

**Some Brief Considerations of the Queer Canadian Playwright interspersed with Authentic Textual Examples of Queer Canadian Playwriting from the Canon of a Queer Canadian Playwright, by Greg MacArthur**

Queer = open, unstable, encompassing, community, progressive, expanding.

Playwright = restrictive, solitary, outdated, singular, shrinking, niche.

I speak only for myself.

Life is a conversation. This is a conversation.

I have been writing plays for twenty-five years.

I am gay.

I am queer.

Wearing the label “queer playwright” feels constricting to me, tight and awkward, like trying to squeeze into a navy blue double-breasted suit I wore to my cousin Paul’s wedding in 1988.

Twenty years ago, my answers would have been different.

Twenty years from now, my answers will (hopefully) be different.

This isn’t pork. I don’t think this is pork.

The word queer has become so encompassing, fluid, and reaching, almost to the point of meaninglessness.

That is not a bad thing.

Look at me lying on a bed at the Chelsea Hotel with a needle in my arm.

28 is the peak age for a playwright.

52 is the peak age for queer.

I don’t write plays. I write open texts.

A playwright doesn’t easily fit into a postdramatic landscape.

Kartik gets a small erection.

In this multi/interdisciplinary, post-structuralist climate, where, for the past thirty years we have becoming more and more fluid, definitions that restrict or confine are not useful.

Words that divide and separate are less interesting than words that don't.

I'm no nurse, but I think banging your gushing head 'gainst the ground ain't the healthiest road to take.

We are more than one thing. We are more than two things.

It crushed the chipmunk's head easily, with little effort.

Early in my career, I felt pressure to write more overtly gay-themed plays.

I succumb to peer pressure easily.

in the 1990s, Buddies suggested I take my plays to the Tarragon. The Tarragon suggested I take my plays to Buddies.

I once wrote a play with the (almost) sole purpose of trying to get Matthew Mcfadzean naked.

There is no difference between a queer and non-queer playwright.

You shouldn't believe everything you hear about Sweden because there's lots of rumours going on about Sweden but no one really knows what's going on in Sweden.

Traditional playwriting practices are still only relevant in regional, consumer & subscription-driven theatres.

Relational aesthetics has been a game changer.

Microtopias have infiltrated every art form.

Antagonism is necessary.

Text and narrative are still at the forefront of my artistic practice.

Shia LaBeouf was an artist. He died a little over seven months ago. He was our friend.

With queer work, form, location, and process are equally (if not more) important and relevant as content.

CAEA is not queer. PACT is not queer. Proscenium stages are not queer. They are, however, the last bastion of the playwright.

Like, because my parents took off and I'm quiet and like German porn that somehow makes me interested in the human psyche.

Subscriber-based, regional theatres feel increasingly dated, inflexible, economically restrictive, and bound by traditions and methodologies no longer conducive to creating truly engaging performances. Sitting in these theatres, surrounded by dated architecture and an aging

audience, watching carefully structured, realistic plays, I can't help but feel like one of the last stragglers at a party trying desperately to feel relevant, hip and engaged, but secretly feeling depressed and bored, knowing that all the cool kids had left the building ages ago.

I never understood that: why are they Transformers?

Do not underestimate labels.

In the spirit of Duchamp, by naming something, it becomes that. Call yourself whatever you want. I write a play. I call it a novel. Or a Fluxus instructional Booklet. Or long-form journalism.

Boom.

Anyone still trying to make a living as a playwright after the age of forty probably stands to inherit money.

From the beginning of my career, I have felt out-of-place, homeless, inbetween, outside the establishment, and outside the anti-establishment.

This is not a bad thing.

But a pen rolls off a table and instead it's me in the hostel with the Israelis and the two Irish drug addicts and the biography of Dirk Bogarde and my bare bleeding feet and my unfinished life and my fridge magnet and my shitty nylon shirt and my job at Staples.

If I could do it over, I would have left Canada.

If you are a Chef, you don't restrict yourself to one or two ingredients.

There is a restaurant in Tokyo that serves nothing but dirt.

I am still stuck in this field and all I see is red.

1993 was the best year for queer theatre in Toronto. It has been downhill from there.

Some early Canadian queer companies/artists that influenced me: DNA, STO Union, Ali Riley, pow pow unbound, Cathy Gordon, Death Waits, augusta company, Videocabaret.

You're like the shaggy-haired girl from the Breakfast Club, kind of quirky and weird.

We learn from antagonism, not agreement and/or consensus. Staying within our own community is boring.

I keep having this recurring dream I'm having sex my younger brother.

I write performance texts that are meant to be read, recorded, projected, spoken, considered, ignored.

Theatre, like the economy, is seeing the disappearance of the middle: soon there will only be large commercial houses, and tiny storefront spaces. Nothing in between.

We have reached peak queer. There will be a backlash.

Racism is the costume?

I cut my own hair.

No one wants to use the word theatre in their company name anymore.

Hyperreality has forever shifted the climate of playwriting.

They were dead, the two boys.

I have never set out to write a queer play.

Everything I do is queer.

It's little things that cripple you, that paralyze you, that follow you, that cut you, that bleed you, that strangle you until you can't breath or move.

One cannot wear two hats successfully; one can wear fourteen hats more successfully.

I feel my work, in form and content, is more comfortably placed in the queer aesthetic of the late 1990s / 2000s rather than the gay/lesbian world of the late 1980s.

Time has caught up with me.

I feel ahead of things.

Sometimes I have to tie him down, strap him down in a chair to make him stop, with leather straps, fucking whip the fucking shit out of him.

The terms queer and playwright are moving in two different directions: one stuck in the past, holding onto old traditions and methodologies not longer relevant to truly progressive work; the other, lurching further towards instability, inclusivity, putting the power in the hands of viewer / spectator / participant.

We love Mexican food. We eat tacos every night.

I think I might grab another gin and tonic. Catch up a bit.

My most recent work, *A Man Vanishes*, was produced at Videofag in March 2016. It was written specifically to be performed by Will and Jordan *in situ* at Videofag.

I don't necessarily consider *A Man Vanishes* a play, although it bears resemblance to one.

I don't necessarily consider *A Man Vanishes* queer, although it bears the traces of that word.

Aim to be the space the forward slash once occupied.

One of them was trying to take the Aero bar away from Karina. She was in a ball. She said no. She picked up her wand.

Text and narrative are physically a part of all of us.

I know how much Mom likes these custard tarts.

Stone cold silence. It creeps up on you.

In ten years i will start writing traditional mimetic plays again under a pseudonym, kinda like an acclaimed novelist using a nom de plume to write cheesy, money-grabbing detective novels.

Art. Gosh, Clever.