A PUBLIC HUMANITIES GUIDEBOOK FOR BERLIN

MUSEUMS, MEMORIALS, AND SITES OF REMEMBRANCE

Methods in Public Humanities
Professor Dietrich Neumann
John Nicholas Brown Center for Public Humanities and Cultural Heritage
Spring 2022

#THESCHINKELSHOW
USEFUL PHRASES TO GET BY:

WORDS:
- Yes – Ja (yah)
- No – Nein (nine)
- Thank you – Danke (DAHN-kuh)
- Please and You’re welcome – Bitte (BITT-uh)
- Excuse me – Entschuldigen Sie (ent-SHOOL-degen see)
- I’m sorry – Es tut mir leid (ehs toot meer lite)
- Where? – Wo? (Vo?)
- Where’s the restroom? – Wo ist die Toilette? (vo ist dee toy-LET-uh)

GREETINGS:
- Hello/Good day – Guten Tag (GOOT-en tahk)
- Good morning – Guten Morgen (GOO-ten MOR-gen)
- Good evening – Guten Abend (GOO-ten AH-bent)
- Good night – Gute Nacht (GOO-tuh nahdt)
- Good bye – Auf Wiedersehen (Ouf VEE-der-zane)
- See you later – Bis später (Biss Sch-PAY-ter)
- Informal Good-Bye – Tschüß (t-ch-uice)

SMALL TALK:
- My name is – Mein Name ist…. (Mine NAH-muh ist…)
- What’s your name? (formal) – Wie heißen Sie? (vee hie-ssen zee)
- Nice to meet you – Es freut mich. (As froit mish)
- How are you? (formal) – Wie geht es Ihnen? (vee gayt es ee-nen)
- (Very) Good – (Sehr) Gut (zair goot) / Bad – Schlecht (shlekht)
- I’m doing well. – Mir geht’s gut. (MIR gates GOOt)
- Do you speak English? (informal) – Sprichst du englisch? (shprikhst doo eng-lish)
- I would like… – Ich hätte gern… (Ish het-a Gar-en)
- I am from…[the USA/Canada/Australia/UK]. – Ich komme aus…(den USA/Kanada/Australien/Großbritannien)
- Do you speak English? – Sprechen Sie Englisch? (SPRA-shun see ANG-lish)
- I don’t understand – Ich verstehe nicht (Ish VARE-stahe nisht)
- I can’t speak German – Ich kann kein Deutsch. (Ish kun kine doitsh)
- How much does that cost? – Wieviel kostet das? (Vee-veal cost-it DAs?)
- Cheers! – Prost! (PRO-st)
- Have a good trip! – Gute Reise! (GOOt-a Rise-a)
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March 26th - April 3rd

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CONSTRUCTION & DESIGN

In 1962, famed German architect Mies van der Rohe was chosen to design the ultimate modern museum space. This new gallery would showcase art from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Eager to have a Mies building in Berlin, museum planners gave him full creative control and a blank check. To design the structure, Mies looked directly to his past work. Several years previously, Mies designed a strikingly similar building for the new headquarters of the Bacardi Company in Cuba. After the project was abandoned in 1960 due to political unrest, Mies aimed to reuse the design for a museum to house George Schaefer’s collection of nineteenth-century art. The Schaefer Museum was never constructed, but when Mies was approached to design the Neue Nationalgalerie he saw the opportunity to finally implement this design. Located only a short distance from the newly erected Berlin Wall, the Neue Nationalgalerie and gardens opened in 1968 with very few changes from Mies’ original design for the Bacardi headquarters.

West Berlin planners envisioned Neue Nationalgalerie as one of the cornerstones of the Kulturforum, a prestige project of cultural buildings that aimed to amplify western values and culture in a divided city. Mies claimed that he intended the building’s modernist glass structure to symbolize western freedom and openness. Following a meticulously designed grid pattern, the gallery includes the upper glass pavilion finished with granite and marble, and a lower white-cube gallery which opens on a sculpture garden.
The Neue Nationalgalerie is a significant piece of architectural art, but also a challenging practical space. Curators and museum professionals have frequently complained about the difficulties of designed exhibits for the gallery. Polished floors reflect ample natural light to cast awkward shadows throughout the space. Since all the exterior walls are glass, museum interpretation and casework must rely on movable freestanding walls that limit options for curators. The layout also makes it difficult to differentiate exhibit spaces, resulting in a confusing layout and visitor experience. Architectural and aesthetic elements chosen for the sake of design have resulted in additional logistical problems for gallery staff. Thin glass windows are prone to cracking and doors are too small to move large art works through. Mies fully understood these issues but was determined to continue despite them for the sake of his design. When asked about potentially revising some aspects of the building, Mies famously quipped, “it means great difficulties for the exhibiting of art. I am fully aware of that. But it has such potential that I simply cannot take those difficulties into account.”

Public reaction to the museum was mixed. Some applauded the structure’s open and flexible floor plan and interpreted the transparent walls as symbolic of an elimination of barriers between art and the community. Others, particularly young students, derided the building as another temple for the rich and privileged.

The Neue Nationalgalerie closed for extensive renovations in 2015 and reopened in August 2021. The architectural updates were intended to meld seamlessly into Mies’ style while fixing some of the infrastructure and logistical issues to create a usable space. Today, the collection houses at the gallery focuses on modern art from the 20th century, especially works of Cubist, Expressionist, Bauhaus, and Surrealist art.

This museum space provides an opportunity to look at the somewhat awkward tension between form and function. The desire to create beautiful structures can sometimes come at the expanse of functional spaces that can clearly and accessibly communicate with the audiences they intend on reaching. This discussion prompts important questions about museum structures.

**PUBLIC CRITICISM**

"It means great difficulties for the exhibiting of art. I am fully aware of that. But it has such potential that I simply cannot take those difficulties into account.”

— Mies van der Rohe

**THE GALLERY TODAY**

What is the purpose of museum buildings in of themselves?

When are museum structures art and when are they vessels of art? Where is the line between the two?
RUSSIAN HONOR MEMORIAL TIERGARTEN

Just a few months after the Red Army captured Berlin in May 1945, the Soviet Union erected a monument in the center of the city to the more than 80,000 Soviet soldiers killed in the Battle of Berlin. The monument in Tiergarten features a towering Soviet soldier flanked by Soviet tanks and howitzers used in the Battle of Berlin. In addition to its role as a monument, the site is also the final resting place of 2,000 soldiers killed in the fighting. Although the memorial is located in what would later be the British sector of the city, the memorial remained a site of active commemoration throughout the Cold War. Soviet honor guards crossed over from East Berlin daily to guard the monument and lay wreaths. The engraving in Russian at the monument’s base reads, “Eternal glory to heroes who fell in battle with the German fascist invaders for the freedom and independence of the Soviet Union.”

RUSSIAN MEMORIAL TREPTOW

Like the memorial in Tiergarten, the Russian Memorial in Treptow commemorates the Battle of Berlin. Designed by Soviet architect Yakov Belopolsky, the memorial features a 12-meter-tall bronze statue of a Soviet soldier holding a German child and standing over a broken swastika. Both this memorial at Treptow and the memorial at Tiergarten were supposedly constructed using materials from the bombed ruins of the Reich Chancellery. Opening four years after the end of World War II, the memorial site includes the graves of over 5,000 Soviet soldiers. The monument in Treptow was designed as a triptych. The other two corresponding monuments in the series are in Volgograd (formerly Stalingrad) and Magnitogorsk. For many years, Treptow served as East Germany’s central and most important memorial commemorating World War II.

MARX AND ENGELS DENKMAL

Before World War II, the Marx Engels Forum was a densely populated quarter of Old Town Berlin. After the neighborhood was reduced to ruins during the war, the area was cleared. In 1977, the German Democratic Republic appointed the sculptor Ludwig Engelhardt to redevelop the empty space as a tribute to Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. The figures of Marx and Engels are depicted in bronze as larger than life and their gaze looks wistfully towards the east. Both are also placed at eye level where visitors can touch and interact with them.
**THE POLITICS OF MEMORY**

Like many other memorials in Central and Eastern Europe, the Soviet memorials of Berlin carry with them an additional layer of meaning and interpretation informed by Cold War and contemporary politics. The Russian memorials in Treptow and Tiergarten both commemorate the Soviet defeat of Nazism and thousands of lives lost in the Battle of Berlin. Yet, over time they gained new meaning as symbols of both Soviet control and of violence inflicted on Berliners. In recognition of the atrocities committed by the Soviet army on German civilians, some have taken to calling the two war memorials the “Tomb of the Unknown Rapists.”

In 1990, the Treaty on the Final Settlement with Respect to Germany reunited the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic. In the agreement, the unified Germany assumed responsibility for the maintenance for Soviet war memorials. After the 2014 Russian annexation of Crimea, a petition circulated calling for the removal of Soviet tanks in Berlin’s monuments, which many interpreted as a symbol of Russian violence. Citing the terms of reunification, the Bundenstag rejected the petition. In light of Russia’s 2022 invasion of Ukraine, the issue of what should be done with Berlin’s soviet memorials is certain to resurface.

> “Eternal glory to heroes who fell in battle with the German fascist invaders for the freedom and independence of the Soviet Union.”
> --Engraving on the Russian Honor Memorial Tiergarten

- What roles do Soviet monuments play in public memory? How has role changed?
- How can these monuments be used to remember both Nazi and Soviet atrocities?
**MEMORIAL TO HOMOSEXUALS PERSECUTED UNDER NAZISM**

**2008**

The concrete cube structure houses a projection of two men kissing.

There was initial contention about it being across from Eismann's Memorial to Murdered Jews in Europe. Some considered it may be insulting, or outright dismissed the need for such a memorial.

**Artists:** gay artists Michael Elmgreen and Ingar Dragset (often called Elmgreen & Dragset),

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**MEMORIAL TO GAY VICTIMS OF NAZI REPRESSION**

**1989**

The pink granite triangle was installed in the Nollendorfplatz U-Bahn Station, and in 1993 an additional plaque was added. This plaza once had a vibrant queer community that had bars, bookstores, cafes, theatres, and dance halls. Due to Nazi laws and extermination goals, this community was decimated. The Pencil Monument in Nollendorfplatz (2000) also serves as a reminder that this was where the queer community once thrived.
MEMORIAL TO THE SINTI AND ROMA VICTIMS OF NATIONAL SOCIALISM

**Artist:** Dani Karavan (Israeli sculptor)

**Location:** Tiergarten

- **1992**
  Agreement to build memorial

- **2001**
  Agreement on location

- **2008**
  Construction

- **2012**
  Completion

As you enter the memorial’s space, the sound of notes from a violin streams in. Each note is described as “distinct,” and “haunting,” until finally it is “like a keening wail.”

A circular reflective pool with a triangle that houses as a base for a fresh flower that is “refilled” frequently. The triangle represents the triangle badges forced upon the different ethnic, religious, or sexual minorities when arrested and moved to the camps. The Roma and Sinti were often made to wear black triangles, which was the catch-all for all “asocials” or those deemed unfit for society.

Asio Otus. 2012.

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**AUSCHWITZ**

Muj šukkó, kjá
kalé vušt
šurde; kwit.
Jilo čindó bi
dox, bi lav,
nikt ruvbé.

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**AUSCHWITZ**

Gaunt face
dead eyes
cold lips
quiet
a broken heart
out of breath
without words
no tears

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**AUSCHWITZ**

Drenperdo Mui,
phagede Jakha,
schiel Wuschtia;
Pokunipen.
Phagedo Dschi,
kek Ducho, kek
Labensa, kek
Asvia.

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**Plaque poem by Italian Sinti and Roma composer, Santino Spinelli**

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DANIEL EVERTON
ALTES MUSEUM

FILL IN THE BLANK

The architect was named Karl ________________ Schinkel.

The Altes Museum was used in Nazi _________________.

First ordered in 1828, the museum would not be completed until _________________.

TRUE OR FALSE

WHICH IS A BIG Fat LIE?

The Altes Museum was built in Bavaria and then transported to Berlin  T  F

The building is constructed with concrete that looks like marble.  T  F

The original design called for the building to be painted.  T  F

Schinkel was Prussian  T  F

Name something else Schinkel has done:  __________________________

BONUS!

Find an artifact in the Museum and draw it!
ACROSS

3. What does Altes mean?
5. What is its largest collection? (In German!)
7. What type of columns does it have?

DOWN

1. What style is the architecture?
2. What language is on the portico?
4. How many horses can be seen from the front? (Look up!)
6. Which King Frederick ordered Schinkel to make this? (Hint: Not the gay one)
Libeskind's main inspiration for the design of the museum was mapping the loss of Jewish life and culture from Berlin during World War 2 in an effort to reassert that identity within the city. The exterior facade is cut with an abstracted map of the addresses of prominent Jewish citizens living in Berlin and places of cultural significance for the Berlin Jewish population prior to the War. In the tradition of Walter Benjamin, this map provides conceptual wayfinding for memories of a lost population. The abstraction of this map informs the overall dimensions and shape of the building, which is meant to evoke a fractured Star of David or a lightning bolt. Libeskind’s map is cut into this building’s reflective facade as windows, forming a visible pattern of absence on the outside of the building and creating the only means of looking at the outside world from within the building.

The interior layout of the Museum is designed around three axes: The Axis of Exile, the Axis of the Holocaust, and the Axis of Continuity. These axes represent the three paths of German Jewish people during and after World War 2 and lead to different interpretive spaces inside the building. The layout of the rooms and content is intentionally confusing, meant to evoke the confusion and desperation of Jewish citizens trying to navigate the War and Holocaust. Libeskind envisioned another straight axis running through the building and intersecting with the geometric exterior design. Where this line intersects, the Museum opens into Voids, mostly inaccessible spaces that fill the height of the building. These voids represent the loss of Jewish life and culture from Berlin, a void that can never be filled.
THE MUSEUM

Libeskind's building holds the collections of the Jewish Museum. The museum's main exhibit, which was recently updated in 2020, is titled "Jewish Life in Germany: Past and Present", and follows Jewish history from the Middle Ages to the present. This exhibit replaces the original exhibit, which was generally considered small and underwhelming set within the scope and intensity of Libeskind's building. chezweitz, the design firm hired to complete this new exhibition, worked with the building's intentionally disjointed layout and dark jagged shapes to create thematically coherent but visually contrasting sections that focused on focused detail instead of heavy artistic abstraction.

THE "OLD BUILDING"

Visitors enter the Museum through the Baroque Old Building, formerly the Collegienhaus for the Royal Court of Justice. It was designed by Philipp Gerlach and built in 1735 and is the last remaining Baroque palace in Friedrichstadt. Originally the Berlin Museum, Libeskind incorporated the structure into his design for the Jewish Museum. The main facade remains intact, but the back of the building is now a covered glass courtyard. Visitors enter the Jewish Museum from the old Berlin Museum through an underground passage, linking the history of the city to the history of its Jewish population.

GARDEN OF EXILE

Walking along the Axis of Exile, visitors come out of the main building into the Garden of Exile. The tall stele and tilted floor evoke the feelings of disorientation felt by Jewish German refugees fleeing persecution, while the olive trees growing above the stele are a symbol of peace and hope. This garden can only be reached by traveling through the labyrinthine inner museum.

The Jewish Museum has remained empty at various times during its life as exhibitions are installed and changed. Many visitors found Libeskind's empty building to stand on its own as a poignant memorial for the Jewish victims of World War 2. For these visitors, exhibitions struggle to convey meaning within this intentional structure and detracted from the experience Libeskind intended. The new central exhibition tries to combat this perspective and add interpretive context about Jewish history and culture. During our visit, consider if the exhibitions add or detract from your experience. Would your opinion be different if you entered the space without any context as a casual visitor? How does the architectural design work with or against the purpose of the Museum?
MONUMENTS, PUBLIC ART, AND MEMORIALS ON THE TAUENTZIENSTRASSE

KAISER WILHELM MEMORIAL CHURCH
Memorial Against War and Destruction

Commissioned by Kaiser Wilhelm II as a memorial for his grandfather and figurehead of German Unification in 1870, Kaiser Wilhelm I.

Architect: Franz Heinrich Schwechten (original), Egon Eiermann (reconstruction)
Style: Neo-Romanesque style
571 ft. central tower, which was heavily damaged during British air raids in 1943 and 1945.

The main spire of the Church was left untouched in its ruined state as a memorial against war and destruction. This choice to memorialize war through preservation of ruin ties into Riegel's discussion of a monument's age value. In addition, contemporary writers have ascribed more aesthetic value to the church in its ruined state than it held in its complete state. What do you think gives the church value as a monument? How do you think Eiermann’s modern additions compliment or detract from the original structure?

WHO'S WHO?

Kaiser Wilhelm II
Notoriously disliked, leader of Germany from 1888-1918 who commissioned the Church in memory of his grandfather.

Kaiser Wilhelm I
King of Prussia, Emperor of Germany, presided over German Unification, and generally better liked than his grandson.

Franz Schwechten
Architect of the original Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church.

Egon Eiermann
Architect of the reconstructed Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church.

WHAT IS NEO-ROMANESQUE?

It’s an architectural style defined by round arches, thick entryways and windows, towers, symmetry, and a reliance on the Roman arch. See if you can spot these details in the original tower!
BERLIN
Artists: Brigitte Matschinsky-Denninghoff and Martin Matschinsky

1891
Installed on the Tauentzienstraße as part of West Berlin’s celebration of the city’s 750th anniversary.

It is one of eight public art pieces installed along the street as part of the celebration, and stands in line with the Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church and the Wittenbergplatz train station.

The artists intended the statue to speak to Berlin’s separation during the Cold War, and chose its location strategically - it’s oriented East/West, placing the viewer in sight of a memorial to Germany’s destructive military past, and the main transit line connecting East and West Berlin.

This sculpture is constructed from steel tubes with concrete bases and aligns with the artists’ prior work with Minimalism-inspired tubular structures. Evoking broken chains, trees, gateways, even knots, the intertwined bars highlight a shared past, while the fundamental separation at the center of the structure speaks to the fractured and seemingly irreparable divide of Cold War Berlin.

How does this sculpture marry the goals of art and memorialization? Considered next to the very literal Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church, how does the abstraction of this piece work with or against its memorial purpose?

WITTENBERGPLATZ: PLACES OF TERROR WE MUST NEVER FORGET

1891
Places of Terror lists concentration and death camps used by Nazis during the Holocaust. It stands outside the Wittenbergplatz, a station for the Berlin U-Bahn (underground rail). The station was opened in 1902 and is an active rail station for the city’s public transportation network.

The camp names on the sign are formatted to resemble stops along a train or bus route. It serves as a reminder of the role of modern transit in moving Jewish Berliners from the city to camps, and of the acceptance of the structures of mass murder by ordinary citizens.

Wittenbergplatz was not a prominent departure point for Jewish victims. However, it is a busy transit station, and near one of Berlin’s biggest shopping centers. Is this the best location for a memorial like Places of Terror? Is the generic, uninterpreted format effective, or does it render it less effective?
The basic architectural idea of the museum based on a classical temple was highly promoted by the Prussian king Friedrich Wilhelm IV, who died a year before the museum went under construction in 1862. An equestrian statue of him stands outside the building, remembering the staunchly conservative but Romantic monarch’s penchant for art and for imperial building campaigns.

The statue remembers the king as a patron of the arts but says little about his role as a conservative imperial monarch.

The Walhalla memorial is closely related to the Alte Nationalgalerie through their shared reference to Classical architecture, a preferred style of the Prussian imperial regime.

The Athenian Acropolis is the main stylistic progenitor of the Alte Nationalgalerie

**1862**

- **Constructed**
  - The neoclassical Alte Nationalgalerie contains paintings and sculptures largely from the 19th century.

**1876 (MARCH 21)**

- The museum opened on the birthday of Friedrich Wilhelm IV’s successor, Wilhelm I

**THE ARCHITECTS**

The museum was originally designed by architect Friedrich August Stüler, a student of Karl Friedrich Schinkel and architect of the Neues Museum. The Alte Nationalgalerie was subsequently completed by Johann Heinrich Strack. Stüler died before he had completed his plans for the design, which architect Carl Busse completed. Like many other public institutions of the day, the Alte Nationalgalerie reflects the Prussian penchant for a classical style that Schinkel had largely popularized. Its appearance recalls not only classical Greek temple architecture, specifically that of the Parthenon, but also other German architectural projects executed in the classical style. The raised museum recalls architect Friedrich Gilly’s proposed monument to Friedrich II of Prussia, which would have taken the form of a classical, rectangular temple raised above the city of Berlin much like the Parthenon rises above the city of Athens on the Acropolis. The Alte Nationalgalerie also has architectural resonance with the Walhalla, a hall of fame for notable Germans in the arts, sciences, and politics that is located in the town of Donaustauf.
The museum's original collection was formed by a bequest of art from the German banker Johann Heinrich Wilhelm Wagener. Wagener's original collection of 262 pieces contained numerous pieces by key figures of German art including Caspar David Friedrich and Karl Friedrich Schinkel. Today, the collection of approximately 1800 paintings and 1500 sculptures is a repository of Romantic and Impressionistic artworks. Its holdings now include pieces by Claude Monet, Edgar Degas, Auguste Renoir, Édouard Manet, and Paul Cézanne and sculptures by Johann Gottfried Schadow, the sculptor of the Brandenburg Gate's Quadriga statue.

Gilly’s plan for a monument to Friedrich II was never completed but illustrates the German imperial preference for Neoclassical styles.

After the reunification of Berlin, renovations on the museum under the direction of architectural firm HG Merz Berlin began in 1992. Unlike that of the next-door Neues Museum, the renovation of the Alte Nationalgalerie was very faithful to its original interior and exterior appearance. Reopened in December of 2001, the Alte Nationalgalerie was the first on Museum Island to do so and celebrated its 125th anniversary upon its reopening.

Why was the neoclassical style often used for 19th century art museums?

What role does the Alte Nationalgalerie’s collection play in the temporal and geographic breakdown of Berlin’s museum holdings?

Can we dissociate art and its collection from political and imperial projects?
How can we rectify Käthe Kollwitz’s original artistic intentions with the work her statue is now doing in its enlarged form? Does the pietà statue obfuscate responsibility for atrocities by inviting too broad of a public identification as “victims”?

**BISMARCK MEMORIAL**

**Location:** Tiergarten  
**Artist:** Reinhold Begas

1906  
Completed

Berlin’s memorial to Otto von Bismarck (1815–1898) honors the first Chancellor of the German Empire, who served three kings (subsequently emperors) between 1862 and 1890. Designed by the German sculptor Reinhold Begas, the monument depicts Bismarck as a victorious statesman in a cuirassier’s uniform, referencing his military might during the three Prussian wars of expansion that he used to engineer the unification of the disparate German states under one overarching empire. Formerly located in front of the Reichstag, the monument was moved to the Tiergarten under Adolf Hitler’s direction in 1938.
Like other monuments to Bismarck across Germany, the Berlin monument has been the site of physical interventions; in July of 2020, the memorial was splashed in red and yellow paint, and the words “Decolonise [sic] Berlin” were spray-painted onto the base of the memorial. As a political figure, Bismarck is seen by some not only as the engineer of Germany’s unification, but also as a key player in the German Empire’s expansion and subjugation of colonial subjects in Africa, South America, and Asia. His political agenda, and his subsequent nationalist valorization by the Nazis, have brought his memorialization into contemporary question.

How does Bismarck’s personal status and history figure into this monument? Into the physical memorialization of Germany’s imperial past?

How can we rectify monuments to imperial and nationalistic political figures alongside monuments to the victims of atrocities and violence in Berlin’s memorial landscape?

SIEGESÄULE

VICTORY COLUMN

Location: Tiergarten – Großer Stern
Artists: Heinrich Strack and Friedrich Drake

1873

The Siegesäule or Victory Column affords a panoramic view of the city from the top of its 67-meter column (approximately 220 feet). Located in the center of the Tiergarten, the column occupies a major interior intersection of the park called the Großer Stern (“Great Star”). Designed by the German architect Heinrich Strack and German sculptor Friedrich Drake, the column went under construction in 1864 and was meant to celebrate Prussia’s victory over Denmark in the Second Schleswig War. The column was finally finished in 1873 after the Prussians had defeated the Austrians in 1866 and then the French in 1871, and thus served as a commemorative monument to the entirety of the Wars of German.

The Column sits atop a massive granite plinth that is decorated with bronze friezes of military victories. The circular colonnade that surrounds the glass-mosaiced base of the monument also depicts scenes of German imperial military success. The column itself is composed of four fluted sandstone barrels; the first three parts are decorated with gilded cannon barrels of various sizes, referring both to Germany’s military might and to the three specific campaigns which the monument was meant to glorify. The Victory Column is topped with a gilded statue of a winged angel representing Viktoria or Nike, the goddess of victory, which faces the Brandenburg Gate.

The column was enlarged and relocated as part of Adolf Hitler and Albert Speer’s unfulfilled urban expansion plans; Hitler oversaw the addition of the fourth section of the column. At the conclusion of WWII, both the Polish and the French armies raised their own national flags from the top of the column, visualizing their own military success over Germany.

Should the Sieggesäule be returned to its original appearance?

The monument is a frequent stop on Pride parades and shares its name with the queer magazine Sieggesäule. What are the implications of the monument’s appropriate by the queer community in Berlin?
The equestrian monument to Prussian King Friedrich II (1712–1786) commemorates his life and times. Designed by the German sculptor Christian Daniel Rauch (1777–1857), the statue was unveiled on Unter den Linden on May 31, 1851; Karl Friedrich Schinkel also contributed to the statue’s design. Depicted astride a spirited stallion, the king appears composed and wise. Instead of a sword hanging at his left-hand side, a cane hangs just below his right hand.

The statue of Friedrich, which is larger than life, stands atop a four-part pedestal. At the top of the monument, a frieze shows the king’s life, cornered by allegorical female figures depicting the four Platonic virtues. Friedrich II was the first Prussian king to be honored with an equestrian statue, but he is not the only figure depicted on the monument. Some 74 other figures decorate the middle sections of the ensemble, honoring the surrounding cadre of military, political, and intellectual figures who undergirded Friedrich’s reign. At each corner, a major general of the time is depicted in a life-size equestrian statue. On the west side of the monument, however, numerous statues also depicted figures from Prussian’s cultural and intellectual scene, including the philosopher Immanuel Kant.

The statue’s foundation stone was laid in 1840, 100 years after Friedrich had acceded to the throne, although its completion was subsequently delayed by the 1848–49 revolution. In 1949, the statue was dismantled and removed from Unter den Linden to the grounds outside Friedrich’s Potsdam palace Sans Souci so that it could remain in West Berlin. By 1959, however, the statue was slated to be melted down. The collective will of academics and politicians prevented its destruction, and the statue was thoroughly restored on its original site 2001.

How does the statue’s function as a memorial both to Frederick and to his courtly milieu reflect both the political realities of his time and idealized historical images of his reign?
HISTORY OF THE SITE

Originally a military fort built from 1559-94, The Zitadelle Spandau now functions as a museum that offers permanent exhibitions on the history of the town of Spandau and the castle and citadel that make up fortress. Beyond its site-specific exhibitions, Zitadelle Spandau is home to political monuments which were once displayed in Berlin but have now been removed.

Touted as “one of the best-preserved Renaissance fortresses in all of Europe,” the citadel was built at the meeting of the Havel and Spree Rivers and served as an active military fort for about 360 years spanning the Thirty Years War (1618-1648) to a base for Nazi soldiers in WWII.

Fun Fact: The Julius Tower (featured in photo to the right) was built in the 13th century, prior to the rest of the citadel, making it Berlin's oldest building!
Unveiled. Berlin and its Monuments

The permanent exhibition of the discarded monuments, “Unveiled. Berlin and its Monuments”, opened in April 2016 and contains around 100 pieces mainly from the German Imperial era (1871–1918). Holding artifacts ranging from busts of militaristic Prussian rulers, statues of Aryan athletes and warriors, and an eight-ton granite head of Vladimir Lenin, these statues are presented as they were found (bullet holes, missing pieces, and damage from bombs included). Urte Evert, director of the Citadel, says, “Inside the museum, visitors confront at eye level statues and monuments that used to represent power,” Evert says. “You can touch everything. Nothing is put on a pedestal. You can talk about what makes you mad.” The exhibit creates a space of contact and mitigates the risk of historical amnesia and erasure. 

How does the physical space of Spandau Zitadelle enhance or detract from the reckoning process the “Unveiled. Berlin and its Monuments” exhibition sets out? In other words, if museums are often sites of power and meaning-making to what extent can museums successfully unmake meaning and minimize power?
The German Resistance Memorial Center at BendlerBlock

In 1944 a group of German army officers plotted an assassination attempt against Adolf Hitler. Led by Claus von Stauffenberg, the group planned to plant a bomb to kill Hitler and then organize a coup against the rest of the Nazi regime. On July 20, 1944, the bomb was successfully planted by von Stauffenberg himself; however, Hitler was only wounded by the impact and then sought revenge on his attempted killers. A day later, von Stauffenberg and his collaborators were all executed in the courtyard of Bendlerblock.

In commemoration of their bravery and other resistance movements through the history of Germany, a memorial was erected in 1980. Featuring the bronze figure of a young man with his hands bound, by Professor Richard Scheibe, an inscription in front of the figure reads:

“You did not bear the shame.
You fought back.
You gave the great,
Forever tireless
Sign of change,
Sacrificing your glowing life
For freedom,
Justice, and honor.”
Resistance against National Socialism

The courtyard memorial is part of the larger German Resistance Memorial Center located in the BendlerBlock building. The building itself was built in 1914 in a neoclassical style and served many purposes from headquarters to the Imperial Naval Cabinet under Emperor Wilhelm II in the early 20th century and then German Army offices during the time von Stauffenberg worked there in the mid 20th century. Now the BendlerBlock building is home to a permanent exhibition called “Resistance against National Socialism” which covers the diverse and rich history of resistance movements against the National Socialist dictatorship.

“You did not bear the shame.
You fought back.
You gave the great,
Forever timeless
Sign of change,
Sacrificing your glowing life
For freedom,
Justice, and honor.”
– Inscription on memorial

Photo of Claus von Stauffenberg
BERLIN WALL MEMORIALS

Location: border of East and West Berlin
Length of wall: about 90 miles
Height: 11.81 ft
Primary materials: concrete
Current status: Mostly dismantled

1961

Erected by the Communist government of East Germany in 1961

It was made of stone and cement, with barbed wire to discourage crossing and empty space to allow for the guards to harm people who wished to cross.

The wall was called “Antifaschistischer Schutzwall”, and alleged to prevent fascists (the Western Berliners) from crossing over the dividing line.

Checkpoints were spread out along the length of it to allow for visitors to cross, theoretically, but passing through these checkpoints was not encouraged.

Unfortunately, this wall is a site of violence, as residents who attempted to cross were at times killed by guards, and an estimated 170 people were victims of fatal violence. Over the course of nearly 30 years, thousands of people did successfully cross the wall.

MEMORIAL TO THE FALL OF THE WALL: "THE BIG ONE"

The majority of this wall was knocked down in late 1989, and pieces of it were saved and displayed in collections and museums. The remaining wall fragments are artistic canvases, and serve as a multi-site memorial to this partition and then following reunification.

This memorializes the 1989 destruction of the wall and the reunification which followed.

From this source I learned the word Gedenkstätte, meaning memorial, and here is an important word for us to know as we travel through the city. This organization is rather large and includes a research team, and their sites include Checkpoint Charlie Memorial, Marienfelde Refugee Center Museum, Berlin Wall Memorial, plus a research team and an education team and many visitor-facing services. On the wall memorial itself, they say “The memorial extends along 1.4 kilometers of Bernauer Strasse. It is situated on the former border strip between East and West Berlin.” It is meant to help us understand borders, how they are created by people and can be destroyed by people. The idea of borders, crossings, and walls loom very large in Berlin, and it seems we will come face to face with this topic several times.

MEMORIALS TO THE WALL NEAR THE BRANDENBURG GATE

Small one, Strasse de 17

This is the smaller memorial, honoring the same subject mentioned above.

Julia Zimring

TRACI PICARD
**CHECKPOINT CHARLIE**

This is the location of a historic border crossing. There was a little guard house, and now a museum at the site.

This site is symbolic of the top-down control of movement, media, and thought attempted by the East Germans in postwar times.

“Non-military travelers were often subject to intense scrutiny before being allowed to pass the East German border, and guards were known to confiscate any newspapers or literature that contradicted communist ideology.”

-Evan Andrews

**EAST SIDE GALLERY**

The East Side Gallery is a piece of the Berlin wall which still stands, featuring a variety of graffiti. Change is the nature of graffiti, so what we see may vary, but it is intended to honor the wall and the many issues connected to it.

There are many political messages in the graffiti here; we can use an example of the most famous wall graffito, titled “My God, help me to survive this deadly love.”

Created by artist Dmitri Vrubel in 1990, it was painted onto the Eastern side and references a famous photograph taken 11 years before, in 1979.

“Fraternal kiss”, photographed by Regis Bossu, captured the celebration of the 30th anniversary of the founding of the German Democratic Republic. The 2 politicians Erich Honeker, a leader of the German Democratic Republic, and Leonid Brezhnev, Soviet General Secretary, greeted each other with what is referred to as “a Socialist kiss”, and the art plays on the layers of meaning we could draw from it.

This is further complicated by the many years of this piece put into conversation with more recent events, as noted by this 2005 photo. It has since been restored.

An important fact is that the piece was created after the fall of the wall, and prior to this time, the majority of graffiti art was on the Western side of the wall. This is a sign of the changes that happened as the reunification process unfolded, and the restoration of a graffito tells us about the change in valuation of street art from something to be prevented, into something to be cared for and even promoted.
The Deutsches Historical Museum is primarily focused on history. Their building was finished in 1730, after over 30 years of hammering away at it, and is the oldest extant building in the Unter den Linden area. It was not originally built for its current purpose. Originally, it was called "Zeughaus", which literally seems to mean "things house", but is better translated to arsenal or armory. It was a team effort to plan and design this, "four architects were involved in its construction: "Johann Arnold Nering was responsible for the planning; after his death, Martin Grünberg supervised its construction. Three years later, he was replaced by Andreas Schlüter, who also designed the 22 relief heads of vanquished mythological giants". Major rebuilding occurred after World War II when the Zeughaus was damaged. Though the building is old, the business is not; it was only founded in 1987.

"It sees itself as a place for strengthening historical judgment, where overarching philosophical, ethical and historical questions are negotiated.”

- The elevator pitch of the Museum

More modern additions are part of the structure now, including an I. M. Pei-designed Exhibition Hall section, made mainly of glass. The museum describes this addition quite poetically, "His building is a compelling masterpiece of urban design that conveys a sense of transparency, light, and movement while creating a striking counterpart to the Baroque Zeughaus." I feel the love!

"The architecture should seduce people to move through the whole building full of curiosity and pleasure. I even want to tempt them to the top-most floor through ever more steps, new views."

- I. M. Pei, pictured in front of another of his famous works in Paris.

The museum lives among a little neighborhood of multiple museums, memorials, and cultural sites alongside the Spree River. What stands out to me most about this location is how "hard" it is; I feel like an entire quarry of stone has disgorged itself onto the plaza and assembled into a stone scape. They say of their home that “the building itself speaks of Germany’s turbulent history”, but don’t get deeply into how, and I look forward to listening to the speech of the building to see what it says to me. Perhaps these sculptures of dying warriors are one way that turbulence is communicated?
This museum appears to have a very large collection, and they place their earliest local artifacts in the early Middle Ages, before the existence of “a place called Germany”. They also mention that they have a 3rd-century Roman milestone, which I would consider to be older than early Middle Ages, so perhaps we can look into this further onsite.

There are both permanent exhibits housed here, and rotating exhibitions. These reflect the history of Germany as well as a wide variety of things that I’d call “eclectic”, including textiles, sculpture, all types of art, a pop-up camper, a very old helmet, and primary source documents.

Recently, they have acquired a large collection of objects which demonstrate the history of anti-Semitism. Approximately 15,000 objects were collected over time by a Holocaust survivor, and these will be available for researchers to learn more about this pernicious evil.

The big exhibit happening during our visit is Karl Marx and Capitalism, which I didn’t realize I wanted to see, but it sounds intriguing. “The exhibition ‘Karl Marx and Capitalism’ presents and problematizes that work and influence of Marx as a confrontation with a dynamically changing capitalism and the controversies of the 19th century”. Perhaps this exhibit can be paired with some of the memorials of communism, resistance and political action.

OTHER IMPORTANT FACTS

There is a little cafe inside, and a gift shop. I will look forward to purchasing some Marx-themed souvenirs.

Inside the museum is a movie theater.

There is also a large research library, which I’d like to set aside time for someday.
1878: Wilhelm von Bode proposes a new Renaissance museum.

1880: Bode presents this idea to Crown Prince Friedrich Wilhelm.

1888: Wilhelm I dies and the Crown Prince succeeds him as Kaiser Friedrich III. After reigning for 99 days, he dies and is succeeded by his son, Wilhelm II. Wilhelm II commissions German architect Ernst von Ihne to design the museum in Baroque Revival style.

1904: The Kaiser Friedrich Museum opens on October 18th, the same day that Friedrich III would have turned 73.

1943-45: Works of art were evacuated to salt mines with the outbreak of WWII. The Allies’ full-scale attacks on Berlin caused severe damages to the Kaiser Friedrich Museum.

1949: After WWII, Germany and Berlin were divided into four occupation zones, with two German states — the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic. The holdings in the Sculpture Collection and the Museum of Byzantine Art were subsequently housed partly in the Kaiser Friedrich Museum in East Berlin and partly in the Bruno Paul building in West Berlin.

1956: The museum was officially renamed after Bode, its inaugural director and spiritual founder.

1990s: The fall of the Berlin Wall made merging the collections possible.

1998-2006: After the German Reunification, extensive measures were carried out to renovate the museum. Viennese architect Heinz Tesar and the firm Christophe Fischer are tasked with the overhaul of the Bode Museum, reconstructing the ceilings and floors in keeping with the historical building.
The Sculpture Collection and Museum of Byzantine Art and the Münzkabinett

The Sculpture Collection and Museum of Byzantine Art features one of the largest collections of ancient sculptures in the world. This was mainly the efforts of art historian Gustav Friedrich Wagon and the museum’s first director Wilhelm Bode, who acquired a great number of sculptures of Italian and German origin. The Numismatic collection contains 4000 coins and metals, presenting a complete monetary history from the beginnings of coinage in the 7th century to present day.

THE BUST OF FLORA

In 1909, Wilhelm von Bode purchased a wax bust of the goddess Flora for the sculpture collection and attributed the piece to Leonardo da Vinci. However, within two years of the artwork’s acquisition, more than 730 articles were published in international press, revolving around whether the bust was a da Vinci original. Since then, generations of art historians to the present day continue to debate over the authenticity of the Bust of Flora. In a recent study published in 2021, researchers conducted a chemical analysis and discovered from the wax sample that the Flora bust was created centuries after da Vinci’s death. This finding complements historical documents that point to 19th century British sculpture Richard Cockle Lucas as the original creator.
STUMBLING STONES

ARTIST: GUNTER DEMNIG
DATE: 1992 – PRESENT

- 10*10cm brass plates laid in front of the last voluntarily chosen place of residence of a victim of the Nazi
- Inscription begins with “Here Lived” and followed by the victim’s name, date of birth, and the tragedy inflicted upon them during the Holocaust (“internment,” “suicide,” “exile,” “deportation,” and “murder”).
- More than 70,000 stumbling stones laid in more than 1,200 cities in Europe.
- Honors all victims of the Nazi regime, including Jewish, Sinti, Roma, disabled, dissident etc.
- Local groups — residents of a particular street or children working on a school project — gather to research the biographies of victims and raise the 120 euro cost to installing a stone.

BOOK BURNING MEMORIAL

ARTIST: MICHA ULLMAN
DATE: 1995

- Dedicated to the remembrance of the Nazi book burnings that took place in Bebelplatz, Berlin in 1933.
- The empty white bookshelves have space for around 20,000 books, which symbolizes the over 20,000 books from mainly Jewish, communist, or liberal authors burned on 10 May 1933.
- Book burning 1933: On May 10, 1933, university students burned more than 25,000 “un-German” books in a campaign organized by Joseph Goebbels, Minister of Education and Propaganda of the Nazi government.
- Authors whose works were burned: Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Sigmund Freud, Rosa Luxembourg, Helen Keller, Albert Einstein, Ernst Hemingway, Erich Maria Remarque, H.G. Wells, Franz Kafka, Aldous Huxley, James Joyce, Vladimir Nabokov, Maxim Gorky, Leo Tolstoy

“IT begins with the void that exists in every pit and will not disappear. You could say that emptiness is a state, a situation formed by the sides of the pit: The deeper it is, the more sky there will be and the greater the void. In the library containing the missing books, that void is more palpable.”
— Micha Ullman

- Other projects by artist:
  - 1980: Odor marks (Paris)
  - 1981: Blood spot (London)
The three narrow mirrors inclined inward are reminiscent of the dressing mirrors in these Jewish fashion houses. Inside the pyramid are three plates embedded in the floor that provides information on the Jewish entrepreneurs and businessman that lived and worked here. The second part of the monument is names of Jewish fashion companies printed on the steps of the underground entrance.

In the 19th century, Hauvogteiplatz was a residential and business area for those primarily of the Jewish faith. Because Jews were barred from any industry other than trade and retail, many picked up tailoring and textile skills. By the mid-to-late 19th century, it became the center of Berlin’s clothing industry and the birthplace of German Konfektion, ready-to-wear garments. When Hitler rose to power, Jewish-owned clothing stores became the target of persecution. Manufacturers and business owners were forced to sell their storefronts and those who were unwilling risked being sent to extermination camps.

In what ways does memory work differently between grass-root memorials and state-sponsored ones?
MEMORIAL TO THE MURDERED JEWS OF EUROPE

DENKMAL FÜR DIE ERMORDETEN JUDEN EUROPAS

Architect: Peter Eisenman
Location: Western Mitte, under unter del Linden (former place of the Berlin wall)

1999
Commissioned by the German Federal Parliament

2003
Construction began

2005
Completed

“Architecture, I believe, is necessary to mark collective memory.”
“Architecture collects collective memory.”
Peter Eisenman

2,711 concrete slabs are organized in a grid and distributed on around 4.6 acres. Each slab (or stelae) is 7 ft 9+1/2 in long and 0.95 m 3 ft 1+1/2 in wide and has different heights (from 8 in. to 15 ft 5 in).

B.A. in Architecture from Cornell, Master of Architecture from Columbia, and M.A. and P.h.D. from Cambridge. He is also a writer and lecturer at Yale and has taught at Cambridge, Harvard, Pennsylvania, Princeton, among other institutions.

INSPIRATION

The journalist Lea Rosh and the historian Eberhard Jäckel proposed to construct a memorial in the late 1980s, in an effort to commemorate the event.

He talked with a woman who was taken to Auschwitz with her mother in 1944. Mengele separated them and she felt lost. It makes the public feel in a labyrinth, disoriented, and lost in space and time.

The shape, color, and organization of the slabs resemble coffins in a cemetery.

There is no clear entrance or exit. It is open to the public and does not have a physical restriction that limits its interaction with the blocks.

It is intended to be reflective and contemplative to induce a sense of “critical memory.”

Frank Stella was supposed to participate in the design, but he retired from the project.

Associated with the “Kuleshov effect” (film): the juxtaposition of image and text (the name of the monument and the image of the site) causes a feeling in the viewer. As it is abstract, the viewers attribute meaning by what they infer from its title.
Julia Zimring

THE “INFORMATION SITE”
Location: underground
Exhibition designer: Dagmar von Wilcken

Special and temporary exhibitions: “What was deemed fully legal at the time … – Soldiers and civilians tried before the courts of the military”, “Fire! Anti-Jewish Terror on Kristallnacht in November 1938”, and “The Unknown Extermination Camp at Chelmno nad Nerem – History and Remembrance”.

The stelae are used to carry information and content, providing them with meaning. Some can be seen and are incorporated into the four thematic rooms.

Humanization: use of personal testimonies, images, and belongings.

ROOM OF DIMENSIONS:
Diaries and letters (personal account of events).

ROOM OF FAMILIES:
Examples of 15 families from different origins and contexts using photos and personal belongings. There is a similar portrayal of objects in the Auschwitz museum.

ROOM OF NAMES:
Biographies of some of the victims. If you read everything in this room it would take six years, seven months, and 27 days.

ROOM OF SITES:
Videos of persecution around different places in Europe.

CONTROVERSIES:
The title is vague and has been criticized because it does not mention the Holocaust or a specific context, assuming the viewers are familiar with it and somehow avoids acknowledging the direct responsibility of the Germans for this event.

The company that produced the substant to protect the concrete from graffiti (Degussa) was found to be linked with the killing of the Jews, as one of its subsidiaries (Degesch) produced the Zyklon B gas used in extermination camps.

As a public memorial (funded by the Federal government) should it be more detailed and explained to the viewer?

What prevails: the creation of an explicit collective memory or the artist’s intention?

Should it remain abstract, according to the artist’s idea?
**NEUES MUSEUM**

**Architect:** Friedrich August Stüler (original) and David Chipperfield Architects and Julian Harrap (restoration).

**Location:** Museumsinsel

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It was commissioned by Prussian king Friedrich Wilhelm IV. During World War II it was bombed in 1943 and 1945 and abandoned through 1989. It was constructed after the Altes Museum (hence its name).

**Other works by the architect:**
- *Alte Nationalgalerie, 1862-1876* (planned by him and Johann Heinrich Strack, Neoclassical and Renaissance Revival).
- *Restoration of the Winter Palace, Saint Petersburg, Rusia also Neoclassical and Renaissance Revival, 1837*

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The restoration was done following the guidelines of the Venice Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites (1964) which states that historical buildings must be safeguarded as historical evidence, thus any modifications beyond the original form must not replicate this form but subtly mark the alterations.

It is part of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin (Berlin State Museums) which consists of seventeen museums, libraries, research centers, and other cultural institutions.
Preservation and reparation: not putting its elements in contrast but in conversation with each other. Gives a sense of authenticity (the age value is more prominent because it contrasts with the new) Superposition of different times and a museum as a testimony of history.

**INITIAL COLLECTION:**
- Ethnographic collection.
- Arts Chamber (Kunstkammer).
- Ancient Egypt, Greece, Rome, Byzantine, Gothic, Renaissance, Medieval and Modern art.

What are the significance and implications of these collections being here?

How does the museum as an institution perpetrates colonialism?

**CURRENT COLLECTION:**
Egyptian Museum and Papyrus Collection, the Museum of Pre- and Early History, part of the Collection of Classical Antiquities.
- Bust of Nefertiti
- Loans from Antikensammlung (Classical art collection of Pergamonmuseum and Altes Museum)
- Archaeological collection of the former Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte (prehistory and early history), since 2009.
- Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung (Ancient Egypt, with additions).

The architecture is soberer in spaces where objects need more protagonism.
HISTORY OF THE SITE
Architect Johann Höninger designed the Synagogue Levetzowstraße and it was inaugurated in 1914. Central to the growing Jewish communities in both Moabit and Hansaviertel, Synagogue Levetzowstraße housed not only one of the largest places for worship in the city, but also provided housing and religious education. The synagogue was damaged during the pogroms of 1938 but remained functional.

In 1941, the synagogue was misused as a collection point for Jews destined for deportation. It is estimated that 20,000 Jews passed through this space during this time. Days were spent in this structure, with violating physical examinations and processing of Jewish individuals happening between the walls of this place of worship. It was also a place where Jewish community cared for itself as these events unfolded. Jews were then transported by truck to nearby Putlitzbrücke station. However, after 1943 some were made to walk this distance on foot. The structure had to be demolished post-War due to extensive structural damage from Allied air-raids over Berlin. The original structure of the synagogue is no longer present; however, commemorative measures have been taken to represent the histories that took place here.
MEMORIALIZATION

The first act of remembrance for those who were deported was the placement of a plaque on the corner of Levetowstrasse and Jagowstrasse streets in 1960. In 1985, architects Jürgen Wenzel and Theseus Bappert, and sculptor Peter Herbich won a design competition to construct a memorial on the site of the synagogue. Their design operates within abstraction while representing the realities of deportation. A train car contains stylized marble statues of people, tied together. A ramp is placed at the train car entrance, with marble individuals set in motion entering the car. Additionally, plaques on the ground before the ramp represent synagogues that used to exist in Berlin. In the foreground is a metal wall with dates of deportations inscribed upon it. This memorial mixes representational with the historical realities. Its scope goes broad to the trains that deported Jews to ghettos and concentration camps all over Germany, trains that left the literal locations of Grunewald Station, for example. The scope also focuses on the structure that once stood here, how it served a community that has undergone and been lost to World War II, and the specific days of collection that were so full of fear, the unknown, and the violating acts of othering.

Hansaviertel, one of the smallest districts in Berlin, was almost completely destroyed from the bombings that occurred during World War II. Ten percent of these homes were Jewish residences and made up a lively Jewish community along with Jews living in neighboring Moabit. Jewish-owned businesses and cultural connection, often centering around the largest synagogue in the area, Synagogue Levetzowstraße, were all lost through very intentional acts of erasure. How do we hold this memory? How do we consider it wholly? This was once a place of cultural thriving that has been contorted to hold a history of pain. Bertram Janiszewski, in his book “Das alte Hansaviertel” writes: “The anxiety amongst the Jews is indescribable. Scenes unfolded on the street and at the synagogue on Levetzowstraße: helpless Jews, screaming Jews in crying fits (...) As much as I try to stay calm, this choking fear is hard to escape.” —Bertram Janiszewski

As we stand here, we must reckon with the realities that this war, these architectural consequences of it in both the loss and commemoration, all exist through intention. There was a reason why this space was used against the Jewish population of this area, and there is a reason that it now exists to represent this history.
We are standing together on a platform for a train, the tracks running endlessly ahead—this is a familiar sight, familiar objects, tracks and brick and infrastructure. We are standing together on this platform, obviously left unused. But as many have done before us, we are standing on this platform in a completely different context, time, background. This train was operational from 1941 to 1945 and located near the Wansee Villa, where in 1942 the decision on the “final solution” was made. Over 50,000 Berlin Jews were sent to concentration camps from this train station throughout its use.

Two memorials exist at this site, one commissioned by the state of Berlin in the late 1980s. The plan for the memorial was selected through a design competition, won by Polish artist Karol Broniatowski and was unveiled in 1991. It took the form of deportee silhouettes conveyed on an 18 meter-long concrete wall. The second memorial was commissioned by Deutsche Bahn, the German national railway company with the intent of confronting the company’s historic ties to the railway responsible for deporting Jews. Also chosen through a design competition, the winning designers, the architectural team of Hirsch, Lorch and Wandel, chose to remember through modifying the existing infrastructure and allowing for decay. Under our feet are grated floor coverings on the edge of the platform. Text on the edge of each chronologically accounts for each of the 186 deportations of Jews from Berlin to concentration camps, such as Theresienstadt and Auschwitz, and ghettos, like Łódź. It is the power of place to get to imagine other ways people have known this space. It was waiting for the train to the unknown. The choice to let the vegetation around us remain unmanicured is a testament to the end of this site’s original use. No trains shall run again and this unmaintained status speaks to how this site is not one to idealize the past, but to remember its existence and the passage of time.

This landscape, this train platform, this familiar made rancid is a metaphor at large for the treatment of Jews in eastern Europe. What was familiar was the discomfort, the systemic making of life more difficult gradually and gradually until a train ride was sanctioned. This state of discomfort for Jewish residents was not only present during World War II, but historically for hundreds of years, causing many Jews to immigrate prior to the War. To connect with this site and this platform is to connect with the daily, incremental strides towards this fate.
Survivor Billy Harvey describes his experience on a train like the one that would leave from Gleis 17: “We were [in the ghetto] for six weeks under terrible sanitation conditions. We were freezing, we had very little food to eat. One day the train arrived...they pushed into one cattle car as many people they possibly can—so that we were crushed like sardines. There [were] no windows on the cattle car. When the sliding doors slammed closed on us, the only light came through the wooden cracks.”

I am imagining that the feelings and the disparities between where we are standing now and where Jews were being sent would have been unimaginable.

In this space, draw (however abstractly or accurately you desire) parts of this environment that stand out to you, that evoke feelings, that draw your attention. Write words that express the feelings you are moving through here. This is a space for reflection and grief.
The Pergamonmuseum was designed by architects Alfred Messell and Ludwig Hoffmann, and was constructed over the course of twenty years, from 1910 to 1930. The namesake of this museum is connected to an archaeological excavation that took place in what is now Turkey from 1878 to 1886. This excavation revealed frieze panels from the Pergamon Altar and this, among the reconstruction of historical structures, such as the Market Gate of Miletus, the Ishtar Gate and Processional Way from Babylon, and the Mshatta Facade have garnered the museum worldly acclaim. The three wings of the building now house three collections from the Museumsinsel Berlin: the Antikensammlung, Vorderasiatisches Museum, and the Museum für Islamische Kunst.

**Antikensammlung (Collection of Classical Antiquities)**
This collection houses objects from the Classical world ranging in dates from the Aegean Bronze Age to the late Roman period. Objects range from jewelry made from precious metals and jewels to architectural features and were collected through donations and archaeological expeditions. This collection of objects overlaps with those presented at the Museumsinsel Berlin. The Pergamon Altar is reconstructed in this collection, with modern additions to recreate its original presentation.

**Vorderasiatisches Museum (Museum of the Ancient Near East)**
Houses archaeological finds from Mesopotamia, including handcrafts, every-day objects, and many reconstructed architectural features from the Near East. Notably on display are the tiles from the Gate of Ishtar and the Babylonian Processional Way, both recovered from a German excavation in Iraq in 1899.

**Museum für Islamische Kunst (Museum for Islamic Studies)**
This collection holds materials from the southern and eastern Mediterranean region and Spain across Anatolia, the Middle East and Central Asia all the way to India beginning with the early Islamic period, from the 7th and 10th centuries. The architectural feature of note in this collection is the façade of the Mshatta desert palace.
Berlin, like many countries with a history of colonization, holds objects from the global South in museum contexts. This museum, built during the hey-day of armchair anthropology, with a focus on collecting “curiosities” from outside of the Western sphere and displaying them for Western consumption. Similarly linked in this colonial-archaeological matrix is the Deutsches Archaeologisches Institut (DAI), which similarly funded early archaeological excavations. Founded in 1829, the DAI conducted many excavations in countries over which they exercised imperial power. The height of German imperialism coincides with the legitimation of archaeology as a field. The authorized existence of the German Empire ended in 1919 with the signing of the Treaty of Versailles after World War I. However, these imperial ties continue to be strengthened and replenished through the maintenance and museum display of objects, taken from their places of origin through excavations permitted through imperial might.

How this museum seemingly struggles with its history, resisting calls by Iraq for the repatriation of the Gate of Ishtar. This gate is known in Iraq as a symbol of ancient Babylonian greatness and is only represented in its place of origin by a replica. The Pergamonmuseum charges $14 for visitors to view this piece of Iraqi history. It is important to understand cultural heritage as a resource, both financial, political, and national. Being here in this museum, viewing the great materialities from other places, it is important to be mindful of their original contexts, how they continue to live in these museums, and how they got here.
A BRIEF HISTORY OF
THE HUMBOLDT FORUM

FROM ROYAL PALACE TO PUBLIC FORUM:
SIX CENTURIES OF THE SCHLOSSPLATZ SITE

1443
The palace that originally sat on the Schlossplatz site was intended for the Hohenzollern royal family. Its cornerstone was laid on July 31, 1443.

1698
Baroque sculptor and architect Andreas Schlüter expands the structure in order to make it more "royal."

1767 & 1769
Future namesakes of the Humboldt Forum, Wilhelm & Alexander von Humboldt are born, respectively. Wilhelm was an educational reformer and humanities scholar. Alexander was an explorer and naturalist. Their name is meant to evoke cosmopolitanism, quests for knowledge, open-mindedness."

1918
Karl Liebknecht proclaims the Free Socialist Republic from the Palace balcony.

1939-1945
World War II air raids cause significant damage to the Palace.

1950
The GDR completes building of Palast der Republik, a multiuse space for politics and entertainment. It contained a people’s assembly, as well space for concerts, gatherings, restaurants and even a discotheque. It was considered a “people’s place.”

1967
The GDR completes building of Palast der Republik, a multiuse space for politics and entertainment. It contained a people’s assembly, as well space for concerts, gatherings, restaurants and even a discotheque. It was considered a “people’s place.”

1992-1993
William of Boddien recreates the Berlin Palace facade in a trompe l’oeil style. A on a 10,000 square meter canvas is hung on a 1:1 scale scaffolding.

2002
The Bundestag passes a resolution to demolish the Palast der Republik and rebuild the original Palace. Demolition begins four years later.

2013
Despite controversy, reconstruction of the Palace (now called The Humboldt Forum) begins. Italian architect Franco Stella envisions it as a link between tradition and modernity.

2020
Construction of The Humboldt Forum is complete. It features three Baroque facades and one modern facade facing the Spree. Opening to the public is delayed due to Covid-19.

2021
The Humboldt Forum opens to the public and promises to be a space for culture, art, science, exchange, and debate.

JULIA ZIMRING
THE HUMBOLDT FORUM

THE GDR NEVER EXISTED

The Humboldt Forum, located in the Schlossplatz area of Berlin, is marketed as more than a museum. It is a platform for dialogue and debate, public participation, and experimentation in the arts, humanities, and sciences. The museum is collectively operated by four institutional partners: the National Museums in Berlin / Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation, the Humboldt-University of Berlin, the Stiftung Stadtmuseum Berlin, and the Humboldt Forum Foundation in the Berlin Palace. Through a jointly issued mission statement, the Forum's leadership acknowledges the role of colonialism and racism in the site's history and pledges to promote the continuous questioning and decolonizing of knowledge in science, art and culture. The Humboldt Museum maintains a number of looted Benin bronzes, and a large portion of its collection comes from the Ethnological Museum and the Museum of Asian Art. It has stated that it is committed to conducting provenance research, but no repatriation has occurred. The Forum is inextricably tied to Berlin's imperial, divided, and reunited past. Whether or not it fulfills its purpose as the architectural link between Berlin's past and present, the Forum must confront its complicated legacy and reckon with memories that are unwieldy, uncomfortable, and deeply embedded in the landscape.
MEMORIAL TO THE VICTIMS OF NATIONAL SOCIALIST 'EUThANASIA' KILLINGS

1933
Third Reich implements the Law for Prevention of Genetically Diseased Offspring, allows for forced sterilization.

1933-1934
400,000 people are forcibly sterilized.

1939
Hitler's "mercy killing decree" authorizes doctors to murder people they deemed to be "unworthy of life."

1940-1941
In a villa at Tiergartenstrasse 4, doctors coordinate Aktion T4, a campaign that killed more than 200,000 people via euthanasia.

1946
Nuremberg Doctors Trial takes place. Sixteen doctors are found guilty and sentenced to death. Others are fined and continue practicing.

1950-1960
The T4 villa is demolished due to damage from the war. The Kulturforum is established in its place. The Philharmonic overlaps with the former site of T4.

1987
Richard Serra's sculpture Berlin Junction is acquired and installed at the T4.

1989
A plaque is added to contextualize Berlin Junction and make clear its commemoration of the euthanasia victims.

2012
A competition is held to develop a memorial and information point at T4.

2014
Architect Ursula Willms's abstract memorial and information point is inaugurated.

Question for Reflection
Do these memorials succeed in bringing the victims and the perpetrators of euthanasia killings out from the margins of memory?

Location: Tiergartenstrasse 4
Style: Abstract sculptures & Information panels
Artists: Richard Serra (Berlin Junction, 1988) & Ursula Willms (Memorial to the Victims..., 2014)

Aktion T4 was among Nazi Germany's first systematic murder campaigns. And yet, memorialization of the euthanasia victims has been a marginalized endeavor. Stigma surrounding genetic illness, as well as guilt for not preventing the deaths of family members has impacted many German people's ability to confront this traumatic past.

Berlin Junction

American artist Richard Serra is known for creating large-scale, site-specific sculptures which urge the viewer to engage with and perform around them, exploring the metaphysical connections between objects, people, time, and space. Not for the first time in his career, Serra's installation at T4 was met with controversy. Like Tilted Arc in New York, Berlin Junction was criticized for being too abstract and disconnected from its site. The unlabeled sculpture was seen as a token effort from the government to subdue the growing public desire to recognize the victims of euthanasia. In response to the backlash, a plaque was installed with the words, "There were many victims but few of the perpetrators were brought to justice."

Memorial to the Victims of National Socialist Euthanasia' Killings

Ursula Willms' memorial, built 25 years later, aimed to accomplish what Serra's did not: highlight the historical significance of the T4 site and offer information about the perpetrators and victims of euthanasia. Willms is the architect behind the widely successful Topography of Terror exhibition, a similarly didactic memorial/documentation area/site of memory. Here, despite its abstract form, Willms wanted to suggest a link between visitors and victims of Nazi euthanasia. In contrast to Berlin Junction's steel walls, Willms' blue glass wall encourages visitors to look at and confront one another, humanizing the act of remembrance. "They [the victims] face us, are between us, among us," said Willms.
1914
Pharmaceutical entrepreneur Ernst Marlier hires Paul Otto Baumgarten to construct his Villa Marlier on Lake Wannsee.

1921
The Marliers sell the Villa to Friedrich Minoux, an anti-Weimar Republic right-wing extremist.

1940
Minoux sells the Villa to the SS. It becomes a guesthouse for guesthouse for the Reich Security Main Office (RSHA).

1942
Reinhard Heydrich invites representatives of the SS and other Reich ministries to discuss the details of the "Final Solution of the Jewish Question." The Wannsee Protocol leads to the murder of 6 million Jews.

1947
Adolf Eichmann’s minutes from the Wannsee Conference are discovered and become a primary document in labeling the Holocaust as a state-sponsored political crime.

1947
Berlin Mayor Richard von Weizsäcker holds the first commemorative ceremony at the Wannsee Villa.

1982
The Memorial and Educational Site opens on the 50th anniversary of the Wannsee Conference.

Location: Großen Wannsee 56-58, Lake Wannsee
Style: Italian Villa (Exterior)
Contemporary Education Center (Interior)
Architect: Paul Otto Baumgarten
Advocate for Memorial: Joseph Wulf

“In the Third Reich evil lost its distinctive characteristic by which most people had until then recognized it. The Nazis redefined it as a civil norm.”
— Hannah Arendt, Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil

BUREAUCRACY & GENOCIDE
The beauty of the Wannsee Villa belies its terrible past as the place where Nazi Germany’s “Final Solution” was written into law. Although the deportation and murder of Jews had already begun by January 1942, it was here at Wannsee that the banal details regarding the implementation of genocide were codified. Today, the House of the Wannsee Conference serves as a site of conscience to the six million lives lost in the Holocaust, and a warning against complicity and the banality of evil.

LEARNING FROM THE PAST: MEMORIALS AS PLACES FOR PEDAGOGY
As its official title suggests, the Wannsee site is tasked with the responsibility of educating the public about its past. If differs from many of memorials and monuments in that it is a site more connected to the perpetrators of crimes, rather than victims. In this way, it shares a similar burden to the Topography of Terror memorial.

Questions for Reflection
In what ways does this Memorial and Education Site "do memory work" on behalf of its visitors? In what ways does it shift the burden of memory onto the public?
WHO WILL WE REMEMBER?
WHAT WILL WE COMMEMORATE?
HOW?