

PRESS RELEASE

ROBERT MAPPLETHORPE: NIGHT WORK CURATED BY SCISSOR SISTERS

WITH: MATTHEW BARNEY / TOM BURR / DAN FISCHER /
NEIL GALL / PAUL LEE / GLENN LIGON / OSWALDO MACIA /
JACK PIERSON / MARC SWANSON / SCOTT TRELEAVEN /
BANKS VIOLETTE / GILLIAN WEARING /

19 JANUARY – 19 FEBRUARY 2011
OPENING: TUESDAY 18 JANUARY, 6 – 8PM



Robert Mapplethorpe was an icon of the American avant-garde in the late twentieth century, embodying in his life and art a powerful sense of freedom in all its manifestations – creative, political, personal, sexual. Since his untimely death from an AIDS-related illness in 1989, Mapplethorpe's presence has continued to be felt across all art forms, his unrepentantly honest and meticulously composed explorations of desire, transgression and identity offering inspiration and challenges to a wide range of visual artists, filmmakers, writers and musicians. Scissor Sisters, one of the pre-eminent bands to emerge from New York's art scene in the past decade, last year celebrated Mapplethorpe's distinctively dark and decadent sensibility by deploying a series of Mapplethorpe's photographs as the artwork for their most recent album release, as well as the singles from the album and the design concept for the accompanying world tour.

This exhibition brings together the seven Mapplethorpe images chosen by Scissor Sisters, along with other photographs, Polaroids and unique and rarely seen sculptures by the artist, and with the band's selection of important works by major contemporary artists who have admired or been influenced by Mapplethorpe's aesthetic and attitude. Uncompromising but life-affirming, Mapplethorpe's fascination with eroticism and mortality, beauty and liberty produced very contemporary interpretations of universal themes, themes which found articulation through the artist's exacting gaze upon the harmonic, indeed sculptural, possibilities of the objects and scenarios he encountered. His practice was distinguished by the expression of an outlook that ranged from irreverent to subversive to starkly brutal, through a rigorously disciplined language of formal and tonal composition. This unwavering commitment to the pursuit of ideal form, however unconventionally realised, exemplified a potent trend in contemporary art, where the relationships and tensions between sensuous excess and controlled restraint are made visually manifest.

Robert Mapplethorpe (b. New York, NY, 1946; d. Boston, MA, 1989) studied for a B.F.A. from The Pratt Institute, before embarking on a career which included over 50 solo exhibitions during his life, including numerous museum shows in the USA, Europe and Japan. He has since his death continued to be the subject of important retrospectives, including *Robert Mapplethorpe: Perfection in Form*, Galleria dell'Accademia, Florence (2009, traveled to Museo d'Arte della Città di Lugano - Villa Malpensata, Lugano); *Polaroids*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2008; travelled to Modern Art Oxford, Oxford; and Henry Art Gallery, Seattle); *Robert Mapplethorpe: Retrospective*, NRW-Forum Kultur und Wirtschaft, Düsseldorf (2010); *Robert Mapplethorpe* (travels to C/O Berlin, 2011); and *Robert Mapplethorpe: Photography and Sculpture*, Towner Art Gallery, Eastbourne (2010).

Scissor Sisters (f. New York, 2001) is comprised of Jake Shears, Babydaddy, Ana Matronic, Del Marquis and Randy Real. Following three albums (*Scissor Sisters*, 2004; *Ta-Dah*, 2006; *Night Work*, 2010), they have sold over 8.5m albums worldwide, and become one of the most influential contemporary music groups working today. They have toured widely internationally, including performances for the opening of Art Basel Miami Beach, programmed by Deitch Projects (2004); and at Isa Genzken's exhibition in the German Pavilion at the 52nd Venice Biennale (2007). This is the first contemporary art exhibition curated by the group. They live and work in New York, USA.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, INTERVIEWS OR IMAGES, PLEASE CONTACT PHILIP ABRAHAM
E: PHILIP.ABRAHAM@ALISONJACQUESGALLERY.COM / T: +44 (0)20 7631 4720