

## Introduction

### *Memory Passages*

OVER THE PAST EIGHT DECADES, Holocaust memorials have been commissioned by representatives of various publics, designed by artists and architects, and viewed by millions of passersby. The study of these sculptures is particularly enriching, as it intersects art history, history, memory theory (both individual and collective), politics, and cultural studies, among other fields. Tracing the development of such memorials from the postwar period to the early twenty-first century, this book analyzes case studies from the United States, the German Democratic Republic (GDR), the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), and unified Germany. Memorials, a particular genre of public art, offer case studies in the humanities for how interpretations of the past have changed over time in different communities and nations, and whether or not visual forms embody those interpretations. The focus on the visual field makes this study different from those that precede it.

In this study, “visual field” refers to the art historical, social, political, historical, and philosophical contexts for the artistic conception of memorials, including aesthetic choices that do or do not respond to both commissions for those sculptures and public attitudes toward the Holocaust at the time of their commissions. This interest in the visibility of memorials adds a new dimension to the existing literature, which primarily focuses on politics, public dialogue, and collective memory. But the textual also plays an important role in this study, as the visual rhetoric of memorials does not always align with the documents associated with commissions, such as commemorative plaques, commission documents, meeting notes, and artists’ statements. It is

## Excerpt • Temple University Press

therefore critical to interpret memorials as an expression of artistic, as well as societal, responses to the Holocaust, to consider visual and textual sources both together and separately—and to question whether they coincide or deviate from each other.

To gain a better understanding of the diversity of visual responses to the Holocaust, it was necessary to broaden the scope of this study beyond the canonical and much-discussed memorials in Washington, DC, and Berlin. Scholarly and public attention to memorials is subject to trends, tastes, and fashions in contemporary art—only those created by artists deemed important by the art world receive scholarly attention. This study, in addition to examining national memorials, also attends to overlooked memorials—which viewers and critics at the time deemed to be outside of contemporary art trends—to reveal what their function was at the time of their commissions and how they are still significant for us today. For both sets of memorials, when creative choices of artists and architects are considered, the memorials reveal attitudes toward the Holocaust that were prevalent at the time of their realization.

The memorials that have been overlooked in the literature, in travel guides, and in collective memory often are those that were designed at moments in time when commissioning bodies struggled to find the words with which to describe the Holocaust, and/or when the public was not necessarily ready for a work that clearly differentiated victims from perpetrators. Investigating the visual forms of those memorials reveals how artists and commissioners strove to find visual forms for a historical event that they had not fully processed. “Successful” memorials are not only the ones that receive acclaim from art and architecture critics, experience high volumes of visitors, and enter into the collective memory of the event to which the memorial is dedicated. Successful memorials, in this study, reach beyond our limits of imagining what is possible in the visual field of public space and include those that have been overlooked in the scholarship of Holocaust memorials.

When commissioned to design Holocaust memorials, artists most often use the visual vocabulary that they developed in previous works of art. What changes do artists make to their stylistic approaches when designing memorials, and why? Why have memorials changed from discrete sculptural objects in space to installation-based works that involve the viewer’s bodily movement? How do visual motifs embrace or elide community needs in relation to Holocaust memory, and in what ways are visual forms in conversation with attitudes toward the Holocaust? Addressing these questions does not always result in steadfast explanations. But the work of investigating potential answers leads to a better understanding of the ways in which the needs, attitudes, and opinions of commissioning bodies, designers, and the public converge, or diverge, at particular moments in time.

## Excerpt • Temple University Press

Artists and their stylistic choices play fundamental roles in the creation of the collective memory of the Holocaust in any given community. My understanding of the phrase “collective memory” is formed by the work of several theorists. Following Pierre Nora, I understand collective memory to embody the myriad ways that communities remember their pasts, including, but not limited to, through literature, film, and political speeches that are available to large portions of populations and that help structure the memory of a historical event to which contemporary audiences may or may not have had direct access.<sup>1</sup> So, too, Maurice Halbwachs’s famous conception of the term includes a definition that refers to “frameworks of memory.” We only remember things because we belong to certain social groups that have already predetermined that those events are important to remember.<sup>2</sup> Halbwachs, writing in the 1940s, does not take into account traumatic memories—nor could he have, given that a full theorization of trauma and its relationship to memory and collective memory does not appear in medical literature until the 1960s. Traumatic memories are those that do not fit into predetermined categories, and victims of trauma are unable to fully process those experiences. As Dori Laub explains, psychological trauma is a condition that is akin to having “an empty void” in the psyche.<sup>3</sup> The emptiness in the psyche is the massive loss that trauma victims carry with them—loss endlessly repeated through nightmares and in daily life (therapy’s goal is to address that repetition and guide a trauma victim toward functioning in daily life). A theorization of trauma appears in this study in discussions of works of art that introduce empty spaces and voids. Some works of art examined in this book, such as Peter Eisenman’s Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, incorporate empty spaces and voids that are, I explain, metaphors for what Laub refers to as “empty spaces in the psyche.” When do memorials become part of the collective memory of a community, town, city, or nation—and why? Why have scholars overlooked some memorials in the literature on Holocaust memory? What aspects of Holocaust memory do those memorials reveal, and what aspects do they obscure? Do voids in sculptures help us sympathize with the trauma that victims and survivors endure(d)?

This book also addresses how inscriptions and commemorative plaques often tell us something by what they *do not* tell us. Commissioners of public art install plaques to provide basic information about the event or persons memorialized. Such plaques function not unlike wall labels in museum exhibitions—except that wall labels usually provide the artist’s name, title of work of art, date of creation, and medium, along with other information that is appropriate to the work and relevant to the exhibition. Curiously, while informational plaques for memorials usually provide a title and date of installation, they do not always include the artist’s name—and artists do not usually design the plaques. This

## Excerpt • Temple University Press

may be due to a desire on the part of commissioners to emphasize the event or person(s) being memorialized rather than the artist. Does the language on plaques, aimed to memorialize the Holocaust, embody the needs of communities? How does that language elide historical facts? What do these addenda reveal to us about attitudes toward the past?

The title of this book, *Memory Passages*, refers to those very aspects of the visual and the textual. The passages that have been written about memorials in commission meeting notes, in the media, and by artists and critics all help us interpret these works of art. And the sculptures themselves, to differing degrees, provide spaces of viewing—passages for walking around and through the works of art. To fully view a sculpture, one must walk around it. Perambulation is therefore an integral part of experiencing a sculpture. In recent years, artists and architects have expanded the field of that bodily engagement with sculpture. Not only do we walk around Holocaust memorials to see them; now we walk *through* them as well. Some designers of memorials create pathways by which we navigate between objects that make up the memorial, activating us to walk or meander. I argue that this walking, in turn, promotes new forms of memory, which is another subtheme of this book.

For decades, scholars and artists have struggled with the issue of how to represent the Holocaust in visual form. Theodor W. Adorno's dictum, "to write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric," triggered debates concerning the limits of representation.<sup>4</sup> Saul Friedländer points out that often overlooked is another Adorno statement: "The abundance of real suffering . . . demands the continued existence of art [even as] it prohibits it. It is now virtually in art alone that suffering can still find its own voice, consolation, without immediately being betrayed by it. The most important artists of the age have realized this."<sup>5</sup> Henry Moore, selected to chair an international competition for the design of a Holocaust memorial at Auschwitz, conceded the difficulty of memory as it pertained to the plastic arts when he asked in 1958, "Is it in fact possible to create a work of art that can express the emotions engendered by Auschwitz?"<sup>6</sup> One of the strongest voices in this ongoing debate is that of Friedländer, who argues, "The extermination of the Jews of Europe is as accessible to both representation and interpretation as any other historical event. But we are dealing with an event which tests our traditional conceptual and representational categories, an 'event at the limits.'"<sup>7</sup> The case studies in this volume very much fall on the side of Friedländer—the very fact that artists were commissioned to create Holocaust memorials, and continue to do so, means that we are dealing with representation about the Holocaust. "The limits" to which Friedländer refers are the limits of understanding the horrors of the Holocaust. Adding to his famous statement, I demonstrate that contemporary attitudes toward the Holocaust add limits to the process of conceiving

## Excerpt • Temple University Press

of and designing very specific works of art—Holocaust memorials. In the two Germanys and in the United States, Jews remembered and talked about the Holocaust in the postwar years, but there were very real limits to those discussions in the wider, non-Jewish public. Those limits, in turn, affected how commissioners of Holocaust memorials worded their discussions, their calls for models, and their instructions to artists. Artists worked within those limits when designing works of art to fit those very commissions.

### Remarks on Vocabulary

A brief discussion of my choice of words, including *monument*, *memorial*, *antisemitism*, and *Holocaust*, is important to situate this study. *Monument* and *memorial* are closely related. Marita Sturken explains that *monument*, in English, refers to deceased individuals who engaged in acts of heroism, whereas *memorial* commemorates or honors innocent victims.<sup>8</sup> I temper Sturken's extremely helpful distinction by adding that it was only when victims of the Holocaust were seen as worthy of being depicted in public space that both countries started to use the word *memorial*.

In German, *Denkmal* (monument) has at its root two words. The verb *denken* (to think) implies that one will stop in front of a sculpture and think about its message. The word *Mal* (times) means the number of times something happens (as opposed to time in a general sense, or *Zeit*). If we parse the meaning of *Denkmal*, we see that the word asks us, when we are in front of a monument, to take this time to remember. This word is related to the phrase *Denk mal daran* (think about it). *Denkmal* refers to sculptures that memorialize individuals or groups who engaged in heroic activities, such as the myriad Bismarck monuments that can be found throughout Germany, dedicated to Otto von Bismarck (who unified Germany and was the first chancellor of the German Empire, 1871–90). *Mahnmal* (memorial), on the other hand, has its roots in the verb *mahnen* (to remind). Here, too, we are reminded to “take time to remind ourselves” of the sculpture's theme. *Denkmal*, rather than *Mahnmal*, is often used conventionally in German to refer to works in public space dedicated to the victims of the Holocaust. Peter Eisenman's 2005 Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe has the word *Denkmal* in the German title (*Denkmal der ermordeten Juden Europas*)—but in English, we refer to it as a “memorial” (*Mahnmal*).

The construction of public sculptures dedicated to the Holocaust internationally began in the immediate postwar period. They were often entitled with the word *monument*. A case in point is Nathan Rapoport's Monument to the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising (Warsaw, 1948), which is dedicated to the fighters and heroes of the uprising of the same name. So, too, in the 1960s,

## Excerpt • Temple University Press

the commission uses the word *monument* for his Monument to the Six Million Jewish Martyrs in Philadelphia. Likewise, in the FRG, the commission for Gerson Fehrenbach's 1964 sculpture dedicated to a destroyed synagogue referred to it as a *monument*. The use of *memorial* in the titles of sculptures in public space dedicated to the Holocaust in both Germany and the United States appears in the 1980s, when a greater consciousness toward victims and survivors developed in both countries. In the U.S. context, a case in point is the 1981 publication of Sybil Milton's *In Fitting Memory: The Art and Politics of Holocaust Memorials*.<sup>9</sup> In the FRG, Horst Hoheisel entitled his *Mahnmal Aschrottbrunnen* (Aschrott Fountain Memorial) in 1985. Throughout this study, I often refer to works as "monuments" when locating them in their historical contexts when either the word *monument* or *Denkmal* was used and as "memorials" when discussing those works as they have been received over time. In some cases, works that were originally entitled a "monument," say, in the 1960s, would now be referred to as a "memorial," because communities now tend to focus on remembering and mourning the dead rather than monumentalizing their heroic deeds.

In this study, and following the recommendation of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's Committee on Antisemitism and Holocaust Denial, I use the term *antisemitism*, and not *anti-Semitism*.<sup>10</sup> As Doris Bergen explains, the term *antisemitism* is misleading, because "the adjective 'Semite' describes a group of related languages, among them Hebrew, Arabic, and Phoenician, and the people who speak them. . . . Use of the hyphen implies that there was such a thing as 'Semitism,' which antisemites opposed. In fact, no one who ever used the term . . . ever meant anything but hatred of Jews."<sup>11</sup> I therefore use the term *antisemitism*.

Finally, both *Holocaust* and *Shoah* refer to the anti-Jewish events of 1933–45. The former means a sacrifice burnt on the altar and came to be used in the 1950s. The latter is a biblical term and has been used since the Middle Ages; it means "destruction" in Hebrew. I use the word *Holocaust* in this study for purely practical reasons: works of art in public space dedicated to the murdered six million Jews of Europe have come to be known as "Holocaust memorials" rather than as "Shoah memorials."

### The United States and the Two Germanys

My study focuses on the United States, the GDR, the FRG, and post-1989 unified Germany, but I could have attended to memorials in many different countries. Israel, especially, has installed memorials on an almost yearly basis at Yad Vashem, its national site of Holocaust remembrance. Countries such as Denmark, France, and the Netherlands have followed suit. I focus

## Excerpt • Temple University Press

on memorials in the United States and Germany for several reasons. First, the United States played a decisive role in the rebuilding of the FRG in the postwar period. Its influence on West German politics and culture cannot be underestimated. Second, international contemporary art exhibitions such as documenta in Kassel (an international exhibition that takes place every five years) and Skulptur Projekte Münster (which focuses on international sculpture in public space and takes place every ten years) draw visitors from around the world. Meanwhile, the GDR had a close alliance with the Soviet Union, and the predominance of Russian socialist realism was the de facto state-sanctioned art style up until unification. The GDR's artistic community in the late 1950s, however, started to discuss how elements of the avant-garde could be expressed in public art, and those stylistic choices, in turn, were indebted to both prewar European and American influences.

Third, vital contemporary art centers in West Germany resulted in an exchange of artistic ideas between the two countries. By the late 1980s, FRG sculptors started to design Holocaust memorials that incorporated negative spaces—if not disappearing monuments.<sup>12</sup> Jochen Gerz and Esther Shalev-Gerz coined the innovative term *counter-monument* (*Gegen Denkmal*) for their 1986 Monument against Fascism, War, and Violence—and for Peace and Human Rights, in Hamburg. The work consists of a tall pillar that was lowered into the ground over time. As it was lowered, visitors were invited to inscribe messages on the column. Likewise, Horst Hoheisel's Aschrott Fountain Memorial (1985) takes the design of a former fountain—destroyed by Nazis in 1938—re-creates the fountain upside down and installs it underground. Such works are counter-monuments because they refuse verticality and heroism and utilize negative space as a metaphor for the absence of Jews and other victims of National Socialism. In his 1992 article, James E. Young first used in English the term *counter-monument* to describe works in public space that refuse to extol individuals and events and that question heroic monuments that feature figuration and verticality.<sup>13</sup> The counter-monument in Germany, and the theorization of it by Young, however, would not have been possible without the strides in contemporary memorial and art making in the United States.

As Young points out in his *The Stages of Memory: Reflections on Memorial Art, Loss, and the Spaces Between*, Maya Lin's Vietnam Veterans Memorial (1982), a watershed in memorial architecture, is a precursor to counter-monuments because it refuses the aesthetic features of the monuments that surround it. For instance, it features polished black granite, thereby contrasting with the white sandstone of Washington, DC. And it contrasts to the white verticality of the Washington Monument, the Lincoln Memorial, and the Jefferson Memorial by insisting on horizontality and employing the color black.<sup>14</sup> I would also add to

## Excerpt • Temple University Press

Young's compelling analysis that the Vietnam Veterans Memorial embraces a simplicity of form and utilizes words—influences of minimalism and conceptual art, respectively.

In the 1960s, artists such as Carl Andre and Donald Judd sought to remove all elements of narrative engagement, decoration, and composition from their works of art. Critics soon coined the term *minimalism* to refer to such works of art, and the terminology stuck. With its clear geometric structure of polished black granite angles, Lin's work borrows from the stripped-down forms of minimalism. But the memorial would never be called minimalist, for it contains words, which would have been anathema to the proponents of minimalism. The words are, in fact, the names of the soldiers who died or are missing in action. Lin's use of words stems (intentionally or unintentionally) from conceptual art practices, which date to the 1960s and are still in use today.

Lucy Lippard and David Chandler, in 1968, famously proclaimed that conceptual art heralded the “dematerialization” of the art object.<sup>15</sup> Works of art no longer had to be made of stone, clay, or paint. Instead, they could be made of words, or empty spaces, or sound—the materials of conceptual artists, who favored ideas over the “thingness” of sculpture. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial can therefore be said to employ modifications of minimalism and conceptual art, strategies that the sculptors of counter-monuments in Germany also adopted. The concepts of the disappearing monument, for the Gerz team, or the negative form, for Hoheisel, were possible because such ideas were already being explored in conceptual art circles—what could be more dematerialized than a disappearing monument? The exchange of ideas in the art world between the two countries is, therefore, imperative for understanding the development of memorials in both nations.

### An Interdisciplinary Field of Study

With the publication in 1993 of his book *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning*, James E. Young instituted the topic of Holocaust memorials as an interdisciplinary field of study.<sup>16</sup> His book examines Holocaust memorials in Germany, Poland, Israel, and the United States from the point of view of collective memory, for the commissions and resulting works of art, he explains, are based on how communities remember the Holocaust. Since that watershed publication, Young has entered the international scene when it comes to commissioning works of public art dedicated to memorializing tragedy. Among others, he has consulted on the Berlin Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, the National 9/11 Memorial and Museum in New York City, and the Memorial to Norway's Utøya Massacre.<sup>17</sup> His studies, including *The Art of Memory: Holocaust Memorials in History, At Memory's Edge:*

## Excerpt • Temple University Press

*After-Images of the Holocaust in Contemporary Art and Architecture*, and *The Stages of Memory*, offer excellent historical information and analyses about a plethora of sites and works of art.<sup>18</sup>

Young's studies have paved the way for more scholarly examinations of Holocaust memorials that investigate the complex relationships between commissions, politics, and history. Peter Carrier's innovative *Holocaust Monuments and National Memory Cultures in France and Germany Since 1989* (2005), for instance, analyzes the ways in which political strategists delegate to memorials the moral responsibility of remembrance, focusing on the negotiation of national historical identities.<sup>19</sup> For Carrier, public art becomes an instrument of political representation. Similarly, Caroline Wiedmer analyzes Germany and France in *The Claims of Memory: Representations of the Holocaust in Contemporary German and France* (1999).<sup>20</sup> While some of her analyses of objects overlap with mine, such as Gunter Demnig's *Stolpersteine* (*Stumbling Blocks*) project as well as the Berlin Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, the visual forms of the sites are not her primary focus.<sup>21</sup> Trauma theory plays a key role for Wiedmer, but the visual ramifications of trauma—what I analyze as an attention to absence, walking, or solitary viewing—do not come into play. So, too, Jennifer A. Jordan's *Structures of Memory: Understanding Urban Change in Berlin and Beyond* (2006) is also an important sociological text with which my research is in dialogue.<sup>22</sup> She focuses on often-overlooked memorials in Berlin and pays particular attention to the social and political circumstances of their making, concentrating on the historical, economic, and legal contexts of memorials. Jennifer Hansen-Glucklich's *Holocaust Memory Reframed: Museums and the Challenges of Holocaust Representation* (2014) analyzes the museums including the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM), Yad Vashem, and the Information Center beneath Eisenman's memorial in Berlin. She focuses primarily on the role of the museum as being framed with the country's "civil religion" and addresses architecture and its relation to the void.<sup>23</sup>

While traditional interpretations of high modernist works of art (minimalism, in particular) stress the materiality of the object, or its aggressive positioning in relation to the viewer, revisions to this thinking posit that modernism can seek to address memory and the Holocaust.<sup>24</sup> As Mark Godfrey explains, in the United States, some postwar modernist works of art, although alluding to the Holocaust via their titles, were rarely analyzed, at least in the early years, in terms of this seemingly blatant meaning.<sup>25</sup> Godfrey's *Abstraction and the Holocaust* (2007) is an innovative and pivotal point of departure for the topic of visual art and the Holocaust.<sup>26</sup> He examines how abstraction came to be a preferred style of Holocaust memorials and starts his analyses by asking to what extent abstraction fulfills the needs of memory. His open-ended discus-

## Excerpt • Temple University Press

sions bring commissions, rarely seen documents, and highly perceptive visual analyses to bear on his interpretations of painting, sculpture, and photography. Godfrey compellingly argues that abstraction is fully capable of providing a visual language for works of art dedicated to the Holocaust. Cases in point include Frank Stella's black stripe paintings such as *Arbeit Macht Frei* (1958) and Morris Louis's *Charred Journal: Firewritten* (1951). Comparably, Louis Kahn's proposed Holocaust memorial (1966–72) for Battery Park in New York City consisted of nine glass cubes that made an outright association between modernism and the Holocaust (the memorial was never built).

Other scholars focus their studies on works of art that respond to the Holocaust but are not necessarily memorials. Lisa Saltzman and Paul Jaskot, for instance, place national identity, postmodernism, and politics in the foreground of their research. While Saltzman locates Gerhard Richter's works in the social context of German religious cycles of commemoration, Jaskot resists the myth that there was "silence" in art criticism regarding the analysis of artwork and its relationship to the Holocaust in the postwar period in Germany.<sup>27</sup> Scholars such as Samantha Baskind, meanwhile, point out that the study of Holocaust memorials has been largely absent from art history, primarily because memorials are objects that do not easily fit into the canon of objects that the discipline deems worthy of analysis. Nonetheless, Baskind explains, these objects are worthy of analysis, for the simple reason that many artists created Holocaust memorials that incorporated "the artists' signature styles in some way."<sup>28</sup> In other words, memorials can be analyzed as objects that are part of an artist's oeuvre and therefore integrated into larger arguments about twentieth- and twenty-first-century art. Margaret Olin and Richard S. Nelson explain historical reasons for ways in which analysis of memorials and monuments has faltered within art history: "After the nineteenth century, most art historians thought monuments were no longer a proper object of study."<sup>29</sup> This belief, they explain, was widely held until Lin's Vietnam Veterans Memorial and, soon after, Young's work on Holocaust memorials. My study is informed by these scholars' works, and I add to them by focusing on the visual field. Historical sources, too, play a vital role in my analysis of memorials.

Scholarship about Holocaust memory in Germany and the United States is rich. In the context of the United States, Hasia Diner's *We Remember with Reverence and Love* (2009) is perhaps the most groundbreaking for its detailed analysis of the ways in which Jewish communities remembered the Holocaust in the postwar years.<sup>30</sup> Thomas Fallace's *The Emergence of Holocaust Education in American Schools* (2008) is unique for its analysis of the texts and materials teachers use to teach the Holocaust in the postwar period.<sup>31</sup> Integral to any study of East and West Germany is Jeffrey Herf's *Divided Memory: The Nazi Past in the Two Germanys* (1997), in which he explains ideological differences as well

## Excerpt • Temple University Press

as public commemorations in both countries.<sup>32</sup> Vital for a study of Holocaust memory in both the United States and Germany is Daniel Levy and Natan Sznajder's *The Holocaust and Memory in the Global Age* (2006). It compares the reception of events such as the Nuremberg trials (1945), the Eichmann trial (1961), the Holocaust television miniseries (1978), and the *Historikerstreit* (historians' debate) of the 1980s in Germany, among others events in the GDR, FRG, and the United States.<sup>33</sup> There are a great many sources about Germany in this regard, and I encourage my readers to peruse the selected bibliography for texts relevant to their concerns. For the intersection of the history of art and politics, I especially recommend Paul B. Jaskot's *The Nazi Perpetrator: Postwar German Art and the Politics of the Right*, which investigates how artists and architects in the postwar period "engaged with or reacted to the maneuvers of the right."<sup>34</sup>

My work builds on these innovative studies by looking, first and foremost, at the visual aspects of memorials. Exactly what do we see when we look at a Holocaust memorial? What forms present themselves, and what conclusions can we draw from them? Careful looking provokes questions: Why this style, that element, this motif, or that color? To answer these questions, I turn both to the commissions and to the previous works by artists. I also attempt to put the commission and the work of art in the context of larger attitudes toward the Holocaust in the countries in which these works reside.

For each work of art, I consult archival documents to determine the histories of the commissions and analyze memorials in terms of the artist's previous artistic production. Some chapters analyze memorials about which little to nothing has been written. These chapters, in particular, provide in-depth historical information about the commissioning process, including interviews with Holocaust survivors, artists, and family members of the artists, which contribute new information and points of view. When analyzing memorials about which much has been written (the contemporary works of art in the USHMM, the Berlin Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, and Garden of Stones, in the Museum of Jewish Heritage [MJH], for instance), I present new interpretations based on earlier works by those artists and/or architects and introduce new theoretical approaches. Each artist and work of art is put into an art historical context that helps explain why the work of art looks the way it does, how it generates meaning in public space, and how its meaning shifts with changing attitudes toward the Holocaust in each country.

### Format and Content of the Book

The United States, the GDR, and the FRG all struggled in the postwar years to find visual forms for Holocaust remembrance. That struggle, in all three countries, continued in the post-1989 years, which I explore in the chapters.

## Excerpt • Temple University Press

For each country, I examine memorials that reveal local and national stories about how the Holocaust is represented, discussed, and situated in public memory of the Holocaust. My choice of objects is based on either the lack of scholarly literature about those sculptures and/or the significant stylistic contributions those sculptures make to the history of Holocaust memorials that have been heretofore overlooked. Every chapter examines a specific memorial or set of memorials, relying on archival research, interviews, and artists' biographies (when relevant to the interpretation of the work of art) to tell the story of the commission. Holocaust survivors and their families who wish to bring public attention to the memory of the six million victims often drive Holocaust memory in cities and towns outside of national capitals. The book contains chapters on the national sites of Holocaust memory that strive to define Holocaust memory for the United States and Germany as well as on memorials in larger and smaller cities that have been overlooked in the literature.

Chapter 1, "East and West Germany in the Postwar Years: Will Lammert and Gerson Fehrenbach," analyzes the ways in which postwar attitudes in both countries coalesced around specific memorials. Will Lammert's *Burdened Woman* (1959) demonstrates that while the GDR struggled to memorialize the Holocaust and relied on Christian themes disguised as socialist ideals in works of art, Lammert returned to expressionism to memorialize the dead. Interviews with the artist's family and archival documents reveal that elements of Lammert's biography (he was married to a Jew and fled to the Soviet Union during World War II) afforded him an unusual approach to Holocaust memory that changed the GDR's culture of memorialization.

In the West, meanwhile, the oft used motto "never again" not only referred to the Holocaust but also to the generic destruction of World War II, including the Allied bombing of Germany. The Münchener Straße Synagogue Monument (then West Berlin, 1963) was commissioned by the Schöneberg Borough Assembly. It is dedicated to the destruction of that synagogue on *Kristallnacht* (Night of Broken Glass; when thousands of synagogues and Jewish businesses were destroyed), but the language on the accompanying plaque is vague and speaks to the difficulty of addressing the destruction in an outright way. Minutes of Borough Assembly meetings reveal that while perpetrators of *Kristallnacht* and their victims were named in meetings, it was not acceptable for such information to be visualized—either in artistic form or in written text in public space—in the early 1960s.

Chapter 2, "A Forgotten Memorial and Philadelphia's Survivors: Nathan Rapoport's Monument to the Six Million Jewish Martyrs (1964)" addresses an early public monument to the Holocaust in North America; and it has been all but absent in the literature. A close examination of archives demonstrates the ways in which survivors bonded together in the postwar years to

## Excerpt • Temple University Press

ensure the lasting memory of the six million Jewish Holocaust victims. In 1961 the Philadelphia Holocaust Memorial Committee commissioned sculptor Nathan Rapoport, the sculptor of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising Monument (1948) and Yad Vashem's Wall of Remembrance (1976), to create a sculpture dedicated to the victims of the Holocaust. The committee, consisting of Holocaust survivors and their children, placed the statue in the heart of the city, to which it was presented as a gift. At the time, the phrase "Holocaust survivor" was not yet widely used, and knowledge of the Holocaust was not widespread except within Jewish communities.

Chapter 3, "Monuments to Deported Jews in Hamburg (Hrdlicka, Rückriem, and Kahl) and East Berlin (Will Lammert)" examines memorials in the GDR and the FRG. In the GDR, Will Lammert originally designed the figures in what is now known as the Monument to the Deported Jews in Berlin (1985) as part of the Ravensbrück monument (see Chapter 1). The Ravensbrück commission, however, rejected these figures. Nonetheless, the Lammert family cast the sculptures in bronze and put them into storage. In 1985, the artist's grandson installed them in Mitte, Berlin, at a time when the GDR was rethinking this neighborhood as worthy of retaining its original architectural features—as well as its Jewish past. Known as the Memorial to Victims of Fascism in 1985, the sculptural group came to be known as Monument to the Deported Jews in the 1990s, after unification, when "victims of Fascism" no longer resonated in unified Germany.

Meanwhile, in the FRG, monuments in Hamburg Dammtor attempt to address the National Socialist past but stylistically fall short of their goals: one monument was never completed, another is easily overlooked, and the third often is overgrown with weeds. Nonetheless, grassroots organizing for the monuments demonstrates the commitment of the neighborhood to confront the past. Examples include Alfred Hrdlicka's unfinished Counter-Monument (1985–86), Ulrich Rückriem's minimalist Memorial to the Deported Jews (1983), and Margrit Kahl's Joseph-Carlebach-Platz Synagogue Monument (1988).

Chapter 4, "Memorial Functions: Shapiro, Kelly, LeWitt, and Serra at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (1993)" attends to works of art by Joel Shapiro, Ellsworth Kelly, Sol LeWitt, and Richard Serra. The commissions for works of art in the museum have been analyzed in depth by Mark Godfrey, and I add to his analysis in three ways: by explaining the historical context and the fact that, at the time of the commissions, a visual language with which to address the Holocaust had not yet been developed in the United States; analyzing previous works of art by the artists that address the Holocaust; and focusing on the works' interaction with the architecture of the building.

Chapter 5, "Walking through Stelae: Peter Eisenman's Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe (2005)" concentrates on Richard Serra's input (he

## Excerpt • Temple University Press

withdrew his participation in the project) into the first German national memorial to the Holocaust, which opened in 2005. The facilitators of the project, television journalist Lea Rosh and historian Eberhard Jäckel, had visited Yad Vashem in Jerusalem. “If they have a memorial, why don’t we?” they wondered, creating the possibility of memory that crosses national borders, thereby influencing another country’s collective memory as much as it does its own. The memorial became a watershed in Holocaust memorialization, especially for its vast field of stelae that provides spaces to walk, encouraging disorientation and individual memory work. I turn to Michel de Certeau and Henri Bergson to theorize memory and perambulation.

The Conclusion, “Andy Goldsworthy: Nature and Memory at the New York Museum of Jewish Heritage—A Living Memorial,” investigates the role of natural materials in a memorial by an environmental artist. The MJH in New York City is dedicated to Jewish life before, during, and after the Holocaust and seeks to tell the history of American Jewry in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries through the eyes of those who lived it. Goldsworthy’s Garden of Stones represents a departure in Holocaust memorial making by introducing natural materials that change over time. The project consists of eighteen boulders, each about 3–4 ft. in height and diameter and weighing 3–15 tons, each containing a dwarf chestnut oak tree, meant to symbolize the fragility and tenacity of life. I analyze the work as a “social sculpture” by interpreting it through the lens of Joseph Beuys and his 1982 project, *Aktion 7000 Eichen* (*Action 7,000 Oaks*, commonly referred to as *7,000 Oaks*), thereby highlighting the memorial’s role in engaging the viewer and promoting healing for survivors.

Finally, a few words about how to use the images and how to understand the formats of titles of memorials in this book (which may be confounding for readers who are not art historians). There are fewer images for chapters in which I discuss memorials that are well known, as those images can be easily found online. I hope that my readers will look up the works of art that are not illustrated. More photographs are provided in chapters analyzing memorials that have been overlooked in the literature. In some cases, these images cannot be found online, so publication of them is vital for this study. Regarding the formatting of titles of works of art in this study (and following the conventions of the *Chicago Manual of Style*), the titles of works of art in public space that are memorials or monuments are *not* italicized. Works of art in public space that are sculptures but *not* memorials or monuments are italicized, as are sculptures that are exhibited in museums or galleries. These details are best explained at the outset to avoid any confusion for the reader. Even more important to this Introduction, however, are the reasons for this study.

By focusing on the visual and verbal fields of Holocaust memorials, we come to understand that sculptures in public space have the potential to

**Excerpt • Temple University Press**

instill and provoke new ways to remember the past, memorialize events happening in our time, and warn the future. When artists, architects, and designers engage in new and unconventional approaches to sculpture dedicated to the Holocaust in public space, they create works of art that generate new forms of contemplation. Commissioners for works of public art, I hope, will learn important lessons about the ways that the wording of calls for entries affects the choices artists make for sculptures. Artists have the potential to learn how their predecessors worked through difficult histories and established new artistic vocabularies. Readers interested in the Holocaust or in cities such as Berlin, Philadelphia, Washington, DC, Hamburg, or New York City will uncover hidden histories about works of art and find new ways to engage with memorials that draw millions of people every year.

Written from an art historical perspective, *Memory Passages: Holocaust Memorials in the United States and Germany* traces the processes of commissioning, designing, jurying, and installing memorials by integrating heretofore unused archival sources and new interviews with commissioners, survivors, and artists. This study, therefore, weaves together art historical context, social history, and critical responses to memorials into my interpretations of Holocaust memorials. The Holocaust was not a genocide to end all genocides. There continues to be a need for commissioning, designing, and building memorials and public works of art dedicated to similar tragedies. Holocaust memorials in Germany and the United States represent some of the most innovative forms of sculpture in public space. Memorials to the Holocaust set the tone for memorials dedicated to other tragedies that followed, providing the public with a visual vocabulary with which to approach genocide and tragedies. Memorials will not stop genocide, but they are a constant reminder of human rights violations, ethnic cleansing, and genocides that continue around the world. Scholarship on both the more popular and the early, lesser-known memorials is essential to keep the debate about how we should remember atrocities of the past significant and alive.