

Working Like a Homosexual: Camp, Capital, Cinema

Matthew Tinkcom

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CAMP, CAPITAL, CINEMA

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Matthew Tinkcom : Working Like a Homosexual: Camp, Capital, Cinema before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Working Like a Homosexual: Camp, Capital, Cinema:

2 of 5 people found the following review helpful. "Working" requires a bit of labor on the part of the readerBy Chadwick RobertsTinkcom's text is hard to digest at times, especially the lengthy introduction that exposes the

manuscript's origin as a dissertation. Work through the intro pays off for tenacious readers, as the book is an insightful inquiry into camp using Marxist theory and a menagerie of examples drawn from both "high" and "low" forms of filmic art. The author does a decent job of historicizing different types of cinematic queer cultural production while engaging his assertion that camp forms a critique of capitalism. If one can muddle through the excessively exhaustive introduction they will find the cinematic examples the author uses and the research he has undertaken compelling. One can only hope that Tinkcom's work is indicative of forthcoming scholarly inquiries critically engaging queer subjectivity in the vein of Richard Dyer's recent and more accessible volume of essays, *The Culture of Queers* (2002).

What does camp have to do with capitalism? How have queer men created a philosophy of commodity culture? Why is cinema central to camp? With chapters on the films of Vincente Minnelli, Andy Warhol, Kenneth Anger, and John Waters, *Working Like a Homosexual* responds to these questions by arguing that postWorld War II gay male subcultures have fostered their own ways not only of consuming mass culture but of producing it as well. With a special emphasis on the tensions between high and low forms of culture and between good and bad taste, Matthew Tinkcom offers a new vision of queer politics and aesthetics that is critically engaged with Marxist theories of capitalist production. He argues that campwhile embracing the cheap, the scorned, the gaudy, the tasteless, and what Warhol called the leftovers of artistic productionis a mode of intellectual production and a critical philosophy of modernity as much as it is an expression of a dissident sex/gender difference. From Minnellis musicals and the everyday glamour of Warhols films to Angers experimental films and Waterss trash aesthetic, Tinkcom demonstrates how camp allowed these gay men to design their own relationship to labor and to history in a way that protected them from censure even as they struggled to forge a role for themselves within a system of value that failed to recognize them.

A brilliant, innovative study of camp that exceeds the terms in which this topic traditionally has been conceived. The result is a reformulation of camp as queer industrial labor, from the perspective of the production as well as the reception of that work. Anyone working on camp will hereafter have to reckon with this book. Steven Cohan, author of *Masked Men: Masculinity and the Movies in the Fifties*