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Nostalgia Is Alive for Marc Hundley

by Kathleen Massara | 09/28/2011 4:00 AM | 1 Comment

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It's a cold night, but inside [Team Gallery](#) it's warm, packed with the young and hip, who clutch complimentary cans of Budweiser and wear beat-up Converse sneakers and Opening Ceremony jackets. It's a silly word—hipsters—but the gallery is filled with them. They are here for the opening of [Marc Hundley's](#) first solo exhibition, [Joan Baez is Alive](#) (through October 29). The walls are filled with framed posters of concerts that never happened, mostly from outspoken and eccentric singers with strong vibratos. There's nostalgia, longing, and an appreciation for the art of the stencil. In one poster, titled "Night in the City," bursts of white from streetlights contain yellow text that reads: "light up, night time, and city light time." Joni Mitchell's name floats nearby to remind you of her [hit song](#). In his artist's statement, Hundley [proclaims](#), "I generally make things that advertise the way I feel—or celebrate things I have chosen to have meaning."

Hundley was born in 1971, five years after the Canadian songstress Buffy St. Marie released "Little Wheel Spin and Spin," which is also cited in the show. Another poster quotes a few lines from the 6ths song "I've Got New York," while in the main room a green Magnetic Fields-inspired faux concert ticket is framed and behind glass. It's a throwback to another era, expressing nostalgia for the days when Soho was still gritty and ladies ruled the folk stage. But when you compare this work to that of someone like [Masaru Aikawa](#), a Japanese artist who painstakingly recreated popular CD covers and liner notes in 2007, Hundley's efforts seem incredibly half-assed. Simple stencils—not even silkscreens—are on sale for thousands of dollars at the gallery, evoking the boom times of yesteryear. But what are we nostalgic for, exactly? And is there even a "we" here? If not, one might as well just tour Hundley's apartment or browse his scrapbooks.

This kind of art has been done before, and it's nice for a minute to recognize the lyrics of a song you like or see an image of Gena Rowlands in [A Woman Under the Influence](#) and pat yourself on the back for knowing about John Cassavetes, but there has to be more here. All that viewers are left with is a few lyrics under glass with no context, which is not enough to hold this exhibition together. We need to ask more from artists than that they blithely reference particular movies and songs, or else we easily become trapped in a facile self-referential loop. As Lou Reed once said, "I don't like nostalgia unless it's mine."

(Marc Hundley, "Little Wheel Spin and Spin.." 2011, courtesy the artist, Team Gallery)

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