1. Architecture and the representation of events

To consider the contemporary representations and memory of the Shoah means to talk about various relations, testimonies, and images of the Jewish Holocaust as a historical event. Today they are manifold; the Holocaust has been described often and in detail not only in original documents, but also in literature and visual arts: painting, prints, sculpture, and perhaps most of all, film. Referring to contemporary representations of the Jewish tragedy in architecture, first we have to assess the potential architecture holds for communicating historical events.

Architecture, in the basic meaning of a functional art of shaping space, seems to be ill-suited to represent our memory of historical events. As all other arts, it operates on form, but its essence is to shape human behaviour and to provide safety. Thus the problems of function and use come before the issue of semantic communication, let alone portraying of events. Of course, architectural monuments last through time and of all artistic achievements they perhaps succumb to time least readily thanks to the Vitruvian firmitas, transferring the memory of the time they were created in through their sheer existence. The image of an entire epoch is automatically retained in the architectural style of the buildings. Usually, architecture is a mute witness of events. It is difficult to imagine a purely architectural representation of human tragedy and destruction rather than material substance. Only metaphorically, through the ruin of matter, can one convey the idea of the ruin of a people. The question arises then, whether architecture can convey the image of events, or more
precisely, to present them again, if we consider the literal meaning of re-
presentation more closely.

Even more, can architecture, whose central purpose is to provide
safety, in any way present a situation of threat, terror, the ultimate catas-
trophe? And, if the answer to these questions is yes, and we are talking
about Shoah, can one imagine architecture of fear, confusion, and uncer-
tainty as a representation of the Holocaust?

2. Architectural ways of imaging. A typology

Architecture interacts with and affects both the intellect and the bod-
ies of its users. The semantic aspect of a building is operated intellectu-
ally and refers to the knowledge, memory and feelings of the viewer; the
physical structure shapes behaviours and is perceived through senses.
Architecture, as an essentially abstract and non-representative art, is
unable to render historical images. What it can do, however, is to evoke
them in the viewer's imagination based on associations and the knowl-
edge of history that he or she may have. It can also force upon them reac-
tions identical to the experiences that the witnesses of the real events had,
by creating specific environments and spatial situations. The result is the
first level of the typological division in architectural imagery connected
with the way architecture interacts with and affects its users. It includes
examples based on the intellectual interaction with the viewers and
instances enforcing physical experiences upon the viewers.

Another level of the typological division refers to the time in which
a given building or architectural situation came into existence. The divi-
sion here is also dichotomous. The first group of types includes structures
and situations which existed in the time when a given event actually hap-
pened, together with the re-shaping of such structures and situations; the
second group comprises the effects of artistic creation, structures and sit-
uations created after a given event.

The interdependence between these levels of systematic division is
that all types belonging to the group of objects existing in the time of an
event and most types of creations are related to the intellect and feelings
of the viewers. Only one type in the group of artistic creation is based on
the recipient's somatic reactions.

In the following section of the paper, a typology of architectural ways
to portray events has been presented, with examples related to the histo-
ry of the Jewish Holocaust. The temporal division has been chosen as the
starting point of the analysis. As in any typology, the dividing lines between categories are neither clear-cut nor exclusive; various types overlap or contain unnamed areas.

And so, in the groups of structures existing before and in the time of a given event, we can distinguish two categories. These are the witness and the transformed result of the event, where the former type includes a specific subcategory, i.e., the testimony.

The witness of an event is an architectural structure, which had been created before the events it is to represent took place. It can be called the one who remembers the events. However, its relation to the event is chronological only. Sometimes we are not even able to realize that the structure had anything to do with the events at all. An example could be the Old Synagogue in Kraków, a well-preserved, partly reconstructed Renaissance building dating back to the 15th century, which has survived the Holocaust. The information about the Holocaust is only conveyed indirectly, through the change in function from a place of worship to a museum, not to mention the exhibits. The structure itself, to the author's knowledge, was not involved in the Shoah, although during the occupation the Nazis performed executions in the yard.

Some of the buildings-witnesses have their special record in history. Often, from the artistic (here: architectural) point of view, they are not worthy of special notice. An example of a structure connected with very concrete events is a fragment of a leaning brick wall, part of the former walls surrounding the Warsaw ghetto, located at the intersection of three streets in Warsaw (Wolności, Bacciarellego and Kacza). It does not stand out in any way, its image does not represent the event in any way (there even is no memorial plaque on it); its spatial form does not "say" anything, especially about the tragedy. It is only the knowledge gained elsewhere, which, in the imagination of a sensitive viewer, transforms this common object into a medium of image.

The category of witnesses may also include certain spatial situations that impacted the course of events, to be inferred from the testimonies of survivors. In Claude Lantzman's film entitled Shoah (1985), the survivors talk about the "Road to Heaven" or the "Road of Death" in Treblinka, Poland. This is closely connected to the topography of the Nazi extermination camp in Treblinka: "there was a hill and there was a crematory". The relation between the height and visibility of the objects
in the death camp was important for the way the Nazis directed the final steps of the Jews. The subsequent sections of the road were arranged so as to prevent prisoners from seeing the end. The element of surprise was crucial to keep the crowd of newcomers calm, unaware that they had been sentenced to death. The typical right-angle turn in the path between the buildings in which the prisoners undressed and the gas chambers, can also be seen in the death camp in Sobibór. These spatial relations have survived until today (often such spatial details are affected by the places being turned later into historical memorial sites); even so, understanding them requires historical knowledge.

**Testimony** to the events is a category included in the one described above: every testimony is a witness. It is a structure, whose present state (destroyed, reshaped, ruined) testifies to the historical event and brings to mind the memory of it. It is a "speaking" witness, evoking an image connected to a specific event. An example here is the Baroque Great Synagogue in Słonim; a building erected in 1642, the only monument of the Jewish culture of that time preserved in Belarus, and one of the best preserved ever (in spite of all the decay). Its terrible technical condition and the change in function - today, it is an abandoned warehouse gradually being transformed into public toilets - testify to a dramatic change which took place as a result of the historical events sixty years ago. The Great Synagogue with a collapsed roof in Brody is a similar case. The inspection of such buildings and our impressions force us to reflect on the lost nation, to ask why such things ever happened. To imagine the events today requires knowledge, although the sight alone may be shocking.

Of course, there are Holocaust testimonies in the form of camp buildings from that time; barracks and gas chambers, empty today, at first glance inspire no terror. The viewer unaware of the Holocaust death machine will not necessarily associate them with its image.

**Transformed result of an event** is a new architectural situation, more or less consciously designed, which is a spatial result of historical events and not only functional decisions. Here we are talking not so much about the witness, as about what has survived from the witness-structure until today. This category includes structures, which were not meant to serve as memorials or representations of historical events.

An example indirectly connected with the Holocaust is the almost 100-metre high mound *Teufelsberg* in Berlin, which was made after 1945
from debris and ruins of the buildings destroyed during World War II and dumped on one spot. Today, it is a recreational space for the inhabitants of Berlin with skiing slopes and bicycle paths; it no longer evokes negative associations and historical reflection.

A more compelling example, directly related to Shoah, is the Muranów housing estate in Warsaw. After the war the ghetto, completely demolished and destroyed at Himmler's command, 1 posed a technical challenge which was difficult to solve. It was impossible to remove the rubble and ruins and collect them on one spot outside the city, like in Berlin. The crumbled building substance served then as the foundation for the building site of a new estate. In a designated area of Warsaw, an urban plinth about 1.5 meter high was formed. Its meaning and the reason behind its existence are no longer legible today (over the years the information was intentionally kept secret); they require recognition and historical knowledge. When the knowledge is gained, the representation of the tragedy becomes a powerful vision on an urban scale - it is rubble mixed with the bodies and blood of the victims that makes for the foundation of the houses.

In the group of artistic creations several types can be distinguished. These types have two things in common: they have been created after the events the representation of which is sought, and their design has been deliberately shaped. These types include: monument expressing an idea, monument directly displaying the results or testimony of an event and laboratory.

Monument expressing an idea is an *ex nihilo* created spatial structure or complex, whose idea was born in the mind of the creator, and whose realization is to evoke emotions based on knowledge, associations, and memories. Not always but usually, it preserves the memory of a given event in the very place connected with this event. In principle, it does not

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1 Brigadefuhrer-SS and Police General Jörgen Stroop entitled his luxuriously published report on the demolition of the ghetto *The Jewish housing district exists no more!* He wrote: "I decided to destroy the entire Jewish housing district by burning all the buildings". Responsible for building and housing affairs, Obergruppenführer-SS Heinz Kammler made sure that all the ruins were blown-up, turning the former ghetto into a flattened brick and stone desert by 15 May 1943. Cf. J. Hey decker and J. Leeb, *Bilanz der Tausend Jahre. Die Geschichte des III. Reiches in Spiegel des Nürnberger Prozesses*, München: Wilhelm Heyne Verlag, 1975, translation by the author.
use the authentic material (testimony). This category includes numerous sculptures and architectural monuments already created in memory of the Jewish Holocaust. As examples, we can mention the oldest one in Poland: the Monument to the Heroes of the Ghetto Uprising in Warsaw, by Natan Rapaport, erected in 1948 (later copied in Jerusalem, i.e., a place unconnected to the Holocaust), and the latest one: the monument of the tragedy in Jedwabne. Such monuments are to evoke a clear image of the events through their realistic artistic vision and inscriptions.

**Monument directly displaying the results or testimony of an event** is a monument created with the use of authentic substance and/or original situation (testimony) which play the leading role in the composition. The artist's will is limited to providing the background. The added elements constitute a framework; they arrange the testifying elements and intensify their expression. The never-executed Auschwitz monument by Oskar Hansen and his associates would be an example of this type of structure in relation to the memory of Shoah. Hansen proposed to recognize the entire camp as a monument by introducing into the existing situation a single new compositional and functional element: a diagonal asphalt lane - a ritual path, which would serve as both a framework conforming to the preserved historical reality, and a way to reach the sanctified ground. This solution was to inspire reflection based on knowledge, but this reflection also required some feeling, intensity and effort.

The Jewish Holocaust, according to Norbert Elias, was the result of interplay of complex emotions and social resentiments born behind the unified facade of a social order. Hitler once again evoked before the eyes of the German masses the phantom of a hegemonic German Reich. In the years 1933-1945, this phantasmal phantom had its administrative embodiment - the centre for the main bodies of internal control of the National Socialist regime: headquarters of the Gestapo Police, SD and RSHA in the so-called Prinz-Albert Block between Stresemann-, Niederkircher-, Wilhelm- and Anhalterstrasse in Berlin. After the war, these buildings were deliberately blown up and demolished. A Swiss

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2 The historical irony is that the inclined pylon supporting the bronze sculpture group in the Monument of the Ghetto Heroes consists of stones collected by artist Arno Breker for a never-executed monument of the Nazi victory.

3 Design submitted for the competition in 1958.

architect, Peter Zumthor, in his project, the motto of which is the *Topography of Terror*, proposed to enclose the remaining ruins in a container extreme in its neutrality, a rectangular box erected over the hardly perceptible ruins. In a way, the representation of the Holocaust is present as a fulfilled memento of "who lives by the sword, dies by the sword". This project is on the border of the two categories: monument directly displaying the results of an event and another category described below, namely a *container*.

*A container* is a building serving as a package for the proper content relevant to the event. In such a case the architectural style usually refers to the epoch and the nature of events, thus it is often anachronistic. It is easy to cross the border of kitsch, in which an artificially created reality is to evoke associations with the ambience of past times and landscapes, just like in the case of open air folk-museums. One example to be cited is the building of the Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York, the logo of which says a *living memorial to the Holocaust*. The shape of the structure refers to a synagogue, although it looks more like a Babylonian ziggurat and its avowed aim is not to represent the Holocaust.

*A laboratory* is a structure, which plays on archetypal reactions, such as the experience of darkness or a cave. It evokes such reactions. The structure is designed deliberately to interplay with the viewer's emotions; it places the contemporary viewer in circumstances resembling the situation of a given historical event. It is indeed a new type of structure. The architect does not rely on the viewer's memories, knowledge or imagination, but rather directly affects his or her senses, by placing him or her in a situation of the original witnesses. The viewer is exposed, within acceptable limits, to environmental conditions similar to the conditions experienced by participants of the original event, although these conditions have been artistically processed. A direct, visceral interaction between space and senses takes place, remaining outside of intellectual reflection. The user is to become a "surrogate witness". Examples of laboratories are given by the United States National Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington and the Jewish Museum in Berlin, which will be described in more detail in further sections of the paper.

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1 Design awarded in the 1993 competition; currently under construction.
3 Certain existing places are more the result of coincidence than purposeful action; e.g. the space between two dome layers in the Cathedral in Florence or St. Peter's in Rome.
3. Laboratories of psychological architecture

The post-modern reaction in architecture was to put stress on the semantic value of a building, which was what Modernism in principle rejected in favour of abstraction. Today, other means of expression are sought beyond the mere use of codes of meaning. Once again, architecture redefines itself as a spatial art. Recognizing this fact reinstates a proper balance. The search for new means of expression in architecture, which is taking place in all of contemporary art, leads to interest in the human body. Achievements in psychology which has focused on environment research since the 1960s, have become a more or less conscious foundation for creative architectural activity. Architectural psychology has led to the establishment of psychological architecture based on reflections on the human being and behaviour.

Memory resonator

The U.S. National Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, designed by James I. Freed, can be categorized as a container-building. But it also includes motifs, which make it possible for us to include it in the category of laboratories. These are aspects, which influence the somatic, automatic, subconscious experience of the viewer irrespective of his or her knowledge, awareness, or memory. These aspects interplay with the senses, not the intellect; this is the main aim of the architect's artistic activity. The Museum in Washington, according to the concept of its creator, is not to be a neutral container, but an architectural structure referring to history through certain abstract forms. These metaphorical and symbolic forms are a system open for interpretation, a resonator of the visitor's memory. Freed wants his building to be experienced viscerally. This draws from the assumption that, just like the Shoah was incomprehensible, also this building has not been designed to be comprehended intellectually. It is intended to engage the visitor and move him or her emotionally, evoke fear, sadness, anxiety, and as a result, force reflection and leave nobody unaffected.

"For the permanent exhibition at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum the design approach was minimal and transparent,

James Ingo Freed as the leading architect from Pei, Cobb, Freed & Partners. The Museum was erected in 1993-94.
and the designers were in dialogue only with the story - not with the history of design or the conventions governing most museum penetrations; we reached for a sense of immersion by trying to erase the seams between exhibits and architecture. Installation strategies included the removal of conventional barriers of certain glass-encased vitrines: some objects can be touched, and reactions sought are visceral as they are intellectual. (...) The design intended to make the environment so united with its subject that memory of the museum experience and the sharing of memory through discussion will carry on in the lives of the visitors".

The external architecture of the Museum in Washington is an after-vision of the places connected with the Holocaust visited by the architect: death camps, ghettos, their preserved structures and building materials. In Freed's conceptual sketches we can see a sort of stetl with protruding domes of synagogues; in the realization they become the watchtowers of a concentration camp. The building contains elements of the hidden, elements of illusion, detachment of structure, and duality. The image of a "normal" building with stone facing as seen from the street contrasts with the interior which is full of contradictions. Openings, which seem to be windows, have been bricked up; in the actual windows the canonical order has been reversed: the "panes" are non-transparent stone slabs, whereas their "frames" have been made of transparent glass. The glass skylight above the high central space of the Hall of Witness runs diagonally and constitutes a twisted, eccentric, irregular structure which may resemble the fallen roof of the Synagogue in Brody. Freed claims this roof "tells the visitor something is amiss here". The constructional solutions and building materials from the period of rapid industrial development (riveted iron beams, non-plastered pointed red brick) used in the interiors are to evoke associations with the ideals of early modernism: the time of ideologies which eventually led to the construction of death factories. Glass bridges have been placed above the skylight; the figures of other visitors, spectrally deformed by the refraction of light, walking across the bridges create a situation of surveillance; they evoke the unsettling impression of being watched.

grafika znajduje się w wersji papierowej pisma

The main flight of stairs narrows up with the ascent; this emphasizes the convergent perspective and is (potentially) to evoke the image of a rail track leading to the transportation ramp in the camp. Generally, according to the architect's intention, the whole of the interior suggests a departure from norm, from normality. An important aspect of the Museum is the interplay of painting, sculpture and architecture. Four works of art were commissioned. Richard Serra brought his heavy steel plate entitled *Gravity* and placed it in such a way that it cuts the staircase asymmetrically and splits the crowd of visitors. Thus, the artist builds a situation of enforced parting. A particularly important and irreplaceable asset to the functioning of the Museum is the constant presence of a group of Holocaust survivors, who work there on voluntary basis. They are the living witnesses.

**The unspeakable absence**

The concept of the Jewish Museum in Berlin designed by Daniel Libeskind and his original ideas underlying it are well known. Let us recall them briefly. The Berlin project was based in its creator's imagination on four motifs-aspects. We have to know them in order to be able to see them in the completed building. It seems impossible for an unprepared observer to infer them from a mere inspection of the building.

The first motif was to develop the building "between the lines": a straight line divided into sections of discontinuing and unavailable space, and a broken line continuing "indefinitely" and defining the form. The void represents something the author tries to remind us of: something "which has been lost and will never be set right again". The "lost cubature" is to make us aware of the "unspeakable absence". The architect here adopts the role of a poet of space. One may recognize a close

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"The design for the Jewish Department of the Berlin Museum, completed for the competition in 1989, was awarded the first prize. The work on the design, which was eventually called the Jewish Museum, was completed in 1993. The actual erection of the museum took a long time. The building was opened to the public in the last phase of construction; officially, it was opened in September 2001.

"It is worth noting that Claude-Nicolas Ledoux was the precursor of the inaccessible void symbolizing absence; in his design for the underground cemetery in Chaux, Ledoux introduced a spherical space illuminated from above, which the underground galleries of the catacombs opened into (18th/19th century)."
resemblance (if not identity) with the attitude of Tadeusz Różewicz, an eminent Polish poet. According to Maria Janion, "the hidden lyrical event in Różewicz's poetry is the inexpressible - death. Różewicz was born as the poet of the Holocaust, a phenomenon unique in its terrible nature (…)." But it is not merely the Holocaust that seems to bring Libeskind and Różewicz together. Janion has noted that Różewicz's central dilemma is "how not to write a poem; how to get to the poet's silence", because "to struggle with the unspeakable is to struggle with silence. (...) Being silent is different from speaking silence". Similarly, Libeskind tries to express the inexpressible by using emptiness instead of the solid materials usually perceived as the substance of architecture. This emptiness can be understood as anti-space, as "no architecture". To understand the design it is important to be aware of numerous essays by Libeskind, which are variants of his basic concept; such knowledge would undoubtedly help the viewer to perceive the Museum's architecture in a more comprehensive and complete way. The perception of poetic propositions and attitudes in architecture requires education.

The second aspect is the figure of Arnold Schoenberg and his unfinished opera Moses und Aron with its "non-musical word supplement". Libeskind sees the building of the Museum as an attempt at an architectural completion of the opera.

The third aspect is the list of Jews deported from Berlin, based on Gedenkbuch. By joining their pre-war addresses on the map of Berlin, the architect came up with a number of crossing lines, among which it was easy to highlight the ones which formed a sort of Star of David. The Star's acute angle geometry is said to underlie the zigzag layout of the Museum. Again, only being aware of the architect's reasoning lets one read this idea in the actual building. It cannot be seen from the street.

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14. We are dealing here with a case of architecture parlante, "talking architecture", the favourite means of architectural expression in the 18th century. The idea of a pavilion, whose layout is based on the drawing of a six-pointed Star of David, was also used by Polish architect Jerzy Buszkiewicz in his memorial in the death camp in Chełmno upon Ner (executed in association with the sculptor Józef Stasiński) (1958).
The fourth aspect is the text of Einbahnstrasse by Walter Benjamin, which has been incorporated in the sequence of sixty sections along the zigzag; every section represents one of the "Stations of the Star" described by Benjamin.

When aware of these aspects, the viewer can use the acquired knowledge of the architect's inspirations to get to know the work of art more fully and in accordance with the artist's intentions. The representation of an event is based on a viewer's knowledge and memory, and also on the collective memory of society. Cognition and experience is for the most part intellectual.

Representation imposed by the senses

Apart from the narrative effect requiring recognition, knowledge and memory, we should also observe in the Museum in Berlin a new and clearly very important aspect: the behavioural impact of this architecture. This is achieved not only through the showcase and its content (exhibits), but by direct interaction of the building space with the viewer's senses. Architecture shaped in an abstract way imposes impressions, the experiencing of which the viewer cannot avoid. The architect is able to influence the viewer's experiences without the medium of the anecdote, and to be able to place the viewer in the situation of a witness to the actual historical event. This takes place, obviously, under selected and acceptable conditions, but the achieved effects are nevertheless worthy of notice.

In order to obtain the desired effect, the architect uses elements, the aim of which is to make it impossible for us to perceive the whole structure in standard terms. The spatial structure of the building is a novel-

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15 Libeskind himself says that a building "is not a form, image or text, but about the experience which is not to be simulated" (speech delivered on the occasion of receiving the German architectural award Deutsche Architekturpreis in 1999).

16 Libeskind expresses his anxiety towards the results of the competition for Alexanderplatz in Berlin, where in the awarded design there is a clear departure from experiment and contemporary materials towards an attempt to "use thousand-years-old materials to build granite solidity", which would reflect the image bureaucrats hold of the city. This deceptively innocent turn in thinking may be the inception of very dangerous events, as history has shown, cf. D. Libeskind, "Die Banalität der Ordnung", in: Einfach schwierig. Eine deutsche Architekturdebatte. Ausgewählte Beiträge 1993-1995, ed. G. Kahler, Braunschweig/Wiesbaden: Vieweg, 1995, p. 37.
ty indeed. The negation of the traditional (classical, "normal") paradigm of the building is achieved in several ways: axis in the disposition of the whole complex and symmetry has been rejected, the principle of the balance of forms has been rejected, too; there is no "main entrance"; the floors have been obscured (by concealing their number the scale of the building has been camouflaged); there are no windows and other elements of a traditional building.

There is not even the slightest echo of the academic classical axial composition, which, in a sense, still governs most of the buildings designed all over the world. The functional problem of the transparency of the entrance and driveway has been completely eliminated, simply because they are not there. By counting the levels of windows we usually determine the number of floors in a building and thus can roughly determine its scale. Here, this luxury is denied. The openings in the shell of the building, which in part play the role of traditional windows, form cracks, crevices, furrows, irregular areas arranged according to the supergraphic design of the facade, and they remain in very loose connection with the internal organization of the building as a functional structure.

Fragment of the shell of the elevation, Jewish Museum Berlin (2000)
Deprived of the traditional points of reference, in his or her reception, the viewer is purified, unarmed and intellectually naked in view of the inconceivable object, i.e., unusual space: a building with no doors, no windows, even with no roof, covered with a lizardlike metal skin.

Subsequent sightseeing stages lead through underground halls up towards the sky and the sense of sight, hearing, touch and kinesthesis are attacked in a way imposing a very unambiguous reaction. Nan Ellin is right in noticing that fear has always been present in the human experience and houses in the town have always had the purpose of ensuring security and protection against danger. The Museum in Berlin, on the contrary, is a building whose purpose is to expose us. Libeskind, to the extent the building regulations allowed him, has created architecture which evokes anxiety, irrespective of historical knowledge, aesthetic sensibility, knowledge of literature or even essays by the architect himself.

Effects used by Libeskind have been known and used in the history of architecture. These include: distortion in perspective, use of light and its absence (light and shadow), drastic changes in the height of adjacent rooms, deviations from the vertical and the horizontal, changes in the acoustic quality of the space. New effects include acute "non-functional" angles in the deconstructed space.

The effect of scant lighting and smooth walls and long sequences of passages is known from the architecture of ancient Egypt. It is important to separate Libeskind's design from earlier realizations of architecture parlante. Surprises, just like the raft trip down the underground River Styx in Zofijówka near Humań, grottoes in parks, bridges yielding to our steps when we cross them (irritating our sense of stasis) (in Stourhead or Bagno Park near Münster), grottoes with surprises (usually a fountain, like the Hercules Grotto in Cassel) and other similar effects deliberately used in the 18th-century parks, were created to innocently frighten or entertain the users. Today too, one of the obligatory elements of an amusement park is the tunnel of terror. In the Berlin Museum, the novelty lies in the fact that these effects have been used in official architecture as a representation of a tragic historical event to evoke fear and anxiety and force visitors to profound reflection.

Road to the world of the dead

The entrance to the Jewish Museum is located outside of the building in question, in a Baroque palace of the Museum of Berlin (Kollegienhaus). We descend along a path which is a contemporary realization of the need for a labyrinth. Traditionally, the synagogue and the Romanesque church were accessed in such a way. Here, we simultaneously descend into the world of the dead. Dimly-lit steps lead us down to the dungeons; the sense of engulfing darkness is very acute. The light intensity is very low. At the lowest level we find ourselves at the crossing of three passages, which run around a triangular glass case. By choosing the corridor to the right, we come to an apparent dead-end, the passage gradually narrowing as it proceeds. The effect is due to a rising floor and falling ceiling, of which we might not be conscious, but we do feel cornered and oppressed. Finally, we lean against a wall. Breathless.

We can feel the metal door at the end of the passage. Opening it, we enter a tower (called the Holocaust Tower in the Museum guide). It is
dark inside. Bare reinforced-concrete walls set at various angles upon a trapezoid layout create an acoustic environment in which even the smallest noise or word spoken by a single visitor is multiplied. This creates an acoustic background unavoidably associated with whispering or the noise made by an anxious crowd, the noise of nervous incomprehensible murmuring. The anxiety is intensified as the only visible source of light is located at the top of the tower; we sense it rather than see it lighting the chamber. When our eyes get used to the darkness, we can see a ladder, but it starts way above our heads, where we cannot reach it. It is unattainable. It somehow signals the way out and hope, but it remains inaccessible. The feeling of threat, uncertainty and imprisonment has been created in a relatively simple way (of course, the visitors know the way they entered the tower, but the door has slammed and they are not sure whether they can open it from the inside). Here, we are dealing with the archetypal experience of the labyrinth and cave.

By returning to the crossing of the three passages, we can choose one of the paths to the light: walk up the straight staircase leading to higher floors or walk straight on, taking the horizontal path to the garden.
Inaccessible garden evoking anxiety and uncertainty

The garden by E.T.A. Hoffman is one of "Hoffman's stories", a fairy-tale situation, which - by throwing the visitor off balance - imposes a very specific experience in a simple way. In order to enter the garden,
we have to leave the Museum building. After we do so, we enter a depression (over 3 metres below the level of the ground around the Museum) on the level of the dungeons. In its floor there are enormous over ten-metre-high posts with olive trees growing in pots on their tops. The greenery in this garden is inaccessible. By lifting our heads, we perhaps dream of finding ourselves in the Garden of Eden. The one we are walking in is all concrete and stone. In reality, it is a labyrinth in the biological way as it affects our sense of balance. It is not only the inaccessibility of the trees and the fear of losing our way that is unnerving. The concrete posts deviate from the vertical plane by 10-12°, so does the floor from the horizontal. The posts-pots are located perpendicularly to the floor. Walking over the inclined plane is not comfortable and being in the forest of inclining trunks resembles the situation of being on a ship sailing over rough sea. Although the masts remain in the standard, "normal" relation to the deck, we sense that the entire ship is tilting. After several minutes we automatically reset our perceptual mechanism. In spite of anxiety caused by the lack of stability, which has been geometrically transformed in relation to constant parameters resulting from the force of gravitation, the powerful influence of the surroundings makes us treat the figures of other visitors in the garden as weirdly stooped, deviating from normality. This again evokes a feeling of uncertainty. We are on a journey, whose aim remains unattainable and our survival is uncertain. The reference to history, to the enforced flight from everyday life, to emigration in search of a new homeland, is obvious.

**Liberation**

On our way back from the garden, we can go up along the third corridor. It is also a very slightly ascending surface. This makes it look longer and higher from one end and shorter and lower from the other. Thus, the figures of the people at the other end may seem either smaller or bigger respectively. Inside, the building also cheats our sense of scale. We walk up the steps towards heaven (the German name for this type of single-flight staircase is no other but *Himmeltreppe*). The metaphysical desire to go up is stressed by the fact that the upper floors of the building are lit more brightly than the bottom of the stairs.
Summary

Fundamentally, works of architecture are not well-suited to represent events. However, as the author has tried to prove, architecture has the potential ability to evoke and recall visions, including visions of past tragic events. The typology of possible cases has been presented. It seems that in the last category, the laboratory, architecture approaches and explores its limits, by imposing the role of the substitute witness upon the visitor. The proposed term laboratory may have a much deeper meaning. Don Fowler has observed that the laboratory is for the 21st century what the cathedral
was for the 14th century, the railway station for the 19th century and the office block for the 20th century. This means that the laboratory embodies, both in its manifesto and technology, the spirit and culture of our century, and it attracts the greatest intellectual and economical resources of our society. This remark may have been made in relation to research laboratories in the common sense of the phrase, but it is symptomatic. Experimental research, especially if related to human life, will play an increasingly greater role in science. The experiment with the viewer, or the user of architecture, where there is the direct transmission of experience working outside of the intellectual consciousness and engaging a wide spectrum of sensual body experiences, is more and more present in architecture today. In Libeskind's building we are dealing with a masterpiece of architectural art. It is a "pure architecture", for its own sake. Established criteria allow us to assess such unique works. The criteria, generally approved by various researchers, refer to the sensual, physiological reactions of our organism. We participate in an experience rare in architecture - the unnerving pins and needles, the Nabokovian shivers down our spine that prove a work of art has gone straight and deep to our heart. But at the same time or perhaps even earlier, Libeskind's Museum interacts with us and influences us; if we surrender to this influence, for a short moment and within the right proportions, we can identify with the people threatened with holocaust, and this has been the central proposition of this paper.

18 The complex is meant to be visited as a space, before the function of a museum is introduced. Witold Rybczyński, in his essay "But is it art?" (In: Looking around. A Journey Through Architecture, New York: Penguin Books, 1995, p. 187), reminds us that in November 1989 the critic Paul Goldberger praised the president of the Wexner Center for the Visual Arts in Columbus, Ohio, the building of which was designed by Peter Eisenman and Richard Trott, for taking the difficult decision of not hanging any paintings in the galleries for several months after the Center had been opened, so that the space in the building could be fully appreciated by the public. This guaranteed that the Museum and not the works of art presented in it would become the main point of interest. The building was to suffice for an exhibition. This gave rise to the question what is a museum of art worth without art? The obvious answer is that architecture itself is an art (too). Libeskind's Museum in Berlin is a similar story. It was open to the public already in the late stages of its construction - as a pure space. It was visited as such by almost half a million people.

19 Vladimir Nabokov writes, for example, "although we read with our minds, the seat of artistic delight is between the shoulder blades. That little shiver behind is quite certainly the highest form of emotion that humanity has attained when evolving pure art and pure science", cf. V. Nabokov, Lectures on Literature, ed. F. Bowers, New York: Harcourt, 1980, p. 64.