

Allan Spiers
Reponse to Masterpiece Cake case
December 2017

Q: As an artist, would you take a commission to express something that was counter to your own beliefs (artistic or not)?

A: This is a scenario I have actually dealt with personally. One of my main businesses is as a graphic designer. I specialize in political advertising and have done work for both parties. I have had to do a lot of work that pertained to ideals that did not align with my own, and I was completely ok with this because at the end of the day, I am getting paid. As a business owner it isn't my job to cater to only my point of view, but solely the point of view of the client who hired me. That is the cost of doing business.

Q: Where do you feel the lines are drawn between expression, discrimination, and religious belief? At what point does free expression have to be curtailed in order to protect the community as a whole?

A: As mentioned above, I typically deal with a lot of crazy political ideas. There was one instance where I refused a job. It was an anti-gay smear piece paid for by the Republican party. That was where my line in the sand was. In my opinion, freedom of expression is something that is personal. When that expression extends beyond the artist as an individual and starts to effect other people, whether it be hate speech meant to stand in the way of the liberties and freedom of others, or something that excludes a specific community or communities of people, it should not be protected. We are a country that prides itself on freedom, liberty, and justice. As long as one's self-expression does not interfere with these values, only then should it be protected.

Q: Does the government (at any point) have a right to determine what is and is not art? If so, under what conditions?

A: The government absolutely does not have the right to determine what is and is not art. It is subjective, and up to the community. The artist doesn't even have a say in the matter. One can call what they do "art" but until the audience accepts it as art, it falls into a sort of purgatory where it is internalized exclusively within the artist.

Q: Any thoughts about the case as a whole that you want to add?

A: I will end with this. Regardless if one considers this free expression of art or not, it is still hate. Now more than ever, we need to find our power, find our strength, and find our will to enforce change to confront and combat hate in all its incarnations. It is time we stop being silent and passive and get aggressive in the fight against those who would oppress any community. We as witches, workers, and occultists have been charged with righting injustice, balancing the scales when society fails us. We cannot defeat this with love and light, but with the iron sword of our incantations. We have it within us, we cannot let them go unchecked.