

2019

Queer Desires, the Beach and Catalan Cinema

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Recommended Citation

Maestre Brotons, Toni and Obrador Pons, Pau (2019) "Queer Desires, the Beach and Catalan Cinema," *Critical Tourism Studies Proceedings*: Vol. 2019 , Article 80.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.library.tru.ca/cts-proceedings/vol2019/iss1/80>

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Title: Queer Desires, the Beach and Catalan Cinema

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Abstract:

The beach is at the heart of Mediterranean mass tourism. However, it remains invisible to cultural studies of tourism, which are more interested in urban and rural geographies. The invisibility of the beach is not just the result of lack of empirical research but of our theoretical inability to make sense of a liminal and fluid space. In response to these shortcomings, this paper analyses the place of the beach in Catalan cinema. In so doing, we want to examine further the influence of cinema in shaping the contemporary experience of the beach (Carter, 2007; Handyside, 2009; Cirer, 2016). The paper looks at two films: *Kràmpack* (Cesc Gay, 1999) and *Nívols d'estiu* (Felipe Vega, 2008). The main focus of the paper is the relation between space, sexuality and the beach. The beach appears in these films as a liminal space in opposition to both, the centrality of the city in contemporary societies and the hegemony of heterosexuality, family and marriage. Such liminality is reinforced by the ephemerality of the beach, which is not a place of permanence or residence but just a mere parenthesis in everyday life (Urbain, 2003). We want to show the extent that the cultural and geographical characteristics of the beach affords relations that depart from the established norm, including infidelity and homosexuality. We are also interested in the ludic, material and sensual character of the beach, which defies the visual and detached logic of the tourist gaze (Obrador, 2012). The sensual and ludic character of the beach is especially visible in *Kràmpack*, which examines the game of seduction between two teenagers.

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