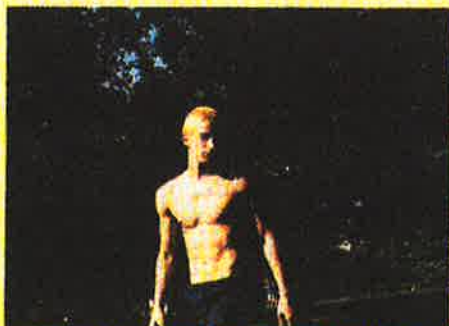


# attitude



**BEAUTY MARK** An alternative vision of beauty can be seen at new gallery space, The Apartment In Soho. Their debut exhibition, *The Unbearable Lightness of Beauty*, features the sumptuous photos of Japanese artist Kasumi Morimura alongside Caroline May's investigation of the archetypal male. Both artists attempt to question the nature of beauty by raiding images

from popular culture. For instance, May's sinewy male (above) that appears up-close in her photos seems to fit comfortably into our modern-day line-up of cutesy, pre-pubescent boy band members. Bare-chested and cropped blond hair may make him the new boy on the block, but something about his self-conscious posture amidst the stiffened traditionalism of the English landscape tells us otherwise. Boy wonder becomes as artificial as his surroundings.

Instead Morimura uses familiar advertising images with Japan's tradition of horticulture. They become strange, intricate hybrids that splice together Western and Eastern stereotypes of beauty. The results from these two photographers prove that there's just no getting away from stereotypes of beauty. But far from its association with all that is lightweight and shallow, our understanding of what constitutes beauty has long been embedded in eastern and western art. It's simply given a facelift every so often by changing taste and fashion.

Understated, elegant and worth a look.

*The Unbearable Lightness of Beauty*, at The Apartment, London W1, to 31 August. For info, tel 0171-434 0046