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Artist tears down walls of criticism on International Blasphemy Day

CFI installment meant to promote discussion, defend criticism of religious beliefs



Ike Forces Sally Under God

It's no secret that D.C. artist Dana Ellyn pushes boundaries with her "blasphemous" paintings. Her work has been called "extremely acidic, caustic, and pointed" by Artomatic reviewers, and Ellyn was lauded by the D.C. Examiner (Sept. 16, 2008) for creating "lushly hued, wickedly witty renderings of" famous political, social, and religious figures.

In conjunction with the Center for Inquiry, an artist showcase will be opened to the media and general public to highlight the paintings meant to foster open-minded discussion about religion—including selections from her acclaimed Ten Commandments series.

What: The Blasphemous Paintings of Dana Ellyn

When: 7 – 9 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 30

Where: The Center for Inquiry, 621 Pennsylvania Ave. SE, near Eastern Market Metro

Why: To cultivate needed discussion of religious criticism, as a visual part of Blasphemy Day.

International Blasphemy Day is not just a day. It is a continual movement to dismantle the wall that unjustly stands to protect religious beliefs from criticism. The objective of International Blasphemy Day is to open up all religious beliefs to the human rights of free inquiry, discussion, and criticism to which all other areas of academic interest are subjected. This Blasphemy Day event is a part of the Center for Inquiry's Campaign for Free Expression, and 15 percent of the painting sales from this show will be donated to the Center for Inquiry D.C.

This event is free and open to the public.

To learn more about International Blasphemy Day and the Center for Inquiry's Campaign for Free Expression, visit www.pleaseblock.us.

About the artist:

Ellyn's first real introduction to religion was through her art history classes in college. Gods and goddesses of mythology were rightly presented as fiction, while Christian themes were treated as history. But she could see that they were all just stories.

Throughout her 20s and 30s, Ellyn continued her personal quest to learn more about religion and come to terms with her lack of belief. Now, she is finally fully comfortable with painting (and discussing) where she stands on religion. Her paintings are not meant to offend—rather, she hopes they encourage open-minded discussions—and perhaps induce a giggle or two along the way.

The Center for Inquiry (CFI) is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization that engages in research and development in two broad areas of concern: 1) secularism, religion, ethics, and society, and 2) paranormal and fringe-science claims. It does so through its affiliates: the Council for Secular Humanism and the Committee for Skeptical Inquiry. It tackles head on many of today's burning issues from a refreshing and often provocative perspective, based on science, reason, and a humanistic, secular outlook.

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