

Chapter Title: In Search of a City? Urban Memory in Unified Berlin

Book Title: Urban Memory and Visual Culture in Berlin

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Published by: Amsterdam University Press

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv8pzdev.8>

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4. In Search of a City?

Urban Memory in Unified Berlin

At the conclusion of her chapter on 'Re-Centering Berlin', Janet Ward writes:

By the middle of the twenty-first century, when Berlin may well have recovered from its present bankruptcy, the Hauptbahnhof will be there smoothly connecting not just the city, but the European continental east, west, north, and south.¹

This is a vision of the synchronic city for the global age, beyond the dreams of Rolf Schwedler in its celebration of technological time.² Where is the asynchronous city and does it have any value in the global age?³ Paul Virilio sardonically declared the end of the 'city' in a 1984 essay that emphasized the increasing synchronicity of a post-urban regime:

Where once an entire 'downtown' area indicated a long historical period, now only a few monuments will do. Further, the new technological time has no relation to any calendar of events nor to any collective memory. What is a monument within this regime? Instead of an intricately wrought portico or a monumental walk punctuated by sumptuous buildings, we now have idleness and monumental waiting for service from a machine.⁴

Virilio's melancholy has much in common with the lamentations of Paul Connerton about the disappearance of collective memory in a synchronized environment. The questions which Virilio raises about the technologized, synchronized body of the citizen and the obsolescent encounter with 'old' architecture are ones that are germane to Berlin in its post-unification context.

This chapter traces the ongoing presence of the asynchronous city and its role in the construction of urban memory. It looks not so much for the descendants of the wounds and 'strange emptiness of which postwar Berlin was full', but to focus on how the museal gaze operated in those large, obsolescent spaces that were left behind by the collapse of the GDR regime: the Potsdamer Platz, which had been crisscrossed by the Wall, and the renamed Schlossplatz, which had housed the Palace of the Republic from 1973 onwards. Here we continue to see urban memory at work, albeit an urban memory that addresses an even more tenuous collective than had

existed in Berlin before the fall of the Wall. Wim Wenders had seamlessly elided inhabitant and visitor in his description of those who encountered Berlin's wounded cityscape, but perhaps we need to rethink these terms when considering the tenuous collective that the spatial images of urban memory might address in our contemporary moment.

In one of the images used in her 2004 essay on 'Berlin, the Virtual, Global City', Janet Ward presents a photograph she took in 2002 of a poster for the renovation of the corner building of Oderberger Strasse and Kastanienallee in Prenzlauer Berg, the very building over which the poster had been imposed. This is a curiously 'minor' example of a phenomenon that had been virulent in Berlin since the fall of the Wall, most notoriously demonstrated by the Schloss façade draped over the Palace of the Republic (discussed below). What the advertisement and the photograph render invisible is the economic pressure being exerted on the 'crumbling' tenement's current occupants. Yet in terms of an encounter with urban space, the advertisement also blocks the spatial recognition of place that would otherwise be available to those same occupants, their familiar urban environment. The poster has no human figures in its spatial image, merely cars. Ward's position as visitor and photographer (and thus co-constructor of the spatial image) is not one that she reflects upon.

This ongoing process of commercial rehabilitation of 'obsolete' housing structures is not a process unique to Berlin,⁵ or even to the post-89 period, as our discussion of the 1970s illustrated, but this particular object, presumably chosen 'at random', in fact illustrates how, in contemporary Berlin, the 'spatial image' operates as a form of resistance. Ward's article was published in 2004, but a year later the proclaimed renovation had yet to begin, and an interstitial use of the building had emerged in the meantime, an occupation (albeit legal) of the site, which has many resonances with the more illustrious example of the Tacheles building on the Oranienburgerstrasse eight stops further down the tramline. While the spatial image of Tacheles was ultimately co-opted into a tourist itinerary of the city⁶ – the shock value of obsolescence framed and incorporated for the Lonely Planet generation – this house in the Oderbergerstrasse allows us to think about a site that is not explicitly framed for visitors, but where the complex overlap between developer/artist and visitor/citizen in the transforming city makes itself disruptively visible. An article in the *Tagesspiegel* from 15 October 2005 began with a phrase that invoked the question of urban attention:

During the day you hardly take any notice of the house at the Oderbergerstraße, on the corner of Kastanienallee. The walls are almost black.

Imposing posters announce that you can buy condos here and renovation will be beginning soon. In truth, it should be standing empty. But suddenly a window opens. A white tip exposes itself. Then a rocket comes into view. In other windows light is now visible. A young woman peers out from a balcony door. In a green-painted room a man in red sportswear is doing gymnastics. In the distance you can hear aircraft noise. These strange neighbours are artists and students.⁷

The article was written two weeks before the renovations were due to begin. Here playfulness was part of the game, as Wolfgang Krause, who had taken on the 'role' of the Swiss owner (Krause-Bösel, a pun on the German word for 'evil'), explained. The house had become a site of spatial practices that were not unlike the specific anti-capitalist rejection that marked Tacheles. Spontaneous concerts were organized at the windows in order to 'surprise passers-by'; other residents played the roles of noisy neighbours (a full description of the activities in the house can be found at www.ozwei.net/daheim/index.html). In other words, the house is not just an image of disruption, but a spatial image, in that it is a site of practices that shape an encounter with the urban environment, not just for passers-by, but also for neighbouring tenants: one tenant next door had also decorated his window. The house itself was decorated with the names of the occupants in the form of 'museum signs'.

From Janet Ward's pragmatic point of view, such resistance would be ultimately futile. Yet, according to the *Tagesspiegel* article, the house was apparently framed as the 'first stage' in the Tour de Kastanie on a pseudo-'estate agent' map of the city that echoes the form of spatial practice conducted by the IBA-Alt in its exhibitions of the 1980s (see Chapter Three). The principle here is movement as spatial practice and the shaping of attention to the built environment that 'resists' the imposition of exchange value upon space, without resorting to 'restorative nostalgia', or 'petrification', as Janet Ward terms it.⁸ This itinerary can be juxtaposed with other itineraries of the city that were shaped, for example, at the more highly visible obsolescent site of Potsdamer Platz.

Regulating the museal gaze at Potsdamer Platz

Janet Ward neatly sums up the dilemma the city planners faced at Potsdamer Platz, 'to re-insert physical nodes of relevance and connectivity into its urban center, which was, essentially, a series of wastelands [...]'.⁹

In fact, though Ward puts the emphasis on the imposition of synchronic infrastructures, it is conceptions of the urban past that underpin the reconstruction of Berlin's centre due to the subterranean influence of Halbwachs's theories of collective memory upon architectural design and urban planning. The *Planwerk Innenstadt*, the planning scheme that outlined the plans for developing Berlin's centre post-unification, was profoundly influenced by the work of the second IBA in Berlin – discussed in Chapters Two and Three – which set the principles of 'careful renewal' and 'critical reconstruction' in constructing a memory of the urban. These principles were predicated on the work and thought of the Italian architect Aldo Rossi, particularly his idea of the persistent street network as the 'genetic code' of the city.¹⁰ Such a code is, according to Rossi, ideally not part of an explicit sign system, but the *Planwerk Innenstadt* codified it into a fixed image in setting down regulations relating to building height and usage that belonged to a particular moment in the city's historical development – an irony that was not lost on many critics.¹¹ The spaces and buildings constructed according to these principles (e.g. those at Spittelmarkt or those planned for the Molkenmarkt) are intended to shape a city in the European tradition, a technological construction, after the fact, of the conditions under which place memory can apparently evolve.

The *Planwerk Innenstadt* is a prescription for the spatio-temporal forms within which urban life is played out, after the disappearance of a conventional place memory. The spatio-temporal conditions in which it is realized are unavoidably those of the contemporary post-urban city. The encounter with the built environment is organized in these spaces to form not just an official narrative, but a regulated form of spatio-temporal encounter with the urban past that relies upon the elision of cultural and communicative memory.

This is explicit in the city's official self-presentation as museum, *Berlin: Open City. The City as Exhibition*, which ran from 1999 to 2000 (although, in the nature of the undertaking, it effectively continues to exist).¹² The 'exhibition guide' argued that the ten routes it outlines are 'to be mastered in around four hours of walking', and are 'not tourist trails following the famous landmarks. Street crossings and eyesores are as much part of reality as harmony and idyll' (BOS, 7). The routes engage explicitly with the everyday spatial practice of the city, but always in the form of a guided itinerary that constructs the tourist as 'individual urban explorer' (*individueller Stadterkunder*) (BOS, 8), working with the rhetorical distinction of the 'true traveller' who also travels *by foot*, in search of the 'authentic' experience of the urban environment, compared to the 'mere' tourist. The itineraries are not exclusively related to the past, but seamlessly interweave past and

present in their trajectories. Route 3, moving 'between myth and future', integrates tarrying (*verweilen*) at Potsdamer Platz with the contemplation of three forms of post-war urban planning: the planned cityscape of the 1950s and 1960s, as illustrated by the *Kulturforum*, the results of the 1987 IBA-Neu in Kreuzberg, and Mehringplatz as an example of 1960s planning for the 'car-friendly city' with its ubiquitous urban freeways.

While this itinerary focuses mainly on still-functional parts of the built environment, it does take in material remnants of the past, such as the 'Topography of the Terror', but subordinates their material opacity to, in this case, the discussion and illustration of Peter Zumthor's (at that time) planned structure at the site (*BOS*, 78–9). In the case of the Hochbunker near the Anhalter Bahnhof, or the remains of the Berlin Wall at the Niederkirchnerstrasse, the guide merely provides historical information that situates the remnants firmly in the past – there is no sense of their current function, other than as illustrations of the unique cultural memory of this non-generic city. These remnants are imbued with memory value as isolated *lieux de mémoire* within the framework of cultural memory that, in Aleida Assmann's terms, translates an object from the 'storehouse repository' into the 'functional memory' of cultural memory. Yet this experience of cultural memory is still dependent on a particular mode of encounter with the built environment: the guide implies that the tourist (or visitor to the 'exhibition') is travelling on foot and frequently refers back pejoratively to the obsessive focus on automobility of an earlier generation, which was responsible for the demolition of place memory (*BOS*, 77, 88). This pedestrian mode of encounter is a key dynamic of place memory, predicated on the immediate, spontaneous and reciprocal relationship between citizen and built environment. The encounters with the remnants in this city on display are, however, inevitably shaped by their framing in the guide, which, as Boyer suggests of the city of collective memory in general, undercuts 'a more spontaneous reaction [...] [these are] theatrical stage sets that have little to say about the memory of place.'³ They do, however, have something to say about *how* this form of urban memory is produced.

Each of the objects listed in the guide is delimited, albeit in different ways, by the frame which documents its past and makes a case for its historical significance. This strategy can then be seen at work in other 'antique' material remnants to be found on display at Potsdamer Platz: fragments of the Berlin Wall, the former Kaisersaal in the Hotel Esplanade within the Sony Center, the façade of the Esplanade itself, the façade of Haus Huth, the reconstructed traffic lights and the former S-Bahn sign for Potsdamer Platz encased within the Sony Center.

The former S-Bahn sign for Potsdamer Platz is incorporated within 'Bahn Tower', the name which had been given to the tower that had originally been intended for the Sony corporation headquarters, and was then leased to the German railway corporation, the Deutsche Bahn.

Encased in its glass vitrine, the object is intended to be encountered as if in a museum, a form of encounter that is enhanced by the framing in glass of the façade of the Hotel Esplanade round the corner, and the 'Kaisersaal' of the former Hotel, which had been moved, in an example of technological virtuosity, from its original site to be incorporated into the structure of the Sony Center. The encounter with the palimpsestic quality of urban space reinforced its paradigmatic status after 1989, but, following the pattern described by De Certeau for Paris in 'Ghosts in the City', it was largely reincorporated within the synchronic urban gaze in the construction of narratives of cultural memory. The museal urban gaze is instrumentalized here to create a sense of narrative coherence, of a past seamlessly incorporated into the present. These objects are not obstacles to movement, to the circulatory rhythms of the city. The glass is of course not the only element in the framing, as there is also the use of signs.

An analysis of the textual component of the framing of many objects at the Potsdamer Platz reveals the 'official' narrative of cultural memory as one which privileges the Wilhelmine and Weimar periods, fundamentally disregards the Third Reich, and presents the GDR as a period that has been 'overcome'. From this point of view, it would be easy to suggest that these framings represent an example of remembering 'badly', in that they do not value the 'correct' version of history that demands an engagement with the Third Reich. The informational content of the frame is, however, only one element in the encounter with the object; there is also the materiality of the object itself, its 'subterranean attractions' (Boyer), which can be further glossed in terms of Riegl's identification of the 'age value' of the unintended monument, or, as Baudrillard puts it, '[the antique] is there to conjure up time as part of the atmosphere.'¹⁴ Yet the form of the frame, which at Potsdamer Platz includes the use of display glass and signage, gives the objects the particular status of the antique, 'to the extent that is [also] experienced as a sign.'¹⁵

It might nevertheless be claimed, with Baudrillard, that these objects, in their exhibition setting in a 'new' city centre at Potsdamer Platz that is predicated on consumerist display, are 'not on a par with other objects' and falsely manifest themselves as 'total, as an authentic presence.'¹⁶ Beyond the semantic content of the framing that places them within a certain historical urban and national narrative, these remnants are also framed

as material that direct an encounter with Berlin as a city replete with urban memory.

A further example elucidates what is at stake in the production of urban memory at Potsdamer Platz. Burgin suggests that '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',¹⁷ but who are we and what is our path? Moving through Potsdamer Platz is, in principle, a timetabled experience of consumption.¹⁸ If we doubt this, then let's take a wander down Bellevuesstrasse, along the rear side of the Sony Center – though, why would we, given that there are no more shops in this direction? But let's assume we do so anyway. We might well miss a plaque, for it is 'only' a sign. This plaque is, moreover, not displayed in upright and thus more visible fashion, like the Wall fragments, or the S-Bahn sign. Rather it is embedded in the ground, not the pavement (as with the Stolpersteine), but rather in the margin between the pavement and the Bellevuestrasse.

This is a plaque to mark *not* the original place where the Volksgerichtshof – the National Socialist court of 'justice' – stood, but rather where the entrance to the court stood. Yet, for all that it is only a sign, its location also frames a particular form of encounter. (One assumes that the entrance was much larger than the size of the plaque, hence its positioning must be deliberate). This encounter with the place is thus multiply marginalized: not in the original location of the building – which would be at the heart of the Sony Center – and thus separated off from the punctual circulation of tourists and consumers; not on the pavement – where it might interrupt the punctual passage of the passers-by; and it is not particularly visible. Yet it also bears the hallmark of the traditional framing of the official monument of mourning – it is rendered in bronze, like the plaques which frame the ruin of the Kaiser William Memorial Church in the west of the city, or even that which is attached to the artificial reconstruction of the traffic lights on Potsdamer Platz and the S-Bahn just discussed above.

In terms of the construction of an official narrative, it seems clear that while the celebration of a narrative of pre- and post-1933 Germany is displayed explicitly in the main thoroughfares of the new Potsdamer Platz, the period of National Socialism is marginalized. It is not just the content that matters here, but the spatio-temporal framework within which a museal site is constructed. Whereas the monuments in the main thoroughfares of Potsdamer Platz are organized to be encountered (and explained) as in a museum, this is clearly not the case with the plaque marking the threshold to the Volksgerichtshof. While it could be argued that it is theoretically 'present' as a specific location in the urban space, we see that presence

in urban space is not a neutral affair. As we saw elsewhere at Potsdamer Platz, the narrative elaboration that is cultural memory is preceded by an encounter with the mnemonic trace. Here, materiality is performed by the marginalized brass plaque. The Volksgerichtshof has been reconsigned to the storehouse repository of urban memory. The plaque commemorating the Volksgerichtshof unintentionally uncovers some of the key dynamics of urban memory and allows us to reinforce what we have understood to constitute place memory. It is not only derived from the age value of 'antique' objects, but also from the form of attentiveness that is required even to perceive the object in the first place.¹⁹

Deregulating the museal gaze at Potsdamer Platz

Curators and collectors were drawn to the Potsdamer Platz as a site of urban transformation where the production of spatial images was taking place. Andreas Huyssen's essay, 'The Voids of Berlin' is fundamentally a valorization of Daniel Libeskind's construction of a form of place memory through the maintenance of the 'void' at the newly founded Jewish Museum. Less frequently recalled is that Libeskind conceived two highly complex plans for the allegorical incorporation of the past with the city, 'Über den Linden', and his design for Potsdamer Platz, 'Out of Line', which approached the site as a puzzle derived from a series of fragments of the urban past.²⁰ There was a collective dimension to this conception, one that transcended the local, and offers our first version of the collective that contemporary urban memory might address:

This space is based on the simple principle that people from around the world form the shareholder's association, thus owning a share of Potsdamer Platz. Soil from the world on the roof, wilderness from Berlin on the ground. Everyone now has the right to a space in the wilderness, the possibility of cultivation, streams of seeds powered by wind and sail, the eye-I-cure, thunderstorms, sky-books, artificial sun-rain, sparkwriting, plantation in the clouds, the waterfall, inspiration ... all necessities in the Berlin of tomorrow.

Libeskind's highly theoretical conception of a 'globally connected' Berlin is central to the argument of this final chapter, a Berlin not just for Berliners. Whereas Libeskind's ideas remained on the drawing table, a 'practical' engagement with the materiality of Potsdamer Platz is demonstrated by



17. Arwed Messmer/Annett Gröschner, 'Potsdamer Platz: Anno Zero #11', 1995. 50 x 64 C-print from the series *Potsdamer Platz Anno Zero* 1994/95. Courtesy of the artists. 'If one comes out of the suburban station building on to the forecourt, the first thing that always strikes one's eye is the advertisement for the telegraph factory Töpffer & Son on the back side of a firewall of a house in the Köthener Strasse.'

Arwed Messmer and Annett Gröschner's series, 'Potsdamer Platz Anno Zero' (1994/5). This is a series of 25 captioned photographs showing the Platz at the beginning of construction, dating from between January 1994 and February 1995. The work won Messmer the Otto-Steinert-Preis of the German Photographic Society in 1995, and was most recently to be seen in the '89/09 – Art between Traces and Utopia' exhibition in 2009 at the Berlinische Galerie. In their fixation on the marginal traces of building development, and the decision to set these traces against the surrounding cityscape, Messmer's photographs diverge from the celebratory vision of the iconic city centre that was offered at the Info Box. Messmer's work documents the encounter with the urban environment as an act of collection and curation.

In the example chosen here (Fig. 17), an extended exposure time is revealed through the blurred bushes on the left-hand side of the photograph, indicating the act of collection as one of static contemplation (in Czaplicka's

sense). The movement of the bushes reveals the photograph as an indexical record of passing time, while also capturing obsolescence (the car wreck, for example). The act of collection is staged within the encounter of the viewer with the photograph. It is not simply a photograph, however, for the illusion of unmediated visual access is broken through the use of the textual supplement. This sign, unlike Boltanski's signs at *Missing House*, is not a plaque – though it is an integral part of the image – but it does similarly highlight the sparse image's need for supplementary explanation. Gröschner's text, however, does not supplement the image in a straightforward way. Rather, it foregrounds the spatial encounter with the site in an unspecified historical context: the visitor is departing from one of the nodal transport infrastructure points in the city and the text highlights the form of visual attention that is generated by the built environment. In that sense, it alludes to the formation of communicative memory in the built environment, while the photograph points to the way that that communicative memory has been rendered impossible through the building's contemporary absence. Our encounter with the 'spatial image' of photograph and caption is fractured temporally while we apparently remain in a state of spatial contemplation (if we consider the work's conventional display within an exhibition setting). Through its interplay of text and image, the work undercuts both the illusion of the visual immediacy of material traces and the illusion of a separate and definitive supplementarity which text can supply, while also reminding us of the layers of a past (if not of a clear history) that are present, if not always immediately visible in the city.²¹

Film after the synchronic city

The uncertainty of the present also opened up the potential for forms of 'cultural resistance', as Evelyn Preuss describes the critical positions assumed by many films of the 1990s that both revisited the past and reimagined the present in Berlin.²² Film is another medium in which the layers of the past can be made visible, and this is certainly the case with Thomas Schadt's *Berlin. Sinfonie einer Großstadt*, a documentary film made over the course of 2001 that generates the presence of the past within the capital of the united German nation. Schadt's film would not exist without the presence of a Weimar predecessor, Walther Ruttmann's 1927 film *Berlin. Die Sinfonie der Großstadt*. As has been well-documented, Ruttmann's film, ostensibly a documentary of city life, is a celebration of the machine-city constructed through the five acts of a day in the life of *the* metropolis: Berlin, in 1927,

embodies the archetypal traces of modern metropolitan life. Through its double refusal of the definite article, Schadt's title is immediately more modest, denying the archetypal and emphasizing the idea that Berlin could be 'any' city. In his introduction to the book version of his work, Schadt observes that he maintained 'a fundamental distance' to Ruttmann's film, since the latter's 'futuristic vision of the city was not fulfilled.'²³ For Schadt, this is down to the course of German history after 1945, for Schadt claims that he cannot 'look at Berlin without thinking about what took place between 1927 and 2002 in Germany and elsewhere.'²⁴ One notes that Schadt talks of 'looking' at Berlin, and not, for example, 'thinking of it'. In other words, it is the visual impact of the city that gives it its anamnestic dimension and triggers remembrance of the complex relationship between the 1920s and the present. Let us begin by considering how this anamnestic dimension is generated in two ways in the film.

First, there is the remembrance of images from preceding films, predominantly Ruttmann's film, and the way in which those are reworked for a reading of the present. Second, there is the use of images of the past to evoke memories of Berlin's history, pointing towards a sense of historical awareness absent in Ruttmann's film. Schadt's film, and its gaze, are located both 'beyond' the synchronic city and within a counter-narrative founded on a way of seeing that he recalls from Henri Alekan's camerawork in Wenders's *Wings of Desire* and the photography of August Sander.²⁵ Wenders's work with Alekan was very much an homage to the cinematography on *La Belle et La Bête* (1946). Implicit in both Wenders's and Schadt's references to these image-makers is a 'way of seeing' that is rooted in a response to urban modernity in the 1920s. In Sander's remarks on his exhibition at the Cologne Art Union in November 1927, he argued that 'nothing seems better suited than photography to give an absolutely faithful historical picture of our time.' In his work, Sander sought to avoid 'sugar-glazed photography, gimmicks, poses and fancy effects.'²⁶ Schadt renounces the possibility of special effects in his film, although we will go on to examine the 'effect' of the still image within the film itself.²⁷ The ethical integrity of Sander's project is described by Schadt as a complex aesthetically constructed authenticity.²⁸ Schadt's documentary film is a complex aesthetic engagement with authentic material, showing how a way of seeing developed in the 1920s is re-invoked by visual culture in post-unification Berlin.²⁹

Legitimized through reference back to Sander, Schadt establishes a similarly complex and reflective way of seeing the city in his film. It could indeed be argued that, for Schadt, August Sander is a more significant reference point from the Weimar period than the apparently self-evident

Walther Ruttmann. Whereas Wenders gains historical legitimation for his project through reference to his antecedents, Schadt does not use his obvious Weimar prototype (Ruttmann) as a way of legitimizing his own procedures. Rather Schadt's use of imagery from earlier films, principally but not only Ruttmann's, establishes a dialectic between the repetition and reworking of imagery. Underpinning Schadt's reworking of Ruttmann's imagery is an implicitly critical dialogue. The way in which the remembrance of images is staged in Schadt's film virtually repeats the original. The most obvious example is the film's conclusion, where the shot of light upon water is a direct repetition of the opening image of Ruttmann's 1927 film. The shots of office elevators moving up and down on the outside of the Ludwig-Erhard Haus³⁰ seem to repeat directly the office elevators from Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1927). The irony here, of course, is that in *Metropolis* they were the studio set of an imagined city that had not yet come into realization.³¹ This neatly illustrates one form of the interplay of the visual culture of the 1920s with that of contemporary Berlin: the studio set as city has become the city as studio set.

There are a number of shots in Schadt's film that seem to recall Wim Wenders's *Der Himmel über Berlin*, such as those of the Siegessäule (23), or of a cloud-laden sky pierced with sunlight, or that of an *Imbiß* on Potsdamer Platz (55). The *Imbiß* is a key location for the interaction of the angels and Peter Falk in Wenders's film as an invocation of the 'life-world' within the anonymous city. With this latter image, it becomes clear that every repetition is already a reworking, as the *Imbiß* in Schadt's film is framed against the striking new steel and glass entrance to the Potsdamer Platz railway and underground station, thus implying a 'life-world' at the mercy of the forces of homogenization, a concern with which again Schadt's film engages, but which is of little interest to Ruttmann's celebration of urban technology.

These images from Schadt's film fundamentally repeat the aesthetic and thematic concerns of the earlier images that they recall, but a refracted memory of images is present in a more 'critical' form in other sequences. This is most noticeable in his presentation of the synchronized industrial modernity that Ruttmann's film sought to celebrate. Like Ruttmann, Schadt seems to be fascinated with the symmetrical 'poetry' of 'machinery', such as in the cigarette factory (34) or the newspaper printing house (29). Where Ruttmann sought to present the dynamic speed of wheels, Schadt focuses on the slow, laborious duration of the production process, as in the frequent sequences of bread or tablets being propelled along conveyor belts before ineluctably tipping off the edge onto another conveyor belt, something which the spectator is invited to anticipate due to the angle of the shot. Due to the

slow-moving conveyor belt, this becomes a painful anticipation. Schadt also focuses more obviously on the production of commodities (cigarettes, beer bottles), whose consumption he illustrates throughout the film, rather than industrial production *per se*, which is the principal concern for Ruttmann. Schadt's film is informed by a contemporary ecological consciousness, in that he shows detritus being sorted on conveyor belts at one point. Scenes such as the sorting of the rubbish also embed the labourer more thoroughly within industrial processes than is the case in Ruttmann's film, where the worker's hand, in close-up, is necessary to start the wheels, which, however, once in motion, run of their own accord.

Schadt revisits many of the key *topoi* of Ruttmann's film to offer a vision of the fate of modernity. This refracted perspective on the industrialized modern metropolis is also underlined by the way in which Schadt reworks one central *topos* of Ruttmann's view of the city: industrialized time. Georg Simmel had observed in his essay on the metropolis and mental life that 'the relationships [...] of the typical metropolitan [...] are so complex that without the strictest punctuality in promises and services the whole structure would break down into an inextricable chaos',³² and with his recurring shots of clocks precisely 'on the hour' Ruttmann's film illustrates this rather literally. Schadt too uses the clock motif, but the difference is that his clocks are rarely 'on the hour', suggesting a more subjective sense of time and its regulation in the city, rather than the mechanical dominance at work in both Ruttmann's film and Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*. This ironic repetition and refraction of motifs can also be seen in the use of display windows, which, again in line with Simmel's analysis of commodification in the metropolis, Ruttmann showed as being sites of voyeuristic desire, most obviously in the scene where a man and a prostitute exchange glances through a shop window. Schadt shows a *Hundesalon* on Maybachufer in Neukölln in front of which stroll a large hound and its owner, both gazing into the display window. Such a relaxed and ironic repetition of one of the central themes of the visual culture of urban modernity (highlighted, for example, in the paintings of Ernst Ludwig Kirchner and Fritz Lang's 1931 film *M*, where Peter Lorre's character spies his victim in a mirrored reflection in a shop display of knives) could be said to playfully renounce one of the key neuroses of that modernity. Ruttmann's film, through its focus on the grand picture palaces and the audiences flocking to see Chaplin, celebrated the fact that the Berlin of the 1920s was a 'cinematic city' in the double sense, as observed by Janet Ward, that 'beyond the projected images of early German cinema [was] a three-dimensional, socioeconomic dimension manifest in the architecture of the Weimar film industry.'³³ Schadt, by contrast, may

show us the celebrities arriving on the red carpet to attend film premieres, as well as an open-air cinema on the Museumsinsel, but his camera also presents us with an erstwhile *Kino Sojus*, now obviously a supermarket, on an empty Allee der Kosmonauten in Marzahn.³⁴

What clearly distinguishes Schadt's film from its predecessor is its awareness of the presence of the past in the urban environment. Schadt's film catalogues the city's wounds, for example showing both the Soviet *Ehrenmal* in Treptower Park and the Olympic Stadium in Charlottenburg, entering a former air-raid bunker in Wedding, as well as displaying fragments of the former Wall and the Jewish Cemetery in Prenzlauer Berg. Beyond this, he also, however, reflects upon the fact that, as we saw in our discussion of Potsdamer Platz, these 'sights' of memory also constitute a key element in the visual encounter with the city. This is most evident in the representation of Checkpoint Charlie, where Frank Thiel's iconic images of the border guards (at the centre of Friedrichstrasse) are contrapunctually set in the context both of the new city architecture and the giant billboards which adorn the urban landscape (40-41). A similar counterpoint is achieved in his image of the (at that time) future 'Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe', which is advertised through a giant sign that Schadt carefully composes against the background of the new architecture of Potsdamer Platz and alongside a similarly large billboard advertising a SAT 1 reality programme *Girls Camp* (44). Such involuntarily crass juxtapositions, which the city itself offers and which Schadt's gaze frame, point to an obvious tension between the 'memory value' and 'exchange value' of the urban environment. This was evident in debates about the role of the completed Holocaust monument within public space.³⁵ Schadt's mise-en-scènes seek to do justice to the complexity of the image of the past in its current context and the complexity of 'narrativizing' objects of the past in the present.

The complexity of the image of the past is taken up at five specific points in the film, where it projects images from the past. At each point, a still camera is focused, from within, on the cupola of the Reichstag, the ostensible embodiment of transparent democracy. The focus then resolves, like an extended exposure, to reveal a photographic image from the past, in each case of the Reichstag. The first is of the Wilhelmine Reichstag, but this is immediately juxtaposed with a rack of postcards of Berlin, 'wie es war', with archaic images of archetypal representative urban architecture (railway stations etc.), alongside which, out of focus, are postcards of the interior of the new cupola. Schadt thus highlights the commodification of images of the past, something in which, of course, he is also engaged. This still image of the Wilhelmine Reichstag then triggers a montage of military

monuments (e.g. Bismarck) and a recollection of German imperial ambition (a statue holding a globe), before moving into a series of images related to the remembrance, in Berlin, of the 9/11 attacks on iconic buildings in the United States. From this montage of images it would be possible to construct a critique of imperialist ambition that reaches to the present, but the absence of commentary leaves it very much to the spectator to make these links.

Just as with the first image of the Reichstag, the next four still images curate the viewer's 'beam of attention' for a further montage of images related to the city's memory landscape: the next still is of the Reichstag fire and this is linked directly to Werner March's Olympic Stadium (76). The third follows on from the preserved graffiti and shows the Reichstag in ruins in 1945 (72), an image which is then connected to the Soviet monument in Treptower Park (80). The fourth image then shows the gathering at the Reichstag on 1 May 1962, with the giant sign declaring 'Freiheit kennt keine Mauer', and this is then linked to a series of images related to the Wall (90-91) and the repressive GDR state (Hohenschönhausen).

As discussed in the introduction, James Elkins has argued that 'images, in visual studies, are too often either immediately self-interpreting or stand-ins for information that is non-visual.'³⁶ The documentary film, which works with and relies on the medium's indexical quality, brings such questions to the fore, as we saw with *Die Mauer*. That Schadt chooses a *photographic* image is significant in that, theoretically, he could have montaged cinematic footage of the past in the manner of Joachim Fest's 1977 historical documentary *Hitler. Eine Karriere*.³⁷ The still image, within a cinematic production, produces a very different effect, especially when used, as here by Schadt, to suspend time in a manner completely different from the way in which Ruttmann's film celebrated movement and the rhythm of empty homogeneous time passing, both in the city and in film. This aesthetic effect – the disruption of the flow of time – is as important as the content of the image, for the images Schadt shows might be taken to be immediately self-interpreting or to stand in for information that is non-visual. The visual information communicated is the freezing of synchronic, cinematic time.

Schadt's renunciation of any explication of these images that would clarify the critical memory value of the fragment, is complicated, as that renunciation might generate a kind of nostalgia, in that the auratic sense of the past that is transmitted by the 'age value' of the still photograph simply gives the viewer precisely that: an image *of* the past, with its monumental memory value. The images in Schadt's film are produced in monochrome – he used colour negative that was then developed in black-and-white – which could be argued to produce a certain timeless

dimension. It is important, however, to note that Schadt does not seek to bridge the gap between the aesthetic effect and critical knowledge through textual commentary, other than perhaps when he focuses on a *sign* in the Jewish Cemetery that explains that what is beneath the surface are the bodies of *Kriegsgegner* who were discovered by the SS, hung and interred on that spot (79).

This refusal, by and large, to explain and clarify the images is an important decision. Much memory work that is (to be) carried out in the visual field relies on the willingness and ability of the spectators to do that work. It is this refusal that Evelyn Preuss criticizes in her reading of Schadt's film. She accuses him of 'dissolving unproblematically [from the past] into the contemporary', something our analysis has already addressed, but her major concern revolves around his 'abstracting and aestheticising impetus' which neither 'contextualises nor even clearly names' locations, thus rendering them 'undecipherable'.³⁸

Often the verbal is required as a supplement to the image to ensure the critical perspective of the museal gaze. The verbal is practically absent from Schadt's film, as Preuss notes. For Preuss, the 'reliance on the audience's knowledge' is a questionable strategy, as 'historical images are left without dates, rendering them as ghostly apparitions outside of time'.³⁹ In essence, Preuss wishes to abolish the ambiguity of the 'monumental' image and demands that the audience be able 'to recognize and connect the places to historical narrative', in other words be able to make the images make sense (although it is difficult to see how the mere supplementary provision of the date actually resolves this problem).⁴⁰ Schadt's refusal to supply the supplement, effectively leaving the 'image' as a 'secret about a secret',⁴¹ is condemned as an aestheticizing strategy that undermines the potential for critical history on the part of the spectator.⁴² Yet Preuss herself illustrates all too well the contingency of images when she takes Schadt to task for his presentation of the Prenzlauer Berg Jewish Cemetery, with 'shots of the sunlight dancing on the stones. [...] In the context of German history, these images [...] trigger associations with the fire of Nazi crematoria [...]'.⁴³ Such an association is made (subjectively) by Preuss, thus ironically demonstrating the potential 'critical memory value' of such an *image* to awaken historical associations. Schadt's refusal to offer an interpretative framework other than the one offered by his selection of images can be read positively as forcing the viewer into an active encounter rather than simply passively consuming a particular interpretation. While Preuss argues that the 'shots of historical and memorial sites tend to be devoid of people, they present no agent to carry on the remembrance',⁴⁴ such an argument erases

the critical potential of the presence of the film's audience, something which she actually demonstrates herself in the example cited above.

This 'montage' of the past within the present mirrors the paradigm for embedding the past within the present that can be seen elsewhere in the new Berlin Republic.⁴⁵ In its perpetual return to Foster's Reichstag, Schadt's film is very much a product of contemporary Berlin's engagement with the visual culture of the past, but is highly subtle in terms of the way it remembers images and interrogates images of remembrance. In composing a mode of encounter that imagines its antecedents in the likes of the Weimar photographer, August Sander, it poses, but does not answer, questions of how images can carry the potential for a critical engagement with the past. Through its reference back to Ruttmann's film, it recalls Berlin as the 1920s as the apogee of urban modernity and points, through its own historical awareness, to that decade's apparent lack of a historical awareness. In so doing it reflects, and reflects upon, an uncertainty about the status of the contemporary city, while at the same time constituting that urban environment through its representation of the lived experience of the city, and the cinematic encounter with urban memory, in a moment of inducing the audience to see beyond the synchronic rhythm of the city/cinematic image.

The memory event in the global tourist city

In the city's official self-presentation as museum discussed earlier, *Berlin: Open City. The City as Exhibition*, which ran from 1999 to 2000, experience is framed as an event (*Erlebnis*). While the implicit tourist collective shaped by the guided walks remains precisely that – implicit – the collective urban event had established as a paradigmatic form of urban experience by the mid-2000s in Berlin. This has its roots in the Love Parade, the electronic dance festival that ran, intermittently, in the city in the summer between 1989 and 2010.

This event culture also manifested itself in the encounter with the past, as for example in Christo's 'Wrapped Reichstag' project, realized in 1995 after decades of planning, and despite its local, specific historical resonances, it was, as Beatrice Hanssen described it, an example of 'globalized art in a national context' and presents 'the first truly global media art event.'⁴⁶ And while images of this event did indeed circulate around the world, it also needs to be understood as a specific spatial image, a material intervention in the Berlin cityscape, which, as Andreas Huyssen suggests in his essay

on 'Monumental Seduction', 'did function as a strategy to make visible, to unveil, to reveal what was hidden when it [the Reichstag] was visible.'⁴⁷

'Wrapped Reichstag' was a striking reversal of the otherwise dominant palimpsest paradigm, as it involved adding layers to a structure, rather than digging to get a view of the 'depths' of past time. For Huyssen, the project became 'a monument to democratic culture', opening up 'a space for reflection and contemplation as well as for memory', for 'a fleeting and transitory epiphany.'⁴⁸ The elision of contemplation, memory and epiphany here by Huyssen suggests an emphasis on the temporality of the encounter rather than the narratives elaborated. Yet for Huyssen, the wrapping 'muted [...] the memory of speeches from its windows, of the raising of German or Soviet flags on its roof.' In other words, Huyssen remembered what was not present as remembrance in Christo's framing of the site, which constructed an encounter with place. Huyssen used his own photograph of citizens and visitors staring up at the structure to illustrate the encounter with the wrapping of the building, but what this photograph also shows is the fence which separates a public from the structure, a 'ground-level' photograph that contrasts with his employment of the 'official' Columbia University photograph in the same essay, which presents a distanced overview with no 'human grounding' of the image. Each photograph tells a different story of a mode of encounter, of a particular 'beam of attention'.

The power of the visual and the temporal and spatial location of the spectator, are important factors in the encounter with any monument in public space. Henri Lefebvre suggests that a monument 'does not have a "signified" (or "signifieds"); rather it has a *horizon of meaning*: a specific or indefinite multiplicity of meanings.'⁴⁹ To return to the categories we introduced in Chapter Two, the 'monumental memory value' of the urban environment is produced by reducing the contextualization of the image, implying an unmediated access to the past and emphasizing its poetic qualities. There is nothing either within or outside the frame to mediate its meaning, thus the *horizon of meaning* is shaped by the codifications of the aesthetic technologies. This is also at stake in Hoheisel's 'Gate of the Germans' (see the introduction), Christo's 'Wrapped Reichstag', and also at another intervention in the city's centre, an installation, temporarily located at the Brandenburg Gate by the artist Marcel Backhaus working for the architectural association 'Gruppe 180' and with the backing of the Berlin Senate in 2005, to mark the sixtieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War.⁵⁰

A photograph of the installation was taken by Miguel Parra Jimenez and posted on the Trekearthers site.⁵¹ This is a photograph of a constructed

image of the ruins of central Berlin at the end of the Second World War. The installation demonstrates how, like Christo's project, the palimpsest paradigm for the display of urban memory had become institutionalized by the mid-2000s (as notably celebrated by Andreas Huyssen in his essay 'After the War: Berlin as Palimpsest'). The problem with Huyssen's position is that it privileges the verbal sign, the notion of Berlin as 'disparate city-text that is being re-written while previous text is preserved', while underplaying the centrality of the visual encounter with the city.⁵²

While Backhaus's installation could be said to 'fracture' the monumental space of the city centre that is framed by the Brandenburg Gate, the Reichstag, Albert Speer's East-West axis that leads to it, and the Pariser Platz on the far side of the gate, the aesthetic technologies it employs in fact heighten the poetic effects of the image: the gothic rubble and the predominance of stone produce a ruin aesthetic, while the use of a monochrome image heightens the sense of historical distance: the past does not coexist with the present, but is coded as distinct, while also being directly accessible in visual terms. The absence of the actual ruined material is compensated for by the material photographic image of the material. The photograph of the ruin operates as a surface on to which memory value can be projected, depending on the perspective.

According to Paul Virilio, the 'overexposed city' is entered not through a gate or through an *arc de triomphe* but rather through an electronic audience system. 'If the metropolis is still a place, a geographic site, it no longer has anything to do with the classical oppositions of city/country nor centre/periphery.'⁵³ Yet, what Berlin seeks to offer is precisely an experience of the 'centre' through the encounter with the defunctionalized remnant of a 'gate' that has been imbued with 'memory value', not so much in terms of the memory of cultural narrative, but in terms of an encounter with a specific, material city. The Brandenburg Gate may have no function in terms of organizing urban experience as a gateway, but it is however, an integral part of the tourist infrastructure of Berlin,⁵⁴ and, as with Hoheisel and Backhaus, it can reassert the significance of the city as **centre**.⁵⁵

Urban memory at/of the city centre: Palace of the Republic

The Daimler-Benz development at Potsdamer Platz was officially opened by the Federal President of Germany, Roman Herzog, on 2 October 1998, in a ceremony with large-scale celebrations and musical performances. If this marked the 'closure' of the former 'wasteland', attention now shifted

east towards the 'Mitte', the district which housed the Museum Island, and above all, the obsolete Palace of the Republic.

The question that the Palace of the Republic poses to memory in post-unification Berlin has generally been understood in terms of the cultural memory of the GDR. The Palace of the Republic was built between 1973 and 1976 as a multifunctional building. It was the site of the infrequent meetings of the East German parliament, the *Volkskammer*, but precisely for that reason it can barely be considered to have been the seat of power in the GDR, which was located in the Central Committee of the leading Socialist Unity Party. It was a place for state occasions, such as the party conferences of the SED, but also a place for cultural and entertainment activities. Its communal functions are neatly captured in the 1977 DEFA film, *Du und Icke und Berlin*, where it is the location for the social interaction of many of the characters.⁵⁶ In other words, as well as being a space of state representation, it was also a site of spatial practices, with the ensuing place memories that might be connected with that.

Those place memories expressed themselves in response to the threat posed to the structure after unification. Although other major and minor modernist building projects of the GDR era, such as the Foreign Ministry and the Ahornblatt, soon fell to the wrecking ball, this was not the fate of the Palace, which was closed by the GDR government on 19 September 1990, before unification took place, on health and safety grounds. The use of asbestos in its construction meant that the building apparently needed a programme of renovation before it could be safely used.

Given the general tendency towards demolition, the threat towards the building generated local resistance in the form of a museal gaze that remembered the spatial practices associated with the site. As a building that no longer fulfilled its previous function, its meaning was debatable. For many, after the fall of the Wall, the Palace was not a symbol of the SED dictatorship, 'the true meaning of the building is too civic, too uncertain and palimpsestic.'⁵⁷ Those demanding the maintenance of the Palace asserted the value of the memories they associated with the space in a series of publications. As a prominent marker of the shift in the GDR towards a more consumer-oriented socialism, the Palace was also designed as a place for a wide variety of cultural and leisure activities. The building provides the focus for those memories (and thus for an ambivalent relationship to the GDR state).⁵⁸ This form of memory value offers clear parallels to the defence of the Kaiser William Memorial Church in the immediate post-war era: a (renovated) Palace should remain as a spatial image of a previous order. Those resisting, however, were not in a position to create powerful spatial

images, unlike those who wanted the return of the City Palace (see below). The West Berlin newspaper *Tagesspiegel* pointed towards the difference between spatial interaction with the building and a remnant that has been reduced to a distant image: 'The "House of the People" generated a tangled set of relations for those in the East, those from the West merely see the dead-eyed building and wonder what all the fuss is about.'⁵⁹

The question that the Palace poses is, however, not simply how one deals with the place memories, but is also shaped by the fact that it inhabits a 'loaded' historical space at the former 'city centre' around the Museum Island. In addition, the Palace was a prominent architectural structure, which, in the eyes of its defenders, represented a piece of 'world-standard' construction.⁶⁰ In other words, it raised the question of how a 'city centre' should be envisaged. For that reason, the installation on the front of the Palace of a large-scale façade representing the former Stadtschloss by William Boddien and the *Förderverein Berliner Schloss e.V.* in 1993 is significant not so much in terms of the 'monarchist' cultural narrative which it might imply, but as the urban museal gaze which it shapes upon a putatively coherent city centre.

This is the construction of 'place' in the city centre, but it is certainly not the palimpsest principle at work here, rather it is the masking of layers of the past in the production of a 'monumental memory value' which implies seamless historical continuity through its framing of the encounter with the historical façade of the Stadtschloss. Indeed, for Dieter Hoffmann-Axthelm, it would represent the triumph of *Stadtbildpflege* over both critical and antiquarian historical work.⁶¹

Boddien's intervention was part of the public debate and academic discussion about the Palace that ran almost without end since unification.⁶² The variety of perspectives demonstrate that the Palace, as a building which has lost its function, becomes the projection site for different forms of memory value. These forms of cultural memory are undercut by the position of the building in the centre of a tourist city. In 1991 Otto Merk observed that tourists could have no idea what this building means: 'Explanatory plaques [...] which say something about the building, which is visually not to be missed, are presumably too expensive.' In the next ten years, in line with the production of the city as museal space, signs appeared. From 2003, sixty-eight signs were erected (for five years) close to the Palace of the Republic: posted on to the wooden fence surrounding the building, they told the history of the space now occupied by the Palace and the Schlossplatz through images and text (the history of the Palace of the Republic was presented on two of these). Official excavations carried out on the Schlossplatz

allowed the display of foundations whose visual effect was reminiscent of those previously exhibited along the Topography of the Terror, reminding visitors and tourists of the presence of a material past.

In 1996, Federal President Roman Herzog indicated how far the material trace as a palimpsest of the historical process had become institutionally paradigmatic when he envisaged a solution that combined both the Palace of the Republic and a rebuilt Schloss.⁶³ At this stage, though, the building was not beyond renovation, nor did it *appear* to be a ruin, except for those who saw it as a ruin of a debased form of modernist architecture. Time, that most perennial of the processes of ruination, worked away on the structure over this period. Like the Gestapo-terrain, the period of time the site spent as an unintended monument is important in the evolution of its meaning as a palace of ruin.

After wranglings that went on for a decade, the Palace of the Republic was condemned to demolition. The asbestos removal work which, although not quite the final act in the process of ruination, meant the removal of all signs of the previous uses which the building had. By 2003, the interior of the Palace now had the archetypal visual attraction of the ruin for a museal gaze. The ruin now offered the possibilities of a different kind of memory value, through a return to the paradigm of the Mythos Berlin exhibition, its *Zwischennutzung* – the interstitial reappropriation of the site for cultural activities.

This was initiated in November 2001 before the removal of the asbestos and the final decision on the building's fate, and took place between 4 July and 26 July 2003. The projects that were staged in the building were expressly art projects that stressed the sensory encounter with the site. While the projects for the most part enabled a collective experience of the dynamics of place for its visitors, it would not be wrong to suggest they were as 'apolitical' as the games of beach volleyball that were organized under the commercial auspices of Jever Pilsner and the like at this time on the appropriated 'empty space' in front of the Palace.

One project from this interstitial phase that might be said to address the political history of the site did so in an indirect fashion that also addressed the politics of the museal gaze. Lars Ramberg's 'Doubt' (*Zweifel*), was, like Boltanski's 'Missing House', a material (and verbal) intervention in the urban site, installing a series of letters facing west and spelling out 'ZWEIFEL' on the top of the now defunct Palast.

As a form of integrated caption, 'Zweifel' can be read as a commentary on the uncertain political and cultural status of the Palace in post-unification Berlin. The installed letters suggest the need for a supplement to the unintended monument, just as they themselves are a commentary on the

supplementary meanings that had been applied to the Palast since the end of the GDR – as well as to the (now detached) emblem that sought to define the building's function between 1976 and 1990. What 'Zweifel' underlines is uncertainty: an intellectual uncertainty about what the building signifies. Moreover, it highlights this referential uncertainty not by refusing referentiality but by foregrounding its work. In other words, while 'Zweifel' may highlight indeterminacy, it does not deny meaning as a whole, but merely the definitive imposition of meaning. It is an investigation of the technologies of transmission, creating the preconditions for the generation of meaning-effects through a museal gaze and a spatial image.

Beyond its playful engagement with the meaning of the building, like many of the other *Zwischennutzung* projects that took place within the Palast, 'Zweifel' invited a material encounter with the installation itself. Lifted out of the conventional tourist itinerary, visitors could stand on the Palace's roof and move amongst the letters (whose meaning, if they were non-German speakers, would remain a mystery to them), simultaneously gaining a high-level perspective on the city centre normally only afforded to those in the café of the Television tower. 'Zweifel' was temporally limited; it came to an end in 2005 (with the end of the *Zwischennutzung* initiative).

Another project from this period in the history of remembrance at the Palace site similarly illustrates the dynamics of place memory. Both in its subject matter and in its material, Tacita Dean's 2004 film, *Palast*, reflected on the question of obsolescence. Dean wrote about the decaying building:

When the Palast der Republik was first opened in 1976, it was clad in white marble with 180 metres of windowed façade, triumphant in its transparent splendour. [...] There is now no trace of the white marble; the structure is raw wood and the windows are tarnished like dirty metal. It is as if the state is letting time make up its mind – letting entropy do the job and make the decision it is loathe to make. But the sore in the centre of the city is too public, and so a month ago, the wedding cake won and the Palast der Republik was condemned. The revivalists were triumphant. Soon Museum Island will be homogenized into stone white fakery and will no longer twinkle with a thousand setting suns.⁶⁴

Dean's project, a ten-minute film, is an 'unintended monument' to film as a medium of preserving threatened objects at the time of celluloid's own growing obsolescence and in doing so it offers a haptic experience of historical material (both film and the building). It is a work which effectively induces a 'slow, reflective analogue state', as opposed to 'instantaneous,

vacuous digital image technologies', in the rhetoric of synchronicity and contemplation invoked by Sean Rainbird, writing about Dean's Berlin works.⁶⁵ Any attempt to describe in words Dean's film will inevitably fall back onto a rhetoric of contemplation, intense attention and the apprehension of passing time: we experience the film's use of ambient urban sound, the exclusive use of close-ups of the structure, only ever showing a section of the windowed walls and giving no sense of its scale, while referring to the fracturing of the image in the series of celluloid frames; the lingering on the baroque outlines and green domes of the Dom standing next to the palace. Dean's work, though itself an act of musealization, is, unlike Ramberg's, not site-specific, being designed for the sensory-motor scheme of the gallery/museum, with its inscribed expectations of contemplation and reflection.

In her commentary, Dean makes it clear that knowledge of the building's history was irrelevant to her approach to the object. Rather than simply an affirmation of Bazin's ontology of the photographic image (something evident in Sophie Calle's verbal-photographic work 'The Detachment'), Dean's project is founded on a complex engagement with indexical materiality that implies the index of time as temporal experience, the passing of time, rather than historical experience. Film is still ultimately conceived as an index, however, and the spectator still situated in a conventional exhibition context in Dean's work, for all the evocation of a reflective, slow experience of an architectural structure. It was also dissectible into a series of plates for separate exhibition, ensuring an afterlife for the still image, if not the film, which is now archived in the vaults of Tate London. Dean's target is not synchronicity, but the absence of time, *per se*.

The decline of the Palace was, of course, a highly visible phenomenon in the centre of the city, and as such attracted interest from artist-curators, such as Thomas Florschuetz, with his photographs of the 'Museumsinsel', views of the Palace's interior, and its environs, as glimpsed through milky, distorting (window) frames.

Our focus up to now has been on how the museal urban gaze develops in relation to material or photographic remnants. How does that gaze relate to the process of demolition, the emergence of an 'any-space-whatever' and its dissociated spatial rhythms.

One answer was provided by a project exhibited in 2009 at the Temporary Art Hall, another interstitial use of this 'empty' urban space, located in the close vicinity of where the Palace had stood. In Allora & Calzadilla's 'How to Appear Invisible', which ran from 11 July to 6 September 2009, the demolition was captured on film. The film was part of a two-piece exhibition and shown in a darkened room that recreated a conventional cinematic experience.

It opens with what appears to be a fairly straightforward, if disturbing documentation of the images and sounds of the demolition of the Palace of the Republic. After about five minutes, an Alsatian wanders, as if by chance, across the shot. The Alsatian is wearing a Kentucky Fried Chicken bucket around its neck that frames and blinkers its gaze, concentrating its attention. The camera, as if now seized by curiosity, tracks the dog's movements through the empty interiors and wasteland exteriors of the site, following its rhythms through the any-space-whatever. The camera's attention moves then between the dog, the demolition activities, and the larger cityscape. Occasionally we have a close-up of the dog, apparently looking intently in search of the thing to attract its attention. The film concludes with the dog settling down at the foot of the rubble of one of the semi-demolished remnants.

The leaflet accompanying the installation suggests that the piece addresses the 'historically significant grounds where the Kunsthalle has been temporarily erected: the Schlossplatz with its remaining traces and signs.' The film itself does not communicate any historical facts relating to the site's significance; its communication is primarily through a gaze, the visual immediacy of the fragmented built environment. This visual immediacy is interrogated through the foregrounding of mediated gazes: the dog's gaze is framed by the KFC-cone collar, ours by the camera lens.

This, then, is one post-unification formulation of the museal urban gaze, a hybrid of inhabitant and visitor engaged in Benjaminian rag-picking amongst the rubble. What emerges is the mode of encounter. The postcard that advertised the exhibition, creates an image of contemplation within contemplation, the still image framing the dog in the foreground, in the middle ground, a fragment of the Palace remains that juts out beyond the frame, while in the background the Dom is placed more neatly within the frame of the photograph. In that sense, here, the photograph performs its own act of narrativization, the encounter produces a narrative hierarchy that however remains complex and unresolved.

The local and the global

An exhibition held in the Rotes Rathaus in Berlin-Mitte at the same time in July 2009 illustrated that the visible obsolescence of the GDR cityscape had had an afterlife in the new regime of representation that has developed in the reconstruction of the new German capital, one which had much in common with the presentation of obsolescent ruins in the 1950s in both West and East Berlin, as discussed in Chapter One. The poster outside the

Rathaus announcing the exhibition: juxtaposed two photographs, showing (presumably) the same courtyard in its condition in 1993 and in 2008. The textual captions 'Die Gerettete Mitte' and 'Die Sanierung der Spandauer Vorstadt 1993-2008 und der Rosenthaler Vorstadt 1994-2009' frame how one is to meant to 'read' the images, in case one were tempted to value the dilapidated façades of the past over the whitewashed present.

The exhibition took place in an upper room in the Rathaus and began with the photographer, Klaus Bädicker's, biography alongside four boards, titled 'Impressions of the Rosenthaler Vorstadt from the 1980s' which displayed the condition of certain *Hinterhöfe* in that decade through a series of large-format monochrome photographs. It was striking that the 'captioning' was set to one side of the photographs, heightening the impression that the pictures communicate self-evidently their 'message'. For those who had lived there at the time, there might be a moment of visual anamnesis of their former spatial practices. For visitors, like myself, the generic 'age value' qualities of decay in the images might well be the prime element communicated. So, as with the first set of images on the exhibition poster, these are potentially ambiguous images, whose meaning is primarily generated by their juxtaposition with the images of the renewed district in the rest of the exhibition. Interestingly, these photographs were not directly juxtaposed with the images of the renovated buildings, and in their large format, approach the status of independent aesthetic objects, rather than a 'mere' documentation of the built environment.

The absence of further information relating to these photographs can be contrasted with the abundance of textual and visual information contained on the other boards in the exhibition. The initial board, 'Die Gerettete Mitte', followed the exhibition poster in juxtaposing the before and now condition of six spaces in the district. The rest of the boards were titled thematically and comprised a compendium of the important aspects of contemporary urban renewal, from a reflective and meticulous planning culture to a documentation of the history of the district.

It is interesting to observe the ambiguity of the display of 'age value' in Bädicker's photographs, removed from the original East Berlin context in which they were taken.⁶⁶ They no longer function as a critical evocation of an otherwise disregarded life-world, but are subsumed within the logic that previously informed the GDR state's triumphalist instrumentalization of the visual signs of physical but also moral obsolescence. That logic has now been appropriated by the champions of urban renewal in the 'new' Berlin, rendering the 'old' GDR cityscape redundant and the 'new'/renewed Berlin

as functional, not in terms of a utopian vision of the future (the logic in both post-war West and East Berlin), but as the mastering and incorporation of the former cityscape.

Anonymous asynchronous centre

The official exhibition incorporated and presented the contemporary hegemonic visualization of the city with the visual media at its disposal. The logic of that visualization is subtly undermined in a collection of photographs by Arwed Messmer, entitled *Anonyme Mitte* (2009). Messmer's photographs of Berlin-Mitte in its post-unification state of demolition/transition are juxtaposed with images discovered by Messmer in his archival work. These had been taken by Fritz Tiedemann under contract by the GDR state in 1951. Rather than working with a conventional old/new juxtaposition, Messmer's volume, which made use of pages that folded out to reveal panoramas, quite literally opens out our awareness of the desire for new states (the GDR in 1951, the Federal Republic in the present) to establish their own legitimacy through the moulding of the cityscape, seemingly unaware that their cityscape will itself be 'the past' one day.

Messmer engages with the curation, production, and exhibition of an archive, recording moments of encounter that then reproduce themselves. Artistic engagement in the encounter with empty sites in this part of the city has been relentless, as if the 'closure' of the Potsdamer Platz had forced the search for 'wounds' in the cityscape to alight on this remaining site of an uncertain past, present, and future.

Barbara Pousstichi's 2010 project, 'Echo', cloaked the Temporary Art Hall in a mock-up of the Palace structure, perhaps as a comment on the perpetual reformulations of the structure, while creating the uncanny effect of the presence of the disappeared structure in an unfamiliar, yet familiar location in the cityscape. Pousstichi replaced the insignia of the hammer and sickle with a clock, suggesting again the replacement of explicit ideology with the invisible ideology of synchronic urban activity. As Diederich Diederichsen observed of the project, invoking, in the De Certeauian term of the 'obstacle', the encounter with the past and the ambiguities of the museal gaze:

It [...] places an obstacle in the path of those who would like to take renewed command of history as an interplay of constant and variable in which only those who are currently in power determine what the constant is and what it represents, and what the variable is.⁶⁷

Time frames in the digital city

The Temporary Art Hall is no more, as the location is at time of writing (January 2016) almost wholly occupied by the new structure of the Humboldt Forum. The Palace survived for a number of years, however, in the digital form of Lars Ramberg's photographic archive, at www.palastdeszweifels.de.⁶⁸ It could be argued that the material dimensions of the encounter with the installation are now reduced to the visual spectacle of the photographs that document the installation's presence in the cityscape. Yet the visual is not necessarily a reduction; it poses instead a different set of problems, offering the opportunity to focus on the mechanisms by which the visual form of the cityscape becomes a projection surface for historical narratives through the work of the encounter. It is here that Ramberg explicitly reimagines his project as a form of place memory after the fact, while posing questions about the hyperspatial navigation of the (im)material city centre in the 'posturban' twenty-first century.

The website presented us with little information for navigation, other than the navigation menu which contains a series of dates (1940, 1978, 2005, 2007 and 'now') as well as an alternating series of images (which it later becomes clear come from the 2005 series).⁶⁹ If you click on 2007, for example, you see images from the period of the building's dismantling. Only the datelink and the related URL related function as supplements to these images, in this case: www.palastdeszweifels.de/index2007.html.⁷⁰

If one clicks on '1978' things are less straightforward. There is a postcard with a caption celebrating the exhibition of paintings in the Grosse Foyer, but this is followed by images of a march from 1 May 1959 (conveniently the date is marked on the photograph), then a couple crossing a road, and then another colour framing of the Palast. If the ostensibly firm link between the historical date (1978) and the indexical quality of the photograph (as physical trace of the cityscape) are placed 'in doubt', then such pseudo-indexicality becomes part of a playful interaction with HTML (HyperText Markup Language) when we click on 1940, for which the URL is www.palastdeszweifels.de/index1930.html.⁷¹

The series of images here are, it would seem, not all from the same year, though it is impossible to make a definitive judgment (again here the non-chronological ordering of the images seems important). We have standard images of the Schloss façade, but interspersed with a photograph of the Schloss in a ruinous state, and another, presumably of the demolition, followed again by an intact Schloss, seen from above set in snow, followed

by a painting of the Schloss from a much earlier era; the sequence then starts again.

Ramberg's online exhibition can be seen simply as a cynical comment on the vanishing material presence of the GDR cityscape; perhaps it is a contemporary form of the *Kaiserpanorama*. The Imperial Panorama was the means of determining the 'selectivity and rhythm of attentive response' of the urban audience at the turn of the previous century – Ramberg's is thus an ironic version of the urban training implicit in this panorama for the 'internet age'.⁷² Ramberg's online exhibition exploited the possibilities and limitations of such a form of exhibiting 'the past', exploring questions and raising doubts about narrative linearity, legibility, and visibility, and as such is a welcome commentary on the flood of Palast images that (over)populate the internet.⁷³ In such images, the past is fixed, apparently, in a series of figures that represent states of the past but Ramberg's online exhibition demonstrates the seductive but fallible self-evidence of documentary images of material remnants. The final date, in a permanent state of becoming, is 'now' (*jetzt*). On 11 February 2011, when I first accessed it, the view from the webcam was of the Deutsches Historisches Museum which showed Berlin's ever-ongoing antithesis to the value of the past: the circulation of traffic through the city centre, the timeless and time-coded, the punctual city as seen from a historical museum.

These visual cultural engagements with the urban past interrogate the contemporary dynamics of urban memory, viewing acts of evocation, and reminiscence as technologies in themselves. It is not primarily the (historical) meaning of the sites that is to be recovered, but the mode of encounter with these sites that is to be produced. Through an investigation of those technologies they undermine touristic itineraries that are predicated on the same model of regulation as conventional engagements with urban space and time. They enable us to experience place in the city in a way that resonates not only with Halbwachs's conception of how urban transformation provokes the resistance of local traditions, but also with how the conceived collective memory relates to the experience of place. These international artists reframe our understanding of urban memory as something distinct from the Assmann's conception of cultural memory, which is all too often focused around a national identity. They bring out the complex interplay between the encounter and its narrativization in the museal urban gaze.

