

EXPOSING MASCULINITIES: MY JOURNEY AS A QUEER ARTIST

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“At age 14, I underwent a double mastectomy as a result of gynecomastia, a disorder in some boys that results in the formation of breasts at puberty. The surgery left me with large scars across my chest and around my nipples. These scars represent my own painful experience with non-normative gender. These photographs attempt to take control back over my body in a way that celebrated that experience while acknowledging the pain.”

This essay chronicles my experience as a young queer artist. The narrative of what follows reflects my creative process; it begins by speaking intellectually about my reasons for making art and begins to become more personal as the work develops. I conclude by discussing some of the artists and theorists that have guided me through this creative process. While my works do not always have a common aesthetic, they are interconnected, and the linear form of this essay reveals the connections between the various pieces and the momentum of their progression.



Figure 1. *One-Sex Model* (installation), 2005, lazerlight prints mounted on plexiglass

I am fascinated by the actual nature of gender and investigate how it relates to ideas surrounding self-representation. This prompted my, “One-Sex Models.” In the project I attempted to find and photograph people who I felt were, to varying degrees, existing outside gender norms. I did not want every model to be completely androgynous but to have an element, through either physical structure, gaze or pose, of gender ambiguity; I wanted to blur the categories rather than create a new one. I chose to photograph each individual on a white background with a soft but revealing light to give a stark, yet glamorous aesthetic to the work in order to call attention to and explore the personal androgyny of the models. The title “One-Sex Models” was meant to reference the notion of gender as a continuum rather than a distinct categorization¹. I found that by questioning the validity of gender I am also, and perhaps more effectively, addressing the validity of sexuality.

¹ Feminist theory specifically on the topic of gender formation is of particular relevance to my work. One of the most influential texts I read was Thomas Laqueur’s *Making Sex: Body and*



Figure 2. *Transitional Faces (study 1)*, 2005, digital photograph, make-up, acrylic

While creating “One-Sex Models” I was also working with some of the same images in an aesthetically and conceptually different fashion to create “Transitional-Faces.” This work explores externalized psychological states of how some queer men explore gender. From firsthand experience and observations in the queer community such exploration can take many forms ranging from drag to hyper-masculinity. I chose to investigate the effeminate side of this exploration, which mimics my own experience. I worked with the most “masculine” of the images in order to give the images more gender range and conflict. To achieve this effect I used paint and make-up on the surface of the images to put the faces into tumultuous states of drag.

Gender from the Greeks to Freud. Laqueur shows that the Pre-Enlightenment concept of gender was more ambiguous. It was believed “that inappropriate behaviors might really cause a change of sex” (Laqueur, 126). The classic story of Marie-Germain serves as a clear example of natural sex change. The story is about a girl named Marie who was soon to be Germain. During puberty Marie jumped across a ditch while chasing a pig, which ruptured the ligaments that held ‘her,’ (now ‘his’) male genitalia inside (Laqueur, 127). Thus Marie became known as a boy by the name of Germain, “a well-built young man with a thick red beard” (Laqueur, 127).

Though aesthetically disparate both “One-Sex Models” and “Transitional Faces” were created during the same time and used the same models. These works revealed an interesting dynamic in my art: the psychological state creating self-representation. This realization would not surface again until “Sewing the Façade” and “Veiled,” which will be discussed further in the paper.



Figure 3. *Beauty Monsters (installation)*, 2006, digital prints

After the previous projects I began to investigate the various sources that may inform ideas of self-representation to create “Beauty Monsters.” I became particularly interested in the sources that directly depicted the notions of hyper-beauty and body: fashion, fitness and porn magazines. I began obsessively consuming and cutting up these magazines and would then spend hours piecing together various disembodied parts to create grotesque figures out of idealized gendered forms. I took great care when constructing these images to make them as visually seamless as possible to heighten the work’s plausibility. These figures were then scanned and printed in various scales from life-size to the approximate size they would have originally been in a magazine. In the final presentation, they were pasted to a gallery wall to

appear as if an army of Beauty Monsters was about to march into the space of the viewer. Among my constructed figures I included one image that was directly scanned from the magazine. The inclusion of this figure both highlighted the ridiculousness of fashion images and made my constructions more believable. The intent of “Beauty Monsters,” beyond an investigation of these sources, is to again provide visual depictions of a queer gender continuum. In this way “Beauty Monsters” is conceptually similar to “One-Sex Models.”



Figure 4. *Iconoclast*, 2005, mixed-media

While working with ideas surrounding gender, a series I had created previously, titled “Iconoclast” began to receive some controversial press.² This was the result of some conservative activists objecting to my work being publicly place at my undergraduate university. This caused them to photograph my work and appeal to several conservative media personalities. Lars Larson, a conservative radio talk show host, picked up the story. I was notified by some of my friends in Oregon and subsequently called *The Lars Larson Show* and was interviewed (see Appendix 1, “Interview Transcript”). After this I made my own appeal to the liberal press and was published in *The*

² My first polemically queer series is “Iconoclast.” In these works I photographed homosexual couples/individuals and paired them with patron saints such as Saint Martin de Porre for social justice, Saint Joseph for marriage, Saint Patrick for excluded people, and Saint Anthony of Padua for oppressed people. Text from the recently passed amendments prohibiting gay marriage surrounded the figures and saints. The images were then gold-leafed and made to resemble Byzantine icons. The purpose of the work is not only to draw parallels between religion and legislation but also to highlight inherent hypocrisies.

Advocate and picked-up by other small Oregon-based newspapers. Through being in *The Advocate*, I was contacted by members of the Catholic gay community. This was around the time that Pope John Paul II died and Pope Benedict XVI was appointed. His appointment is the source of turmoil amongst gay Catholics, especially after the Church issued a new document on the church’s view on homosexuality. I could not resist making a documentary about being queer and Catholic in this turbulent time in the Catholic Church. While this seemed a departure from the work I was engaged in I felt compelled to make the documentary “A Place at the Table.”



Figure 5. *A Place at the Table* (video still), 2006

Despite my connections I began to face a great deal of resistance from both the straight and gay Catholic community. The gay community was afraid they would face discrimination if they were part of the documentary and the straight community did not want the issue talked about. Fortunately, I had become friends with Brother Brian Halderman, a ‘religious’ in The Society of Mary (a sect of the Roman Catholic Church), who was one of the first openly gay people to enter religious life in the Catholic Church. He became the largest supporter of “A Place at the Table.” He put me in contact with many other gay Catholics, over fifty people in all, of which only seven allowed me to interview them. To gain more familiarity I began to be an active member

of the gay Catholic community. I volunteered at Catholic booths at queer events, sang in the Catholic choir for the Sounds of Acceptance benefit, and attended Peace and Justice meetings (a gay friendly Catholic organization). By doing these activities I not only was able to meet more gay Catholics but gained firsthand knowledge of the discrimination gay Catholics have to endure, both from the queer community and within the Church. This helped me gain the proper perspective for the work.

After I had interviewed several gay Catholics and the leader of Peace and Justice (Sister Marge O’Gorman), I realized that I had to find someone who could set the stage of the documentary by laying out the official Church doctrine on homosexuality. This proved to be a complicated process of dealing with Catholic bureaucracy from the Archbishop down to the ostensibly heterosexual Father James Knapp, the leader of Courage (the official Catholic Group for people with homosexual tendencies). While I was attempting to get an interview from someone inside the Church about the doctrine, I had to be very careful to not draw too much attention to some of the other organizations and people I had already been in contact with. I did not want to cause the gay friendly organizations to be shut down. Eventually, I was granted an official Archbishop sanctioned interview with Father Knapp. The interview was tense, his speech was guarded and he recorded me as I recorded him.

“A Place at the Table” runs approximately ten minutes and is comprised of interviews shot in the interviewee’s personal spaces such as, a home or place of worship. They are linked together with symbolic footage of Catholic imagery, mostly taken from the Cathedral Basilica of Saint Louis and the Saint Francis Xavier College Church. This documentary addresses the Church’s doctrine in contrast to the actual experience of living as a homosexual in the Church.

After working closely with the gay Catholic community, I wanted to return to working with ideas of gender, experience and the body. I also felt it was time for me to work more directly from personal experiences.



Figure 6. *Sewing the Façade*, 2006, digital print, thread and needle

At age 14, I underwent a double mastectomy as a result of gynecomastia, a disorder in some boys that results in the formation of breasts at puberty. The surgery left me with large scars across my chest and around my nipples. These scars represent my own painful experience with non-normative gender. These photographs attempt to take control back over my body in a way that celebrated that experience while acknowledging the pain.

Out of the images I had, I found one that struck me; my eyes were closed, my expression a mix between ecstasy and pain – my gesture dynamic. I wanted to highlight the gesture and emotion while emphasizing the scars. I came to the idea of sewing red thread into the image over the scars to accentuate the emotional consequences of the surgery. During the process of sewing I noticed that the gesture in the photograph was similar to the action I was making. This realization caused me to connect the thread to my hand in the image. The thread and image seemed to visually merge into each other.



Figure 7. *Sewing the Façade*, 2006, digital prints, needles and thread

For the final presentation of what came to be known as “Sewing the Façade” I chose five images, printed them life-size on matte finished paper and sewed into them with red thread. On some of the images I sewed strictly over the scars from my surgery and in others I responded less literally to the image. All of the images are of me from the mid-torso up, on a black background, with my eyes closed. The thread is sewn into my chest at various locations and connects to my hands to make it appear as if the image is sewing itself. I left the needle on the thread dangling outside the frame to further the illusion and to break the frame of the picture. The use of red thread and the inclusion of the needle is of particular importance to the work. They are meant to be read beyond the literal reference of blood and surgery, to be healing yet destructive, concealing while highlighting, masculine and feminine. These elements get to the core of what I want “Sewing the Façade” to visually articulate.

“Sewing the Façade” addresses ideas surrounding the body in relationship to self-expression, queerness and gender. It celebrates the beauty of the non-normative while documenting the pain afflicted by the normative ideal.



Figure 1. *Veiled*, 2007, video installation

Most recently, I created the video installation “Veiled.” The work consists of large amounts of various white fabrics suspended in the middle of a dark space with a video projection coming from inside. The initial view is of a large circular glowing white satin form. There is a part in the fabric that serves as an entry revealing the inner part of the installation. Inside there is soft gathered chiffon. From behind a single sheet of sheer fabric a video of myself is projected in small scale. Since the fabric is sheer and the projection is from behind, the flowing fabric lining the structure also has a larger less sharp version of the video projected on it. The rear projection is also what gives the exterior fabric a glow, even though no discernable image can be seen from the outside.

The video projects an image of me nude from the shoulders up slowly spinning as thin red threads bind my face and neck. The video begins with a few threads on my face and over approximately six minutes they form large ribbon-like bands over my eyes, mouth and neck, at this point the footage reverses and begins to unbind me; It is meant to be seen as non-linear and perpetual. I chose to edit the clips with very slow cross-fades in order to maintain the meditative feel of the work and reduce the loop from two hours to twelve minutes.

To me, gender is learned and not innate. The video references gender as a performance by depicting the nature of the constraints of normative gender with the slow building of the thread over time to completely deform and constrict my face and neck. The looping shows how one can never truly escape these constraints: first they appear invisible or inconsequential, but over time they will build up until they completely conceal a person.

While there are several potential reads for the function of the fabric structure; I am most interested in it as a veil and in reference to theatricality. The veil is currently a highly debated and controversial topic with reference to the Islamic tradition of veiling women. To me the veil is an overt symbol of oppression, a garment that binds and obscures. I hope to tap into this debate and the possible reads of the veil. I am using the reference of the veil by literally veiling the image from viewers by projecting the image through many layers of fabric to make the initial image unreadable but aesthetically seducing. I then invite the viewers to come inside the satin veil. Once inside they are then confronted by a crisp and disturbing image of a person being bound by thread. The harshness of the image is contrasted by the ethereal nature of the large softer image being projected onto the chiffon lining. This duality is important as it articulates the duality of what is perceived with gender and what is experienced.

The reference of the theater, with the fabric alluding to a curtain, parallels the concealing of the veil but speaks directly to the idea of gender as a performance. This is also integral to the work because the clear image is eventually revealed. In this way the connotations of the veil and the theater, in reference to gender as performance, combine to make the potential interpretation of the work more accurate to my intention.

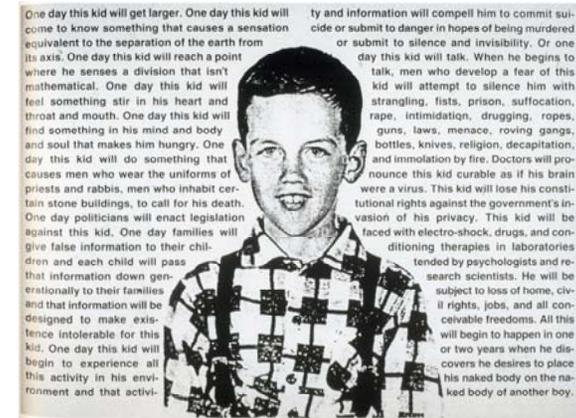


Figure 9. David Wojnarowicz, *Untitled [One day this kid...]*, 1990, gelatin-silver print, 30 x 40"

A Foundation for Artistic Practice: Discussion of Influences

My discovery of David Wojnarowicz was the result of two important moments in my life: coming out as queer, and making the decision to pursue being an artist. I immediately became enthralled by his work and pored over it for months. His writings are coarsely honest and his imagery complex and loaded with meaning. The works that combined his writing and images became of particular interest to me. For example “Untitled [One day this kid...]” is full of rage and hope. The story is moving and the image of the innocent looking boy (a photograph of David Wojnarowicz as a boy) surrounded by the text work together to produce a powerful account of his life in a manner that reaches beyond mere autobiography. Above all I value and carry with me his unapologetically personal approach to art making. As Dan Cameron states:

He was a genuine idealist in the sense that he spoke up loudly for causes that he believed in and never hesitated to make his art a vehicle for his political convictions. But he was also a visionary artist in the sense that his works were often triggered by

private experiences or dreams, and he was especially fond of creating links between ecstatic experience and polemical confrontation (Cameron, 3).

Wojnarowicz seemed to give me permission to speak loudly and never hesitate. I began to create art that explicitly dealt with my personal experiences, often in an overtly political way. Working this way was an extremely important step for my work. I still work from personal experiences but have begun to move away from being as aggressively political and as overtly autobiographical.



Figure 10. David Wojnarowicz, *Fuck You Faggot Fucker*, 1984, black-and-white photographs, acrylic, and collage on masonite, 48 x 48"

The way I approach materials and object making mirrors that of Wojnarowicz. I do not focus exclusively on aesthetics or issues and I use a variety of media as a way to bring new layers of meaning and context to my work (Cameron, 4). However, visually my work is very different from Wojnarowicz's. This is especially true in my more recent work where I have sought to have a very simple and elegant aesthetic as opposed to Wojnarowicz's complexly charged and emotionally raw style.



Figure 11. Adrian Piper, *The Mythic Being: I Embodiment Everything You Most Hate and Fear*, 1975, oil crayon on photograph

Adrian Piper's essay "The Joy of Marginality" speaks eloquently about passing as mainstream, yet being marginal to it, and the perspective this relationship provides (Piper, 236). I also attempt to utilize this privileged perspective in my work to comment on the mainstream thought process. Although the source of my marginality is due to being queer and not my ethnic identity, my awareness and response corresponds with Piper's.

I become aware of my racial identity when someone brings it to my attention. This happens, for example, whenever someone makes a racist, sexist, homophobic, or ethnic slur of any kind. That brand of irrational hostility, no matter where it is explicitly directed, reminds me of my vulnerability as a black person (Piper, 233).

This is analogous to how I perceive my sexuality and gender and react to any statement of bigotry; it makes me feel vulnerable and enraged. My work is in response to these feelings, as is Piper's. This perspective affects my work directly; I use this perspective to channel my experiences in productive ways and to take back power in order to not be confined (Piper, 234).

Beyond Piper's writings, her interventionist performance based work and how it functions is of great importance. In "The Mythic Being" she created an alter-ego (a young black male) and walked around public places asserting this false identity, reflecting the root of the discrimination she feels as a black female. This speaks not only about racial discrimination, but can be

read as showing gender as performance. It is also of interest to my working method in that she photographs these performances as documentation of the event and then through an additive process uses that documentation to make an art object. Much of my work is based in performance, and the photographs of the event are altered. These alterations, such as the adding of thread to “Sewing the Façade,” turn the documentation into autonomous art object.

The purpose of Piper’s work makes viewers aware of their own racism. She constructs relationships with the viewers to highlight their xenophobia. While my work is not as immediate and more specifically addresses ideas surrounding sexuality and sex, our perspective and intent is similar.

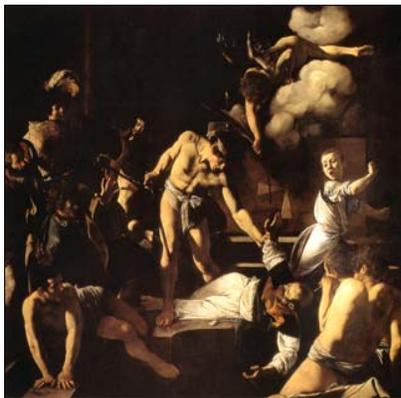


Figure 12. Caravaggio, *The Martyrdom of St. Matthew*, 1599, oil on panel

While my ideologies and some working methods parallel both Wojnarowicz and Piper, aesthetically there are few similarities. Visually I draw from such artists as Caravaggio and Mapplethorpe, both of whom are used as examples in Dave Hickey’s *The Invisible Dragon: Four Essays on Beauty* where he talks about the idea of transgressive beauty and its “subversive potential” (Hickey, 13).

In my work, I look to the gestures, tenebrism, and imagery of Caravaggio. Today he is seen as a maker of beautiful paintings. However, Hickey argues that during the time of Caravaggio his works were seen as political due to their subject matter surrounding the religious debate of intercession.

[W]e must ask ourselves if Caravaggio’s ‘realism’ would have been so trenchant of his formal accomplishments so delicately spectacular, had his contemporary political agenda, under the critical pressure of a rival Church, not seemed so urgent (Hickey, 18)?

He argues that Caravaggio used aesthetics to lull his viewers into contending with its subject matter. I draw from this baroque aesthetic in my lighting and color palette. I want my viewers to be visually seduced by the work and therefore made to contend with the more socio-political content of the work.



Figure 13. Robert Mapplethorpe, *Annamirl and Wim*, 1984, silver-gelatin print

Robert Mapplethorpe used beauty’s inherent visual draw as a means to communicate ideas of sexuality that run contrary to the mainstream. Hickey argues that the subject matter alone was not what caused conservative

activists of the time to react so violently, but that he depicted the acts as beautiful.

It was not that men were making it then, but that Robert [Mapplethorpe] was 'making it beautiful.' More precisely, he was appropriating a Baroque vernacular of beauty that predated and, clearly, outperformed the puritanical canon of visual appeal espoused by the therapeutic institution (Hickey, 22).

If one represents marginal experiences or people in an unappealing or ugly way then there is nothing being said that runs contrary to mainstream thought. By using beauty while photographing queer subject matter one subverts the mainstream gaze simply by portraying what is widely seen as negative in a positive light.

Another major aspect to my work is how queerness is manufactured. Michael Warner claims:

The closet is better understood as the culture's problem, not the individual's ... It is experienced by lesbians and gay men as a private, individual problem of shame and deception. But it is produced by the heteronormative assumptions of everyday talk. It feels private. But, in an important sense it is publicly constructed (Warner, 52).

Warner touches upon several main preoccupations in my work. I aim to explore how queerness is mediated and defined by the heteronormative culture, and to reveal those definitions and rearticulate them from a queer perspective. I see the body as the site of mediation between this heteronormative culture and the internal psyche of the individual. The body, like Warner's idea of the closet, is experienced as an individual place of shame and deception, but is ultimately publicly constructed. In my work, I strive to depict the internal experiences of heteronormativity on queer bodies. The depiction of this struggle is an attempt to regain power over the effects of heteronormativity.

Through this discussion, I have put myself in dialogue with some of the key artists, cultural critics and art theorists that have informed my art making. From them I have gained a great deal; from Laqueur an understanding of the true nature of gender, from Wojnarowicz an unapologetically personal

approach, from Piper an embracement of the perspective and experience of being Other, from Hickey an understanding of the role and power of subversive beauty, from Caravaggio and Mapplethorpe examples of how to create images of polemical beauty, from Warner a critical understanding of heteronormativity. In this sense my work can be considered a branch of the Politics Identity Art Movement. While I draw from these ideologies, I am moving away from an overtly political stance to work with an emphasis on cultural commentary in an attempt to make visible the mechanisms by which people's experiences are mediated and how they manifest.

Thus far, my work has been engaged with a critical yet celebratory investigation of queerness, with a particular emphasis on gender formation and experience. For me to achieve this, it is crucial that I begin by working from my own personal experiences in an attempt to transcend the autobiography, without discounting it. To effectively communicate my ideas I strive for visually seductive work that contains cultural commentary.

I am still fascinated by, and will continue to work with, the mechanisms that inform gender. However, I have been investigating feminine aspects and experiences of queer gender. While this is an important aspect to my work, I have come to the realization that masculinity has an analogous relationship to the invisible mechanisms that cause systems of oppression. I plan to use this perspective and to begin investigating masculinity and how it functions in relationship to queerness.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sean Gysben Fennell is queer artist and activist originally from the Pacific Northwest. He attended Willamette University in Salem, Oregon and recently completed his graduate work at Washington University in St. Louis, Sam Fox School of Design and Visual Arts. Fennell is currently living in Denver, Colorado and teaching at the University of Denver, School of Art.

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Appendix 1, “Interview Transcript

Las Larson: Sean Gyshen Fennell is an artist at Willamette University. How are you doing Sean?

Sean Gyshen: Doing pretty well Lars, how are you?

LL: Glad to have you on the program but I’m not real happy about that artwork. I mean it’s a private university you can put what you want on the walls. I’ve had a lot of people trying to figure out what this artwork means. These naked figures of people who appear to be in embraces that would indicate they are homosexuals and then torn up pages of something at the bottom of the photos. Why don’t you tell us what it’s all about.

SG: I’d love to. First of all the goal of the icon project is to yield art that investigates societal constructs and visually stimulates the viewer and to facilitate discussion. Which is why I am very happy to be on your show because that is what the work is intended to do. The text that is in the background is actually some of the measures that were passed, excluding gay marriage, Measure 36 and the smaller icons that are below are the Patron saints such as St. Anthony of Padua or St. Patrick who are the patron saints of the oppressed people and excluded people. And the figures in fact, in the icons are homosexuals and its trying to draw lines between these and investigate the current political and religious climate.

LL: Does one of those figures work for Kate Brown, the senator?

SG: I am not familiar with that.

LL: Sure, you don’t know the people you took naked pictures of?

SG: I know them very well but I don’t know what they are doing now. I actually moved to St. Louis. I am attending graduate school.

LL: OK So here’s the concern I have. Why would you show a ballot measure passed by Oregonians overwhelmingly torn up at the bottom of the picture like that?

SG: Well, it is actually not torn up. It’s in its completion there is gold leafing over the entire image which I guess gives it an appearance of being torn.

LL: So it’s not really torn up?

SG: No, it is not torn up. It is in its completion.

LL: It’s in completion?

SG: All the text is there it is just that some of it is obscured with gold leaf.

LL: Okay, So it wasn't intended to look torn up.

SG: No

LL: Okay. Now the figures appear to be posed in a way that I thought it looked like icons like you'd seen in Russian icon, the little kind of circles around the head and a little gold leaf.

SG: Exactly

LL: So you are depicting homosexual figures in photos as saints.

SG: I am referencing Byzantine Icons and religion through those forms. I do not consider the objects to be venerated in any way. I am merely using visual language.

LL: No, now what's the visual language when you depict homosexual figures in a photo as saints?

SG: I am referencing the saint figures as well as drawing attention the fact there are saints within the religion such as St. Anthony of Padua for oppressed people yet the religion in of itself is oppressing individuals and saints themselves have been martyred. And...

LL: (Interrupts) How is religion oppressing homosexual people?

SG: Well, I mean it's pretty clear within the legislation

and in your show that all Christians should be offended by images like the ones I made.....

LL: Well no no, I am bothered by images if they if they if they are comments on religion by taking homosexual figures and portraying them as saints. I don't think any religion on earth makes people saints by their personal behavior or homosexual behavior. And I don't know how it is you think religion oppresses people with regard to their sexuality. You have a choice as to which religion you participate in. Tell me which religion oppresses homosexual people.

SG: Well right now Catholicism especially the Vatican is saying homosexuals cannot be ordained. I mean for example...

LL: Well well but that's the rules of their group. If you are a homosexual and you want to be ordained, you go to a different church.

SG: Well are you saying homosexuals should not be able to be Catholic?

LL: Well that's what the Catholic Church has decided. Does a church have the right to set the standards for its religion?

SG: I believe.....

LL: I mean for example. If.. I like I like to drink whiskey on occasion. I try to do it in moderation and I try to do it only on the weekends with friends and when I am not going to drive. But if I wanted to join the Mormon Church Sean, I can guaran' damn tee you that the Mormons are not going to let me in as a whiskey drinker.If I say, well you ought to change your rules and let whiskey drinkers into the Mormon Church they'd say Lars, one of the tenants of our religion is that you don't drink booze. So why would a booze drinker want to join the Mormon Church? Why would a homosexual want to become ordained as a member of a church that doesn't... you know that does not believe that homosexuals should become priests?

SG: Well drinking whiskey Lars is a choice where I do not believe homosexuality is a choice and there are these people who have been brought up as Christians....

LL: No but joining a church is a choice, becoming a religion is a choice. Can we agree on that?

SG: Joining a religion is a choice..

LL: I could choose to become a Catholic tomorrow, I could choose to to convert to Judaism tomorrow so but why would I want to join a church that doesn't respect the way I conduct my life?

SG: Well possibly that was the church you were brought up in and that is the community you feel comfortable in and perhaps that is the faith you actually believe in yet it discriminates against you and you should still have the choice to join that religion, I believe.

LL: Do you think the people should be offended by your art work?

SG: If people are offended by my artwork I think that is fine. The work in of it's self is there to facilitate discussion and hopefully draw connections and get people to start thinking about that there are certain societal constructs that prohibit people from doing things and...

LL: You're trying to get people to think differently, right?

SG: I am trying to bring a different prospective to these issues that have intertwined through out history. I mean homosexuality in the church and art is nothing new.It has been there for an extremely long time.

LL: Good point. Sean I'm up against a clock but I appreciate your time sir. Thank you very much.

SG: Thank you very much.