

Graduate Diploma of Fine Art Graduating Exhibition

December 2013

Whanganui, New Zealand

Every Sperm is Sacred (2013)

This exhibition was a personal reaction against the rigidity and fundamentalism of some brands of Christianity and other faiths, including my own upbringing as a Church of England Anglican.

The phrase Every Sperm is Sacred was derived from a song written by Monty Python in the 1980's

[https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Every\\_Sperm\\_Is\\_Sacred](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Every_Sperm_Is_Sacred)

The song was a parody and satire of Catholicism but the essence of the statement is drawn from the Jewish Bible. Where any discharges from the body are impure. Including women's menstrual blood. In Judaism conception is sacred and holy. Sexuality in the right context is sacred and holy, encouraged as a religious good. To be enjoyed.

Christianity took statements, which are believed to be the Word of God, outside of their original context, even language of Hebrew which is vastly different than English. Without truly trying to understand where they came from and why.

And transformed them into a situation where sexuality outside procreation in a family was forbidden. Along with an idea that God forbids pleasure in sexuality. That sexuality is not holy and certainly not sacred, quite the opposite. In any case these narratives have led to unintended consequences. The body was not to be trusted. Along with feelings. The body is a place of sin in Christianity. In Christianity they believe we are born sinners and are sinners for life. It's a life filled with shame as of course as a child with Christian parents we get two messages. Sexuality is good. But only in a certain context.

Outside that context, sexuality is bad. It stems from a verse in the Hebrew bible. Forbidding ejaculation except in a woman. Masturbation is bad and obviously the result for men, of ejaculation of sperm, can be seen as bad if Every Sperm is Sacred.

Going back to the Hebrew Bible it was written in the context of complete unbridled sexuality of the time thousands of years ago. Orgies. Multiple wives. Sexual expression of every type including that which is banned by law today. Incest and bestiality.

Understandably, with such negative messages about such a fundamental human drive, it could be theorized this is one reason Christians deserted the Church in droves.

How could something so pleasurable be so bad? Now it's not only ok to enjoy every form of sexual expression, but there is also whole industry's grown up around it. Are we better off as a society? Some would say yes, we are free of shame. Some would say no, society is imploding without the backbone of families. And the new imperative of work and economic prosperity replacing the old Judeo-Christian ideas about what makes a healthy society and communities. Some people are lonelier than every despite the promises of social media and technological advances in telecommunications. And the liberalism of sexuality.

The focus on individual enlightenment ideally through work where empty corporate jingoisms replace wisdom learned through the ages. Relationships, including sexual relationships, can be temporary and fleeting.

So, the question remains, is sexuality ultimately about life, bonding and long term connections? Or a fleeting pleasure? My exhibition was about life! A vote for life!