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When Snow Falls on Berlin

A STRATEGY TO CULTIVATE THE INDETERMINATE SPACE

Berlin has absorbed different important phases of construction and demolition since the early twentieth century until today. The major development phase is due to the demolitions, caused by the war, which offered new small and huge open spaces in the heart of the city available for new appropriations.





Buildings of different periods are close to each other to form together the city of Berlin we can experience. In other words, the city is the result of the superimposition of different phases. Some elements – considering the built but also the voids – have persisted from generation to generation until today. They are witnesses displaying traces of the evolution of the city.

The area situated between Ostbahnhof and Warschauer Strasse, along the river Spree, is a perfect representation of the superimposition of different development phases. It is crossed by a fragment of the remaining Berliner wall, which has now become an important touristic attraction for Berlin. Some industrial buildings remind

the industrial past along the Spree while some houses are standing alone, without neighbors, untouched by the war. All these elements are wrapped by a large empty indeterminate space. The area has clearly the status of a space on hold.

However, the emptiness gives a quality to the site, which cannot be found in centres of other European cities. To preserve these specific qualities, the empty space needs an intensification of its particularities. It needs to be activated to not be conquered and filled with buildings and density, ignoring the importance of such an unusual space. The voids have to be defined and cultivated, in regards to their origins in order to give an identity to the site.



Before 1940



Between 1940 and 1953



Between 1953 and 1989



Between 1989 and today

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2a

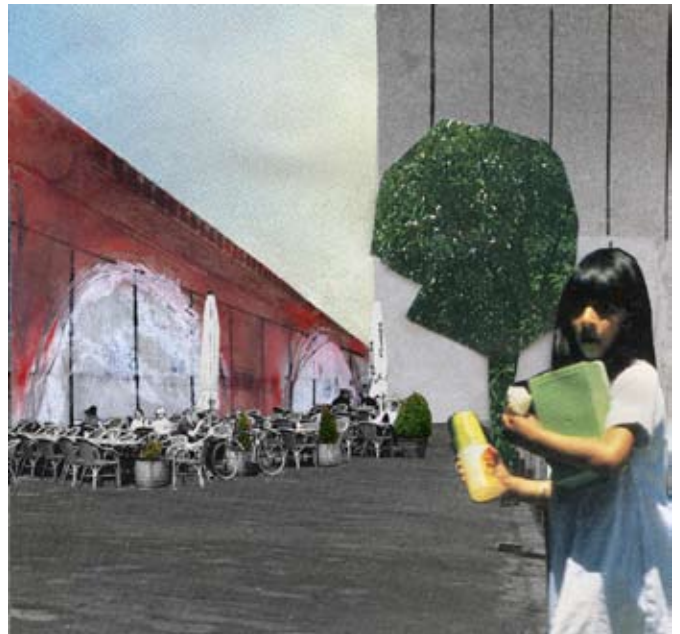


2b

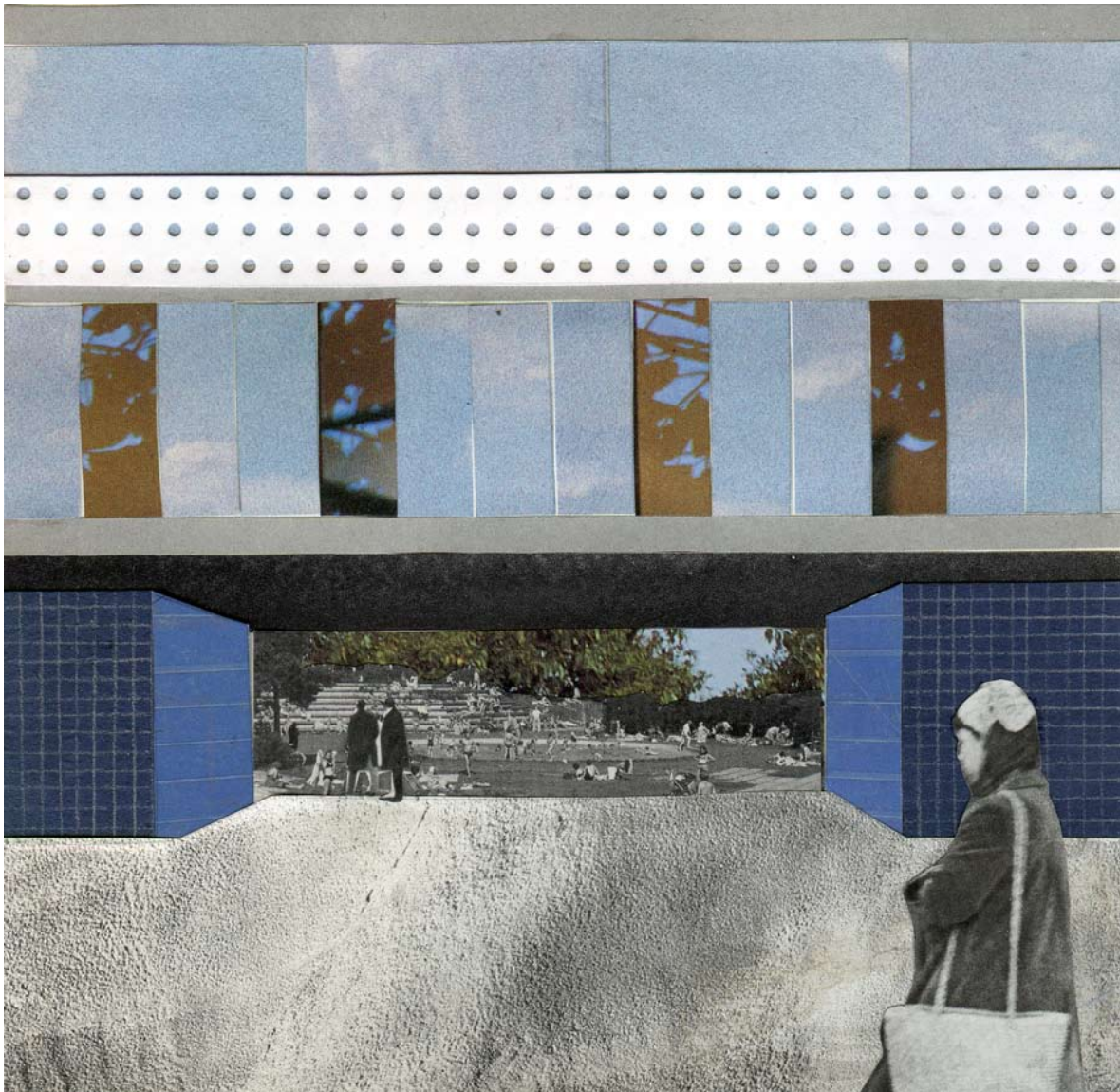


2c

- 1 Progressive transition of built form around the Ostbahnhof area from 1940 to today.
- 2 a Houses without neighborhoods.
b Abandoned industrial buildings.
c Superposition of historical layers.
- 3 Bars and restaurants under the rails.
- 4 Floating family housing.



3



4

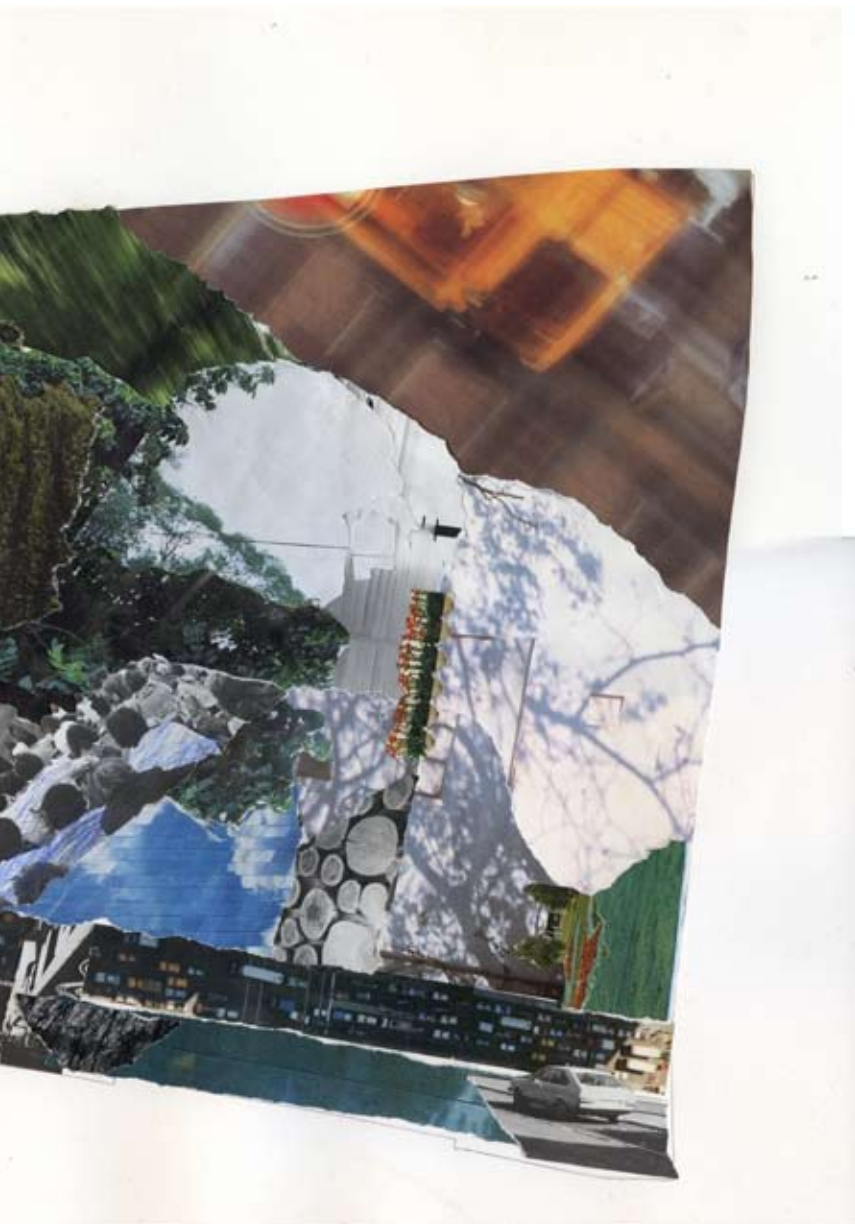


The entire site is covered with a uniform material to provide a coherent background for new appropriations of the space along the Spree between Ostbahnhof and Warschauer Strasse. It is in constant mutation and spatially indeterminate. Specific zones are formed locally by the creation of strategic poles – there is no structure imposed to determinate the events but the events determinate the structures.

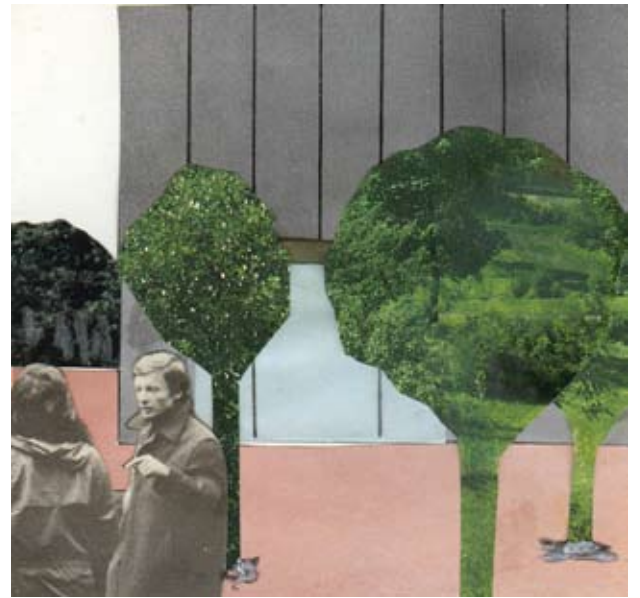
The poles generate particular atmospheres, which are sometimes new ones or an intensification of what already exists. The atmospheres are continuous and diversified at the same time. There is no opposition but rather coexistence.



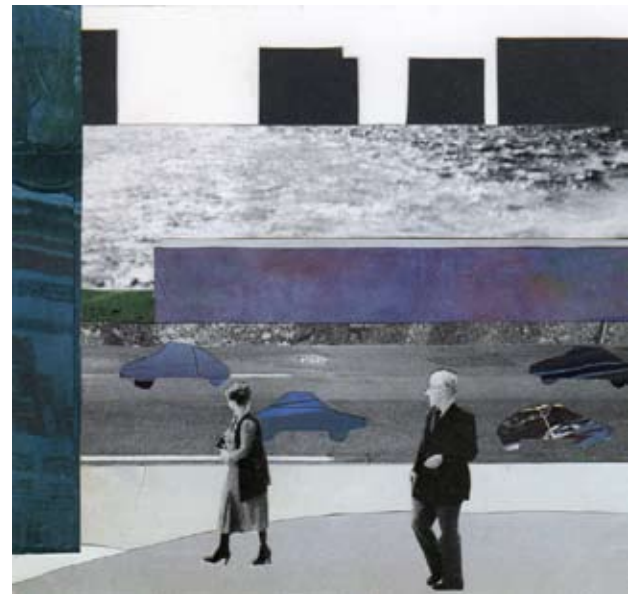
- 1 Atmospheric Plan of the site.
- 2 Forest around the O2-Arena
- 3 View of the river Spree from the top of the new hill.
- 4 Residential housing at the waterside.



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2



3



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