



Mapplethorpe: A Biography

By Patricia Morrisroe



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With Robert Mapplethorpe's full endorsement and encouragement, Morrisroe interviewed more than three hundred friends, lovers, family members, and critics to form this definitive biography of America's most censored and celebrated photographer.

NOTE: This edition does not include photographs.



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Mapplethorpe: A Biography By Patricia Morrisroe Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

The late photographer-provocateur, who died from AIDS-related illness in 1989, chose Morrisroe, a frequent contributor to *New York* magazine, as his biographer. The result is a deeply sympathetic portrait of one of the most controversial artists of the 20th century. His work offsets with luminous elegance and compositional rigor its sometimes shocking content: not only absurdly lush blossoms and haughty socialites but also male nudes and explicit sadomasochistic scenes that reflected his own obsessive forays into the Manhattan underworld. The book explores his rise in the vital art world of 1970s Manhattan as well as his bond with rocker Patti Smith, whom Dali described as "a Gothic crow"; his sometimes loving, sometimes mutually exploitative relationship with his lover and patron, Sam Wagstaff; and the moving coincidence of his greatest critical successes occurring with the insidious and slow depredations of his illness. Although one sometimes longs for the nuanced appreciation of his work that an art historian would have offered, Morrisroe admirably balances frankness with sympathy in this memorable book. Photos not seen by PW. BOMC and QPB selections.

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From Library Journal

Robert Mapplethorpe (1946-89) gained his greatest fame when a retrospective of his works led to obscenity charges against Cincinnati's Contemporary Arts Center. But even while he defied the art world with graphic photographs revealing his deepest sexual fantasies, Mapplethorpe was acclaimed for his celebrity portraits and flower images. Six months before his death from AIDS, the highly controversial photographer selected Morrisroe, a feature writer for *New York* and the *New York Times*, among other publications, to document his life. Whereas Jack Fritscher's candid memoir, *Mapplethorpe: Assault with a Deadly Camera* (LJ 10/1/94), is largely drawn from personal reminiscence and is more narrowly focused, Morrisroe's compelling work is based on interviews with Mapplethorpe himself as well as hundreds of family members, lovers, and colleagues. Morrisroe provides intimate, often painful, details of his rigid Catholic upbringing, the sexual obsessions that drove him to the gay S-M scene, and his intense relationships with rock singer Patti Smith and aristocratic lover Sam Wagstaff. Given the continuing prominence of arts funding and censorship issues, this definitive biography is strongly recommended for most collections.

-?Joan Levin, *MLS, Chicago*

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From [Booklist](#)

How did a middle-class Catholic boy from Queens become one of the world's most controversial artists? Morrisroe, who met Mapplethorpe at the pinnacle of his fame and the beginning of his rapid descent toward death from AIDS, provides as cogent an explanation as possible in an excellent biography notable for its dramatic structure and candor. Morrisroe tracks Mapplethorpe's brief and excessive life from his awkward boyhood, through his miasmic college and ROTC years, to his abrupt sexual and artistic liberation when he discovered drugs and gay S & M bars, habits he overindulged in right up to his death at age 43. Mapplethorpe's story is tied inextricably to the life story of his closest friend, sometime lover, and most important muse, Patti Smith, who Morrisroe also portrays with skill and ardor. Morrisroe does a superb job of conjuring the New York art and club scene during the 1970s and 1980s and of tracing the evolution of Mapplethorpe's troubling art. A photographer perversely proud of his lack of technical knowledge, Mapplethorpe had a brilliant but cold eye and ruthlessly objectified his sex partners and models. The truth is, Mapplethorpe was fixated on transgression, sadism, evil, and death. Incapable of love, he used and abused people, including himself. But these harsh truths don't detract from his impact as an artist or diminish the raw

power of his images. There is a dark side to every aspect of life, even beauty. *Don't a Matrix*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Matthew Hood:

Nowadays reading books become more and more than want or need but also become a life style. This reading habit give you lot of advantages. Associate programs you got of course the knowledge even the information inside the book this improve your knowledge and information. The info you get based on what kind of reserve you read, if you want get more knowledge just go with schooling books but if you want truly feel happy read one having theme for entertaining such as comic or novel. The Mapplethorpe: A Biography is kind of publication which is giving the reader erratic experience.

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