

PARALLAXIS: Fifty-five Points to View  
Recipients of the 1995 and 1996 Western States Arts Federation /  
National Endowment for the Arts Regional Fellowships for Visual Arts  
Artist notes by Kathleen Shields

## CHRIS KOMATER

The theme of Chris Komater's work is gender roles, in particular that of masculinity and how it is defined by the culture. Using motifs from black-and-white films from the late 1930s to the early 1950s in his "sound sculptures," he works to "isolate stereotypes and moral and sexual ambiguities so we can look at their impact and influence." He writes: "Our distance in time from these images makes them both lyrical and camp." In *Killer's Kiss*, for example, forty-eight fedoras placed on the floor and surrounded by lipstick-stained cigarette butts crushed by high heels project pieces of recorded dialogue about "middle-class family men in a terrain of deceiving women and the promise of easy money." In *High Noon*, Komater uses music and dialogue from the 1952 Western of the same name to sledge a confrontation between duty and love, masculine and feminine. Pertinent lines from the movie bounce between a row of Stetsons and a row of bonnets placed at head height to enhance the liveliness of the exchange.

Other works look at more contemporary, perhaps less fixed, ways of describing masculinity. *Massculinity* is a window display of Pinocchio surrounded by objects associated with men, and *Personals* is a sound installation of blank frames on a wall covered with "images of male bonding," emitting recordings of men responding to personal ads. Such works suggest a more ambiguous cultural and social role for males than that defined in old movies, one that is ever changing but still subject to the times. KS

### SELECTED INDIVIDUAL EXHIBITION

*High Noon*, The Lab, San Francisco, California, 1993

### SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

*Mirror, Mirror . . . Gender Roles and the Historical Significance of Beauty*, Oliver Arts Center, California College of Arts and Crafts, Oakland, California, 1994

*Screening Space: Reflections on the Cinema in Recent Art*, Jan Kesner Gallery, Los Angeles, California, 1994

*Windows*, Fillmore Center Interim Arts Project, San Francisco, California, 1993

*Site/Western Union*, Haines Gallery, San Francisco, California, 1991

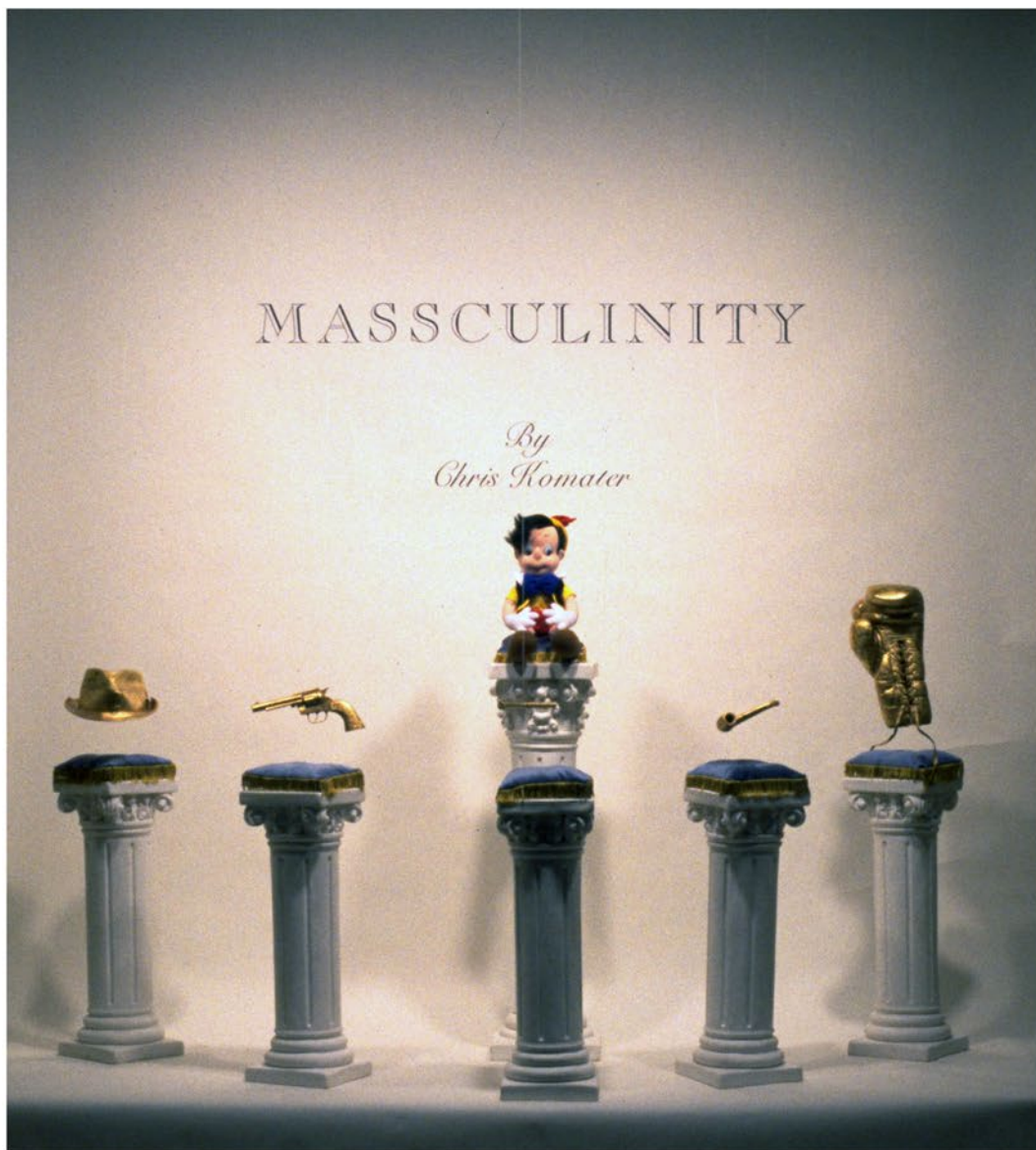
### SELECTED AWARD

Artist Residency Award, Villa Montalvo Center for the Arts, Saratoga, California, 1994

Born 1965 in South Bend, Indiana  
B.F.A., San Francisco Art Institute, San Francisco, California, 1988  
Resides in San Francisco, California



*Personals*, 1994  
Sound sculpture: paneling with images of male bonding, frames with voices of men responding to personal ad, heavy breathing pillow, 8' x 8' x 8'



CHRIS KOMATER  
*Massculinity*, 1993  
Retail window display of objects for men: leather,  
plastic, fabric, gold leaf, 9' x 12' x 12'