

Beauty gets a makeover in 'Allure'

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Abstract Nudes

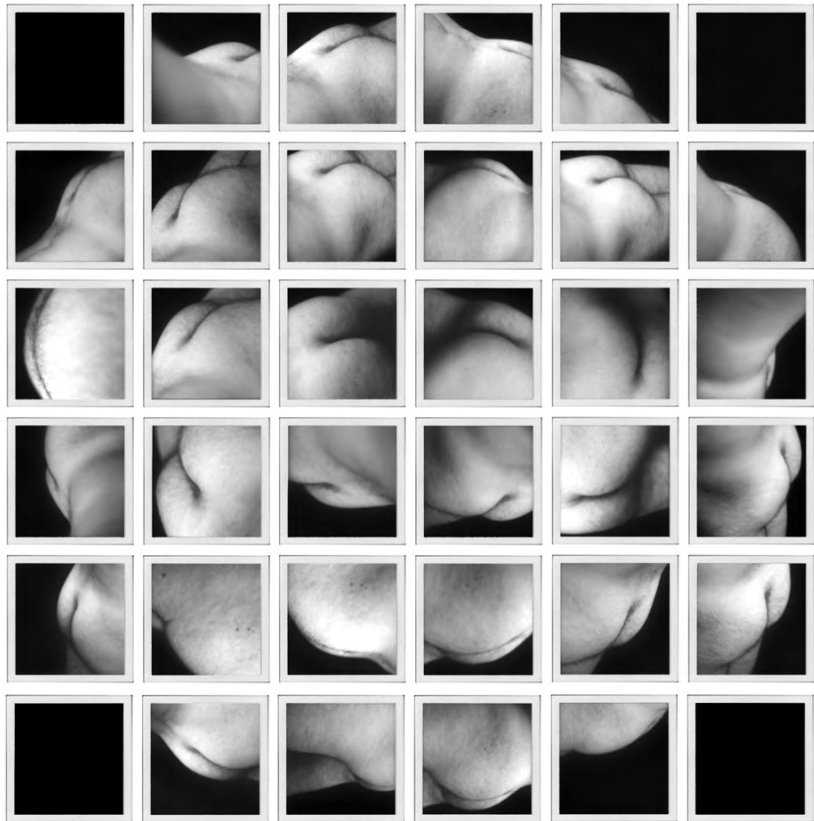
San Francisco photographer Chris Komater assembles images in grids. He shoots portions of male nudes and organizes them in kaleidoscopic patterns. The manner in which he frames and situates each image, and its relationship to the surrounding ones, obscures our sense of what we're looking at—a neck?—a shoulder?—but folds it into a greater sensual whole.

"Odalisque," for instance, gives us the male torso, slender and hirsute and cutting a clean, fomal line against a black background. Komater sets the torsos, alternately filling the top and botton of the frame, in three rows of four, and each row is a sinuous undulation of flesh. "Sweetheart" comprises 36 images of buttocks and thighs, oriented in a rotation. The prints, each exquisite in tone and texture, together morph into a flowerlike blossom of white on black.

"Beanstalk" climbs from floor to ceiling, a series of color prints of a man's legs and torso, some upside down and some right side up, but each joining to the next in a cruller-like twist of skin, flesh, and hair. Komater joins a long tradition, reaching back to Edward Weston, of finding abstraction in nudes. The patterns he creates, though, shed a new light on an old (and still alluring) idea.

Chris Komater: Harem

At: Bernard Toale Gallery, 450 Harrison Ave, through Feb. 24



Chris Komater's "Sweetheart" comprises 36 images of buttocks and thighs, which together morph into a flowerlike image.