



The Little Book of Tom of Finland: Blue Collar

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Let's get physical: Tom's cowboys, loggers, roughnecks, and roustabouts

As a boy, Tom's first crush was a strapping young farmhand who worked the fields around his family home. Finland is a land of tough physical men, catching fish in the icy sea; cutting logs in the endless forests; threshing oats, rye, and barley on the farms. Tom, a more sensitive boy, admired these rough men and their distinctive clothing, designed for protection and utility. He later said, "When I was young, leather was worn by people who worked outside because it was warm. **All the men who wore leather, they were the type of men which I adored.**"

When he began to draw he celebrated these early idols, improving their wardrobes with **tight jeans, faded T-shirts, and thigh-high beak-toed Lappish boots**. It was a young logger in this gear who appeared on the spring 1957 cover of *Physique Pictorial*, introducing Tom to the world. In the decades to follow Tom added **truckers, repairmen, construction workers, circus roustabouts, and the American cowboy to his roster of working-class heroes**. Though just sexual fantasies for him, his portrayal of blue-collar lovers helped working class gays accept their true selves.

The Little Book of Tom of Finland: Blue Collar traces Tom's fascination with working men in one compact and affordable package. A **brawny lineup of multi-panel comics and single-panel drawings and paintings** is set alongside archival and contextual material, including historic film stills and posters, personal photos of Tom, sketches, and Tom's own reference photos.

Text in English, French, and German



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Thomas Rinaldi:

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Bessie Scudder:

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