

TOM SANFORD

Mr. Hangover

545 West 23rd Street, 212-334-9255

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Maybe we should just forget the whole statesman, warrior scientist, artist, thinker, businessman- idols of that type are dead or dying surely? People who cling to such figures- are they just slave to nostalgia, nostalgia for the real, for the heights and depths to which earlier ages aspired? Are they epochal snobs, so to speak, anachronisms clinging to the judgment that pop culture is just too pop to be taken seriously? Are they just refusing to believe that the place of real heroes could be usurped by mere performers-when in fact, that is exactly what has happened? – Thomas de Zengotita, *Mediated How the Media Shapes Your World and the Way You Live in It*

I like people who are really f---ed up. ... I am very high strung and suffer from multiple personalities. Jane. She's crazy and she always wants to kill me. Tila. ... Poor Girl. ... She deserves a break. ... I do a lot of things that are self-destructive. ... I've always been a nerdy geek trapped inside a umm ... woman's body. Yea. ... That's me. People love me for some reason. I don't know why. ... I do but I just say I don't know why just to be modest. – Tila Tequila, star of *A Shot at Love with Tila Tequila*, in a post on her MySpace page.

Leo Koenig Inc. is pleased to announce the opening of a solo exhibition by Tom Sanford entitled "Mr. Hangover." Featured in the exhibition are new works modeled after ubiquitous street posters that are plastered around most cities to advertise events, movies and products. Comprised entirely of hand painted posters that are unframed and tacked to the wall, they suggest influences that come as much from the broader consumer culture as they do from the arena of fine art. In "Mr. Hangover," Sanford references a world of disposable cultural objects and ephemera, and the glut experienced after being inundated by these elements.

Tom Sanford's work is littered with the icons and detritus of pop culture obsessions. In this exhibition, these references become a fractal projection of his identity. Personal identification mixes with celebrity iconography offering glimpses into a lexicon of the artist's experience. These images exude a curious combination of veneration and disdain for the subjects depicted, even when (or especially when) the subject is the artist himself.

Alternately sweet, sarcastic, caustic and mundane, Sanford briefly attempts to share a personal aside only to shout "gotcha!" with the next image. Tarnished sports heroes share the walls with portraits of cheap beers and even cheaper pop stars. Sometimes the stars are depicted as themselves, other times they are depicted as a character they play in a film or TV show. All the while, the quintessential New York paper coffee cup proclaims "It's Our Pleasure to Serve You." In the artist's own words, Sanford calls this his "mad magazine version of Marxist critique-and a subtle acknowledgement of the position of the artist in the culture economy." This presentation induces a dizzying push/pull, mimicking the schizophrenic nature of our contemporary surroundings and the way competing imagery and attitudes incessantly vie for our attention.

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Tom Sanford has a BA from Columbia University. This is his second solo exhibition at Leo Koenig Inc. Sanford recently exhibited his exhibition at Galleri Faurschou in Copenhagen and he is preparing for a solo exhibition with Galerie Erna Hecey in Brussels. His work was seen in the group exhibitions "The Incomplete" at the Chelsea Museum and "Heroes!...like us?" at the Palazzo Delle Arti in Naples, Italy. He lives and works in New York City.