



Simon Ward

Urban Memory and Visual Culture in Berlin

**Framing the Asynchronous City,
1957-2012**

Amsterdam
University
Press



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The cathedral leaves its locale to be received in the studio of a lover of art
– Walter Benjamin

Berlin has a lot of empty spaces... I like the city for its wounds.
They show its history better than any history book or document. [...]
[The] empty spaces allow the visitor and the people of Berlin to see through the
cityscape [...], through these gaps in a sense they can see through time.
– Wim Wenders

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Acknowledgements

This book has its origins in the paths I walked across the open space between the Potsdamer Platz S-Bahn station and the Staatsbibliothek in the winter of 1992, during a year I spent in Berlin as a part of my doctoral studies. I did not possess a camera at the time, so I do not possess what would now be a rich repository of photographs of that strange, liminal wasteland in the middle of the former divided city. Of course, I can always search Flickr.

Ten years later I returned to Berlin on a scholarship from the Berlin Parliament (the Studienstiftung des Abgeordnetenhauses von Berlin), to begin work on a tentative project on the ruins of Berlin. Potsdamer Platz was certainly different, but more crucial was the renewing of the intellectual friendships I had made during that first visit, as I sought to think through some of the conundrums with which the cityscape confronted me. More than another ten years on, and thanks in large part to the support of AHRC Research Leave Scheme from September 2009 to January 2010, regular research assistance from the Carnegie Trust for the Universities of Scotland and the British Academy, and research leave periods granted by my former employer, the University of Aberdeen, this book has finally found a form.

My thanks are due, primarily, to all those editors who read and commented so carefully on my ideas as they crystallized over the years. Thanks are also owed to the many friends and colleagues in Berlin, Aberdeen, Durham, and elsewhere, who have given of their time in indulging, and questioning, my obsession with the ruins of this city. A non-exhaustive list must include David Barnett, Martin Dammann, Paul Flaig, Katherine Groo, Uta Kornmeier, Karen Leeder, Christoph Lindner, Jonathan Long, Nikolaj Lubecker, Arwed Messmer, Bill Niven, Dora Osborne, Joachim Seinfeld and Geoff Westgate.

My greatest thanks go to my enthusiastic children, Verity and Dominic, who provided great company on recent tours of Berlin, and above all to my acutest editor and least melancholic reader, my wife, Janet Stewart, without whose unwavering support and belief this work would not have seen the light of day.

As is the nature of such a long-term project, fragments of it have been previously published in different forms and contexts, none of which specifically addressed the book's central question of urban memory. Material that is reused here in Chapter Two first appeared with Wiley in a special issue of *German Life and Letters* in 2010 dealing with 'Cityscapes of the GDR', and more recently in *Edinburgh German Yearbook 2016* (Camden House). Some

of the writing in Chapter Three previously appeared in Peter McIsaac and Gabriele Mueller's 'Exhibiting the German Past' (University of Toronto Press, 2015). Some material in Chapter Four previously appeared in Christoph Lindner's volume *Globalization, Violence and the Visual Culture of Cities* (Routledge, 2009) and *Berlin: Kultur und Metropole in den zwanziger und seit den neunziger Jahren* (iudicium, 2007), and other parts more recently in Karen Leeder's special edition of *New German Critique* (Duke University Press, 2015) on 'Figuring Lateness in Modern German Culture'. I am grateful to all these publishers for allowing me to reuse this material as part of a coherent whole.

Introduction

Berlin and the Question of 'Urban Memory'

Contemporary Berlin, a city scarred by the twentieth century, displays its past on almost every street corner, it would seem. The upheavals it has experienced have not just been political, but have also been accompanied by a series of radical physical transformations in the built environment. A large body of literature has been produced on the sophisticated memory work that has been undertaken in Germany, and Berlin in particular. One of those authors, Aleida Assmann, asserts that German places of memory cannot be adequately understood through Pierre Nora's model of *lieux de mémoire*, in which modernity's process of accelerated renewal and obsolescence generates, in a compensatory reaction, the proliferation of museums and sites of memory. Assmann ascribes this to the fact that the traumatic sites are the locations of acts of atrocity that surpass human understanding.¹ Contemporary Berlin's memory landscape has been read almost exclusively through its expression of Germany's troubled national past, be it National Socialism or the German Democratic Republic. This book is not primarily concerned with the narrative elaborations of identity that take place around sites of National Socialist atrocity in Berlin. That work has been done, by amongst others, Brian Ladd and Rudy Koshar, as well as Andrew Webber, who takes a psycho-topographical approach to the city in *Berlin. City of the Twentieth Century*, Karen Till, who focuses on the politics of contemporary place-making in *The New Berlin*, Jennifer Jordan, who investigates processes of place-making in *Structures of Memory* in relation to the demands of 'real estate', and Janet Ward, who devotes a section to Holocaust memorial architecture in her study of *Post-Wall Berlin*. The validity of this earlier work is assured. This engagement with the material past has in earlier work generally been framed in terms of 'remembering well'.² What might it mean to remember well, beyond the frame of national trauma?

This book evolved at the same time as a spatial turn in Berlin urban studies that is less tied to narratives of the national past. This has much to do with the desire to see the post-unification period as something radically different from what came before. This turn has produced work that explicitly deals with the politics of urban redevelopment in post-unification Berlin (Colomb, 2011), as well as Barbara Mennel and Jaimey Fisher's 2011 heterogeneous edited collection, *Space, Place, and Mobility in German Literary and Visual Culture*. While I endorse Colomb's shift from identity politics



1. Photograph: Axel Mauruszat.

to the politics of space, this book offers a historical trajectory that suggests a continuity in forms of urban memory that cross the ostensible caesura of the fall of the Wall that determines studies such as Colomb's and Janet Ward's. Similarly, Colomb examines the discourses of place marketing beyond the merely architectural production of place, while this book moves in a different, if related direction, towards a close reading of how the encounter

with place has been framed over the past fifty years, and of the aesthetic practices that have emerged in that context.

To address this question, the book's focus is on Berlin as a generic city (both a polemical exaggeration and a necessity, in order to move away from the specificity of the 'traumatic' city), and its theoretical frameworks are taken from thinkers who have thought about place and the city in more abstract terms. Berlin's places of memory are, however, not solely traumatic sites. The Anhalter Bahnhof, the site photographed in figure 1, is a useful example to start with as an ambivalent location of various urban pasts. This book focuses not on what happened 'here', in the past, but what happened *to* the site, in terms of demolition, reconstruction, and remediation, tracing how the remembrance of place has been constructed in the city in reaction to radical material upheavals in the city, both in East and West. Both halves in the city become paradigmatic experiments in modernist urban reconstruction in the post-war era, albeit at slightly different paces. While the east of the city was initially dominated by Stalinist architectural dictates, by the mid-1960s urban planning practices were fundamentally in line with those which had dominated in the western half of the city since the end of the war (in theory), and from the mid-1950s (in practice). Responding to this radical reconstruction, many interventions in, and framings of, urban sites in the built environment in both East and West Berlin over the past fifty years have sought to recover an experience of place in the city. Berlin's varied *lieux de mémoire*, some of which are of course sites of traumatic past experience, have not merely had constructed narratives around them, but have also been explorations of the dynamics of place memory in the city. This 'place memory work' responds to what has been experienced as a loss of place in two related forms; the (re)construction of urban milieux, and the curation of the 'wounds' or 'empty spaces' of the city which enable a critical perception of time in the city.

Over the course of the past fifty years, Berlin has become an increasingly internationally inflected city, not so much in political and economic terms but in the sense of being an international cultural hub, where architects, artists and tourists have gathered. This particular city can provide key insights into how the mechanisms of urban memory – a term that will be elaborated in this introductory chapter – have developed more generally in an era of globalization, migration, and the concomitant effects of gentrification, tourism and the acceleration and synchronization of experience. The development of urban memory is not simply a phenomenon of the two decades since unification, but has been central to the development of Berlin's memory culture since the late 1950s. As we shall see, the question

of how to shape attention to place applies to all sites of an urban past that are threatened by urban transformation. 'Remembering well' ultimately involves remembering how to attend to place, so that, following Maurice Halbwachs, one might *first of all* remember how to remember in the city.

This introductory chapter begins by building a framework for approaching urban memory as a form of place memory in the city. Place memory is taken up through the work of Maurice Halbwachs and Paul Connerton, both of whom juxtapose the abstractions of modernity with an authentic experience of place. Halbwachs's conception of 'place memory' as a spatial image opens up questions of visualization and the role that visual culture and its technologies of place-making play in 'remembering well'. The viscosity implied in the spatial image is primarily theorized through Andreas Huyssen's concept of the 'museal gaze' which is modified in order to incorporate theoretical perspectives on the dynamics of place memory in modernity as well as the urban subject, attention, and the 'memory value' of the built environment. This book's history of place memory, and the history of theorizations of place memory, in Berlin since 1957 is structured around the way that this 'museal urban gaze' emerges in response to the synchronic modernist city. The introduction then takes a specific example of urban memory work (Hans Hoheisel's installation at the Brandenburg Gate in 1997) as a way of illustrating the method of interrogating the museal urban gaze. The chapter concludes with an outline of the book's structure and description of its content.

After 'place memory'

In many discussions of the topic, place memory is invoked after the fact, after its disappearance, as something authentic and spontaneous in contrast to an inauthentic modernity that has forgotten how to remember place 'well'. In Pierre Nora's work, this opposition is presented as a contrast between 'true memory [...] which has taken refuge in gestures and habits, in skills passed down by unspoken traditions, in the body's inherent self-knowledge', and 'memory transformed by its passage through history, which is nearly the opposite: voluntary and deliberate, experienced as a duty, no longer spontaneous'.³ Another version of this melancholy lament can be found in Paul Connerton's 2009 book on *How Modernity Forgets*. Although Connerton does not refer to Nora, and understands modernity's effects quite differently, they both juxtapose the abstractions of modernity with an authentic experience of place.

For Connerton, modernity's erosion of place memory through those 'processes that separate social life from locality and from human dimensions',⁴ is ascribed to 'the repeated intentional destruction of the built environment', removing the 'architectonic props' necessary for the production of place memory. For Connerton, 'modern space' destroys place memory because it is 'space wiped clean'.⁵ This account of modern space echoes Henri Lefebvre's conception of 'abstract space' – space conceived as a commodity with 'exchange value', where 'the tendency to homogenization exercises its pressure and its repression with the means at its disposal: a semantic void abolishes former meanings'.⁶

Crucially, abstract space *tends* towards homogeneity, but what, then, of the surviving remnants and their 'former meanings', as well as the mode of encountering them? This book offers Berlin as a counter-example to Connerton's over-dramatization of the effects of modernity, by analysing two ways in which the dynamics of place memory are generated within the city as 'urban memory': first, how the repair of urban environments has sought to revivify processes that connect social life to locality; and second, how the encounter with material remnants left behind by the successive reconstructions of the urban environment since the end of the Second World War have been subject to technologies of urban memory production. To be sure, neither of these is entirely 'authentic', but neither are they simply to be dismissed as 'mere' artifice.

Neither of the Assmanns's conventional terms of 'communicative' or 'cultural' memory adequately capture the meaning of 'urban memory', which contains elements of both, and indeed spans the conceptual division between the two, as will be discussed below and throughout.⁷ Urban memory describes a mode of encounter that has its roots in Maurice Halbwachs's work on collective memory and in particular a close reading of his analysis of the relationship between place and social memory.⁸ In his essay on 'Space and the Collective Memory', Halbwachs offers a subtle way of thinking about how the rupture of modernity affects the working of place memory. He begins by sketching how collective memory is present in the built environment: 'the forms of surrounding objects [... stand] about us a mute and motionless society. While they do not speak, we nevertheless understand them because they have a meaning easily interpreted'.⁹

'Interpretation' is not here the work of allegorical deciphering: each detail of these places has a meaning intelligent only to members of a particular group, for 'each portion of its space corresponds to various and different aspects of the structure and life of the society' and 'each object appropriately placed in the whole recalls a way of life common to many men. The meaning

is thus self-evident to the group whose spatial practices are imprinted upon that particular environment.”¹⁰ Not only this, but the relationship is reciprocal: ‘place and groups have received the imprint of the other’, or, in the words of Henri Lefebvre, such physical surroundings are a ‘faithful mirror’ of the collective.¹¹ This kind of environment facilitates a collective experience and it is this kind of ‘communicative’ relationship between society and space that has been envisaged by those who have sought to restore a memory of collective experience of the built environment to Berlin over the past fifty years.¹² In Berlin, this is a form of urban memory after the fact that emerges as a resistance to the radical transformations in the Berlin cityscape since the end of the Second World War, which saw large parts of the city being restructured to construct a modern urban environment configured around the automobile and the automobilization of experience.

‘Place memory’ and the ‘spatial image’

Unlike Connerton, Halbwachs addresses how local tradition responds to urban transformation, investigating how ‘habits related to a specific physical setting resist the forces tending to change them. [...] This resistance best indicates to what extent the collective memory of those groups is based on spatial images.’¹³ For Halbwachs, such resistance, ‘the force of local tradition’, ‘manifests itself in physical objects, which serve as its image.’¹⁴ Collective memory only becomes visible at the moment of its threatened oblivion; these physical objects at that moment are framed as ‘spatial images’.¹⁵

The term ‘spatial image’ implies that the embeddedness of the object in a spatial framework is central to its function as a site of resistance to the wiping clean of modern space. Local tradition calls attention to the site as having a connection to its collective past and frames it as a ‘spatial image’ that is read against the (otherwise anonymous) abstracting forces of urban transformation. The ‘framing’ is crucial, for it must not simply preserve the object, but also the mode of encounter.¹⁶ The ‘spatial image’ thus retains not only physical traces of the location, but also the traces of the mode of encountering that place; ‘image’ in this sense implies a network of relations rather than simply a visual object. In unpacking the spatial images of the past fifty years in Berlin, a visual culture approach which understands the image in this way is crucial to interrogating how a spatial image functions as place memory in a ‘memory contest’. This is not a contest in the conventional sense, where there is a contest over the meanings and narratives to be attributed to a particular location. Rather

it is a contest over *whether* a physical location has any memory value and how it is to be encountered. The mode of encounter ultimately determines the production of place.

Connerton and Halbwachs describe the dynamics of place memory in ways that help us understand what kind of encounter is imagined. The key to these descriptions is that they describe a *former* mode of encounter. While Connerton apparently describes an 'existing state', his argument for the forgetfulness of modernity is predicated on its disappearance.

Connerton:

We experience a locus *inattentively*, in a state of distraction. If we are aware of thinking of it at all, we think of it not so much as a set of objects that are available for us to look at or listen to, rather as something which is inconspicuously familiar to us. It is there for us to live in, to move about in, even while in a sense we ignore it. We just accept it as a fact of life, a regular aspect of how things are.¹⁷

Halbwachs:

Nowadays, in an old church or convent, we *inattentively* walk on flagstones marking the location of tombs and don't even try to decipher the inscriptions engraved in the stones on the sanctuary floor or walls. Such inscriptions were continually before the eyes of those who worshipped in this church or belonged to this convent. The space that surrounded the faithful was permeated with religious meaning by means of funeral stones, as well as altars, statues, and pictures of the saints. We fashion a well-nigh inaccurate conception of the way their memory arranged remembrances of ceremonies and prayers, of all the actions and thoughts that make up the devout life, if we are ignorant of the fact that each found its place in a specific location.¹⁸

Connerton and Halbwachs both use the term 'inattentively'. For Connerton, the relationship to place has the connotations of a 'tactile', unmediated experience of the built environment, as Walter Benjamin formulates it in his 'Work of Art' essay. For Halbwachs it indicates a modern 'lack of attention'. Connerton's collective is still intimately connected to its place; Halbwachs's collective is unable to perceive how the collective memory of place works, because it has forgotten. There are two tasks which Halbwachs sets this 'inattentive' visitor (or tourist): first, to recall how earlier societies remembered spatially, but second, implicitly, to begin to relate to space as

they did. The recovery of the place's former 'meaning' is not important; more significant is the attempt *to recover how place is remembered*:

Space is a reality that endures: since our impressions rush by, one after another, and leave nothing behind in the mind, we can understand how we recapture the past only by understanding how it is, in effect, preserved by our physical surroundings. It is to space – the space we occupy, traverse, have continual access to, or can at any time reconstruct in thought and imagination – that we must turn our attention. Our thought must focus on it if this or that category of remembrances is to reappear.¹⁹

There are three key points to be made in relation to the above passages in terms of the dynamics of place memory. The first is the sense of collectivity: that the mode of encounter is not predicated on an atomized 'modern' individual whose cognitive engagement with the site is the determining factor, but on a body that is part of the collective body of the city. In these passages, Halbwachs has moved beyond Connerton's collective 'we' that experiences the built environment as lived memory, to a belated collective 'we' that is being asked to recover the past experience of collective space.

The second key dynamic of place memory involves the recovery of a particular mode of attention to space. Here again, Halbwachs's position is subtler than Connerton's, as it recognizes that the past is no longer self-evidently present in conditions that constrain attention to the built environment. For Halbwachs, it would appear, we don't attend to space anymore.

The third aspect is the encounter with the authentic, surviving material environment. The material object is accorded an auratic power. This question of the authenticity of place is central to the work of Halbwachs and Connerton, where place is attributed natural qualities in terms of how it evolves. A cityscape is, however, also an artificial intervention into landscape. In his essay on the 'Work of Art in the Age of Its Mechanical Reproduction', Walter Benjamin argues that the authenticity of the art object is 'interfered with' when it is removed from its unique site by the means of mechanical reproduction. Although he claims that 'no natural object is vulnerable on that score', he also, in the same paragraph, argues that the authenticity of a landscape is depreciated when it 'passes in review before the spectator in a movie.'²⁰ A landscape or indeed a cityscape is the product of an encounter between the viewer and an environment, so that an environment is not in and of itself a 'unique sight', as the position of

the viewer is not the same each time. That encounter is also dependent on the position of the viewer *vis-à-vis* the object. For Benjamin, implicitly, film provides a reproduction that alters the duration of the encounter. As Benjamin noted in his 'Work of Art' essay, 'historical testimony rests on the authenticity, [of the object], and [authenticity], too, is jeopardized by reproduction when substantive duration ceases to matter. And what is really jeopardized when the historical testimony is affected is the authority of the object.'²¹ A key question for this study is the relation between the material object and the idea of its testimony of substantive duration, a duration grounded not just in the longevity of the object, but in the duration of the encounter in the generation of the auratic effect. This is a question we shall address through the concept of the 'museal gaze', as outlined below.

Halbwachs proposes his model of place memory (which is predicated, like all theories of place memory, on a stable built environment) from a point after which it has ceased to be the dominant mode of relating to space. It is not, like Connerton's, a model steeped in nostalgia, but a call for a revitalization of a particular attention to material space. It is a call that comes *after* the traditional coordinates of place memory have been undone by the forces of homogenization and distraction in the city.

The spatial image of the synchronic city

How do these forces of homogenization work in the city? If place memory is generated not only by the physical site, but also through the mode of encounter with it, and the concomitant production of 'spatial images', then whatever threatens or attenuates place memory must also be related to the organization of the perception of the built environment. The role played by homogenization lies not just in the demolition of places, but also in the structuring of a way of encountering the city.

In Michel de Certeau's essay on 'Walking in the City', the 'concept-city [...] provides a way of constructing space on the basis of a finite number of stable, isolatable and interconnectable properties.'²² This concept-city, a synonym for modernist urban planning of the post-war era, sees the 'substitution of a nowhen, or of a synchronic system for the indeterminable and stubborn resistances offered by traditions.' This is not just the organization of the gaze upon the city (in the 'exaltation of the scopic drive' which gazes down on New York from the top of the World Trade Center), but of the perception of time in urban space.

By contrast, Aleida Assmann's discussion of 'places of memory' is underpinned by a distinction between abstract space and meaningful place:

'Space' is a neutralized, de-semiotized category of fungibility and disposability; attention directs itself [richtet sich] towards the 'place' with its enigmatic, unspecified significance [Bedeutsamkeit].²³

Attention plays a key, if rather unacknowledged role in her construction of this distinction. The implication of Assmann's assertion is that while 'place' involves attentiveness, 'space' does not. The perception of space does however involve a mode of attention. For Assmann, 'the concept of space contains a potential for planning that points to the future', whereas De Certeau points to a 'nowhen' in the concept-city, a time without past or future. The concept-city, and its designers, imagine space without historical time; the concept-city is a disciplinary framework that constructs a synchronic experience of an interchangeable space, in which time is activity. This shapes a mode of encounter with the city in modernity that is instrumentalized towards systemic functioning, is goal-oriented and result-driven. Walter Benjamin in his 1932 essay on 'Experience and Poverty' discusses the concomitant loss of experience (*Erfahrung*), when, according to Benjamin, the city is experienced (*erlebt*) in the mode of attention required by the synchronic rhythms of factory conveyor-belt production.²⁴ Attention is organized as a functional, calculable capacity driven by the sensory-motor requirements of a synchronically organized, interchangeable environment.

'Place' is not just the product of attentiveness in itself – one can be attentive to the traffic infrastructure, after all – but a different kind of attention grounded in experience, and frequently defined in opposition to a synchronic gaze that privileges the visual over other senses, following what Lefebvre terms the 'logic of visualization'. The synchronic gaze produces a form of 'civic seeing', in Tony Bennett's terms, which models the 'good citizen' understood as one who 'maintains perceptual synthesis' by learning 'how to isolate sentiments in the sensory field at the expense of others',²⁵ and is thus best adapted to the most efficient circulation of goods and consumers.

The synchronic urban gaze produces a particular 'regime of attention' which emerges from 'the civic lessons embodied in [these] arrangements' which 'are to be seen, understood, and performed' by the citizens, as Bennett describes the organization of attention in the modern museum at the beginning of the twentieth century.²⁶

David Frisby suggests a way out of this perception of a determinist cityscape:

If our experience of modernity is to be any more than the endless affirmation of the ever-new that is presented to us on the surface of everyday modern life, then it must access the contradictions and differentiations of modernity that exist within it.²⁷

For Frisby, the subjective activity of *flânerie* 'seeks to make sense of the fragmentary experiences and images of the metropolis, to search for the traces of origin, [...] following traces, including memory traces, in order to reconstruct the past.' Frisby focuses on the 'making sense'; the focus in this book is how this access to the temporal contradictions and differentiations of modernity is facilitated. A more differentiated perception of time as layered, as including past and perhaps even future, rather than simply a synchronic present, would be what De Certeau describes as an 'obstacle' to efficient urban circulation, as it forms a resistance to the synchronic rhythms of the modernized urban environment. The 'obstacle' in this study is the 'spatial image' of place memory, both a material site and a mode of perception, a network of relations. How does the encounter with that obstacle come about?

The spatial image of the asynchronous city

'Memories often cleave to the physical settings of events', asserts Brian Ladd at the beginning of *Ghosts of Berlin*, but it is precisely how this 'cleaving' *takes place* that is at stake here, how it is done?²⁸

Berlin has a lot of empty spaces... I like the city for its wounds. They show its history better than any history book or document. [...] [The] empty spaces allow the visitor and the people of Berlin to see through the cityscape [...], through these gaps in a sense they can see through time.²⁹

How does the asynchronous city become visible to the body moving through the city? The position of Wim Wenders in the quotation above is echoed by Karen Till's observation that 'open wounds create an irritation in everyday space through which past collides with present.'³⁰ Such ambiguous encounter with the material remnant in the urban environment can be described through Andreas Huyssen's term, the 'museal gaze'. In his 1994 collection

of essays, *Twilight Memories*, Huyssen observed that the boundaries of the contemporary museum were becoming ever less distinct. Huyssen embraced this development, arguing that it undid the traditional mission of the museum as the purveyor of an exclusionary, conservative narrative of nation.³¹ In this, Huyssen was in line with Tony Bennett, who, in his essay 'Civic Seeing: Museums and the Organization of Vision', charts the shifting 'regimes of vision' in museums, whereby 'the directed forms of vision that have dominated Western museum practices since the Enlightenment' have 'given way to more dialogic practices of seeing which, in enabling a greater degree of visual give-and-take between different perspectives, might prove more conducive to the requirements of "civic seeing" in culturally diverse societies.'³²

Beyond this embracing of diversity, there was another positive element that Huyssen identified, a 'newfound strength of the museum and the monument in the public sphere.'³³ This strength has, on the surface, little to do with Huyssen's celebration of the post-national museum. Rather, Huyssen surmised that it might have 'something to do with the fact that [the museum and the monument] offer something that television denies: the material quality of the object.'³⁴ Huyssen designated this, rather cursorily as 'the museal gaze'.³⁵

Huyssen privileged this particular aspect of the museum experience in reaction to postmodern critiques of the museum in the 1980s, and in particular in response to Baudrillard's assertion that musealization is 'the pathological attempt of contemporary culture to preserve, to control [and] to dominate the real.'³⁶ Musealization, in this critique, 'simulates the real'. For Huyssen, the 'museal gaze' redeems the idea of a 'museal' that enables a connection to the real. In the case of both the museum and the monument, there is a 'live gaze' that interacts with the object.³⁷ For Huyssen, the auratic power of the object is produced by this live gaze:

Objects of the past have always been pulled into the present via the gaze that hit them, and the irritation, the seduction, the secret they may hold is never only on the side of the object in some state of purity, as it were; it is always and intensely located on the side of the viewer and the present as well.³⁸

It is the live gaze that endows the object with its aura, much as Pierre Nora argues of *lieux de memoire* that 'even an apparently purely material site becomes a *lieu de memoire* only if the imagination invests it with a symbolic aura.'³⁹ For Huyssen, however, the museal gaze is dependent on the live

presence both of the observer and of an object, whose key qualities are its materiality and its opacity, and the fact that:

the more mummified an object is, the more intense its ability to yield experience, a sense of the authentic. No matter how fragile or dim the relation between museum object and the reality it documents may be, either in the way it is exhibited or in the mind of the spectator, as object it carries the register of reality which even the live television broadcast cannot match.⁴⁰

Distancing himself from the postmodern critique of the museum, Huyssen was clearly still invested in the ideal of the rational, attentive, well-ordered museum-going public, an ideal which, as Bennett suggests, was originally founded on the rejection of ‘the clouding, diverting, hypnotic, dazzling, numbing, or shock effects of more popular visual technologies’ of urban life at the end of the nineteenth century.⁴¹ At the end of the twentieth century, Huyssen’s museal gaze is a counterpoint to the ‘television gaze’; its encounter with the ‘register of reality’ defines the anamnestic dimension of the material object. This anamnestic dimension, which Huyssen terms ‘memory value’, needs to be distinguished from the transmission of critical historical knowledge and understanding. Rather, the museal gaze ‘may be said to [...] reclaim a sense of non-synchronicity and of the past.’⁴² This aligns Huyssen’s conception of the ‘spatial image’ of the object with De Certeau’s in the appreciation of the asynchronous. Not only does Huyssen value asynchronicity, but in the process he alludes to a form of attentiveness:

The older an object, the more presence it can command, the more distinct it is from current-and-soon-to-be obsolete as well as recent-and-already obsolete objects. That also may be enough to lend them an aura, to reenchant them beyond any instrumental functions they may have had at an earlier time. It may be precisely the isolation of the object from its genealogical context that permits the experience via the museal glance of reenchantment.⁴³

Not only does Huyssen use the term ‘glance’ here, to suggest an almost involuntary, indirect encounter with the object, but, in elaborating the ‘memory value’ of the material object, he is also close to Alois Riegl’s definition of the contingent ‘age value’ of the unintended monument.⁴⁴ The ‘age value’ of the material object bears testimony to the passing of time, rendering time visible where it would otherwise be invisible.

Huyssen's museal gaze produces, in the interaction between live spectator and opaque material object, an awareness of past time that is at odds with a synchronous, televisual present. Riegl's unintended monuments were implicitly situated in public space and, crucially, Huyssen sees the museal gaze as operating both in conventional museums and in the museum in an expanded, amorphous sense, in relation to monuments in 'reclaimed public space, in pedestrian zones, in restored urban centres, or in pre-existing memorial spaces.'⁴⁵

An important caveat must however also be applied to Huyssen's museal gaze, and that is his use of it as an academic practice when confronted with the built environment of Berlin. At one point in his seminal essay 'The Voids of Berlin', Huyssen recalls his encounter with the empty space of post-unification Potsdamer Platz. As he walks across this space, he writes that he '*could not help* remembering' [my italics – SW] that this had been the site of the Imperial Chancellery and of Speer's plans for Germania. Huyssen relies upon the assumption that the built environment can give unmediated access to history: the transmission of historical knowledge is validated through an apparently unmediated, spontaneous, indeed involuntary memory.⁴⁶

This is a key aspect of the dynamics of place memory, poised between the immediacy of communicative memory and the musealizations of cultural memory. Crucial in the above example was that Huyssen was actually moving across the space. The 'live'-ness of Huyssen's gaze is central to overcoming the negative connotations of the site's musealized presence. Huyssen does not investigate how this gaze might be organized, or even how, as Hilde Hein writes in her brief consideration of Huyssen's concept, 'the aura-conferring gaze rests upon an object's musealized presence.'⁴⁷ Most of the locations under consideration in this book are not 'musealized' in the conventional sense. They are 'unintended monuments' in the terms of Alois Riegl, not subject to a regime of preservation. Where does their aura come from?

The remnant as ghost

The non-musealized remnant is often metaphorically described in terms of the 'ghost', a clear trope of asynchronicity. As Steve Pile suggests, 'ghosts haunt the places where cities are out of joint; out of joint in terms of both time and space.'⁴⁸ As Pile notes of Derrida's invocation of ghosts, they are not fixed in history. While the presence of the ghost is taken for granted

as a trigger that confirms a pre-existing 'will to remember', it is often used to approach the past through a pre-determined lens in order to write a *counter-history*, a *different* elaboration of the past that nevertheless still fixes the ghost in its historical place. Christine Boyer, writing in the context of the gentrification process of the 1980s in New York, rejects the reified commemorations of the city of collective memory in favour of a different set of narratives that tell other histories embedded in the city. Influenced by Pile, Karen Till's discussion of 'open wounds' slips directly from the encounter to a defined (traumatic, national) meaning of the wound:

These commemorative sites are 'out of place' in the contemporary urban setting, for they are defined by (re)surfacing and repressed memories of violent pasts. The open wound asks visitors to confront their feelings of being haunted or not by valid national histories that remain present, yet invisible, in the city.⁴⁹

Till papers over the fracturing of urban time with the invocation of national histories, reducing an ambiguity that was evident in Wenders's reading of the wounded cityscape.

Ghosts are much more ambiguous in Michel de Certeau's essay, 'Ghosts in the City'. This essay revises the arguments of the aforementioned 'Walking in the City' in light of the reconstruction of the Marais quarter in Paris in the 1980s (though it does not name this specifically). De Certeau writes that 'the technicians [of the 'concept-city'] were supposed to make a tabula rasa of the opacities that disrupted the plans for a city of glass', but in fact the 'strategy that, yesterday, aimed at a development of new urban spaces has been little by little transformed into a rehabilitation of national heritage'.⁵⁰ De Certeau identifies a logic of conservation, where the dissemination of objects from the past 'works yet again at extending the museum out of its walls, at museifying the city'.⁵¹ De Certeau contrasts this form of spatial image with the image that emerges from the encounter with obsolete remains, 'the opaque ambivalence' of these 'seemingly sleepy, old-fashioned things', 'these inanimate objects', which, 'by eluding the law of the present, [...] acquire a certain autonomy.' This autonomy is framed in terms of language:

These [...] defaced houses, closed-down factories, the debris of shipwrecked histories still today raise up the ruins of an unknown, strange city. They burst forth within the modernist, massive, homogeneous city like slips of the tongue from an unknown, perhaps unconscious, language.⁵²

Against the musealizing ennoblement of objects in the city, which 'see themselves recognized with a place and a sort of insurance on life,' these remains 'actually [...] function as history.'⁵³ This is not history in the sense of Nora's critical historiography, for it consists in opening 'a certain depth within the present, but [the objects] no longer have the contents that tame the strangeness of the past with meaning. Their histories cease to be pedagogical; they are no longer "pacified" or colonized with semantics – as if returned to their existence, wild, delinquent.'⁵⁴

This is a much more radically contingent sense of the presence, and indeed visibility, of the past than that suggested by other writers on the ghost in the city. While Nora suggests that *lieux de memoire* were remnants, 'fundamentally remains, the ultimate embodiment of a memorial consciousness', they were nevertheless 'created by a play of memory and history. [...] To begin with, there must be a will to remember.'⁵⁵ In Nora, there is the reassertion of intentionality by a remembering subject. In De Certeau's account, these opaque objects have autonomy and the subject who perceives the depth within the present is not identified and is certainly not an active agent.⁵⁶ Rather, s/he seems to be part of the collective consciousness of the city. De Certeau secures the involuntary spontaneity of a memory which 'bursts forth' but the result is opacity and, as Nora would see it, arbitrariness. For De Certeau, however, the remnant from a forgotten past is always already valorized for its capacity to disrupt the city's synchronic organization through its asynchronic presence, prior to any narrativization it experiences.⁵⁷

This arbitrary remnant has a tradition in discussions of obsolescent material. Alois Riegl, writing at the beginning of the twentieth century, claimed that the value of an 'unintended monument' (*ungewolltes Denkmal*) was its 'age value' (*Alterswert*), which expressed a contingent but material relationship to past time.⁵⁸ Victor Burgin described such remnants as unresolved 'monuments of melancholia', in contrast to official 'monuments of mourning'. Burgin proposes thinking of the material remnant as a mnemonic trace, 'an element in a narrative that is nevertheless independent.' Burgin significantly focuses on the spontaneous, involuntary encounter with the obsolescent material object: 'if the past is really to touch us then it is more likely to be when we least expect it, as when some of its litter blows across our path.'⁵⁹ The encounter with the past comes as a surprise interruption of a purposeful movement through space. In his discussion of detritus in the city, Michael Sheringham focuses on the arbitrary nature of the encounter with the trace, echoing De Certeau's essay on 'Ghosts in

the City', with the difference that Sheringham problematizes the status of the subject in this encounter. Sheringham is actually investigating the process by which the material remnant becomes translated from the repository to the archive (at which point it is pacified by semantics). Sheringham formulates the encounter with the past in the city as '[losing] the outlines of one's own familiar identity and gaining access to a hidden dimension of urban reality',⁶⁰ '[experiencing a defamiliarization of] the city we thought we knew, and [wrenching] us out the present, into an intermediate zone of overlapping timescales.'⁶¹ Sheringham argues for a voluntary surrender of the self to the material of the city, so that we may 'find ways of being [the city's] amanuensis, by consenting to let go of our familiar reference points in personal and collective space and time.' Sheringham implies that accessing the past means surrendering a secure subject position, but also the emergence of a new urban subject, 'a kind of philologist, *attentive* to shifts and slides, bifurcations and compressions' [my italics]. This mode of attention supposes a merging between subject and object to the point where 'it is the city that walks the walker, making the archivist part of its ever-expanding archive.'⁶² Ironically, this is a reiteration of Halbwachs's account of memory and social space: 'not only homes and walls persist through the centuries, but also that whole portion of the group in continuous contact with them, its life merged with things', although Sheringham has reduced this to an individual encounter. Sheringham, like Halbwachs and Connerton, is de/prescribing a return to a former mode of attending to space, theorizing a memory of how the place memory of a collective works, of how a spatial image emerges through the encounter with the remnant.

The unmusealized object has qualities which precede any instrumentalization and which make themselves evident in the moment of encounter. This shifts our focus from the informational content of a monument's framing – the commemoration of a specific place or event – to understand the act of remembrance as, first and foremost, a mode of encounter with a contingent past, in which 'historical transmission' is not the communication of a specific history, but the moment at which we remember how to remember place.

De Certeau describes a 'pacification' of the object, which is explained by Aleida Assmann's distinction between 'repository memory' – a storehouse of unsorted fragments – and 'functional memory' – the selective functionalization of those fragments within a particular culture. Assmann, however, implies that the only value a remnant can have is in its refunctionalization within a founding narrative:

this pre-history which can only be grasped in traces can be of great significance if [a] later time recognizes/acknowledges [the German here is ambiguous – SW] a normative foundation of its own era. Ruins and relics that have become unnoticed and invisible can suddenly become visible again when this beam of attention falls upon them.⁶³

Assmann's account of how the past is collected and curated usefully theorizes two different forms of collection of the past: 'storage memory' in an expansive, potentially limitless repository, and 'functional memory' in the archive, but she does not provide an account of the mode in which the repository is accessed and activated by this 'beam of attention', failing to consider the dynamics of urban memory, the acts of evocation and reminiscence, as technologies in themselves. Assmann writes of 'places of memory' that they are 'exploded fragments of a lost or destroyed lifeworld (*Lebenszusammenhang*):

With the surrender and destruction of a place, its history is not over, it retains material relics that become elements in narratives and thus points of reference for a new cultural memory. These places are however in need of explanation: their significance has to be secured through verbal transmission.⁶⁴

In contrast to Assmann's final assertion here, Dolores Hayden suggests that 'the urban landscape is not a text to be read, but a repository of environmental memory far richer than any verbal codes.'⁶⁵ This poses a challenge to traditional readings of cultural memory work which analyse the construction of narrative (and counter-narratives), and offers a corrective in line with Lutz Koepnick's assertion that German Studies scholars dealing with Berlin's built environment 'should develop conceptual means to distinguish between and evaluate different strategies of negotiating history and memory', rather than assuming that architectural structures themselves can index historical events and embody memory, which is nothing other than a 'conflation of remembrance and history'.⁶⁶ Assmann falls into this trap, as, in her work, Nora's 'will to remember' is reformulated as a 'beam of attention' directed towards the establishing of identity and the reappropriation of the remnant within an ordered archive of the past. For Assmann, the remnant only has value if its meaning is secured within a narrative framework. As we saw, for De Certeau the remnant only has value if it 'bursts forth' and is encountered spontaneously.

There are three aspects that we can draw from the foregoing discussion, in order to theorize the nature of the encounter with the remnant. First: the contingency of the past is a central aspect of this encounter with the material trace. It is not a specific or communal past that is being recalled, but a sense of the past itself, which is collective in the very broad sense implied by Victor Burgin's collective noun when he suggests that '*we* may be touched by a past *we* have not actually lived in ways that go beyond the affectless observation of a ritual' [my italics – SW]. Burgin here moves beyond one of the key precepts of place memory (that is connected to the lifeworld of a community), and yet maintains the dynamic encounter of place memory:

Second: the curator of the remnant is not a collective agent, but an individual Benjaminian flâneur, something which has implications for the (generally unreflected) position of the scholar writing about this kind of activity.⁶⁷

Third, this encounter is founded on a rhythm that is in consonance with the environment and on a loss of control that enables the activation of the archive. As Henri Lefebvre suggests, 'to grasp a rhythm it is necessary to have been grasped by it; one must let oneself go, give oneself over, abandon oneself to its duration.'⁶⁸ The capacity for attending to the past involves some kind of surrender of a secure subject position. It will be possible to construct out a narrative on the basis of the remnant, to create, as Burgin sees it, 'a monument of mourning', and an official site that makes the case for the remembrance of a specific event.

This was the position taken up by Georg Dehio in the still-telling debate about 'monumental preservation' at the beginning of the twentieth century in the German-speaking area between Alois Riegl and Georg Dehio; it is precisely attention that is at stake.

Dehio was attempting to establish the institution and discipline of monument preservation as a response to the pessimistic diagnosis of a new era imbued with the spirit of liberalism, which expresses itself in the impositions of both the legal system and the economic system, in the growth of private ownership, of the increasing importance of traffic and circulation and 'individual utilitarian motives in general'. This diagnosis of the 'new era' has much in common with Connerton's assertion that modernity 'separates social life from locality and human dimensions' and with the analysis of modernity provided by Georg Simmel in his 1903 essay on 'The Metropolis and Mental Life', which also analysed the increasing dominance of abstract, contractual relations in the modern city, even if Dehio approaches this new era from a much more judgemental perspective.

Dehio insisted on the imposition of a narrative of cultural identity, a 'national optic', which would guide the authorized curator in the collecting, archiving and exhibiting of the substance of the nation. This would require restrictions upon the aforementioned phenomena of modernization, but would also have to combat the threat of material destruction (the rapid turnover of buildings in the city, as bemoaned a century later by Connerton) and the 'loss of the capacity for reception' (*Verlust der Aufnahmefähigkeit*), which echoes the diminished modern urban attention span identified by Simmel in his essay. For Dehio, this is to be combated by the imposition of a different form of attention to the material built environment: *pious devotion*.⁶⁹

The capacity to impose and secure a narrative is dependent on the mode of the initial encounter. Dehio's pious devotion echoes Halbwachs's formulation of how place memory works (his model was, after all, a cathedral), and implies not only an unmediated form of attention to the built environment, but also reformulates a mode for the investment of symbolic aura. The value of the preserved monument resides in the historical continuity of the nation that, through its material presence, it can be brought to symbolize. For that reason, Dehio rejects the idea of leaving a building to decay 'naturally', as this would obviously imply the instability of the idea of nation.⁷⁰

We can contrast Dehio's attempt to curate sites of memory as 'official' sites of national identity-formation (in a text-book illustration of Aleida Assmann's theory of the production of sites of cultural memory), with Riegl's recognition, and indeed celebration, of the democratic contingency and materiality of the site. Riegl and Dehio are both responding to modernity, something that is expressed through their conception of attention. For Riegl, the modern built environment shapes the 'beam of attention' that is directed towards the building with 'age value'. Dehio demands a mode of attention, a form of 'civic seeing' that is organized as a counterweight to modern distraction and which is not detachable from the meaning that is transferred from the object to the viewing subject. Dehio's demands remains dependent on the mode of encounter with the monument. It is not primarily the (historical) meaning of the sites that is at stake, but the mode of encounter – the 'museal urban gaze'.

Rather than assuming that a specific past is transparently expressed through the object, we need to think through the technologies of transmission that facilitate the production of 'spatial images'. The cityscape is not simply a medium in itself, but it requires a framing and construction as a 'spatial image'. There are fundamentally three major technologies: musealization, site-specific installation, and exhibition. These are technologies that engage

with attention, embodied experience, and the experience of time in the city.⁷¹ The synchronic and museal gazes are not only present in visual culture, such as photography, film and site-specific installation, but is implicit in many kinds of text (in the broadest sense) that formulate an encounter with the city. For that reason, the material under consideration in this book is quite heterogeneous: it involves institutional exhibitions, theoretical reflections, newspaper articles as well as film, photography and installations. It should go without saying that it is in the nature of such a project about elusive remnants that the material dealt with can make no claim to being exhaustive. It has been selected and curated to frame the argument of the book.

Materials, method: pausing at the gate of the Germans

To offer an insight into the kind of materials and the strategy of close reading in which this book will engage, I look here at a case of memorialization drawn from the introduction to Aleida Assmann's 2006 book *The Long Shadow of the Past: Memory Culture and the Politics of History*. Here, Assmann discusses an art installation. Or rather, she discusses a photograph of an art installation, Hans Hoheisel's 1997 work, 'The Gate of the Germans', in which, for a few brief moments, an image of the infamous gates to Auschwitz concentration camp, with the slogan, 'Arbeit Macht Frei', was projected on to the Brandenburg Gate.

The slogan functions as a perverse form of memorial plaque, one of the key technologies of memory transmission. Attention needs to be paid to how varying forms of 'plaque' organize attention and time, from the solid bronze adornments on the Kaiser William Memorial Church (discussed in Chapter One), through the provisional placards at the Topography of the Terror (Chapter Two) to the kind of 'temporary' signage as in this kind of installation.

Assmann writes of this installation (Fig. 2):

In the photograph the unique and fleeting performance, which like an involuntary flash of memory was only perceptible for a brief moment for few people on that cold January night, was mothballed (*stillgelegt*) and preserved, through which it can be made available to others at a temporal and spatial distance.⁷²

Photography is on one level a musealizing activity that obviously involves a pause, yet, with Mike Crang, we have to be wary of attributing 'to the moving



2. Hans Hoheisel, 'The Gate of the Germans', Berlin, 1997. Photograph taken by the studio of Hans Hoheisel. Courtesy of the artist.

body the immobility of the point through which it passes', something which will be significant in our discussion of photography's museal gaze in this book.⁷³ Assmann appropriates the photographic representation of Hoheisel's installation and translates into a fixed, isolated image, which she later terms a 'Denkbild', presumably an allusion to 'Denkmal', the German for monument. This translation is based on her own theory of memory transmission, by which objects, once their initial function has been exhausted, can be taken from the repository and refunctionalized within the framework of cultural memory which operates at temporal and spatial distance. The now reified 'Denkbild' is open to Assmann to decipher, which she does by effectively providing a historical supplement to the image, performing the same kind of activity engaged in by Brian Ladd, in *Ghosts of Berlin*, in outlining the meanings which have been attributed to the monument, which was built in the 1790s, from then to 1989. She supplies not only historical depth to the image, but also situates it in the media context of the early twentieth century, as she notes how the Gate was used for commercial advertising projection purposes during its renovation between 2000 and 2002. The third context through which she draws meaning from the photograph is through its invocation of the Holocaust: according to Assmann, Hoheisel's work is able to make the problematic of German national memory 'in unmittelbarer Evidenz deutlich' (immediately and clearly evident). This is an interesting

claim, since it is founded on a reading of a photograph of the installation. Yet this reading, in its effort to delimit the significance of the installation to the 'studium' of the photograph (to use Roland Barthes' classic term for the intended subject of the image), and the lens through which Assmann chooses to read it (since her book is about the dynamic of individual and collective remembrance in the 'long shadow' of a traumatic past), actually misses one curious aspect of that photograph, which reminds us of other dimensions of works of visual culture such as Hoheisel's that become invisible once, in the peace and quiet of our academic study, we contemplate a 'Denkbild'.

If we look at the photograph again, we might notice that the photograph is clearly not of an 'instant', but that the shutter's exposure time has been lengthened, with the result that a moving object (presumably a bus, given the yellow traces in the bottom left-hand corner) has left a trace of light that passes through the gate and veers to the left (following the required traffic regulation). Assmann's analysis can do nothing with this particular aspect of the photograph (let us call it, continuing to follow Barthes' terminology, the 'punctum'). It is one aspect that exceeds her framing of the photograph. One could also interrogate the location of the camera, set to one side of the Gate, since presumably a conventional frontal position was rendered inadmissible by the same traffic regulations that shaped the movement of the bus.

By considering the photograph a transparent document of an art installation, Assmann misses the fact that the photograph (with its extended exposure time) is itself a 'spatial image' in which the environment of the encounter plays a significant role: the photograph temporalizes space, rather than spatializing time, as the 'Denkbild' does, much as the original installation temporalized space through its interruption of the apparently static structure that is the Brandenburg Gate.

This suggests that the photograph, and certainly the installation, cannot simply be used to abstract, and explicate allegorical significance. Rather the spatial image, including the transient encounter with the installation itself, was not only an engagement with Germany's traumatic past, but also an engagement with the spatial and indeed the temporal structure of an urban space, and how one attends to it.

In the motion of the bus we have spatial practices that are shaped by the synchronic organization of space and time that is embodied by the bus timetable and the city street network. That bus, of course, would be the 100 that ran from Zoologischer Garten through the Brandenburg Gate from 1990 until 2000, when the Gate was closed to motorized traffic once more. The itinerary was marketed as a 'tourist route', another set of spatial practices

that produce a certain perception structured by what John Urry terms the 'tourist gaze', so that the passengers may well have had their attention drawn to the Gate's presence at the moment of the projection. If this was a 'memory event', in the manner of Christo's 'Wrapped Reichstag' (discussed in Chapter 4), then, given the time of its intervention, it is probably an ironic commentary on that phenomenon.

The Brandenburg Gate is an odd place to start, given that this book is primarily concerned with the (in)visibility of marginal(ized) urban sites, which are brought together under the conceptual umbrella of 'unintended monuments'. There can be few Berlin landmarks as remediated as this Gate. Hoheisel said that, in the course of his preparation for the installation, the Gate had become 'ever more of a simple projection surface'.⁷⁴ Yet, as Assmann's history of the monument demonstrates, precisely this function of the Gate as a projection surface, a *lieu de memoire* to be invested with symbolic aura, means that it shares many qualities with those sites. Its original function as a celebration of military victory has long since given way to a variety of transient projections, be they the Nazi celebration of 1933, or the post-Wende, pre-unification euphoria of New Year 1990. In that sense, the Brandenburg Gate can also qualify as an unintended monument, in that, free from any fixed function, it can always be reinvested with meaning. Assmann claims of the Gate that it 'announces (*verkündet*) and embodies history', but this assertion is grounded in what Jonathan Long critiques as the 'expressive' view of the built environment.⁷⁵ Assmann herself, through her detailed explication of the Gate's complex historical layers has already placed this self-evident expressive dimension in question. Yet this claim, along with her earlier assertion that Hoheisel's installation was 'clear and immediate evidence' of the problem of German national memory, is founded not only on the expressive fallacy that the material object embodies history (as we also saw with the example from Huyssen) but also the fallacy identified by James Elkins, who has argued that 'images, in visual studies, are too often either immediately self-interpreting or stand-ins for information that is non-visual'.⁷⁶ The power of these fallacies is undeniable, but how they are produced can be productively interrogated in order to get a clearer understanding of the dynamics of place memory.

Visual/memory/event culture

As suggested, Hoheisel's installation can also be read as a commentary on a contemporary memory 'event culture' that is prevalent in Berlin. Examples

of this are discussed in Chapter Four, and their prehistory traced in the first three chapters of this book. These events directed towards 'the past' in the city in a collective fashion through a Debordian 'spectacle' that, in Lutz Koepnick's terms, contains 'possible anxieties about the mutability of meaning and identity in modern society' and redefines 'a shared sense of stability and orientation amid the frenzy of progress'.⁷⁷ For Koepnick, the only break in the spectacle comes with the technological breakdown of the event screen, and with that the emergence of a rare opportunity to 'question how our own present ever more forcefully expands into, reframes and gobbles up the rest of the time'.⁷⁸ This book is similarly focused on moments of breakdown in the synchronic order of the city, but in particular how these breakdowns can also be engineered, as by Hoheisel, through a critical visual culture.

As this book shows, visual culture engagements with Berlin's cityscape have often served as barometers of the emergence of more general processes, as well as reflections on contemporary technologies of visualization and reproduction. What is then the relationship between artistic practices of remembrance, such as Hoheisel, and everyday practices of memory? As Assmann observes elsewhere in her by now extensive oeuvre on memorial practices, art is not only a means of representing memories, but is a 'hand-maiden' to communication about memory', a 'social trigger for the liberation of blocked memories'.⁷⁹ Yet this trigger does not just happen at the level of content. If this were the case, 'remember Auschwitz' would then be one of the messages of Hoheisel's installation as a straightforward reversal of other, earlier triumphant uses of the Gate. The form of the spatial image is also significant, however, precisely in the absence of uniformly organized bodies or flags. As Assmann herself admits in another volume, artists 'prefer to approach the less-remarkable and invisible things' and transform them into a 'spur to thought about that which does not have any value as a monument and does not have the status of a recognized historical place.' For Assmann, artists make an important contribution to 'the perpetually open question as to what we recognize at any time as history in the present'⁸⁰ and focus on 'the mechanisms for the production and dissolution of attention'. Indeed many of the artists at work in this book investigate what might constitute the mechanisms of a relatively invisible everyday 'memory culture' on the margins of official commemoration, and yet influence in the longer term how that official policy works (as the examples of Boltanski and Garazaibal in Chapter Four illustrate). There remains the question of the artwork itself, and particularly a site-specific installation such as Hoheisel's in this installation a reworking of how we attend to urban space and time in the

production of a (fleeting) aestheticized space. Hoheisel's installation can be read as the production of place memory, after its disappearance, through the *technological* construction of a spatial image.⁸¹

Image technologies and the museal gaze

Spatial images need not only be site-specific installations, but can be produced in other forms of visual culture that involve an encounter with, and carrying over of, an indexical image of a particular site.

Photography and film are clearly significant here; painting will play less of a role given its indirect relation to the 'register of reality' (Huyssen) that is so central to the museal gaze. The photography at stake here is not 'rubble photography' in the conventional sense understood by scholars whose studies of such images focus on the iconicity of the ruin and the significance of bearing witness to wartime trauma.⁸² The remnants does not possess the 'shock value' of an intact world demolished, but actually function as a remnant of a disavowed past. Eugène Atget is a crucial reference point here, not only because his work was also rescued from obscurity, but because his procedure of producing a 'spatial image' of a world under threat due to the radical transformation of the modern cityscape resonates with the photographic production from the 1960s to the 1980s which similarly sought to record the vanishing landscape threatened by postwar reconstruction. The construction of a photographic archive of the rubble-strewn cityscape could lead us to read the photographer as a 'camera-bearing conservationist', as Stefan Gronert describes the work of Bernd and Hilda Becher.⁸³ The photographic archive can *also* be an archive of urban sites. Yet, as a *photographic* archive, it is more mobile and easily reproducible than material objects in the city – the transplanted Hotel Esplanade at Potsdamer Platz being the exception that proves the rule, as discussed in Chapter Four. Photography is also more susceptible to an interventionist curatorial and exhibition practice, which has implications for the discussion in Chapter Three of how photographs of the immediate post-war era have been used.

In the age of technological reproduction, cinema's indexical relationship to a pro-filmic world has been constantly invoked as a form of encounter with reality by the likes of Siegfried Kracauer and Andre Bazin. Emma Wilson brought Huyssen's 'museal gaze' into her discussion of Alain Resnais's use of tracking shots in *Night and Fog* (1955). For Wilson, these produce 'a more mobile, three-dimensional, even haptic encounter with history and its material relics than the conventional museum provides', which 'might be

aligned with Andreas Huyssen's reflections on the new possibilities of the museal gaze'.⁸⁴ Such extended tracking shots, as well as powerfully haptic close-ups, are also a striking feature of Resnais's next film, *Hiroshima Mon Amour* (1959). This latter film can be read as a prime example of cinematic scepticism towards 'conventional' museum practice, for which the Hiroshima museum stands in, despite, or perhaps precisely because of the way in which Resnais's camera encounters it, in fluid sweeps that undermine 'the singular and fixed spectatorial position that museums sought to arrange as the ideal vantage point from which to see and understand the logic underlying the exhibition arrangements'.⁸⁵

Such haptic encounters in cinema undo, in Laura Marks's terms, 'visual mastery' but also the mastery of the past as a discrete object. They run counter to clarified historical seeing as comprehension, which is constructed in *Hiroshima Mon Amour* as the museum's mission and ultimate failing. Through his refusal to frame the object, Resnais's tracking shots point not only to the limits of historical understanding, but also to the necessity of the encounter for any beginning of understanding. The extended tracking shot draws our attention to the duration of the encounter with the object, the material extent of the object, and frames, or rather, constantly reframes our gaze upon the object, in contrast to the conventional museum's static framing, which compels the visitor's body to halt in order to gaze upon the framed object. As Julie Ng describes it in her discussion of Daniel Libeskind's post-unification models for Berlin, 'the museum-goer [...] encounters artefacts that contain affective significance because of the vast quantitative distances in time between the viewer and the viewed that, none the less, are closed by what seems to be the immediacy of the object'.⁸⁶ The camera, by contrast mimics a mobile gaze, imitating the way in which 'the museum-goer is being moved both by the [museum] design and the object.' Ng expands her discussion through reference to Gilles Deleuze, whose film theory is also useful for a discussion of the representation of the encounter with the abandoned remnant. In *Cinema 2*, Deleuze discusses the kind of image that emerges from the cinematic engagement with the 'any-space-whatever',⁸⁷ a disconnected space that provokes the breakdown of the conventional sensory-motor schemata of habit that conventionally dictate the stimulus- and-response-driven logic of the urban environment, leaving the subject a mere 'spectator' rather than agent. For Deleuze, the model for this kind of disconnected space was, tellingly, the ruined post-war European city framed in neo-realist cinema. For Ng, such a space produces 'paralysis' in the subject, but this can also be read as the 'loss of subjecthood', that, following Sheringham, is a central element in the dynamics of place

memory. For Deleuze, this immobility can also be read as opportunity for thought. This book will examine how this is enabled by the construction of a spatial image, a recovery of 'attentiveness' through the technology of a museal gaze, which connects 'age value' with the undoing of the synchronic rhythms of the city. This production of place memory is at the same time a moment of discovery and a moment of preservation, but is also a technological production (as Ng underlines in her discussion of Libeskind's designs). An awareness of the technological form of transmission is crucial in understanding how urban memory works as a hybrid form of communicative and cultural memory.

This work will be traced throughout this book's history of the production of spatial images in Berlin, elucidating the longer history of the urban memory culture in which Hoheisel's installation took place.

Overview

Chapter One, 'Remembering the "Murdered City": Berlin 1957-1974' traces the gradual emergence of local place memory work from the late 1950s through to the mid-1970s. The chapter begins in 1957, the hegemonic moment for the *autogerechten Stadt* (the 'automobile city', which we might also translate as the 'concept-city') in the west of the city. This was the year of the Hauptstadt Berlin international building exhibition, which shows how the synchronic urban gaze of the planners was exhibited in the attempt to construct a form of civic behaviour that was adapted to the new planned urban environment. At this moment, in the local resistance, for example, to the planned demolition of the Kaiser William Memorial Church, we can begin to see the production of 'spatial images' of resistance, the tentative emergence of a museal gaze in response to the 'murdered city', as the post-war environment in West Berlin was polemically described by the journalist Wolf-Jobst Siedler. Siedler sees post-war urban planning as the 'second destruction' of the city, following on from the effects of the air war. The chapter focuses on public debates about urban reconstruction, and the accompanying critique of the synchronic gaze, both in the writings of Siedler and of the social psychologist Alexander Mitscherlich and the photography of Elizabeth Niggemeyer. Other technologies discussed involve the musealization of urban façades, enshrined in the rather limited official policy of *Stadtbildpflege* (preservation of the city image). This musealization process becomes visible in both halves of the city in the late 1960s. While urban planning policy in West and East seeks to respond to, and to some

extent, regulate that emergent museal gaze, the practice of critical visual culture was slower to respond. Wim Wenders's early film, *Summer in the City* (1970) is an investigation of movement through urban spaces that links to our discussion of a Deleuzian 'any-space-whatever' in its foregrounding of the rhythms of space and time in the encounter of the city under threat of demolition.

Chapter Two, 'Place Memory Work in East and West Berlin 1975-1983', traces how 'place memory work' develops across forms of visual culture from the mid-1970s through to the early 1980s. This period sees the emergence of curators, as representatives of a generational shift in historical and urban consciousness in which the absence of 'place' is keenly felt in tandem with a rejection of the regime of attention shaped by the dominant synchronic urban gaze. For these curators, the need to respond to the presence of traces of the historical process (both before and after 1945) leads them to theorize how to 'work with place' in the production of spatial images in architecture, site-specific intervention as well as photography and film. This chapter illustrates how place can be produced through the direct encounter with the material remnant, but also through the indexical recording forms of the photograph and film, whose strategies for exhibiting the cityscape dovetail with the display strategies of spatial interventions.

Architecture and urban renovation is addressed in the analysis of the International Building Exhibition from the late 1970s. In its two sections, IBA-Neu and IBA-Alt, it focused on the production of spatial images in the Southern Friedrichstadt, an area that had been neglected in the post-war era and was rediscovered, curated and exhibited in the 1970s. These two sections developed related, but importantly distinctive forms of urban memory in 'activating the silent reserves of place'.⁸⁸ The first, IBA-Neu, was founded on the Senate's demand that the 'genetic structure' of the city was to be the basis of future urban development, whereas IBA-Alt criticized the IBA-Neu as an aesthetic programme and saw its own task as the recovery of forgotten social histories, including everyday experience under National Socialism, in Kreuzberg. The IBA-Alt's museal urban gaze sets itself against the synchronic gaze as a form of 'social amnesia', exemplified by the memory work at the former SS-headquarters, now the Topography of the Terror. The IBA-Alt promoted the production of 'memory value' within the cityscape through encounters with remnants that generate critical depth and an awareness of the discontinuities of the history process.

Critical visual culture takes up this work at other, less prominent sites in Berlin (Hotel Esplanade, Anhalter Bahnhof, the former Embassy Quarter in West Berlin) in projects that precisely interrogate the interaction between

the memory of place and the narrativizations of cultural memory. We also see this in the field of photography, the curation of previously neglected photography from the immediate post-war period (e.g. Fritz Eschen and Friedrich Seidenstücker) and the emergence of photographers in West and East who critically dissect the synchronic urban gaze and at the same generate a museal urban gaze upon neglected, obsolescent spaces of the city. This process is also evident in a series of films in East and West from this period.

Chapter Three, 'The Remembered City on Display 1983-1994', examines how this 'place memory work' becomes codified in forms of display that establish the paradigm of the city itself as a museal space between 1984 and the early 1990s, spanning the fall of the Wall. This is illustrated with reference to the public outcomes of the IBA-Neu and -Alt projects, and then to a series of projects related to the 750th anniversary of the city's founding in 1987, which establishes a new technological dimension to the dynamics of place memory: the installation as 'collective' event. The 1986 Mythos Berlin exhibition on the site of the Anhalter Bahnhof illustrates site-specific urban memory production ('the city as museum') as a specific technology in the evocation of past time and experience, but also as an embryonic form of event culture. An extended analysis of Wim Wenders's *Wings of Desire* (1986) focuses especially on how the film shapes the viewer's encounter with the 'wounds' of the southern Friedrichstadt and Potsdamer Platz. Wenders curates the city in such a way as to (re) formulate the viewer's experience of the cityscape through the undoing of the sensory-motor habits of the urban environment. The Nikolaiviertel reconstruction in East Berlin allows for a broader consideration of the positions of monument preservation and reconstruction in the period, especially in comparison with the aims of the West Berlin IBA-Neu. Its construction of urban memory is read against the late GDR film, *The Architects* (1989/1990) which revisits the themes of critical visual culture, the synchronic city and obsolescence, that were also visible in the films discussed in Chapter Two. *The Architects* was begun before and completed after the fall of the Berlin Wall, and expresses a continuity that is to be found in the immediate post-wall era. Jürgen Bottcher's documentary film *Die Mauer* (1991), about the fall of the Wall and its aftermath. This film works with the visual language of obsolescence familiar to the GDR – not however now as a tacit form of state dissidence, but as a form of resistance to the synchronic time regime of the new post-unification order with its associated historical narratives. A similar continuity is evident in Christian Boltanski's *Missing House* and Shimon Attie's *Writing on the Wall*, both of which are explicit interventions in the urban fabric shape encounters

that foregrounds the city as simultaneously repository, archive and display museum.

Chapter Four, 'In Search of a City? Urban Memory in Unified Berlin', looks at how Berlin's memory culture has responded to what Paul Virilio diagnoses as the increasingly porous condition of the city in a globalizing world. The focus of this chapter is less on specific 'wounds' in the cityscape and more on the large 'obsolescent' spaces left behind by the collapse of the GDR regime and which need to be integrated into the working conception of a historic city: the Potsdamer Platz, which had been criss-crossed by the Wall, and the 'Schlossplatz' which housed the Palace of the Republic from 1973 onwards. These spaces are too large and too central to be 'invisible' or 'marginal', but the memory culture that emerges from them remains intelligible in terms of a museal urban gaze that (re)produces the dynamics of place memory. One key form is the IBA-Neu's architectural model of urban memory, which became established as a paradigmatic form in the so-called 'critical reconstruction' of the city in the 1990s. With particular focus on the (re)construction of Potsdamer Platz as 'the memory of place', the chapter illustrates how Kleihues' original concept of the built environment as collage is adapted to the construction of a 'new urbanist' environment to ensure the appropriation of fragments of the past into a carefully bounded conception of the 'city'. The automatization of movement through the city is less directly associated with automobiles and becomes more implicitly a pedestrian form of consumption of the Wall, the Hotel Esplanade and other remnants of the past at Potsdamer Platz, where the palimpsests of past time are one of many commodities to be consumed. At the same time, other projects at Potsdamer Platz continue to produce a critical museal gaze, such as the photographic work of Arwed Messmer that interrogates substantive duration in the built environment. This section concludes with an analysis of Thomas Schadt's 2002 film, *Berlin. Sinfonie einer Grossstadt*, a museal invocation of Walter Ruttmann's 1927 celebration of the synchronic machine city. Schadt's film is situated *after* the city as synchronic machine and interrogates how the image of the city serves to transmit the past. The film not only frames a musealized city, but also questions as to the nature of the city *per se* in the contemporary 'postmodern' moment.

With the 'completion' of Potsdamer Platz in 1998, Berlin-Mitte became the new paradigmatic site of 'unintended monuments' in the city, due both to the obsolescence of the Palace of the Republic, and also to the 'emptiness' of the spaces produced by the synchronic urban gaze of the GDR's planning institutions. While the Palace of the Republic was a site of local and national memory contestation in the 1990s,⁸⁹ it becomes increasingly

a site for international artists to engage with a more general, contemporary concern with obsolescence and modernization, as is seen in projects such as Tacita Dean's film *Palast* (2004) and Lars Ramberg's installation *Zweifel* (2005), which are documents of an obsolescent building that invite the viewer to experience the passage of past time in a medium-specific context.

International artists also reflect on this tension between a marketable urban memory and processes of obsolescence. We see this in Allora and Calzadilla's piece about the Palace of the Republic, 'How to Appear Invisible', and Lars Ramberg's revivification of his *Zweifel* project in digital form on the internet. This is memory produced and consumed from an almost infinitely expanded urbanized (hyper)space.

The conclusion takes up Paul Virilio's idea of the 'overexposed' city and Rem Koolhaas's rejection of urban nostalgia to analyse the practices of the 775th city anniversary in Berlin in 2012. It contrasts these with Juan Garzaibal's installation, *Memoria Urbana* (2012), which recreates the skeleton and floorplan of a disappeared church at an anonymous crossroads in the Mitte district. This installation also speaks to the dematerialization of, and yet ongoing value of urban memory in a context beyond the conventional linguistic and geographical borders of the city, in an era of global migration. Above all, it addresses a collective that is neither local or global, but allows us to recuperate the word 'denizen' in its historical sense, to denote those who are accorded civil rights without belonging to the place.

In an era where the urbanization of space, and spatial experience, seemingly know no bounds, it is crucial to understand the mechanisms by which a relationship to the past is fostered. By observing how asynchronous spaces are archived and exhibited, it is possible to see how a critical recalibration of urban attention is attempted so that, following Halbwachs, one might remember how to remember place.

We are able to see the continuities in conceptions of place memory that follow through from the late 1970s as discussed in Chapters One and Two into the post-unification period. This reframing of urban memory in Berlin coincides then with the need to reconceptualize the city in the era of the global and the virtual. It is in this post-urban and post-GDR context that the paradigm of remembering National Socialism 'well' collapses not only into a more diffuse content (the remembrance of different pasts), but also ever more complex forms of museal gaze, imbricated with technologies which show how artists are interested, beyond the material remnant and its past, in attention, but also, importantly, in technologies that organize attention to space. The ostensible unimportance of the local does not diminish the production of forms of place memory and indeed the embodied encounter

with the built environment in Berlin. The critical practice of urban memory, divested of a nostalgic longing for authentic place, can be a tool for continuing to generate vigilance towards the cityscape as an indirect object, and towards the discontinuities and asynchronicities of urban time and space.

An academic book about the cityscape – not a coffee table picture book – is obviously formally constrained in how much visual material it can present. For that reason, I have created a web site – asynchronouscity-berlin.wordpress.com – which hosts further visual material that can be read alongside this publication, as well as links to other sites with relevant visual material.