Moving Images - Static Spaces: Architectures, Art, Media, Film, Digital Art and Design

• Paper / Proposal Title:
High-Rise: The Fantastic Menace

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• Presentation Method. I would like to:
  i. submit a written paper only (and not attend/present)

• Abstract (300 words):
This paper investigates the depiction of the city, architecture and the high-rise building form in particular in science fiction film and literature in order to represent ominous atmospheres and exploit phobias of the modern man in the current and future city. The novel High-Rise by J. G. Ballard and its film adaptation of the same title form the main thrust of this study. His work is characterised as psychological, visceral, proto-erotic and often dystopian, playing on social, economic and political fears of the time.

While evaluating architecture and its placement within science fiction, this paper engages a few narrative themes; namely, globalisation, cybernetics and psychological trauma, and examines the role of architecture in reinforcing particular emotive positions. The study explores the various speculations by Anthony Vidler, Walter Benjamin, Juhani Pallasmaa and George Simmel on images, atmospheres, phobias and anxieties in the modern city in relation to a sample of films, namely High-Rise and its film adaptation in particular, evaluating modern man’s ability to live in the modern city. These explorations
make it possible to comprehend why the form of tall buildings has been realised as both fantastical and menacing within this dissertation. The fantastic often turns to menace; the excitement for the future city and admiration of the high-rise’s role turned to fear of rampant, advancing technology. Science fiction began to exploit the phobias of the prophetic future city.

• Author(s) Biography (200 words each):

I am an architecture student based in Glasgow, Scotland. I am currently studying for my Masters degree at the University of Strathclyde and previously completed my undergraduate degree at the University of Edinburgh, during which I conducted research into the film High-Rise, based on a novel by J. G. Ballard. This submission is based on this dissertation paper I wrote as part of my degree.