

# Title: Ground Zero – the socio-political minefield of symbolic architecture

Daniel Libeskind

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## Abstract:

Daniel Libeskind is today one of the architecture profession's media elite. He took up his position in the list of 'super star architects' twenty ago and has remained in the spotlight of the press ever since. He has projects across the globe and has been awarded prizes by *Time Magazine*, *The Goethe Institute*, the *American Institute of Architects* and the *RIBA*. He was also appointed the first Cultural Ambassador for Architecture by the State Department of the United States in 2004. He has been both critically lauded and sardonically ridiculed. Tom Dyckhoff of the London Times refers to him as a 'global brand'.

His most high profile project to date has been *The Jewish Museum of Berlin* which, after various years of partial completion, was finally opened in full on September 11 2001. The opening day of Libeskind's commemoration of the twentieth century's act of horror par excellence then, was also the day of the twenty-first century's most iconic terrorist act. The macabre irony was not lost on Libeskind himself but the competition that led to him being appointed master planner and architect of the Ground Zero project, turned out to be a dirty, personalised and publically aired media circus. It was a story of political infighting, tawdry economic deals and architectural brinkmanship. It culminated ten years ago this month with Libeskind's 'victory.' In this interview Daniel Libeskind looks back over a decade of working on this project and muses on one of the most high profile, emotive and polemic architectural projects of recent times.