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A black and white, high-contrast portrait of a man's face and neck, shown in profile from the chest up. He has dark hair and is looking slightly to the left. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the contours of his face against a dark background.

Robert Mapplethorpe
THE PHOTOGRAPHS



PAUL MARTINEAU BRITT SALVESEN

Robert Mapplethorpe

THE PHOTOGRAPHS

PAUL MARTINEAU BRITT SALVESEN

Robert Mapplethorpe's legacy is rich and complicated, triggering controversy, polarizing critics, and providing inspiration and new pathways for many artists who followed him. Driven by his desire for fame, Mapplethorpe taught himself about the history of art, how to run a studio, how to network, and how to keep the public interested in him. At the same time, he honed a distinctive individual vision based on craftsmanship and an aesthetic of classical grace. One of the most influential and controversial artists of his time, today Mapplethorpe stands as an example to emerging photographers who continue to test boundaries and experiment with concepts of the beautiful. His life and work continue to reward examination, taking on new relevance with shifting social and artistic concerns.

Robert Mapplethorpe: The Photographs offers just such a timely and rewarding examination. Drawing from the extraordinary collection of nearly two thousand editioned works, mixed-media objects, and Polaroid instant prints—jointly acquired in 2011 by the J. Paul Getty Museum and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art from The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation—as well as from the Robert Mapplethorpe Archive housed at the Getty Research Institute, the authors and contributors were given the unique opportunity to explore new resources and present fresh perspectives. The results are a fascinating introduction to Mapplethorpe's career and legacy and five in-depth essays on sexuality and identity, all accompanied by a rich selection of illustrations covering the remarkable range of Mapplethorpe's photographic work. Additional resources include the artist's vast exhibition history, an illustrated chronology of his life and work, and a useful bibliography. All of these elements, beautifully integrated, contribute to what promises to become an indispensable publication of lasting significance and an essential point of access to Robert Mapplethorpe's work and practice.





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Robert Mapplethorpe
THE PHOTOGRAPHS

Paul Martineau and Britt Salvesen

with contributions by

Philip Gefter

Jonathan D. Katz

Ryan Linkof

Richard Meyer

Carol Squiers

This publication is issued on the occasion of the exhibition *Robert Mapplethorpe: The Perfect Medium*, on view at the J. Paul Getty Museum at the Getty Center, Los Angeles, from March 15 to July 31, 2016, and at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art from March 20 to July 31, 2016; subsequently at the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Montréal from September 10, 2016, to January 15, 2017; and at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, from October 28, 2017, to February 4, 2018.

This exhibition was organized by the J. Paul Getty Museum and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

TERRA
FOUNDATION FOR AMERICAN ART

This exhibition is made possible through support from the Terra Foundation for American Art.

The J. Paul Getty Museum exhibition is sponsored by Sotheby's.

The LACMA exhibition is sponsored by Phillips.
Additional support is provided by the Wallis Annenberg Director's Endowment Fund.

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Published by the J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles

Getty Publications
1200 Getty Center Drive, Suite 500
Los Angeles, CA 90049-1682
www.getty.edu/publications

Beatrice Hohenegger, *Project Editor*
Diana C. Stoll, *Manuscript Editor*
Jeffrey Cohen, *Designer*
Stacy Miyagawa, *Production*

Distributed in the United States and Canada by the University of Chicago Press

Distributed outside the United States and Canada by Yale University Press, London

Printing by Trifoglio, Verona, Italy
Separations by Robert J. Hennessey, Photography

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Robert Mapplethorpe (J. Paul Getty Museum)

Robert Mapplethorpe : the photographs / Paul Martineau and Britt Salvesen ; with contributions by Philip Gefter, Jonathan D. Katz, Ryan Linkof, Richard Meyer, Carol Squiers.
pages cm

"This publication is issued on the occasion of the exhibition *Robert Mapplethorpe: The Perfect Medium*, on view at the J. Paul Getty Museum at the Getty Center, Los Angeles, from March 15 to July 31, 2016, and at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art from March 20 to July 31, 2016; subsequently at the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Montréal from September 10, 2016, to January 15, 2017; and at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, from October 2017 to February 2018."
—ECIP galley.

"This exhibition was organized by the J. Paul Getty Museum and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art."—ECIP galley.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-60606-469-6 (hardcover)

1. Mapplethorpe, Robert—Exhibitions. 2. Mapplethorpe, Robert—Criticism and interpretation. 3. Photography, Artistic—Exhibitions. 4. J. Paul Getty Museum—Exhibitions. 5. Los Angeles County Museum of Art—Exhibitions. I. Martineau, Paul, 1967– III. Salvesen, Britt. IV. J. Paul Getty Museum, host institution, issuing body, organizer. V. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, host institution, organizer. VI. Title. VII. Title: Robert Mapplethorpe, the perfect medium.

TR647.M362 2016

770.74'79493—dc23

Front jacket: Robert Mapplethorpe, *Self-Portrait*, 1985 (plate 138, detail)
Back jacket: Robert Mapplethorpe, *Flower Arrangement*, 1986 (plate 145)
Page i: Robert Mapplethorpe, *Untitled (Self-portrait)*, ca. 1974 (plate 21)
Page ii: Robert Mapplethorpe, *Self-Portrait*, negative 1980; print 1990. Gelatin silver print, 35.6 × 35.6 cm (14 × 14 in.). Jointly acquired by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; partial gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation; partial purchase with funds provided by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the David Geffen Foundation, 2011.9.21

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DIRECTORS' FOREWORD

In a career of nearly three decades, Robert Mapplethorpe established himself as one of the most significant photographic artists of the second half of the twentieth century. His work has been exhibited and published internationally and can be found in many of the world's most important museums and private collections. Mapplethorpe's photographs are often defined by the artist's penchant for perfectly controlled compositions. His patron and lover, the curator and collector Samuel J. Wagstaff Jr., understood the danger inherent in pursuing perfection, writing of Mapplethorpe's photographs: "The trouble with perfection is that it begins to look easy." As you will discover in the pages of this book, however, nothing about Mapplethorpe's life and career was easy. They work together to tell a compelling story about American culture during the 1970s and '80s. From the sexual revolution to the hedonism of the "Me" generation, Mapplethorpe managed to encapsulate the defining facets of the period in uniquely visual terms that continue to inspire admiration and draw crowds.

In 2011 the J. Paul Getty Museum and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art jointly acquired a large and representative body of work by Mapplethorpe through a generous partial gift from The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation, with additional funds provided by the David Geffen Foundation and the J. Paul Getty Trust. The majority of this collection is housed at the Getty Museum and the Getty Research Institute, with a rotating representative sample on deposit at LACMA. The institutions' collective holdings include more than nineteen hundred limited-edition photographs and approximately one thousand non-editioned photographs, as well as sixty unique objects, both framed and unframed; over one hundred Polaroids; and a deep trove of archival materials.

It may at first seem unlikely that the art and archive of an artist so identified with New York should reside in Los Angeles, but it is only here that the three institutions could join forces and provide full scope for exhibitions, interpretation, preservation, programming, and access. At the Getty Museum, these works complement the historic collection of photographs assembled by Samuel J. Wagstaff Jr. and purchased in 1984, and relate directly to the Wagstaff archival material generously donated to the Getty Research Institute by The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation. At LACMA, Mapplethorpe's work can be presented and interpreted in a multitude of contexts that reflect on his life and times. In the medium of photography, it enhances, and is enhanced by, the Marjorie and Leonard Vernon Collection of some 3,500 photographs from the mid-nineteenth to mid-twentieth centuries (made possible by Wallis Annenberg and the Annenberg Foundation), and the Audrey and Sydney Irmis Collection of photographic self-portraits. When taken together with the Mapplethorpe archive at the Getty Research Institute, the holdings of his artwork at the Getty Museum and LACMA represent a uniquely rich resource for research and appreciation of the artist, and make Los Angeles the premier destination for the study of Mapplethorpe.

This volume is both a celebration of the landmark acquisition of nearly all of the artist's editioned prints and an attempt by scholars in both museums to reevaluate the artist's life and career in a way that was not previously possible. We would like to thank Paul Martineau and Britt Salvesen, who in 2011 began to work together toward *Robert Mapplethorpe: The Perfect Medium*, an unprecedented two-part exhibition reflecting the identities of our two institutions' distinctive holdings, and which provides the most comprehensive retrospective to date of Mapplethorpe's formation, rise to acclaim, and legacy. Martineau and Salvesen also spearheaded this

publication, contributing an introductory overview and facilitating the research of their fellow essayists. This book and the shared ownership of the collection have had the effect of increasing cooperation between the museums in a way that we hope will stand as a model for other institutions considering large-scale joint acquisitions.

We wish also to acknowledge those institutions to which this exhibition will travel: the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Montréal, led by museum director and chief curator Nathalie Bondil; and the Art Gallery of New South Wales, under the direction of Michael Brand, himself formerly director of the Getty Museum, and who—with the late James Wood, president of the J. Paul Getty Trust from 2006 to 2010—was instrumental in securing this gift.

We are honored to have received the Terra Foundation for American Art's generous support as underwriter of the touring exhibition. The Getty Museum would like to express sincere gratitude to Sotheby's for their support of its installation. LACMA is also deeply appreciative of Phillips's long-term support and sponsorship of its presentation. Additional support at LACMA is provided by the Wallis Annenberg Director's Endowment Fund.

Finally, we would like to extend our deepest appreciation to the board and staff of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation, especially Foundation president Michael Ward Stout, for their active cooperation in this project and for placing their trust in us as custodians of Robert Mapplethorpe's legacy.

Timothy Potts
Director, J. Paul Getty Museum

Michael Govan
CEO and Wallis Annenberg Director, Los Angeles County Museum of Art

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This publication represents five years of research and exploration undertaken at the J. Paul Getty Museum and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), beginning with the 2011 joint acquisition of Robert Mapplethorpe's works and archive, and culminating in a major exhibition in 2016. This has been a truly collaborative endeavor, not only between two curators but involving many individuals in our institutions and at The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation.

We are profoundly grateful to The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation's board of directors, including Eric R. Johnson, Dimitri Levas, Burton Lipsky, Stuart Shining, and Michael Ward Stout, as well as to staff members Joree Adilman, Jennifer Fiore, and Adam Rosenthal, for their assistance with the historic acquisition and for their help with preparing this volume.

Timothy Potts, director of the J. Paul Getty Museum, and Michael Govan, Wallis Annenberg Director and CEO at LACMA, have been steadfastly supportive of this undertaking from the start. The project has also benefited from the guidance and encouragement of other leaders at both institutions. At the Getty we would like to acknowledge John Giurini, assistant director of museum communications and public affairs; Virginia Heckert, curator and department head, Department of Photographs; Quincy Houghton, associate director of exhibitions and public programs; Judith Keller, senior curator of photographs; and Thomas Kren, associate director for collections. At LACMA we would like to acknowledge Miranda Carroll, director of communications; Zoe Kahr, deputy director for exhibitions and planning; Lisa Mark, publisher; and Terry Morello, senior vice president for external affairs. We greatly appreciate your enthusiasm and support. At the J. Paul Getty Trust we thank Stephen Clark, vice president, general counsel and secretary; and Mikka Gee Conway, assistant general counsel. At LACMA we appreciate the assistance of Fred Goldstein, senior vice president, general counsel and secretary.

We are profoundly grateful to contributing authors Philip Gefter, Jonathan D. Katz, Ryan Linkof, Richard Meyer, and Carol Squiers for their excellent and insightful essays. Each author brings ample talents and extensive scholarship to bear on this collaborative effort. Getty intern Matthew Kluk and Getty research assistant Karlyn Olvido were also instrumental in the success of this book, both as researchers and as contributors of ancillary documentation; LACMA assistant curator of photography Ryan Linkof must be acknowledged in these capacities as well.

Members of the Department of Photographs at the Getty Museum and of the Wallis Annenberg Photography Department at LACMA helped us in various ways. At the Getty Museum we extend our appreciation to assistant curators Mazie Harris, Karen Hellman, and Arpad Kovacs, research associate Miriam Katz, project administrator Marisa Weintraub, and intern Anthony Merrill. At LACMA thanks go to curatorial administrator Dhyandra Lawson, associate curator Rebecca Morse, curatorial assistant Eve Schillo, and intern Kiernan Gatewood.

Conservators, mount makers, registrars, and exhibition planners at both institutions played vital roles in the care, storage, documentation, and display of the Mapplethorpe collection. We would like to thank Victoria Behner, Carole Campbell, Cherie Chen, Dale Daniel, Erika Franek, Sarah Freeman, Elie Glyn, Leigh Grissom, Marc Harnly, Stephen Heer, David Karwan, Amber Keller, Carolyn Lifsey, Ernie Mack, Grace Murakami, Robin Sanford, Janice Schopfer, Tiffany Severance, Tiffany Shea, Ron Stroud, Martin Szytk, and Lorraine Wild for their work and expertise.

We are particularly grateful for the meticulous efforts of former Getty Museum curatorial assistant Linde Brady Lehtinen, who catalogued the photographs and created an extensive set of research files related to the collection.

The photography technicians at both the Getty Museum and LACMA—including Laura Cherry, Gary Hughes, Brenda Smith, and Michael Smith—ensured that the visual documentation of the collection would be of the highest quality.

At the Getty Research Institute the staff of the Special Collections Reading Room deserves many thanks, as do registrar Irene Lotspeich-Phillips and curator Frances Terpak. We are especially indebted to Michelle Brunnick, who served as our main point of contact for information about and access to the Robert Mapplethorpe Archive.

Other individuals who generously shared their knowledge and firsthand experiences of Mapplethorpe with us are Marisa Cardinale, Brian English, Judy Linn, Edward Mapplethorpe, and Robert Sherman.

It has been a great pleasure to work with Judy Annear of the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, and with Dianne Charbonneau of the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Montréal. We are delighted that each of these respected institutions will host the exhibition *Robert Mapplethorpe: The Perfect Medium* after its initial presentation at the Getty Museum and LACMA.

This book was produced by Getty Publications, in collaboration with LACMA, under the direction of publisher Kara Kirk. Beatrice Hohenegger served with great efficiency and capability as the project editor, Jeffrey Cohen created this volume's elegant design, Stacy Miyagawa expertly coordinated the book's production, Pam Moffat obtained the image rights, Theresa Duran created the index, and Diana Stoll, manuscript editor, impressed us all with her knowledge and organization.

In conclusion, we would like to thank the staff of both museums for their efforts on this project. We are exceedingly fortunate to count many talented and dedicated individuals among our colleagues. Future researchers will benefit, as we did, from the groundwork they have laid to establish Mapplethorpe's art at the Getty Museum and LACMA.

— *Paul Martineau and Britt Salvesen*

INTRODUCTION

Paul Martineau and Britt Salvesen

Robert Mapplethorpe's legacy is rich and complicated, triggering controversy, polarizing critics, and providing inspiration and new pathways for many artists who followed him. His life and work continue to reward examination, taking on new relevance with shifting social and artistic concerns. As his close friend Patti Smith wrote in a 1988 poem dedicated to him, "Certain gifts are chosen and arranged in retrospect."¹ Mapplethorpe did not set out to be a photographer, yet he made his mark in that medium and changed the field forever. Nor did he intend to take a stand for gay civil rights, but his work was ultimately validated both for and despite its unapologetic depictions of sexuality.

Each monograph on Mapplethorpe—from those published during his lifetime to the many volumes and catalogues that have followed—engages in the *choosing* and *arranging* referenced in Smith's poem: some focusing on individual bodies of work, others surveying iconic images. The present publication adds a forward-looking perspective. While it coincides with a major traveling exhibition of Mapplethorpe's work, this volume is not intended primarily as a documentation of that exhibition. Rather, it celebrates the extensive holdings of Mapplethorpe's art jointly acquired in 2011 by the J. Paul Getty Museum and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA). With the entire body of work—1,969 editioned prints as determined by the artist—at our disposal, we have had the opportunity to observe fascinating patterns (particularly in figure studies) and intriguing exceptions (such as landscapes). This collection, when combined with the Robert Mapplethorpe Archive, housed at the Getty Research Institute (GRI), will serve as a central resource and matrix for future scholars of Mapplethorpe and his era.

The selection of plates in this volume indicates the range of Mapplethorpe's photographic work, from familiar masterworks to less known and previously unpublished images. Introductions to each of the four plate sections parse the imagery in loosely chronological chapters, providing basic biographical information and outlining the rapid evolution of Mapplethorpe's twenty-year career. Additional reference information includes a chronology, selected exhibition history, and selected bibliography. This catalogue thus aims to be an essential point of access to the artist's work and practice.

It also demonstrates the great potential for new scholarship and new perspectives on Mapplethorpe. Determined to control his own legacy, Mapplethorpe achieved a career pinnacle—retrospectives at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York and at the Institute of Contemporary Art in Philadelphia—just before he died on March 9, 1989, at age forty-two. Immediately thereafter, as the culture wars of the era unfolded, he was recast as a provocateur, pornographer, activist, and AIDS victim, according to the partisan agendas of those involved. It was, for a time, unclear whether Mapplethorpe would go down in history as a political and sexual radical or as a successful and significant artist.

The reception was different—less encumbered by conservative critique—in other parts of the world. A major retrospective in 1992, curated by Germano Celant, solidified Mapplethorpe's reputation in Europe and beyond, opening at the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art in Humlebæk, Denmark, and traveling to Italy, Finland, Belgium, Sweden, Australia, Israel, Spain, Austria, New Zealand, England, Ireland, Brazil, and Germany; that same year, another solo exhibition appeared in Monterrey, Mexico, and a third circulated among five venues in Japan. Through the 1990s and 2000s, a number of exhibitions and publications focused on the aesthetic power and art historical

affinities of Mapplethorpe's oeuvre. Notable among these are *Robert Mapplethorpe and the Classical Tradition: Photographs and Mannerist Prints* (2004), *Robert Mapplethorpe: Perfection in Form* (2009), and *Mapplethorpe/Rodin* (2014). Other projects have drawn attention to work Mapplethorpe executed before focusing on gelatin silver printmaking; Sylvia Wolf's catalogue (2007) and exhibition *Polaroids* (2008), produced by the Whitney Museum of American Art, is a notable example. A series of gallery exhibitions curated by artists, beginning in 2003 with *Robert Mapplethorpe: Eye to Eye* (selected by Cindy Sherman) at Sean Kelly Gallery, New York, brought out less known images from The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation's holdings and began to indicate the influence of Mapplethorpe on his contemporaries and on subsequent generations of artists. These and many other explorations of Mapplethorpe's work that have been undertaken since his death have served to dispel the cloud of censorship that threatened his legacy in 1989–90.

Now, nearly three decades later, Mapplethorpe's life and work continue to reward close examination, as demonstrated by the five contributors to this catalogue, all of whom are active as scholars, critics, and curators. Three of the authors—Philip Gfelter, Jonathan D. Katz, and Carol Squiers—met the artist in person; the other two, Ryan Linkof and Richard Meyer, came to his work later. Drawing on the editioned body of images and the archive of working materials, ephemera, and other documentation held at the Getty Research Institute, these writers offer new perspectives on Mapplethorpe, his time, and his legacy. Their points of view reflect and participate in the debates of our own day, without foreclosing the possibilities that remain for future avenues of investigation.

Richard Meyer, professor of art history at Stanford University, first worked with the Mapplethorpe Archive while preparing his groundbreaking 2002 study *Outlaw Representation: Censorship and Homosexuality in Twentieth-Century American Art*.² In his essay for the present volume, Meyer examines Mapplethorpe's breach of the putative boundary between art and pornography, a tendentious pursuit that challenged conservative politicians and art world advocates alike to reckon with an art that fully expresses the sexuality of its subjects and its maker.

While Meyer describes how homosexuality was instrumentalized rhetorically and visually during the culture wars, Philip Gfelter looks at the development of the gay community itself. Building on the extensive research that forms the basis of his acclaimed 2014 biography *Wagstaff: Before and After Mapplethorpe*, Gfelter establishes a parallel between the rising status of photography in the art world and the increasing visibility of gay collectors, dealers, and artists, chief among them Samuel J. Wagstaff Jr., Mapplethorpe's mentor and sometime partner.³ Mapplethorpe acted as a catalyst of sorts in these processes of change, not only because he was openly gay but also because his work offered a newly complex iconography of homoerotic desire, one that drew equitably, as Gfelter notes, from both the visual traditions of Renaissance painting and the subculture of the gay s/m community in New York.

Jonathan D. Katz, professor at the State University of New York, Buffalo, takes up other aspects of Mapplethorpe's iconography, introducing the notion of "queer classicism." Whereas Mapplethorpe's sex pictures and classicizing figure studies have often been discussed in opposition, Katz contends that they should be considered together, as part of the artist's larger project to balance control and abandon, to question gender dichotomies, and to declare the expansiveness of sex as a common ground of human experience. Cocurator (with David C. Ward) of the 2010 exhibition *Hide/Seek: Difference and Desire in American Portraiture* at the Smithsonian Institution's National Portrait Gallery in Washington, D.C., Katz attends carefully to the implicit and explicit coding of sexual desire.⁴

Ryan Linkof, assistant curator in the Wallis Annenberg Photography Department at LACMA, takes up the specific codes of fashion and fetishism in his essay. While Mapplethorpe achieved renown as an artist rather than as a commercial fashion photographer, he was adept at composing garments and bodies for maximum erotic charge. Analyzing several examples from Mapplethorpe's personal and editorial work, Linkof argues that the artist deployed the visual language of fetishism in uniquely charged ways. Much of that charge comes from Mapplethorpe's implication of himself in the scenarios he photographed: he was an integral part of the worlds he depicted, as artist/observer, as participant, and sometimes as the subject of his own photographs.

Carol Squiers, curator at the International Center of Photography, New York, looks at Mapplethorpe's self-portraits as agents in the discovery and construction of his own identity, beginning with the declaration of his homosexuality and ending with the acceptance of his mortality. To better understand the cumulative significance of Mapplethorpe's self-portraits, Squiers contrasts them with selected portraits of Mapplethorpe by other artists, given to him or to the Foundation over the years and now held at the Getty Museum or in the Mapplethorpe Archive.

SHAPING AN ARTISTIC CAREER

One of the strongest motivations in Mapplethorpe's life was his desire for fame. As a visual artist, he understood the importance of creating a dynamic public identity and purposefully adjusted his image to suit his needs. Mapplethorpe's success as an artist was based, in part, on the interest he generated in himself. His desire for celebrity and notice was undoubtedly shaped by childhood experiences. The third of six children in a busy middle-class household in Floral Park, Queens, Mapplethorpe had to vie for his parents' attention. As a teen he was skinny and socially awkward—not uncommon qualities, of course, but they made living in the shadow of his older brother, Richard, who was outgoing, popular, and athletic, more challenging. In 1963, after graduating from the local public high school at the age of sixteen, Mapplethorpe enrolled at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, where he joined the ROTC unit on campus and eventually became a member of the Pershing Rifles military honors society. By 1965 he was beginning to question his sexuality and experimenting with drugs. He switched his major at Pratt from advertising design to graphic arts. According to his biographer, Patricia Morrisroe, he became fascinated with Andy Warhol in 1966, choosing him as an artistic role model.⁵ Like Mapplethorpe, Warhol had started out as something of an outsider but created art and an artistic identity that transported him from his working-class roots in Pittsburgh to a lavish townhouse on Manhattan's Upper East Side. Warhol's work was known everywhere, desired by everyone; moreover, he had established the Factory, a workspace where life and art became one. Mapplethorpe envied the glamour and exclusivity of Warhol's success as an art star and wanted them for himself.

In 1967 Mapplethorpe met the artist-poet, and later rock musician, Patti Smith. They lived together, in relative poverty, first as lovers, then as artistic partners, becoming regulars at the nightclub/restaurant Max's Kansas City, where they mixed with Warhol's coterie of artists, models, musicians, and drag queens. Mapplethorpe let his hair grow into curly, shoulder-length locks and dressed in a sheepskin vest and beads—the consummate hippy. He was young and handsome, and this epebic, bohemian look suited him well. At this time, his art consisted primarily of drawings, jewelry, and mixed-media collages, many of which included images cut from gay pornography magazines. Smith later recalled her early years with Mapplethorpe:

He had absolute confidence in his work and in me, yet he worried incessantly about our future, how we would survive, about money. . . .

He was searching, consciously or unconsciously, for himself. He was in a fresh state of transformation. He had shed the skin of his ROTC uniform, and in its wake his scholarship, his commercial path, and his father's expectations of him.⁶

In 1971 and 1972, respectively, Mapplethorpe met two influential curators: John McKendry, curator of prints and photography at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and Sam Wagstaff, who had been senior curator at the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford, Connecticut, and curator of contemporary art at the Detroit Institute of Arts. McKendry's involvement with Mapplethorpe was brief (he died in 1975), but it was of major significance. McKendry invited Mapplethorpe to view the collection of historic photographs at the Met, gave the young artist a Polaroid camera, and introduced him to his network of influential friends. Wagstaff became the artist's lover and patron. With his financial support and art world connections, Mapplethorpe's career as a photographer began to take shape. He moved to a studio loft at 24 Bond

Figure 1

David Seidner (American, 1957–1999), *Robert Mapplethorpe*, ca. 1980. Gelatin silver print; image (in 5 pieces): 60.3 × 16.4 cm (23¾ × 6⅞ in.); overall sheet: 61.4 × 16.8 cm (24¾ × 6⅞ in.). New York, International Center of Photography.

Gift from the Estate of David Seidner and purchase, with funds provided by the ICP Acquisitions Committee, 2001



Street, and in 1973 had his first solo exhibition, at the Light Gallery in New York. By the mid-1970s, Mapplethorpe had acquired a medium-format camera and was using it to make portraits of members of New York’s art world. His pictures of prominent writers, actors, and dancers helped to foster a demand for his work among other creative people, many of whom were interested in molding their own public images and needed pictures of themselves for professional purposes. In 1975, for example, Mapplethorpe made a portrait of Smith for the cover of her debut album, *Horses* (plate 29). The album was a hit, catapulting Smith to stardom. She later recalled:

Robert was unabashedly proud of my success. What he wanted for himself, he wanted for us both. He exhaled a perfect stream of smoke, and spoke in a tone he only used with me—a bemused scolding—admiration without envy, our brother-sister language.

“Patti,” he drawled, “you got famous before me.”⁷

In 1977 Mapplethorpe became increasingly interested in photographing the gay s/m community of which he was not just an observer but an active participant: he spent many late nights prowling New York sex clubs looking for sexual partners and models. During this period Mapplethorpe styled himself as an artistic rebel, dressing in denim and leather. He made the slightness of his build less noticeable by layering clothing on his upper body (fig. 1). He sometimes wore a belt with the word “shit” emblazoned on the buckle to fancy dinner parties hosted by members of New York society—and took much delight in shocking the other guests.

When Mapplethorpe’s sex pictures were exhibited in the late 1970s, they roiled the New York art world, bringing him the attention he craved and earning him a reputation as an enfant terrible. Wagstaff was ready to defend his protégé: “[The sex pictures] have a perfectly natural frankness, couched in elegance even, which looks quite different than any dirty pictures you have ever seen,” he wrote. “Some part of freedom is always outrageous to somebody and that’s not to say that [a] certain outrage isn’t a necessity to art’s health.”⁸ A consummate example of this outrageous frankness is Mapplethorpe’s 1978 self-portrait with the handle of a leather whip

inserted in his anus (plate 43). This image, the ultimate act of defiance, made it absolutely clear that the artist was fully committed to his project.

After showing with the Holly Solomon Gallery in SoHo for less than a year, Mapplethorpe moved to the Robert Miller Gallery, which was located at 724 Fifth Avenue in the heart of the city's upscale midtown gallery district. The move was part of a plan hatched by Wagstaff and Mapplethorpe to balance the artist's reputation as creative rebel with a more conservative gallery setting. Mapplethorpe's next major project, with the female bodybuilder Lisa Lyon, was calculated to surprise critics who had dismissed him as just a purveyor of photographs of gay s/m sex. Mapplethorpe and Lyon were well matched: artist and model shared an enthusiasm for the myriad ways she could be pictured—undressed or dressed in various guises, ranging from ingenue to dominatrix.

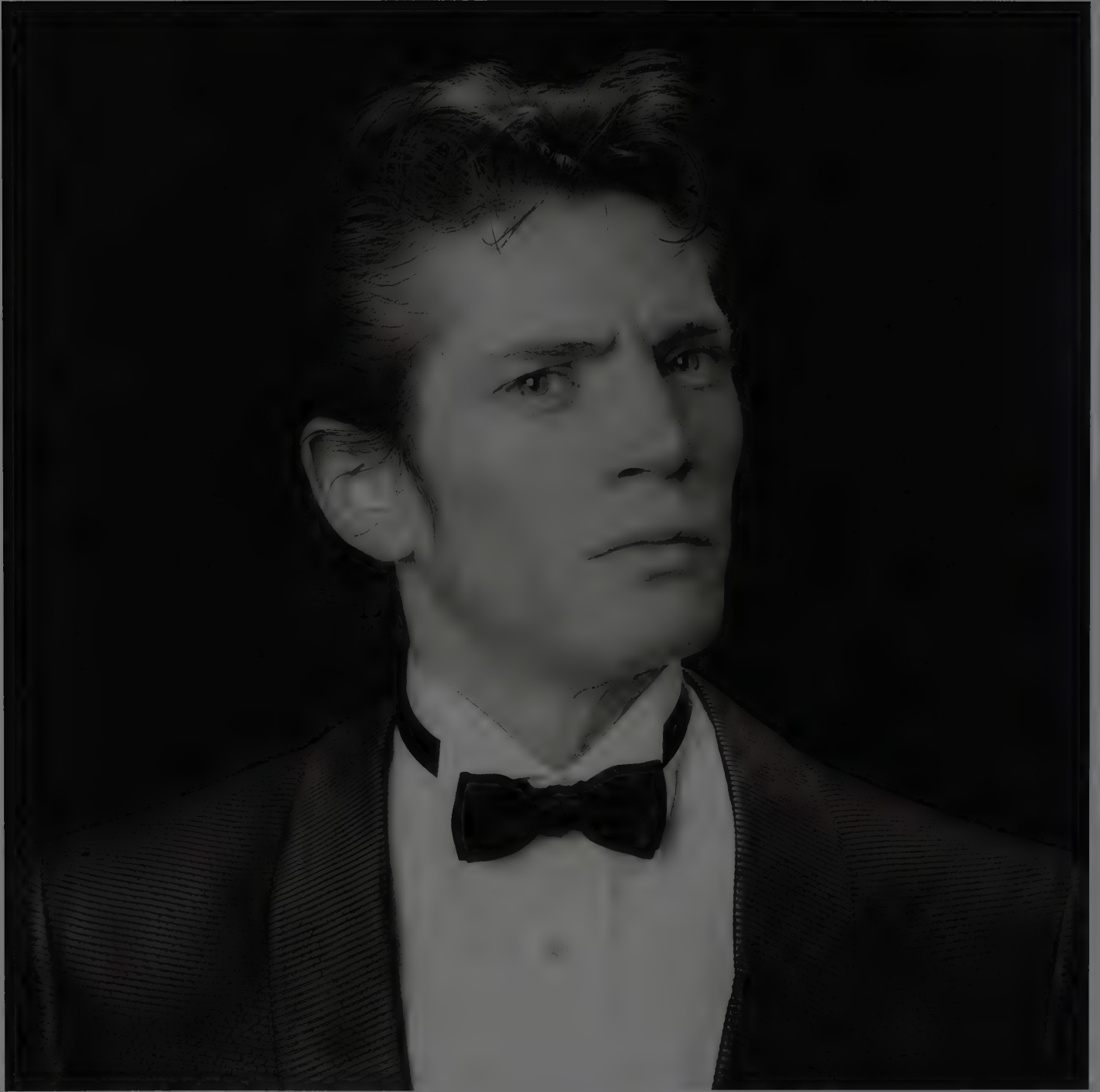
Throughout his career, Mapplethorpe kept a close eye on the amount and type of publicity he was getting. He regularly combed through newspapers and magazines, clipping out articles and reviews about his work. Although he was sensitive to negative criticism, he understood (as did Warhol) that bad press was better than no press. Hiring a studio manager as well as a staff of assistants and printers to help him run his business afforded Mapplethorpe the time to monitor his career and attend art-related events.

During the late 1970s and early 1980s, when Mapplethorpe wasn't working with Lyon or creating portraits of members of the New York art world and other celebrities, he was photographing African-American men as objects of desire. Perhaps his most famous is *Man in Polyester Suit* (plate 72). Unlike his series of photographs of Ajitto (plates 99–102), in which the viewer's eye is allowed to enter the image to explore the model's body as pure form, *Man in Polyester Suit* comes as a blunt visual confrontation that calls into question (white) fears about black sexuality by conjuring and reinforcing the racial stereotype of the well-endowed black male. While Mapplethorpe may have created this photograph to shock, its success as a provocation rests on its solid compositional structure; there isn't a single element that could be adjusted to improve it—framing, lighting, pose, the layers of suiting, and the way the white fabric shirttail sets off the model's penis—all align to make a perfectly balanced and visually riveting picture.

Mapplethorpe's efforts to navigate himself into the limelight were effective. By the mid-1980s, his work was being shown regularly in museums and galleries all over the world, and he was living in a lavish \$500,000 loft at 35 West 23rd Street. Around this time, he began carving out a new image of himself as a well-established artist. This shift is clearly reflected in his self-portraits: his former leather biker jacket, pompadour, and expression of relaxed confidence (plate 85) were traded in for a grosgrain silk dinner jacket, bowtie, and guarded sideways glance (fig. 2). The latter photograph was made in 1986, the year Mapplethorpe was diagnosed with AIDS, and it seems to contain the haunting specter of the disease that would end his life three years later.

After Wagstaff died of AIDS-related complications at age sixty-five, in January 1987, Mapplethorpe made an effort to distance himself from his former mentor.⁹ He was afraid that people would be put off if they thought that he, too, had the disease, and he wanted to dispel the notion that Wagstaff had been the principal instrument in his rise to stardom. In interviews of this period, Mapplethorpe made sure to point out that from the very beginning of his career to the present, his eye and his themes had remained consistent.¹⁰

As his health declined, Mapplethorpe faced his plight with courage and resolve. Unlike rival photographer Peter Hujar, who stopped working altogether as soon as he discovered he had AIDS, Mapplethorpe continued to photograph and to steer his career forward. Although he did not have regrets about the way he had lived his life, he was frustrated by the idea that he would not be able to enjoy the fruits of all his hard work. At Hujar's funeral, Mapplethorpe told a friend, "I just hope I can live long enough to see the fame."¹¹ Fortunately, his will to survive was strong, and his tenacious, against-all-odds attitude kept him going. On July 11, 1988, Mapplethorpe was admitted to New York's St. Vincent's Hospital with a bacterial infection. Although he was not expected to leave the hospital alive, he surprised his doctors by rallying and was allowed to go home a week later.¹² Mapplethorpe's "perfect moment" came two weeks afterwards, when he was able to attend the opening reception of his retrospective exhibition at the Whitney Museum, eight months before his death.



Mapplethorpe's definition of his body of work distinguishes him as an artist concerned with his legacy, but he did not methodically construct a catalogue of his photographic output at the end of his life. Rather, he made decisions incrementally, while maintaining his artistic production and managing his studio. As evidenced by the exhibition history and bibliography in this volume, Mapplethorpe had ample opportunities to present his photographs to the public, each time selecting works to reinforce what we might today call his "brand," or what he probably thought of in terms of style. Queried in 1988 by curator Janet Kardon about the stylistic or conceptual changes in his work over the years, Mapplethorpe described a process of continual refinement rather than a series of ruptures: "I think the work moves toward a kind of perfection . . . but basically the vision is the same."¹³

Within that cohesive vision, Mapplethorpe enjoyed setting up provocative juxtapositions in order to insist on continuities. A notable early instance took the form of two concurrent New York exhibitions, collectively titled *Pictures*, in February 1977: his sex pictures were on view at the Kitchen, while portraits were exhibited at the Holly Solomon Gallery. Mapplethorpe slyly positioned himself as an individual who could operate in both worlds (see fig. 47). In the following year, he published the X and Y Portfolios with photography dealers Harry Lunn, Robert Miller, and Robert Self. The Z Portfolio, published by the Lunn Gallery and Robert Miller, completed the trio in 1981. Each portfolio comprises thirteen prints: X features s/m scenarios; Y, floral still lifes; and Z, black male nudes. Together, they equate three of Mapplethorpe's primary subjects at the levels of composition, form, and format. In the history of photography, portfolios have served as compendia, ready-made exhibitions, and summaries of an artist's work to date. They are also personal objects, suitable for private enjoyment and exchange. These three portfolios satisfied Mapplethorpe's wish to offer his work in a manner that is precious, intimate, and covetable.

Starting in the early 1980s, Mapplethorpe actively published his photography in books, another important medium for establishing his vision and shaping his body of work. The books he produced in this era are of the highest quality, elegantly designed (many by Dimitri Levas), and beautifully printed, with text contributions intended to amplify the artistry, integrity, and scope of the work. *Lady: Lisa Lyon*, with text by Bruce Chatwin and a foreword by Wagstaff, countered the perception that Mapplethorpe was a photographer only of men.¹⁴ *Certain People*, a collection of portraits (with text by Susan Sontag), shows Mapplethorpe pitting himself against established masters of the genre such as Richard Avedon and Irving Penn.¹⁵ By the middle of the decade, many of Mapplethorpe's portraits were made on commission; he would incorporate some of these into his editioned body of work, taking into account both the subject's identity and the picture's success. Two commissions involving portraits of fellow artists resulted in the books *The Heroic Figure* (1984) and *50 New York Artists: A Critical Selection of Painters and Sculptors Working in New York* (1986);¹⁶ seventy-three portraits by Mapplethorpe were published in these books, and from these he selected additions to his editioned body of work. One of the last monographs in which Mapplethorpe was directly involved, *The Black Book* (1986), reprises the subject of the Z Portfolio.¹⁷ With this deliberately provocative publication, Mapplethorpe acknowledged that he had taken on a "loaded subject," while also claiming that visual attraction was his sole reason for doing so: a characteristic conflation of subject and style.¹⁸

Alongside his publishing activities of the mid-1980s, Mapplethorpe was the subject of numerous exhibitions and, finally, two major retrospectives, which surely prompted him to consider his career as a whole. *Robert Mapplethorpe* opened at the Whitney Museum in July 1988 and *Robert Mapplethorpe: The Perfect Moment* opened at the Institute of Contemporary Art in Philadelphia in December 1988 and then traveled to six additional venues in 1989–90. These shows were statements crafted by the artist and his curators—Richard Marshall at the Whitney and Janet Kardon at the ICA; both were wide-ranging presentations primarily of photographic prints (110 works in the Whitney's show and 175 in the ICA's). What critic Andy Grundberg called "Mapplethorpe mania" came, sadly, at a moment when the artist himself had only weeks to live.¹⁹

Mapplethorpe managed to attend the opening of the Whitney exhibition, but he was too ill to see the ICA show, and he had died by the time his exhibition was canceled in 1989 by

Figure 2

Robert Mapplethorpe
(American, 1946–1989),
Self-Portrait, negative
1986; print 2011. Gelatin
silver print. Image: 48.8 ×
48.7 cm (19¹/₁₆ × 19¹/₁₆ in.);
sheet: 61 × 50.8 cm (24 ×
20 in.). Promised gift of
The Robert Mapplethorpe
Foundation to the J. Paul
Getty Trust and the Los
Angeles County Museum
of Art

one of its scheduled venues, the Corcoran Gallery of Art, in Washington, D.C. There, the show and accompanying catalogue had been partially funded by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA); the museum canceled the presentation under pressure from conservative lawmakers and religious groups objecting to the NEA's support of art they deemed "pornographic." Ultimately, *The Perfect Moment* was presented at an alternative venue, the Washington Project for the Arts. However, the culture wars raged on. From Washington, the exhibition tour continued for a few months without incident, but in April 1990, when it opened at the Contemporary Arts Center, Dennis Barrie, the museum's director, was arrested on charges of obscenity. A key point of contention in the ensuing trial was whether the entire checklist of 175 works should be considered evidence (as the defense claimed was appropriate), or only seven photographs that were deemed particularly obscene by the prosecution. The judge overruled the defense on that point; nonetheless, Barrie was acquitted in what most of the art world hailed as a victory for freedom of expression.

The Ohio judge's refusal to let the jury consider the allegedly obscene photographs in the context of Mapplethorpe's *full* range of work is, in a sense, emblematic of a challenge faced to this day in the field of photography. It is a prolific medium (now more than ever), frequently tied to commercial imperatives and deadlines, and photographers often tend to be more concerned with making new pictures than with assessing and archiving past production. Mapplethorpe's determination to shape his overall body of work even while he was producing it speaks to the way he approached his practice, the aspirations he had for his career, and the changing status of photography in the art world. We can look back to Edward Weston for a key historic example of a photographer shaping his oeuvre in a consciously artistic way (although Mapplethorpe, who considered Weston's work "too dry," might not make the same link).²⁰ Avedon and Penn were more immediate precedents, not only in the scope of their subjects but also in their ways of running studios and controlling production. Mapplethorpe likely looked to them as measures of success.

Mapplethorpe seemed to have a clear understanding of how to hone, configure, and organize his photographic output throughout his working life. With Wagstaff's financial support, he had established his Bond Street studio in 1972 and proved himself capable of running it very effectively for seventeen years. One important activity of his studio assistants was to maintain the catalogue of prints and their editioning. This would ensure the existence of a self-defined body of work, ultimately amounting to 1,969 images—differing in status from the nearly one thousand uneditioned prints and exponentially more unprinted negatives remaining in the Mapplethorpe Archive. Mapplethorpe typically mandated limited editions of ten to fifteen prints of each image. His primary printers for gelatin silver prints were Tom Baril and his brother Edward Mapplethorpe; he worked with them closely to ensure the consistency and quality of each print.

When his illness became undeniable, Mapplethorpe began to think about setting up a foundation to preserve his legacy. Considerable assets were at stake, not only his own but also his inheritance from Wagstaff. Mapplethorpe turned to his attorney, Michael Ward Stout, well established as a representative of other artists' estates. "Robert is the most astute businessman of any of my clients," Stout told journalist Dominick Dunne in 1988. "If there is a decision to be made, he understands the issues and votes the right way."²¹ In consultation with Stout, Mapplethorpe put in place a board of trustees, and on May 27, 1988, The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation was established. Dedicated to the artist's legacy, the Foundation is also a major supporter of AIDS research and of photography publications and exhibitions; it has provided grants and donations to arts institutions around the world.

Now that the sensational headlines that preceded and followed Mapplethorpe's untimely death in 1989 have faded into the past, it is possible to reexamine the artist's life and career with fresh eyes. While much of what has been written about Mapplethorpe still rings true, the authors of this volume hope that the insights presented here will bring new light and greater balance to the study of his work. This volume inaugurates what is certain to be a fruitful future for Mapplethorpe scholarship and literature drawn from both museums' holdings and the invaluable materials in the Robert Mapplethorpe Archive at the GRI. These primary sources have been used by the authors of the present volume to characterize Mapplethorpe's participation and self-

presentation in the contexts of gay culture and the New York photography scene of the 1970s and 80s. These same resources, consolidated in Los Angeles at the Getty Museum, LACMA, and the GRI, will no doubt encourage research into other topics, such as Mapplethorpe's presentation, installation, and design strategies; his relationships with curators and with other artists; the collaborative aspects of his work; his successful efforts to position photography in the contemporary art market; his international presence during his lifetime and after; and many more.

Two words that come to mind when thinking about Mapplethorpe's career are "order" and "chaos." Together they encapsulate the extremes that are so essential to his work, the quiddity that makes it crackle with visual tension. The artist himself sometimes referred to that essence as magic, but it might be better described as artistic vision, or creative force. Fortunately, Mapplethorpe also possessed the drive to find an appropriate outlet for his vision and the discipline to bring it to fruition. He was an artist who understood the value of his own intuition and eye, who taught himself the history of photography, how to network, how to run a studio, and how to keep the public interested in him.

Never afraid to offend or break artistic rules, Mapplethorpe expanded the notion of what was possible in art. Many of his best photographs reference the past but also have an edge that keeps them relevant to today's audiences. Moreover, Mapplethorpe stands as an example to emerging photographers who continue to experiment with and tease the boundaries of acceptability. His influence is pervasive and, almost three decades after his death, Mapplethorpe's work remains necessary to any serious discussion of late twentieth-century art. It endures.

NOTES

- 1 Patti Smith, "Dedication," in Janet Kardon, *Robert Mapplethorpe: The Perfect Moment* (Philadelphia: Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, 1988), 31.
- 2 Richard Meyer, *Outlaw Representation: Censorship and Homosexuality in Twentieth-Century American Art* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).
- 3 Philip Gefter, *Wagstaff: Before and After Mapplethorpe* (New York: Liveright, 2014).
- 4 The exhibition's accompanying catalogue is Jonathan D. Katz and David C. Ward, *Hide/Seek: Difference and Desire in American Portraiture* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Books, 2010).
- 5 Patricia Morrisroe, *Mapplethorpe: A Biography* (New York: Random House, 1995), 43.
- 6 Patti Smith, *Just Kids* (New York: Ecco, 2010), 47–48.
- 7 *Ibid.*, 258.
- 8 From an undated note in the Samuel J. Wagstaff Jr. papers in the collection of the Getty Research Institute, box 181, folder 12.
- 9 Morrisroe, *Mapplethorpe*, 326–27.
- 10 "An Interview with Robert Mapplethorpe by Anne Horton," in *Robert Mapplethorpe 1986* (Berlin: Raab Galerie; Cologne: Galerie Kicken-Pauseback, 1986), n.p.
- 11 Mapplethorpe, quoted in Morrisroe, *Mapplethorpe*, 326.
- 12 *Ibid.*, 343.
- 13 Mapplethorpe, quoted in Janet Kardon, "Robert Mapplethorpe Interview," in Kardon, *The Perfect Moment*, 28.
- 14 Robert Mapplethorpe, *Lady: Lisa Lyon* (New York: Viking, 1983).
- 15 Robert Mapplethorpe, *Certain People: A Book of Portraits* (Pasadena, CA: Twelvetrees Press, 1985).
- 16 Linda L. Cathcart and Craig Owens, *The Heroic Figure* (Houston: Contemporary Arts Museum, 1984); Richard Marshall, *50 New York Artists: A Critical Selection of Painters and Sculptors Working in New York* (San Francisco: Chronicle, 1986).
- 17 Robert Mapplethorpe, *The Black Book* (New York: St. Martin's, 1986).
- 18 Kardon, "Robert Mapplethorpe Interview," in *The Perfect Moment*, 28.
- 19 Andy Grundberg, "Photography View: The Allure of Mapplethorpe's Photographs," *New York Times*, July 31, 1988.
- 20 Kardon, "Robert Mapplethorpe Interview," in *The Perfect Moment*, 26.
- 21 Stout, quoted in Dominick Dunne, "Robert Mapplethorpe's Proud Finale," *Vanity Fair*, February 1989, 125–32, 183–87; <http://www.vanityfair.com/culture/1989/02/robert-mapplethorpe-aids-dominick-dunne> (accessed March 25, 2015).

Plates

PART 1

Constructing an Image

Figure 3

Robert Mapplethorpe
(American, 1946–1989),
Untitled, ca. 1968.
Inscription: "Worlds Are
Colliding, Destruction
of the Self!" Ink on paper.
Sheet: 35.6 × 27.8 cm
(14 × 10³/₁₆ in.). Gift of

The Robert Mapplethorpe
Foundation to the J. Paul
Getty Trust and the Los
Angeles County Museum
of Art, 2011.M.20.173,
box 49, folder 1

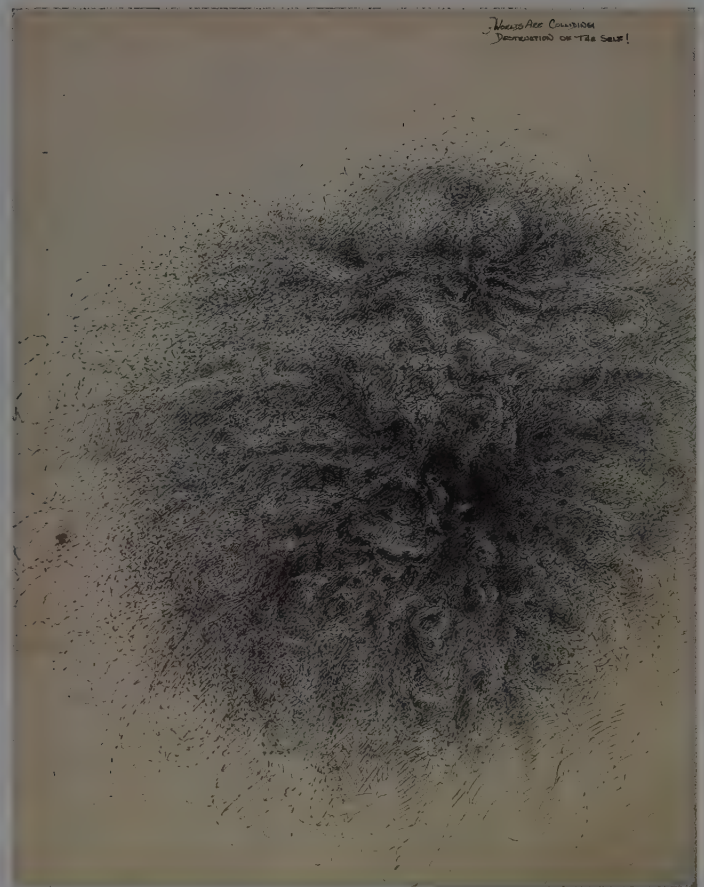
Robert Mapplethorpe's background did not predispose him to become an artist, but he possessed the drive, charisma, and talent to reinvent that role for himself and for many since. From the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s—observing the increasingly pluralistic contemporary art scene, the upheavals of civil rights movements, and the possibility of alternative lifestyles—Mapplethorpe, like many young people of his generation, discovered himself through art. The following selection of works from the J. Paul Getty Museum and LACMA collection traces the formation of Mapplethorpe's aesthetic vision and sexual identity and their coalescence in the photographic medium.

Photography did not capture Mapplethorpe's attention at an early age. His father, an engineer, had a darkroom in the basement of their Queens home, but as he was growing up, Mapplethorpe apparently displayed no desire either to make or to print photographs. He was, however, interested in the role of the photographic image in advertising design, the major he declared when he enrolled at age sixteen at the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, in September 1963. That period of late adolescence also marked Mapplethorpe's earliest attraction to homoerotic pornography, although he was not yet ready to acknowledge his sexuality and spent his first year in college conforming to masculine norms through membership in the ROTC and the National Society of Pershing Rifles, a military honor society.¹

By 1965 countercultural forces were building at Pratt as elsewhere, and the ethos of freedom and experimentation lured Mapplethorpe away from his fraternity activities. He switched his major from advertising design to graphic arts, with an emphasis on sculpture, painting, and drawing, and began to redirect his skills toward the goal of self-expression rather than illustration. While some of the artist's early efforts in the Robert Mapplethorpe Archive at the Getty Research Institute may have resulted from assignments, the majority of the work that Mapplethorpe retained from this era was likely done on his own, some of it fueled by drugs (fig. 3)² and often exploring the theme of the faceted self, as in a vivid crimson composite self-portrait (see fig. 54).

In Patti Smith, whom he met in the spring of 1967, Mapplethorpe found a soulmate who could mirror and witness his self-invention. Bohemians with very little cash, Mapplethorpe and Smith made do with the supplies at hand, such as cardboard, spray paint, pencils, and dime-store picture frames. They pored over books about Surrealism and other shared enthusiasms. They moved into the Chelsea Hotel—famously inhabited by fringe artists and musicians—and lingered at other places where artists gathered, such as Max's Kansas City nightclub/restaurant. The sociability of artists and the cross-fertilization of creative personalities and radical outliers struck them powerfully.

In the wake of Minimalism and Pop Art, the New York art scene of the 1970s vibrated with nervous energy. Jasper Johns, Robert Rauschenberg, and Andy Warhol, among others, had paved the way for practices



that were simultaneously high and low, disciplined and messy, glamorous and grungy. These artists gave Mapplethorpe the validation he needed to develop a visual lexicon from his own obsessions. His Catholic background provided one source of inspiration, the church's iconography juxtaposed in his imagination (and sometimes in his work) with homoerotic pornography.³ *Tie Rack* (plate 1) shows him slyly mixing the sacred and the profane. The neckties flanking a modified depiction of the Virgin Mary suggest the conventional masculinity Mapplethorpe was in the process of rejecting. His new wardrobe, in life and art, was that of the urban gay subculture, openly declared in constructions of mesh T-shirts (plate 2), underwear (see figs. 45 and 46), and leather garments.

As seen in such works as *Leatherman #1* (plate 6), Mapplethorpe's earliest engagement with photography involved the appropriation and modification of mechanically reproduced imagery from periodicals, books, and other sources. His sensibility for graphic design is evident in his careful compositions of figures with lines, vectors, stars, and other devices. A classicizing impulse can be discerned in the tendency toward symmetry and centrality, a disposition that would continue throughout his life. But while constructions and collages were productive exercises, Mapplethorpe had yet to find a mode of expression that set him apart and satisfied him—until he began to make photographs with a Polaroid camera, as he put it, "so that I would have the right raw material and it would be more mine, instead of using other people's pictures."⁴

Mapplethorpe's early Polaroid activity, as well as his entrée into art world social circles, was facilitated by Sandy Daley and John McKendry. Daley, a filmmaker, lent Mapplethorpe her Polaroid camera in 1970 and also introduced him to artists and dealers. McKendry, a curator at the



Figure 4
Robert Mapplethorpe
(American, 1946–1989),
Untitled (Patti Smith),
1971/72. Polaroid emulsion
on paper with ink. Image:
16.1 × 11.5 cm (6 1/4 × 4 1/2
in.), sheet: 34.8 × 27.5 cm
(13 5/8 × 10 7/8 in.).
Gift of The Robert
Mapplethorpe Foundation
to the J. Paul Getty Trust
and the Los Angeles
County Museum of Art,
2011.M.20.36,
box 53, folder 1

Figure 5
Exhibition announcement
for *Don't Touch Here*, Light
Gallery, New York, 1973.
Image: 7.5 × 9.6 cm (2 7/8 ×
3 3/4 in.); sheet: 8.8 × 11.2
cm (3 1/2 × 4 1/2 in.); black
Polaroid film cover, folded:
8.6 × 13.6 cm (3 3/8 ×
5 1/4 in.). Gift of The Robert
Mapplethorpe Foundation
to the J. Paul Getty Trust
and the Los Angeles
County Museum of Art,
2011.M.20.21,
box 19

Figure 6
Robert Mapplethorpe
(American, 1946–1989),
Untitled (Polaroid film),
1974. Three dye diffusion
prints in artist's frame.
Image (each): 8.9 × 11.4
cm (3 1/2 × 4 1/2 in.); sheet
(each): 10.6 × 13.2 cm
(4 1/4 × 5 1/8 in.).
Gift of The Robert
Mapplethorpe Foundation
to the J. Paul Getty Trust
and the Los Angeles
County Museum of Art,
2011.M.20.132



Metropolitan Museum of Art, saw some of the pictures Mapplethorpe had made with the borrowed camera and wanted to foster his talent. He gave Mapplethorpe a Polaroid camera for Christmas in 1971 and introduced the young artist to the Metropolitan's collection. "Looking at those photographs [at the Metropolitan]," Mapplethorpe later recalled, "made me think photography maybe could be art. I had never thought about that before, but now I found myself getting excited about the possibilities."⁸ McKendry also offered material support, connecting Mapplethorpe to the Polaroid Corporation's Artist Support Program and underwriting a trip to London, where Mapplethorpe mingled with and took pictures of aristocrats and art world notables.⁹ (A few years later, in 1975, Mapple-

thorpe paid tribute to McKendry in a symbolically laden portrait, made a day before the curator's death from alcohol-related liver disease; plate 19.)

The camera activated Mapplethorpe's observational acuity, sense of timing, and ability to be in the moment. Photography was a means of possession, seduction, and play. Exploring the Polaroid's potential for intimacy and immediacy, and its characteristic shallow depth of field, Mapplethorpe took pictures of friends and lovers in which his proximity is palpable. Many of his subjects, themselves artists and performers, posed enthusiastically for the camera, effectively challenging Mapplethorpe to take the upper hand in the charged dynamic between sitter and photographer. Repeated collaborative sessions with friends such as Patti Smith and David Croland were especially significant in shaping Mapplethorpe's vision. With Smith, his onetime lover and close friend, he could observe and respond to her personal magnetism and self-conscious androgyny; with Croland, he could cast a real-life boyfriend in sexual scenarios he had seen in pornographic magazines. Mapplethorpe also proved to be one of his own best subjects. Early self-portraits show him posing, gesturing, and proving to an as-yet-undefined audience that he fully participated in the scenarios he portrayed.

In later interviews, Mapplethorpe remarked that photography's instantaneity was part of its appeal for him. It was "the perfect medium... for the 70s and 80s, when everything was fast," he explained to curator Janet Kardon. "If I were to make something that took two weeks to do, I'd lose my enthusiasm. It would become an act of labor and the love would be gone."¹⁰ However, it is important to consider such statements against the reality of the process. The Polaroid technology Mapplethorpe used between 1970 and 1974 required several steps after exposure: one had to time the development; separate the print from the negative; fix, wash, and dry the negative; and coat the positive with fixing solution. Sometimes the process went wrong, but Mapplethorpe would often add color or otherwise alter a flawed print rather than discard it. He also experimented with different ways of working with the image: for example, lifting emulsion from one piece of paper and manipulating it while applying it to another surface (fig. 4).

In the summer of 1972 Mapplethorpe presented a selection of Polaroids, collages, constructions, and jewelry to curator Samuel J. Wagstaff Jr. The encounter resulted in a relationship that would be life changing for both men. A distinguished curator and collector, Wagstaff endorsed Mapplethorpe's artistic ambitions, while Mapplethorpe encouraged the older man to live an openly gay lifestyle. Photography was a shared passion.



Wagstaff began to collect historic and anonymous prints, becoming, as Mapplethorpe recalled in 1989, “obsessed with photography. He bought with a vengeance. It went beyond anything I imagined. Through him, I started looking at photographs in a much more serious way. I got to know dealers. I went with him when he was buying things. It was a great education, although I had my own vision right from the beginning. If you look at my early Polaroids, the style was then what I have now.”⁹

By January 1973 Mapplethorpe’s photographic style was already distinctive enough to earn him a solo exhibition at New York’s Light Gallery on Madison Avenue, one of the few venues for contemporary photography at the time. The opening attracted collectors, artists, musicians—the varied uptown and downtown characters whom Mapplethorpe would continue to cultivate while forging an artistic career that flourished beyond the boundaries of the photography world. As the insolently modified image (fig. 5) on the Light Gallery announcement suggests, Mapplethorpe did not, at this stage, have a purist’s reverence for the traditional photographic print, but he was already a perfectionist and an innovator in terms of presentation. He combined images into multipart composites; he used Polaroid casings as frames (fig. 6); and he designed custom frames, which were built by a carpenter named Robert Fosdick.¹⁰ When Mapplethorpe used Polaroid’s positive/negative film, he had the option of putting the negatives in an enlarger to make gelatin silver prints.¹¹ Thus he both exploited and forestalled one of photography’s essential characteristics, its reproducibility.

In 1972 Wagstaff gave Mapplethorpe a Hasselblad camera, which used 2¼-inch roll film. Mapplethorpe’s eye had been trained with the Polaroid camera, and he was ready for the increased precision and speed provided by the Hasselblad’s superior lens and mechanics. Whereas the Polaroid produced a rectangular image, the Hasselblad’s square format enabled different compositions, appealing to Mapplethorpe’s inclination toward symmetry and geometry, evident, for example, in his double portrait of Philip Glass and Robert Wilson (plate 31). Significantly, Mapplethorpe now had to make more concerted decisions about print aesthetics, in some cases emulating the gentle tonal gradations found in his Polaroids (plate 27), and in other examples establishing stronger contrasts between light and dark (plate 21). Understanding the camera and refining his printing preferences, he could guide the darkroom assistants and printers he was able to hire by the late 1970s.

When Mapplethorpe had concurrent exhibitions at the Holly Solomon Gallery and The Kitchen in February 1977,¹² both displays apparently consisted exclusively of gelatin silver prints, no Polaroids or nonphotographic work. He would go on to establish a reputation as a master of the black-and-white, square-format gelatin silver print, but this first chapter in his body of work reveals his origins as a designer, bricoleur, and performer.

— Bill Salvesen

NOTES

1 Sylvia Wolf, “An Authentic Artlessness: Robert Mapplethorpe’s Polaroids, 1970–1975,” in Wolf, *Polaroids: Mapplethorpe* (New York: Prestel; Whitney Museum of American Art, 2007), 22.

2 Patti Smith, *Just Kids* (New York: Ecco, 2010), 62.

3 Mapplethorpe later acknowledged Catholicism’s aesthetic impact as follows: “A church has a certain magic and mystery for a child. It still shows in how I arrange things. It’s always little altars.” Quoted in Patricia Morrisroe, *Mapplethorpe: A Biography* (New York: Random House, 1995), 17–18.

4 Mapplethorpe, quoted in Janet Kardon, “Robert Mapplethorpe Interview,” in Kardon, *Robert Mapplethorpe: The Perfect Moment* (Philadelphia: Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, 1988), 23.

5 *Ibid.*, 108.

6 On Polaroid’s Artist Support Program, see Wolf, *Polaroids*, 35; on the trip to London, see Morrisroe, *Mapplethorpe*, 102.

7 Between 1970 and 1975, Mapplethorpe made more than fifteen hundred Polaroids. Wolf, *Polaroids*, 21.

8 Mapplethorpe, quoted in Kardon, “Robert Mapplethorpe Interview,” in

The Perfect Moment, 23.

9 Mapplethorpe, quoted in Dominick Dunne, “Robert Mapplethorpe’s Proud Finale,” *Vanity Fair*, February 1989, 125–32, 183–87; <http://www.vanityfair.com/culture/1989/02/robert-mapplethorpe-aids-dominick-dunne> (accessed April 15, 2015). Mapplethorpe expressed a similar sentiment in Kardon, “Robert Mapplethorpe Interview,” in *The Perfect Moment*, 23.

10 According to Wolf (*Polaroids*, 60), Mapplethorpe began to order custom frames toward the end of 1973.

11 Mapplethorpe’s first Polaroid camera, which he used between 1970 and 1973,

was a Model 360, producing prints measuring 8.3 × 10.8 cm (3¼ × 4¼ in.). From 1973 to 1975, he used a Graflex with a Polaroid back that produced prints of 10.5 × 13.4 cm (4¼ × 5¼ in.). Wolf, *Polaroids*, 23 and 9.

12 For further discussion of these exhibitions, see the Geller, Linkol, and Squiers essays in the present volume.



1

Tie Rack, 1969



2

Untitled (3 T-shirts), 1970



3

Untitled (Nude with spool), 1970



4
Untitled (Skull), 1972



5

Self-Portrait, 1972



6
Leatherman #1, 1970



7

Andy Warhol, 1972



8

Untitled, ca. 1973



9

Sam Wagstaff, ca. 1972



10

Untitled (Manfred), ca. 1974



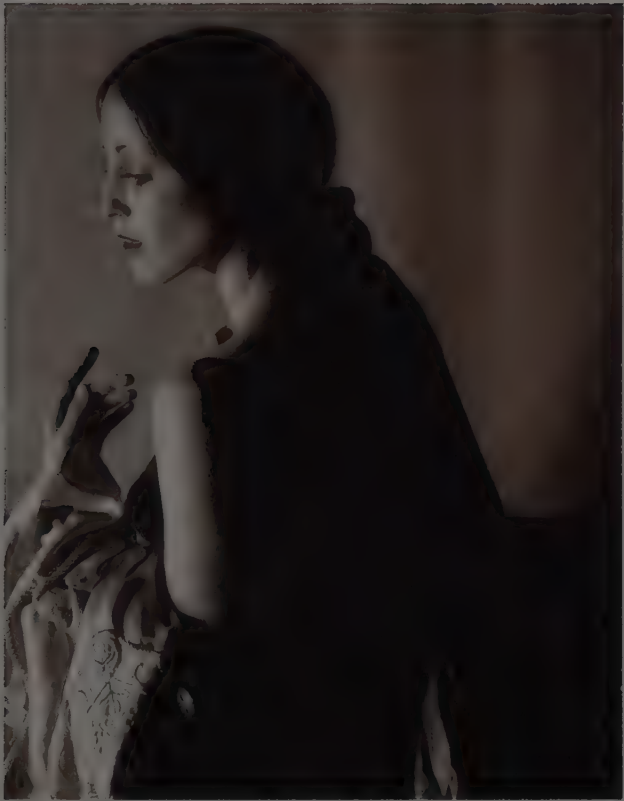
11

Untitled (David Croland), ca. 1973

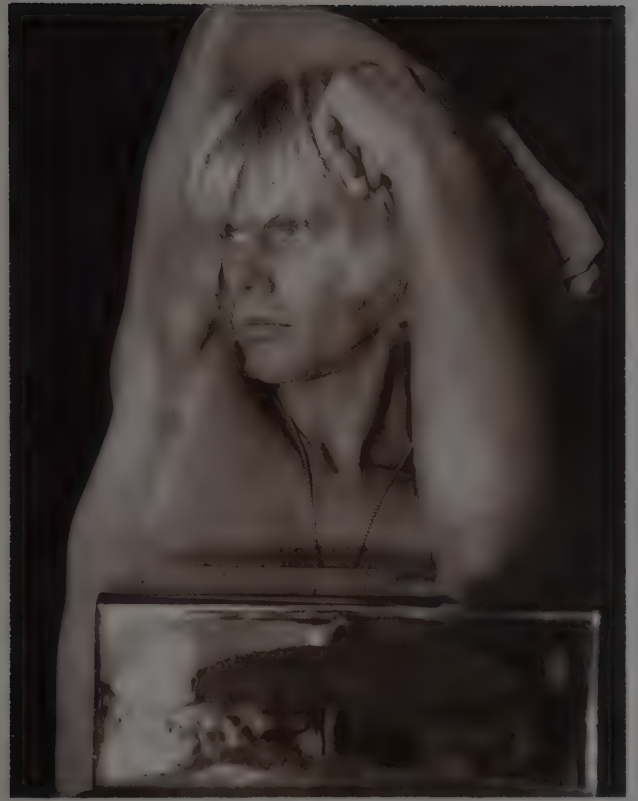


12

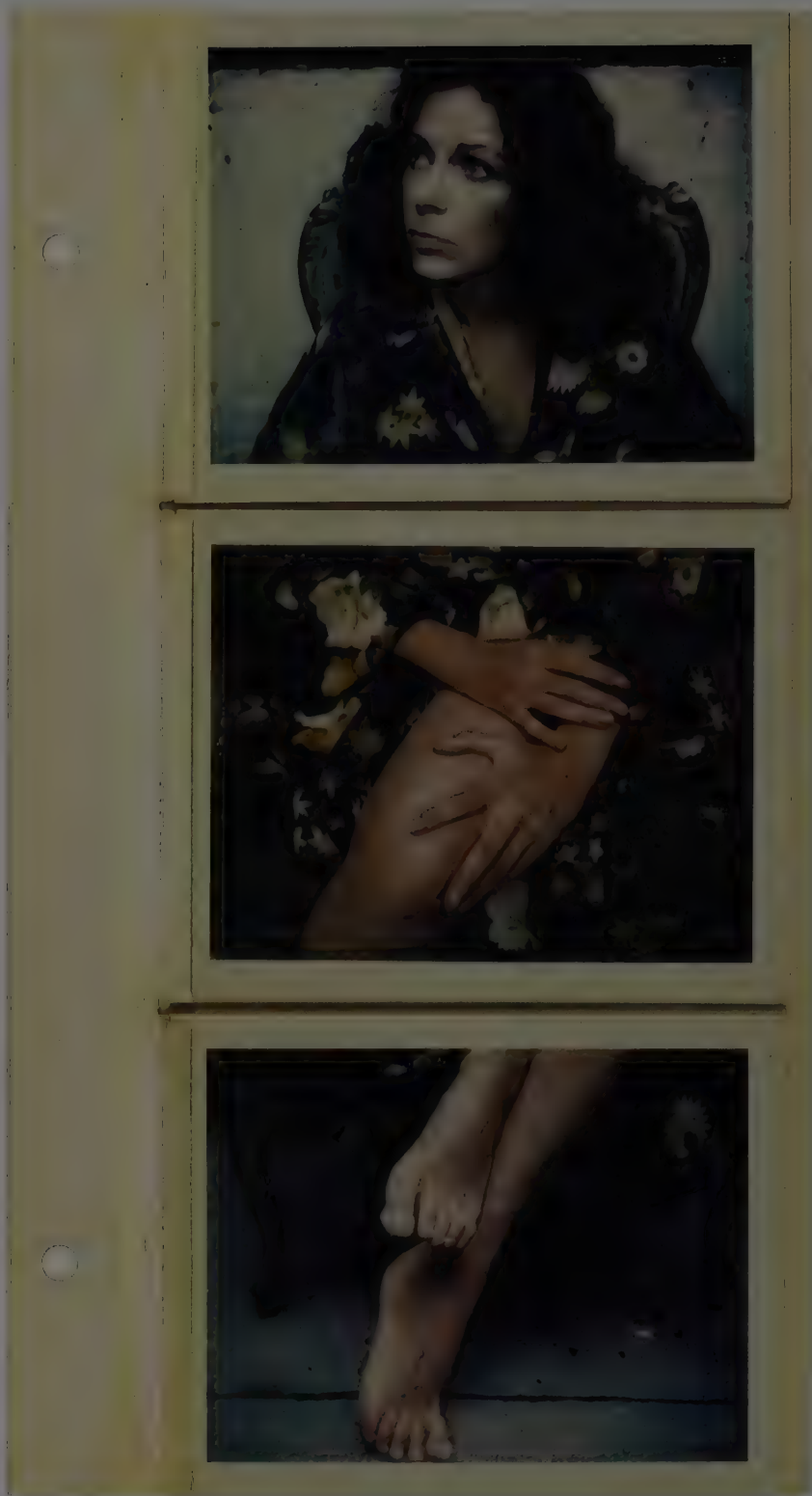
Untitled (Marianne Faithfull), 1974



13
Untitled (Terry), 1974



14
Untitled (Randy), 1975



15

Untitled triptych (Ruth Kligman), ca. 1972



16

Alex, 1973



17

Untitled (Charles and Jim), 1974



18

Diane and Merlow, 1974



19

John McKendry, 1975



*Paul
Hartley 1974*

20

David I, 1974



21

Untitled (Self-portrait), ca. 1974



22

Patti Smith, 1976



23

Self-Portrait, 1975



26

David Hockney, 1976



27

Rose Lambton, 1976



24

Kevin Farley, 1976



25

Catherine Milinaire, 1976



28

François, San Francisco, 1976



29

Patti Smith, 1975



30

Jesse McBride, 1976



31

Philip Glass and Robert Wilson, 1976



32

Rebecca Fraser, 1977



33

Holly Solomon, 1976



34

Peter Berlin, 1977



35

Patti Smith, 1975

PART 2

On the Edge

By the mid-1970s Mapplethorpe had turned to photography as his primary creative medium. The formal experimentation of his art school years and his early efforts with the Polaroid camera evolved relatively quickly into a disciplined studio practice and a shrewd engagement with the art market. Within a few years of moving into his loft at 24 Bond Street, purchased for him by Sam Wagstaff in 1972, Mapplethorpe had put in place many of the key features of his mature photographic style, characterized by meticulous compositions and masterfully executed black-and-white prints. The studio provided an environment in which he could tightly control the conditions and dictate the eventual outcome of his photographic sessions. This refinement of technique was accompanied by a continued engagement with the provocative, sexual subject matter that he had explored in his early works.

Between 1977 and 1980 Mapplethorpe produced a remarkable body of work focused on the gay male s/m community. The artist's personal familiarity with bars such as the Mineshaft and the Saint served a double purpose, facilitating sexual encounters while also allowing him to solicit models for his photographs. He invited men back to his loft to have sex and often parlayed those interactions into photographic sessions. Images such as *Larry and Bobby Kissing* (plate 55), a portrait of two leather-clad men embracing, boldly celebrate a gay subculture that was considered by many to be deviant and marginal, but was central to Mapplethorpe's burgeoning creative identity. It was important to him that people knew he was an active participant in this community, not simply an outside observer. "I was a part of it," he later recalled. "Some of

those experiences that I later recorded I had experienced firsthand, without a camera."¹ Nowhere was his desire to proclaim his participation more evident than in his iconic *Self-Portrait* of 1978, showing him, with a leather bullwhip inserted into his anus, defiantly looking back at the camera (plate 43).

While New York was unquestionably the crucible of Mapplethorpe's sexual and artistic life, the time he spent in California was instrumental in consolidating his professional and personal identity. A trip to San Francisco in 1968 sparked Mapplethorpe's experimentation with homosexuality, and nearly a decade later he visited the city again, widening his community of sexual partners and photographic subjects. During this trip, he met the editor of the gay leather magazine *Drummer*, Jack Fritscher, who would eventually reproduce a photograph by Mapplethorpe on the magazine's cover (fig. 7). Mapplethorpe shot some of his most enduring photographs while in the Bay Area, including a series of images of two men engaged in s/m activity in an abandoned military bunker in the Marin Headlands, just outside San Francisco (plate 37).

The evolution of Mapplethorpe's sex pictures reveals him moving closer to the elegant, formal style that became his trademark. He assiduously prepared his compositions with the aid of a Polaroid camera, shooting a number of test shots before picking up his Hasselblad (fig. 8). A further process of refinement and editing came after the negatives had been printed. His archive contains a large number of non-edited sex pictures—images that he felt were not worth printing in limited editions or exhibiting (fig. 9). As he prepared this work for sale and

Figure 7

Robert Mapplethorpe (American, 1946–1989), *Elliot Siegal*, 1978, cover of *Drummer*, no. 24 (September 1978). Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute. Gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation, 2011.M.20, box 123

Figure 8

Robert Mapplethorpe (American, 1946–1989), *Test shot* (Giorgio), ca. 1985. Dye diffusion print. Image: 7.3 × 9.5 cm (2 $\frac{7}{8}$ × 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.); sheet: 8.6 × 10.7 cm (3 $\frac{3}{8}$ × 4 $\frac{3}{16}$ in.). Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute. Gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation, 2011.M.20.1154, box 171, folder 1

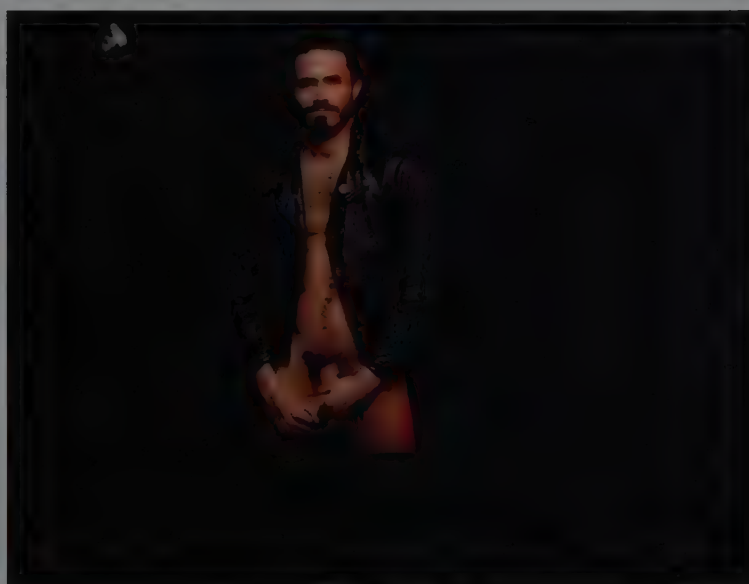


Figure 9

Robert Mapplethorpe
(American, 1946–1989),
Untitled, 1979.
Non-editioned gelatin
silver print. Image: 35.5 ×
35.5 cm (14 × 14 in.);
sheet: 50.6 × 40.5 cm
(19⁵/₁₆ × 15⁵/₁₆ in.). Los
Angeles, Getty Research
Institute. Gift of The
Robert Mapplethorpe
Foundation,
2011.M.20.1021



exhibition, he prioritized symmetry and balance, expressing an affinity for powerfully succinct and harmoniously composed representations of sexual fetishism.

The release of his X Portfolio was Mapplethorpe's attempt to legitimize his sex pictures in a fine-art context. A collaboration with his gallerist, Robert Miller, and the photography dealers Harry Lunn and Robert Self, the limited-edition portfolio was a deluxe box set—thirteen photographs packaged in a silk clamshell case and accompanied by an essay by respected poet, playwright, and translator Paul Schmidt.² The photographs that comprise the X Portfolio are an exercise in studio discipline, expressing an impulse toward visual order and formal clarity. They are less a documentation of sexual activity than a representation of it as a purified ideal, reduced to basic forms and geometries—the effects of studio lighting and deliberate composition. The men in the images often appear frozen in a moment of stasis, isolated and neatly contained within the frame, and subject to the constraints of the photographic studio (plate 39).

Not that Mapplethorpe's sex pictures are antiseptic or cleansed of sexual power. Their visual punch is still strong, decades later. *Lou*, N.Y.C. (plate 45), which shows a man inserting his pinky finger into his urethra, as well as two photographs representing anal penetration (including plate 46), speak to Mapplethorpe's desire to evoke the visceral, bodily sensations at the center of these practices. Perhaps most indelible of all, *Dick*, N.Y.C. depicts a penis clenched in a device, bleeding after being grazed repeatedly with a scalpel (plate 49). The combination of stunning technical mastery and unflinching corporeality ensures that these images linger in the mind long after the first viewing.

The sex pictures attracted widespread attention and placed Mapplethorpe on a national and international stage. He had his first gallery

exhibition outside of New York at San Francisco's Simon Lowinsky Gallery in February 1978. That presentation included works from the X Portfolio, which Lowinsky then arranged to be sent to the Los Angeles Institute of Contemporary Art, where they were displayed in August of that year, the first time Mapplethorpe's work was shown in Los Angeles. San Francisco would also host the artist's notorious *Censored* exhibition, at 80 Langton Street, which provocatively reproduced his bullwhip *Self-Portrait* as the lead image (fig. 10). Works from the series appeared later that year in Mapplethorpe's first European exhibition, at La Remise du Parc gallery in Paris.

Sex was not the only subject Mapplethorpe photographed in his studio. His mature work tends to fall into three categories: nudes (including his sex pictures), portraits, and still lifes. To further solidify the relationship between the three modes of image making, the X Portfolio was produced in conjunction with the Y Portfolio, a selection of thirteen flower still lifes, and was followed three years later, in 1981, by the Z Portfolio, thirteen portraits of black men. As is often noted, Mapplethorpe sought to create equivalence among these subjects. He intended for the portfolios to be understood in relationship to one another, ideally viewed "all in one mass," in order to highlight the formal similarities among the three bodies of work.³

Mapplethorpe's desire to show all his work side by side conflicted, however, with the realities of the art market. As with the dual *Pictures* shows in 1977, which presented sex pictures at The Kitchen and portraits at Holly Solomon's gallery nearby, he made efforts to keep the more graphic imagery separate from his nonsexual work. The flower images (which were likewise featured at Holly Solomon Gallery in 1977) offered a palatable alternative for collectors wary of acquiring works of a sexually explicit nature. That said, his floral still lifes are not the innocent, anodyne



CENSORED

**Robert
Mapplethorpe**

March 21
through April 1, 1978
Reception
Monday, March 20,
6–8 p.m.

80 Langton Street
San Francisco
1415 685-6418
Gallery Hours: 1–5 p.m.
Tuesday–Saturday

Figure 10
Announcement for Robert
Mapplethorpe's 1978
Censored exhibition at
80 Langton Street,
San Francisco. Los Angeles,
Getty Research Institute.
Gift of The Robert
Mapplethorpe Foundation,
2011.M.20, box 194,
folder 1

images that they might appear to be at first glance. As many critics have observed, Mapplethorpe's fascination with flowers was rooted in the fact that they are the sexual organs of plants, and analogies to the phallus are ubiquitous in these images. Moreover, the flower photographs are the quintessence of Mapplethorpe's penchant for compositional order and control, expressing an almost menacing tendency to petrify organic life in the pursuit of the perfect aesthetic arrangement.

As Mapplethorpe's renown grew, his studio attracted New York's cultural elite. Musicians, artists, art dealers, and other celebrities visited 24 Bond Street, and his portraits of the late 1970s and early 1980s offer a veritable who's who of emerging and established stars. He photographed figures such as Richard Gere, Deborah Harry (plate 61), David Hockney (plate 26), Grace Jones, Iggy Pop, Arnold Schwarzenegger, and, of course, Patti Smith (plate 56), newly anointed as a rock-and-roll superstar.⁴

Mapplethorpe's portraits have the same careful and considered visual language that is so evident in his sex pictures and flowers. He had a clearly identifiable style, with sitters often depicted above the waist, camera closely focused on smooth, unblemished faces. Set against dark backdrops and illuminated with bright artificial bulbs, Mapplethorpe's sitters often appear to radiate light, creating bold contrasts between background and foreground (plate 79). While he certainly produced flattering depictions, there is always an edge to his portraits. In a 1978 interview, he noted: "I want the person to look at least as interesting as they can look. . . . I try to catch something unique in him that no one else has. That quality is what I want to come across, not the superficial prettiness, even though I love photographing beautiful people."⁵

By the start of the 1980s Mapplethorpe had turned his focus to black men as the primary subjects of his nude photography. He spoke very candidly about his appreciation of the tonal effects of black skin and sought models that fit his physical ideal, with muscular, sculptural

bodies and, most often, extremely large penises, which are frequently the focal points of the work. He embarked on a series of sexual and artistic relationships with young black men, resulting in an extensive catalogue of nude figures and portraits. Among the first of these men was Phillip Prioleau, whom Mapplethorpe hired to work in his studio and convinced to pose in a series of classicizing nude figure studies (plates 70, 71).

While he had sex with many of these men, one in particular, Milton Moore, would become a source of passionate inspiration and troubled infatuation. During their tempestuous two-year affair, Mapplethorpe attempted to serve as his patron, moving Moore into Mapplethorpe's own apartment at 77 Bleeker Street and encouraging him to model, dance, and take art classes. It was clear to Moore, and to many of Mapplethorpe's friends and colleagues, that the artist's motives were more libidinal than intellectual.⁶ Moore is the subject of one of Mapplethorpe's best known and most controversial images, *Man in Polyester Suit* (plate 72), which provides powerful testimony to Mapplethorpe's erotic attachment to the anatomical endowment of his lover.

Mapplethorpe's considered engagement with black male subjects attracted the attention of galleries in Europe and the United States and culminated in the release of the *Z Portfolio* in 1981. Those thirteen photographs show him working in his most formal mode. The models, while mostly identified by name, function more as aesthetic objects than as human subjects—set atop pillars and frozen in space like sculptures (plates 66, 68). The *Z Portfolio* seems to sit at the intersection between his sex pictures and what was to come; between his investment in the psychology and aesthetics of sexual desire and the fascination with historical precedent and the formal exercise of studio photography.

—Ryan Linkof

NOTES

- 1 Mapplethorpe, quoted in Richard Meyer, *Outlaw Representation: Censorship and Homosexuality in Twentieth-Century American Art* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 194.
- 2 Paul Schmidt would later publish his translation of Arthur Rimbaud's

- 3 Janet Kardon, "Robert Mapplethorpe Interview," in Kardon, *Robert Mapplethorpe: The Perfect Moment* (Philadelphia: Institute of Contemporary Art,

- 4 Smith was also the subject of Mapplethorpe's first film, *Patti Smith: Still Moving*, which he shot in his studio in 1978.
- 5 Mapplethorpe, quoted in "Robert Mapplethorpe, Portraitist and Photog-

- 6 See Patricia Morrisroe, *Mapplethorpe: A Biography* (New York: Random House, 1995), 244–61.



36

American Flag, 1977



37

Jim, Sausalito, 1977



38

Patrice, N.Y.C., 1977



39

Joe, N.Y.C., 1978



40

Tulips, N.Y.C., 1977



41

Helmut, N.Y.C., 1978



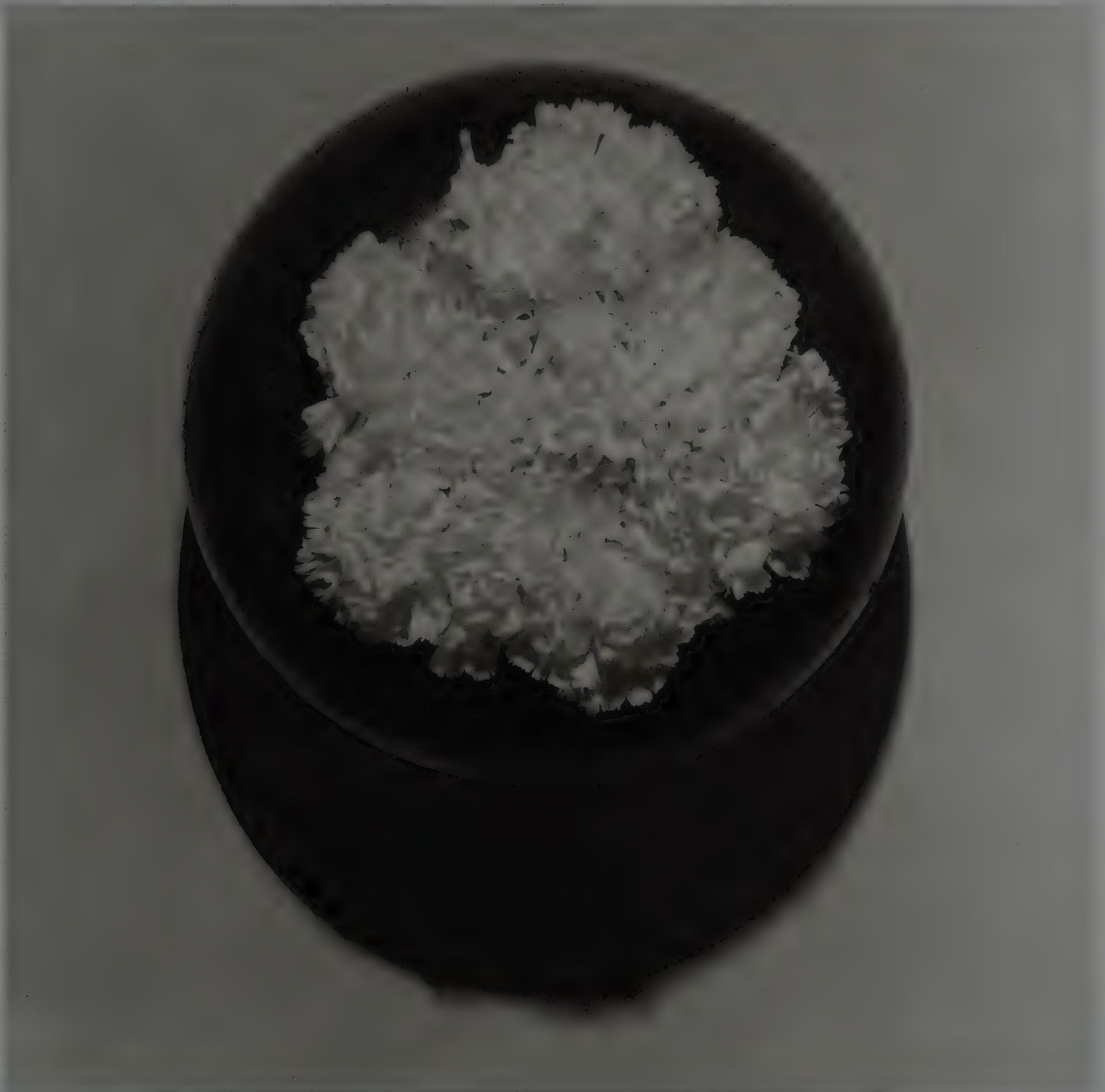
42

Scott, N.Y.C., 1978



43

Self-Portrait, 1978



44

Carnation, N.Y.C., 1978



45

Lou, N.Y.C., 1978



46

John, 1978



47

Boot Fetish, 1979



48

Baby's Breath, N.Y.C., 1978



49

Dick, N.Y.C., 1978



50

Dominick and Elliot, 1979



51

Lynn Davis, 1979



52

Marcus Leatherdale, 1978



53

Phyllis Tweel, 1979



54

Sybil Walker, 1979



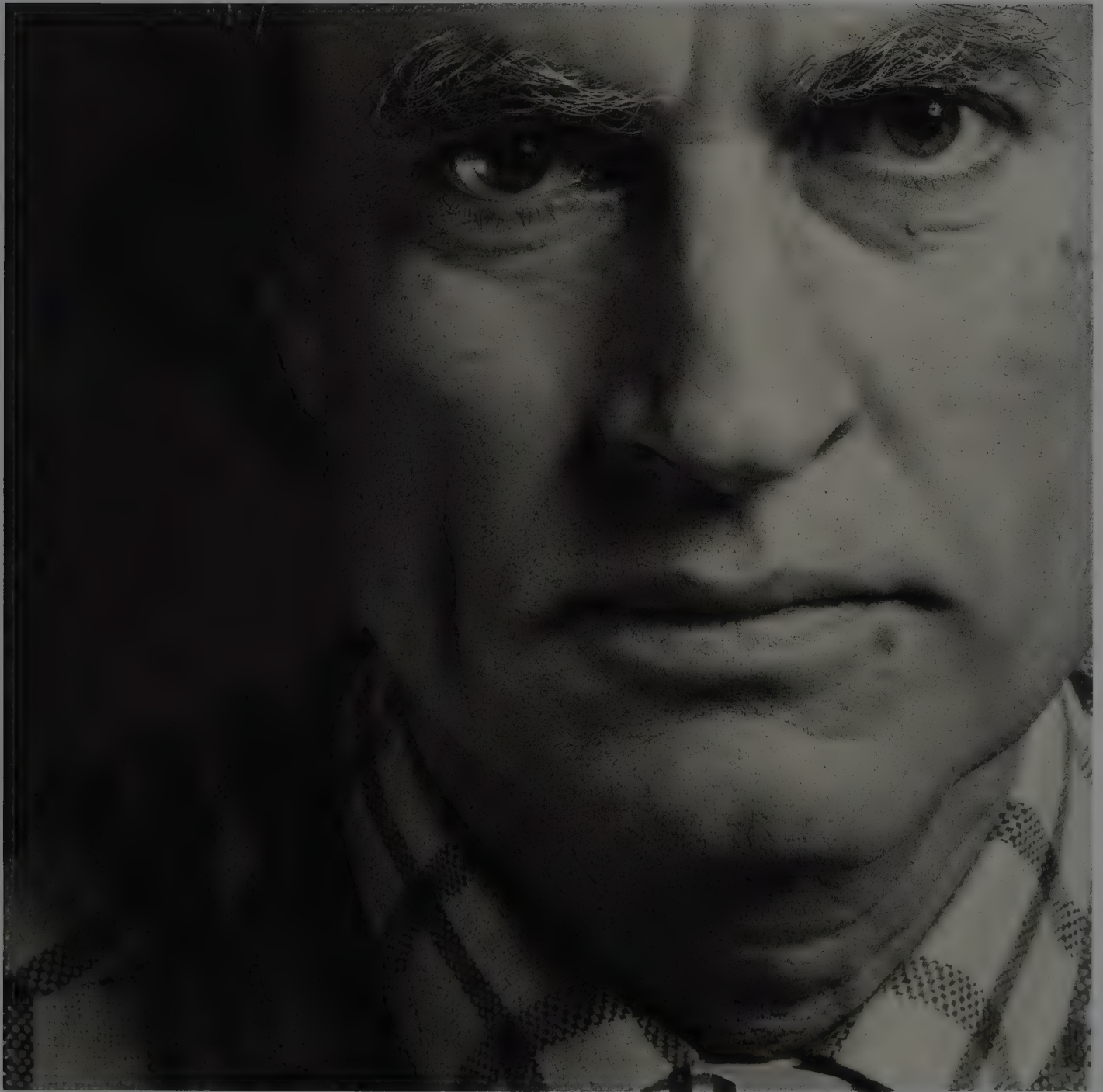
55

Larry and Bobby Kissing, 1979



56

Patti Smith, 1978



57

Sam Wagstaff, 1979



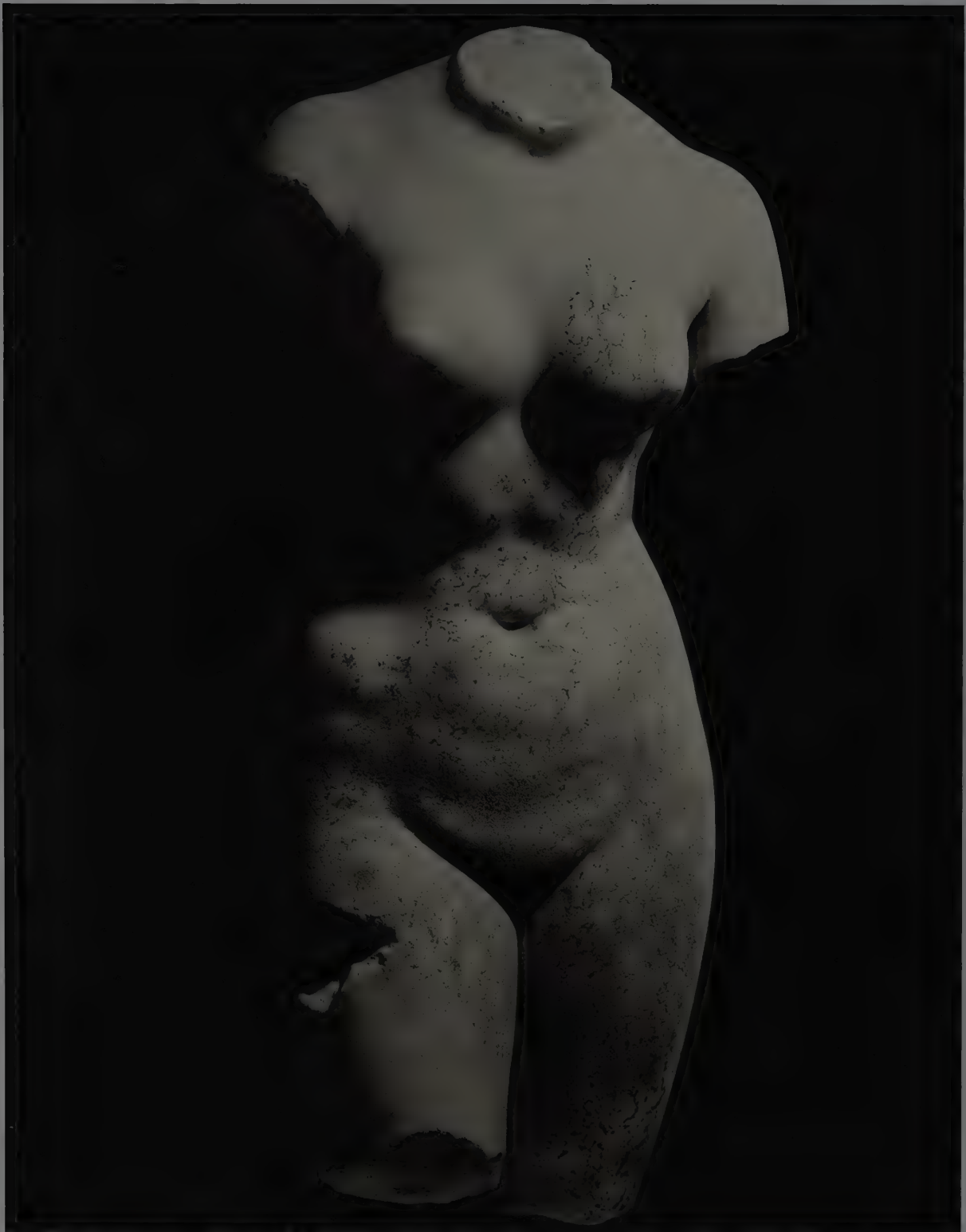
58

Henry Geldzahler, 1979



59

Marisol, 1979



60

Female Torso, 1978



61

Deborah Harry, 1978



62

James Ford, 1979



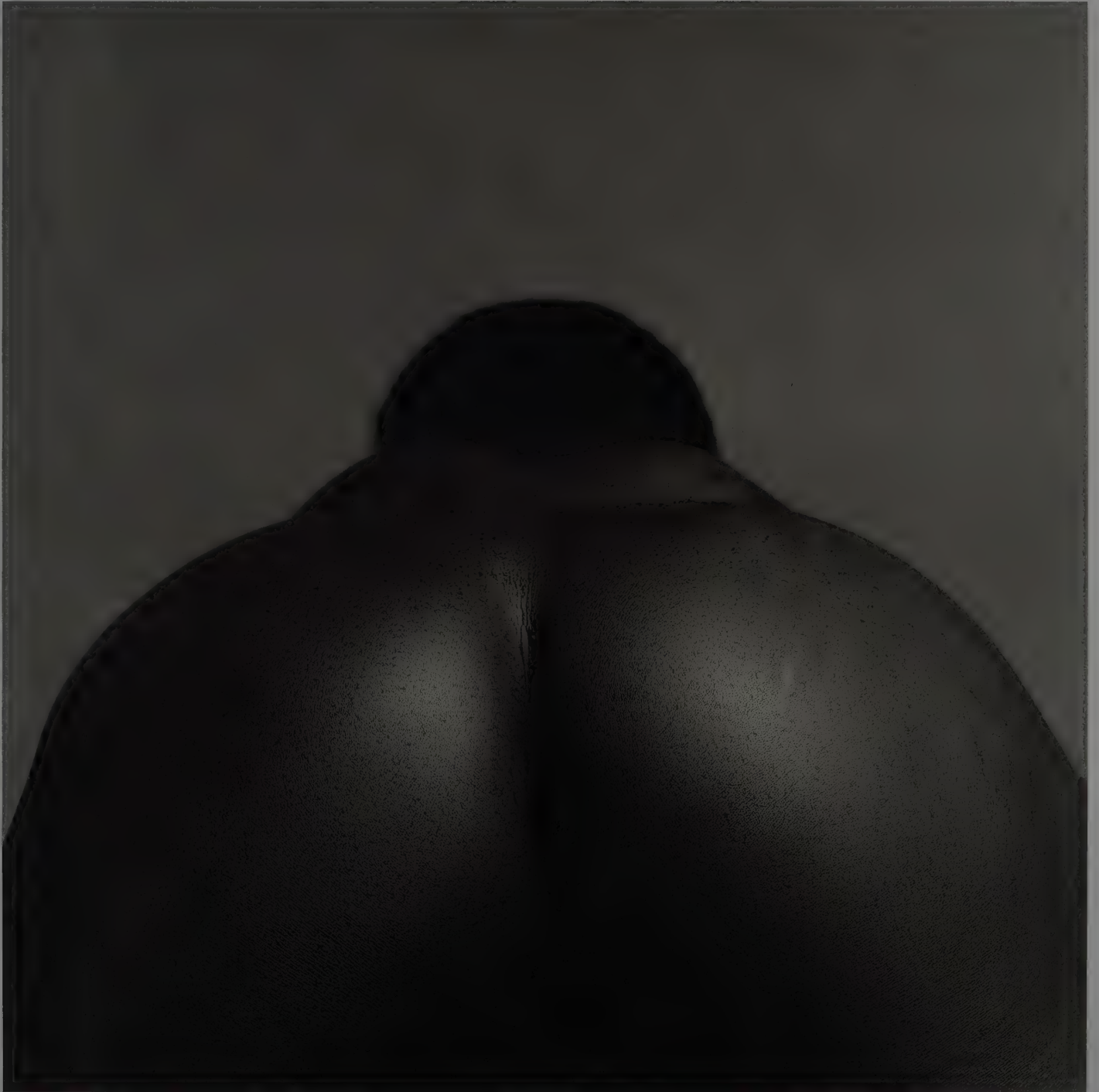
63

Hooded Man, 1980



64

Keso Dekker, 1979



65

Ajito, 1981



66

Dan S., 1980



67

Raymond Sheldon, 1979



68

Bob Love, N.Y.C., 1979



69

Brian Ridley and Lyle Heeter, 1979



70

Phillip Prioleau, 1979



71

Phillip Prioleau, 1979



72

Man in Polyester Suit, 1980



73

Leland Richard, 1981



74

Leland Richard, 1980



75

Tim Scott, 1980



76

Winter Landscape, 1979



77

Stephan, 1980



78

Nikki Starnes, 1980



79

Claudia Summers, 1980



80

Waves, 1980



81

Phillip Prioleau, 1980



82

Eric, 1980



83

Lisa Lyon, 1980



84

Lisa Lyon, 1980



85

Self-Portrait, 1980



86

Cynthia Slater, 1980



87

Steven Lloyd, 1980



88

Jeff Gray, 1980



89

Ron Sims, 1980



90

Lisa Lyon, 1980



91

Self-Portrait, 1980

PART 3

Striking a Balance

Figure 11
Robert Mapplethorpe
(American, 1946–1989),
Self-Portrait, 1983. Gelatin
silver print. Image: 38.3 ×
37.8 cm (15¹/₁₆ × 14⁷/₁₆ in.);
sheet: 50.5 × 40.2 cm
(19⁷/₁₆ × 15³/₁₆ in.).
Promised gift of The Robert
Mapplethorpe Foundation
to the J. Paul Getty
Trust and the Los Angeles
County Museum of Art

By the late 1970s Mapplethorpe was approaching something of an impasse in his career. His dilemma would be laid out during a conference held in conjunction with his 1983 retrospective at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London. When asked by an interviewer how much further he could go—having already depicted two men engaged in fisting (see fig. 23)—Mapplethorpe, ever the provocateur, quipped: “Actually I have one with two [fists].”¹ But the question brought up a critical point: Mapplethorpe had taken his work to the most extreme level of explicitness. While his pictures of gay male sex and s/m had brought him notoriety and the attention of the art world, they simultaneously ran the risk of labeling him a pornographer, or at least an artist who was simply out to shock. He required a new challenge that would provide a balance for his edgy pictures while adding a new dimension to his photographic oeuvre. He was to find the perfect collaborator in late 1979, not at his usual stomping grounds of bars and clubs, but at a SoHo party.

Lisa Lyon, clad that night in black rubber, was unlike any woman Mapplethorpe had ever seen. A professional bodybuilder and winner of the 1979 International Federation of Bodybuilding and Fitness Women’s World Pro Bodybuilding Championship, Lyon had a body that confused conventional gender lines. Her breasts and long hair exuded femininity, while her muscular physique was decidedly masculine (plate 113). This was the sort of challenge that Mapplethorpe had been searching for. He could showcase the female physique, until then little explored in his oeuvre, while still working within his lexicon of the muscular, sculptural body. Mapplethorpe and Lyon embarked on a six-year collaboration that was nothing short of obsessive. It began with a brief but intense sexual relationship that was later complicated by the collision of Lyon’s manic-depressive behavior with Mapplethorpe’s career ambitions.² More than two hundred photographs came of their collaboration: Lyon was Mapplethorpe’s most photographed subject. The images depict her in a range of guises, from bodybuilder to showgirl, dominatrix to grande dame.

The success of their work together may have been due in part to the fact that Lyon viewed herself less as a bodybuilder (she never competed again after her initial win) than as a sculptor or performance artist, whose body was her medium. She and Mapplethorpe didn’t fall into the usual hierarchy between photographer and model, but worked as cocreators within the photographic setup. The vibrancy and diversity of the resulting photographs serve as testament to this. Mapplethorpe’s images of Lyon were eminently of the moment, whether she is dressed in haute couture (plate 109) or the everyday garb of a gym rat (plate 112).³ Although certain images depict Lyon as a classic voluptuous odalisque (plate 107), for the most part she is very much the new woman of the 1980s, ready to assert what Mapplethorpe’s mentor and lover Sam Wagstaff described as “her revised femininity.”⁴ In 1980, Ingrid Sischy, then editor of *Artforum* magazine, published a portfolio of the prints in the magazine; this helped lead to a contract for the book *Lady: Lisa Lyon*.⁵ That volume



Figure 12

Baron Wilhelm von Gloeden (German, 1856–1931), *Male Nude Seated on a Rock, or Cain*, ca. 1900. Albumen silver print, 61 × 43.2 cm (24 × 17 in.). Florence, Italy, Alinari Archives



Figure 13

Julia Margaret Cameron (British, born India, 1815–1879), *I Wait (Rachel Gurney)*, 1872. Albumen silver print, 32.7 × 25.4 cm (12 7/8 × 10 in.). The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, 84.XM.443.2



contains more than a hundred images of Lyon, with a foreword by Wagstaff. The critical reception of the work was tepid at best (even Wagstaff's text has a tentative tone); nonetheless, the project had steered Mapplethorpe into a new and fruitful direction.

Mapplethorpe's place in the New York art world was at this point all but secured. A self-portrait of 1983 (fig. 11) shows a well-groomed, apparently sanguine artist. An air of businesslike respectability seems to have taken the place of his former countercultural ennui. In 1982 Mapplethorpe hired his brother Edward to work as an assistant at the Bond Street studio. Edward had recently graduated with a degree in photography from the State University of New York, Stony Brook; the knowledge he brought with him, including formal training in lighting techniques helped improve Robert's studio practice.⁶ On the printing end, Mapplethorpe's work also grew, transitioning from his gritty early style to the refined, polished images for which he is best known.

His new status as an established artist brought art world titans such as Louise Bourgeois (plate 115) and Andy Warhol (plate 131) to his studio for portraits of themselves. By no means simple celebrity portraits, these images reveal Mapplethorpe's effort to capture aspects of the artists' work in his own. Bourgeois smiles mischievously as she grasps her 1968 sculpture *Fillette*—an oversized phallus—under her arm, alluding to the roles gender and sexuality play in her work. Warhol is depicted without props, leaning uncomfortably against a white wall, hands clasped in front of him; it is his persona and fixation with fame that define him here, not his ubiquitous art.

Mapplethorpe's engagement with the contemporary moment, as evidenced by his photographs of Lisa Lyon and figures from the New York art world, belies an equally deep and creative involvement with art historical tradition. In the suite of photographs Mapplethorpe produced in 1981 of a model named Ajitto (plates 99–102), the camera rotates around the subject's body with clinical precision. Because Ajitto's head is lowered, his body is brought front and center; these images serve as figure studies

more than as portraits. The semi-fetal pose of the model invokes a rich historical lineage. The early twentieth-century photographer Baron Wilhelm von Gloeden captured the same posture in his *Male Nude Seated on a Rock* (fig. 12) around 1900. Von Gloeden's youth is in a similar semi-fetal position, but the setting is a rocky landscape. This image in turn directly recalls Hippolyte Flandrin's 1836 painting *Jeune homme nu assis au bord de la mer* (Nude young man sitting beside the sea; Louvre Museum, Paris). Mapplethorpe was without question familiar with von Gloeden's most popular image, as he owned a print of it himself.⁷

Mapplethorpe was introduced to photography collecting by Wagstaff, who had been voraciously buying photographs since 1973. Mapplethorpe accompanied Wagstaff on buying excursions to auctions in New York and Europe as well as to a host of flea markets. In 1982 Mapplethorpe sold some of the collection he had amassed under Wagstaff's guidance. The auction, at Sotheby's on May 24, 1982, provides a window into the kind of work that had caught Mapplethorpe's eye. The collection encompassed prints by some of photography's best known practitioners from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, including Julia Margaret Cameron (fig. 13), Edward S. Curtis, and Edward Steichen, along with a host of lesser-known and unknown makers. Also included were numerous male and female figure studies, which clearly appealed to Mapplethorpe's formal sensibility. There was a host of homoerotically charged photographs by gay photographers such as von Gloeden, George Platt Lynes, and Minor White. The one-hundred-lot auction netted a total of \$98,165 (close to \$250,000 in 2015 dollars).⁸

Mapplethorpe's collection bears mentioning, as it clearly displays the ways in which the art of the past affected his work. Art historical references abound in this period of Mapplethorpe's career. Model Phillip Prioleau (plate 123)—his skin painted with leopard spots—collapses in the manner of the Hellenistic sculpture known as *The Dying Gaul* (Capitoline Museums, Rome). Lisa Lyon is variously depicted in poses that echo those of the crucified Christ (plate 129) or a recumbent goddess

Figure 14
 Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio (Italian, 1571–1610), *Ragazzo morso da un ramarro* (*Boy Bitten by a Lizard*), 1595–1600. Oil on canvas, 66 × 49.5 cm (26 × 19½ in.). London, National Gallery



(plate 107). James Ford (plate 62) reclines in his bathtub like the subject of Jacques-Louis David's 1793 *Death of Marat* (Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium, Brussels). Even the artist's self-portraits borrow from historical antecedents. Mapplethorpe's self-portrait of 1983 (plate 130) offers a contemporary leather biker archetype, as though Marlon Brando of the 1953 film *The Wild One* were merged with an inner-city gang member, complete with switchblade. Subsumed within the composition, however, is a reference to Caravaggio's *Ragazzo morso da un ramarro* (*Boy Bitten by a Lizard*, 1595–1600; fig. 14). Caravaggio's youth—whose hair bears a striking resemblance to Mapplethorpe's curls—arches his left hand upward in an expression of surprise and pain. While Mapplethorpe's right hand jabs confidently forward, his left is raised in the same idiosyncratic gesture. With this appropriation, Mapplethorpe associates himself with the Baroque painter—who was just as controversial in his time as Mapplethorpe was in his own.

This intricate web of historical references sheds light on Mapplethorpe's fascination—bordering on obsession—with the classically proportioned body. From some of his earliest Polaroid works (e.g., plate 10) to some of the last works completed before his death (e.g., plate 168), Mapplethorpe positioned and framed his models in ancient Greek and Roman sculptural terms, and in his final years he would create several photographs of classical-style sculptures. The serenity and simplicity of these marble bodies continues to resonate with the balance and sense of calm Mapplethorpe imparted upon his own statuesque models through his use of soft lighting, saturated backdrops, and matte paper.

—Matthew Kluk

NOTES

- 1 Mapplethorpe, quoted in Arkady Ippolitov, "Images and Icons," in Germano Celant et al., *Robert Mapplethorpe and the Classical Tradition: Photographs and Mannerist Prints* (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2004), 21.
- 2 Despite Mapplethorpe's homosexuality, he and Lyon shared an intensely close bond. This attraction became physical after a photo shoot in Joshua Tree National Monument in 1980.

See Patricia Morrisroe, *Mapplethorpe: A Biography* (New York: Random House, 1995), 241–42.

- 3 For further discussion of Mapplethorpe's artistic relations to clothing and fashions, see the Linkof essay in the present volume.
- 4 Samuel J. Wagstaff Jr., "Foreword," in Robert Mapplethorpe, *Lady: Lisa Lyon* (New York: Viking, 1983), 8.
- 5 Morrisroe, *Mapplethorpe*, 249.
- 6 Jonathan Van Meter, "How Edward

Mapplethorpe Got His Name Back," *New York Magazine*, September 16, 2007, <http://nymag.com/arts/art/features/37644/> (accessed March 11, 2015).

- 7 Mapplethorpe was with Sam Wagstaff when the latter purchased several photographs by von Gloeden in the early 1970s. See the Gefter essay in the present volume.
- 8 See Paul Martineau, "A Curious Vice: The Extraordinary Life of Samuel J.

Wagstaff, Jr.," in *The Thrill of the Chase: The Wagstaff Collection of Photographs at the J. Paul Getty Museum* (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2016).



92

Milton Moore, 1981



93

Gerard, 1981



94

Jack Walls, 1982



95

Untitled, 1981



96

Tulip, 1982



97

Phillip Prioleau, 1984



98

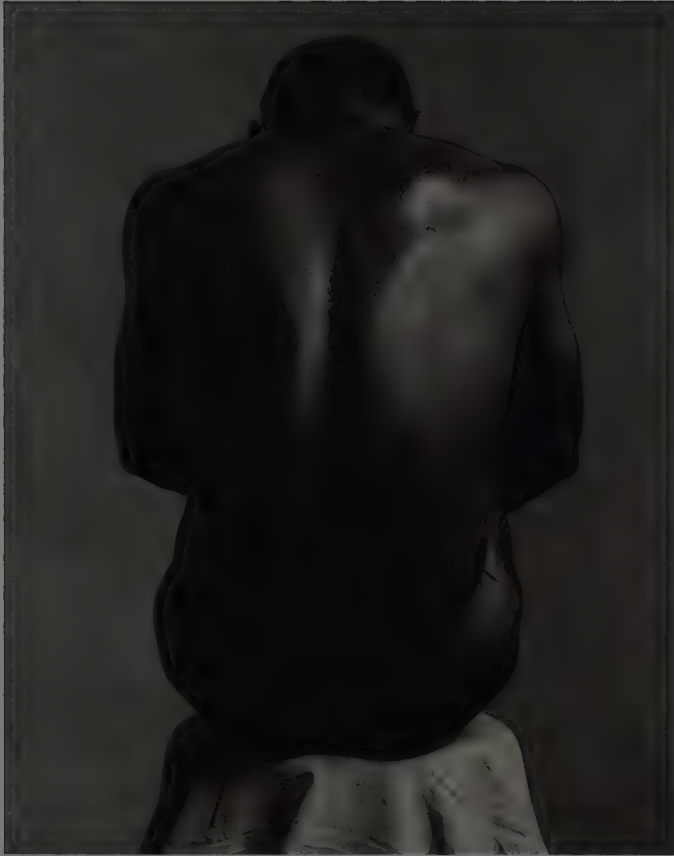
Phillip Prioleau, 1982



99
Ajitto, 1981



100
Ajitto, 1981



101
Ajitto, 1981



102
Ajitto, 1981



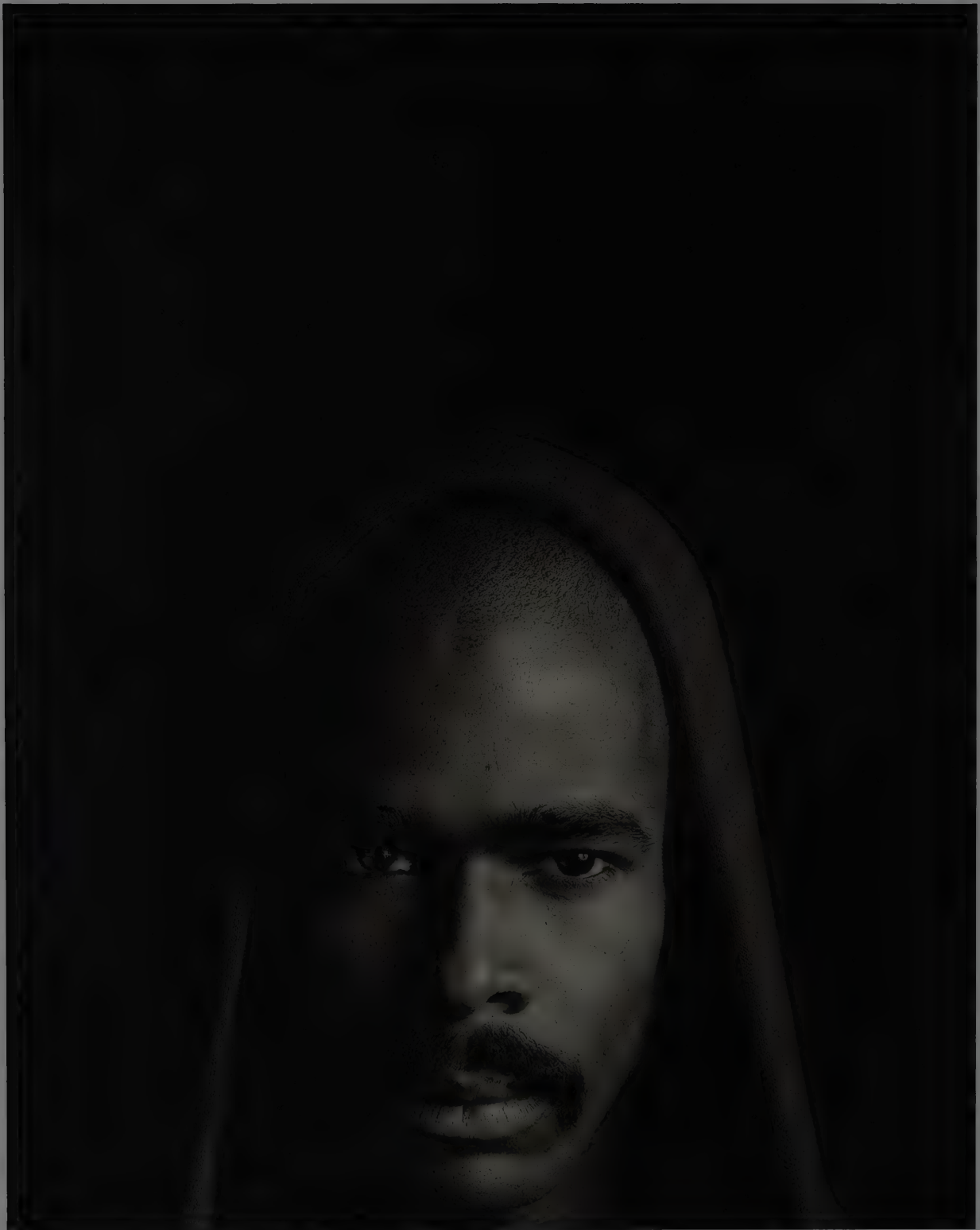
103

Ada, 1982



104

Phillip Prioleau, 1982



105

Phillip Prioleau, 1982



106

Lisa Lyon, 1982



107

Lisa Lyon, 1982



108

Miep Brons, 1981



109

Lisa Lyon, 1982



110

Phillip Prioleau, 1982



111

Kathy Acker, 1983



112

Lisa Lyon, 1982



113

Lisa Lyon, 1982



114

Orchid, 1982



115

Louise Bourgeois, 1982



116

Tulip, 1982



117

Lisa Lyon, 1981





118

Donald Cann, 1982



119

Milton Moore, 1981



120

Milton Moore, 1981



121

Derrick Cross, 1983



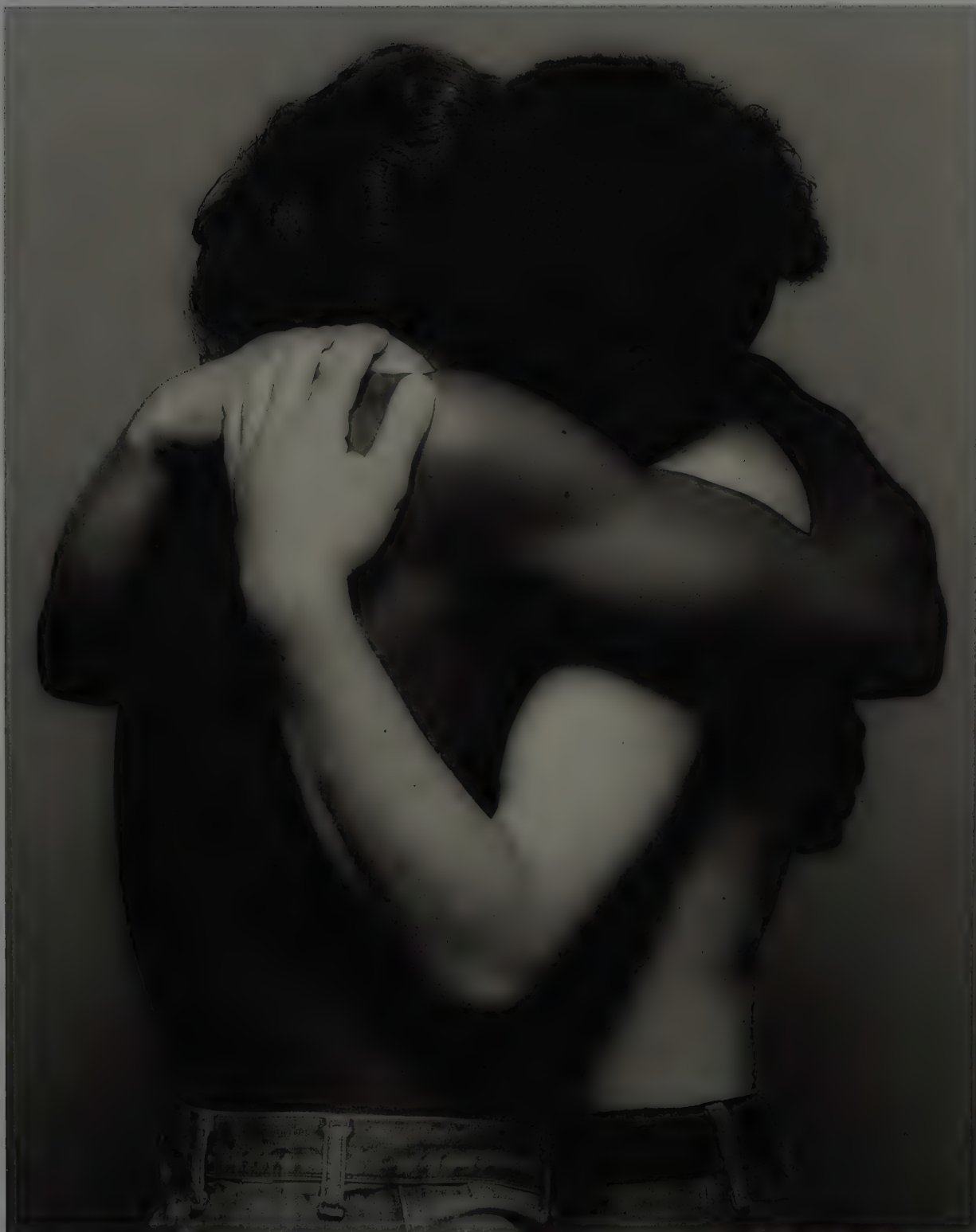
122

Arthur Giovanni, 1982



123

Phillip Prioleau, 1984



124

Embrace, 1982



125

Coral Sea, 1983



126

Mountain, 1983



127

White Gauze, 1984



128

Puerto Rico, 1981



129

Lisa Lyon, 1982



130

Self-Portrait, 1983



131

Andy Warhol, 1983



132

Marisa Berenson, 1983



133

Carnations, 1984



134

Two Men Dancing, 1984



135

Ken Moody and Robert Sherman, 1984

PART 4

The Perfect Moment

Figure 15
Antonio Canova (Italian, 1757–1822), *The Three Graces*, 1814–17. Marble, 173 × 97.2 × 57 cm (68 $\frac{1}{8}$ × 38 $\frac{1}{4}$ × 22 $\frac{7}{16}$ in.). London, Victoria and Albert Museum. Purchased jointly with the National Galleries of Scotland,

with the assistance of the National Heritage Memorial Fund, John Paul Getty II, Baron Heinrich Thyssen-Bornemisza, the Art Fund, and numerous donations from members of the public

By 1985 Mapplethorpe had had more than forty solo exhibitions, including a major traveling retrospective organized by the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London. His work had been the subject of numerous publications, including several solo exhibition catalogues and two monographs. He had orchestrated his own transition from artistic rebel, shocking the art world with his gritty, outré sex pictures, to mature artist celebrated for the elegance and refinement of his compositions. The success of that transformation is a testament to Mapplethorpe's determination and intelligence.

Well aware that paintings regularly commanded significantly higher prices than photographs, Mapplethorpe insisted that he was an *Artist*, rather than a photographer in the traditional sense, and this gave him extra cachet. In addition to using custom-designed frames, mirrors, and fabric panels with his photographs to create unique objects, he looked for ways to increase the appeal and value of his individual prints. One of those ways was to vary his printing method. Mapplethorpe invited print-maker Martin Axon to help him choose images that would benefit from being printed in platinum. Since the late nineteenth century, the platinum printing process had been valued over the more common (and less costly) gelatin silver process, because it produces a print with a wider tonal range, a luxurious matte surface quality, and enhanced archival stability. One of the images Mapplethorpe and Axon selected was *Lydia Cheng* (plate 160) from what was dubbed his "bronze series," the result of a failed experiment in color photography. Cheng later recalled how these images came about:

Robert had a makeup artist at the shoot who was supposed to apply different brushstrokes of color from a glittering palette of eye makeup. Every time we tried to shoot, the colors didn't seem to highlight my body properly. Finally, Robert came over and started blending the colors on my skin to see what would happen. Suddenly this wonderful shade of bronze appeared. It made my body look like a bronze statue, which is what Robert was really looking for.¹

Mapplethorpe included Cheng in another composition that celebrates the sculptural body: *Ken and Lydia and Tyler* (plate 140). Inspired by the motif of the Three Graces, as frequently depicted by artists from the time of the ancient Greeks into the nineteenth century (fig. 15), Mapplethorpe's version utilizes one female and two male models. The subjects are of different racial backgrounds, apparently selected for their range of skin tones, from light to dark. The artist here subverts the traditional art historical motif, inviting new, nonbinary interpretations of gender, race, and sexuality.

In 1985, following the previous year's sale of his collection of photographs to the J. Paul Getty Museum, Sam Wagstaff purchased a \$500,000 loft for Mapplethorpe at 35 West 23rd Street (only two blocks



from the rundown space Mapplethorpe had shared with Patti Smith in the early 1970s). The artist went about furnishing the new apartment with an eclectic mix of objets d'art, antiques, and Venini glass (fig. 16). The stylish loft and its contents were components of Mapplethorpe's long-term goals and tangible markers of his success. There was enough room here for a studio, so he transferred his camera and lighting equipment to 23rd Street from his Bond Street studio, which he retained, however, for its darkroom.²

In 1986, Mapplethorpe embarked on a book project with Richard Marshall, curator at the Whitney Museum of American Art. The goal was to create a survey of New York City-based artists that conveyed a sense of the quality and diversity of the contemporary art scene. Titled *50 New York Artists: A Critical Selection of Painters and Sculptors Working in New York*, the book features portraits of artists by Mapplethorpe, each paired

Figure 16

Robert Mapplethorpe (American, 1946–1989), Polaroid test shot of the interior of Mapplethorpe's West Twenty-Third Street loft, taken for *House & Garden* (June 1988). Dye diffusion print. Image: 8.9 × 11.4 cm (3½ × 4½ in.); sheet: 10.6 × 13.2 cm (4¼ × 5¼ in.). Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute. Gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation, 2011.M.20, box 172, folder 3

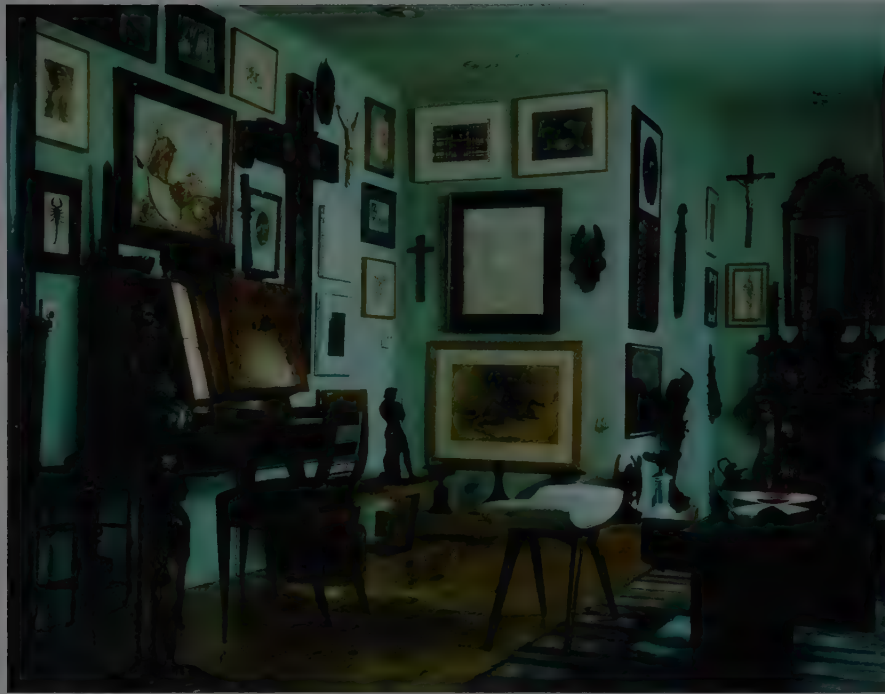


Figure 17

Robert Mapplethorpe (American, 1946–1989), *Self-Portrait*, negative 1986; print 2008. Non-editioned gelatin silver print. Image: 38.3 × 37.8 cm (15¼ × 14¾ in.); sheet: 50.4 × 40.2 cm (19¾ × 15¾ in.). Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute. Gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation, 2011.M.20.426

Figure 18

Artforum magazine, vol. 28, no. 1 (September 1989), cover image by Frank Herrera, *The Perfect Moment* protest, June 30, 1989, Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

with a photograph of that artist's work. The roster of subjects is impressive: Louise Bourgeois, Chuck Close, Willem de Kooning, Keith Haring, Jasper Johns, Ellsworth Kelly, Richard Serra, Joel Shapiro, Cindy Sherman, and Andy Warhol, among others. Mapplethorpe's portrait of the sculptor Louise Nevelson (plate 146) stands out as one of the more enigmatic in the group and is representative of the high-contrast style Mapplethorpe began to employ during the last years of his career (plates 161, 171). For this image, Mapplethorpe positioned the camera low, a move that reinforced the sitter's formidable personality. He centered her within the composition and counterbalanced the turn of her head to the left with the position of her hands to the right of center. This highly controlled pose within the square format is symmetrical and active, hallmarks of Mapplethorpe's best portraits.

In addition to making all the portraits in *50 New York Artists*, Mapplethorpe himself was a subject in the book. It was a significant accomplishment, especially considering that the volume included only one other artist (Sherman) whose primary medium was photography. Unlike many of his earlier self-depictions that show him in a variety of getups and guises, for this context Mapplethorpe chose an image of himself wearing simple clothes—a light-colored shirt and dark blazer—with his hair brushed back from his face (fig. 17). He stares out of the frame, one side of his face cut by diagonal shadows; careful inspection reveals that his right ear was swollen. Although it is a rather haunting image, Mapplethorpe was not satisfied with it enough to include it among his editioned work.

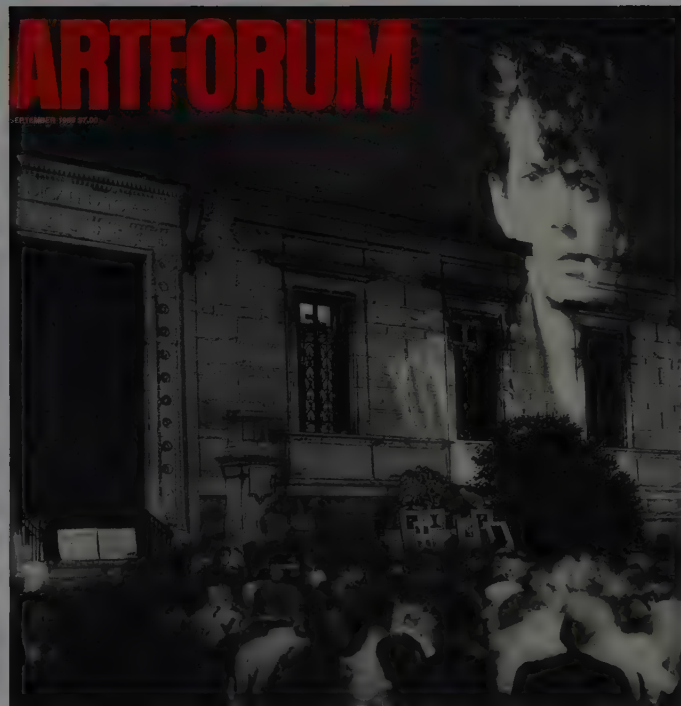
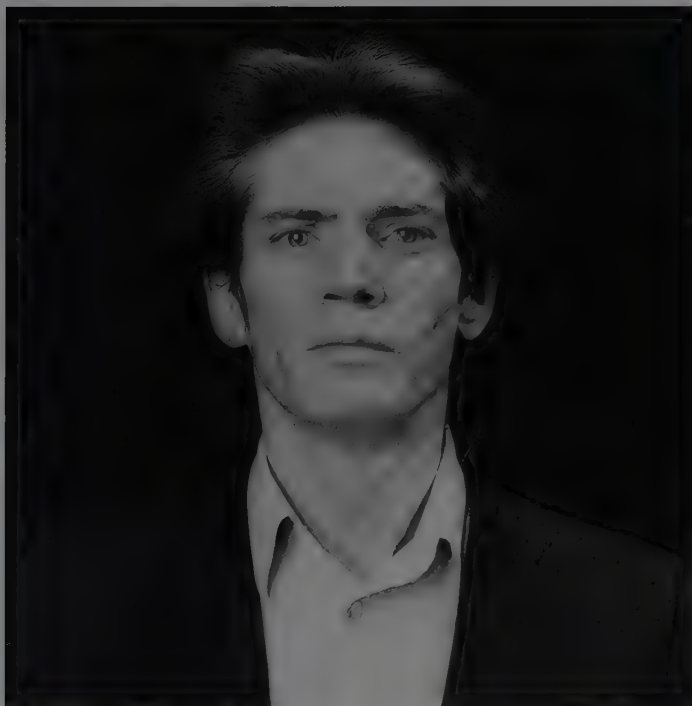
Mapplethorpe's career continued to gather momentum, but the last four years of his life were among his most challenging. In September 1986 Mapplethorpe was hospitalized and diagnosed with AIDS. Although he had been suffering with infections and night sweats since 1982, he had maintained a state of denial, even telling a friend: "I'm not in a high-risk group."⁴ Once his worst fears were confirmed, he turned inward and chose to work more ardently than ever, revisiting and perfecting some of the themes on which he had based his career: portraiture, classicizing nudes, and still lifes.

When Wagstaff died, on January 14, 1987, Mapplethorpe inherited the bulk of his estate, which was estimated to be worth between five and seven million dollars. Mapplethorpe and photography curator Maria Morris Hambourg organized a memorial service in Wagstaff's honor at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The same year, Mapplethorpe made his last great series of figure studies, featuring an African-American male model named Thomas Williams. The photographer had Williams assume a variety of poses within a freestanding cube of approximately five feet square, with a circular cutout five feet in diameter (plates 136, 153).⁵

As Mapplethorpe's health declined, he began making fewer figure studies and portraits, focusing his energies on floral and sculptural still lifes instead. He liked to refer to his flower pictures as "New York flowers," acknowledging that many of them are a bit hard or sinister looking.⁶ *Orchid* (plate 144), for example, contains a cast shadow that resembles a devil's head. In 1988 Mapplethorpe decided to create a series of flower pictures using color film. He had these negatives printed using the dye transfer, or dye imbibition, process; the vivid images that resulted demonstrate a somewhat acidic palette that was popular at that time. Over the course of his career, Mapplethorpe managed to transform the floral still life—a subject that many sophisticated collectors had been reluctant to display in their homes—into an important contemporary theme.

Plans were underway in 1988 for two retrospective exhibitions: one organized by Richard Marshall for the Whitney Museum, the other organized by Janet Kardon for the Institute of Contemporary Art at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. Despite his waning strength and health, Mapplethorpe was determined to live long enough to attend these exhibitions. At the same time, with his legacy very much on his mind, he established The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to steward his own work into the future, to provide support for other photography-related projects and exhibitions, and, later, to help fund AIDS research.

While the disease continued to deplete his body in his final months, Mapplethorpe used the camera as a means of taking artistic control over what was happening to him. In doing so, he joined a group of important visual artists whose work confronted the AIDS crisis and their



own experience with the disease—among them Keith Haring (who died in 1990 at thirty-one), David Wojnarowicz (who died in 1992 at thirty-seven), and Felix Gonzalez-Torres (who died in 1996 at thirty-eight). Mapplethorpe's *Self-Portrait* of 1988 (plate 174) shows the artist's face with signs of illness and fixed with an impassive expression. His head appears to be floating, and his hand grips a skull-topped cane, clearly a symbol of his impending death. The simple composition—with pale visual elements protruding from a tomblike darkness—and brutal honesty of the work make this one of Mapplethorpe's strongest photographs.⁷

The retrospective exhibition at the Whitney Museum was one of the high points of Mapplethorpe's career, and despite his fragile condition, he attended the show's opening reception on July 27, 1988. He was emaciated and ashen: his appearance made it clear to all who saw him that he was dying. The exhibition received good reviews, and as news about Mapplethorpe's condition spread, the sales of his photographs skyrocketed. Dealer Howard Read is said to have sold over \$500,000 worth of prints in December 1988 alone—a testament to the morbid curiosity of the art-buying public and their eagerness to purchase while the artist was still alive, knowing that prices for the work would rise after his death.⁸ Mapplethorpe was too ill that December to attend the opening of *The Perfect Moment* at the Institute of Contemporary Art, the first venue of an ambitious seven-city tour.

The artist died on March 9, 1989, at the Deaconess Hospital in Boston. His death came just three months before the decision to cancel the presentation of *The Perfect Moment* at the Corcoran Museum of Art in Washington, D.C. The cancellation sparked a series of protests that were highly publicized (fig. 18) and helped to fuel the American culture wars of the early 1990s.⁹ Over the next two years, Mapplethorpe was demonized by conservative politicians, his hard-won fame transformed, for some, into infamy. For others, Mapplethorpe's work represented the very paragon of creative freedom.

On the fifth anniversary of his death, Patti Smith wrote of Mapplethorpe: "He was demonic but not evil, only as demonic as a small deity, mischievous but not without compassion. He was a ray where darkness fell."¹⁰ Among the last photographs that Mapplethorpe made were *Calla Lily* (plate 173) and *Ermes* (plate 176). The flower and the bust in these two images appear to possess a kind of magic: they seem almost to glow from within. In these photographs, as in so many others, Mapplethorpe struck the perfect balance between light and dark, hard and soft, ephemeral and eternal.

—Paul Martineau

NOTES

- 1 Lydia Cheng, "Memories of Robert Mapplethorpe: A Sublime Collaboration," in *Robert Mapplethorpe* (Tokyo: Asahi Shimbun, 1992), 37.
- 2 Gordon Baldwin and Daniel Cornell, *Robert Mapplethorpe: Portraits* (Palm Springs, CA: Palm Springs Art Museum, 2009), 22.
- 3 Richard Marshall, with portraits by Robert Mapplethorpe, *50 New York*

Artists: A Critical Selection of Painters and Sculptors Working in New York (San Francisco: Chronicle, 1986).

- 4 Mapplethorpe, quoted in Patricia Morrisroe, *Mapplethorpe: A Biography* (New York: Random House, 1995), 299.
- 5 Baldwin and Cornell, *Robert Mapplethorpe: Portraits*, 19.
- 6 Morrisroe, *Mapplethorpe*, 182.

7 For further discussion of this 1988 image, see the Squiers essay in the present volume.

- 8 Morrisroe, *Mapplethorpe*, 357.
- 9 For further discussion of Mapplethorpe's role in the culture wars see the introduction and the Meyer essay in the present volume.
- 10 Patti Smith, "Meditations (his ritual)," in *Robert Mapplethorpe*, 14.



136

Thomas, 1987



137

Continuous Profile of Mussolini, 1988



138

Self-Portrait, 1985



139

Cock, 1985



140

Ken and Lydia and Tyler, 1985



141

Irises, 1986



142

Lindsay Key, 1985



143

Lydia Cheng, 1987



144
Orchid, 1987



145

Flower Arrangement, 1986



146

Louise Nevelson, 1986



147

Dollar Bill, 1987



148

Suzie's Couch, 1986



149

Lydia Cheng, 1987



150

Calla Lily, 1986



151

Benjamin, 1985



152

Grapes, 1985



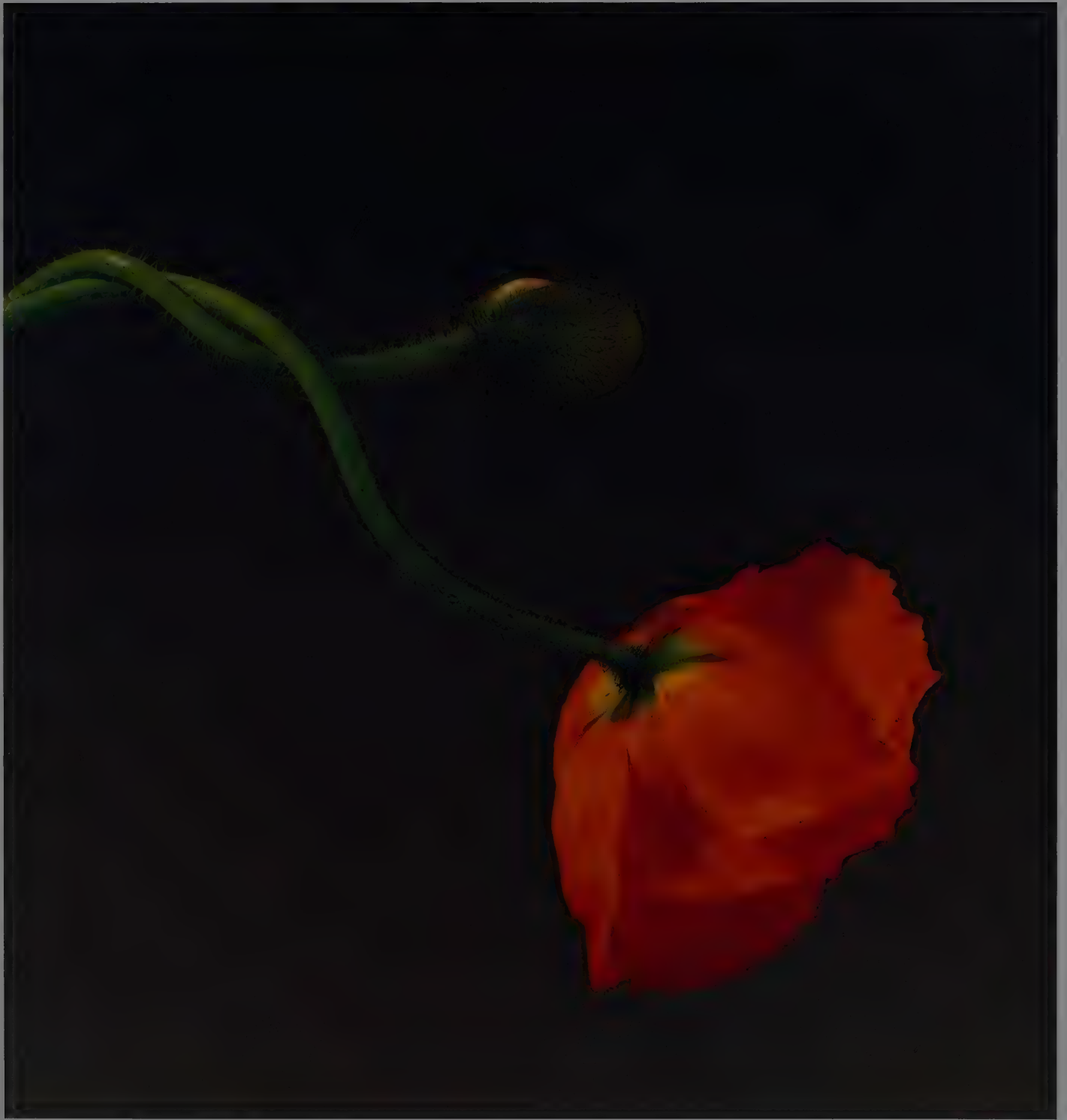
153

Thomas, 1987



154

Tulip, 1988



155

Poppy, 1988



156

Parrot Tulips, 1988



157

Thomas, 1986



158

Thomas, 1987



159

Lucinda's Hand, 1985



160

Lydia Cheng, 1985



161

Melody Danielson, 1987



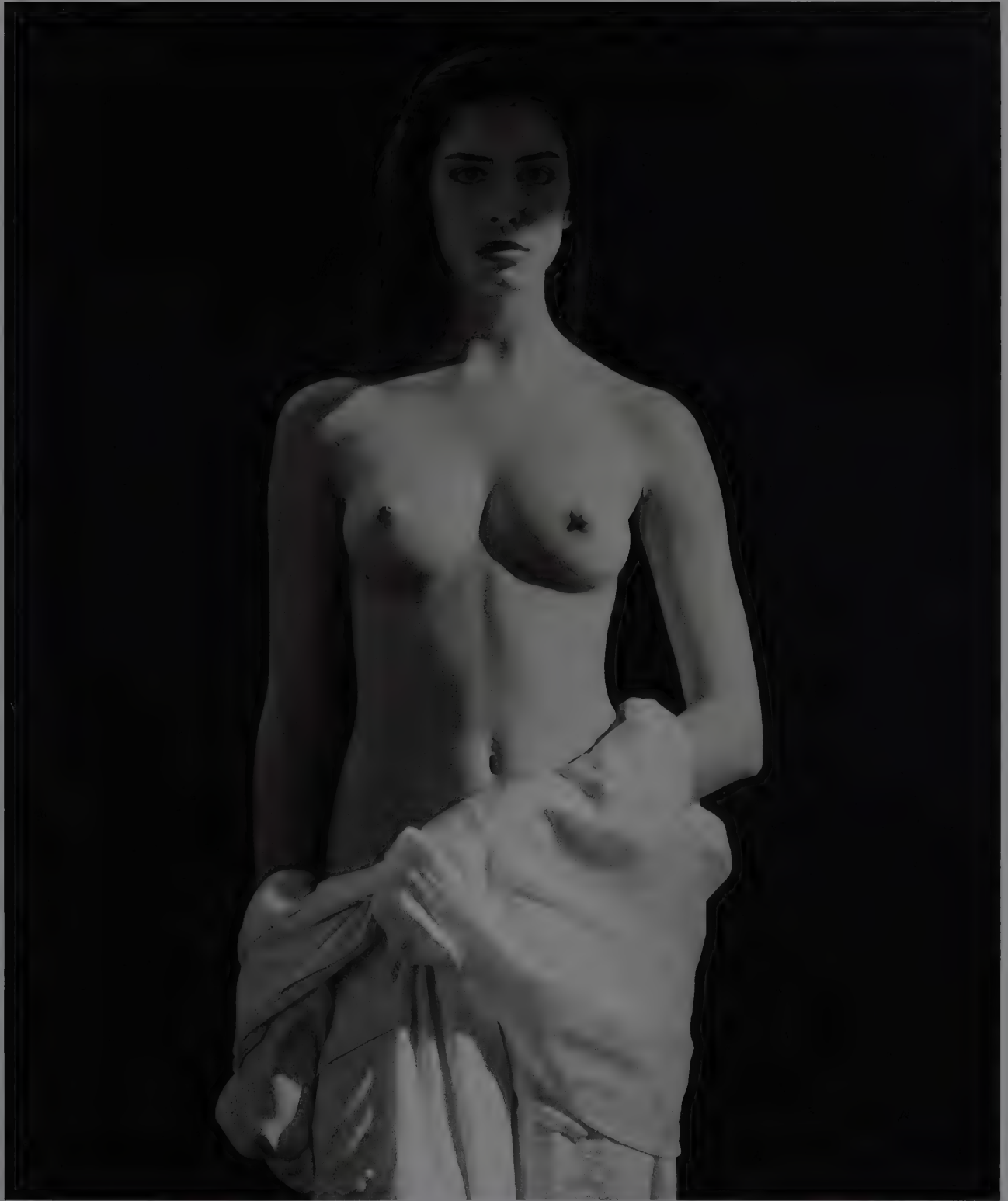
162

Melody (Shoe), 1987



163

Wrestler, 1989



164

Sonia Resika, 1988



165

Ice Bucket and Spoon, 1987



166

Tulips, 1988



167

Skull, 1988



168

Paul Wadina, 1988



169

Black Bust, 1988



170

Apples & Urn, 1987



171

Isabella Rossellini, 1988



172
Apollo, 1988



173

Calla Lily, 1988





174

Self-Portrait, 1988



175
Calla Lily, 1988



176

Ermes, 1988

Essays

MAPPLETHORPED

Art, Photography, and the Pornographic Imagination

Richard Meyer

There are easier ways to see pornography than to make an appointment to visit Special Collections at the Getty Research Institute in Los Angeles. But if you care to peruse a vintage copy of *Rod: The Magazine for the Broad Minded Male* or *Stripped and Strapped: The Games Some People Play* while seated next to a researcher studying nineteenth-century drawings of English Gothic Revival architecture, I recommend that you consult box 227 of the Getty's Robert Mapplethorpe papers and photographs.

In that box, you will find a cache of mid-1960s soft-core physique magazines, including *Beach Adonis*, *Demigods*, and *Muscles à Go Go*. Such publications employed a pretext of physical-fitness and bodybuilding instruction to offer full-color pictures of oiled-up, well-developed young men posing, alone or in pairs, for the camera. The men were invariably naked save for swim trunks, a thong, or a strategically placed prop such as a sword handle or beach ball. On occasion, a black rectangular bar was printed over the genitals of the model. (Prior to the mid-1960s, the publication of photographs featuring frontal male nudity was prohibited in the United States.)¹ In addition to physique periodicals, box 227 also contains hard-core photographic prints and magazine clippings from the late 1960s and early '70s. The freestanding photographs appear to be amateur, anonymously produced porn that would have been traded by hand or purchased, covertly, through the mail. Because the clippings have been removed from the magazines of which they were part, they cannot be precisely identified or dated. Several of the clippings seem to be drawn from a publication printed under the guise of a clinical sex manual with full-page photographs accompanied by instructional language in small type, explaining such categories as "sex devices," "ejaculation," and "orgy." Mapplethorpe's collection of pornography, or at least the portion of it that is preserved in his archive at the Getty Research Institute, ends in the mid-1970s. Just as commercially produced, full-frontal gay porn became readily available at newsstands and bookstores, it all but disappears from Mapplethorpe's archive. As its number implies, box 227 represents a mere fraction of the material housed in the Mapplethorpe papers, most of which consist of personal correspondence, press clippings, exhibition announcements, interviews, and model releases, among other items.

Why focus, then, on the relatively small portion of Mapplethorpe's archive constituted by pornography? One reason is the centrality of the idea of pornography to Mapplethorpe's photography and to the attacks on it in the context of the culture wars over federally funded art in the late 1980s. Another, and related, rationale concerns the creative use to which the artist put his collection of physique magazines and pornography at the start of his career, well before he was making photographs for exhibition.

In 1969 Mapplethorpe left his studies at the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn and sought to launch his career as a professional artist. In addition to jewelry and shrinelike objects, the work he made at the time consisted of collages and assemblages, some of which incorporated pornographic imagery. The Robert Mapplethorpe Archive preserves a number of manipulated, over-drawn, or partially cutout pages of homoerotica from this period. In one instance, Mapplethorpe scissored away a rectangular fragment from a magazine page offering a shirtless, tattooed young man in a cowboy hat (fig. 19). In removing this portion of the image, Mapplethorpe effectively bars out the eyes of the young cowboy. Yet that very blockage of vision gives onto a view of a second shirtless young man—this one in a leather biker's cap—on a subsequent page of the

Figure 19
Robert Mapplethorpe
(American, 1946–1989),
partially cutout magazine
page, ca. 1969. Image:
27.6 × 21 cm (10⅞ ×
8⅜ in.). Los Angeles, Getty
Research Institute. Gift of
The Robert Mapplethorpe
Foundation, 2011.M.20,
box 227, folder 4

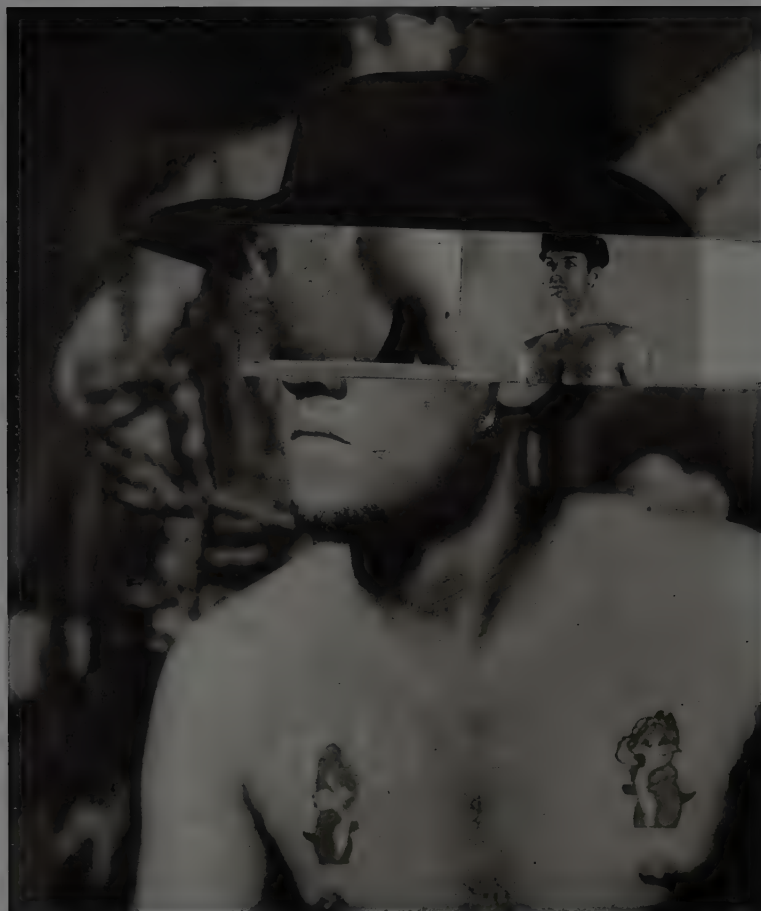


Figure 20
Robert Mapplethorpe
(American, 1946–1989),
Bull's Eye, 1970, cover of
Gay Power, vol. 1, no. 16
(1970). Los Angeles,
Getty Research Institute.
Gift of The Robert
Mapplethorpe Foundation,
2011.M.20, box 122



magazine. The partial effacement of one homoerotic image issues in the sudden appearance of another. Although not intended by Mapplethorpe to be seen as a discrete work of art, this cut-out page anticipates several of the signed and framed collages that the artist would make in the early 1970s.²

In *Leatherman #1* (plate 6), Mapplethorpe lays a tightly woven black mesh over a thin board with brush-applied red color bearing the image of a semi-naked man. The red paper is pasted onto an expanse of sky-blue wallpaper embossed with white-velvet flocking. A silver star punctuates the upper-right section of the black-mesh field. The figure, seated on a stool, wears a biker's cap, leather gloves, and a motorcycle jacket. He holds a large bullwhip that wraps, snake-like, around his exposed right thigh and knee. A small white bar (difficult to discern in reproduction) has been placed over the figure's eyes. The leatherman's gaze is thus subject to a double barring—first by the rectangle and then by the field of black mesh with which it is overlaid.

The theme of visual censorship becomes more explicit in *Bull's Eye* (fig. 20), a 1970 collage in which Mapplethorpe appropriates the pornographic image of a naked man wearing knee-high rubber boots and sets it within a larger field of cutout circles, bars, and rectangles. Two rectangular screens of black-paper mesh have been placed, like a pair of sliding doors, on either side of the figure, while a black bar obscures the man's eyes (at once shielding and criminalizing his appearance) and a spray-painted yellow square covers his midsection. A red circle bounded by a larger white ring, the "bull's eye" of the work's title, overlays the figure's genitals. Mapplethorpe presents the naked male body as both a target of prohibition and a source of pleasure, as both an example of censorship and a defiance of it. By blocking out, barring over, and cutting into pornographic images of the male body, Mapplethorpe simultaneously exaggerates and eroticizes the labors of censorship.

In reflecting on his early work in a 1981 interview, the artist would connect his collages to the contraband appeal of pornography. When asked about the rectangles that cover the eyes of the men in several of his early works, Mapplethorpe noted:

I've always liked that, it's like pictures of gangsters with their eyes blocked out. A friend once gave me a show in his apartment in the Chelsea Hotel [in 1971]. The announcement was a pack of male pornographic cards and each one had their eyes blocked out. The first time I went to 42nd Street and saw those pictures in cellophane, I was straight and didn't even know that those male magazines existed. I was sixteen and not even old enough to buy them. I'd look in the window at those pictures and I'd get a feeling in my stomach. I was in art school then and I thought, God, if you could get that feeling across in a piece of art. . . . It was exciting but definitely forbidden.³

It is not surprising that a sense of the "forbidden" should have augmented Mapplethorpe's teenage fascination with pornography. What is surprising, however, is the artist's desire to "get that feeling across in a piece of art." In his early work, Mapplethorpe attempted to picture not just the sexual immediacy of pornographic images but also their under-cellophane inaccessibility, not just the visual pleasure of eroticized male bodies but also their unreachable aspect. The artist's "42nd Street" anecdote rehearses the dialectic between desire and constraint to which his body of work gave pictorial form.

Far from simply concluding in a notorious moment of censorship, Mapplethorpe's career was shaped by the force of prohibition throughout. Long before his photographs were denounced as pornography on the floor of the U.S. Senate, the artist portrayed the censorship of pornographic imagery and the eroticization of discipline within his work. In so doing, he gave visual form to the contradiction whereby the prohibition of homoerotic imagery serves not only to suppress but also to provoke and produce that imagery.

In the United States, it is legally impossible for a visual image to be defined as both art and obscenity. The U.S. Supreme Court's decision in the 1973 case of *Miller v. California* rules obscene any work that "appeals to the prurient interest in sex; portrays in a patently offensive way sexual conduct specifically defined by the applicable state law; and, taken as a whole, does not have serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value."⁴ The language of the law dictates, then, that an obscene picture cannot also qualify as one that has "artistic value," and conversely, that a work of art is, by definition, not obscene.

Fortunately, Mapplethorpe was a visual artist rather than a lawyer. In his mind, there was no contradiction between artistic value and graphically sexual subject matter. "I can," he insisted, "make pornography art."⁵ The pornography to which he was most often drawn featured eroticized displays of the male body as well as hard-core scenes of gay sex and s/m. By drawing on the conventions of both art and pornography, Mapplethorpe scandalously intertwined aesthetic form and sexually explicit subject matter. From left-leaning critics and curators to conservative politicians and fundamentalist preachers, a diverse range of viewers would recognize

and respond to Mapplethorpe's pornographic imagination.⁶ Both supporters and adversaries were "Mapplethorped," to the extent that they adopted, however unwittingly, the photographer's extravagant sexual imagination when confronting his work. And, as we shall see, that imaginative vocabulary was set to wildly different ends in the context of the retrospective *Robert Mapplethorpe: The Perfect Moment*, and the culture wars it helped provoke.

"I MIGHT"

In June 1989 the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., canceled *Robert Mapplethorpe: The Perfect Moment*, a full-scale retrospective of the photographer's work slated to open a few weeks later. The exhibition and its accompanying catalogue had been partially supported by a \$30,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA).⁷ The Corcoran's decision was made in response to pressures applied by Republican politicians, particularly Senator Jesse Helms of North Carolina, who were, in turn, responding to protests against Mapplethorpe and the NEA by religious "watchdog" organizations such as the Christian Coalition and the American Family Association. The Mapplethorpe controversy was part of a broader attack on federal arts funding already underway by the summer of 1989.⁸

Five weeks after its cancelation by the Corcoran, *The Perfect Moment* was mounted by the Washington Project for the Arts, an alternative arts space in Washington, D.C. Following its run in Washington (where the show attracted some forty thousand viewers), *The Perfect Moment* traveled to the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art in Hartford, Connecticut, and the University Art Museum in Berkeley, California, where it was mounted without incident, and then continued to the Contemporary Arts Center (CAC) in Cincinnati. On April 7, 1990, the opening day of the exhibition in Cincinnati, police temporarily closed *The Perfect Moment* in order to videotape the show as evidence for an obscenity indictment. That same day, the director of the CAC, Dennis Barrie, was indicted on charges of pandering obscenity and child pornography.⁹ The ensuing trial marked the first time that a museum director was prosecuted as a result of the art he presented to the public. By presenting expert witnesses who defended Mapplethorpe's work on purely formal grounds, Barrie's lawyers succeeded in securing his acquittal on all charges.

The catalogue for the exhibition includes an interview with the photographer by Janet Kardon, the show's curator. At the time, Kardon was the director of the Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA) in Philadelphia, the museum that organized the exhibition and mounted it in late 1988, just prior to its ill-fated journey to Washington. At one point in the interview, Kardon describes the disparity between Mapplethorpe's coolly classical style and his frankly carnal subject matter, only to have the photographer make it clear that he does not see things in quite the same way:

JK: You bestow elegance on a subject one would never consider as elegant—in the photographs of the cocks, for example. One might not say a cock was elegant.

RM: I might.¹⁰

Although the catalogue elsewhere refers to Mapplethorpe's photographs of extravagantly endowed men as "figure studies," Kardon here describes them as "the photographs of the cocks." Her word choice is drawn not from the lexicon of art history or curatorial practice but from an explicitly sexual vernacular more often employed in pornography, raunch, and otherwise off-color contexts. The word "cock" is also, and crucially, borrowed from Mapplethorpe's own descriptive vocabulary.

A bit taken aback, perhaps, by the photographer's rejoinder, Kardon offers a qualified concession: "All right, one might. In the heat of ardor, you might think, 'That's an elegant cock.' Normally, it's not a subject you would consider elegant." For Kardon, a penis would not usually be seen as elegant because one would not "normally" approach it as an aesthetic object in the first place. But, as Mapplethorpe suggests, Kardon's claim assumes a normative viewer (a "one")



Mark Stevens (*Mr. 10½*), 1976

subject one would never consider as elegant—in the photographs of the cocks, for example. One might not say a cock was elegant.

RM: I might.

JK: All right, one might. In the heat of ardor, you might think, “That’s an elegant cock.” Normally, it’s not a subject you would consider elegant. But you think of flowers as possessing an elegance, or refinement, and I think you treat the flowers like the cocks and the cocks like the flowers.

RM: Yes, I think they’re the same. A cock is more problematic when you’re photographing, especially if you want it erect. You can’t juggle the lights as much, and it’s hard to refine the photograph quite as much as you’d like, but I attempt to make just as refined a photograph as of one of the flowers. JK: Picasso continually returned to an artist-and-model motif. They are very much like self-portraits, almost diaries, because his depiction of the artist changed as he aged, and the model always resembled whomever he was in love with at the time. Are you involved in a similar way with your subjects?

RM: Not really, because I’m not involved with some of the subjects I’ve photographed over and over again, such as Ken Moody. I can fall in love with the subject and not be personally involved. And I can photograph somebody that I don’t like at all. There’s one person in particular I photographed any number of times; as a person, he’s horrible, but I couldn’t take a bad picture of him. There was a sympathy in the studio, but outside I couldn’t talk to him. He was disgusting. I might have flowers around and not bother to take a picture of them; and I like vases, but I like them without flowers. If I put them together, I love taking pictures of them, but it doesn’t mean I love flowers. When you’re working with a subject, I think you have to love it, but you don’t have to love it afterward. I can do a commissioned portrait of somebody who’s not my kind of person at all.



Orchid and Leaf in White Vase, 1982

JK: So you have taken a picture of somebody you really didn’t like?

RM: Yes, I have, but I loved them when I was taking the picture. I think you have to unless you have a different approach to photography. I think you have to love when you’re taking pictures.

JK: Or be fascinated. Diane Arbus would be fascinated.

RM: I don’t know; I think she probably had enough passion. In order to take your pictures, you have to like what you’re doing at that time.

JK: I’ve been thinking of some earlier photographers, such as Man Ray or August Sander, in relation to your work.

RM: I don’t think I was influenced by what I’ve seen. From the early Polaroids, I had a style, a way of seeing. As time went on, I learned the history. You may be subconsciously influenced by what you’ve seen, and I’ve seen a lot.

JK: How about someone like Edward Weston?

RM: Too dry for me.

JK: Lartigue?

RM: I don’t like the quality of his later prints. You present photographs on a gallery wall and try to make them hold the wall; sometimes I think photographs are often better viewed held in the hand or in books. You don’t see all the sloppy handwork and retouching when fashion photographs are seen in a magazine. Cecil Beaton’s photographs are seen better in reproduction. I met him a couple of times. He wanted desperately to be viewed as an artist. We went to look at his photographs and all he wanted to show us was his sketches. And then someone like Man Ray, whose photographs I admire, didn’t want to be seen as a photographer. When I first did commercial work, I worried all night about it, because I was getting paid, and I had to please all these people. I think Warhol is important.

JK: I do, too, and I think he’s still undervalued.

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whose perspective does not represent the photographer’s point of view. With his simple affirmation, “I might,” Mapplethorpe opens a space of difference and desire whereby the language of pornography (“cocks”) may comfortably coincide with the vocabulary of aesthetic taste and distinction (“elegant”).

Kardon touches on a related issue when she turns to another subject for which the photographer was equally well known: “You think of flowers as possessing an elegance, or refinement, and I think you treat the flowers like the cocks and the cocks like the flowers.”¹⁰ Condensed within this comment is a central conceit of Mapplethorpe’s broader photographic enterprise, namely, the scrambling of aesthetic categories and genres usually understood as discrete, even mutually exclusive.

As though to make this point on visual grounds, the ICA catalogue juxtaposes *Mark Stevens (Mr. 10½)* and *Orchid* (plate 114) at the top of the page that includes the section of interview cited above (fig. 21). Stevens was a porn star who appeared in more than eighty X-rated films in the 1970s, including both straight and gay titles (e.g., *The Devil in Miss Jones* and *Michael, Angelo and David*). In Mapplethorpe’s photograph, the cropped form of Stevens’s body arcs from the lower-left corner of the composition to the upper right. The penis for which the actor was celebrated is laid out horizontally on a rectangular tabletop, almost as though it were a free-standing object for sale or delectation. The proud display and pictorial centrality of Stevens’s genitals allude to his professional nickname while simultaneously confirming its accuracy. Outfitted in black-leather chaps that variously reflect and absorb the studio lighting, Stevens’s body creates an intricate play of tonal and textural variation—of flesh and leather—unfolding across the surface of the image. By combining formalist aesthetics with pornographic celebrity, *Mark Stevens (Mr. 10½)* draws together the otherwise distinct spheres of fine-art photography and the commercial sex industry.

In the flower photograph that serves as both contrast and companion to *Mark Stevens (Mr. 10½)*, a long, slender leaf reaches toward the upper-left corner of the visual field. Like the

Figure 22
Advertisement for Robert Mapplethorpe's X and Y Portfolios, Robert Miller Gallery, New York; published in *Artforum* magazine, vol. 17, no. 9 (April 1979)



X

X and Y by Robert Mapplethorpe—two portfolios of 13 prints each in an edition of 25. Published by Harry Lunn, Washington, Robert Miller, New York, Robert Self, London.



Y

An exhibition of new photographs by Robert Mapplethorpe at the Robert Miller Gallery 724 Fifth Avenue, New York, March 21 through April 12.

white bud vase it shares with an iris blossom, the leaf dramatically pierces the black backdrop against which it is set. Flower, leaf, and vase have been artfully lit and carefully arranged by the photographer to produce a high-contrast, severely geometric composition. Mapplethorpe sometimes referred to such still lifes as his "New York flowers," as though to underscore the urbane sensibility from which they stemmed.

Mark Stevens (Mr. 10½) and *Orchid* suggest equivalent degrees of formal control and meticulous arrangement within the square confines of their respective prints. The curvilinear profile of the leaf seems to mirror, even to answer, the cupped torso of the porn star. Both the penis and the vase are displayed on rectangular surfaces as though they are objets d'art or prized collectibles. Throughout his career, Mapplethorpe took particular delight in presenting wildly different subjects as equally stylized forms of photographic enjoyment. "I don't think there's that much difference," he told an interviewer in 1979, "between a photograph of a fist up someone's ass and a photograph of carnations in a bowl."¹²

Mapplethorpe's provocative comment echoes the bipartite structure of an advertisement published by the Robert Miller Gallery in 1979 in which *Helmut*, a portrait of a squatting leatherman atop a pedestal, is paired with an equally symmetrical still life of white carnations in a black bowl (fig. 22; plates 41, 44). Even as it reveals Helmut's buttocks, boots, and leather harness, the portrait also emphasizes the spare, art-studio setting—the pedestal, white walls, and framing

swath of drapery. Mapplethorpe's formalist play with light and shadow is insistent and unapologetic here, the leather jacket becoming blackest, for instance, when it overlaps the white muslin fabric behind it.

The letter X centered beneath *Helmut* refers to Mapplethorpe's X Portfolio, an edition of thirteen photographs of gay s/m that was paired with a contrasting Y Portfolio of images of flowers (the Z Portfolio, a set of photographs of black male nudes, was later added). If carnations and leathermen can inhabit the same photographic lexicon, it follows that even the most audacious of s/m imagery may be "tamed" into elegant abstraction, and the gentlest of floral arrangements freighted with sexual charge—or so would seem to be the logic proposed by the coordination of Mapplethorpe's alternate photographic practices into matching portfolios. Mapplethorpe would frequently contend that the formal power of his pictures could reconcile even the most dramatic contrasts of subject matter. "I'd have a picture of fruit or flowers next to a picture of sexuality next to a portrait of someone socially prominent. My interest was to open people's eyes, get them to realize anything can be acceptable. It's not what it is, it's the way it's photographed."¹³

The comparative logic of Mapplethorpe's photography extended as well to descriptions of his lifestyle. In 1978, *Son of Drummer*, a special issue of the gay porn and leather-fetish magazine *Drummer*, published a photo spread called "The Robert Mapplethorpe Gallery." The accompanying commentary described the life of the photographer in the following terms:

He lunches afternoons at One Fifth Avenue. He maneuvers after midnight at the Mineshaft. He photographs princesses like Margaret, bodybuilders like Arnold, rock-stars like his best friend Patti Smith, and nighttrippers nameless in leather, rubber, and ropes. He's famous for his photographs of faces, flowers, and fetishes.¹⁴

Mapplethorpe's sophistication as a gay photographer is exemplified by the ease with which he moved from one cultural milieu to another, from upscale restaurants to hard-core sex clubs and back again. The commentary suggests a parallelism between the photographer's diverse subjects and the various social and sexual spaces in which he circulated.¹⁵

Mapplethorpe's s/m photographs—which he typically referred to as the "sex pictures"—cross the theatrical appeal of gay leather culture (with its erotic props, costumes, and roles) with that of studio photography. *Boot Fetish* (plate 47), for example, portrays a subject who has placed much of his face inside a leather cowboy boot, as if to inhale its aroma. The physical identity of the sitter is subordinated to that of his fetish object, white flesh giving way to black leather, brown stitching, silver studs. It is almost as though the man, through the posturing of his body, attempts to conform to the demands of his boot. Notice the rounding over of the shoulders, the loss of the lower part of the face, the way the sitter's body, however we trace its outline, returns our gaze to the boot. Mapplethorpe exploits the fetishistic capabilities of photography—the way it can deploy light, texture, and cropping to isolate and eroticize an object—to showcase a leather fetish item.¹⁶

At the heart of Mapplethorpe's s/m project lies a tension between sexual exchange and its simulation. It mattered to Mapplethorpe that the men portrayed in his photographs be recognized as authentic participants in the gay leather subculture, not as models hired and costumed for a day's shoot. "The people involved in those sexual pictures," Mapplethorpe insisted, "are really involved in them. It's their thing. If there was somebody that happened to be drinking piss in the photograph, he was, in fact, into drinking piss. He wasn't doing it for the picture."¹⁷ For all their overt artifice and premeditation, Mapplethorpe's pictures are not, he tells us, mere pantomimes of s/m. Rather, they are grounded in the real, off-camera practices of a larger subculture. Yet this claim is contradictory insofar as Mapplethorpe's subjects, however genuine their participation in the s/m scene, were of course "doing it for the picture," at least on the occasions in which they posed in the photographer's studio. As Mapplethorpe himself described it, "for the most part, these situations were created with my photographs in mind."¹⁸

Nowhere is the tension between "doing their thing" and "doing it for the picture" more dramatic than in Mapplethorpe's unforgettable photograph *Helmut and Brooks*, N.Y.C. (fig. 23).

Figure 23
Robert Mapplethorpe
(American, 1946–1989),
Helmut and Brooks, N.Y.C.,
1978. Gelatin silver print.
Image: 35.2 × 35.2 cm
(13 $\frac{3}{4}$ × 13 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.); sheet:
50.4 × 40.4 cm (19 $\frac{3}{8}$ ×
15 $\frac{7}{8}$ in.). Promised gift of
The Robert Mapplethorpe
Foundation to the J. Paul
Getty Trust and the Los
Angeles County Museum
of Art

Figure 24
Robert Mapplethorpe
(American, 1946–1989),
Larry Hunt, 1978.
Non-editioned gelatin
silver print. Image: 35.6 ×
35.6 cm (14 × 14 in.);
sheet: 50.5 × 40.7 cm
(19 $\frac{3}{8}$ × 16 in.). Los Angeles,
Getty Research Institute.
Gift of The Robert
Mapplethorpe Foundation,
2011.M.20.489, box 72



Although its title suggests a double portrait, we see the face of neither Helmut nor Brooks. We are, in fact, given only the upper right shoulder and arm of one man and the spread buttocks and foreshortened torso of the other. The right hand and wrist of the first man are hidden from view because they have been inserted into the rectum of his companion. The photograph zooms in so close to the men's bodies that we can see the texture of skin and strands of body hair. Mapplethorpe places the act of penetration at the very center of the photographic composition. Helmut and Brooks are presented not as the humanist subjects of conventional portraiture but as partners in a radical sex act. While fisting may well have been an activity regularly enjoyed by the two men, it was, on this occasion, performed for the purpose of being photographed.

And there is something more. In addition to a manual act of anal penetration, the photograph also shows us the "seat" upon which this sexual transaction unfolds, namely a wood-and-leather William Morris chair, circa 1910–12. Mapplethorpe was an avid collector of Arts and Crafts furniture, pieces of which were displayed in his Manhattan loft. "The furniture I collect," Mapplethorpe said in 1978, "relates to a certain kind of passion I feel within myself . . . it has for me an amorous, masculine quality that I don't find in other furniture."¹⁹ As he did in *Helmut and Brooks*, Mapplethorpe would sometimes pose his male subjects on or against Arts and Crafts furniture.

In his 1978 portrait of Larry Hunt (fig. 24), for example, the subject is seated on an oak hall bench, produced around 1902 by the firm of Gustav Stickley. The bench has here been introduced into the space of the studio, with its bare floorboards, strobe lights, and reflective backdrops. Mapplethorpe takes the sturdiness and symmetry of the hall bench, its foursquare proportions and no-nonsense styling, and matches them to those of his model. Consider, for example, how Hunt's chunky lumberjack boots and black leather jacket seem to answer the solid



oak construction and leather seat of the bench, or how the stacked diamond pattern of his bootlaces plays off the horizontal insistence of the bench's metal circle pins.

Photographs such as *Helmut and Brooks* and *Larry Hunt* enact a dialogue between gay sex culture, interior decoration, and studio photography. Like the juxtaposition of s/m and flowers in the X and Y Portfolios, these photographs bespeak Mapplethorpe's desire to reconcile apparently incommensurate subjects. There were, however, external limits imposed on that desire. Few galleries were willing to show such provocative pictures in the late 1970s. In 1980 Mapplethorpe stopped making photographs of gay s/m, and his sex pictures were rarely exhibited in the United States again during his lifetime.²⁰

According to writer Ingrid Sischy, the photographer's s/m pictures "became the portion of his work which stayed in drawers, only appearing on the rarest of occasions and many of them never again seen. But no one who knew about them forgot those scenes, even if the knowledge was only by rumor. They stayed in the back of the mind, tugging a little every time another Mapplethorpe work went by."²¹ Sischy describes the s/m photographs as a remembered disturbance, a set of phantom images that continued to haunt Mapplethorpe's career even after they were stashed away in storage. Writing in 1988, Sischy could scarcely have anticipated the disturbance that would be provoked by the s/m photographs the following year. This time, however, that disturbance would register not only at the level of individual viewing but also at those of museum policy, legislative conflict, and national consciousness.

MARBLE TOP

As part of his largely successful effort to impose content restrictions on federally funded art during the summer of 1989, Jesse Helms exploited public fears and fantasies about male homosexuality. The name the senator most frequently assigned to these fears was "Mapplethorpe." During congressional hearings on the NEA, Helms mentioned Mapplethorpe's "recent death from AIDS" and then declared of his photography:

There are unspeakable portrayals which I cannot describe on the floor of the Senate. . . . Mr. President [George H. W. Bush], this pornography is sick. But Mapplethorpe's sick art does not seem to be an isolated incident. Yet another artist exhibited some of this sickening obscenity in my own state. . . . I could go on and on, Mr. President, about the sick art that has been displayed around the country.²²

In denouncing Mapplethorpe's art as "sick," Helms suggests that it is not an "isolated incident" but a spreading "obscenity" that must be contained and eradicated. HIV infection was thus metaphorically displaced from Mapplethorpe's body to the body of his work, as his photographs were said to pollute an otherwise "clean" American culture.

Helms's attack on Mapplethorpe's photography was consistent with the senator's public policies regarding AIDS at the time. In June 1987 Helms appeared on national television to call for a federal quarantine of people with AIDS, a proposal no less menacing than the spread of HIV infection it sought to ward against. In November of the same year, Helms successfully moved to prohibit federal funding for AIDS-prevention instructional materials that might "promote, encourage, or condone homosexual activities or the intravenous use of illegal drugs."²³ In the course of introducing this legislation, Helms would offer his own theory of HIV transmission: "Every AIDS case," he said flatly, "can be traced back to a homosexual act."²⁴ For all its terrible ignorance, Helms's misstatement bespeaks the symbolic force of the association between gay sex and epidemic sickness, an association that Helms would later summon in his denunciation of Mapplethorpe.

"Old Helms will win every time," the senator told the *New York Times* in July 1989 (referring to cutting federal money for art projects with homosexual themes). "This Mapplethorpe fellow was an acknowledged homosexual. He's dead now, but the homosexual theme goes throughout his work."²⁵ Later in the same article, Helms would try to clarify his own criteria

for artistic judgment by making the following aesthetic distinction: "There's a big difference between *The Merchant of Venice* and a photograph of two males of different races [in an erotic pose] on a marble top table."²⁶

Left unmentioned by the *New York Times* was the fact that no such photograph by Mapplethorpe exists. Two photographs of interracial male couples, including *Embrace* (plate 124), appear in the Mapplethorpe catalogue that Helms not only saw firsthand but selectively photocopied and distributed to his colleagues in the Senate.²⁷ Neither of those couples, however, is posed on a marble-top table. Marble-top tables appear nowhere, in fact, within Mapplethorpe's published oeuvre, though tables of different materials do surface in explicitly homoerotic contexts in his photography, most famously *Mark Stevens (Mr. 10½)* (see fig. 21), a photograph reproduced in the exhibition catalogue on which Helms based his descriptions of Mapplethorpe's work.

Few would expect Helms to be a particularly careful viewer of Mapplethorpe's work. But the way the senator gets the photographs wrong reveals how the rhetoric of censorship summons its own fantasies of erotic transgression and exchange, its own theater of sexual acts and imagery. "Two males of different races [in an erotic pose] on a marble top table" is cited by Helms as though it were a description of a photograph by Mapplethorpe. The description is, however, of an imagined picture that has been worked by Helms across the body of Mapplethorpe's photography and, in this sense, was produced as much by the senator as by the photographer whom he attacks. The literary critic D. A. Miller has suggested that the phrase "marble top" was summoned by Helms as a surrogate for the word "Mapplethorpe."²⁸ The words "marble top" provide Helms with a means, however unconscious, of inserting Mapplethorpe into the sexualized scene of interracial coupling the senator describes.

To the fabricated image of the "marble top table" I want to juxtapose a moment in which Helms describes the art in his own home so as to dramatize, by way of contrast, the obscenity of Mapplethorpe's work. The senator singles out for particular praise a painting that depicts "an old man, sitting at the table, with the Bible open in front of him, with his hands folded in prayer. . . . And it is the most inspiring thing to me. . . . We have ten or twelve pictures of art, all of which I like. But we don't have any penises stretched out on the table."²⁹ By avowing his admiration for a picture of a pious old man at a table, Helms means to counter other pictures, half-remembered and half-imagined, of other men (e.g., *Mark Stevens [Mr. 10½]*) and other tables (e.g., marble-top ones). Helms's assertion that "we don't have any penises stretched out on the table" unwittingly confuses the distinction between representation and corporeal presence, between Mapplethorpe's pictures and the men (and penises) depicted in them. At such moments, Helms does not describe an individual Mapplethorpe photograph so much as he conjures a space of homosexual difference and depravity, of tables and tabletops on which "indecent" pleasures unfold. Helms recognizes and righteously disavows the luxurious and forbidden space of homosexuality portrayed by Mapplethorpe.

Some of the contradictions of Helms's attack are suggested by a cartoon published in the *Philadelphia Daily News* in July 1989, two days after the introduction of legislation that imposed content restrictions on federally funded art (fig. 25). The cartoon shows Helms and an assistant in the midst of cutting paintings out of frames and otherwise destroying works of art deemed offensive. The assistant tells his boss, "Great idea, getting rid of all the fag art, Mr. Helms!" Plaques beneath the now-absent works of "fag art" identify the men who made them: Leonardo da Vinci, Caravaggio, and Michelangelo. As this cartoon suggests, neither the issue of homosexual art nor the pictorial force of same-sex desire can be confined to the contemporary moment. Homosexuality registers even, and sometimes especially, within some of the most beloved and canonical works of art in the Western tradition.

Although the cartoonist, Signe Wilkinson, was likely unaware of it, the caption she has put in the mouth of Helms's assistant echoes a comment once made by Mapplethorpe. During a 1979 interview with a short-lived publication called *Manhattan Gaze*, Mapplethorpe declared: "There's all this energy now around faggot art. It would be nice to see something legitimate as art come out as well. I don't see why it couldn't."³⁰ Mapplethorpe's comment, with its distinction between "faggot art" and "something legitimate," signals his ambition to bridge the gap between

Figure 25
 Signe Wilkinson
 (American, b. 1959),
 "Great Idea, Getting Rid
 of All the Fag Art,
 Mr. Helms!" cartoon in
 the *Philadelphia Daily News*
 (July 28, 1989)



the still-emergent gay-identified art scene of the late 1970s and the established art market of uptown galleries, museums, and auction houses.³¹ By 1979 Mapplethorpe was well on his way to realizing this ambition. His photography had been the subject of one-person shows in New York, Los Angeles, Houston, Amsterdam, and Paris, and his work was now represented by the prestigious Robert Miller Gallery in New York.

Today, the price of Mapplethorpe's work at auction, the critical and interpretive attention it has received, and its acquisition and display by prominent museums attest to the fact that it has indeed achieved "something legitimate" in the history of art. The reception of Mapplethorpe's work cannot be dissociated from the political panic and public controversy it provoked in 1989–90. Rather than damaging the photographer's reputation, the culture wars ultimately, if inadvertently, elevated his work's stature and international visibility.³²

If the figure of Mapplethorpe as virulently homosexual was thrust onto the national stage in the late 1980s and early '90s, so too was the power of his photography to incite political conflict and activism. The vilification to which Mapplethorpe was subject provoked a counter-discourse in which his work came to symbolize sexual and artistic freedom in the face of intolerance and homophobia. And, as the cartoonist for the *Philadelphia Daily News* reminds us, it was Senator Helms (perhaps more than anyone other than Mapplethorpe himself) who insisted on the sexual and political force of the photographer's work and who helped, however unwittingly, to secure a place for that work in the history of art.

When Mapplethorpe insisted that "I don't think there's that much difference between a photograph of a fist up someone's ass and a photograph of carnations in a bowl," he laid down a provocation with which viewers of his work must still grapple. While the subjects of fisting and flowers may never achieve the perfect equivalence the photographer claimed, each was fashioned by Mapplethorpe into supremely resolved and meticulously arranged compositions. Or, as the photographer once said: "It's a different subject, same treatment, same vision, which is what it's all about—my eyes as opposed to someone else's."³³

Mapplethorpe forces viewers to consider both a floral still life and an extreme act of sexual pleasure (and pain) in a new light. We see the photographer's subjects not only through our eyes but also through his. When we view *Helmut and Brooks* beside one of the "New York flowers," when we appreciate the formal control and severe degree of stylization to which each has been subjected, when we understand that pornography can also be art, we too have been Mapplethorped.

- 1 According to the historian Thomas Waugh: "Full frontal nudes only became systematically available over the counter around 1966, after a set of crucial court decisions. Prior to that you took your chances: some sets [of male nude photographs] were distributed with inked-in posing straps which the customer was supposed to have enough ingenuity to sponge off." Waugh, "Photography, Passion, and Power," *Body Politic*, March 1984, 30. On the relaxation of obscenity laws in the late 1960s, see F. Valentine Hooven III, *Beefcake: The Muscle Magazines of America, 1950-1970* (Berlin: Taschen, 1995), 123-25. On the rise of gay pornography in the 1970s, see Michael Bronski, "Gay Publishing: Pornography," in *Culture Clash: The Making of a Gay Sensibility* (Boston: South End Press, 1984), 160-74.
- 2 On the sometimes unstable distinction between freestanding works of art and archival materials in the context of Mapplethorpe's early work and pornography, see Ryan Linkof's essay "Mapplethorpe's Underwear: Art and the Archive in the Museum Exhibition," *Journal of Visual Culture* (forthcoming). At my request, Linkof kindly shared with me a version of the essay prior to its publication.
- 3 Mapplethorpe, quoted in Carol Squiers, "With Robert Mapplethorpe," *Hamptons Newsletter*, August 27, 1981.
- 4 U.S. Supreme Court verdict, as quoted in Richard Bolton, ed., *Culture Wars: Documents from the Recent Controversies in the Arts* (New York: New Press, 1992), 333. Miller v. California was a lawsuit brought by the State of California against Marvin Miller, the owner of a mail-order business dealing in pornographic books and films. Ruling in Miller's favor in 1973, the Supreme Court revised the legal definition of obscenity.
- 5 Mapplethorpe, quoted in Janet Kardon, "Robert Mapplethorpe Interview," in *Robert Mapplethorpe: The Perfect Moment* (Philadelphia: Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, 1988), 28.
- 6 The phrase "pornographic imagination" is drawn from a well-known essay by Susan Sontag in which she argues that "everyone, at least in dreams, has inhabited the world of the pornographic imagination for some hours or days or even longer periods of his life; but only the full-time residents make the fetishes, the trophies, the art." By these lights, Mapplethorpe might be understood as one of Sontag's "full-time residents." See Susan Sontag, "The Pornographic Imagination" (1967), in Sontag, *Styles of Radical Will* (New York: Picador, 1969), 71.
- 7 The NEA granted \$30,000 to Philadelphia's Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA) to organize the exhibition and to produce the accompanying publication. *Robert Mapplethorpe: The Perfect Moment* opened at the ICA on December 9, 1988.
- 8 The previous April, the American Family Association had launched a letter-writing campaign denouncing a single work of art, Andres Serrano's 1987 *Piss Christ*. Serrano's work, a large-scale color photograph of a crucifix submerged in a luminous bath of the artist's urine, had been awarded a \$15,000 prize by the Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, an institution partially funded by the NEA. In May, on the floor of the Senate, Republican Senator Alfonse D'Amato of New York ripped up a catalogue that featured *Piss Christ*. Jesse Helms, in apparent distress over Serrano's link to the senator's home state of North Carolina, insisted that "I do not know Mr. Andres Serrano, and I hope I never meet him. Because he is not an artist, he is a jerk." Jesse Helms, *Congressional Record*, May 18, 1989, p. S5595.
- 9 At 3:00 p.m. on April 7, 1990, "police officers ejected about 500 viewers [from the Contemporary Arts Center,] shut the museum for 90 minutes, videotaped Mapplethorpe's work as evidence, and indicted Barrie." Robin Cembalest, "Cincinnati: Imperfect Moment," *Artnews*, Summer 1990, 51.
- 10 Mapplethorpe, quoted in Kardon, "Robert Mapplethorpe Interview," *The Perfect Moment*, 28.
- 11 *Ibid.* Mapplethorpe agreed with Kardon on this point even as he then complicated the apparent parallelism between floral and phallic subjects: "Yes, I think they're the same. A cock is more problematic when you're photographing, especially if you want it erect. You can't juggle the lights as much, and it's hard to refine the photograph quite as much as you'd like, but I attempt to make just as refined a photograph as of one of the flowers."
- 12 Mapplethorpe, quoted in Parker Hodges, "Robert Mapplethorpe: Photographer," *Manhattan Gaze*, December 10, 1979-January 6, 1980, 5.
- 13 Mapplethorpe, quoted in Janis Bultman, "Bad Boy Makes Good," *Darkroom Photography*, July 1988, 26.
- 14 Jack Fritscher, "The Robert Mapplethorpe Gallery," *Son of Drummer* (special issue of *Drummer*), 1978, 15.
- 15 One Fifth Avenue was an exclusive downtown restaurant especially popular within the art world at the time. The Mineshaft had been described a year earlier by Jack Fritscher, in "Men's Barscene: Mineshaft," *Drummer* 3, no. 19 (1977): 82-83:
- The 'Shaft is an amazing maze of rooms, stairways, toilets, closets, hallways, bathtubs, gloryholes, and sex equipment. Light varies [from] shadows to darkness. Men sit, stand, kneel, hang, crawl, drink, and eat. . . . The music is truly weird, but played low enough not to cover the slurps, moans, whippings, and piss scenes.
- Anything you can fantasize is available somewhere in the Mineshaft. The Mineshaft is the pits. In the best sense. The "Shaft" is no place to take your daytime identity. The 'Shaft is the place of the night-time ID. Abandon inhibition all ye who enter here.
- 16 For further discussion of this image, see the Linkof essay in the present volume.
- 17 Mapplethorpe, quoted in David Hershkovits, "Shock of the Black and the Blue," *SoHo Weekly News*, May 20, 1981, 10.
- 18 Mapplethorpe, quoted in Gary Indiana, "Robert Mapplethorpe" (interview), *Bomb* 22 (Winter 1988): 22.
- 19 Mapplethorpe, quoted in Carol Lorraine Bohdan and Todd Mitchell Volpe, "Collecting Arts and Crafts," *Nineteenth Century* 4, no. 3 (Autumn 1978): 57.
- 20 By this time, Mapplethorpe had begun taking photographs of nude or partially nude black men. Although the racial and sexual politics of these photographs would make them quite controversial, they were never as explicit as Mapplethorpe's work on s/m.
- 21 Ingrid Sischy, "A Society Artist," in Richard Marshall, *Robert Mapplethorpe* (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1988), 84.
- 22 Jesse Helms, record of the Proceedings and Debates of the 101st Congress, First Session, July 26, 1989, p. S8807.
- 23 Jesse Helms, quoted in "Helms Says AIDS Quarantines a Must," *San Diego Union-Tribune*, June 15, 1987.
- 24 Jesse Helms, *Congressional Record*, October 14, 1987, p. S14202.
- 25 Jesse Helms, quoted in Maureen Dowd, "Unruffled Helms Basks in Eye of Arts Storm," *New York Times*, July 28, 1989, A1.
- 26 *Ibid.*
- 27 See Kara Swisher, "Helms's 'Indecent' Sampler: Senator Sends Photos to Sway Conferees," *Washington Post*, August 8, 1989; and "Helms Mails Photos He Calls Obscene," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, August 9, 1989. According to Swisher, the four photographs copied by Helms and mailed to his colleagues were *Rosie* (not illustrated in this volume), *Jesse McBride* (plate 30), *Man in Polyester Suit* (plate 72), and *Mark Stevens (Mr. 10½)* (fig. 21).
- 28 D. A. Miller, *Bringing Out Roland Barthes* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992), 41-42.
- 29 Jesse Helms, quoted in Charles Babington, "Jesse Riles Again," *Museum & Arts: Washington*, November/December 1989, 59.
- 30 Mapplethorpe, quoted in Hodges, "Robert Mapplethorpe: Photographer," 5.
- 31 The "energy" around "faggot art" to which Mapplethorpe refers was most vividly demonstrated in the growth of gay-male-owned and -oriented galleries in New York as well as other cities in the late 1970s. By 1980 five such galleries were operating in Manhattan, including the Robert Samuels Gallery, in which Mapplethorpe exhibited both flowers and s/m photographs. See George Stambolian, "The Art and Politics of the Male Image: A Conversation between Sam Hardison and George Stambolian," *Christopher Street* 4, no. 7 (March 1980): 18.
- 32 See Richard Meyer, "Barring Desire: Robert Mapplethorpe and the Discipline of Photography," in Meyer, *Outlaw Representation: Censorship and Homosexuality in Twentieth-Century American Art* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 158-225; "The Jesse Helms Theory of Art," *October* 104 (Spring 2003): 129-46; and "Mapplethorpe's Living Room: Photography and the Furnishing of Desire," *Art History* 24, no. 2 (April 2001): 292-311. At various points in the current essay I have drawn—both directly and indirectly—on my prior research and writings on Mapplethorpe.
- 33 Mapplethorpe, quoted in Hershkovits, "Shock of the Black and the Blue," 10.

FLESH AND SPIRIT

Robert Mapplethorpe, Sam Wagstaff, and the Gay Sensibility

Philip Gefter

In the early 1970s the medium of photography gained new stature among the fine arts. Museums and art schools in the United States began to establish autonomous photography departments; several commercial galleries now showed photography exclusively; and an unforeseen market for photography was emerging in the art world.

This newly expanded regard for photography as a fine art occurred simultaneously with the growing visibility of the gay rights movement. Although it is worth noting that photography and homosexuality surfaced, respectively, from the margins of artistic legitimacy and mainstream society, this concurrence was nothing more than a coincidence of timing. And yet by the end of that decade the influence of what has come to be identified as a “gay sensibility”—manifest in the relationship of Robert Mapplethorpe and Samuel J. Wagstaff Jr.—would become an indelible ingredient in photography’s coming of age.

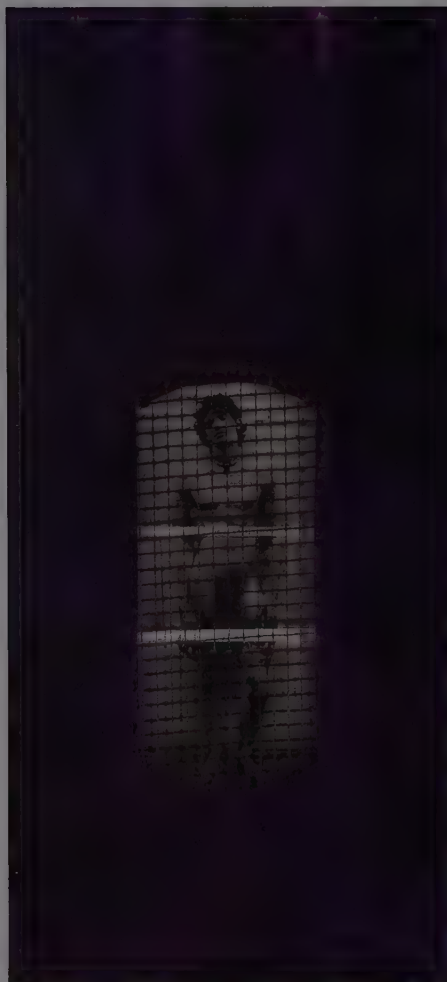
Sam Wagstaff and Robert Mapplethorpe met in 1972; Wagstaff was fifty years old, Mapplethorpe was half his age. They were to become one of the celebrated couples of the twentieth century—not only because they were glamorous, and not only because they were gay. As lovers, they did not adhere to monogamy; as committed partners, their deep emotional bond by no means conformed to the conventions of heterosexual marriage; but, as patron and artist, they brought co-conspiratorial fervor to securing respect for photography in the art world and also to establishing Mapplethorpe’s career as an artist.

As a respected curator of painting and sculpture throughout the 1960s, first at the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art in Hartford, Connecticut, and then at the Detroit Institute of Arts, Wagstaff had a more influential role in shaping art history in the last half of the twentieth century than is widely understood. He organized, for example, *Black, White, and Gray*, the first museum show of Minimalist art, at the Wadsworth in 1964, and lent steady curatorial support—and friendship—to a roster of artists who were just emerging in that decade, among them Walter De Maria, Mark di Suvero, Michael Heizer, Ray Johnson, Agnes Martin, Tony Smith, Richard Tuttle, and Andy Warhol.

Mapplethorpe had studied formally at New York’s Pratt Institute, a preeminent art school, and by the time he met Wagstaff, he had also received a unique extracurricular education at some of the city’s more notorious art world haunts. Among these were the Chelsea Hotel, a bohemian residence for a pantheon of artists, writers, and musicians of the era (among them William Burroughs, Bob Dylan, Allen Ginsberg, and Larry Rivers), and Max’s Kansas City, a nightclub/restaurant made famous by Andy Warhol and his coterie of “superstars” (including Candy Darling and Holly Woodlawn) and other regulars in the club’s legendary back room. The flamboyance of the Warhol retinue attracted media attention and quite possibly paved the way for what eventually became known as the LGBTQ community—lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and (much later) those who are transgendered and queer. The seductive, sexually frank tone of the song “Walk on the Wild Side,” written by Lou Reed about this group in the back room at Max’s, aptly sums up the persona Mapplethorpe was cultivating there. “Sam really respected the way I was honest about being gay,” Robert would later tell his biographer, Patricia Morrisroe. “I helped Sam be more open about his sexuality.”¹

Born into an established New York family, Wagstaff benefited from his good looks and a sterling education. He would spend the 1950s and ’60s living a double life in the roomy art

Figure 26
Robert Mapplethorpe
(American, 1946–1989),
Untitled (Self-portrait),
1971. Dye diffusion transfer
print collage with painted
potato sack. Overall:
64.5 × 41.3 cm (25½ ×
16¼ in.). Collection Pérez
Art Museum Miami.
Promised gift of Charles
Cowles



world closet of Manhattan, where he encountered many artists—among them John Cage, Merce Cunningham, Jasper Johns, Robert Rauschenberg, and Warhol—who were, like himself, gay. In general, this group could be honest about their sexuality only among themselves, free to roam openly within the confines of their own social circle. Wagstaff was among the fortunate compared to the majority of gay men and lesbians throughout the country who lived in painful isolation, constantly fearful of being found out, obsessively protective of their secret—the revelation of which was certain to destroy their lives. (As late as 1963, the *New York Times* commonly used the word “pervert” for “homosexual.”)² In this context, Wagstaff maintained a strict heterosexual persona in both of his official curatorial positions.

Photography, as something of an outlier in the world of art, had suffered its own form of prejudice. Well into the 1970s, it was still viewed by many in the realm of the fine arts as nothing more than a utilitarian medium, an “applied art.” Photographic imagery appeared everywhere in daily life—in newspapers, magazines, and advertisements, on billboards, driver’s licenses, and passports—and its ubiquity conspired against its acceptance as a medium of art making. Wagstaff himself had, for much of his early career, been unconvinced of photography’s worth. “Painting is art and photography is not art 99 percent of the time,” he said dismissively to the *Hartford Times* in 1961, echoing an attitude that was widely held among curators, critics, and scholars of the day.³ His enthusiastic embrace of photography in the 1970s, then, would come as a surprise to many of his colleagues and, in turn, his reputation as an esteemed curator of painting and sculpture would exert a persuasive influence on the perception of the photograph as a viable object of aesthetic value.

Mapplethorpe did not claim photography as his defining medium until 1973. Up to that point, he had been incorporating photographs cut from the pages of physique magazines into collages and assemblages, often with found objects laid over them and elaborately constructed frames. When he began to experiment informally with the Polaroid camera, he realized greater control over the images and started including his own photographs in the work.

Mapplethorpe’s assemblages were in keeping with the art-making practices of the period; what set his work apart was its frequent homoerotic treatment of the male nude figure. At the same time, symbolic references to Catholicism (the religion of his upbringing) and Catholic ritual were juxtaposed in the overlay of imagery, fabrics, and other materials. Mapplethorpe was equating the (homo-)erotic with the spiritual and the sacred. In *Untitled (Self-Portrait)* (fig. 26), Mapplethorpe stacked three small Polaroid images (dye diffusion prints) into a vertical triptych—each element showing a section of his own naked body—to compose a full-length self-portrait. The Polaroids are framed in a window of mesh, part of a brown-paper potato sack that serves as a mat border, which he spray-painted purple. The viewer peers through the mesh to see Mapplethorpe’s naked body, as if he is standing behind the scrim of a confessional, or perhaps the grate of a prison door. The spectacle of his bare flesh—his nipples and navel, his pubic hair and penis, and the defiant but seductive expression on his face—all amount to a provocation that is at once erotic and seemingly sacramental.

A GAY SENSIBILITY

Mapplethorpe was not, of course, the first artist to photograph the male nude in homoerotic terms. Among his many antecedents were Thomas Eakins, Baron Wilhelm von Gloeden, F. Holland Day, and George Platt Lynes. Yet the strict cultural taboo that led to severe laws against homosexuality made it virtually impossible for these artists to exhibit such imagery in a public context. With the help of Wagstaff, Mapplethorpe would be the first to bring a consistent representation of the homoerotic in photographic imagery to the museum and gallery wall.

One of Mapplethorpe’s early collages, *Bull’s Eye* (see fig. 20), appeared in a publication called *Gay Power*, which billed itself as “New York’s first homosexual newspaper.” It consists of a found image of a nude man, over whose eyes Mapplethorpe has placed a black censor bar; a red John Baldessari-esque circle covers his genitalia. In a description of *Bull’s Eye*, Richard Meyer identifies the tightrope between oppression and desire that so many homosexuals walked before

the early years of the gay rights movement in America: "Mapplethorpe presents the naked male body as both a target of prohibition and a source of pleasure, as both an example of censorship and a defiance of it."⁴

These dualities are at the core of the *gay sensibility*, which evolved from the homosexual experience of alienation in society. Until the advent of gay liberation in the 1970s, the carefully protected secret of forbidden desire required the homosexual to lead a double life, not only for social acceptance but for purposes of safety. Out of this partitioned existence emerged a number of survival mechanisms: irony became a lingua franca; paradoxical wit, a salve for pain and longing; and aesthetic idealization, a surrogate for sexual pleasure. These are central components of the *gay sensibility* and underscore a strain of creative expression throughout the twentieth century that aimed high in formal artistic realization, while taking recourse in paradox and counterpoint—as seen, for example, in the fin-de-siècle plays of Oscar Wilde and the photographs of George Platt Lynes. As the gay rights movement became increasingly visible, this *gay sensibility* was more directly manifest in the work of Mapplethorpe, as well as in that of contemporaries such as George Dureau, Peter Hujar, Arthur Tress, and David Wojnarowicz.

In December 1973 the American Psychiatric Association removed homosexuality from its list of psychiatric disorders. This made front-page headlines across the country. It was four years after Stonewall—the 1969 uprising prompted by a police raid at New York's Stonewall Inn—the symbolic starting point of gay liberation in America. No longer was homosexuality considered a mental disorder, and for many gay people, the veil of fear about being discovered and persecuted was beginning to lift.

Duane Michals, then forty-one, had lived through his youth under the tyranny of "the love that dare not speak its name," and made it a theme in some of his work. In one text-image piece, *The Unfortunate Man Could Not Touch the One He Loved* (fig. 27), a male nude figure is seen from above, his hands inside a pair of shoes on the floor. Michals's text lucidly renders the effect of cultural taboo on the homosexual: "The unfortunate man could not touch the one he loved. It had been declared illegal by the law. Slowly his fingers became toes and his hands gradually became feet. He began to wear shoes on his hands to disguise his pain. It never occurred to him to break the law."

Mapplethorpe, fourteen years younger than Michals, had come of age at a pivotal moment in history. Certainly homosexuality was still a topic with which the art world (like much of the world at large) had not fully come to terms, but it was an exhilarating moment of increased visibility and destigmatization for gay people in New York. And it was at this moment that Mapplethorpe made his transition from collage and assemblage to a purely photographic process.

WAGSTAFF AND PHOTOGRAPHY

It was at this time, too, that Wagstaff turned his sharp eye and art historical expertise to the collection of photographs. With his respected curatorial background in painting and sculpture and his social connections, Wagstaff played an important role in changing the art world's perceptions about the medium. Indeed, he became a tireless advocate for photography: "Gustave Le Gray made pictures in the 1850s. He's the greatest photographer of all, the best that there has been, and the textbooks hardly mention him," Wagstaff said in the *Washington Post* in 1978. "It's like leaving Rembrandt out of a history of Western art."⁵ Certainly Mapplethorpe was instrumental in Wagstaff's recognition of photography as an art form. Wagstaff would later observe: "Robert got me into photography"—but not before Mapplethorpe asked his ex-girlfriend, Patti Smith, to do a tarot-card reading to see if collecting photographs was an auspicious venture for Sam. "I began to collect photographs with Patti Smith's approval," Wagstaff wryly told a Spanish television interviewer some years later.⁶

In turn, it was primarily due to Wagstaff's influence that photography would soon be finding new purchase in the market. The medium had faced the challenge to find acceptance in the realm of serious art since its inception in the 1830s: the battle had been waged over the years by such ardent champions as William Henry Fox Talbot, Roger Fenton, Alfred Stieglitz, Edward

Figure 27
Duane Michals
(American, b. 1932),
The Unfortunate Man Could Not Touch the One He Loved,
1976. Gelatin silver print,
12 × 18 cm (4¾ × 7¼ in.).
New York, Metropolitan
Museum of Art. Bequest of
Maurice B. Sendak, 2012,
2013.159.41



Figure 28

Baron Wilhelm von
Gloeden (German,
1856–1931), *Reclining Nude
Young Man*, 1899–1920.
Gelatin silver print,
17.1 × 22.5 cm (6¾ ×
8⅞ in.). Los Angeles,
J. Paul Getty Museum,
84.XO.891.4.76



Steichen, and Beaumont Newhall. Although headway had been made by such advocates, it was not until the 1970s that the art market—never mind curators, critics, and scholars—would begin to embrace photography in earnest. However, throughout the 1960s the photographic image had, in fact, been creeping toward greater legitimacy, hiding in plain sight in canvases on the walls of museums and galleries, in works by such well-established artists as Baldessari, Rauschenberg, Ruscha, and Warhol, who utilized photography in service of their larger conceptual ideas.

Among countless examples of the use of photography in Warhol's oeuvre is his 1964 *Race Riot*. For this series, the artist created ten screen-printed canvases of a photograph borrowed from a 1963 *Life* magazine spread about the civil rights protests in Birmingham, Alabama. Warhol gave his friend Wagstaff two of these canvases in red; later, Wagstaff purchased two more, one white and one blue, from Leo Castelli, Warhol's dealer, for \$548. Wagstaff assembled *Race Riot* as a grid of four images and kept it his entire life. (After his death in 1987, the work changed hands, eventually selling at Christie's in 2014 for \$62.8 million.)⁷ Although *Race Riot* is indisputably photo based, its visual language representational, and the articulation of figures purely photographic, at the time of its creation no one deemed it "photography." *Race Riot* exemplifies the kind of concept-driven work made throughout the 1960s that conditioned a museum-going public—without their being entirely aware of it—to the language of the photograph.

In the early 1970s Mapplethorpe accompanied Wagstaff on some of his virgin shopping expeditions, to private dealers and flea markets alike, hunting for photographs. Their first excursion would yield the acquisition of several photographs by Wilhelm von Gloeden (an unexpected find from a pornography dealer in Staten Island). *Reclining Nude Young Man* (fig. 28) is from Wagstaff's trove of pictures by this German photographer—known for his highly stylized images of naked Sicilian boys—whose work would be an early influence on Mapplethorpe.

With a new studio at 24 Bond Street and a Hasselblad, both provided by Wagstaff, Mapplethorpe began to photograph the male nude with greater formal resolution. He concentrated on the lines of the body in sheer sculptural terms and relied on his own attraction to his male nude subjects to coax a sexual provocation into his images. These remained signature elements throughout his body of work—but his visual engagement with sexuality would soon take a far more explicit turn. He often described s/m not in terms of the roles of sadist and masochist; rather, for him, s and m stood for "sex" and "magic," and his representation of the gestures and paraphernalia of s/m derived from this association.

BEYOND THE MALE NUDE

The male nude was, in the 1970s, still a relatively scandalous subject, particularly in photography. (The publication of photographs of full-frontal male nudes had been legalized in the United States only in the mid-1960s.) And it seemed that for many viewers, the depiction of the male nude was in itself tantamount to homosexual longing.

In 1978 the Marcuse Pfeifer Gallery in New York presented *The Male Nude: A Survey in Photography*, a study of the subject through the medium's history. Interestingly, critics cited the homosexual theme above other characteristics of the show (although most of the photographs were made by heterosexual men and women). "There is something disconcerting about the sight of a man's naked body being presented primarily as a sexual object," wrote Gene Thornton in his review in the *New York Times*.⁸ However, many of the nudes were presented not as sexual objects but rather as classical figure studies, or as individuals in the ordinary circumstances of their lives. For some (presumably heterosexual male) reviewers, the male nude shown in *any* state, presented on *any* terms, was de facto an expression of homosexual desire.

In such a context, the subject matter of Mapplethorpe's photographs of the late 1970s was nothing less than explosive; his work showed not only male genitalia and the most candid homoeroticism but also s/m sexual activities in almost forensic photographic detail. And the work broke other cultural taboos as well: the unabashed homoerotic imagery itself was seen by many as pornographic, but associating it with religious iconography was downright blasphemous. Mapplethorpe understood that his work was provocative, which made the public reaction that much more thrilling to him. In fact, the controversies surrounding his photographs propelled his reputation, but the quality, substance, originality—and timing—of his photographs were the factors that eventually secured his place in art history.

In 1977, when Mapplethorpe was given his first serious exhibition, at the Holly Solomon Gallery in SoHo—then the geographic hub of the contemporary art world in New York—only his portraits were featured. A concurrent Mapplethorpe exhibition was mounted not far away at The Kitchen, an alternative performance space, in which his homoerotic and s/m imagery was shown. Solomon had been willing to represent Mapplethorpe on condition that his more inflammatory sexual work would not be shown at her gallery. "Sam Wagstaff was considered a great photography collector. I wouldn't have touched Robert without Sam," Solomon later recalled. "And there were others like me who felt the same way."⁹ While disinclined to represent Mapplethorpe at first—or indeed, even to show photography in her gallery—in the space of only a few years Solomon would come to see the wisdom of having taken on this young provocateur. (It is worth acknowledging that, while Mapplethorpe's work projected a defiant posture of transgression from mainstream propriety, he himself was not entirely immune to some residual discomfiture, perhaps deriving from his Catholic upbringing: when his parents, who lived across the river in Queens, came to see his work hanging in a Manhattan art gallery, the artist ushered them around the Solomon show but kept them away from his more controversial images farther downtown.)

Germano Celant, a curator at New York's Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, saw the two concurrent 1977 Mapplethorpe shows and understood what a powerful gesture it was at the time for Mapplethorpe to "come out" in his erotic photographs, not only as a person but as an artist. "These images were a completely different input in the art world, as works of art," Celant noted. "And that is what makes his work so radical."¹⁰

FLESH AND SPIRIT

Mapplethorpe's Catholic upbringing would inform many aspects of his work—beginning with his earliest artistic endeavors—not least of them his formal understanding of compositional balance. In the 1980s Mapplethorpe told Ingrid Sischy (editor at the time of *Artforum* magazine): "A church has a certain magic and mystery for a child. It still shows in how I arrange things. It's always little altars. It's always been this way—whenever I'd put something together I'd notice it was symmetrical."¹¹

Figure 29
 Lucas Cranach the Elder
 (German, 1472–1553), *Holy Trinity in a Glory of Angels*,
 ca. 1515–18. Paint on wood
 panel, 42.2 × 28.5 cm
 (16½ × 11¼ in.). Bremen,
 Germany, Kunsthalle
 Bremen



On the level of content, as critic Arthur C. Danto has noted, Catholicism certainly contributed to Mapplethorpe's intention to convey sex and sexuality in terms of transcendence. "What is finally Catholic is the abiding mystery of spirit and flesh, which has its analogies in the philosophical structure of art," Danto writes.¹² Mapplethorpe, who was himself philosophical about sexuality and spirituality, said: "People get blocked about what pleasure is. It can be incredibly sensual to, say, piss into someone's mouth. It can be incredibly sensual to receive it. It's all about reaching a certain mental place that's very sophisticated. It's almost impossible to talk about in clear terms." And he observed, profoundly: "I don't think anyone understands sexuality. What's it about? It's about an unknown, which is why it's so exciting."¹³

The history of Western art is much populated with images of Christ nailed to the cross—usually wearing a loincloth, sometimes entirely naked. Wagstaff, who specialized in early Renaissance Italian painting during his graduate studies at the Institute of Fine Arts at New York University, would surely have shown Mapplethorpe renderings of Christ from that period, some of which have decidedly erotic overtones.

The sexual symbolism and religious attitudes surrounding the body of Christ are the subjects of art historian Leo Steinberg's controversial 1983 essay "The Sexuality of Christ in Renaissance Art and in Modern Oblivion." As Steinberg writes:

[Christ's] manhood differs from that of all humankind in one crucial respect, which once again involves the pudenda: he was without sin—not only without sins committed, but exempt from the genetically transmitted stain of Original Sin. . . . How then could he who restores human nature to sinlessness be shamed by the sexual factor in his humanity? And is not this reason enough to render Christ's sexual member, even like the stigmata, an object of *ostentatio*?¹⁴

Steinberg makes his case with examples of the Christ figure painted at times with an erection, under drapery but very apparent. "Is it conceivable that Christian artists would assign the erection motif to the figure of the dead Christ?" Steinberg muses. "Are these works sacrilege or still affirmative Christian art? . . . It is no far cry . . . no straining leap of imagination to equate penile erection, reciprocally, with flesh vivified."¹⁵

The sixteenth-century German master Lucas Cranach the Elder offers us an example of this motif in his *Holy Trinity in a Glory of Angels* (fig. 29). While it may seem implausible to draw an association between Cranach and Mapplethorpe, there is without doubt a point of connection in this theme of "flesh vivified." Cranach's painting presents Christ's (covered) erection in the context of divinity. For Cranach, divinity was embodied in Christ; for Mapplethorpe, divinity took form in the ultimate aestheticization of man.

While we have no way of knowing whether Mapplethorpe was familiar with Cranach's painting, his approach to the sexuality of his subjects aims for the sublime—a marriage, perhaps, of aesthetic perfection and a state of (spiritual) grace. It seems clear, at any rate, that both the iconography and the formal precepts of such Renaissance works—obviously very familiar to Wagstaff—provided for Mapplethorpe an art historical precedent for his obdurate formalism and a model in Catholic imagery for his belief in the spirituality of the flesh.

VITRUVIAN MEN

While Wagstaff provided loyal encouragement for Mapplethorpe's homoerotic work and championed the young artist in the upper precincts of the art world in New York and London, he was privately experimenting with photography himself. Wagstaff never made formal prints of his work, which spans a period of only a few years, beginning in the early 1970s, around the time he started to collect photographs. He had his film processed at a neighborhood commercial photo lab, which produced 3-by-5-inch prints with white borders. There is clear evidence in these images of an eye informed by art history: Wagstaff's figure studies are deliberately, at times mischievously, imbued with eroticism, yet it appears that he aspired to represent

the male nude with the formal characteristics of the “universal” in art.

Although he never made exhibition prints of this work, Wagstaff’s pictures manifest serious visual curiosity and are plainly expressive of his newly unharnessed homosexual identity. They were never shown in galleries or published in his lifetime, perhaps because he was simply exploring the medium in order to understand it; moreover, the tension it created in his relationship with Mapplethorpe might well have inhibited Wagstaff’s ambitions as a photographer. Mapplethorpe was emphatic about the boundaries between their roles (which, of course, served his own ambitions): “You’re the collector,” he would say to Wagstaff. “I’m the artist.”¹⁶ And yet the connection between Wagstaff’s “sketches” with the camera and Mapplethorpe’s finished work is irrefutable.

In more than a few series of images, Wagstaff photographed the human figure in a frame within a frame. In *Figure with Sheet* (fig. 30), for example, a male nude stands in front of a blue sheet, holding it taut behind him at all four corners with outstretched hands and feet. While the photograph simulates—in vertical terms—a man lying on a bed, the sheet serves as an improvisational device to establish a frame within a frame. The figure, abstracted against and framed within a solid color, takes on pictographic, or even calligraphic form. The body and the pose also allude to depictions of Christ on the cross.

Mapplethorpe, too, often used the frame within a frame to situate the male nude. In *Thomas* (fig. 31), an African-American male nude is framed in a white square box, his hands and feet firmly planted at all four corners (the same model, Thomas Williams, appears in circular frames in plates 136 and 153). The visual similarities between Mapplethorpe’s and Wagstaff’s photographs are obvious, although they were made more than a decade apart. Of course, meaning, intention, and resolution distinguish one from the other: Wagstaff’s framed nude is a playful color photograph, made outdoors in a casual setting. His Caucasian subject, looking directly into the camera, seems to be in control of his own fate in the image; his hands and feet support the blue fabric in which he is framed, and he is free to step out of it at any moment. The highly formalized perfection of Mapplethorpe’s studio-made black-and-white photograph, by contrast, asserts his signature immediately. The African-American figure’s gesture of determination suggests that he is pushing against the walls of the white box, as if he might be trapped. The geometry of the man-made square enclosure is in counterpoint with the organic architecture of the male body, while the subject’s hanging genitalia—or “object of *ostentatio*”—at the very center of the photograph anchors the composition.¹⁷ This, again, is a Christlike figure. In both images one can also see a variation of Leonardo’s *Vitruvian Man*, a study of proportion and form that likewise universalizes the male figure.

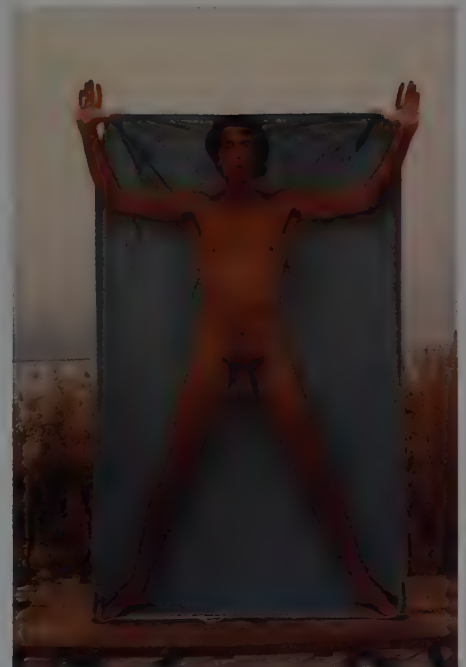
There is no question that Wagstaff’s well-honed art historical sensibilities had a vital impact on his younger companion. What Mapplethorpe managed to achieve in his art, in turn, was a synthesis of the universal and the transgressive. His work is a marriage of the spiritual and the sexual, absent the dogma of his Catholic past, but infused with its reach for transcendence.

THE EDGE

In 1978 Mapplethorpe made what would become one of his most iconic images: *Self-Portrait* (plate 43), in which he poses with the handle of a whip in his anus—a more defiant response to the kind of prejudice that had led Michals to make *The Unfortunate Man Could Not Touch the One He Loved* (see fig. 27). Maybe he was presenting himself as the devil in the eyes of a homophobic society; tauntingly, menacingly, he might have been highlighting the anus as an erotic focal point. One thing is certain: in this succinct and unapologetic visual confrontation, he puts himself forth as the very target of cultural disdain, an enfant terrible flaunting a kiss-my-ass gesture as sexual provocation—in gleeful defiance of bourgeois convention.

Such conventions were toppling all around. Mapplethorpe and several of his contemporaries—George Dureau, Peter Hujar, and Arthur Tress among them—foregrounded the penis in their photographs as an object of contemplation and desire. Hujar’s *Bruce de Saint Croix* (fig. 32) was shocking at the time for many people; an erect penis had never before been photographed

Figure 30
Samuel J. Wagstaff Jr.
(American, 1921–1987),
Figure with Sheet,
ca. 1973. Kodacolor print.
Image: 11.7 × 8 cm
(4½ × 3⅛ in.); sheet:
12.7 × 8.8 cm (5 × 3⅝ in.).
Los Angeles, Getty
Research Institute,
Samuel J. Wagstaff Papers,
2005.M.46, box 20





with such formal regard. Dureau—a direct influence on Mapplethorpe—photographed dwarves, as in *Roosevelt Singleton* (fig. 33), as well as men with disabilities, in the nude with both tenderness and desire. Tress made visual puns out of the homoerotic: in *Superman Fantasy*, *New York* (1977) he depicts with some irony the symbolic power of the phallus, his nude subject brandishing his own semierect penis through a cardboard cutout of Superman—as if the erection turns all men into Superman in their own minds.

In his 1992 essay “Playing with the Edge: The Photographic Achievement of Robert Mapplethorpe,” Arthur Danto explores the characteristics of “transgression” in the artist’s work. The “edge” of Danto’s title might refer to the societal boundaries Mapplethorpe courageously violated, or it might allude to the razor-sharp “edginess” of Mapplethorpe’s persona; in purely visual terms, the “edge” also might be a reference to the optical precision with which



Figure 31
Robert Mapplethorpe (American, 1946–1989), *Thomas*, 1986. Gelatin silver print. Image: 48.7 × 48.7 cm (19³/₁₆ × 19³/₁₆ in.); sheet: 60.3 × 50.3 cm (23³/₄ × 19³/₁₆ in.). Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art



Figure 32
Peter Hujar (American, 1934–1987), *Bruce de Saint Croix*, 1976. Gelatin silver print. Image: 37.5 × 37.5 cm (14³/₄ × 14³/₄ in.); sheet: 50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.). New York, Peter Hujar Archive

Figure 33
George Dureau (American, 1930–2014), *Roosevelt Singleton*, 1978. Gelatin silver print. Image: 36.8 × 36.8 cm (14¹/₂ × 14¹/₂ in.); sheet: 50.8 × 40.6 cm (20 × 16 in.). New Orleans, Arthur Rodger Gallery

the photographer rendered the lines of his nude figures, with classical—sometimes even minimalist—elegance. Famously, Mapplethorpe’s ambition was to create fully artistic images that would be as arousing as those in porn magazines: to achieve “smut that is also art.” As Danto puts it, “In a perfectly analogous way, he played with the edge that separates art and mere pornography mainly because he cherished the feeling the latter induced in him in those first powerful experiences with crude images.”¹⁸

Robert Sherman (fig. 34) is one of three Mapplethorpe photographs that appear in the catalogue for *The Male Nude*, published a year after the Marcuse Pfeifer show.¹⁹ The circumstances that led to this image reveal the extent to which Mapplethorpe relied on the gay community—itsself still very much on the “edge” of mainstream society—when seeking models for his photographs.

In the 1970s the heart of gay life in New York City was downtown, out of sight, and after hours. Like many other urban gay men—partitioning their social lives from their sexual escapades—Mapplethorpe arranged two-tiered evenings, first going to concerts, openings, or dinner with friends, and later cruising the West Village gay bars along the waterfront. This nightly ritual served dual purposes for Mapplethorpe. He was in pursuit of sexual pleasure while at the same time prowling for models to photograph.

One night at the Mineshaft, one of the city’s most serious s/m clubs, Mapplethorpe noticed an unusual-looking young man with alopecia, an autoimmune disease that causes the loss of all body hair. Mapplethorpe introduced himself and expressed an interest in photographing him. Robert Sherman, who was barely twenty-three and newly arrived from the suburbs of Connecticut, recalls that he initially found Mapplethorpe intimidating, but finally agreed. They met at a later point at the Mineshaft; Mapplethorpe then took the young man back to his loft,



where they had sex and spent the night together. As the sun was coming up, Mapplethorpe roused the sleeping Sherman to photograph him in the early-morning light. The resulting picture shows the young man crouched naked in a geometric pattern of light and shadows cast by the outside fire escape on the studio wall behind him.²⁰

The anecdote sheds some light on Mapplethorpe's approach to his subjects. "I prefer people I know, or at least people I have had conversations with, because it is about a relationship, between photographer and subject," Mapplethorpe told Danto. "I'd like to think ideally I could hang out with the person and ideally maybe have a better experience photographing them."²¹

Mapplethorpe was at this point, according to Danto, "perhaps the artist of his own time."²² And yet, in the 1970s, museum photography departments—many of them relatively newly established—were largely engaged with classic street photography, the vogue for the "snapshot" aesthetic, or new color photography by the likes of Stephen Shore and William Eggleston. Most museums did not yet acknowledge homoerotically infused imagery, despite the fact that it represented an increasingly influential subculture, in society as well as in the world of fine-art photography.

As Mapplethorpe was cruising the gay world for sex and models, Wagstaff was playing an instrumental role in establishing the art market for photography, and within that market introducing his appreciation for the work of Mapplethorpe. Wagstaff's activities in the auction houses attracted a small cabal of new photography collectors who were buying photographs alongside him; many of them were gay men (George R. Rinhart, Paul F. Walter, John C. Waddell, and Pierre Apraxine, for example) who went on to amass significant collections of their own. Indeed, the importance of the gay sensibility in shaping or confirming the canon of photographic history is indisputable. These collections are today among the photography holdings of some of the world's major museums and institutions: the J. Paul Getty Museum (Wagstaff); the Museum of Modern Art (Walter); and the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Waddell, as well as the Howard Gilman collection, of which Apraxine was curator).

Mapplethorpe's work maintains a balance on the edge between the classical and the (homo-)erotic that no other artist has quite achieved. While he was influenced by the pornographic imagery of his youth, and the newly liberated gay culture of New York, his work transcends the intent of arousing sexual desire: Mapplethorpe's subject matter—whether a nude or a flower or the leather paraphernalia of s/m—is always sexualized, though it is not always sexual. His originality is characterized in the manifestation of his own desire and his aspiration toward a transcendent visual perfection. For Mapplethorpe, such visual perfection was close to spiritual transformation. This transcendence was always his goal, whether in hot sexual pursuit or in the arctic elegance he sought in his photography.

Figure 34
Robert Mapplethorpe
(American, 1946–1989),
Robert Sherman, 1979.
Gelatin silver print. Image:
35.1 × 35 cm (13³/₁₆ ×
13³/₁₆ in.); sheet: 49.1 ×
40.1 cm (19³/₁₆ × 15³/₁₆ in.).
Promised gift of The Robert
Mapplethorpe Foundation
to the J. Paul Getty
Trust and the Los Angeles
County Museum of Art

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- Robert Sherman described being photographed in "Working with Mapplethorpe," a panel discussion at the Getty Center, Los Angeles, January 9, 2013. Along with Sherman, the panel included Brian English and Judy Linn; it was moderated by the author.
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ROBERT MAPPLETHORPE'S QUEER CLASSICISM

The Substance of Style

Jonathan D. Katz

One of Robert Mapplethorpe's most iconic photographs is *Hooded Man* (plate 63)—an image of a nude, well-built black man with a pillowcase over his head. The authoritative resolution of this image belies the complicated process of its development. The final photograph has the kind of masterful perfection that becalms Mapplethorpe's best photographs, as if nothing could be added or taken away: everything is exactly right as it is and will remain suspended in that perfection. Mapplethorpe shrouds the nude black model in a hood—reminiscent of both the cowls of the Ku Klux Klan and a hooded lynching victim—and has him pose fully frontally, his arms flexed before his chest, in a gesture of authority and self-possession. His tensed arms, powerful shoulders, trim, muscular body, and large genitals make him the very model of masculine privilege, but the combination of his race and that hood threaten to nullify his masculine autonomy and make him appear instead as a victim. Like the answer to a question we hadn't thought to ask, the image freezes its twinned historical antagonists in amber, allowing viewers to examine the nature of a defining conflict that implicates every American. Is this a black Klansman, sure to arouse ire on every side, or is it the hooded victim of a modern-day photographic lynching, whose complicity in his own degradation seems to implicate not only him, and his photographer, but us, the viewers, too? Because, however disturbing the photograph might be, it is impossible to deny the pleasure it offers, and part of that pleasure resides in its daring refusal of the moral code we know, embrace, and try to live by, a code that knows better than to make a brutal oppressor and his victim into counterparts of equal standing.

But look again: Mapplethorpe goes to considerable trouble to forge a kind of visual parity between his model's hooded head and the hooded head of his penis. Along the center axis of the image, the shape of the dark pillowcase and the man's foreskin are in a mirror relationship, each the formal obverse of the other, mediated by hands that seem to point at once up and down, as if sealing the case for equivalency. By a kind of logical extension, the image converts the black model's body itself into a gigantic penis, his shrouded head evoking his hooded foreskin. Thus in a single image are held, suspended, the complex antinomies of a racist culture that at once imputes to black men a presumptive hypersexual endowment and erotic prowess that it then diminishes in hideous acts of castration and demasculinization—from the ubiquitous terminology of "boy" in the Jim Crow era to the castrations of dead and dying victims of lynching—as if killing a black man weren't enough, the literal death superseded by the symbolic death of his legendary phallus.

This is a lot of weight, conceptual and historical, for one photograph to carry, and it is unlikely that Mapplethorpe anticipated and planned for its realization in every respect. But it is clear that he knew exactly what he wanted when he saw it, and that his greatness as a photographer lies in capturing the image with the densest, most complicated symbolism it could possibly carry. The Getty Research Institute's Robert Mapplethorpe Archive contains a non-edited print from the same session that gave us *Hooded Man* (fig. 35). This photograph is conceptually slack, lacking the formal beauty and symbolic moral weight of the final image. Here, the same model is viewed from the side, his arms held apart, the pillowcase not wrapped around his head like a hood but loosely placed there, its excess cloth gathered behind his head. All the metaphorical possibilities of the edited print are absent in this version: this is merely

Figure 35

Robert Mapplethorpe
(American, 1946–1989),
untitled variant of *Hooded
Man*, 1980. Non-editioned
gelatin silver print. Image:
45.6 × 35.7 cm (17³/₁₆ ×
14¹/₁₆ in.); sheet: 50.5 ×
40.4 cm (19⁷/₁₆ × 15⁷/₁₆ in.).
Los Angeles, Getty
Research Institute. Gift of
The Robert Mapplethorpe
Foundation, 2012.M.20,
box 93

a naked man with a pillowcase on his head. Lacking the tensed counterpoints of the final print, there is no interior logic to its construction, and so it was rejected by the photographer.¹

Here we can see that the two widely assumed poles of Mapplethorpe's oeuvre—formal perfection on the one hand and sexual provocation on the other—are in fact twinned, if not actually the same thing. From early in Mapplethorpe's career, critical accounts of his art tended to stress only one of these two poles, and often took swipes at the artist for his uncomfortable combination of studio control and erotic abandon.² Some critics, devotees of Mapplethorpe's erotic work, felt that his classical technique was a form of hedging his bets, if not actual complicity with an art market that tended to lap up his technical bravura despite the unfortunate imagery. Other critics conversely found that his unparalleled skills were irrevocably marred by his choice of subject matter. For Mapplethorpe these were false polarities; a provocation had to have a perfect form or it wasn't really a provocation. The proof of this is the final *Hooded Man* image in comparison with its slack counterpart.

Mapplethorpe's photographic statements entailed citing, even highlighting, clichéd social meanings that the image itself then complicates or undercuts. That is his one-two punch: the photograph is set up to lead the viewer's expectation one way, before that expectation is turned against itself. If that double take does not happen, then the photograph just doesn't work. As with a good joke, careful framing serves to lead us one way before the punch line contradicts the anticipated outcome. Thus irony animates Mapplethorpe's aesthetic politics, for he opens a gulf between what his images can be taken to say and what (as with *Hooded Man*) they may actually mean. Many other artists photographed erotic, and even homoerotic, scenarios before and during Mapplethorpe's career. But their work tended toward a mode of ostensible realism, as if to implicitly convey the idea that what was being photographed functioned in documentary terms, as a positivist account of what life looked like.³ By girding the erotic in a self-contradictory antirealism, a manifest staginess, Mapplethorpe ensures that eroticism in his photography is never merely a slice of life.⁴

What sets Mapplethorpe's work apart is that its eroticism is a function of its classicism, and vice versa. He made viewers look at the erotic in new ways precisely because of the way he photographed it. The treatment of eroticism (and especially socially marginal eroticism) with such bravura compels people to look closely and carefully at what many still prefer not to see. Furthermore, Mapplethorpe's work seductively elicits a response of aesthetic *pleasure* from the encounter with images that might in other circumstances trigger discomfort or even disgust. As Mapplethorpe described his practice in an interview in the *East Village Eye* in 1983: "I'm trying to make sculpture without having to sculpt. I'm trying to get the head in just that right spot where everything looks perfect. I'm looking for perfection in form. I do that with portraits. I do it with cocks. I do it with flowers. It's not different from one subject to the next."⁵

The notion of Mapplethorpe's eroticism as a function of his classicism, and vice versa, is understood by numerous critics simply in terms of his aestheticizing of elements considered by many to belong outside the realm of aesthetic experience. This is, of course, particularly notable in his depictions of acts that many understood in his time (and many still do) as perversions, and his focus on parts of the body shown more commonly in pornography than in fine art.⁶ But this critical perspective sees Mapplethorpe's innovation as moving in one direction only. The relationship between the erotic and the classical in Mapplethorpe's work, however, constituted a far more complicated dialectic.

It would seem, indeed, that Mapplethorpe's most lasting impact as an artist was his *re-drawing* of the boundary line of the aesthetic, to include that which had previously been excluded from it. By using the most traditional procedures of studio photography—meticulous framing, lighting, composition, color contrast, focus, and so on—Mapplethorpe stretched the parameters of the aesthetic to comprise such unlikely subjects as anuses, erections, cunnilingus, s/m, and a heavyset, bearded man dressed in a diaper and bib, cavorting like an overgrown baby. The irony in this, an inherently political irony, is not in the familiar notion that "beauty is everywhere," but rather that human sexuality, in all its permutations, aspires to the same transcendental possibilities as the most exalted religious subject—for they both deploy the flesh in an effort to lead beyond the flesh.



LOADED SUBJECTS

To some of today's younger students of art history, the nineteenth-century French Academy's traditional hierarchy of subjects—with history painting at the top and genre scenes at the bottom—can seem an incomprehensible restriction for artistic production. But a similar, if unspoken, hierarchy of subjects existed at the beginning of Mapplethorpe's career, particularly in the field of photography.⁷ As both a medium and a market category, fine-art photography had to be guarded from the "corruptions" to which the camera was susceptible, pornography not least among them; this meant that little art photography before Mapplethorpe explored the explicitly erotic. (Of course, female nudes have long been ubiquitous in fine-art photography, but the depiction of explicit sexual acts was and remains rare.) When fine-art photography and the erotic did merge, as in certain images by George Platt Lynes, for example, it was generally intended to circulate only within an arena of viewers already known to appreciate the medium's manifold forms of license.

Opening the rarefied photographic aesthetic to contamination by its corrupted other, pornography, should be understood as an activist gesture, one very much in keeping with Mapplethorpe's Stonewall-era political instincts. He was explicit on this point, saying in 1983:

I want to publish a pornographic magazine. I want to reach 42nd Street. I want to see how close I can come to real pornography. Play with that edge. I want to see if you can take some of those pictures I've taken and put them in the context of a pornographic magazine. In other words, can somebody jack-off to a photograph that, in fact, is better than pornography? The idea of doing a smut magazine that is also art. Having a magazine on 42nd Street also be a catalogue for an art show.⁸

It is difficult to imagine another artist setting up masturbation as a standard of artistic success, much less willing to hawk a catalogue of his photography in a porn shop. But Mapplethorpe was fully a product of the Stonewall-riots generation, twenty-two years old at the defining act of resistance that incited the modern LGBTQ civil rights movement. An identity-based gay politics was his birthright, and he missed no opportunity, especially early in his career, to articulate his desire to make an art that had the same visceral impact as the gay pornography he had so coveted as a youth. This was, of course, a declaration of his gay identity, but it was equally a statement in favor of a new kind of art, one that refused to defend or acknowledge any distinction between different kinds of aesthetic experiences. Pornography and art, in Mapplethorpe's formulation, shared the pursuit of beauty and the solicitation of desire—and any dividing line between these two kinds of looking was specious. On this score Mapplethorpe was clear, and he often articulated a hope to combine the raw, instinctive power of pornography with the formal beauty of fine-art photography with a view to generating a particularly vigorous hybrid of the two.⁹

Mapplethorpe's own epiphany concerning the relationship between sexuality and art took place in public, on New York's 42nd Street. It wasn't until 1965 that the first image of a frontal male nude was published legally in a U.S. pornographic magazine (following a legal battle ending in 1962 that went all the way to the Supreme Court, under the rather comic title *MANual Enterprises v. Day*).¹⁰ Thus the men's magazines Mapplethorpe viewed on 42nd Street when he was a teenager, an experience he keenly remembered, did not even yet have full-frontal nudity. In short, in the artist's youth, the open, public appeal to same-sex desire was still highly contested territory, its political dimensions unmistakable.

Mapplethorpe was a paradoxical moralist, in that his own moral vision often contravened, sometimes aggressively, the accepted morality of his day. In his youth it became painfully clear that while closeted homosexuality had a long and distinguished history, the public declaration of one's homosexuality was effectively an act of political resistance, a gesture of ethics. Mapplethorpe embraced that ethical resistance, and in so doing, he made enemies. When, late in his career, he fell afoul of certain self-appointed guardians of antiquated, desiccated social codes—most notably Jesse Helms, the hate-spewing senator from North Carolina—political resistance

was for him already an old story.¹¹ Mapplethorpe's enemies sought to strike back because he was clearly seeking to threaten their way of life, to contaminate their categories, by bringing sexuality, in all its mind-boggling variety, fully into public consciousness.

THE FRAME

One of Mapplethorpe's essential artistic devices—serving to delineate his works both visually and conceptually—was his framing. We have seen this in his movement toward the final version of his *Hooded Man* photograph, for example: one of the differences between the discarded version of the image and the ultimate version is how the subject is framed. This idea of framing is to be taken literally as well as figuratively, for Mapplethorpe was unusually attentive to the application of frames to his work from the beginning of his career. Many of his earliest collages, often appropriations from gay porn, depend exclusively on framing to transform their sources. Sometimes he would simply artfully frame a jockstrap or T-shirt—as in an untitled work from 1970 (plate 2)—allowing the object itself to radiate its haptic, implicitly erotic allure. Some later series of images are so elaborately framed—as in *Diane and Merlow* (plate 18)—that the photographs contained in them appear as almost sculptural objects.

In still other works, Mapplethorpe literally added peepholes or obscuring dots, alternately frustrating and enabling our desires to see, making the viewer aware that seeing is not as transparent as it is generally assumed to be, but is crosscut with ideological strictures that govern what can be seen and by whom. This mixture of sight and its restriction, the ostensibly transparent with the manifestly nontransparent, is a familiar conceit to inhabitants of the social margins—including Mapplethorpe, of course, but also many of his earliest viewers. As he described his first discovery of gay pornography before he was old enough to buy it:

It was exciting but definitely forbidden. Because they were always in cellophane you couldn't get at them. Putting things over the pictures came partly from that, it veiled things a little bit and made them more unreachable. But I remember wanting to get that feeling across, which of course you can't, in the context of an art gallery.¹²

That Mapplethorpe sought to express in his art the feeling of frustrated desire as he once experienced it emphasizes the dialectical nature of his thinking; while he certainly sought to aestheticize the erotic, he equally sought an expansion of the category of "the aesthetic" so that it would accept and incorporate all the pent-up horniness of a young gay boy seeing his first male skin magazine in public.

Crucially, the aestheticizing of the erotic in Mapplethorpe's work cannot be confined to the iconographic level alone. He didn't contribute to an expansion of the realm of the classical merely by photographing cocks or assholes or fellatio. Rather, he perverted the aesthetic according to its own categories of value, which is to say that he created images in which the formal elements of classical fine-art photography were made coterminous with cocks, assholes, fellatio. In his hands, the traditional formal building blocks of the classical—points, orbs, rods, triangles, and so on—were now respectively anuses, breasts, erections, pubic hair. The erotic had infiltrated and overtaken the classical in such a way that the most eroticized of body parts could now be mapped seamlessly over the most traditional pictorial vocabulary of classicism. The sexed body and the body in sex both became the stuff of what we might term a *new classical order*, and the world of photography—indeed, the world of art—had no choice now but to acknowledge that an anus, properly composed and photographed, could exemplify the highest pictorial possibilities of this medium. Sexuality wasn't *in* the photograph; it *was* the photograph, which is to say that Mapplethorpe's classical affect was an indissoluble amalgam of his pictorial means and his subjects.

A very early untitled triptych (plate 15) exemplifies Mapplethorpe's signature combination of careful framing and loaded subject matter, albeit in this instance the artist is operating with a subtlety that verges on timidity. The tripartite portrait of Ruth Kligman eccentrically divides her

Figure 36
Edith Metzger (American, 1931–1956), Jackson Pollock and Ruth Kligman, 1956



Figure 37
Robert Mapplethorpe (American, 1946–1989), *Isaiah*, 1981. Gelatin silver print. Image: 38.7 × 38.8 cm (15¼ × 15¼ in.); sheet: 50.5 × 40.4 cm (19¾ × 15¾ in.). Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art

into a traditional bust, a single knee, and her feet. Kligman was notorious as both Jackson Pollock's mistress and the sole survivor of the drunken car crash that claimed the lives of both the artist and Kligman's friend Edith Metzger. In a well-known photograph of Pollock and Kligman, shot by Metzger during the very weekend of the crash, Kligman sits on Pollock's lap as he grabs her knee (fig. 36). Pollock's two meaty hands frame his girlfriend's knee in a gesture of intimate possession, a position echoed by Kligman's own hands in the middle image of Mapplethorpe's triptych. Kligman's knee is thus at the dense center of this infamous erotic entanglement, in which the passage of American modern art was painfully merged with masculine authority and domination (Pollock sped up when Metzger begged him to slow down). But early Mapplethorpe wears his cultural conscience lightly in this carefully framed photograph of his friend.

Again and again, Mapplethorpe frames his photographs in such a way as to reveal hidden dimensions of his subject, to expose and undercut social expectation. For this artist, good photography was a kind of x-ray of the social body, a valuable moral tool that, through careful selection and framing, could compel viewers to consider things that were otherwise invisible—indeed, that have enduring power precisely as a function of their invisibility.

PHOTOGRAPHING THE INVISIBLE

Mapplethorpe's photographs exposed the generally invisible, but controlling, substrata of values and relations that structure the social norm and reproduce its configurations of power. No wonder he is perhaps the premier photographer of the penis—surely one of the most culturally invisible, yet culturally authoritative, constructs we have. As such, the *penis* and the *phallus* are in a contrasting relation to one another—one, a patently vulnerable piece of flesh, the other a cultural construct endowed with the illusion of invulnerable authority and power. Those most sexually attracted to the fleshly penis, such as heterosexual women and gay men, are by definition denied the cultural authority that accrues to the symbolic phallus. In the face of a culture that policed the appearance of the penis in favor of the phallus, Mapplethorpe inverted that code and repeatedly combined, for example, penises and guns or knives, to frame, expose, and thus ironize the dependence of domination on its obverse, a man's most vulnerable flesh. In this light, Mapplethorpe's 1978 photograph *Dick, N.Y.C.* (plate 49) emerges less as a journalistic chronicle of a most extreme form of s/m practice (as it's usually addressed in the Mapplethorpe literature) and more as a literal attempt to frame, constrain, and, through wounding, dethrone the mythic phallus.

But these are the wages of irony: the ironist must always figure the target of ironic distancing in the act of critiquing it. With a view to undercutting the hidden, structuring social meanings that he so self-consciously set himself against, Mapplethorpe often photographed the very stereotypes he sought to challenge. Thus in *Isaiah* (fig. 37) he poses his African-American model, nude except for a leopard-skin cloak and what appears to be a spear, in a seemingly retrograde and racist evocation of black "primitivism." So too, as we have seen, Mapplethorpe's well-endowed black male models come perilously close to repeating the racist equation of black masculinity and the fantasy of the "big black dick." In fact, since all of Mapplethorpe's penis shots flirt with the reification of the connection between big penises and traditional masculinity, the artist developed various strategies to enforce a reconsideration of our reflexive presumptions. In his 1976 image *Mark Stevens (Mr. 10½)* (see fig. 21, left), the model's huge penis is posed, like a piece of sculpture, on what is to all intents a plinth; but the photographer rewrites this ostensibly hyperphallic script by dressing Stevens in leather chaps and having him bend over the plinth in such a way as to imply an erotic tendency to sexual passivity. In so doing, any naturalized equation between penis size and masculine domination is put to question, even as the penis itself is held out as an object of autonomous identity.

The putative social code against revealing the penis is so entrenched that even the progressive critic Arthur C. Danto, writing in 1988, was manifestly discomfited by all of Mapplethorpe's big-dicked guys. Danto noted (perhaps with a hint of defensiveness in his tone): "In my nearly four years as a soldier, I would have noticed it if anyone was equipped like the *Man*



Art by [Signature]

Figure 38

Robert Mapplethorpe (American, 1946–1989), *Lisa Lyon*, 1981. Gelatin silver print. Image: 49 × 38.4 cm (19³/₁₆ × 15¹/₁₆ in.); sheet: 50.6 × 40.3 cm (19³/₁₆ × 15¹/₁₆ in.). Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art



Figure 39

Robert Mapplethorpe (American, 1946–1989), *Lisa Lyon*, 1982. Gelatin silver print. Image: 38.4 × 38.4 cm (15¹/₁₆ × 15¹/₁₆ in.); sheet: 50.2 × 40.2 cm (19³/₁₆ × 15¹/₁₆ in.). Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art

in *Polyester Suit* [plate 72], or Mark Stevens for that matter,” and then goes on to wonder “if Mapplethorpe’s aestheticizing project would have allowed another choice.”¹³ I would hazard that the answer to that question is no—although not for the aesthetic rationale that Danto suggests, but in order to allow irony a space in which to work. An average endowment is too easily naturalized, understood as merely corporeal; Mapplethorpe instead sought out the exaggerated genitals of his mostly gay male models in order to, in some cases literally, frame the penis as part of a larger inquiry into the terms of phallic authority. When Mapplethorpe does photograph a black model with a more or less average endowment (as in his 1982 photograph *Cock*), he cheekily offsets the man’s penis on a white ground beside a dark backdrop it cannot reach. In contrast, to achieve the placid, recumbent fullness of *Cock with Star* (1977), he literally blacked out a white model’s body to frame his penis, making it the central subject of the photograph. The penis’s unguarded indolence in that image is light years from *Cock and Gun* (1982), which enlists a black man’s erection to narrate a cultural conjunction too often tragically realized in the enduring American narrative of a white man shooting a black man.

REWRITING GENDER SCRIPTS

Mapplethorpe’s manner of complicating and ironizing the terms of phallic authority was part of his lifelong interest in the construction and performance of gender. The chameleon-like bodybuilder Lisa Lyon modeled for Mapplethorpe, and together they effected a powerful short-circuit of our familiar gender scripts. Lyon’s muscular frame, combined with her beauty, intelligence, and adventuresome disposition, made their collaboration one of the most successful of Mapplethorpe’s career. She could move seamlessly from a glamorous Hollywood star turn, languorously reclining on a stone bench in an odalisque pose in a 1982 photograph (plate 107), to the leather-clad dominatrix of another image from the previous year, her tensed posture, high-heeled boots, and pretty, made-up face giving her the look of a Barbie doll gone bad (fig. 38). In the latter image, Mapplethorpe posed Lyon in such a way that her twinned shadows meet in the middle to yield a large, phalluslike shape between her legs, forming a continuous line with her leather harness.

Occasionally the parade of guises becomes so outlandish as to veer into the intentionally ridiculous. One 1982 image of Lyon (fig. 39) is unlike any other Mapplethorpe photograph, and it registers almost as camp. Here, Lyon is dressed like a circus acrobat in a bad 1950s publicity shot, astride a skewbald pony, her forced smile and the stationary steed contributing to the awkward, uncomfortable, and manifestly staged proceedings. But if we compare a 1982 image that emphasizes Lyon’s femininity (such as plate 107) with another photograph of the same year (plate 113), in which her well-muscled arms and shoulders seem incommensurable with her evident sex and luxuriant hair, a key aspect of Mapplethorpe’s achievement comes into focus. The artist by and large is not interested in playing with the superficial signifiers of gender, as in traditional drag photography. Rather, he is concerned with showing how the body itself, emptied of obvious gender signifiers and shorn of all adornments, nonetheless moves in and out of a gendered legibility.

Any number of Mapplethorpe’s photographs attest to this approach. In his 1980 image *Smutty*, the subject is bare chested, his arms sleeved in tattoos; although he is clearly male, *Smutty*’s fine-featured face and almost balletic posture combine to make him patently androgynous. In the 1978 image titled *Ass Shaving* (fig. 40), a thin man lies with legs splayed before the camera; his penis is obscured by hands, but we can see that the man’s anus has been stretched to assume the proportions of a vagina. In these images and many others, the body, the ostensible bedrock of gender differentiation, moves toward androgyny, in and through eroticism.

This, then, is a great contradiction within Mapplethorpe’s work: that despite the innumerable strictures we place on sex, it is in sex above all that we give up our differentiations and distinctions, that male and female merge, as do gay and straight, white and black, and other apparent dualities, in a polymorphous perversity. A dominatrix puts a powerful executive in his place—and they both find it deeply satisfying—while a muscular man throws his legs in the air and briefly fantasizes that he is a woman, and a black and white couple exchange whips, cuffs,





and restraints, even the very language of slavery, despite their very different relationship to that fraught past.

"BEYOND ANY EXPERIENCE I KNOW OF"

Sex is the great leveler, and it may be because of its radical propensity to remake the relations of social power that we erect so many barriers around it in the first place, seeking to mitigate its threat. Sex does not even really require a partner, as is attested by Mapplethorpe's extraordinary image *Joe, N.Y.C.* (plate 39). This subject's act is routinely referred to as an instance of gay s/m, but for this man, clad in a rubber sensory-deprivation suit, where and how precisely does gender enter the picture? Rather, through sensory deprivation, the body, the defining ground of physical differentiation, loses any purchase on physical difference. What is lost in this erotic is indeed what all forms of the erotic seek, most notably in orgasm, but in plenty of other pleasures as well: a momentary return to Freud's "oceanic" feeling, a sense of oneness between the ego and the outside world, a self most fully realized, amazingly enough, only when it loses itself. As Mapplethorpe once said: "Sex is an experience that has no parallels anywhere. It goes beyond any experience I know of otherwise."¹⁴ Too often, in his open discussion of sex, Mapplethorpe has been understood as merely horny. The sense of expansiveness, of new possibility that Mapplethorpe glimpsed in sex, is little addressed, despite the work's often careful taxonomy of permutations of desire.

There is a remarkable, quasi-narrative 1982 series of photographs involving four models, Marty, Veronica, Hank, and Veronica's boyfriend (or so they are identified in the photographs' titles). The series apparently begins with Marty, an African-American man, and Veronica, a

Figure 40
Robert Mapplethorpe
(American, 1946–1989),
Ass Shaving, 1978. Gelatin
silver print. Image: 35.4 ×
35.5 cm (13⁷/₁₆ × 14 in.);
sheet: 50.5 × 40.4 cm
(19⁷/₈ × 15⁷/₈ in.). Promised
gift of The Robert
Mapplethorpe Foundation
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and the Los Angeles
County Museum of Art



Figure 41
Robert Mapplethorpe
(American, 1946–1989),
Marty and Veronica, 1982.
Gelatin silver print. Image:
38.6 × 48.9 cm (15¹/₁₆ ×
19³/₄ in.); sheet: 40.2 ×
50.5 cm (15³/₁₆ × 19⁷/₈ in.).
Promised gift of The Robert
Mapplethorpe Foundation
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and the Los Angeles
County Museum of Art

Figure 42

Robert Mapplethorpe
(American, 1946–1989),
Marty Gibson, 1982. Gelatin
silver print. Image: 48.7 ×
38.9 cm (19³/₈ × 15³/₈ in.);
sheet: 50.4 × 40.5 cm
(19³/₈ × 15³/₈ in.).
Promised gift of The Robert
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and the Los Angeles
County Museum of Art



white woman, together. They kiss; he performs cunnilingus on her; she fellates him; they have intercourse. In one of the intercourse photographs, *Marty and Veronica* (fig. 41), she is astride him while both face the camera, their hands framing his erection. Crucially, her hands are placed atop his, a simple gesture that reverses the potent combination of racial and gendered power relations that haunted and continue to haunt any image of a black man entering a white woman. Yet in a subsequent photograph, *Marty Gibson* (fig. 42), the same man lies on the floor, on his back, feet in the air, his arms framing his asshole and hard cock. His anus becomes the sole focus of another photograph—the hyperphallic inverted—a glorious study in black and gray. Then comes another image of Marty, this time standing, holding the neck of the kneeling Hank, as the white man avidly fellates him. In one of the last photographs in the series, *Veronica and Boyfriend* (fig. 43), Veronica and her boyfriend touch tongues. Here, Veronica is on top, and her thick, long, fleshy tongue turns into a phallus before our very eyes as it enters the noticeably more delicate, passive (though mustachioed) confines of her boyfriend's mouth. Here, in a single series of images, the ostensibly stable, organic verities of race, gender, and sexuality are so completely shuffled and reshuffled that we no longer know what is “nature” and what is culture. Here, in short, is formal perfection in service to political provocation—or, better, form indissolubly wedded to politics.



Figure 43
Robert Mapplethorpe
(American, 1946–1989),
Veronica and Boyfriend,
1982. Gelatin silver print.
Image: 15.3 × 20.3 cm
(6 × 8 in.); sheet: 40.2 ×
50.3 cm (15³/₁₆ × 19³/₁₆ in.).
Promised gift of The Robert
Mapplethorpe Foundation
to the J. Paul Getty Trust
and the Los Angeles
County Museum of Art

That is Mapplethorpe's classicism, and unlike other contemporary iterations of the trope, it always pointed forward, not back. A precisely composed and framed subject could make any image, even one that was flat-out erotic, into a paradigm of the classical. In turning his "conservative" artistic means toward a radical end, Mapplethorpe shifted and even redrew the long-established boundary lines of social and aesthetic mores. And that, in the final analysis, was the point. If anything can become anything else, then the perception of essential difference is only that: a perception. Mapplethorpe's art is a serious, even activist, triumph of style over substance.

NOTES

The author would like to acknowledge two key people at the Getty, Matthew Kluk and Michelle Brunnick; without their assistance, this essay would have been impossible to write.

- 1 Apparently, such lack of resolve about the final state of the image was unusual for Mapplethorpe. As related by Arthur C. Danto: "Dimitri Levas told me that all the shots in the contact sheets looked pretty much like the one selected for the final image, as if the photographer knew precisely what the outcome would be." In *Mapplethorpe*, essay by Arthur C. Danto (New York: Random House, 1992), 131.
- 2 See Arthur C. Danto, "Robert Mapplethorpe," *Nation*, September 26, 1988, 246–50.
- 3 The defining account of Mapplethorpe's distance from the documentary is Richard Meyer's excellent "Imagining Sodomasochism: Robert Mapplethorpe and the Masquerade of Photography," *Qui Parle* 4, no. 1 (Fall 1990): 62–78.
- 4 As Allen Ellenzweig puts it in "Robert Mapplethorpe at Robert Miller," *Art in America*, November 1981, 171: "Sex is beautifully packaged and objectified; you can even take it home and put it on your walls. What we have then is the deca-dence of a 19th century estheticism brought to bear on contemporary sex and art."
- 5 Mapplethorpe, quoted in David Hershkovits, "Visceral Visual," *East Village Eye* 5, no. 31 (April 1983): 8. In the same discussion, Mapplethorpe notes: "I think it could be pornography and still have redeeming social value. It can be both, which is my whole point in doing it—to have all the elements of pornography and yet have a structure of lighting that makes it go beyond what it is."
- 6 Arthur Danto's criticism is exemplary in this regard. See Danto, "Robert Mapplethorpe," 246–50.
- 7 See Jeff Wall, "Marks of Indifference': Aspects of Photography in, or as, Conceptual Art," in Ann Goldstein and Anne Rorimer, eds., *Reconsidering the Object of Art, 1965–1975* (Los Angeles: Museum of Contemporary Art, 1995), 247–67.
- 8 Mapplethorpe, quoted in Hershkovits, "Visceral Visual," 8.
- 9 See Carol Squiers, "With Robert Mapplethorpe," *Hamptons Newsletter*, August 27, 1981.
- 10 Rachel Kranz and Tim Cusick, *Gay Rights: Revised Edition* (New York: Facts on File, 2005), 72.
- 11 For further discussion of Senator Jesse Helms's responses to Mapplethorpe's work, see the Meyer essay in the present volume.
- 12 Mapplethorpe, quoted in Squiers, "With Robert Mapplethorpe."
- 13 Danto, "Robert Mapplethorpe," 248.
- 14 Mapplethorpe, quoted in "Robert Mapplethorpe," interview conducted October 16, 1977, published in *Night*, no. 35 (1997): 2.

A DISCIPLINED STYLE

Fashion and Fetishism in the Art of Robert Mapplethorpe

Ryan Linkof

Can I wear this? Or is it art?

—Patti Smith to Robert Mapplethorpe, ca. 1970

In the spring of 1982, Hayden Gallery, on the campus of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, opened the exhibition *Intimate Architecture: Contemporary Clothing Design*. The accompanying catalogue featured nine photographs by Robert Mapplethorpe of the female bodybuilder Lisa Lyon. For the cover image, Mapplethorpe shot Lyon standing stiff and erect, her body squarely directed toward the camera, draped in a coat designed by Yeohlee Teng (fig. 44). The photograph highlights the formal structure of the garment itself, cropping out Lyon's head and legs, creating the appearance that she is floating in space, almost as if the coat is supporting itself. The garment resembles a clerical robe; its undulating fabric is photographed as though it is imbued with mystical significance. Placed within an ambiguous, darkened space, it radiates light like a fetish object.

In the catalogue acknowledgments, the show's curator, Susan Sidlauskas, praised Mapplethorpe's photographs, noting that they "proffer an artist's vision of the particular personality of each garment and serve as a provocative foil to conventional fashion photography."¹ She emphasized the photographer's ability to effectively capture the "personality" of the clothes, as if conjuring some sort of inner essence. For an exhibition that was a calculated attempt to place fashion within a history of architecture and design—allowing "clothing to be viewed as something other than merchandise"—it makes sense that Sidlauskas looked to Mapplethorpe's "unconventional" photography to make her case.² Mapplethorpe had already shown himself to be an artist who had the power to shed new light on a variety of subjects—from flowers to sex—and his approach to fashion was no different.

Clothing is not the first thing one might typically associate with Mapplethorpe. He is so closely identified with sexuality—with frank depictions of *unclothed* bodies—that it is easy to read right past his fixation with wardrobe. From the very beginning of Mapplethorpe's artistic career, however, fashion was a central concern in his practice. The ease with which he made the transition in the 1980s to fashion photography—conventional or not—reflects his considered engagement with the meaning and function of clothing beginning in the late 1960s.

Given its relationship to bodily constriction and exposure, fashion held a considerable appeal for Mapplethorpe. From corsets to codpieces, fishnets to jockstraps, fashion design has long been bound up with the sexual presentation of the body.³ From the start, Mapplethorpe's work engaged with clothes as a crucial feature of social and sexual relationships and emphasized the role of fashion choice in communicating knowledge about sexual behavior and preference.

The fashion industry's marketing of desire—for bodies as well as objects—was well suited to his broader interest in the psychology of the fetish. A term simultaneously identified with concepts of religious awe and sexual fixation, fetishism appealed to Mapplethorpe's dual interest in Catholic mysticism and the power of libidinal desire, or what he called "sex and magic."⁴ His photography offers countless examples of the medium's capacity to present the world as an object of aesthetic enjoyment and fetishistic analysis.⁵ In fashion, Mapplethorpe had a ready-made subject, given its relationship to what is often described as "commodity fetishism," or the



Figure 44
Robert Mapplethorpe
(American, 1946–1989),
*Lisa Lyon Wearing a Coat by
Yeohlee Teng, 1982*. Cover
of the exhibition cata-
logue *Intimate Architecture:
Contemporary Clothing
Design* (Cambridge, MA:
MIT Committee on
the Visual Arts, 1982)

notion that consumer goods take on beguiling qualities when abstracted from their utilitarian purpose.⁶ Both before and after he took up the camera, his art explored the many and diverse fantasies attached to articles of clothing.

Starting very early in his career as an artist, Mapplethorpe's interest in fashion and style was closely allied with his creative and sexual identity. During his years as a student at the Pratt Institute, he made a dramatic transformation from a dutiful member of a military honor society to a rebellious 1960s bohemian, revealing the crucial role of practices of self-presentation in his creative development.⁷ Known for perfecting his costumes to reflect his artistic identity, he was accused by one teacher of spending more time selecting his outfits than attending to his studio practice.⁸ Mapplethorpe's attention to his clothing was, however, a precursor to ideas he would continue to explore as his art matured.

Some of Mapplethorpe's earliest surviving creations are fetish necklaces that he constructed with found materials. Incorporating gothic elements with military insignia, he attached animal claws and imperial eagles to leather straps. These objects reflect the influence of his early experience in the ROTC and its strict military dress and protocol, as well as the modish Victorian-inspired attire that he shared with his then girlfriend Patti Smith. In their evocation of tribal ritual and ceremony, his necklaces illustrate an early interest in the relationship between forms of dress and acts of fetishism.

His first works of art were sculptures made from articles of clothing repurposed and displayed to highlight their sexual connotations. The subtext of these works was sometimes cartoonishly explicit: one piece that caused a stir among his fellow students at Pratt was created from a pair of denim jeans, the crotch loaded with socks and rigged with an electronic device to give the impression of erectile tumescence.⁹ When curator and future patron and lover Sam Wagstaff first visited Mapplethorpe's loft in 1972, he encountered a work composed of a black motorcycle jacket with an audiotape of a pornographic film projecting from the pocket, hung next to a pair of leather pants with a loaf of bread protruding from the open zipper.¹⁰

As the homoerotic tenor of these objects illustrates, their creation coincided with Mapplethorpe's personal sexual awakening. As he explored his sexual impulses, clothing served as an effective tool for accessing his desires and creating a homoerotic iconography. Immediately after his first experience at a gay bar, for example, he returned to his apartment and produced a collage that he titled *Tight Fucking Pants*.¹¹

It was with these constructions that Mapplethorpe established a name for himself as an artist. The first exhibition outside of school to include his work was titled *Clothing as Art*, organized in 1970 by Stanley Amos at the Chelsea Hotel.¹² Most of these early objects no longer exist, in large part because Mapplethorpe approached this sculptural practice in a decidedly provisional spirit. He plundered his own closet (and those of his friends, Smith in particular) to create works of art, which he would later deconstruct when he was in search of clothes to wear. Depending on the exigencies of his social life, then, the same garment could function as utilitarian personal attire, a marker of identity and sexual preference, or, in the proper context, an art object. The ephemeral and fungible nature of these sculptural pieces reveals an artist in a moment of experimentation, working through and testing ideas.

Among the earliest surviving works that Mapplethorpe made in this vein is the construction *Untitled (Blue underwear)*, which he produced by stretching a pair of pale-blue briefs over a wooden frame, as if preparing a canvas to be painted (fig. 45). Twisting the underwear inside out, he exposed its most intimate area, evoking the male anatomy through its conspicuous absence. Similarly, with his vertical sequence of three T-shirts produced the same year—the cotton fabric and mesh pulled tightly over frames serving as surrogates for the human form—he emphasized how clothing provides a context for the sexual display of the body (plate 2).

These bricolage "readymade" works emerged from Mapplethorpe's early interest in sculpture and reflect the influence of assemblage artists such as Robert Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns. Mapplethorpe's use of everyday materials was rooted in a Pop-inflected impulse to elevate ordinary objects to the status of art. By displaying articles of clothing on canvas stretchers, he



was taking a swipe at the art historical hegemony of painting by equating it with mass-produced goods. Whether or not these constructions are successful as finished works of art, they illustrate Mapplethorpe's commitment to clothing as a material and a conceptual subject.

These constructions are closely related to Mapplethorpe's better-known collage and assemblage works that incorporate pornographic imagery, produced during the same period (plate 6). The two modes sometimes overlapped, as with a framed pair of mesh-bikini briefs covering pages from a pornographic magazine, which he wrapped in cellophane (fig. 46). This work associates underwear with the sexual power of pornographic imagery and evokes a frequently referenced story about Mapplethorpe's early fascination with the display of pornography in a shop window—"pictures in cellophane"—which he credited with informing his artistic imagination.¹³ In attending to the erotic significance of layering and unwrapping, the work also draws attention to the function of underwear as the final layer of clothing to be removed before one is naked.

Mapplethorpe's exploration of the relationship between sex and the adornment and stylization of the body is most clearly expressed in his engagement with leather and bondage. Leather was, of course, the attire of choice in the gay male fetish and s/m community that Mapplethorpe would soon make his own. The severe power dynamics, the disciplined role-play of s/m, are made manifest in the physical form of the clothes associated with that community.¹⁴ Tucked amid Mapplethorpe's voluminous collection of pornographic magazines and ephemera is an essay titled "The Significance of Leather" that reveals some of the ways that leather circulated in gay literature and pornography: "The leather fetish—the symbol of virility—is widely practiced all over the world today. The wearing of leather is a symbol of ruggedness among the 'gay set' as well as the motorcycle gangs."¹⁵ This combination of style, fetishism, and "rugged" masculinity not only informed Mapplethorpe's self-presentation but would become a chief concern of his creative work in the years to come.

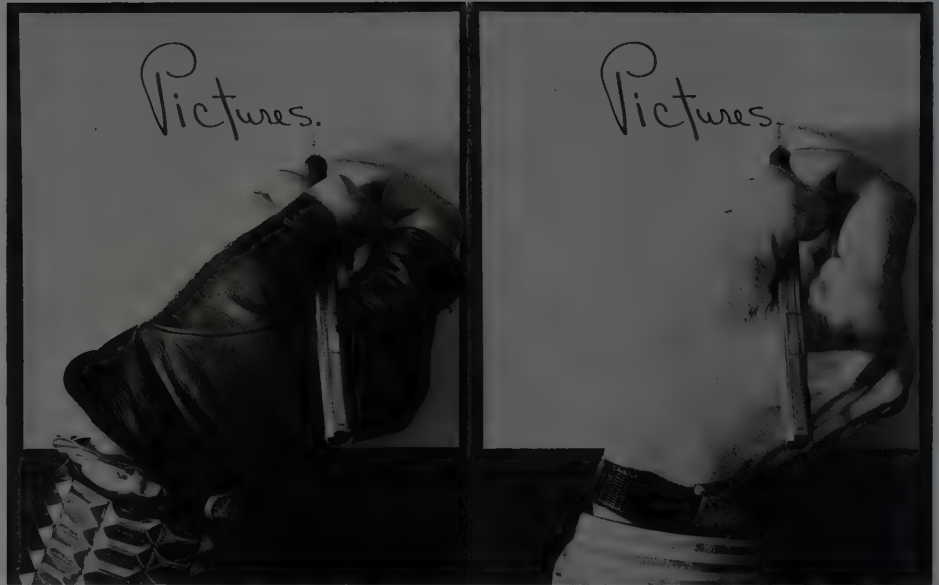
Mapplethorpe's turn to photography in the early 1970s coincided with his embrace of leather, and he explored the potential of both forms of expression simultaneously. His early Polaroid self-portraits show a young man trying on the apparatus of bondage, even as he learns how to use the photographic apparatus (plate 8). As he matured as a photographer, trading his Polaroid camera for a Hasselblad 500, he continued to explore his own identity vis-à-vis leather and sexuality. His 1980 self-portrait as a surly, smoking leatherman captures the hypermasculine posturing that was concomitant with the choice of leather as a fashion statement (plate 85). And most indelibly of all, his *Self-Portrait* from 1978, showing him in a leather vest and chaps with a bullwhip inserted in his anus, is a confrontational acknowledgment of his participation in that community (plate 43).¹⁶

Figure 45
Robert Mapplethorpe
(American, 1946–1989),
Untitled (Blue underwear),
1970. Fabric on painted
wood frame. Overall:
33 × 33 cm (13 × 13 in.).
Gift of The Robert
Mapplethorpe Foundation
to the J. Paul Getty Trust
and the Los Angeles
County Museum of Art,
2011.M.20.14,
box 14

Figure 46
Robert Mapplethorpe
(American, 1946–1989),
Untitled (White underwear
with nylon string), 1970.
Mixed media with maga-
zine photograph. Overall:
33 × 33 cm (13 × 13 in.).
Private collection,
reproduced in *Robert
Mapplethorpe: Early Works,
1970–1974* (New York:
Robert Miller, 1991)

Figure 47
Announcement for Robert Mapplethorpe's exhibitions at Holly Solomon Gallery and The Kitchen, New York, February 1977. Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute. Gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation, 2012.M.20, box 194, folder 1

Figure 48
Robert Mapplethorpe (American, 1946–1989), *Leather Crotch*, negative 1980; print 2010. Gelatin silver print. Image: 35.2 × 35 cm (13 $\frac{3}{8}$ × 13 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.); sheet: 50.5 × 40.2 cm (19 $\frac{7}{8}$ × 15 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.). Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art



His most self-conscious engagement with clothing and its sexual connotations came in the form of two images he created for the invitation to *Pictures*, the umbrella title for a pair of simultaneous New York exhibitions in 1977, at the Holly Solomon Gallery and The Kitchen (fig. 47). A clever acknowledgment of the distinct audiences to which the shows were addressed, the pair of photographs is also a statement about social protocols of dress and self-presentation. One image shows the artist's hand and wrist with a watch and tailored shirt cuff; the other, the same hand in a fingerless leather glove above a metal-studded bracelet. Here, Mapplethorpe frames the difference between "sexual deviance" and "respectability" as a matter of style—the exchange of one costume for another.

The relationship of sex and clothing was underscored by the works on view at The Kitchen: his so-called sex pictures, focused on his friends and acquaintances in the leather community.¹⁷ These photographs have been written about at length (perhaps disproportionately, given their relatively small number), and the discussion has been somewhat narrowly focused on their depiction of sexual acts. What has often been missed, however, is that the sex pictures are also very much about fashion, and more specifically, about the relationship—even the inextricability—of fashion and fetishism.

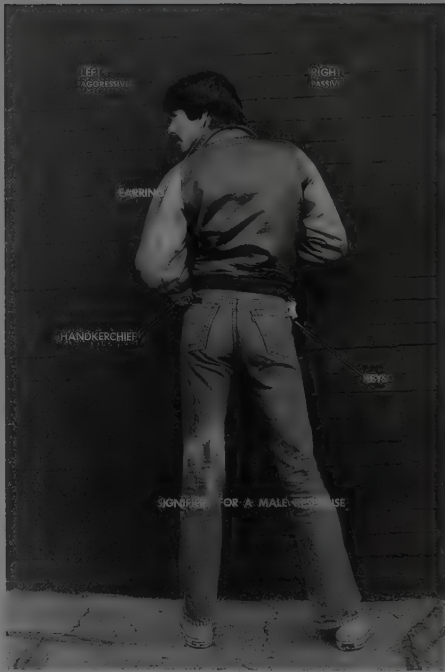
Consider one of the best known of Mapplethorpe's sex pictures, *Joe, N.Y.C.* (plate 39). The subject of the image is not so much a body (or a person, for that matter) offered up for sexual delectation as it is a kind of living mannequin, positioned to highlight the key features of his fetish attire. The figure is fixed, almost inanimate, in a sexually submissive posture, and encased in a rubber suit, a tube cascading from his mouth. He kneels on a bench in a shallow, well-lit space, as if on display in a shop window. Mapplethorpe meticulously reproduces the visual and tactile qualities of the rubber, pulled tautly over the man's body. The image offers a doubling of the fetishistic impulse: not only does it provide a visual description of the man's fetish gear, it renders Joe himself as a fetish object—a shiny, petrified *thing* meant to stand in for particular sexual practices without actually exhibiting those practices.

Many of Mapplethorpe's works explicitly engage with the sexual rituals attached to particular articles of clothing. *Boot Fetish* (plate 47) is perhaps the most blatant example, exhibiting the unnamed subject's erotic investment in the cowboy boot that he holds in his hands. Standing in sharp contrast to the milky texture of the man's skin, the boot is the focus of the photograph. Its meticulous stitching, sharp metal studs, and glossy leather (and, one imagines, evocative scent) are central to its sexual power.

Mapplethorpe used this strategy of intense close-up—what has been called "aggressive cropping"—on the paraphernalia of leather culture on multiple occasions.¹⁸ *Leather Crotch* (fig. 48) is a close study of a leather codpiece, affixed with metal chains and rivets to the crotch



Figure 49
 Hal Fischer (American,
 b. 1950), *Signifiers for a
 Male Response*, 1977, from
 the series *Gay Semiotics*.
 RC print, 50.8 × 40.6 cm
 (20 × 16 in.)



of a pair of leather pants. The polished metal belt buckle and the lustrous pants reflect the glare of Mapplethorpe's bright studio lights, glistening like radiant talismans. And again, in *Patrice*, N.Y.C. (plate 38), Mapplethorpe places the emphasis squarely on his subject's fetish accessories: the sheen of the man's leather sleeve, the orderly geometry of the buckles and rings of his harness, and the texture of the jockstrap and the engorged sexual organ that it contains.

While leather was a primary subject in Mapplethorpe's work, especially as the 1970s wore on, it was only one aspect of his interest in the self-styling of gay men and the overlapping fantasies of masculine dress and sexual power play. The evolution of Mapplethorpe's personal style in the mid-1970s reflected a broader shift in gay identity and sexual politics in the wake of the so-called gay liberation movement. The egalitarian spirit and questioning of traditional gender roles that propelled the Stonewall riots in June 1969 were quickly replaced by a deepened investment in the value and appeal of masculinity within the gay male community, seen most visibly in the stylistic conventions of leather and the appropriation of working-class male roles such as cowboys, lumberjacks, and bikers.¹⁹

The discourse of the "gay clone" or the "Castro Clone" (named for the gay enclave in San Francisco) acknowledged the ubiquity of this stylistic display of manliness in the gay communities of major American cities.²⁰ Looking back from the close distance of the early 1980s, author Andrew Holleran described the clone as "a male homosexual in his twenties or thirties (if there was any age limit at all) who . . . traveled in packs with other clones, had short dark hair, a short dark moustache, and wore Levi's, work shoes, plaid shirt, and bomber jacket over a hooded sweatshirt."²¹ As much of the language and discussion around the clone indicates, this identity was largely a consumer-based fashion choice.²² As Mapplethorpe was keenly aware—as were many observers of gay culture at the time—clothes offered a way of distilling sexuality into signs and codes, worn on the body in ways that could be read and interpreted by an initiated viewer.

In 1977 the San Francisco-based artist and critic Hal Fischer produced a comprehensive study of the Castro Clone, under the quasi-scientific title *Gay Semiotics: A Photographic Study of Visual Coding among Homosexual Men*. The work is a combination of tongue-in-cheek descriptions of dress and self-presentation with photographs that document and describe the "signifiers," "fetishes," and "street fashions" seen to be characteristic of homosexual men (fig. 49).²³ While Mapplethorpe did not share Fischer's sense of humor, the two photographers did share an interest in the stylistic conventions of the gay communities in which they circulated. Versions of the Castro Clone abound in Mapplethorpe's studio portraiture from the late 1970s and early 1980s (see, for example, his 1979 portrait *Keso Dekker*; plate 64). Mapplethorpe's similarities to Fischer end there, however. He was less interested in producing an ethnography of gay men's lives than he was in examining the fetishistic potential of particular items of clothing. He employed his distinctive high-intensity close-ups to draw attention to garments and accessories, highlighting their placement on the body. Photographs that center on dangling earrings (plate 93), the tension of mesh across the torso, or the gleam of a belt buckle (plate 81) offer succinct investigations into the eroticized relationship between bodies and ornamentation.

Mapplethorpe also photographed men in costume, performing the masculine roles of policemen, cowboys, and military men. The disciplined sartorial codes of uniforms were particularly potent subjects for sexual fetishism, as Susan Sontag observed in her essay "Fascinating Fascism," written in 1975, just as Mapplethorpe was producing these portraits: "There is a general fantasy about uniforms. They suggest community, order, identity . . . the legitimate exercise of violence. But uniforms are not the same thing as photographs of uniforms—which are erotic materials."²⁴ The long history of associations between the military and homosexual activity is activated in several of Mapplethorpe's images, among them *Milton Moore* (plate 92), in which the subject—Mapplethorpe's lover, who was in fact an ex-Navy serviceman—salutes the camera in full sailor gear, and a 1982 portrait of Jack Walls, in which the warm tones of Walls's skin and his stubbled cheek are contrasted with his crisp, starched army uniform.

Intriguingly, many of the models that Mapplethorpe dressed in military attire were black men, who came to be the main focus of his male portraiture by the early 1980s. Mapplethorpe's fascination with the sexuality of his black subjects has been at the center of discussions about his photographic fetishism. He was unabashed about his appreciation of the sculptural qualities

of black men's bodies and the "bronze-like" quality of their skin tones.²⁵ This has, not surprisingly, opened his work up to accusations of racial fetishism. As art historian Kobena Mercer has argued: "The glossy, shining, fetishized surface of black skin thus serves and services a white male desire to look and to enjoy the fantasy of mastery."²⁶ To be sure, many of Mapplethorpe's works seem to equate black men's bodies with sculpture or decorative objects (see, for example, the four images titled *Ajitto*, plates 99–102). As Mercer himself later acknowledged, however, it is shortsighted to analyze Mapplethorpe's investment in black men's sexuality in a vacuum.²⁷ The artist's fetish for black men was only one aspect of an art practice committed to investigating manifold expressions of fetishism—often layered atop one another, and frequently involving clothing and other adornments to the body.

One unforgettable example of this layering is *Man in Polyester Suit* (plate 72). This photograph—which shows the torso of Milton Moore in a three-piece suit, his penis unsheathed at the center—has been the focus of much examination and debate with regard to Mapplethorpe's reduction of black men to their sexuality. What is often lost in that discussion, however, is the fact that the thick expanse of Moore's penis is not the only thing on display: as its ingenuous title suggests, the image is as much about tailored formal wear as it is about anatomy. Drawing attention to the material of the clothes—heavy, suffocating polyester—the photograph stages a back-and-forth between flesh and fabric. The tension between the exposed and the covered body—between the connotations of formal, genteel clothes and the libidinal urges that they are meant to mask—is the animating idea behind the image. The fetish of "men in suits" is laid (literally) bare in the photograph. It was perhaps for exactly this reason that Helmut Lang included this image in an advertisement published after Mapplethorpe's death with the almost comically neutral caption: "Finest suits and menswear since 1986."²⁸

Mapplethorpe's fascination with clothes throughout his career was one reason that he seemed, on the surface, to be a natural for fashion photography. Not only does his formal approach to black-and-white photography reflect the influence of 1930s glamour and fashion photographers such as Horst P. Horst, Cecil Beaton, and George Hoyningen-Huene, he was also frequently compared to the living heavyweights in that field, Richard Avedon and Irving Penn.

Mapplethorpe began making inroads into commercial fashion photography in the early 1980s. Represented by the agency Art + Commerce, he shot numerous brand campaigns and worked for magazines such as *Italian Vogue*, *French Vogue*, and *L.A. Style*.²⁹ Mapplethorpe was part of a trend in the 1980s that saw photographic artists such as Laurie Simmons, Cindy Sherman, and William Wegman taking on commercial projects, and his work was often discussed in that context.³⁰ As International Center of Photography curator (and later director) Willis Hartshorn observed in 1986: "[Mapplethorpe's] work looks particularly appropriate in fashion magazines, allowing him to retain his preference for beautifully muscled models and high style. Mapplethorpe is unconcerned with distinctions of art and commerce in his work; he often exhibits photographs that were originally commissioned by a commercial client."³¹ The fact that Mapplethorpe saw his photographs easily transitioning between fashion magazines and art galleries reveals the extent to which a focus on clothing was already embedded in his work.

And yet, despite his natural affinity for fashion, he did not exactly excel as a fashion photographer. Try as he might to make his rigid formal style conform to the needs of fashion photography, he would not—like his contemporaries Herb Ritts, Bruce Weber, or others with whom he was often compared—make significant headway in the industry. His difficulty adapting to the requirements of fashion shoots is evident in a 1986 photograph he made for the Cuban designer Miguel Cruz (fig. 50). Here, a nearly nude model sits within a circular form, pulling a sweater over his head. The image shares much with the sleek, sculptural nudes that were Mapplethorpe's specialty by the mid-1980s (see, for example, plates 136, 153). But as a commercial fashion photograph, the Miguel Cruz image fails in key ways: it is unclear what is being sold, or even what kind of mood the clothing is meant to evoke. Instead, the attention is on the phallic form created by the model's sinewy body. Mapplethorpe's fashion agent, Anne Kennedy, felt that the advertisements in this campaign were "embarrassingly awful"—a harsh assessment indeed from the woman whose job it was to promote this work to potential clients.³² Mapplethorpe himself acknowledged his difficulty working in this field, admitting to an interviewer: "I've always

been interested in the personality of the model. That's problematic because in merchandising they want clothes to show and not the model."³³

As a mode of image making, fashion photography has a distinct purpose: to sell fantasy and appealing illusion. Mapplethorpe's hard-edged, clinical style did not lend itself easily to that end. His 1985 fashion editorial for the German magazine *Stern*, which features Ken Moody posing with high heels, certainly foregrounds the merchandise but does so in a way that offers a heavy-handed equivalence between shoes and the phallus: the photographs are clearly more about sexual fetishism than about selling a product (fig. 51). Moreover, photographs such as this are perhaps too imbued with Mapplethorpe's own desire for these men to function as effective

Figure 50
Robert Mapplethorpe
(American, 1946–1989),
Miguel Cruz, 1986. Gelatin
silver print. Image: 58.8 ×
48.7 cm (23³/₁₆ × 19³/₁₆ in.);
sheet: 60.5 × 50.5 cm
(23³/₁₆ × 19³/₁₆ in.). Promised
gift of The Robert
Mapplethorpe Foundation
to the J. Paul Getty Trust
and the Los Angeles
County Museum of Art



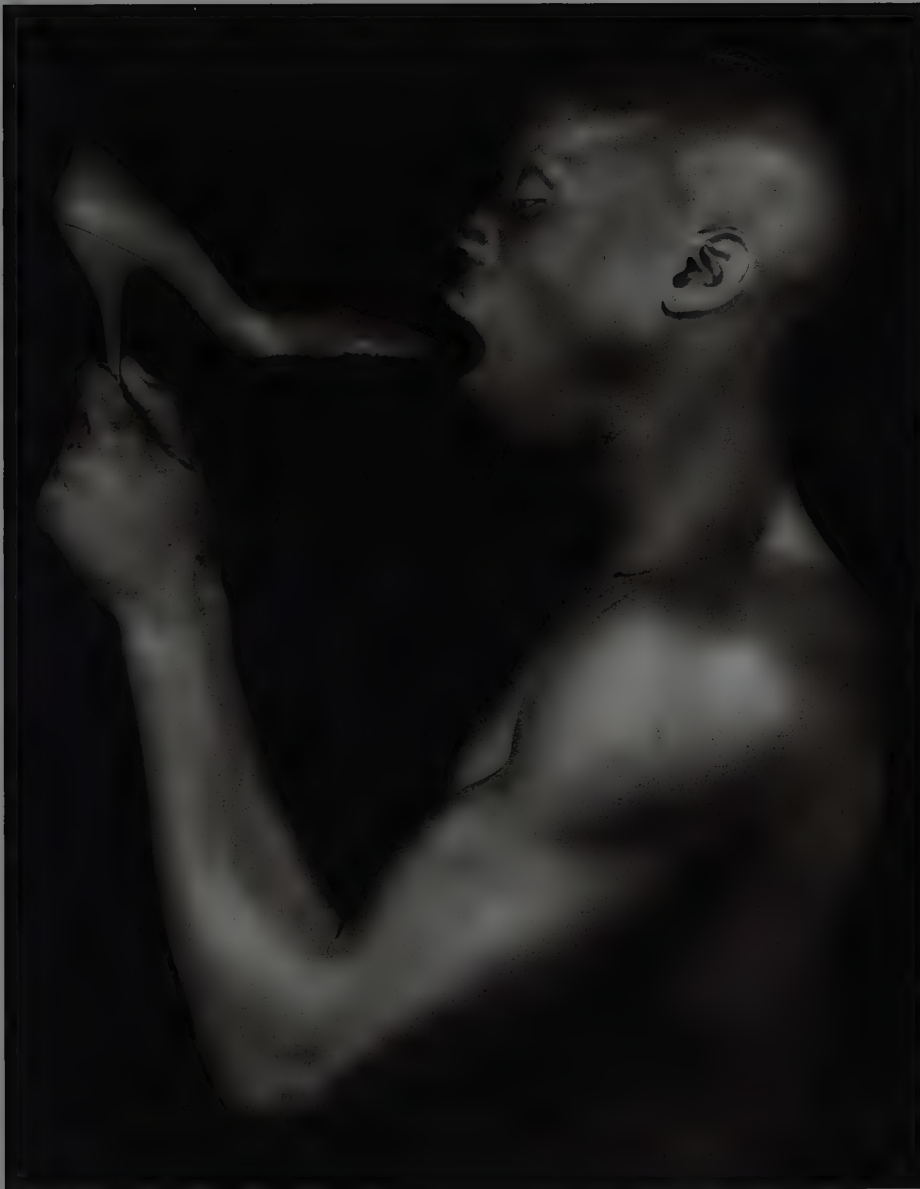


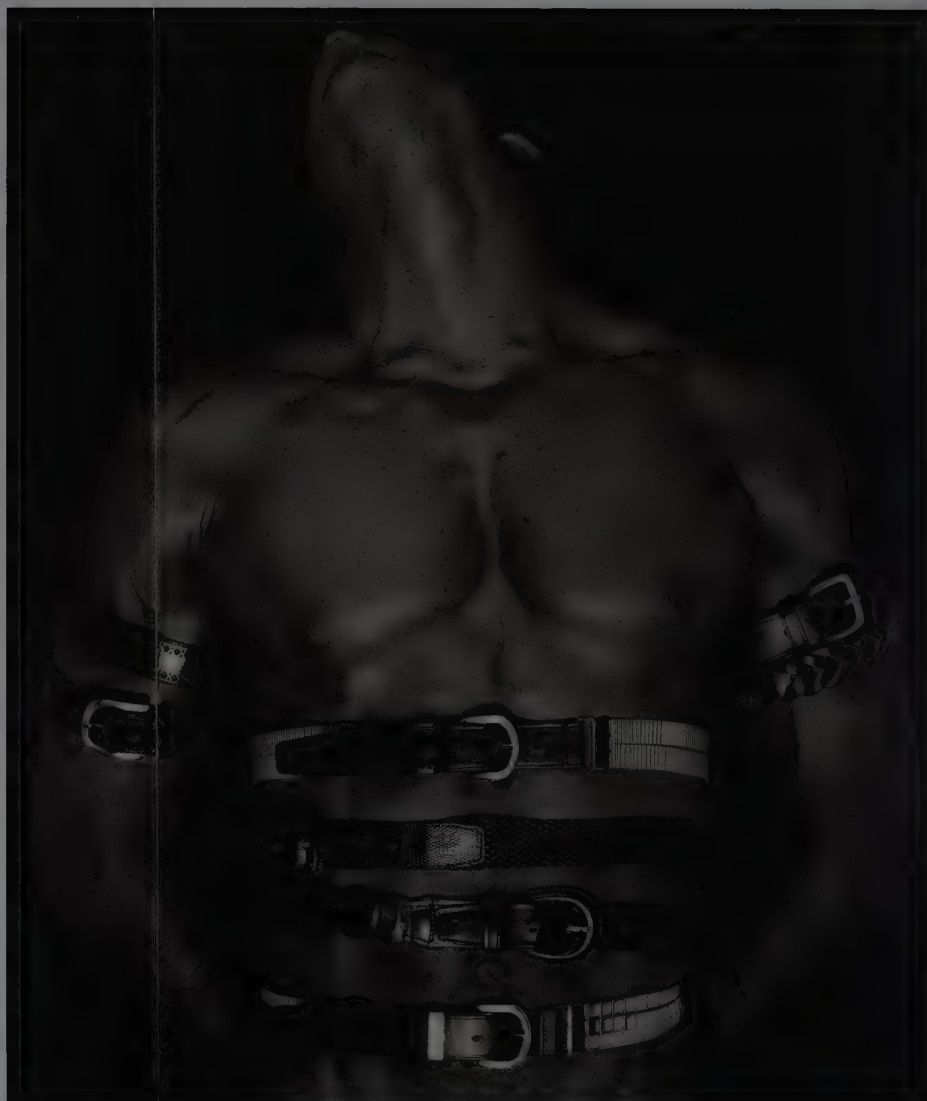
Figure 51
Robert Mapplethorpe
(American, 1946–1989),
Ken Moody, negative 1985;
print 2008. Gelatin silver
print. Image: 48.5 × 38 cm
(19 $\frac{1}{8}$ × 14 $\frac{3}{16}$ in.) ; sheet:
50.4 × 40.2 cm (19 $\frac{3}{16}$ ×
15 $\frac{3}{16}$ in.). Promised gift of
The Robert Mapplethorpe
Foundation to the J. Paul
Getty Trust and the Los
Angeles County Museum
of Art

fashion photography. His biographer, Patricia Morrisroe, thought as much, arguing: “The real message of the pictures wasn’t about fashion, but power and submission, especially as it related to black men, whom Mapplethorpe regarded as the ultimate accessory—a fetish equal to a high-heel shoe, or a diamond elephant pin.”³⁴ Fetish, in other words, trumped fashion, or at least fashion photography.

Still, it is counterintuitive that Mapplethorpe’s simultaneous interest in sexual fetishism and the stylization of the body was never effectively harnessed for the purposes of fashion photography. Fashion is so much about fetish—about the ineffable allure of commodities charged with psychic energy and inserted into an erotic economy of consumption. What is more, the visual strategies of s/m—familiar territory for Mapplethorpe—were very much in vogue at the time in fashion photography, as seen in the work of photographers such as Guy Bourdin and Helmut Newton.³⁵ Mapplethorpe should, it seems, have been the consummate photographer to catalyze all these elements. But his interest in fetishism resulted in a very different kind of imagery for him than it did for Bourdin, Newton, and others. The disciplined formality of Mapplethorpe’s studio photographs tended to make his subjects into specimens rather than actors. Fashion photography depends on some amount of empathy or identification with the model,

Figure 52

Advertisement from a catalog for fashion designer Tokio Kumagai, 1986, with photography by Robert Mapplethorpe. Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute. Gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation, 2011.M.20, box 139, folder 1



and some faith in the illusion of comfort provided by commodities; that empathy is difficult for viewers to muster if the subjects are frozen in the space of the studio like statues, isolated and trapped in the frame with nothing to keep them company but articles of clothing that more closely resemble mystical amulets than personal fashion choices.

While certain of Mapplethorpe's more severe critics have dismissed his fashion photography summarily, the work deserves closer consideration, since it illuminates issues that are at the heart of what he accomplished with his art. His photographs for Japanese designer Tokio Kumagai, for example, crystalize many of the impulses that characterized Mapplethorpe's practice since his first constructions (fig. 52). Abstracting and isolating Kumagai's accessories, and placing them in relation to a nude male subject, Mapplethorpe insists on their place in the language of bodily desire. Seen within a longer history of his engagement with fashion and fetishism, the image of a muscular torso strapped with leather belts evokes his earlier images of leathermen's harnesses and bondage gear (plate 38).

The sensibility of the Kumagai advertisement also relates directly to the formal beauty and elegant simplicity of *Melody (Shoe)* (plate 162). One of Mapplethorpe's most explicit statements about the power of fetishism, this photograph offers a detailed depiction of a shiny, patent-leather stiletto-heeled shoe, conjuring a complicated array of associations: the pain that the wearer must endure due to the absurd elevation and the physical demands of walking in such a shoe; the potential harm that could be inflicted with that daggerlike heel; and the unavoidable

erotic connotations invoked by high-heeled shoes. The photograph also hearkens back to Mapplethorpe's early constructions and their declarative affirmation of the sexual charge of particular articles of clothing.

Melody (Shoe) returns us to the photograph that started us off: the picture of Lisa Lyon in a Yeohlee Teng coat. Mapplethorpe's relationship to fashion, style, and the cultural connotations of clothing illuminates why he seemed to be the ideal choice to produce photographs for a catalogue dedicated to offering a new perspective on fashion design. The combination of Mapplethorpe's objectifying photographic gaze, his lifelong fascination with sexual rituals and practices, and the long-established associations of clothing with fetishism resulted in a rich and extensive body of work focused on the subject. His two-decade artistic relationship with clothing provides numerous examples of how his work was a "provocative foil to conventional fashion photography." While his commercial fashion photographs may not have been fully successful in conveying couture as a commodity for advertising purposes, he was a master at capturing how clothing and accessories function as vehicles for the communication of desire.

Fashion is by definition contemporary and of the minute, which might seem out of place in the career of a photographer so deeply invested in classical form.³⁶ There is a tension in Mapplethorpe's work between the clothed body—marked by its era, identity, and sexual proclivity—and the unembellished, classicized body often thought of as timeless. Fetishism serves as a bridge between the two, functioning as the eternal essence underlying the ephemeral expression of personal style. Mapplethorpe, it seems, was interested less in documenting fashion trends than in revealing their relationship to a more deeply entrenched impulse: sexual desire. He reveals a structural truth at the core of clothing design that is both contemporary and timeless: fashion is deeply implicated in the psychology of the fetish.

NOTES

- This essay's epigraph is taken from Patricia Morrisroe, *Mapplethorpe: A Biography* (New York: Random House, 1995), 75.
- Susan Sidlauskas, *Intimate Architecture: Contemporary Clothing Design* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Committee on the Visual Arts, 1982), n.p.
 - Ibid.
 - See Valerie Steele, *Fetish: Fashion, Sex and Power* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).
 - Morrisroe, *Mapplethorpe*, 145. The term "fetish" derives from ideas about the function of African religious objects. It is also foundational to Freudian theories of sexual transference and fixation. See Sigmund Freud, "Fetishism," in *The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, J. Strachey, trans. (London: Hogarth and the Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1927), 147–57.
 - For the classic study of photography and fetishism, see Christian Metz, "Photography and Fetish," *October* 34 (Autumn 1985): 81–90.
 - For the foundational study of "commodity fetishism," see Karl Marx, "The Fetishism of Commodities and the Secret Thereof," in *Capital: Critique of Political Economy*, vol. 1, section 4 (original German pub., 1867), <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/ch01.htm#54> (accessed March 15, 2015).
 - For further discussion of Mapplethorpe's purposeful modes of presenting himself in his self-portraits, see the Squiers essay in the present volume.
 - Morrisroe, *Mapplethorpe*, 40.
 - Ibid., 59.
 - Ibid., 113.
 - Ibid., 60.
 - Ibid., 75.
 - Carol Squiers, "With Robert Mapplethorpe," *Hamptons Newsletter*, August 27, 1981.
 - See Mark Thompson, *Leatherfolk: Radical Sex, People, Politics, and Practice* (Boston: Alyson, 1991).
 - Bruce King, "The Significance of Leather" (clipping), Getty Research Institute, 2011.M.20, box 227, folder 2.
 - My understanding of Mapplethorpe's relationship to s/m is indebted to Richard Meyer's extensive investigation into his art and archive. See, in particular, Meyer, *Outlaw Representation: Censorship and Homosexuality in Twentieth-Century American Art* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 158–223.
 - See, in particular, Dimitri Levas, ed., *Pictures: Robert Mapplethorpe* (New York: Arena, 1999).
 - Jonathan Nelson, "Mapplethorpe's Search for Intense Ordered Beauty," in Franca Falletti and Jonathan Nelson, *Robert Mapplethorpe: Perfection in Form* (New York: teNeues, 2009), 18.
 - See John D'Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities: The Making of a Homosexual Minority in the United States* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983); and Richard Meyer, "Gay Power circa 1970," *GLQ* 12, no. 3 (2006): 441–64.
 - See Martin P. Levine, *Gay Macho: The Life and Death of the Homosexual Clone* (New York: New York University Press, 1998).
 - Andrew Holleran, "The Petrification of Clonestyle," *Christopher Street* 6, no. 69 (1982): 14–17.
 - For more on this, see Catherine Lord and Richard Meyer, *Art and Queer Culture* (London: Phaidon, 2013), 27.
 - Hal Fischer, *Gay Semiotics: A Photographic Study of Visual Coding among Homosexual Men* (San Francisco: NFS Press, 1977).
 - Susan Sontag, "Fascinating Fascism," *New York Review of Books* 22, no. 1 (February 6, 1975): <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/1975/feb/06/fascinating-fascism> (accessed March 15, 2015).
 - See Robert Mapplethorpe, *The Black Book*, foreword by Ntozake Shange (New York: St. Martin's, 1986).
 - Kobena Mercer, "Reading Racial Fetishism: The Photographs of Robert Mapplethorpe," in Emily Apter and William Pietz, eds., *Fetishism as Cultural Discourse* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), 310–29. The artist Glenn Ligon's *Notes on the Margin of the Black Book* (1991–93) is a significant artistic response to Mapplethorpe's interest in black male sexuality.
 - See Kobena Mercer, "Skin Head Sex Thing: Racial Difference and the Homoerotic Imaginary," in Bad Object-Choices, eds., *How Do I Look? Queer Film and Video* (Seattle: Bay Press, 1991).
 - Getty Research Institute, 2011.M.20, box 139, folder 7. This was part of a series of advertisements that Helmut Lang produced using Mapplethorpe's photographs in the mid-1990s.
 - Morrisroe, *Mapplethorpe*, 286.
 - See, for example, Henry Barendse et al., *The Fashionable Image: Unconventional Fashion Photography* (Charlotte, NC: Mint Museum Department of Art, 1986).
 - Willis Hartshorn, *Art and Advertising: Commercial Photography by Artists* (New York: International Center of Photography, 1986).
 - Kennedy, quoted in Morrisroe, *Mapplethorpe*, 300.
 - Mapplethorpe, quoted in Mark Thompson, "Portfolio: Robert Mapplethorpe," *Advocate*, July 24, 1980, 21–22.
 - Morrisroe, *Mapplethorpe*, 287.
 - For a discussion of Mapplethorpe in the context of Bourdin and Newton, see Carol Squiers, "The Art of Fashion, the Fashion of Art," in Barendse, *The Fashionable Image*, 10.
 - See Germano Celant et al., *Robert Mapplethorpe and the Classical Tradition: Photographs and Mannerist Prints* (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2004).

MAPPLETHORPE

Portrait/Self-Portrait

Carol Squiers

During Robert Mapplethorpe's short but prolific career, the portrait was central to his work. Photographs of Patti Smith and the artist's self-portraits, exploring his face, body, and sexuality, are among the earliest pictures he took. Although he could not have known it when he began, the portrait form would become an increasingly expansive category over the course of his life, as photography gained greater credibility—in museums, galleries, and the art market—as a medium of fine art.

The history of photography was launched with the daguerreotype, which established the portrait as an image of an exact depiction of the sitter's face and costume—although the presumption of fidelity to “reality” was complicated from the start. A competing idea of the portrait included psychological, social, and dramatic elements as well, as seen clearly in Hippolyte Bayard's now-famous *Self-Portrait as a Drowned Man* (1840), wherein the photographer portrayed himself as a suicide driven to despair by the French authorities who ignored his photographic discoveries while celebrating those of Louis-Jacques-Mandé Daguerre. Here, precise description took a backseat to the photographer's desire to convey himself as a worthy man who was victimized and despondent. The photographic portrait developed thereafter as a form that offered the possibility of combining faithful physical description of and revelation about the “human original.”¹ The self-portrait could go still further, in that the original subject is the artist, fulfilling the expectation “to deliver the artist in some capacity to the viewer.”²

Within his roster of subjects, Mapplethorpe's self-portraits occupy a special place. As scholars have noted, he used the camera as a tool of self-exploration from the time he made his earliest Polaroid images in 1970.³ In particular, he represented his substantial sexual and other personal transformations in photographic images several decades before the emergence of queer studies and queer theory. He explored his newly realized identities, first as a gay man, then as a gay man involved with bondage, leather, s/m, and other subcultures, and later as a white gay man involved with black men. In the last four years of his life he rather fearlessly represented himself as a man facing his own physical deterioration and quickly advancing mortality.

As Mapplethorpe was shaping his own image, other photographers were also making photographs of him. His trajectory from naive young art student to infamous dying artist is represented in portraits and self-portraits held in the collections of the J. Paul Getty Museum and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), and in the Getty Research Institute, which contains Mapplethorpe's personal archive. There are more than eighty photographic portraits of him by other artists there, although for many of the images there is little available information, including even the photographer's name. Over the course of time in these photographs, Mapplethorpe evolves from the conservatively groomed suburban boy who started college at sixteen to the venturesome aspiring artist whose sense of style and self-possession developed throughout the 1970s and 1980s. The fact that Mapplethorpe kept these images of himself doesn't tell us what they meant to him or whether he looked at them or simply stored them away. Many are not particularly insightful or artistically well made. But the portraits do give us an idea of how others saw him, how he conceived himself for public presentation at various times, and how he related to the camera as a subject of someone else's regard. An investigation into a selection of these depictions of the artist, along with some of Mapplethorpe's self-portraits, offers insights

Figure 53

Unknown photographer,
*Portrait of Robert
Mapplethorpe*, ca. 1965.
Gelatin silver print. Image:
24.2 × 19.4 cm (9½ ×
7⅝ in.); sheet: 25.2 ×
20.3 cm (9⅝ × 8 in.).
Gift of The Robert
Mapplethorpe Foundation

to the J. Paul Getty Trust
and the Los Angeles
County Museum of Art,
2011.M.20.347,
box 63



into how he was understood as a subject by others and how he observed and constructed himself in front of the camera.

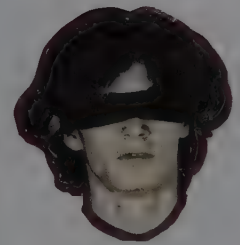
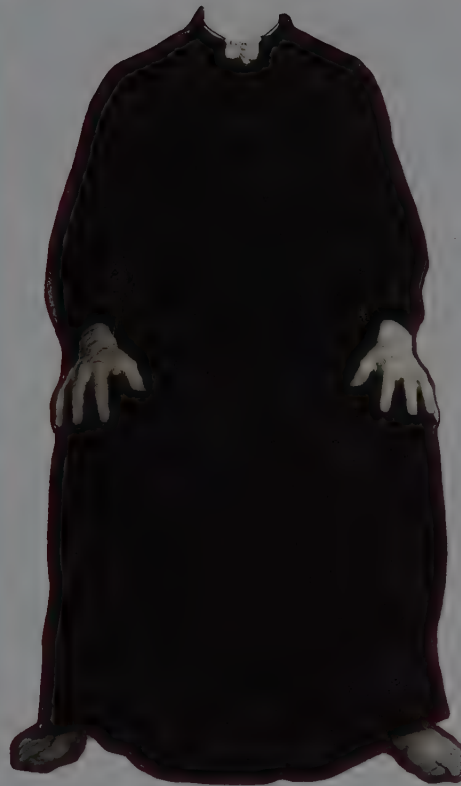
The Getty Museum and LACMA collections and the Robert Mapplethorpe Archive contain a few images of Mapplethorpe as a student at New York's Pratt Institute (which he attended from 1963 to 1969) and a greater number of both formal and informal images from the 1970s, made by friends, acquaintances, and other photographers. Unlike family snapshots, which often situate the individual within a familial group and/or domestic setting, most of the early images chart Mapplethorpe's growing sense of the person he was working to become, as a uniquely self-created being. Later portraits of him by well-known photographers seem to reflect the difficulty of contending with the image Mapplethorpe established of himself, even as they were working to capture him through the prism of their own particular visions. For the most part, Mapplethorpe's depictions of himself are more visually and psychologically powerful than anything anyone else could create of him.

One of the earliest portraits of Mapplethorpe in the archive is by an unknown photographer (fig. 53) and shows the artist as a young man, perhaps in his late teens, standing outdoors on a shallow brick stairway, wearing a dark turtleneck and pants, a light-colored sport coat, and a sober, slightly questioning expression. His hair is cropped close to his head, which is probably an indication of his membership in the ROTC and the Pershing Rifles, a military honor society.⁴ Standing in three-quarter view, Mapplethorpe has his shoulders hunched and head thrust forward, a posture that emphasizes his youth, slender build, and lack of assurance. Still, even in this early photograph, he shows a certain awareness of his image in the contrapposto pose he strikes and in the economy of his dress and expression. This is a picture of a fragile, serious young man who is still living an identity that he will shed as he moves through the 1960s.

Along with issues of his corporeal image, Mapplethorpe had a much bigger question to answer in those years: whether or not he was gay. He thought his dilemma might be settled when he met and fell in love with Patti Smith in 1967. But soon he was exploring his conflicted feelings about men in the collages he made from assorted pictures of sailors, classical Greek statuary, and Michelangelo's *Slaves*. Smith left Mapplethorpe in the summer of 1968, which devastated him. Soon after, he decided to go to San Francisco to confront his sexual conflicts, and (as Smith recalls) begged her to return to him or else he would "turn homosexual." To Smith it seemed that his sexual experimentation with men while he was in California left him "both triumphant and troubled."⁵

Mapplethorpe's profound confusion around this time is reflected in the piece called *Red Self-Portrait* (fig. 54), in which he montaged photographs of himself with close-cropped hair. Apparently influenced by Cubist and Surrealist imagery as well as by Hollywood psychological thrillers, the four superimposed photographs evoke a young man whose image of himself is splintered and unstable, his head detached from his body, his face a series of half-visible fragments floating in a scalded red atmosphere. This can be seen as an example of youthful dramatics, but it also speaks of a psychic confusion Mapplethorpe sought to capture and even manage with the materials and processes of art making, an impulse that would continue throughout his career.

Although the fragmented portrait was unusual for Mapplethorpe, the theme of the detached head appears throughout his work. One collage from 1968 shows the head of a blindfolded man in a top hat being held at the end of a string by a decapitated body; other pieces are arrayed with the floating heads of priests or popes.⁶ According to Smith, Mapplethorpe would sometimes wear monk's robes when he worked, one of his many appropriations of the iconography of Catholicism, the religion of his family and upbringing.⁷ The Mapplethorpe archive contains an undated photograph of a barefoot, headless seated figure wearing religious robes, which has been cut out and mounted on stiff paper (fig. 55, left). Beside this decapitated figure is a cutout image of Mapplethorpe's own head, blindfolded (fig. 55, right). Although the headless figure is unlabeled, it is adorned with a necklace similar to the ones Mapplethorpe made when he was young, which indicates that the body in the image is his own. The blindfold, an accoutrement of bondage, also reads as a variation on the black bar printed across people's faces in compromising photographs to obscure their identities, a trope Mapplethorpe used a number of times in his collages.⁸



Detached heads reappear in his photographs in 1981, when he made a frightening portrait of Roy Cohn, the disgraced lawyer who collaborated on Senator Joseph McCarthy's vicious anti-Communist witch hunts of the 1950s.⁹

There is no evidence that Mapplethorpe ever went out in public dressed as a monk, although his appearance was constantly changing. By the late 1960s his short hair had grown out into luxuriant curls, and his wardrobe was comprised of combinations of black leather, denim, and jewelry made of metal skulls, beads, chains, feathers, and leather, all layered in ways that created definition and detail on his slender upper body. And yet the salient qualities captured in other people's early images of Mapplethorpe are his physical delicacy and an air of vulnerability. Whether he is getting dressed, in a 1970 image by Judy Linn (fig. 56), or posing in his studio for the writer Edward Lucie-Smith (around 1971), Mapplethorpe's romantically tousled hair and somber expressions, coupled with his lean silhouette, only increased his appearance of poetic frailty.

An important part of Mapplethorpe's photographic education came from his perusal of the images he cut out of gay physique and pornography magazines to make collages. Among the photographic lessons he learned from those images was the virtue of frontal address and an open posture. In some of his earliest self-portraits, both clothed and nude, he abandons the tentative poses he strikes for other photographers and stages a more direct confrontation with the camera. In a collage from 1970 he shows himself nude and seated with his legs spread, red dots covering his nipples and genitals, his gaze directed at the camera.¹⁰ Although collage elements alter his early nude photographs, the images themselves are relatively straightforward (see fig. 20). Indeed, Mapplethorpe often seems more comfortable in nude self-portraits than in those that show him clothed, such as a circa 1973 image in which he protectively crosses his arms across his chest and smiles bashfully while looking off camera (fig. 57).

In the 1970s Mapplethorpe's circle of acquaintances and friends widened considerably after he met the model David Croland, who introduced him to a range of fashion and society figures. Through Croland he met both John McKendry, a curator of prints and photographs at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and Samuel J. Wagstaff Jr., who would become Mapplethorpe's

Figure 54
Robert Mapplethorpe
(American, 1946–1989),
Red Self-Portrait, ca. 1967.
Photo collage: gelatin silver
print and pencil on board,
with transparent red
plastic and black tape.
Overall: 23.7 × 19.5 cm
(9³/₁₆ × 7⁷/₁₆ in.). Gift of
The Robert Mapplethorpe
Foundation to the J. Paul
Getty Trust and the Los
Angeles County Museum
of Art, 2011.M.20.125,
box 46, folder 1

Figure 55
Robert Mapplethorpe
(American, 1946–1989)
Pieces from Mapple-
thorpe's unrealized
animation *Tantric Garden
of Eden*, ca. 1969. Photos
by Lloyd Ziff. Mixed media.
Head: 6 × 5.5 cm (2³/₈ ×
2³/₈ in.); body: 19.5 × 11.5
cm (7⁷/₁₆ × 4¹/₂ in.). Gift of
The Robert Mapplethorpe
Foundation to the J. Paul
Getty Trust and the Los
Angeles County Museum
of Art, 2011.M.20.217,
box 51, folder 1

Figure 56

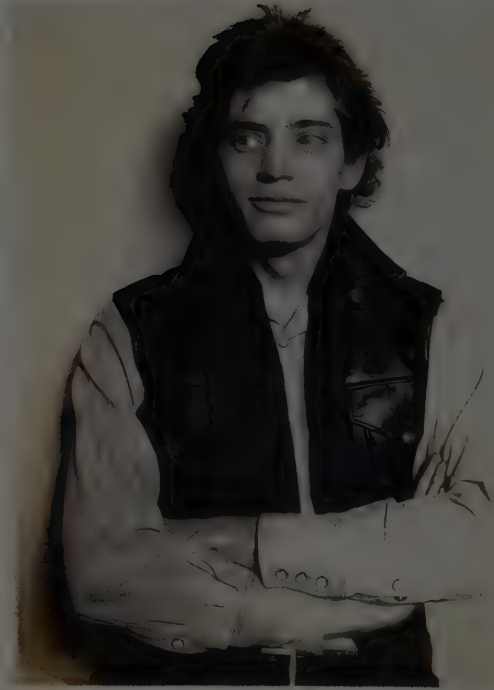
Judy Linn (American, b. 1947), *Robert Gets Dressed at the Chelsea*, 3, 1970. Gelatin silver print. Image: 11 × 16.6 cm (4 $\frac{3}{16}$ × 6 $\frac{5}{16}$ in.); sheet: 11.6 × 17.3 cm (4 $\frac{3}{16}$ × 6 $\frac{5}{16}$ in.). Gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul

Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 2011.M.20.376, box 63



Figure 57

Robert Mapplethorpe (American, 1946–1989), *Self-Portrait*, ca. 1973. Dye diffusion print. Image: 11.4 × 8.9 cm (4 $\frac{1}{2}$ × 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.); sheet: 14.6 × 10.8 cm (5 $\frac{3}{4}$ × 4 $\frac{1}{4}$ in.). Gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 2011.M.20.58, box 63



patron, friend, and sometime lover. Among the photographers Croland knew was Francesco Scavullo, a fashion and celebrity portrait photographer best known for his hyperbolically sexy covers for *Cosmopolitan* magazine.¹¹ Scavullo made portraits of Mapplethorpe alone and a much-reproduced one of him with Sam Wagstaff in 1974.

But Scavullo's images of the photographer that year hardly resemble the tentative young Mapplethorpe seen in his own self-portrait of circa 1973. In one Scavullo portrait, Mapplethorpe stands very straight, shoulders back, and feet apart (fig. 58). Despite his open stance, his arms are arranged to shield his torso; his right arm is bent across his body with his hand grasping his left arm, which angles down and across his groin. He is dressed in the slightly sinister black-leather pants and accessories that became his trademark garb, along with layers of shirts or sweaters and a denim vest, which added bulk and definition to his upper body. He gazes straight out of the image, with his mouth drawn up very slightly at the corners. Everything about this portrait marks it as the product of a professional photographer, including the artfully coiffed hair, well-modulated lighting, and deliberate pose.

Scavullo's double portrait of Wagstaff and Mapplethorpe was apparently done at the same time and was shot in the same style. But the loving embrace in which the younger man holds the older is unusually revealing for the period—only five years after the Stonewall riots that inaugurated the modern gay liberation movement. Scavullo didn't have a specific commission to create these pictures, and years later he wrote that he took the double portrait simply because he wanted to.¹² In 1974 Mapplethorpe was famous only in the artistic and social subcultures in which he worked and socialized, as was Wagstaff. It would be another few years before Mapplethorpe publicly staked his claim as perhaps the era's most shocking young photographer with artistic ambitions.

By this time Mapplethorpe had been studying original photographic prints by a variety of photographers for several years. McKendry dazzled him with great photographs from the Metropolitan's collection by the likes of William Henry Fox Talbot, Edward Steichen, and Alfred

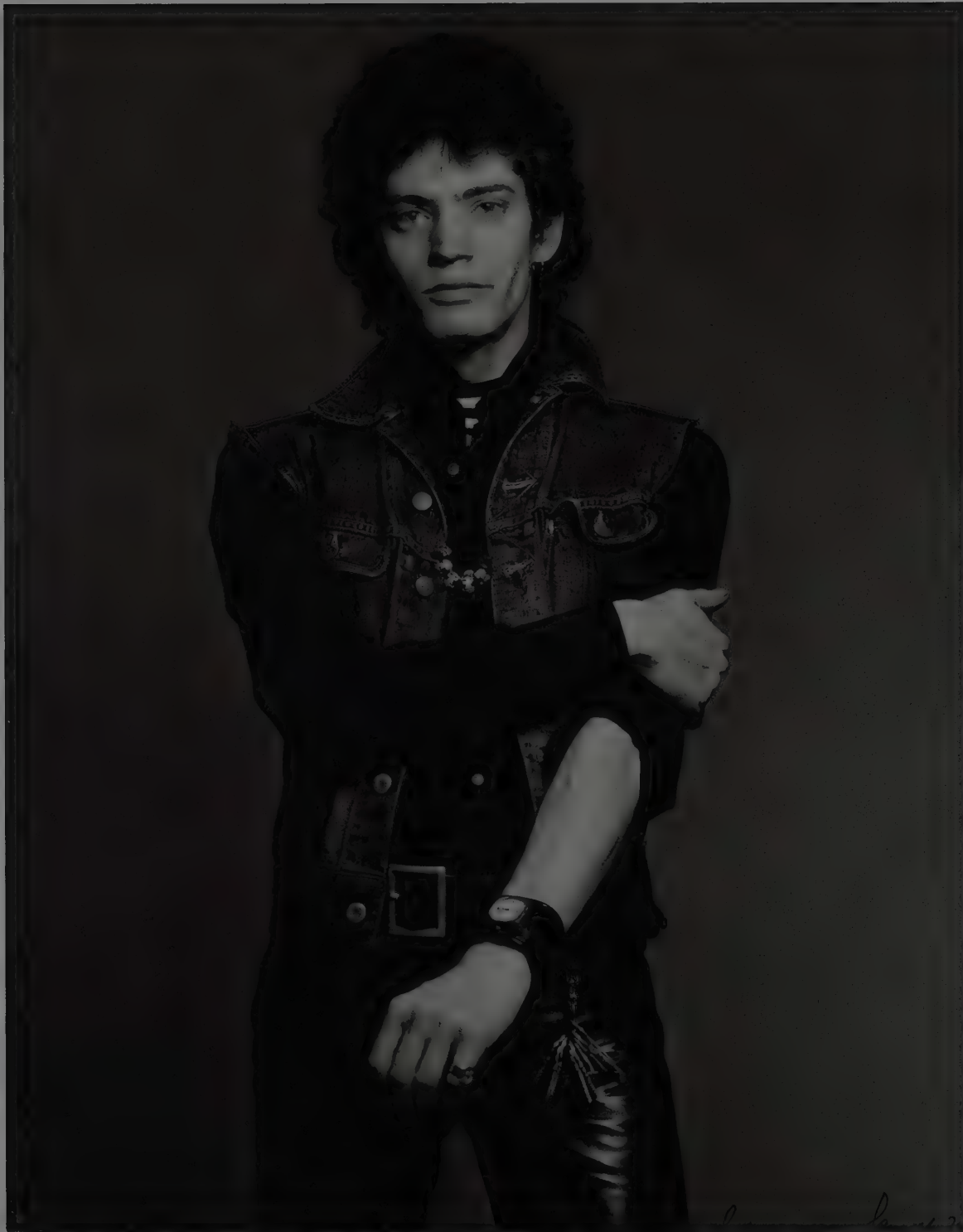


Figure 58
Francesco Scavullo
(American, 1921–2004),
*Portrait of Robert
Mapplethorpe*, 1974.
Gelatin silver print, 34.8 ×
27.4 cm (13⁷/₁₆ × 10¹³/₁₆ in.).
Gift of The Robert
Mapplethorpe Foundation
to the J. Paul Getty Trust
and the Los Angeles
County Museum of Art,
2012.11.1

Stieglitz.¹³ Wagstaff's collection grew exponentially during the 1970s, and Mapplethorpe himself began collecting photographs. The Wagstaff holdings often expanded with multiple acquisitions at once, as it did shortly after he and Mapplethorpe posed for the Scavullo portrait, when Wagstaff acquired more than three hundred prints by the great nineteenth- and early twentieth-century French portrait photographer Nadar (Gaspard-Félix Tournachon).¹⁴ Mapplethorpe's self-portraits were still tentatively conceived at this point, but that mother lode of Nadars gave him a multitude of more formal portrait poses to study. Now able to hold in his hands and

scrutinize fine photographic prints, Mapplethorpe began to understand the subtleties, aesthetics, and possibilities of the photographic image. Indeed, he would later cite Nadar as “the one portrait photographer whose career had affected his own significantly.”¹⁵

Mapplethorpe had also spent time throughout his schooling and his years with Patti Smith poring over an eclectic array of reproductions in art and photography books. In the early years he scoured the works of Hieronymus Bosch and Egon Schiele, and the photographs of Hans Bellmer.¹⁶ With Smith he looked at Dada and Surrealism, erotic art, William Blake, Jackson Pollock, and Andy Warhol.¹⁷ But there were likely contemporary influences, too, particularly in the detailed, beautifully lit studio work of Richard Avedon and Irving Penn, two leading editorial photographers, both well known for their portraiture. Avedon had a controversial show of individual and group portraits at the Marlborough Gallery on New York’s 57th Street in 1975.¹⁸ Featuring a variety of subjects from radically different social strata—from Warhol’s Factory circle (some of them nude) to the Mission Council, the policymaking body of senior U.S. government and military officials who basically ran the Vietnam War—the exhibition underlined the art world’s growing interest in contemporary photography. Reaction to the show was strong and tended to seem negative even when positive comments were made. In the *New York Times*, the powerfully contentious art critic Hilton Kramer wrote not one but two reviews of the show, which questioned whether Avedon’s powerful work was “quite real” and fretted about celebrity, glamour, and how the exhibition made him feel that photography “is not to be trusted.”¹⁹ Nevertheless, the size, impact, and subject matter of the black-and-white prints showed a new audience the power of the photographic image, a message that was surely significant for Mapplethorpe, who would soon face similar dissatisfactions from the critics.

Despite myriad possible influences, there is no single identifiable stylistic or subjective precedent for Mapplethorpe’s *Self-Portrait* (plate 43), which indelibly marked him and his career thereafter. In this often-reproduced image he is dressed in a leather vest and laced-up chaps that frame his bare backside, which is fully presented to the viewer, with the handle of a leather bullwhip inserted in his anus. The former altar boy, who had once told Patti Smith he held hands with God when he made art, here presents himself as a satanic figure.²⁰ His body is arranged in a series of jagged angles and lowered into a crouch as if he could spring out and attack, his gaze a piercing dare. He provocatively declares his identification with the gay leather s/m subculture, as well as his disdain for those who didn’t accept either its practices or his images of them. Richard Meyer has proposed that the whip he holds is like a cable release on a camera, which characterizes this as a self-reflexive gesture.²¹ It also seems significant that the whip snakes toward the viewer and out of the frame of the image, suggesting that it ends up in the space of the spectator—linking the viewer to Mapplethorpe’s image not just visually but physically as well.

Mapplethorpe’s work generated a lot of reactions, many of them negative. One 1979 image by Fred W. McDarrah, a longtime photographer for the *Village Voice*, was certainly made in response to the artist’s growing notoriety. The image, *Robert Mapplethorpe in His Bond St. Studio, December 22, 1979*, shows a bleary-eyed Mapplethorpe holding a print of a frisky baby, which was a portrait commission (fig. 59). McDarrah is apparently looking down at the seated Mapplethorpe, shooting from a standing position. Even without any textual information about its purpose, the picture telegraphs a message of scorn in the way the baby’s angelic image is so jarringly juxtaposed with the leather-jacketed artist who made the picture. The *Village Voice* published another image from the same sitting—an equally unflattering portrait that looks almost like a mug shot. The article it accompanied maps out, in snarky prose, the considerations and costs of having one’s portrait made by contemporary artists, including Avedon, Mapplethorpe, Alice Neel, Warhol, and others. The caption for the photograph of Mapplethorpe with the baby picture starts: “‘Portraits are very demanding,’ says Robert Mapplethorpe, many of whose demanding portraits have shown their sitters in bondage”—the evident purpose being to contrast the innocence of the baby with the assumed depravities of bondage.²²

McDarrah’s portraits of the artist were made in the same year that Mapplethorpe showed his X Portfolio of s/m pictures at the Robert Miller Gallery—including his self-portrait with a bullwhip—which triggered a harsh review by the *Voice*’s Ben Lifson.²³ In the *New York*



Figure 59
Fred W. McDarrah
(American, 1926–2007),
Robert Mapplethorpe
in His Bond St. Studio,
December 22, 1979, 1979.
Gelatin silver print,
35.4 × 21.3 cm (12 $\frac{3}{8}$ ×
8 $\frac{3}{8}$ in.). Los Angeles,
J. Paul Getty Museum,
2003.142.6

Times, Hilton Kramer wrote: "The very real interest of this show lies not so much in 'art' as in the way it somewhat redraws the boundaries of public taste. After Helmut Newton, perhaps Mr. Mapplethorpe's was the next logical step. But it gives one the creeps, all the same."²⁴

Mapplethorpe was extremely sensitive to criticism of his work and must have been hurt and angered by the often-nasty rhetoric leveled at him and his show. But his photography flourished. In 1980 he made two provocative self-portraits, which have been the subject of much critical attention. Both are notable for their frontal, head-and-shoulders poses, a form he would continue to use for portraiture until the end of his life, and for the direct gaze he offers the viewer. In one image he wears a black-leather jacket, clamps a cigarette between his lips, and stares out intensely. Furrowing his brow, he narrows his eyes with tough bravado, his forehead

Figure 60

Sheila Metzner (American, b. 1939), *Portrait of Robert Mapplethorpe*, 1984. Fresson-process color print, 64.5 × 43.2 cm (25¼ × 17 in.). Gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 2012.16



hidden by the swooping cascade of hair that erupts in a 1950s street-punk style (plate 85). In the other he poses in women's makeup, his gaze softer and more open, qualities that are magnified by his naked chest (plate 91). In this androgynous guise Mapplethorpe bares himself to the viewer as a figure who is vulnerable, questioning, and receptive to our inspection. He is performing masquerades in both self-portraits, but in each of them the viewer nevertheless feels his living, provocative presence.²⁵

Mapplethorpe had become a figure of both fascination and censure in the art world after his attention-getting dual exhibitions in New York in 1977, one featuring his sexual pictures at The Kitchen; the other, mainly portraits, at the Holly Solomon Gallery. Increasing numbers of serious artists began to make his portrait. In the late 1970s he posed for George Dureau, Lynn

Davis, and Alice Springs, whose images of him have an unusual vitality of both expression and pose. Timothy Greenfield-Sanders and Neil Winokur both photographed Mapplethorpe in 1982, and the following year Andy Warhol made a color Polaroid portrait of him. The Winokur and the Warhol bear a strong resemblance to one another in the subject's frontal, mug-shot-like posture, the deadpan expression, and the nearly identical getup of a black jacket and white shirt accented with the same skinny red-leather tie. The two pictures by Greenfield-Sanders from 1982 are in soft focus and printed on warmer paper. In them Mapplethorpe wears an uncharacteristic light-colored hoodie and nondescript shirt, which help to fashion another version of the artist, appearing younger and gentler than the persona he often strove to project in his self-portraits. As he has before, though, he folds his arms across his body, physically and metaphorically creating a barrier between himself and the photographer—and by extension, the viewer.

Two years later, in 1984, Sheila Metzner, an artist who is also a successful fashion and advertising photographer, made a sumptuous color portrait of Mapplethorpe for *Vanity Fair* (fig. 60). An emerald-green background predominates, with Mapplethorpe standing next to a low round table that holds a sculptural white vase of pale anthurium. Their prominent yellow stamens point sharply toward Mapplethorpe, a reference, perhaps, to his own sexualized flower pictures. He stands cocooned in a glossy, belted black-leather coat and red cashmere muffler, his arms hidden at his sides, hands sheathed in his pockets. His head is turned slightly to his right, but his eyes gaze warily forward, and his hair is neatly combed back from his face. The subtle, dappled color of Metzner's Fresson-process prints usually foreground the figure in a richly aesthetic environment, but this model appears to recede into his dark coat.²⁶ As in many of his studio sittings with other photographers, Mapplethorpe seems unwilling to be as responsive to the photographer as his subjects are to him.

Of course, all the 1980s portraits of Mapplethorpe were made against the harrowing and inescapable backdrop of AIDS. Mapplethorpe was treated for a debilitating gastrointestinal illness off and on beginning in the early 1980s and was hospitalized for the first time in 1982 in New Orleans.²⁷ Although a doctor who treated him thought that "Robert was in a panic about having AIDS,"²⁸ Mapplethorpe continued to live in a state of denial.²⁹ The HIV virus that causes AIDS hadn't yet been identified, and an antibody test for it would not be available until 1985. Mapplethorpe was officially diagnosed in September 1986, only months before Sam Wagstaff died of an AIDS-related illness.³⁰ The first possible treatment for AIDS was approved for use by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration in March 1987. In the meantime, the numbers of people being diagnosed and dying kept escalating, which produced a toxic mix of fear, anger, panic, and disavowal.

Even if Mapplethorpe wasn't acknowledging his concerns about his health to those around him, he had begun to come to terms with it in his self-portraits. Curator Jeffrey Grove notes that his 1985 *Self-Portrait* (plate 138) is "the first image initiating a series that would follow, in which the artist acknowledges, and tries to mediate an acceptance, of his HIV positive status."³¹ In this image, Mapplethorpe poses in three-quarter view and looks away from the camera, then quickly turns his head to his right, creating an evanescent, transparent profile image of himself.³² He is clearly depicting his own visage in the process of transformation, miming his passage from flesh to specter, fashioning a contemporary spirit photograph. It is also a picture in which telltale signs of sickness can be plainly seen in the white, bumpy patches on his jaw and neck. The first in a series of increasingly moving self-portraits that Mapplethorpe would make over the last four years of his life, it was created at a point when—as the artist was well aware—there was no treatment yet available to slow the already-visible evidence of his physical demise.

This series of photographs culminates in an extraordinary image from 1988, one of the most startling of all Mapplethorpe's self-portraits (plate 174). Here the photographer's head seems to float on a black ground as he holds a cane topped by a carved image of a skull. The photograph was made during a studio session attended by Mapplethorpe's brother Edward and studio assistant Brian English. The session began with English behind the camera and Mapplethorpe kneeling on the wooden floor holding the cane, wearing a black turtleneck sweater and what English remembers as "a defiant look."³³ But the ailing Mapplethorpe quickly felt severe pain in his knees, so English helped him up and got a stool for him to sit on. This changed the

Figure 61
Gillian Wearing
(British, b. 1963), *Me as Mapplethorpe*, 2009.
Gelatin silver print. Image:
159 × 126.7 cm (62 $\frac{3}{8}$ ×
49 $\frac{7}{8}$ in.); sheet: 185 ×
126.7 cm (72 $\frac{3}{8}$ × 49 $\frac{7}{8}$ in.).
Gift of The Robert
Mapplethorpe Foundation
to the J. Paul Getty Trust
and the Los Angeles
County Museum of Art,
2011.M.20.320,
roll 2



spatial relationships between Mapplethorpe, the camera, and the cane, which was now farther in front of him than it had originally been. Mapplethorpe's expression had also changed, from a look of strength and perhaps anger to one of melancholy, even depression as he absorbed the reality of his physical condition. After the artist had changed position again, going from the stool to a chair, his brother took over the camera. The focus Mapplethorpe wanted on the grimacing carved skull on the cane meant that his face was thrown slightly out of focus, almost giving the sense that he is fading away before our eyes. His right arm comes straight at us, his hand fiercely gripping the cane; here, his arms are no longer defensively protecting him. This brave, unflinching self-portrait shows a man who confronted his challenges, his demons, his love, and his identity by making photographs.

During his lifetime, whether consciously or unconsciously, Mapplethorpe managed to stymie most of the photographers and artists who tried to make his portrait. Perhaps he never had the opportunity to sit for someone who could call his bluff. There are, for instance, no published images of him by Richard Avedon, Irving Penn, or Helmut Newton; although Annie Leibovitz photographed him, it was in a genial commercial image, a double portrait with the fashion photographer Norman Parkinson, who towered over the seated Mapplethorpe in an ad for Rose's Lime Juice. But two decades after his death, the artist Gillian Wearing made an image titled *Me as Mapplethorpe* (fig. 61), in which she re-created his final self-portrait.

This compelling, difficult image is one of a series Wearing has made of photographers she admires "who engaged variously and intensely with questions of identity, social roles, individual freedom and the use of masks."³⁴ At nearly 150 by 122 centimeters (59 by 48 inches), the print has a substantial presence, especially as *her* eyes look out at the viewer with a particular intensity from the Mapplethorpe mask she has adhered to her face. The mask is remarkably lifelike, except for the exaggerated edges around the eyes—which is a purposeful strategy so that the viewer understands that the visage is a mask.³⁵ The effect is uncanny, especially at this

scale. The portrait looks like but *not* like Mapplethorpe, at a crucially vulnerable point in his life. Wearing's eyes peer out from beneath layers of her, of him—of time, of illness, of vulnerability, and of impending death.

Wearing's portrait is a tougher image than the one Mapplethorpe made, and it is very difficult to look away from. It also seems an uncannily final confirmation that he has died. Mapplethorpe was very much alive when he made his photograph about his own death—but now he is gone, and what survives is the art. Somehow it is fitting that the most powerful image made of him by another artist is one created by strategies of appropriation and gendered role-playing.

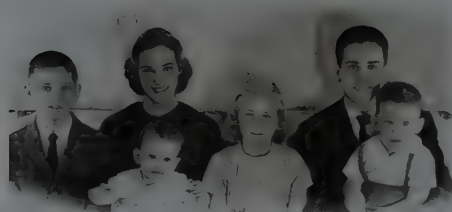
Mapplethorpe's search for his sexual and artistic identity was conducted with an unsparing urgency across the relatively short span of his creative life. Much of that quest became concentrated in his self-portraits, where he reshaped and interrogated his own visage with increasing self-knowledge. If Wearing's depiction is so affecting, it is because of what Mapplethorpe was able to reveal of himself.

NOTES

- 1 The term "human original" seems particularly apt in the context of photography. See Richard Brilliant, *Portraiture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 7.
- 2 Amelia Jones, "The 'Eternal Return': Self-Portrait Photography as a Technology of Embodiment," *Signs* 27, no. 4 (Summer 2002): 951.
- 3 See especially Jeffrey D. Grove, "Robert Mapplethorpe's Self-Portraits," Ph.D. diss., Case Western Reserve University, 1999.
- 4 Mapplethorpe had to pledge this fraternal organization. According to Patricia Morrisroe, this consisted of a "six-week hazing process that ended in the torturous 'Hell Night.'" Ironically, the initiation included actions that "evoked the rituals of gay sadomasochistic sex," complete with nudity, blindfolds, rope-bound penises, the consumption of excrement (actually bananas and peanut butter), and anal penetration. Patricia Morrisroe, *Mapplethorpe: A Biography* (New York: Random House, 1995), 29–31.
- 5 Patti Smith, *Just Kids* (New York: Ecco, 2010), 74, 78. Although the two parted as lovers, they remained friends until the photographer's death.
- 6 Among the precedents for these images are Victorian scrapbook imagery, Roman Catholic prayer cards, and souvenir postcards featuring the pope that are sold near the Vatican.
- 7 Smith, *Just Kids*, 62.
- 8 When Mapplethorpe was at Pratt Institute, he is said to have carried around the skull of his deceased monkey, Scratch. Morrisroe, *Mapplethorpe*, 41–42.
- 9 Cohn died of AIDS-related complications in 1986. Before his death he had repeatedly denied rumors that he was being treated for AIDS. Albin Krebs, "Roy Cohn, Aide to McCarthy and Fierly Lawyer, Dies at 59," *New York Times*, August 3, 1986, <http://partners.nytimes.com/library/national/science/aids/080386sci-aids.html> (accessed April 15, 2015).
- 10 Reproduced in Sylvia Wolf, *Polaroids: Mapplethorpe* (New York: Prestel; Whitney Museum of American Art, 2007), 27.
- 11 David Croland, online text to accompany the exhibition *Robert Mapplethorpe: Fashion Show*, Alison Jacques Gallery, London, July 13, 2013, <http://www.alisonjacquesgallery.com/usr/library/documents/david-croland-text-david-croland-text.pdf> (accessed March 24, 2015).
- 12 Francesco Scavullo, *Scavullo: Photographs, 50 Years* (New York: Abrams, 1997), 47.
- 13 See Morrisroe, *Mapplethorpe*, 108; and Smith, *Just Kids*, 190.
- 14 Philip Gefter, *Wagstaff: Before and After Mapplethorpe* (New York: Liveright, 2014), 167–68.
- 15 Grove, "Robert Mapplethorpe's Self-Portraits," 47.
- 16 Morrisroe, *Mapplethorpe*, 43. Mapplethorpe could also have seen Egon Schiele's vibrant, tortured nude self-portraits at Serge Sabarsky's Madison Avenue gallery (1968–85), which specialized in Austrian and German Expressionist art.
- 17 Smith, *Just Kids*, 49.
- 18 *Richard Avedon: Photographer* was presented at the Marlborough Gallery September 10–October 4, 1975.
- 19 Hilton Kramer, "Avedon's Lens Celebrates Celebrity," *New York Times*, September 11, 1975; and Kramer, "Avedon's Work Leaves Us Skeptical," *New York Times*, September 21, 1975.
- 20 Smith, *Just Kids*, 276.
- 21 Richard Meyer, "Imagining Sadomasochism: Robert Mapplethorpe and the Masquerade of Photography," *Qui Parle* 4, no. 1 (Fall 1990): 67–68.
- 22 Barbara Moynihan, with photographs by Fred W. McDarrah, "Portraits: The State of the Art," *Village Voice*, January 7, 1980, 44–45.
- 23 Ben Lifson, "The Philistine Photographer: Reassessing Mapplethorpe," *Village Voice*, April 9, 1979, 79.
- 24 Hilton Kramer, "Robert Mapplethorpe," *New York Times*, April 6, 1979.
- 25 In 1981–82 Andy Warhol and Christopher Makos made Polaroid portraits of Warhol in drag, which were said to be homages to Man Ray's portraits of Marcel Duchamp in the guise of his female alter ego, Rose Sélavy. See Christoph Heinrich and Candace Breitz, *Andy Warhol: Photography* (Hamburg, Germany: Hamburg Kunsthalle; Pittsburgh: Andy Warhol Museum; Zurich and New York: Stemmler, 1999), 220–21.
- 26 Metzner remembers that Mapplethorpe had arrived from a doctor's appointment when they began. My thanks to her for recounting her session with him in an e-mail communication, December 16, 2014.
- 27 Morrisroe, *Mapplethorpe*, 268–70. Mapplethorpe had a bacterial ear infection, relatively rare in adults, and swollen lymph nodes.
- 28 *Ibid.*, 270.
- 29 See Gefter, *Wagstaff*, 354.
- 30 *Ibid.*, 377. Wagstaff died on January 14, 1987.
- 31 Grove, "Robert Mapplethorpe's Self-Portraits," 221.
- 32 This photograph references an early Polaroid self-portrait in which Mapplethorpe is shirtless in a leather vest and shaking his head, whether in pain, ecstasy, anger, or a combination of sensations and feelings. See Richard Marshall, *Robert Mapplethorpe* (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, in association with New York Graphic Society Books; Boston: Little, Brown, 1988), 30. The image also recalls the Futurist sculpture *Profilo continuo del Duce* (*Continuous Profile of Mussolini*; 1933), which Mapplethorpe owned and photographed (see plate 137).
- 33 I am grateful to Brian English for relating this story to me during an interview in Los Angeles on August 3, 2014.
- 34 Doris Krystof, "Call Gillian: Masks, Identity and Performativity," in *Gillian Wearing* (London: Whitechapel Gallery and Ridinghouse; Düsseldorf: Kunst-sammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, 2012), 18. This is one of a group of six self-portraits Wearing has made using the faces of other artists. The other works are *Me as Arbus* (2008), *Me as Warhol in Drag with Scar* (2010), *Me as Sander* (2012), *Me as Cahun Holding a Mask of My Face* (2012), and *Me as Weegee* (2013).
- 35 The process for creating these masks is long and complicated, involving a sculptor, painters, and a wigmaker. After a clay cast is made on Wearing's face of the subject, it is then overlaid with a sculpture of the mask of the subject; then all of it is cast in silicone. When Wearing takes the photograph, the composite mask is glued onto her face for a session that can take six hours, because the expression is hard to maintain. See "Gillian Wearing Takeover: Behind the Mask—The Self Portraits," *Guardian*, March 27, 2012, <http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/gallery/2012/mar/27/gillian-wearing-takeover-mask> (accessed April 15, 2015).

CHRONOLOGY

Compiled by Karlyn Olvido



Robert Mapplethorpe (left) with his mother, Joan; brother James; sister Nancy; father, Harry; and brother Edward, ca. 1958

November 4, 1946

Robert Michael Mapplethorpe is born at Irwin Sanitarium in Queens, New York, the third child of Joan and Harry Mapplethorpe. His parents are Roman Catholic. Ultimately, Robert will have five siblings: Nancy (b. 1943), Richard (b. 1945), Susan (b. 1949), James (b. 1958), and Edward (b. 1960).

1949

August: Mapplethorpe's parents purchase their first and only home, at 83-12 259th Street in Floral Park, Queens.



Robert Mapplethorpe and his mother on the day of his first Communion, ca. 1954-56

1960

June: Graduates from Floral Park's P.S. 172 middle school.

Enrolls at Martin Van Buren High School in Queens Village.

1963

At sixteen, graduates from high school, moves away from home, and matriculates at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn to study advertising design.

Joins the ROTC unit at Pratt, later pledging to the Pershing Rifles, a fraternal military honor society.

Is nearly caught stealing a pornographic magazine in Times Square.

1965

Changes major at Pratt from advertising design to graphic arts with an emphasis in sculpture, painting, and drawing.

1966

Summer: Works as a counselor at St. Vincent's Boys Camp in Delaware.

1967

Meets Patti Smith toward the end of Pratt's spring semester and moves into an apartment with her near the school.

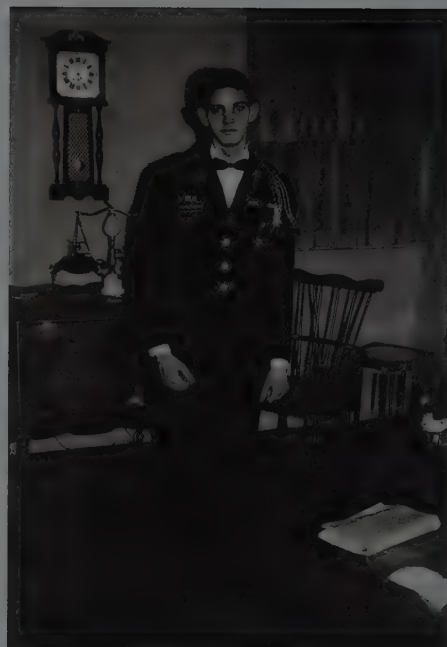
Works as a window trimmer for F.A.O. Schwarz toy store in New York.

1968

Creates collages using imagery associated with black magic and Catholicism. Makes boxes, altarpieces, and triptychs inspired by the work of Joseph Cornell and Marcel Duchamp.

Drafts a number of large constructions but is unable to assemble them because he does not have the necessary funds or space.

Travels to San Francisco, without Smith.



Robert Mapplethorpe in his Pershing Rifles uniform, ca. 1963

1969

In his final year at Pratt, fails a psychology exam, which prevents him from graduating. Withdraws from the school.

July: Moves into the Chelsea Hotel in Manhattan with Smith. In November, they move into a larger room on the second floor. The hotel is a well-known magnet for bohemian artists, writers, and musicians.

Mapplethorpe and Smith meet members of Andy Warhol's Factory cohort at the nightclub/restaurant Max's Kansas City. Among them are Jackie Curtis, Candy Darling, Danny Fields, Gerard Malanga, and Viva.

Mapplethorpe is hired as an ad hoc photographer for Warhol's *Interview* magazine.

Introduces spray paint and sexual imagery from porn magazines into his mixed-media collages.

Begins to design and sell jewelry.

Mapplethorpe and Smith end their sexual relationship but remain friends.



Judy Linn (American, b. 1947), *Robert Mapplethorpe and Patti Smith at the Chelsea Hotel, Room 204, 1970*. Gelatin silver print, 50.8 × 60.9 cm (20 × 24 in.). Courtesy of the Susanne Hilberry Gallery

1970

May 25: Meets David Croland, an illustration artist and model; they begin a relationship. Croland will introduce Mapplethorpe to several influential people in the art world, including Henry Geldzahler, curator of twentieth-century art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

Mapplethorpe is included in the group show *Clothing as Art* (organized by Stanley Amos) at the Chelsea Hotel. It is the first exhibition outside of school to include Mapplethorpe's work.

Filmmaker and photographer Sandy Daley, a Chelsea Hotel resident, shares her photo books with Mapplethorpe and lends him a Polaroid camera.

Daley films *Robert Having His Nipple Pierced* (Patti Smith later provides a spoken-word soundtrack). Dr. Herb Krohn, resident physician at the Chelsea Hotel, assists with the procedure.

Moves with Smith into a loft at 206 West 23rd Street, with space for Mapplethorpe to make larger and more elaborate constructions.

Smith meets poet and musician Jim Carroll, who moves into the 23rd Street loft.

1971

July 3: Through Croland, meets John McKendry, curator of prints and photography at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, who allows Mapplethorpe and Smith access to the museum's photography archives. Mapplethorpe takes an interest in the printing process and in the



David Gahr (American, 1922–2008), *Patti Smith at Chelsea Hotel, 1971*. Gelatin silver print. Estate of David Gahr

concept of photography as fine art; he is particularly intrigued by the work of Alfred Stieglitz and Paul Strand.

Travels to London with McKendry, who introduces Mapplethorpe to figures in the international art scene.

McKendry gives a Polaroid camera to Mapplethorpe, who begins to focus his art practice on photography.

Receives a grant from the Polaroid Corporation.

November 4: An exhibition of Mapplethorpe's constructions and collages opens at the Chelsea Hotel. The artist, then in Paris, turns twenty-five.

November 24: Daley's film *Robert Having His Nipple Pierced* is screened at New York's Museum of Modern Art.

Musician Allen Lanier, Smith's boyfriend, moves into the 23rd Street loft.

1972

Begins searching for tintypes and photographs at thrift stores and flea markets.

Croland introduces Mapplethorpe to Samuel J. Wagstaff Jr., the former curator of contemporary art at the Detroit Institute of Arts, and former senior curator and curator of paintings, prints, and drawings at the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford, Connecticut

Wagstaff gives Mapplethorpe a Hasselblad camera.

Receives \$15,000 from Wagstaff to purchase a studio loft at 24 Bond Street, close to Wagstaff's residence at 54 Bond Street.

Smith and Mapplethorpe move out of the 23rd Street loft.

1973

January 6: *Polaroids*, Mapplethorpe's first solo gallery exhibition, opens at New York's Light Gallery.

January 27: Wagstaff purchases Mapplethorpe's photograph *Mickey* from Light Gallery for \$200.

Attends the exhibition *The Painterly Photograph, 1890–1914* at the Metropolitan Museum of Art with Wagstaff.

With Mapplethorpe's encouragement, Wagstaff purchases several photographs by Baron Wilhelm von Gloeden from a magazine vendor.

Begins sending film to commercial printers to produce gelatin silver prints.

Exhibits Polaroids alongside the work of Brigid Polk and Warhol at New York's Gotham Book Mart.

Commissioned by Smith to shoot the cover image for her book of poems *Witt* (published by Gotham Book Mart).

August–September: Visits Fire Island, New York, with Wagstaff.

1974

Gives \$1,000 to Smith in support of her music career. She uses the gift to record "Piss Factory" and "Hey Joe" at New York's Electric Lady Studios.



Robert Mapplethorpe (American, 1946–1989), *Princess Margaret and Reinaldo Herrera*, negative 1976; print 2010. Gelatin silver print, 35 × 35 cm (13¾ × 13¾ in.). Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art

1975

Photographs Smith for the cover of her album *Horses*; the shoot takes place at Wagstaff's penthouse at 1 Fifth Avenue.

Makes dye transfer prints, including images of the archbishop of Canterbury, Allen Ginsberg, McKendry, and Smith.

June 23: McKendry dies of complications from liver disease.

1976

Photographs socialites, musicians, artists, members of the s/m underground, and porn stars.

Shoots the cover image for the band Television's album *Marquee Moon*.

British socialite Catherine Tennant invites Mapplethorpe to the Caribbean island of Mustique (owned by her stepbrother Colin Tennant). Mapplethorpe photographs celebrity guests, such as Princess Margaret and Spanish aristocrat Reinaldo Herrera, at Colin Tennant's Gold Ball for *Interview* magazine.

Travels to London, where he photographs celebrities and prominent social figures, such as Isabel and Rose Lambton and musician Marianne Faithfull.

1977

Increasingly incorporates s/m subjects into his photography. Begins to make photographs that will form the X Portfolio.

February 5: Two exhibitions, collectively titled *Pictures*, open in New York: a show of sex images at The Kitchen and a show of portraits at Holly Solomon Gallery (this installation is supervised by Wagstaff). Wagstaff hosts a party at the restaurant at 1 Fifth Avenue to celebrate the openings.

March 10: Wagstaff purchases a portrait of Smith by Mapplethorpe from Holly Solomon Gallery for \$600.

Holly Solomon successfully petitions to have Mapplethorpe's photographs exhibited at Documenta 6 in Kassel, Germany.

December 10: Wagstaff purchases Mapplethorpe's *Tuber Rose* from Holly Solomon Gallery for \$400.

1978

January 18: *Robert Mapplethorpe: Photographs*, the artist's first solo museum exhibition, opens at the Chrysler Museum in Norfolk, Virginia. The Chrysler publishes the first catalogue to accompany an exhibition of Mapplethorpe's work; it includes an essay by the museum's director, Mario Amaya.

February 17: An exhibition of vintage photographs from Mapplethorpe's collection opens at the University of California, Berkeley. Included are works by Berenice Abbott, Julia Margaret Cameron, Peter Henry Emerson, Frederick Evans, Roger Fenton, Lewis Hine, Man Ray, Baron Adolph de Meyer, Eadweard Muybridge, Edward Steichen, Carleton Watkins, and Minor White.

February 21: San Francisco's Simon Lowinsky Gallery presents Mapplethorpe's first solo gallery exhibition outside New York.

March 11: *Seven Artists' Views of the Male Image*, including works by Mapplethorpe, opens at Robert Samuels Gallery in New York.

Directs the short black-and-white film *Patti Smith: Still Moving*.

June 7: *Film and Stills*, a two-artist show of works by Mapplethorpe and Smith, opens at Robert Miller Gallery in New York. Robert Miller becomes Mapplethorpe's exclusive dealer.

June 15: La Remise du Parc gallery in Paris presents Mapplethorpe's first solo exhibition in Europe.

August: The exhibition *Bondage and Discipline* opens at the Los Angeles Institute of Contemporary Art.

Focuses on figure studies and portraits of black men. Collaborates with Miller and photography dealers Harry Lunn and Robert Self to publish limited editions of the X Portfolio (s/m images) and Y Portfolio (floral images).



ROBERT MAPPLETHORPE PHOTOGRAPHS

Robert Mapplethorpe (American, 1946–1989), *Cedric*, 1977. Cover of exhibition catalogue *Robert Mapplethorpe: Photographs* (Norfolk, VA: Chrysler Museum, 1978)

1979

Receives a grant from New York State Creative Artists Public Service Program.

Meets bodybuilder Lisa Lyon at a party in New York. Mapplethorpe photographs Lyon in his Bond Street loft the following day. They will go on to collaborate on numerous figure studies and portraits.

March 17: The exhibition *Trade-Off: Lynn Davis and Robert Mapplethorpe* opens at the International Center of Photography in New York. The show features portraits of same sitters by Davis and Mapplethorpe, along with the artists' portraits of each other.

Smith leaves New York for Detroit as her popularity as a rock musician increases. Mapplethorpe makes a photograph of her in Wagstaff's apartment for the cover of her album *Wave*.

Begins working with master printer Tom Baril.

Wagstaff purchases Mapplethorpe's *Joe with Mirror* from Robert Miller Gallery for \$1,500.

Solo exhibitions in Amsterdam, Houston, and New York.

1980

With Lyon, visits Joshua Tree, California; Fire Island, New York; and Amsterdam.

Artforum editor Ingrid Sischy publishes Mapplethorpe's photographs of Lyon in the magazine.

Meets Milton Moore at Keller's, a New York gay bar. Moore, an ex-Navy serviceman, models for Mapplethorpe at the artist's Bond Street residence.



Top: Robert Mapplethorpe (American, 1946–1989), *Lynn Davis*, 1979. Gelatin silver print, 35.3 × 35.5 cm (13³/₈ × 14 in.). Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art

Bottom: Lynn Davis (American, b. 1944), *Portrait of Robert Mapplethorpe*, 1979. Gelatin silver print, 38.6 × 38.6 cm (15¹/₈ × 15³/₈ in.). Gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 2012.7.2



Meets Jack Walls, a Navy veteran, who moves into the Bleecker Street apartment.

May 24: Auctions off approximately one-fifth of the photographs in his collection—including works by Cameron, Walker Evans, Hine, and de Meyer—at Sotheby's, New York. Builds on his ongoing collections of Arts and Crafts furniture, Scandinavian ceramics, 1950s Italian glass, and photographs.

The Crucifix Show opens at Barbara Gladstone Gallery in New York. The exhibition includes fifty Mapplethorpe photographs among work by other artists such as Brice Marden, Sol LeWitt, and Richard Artschwager.

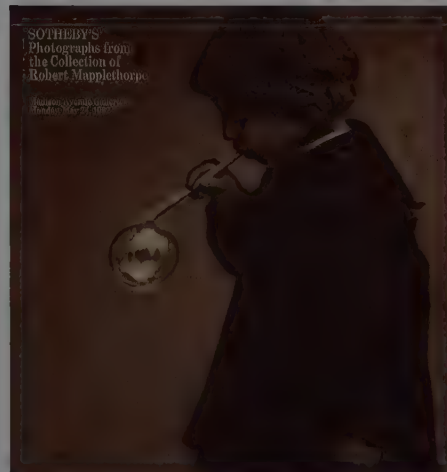
Solo exhibitions in Amsterdam, Atlanta, Chicago, Fire Island, New York, Los Angeles, New Orleans, Rome, Tokyo, Utrecht (Netherlands), and Zurich.

1983

Begins experimenting with Cibachrome (silver-dye bleach) prints; Mapplethorpe will continue to produce these occasionally until 1985.

Begins making platinum prints.

Photographs bodybuilders Ken Moody and Lydia Cheng. Dimitri Levas joins the studio as an assistant and photo stylist. Levas will work with Mapplethorpe until the artist's death.



Photographs from the Collection of Robert Mapplethorpe (auction catalogue), Sotheby's, New York, May 24, 1982



Robert Mapplethorpe (American, 1946–1989), *Lisa and Robert*, 1982. Gelatin silver print, 38.8 × 48.8 cm (15¹/₈ × 19³/₈ in.). Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art

Warhol and Mapplethorpe make portraits of each other.

Mapplethorpe's *Lady: Lisa Lyon*, with a foreword by Wagstaff and text by Bruce Chatwin, is published by Viking. Leo Castelli exhibits images from the book. The Lyon photographs are featured in *Elle* magazine.

Mapplethorpe's wall-mounted sculptures are exhibited at Robert Miller Gallery.

August: Travels to Italy to attend the opening of *Robert Mapplethorpe: Fotografie* at Centro di Documentazione di Palazzo Fortuny in Venice. (The exhibition travels to Florence.)

November: Travels to London to see the retrospective *Robert Mapplethorpe, 1970–1983* at the Institute of Contemporary Arts with Lyon, Sischy, and Wagstaff. (The exhibition tours the United Kingdom, to Bristol, Edinburgh, Nottingham, and Oxford. The accompanying catalogue includes texts by critics Stuart Morgan and Alan Hollinghurst.)

Other solo exhibitions in Düsseldorf, London, Milwaukee, Munich, New York, Paris, Rennes (France), Tokyo, and Toronto.

1984

Continues making platinum prints, working with Martin Axon of Platinum Press in New Haven, Connecticut.

Directs *Lady*, a short color film, starring Lyon.

Solo exhibitions in Amsterdam, Apeldoorn (Netherlands), Boston, Brussels, Chicago, and San Francisco.

1981

October: The solo exhibition *Black Males* opens at Robert Miller Gallery in New York.

Z Portfolio, photographs of black men, is published by Lunn and Miller.

November: Mapplethorpe and Moore move into a small apartment at 77 Bleecker Street; Mapplethorpe retains his Bond Street space as a studio and darkroom.

Other solo exhibitions in Basel, Berlin, Brussels, Frankfurt, Los Angeles, Paris, San Francisco, and Washington, D.C.

1982

With Lyon, visits Jamaica and Los Angeles.

April 1: Edward Mapplethorpe, the photographer's youngest brother, begins work as an assistant and printer at the Bond Street studio.

April 14: Wagstaff purchases Mapplethorpe's Z Portfolio for \$1,250.



Left: Andy Warhol (American, 1928–1987), *Portrait of Robert Mapplethorpe*, 1983. Synthetic polymer silkscreen on canvas, 101.6 × 101.6 cm (40 × 40 in.). Private collection

Right: Robert Mapplethorpe (American, 1946–1989), *Ed Moxey* (a.k.a. Edward Mapplethorpe), 1983. Gelatin silver print, 48.7 × 38.5 cm (19 1/8 × 15 1/8 in.). Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art

Receives a general support grant of \$15,000 from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA).

Designs a phallus-shaped coffee table (later produced by ARC International).

Commissioned by Morgans Hotel in New York to make photolithographs of flowers for guest rooms.

Solo exhibitions in Hartford, Connecticut, Naples (Italy), Madrid, Montreal, Munich, and Tokyo.

1985

Makes photogravure works with Graphicstudio, University of South Florida, in Tampa; this studio will continue to make photogravures for Mapplethorpe until the artist's death.

Mapplethorpe's *Certain People: A Book of Portraits* is published by Twelvemtree Press.

Swiss gallerist and collector Bruno Bischofberger commissions Mapplethorpe to photograph his collection of art glass.

New Works in Platinum opens at Robert Miller Gallery.

Wagstaff purchases a \$500,000 loft for Mapplethorpe at 35 West 23rd Street.

Solo exhibitions in Atlanta, Chicago, Lisbon, Madrid, Milwaukee, New York, Paris, and San Francisco.

1986

Begins printing images in platinum on linen and producing photogravures on silk.

Designs sets for choreographer-dancer Lucinda Childs's performance *Portraits in Reflection*, presented at New York's Joyce Theater.

Photographs fashion advertisements for designer Miguel Cruz (will continue working with Cruz for three seasons).

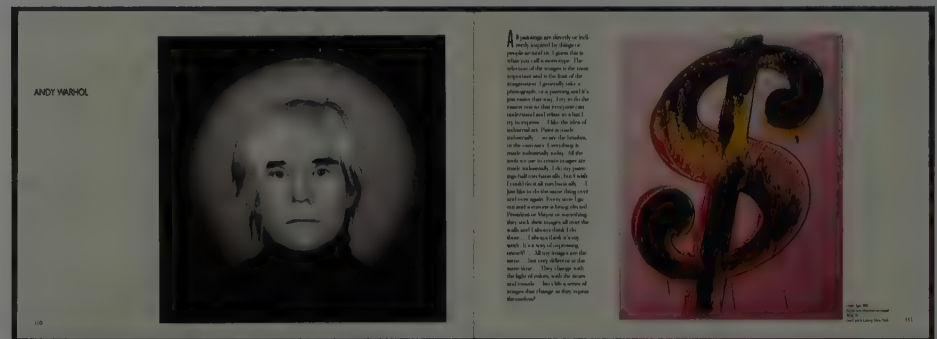
Commissioned by Whitney Museum of American Art curator Richard Marshall to make portraits for the book *50 New York Artists: A Critical Selection of Painters and Sculptors Working in New York* (published by Chronicle). Subjects of these portraits include Louise Bourgeois, Jasper Johns, Louise Nevelson, Andy Warhol, among others, and Mapplethorpe himself.

Mapplethorpe's *Black Book*, with a foreword by Ntozake Shange, is published by St. Martin's.

Makes photogravures for *A Season in Hell* by Arthur Rimbaud, translated by Paul Schmidt (New York: Limited Editions Club).

September: Admitted to New York's Beth Israel Hospital with pneumonia and is diagnosed with AIDS.

Solo exhibitions in Bologna (Italy), Chicago, Houston, New York, and South Yarra, Victoria (Australia).



Pages 110–111 from Richard Marshall's *50 New York Artists: A Critical Selection of Painters and Sculptors Working in New York*, with portraits by Robert Mapplethorpe (San Francisco: Chronicle, 1986)

1987

January 14: Wagstaff dies of AIDS-related complications. Mapplethorpe and photography curator Maria Morris Hambourg organize his memorial service, which takes place at the Metropolitan Museum of Art on March 2. Mapplethorpe inherits the majority of Wagstaff's estate, valued at between five and seven million dollars.

Works on a series of color photographs of flowers.

Photographs Smith in Los Angeles for the cover of her album *Dream of Life*.

Shoots the cover image for Laurie Anderson's album *Strange Angels* (released in 1989).



Geometric coffee table designed by Robert Mapplethorpe and produced by ARC International



Robert Mapplethorpe (American, 1946–1989), *Miguel Cruz*, 1986. Gelatin silver print, 58.8 × 48.9 cm (23¼ × 19¼ in.). Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art

Solo exhibitions in Berlin, Cologne, Geneva, London, Milan, New Orleans, New York, Piran (Ljubljana, Yugoslavia), and San Francisco.

1988

Mapplethorpe's health deteriorates; he is admitted to St. Vincent's Hospital in New York twice for antibiotic treatments.

Creates portraits for the cover of *Splash* magazine; subjects include Debbie Harry, Isabella Rossellini, and Brooke Shields.

Shoots the cover image for Paul Simon's album *Negotiations and Love Songs*.

July 27: The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation is established to ensure his artistic legacy, to provide grants for photography exhibitions and publications, and, later, to help fund HIV/AIDS medical research. The Foundation will be the residuary recipient of Mapplethorpe's estate.

July 28: *Robert Mapplethorpe*, the first U.S. museum retrospective of Mapplethorpe's work, opens to the public at New York's Whitney Museum of American Art. The catalogue includes a text by curator Richard Marshall. Mapplethorpe attends the opening.

The Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA) at the University of Pennsylvania, in Philadelphia, organizes the traveling exhibition *Robert Mapplethorpe: The Perfect Moment*, curated by Janet Kardon, partly supported with a \$30,000 grant from the NEA. The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation offers its first grant to the ICA to subsidize the production of an accompanying catalogue, with texts by David Joselit, Kardon, Kay Larson, and Smith.

New Color Work opens at Robert Miller Gallery.



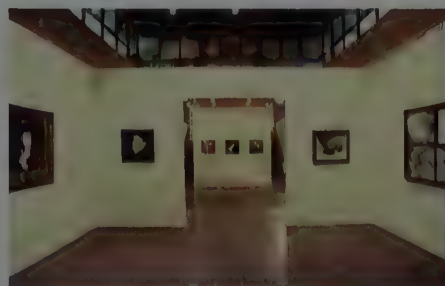
Robert Mapplethorpe at the opening reception of his retrospective at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, July 27, 1988. Photograph by Jonathan Becker

December 9: *Robert Mapplethorpe: The Perfect Moment* opens at the ICA in Philadelphia; Mapplethorpe is too ill to attend the event. (The exhibition travels to Chicago; Washington, D.C.; Hartford, Connecticut; Berkeley, California; Cincinnati; and Boston)

Other solo exhibitions in Amsterdam, Chicago, London, Lucerne (Switzerland), New York, Paris, Santa Monica (California), Seattle, and Washington, D.C.

1989

January 20: Mapplethorpe sells Wagstaff's silver collection at Christie's in New York.



Installation view of *Robert Mapplethorpe: The Perfect Moment* at the Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, 1988

February 25: *The Perfect Moment* opens at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago.

Photographs U.S. Surgeon General C. Everett Koop for the April 24 issue of *Time* magazine.

March 1: Travels to Boston's New England Deaconess Hospital for the experimental treatment CD4 for HIV-positive patients, but is too weak to undergo the treatment.

March 9: At approximately 6 a.m. Mapplethorpe dies in the hospital due to respiratory failure.

March 14: The Mapplethorpe family holds a funeral mass at Our Lady of the Snows in Queens.

May 18: A memorial service for Mapplethorpe is held at the Whitney Museum of American Art.

June 12: Christina Orr-Cahall, director of Washington, D.C.'s Corcoran Gallery of Art, cancels the museum's scheduled presentation of *The Perfect Moment*.

June 30: Protesters project images of Mapplethorpe's photographs onto the facade of the Corcoran Gallery in response to the museum's decision to cancel *The Perfect Moment*.

July 22: The Washington Project for the Arts (WPA) hosts *The Perfect Moment*.

PLATE LIST

All works are by Robert Mapplethorpe.

The majority of the prints listed here are lifetime, that is, made under the artist's supervision. Later print dates indicate one of two circumstances: 1. the printing of an edition determined by Mapplethorpe was not completed during his lifetime, and The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation (RMF) made a posthumous print to complete the edition; 2. the entire edition was sold or otherwise placed before 2011, when the collection was acquired by the Getty and LACMA, and therefore RMF made a posthumous exhibition print in order to provide the Los Angeles institutions with a complete collection of the artist's work.

The terms "Polaroid" and "dye transfer print" are being substituted with "dye diffusion print" and "dye imbibition print," respectively, in modern scholarship.

PART 1

Constructing an Image

- 1** *Tie Rack*, 1969
Chromolithograph, colored pencil, stained plywood, Plexiglas, metal crucifix, black thread, needles, black neckties, framed by the artist
Image: 50.5 × 39.8 cm (19 $\frac{3}{8}$ × 15 $\frac{3}{16}$ in.)
Object (whole): 60.5 × 45.8 × 10.3 cm (23 $\frac{3}{16}$ × 18 $\frac{1}{16}$ × 4 $\frac{1}{16}$ in.)
Jointly acquired by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; partial gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation; partial purchase with funds provided by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the David Geffen Foundation
2011.9.1
- 2** *Untitled (3 T-shirts)*, 1970
Fabric, wood, framed by the artist
Object (each frame): 53.6 × 53.6 × 3 cm (21 $\frac{1}{8}$ × 21 $\frac{1}{8}$ × 1 $\frac{3}{16}$ in.)
Jointly acquired by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; partial gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation; partial purchase with funds provided by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the David Geffen Foundation
2011.9.3
- 3** *Untitled (Nude with spool)*, 1970
Hand-colored and painted gelatin silver print, wooden spool with thread, framed by the artist
Image: 17 × 12 cm (6 $\frac{1}{16}$ × 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.)
Frame: 19.5 × 14.3 × 4.2 cm (7 $\frac{1}{2}$ × 5 $\frac{5}{8}$ × 1 $\frac{6}{16}$ in.)
Jointly acquired by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; partial gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation; partial purchase with funds provided by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the David Geffen Foundation
2011.9.4
- 4** *Untitled (Skull)*, 1972
Photo transfer and acrylic on canvas, framed by the artist
Image: 22 × 29.6 cm (8 $\frac{1}{16}$ × 11 $\frac{5}{16}$ in.)
Frame: 25.9 × 33.3 × 2.6 cm (10 $\frac{3}{16}$ × 13 $\frac{3}{8}$ × 1 in.)
Jointly acquired by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; partial gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation; partial purchase with funds provided by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the David Geffen Foundation
2011.9.5
- 5** *Self-Portrait*, 1972
Dye diffusion print, framed by the artist
Image (irregular): 10.7 × 8.5 cm (4 $\frac{3}{16}$ × 3 $\frac{3}{8}$ in.)
Sheet (calendar page): 19.2 × 12.8 cm (7 $\frac{1}{16}$ × 5 $\frac{1}{16}$ in.)
Frame: 33 × 27.7 × 2 cm (13 × 10 $\frac{7}{8}$ × 1 $\frac{3}{16}$ in.)
Gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
2012.20.2
- 6** *Leatherman #1*, 1970
Mixed media, framed by the artist
Image: 24 × 17.2 cm (9 $\frac{1}{16}$ × 6 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.)
Frame: 38 × 48 × 2.5 cm (14 $\frac{1}{16}$ × 18 $\frac{7}{8}$ × 1 in.)
Jointly acquired by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; partial gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation; partial purchase with funds provided by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the David Geffen Foundation
2011.9.2
- 7** *Andy Warhol*, 1972
Mixed media, framed by the artist
Image (irregular): 28 × 21.8 cm (11 × 8 $\frac{5}{16}$ in.)
Frame: 48.5 × 42.5 × 2.5 cm (19 $\frac{1}{8}$ × 16 $\frac{3}{8}$ × 1 in.)
Jointly acquired by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; partial gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation; partial purchase with funds provided by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the David Geffen Foundation
2011.9.6
- 8** *Untitled*, ca. 1973
Dye diffusion prints, framed by the artist
Image (each): 9.5 × 7.3 cm (3 $\frac{3}{4}$ × 2 $\frac{7}{8}$ in.)
Frame: 27.5 × 28.8 × 4 cm (10 $\frac{3}{16}$ × 11 $\frac{3}{16}$ × 1 $\frac{5}{16}$ in.)
Jointly acquired by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; partial gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation; partial purchase with funds provided by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the David Geffen Foundation
2011.9.8
- 9** *Sam Wagstaff*, ca. 1972
Dye diffusion print
Image: 11.4 × 8.9 cm (4 $\frac{1}{2}$ × 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.)
Sheet: 14.6 × 10.7 cm (5 $\frac{3}{16}$ × 4 $\frac{3}{16}$ in.)
Jointly acquired by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; partial gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation; partial purchase with funds provided by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the David Geffen Foundation
2011.9.46
- 10** *Untitled (Manfred)*, ca. 1974
Dye diffusion print
Image: 11.4 × 8.9 cm (4 $\frac{1}{2}$ × 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.)
Sheet: 14.6 × 10.7 cm (5 $\frac{3}{16}$ × 4 $\frac{3}{16}$ in.)
Jointly acquired by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; partial gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation; partial purchase with funds provided by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the David Geffen Foundation
2011.9.58
- 11** *Untitled (David Croland)*, ca. 1973
Dye diffusion print
Image: 11.4 × 8.9 cm (4 $\frac{1}{2}$ × 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.)
Sheet: 14.6 × 10.7 cm (5 $\frac{3}{16}$ × 4 $\frac{3}{16}$ in.)
Gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
2012.20.1.44
- 12** *Untitled (Marianne Faithfull)*, 1974
Dye diffusion print
Image: 11.4 × 8.9 cm (4 $\frac{1}{2}$ × 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.)
Sheet: 14.6 × 10.6 cm (5 $\frac{3}{4}$ × 4 $\frac{3}{16}$ in.)
Gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
2012.20.1.8
- 13** *Untitled (Terry)*, 1974
Dye diffusion print
Image: 11.4 × 8.9 cm (4 $\frac{1}{2}$ × 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.)
Sheet: 14.6 × 10.7 cm (5 $\frac{3}{4}$ × 4 $\frac{3}{16}$ in.)
Gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
2012.20.1.26
- 14** *Untitled (Randy)*, 1975
Dye diffusion print
Image: 11.4 × 8.9 cm (4 $\frac{1}{2}$ × 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.)
Sheet: 14.6 × 10.6 cm (5 $\frac{3}{4}$ × 4 $\frac{3}{16}$ in.)
Gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
2012.20.1.30

- 15** *Untitled* triptych (Ruth Kligman), ca. 1972
Dye diffusion prints in album page
Image (each): 8.9 × 11.4 cm (3½ × 4½ in.)
Album page: 26 × 14.1 cm (10¼ × 5½ in.)
Jointly acquired by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; partial gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation; partial purchase with funds provided by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the David Geffen Foundation
2011.9.60
- 16** *Alex*, 1973
Blue-toned gelatin silver print, framed by the artist
Image: 35 × 27.2 cm (13¾ × 10⅞ in.)
Frame: 53.1 × 45 × 1.8 cm (20⅞ × 17⅝ × ⅞ in.)
Jointly acquired by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; partial gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation; partial purchase with funds provided by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the David Geffen Foundation
2011.9.9
- 17** *Untitled* (Charles and Jim), 1974
Dye diffusion print
Image: 8.8 × 11.4 cm (3⅝ × 4½ in.)
Sheet: 10.6 × 14.6 cm (4⅜ × 5¾ in.)
Jointly acquired by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; partial gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation; partial purchase with funds provided by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the David Geffen Foundation
2011.9.56
- 18** *Diane and Merlow*, 1974
Three gelatin silver prints, framed by the artist
Image (left): 23.8 × 18.5 cm (9⅜ × 7⅝ in.)
Image (center): 33.8 × 26.2 cm (13⅝ × 10⅝ in.)
Image (right): 46.2 × 35.9 cm (18⅜ × 14⅞ in.)
Frame (irregular): 53.2 × 95.2 × 2.5 cm (20⅝ × 37½ × 1 in.)
Jointly acquired by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; partial gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation; partial purchase with funds provided by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the David Geffen Foundation
2011.9.10
- 19** *John McKendry*, negative 1975; print 1992
Gelatin silver print
Image: 35.7 × 35.4 cm (14⅞ × 13⅝ in.)
Sheet: 50.4 × 40.1 cm (19⅜ × 15⅝ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 20** *David I*, 1974
Two gelatin silver prints, framed by the artist
Image (left): 11.3 × 8.9 cm (4⅜ × 3½ in.)
Image (right): 11.3 × 8.9 cm (4⅜ × 3½ in.)
Frame: 38.1 × 35.5 × 1.9 cm (15 × 14 × ¾ in.)
Jointly acquired by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; partial gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation; partial purchase with funds provided by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the David Geffen Foundation
2011.9.12
- 21** *Untitled* (Self-portrait), ca. 1974
Dye diffusion print
Image: 8.9 × 11.4 cm (3½ × 4½ in.)
Sheet: 10.7 × 14.6 cm (4⅜ × 5¾ in.)
Gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
2012.20.1.38
- 22** *Patti Smith*, 1976
Gelatin silver print
Image: 35 × 35.1 cm (13¾ × 13⅞ in.)
Sheet: 50.6 × 40.1 cm (19⅝ × 15⅝ in.)
Jointly acquired by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, with funds provided by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the David Geffen Foundation
2011.7.4
- 23** *Self-Portrait*, 1975
Gelatin silver print
Image: 35.4 × 35.7 cm (13⅝ × 14⅞ in.)
Sheet: 50.3 × 40.5 cm (19⅜ × 15⅝ in.)
Jointly acquired by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, with funds provided by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the David Geffen Foundation
2011.7.2
- 24** *Kevin Farley*, 1976
Gelatin silver print
Image: 35.5 × 35.5 cm (14 × 14 in.)
Sheet: 50.6 × 40.1 cm (19⅝ × 15⅝ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 25** *Caterine Milinaire*, 1976
Gelatin silver print
Image: 35.4 × 35.4 cm (13⅝ × 13⅝ in.)
Sheet: 50.4 × 40.3 cm (19⅜ × 15⅞ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 26** *David Hockney*, negative 1976; print 2005
Gelatin silver print
Image: 35.1 × 34.9 cm (13⅝ × 13⅞ in.)
Sheet: 50.2 × 40.2 cm (19¾ × 15⅝ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 27** *Rose Lambton*, 1976
Gelatin silver print
Image: 36.6 × 35.9 cm (14⅞ × 14⅞ in.)
Sheet: 50.8 × 40.3 cm (20 × 15⅞ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 28** *François, San Francisco*, 1976
Gelatin silver print
Image: 35.4 × 35.3 cm (13⅝ × 13⅞ in.)
Sheet: 50.5 × 40.3 cm (19⅞ × 15⅞ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 29** *Patti Smith*, negative 1975; print 1995
Gelatin silver print
Image: 35.8 × 35.5 cm (14⅞ × 14 in.)
Sheet: 50.7 × 40.2 cm (19⅝ × 15⅝ in.)
Jointly acquired by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, with funds provided by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the David Geffen Foundation
2011.7.1
- 30** *Jesse McBride*, negative 1976; print 1990
Gelatin silver print
Image: 35.3 × 35.6 cm (13⅞ × 14 in.)
Sheet: 50.2 × 40.4 cm (19¾ × 15⅞ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 31** *Philip Glass and Robert Wilson*, negative 1976; print 2005
Gelatin silver print
Image: 35.3 × 35.5 cm (13⅞ × 14 in.)
Sheet: 50.2 × 40.3 cm (19¾ × 15⅞ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art

PART 2

On the Edge

- 32** *Rebecca Fraser, 1977*
Gelatin silver print
Image: 35.5 × 35.3 cm (14 × 13⁷/₁₆ in.)
Sheet: 50.7 × 40.3 cm (19¹³/₁₆ × 15⁷/₁₆ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 33** *Holly Solomon, negative 1976; print 2005*
Gelatin silver print
Image: 35.3 × 35.5 cm (13⁷/₁₆ × 14 in.)
Sheet: 50.4 × 40.1 cm (19¹³/₁₆ × 15¹³/₁₆ in.)
Jointly acquired by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, with funds provided by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the David Geffen Foundation
2011.7.3
- 34** *Peter Berlin, 1977*
Gelatin silver print
Image: 35.5 × 35.7 cm (14 × 14¹/₁₆ in.)
Sheet: 50.8 × 40.4 cm (20 × 15⁷/₁₆ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 35** *Patti Smith, 1975*
Dye imbibition print
Image: 49 × 39.4 cm (19³/₁₆ × 15¹/₂ in.)
Sheet: 50.4 × 40.5 cm (19¹³/₁₆ × 15⁷/₁₆ in.)
Jointly acquired by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, with funds provided by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the David Geffen Foundation
2011.7.33
- 36** *American Flag, 1977*
Gelatin silver print
Image: 35.3 × 35.3 cm (13⁷/₁₆ × 13⁷/₁₆ in.)
Sheet: 50.5 × 40.5 cm (19⁷/₈ × 15³/₁₆ in.)
Jointly acquired by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, with funds provided by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the David Geffen Foundation
2011.7.6
- 37** *Jim, Sausalito, 1977*
Gelatin silver print
Image: 35.2 × 35.3 cm (13⁷/₁₆ × 13⁷/₁₆ in.)
Sheet: 50.1 × 40.2 cm (19³/₄ × 15³/₁₆ in.)
Jointly acquired by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, with funds provided by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the David Geffen Foundation
2011.7.8
- 38** *Patrice, N.Y.C., negative 1977; print 1978*
From the X Portfolio
Selenium-toned gelatin silver print
Image: 19.5 × 19.5 cm (7¹¹/₁₆ × 7¹¹/₁₆ in.)
Mount: 33.8 × 32.5 cm (13³/₁₆ × 12³/₁₆ in.)
Jointly acquired by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Partial gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation; partial purchase with funds provided by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the David Geffen Foundation
- 39** *Joe, N.Y.C., negative 1978; print 1992*
Gelatin silver print
Image: 35.8 × 35.5 cm (14¹/₁₆ × 14 in.)
Sheet: 50.6 × 40.2 cm (19¹³/₁₆ × 15¹³/₁₆ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 40** *Tulips, N.Y.C., negative 1977; print 1978*
From the Y Portfolio
Selenium-toned gelatin silver print
Image: 19.5 × 19.5 cm (7¹¹/₁₆ × 7¹¹/₁₆ in.)
Mount: 33.8 × 32.2 cm (13³/₁₆ × 12³/₁₆ in.)
Jointly acquired by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; partial gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation; partial purchase with funds provided by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the David Geffen Foundation
2011.9.42.1
- 41** *Helmut, N.Y.C., negative 1978; print 2010*
Gelatin silver print
Image: 36 × 35.4 cm (14³/₁₆ × 13¹⁵/₁₆ in.)
Sheet: 50.5 × 40.3 cm (19⁷/₈ × 15⁷/₁₆ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 42** *Scott, N.Y.C., 1978*
Gelatin silver print
Image: 35.2 × 35.4 cm (13⁷/₁₆ × 13¹⁵/₁₆ in.)
Sheet: 50 × 40.5 cm (19¹³/₁₆ × 15⁷/₁₆ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 43** *Self-Portrait, negative 1978; print 2003*
Gelatin silver print
Image: 35.1 × 35.3 cm (13¹³/₁₆ × 13⁷/₁₆ in.)
Sheet: 50 × 39.9 cm (19¹¹/₁₆ × 15¹¹/₁₆ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 44** *Carnation, N.Y.C., 1978*
From the Y Portfolio
Selenium-toned gelatin silver print
Image: 19.4 × 19.5 cm (7⁷/₈ × 7¹¹/₁₆ in.)
Mount: 33.8 × 32.5 cm (13³/₁₆ × 12³/₁₆ in.)
Jointly acquired by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; partial gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation; partial purchase with funds provided by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the David Geffen Foundation
2011.9.42.13
- 45** *Lou, N.Y.C., negative 1978; print 2010*
Gelatin silver print
Image: 35 × 35 cm (13³/₄ × 13³/₄ in.)
Sheet: 50.5 × 40.2 cm (19⁷/₈ × 15¹³/₁₆ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 46** *John, 1978*
Gelatin silver print
Image: 35.4 × 35.3 cm (13¹⁵/₁₆ × 13⁷/₁₆ in.)
Sheet: 50.2 × 40.3 cm (19³/₄ × 15⁷/₁₆ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art

- 47** *Boot Fetish*, 1979
Gelatin silver print
Image: 35.4 × 35.2 cm (13⁵/₁₆ × 13⁷/₁₆ in.)
Sheet: 50.7 × 40.3 cm (19³/₁₆ × 15⁷/₁₆ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 48** *Baby's Breath, N.Y.C.*, 1978
From the Y Portfolio
Selenium-toned gelatin silver print
Image: 19.5 × 19.4 cm (7¹¹/₁₆ × 7⁹/₁₆ in.)
Mount: 33.7 × 32.5 cm (13³/₄ × 12¹³/₁₆ in.)
Jointly acquired by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; partial gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation; partial purchase with funds provided by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the David Geffen Foundation 2011.9.42.10
- 49** *Dick, N.Y.C.*, 1978
From the X Portfolio
Selenium-toned gelatin silver print
Image: 19.5 × 19.5 cm (7¹¹/₁₆ × 7¹¹/₁₆ in.)
Mount: 33.8 × 32.5 cm (13⁵/₁₆ × 12¹³/₁₆ in.)
Jointly acquired by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; partial gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation; partial purchase with funds provided by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the David Geffen Foundation 2011.9.41.12
- 50** *Dominick and Elliot*, 1979
Gelatin silver print
Image: 35.4 × 35.4 cm (13⁵/₁₆ × 13⁵/₁₆ in.)
Sheet: 50.3 × 40.2 cm (19¹³/₁₆ × 15¹³/₁₆ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 51** *Lynn Davis*, 1979
Gelatin silver print
Image: 35.3 × 35.5 cm (13⁷/₁₆ × 14 in.)
Sheet: 50.2 × 40 cm (19³/₁₆ × 15³/₁₆ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 52** *Marcus Leatherdale*, negative 1978; print 2008
Gelatin silver print
Image: 35 × 35 cm (13³/₄ × 13³/₄ in.)
Sheet: 50.5 × 40.4 cm (19⁷/₁₆ × 15⁷/₁₆ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 53** *Phyllis Tweel*, 1979
Gelatin silver print
Image: 35.2 × 35.1 cm (13⁷/₁₆ × 13¹³/₁₆ in.)
Sheet: 50.5 × 40.3 cm (19⁷/₁₆ × 15⁷/₁₆ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 54** *Sybil Walker*, 1979
Gelatin silver print
Image: 35.1 × 35 cm (13¹³/₁₆ × 13³/₄ in.)
Sheet: 50.5 × 40.1 cm (19⁷/₁₆ × 15¹³/₁₆ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 55** *Larry and Bobby Kissing*, negative 1979; print 2005
Gelatin silver print
Image: 45.3 × 34.7 cm (17¹³/₁₆ × 13¹¹/₁₆ in.)
Sheet: 50.5 × 40.2 cm (19⁷/₁₆ × 15¹³/₁₆ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 56** *Patti Smith*, negative 1978; print 2011
Gelatin silver print
Image: 35.3 × 35 cm (13⁷/₁₆ × 13³/₄ in.)
Sheet: 50.8 × 40.4 cm (20 × 15⁷/₁₆ in.)
Gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art 2012.52.28
- 57** *Sam Wagstaff*, 1979
Gelatin silver print
Image: 35.2 × 35.2 cm (13⁷/₁₆ × 13⁷/₁₆ in.)
Sheet: 50.5 × 40.3 cm (19⁷/₁₆ × 15⁷/₁₆ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 58** *Henry Geldzahler*, 1979
Gelatin silver print
Image: 35.1 × 35.1 cm (13¹³/₁₆ × 13¹³/₁₆ in.)
Sheet: 50.7 × 40.3 cm (19¹³/₁₆ × 15⁷/₁₆ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 59** *Marisol*, 1979
Gelatin silver print
Image: 35.1 × 35.1 cm (13¹³/₁₆ × 13¹³/₁₆ in.)
Sheet: 50.6 × 40.4 cm (19¹³/₁₆ × 15⁷/₁₆ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 60** *Female Torso*, negative 1978; print 2009
Gelatin silver print
Image: 48.4 × 37.9 cm (19¹/₁₆ × 14¹³/₁₆ in.)
Sheet: 50.5 × 40.2 cm (19⁷/₁₆ × 15¹³/₁₆ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 61** *Deborah Harry*, negative 1978; print 2011
Gelatin silver print
Image: 35.1 × 35.1 cm (13¹³/₁₆ × 13¹³/₁₆ in.)
Sheet: 50.6 × 40.3 cm (19¹³/₁₆ × 15⁷/₁₆ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 62** *James Ford*, negative 1979; print 1992
Gelatin silver print
Image: 35.7 × 35.5 cm (14¹/₁₆ × 14 in.)
Sheet: 50.3 × 40.3 cm (19¹³/₁₆ × 15⁷/₁₆ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 63** *Hooded Man*, 1980
Gelatin silver print
Image: 44.9 × 35.5 cm (17¹/₁₆ × 14 in.)
Sheet: 50.3 × 40 cm (19¹³/₁₆ × 15³/₁₆ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 64** *Keso Dekker*, 1979
Gelatin silver print
Image: 35.5 × 35.1 cm (14 × 13¹³/₁₆ in.)
Sheet: 50.5 × 40.2 cm (19⁷/₁₆ × 15¹³/₁₆ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 65** *Ajitto*, 1981
From the Z Portfolio
Selenium-toned gelatin silver print
Image: 19.1 × 18.9 cm (7¹/₂ × 7⁵/₁₆ in.)
Mount: 34.3 × 32.5 cm (13³/₂ × 12¹³/₁₆ in.)
Jointly acquired by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; partial gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation; partial purchase with funds provided by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the David Geffen Foundation 2011.9.43.6

- 66 *Dan S.*, negative 1980; print 1981
From the Z Portfolio
Selenium-toned gelatin silver print
Image: 19.1 × 18.9 cm (7½ × 7½ in.)
Mount: 34.3 × 32.5 cm (13½ × 12¾ in.)
Jointly acquired by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; partial gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation; partial purchase with funds provided by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the David Geffen Foundation
2011.9.43.12
- 67 *Raymond Sheldon*, negative 1979; print 1996
Gelatin silver print
Image: 33.4 × 35.6 cm (13¼ × 14 in.)
Sheet: 50.7 × 40.3 cm (19¾ × 15¾ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 68 *Bob Love, N.Y.C.*, 1979
From the Z Portfolio
Selenium-toned gelatin silver print
Image: 19.1 × 18.9 cm (7½ × 7½ in.)
Mount: 34.3 × 32.5 cm (13½ × 12¾ in.)
Jointly acquired by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; partial gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation; partial purchase with funds provided by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the David Geffen Foundation
2011.9.43.13
- 69 *Brian Ridley and Lyle Heeter*, negative 1979; print 1992
Gelatin silver print
Image: 35.6 × 35.5 cm (14 × 14 in.)
Sheet: 50 × 40.2 cm (19¾ × 15¾ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 70 *Phillip Prioleau*, 1979
Gelatin silver print
Image: 34.8 × 34.8 cm (13¾ × 13¾ in.)
Sheet: 50.5 × 40.3 cm (19¾ × 15¾ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 71 *Phillip Prioleau*, 1979
Gelatin silver print
Image: 34.8 × 34.8 cm (13¾ × 13¾ in.)
Sheet: 50.2 × 40.3 cm (19¾ × 15¾ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 72 *Man in Polyester Suit*, negative 1980; print 1981
Gelatin silver print
Image: 45.5 × 35.4 cm (17¾ × 13¾ in.)
Sheet: 50.4 × 40.4 cm (19¾ × 15¾ in.)
Jointly acquired by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, with funds provided by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the David Geffen Foundation
2011.7.12
- 73 *Leland Richard*, 1981
Gelatin silver print
Image: 34.9 × 35.7 cm (13¾ × 14¼ in.)
Sheet: 50.3 × 40.4 cm (19¾ × 15¾ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 74 *Leland Richard*, 1980
Gelatin silver print
Image: 34.9 × 35.5 cm (13¾ × 14 in.)
Sheet: 50.2 × 40 cm (19¾ × 15¾ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 75 *Tim Scott*, 1980
Gelatin silver print
Image: 35.4 × 35.5 cm (13¾ × 14 in.)
Sheet: 50.5 × 40.3 cm (19¾ × 15¾ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 76 *Winter Landscape*, 1979
Gelatin silver print
Image: 35.3 × 35.1 cm (13¾ × 13¾ in.)
Sheet: 50.4 × 40.3 cm (19¾ × 15¾ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 77 *Stephan*, 1980
Gelatin silver print
Image: 34.9 × 34.9 cm (13¾ × 13¾ in.)
Sheet: 50.5 × 40 cm (19¾ × 15¾ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 78 *Nikki Starnes*, 1980
Gelatin silver print
Image: 35 × 35.5 cm (13¾ × 14 in.)
Sheet: 50.5 × 40.3 cm (19¾ × 15¾ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 79 *Claudia Summers*, 1980
Gelatin silver print
Image: 34.9 × 35 cm (13¾ × 13¾ in.)
Sheet: 50.5 × 40 cm (19¾ × 15¾ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 80 *Waves*, negative 1980; print 2007
Gelatin silver print
Image: 34.9 × 34.9 cm (13¾ × 13¾ in.)
Sheet: 50.1 × 40.1 cm (19¾ × 15¾ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 81 *Phillip Prioleau*, 1980
Gelatin silver print
Image: 35.1 × 35.1 cm (13¾ × 13¾ in.)
Sheet: 50.3 × 40 cm (19¾ × 15¾ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 82 *Eric*, negative 1980; print 2008
Gelatin silver print
Image: 35 × 34.9 cm (13¾ × 13¾ in.)
Sheet: 50.4 × 40.2 cm (19¾ × 15¾ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 83 *Lisa Lyon*, 1980
Gelatin silver print
Image: 35.5 × 35.5 cm (14 × 14 in.)
Sheet: 50.6 × 40.3 cm (19¾ × 15¾ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 84 *Lisa Lyon*, 1980
Gelatin silver print
Image: 34.9 × 35 cm (13¾ × 13¾ in.)
Sheet: 50.4 × 40 cm (19¾ × 15¾ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 85 *Self-Portrait*, negative 1980; print 2008
Gelatin silver print
Image: 34.9 × 35 cm (13¾ × 13¾ in.)
Sheet: 50.5 × 40.3 cm (19¾ × 15¾ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art

PART 3

Striking a Balance

- 86 Cynthia Slater, 1980**
Gelatin silver print
Image: 35.2 × 35.4 cm (13⁷/₁₆ × 13¹⁵/₁₆ in.)
Sheet: 50.7 × 40.3 cm (19¹³/₁₆ × 15⁷/₁₆ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 87 Steven Lloyd, 1980**
Gelatin silver print
Image: 35.4 × 35.6 cm (13¹⁵/₁₆ × 14 in.)
Sheet: 50.3 × 40.2 cm (19¹³/₁₆ × 15¹³/₁₆ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 88 Jeff Gray, 1980**
Gelatin silver print
Image: 35 × 35.6 cm (13³/₄ × 14 in.)
Sheet: 50.4 × 40.4 cm (19¹³/₁₆ × 15⁷/₁₆ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 89 Ron Sims, 1980**
Gelatin silver print
Image: 35.3 × 35.7 cm (13⁷/₈ × 14¹/₁₆ in.)
Sheet: 50.4 × 40.5 cm (19¹³/₁₆ × 15¹³/₁₆ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 90 Lisa Lyon, 1980**
Gelatin silver print
Image: 35.4 × 35.4 cm (13¹⁵/₁₆ × 13¹⁵/₁₆ in.)
Sheet: 50.5 × 40.1 cm (19⁷/₈ × 15¹³/₁₆ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 91 Self-Portrait, negative 1980; print 1989**
Gelatin silver print
Image: 35.5 × 35.7 cm (14 × 14¹/₁₆ in.)
Sheet: 50.5 × 40.5 cm (19⁷/₈ × 15¹³/₁₆ in.)
Jointly acquired by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, with funds provided by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the David Geffen Foundation
2011.7.11
- 92 Milton Moore, 1981**
Gelatin silver print
Image: 35.4 × 35.5 cm (13¹⁵/₁₆ × 14 in.)
Sheet: 50.5 × 40.2 cm (19⁷/₈ × 15¹³/₁₆ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 93 Gerard, negative 1981; print 2011**
Gelatin silver print
Image: 38.3 × 38 cm (15¹/₁₆ × 14²⁵/₁₆ in.)
Sheet: 50.4 × 40.5 cm (19¹³/₁₆ × 15¹³/₁₆ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 94 Jack Walls, 1982**
Gelatin silver print
Image: 48.8 × 38.6 cm (19³/₁₆ × 15³/₁₆ in.)
Sheet: 50.3 × 40.2 cm (19¹³/₁₆ × 15¹³/₁₆ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 95 Untitled, negative 1981; print 1992**
Gelatin silver print
Image: 39 × 38.3 cm (15³/₈ × 15³/₁₆ in.)
Sheet: 50.2 × 40 cm (19³/₄ × 15³/₄ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 96 Tulip, negative 1982; print 2011**
Gelatin silver print
Image: 38.3 × 38.1 cm (15¹/₁₆ × 15 in.)
Sheet: 50.8 × 40.4 cm (20 × 15⁷/₁₆ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 97 Phillip Prioleau, negative 1984; print 2011**
Gelatin silver print
Image: 35.1 × 35.3 cm (13¹³/₁₆ × 13⁷/₈ in.)
Sheet: 50.5 × 40.6 cm (19⁷/₈ × 16 in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 98 Phillip Prioleau, 1982**
Gelatin silver print
Image: 38.2 × 38.5 cm (15¹/₁₆ × 15³/₁₆ in.)
Sheet: 50.4 × 40.2 cm (19¹³/₁₆ × 15¹³/₁₆ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 99 Ajitto, negative 1981; print 2009**
Gelatin silver print
Image: 45 × 35.3 cm (17¹/₁₆ × 13⁷/₈ in.)
Sheet: 50.3 × 40.4 cm (19¹³/₁₆ × 15⁷/₁₆ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 100 Ajitto, 1981**
Gelatin silver print
Image: 45.4 × 35.5 cm (17⁷/₈ × 14 in.)
Sheet: 50.2 × 40 cm (19³/₄ × 15³/₄ in.)
Jointly acquired by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, with funds provided by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the David Geffen Foundation
2011.7.13
- 101 Ajitto, negative 1981; print 2010**
Gelatin silver print
Image: 44.9 × 35.4 cm (17¹³/₁₆ × 13¹⁵/₁₆ in.)
Sheet: 50.3 × 40.4 cm (19¹³/₁₆ × 15⁷/₁₆ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 102 Ajitto, negative 1981; print 1991**
Gelatin silver print
Image: 45.3 × 35.3 cm (17¹³/₁₆ × 13⁷/₈ in.)
Sheet: 50 × 39.9 cm (19¹³/₁₆ × 15¹⁴/₁₆ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 103 Ada, negative 1982; print 1991**
Gelatin silver print
Image: 48.5 × 38.3 cm (19¹/₈ × 15¹/₁₆ in.)
Sheet: 50.5 × 40.1 cm (19⁷/₈ × 15¹³/₁₆ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 104 Phillip Prioleau, negative 1982; print 1990**
Gelatin silver print
Image: 38.8 × 38.8 cm (15³/₄ × 15³/₄ in.)
Sheet: 50.4 × 40.2 cm (19¹³/₁₆ × 15¹³/₁₆ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 105 Phillip Prioleau, 1982**
Gelatin silver print
Image: 38.5 × 38.6 cm (15³/₈ × 15³/₁₆ in.)
Sheet: 50.1 × 40 cm (19³/₄ × 15³/₄ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art

- 106** *Lisa Lyon*, negative 1982; print 2010
Gelatin silver print
Image: 38.3 × 37.9 cm (15¹/₁₆ × 14³/₁₆ in.)
Sheet: 50.5 × 40.3 cm (19⁷/₁₆ × 15⁷/₁₆ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 107** *Lisa Lyon*, 1982
Gelatin silver print
Image: 38.4 × 38.4 cm (15¹/₁₆ × 15¹/₁₆ in.)
Sheet: 50.5 × 40.3 cm (19⁷/₁₆ × 15⁷/₁₆ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 108** *Miep Brons*, 1981
Gelatin silver print
Image: 35.5 × 35.5 cm (14 × 14 in.)
Sheet: 49.9 × 40.3 cm (19⁹/₁₆ × 15⁷/₁₆ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 109** *Lisa Lyon*, 1982
Gelatin silver print
Image: 38.2 × 38.7 cm (15³/₁₆ × 15³/₁₆ in.)
Sheet: 50 × 40.1 cm (19¹³/₁₆ × 15¹³/₁₆ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 110** *Phillip Prioleau*, 1982
Gelatin silver print
Image: 48.7 × 38.5 cm (19³/₁₆ × 15³/₁₆ in.)
Sheet: 50 × 40.1 cm (19¹³/₁₆ × 15¹³/₁₆ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 111** *Kathy Acker*, 1983
Gelatin silver print
Image: 48.7 × 38.5 cm (19³/₁₆ × 15³/₁₆ in.)
Sheet: 50.3 × 40.2 cm (19¹³/₁₆ × 15¹³/₁₆ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 112** *Lisa Lyon*, 1982
Gelatin silver print
Image: 48.7 × 38.7 cm (19³/₁₆ × 15³/₁₆ in.)
Sheet: 50 × 40.2 cm (19¹³/₁₆ × 15¹³/₁₆ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 113** *Lisa Lyon*, 1982
Gelatin silver print
Image: 48.5 × 38.4 cm (19¹/₁₆ × 15¹/₁₆ in.)
Sheet: 50.2 × 40 cm (19³/₄ × 15³/₄ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 114** *Orchid*, negative 1982; print 2010
Gelatin silver print
Image: 38.3 × 37.8 cm (15¹/₁₆ × 14⁷/₁₆ in.)
Sheet: 50.6 × 40.2 cm (19¹³/₁₆ × 15¹³/₁₆ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 115** *Louise Bourgeois*, negative 1982; print 2010
Gelatin silver print
Image: 38.2 × 37.9 cm (15¹/₁₆ × 14³/₁₆ in.)
Sheet: 50.4 × 40.1 cm (19¹³/₁₆ × 15¹³/₁₆ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 116** *Tulip*, 1982
Gelatin silver print
Image: 38.5 × 38.4 cm (15³/₁₆ × 15¹/₁₆ in.)
Sheet: 50.4 × 40.2 cm (19¹³/₁₆ × 15¹³/₁₆ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 117** *Lisa Lyon*, negative 1981; print 2010
Gelatin silver print
Image: 45.1 × 35 cm (17³/₄ × 13³/₄ in.)
Sheet: 50.5 × 40.3 cm (19⁷/₁₆ × 15⁷/₁₆ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 118** *Donald Cann*, 1982
Gelatin silver print
Image: 38.5 × 38.6 cm (15³/₁₆ × 15³/₁₆ in.)
Sheet: 50.4 × 40.3 cm (19¹³/₁₆ × 15⁷/₁₆ in.)
Jointly acquired by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; partial gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation; partial purchase with funds provided by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the David Geffen Foundation
2011.9.22
- 119** *Milton Moore*, 1981
Gelatin silver print
Image: 38.2 × 38.6 cm (15¹/₁₆ × 15³/₁₆ in.)
Sheet: 50.4 × 40.3 cm (19¹³/₁₆ × 15⁷/₁₆ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 120** *Milton Moore*, 1981
Gelatin silver print
Image: 38.3 × 38.7 cm (15¹/₁₆ × 15¹/₁₆ in.)
Sheet: 50.3 × 40.3 cm (19¹³/₁₆ × 15⁷/₁₆ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 121** *Derrick Cross*, negative 1983; print 1991
Gelatin silver print
Image: 48.5 × 38.2 cm (19¹/₁₆ × 15¹/₁₆ in.)
Sheet: 50.4 × 40 cm (19¹³/₁₆ × 15³/₁₆ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 122** *Arthur Diovanni*, 1982
Gelatin silver print
Image: 48.7 × 38.6 cm (19³/₁₆ × 15³/₁₆ in.)
Sheet: 50.3 × 40.4 cm (19¹³/₁₆ × 15⁷/₁₆ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 123** *Phillip Prioleau*, 1984
Gelatin silver print
Image: 38.5 × 38.6 cm (15³/₁₆ × 15³/₁₆ in.)
Sheet: 50.2 × 40.2 cm (19³/₄ × 15¹³/₁₆ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 124** *Embrace*, negative 1982; print 1996
Gelatin silver print
Image: 48.6 × 38.4 cm (19¹/₁₆ × 15¹/₁₆ in.)
Sheet: 50.4 × 40.5 cm (19¹³/₁₆ × 15⁵/₁₆ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 125** *Coral Sea*, 1983
Platinum print
Image: 58.8 × 49.7 cm (23¹/₄ × 19¹/₁₆ in.)
Sheet (irregular): 65.8 × 56.3 cm (25⁷/₈ × 22³/₁₆ in.)
Jointly acquired by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, with funds provided by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the David Geffen Foundation
2011.7.22

PART 4

The Perfect Moment

- 126** *Mountain*, 1983
Gelatin silver print
Image: 22.6 × 22.7 cm (8 $\frac{7}{8}$ × 8 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.)
Sheet: 50.4 × 40.2 cm (19 $\frac{1}{4}$ × 15 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 127** *White Gauze*, negative 1984; print 2006
Gelatin silver print
Image: 38.3 × 37.8 cm (15 $\frac{1}{8}$ × 14 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.)
Sheet: 50.5 × 40.3 cm (19 $\frac{1}{8}$ × 15 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 128** *Puerto Rico*, 1981
Gelatin silver print
Image: 38.4 × 38.7 cm (15 $\frac{1}{4}$ × 15 $\frac{1}{4}$ in.)
Sheet: 50.4 × 40.4 cm (19 $\frac{1}{2}$ × 15 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 129** *Lisa Lyon*, 1982
Gelatin silver print
Image: 38.2 × 38.5 cm (15 $\frac{1}{8}$ × 15 $\frac{3}{8}$ in.)
Sheet: 50.4 × 40.4 cm (19 $\frac{1}{2}$ × 15 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 130** *Self-Portrait*, negative 1983; print 1991
Gelatin silver print
Image: 49 × 38.5 cm (19 $\frac{1}{8}$ × 15 $\frac{3}{8}$ in.)
Sheet: 50.4 × 40.4 cm (19 $\frac{1}{2}$ × 15 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 131** *Andy Warhol*, negative 1983; print 1993
Gelatin silver print
Image: 39.1 × 38.5 cm (15 $\frac{1}{2}$ × 15 $\frac{3}{8}$ in.)
Sheet: 50.5 × 40.2 cm (19 $\frac{1}{8}$ × 15 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 132** *Marisa Berenson*, 1983
Gelatin silver print
Image: 38.7 × 38.6 cm (15 $\frac{1}{4}$ × 15 $\frac{3}{8}$ in.)
Sheet: 50.5 × 40.2 cm (19 $\frac{1}{4}$ × 15 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 133** *Carnations*, 1984
Gelatin silver print
Image: 38.7 × 38.7 cm (15 $\frac{1}{4}$ × 15 $\frac{1}{4}$ in.)
Sheet: 50.6 × 40.3 cm (19 $\frac{1}{2}$ × 15 $\frac{1}{8}$ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 134** *Two Men Dancing*, negative 1984; print 1990
Gelatin silver print
Image: 48.5 × 38.6 cm (19 $\frac{1}{8}$ × 15 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.)
Sheet: 50.4 × 40.5 cm (19 $\frac{1}{2}$ × 15 $\frac{3}{8}$ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 135** *Ken Moody and Robert Sherman*, 1984
Platinum print
Image: 49.4 × 50.2 cm (19 $\frac{3}{8}$ × 19 $\frac{1}{4}$ in.)
Sheet (irregular): 65.8 × 56.4 cm (25 $\frac{3}{8}$ × 22 $\frac{3}{8}$ in.)
Jointly acquired by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, with funds provided by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the David Geffen Foundation
2011.7.23
- 136** *Thomas*, negative 1987; print 1994
Gelatin silver print
Image: 48.8 × 48.8 cm (19 $\frac{1}{2}$ × 19 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.)
Sheet: 60.4 × 50.5 cm (23 $\frac{3}{4}$ × 19 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.)
Jointly acquired by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, with funds provided by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the David Geffen Foundation
2011.7.31
- 137** *Continuous Profile of Mussolini*, negative 1988; print 1990
Gelatin silver print
Image: 49.1 × 49 cm (19 $\frac{1}{8}$ × 19 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.)
Sheet: 60.6 × 50.7 cm (23 $\frac{3}{8}$ × 19 $\frac{3}{8}$ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 138** *Self-Portrait*, 1985
Gelatin silver print
Image: 38.7 × 38.6 cm (15 $\frac{1}{4}$ × 15 $\frac{3}{8}$ in.)
Sheet: 50.4 × 40.3 cm (19 $\frac{1}{2}$ × 15 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.)
Jointly acquired by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, with funds provided by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the David Geffen Foundation
2011.7.21
- 139** *Cock*, negative 1985; print 2010
Gelatin silver print
Image: 37.9 × 48.9 cm (14 $\frac{3}{8}$ × 19 $\frac{1}{4}$ in.)
Sheet: 40.2 × 50.6 cm (15 $\frac{3}{8}$ × 19 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 140** *Ken and Lydia and Tyler*, negative 1985; print 2004
Gelatin silver print
Image: 38.4 × 38.2 cm (15 $\frac{1}{2}$ × 15 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.)
Sheet: 50.5 × 40.2 cm (19 $\frac{1}{8}$ × 15 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.)
Jointly acquired by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, with funds provided by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the David Geffen Foundation
2011.7.19
- 141** *Irises*, negative 1986; print 1990
Gelatin silver print
Image: 49 × 49 cm (19 $\frac{1}{8}$ × 19 $\frac{1}{8}$ in.)
Sheet: 60.2 × 50.5 cm (23 $\frac{1}{2}$ × 19 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.)
Jointly acquired by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, with funds provided by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the David Geffen Foundation
2011.7.29

- 142** *Lindsay Key*, negative 1985; print 1992
Gelatin silver print
Image: 49 × 38.4 cm (19³/₁₆ × 15¹/₈ in.)
Sheet: 50.6 × 40.3 cm (19¹/₈ × 15³/₁₆ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 143** *Lydia Cheng*, 1987
Gelatin silver print
Image: 59 × 49.1 cm (23¹/₄ × 19³/₁₆ in.)
Sheet: 60.8 × 50.9 cm (23¹/₈ × 20¹/₁₆ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 144** *Orchid*, negative 1987; print 1989
Gelatin silver print
Image: 49.1 × 49.2 cm (19¹/₁₆ × 19³/₁₆ in.)
Sheet: 59.2 × 50.8 cm (23¹/₁₆ × 20 in.)
Gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
2012.52.23
- 145** *Flower Arrangement*, 1986
Gelatin silver print
Image: 49 × 49 cm (19¹/₁₆ × 19³/₁₆ in.)
Sheet: 60.6 × 50.5 cm (23³/₁₆ × 19¹/₈ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 146** *Louise Nevelson*, negative 1986; print 1990
Gelatin silver print
Image: 48.9 × 48.9 cm (19¹/₄ × 19¹/₄ in.)
Sheet: 60.5 × 50.5 cm (23³/₁₆ × 19¹/₈ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 147** *Dollar Bill*, negative 1987; print 1989
Gelatin silver print
Image: 49 × 59 cm (19¹/₁₆ × 23¹/₄ in.)
Sheet: 50.8 × 60.7 cm (20 × 23³/₈ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 148** *Suzie's Couch*, 1986
Gelatin silver print
Image: 49.1 × 49 cm (19¹/₁₆ × 19³/₁₆ in.)
Sheet: 60.6 × 50.6 cm (23³/₁₆ × 19³/₁₆ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 149** *Lydia Cheng*, negative 1987; print 2004
Gelatin silver print
Image: 48.5 × 58 cm (19¹/₁₆ × 22³/₁₆ in.)
Sheet: 50.3 × 59.8 cm (19³/₁₆ × 23³/₁₆ in.)
Jointly acquired by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; partial gift of the Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation; partial purchase with funds provided by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the David Geffen Foundation
2011.9.24
- 150** *Calla Lily*, negative 1986; print 1990
Gelatin silver print
Image: 48.6 × 48.6 cm (19¹/₁₆ × 19³/₁₆ in.)
Sheet: 60.3 × 50.3 cm (23³/₁₆ × 19³/₁₆ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 151** *Benjamin*, 1985
Gelatin silver print
Image: 48.6 × 38.5 cm (19¹/₁₆ × 15³/₁₆ in.)
Sheet: 50.2 × 40.1 cm (19³/₄ × 15³/₁₆ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 152** *Grapes*, negative 1985; print 2004
Gelatin silver print
Image: 38.5 × 38 cm (15³/₁₆ × 14³/₁₆ in.)
Sheet: 50.5 × 40.2 cm (19¹/₈ × 15³/₁₆ in.)
Jointly acquired by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, with funds provided by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the David Geffen Foundation
2011.7.20
- 153** *Thomas*, negative 1987; print 1994
Gelatin silver print
Image: 48.8 × 48.8 cm (19³/₁₆ × 19³/₁₆ in.)
Sheet: 60.4 × 50.5 cm (23³/₁₆ × 19¹/₈ in.)
Jointly acquired by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, with funds provided by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the David Geffen Foundation
2011.7.32
- 154** *Tulip*, 1988
Dye imbibition print
Image: 52.4 × 47.7 cm (20³/₈ × 18³/₁₆ in.)
Sheet: 60.7 × 50.8 cm (23³/₈ × 20 in.)
Jointly acquired by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; partial gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation; partial purchase with funds provided by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the David Geffen Foundation
2011.9.38
- 155** *Poppy*, 1988
Dye imbibition print
Image: 50.3 × 47.5 cm (19³/₁₆ × 18³/₁₆ in.)
Sheet: 60.6 × 50.7 cm (23³/₁₆ × 19³/₁₆ in.)
Jointly acquired by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; partial gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation; partial purchase with funds provided by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the David Geffen Foundation
2011.9.39
- 156** *Parrot Tulips*, 1988
Dye imbibition print
Image: 52.6 × 66.1 cm (20¹/₁₆ × 26 in.)
Sheet: 60.8 × 75 cm (23³/₁₆ × 29¹/₂ in.)
Jointly acquired by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; partial gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation; partial purchase with funds provided by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the David Geffen Foundation
2011.9.40
- 157** *Thomas*, negative 1986; print 1988
Gelatin silver print
Image: 48.6 × 48.5 cm (19³/₁₆ × 19¹/₁₆ in.)
Sheet: 60.1 × 50.2 cm (23³/₁₆ × 19³/₁₆ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 158** *Thomas*, 1987
Gelatin silver print
Image: 48.9 × 49 cm (19¹/₄ × 19³/₁₆ in.)
Sheet: 60.3 × 50.4 cm (23³/₁₆ × 19³/₁₆ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 159** *Lucinda's Hand*, 1985
Gelatin silver print
Image: 48.7 × 38.7 cm (19³/₁₆ × 15¹/₄ in.)
Sheet: 50.2 × 40.4 cm (19³/₄ × 15³/₁₆ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art

- 160** *Lydia Cheng*, 1985
Platinum print
Image: 59.2 × 49.7 cm (23¹/₁₆ × 19³/₁₆ in.)
Sheet (irregular): 65.8 × 56.5 cm (25⁷/₈ × 22¹/₄ in.)
Jointly acquired by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, with funds provided by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the David Geffen Foundation
2011.7.26
- 161** *Melody Danielson*, 1987
Gelatin silver print
Image: 58.9 × 49.1 cm (23³/₁₆ × 19⁵/₁₆ in.)
Sheet: 60.5 × 50.7 cm (23³/₁₆ × 19⁵/₁₆ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 162** *Melody (Shoe)*, negative 1987; print 1989
Gelatin silver print
Image: 48.9 × 49.2 cm (19¹/₄ × 19³/₁₆ in.)
Sheet: 60.6 × 50.7 cm (23⁷/₁₆ × 19⁵/₁₆ in.)
Gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
2012.52.22
- 163** *Wrestler*, negative 1989; print 2009
Gelatin silver print
Image: 58.3 × 48.3 cm (22⁵/₁₆ × 19 in.)
Sheet: 60.5 × 50.4 cm (23³/₁₆ × 19¹³/₁₆ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 164** *Sonia Resika*, negative 1988; print 1990
Gelatin silver print
Image: 58.8 × 49 cm (23³/₁₆ × 19⁵/₁₆ in.)
Sheet: 60.6 × 50.6 cm (23⁷/₁₆ × 19⁵/₁₆ in.)
Jointly acquired by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; partial gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation; partial purchase with funds provided by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the David Geffen Foundation
2011.9.35
- 165** *Ice Bucket and Spoon*, negative 1987; print 2006
Gelatin silver print
Image: 48.6 × 48.6 cm (19³/₁₆ × 19³/₁₆ in.)
Sheet: 60.5 × 50.7 cm (23³/₁₆ × 19⁵/₁₆ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 166** *Tulips*, negative 1988; print 1990
Gelatin silver print
Image: 49.1 × 49 cm (19⁵/₁₆ × 19⁵/₁₆ in.)
Sheet: 60.3 × 50.7 cm (23³/₁₆ × 19⁵/₁₆ in.)
Gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
2012.52.27
- 167** *Skull*, negative 1988; print 2005
Gelatin silver print
Image: 48.8 × 48.8 cm (19³/₁₆ × 19³/₁₆ in.)
Sheet: 60.7 × 50.7 cm (23⁷/₈ × 19⁵/₁₆ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 168** *Paul Wadina*, negative 1988; print 1989
Gelatin silver print
Image: 49 × 59 cm (19³/₁₆ × 23¹/₄ in.)
Sheet: 50.7 × 60.5 cm (19⁵/₁₆ × 23¹³/₁₆ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 169** *Black Bust*, negative 1988; print 1989
Gelatin silver print
Image: 49.2 × 49.4 cm (19⁵/₁₆ × 19⁷/₁₆ in.)
Sheet: 60.8 × 51.1 cm (23¹⁵/₁₆ × 20⁵/₁₆ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 170** *Apples & Urn*, negative 1987; print 1989
Gelatin silver print
Image: 49.2 × 49.2 cm (19⁵/₁₆ × 19⁵/₁₆ in.)
Sheet: 60.7 × 50.8 cm (23⁷/₈ × 20 in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 171** *Isabella Rossellini*, negative 1988; print 1990
Gelatin silver print
Image: 58.9 × 49.2 cm (23³/₁₆ × 19³/₁₆ in.)
Sheet: 60.6 × 51 cm (23⁷/₁₆ × 20¹/₁₆ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 172** *Apollo*, negative 1988; print 1989
Gelatin silver print
Image: 59 × 49.3 cm (23¹/₄ × 19⁵/₁₆ in.)
Sheet: 60.7 × 50.9 cm (23⁷/₈ × 20¹/₁₆ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 173** *Calla Lily*, negative 1988; print 1990
Gelatin silver print
Image: 49.2 × 49.1 cm (19³/₈ × 19⁵/₁₆ in.)
Sheet: 60.7 × 50.7 cm (23⁷/₈ × 19⁵/₁₆ in.)
Promised gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- 174** *Self-Portrait*, 1988
Platinum print
Image: 58.7 × 48.3 cm (23³/₈ × 19 in.)
Sheet (irregular): 67.8 × 56.5 cm (26¹/₁₆ × 22¹/₄ in.)
Jointly acquired by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; partial gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation; partial purchase with funds provided by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the David Geffen Foundation
2011.9.25
- 175** *Calla Lily*, negative 1988; print 1990
Gelatin silver print
Image: 49 × 49 cm (19⁵/₁₆ × 19⁵/₁₆ in.)
Sheet: 60.5 × 50.5 cm (23¹³/₁₆ × 19⁵/₁₆ in.)
Jointly acquired by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; partial gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation; partial purchase with funds provided by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the David Geffen Foundation
2011.9.26
- 176** *Ermes*, negative 1988; print 1990
Gelatin silver print
Image: 49 × 49 cm (19⁵/₁₆ × 19⁵/₁₆ in.)
Sheet: 60.5 × 50.5 cm (23¹³/₁₆ × 19⁵/₁₆ in.)
Jointly acquired by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; partial gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation; partial purchase with funds provided by the J. Paul Getty Trust and the David Geffen Foundation
2011.9.36

SELECTED EXHIBITION HISTORY

Compiled by Ryan Linkof

Exhibitions are organized alphabetically by institution within each year.
Where possible, titles and dates have been included.

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 1973**
Light Gallery, New York, *Polaroids*, January 6–February 3
- 1977**
Holly Solomon Gallery, New York, *Flowers*
Holly Solomon Gallery, New York, *Portraits*,
February 5–26
The Kitchen, New York, *Erotic Pictures*, February 5–19
- 1978**
Chrysler Museum, Norfolk, Virginia, *Robert Mapplethorpe: Photographs*, January 18–March 12
(Catalogue with text by Mario Amaya)
Langton Street Gallery, San Francisco, *Censored*,
March 21–April 1
La Remise du Parc, Paris, *Robert Mapplethorpe*,
opened June 15
Los Angeles Institute of Contemporary Art, *Bondage
and Discipline*, opened August
Simon Lowinsky Gallery, San Francisco, *Mapplethorpe
Photographs*, February 21–March 25
- 1979**
Galerie Jurka, Amsterdam, *Robert Mapplethorpe*, May 5–
June 9 (Catalogue with text by Rein von der Fuhr)
Robert Miller Gallery, New York, *Contact*, March 21–
April 12
Robert Samuels Gallery, New York, *Robert Mapplethorpe:
1970–75*
Texas Gallery, Houston
- 1980**
Espace photographique Contretype, Brussels, *Robert
Mapplethorpe*
Galerie Jurka, Amsterdam, *Black Males*, January 11–
May 12 (Catalogue with text by Edmund White)
In a Plain Brown Wrapper Gallery, Chicago, *Robert
Mapplethorpe: Black and White Photographs*,
February 9–March 16
Lawson DeCelle Gallery, San Francisco, *Robert
Mapplethorpe: Blacks and Whites*, opened March 25
Stuart Gallery, Chicago
Van Reekum Museum, Apeldoorn, Netherlands
Vision Gallery of Photography, Boston
- 1981**
Ace Gallery, Los Angeles, *Recent Photographs*
Espace photographique Contretype, Brussels,
Black Males
Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco, *Robert Mapplethorpe*,
October 28–December 5
Frankfurter Kunstverein, Frankfurt am Main, *Robert
Mapplethorpe*, April 10–May 17. Traveled to:
Fotogalerie Forum Stadtpark, Graz, Austria; Modern
Art Galerie, Vienna; PPC Galerie F.C. Gundlach,
Hamburg, Germany; Kunsthalle, Basel; Kunstverein,
Munich; Nikon Foto Galerie, Zurich (Catalogue
with text by Sam Wagstaff and Peter Weiermair)
Galerie Jurka at Basel: Art 12 '81, June 17–22
Galerie Texbraun, Paris, opened October
Lunn Gallery, Washington, D.C., opened November
Nagel Gallery, Berlin
Robert Miller Gallery, New York, *Black Males*, opened
October
- 1982**
Contemporary Art Center, New Orleans, *Robert
Mapplethorpe*, opened November
Fay Gold Gallery, Atlanta, *Robert Mapplethorpe:
Photographs*, April 3–May 5
Galerie Jurka, Amsterdam, *Robert Mapplethorpe:
Recent Work*, opened October
Galerie Watari, Tokyo, *Robert Mapplethorpe*,
September 24–October 14
Galleria Il Ponte, Rome, *Black Males*
Larry Gagosian Gallery, Los Angeles, *Robert Mapple-
thorpe*, opened June
Nikon Foto Galerie, Zurich
Shore Gallery, The Pines, Fire Island, New York
Ton Peek Photography, Utrecht, Netherlands, *Robert
Mapplethorpe Fotos*
Young Hoffman Gallery, Chicago
- 1983**
Barbara Gladstone Gallery, New York, *Robert Mapple-
thorpe Photographures*
Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, *Robert Mapplethorpe*,
May 11–June 19
Centro di Documentazione di Palazzo Fortuny, Venice,
Robert Mapplethorpe: Fotografie, opened August.
Traveled to: Palazzo delle Cento Finestre, Florence
(Catalogue with text by Germano Celant)
Galerie Düsseldorf, *Mapplethorpe Fotografie*
Galerie Watari, Tokyo, *Robert Mapplethorpe: Flowers*,
August 25–September 17 (Catalogue with text by
Sam Wagstaff)
Hardison Fine Arts Gallery, New York, *The Agency*,
May 3–28 (Catalogue with photographs by Robert
Mapplethorpe)
Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, *Robert
Mapplethorpe, 1970–1983*, November 4, 1983–
January 1, 1984. Traveled the United Kingdom, to:
Stills, Edinburgh; Arnolfini, Bristol; Midland Group,
Nottingham; Museum of Modern Art, Oxford
(Catalogue with text by Stuart Morgan and Alan
Hollinghurst)
Institut franco-américain, Rennes, France
Jane Corkin Gallery, Toronto, *Robert Mapplethorpe*
- Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, *"Lady": Photographs of
Lisa Lyon*, March 5–19
Michael Lord Gallery, Milwaukee
Olympus Gallery, London, *Lady: Lisa Lyon*
Robert Miller Gallery, New York, *New Works*
Sam Hardison Fine Arts, New York, *Recent Work*
- 1984**
Galería Fernando Vijande, Madrid, *Robert Mapplethorpe:
Fotografías, 1970–1983*
Galerie John A. Schweitzer, Montreal, *Robert Mapple-
thorpe: Photographies, 1978–1984*
Galleria Lucio Amelio, Naples, Italy, *Robert Mapplethorpe*
Hara Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo, *Lady
Rüdiger Schöttle Galerie, Munich, Lady*
Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford,
Connecticut, *Matrix 80: Robert Mapplethorpe*,
July 28–September 18 (Brochure with text by
Sam Wagstaff)
- 1985**
Barbara Gladstone Gallery, New York, *Robert Mapple-
thorpe: Process*, opened September
Betsy Rosenfield Gallery, Chicago
Fay Gold Gallery, Atlanta, *Robert Mapplethorpe:
Photographs*, October 19–November 20
Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco, *Robert Mapplethorpe:
Platinum Prints*, May 15–June 22
Galeria Cómicos, Lisbon, *Robert Mapplethorpe:
Black Flowers*
Galería Fernando Vijande, Madrid, *Black Flowers*,
March 28–April 20 (Catalogue with text by Edmund
White)
Galerie Daniel Templon, Paris, *Robert Mapplethorpe:
Process*, March 2–30
Michael Lord Gallery, Milwaukee
Robert Miller Gallery, New York, *New Works in Platinum*
- 1986**
Australian Center for Contemporary Art, South Yarra,
Victoria, *Robert Mapplethorpe: Photographs 1976–
1985*, February 4–March 16 (Catalogue with text
by Paul Foss)
Betsy Rosenfield Gallery, Chicago, *Robert Mapplethorpe*
Palladium, New York, *New Photographs*, opened May 10
Sala d'Ercole di Palazzo d'Accursio, Bologna, *Robert
Mapplethorpe*
Texas Gallery, Houston, *Robert Mapplethorpe*
- 1987**
Claus Runkel Fine Art, London, *Robert Mapplethorpe:
Photographs*
Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco, *Robert Mapplethorpe:
Platinum Prints*, May 27–July 4

- Galerie Pierre Huber, Geneva, *Robert Mapplethorpe*
 Galleria Françoise Lambert, Milan, *Robert Mapplethorpe*
 Julia Gallery, New Orleans, *Robert Mapplethorpe*
 Obalne Galerije, Piran (Ljubljana, Yugoslavia), *Robert Mapplethorpe: Fotografije* (Catalogue with text by Germano Celant)
- Raab Galerie, Berlin; Galerie Kicken-Pauseback, Cologne, *Robert Mapplethorpe 1986*, April 11–May 13 (Berlin), April 30–June 6 (Cologne) (Catalogue with interview by Anne Horton)
- Robert Miller Gallery, New York, *Robert Mapplethorpe*, May 3–23
- 1988**
- Betsy Rosenfield Gallery, Chicago
 Blum Helman Gallery, Santa Monica, California
 Galerie Jurka, Amsterdam
 Grand Palais, Paris, *Autoportraits*
 Greg Kucera Gallery, Seattle, *A Season in Hell*, October 6–30
 Hamiltons Gallery, London
 Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, *Robert Mapplethorpe: The Perfect Moment*, December 9, 1988–January 29, 1989.
 Traveled to: Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Washington Project for the Arts, Washington, D.C.; Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, Connecticut; University Art Museum, University of California, Berkeley; Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati; Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston (Catalogue with text by Janet Kardon et al.)
 Mai 36 Galerie, Lucerne, Switzerland, *Robert Mapplethorpe* (Brochure with text by Stuart Morgan)
 Middendorf Gallery, Washington, D.C., *Robert Mapplethorpe*
 National Portrait Gallery, London, *Mapplethorpe Portraits*, March 25–June 19 (Catalogue with text by Peter Conrad)
 Robert Miller Gallery, New York, *New Color Work*
 Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, *Robert Mapplethorpe: Ten by Ten*, February 26–April 18. Traveled to: Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris (Catalogue with text by Els Barents)
 Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, *Robert Mapplethorpe*, July 28–October 23 (Catalogue with text by Richard Marshall et al.)
- 1989**
- Betsy Rosenfield Gallery, Chicago, *Robert Mapplethorpe*
 Blum Helman Gallery, Santa Monica, California, *Robert Mapplethorpe*
 Bridgewater/Lustberg, New York, *Robert Mapplethorpe*
 Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco, *Robert Mapplethorpe: A Selection of Photographs, 1971–1988*, January 18–February 25
- Galerie Baudoin Lebon, Paris, *Robert Mapplethorpe*
 Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst, Citadelpark, Ghent, Belgium, *Robert Mapplethorpe: Een Retrospective*
 Sala d'Ercole di Palazzo d'Accursio, Bologna, *Robert Mapplethorpe*
- 1990**
- Martina Hamilton Gallery, New York, *Robert Mapplethorpe*
- 1991**
- Ace Gallery, Los Angeles, *Lady*
 FAE Musée d'Art Contemporain, Pully (Lausanne), Switzerland, *Mapplethorpe*, November 9, 1991–March 15, 1992 (Catalogue with text by Chantal Michetti-Prod'Hom and Charles A. Riley)
 Galería Weber, Alexander y Cobo, Madrid, *Robert Mapplethorpe*
 Robert Miller Gallery, New York, *Robert Mapplethorpe: Early Works*, opened May (Catalogue edited by John Cheim)
- 1992**
- Centro di Documentazione di Castello di Rivoli Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, Turin, Italy
 I.C.A.C. Weston Gallery, Tokyo
 Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, *Mapplethorpe versus Rodin*, January 25–March 22 (Catalogue with text by Germano Celant)
 Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk, Denmark, *Robert Mapplethorpe*, February 8–May 24. Traveled to: Centro per l'Arte Contemporanea Luigi Pecci, Prato, Italy; Turun Taidemuseo, Turku, Finland; Palais des Beaux Arts, Brussels; Moderna Museet, Stockholm; Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney; Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth; Tel Aviv Museum of Art; Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona; Kunsthau Wien, Vienna; City Gallery Wellington, New Zealand; Hayward Gallery, London; Gallery of Photography, Dublin; Museu de Arte Moderna, São Paulo; Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart, Germany (Catalogue with text by Germano Celant)
 Tokyo Metropolitan Teien Art Museum, *Robert Mapplethorpe*, opened June 2. Traveled Japan, to: Contemporary Art Gallery, Ibaraki; Museum of Modern Art, Kamakura; Nagoya City Art Museum; Modern Art Museum of Shiga (Catalogue with text by Patti Smith et al.)
- 1993**
- Hamiltons Gallery, London, *Robert Mapplethorpe*
 Robert Miller Gallery, New York, *Black and White Polaroids, 1971–1975*
- Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, *Robert Mapplethorpe: Self-Portraits*, November 9, 1993–February 23, 1994 (Catalogue with text by Germano Celant and Patti Smith [Mirrors])
- 1994**
- Xavier Hufkens, Brussels
- 1995**
- Wessel O'Connor Gallery, New York
- 1996**
- Baldwin Gallery, Aspen, Colorado
 Galerie Baudoin Lebon, Paris, *Les autoportraits de Mapplethorpe*, March 21–May 4 (Catalogue with text by Jean-Louis Déotte and Jean-Michel Ribettes)
 Galleria Giò Marconi, Milan
 Mitsukoshi Museum of Art, Tokyo, *Robert Mapplethorpe*, December 5, 1996–January 19, 1997. Traveled Japan, to: Takashimaya Grand Hall, Osaka; Fukushima Prefectural Museum of Art; Hokkaido Asahikawa Museum of Art, Asahikawa; Sogo Museum of Art, Yokohama; Marugame Genichiro-Inokuma Museum of Contemporary Art, Kagawa (Catalogue)
 Robert Miller Gallery, New York, *Robert Mapplethorpe: Children*
- 1997**
- Baldwin Gallery, Aspen, Colorado
 Dorothy Blau Gallery, Bay Harbor Islands, Florida
 Fay Gold Gallery, Atlanta, *Robert Mapplethorpe: Flowers*, October 9–November 4
 Vau Gallery, Berlin
- 1998**
- Akita Senshu Museum of Art, Kyoto
 Galerie Baudoin Lebon, Paris, *Robert Mapplethorpe Portraits, Patti Smith Dessins*, June 3–July 4 (Catalogue with text by Paula Aisemberg et al.)
 Xavier Hufkens, Brussels
- 1999**
- Andrea Rosen Gallery, New York
 Centre Cultural la Beneficència, Valencia, Spain
 Galería Arnés y Röpke, Madrid
 Hamiltons Gallery, London
- 2000**
- Blum & Poe, Santa Monica, California, *Robert Mapplethorpe: Polaroids*, September 14–October 14
 Cheim & Read, New York, *Robert Mapplethorpe: Auto-Portrait Polaroids 1972–1974*, April 28–June 10

- Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Salzburg, Austria, *Artists' Portraits, Black Male Torsos, Flowers, Horses*, December 2, 2000–January 25, 2001
- Roslyn Oxley Gallery, Sydney, *Robert Mapplethorpe: X, Y, and Z Portfolios*, May 3–20
- Santa Monica Museum of Art, California, *The Perfect Moment*, opened May
- 2001**
- aspreyjacques, London, *Robert, Patti and Sam*
- Baldwin Gallery, Aspen, Colorado, *Robert Mapplethorpe*
- 2002**
- Galerie Stefan Röpke, Cologne, *Robert Mapplethorpe: Flowers*, July 5–September 7
- Museum of Contemporary Art, Sapporo, Japan, *Robert Mapplethorpe: Retrospective*
- Xavier Hufkens, Brussels
- 2003**
- aspreyjacques, London, *Robert Mapplethorpe: Sculptures and Hand-Painted Photographs*
- Olga Korper Gallery, Toronto, *Robert Mapplethorpe*, opened November
- Sean Kelly Gallery, New York, *Robert Mapplethorpe: Eye to Eye*, September 12–October 18 (Exhibition curated by Cindy Sherman)
- 2004**
- Marc Selwyn Fine Art, Los Angeles, *Robert Mapplethorpe: Pictures, Pictures*, January 31–March 13 (Exhibition curated by Catherine Opie)
- Merano Arte Edificio Cassa di Risparmio, Merano, Italy, *Il mondo di Robert Mapplethorpe*
- Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, and State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia, *Robert Mapplethorpe and the Classical Tradition: Photographs and Mannerist Prints*, July 1–August 24. Traveled to: Deutsche Guggenheim Museum, Berlin; State Hermitage Museum; Moscow House of Photography; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (Catalogue with text by Germano Celant et al.)
- Thomasville Cultural Center, Georgia, *Robert Mapplethorpe: Still Life Portraits*, December 15, 2004–March 27, 2005
- 2005**
- Alison Jacques Gallery, London, *Robert Mapplethorpe*, January 14–March 12 (Exhibition curated by David Hockney)
- Fototeca de Cuba, Havana, *Sacred and Profane: Robert Mapplethorpe*, December 14, 2005–February 18, 2006
- Galerie im Alten Rathaus, Prien am Chiemsee, Germany, *Robert Mapplethorpe: Porträts und Erotik*, October 20–December 11. Traveled to: Stadtgalerie Klagenfurt, Austria
- Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Paris, October 13–November 19 (Exhibition curated by Hedi Slimane)
- Olga Korper Gallery, Toronto, *Robert Mapplethorpe*, opened September
- Palazzina della Promotrice delle Belle Arti, Turin, Italy, *Robert Mapplethorpe: Tra antico e moderno*, October 8, 2005–January 2, 2006 (Exhibition curated by Germano Celant)
- 2006**
- Alison Jacques Gallery, London, *Robert Mapplethorpe: Still Moving & Lady*, September 8–October 7
- Baldwin Gallery, Aspen, Colorado, *Robert Mapplethorpe: Lisa Lyon*, February 17–March 12
- Bernheimer Fine Old Masters, Munich, *Robert Mapplethorpe: Pictures*, November 8, 2006–January 27, 2007
- Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Salzburg, Austria, July 22–September 23 (Exhibition curated by Robert Wilson)
- Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh, *Robert Mapplethorpe*, July 29–November 5 (Catalogue edited by Keith Hartley)
- 2007**
- Galería Pepe Cobo, Madrid, *Vanitas*, December 13, 2007–January 31, 2008
- Galerie Stefan Röpke, Cologne, *Robert Mapplethorpe: Women*, June 2–September 1
- Marc Selwyn Fine Art, Los Angeles, *Robert Mapplethorpe: Unique Works from the 1970s*, November 3–December 22
- Weinstein Gallery, Minneapolis, *Robert Mapplethorpe: Ken and Lydia*, April 19–June 23
- 2008**
- Baldwin Gallery, Aspen, Colorado, *50 New York Artists and Other Portraits*, March 14–April 12
- Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Paris, *Lisa, Milton, Thomas & Ken*, May 6–June 7
- Mai 36 Galerie, Zurich, *Robert Mapplethorpe: Works, 1975–1988*, August 30–October 18
- Olga Korper Gallery, Toronto, *Robert Mapplethorpe*, May 1–31
- Sean Kelly Gallery, New York, *Robert Mapplethorpe: Certain People*, February 8–March 15
- Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, *Polaroids: Mapplethorpe*, May 13–September 14. Traveled to: Mary and Leigh Block Museum of Art, Evanston, Illinois; Modern Art Oxford, England; Henry Art Gallery, Seattle (Catalogue with text by Sylvia Wolf)
- 2009**
- Centro de Arte Contemporáneo, Málaga, Spain, *Robert Mapplethorpe*, September 11–November 15
- Es Baluard Museu d'Art Modern i Contemporani, Palma de Mallorca, Spain, *Robert Mapplethorpe*, March 12–May 17
- Galeria Fortes Vilaça, São Paulo, *Robert Mapplethorpe: Flowers and Body Parts*, May 14–June 20
- Galleria dell'Accademia, Florence, *Robert Mapplethorpe: Perfection in Form*, May 25, 2009–January 10, 2010. Traveled to: Museo d'Arte della Città di Lugano, Villa Malpensata, Lugano, Switzerland (Catalogue with text by Franca Falletti et al.)
- Inverness Museum and Art Gallery, Scotland, *Robert Mapplethorpe (Artist Rooms Tour)*, April 26–June 27. Traveled England, to: Museums Sheffield; Towner Art Gallery, Eastbourne, East Sussex
- Marc Selwyn Fine Art, Los Angeles, *Robert Mapplethorpe: Black, White, and Silver*, February 12–March 28
- Palm Springs Art Museum, California, *Robert Mapplethorpe: Portraits*, January 23–April 19. Traveled to: Center for Creative Photography, Tucson, Arizona; San Jose Museum of Art, California (Catalogue with text by Gordon Baldwin and Daniell Cornell)
- TR 3 Gallery and National Gallery, Ljubljana, Slovenia, *Robert Mapplethorpe*, June 1–August 15
- Weinstein Gallery, Minneapolis, *Robert Mapplethorpe: Women*, May 29–July 10
- 2010**
- Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires, *Robert Mapplethorpe*, June 4–August 2
- NRW-Forum Kultur und Wirtschaft Düsseldorf, *Robert Mapplethorpe*, February 6–August 15
- Olga Korper Gallery, Toronto, *Robert Mapplethorpe*, January 15–November 20
- 2011**
- Alison Jacques Gallery, London, *Robert Mapplethorpe: Night Work*, January 19–March 19 (Exhibition curated by Scissor Sisters)
- C/O Berlin, *Robert Mapplethorpe*, January 21–May 1
- Fondazione Forma per la Fotografia, Milan, *Robert Mapplethorpe*, December 1, 2011–April 9, 2012
- Fotografiska, Stockholm, *Robert Mapplethorpe*, June 17–October 2
- Galería Elvira González, Madrid, *Robert Mapplethorpe: Almodóvar's Gaze*, June 7–July 29 (Exhibition curated by Pedro Almodóvar; catalogue with text by Siri Hustvedt)
- Galerie Stefan Röpke, Cologne, *Robert Mapplethorpe: En Plein Air*, June 1–July 9

Galerie Thaddæus Ropac, Paris, *Robert Mapplethorpe*, November 25, 2011–January 7, 2012 (Exhibition curated by Sofia Coppola)

Galerie Thomas Schulte, Berlin, *Robert Mapplethorpe: Friends and Acquaintances*, March 25–April 25

Galeri Nev, Istanbul, *Robert Mapplethorpe: Desired*, January 14–February 12

i8 Gallery, Reykjavik, Iceland, *Robert Mapplethorpe*, July 28–September 10

Montclair Art Museum, New Jersey, *Robert Mapplethorpe Flowers: Selections from the JP Morgan Chase Art Collection*, February 4–July 17

Onassis Cultural Centre, Athens, Greece, *Robert Mapplethorpe*, November 1, 2011–February 29, 2012

Sean Kelly Gallery, New York, *Robert Mapplethorpe: 50 Americans*, May 7–June 18

Texas Gallery, Houston, *Robert Mapplethorpe: Blossoming*, March 10–April 24

2012

Galeria Senda, Barcelona, *Robert Mapplethorpe*, September 27–November 17

J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, *In Focus: Robert Mapplethorpe*, October 23, 2012–March 24, 2013 (Exhibition curated by Paul Martineau)

Los Angeles County Museum of Art, *Robert Mapplethorpe: XYZ*, October 21, 2012–March 24, 2013 (Exhibition curated by Britt Salvesen)

Ludwig Museum, Budapest, *Robert Mapplethorpe*, May 25–September 30

Mai 36 Galerie, Zurich, *Mapplethorpe: Pure*, April 27–May 26

Olga Korper Gallery, Toronto, *Robert Mapplethorpe*, December 1, 2012–January 31, 2013

Perth Museum and Art Gallery, Scotland (Artist Rooms Scottish Tour), November 10, 2012–April 27, 2013. Traveled Scotland, to: Gallery at Linlithgow Burgh Halls, Linlithgow; Dunoon Burgh Hall, Dunoon; Old Gala House, Galashiels

2013

Alison Jacques Gallery, London, *Robert Mapplethorpe: Fashion Show*, September 10–October 5

Baldwin Gallery, Aspen, Colorado, *Robert Mapplethorpe*, February 15–March 10

Galería Elvira González, Madrid, *Robert Mapplethorpe: Works from 1980 to 1989*, May 23–July 19

Galerie Stefan Röpke, Cologne, *Robert Mapplethorpe: Fetish*, June 21–August 31

Galerie Thaddæus Ropac, Salzburg, Austria, *Robert Mapplethorpe*, August 31–October 26 (Exhibition curated by Isabelle Huppert)

Galleria Franco Noero, Turin, Italy, *Robert Mapplethorpe*, June 4–July 27

Sean Kelly Gallery, New York, *Robert Mapplethorpe: Saints and Sinners*, December 13, 2013–January 25, 2014

Seibu, Ikebukuro, Tokyo, *Robert Mapplethorpe: Flowers*, February 1–14

Xavier Hufkens, Brussels, *Robert Mapplethorpe: Au Début*, June 6–July 27

2014

Galerie Thomas Schulte, Berlin, *Robert Mapplethorpe*, October 4–November 15

Grand Palais, Paris, *Robert Mapplethorpe*, March 26–July 13 (Catalogue edited by Jérôme Neutres)

Kinsey Institute, Bloomington, Indiana, *Robert Mapplethorpe: Photographs from the Kinsey Institute Collection*, October 10–November 22

OHWOW, Los Angeles, *As Above, So Below*, February 28–March 29

Tate Modern, London, *Robert Mapplethorpe* (Artist Rooms Tour), May 11–October 26. Traveled the United Kingdom, to: Aberystwyth Arts Centre, Wales; Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle, England; Clydebank Museum and Art Gallery, Scotland

Weinstein Gallery, Minneapolis, *Robert Mapplethorpe*, June 6–July 19

2015

Baldwin Gallery, Aspen, Colorado, *Robert Mapplethorpe*, July 28–September 7

Galería Pepe Cobo, Lima, Peru, *Robert Mapplethorpe*, April 8–June 13

Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki, *Robert Mapplethorpe*, March 13–September 13

Olga Korper Gallery, Toronto, *Robert Mapplethorpe*, May 2–30

2016

J. Paul Getty Museum and Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, *Robert Mapplethorpe: The Perfect Medium*, March 15–July 21. Traveled to: Musée des Beaux-Arts de Montréal; Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney (Catalogue with text by Paul Martineau and Britt Salvesen et al.)

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

1970

Chelsea Hotel, New York, *Clothing as Art*, opened November 4 (Exhibition organized by Stanley Amos)

1973

Gotham Book Mart, New York, *Polaroids: Robert Mapplethorpe, Brigid Polk, Andy Warhol*

1974

Buecker and Harpsichords, New York, *Recent Religious and Ritual Art*

Bykert Gallery, New York

1976

Holly Solomon Gallery, New York, *Animals*

1977

Documenta 6, Kassel, Germany, June 24–October 2 (Catalogue with text by Manfred Schneckenburger)

Holly Solomon Gallery, New York, *Surrogates/Self-Portraits*

1978

Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., *The Collection of Sam Wagstaff*, February 4–March 26. Traveled to: St. Louis Art Museum; Grey Art Gallery and Study Center, New York University, New York; Seattle Art Museum; University Art Museum, University of California, Berkeley; High Museum, Atlanta (Catalogue with text by Sam Wagstaff)

Marcuse Pfeifer Gallery, New York, *The Male Nude: A Survey in Photography*, June 13–July 28 (Catalogue with text by Shelley Rice)

Marge Neikrug Gallery, New York, *Rated X*

Museum of Modern Art, New York, *Mirrors and Windows: American Photography since 1960*, July 28–October 2. Traveled to: Cleveland Museum of Art; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; J. B. Speed Museum, Louisville, Kentucky; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Krannert Art Museum, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign; Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond; Milwaukee Art Center (Catalogue with text by John Szarkowski)

Robert Miller Gallery, New York, *Film and Stills* (Two-person show with Patti Smith)

Robert Samuels Gallery, New York, *Seven Artists' Views of the Male Image*, opened March 11

1979

Aspen Center for the Visual Arts, Colorado, *American Portraits of the Sixties and Seventies*, June–August (Catalogue with text by Julie Augur)

International Center of Photography, New York, *Trade-Off: Lynn Davis and Robert Mapplethorpe*, March 17–April 22
Museum of Modern Art, New York, *People Watching*, October 1–November 27
Santa Barbara Museum of Art, California, *Attitudes: Photography in the 1970s*, May 12–August 5 (Catalogue with text by Fred R. Parker)
Whitney Museum of American Art (annex), New York, *Artists by Artists*

1980

Freedman Gallery, Albright College, Reading, Pennsylvania, *Presences: The Figure and Manmade Environments*, February 24–March 20 (Catalogue with text by Bruce Sheftel)
Jehu Gallery, San Francisco, *Secret Paintings (Erotic Paintings and Photographs)*
Padiglione d'Arte Contemporanea, Milan, *Quattro fotografi differenti: Barbara Kruger, Judith Linn, Robert Mapplethorpe, Charles Traub*, April–May (Catalogue with text by Carol Squiers)
Visual Arts Museum, School of Visual Arts, New York, *In Photography, Color as Subject*

1981

Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York, *Figures: Forms and Expressions*, November 20, 1981–January 3, 1982 (Catalogue with text by Robert Collignon and Biff Henrich)
Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, *Autoportraits photographiques, 1898–1981*, July 8–September 14 (Catalogue with text by Denis Roche)
Institute for Art and Urban Resources at P.S.1, Long Island City, New York, *New Wave*, February 15–April 5
Marlborough Gallery, New York, *Surrealist Photographic Portraits 1920–1980*, April 9–May 9 (Catalogue with text by Dennis Longwell)
Newport Harbor Art Museum, Newport Beach, California, *Inside-Out: Self Beyond Likeness*, May 22–July 12. Traveled to: Portland Art Museum, Oregon; Joslyn Art Museum, Omaha (Catalogue with text by Lynn Gamwell and Victoria Kogan)
Nordiska Kompaniet Göteborgs Konstmuseum, Göteborg, Sweden, *U.S. Art Now* (Catalogue with text by Lars Peder Hedberg)
Robert Samuels Gallery, New York, *Marked Photographs*
Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, *Instant Fotografie*, December 4, 1981–January 17, 1982 (Catalogue with text by Els Barents in collaboration with Karl Schampers)

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 1981 Biennial exhibition, January 20–April 5 (Exhibition curated by John G. Hanhardt, Barbara Haskell, Richard Marshall, and Patterson Sims)

1982

Barbara Gladstone Gallery, New York, *The Crucifix Show*
Concord Gallery, New York, *The Erotic Impulse*
Documenta 7, Kassel, Germany, June 19–September 28 (Catalogue with text by Saskia Bos and Rudi Fuchs)
Galerie Texbraun, Paris, *La Photographie en Amérique*
Grey Art Gallery and Study Center, New York University, New York, *Faces Photographed: Contemporary Camera Images*, November 9–December 23 (Catalogue with text by Ben Lifson)
Harlem Exhibition Space, New York, *The Black Male Image*
Hayden Gallery, List Visual Arts Center, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, *Intimate Architecture: Contemporary Clothing Design*, May 15–June 27 (Catalogue with text by Susan Sidlasukas)
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, *Counterparts: Form and Emotion in Photographs*, February 26–May 9 (Catalogue with text by Weston J. Naef)

1983

Castelli Graphics, New York, *Three-Dimensional Photographs*
Ffotogallery, Penarth, Wales, *New Perspectives on the Nude*
Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, *Robert Mapplethorpe: Drawings, Photographs*, March 5–26
Linda Farris Gallery, Seattle, *Self-Portraits*, August 4–September 11. Traveled to: Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery (Brochure with text by Peter Frank)
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, *The Nude in Modern Photography* (Catalogue with text by Dorothy Martinson)
Taft Museum, Cincinnati, *Presentation: Recent Portrait Photography*, June 17–July 31 (Brochure with text by Janet Borden)
Tate Gallery, London, *New Art at the Tate Gallery 1983*, September 14–October 23 (Catalogue with text by Michael Compton)
Whitney Museum of American Art (annex), New York, *Phototypes: The Development of Photography in New York City*, May 4–June 3 (Brochure with text by Philip Hotchkiss Walsh et al.)

1984

Cable Gallery, New York, *Sex*
Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, *The Heroic Figure*, September 15–November 4. Traveled to: Memphis Brooks Museum of Art, Tennessee; Alexandria Museum/Visual Art Center, Louisiana;

Santa Barbara Museum of Art, California (Catalogue with text by Linda L. Cathcart and Craig Owens)
Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, *Face to Face: Recent Portrait Photography*, June 13–July 29 (Catalogue with text by Paula Marincola)
New England Foundation for the Arts, Cambridge, Massachusetts, *Twelve on 20 x 24*. Traveled to: Gallery of the School of Fine Arts, Boston; Westbrook College, Portland, Maine; Fitchburg Art Museum, Massachusetts; Smith College Museum, Northampton, Massachusetts; Honolulu Academy of Arts (Brochure with text by Jon Holmes)
Nexus Gallery, Atlanta, *Radical Photography: The Bizarre Image*, January 20–February 25 (Catalogue with text by Eric D. Bookhardt)
Palais des Congrès, Montreal, Second Salon of Montreal Art Galleries
Superior Street Gallery, School of the Art Institute of Chicago, *Sex-Specific: Photographic Investigations of Contemporary Sexuality*, November 2–24 (Catalogue with text by Joyce Fernandes)
Wave Hill, Bronx, New York, *Flower as Image in 20th-Century Photography*, November 15, 1984–January 7, 1985 (Catalogue with text by Linda Macklowe)

1985

Artists' Space, New York, *Split Vision: Photography*, December 14, 1985–January 18, 1986 (Exhibition curated by Robert Mapplethorpe and Laurie Simmons)
Goldie Paley Gallery, Moore College of Art and Design, Philadelphia, *Memento Mori*, November 8–December 18 (Brochure with text by Richard Flood)
Hayden Gallery, List Visual Arts Center, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, *Nude, Naked, Stripped*, December 13, 1985–February 2, 1986 (Catalogue with text by Carrie Rickey and Dana Friis-Hansen)
Jason McCoy Inc., New York, *Marcus Leatherdale, Robert Mapplethorpe, Laurie Simmons: Still Life Photographs*
Light Gallery, New York, *Messages from 1985*
Mary and Leigh Block Gallery, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois, *Picture Taking: Weegee, Walker Evans, Sherrie Levine, Robert Mapplethorpe*, November 1–December 22 (Catalogue with text by William Olander)
Museum of Modern Art, New York, *Self-Portrait: The Photographer's Persona, 1840–1985*, November 7, 1985–January 7, 1986
One Penn Plaza, New York, *Beautiful Photographs* (Exhibition curated by Gene Thornton)
Patricia Heesy Gallery, New York, *Flowers: Varied Perspectives*

Photographers' Gallery, London, *Five Years with "The Face,"* April 19–May 18
Vision Gallery of Photography, Boston, *Style: An Exhibition of Fashion Photographs*

1986

Centre Georges Pompidou, Galeries Contemporaines, Paris, *Invitation: La Revue Parkett*, June 3–August 24
International Center of Photography, New York, *Art and Advertising: Commercial Photography by Artists*, September 14–November 9 (Catalogue with text by Willis Hartshorn)
Mead Art Museum, Amherst College, Amherst, Massachusetts, *Rules of the Game: Culture Defining Gender*, January 16–February 17 (Catalogue with text by Judith Barter and Anne Mochon)
Mint Museum, Charlotte, North Carolina, *The Fashionable Image: Unconventional Fashion Photography*, September 28–November 16 (Catalogue with text by Henry Barendse et al.)
National Portrait Gallery, London, *Staging the Self: Self-Portrait Photography 1840s–1980s*, October 3, 1986–January 11, 1987. Traveled the United Kingdom, to: Plymouth Arts Centre; Ikon Gallery Birmingham (Catalogue edited by James Lingwood)
Photo Resource Center, Boston, *The Sacred and the Sacrilegious: Iconographic Images in Photography*
Turman Gallery, Indiana State University, Terre Haute, *intimate/INTIMATE*, March 22–April 22 (Catalogue with text by Charles S. Mayer and Bert Brouwer)
Whitney Museum of American Art (annex), New York, *Sacred Images in Secular Art*, May 1–July 13 (Brochure)

1987

Center for the Fine Arts, Miami, *Contemporary American Figurative Photography*
International Center of Photography, New York, *Legacy of Light*, November 20, 1987–January 3, 1988
New York University, Tisch School of the Arts, New York, *Photographers Who Make Films*
Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, *Portrait: Faces of the 80's*, July 20–September 13 (Catalogue with text by George Cruger)

1988

Grand Rapids Museum, Michigan, *Flowers*
High Museum at Georgia-Pacific Center, Atlanta, *First Person Singular: Self-Portrait Photography, 1840–1987*, January 14–March 4 (Catalogue with text by Ellen Dugan)
National Museum of Dance, Saratoga Springs, New York, *The Fugitive Gesture: Masterpieces of Dance Photography, 1849 to the Present* (Catalogue with text by William A. Ewing)

Whitney Museum of American Art (annex), New York, *Identity: Representations of the Self*, December 14, 1988–February 10, 1989 (Brochure)

1989

Burden Gallery, Aperture Foundation, New York, *The Legacy of William Henry Fox Talbot*
Burden Gallery, Aperture Foundation, New York, *Self and Shadow*
Frankfurter Kunstverein, Frankfurt am Main, *Portraits: Das Portrait in der zeitgenössischen Photographie* (Catalogue with text by Peter Weiermair)
Greg Kucera Gallery, Seattle, *Taboo*, October 5–29 (Brochure with text by Greg Kucera and Matthew Kangas)
Mai 36 Galerie, Berlin, *Les Krims, William Klein, Irving Penn, Duane Michals, Robert Mapplethorpe*
National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., *On the Art of Fixing a Shadow: 150 Years of Photography*, May 7–July 30. Traveled to: Art Institute of Chicago; Los Angeles County Museum of Art (Catalogue with text by Sarah Greenough et al.)
University of Missouri, St. Louis, *The Modernist Still Life—Photographed*, February 20–March 17. Traveled to: University of Missouri, Kansas City; University of Missouri, Columbia (Catalogue with text by Jean S. Tucker) (see also 1992)
Victoria and Albert Museum, London, *Photography Now*, February 15–April 30 (Catalogue with text by Mark Haworth-Booth)

1990

Bayly Art Museum, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, *The Humanist Icon*, March 18–May 20. Traveled to: New York Academy of Art, New York; Edwin A. Ulrich Museum of Art, Wichita State University, Kansas (Exhibition curated by Lowell Nesbitt)
C2 Gallery, Tokyo, *Great Contemporary Nudes, 1978–1990: Selected Works by Robert Mapplethorpe, Herb Ritts, Bruce Weber*, April 28–June 11 (Catalogue with text by Shuhei Takahashi)
G. Ray Hawkins Gallery, Los Angeles, *Robert Mapplethorpe: Flowers/André Kertész: Vintage Photographs*
International Center of Photography, New York, *The Indomitable Spirit: Photographers and Artists Respond in the Time of AIDS*, February 9–April 7. Traveled to: Lorence-Monk Gallery, New York; Pace/MacGill Gallery, New York; Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco; Rhona Hoffman Gallery, Chicago; Blum Helman Gallery, New York; Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery; AIPAD Special Exhibition at Basel Art Fair; Gallery for Fine Photography, New Orleans; Fay Gold Gallery, Atlanta
Marc Richards Gallery, Los Angeles, *Faces*

Massimo Audiello Gallery, New York, *Disturb Me*, March 17–April 7
New Orleans Museum of Art, *Altered Truths: Contemporary Photography from the Michael Myers/Russell Albright Collection*, January 12–February 24
Texas Gallery, Houston, *Art That Happens to Be Photography*
Tony Shafrazi Gallery, New York, *The Last Decade: American Artists of the 80s*, September 15–October 27 (Catalogue with text by Robert Pincus-Witten et al.)

1991

Burden Gallery, Aperture Foundation, New York, *The Body in Question*
Cleveland Center for Contemporary Art, *Cruciformed: Images of the Cross since 1980*, September 6–November 3. Traveled to: Museum of Contemporary Art, Wright State University, Dayton, Ohio; Western Gallery, Bellingham, Washington; Macdonald Stewart Art Centre, Guelph, Ontario (Catalogue with text by David S. Rubin)
Galerie Pierre Huber, Geneva, *The Revenge of the Image*, March–April
Margo Leavin Gallery, Los Angeles, *Twentieth-Century Collage*, January 12–February 16. Traveled to: Centro Cultural Arte Contemporáneo, Mexico City; Musée d'Art Moderne et d'Art Contemporain, Nice, France
Stephen Wirtz Gallery, San Francisco, *Framed*
Victoria and Albert Museum, London, *Appearances: Fashion Photography since 1945* (Catalogue with text by Martin Harrison)
Weston Gallery, Carmel, California, *Modern Botanical*

1992

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, *This Sporting Life, 1978–1991*, May 16–September 13. Traveled to: University of Houston; Delaware Art Museum, Wilmington; Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York (Catalogue with text by Ellen Dugan et al.)
Museo de Monterrey, Mexico, *Becher, Mapplethorpe, Sherman*, April–June (Catalogue with essays by Olivier Debrouse et al.)
University of Missouri, St. Louis, *The Modernist Still Life—Photographed*. Traveled to: USIS American Center, Thessaloniki, Greece; BNC, Athens, Greece; American Center, Karachi and Lahore, Pakistan; American Center, Delhi, India; Venkatappa, Bangalore, India; Jeddah Literary Society, Saudi Arabia; Riyadh Cultural Center, Saudi Arabia; National Gallery, Amman, Jordan; Maison de la Culture, Algiers, Algeria; and Rabat, Morocco (Catalogue with text by Jean S. Tucker) (see also 1989)

1993

Espace lyonnais d'art contemporain, Centre d'échanges de Perrache, Lyon, France, *Here's Looking at Me: Contemporary Self-Portraits*, January 29–April 30 (Catalogue)

Galleria Photology, Milan, *Supreme Shots: Fashion Photography since 1948*

Isetan Museum of Art, Tokyo, *American Made: The New Still Life*, June 3–15. Traveled to Hokkaido Obhiro Museum of Art, Hokkaido, Japan (Catalogue with text by Patty Carroll)

Richard Green Gallery, Santa Monica, California, *Form: Female*

Santa Barbara Museum of Art, California, *In Dialogue: The Art of Elsa Rady and Robert Mapplethorpe*, February 6–March 28 (Brochure with text by Diana C. du Pont)

Thread Waxing Space, New York, *I Am the Enunciator*, January 9–February 20 (Exhibition curated by Christian Leigh)

1994

Aspen Art Museum, Colorado, *The Shaman as Artist, the Artist as Shaman*, February 10–April 10 (Catalogue with text by Klaus Kertess)

Hamiltons Gallery, London, *Flowers 1850–1994*

Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, *Face-Off: The Portrait in Recent Art*, September 9–October 30 (Catalogue with text by Melissa E. Feldman and Benjamin H. D. Buchloh)

New York City Police Department, New York, *Gay and Lesbian Pride in Policing Display*, June 15–July 13

Weatherspoon Art Gallery, University of North Carolina, Greensboro, *Fictions of the Self: The Portrait in Contemporary Photography*, February 14–April 30. Traveled to: Herter Art Gallery, University of Massachusetts, Amherst; Palazzo delle Esposizioni, Rome; Musée d'Art Moderne, Nice, France (Exhibition curated by Michael E. Cobylin and Trevor Richardson)

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, *Black Male: Representations of Masculinity in Contemporary American Art*, November 10, 1994–March 5, 1995 (Catalogue with text by Thelma Golden et al.)

1995

Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, Ridgefield, Connecticut, *Inside-Out: Psychological Self-Portraiture*, May 20–September 17 (Catalogue with text by Douglas F. Maxwell)

California Museum of Photography, Riverside, *The Garden of Earthly Delights: Photographs by Edward Weston and Robert Mapplethorpe*, March 4–April 30 (Catalogue with text by Jonathan Green et al.)

Kunsthalle Bielefeld, Germany, *Blumenstücke/ Kunststücke*, December 10, 1995–February 25, 1996 (Catalogue edited by Hans-Michael Herzog)

1996

Los Angeles County Museum of Art, *Ports of Entry: William S. Burroughs and the Arts*, July 18–October 6 (Catalogue with text by Robert A. Sobieszek)

Sprengel Museum, Hannover, Germany, *Sex & Crime: Von den Verhältnissen der Menschen*, February 18–May 12 (Catalogue with text by Ulrich Krempel)

Tacoma Art Museum, Washington, *Kinships: Alice Neel Looks at the Family*, March 12–June 16. Traveled to: Mills College Art Gallery, Oakland, California; Sheehan Gallery, Whitman College, Walla Walla, Washington; University Art Museum, University of California, Santa Barbara; Boise Art Museum, Idaho; Smith College Museum of Art, Northampton, Massachusetts (Brochure)

Ubu Gallery, New York, *The Gun: Icon of Twentieth-Century Art*, January 27–March 9

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, *Consensus and Conflict: The Flag in American Art*, July 19–September 18 (Catalogue with text by Poyin Auyoung et al.)

1997

Milwaukee Art Museum, *Identity Crisis: Self-Portraiture at the End of the Century*, September 12–November 16. Traveled to: Aspen Art Museum, Colorado (Catalogue with text by Dean Sobel and Marc J. Ackerman)

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, *The Warhol Look/Glamour Style Fashion*, November 8, 1997–January 18, 1998. Traveled to: Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg, Germany; Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh; Auckland Art Gallery, New Zealand; International Center of Photography, New York (Catalogue with text by Mark Francis et al.)

1998

Cheim & Read, New York, *Three Catholics: Andy Warhol, Ed Ruscha, and Robert Mapplethorpe*, April 29–June 27

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia, *Beyond Belief: Modern Art and the Religious Imagination*, April 24–July 26 (Catalogue with text by Rosemary Crumlin)

Salzburger Landessammlungen Rupertinum, Salzburg, Austria, *Ideal and Reality: The Image of the Body in 20th Century Art*, July 18–September 27 (Catalogue edited by Peter Weiermair)

1999

Los Angeles County Museum of Art, *Ghost in the Shell: Photography and the Human Soul, 1850–2000*, October 16, 1999–January 17, 2000 (Catalogue with text by Robert A. Sobieszek)

Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, *Rock Style: How Fashion Moves to Music*, December 9, 1999–March 19, 2000 (Catalogue with text by Tommy Hilfiger and Anthony DeCurtis)

National Portrait Gallery, London, *The Possibilities of Portraiture*

Neuberger Museum of Art, State University of New York, Purchase, *Contemporary Classicism*, February 21–June 6. Traveled to: Tampa Museum of Art, Florida (Exhibition curated by Judy Collischan)

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, *The American Century: Art & Culture 1900–2000*, April 23–August 22 (Catalogue with text by Barbara Haskell et al.)

2000

Cheim & Read, New York, *Couples*, January 6–February 26

2001

CAPC musée d'art contemporain de Bordeaux, France, *Plus vrai que nature*, March–September

Niitsu Art Museum, Niigata, Japan, *Promiscuous Flowers: Robert Mapplethorpe and Nobuyoshi Araki*, June 13–July 1. Traveled Japan, to: Odakyu Museum of Art, Tokyo; Museum Eki, Kyoto (Catalogue with text by Noriko Fuku)

2002

Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh, *Strange Messenger: The Work of Patti Smith*, September 27, 2002–January 5, 2003. Traveled to: Contemporary Arts Museum Houston; Parco Gallery, Tokyo; Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia; Haus der Kunst, Munich; Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, Netherlands (Catalogue with text by David Greenberg and John W. Smith)

Bruce Museum of Arts and Science, Greenwich, Connecticut, *The Great American Nude*, June 15–September 8 (Catalogue with text by Nancy Hall-Duncan and William H. Gerdt)

Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, *To the Flag: Taking Liberties*

Deichtorhallen Museum, Hamburg, Germany, *Archaeology of Elegance, 1980–2000: 20 Years of Fashion Photography* (Catalogue with text by Ulf Poschardt et al.)

Israel Museum, Jerusalem, *Revelation: Representations of Christ in Photography*, May 22–September 6 (Catalogue with text by Nissan Perez)

Museu d'Art Contemporani, Barcelona, *Pandemic: Facing AIDS*. Traveled to: FAD Convent dels Àngels, Barcelona; Apartheid Museum, Johannesburg; United Nations, New York; Moscow State University (Catalogue with text by Kofi A. Annan et al.)

2003

Independent Curators International, New York, *Likeness: Portraits of Artists by Other Artists*, February 27–May 8. Traveled to: CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, San Francisco (Catalogue with text by Matthew Higgs et al.)

International Center of Photography, New York, *Only Skin Deep: Changing Visions of the American Self*, December 12, 2003–February 29, 2004. Traveled to: Seattle Art Museum (Catalogue edited by Coco Fusco and Brian Wallis)

2004

Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh, *Flowers Observed, Flowers Transformed*, May 16–September 5

Galleria d'Arte Moderna, Bologna, *Il nudo fra ideale e realtà: Una storia dal Neoclassicismo ad oggi*, January 22–May 9 (Exhibition curated by Peter Weiermair)

Galleria In Arco, Turin, Italy, *Istanti Istantanei: Arte in Polaroid/Instant Instincts: Art in Polaroid, nelle opere di Nobuyoshi Araki, Robert Mapplethorpe, Carlo Mollino, Yasumasa Morimura, Mario Schifano*, March 31–May 22

Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk, Denmark, *The Flower as Image*, September 10, 2004–January 16, 2005 (Catalogue edited by Michael Juul Holm et al.)

Tel Aviv Museum of Art, *Rose c'est la vie: On Flowers in Contemporary Art*, July 8–October 9 (Exhibition curated by Edna Moshenson)

2006

Fondation Beyeler, Basel, *Eros in der Kunst der Moderne*, October 2006–February 2007. Traveled to: Kunstforum Wien, Vienna (Catalogue edited by Delia Cihua et al.)

2007

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, *Family Pictures*, February 9–April 16

2008

Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, *Photography on Photography: Reflections on the Medium since 1960*, April 8–October 19

2009

Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna, *The Portrait: Photography as Stage—From Robert Mapplethorpe to Nan Goldin*, July 3–October 18 (Catalogue with text by Ulrich Pohlmann et al.)

Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, *Deadline*, October 7, 2009–January 10, 2010 (Catalogue with text by Odile Burlureau and Emil Ouroumov)

Xavier Hufkens, Brussels, *Sterling Ruby and Robert Mapplethorpe*, December 10, 2009–January 14, 2010 (Exhibition curated by Sterling Ruby; catalogue with text by Sterling Ruby and Ed Schadt)

2010

Baldwin Gallery, Aspen, Colorado, *Horses*, June 26–July 25
Galleria Giò Marconi, Milan, *Robert Mapplethorpe/Man Ray*, March 24–May 22 (Catalogue with text by Bruno Corà)

National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., *Hide/Seek: Difference and Desire in American Portraiture*, October 30, 2010–February 3, 2011. Traveled to: Brooklyn Museum, New York; Tacoma Art Museum, Washington (Catalogue with text by Jonathan D. Katz and David C. Ward)

Weinstein Gallery, Minneapolis, *Portraits/100 Years: August Sander, Robert Mapplethorpe and Alec Soth*, August 27–October 23

2011

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, *Legacy: The Emily Fisher Landau Collection*, February 10–May 1 (Catalogue edited by Dana Miller)

2012

Leopold Museum, Vienna, *Nude Men: From 1800 to the Present Day*, October 19, 2012–January 28, 2013. Traveled to: Musée d'Orsay, Paris (Catalogue edited by Tobias G. Natter and Elisabeth Leopold)

Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, *Regarding Warhol: Sixty Artists, Fifty Years*, September 18–December 31 (Catalogue with text by Mark Rosenthal et al.)

Xavier Laboulbène, Berlin, *Mapplethorpe and Michael Sayles*, April 13–June 23

2014

Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, *Urban Theater: New York Art in the 1980s*, September 21, 2014–January 4, 2015 (Catalogue with text by Michael Auping et al.)

Musée Rodin, Paris, *Mapplethorpe/Rodin*, April 7–September 21 (Catalogue with text by Hélène Pinet et al.)

2015

Gagosian Gallery, New York, *In the Studio: Photographs*, February 17–April 18 (Catalogue with text by Peter Galassi)

Tacoma Art Museum, *Art AIDS America*, October 3, 2015–January 10, 2016

Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, Connecticut, *Warhol & Mapplethorpe: Guise & Dolls*, October 17, 2015–January 24, 2016 (Catalogue with text by Patricia Hickson)

2016

Munch Museet, Oslo, *Mapplethorpe + Munch*

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Compiled by Ryan Linkof

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- Black Flowers*. Madrid: Galería Fernando Vijande, 1985. Text by Edmund White.
- Black Males*. Amsterdam: Galerie Jurka, 1980. Text by Edmund White.
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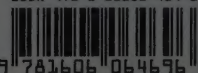


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ISBN 978-1-60606-469-6



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Printed in Italy