

Memory and Anti-memory

in the Project by Peter Eisenman and Jaquelin Robertson for Koch-/Friedrichstraße Block 5, Berlin

Carolina Ferreira de Carvalho,
Jorge David Morales*

Abstract This paper aims to explore the importance of memory and anti-memory in the project by Eisenman/Robertson Architects which won the competition for Koch-/Friedrichstraße Block 5. It argues that the method used by the architects involves a “psychoanalysis of the city”. To that end, it examines the concepts of history, memory and anti-memory applied to the context of post-war Berlin reconstruction. The study is based on texts of history, sociology, philosophy and psychoanalysis, as well as on writings of the architects themselves and studies and critiques about them. Thus, the paper aims to show the strong mnemonic charge explored by the project and the critical way in which the architects address the subject of memory, so extensively explored at the time.

Keywords: memory, anti-memory, Peter Eisenman, Jaquelin Robertson.

Memória e anti-memória no projeto de Peter Eisenman e Jaquelin Robertson para o Bloco 5 de Koch-/Friedrichstraße, Berlin

Resumo Este artigo visa explorar a importância da memória e da anti-memória no projeto vencedor do concurso para o Bloco 5 de Koch-/Friedrichstraße, do escritório *Eisenman/Robertson Architects*, defendendo que o método utilizado pelos arquitetos se dá por uma “psicanálise da cidade”. Para tanto, são abordados os conceitos de história, memória e anti-memória aplicados ao contexto da reconstrução de Berlim pós-Guerra; tendo como base textos das áreas de história, sociologia, filosofia e psicanálise, além de textos dos próprios arquitetos, bem como de seus estudiosos e críticos. Nesse sentido, o artigo tem por objetivo expor a forte carga mnemônica explorada no referido projeto e a maneira crítica com que os arquitetos abordam o tema da memória, tão explorado à época de sua elaboração.

Palavras-chave: memória, anti-memória, Peter Eisenman, Jaquelin Robertson.

Memoria y anti-memoria en el proyecto de Peter Eisenman y Jaquelin Robertson para el Blo- que 5 de Koch-/Friedrichstraße, Berlín

Resumen Este artículo explora la importancia de la memoria y la anti-memoria para el proyecto vencedor del concurso para el Bloque 5 de Koch-/Friedrichstraße, de *Eisenman/Robertson Architects*, defendiendo que el método utilizado por los arquitectos se da por una “psicoanálisis de la ciudad”. Son abordados los conceptos de historia, memoria y anti-memoria aplicados al contexto de la reconstrucción de Berlín pos-Guerra. El estudio cuenta con textos de las áreas de historia, sociología, filosofía y psicoanálisis, además de textos de los propios arquitectos, de estudiosos y de críticos del proyecto. Así, el objetivo es exponer la fuerte carga mnemónica explorada en el proyecto referido y la manera crítica con que los arquitectos abordan el tema de la memoria, tan explorado por entonces.

Palabras clave: memoria, anti-memoria, Peter Eisenman, Jaquelin Robertson.

The project addressed here is temporally situated in the early 1980s – in the so-called post-modern period, which spans from the 1960s to the late 1980s and is characterized mainly by revision and criticism of modern precepts. Josep Maria Montaner (2007) points out that one of these revision movements can be identified in the reintroduction of preexisting environment elements into the architectural culture, such elements being constituted by concepts like tradition, history and monument, which opposes the clean-slate doctrine advocated by the Athens Charter.

Such orientation is primarily present in the Italian circle of reviewers and critics, of whom Montaner (2007) highlights Ernesto Nathan Rogers, Ludovico Quarani, Giulio Carlo Argan, Manfredo Tafuri and Aldo Rossi. All of them somehow treated architecture and the city as indissociable, interdependent components. In his early critical studies, from 1967 to 1975, Peter Eisenman takes no position in this discussion on the return to the traditions and memories of the city, a subject that will not appear in his works until the late 1970s.

According to K. Michael Hays (2010), it is not until 1978 that the site becomes a major factor of practical signification in Eisenman's works, a date that inaugurated what can be classified as a second phase in his critical and design elaborations. And only in 1983 is the term "memory" more deeply explored and problematized in his writings: both in his introduction to the first American edition of Rossi's *The Architecture of the City* and in the essay for volume 53 of *Architectural Design* magazine, a text in which Eisenman and his partner Jaquelin Robertson expound the concepts and guidelines of their winning proposal for Koch-/Friedrichstraße Block 5 in Berlin.

The building, situated at the intersection of Friedrichstraße and the Berlin Wall, is part of this second period of the architect's work, when the internal relations of architecture cease to be his only focus of analysis. On the contrary, the "cities of artificial excavation" (a name that encompasses a number of projects with these same characteristics) are constituted by design explorations that, for the first time, lead Eisenman's attention to the objective city and its composing elements: site, history, memory and what Eisenman and Robertson will later call "anti-memory" (EISENMAN; ROBERTSON, 1983, p. 92).

Thus, in order to better explore the way in which the architects use the concepts of memory and anti-memory in their project, this article discusses what is understood by memory and its difference from what is understood by history, an important distinction in their discourse. For this discussion, these concepts were addressed mainly from the perspectives of the historians Pierre Nora and Jacques Le Goff, and of authors like Michel Foucault, Michael Pollack and Andreas Huyssen, as well as recent discussions on the subject¹.

Subsequently, the article presents general characteristics of projects that may fall under the second phase of Peter Eisenman's work, the "cities of artificial excavation", and explains why their mechanisms of action can be understood to come close to Freudian

* Carolina Ferreira de Carvalho is an architect and urbanist and an architecture master's student at the Graduate Program in Architecture at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (PROARQ/UFRJ), ORCID <<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0059-3611>>. Jorge David Morales is an architect and urbanist and an architecture master's student at the Graduate Program in Architecture (PROARQ) at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro - UFRJ, ORCID <<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3195-2525>>.

¹ T.N.: The quotations in English of works by J. P. Kleihues and P. Lambert were translated from Portuguese, more specifically from what was translated from English into Portuguese by the authors of this paper. For the quotations in English of the work by P. Nora, they were also translated from Portuguese, though in this case from the parts translated from the original French to Portuguese by the authors of this paper. For all the other works originally written in other languages, the quotations in English were translated from Portuguese, more specifically, from the Brazilian/Portuguese editions of these works.

psychoanalysis, based on arguments of Sigmund Freud himself and of Jacques Derrida. Hence the choice for the Berlin project (Koch-/Friedrichstraße Block 5) in order to show the manifestation of such resolutions in architecture, since it highlights particularities arising from the segmentation of this city in the post-war period. Also importantly, the study looks into the questions that led to the creation of the competition won by Eisenman's and Robertson's proposal, as such questions have a major impact on the resulting product. Its contextualization will allow debating the concept of anti-memory specific to the analyzed project.

It is worth highlighting that concepts and terms of psychoanalysis and philosophy were consulted for better understanding of the analyzed project. This is also due to the fact that these fields of knowledge allow comparing Eisenman's and Robertson's architecture to a kind of "psychical device" of the city of Berlin – its repressed archives brought to light by the duo's project. Thus, the study establishes a connection between Berlin's mnemonic charges, accessed through what is herein called "psychoanalysis of the city", and the project for Koch-/Friedrichstraße Block 5, whose architect is often known for the part of his work that is indifferent to cities' issues.

History and Memory – a distinction

History

In the project by Peter Eisenman and Jaquelin Robertson, the distinction between *history* and *memory* is fundamental, as also stressed by Pierre Nora (1984) in his *Les lieux de mémoire*, where already in its first chapter he highlights the differences between both concepts, which operate on the same matters: the past and the present. For the author, history is the reconstruction of what is already gone by; in his words, "[...] the always problematic and incomplete reconstruction of what is no more [...] a representation of the past" (NORA, 1984, p. 21). Still in the same chapter, Nora (1984) underscores the fact that history and memory were long tied to one another.

Jacques Le Goff (1988), in *History and Memory*, is another author who stresses this connection when he expounds the origins of the discipline of history, which he says emerged as an *account*, "[...] the narration of one who can say 'I saw, I felt'." (LE GOFF, 1988, p. 9), starting from history-account, history-testimony. However, with the advent of historiography, history gradually became an intellectual operation (NORA, 1984, p. 21), and the subjective character of memory moved it away from what was once a union. In other words, memory, he says, compromises the scientific objectivity which history was endowed with – a science that led Marc Bloch to consider history as "[...] the science of men in time [...]" (BLOCH apud LE GOFF, 1988, p. 17-18).

Both cited books are situated in a period of historiographical revision in which there is not only a return to the importance given to the past – which Andreas Huyssen (2000) refers to as part of a transfer of the focus that was placed on the future in first the decades of the 20th century and which is moved to the past, particularly since the 1980s –, but also the emergence of questioning about the perspectives that dictate the writing of history, as suggested by Le Goff when he refers to "the recognition of the historical fact as a construction, and of documents as not innocent elements [...]" (LE GOFF, 1988, p. 11). With this passage, the historian reinforces a question already raised by Michel Foucault in the 1960s, in his book *The Archeology of Knowledge*.

In that book, Foucault (1969) questions the linear and teleological conception of history and, of course, the way in which this discipline operates and deciphers its primordial source, the *document*. Thus, the philosopher argues that history traditionally played the role of keeping the monuments of the past and turning them into documents to then decode their information, which according to him is rarely verbal (FOUCAULT, 1969). The role of history then was one of archive only.

It is worth stressing that this archive was recorded from a particular perspective, the perspective that was in power to the point of having the authority to determine what would be archived and what would be omitted (SCHWARTZ; COOK, 2004). In contrast, the new disposition of history, according to Foucault (1969), is that of turning documents into monuments, thus deciphering what lies in their depths, a kind of archeology “[...] for the intrinsic description of the monument” (FOUCAULT, 1969, p. 8), which exposes its multiple strata.

Therefore, history is traditionally viewed as the bearer of instituted knowledge of what is recognized as the official past, endowed with a scientific objectivity. The recognition of the several layers intrinsic in the document – and thus in history, incorporating several other discourses and recognizing that they [...] [do] not ha[ve] only one meaning or one truth [...]” (FOUCAULT, 1969, p. 144) – is of paramount importance for Eisenman to perform his “artificial excavations”. As the name says, the architect’s excavations carry out the “archeological” (to use Foucault’s term) expedition in the mnemonic archives of the city.

Memory

As noted earlier, after the Second World War, memory came to be applied to discussions about architecture and the city. Andreas Huyssen (2000) argues that this interest intensified from the 1980s onwards, when there emerges a predominant regard for the past-present, no longer directed to the future.

Memory may be defined as the ability through which the past is retained and remembered. This faculty’s locus is the human psyche, which therefore leads to a subjective dimension. Jacques Le Goff (1988) defines it primarily as a psychical function of retrieving past information, or information so considered by the human being, and he makes a broader distinction between the types of memory that occurred over history.

Memory is a primary entity in cities and in society as such. Its relevance is denoted precisely when it is differentiated from history. It usually acts as an element that contributes to history and may remain connected to it. However, that does not change its autonomous nature. For Le Goff (1988), memory’s ability to place itself outside of time separates it radically from history. Thus, according to the orientation it takes on, it can move away from history or unite with it.

Memory, independent from history, allows for other facts to be seen: it cannot be silenced, and it often opposes or counters official history. Michael Pollak (1989) refers to this when he relates forgetting, memory and silence. Through stories told by survivors of the Second World War, the author shows that memories and memory-based narratives are not necessarily reflected in official history.

Memories that can be charged with pain or shame tend to create a history with gaps and silences that do not show the full picture that memory reflects in each individual and therefore in society. These memories are transmitted between generations, in social, political or associative networks in a way that he calls “subterranean” (POLLAK, 1989, p. 4). The author points out that such non-official memory opposes the organized memory, since the latter is restricted to the image elaborated by the majority of the population or the one imposed by the state. According to him, it is because of this opposition and this way of transmission that the non-official memory faces more difficulty remaining intact over time, and may vary until the day it can come to invade the public space and manifest itself.

Comparable to history, memory also represents the struggle for power, for what should be remembered or forgotten, for what is built in its name, what is silenced and what is shown in the public sphere. As defined by Pierre Nora (1984), it is ever evolving, subject to change between recollection and amnesia, between latencies and revitalizations, for it is life itself incarnated by living groups.

“Cities of artificial excavation”

“Cities of artificial excavation” was the name given to the series that comprised projects of what can be classified as a second moment of Peter Eisenman (1978-1988), which shows great attention and sensitivity to the questions of the objective city. The change in his design approach was such that Ignasi de Solà-Morales (1995) wrote an essay for the Spanish magazine *AV Monografías*, on its thematic edition on Peter Eisenman, in which he categorized Eisenman’s work until the 1990s in three different phases: *form*, *memory* and *event*.

Evidently, the phase in question here is the one regarding *memory*, in Solà-Morales’ words, as these projects are directed to the place, the archeology (in the Foucauldian sense). Importantly, however, the Catalan architect dismisses the possibility that these “excavations” could fall under what may be called contextualism (SOLÀ-MORALES, 1995, p. 22), for while there may be an interaction of the projects and their exterior, the reflections always start from within the architecture; besides, the elements of the city which Eisenman dialogues with are mostly pieces already absent from the urban fabric, no longer physically present (or at least superficially accessible) in the space.

Phyllis Lambert (1994), director of the Canadian Centre for Architecture, a Canadian institution that housed the exhibition “Cities of Artificial Excavation” in 1994, says that these projects’ starting point is the abstraction and piecing back together of the site’s particularities. In other words, the appropriation of active components of the historical formation of these places for creating the projects as “narratives” from a “fiction” created by the architect.

The concept of fiction stems from Eisenman’s investigations between the 1970s and the 1980s, when he tries to break with the mode of thought that he called “classical”, something he believes stretched from the Renaissance to the recent modern movement (EISENMAN, 1984). “Classical”, according to the architect, is everything that still follows classical antiquity. But because times move forward, as well as the values and messages

spread by architecture, keeping a form that is employed since ancient Greece, or even following similarly the way of conceiving architecture when societies have already changed, would be, according to Eisenman (1984), a kind of simulation (based on Jean Baudrillard's concept): a fiction in which one cannot distinguish the real from the unreal or illusory.

Based on this conclusion, i.e., that the architecture produced between the 15th and the 20th centuries was but a fiction, Eisenman proposes an architecture through *dissimulation*, and no longer through *simulation*. The distinction between both conditions, according to Jean Baudrillard (1981, p. 9), lies in the conception that the former leaves "[...] the principle of reality intact: the difference is still clear, it is simply disguised [...]", while the latter does not: that boundary is blurred, uncertain. For Eisenman (1984, p. 242), one approach does not oppose the other, they simply have different natures. Through dissimulation, Eisenman is therefore embracing the fantastic character of his projects, their *artificial* condition.

In turn, the excavations, as Lambert (1994, p. 7) properly characterizes, "[...] translate this investigation of the isolated, abstract, three-dimensional object to the vast plan of the physical and historical topographies of specific site." They operate through an interpretation approach similar to that of psychoanalysis. One can say that Eisenman excavates abyssal layers of the city, repressions superficially invisible, in the same way as psychoanalysts explore the depths of the human psychical apparatus.

"Psychoanalysis of the city"

It is argued here that Eisenman treats the city and its *traces* in a similar way to that described by Sigmund Freud (1925) in his text "A Note upon the Mystic Writing Pad", in which he compares the device to the human perceptual apparatus. This is because, according to him, the *mystical writing pad* was capable of keeping "*lasting traces*" (FREUD, 1925, p. 242) written on it, but it was also capable of discarding notes on its surface when they were no longer desired, i.e., when that space came to be requested by new notes.

Briefly, such properties are owing to its composition, as it is formed by a wax board superposed by two sheets that make up a thin, transparent sheet: the upper one is a piece of celluloid, and the lower one is a waxed paper. Thus, one can write and erase notes on the celluloid sheet without losing their record, which remains as a groove on the wax board, accessible only when the upper layers are removed or lifted. That is because the celluloid sheet works as a protective coating for the waxed paper, the equivalent of the "*protective shield against stimuli*" (FREUD, 1925, p. 243) of one of our psychical systems, the one that receives our perceptions, "[...] and can behave like blank sheet to every new perception" (FREUD, 1925, p. 243), but it does not turn them into lasting traces, that which is actually stored in our minds throughout our lives.

According to Freud's analogy, the celluloid is the equivalent of our shield against external, possibly harmful influxes; the waxed paper works as our actual receptive system, responsible for receiving perceptions; and the wax board is like our unconscious, "[...] 'mnemonic systems' behind it [the perceptual system]" (FREUD, 1925, p. 243), responsible

for storing the lasting traces. However much some memories may be “erased” from our receptive system so that it can take in other information, they remain stored in our unconscious and often can only be accessed through psychoanalysis sessions (FREUD, 1924).

After all, if Freud (1924, p. 219-220) defines psychoanalysis as “[...] the theory of the deeper psychical processes not directly accessible to consciousness, a ‘psychology of the depths’ [...]” and if Eisenman’s “excavations” were going beyond the visible, excavating “*historical topographies*” (LAMBERT, 1994, p. 7) to get to what “is not directly accessible to consciousness”, to the surface, would he not be doing a procedure analogous to psychoanalysis, a kind of “psychoanalysis of the city”?

And if in order to “read” what was erased on the surface of the mystic writing pad, it is necessary to view the deeper part of the apparatus, in this case the wax board; in the human mind the same process (of reaching the depth, the unconscious) occurs through psychoanalysis; then it can be inferred that Peter Eisenman’s procedure for excavating the deep archives of cities occurs through the same procedure. And the instrument used to access the superficially inaccessible layers of the city (as they were repressed, archived in a kind of urban unconscious) is *drawing*.

Eisenman makes drawing his main tool because it is based on it that he can operate with the absent elements of cities – existing, when the project is created, only as *archives*. K. Michael Hays (2010) argues that Eisenman, in operating *upon* drawing, makes it his site per se, not the position of his “object” in the physical space. These archives reproduce the lack of the form; form understood “[...] not as an object of architectural desire but as a setting for the emplacement of a Symbolic order that is also a realm of absence and lack” (HAYS, 2010, p. 63).

Based on a reading of *Archive Fever*, by Jacques Derrida (1995), one can interpret that Eisenman starts from the virtual questions of the city, from the “archive of the virtual” (DERRIDA, 1995, p. 86), since he is dealing with the “*actually absent*” (DERRIDA, 1995, p. 84) of the city. Thus, the architect operates with what Derrida calls “[...] *unconscious archives*, more generally *virtual* [...]” (DERRIDA, 1995, p. 84), a material that, according to Derrida, is not readable through the norms of “common history” (DERRIDA, 1995, p. 84), and must therefore be read through other resources.

Drawing not only allows Eisenman to access the “urban unconscious”, but also to “implant” memories that never existed in that space, in that urban mind, thus producing a *new archive*. For if Eisenman argues that what was produced in cities was already a fiction, then his acting upon them also occurs through the realm of the fictional. With this attitude, the architect takes to the highest degree a memory principle that Paula Uglione and Cristiane Duarte summarize in this statement: “What is produced in the field of memory, in memory archives, is always of the order of fiction” (UGLIONE; DUARTE, 2011, p. 93). In other words, Peter Eisenman, in the “cities of artificial excavation”, makes use of the virtual character of drawing, of the archive, to highlight the fictional condition of the matter of cities. In the Koch-/Friedrichstraße Block 5 project, Eisenman’s approach was no different.

Block 5

Internationale Bauausstellung Berlin – IBA

Peter Eisenman's and Jaquelin Robertson's artificial excavation in Berlin took place on the occasion of Berlin's International Building Exhibition (IBA, acronym for *Internationale Bauausstellung*) of 1987, which aimed at rethinking and rebuilding the historic centers of the western capital of Germany (divided in two at the time), destroyed by the Second World War. The event was the opportunity to put into practice the theories of revision and criticism of the modern movement, such as the synchrony between architectural design and urban design, thus bringing questions of tradition, history and memory back to the discussions about cities.

According to Josef Keilhues, director of IBA's *Neubau* sector, what was proposed was a "critical reconstruction of the city" by means of "[...] rational confrontation with [its] constituent elements" (KLEIHUES, 1991, p. 6). In other words, the emplacement of new buildings in dialogue with the existing city, rather than the negation of historicism advocated by modernism (KLEIHUES, 1991, p. 7). However, the "critical reconstruction" lies precisely in rethinking the city, in considering its preexisting features, yet making sure that each new building would not lose its singularity and fall into pastiche. For Kleihues (1991), such attitude would grant individuality to West Berlin, which Laís Bronstein (2004, p. 6) characterized as "plurality in totality".

In this context, various prominent architects in the critical architectural scene were invited to enter the competitions for the different areas to be reconstructed. Among them was Eisenman/Robertson Architects, which eventually won the competition for Block 5 of the social housing compound in the neighborhood of Friedrichstadt, specifically in the area of Kochstraße and Friedrichstraße, near the intersection with the Berlin Wall, a fundamental component to conceptualize the project.

In the process of critical reconstruction of the city, one of the main questions developed by Eisenman and Robertson (1983) concerned what they believed was a crisis of history: object of looting for the modern, and of fetish for the post-modern. For the architects, history had been reduced to a kind of nostalgia (EISENMAN; ROBERTSON, 1983), a desire for the past, which, in the case of Berlin, had been interrupted by the wars.

The emptiness of the city – resulting from a destruction that is not just the physical one, caused by war conflicts, but which extends to its trajectory – also manifests in interruptions in its own history. For Eisenman and Robertson, the void between two ends of an interrupted history is thus filled by memory (EISENMAN; ROBERTSON, 1983). "Where history ends, memory begins" (EISENMAN; ROBERTSON, 1983, p. 91).

Escaping the historicization of the past

Based on their reflection about the city's relationship with its history, Eisenman and Robertson highlight a need arising from society for an idea of past, a return to memory, which Andreas Huyssen (2000, p. 14) describes as the "[...] mass commercialization of nostalgia [...]", whose boom dates from 1970s, with retro fashions, the historicizing restoration of old urban centers, among other activities, which increased in the 1980s with the debates on and mediatic coverage of the Shoah.

The “implantation of memories” in the gaps of history that Eisenman and Robertson (1983) refer to can be related to the rampant consumerism identified by Huyssen (2000), who detects the commercialization around history and memory. Mass memories, which the author calls “imagined memories” (HUYSSSEN, 2000, p. 18), much easier to forget than lived memories. It is thus concluded that memory can not only be created from experiences, but also imposed artificially, in order to sell a past that never existed. This holds for a growing culture of copy, in which remakes and the fear of forgetting predominate. Huyssen also stresses that everything that is remembered is of a virtual nature, since “memory is always transitory, notoriously unreliable and subject to forgetting [...]” (HUYSSSEN, 2000, p. 37).

According to Nora (1984, p. 25), there is an appeal to everything related to memory, precisely because it was removed from social habits, hence its no longer occurring spontaneously. The consequence of this process that ceased to be natural is the constant fear of forgetting, the eagerness to preserve information in a paradoxical, information-saturated world. “We speak so much of memory because it no longer exists” (NORA, 1984, p. 19).

In their project for Berlin’s social housing, Peter Eisenman and Jaquelin Robertson explore critically this character of artificiality of memory, which can be classified as a mode of simulation imposed by the media. The architects operate through the exaggerated, evident employment of the fictional, which, as said earlier, is carried out through dissimulation. It will be possible to identify this in the way the concept interferes in the project for Block 5. But first it is necessary to present a few observations the duo makes about the place their project is planned for.

Memory of Friedrichstadt

For Eisenman and Robertson (1983), the city of Berlin is the locus of historic void, since it stands as a marker of continuity and, at the same time, of the end of the Enlightenment – whose rationality and discernment led to the two World Wars.

And the place designated for the project is the locus of memory: the site’s proximity to the Wall just underscores the configuration of city-museum that it grants to Berlin by encircling it (EISENMAN; ROBERTSON, 1983) and also by keeping record of major transformations that occurred there, such as the walls that delimited its boundaries in other periods.

But this memory is considered by the architects as endowed with an ambivalent nature: “[...] the memory of something that once existed and thrived, but also, in its peculiar condition, the embalming of something living in the present.” (EISENMAN, ROBERTSON, 1983, p. 92). Such memory, according to them, bears the condition of simultaneous inclusion and exclusion, of remembering and forgetting (EISENMAN; ROBERTSON, 1983, p. 92), since while it was the stage of a glorious past, exalted and which should be remembered, its current state is one of degradation, devastation – consequences of that very triumph, which led the city to shame. However great is the effort to repress the fact of the devastation, the memory, it remains archived, “[...] because a repression also archives that whose archive it dissimulates or encrypts [...]” (DERRIDA, 1995, p. 86). “In the conscious act of forgetting, one cannot but remember” (EISENMAN; ROBERTSON, 1983, p. 92).

Anti-memory of Friedrichstadt

In order to approach, in the Block 5 project, the duality they identified in Berlin's memory, Eisenman and Robertson resorted to the dualism also present in its history: on the one hand, the peculiarities of the local history, its singularities, which previously made the city *someplace* (EISENMAN; ROBERTSON, 1983); on the other, the city that became vague, belonging to the world, "[...] its specificity and identity [which] have been sacrificed on the altar of modern history [...]" (EISENMAN; ROBERTSON, 1983, p. 92), which launched the city into the crossroads of *every place* and *no place* (EISENMAN; ROBERTSON, 1983, p. 92), and it succumbed to the international style and to what is not particular to anywhere, to the generic.

With the intent at once "[...] to memorialize a place and to deny the efficacy of that memory" (EISENMAN; ROBERTSON, 1983, p. 92), Eisenman and Robertson thus conceptualize what they call *anti-memory*.

With the concept of anti-memory, the architects eschew a sentimental or nostalgic idea, which they believe pertains to memory (EISENMAN; ROBERTSON, 1983). For them, anti-memory avoids the search for a past event – which does not mean that it is linked to forgetting, it simply does not seek to restore something that is no longer present, something past (EISENMAN; ROBERTSON, 1983).

Thus, anti-memory operates on emptiness: it has no historical allusions and it "[...] makes no claims to a more perfect future or a new order" (EISENMAN; ROBERTSON, 1983, p. 92). It is a way of obscuring the reality of the past, "[...] which is in fact what renders the reality of the present no place" (EISENMAN; ROBERTSON, 1983, p. 92); as opposed to memory, which, through nostalgia "[...] obscures the reality of the present [...]" (EISENMAN; ROBERTSON, 1983, p. 92) – denies the presence of the Wall with a view to restoring the past.

In this project, Eisenman and Robertson work with both memory and anti-memory, precisely because of the opposition that both establish with each other and thus produce a "[...] suspended object, a frozen fragment of no past and no future, a *place*. Let us say it is of its own time." (EISENMAN; ROBERTSON, 1983, p. 92). An architecture suspended in time, which, based on the union of both concepts, is the creation of an object that relates with the past but does not seek it: it pertains to its time, so as to recognize its current condition, the production of a *place*.

For Francisco Lucena (2010), the suspended object which Eisenman and Robertson refer to is the reflection of the process of artificial excavation, the superposition of the various historical layers of the city through drawing. Here also, drawing is responsible for excavating memory and anti-memory. And this process is carried out, more precisely, using the grid. Drawing is what leads to the virtual, to the archived, but it is the grid that allows full manipulation of the elements for building the narrative, the fiction.

Grid

The grid is an imaginary pattern that Eisenman and Jaquelin Robertson use to articulate the whole project for Block 5. But besides that, it is the most important tool in the whole

process of excavation and superposition of the historic and mnemonic layers of the city. Hays (2010, p. 72) argues that the grid in this project is raised to the position of great architectural signifier, since it is at once the diagram of hypothetical structures of the place, the material that supports the building's roles, and a reiterative, self-reflective framework (the reaffirmation of what Eisenman and Robertson said about the project's being the "object of its own time").

And the historic and mnemonic layers incorporated in these several grids that superpose one another (as well as the city's history and memory) are derived from the elements of great meaning for Berlin, and are allies of the hypothetical structures that Hays speaks of. These are indeed the "implants" of memory, with one of them playing the main role in this excavation process: the Mercator projection. Its importance is related to the second nature of history that the architects identify in Berlin, i.e., the one that records a city of the world deprived of its singular, identity aspects.

The Mercator grid is "[...] a universal geometric pattern without history, place or specificity" (EISENMAN; ROBERTSON, 1983, p. 92), developed by the Flemish geographer Gerardus Mercator in 1569, during the Age of Discovery. It was the first representation to encompass the Earth globe and to apply a cylindrical projection to it (after the Earth was proved to be spherical by Ferdinand Magellan's circumnavigation, in 1522). With this "[...] most neutral and artificial system of marking [...]" which "ties Berlin to the world" (EISENMAN; ROBERTSON, 1983, p. 92), the architects articulate the layers which arise from Berlin's singularity. Through this process, they combine the real condition and the artificial condition of the city.

The artificial element, as said earlier, is the Mercator grid. As to the elements that grant particularity to the city as components of its history, they are under the strong influence of the Berlin Wall. These elements are the old walls that founded and used to delimit the city in previous periods. In the case of the oldest wall, it consists only in a trace, absent from the urban surface. As to the more recent wall, part of it is still present in the city, however, Eisenman and Robertson do not use it in its original form, but in an artificial reconstitution, "[...] a hypothetical rationalisation of what they might have been." (EISENMAN; ROBERTSON, 1983, p. 92). In other words, even in operating with "official" memories of historic elements of Berlin, the architects graft a fiction component and build a new memory from the anti-memory (since it is the Mercator grid which is the main anti-memory element, and which articulates these imaginary operations).

Eisenman's and Robertson's main procedure consists in the extraction and superposition of grids by extending the form of these elements arising from the memories of the city (whether "true" or not) and from its present condition. In other words, the conception of the project is based on the superposition of grids which arise from the absent wall of 18th century Berlin, from the fictional reconstruction of the founding wall (still present, though "tampered with") built in the 19th century, from the city's current urban fabric, and from the Berlin Wall itself – the greatest symbol of Berlin's physical and social condition at the time, as it bears the "[...] monument[ality of] the erosion of the unity of the city and the world, [which] forms a nexus of walls at different levels which become a composite datum of memory" (EISENMAN; ROBERTSON, 1983, p. 92). And above all these mnemonic substrates, the architects position the Mercator projection, "extruded" to the height of the Wall (3.30 meters).

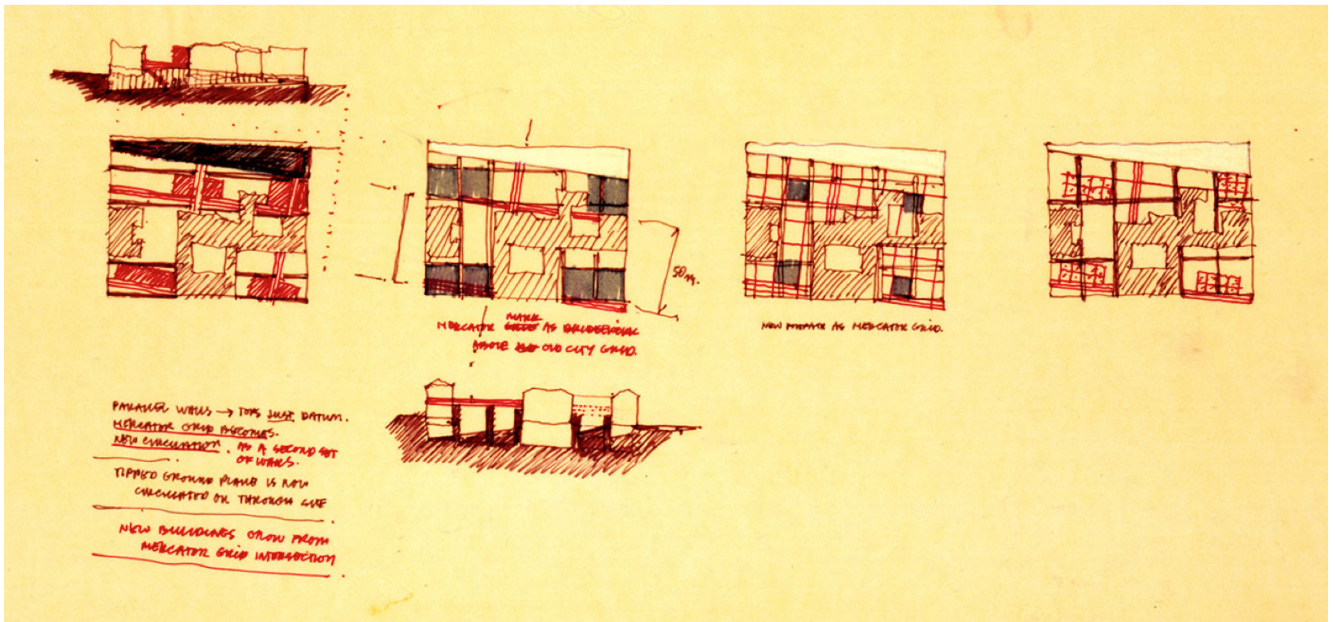
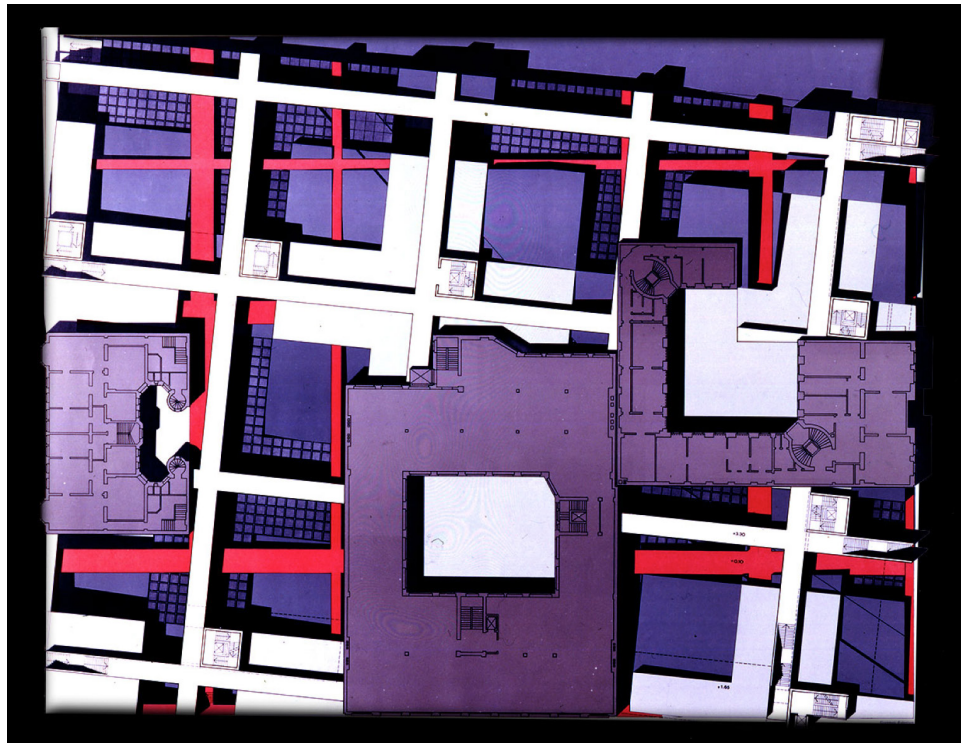


Figure 1: Conceptual sketches for Block 5 of the Koch-/Friedrichstraße housing unit, with the Mercator projection (visible in the figure as the red, more spaced grid, reaching the height of the Berlin Wall) placed over the city's grids, thus establishing what the caption reads, "[...] a second set of walls", "new buildings rise from the intersection of the Mercator grid". Such grids found the project and return on the layout of the façades. Peter Eisenman, 1981-1985. Source: <<https://eisenmanarchitects.com/IBA-Social-Housing-1985>>.

Figure 2: Drawing of the superposition of grids in floor plan. Peter Eisenman and Jaquelin Robertson, 1981-1985. Source: <<https://eisenmanarchitects.com/IBA-Social-Housing-1985>>.



Thus, Eisenman and Robertson perform a kind of cartography of the memory of the city (Figures 1 and 2). However, it is subjugated and erased by the presence of the artificial wall implanted (the Mercator projection rendered tridimensional). This almost illegible combination of grids thus segments a city already divided, leaving a permanent scar on its surface (EISENMAN; ROBERTSON, 1983). The superposition of anti-memory on memory.

Even though not fully, this project was actually executed, unlike other significant “artificial excavations”, such as that of Venice (1978), which resulted from a conference that sought to discuss new alternatives for degraded historic centers, but stayed on the investigative, virtual level; and that of Paris (1987), which was intended to provide a landscaping plan for Parc La Villette, in collaboration with Jacques Derrida, but whose original design was not concretized.

Briefly, the form that the building would have is the result of the Mercator grid rendered tridimensional, and it could be walked on as a raised garden at the rooftop terrace level (Figure 3). However, this part of the building was not executed, only the apartment block. The “scarred” memories, which were recovered from the city’s unconscious to then be subjugated to the artificiality of the “neutral” Mercator grid (EISENMAN, ROBERTSON, 1983, p. 92), are exposed on the façades (Figures 4 and 5), thus bringing to the building’s surface the memory contained in that historic locus. According to Eisenman and Robertson (1983), the perpendicular relation between the ground plan (superposed to the “mnemonic cartography”) and the façades (superposed by the same combination of grids) creates a reflection between them, thus “[...] creat[ing] [...] the void of anti-memory and a space for memory” (EISENMAN, ROBERTSON, 1983, p. 93).

Figure 3: The terrace garden whose footpaths are formed by rendering tridimensional the grids used for the project’s conception. This part of the building was not executed Peter Eisenman and Jaquelin Robertson, 1981-1985. Source: <<https://eisenmanarchitects.com/IBA-Social-Housing-1985>>.

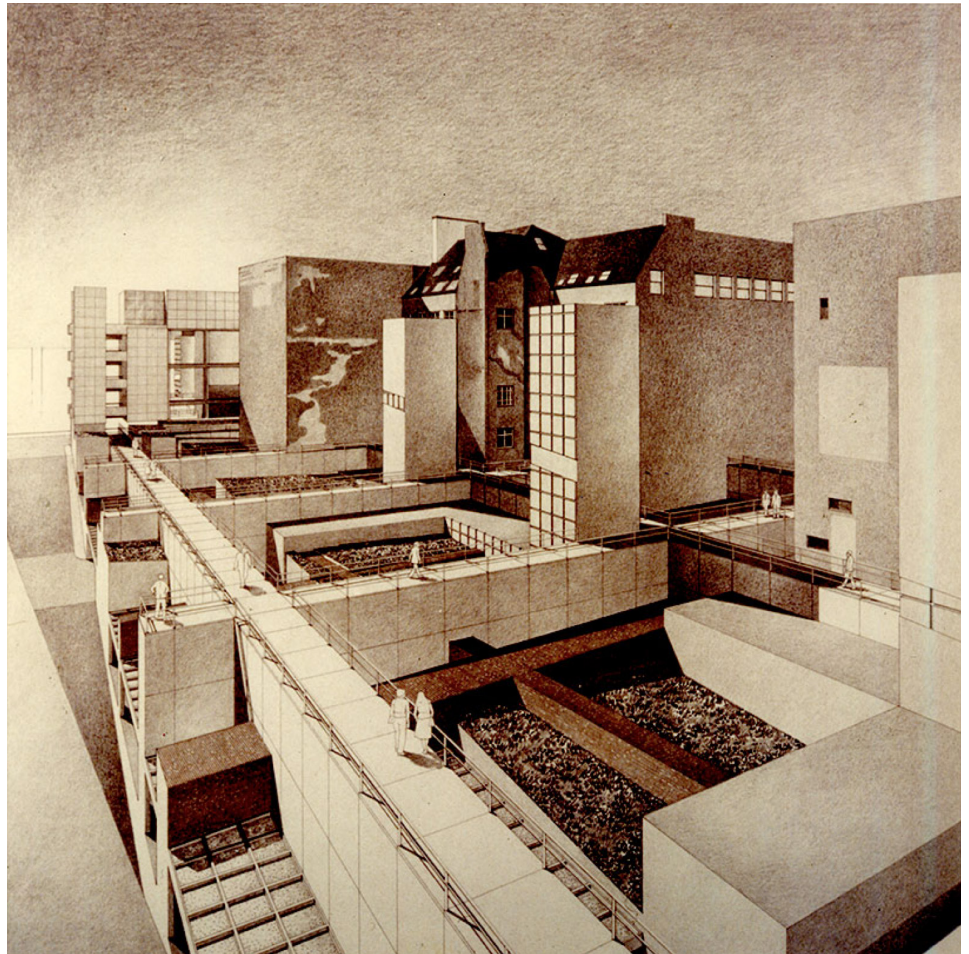




Figure 4: The grids which guide the project, exposed on the façade seen from Kochstraße at the transfer point to Rudi-Dutschke-Straße. Peter Eisenman and Jaquelin Robertson, 1981-1985. Source: <<https://eisenmanarchitects.com/IBA-Social-Housing-1985>>.

Figure 5: Detail of the grid transposed to the sash. Peter Eisenman and Jaquelin Robertson, 1981-1985. Source: <<https://eisenmanarchitects.com/IBA-Social-Housing-1985>>.

In this way, the environment created, particularly what would be the garden, invokes self-reflection, “it becomes a museum of its own archeology” (EISENMAN; ROBERTSON, 1983, p. 93). For the architects, this is the result of the dubious nature of memory and anti-memory: the fragments that become the whole (the restoration of Friedrichstadt’s singular elements, i.e., the fragments of repressed walls and the later action of reconstituting and extending them until they form a continuous grid) and the whole that becomes fragmented (through the superposition of the Mercator grid, thus suppressing the expressivity of the grid of walls).

Thus, the building is not directed toward the future, nor does it seek a past: it remains floating in its own moment.

Final considerations

In identifying that memory, like history, is something that progressively superposes on itself over time, so that, metaphorically, some memories lie closer to the surface than others, it is common to consider that the ones lying on a deeper layer are “forgotten”. However, the development of psychoanalysis has shown that the information and memories not easily retrievable from the human unconscious are not necessarily discarded, and can be archived in the unconscious, which Sigmund Freud called *lasting traces*, much more difficult to be accessed precisely because they are in a deeper layer of the mind, the one that also keeps traumas.

As discussions about the past grew, particularly around the 1970s and 1980s, influenced not only by a renewed interest in history in some fields of knowledge (such as architecture), questions of history became the object of extensive mediatic coverage. This context led to a commercialization of these studies on the past, and even the “invention” of some “memories”, which gave an artificial character to what was disseminated as memory.

In this study, it was argued that Peter Eisenman’s and Jaquelin Robertson’s approach to the restoration of the importance of the past was not carried out in a usual way. Instead of going against the grain of commercialized artificiality of history and memory (a possible critical attitude), the architects made their studies and projects an exaggeration of that artificiality. However, Eisenman and Robertson escape nostalgia and point to much more pessimistic paths than the nostalgic past disseminated (by the media, for example). And to that end, they created the concept of anti-memory, to move away from something sentimental in their idea of the past.

The main peculiarity presented in this article consists in Eisenman’s and Robertson’s interest, not in the superficial past, or rather the past that is visible from the city’s surface, but in the past that is absent, repressed, as a lasting trace in cities. It is concluded that in order to access the memory and anti-memory of the cities which Eisenman and Robertson investigate, the architects made use of resources of psychoanalysis – a tool that is also subverted, since they do not just bring to the surface repressed urban memories, they also manipulate them so that they leave their “natural” state to be placed at the height of an artificial and fictional condition.

Therefore, Eisenman’s “cities of artificial excavation” can be said to be the ultimate critique of the superficiality (both in the sense of a not very deep layer and in the semantic extension of futile encompassed in the entry word) of the notion of idealized, nostalgic past which is commercialized through the means of consumption. It is a critique which is not presented just on paper, disseminated in journals and books, but is developed into projects, and in the case of Koch-/Friedrichstraße Block 5, it possesses a form, it is concrete. A critique suspended in its time, which is visible to all passers-by, and was only possible through the excavation of memory and anti-memory by means of a procedure analogous to psychoanalysis.

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