CHAPTER 14

THE *BRACHEN* OF BERLIN

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In the architectural historian Reyner Banham's *Los Angeles: The Architecture of Four Ecologies* (1971), he identifies four loosely defined ecologies that encapsulate the experience of the sprawling southern Californian metropolis and its dramatic hinterland of desert, ocean, and mountains.[1] Each of his spatial formations—"surfurbia," "foothills," "the plains of Id," and "autopia"—denotes a distinctive facet of the lived experience of Los Angeles. If we were to apply a similar kind of architectonic typology to Berlin, there are "four ecologies" that immediately spring to mind: the extensive network of postglacial lakes that have been deeply enmeshed in public cultures of nature; the extensive S-Bahn train network, with its distinctive cream and maroon livery and instantly recognizable softly whirring soundscapes; the honeycomb-like structure of the city's inner courtyards or *Hinterhöfe*, with their resonant acoustic milieus that blur boundaries between public and private space; and the array of empty spaces across the postwar city in the wake of wartime destruction and geopolitical division that became widely referred to as the *Brachen* (or *Brache* in its singular form). It is this fourth "ecology" that will form the focus of my essay.

CRITICAL ETYMOLOGIES

The word *Brache* has long-standing agricultural connotations in relation to maintaining the fertility of the earth, denoting either a plot of land that

has been temporarily taken out of use or the period of time under which a field remains fallow. The Duden dictionary traces the word *Brache* to the Old High German *brahha* and to the earliest origins of German as a written language.[2] There are evident similarities between the meaning of the word *Brache* and the English *fallow*, the French *friche*, or the Italian *spazio incolto*. The practice of "resting" the earth is deeply woven into the history of language, especially before the chemical revolution of the nineteenth century and the steady intensification of capitalist agriculture. During the second half of the twentieth century we find that the word *Brache* has gradually evolved to encompass a wider range of spaces and meanings. The earlier agricultural emphasis has been partially displaced by a greater association with various forms of abandonment or "laying waste" that have left a series of anomalous sites in their wake.

The term *Brache* has been widely used in relation to postindustrial landscapes. In the Ruhr region, for example, interest in *Brachen* (or *Brachflächen*) is especially associated with the void spaces associated with industrial decline. The proliferation of *Brachen* in the Ruhr and other postindustrial landscapes has been produced by the closure of mines, factories, and other elements of landscape change.[3] The reuse of these sites has been the focus of sustained interest spanning new industrial strategies as well as elaborate forms of landscape design such as the Duisburg-Nord Landscape Park.[4] In Berlin, by contrast, the term *Brache* has been applied to a variety of often smaller sites forming a complex checkerboard of urban wastelands. Unlike their postindustrial counterparts these urban *Brachen* have been less closely associated with discourses of decontamination and land remediation.[5]

The gradual adoption of the term *Brache* in a Berlin context has accompanied the proliferation of wastelands left in the wake of wartime destruction, geopolitical division, and further upheaval following reunification. The recent use of the term in an urban context also resonates with a wider conceptual vocabulary for anomalous or transitional spaces such as the *Zwischenstadt*, denoting the "in-between city," first elaborated by Thomas Sieverts, the *terrain vague* described by Ignasi de Solà-Morales, the presence of *Baulücken*, similar in meaning to *vacant lots*, and the more ecologically inflected term *Stadtwildnis* (urban wilderness).[6] There is also a degree of commonality between an urban *Brache* and various kinds of wastelands that have been historically associated with unproductive or otherwise unusable land.[7]

CULTURAL AND SCIENTIFIC REPRESENTATIONS

In Berlin's case various kinds of empty spaces have clearly existed at earlier points in the city's history. In Adolph Menzel's painting *Hinterhaus und*

14.1. Lois Weinberger, *Brandenburger Tor*, 1994. *Source*: Studio Lois Weinberger.

Hof (Rear courtyard and house, 1844), for example, we can see an intricately portrayed area of waste ground that might a century later have been referred to as some kind of *Brache* or urban wasteland. Similarly, in early twentieth-century paintings such as Max Beckmann's *Blick aus dem Atelier, Eisenacherstraße 103* (View from the studio, 103 Eisenacher Street, 1905) we can identify a range of marginal or transitional spaces that are reminiscent of postwar urban landscapes. What is different about the postwar era, however, is the sheer extent of these types of void spaces and the degree to which they have been incorporated into a distinctive set of cultural, political, and scientific discourses.

The *Brachen* have been a recurring element in postwar art and photography. In 1979, for instance, the French artist Paul-Armand Gette's initial study of the city entitled "Some waste grounds in Berlin" became part of his botanical installation *Exotik als Banalität* (Exoticism as banality, 1980), which featured photographs of spontaneous vegetation growing in city streets.[8] In the 1970s the influential Berlin-based photographer Michael Schmidt also made a series of landscape studies of waste spaces in Kreuzberg, Schöneberg, and other districts, as part of his documentation of everyday life. More recently there have been depictions of anomalous spaces associated with the geopolitical division of the city, such as Lois Weinberger's intervention at the *Brandenburger Tor* (1994) where he is seen watering "weeds" in a former security zone (fig. 14.1) or Ulrike Mohr's study of trees growing on the roof of the former Palast der Republik in her *Aktion Restgrün* (2006) project that involved a temporary halt to the demolition process. The strange ecologies of the former "death strip" itself have also been a focus of attention: the film *Mauerhase* (dir. Bartosz Konopka, 2009), for instance, documents the abundance of rabbits within the relative safety of securitized zones. In some of the most recent interventions there is an even clearer sense of recording an aspect of the urban landscape that is rapidly disappearing. The photographer Florian Reischauer, for instance, has chronicled some of the last remaining *Brachen* in his "Pieces of Berlin" series completed between 2014 and 2018.

Berlin's *Brachen* have also featured in a variety of cinematic representations of the postwar city. A striking early example is Roberto Rossellini's neorealist depiction of Berlin in *Germania Anno Zero* (Germany year zero, 1948) where the extensive *Trümmerlandschaften* (rubble landscapes) form the backdrop to a narrative emphasis on everyday survival.[9] In Robert Siodmak's *Tunnel 28* (*Escape from East Berlin*, 1962), by contrast, we encounter a different array of empty spaces emerging from the intensifying geopolitical division of the city amid an atmosphere of Cold War paranoia. Over time, however, the cinematic resonance of the *Brachen* acquired new kinds of significance, especially in relation to the unusual landscapes within the

14.2. Still from *Berlin Chamissoplatz* (dir. Rudolf Thome, 1980). Courtesy of Rudolf Thome.

island city of West Berlin, with its marooned cultural and political configuration. In Rudolf Thome's film *Berlin Chamissoplatz* (1980), for example, we encounter the extensive wasteland next to the Berlin Philharmonie concert hall (fig. 14.2).[10] In Wim Wenders's film *Der Himmel über Berlin* (*Wings of Desire*, 1987), it is the assortment of abandoned buildings and spaces at the former Gleisdreieck railway junction that provides a poignant backdrop to his meditations on time and memory in the city.

During the 1950s the *Trümmerlandschaften* emerged as a kind of vernacular public space that became a source of inspiration for urban botanists who became fascinated by the unusual combinations of species, including plants normally encountered only in much warmer climates such as the Mediterranean. As geopolitical divisions made excursions outside the city more difficult, many botanists in West Berlin began to switch their attention away from the last vestiges of "natural" vegetation to be found at or beyond the city limits to the bewildering variety of plants to be found among the ruins and waste spaces of the postwar city. The botanist Hildemar Scholz, for example, carried out some of the first systematic studies of these new urban ecologies. Scholz refers to a "ruderalization of the landscape" associated with drier and warmer urban environments that had become increasingly dominated by nonnative plant species derived from

global patterns of trade and migration.[11] The Berlin-based botanists were transfixed by the presence of species such as *Dysphania botrys*, an aromatic Mediterranean plant associated with hot and stony ground that had rapidly colonized the city's rubble-strewn wastelands. Interestingly, Scholz noted the potential vulnerability of some of these rare or more unusual ruderal plants to future changes in land use. Since the time in which Scholz was writing, for instance, *Dysphania botrys* has largely disappeared from Berlin as most of its former sites have been built over.[12]

The strange landscapes of postwar Berlin have also been a locus of desire and imagination. The marginal spaces of the postwar city became "erotic refugia" for the city's emerging and reemerging sexual subcultures. Indeed, for the historian Jennifer Evans the spatial topography of the traumatized city served as an active dimension to the complex choreographies of sex and sexuality across postwar Berlin.[13] The material characteristics of the city itself have played a role in fostering specific kinds of consciousness and experience. The intersections between space and sexuality are captured in Frank Rippioh's groundbreaking film *Taxi zum Klo* (Taxi to toilet,1980), where the main protagonist leads a "double life" between a professional persona and the hidden realm of casual sexual encounters. Similarly, in the paintings of Rainer Fetting, who worked within the island city of West Berlin during the 1970s and 1980s, a variety of anomalous spaces become the settings for heightened forms of urban eroticism. Fetting focused in particular on the deserted nocturnal landscapes produced by geopolitical separation, including a number of works that depict human figures near the former Berlin Wall, such as *Van Gogh und Mauer V* (1978). In the 1990s, however, he turned his attention to landscapes in rapid transition following the city's reunification, such as the vast construction site for the new Potsdamer Platz quarter.

Reflecting on the cultural significance of some of these anomalous spaces we find that artists, botanists, and sex workers are among the social groups that had formed the most intense connections with specific sites. The distinctive *Brache* in the Lützowplatz, for example, served as an important location for botanical fieldwork over many years and also as a space for sexual subcultures within the city. The site was lost to commercial development during the 1980s in an early indication of the fragility of alternative social and ecological claims over space in the postwar city.[14] The intensive botanical study of these sites illustrates a contrast between ground-level cartographic projects such as the biotope mapping project initiated by Berlin's Technical University and alternative representations of land use reliant on satellite imagery, aerial photography, and other methods operating at greater distance from their object of study.[15] The street-by-street botanical surveys undertaken by urban botanists are more akin to a variety of

embodied experimental epistemologies that place greater emphasis on the affective dimensions of research practice. Botanical fieldwork involves not only walking through sites and using visual modes of observation but also a variety of more tactile or olfactory interactions with plants to determine the characteristics of leaves, stems, flowers, and other features. The marginal spaces of Berlin invite multisensory encounters with urban landscapes; rather than fragments of nature to be glimpsed at a distance, these spaces can serve as a source of reverie or transgression marked by the moment of stepping off the street or finding an opening in a fence.

The study of *Brachen* as distinctive urban biotopes has been marked by a tension between the empirical investigation of novel socio-ecological assemblages and a wider set of discourses over the significance of cosmopolitan ecologies for critical landscape interpretation. Scholars such as Gerhard Hard, Vera Vicenzotti, and Ludwig Trepl have provided a conceptual bridge between the study of spontaneous urban ecologies and a critique of bourgeois conceptions of nature. Hard, for example, contrasts ruderal ecologies with the nexus of activities devoted to the implementation of various forms of "urban greening."[16] Similarly, Vicenzotti and Trepl have stressed how the "urban wilderness" has posed a consistent threat to perceived forms of socio-spatial order.[17] In this sense, a critical reading of *Brachen* connects with neo-Marxian approaches to the study of landscape in terms of a critique of the production of nature within the capitalist city and the significance of marginal spaces within counter-hegemonic cultural and ideological constellations.

MODALITIES OF MEMORY

Each individual *Brache* represents a symbolic place of memory within a highly localized rather than international context. Considered collectively, the *Brachen* denote a regional cultural sensibility associated with heavily destroyed inner urban areas and the multiplicity of void spaces within the former island city of West Berlin. Although some examples of *Brachen* did emerge in East Berlin, such as the Cold War era Leipzigerplatz lying in suffocating proximity to the former Wall or the Stralauer Halbinsel and RAW-Gelände in Friedrichshain, both created in the wake of rapid deindustrialization after German reunification, these other sites never acquired quite the same degree of cultural, political, and ecological resonance as the more high-profile examples in West Berlin, such as the Südgelände.[18] Furthermore, since the *Brachen* were produced by a combination of historical trauma, geopolitical division, and postindustrial malaise, they do not represent fragments of history or meaning that are easily incorporated into a marketable variant of the urban past.[19] On the other hand, the association

14.3. Fragments of the prewar city from the Teufelsberg, 2015. Photo by Matthew Gandy.

of Berlin with an abundance of space after reunification has played a significant role in the burgeoning international status of the city as a vibrant terrain for art and culture.[20] It is above all the aesthetic and ecological characteristics of the *Brachen* that have been most easily incorporated into contemporary landscape design discourse, while the complexities of their material origins have quietly slipped from view. Indeed, from an ecological perspective the precise historical origins of these different sites are not necessarily the determining factor in the study of these diverse biotopes.

The tranquility of many *Brachen* provides a poignant contrast with the surrounding city streets. Perhaps even more tellingly, many of these sites were produced by violent events, so that the return of nature holds an ambiguous relation with fading tropes of collective memory. Following the insights of W. G. Sebald, we might postulate that in their first phase the city's *Brachen* emerged from a thanato-ecological constellation of rats and flies before a gradual "softening" of the landscape through the arrival of grasses and wild flowers.[21] One of the most intriguing *Brache* is the Teufelsberg (Devil's Mountain) formed from a huge pile of wartime debris cleared from other parts of the city.[22] In the 1960s and 1970s this expanse of stony ground became the focus of intense botanical interest with its tumbleweeds and other plants characteristic of semiarid environments. A documentary from 1972, for instance, depicts the botanist Herbert Sukopp pointing out unusual plants. On visiting the site in 2015, however, I found that much of the stony hillside had become covered in dense secondary woodland that at first glance appears to be an extension of the nearby Grunewald forest. This recently formed woodland is dominated by adventive species such as sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), a so-called archaeophyte originating from central Europe that had been introduced into most of northern Europe before 1500.[23] At ground level I could see broken tiles and other scattered fragments of prewar domesticity in every direction (fig. 14.3). These shards of memory reveal how this new urban forest serves to both reveal and hide the past. Although the site has never been built over, apart from the American spy station at its summit during the Cold War, the dense vegetation now serves as an ecological trompe l'oeil in relation to the wider urban landscape.

INCORPORATIONS

The existence of *Brachen* as anomalous spaces within a capitalist city raises questions of ownership and control. The tension between these types of spaces and the operation of the capitalist land market has long been a source of curiosity for artists and urban theorists. In a North American context, for instance, Gordon Matta-Clark began a project in the early 1970s based on a series of "unsalable" plots of land in New York City, such as residual spaces between garages and parking lots.[24] Similarly, in Berlin the architect Arno Brandlhuber documented fifty-eight interstitial spaces between buildings near his office in Mitte in the early 2000s in order to explore traces of DDR-era urban planning. Brandlhuber's compendium resonates with the interface between architectural theory and artistic practice that has underpinned a number of experimental responses to "temporary spaces" within the city.[25] For the architectural critic Alexander Koch, Brandl-

14.4. Birch trees in the Südgelände nature park, 2022. Photo by Matthew Gandy.

huber's inventory of anomalous spaces that survived the development boom of the 1990s marks "a decentralized architectural monument to socialist postmodernism" as if to underline the apparent incongruity of these different elements.[26]

In some instances the use of these *Brachen* as vernacular kinds of public space has been suggestive of a form of grassroots land politics that operates on a symbolic as well as material level. An interesting example is the Skulpturen Park Berlin project based around a program of activities focused on just one site in Mitte; the intensity of interventions became so elaborate that many people assumed that the cultural collective actually owned the site within which the activities were taking place.[27] On one level this efflorescence of place-based cultural engagement exemplifies interest in various forms of "temporary urbanism," but it also reveals the poignant divide between the lived experience of marginal spaces and the more abstract calculus of potential future interventions. Furthermore, an intense focus on specific sites can lead in markedly different directions toward either a process of "knowing into oblivion," as the anthropologist Eric Harms has articulated, or in rare cases such as the Südgelände former railyards toward some form of lasting protection on the basis of its scientific significance for urban ecology (fig. 14.4).[28] In the case of the Südgelände nature re-

14.5. The creation of a *Brachen* aesthetic using rubble substrates in the recently opened Park am Gleisdreieck, 2018. Photo by Matthew Gandy.

serve, its eventual creation in the year 2000 after some twenty years of local campaigns was enabled only by its status as a "compensation landscape" to be preserved in exchange for the loss of other marginal spaces of nature elsewhere in the city.[29]

The steady erasure of these sites in recent years underlines how the agricultural connotation of the word *Brache* resonates with a "capitalist fallow" in which these "dormant" spaces have been simply awaiting the "seeds"

of speculative investment. The *Brachen* have been marked by a persistent tension between cultural or ecological forms of appropriation and an instrumentalist impetus toward capitalist (re)valorization. In some cases, however, the cultural appropriation of the *Brachen* is more ambiguous: the use of ecological motifs such as ruderal vegetation has become a significant aesthetic element within landscape design. In the case of Berlin's recently opened Park am Gleisdreieck, for instance, specific types of substrates, such as *Ökoschotter* (eco-rubble), have been used to mimic the floristic diversity of the former *Brachen* and to encourage specific types of plants to flourish, such as evening primrose (*Oenothera* spp.), mullein (*Verbascum* spp.) and viper's bugloss (*Echium vulgare*) (fig. 14.5). This elaborate staging of urban nature illustrates an interesting dilemma: it may be easier to re-create aspects of urban biodiversity than it is to protect low-income neighborhoods from the disruption of speculative urban development.[30]

>In this essay I have suggested that postwar Berlin has been marked by a historically specific kind of cultural association with marginal spaces in which the *Brachen* became synonymous with the postwar city. But does a narrow focus on Berlin risk a degree of cultural "overdetermination" in relation to wider discourses about marginal spaces and spontaneous urban ecologies? If the *Brache* serves as a synecdoche for postwar Berlin, does this imply an aestheticization of urban space, thereby underpinning a certain kind of urban landscape sensibility that is to a greater or lesser extent unconnected with an analysis of structural dimensions to urban change? How, in other words, should we combine an aesthetic or ecological evaluation of marginal urban spaces with an understanding of their diverse origins? There might, for example, be a parallel here with the romanticization, or even fetishization, of Weimar-era Berlin. Indeed, if we look at the metropolitan space of Berlin in its entirety, the interest in urban wastelands has tended to be concentrated in a cluster of inner-city neighborhoods that suffered more extensive wartime damage and were also marked by their close proximity to the void spaces created by geopolitical division. In recent years, however, interest in the remaining *Brachen* has begun to shift toward marginal sites located beyond the inner core of the city, such as abandoned spaces associated with former airfields, factories, or other kinds of infrastructural installations.

As a landscape category the *Brache* clearly exceeds the specificity of named (and numbered) biotopes that have underpinned cartographic representations of urban ecology in Berlin and other cities. Technical sounding terms used by ecologists, such as *Bahnflächen* (railway lands), do not fully capture the cultural resonance of such spaces. In contrast, the emergence of more recent words, such as *Gleiswildnis* (track wilderness) used in landscape design, provides a better reflection of these unusual landscapes. The

biotope mapping undertaken by Berlin's Technical University is indicative of the sheer range of identifiable socio-ecological assemblages associated with urban space. Yet the idea of the *Brache* is ultimately closer to culturally inflected terms such as *Stadtwildnis* (urban wilderness) and the enduring fascination with marginal spaces dominated by spontaneous forms of urban nature. As a research object a *Brache* is an idea as well as a material artifact; although botanists have adeptly incorporated these kinds of marginal sites into novel classification systems, this represents only part of the story of their cultural and scientific significance. The interpretation of *Brachen* illustrates tensions between empiricism and abstraction running through ecology, geography, and cognate fields; the almost infinite variety of these sites not only disturbs existing typologies but also illuminates the complexities of place, memory, and multiple strands of public culture.

The study of *Brachen* illuminates how Berlin itself has been a focal point for the development of urban ecology. For the botanists working in Berlin the entire city was transformed into a kind of large-scale field station with individual sites serving as outdoor laboratories for research, pedagogy, and the ecological enrichment of public culture. What we might refer to as the Berlin school of urban ecology, associated with the city's Technical University, played a significant role in the articulation of an "observational paradigm" that can be differentiated in important respects from systems-based approaches to the study of urban nature.[31] In particular, the Berlin school has been marked by an intricate taxonomic impulse driven in part by the so-called Zürich-Montpellier school of plant sociology, which seeks to identify the presence of naturally occurring species assemblages. The key difference, however, is that the application of this quasi-Linnaean classification system is not concerned with "natural" vegetation types per se but rather with the spontaneous appearance of hitherto undescribed species combinations occurring within urban environments. For urban botanists each study site can hold ecological surprises: the chance arrival of the false acacia tree (*Robinia pseudo-acacia*), for example, has had a dramatic impact since its root system fixes nitrogen, thereby changing the characteristics of the soil and enabling dense vegetation to develop, including many species that would be unable to colonize the nutrient-poor substrates associated with *Brachen* during the early stages of their development.

FADING IMAGINARIES

There is a certain inevitability to the loss of *Brachen*, either through the appropriation of sites for urban development or simply from processes of ecological succession, that lead inexorably toward some kind of dense vegetation cover. The question of how to protect *Brachen* thus presents both

a political and temporal challenge. In the Südgelände nature reserve, for example, parts of the site are managed as "urban grasslands" to artificially sustain the diversity of flora and fauna associated with the original *Brache*. The practical dimensions to holding specific urban wastelands in a state of suspended ecological animation pose a variety of challenges for longer term approaches to the protection of urban nature. More recently new ecological discourses have begun to emerge, such as the recasting of cities as "national parks" in which questions of ecological connectivity, "green infrastructure," and enhanced access to nature play a significant role.[32] Under this alternative, less scientifically framed formulation, however, it is conceivable that the *Brachen* may play a diminished role in a very different kind of urban ecological imaginary. For many scientists the *Brachen* have served as portals into an uncertain future, revealing which novel ecological assemblages might flourish under hotter and drier conditions. Although most of these original study sites have now been lost, a cursory glance from the window of a moving train can reveal characteristic clusters of *Ailanthus* trees or patches of *Euphorbium* and other plant species associated with stony substrates, thereby serving as a constant reminder of the marginal sites of nature that have sparked enduring forms of cultural and ecological fascination.

From around 2008, in the wake of the global banking crisis, we can discern an accelerated process of spatial erasure as what was once a relatively cheap European city has been steadily reintegrated within global circuits of capital and investment.[33] Many marginal sites have disappeared along with the connective spaces that as recently as 2010 afforded a kind of alternate geography to the city.[34] Berlin is facing growing challenges from demographic growth, housing shortages, and rising rents, thereby instituting a new phase in the city's history that marks a degree of material and symbolic closure for the postwar era.

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1. Banham, *Los Angeles*.

2. *Duden*, s.v. "Brache (*n.*)," accessed April 10, 2022, https://www.duden.de/rechtschreibung/Brache.

3. On postindustrial *Brachen*, see, e.g., Genske and Hauser, *Die Brache als Chance*; Hauser, "Derelict Land in European cities."

4. See, e.g., Latz, *Rust Red*.

5. Höfer and Vicenzotti, "Post-industrial Landscapes."

6. On the etymological complexities of urban wastelands, see, e.g., Gandy, "Marginalia." The difficulties of translation between the German *Brache* and the English word *wasteland* are revealed in my exchange with Hanns Zischler in the documentary film *Natura Urbana: The Brachen of Berlin* (dir. Matthew Gandy, 2017). The question of which sites can be considered *Brachen* is clearly contentious. At the first screening of *Natura Urbana* in Berlin, for example, audience members were encouraged to provide written feedback. On one of the returned sheets someone had angrily written that the Tempelhofer Feld (on the site of the former airfield) is not a *Brache*, underlined several times.

7. See, e.g., Malm, "In Wildness Is the Liberation of the World."

8. See Gandy, *Natura Urbana*.

9. On the cinematic representation of "rubble landscapes," see Rentschler, "The Place of Rubble in the *Trümmerfilm*"; Shandley, *Rubble Films*.

10. The distinctive landscapes of Rudolf Thome's film *Berlin Chamissoplatz* are also discussed in Jasper, *Cyborg Imaginations*; Tomczak, "Zu Berlin Chamissoplatz 1980"; Uricchio, "The City Reviewed"; Vas, *Competing Cityscapes*. The film also forms the basis of the sound collage and music improvisation entitled "Berlin Chamissoplatz" composed by Matthew Gandy and BJ Nielsen for *Acoustic City*.

11. Scholz, "Die Veränderungen in der Ruderalflora Berlins."

12. I had enormous difficulty in finding this plant in the summer of 2015 until the botanist Birgit Seitz pointed one out to me in a parking lot. The scene appears in the documentary film *Natura Urbana*.

13. Evans, *Life among the Ruins*. On the postwar cultural recovery of the city, see Schivelbusch, *In a Cold Crater*.

14. See Lachmund, *Greening Berlin.*

15. An overview of the scope of the ecological work undertaken in West Berlin by Berlin's Technical University is contained in Sukopp, *Stadtökologie*. On the evolving conceptual framework inspired by botanical research in the city, see, e.g., Kowarik, "Unkraut oder Urwald?" and "Wild Urban Woodlands." See also, e.g., Kwa, "Visual Grasp of the Fragmented Landscape."

16. See Hard, "Städtische Rasen, hermeneutisch betrachtet."

17. See Vicenzotti and Trepl, "City as Wilderness."

18. See, e.g., Jacek Slaski, "12 berühmte Brachen in Berlin: So leer war die Stadt," *tipBerlin*, December 28, 2023.

19. Binder, "Capital under Construction."

20. See Schäfer, "Raumproduktion zwischen Aktivismus und Instrumentalisierung"; Teutsch, *Unverfugt*.

21. Sebald, *On the Natural History of Destruction*.

22. See the chapter by Brantz, in this volume.

23. This historical marker is widely used in botany to underline the global

ecological significance of European contact with the New World. It is, of course, a highly Eurocentric reading of ecological time.

24. Kastner, Najafi, and Richard, *Odd Lots*.

25. The project was featured, for example, in the Make City festival held in Berlin in 2015, billed as "A festival for architecture and urban alternatives."

26. Koch, "Option Lots."

27. See Schäfer, "Raumproduktion zwischen Aktivismus und Instrumentalisierung"; Schroeder, *Skulpturenpark Berlin_Zentrum*.

28. See, e.g., Harms, "Knowing into Oblivion." See also Cotoi, "We Should Have Asked What Year It Was!"

29. See Kowarik, "Südgelände, Berlin"; Lachmund, *Greening Berlin*; Jasper, "Berlin, a Ruderal Urbanism."

30. See Gandy, "At a Tangent"; Ferrari "Along the Western Margin of Park am Gleisdreieck."

31. See Gandy, *Natura Urbana*. Interestingly, the focal point for the emergence of urban ecology in the DDR had tended to be concentrated in cities such as Dresden and Leipzig rather than in East Berlin with more of an entomological focus led by scientists such as Bernhard Klausnitzer. See, e.g., Klausnitzer, Ökologie der Großstadtfauna.

32. The recently created Berlin National Park City initiative is a cooperation between Blühender Campus FU and the River Collective. In February 2021 a forum was held in Berlin entitled "Wildnisstadt Berlin: What If Berlin Was a National Park City?"

33. Stephan Radomsky, "In Berlin haben es Mieter noch schwerer als in München," *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, September 22, 2021.

34. Gandy, "Interstitial Landscapes" and "Ghosts and Monsters."

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