

Disappearing History: Challenges of Imagining Berlin after 1989

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After 1989, as the Senate of the reunified Berlin sought to construct the image of the city, it drew heavily upon a variety of images from its intense past, including the golden Weimar years, the bifurcation of the city into East and West, and even its Nazi period. Now, a variety of new topics reimagine the city: art and artists, civil society activities, and urban interventions like urban gardening. Each of these currently plays an enormous role in the production of Berlin's unique metropolitan identity. Indeed, the city's image campaigns produced by the marketing company "Partner für Berlin"¹ contained various topoi throughout the 1990s, such as Berlin "as a bridge between Eastern and Western Europe," Berlin as "a leading digital economy centre," and Berlin "as an art metropolis" (Colomb 137). With the relocation of the government and ministries from Bonn, the formal capital of Federal Germany, it became clear that the reunified Germany's old-and-new capital Berlin had inherited a heavy and difficult historical burden. Berlin faced two major challenges at the beginning of the 1990s: fulfilling the role of a national capital, and, at the same time, meeting the challenges of globalization (especially the global competition of cities). Hence, Berlin required redefinition after 1989.

Globalization has shifted cities and metropolises all over the world into the foreground and elevated a subset of them to the category of "world cities" (Hannerz 68). European cities, like their Asian and North- and South-American counterparts, compete with one another to become pre-eminent centers of economic and cultural exchange, and, by extension, of tourism as well. The ethnic and cultural diversity, history, and heritage of these cities, and their effective representation, play an important role in this competition. Such cultural heritage constitutes a form of capital that is part of a symbolic economy broadcasting a city's image and accruing to it concrete economic advantages by, for example, increasing tourism and attracting creative industries (Zukin). To succeed in this symbolic economy, cities undertake not only "self-culturalization" but also "self-historization" by shaping and disposing their distinctive features to appear in the most favorable light (Reckwitz 3, 4). The renovation and reinterpretation of particular city quarters, the staging and promotion of events, the fashioning of an image unique

¹ The company, Partner für Berlin Holding Gesellschaft für Hauptstadt-Marketing mbH, was established in 1994.

to the city, and the marketing of its history—mostly through historical architectural attractions—manifest the processes of self-culturalization and self-historization. Cities consciously cultivate a brand and communicate it to the world by adopting an approach similar to that used in the marketing of consumer products. City branding efforts profit from the unique history attached to place, the creation of museum districts, or the reconstruction of ethnic quarters (the Marais in Paris or the Kazimierz in Krakow as Jewish quarters, for example).

The strong presence and intensive use of history in imagineering processes were characteristics of the “fabricating” of Berlin at the beginning of the 1990s as well (Binder 37-43). Despite economic challenges like the loss of most of Berlin’s industrial base (Colomb 83) and political debates about German unification and the new role of Berlin, the main issues present in the local media and public debates centered on concrete urban development (106-7). These discourses raised questions about the city’s identity in relation to its historical heritage of Nazism and Communism (Macdonald). Because of this difficult history and heritage, there were loud pleas to select an epoch upon which positive identity building and image construction could take place (Binder 37-43). Weimar Berlin and the “Golden Twenties,” or “Roaring Twenties,” therefore became the reference points in the 20 June 1991 Parliamentary debate on Berlin as a capital (Germany). In this historic debate in the German Bundestag, the main question was a symbolic one: why relocate from Bonn when Berlin was “so freighted with heavy historical baggage” (Large 547)? In that spectacular session, only a slim majority—by eighteen votes—approved Berlin’s capital status. Leftist and liberal MPs argued in a very emotional debate *for* Berlin, due to its democratic heritage rooted in the Weimar Period. How Berlin’s difficult historical heritage was to be faced were clear for these MPs. In their argumentations *for* or *against* Berlin, they cited various epochs from this history. The Social Democrat MP Hans-Jochen Vogel admonished his fellow MPs the following way:

Ich müßte mich vor der Stadt schämen, die wie keine andere die deutsche Geschichte in ihren dunklen, aber auch in ihren hellen Abschnitten repräsentiert und ohne die es—dem stimme ich ausdrücklich zu—die deutsche Einheit wohl nicht gegeben hätte.(...)

I should feel ashamed in front of the city which represented German history with its dark but also with its bright periods unlike any other, and—I expressly agree—without which German unity would not have been achieved(...)

“Choosing” the Weimar Period as a reference point solved the dilemma of the city’s “heavy historical baggage,” and, therefore, during the 1990s Berlin seemed to be inseparable from the

myth of the “Golden Twenties.” As sociologist Sybille Frank emphasizes in her research on the revitalization of the emblematic Potsdamer Platz, “The memory images in the myth remain conspicuously limited to the 1920s” (Frank 297). The images from which this myth had been constituted included experimental/laboratory, Americanization, mass culture, crisis, and modernity (Gantner 187). While the Weimar Republic remained a reference point for the urban imaginary during the 1990s, by the 2000s new historical themes moved into focus. Attention to the Holocaust, for example, emerged through the new memory district (Brinkman), which includes the Jewish Museum (2001), the Memorial of the Murdered Jews of Europe (2005), and the Topography of Terror, which was extended by a new documentation center in 2010 (Till). But besides these historical issues, new topics were introduced in the urban imaginary process of Berlin, such as art and creativity.

Onward from the middle of 1990s, art and the growing art scene play a growing role in the imagineering process of the city. The establishment of Berlin's art fair, the Art Forum 1995, and, three years later, the Berlin Biennale, point not only to the significant number of galleries and artists in the city but also to the growing support of major agents in the city's marketing, such as the Berlin Senate.² In 2000 a real gallery boom started and with each opening, more international and German collectors frequent the capital. The official tourism website “Visit Berlin” illustrates the extent to which the Berlin Senate is aware of this development: “From artists, gallery owners and curators, to critics and collectors—Berlin is an artistic hub and the place to be for all art professionals. Berlin is long been said to be one of the most vital and exciting centers of art. This is why many artists come to the German capital, whether for a few weeks or months, a couple of years, or forever”³ (“Berlin”).

In view of this context article analyzes the paradoxes of the activity of image production—or *urban imagineering*—of Berlin over the last two and a half decades by observing the phenomenon of *disappearing history*. The term *urban imagineering*, was coined by Charles Rutheiser. It refers to the successive waves of organized and systematic promotion as linked but not always well-coordinated acts. The German anthropologists Rolf Lindner and Alexa Färber develop the concept further and have applied it to the study of Berlin. Each understands urban imagineering as a differentiated discourse field of practice especially among professionalized groups of stakeholders. One such stakeholder is the marketing agency of

² Many different, and often interconnected, reasons account for the current success of contemporary art in Berlin. The existence of well-established institutions was not the only crucial reason for Berlin's development into a metropolis of fine arts. Its history and culture, different communities, and the living conditions in Berlin also played a crucial role in the development of contemporary art. For more on the city's art development, see Zorn.

³ Berlin: Epicentre of Contemporary Art.” *VisitBerlin.de*. Berlin Tourismus & Kongress GmbH, Feb. 2015. Web. 20 Sept. 2015. <http://press.visitberlin.de/en/news-release/berlin-epicentre-of-contemporary-art>.

Berlin's municipality,⁴ which actively generates the unique images, narratives, and symbols of the city. In this process of selection and production of publicly communicated images of the city (Schürmann and Guckes), as we argue, both ethnic and cultural diversity and history play a significant role (Welz). Therefore, the aim of this paper is twofold. First, our analysis of two case studies—the former Jewish Girls' School in Berlin's Mitte borough and the *be berlin* campaign—shows the selection process of historical themes internal to the urban imagineering of Berlin. Second, the paper intends to capture the phenomena of disappearing history as a consequence of urban imagineering. As we argue, the term disappearing history describes a process where agents of urban imagineering, such as the Berlin Senate, select and use the values and images in synchrony with globalization and its emphasis on the 'new'—instead of using and referring history and knowledge about it—in order to re-imagine a city. Here, the 'new' attached to art and creativity re-imagines Berlin.

Disappearing History

The former Jewish Girls' School in the Auguststrasse is an example of disappearing history. The building's beautiful renewal—through the careful selection of certain historical and thematic tools—represents the creation of a completely new image. Moreover, we argue that this image has the additional effect of re-evaluating the area around the building, which provides a completely new context for it. In the new context, the difficult history of the building gifts the structure and its new functions an exotic touch. As a result of its transition, the former Jewish school—for years un-renovated and empty—is now one of the fashionable hubs in Mitte, Berlin.

The school in the Auguststrasse was built between 1927 and 1928 based on the plans of architect Alexander Beer with a usable area of about 3,000 square meters. It was one of the last finished pre-war buildings of the Jewish municipality of Berlin. Consisting of 14 classrooms, a gymnasium, and a roof garden as a place of residence for older pupils, the school was one of the most modern ones in the city. Closed in June, 1942, most of the pupils and teachers had been deported and killed in various concentration camps. The building served as a military hospital until 1945. Between 1950 and 1989, the building was used as a school in Soviet East Berlin. Between 1996 and 2009, the desolate building hosted some exhibitions, but it was only

⁴ The main task of Berlin's first public-private partnership, formed in 1994, was to develop and implement new strategies and messages for a concentrated urban and site marketing. The brand perception of Berlin had to be revitalized and a new and positive image of the German capital had to be created. The "New Berlin" campaign was thus addressed to newly defined target groups: the city's population and economy, the German population as a whole, potential investors, and visitors to the capital ("5 Years").

in 2009 that the building was officially handed over officially to the Jewish community. The community's lack of financial resources to renovate the protected building compelled them to lease it to the Michael Fuchs gallery for twenty years. The owner of the gallery redeveloped the structure and had tried to establish a new concept of revitalization in the building by connecting it as art space, commemoration, and culinary historical site. The history of the structure and its perceived "Jewishness" (as the former Jewish Girls' School) played an enormous role in relocating the building within the map of Berlin's fashionables areas (Ludigs 115-17). Moreover, the building and its history also influences the imagineering process of Berlin's Mitte as a Jewish Quarter ("Berlin Entdeckt"). The example of the Auguststrasse shows how Jewish heritage becomes stylish through emphasizing certain Jewish cultural motives, as the anthropologist Wolfgang Kaschuba describes: "Urban diversity is then conceived above all as style..., which makes the Jewish topos look stylish" (Kaschuba 298).

The former Jewish Girls' School and its history had been "recycled" by mixing components of luxury and exotic (Jewish). As it happens, in the two restaurants offering "Jewish style" dining, Matzah ball soup appears on the menu. The imagineering of a stylish and exotic place in the city therefore succeeds even at the level of food choice. *Merian*, one of the best-known magazines for travel and tourism in Germany, introduced the newly imaged Jewish Berlin the following way:

Das Jüdische in der Hauptstadt ist in den letzten Jahren vor allem dank des Zustroms aus Russland, Israel und den USA viel sichtbarer geworden. Und hinter diesem neuen jüdischen Berlin steckt die Sehnsucht nach Normalität—ohne die Geschichte dabei zu vergessen. ... Immer öfter gelingt dieser Spagat. Zum Beispiel in der Ehemaligen Jüdischen Mädchenschule(Ludigs 115)

Jews in the capital have become more visible during the last years above all thanks to migration from Russia, Israel, and the USA. And behind this New Jewish Berlin lies a longing for normality—but without forgetting history. ... More and more often [Jews] succeed at this. For example, in the former Jewish Girls' School.

The building and its past legitimize this "Jewishness" and the same legitimacy provides the restaurant a touch of "exotic" as well. Briefly introduced, the development of the building points to an imagineering process within which motives and images of history and culture are torn out from their context and are marketed. Current political, economic, and cultural interests

determine these motives. Therefore, in this case, Jewish culture and the history of the building and the area are reduced to certain motives, such as food like Matzah ball soup or music like Klezmer. The homepage of the management of the building also accords with this reduction, saying: “After effectively demonstrating how the building would both honor the past and become part of Berlin’s creative future, this newly refurbished space aims to combine the experience of history, art and gastronomy” (“History”).

According to the quotations, while it seems that the history of the building is utilized as a reservoir of motives due the exotic Jewishness of the building, in general this motivation does not seem to play a significant role in the marketing of the place. However, that “Image of the Jew,” as it has been influenced by the Holocaust, WWII, and Israel for several generations, is slowly replaced with new motives based on cultural clichés, like music, clothes, styles, or eating habits, as well as on creativity. In a way, it is possible to see the implications of creating a new Jewishness despite of the “difficult history” (Macdonald 2009) associated with the history. The renewed Jewish Girls’ School testifies to the ongoing process of the disappearance of the history—in this case, of the German-Jewish history. The building’s past serves as a resource for re-imaginering the building and for the re-location of it into frames of a new and creative Berlin. The difficult German-Jewish history does not fit, in all its complexity, into the newly imagined, creative, and hip Berlin. The building and its complex history is reduced to internationally decodable images of Jewish culture (or what is thought to be Jewish culture), such as Matzah ball soup, klezmer music, and the Holocaust, as the anthropologist Wolfgang Kaschuba points out: “‘Jewish’ means just Klezmermusik, Kosherburger, circumcision: virtually another facet of urbane ‘migrantischer’ variety” (Kaschuba 298). An architectural manifestation of the German-Jewish past is transformed into an artistic and gastronomy hub, into a place of an exotic—Jewish—urban culture. Through this transformation, the history is replaced with the created images of an urban minority culture on the one hand and art and culinary images on the other.

The *be Berlin* campaign

In 2004, the German urban planner Dieter Hassenpflug declared, “The resources for the production of future urban habitats lie in the past” (Hassenpflug 82). He points to one of the most discussed correlations between heritage, identity, and history within urban studies research. Against this widely shared conviction (cf. Tauschek), we present the hypothesis of *disappearing history* to draw attention to the fact that history now plays less of a role in the projected urban future than even five years ago. By understanding urban imaginering as a

differentiated discourse and field of practice, it is possible to capture and analyze the practices and the most influential agents actively involved in the selection of the visual tools used in the creation of the image of Berlin.

Analyzing the image campaign *be Berlin*, organized and released by the marketing agency Berlin Partner GmbH under the supervision of the Berlin Senate in 2008 (“Wir Vermarketen”), offers one case to observe and examine the change in the imagining of the city from the past to the future and how this imagining influences the selection of images of Berlin. The image campaign was to give the capital a *clear profile* in which the imagineering of a “New Berlin” was to be based on the following two principles:

1. avoid large spectacular actions or brisk slogans but thematize the diversity and creativity of the 3.4 million Berliners “who make our city so unique and who contribute every day to its transformation” (“5 Years”);
2. systematically expose the different facets of Berlin, such as business, science, culture, industry, modern sports, and community.

The first principle contains the clear message that Berlin is the place where every city dweller, newcomer, and even tourist can experience being part of a city community in their own individual ways. *Be Berlin* perceives this diversity of individuals and the co-existence of these various people as a driving force for creativity, change, and innovation. These attributes—and here we follow the logic of the campaign—are the basis for developing the city as an attractive economic location. The second principle, based on the first one, connects the diversity of city dwellers with the six main areas of urban production. In the first year of the campaign, and in the campaign opening speech of the mayor Klaus Wowereit, city dwellers were invited to participate actively in the campaign. This *participatory* element of the campaign was not meant only rhetorically. From 2008, thousands of people have taken part in the campaign through campaign testimonials or in the form of the various competitions, both of which became integral parts of the campaign. The campaign produces several thematic images every year around an established topic, and various images were created and set in place. The following chart provides an overview of the chosen topics (and their slogans) over the last six years. The summary of the campaign activities between 2008 and 2014 serves as a basis for the chart (“5 Years”).

be Berlin campaign	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Historical topics	Unification of Germany (Day of German Unification)	-	-	-	-	be John F. Kennedy	-
Future related topics (STS)	-	-	Future made in Berlin Clean-tech World	-	City of Chances Science in Berlin Startups in Berlin	-	Digital capital E-Mobility Technology and Innovation "Typical Berlin: Everywhere space to think"
Present time topics	The longest love letter to our city on eight Berlin S-Bahn stations	Berliners with Heart & Gob Berlin the place to be	Berlin your face/ Social city Industry Showcase	"We in Berlin" "be Berliner national"	"Ideas in Berlin" "Culture in Berlin" "Work in Berlin" / "Nature in Berlin"	"Your idea for Berlin"	Families and Talents "Bring your children to Berlin! They will be here later anyway!"
Events turned into Images	Festival of Light Fashion week	Festival of Light Fashion Week	Festival of Light Fashion Week	Berlin Music Week (BMW) Fashion-week Festival of Light	Fashion Week Festival of Light BMW	Fashion Week Festival of Light BMW	Fashion Week Festival of Light BMW

As the chart shows, few historical topics were selected; in 2013 there was the fiftieth anniversary of John F. Kennedy's visit to Berlin, and the other topic, which recurs again and again, is the fall of the Wall. Much more than historical images and topics, future visions are projected onto the city: like digital worlds, clean technology, and the future itself. The present is more "socially" related and is reflected in basic principles: diversity, society, and creativity. This means that Berliners themselves are thematized, as the slogan "We in Berlin" suggests.

But there is a significant change in the perspective of the campaign in the imagineering of the “New Berlin” of the future: each focuses more on images of “digital” and “scientific” visions for a city of new technologies and sciences as well as design and culture. But this *less historical* “New Berlin” points to another phenomenon requiring consideration; namely, that this image of a smart and green Berlin is not only politically correct, but is a vision that can be *shared* by everyone. The *be Berlin* campaign was built on the diversity of the city dwellers—the new vision of Berlin therefore has to be sharable by everyone who is already in the city and also by those intending to move or to transit there. There has to be a future vision that *includes*, and *does not exclude*, as history does.

The historical images of the city are mostly based on the commonly experienced past of the nation. Although Berlin was perhaps always a “European” metropolis, as the capital of imperial Germany, the Weimar Republic, and Nazi Germany, it plays a national, political, and cultural role simultaneously. After 1945 again, the historical experiences of the *Berliner Bürger* could not have been separated from the fate of the two Germanys. But this past, even the fall of the Wall, is *exclusive* to those who were not part of the *national* historical experience. This history of *exclusion* is disappearing together with history itself from the image of the city. As the spectacularization of history implies a move to popularize history for everyone, it can be argued that the values and issues offered by the *be Berlin* campaign, such as science, ecology, technology, design, culture, and creativity, must necessarily imply the future in their endeavor to be shared by everyone.

The Rise of New Berlin as an Art City

The 1990s defined Berlin as a city of arts and alternative culture; youth cultures, activist movements, and street art—all young and global—took on a new role in the public spaces of the city. Officially promoted by the Senate as having “long been said to be one of the most vital and exciting centers of art” and “an artistic hub and the place to be,”⁵ an increase in investment in the arts and its institutions as well as funds raised from the early 2000s led to a new and dynamic art world re-imagining the city as a new center for art and alternative global lifestyles. At this time, the increase in art fairs, the relocation of art galleries to Berlin, and the arrival of artists from all around the world helped define Berlin as a global capital of the arts. The material

⁵ Berlin: Epicentre of Contemporary Art.” *VisitBerlin.de*. Berlin Tourismus & KongressGmbH, Feb. 2015. Web. 20 Sept. 2015.

consequences of this are observable in the redefinition of Berlin's quarters and its architectural heritage.

Despite changes in their discourse in later years, the first three Berlin Biennales thematized Berlin as 'a city of art.' The first arts biennale of 1998, entitled "Berlin," focused on artists who had moved to the city permanently and even temporarily, as they "found a departure (for their work) by taking a look at this exciting city" (Lelgemann et al. 7). The 1990s were defined as a lively time for the arts in Berlin, and the city itself was defined as an inspiration for the arts. The curator of the major sponsor Hauptstadtkulturfonds Berlin, Adrienne Goehler, had defined the biennial as being highly relevant to the capital city, and the minister also emphasized the "great future potential" of the exhibition (Lelgemann et al. 7). Nevertheless, while the destruction of the Wall was chosen as "the historical and the conceptual starting point" for the contemporary art exhibition, the choice of Kunstwerke or Martin-Gropius-Bau as venues to exhibit international art also linked the city to the "international developments" within art, an endeavor which could be interpreted as the desire to be part of the global, and connecting the city and its spaces with the rest of the world, through arts (Biesenbach 8-9). In 2004, Christina Weiss, the State Minister at the Federal Chancellery and the Federal Government Commissioner for Cultural and Media Affairs, defined the city as already a "hub for the contemporary art world" and a "charismatic city with a historical depth, political connotations and newly defined urban spaces" (Weiss, 6). Apart from a desire to explore the aesthetic terrain of Berlin, it is significant that the emphasis was the city's "giving each new generation of new arrivals to the city the opportunity to improvise their very own *new Berlin*" (Biesenbach 10). Also important is the city's depiction of being in a state of "relative poverty and relaxed *laissez faire*" attitude due to the surfeit of accommodation and business space (Biesenbach 10). Berlin's announcement as the art capital of Europe is associated with "artistic authenticity" as well as "transgressive and Bohemian lifestyles" (Graw 34). Isabelle Graw argues that "the alternative," "minoritarian," and "bohemian" connotations of today's Berlin "conform to a professional profile that is in high demand in what is described as 'network capitalism'" (Graw 36).⁶ On the other hand, Ingo Niermann observes a new direction in the market that involves social networking in biennales, festivals, art fairs, and openings, declaring that "the times are over when the lives and the looks of bohemians were exotic enough to sell (their works)" (Niermann 90).

⁶ Graw employs the term "network capitalism" in reference to sociologists Luc Boltanski and Eva Chiapello's *The New Spirit of Capitalism*.

The Senate and its official choice of Berlin as art city had material consequences, such as an increase of art spaces spread throughout the city, which transformed the architectural heritage and the quarters of the city to suit their new uses. The city now hosts approximately 400 galleries, most of which opened in the last ten years and some of which relocated from other cities like Cologne; several galleries from around the world opened branches in the city out of a need to compete with New York as a major global center for arts in the twenty-first century (Graw 34). Gallery Weekend, founded in 2005, followed by the inauguration of Berlin Art Week in 2012, “sought to underscore the importance of the city as a center for contemporary art, placing a focus on the city as a place that attracts visitors from all around the world” (“Berlin Art”). In 2008, Gallery Weekend evolved into an international art fair *abc* (Art Berlin Contemporary), “with a common interest in promoting Berlin as an art market and bringing its protagonists together” (“ABC: About”). Other successors of the Art Forum (created in 1996) include Preview Art fair, founded in 2005, and the Berliner Liste, initiated in 2008. The recently founded Positions announced itself with the promise of “depicting the quality and currentness of the international art scene comprehensively and independently from established categories, inviting the visitor to discover new positions” (“About Us”).

While urban space and the spaces of art are brought together as never before, art also provides the city's old quarters with a new function. Art and commercialization go hand in hand, and the old quarters are undergoing renovation for the new face of Berlin: renewed and reused with new functions. The choice of these renovated venues for galleries reflects Berlin's new face, building itself from the architecture of the old. This includes the choice of iconic spaces in the city for use as galleries, as well as the transformation of previously existing buildings into gallery spaces. Designing the city occurs in parallel with designing its gallery spaces in accordance with the new architectural face of Berlin. Artnet recently chose Berlin's ten best art spaces, selecting several galleries that work with iconic and disused structures of the city in accordance with the city's new adjustment for contemporary art (Forbes). For example, the influential contemporary art gallery Blain I Southern, which moved into the old cavernous hall that previously held the printing press of the Berlin newspaper *Tagesspiel*, engenders this adjustment in the newly emerging gallery quarter around Potsdamer Strasse. The former Catholic church of St. Agnes is being renovated as the new space for young artists associated with König Gallery, which moved to a former industrial space in 2006 near Potsdamer Platz, a main square which is a symbol of the postmodern city today. The “monumentality” of the new space, St. Agnes Church, is especially emphasized on the website of the gallery as part of the description for one of its sound-art installations (“Nach”). Galerie

Kewenig, which moved to Berlin in 2013 from Cologne, purchased a 1688 townhouse, one of the city's oldest, in baroque style near the museum island. Artnet also lists the “ostalgic” spaces that link the new art world to the former east of Berlin; notably, the Galerie Neu now occupies three spaces in Mitte, including a GDR Plattenbau apartment block previously used as an electric plant, and both Capitain Petzel and Peres Projects now inhabit the former commercial spaces of Karl-Marx Alle near Alexanderplatz (Forbes).

The urge to transform historical spaces and give them new function is a part of the global world: new, dynamic, and forward-looking. As most cities had to reinvent themselves to accord with global conditions, urban spaces and iconic buildings gained new functions through art in Berlin, and many new projects with architectural design involved have become a part of the landscape of art institutions opened after 2000. For example, the Contemporary Fine Arts exhibition space erected across the Neues Museum, a museum of nineteenth-century art, design, and technology on Mitte's Museum Island, was designed and built by David Chipperfield Architects (2003–2007), and the same studio was behind the restoration of the Neues Museum, which reopened in 2009 (Forbes).

Berlin's policymakers are proud of the existence of contemporary art in the city. In Spring 2007, local newspapers reported that the new branding strategy promoted by then-Mayor Klaus Wowereit was “Berlin: City of Change.” He declared that the aim was “to promote Berlin as a casual and relaxed, international and open metropolis, radiating joy and creativity, and where it is a pleasure to live” (Colomb 259). The metropolis imagined a decade earlier had already faded away and was no longer questioned.

Conclusion

The process of image production for Berlin by professionals and stakeholders has generated a variety of images, narratives, and symbols for Berlin since the 1990s. Within this process of urban imagineering, an increasing interest has been focused on memory and historical narratives. On the other hand, the rise of art and its institutions—entangled with the urban fabric, real estate investments and the ways they are marketed, the new strategies of imagining Berlin through marketing campaigns, and the new discourses on history—all imply a change to the ways Berlin is imagined. The Berlin of 2015 illustrates a process of disappearing history: how history is disappearing from the present self-image and future vision of the city.

Although the case studies reflect, to a certain degree, on different aspects of the history and historical heritage of the city, they also illustrate the process of disappearing history. The case of the former Jewish Girls' School connects with image-creation on the basis of tangible heritage while the campaign *be Berlin* uses certain selected historical events as tools in the urban imagineering. If disappearing history produces a new type of instrumentalization of the history that looks forward to the future, then the official decision undertaken to introduce a 'new' Berlin produces cultural and material consequences in the city: arts and creativity become motives for the production of Berlin's contemporary image, which re-defines quarters, places, and buildings of the city in return. Within this process, particular histories of spaces play a rather marginal role. The case studies examined in this paper clearly show that, rather than the past, attention is focused on the future, defined through the notions of change, dynamism, and, especially, the "new." Globally understandable and sharable values and slogans—such as technology, smart, digital, green, as well as artistic and creative—belong to the repertoire of this future image of Berlin. In addition, this vision is globally attractive and provides a guarantee of openness and internationalism for everyone. Calling for the new and the city to be shared globally, it also moves away from the historical narrative by reducing it to selected images. In fact, even imaging the past is completed by the spectacularization of history that is in fact a way to open up the city to the laws of the global market. In this regard, in the discourse of imagining Berlin, art plays an especially definitive role: it replaces history as the city's master discourse, evolves within the spirit of the contemporary, and defines itself to accord with the dynamic and the new. Hence, while many urban researchers record the phenomenon of Berlin's self-historicization (cf. Zukin; Florida; Reckwitz), this already marks a previous phase of the imagineering of Berlin, one characteristic of the late 1990s and early 2000s.

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