

Dispatch



Summer 1996

Table of Contents

- [Bianchi on Beauty](#)
- [The Censored Act](#) - The Lifestyles Convention Erotic Art Exhibition
- [KAKE in Canada](#) - Montréal will host the first Tom Of Finland Exhibit
- [Cocksucker Controversy](#)
- [Star Search](#) - The Foundation wish list
- [Up & Coming](#) - Events Around the Globe
- [New Books of Erotic Art & Photography](#)
- [Only for you! -- Members Only!](#)

We always welcome [mail](#) to the Tom of Finland Foundation.

BIANCHI ON BEAUTY



Tom's photographs in the book illustrate his belief in the beauty to be found both in order triumphant...

With so much censorship and hostility around it can be easy to slip into a negative mode of thinking. **Tom Bianchi** has put together a little book, *In Defense of Beauty*, which is a delightful antidote to that. Here are just a couple of excerpts from it:



...and not so triumphant.

I am no longer surprised when I hear the charge that the people in my pictures are "too beautiful" or "only the most perfect bodies," for I have come to see the mistake in perception from which these comments come. The implication is that I am an elitist, or as one friend suggested, the new word is lookist. But people who find fault with beauty, who trivialize it by assuming a negative quality in it, diminish themselves. The ability to appreciate beauty in others is a prerequisite to express it in oneself. As Oscar Wilde observed: **Those who find ugly meanings in beautiful things are corrupt without being charming. That is a fault.**

If we assign negative values to beauty, say, as a defense against our belief that it is unattainable either in or to ourselves, we will not appreciate its value when we see it in others. When we hear the denigration of beauty, we hear the voice of a wounded person whose vision has been corrupted, preventing that person from seeing the power of beauty to create change.

Many fine artists have told the story of our alienation and our pain. In his book *About Looking ...* John Berger points out: **The truth is that most photographs taken of people are about suffering and most of that suffering is man-made.** Berger suggest that inherent in photography is the possibility of its use for prophecy, a use beyond the mere recording of what is.

As Deepak Chopra said in *Quantum Healing*: **There is no more beautiful experience than when the world expands beyond its accustomed limits. These are the moments when reality takes on splendor.** I know of no greater man-created fault than the denial of man's own power. If we imagine a better, more beautiful life for us all, we must take responsibility to make it happen, step by step, ourselves. As Dr. Chopra has suggested: **We all have the power to make reality. Why make it inside boundaries when the boundless is so near?**

We have been given the gift of being co-creators. As a verse from the Veda says: **What you see, you become.**



THE CENSORED ACT

The Lifestyles Convention Erotic Art Exhibition

This year, the best known of the alternative living groups, (formerly 'swingers clubs'), has made a concentrated effort to include ad varieties of sexuality in their exhibition. This report is by the curators themselves:

Rick Castro displayed elegant bondage photos. Shown at left: "Caught Smoking".

An ideal society would let anything be expressed. That ideal society has never existed, not in America or elsewhere, but, thanks largely to the Supreme Court, we are now almost censor-free. Censorship's real damage is that it produces a society of frightened, uptight men and women which passes on through generations a legacy of fear towards sexual behavior. Humanity has been playing a little sexual game and its cardinal rule is: "Do it if you have to, but make sure you feel bad about it and make sure you don't tell anyone."

This creates a problem for erotic art in that, while society is changing, attitudes toward sex remain almost unchanged. Both those who condemn art as pornography and those who celebrate pornography as art agree on the inextricable entanglement of these two terms. Whether it's the most sexually liberating form of art or the epitome of sexual oppression represented by art, **pornography is crucial for understanding our cultural past.**

Besides Tom, works from the permanent collection were also exhibited including above, from the Scot, O'Hara Collection, Patricia Ridenour's "Lying Under His Light," whose delicate hand tinting is not discernible in b/w.



The Sixth Annual Sensual and Erotic Art Exhibition, held this past August 22, 23, and 24 in San Diego as part of the Lifestyles Convention was viewed by thousands, giving artists a free forum and expanding the general public's opportunity to experience erotic art work in many forms. This could not have been done without Durk Dehner and the Tom of Finland Foundation, to whom we owe a debt of gratitude for helping Lifestyles members and the public in reassessing old judgments by adding new material that brings the exhibition both to where we are and where the arts are today. If the appearance of controversial subject matter or politically incorrect images seems odd in an erotic art show, it is simply a sign of the rapid changes in both art and art thinking.

This year's theme "The Censored Act" developed from the desire to take a closer look at the contributions of the celebrated politically incorrect in our society. Our intention in assembling these works was to make more widely know the achievements of some fine artists whose neglect can in part be attributed to their sex, culture or subject matter and to learn more about why and how erotic artists have emerged as rare exceptions.

The history of art in the 20th Century discloses a number of significant artists who led closeted lives. More recently some artists have been openly gay, but investigations designed to find distinctive styles or traits applicable collectively to the work of gay artists have not, as yet, produced plausible results. Only in recent decades have the courts recognized the right to publish materials with an explicit homosexual content.

Erotic art in the gay tradition -- now apparently 'coming out' -- actualizes and externalizes what is very intimately part of ourselves. The purpose of this inquiry has been to discover something, not only about the erotic impulse in art, but about the nature of the culture we live in. The work of Tom of Finland is both vulnerable and heroic, ambivalently confirmed in his personal feelings, made touchingly human in his imagery. His drawings take in every aspect of gay life, nothing is too sacred, nothing is too mundane. The emotional scope of the romantic expression is highly measured in the works by Greg Gorman, Rick Castro and Christine Kessler. In contrast, the works of Jim Suterdaur, Sadao Hasegawa, Kira Od and Jakal show the depth of the erotic intensity. The height of fantasy represented by Robert Kalafut's paintings lies in the reduction of the hero-genius to 'victim,' a most moving, stirring drama of humanity. These artists ask for just one thing -- that attention be paid -- giving us in exchange the most profound ethical message.

-- Luis & Theresa De La Cruz



KAKE in CANADA

(Tom's portrait of 'Bruno' (above left) is the poster boy for the Montreal exhibition.)

Montréal will host the first Tom of Finland Exhibit...

...to be held in the Land of the Maple Leaf during Canadian Thanksgiving holiday weekend. Hosted by the Canadian Homoerotic Art Patrons Society (CHAPS), the exhibition will run only 5 days, Oct. 11 - 15, displaying 30 of Tom's drawings as well as work by the four winners of the contest held to select Tom's 'heirs'

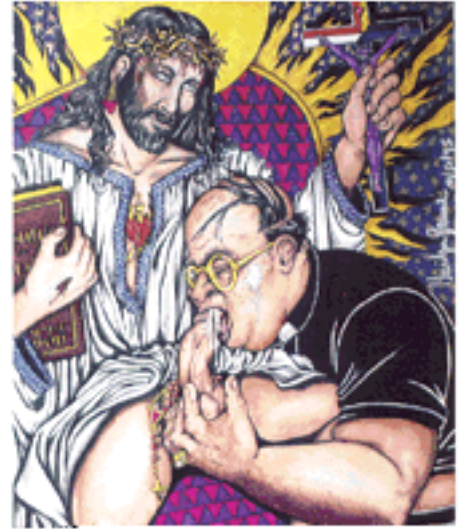
Club, which will feature Scott Thompson and Tom of Finland drawings recreated in living tableaux. Vernissage advance tickets are \$25. For reservations, call 800-361-4595. For further information: 514-521-7415.

'COCKSUCKER' CONTROVERSY

(The cause of it all: Garilyn Brune's "Cocksuckers for Christ" (16 by 13 inches, mixed media on paper) This is the whole work; the image in the Spring Dispatch was mistakenly cropped. Garilyn's painting just barely made the contest, being completed on the deadline itself -- appropriately, Halloween.)

To our great surprise (are we that naive?), the Grand Prize Winner of the 1995 Emerging Erotic Artist Contest spurred responses from Wales to New South Wales, letters as much as five pages long, covering the whole range of possible opinions. It got a lot of people thinking about art, sex, and religion -- what more can one ask of a work of art? Here is a small sampling of what you readers had to say:

Many communicators offered to allow their names to be used and few were completely anonymous -- my favorite was "This is blasphemy! Take me off your mailing list!" with no name or address attached - but we decided to use only Vernon's (see below) to keep things simple.



EDITOR'S PICK

"Do it and lie about it, " so we are taught from childhood, "then do it again. "I was brought up in one of those toxic religions too but I couldn't be a hypocrite. My aunt said David and Jonathan were lovers. I started blowing my brothers for money at 5. They took it very well. I blew them for years.

"You can do it, but don't admit it." -- U.S. Government. I admitted it in the Air Force -- dishonorable discharge. But all those fags at Sampson Air Force Base!

I gave up my straight job because my straight boss thought I should service him after his wife got killed in a car accident. Then I went into a monastery because I knew a lot about religion. But my superior had me expelled because I would not blow him. **Do unto others as you would have them do unto you --** I did that And I think it is godly love. Just as good as any love. God is love - love is god ... Everybody I ever had sex with I loved or I wouldn't have done it. And that is about 20,000 people at this point in life, (I'm 61) gay and loving. I follow the commandment. There's a lot more people I'd love to love.

Since this is Christ's only commandment, I've done it. As well as I can. And didn't lie about it. I'm not a hypocrite. Just a lover.

-- **Vernon Sebastian Reynolds, Baltimore, MD**

Thanks for your Spring '96

...Garilyn Brune has every right to

As a gay Christian who has found

Dispatch -- Keep it up!! Induct
me as a Commander ...

As a Christian priest ... my first
reaction was of utter disgust --
but not by the action depicted but

1. Volker Morlock is in the final stages of Tom's long awaited Retrospective III, slated for spring '97. He (and just about everyone else) would like to see **the drawing at the right** as the cover image. It is a color work, but we have only a poor Polaroid snap of it in color and we have lost contact with the present owner. If anyone knows of its current whereabouts, please contact us.
2. Even in the art world, many grants depend on the education of those applying the grant. There are no degrees offered in the erotic arts (yet!) so we are seeking **persons with Ph.Ds** in art, history, sociology, library science, and any relatable field who are willing to work with us to apply for grant money for Foundation projects.
3. We are also looking for a **grant writer who has experience in (or just a love of) the arts** and can tailor applications from us to appropriate organizations.
4. We are looking for a **legal advisor**, preferably one with experience in international copyright law, but any attorney interested in using us to learn that area is also welcome.



UP & COMING

Ongoing - Copenhagen, **Sebastian Bar Cafe**, Hyskenstraede 10, 45 33 32 3379, hosts a series of homoerotic art shows, including our '95 contest winners.

Oct 12 thru Christmas - **Nigel Kent & Osze**, color and b/w works from Amsterdam and Medellin, Columbia, at the Tom of Finland Gallery, 1601 Griffith Park Blvd, L.A., 1-800-3-FINLAND.

NEW BOOKS OF EROTIC ART AND PHOTOGRAPHY ARE PROLIFERATING

Xmas is coming! What to get for that *especially* bad child on your list? May we suggest any one of a whole slew of new books of erotic art and photography?

Benedikt Taschen has five - count 'em -- *five* new books with erotic themes: on women -- **Eric Kroll's Beauty Parade**; dominance and s/m - **The Art of Eric Stanton**; 'authentic' photos by **Jürgen Teller**, plus the jumbo **The Great American Pin-Up** (see right.) and **1000 Tattoos**.

Volker Janssen has two new ones: a butt sequel -- **Männer von Hinten 2** and a handsome new book on **Bruce of LA** which spotlights some of his color work.

David Sprigle, of calendar fame, is publishing his first hard-cover book -- 42 photographers, known and unknown, offering both an unusual 7X7 format and an exciting new concept of making each of the 99 images in the book available as a signed, limited edition photograph so the volume functions as both a coffee table book and a very classy catalog.



published in a French edition (joining those in Finnish, German and English) by a new publishing consortium: Gemini Federation, available in November.

Tom Bianchi has not just [In Defense of Beauty](#) but a new volume of photographs presenting an x-rated side of his work hitherto unseen.

For all of you who don't already have it, the new book of **Hasegawa** colored drawings is well deserving of its hit status.

A long-overdue book on Mark I Chester's powerful photography covering the Folsom Street seventies s/m scene will be out in time for this year's Folsom Street Fair.

And finally, through its mail-order division, the Tom of Finland Company is releasing **Tom of Finland's Blacks, Volume II** in time for Christmas.

Previews of many of the items listed above are available on the [Tom of Finland Company](#) website.

IN MEMORIAM

The Foundation's legal advisor for the last couple of years has been the retired Los Angeles attorney **Frank Ker**. Franks Passing was in June and he will be missed by all of us who worked with him on the board of directors.



ONLY FOR YOU! MEMBERS ONLY!

Anybody can put up their money and buy the shirt or the badge or the patch, but this year we are out to show you members just how much you mean to the Foundation.

Nobody but you members who join (or re-up) between June 1996 - June 1997 get the Foundation's black cotton twill baseball cap with our Flying Cock shield embroidered in silver, red and gold!

PLUS!

Spring of '97 is the 40th anniversary of the publication of the very first Tom of Finland drawing seen by the world.

We printed a special commemorative print of that drawing and only you will receive it! All three ranks get the hat and the print.

- **Recruits** (\$35) also get a 10% discount (only on Foundation merchandise).
- **Seamen** (\$100) get a 15% discount, and our Emerging Erotic Artists book.
- **Commanders** (\$250) get our badge-pin in sterling silver and a 20% discount.

All members receive membership card, a year of the **Dispatch**, and invitations to special events in their area. New members also get a compilation of earlier **Dispatches**.

[JOIN UP NOW!](#)

DISPATCH is the house organ for the TOM of FINLAND FOUNDATION Editor: Valentine Hooven.
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