

MAI 36 GALERIE

Robert Mapplethorpe

Opening: Thursday, 17 January 2019, 6 to 8 p.m.
Exhibition: 18 January – 2 March 2019
Hours: Tues – Fri 11 a.m. to 6.30 p.m., Sat 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

„I'm looking for the unexpected. I'm looking for things I've never seen before.“ R. Mapplethorpe, 1988

Mai 36 Galerie is delighted to present the fifth solo exhibition of works by American photographer Robert Mapplethorpe.

Robert Mapplethorpe (1946-1989) studied Fine Art at the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, New York, from 1963. His early influences included artists such as Joseph Cornell and Marcel Duchamp. Experimenting with mixed media collages, he began incorporating his own polaroids into his work from 1970 onwards, and turned his attention increasingly towards photography. In 1973, he had his first solo exhibition with polaroids, but by 1975 he was using a Hasselblad medium-format camera for his work.

Although Mapplethorpe dominated the late twentieth century photographic scene, no other photographer of his time invited as much controversy as he did. His radical portrayals of nudity and sex acts were highly controversial, while his graceful floral arrangements, still lifes, powerful black-and-white portraits and self-portraits garnered acclaim. By the mid-1980s, Mapplethorpe was successfully and frequently exhibiting. In 1977, he took part in the Documenta 6 in Kassel and in 1988 the Whitney Museum devoted an exhibition to him during his lifetime. He was also involved in a number of commercial projects, designing album covers and publishing portraits and party photos in Andy Warhol's *Interview Magazine*.

Mapplethorpe's classically inspired image of the human body was even adopted by commercial photography. He looked to the iconography of Classical Antiquity and the Renaissance, and developed his own distinctive photographic style of radically pared-down composition. Even the early polaroids he created after his Fine Art studies at the Pratt Institute foreshadow his later motifs – albeit in color and more directly. With the shift to classic black-and-white photography, Mapplethorpe refined his technique and compositional style, going into more detail, cropping more closely, and creating aesthetically staged images in black-and-white.

The exhibition at Mai 36 Galerie shows works from 1976 to 1988 and includes the themes of *male / female / SM / flowers / still life*. The selection shows Robert Mapplethorpe as an artist firmly anchored in his time, yet whose works remain topical to this day. His photographs challenge us, while at the same time presenting images of classical beauty. Mai 36 Galerie has been representing the work of Robert Mapplethorpe since 1988.

Currently, the Museo Madre in Naples is showing *Robert Mapplethorpe – Coreografia per una mostra* and from January 2019 the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York is opening *Implicit Tensions: Mapplethorpe Now*, a two-part, yearlong exhibition. A full-length feature film about Mapplethorpe's life and work, addressing the parallels between his art and his sexuality, is due for release later in the year.

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Visual materials available on request (office@mai36.com).

We look forward to seeing you at the gallery and thank you for your interest.

Mai 36 Galerie
Victor Gisler

January 2019