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- Alice Tippit
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"The Female Gaze, Part Two: Women Look at Men"
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"The Grace Jones Project"

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Toronto

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- Lukas Duwenh ogger
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"FOUND"
- "Krishna in the Garden of Assam"

Liverpool

- Maria Lassnig

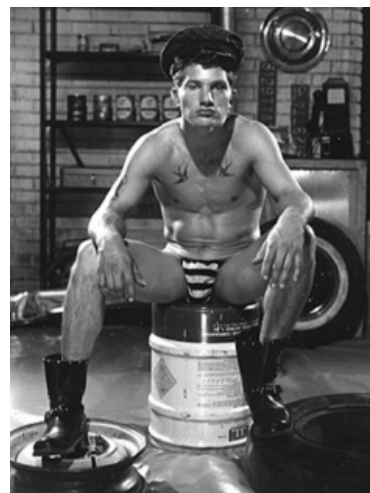
Dublin

Los Angeles

Bob Mizer and Tom of Finland

MOCA PACIFIC DESIGN CENTER
8687 Melrose Avenue
November 2, 2013–January 26, 2014

The prolific photographer, publisher, filmmaker, and entrepreneur Bob Mizer was the first person to publish Touko Laakonsen's drawings—in 1957 on the cover of his "beefcake" magazine *Physique Pictorial*—but he also gave the artist his now famous name, Tom of Finland. This exhibition—organized by Bennett Simpson and the artist Richard Hawkins—brings the two collaborators together for their first major museum retrospective in the United States. Sparingly describing much of the backstory behind the pair's work with just a few wall texts (a concurrent show in LA at the ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archive, "Art & Physique Circa Bob & Tom," should provide some of that absent historical context), the show instead focuses on a varied collection of both artists' output, including examples of the *Physique Pictorials* that Tom of Finland contributed drawings to, which are displayed in vitrines, as well as original artwork of his, and Mizer's very strange and wonderful "catalogue boards"—grids on which he used to arrange his photographs of loin-clothed, and occasionally nude, male models, under such zany narrative rubrics as "Tijuana Bandit Time Machine" and "Baby Doll."



Bob Mizer, *untitled (Dennis Lavia Seated in Garage)*, Los Angeles, c. 1964, silver gelatin print, 8 x 10".

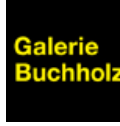
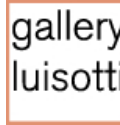
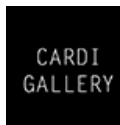
It's evident here that responding to the US censorship laws of the 1940s and '50s, especially in Mizer's case, made for a sort of Oulipian erotica, one based around restrictions on what could and couldn't be depicted. Though it's hard to imagine anyone missing the significance of the many bulging crotches (which give way, in the following decade, to fully exposed gargantuan genitalia and countless inventive arrays for their use) on Tom of Finland's smiling god-men—a bodacious collection of loggers, sailors, bikers, cops, dandies, and army officers—desire is portrayed, in early works, mostly by way of humor; sex acts amount to unspoken punch lines in erotically charged scenarios. While Mizer's photos are also funny and suggestive, something slightly more revealing emerges there: namely, the ambition and vulnerability of his models. If Tom of Finland helped pave the way to gay liberation with mythic portrayals of indomitable queer men, Bob Mizer documented the real people walking along the path.

— [Kate Wolf](#)

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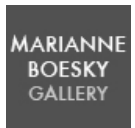
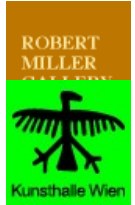
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