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ROBERT MAPPLETHORPE

PHOTOGRAPHIES

EDITED BY PAUL MARTINEAU AND BRITT SALVESEN

TEXTS BY PAUL MARTINEAU, BRITT SALVESEN, PHILIP GEFTER, JONATHAN D. KATZ, RYAN LINKOF, RICHARD MEYER, AND CAROL SQUIERS

Offering an extraordinary selection of illustrations—from familiar masterworks to previously unpublished images, and from elegant floral still lifes to controversial erotic photographs of the gay s/m community—and featuring an introduction and five in-depth essays on sexuality and identity, all complemented by other valuable resources, this book represents an essential point of access to Robert Mapplethorpe's work and practice.

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 experiment with the boundaries of acceptability and concepts of the beautiful. His life and work continue to reward examination, taking on new relevance with shifting social and artistic concerns.

Robert Mapplethorpe. Photographies 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.

Paul Martineau is associate curator in the Department of Photographs at the J. Paul Getty Museum. He has organized numerous exhibitions covering a range of topics spanning the history of photography from its beginnings to today.

Britt Salvesen is curator and head of the Wallis Annenberg Photography Department and the Prints and Drawings Department at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.