



What is Sacred

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CELEBRATING THE CREATIVE SPIRIT

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Nothing Else But Darkness II (detail)

**Illustration on page 2 (lower)
& photos pages 9 & 10:**
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Flower page 3: a little sample of
Lyttelton, New Zealand

Photo pages 4 & 7:
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Photo page 11: Lee Tanner

Nature photos page 16:
Kurt Andersen

**I'm a Real Artist illustrations
pages 3, 22 & 23:** Eliezer Sobel

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Sacred art is that which communicates the internal state of creative people who reside in the Land of Awe, Astonishment and Gratitude, and can't help but infuse their expressions with the spillover from such a disposition. Such work is a message of good will from those whose heartfelt intention is that the result of their labors be for the benefit of all Beings and Creatures and Things. And those of us who are receptive will feel and receive the blessings that such Sacred Art radiates.

As an art non-critic, however, anything that opens my heart, makes me laugh, brings joy, and perhaps inclines me toward attempting to be a kinder and more loving person, is sufficiently sacred for me. A child's first crayon scribble, therefore, is no less an ecstatic expression of the Great Mystery of Being than the Zen Master's spontaneous ink calligraphy, and the Beatles are right up there alongside The Pieta. My list also includes Brian Wilson, Fantasia, butterflys as "found flying art," Greek music by Theodorakis, Henry Miller watercolors, Hafiz poems, my mother's brisket, cats, and everyone ever mentioned in this journal. I'd be very interested in knowing what's on your list. Please send it in.

Enough talk about what is or isn't sacred art:



if it sings and makes sounds and you are transported and happy it is Sacred Music

if it leaps in the air and spins around and there is a sense of exhilaration in the depths of your soul, call it Sacred Dance.

if it's full of color and shape and stops you dead in your tracks with wonder, or if it lives as a lullabye and you're soothed by it, or if it moves you to start writing poetry yourself, it's the Real Thing.

if it makes you take life more seriously, as well as far less seriously, and causes you to stand

perplexed between the two, laughing and weeping simultaneously, you're probably onto something.

if it makes the entire mystery of existence strike you as perpetually teetering between the absurd and the dazzling, or you find yourself falling to your knees in gratitude for it has restored your faith, it is Sacred Art.

or if it's just really, really funny.

—E.S.

art?

From A Self-Interview with Paul Krassner, Editor of The Realist:

Q: What exactly is your spiritual path?

A: Attempting to avoid getting a headache whenever I think about the infinity of time and space. Viewing reality through a filter of absurdity. Being in awe of nature and technology and the human spirit. Marveling at the process of coincidence. Meditating on the concept of evolution in every aspect of civilization. Relishing the miracle of consciousness. Playing with my ego instead of attempting to get rid of it. Developing an intimate relationship with the deity I don't believe in. That's my religion. According to a recent survey by the Barna Group, an independent market-research company, about one out of five self-described atheists and agnostics (19%) pray to God during a typical week. I know I do. For example, before I go on stage to perform, I always pray, "Please God, help me do a good show." And then I always hear the voice of God, booming, "SHUT UP, YOU SUPERSTITIOUS FOOL!" My favorite metaphor for God comes from Krishnamurti. A disciple asked him, "Why is there evil in the world?" And he replied, "To thicken the plot." My working philosophy comes from the comic strip, Mary Worth: "When in doubt, do the kindest thing." I believe that existence has no meaning, and I love every minute of it. The only thing to do is enjoy the mystery. I mean, if life is not a mystery, what the fuck is it?



Am I a real writer? A real artist? I have finally had an insight regarding this long-gnawing question of authenticity and creative identity: Yes, I am a real writer, and... **ONLY WHEN I AM WRITING.**

And when I'm eating I'm a real eater. There's a certain freedom that comes from this understanding that I wish I had had a long time ago, and so in this issue we introduce the first in what we hope will one day be a series of children's books, Wild Heart's **I'M A REAL ARTIST** feature, to be read aloud to little kids. Unless you have no little kids.

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