

Mass Flow

Berlin Central Station (Hauptbahnhof)

T. Ivey, S. Fetten, F. La Vigna, T. Rafati, Z. Zavodsky

29

With about 350,000 riders on 1,800 trains daily, and 44,000 square meters of restaurants and retail space, the Berlin Central Station (Hauptbahnhof) is the largest crossing station in Europe. Its central location in the city--the site of the former Lehrter Bahnhof--and proximity to tourist attractions has made the station an infrastructural landmark for a reunified Berlin.

Five people, with different backgrounds, and seven languages at their disposal, spent three days observing and listening to the station and its temporary inhabitants. In addition to the scale of the individual or group, we investigated the relationship between the building, the different forms of transportation it connects and the city it supports. Two full days were spent on site, attempting to inhabit the interior and exterior, observing, following, recording, and utilizing.





The station is a large system in perpetual motion comprised of both organic and inorganic elements constantly interacting and communicating. The energy in the station is abundant, almost overwhelming. Our exhibit attempts to capture and portray the spirit of this system: A one square meter skeleton frame was constructed to represent the structural containment of the energy created by the people and transportation. We projected a six-minute video through the construction. The video was a series of brief stories of people in the station collected as re-enactments of the energy flow within the system: a heavy-set security officer strolling, a mesmerized child on his way to McDonald's, an elderly woman walking through with her luggage from one bus terminal to another on opposite ends of the station, and a middle-aged woman rushing to catch the next train. The audio track, recorded separately, spans across the entire video in order to depict the distinct but connected and overlapping layers within the system.



31



space. various spaces. big. small. crowded. empty
observing the place under the criteria of movement. mass-individual. flow-personal story.
entering staying changing leaving. switching station *umsteigen*.
flow. stream

melting with space. passive movement up down. escalator.
level -2 -1 0 +1 +2. 3 *achsen*. *kreuzbahnhof*. simultaneous movement. crossing. trains streams people. crossing. *velocita'* different stories pathsstreamlines
leading to configuration. breaking configuration. personal story. entering leaving. inside outside. circulation. loop. INFINITY. stream.
speed. different rates. rushing running *hetzen eile*. Pause. sitting. napping. reading. standing. waiting. *attesa*.
entrer rester changer sortir
sounds voices colours signs. change. entering by train leaving directly. compare for shopping. entering through entrance *den zug nehmen*.
information colours signs. taking the s-bahn on level +2. taking an ice on level -2. *zu mcdonalds* on level -2 *eine pommes kaufen*.
remaining inside
voci suoni colori segnali. taking the elevator from level 0 to level +2 arriving on level +2 jumping in the s-bahn.

getting out of the s-bahn on level +2 taking the elevator to level -1 *coffe*. *voix bruit couleurs signes*.
entering the city
taking the r-bahn on level -2. taking the elevator from level 0 to level +2. arriving on level +2 taking the escalator to level +1 taking the elevator to level -1.
getting fries at mcdonald rushing. to the escalator catching the s-bahn on level +2. leaving the taxi enter the main entrance on level 0 going up to level +1
grabbing a coffee waiting in line getting a ticket hurrying. to the escalator to level -2 jumping in the ice. doors close.
leaving the city
buying shoes. transfer. entering by train going out directly. *geräusche stimmen farben schilder*. pass by for shopping entering
taking the train. taking the s-bahn on level +2. taking an ice on level -2. taking the r-bahn on level -2. taking the elevator from level 0 to level +2.
arriving on level +2 taking the escalator to level +1 taking the elevator to level -1 *schrippen bei kamps*. rushing to the escalator. catching the s-bahn on level +2.
leaving the taxi. enter. passing through. taking the bus. arriving on level +2 taking the escalator to level +1 taking the elevator to level -1 grabbing a coffee
waiting in line getting a ticket hurry. to the escalator to level -2 jumping in the ice. *türen schließen*.
collapse of perception

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