

-For Sale-

Queer Logic: Home of Sweet Antinomies

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Welcome, welcome ladies and gentleman to *Home Sweet Homo*. Ignore the "Beware Queer Critic" sign on the gate and follow me, your eager host, in an orderly manner up this rambling garden path. Today we have a truly splendid, if slightly reductive, piece of real-estate on offer for your Queer primed minds.

This outstanding property is ideally situated in one space and time but contains a myriad of contradictory, spacious concepts. It is the home of identification in dis-identification, concealment in revelation, expression in re-repression and birth in death. It's an abode where diametrically opposed and contradictory ideas swirl together through a wash of laundered concepts and come out cleansed and soiled to perfection. It is, prospective buyers and home loan merchants, the low interest rate dimension I call *Queer Logic*.

And to assist you in the inspection, I introduce you to the part-owners, Daniel Mudie Cunningham, Erna Lilje and Toby Huynh, young, Queer, home makers involved in the evolution of *Queer Logic*. Together they have created for your viewing pleasure a confronting display of interior/exterior/post-terior decorative features and a plush panorama of current Queer theoretical concerns. But to throw the mood-lighting at just the right angle, let me place their work as a team in a cosy theoretical context before I describe their projects individually.

The built in concept that demands immediate attention before we can inspect the property further, is *Queer Logic*. What on earth is this new, central feature in the house of Queer, I hear some of you, who have been on the auction rounds longer than most, murmur? Like its older inner city precursor, the *Camp Logic* estate, built on the foundations of Camp, our new site has evolved out of a specific political and social base called Queer. There are vital and chasmic differences however.

Camp was formulated to critique the inconsistencies and idiosyncrasies of hetero-enforced stereotypes, shifting the 'natural' and 'inevitable' relationships between gender and sex. Mostly lesbians and gay men were involved with this camp aesthetic, which was often defined by theatricality, bitter-wit and irony. *Camp Logic* evolved out of this

political-aesthetic and its peculiar characteristic was that it could critique a concept whilst subscribing to it at the same time e.g. drag complicated gender by utilising stereotypes, Warhol critiqued mass culture by subscribing to mass culture. This was seen as *Camp Logic*.

Queer was developed as a strategy to be more inclusive of sexuality, sex and gender differences. It delivered a platform of diversity and broader identity formulations including lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgenders. Identities developed by the Queer communities, homo-norms, can now be critiqued as vigorously as hetero-norms. Its aesthetic follows that of its post-modern, feminist womb - a myriad of migrating images and scavenged ideas pastiched into new Queer forms. It appropriates Camp but can inhabit many other homes.

Although Queer on one level is seen as an umbrella term for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people, at least one other version of Queer, of which I am aware, argues for continued oppositionality to the norm and a rupture of solid identities towards fluid continuity. This Queer also includes straight Queers, sex workers and anyone else outside the sexual-social norm for a certain period in history. In Queer Theory(ies) therefore, oppositional and antonymous politics often exist in the same, quick breath. *Queer Logic* inherits its peculiar features from this multiple, Queer political base. Contradictory, differing and sometimes oppositional concepts occupying the same space at once, is the main characteristic of what I call *Queer Logic*.

Like Camp Logic, the Queer Logic aesthetic may subscribe to that which it critiques, but that is not its core characteristic. The existence of differing, sometimes conflicting ideologies and concepts, in the same space and time is its main feature. Camp Logic, by critiquing through subscription, is certainly a form of Queer Logic, but the latter's trajectory is much broader, embracing a myriad points of view, irreconcilable paradoxes, dialectics and oxymoronic aesthetics.

In *Home Sweet Homo*, Cunningham, utilises Queer Logic through a process of identification in dis-identification. In *The Den* installation, personal identity and memory is questioned and re-created through the portrayal of others' histories. A fictional life is created through the exhibition of images and objects from other people's lives; a burgled identity is constructed. By creating this new identity we are forced to question our own sense of home/self. How much of what we call 'our-selves' is generated through imaginative re-remembering, how much from actual experience and how much from others influence on us? Gay male culture, masculinised social conventions and Queer identity formulations all play a part in the location of the home/selves we

inhabit and in the memories of what we are. By dis-identifying from pre-conceived notions of self we are asked to identify a new self.

The Ballad of Technological Dependency continues with this Queer Logic. By showcasing the records of friends and colleagues, from telephone messages left on answering machines to photos and relics left at his home, Cunningham both reveals and conceals his friends identities. Are they 'outed', in terms of identity, through this process of revelation or are they submerged in Cunningham's vision of and relationship with them? Concealment in revelation is yet another Queer Logistical strategy employed in this continual loop of living life through other people's experiences.

Erna Lilje utilises Queer Logic through the concept of expression through repression. In her installation *Sample Pot*, handy hints for interior re-decoration through a do it yourself *Sexy, Healthy and Wise* home improvement show, takes on an extra resonance when slipped to us through texts and colours like *Fleshy Petal* and *Melting Moment*. Queer sexuality, often repressed from years of internal/external homophobia, finds expressive vents through the oddest of avenues, not the least being intra-textual dalliances on television. No need to fear repression Queer homemakers. Television's Tonia Todman will ease your pain, help you renovate without the dust and engage you in a delightful romance through the gentle art of macramé and raffia baskets. Heaven right here on earth.

Inevitably though, some eyebrows will be raised. Malicious home-wreckers will insist she is not just an innocent, imaginary, sexualised substitute but a conspiracy with no budget restraint, designed to keep us trapped and prozaced in sexual limbo. We may project our sexuality into the oddest of spaces, find expression in repression, but are our own sexual needs ever met? When will we have time to renovate our own home/sexual-selves when there is no other '[wo]man' than Todman?

Finally, but inevitable not so final, Toby Huynh utilises Queer Logic through the concept of birth in death. In *How I Have Come To Be Your Daughter...*, Huynh explores the birth of the soul through the death of the body. In Chinese culture the soul, after death, is believed to return home to re-unite with the body before it passes on to its next abode. The family house becomes a comforting departure lounge where people can recollect and say good-bye, before the soul leaves to choose a new home and prepare for the next round of learning.

In Huynh's work, Queer Logic through birth in death is not limited to the soul. This Queer Logic is extended further through the representation of emergent cultures, both

ethnic and sexual, with older ones, in the same space and time. New Cross-cultural and cross-sexual spaces are birthed through the death of older ideals and structures. Huynh is not only involved in re-negotiating Chinese and Australian understandings of home/selves, but also in creating a central room for Queer sexuality within both these hetero-dominant houses. The Queer Logic of existing both within and outside of culture, is utilised in a brave and extraordinary way to make form out of the void, channeling the fear of traditions seeming death, into a creative alternative. Tradition, as always, needs reinventing and only stays meaningful when the furnishings of culture are effectively re-arranged.

Home Sweet Homo sees Daniel Cunningham, Erna Lilje and Toby Huynh looking with videos and installation at the discontents, frustrations, rituals and ecstasies of same-sex sexuality through the paradigm of Queer Logistical eyes. Renovations in the House of Queer have been proposed and completed - not a cent need be spent. We ask you now to visualise the huge potential in this Queer Logic Estate and imagine living within its unique properties. Thank you for attending the inspection. I now declare the auction open and bidding to start.

The End