"Between the Lines"

The name of the project, "Between the Lines," captures the essence of Libeskind's project. The driving force of the design are long parallel and intersecting lines without beginning or end that define sharply pointed, dramatic bodies or spaces. The zig-zag contours are derived from imaginary lines on the city map which connect the site with significant points in Jewish cultural history throughout Berlin, making what he called "an irrational matrix," resembling a distorted version of the Star of David.

The Jewish Museum was designed as an addition to the Berlin Museum by Daniel Libeskind. It is located at the southern end of the historic heart of Berlin, Germany. The museum occupies 150,000 sq. feet and is constructed of zinc-clad concrete. It was completed in 1998, and it cost $40 million.

Plans

There is no visual connection between the existing museum and the Jewish Museum. The visitors must enter the existing building and go underground to enter the new museum. Upon descending, the visitor is confronted with three corridors. Moving straight ahead takes the visitor to the main stair, which in a single run ascends through the entire museum, allowing visitors to choose one or all the levels. Another corridor, on a different axis, leads to a heavy metal door that opens to the base of a dark tower. This tower "represents the end of Berlin as we knew it," and is a singular gesture that recognizes the hundreds of thousands murdered. The third corridor leads to the E. T. A. Hoffman Garden. It represents the exile and emigration of Berliners. The garden consists of forty-nine inclined rough concrete columns with planting. Forty-eight of these, contain soil from Berlin, the forty-eighth contains soil from Israel. The number represents the year in which the state of Israel was formed, 1948.
Sections

The first section depicts the gallery spaces. These spaces are meandering zig-zags. The gallery spaces are intersected by a series of six voids at an oblique angle. Bridges are embedded in between the voids. On another axis, is the main stairs, which run through the whole project. The images show the spaces created by these zig-zag forms. The first two are courtyards commemorating important Jewish figures. The next one is a shot of the main stairs. The top image is of the E.T.A. Hoffmann Garden, also known as the "Garden of Exile". It can be accessed from the underground corridor or from the street.
Light

Daniel Libeskind successfully manipulated light to convey his interpretation of Jewish history in Berlin. Throughout the project, light is used to convey a different emotion. There are six void spaces that are dimly lit along an axis of the project. These dark spaces convey the time in history when so many Jewish people were killed. The gallery spaces are better lit through the use of skylights and slit-like openings. These openings represent the wounds experienced by Jews throughout history. They were derived from an "irrational matrix" that Libeskind created by superimposing lines from the site to various points of importance to the Jewish community on a map of Berlin. These openings also allow glimpses of Berlin.
Voids

There is a series of voids slashing through the galleries, perpendicular to the street. It is raw-concrete space, lit dimly by indirect slit-like windows and skylights. These empty voids represent the inexpressable "absence" of Jewish lives lost in the Holocaust. There are a total of six voids, but only four can be physically entered. The images above are the voids that are contained within the building. The first one can be occupied. The second one is called the Holocaust Void. It cannot be occupied, but can be viewed from upper floor through narrow openings. The diagrams above demonstrate the relationship between the various elements of the project: gallery space, circulation, the main stairs, bridges, the voids, the garden, and the existing building.