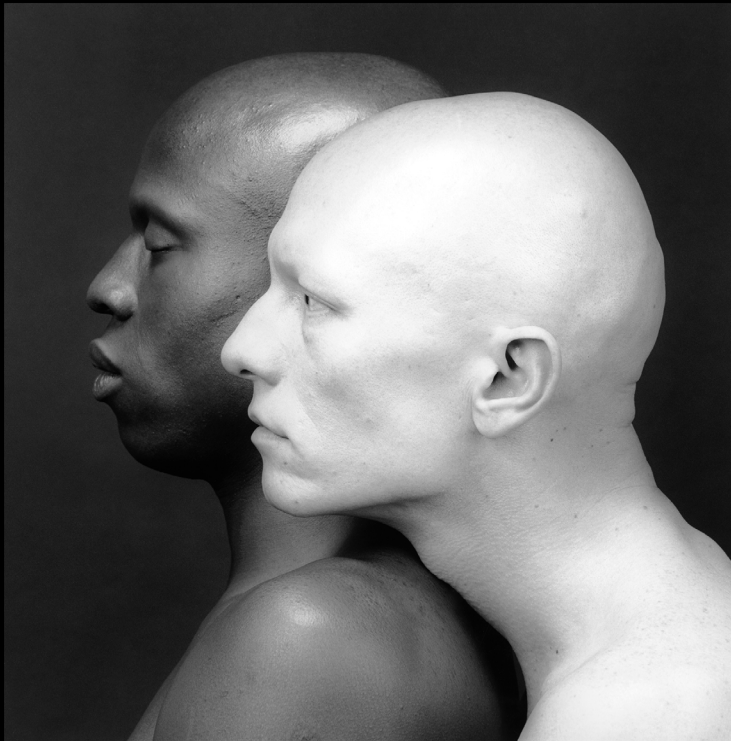


Robert Mapplethorpe

curated by Edward Enninful

2 March—6 April 2024

Paris Marais



Thaddaeus Ropac

London Paris Salzburg Seoul

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Robert Mapplethorpe wanted to disrupt the idea of what a portrait is. And I've always wanted to disrupt the idea of what fashion is – what people consider as beautiful or not has always been fascinating to me.

— Edward Enniful

For this exhibition of works by American artist Robert Mapplethorpe (1946–1989) at Thaddaeus Ropac Paris Marais, the gallery invites Ghanaian-born British editor Edward Enniful OBE to collaborate with the Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation to present his singular vision of the photographer's work. Enniful, Global Creative and Cultural Advisor of *Vogue*, was given *carte blanche* to explore the full archives of the Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation. In the exhibition, he presents his selection of 46 prints in pairs, forging new dialogues between them and inviting visitors to see even some of Mapplethorpe's best-known photographs anew. With this unprecedented curatorial approach to the photographer's work, as Michael Ward Stout, president of the Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation, says: 'Edward has made a unique contribution to Mapplethorpe's legacy'.

As an editor, Enniful is used to seeing in double page spreads. He explains: 'I am used to images fighting or working together, tension and opposites, or harmony. Things that people don't expect to go together, finding a sense of serenity within the chaotic.' While the pairs of works often confront each other, many are marked by a sense of associative formal play. Shapes and silhouettes explored in one photograph appear in unexpected ways in its companion work. Arnold Schwarzenegger's muscular form – almost armour-like – is echoed in the exaggerated puffed sleeves of a high fashion outfit, which embodies another kind of armour. In another pair, spread fingers highly defined against a dark background emerge as ribs brought out through careful lighting on a nude torso.

Thaddaeus Ropac

London Paris Salzburg Seoul



Robert Mapplethorpe
Daisies, 1978
Silver gelatin print
50.8 x 40.6 cm (20 x 16 in)
MAP # 141.1; (RMP 1476.2)



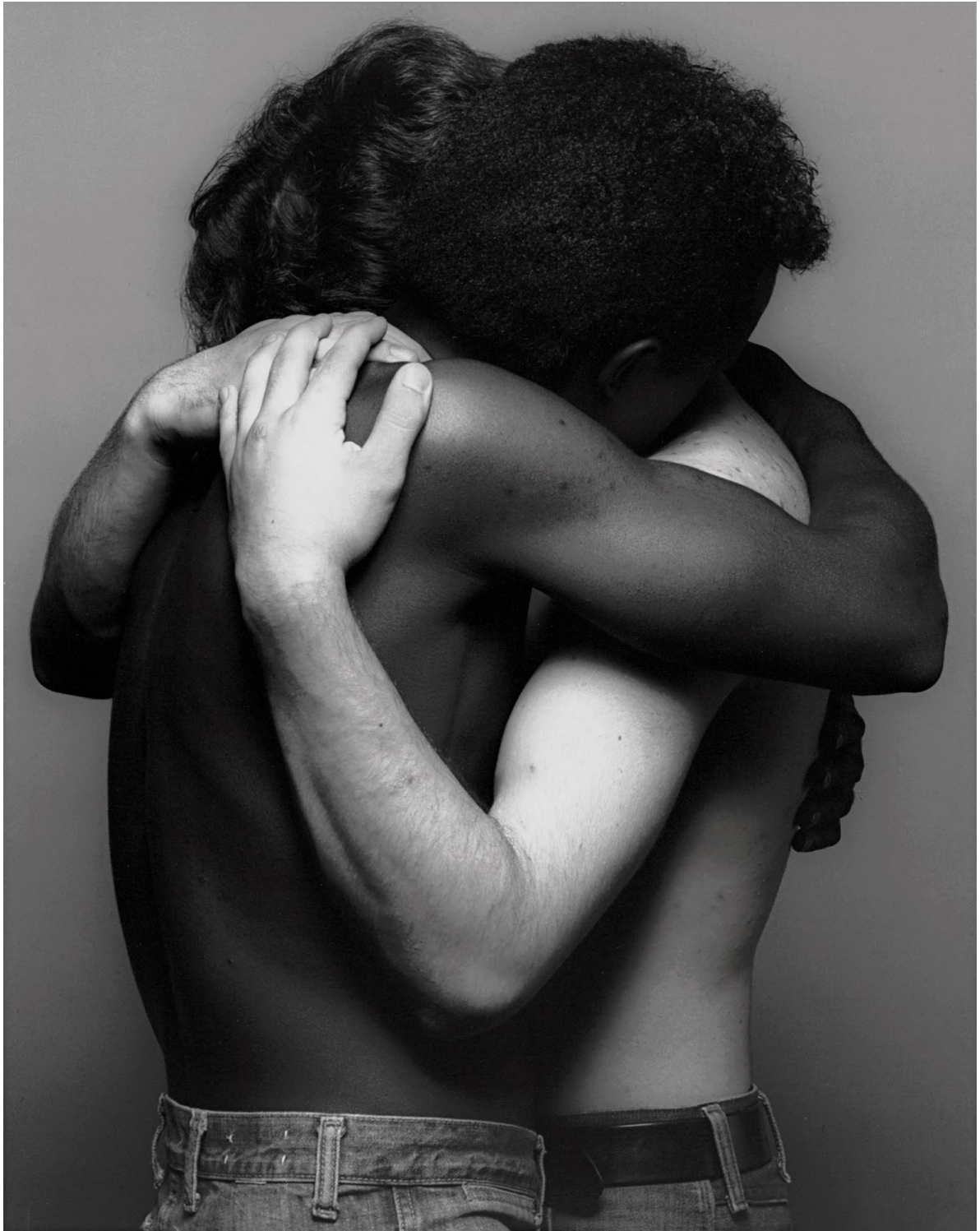
Robert Mapplethorpe
Lucinda's Hands, 1985
Silver gelatin print
50.8 x 40.6 cm (20 x 16 in)
MAP # 1656 ; (RMP 1491.9)



The exhibition spans Mapplethorpe's fashion photography as well as stark portraits, nudes and still lifes. By capturing unexpected subjects with a classical formality, Mapplethorpe defied prevailing aesthetic standards, paving the way for unconventional beauty to be appreciated as art. Enniful is known for making models who don't fit the white, sample-size norm a non-negotiable on the pages of *Vogue* around the world, and his work, like Mapplethorpe's, has represented a challenge to discriminatory aesthetic ideals. In several of the pairings on view, Enniful juxtaposes a subject who conforms to traditional beauty standards alongside one who diverges from them. Through Mapplethorpe's lens, these visual dialogues prompt viewers to transcend dichotomous thinking and to engage with the questioning of aesthetic norms that was central to Mapplethorpe's practice: questions which remain relevant to this day.

Robert Mapplethorpe
Self Portrait, 1980
Silver gelatin print
50.8 x 40.6 cm (20 x 16 in)
MAP # 411 ; (RMP 1284.15)

Robert Mapplethorpe
Self Portrait, 1980
Silver gelatin print
50.8 x 40.6 cm (20 x 16 in)
MAP # 384 ; (RMP 1477.AP1)



Robert Mapplethorpe

Embrace, 1982

Silver gelatin print

50.8 x 40.6 cm (20 x 16 in)

MAP # 866 ; (RMP 1258.8)



Robert Mapplethorpe
Lisa Lyon, 1982
Silver gelatin print
50.8 x 40.6 cm (20 x 16 in)
MAP # 727 ; (RMP 1482.9)



Robert Mapplethorpe

Flower, 1981

Silver gelatin print

50.8 x 40.6 cm (20 x 16 in)

MAP # 563 ; (RMP 1598.12)



***For me, everything has to be about storytelling.
And that's why the pairings in this exhibition
are so interesting to me – it's like the passage
of time and life, where nothing is black and white.***

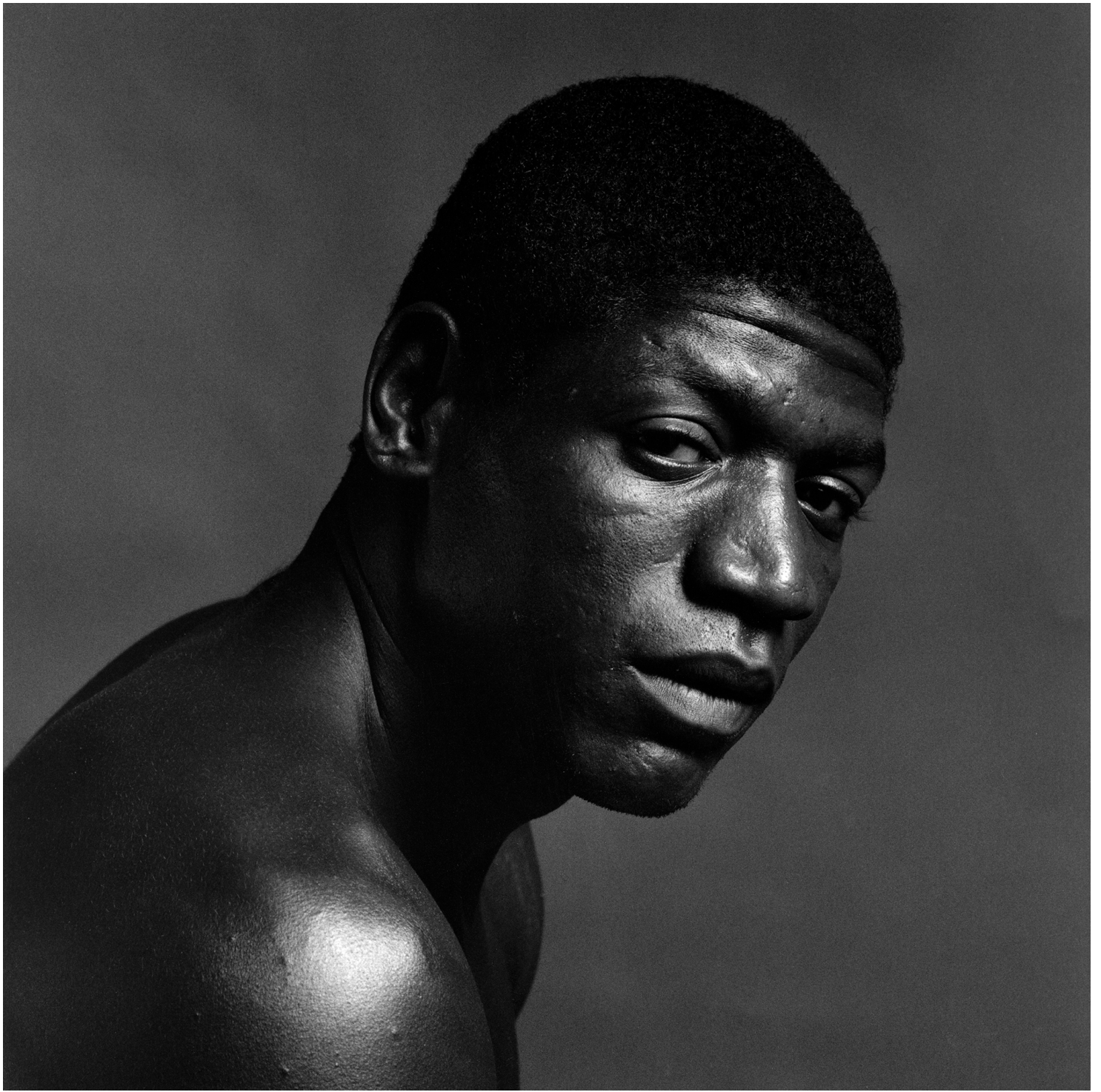
— Edward Enniful

Robert Mapplethorpe
Lisa Lyon, 1980
Silver gelatin print
50.8 x 40.6 cm (20 x 16 in)
MAP # 840 ; (RMP 1484.3)

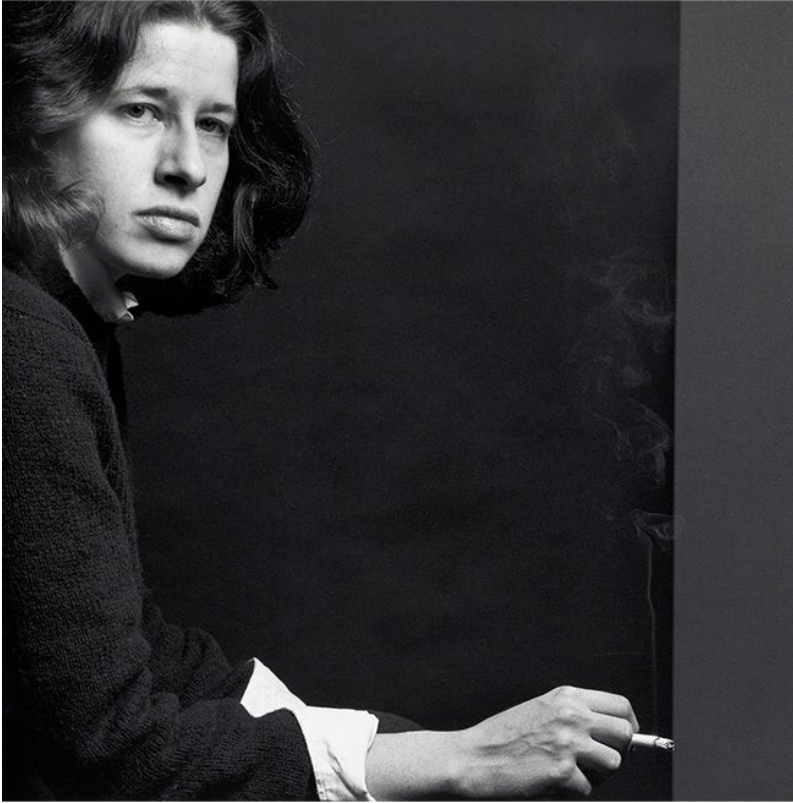
Robert Mapplethorpe
Thomas, 1986
Silver gelatin print
50.8 x 61 cm (20 x 24 in)
MAP # 1673 ; (RMP 2157.5)



Robert Mapplethorpe
Carolina Herrera, 1979
Silver gelatin print
50.8 x 40.6 cm (20 x 16 in)
MAP # 450 ; (RMP 1480.7)



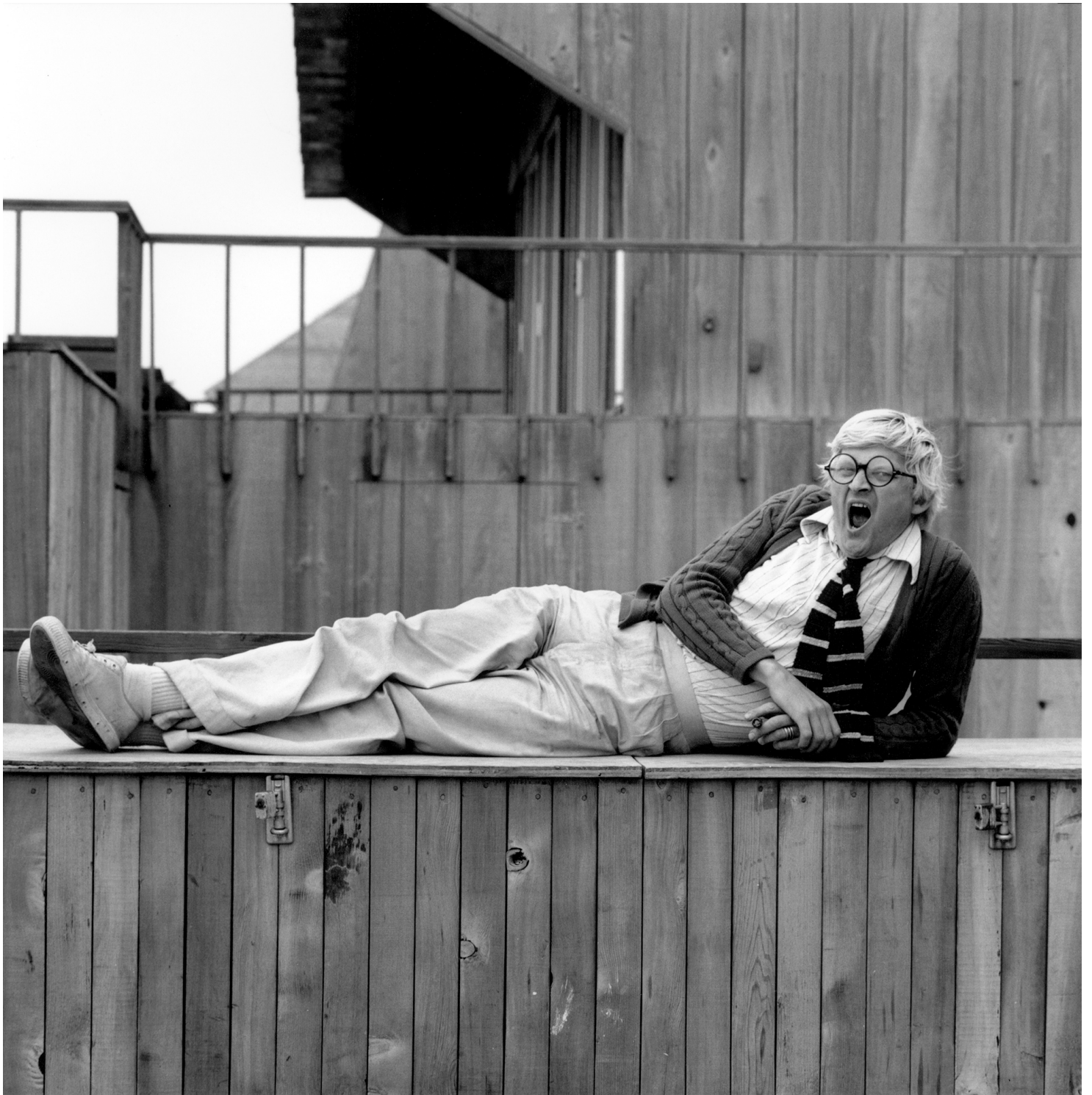
Robert Mapplethorpe
Bob Love, 1979
Silver gelatin print
50.8 x 40.6 cm (20 x 16 in)
MAP # 392 ; (RMP 1478.13)



Enniful first discovered Mapplethorpe's work in the early 1990s through the artist's *Black Book*, a potent photographic study of Black men which was met with controversy but resonated with Enniful. The first quality he was drawn to was the photographer's use of light. This comes through in his curation, which plays with contrasts of light and dark: facial features defined by gradations of light and shadow, contrasts of skin tones or of clothed and unclothed bodies, arrangements of wildflowers defined by directional lighting and juxtapositions of dark and light backgrounds. By bringing together contrasting works, Enniful gives the exhibition a sense of visual harmony, in which light is balanced by dark: a reminder to the visitor of the interconnectedness of seemingly opposing forces. Across the exhibition, it is this balance of confrontation and resonance, of juxtaposition and harmony, that characterises the ensemble of Enniful's approach to Mapplethorpe.

Robert Mapplethorpe
Fran Lebowitz, 1980
Silver gelatin print
50.8 x 40.6 cm (20 x 16 in)
MAP # 424 ; (RMP 1479.7)

Robert Mapplethorpe
Isabella Rossellini, 1988
Silver gelatin print
61 x 50.8 cm (24 x 20 in)
MAP # 1953 ; (RMP 1492.AP2)



Robert Mapplethorpe
David Hockney, 1976
Silver gelatin print
50.8 x 40.6 cm (20 x 16 in)
MAP # 42.1; (RMP 1018.4)



Robert Mapplethorpe
Rae Dawn Chong, 1984
Silver gelatin print
50.8 x 40.6 cm (20 x 16 in)
MAP # 1335 ; (RMP 1488.3)

Robert Mapplethorpe

About the artist



Born into a strict Catholic family in Queens, New York, Mapplethorpe attended the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn from 1963–69, where he studied painting, sculpture and graphic design. During his formative early years, Mapplethorpe worked across media, producing numerous drawings, collages and three-dimensional objects. He began taking polaroids in 1971 and progressively incorporated photography, along with clippings from books and magazines, into his sculptural assemblages. His first solo exhibition was *Polaroids* at the Light Gallery, New York in 1973. He only began working exclusively with photography from the mid-1970s, when he was given a Hasselblad 500 camera by curator and collector Sam Wagstaff, who was also his mentor and lover.

In 1988, a year before his untimely death from AIDS, Mapplethorpe's work was shown in four important exhibitions at the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Institute of Contemporary Art at the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia; and the National Portrait Gallery, London. Recent solo exhibitions have been hosted at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York (2019); Museo Madre, Naples (2018); Kunsthal Rotterdam (2017); Los Angeles County Museum of Art (2016); ARoS Aarhus Art Museum (2016); Tate Modern, London (2014); Grand Palais, Paris (retrospective, 2014) and Musée Rodin, Paris (2014). Beyond the art-historical and social significance of his work, his legacy lives on through the work of the Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation, which he established in 1988 to promote photography, support museums that exhibit photographic art and fund medical research in the fight against HIV and AIDS. In 2011, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and the J. Paul Getty Trust jointly acquired the artist's art and archives through a generous gift from the Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation.

Edward Enninful

About the curator



Edward Enninful © Adama Jalloh

Ghanaian-born British editor Edward Enninful OBE,
Global Creative and Cultural Advisor of *Vogue*,
has been invited to curate this exhibition of works
by Robert Mapplethorpe.

Current & upcoming exhibitions



Ely House, London

Erwin Wurm

Surrogates

15 February—13 April 2024



Paris Marais

Tom Sachs

"Painting"

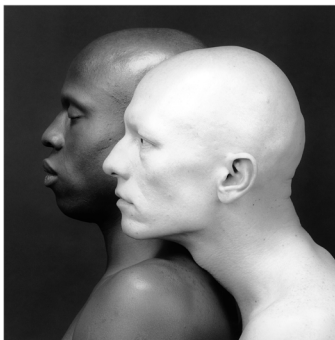
17 January—24 February 2024



Richard Deacon

New Works

13 January—6 April 2024



Paris Marais



Robert Mapplethorpe
curated by Edward Enninful

2 March—6 April 2024



Paris Pantin

Re-enchantment

Group show

17 February—11 May 2024

Current & upcoming exhibitions



Salzburg Villa Kast

Irving Penn

The Bath

27 January—13 March 2024



Jonathan Lasker

Painting and Drawing

27 January—13 March 2024

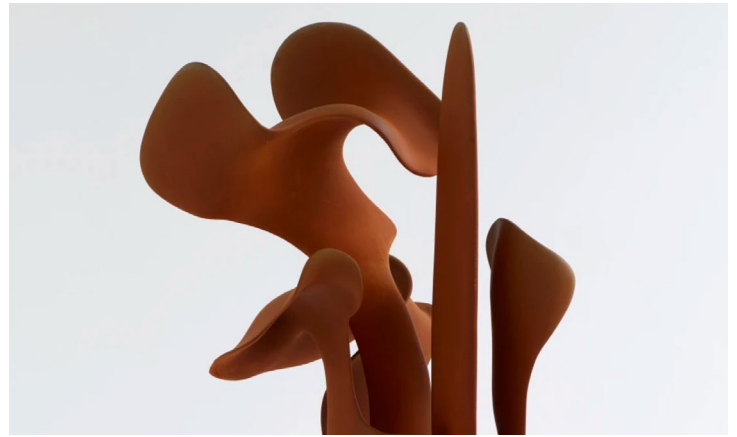


Salzburg Villa Kast

Amos Gitai

War Requiem

21 March—11 May 2024



Tony Cragg

New Sculptures

21 March—11 May 2024



Seoul Fort Hill

Nostalgics on realities

Group show

26 January—9 March 2024