

Palatable Art Only!

by [G. Tod Slone](#) (September 2024)



The Art of Painting (Johannes Vermeer, 1666-68)

Mon intention, en réalisant ces peintures, était d'élever le fumier au rang d'objet de beauté et de le mettre en valeur de manière très spectaculaire. [My intention regarding these paintings was to elevate manure to an object of beauty and to value it in a very spectacular fashion.] –Jamie Reynolds, artist of the “Bullshit” exposition, promoted by Radio-Canada

On Cape Cod in Massachusetts where I dwell, Jamie Reynolds' dung art would certainly be promoted and welcomed. Here, the tourist industry, aka the chamber of commerce, de facto controls art to the point where any art critical of its approved art will be ostracized into oblivion. As a critic, I have been openly critical of that dubious status quo. The French concept of *l'art pour l'art* serves that industry well. In essence, art for the sake of art with the exception, of course, of critical art for the sake of critical art. And that of course is in line with egregious DEI Orwellian hypocrisy, as in diversity/inclusion really means unity/exclusion.

That hypocrisy is often egregious, as in the Cultural Center of Cape Cod's mantra “All the Art for All of Us”... yes, but not my art and not for me. The Center, by the way, is currently inflating its hypocrisy with its call for art on the theme of [“Unfinished Democracy: Artistic Reflections.”](#) Executive Director Molly Demeulenaere states, “Ultimately I hope this exhibition serves as a call to action, urging viewers to engage critically with the challenges facing contemporary democracy and to harness the transformative potential of art in shaping a more equitable future.” Now, how the hell art is going to do that, she fails to state. Moreover, any art critical of her and her Center will be excluded ... in the name of “unfinished democracy,” of course.

Now, I am not against approved/promoted art, where the emphasis tends to be placed overwhelmingly on *la forme* or

technique, as opposed to *le fond* or substance. Most of that art, however, focuses here on the tired tropes of Cape Cod landscape scenes, boats, homes, people on the beach, though flowers, and metal shape sculptures. Nudes, of course, are always approved. The bronze statue of a nude male with glaring rear end standing in front of the Cape Cod Museum of Art stands as an example of an innocuous trope. But no turds, uh, human manure, on the ground. Fine. Wouldn't it, however, be incredibly unique for the museum curator/censor to have a statue of himself depicted as a chamber-of-commerce arts court jester? In essence, all that I've been asking for is for the arts machine to open its hermetically-sealed gates to a little art critical of art, artists, and arts apparatchiks.

Besides the museums and centers, *Provincetown Arts* and *Cape Cod Art* magazine, stuffed with ads—real estate et al—also form part of the arts machine, that is, the chamber of commerce tourist industry. Whenever I've openly criticized arts editors (and executive directors), the norm has been one of non-response, which constitutes de facto exclusion, certainly not inclusion, as in "all the arts for all of us." The reality of the large majority of arts apparatchiks (and artists) tends in that undemocratic direction. That conclusion resulted from my personal testing of the murky waters over the decades. The American Library Association's hypocritical library bill of rights could easily apply to the arts, in particular, "libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view." So, how about arts museums and magazines should provide art presenting all points of view? Why hypocritical? Well, examine the dialogue de sourds, "[Notes on the Office for Intellectual Freedom... Sham](#)," I had with a former ALA director. Note how he weasels in and out of the ALA's statement.

As for the former editor of *Provincetown Arts*, I simply suggested he include a page for criticism with his and the magazine's regard. To his credit, he actually responded ... or

sort of:

Silly Slone, I was trained in literary studies during a decade in graduate school with some of the foremost critics of the time. Your idea of criticism, from the shrillness of your rants, excludes any sense of illumination. Please do not contact me again.

Such ad hominem inanity does not anger me in the least. On the contrary, it tends to spur my creativity. For the full correspondance, as well as a critical cartoon, examine [“Bullseye, A Synopsis of the Pitiful Reality of the Art Establishment.”](#) As for *Cape Cod Art*, its editor is also director of the big arts money machine, the Arts Foundation of Cape Cod. Regarding the latter, examine my [“Letter to an Angry Artist.”](#) *Cape Cod Art*, published once per year, features artists who dare not go against the arts machine, contrary to Thoreau’s pro-democracy advice: “let your life be a counterfriction to stop the machine.” Never in a thousand years would it even consider publishing this brief essay. Democracy at its finest?

[Table of Contents](#)

G. Tod Slone, PhD, lives on Cape Cod, where he was permanently banned in 2012 without warning or due process from Sturgis Library, one of the very oldest in the country. His civil rights were being denied because he was not permitted to attend any cultural or political events held at his neighborhood library. The only stated reason for the banning was “for the safety of the staff and public,” yet he has no

criminal record and has never made a threat. His real crime was that he challenged, in writing, the library's "collection development" mission that stated "libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view." His point of view was somehow not part of "all points of view." In November 2022, he requested the library [rescind its banning decree](#), which it finally did. He is a dissident poet/writer/cartoonist and editor of [The American Dissident](#).

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