



Sandra Jasper  
PhD Candidate  
UCL Urban Laboratory  
University College London

s.jasper@ucl.ac.uk  
www.ucl.ac.uk/urbanlab

## *Phantom limbs* – encountering the hidden spaces of the former West Berlin

An exploration retracing abandoned transport infrastructures above and beneath the surface.

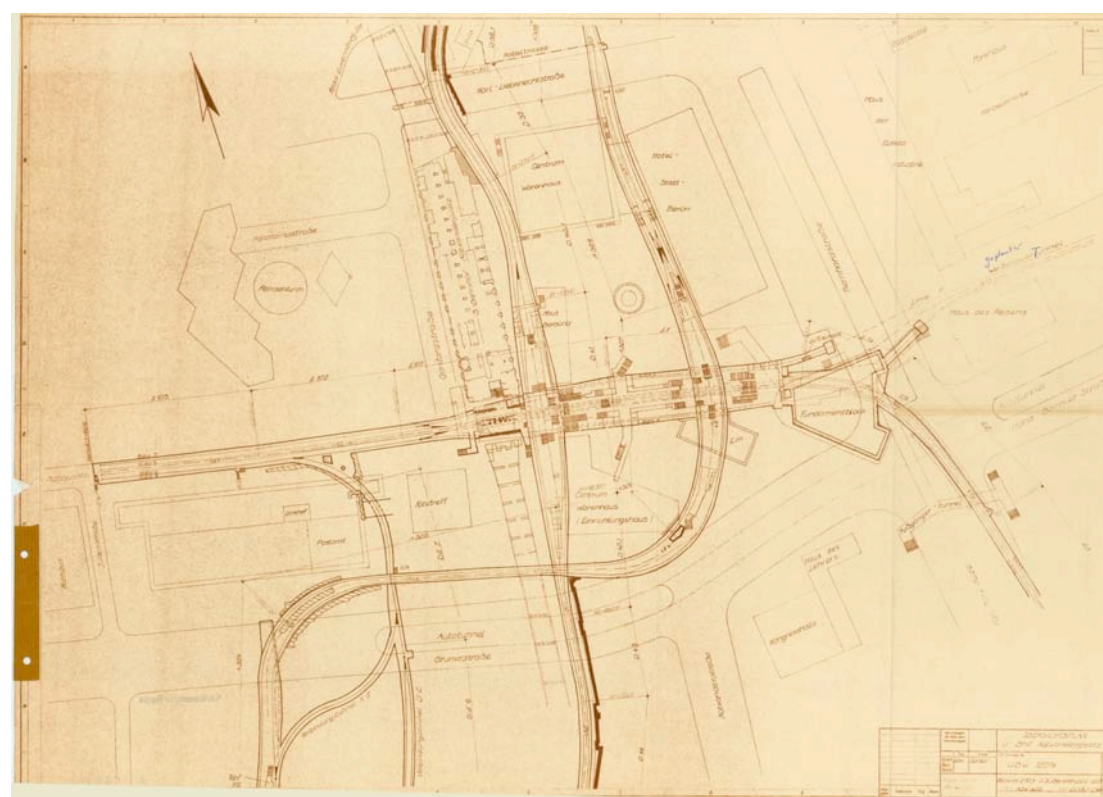
Looking at the city through its hidden infrastructures opens up new perspectives on its spatial history. In West Berlin, abandoned and marginal spaces emerged alongside transport infrastructures as a result of the city's geopolitical division.

As part of my PhD project, I examine the interconnected history of the divided city's infrastructure in order to question popular notions of West Berlin's "island" status during the Cold War and to shed new light on scholarly metaphors deployed to examine the city. Much of the vocabulary currently employed to account for those spaces that emerge at the intersection of landscape and infrastructure is concerned with how to utilize these "leftover", "waste", or "loose" spaces in the future, but does rarely account for the experience of these specific urban landscapes. Incorporating the phenomenon of phantom limbs into our understanding of the body-city nexus, enables us to explore questions of cultural memory and sensory experience in relation to those invisible spaces hidden above or beneath the surface of a city that – in the case of West Berlin – emerged through intersecting processes of geopolitical division and cycles of investment and disinvestment in urban infrastructures.

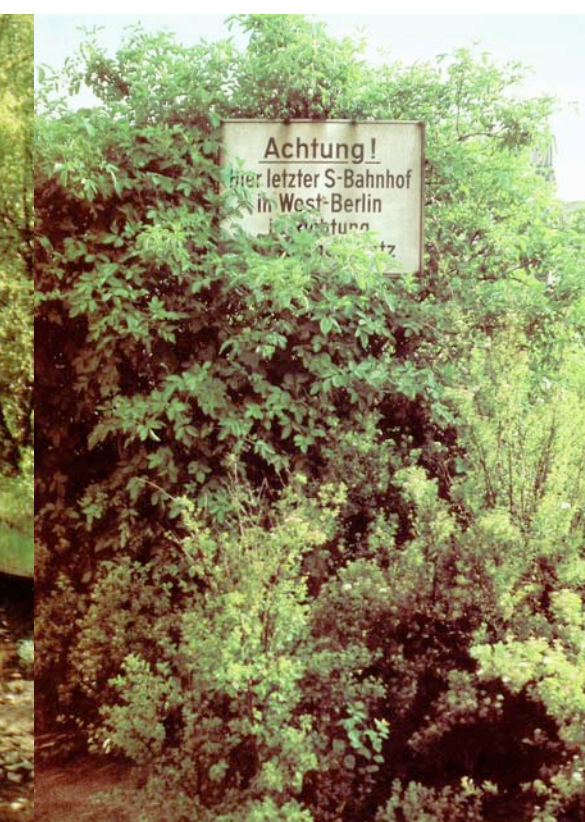
Moreover, a closer investigation of Berlin's "phantom limbs" also opens up ways of charting the corporeal experience of space and those sensory aspects of the body's spatial experience that go beyond the visual realm. Revisiting sound art projects of the early 1980s that turned their attention to West Berlin's derelict transport infrastructures, opens up reflections on the wider historical, political and cultural contexts in which these urban landscapes were experienced.



Acoustic landscapes - Memories of mobility in Bill Fontana's sound installation "Entfernte Zuege" (distant trains) 1984, Anhalter Bahnhof, Berlin



Traces in maps and plans- the unfinished underground line U10/ line F, Landesarchiv Berlin



Transport biotopes - photographic studies at Anhalter Bahnhof, Berlin, 1982



*Sandra Jasper* is a doctoral student at the UCL Urban Laboratory. Her research focusses on the body-city nexus and embodied encounters with space in the late-modern metropolis. Her PhD thesis *Cyborg imaginations: nature, technology and urban space in West Berlin (1948-1984)* draws from diverse fields, such as sound art, engineering and architecture. Examples explored are Berlin's hidden spaces that emerged from the city's division and the experiential aspects of acoustic landscapes. She is teaching in the UCL MSc Urban Studies.