Architecture,* 10.

[105] "Fact Sheet: Deconstructivist Architecture."

[106] Johnson and Wigley, *Deconstructivist Architecture,* 10.

ordered and stable memory through or within a disordered space. But this utilization of the

disorderliness of the ruin is a very different way to use the ruin from Chipperfield's way in the

Neues Museum.

The exhibition catalog clearly demonstrates how these architects appropriated the

principles of deconstruction to create a new visual language:

> A Deconstructive architect is therefore not one who dismantles buildings, but one
> who locates the inherent dilemmas within buildings. The deconstructive architect
> puts the pure forms of the architectural tradition on the couch and identifies the
> symptoms of a repressed impurity. The impurity is drawn to the surface by a
> combination of gentle coaxing and violet torture: the form is interrogated.[107]

Libeskind takes the pure forms of the architectural tradition, perhaps the most basic of

them, the line, and identifies the repressed impurity in it. In his interview in *El Croquis,*

Libeskind spends almost four pages discussing the inherent dilemmas in both the form

and concept of the line,

> The line is an eternal phenomenon and has a built-in mystery. Even geometrically,
> the idea of the line as the shortest distance between two points is itself a highly
> mystical metaphysical concept. For example… the contiguity of point A and point
> B. Between point A and point B you can insert another point, point C. The whole
> problem of a line opens up infinity and impossibility of grasping the sources of
> the line. In that sense there is always the possibility—certainly in architecture,
> that a new abysmal line is formed. Even if that line does not appear as part of the
> history of the line, but only as a point on the screen, a curvature of an oblique
> reference, it might in the long run become a 'line.'[108]

Here, Libeskind makes a direct connection between the line and the concept of time. He

understands the representational function of the very concrete concept of the line to be

metaphysical, dealing with abstract concepts such as time and space. He finds a fascinating

tension between the concreteness of a line between two points and the contiguity or infinitude of

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[107] Johnson and Wigley, *Deconstructivist Architecture,* 11.

[108] Bates, "A Conversation Between the Lines with Daniel Libeskind," 21.

all the points in between. To Libeskind, the line is an overwhelming representation of infinitude and possibility for metaphysical concepts like time and space—within it, at any location or at any time something new may happen or be formed.

In this we can see why Libeskind deconstructs the line in this building, why he slashes into the skin of it, why he makes it appear as if it is collapsing, why he slopes the floors inside of it. Libeskind uses a distortion of pure forms to deal with the ungraspable metaphysical concepts of time and history. We think we know exactly what a line is, the direct route from point A to point B. Likewise, we ascribe concrete definitions to metaphysical concepts like time and space and attempt to represent them through material objects. By completely rupturing our notion of the line, Libeskind calls to our attention the fragility of our conceptions not only of the line itself but of the concepts which we associate them with. By probing these forms, coaxing them and torturing them, he is able to not only bring out the repressed impurities within the forms, but within the concepts of time and history which they are representative of. It is within these ruined forms, these repressed impurities, these pleasures of unease that Libeskind and deconstructivist architects alike, believe one can evoke a memory through architecture.

IV.   Design Gestures

A closer look at the design gestures within the Jewish Museum Berlin will elucidate the way in which Libeskind sought to turn the museum and architecture inside out, re-inscribing Jewish identity into architectural space and memory into the void. The Star of David is the largest of these gestures in the Museum. Libeskind has on many occasions explained that he

drew inspiration from the Star of David for the plan of the museum.[109] But the plan's use of the

star goes beyond simply being an inspiration or acting as an applied icon; the building does not

appear as a typical two-overlaid-triangles Star of David. Instead, Libeskind opens up and unfolds

the star onto the site. He claims to do so very deliberately according to numbers and formulas

determined by distances between certain historical events in the city (Figure 3.13). The historical

events are all related to Jewish identity, but no where in the building or in supplemental literature

does Libeskind name the specific events. This instance reflects the certain element of myth-

making that Libeskind is undertaking in the Jewish Museum. With all of the literature that

surrounds this building in which Libeskind explains its inspiration, symbolism, and theory, one is

forced to question how much of it is genuinely factual and how much is just myth-making.

Nonetheless, even if one is to assume some of these statements, such as the distances derived

from the locations of Jewish historical events, are embellishments of the truth, that is not to say

that they detract from the building's meaning. The fact alone that Libeskind makes statements

like these inscribes the meaning in the building, regardless of whether or not the distances are

truly there. This is perhaps the beauty of a more theoretically designed construction of memory:

it does not depend on the material elements of the architecture.

Through this unfolding of the star, Libeskind inscribes history into place, using the Star

of David, the iconic emblem of Jewish identity, inscribing the star itself into the topography of

Berlin. Libeskind's inscription of the star into the city gives the symbol a new urban scale. The

symbol goes from a figurative emblem of the Jewish people to a very literal incising of those

people into the urban landscape of the city. The building thereby emerges from the Star and from

actual events, from space and time, from Jewish identity and history itself. Rather than

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[109] Daniel Libeskind, *Jewish Museum Berlin* (Berlin: Verlang der Kunst, 1999).

constructing the building or memory, out of stuff, historical material that somehow attempts to

hold the entire weight of Jewish identity and history within it, Libeskind instead makes a

statement about how to better construct a memory by deriving it from the metaphysical concepts

like time and space themselves.

In one of Libeskind's conceptual drawings for the Jewish Museum, the architect overlays

elevations and plan drawings of the building with columns of texts, axonometric renderings, and

the Star of David (Figure 3.14). Upon closer examination, the Star of David is not just made of

opaque lines, but of strips of the map of Berlin. Here we can see Libeskind literally inscribing

the geography of Berlin into Jewish Identity. In this drawing a dark handprint makes an imprint

in the top left hand corner, perhaps a further indication of the impression and inscription of

identity that Libeskind sought to accomplish.[110]

From the exterior, the building has very little in common with those surrounding it, a

choice Libeskind made very purposefully. Libeskind called this implementation of a completely

new architectural language a creation of a "Heterogeneous Order" with the site and its

surrounding buildings. Meaning, rather than leaning on one or another of the already existent

architectural styles on or near the site, tipping the scale in either which way, Libeskind

understood his choice as finding a certain type of harmony through accentuating difference. By

using a novel visual language in the already assorted space he creates a powerful statement and

strong delineation between old and new, past and future.[111] Libeskind's choice to visibly make

no connection on street level between the new building and the Baroque Old Building to which it

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[110] Daniel Libeskind, "Jewish Museum, Extension to the Berlin Museum with Jewish Museum Department," *El Croquis* 80, *Daniel Libeskind 1989-1996* (1996).

[111] Bernhard Schneider, *Daniel Libeskind. Jüdisches Museum Berlin,* (New York: Prestel, 1999), 27.

is an extension also emphasizes this clear line drawn between old and new. In producing more heterogeneity on the site and accentuating the Jewish Museum's difference from its surroundings, Libeskind represents the history of the position of Jews in society.

The zinc-cladding on the exterior of the building will eventually fade to matte, which is a factor Libeskind was surely aware of when he chose this material, perhaps intending for the museum to portray its age honestly as years went by. The rectangular sheets of zinc are clearly articulated. The vertical lines are perpendicular to the street but the horizontal lines run diagonally, giving the building an off-kilter feeling and the appearance that it is growing out of or falling into the ground. This effect challenges the viewer's notions of stability and order, and is disorienting before one has even entered the building.

Libeskind has said that he drew inspiration from Walter Benjamin's essay, "One-way Street." On one level, Libeskind is interested in the tensions within Benjamin's "One-way Street" which he defines as "inadequate ideology."[112] It is this type of tension, one that "spiritually affirms the permanent human tension polarized between the impossibility of the system and the impossibility of giving up the search for a higher order," that Libeskind is interested in probing in his architecture. On another level, Libeskind seems to be interested in the complexity of Benjamin's life. He describes Benjamin as one of the "great figures in the drama of Berlin who have acted as the bearers of an immense hope and anguish."[113] Benjamin's exile from Nazi Germany, which he spent all over Europe, his time spent in a French concentration camp, and his eventual suicide, all contribute to an overall tumultuous biography, one that is

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[112] "Walter Benjamin," Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, July 22, 2015, accessed April 22, 2016, http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/benjamin/#BioSke.

[113] "Walter Benjamin."

intertwined with Berlin and almost impossible to summate.[114] Libeskind most likely saw this

work as a representation of the tormented and expendable nature of Jewish life in the 1930's, a

memory which he was attempting to resurrect. That is perhaps why Libeskind is so drawn to

"One-way Street," which has been described as both a memorial to Holocaust victims of sorts

and as an autobiographical work.

The essay, a collection of fragments of writings by Benjamin between 1923 and 1926, is

not about one subject in particular. It is organized into small sections, "Stations of the Star," all

with starkly different titles such as "Breakfast Room" or "To the Public: Please Protect and

Preserve These New Plantings." It is difficult to know how to make sense of these seemingly

random snippets of writing. Susan Sontag understands them as autobiographical: "the only book

[of Benjamin's] of a discreetly autobiographical nature published in his lifetime…Reminiscences

of self are reminiscences of a place, and how he positions himself in it, navigates around it."[115] In

a theoretical sense, this reminiscence on the self as place is exactly what Libeskind attempts to

achieve in the Jewish Museum, to represent and navigate identity as in its spatial identity.

Furthermore, Libeskind is most interested in the modern experimentation with form that

Benjamin makes, quasi-constructivist as the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy describes it.[116]

Libeskind inscribes the framework of "One-way Street" into the building, putting the "Stations

of the Star" into the building in the continuous sequence of 60 sections along the zig-zag.[117]

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[114] "Walter Benjamin."

[115] Susan Sontag, introduction to *One-way Street and Other Writings* by Walter Benjamin, (New York: Penguin Classic, 2009), 9-10.

[116] "Walter Benjamin."

[117] Libeskind, "Jewish Museum, Extension to the Berlin Museum with Jewish Museum Department," 42.

Yet another way in which Libeskind attempts to inscribe Jewish identity into the architecture and the space of the museum exists in the fenestration. Libeskind derives the angles and lengths of the lines of the windows that scatter the exterior skin seemingly randomly from lines drawn on a map between the site of the Jewish Museum and the addresses of significant figures in Berlin's Jewish history, such as Mies van der Rohe, Heinrich Heine, and Walter Benjamin (Figure 3.3).[118] Here, the building becomes an index of absence. Libeskind engraves an international community of Jews into the building, turning the structure into a geographical symbol and rendering the intangible web of Jewish identity tangible. This is ever more pronounced in Libeskind's working elevations of the Jewish Museum, which, by including the fenestration, look more like maps than architectural elevations (Figure 3.15).

Turning our gaze from the street-level to above the building, the structure at first looks like a jagged lightning bolt, a monolithic zigzag (Figure 3.1). In fact, Libeskind conceived of the plan of the extension building as not one, but two intersecting lines (Figure 3.16). The first is the zig-zagging zinc structure that constitutes the museum space. The second is not a physical structure in its own right, but instead manifests itself in the spaces it intersects with the other line as five "voids": cavernous, un-heated, un-air-conditioned, concrete clad spaces inside the museum (Figure 3.17). Libeskind has described this second line as directly representative of "what has been lost and will never be recovered."[119] Libeskind thereby associates voids with loss but that is not to say that he conceives of the void as empty or vacant. On the contrary, he gives the void texture and meaning. In this second line, Libeskind attempts to give architectural shape to the void as a way to grapple with larger questions of history and how we remember it. Given

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[118] Bates, "A Conversation Between the Lines with Daniel Libeskind," 11.

[119] Bates, "A Conversation Between the Lines with Daniel Libeskind," 11.

the task of representing a cultural identity and history, Libeskind makes the statement that it is

just as important to represent what is not there as it is to represent what is. This is quite an

interesting statement to make through a museum, an institution devoted to the mission of

representing history through material objects.

In his *El Croquis* interview, Libeskind describes this reversal, or turn inside out, of the

museum's emphasis, the organization of architecture, and our conception of history:

> This is basically a summary of how the building works. It is not a collage or a
> collision or a simple dialectic, but a new type of organization which is organized
> around a center which is not, around what is not visible. And what is not visible is
> the richness of the Jewish heritage in Berlin, which is today reducible to archival
> and archeological material, since physically it has disappeared.[120]

Libeskind is very clear about the fact that he sought to construct an emblem of the lost and

invisible rather than focusing on the visible, existing, reducible material. His focus is on the void

rather than the solid elements of architecture. If ruins are what still remains of something that has

been destroyed, in this attempt to render tangible both the visible and the invisible Libeskind

constructs a ruin out of new materials, giving shape to that which was lost in the Jewish culture

and history. Libeskind's inspiration and conception of the void will be returned to more in depth

in later on.

The first void that the visitor encounters is the one which houses the passage from the

Old Building to the extension building, a cavernous staircase that leads one down to the lower

level. The visitor may only reach this passageway by first entering entering the Old Building.

The Old Building has a typical Baroque U-shaped floor plan, which has been rendered into a

square with the addition of a modern overhead covering above the courtyard (Figure 3.18). The

first floor of the museum therefore becomes an open space for convening. After receiving an

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[120] Libeskind, "Jewish Museum, Extension to the Berlin Museum with Jewish Museum Department," 45.

admission ticket and checking any coats or bags, the visitor proceeds down the cavernous void-staircase to the lower level (Figure 3.19). This lower level has a different floor plan than the above-ground open structure, almost constituting a "K"-shape with an extra limb in the middle (Figure 3.20). On this lower level, movement is organized into corridors, a much more claustrophobic experience than the first floor. The plan is composed of three straight axes named after three events in the history of German Jews: the Axis of Exile, the Axis of the Holocaust, and the Axis of Continuity. There is also an interactive multimedia room, the Rafael Roth Learning Center. This gesture of organizing the lower level exhibition space, the first one that visitors will encounter in the new building, reflects a desire by Libeskind to organize the history of German Jews and their identity very strictly around these events. This is his representation of what is there as opposed to what has been lost. But, once one enters these lower level exhibition corridors, the experience feels far from ordered and organized.

The procession down the cavernous staircase and into the organized axes of history is representative of the type of narrative Libeskind attempts to accomplish in the building, one which you must physically and emotionally enter, an immersive experience. The fragmented nature of the lines, the somewhat confusing organization, and the unclear architectural promenade speak to the distortion of the at-first organized narrative he is doing, taking what we thought was straightforward and resolved and rendering it perplexing. The first axis that one encounters after descending the staircase from the Old Building is also the longest: the Axis of Continuity (Figure 3.21). Libeskind conceptualizes this axis, the vertical line of the "K" that the other axes branch out of, as the continuation of the history of Berlin. It gradually ascends towards the main staircase of the building which leads one to the exhibition floors. The Axis of Exile, the top limb of the "K" leads one outside to the Garden of Exile. This is the only instance

that the under-ground structure leads to the outside world, doing so in a very oppressive manner as the corridor slopes upward and the ceiling height remains the same, an architectural representation of its theme of Exile.

The E.T.A Hoffmann dedicated Garden of Exile, a clear allusion to the Garden of Eden, is a 7 x 7 concrete columned square outside the building on street-level (Figure 3.22). The forty-nine columns are filled with earth and an irrigation system below the columns allows growth of Willow oak out the top of them. Libeskind describes this space as "the 'upside down' garden" which points to his desire to flip architecture on its head in this building, to reverse our conceptions of space and time. The Garden certainly does this as it tilts upward, contorting the visitors sense of gravity and perception. The space resembles in some ways a shrunken, slanted, gridded city of skyscrapers, a dystopia of sorts. The dedication of the to E.T.A Hoffman, is most likely a reference to the *unheimlich*, a German word often translated as the uncanny, meaning something strange yet familiar. Ernest Jentsch and Sigmund Freud identify E.T.A Hoffman, a Prussian Romantic author, artist, and composer, as masterfully using the uncanny in his writing, specifically in his story "The Sandman."[121] They argue over where exactly this uncanny notion emerges from in the story, but agree that something strangely uncertain yet familiar comes from the writing. Libeskind's dedication of the garden to Hoffman represents the *unheimlich* notion that the architect was attempting to have emerge in this building, specifically in this garden. That is, the feeling that something is strange yet familiar. This feeling supports the notion of the ruin in the building as visitors get the sensation that this building was meant to be here, has been here for years, although they know this is not the case.

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[121] Sigmund Freud, *The Uncanny* (London: Penguin Classics, 2003).

Libeskind also explains his quite literal and material representation of Jewish history. The forty-eight columns are filled with earth from Berlin to represent the year that the state of Israel was formed, 1948. Here, Libeskind's symbolic gestures expand beyond form to materiality. Again, with this very direct yet flipped symbolism—the earth of Berlin representing Israel and the earth of Jerusalem representing Berlin—Libeskind offers meaning and narrative and then subverts and questions it, rendering the space very complex. In this rendering of space complex, Libeskind also renders the history and memory which it represents complex as well. In this complexity, he believes, these often intangible concepts become tangible, perceivable, and legible. It is here, that the viewer will be able to experience the history and memories.

The Axis of the Holocaust, the middle limb of the "K," leads to the Holocaust Tower, which is perhaps the most disturbing space of the museum in its austerity (Figure 3.17). This bare concrete tower is the pentagonal structure, visible from the south exterior. Once one enters the space, letting the loud door close behind him or her, only one slit at the top of the tower dimly lights the cold, unheated space. This space is designed to render tangible the void in Schoenberg's opera *Moses und Aron*, an inspiration for the building that will be discussed in detail later on. This void, along with the five other ones throughout the building, are not just moments within the museum, they are the main design element of the building according to Libeskind,

> Absence therefore serves as a way of binding in depth, and in a totally different manner, the shared hopes of people. It is a conception which does not reduce the museum or architecture to a detached memorial or to a memorable detachment. A conception, rather, which reintegrates Jewish/Berlin History through the unhealable wound of faith…[122]

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[122] Libeskind, "Jewish Museum, Extension to the Berlin Museum with Jewish Museum Department," 45.

Here, Libeskind explains what he finds so interesting and important about the void. In his

torturing of the line, he found the impurity of it: it exists in a reduced and detached manner. He

finds absence to have more depth and rather than creating an object, a building, a memorial to a

memory or history, he designs a void to it. This way, the viewer is able to share and experience it

in a deeper, more immersive, less reduced, less resolved way than Chipperfield's.

V.   The Void

Following his formal investigations of the symbolic potential of the Star of David,

Libeskind treats the void as the second largest design gestures for the Jewish Museum. Libeskind

attempts to re-inscribe memory into the void rather than being descriptive about it and in doing

so makes a statement about the depth and gravity of metaphysical concepts like memory, time,

and space. His title for the project emphasizes how important the space within the building itself

is to his conception of it. The title, "Between the Lines," implies significance is to be found

within the "in-between" spaces. That is to say, importance and meaning manifests itself in

between and within the material elements of a building, within space itself.[123] This theory gives a

texture and meatiness to space. One can see this manifesting itself in the way in which he gives

shape to emptiness in the building, i.e. the voids. Libeskind often makes remarks about this

tension in representing the invisible, such as this one in his *El Croquis* interview:

> The new extension is conceived as an emblem wherein the invisible, the void, has
> made itself apparent as such. Void/invisible: these structural features have been
> gathered in the space of the city and laid bare in an architecture where the
> unnamed remains in the name that keeps still.[124]

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[123] Bernhard Schneider, *Daniel Libeskind. Jüdisches Museum Berlin,* (New York: Prestel, 1999), 36.

[124] Libeskind, "Jewish Museum, Extension to the Berlin Museum with Jewish Museum Department," 45.

Here, Libeskind explains his attempts to make architecture signify the unnamable in space. This struggle to represent the unnamable is quite clearly linked to the most unnamable event in Jewish History, the Holocaust.[125] In a bigger way, Libeskind also makes a point here about architecture in general, arguing a reversal of its focus from the wall and the concrete elements of a building to the voided spaces of it, a fundamental rethinking of the field of architecture that only a Deconstructivist architect could achieve.

So where exactly did Libeskind's interest in the void begin? Libeskind's early drawings such as his 1979 *Micromegas* series, named after a satirical story by Voltaire, show his interest not only in the line but in this notion of giving texture to space (Figure 3.8). *Micromegas* was a series of compositions in which Libeskind uses axonometric drawing as an exploratory exercise. Each composition has a descriptive name such as "Garden" or "Dream Calculus." Within these compositions, Libeskind produces an ordered chaos in which space is distorted—just when you think you can tell what you're looking at, a room with four walls for example, Libeskind turns it upside down or morphs it into something else. Neither the *Micromegas* images or the Jewish Museum have any degree of centrality, one is meant to roam both of them freely. The "permanent gestation" and "magmatic state" in these compositions mirror those in the Jewish Museum, as José Luis González Cobelo describes.[126] These exploratory drawings show Libeskind's attempt to give a texture and meatiness to space in the same manner as he did in the voids of the Jewish Museum.

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[125] Stanley Allen, "Libeskind's Practice of Laughter," Assemblage 12 (Aug., 1990): 20.

[126] Cobelo, "Architecture and its Double: Idea and Reality in the Work of Daniel Libeskind," 33.

For the Jewish Museum in particular, Libeskind found inspiration for the void in Arnold

Schoenberg's opera *Moses und Aron.* Schoenberg, an Austrian composer and painter, was moved

to write this opera in 1932 by the rise in anti-Semitism and by a specific anti-Semitic encounter

he had himself. The music is dark, disorienting, and dissonant. In particular, Libeskind was

fascinated by the incompleteness of the opera. In an essay about music and architecture,

Libeskind describes two levels at which this incompleteness exists in the opera. The first is the

more literal, the actual incomplete nature of the opera itself: "What interested me was the

incompleteness of the score, due to Schoenberg's exile from Berlin in those fatal years leading to

the Holocaust." Libeskind explains, more specifically, the fact that "the entire musical world

ground to halt…due to the deep structural faults revealed by the history of culture itself."[127] Here

we see history's ability to create something that does not exist, something that is lost or lacking,

i.e. a void, being far more important than its ability to create something that exists concretely.

This is in essence what Libeskind attempts to render tangible in the Jewish Museum.

The second level in which incompleteness comes into play in *Moses und Aron* is in the

plot of the opera itself. Libeskind becomes very interested in the paradox that Moses and Aron

explore in the revelation as a figurative form, which the architect also refers to as the relationship

between "the revealed and the unimaginable truth, and the spoken and mass-produced people's

truth."[128] Libeskind explains the dissonance of the music is representative of this conflict and

that for the majority of the opera, the music obliterates the text.[129] But, he points out the very last

moment in the opera when the music ceases and Moses is heard as extremely important:

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[127] Daniel Libeskind, "The Walls Are Alive," *The Gaurdian,* July 12, 2002.

[128] Libeskind, "Jewish Museum, Extension to the Berlin Museum with Jewish Museum Department," 41.

[129] Libeskind, "Jewish Museum, Extension to the Berlin Museum with Jewish Museum Department," 41.

> 'Oh word, you word that I lack,' is the last line. It is no longer sung but actually spoken. At the end of the opera, one can understand the word, because there is no music and the word is isolated and expressed in a shockingly naked and unmusical manner.[130]

In multiple essays and texts about the building by Libeskind, the architect uses the actual score of the opera to explain this moment, sometimes overlaying the text on top of the music in a visual representation of an opera of sorts. [131] In his essay in *El Croquis*, Libeskind places the sheet music on the same page as his discussion of the void and next to a list of names, many of which have the last name Berlin or Berliner (Figure 3.23).[132] This parallel to the names represents the constant connection to identity Libeskind makes in the building. By using the sheet music, Libeskind renders silence visible. One can see in the image of the score the empty space left by the pause. In his architecture, he renders this visible silence three dimensionally in space. The "aporia of Moses and Aron" as Libeskind calls it, an internal contradiction in the attempt to represent that which cannot be expressed through words and images, is what Libeskind attempts to construct architecturally of the Jewish Museum.[133]

Libeskind takes this element of incompleteness which he identifies in the actual unfinished nature of the opera due to history, in the essential paradox of the plot and its representation in the music itself, and architecturally reconstructs it in the voids of the museum (Figure 3.17):

> The "Memory Void" is the final chord in which the unwritten word of Schoenberg's Moses develops an unexpected resonance with its own silence - a silence that reflects back into Berlin's bustling development.

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[130] Daniel Libeskind, "The Walls Are Alive."

[131] Libeskind, "Between the Lines: Extension to the Berlin Museum, with the Jewish Museum."

[132] Libeskind, "Jewish Museum, Extension to the Berlin Museum with Jewish Museum Department," 42.

[133] Daniel Libeskind, "The Walls Are Alive."

Libeskind explains here not only that the void is a direct manifestation of the unwritten

word of Moses in the Opera, but also explains what exactly happens in the void. That is,

in the same way that there is a resonance found in the unwritten word silence and

incompleteness of the end of the opera, there is a similar deep significance found within

the acoustically hollow and bare silence and emptiness of the void.

   VI.   Conclusion

      Libeskind collapses form and concept in this building, he navigates between the two

fluidly—when he tortures a form, the line for example, he simultaneously tortures concepts.

His design was far more conceptual than the other entries in the competition as it "symbolically

inscribed the trauma of the Holocaust into the architecture," the Jewish Museum's website

explains.[134] Libeskind's design process was clearly to derive architecture from symbolism and

abstract representations rather than from the human or movement for example the way other

architects do. To this regard, Libeskind also did not derive his architecture from the building's

intended function, instead reconceiving what the program of the museum should be, constructing

an experience of the Holocaust rather than a presentation of Jewish culture through objects. This

type of experiential approach is directed towards a viewer who is more interested in recreating or

reliving an event, being immersed in it, rather than looking at it from the outside in. Here again

Libeskind turns our preconceived notions inside out, putting emphasis on the space within as

opposed to the walls which enclose and hold.

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[134] "Jüdisches Museum Berlin: Zwei Jahrtausende Duetsch-Jüdische Geschichte," 4.

It is in this reconfiguration of the emphasis of architecture to the void that Libeskind looks to other media for inspiration. Libeskind's constant referencing to sources outside of architecture such as music and literature reasserts the idea that architecture need not be bound by the confines of its own field and may be derived theoretically through symbolism.

Libeskind's profound idea on how to represent memory by designing the void, comes into collision with the curatorial approach of the museum. At the end of the Axis of Continuity is the Sackler Staircase which leads one to the Level 2 and Level 3, the exhibition levels. The exhibition levels, back above-ground, take the shape of the zig-zag structure seen from the street level. The curatorial approach on these levels, as well as in the corridors on the lower levels, is one of excess. The space is overloaded with objects, each one is described in depth, and tons of texts with stories of individuals line the walls. The effect is overwhelming, the viewer feels as if there is no way they can take in all of the information and they proceed to skim it all, connecting with very little. There is a huge disconnect between this reducible to objects strategy of representing memory and the designing the void strategy that Libeskind preaches about the architecture of the building.

When we think of a ruin we think of a structure that is destroyed, broken, collapsing, unstable, chipping, fragmented, dilapidated. But most of all, we think about what it used to be, what is no longer there. In the Jewish Museum, Libeskind does not ask the viewer to find identity and history in material objects. Instead, Libeskind asks the viewer to find it in what is not there. He distorts our once seemingly concrete concepts of pure forms like the line, that we so closely associate with and use to understand time and space, and thereby makes us question our pre-conceived notions of these metaphysical concepts. In these disoriented and impure in-between spaces, the voids, Libeskind evokes a memory. As Libeskind reverses the role of the

void, giving empty space shape and meaning, he places memory in what is not there as opposed

to what is, which is in essence what a ruin is, thereby constructing the Jewish Museum by way of

the new as ruin.

Conclusion

Just a block away from Checkpoint Charlie, the largest portion of the eastern side of the

Wall still stands today (Figure 4.1). The Wall still wears post-1989 Berliner's graffiti and hacked

away concrete reveals the iron structure within it. The 200-meter long segment, which once

divided the eastern neighborhood of Mitte from the western neighborhood of Kreuzburg, now

exists as part of the Topography of Terror Documentation Center.[135] The center is on the site of

the former Gestapo and SS headquarters active during the Nazi Regime.[136]

The site had first been opened to public, "temporarily arranged" as the senate described

it, before the fall of the Wall in 1983 as part of Berlin's 750th anniversary celebrations. On it was

an exhibition titled "Topography of Terror. Gestapo, SS and Reich Security Main Office on the

'Prinz-Albrecht-Terrain'." In the year of the fall of the Wall, the Berlin Senate decided to

compile a commission of experts, led by the director of the current site Reinhard Rürup, to

develop a long term design and use for the site. After a long bout of design competitions and a

halt on the construction of Swiss architect Peter Zumthor's extremely expensive design, the

commission eventually decided on Ursula Wilms of Heinle, Wisher and Partner's design for the

Topography of Terror Documentation Center in 2006. [137]

Despite its name, the center is essentially an indoor-outdoor historical museum with both

permanent and traveling exhibitions, but the word choice of "center" is interesting in light of the

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[135] "The Historic Site 'Topography of Terror.' A Site Tour in 15 Stations," Stiftung Topographie Des Terrors, accessed April 22, 2016, http://www.topographie.de/en/exhibitions/site-tour/#c1071.

[136] "The Historic Site 'Topography of Terror.' A Site Tour in 15 Stations."

[137] "The Historic Site After 1945: Repressed History," Stiftung Topographie Des Terrors, accessed April 22, 2016, http://www.topographie.de/en/the-historic-site/after-1945/z/0/.

very didactic, archive-like exhibition style of the institution. One permanent exhibition is housed

in the prize-winning Ursula Wilms designed Documentation Center building, a directly didactic

and text-heavy telling of the story of the site's history supplemented with an abundance of

photographs. The second permanent exhibition runs along the ruins of the Wall where visitors

may walk along the "Exhibition Trench" and learn about Berlin and National Socialism between

1933 and 1945, again through text and photographs (Figure 4.2). Lastly, one may opt for the

"Historic Site Tour" which integrates both the indoor and outdoor exhibitions as well as the

providing more history about the site itself. The exhibitions in their archive-like manner, as well

as the metal encased structure of the Documentation Center building, endow the site with a very

cold and austere feeling.

Before entering the site, the Wall is the first thing the visitor encounters as it still

functions as a wall for the grounds. The Wall runs along the perimeter of the site on one side on

Niederkirchenstraße. The "Exhibition Trench" is where the visitor more deeply encounters the

Wall up close. Directly below it the earth has been excavated to reveal the former cellar wall of

the Gestapo Headquarters. The Wall is thereby carved out as even more of an object of its own

right on the site. The awning of a covered walk way delineates where the cellar wall ends and the

Wall begins. Visitors walk along the Wall within this dug out "Exhibition Trench," reading about

National Socialist policy in Berlin between 1933 and 1945, meanwhile getting up-close to "the

traces of the destruction that occurred [on the Wall] during the transitional period," that the

Topography of Terror made sure to preserve.[138] The exhibition material is displayed on glass, so

as not to obstruct the view of the real information on display: the marks of history left on the

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[138] "Berlin Wall Monument," Stiftung Topographie Des Terrors, accessed April 22, 2016
http://www.topographie.de/en/the-historic-site/berlin-wall-monument/

Wall (Figure 4.3). The glass separating the viewer from the Wall gives even more of a sense that the Wall is an object being presented as if in a glass box in a museum.

At the Topography of Terror Documentation Center, the ruin is used quite candidly. It is presented in a very straightforward way as the ruin, not only in its accentuation of itself as an object on display but also through visual queues. The notion of ruin is communicated in the state of destruction that the Wall is maintained in. The concrete of the Wall is soiled black in some places and completely hacked away at in others. Orange wrought iron juts out seemingly dangerously and the black concrete capping, once there to prevent East Berliners from escape attempts, remains.

Carved out of the urban fabric to accentuate its object-ness and left in a state of disrepair, the senate, institution, and architect make no attempt to disguise the ruin or to make it continuous with the new. Through this, the Topography of Terror Documentation Center, in agreement with it's name, constructs a very documented, memory, almost archival in manner. An artifact of Berlin's history is encased in a sterile environment and preserved in the state it was found. Here we have a third instance of the use of the ruin as a way to construct memory in Berlin after 1989, one which is very different from both the resolved and theoretical ruins we've looked at. The Topography of Terror Documentation Center's use of the ruin is so straightforward it seems trivial in comparison to the complex uses in the Neues Museum and the Jewish Museum.

The fall of the Wall left a scar in the city's urban fabric and population. It rendered the Wall as an emblem and a ruin, an index of what was once there. In turn, both the Wall itself and the notion of ruin became a literal and figural unit for Berlin's architects, institutions, and senate, to configure memory through and around. While the Topography of Terror Documentation Center most clearly and literally figures the ruin of the Wall into its Museum, the Neues Museum

and the Jewish Museum also figure the ruin of the Wall into their architectures of memory in different ways. Post-1989 constructions of memory in Berlin construct memory through the ruin not only in the very literal way that the Topography of Terror Documentation Center does, displaying the ruin on the site as a separate almost archival object, but also in a more theoretical way as Libeskind does and in a more resolved way as Chipperfield does.

The way in which Libeskind constructs the ruin in the Jewish Museum Berlin stands directly at odds with the way in which we saw Chipperfield do so in the Neues Museum. Firstly, the large architectural gestures that the two architects take in their constructions of memory, Chipperfield's streamlining and Libeskind's deconstructing, are in direct opposition to each other in their most basic actions, units, and conceptions of memory. Chipperfield's streamlining of the ruin frames material objects as didactic snippets of history and reduces memory to a concrete form. Libeskind on the other hand deconstructs notions of memory being held in material objects, re-inscribing memory into the void. The two architects and buildings have very different audiences in mind. Chipperfield's streamlined use of the ruin renders it easily digestible and presents a resolved conception of history to a modern, international, consumer public. Libeskind's deconstructivist construction of the ruin on the other hand, aims to do quite the opposite by disorienting the viewer, one who is interested in an immersive feeling of memory, into a more emotional experience of the past.

Libeskind and deconstructivist architects alike would look down upon the resolved history and memory that Chipperfield and the Staatliche Museen Berlin attempted to construct, similarly to how they perceive of Russian Constructivism. The *Deconstructivist Architecture* catalog explains that deconstructivist architecture employs strategies from the Russian Constructivism avant-garde movement, attempting to fundamentally and drastically break open

the architectural tradition, but draws a distinction between the two movements in that Russian

Constructivism never realized any structures and later began to compromise their philosophies

for the labor market, making more resolved, machine-like forms and works.[139] This is similar to

the resolved memory which we found Chipperfield to have constructed in the Neues Museum.

One in which an international consumer public could feel comfortable and securely situated in a

narrative, global in scale but with Germany at the center. Although deconstructivist architecture

draws on Russian Constructivism, it does not fall into the same pattern of resolution as seen in

Constructivism and Chipperfield's Neues Museum. Instead, it fully commits to both the formal

and conceptual use of the disturbed form, the ruin.

Chipperfield does little to locate the impurities in architectural forms in the Neues

Museum, rather he picks up the pieces of a dismantled architecture and completes it to bring it

back to its original pure form. While Chipperfield is focused on the solid elements of

architecture, Libeskind is focused on the space in between. It is in Libeskind's effort to

reconfigure the emphasis of architecture that he looks to other media for inspiration. Libeskind's

constant referencing to sources outside of architecture such as music and literature highlights his

theoretical understanding of architecture which stands in stark contrast to Chipperfield's very

anti-theoretical one.

Both Chipperfield and Libeskind's constructions say something about the ruin and

thereby about architectures of memory. In the Jewish Museum, Libeskind refuses the tendency to

make the ruin icon and instead reveals that the ruin can be an experience. His forays outside of

the architecture field into music and literature assert that memory need not be constructed only

by the material stuff of the past, but though symbolic and theoretical meaning as well. His

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[139] Johnson and Wigley, *Deconstructivist Architecture,* 11.

argument in this building is that a memory constructed through symbolic means, around space, is in fact a deeper and more complex memory than one constructed and shared through material objects.[140] On the other hand, in the Neues Museum, Chipperfield does not make any claims on a deep, shared, or collective memory of this sort. Chipperfield and his institutional backing, which had much more of a hand in the design process than the Jewish Museum had in Libeskind's, were much more concerned with constructing and architectural memory which was easily accessible to a wider public and which could situate the institution within a larger narrative of the city's history and urban fabric. Through the Neues Museum, Chipperfield shows the way in which a ruin may be used and manipulated, watered down, and spoon-fed to the public in order to support institutional narratives. Furthermore, his work on the Neues Museum exemplifies the way in which architectures of memory, which often try to project objectiveness, as apparent in the scientific language surrounding this project, are often seeped in institutional motives that are not always apparent at first glance.

Through this examination we learn a number of things about architecture, memory, and the ruin which we would not have without looking at these buildings and their relationship to the fall of the Wall. Firstly, by looking at the way in which the fall of the Berlin Wall reverberated effects not only through the politics and people of Berlin but also through its urban fabric, we see the way in which a global event can physically manifest itself within the architecture of a city. This case study of the Berlin Wall illuminates the way in which a ruin may take on a large role in a city like Berlin, becoming both a literal and theoretical emblem for the city, emphasizing the importance and likewise the difficulty in preservation and restoration. Moreover, having been

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[140] Daniel Libeskind. "Between the Lines: Extension to the Berlin Museum, with the Jewish Museum," *Assemblage* 12 (Aug., 1990).

built by non-German star-architects, these architectural constructions of memory highlight the

unification of Berlin under capitalism and point to the questions of who exactly gets to construct

memory in a city. Our close look at the Neues Museum and its inextricable relationship with its

island and institution reveals that architecture is not as impartial as it often projects itself to be

but rather is often bound up with larger institutional or state motives. The relationship between

both Chipperfield and the Staatliche Museen Berlin's rhetoric about the building and the

buildings design gestures reminds us to look deeper and parse out what is genuine and what is

public relations in architecture. Our study of the Jewish Museum in Berlin in its deconstructivist

rethinking of the field of architecture and its reach outside of the field for inspiration, reveals the

boundless possibilities of architecture, its ability to be turned inside-out and to be derived from

something less concrete and more theoretical. Libeskind's design for the Jewish Museum on the

other hand reasserts that architecture may be as much a cathartic experience, a work of art, as it

is a shelter or frame for daily activities.

Images

Figure 1.1. Memorial to the Murdered Jews by Peter Eisenman, completed in 2004.
Source: Corbis, Wall Street Journal, digital photograph, c. 2005-2016, Berlin.
http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052702303936704576399912634957114.

Figure 1.2. Chapel of Reconciliation by Peter Rudolf Reitermann and Peter Sassenroth, completed in 2000.
Source: Alan Wyde, DayOut, digital photograph, c. 2014,
http://dayoutinnz.blogspot.com/2014/06/the-new-reconciliation-chapel-in-berlin.html

Figure 1.3. Map of Berlin in 2015 showing the concentration of architectural constructions of memory by the scar of the Wall.
Source: Gilda Gross, *Map of Berlin Wall and Architecture Constructions of Memory,* google map and pen, 2015, New York.

The Wall
in figures

1 Concrete flagstone wall with or without piping on
  top
2 Wire mesh fencing
3 Inspection track
4 Lighting
5 Anti-vehicle trench
6 Outer limit of border patrol track
7 Patrol track
8 Guide wire of guard dog track
9 Alarm
10 Observation tower
11 Fencing with built-in alarm

Figure 1.4. A diagram of the Berlin Wall shows its composition of two separate 12 feet tall walls, one east and one west, and "the Death Strip" that lay in between.
Source: Anonymous, *Berlin Wall Diagram,* Flickr, scanned image from book, http://tinyurl.com/j46kddq.

Figure 1.5. A map showing the Ghost Stations in West Berlin during the divide with X's. Source: Anonymous, *Ghost Stations in the City of Berlin,* VisitBerlin, map and pen, 2014, Berlin, http://mauer.visitberlin.de/en/868-ghost-stations/.

Figure 1.6. A map of the *Routes to Berlin* published in an East German textbook.
Source: Anonymous, *General Plan, Routes to Berlin*, Edition Gauglitz, c. 1961- 1989, Berlin,
http://art.members.sonic.net/unify90/ber6.html.

Figure 1.7. Berlin's Kulturforum.
Source: Senate Department berlin, digital photograph,
http://www.stadtentwicklung.berlin.de/planen/staedtebau-projekte/kulturforum/.

Figure 1.8. Palast der Republik c. 1977.
Source: Istvan, *Palast der Republic 1977*, Wikimedia Commons, ABC, 1977, Berlin,
http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/rearvision/palace-of-the-republic-1977.j
pg/4239530.

Figure 1.9. Wilhelm Kaiser Memorial Church by Egon Eiermann.
Source: Places to Visit, http://www.placestovisit.tips/places-to-visit-in-berlin/.

Figure 1.10.
Above: The Neues Museum, Berlin by David Chipperfield Architects in collaboration with Julian Harrap Architects, completed in 2008.
Source: Anonymous, David Chipperfield Architects, digital photograph, c. 2008-2016, Berlin, http://www.davidchipperfield.co.uk/project/neues_museum.

Below: The Neues Museum's Egyptian Courtyard.
Source: Achim Kleuker, Staatliche Museen Berlin, digital photograph, c. 2008-2010, Berlin, http://tinyurl.com/pg64ldg.

Figure 1.11. The Jewish Museum by Daniel Libeskind completed in 2001.
Source: Bitter Bredt. Studio Libeskind, digital photograph, c. 2001- 2015, Berlin,
http://libeskind.com/work/jewish-museum-berlin/.

Figure 1.12.
Above: The Topography of Terror by Ursula Wilms, completed in 2010.
Source: Stephan Müller, Topography of Terror Foundation, digital photograph, c. 2010-2015,
Berlin, http://www.topographie.de/en/.

Below: Topography of Terror's open-air museum component along the original ruins of the
Wall.
Source: Kate Morgan, Lonely Planet, digital photograph, c. 2010-2015, Berlin,
http://www.lonelyplanet.com/germany/berlin/travel-tips-and-articles/77814.

Figure 1.13. A satellite image taken from space decades after the Wall fell reveals the still present divide in Berlin through the difference in street lights installed during the Cold War. Source: Chris Hadfield, The Telegraph, satellite image, c. 2013, Berlin, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/germany/10003467/Berlin-satellite-image-reveals-stark-east-west-divisions.html.

Figure 2.1. Ariel photograph of Museum Island, 2010.
Source: *Museum Island Berlin,* digital photograph, (Munich: Hirmer, 2012).

Figure 2.2. The west façade and entrance to the Neues Museum, c. 2009.
Source: Digital photograph, https://memphistours.wordpress.com/2010/10/27/neues-museum-celebrates-first-anniversary/.

Figure 2.3. Neues Museum's southeast corner, completely eradicated by bombs in World War II.
Source: Digital photograph, c. 2009, http://www.davidchipperfield.co.uk/project/neues_museum.

Figure 2.4. Bullet holes on the exterior of the Neues Museum, c. 2010.
Source: Digital photograph, c. 2010, http://museumchick.com/2010/06/neues-museum-island-berlin-nefertiti-bust.html.

Figure 2.5. Stüler's Neues Museum c.1850. View from northwest.
Source: Henry Albert Payne, *Berlin und seine Kunstschätze,* drawing or etching, c. 1850.
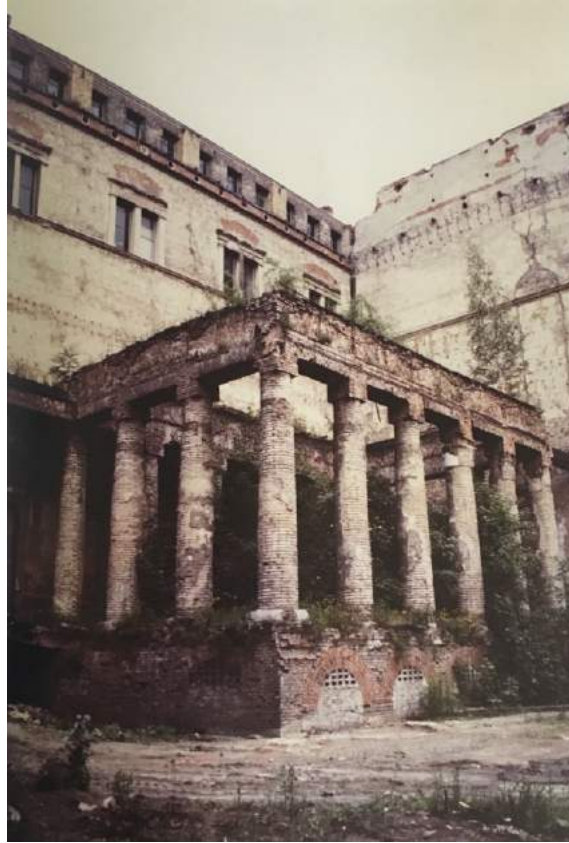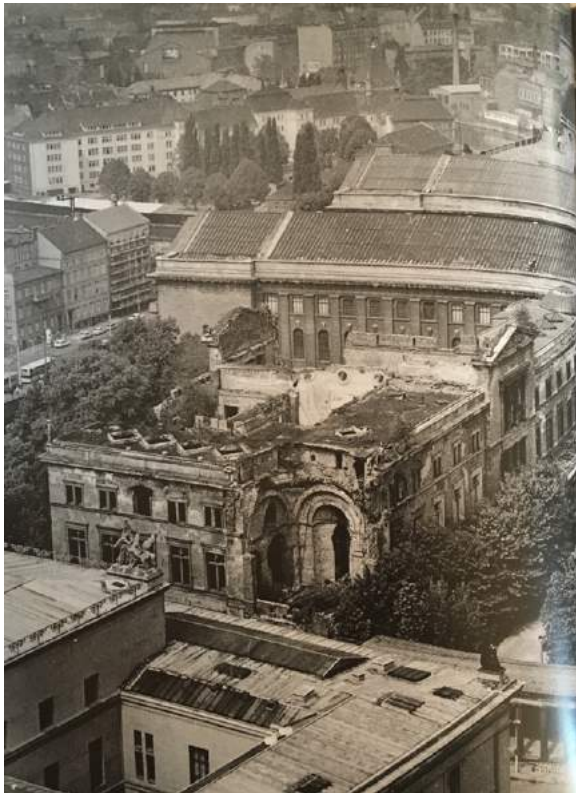
Figure 2.6. Neues Museum in ruins after World War II, c. 1985.
Source: *Museum Island Berlin,* digital photograph, (Munich: Hirmer, 2012).
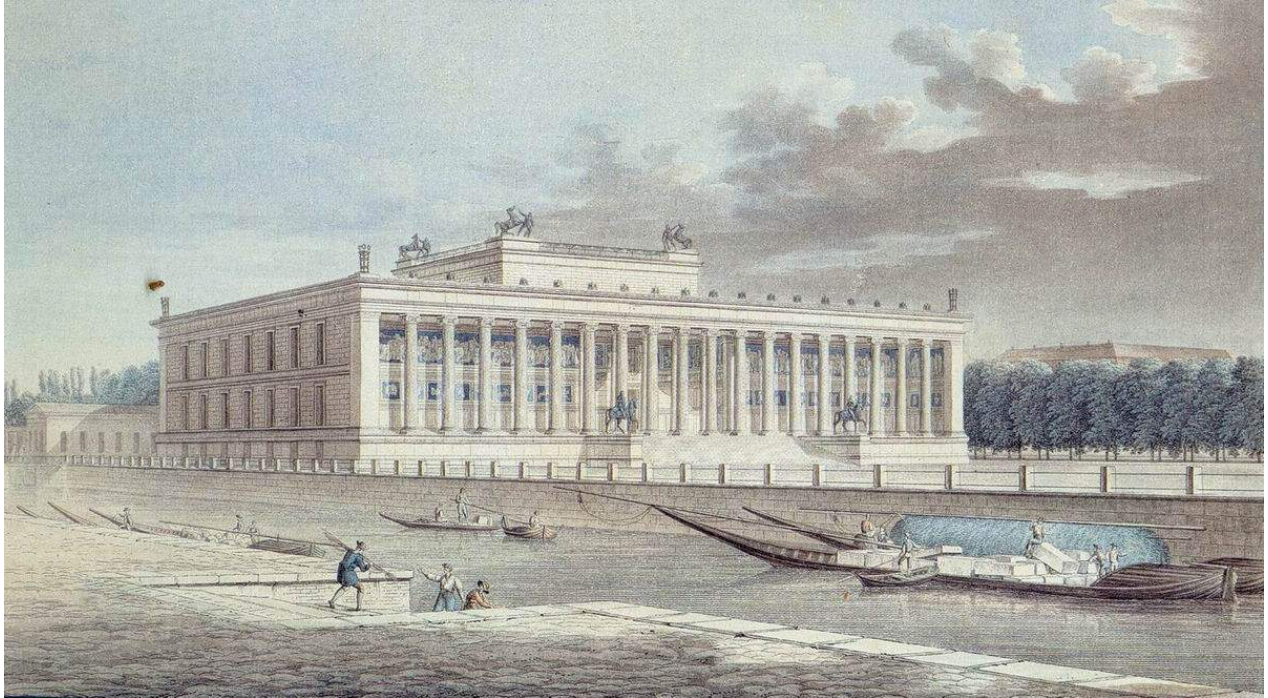
Figure 2.7. The Altes Museum, c. 1830.
Source: Friedrich Alexander Thiele, color etching, c. 1830,
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Altes_Museum#/media/File:Berlin_Altes_Museum_Friedrich_Thie
le_1830.jpg.

Figure 2.8. Stüler's Neues Museum's Egyptian Room, c. 1862.
Source: Friedrich August Stüler, *Das Neue Museum in Berlin,* (Berlin: Ernst & Korn, 1862).
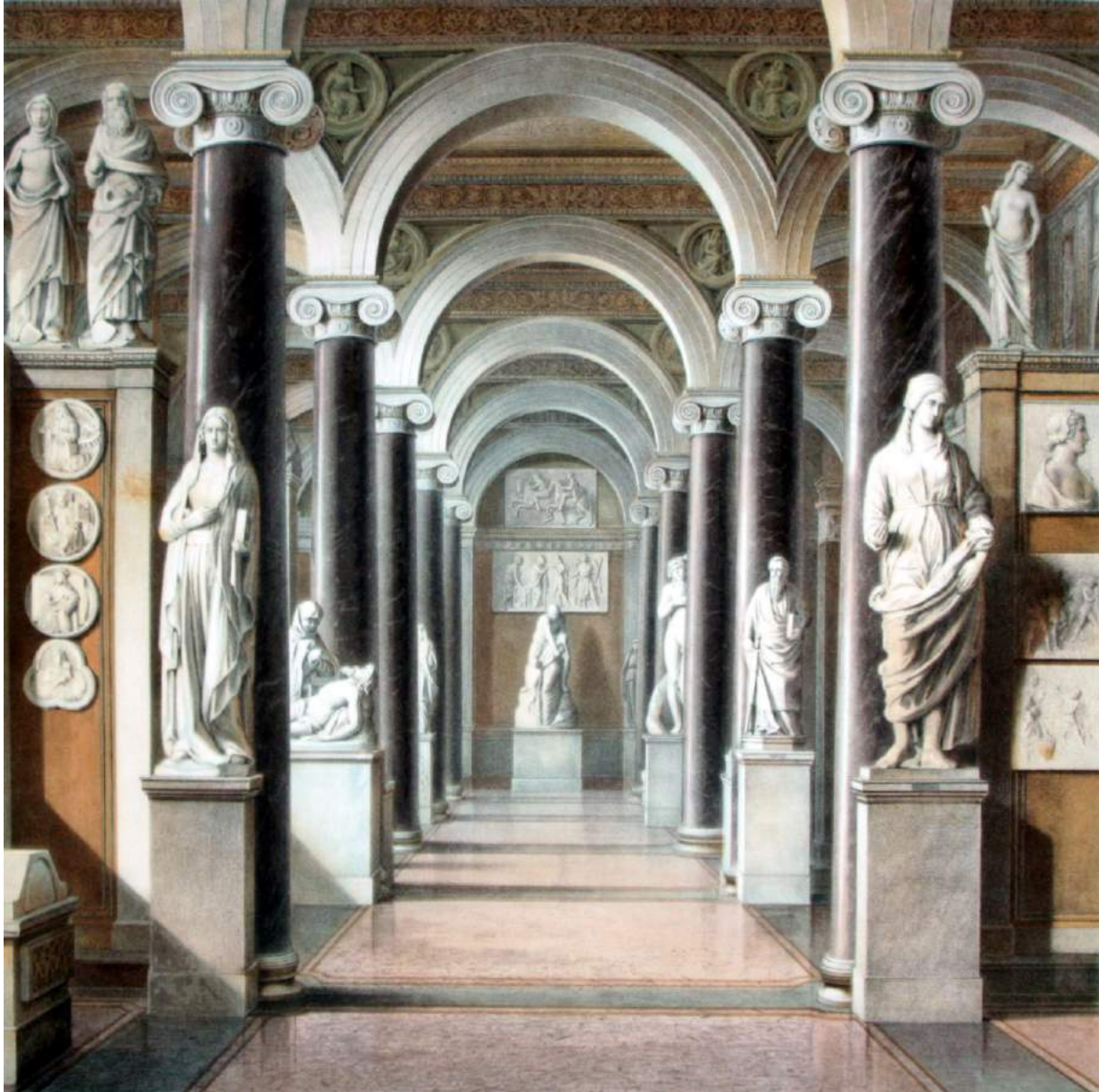
Figure 2.9. Stüler's Neues Museum's Moderner Saal, c. 1862.
Source: Friedrich August Stüler, *Das Neue Museum in Berlin,* c. 1862, (Berlin: Ernst & Korn, 1862).

Figure 2.10. The Neues Museum left uncovered in the years following the War, allowing foliage to grow within it, c. 1985.
Source: *Museum Island Berlin,* digital photograph, c.1985, (Munich: Hirmer, 2012).

Figure 2.11. The entrance hall of the restored Neues Museum, c. 2009.
Source: *Museum Island Berlin,* digital photograph, c. 2009, (Munich: Hirmer, 2012).
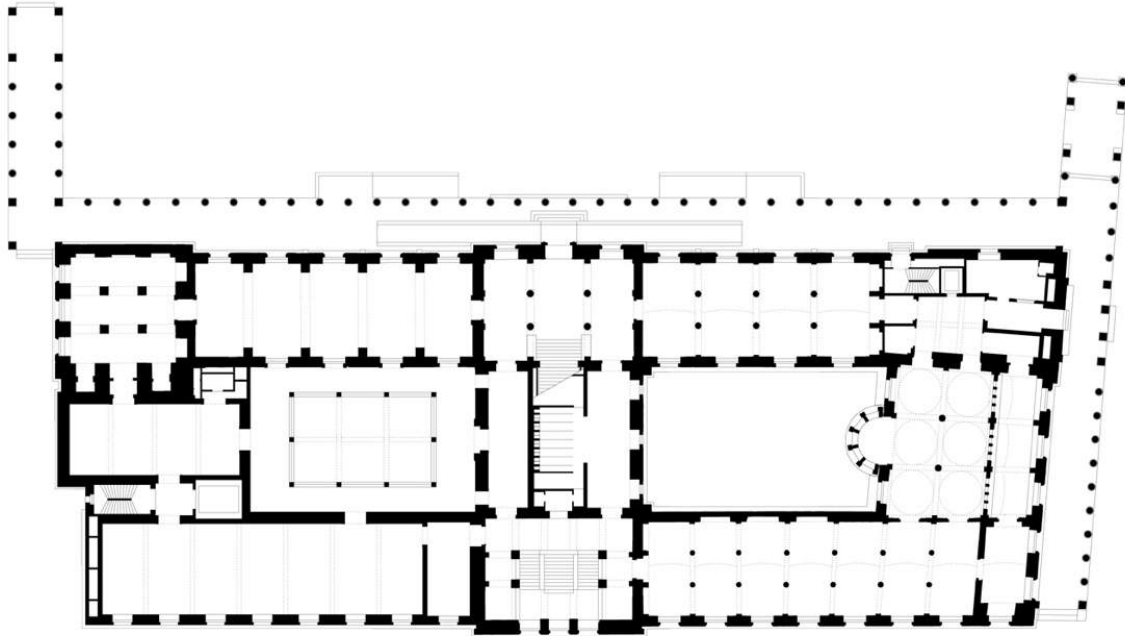
Figure 2.12. Ground floor plan of Chipperfield's restored Neues Museum, c. 2009.
Source: David Chipperfield Architects, c. 2009,
http://www.davidchipperfield.co.uk/project/neues_museum.
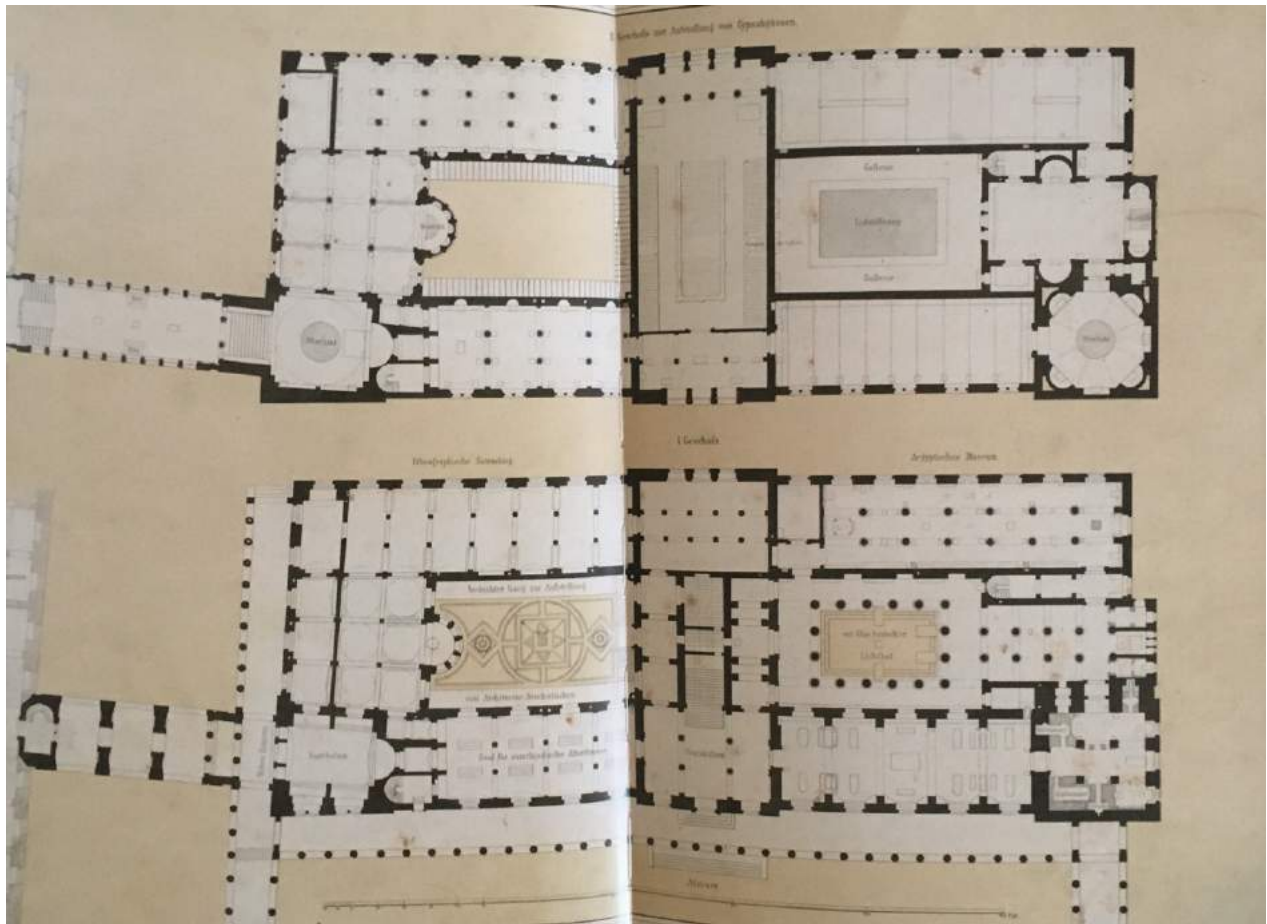
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Hedwig Schultz-Voelcker, *The Main Staircase of the Neues Museum,* watercolor,
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Figure 2.15. Chipperfield's Neues Museum's reconstructed Main Staircase with fragments of the original scenes by Wilhelm von Kaulbach depicting the history of mankind.
Source: Digital photograph, c. 2009, http://interlab100.com/2014/05/19/neues-museum-david-chipperfield-architects/.
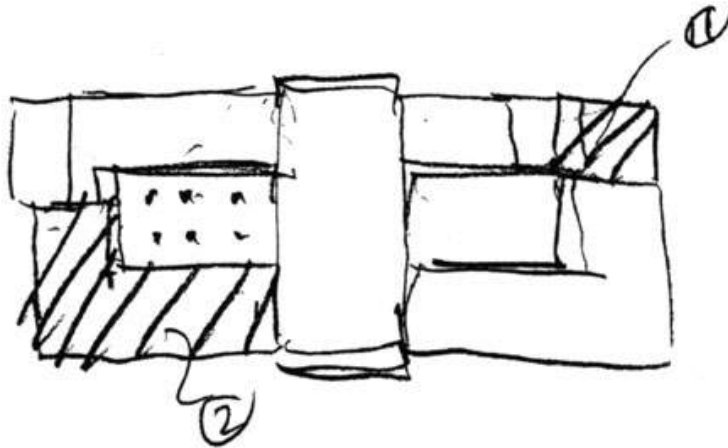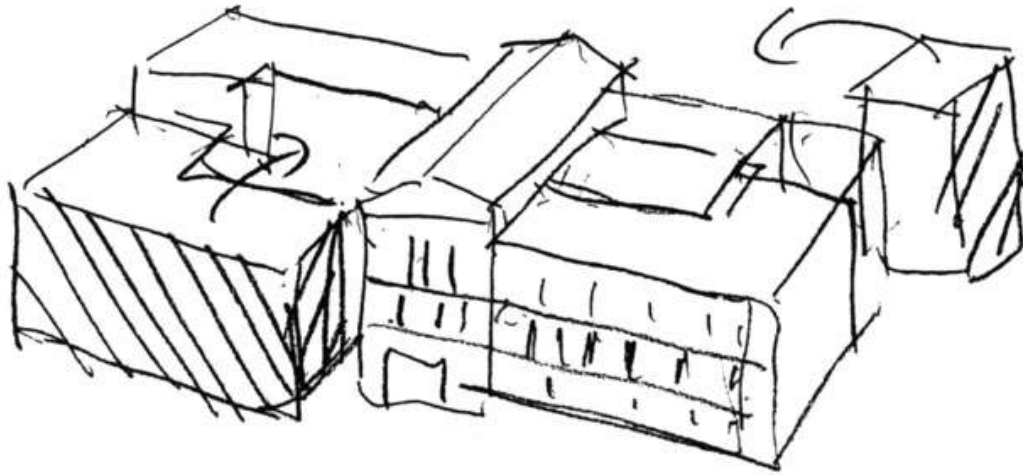
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Source: David Chipperfield Architects, *Reestablishment of Form and Figure,*
http://www.davidchipperfield.co.uk/project/neues_museum.

Figure 2.17. The Egyptian Courtyard in Chipperfield's restored Neues Museum featuring frescos of archeological sites from Stüler's Neues Museum, c. 2009.
Source: Digital photography, *Museum Island Berlin,* c. 2009, (Berlin: Ernst & Korn, 1862).

Figure 2.18. North Dome with Nefertiti Bust.
Source: Digital photograph, *Candida Höfer*, Johnen Galerie, color print, c. 2012,
http://www.johnengalerie.de/en/exhibitions/previous/action/show/controller/exhibition/exhibitio
n/94.html.
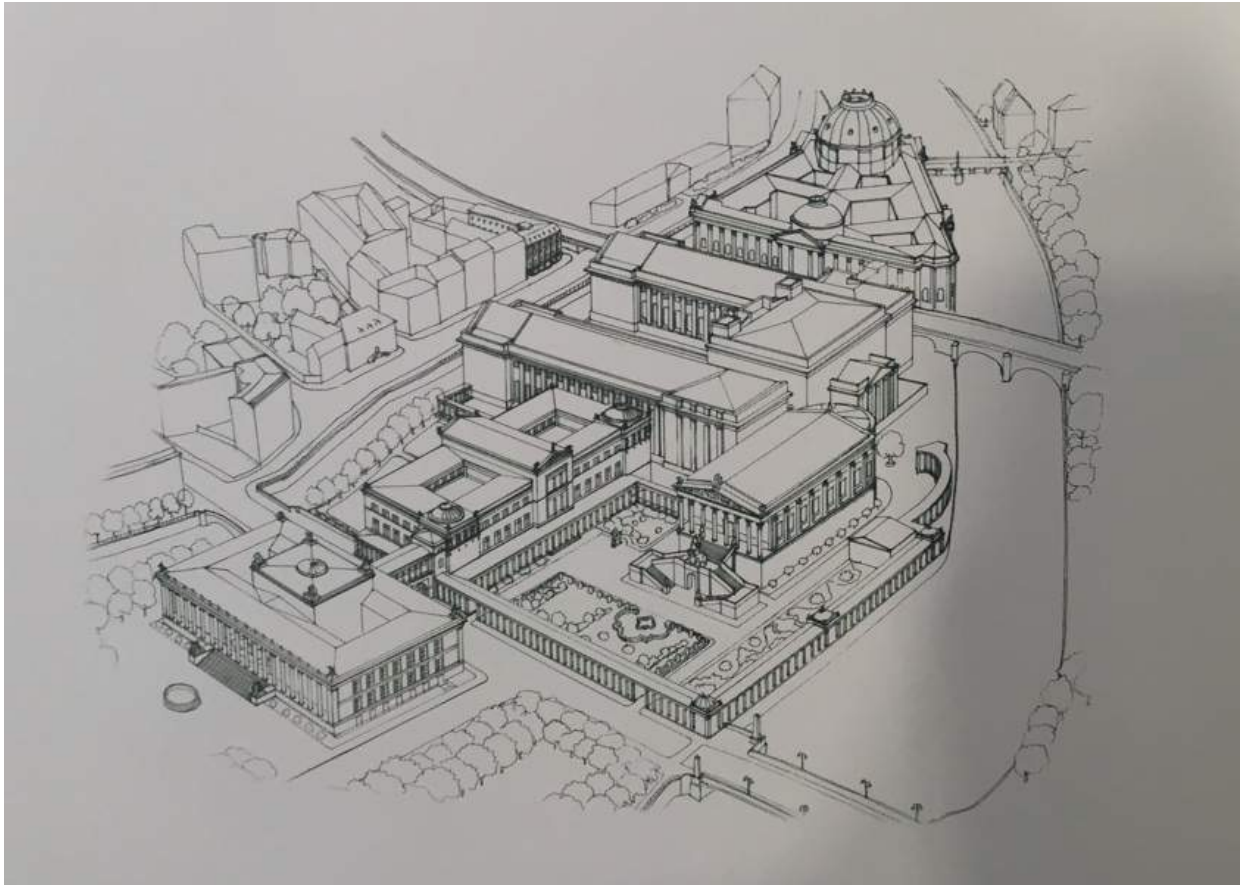
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Source: Museum Island project competition, *Museum Island Berlin,* 1993, (Berlin: Ernst & Korn, 1862).
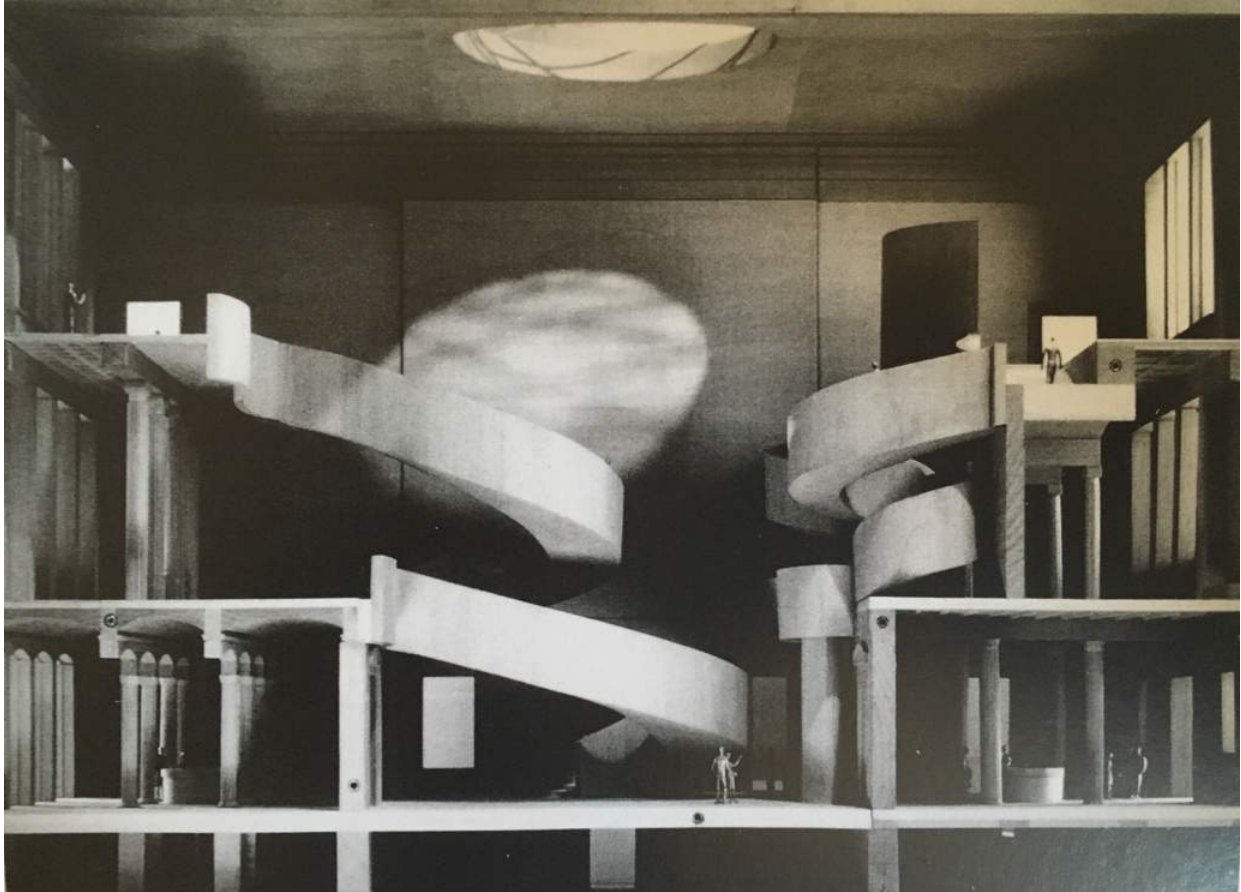
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Source: Expert reports on the Museum Island, *Museum Island Berlin,* photograph of model 1997, (Berlin: Ernst & Korn, 1862).
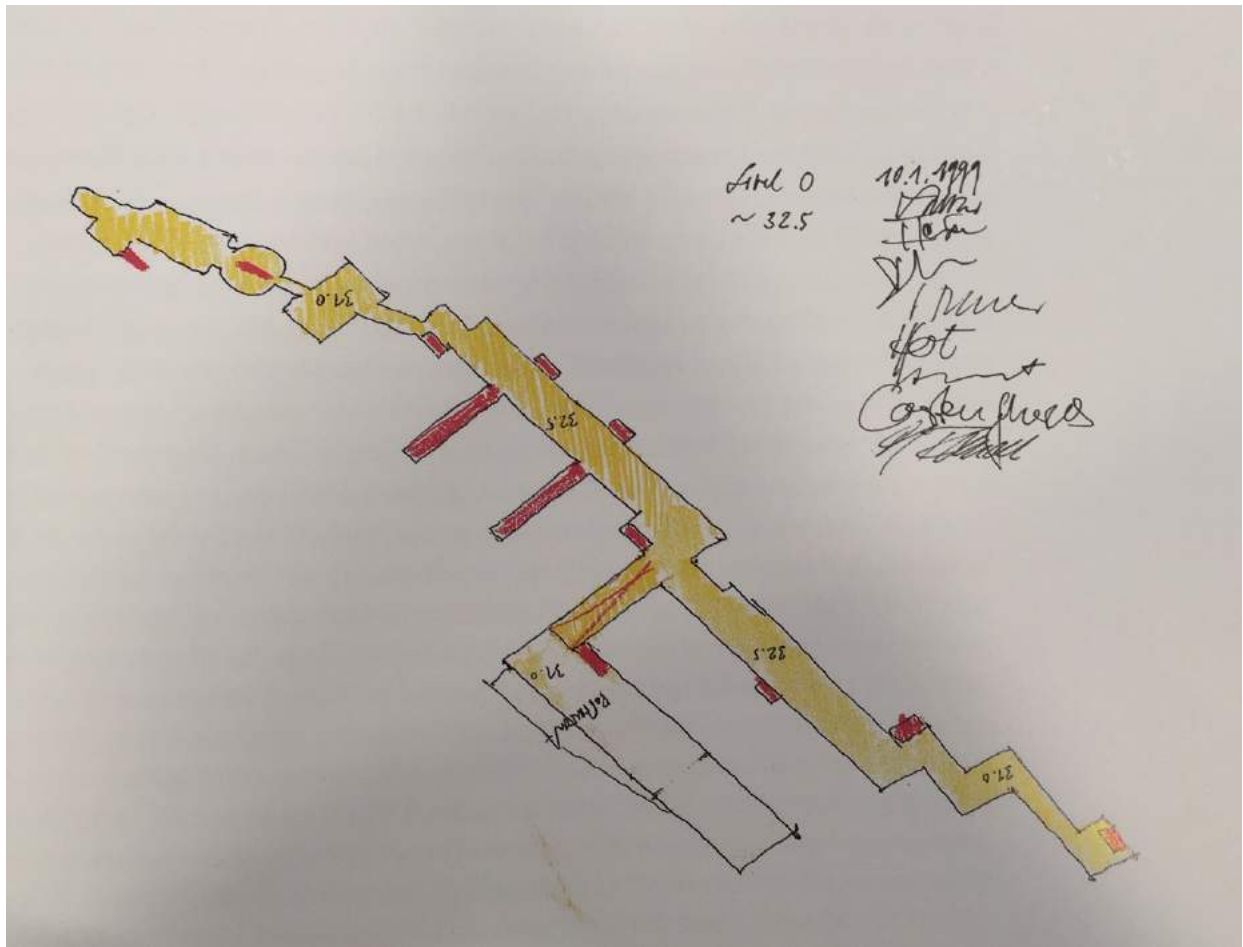
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Source: Bird's eye view of Jewish Museum, Archdaily, digital photograph, Berlin,
http://www.archdaily.com/91273/ad-classics-jewish-museum-berlin-daniel-libeskind.

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Source: Bird's eye view of Jewish Museum, Open Buildings, digital photograph, Berlin,
http://openbuildings.com/buildings/jewish-museum-berlin-profile-9719.

Figure 3.3. Slashes cut into the zinc-clad façade of the Jewish Museum, c. 2010.
Source: Exterior of Jewish Museum, Architectural digest, digital photograph, Berlin,
http://www.architecturaldigest.com/gallery/daniel-libeskind-jewish-museum-berlin-slideshow#3.

Figure 3.4. Upper exhibition level at the Jewish Museum shows the curatorial approach of the museum, c. 2010.
Source: Interior of Jewish Museum, Building Co UK, digital photograph, Berlin, http://www.building.co.uk/jewish-museum-extension-by-long-and-kentish-in-camden-town-london/3160533.article.

Figure 3.5. Visitors in the exhibition rooms at the first Jewish Museum on Orianenburger Strasse, 1936.
Source: Interior of Jewish Museum on Orianenburger Strasse, Jewish Museum Berlin, 1936, http://www.jmberlin.de/main/EN/04-About-The-Museum/02-History-Museum/00-founding-museum.php?d=1933.

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Source: Cornelius M. Braun, The Ephraim Palais, Berlin, Stadtmuseum Berlin, digital photograph, http://www.en.stadtmuseum.de/ephraim-palais.
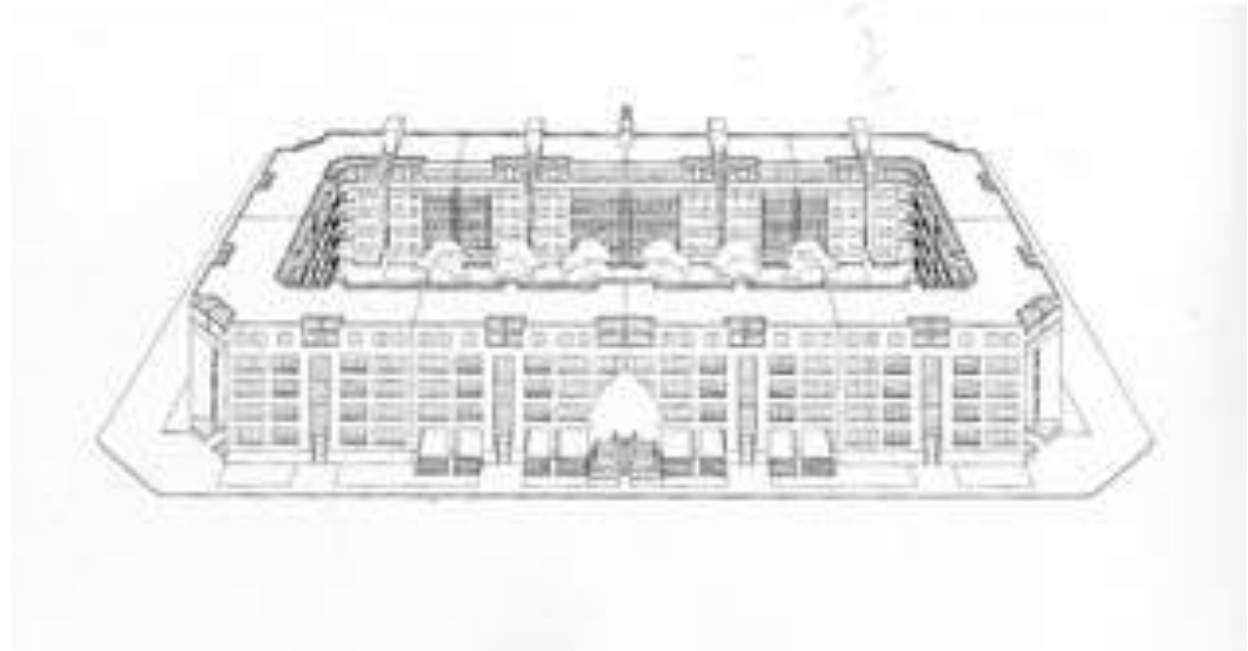
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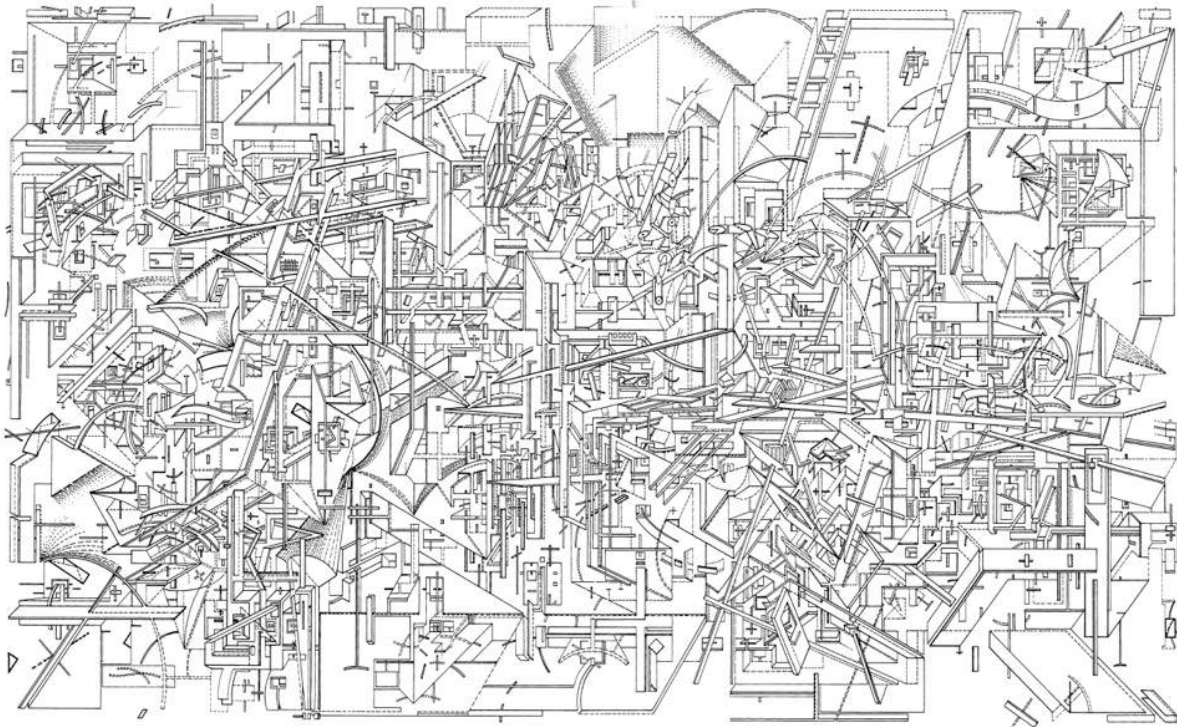
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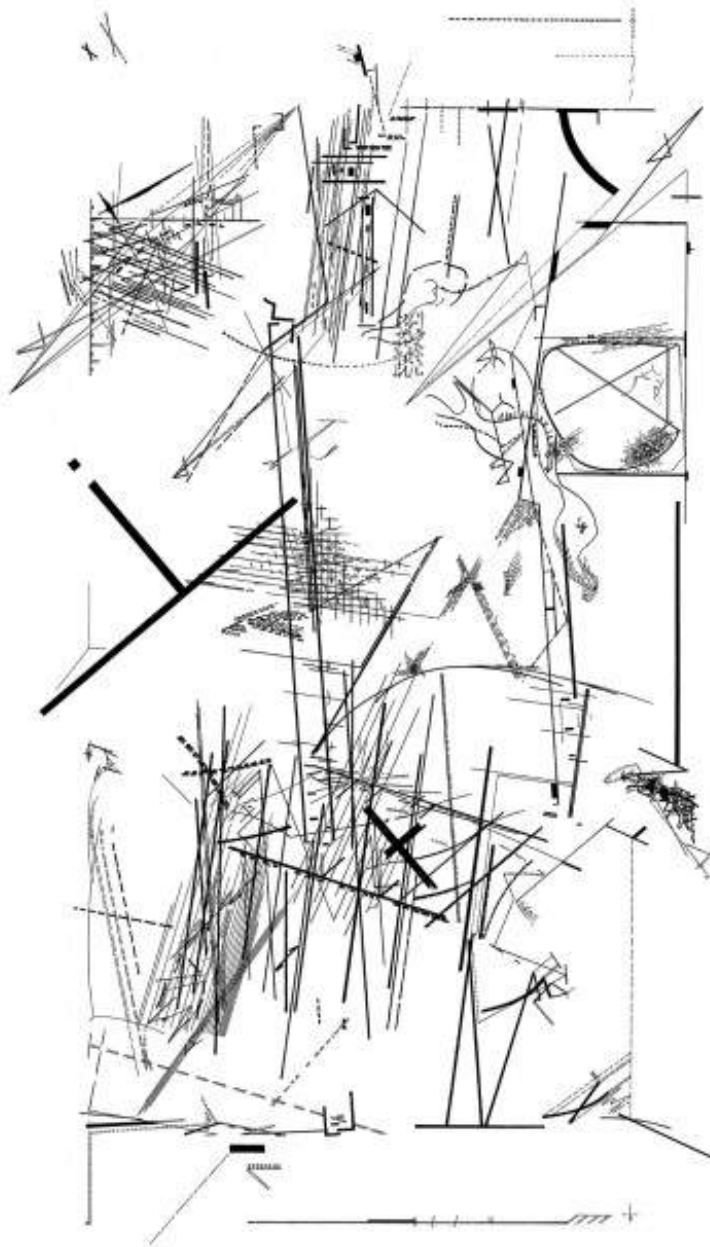
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Source: Daniel Libeskind, *Chamber Works,* drawing, 1983 http://libeskind.com/work/chamber-works/.
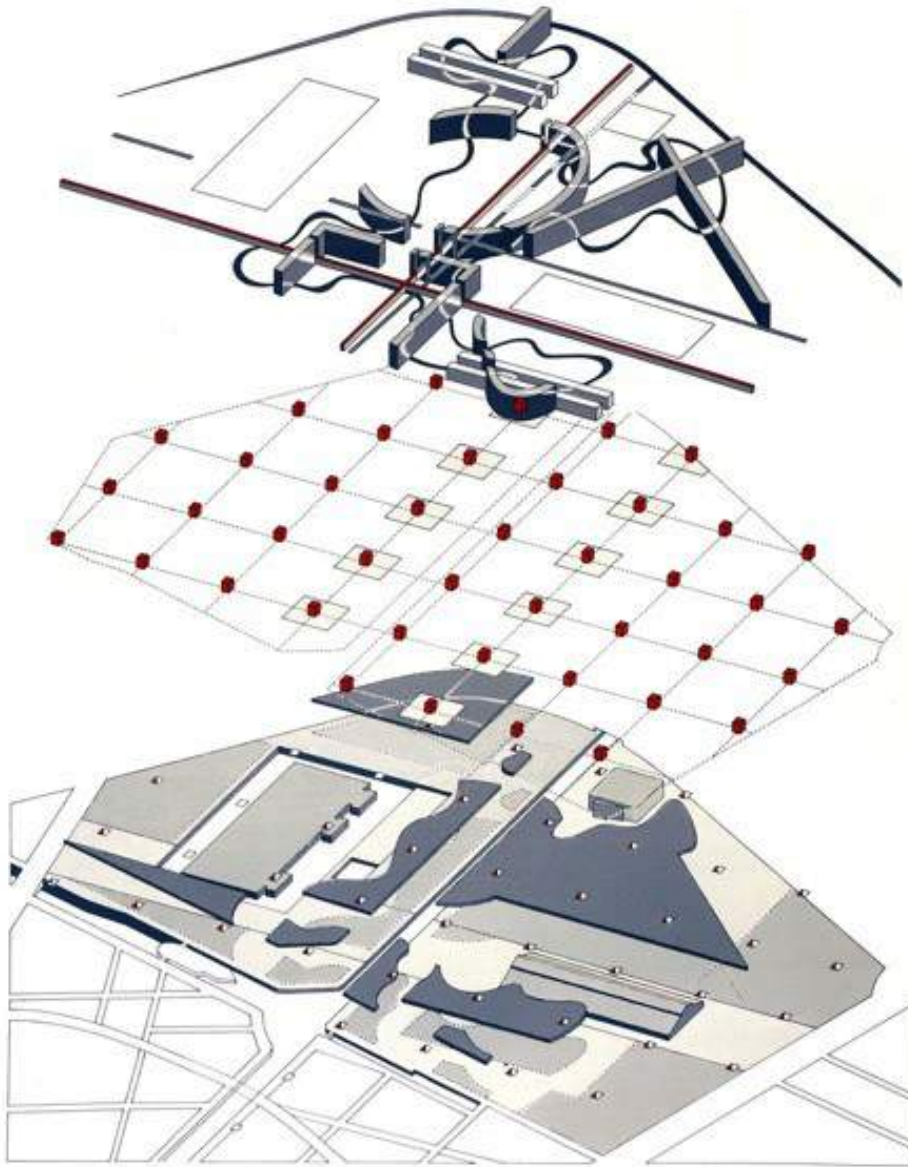
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Source: Berhard Tschumi, Parc de la Villette, computer rendering, Paris, 1982-83,
http://www.archdaily.com/92321/ad-classics-parc-de-la-villette-bernard-tschumi.
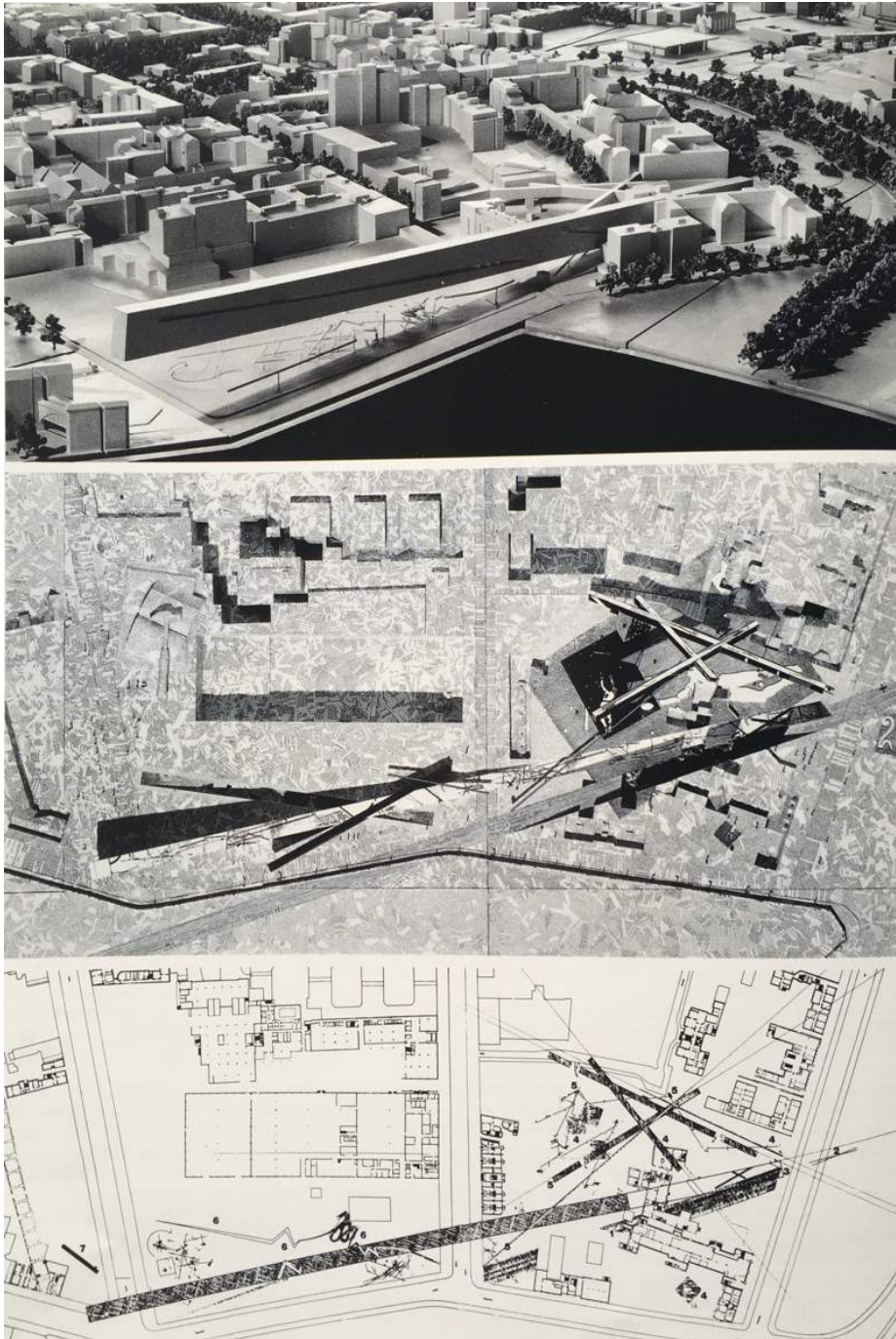
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Source: Daniel Libeskind, City Edge Competition, model, rendering, drawing, 1987, Berlin, *El Croquis* 80 (1996).
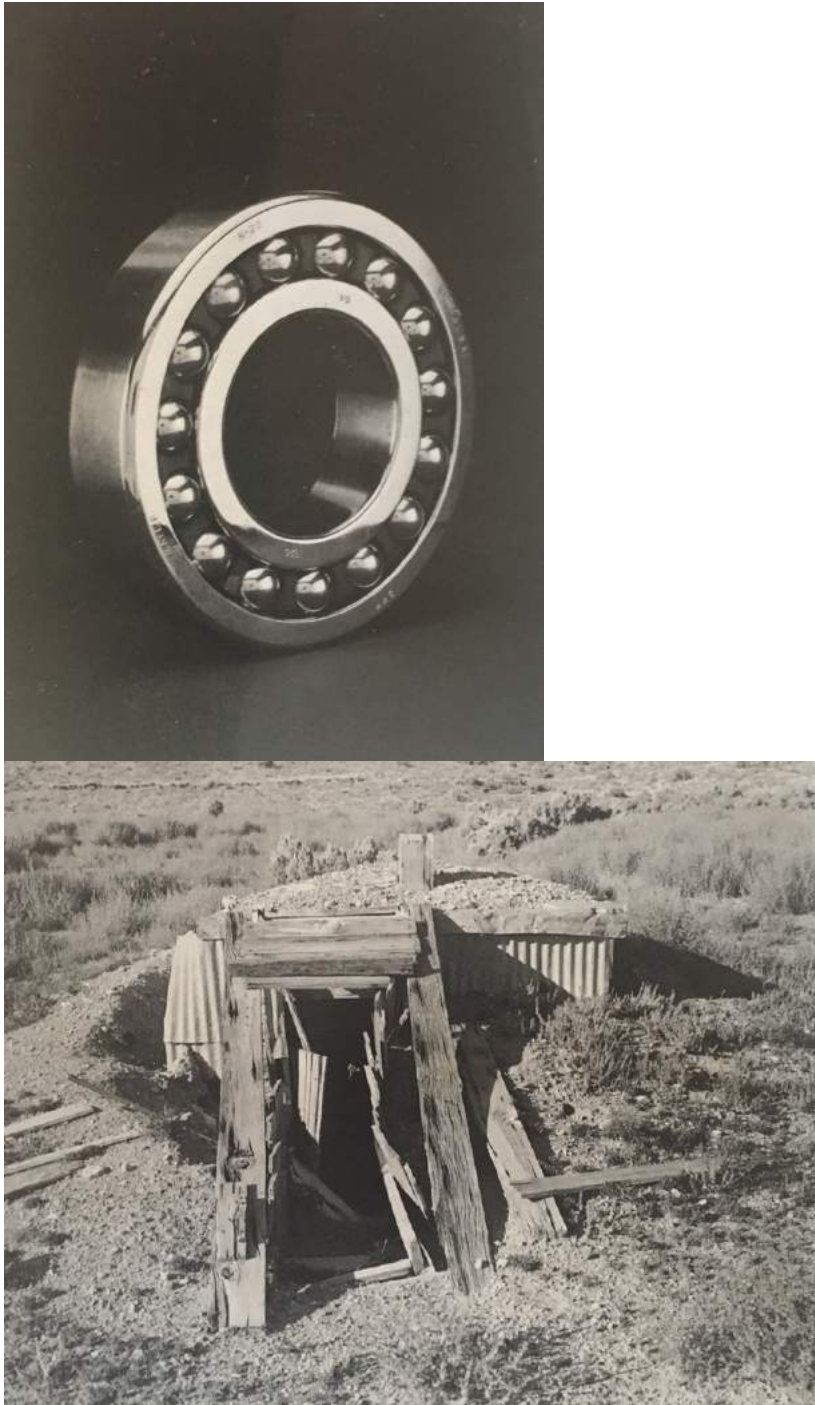
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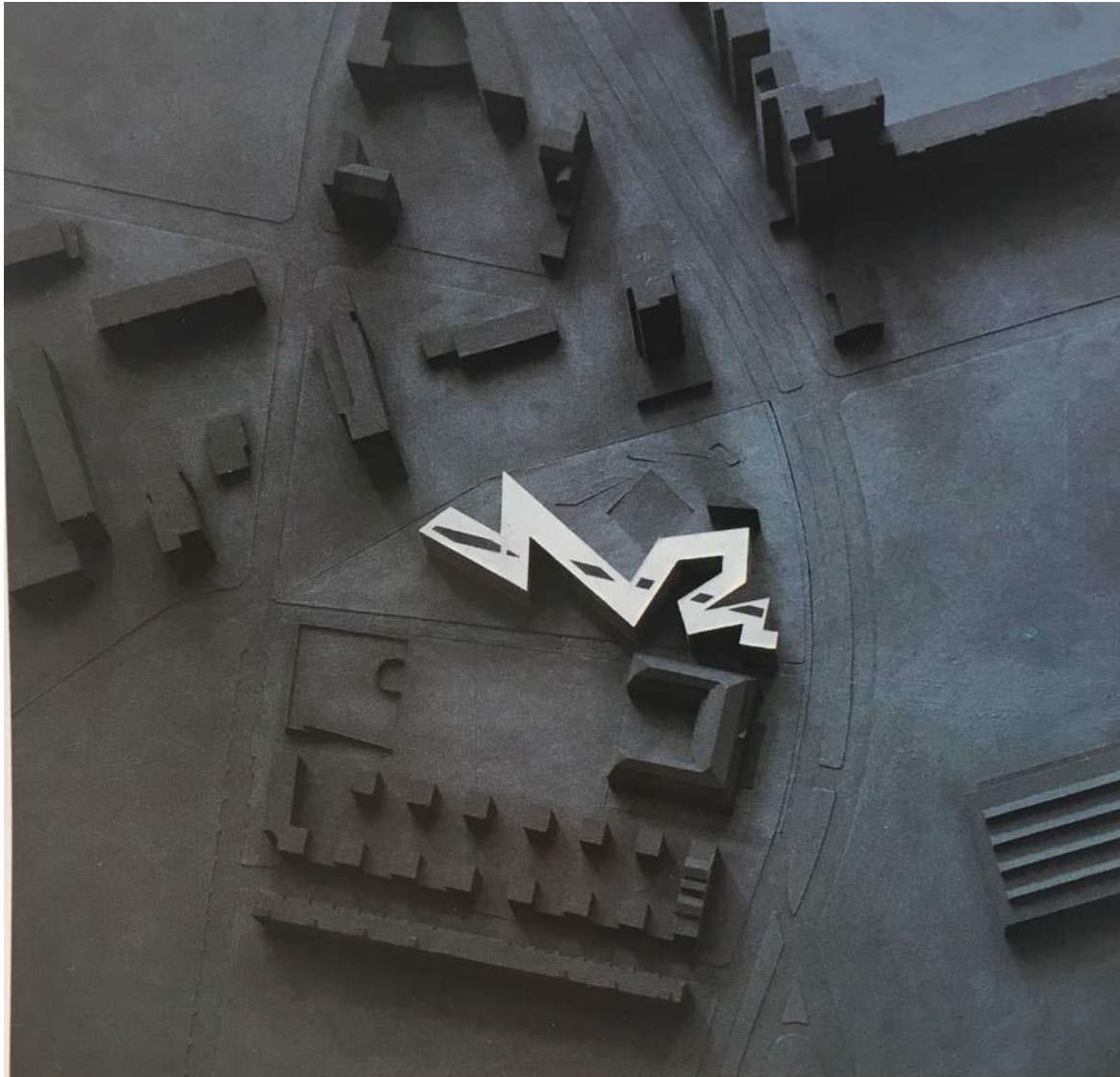
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Source: Daniel Libeskind, conceptual drawing and collage, 1989-1992, *El Croquis* 80 (1996).
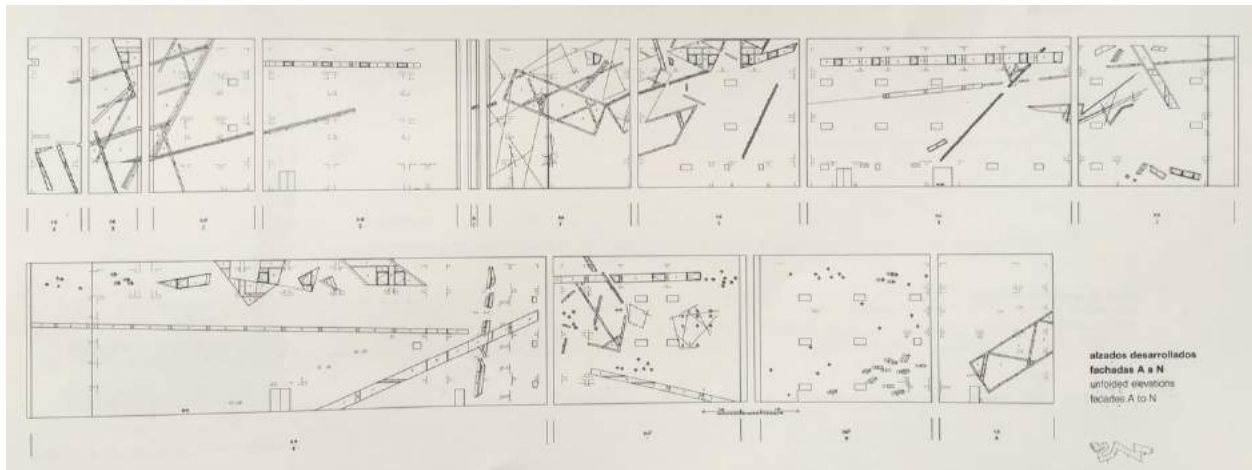
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Source: Daniel Libeskind, Unfolded Elevations of Jewish Museum, digital drawings, Berlin, 1989-1992, *El Croquis* 80 (1996).
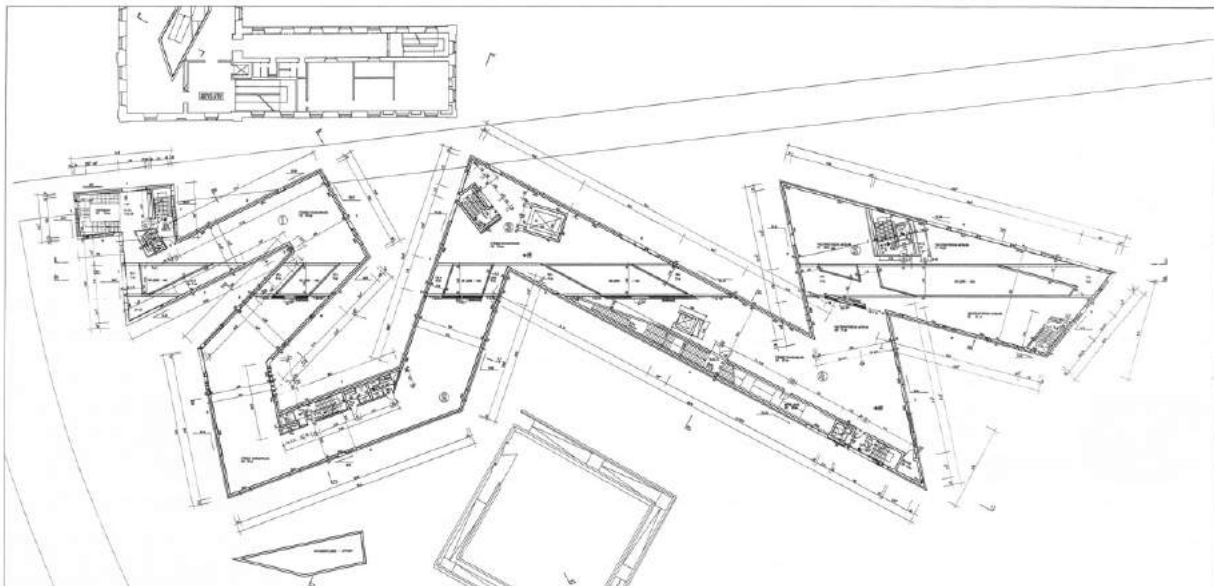

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Source: Plan of Jewish Museum, Studio Libeskind, Berlin, digital drawing, 1989-1992, http://libeskind.com/work/jewish-museum-berlin/.

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Source: Bitter Bredt, Void in the Jewish Museum, digital photograph, Berlin,
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http://www.aviewoncities.com/gallery/showpicture.htm?key=kvege1736.

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https://issuu.com/suncica/docs/home_of_revolution.
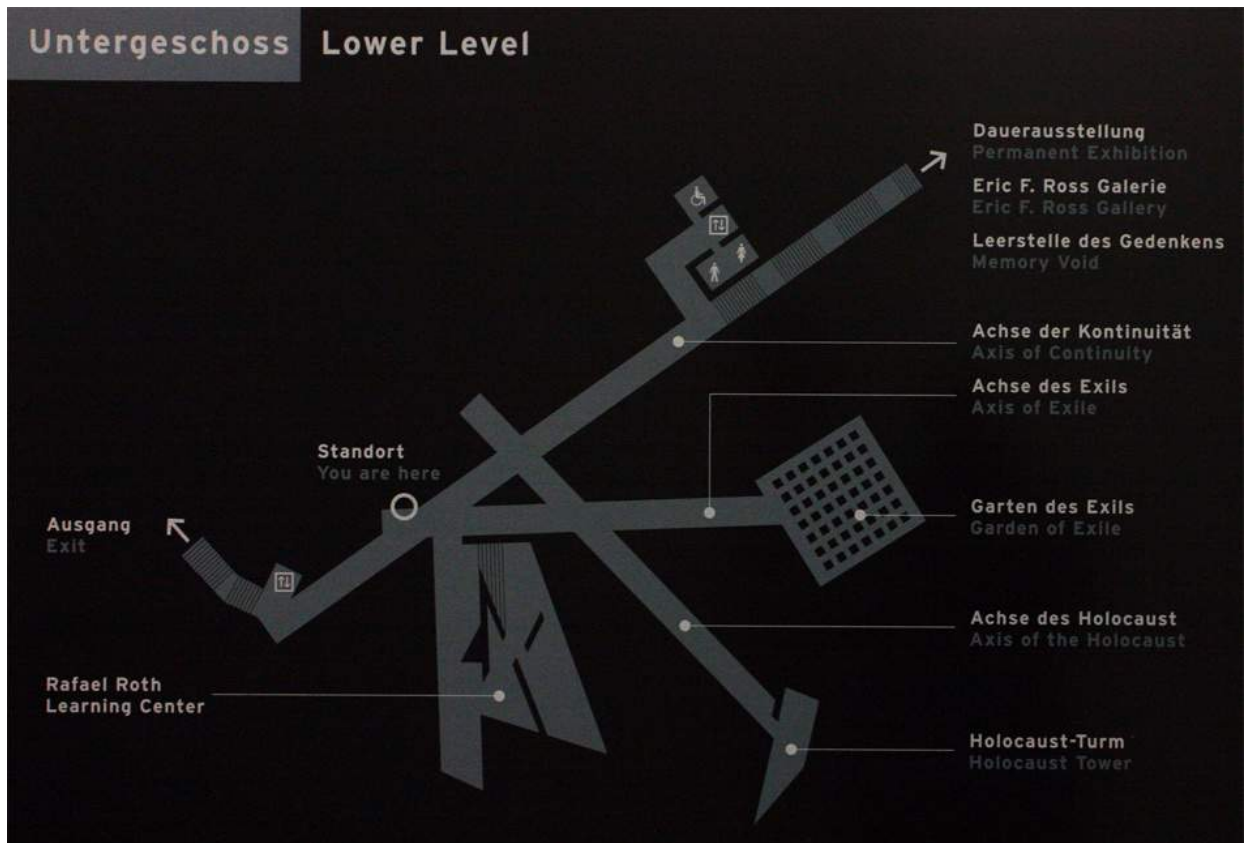
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https://pixelmaedchen.wordpress.com/2013/05/30/jewish-museum-berlin-1-architecture/.

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Source: Bitter Bredt, Underground Crossroads at Jewish Museum, digital photograph, Berlin,
http://libeskind.com/work/jewish-museum-berlin/.

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Source: Bitter Bredt, Garden of Exile, Jewish Museum, digital photograph, Berlin,
http://libeskind.com/work/jewish-museum-berlin/.

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Source: Britta Scherer, Topography of Terror, digital photograph,
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