Architecture of Alienation: The Double Bind and Public Space

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Between the idea

And the reality

Between the motion

And the act

Falls the Shadow

T.S. Eliot: The Hollow Men (1925)

Double Bind, it seems to me, restates the artist's enduring themes – of presence and memory – and his preoccupation with the place of the spectator, as both agent and witness to the enigmatic condition of the artwork. There are those who criticize him for his theatricality, for his sometimes baroque impurity and poeticism as a stylist. These, in my view, are among his strengths.

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Abstract: *This paper approaches the emergence, over the 20th century, of a public architecture that occupies sights/sites once associated with industry and social alienation, in this case the conversion of London's Bankside Power Station into the Tate Modern Art Museum. Utilising Bertolt Brecht's revolutionary theories on performance, the celebrated architecture of Herzog and De Meuron is investigated alongside 'Double Bind', an installation by the late Spanish artist Juan Muñoz whose work highlights the quality of isolation in the contemporary metropolis. In investigating architecture and installation, a space is opened up between the art and architecture revealing a performativity that engages with 20th century trauma and the crisis of the modern. This spatial dynamic forms an architecture of alienation where the participants are estranged from the environment, rendering them strangers, even within familiar environments … tourists in their own land.*

Specular provocation

This time a lone figure, arms outstretched as if frozen in terror, confronted himself in a large round mirror. Transfixed by his self-image, this histrionic gesturer wore a sardonic disconcerted grin, as if to placate if not dissipate his welling fears (Cooke, 1999. p. 24).

Perhaps 'the tourist' was really an early postmodern figure, alienated but seeking fulfillment in his own alienation – nomadic, placeless, a kind of subjectivity without a spirit, a 'dead subject' (MacCannell, 1999. p. xvi).

In Juan Muñoz's 1998 installation, Streetwise (Site Santa Fe: June 6 – August 2, 1998), we come across a room in which a plastery-grey statue faces its own reflection. Stuffed-glove hands fray out in a gesture of tension, whilst his enigmatic grimace and blank eyes are caught in both the mirror and the glaring light of the gallery. What we also realise is that we too, as observers of the observer, are implicated in the mirror's gaze. We are caught in the double bind of the viewer and the viewed, becoming complicit witness to an eternal moment. This moment of estrangement, where the individual is isolated and confronted could be considered a Brechtian moment, isolating and challenging the role of individuals in a collective audience. The space of alienation is a specular/spectral space, reflecting and haunting the spectator confronted with her own image. In this paper the work of theatrical revolutionary, Bertolt Brecht, and installation artist, Juan Muñoz, form book-ends to an inquiry into an 'architecture of alienation' and its relationship to cultural production. The trajectory is from the industrial to the post-industrial, from a discursive Theatre of Alienation to a proposed Architecture of Alienation, from the desire to find a suitable theatrical model to the formulation of a hybrid construction. Whilst industrial architecture takes centre-stage the paper begins by mining the texts of Brecht and ends with an analysis of Muñoz's final installation (2002) in London's Tate Modern art museum. Embedded within it is a question: why are contemporary audiences drawn to industrial sights/sites associated with alienation and cruelty, which are proving popular as public spaces and tourist attractions?

Epic moves (industrial sites)

Architecture and urbanism, those pre-eminent arts of spatial definition, offer a suggestive lexicon for evoking displacement, nomads, and estrangement as the foundation of the modern condition (Cooke, 1999. p. 25).

At the heart of this paper is the 'Theatre of Alienation' of German Playwright Bertolt Brecht and its potential to inform art and interior practice. As a theatre revolutionary he sought to re-act to and act upon the preconceptions of the art form. His historicity allowed him to work through existing forms, disrupting them with what he called the *verfremdungseffekt* or *alienation technique*; a transformation of the familiar into the strange in order to create that dialectal moment for the audience.

Alienation, as a product of industrial society and the totalities of the modernisation process, tends to reduce the subject to a state of passivity inducing a soporific effect. This paper adopts a different strategy by engaging with alienation as a necessary and active agent in cultural productions, a production itself rather than a product. For Bertolt Brecht alienation was a creative act leading to a positive outcome… something that occurs in the irretrievable state of modernity's exile. His theatrical model was to arouse wakefulness in the spectator/ participant… 'Let them dream in blazing clarity' (Brecht in Esslin, 1985, p. 125).

Whilst this paper constitutes the search for a theatrical model, it focuses on the role architecture plays in cultural production, especially at that membrane where the body and the building meet. A performance lens on architecture encourages the, all too often underestimated, inter-action between body and object in space. The sheer scale of buildings, such as public art museums, tends to overwhelm the attention to the detail of their inhabitation, so rarely discussed or represented in architectural discourse. Instead the building is reduced to an object through which the masses flow. This is due mainly to the 'epic' nature of the institution where the intimate and ordinary are dominated and alienated by the extra-ordinary. However an investigation of the 'epic theatre' of Bertolt Brecht revises the relationships between the body and the built. Although Brecht wrote very little on the role of architecture in his theatrical formulations, a close reading reveals ideas, which can be translated into spatial terms. Before attending to his writing it is necessary to establish a link between art, industry and the era out of which he emerged as a theatre revolutionary.

The recent transformation of London's redundant Bankside Power Station into the Tate Modern was initially accused of being a conservative act, smacking of Britain's obsession with heritage. However this converted behemoth of outmoded industry, which has become a major tourist site in London (contributing to the development of Southwark and the Thames Southbank as a lively cultural precinct), demonstrates a move throughout the latter half of the 20th century to occupy industrial sites for the exhibition of contemporary art. According to Tate Director, Nicholas Serota, the choice of that particular site was never an exercise in industrial archaeology, but rather 'driven by the view… that adapted industrial spaces made more sympathetic and inspiring spaces for exhibiting art than purpose-built new ones' (Moore & Ryan, 2000, p. 17). In fact a canvassing of artists and curators in the early stages revealed a fascination of industrial spaces as 'buildings with integrity' (Moore & Ryan, 2000, p. 55). This notion was over discussed a decade ago at the *New Museology* conference, held in London where Joseph Kosuth stated:

> …*architecture in relation to art should be naturalised in a way that serves the art. The meaning of the architecture should be useable. That is why buildings that were originally intended for something else, that have been taken over by contemporary art, tend to work quite well* (Papadakis, 1991, p. 21).

However these buildings, which are invariably warehouses, power stations, disused army sheds and factories suggest more than simply an aesthetic fascination with industrial architecture as vessels for the exhibition of art. There are plenty of architectural typologies that could be said to embody integrity or usability. As technological icons of what Rayner Banham calls 'the first machine age', they are cruel sites of labour, transformed into cultural sights of art and tourism. Further I would contend that they are sites of alienation with an attendant sense of estrangement necessary to the experience of contemporary art.

The rise of the modern movement in architecture was inspired and motivated by the rise of industry. Such an alliance between creativity and technology exists in the concurrent rise of the historic avant-garde whose shock techniques stemmed from a celebration-of and reaction-to science and production. Industry became aligned with a new *'concrete'* utopia (Banham, 1960, p. 7). During the first four decades of the 20th century architecture, industry and the avant-garde coalesced in the movements of Expressionism, Dadaism, Russian Constructivism, Futurism, the Russian post-revolutionary Proletcult and Surrealism. The machine became an aesthetic symbol for architects and artists and the massive concrete structures of industry represented a brave new world of science and technology. Industrial buildings were likened to ancient monuments and classical temples. They embodied 'some kind of technological utopia' (Banham, 1960). It was this rational and technological utopia that Bertolt Brecht took up in his project of epic theatre. Hoping that modern technologies would contribute to building a socialist mass culture, Brecht embraced the 'concrete utopian process' as a means of warding off antiquarianism in cultural production. Fredric Jameson (1998) refers to this as:

> …*the task of Brecht's 'modernism' in the narrower, technological or industrial sense; the delight of aeroplanes and in the radio, the dimension of 'workers' to be added to that of peasants' in any Gramscian aesthetic alliance* (p. 3).

Brecht (1964) wished to change the machine rather than be changed by the machine (p. 40). Even though he was neither prolific nor explicit in the architectural definition of his new theatre he tended to appropriate the language and aesthetics of the industrial age. We must therefore operate upon his texts to reveal an implicit architecture. Therein lies the *gestus* of the built, the epic space of cultural production, an architecture of alienation.

Revealing the apparatus

In Brecht's theatre, the protagonists are placed in the full glare of the stage lights, but the very brilliance of the lights and the bareness of the dramatic space deliberately isolate and distance them (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 22).

For Bertolt Brecht the theatre was an 'apparatus' with a social function that had been commandeered by society 'in order to reproduce itself'. He saw it as mode of production linked to capitalist consumption and therefore in need of revolutionising. This required a transformation of cultural institutions 'from places of entertainment into organs of mass communication' (Brecht, 1964, p.41). As Benjamin (1966) points out, the 'epic theatre' was a means of uncovering conditions rather than reproducing them (p. 4). Rather than creating illusion through concealment it was to illustrate reality through revelation. The audience was to be considered a gathering of technical experts to whom conditions were exposed through an interruptive process. This also derived from Brecht's interest in new technical forms of communication such as cinema and radio, which did not require sustained attention from an audience. The incorporation of these forms in performance allowed for the use of overlay and montage, seen in designer Casper Neher's application of text, projections and juxtapositions of real and simulacra. Rejecting a theatre that immersed the collective audience within an empathetic experience, the epic theatre was a device constituting a technology of estrangement whereby each individual spectator was confronted not only with the awareness of their participation within the performance, but their presence within the space of the auditorium. However this instrument they occupied was deliberately outmoded, incomplete and heir to failure.

The physical space became absorbed into the apparatus. It was utterly necessary that the environment be referenced as part of the production. Here the already existing architecture is co-opted within the apparatus as an already outmoded machine for production, bringing its own character and a sense of history to the performance. The atmosphere of the play works in tandem with what Neher (1986) calls 'the life of reality';

In other words we ought to be studying the environment; and then if we are real, all too real, we get back to the atmosphere once more … (p. 76).

The atmosphere becomes a doubling of the existing and the produced. History is incorporated into the present moment. This is in keeping with Banham's suggestion that the historic avant-garde were interested in industry from the first machine age which was, already recent history. It constitutes a romanticisation and heroicisation of technology because it is always and already 'in the past'.

Estranged in everyday architecture

Brecht perceived the epic content of everyday life superbly; the hardness of actions and events, the necessity of judging. To this he added an astute awareness of the alienation to be found in everyday life. To see people properly we need to place them at a reasonable distance, like the objects we see before us. Then their many-sided strangeness becomes apparent: in relation to ourselves, but also within themselves and in relation to themselves. In this strangeness lies their truth, the truth of their alienation (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 20).

Industrial buildings were more akin to the *'everyday'*, valorised by Brecht, than the established palaces of culture such as purpose-built theatres and museums. However, as palaces and temples of industry they were bestowed with their own epic qualities (that is, grand, monumental and heroic). In their current reuse as cultural institutions they have come to replace one 'epic' architecture for another. This highlights the gap which falls between the pre- and post- Brechtian definitions of the 'epic'; a gap which continues to open up as a paradox in the work of Brecht and the historic avant-garde's revolutionary embrace of industry's liberating force. This paradox also endures in refurbished industrial sites today.

Brecht's revolutionary epic theatre was set against the backdrop of melodramatic and naturalistic theatre; a theatre of immersion, where passive spectatorial involvement hindered audience's ability to act and alter situations. In opposition to this hypnotic and intoxicating model he created his own 'epic theatre', which required an audience to be critically detached and to reflect on the action self-consciously presented without illusory trappings. Whilst this drew on the old model, where the epic poet reported events from the past, it resisted the requirement for empathy or identification.

Brecht establishes *'epic theatre'* through the archetypal *Street Scene*; where a traffic accident has occurred on a city corner and the witnesses are re-constructing the event in order to communicate the facts. Their re-enactment involves quotation, repetition, interruptions, montage and gestures, all creating a necessary critical distance. This choice of the everyday incident as an epic event illustrated the requirement for events to reflect a 'lived' rather than 'staged' reality. It was also a 'de-heroisation' of the old epic model; an anti-epic epic theatre. Brecht bemoaned the fact that the audience handed in their 'everyday life' in the theatre lobby along with their cloaks. It represented the missing ingredient within which the audience should be immersed rather than the intoxication of illusory magic. Henri Lefebvre (1991) sees the Brechtian Theatre as an apparatus of production, filtering the everyday and discarding the weakest part, associated with magic and illusion (p. 23).

The epic theatre does not represent a seamless whole but rather presents a montage effect. As in the retelling on a street corner, all the chaotic elements within the city continue to simultaneously exist, but they come in and out of view when required and each creative participant must work hard to focus on the task at hand. However the environment never disappears. This sets up an oscillation between staging and reality, between attraction and distraction, between epic and intimate, between experience and distance; 'The spectator wavers between an externalised judgement… and an immersion in the image proposed' (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 23). This wavering exists as a direct result of Brecht's resistance to the *Gesamptkunstwerk* (total work of art; a unity of theatrical elements) and is highlighted by his commitment to a separation of elements within the 'epic theatre'. The resulting action-in-flux also serves to destabilise the viewers, constantly reminding them that they are active participants in a production. A dialogue is established between the spectator and the spectacle, creating a growing tension; '…The spectator cannot relax. He is not allowed to' (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 22). This happens when the architecture refuses to recede into the background, giving precedence to performance, but instead becomes implicated in the performance. A collapse occurs between the place of the stage (scenography) and the space of the theatre (architecture). Architecture therefore becomes part of the fractured *mise en scene*.

Revealing the technology and revealing the architecture are deliberately alienating techniques which Brecht (1964) maintains surround us in everyday life…'turning the object of which one is made aware, to which one's attention is to be drawn, from something ordinary, familiar, immediately accessible, into something peculiar, striking and unexpected' (p. 143). This deployment of the 'alienation effect' *(verfremdungseffekt)*, like the mirror in Munoz's *Streetwise*, catches us unaware, shocking and shifting the audience from participant to stranger. The refusal to transport the spectator, heightens their awareness of contradictions, and inconsistencies, breaking through the hermetic membrane and unity of the *Gesamptkunstwerk*.

The alienation effect, as estrangement, also carries with it a sense of the uncanny. It is a by-product of that disturbing oscillation. In Brecht's constant challenging of the real and the simulacra, a doubling occurs through the paradox of his project. Moving between immersion and distantiation, a spatial estrangement takes place for the audience, caught between the fictive world of performance and the architectural reality of the everyday. Conflicting modalities of time and space are also distilled and contained within the experience of the production.

'Estrangement from the world', wrote Theodor Adorno in 1969, 'is a moment of art' (p. 262). However, over 30 years later, Andreas Huyssen (1986) suggests; 'In an age saturated with information, including critical information, the v-effekt has lost its demystifying power' (p. 15). No one can deny that Brecht's radicality is no longer as acute as it was half a century ago, nor dispute the way many of his ideas have been absorbed into the form of theatre he reviled and condemned. (This includes exposing lighting fixtures, the use of projections, quoted gesture and narration to name but a few incorporations into the mainstream.) Nevertheless traces are left by his theories, which can help make sense of contemporary cultural productions. As Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1998) asks, in *Destination Culture*: '… how has the avant-garde prepared us for watching and valuing what we don't know how to react to?' (p. 203). There is value to their legacy supported by Huyssen's claim that the historic avant-garde and their shock techniques were progenitors of the post-modern condition. Like the refurbished industrial buildings their presence remains palpable and disturbing. What follows is an analysis of an industrial building transformed into a cultural institution, within which an installation throws into relief an *architecture of alienation*.

Anti-monumental monumentality

When the Georges Pompidou Centre opened its doors in 1977 it was greeted with a mixture of agitation and excitement. The Beaubourg's factory image created a shock-effect in its historic Parisian neighborhood, referred to by an agitated Jean Baudrillard (1997, p. 210) in an article that began 'Beaubourg-Effect… Beaubourg-Machine…Beaubourg-Thing – how can we name it?' He then proceeded to name it 'incinerator', 'refinery', 'hypermarket' whilst also insinuating it resembled a slaughterhouse, within which the masses are treated like 'cultural livestock'. Quarter of a century later the industrial aesthetic, with exposed services and structures, has become commonplace in cultural buildings. Those offending escalators, previously associated with department stores and shopping malls, are now installed in countless arts institutions including Covent Garden Opera House and the Tate Modern in London, which is the site now under discussion.

The Centre Pompidou also established a precedent for art museums as architectural spectacles, referred to in France as *grands projets*. These are defined as epic, political and architectural gestures and most recently include Daniel Libeskind's Jewish Museum in Berlin and Frank Gehry's Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao (both completed for the new millenium). Such buildings have become associated, as much with the architects who created them as the cities they inhabit. Rowan Moore refers to them as 'visibly signed' objects… 'collectible as the works they contain' (Moore & Ryan, 2000, p. 7).

The Tate Modern represents a departure from this idea of a signature work. As a reused industrial building it is difficult to separate the mark of the original architect Giles Gilbert (see Scott, 1950) and the more recent Swiss architectural firm, Herzog and de Meuron. What dominates is the seemingly mundane architecture, unmistakably representing an industrial typology, more particularly that of a power station, signaled by the commanding central smokestack. Sited on axis with St Paul's Cathedral, its industrial chimney confronts the ecclesiastical dome across the Thames, forming a curious dialogue between monuments to industry and God…. both now cathedrals to the cultural life of London. In *The Architectural Uncanny*, Anthony Vidler (1998) establishes the play of doubling as one 'where the other is, strangely enough, experienced as the replica of self, all the more fearsome because apparently the same' (p. 3). Such an uncanny mirroring creates a performative loosening in which the world is made strange. Transforming an inaccessible, dangerous and literally electric site into a permeable public building sets into motion the oscillating factor of Brecht's estrangement.

Prior to its refurbishment, as part of Britain's millenium projects, Bankside Power Station lay dormant for 20 years, adrift in the once industrial wasteland of Southwark; a redundant piece of history. Until revived for the purposes of the Tate Museum, it was a remnant in the act of disappearing; what Michel de Certeau refers to as; a 'legendary object'; a resistant fragment from a persistent past (de Certeau & Giad, 1998, p. 133). Refurbishing the building may have transformed it into a contemporary institution but its history and typology endure in the enormous bulk of its brickwork, the assertion of its smoke-stack and the hyperbolic space of its Turbine Hall. It is as much a temporal phenomenon as a spatial reality. This building as 'stranger' conjures up Michel de Certeau's notion of 'haunted narrativity' in everyday life. Focusing on the relationship between strangeness and familiarity, he sees the city as 'a fascinating theatre' transformed, by strange and fragmentary pasts, into 'an immense memory where many poetics proliferate' (de Certeau & Giad, 1998, p. 141). De Certeau encourages the awakening of stories that sleep in the streets, to reveal an uncanniness of the 'Already There' and create a city to be imagined, dreamed and lived in. This mythic element is present in previously overlooked areas such as London's Dockland's and the now revitalized Bankside area in Southwark.

The Tate Modern's publication on this building tends to a romantic and egalitarian language claiming it to be no glamorization of heritage and with an appeal 'not to the eternity of the Acropolis or the Pyramids but to the continually shifting present' (Moore & Ryan, 2000, p. 11). This latter statement refers almost directly to cultural institutions and architectural masterpieces such as the Getty Museum overlooking Los Angeles and the Louvre's Pyramid

extension in Paris, which like many monumental museums over the last 50 years are considered significant architectural masterpieces. However the brick monumentality of Giles Gilbert Scott's 1950 creation and its massive spaces are financially impossible to replicate in contemporary London where projects such as these are principally funded by public Lottery money. Therefore Herzog and de Meuron, the Switzerland-based design team, which won a limited architectural competition to transform the building, wisely did less rather than more, drawing upon the strange nature of the old power station. This was emphasized by the simple additive gesture of glowing containers both on the exterior and interior; a single elongated horizontal form crossing the dark vertical marker of Scott's campanile/chimney and a series of ghostly boxes from which viewers can regard the colossal public space of the Turbine Hall.

Clearly the pre-Brechtian 'epic' is inscribed into the historic building, with its exterior scale and allusion to cathedral and monument. This is trumped by the extraordinarily vertiginous effect elicited on entering the building via a ramp down and out into the spectacular central space, set aside as an internal public plaza for the exhibition of large works. The impact is visceral and powerful on the visitor, one of 10,000 moving through the building every day. However the epic quality doubles as a Brechtian phenomenon, destabilizing and unsettling through its overwhelming scale and lack of sensual ornamentation.

Architect Jacques Herzog (in Moore & Ryan, 2000) speaks of the influence of Hitchcock films on his practice of architecture, claiming the filmmaker 'describes normal people and shows that whatever is special or scary or beautiful comes out of these very normal situations' (p. 52). Here everyday life is deliberately made strange by the architectural gestures, which are both subtle and overt. It is difficult to see where the old architecture finishes and the new begins. Details and finishes are played with and played down, collapsing past and present within the building. The gallery boxes glow eerily within the well-lit interior of the turbine hall and the sheer scale creates a pervading and disturbing silence. Yet it has the scale of a micro-city, suggesting a world within a world through which thousands of people pass daily. Unlike the smaller, adjoining galleries, which are calm, well measured and articulated white cubes, the Turbine Hall is a disturbing alienating and compelling space. The carefully articulated rawness of this hall with its riveted steel columns and beams, march of overhead trusses, giant gantry cranes, glazed skylights, strip lighting, precipitous bridge and ramping floors come together in a way that creates a space simultaneously multiplicitous and totalizing. The montage of old and new, rudimentary materials, layered vertigo and sloping floors resist a grandiose monumentality. As Herzog claims;

We are not longing for monumentalism. We hate monumentalism. Monumentalism doesn't mean something that is big but having a one and only goal, which is to impress and manipulate people (Moore & Ryan, 2000, p. 53).

Like Brecht's un-epic epic space this is an attempt at non-monumental monumentality. Herzog refers to the building as a 'heterotopic place'. This indexes Foucault's idea of architectural heterotopias, described by Aaron Betsky (1990) as: '… 'other' fragments of a utopian world floating in the real world, distorted mirrors of reality whose floor plans are maps for possible other worlds' (p. 31). According to Foucault museums, theatres, cemeteries, libraries and fairs, set apart from everyday activity, production and consumption create illusory spaces staging and projecting an alternative world. They do so through the part they play in the real world, whilst operating as world's apart within that world. Herzog reinforces this idea with his phrase 'artificial normality' (Moore & Ryan, 2000, p. 53).

Herzog and de Meuron's architecture of alienation achieves a Brechtian strategy outlined by Susan Buck-Morse (1990) in *The Dialectics of Seeing*: 'mobilizing historical objects by connecting the shock of awakening with the discipline of remembering' (p. 272). It is the industrial building, as an outmoded machine that reawakens us to the dream of the apparatus, a lost time when artists and engineers sang the praises of an industrialized utopia, whilst in-the-moment we move through its spectacular brick, glass and steel remains. The outmoded machine has become an apparatus for viewing art. Yet we have to question how the visitors are compelled to participate in, rather than be processed by, this hybrid viewing machine. We cannot rely on the architecture alone to stage and interrupt the action. The architecture provides an epic environment within which artists can utilise gestures-in-flux to negotiate between the real and the illusory. Installation art has become a means of performative expression in the contemporary art museum and the Turbine Hall was designed for provoking and housing epic installations; augmenting and supplementing a montaged and alienating space.

Architecture therefore works in tandem with the artists, in the curious spectacle of the Tate Modern's Turbine Hall, in order to engage with, and interrupt, the collective parade of individuals moving through and around it. The montage effect, conjoining postwar power plant and post-industrial modern art museum, requires further alienation-effects to stage and project an-other world? It took the work of Juan Muñoz to seize hold of this epic space and render it a form of epic theatre, a work which sadly proved to be his final production, opening only two months before his untimely death at the age of forty-eight.

Performance in exile

The war separated
Me, the writer of plays, from my friend the stage designer.
The cities where we worked are no longer there.
When I walk through the cities that still are
At times I say: that blue piece of washing
My friend would have placed it better (Brecht in Neher, 1986, p. 12).

Brecht's, post-exile drift through Germany's post-WWII cities, elicits a longing for the designed *gests* furnished by Caspar Neher in so many of their collaborative productions. The playwright/director relied on his friend, the designer, to visually orchestrate the environment, not only through sets, props, sounds, lighting and an incorporation of the existing architecture, but by envisioning the various groupings of performers, which he referred to as 'nodes of action'. This interruptible orchestration of the various autonomous elements contributed to the epic theatre's alienation effect. Half a century later another artist-in-exile brings together such elements in the Tate Modern's Turbine Hall.

It has been said to leave home is to impose exile, a condition which remains even after you return home. Juan Muñoz, who left Spain at 17 years old, to seek his schizophrenic brother in London, who was seeking a psychiatrist, who was an alcoholic seeking something at the bottom of a bottle (an event seen by Munoz as a 'Double Bind' based on Gregory Bateson's theory of a paradoxical interpersonal relation where no matter what a person does, he can't 'win') remained in England to study art and sculpture. He considered himself to be in a permanent state of exile, even 'at home' in his Madrid studio. Exile is an inherent and repeated theme in his work; an estrangement that represents being nowhere and everywhere; a form of alienation. As Edward Said writes:

Exiles cross borders, break barriers of thought and experience…
Exile is never the state of being satisfied, placid or secure…
It is nomadic, de-centered, contrapuntal (in Munoz, 1999).

Muñoz is fascinated with the contemporary condition of urban exile in modern cities, where people inhabit the cracks and crevices of vast structures. This alienation is captured in his earlier installations with titles such as *Wasteland* (1987), *A Place Called Abroad* (1996) and *Streetwise* (1998), in which he created disturbing urban landscapes with dead end streets, precarious balconies, blind windows, empty elevators and dangerous stairs. These sites are populated by the grey figures of fiberglass men, alone or in groups, engaged in enigmatic activities. These disturbing characters, with their tightly closed eyes, caught in corners, against

walls, gazing in mirrors and blinded by light; are referred to as *Conversation Pieces*. They form secret tableaus of the mundane. The preoccupations and aesthetic elements of these previous works are brought together into his final installation in the Tate Modern.

It is a sense of exile and isolation within the collective that Muñoz sought to achieve in the vast and alienating space of the Turbine Hall, where this elliptic journey comes to rest. Set aside for major installations (beginning with the invasion of Louise Bourgeois' giant spider for the millenium opening) the scale and interior-cityscape is a daunting site to respond to, but one that contained the inherent characteristics Muñoz has previously worked with. Rather than create an urban landscape within a white gallery, as he had done in previous installations, he had only to embrace the existing conditions (both psychic and physical) of the hall. The main challenge was how to interrupt the visitors' drift and isolate them within the greater context.

The visitor enters the vast space by moving down the ramping concrete floor and, looking up into the empty and vertiginous space of the Turbine Hall, sees little evidence of a major installation. What abides is an overwhelming sense of emptiness and silence, in spite of the numbers of other museum-goers moving through the building. The stillness and silence are broken by two elevator cages in the distance, suspended from the glazed roof's gantry cranes, grinding their way vertically up and down at varying speeds. These vacant machines are relentless in their redundant task, but they draw the visitor forward towards the bridge in the center of the hall. Although aware of others viewing from differing vantage points within the space, the visitor is still unclear as to the objects of their gaze.

Muñoz bifurcated the hall in its height and depth, with a large plane running between the bridge and the end wall. This can only be apprehended as you approach the stairs that take you up onto the deck, from which you gaze onto a vast, flat and inaccessible surface, punctuated by black squares that suggest a grid of black voids, through two of which the elevators continue their inexorable journeying. This passing through of the machines, draws attention to the fact that there is a subterranean space below which is accessed by returning down the stairs.

Entering a gloomy world of dark steel columns and industrial ceiling panels, punctured by pools of light from the voids above, we realize that not all the black squares above are light-wells into this lower realm. The artist has utilized *trompe l'oeil* to confound our experience. As we look up through the voids into the intense solar light, our eyes adjust between gloom and glare to find a further world exists, a horizontal slice of inhabitation. Here are the grey figures, populating an interior zone of shuttered windows, air-conditioning units and fluorescent strip

lighting. The inhabitants appear to stare down at you from the balcony edges of the light wells, or disappear into the labyrinthine world concealed between ceiling and the floor above. One is balanced on the back of a chair that tilts precariously over the protruding ledge, another moves into the maze as though repeating a familiar routine. An ensemble of men clutch each other in a conga line, whilst others move inward holding sheets (or shrouds). It is not clear what their tasks are or if they are merely playing. It also occurs that these men and their environment are only one third life-size and their eyes are shut tight, further unsettling phenomena within this installation that shuttles between reality and illusion.

In looking up we isolate ourselves from our fellow spectators and find ourselves the object of an-other's gaze, returned from the closed eyes of small gray men. Like Muñoz, seeking his brother in an alien environment, we are disoriented and unable to apprehend the mysteriously mundane environment sandwiched between floor and ceiling. We are ourselves caught in the double bind; between architecture and scenography, reality and illusion, the gaze and blindness, fun and fear, engagement and isolation. In looking for others we are seeking ourselves. And what we find is a series of images which the artist has forced into emptiness:

> The elevators carry nobody. The windows lead nowhere. They imply night, the closing down of the street, the moment of closure. Everything seems to be closed down. All the figures have very tightly closed eyes (Munoz, 2001, p. 76).

Yet, as Muñoz (2001) insists, this emptiness is not complete closure; 'You don't show the emptiness. You show the wish for it to be full' (p. 77).

Muñoz's epic theatre, which completes an architecture of alienation in the Turbine Hall, was inspired by the existing space as well as t to he visceral and psychological responses it elicited. His subtle spatial dislocations come from an already dislocated space. Unlike the white cube galleries in which he had previously constructed environments of estrangement, this place already contained raw material and, as the artist maintains (Cooke); 'You just have one material world to explain another material world and the gap in between is the territory of meaning.' He took the existing architecture (already a montage of old and new) and added further architectural devices; *trompe-l'oeils*, staircases, balconies, balconies and elevators. As with the work of Herzog and de Meuron, it is difficult to discern where the interventions begin and end. This is an extension of the building that is, in itself, an extension of history.

Double Bind, attempts to re-address museum-goers that 'just drift through without caring', by forcing them, as individuals, to 'pay attention' (cited by Campbell-Johnston, p. 5). This is achieved through a mixture of unnerving tricks and architectural realities. Like the epic

theatre of Brecht it wishes to engage directly with each spectator through the presentation of a sequence of isolated events within the whole, as well as setting up a distance that is both literal and psychological. It attempts to engage the viewer through strategies, which are 'more distanced, more dispassionate, less immersive.', rendering her/him both participant and stranger. This is done through interruptive strategies (in the architecture) and quotable gestures (in the sculptures). The repeatable figure of the man with closed eyes is like Brecht's 'untragic hero', narrating events and leaving the audience to come to its own conclusions. The theatrical devices of both Munoz and Brecht, which present us with these empty figures in their alien environments, are designed to confront our own contemporary existence. As Benjamin writes:

> [Brecht] goes back, in a new way, to the theatre's greatest opportunity: the opportunity to expose the present. In the center of his experiments is man. Man of today; a reduced man therefore, a man kept on ice in a cold world. But since he is the only one we have, it is in our interest to know him. To subject him to tests and observations… (in Buck-Morse, 1990, p.149).

It seems that installation art has become a means for cultural production that bridges theatre and the art object within an immersive site-specific environment. Architecture, more about site-seeing than sight-seeing, is itself a means of cultural production that holds a historicity within its very fabric. As Benjamin (1966) claims the epic stage was no longer 'the planks which signify the world… but a convenient public exhibition area' (p. 2). The architecture of alienation, which draws upon a Brechtian model of theatre, is one where objects, the body and the built come together to be displayed in disruptive ways. This montage effect highlights the subject's awareness of her own exile. Recent trends in converting old buildings into art galleries and museums illustrate a search for something more than neutral white cubes and singular architectural gestures within which to exhibit art. These buildings, such as warehouses, factories, and the reused Bankside power station, connect to the collective awareness of a mechanized past and utopian dream. They also constitute a threat of estrangement that both haunts and delights the exiled postmodern subject, having the potential to halt their drift, to bring them home through the un-homely.

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