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Abstract

Over the past fifteen years Berlin's Potsdamer Platz has experienced a nearly unprecedented level of redevelopment, transforming it from a bleak, empty ruin cut by the Berlin wall to an urban entertainment and commercial complex. Housing international corporations and designed by a slew of world-renowned architects, the site has played a large part in the architectural discourse of post-wall Berlin. Critical scholarship concerning the new Potsdamer Platz, however, has largely neglected the more complicated and discordant attributes of the architecture and planning, regarding the site as a superficial image of contrived urban tourist space and classifying it in a singular capacity. Synthesizing historical and critical texts and images with experiential research and analysis of the architecture and spatial relationships on Potsdamer Platz, I examine the various complexities, dissonances and ambiguities present within the site and the surrounding context of Berlin. Through this exploration I propose a new image of Potsdamer Platz, one that is multifaceted, fragmented and ultimately defined by layered discord rather than singularity.

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