

EROTIC AUTHORS ASSOCIATION

Jack Fritscher, Founding Member, Board of Directors

Jack Fritscher biography by Marilyn Jaye Lewis, Founder and Executive Director

www.EroticAuthorsAssociation.com

May 2002

Jack Fritscher, www.JackFritscher.com, is a writer, analyst, and theoretician of erotica, experienced on boards of advisors and boards of directors in the arts. In 1967, as a gay-activist founding member of the American Popular Culture Association, he insured that homosexual culture be prominently represented. In a 45-year career, with more than 6,000 pages in print, he writes: "Erotica is the essential writing of lesbian culture the way that blues and rap are essential to African-American culture. No one dares censor blues or rap. Yet both the puritan 'straight mainstream' of publishing, as well as the exclusionism of the self-anointed 'gay literary establishment' have too long censored lesbian erotica by denying both its cultural essence and its literary nature. Historically, everything has been rigged against erotica—agents, publishers, printers, distributors, bookstores, reviews, and awards. The EAA can change history."

His writing and photographs, often internationally censored, have been championed by British arts critic Edward Lucie-Smith, in the Lucie-Smith books, *Ars Erotica* (1997), *Adam: The Male Figure in Art*, (Rizzoli, 1998), and in the British *Index on Censorship* (1997 & 1999). After writing the controversial 1994 erotic bio-memoir of his relationship with the federally censored Robert Mapplethorpe, *Mapplethorpe: Assault with a Deadly Camera* (aka *Mapplethorpe: El fotógrafo del escándalo*, 1995 Barcelona), Fritscher also wrote the Mapplethorpe entry for *Censorship: A World Encyclopedia* (2002). Fritscher's erotic books have sold more than 110,000 copies and his erotic videos, more than 250,000 copies.

With his dissertation on *eros* and *thanatos*, *Love and Death in Tennessee Williams*, he received a doctorate in American literature and criticism from Loyola University, Chicago, 1968, and has continued his *eros*-themed Williams' scholarship with *Modern Drama* magazine as well as the New York Art Theater, *Playbill* (2002). From 1968-1975, as tenured associate professor, he taught creative writing, American literature, and film criticism and history; and at art centers and on the university lecture circuit with Bella Abzug and Adele Davis, he represented the underground erotic cinema of Andy Warhol, Kenneth Anger, Maya Deren, and the Kuchar Brothers, while shooting and screening his own erotic films which, evolving into Palm Drive Video, have played at fringe venues, such as the 9th Annual Olympia Film Festival, Washington, 1992.

In 1971, his nonfiction book *Popular Witchcraft: Straight from the Witch's Mouth*, pioneered—along with a distinguished interview with Anton LaVey, High Priest of the Church of Satan—the first mention of the *eros* of gay wicca. With a 1972 government grant, he resurrected the writing of erotic literary legend Sam Steward (Phil Andros), intimate of Gertrude Stein, Alice B. Toklas, Thornton Wilder, and James Purdy, for whose novel *Narrow Rooms* Jack Fritscher shot the cover photograph (1995 British edition).

He is also the founding San Francisco editor of *Drummer* magazine. Over 25 years, he has been *Drummer's* most frequent contributor with more than 125 fiction and feature pieces, as well as 400 photographs, including covers and centerfolds in 60 issues. In 1984, the *Bay Area Reporter* wrote: "Jack Fritscher invented the South of Market prose style and its magazines." Magazine culture has been his prime erotic medium for market-testing fiction for anthologies and

novels. After *Drummer*, he created both *Man2Man* magazine (1980) and the San Francisco tabloid, *The California Action Guide* (1982), and aided John W. Rowberry in the creation of the magazines *Skin*, *Skinflicks*, *Inches*, and *Just Men*.. His erotic journalism published in *Drummer*, including a back-story memoir of creating the legendary *Drummer*, will appear in the forthcoming book, *Eyewitness Drummer: A Memoir of the Gay History, Pop Culture, and Literary Roots of the Best of Drummer Magazine*.

His erotic writing—strong on dialog, character development, and narrative arc—has appeared in 30-some magazines, both straight (Larry Flynt) and gay (*Checkmate*, *Dungeon-Master*, *Bear*, *Bear Annual*, *Powerplay*, *In Touch*, *James White Review*), as well as in many pedigreed anthologies: *Gay Roots* (Winston Leyland); *Best American Erotica* (Susie Bright); *Best Gay Erotica* series (Richard LaBonte); *The Burning Pen: Sex Writers on Sex Writing* (M. Christian); *Chasing Danny Boy: Powerful Stories of Celtic Eros* (with Neil Jordan, author, *The Crying Game*); *Tales of the Bear Cult* (Mark Hemry); and the *Friction* series (Alyson).

His on-going erotic history of gay popular culture appears in *The Leather Man's Handbook* (Larry Townsend); *Leatherfolk* (Mark Thompson); *Bears on Bears* (Ron Suresha); *Bear Book II* (Les Wright). He has recorded interviews and written features on many erotic personalities including, besides Robert Mapplethorpe: Tennessee Williams, photographer/painter George Dureau, photographer Joel-Peter Witkin, director Wakefield Poole, Sam Steward/Phil Andros, Georgina Spelvin (star of *The Devil in Miss Jones*), Peter Berlin, Robert Opel, Camille O'Grady, David Hurler (Old Reliable Studio), Bob Mizer (AMG Studios, *Physique Pictorial*), Lou Thomas (Target Studio), and director J. Brian (*Seven in a Barn*) for whom he wrote the screenplay and novelization of the 1981 film, *J. Brian's Flashbacks*, serialized in *Honcho*.

His earliest erotic novel is *Leather Blues* (1972). His collection of 69 erotic stories is in four books: *Corporal in Charge of Taking Care of Captain O'Malley*, *Stand by Your Man*, *Rainbow County and Other Stories*, and *Titanic: Forbidden Stories Hollywood Forgot*. This series won the 1999 Small Press Book Award for best erotica in the U. S. from a field of straight, gay, and lesbian books. The newest edition of his fiction, collected and introduced by Jesse Grant, is *Jacked: The Best of Jack Fritscher* (Alyson, summer 2002).

His other erotic-themed novels are, *The Geography of Women: A Romantic Comedy* (aka in the Greek edition, *Geographia Gynaikon*, Athens, 1999), and *What They Did to the Kid: Confessions of an Altar Boy* (2002), winner of several Book Expo America awards including: "Story Teller of the Year," "Top 10 Books of the Year," as well as "Finalist, Best Fiction," *ForeWord* Magazine awards, and on network CNN: "Top 100 You Are Reading." His mammoth signature novel, *Some Dance to Remember* (completed 1982, published 1990), which the *Advocate* called "the gay *Gone with the Wind*," Michael Bronski termed an "epic" narrative telling of the gay renaissance in San Francisco, 1970-1982. The coffee-table book of his X-rated photographs, with an introduction by Edward Lucie-Smith, *Jack Fritscher's American Men*, was published by GMP Press, London, 1994.

For television, he has appeared on *Oprah*, as well as with Camille Paglia in *Priapus Unveiled* (BBC-Channel 4); and was a producer with Gay Rosenthal Productions, Los Angeles, for "Robert Opel: The Man Who Streaked the Oscars," featuring Mark Thompson and Durk Dehner, Tom of Finland Foundation, on the network TNN series: *Fame for 15* (2002). Two of his videos, including *Dureau in Studio*, produced by Mark Hemry, profiling the erotic painter-photographer, George Dureau, New Orleans, are in the permanent collection of the Maison Europeene de la Photographie, Paris. With Mark Hemry, he shot the severely erotic six video series *Bound for Europe* (1989) for director Roger Earl and producer Terry LeGrand, Marathon

Studios. He has written, directed, and photographed more than 130 erotic video features and documentaries for www.PalmDriveVideo.com.