

Towards a Queer Built Domesticity

What is queer space? The obvious instance of one is a space in which queer bodies intentionally assemble, or one in which queer, homosexual acts are performed. This definition, although not wrong, negates the notion of “queer” to a fleeting practice rather than a persevered identity. To actively identify as queer is to deviate from the norm, to be inherently counter-cultural. It is a practice as much as it is an approach - to subvert, to reassemble, to transform.

What does it mean to approach in queerness, when having space and material in mind? In his book *Queer Space*, Aaron Betsky defines queer space as a hybrid space, composed of the man-made and the natural. It is an ephemeral, infinite space, transcending the walls which attempt to confine it. It is a mirror space - mirroring our bodies, yet freeing them to transform and act unbothered, allowing for desire and longing.

Textiles, and particularly knits, are often dubbed as second skin. The structure of knitting is such that stretches and morphs. It allows the body, rather than restricts it. The act of knitting, culturally impossible to distinguish from the sense of hand work, care, and labour, is representative of the body - both the hands that have created it, and the body it wishes to contain.

Hands are at heart both of the labour of textile and of dyke lust. Hands act as the connective thread between the identity of textile maker and the queer, knotting them together. The queer space I create, then, is one of inseparable hands, coming together. In their abstraction, they are five-pointed stars - a center, the palm, and five fingers, stretching out.

These abstractions are composed of softly hand spun yarns, made from beautiful fibers - mint, banana, rose bush. Of natural materials, such as cotton and wool. Hand dyed over long hours, these slow materials are then combined with their material contrast: synthetic thermoplastic yarns, factory manufactured, reactive to the heat of boiled water. These opposites are in turn knitted - together, apart, in segments, by my hands and by a machine, producing vastly different outcomes.

Then, they come together. They come together in the bed frame - one of queer past love, in the confines of a bedroom, in an apartment, in a city, under lockdown. They hang off the frame and off each other, yearning for touch that is now forbidden. They mirror both the bed's past and its occupier's desire for the future. They are geometric, yet their assembly creates an unstructured geometry, a canopy, a new space within the space. It is defined yet open, soft.

Time is an element we often consider as textile practitioners; the amount needed to produce, the amount of time until it decays. As queers, time is often the before and the after. In the middle, we transform. Although transformation is never cut and clean, perfectly contained, there is that moment of transformation, in which we decide to embrace and allow for it. Becoming resilient yet celebrating our softness. This queerness is not something to conceal, but to celebrate.

The queer space is a transgressive one. This space is. The heat of the steam transforms it - it curls and hardens, shifts in an unpredictable way. As its skeleton becomes rigid, it rises. It is not immediate, rather, it is deliberate. It is soft and stable, it is resilient, it is alive.