

# GLADSTONE GALLERY

Billy Anania, "Robert Mapplethorpe at Gladstone Gallery," *Musee Magazine*, March 6, 2018



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## Robert Mapplethorpe at Gladstone Gallery

REVIEWS



Lisa Lyon, 1983 © Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation.  
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Robert Mapplethorpe's "Pictures/Self Portrait" from 1977 shows the New York photography legend's right hand in a leather glove and studded bracelets. The late artist holds an old-fashioned pen with the word "Pictures" scrawled across a

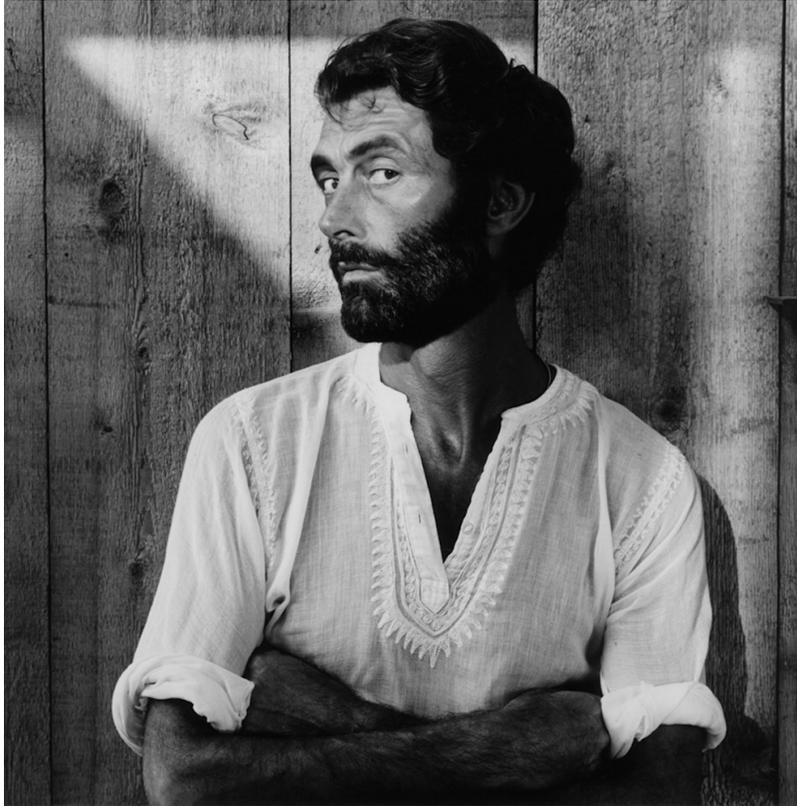
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square sheet of paper. Despite its unconventional nature, this piece accurately represents the photographer's rendering of self. Faceless and anonymous, Mapplethorpe's image is secondary to his purpose: To ascribe meaning through visuals. The accessories add stylistic flair to his vision, which encapsulated the New York underground BDSM scene of the '60s and '70s.

A new exhibition in Chelsea offers alternative perspectives on the renowned artist's oeuvre. Robert Mapplethorpe is Gladstone Gallery's first show since announcing their representation of his estate last year. Barbara Gladstone previously collaborated with Mapplethorpe on a portfolio of flowers in the 1980s.

The exhibition was curated by renowned photographer Roe Ethridge, who has long drawn influence from Mapplethorpe. Selected works include famed images and never-before-seen photographs from archives. Instead of highlighting particular years or themes, Ethridge chose lesser known pieces that convey the artist's malleability. The exhibition is therefore an even combination of historic photography and contemporary curation.

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Lou Fisher, F.I., 1977 © Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation.

Ethridge blends placid imagery with provocative themes, revitalizing Mapplethorpe's work through careful juxtaposition. Still life photographs of flowers in thin glass vases bear corporeal features when viewed alongside nude portraits and bondage scenes. Models are shown in resplendent poses and in more candid settings. This duality speaks to the intimacy Mapplethorpe shared with many of his frequent collaborators, including former lover Milton Moore.

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Nick Marden, 1980 Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation.

Mapplethorpe continually found a way to contextualize close relations within the greater artistic discourse. Many of these connections were famous artists and performers. A 1983 portrait of Robert Rauschenberg and Trisha Brown provides an intimate view of the dance partners. Both dressed in dark colors, the artist and choreographer stand in a tender embrace, looking directly into the camera with smiles on their faces. Portraits of Patti Smith, Morgan Fairchild and Baby Larry subvert conventional notions of the medium, favoring a synthesis of charm and deviance. Beyond new perspectives, the exhibition proves that Mapplethorpe's work can still beguile audiences nearly three decades after his death.

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