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“Don’t Shoot, I’m Dead Already”

By Amy Bowker on April 30, 2008

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The great irony of city life is that you can find yourself desperately alone while surrounded by millions of people. It’s a sentiment explored though not emotionally conveyed in “Don’t Shoot, I’m Dead Already,” an ambitious project currently running at the Luna Playhouse.

Brenda Hattingh plays a caustic loner who has so completely alienated her neighbors that she has no one to call for help when a stranger (Brantley Black) forces his way into her apartment. Held at gunpoint, she endures what can only be described as the oddest sort of home invasion as the intruder seems more intent on conversation than any sort of criminal activity. As the back story unwinds, intentions become more clear but the play is so bogged down with wordy staging that it misses its own best point — in an overpopulated world where physical space is evaporating, our knee jerk response is to distance ourselves emotionally from our closest neighbors. As Brenda’s character laments of her relationship to the outside world, “There’s a fault in this connection.” Had the characters been forced to show instead of tell, this compelling idea could have blossomed into a powerful story.



Set design is outstanding — all triangles and sharp angles and blistering red lights that render the stage a kind of existential nightmare.

“Don’t Shoot, I’m Dead Already,” plays Fridays and Saturdays at 10:30 p.m. through May 31 at the Luna Playhouse, 3706 San Fernando Road, Glendale. Tickets are \$20. For reservations call 818-500-7200. Play contains mature content and partial nudity.

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