

# GLADSTONE

## Gladstone Gallery presents historic works by Robert Mapplethorpe, curated by Roe Ethridge

Drawing from previously unseen works, the exhibition offers a renewed perspective on Mapplethorpe's groundbreaking approach to portraiture, still life, and image-making

Gladstone Gallery is pleased to present an exhibition of historic works by Robert Mapplethorpe, curated by artist, Roe Ethridge. This marks the gallery's first solo presentation as the New York representative of the Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation. Barbara Gladstone showed his work once before when she published the seminal *Flowers* portfolio in the early 1980s. Ethridge brings his own perspective as a contemporary artist who works in the same genres of portraiture and still life that are touchstones of Mapplethorpe's well-known oeuvre. Drawn from the extensive archive of the Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation, Ethridge has selected both iconic images—including self-portraits, flowers, and scenes of frank sexual provocation—and those exhibited for the first time to evoke his own experience of understanding the breadth of Mapplethorpe's mastery of process and composition. This show offers a compelling new look at Mapplethorpe's distinctive practice: rather than focusing on a specific time or subject, it explores less familiar images and themes that highlight the innovation of his work, still astonishing almost three decades after his death

Ethridge's take on a figure who has loomed large since he began studying the medium, highlights Mapplethorpe's focus on classical and baroque, intimate and public, and restraint and licentiousness. Ethridge states—"Mapplethorpe didn't make pictures of daily life; his daily life was making pictures." He approached the body of work with an eye to contextualizing iconic poses and erotically-charged compositions of Mapplethorpe's friends, lovers, and the world around him within a larger scope of his aesthetic interests and perceptive vision. Precisely posed photographs of his lover, Milton Moore, are accompanied by more candid portraits of Moore's niece and nephew—a nod to the intimate familiarity Mapplethorpe shared with many of his subjects. Ethridge's presentation reveals mannerist expressions, unexpected subjects, and humorous moments: Patti Smith's entranced gaze with prophetic vision, the televisual appeal of actress Morgan Fairchild, and the shock of Baby Larry, all encompass Mapplethorpe's incisive eye for beauty and perversity.

Roe Ethridge surveys Mapplethorpe's legacy and sees the work afresh in a contemporary light. In this way, he presents these works to show both its historical significance and its potential to enthrall and surprise audiences in new ways. Mapplethorpe's freedom to experiment and make pictures of his daily life continues to inspire Ethridge, who states: "I had a secret trust with Mapplethorpe's work; it was giving me license to do what I was doing as a photographer."

### Exhibition Details

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Curated by Roe Ethridge  
March 3 – April 14, 2018  
515 West 24th Street  
New York, NY 10011

## About Robert Mapplethorpe

Robert Mapplethorpe (1946–1989) was born and raised in Queens, New York. Mapplethorpe attended the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn from 1963 to 1969, where he majored in Graphic Arts and worked primarily in painting, sculpture and collage. It was not until the 1970s when the artist Sandy Daley gave Mapplethorpe a Polaroid camera that he began to experiment with photography, which he originally used as a means to document his mixed-media artworks, and develop his signature style. During his lifetime, Mapplethorpe had impressive solo exhibitions at some of the most acclaimed institutions around the world, including the Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; the National Portrait Gallery, London; the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. After his untimely death from AIDS in 1989, Mapplethorpe has been the subject of solo exhibitions at major international museums, including the Galleri dell'Accademia, Florence, Italy; Grand Palais, Paris, France; Musée Rodin, Paris, France; Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden; Musée des beaux-arts de Montréal, Canada; and State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia. Mapplethorpe is currently the subject of a major touring retrospective, *The Perfect Medium*, which opened at the J. Paul Getty Museum and Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), Los Angeles in 2016, and has recently toured to Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Canada and the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia, on view through March 4, 2018.

## About Roe Ethridge

Roe Ethridge (b. 1969, Miami, Florida) lives and works in New York. His photographs have appeared in solo exhibitions at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston; the Garage Center for Contemporary Culture, Moscow; and Le Consortium, Dijon, France. Ethridge has also been included in group exhibitions at notable institutions including: the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Aspen Art Museum, Colorado; the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; the Barbican Center, London; MoMA PS1, Queens, New York; the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, Illinois; and the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles.

## About Gladstone Gallery

Gladstone Gallery is known for its commitment to artists whose prescient approaches and experimental practices have defined the contours of contemporary art. The gallery has long been an active partner in the cultivation of iconoclastic careers, fostering a roster of artists recognized for their ground-breaking contributions. Headquartered in New York and including outposts in both Brussels and Seoul, Gladstone's impact extends globally, enabling both the presentation of new bodies of work, and an amplification of the international reach of its artists. Alongside its work with contemporary artists, the gallery is steward to the legacies of pivotal historical artists

# G L A D S T O N E

and serves as an advocate for the enduring power of art. Gladstone is led by a team of partners who spearhead its long-term vision and program, building on the values of its founder Barbara Gladstone.

**Press Contact**

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