



Fall/Winter 1995/1996

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THE DICK OF DEATH

Erotic Art in the Age of Aids

Art has dealt with death throughout history. Egyptians celebrated it in temple and tomb for three thousand years. Right up through Victorian times, death was a major theme. But not in our society. Today, weeping angels and prostrate marble lovers are out of fashion even in cemeteries. It has been said that death, not sex, is our last truly taboo subject. Therefore erotic art which concerns itself with death is doubly forbidden. But sex and death are opposite sides of the same coin. The French are aware of that; they call the orgasm 'le petit mort.' Today, with sexual contact being the primary source of AIDS contagion, that 'little death' can lead directly to the grand one. It is time for erotic art and death to acknowledge their secret intimacy.



A phrase which during the 70's was the highest compliment -- "Oh, girlfriend, he has the Dick of *Death*!" -- is now too literal. It ought to be funny, but we've lost too many of those dear departed dicks to laugh at it much.

How do artists deal with death in such numbers without having their art smothered by the pathos? For that matter, why should they? The Globe was closed regularly due to plague yet Shakespeare never mentions it except in jest or insult. "Plague take thee, scurvy knave!" Yet Death is always in his cast. "Out, out, brief candle!..."

Above left: Ed Freeman is not afraid of dramatic affect in his evocatively enigmatic photographs. Below Right: "Leaves - Don", Victor Arimondi,

San Francisco.

So, each artist deals with mortality individually. Victor Arimondi has created collages he calls "Leaves" to memorialize the dozens of friends and models AIDS has removed from his life and career. Ed Freeman found that though he does not overtly attempt to treat death, it has a way of insinuating itself just beneath the surface of his computer enhanced photographs and Lorraine Inzalaco -- well, read Tim Jolliffe's article on this page. Dramatically different responses - direct portrayal, indirect reference, and subliminal subtext - but these artists all combine sex and death with talent and honesty.

-- F. Valentine Hooven, III



The End of Time

A guest editorial by Morris Kight

However much or little you might have, give a lot of thought to the most creative use for it. The new generation of lesbian and gay people need not go through the pauperite horror many of us experienced before liberation. We have spun off many institutions and they all need support. Certainly not all of them are attractive to all of us, but somebody somewhere loves them, and ought to support them. So leave money to the institution of your choice.

This is an excerpt from Morris Kight's "Will You Still Love Me When I'm Seventy-Four?", a chapter in LAMBDA GRAY a book of essays by a variety of authors, subtitled "A Practical, Emotional, and Spiritual Guide for Gays and Lesbians Who Are Growing Older" available from book stores or through Newcastle Publishing, FOB 7589, N. Hollywood, CA 91409.

MEMBERS' WEEKEND

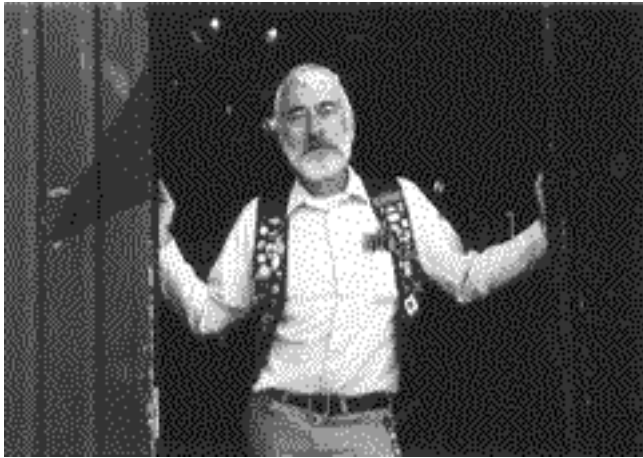


"In every real man a child is hidden that wants to play." With that quote from (believe it or not) Nietzsche, Foundation member John M. Burnside launched a letter thanking us for the Member's Weekend last November 10, 11 and 12. "...I have trouble believing I was really there at all; the weekend had such a wonderful, dreamlike quality about it. I can honestly say that those three days are probably the best of my life (so far)!" he wrote, ending up with "I felt I was, at long last, home!"

Above left: Steven Johnson Leyba displays his wares at the Sunday Art Mart. Below left: the Hun (Bill Schmeling) in all his glory. photoed by popular Victor Arimondi. Below right: Before a wall of entries to the 1995 Contest, Jonathan poses for Valentine to demonstrate artist/model interaction. Photos by Commander Jack Meyer

Those sentiments were echoed by many others, including the Hun (Bill Schmeling) who was the Weekend's featured artist with an exhibition of his original work opening at the Tom of Finland Company's brand new gallery and a Saturday evening book signing to introduce **The Hun Book**. Bill said it was great to finally attend an event where "erotic art is the center of attention and not shunted off into a corner somewhere."





Every aspect of the Weekend fulfilled the Foundation's aims, from the John Sonsini slide show of 50's physique photography during the Art Fair at Hollywood Moguls to the boisterous dinner at Gloria's Cafe to the chic cocktails and exhibit at the Cobalt Cantina. But the real purpose, the serious side of the Weekend, was the networking among artists, editors, collectors and fans and it was intense.

New relationships were formed and old ones deepened.

Honcho's head editor Doug McClemon and artist Matt, who had been working together for several years, had to come all the way to L.A. from New York and New Orleans respectively, to finally meet face to face.

Virtually every artist who brought work sold it and some of them -- i.e. Kira Od with her dramatic bronze

animal-men -- sold far more than they expected.

With such a success, naturally plans are to make it a yearly event. Thus, the 1996 Erotic Art Weekend is already slated for **November 8, 9 and 10**, so make your plane reservations now and watch the Dispatch for further details!

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

THE EROTIC ART COMMUNITY CONTINUES TO MOURN -- *In the last month we have lost two more artists each in his own right very talented.*

Bob Flanagan -- I had the privilege of knowing this remarkable performance artist through the Foundation's affiliation with Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions. Bob was born with cystic-fibrosis. Those who have this genetic disease seldom live past twenty but Bob survived to forty-three, using his affliction as a vehicle for his creativity. He became the fore-runner of sado-masochistic performance art in partnership with his mistress Sheree Rose. Together they created a cutting-edge mixture of visual still art, video and live performance. Their work, "Visiting Hours" was performed for one month at a time, allowing the visitors to view the still works while experiencing Bob in a hospital bed.. What stands out most for me is how he used his illness, his handicap, as a dynamic part of his art. His works were presented in museum installations in major cities as well as part of such hip video works as with Nine Inch Nails. Bob and Sheree made sado masochistic art acceptable within the mainstream art world, making it possible for such other artists as Ron Athey to present their work. To do justice to him and his work I suggest that you pick up a copy of *ReSearch, People Series, Volume one: Bob Flanagan - SuperMasochist*. Thank you, Bob Flanagan, for being such an inspiration.



At left: Bad brad Braverman's Autoerotic Gay Suicide photos gained him international attention. Pictured (#4) is part of the enormous donation of art made to the Foundation by Scott O'Hara.

Brad Braverman leaves us so very early in his creative career. Starting with still photography, he very soon moved into videography, producing montages of male sexuality in an art style that pleased and many times shocked the viewer. He created major challenges to his career by taking images that would normally be treated as pornography, using them in a film noir style, and then pushing to get them accepted in fine art circles even though it required him to host his own cinema screenings of his work in Los Angeles and handle his own distribution of his videos.

His last two pieces, "Pissed" and "RawShock" were getting him a lot of notice. "Pissed" won best special interest video at the December Gay Erotic Video Awards. I was honored to be the presenter of that award and, when Brad was too explained to the audience that the award was especially meaningful given that the LAPD had charged him with obscenity because of that video's use of men urinating and engaging in water sports. He was preparing to fight the charge on artistic grounds when he passed. It is undetermined at this time what will happen with his collection of works and their availability to the public.

-- Durk Dehner

WAR CASUALTIES

by Timothy Jolliffe

About this time last year, the new and improved *Dispatch* appeared. It was the first time the newsletter had given predominant coverage to female erotic artists. It was ground breaking and trailblazing and perceived as every bit necessary. If the Foundation was to expand, we could not continue to ignore women, one half (likely more) the population, when it comes to promoting and protecting erotic art.

Below right, "Tom Dear", AKA "Death by AIDS" oil on linen. by Lorraine Inzalaco, Chicago.

The response was unexpected to say the least. A handful of the Foundation's supporters objected to a woman on the



erotic art, to stick with the Foundation and its dream: to educate the world about sexuality through erotica rather than through the religious systems which would have us pretend it doesn't exist. We must break through the ignorance of a society that has AIDS as its second-leading cause of death for men **and** women between the ages of 25 and 40 and yet doesn't want to talk about sex.

We must not break down among ourselves into warring factions as we fumble with the reins of an unprecedented amount of grief over AIDS and its impact on us. Although the female segment of the gay community has not been as directly affected by this scourge as the male, they have been right there in the front lines. They realize the importance of sticking together in "the big fight" as responsible, compassionate members of the community helping to care for their wounded brothers.

Lorraine Inzalaco is a nurse, a lesbian and an artist. She painted "Tom Dear" to depict a real event, the transition from "life" to "death" by her beloved friend Tom. She held him, a piece of her life, in her arms and watch his life flutter away to an angel Tom saw beckoning to him.

I note the eroticism of this artwork; Tom is completely nude, so is the golden angel behind him. I note the strikingly similarity to the erotic Christian Pietas where Mary holds the naked body of Jesus after he is taken from the cross. But I also note the importance of having women in my life, both in the traditional roles of "mother" and "care-giver," but also in the ground-breaking positions of creators of erotic art. We cannot discard any help which comes our way. Let's not close our minds to the different experiences this life has to offer us.

LITTLE SISTERS GAINS LANDMARK DECISION

In December, the Supreme Court of British Columbia found that Canadian Customs has used its mandate to censor books (including the Tom of Finland Retrospectives) and other materials in a manner contrary to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, stating that the "arbitrary and improper consequence of an inadequate and flawed administration" was too systematic to be labeled mere human error, as the Defense tried to do. However, the bookstore had sought to have the statute (giving Customs censorship authority) itself declared unconstitutional and the judge ruled against them on that point. Little Sisters will appeal.

EROTIC GALLERY

Phase 3 Launches in March

Satisfied subscribers have purchased more than a third of the original works of art offered in the first two phases of the Erotic Gallery by Mail's inaugural year, including all three works by Valentine, one ("Stake-Out" at right.) going for \$100 above the asking price.

Photographs too, both vintage work by the likes of Bob Mizer of AMG and newer work by such talents as Victor Arimondi of San Francisco, are also being purchased.

Volker Morlock, the project head for the Gallery, promises "There will be even more new artists coming up in our future mailings as well as old favorites like the Hun and Olaf. We try very hard to offer as much variety as possible, not just in style but also in price. Some work is as low as \$100."

But many fans subscribe with no intention of buying, just for the chance to look at the 24 works offered each mailing, because they are high-quality laser reproductions in 3.5 x 3.5 inch formats and consist mostly of never before published drawings, paintings and sculpture. **Subscriptions** are \$15 per year and now is the time to join up for March.



Most valuable piece yet offered is the famed "Self-portrait" (left) by Mapplethorpe. At a mere \$18,500 it is still available so get your bid in now!

Oops! In our "The Devil Made Me Do It" issue, it was stated that Tom himself drew no such mythical



O'HARA DONATION

400 Pieces. Major Works by Major Erotic Artists!

In the process of being appraised at this time is the largest donation of erotic art ever received by the Foundation. The works were collected by the well-loved porn star Scott O'Hara and it is a stellar assembly of homoerotic art. Scott began collecting only work that featured his well-known, well-hung physique but soon branched out into all manner of other subjects and, thanks to his excellent eye, the Foundation has been gifted with three more Tom of Finlands, a Bastille, five rare Dominos, and multiple masterworks by Phillip Core, Mark I. Chester, Etienne, Stanley Stellar -- the list goes on and on.

Most of the art has been handsomely framed and a selection of it will on display as part of the art exhibition "Recent Acquisitions of the Foundation Archives" part of Tom's Bar V on May 5th at Hollywood Mogul's, giving the public its first chance to see some of Scott's world-class collection.



*How to illustrate **two** articles with **one** image: At the right is a masterpiece of erotic art featuring the Rolls Royce of dildos, a pencil drawing by Olaf which will be reproduced in the new book on him (See below) and the original, donated by Scott O'Hara, will be displayed at Tom's Bar V (See above).*

NEW OLAF BOOK AND EXHIBITION

The featured artist of the last Dispatch was Olaf, the master drawer of the satyr and his ilk. But his art encompasses much more (See left.) and the full range of his subject matter will be found in a new book in the works as the second in the series being published by the Tom of Finland Company. The release date is scheduled to coincide with the exhibition of Olaf works for sale opening on March 16 at the Tom of Finland Company Gallery and Store. For more information or to be on their mailing list, call 1-800-FINLAND or 213-666-1052.

DISPATCH, house organ for the TOM of FINLAND FOUNDATION PO Box 26658, Los Angeles, CA 90026, USA, is edited by Valentine Hooven , and written by Morris Kight, Tim Jolliffe, and Durk Dehner.



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