
*PLAY SEX LOVE**BY KATHRYN FISCHER*

Community Action Center, a new video by A.K. Burns and A.L. Steiner, is a work of art, an erotic statement, an exploration in play between differently gendered persons, an expression of love and a political body of textual theory. In these it enters the realm of the pornographic without explicitly claiming the word porn in either the process or finished work. Quite simply, it is a series of erotic performances set to music, taking the viewer into a variety of queered archetypes and sexual perspectives. However one describes it, CAC is a contribution to the body of queer feminist porn and has its place in a long tradition of feminist performance art.

Through the diversity of the scenes pictured, what's clear is that CAC was not an exercise in setting out to make a queer porn, but rather a performative process captured on video that encompasses the diversity of queer sexuality through play and experimentation. This also gives it a political standpoint beyond the turn-on. "We know that the social and sexual oppression of women & queers - through instituted systems of control, violence and terror - is a construct of the heteronormative patriarchal structure," says Steiner, "But we are, and always were, fighting against it with our powerful minds and bodies. And sexual creativity figures into that liberation."

From the first scene, which pictures multiple bodies engaging in playful acts with fruit and food, it is clear that





play figures importantly into the project. Burns says of play that it is "an under recognized social function. We did it in kindergarten, but then we were told to stop and stay in our desks. But play should never stop and it's always the best way to learn."

Community Action Center is also distinctly non-commercial. Most if not every scene employs natural objects like fruits, leaves, feathers, hands, body parts. Things bought and sold do not figure broadly into the imagery represented. Equally, the video itself was not made for the primary purpose of making sales. "There's plenty of queer porn that's commercially oriented," says Steiner. "I'm not interested in it because of its lack of artistic and aesthetic considerations and its uncritical mimicking of normative power structures."

This begs the question of whether "queer" porn, if one takes the term queer as a political orientation, can be commercially oriented at all and, further, what makes queer porn "queer"?

"Queer porn is not just about homosexual sex," says Burns, "it should just be strange. We're interested in making and watching strange porn. And that is queer." This helps to explain why the scenes pictured in CAC are not just bodies having penetrative sex, but also include playful acts, ritualistic sewing of skin, interaction with the natural world that ride the border of sexual and erotic. Says Steiner, "We defined queer sex and feminist agency as a shared acknowledgment of reciprocal penetration, and as something that is not limited to only penetrative acts... the fusing of creativity and sexuality is queer. "Sex" was the one thing we never defined in making this video. There are so many things we allowed to be sexual, and "having sex" was the least of our interests, to some degree. It was what leads to feeling turned-on, what leads to wanting to participate in an overtly sexual act, that was interesting to us.

Of mainstream porn Burns requests, "No more bad dialogue. No more bright lighting - I don't need to see perfectly lit and zoomed in genitals to be turned on, I need to feel more than I need to see, so it must be beautiful, first and foremost. No more of the obvious - the thing that bothers me the most

