

10 December, 1994

Queers in Space Vancouver

Manifesto

Queers in Space Vancouver is a collective of artists, designers, planners, and community activists formed to recognize, articulate, and promote the presence of 'queer' 'space' in our public environments. Queer space is always in flux because of a range of social, economic, cultural, and political dynamics. Queer space can be defined as that which is inhabited and frequented by sexual minorities and where alliances are formed. Much of these public queer spaces are barely concretized and are ephemeral and nomadic. But other queer sites are increasingly "stable" and strategic. The resulting communities are better able to foster respect, security, and freedom of expression and, in turn, propagate new alliances. The heart of our work in Queers in Space Vancouver is the celebration and (re)construction of community.

The definition of 'queer' transcends but does not ignore the experience of an individual as based on their gender, race, and sexual orientation. In order not to limit membership, we use the term 'queer' for anyone with a marginalized sexuality or a commitment to respect and full freedom of expression. We are more interested in defining the term 'queer' through our actions and what we achieve in specific alliances, communities, and places.

Based on our experience, queer space is

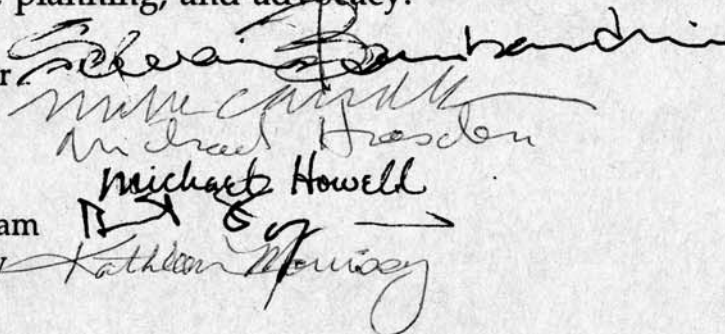
- *queered by desire*
- **an arena / theatre, / opera**
- *comprised of zones of play*
- *dramatic, campy, outrageous*
- *left-handed*
- *frequented by straight males*
- *sometimes politicized*
- *visible and invisible*
- *often safer for women*
- **not always in a ghetto**
- **a sexual construct**
- *eroticized*
- **often straight space**
- *somewhere over the rainbow*
- *"not in Kansas anymore"*
- *often unsafe*
- (Oscar) Wilde
- **transformed by (queer) bodies**
- **ordinary**
- *often gendered before it eroticized*
- *no there, there*
- **increasingly valued and marketable**
- Stonewall 1969
- **intriguing**
- *an infra-thin*
- *zonal*
- *lacking imagination*
- *often camouflaged*
- *inter / trans national*
- Paris 1968

Some principles

Queers in Space Vancouver is anti-dogmatic and we are loosely allied around the following precepts and principles.

- Public environments are often hostile to sexual minorities.
- Lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals are constantly being confronted with homophobia in public space. Women and a range of other groups are also increasingly confronted with inequities and the de facto privatization of 'open' space in cities.
- Urban and rural landscapes can be experienced and read in many ways. A central mission of Queers in Space is to reveal and assert other perceptions of our public environments.
- Homophobia is still very much intrinsic in planning and design of public space, today, and this fact is a central factor in the problems faced by queers today.
- Our argument is that public space has been overtly dominated by colonialism, patriarchy, and compulsory heterosexuality.
- A growing portion of lesbian, gay male, bisexual, and transsexual public life is being commercialized and privatized. By critically examining the impacts of privatization of public space, we can determine how to better form, defend and reconstruct our communities.
- Queers in Space advocates the expansion of the composition and definition of our public environments to support more safe and nurturing places. Queers in Space is infiltrating and occupying a range of discourses on the city, urban design, and regional planning. We are learning how to reread the queerscape.
- We intend to communicate our ideas by any means necessary. Our weapons are critical thinking, humour, and irony communicated through art, design, planning, and advocacy.

Sylvain Bombardier
Michael Carroll
Michael Hoeschen
Michael Howell
Gordon Brent Ingram
Kathleen Morrissey



Handwritten signatures of the listed individuals: Sylvain Bombardier, Michael Carroll, Michael Hoeschen, Michael Howell, Gordon Brent Ingram, and Kathleen Morrissey.