

Jewish Berlin:

The centerpiece of Jewish Berlin is the Judisches Museum which many think is the Holocaust Memorial. That memorial, designed by American architect Peter Eisenman, is something entirely different. The Judisches/Jewish Museum is not a Holocaust museum per se. Rather, it tells the history of the Jewish community of Germany, and especially Berlin, from when the first Jews arrived in Berlin in 1671 until after World War II. The award winning building, designed by Polish/Israeli/American architect, Daniel Libeskind, is at once disorienting, upsetting, out-of-whack, and brilliant. It is Alice falling down the rabbit hole. Your physical being is set atilt much as the lives of the people whose story it seeks to tell. The scary part is: prior to 1933 when Hitler came to power, the Jews of Berlin were integrated, both socially and professionally, into German society and felt seemingly accepted. Their lives back then and our lives in America today are not much different. You know the rest of the story.



The Memory Stones:

Artist Gunter Demnig said, "*A person is forgotten when their name is forgotten.*" To break that trend Demnig began his "*Stolpersteine*" project. He researches Holocaust victims then creates a 4" by 4" brass plate that is attached to a concrete base. The base is submerged in the ground so that the plate is level with the sidewalk. The nameplates, engraved with "*Here lived..., their name, date of birth, date & destination of deportation, and date/place of death if known*", are installed in front of each victim's former home. There are over 4500 of these "stumble stones" already in place in over 60 cities in Germany with more than 1400 of them in Berlin. These "stones" are not meant to trip your toe -- just your mind.