local expressions that would challenge dominant architectural forms. However, a limited number of architects, such as Argentina’s Alberto Prebisch, responded within the particularities of their own specific contexts, as well as political and cultural desires for modernization. Prebisch sought to be more international, rational, and scientific, and closer to European and North American examples, experiments, and developments.

At the core of functionalism in Latin America was the selective embrace or abandonment of modernity or its lineaments. The result was a new solution based on the integration of the contemporary, radical, and modern with the old, ‘inefficient’, and vernacular. García Canclini’s *Hybrid Cultures* offers relevant insight, showing how functionalism was explored and carried out throughout the twentieth century in Latin America. And, while it would be easy to essentialize García Canclini’s argument by merely translating its provocative title and implications into an architectural milieu, the book provides us with an understanding of Latin America’s ambivalence with modernity and to the development of a ‘multitemporal heterogeneity’. In this context, it shows how functionalist architects jumped forward or stepped back from modernity, and how unimaginable strategies and possibilities could be formed by the hybridity required of the context and needs that prompted this architecture. It shows, in short, how they negotiated their present modernity and their desire to leave it.


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**GLITCHING AND BUFFERING: INHABITING THE GLITCH**

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The glitch is a problem. It’s the acid reflux of the digital world, it’s new media’s confessional booth where it crackles out its sins to us, its secular priests. As much as we hate the glitch we must also crave it, we secretly enjoy that it is a spanner in the works—a minor rebellion of those vast sandbanks of data which ensnare us all.

A tearaway child, the glitch spoils our favourite songs on an old CD, it signals the loss of a days work, severs the ending from our favourite films, corrupts and ages the face of our favourite actors (before the drugs get to them first), and spoils our titillations on Tinder. Although over time the glitch starts to blend in and we work around it, the glitch is the digital equivalent of running one’s hand over a tactile brutalist mass of board marked concrete: it has a very physical presence. Though the digital world is often seamless like the sterile walls of a hospital, the glitch gives it the physicality and friction that all life needs. “It’s alive,” we think when seeing a glitch on a screen—technology is like us in that it is given presence and personality through its faults.

However, I hadn’t, until now, seen a convincing use of the potential of the glitch in a three-dimensional architectural space. I’d seen ‘glitched’ facades, but these were just ornament, and all other examples I’ve personally witnessed of the glitch in architecture have been accidental (maybe the glitch should always be accidental, after all that is its nature) and reappropriated by me in an act of visual bricolage. Surely then, this problem of our time has spatial potential if we translate it from a 2D screen-based phenomena into a space that can be inhabited by people: the glitch can promote new types of spatial experience and different approaches to circulation around a building, and even, as I’ll discuss later, renovation.

I would characterize the spatial installation ‘Kunstwerk’ (2010) by the Brazilian artist Renata Lucas as a spatial glitch, although not spoken about as one by the artist (Fig. 1). In the piece, Lucas makes a radial cut in a Berlin street and rotates the section of footpath along its arc. This simple act glitches what we see everyday, disturbing the linear rhythm and directionality of the street while sending us off walking into a slightly different direction. This is the crux of the glitch; it is a point of indeterminacy which opens up—quite literally in this case—a multiplicity of different pathways.

If we look at Modernist architecture, the most influential architects innovated by changing how spaces relate in both vertical and horizontal axes. We see this in Adolf Loos’s Raumplan, with its discordant modulating spaces scattered around in three dimensions; Le Corbusier’s ramps and Dom-ino House; and Rem Koolhaas’s lifts that are also floors. I would like to
propose a ‘Glitched Plan’ as a next possible configuration, where the relationship between rooms and floors is ruptured—not just how we see on glitched screens and in images, but a three dimensional glitch that can be traversed and inhabited.

The glitch looks modern, but it doesn’t need to. To look completely modern is always a folly, like the grotesque laptop bags purposely made to look futuristic, or like computers themselves, beloved by middle management Englishmen (though admittedly well-matched to their Burton formal pointed shoes and year-round Christmas socks). Nothing ages as bad and as instantly as such visions of the future. It’s often forgotten by Sci-Fi set designers, but in the future people will still have taste. It’s better to think instead of the room at the end of Stanley Kubrick’s *2001 Space Odyssey* where in the white gridded space there is still baroque furniture. The glitch doesn’t try to be modern; it just corrupts whatever situation it’s placed into—it should look like a foreign or exotic intruder. Perhaps our efforts at embracing this corruption—of space or of technology—is as modern or ‘current’ as we can be at this moment in time. Contrary to usual logic, the glitch could offer innovation of many architectural types and styles, not through success and good intentions but through corruption and error.

MONTAGED IMAGES

Art, music, fashion, and visual culture are generally leagues ahead of architecture. The development of montage—the process by which two conflicting images are shown and the viewer is left to fill in the gaps between—in visual culture was one such innovation which eventually influenced architecture. Walter Benjamin decreed that this, and other filmic processes, fragmented our perception of the world. Architecture eventually followed this fragmentary logic, noticeable, for instance, in the framing of different activities and spaces in Loos’s Muller House, in the manipulation of transparency and depth in Corbusier’s work, and more literally in the montaged reflective and material planes of Mies van der Rohe’s Barcelona Pavilion.

Although the glitch is a new type of montage, it’s not fragmentary. Instead, it merges the succession of contrasting images needed for montage into one image. Whereas the traditional montage took two images (or two spatial planes) and allowed our brains to combine them into something else—a ‘third thing’ as the surrealists called it—the glitch merges these two images into the same image. We’re presented with two different views—two alternate realities—of the same thing at once. We have no gaps to fill in the glitched image, and so it is complete and homogeneous.

COMPLETION AND DECONSTRUCTION

Following this principle of the ‘merged montaged’ borrowed from visual culture, a glitched space could at first glance—and inaccurately—appear to be just another example of deconstructivist architecture. But a glitched space isn’t statically deconstructed: it’s perennially on the edge of deconstruction and completion. It may look fragmented from one angle but then it shifts back into place from another viewpoint. A glitch only happens because it’s part of a system that wants to be

Figure 1. *Kunst-Werke*, by Renata Lucas. Photograph by Arina Essipowitsch.
Figure 2. Twiggy’s glitched front elevation designed by Architecten De Vylder Vinck Taillieu. Drawings by Matthew Turner.
complete. There can be fissures and corruption in glitched imagery and space, but it eventually returns back to something complete. A glitch holds on to recognition by the skin of its teeth and dental records. It has a migratory visual logic, allowing us to trace where it comes from and where it will go back to.

A glitched space then is a deconstruction that has the potential to remain whole and complete—a spatial condition reflexive of the times we live in, where social media and other networks can give the illusion of seamless perfection and infinite connection, but everything is really in a tumult of shape-shifting flux. Similar to the glitch, our world is fragmented and broken but can appear frictionless and complete, and in this way, glitch architecture is both expressive of the times we live in—as architecture should be—while also ameliorating and drawing out potential from its negative attributes.

BUFFERING

In architecture, the glitch can inform the spatial programme and sequence, while also warping our perception of linear movement and time. I’ve only come across a meaningful approach to the glitch once in an architectural project, and even this wasn’t acknowledged as such by its architect. The project might just be seen as an example of the refined eccentricity of Belgian architecture, but Twiggy, designed by Architecten De Vylder Vinck Taillieu, is an accurate and appropriate example of the glitch in architecture. The project is a renovation of an old town house in Ghent for use as a fashion boutique. Here, the glitch, as I’ll speculate, has been used to renovate and extend its existing architecture.

The project is surrealistic, characterized by uncanny spaces containing fireplaces and doorways suspended halfway up the walls, as well as many angled mirrors. These multiple spaces cut them up and also glitch the reflections of visitors as they examine their bodies through a carnivalesque hall of mirrors. A new façade, which mimics the existing one, has been angled and pulled away from the building at roughly 45 degrees to house a new staircase between floors and offices. Both the staircase itself and the space that encloses it are symptomatic of the glitch (Fig. 2).

All architecture has a sense of time associated with it. For example, a church is slow and contemplative while an underground train station is fast. The glitch has a liminality which suggests the sense of time inherent within it—not our usual sense of linear time, but one which buffers, like that other phenomena of the YouTube generation, when a video being streamed from the Internet stops because content is being loaded. The content is there and ready to be experienced, but we haven’t watched it yet. We buffer in everyday life too when we don’t look at our environment in detail or when we collect images on our phones so that we can experience them later—we buffer content for later consumption.

Twiggy’s renovation, like the merged montage images we previously discussed, is complete and connected, but it’s also a rupture of the building’s original flesh. Seen frontally, the extension merges with the original building, appearing complete and integrated. But when viewed from an angle, a mutilation of the original façade occurs. The intervention of the staircase buffers between completion and deconstruction, between one state and the next. Twiggy is buffering in the interior too. Walking its staircase we’re neither in a totally new building nor in the original. Instead, we’re circulating from floor to floor in a kind of liminal phantom buffering zone, not inside nor outside, stuck between the old and the new parts of the building.

There are more glitches within the first if we look at the interior of the staircase element itself. The whole flight of stairs is reflected at disjunctive angles. The window reveals are mirrored too, making them look smeared into strong verticals which cut straight through the reflected doorway at the top of the stairs and through anyone that passes. The staircase does its job, but our experience of that function is splintered into shards through reflection, and in this glitch, our perception of ourselves becomes ruptured as well. These multiple glitches, then, open up a multiplicity of lateral experiential pathways, just as in Renata Lucas’s installation.

It’s appropriate that this gesture should happen in the staircase. When traversed or seen from above, the staircase, looks like the pixelated striations and fissures we see within the clouded noise of a glitched image or film. And if a glitch is about the disorder in an ordered system and the way different experiences and views collide, then again the staircase, the point of transition between different types of spaces, the point of collision between different users of a building, is appropriate.

The glitch is a stretched threshold—the space hardly exists in how we usually experience architecture. In the future, if anything remains physically at all, maybe everything will be glitching, and everything will be buffering, and the distinction between architectural hierarchies will become increasingly smeared. If Loos had his Raumplan, Corbusier his ramps and Koolhaas his lift floors, the glitch is a transitional blind spot: a point of spatial indeterminacy, trapped in the schizoid zone between completion and destruction. One that is slippery, hard to grasp and constantly remaking itself.

1 This is a characteristic of the glitch delineated by Simon O’Sullivan in his essay ‘From Stuttering and Stammering to the Diagram: Deleuze, Bacon and Contemporary Art Practice’, which has been crucial in developing my work on the glitch.

BIBLIOGRAPHY