

Sad for Sexpo



Sexpo is coming to Hobart this weekend.

This is a great sadness to me. I think Sexpo is a Bad Thing. I would love to see it not happen. I would gladly see it go away.

There are a number of arguments that can be made that the previous Government should never have given approval for this event, particularly right next to the supposedly family-friendly Salamanca Place on a Saturday.

There are some other arguments that talk about why Sexpo is a bad thing in general. Some of these arguments are moralisms.

Most of the decent arguments revolve around the innate degradation of women, and the demonstrable harm it risks for both participants and attendees. Others, including Melinda Tankard Reist, can do a much better job of articulating these arguments than me. But here's a tip for those inclined: follow the money, who profits from Sexpo? *That's* the main scope for argument.

But what I want to talk about is catalysed by posts such as this, by the Mercury, who is clearly loving having something juicy and sexy to promote its circulation.

Post by themercury.com.au.

This sort of stuff produces an emotional reaction in me. And so here is the cathartic emotional vent:

I am FRUSTRATED. More than frustrated – annoyed. Annoyed at the false dichotomy that is bread and butter to the newspaper, and condescending tripe from the proponents. Because what this is about is a battle between the sexually liberated and the sexually repressed, right? Well, perhaps, but only

in *Today Tonight* land. "Sex is not a dirty word"? No one is saying it is. But neither is sex cheap. And Sexpo makes it cheap. Very cheap. Commodified, industrialised, chickenfeed cheap. I'm frustrated that such inarticulate, dismissive, and dimwitted dialogue gets traction in the public mind, and in "our" newspaper. I am frustrated. I am frustrated with US.

I am ANGRY. I am angry that there is no outrage to push past the whitewashed walls of this event and see the degradation and exploitation upon which it stands. An ounce of "safe sex" here, and a dose of artistic liberation there, does not make up for the fact that the only reason this exists is that men want to use women sexually (I could be blunter) and there is money to be made out of that. But no. Throw in a Footy Show star (because that will lift the tone, right?), get posters on the buses, and show a bit of corporate "philanthropy" on the side, and it's all above board and decent? Oh, and it's good for business, right Mr. Mayor? Are we that thirsty for a fraternal arm-twist from Melbourne & Sydney: "Welcome to the Sexpo club, little cousin, you're real men, real ladies, now"? Nauseating, putrid, compliant, weak, unprincipled self-inflicted inferiority. I am angry. I am angry at US.

I am SAD. I am sad because judging from the comments left on facebook, my feelings are not shared by the majority, or even a large minority. The beauty I find in a positive, intimately expressed sexuality finds no harmony. The fears I have for pornographised men being given license to use and abuse are not heeded. The fact that we are responding to this industry sale-show with not just an ambivalence, but with a positivity, leaves me despairing for our society. We have gone this far? We have repressed our consciences, we have hardened our hearts, this much? We are so desperate for affirmation that we demand the freedom to literally let it all hang out and have it embraced? What a desperate situation we are in. How much further down this rabbit-hole must our Tasmanian world go before it realises that this form of monstrosity will never

ever treat us well? What can save us from such a love-tainting, honour-denying, freedom-abusing, degradation of all that is good? In the end I am sad. I am sad for US.

And now we pray. What else is left?