

Elizabeth Houston Gallery



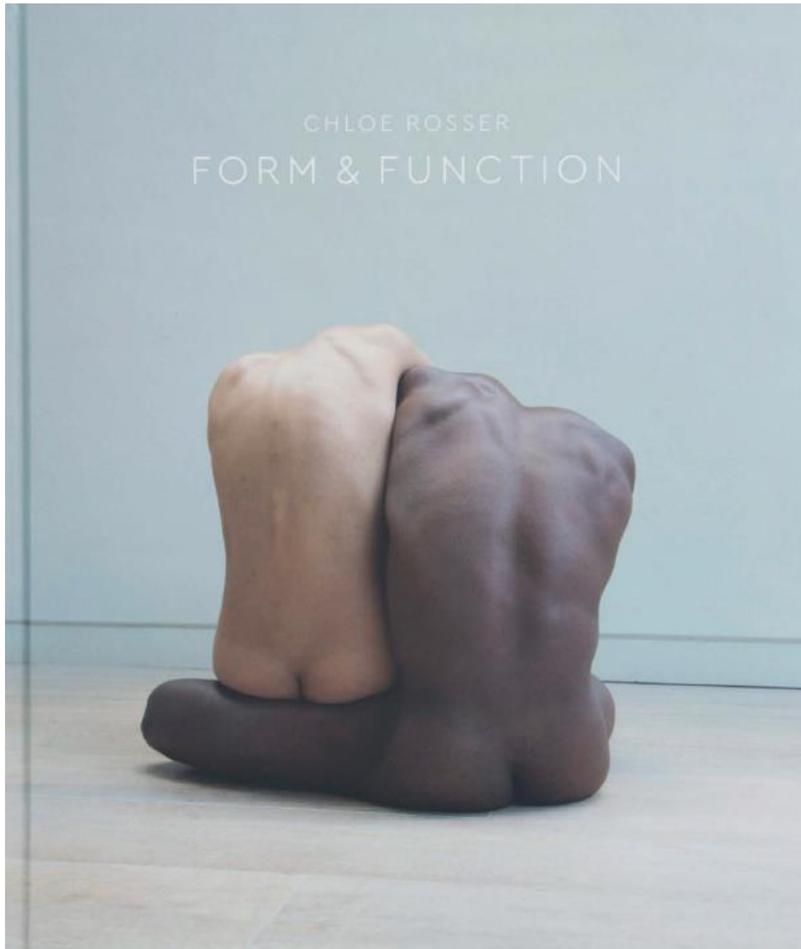
BOOK REVIEW: FORM & FUNCTION BY CHLOE ROSSER (STAY FREE PUBLISHING)



Form & Function by Chloe Rosser deals with the human condition and our increasing alienation from our own bodies. In these photographs, what should be intimately familiar is transformed into an unfamiliar sculpture.

Rosser challenges mainstream conceptions of body image through capturing a fluidity of gender and identity, embracing inclusivity every step of the way. The book is a culmination of Rosser's work over the last five years.

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Presenting images created over a 5-year period, Rosser's subjects are contorted into shapes devoid of heads, limbs and other differentiating features. The viewer is left to consider an almost unearthly form, positioned in an unassuming space and the questions that this construction evokes. Who is this person? How are they able to hold this position? What gender are they?

Once you've passed beyond those superficial immediate concerns, the images begin to address much more profound ideas. The beauty that is intrinsic to all people regardless of age, ethnicity, gender, how much you weigh or what your face looks like. The strength and vulnerability that we all carry, both of which are often obscured by the façade that we present to the world every day. These ideas are woven through each fibre of every page in this book.

Rosser further develops these ideas by introducing additional forms into the space. It's impossible to escape the suggestion of relationships, and sometimes tension, between them. Again, these forms allude to universal notions of equality of people, of our interdependence, and of our need for connection and interaction as they intertwine, bodies lean on each other for support and these solemn shapes exist in a transiently perfect equilibrium.

Rosser's images are beautifully crafted, both in the execution of the pose but also in the formality and technical proficiency of their composition, as diffused natural light gently bathes these eerily familiar forms in spaces that rarely draw your attention from the subject. Occasionally, a wallpaper pattern or chest of draws will materialise, jolting the viewer into remembering and recontextualising these sculptural forms in a domestic human setting. Mostly though, you are struck by how relatable these forms are – they could be anyone, they could be me, you could be them.

In their somewhat otherworldliness and close attention to small details, these images bring to mind the work of Torbjorn Rodland or Sam Jinks. Rosser brings a thoughtfulness and precision of communication to bear, honed over a number of years of diligent enquiry into her subject. The work is unsettling in a way that doesn't alienate the viewer, masterfully simple and yet satisfyingly complex, because of the various layers of meaning embedded in each image and the work as a whole. As such the viewer is invited to linger a while with each photograph, to ponder the curves and lines, to wonder how comfortable you yourself might feel under the perceptive yet respectful gaze of Rosser's lens.

This is work to be enjoyed at length, to be revisited and contemplated. The hardback is a pleasure to handle and spend time with and the photographs are beautifully reproduced. A transcript of an interview with Rosser brings the book to a close, by which time you will have hopefully arrived at your own conclusions about what you have seen. My conclusion is that this work, like all great art, succeeds in reminding you of yourself as well as of the traits that connect us all.

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Form & Function by Chloe Rosser.

Published by Stay Free Publishing

Limited to: 500 copies

Hardcover

24 x 28 cm, Portrait

120 pages

Form & Function by Chloe Rosser was reviewed for Shutter Hub by Justin Carey