



The J. Paul Getty Trust

LACMA

NEWS

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Self Portrait, 1980, Robert Mapplethorpe. Gelatin silver print. Jointly acquired by LACMA and The J. Paul Getty Trust. Partial gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation; partial purchase with funds from The David Geffen Foundation and The J. Paul Getty Trust. © Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation. Used by permission.

LACMA AND THE GETTY ACQUIRE ROBERT MAPPLETHORPE ART AND ARCHIVE

**Joint acquisition brings finest and most representative
body of work and related material by
Robert Mapplethorpe to Los Angeles and underscores
the museums' commitment to collaboration**

LOS ANGELES—The Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) and the J. Paul Getty Trust are pleased to announce their joint acquisition of art and archival materials by or associated with Robert Mapplethorpe, one of the great photographers of the second half of the twentieth century. The vast majority of the acquisition comes in the form of a generous gift from the Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation, and the remainder from funds provided by The David Geffen Foundation and the J. Paul Getty Trust.

This significant acquisition establishes Los Angeles as the center for the study of Mapplethorpe, gathering in one location the finest and most representative body of the artist's work in conjunction with the definitive collection of related archival materials. The acquisition covers more than 2,000 works of art by the artist, including a print of virtually every photograph he editioned in silver gelatin, a large number of Polaroid works and unique works, artworks by Mapplethorpe's contemporaries and the richest and most extensive documentation of his career, including personal correspondence with significant cultural figures of the period.

The J. Paul Getty Museum and LACMA will add well over 2,000 jointly owned works of art to their collections, and a substantial archive will reside at the Getty Research Institute. LACMA and the Getty are planning a collaborative series of monographic exhibitions, and additional plans are currently being developed to show and publish the work in the future.

This acquisition marks the first time that LACMA and the Getty have acquired jointly, and initiates a new collaboration for exhibitions, loans and scholarly exchange. “We are thrilled to partner with the Getty on this acquisition, which grows an already significant investment by both institutions in collecting photography while also furthering the collaboration between our two Los Angeles institutions,” said Michael Govan, LACMA’s CEO and Wallis Annenberg Director.

The LACMA portion of the purchase was made possible by a generous gift from The David Geffen Foundation. “I am extremely happy to support this acquisition of artwork and papers by one of the most significant artists of the twentieth century,” commented David Geffen, “and to add to Los Angeles’ stature as one of the most important centers for photography in the world.”

“We are very grateful for the generosity of the Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation in making this extraordinary art and archival material available here in Los Angeles,” said Deborah Marrow, interim president and CEO of the J. Paul Getty Trust. “This collaboration is a great example of the strength of the collegial relationships among the art institutions in LA.”

“The Getty Museum is particularly pleased to add these works by Mapplethorpe to our photographs collection, the origins of which lie in the 1984 acquisition of the Sam Wagstaff collection,” adds David Bomford, acting director of the J. Paul Getty Museum. “Both Mapplethorpe and Wagstaff contributed greatly to the field of photography, and adding Mapplethorpe’s work to Wagstaff’s collection is a fitting tribute to them both. The acquisition also supports our philosophy of collecting individual artists in depth, so the chance to share a substantial part of Mapplethorpe’s oeuvre with LACMA is a wonderful opportunity for us.”

At the Getty Research Institute, the Mapplethorpe archival material joins the archives of Wagstaff, the noted curator and collector who was the artist’s partner, and Harry Lunn, the prominent photography dealer who published Mapplethorpe’s X, Y and Z Portfolios with Robert Miller and Robert Self in 1978. “Because of their depth and breadth, these materials will stand not only as the primary resource on Mapplethorpe, but as a repository for research on a wide variety of topics, including the growing acceptance of photography as an art form and the enormous changes in the art market in the latter part of the 20th century,” said Thomas Gaehtgens, director of the Getty Research Institute.

Michael Ward Stout, the Mapplethorpe Foundation’s president, explained that: “This remarkable acquisition, which is still being appraised but is conservatively valued at well in excess of \$30 million, had its inception three years ago, when I was visiting my longtime friend Michael Govan and happened to mention that the Mapplethorpe Foundation was considering a select few institutions as candidates to house the Mapplethorpe archive. ‘Why not us?’ was the immediate response from Michael, who knew our collection thoroughly from his Guggenheim days. After much discussion, it became clear that an ideal arrangement, if it could be achieved, would be for LACMA to work with the Getty as its partner. After Michael arranged meetings with key people at the Getty Museum and the Getty Research Institute, everything began to fall into place. We are delighted that the uniquely complementary resources of two of Los Angeles’ leading cultural institutions have come together in a collaboration that we believe benefits not only the Mapplethorpe Foundation but the Getty, LACMA, and scholars and visitors from around the world—especially as it enables Mapplethorpe to become part of the vibrant center of contemporary art and scholarship that Los Angeles has become. We are grateful to the many

gifted curators, administrators, advisors and trustees who have worked hard to bring the acquisition to fruition.”

The Mapplethorpe archive is representative of the artist’s entire career and legacy, and has the potential to act as a conduit to larger research topics about art in the 1980s, the confluence of cultural and political debate, and its interpretation through subsequent generations of artists such as Catherine Opie, Glenn Ligon, Elizabeth Peyton and others.

The archive is vast, containing almost 2,000 examples of editioned Mapplethorpe prints; over 200 unique works by Mapplethorpe (drawings, hand-painted collages and assemblages, some of which combine found objects with photographs or Polaroids), approximately 1,100 uneditioned silver gelatin prints, 100 Polaroid works, 120,000 negatives with 6,000 related contact sheets covering the artist’s fine-art work, portrait commissions and other photography; Mapplethorpe’s 1978 film *Still Moving* (featuring Patti Smith) and his 1984 video *Lady* (featuring Lisa Lyon); a selection of works by other artists that were owned by or otherwise associated with Mapplethorpe or his foundation (including photographs of Mapplethorpe or his artwork by contemporaries such as Lynn Davis); several hundred test prints and variations for editioned and non-editioned prints; and videotaped interviews with the artist.

Also included is an array of documents relating to the artist’s life and work: exhibition-related materials such as correspondence; press clippings; exhibition information; inventories; publications; documentation of the landmark 1990 Cincinnati trial (including video tapes and interviews); personal correspondence with the artist’s intimates and friends such as Patti Smith, Sam Wagstaff, John McKendry and other contemporaries; important documentation concerning Mapplethorpe’s artistic and commercial career, including original business records of his portrait commissions and commercial assignments and his editioned and unique art works; visual documentation of Mapplethorpe’s early installations, multi-media constructions and jewelry designs; over 3,500 Polaroids shot to document the composition, lighting and technical specifications of Mapplethorpe’s still lifes and portrait sittings; a complete library of exhibition catalogues and other publications reproducing Mapplethorpe images; and comprehensive media materials covering the NEA, The Corcoran Gallery of Art, and The Cincinnati Contemporary Art Center controversies that arose shortly after the artist died in 1989.

Most of these archival materials will reside at the Getty Research Institute.

About the Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation

The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation, Inc. was established by the artist in 1988, a year before his death. In establishing the Foundation’s philanthropic mandate, Mapplethorpe targeted the two areas of his greatest concern: support of medical research in the area of HIV/AIDS, and recognition of photography as art form of equal importance with painting and sculpture.

In keeping with its founder’s wishes, the Mapplethorpe Foundation has spent millions of dollars to fund medical research in the fight against AIDS and HIV infection by establishing research and care centers at major medical facilities such as Harvard University and Beth Israel in New York.

In the field of the photographic arts, the Foundation has funded numerous publications on photography, supported exhibitions and acquisitions at various art institutions and provided grants—in the form of funding or gifts of original Mapplethorpe works—to qualified art institutions, ranging from the world's major art museums to small university galleries.

In addition to its charitable work, the Foundation works to maintain Mapplethorpe's artistic legacy by organizing and/or lending to Mapplethorpe exhibitions around the world, preserving his archive of vintage editioned prints, strictly maintaining and, if necessary, completing the editions he established during his lifetime and placing his work in important museum collections around the world.

The Foundation retains extensive holdings of Mapplethorpe works, both editioned and unique, and will continue to make sales of art to fund its charitable endeavors, to lend and donate Mapplethorpe works in support of exhibitions and museums around the world and to manage and license the Mapplethorpe copyrights and other intellectual property.

About Robert Mapplethorpe (1946–1989)

Mapplethorpe was a major cultural figure during a period of tumultuous change who contributed to shaping not only the art of photography but the larger social landscape.

His international fame derives from his prolific body of almost 2,000 editioned, large format black-and-white and color photographs, which have been featured in over 200 solo exhibitions around the world since 1977. Extensively exhibited and widely published, Mapplethorpe's elegant prints representing portraits, nudes, flowers, and erotic and sadomasochistic subjects dominated photography in the late 20th century. Less well known are the over 1,500 Polaroid works that Mapplethorpe produced in the early 1970s before he took up the Hasselblad 500 camera given to him in 1975 by Sam Wagstaff, the visionary curator who became Mapplethorpe's benefactor and mentor.

Widely recognized for the role he played in elevating photography to the level of art, Robert Mapplethorpe always considered himself not only a photographer, but an artist. From 1963 to 1969, Mapplethorpe studied for a B.F.A. at the Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, where he majored in graphic arts and took courses in painting and sculpture—but never attended photography courses. In the late 1960s, he started clipping images from magazines to incorporate into collages. While living at the Chelsea Hotel with his friend and muse, Patti Smith, he borrowed a Polaroid camera in 1971 from fellow hotel resident Sandy Daley to create his own images for use in collages. Overshadowed by the power of his later large-format photographs, Mapplethorpe's early drawings, collages and assemblages, created between 1968 and 1972, remain largely unfamiliar, despite the importance they hold in understanding the artist's formative years.

In the mid-1970s, using the Hasselblad 500, he began photographing participants in New York's S&M subculture and created many of the strikingly powerful studies for which he is most renowned. He refined his style in the early 1980s and began concentrating on elegant figure studies and delicate floral still lifes, as well as glamorous celebrity portraits.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, his work emerged at the center of an American culture war over the use of public money to support art that some deemed obscene or blasphemous. When some of Mapplethorpe's more controversial works were exhibited at The Contemporary Arts Center in Cincinnati, director Dennis Barrie was arrested and charged with pandering (a charge of which he was ultimately acquitted after a landmark public trial).

Mapplethorpe died in 1989 at age 42 from complications of AIDS.

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About LACMA

Since its inception in 1965, LACMA has been devoted to collecting works of art that span both history and geography—and represent Los Angeles' uniquely diverse population. Today, the museum features particularly strong collections of Asian, Latin American, European and American art, as well as a contemporary museum on its campus. With this expanded space for contemporary art, innovative collaborations with artists and an ongoing *Transformation* project, LACMA is creating a truly modern lens through which to view its rich encyclopedic collection.

Location and Contact: 5905 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA, 90036 | (323) 857-6000 | lacma.org

Hours: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday: noon-8 pm; Friday: noon-9 pm; Saturday, Sunday: 11 am-8 pm; closed Wednesday

General Admission: Adults: \$15; students 18+ with ID and senior citizens 62+: \$10

Free General Admission: Members; children 17 and under; after 5 pm weekdays for L.A. County residents; second Tuesday of every month; Target Free Holiday Mondays

Press Contact: For additional information, contact LACMA Communications at press@lacma.org or (323) 857-6522.

About The J. Paul Getty Trust

The J. Paul Getty Trust is an international cultural and philanthropic institution devoted to the visual arts that includes the J. Paul Getty Museum, the Getty Research Institute, the Getty Conservation Institute, and the Getty Foundation. The J. Paul Getty Trust and Getty programs serve a varied audience from two locations: the Getty Center in Los Angeles and the Getty Villa in Malibu.

Visiting the Getty Center

The Getty Center is open Tuesday through Friday and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5:30 pm, and Saturday from 10 am to 9 pm. It is closed Monday and major holidays. Admission to the Getty Center is always free. Parking is \$15; free after 5 pm on Saturdays and for special events. No reservation is required for parking or general admission. Reservations are required for event seating and groups of 15 or more. Please call (310) 440-7300 (English or Spanish) for reservations and information. The TTY line for callers who are deaf or hearing impaired is (310) 440-7305.

Additional information is available at www.getty.edu

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