



The New Berlin: Memory, Politics, Place

Karen E. Till

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The New Berlin reveals a city haunted by ghosts from difficult pasts and "remembered futures," a place where past, present, and future collide in unexpected ways as individuals and groups search for what it means to be German. Karen Till skillfully moves through the spaces and times of a city marked by voids, ruins, and construction cranes to search through material and affective landscapes of intentional forgetting and painful remembering. In doing so, she deepens our understanding of the practice and politics of place making - and of how particular places embody and narrate distinct national pasts and futures, stories of belonging, and the absences and presences of social memory-work. Four locations frame The New Berlin: the Topography of Terror, the much-debated Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, the Jewish Museum, and Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp Memorial and Museum. Through these and other sites, we encounter people unexpectedly colliding with and evoking ghosts from multiple Berlins as they dig through social and material landscapes, claim public spaces, market the city, go on tours, or debate what national past should be remembered, for whom, where, and in what form. Through a complex interweaving of field notes, interviews, archival texts, personal narratives, public art, maps, images, and other sources, Till deftly describes how these places and spaces uniquely exemplify the contradictions and tensions of social memory and national identity in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Highlighting an interdisciplinary "geo-ethnographic" and nonlinear temporal approach to place making and memory in postunification Germany, The New Berlin introduces readers to people confronting loss and past injustices amid the construction sites and ghosts of the contemporary city.

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