

---

Stumbling Stones: Holocaust Memorials, National Identity, and Democratic Inclusion in Berlin

Author(s): Kirsten Harjes

Source: *German Politics & Society*, Spring 2005, Vol. 23, No. 1 (74), SPECIAL ISSUE: Essays in honor of Hinrich C. Seeba (Spring 2005), pp. 138-151

Published by: Berghahn Books

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23740916>

---

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <https://about.jstor.org/terms>



is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *German Politics & Society*

JSTOR

# Stumbling Stones

Holocaust Memorials, National Identity, and Democratic Inclusion in Berlin

*Kirsten Harjes*

German, University of California at Davis

---

What makes one “German”? The bread. The good bread that comes in so many colors, consistencies, shapes, and smells, and that can be shared around the table where Germans sit and eat and talk and argue, and where together they can eat the soup they have cooked for themselves (*gemeinsam die Suppe auslöffeln, die sie sich eingebracht haben*).

Christa Wolf<sup>1</sup>

In 1997, Hinrich Seeba offered a graduate seminar on Berlin at the University of California, Berkeley. He called it: “*Cityscape: Berlin as Cultural Artifact in Literature, Art, Architecture, Academia*.” It was a true German studies course in its interdisciplinary and cultural anthropological approach to the topic: Berlin, to be analyzed as a “scape,” a “view or picture of a scene,”<sup>2</sup> subject to the predilections of visual perception in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This course inspired my research on contemporary German history as represented in Berlin’s Holocaust memorials. The number and diversity of these memorials has made this city into a laboratory of collective memory. Since the unification of East and West Germany in 1990, memorials in Berlin have become means to shape a new national identity via the history shared by both Germanys. In this article, I explore two particular memorials to show the tension between creating a collective, national identity, and representing the cultural and historical diversity of today’s Germany. I compare the *Denkmal für die ermordeten Juden Europas* (Memorial for the Murdered Jews of Europe, or “national Holocaust memorial”) which opened in central Berlin on May 10, 2005, to the lesser known, privately sponsored, decentralized “stumbling stone” project by artist Gunter Demnig.

After 1989, political leaders in Germany sought to reestablish Berlin as the German capital, without the baggage of either Nazi Berlin or the divided Berlin, but instead in the tradition of the democratic and European orientation of the former Bonn Republic. To accomplish that, the federal government moved most of its institutions from Bonn to Berlin and initiated reconstruction of large sections of the city infrastructure to accommodate a growing population and increased travel between east and west. The government also sought in various ways to make explicit the multilayered history that has become the trademark of this metropolis. Through constructing and reconstructing new and old streets, squares, and buildings, Berlin has become an architectural *palimpsest*, attracting tourists and inspiring scholars.<sup>3</sup> The public debates often accompanying such construction projects serve the political function of demonstrating Germany's commitment to explicitly and officially come to terms with its past.

In this context, Berlin's memorials are expected to represent a new generation of politicians and citizens committed to historical responsibility for the Holocaust and the fight against contemporary racism.<sup>4</sup> From the Topographie des Terrors (1987-present), to the Denkmal für die ermordeten Juden Europas (1989-present), to the Neue Wache (1993), to the Schöneberger Gedenktafelprogramm (1993), to Gunter Demnig's *Stolpersteine* ("Stumbling Stones", 1996-present), these memorials generally attempt to fulfill three functions: to mourn and commemorate the dead, to educate their audiences, and to politically and socially represent contemporary German citizens. Of these three functions, the representative is the most contested. Representation is a complex concept, but for present purposes it might be defined as "standing for" some group of people.<sup>5</sup> To represent a religiously and ethnically diverse country with a memorial is a difficult task. Not only does German history appear very different to Germans of different generations but for most members of minority groups in Germany today, the Holocaust does not seem to be part of a history shared with their ethnic German neighbors. Instead, immigrants from Turkey, the former Yugoslavia, or the former Soviet Union bring their own, often silent memories of racism and genocide. And yet, however difficult, the task of integrating these and other heritage communities into collective memory

practices is vital. After all, a key rationale for keeping the painful memories of the Holocaust alive is to promote ethnic tolerance and integration. To foster an ethnically exclusive form of collective memory in Germany would be a bitter irony. German politicians thus appropriately look to collective memory as a force of sociopolitical cohesion. The more inclusive a memorial or commemorative practice, the more it will contribute to collective identity as currently understood by the leading political forces in Germany. However, it remains to be asked: In what ways can Holocaust memorials stand for a diverse populace? What formal gestures, designs, or locations are most inclusive?

Efforts to memorialize the Holocaust have tended to assume a relatively homogenous German populace. The main distinctions have been made between categories of more or less active participants in the Nazi terror, and, with regard to those too young to have been personally involved, between those paying mere lip service to memory and those searching for some form of authentic memory. Coming to terms with the past has often been understood as a highly individual matter, centered on delving into one's family history and facing the possibility of dirty truths hidden therein. Most practices of collective memory have so far not sought to address broader historical implications of the Holocaust, nor to view the Holocaust in the context of the history of genocide. In academia, in contrast, such questions have been central to the fast-growing interdisciplinary sub-field of "genocide studies."<sup>6</sup> Here, scholars have begun comparing the Holocaust to other genocides, and the Nazis' system of persecution to occurrences of racist oppression elsewhere. The comparisons are useful because they point to historical patterns of eliminationist racism, and can thus help people identify and understand contemporary racist behavior. More than fifty years of German memory of the Third Reich has not, so far, enabled the lay public to deal effectively with the challenges posed by new immigrants, nor has it offered possibilities for other heritage communities to enter into the discourse of German memory. Holocaust memory has usually been regarded as an exercise in specifically German citizenship.

Such an exercise is the Memorial for the Murdered Jews of Europe, currently under construction in central Berlin. It was originally designed by New York artist Richard Serra and New York

architect Peter Eisenman, and has been under Eisenman's sole direction since June 1998. The memorial was selected by a jury of experts after two extensive design competitions. The federal government plans to spend a total of twenty-seven million euros on the project, and it has devoted two parliamentary plenary debates (in 1996 and 1999) to financial and design questions about this memorial. The government has also relinquished an area of 19,000 square meters—about two soccer fields—of public land between the Brandenburg Gate and the Potsdamer Platz to the foundation sponsoring the memorial. The area is near the former Nazi military and police headquarters and the Hitler bunker. It is also in the middle of the former “no-man’s-land,” or “death strip,” next to the Berlin Wall, thus connecting east and west quite literally.<sup>7</sup> The memorial design consists of 2,751 concrete slabs (officially called “stelae”) of differing heights, mounted in symmetrical rows on an uneven surface. An information center is adjacent to the field of stelae.

During the thirteen years that it was planned and debated, the Memorial for the Murdered Jews of Europe came to be associated with the unified government's wish to set a signal of integration: the integration of east and west German collective memory, and Germany's peaceful integration into the European Community and its leading role in it. The memorial also became associated with Germany's official commitment to a distinctly democratic form of collective memory, an aspiration shared by many other countries as well. From the United States to South Africa, democratic nations have in recent years increasingly sought to democratize collective memory by, among other things, apologizing on the highest political level for past crimes against minorities. Political leaders have used such official apologies not only to try to atone for slavery, persecution, and genocide but also to open the discourse of collective memory to more social groups. To incorporate minorities into the symbolism and language of collective, public memory, it has often seemed necessary to bring to mind past abuse and discrimination. Including disadvantaged minorities in the official language of memory will, so the hopes of political leaders, in turn create a less divided populace.<sup>8</sup> The construction site of the national Holocaust memorial thus includes a visitors' platform with information billboards, one of which quotes the government's aims in approving the

project: to honor the dead, preserve the memory of the Holocaust, warn future generations to not violate human rights, defend democracy and the rule of law, and resist dictatorship.<sup>9</sup>

The design of the Memorial for the Murdered Jews of Europe tries in various ways to give form to the idea of an open, inclusive memory. First, the plentitude of orderly arranged stelae suggests the image of a cemetery, which is widely understood as a site of mourning, and therefore intellectually accessible to most people. Second, the memorial's otherwise abstract design is intended to leave visitors a relatively large amount of interpretive freedom, and thus, to appeal to more people than would a memorial with a more determinate meaning.<sup>10</sup> Third, the memorial's design is experience-based, insofar as it aims to create a particular emotional experience among visitors who walk through the vast field of stelae. The memorial is large and stunning, and it alters the cityscape to a large degree. It is intended to elicit a somatic, corporal form of memory, based not primarily on reflection but on emotional experience. Experience-based designs have become quite common in memorials, museums, and historical exhibitions. They seek to circumvent what is seen as routinized or false practices of memory, and present a form of memory that is more tangible, tactile, and authentic in the sense that the visitor emotionally and physically participates in the memory. Whereas every type or size of memorial is meant to elicit emotions, the experience-based memorial foregrounds this intention, investing much effort and expense on an elaborate manipulation of reality. People visit such a memorial expecting an emotional "ride." The designer of the national Holocaust memorial expects visitors walking among the thousands of narrowly spaced stelae to experience feelings of claustrophobia and oppression reminiscent of the experience of Jews in the concentration camps.<sup>11</sup>

Despite the enormous effort and expense invested in its design, the national Holocaust memorial promises to fulfill the above-mentioned three functions of contemporary memorials to only a limited degree. Those with little knowledge about or interest in the Holocaust—which describes most young people in Germany today—are unlikely to have the intended emotional experience. And even if they do, whether 'feeling' history and memory stimulates intellectual reflection, or sets in motion unfamiliar thoughts on the subject,

thereby fulfilling the memorial's educational function, is entirely dependent upon the previous knowledge and intellectual inquisitiveness of the individual visitor. It is further problematic to assume that an experienced-based design can fulfill the representative function of the memorial, the aim of presenting a picture of German identity to a national and international audience. Providing each visitor with an individual experience does not convey how Germany today aims to deal with the Holocaust. Only the speeches held at future ceremonies at this site and the texts available in the adjacent information center will give an idea of what this representative picture is supposed to be. Will the information center be dominated by literature on the workings of the deathly Nazi apparatus, similar to the information one can obtain at the *Topographie des Terrors*, the *Jüdisches Museum*, or the *Wannsee-Villa*? Will it contain literature on the Nazi state ideology, the perspective of the perpetrators, and those aspects of fascism that some contemporary visitors would find attractive? Will it contain general literature on racism, genocide, and neofascism? For the memorial to fulfill its educational function, all of these aspects would need to be included. But for it to fulfill its representative function, a more limited selection would probably have to be made; one that clearly focuses on the commitment to honor the dead and prevent contemporary racism, avoiding any impression of, for instance, spreading Nazi paraphernalia or other items that could be interpreted as fostering neofascism.

Widespread efforts to define the Memorial for the Murdered Jews of Europe as a national memorial have not satisfied the wish to create more memorials and to diversify and democratize memory. This is especially apparent in the case of so-called countermonuments.<sup>12</sup> One type of countermonument is the "stumbling stone," or *Stolperstein* memorial. Rather than presenting a ready-made interpretation of German history, this type of memorial aims to make people think (as in *Denk-mal*).<sup>13</sup> It emphasizes the educational over the commemorative and representative functions of memorials, and it incorporates a view of historical education as dependent upon active, critical engagement with the past. *Stolperstein* are generally small, rather nondescript pavement stones or street signs with an inscription referring to a past event. Often several pieces belong to one memorial installation, spread out over a city's streets and building facades.

Rather than being located in a meditative, isolated place one has to actively seek out, such as a museum, park, or a structure on the outskirts of town, *Stolperstein* memorials are placed at unexpected locations. Through their plentitude, their inconspicuous locations, and their lack of explanatory texts or documentation, *Stolperstein* can, on the one hand, surprise and irritate those who pass by. On the other hand, these decentralized memorial pieces can blend into the city like pieces of furniture, becoming familiar, unnoticed objects to the people who see them every day.

The term “stumbling stone” or “stumbling block” is a biblical metaphor implying both a potential catastrophe, “tripping” or “stumbling,” and a potential journey toward righteousness, the stone becoming a cornerstone of the good. The stumbling stone educates people to do the right thing, reminding them of the law, rules, and etiquette of their culture. To the prophet Isaiah (8:14), the symbolic stone over which a wrongdoer or an entire people living in violation of God’s law must stumble is a reminder to live life in fear of God and a gauge that tells whether one has lived the proper life or not. In the New Testament, the stumbling stone makes those fall who disobeyed the word of God, but it is a blessing to the faithful, a cornerstone of their godly lives. In New High German, the proverbial *Stein des Anstoßes* reflects the biblical image of a stumbling stone. The *Stein des Anstoßes* is a difficult situation or person, to be handled carefully to avoid embarrassment.

The designers of *Stolperstein* memorials never claim to represent the nation in the sense of “standing for” Germany, but many of them do suggest that their memorials “stand for” and “speak for” the victims of the Holocaust. They often focus on specific dates of death, names of people or cemeteries, or cornerstone events in the persecution and murder of the German Jews. Because these memorials are comparatively inexpensive and require little financial assistance from federal or local governments, their designers have no formal obligation to support governmental efforts to promote a particular vision of national identity. Instead, they claim to offer a more open, more democratic path to collective memory in which citizens themselves develop a conception of national identity and historical responsibility from the bottom up.<sup>14</sup> In its title, design, and location, a *Stolperstein* memorial connotes a rejection of ritualized forms of memory and the



proverbial lip service. By breaking the conventions of Holocaust commemoration, *Stolperstein* memorials make a claim to a more authentic form of memory. Authentic memory is here understood as an individual, spontaneous act that comes about in some sort of unconventional manner. In this sense, an authentic act of memory is also a democratic act of memory, because it originates from individual citizens rather than being directed by state institutions.

The image of the stumbling stone has found appeal among several artists, sponsors, and commentators, most notably in Berlin, Cologne, and Hamburg. One of the earliest stumbling stone memorials that was unofficially given that title is the set of memorial signs (*Gedenktafeln*) in the Bavarian Quarter (Bayrische Viertel) of Berlin-Schöneberg. One-hundred-fifty metal plates and street signs were installed, each referring in some way to the expulsion and murder of Jewish Germans. For example, a plate on a park bench says: *“Juden dürfen am Bayrischen Platz nur die gelb markierten Sitzbänke benutzen. 20. März 1935.”* (“Jews may only use the benches marked yellow at the Bavarian Square. 20 March 1935”). A plate next to the entrance to a doctor’s office says, *“Ab dem 30. April 1935 dürfen Juden nicht mehr als Arzt praktizieren.”* (“After 30 April 1935 Jews are not allowed to work as doctors anymore”). The signs hardly resemble a traditional memorial. As a result, when the memorial was installed in 1993, the Berlin City Council received numerous calls from concerned citizens who were appalled at what they thought was a new outbreak of anti-Semitism.

Perhaps the most fascinating *Stolperstein* project to date is that of Cologne artist Gunter Demnig. Taking the term *Stolperstein* quite literally, he has since 1995 installed more than 3000 stones of about ten square centimeters in the streets of Germany, mostly in Cologne, Hamburg, and since 1996 also in Berlin, mostly in the ethnically diverse districts of Kreuzberg and Friedrichshain. New stones are added regularly. Each stone has a brass coating engraved with the name of a victim and the date of their deportation or death. The stones are placed in front of the houses where the people lived in at the time of their deportation. The stones are flush with the street surface, shiny, and evoke the idea of “stumbling” by inviting people to stop, read, and talk about the Holocaust.<sup>15</sup> Anyone can commission a stone for ninety-five euros, which includes all craftsmanship and

masonry as well as any necessary research. If there is research to be done, Demnig likes to enlist local school classes for help in order to educate young people and promote acceptance for the memorial.

The idea of transforming paving stones into stumbling stones has a predecessor in a project that was never realized because it took the idea of *Stolperstein* even more literally. It was one of sixteen design proposals for the Berlin Holocaust memorial submitted in 1997. The idea was to convert one kilometer of the busiest Autobahn in Germany, the A1, into a memorial by replacing the smooth surface of the Autobahn with cobblestones, thus slowing the traffic. A giant sign was to be put above the freeway with the title, “The Monument to the Murdered Jews of Europe.”<sup>16</sup> Another predecessor is the cobblestone memorial on the Schlossplatz in Saarbrücken. Artist and art history professor Jochen Gerz and his student helpers carried away more than 2,000 cobblestones late at night, engraved them with the names of Jewish cemeteries, and placed them back where they were—the inscriptions facing down. In contrast to these predecessors, Demnig’s *Stolpersteine* is a far more temporally and thematically open-ended project. It is also the project with the most community outreach.

Artists and jurors asked to pick a design for a memorial site always attempt to predict the emotional and intellectual response of the viewer—especially when the memorial is supposed to be combined with educational appeal. A prediction is not easy, especially given that future visitors will come from very different backgrounds. The most common solution has been to avoid the mimetic and choose ever more symbolic, abstract, and minimalist designs. In the case of the competition for the World Trade Center memorial in New York, for example, jury member James Young found that the one thing the jury agreed upon very quickly was “to move away from the literal.”<sup>17</sup> With the exception of the information center that some members of parliament insisted be included at the site, the Berlin Holocaust Memorial also employs a largely abstract design.

Demnig’s *Stolpersteine*, in contrast, are very literal in one way: A stone with a name and a date of death or deportation recalls the tombstone for a particular historical individual. The stones commemorate individual people rather than large groups or complex events. Similarly, in contrast to the national and international public

to which the national Holocaust memorial appeals, the intended audience of Demnig's *Stolpersteine* are individuals and small groups. In another way, however, the *Stolpersteine* are not literal at all. The stones are distributed throughout certain areas of Berlin, yet no explanations at all accompany this memorial. It relies entirely on already existing sources of Holocaust memory. It thus depends on an audience that is generally well educated, or at least somewhat curious and investigative.

There are only a few studies on how the people living near these types of decontextualized memorials actually react to them. Walter Grasskamp examined abstract, modern art in public spaces in German cities (*Kunst im öffentlichen Raum*) in his book *Unerwünschte Monumente* (Unwanted Monuments). He concludes that whenever people do not know what something means, or do not get enough clues to come up with some kind of interpretation, they become annoyed about the uninvited intrusion into their daily lives. One of Demnig's stumbling stones once elicited the following comment from an older resident: "*Ja ja, die Juden. Jetzt wird so ein Gedöns drum gemacht, als wären die alle unschuldig gewesen.*" ("Yes, yes, the Jews. Now people make a fuss about them, as if they were all innocent").<sup>18</sup> The stumbling stones have to strike a difficult balance between being a public monument, i.e. a public, official piece of collective memory standing for the dead and for the city's wish to commemorate the dead, and being located in the semi-private space right in front of people's doorways. As these doorways are usually the entry to an apartment house with several occupants, and as the sponsors of the stones most often do not live in that house, the tenants will at first have no connection to such a memorial stone. Forcing people of various ages and ethnicities to integrate the memory of the Holocaust into their daily lives—or to actively ignore it—does not necessarily have positive effects, as the above quote shows. The possibility of negative reactions to stumbling stones underlines not only the importance of a well-grounded general education in German history, but also the important role of more ritualized forms of collective memory that provide an interpretive context for the *Stolpersteine*.

In their open-endedness, their formal modesty, their focus on individual memory, and their potential to generate neighborhood talk, Demnig's *Stolpersteine* focus on the moral duty of remembering

and taking responsibility for that which lies in one's proximity: here, the former neighbors. In seeking to involve local communities, their design has been in a certain sense democratic. And by attempting to appeal to the moral duty of neighbors toward each other, Demnig's *Stolpersteine* can build multicultural communities around the common cause of collective memory. They gather a heterogeneous public around the perpetuation of a unifying story—that of the Holocaust—which can thus become part of political and multicultural German identity rather than being restricted to ethnic Germans and German Jews. Commentators have praised the communicative potential of this memorial, as each stone can potentially function as a “medium” (*Mittlerfunktion*).<sup>19</sup> Neighbors could begin talking to each other about the history of their apartment building, and schoolchildren recruited to conduct research for a new stone could learn about the history of the Holocaust. Whether Demnig's *Stolpersteine* fulfill the educational functions of memorials in this way, or merely annoy those who stumble upon them, depends on the success of these communicative efforts within each neighborhood. In addition, the stones' success depends on how well they can be adapted to recent experience. Although the historical reference of the stumbling stones in Berlin has been the Holocaust, the reference can change. The simple, modest stones, which fit everywhere and can be installed in very little time and at little cost, could be used to commemorate more recent incidents of racist violence. We might soon find stones for victims of neo-Nazi attacks, especially in predominantly Muslim districts such as Berlin's Kreuzberg. As an ongoing project with few limits, the stones could connect the past to the present.

The *Stolpersteine* have considerable potential to foster inclusive forms of collective memory, but like every other memorial, they depend on a public that they only partially help create. Demnig has individualized memory to the point of specifying one name and date per mini-memorial. He has diffused the location and the occasion for memory. The stones themselves neither educate their audiences nor interpret the data they provide. Instead, they rely heavily on other sources for that. Their implied audience is curious, enlightened, and self-reflexive. To educate, these memorials need communicative people and documentation to complement their minimal messages. Examples of such documentation are two books recently

published on Demnig's *Stolpersteine*. One of these books presents short biographies of people for whom stones were laid.<sup>20</sup> The other provides maps and lists of streets to help find the stones, describes some of the sponsors and their motives, and informs readers about the artist and the history of his projects.<sup>21</sup> In sum, though *Stolperstein* memorials only partially fulfill the need for collective experiences such as public ceremonies or rituals that help people feel part of a shared public memory, they successfully appeal to the contemporary association of authentic memory with an avoidance of ritual. They are potentially open to commemorate any victims of violence, and they may foster communication about memory by appearing in the midst of people's daily lives.

## Notes

1. Christa Wolf, "Abschied von Phantomen—Zur Sache: Deutschland," *Auf dem Weg nach Tabou* (Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1994), 339. See also the English edition: *Parting from Phantoms* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1997), 303.
2. *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary* (Springfield, Mass.: Merriam-Webster Inc., 1987).
3. In this context, I borrow the term "palimpsest" from Andreas Huyssen's work on Berlin's memoryscape: *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003). For an in-depth discussion of Berlin's efforts to translate history into an urban landscape, see Brian Ladd's *The Ghosts of Berlin* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1997). For a discussion of the efforts to represent democracy through architecture in the unified Berlin (the most prominent example being the glass cupola on the refurbished Reichstag), see Michael S. Wize's study *Capital Dilemma* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1998).
4. As younger Germans cannot be held responsible for the deeds of their grandparents, historical responsibility is often understood as the relationship of the younger generation to the witnesses, whose stories need to be remembered and retold. See Ulrich Baer, ed., "*Niemand zeugt für den Zeugen*": *Erinnerungskultur und historische Verantwortung nach der Shoah* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2000), 16.
5. Although the sponsors and designers of memorials might seek to "act for" those they claim to represent, the representative function of memorials themselves is best understood as a matter of symbolically "standing for" some group of peo-

- ple. See Hanna Fenichel Pitkin, *The Concept of Representation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967).
6. Memorials with broader, more general messages against genocide are often accused of skirting Germany's specific historical responsibility and are disregarded as mere lip service, fueled by dubious intentions of wanting to forget quickly (*Schlußstrich-Mentalität*). An example of such a memorial is the national war memorial *Neue Wache* in Berlin, which was commissioned by Helmut Kohl in 1993 and, in its original version, spoke out against genocide in general. It drew so much criticism that specific texts about the Holocaust were added to it. The government was later glad to be able to support the proposed Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe as a national Holocaust memorial.
  7. However, with its emphasis on the ethnicity of the victims, the national Holocaust memorial follows the tradition of West Germany's memory practices in favor of East Germany's emphasis on the political affiliation and nationality of victims. See, for example, Thomas C. Fox, *Stated Memory: East Germany and the Holocaust* (Rochester: Camden House, 1999) or Jeffrey Herf, *Divided Memory: The Nazi Past in the Two Germanys* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997).
  8. Hermann Lübke, *Ich entschuldige mich. Das neue politische Bußritual* (Berlin: Siedler Verlag, 2001).
  9. The exact citation reads: "Beschluss des Deutschen Bundestages vom 25. Juni 1999 (Auszug): 1.1 Die Bundesregierung errichtet in Berlin ein Denkmal für die ermordeten Juden Europas. 1.2 Mit dem Denkmal wollen wir: – die ermordeten Opfer ehren, - die Erinnerung an ein unvorstellbares Geschehen der deutschen Geschichte wachhalten, - alle künftigen Generationen mahnen, die Menschenrechte nie wieder anzutasten, stets den demokratischen Rechtsstaat zu verteidigen, die Gleichheit der Menschen vor dem Gesetz zu wahren, und jeder Diktatur und Gewaltherrschaft zu widerstehen."
  10. See James Young, *At Memory's Edge* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 212–13: "The architect prefers that the pillars, though stonelike, remain undetermined and open to many readings ... in their abstract forms, they will nevertheless accommodate the references projected onto them by visitors, the most likely being the tombstone."
  11. Peter Eisenman in an interview with *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 21 May 1999: "Und plötzlich, nach ein paar Metern, hast du Angst. Weil du alleine bist. Das ist der Terror der Einsamkeit. Ich will dieses Gefühl hervorrufen. Zwischen den Stelen ist es sehr eng, man muß sie alleine durchlaufen. Nebeneinander geht es nicht. Und man läuft ohne Ziel. Es gibt keinen Eingang, keinen Ausgang. Es gibt kein Zentrum, wo man ein Bier kriegt, wenn man es erreicht hat. Du läufst rein, du bist allein. Das ist furchtbar – und es trifft genau, was die Opfer des Holocaust durchgemacht haben."
  12. See James Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993).
  13. The historian Reinhart Koselleck even goes so far as to call all memorials stumbling stones, based on the etymology of "*Denk-mal*." Koselleck, "Denkmäler sind Stolpersteine," *Der Spiegel* 6 (1997): 190–92.
  14. In this article, I think about democratic memory with regard to designs. The possibility of democratizing the making of collective memory is also an important political question: Who picks the artists, the jurors? Who sets the parameters of the design competitions? Who decides on the funding? Is the public invited at

- any step in the process? See Kirsten Harjes, *Denkmäler, Literatur und die Sprache der Erinnerung: Kollektives Gedenken an den Holocaust in Deutschland nach 1989*, Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 2001. It is interesting to compare some of that data to the decision-making process on the 9/11 memorial. Instead of ten years of public debate, the thirteen-member jury in New York worked in isolation for six months, with as little input as possible from the lay public, experts, or politicians. In Berlin, the final decision was left to Parliament, showing the importance of this memorial's representative function.
15. Neue Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst, ed., *Stolpersteine* (Berlin: NGBK, 2002), 10–11.
  16. Every once in a while the media return to this serious but utopian alternative memorial. See, for example, Klaus Theweleit, "Für die Wirklichkeit des Unwirklichen." *taz mag*, 8–9 September 2001. "Aber ein besonders schönes Stück auf der Liste der nie zu verwirklichenden Werke werden Sie [Herz and Matz, the designers] geliefert haben: ein Schlag in die Psyche der Lenkernation, in den flotten Neuronenkern und seine *Bahnungen*, hinein in der Deutschen weg-asphaltierte Emotion" (original italics).
  17. James Young, quoted in Glenn Colins and David W. Dunlap, "Unveiling of Memorial Reveals a Wealth of New Details," *The New York Times*, 15 January 2004.
  18. Kirsten Serup-Bilfeldt, *Stolpersteine. Vergessene Namen, verwehte Spuren. Wegweiser zu Kölner Schicksalen in der NS-Zeit* (Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 2003), 9.
  19. Leonie Baumann, "Ein kleiner Stein zwischen Kunst, Geschichte und Zukunft," *Stolpersteine* (Berlin: NGBK, 2002), 8.
  20. Kirsten Serup-Bilfeldt (see note 18).
  21. Neue Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst (see note 15).