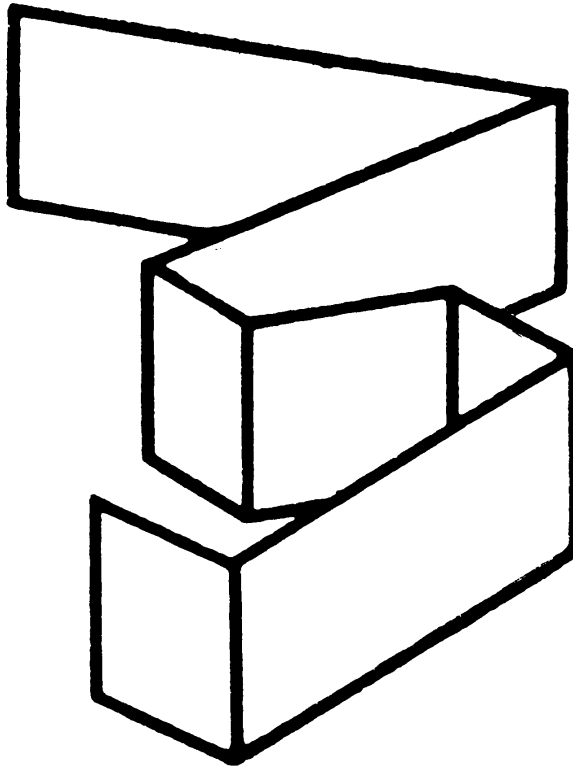


the Jewish history of Germany and of Berlin. I felt that certain people and particularly certain scientists, composers, artists and poets formed the link between Jewish tradition and German culture. So I found this connection and plotted an irrational matrix which was in the form of a system of squared triangles which would yield some reference to the emblematics of a compressed and distorted star: the yellow star that was so frequently worn on this site, which today is green.'

He went on to enumerate three other aspects and then went on to say:

Right
Jacob G. Tschernichow,
Study of a multiple-fold
from *Die Grundlagen der
modernen Architektur;*
*Ehrfahrungsmässige experi-
mentelle Forschungen,* 1930



'To summarize this four-fold structure: The first aspect is the invisible and the irrationally connected star which shines with the absent light of individual address. The second one is the cut through Act II of *Moses and Aaron* which has to do with the non-musical fulfilment of the word. The third aspect is that of the departed or missing Berliners; the fourth aspect is Walter Benjamin's urban apocalypse along the One Way Street. (Libeskind, 1992)

Was the star of David the natural springboard since the museum was devoted to the Jewish presence in Berlin or was it also at least sanctioned by a number of forms which were the subject of Paul Klee's paintings in the 1920s. Kurt W. Forster makes a strong case for the pictorial influence in his introductory essay in the same exhibition catalogue which transcribed Libeskind's talk. Forster adds a telling illustration taken from *Foundations of Modern Architecture* by Jakob G. Tscernichow published in Leningrad in 1930 and used in schools of architecture.

Doubts also arise since the design of the Jewish Museum was preceded by a work called 'Line of Fire' dating from 1988 in which highly jagged folds are cut by a straight line incision. The Berlin museum was also carried out concurrently with the design of the Felix Nassbaum Museum in Osnabrück which houses a series of paintings but is made up of the same characteristically vigorous and broken folds.

The fact that Libeskind uses an almost identical visual vocabulary for three projects in no way invalidates the architectural significance of his Jewish Museum or of the other two designs. What it may do, however, is to emphasise the inevitable need to make visual choices and that these choices are most frequently made on the basis of known and preferred forms.