Experience between the lines

A study on the visitors' experience in the Jewish Museum Berlin by Daniel Libeskind

AR2A011 Architectural history thesis
TU Delft

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Title page image: Figure 1: Tower of Holocaust (Ziehe, n.d.)

Abstract

Figure 2: Memory void (*Memory Void*, n.d.)

The Holocaust is one of the most horrendous events in history, therefore people should be educated on the topic to create remembrance. Museums are the designated places for this; however, traditional museums are not most suited. According to neurophysiology, re-imagining and emotional connection are most important to make people remember. New memorial museums or counter-monuments provide in this new type of museum, with the Jewish Museum Berlin by Daniel Libeskind being one of the first and with that experimental examples. Daniel Libeskind supported his design with a paper called 'Between the Lines' where he explains the concept of the design writing he tried to create a building of contemplation and memory. His design is focused on creating a haptic experience, especially at the underground level with several highly experiential spaces. According to most experts, architects and 'normal', he succeeded in this task and created a museum that speaks to the emotions, especially in those spaces that make the visitors think and create a lasting memory. Hereby he provided a museum that makes people never forget the horrors of the Holocaust.

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Figure 3: Areal view (Bredt, n.d.)

Introduction

The Holocaust is one of the most horrendous events in history and arguably the most famous and most discussed in Europe. It is impossible to completely understand the horrors the Jews have gone through in that time. However, it is important to not forget and to make people understand a glimpse of what happened in order to create understanding, both to never forget and to prevent anything like it from happening in the future.

Thereby the question rises how to achieve this. How to educate people on this topic, not just in terms of sharing facts, but also in terms of emotional connection. Many monuments and museums are built for this purpose. According to many critics, architects, scientists and ordinary people the Jewish Museum Berlin, designed by Daniel Libeskind, is the most successful in terms of its design. With over 700.000 visitors each year it is one of the most visited museums in Berlin (Jüdisches Museum Berlin, z.d.).

In neurophysiology, it is said that a person's memory is not based on received information but rather on re-imagining (Silke Arnold-de Simine[1], 2012). She writes that memorials and memory museums often use this re-imaging to get the visitors attention since it is seen as more engaging and besides, it is a democratic and ethical way of translating the past. The Jewish Museum Berlin uses the same manner to display the past and it is much strengthened by the experiential design of Daniel Libeskind.

This thesis will therefore research how Libeskind's design tries to make its visitors re-imagine the past and emotionally connect with the history of Jews in Germany. Then it will be researched how experts and 'normal' visitors perceive Libeskind's design to conclude whether Libeskind succeeded in the task of designing the Jewish Museum Berlin.

A lot of studies on the Jewish Museum Berlin have been conducted already, however, none of them gives a comprehensive comparison of Libeskind's design concept and ideas and how his design is perceived and appreciated by both experts and architects as well as normal visitors. This thesis tries to fill in that gap and give an understandable and comprehensive overview.

This thesis will be looking at the design of the Jewish Museum Berlin by Daniel Libeskind, with the main focus on the perception, experience and emotional connection with the museum. The goal is to find out how Libeskind tried to design the building in a way that the visitors feel emotionally connected and consequently get a much more memorable experience of the visit. Besides, this research tries to conclude whether Libeskind succeeded in this task. To find this out the research will be focussed on three main topics, Libeskind's concept for the design, critics' opinions, and the opinions of visitors.

The first chapter "The museum's history", gives an overview of the history of the museum from its origin until now to put the Libeskind design into the historical perspective of the museum. The second chapter "Designing a memorial museum", provides a theoretical framework of the function and properties a memorial museum should have according to literature and thereafter places Libeskind's design in this framework. The third chapter "Between the Lines", summarizes and analyses the writings that Libeskind wrote throughout the design process to support the design to ultimately uncover his ideas for this design. The fourth chapter "Experiencing the museum", analyses writings on the design from different critics and analyses research on visitors' appreciation of the design. These findings will then be compared to Libeskind's ideas to conclude whether Libeskind's design is understood the way he meant and whether the museum's design fits into the theoretical framework made in the second chapter. Finishing with a summary and concluding whether Daniel Libeskind's design for the Jewish Museum Berlin is successful or not.

[1] **"Silke Arnold-de Simine is a lecturer in German Studies in the Department of European Cultures and Languages, Birkbeck (University of London). Her research interests lie in 19th- and 20th-century German literature and early film, gender studies, cultural memory and museum studies." (Arnold-de Simine, z.d.)**

The museum's history

This chapter heavily relies on the book Jewish Museum, Libeskind, D., & Binet, H. (1999), the source will therefore not be repeated throughout the chapter.

The origin of the Jewish Museum lays among a few private collectors of Jewish ceremonial objects as art objects, banker Alexander David (1687-1765) was one of the most important. After his death, his collection was given to the Jewish community in Braunschweig.

The first collection of Jewish art that was exhibited to the public however was more than one hundred years later in 1878, at the world expo in Paris and belonged to Isaac Strauss (1806-1888). This exposition was exceptional at the time because it showed objects for their aesthetic quality over their ritual function. In 1889 the Musée the Clungy was able to acquire Strauss's collection. Less than ten years after the exhibition on the world expo, a similar exhibition was presented in London with close to 3000 objects spread over four locations. This large number of objects opened the possibility to classify and analyse the objects for the first time.

All Jewish museums in the German-speaking part of Europe originated from private collectors. Just before 1900 ethnological organizations and small museums were founded to collect and protect Jewish objects to keep evidence of Jewish culture and to show it to the public. The founding of the "Society for the Collection and Conservation of the Art and Historical Monuments of the Jews" in Vienna (1894), the "Society for the Study of Jewish Art" in Düsseldorf (1897) and the "Society for Jewish Ethnography" in Hamburg (1898) formed the first institutional basis for Jewish museums in the German-speaking part of Europe. They collected, researched and exhibited all kinds of Jewish art and objects, with every organization having another focus. They succeeded to a certain extent and were able to produce exhibition spaces, meanwhile inspiring smaller communities to open their exhibitions. Shortly after, collections were shown in Danzig (1903), Prague (1906), Warsaw (1910) and Berlin (1917) and at the same time, new communities and exhibitions started in among others Jerusalem and St. Petersburg. From the start of the century until around 1920, the history of Jewish museums reached a culmination, mostly due to the strong interest of the Jews in their history. Museums exhibited art but also presented the efforts of Jews to take place in German society. At the end

of this period, the problem of the German-Jewish identity had become an important part of the museum work, with exhibitions mainly directed towards non-Jewish visitors.

In this history, the role of Berlin had been less prominent. Jeweller Alber Wolf (1841-1907) started gathering a private collection that was bequeathed to the Jewish congregation in Berlin, this was the foundation for the Jewish Museum. The collection was open to the public in 1917 for the first time. Till 1930 when Karl Schwarz became director of the museum, Moritz Stern was the supervisor. Before, Karl Schwarz had founded a "Jewish Museum Society" which wanted to raise interest in Jewish art and culture and to expand the collection to later form a Jewish Museum. By not only collecting old but also contemporary works by Jewish artists, it stood out amongst other museums. On January 24, 1933, just a few days before the Nazis seized power, the museum was inaugurated next to the synagogue on Oranienburger Strasse 31.

In the summer of 1933, Karl Schwartz left Berlin and went to Palestine, followed by his predecessor Erna Stein-Blumenthal in May 1935. Dr Franz Landsberger became director after Erna Stein-Blumenthal left and he was able to organise a few significant exhibitions before forced close on November 10, 1938. The last exhibition was about the restrictions and oppression that kept Jews from properly practice their faith. After the pogrom on Kristallnacht the Nazis confiscated the properties of the museum and the director Franz Landsberger was arrested and sent to Sachsenhausen. When he was released, he fled to England and later emigrated to the United States.

The destruction and spread of the great populations of central and eastern European Jews and their museums and private collections left a cultural vacuum. Big parts of their rich history had disappeared. This void was partly filled by new museums in the United States and Israel. After the war Jewish survivors focussed on reconstructing their community and claiming restitution and reparations by the Federal Republic of Germany. There was at first no attention on reopening museums and besides, there were no exhibition pieces left for those were all destroyed by the Nazis. Few works were found back later, and are still exhibited in several museums among which the Jewish Museum in Berlin.

The Berlin wall made the Märkisches Museum inaccessible for citizens of West Berlin and instigated the founding of the Berlin Museum by Edwin Redslob in 1962. The museum was accommodated in a reconstructed Baroque Kollegienhaus on Lindenstrasse in 1969, which provided a place to relive Berlin's history. Jewish pieces were among collected items since the start, because this museum was a place for all Berlin citizens. Primarily, exhibitions were focused on religious aspects, but later, starting in the seventies, cultural life before and after the war became a focal point in the exhibitions. The experience of exclusion of Jews during the war became more important over time, resulting in the idea of building an extension building to house this aspect of history. In November 1975, the "Society for a Jewish Museum in Berlin" was founded. They wanted to rebuild the Ephraim Palace on a plot adjacent to the Berlin Museum. In 1979 Dr Vera Bendt was the new curator of the Jewish part of the Berlin Museum. The reconstruction of the Ephraim palace was harder than expected and finally in 1981, the municipality decided to reconstruct the palace closer to its original site and the plans for the building to be part of the Berlin Museum were laid to rest again.

In the meantime, the museum's Jewish collection continued to grow, and with that the need for an extension building. Then a bill passed which stated that because the former Jewish museum was taken by the Nazis, a new museum was considered restitution. Gifts of documents allowed the society to spread information and with that to mobilize its members to defend themselves against anti-Semitism. The Jewish division of the museum got a permanent space in the Berlin museum in 1984 since the alternative of a new building could not be found. In 1986 the number of spaces for the Jewish division extended to four already. In the following years the idea of an extension kept being mentioned, and a plan was made for an "integrative model". The model emphasized the role of Jews as an integral part of the city's history, besides a representation of the "distinct history of the Jews". In March 1988, at the Aspen Institute, it was decided that a Jewish museum must be created as part of the Berlin Museum, but it had to be architecturally recognized as an independent and individual building and museum. Besides, it was agreed that its name would be "Berlin Museum – Jewish Museum". The plot to the south of the current building was chosen and a program and budget were made and approved. The contest for the design got 165 entries, and Daniel Libeskind's design was chosen. It developed "a spatial and kinetic concept of inter-

penetration, refraction, superimposition and temporary division" (Libeskind & Binet, 1999, p. 112). According to Heinz Galinski, chair of the Jewish Congregation, the design made it possible "to connect the 'achievements and fate' of the Jewish citizens of this city with the history of Berlin in an inescapable way. In the future, no one will be able to visit the Jewish Museum without perceiving the history of Berlin, and no one will be able to visit the future Berlin Museum without experiencing the history of its Jewish citizens in past and present." (Libeskind & Binet, 1999, p. 112).

After the Fall of the Berlin Wall, some started to advocate to stop the building plans and yet again try to use the Ephraim palace. The realization was in danger because of financial difficulties partly caused by the attempt to host the Olympics in Berlin. The museum, together with Daniel Libeskind started a campaign for the building that got lots of supports from the international public. This put pressure on the Jewish community and the municipality which resulted in the mayor of Berlin announcing in the fall of 1991 that Daniel Libeskind's design would be built. After more planning and some cost reduction, the cornerstone was laid in a ceremony on November 9, 1992. The baroque building was restored at the same time.

Under director W. Michael Blumenthal the Jewish Museum finally became an independent museum. The new building is now housing the 'Jewish Museum Berlin' which was completed in 1999 and officially opened on September 9, 2001.

The Jewish Museum Berlin was never supposed to be a holocaust museum, the initial plan was to build an extension wing to the existing Baroque building where the Jewish part of the German culture could be exhibited (Libeskind & Binet, 1999). The Jewish part was meant to be autonomous and at the same time incorporated with the existing museum to show how German and Jewish culture are intertwined (Arnold-de Simine, 2012).

Between commissioning in 1999 and the official inauguration in 2001, the building was still empty, but open for visitors to experience the architecture. It was, and by some still is, argued to leave the building empty because an exhibition only blurs the experience of the architecture itself, according to Arnold-de Simine (2012). She writes that some even proposed not to build Eisenmann's 'Denkmal für die ermordeten Juden Europas' and leave the Libeskind's building empty to serve as a Holocaust memorial instead. However, this was prevented by the Jewish community and the Berlin Senate that did not want to give up the museal function of the institute (Arnold-de Simine, 2012).

Figure 4: Front facade (Hufton+Crow, n.d.)

Arnold-de Simine (2012) writes that in neurophysiology it is said that personal memory is not based on received information, but on re-imagining, it is elusive, selective and therefore it cannot be trusted. However, to represent difficult pasts, personal memories are widely used. These personal memories are not only conceived to be more engaging but they are also seen as providing a democratic and ethical way of approaching the past according to Arnold-de Simine. The same article says that more objectified exhibitions that are mostly very detached and distinct from the present are no longer fit for the growing remembrance culture which is nowadays more focussed on the emotional connection rather than historical facts. She writes that this stirring up of empathy is believed to be much stronger in preventing violent histories from reoccurrence. A lot of contemporary popular remembrance culture in western countries is based on this more emotional approach towards history (Arnold-de Simine, 2012).

During the Cold War, erected memorials for victims of the Second World War were mostly monumental classicist buildings that were manipulating collective memory by overemphasizing and stabilizing the dominant voice and thus by taking part in cultural repression (Esra Akcan[2], 2010). Akcan also writes that the west was looking for new forms of commemoration, not a memory of the unknown soldier that praises the army, but a monument that provides a place to mourn about lost citizens and loved ones. These monuments are more personal and make place for emotions, not like the ceremonious, classicist monuments. In her article, she calls these new type of monuments countermonuments.

From the nineties onward, the history museum has gone through a transformation process in terms of role and function in society (Arnold-de Simine, 2012). She writes that most of the new build museums about history are no longer the traditional history museums, they are now more 'memory museums' following the theory described above. These museums distinguish from traditional history museums by not just exhibiting academic and institutional history, but more as places of memory, bringing a wider range of stories about the past to the public (Arnold-de Simine, 2012). However, James E. Young (2000) writes that giving an architect the task to design for such a memory as the Holocaust is arguably impossible. He argues that such a memory might not be housable at all.

On the contrary of a museum just exhibiting a collection, memory museums take initiative in singling out past events to be able to appeal to controversies of the present (Akcan, 2010). The exhibition becomes representative of the story, rather than the objects themselves (Arnold-de Simine, 2012). She writes that exhibited objects are no longer of institutional value, but are now experiences of 'witnesses' of the past that make the visitor re-live their experience. As individual objects, they are relatively worthless but combined they create an impressive exhibition that speaks to the emotions of the visitor. Ana Suoto (2018) complements these findings, she writes that the objective is to have visitors make a personal connection with the past, and make them experience it. She continues that the distance between the present and past should be changed into an emotional connection between the visitor and the eye-witnesses. The objects are then mostly audio-visual which reduces the space between the visitor and the 'witness' and these experiences are often even haptic, which breaks one of the major rules in traditional museums (Arnold-de Simine, 2012). The same article says that giving a voice to dead witnesses transfers visitors into 'secondary witnesses' and provides for visitors to identify with the dead. The aim is to confront and maybe discomfort the visitor and pushes them into self-reflection and responsibility.

Additionally, Suoto (2018) writes that more recent literature is moving away from discussing the representation of death, and is more shifting towards the visitors' responses to these representations. She substantiates this conclusion by naming research from Biran, A., Poria, Y. & Oren, G. (2011)

[2] **"Esra Akcan is the Michael A. McCarthy Professor of Architectural Theory in the Department of Architecture and the Director of the Insitute for European Studies. Her scholarly work on a geopolitically conscious global history of urbanism and architecture inspires her teaching." (Center for International Studies, z.d.)**

[3] **James E. Young is a "Distinguished Professor Emeritus and Founding Director of the Institute for Holocaust, Genocide, and Memory Studies." (College of Humanities & Fine Arts, Department of English, z.d.)**

[4] **"Dr Ana Souto is a Principal Lecturer in Architecture at the School of Architecture, Design and Built Environment. Ana plays a key role in the development and leadership of the research modules on undergraduate and postgraduate courses in Architecture, and is supporting doctoral candidates with her role as Post Graduate Research Tutor at School level." (Nottingham Trent University, z.d.)**

that looks into the reasons people visit Auschwitz. With this research they found that the main reasons that are mentioned by visitors are 'see it to believe it', more understanding of what happened and simply the fact that Auschwitz is a 'famous death tourist attraction'. With these findings, they conclude that not death nor the dead should be considered, but the visitors' perception of it, and how they get empathy and connections with the past to link to the present.

One of the earlier museums or countermonuments is the Jewish Museum Berlin by Daniel Libeskind's and is hereby an experimental practice as well. Arnold-de Simine describes the design as "not simply an accumulation of several medial practices, but can be described as 'intermedial': it attempts to evoke altermedial semiotic frameworks to explore the limitations of different representational concepts and strategies." (2012, p.16)

It could be argued that the two almost opposite commemorative functions cannot be joined in one building. The general view on monuments is that it is a place for ceremonies and it is creating a community for mourning (Arnold-de Simine, 2012). She also writes that memorials are a place for humble commemoration and passive contemplation, where museums are informative, critical and explanatory institutions. The need for buildings that can provide for both functions was rising, however, the question of how to design such a place is hard to answer as stated by Arnold-de Simine. Akcan (2010) however writes that Libeskind succeeded in this task, she argues that his design is not only a countermonument in terms of its function but in terms of its architectural shape as well. She writes that the museum is, despite its huge scale, not anything like the classic monuments from that time that have properties like symmetry, hierarchy, clear entrance and clear geometry. It is quite the contrary with its never fully appearing façade, hidden entrance and confusing shape. This rekindles the discussion on the function of a memorial once again. The design encourages its visitors to engage on an emotional and visceral level, which reaches further than the traditional informative function of the museum and ceremonial function of memorials (Akcan, 2010).

Terry Smith[5] (2005) claims that Libeskind's design is more a philosophical program or an architectural manifesto. In addition to the big sense of engagement on the emotional level within the building, the design is assisted by several writings and dissertations that Libeskind wrote which provides the building with multiple layers. He writes that, without claiming that the design is completely corresponding with the writings, it is apparent that these writings are an integral part of the design (Libeskind & Binet, 1999). When looking into the building from the perspective of the writings, the design can be experienced in three levels described by Smith (2005).

The first is the level of experience, the main goal of the design is to create an experience. Not aiming for figurative representation or iconographic symbolism, but trying to provoke emotional and visceral reactions and psychologically disturbing experience of disorientation.

The second is the level of metaphor, the metaphor of the void that represents the violently created void of Jewish culture in the history of Berlin. Six voids are placed in the building on the intersections of the two lines, they can be seen but not really entered or used. The intersections represent the inseparable intersections of Jewish and German that created these voids.

The third is the level of allegory, the building is described as an 'emblem' by Libeskind himself with which he means that there is no eminent connection between concept and building. Therefore, the building cannot be completely understood without adequate knowledge. The interpretation of the building by both scholars and regular visitors is very much influenced by the dissertations Libeskind wrote alongside the design. He wrote these dissertations during the design phase, continuously integrating design changes he was forced to make by the Jewish community and municipality of Berlin, and also after completion, he did a few writings considering the reactions of the visitors. However, he never meant to create a linear narrative to describe the building and the design process, on the contrary, it seems that he is satisfied that the writings are as fragmented as the building itself. (Smith, 2005)

[5] **"TERRY SMITH, FAHA, CIHA, is Andrew W. Mellon Professor of Contemporary Art History and Theory in the Department of the History of Art and Architecture at the University of Pittsburgh, and Professor in the Division of Philosophy, Art and Critical Thought at the European Graduate School." (University of Pittsburgh, z.d.)**

Although the official name of the building is 'Extension of the Berlin Museum with the Jewish Museum Department' or 'Jewish Museum Berlin', Daniel Libeskind named his design 'Between the Lines' just as a paper he wrote to explain and support his design. 'Between the Lines' references to two lines of thinking: "One is a straight line, but broken into many fragments; the other is a tortuous line, but continuing infinitely." (Libeskind, 1991, p. 86).

Between the lines is mostly used when speaking of a text, where the meaning of the text cannot be found in the literal meaning of the words but has to be sought for more deeply: between the lines. According to Arnold-de Simine (2012) 'Between the lines' evokes a paradigm in space and time where none of the two is the main and where they are inextricably linked. The lines have both a spatial and temporal meaning. History is often posed on a timeline, which implies that history is a linear process. Arnold-de Simine writes that a place between the lines suggests that they might be asynchronous and that their continuity can be undermined. She says that spatially, two lines create in-between space, they can be separate or they can intersect. In the architectural sense, the lines do not indicate walls but the space between walls, creating voids, gaps, absence; referring to the absence of Jewish life, culture and history in Berlin after the Holocaust (Arnold-de Simine, 2012).

Libeskind (1992) starts his paper by stating it is impossible to speak about a starting point in architecture. He finds the whole notion of a starting point doubtful because a starting point presumes that there is a past, while the past is always being experienced as the present. Time, therefore, is invisible and just passes by while its effects are visible, he says. So in between a design, or just two drawings or works time passes and one has been changed completely, just as the architecture itself (Libeskind, 1992).

Thus, when speaking of architecture is to speak of the paradigm of the irrational according to Libeskind (1992). He finds that the best works of contemporary spirit come from the irrational, while reason kills these best works, but is dominating the world. Therefore, this design originates in the irrational, out of nothing. He then states that he cannot tell how something started of nothing, but he can share four elements that interested and inspired him.

The star of David

The first is a hexagon, the star of David, which he calls very cliché (Libeskind, 1992). As already stated, Berlin is not just a physical place, it is also about the people and their relationships. He started to plot addresses of Berliners and Jews that had somehow a relationship, which also showed how Jews and Germans are connected in history. The connection of these addresses of writers, scientists, composers, artists and poets formed a distorted star of David. With this he also found his starting point, he did not want to start from a simple grid, but he had to start something out of nothing. That was the first dimension of the design: the irrational invisible matrix. (Libeskind, 1992)

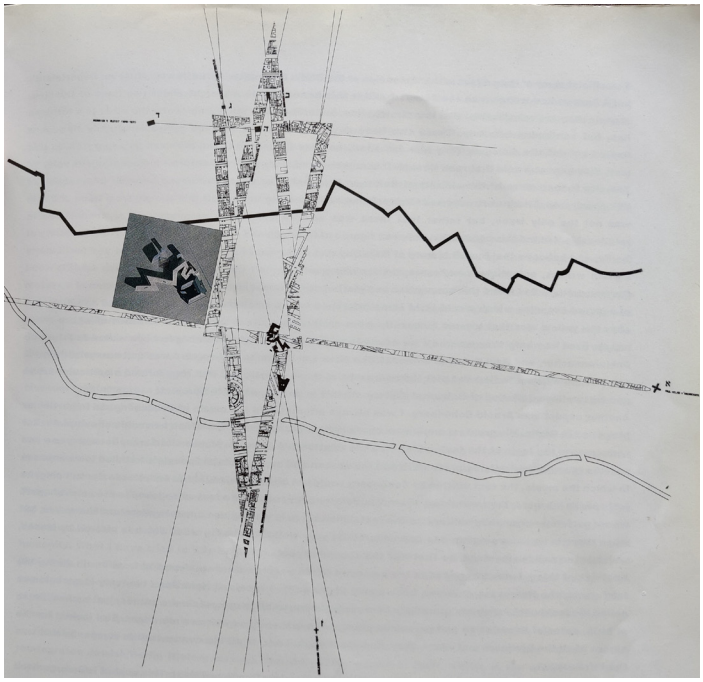

Figure 5: Star of David, design concept (Libeskind, 1991)

Opera of Aaron and Moses

The second inspiration came from music, the opera Aaron and Moses composed by Arnold Schönberg. The piece consists of three parts, but the third part was never finished, not only due to lack of inspiration but also because of the rising limitations of the Jewish Berliners. The piece is a conversation between Aaron and Moses, Aaron representing the people of Israel and Moses the one knowing that there is nothing to tell the people. At the end of the piece Aaron disappears, the music stops and Moses stops singing, he ends with speaking the words 'oh word, thou word, that I lack'. Lacking words is what represents Jewish history (Libeskind, 1991). Besides, Libeskind (1992) finds this opera emblematic for his architecture, in that sense, it contains vacant spaces and dead ends.

Figure 6: Void (Esakov, 2010)

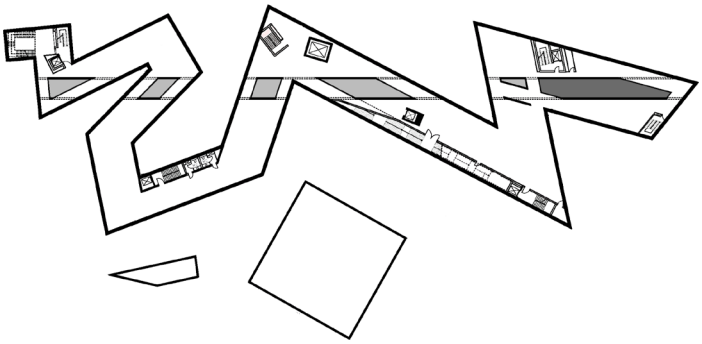

Figure 7: Location of the voids (*Floorplan First Floor*, 2015)

Names of killed and deported Jews

Next to the architectural and musical dimension, the third is a textual dimension. Libeskind asked the Federal Information Office and asked for documents with deported and missing Jews, and got two thick books with just names, birthdates, deport dates and places where they were murdered. Libeskind sought out the names of Berliners which formed the third element of the design. (Libeskind, 1991)

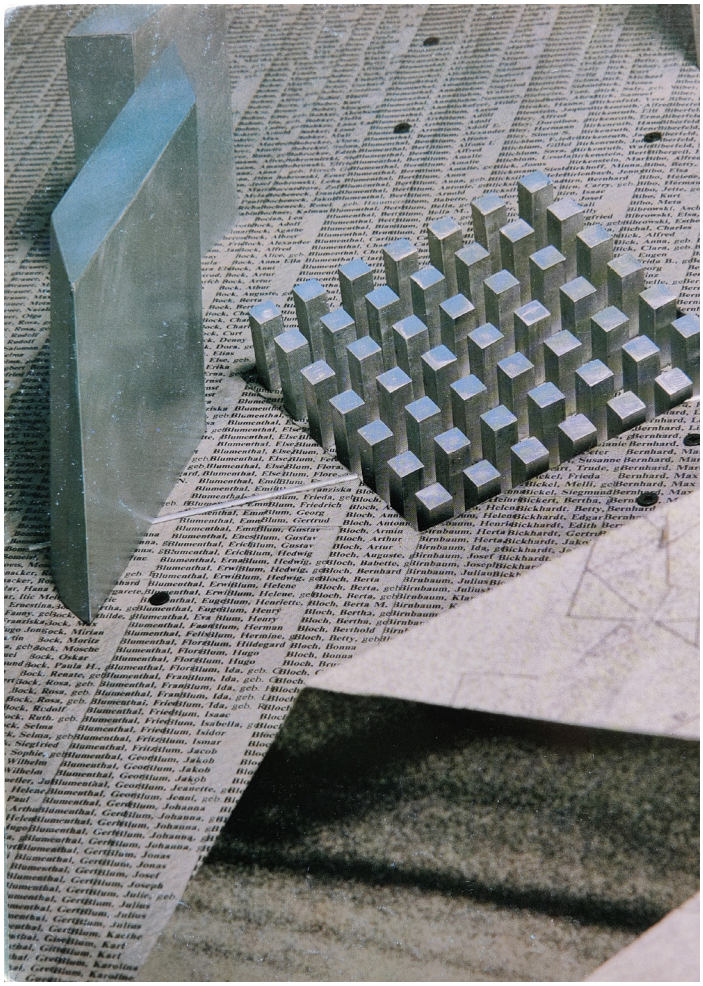

Figure 8: Names of killed and deported Jews, design concept (Libeskind, 1991)

'One Way Street' by Walter Benjamin

The fourth and last aspect is the essay 'One Way Street' by Walter Benjamin (Libeskind, 1991). This essay consist of sixty short pieces varying a lot in theme and writing style. This inspiration led to incorporating a sequence of sixty sections in the zig-zag line and the randomly placed windows. They represent the 'Stations of the Star' described by Benjamin.

Figure 9: Facade (Esakov, 2010)

To summarize these four dimensions of the design: the first dimension is an invisible and irrational relation between unconnected individual addresses that together form a star. The second is a musical dimension of vacant spaces and dead ends. The third one is the aspect of thousands of deported and missing Berlin Jews. The fourth and last aspect is that of the 'One Way Street' essay by Walter Benjamin.

According to Libeskind (1991), it is important for the design that the Jewish Museum is not just for the current Berlin citizens, but it should also be, imaginatively, accessible for citizens of the past and the future. The museum must be a place for all Berliners to confirm their common heritage, a shared hope that originates in individual desire. To achieve this Libeskind tried to find a way to discourage passivity of visitors in the museum. He wanted to give visitors space in the museum to make them decide how, where and what to do for themselves in a museum which function is that of showing the history of the city (Libeskind, 1992). The new building is conceived as an emblem that makes itself apparent through the invisible, the void (Libeskind, 1991). He writes that the museum is not about text, construction or knowledge, it is about existence and in-existence.

The Jewish Museum is not only meant to inspire poetry, music and drama, but it should be a home for everyone and a spiritual site (Libeskind, 1992). He writes that it should also represent the uncertainty of Berlin's future and the Jewish role in it. It is looking to reconnect the history of Berlin, which should not be camouflaged or forgotten. Libeskind (1992) sought to see again the implicit meaning of Berlin and tried to make it visible and apparent in the building and the site.

The new Jewish Museum is, as mentioned earlier, conceived as an emblem. An emblem of the void and the invisible where the void is the base and the building is shaped around it (Libeskind, 1992). He writes that this void is not only a means of characterizing the building to the public, it is also a result of the literal void in Jewish documents and objects. The building tries to provoke the absence rather than presence. According to Libeskind, the museum materializes the void that runs through the contemporary culture of Berlin and makes it accessible to the public.

From the start, the idea existed that the new building should have a deep connection with the old Baroque building (Libeskind, 1991). However, the connection should not be visible from the outside, this resulted in an underground connection between the two buildings. His idea was that this particular way of connecting preserves the contradictory autonomy of the buildings, but invisibly bonds them together even more. This past fatality of the connection of the Jewish culture with that of Berlin is now invisibly embodied in the building (Libeskind, 1991).

The previous two chapters showed the theory behind the design of the museum. First explaining the need for a different kind of museum, namely a memorial museum showing stories of eyewitnesses of the tragedies that took place. Consequently, creating a place for mourning and contemplation where experience is more important than historical facts. The following chapter explained Libeskind's way of thinking behind this museum, the framework he used and the writings he wrote to support his design. This chapter will dive into the experience that people have in the museum. The experience of experts and 'normal' people will be used and compared to the theory to see whether the ideas behind the design and the design itself are in accordance with what visitors' experience.

Suoto's research (2018) shows that more than half of the ratings are five stars and another quarter are four star ratings, see figure 10. In the five-star reviews on TripAdvisor (figure 11) the architecture in general or Libeskind himself is often mentioned. Also, many reviews mention some of the most important spaces in the building (figure 12) like the Garden of Exile, the Tower of Holocaust, the Axis of Continuity and the voids. Furthermore, many of the five-star reviews refer to the provocation of thoughts and emotions in the building. Her research shows that among the four-star reviews many of the same comments are made as in the five-star reviews. However, some of the reviews write things like that the design is 'too clever' and 'overshadowing the collection' also some comment on the unclear and distracting circulation (figure 13). The three-star reviews mention the same negative things as the four-star reviews about the design and circulation, but more often. Some of the three-star reviews also mention that the underground is disconnected from the rest of the museum, hereby the underground is marked as very interesting and the upper floors as boring. The two- and one-star reviews describe the building as boring, sterile and cold and often mention the layout, while some comments say that the museum is not enough about the Holocaust and that there are better (free) museums and memorials about the Holocaust. (Suoto, 2018)

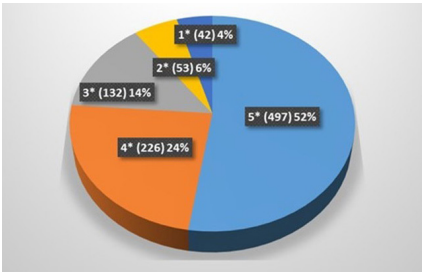

Figure 10: Distribution of ratings (Suoto, 2018)

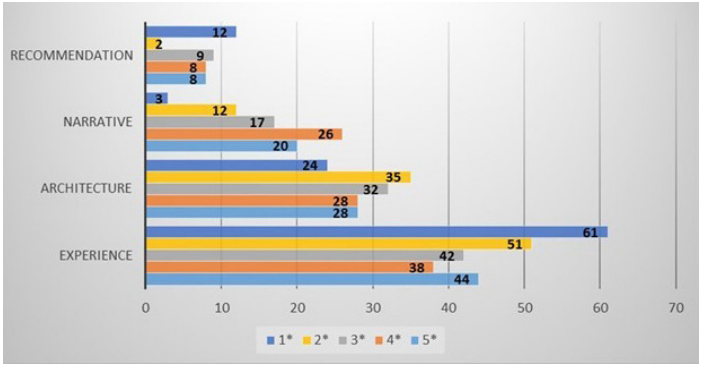

Figure 11: Theme frequency according to ratings (Suoto, 2018)

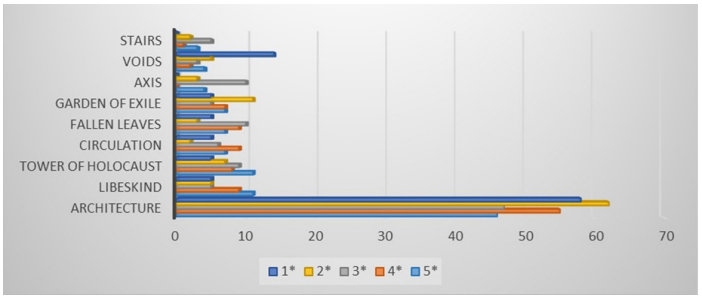

Figure 12: Comments on architecture and design features. Percentages according to ratings (Suoto, 2018)

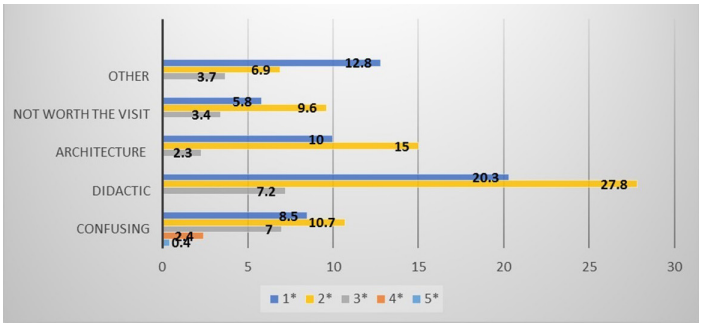

Figure 13: Negative comments according to ratings (Suoto, 2018)

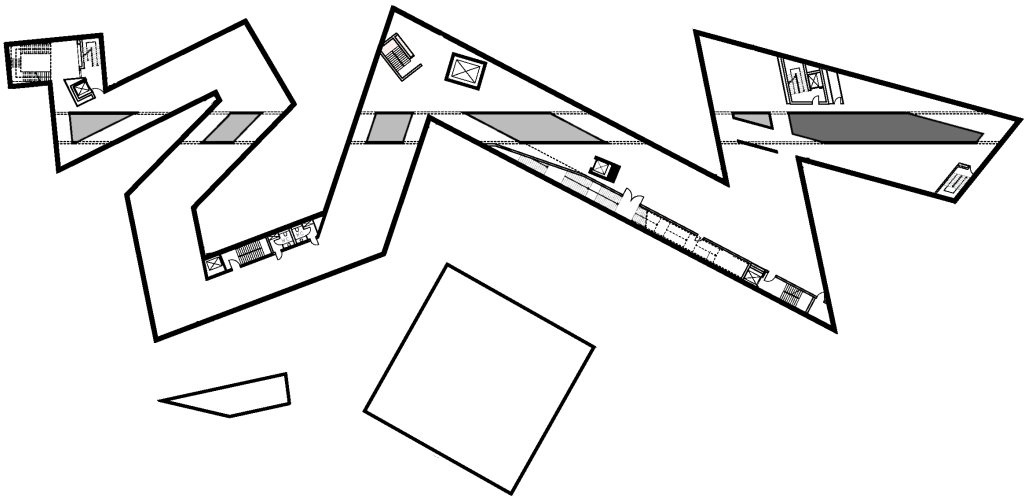

Figure 14: Location of the voids (*Floorplan First Floor*, 2015)

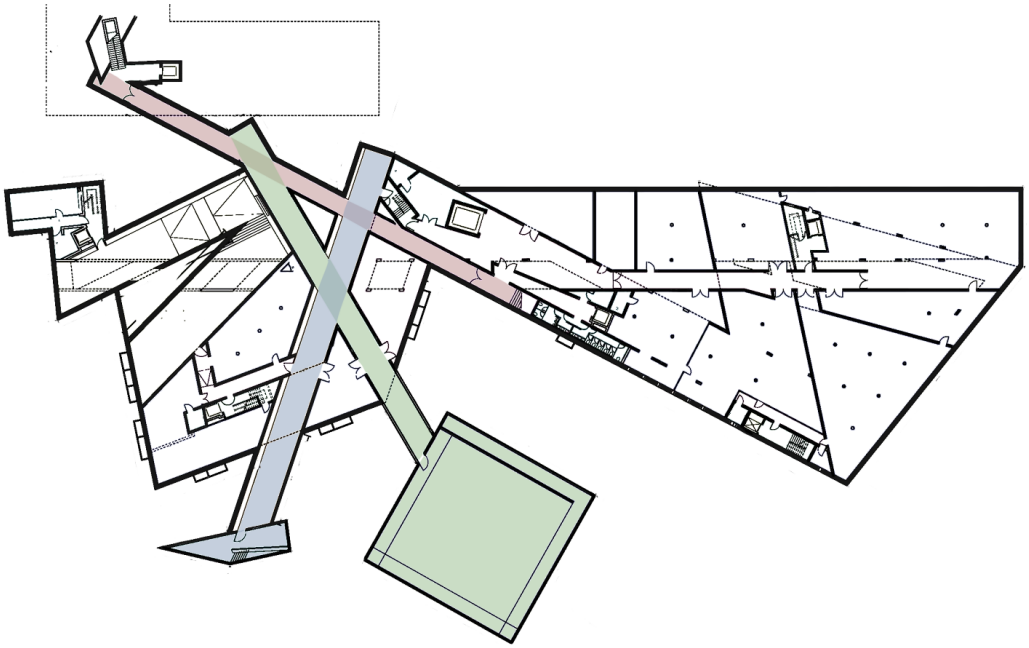

Figure 15: Three axes (*Floorplan Underground Floor*, 2015)

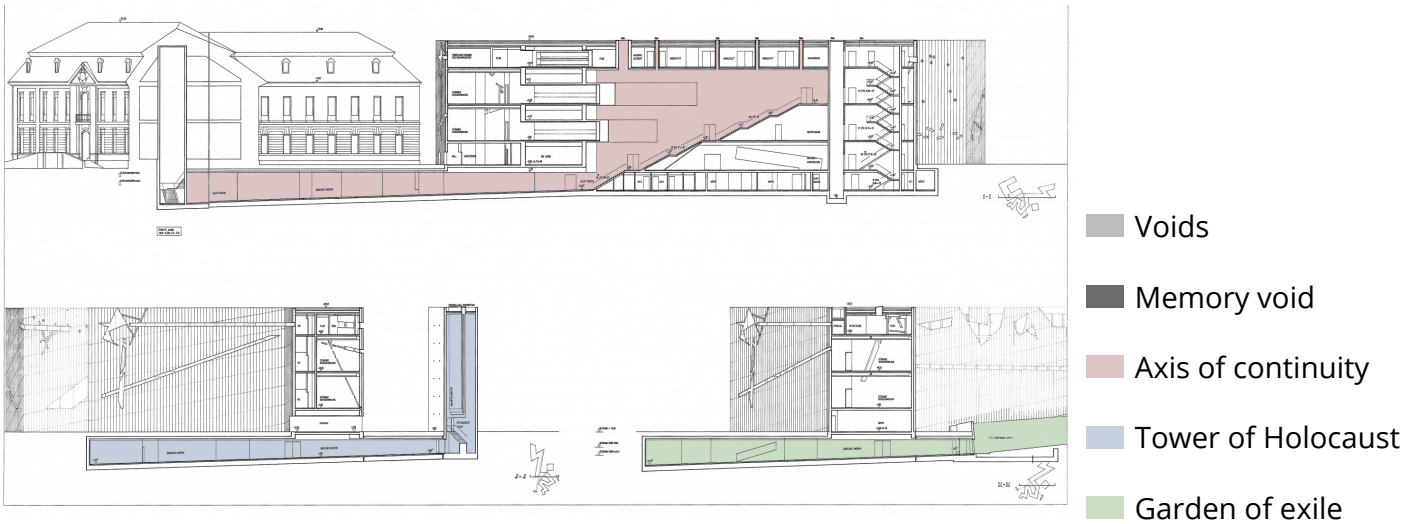

Figure 16: Section through the three axes (Studio Libeskind, n.d.)

Henrik Reeh[6] did a guided tour through the museum before it was officially inaugurated, so there was not yet an exhibition inside. He describes his visit as "a ground-breaking initiation into a complex cultural landscape, revealing many of the expectations which underlie the reception of architecture. "This encounter allows us to single out some of the situations in which the perception of exhibited architecture turns into cultural reflexivity." (Reeh, 2016, p. 4). According to Reeh, architecture normally is just about sight, however, this building touches besides that on the other senses which creates a unique experience, speaking to the emotions of visitors. According to Souto, this is one of the main reasons for most people to visit this museum, she states that didactic and emotional experiences are rated very high (2018). This aligns with Libeskind's objective when designing the building, as written before, he tried to create a building that makes people relate with the Jews that were deported and murdered to make an emotional impact (Arnold-de Simine, 2012).

Entrance

An example of this design playing to the senses already starts when entering the museum by a descending staircase from the baroque building that brings you through the underground connection into the basement of the building (Reeh, 2016). The stair ends in a dark hallway with cold and harsh concrete walls, and immediately starts to work on the visitors' balance for the floor has a slight slope to it that goes up in the hallway. Because of the smallness of the slope, it is not really experienced as one, yet it feels like you are counteracted to continue through the hallway. After a few meters, when turning into another hallway, the slope changes without being aware and thus destabilizing the visitors once more. This playing with the visitors' perception, experience and orientation ensures that the visitor disconnects from the real world according to Reeh (2016). He writes that this disconnection results in a better emotional connection with the stories told in the basement of the building. The basement houses a few biographies and family histories about persecution, escape and annihilation to immediately speak to the visitors' emotions. These individual objects do not form a fluid story, to prevent the visitors from an easy visit with an easy-to-follow story, forcing them to actively connect with what they see and their emotions (Arnold-de Simine, 2012). At the same time, she writes, these very fragmented pieces are also simply the lack of an entire story. The void that was created in Jewish history becomes eminent in the lack of exhibition material making it even more poignant.

Figure 17: Entrance (Bruns, n.d.)

[6] **"Henrik Reeh covers the research fields of humanistic urban studies and studies in modern culture. Based in humanistic urban studies as practiced in the Department of Arts and Cultural Studies, University of Copenhagen, SPATIAL CULTURE outlines a novel framework for understanding the social and cultural environments of the modern and contemporary metropolis." (Univesity of Copenhagen, Department of Arts and Cultural Studies, z.d.)**

Voids

The voids as described before are also physically represented in the building. Not far into the museum, the visitor enters a space that is crucial for the design's concept (Libeskind, 1992), however, most visitors might not even notice. This space is the first of the six voids in the museums, only seen when looking up into a very high concrete space, almost like the shaft of an elevator without doors. At the ceiling, some daylight passes through small openings. On the levels above, these voids penetrate through the floors and disrupt the spaces. Together with the strange and unfathomable shape and route through the building, this results in irritation of visitors according to Suoto (2018), however, this is exactly what Libeskind wanted to achieve (Libeskind, 1992). He deliberately created these slanted halls, diagonal windows and claustrophobic spaces according to Arnold-de Simine (2012). She writes that this disoriented feeling and irritation is not trying to imitate the feeling of the persecuted Jews, but especially to undermine the interpretation of security of the visitor. The design does not pretend that it can mimic the terrible experience and fate of the victims of the Holocaust according to Arnold-de Simine (2012). She also writes that only by active and difficult engagement with the conceptual architecture, the fragmented exhibition and Libeskind's fragmented writings, the complex history of Jewish-Germany can be understood.

Figure 18: Void (Bredt, n.d.)

Three axes

In the basement, three intersecting axes form the configurative basis of the floorplan, all three axes, shaped as corridors, end at specific places that are the most important in terms of architectural means of provoking emotion. The first axis the 'Axis of Continuity', that was just described, leads from the entering staircase to the staircase that brings the visitor back up to the ground level and higher floors of the building. The second axis, the 'Axis of Exile' leads to the 'Garden of Exile' a sunken square with a sloped floor with 49 big pillars towering high over the visitors' head with plants on top. And the third axis, the 'Axis of Holocaust' leads to the 'voided Void', where before entering a board informs visitors that Libeskind insisted to get your own interpretation. The tower was later named 'Tower of Holocaust' indicating how visitors try to make the design more concrete (Arnold-de Simine, 2012).

Figure 19: Axes on the underground level (Esakov, 2010)

Figure 20: Axis of Continuity (Hufton+Crow, n.d.)

Garden of Exile

This garden is officially called the ETA Hoffman Garden of Exile and Emigration. It is a walled, sunken exterior garden, located outside of the building reached by the axis of exile. The garden is filled with forty-nine concrete columns on a seven by seven grid, towering above the visitor's heads. On top of these columns, Russian olive trees are growing as a symbol of hope according to Jüdisches Museum Berlin (z.d.). Forty-eight of the columns are filled with soil from Berlin and the last one, in the centre, is filled with soil from Jerusalem. The columns are placed perpendicular to the 12 degrees sloped floor and are thus oblique, making the visitors feel dizzy, unsteady and disoriented. Together with the unreachable green on top, the experience in the garden tries to recall the feeling of disorientation and instability by the Jews that were forced out of Germany (Jüdisches Museum Berlin, z.d.). According to Suoto (2018), the garden is often mentioned by visitors, mostly in positive comments. She writes that it is most often described as a very poignant experience. This is exactly what Libeskind meant to do with this garden (Arnold-de Simine, 2012).

Tower of Holocaust

As written before, Libeskind called this space the 'voided Void', but its name has been changed to the tower of Holocaust by the public. According to Arnold-de Simine (2012), this is an attempt from the visitors to concretize this abstract design. It is understandable how visitors read this space symbolically. The space is entered from the axis of Holocaust through a heavy metal door, that closes the space and disconnects the visitor from everything else. At the top a narrow slit allows light into the unheated space creates a heat difference and thick concrete walls dull all sound from outside (Suoto, 2018). Arnold-the Simine (2012) writes that this interpretation of the Holocaust tower is problematic because it assumes that it is possible to have a physical experience of how it felt to be living through or dying in the Holocaust. Besides, she writes, that this interpretation also comes short of the space that Libeskind designed: the emptiness of the claustrophobic space "throws the visitors back onto themselves, encouraging them to contemplate this sensation." (Arnold-de Simine, 2012, p. 11).

Figure 21: Garden of Exile (Nastasi, n.d.)

Figure 22: Tower of Holocaust (Ziehe, n.d.)

Memory Void

The last important space in the building is the Memory Void, where the artwork Shalechet, or Fallen Leaves, by Israeli artist Menashe Kadishman is placed. This space is dedicated to victims of the Holocaust and the Second World War as a whole. The space is several meters deep and three stories high, the entire floor is covered with metal faces that represent the suffering of all victims. When walking over them, stepping on these suffering faces, they create a lot of unpleasant noise echoed by the bare concrete walls creates a feeling of guilt as written by Arnold-de Simine (2012). Suoto refers to Walter C. Metz (2008, p. 34) who writes: "This walk: Is also about spectatorship: it asks us to question not only what kind of human being walks on others, but what kind of human watches such stomping and does nothing. Who is the more barbaric?". In Suoto's research (2018), she mentions that many other visitors have had the same experience when walking through this space. They describe it as a moving and unforgettable experience and encourage others to do the same.

Figure 23: Memory void (Ziehe, n.d.)

Upper floors

The upper floors house the more informative part of the museum, these floors are, in contrast to the underground floor, much lighter with windows and white walls. Reeh (2016) describes these floors as relatively neutral and more functional. However, he calls the normality relative, the zigzag floorplan adds labyrinth quality to the building. Also, the voids going up from the basement break the continuity of the upper floors and can only be passed on the sides. The lower ratings given by visitors according to Suoto (2018) where difficulty to orient is mentioned as the main reason is probably mostly directed to these upper floors. Underground this disorientation is less problematic because there is no story to follow, it is about fragmented experiences. However, it is imaginable that on the upper floors, where the exhibition does tell a more fluid story, this unclear floorplan and route can be annoying. Consequently, the museum decided to add red arrows on the floor to create a route and compensate for this, unfortunately, the arrows take away from Libeskind's design concept and were therefore removed again (Suoto, 2018).

Libeskind insisted to get your own interpretation. The tower was later named 'Tower of Holocaust' indicating how visitors try to make the design more concrete (Arnold-de Simine, 2012).

Figure 24: Upper floor (Bredt, 2008)

Conclusion

As the Holocaust is one of the most horrendous events in history it is important to make people aware of what happened, to never forget and to prevent something similar from happening again. Memorials and museums are built for this cause, however, not just any museum succeeds in this task. According to neurophysiology, memory is based on re-imagining and thus, a museum of this kind should create an experience that makes people re-imagine the Holocaust, which is exactly what Daniel Libeskind tried to do with his design for the extension of the Jewish Museum Berlin.

The origin of the museum lies with several private collections of Jewish art and artefacts with the first official inauguration in 1933. The Nazis forced the museum to close in 1938 and all properties were taken and almost all were destroyed. The Berlin Museum reopened in 1969 in the Baroque building in which it is still accommodated. With the Holocaust becoming a more and more important topic and the growth of the Jewish division of the museum a design competition for an extension especially for the Jewish division was written out in 1988. From 165 entries, Daniel Libeskind's design was chosen. Some financial problems and discussion about the design and location postponed the start of the build until the cornerstone of the 'Jewish Museum Berlin' was laid on November 9, 1992. The building was completed in 1999 and officially inaugurated in 2001. Now the museum has won several architecture awards and is one of the most important Jewish museums around the world receiving around 700.000 visitors yearly.

To make people aware of what happened in the past, museums and memorials are needed. However, the traditional museums are not capable of fully reaching this desired goal. To make people remember, re-imaging and emotional connection are needed and therefore a new type of memorial museum is necessary. Such a monument that does not conform to the traditional style for monuments, can be called a countermonument, still a place for contemplation, commemoration and mourning but in a completely different manner. It is all about emotional connection, the exhibition is no longer about the displayed objects, but about experiences of 'witnesses' of the past to make the visitor re-imagine the past. The visitor is made 'secondary witness' by often audio-visual exhibitions that are even haptic, breaking away from traditional museums. The aim is to confront and sometimes discomfort the visitor and pushes them into self-reflection and responsibility.

The design of Daniel Libeskind for the Jewish Museum Berlin is one of the first museums or countermonuments, which makes it an experimental practice as well. Many argue that Libeskind succeeded in this experiment, in terms of its function as well as its architectural shape.

Some even claim that the design is more an architectural manifesto or a philosophical program. This idea is amplified by the writings Libeskind did to support his design, explaining the multiple layers of it. These writings give three perspectives on the design, first that of experience, with the building provoking emotional and visceral reactions. Secondly the perspective of the metaphor, of the voids placed on the intersection of the two lines. And the third perspective, describing the building as an 'emblem' meaning that there is no eminent connection between concept and building and that the writings are needed to understand the ideas behind the design.

Libeskind named the museum 'Between the Lines' which is also the title of the paper he wrote, supporting the design. Although Libeskind starts this paper that it is impossible to speak about a starting point when designing, because he believes that the best works of the contemporary spirit come from the irrational, these writings show that the inspiration for the design comes from four elements. First, the star of David and the connection of the addresses of Jewish citizens of Berlin, forming an irrational and invisible matrix. The second is the 'Opera of Aaron and Moses', from which the third part was never finished and therefore ended suddenly, in a void, lacking words, just like Jewish history. This translated into the voids and dead ends in the building. The third element is a list of killed and deported Berlin Jews. The fourth element is the essay 'One Way Street' by Walter Benjamin resulting in the zig-zag shape and the shape of the windows of the building.

With his design, Libeskind tries to create a building of contemplation and memory for all Berliners to confirm their common heritage. The museum should be a home for everyone and a spiritual site and it tries to reconnect the history of Berlin to the Jewish community as it is now broken. The building is conceived as an emblem of

the void, representing the void in history and also just the lack of exhibition objects, trying to provoke absence. The new building is autonomous, yet literally deeply connected to the Berlin Museum, just as the connection of the history of the Jewish community to Berlin.

According to experts, the building succeeded in speaking to the visitors' emotions, even when the building was still empty between 1999 until 2001. The design is not just about sight, but it speaks to all senses creating a unique and memorable experience. The same becomes apparent from the research into the experience of 'normal' peoples' visits. This was exactly what Libeskind wanted to accomplish. He wanted the building to make an impact by making people relate to the Jews who lived during the Holocaust, creating a lasting emotional experience.

By most visitors the building is appreciated for its emotional impact and provocation of thoughts, mostly mentioning the most important and touching spaces in the building like the Tower of Holocaust, Garden of Exile, Axis of Continuity and the Memory Void with the Fallen Leaves artwork. These spaces are also mostly described by experts writing about the design, although, it is apparent that Libeskind does not elaborate on these specific spaces in hit writing 'Between the Lines'. However, it can be concluded that the aspects he writes about in this text regarding emotional involvement are most eminent in these specific spaces. Thus, he is indirectly writing about spaces because he describes the effect, he wants to achieve with them, he just does not mention them literally in the writing.

Although the building mostly has the effect that was desired by Libeskind on its visitors, not everything is interpreted the way he meant it. The most obvious example is the Tower of Holocaust, which was originally called the voided Void, but changed by the public. However, Libeskind does not see this as a problem. At the entrance of the tower, there is even a note from Libeskind that says the museum can be interpreted the way you want, as long as it makes you think. Also, the museum was not designed as a Holocaust museum, however, it is not a surprise that by many it is perceived that way as the Holocaust is probably the most well known part of Jewish history in Germany. Besides, the entire underground floor of the building is designated to the Holocaust, housing the most impressive architectural spaces as mentioned before.

Some visitors who dislike the building, give reasons like the architecture is too smart and overshadowing the collection, the circulation is unclear and disturbing and that top floors are too sterile and disconnected from the underground part. However, the number of negative comments is much smaller than the number of positive comments. These comments indicate that not all visitors are able to understand the design, which is obvious for people calling the design to clever, but that goes for comments about unclear circulation as well. The unclear circulation is namely part of Libeskind's design concept. At last, it is impossible to design a building that everyone likes and understands, especially with a building with such a difficult function.

To conclude, Libeskind succeeded in designing a memorial museum for the difficult past of the Jewish community in Germany. He designed a building that makes its visitors re-imagine and emotionally connected to the past, with the aim to never forget the horrors of the Holocaust.

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