

## **Transgression – A New Paradigm?**

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Sergio Villanueva Preston

Cornell University

Email: [svp32@cornell.edu](mailto:svp32@cornell.edu)

Mobile: +61 418 500 373

Address: 211/8 Musgrave Street, West End, QLD, Australia 4101

### **Gay ≠ Queer: Transgressive Historiography in the Case of Villa Kenwin**

The norms and canons around which domestic architecture materializes are almost invariably in the service of presenting heterosexuality as a coherent organization, producing it to seem like a natural state, or projecting it as a moral accomplishment (Berlant & Warner 1998). Against this background, the lives of LGBT people cannot help but read as transgressive, even when they struggle merely for inclusion into normative domesticity. Recently, architectural history has begun to redress the erasure of LGBT people from the historical account. Many such histories have done so, however, by removing the vital, transgressive, liberatory *frisson* of a queer historical analysis, instead assimilating these histories into new *homo*-normative narratives which merely supplement existing *hetero*-normative models. Queer theorists have offered clues into how — during this period when LGBT histories are being absorbed into the canon — architecture histories might be written that do not just reinscribe normative power dynamics with new actors, but instead aim to resist the historian's own role in the process of re-normalization.

This paper performs a three part queer history in its analysis of the 1932 modernist home called Villa Kenwin, built and occupied by the extended family constellation at the center of the Pool Group arts collective. Building program, quotidian/tactical occupation, and the design of the space itself provide the architectural limits through which Pool's transgressive practices oscillate, reasserting lines of normativity even at the moment of their crossing (Foucault 1963). Asking what was gained and what was ceded in Pool's alliance with Modernist architecture—in other words, what was liberatory and what was merely 'new'—this paper hopes to demonstrate how feminist and queer theories offer approaches for producing architecture histories that do not merely subsume and consume the transgressive, liberatory lives of its subjects.