

**TOM OF FINLAND HOUSE**  
1419-1421 Laveta Terrace  
CHC-2016-2510-HCM  
ENV-2016-2511-CE

Agenda packet includes:

1. Under Consideration Staff Recommendation Report
2. Nomination
3. Letters of Support

Please click on each document to be directly taken to the corresponding page of the PDF.

# Los Angeles Department of City Planning

## RECOMMENDATION REPORT

**CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSION**

**CASE NO.: CHC-2016-2510-HCM  
ENV-2016-2511-CE**

**HEARING DATE:** August 4, 2016  
**TIME:** 10:00 AM  
**PLACE:** City Hall, Room 1010  
200 N. Spring Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Location: 1419-1421 Laveta Terrace  
Council District: 13  
Community Plan Area: Silver Lake–Echo Park  
Elysian Valley  
Area Planning Commission: East Los Angeles  
Neighborhood Council: Greater Echo Park Elysian  
Legal Description: Sunset Boulevard Heights,  
Lots 21-22

**PROJECT:** Historic-Cultural Monument Application for the  
TOM OF FINLAND HOUSE

**REQUEST:** Declare the property a Historic-Cultural Monument

**OWNER/ APPLICANT:** Durk Dehner  
1421 Laveta Terrace  
Los Angeles, CA 90026

**RECOMMENDATION**      **That the Cultural Heritage Commission:**

1. **Take the property under consideration** as a Historic-Cultural Monument per Los Angeles Administrative Code Chapter 9, Division 22, Article 1, Section 22.171.10 because the application and accompanying photo documentation suggest the submittal warrants further investigation.
2. **Adopt** the report findings.

VINCENT P. BERTONI, AICP  
Director of Planning

**[SIGNED ORIGINAL IN FILE]**

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Ken Bernstein, AICP, Manager  
Office of Historic Resources

**[SIGNED ORIGINAL IN FILE]**

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Melissa Jones, Planning Assistant  
Office of Historic Resources

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Lambert M. Giessinger, Preservation Architect  
Office of Historic Resources

Attachments:      Historic-Cultural Monument Application

## SUMMARY

The Tom of Finland House, built in 1911, is located at 1419-1421 Laveta Terrace in Echo Park, north of Sunset Boulevard, between Echo Park Avenue and Portia Street. The seventeen-room, single-family residence was constructed by contractor W.J. Gretten in the Craftsman style; there is no licensed architect recorded on the building permit. The home was occupied by a series of families until 1979 when the property was purchased by its current owner, Durk Dehner. It was into this household in 1980 that Dehner – a fan of the work of Tom of Finland – would invite the artist to reside. Tom of Finland was an internationally-renowned artist celebrated for his stylized homoerotic drawings and his influence on late twentieth century gay culture. Called the "most influential creator of gay pornographic images" by cultural historian Joseph W. Slade, Tom of Finland's work has only grown in popularity since his death, making him one of the most recognizable gay erotic artists of the twentieth century.

Tom of Finland was born as Touko Laaksonen in Kaarina, Finland on May 8, 1920. From early adolescence, Laaksonen showed significant artistic talent, rendering homoerotic, lifelike drawings of the masculine figures – loggers, lumberjacks, farmhands – that worked the rural landscape of his youth. Upon graduating from high school in 1939, Laaksonen was directed toward a more vocationally-oriented path than fine art and began studying commercial advertising. However, his education was interrupted in 1940 by the outbreak of World War II when he was conscripted into the Finnish army. After the war, Laaksonen moved to Helsinki, revived his artistic career and became a freelance illustrator. In 1956, Laaksonen submitted his artwork to the Los Angeles-based magazine, *Physique Pictorial*, the first all-nude, all-male publication in the United States. To preserve his anonymity Laaksonen signed his submitted art as "Tom." Bob Mizer, publisher of *Physique Pictorial*, enthusiastically accepted the work for publication and appended "of Finland" to "Tom," in the style adopted by other erotic artists of the period. Tom's drawing, featured on the cover of the spring 1957 issue, received an immediate positive response and began his 20-year period as a leading contributor to the magazine. Tom first visited Los Angeles in 1978 to display his work in solo exhibitions and two years later, Tom returned to Los Angeles more permanently, living with Durk Dehner at his home. Dehner became Tom's friend, partner, agent, and occasional model; their collaborative partnership lasted until Tom's death in 1991.

Noteworthy in itself as a Craftsman-style residence, the property at 1421 Laveta Terrace was where Tom lived and worked for the last decade of his life. During this productive period, a third floor space in the house served as Tom's combined bedroom and studio. Though Tom would spend his summers in Finland – visa restrictions required that Tom return to his native country every six months – the house served as the strongest focal point for his work and legacy. Tom's presence at the house helped to christen it "TOM House" in the gay and artistic community. The decade that Tom spent at TOM House was a standout period in his career; works produced at the home during this time were pivotal in turning him into an artist of international acclaim. Throughout the years, Tom's work was collected by major art institutions, including the New York Museum of Modern Art and Los Angeles' own Museum of Contemporary Art; his work came to be admired, too, by several notable individuals including Andy Warhol, Robert Mapplethorpe, and John Waters.

In 1984, Tom and Dehner co-founded the Tom of Finland Foundation at the home to preserve Tom's work as well as to promote a space in which to invite other gay artists and luminaries to be residents and guests. The home lent itself to discourses on art, gay liberation, and pride. To this day, the home houses invaluable artistic material, classes, events and other cultural activities telling of Tom's legacy, helping to cultivate the next generation of gay erotic art and culture in Los Angeles and the wider community.

The primary building on the Laveta Terrace lots is a three-story Craftsman home that is rectangular in plan and clad in composition shingles. The front entrance features an oak door with decorative rectangular carvings and is flanked by vertical side lights containing beveled glass. The ground floor of the primary elevation exhibits a slightly raised masonry and concrete porch consisting of a side-gabled wood overhang with exposed rafters and rough-textured masonry block pillar supports. The second floor of the main elevation has a centered projecting bay directly over the porch overhang with small double-hung windows. The fully-exposed side bay slightly projects and is supported by three rafters with decoratively carved tails. The third floor features a steeply-hipped front-facing gable with decorative stained glass and a flat-roofed dormer with exposed eaves. The interior spaces of the home retain most of the building's early twentieth century Craftsman-style plan and layout, along with extensive decorative features. Coffered ceilings, Art Nouveau-style light fixtures, varnished wood trim and siding, cabinetry, wood floors, and pocket doors are located throughout the space. Nearly all of the alterations to the home were made prior to the proposed period of significance, 1980 – 1990, corresponding to Tom of Finland's direct association with the property during his lifetime. Changes made within this period include the raising of the third-floor dormer roof to allow for larger window openings in the 1980s and stained glass windows that were added to the third floor in 1989. Also, various multimedia artworks have been incorporated into the walls and finishes of the building's interior.

In addition to the three-story house, also on the property is a front-facing gabled garage with exposed rafters, triangular brackets, horizontal wood siding, and decorative features identical to the primary structure. Furthermore, there are multimedia art pieces located throughout the grounds.

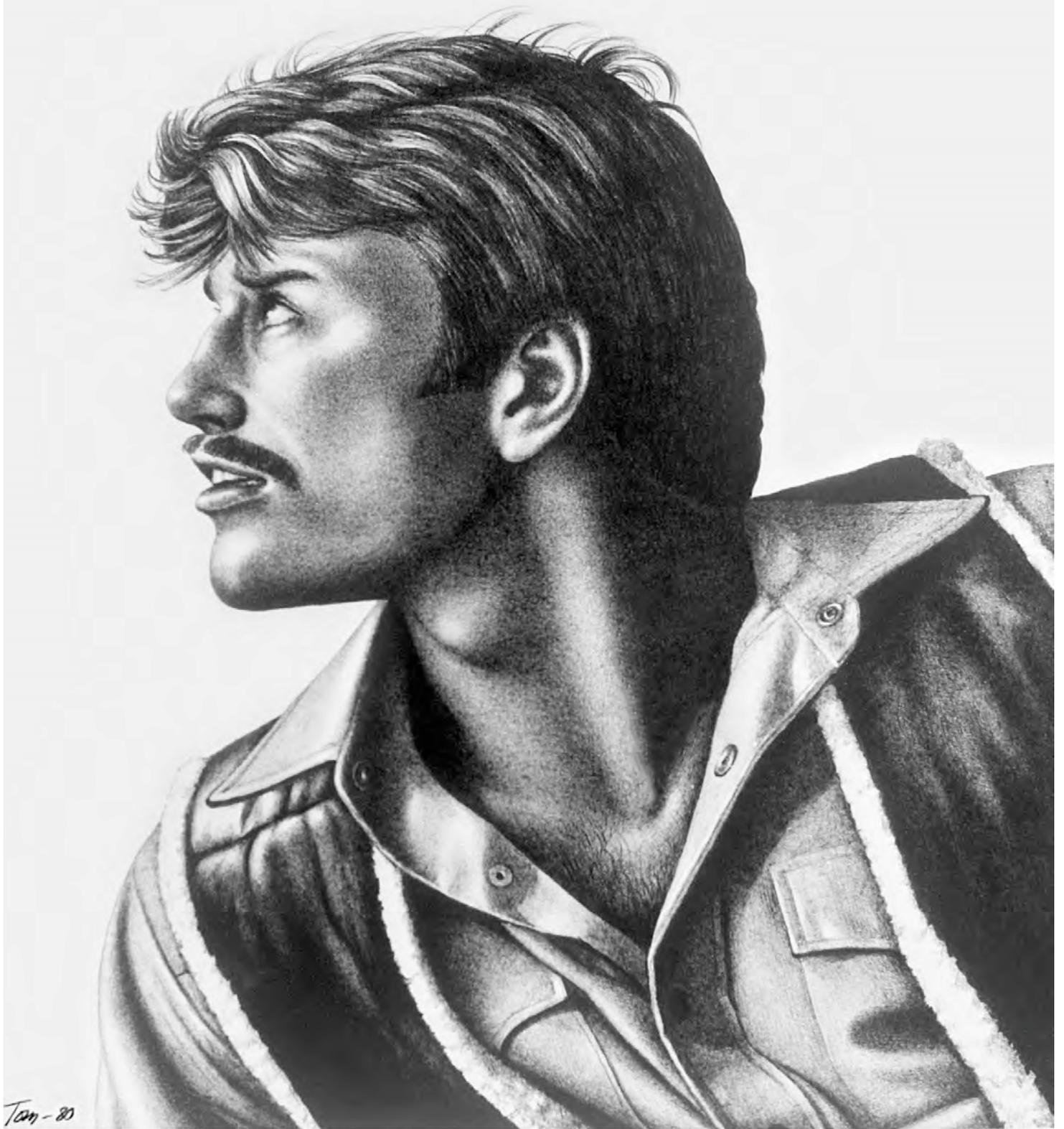
The citywide historic resources survey, SurveyLA, identified the Tom of Finland House as individually eligible for local listing or designation as well as a notable resource associated with Queer Art within the City's LGBT Historic Context Statement.

## **CRITERIA**

The criterion is the Cultural Heritage Ordinance which defines a historical or cultural monument as any site (including significant trees or other plant life located thereon) building or structure of particular historic or cultural significance to the City of Los Angeles, such as historic structures or sites in which the broad cultural, economic, or social history of the nation, State or community is reflected or exemplified, or which are identified with historic personages or with important events in the main currents of national, State or local history or which embody the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type specimen, inherently valuable for a study of a period style or method of construction, or a notable work of a master builder, designer or architect whose individual genius influenced his age.

## **FINDINGS**

Based on the facts set forth in the summary and application, the Commission determines that the application is complete and that the property may be significant enough to warrant further investigation as a potential Historic-Cultural Monument.



TOM OF FINLAND (Touko Laaksonen, Finnish, 1920-1991)  
*Portrait of Durk*, 1980, Graphite on paper  
© 1980 Tom of Finland Foundation

# Tom of Finland House

## HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENT APPLICATION

# HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENT NOMINATION FORM



## 1. PROPERTY IDENTIFICATION

Proposed Monument Name:					
Other Associated Names:					
Street Address:			Zip:	Council District:	
Range of Addresses on Property:			Community Name:		
Assessor Parcel Number:	Tract:		Block:	Lot:	
Identification cont'd:					
Proposed Monument Property Type:	Building	Structure	Object	Site/Open Space	Natural Feature
Describe any additional resources located on the property to be included in the nomination, here:					

## 2. CONSTRUCTION HISTORY & CURRENT STATUS

Year built:	Factual	Estimated	Threatened?		
Architect/Designer:			Contractor:		
Original Use:			Present Use:		
Is the Proposed Monument on its Original Site?		Yes	No (explain in section 7)	Unknown (explain in section 7)	

## 3. STYLE & MATERIALS

Architectural Style:		Stories:	Plan Shape:
<i>FEATURE</i>	<i>PRIMARY</i>	<i>SECONDARY</i>	
CONSTRUCTION	Type:	Type:	
CLADDING	Material:	Material:	
ROOF	Type:	Type:	
	Material:	Material:	
WINDOWS	Type:	Type:	
	Material:	Material:	
ENTRY	Style:	Style:	
DOOR	Type:	Type:	



# HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENT NOMINATION FORM

## 4. ALTERATION HISTORY

List date and write a brief description of any major alterations or additions. This section may also be completed on a separate document. Include copies of permits in the nomination packet. Make sure to list any major alterations for which there are no permits, as well.


## 5. EXISTING HISTORIC RESOURCE IDENTIFICATION (if known)

Listed in the National Register of Historic Places	
Listed in the California Register of Historical Resources	
Formally determined eligible for the National and/or California Registers	
Located in an Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ)	Contributing feature Non-contributing feature
Determined eligible for national, state, or local landmark status by an historic resources survey(s)	Survey Name(s):
Other historical or cultural resource designations:	

## 6. APPLICABLE HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENT CRITERIA

The proposed monument exemplifies the following Cultural Heritage Ordinance Criteria (Section 22.171.7):

Reflects the broad cultural, economic, or social history of the nation, state, or community
Is identified with historic personages or with important events in the main currents of national, state, or local history
Embodies the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural-type specimen, inherently valuable for study of a period, style, or method of construction
A notable work of a master builder, designer, or architect whose individual genius influenced his or her age



# HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENT NOMINATION FORM

## 7. WRITTEN STATEMENTS

*This section allows you to discuss at length the significance of the proposed monument and why it should be designated an Historic-Cultural Monument. Type your response on separate documents and attach them to this form.*

**A. Proposed Monument Description** - Describe the proposed monument’s physical characteristics and relationship to its surrounding environment. Expand on sections 2 and 3 with a more detailed description of the site. Expand on section 4 and discuss the construction/alteration history in detail if that is necessary to explain the proposed monument’s current form. Identify and describe any character-defining elements, structures, interior spaces, or landscape features.

**B. Statement of Significance** - Address the proposed monument’s historic, cultural, and/or architectural significance by discussing how it satisfies the HCM criteria you selected in Section 6. You must support your argument with substantial evidence and analysis. The Statement of Significance is your main argument for designation so it is important to substantiate any claims you make with supporting documentation and research.

## 8. CONTACT INFORMATION

### *Applicant*

Name:		Company:	
Street Address:		City:	State:
Zip:	Phone Number:	Email:	

### *Property Owner*

Is the owner in support of the nomination?      Yes      No      Unknown

Name:		Company:	
Street Address:		City:	State:
Zip:	Phone Number:	Email:	

### *Nomination Preparer/Applicant’s Representative*

Name:		Company:	
Street Address:		City:	State:
Zip:	Phone Number:	Email:	



# HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENT NOMINATION FORM

## 9. SUBMITTAL

When you have completed preparing your nomination, compile all materials in the order specified below. Although the entire packet must not exceed 100 pages, you may send additional material on a CD or flash drive.

### APPLICATION CHECKLIST

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Nomination Form   | 5. Copies of Primary/Secondary Documentation   |
| 2. Written Statements A and B  | 6. Copies of Building Permits for Major Alterations (include first construction permits) |
| 3. Bibliography  | 7. Additional, Contemporary Photos   |
| 4. Two Primary Photos of Exterior/Main Facade (8x10, the main photo of the proposed monument. Also email a digital copy of the main photo to: <a href="mailto:planning.ohr@lacity.org">planning.ohr@lacity.org</a> ) | 8. Historical Photos   |
|  | 9. Zimas Parcel Report for all Nominated Parcels (including map)                         |

## 10. RELEASE

Please read each statement and check the corresponding boxes to indicate that you agree with the statement, then sign below in the provided space. Either the applicant or preparer may sign.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	I acknowledge that all documents submitted will become public records under the California Public Records Act, and understand that the documents will be made available upon request to members of the public for inspection and copying.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I acknowledge that all photographs and images submitted as part of this application will become the property of the City of Los Angeles, and understand that permission is granted for use of the photographs and images by the City without any expectation of compensation.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I acknowledge that I have the right to submit or have obtained the appropriate permission to submit all information contained in this application.

**DURK DEHNER** May 18  
Name: Date: 2016

*Durk Dehner*  
Signature:

Mail your Historic-Cultural Monument Submittal to the Office of Historic Resources.

Office of Historic Resources  
Department of City Planning  
200 N. Spring Street, Room 620  
Los Angeles, CA 90012  
Phone: 213-978-1200  
Website: [preservation.lacity.org](http://preservation.lacity.org)

## A. Proposed Monument Description

### TOM House (“Tom of Finland House”)



Primary elevation of TOM House. Source: *Wallpaper Magazine* (2014)

### Primary Building Exterior

Set on a sloping lot and located on a residential street in the Echo Park area, the subject building is a three-floor residential building constructed in 1911 and designed in the Craftsman style. The building is located on Lots 21 and 22 of the Sunset Blvd Heights Tract at 1421 Laveta Terrace.

The rectangular plan building is cross-gabled with a projecting dormer window at roof level. The roof is covered in composition shingles. Three building floors are above ground, with a basement located below the back portion of the building.

The ground floor of the primary elevation exhibits a slightly raised masonry and concrete porch bisecting two-thirds of the facade. Rough textured masonry block pillars and side walls support a porch consisting of a side-gabled wood overhang with exposed rafters. The elevated porch is accessed by three steps from the ground with flooring covered in tile. The centered entrance in the porch exhibits an oak door with decorative rectangular carvings surrounding a glass opening. This door is flanked by vertical side lights containing beveled glass. The window located within the porch is a large single-pane window. The fully exposed side

bay also has a large single-pane window immediately below a horizontal band that traverses the entire length of the main elevation.

The second floor of the main elevation has a centered projecting bay directly over the porch overhang, with small double-hung windows. Flanking this center bay are pairs of double-hung windows. The fully-exposed side bay is slightly projecting and supported by three rafters with decoratively carved ends. The third floor contains a steeply-hipped front-facing gable with wooden fascia boards and supporting brackets. At the apex of the gable are paired single-pane windows with decorative stained glass. The third floor's western portion has a flat-roofed dormer with exposed eaves, brackets, and two pairs of single-pane windows.

The exterior of the entire building consists of continuous horizontal wood boards that traverse the main and side elevations. The side elevations of the subject building have double-hung windows, rows of single-pane windows, continuous horizontal wood siding, and a plaster and brick chimney on the western elevation.

### **Primary Building Interior**

The subject building contains a total of seventeen rooms. The ground-floor interior spaces of the subject building retain most of the building's early 20<sup>th</sup> century Craftsman-style plan and layout, along with extensive original decorative features. Coffered ceilings, Art-Nouveau-style light fixtures, varnished wood trim and siding, cabinetry, and wood floors are located throughout the interior. The living room exhibits its original fireplace along with original pocket doors. The dining room contains extensive cabinetry and the original built-in buffet with a prominent stained glass window. The second-floor spaces of the subject building, including the bathroom, also exhibit most of the building's original layout and features.

### **Secondary Buildings**

The side driveway area of the subject property contains a temporary utilitarian storage unit. Behind the storage unit is a front-facing gabled garage structure exhibiting exposed rafters, triangular brackets, and horizontal wood siding. All decorative features of the garage structure are identical to the subject building and it appears to have been constructed concurrently with the primary building.

Attached to the side elevation of the garage structure is a wooden patio structure immediately after the steps leading from the kitchen area of the main building. The utilitarian structure is a wooden A-frame-style structure with exposed beams and rafters, wooden latticework, and a concrete cinder block base. One end of this patio area has a brick trash burner that has been converted into a barbeque.

## **Landscape Features**

The downward sloping back portion of the subject property contains three additional levels of terracing supported by low cinder block garden walls and accessed by a concrete staircase with metal and wooden hand rails. This garden area is a dense mix of mature trees, shrubs, vines, and plants. This includes Mexican Fan Palm trees, rubber trees, citrus trees, avocado trees, fig trees, bamboo, banana plants, bougainvillea, loquat, ferns, jasmine, grapes, and roses. Hardscape features of this landscaped area include brick pavers, pebble rocks, fountains, seating areas, signage, and bric-a-brac. Multimedia art pieces are located throughout the grounds.

The street level portion of the subject property is screened by tall and dense shrubbery punctuated by wooden gates. The front yard contains landscaped shrubs, various plants, and two mature trees: a pepper tree and a rubber tree. Flooring is a combination of turf, concrete, brick pavers, tiles, and pebble rocks.

## **Alterations**

Since the subject building's construction in 1911, the following alterations have occurred to the building and grounds. Note that most alterations occurred prior to or during the proposed period of significance of 1980-1990, some are ongoing.

1. The attached patio structure to the garage in the back area appears to have been added sometime between the 1940s-1950s. This patio was fully permitted and legalized by the City of Los Angeles in 1974.
2. A small second-floor porch centrally located over the ground-floor porch was enclosed sometime in the 1970s. The previous owner appears to have reused the same double-hung windows in extending the wall forward a few feet. The space is now used as a bedroom.
3. An interior kitchen wall was removed to enlarge the space.
4. The side brick chimney collapsed in the 1987 Whittier earthquake and was reconstructed with a stucco finish rather than with the original masonry block facing.
5. In the 1980s, the roof of the third-floor dormer was raised several feet to allow for larger window openings. The current owner reincorporated the same roofing material, rafters, and brackets. (*Note:* The adjacent space was used as a studio by subject artist Tom of Finland.)
6. Stained glass windows on the third floor were added in 1989.

7. Landscaped areas have had additions of seating areas, signage, retaining garden walls, paving, and hand rails.
8. Various multimedia artworks have been incorporated into the walls and finishes of the subject building interior.

### **Community History and Building History Prior to Period of Significance (1911-1979)**

The subject building was built as part of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century wave of development in the Echo Park area of Los Angeles. With the laying out of Sunset Boulevard in 1886, residential construction in the Echo Park area began with real estate developer Thomas Kelley purchasing 40 acres to develop the “Montana Tract” in 1887.

The Laveta Terrace location of the subject property was subdivided by Alex Culver as “Sunset Boulevard Heights”. Culver began advertising Sunset Boulevard Heights in 1905 with newspaper advertisements proclaiming “On a Beautiful Knoll, 5 Minutes by the [Street] Car.” A still-extant public stairway was constructed from Sunset Boulevard to Laveta Terrace to spur development.

At some point during the tract development, the residential street’s distinctive 80-90-foot-tall Mexican Fan Palm trees were planted. The height of the palms combined with the hilltop location of Laveta Terrace make the palms visible from long distances and serve as a visual landmark for the immediate neighborhood.

Based on Sanborn Maps, the subject building appears to be one of the first residential buildings constructed in the development. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the building was the first residence constructed on Laveta Terrace, but permit research and adjacent building construction information is unable to fully support this assertion.

Building permits establish that the single-family residence was constructed in 1911 by contractor W.J. Gretten for owner R.W. Kemp at a cost of \$4,500 dollars. There is no licensed architect listed in the building permit.

The home was occupied by a series of families, two of whom appear to be of Italian-American descent. In 1929 the property was owned by Antonio Lozzi. In the early 1970s, the residence was owned by Gelindo Marrone.

In 1979, the residence was purchased from Michael and Katherine A. Bishop by current owner Durk Dehner. Tom of Finland’s residency in the subject property a year later in 1980 establishes the period of significance.

[Refer to attachment *History of Ownership, 1421 Laveta Terrace, Los Angeles* for additional information on prior ownership of property.]

## **Name Designation of Rooms and Exterior Spaces**

Since the formation of the Tom of Finland Foundation in 1984, the organization has given formal names to various spaces throughout the subject building and property.

### *Basement*

The Pit

### *Ground Floor*

The Drawing Room

Kake's Kitchen

Tom's Hall

### *Second Floor*

Lawton's Lookout

The Masters' Room

The Sultan's Salon

The Lupetti Lavatory

The Music Room

The Kirwan Solarium

### *Third Floor*

Tom's Room

North Star (Foundation office)

### *Exterior*

Tom's Bar

Carrington Galen's Pleasure Park

## **"Tom's Room"**

The third-floor studio and sleeping quarters of artist Tom of Finland are preserved by the Tom of Finland Foundation to the physical condition that he left them in 1990. This space contains his bed, desk, clothes, carpeting, lamps, and other personal items. The policy of the organization is to conserve and maintain these items in this space to the greatest extent possible.

## **Art Installations**

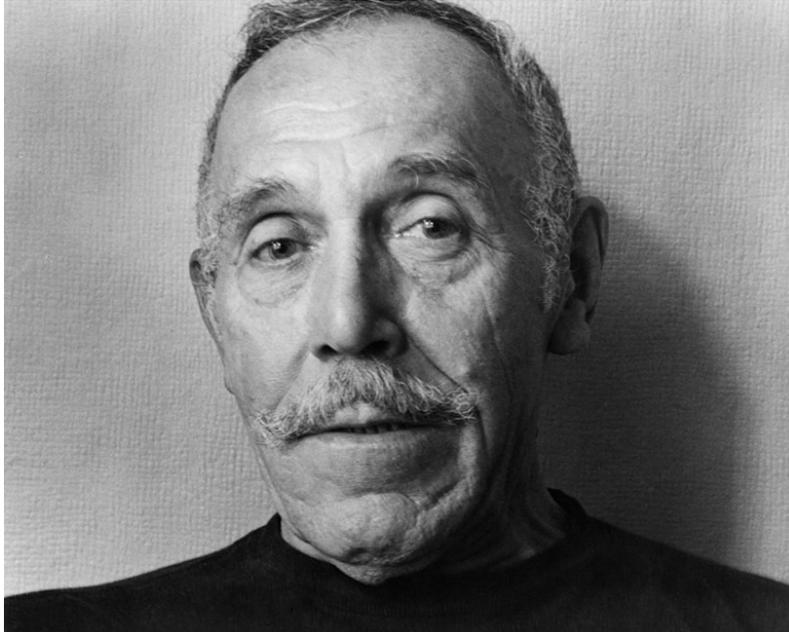
Throughout the interior and exterior of the subject building, multimedia art installations have been added and incorporated into the building by various artists beginning in the 2000s. While the majority of the works exhibited in the

residence are detachable and movable by nature (framed paintings, drawings, posters, sculpture, etc.), some works have been incorporated into the physical fabric of building. Artworks are located on plaster ceilings, doorways, and cabinetry.

Rather than being classified as detrimental alterations after the building's period of significance, these works are in keeping with both the Tom of Finland Foundation's mission to nurture artists, and the artistic aesthetic of Tom of Finland. These works do not detract from the setting and feeling of the interior of the building. The addition of these works are evolving and carefully curated, and they are reviewed by arts professionals to be compatible with the setting of Tom of Finland House. These built-in works enhancing the residence are by highly-regarded artists such as Ross Johnston, Miguel Angel Reyes, Hector Silva, Minoru Terada, and The Haas Brothers.

## B. Statement of Significance

### TOM House (“Tom of Finland House”)



Tom of Finland (Touko Laaksonen) (1980)  
Photo: Robert Mapplethorpe

TOM House is the property in which the internationally-renowned artist known as “Tom of Finland” (Touko Laaksonen) spent the last decade of his productive life, and it is the residence most associated with the artist’s life and work. The property continues to serve as the base of the Tom of Finland Foundation (ToFF), co-founded by Tom himself, and it houses the largest repository of the artist’s work in the world.

Based on the Cultural Heritage Ordinance criteria for the City of Los Angeles, this property meets two criteria for designation as a Historic-Cultural Monument:

- the property is identified with a **historic personage**;
- the property reflects the **broad cultural, economic or social history of the nation, state, or community**

The proposed period of significance for the property is **1980-1990**, corresponding to Tom’s direct association with the property during his lifetime.

This statement is divided into 6 parts: a biographical overview of Tom of Finland as a historic personage; a discussion of TOM House and Tom’s time at the house, a timeline summarizing key events; an examination of the cultural significance of Tom and his art; recognition by the nation of Finland; a conclusion.

## 1. Tom of Finland: Historic Personage<sup>1</sup>

*Tom of Finland is still today the most recognizable of all gay erotic artists.*

F. Valentine Hooven III, biographer for Tom of Finland<sup>2</sup>

### Touko Laaksonen: Early Years

The artist who would become known as “Tom of Finland” was born as Touko Laaksonen on May 8, 1920, in Kaarina, Finland. In the 1920s, Kaarina was a rural town filled with farmland and woods. Already showing precocious artistic talent from childhood, the adolescent Touko began privately creating homoerotic drawings of masculine figures such as the loggers, lumberjacks and farmhands that populated this rural area.

Upon graduating from high school in 1939, Touko was directed towards a more vocationally-oriented path than fine art, and he began studying advertising. This education was interrupted by World War II and Russia’s invasion of Finland. Touko was conscripted into the Finnish army in 1940. His years of military service exposed him to wartime violence that weighed on him for much of his life. With limited access to privacy, he also did no erotic drawing during his four and a half years of service. During this period, however, he began to have sex with uniformed men, adding additional masculine archetypes – particularly uniformed soldiers and sailors – to his sexual fantasies.

After the war, Touko moved to Helsinki and resumed his private erotic drawing. He graduated from his studies in advertising in 1946 and became a freelance illustrator. In 1953, he met Veli Mäkinen, the man who would be his partner for the next 28 years.<sup>3</sup>

### Tom of Finland: Career Breakthrough

In 1956, Touko – at the encouragement of a friend – submitted his artwork to *Physique Pictorial*, a leading US “beefcake magazine” based in Los Angeles that featured depictions of young, athletic men. Touko signed his submitted art as “Tom” to preserve his anonymity. Bob Mizer, publisher of *Physique Pictorial*, enthusiastically accepted the work for publication. Mizer also appended “of Finland” to “Tom”, in the style adopted by other erotic artists of the period, such as the photographers Bruce of Los Angeles and Spartan of Hollywood.<sup>4</sup>

Touko’s drawing – featuring a smiling lumberjack – was featured on the cover of the spring 1957 issue. The response to the artwork was “immediate, electrifying, and

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<sup>1</sup> This biographical section draws primarily from the book *Tom of Finland: Life and Work of a Gay Hero* (Valentine Hooven, 2012) and a proposal for a Finnish language biography of Tom (Luoto, 2014).

<sup>2</sup> Valentine Hooven (2012), p. 25.

<sup>3</sup> Touko and Veli were partners until Veli’s death in 1981.

<sup>4</sup> Mustola, 2006, p. 31.

international”.<sup>5</sup> Touko “became” Tom of Finland, and Tom began a 20-year period as a leading contributor to the magazine. Significantly, *Physique Pictorial* was published out of Los Angeles and thus Tom was connected to the city relatively early in his career.



**First Tom of Finland Drawing with Physique Pictorial (1957)**

This career breakthrough propelled Tom’s progression to becoming a producer of homoerotic images that would eventually become globally recognizable. In his distinctive drawings, Tom took hyper-masculine archetypes that had been reserved for the heterosexual imagination (e.g. lumberjacks, bikers, sailors, cowboys and policemen), and he re-cast them in his own homoerotic drawings. These unabashed re-imaginings of men who enjoyed having sex with each other were unique for their time.

As the demand for Tom’s work grew, Tom began taking on private commissions of his artwork. However, in the 1950s, neither erotic art nor homosexual art paid well. In 1958, Tom became a permanent commercial artist at advertising agency McCann Erickson, and it was not until 1973 that he was able to leave and work full-time on his own creative practice. That same year, Tom had his first exhibition of his artwork, which took place in Hamburg, Germany. However, all but one of the exhibited works were stolen. It was to be five years before Tom exhibited his artwork again – this time, in the city that he would come to be identified with for the remainder of his life: Los Angeles.

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<sup>5</sup> Valentine Hooven (2012), p. 107. As Valentine Hooven has noted elsewhere, by the end of its second year, *Physique Pictorial* already had nationwide distribution in the USA and was also selling in numerous major cities in Europe (Valentine Hooven, 1995, p. 46).

## Tom in Los Angeles and at 1421 Laveta Terrace

In February 1978, Tom arrived in Los Angeles for a 21-day U.S. visit. He stayed with Durk Dehner, a gay man who was then 28 years old. Two years earlier, Durk had seen an image of Tom's art in an advertisement at a gay bar in New York. Struck by the image, he had written Tom a fan letter and they had begun a correspondence.

During Tom's first stay in Los Angeles, his work was shown in solo exhibitions, both in Los Angeles and San Francisco. Durk also began booking Tom into more galleries, beginning a collaboration that saw Durk become Tom's partner, friend and occasional model. This historic and fruitful collaboration would continue until the end of Tom's life.

In 1979, Durk bought a property at 1421 Laveta Terrace, Los Angeles, along with three other gay men. It was into this household that Durk invited Tom, and in 1980, Tom began to stay at the house, which eventually came to be known as "TOM House".

Thus began the direct association of 1421 Laveta Terrace with Tom of Finland. Due to visa restrictions, Tom returned to Finland every six months, but TOM House remained his primary residence and work premises until virtually the end of his life. In 1984, Tom and Durk together co-founded ToFF with the aim of preserving and promoting Tom's work. ToFF operated from TOM House, as it still does today. Eventually, Durk's housemates left the household and Durk became the sole owner of the property. Other people, including gay artists, joined Tom and Durk as residents and guests of the house, continuing a communal life that is retained at TOM House today.

The decade that Tom spent at TOM House was a standout period in his career. Tom's creative development and prolific output at the house, along with an increasing number of exhibitions, private commissions and other sales, were pivotal in turning him into an artist of international renown. His work came to be admired by notable individuals (e.g. artists Andy Warhol<sup>6</sup> and Robert Mapplethorpe)<sup>7</sup> and collected by major art institutions, including New York's Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) and Los Angeles' own Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA).

It was only due to declining health that Tom returned to Helsinki in 1989. The following year, a documentary on his life, *Daddy and the Muscle Academy*, had an international theatrical release. That same year, the first edition of his biography, *Tom of Finland: His Life and Times*,<sup>8</sup> was released and translated into multiple languages. His work was also accepted into the Whitney Museum's 1991 Biennial, alongside art by renowned artists such as Roy Lichtenstein, Jasper Johns and Cindy Sherman.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Ramakers (2000), p. x.

<sup>7</sup> Mapplethorpe was a known admirer and collector of Tom of Finland art (see, for example, Ramakers, 1988, p. 12 and Valentine Hooven, 1993, p. 181). Mapplethorpe had intended to write the introduction for Tom's *Retrospective* volume of works, but his declining health intervened (Niemi, 2006, p. 66).

<sup>8</sup> Valentine Hooven (1993).

<sup>9</sup> Rus (2016), p. 20.

At age 71, Tom died of an emphysema-induced stroke on November 7, 1991. His work had accrued international acclaim – a level of recognition that would only increase in the years to follow. After his death, most of his remaining possessions in Finland were shipped to TOM House,<sup>10</sup> the site that is the strongest focal point for Tom’s work, influence and legacy.

## 2. TOM House



Tom of Finland at TOM House (1984). Photo: Jack Shear

*(TOM House) really is the center of... what was (Tom) and what is him.*<sup>11</sup>  
Durk Dehner, President, ToFF

Noteworthy in itself as a Craftsman-style residence, TOM House was the site where Tom lived and worked for the last decade of his life. During this productive period, a third-floor space in TOM House served as Tom’s combined bedroom and studio. For much of this decade, Tom spent his winters at TOM House in Los Angeles and his summers in Finland.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Dehner (2009a). The transcript for this interview is available upon request.

<sup>11</sup> Dehner (2009a).

<sup>12</sup> Mustola (2006), p. 52.

While staying at the house, Tom would draw almost every day. As Durk Dehner recalled in a 2009 interview:

(He) would actually just shut the door and he would draw... he would draw a lot here. So he was really obsessed with drawing... The only time I ever knew where he didn't pick up his pencil was when we took him on a trip to Hawaii.<sup>13</sup>

ToFF has documented and catalogued 3,862 pieces of Tom's work (2,338 of these being finished pieces and 1524 being preparatory studies). Approximately 1,500 of these works are held on-site at TOM House as part of ToFF's permanent collection, which is the largest collection of Tom's work in the world.<sup>14</sup> ToFF estimates that, of Tom's total documented and catalogued body of work, approximately 800 pieces (around 20%) were created at TOM House.

TOM House is also home to vast amounts of Tom-related ephemera, including personal items belonging to Tom, such as clothing, correspondence and personal photographs; Tom's scrapbooks, which contained clippings of scenes and individuals that informed his art; and paraphernalia that features or references Tom's art – from bar coasters to action figures to matchbooks to a Christmas tree ornament. With most of Tom's personal possessions shipped from Finland to TOM House after his death and merged with what was already at the house,<sup>15</sup> and due to ToFF's ongoing work to preserve Tom's legacy, TOM House holds the world's largest collection of Tom-related ephemera.

Open to the public by appointment, TOM House typically has around 150 artworks on exhibit for visitors to view, with an emphasis on Tom's art and works that contain allusions to Tom's art. A dedicated library houses books on Tom's life and work, along with other relevant publications, such as books on erotic art and queer art. Over ToFF's 32-year history, scholars at many levels and hundreds of artists have used ToFF's collection and library for research.

TOM House also continues to host a range of events that have maintained the public visibility of the property itself and its identification with the personage of Tom of Finland. These events include an art fair, gay and leather<sup>16</sup> community events, and art classes.

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<sup>13</sup> Dehner (2009a).

<sup>14</sup> ToFF also collects erotic works by other artists. In the 1980s, artists living with HIV/AIDS made pleas to ToFF to protect their work posthumously – to ensure that these works did not, as Durk Dehner put it, “fall into just nothingness” (Dehner, 2009a). Although ToFF had previously focused solely on Tom's work, Tom and Durk subsequently expanded its scope to include the preservation and promotion of erotic works by other artists. To date, ToFF holds over 2000 original artworks by artists other than Tom. ToFF's full archive – with over 100,000 images, documents and pieces of memorabilia – is in fact the world's largest repository of erotic art.

<sup>15</sup> Dehner (2009a).

<sup>16</sup> In an adaptation of Johnson's (2004) definition, “leather” is used here as “a blanket term for a large array of sexual preferences, identities, relationship structures, and social organizations loosely” connected to various sexual expressions and practices, including BDSM. Participants may wear leather

The fact that TOM House still has use as a residence – and one in which Durk Dehner still lives – is also worth noting, as it continues the communal and social life of the house that Tom himself experienced. TOM House is rarely empty of people and, over the 25 years that have passed since Tom’s death, it still hosts artists from around the world who make erotic art.

Today, the house continues to accrue distinction for its historical and cultural status, owing to its association with Tom. Most recently, this has resulted in the March 2016 release, by esteemed art book publisher Rizzoli, of the 255-page book *TOM House: Tom of Finland in Los Angeles*.<sup>17</sup>

### Tom of Finland at TOM House: Period of Significance (1980-1990)

As the site most identified with Tom and his work, TOM House is a physical reflection of and a testament to Tom’s artistic, cultural and historical influence.

During his decade at TOM House, Tom filled his days with an abundance of creative activity and stimulation.<sup>18</sup> As reflected in these excerpts from a 2009 interview with Durk Dehner, this period was personally and artistically energizing for Tom:

(H)e loved Los Angeles and he was always happy to just be here. You know I met him when he was 59 or 58... And actually, he (later) thanked me... because he said (being hosted at TOM House, taken to events and introduced to new people) kept him young for that 10 years... his friends of the same age were retiring in Finland and he was out just meeting new people all the time, new guys, and it really stimulated his artwork...

(P)eople would always be coming here. There were 3 or 4 of us living here besides Tom and so there was always activity, there’d be dinners, there’d be new people, and so he found a lot of his models just by being here and them walking through the door as friends and he seemed to really like that...<sup>19</sup>

In the space available in this statement, it is difficult to do justice to the significance of the work that Tom produced at TOM House. This echoes sentiments expressed by Durk Dehner in his 2009 interview:

(T)he decade in LA was remarkable because we’re now just realizing how important it was by looking at the hundreds of sketches that he did during the

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garments, although the wearing of leather does not necessarily involve leather fetishization. As Johnson notes, many of the sexual styles associated with leather subcultures “have a considerable history and are arguably found in many societies” (p. 1).

<sup>17</sup> Reynolds (2016). Also of significance is a 2014 article on TOM House in international design publication *Wallpaper\* Magazine*, written by Richard Meyer of Stanford University (see Meyer, 2014).

<sup>18</sup> For example, as part of his morning routine, Tom would have breakfast and then “he would go (into his room) and draw and draw for 4 hours” (Dehner, 2009a).

<sup>19</sup> Dehner (2009a).

last 4 or 5 years (of this period)... they had stories and they told so much about Tom...<sup>20</sup>

Nonetheless, the remainder of this section singles out some important aspects of the work that Tom produced at TOM House, beginning with the **broadened racial representations** in Tom's work, as informed by his residence in Los Angeles and at the property. For the first forty years of his career, Tom's art was largely populated by depictions of white men.<sup>21</sup> However, while at TOM House, Tom was exposed to the ethnic diversity of Los Angeles. In particular, he was exposed to men of ethnic backgrounds whom he had had little exposure to in Finland, especially African-American men.<sup>22</sup>

As a result, by 1986 – roughly mid-way through his decade of staying at TOM House – men of African background were regularly appearing in Tom's work.<sup>23</sup> These men were frequently shown in interracial encounters, which also broke social prohibitions concerning (gay male) interracial sexuality at the time.<sup>24</sup> By the end of the 1980s, Tom had produced enough finished pieces to enable the publication of a book specifically devoted to his works that featured African-American men.<sup>25</sup> That a concept and a market for such a book had been imagined speaks to important cultural shifts, both within US race politics and US gay male culture. In the years since Tom's death, some of these drawings have circulated internationally, particularly via exhibitions and the continued publication of Tom's work in art books by publisher Taschen.

The racial dynamics in Tom's work were always present<sup>26</sup> and nuanced, and these nuances were deepened through Tom's experiences of living at TOM House. Various commentators have discussed Tom's representations of black men in his work.<sup>27</sup> It has also been observed that some ethnic groups remained largely, if not completely, absent from Tom's art.<sup>28</sup> At the same time, it is less noted, although notable, that during the 1980s Tom's work came to include depictions of men who appeared to be of mixed race.<sup>29</sup> During his stays at TOM House, Tom produced hundreds of works that engaged with the racial dynamics of the time.

**The impact of the AIDS epidemic** was also reflected in the work that Tom produced at TOM House during the 1980s. In interviews, Tom typically distanced himself from any

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<sup>20</sup> Dehner (2009a).

<sup>21</sup> Ramakers (2000), p. 84.

<sup>22</sup> Dehner (2014). In Finland, Tom's exposure to black men had mostly been limited to material that he received from the US via his job at McCann Erickson. Because this material included images of Muhammad Ali, many of the black men in Tom's early drawings bear physical similarities with Ali.

<sup>23</sup> Ramakers (2000), p. 84.

<sup>24</sup> Ramakers (2000), p. 90.

<sup>25</sup> Ramakers (2000), p. 84.

<sup>26</sup> Indeed, to discuss the racial dynamics in Tom's work only in terms of representations of non-white men is to reinforce the ability of whiteness to "(secure) its dominance by" masking itself as a racial category (see Dyer, 1993, quoted in Ramakers, 2000, p. 96).

<sup>27</sup> See, in particular, Ramakers (2000), pp. 83-97.

<sup>28</sup> See, for example, Ramakers (2000), p. 84.

<sup>29</sup> Dehner (2014).

suggestions that he had overt political intentions as an artist,<sup>30</sup> but the AIDS epidemic clearly galvanized his art practice. Durk Dehner recalled in a 2009 interview:

(Tom) tried his best to actually do what he could to encourage fellas to protect themselves. And so for the rest of his life, for those 7 years he was doing drawings oftentimes with condoms in them or with little (safer sex) references. We did a lot of campaigning. We would send safe sex posters (featuring donated Tom of Finland images)<sup>31</sup> out to bars all over the world.<sup>32</sup>

Tom himself died not from AIDS but from an emphysema-induced stroke, owing to years of cigarette smoking. The effects of Tom's own **ageing and illness** also came to be reflected in the work he produced at TOM House. He began to depict older men, some with receding hairlines and grey hair, allowing the men in his art to age with him – in this sense, too, Tom literally produced his most mature work at TOM House. When his emphysema medication caused his hands to shake, he abandoned the meticulous pencil-work of his finished drawings and began creating pastel works, while continuing his sketching.<sup>33</sup> Some of these pastel works remain on display at TOM House.

### 3. Tom of Finland and TOM House: Timeline

1911	1421 Laveta Terrace residence is constructed.
May 8, 1920	Touko Laaksonen is born in Kaarina, Finland.
1957-1976	Touko's artwork is published for the first time, when it appears on the Spring 1957 cover of the Los Angeles-based magazine <i>Physique Pictorial</i> under the name "Tom of Finland". This begins his 20-year period as a leading contributor to the magazine.
1976	Durk Dehner discovers Tom's work and writes Tom a fan letter. They begin a mail correspondence.
Feb 1978	Tom visits the US for the first time. During his 21-day visit, he stays with Durk in Los Angeles and his work is exhibited in Los Angeles and San Francisco. Durk begins booking Tom into galleries.
1979	Durk purchases 1421 Laveta Terrace.

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<sup>30</sup> See, for example, Tom's assertion that he was "never... out to... have a strong influence on the attitudes of heterosexuals or the approval of gays" (quoted in Mustola, 2006, p. 45).

<sup>31</sup> Mustola (2006), pp. 51-52. Tom donated his work for use in numerous AIDS education campaigns, including a widely used Finnish safer sex poster.

<sup>32</sup> Dehner (2009a).

<sup>33</sup> Dehner (2009a).

- 1980 At Durk's invitation, Tom begins to stay at 1421 Laveta Terrace (initially for short visits due to the illness of his partner, Veli). Durk and Tom co-found the Tom of Finland Company<sup>34</sup> to oversee the publishing and licensing of Tom's work.
- 1981 Tom's partner Veli dies from cancer.
- 1982 Tom begins spending six months of each year at 1421 Laveta Terrace, with the remainder of his time spent in Finland.
- 1984 Tom and Durk co-found the Tom of Finland Foundation, with 1421 Laveta Terrace as its operating premises. The entire archival collection of Tom's work is moved from Helsinki to Los Angeles.
- 1989 Due to declining health, Tom makes his final trip to the US.
- Nov 7, 1991 Tom dies in Helsinki from an emphysema-induced stroke.
- 2000 Tom's work is included in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art exhibition *Made in California*.
- 2016 Art book publisher Rizzoli releases the book *TOM House: Tom of Finland in Los Angeles*.

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<sup>34</sup> As discussed in Dehner (2009a), the impetus for setting up the company was to eliminate what was then the widespread piracy of Tom's work. Tom of Finland Company later also became the parent company of Tom of Finland Foundation.

#### 4. Cultural Significance of Tom of Finland and his Art

*(A)n artist superb, but... an influence transcendent. What (Tom of Finland) did was open the doorway, the path for so many to follow by not being afraid of homoerotic subject matter and also the way it was treated.*

Harvey Shipley-Miller, Trustee, Judith Rothschild Foundation<sup>35</sup>

Far from the days when it circulated exclusively among “a small group of insiders”, Tom’s work has “(become) a collectible cultural article”.<sup>36</sup> His works now hang in esteemed art institutions around the world. Images of “his men” also circulate in the realm of the everyday, appearing on items such as homewares, clothing, and even a stamp series produced by the Finnish postal service.<sup>37</sup> All the while, reproductions or derivations of his work are still to be found on the walls of today’s gay bars. Savored as a pornographer, lauded by critics and artists such as Camille Paglia and John Waters,<sup>38</sup> and acknowledged as both changing “the way gay men thought about themselves” and “the way in which non-gay people thought about male homosexuals”,<sup>39</sup> the wide circulation and appreciation for Tom’s work is unique.

This section singles out some standout areas concerning the cultural significance of Tom’s work. The discussion begins with Tom’s impact on the formation of **gay male identity and self-image**.

As already noted, from 1957-1976, the main outlet for disseminating Tom’s art was *Physique Pictorial*.<sup>40</sup> Based in Los Angeles, this leading beefcake magazine has since been credited as the first mass-produced magazine that directly and solely focused on the male physique for its beauty.<sup>41</sup>

The 1940s and 1950s preceded not only the legalization of gay pornography in the US,<sup>42</sup> but the 1967 Black Cat demonstrations and the 1969 Stonewall Inn riots that are often seen as marking the rise of the modern gay rights movement.<sup>43</sup> During this era,

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<sup>35</sup> Quoted in Dehner (2009b), p. 10.

<sup>36</sup> Ramakers (2000), p. x.

<sup>37</sup> The release of the Tom of Finland stamp series attracted worldwide attention, resulting in pre-orders from 178 countries (“Tom of Finland stamps on sale Monday; Finland’s biggest seller ever”, 2014).

<sup>38</sup> See Paglia’s (2009) to the volume *Tom of Finland XXL*, in which she credits Tom as: “crucial in the development of (her) thinking about art and gender” (p. 86). This volume also contains contributions from notable artists and Tom appreciators, including filmmaker John Waters and author Armistead Maupin.

<sup>39</sup> Lucie-Smith (2009), p. 21.

<sup>40</sup> Ramakers (1998), p. 13.

<sup>41</sup> Valentine Hooven (1995), p. 24.

<sup>42</sup> The 1962 Supreme Court ruling in *Manual Enterprises Inc vs. Day* effectively ruled that nude male photographs were not obscene. See Flemming (2012) for a write-up of the ruling.

<sup>43</sup> The Stonewall riots were a series of riots by patrons of the New York lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) tavern Stonewall Inn, in response to a police raid. That said, California was in fact the site of various pre-Stonewall riots in resistance to police raids on LGBT establishments. One of these was the 1967 riot by patrons of The Black Cat Tavern, which itself has Historic-Cultural Monument Status with the City of Los Angeles. Viewed together, TOM House and The Black Cat Tavern are complementary sites reflecting the history of LGBT rights in the city.

beefcake magazines were critical to the formation of gay male identity. As one commentator has noted:

These magazines functioned not only as a source for pin-up pictures, but also as a ground for the exchange of ideas for fantasies and types of identities. They began to form the image reservoirs from which gay men were able to construct new codes for dress and behavior. They began to constitute a placeless community for gay men before physical communities existed.<sup>44</sup>

Over a 20-year period, Tom contributed over 100 drawings<sup>45</sup> to *Physique Pictorial*, with his work often appearing as cover art. The magazine was published by photographer Bob Mizer, himself a major protagonist in the post-war rise of beefcake aesthetics.<sup>46</sup> Like Tom, Mizer was eventually recognized as a pioneer in homoerotic art.<sup>47</sup>

Significantly, both men were based in Los Angeles. In fact, the confluence of Tom and Bob's practices, along with their individual contributions, was the focus of a 2013-14 MOCA exhibition. The exhibition brought together two artists who lived and practiced in Los Angeles, whose interests – artistic, erotic, political – coalesced into a notable collaboration, and who became “two of the most significant figures of twentieth century erotic art and forefathers of an emergent post-war gay culture.”<sup>48</sup>

In becoming a leading contributor to *Physique Pictorial*, Tom tapped into American physique imagery, resulting in a historic period of cross-pollination. As Durk Dehner put it in the magazine article aptly titled “Tom of Los Angeles”: “America became (Tom’s) reference library.”<sup>49</sup> Moreover, during this period, Tom’s art reached a mass audience of gay men, both across the US and in major cities in Europe,<sup>50</sup> and his work was associated with a genre that was pivotal to the gay male culture of the time. In the early 1950s, the first US homophile<sup>51</sup> organizations had begun to be established.<sup>52</sup> Growing alongside them were beefcake magazines, which, as Blake (1988) stresses, were “an underground press equal in importance to the first gay political magazines.”<sup>53,54</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Blake (1988), p. 45.

<sup>45</sup> Ramakers (1998), p. 13.

<sup>46</sup> See, for example, Valentine Hooven’s (1995) discussion of Mizer’s contribution to beefcake aesthetics.

<sup>47</sup> See, for example, the Museum of Contemporary Art (2013a).

<sup>48</sup> Museum of Contemporary Art (2013a).

<sup>49</sup> Hilferty (1998), p. 99.

<sup>50</sup> Valentine Hooven (1995), p. 46.

<sup>51</sup> The homophile movement refers to “organizations and political strategies employed by homosexuals prior to the era of confrontational activism of the late 1960s. The term broadly encompasses the period from the end of World War II to 1970” (Pettis, 2009, p. 1).

<sup>52</sup> Pettis (2009), p. 2.

<sup>53</sup> Blake (1988), p. 45.

<sup>54</sup> As discussed by Mustola (2006), Tom’s work was also pivotal to the gay political environment of the time in Finland. The first homophile organizations were established in Nordic countries in the late 1940s and early 1950s, but this was not so in Finland. Attempts to set up such organizations failed because potential members feared that membership lists would fall into the hands of the police, who were then active in investigating and arresting those suspected of homosexuality. Hence, “(i)n the 40s, 50s and 60s Tom’s pictures *were* the Finnish homosexual liberation movement before organizations were set up and began to operate” (p. 46, emphasis added).

Yet Tom's art was not merely aligned with certain rising cultures of his era; his work influenced those very cultures.<sup>55</sup> One especially-cited area of Tom's influence concerns his masculinized depictions of gay men. Tom's depictions of hyper-masculine men shaped a generation's ideas of gay male identity and self-image, and they remain pervasive and pertinent today. As Geczy and Karaminas note: "The effect of Tom of Finland on the male, gay community was immense, liberating many from inhibitions and to assert that maleness, such as it is, is an idea to be shared between gay and straight men".<sup>56</sup> In the era in which Tom was working, Tom's masculinization of gay identity was a brazen counter to effeminized stereotypes of gay men and it has been widely acknowledged as such.<sup>57</sup> This masculinization has also been praised as destabilizing traditional images of masculinity.<sup>58</sup> Now and into the future, it can still be seen "as a touchstone for opening up the possibility for different queer identities".<sup>59</sup>

Tom's work resonated with other cultural shifts in post-war America. For example, art critic/historian Edward Lucie-Smith notes that an important factor in the appeal of Tom's work in post-war America was the rise of **a culture of bodybuilding in California**, which itself had crossover with beefcake aesthetics.<sup>60,61</sup> Valentine Hooven credits the US beefcake magazines of the 1950s and 1960s with pioneering the health and sports magazines that followed, including those from the bodybuilding and fitness magazine publishing empire founded by Joe Weider,<sup>62</sup> who moved to California in the 1960s. The circulation of beefcake magazines such as *Physique Pictorial*<sup>63</sup> – and thus the increased circulation of Tom's work – increased in parallel with the growth of California's bodybuilding culture in the 1950s and 1960s.

Tom's depiction of bikers also dovetailed with **the popularization of outlaw biker culture**.<sup>64</sup> On one level, Hollywood films clearly played a more influential role than Tom's art. Works such as the 1953 Marlon Brando film *The Wild One* played to mainstream mass audiences, glamorizing male bikers as counter-cultural rebels. Yet Tom mounted his own counter-discourse: his depictions of bikers were a rebellious reminder that male bikers can be enthusiastic participants in gay sex. Indeed, whether he turned his attention to bikers or bodybuilders – or cops or cowboys, or other

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<sup>55</sup> A similar sentiment has also been echoed by Mackie (2013).

<sup>56</sup> Geczy and Karaminas (2013), p. 89.

<sup>57</sup> See, for example, Dehner (2009b), p. 9, and Valentine Hooven, 1993, p. 169.

<sup>58</sup> See Ramakers (2000), who asserts that Tom subverted traditional concepts of masculinity and that Tom's "hyper-masculine universe is not a confirmation of male logic, but its violation" (p. 27).

<sup>59</sup> Geczy and Karaminas (2013), p. 88. See also Cho (2014), who argues that Tom's drawings of hyper-masculine bodies are laden with comic irony and thus invite our ironic reappraisal.

<sup>60</sup> Lucie-Smith (2009), p. 22.

<sup>61</sup> In fact, one of Bob Mizer's most notable models was Arnold Schwarzenegger (Hanson, 2009, p. 19).

<sup>62</sup> Valentine Hooven (1995), p. 158.

<sup>63</sup> See Valentine Hooven (1995) for a discussion of *Physique Pictorial's* swift early commercial success (pp. 32, 44 and 46) and the mass circulation of beefcake magazines (p. 74). By 1955, *Physique Pictorial* routinely sold over 40,000 copies (p. 74). It also spawned similar publications. Valentine Hooven estimates that the total sales for beefcake magazines in 1955 would have approached one million copies annually (p. 74). These are sizeable figures for specialty magazines of the 1950s (p. 72).

<sup>64</sup> Lucie-Smith (2009), p. 22.

masculine figures – Tom poached these archetypes from the prevailing homophobic culture and he came to be acknowledged as “the creator of some of the most iconic and readily recognizable imagery of post-war gay culture.”<sup>65</sup> Thus, it is not so much that Tom’s work simply spoke to certain cultural shifts in post-war America, but that it spoke against them; Tom’s work didn’t merely resonate with the culture but re-imagined it.

Tom’s homoerotic depictions of leather-clad and uniformed men, along with his eventual depictions of BDSM practices between men, were also foundational to the then **emerging gay leather culture**. As declared by Los Angeles’ own MOCA: “Tom imagined the leather scene by drawing it; real men were inspired by it, and suited themselves up.”<sup>66</sup>

Lucie-Smith also notes that Tom’s early depictions of gay men in *Physique Pictorial* “fitted in with other aspects of American life: the love of sports, of the outdoors, and the free and easy male camaraderie that survived from the years when many Americans were frontiersmen.”<sup>67</sup> In fact, Tom’s depiction of men publicly engaging in outdoor sex reflects a particularly significant aspect of his work. The uninhibited public openness among the men in so many of the scenes in Tom’s work, and their evident joy, suggested a carefree sexual freedom. Tom himself spoke of his desire to give gay men:

... an impulse or right of sorts in the form of a picture so that they could openly express their feelings and likes and opinions and attitudes. So that they could smile and feel happy, that it was permitted in a picture even if in practice or in real life it wasn’t the same.<sup>68</sup>

This unrestrained, buoyant freedom lent itself to **discourses of gay liberation and, later, gay pride** that shaped gay politics in the West. Hence Tom and his art are frequently read in emancipatory terms – for example, in Durk Dehner’s description of Tom as a “liberator”<sup>69</sup> – or in terms that speak explicitly of pride – as in Tom’s own stated ambition to draw “proud and happy men!”<sup>70</sup> This consonance with the gay politics of the time helped to cement Tom’s place in post-war gay culture in the Western world.

As Durk Dehner commented in a 2009 interview:

(A) lot of (Tom’s) drawings took place out in nature or out in daytime and there were always smiles amongst the guys and they were happy to be with each other. So, they were having happy relationships in a healthy way and it

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<sup>65</sup> Museum of Contemporary Art (2013a).

<sup>66</sup> Museum of Contemporary Art (2013a).

<sup>67</sup> Lucie-Smith (2009), pp. 21-22.

<sup>68</sup> From a series of interviews, conducted 12-14 May 1990, with Ilppo Pohjola for the documentary *Daddy and the Muscle Academy*. Quoted in Mustola (2006), p. 45.

<sup>69</sup> Dehner (2009b). See also the comment by French photographer Rachel Laurent, that Tom “represents freedom for all of us” (quoted in Mackie, 2013).

<sup>70</sup> Quoted in Valentine Hooven (1993), p. 88.

actually had such an impact. We didn't really know what kind of impact it was until actually we were all involved with it.<sup>71</sup>

## 5. Recognition by Finland

Starting near the end of Tom's life, the nation of Finland began taking steps to properly acknowledge Tom of Finland as a major international artist and contributor to their cultural heritage. The recognition by the Finnish government and Finland's cultural institutions speak to the international significance of Tom and his work.

- In 1990, the Finnish Comics Society grants Tom the Puupäähattu, their most prestigious award. This was the first Finnish organization to honor Tom of Finland. Tom himself was too gravely ill to attend the ceremony.
- In 1991, the Finnish Film Foundation and the Finnish Broadcasting Company (Yleisradio) produced the documentary *Daddy and the Muscle Academy*, written and directed by Ilppo Pohjola. First aired on national television in Finland with theatrical release in Helsinki, the film would travel to film festivals in Berlin, New York, Toronto, San Francisco, and Los Angeles. Tom himself was able to see the documentary at his Helsinki apartment shortly before his passing.
- The Otava Publishing Company, a publisher of Finnish literature since 1890, publishes *Tom of Finland: His Life and Times* in 1992, written by F. Valentine Hooven III. The publication is launched with press and Q & A with author and Durk Dehner at the Academic Bookstore (*Akateeminen Kirjakauppa*) in Helsinki, the largest bookstore in the Nordic countries. Later released in German by Bruno Gmünder Verlag, in English by St. Martin's Press, and in French by Gemini.
- The first solo exhibition of Tom's work in Finland is held in Helsinki in 1992, at Galerie Pelin. The works were from Tom of Finland Foundation. Kiasma, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Helsinki, purchases two works for their permanent collection. Kaarina, Finland, the town where Tom was born and raised, acquires one sketch to exhibit at their council hall.
- In 1999, a group exhibition (*Ruralia, Art of the Countryside*) held at the Pori Art Museum includes Tom's works. That same year, a solo retrospective exhibition of Tom of Finland is held at the Finnish Institute in Paris (*The Most Famous Finn*) and later travels to the Jyväskylä Art Museum.
- In 2006, a solo exhibition (*Ennennäkemätöntä – Unforeseen*) is held at the Helsinki City Museum, curated by Berndt Arell from collections in Northern Europe.

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<sup>71</sup> Dehner (2009a).

- *Tom of Finland* (Retrospective Exhibition) is presented by Turku ÅBO 2011 – Turku Foundation, Homotopia and ToFF in 2011. Curated by Gary Everett, artistic director of Liverpool’s Homotopia, 64 works from ToFF’s permanent collection are exhibited for a year. For the first time the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture contributes funds to an exhibition with Tom of Finland. With over 80,000 visitors, guests including the Presidents of Finland and Austria. Three nephews of Tom’s were given a guided tour with a luncheon in their honor and paid a visit to the original schoolhouse where the family went to school and Tom was raised. This marked a new beginning for the Laaksonen family to publicly show their pride for Tom and his legacy.
- In the fall of 2014, the Finnish Postal Service (Itella Posti Oy) release official postage stamps using Tom’s work. Working closely with the ToFF who spearheaded the effort, works were selected from the collection at TOM House.



Tom of Finland postage stamp released by the Finnish Postal Service *Itella Posti Oy* (2014)

The Finnish Postal Service stated in their press release:

*His emphatically masculine homoerotic drawings have attained iconic status in their genre and had an influence on, for instance, pop culture and fashion. In his works, Tom of Finland utilized the self-irony and humor typical of subcultures. During his career, Tom of Finland produced more than 3,500 drawings... The drawings on the stamp sheet represent strong and confident male figures typical of their designer.*<sup>72</sup>

- In 2014, Tom's birthplace of Kaarina, Finland awards the Tom of Finland Foundation their Medal of Honor, recognizing the organization's efforts to preserve the legacy of Tom's work and his contributions.

## 6. Conclusion

*On a palm tree-lined street in Echo Park sits the Tom of Finland Foundation, a site that testifies to both personal and historical memory.*<sup>73</sup>  
Museum of Contemporary Art (Los Angeles)

In 1997 at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, a drawing was hung between the works of Matisse and David Hockney for an exhibition. That drawing was by Tom of Finland. The exhibition, *Master Drawings in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art*, was a survey of five centuries of European and American drawings in the museum's permanent collection.<sup>74</sup> The show included the work of artists such as Picasso, Van Gogh, Degas, Chagall, and various Italian Old Masters.<sup>75</sup>

This moment speaks to two points that are of importance to this application. The first point: that Tom of Finland holds a distinctive place as a cultural producer. His creative strategy was unique for its time: he drew "against the grain", appropriating various hyper-masculine archetypes for the imaginations and desires of gay male audiences. Moreover, Tom's influence was and remains uniquely broad, such that an image by Tom of Finland can still just as suitably hang on the wall of a gay leather bar as it can between a Matisse and a Hockney.

The second point: that the city of Los Angeles has been of vital importance to Tom of Finland and his pioneering influence on gay culture and the broader culture at large. This is in large part because the physical site that became and remains the strongest focal point for Tom's work and legacy is not in Tom's native Finland, but at TOM House.

Today, the invaluable material objects and ongoing cultural activities at the house are telling facts of Tom's legacy and its embodiment in TOM House. As well as protecting

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<sup>72</sup> [http://www.posti.fi/english/current/2014/20140413\\_stamps.html](http://www.posti.fi/english/current/2014/20140413_stamps.html)

<sup>73</sup> Museum of Contemporary Art (2013b).

<sup>74</sup> Beal (1997), p. 7.

<sup>75</sup> Davis (1997), p. 8.

and preserving Tom's work, the house is also host to vibrant events, such as its art fair and art classes, that aim to cultivate the next generation of artists who are producing erotic art. As Durk Dehner has noted:

(TOM House) really is the center of really what was him and what is him. It's actually a very lively place also because I think that it actually continues to celebrate that point that he was actually making in his drawings.<sup>76</sup>

Year-round, the house receives local, national and international visitors from Tom of Finland appreciators from many walks of life. Among the visitors to this historically and culturally significant property are gay men who make "pilgrimages" to the property. These are men whose lives have been changed by engaging with Tom's art. The stories that these men have to tell about the impact of Tom's work on their lives reflect the fact that "Tom of Finland made as much of an impact on the lives of individual men as he did on the history of masculine representation."<sup>77</sup>

The identification of TOM House with Tom of Finland has been reflected in numerous published works, many of which have been cited in this statement. This has been especially cemented by the recent release of the book *TOM House: Tom of Finland in Los Angeles*.<sup>78</sup> Locally, the house is also known within Los Angeles' LGBT and leather communities as a reference point for Tom, his work and his legacy. Moreover, in 2014, TOM House was included amongst the identified resources in the *SurveyLA: LGBT Historic Context Statement*, which was prepared for the City of Los Angeles' own Office of Historic Resources.<sup>79</sup>

In 2000, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art again included Tom's work in an exhibition. Timed to mark the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of California's statehood, this exhibition examined both the state of California and its cultural legacy. The inclusion of Tom's work was a testament to the strength of Tom's local ties to the state, through his residence at and identification with TOM House in Los Angeles. The name of the exhibition: *Made in California*.

Tom of Finland will always be associated with his birth country of Finland, owing at least to his working name as an artist. But the site that is above all identified with the essence of this artist is TOM House, at 1421 Laveta Terrace in Echo Park, Los Angeles.

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<sup>77</sup> Museum of Contemporary Art (2013b).

<sup>78</sup> Reynolds (2016).

<sup>79</sup> Office of Historic Resources (2014), pp. 90-91, 95.

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*TOM House* by Mark Hayward (ToFF volunteer), 2016  
Tom of Finland Foundation Permanent Collection



TOM House, Primary photo exterior/front façade



TOM House, Primary photo exterior/front façade

# TOM OF FINLAND

Touko Valio Laaksonen, Finnish, 1920 – 1991

# Tom of Finland (Touko Laaksonen): CV

Born 8 May 1920, Kaarina, Finland

Died 7 November 1991, Helsinki, Finland

## Summary of Achievements

- Works held in public collections of esteemed art institutions in USA and Finland, including The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (MOCA), Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), and Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art (Helsinki)
- Over 50 solo exhibitions and over 60 group exhibitions in North America and Europe
- Works published in multiple books by Germany-based art book publisher Taschen (including the large format, 666 page book *Tom of Finland XXL*)
- Works have been the subject of writings by noted scholars and artists. Commentary on works has been published in multiple languages and countries

## Selected Solo Exhibitions

- 2016 *The Pleasure of Play*, Kunsthalle Helsinki, Helsinki, Finland
- 2015 *The Pleasure of Play*, Artists Space Exhibitions, New York, NY  
*Early Work 1944 – 1972*, David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
- 2014 *Sealed with a Secret: Correspondence of Tom of Finland*, Museum Centre Vapriikki, Tampere, Finland
- 2013 *Tom of Finland: Preliminary Drawings*, Stuart Shave/Modern Art, London, England
- 2012 *Tom of Finland*, Kulturhuset, Stockholm, Sweden  
*Tom of Finland: Male Masterworks*, World Erotic Art Museum, Miami Beach, USA
- 2011 *Tom of Finland: Public and Private*, Antebellum Gallery, Hollywood, USA  
*Tom of Finland: Original Drawings*, PHD, St. Louis, USA  
*Tom of Finland Retrospective*, European Capital of Culture, Logomo, Turku, Finland
- 2009 *Tom of Finland*, Schlechtriem Brothers, Berlin, Germany
- 2008 Galería Espacio Mínimo, Madrid, Spain
- 2007 Inman Gallery, Houston, USA
- 2006 Galerie Jean-Luc and Takako Richard, Paris, France  
Keith Talent Gallery, London, UK  
*Ennennäkemätöntä – Unforeseen*, Helsinki City Art Museum, Helsinki, Finland  
*Rough*, Western Project, Culver City, USA  
*Coming of Age*, Charles Cowles, New York City, USA
- 2005 *Tom of Finland*, Galería Espacio Mínimo, Madrid, Spain  
*Tom of Finland*, Maes and Matthys Gallery, Antwerp, Belgium
- 2001 Mark Moore Gallery, Santa Monica, USA
- 1999 *Tom of Finland: Selections from the Tom of Finland Foundation Archives*, YYY Artist Outlet, Toronto, Canada  
*Tom of Finland: The Most Famous Finn*, Jyväskylä Art Museum, Jyväskylä, Finland  
*Tom of Finland: Kake, 4<sup>th</sup> Los Angeles Biennial International*, Mark Moore Gallery, Santa Monica, USA  
*Tom of Finland*, James Van Damme Gallery, Brussels, Belgium  
*Tom of Finland: The Most Famous Finn*, Finnish Institute, Paris, France  
TBA, Chicago, USA
- 1997 *Tom of Finland*, Mark Moore Gallery, Santa Monica, USA  
*Tom of Finland*, Galleri Lars Boman, Stockholm, Sweden
- 1995 Theatre Mississippi, Montreal  
Galerie Emanuel Perrotin, Paris, France
- 1994 Feature Inc., New York, USA  
*Tom of Finland Retrospective*, Schwules Museum, Berlin, Germany

- Tom of Finland*, Museum des Erotik Kunst, Hamburg, Germany  
 Club Champion, Canberra, Australia  
 1993 Galerie Daniel Buchholz, Cologne, Germany  
 1992 Galerie Pelin, Helsinki, Finland  
 Stuart Regan Gallery, Los Angeles, USA  
*A Memorial Retrospective*, Leslie-Lohman Gay Art Foundation, New York, USA  
 1991 Feature Inc., New York, USA  
 1990 Wessel-O'Connor Gallery, New York, USA  
 MUU Galleria, Helsinki, Finland  
 1989 National Leather Association, Los Angeles, USA  
 1988 Feature Inc., New York, USA  
 1987 Rob Gallery, Amsterdam, The Netherlands  
 1985 Rob Gallery, Amsterdam, The Netherlands  
 1984 *Erotische Zeichnungen*, Galerie Jansen, Berlin, Germany  
 Galerie Anderes Ufer, Berlin, Germany  
 1983 Rob Gallery, Amsterdam, The Netherlands  
 The Basement, New York  
 1982 Score, Los Angeles, USA  
*Portraits of Men*, Rob Gallery, Amsterdam, The Netherlands  
 IEM, Paris, France  
 Ambush, San Francisco, USA  
 1981 Rob Gallery, Amsterdam, The Netherlands  
 Rob Gallery, New York  
 1980 Rob Gallery, Amsterdam, The Netherlands  
 Robert Samuel Gallery, New York, USA  
 1978 Rob Gallery, Amsterdam, The Netherlands  
*1978 Calendar*, Fey-Way Studios, San Francisco, USA  
*1978 Calendar*, Eons Gallery, Los Angeles, USA  
 1973 *Loggers*, Revolt Press Bookstore, Hamburg, Germany

### **Selected Group Exhibitions**

- 2015 *Slash: In Between the Normative and the Fantasy*, curated by Kaspars Vanags and Gary Everett, kim? Contemporary Art Centre, Riga, Latvia  
*#RAWHIDE*, curated by Dylan Brant and Vivian Brodie, Venus Over Manhattan, New York, NY  
 2014 Richard Hawkins & William S. Burroughs, Cerith Wyn Evans, Isa Genzken, Tom of Finland, Galerie Buchholz, Berlin, Germany  
*Hudson*, Envoy Enterprises, New York City, USA  
*Dirty Frames*, Gallery Muu, Helsinki, Finland  
*LET'S GO LET GO: In Memoriam Hudson*, 33 Orchard, New York City, USA  
*Abandon the Parents*, Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen, Denmark  
*Do Not Disturb*, Gerhardsen Gerner, Oslo, Norway  
 2013 *Bob Mizer and Tom of Finland*, MOCA, Los Angeles, USA  
*Happy Birthday Galerie Perrotin/25 Years*, Lille300/Tripostal, Lille, France  
*I Want That Inside Me*, Feature Inc, New York, USA  
*Keep Your Timber Limber (Works on Paper)*, Institute of Contemporary Art, London, England  
*Rare and Raw*, Leslie-Lohman Museum of Gay and Lesbian Art, New York, USA  
 2012 *Punt*, Feature Inc., New York, NY  
*We the People*, Robert Rauschenberg Foundation, New York, USA  
*Summer Camp*, Schroeder, Romero & Shredder, New York, USA  
 2011 *Tom of Finland and Mates*, Galerie Mooi-Man, Groningen, The Netherlands  
*Compass in Hand*, Martin-Gropius-Bau, New York, USA  
*Comics Stripped*, Museum of Sex, New York, USA

- 2010 *Compass in Hand*, Valencian Institute of Modern Art, Valencia Spain  
*Never Alone: A Look at Tom and His Friends*, One Archives Gallery, West Hollywood, USA  
*Tom of Finland and Then Some*, Feature Inc., New York, USA  
*The Boneyard*, Maloney Fine Art + Kim Light, Los Angeles, USA  
*Revealed: The Tradition of Male Homoerotic Art*, Central Connecticut State University Art Galleries, New Britain, USA
- 2009 *Sex in the Streets*, Erotic Heritage Museum, Las Vegas, USA  
*The Collectors*, Nordic & Danish Pavilions, 53<sup>rd</sup> Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy  
*Tattoo*, Kathleen Cullen Fine Arts, New York, USA  
*Compass in Hand: Selections from the Judith Rothschild Foundation Collection*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, USA
- 2008 *Pre-Revolutionary Queer*, The Kinsey Institute, Bloomington, USA  
*Liverpool Biennial*, Homotopia CUC, Liverpool, England  
*Ma Bête Noire*, Phil, Los Angeles, USA  
*Glossolalia: Languages of Drawing*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, USA  
*Trade*, Phil, Los Angeles, USA
- 2006 Portland Museum of Art, Portland, USA  
*Scope*, Miami Art Fair, Miami, USA
- 2005 Art@Large, New York, USA
- 2004 James Kelly Contemporary Museum, Santa Fe, USA
- 2001 *The Armory Show*, Mark Moore Gallery, New York, USA
- 2000 Whitechapel Gallery, London, England  
*Made in California: Art, Image, Identity, 1900-2000*, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, USA  
*10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Exhibition*, Leslie-Lohman Gay Art Foundation, New York, USA
- 1999 *Drawing*, Mark Moore Gallery, Santa Monica, USA  
*Ruralia: Art of the Countryside*, Pori Art Museum, Pori, Finland  
*bad boys ... ROUGH TRADE*, Highways, Santa Monica, USA
- 1998 Guggenheim Gallery, Chapman University, Orange, USA  
*Male*, Wessel + O'Connor Fine Art, New York, USA
- 1997 *100 Years of Gay Art*, Akademie der Künste, Berlin, Germany  
*Drawings: An Annual Invitational*, Meyerson-Nowinski Gallery, Seattle, USA  
*Lovecraft*, The Centre for Contemporary Arts, Glasgow, Scotland  
*Master Drawings in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art*, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, USA  
*Some Lust*, Patricia Faure Gallery, Santa Monica, USA
- 1996 Lifestyles Convention, San Diego
- 1992 *The Red Light Show*, Casco Gallery, Utrecht, Belgium  
*Summer Group Exhibition*, Leslie-Lohman Gay Art Foundation, New York, USA  
Stuart Regen Gallery, Los Angeles, USA
- 1991 *AIDS Timeline*, Biennial of American Art, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, USA  
*Exhibition of Erotic Art*, Gallery Mosabacka, Helsinki, Finland  
*Fetish Art*, National Leather Association, Los Angeles, USA  
Rutgers State University, New Brunswick, USA  
Rosamund Felsen Gallery, Los Angeles, USA  
*Ruutuujen aika*, Amos Anderson Art Museum, Helsinki, Finland  
*From Private Collections*, Leslie-Lohman Gay Art Foundation, New York, USA
- 1990 *Censorship*, Couturier Gallery, Los Angeles, USA  
*Que Overdose!*, Mincher/Wilcox Gallery, San Francisco, USA
- 1989 QSM, San Francisco, USA  
*Buttinsky*, Feature Gallery, New York  
*AIDS Timeline*, Matrix Gallery, University of California, Berkeley, USA  
WIWA International, Cologne, Germany  
The New Museum, New York, USA

- 1988 Leonardo da Vinci Gallery, Los Angeles, USA  
 1986 *Social Distortion*, Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions (LACE), Los Angeles, USA  
*Naked Eyes*, International Gay & Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles, USA  
 1978 Stompers (boot shop), New York, USA

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The Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA), Los Angeles, USA  
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 Tom of Finland Foundation, Los Angeles, USA  
 The Kinsey Institute, Bloomington (Indiana), USA  
 The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, USA  
 Leather Archives and Museum, Chicago, USA  
 Leslie-Lohman Museum of Gay and Lesbian Art, New York City, USA  
 Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, USA  
 Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York City, USA  
 Portland Museum of Art, Portland (Oregon), USA  
 Wäinö Aaltonen Museum of Art, Turku, Finland  
 Kaarinan kaupunki (Kaarina Township), Kaarina, Finland  
 MSC Finland – Tom's Club, Helsinki, Finland  
 Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki, Finland  
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- 2014 *Tom of Finland – Sarja kuvia*. Helsinki: Like Publishing  
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 2011 *Tom of Finland: Comic Collection I*. Hanson, D. (Ed.). Cologne: Taschen  
 2009 *Tom of Finland XXL*. Hanson, D. (Ed.). Los Angeles: Taschen America  
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 2005 *Tom of Finland: The Comic Collection*. Vol. 1-5. Hanson, D. (Ed.). Cologne: Taschen  
 1998 *Tom of Finland: The Art of Pleasure*. Riemschneider, B. (Ed.). Cologne: Taschen  
 1997 *Tom of Finland: Retrospective III*. Los Angeles: Tom of Finland Foundation  
 1992 *Tom of Finland*. Cologne: Taschen  
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### Video and Film

- |      |  |
|------|--|
| 2014 | <i>Richard Hawkins – Bob Mizer &amp; Tom of Finland</i> , The Museum of Contemporary Art. Accessed 14 July 2014 at <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tQF4qN-8u0k">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tQF4qN-8u0k</a>   |
| 2013 | <i>Tom of Finland</i> , The Museum of Contemporary Art. Accessed 14 July 2014 at <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jkCnzCI66RQ">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jkCnzCI66RQ</a>   |
| 2011 | <i>Tom of Finland</i> , Mies Mikkonen (dir.), Turku 2011 Foundation  |
| 1991 | <i>Daddy and the Muscle Academy</i> , Ilppo Pohjola (dir.), Yleisradio and Finnish Film Foundation (aired on national television in Finland; theatrical release in Helsinki; film festivals in Berlin, New York, Toronto, San Francisco and Los Angeles. Worldwide theatrical release) |
| 1990 | <i>Tom's Men 1: The Art/Eros Series</i> , James Williams (dir.), Eros Series, Altomar Video  |
| 1988 | <i>Boots, Biceps &amp; Bulges: The Life and Works of Tom of Finland</i> , James Williams (dir.), Eros Series, Altomar Video  |
| 1987 | <i>Advocate Men Live! 2</i> , Fred Bissonnes (dir.), Advocate Video Series, LPI  |

### **Lectures**

- |      |  |
|------|--|
| 1986 | Art Center of Design, Pasadena, CA. Coordinated by artist Tony Greene.                       |
| 1985 | California Institute of the Arts, Valencia, CA. Coordinated by Professor/Artist Mike Kelley. |

### **Award**

- 1990 Puupäähattu Prize, Sarjakuvaseura (Finnish Comics Society)

**Tom of Finland**, 71, Finnish artist known for his hard-core homoerotic, died of an emphysema-induced stroke in Helsinki on Nov. 7. Born Touko Laaksonen, he was rechristened in 1957 when his drawings were first published in the U.S. in *Physique Pictorial* magazine. He had shown at Feature in New York since 1988, and his work appeared at the 1991 Whitney Museum Biennial as part of Group Material's *AIDS Timeline*.

—compiled by *Walter Robinson*  
and *Anastasia Wilkes*

## Tom Of Finland Dead At 71

Tom of Finland, the best-known homoerotic artist of the 20th century, died of an emphysema-induced stroke in Helsinki on November 7.

In the course of his career, Tom saw his artwork go from being unpublishable everywhere in the world to receiving worldwide recognition. In recent years, Tom of Finland drawings have been collected by such celebrities as Andy Warhol, Keith Haring, and Robert Mapplethorpe. They have been auctioned at Christies, exhibited at the Whitney Museum in New York, and

favorably reviewed in serious art periodicals. The Cartoonists' Society of his home country elected him Cartoonist of the Year in February 1991. The Finnish Film Board financed an hour-long documentary which was screened to audience and critical acclaim. It will be shown there on nationwide television early in 1992. A biography from the largest publishing house in Finland will be printed in January 1992, with probably German and English editions to follow.

The name 'Tom of Finland' was born in 1957 when Bob Mizer, publisher of the popular muscle magazine *Physique Pictorial*, wanted to print drawings sent to him from Helsinki. The artist did not want his name used even 8,000 miles away, but Mizer figured that the artist's real name - Touko Laaksonen - would not play well with Americans anyway. Since Touko was already signing his work "Tom," when the spring 1957 issue of *Physique Pictorial* appeared, the laughing lumberjack on the cover was credited to "Tom of Finland" and the rest is gay history.

12 • December 4, 1991 EDGE 219



The man Tom of Finland was born on May 6, 1920, in a semi-rural suburb of Turku, the ancient capital of Finland. He was already drawing comic strips by the age of four. After high school, he moved to Helsinki to study art, but World War II intervened and he spent five years in the uniform of a Finnish Army lieutenant. After the war, Tom supported himself by playing piano in restaurants and clubs at night and doing freelance advertising and window display by day.

In spite of the unprecedented popularity of his erotic artwork, it would be 1973 before Tom was able to concentrate fully on what he always called his "dirty drawings," but once he did, Tom combined a near-photorealistic attention to detail with his wildest sexual fantasies to produce a body of work that, for sheer homoeroticism, will probably never be surpassed.

Tom created literally thousands of his "Tom's Men." Although his leather men are the epitome of rough and rugged, they are never dangerous. With all his passion for the heaviest of sexual imagery, Tom strove to present positive role models in his art. In the last 10 years, he added condoms and safe sex admonitions to his work. "I am not ashamed that I draw men having sex. I work hard to make sure they are proud men having happy sex!"

In 1986, Tom and his business partner Durk Dehner formed the nonprofit Tom of Finland Foundation. The goal is to have a museum of erotic art as a safe home for Tom and similar artists, gay and otherwise. The Foundation and its ~~sister~~ will continue to work toward that end. To make a memorial gift contributing to such a museum may send it to the Tom of Finland Foundation, Box 26658, Los Angeles, CA 90026, or call (213) 250-1685.



L A C E  
Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions

SOCIAL DISTORTION  
JUNE 18 - JULY 27, 86

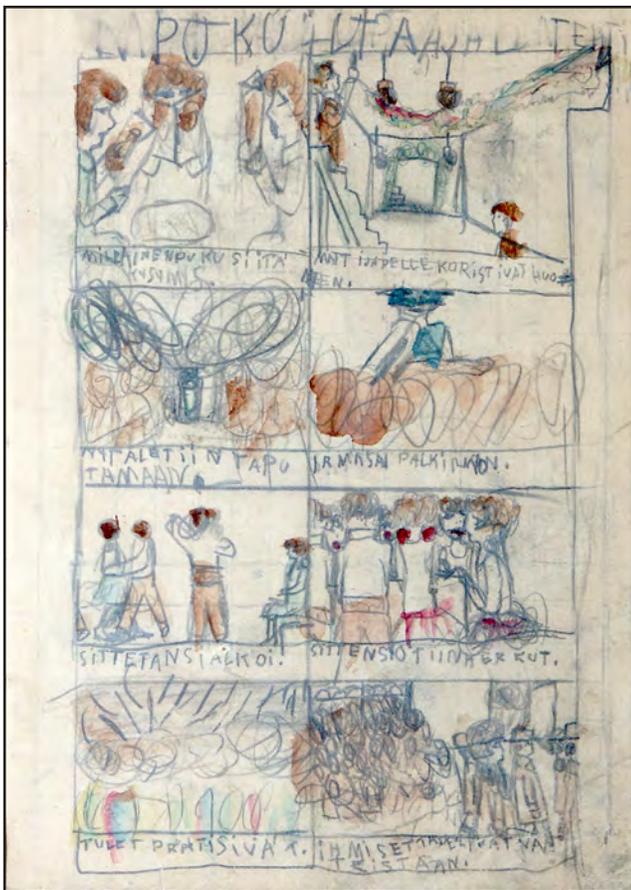
Group exhibition of six artists working in various media whose work dealt satirically with different social issues. Artists included: *Georganne Dean/Greg Metz*, Tom of Finland, Raymond Pettibon, Jim Shaw and Robert Williams.

Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions (LACE) hosted a one-day, four-hour event, "Tribute to Tom of Finland"—a "multimedia soirée" to celebrate the life and times of the internationally renowned male-erotic artist.

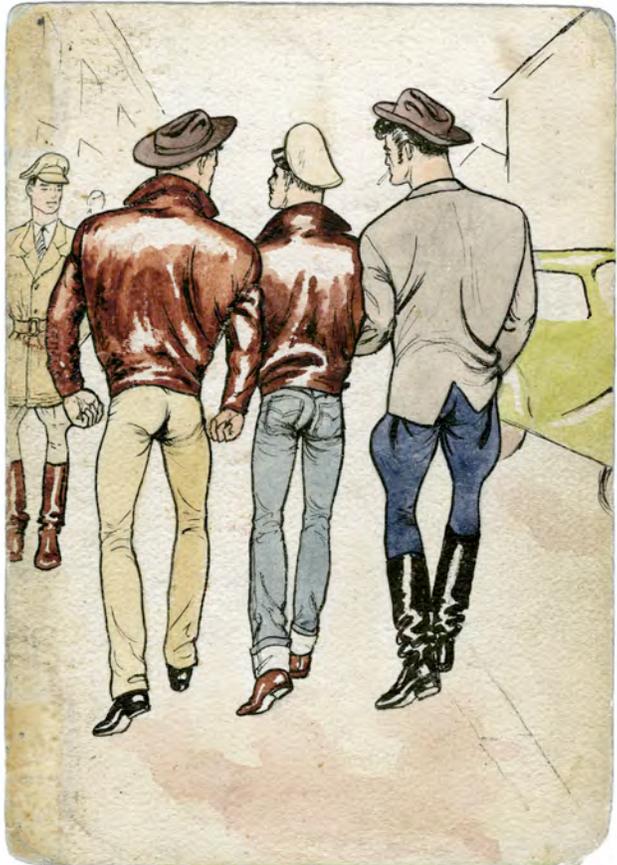
*Los Angeles Times*, April 8, 1992

# TOM OF FINLAND

Artwork Portfolio  
1928 - 1999

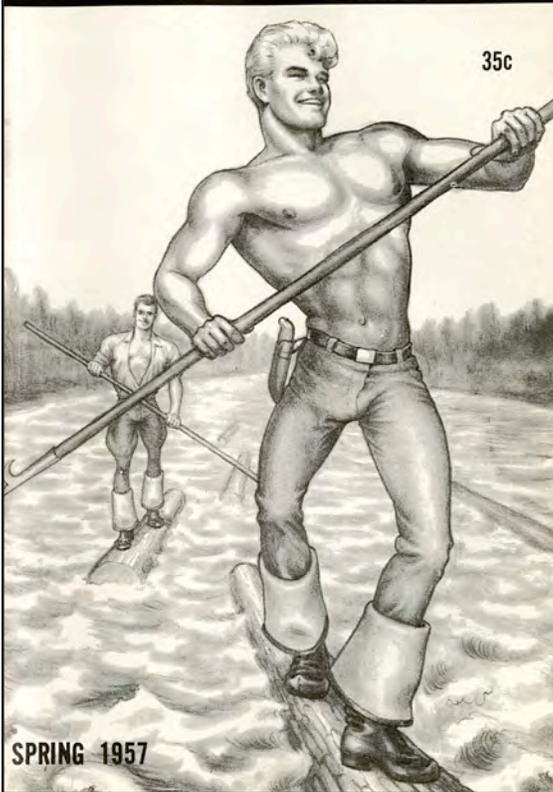


Untitled, 1928, Graphite and watercolor on paper, Tom of Finland Foundation Permanent Collection



Untitled (from *Initiation into the Brotherhood*), 1946, Pen & ink, Gouache on paper, Tom of Finland Foundation Permanent Collection

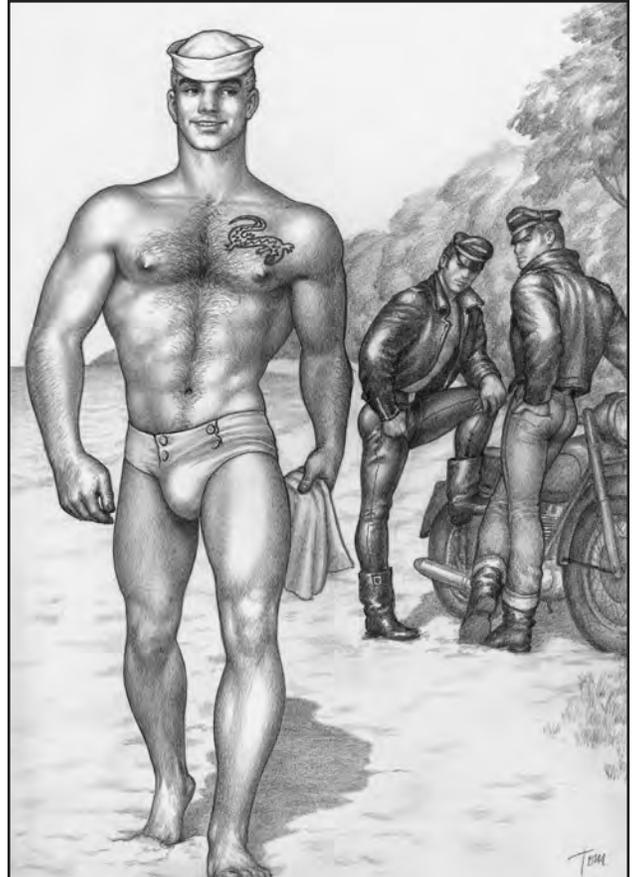
**PHYSIQUE PICTORIAL**



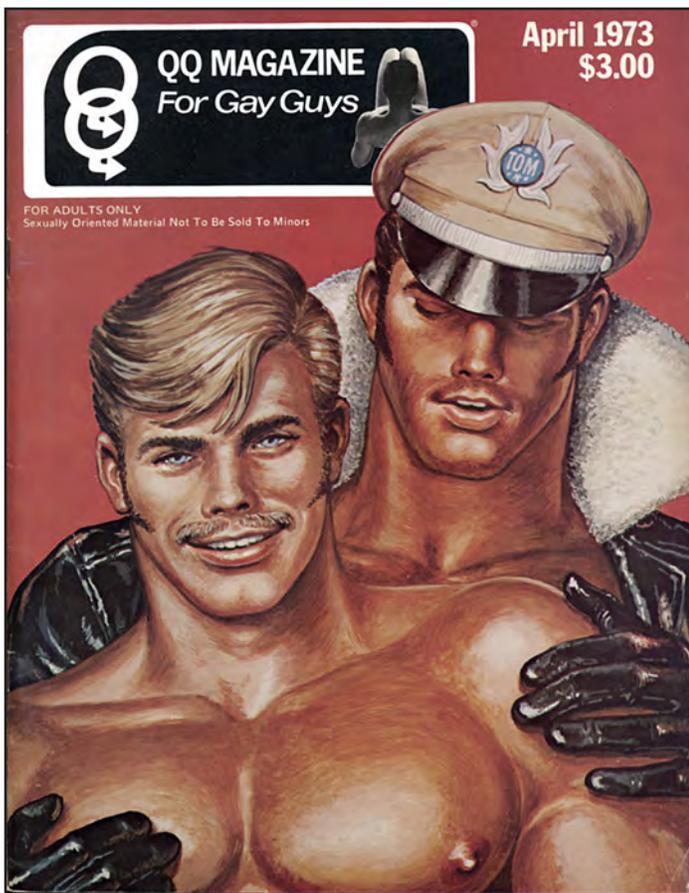
Untitled (From the Athletic Model Guild "Men of the Forests of Finland" series), 1957, Graphite on paper, artwork Tom of Finland Foundation Permanent Collection



Untitled, 1962, Graphite on paper, Tom of Finland Foundation Permanent Collection



Untitled (From the "The Tattooed Sailor" series), 1962, Graphite on paper, Tom of Finland Foundation Permanent Collection



*Buddies* (QQ Magazine, Mar. - Apr. 1973), 1973,  
Gauche on paper, gauche artwork Private Collection



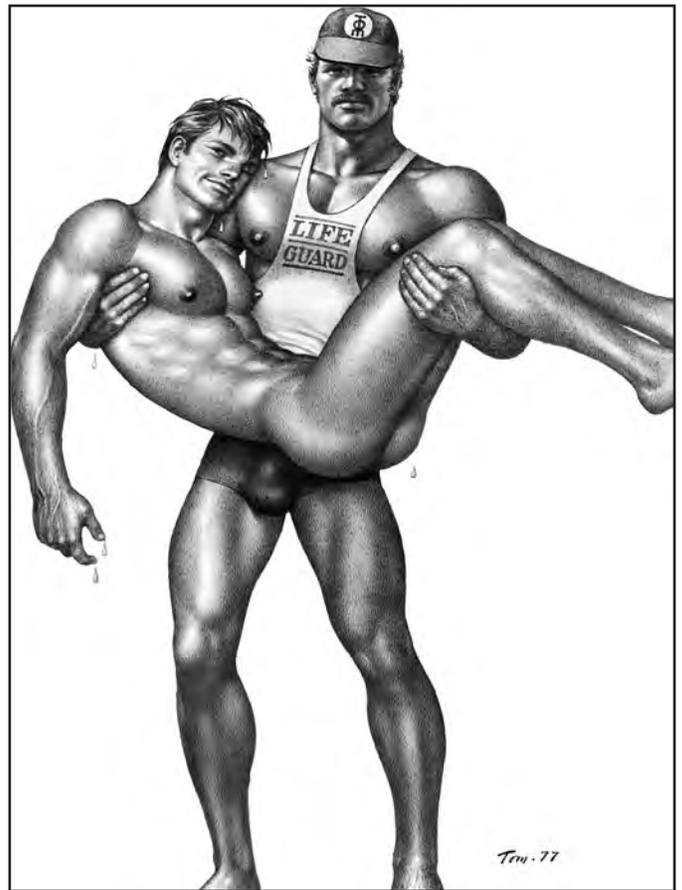
Untitled, 1974, Graphite on paper,  
Private Collection



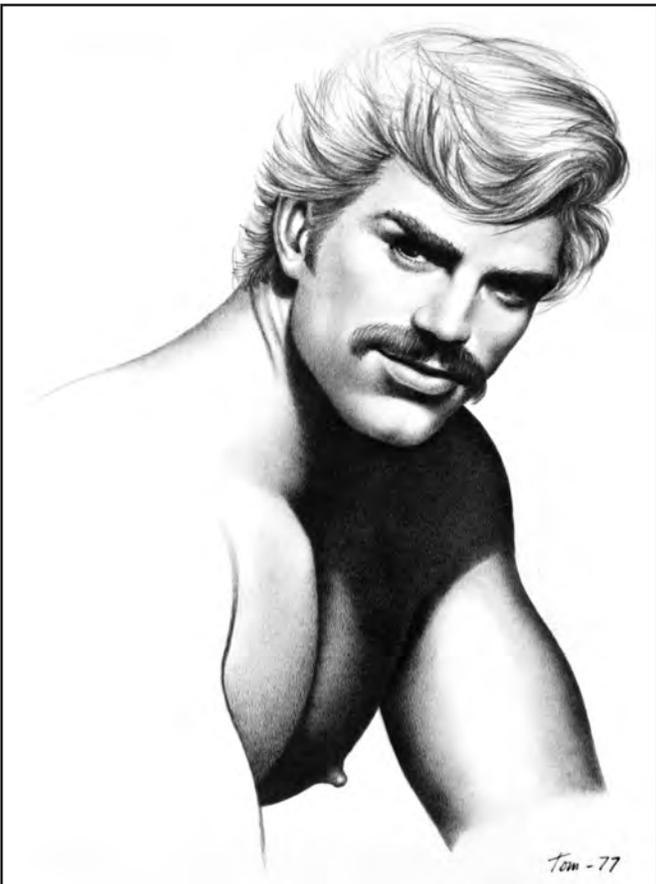
Untitled (from *Camping*), 1976, Gouche on board,  
Private Collection



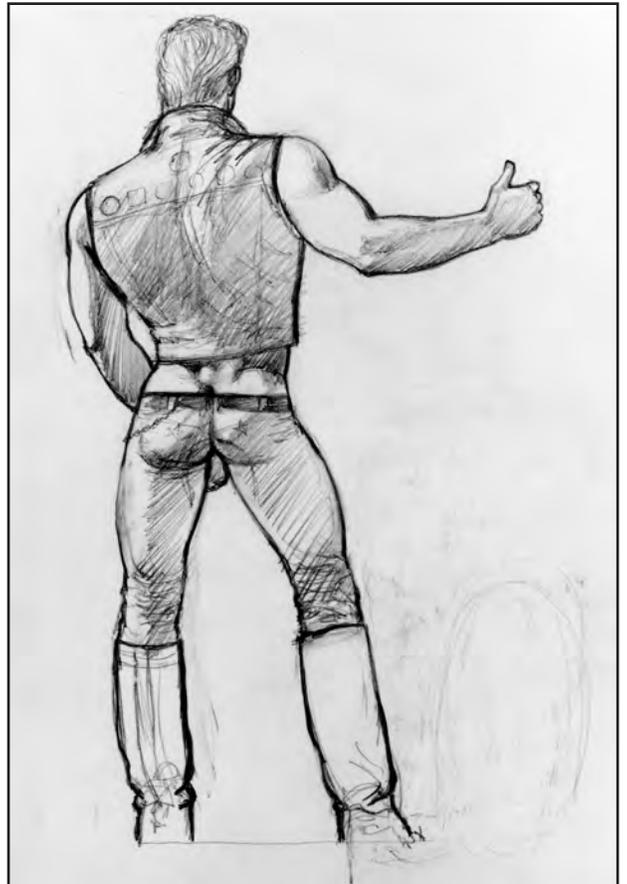
Untitled (Portrait of Aarno), 1976, Graphite on paper, Private Collection



Untitled, 1977, Graphite on paper, Private Collection



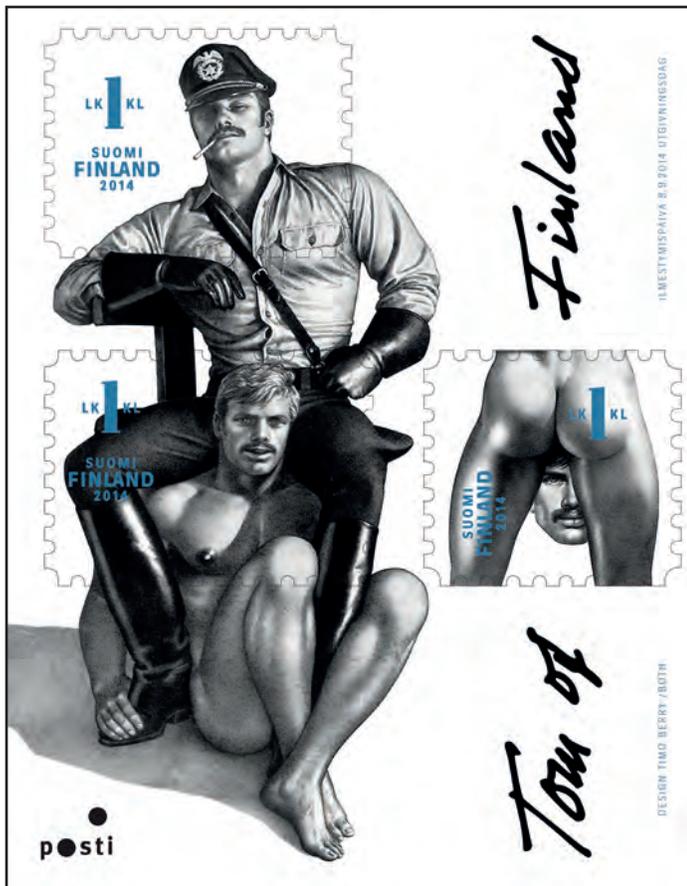
Untitled, 1977, Graphite on paper, Private Collection



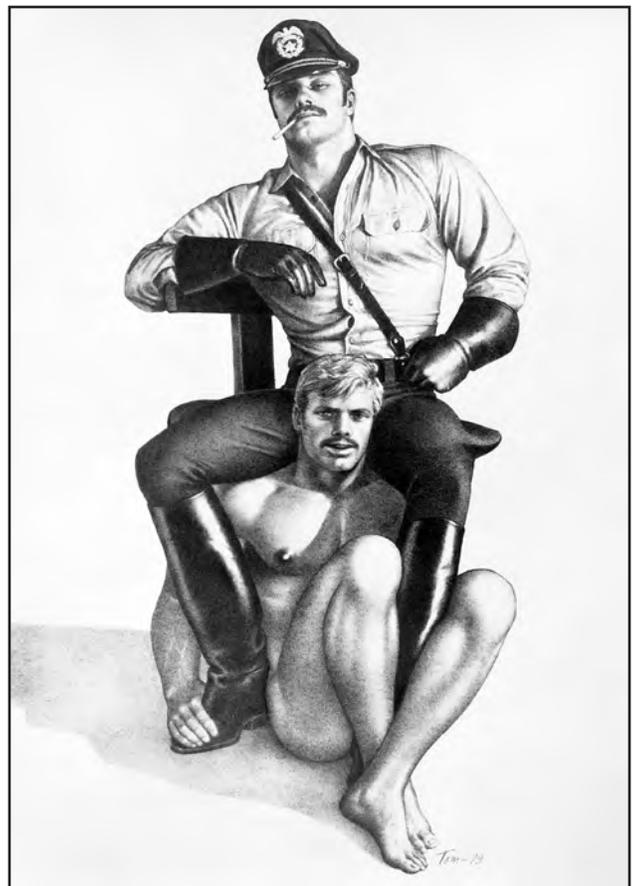
Untitled (Study for #77.25), 1977, Graphite on paper, Museum of Modern Art New York Permanent Collection



Untitled (from *Dick*), 1977, Pen and ink on paper, Tom of Finland Foundation Permanent Collection



Finnish Postage Stamps 2014, Itella Posti, Artwork: TOM OF FINLAND © 1979, 1978 Tom of Finland Foundation



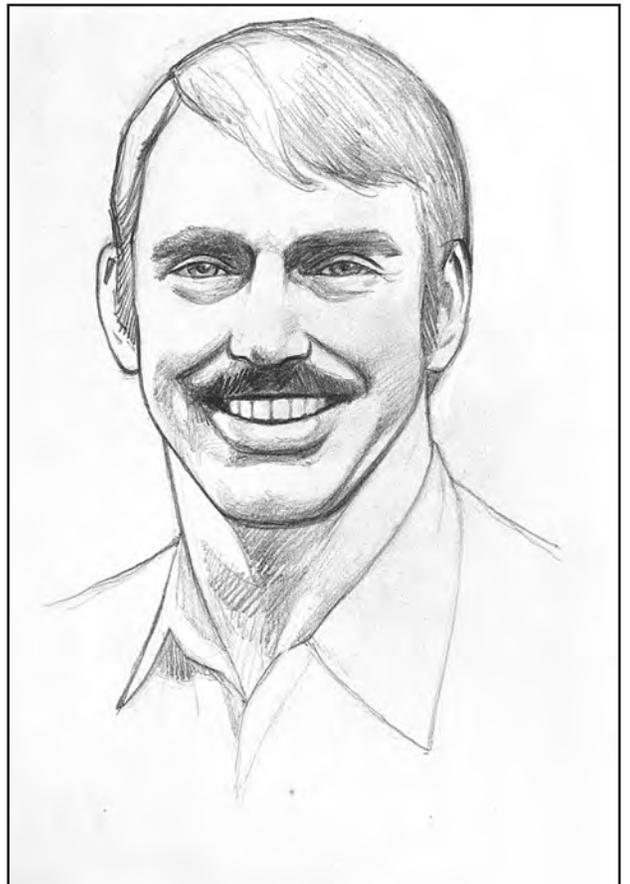
Untitled, 1979, Graphite on paper, Private Collection



*Portrait of Robert Mapplethorpe, 1979, Ink on paper,  
Private Collection*



Untitled (Study for #81.20), 1981, Graphite on paper, Los Angeles County Museum of Art Permanent Collection



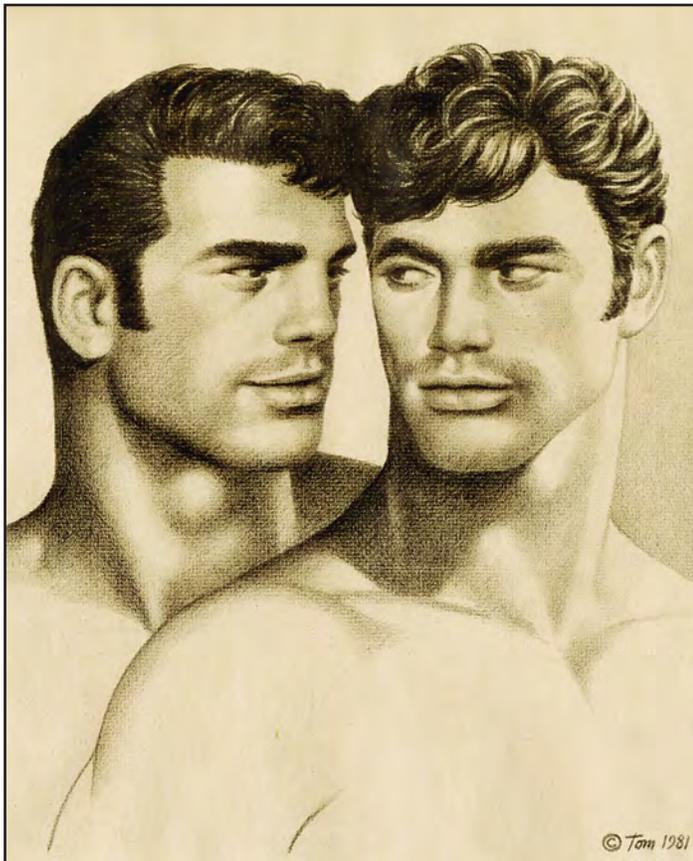
Untitled (Preparatory for portrait of Chuck Renslow), 1981, Graphite on paper, Leather Archives Permanent Collection



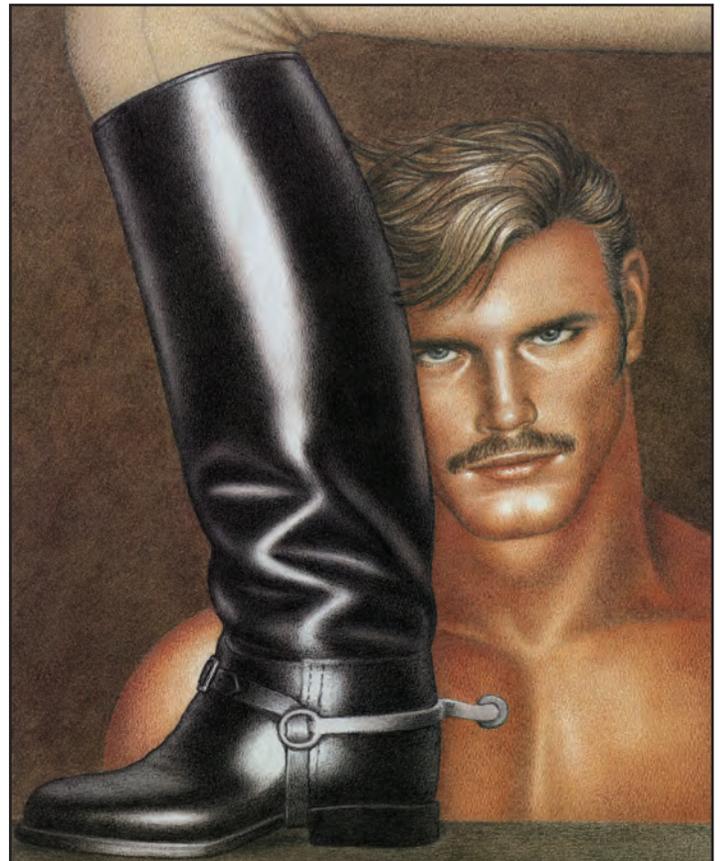
Untitled, 1981, Graphite on paper,  
Private Collection



Untitled, 1981, Graphite on paper,  
Private Collection



Untitled, 1981, Graphite on paper,  
Private Collection



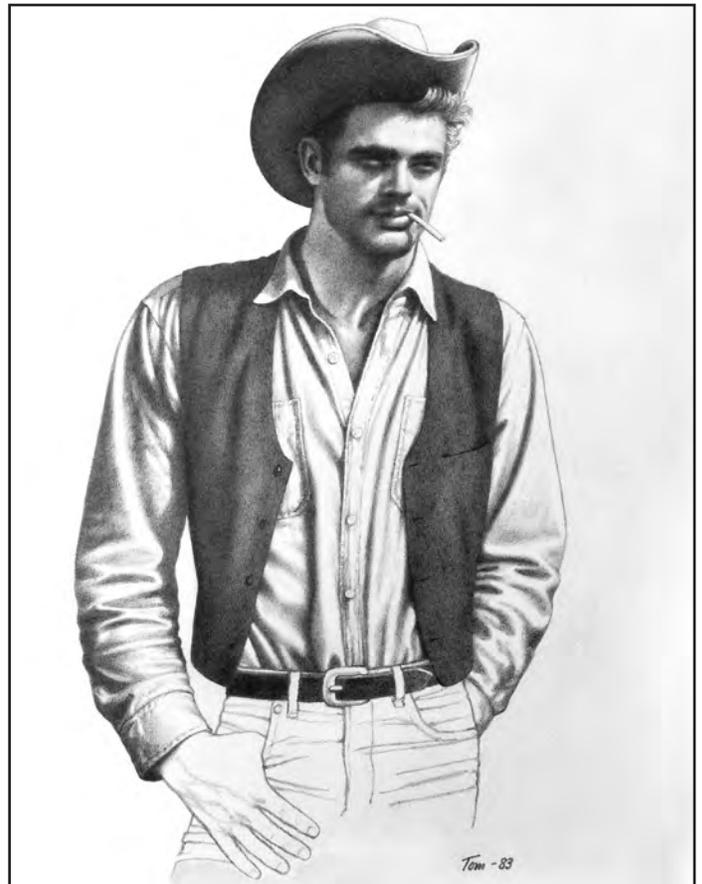
*Man and His Boot*, 1982, Color pencil on paper,  
Tom of Finland Foundation Permanent Collection



Untitled (Model: Luke Daniel. The Pits bar on Santa Monica Blvd., LA.), 1982, Graphite on paper, Private Collection



Untitled, 1983, Graphite on paper, Private Collection



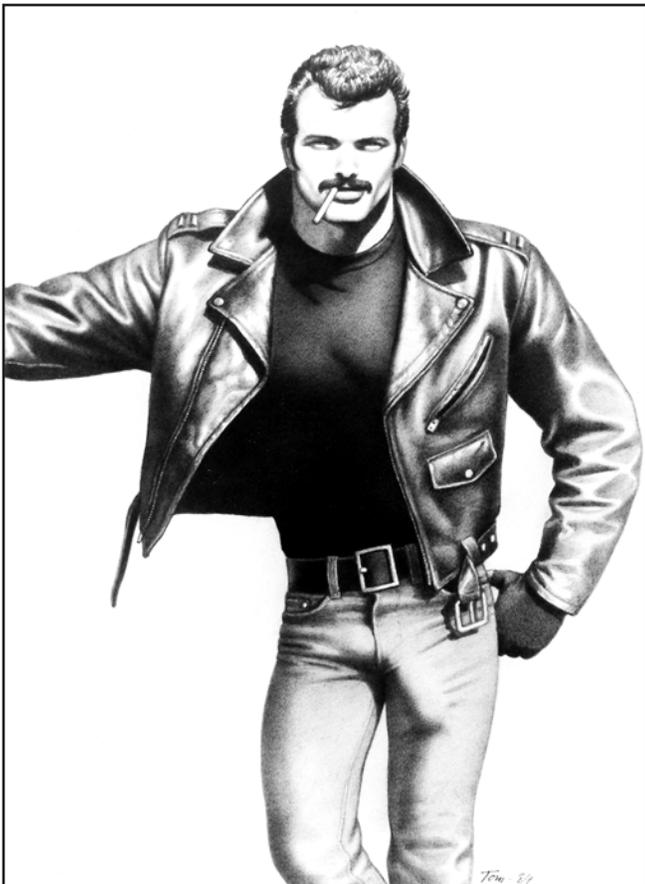
Untitled, 1983, Graphite on paper, Private Collection



Untitled, 1983, Graphite on paper,  
Private Collection



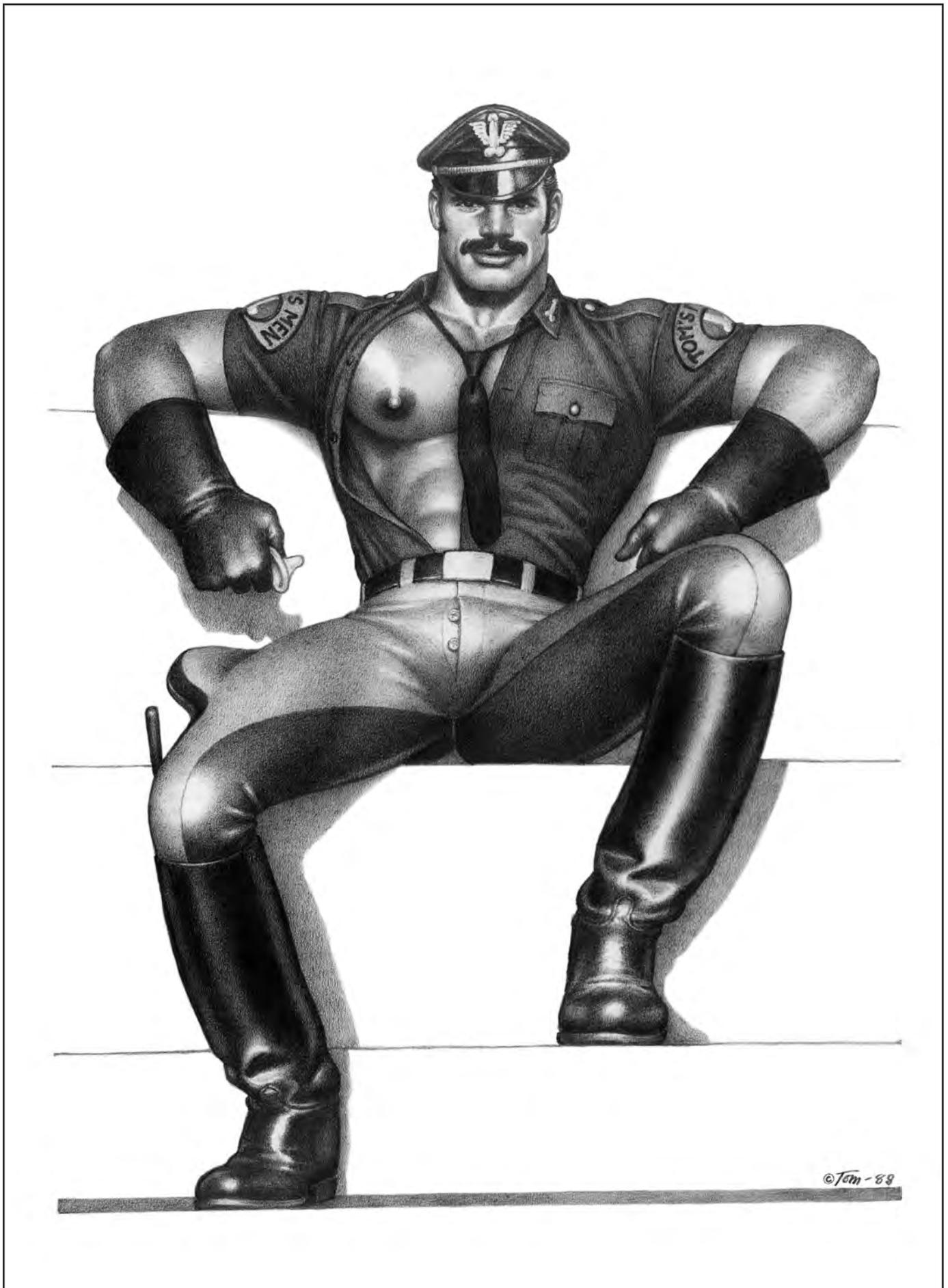
Untitled (Cover artwork for the book, *Roman Conquests*),  
1991, Graphite on paper, Private Collection



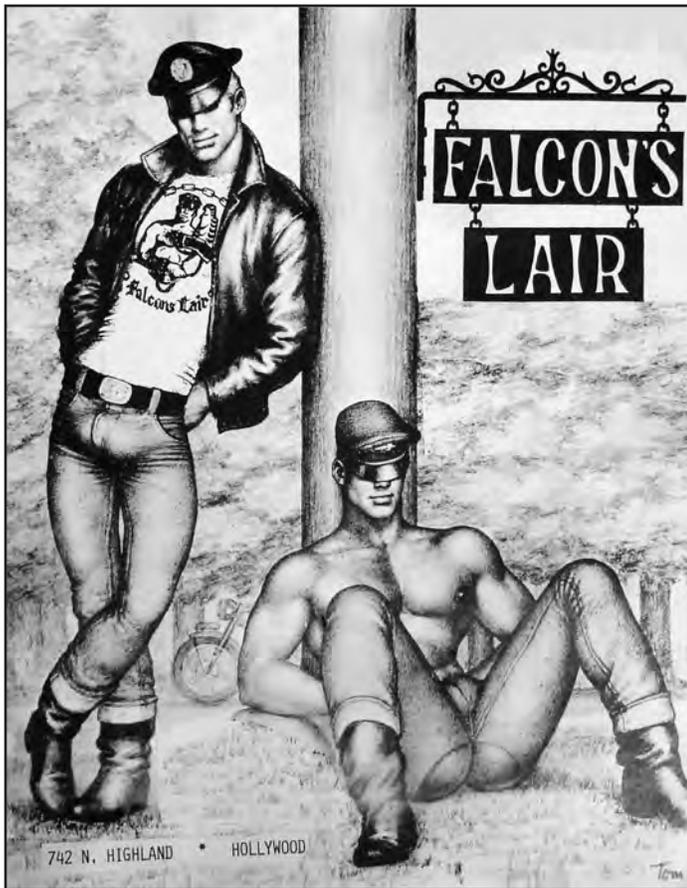
Untitled, 1984, Graphite on paper,  
Private Collection



Untitled (*Use a Rubber*), 1988, Graphite on paper,  
Private Collection



Untitled, 1988, Graphite on paper,  
Private Collection



Falcon's Lair bar, c. 1970

# TOM'S

# LEATHERS

- Jacket \_\_\_\_\_
- Breeches \_\_\_\_\_
- Jodhpurs \_\_\_\_\_
- Chaps \_\_\_\_\_
- Cap \_\_\_\_\_
- Boot \_\_\_\_\_
- Vest \_\_\_\_\_
- Harness \_\_\_\_\_
- Shirt \_\_\_\_\_
- Gauntlets \_\_\_\_\_
- Other \_\_\_\_\_



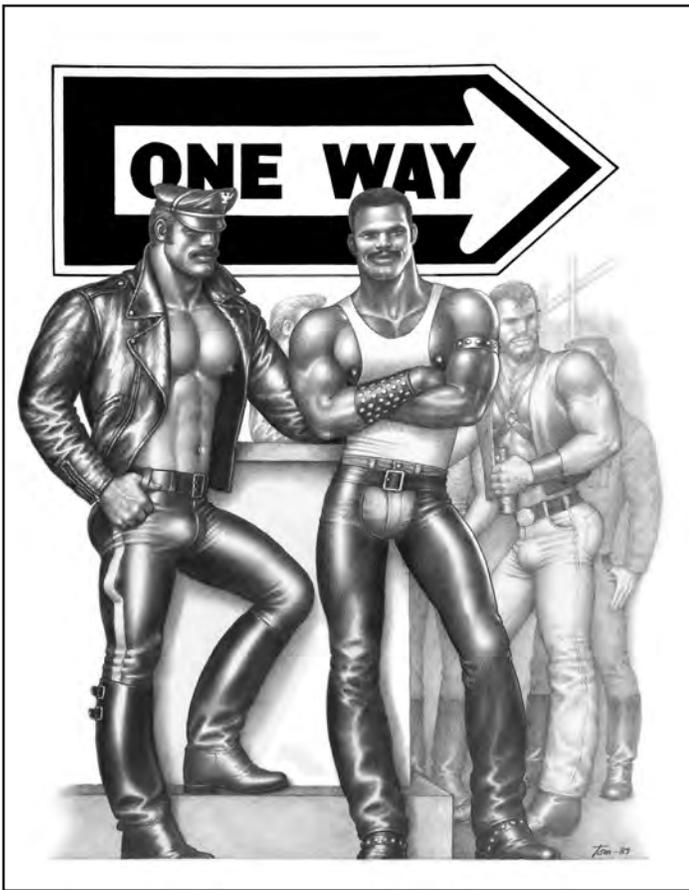
ARE YOU INTERESTED?

in a line of Tom of Finland leather attire based on his drawings?  
 If your answer is yes, mark the items above that you find most desirable and mail this flyer to the

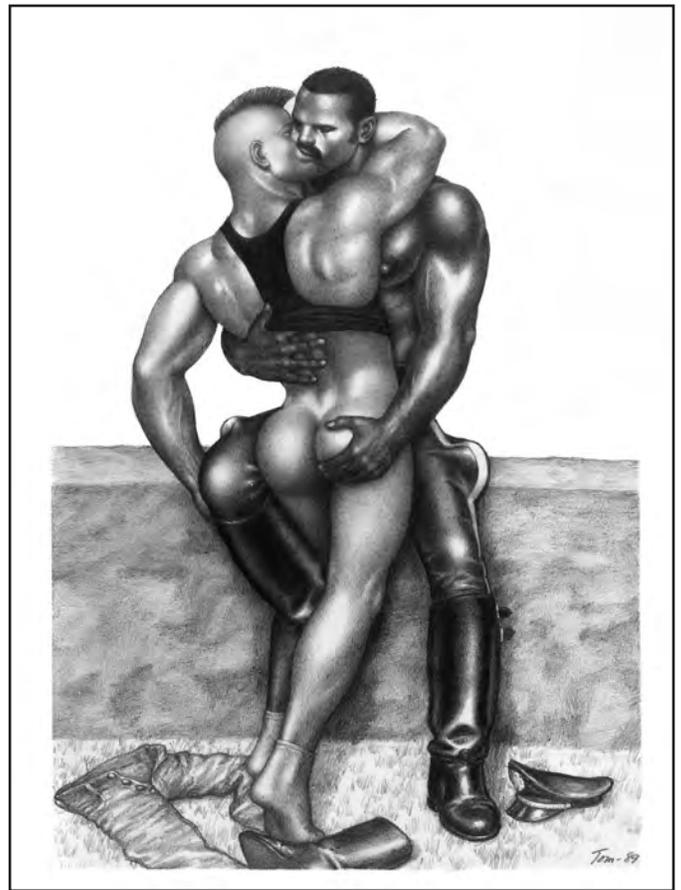
Tom of Finland Company, P.O. Box 26716, Los Angeles, CA. 90026, USA

HERE IS YOUR CHANCE TO INFLUENCE THE MERCHANDISE

Tom's Company, c. 1985



Untitled (One Way bar on N. Hoover Street), 1989,  
Graphite on paper, Private Collection



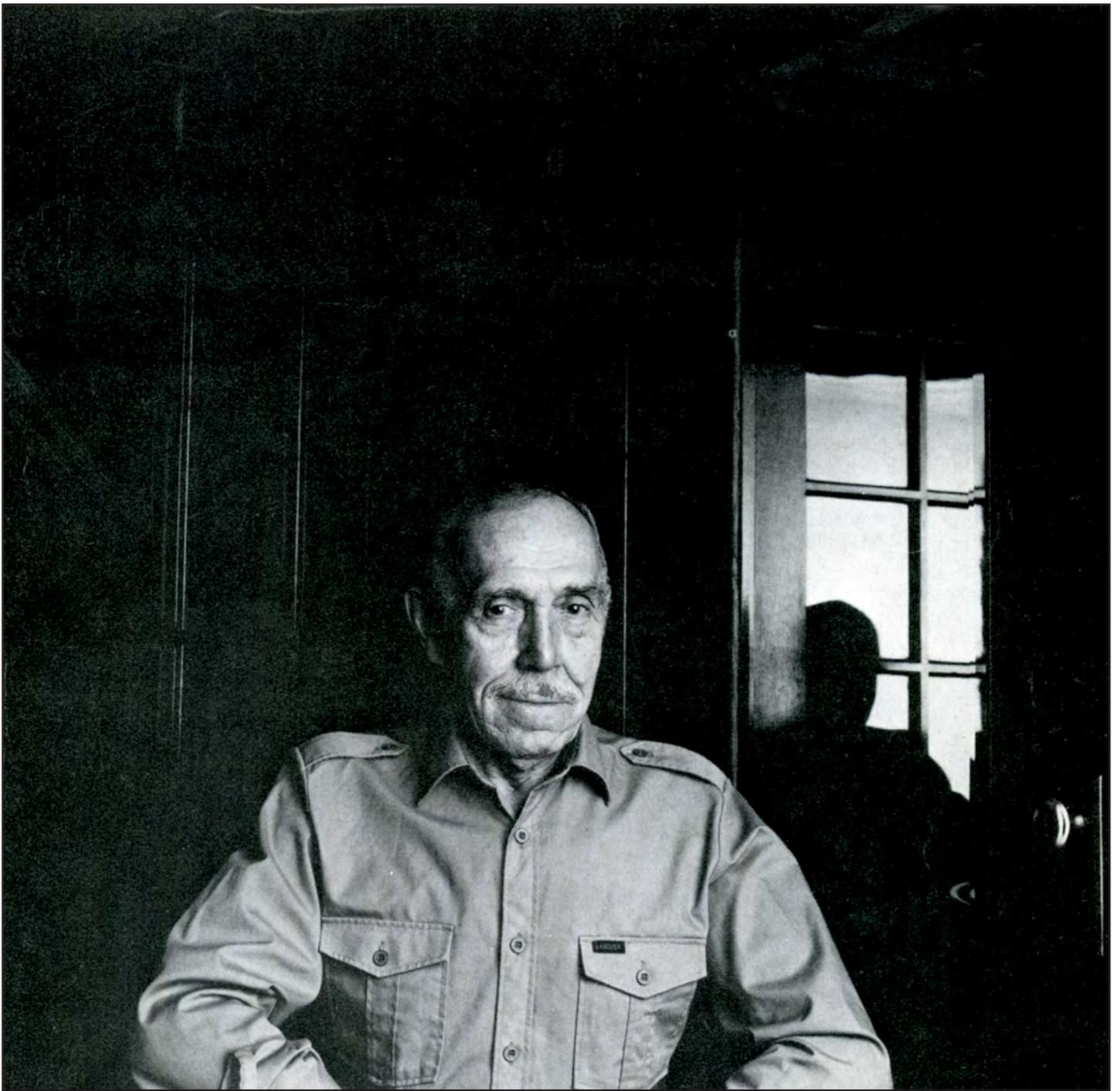
Untitled, 1989, Graphite on paper,  
Private Collection



Untitled (Preparatory for finished drawing #77.37), 1977, Graphite on paper,  
Tom of Finland Foundation Permanent Collection

# Images of TOM House

1980 to 2016



Tom in The Drawing Room, 1984, Photo by Jack Shear



Tom and friends in the Gardens. c. 1988



Tom and fan in TOM's Hall, c. 1989



Durk Dehner and Tom at Kake's Kitchen door, c. 1985



Tom and Jim Neuman, c. 1980



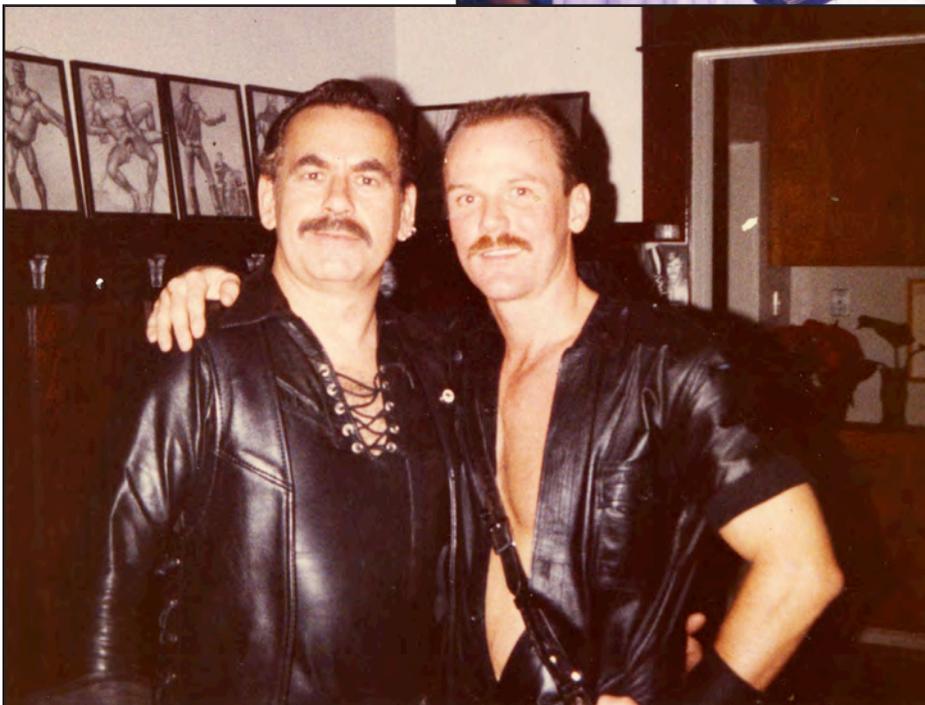
Tom's photos of model Joe taken at TOM House exterior, 1989



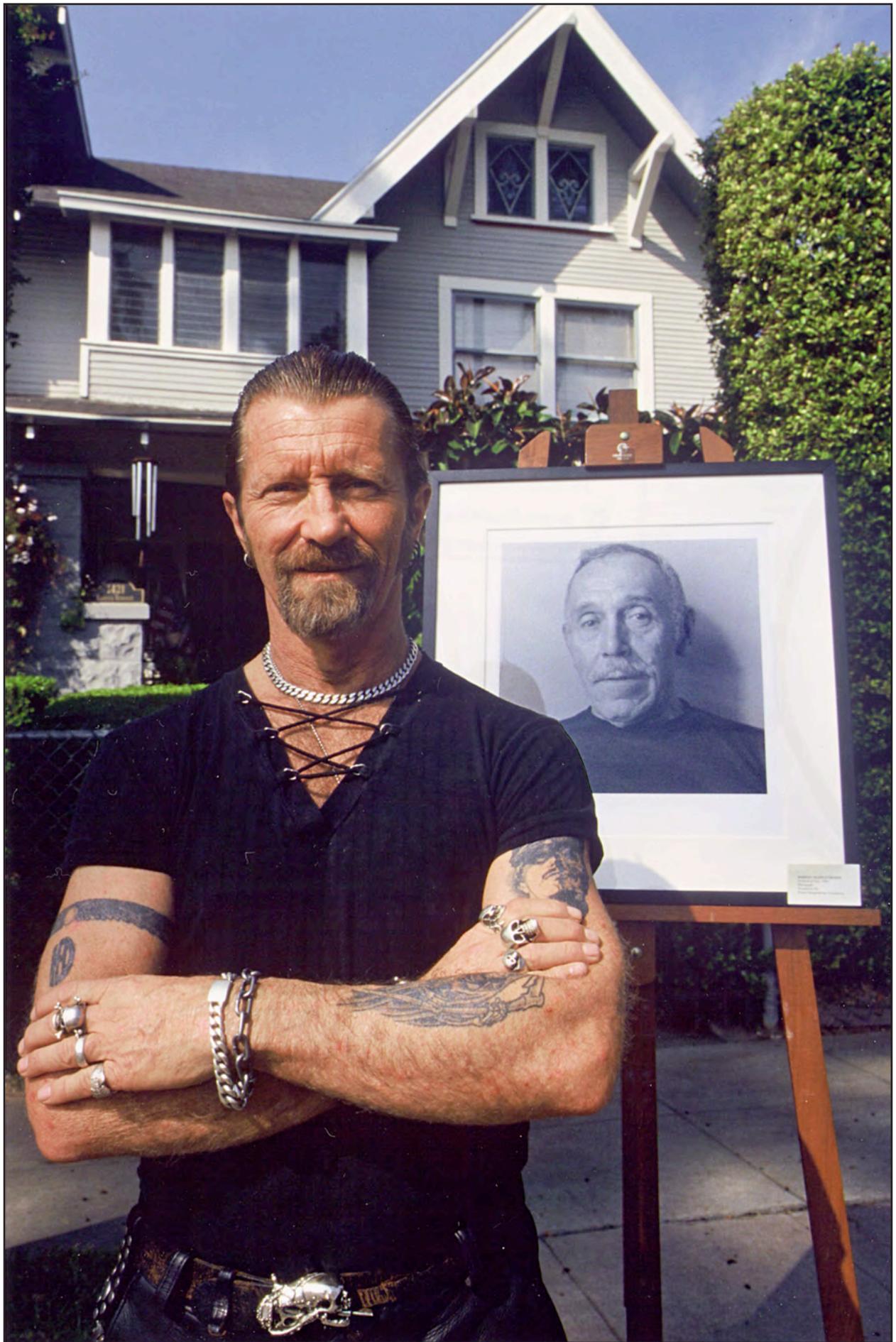
Friends in TOM's Hall, c. 1981



Friends in TOM's Hall, c. 1995



Friends in TOM's Hall, c. 1986



Durk Dehner with Mapplethorpe portrait in front of TOM House, c. 2003



Bungaku Ito, editor-in-chief of Barazoku Magazine, visits TOM House, 1999



Portrait of Tom of Finland by P. Florian, 1995



John Waters, Durk Dehner and Greg Gorman with "TOM's Men" in TOM House, 2002



House Tour for Echo Park Historical Society, 2015



Los Angeles Band of Brothers, 2011



Carolers, 2013



Holiday Celebration, 2013



Holiday Celebration, 2014



Tom of Finland Foundation Drawing Workshop, 2013



Tom of Finland Art Fair, 2014



Tom of Finland Art Fair, 2014



Tom of Finland Art Fair, 2014



Volunteer researching in TOM's Hall



Wedding of Tom Cho and Jackie Wyckes, 2014



Wedding of Dick Manniace and Andrew Buzzi, 2015



"Movie Night", 2015



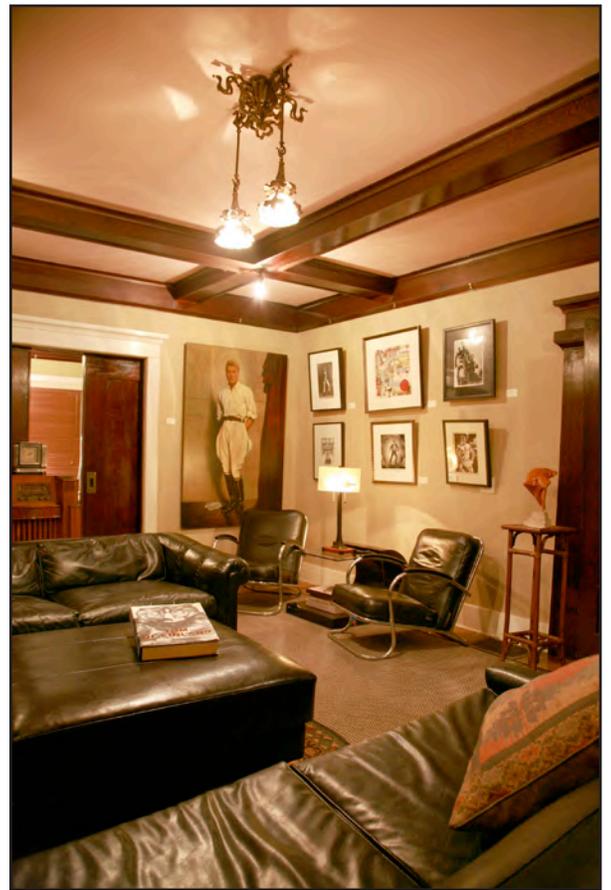
Tom of Finland Awards Reception, 2014



Award Presentation to Tom of Finland Foundation  
Presented by Mitch O'Farrell to Durk Dehner, 2015



Foyer, photo by Henning von Berg, 2007



Drawing Room, photo by Henning von Berg, 2007



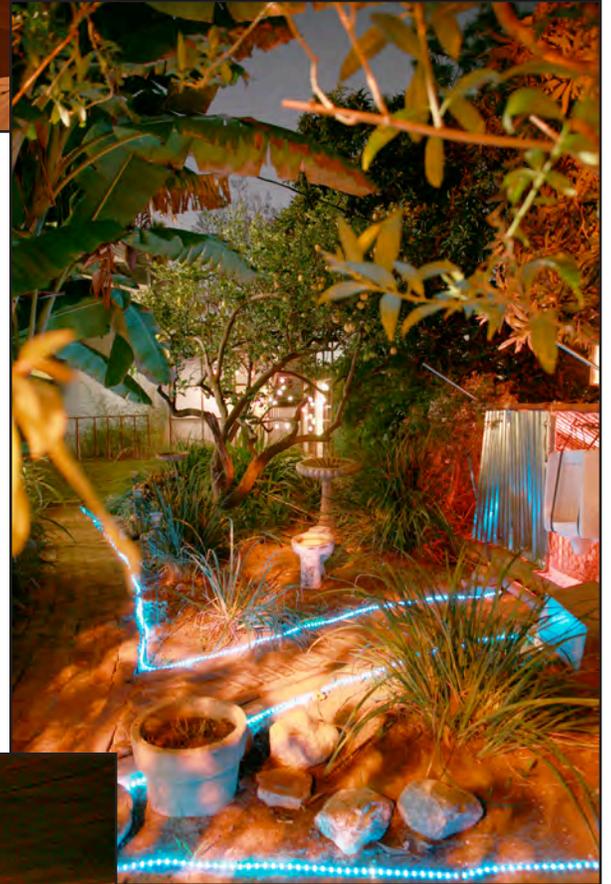
Breakfast Room, photo by Henning von Berg, 2007



Kake's Kitchen, photo by Henning von Berg, 2007



The Masters' Room, photo by Henning von Berg, 2007



Carrington Galen's Pleasure Park, photo by Henning von Berg, 2007



Portico at night, photo by Henning von Berg, 2007



Tom's uniform and boots in TOM's Room



Portrait of Tom of Finland by Rinaldo Hopf



CERTIFICATE OF RECOGNITION  
*is hereby presented to*

*Tom of Finland*  
FOUNDATION

On behalf of the City of Los Angeles and the 13th Council District, I would like to recognize Tom of Finland on the occasion of the 9th Annual Tom of Finland Foundation Erotic Art Weekend in Los Angeles.

The Tom of Finland Foundation was established by Durk Dehner and his friend Touko Laaksonen, a.k.a. Tom of Finland. As Tom had established worldwide recognition as the master of homo-erotic art, the Foundation's original purpose was to preserve his vast catalog of work. Several years later the scope was widened to offer a safe haven for all erotic art in response to rampant discrimination against art that portrayed sexual behavior or generated a sexual response.

Best wishes on continued growth and success!

August 2015



*Mitch O'Farrell*  
MITCH O'FARRELL  
COUNCILMEMBER, 13TH DISTRICT

*California State Assembly*

Certificate  
Of  
**Recognition**

PRESENTED TO:

**TOM OF FINLAND  
FOUNDATION**

*Congratulations on receiving the Art &  
Design Business Award from the West  
Hollywood Chamber of Commerce. Thank  
you for your dedication and commitment  
to make our community better. May your  
business flourish with continued success.*

*Paul Koretz*

**PAUL KORETZ**

June 7, 2005

MEMBER OF THE ASSEMBLY  
CALIFORNIA STATE LEGISLATURE



# TOM House

In Media  
2009 - 2016

DIAN HANSON

# TOM of FINLAND



XXL

TASCHEN

TASCHEN

TOM  
of  
FINLAND



TASCHEN

## **“Don Knotts at the Leather Mansion”**

—John Waters

Once upon a time, I went to the Tom of Finland Foundation in Los Angeles for one of their annual fundraising celebrations. I had heard about this amazing mansion filled with pornographic archives, dungeons, S & M offices, and a huge collection of erotic male art, but I knew I didn't have the proper outfit to wear. John Waters in leather chaps, no pants, and motorcycle boots is just not a look anybody would be comfortable with. The fact that my friend, Greg Gorman, another “civilian” was going with me, gave me a false sense of fashion confidence.

Of course, once we got there, we saw every single person but us was dressed in full-fetish S & M gear. Durk Dehner, the great heir apparent to Tom of Finland and top international cheerleader for the leather lifestyle, greeted us at the door and showed no sign of dominance-disappointment at our relatively normal cotton clothes. Remembering how I had unsuccessfully tried to talk my way into “uniform night” at The Mineshaft in New York in the '70s, by claiming my suit was “plain clothes detective,” I was relieved I didn't have to pretend anymore.

Durk welcomed us warmly and introduced me to my “slave” for the evening. Good God. A waiting-for-orders, white-man slave dressed head-to-toe in leather. “Really...I'm fine...don't need a thing,” I mumbled to the clearly disappointed masochist who seemed totally helpless without a command to obey. Seeing the crushed look on his face, I finally asked him for a drink. “YES, SIR!” he bellowed in sexual submission, and I felt even more like Don Knotts. I learned from this exchange, however. Today, whenever a young male fan calls me “sir,” I say, “Please don't call me 'sir' in a non-sexual way.” Their faces pale, much like mine must have that night in the leather mansion.

Tom of Finland is, of course, a great artist. There can really be no debate about that anymore. His drawings are beautiful, confident, sexy, totally original and butch-elegant. Tom of Finland uses great wit in his work, but he's never funny. Can “funny” ever really be butch? Is humor, by definition, a little bit nelly? Tom is also a classic. He invented a look, and you better respect it. He may have been a “daddy”-type later in life, but I'm not so sure he would have approved of the “bear” movement. After all, isn't a “bear” just a Tom of Finland man who let his body go?

Months later, I went back to buy a Tom of Finland drawing. As an art collector, it was an experience like no other. Durk, now in art dealer mode, answered the front door in full bondage gear, even though our appointment was at 10:00 AM. He ushered me into his "killing room," (the term dealers use for their back room where the sale is closed), and showed me Tom's work that was still available. I felt like I was in the Vatican. Never had a dealer's commitment to their artist's work been so obvious. Durk was not only devoted to Tom of Finland's drawings, he had become one.

I selected a lovely little signed pencil sketch of a handsome stud rimming a butch biker and wrote out the check. Money is rarely spent so well. The drawing now hangs in a hall right outside my bedroom in my Baltimore house, and every time I pass it, I feel happier. I wonder what the cleaning lady thinks? She's never mentions it.

#### **About the authors:**

**John Waters** was born in 1946 in Baltimore, Maryland, and briefly attended New York University. He made his first film, *Hag in a Black Leather Jacket*, in 1964, and has since directed 16 others, including *Pink Flamingos*, *Polyester*, *Hairspray*, and *Pecker*. He lives in Baltimore.

**Edward Lucie-Smith** was born in 1933 in Kingston, Jamaica, and schooled at Oxford. He has published over 100 books, including *Sexuality in Western Art* and *Latin American Art of the 20th Century*. He lives in London and travels extensively.

**Armistead Maupin** launched his fictive *Tales of the City* serial in the *San Francisco Chronicle* in 1976, later released as a six-volume series of novels, three of which were produced as miniseries for television. He lives in San Francisco.

**Todd Oldham's** studio is a multifaceted design studio for film, photography, furniture, interior décor, books, and even floral arrangements. He lives in New York City and in eastern Pennsylvania.

**Camille Anna Paglia** is the author of five books, including *Sexual Personae: Art and Decadence from Nefertiti to Emily Dickinson*, her groundbreaking analysis of sexual ambiguity in art and literature. Paglia is University Professor of Humanities and Media Studies at University of the Arts, Philadelphia, PA, where she lives.

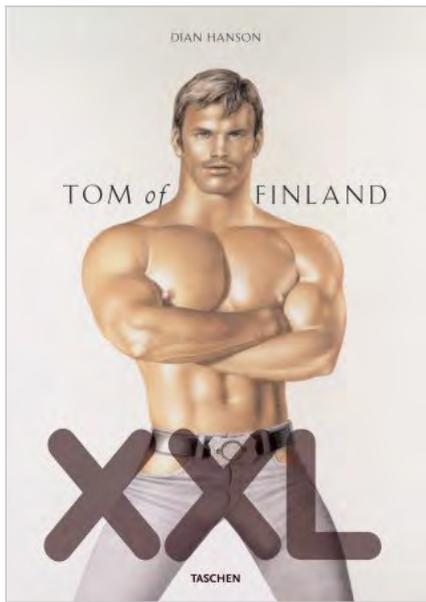
**Tom of Finland: XXL** Printed in Italy ISBN 978-3-8228-2607-2

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Hohenzollererring 53, D-50672, Köln, Germany

# TASCHEN

HONG KONG KÖLN LONDON LOS ANGELES MADRID PARIS TOKYO



## Tom of Finland XXL

Hanson, Dian (ED)

Paglia, Camille / Waters, John

Hardcover, 29 x 40.5 cm (11.4 x 15.9 in.),

666 pages

USD 200.00

ISBN 978-3-8228-2607-2 (01/2009)

German, French, English)



## Bigger is better: The complete life and work of the artist Tom of Finland

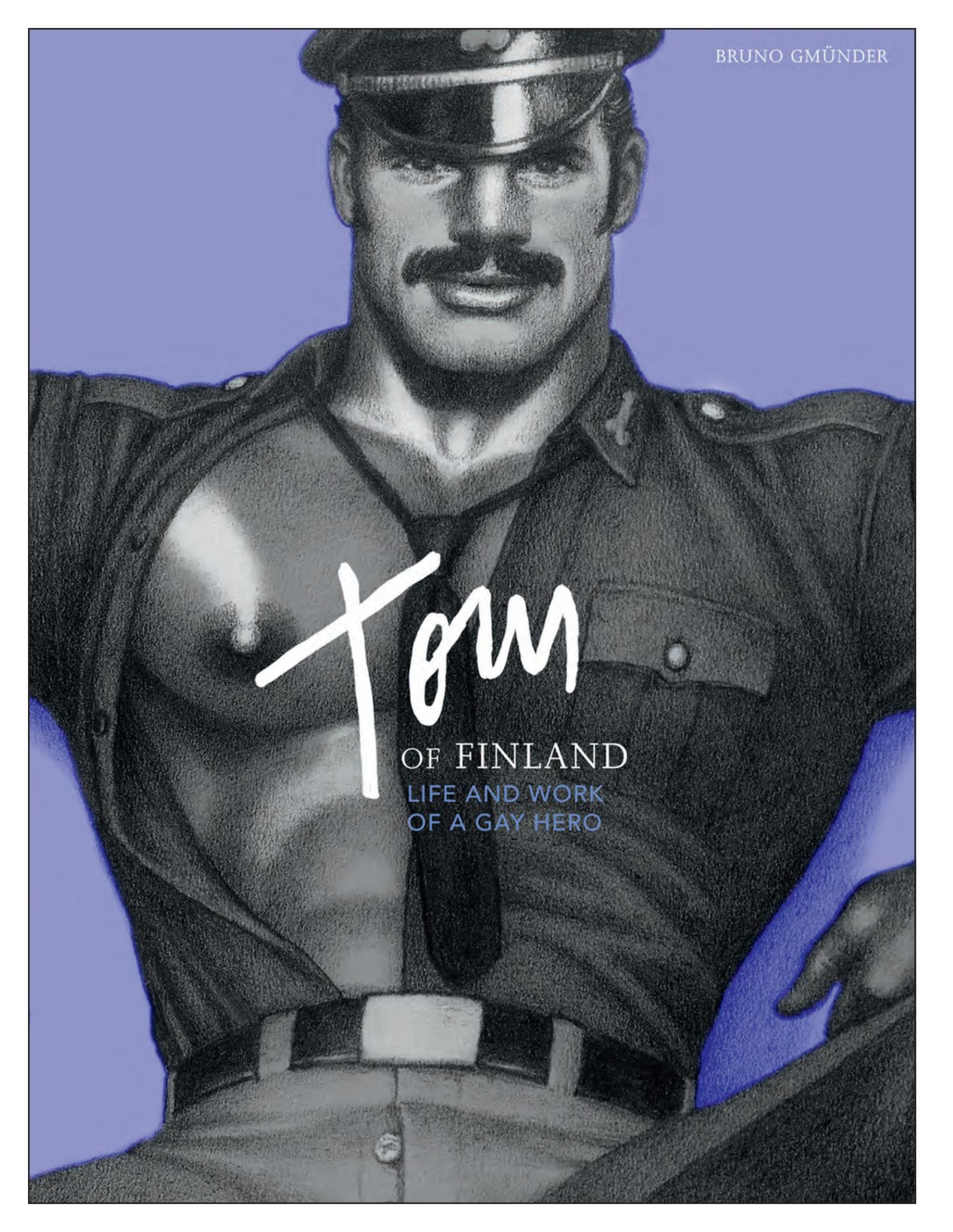
In 1998, TASCHEN introduced the world to the masterful art of **Touko Laaksonen** with *The Art of Pleasure*. Prior to that, Laaksonen, better known as Tom of Finland, enjoyed an intense cult following in the international gay community but was largely unknown to the broader audience. *The Art of Pleasure* gave Tom well-deserved recognition and increased his following exponentially; *Tom of Finland XXL* will fix him forever in the realm of fine art.

With dimensions of 29 by 40.5cm and 704 pages, *Tom of Finland XXL* contains nearly 1000 images, covering 6 decades of the artist's career. The work was gathered from all known collections across the US and Europe with the help of the Tom of Finland Foundation and features many drawings, paintings and preparatory sketches that have never been reproduced in any book. Other images have only been seen out of context and will be presented here in the sequential order Tom intended for full artistic appreciation and erotic impact. This elegant oversized volume will showcase the full range of Tom's talent, from sensitive portraits to frank sexual pleasure to tender expressions of love to Tom's haunting tributes to young men struck down by the AIDS epidemic.

Completing this collector's edition are eight specially-commissioned essays on Tom's social and personal impact by **Camille Paglia, John Waters, Armistead Maupin, Todd Oldham**, and others, plus a scholarly analysis of individual drawings by art historian **Edward Lucie-Smith**. For the man—or woman—who thinks bigger is better, *Tom of Finland XXL* is certain to satisfy.

### About the editor:

**Dian Hanson** is TASCHEN's sexy book editor. As a 25-year veteran of men's magazine publishing, she edited titles including *Puritan, OUI, Outlaw Biker, Juggs*, and *Leg Show*. Her many books for TASCHEN include *The Big Book of Breasts* and *The Big Penis Book*.



BRUNO GMÜNDER

Tom

OF FINLAND  
LIFE AND WORK  
OF A GAY HERO



These changes paralleled those occurring in the gay world at large, some of which had been influenced, if not actually initiated, by Tom's drawings. From 1957 on, Tom's art promulgated powerfully masculine images which became mainstays of gay masturbation fantasies. In the wake of the 1969 Stonewall riots and the advent of gay pride, gay men began to try to be Tom's men. In the seventies, San Francisco's "Castro clone" look—Levi's, boots, and work shirts—swept the gay scene. Super-butch haircuts and outfits and attitudes continued to spread in the eighties.

The Puupää hat award from the Finnish Comic Society is the black hat with the daisy, opposite the bust of Tom. Photo taken in Tom's studio in Los Angeles.



Bill, Norman, Tom, David, Denis, Karl and Durk, TOM House dining room, c. 1982

The timing in which Durk entered into Tom's life was nothing less than providence. If one considers one's life in eras then as Durk was entering into Tom's life, Veli, his life partner of 28 years, was leaving. Veli's throat cancer took him and left Tom to travel to the states to live with Durk and his household for extended periods of time. This was the leather brotherhood that Tom created in his drawings. He had his leather brothers in Finland, with the creation

of the MSC motorcycle club, and now he was part of the Dehner leather brotherhood in the U.S. as well. It meant the acquisition of new leathers. Tom received a new LAPD issue leather jacket from the household and had himself made a pair of chaps from local leather maker Sterling. Tom looked good at his first public appearance in Los Angeles at the opening of his exhibition at Eons Gallery in 1977.



Tom guest lectures at California Institute for the Arts (CalArts), part of the 1985 Graduate Lecture Series, professor/artist Mike Kelley.

Tom of Finland has been an incredible inspiration to my work and within the gay community, as well.  
—Mike Kelley



Tom could have made things easier on himself if he had been willing to play—as Quaintance did with his Old West and mythological themes—to the double standard that censored historical erotica a little less strictly. (Quaintance had begun to hint, in works like “Saturday Night,” that maybe his cowboys were more interested in each other than in schoolmarms and dancehall girls. More than likely, he would have been in the forefront of the coming sexual revolution but, tragically, George Quaintance died just as Tom’s first works were being published in 1957.)

Tom did not want to set his drawings in ancient Rome. The here and now was what turned him on, so the here and now was where he placed his drawings. That was the second aspect of his work that was new to the viewers of the day. His drawings seem to be happening right around the corner and that added to their erotic charge. Many newly-aware gay men were immensely relieved to learn from Tom’s drawings that homosexuality did not die out with the fall of the Roman Empire—and they continue to teach that awareness to a whole new generation today.

**Durk, Bob Mizer from AMG and Tom, 1986**

Bob Mizer, owner of Athletic Model Guild, worked with Tom from 1957 through 1975 without ever meeting. When Tom first started staying in Southern California they had the opportunity to socialize—Tom going down to Bob’s studio to watch him shoot and sometimes have lunch. Tom and Durk would also go down for weekly screenings of Bob’s film footage. Bob returned most of the drawings that Tom had sent him over the years. It was his way of insuring the TOM legacy, as nearly two hundred works came to ToFF’s permanent collection.

# AFTERWORD

Tom's passion continues ...

Twenty-one years later, Tom of Finland's influence is still felt by new generations of all orientations. In 2006, the Museum of Modern Art in New York accepted five Tom of Finland drawings into their permanent collection as part of a much larger gift from The Judith Rothschild Foundation. The trustee of The Judith Rothschild Foundation, Harvey S. Shipley Miller, said so eloquently, "Tom of Finland is one of the five most influential artists of the twentieth century. As an artist he was superb, as an influence he was transcendent."

Harvey's statement reflected what I instinctively knew as a young man, that somehow Tom's life had to be documented and his work preserved. Now, Tom's message is permanently fused into the fabric of modern-day culture.

Tom's goal was to perfect his technical ability as an artist, to rise above language barriers and to successfully convey that men—his men—all men are proud, sexual, defined and fully realized by nature. Gay men are complete, happy without shame or guilt.

When an influence such as Tom's is absorbed into society it ceases to be a separate element, and therefore, difficult to distinguish after the fact. We don't even notice when in time these major cultural shifts take place.

The physiques of Tom's men inspired developing gay men to become what they became. Knowing it was now possible, they went to gyms in masses to develop their bodies and in turn, ignited the entire culture and with it came the explosion of the fitness movement which spread health clubs across all nations.

The clothing/gear worn by the men in Tom's drawings sparked designers such as Tom Ford and Jean Paul Gaultier, and their Tom-influenced designs revolutionized the men's fashion industry. Bands and their lead singers, like Judas Priest, Freddy Mercury and the Village People, adopted styles that were the result of being reared on Tom of Finland. They exposed the broader culture to the male sexual icons of Tom's men, bringing them to life.

The gay liberation, gay pride and coming-out movements, the proliferation of gay bars and especially the leather/biker subculture, have their roots embedded with Tom's influence. Tom was an instrument that created the archetypes needed at the time for redefining homosexuals—first by gays themselves; then, eventually, by all of society.

Tom's work favored the "manly man." His motivation? This type definitely turned Tom on, yet he consistently chose "butch" because *manliness* had always been denied the homosexual—as if it was solely owned by the heterosexual world! Tom felt this unjust and wanted to equalize the playing field. He sought to broaden the vocabulary of what gay men could be.

Members of the Queer Nation organization protested Tom of Finland not long after his death, calling him a "sell out"—only drawing what they saw as "straights." They were too young to know the history of why the artist chose the super-masculine male for a role model. Tom wished everyone to have the freedom to be what they wanted to be by their own definition. Gay men of different generations have found Tom's work as the centerpiece of gay events and in gay establishments worldwide. Tom of Finland is the declaration of who we are: proud to be gay.

—Durk Dehner

**Tom of Finland was a groundbreaking queer artist, a subversive, an activist. His drawings have provided developing Homosexuals with empowering role models: icons. His creations, "Tom's Men," broadened global society's definition of what a queer could be. He gave us permission to be. And influenced artists that stood on his shoulders, with what they would see.**

—S. R. Sharp, *Starrfucker* magazine, Issue 04, 2011, created by Jeremy Lucido



**Cover:**

**Untitled (detail), 1988,  
graphite on paper, ToFF #88.10**

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# PIN-UP

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Featuring  
**DELFINA DELETTREZ, HANS KOLLHOFF,  
ROLU, PAULO MENDES DA ROCHA,  
VALERIO OLGIATI, TOM OF FINLAND**



Hidden behind a tall eugenia hedge in the unassuming Echo Park neighborhood of Los Angeles, at 1421 Laveta Terrace, stands an Arts-and-Crafts bungalow where Touko Laaksonen spent much of the last ten years of his life. Better known as Tom of Finland, Laaksonen produced an enormous body of work whose radical and utopian depictions of masculine confidence, fantasy, and pleasure influenced reality with such dominance that they liberated generations and became a permanent cornerstone of gay culture. Today, the Laveta Terrace bungalow is home to the Tom of Finland Foundation, run by Durk Dehner — a former model and Tom’s agent, friend, lover, muse, and business partner for many years — and his partner Sharp. An informal museum of Tom’s life, the foundation houses his archive as well as thousands of mementos from a career that spanned four decades. Art, leather, and dark-wood trim permeate the house, creating a heavy masculine energy, whether in the cozy ski-lodge-style living room or in the guest rooms, which are now used for artist’s residencies. But there are light touches too: a Tom of Finland cookie jar, two Michelangelos flanking the main bathroom’s sink, a fully-functioning phallic toilet flush, and a wall covered in celebrity photographs showing Dehner with the likes of Grace Jones and Liza Minnelli. The backyard, fitted out with a fun cage and an outdoor throne with peculiar openings, overlooks the Hollywood Hills. It is here, at a cabana-meets-boot-camp outdoor bar, that the foundation hosts its regular parties which, Dehner warns, are not necessarily for the faint of heart (a dungeon-style basement is reserved for selected visitors only).

But it’s not all fun and games for Dehner and Sharp. Under their direction, the foundation’s mission has expanded: as well as celebrating, preserving, and protecting Tom’s art, it is also an active community center, and promotes erotic art in general. All available wall space showcases works depicting some form of beauty, decadence, desire, hedonism, love, and lust. And while many appear to be by the master, they’re not all real Tom of Finlands. “Unlike most artists, Tom was never offended by others copying his style — he was always flattered,” says Dehner, who keeps the many donated Tom-inspired pieces in annual rotation. The foundation even commissions new pieces, like the trompe-l’oeil murals with strategic holes that turn viewers into voyeurs.

There is one room, however, on the third floor, that has a very different aura. Quiet, uncluttered, almost monastic, with just a bed and a bare-bones drafting table, it was Tom’s private room. Since the artist’s death in 1991, Dehner and Sharp have preserved it exactly the way it was, with Tom’s leather jacket hanging by the bedside and his sharpened pencils on the desk. “Tom always enjoyed all the visitors and wild events we hosted here over the years,” says Dehner, “but through it all, he would always find time to slip away to work in the attic, putting in many hours, every day. He was absolutely driven to make his work. It was his life’s mission.”

Michael Bullock





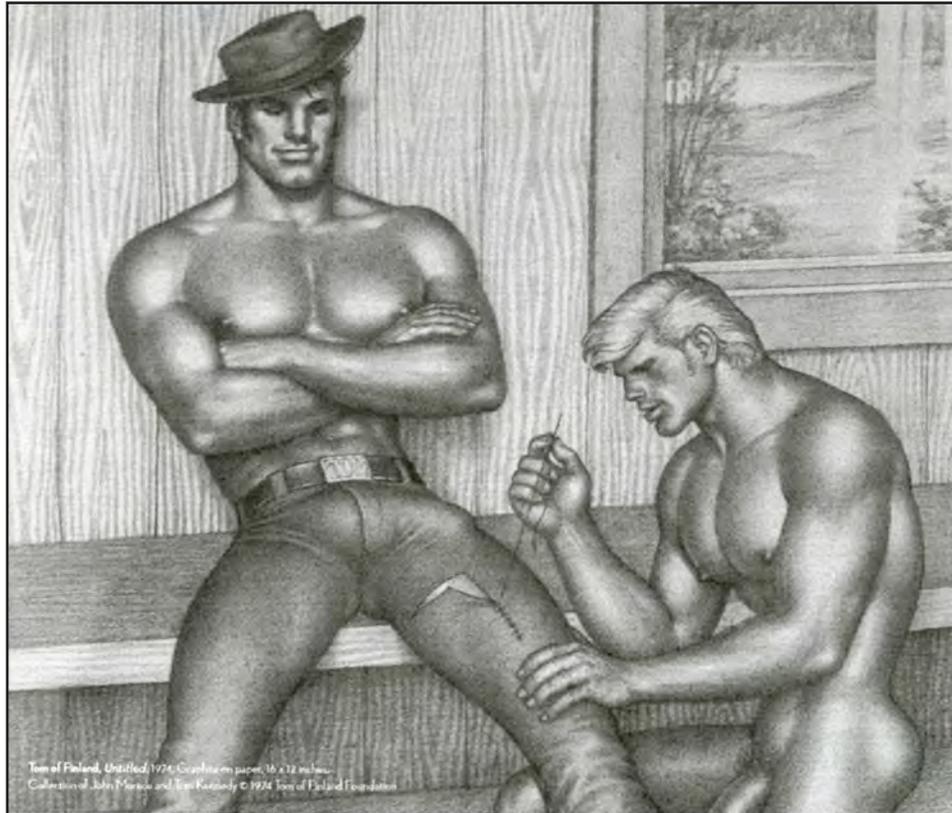
Composite from 13 full page spread in *PIN-UP*, Issue 14, Spring/Summer 2013

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Bob Mizer, Untitled (Berry Leach with Jambalwood), Los Angeles, c. 1954. Vintage large-format black and white negative. Silver gelatin print, 8 x 10 inches. Printed with permission of Bob Mizer Foundation, Inc.

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Tom of Finland, *Untitled*, 1974. Graphite on paper, 16 x 12 inches.  
 Collection of John Marasco and Tom Keston © 1974 Tom of Finland Foundation

## Introduction

*Bob Mizer & Tom of Finland* is the first American museum exhibition devoted to the art of Bob Mizer (1922–92) and Tom of Finland (Touko Laaksonen, 1920–91), two of the most significant figures of twentieth-century erotic art and forefathers of an emergent postwar gay culture. The exhibition features a selection of Tom of Finland’s masterful drawings and collages, alongside Mizer’s rarely seen photo-collage “catalogue boards,” as well as a comprehensive collection of his groundbreaking magazine *Physique Pictorial*, where drawings by Tom of Finland were first published in 1957.

Tom of Finland is the creator of some of the most iconic and readily recognizable imagery of postwar gay culture. He produced thousands of images beginning in the 1940s, robbing straight, homophobic culture of its most virile and masculine archetypes (bikers, hoodlums, lumberjacks, cops, cowboys, and sailors) and recasting them—through deft skill and fantastic imagination—as unapologetic, self-aware, and boastfully proud enthusiasts of gay sex. His most innovative achievement, worked out in fastidious renderings of gear, props, settings, and power relations inherent therein, was to create depictions

that would eventually become the foundation of an emerging gay leather culture. Tom of Finland imagined the leather scene by drawing it; real men were inspired by it and suited themselves up.

Mizer began photographing as early as 1942, but unlike many of his contemporaries working in the subculture of illicit “physique” nudes, he took the Hollywood star-system approach and founded the Athletic Model Guild in 1945. This film and photography studio specialized in handsome, natural-bodied, boy-next-door talent as opposed to exclusively muscle-bound figures, which was standard at the time. In his myriad satirical prison dramas, sci-fi flix, domesticated bachelor scenarios, and elegantly captivating studio sessions, Mizer photographed and filmed over 10,000 models at a rough estimate of 60 photographs a day, seven days a week for almost 50 years. He always presented a fresh-faced and free, unashamed and gregarious, and natural and light-hearted approach to male nudity and intimate physical contact between men. For these groundbreaking perspectives in eroticized representation alone, Mizer ranks with Alfred Kinsey at the forefront of the sexual revolution.

Though Tom of Finland did not start spending time in Los Angeles until the early 1980s, he had long known of Mizer and the photographer's work through *Physique Pictorial*, the house publication and sales tool for Athletic Model Guild. It was to this magazine that the artist first sent his drawings, and it was Mizer—finding the artworks remarkable and seeking to promote them on the magazine's cover, but believing the artist's Finnish name (Touko Laaksonen) would be too difficult for his clientele—who is responsible for the now famous "Tom of Finland" pseudonym.

By the time the gay liberation movement swept through the United States in the late 1960s, both Mizer and Tom of Finland were already well known and widely celebrated as veritable pioneers of gay art. Decades before the police raids on the Stonewall Inn (1969) and the Black Cat Tavern (1966)—a time when the closet was the norm and there was no "gay community"—Mizer and Tom of Finland's evocative and lusty representations of masculine desire and joyful, eager sex between men proliferated and were disseminated worldwide. If these artists were not ahead of their time, they might just have foreseen and even invented a time.

Spanning five decades, the exhibition seeks a wider appreciation for Tom of Finland and Bob Mizer's work, considering their aesthetic influence on generations of artists, both gay and straight, among them: Kenneth Anger, Rainer Werner Fassbinder, David Hockney, G. B. Jones, Mike Kelley, Robert Mapplethorpe, Henrik Olesen, Jack Pierson, Andy Warhol, and John Waters. The exhibition also acknowledges the profound cultural and social impact both artists have made, especially in providing open, powerful imagery for a community of desires at a time when doing so was still very much criminal. Presenting the broader historical context and key aspects of their shared interests and working relationship, as well as more in-depth solo rooms dedicated to each artist, the exhibition establishes the art-historical importance of the staggering work of these legendary figures.

## **Tom of Finland**

This selection of drawings by Tom of Finland communicates the range of the artist's subjects, formats, and methods. The finely rendered graphite and pen-and-ink drawings for which he is best known appeared in several forms over the years, from individual finished drawings to serialized narratives such as KAKE, MIKE, and RINGO. Prior to his finished works, Tom of Finland would often produce preparatory drawings, quick sketches, and detail views. Even before this, he kept reference folders of images cut out from newspapers and magazines, a group of which can be seen here. These "collages" were not for publication but for the artist's private use, and they show groupings of expressions, postures, costumes, and body types that were essential to Tom of Finland in developing his own signature style.



**Tom of Finland**

This selection of drawings by Tom of Finland communicates the range of the artist's whimsical, baroque, and muscular, "finely rendered graphics and pen-and-ink drawings to which he is best known as creator of a unique style and the term, Tom of Finland, which became a household name. Tom of Finland would often produce proprietary drawings which sometimes, and often rarely, crossed into the realm of pornography. A group of artists can be seen here. These "stylings" were used for application to fur by the artist's producers, customers, and finally those that were marketed to Tom of Finland in developing his own signature style.

*Bob Mizer and Tom of Finland, MOCA, Installation Shot, 2013*



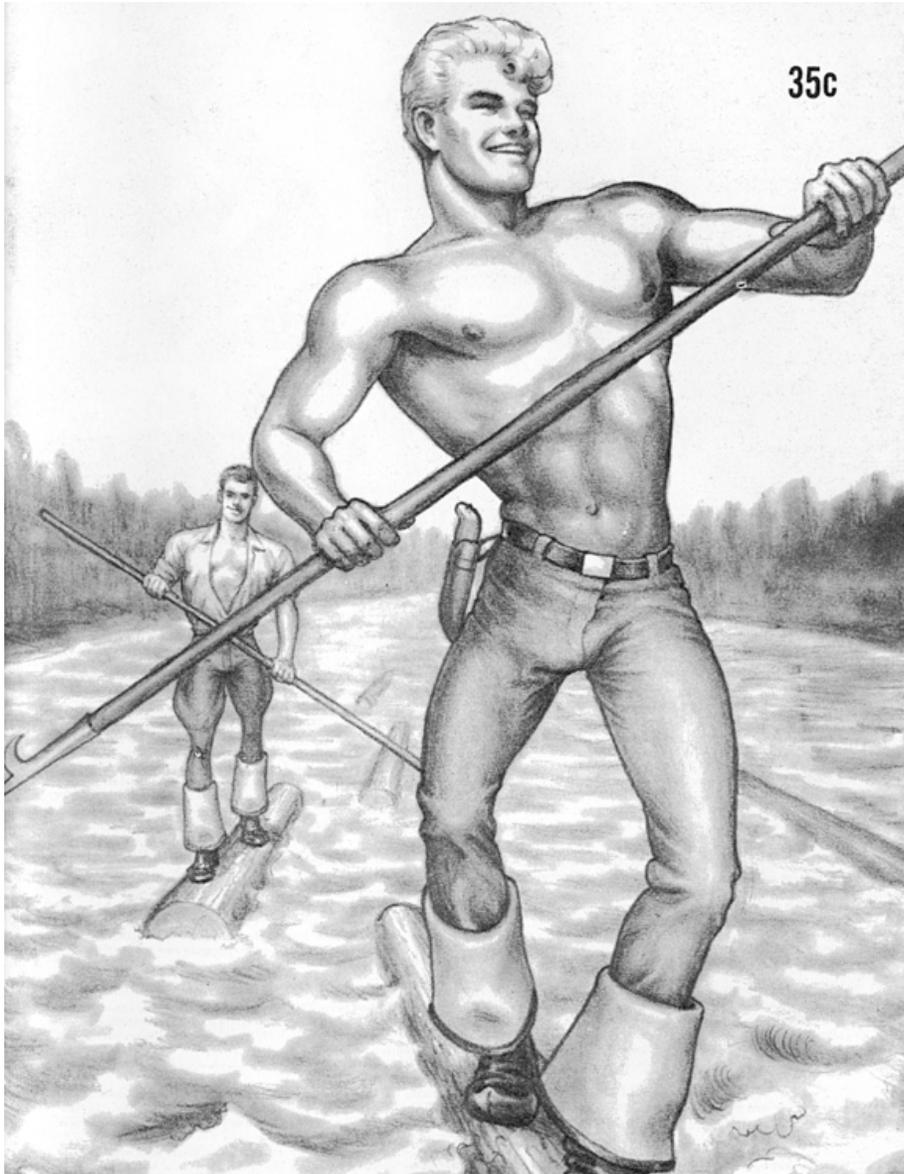
## Tom of Finland - MOCA U - MOCAtv

Published on Nov 1, 2013

Famed erotic artist Tom of Finland made as much of an impact on the lives of individual men as he did on the history of masculine representation. On a palm tree-lined street in Echo Park sits the Tom of Finland Foundation, a site that testifies to both personal and historical memory. Foundation co-founder and former Bruce Weber model Durk Dehner met Tom because of a compelling image on a bathroom wall, and soon became the artist's muse, patron, and longtime friend. In this short video, Dehner and foundation vice president S.R. Sharp discuss Tom's radical imaginary, his command of the gay male gaze, how Tom of Finland got his name, and why Tom made the move to Los Angeles. Dehner has preserved the home he shared with Tom as a homage to Tom's legacy, and to this day, the home remains open to the public.

## Tom of Finland in Los Angeles

Drew Mackie



To those familiar with Tom of Finland, the very mention of his name brings to mind a display of prime beef that would put a butcher shop to shame. That's not an inaccurate image, but it doesn't come close to explaining the importance of Touko Laaksonen's art. His masterful drawings of the male form didn't just echo an emerging segment of gay male culture; they helped shape it.

Born Touko Laaksonen in Finland in 1920, Tom earned fans in the U.S. starting in 1957, with the publication of his first illustration in *Physique Pictorial*, a jolly lumberjack, shirtless and balancing on a log floating down a river. A **Bob Mizer-produced magazine**, *Physique Pictorial* boasted muscle-bound men in "health and fitness" spreads that circumvented laws prohibiting gay pornography in the United States. But more than just titillate readers, Tom of Finland sought to create a happy, masculine identity for the gay men who had otherwise only seen themselves portrayed in culture as comical sissies or psychological defects. In his essay for the Taschen collection **Tom of Finland XXL**, John Waters calls Tom the grand-

daddy of this cultural image of the big, swaggering gay man. "His drawings are beautiful, confident, sexy, totally original and butch-elegant. ... He invented a look, and you better respect it."

Durk Dehner, the president and co-founder of the **Tom of Finland Foundation**, agreed. "When I was growing up, there was nothing positive about being a homosexual," he said. "He gave the young, developing homosexual imagery that they could actually attach themselves to and feel good about."



Durk Dehner, photographed by Drew Tewskbury



Untitled, 1968, Courtesy Tom of Finland Foundation

By the time the Tom of Finland Foundation was established in Echo Park in 1984, the SoCal gym boom had made those primo physiques ever-so-slightly more attainable, and Freddy Mercury and Rob Halford had rocked decidedly Tom of Finland-esque aesthetics onstage. In that same Taschen book, Frankie Goes to Hollywood singer Holly Johnson, who once commissioned Tom of Finland-inspired costumes for the band's touring show, cites the more military-inspired aspects of the Tom of Finland look as having helped inspire the most subversively homoerotic movies in history. Writes Johnson,

*The '80s blockbuster "Top Gun" drew heavily on the visual theme of uniformed male partners. Tom Cruise's Maverick character played out a heterosexual love story that could not disguise the homoerotic setting. The liberating effect of Tom's men smiling lustfully in the bright light of day cannot be underestimated. No longer confined to the subterranean meat mazes of popular porn scenarios, his finely crafted icons are now out there for all to enjoy.*



Physique Pictorial Volume 10 Number 4, April 1961, Courtesy Bob Mizer Foundation, Inc.

Considering how international this new archetype for gay male masculinity had become, it's remarkable to think of Tom fine-tuning it in Echo Park, where he'd escape the cold Finnish winter months until his death in 1991. As a result his time here, Los Angeles benefits from the foundation's archives, which include not only the largest collection of Tom's work, but also the largest archive of erotic art in the world, at well over 100,000 items. The collection includes all manner of subject matter -- not just the homomasculine but also any art that by virtue of its erotic nature might encounter resistance from mainstream artistic society. Of course, the foundation focuses on promoting Tom of Finland art, and Dehner proudly recalled how in 1998 LACMA acquired a work of Tom's that ended up being displayed between a Hockney and a Matisse.

Story Continues Below  
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What perhaps makes the foundation's collection so outstanding, however, is its inclusion of artwork that even Tom of Finland diehards likely haven't seen before -- collage and photography. Some of the collages are visible at the **the Tom of Finland-Bob Mizer exhibition currently at MOCA's Pacific Design Center**. Image boards, in a sense, these reference pages feature the images that would eventually inspire Tom drawings, just jumbled into a more surreal anatomical combination than even his most populated artworks.



The real treasure hiding in the foundation -- in Tom's well-preserved bedroom, no less -- would have to be the photographs. Many of Tom's drawings were preceded by monochrome photographs that Tom would take of his models. Though Tom was never known for his photography, the shots are well-composed to the point that they could stand on their own as works of art. But the fact that Tom had to develop the film himself -- the subject matter would have often prevented him from going to commercial photo developers -- meant that art was truly and purely his, start to finish, conception to finished drawing.



Photo by Drew Tewksbury



Photo by Drew Tewksbury

In fact, Los Angeles has been home to few more masterful artists of the human body. Though Tom certainly focused almost exclusively on the male anatomy, he drew them in an idealized way that's unattainable except for the biggest of the big men on campus. Even with all the manly posturing, however, there's a certain kind of glee that holds these men back from full-on godhood: They're just too comfortable in their human forms, and they just find too much joy in the simple act of being human.

It's that joy that drew an eclectic mix to the opening of the Tom of Finland-Bob Mizer show in late November. True, the crowd included many gay men who grew up looking at Tom of Finland art, who were for the first time seeing them in high-res, offline, non-pirated format that allowed them to see every pencil swipe of hair on every exposed chest. But the crowd also included hand-holding straight couples, groups of women, blue-hairs and others that you might not necessarily expect at an ostensibly gay-centric, West Hollywood-based art show.



Untitled (From Jungle Seafood story), 1972, Courtesy Tom of Finland Foundation

This fact may be surprising to both admirers of Tom of Finland art and those just learning about it.

Dehner has a theory about the art's potential for wide appeal. "Everyone loves Tom of Finland," he said, noting that the turnout at most exhibitions is usually less than half gay people. "Any exposure they've had to him makes them feel good." Dehner said he recalled watching the French photographer **Rachel Laurent** stride around the room at a 2006 exhibition of Tom of Finland art in Paris. She looked ecstatic, and when Dehner asked her what she thought of the art, she offered the following response: "I have arrived at the bastion of freedom. Displayed here are the works of a man that didn't cower or inhibit himself in his expression of what was in his heart. He represents freedom for all of us."



Untitled (No.1 from Cyclist and the Farm Boy series), 1973, Courtesy Tom of Finland Foundation

Indeed, that freedom may be the most fantastical element to Tom of Finland's decidedly unreal works. Walking into the MOCA exhibition, you'd most likely be impressed most by the bulges -- muscular and otherwise, leather-covered and bare. Look long enough, however, and you'll notice that the men depicted are out in the open, experiencing a level of abandon that's rare even in the most liberal of contemporary societies. "The art shows men young and buff and happy, enjoying life without inhibition," Dehner said, explaining that this love of freedom transcends gender and sexuality. "Today, women are more liberated. And straight men are much more comfortable with themselves -- not so afraid of their own. And so Tom of Finland's men are great for anyone. They give a context for where our whole culture has gone."

Dehner -- who was also partner, model and muse to Tom of Finland, and whose likeness can be seen throughout Tom's work -- doesn't hesitate to underscore the importance of an artist whose vision became part of living, breathing culture and whose vision was so uniquely his own. "His technique is truly masterful, and that's why perception of him has changed from a pornographer to an illustrator to an artist and now finally to a master artist. He did not do just one masterwork; he did several, which is very rare."



Courtesy Tom of Finland Foundation

It remains to be seen how public opinion about Tom of Finland will evolve, especially in comparison to how mainstream sexual mores also change. In the book "Tom of Finland: His Life and Times," Tom revealed a measured vision of his legacy and looked toward the distant future with reserved optimism.

"I know my little 'dirty drawings' are never going to hang in the main salons of the Louvre, but it would be nice if -- I would like to say 'when,' but I better say 'if' -- our world learns to accept all the different ways of loving. Then maybe I could have a place in one of the smaller side rooms."

*The Tom of Finland-Bob Mizer show is on display at MOCA's Pacific Design Center through January 26.*

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Inside the temple to Tom of Finland



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↑  
BANNER OF TOM OF FINLAND'S ALTER EGO, KAKE, PAINTED BY ARTIST TAURUS WEBSTER, AT THE TOM OF FINLAND FOUNDATION HEADQUARTERS IN ECHO PARK, LOS ANGELES

# The leather man

A temple to Tom of Finland reveals how the artist beefed up the image of homosexuality, while his bulgingly priapic cops and cowboys are now raising the homoerotic to high art

PHOTOGRAPHY JACK PIERSON PRODUCER: MICHAEL REYNOLDS WRITER: RICHARD MEYER



## Smart Art

THIS 1910 HOUSE IN LA'S ECHO PARK, PURCHASED BY THE ARTIST'S FRIEND DURK DEHNER AND OTHERS IN 1979, BECAME HOME TO TOUKO LAAKSONEN (AKA TOM OF FINLAND) FROM 1980 UNTIL HIS PASSING IN 1991. TOM'S STUDIO IS BEHIND THE TOP FLOOR'S STAINED-GLASS WINDOWS, BANNERS AND WOODEN CUT-OUTS OF TOM'S ALTER EGO, 'KAKE', PAINTED BY ARTIST TAURUS WEBSTER, ADORN THE FRONT YARD. OUT FRONT IS DEHNER'S 1970 CHEVROLET EL CAMINO, THE 'TOM-MOBILE'. TODAY THE HOUSE IS THE HQ OF THE TOM OF FINLAND FOUNDATION, WITH DEHNER AS PRESIDENT, DEDICATED TO PRESERVING AND PROMOTING EROTIC ART

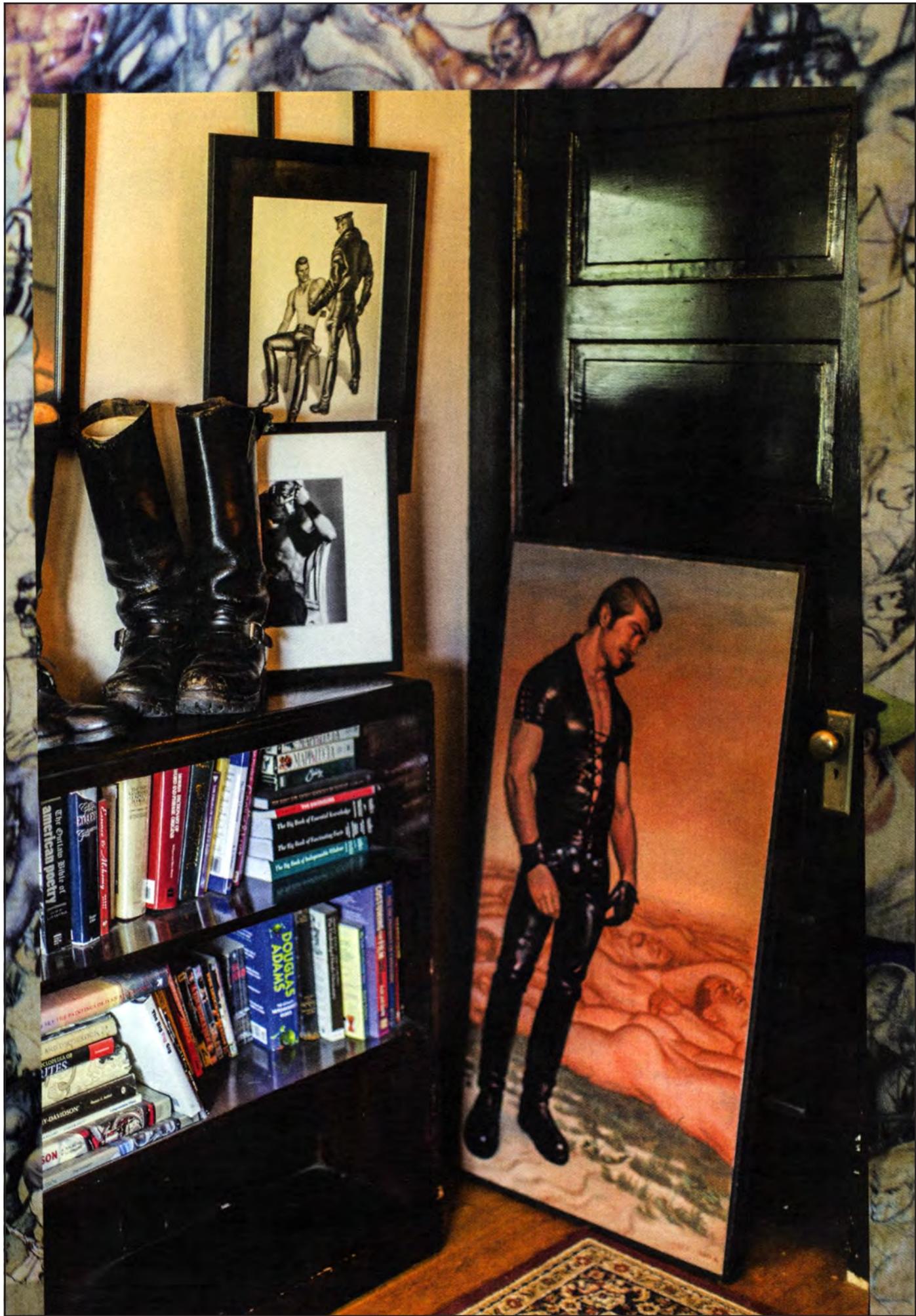




THIS PAGE, INSET, IN THE HOUSE'S REAR GARDEN, THE 'SUGAR SHACK' WAS ERECTED BY FOUNDATION MEMBER CARR GALEN AS 'A SANCTUARY WHERE ONE MIGHT WORK, READ AND FUCK'

OPPOSITE, IN ANOTHER OF THE GARDEN'S SEATING AREAS HANGS A BANNER BY TAURUS WEBSTER, COMMEMORATING AN ICONIC DRAWING BY TOM OF FINLAND FROM A





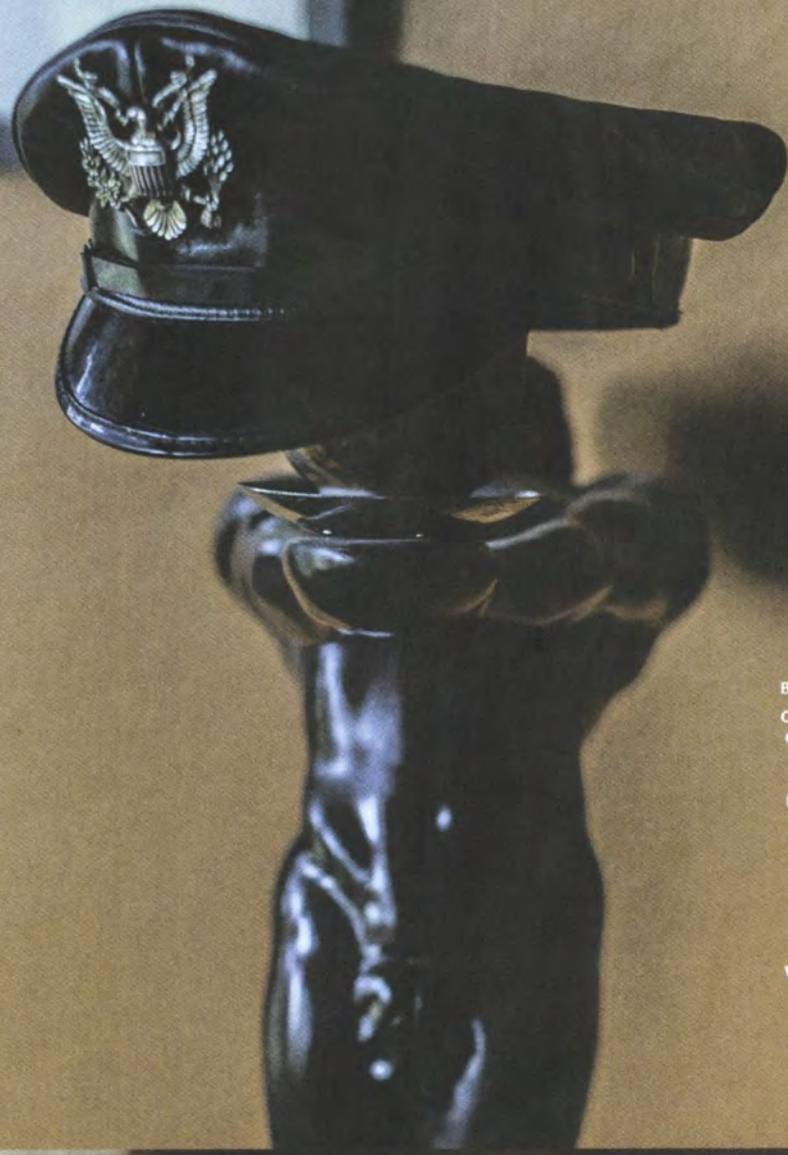


BACKGROUND, A DETAIL OF THE REAR PATIO'S BAR FRONT, COLLAGED WITH REPRODUCED TOM OF FINLAND ILLUSTRATIONS BY A FOUNDATION MEMBER

THIS PAGE, VINTAGE TOM OF FINLAND GRAPHITE DRAWINGS IN THE DINING ROOM. A TRAY BY FINNISH SCULPTOR PEKKA JYLHÄ AND A PLASTER REPLICA OF SCULPTOR VINCENZO DE ROSSI'S 16TH-CENTURY *HERCULES AND DIOMEDES*

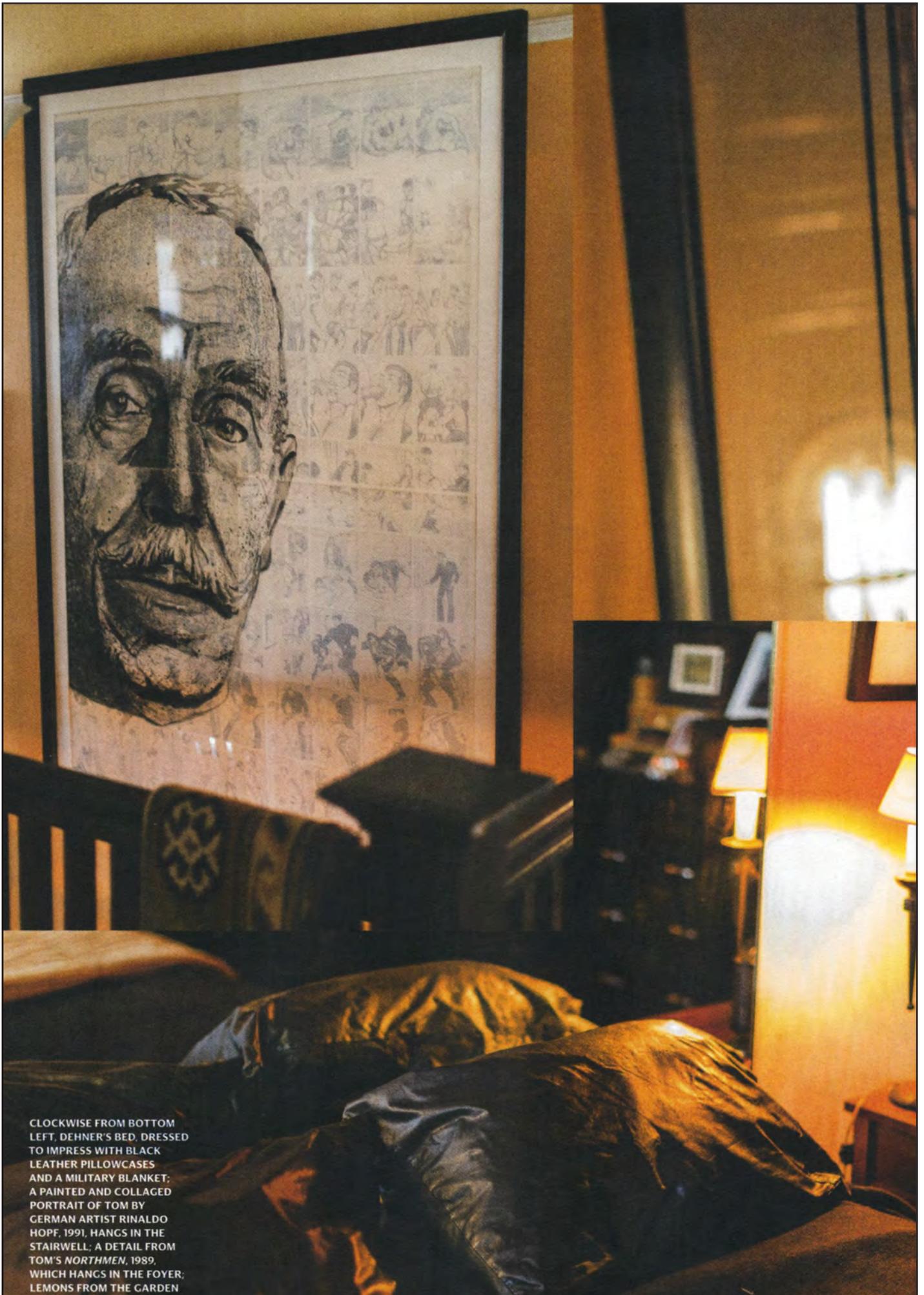
OPPOSITE, A PORTRAIT OF DURK DEHNER, PAINTED BY ARTIST BRUCE RAPP IN 1986. LEANS AGAINST A DOOR IN DEHNER'S BEDROOM. PEERING FROM BEHIND A PAIR OF LEATHER BOOTS IS A 1976 PHOTO OF DEHNER TAKEN BY BRUCE WEBER



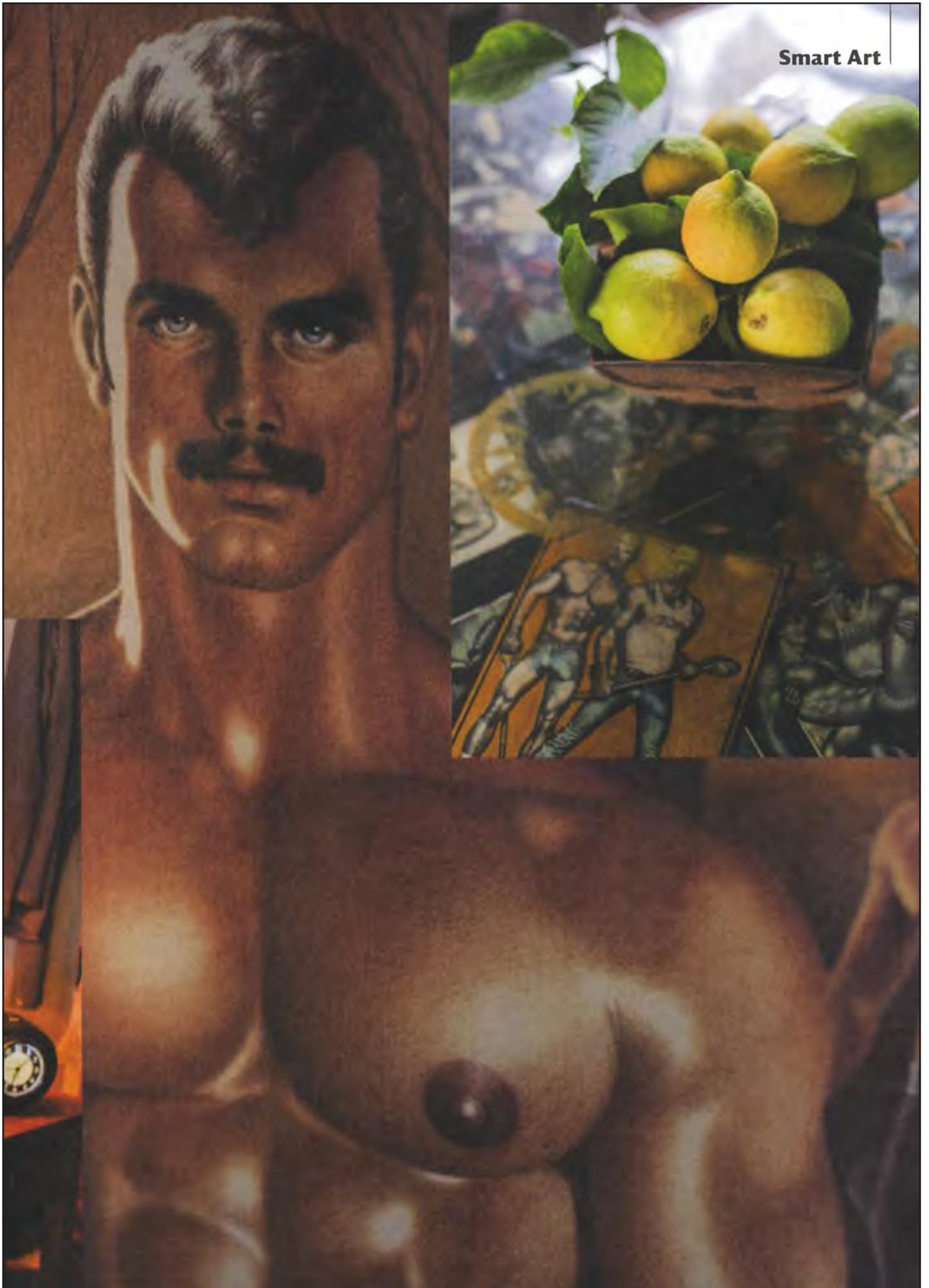


THIS PAGE, A LEATHER CAP LEFT ON TOP OF A 1980S MALE VERSION OF THE 1930 ART DECO LAMP 'CLARTÉ' BY MAX LE VERRIER. INSET, A DESKTOP DETAIL FROM TOM'S STUDIO, WITH THE ARTIST'S BRUSHES, PENCILS AND CHALKS OPPOSITE, REFERENCE BINDERS CATALOGUING MALE PHYSIQUE IMAGERY PRESERVED BY THE FOUNDATION ACT AS A BACKDROP TO AN INSET IMAGE OF DEHNER'S CUSTOM, DOUBLE-BUCKLE BOOTS FROM WESCO. FOLDED BENEATH THEM IS A PAIR OF CUSTOM LEATHER TROUSERS MADE BY 665 LEATHER, BELONGING TO SR SHARP, THE FOUNDATION'S VICE PRESIDENT AND CURATOR





CLOCKWISE FROM BOTTOM LEFT, DEHNER'S BED, DRESSED TO IMPRESS WITH BLACK LEATHER PILLOWCASES AND A MILITARY BLANKET; A PAINTED AND COLLAGED PORTRAIT OF TOM BY GERMAN ARTIST RINALDO HOPF, 1991, HANGS IN THE STAIRWELL; A DETAIL FROM TOM'S *NORTHMEN*, 1989, WHICH HANGS IN THE FOYER; LEMONS FROM THE GARDEN





In a palm tree-lined street in Echo Park, an increasingly hip neighbourhood near downtown Los Angeles, you'll find a beautifully preserved craftsman house from 1910. Apart from the 12ft hedges that run across the front of the property, little would seem to distinguish the residence from its well-kept neighbours. Step inside, however, and a different world comes into view.

Hundreds of works of erotic art spread across virtually all the 17 rooms in the house, as well as its backyard patio and terraced gardens. They range from a sculpted phallus called *Disco Boy*, made of tiny squares of mirrored glass, to a bird feeder fitted with delicately hand-painted scenes of bondage and discipline. A working fountain incorporating a urinal has been constructed in the backyard, while faux frescoes on the first and second floor ceilings present a veritable orgy of men pleasuring themselves and one another.

The house is the headquarters of the Tom of Finland Foundation, an organisation devoted to preserving the legacy of the most influential homoerotic artist of the 20th century. Across a career that spanned nearly 50 years, Tom created thousands of drawings of muscle-bound, bulgingly priapic sailors, soldiers, cops, cowboys, bikers and lifeguards. His pictures delight in the sheen of leather boots and motorcycle jackets and in the snug fit of sailor trousers and muscle shirts.

The male figures wearing those boots and trousers engage in exuberant acts of sexual exchange, often leaning toward fetishism and light bondage. For all their explicitness, Tom's drawings remain lodged within a fantasy world of illustration where every guy is impossibly well-endowed and endlessly open to the next erotic adventure.

The Tom of Finland house is also the private residence of Durk Dehner and SR Sharp, a couple who serve as the foundation's president and vice president, respectively. Dehner, a close friend, model and muse for Tom of Finland, co-founded the organisation with the artist in 1984. Originally conceived as a means to promote Tom's work and preserve his legacy, the foundation eventually expanded to support a wide range of erotic art – by both men and women – through exhibitions, life-drawing classes, erotic art fairs and an artist-in-residence programme.

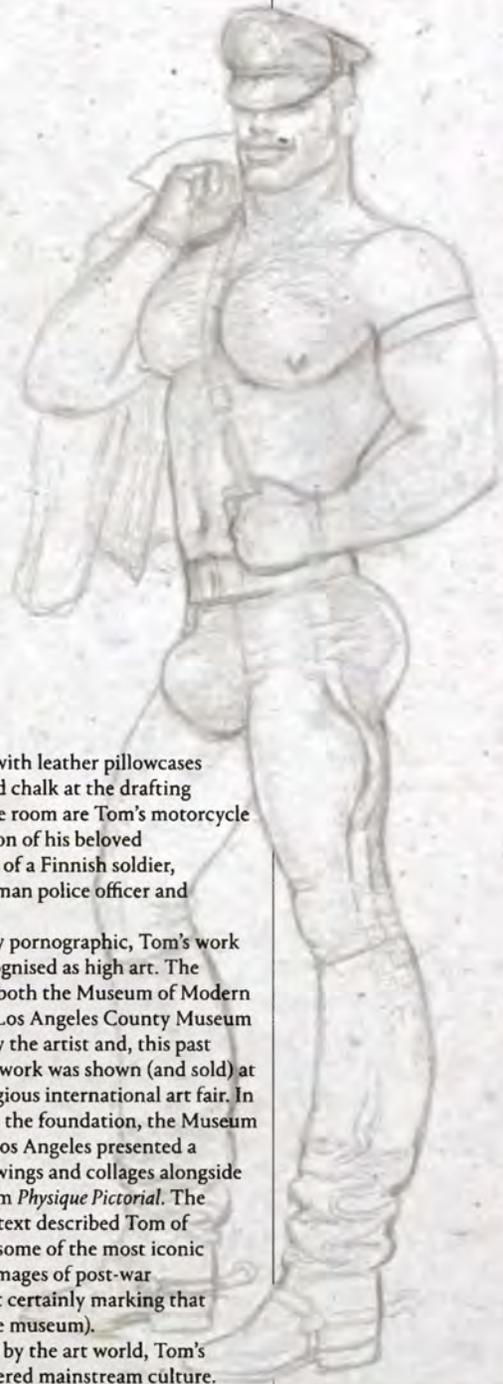
The foundation's early years coincided with the height of the Aids epidemic in America. Artists concerned that their work would be forgotten or destroyed after their deaths bequeathed it to the foundation knowing it would be archived and lovingly preserved. The foundation now possesses a permanent collection of approximately 3,500 works, some 150 of which are displayed in the home at any one time, often in thematic exhibitions curated by Sharp and Dehner. In addition, original drawings by Tom, as well as numerous reproductions and monumental blow-ups of his work, appear throughout the house and grounds.

The artist, born Touko Laaksonen, gained his professional moniker in 1957, when his drawings first appeared in the American magazine *Physique Pictorial*. The magazine's photographer/publisher, Bob Mizer, felt the artist's foreign name would be too difficult for readers to pronounce or remember so he dubbed him 'Tom of Finland'.

During the 1980s, Tom split his time between Helsinki and Los Angeles, ultimately basing himself entirely at the house in Echo Park (Dehner had purchased the home with friends). Tom's studio/bedroom in the converted attic has been preserved»



UNTITLED PREPARATORY DRAWINGS, GRAPHITE ON PAPER, BY TOM OF FINLAND FROM 1982 (THIS IMAGE) AND 1989 (TOP)



much as the artist left it, with leather pillowcases on the bed and pencils and chalk at the drafting table. Also displayed in the room are Tom's motorcycle jacket, boots and a selection of his beloved uniforms, including those of a Finnish soldier, an American sailor, a German police officer and a Canadian Mountie.

While unapologetically pornographic, Tom's work has increasingly been recognised as high art. The permanent collections of both the Museum of Modern Art in New York and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art include drawings by the artist and, this past June, a selection of Tom's work was shown (and sold) at Art Basel, the most prestigious international art fair. In 2013, working closely with the foundation, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles presented a show featuring Tom's drawings and collages alongside photographs by Mizer from *Physique Pictorial*. The exhibition's introductory text described Tom of Finland as 'the creator of some of the most iconic and readily recognisable images of post-war homomascularity' (almost certainly marking that word's official debut in the museum).

Alongside its elevation by the art world, Tom's work has increasingly entered mainstream culture. In September of this year, the Finnish postal service released stamps in honour of the artist, one of which features a drawing of a naked man's shapely buttocks and spread legs. According to Sharp, these are 'the first homoerotic postage stamps in the world'. The nomination of Tom for this honour was made by the foundation, which also worked on a companion show,

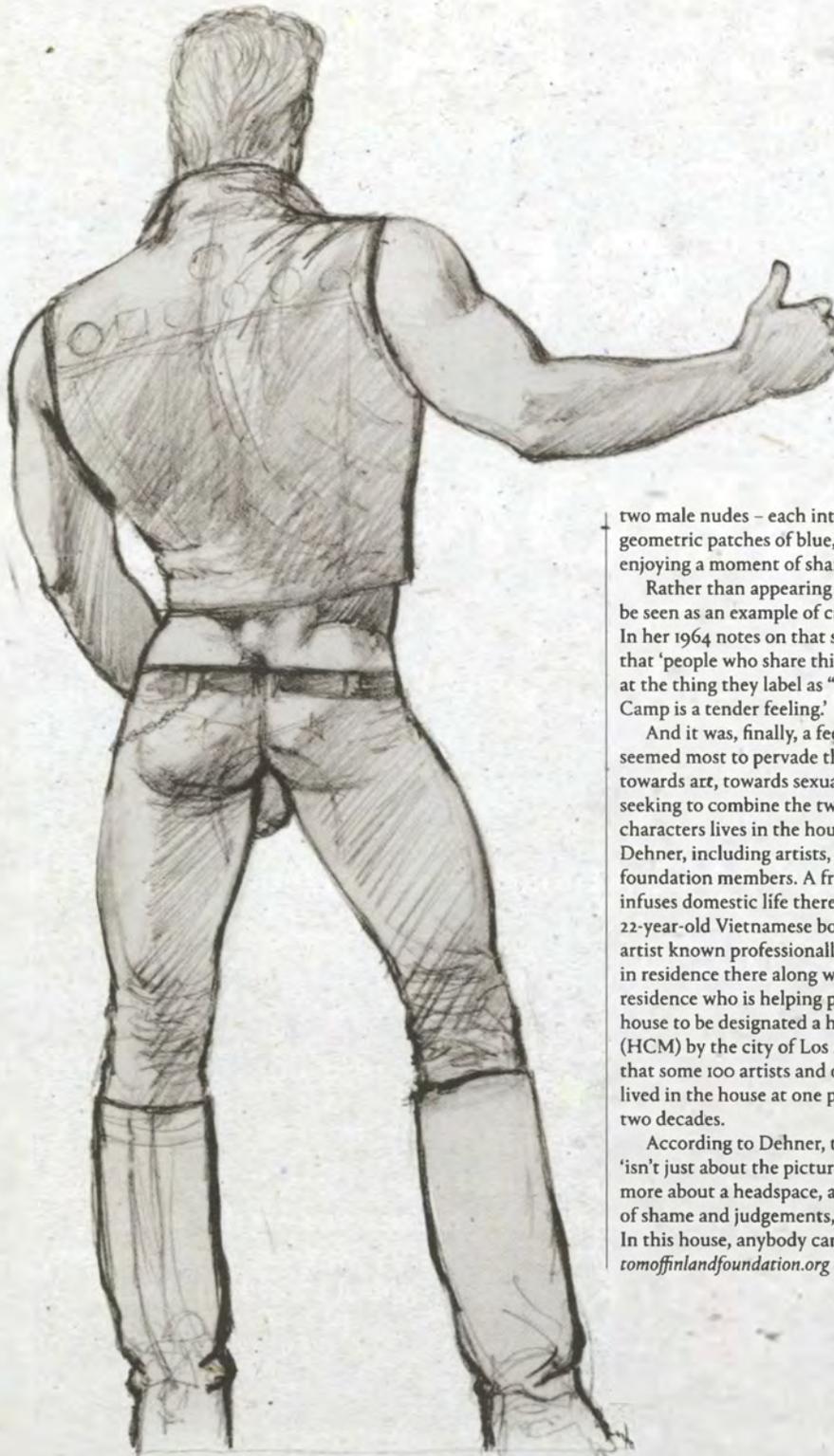
UNTITLED PREPARATORY DRAWING, 1987

**In honour of the artist, the Finnish postal service recently released 'the first homoerotic postage stamps in the world'**

currently on display at the Finnish Postal Museum in Tampere. Titled 'Sealed with a Secret: Correspondence of Tom of Finland', the show mines the artist's trove of letters and photographs to chart his life and work.

Tom's influence extends not only to other erotic artists but also to the development of gay culture across the second half of the 20th century. His drawings have inspired countless viewers not just to hit the gym or don a biker cap but also to imagine an alternative version of homosexuality. As Sharp puts it, 'when Tom's work first appeared in the 1950s, it defied the dominant image of gay men as sissies, fairies and pansies'. Tom's drawings offered a 'homo-masculine' ideal that spoke not only to the desires but also to the personal aspirations of his viewing audience. Some admirers of Tom's art even had their trousers tailored to fit more like those of the men in the drawings, then sent photographs of themselves wearing the refashioned attire to the artist. Such photographs may now be found in the correspondence archive held by the foundation.

And yet, what may finally be most inspiring about the Tom of Finland house is the way in which the artist's relentlessly butch aesthetic mingles with quite different styles of décor and domesticity. That aforementioned mirrored phallus (made by the artist Douglas Holtquist) sits beneath an art nouveau crystal chandelier from 1913. A bust of a bearded leatherman in the kitchen turns out, on closer inspection, to be a ceramic jar (the man's biker cap doubles as a removable lid) with a base bearing the inscription 'tuff cookie'. And a quilt spread across a guest room bed features»



two male nudes – each intricately composed of geometric patches of blue, white and black fabric – enjoying a moment of shared self-gratification.

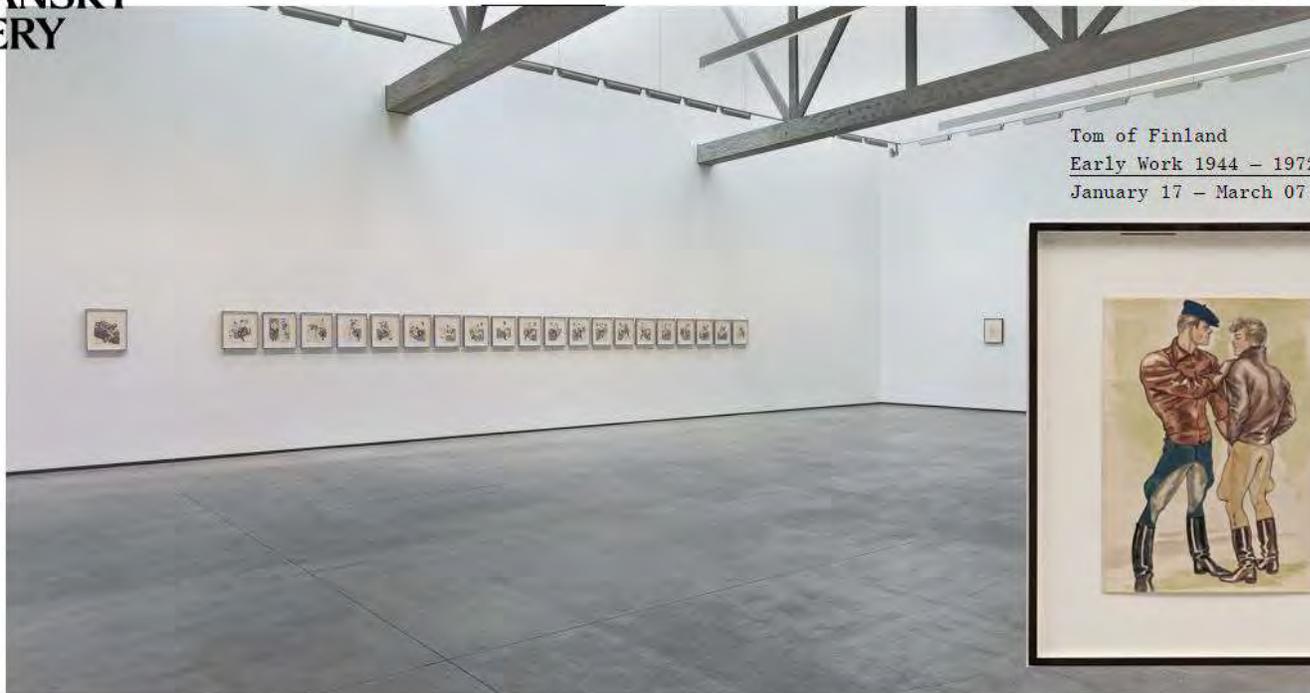
Rather than appearing kitsch, such objects might be seen as an example of camp at its most generous. In her 1964 notes on that subject, Susan Sontag wrote that ‘people who share this sensibility are not laughing at the thing they label as “a camp”, they’re enjoying it. Camp is a tender feeling.’

And it was, finally, a feeling of tenderness that seemed most to pervade the house, a tenderness towards art, towards sexuality and towards those seeking to combine the two. A rotating cast of characters lives in the house along with Sharp and Dehner, including artists, volunteers and fellow foundation members. A free-form, communal spirit infuses domestic life there. At the moment, a 22-year-old Vietnamese body modification performance artist known professionally as Miss Daphne Von Rey is in residence there along with an Australian writer-in-residence who is helping prepare an application for the house to be designated a historical-cultural monument (HCM) by the city of Los Angeles. Dehner estimates that some 100 artists and other creative souls have lived in the house at one point or another over the last two decades.

According to Dehner, the Tom of Finland house ‘isn’t just about the pictures [on display]. It’s much more about a headspace, a state of being, a letting go of shame and judgements, and a caring for one another. In this house, anybody can be a Tom’s man.’ ★  
[tomoffinlandfoundation.org](http://tomoffinlandfoundation.org)

DAVID  
KORDANSKY  
GALLERY

5130 W. Edgewood Pl.  
Los Angeles, CA 90019



Tom of Finland  
Early Work 1944 - 1972  
January 17 - March 07, 2015

Installation view

March 7, 2016



Season 1 | Episode 9 | Scene 23:41

CAST

John Waters

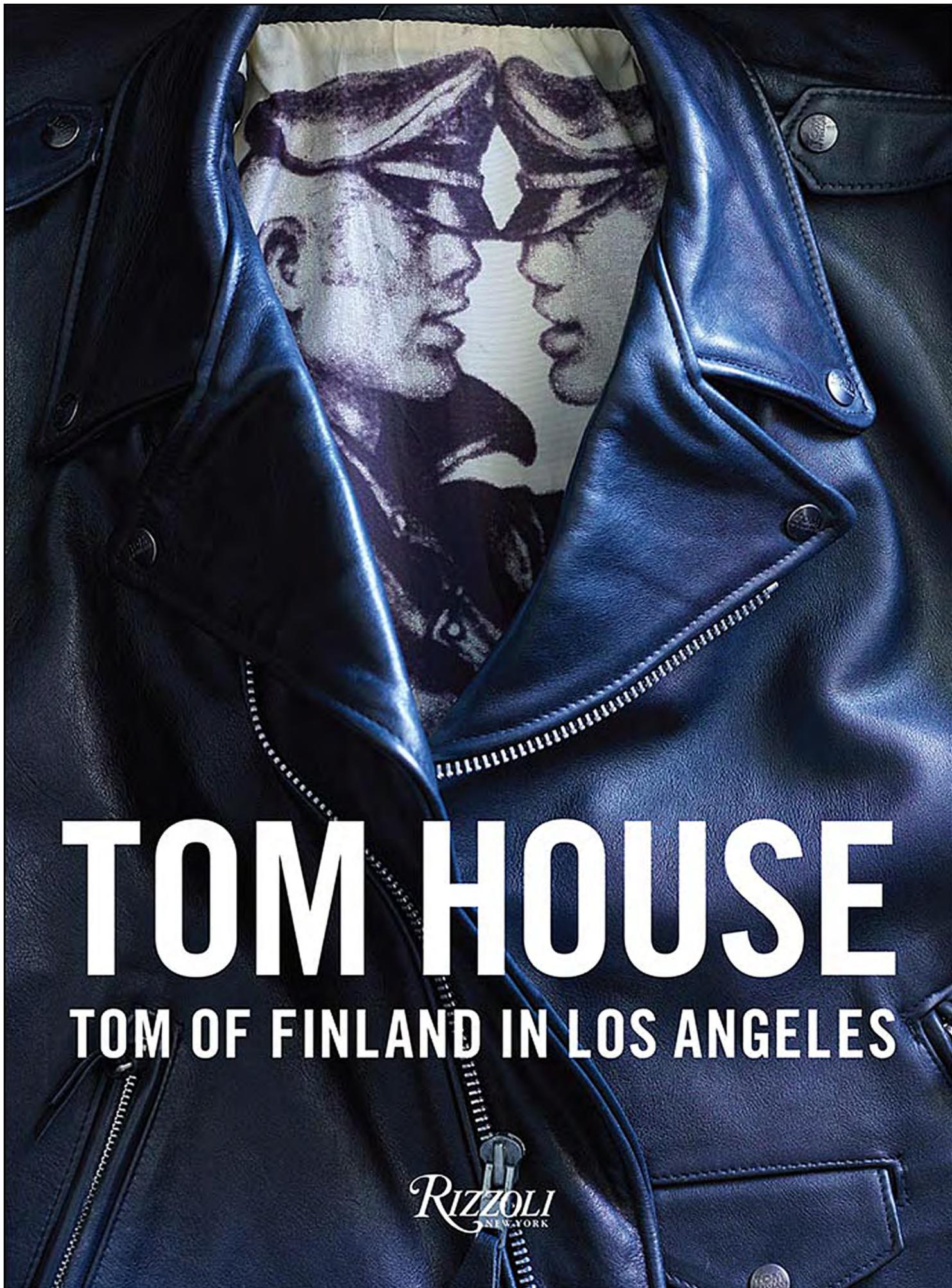
Peter Berlin

Stefan Kalmár, Artists Space

Dian Hanson, Taschen

Durk Dehner, Tom of Finland Foundation

*The New Yorker Presents - Episode 9: TOM OF FINLAND: The artist called Tom of Finland changed the image of gay men forever. Is his work porn, or is it art?*



# TOM HOUSE

TOM OF FINLAND IN LOS ANGELES

RIZZOLI  
NEW YORK

# TOM HOUSE

MICHAEL REYNOLDS / EDITOR

MAYER RUS / WRITER

MARTYN THOMPSON / PHOTOGRAPHER

*RIZZOLI*  
NEW YORK

New York Paris London Milan



Tom's World War II uniform hangs in the artist's attic bedroom. Photo: Martyn Thompson

## FOREWORD

### MAYER RUS

*Let's get a shot with the rimming chair, the stocks, and the chaise.* We're at 1421 Laveta Terrace in Echo Park, Los Angeles, home to the Tom of Finland Foundation and the men who administer it. The occasion is a photo session for this book, and as usual, the joint is jumping. Photographer Martyn Thompson is checking the light for his next picture. Michael Reynolds, the ingenious creative director, is busily arranging furniture—and trying to ignore the chorus of styling suggestions that has, inevitably, broken out among the assembly of gay bikers, leather-men, artists, and other miscellaneous friends of Tom.

In the alfresco bar/clubhouse, hard by the rimming chair and chaise, a silver-haired gentleman in a crisp white T-shirt and black leather vest is overheard telling a friend, "I just got back from Pebble Beach. My aunt has a house on the eighteenth fairway." Meanwhile, two guys engaged in light codpiece-on-codpiece frottage unexpectedly break out laughing. Then they disappear into one of the more private pavilions arrayed along the terraces of the steeply inclined hillside, affectionately dubbed "Pleasure Park."

Across the way, a shirtless beefcake wearing a leather apron and a tattoo that reads "Tom of Finland" across his well-muscled back is shaving the head of a fetching lad in a rickety barber chair. Another eye-catching figure dressed in a California Highway Patrol uniform asks a group of artists gathered around an easel which of his various leather dog hoods they prefer. The piped-in voices of Edith Piaf, Ella Fitzgerald, Dionne Warwick, and Leslie Gore waft over the scene, their plaintive melodies mixing with the pitter-patter from the pissoir water feature. Welcome to Tom House.

Tucked behind a monumental Eugenia hedge on a street of modest bungalows and apartment houses in the rapidly gentrifying Los Angeles neighborhood of Echo Park is one of the gay world's most idiosyncratic and authentic historical sites. Known officially as Tom House (or the Tom of Finland House), it is the place where the revolutionary Finnish homoerotic artist Touko Laaksonen (1920-1991) lived and worked for much of the last decade of his life.

The gabled Craftsman abode now serves as the headquarters of the Tom of Finland Foundation, containing a vast trove of artworks, correspondence, historical documents, and ephemera. But this is no ordinary shrine to a famous artist, trapped in amber, à la Jackson Pollock's studio in East Hampton or Paul Cézanne's dreamy atelier in Provence. For one thing, there are a lot more cocks: metal cocks and marble cocks, painted cocks and penciled cocks, cock kitchen magnets and cock throw pillows, cock collages and cock homages, black cocks and white cocks—cocks around the clock.

The parade of tumescent penises—the work of homoerotic artists from across the globe, Tom included—transcends mere pornography or kitsch (even if there is no shortage of either). Taken as a whole, the kaleidoscopic array embodies the unapologetically phallogocentric ethos that animates Tom House—an ethos cultivated for nearly four decades by the men who live there.

It's an extraordinary place, equal parts frat pad, utopian collective, art historical archive, sepulcher, community center, and den of iniquity. The character of the house morphs in response to whoever happens to be living there or visiting at any particular time. Some days, that might be a gaggle of art students or gay culture vultures; on other days, it might be a group of like-minded voluptuaries gathered for a sex party. Occasionally, it's all those things at once.

Volker Morlock, a longtime Tom of Finland collector and editor of a 1997 publication of the artist's work, aptly describes the residence as "a house of misfit toys, the last fortress of bohemia in a gay cultural landscape that wants desperately to be boring and well-adjusted."

The ringmaster presiding over this ever-changing circus of homoerotic artistry is Durk Dehner, president and cofounder of the Tom of Finland Foundation, the property's actual owner, and the man perhaps most responsible for reclaiming Tom's legacy from the ghettos of illustration and pornography. As much as the Echo Park abode is Tom's house, it is also Durk's house. Artist Richard Hawkins, who worked there as an office manager for five years after getting his MFA from CalArts in 1988, explains: "People who don't know the history of the place often think that this is the house that Tom of Finland's money built. It's really the house that Durk sacrificed his life for."

On this point, however, Dehner demurs. "It's my house, it's Tom's house, it's everyone's house who wants to be a part of it," he says, sounding a bit like Aunt Belle in *Jezebel*, as she opens the doors of her gracious Southern plantation: "My dear, Halcyon belongs to its guests."

Born in Calgary, Dehner seems to have been training for his role as keeper of Tom's flame from a very young age. He says that he was aware of his sexuality when he was five and that he began exploring men's bathrooms by age nine. He also recalls hanging out at local motorcycle shops, "polishing bikes and fetching sodas—anything to get a ride."

Decamping from Canada when he was 20, Dehner's peregrinations took him far and wide, from Los Angeles and New York to Uruguay and Hawaii. Evidence of his adventure-filled life can be found throughout Tom House. There are signed photos by Liza Minnelli and Grace Jones, two of Dehner's clients in the years he worked as a body therapist for a galaxy of high-profile personalities, including Rock Hudson; model shots of Dehner taken by Bruce Weber in New York in the mid-1970s; original Tom of Finland portraits consecrating Dehner's face and physique; and, in the kitchen, a crayon drawing by his granddaughter (he fathered a son when he was 16).

Dehner dates his Tom epiphany to 1976, when he saw one of the artist's typically hyper-charged, hyper-masculine images—Tom called them his "dirty drawings"—on an advertisement for a motorcycle club hanging in the Spike, a popular New York leather bar. "It was so powerful and seductive that it cast a spell over me. It moved me like nothing I'd ever seen," Dehner says.

Within days, Dehner got Tom's address in Helsinki from Dorn Orejudos (aka Etienne), the house artist at photographer Lou Thomas's Manhattan-based atelier of gay erotica, Target Studios.

Dehner initiated his correspondence with a fan letter, and when Tom spied the photographs Bruce Weber had taken of his admirer in *After Dark* magazine, his interest was piqued. The two finally met in the spring of 1978, when Dehner offered to host Tom on his first trip to America, which revolved around back-to-back exhibitions at Fey-Way Studios in San Francisco and Eons in L.A. The opening at Fey-Way—a gallery of gay art founded by Robert Opel, the man who famously streaked the Academy Awards in 1974—attracted a host of Tom aficionados, including Orejudos and photographer Robert Mapplethorpe. When they returned to L.A. for the presentation at Eons, Tom stayed with Dehner and his partner, George Rauch, in the Spanish-style house they rented in Silver Lake.

Tom was apparently smitten—both with Dehner and the sexually liberated milieu in which he flourished. The artist and his protege—Tom was 58 and Durk 28 at the time of their meeting—reconnected in New York in the fall of 1978 for a show Dehner had arranged at Stompers, composer Louis Weingarden's West Village boot shop-cum-gallery. By the time Tom returned to L.A. in late 1979, Dehner had pooled his resources with his current lover, his ex-lover, and his ex-lover's lover to purchase the house on Laveta Terrace. If that sounds like a set-up for a sexy sitcom, the truth is not far off—the place proved to be the perfect backdrop for romantic round robins and gay fellowship.

Completed in 1912, the capacious but timeworn dwelling retained a few vestiges of its Craftsman roots—notably, its dark oak paneling, sliding doors, and staircase—as well as vague hints of the Art Nouveau influence that had migrated from Europe at roughly the same time. In addition to ample outdoor space, the house possessed a partly finished cellar, which the new occupants quickly painted black and outfitted with a sling, leather gear, and other essentials of a proper gay dungeon. Dehner recalls a comic episode that occurred some years later, when a Maytag repairman descended into the cellar to fix the washing machine that was located, conveniently, near the dungeon's various apparatus: "I heard a scream and then saw the guy flee in horror. He didn't come back."

Sex naturally played a big part in the social life of the defiantly polygamous household, but other, less visceral forms of brotherly love set the overriding tone for the home. "There was always lots of activity and people. This was a place where we could simply be ourselves, a place without shame or judgment. It had a spiritual dimension," Dehner explains.

Underscoring the atmosphere of a butch hippie commune, a few members of the core circle actually adopted the same last name, Dehner, which they appropriated from a venerable Nebraska-based boot maker. Durk Dehner, who was born John Jonathan, Jr., also changed his forename to perpetuate a vivid adolescent fantasy. When he was 14, he stole a pair of sunglasses from a 1956 Ford he stumbled upon in a Vancouver park. "The name Durk was scratched on the side of the sunglasses, and I thought that sounded incredibly hot," he recalls. "I never saw the owner, but I must have jerked off a thousand times to the image in my head."

The Dehner Brotherhood, as it was known, included the four original occupants of the house—Durk's then ex-partner George Rauch became Butch Dehner—along with a circle of like-minded friends and lovers, including Tom. In 1980, the artist returned to Laveta Terrace, this time with his partner of many years, Veli Mäkinen. "Veli was very cool and reserved, like so many Finns," Dehner recalls, "but he ultimately gave his blessing to the business relationship I was developing with Tom. He knew Tom had been burned before, but he felt I could be trusted."

Following Mäkinen's death from cancer the following year, Tom began spending more and more time in L.A., eventually remaining in the U.S. for six months of the year, the maximum time afforded by his visa. Dehner describes the early years of Tom's residency as a giddy honeymoon. On road trips and bar visits, Dehner presented Tom, appropriately, as gay royalty. "He got to be young again in L.A.," Dehner says. "When I took him out to clubs, he saw firsthand that all the work he'd done in obscurity for so long had really taken hold. It made him happy to see all these young, sexy guys embracing the aesthetic he worked so hard to perfect."

In 1980, Tom and Dehner cofounded the Tom of Finland Company, effectively wresting control over the production and distribution of Tom's work in the U.S. from the unscrupulous printers and vendors who for years trafficked in pirated reproductions of inferior quality, with no royalties paid to the artist whatsoever. That issue, which had dogged Tom for decades, was a frequent subject in the letters he exchanged with Dehner early in their acquaintance. "Looking back to the ending year, it has been one of the most depressing and difficult in my life. Once again I found out, that I am the loser, damn naive idealist," Tom wrote in a letter dated December 31, 1980, discussing an exhibition at New York's Robert Samuel Gallery. Not only had the gallery failed to pay Tom for works purchased by collectors, it also produced and sold a wholly unauthorized set of Tom of Finland greeting cards.

That type of blatant exploitation with apparent impunity made Dehner's bold ideas for a self-sustaining Tom of Finland business enterprise all the more attractive. "What I wanted for Tom was empowerment—the same thing he had given to so many gay brothers. He was a seminal figure in gay history, but because of the nature of his work, he hadn't been given the respect and recognition he deserved," Dehner explains.

The Tom of Finland Company began by producing calendars, prints, and, most notably, a new installment in Tom's landmark *Kake* graphic novel series, which focused on the adventures of the titular protagonist, a leather-clad Adonis with an insatiable appetite for raunchy man-sex. *Kake in the Wild West*—Tom's first story fully executed in the U.S.—captured the artist's fascination with the outlaw spirit of the American West, graphically displayed in a saloon stocked with randy cowpokes eager for action.

When Tom was in L.A., he drew every day in his attic bedroom. He would have coffee each morning on one of the garden's lower terraces, then sequester himself for hours at his desk before coming down for lunch. "He needed two things to work—isolation and cigarettes," Dehner says. "The smoke was a kind of dreamy intoxicant, and as for the privacy, he once told me that he had to have a hard-on to produce a really great drawing. When the door was closed, he was not to be disturbed."

Today, Tom's room remains largely unchanged from the time of his residency. As one might expect, there is an array of personal memorabilia on display: his officer's uniform from World War 11 bearing the medal presented to him while he served as a second lieutenant in the Finnish Army; leather boots; containers filled with pencils, markers, and brushes; a well-traveled leather suitcase; and a framed sheet of music composed by the artist, who had studied at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki after the war.

The decidedly unpretentious room also features an assortment of Tom of Finland merchandise produced at various points during the artist's lifetime and afterward. There are racks of clothing—flannel shirts, leather jackets, and pants, all bearing Tom's imagery—from the namesake apparel line designed by Gary Robinson and David Johnson from 1996 to 2002. The bed Tom slept on is now covered in Tom-themed sheets and pillowcases fabricated, more recently, by the Finnish home goods company Finlayson. And mingling among the faded postcards and family photographs displayed on a bookcase is an articulated Tom of Finland action figure with interchangeable feet, hands, and penises, both cut and uncut—think of it as Mr. Potato Dick.

As the business of the Tom of Finland Company at long last brought a measure of financial stability, Tom and Dehner turned their attentions to Tom's legacy. In 1984, they established the nonprofit Tom of Finland Foundation with the express purpose of documenting and preserving the artist's vast archive, much of which Tom brought from Finland on his yearly trips. However, in 1986, with the AIDS pandemic showing no signs of abating, the Foundation widened its purview and began accepting the work of other homoerotic artists. "We took in collections that had no place to go because of the stigma attached to the subject matter. The artists' families normally didn't want it, museums and institutions didn't want it, and there was no viable commercial market," Dehner says.

During the bleakest years of the AIDS crisis, Tom House hosted roughly 50 memorial ceremonies by Dehner's account. Many of the artworks that now blanket the walls and ceilings of the residence exude a palpable sense of loss, but their very existence represents the triumph of memory and celebration over the bitter ravages of disease. Were it not for the Foundation, the names of many of these artists might easily have been lost to history. Instead, their creations helped define—and continue to perpetuate—the vital, sex-positive spirit that animates Tom House.

The sheer volume of material that flooded into the house over the years created serious challenges for the Foundation's tiny staff and volunteer corps, which was already struggling to organize and catalog not only Tom's archive of drawings but also a mountain of correspondence, vintage magazines, press clippings, bills of sale, and countless other historical artifacts. All of this material is collected in endless boxes, binders, portfolios, and storage containers crammed into every possible nook and cranny of the house. The treasures of the collection are housed in a safe in a repurposed refrigerated cargo container in the back of the house.

Despite the herculean efforts required to bring order to its vast holdings—an ongoing and seemingly endless process—the Foundation has, in the years after Tom's death, accomplished great things. Dehner and S. R. Sharp, vice president of the Foundation and a full-time resident of Tom House since 2008, regularly host an ambitious schedule of fundraisers, dinner parties, live drawing classes, solo and group art exhibitions, symposia, and community meetings—all in addition to the House's ongoing mission to provide a refuge for at-risk youth and struggling artists.

"The timbre of the events shifts from academic to festive to raunchy," explains Sharp, a former municipal gallery manager who came to Hollywood and worked on the moralizing television drama *7th Heaven* for years before the show ended in 2007. Sharp recalls a particularly memorable visit from a group assisting the Foundation in utilizing technology as a means of disseminating information to the widest possible audience. "There was a potentially awkward moment when I was taking the librarians through the house. We were walking by a cheap bust of David and I noticed a dried-up, used condom nestled in his curls," he remembers.

The Los Angeles Band of Brothers, a self-described "mentoring and fraternal organization" made up of title holders who have competed in the Mr. Los Angeles Leather Contest, holds monthly meetings (and an annual sex party) at Tom House, underscoring the fundamental connection between Tom's artwork and the leather community. LABB member Shad Cruz explains that leather is the common denominator for a wide-ranging group of fetishists whose interests extend to sports gear, latex, neoprene, and fur. "It's an identifier, a way of signaling that you're into risqué sex," he says. "Leather is the fabric of our lives."

Marc Bellenger, who holds the title of Mr. Long Beach Leather 2013, moved into the house in late 2014, supporting the Foundation's work with responsibilities that range from "fundraising to changing the toilet paper," he says. He likens LABB's summertime "play party for men" to an exclusive event at the Scientology Celebrity Centre in Los Feliz. "The screens go up, no one can see in, the music comes on, and then the fun starts," he says.

Beyond hosting librarians and leathermen, the Foundation has produced 25 Tom of Finland Art Fairs at different venues in Los Angeles and New York since 1995, helping to build an extensive network of artists and collectors. It also sponsors a biennial emerging artist competition and an artist-in-residence program. Michael Kirwan, whose erotic imagery celebrates everyday guys as sex gods, became the first visiting artist by default: in 2005, when he came to Tom House to mount his first solo exhibition, a hurricane destroyed his apartment in Fort Lauderdale. Dehner invited him to stay at the house for whatever length of time he needed to regroup, and Kirwan never returned to Florida.

Of course, the Foundation has been indefatigable in pursuing its original mission to promote Tom's work and see it recognized as a revolutionary force in the history of 20th-century art, culture, and gay politics. Over the years, Dehner has found many art-world allies with progressive sensibilities that allowed them to see Tom's work as something beyond mere illustration or pornography. Artist Richard Hawkins has remained a faithful friend and eminence grise. Hudson, the prescient, mononymous force behind New York's Feature gallery, began exhibiting Tom's drawings in 1988 and was the first gallerist to acknowledge the importance of Tom's preparatory sketches and collages. Artist Nayland Blake penned a wide-ranging "appreciation" of Tom's work—including poignant commentary on Tom's representation of black men and his use of Nazi imagery—in the Fall 1988 issue of *Outlook*. Richard Marshall, the adventurous Whitney Museum curator and art advisor, wrote the essay for the catalog of the third retrospective of Tom's work, published by the Foundation in 1997.

Los Angeles gallery owner David Kordansky, who represents the work of Tom of Finland, has become a clarion voice in promoting a wider appreciation of Tom's oeuvre. "The work has not yet been subjected to the kind of criticality and scholarship that it merits. It's so much more than a garnish for West Hollywood coffee tables," he insists. "There's a politic involved, and it's pretty fucking radical." Kordansky is particularly eloquent on the subject of Tom's preparatory drawings: "They are the central station of his desire and the arena in which he exercised his imagination. You can see Tom's mind and libido rendered through his hand."

Kordansky is equally enthusiastic about Tom's collages (or "reference pages," as the artist called them), which combine imagery of men lifted from both mainstream publications and illicit gay magazines along with Tom's own photography.

Tom's sketches and collages featured heavily in *Tom of Finland: The Pleasure of Play*, an exhibition that opened at New York's Artists Space in June 2015. That show was, at the time, the most comprehensive survey of Tom's work ever mounted, marking a milestone in the quest for institutional recognition.

Thankfully, Tom got a small taste of the acclaim that was to come before he succumbed to emphysema in Helsinki in 1991. The year before, he was honored in his homeland by the Finnish Comics Society, and mere weeks before his death, he saw a screening of the as-yet-unreleased Finnish documentary *Daddy and the Muscle Academy*, which paid tribute to the artist in a series of interviews and curious tableaux vivants intercut with flashing images of Tom's drawings. The artist also lived just long enough to learn that his "dirty drawings" had made their way into the Whitney Museum's Biennial of 1991, where they rubbed shoulders with the work of Jasper Johns, Roy Lichtenstein, Mike Kelley, Cindy Sherman, and David Wojnarowicz.

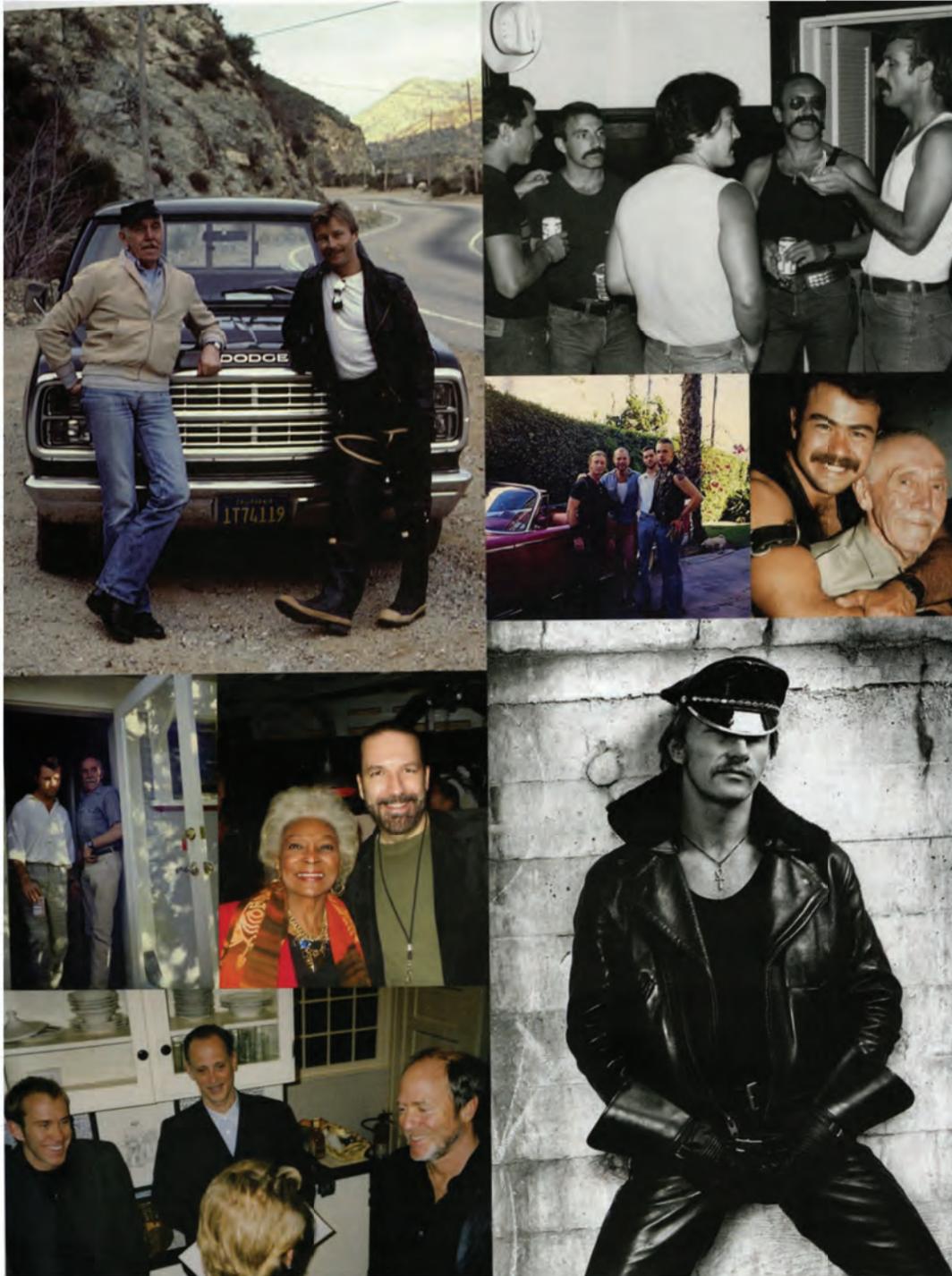
Today, the work of the Foundation continues apace while the maverick spirit of Tom House remains happily undiluted. The Foundation is currently going through the process of registering the property as an official Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument, and the level of activity and energy has only accelerated as Tom's work reaches an ever-expanding global audience. The house is rife with evidence of triumphs great and small—from numerous museum requests to an increasingly varied array of Tom-themed merchandise. The Foundation has recently brokered agreements for a collection of high-end Tom of Finland carpets produced by the Swedish rug maker Henzel Studio, as well as a Tom-branded line of "pleasure tools" that encompasses lubricants, restraints, nipple clamps, an array of insertables, and a collector's edition dildo modeled on Kake's famous cock—the *La Jaconde* of the dildo world.

Like Torahs to the Jews, dildos are sacred objects at Tom House—one cannot simply throw them out with the garbage when they become old and worn. In the sanctum sanctorum of the dungeon, used dildos mingle with assorted chains, nooses, dog collars, cock rings, shackles, hoods, altars, offering cups, and the odd bust of Hitler. A postcard mounted on a wall bears the irresistible message "I love the smell of manhole in the morning." Here as throughout Tom House, humor coexists with raw sexuality, bonhomie with passion, and quotidian tchotchkes with masterpieces of erotica.

On the day Dehner led me on a tour of the musky basement lair, NPR news was playing on the loudspeakers, striking a note that would seem discordant were it not for the genial, affectionate air that pervades even the darkest corners of the home. At Tom House, everyone is welcome, everyone is accepted, and all things considered.



Durk Dehner on the front porch of Tom House, c. 1985.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Tom and Durk at Mt. Baldy, 1986; Tom House, c. 1980; Tom with Mike Pereyra, c. 1989; friends of ToFF, c. 1995; Durk, 1978; John Waters and Greg Gorman, 2001; Tom and Durk, 1986; Nichelle Nichols with ToFF volunteer Harry Schlager, 2015.

## A visit to TOM House in Echo Park

Posted on 29th March 2016



HOSTED BY FRANCES ANDERTON 10 min, 55 sec | Photos from book launch by Boots Bryant

**Frances Anderton** talks with **Marc Ransdell-Bellenger**, Tom of Finland Foundation; **Michael Reynolds**, creative director; and **Mayer Rus**, essayist, journalist and design authority.

We visit TOM House, a museum and mecca for Leathermen and admirers of the homoerotic illustrations of Tom of Finland.

SurveyLA  
LGBT Historic Context Statement  
City of Los Angeles  
Department of City Planning  
Office of Historic Resources

September 2014

Prepared by:



With contributions from:

Carson Anderson, Senior Architectural Historian, ICF/Jones & Stokes  
Wes Joe, Community Activist

**Certified Local Government Grant Disclaimers**

SurveyLA  
LGBT Historic Context Statement

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LAICA donors. While the controversy in Los Angeles quickly faded, an exhibition of his work in 1989 that included photographs from "X Portfolio" resulted in museums and curators charged with obscenity.<sup>174</sup> Although Mapplethorpe is indelibly a New York artist, much of his life's work is in Los Angeles at the J. Paul Getty Museum and Los Angeles County Museum of Art.



**Figure 28:** "Hustlers, Selma Avenue," Anthony Friedkin, 1971. Source: <http://www.drkrm.com/friedkin.html>.

Artists have also used the medium of photography to chronicle LGBT culture for themselves as well as for the larger society. Anthony Friedkin is a Los Angeles native who, at the young age of 19, began chronicling gay life in San Francisco and Los Angeles in his "The Gay Essay" photographic project.<sup>175</sup> Between 1969 and 1973, Friedkin produced dozens of black and white images as part of his essay, which is now considered one of the most extensive and important historical records of the gay community during the period.<sup>176</sup> The images were first shown in Europe and

Asia due to the attitude towards the subject matter in the United States at the time, but have since been displayed and published worldwide. His work is also found in major art collections such as the New York Modern Museum of Art and the J. Paul Getty Museum.<sup>177</sup> Friedkin completed subsequent photo essays that were equally as poignant, including the "Beverly Hills Essay," "The Hollywood Series," "California Prisons," and "Los Angeles." He is still living and working in the Los Angeles area.

### Erotic Artists

While magazines such as *Physique Pictorial* could be sold on newsstands under the pretext that they promoted physical fitness, an underground market developed for far more explicit imagery. The leader in gay erotica was the artist known as Tom of Finland. Born Touko Laaksonen in 1920, he was raised in a small town in Finland and eventually established Los Angeles as his part-time home. Growing up, he was intrigued by the masculine figures—such as farmers and loggers—that surrounded his countryside home. He took an interest in art and music at an early age, and went on to attend an art school in Helsinki to study advertising. During his studies, World War II broke out, and he was conscripted to the Finnish Army; during his time as a lieutenant he had his first

<sup>174</sup> "Crackdowns on Creativity," *Time Magazine*, April 5, 2011, [http://content.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,2063218\\_2063273\\_2063220,00.html](http://content.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,2063218_2063273_2063220,00.html);

[http://content.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,1902809\\_1902810\\_1905179-1,00.html](http://content.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,1902809_1902810_1905179-1,00.html)

<sup>175</sup> Advocate.com Editors, "Anthony Friedkin: The Gay Essay," March 28, 2014, accessed May 12, 2014, <http://www.advocate.com/arts-entertainment/art/photography/2014/03/28/anthony-friedkin-gay-essay>.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid.

<sup>177</sup> "Anthony Friedkin: Gay, A Photographic Essay, 1969-1972," DRKRM Gallery, accessed May 12, 2014, <http://www.drkrm.com/friedkin.html>.

sexual encounters with other enlisted men, which would inspire much of his artwork. After the war he returned to art school and worked as a freelance designer in advertising, and piano player for local cafes.<sup>178</sup>



**Figure 29:** "Untitled," Tom of Finland, 1973. Source: <http://www.kcet.org/arts/artbound/counties/los-angeles/tom-of-finland-bob-mizer-moca.html>.

Word of his artwork got out, and a friend convinced Touko to submit samples to *Physique Pictorial* in 1957. Erring on the side of caution, he submitted his work under the name "Tom," and when it was credited in the spring issue of the magazine as "Tom of Finland," his pseudonym was coined. Demand for his work grew, and he was eventually able to quit design work and give "Tom of Finland" his undivided attention. His first exhibition was in 1973 in Hamburg, Germany; the exhibit was so popular, all but one of his pieces were stolen. He was hesitant to put on another show after the

experience, but in 1978 he had his second exhibition in Los Angeles, which led to many more and frequent trips to the United States. Eventually, he was spending almost as much time in Echo Park as he did Finland, until his death in 1991.<sup>179</sup>

The Tom of Finland Foundation, which he founded in 1984, was formed to catalog his own work as well as to provide a "safe haven" for similar artwork. The foundation seeks to protect erotic art from discrimination by presenting it within the appropriate context, so it can be appreciated and acknowledged free from the opposition that its subject matter might cause. The foundation is housed in the Echo Park Craftsman that Tom called his home away from home.<sup>180</sup>

### Lesbians in the Feminist Art Movement

Even in the liberal art community, female artists (both straight and un-straight) struggled for recognition in a male-dominated world. Although women played leadership roles at *ONE Magazine*, they longed for separate spaces and organizations from men. Lesbians were beginning to wonder if they had more in common with the feminist movement than the gay liberation movement. In Los Angeles, one of the most compelling examples of the attempt to create a lesbian space within the context of the feminist art movement was the creation of The Woman's Building.<sup>181</sup>

<sup>178</sup> Valentine Hooven III, "Tom of Finland: A Short Biography," *Tom of Finland Foundation*, 1992, accessed May 12, 2014, <http://tomoffinlandfoundation.org/foundation/touko.html>.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>180</sup> "Purpose Statement," *Tom of Finland Foundation*, accessed May 12, 2014, <http://tomoffinlandfoundation.org/foundation/purpose.html>.

<sup>181</sup> Moira Rachel Kenny, *Mapping Gay LA: The Intersection of Place and Politics* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2001) 126.

In the early 1970s, three women working at the California Institute of the Arts were frustrated with the art programs offered at the school. Judy Chicago, Arlene Raven, and Sheila de Bretteville formed an independent women's art school that they called the Feminist Studio Workshop (FSW). The earliest classes were held in Bretteville's house but by 1973 they had enough students to lease room in the two-story building that once housed the Chouinard Art Institute. They would call their new facility The Woman's Building. They added more female artists to the faculty and shared the space with other female-operated organizations such as the National Organization of Women and the Associated Feminist Press.<sup>182</sup> Although The Woman's Building was first and foremost a feminist organization, it was a supportive environment that encouraged artistic expression and personal growth, and a place where many female artists came out as lesbians.<sup>183</sup>

In 1977, the FSW began one of their biggest projects, the Lesbian Art Project (LAP). LAP sought to redefine lesbian culture and promote a more glamorous and less "somber" self-image through social events, salons, and art shows. These events ran through 1979. The FSW's next large-scale project was the Great American Lesbian Art Project (GALAS) beginning in 1980. During GALAS, the women of the FSW discussed the current state of lesbian art while holding simultaneous exhibitions across the United States, ranging from full-blown museum galleries to underground shows in private venues. Photographs of the shows were collected in Los Angeles, converted to slides and submitted to four LGBT archives. The project sought to increase the visibility of lesbian artists and promote a dialogue about the feminist and lesbian communities.<sup>184</sup> GALAS was addressed in the mainstream arts media in Los Angeles, and was inclusive of lesbians of color, a portion of the community that had, until then, been largely overlooked and hesitant to participate for fear of discrimination.<sup>185</sup>

### **Fine Artists**

The line between commercial and fine art has always been blurry, especially as each has influenced the other during the 20th century. While commercial art is created on-demand by a company and is usually intended for mass exposure, fine art is created primarily for aesthetics purposes. Many of the most important American fine artists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century have been gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender persons, and during the 1960s and 1970s they became increasingly visible. In some cases, their sexual orientation or gender identity had no apparent influence over the content of their work, while in other cases it was a constant and clear presence.

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<sup>182</sup> Laura Meyer, "The Los Angeles Woman's Building and the Feminist Art Community, 1973-1991," in *The Sons and Daughters of Los: Culture and Community in L.A.*, ed. David E. James (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2003), 44-47.

<sup>183</sup> Faderman and Timmons, 187.

<sup>184</sup> Kenny, 130-131.

<sup>185</sup> "American Art: Lesbian, Post-Stonewall," *GLBTQ: An Encyclopedia of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Culture*, accessed May 12, 2014, [http://www.glbtq.com/arts/am\\_art\\_lesbian\\_post\\_stonewall,2.html](http://www.glbtq.com/arts/am_art_lesbian_post_stonewall,2.html).



**Figure 30:** "Christopher Isherwood and Don Bachardy," David Hockney, 1968. Source: [http://www.hockneypictures.com/works\\_paintings\\_60.php](http://www.hockneypictures.com/works_paintings_60.php)

David Hockney, one of the most acclaimed artists of the late 20th century, is British, but much of his work is inspired by Los Angeles, where he has lived off and on since 1964. Unlike other openly gay artists such as Andy Warhol and Ellsworth Kelly, Hockney candidly explored the nature of same-sex attraction in his portraiture. It should be noted that during the 1960s, the height Pop Art and Abstract Expressionism, figurative art was considered unfashionable. Thus, the abstract tradition in which most artists were working at the time did not lend itself to overt expressions or depictions of same-sex attraction and sexuality.

Hockney's "We Two Boys Together Clinging" (1961) is a rare example inspired by the Walt Whitman poem.

While Hockney was associated with the British Pop Art movement, a visit to Los Angeles inspired him to make a series of paintings of swimming pools in a highly realistic style. In Los Angeles, he began to paint portraits of his friends and acquaintances, including Christopher Isherwood and Don Bachardy. Hockney rented a house in Nichols Canyon and later bought the property and added a studio. He now spends most of his time in England.



**Figure 31:** "Jerry Brown," Don Bachardy, 1984. Source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gubernatorial\\_portrait\\_of\\_Jerry\\_Brown](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gubernatorial_portrait_of_Jerry_Brown)

Don Bachardy is arguably L.A.'s most celebrated portrait painter. Working primarily with acrylics and watercolors, his style is quasi-abstract. He was born in Los Angeles in 1934, and trained at the Chouinard Art Institute (which, coincidentally, would later become The Woman's Building). His first exhibition was at the Red Fern Gallery in London in 1961. One of his most famous portraits is also one of the least popular, Jerry Brown during his first term as governor of California (1975-1983). Bachardy's painting of Brown boldly broke with the longstanding tradition of gubernatorial portraits that favored realism.

Bachardy is almost as well known for his portraits as for his longtime relationship with author Christopher Isherwood. Though there was a considerable age difference between them, they remained partners for years, living together in their Brentwood home until the death of Isherwood in 1986. The two collaborated on projects, and much of Bachardy's work consists of

portraits of Isherwood. In the late 1980s, he painted the portraits of twelve gay rights leaders. Bachardy has been exhibited a number of times in solo art shows across the United States and his work has been published in numerous volumes.<sup>186</sup>

While artists such as Hockney and Barchardy worked within the recognized conventions of the contemporary art world, a younger generation of LGBT artists was beginning to move into riskier territory. Visual artists began collaborating with one another as well as poets, musicians, and dancers and broaching more political themes in their work. A group of Mexican American artists with roots in the Chicano movement emerged in Boyle Heights and East Los Angeles in the late 1960s. During this highly politicized period, artists such as Robert Legoretta employed performance art to explore issues of gender, race, and sexual identity. Best known by his performance persona Cyclona, Legoretta began collaborating with Edmundo "Mundo" Meza and Glugio "Gronk" Nicandro on performances including "Caca Roaches Have No Friends" (1969), "La Loca en Laguna, the Liberation of Laguna Beach" (1971), and "Cyclorama" (1972). These highly planned and executed performances, which sometimes used murals as backdrops, were captured by photographs. Gronk was a founding member of the multi-media arts collective ASCO that included Harry Gamboa Jr., Willie Herrón, and Patssi Valdez.<sup>187</sup>

With the LGBT artists of the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s paving the way, a vibrant LGBT art community emerged in the 1980s and is still thriving today. In 2011, ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archive, in conjunction with the Getty Foundation put on an exhibit curated by David Frantz and Mia Locks called *Cruising the Archive: Queer Art and Culture in Los Angeles, 1945-1980*. The exhibit, shown in three parts, was the largest and most comprehensive showing of the ONE Archive's extensive art collection to date.<sup>188</sup>

There are no currently designated resources associated with this theme. The following table describes known resources associated with cultural organizations and institutions as well as LGBT persons who were prominent in the visual arts. Eligibility Standards address cultural property types such as gallery spaces as well as the homes and studios of historically significant persons.

### Known Resources

Resource Name	Location	Comments
Don Bachardy Residence/Studio	/	Bachardy (1934-0000) is arguably L.A.'s most celebrated portrait painter. One of his most notable works is the official gubernatorial portrait of Jerry Brown.

<sup>186</sup> "Biography," *DonBachardy.com*, accessed May 12, 2014, <http://www.donbachardy.com/biography.html>.

<sup>187</sup> *Cruising the Archive: Queer Art and Culture in Los Angeles, 1945-1980*, ed. Sarah Kessler and Mia Locks (Los Angeles, CA: ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archive, 2011), 147-51.

<sup>188</sup> "About," *Cruising the Archive: Queer Art and Culture in Los Angeles, 1945-1980*, accessed May 12, 2014, <http://cruisingthearchive.org/exhibition>.

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Sidney Bronstein Residence/Studio	3949 Hillcrest Drive	Bronstein (1939-1968) was a painter and active member in the LGBT community who, in addition to painting, volunteered at <i>ONE Magazine</i> and participated in Dr. Kinsey's study on sexuality.
Joan Corbin	232 S. Hill Street (Demolished) With the loss of <i>ONE Magazine</i> 's office on Hill Street, Cobin's residence may be the property that best represents her life; however, she lived in Glendale.	Corbin (1937-2013) was a founding board member of <i>ONE Inc.</i> and the artistic director of <i>ONE Magazine</i> .
Anthony Friedkin	/	Friedkin (1950-0000) is still living as of May 2014. Addresses for living persons are not typically published. Friedkin lives and works in the Los Angeles area.
Tom of Finland House	1421 Laveta Terrace	Touko Laaksonen (1920-1981) was a Finnish artist known for his stylized homoerotic art.
David Hockney Residence/Studio	Need Address	Hockney (1937-0000) is one of the most acclaimed artists of the late 20th century, is British, but much of his work is inspired by Los Angeles, where he has lived off and on since 1964.
The Woman's Building	743 S. Grandview (1973-1975) 1727 N. Spring Street (1975-1991)	Founded in 1973, the Woman's Building was the hub of the lesbian and feminist art movement.
Sascha Brastoff's Ceramics Factory	11520 W. Olympic Boulevard	Brastoff (1918-1993) was a sculptor, designer, and entertainer. He produced hand-painted ceramics at this factory until 1962.
Bob Mizer Residence/Studio	1834 W. 11 <sup>th</sup> Street	Mizer (1922-1992) was a photographer who established the Athletic Model Guild and <i>Physique Pictorial</i> , a fitness magazine aimed at gay men.

**Eligibility Standards**

Theme: Queer Art

Property Type: Residential and Commercial

Property Type Description: Associated property types include residential and



**Artist Tom of Finland played an important role in changing public perceptions of erotic art in Los Angeles.**



**LOS ANGELES  
CONSERVANCY**

## Key Information

**Year of Completion:**  
1910

**Street Address:**  
1421 Laveta Terrace  
Los Angeles, CA 90026  
[Get directions >](#)

**Community:**  
[Los Angeles >](#)

**Property Type:**  
[Residential \(All\) >](#)  
[Single-Family Residential >](#)

**Architectural Style:**  
[Craftsman >](#)

# Tom of Finland Residence

This two-story Craftsman home in Echo Park reflects Los Angeles' contributions to the evolution of erotic art, given its association with noted artist Tom of Finland.

A native of the Finnish countryside, Touko Laaksonen adopted the pseudonym Tom of Finland in 1957, after being credited as such in photographer [Bob Mizer's](#) magazine *Physique Pictorial*. He became a renowned illustrator of gay erotica.

Laaksonen first came to Los Angeles in 1978 to showcase his artwork at an exhibition. The success of the show led him to become a frequent traveler to the region.

He eventually began splitting his time evenly between Finland and Los Angeles, where he lived in this two-story residence he often called his "home away from home."

In 1984, Laaksonen spearheaded the [Tom of Finland Foundation](#) here to catalog his work and to provide a safe space for artists facing discrimination and misrepresentation due to the erotic nature of their work.

The organization continues to present erotic art in a curatorial, yet open, environment where the works can be viewed and appreciated for their artistic contributions, free from moral judgment.

## HISTORY OF OWNERSHIP, 1421 LAVETA TERRACE, LOS ANGELES

The property at 1421 Laveta Terrace has had relatively few owners over the last 100 years. The first recorded owner was a lawyer, Robert W. Kemp (1873-1922)<sup>i</sup>. Kemp bought Lot number twenty one of Sunset Boulevard Heights, paying the amount of ten dollars. It was to be used for “residential purposes with the condition that it not be leased resold to Negro, African or Asiatic races.”<sup>ii</sup> When Robert Kemp applied for the “erection of frame building, permit #2778”<sup>iii</sup>, in April of 1911, he listed his address as 824 East Kensington Road, apparently living with his in-laws<sup>iv</sup>.

In 1906, Robert Kemp married Corda Lillian Weller, daughter of Zachariah and Eliza Weller. Lillian and her family lived in a Queen Anne house at 824 East Kensington Road. Zach Weller who was a hardware merchant with a store, Hoffman & Weller, on Main Street, built the house, which was originally at 401 North Figueroa. However, in 1900, the family vacationed on Catalina Island while the house was moved 3,000 feet north and was wired for electricity, the first house in Angelino Height to do so. The property would stay in the Weller family for the next fifty years and become Historical Landmark, no.223 in 1979<sup>v</sup>.

Among the residents of 1421 Laveta Terrace in its early days were the Kemps 3 children: Phyllis (born 1910), Robert (born 1913<sup>vi</sup>) and Doris (born 1916)<sup>vii</sup>, Minnie F. Klingaman (a cousin of Lillian whose mother’s maiden name was Klingaman<sup>viii</sup>). Minnie was a secretary at the J.R. Ott Company.<sup>ix</sup> Also living there in 1916 were Jas and Lucious Bethune, as gardener and housekeeper.<sup>x</sup> By 1920, the “domestic” had changed to 17-year-old Mytle Boardman.<sup>xi</sup>

After Lillian died in 1926, the property was sold by the executor of her estate, C. E. Listenwalter<sup>xii</sup>, in 1929 to Antonio and Rosa Lozzi for \$11,500<sup>xiii</sup>. There is a Los Angeles City Directory 1926 listing for an E.A. McGrath, who worked for the Times-Mirror – perhaps a caretaker or such.<sup>xiv</sup> The Lozzis (or Lozzie or Lozze<sup>xv</sup>), Italian immigrants with 3 sons and 5 daughters<sup>xvi</sup>, lived in the house from 1929 until selling it to Gelindo Marrone around 1960. The Reconveyance document signed by Antonio Lozzi seems to indicate that the property was sold in 1956, but not to whom<sup>xvii</sup>. There is a listing for a Gelindo Marrone and Zaccaria Casillo in the Los Angeles Street Address Directory in March 1960<sup>xviii</sup>. This has been confirmed by a neighbor, William (Willy) M. Centrone, age 64, who has lived at 1422 Laveta Terrace his entire life, remembers both the Lozzi and Marrone families and that the Marrones moved there about that

time.<sup>xix</sup> Gelindo Marrone applied for an application to “ADD-ALTER-REPAIR-DEMOLISH” 1974 [Included in this application].

Apparently H. Michael and Katherine A. Bishop<sup>xx</sup> purchased the property between that application for alterations and it being deeded in 1979<sup>xxi</sup> to Durk Dehner who now owns the property and continues to live there.

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<sup>i</sup> *History of the Bench and Bar of California*, 1912; "California Death Index, 1905-1939," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QK91-TMLK> : accessed 14 May 2016), Robert W Kemp, 06 Nov 1922; citing 46372, Department of Health Services, Vital Statistics Department, Sacramento.

Kuczynski genealogy lists Kemp as being an attorney in 1920. Genelogia Polska, 2016.

<sup>ii</sup> Los Angeles Deed recorded 1910, Book 4225, p. 162

<sup>iii</sup> Department of Buildings, Application for Erection of Frame Building, Permit #2778, Apr 6,

<sup>iv</sup> United States Census, 1910," database with images, FamilySearch "United States Census, 1910," database with images, *FamilySearch*(<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:MVL3-F21> : accessed 16 May 2016), Robert W Kemp in household of Carrie Merrill, Los Angeles Assembly District 75, Los Angeles, California, United States; citing enumeration district (ED) ED 86, sheet 13A, NARA microfilm publication T624 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.); FHL microfilm 1,374,097. This index has Kemp as “son-in-law” of Carrie Merrill and her son on Kensington. That is an obvious mistake as Mrs. Merrill is listed as being 4 years younger than Kemp. Looking at the original document, it lists Kemp’s address as being separate - 824 Kensington. This sheet is marked as being supplemental to the one where the Weller household is listed.

<sup>v</sup> “Big Orange Landmarks: Exploring the Landmarks of Los Angeles One Monument at a Time”, Floyd B. Bariscale, blog host. March 14, 2009.

<sup>vi</sup> Kuczynski genealogy, Genelogia Polska, 2016.

<sup>vii</sup> "United States Census, 1920

<sup>viii</sup> Ibid .

<sup>ix</sup> Los Angeles City Directory 1912

<sup>x</sup> Los Angeles City Directory 1916

<sup>xi</sup> United States Census, 1920 .

<sup>xii</sup> Lillian’s brother-in-law United States Census, 1910

<sup>xiii</sup> Los Angeles Deed recorded June 20<sup>th</sup>, 1929, Book 7419, p.352

<sup>xiv</sup> “slsmn Times-Mirror Ptg & Bndg Hse”, Los Angeles City Directory 1926

<sup>xv</sup> United States Census, 1930 lists a “Tony A. Lozzie” ; Los Angeles Street Address Directory, 1956, May lists him as Lozze Tony r 1421 Laveta Ter MI 2056. However, the Full Reconveyance document (by the Southwest Title and Tax Company, recorded by the County of Los Angeles, June 29, 1956) has “Antonio Lozze” typed in the document with his signature at the bottom as “Lozzi” with the “i” underlined.

<sup>xvi</sup> United States Census, 1930

<sup>xvii</sup> Full Reconveyance by the Southwest Title and Tax Company, recorded by the County of Los Angeles, June 29, 1956.

<sup>xviii</sup> Marrone, Gelindo P MA 9-1852 Co; Casilio, Zaccaria MA 9-1852 Los Angeles Street Address Directory, 1960, March

<sup>xix</sup> Conversation with Willy Centroni, May 2016.

<sup>xx</sup> H. Michael Bishop (Mr. & Mrs) Grant Deed 79-687081 May 7 1979; Katherine A. Bishop 79-687083 June 20 1979 2220 Loveland, Los Angeles

<sup>xxi</sup> Durk Dehner (Steve Stack, Phillip Chisum) Deed of Trust 79-687082 7th June 1979

All applications must be filled out by applicant.

Ward 2

PLANS and SPECIFICATIONS and other data must also be filed.

BOARD OF PUBLIC WORKS

DEPARTMENT OF BUILDINGS

Application for Erection of Frame Building

CLASS "D"

Application is hereby made to the Board of Public Works (Chief Inspector of Buildings) of the City of Los Angeles, for the approval of this detailed statement of specifications herewith submitted for the erection of the building herein described. All provisions of the Building Ordinances shall be complied with in the erection of said building, whether specified herein or not.

(SIGN HERE)

*W. J. Krump*

(Applicant)

Lot No. 21 + southerly 35 ft of Lot 22. Block APR 6 - 1911

TAKE TO ROOM NO. 6 FIRST FLOOR

ASSESSOR PLEASE VERIFY

TAKE TO ROOM NO. 34 THIRD FLOOR

ENGINEER PLEASE VERIFY

Sunset Blvd Hqhs.

District No. 7 M. B. page 11 F. B. page 87

No. 1421 Laveta Terrace Street

O. K. City Assessor R. J. O'SO Deputy  
O. K. City Engineer Per [Signature] Deputy

- PURPOSE OF BUILDING Dwelling Number of rooms 9
- OWNER'S NAME R. W. Krump
- Owner's address 824 Kensington Road
- Architect's name \_\_\_\_\_
- CONTRACTOR'S NAME W. J. Krump
- Contractor's address 1251 W 46 St
- ENTIRE COST OF PROPOSED BUILDING, \$ 4500.00
- Size of lot 85 x 1 Size of building 40 x 36
- Will building be erected on front or rear of lot? Front
- NUMBER OF STORIES IN HEIGHT Two Height to highest point of roof 30 ft
- Height of first floor joist above curb level, or surface 2'-0"
- Character of ground: rock, clay, sand, filled, etc. Rock
- Of what material will FOUNDATION and cellar walls be built? concrete
- GIVE depth of FOUNDATION below the surface of ground 12"
- GIVE dimensions of FOUNDATION and cellar wall FOOTINGS 16"
- GIVE width of FOUNDATION and cellar walls at top 8"
- NUMBER and KIND of chimneys One Number of flues two
- Number of inlets to each flue One Interior size of flues 8x8
- Give sizes of following materials: MUDDSILLS 2x6 Girders and stringers 4x6  
EXTERIOR STUDS 2x4 BEARING STUDS 2x4 Interior studs 2x3  
Ceiling joist 2x4 Roof rafters 2x4 FIRST FLOOR JOISTS 2x6  
SECOND FLOOR JOIST 2x10 Third floor joist x Fourth floor joist x
- Will the roof be peak, flat or mansard? \_\_\_\_\_ Material of roofing Shingles

Date APR 6 - 1911

PERMIT NO. 2778

OVER

Application Received Edgar Humm



3

APPLICATION TO ADD-ALTER-REPAIR-DEMOLISH AND FOR CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY

MS 2-3-477

CITY OF LOS ANGELES

DEPT. OF BUILDING AND SAFETY

INSTRUCTIONS: Applicant to Complete Numbered Items Only.

Form with 15 numbered sections for building details, including lot info, present/new use, job address, owner details, and new work description.

CASHIERS USE ONLY

APR-8-74 84770 E :87939 T=2CK 7.01

STATEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITY

I certify that in doing the work authorized hereby I will not employ any person in violation of the Labor Code of the State of California relating to workmen's compensation insurance.

"This permit is an application for inspection, the issuance of which is not an approval or an authorization of the work specified herein. This permit does not authorize or permit, nor shall it be construed as authorizing or permitting the violation or failure to comply with any applicable law. Neither the City of Los Angeles, nor any board, department, officer or employee thereof make any warranty or shall be responsible for the performance or results of any work described herein, or the condition of the property or soil upon which such work is performed." (See Sec. 91.0202 L.A.M.C.)

Signature and approval section including 'Signed' field with signature, 'Bureau of Engineering' approval table, and various departmental checkboxes.

75'-0"

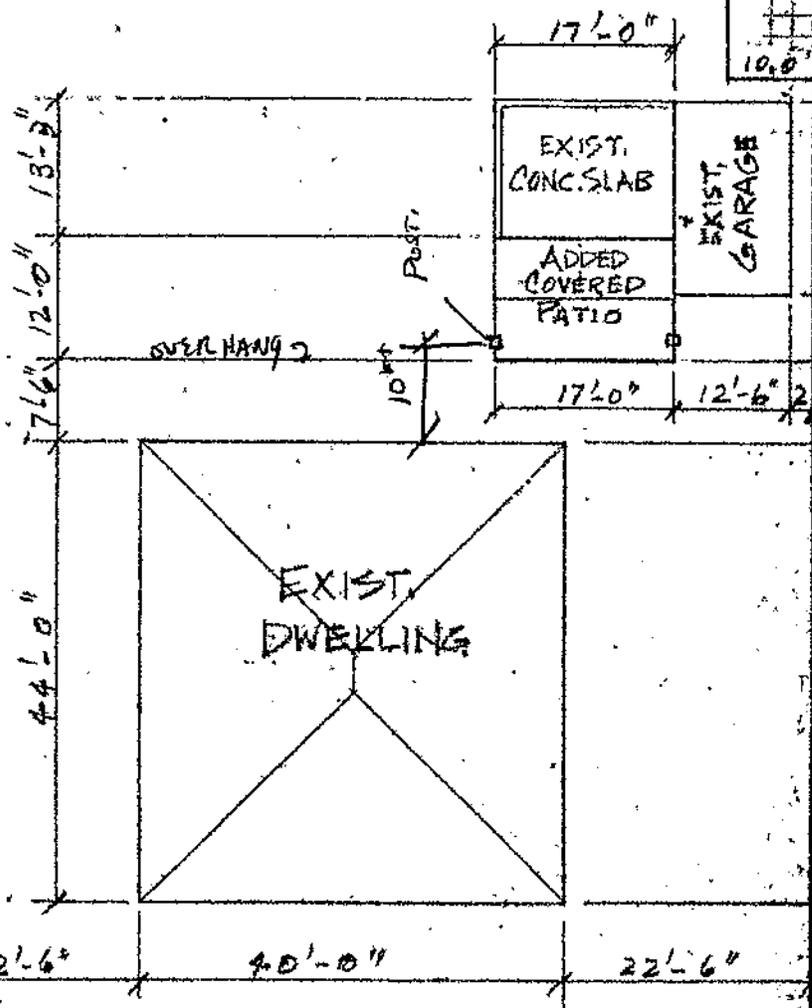
LOT 21 & SW 25<sup>th</sup> LOT 22

SUNSET BLVD HEIGHTS EXC. NE

10<sup>th</sup> OF S.W. 35<sup>th</sup> OF N.W. 45<sup>th</sup> OF LOT 22

43'-25"

10'-0"



1. SITE WHERE WORK IS PROPOSED IS LEVEL. 85'-0"

- 2. NO GRADING IS BEING DONE.
- 3. PROPOSED WORK IS NOT LOCATED ON THE HILL SLOPE THAN PERMITTED DISTANCE TO SLOPE OR BANK.

*Galindo Marrero*  
OWNER OR AGENT

Address of  
Building

1421 Laveta Terrace

CITY OF LOS ANGELES

**CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY**



**NOTE: Any change of use or occupancy must be approved by the Department of Building and Safety.**  
This certifies that, so far as ascertained by or made known to the undersigned, the building at the above address complies with the applicable requirements of the Municipal Code, as follows: Ch. 1, (Zoning Code), Ch. 9, Arts. 1, (Building Code)—for following occupancies:

Issued 5/30/74 Permit No. and Year LA 87939/74

To legalize a 1 story, type V, 17' x 10' patio addition to an existing 1 story, type V, 12'6" x 18'6" garage. Accessory to an R-1 occupancy.

Owner Gelindo Marrone  
Owner's c/o Robbie Lee Wilson  
Address 5357 Sunset Blvd.  
Hollywood, Calif. 90027

B&S Form B-95a—3M Sheet Sets—9-734C-105 27220030001 032 BY R. SIDY:jh

# TOM House Exterior



South



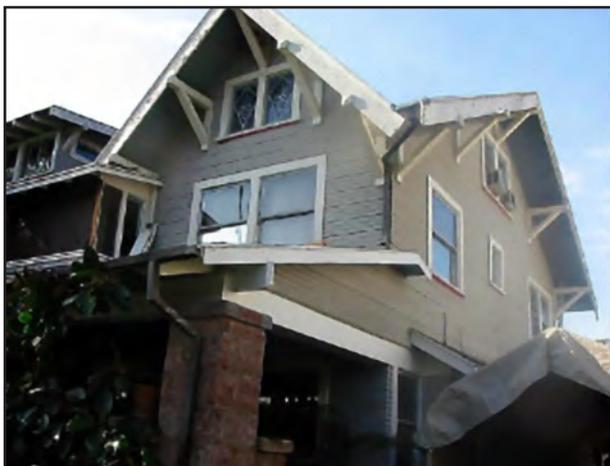
South



South



East



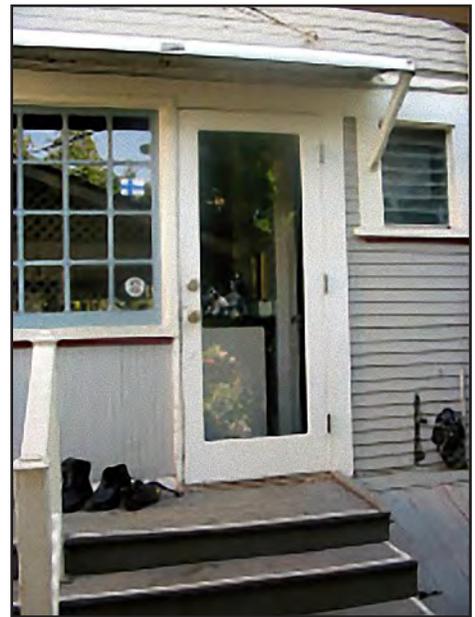
Southeast



Northeast



Northeast



North



North



North



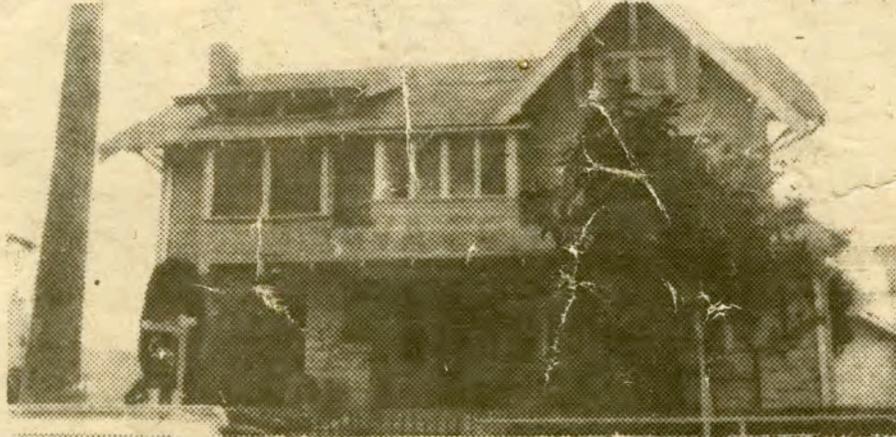
West



South

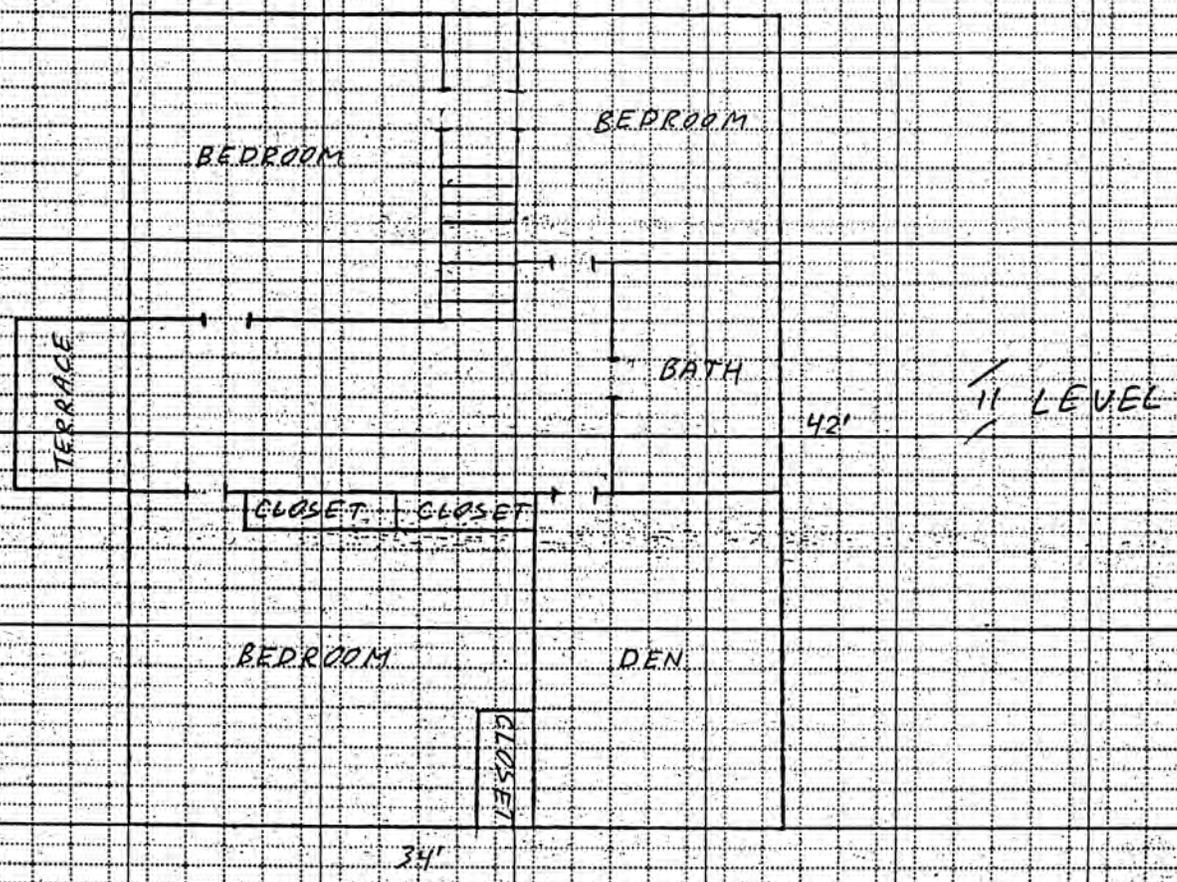
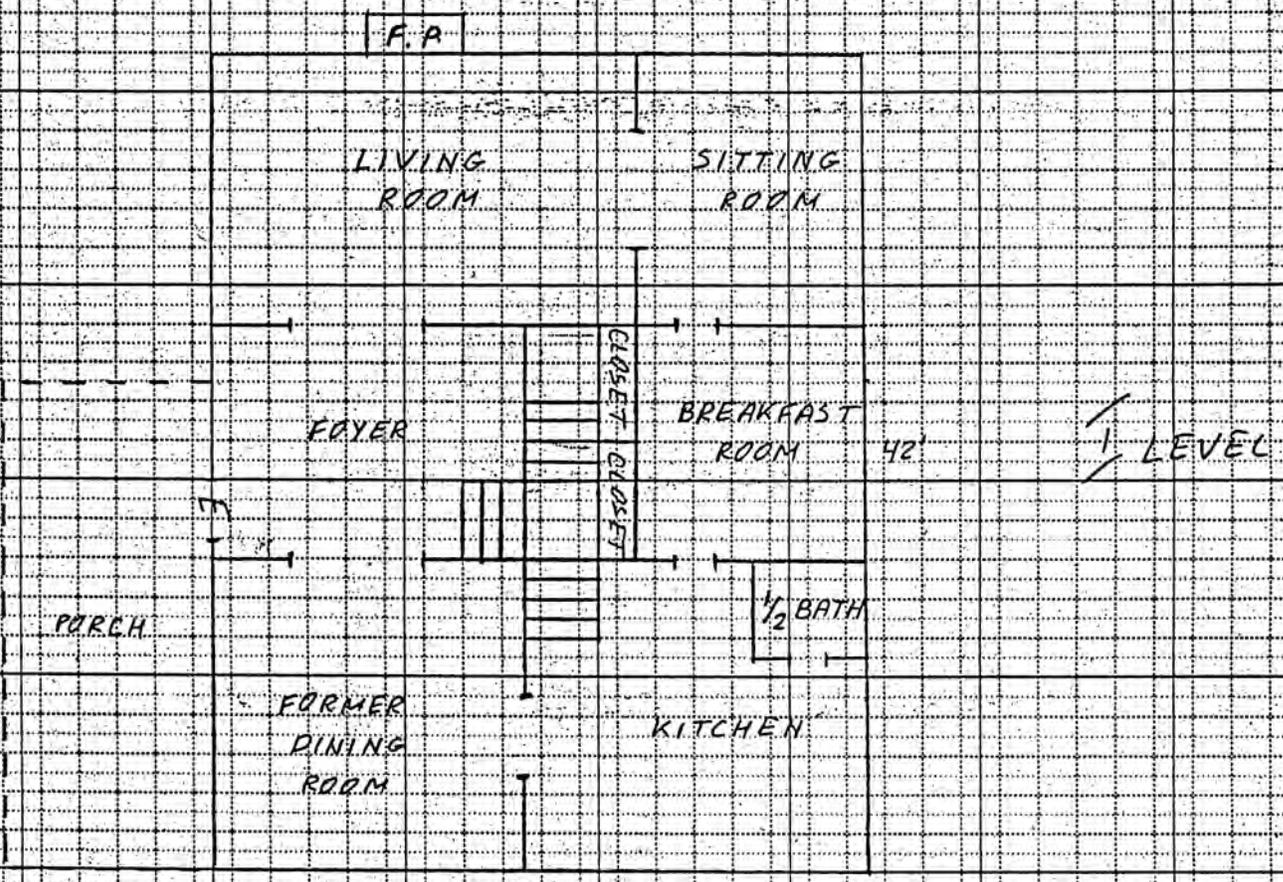
**PIC#1210 4BDR 1.50 BA**

**\$130,000**

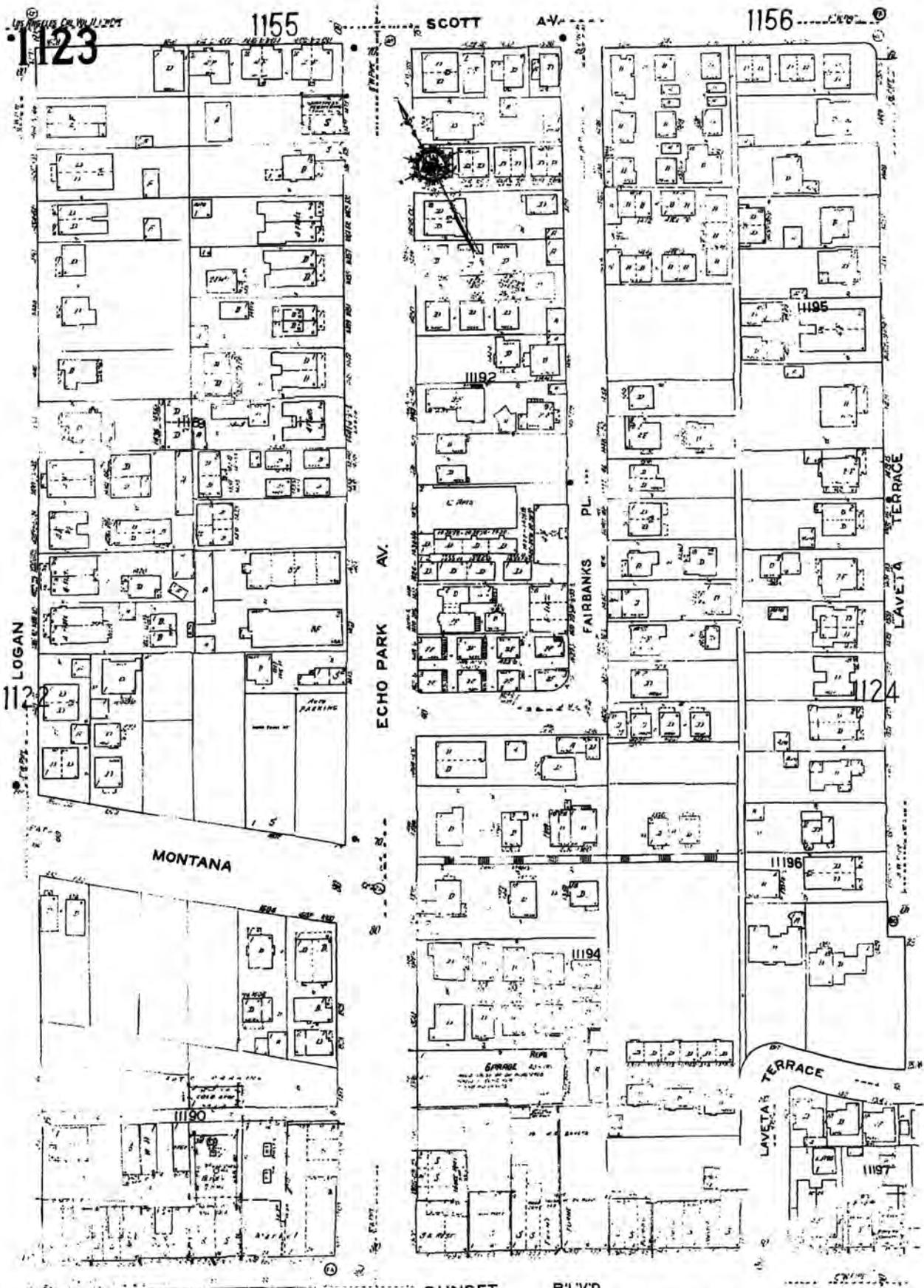


Add <b>1421 LAVETA TERRACE</b>				Zip <b>90026</b>	L# <b>79 01484</b>
Loc <b>NEAR SCOTT,N/SUNSET,1 BLK E/ECHO</b>				Map <b>35 C5</b>	Area <b>21</b>
BR <b>4</b>	BA <b>1.5</b>	MDS	BA	Stor <b>2</b>	Style <b>EARLY CALIFORNIA</b>
Entry <b>LG WOOD</b>	CtrHall		PDR		Ap Tax
LR	FP <b>MASSIVE/LR</b>		DR <b>LG RICH WOOD</b>		Fscl Yr
Den <b>INTIMATE</b>	AC		Bar		Lndr <b>ARCS</b>
Fam	Heat <b>GRAVITY</b>		Ext		Ap Bal <b>NA</b>
Kit <b>UPDATED</b>	GD		DW <b>NO</b>		Int <b>NA</b>
Bltn <b>X</b>	Gas <b>X</b>	Elec		OWC <b>2ND</b>	
B:kft <b>X</b>	Ser <b>X</b>		Gar <b>1 CAR</b>		Carport
Pool <b>RM 4</b>	Lanai <b>PATIO/BBQ</b>		Cabana BA		Gst Hs <b>NO</b>
TC <b>NA</b>	N/S	E/W		Ap. Lot Size <b>50X140,R3,BUILDABLE</b>	
Elem <b>LOGAN</b>		Jr Hi <b>KING</b>		Sr Hi <b>MARSHALL</b>	
Remarks: <b>BEUTIFULLY MAINTAINED TURN OF THE CENTURY(1910)CLASSIC</b>					
<b>THE MASSIVE FRONT OAK DOOR WITH BEVELLED GLASS INSET OPENS</b>					
<b>TO A LARGE ENTRY WITH GENEROUS USE OF DARK WOODS WHICH IS</b>					
<b>ALSO CARRIED THROUGH INTO THE DINING ROOM WHICH ALSO HAS BE-</b>					
<b>VELLED GLASS IN THE BUILT IN CABINETS-STAINED GLASS WINDOW</b>					
<b>ALSO LIGHT TONED HARDWOOD FLOORS THROUGHOUT.</b>					

Circa 1979







S B E U O I U M E T H R E E

1123

1155

SCOTT AV.

1156

EDENDALE DISTRICT

LOGAN

ECHO PARK AV.

FAIRBANKS PL.

LAVETA TERRACE

1123

MONTANA

SUNSET BLVD

LAVETA & TERRACE

S B E U I U M E T H R E E





# City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning

## 7/15/2016 PARCEL PROFILE REPORT

### PROPERTY ADDRESSES

1421 N LAVETA TER

### ZIP CODES

90026

### RECENT ACTIVITY

None

### CASE NUMBERS

CPC-1986-255

ORD-165167-SA4005

ORD-129279

PRIOR-06/01/1946

### Address/Legal Information

PIN Number	139-5A209 30
Lot/Parcel Area (Calculated)	4,492.8 (sq ft)
Thomas Brothers Grid	PAGE 594 - GRID E7
Assessor Parcel No. (APN)	5419025029
Tract	SUNSET BOULEVARD HEIGHTS
Map Reference	M B 10-104
Block	None
Lot	22
Arb (Lot Cut Reference)	2
Map Sheet	139-5A209

### Jurisdictional Information

Community Plan Area	Silver Lake - Echo Park - Elysian Valley
Area Planning Commission	East Los Angeles
Neighborhood Council	Greater Echo Park Elysian
Council District	CD 13 - Mitch O'Farrell
Census Tract #	1973.00
LADBS District Office	Los Angeles Metro

### Planning and Zoning Information

Special Notes	None
Zoning	R2-1VL
Zoning Information (ZI)	ZI-2452 Transit Priority Area in the City of Los Angeles
General Plan Land Use	Low Medium I Residential
General Plan Footnote(s)	Yes
Hillside Area (Zoning Code)	Yes
Baseline Hillside Ordinance	No
Baseline Mansionization Ordinance	No
Specific Plan Area	None
Special Land Use / Zoning	None
Design Review Board	No
Historic Preservation Review	No
Historic Preservation Overlay Zone	None
Other Historic Designations	None
Other Historic Survey Information	None
Mills Act Contract	None
POD - Pedestrian Oriented Districts	None
CDO - Community Design Overlay	None
NSO - Neighborhood Stabilization Overlay	No
Sign District	No
Streetscape	No
Adaptive Reuse Incentive Area	None
Ellis Act Property	No
Rent Stabilization Ordinance (RSO)	No
CRA - Community Redevelopment Agency	None
Central City Parking	No
Downtown Parking	No
Building Line	None

This report is subject to the terms and conditions as set forth on the website. For more details, please refer to the terms and conditions at [zimas.lacity.org](http://zimas.lacity.org)  
(\*) - APN Area is provided "as is" from the Los Angeles County's Public Works, Flood Control, Benefit Assessment.

500 Ft School Zone	No
500 Ft Park Zone	No
<b>Assessor Information</b>	
Assessor Parcel No. (APN)	5419025029
Ownership (Assessor)	
Owner1	DEHNER,DURK
Address	1421 LAVETA TER LOS ANGELES CA 90026
Ownership (Bureau of Engineering, Land Records)	
Owner	DEHNER, DURK
Address	1421 LAVETA TERR. LOS ANGELES CA 90026
APN Area (Co. Public Works)*	0.263 (ac)
Use Code	0100 - Single Residence
Assessed Land Val.	\$145,009
Assessed Improvement Val.	\$123,990
Last Owner Change	07/01/82
Last Sale Amount	\$18,000
Tax Rate Area	13
Deed Ref No. (City Clerk)	965849 9-472 687081 664273 1-758
Building 1	
Year Built	1910
Building Class	D5A
Number of Units	1
Number of Bedrooms	3
Number of Bathrooms	1
Building Square Footage	2,860.0 (sq ft)
Building 2	No data for building 2
Building 3	No data for building 3
Building 4	No data for building 4
Building 5	No data for building 5
<b>Additional Information</b>	
Airport Hazard	None
Coastal Zone	None
Farmland	Area Not Mapped
Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone	No
Fire District No. 1	No
Flood Zone	None
Watercourse	No
Hazardous Waste / Border Zone Properties	No
Methane Hazard Site	None
High Wind Velocity Areas	No
Special Grading Area (BOE Basic Grid Map A-13372)	Yes
Oil Wells	None
<b>Seismic Hazards</b>	
Active Fault Near-Source Zone	
Nearest Fault (Distance in km)	Within Fault Zone
Nearest Fault (Name)	Upper Elysian Park
Region	Los Angeles Blind Thrusts
Fault Type	B

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Slip Rate (mm/year)	1.30000000
Slip Geometry	Reverse
Slip Type	Poorly Constrained
Down Dip Width (km)	13.00000000
Rupture Top	3.00000000
Rupture Bottom	13.00000000
Dip Angle (degrees)	50.00000000
Maximum Magnitude	6.40000000
Alquist-Priolo Fault Zone	No
Landslide	No
Liquefaction	No
Preliminary Fault Rupture Study Area	No
Tsunami Inundation Zone	No
<b>Economic Development Areas</b>	
Business Improvement District	None
Promise Zone	No
Renewal Community	No
Revitalization Zone	None
State Enterprise Zone	None
Targeted Neighborhood Initiative	None
<b>Public Safety</b>	
Police Information	
Bureau	Central
Division / Station	Northeast
Reporting District	1184
Fire Information	
Bureau	Central
Batallion	11
District / Fire Station	20
Red Flag Restricted Parking	No

## CASE SUMMARIES

Note: Information for case summaries is retrieved from the Planning Department's Plan Case Tracking System (PCTS) database.

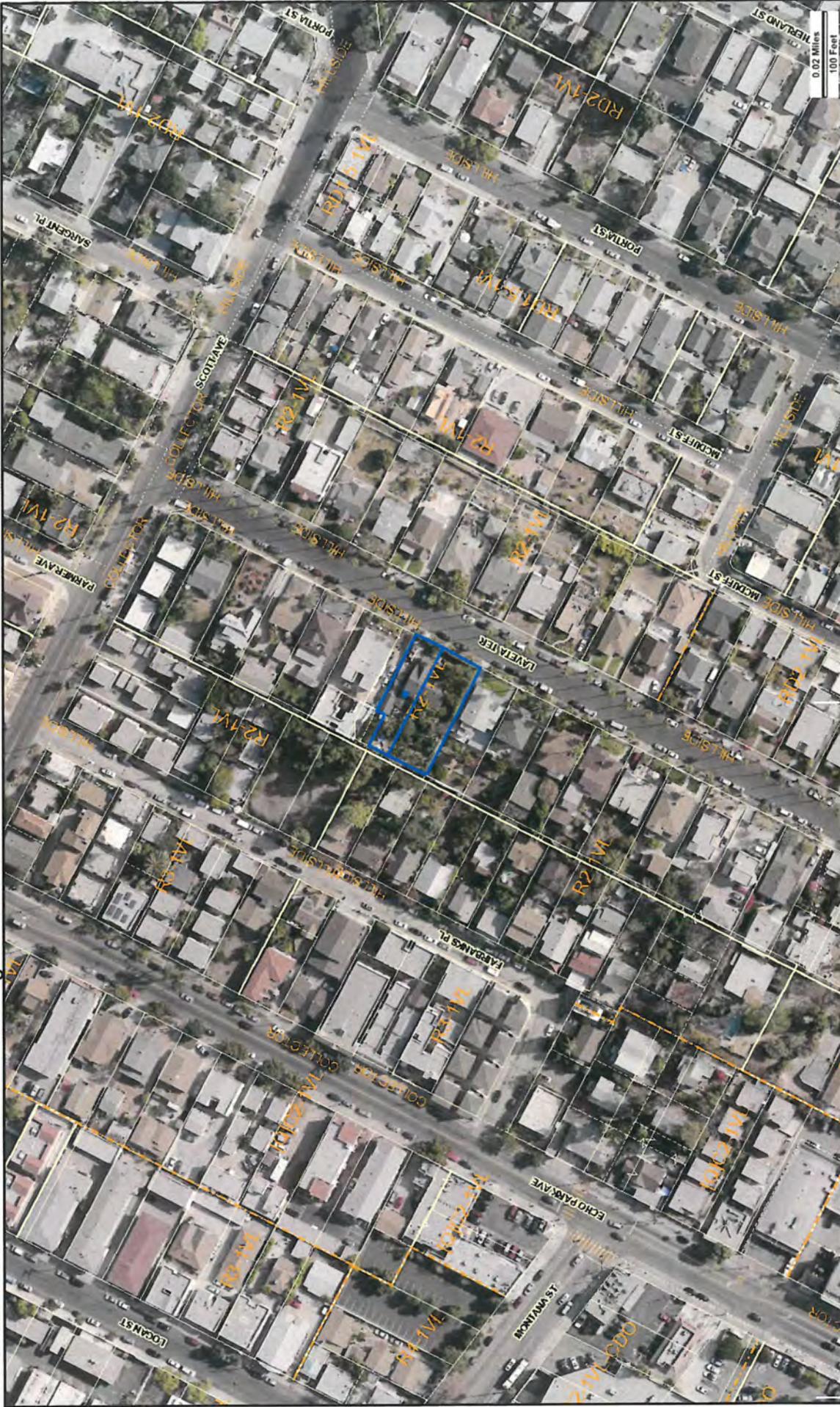
Case Number:	CPC-1986-255
Required Action(s):	Data Not Available
Project Descriptions(s):	AB-283 PROGRAM - GENERAL PLAN/ZONE CONSISTENCY - SILVER LAKE AREA - COMMUNITY WIDE ZONE CHANGES AND COMMUNITY PLAN CHANGES TOBRING THE ZONING INTO CONSISTENCY WITH THE COMMUNITY PLAN. INCLUDES CHANGES OF HEIGHT AS NEEDED. REQUIRED BY COURT AS PART OF SETTLEMENT IN THE HILLSIDE FEDERATION LAWSUIT

## DATA NOT AVAILABLE

ORD-165167-SA4005

ORD-129279

PRIOR-06/01/1946



Address: 1421 N LAVETA TER

Tract: SUNSET BOULEVARD  
HEIGHTS

Block: None  
Lot: 22  
Arb: 2

Zoning: R2-1VL  
General Plan: Low Medium I Residential

APN: 5419025029  
PIN #: 139-5A209 30



# ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST

THE INTERNATIONAL DESIGN AUTHORITY

May 3, 2016

Office of Historic Resources  
Attn: Historic-Cultural Monument Nomination  
Department of City Planning  
200 North Spring St, Room 559  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

To Members of the Cultural Heritage Commission:

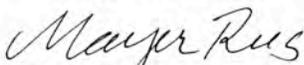
I'm reaching out to lend my support to the nomination for Historic-Cultural Monument designation for TOM House (Tom of Finland House), as submitted by Tom of Finland Foundation (ToFF). I feel very strongly that TOM House is well deserving of this important distinction.

I have been in the world of design publishing for more than 30 years. Currently I am the West Coast Editor of *Architectural Digest*. Prior to that, I was design editor of Conde Nast's *House & Garden* and editor-in-chief of *Interior Design* magazine. My writing has also appeared in the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, *Artforum*, *Vogue*, and many other popular and academic journals. Last year, I wrote the essay that appeared in the book *TOM House: Tom of Finland in Los Angeles* (Rizzoli).

In the past two decades, the artist Tom of Finland has been recognized as one of most important forces in the evolution of gay culture in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. His artwork was nothing short of revolutionary, presenting a vision of unabashed gay pride and self-awareness that profoundly influenced untold numbers of gay men across the globe. In Los Angeles, where Tom spent the greater part of the last decade of his life, the artist found fertile ground to cultivate a portrait of modern gay life untethered from antiquated stereotypes and prejudices. Perched in his attic studio on Laveta Terrace in Echo Park, he synthesized the creative ferment and progressive spirit he found in L.A. and used them to articulate a view of gay life full of hope, freedom, and love.

In the two years I spent at TOM House researching the essay for the book, I found one of the most authentic, historically significant preserves of modern gay culture I have ever encountered. It's not merely a quaint relic of an earlier era of gay history. TOM House is a living, breathing entity, a place that welcomes visitors from around the world, and a repository of artwork and ephemera critical to the ongoing work of social, political, and art historians. I cannot overstate its import and meaning. TOM House is a genuine treasure—and a feather in the cap of L.A.'s storied past, present and future.

Kind regards,



Mayer Rus

cc: Councilmember Mitch O'Farrell, 13<sup>th</sup> District, City of Los Angeles



# CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD

CITY HALL  
8300 SANTA MONICA BLVD.  
WEST HOLLYWOOD, CA  
90069-6216  
TEL: (323) 848-6460  
FAX: (323) 848-6562

TTY: For hearing impaired  
(323) 848-6496

## CITY COUNCIL

LAUREN MEISTER  
*Mayor*

JOHN HEILMAN  
*Mayor Pro Tempore*

JOHN D'AMICO  
*Councilmember*

JOHN J. Duran  
*Councilmember*

LINDSEY P. HORVATH  
*Councilmember*

May 6, 2016

Office of Historic Resources  
Attn: Historic-Cultural Monument Nomination  
Department of City Planning  
200 North Spring St, Room 559  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

To Members of the Cultural Heritage Commission:

I am writing in support of the initiative to nominate TOM House (Tom of Finland House) for Historic-Cultural Monument designation as led by the Tom of Finland Foundation (ToFF).

TOM House was the home and workplace of Tom of Finland, who is considered one of the most influential homoerotic artists of the 20th century. Tom of Finland's work is famed throughout the world for revolutionizing the gay world's self-image, where Tom's art consciously celebrated gay masculinity and promoted positive sexuality. Tom of Finland's legacy as a major LGBT icon and one of the most renowned creators of homoerotic imagery remains as strong as ever with a permanent display in the New York Museum of Modern Art and a place in the collections of numerous art museums, including the Art Institute of Chicago, the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art, and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.

Many of Tom of Finland's historically and culturally important works were produced in TOM House, which served as his studio and home for the last ten years of his life. Today, TOM House also serves as a creative hub, prompting constant conversation about the merits of highlighting masculinity in homoerotic art.

The City of West Hollywood is known globally as one of the most outspoken advocates for the rights of LGBT people. 30 years since its founding, the City still maintains its core value of respect and support for people by celebrating diversity and promoting mutual respect, courtesy, and thoughtfulness toward all individuals. Tom of Finland's work on behalf of the LGBT community parallels this core value, where Tom of Finland promoted respect for diversity and a body-positive representation of gay men in his work.

As such, I recognize the historic and cultural significance of TOM House and fully support TOM House's nomination for Historic-Cultural Monument designation.





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JOHN J. DURAN  
*Councilmember*

LINDSEY P. HORVATH  
*Councilmember*

For additional information regarding my declaration of support for this nomination, you can contact me at (323) 848-6460 or at [jdamico@weho.org](mailto:jdamico@weho.org).

Sincerely,

**John D'Amico**  
Councilmember  
City of West Hollywood

cc: Councilmember Mitch O'Farrell, 13th District, City of Los Angeles



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May 6, 2016

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*Councilmember*

LINDSEY P. HORVATH  
*Councilmember*

For additional information regarding my declaration of support for this nomination, you can contact me at (323) 848-6460 or at [jduran@weho.org](mailto:jduran@weho.org).

Sincerely,

**John Duran**  
Councilmember  
City of West Hollywood

cc: Councilmember Mitch O'Farrell, 13th District, City of Los Angeles



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May 2, 2016

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To Members of the Cultural Heritage Commission:

As Mayor Pro-Tempore of the City of West Hollywood, I am writing in support of the initiative to nominate TOM House (Tom of Finland House) for Historic-Cultural Monument designation as led by the Tom of Finland Foundation (ToFF).

TOM House was the home and workplace of Tom of Finland, who is considered one of the most influential homoerotic artists of the 20th century. Tom of Finland's work is famed throughout the world for revolutionizing the gay world's self-image, where Tom's art consciously celebrated gay masculinity and promoted positive sexuality. Tom of Finland's legacy as a major LGBT icon and one of the most renowned creators of homoerotic imagery remains as strong as ever with a permanent display in the New York Museum of Modern Art and a place in the collections of numerous art museums, including the Art Institute of Chicago, the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art, and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.

Many of Tom of Finland's historically and culturally important works were produced in TOM House, which served as his studio and home for the last ten years of his life. Today, TOM House also serves as a creative hub, prompting constant conversation about the merits of highlighting masculinity in homoerotic art.

The City of West Hollywood is known globally as one of the most outspoken advocates for the rights of LGBT people. 30 years since its founding, the City still maintains its core value of respect and support for people by celebrating diversity and promoting mutual respect, courtesy, and thoughtfulness toward all individuals. Tom of Finland's work on behalf of the LGBT community parallels this core value, where Tom of Finland promoted respect for diversity and a body-positive representation of gay men in his work.

As such, I recognize the historic and cultural significance of TOM House and fully support TOM House's nomination for Historic-Cultural Monument designation.



# CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD

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## **CITY COUNCIL**

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*Mayor Pro Tempore*

JOHN D'AMICO  
*Councilmember*

JOHN J. Duran  
*Councilmember*

LINDSEY P. HORVATH  
*Councilmember*

For additional information regarding my declaration of support for this nomination, you can contact me at (323) 848-6460 or at [jheilman@weho.org](mailto:jheilman@weho.org).

Sincerely,

**John Heilman**  
Mayor Pro-Tempore  
City of West Hollywood

cc: Councilmember Mitch O'Farrell, 13th District, City of Los Angeles

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Office of Historic Resources  
Attn: Historic-Cultural Monument Nomination  
Department of City Planning  
200 North Spring St. Room 559  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

April 30, 2016

To the Members of the Cultural Heritage Commission:

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for the nomination of TOM House (Tom of Finland House) to be officially designated as a Historic-Cultural Monument in Los Angeles. As the owner of David Kordansky Gallery, I am proud and humbled to count the legendary Tom of Finland among the artists whom my gallery represents. An internationally renowned draughtsman and cultural icon, his highly influential drawings can be found both in the permanent collection of the Museum of Modern Art, New York, and recently adorning the postage stamps of his native Finland. I consider TOM House an indispensable force in the effort to preserve Tom of Finland's artwork and to share his legacy with audiences both within and outside our city, the artist's adopted home.

TOM House is the site where Touko Laaksonen a.k.a. Tom of Finland lived and worked for most of the last decade of his life and realized his most lasting artistic achievements. Presenting a rare and unique look into both his creative and personal life (his quarters have been preserved since the time of his death), TOM House can best be described as a "living museum" dedicated not only to the preservation of artworks and ephemera related to Tom of Finland – the world's foremost collection of its kind – but also to fostering a community of tolerance, celebration, and free expression for whom his art continues to inspire.

Only in the last few years have art historians and cultural scholars begun to fully appreciate the contributions of queer artists to our shared social history. Regrettably, much of this was lost to bigotry or the erasure that occurred when generations of artists fell victim to the AIDS crisis. Too few families and institutions saw then the importance of the art left behind. Since the 1980's TOM House has been a sanctuary for such materials, and today – along with the neighboring University of Southern California, which maintains one of the largest archives of queer materials in the world – it is one of the greatest resources for research

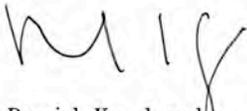
**DAVID  
KORDANSKY  
GALLERY**

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into queer visual culture. Further, TOM House stands as a testament to the progressive and visionary Californian ethos that drew Tom of Finland west and continues to attract people from all over the world.

I hope that you will recognize the undeniable significance of this site and grant it its well-earned designation as a Historic-Cultural Monument in our city.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'DK' or similar initials, written in a cursive style.

David Kordansky  
Owner, David Kordansky Gallery

cc: Councilmember Mitch O'Farrell, 13th District, City of Los Angeles

**DAVID  
KORDANSKY  
GALLERY**

# ECHO PARK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

EPHS • HISTORIC ECHO PARK.ORG

May 6, 2016

Office of Historic Resources  
Attn: Historic-Cultural Monument Nomination  
Department of City Planning  
200 North Spring St, Room 559  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

To Members of the Cultural Heritage Commission:

The Echo Park Historical Society would like to offer a letter of support for the nomination of Historic-Cultural Monument designation for TOM House (Tom of Finland House), as submitted by Tom of Finland Foundation (ToFF).

As President of the Echo Park Historical Society, I encourage the preservation of culturally unique buildings, such as TOM House, that are fundamental to the character of this community. The Echo Park Historical Society makes its voice heard on local preservation issues, informing its membership as well as elected leaders and government agencies on pressing items and necessary action to protect and enhance Echo Park's cultural and historic heritage. The Tom of Finland Foundation has been an active member of the community for many years, with activities that include sponsoring events, holding meetings, and encouraging preservation.

Touko Laaksonen (aka Tom of Finland) was one of the most influential homoerotic artists of the 20th century. His drawings not only rocked the boundaries of the gay community of the time but also spread into the straight leather biker clubs of England, Germany and, eventually, the US. Today the Foundation continues in its efforts of educating the public as to the cultural merits of erotic art and in promoting healthier, more tolerant attitudes about sexuality. TOM House offers a safe haven for all erotic art in response to rampant discrimination against art that portrayed sexual behavior or generated a sexual response. Tom of Finland's role as a champion of authentic self-expression is nicely captured in the just published book, *Tom House: Tom of Finland in Los Angeles*.

Significant cultural aspects to consider:

- Tom lived and worked at TOM House for the last ten years of his life
- TOM House is the operating premises of ToFF, which holds the world's largest collection of Tom's work and of ephemera related to Tom
- TOM House receives visitors from around the world who are interested in Tom and his work

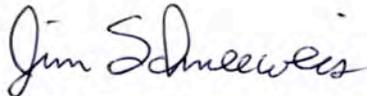
# ECHO PARK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

EPHS @ HISTORIC ECHO PARK.ORG

- TOM House has been preserved in homage to Tom. Tom's combined bedroom/studio has original furnishings and possessions belonging to Tom
- At TOM House, Tom continued to produce historically and culturally important work
- These works also reflected the gay male culture of the time – for example, Tom's drawings that contained references to safer sex practices.

The Echo Park Historical Society believes that it is important to foster, preserve, and protect culturally historic buildings within the Echo Park neighborhood. TOM House is part of the rich history that is Echo Park.

Sincerely,



Jim Schneeweis  
President  
Echo Park Historical Society



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**Submitted electronically**

Los Angeles Cultural Heritage Commission  
Office of Historic Resources  
Department of City Planning  
200 North Spring St, Room 559  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

May 6, 2016

**RE: Tom of Finland House, Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM)  
nomination**

Dear members of the Los Angeles Cultural Heritage Commission:

I am writing on behalf of the Los Angeles Conservancy regarding the Tom of Finland House and the Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM) nomination submitted by the Tom of Finland Foundation. As many of you are aware, greater Los Angeles has long been at the forefront of creating and shaping a collective, yet diverse LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning and/or queer) identity. The City's outstanding SurveyLA LGBT Context has been extremely helpful in shining the light on this part of our collective history, and so deserving of the Conservancy's 2016 Preservation Award.

Raising the profile, building awareness, and protecting significant LGBTQ places is important, and why the Conservancy recently launched the microsite, "Curating the City: LGBTQ Historic Places in L.A.," in which we feature the Tom of Finland House. This two-story Craftsman home in Echo Park reflects Los Angeles' contributions to the evolution of gay erotic art, given its association with noted artist Touko Laaksonen (Tom of Finland).

Laaksonen adopted the pseudonym "Tom of Finland" in 1957 when he submitted samples to photographer Bob Mizer's magazine *Physique Pictorial* under the name "Tom." Not only is Laaksonen important to Los Angeles but internationally for his



body of work. This house is integrally associated with him and his evolving work over time.

It is critically important for these places and their stories to be fully understood and brought to light. The Los Angeles Conservancy is very pleased to offer our support for this important historic place and we encourage your full consideration of this HCM nomination.

Sincerely,

*Adrian Scott Fine*

Adrian Scott Fine  
Director of Advocacy

cc: Ken Bernstein, Office of Historic Resources, Department of City Planning



# MICHAEL REYNOLDS LLC

michaelreynoldsnyc.com

May 5, 2016

Office of Historic Resources  
Attn: Historic-Cultural Monument Nomination  
Department of City Planning  
200 North Spring St, Room 559  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

To Members of the Cultural Heritage Commission:

It is with tremendous conviction and a genuine feeling of importance that I am writing this letter in support of the nomination for Historic-Cultural Monument designation for TOM HOUSE (Tom of Finland House), as submitted by Tom of Finland Foundation (ToFF).

My career in publishing has spanned close to three decades. In that time, I have worn a variety of hats- Editor, Producer, Creative Director- to name a few. I currently act as the US Editor for *Wallpaper\** Magazine (Time Inc.), and in addition contribute regularly to *T Magazine (The New York Times)*, *CULTURED*, *Conde Nast Traveler*, *GQ*, *Vogue* and *WSJ (Wall Street Journal)*. It has been my honor to work closely with the Foundation over this vast period of time, helping to promote the artistry of the late Finnish master known as Tom of Finland (Touko Valio Laaksonen), as well as showcase the historic home in which he spent the last decade of his life. I have produced editorial portfolios on TOM HOUSE for the likes of *OUT*, *Wallpaper\** Magazine, *CULTURED*, *GQ*, and *T Magazine*. Recently, my book, *TOM HOUSE: Tom of Finland in Los Angeles*, was released by the prominent international publishing house Rizzoli and profiled in *Vogue Homme*, *The Huffington Post* and *Slate.com*. The response to date has been epic- of the initial 4,500 copies printed, close to all have sold and now Rizzoli is currently preparing to print a second edition.

The preservation and declaration of TOM HOUSE as an historic landmark by the City of Los Angeles would be incredibly significant on multitude of levels. Politically, economically and culturally it would be honoring the life and work of the 20<sup>th</sup> century's greatest homoerotic artist, an artist whose defiant celebration of his culture and sexuality acted as a beacon of light for generations of gay men being persecuted by existing laws of their day, laws set in place to criminalize their lifestyle and very nature. Tom of Finland is without question a modern day LGBTQ hero. And the house acts as an epicenter for the museum-like presentation of his ephemera and archives, not to mention that it also functions as a haven for the preservation and exhibition of countless other 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century erotic artists- both living and deceased. What's more, the house has opened its doors not only to the LGBTQ community, but to the greater art world and general public as well- hosting fundraisers, life drawing classes, educational tours and community outreach programs. As a result, TOM HOUSE has come to be known internationally, receiving a steady flow of visitors year-round. It has become an historic pilgrimage site, an LGBTQ Mecca of sorts- a Gay Getty!

Please take to heart the importance of having TOM HOUSE designated as an historic Los Angeles landmark house. Its continued existence and preservation will serve to inform generations of LGBTQ individuals to come of their proud heritage, as well as keep alive the art and memory of one of its fiercest defenders.

Sincerely,



Michael Reynolds

cc: Councilmember Mitch O'Farrell, 13<sup>th</sup> District, City of Los Angeles

**The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts**

May 5, 2016

Office of Historic Resources  
Attn: Historic-Cultural Monument Nomination  
Department of City Planning  
200 North Spring St., Room 559  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

To Members of the Cultural Heritage Commission:

I strongly support designating the Tom of Finland House (Tom House) as an Historic-Cultural Monument.

The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts had the privilege of supporting the widely acclaimed survey of Tom's work at Artists Space in New York last year. Both the exhibition and the underlying scholarly research vividly portrayed the historic importance of this iconic gay pioneer. His work and his career comprise pivotal moments in 20<sup>th</sup> century gay history, and the fact that he lived and worked in Tom House for a significant portion of his career should be reason enough to grant it monument status. And the continued presence of the Tom of Finland Foundation in Tom House makes such a designation imperative.

I sincerely hope you will give this nomination your most favorable consideration.

Very truly yours,

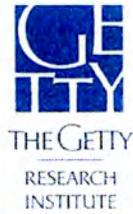


Joel Wachs  
President, The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts  
Former Councilman, 2<sup>nd</sup> District, City of Los Angeles

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THE GETTY

The J. Paul Getty Museum

Research Institute

Conservation Institute

Foundation

The J. Paul Getty Trust

May 2, 2016

Office of Historic Resources  
Attn: Historic-Cultural Monument Nomination  
Department of City Planning  
200 North Spring St, Room 559  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

To Members of the Cultural Heritage Commission:

I am delighted to write this letter in support of the nomination for Historic-Cultural Monument designation for TOM House (the Tom of Finland House), as submitted by Tom of Finland Foundation. I am the Head of Modern & Contemporary Collections at the Getty Research Institute (GRI), and as such I oversee the acquisition of archival artist's materials for the GRI's collections, develop exhibitions and publications, and work on a number of largescale research initiatives, most notably *Pacific Standard Time*, a citywide collaboration of arts institutions who in 2011-12 joined together to produce more than 70 exhibitions devoted to the art and culture of Southern California.

The Tom of Finland Foundation and TOM House are a vital part of the cultural scene of Los Angeles. In addition to the Foundation's truly significant archive of works and materials by Tom of Finland, the Foundation also holds important research collection documenting the history of gay male erotica, including the work of many, many artists. This collection documents important cultures and subcultures within gay male visual life over several decades in the Twentieth century. This material is important as a part of American cultural history, but it is also exceptionally important within the wider history of art in ways that are only recently beginning to be acknowledged. For instance, the Getty's 2011 publication *Pacific Standard Time: Los Angeles Art 1945-1980* contains an essay by art historian Richard Meyer that discusses how magazines such as *Physique Pictorial* (which featured athletic physique photography with a clear homoerotic subtext, and also included illustration and covers drawn by Tom of Finland) were deeply formative for the artist David Hockney, who is widely acknowledged as one of the greatest living painters today.

One might also look to the work of Robert Mapplethorpe, who endured harsh criticism and censorship during his lifetime and today is considered one of the greatest photographers of the 20th century, with an unprecedented double retrospective currently on view at the both the J. Paul Getty Museum and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Neither Mapplethorpe nor Hockney could have ever developed along the lines that they did without the work of Tom of Finland and his contemporaries, who paved the way for fine art to become more directly open to the expression of male beauty and sexuality. Much of this work has been and continues to be unacknowledged, although the work of Tom of Finland continues to gain more and more in stature, with his art collected by major museums around the world, including the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

Both myself and other colleagues at the Getty have visited TOM House and made use of their collections in the pursuit of academic art historical research. They are a wonderful organization, respected and cherished within the arts community and the gay community, well-managed, and with a strong board. The physical site of the house is an absolutely crucial aspect of the Foundation. The notion of “home” is one that was denied to generations of LGBT people, and it is deeply symbolic and significant that TOM House truly is a home, and that the use of all parts of the house to create not only a functioning foundation but also, through the display of its collections, a significant re-invention of what the visual identity of a “home” can and in fact does entail—this is one of the most resonant aspects of the Foundation, and one that goes absolutely to its core.

I deeply hope that the commission will closely consider this nomination. Should you require any additional information from me, please feel free to be in touch directly.

All best,



Glenn R. Phillips  
Curator and Head of Modern & Contemporary Collections  
Getty Research Institute  
1200 Getty Center Drive, Suite 1100  
Los Angeles, CA 90049-1688

cc: Councilmember Mitch O'Farrell, 13<sup>th</sup> District, City of Los Angeles



May 9, 2016

Office of Historic Resources  
Attn: Historic-Cultural Monument Nomination  
Department of City Planning  
200 North Spring St, Room 559  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

To Members of the Cultural Heritage Commission:

This letter is to reflect my support for the nomination for Historic-Cultural Monument designation for TOM House (Tom of Finland House), as submitted by Tom of Finland Foundation (ToFF). I am the founding partner and creative director at the L.A.-based design firm wHY. Our offices in Los Angeles and New York explore design through our four workshops: Ideas, Buildings, Grounds and Objects as they embody our mission to integrate culture into our everyday. Our work is driven by all forms of art that leave a lasting impression, much like the work of Tom of Finland.

TOM House is a living museum that has immortalized Tom of Finland's influential art in Echo Park. It is a glimpse into the private, domestic world of one of the twentieth century's most revolutionary artist that is responsible for a unique graphical and cultural revolution. Tom's graphic work is an icon of the gay community including the home that displays the once controversial work. This space is more than a museum as it encapsulates a time when art was censored and when California needed a voice for a healthier, more natural way of looking at sexuality. TOM House still serves as a safe place for exploration, investigation and education for safe sex. We need your help making this a permanent cultural icon of Los Angeles and California.

The hope in the letter is to share immense support for the Tom of Finland house to be nominated for the Historic-Cultural Monument designation. The message this house and foundation shares with new generations is monumental to a healthier future here in California.

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wHY New York  
473 W. Broadway, Unit 3  
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Thank you for your consideration,

Kulapat Yantrasast  
Creative Director, wHY

cc: Councilmember Mitch O'Farrell, 13<sup>th</sup> District, City of Los Angeles