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Response 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: On one level, you could say I do that regularly - when I paint deities that I do not personally work with. But I enter into an interview type of situation when I take on a commission like that. Though it's probably a good idea to note that just because I don't work with a deity in my personal practice, doesn't necessarily mean I don't BELIEVE in them. Belief is a funny thing - I don't have to be personally invested in an idea to understand or work with it. On the other hand, I've learned not to do projects that don't inspire me or fit my genre. Like if someone asked me to do anime versions of the gods, I would send them along to someone else. I'm pretty busy as it is, so I generally get to pick and choose which projects I want to work on.

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

A: When you are a private/independent artist, you can choose to paint/make art of whatever you want (without violating copyrights). Want to make photos of only gay men for your portfolio and shows? Great! That's your art, and you're probably paying your models, versus them paying you. Want to paint the female body exclusively? Then that's your choice and expression - so if someone says, "hey, could you paint a picture of my horse?" it's not discrimination because it's not the kind of work you do, and the point of your artwork isn't to satisfy a service.

When you are an advertised service industry with a brick and mortar location on the street then picking and choosing customers solely on their religion, color, gender, or sexuality is plain discrimination. I think the best equivalent I can think of is if I was a caricature artist, doing my thing out in public - then I'm saying that I will draw anyone, as long as they are willing to pay and are respectful. I wouldn't turn someone away because they are a different color, religion, or sexuality than me - that's straight up discrimination when I'm offering a portrait service. Now if someone was being drunk and belligerent, then it's within my right to refuse them (and call the cops). Assholism isn't a protected class.

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

A: That is a really slippery slope. If we're referring to a court of law, maybe bodily harm without consent would be a case - like someone arguing that attacking people with a knife on film is their "art" - when it's assault. Times where the government may have a right otherwise would concern publicly funded programs designed to support the arts. Though that's not much different than a gallery deciding who to show, or a corporation deciding who gets the bid on public sculpture. It doesn't involve legislation.

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

Baking cakes is a craft and a service. Same as flower arrangements, printing invitations, etc. It's not creating art for the sake of art, it's not about personal expression. It's hanging your shingle out there to offer a service to the public. If you're a smart businessperson, then you provide your services to those who would pay for it. You can turn people down if you can fit it into your schedule, they can't pay what

you require, want something you don't offer, or you can refuse service because the client isn't a good fit - but when you start bringing "beliefs" into the reasons, that's not artistic expression. Will you do a cake for a Catholic wedding with the stipulation that no one who has been divorced can eat that cake? Or look at the flowers? Cake and flowers are accessories that can be eaten or seen by anyone - they don't sanctify or legalize a marriage. Where you draw the line with "belief"? This case is not about artistic expression nor beliefs - it's about getting a pass at being a bigot and a crap business person.