

# GLADSTONE

Paul Laster, "8-Must-See Solo Gallery Shows in April," *Galerie*, April 2, 2026

Galerie

ART & CULTURE

## 8 Must-See Solo Gallery Shows in April

From David Smalling's paintings using the visual language of the Old Masters to show how social rules and gender expectations influence identity to Jack Pierson's word sculptures and drawings crafted from sentiments and phrases collected throughout his life

BY PAUL LASTER

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**R**ounding up the best gallery exhibitions across the United States each month, *Galerie* traveled from New York to Chicago and Los Angeles to highlight the top solo shows for April. From David Smalling's paintings using the visual language of the Old Masters to show how social rules and gender expectations influence identity and actions at Templon to Cheryl Pope's fabric landscape paintings that explore the spiritual and emotional significance of land as a space of memory, silence, and shared human experience at Monique Meloche and Jack Pierson's word sculptures and drawings crafted from sentiments and phrases collected throughout his life at Regen Projects, these are the not-to-be-missed shows this month.

*Through April 18*



Robert Mapplethorpe, *American Flag*, (1977).

PHOTO: © ROBERT MAPPLETHORPE FOUNDATION. COURTESY OF THE FOUNDATION AND GLADSTONE

## 4. Robert Mapplethorpe | Gladstone, New York

An internationally renowned photographer, **Robert Mapplethorpe** is known for his highly stylized black-and-white images that celebrate classical beauty and demonstrate technical mastery. His work spans subjects from delicate flowers and still lifes to explicit erotic scenes. He captured iconic images of celebrities and artists like **Andy Warhol**, **Grace Jones**, and his close friend and muse, **Patti Smith**, with his 1975 photograph for her album cover, *Horses*, being among his most famous works. He also used a sculptural, formalist style for his floral images, characterized by clean lines, dramatic lighting, and a focus on geometric balance. Additionally, he documented his own life through a series of self-portraits, including powerful final pieces that reveal his struggle with AIDS.

This exhibition debuts **Mapplethorpe's** photographs in a new, large-scale format, fulfilling a long-held wish of the artist. Created in partnership with the **Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation**, it features a selection of his most famous images. The display presents a variety of his signature themes: flowers, classical sculptures, male and female nudes, portraits of artists and celebrities such as Smith and Debbie Harry, seascapes, a leather-clad crotch, and a torn American flag. Collectively, these works emphasize Mapplethorpe's fixation with perfection, a central theme throughout his entire body of work. In his 1980 *Self-Portrait*, he depicts hypermasculinity, wearing a leather jacket and holding a cigarette in his mouth, while his 1988 *Self-Portrait*, a year before his death from AIDS, shows him facing death solemnly, holding a skull-topped cane.