

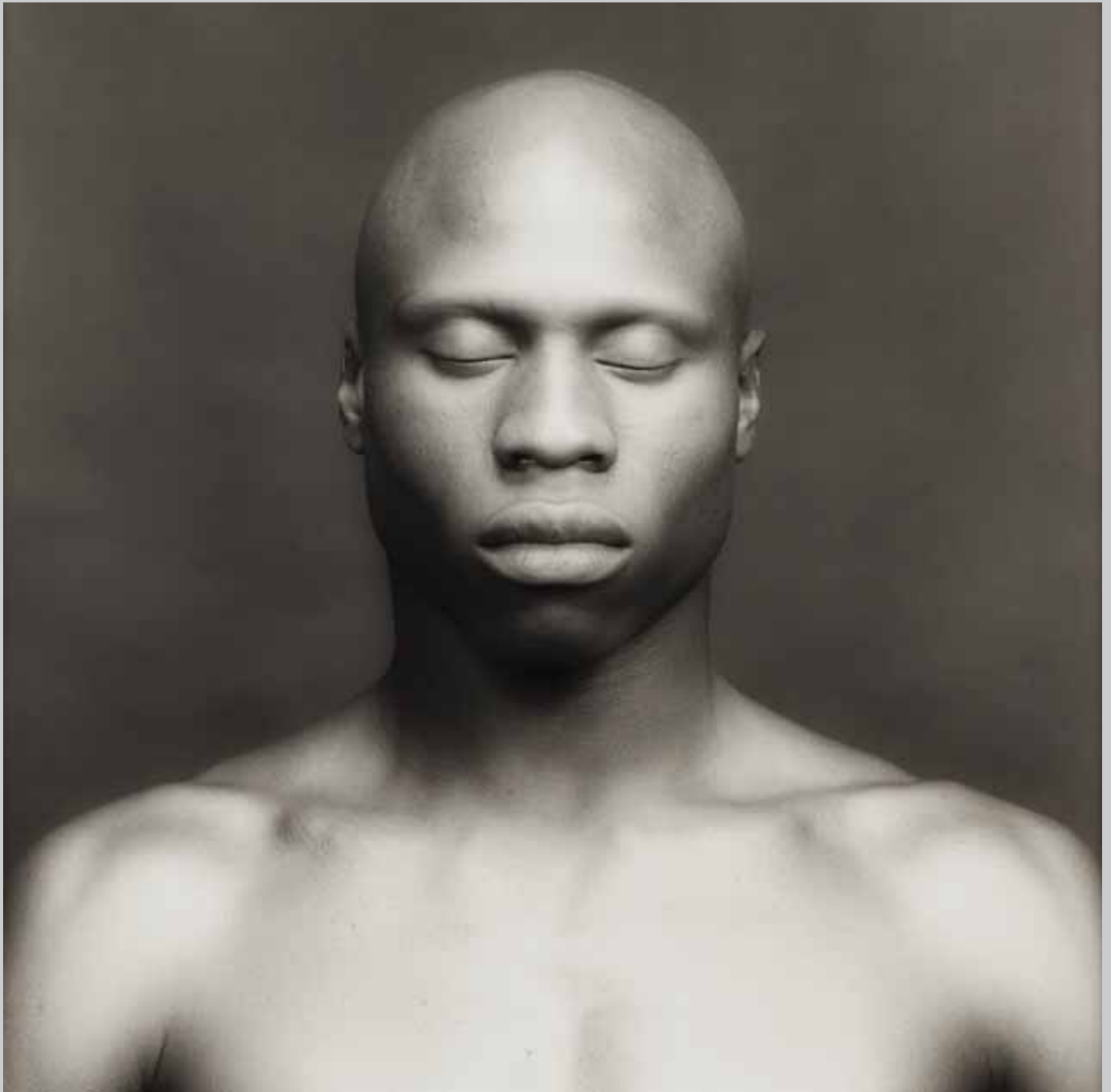
ROBERT MAPPLETHORPE

RESOURCE PACK FOR TEACHERS
AND EDUCATORS

ARTIST
ROOMS

SUPPORTED BY THE

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ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

Robert Mapplethorpe is widely regarded as one of the world's most important artists of the late twentieth century. The group of photographs in ARTIST ROOMS is one of the best collections in the world. It includes studies of flowers, portraits of many of the most influential artists, writers and musicians of the period, including Andy Warhol, Truman Capote and Patti Smith, and iconic self-portraits. Other large collections are held in the U.S.A. by the Guggenheim Museum, the Getty Museum and Getty Research Institute in partnership with the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and the Hessel Museum collection at Bard College. There is also a significant private collection in Norway.

This resource is designed to aid teachers and educators using the ARTIST ROOMS Robert Mapplethorpe collection with groups of young people engaged in related learning activities and projects. The resource focuses on specific works and themes and suggests areas of discussion, activities and links to other works on the online ARTIST ROOMS collection pages.

For schools, the work of Robert Mapplethorpe presents a good opportunity to explore cross-curricula learning. The themes in Mapplethorpe's work can be linked to curricula areas such as Expressive Arts, Health and Wellbeing, Religious and Moral Education, Social Studies, Citizenship and Mathematics.

A glossary at the back of the resource provides further information on key words, terms and people associated with Mapplethorpe and related themes.

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WHAT IS ARTIST ROOMS?

ARTIST ROOMS is a collection of international contemporary art, which has been created through one of the largest and most imaginative gifts of art ever made to museums in Britain. The gift was made by Anthony d'Offay, with the assistance of the National Heritage Memorial Fund, the Art Fund and the Scottish and British Governments in 2008.

ARTIST ROOMS is jointly owned and managed by Tate and National Galleries of Scotland on behalf of the nation and comprises over 1100 artworks. The collection takes the form of major bodies of work by artists including Diane Arbus, Joseph Beuys, Vija Celmins, and Damien Hirst. The guiding concept of ARTIST ROOMS is to show the work of individual artists in dedicated, monographic displays.

Anthony d'Offay's vision for ARTIST ROOMS is that great works of art should be available to audiences anywhere in the country, and especially for young people. This idea developed from Anthony's own discovery of art as a child in Leicester and as a student at Edinburgh University, experiences which shaped his life. Anthony is Ex-Officio Curator of ARTISTS ROOMS.

The collection is available to regional galleries and museums ("Associates") throughout the UK, providing an unprecedented resource with a particular focus on inspiring young audiences.

This is the first time a national collection has been shared and shown simultaneously across the UK and it has only been made possible through the exceptional generosity of the Art Fund – the fundraising charity for works of art.

ROBERT MAPPLETHORPE

Robert Mapplethorpe was born in 1946 in Queens, New York to Joan and Harry Mapplethorpe. He was the third of six children and was brought up in a strict Catholic environment. While studying in high school he showed skills as a draftsman.

At the age of sixteen in 1963, Mapplethorpe enrolled at the Pratt Institute in nearby Brooklyn, where he studied drawing, painting, and sculpture. Influenced by a range of artists including assemblage artist Joseph Cornell and dada artist Marcel Duchamp, he also experimented with various materials in mixed-media collages, including images cut from books and magazines. In 1970 he and Patti Smith, whom he had met three years earlier, moved into the Chelsea Hotel. He acquired a Polaroid camera that same year and began producing his own photographs to incorporate into the collages.

Mapplethorpe quickly found satisfaction taking Polaroid photographs in their own right and in 1973 the Light Gallery in New York City mounted his first solo gallery exhibition *Polaroids*. Two years later he acquired a Hasselblad medium-format camera and began shooting his circle of friends and acquaintances – artists, musicians, socialites, pornographic film stars, and members of the New York underground. He also worked on commercial projects, creating album cover art for Patti Smith and Television and a series of portraits and party pictures for *Interview Magazine*.



Robert Mapplethorpe *Self Portrait* 1980

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In the late 70s, Mapplethorpe grew increasingly interested in documenting the New York S&M scene. The resulting photographs are shocking for their content and remarkable for their technical and formal mastery. Mapplethorpe told *ARTnews* in late 1988, “I don’t like that particular word ‘shocking.’ I’m looking for the unexpected. I’m looking for things I’ve never seen before ... I was in a position to take those pictures. I felt an obligation to do them.” Meanwhile his career continued to flourish. In 1977, he participated in Documenta 6 in Kassel, West Germany and in 1978, the Robert Miller Gallery in New York City became his exclusive dealer.

Mapplethorpe met Lisa Lyon, the first World Women’s Bodybuilding Champion, in 1980. Over the next

several years they collaborated on a series of portraits and figure studies, a film, and the book, *Lady: Lisa Lyon*. Throughout the 80s, Mapplethorpe produced a number of images that simultaneously challenge and adhere to classical aesthetic standards including stylized compositions of male and female nudes, delicate flower still-lives, and studio portraits of artists and celebrities. He introduced and refined different techniques and formats.

In 1986 he was hospitalised for pneumonia and during treatment was diagnosed with AIDS. Despite his illness, he accelerated his creative efforts, broadened the scope of his photographic inquiry, and accepted increasingly challenging commissions. The Whitney Museum of American

Art mounted his first major American museum retrospective in 1988, one year before his death in 1989.

His vast, provocative, and powerful body of work has established him as one of the most important artists of the twentieth century. Today Mapplethorpe is represented by galleries in North and South America and Europe and his work can be found in the collections of major museums around the world. Beyond the art-historical and social significance of his work, his legacy lives on through the work of the Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation. He established the Foundation in 1988 to promote photography, support museums that exhibit photographic art, and to fund medical research in the fight against AIDS and HIV-related infection.

ROBERT MAPPLETHORPE AND PATTI SMITH: ARTIST AND MUSE

Patti Smith and Robert Mapplethorpe had a unique relationship: they were friends, lovers, artistic collaborators and soul mates. Mapplethorpe and Smith met in 1967 and quickly become lovers; they would live with one another for the next few years. The years they spent together proved to be formative to their artistic development; while Mapplethorpe emerged in the mid-1970s as a successful artist, Smith would achieve simultaneous success as a poet and musician, associated with the punk music genre.

Smith was photographed multiple times by Mapplethorpe and would become one of his most frequent sitters. Mapplethorpe photographed Smith for the cover of both *Witt*, her 1973 volume of poetry, and her album *Horses* in 1975. *Horses* would go on to achieve iconic status in popular music and define Smith's androgynous and uncompromising style – a photograph from the same session is in the ARTIST ROOMS collection, *Patti Smith* 1975. Photographed here with her arms and lips open, one hand suggestively holds a



Robert Mapplethorpe *Patti Smith* 1979

© Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation. Used by permission.

tie which is also around her neck while she leans against a wall. Mapplethorpe photographs her as Smith describes it, 'at her most confident'. Her pose is at once vulnerable and confrontational.

By the late 1970s Smith had achieved commercial and critical success. Mapplethorpe would photograph Smith again for her fourth album, *Waves* in 1979, in the same apartment used for the *Horses* shoot. This would be

Smith's last album prior to a nine-year-long hiatus from her recording and performance career. Smith, having met and fallen in love with the American musician Fred 'Sonic' Smith, was ready to focus on family life and *Waves* reflected a new sense of calm, charm and sincerity. Mapplethorpe captures this in the image *Patti Smith* 1979 for the album's cover. Smith, with a piercing stare, is somewhat subdued; the light

fabric of her dress, the tree that obscures part of the body and the doves that rest on either hand give the image a serene, almost arcadian feel.

Patti Smith returned to recording with the album *Dream of Life* in 1988, again

Mapplethorpe would photograph her for the cover. Smith would also contribute to one of Mapplethorpe's final projects, *Flowers*, a book of his flower studies, with a foreword which was released several months after his death.

Discussion

Writing for *Time* magazine in 2011 Patti Smith said of Robert Mapplethorpe: 'I was his first model, a fact that fills me with pride. The photographs he took of me contain a depth of mutual love and trust inseparable from the image. His work magnifies his love for his subject and his obsession with light. So, as one who has stood before the camera of many artists and friends, I can only advise a photographer to love his subject, and if this is not possible, love the light that surrounds her.' What role does the muse play in the artist's work? How do you think the level of intimacy shared between an artist and their sitter or subject affects the work?

Activity

Mapplethorpe creates an arcadian feel for the Patti Smith *Waves* shoot, perhaps reflecting this stage in her life. Depict someone close to you, or someone you admire, which reflects how you feel about them. Choose a medium you think would be most appropriate e.g. a piece of writing, a collage, a sculpture, etc.

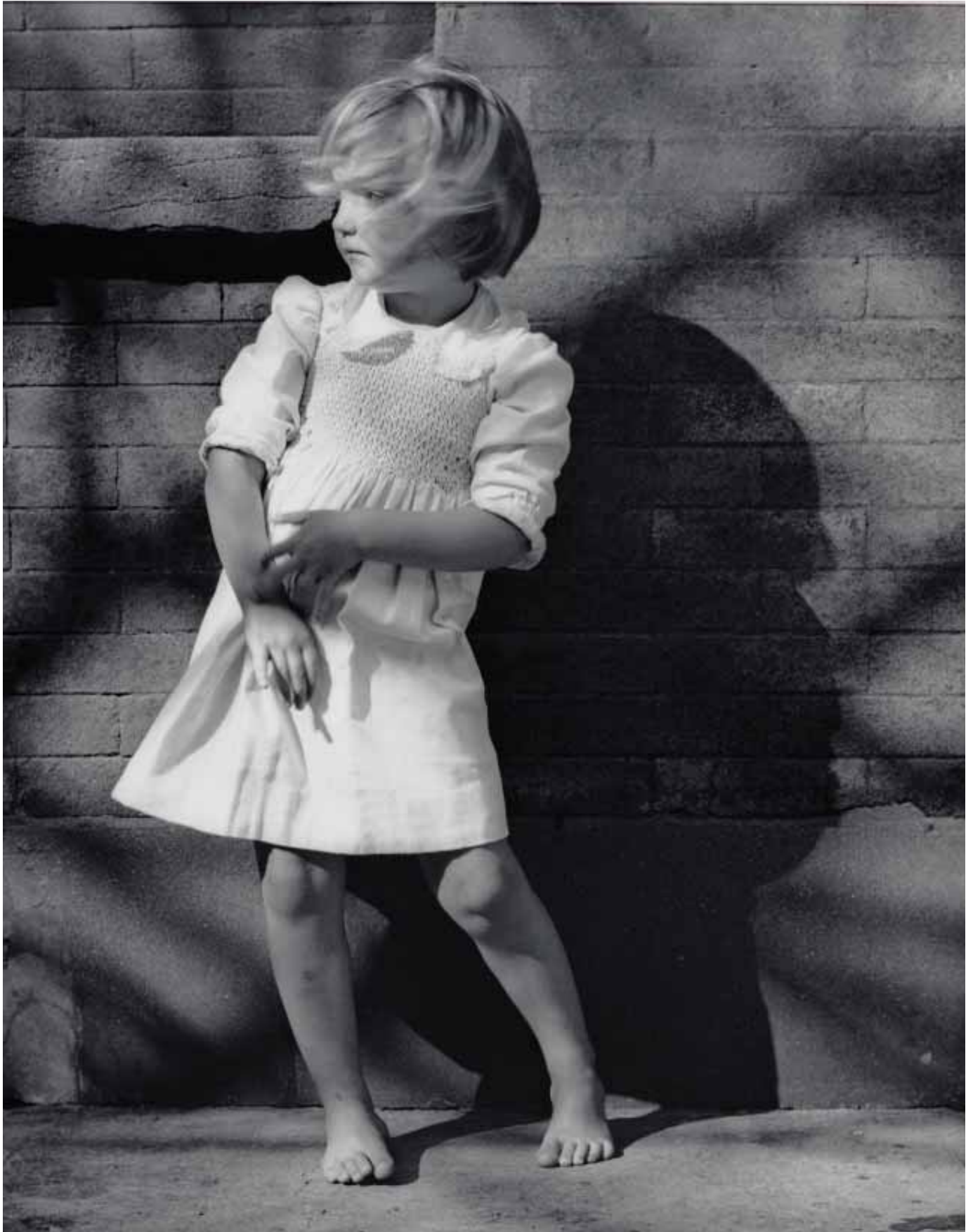
Artist Links

Andy Warhol had more than one muse throughout his life, the most famous of whom was Edie Sedgwick (1943-71). Grace Jones (b. 1948) was also a muse for Warhol. Find out more about Andy Warhol: www.nationalgalleries.org/artistrooms

CHILDREN

Mapplethorpe took a number of photographs of children throughout his career. Sometimes these photographs were private commissions and they were mostly children of friends and society figure subjects. In contrast to his highly posed portraits of adults, his images of children emphasise their innocence,

lack of self-consciousness and a sense of playfulness. Mapplethorpe felt strongly that he should have the consent of his subjects and once stated that children were the most difficult subject to photograph: 'You can't control them. They never do what you want them to do.'



Robert Mapplethorpe *Lindsay Key* 1985

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In the work *Lindsay Key* 1985, the subject looks away from the camera, perhaps to avert her face from a gust of wind; her hair and dress are caught in the breeze, her posture and bare feet highlight a playful nature. Lindsay's pose is a natural counter pose also known as 'contrapposto' which gives the subject a relaxed appearance.

Untypical of much of his work from this period Mapplethorpe captures this subject outside the studio. The shadows cast by the sitter create a strong contrast against her white dress while trees cast abstract shapes in the background. While Lindsay does convey an element of innocence she seems more like a little adult than a child; she appears confident, cool and solemn.

Children have long been depicted in art. During the Renaissance, Raphael and Bellini amongst others depicted children often in relation to Christian themes. The Victorian era was a particularly rich time; the increased depiction of children was in-line with the development of the concept of childhood – a shift in attitudes created the expectation that a child's life should be one of innocence and dependence. During this period artists such as John Everett Millais produced a number of landmark paintings of children. At the same time the photographer Julia Margaret Cameron's Renaissance-inspired photographs depicted children as sacred and the embodiment of innocence. Mapplethorpe cited Cameron as one of his main influences. While they share in portraiture and depictions of innocence, it could be said

that Cameron's work is more emotionally expressive than Mapplethorpe's.

Discussion

Mapplethorpe's photographs of children have sometimes proved controversial because of the question of the subjects' consent and the context of Mapplethorpe's wider oeuvre. Other photographs of children in the ARTIST ROOMS collection include *Honey* 1976 and *Eva Amurri* 1988. Why might depicting a child or working with a child prompt ethical questions? What is the difference between working with an adult and child sitter? What is it about this image and other images of children by Mapplethorpe that conveys innocence?

Activity

The contrapposto pose is primarily associated with ancient Greek and Renaissance sculpture such as Michelangelo's *David* 1504. The subject's employment of the pose here, along with the evident motion of her left hand and right foot, extends the allusion to sculpture in Mapplethorpe's work. Identify other examples of the contrapposto pose in sculptures and visual imagery local to you. Develop a narrative around the different subjects for a short story or visual imagery.

Artist links

Diane Arbus also photographed children but in her portraits the young subjects often seem troubled or vulnerable. Find out more about Diane Arbus:
www.nationalgalleries.org/artistrooms

PORTRAITS: ARTISTS AND CELEBRITIES

Portraiture was one of the main strands of Mapplethorpe's work and during his lifetime, he published books which concentrated on portraiture, including *Lady: Lisa Lyon* 1983, *Certain People: A Book of Portraits* 1985, *50 New York Artists* 1986, in collaboration with

Richard Marshall, and *Some Women* 1989. His subjects included those from wide-ranging social and cultural contexts: from royalty and aristocracy to rent boys, but a large proportion of his portraits from the 1980s were of prominent figures, many in the arts.



Robert Mapplethorpe *Grace Jones* 1984

© Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation. Used by permission.

His portraits can be seen as a reflection of New York's 'cultural scene' throughout the 1980s and each image is characterised by Mapplethorpe's style – his relentless pursuit of beauty where imperfections are absent. The works appear not to define the persona of each sitter but confirm Mapplethorpe's vision, which allows depictions of the sitters that mirror their most perfect selves. The critic and curator Janet Kardon describes Mapplethorpe's portraiture subjects as 'avatars for his vision'.

In 1984 Mapplethorpe photographed Grace Jones, the Jamaican-American singer, songwriter, model and actress, known for her androgynous looks and her provocative behaviour. Jones was a prominent figure in the New York art and social scene in the 1980s, a successful recording artist, film actress and sometimes muse of the artist Andy Warhol.

In Mapplethorpe's *Grace Jones* 1985, Jones is decorated in body paint by the artist Keith Haring for her performance at Paradise Garage, an alternative dance club in New York City. Keith Haring was introduced to Grace Jones by Andy Warhol and Warhol arranged for Mapplethorpe to photograph Jones prior to the performance. Although the image could be seen as a multiple collaboration it is classic Mapplethorpe; the sitter is portrayed frontally, occupying the parameters of the lens in complete symmetry.

Jones has a perfectly sculpted body and often took on masculinised personas

in her performances, challenging representations of the female body. She occupies both the mainstream and avant-garde position within society and transformed her body into a site of power. A second photograph from this session was featured in Mapplethorpe's book *Certain People: A Book of Portraits*.

Discussion

Mapplethorpe's interest in portraiture stemmed from his concern with the beauty of the human form. Much of his work has a strongly classical and sculptural quality. What does Janet Kardon mean when she describes Mapplethorpe's portraiture subjects as 'avatars for his vision'? Do you think the personality being photographed is relevant to the image and Mapplethorpe? What is the difference between the subject and the sitter?

Activity

Mapplethorpe's subjects are often referred to as epitomising a particular cultural scene with figures such as Andy Warhol, Marianne Faithfull and Grace Jones. Create a collage bringing together figures which you feel occupy an equivalent scene today.

Artist Links

Alex Katz often paints family and friends. Find out more about Alex Katz: www.nationalgalleries.org/artistrooms and www.tate.org/artistrooms

THE BODY AND SCULPTURE

Robert Mapplethorpe stated that he sought 'perfection in form' in all his subjects, from nudes and portraits to flowers and architecture. This perfection is exemplified by his celebrated studies of the human figure; sitters included black models, dancers and body-builders, all with muscular and well-defined bodies. These powerful bodies are reminiscent of classical Greek sculpture and governed by rules of symmetry and geometry.

In 1980 Robert Mapplethorpe met Lisa Lyon, the first World Women's Body Building Champion. They would collaborate several times over the next few years creating various portraits and figure studies including both full and fragmented body images. This series of collaborations, which saw Lyon take on multiple guises and 'types' of women, would result in the book *Lady: Lisa Lyon* 1983.

During the same period as his collaboration with Lisa Lyon, Mapplethorpe was also photographing the male figure. Mapplethorpe's male figures were often athletic black men because, as his biographer Patricia Morrisroe would state, 'he could extract a greater richness from the colour of their skin'. He would produce a book exclusively of photographs of black men, *Black Book* 1986. The figure studies included images of fragmented

bodies such as a torso, an extended arm, buttocks and thighs. Mapplethorpe once stated 'I zero in on the body part that I consider the most perfect part in that particular model'.

Mapplethorpe's black sitters included the athlete and model Ken Moody and the dancer Derrick Cross – they would be photographed by him multiple times. In the work *Derrick Cross* 1983 the body's core fills the frame. The arch of the body suggests movement while the draped fabric around the waist enhances the sense of performance and sculpture. The motion of the torso embellishes the muscle definition, emphasising the physicality and sense of strength.

The evaluation of Mapplethorpe's work in relation to the old masters and the Renaissance has focused on his figurative work and still-lives. Recent major exhibitions include Robert Mapplethorpe and the *Classical Tradition* 2005, at the Guggenheim Museum, New York, and *Mapplethorpe: Perfection in Form* 2009 at the Galleria dell'Accademia in Florence, Italy, both of which exhibited this body of work. The Galleria dell'Accademia in Florence is home to great Renaissance masterpieces such as Michelangelo's *David* 1504, alongside which Mapplethorpe's work was shown.



Robert Mapplethorpe *Derrick Cross* 1983

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Discussion

Writing in the introduction to *Lady: Lisa Lyon*, the British writer Bruce Chatwin stated that Mapplethorpe's 'eye for a body was that of a classical sculptor in search of an ideal'.

Mapplethorpe's photographs of Lyon explore the parameters and limitations of gender; she is fetishised not for her sex but for her strength and physical beauty. Mapplethorpe once said that 'photography was a great way to make a sculpture'. What do you think he meant by this?

Activity

Sculpture is three-dimensional art associated with carving,

modelling, casting or constructing yet Mapplethorpe created sculptural photographs. Consider ways that you could create your own two-dimensional sculpture. Consider the materials you could use within the limitations of the two dimensional.

Artist Links

Francesca Woodman also photographed the human body where the subjects identity is sometimes unclear. Find out more about Francesca Woodman: www.nationalgalleries.org/artistrooms and www.tate.org.uk/artistrooms

SELF PORTRAITURE: IDENTITY AND MORTALITY

While images of the body are associated with ideals of beauty, the portrait is often associated with the identity and individuality. The self portrait is perhaps the most complex aspect of the genre because it brings the artist and the sitter into one with the allure of a private diary. Historically the self portrait is linked to artistic identity, experimentation with techniques and autobiography. Mapplethorpe's self portraits contain all of these elements: his early polaroids are his first experiments with the self portrait and his exploration of photography; his works from the late-1970s to the mid-1980s survey different personas

and ideas of identity, while his late self portraits are more autobiographical and concerned with questions of existence.

The ARTIST ROOMS collection contains a number of Mapplethorpe self portraits where he takes on different personas, including knife-wielding hoodlum, a revolutionary and ultimate bad-boy. He also took on the persona of devil, sexual-provocateur and transvestite amongst others. These personas can all be considered different facets of his identity. Susan Sontag, writing in the introduction to his publication *Certain People: A Book of Portraits*

1985, quotes Mapplethorpe as saying that his self portraits express the part of him that is most self-confident.

For the cover image for his *Certain People* publication Mapplethorpe chose the work *Self Portrait* 1980. Here Mapplethorpe portrays himself as the archetypal bad boy, with black leather jacket, dark shirt, cigarette hanging out of the corner of his mouth, cool gaze and coiffed 1950s-style hair. The image is reminiscent of James Dean in *Rebel Without a Cause* 1955 and Marlon Brando in *The Wild Ones* 1953. Typical of many of his portraits, the pose is wholly frontal and composed so that his mouth lies at the very centre of the photograph.

In 1986 Robert Mapplethorpe was diagnosed with AIDS, the syndrome caused by HIV. The HIV/AIDS pandemic was one of the most significant international events in the 1980s and had affected the lives of many in Mapplethorpe's immediate circle. At the time, most of those diagnosed with the disease did not survive more than two years. Mapplethorpe's self portraiture towards the end of his life reflected his diminishing health, his search for catharsis and his mortality.

In *Self Portrait* 1988 Mapplethorpe is seated facing straight ahead, as if he were looking death in the face – as if he were confronting death. The skull-headed cane that he holds in his right hand reinforces this reading.

Mapplethorpe is wearing black, so that his head floats free, disembodied, surrounded by darkness. Using a shallow depth of field, Mapplethorpe photographs his head very slightly out of focus perhaps to suggest his gradual fading away. Robert Mapplethorpe, until the very end of his life, believed that he could beat AIDS.

Discussion

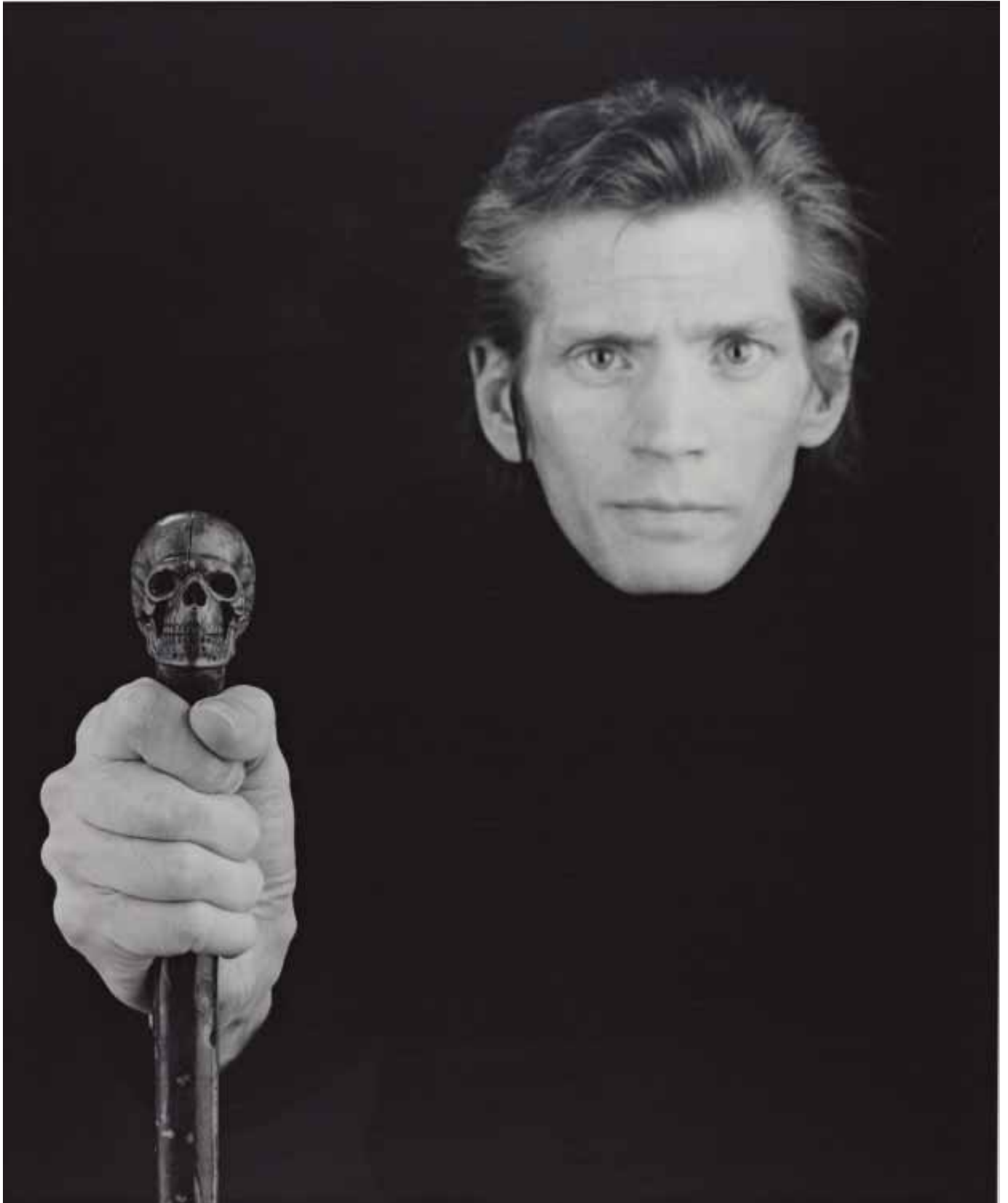
How does a self portrait differ from a standard portrait? Does *Self Portrait* 1988 differ to Mapplethorpe's earlier self portraits? What elements of autobiography are drawn upon in this work?

Activity

Create a map of ideas relating to your own life and think about how these could be drawn upon to create your own self portrait. Think about the medium you would use – would it be photography? Consider how autobiographical you want to be, or would you rather take on a different persona?

Artist Links

The subject of mortality is often explored by Damien Hirst in works such as *With Dead Head* 1991 and *Away from the Flock* 1994. Find out more about Damien Hirst: www.nationalgalleries.org/artistrooms and www.tate.org.uk/artistrooms



Robert Mapplethorpe *Self Portrait* 1988

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BALANCE AND UNITY

Beyond ideals of the human body, characteristic of Mapplethorpe's figurative work and ancient Greek sculpture, balance and unity were key to Mapplethorpe's compositions. In his portrait / partial body study *Ken Moody* 1983 (see front cover), the sitter is typically photographed frontally in perfect symmetry with his mouth and nose at the very centre of the image; his shoulders, which fill the bottom of the frame, and the top of his smooth head form a triangular shape, which was favoured in many of Mapplethorpe's sculptures and photographs.

Typical of Mapplethorpe's work, Ken Moody, a model he worked with numerous times, is photographed in his studio with photographic backdrop material in the background to allow absolute focus on the figure in the foreground. The lighting is arranged to enhance the sitter's symmetrical features, muscle definition and bone-structure.



The sitter's eyes are closed suggesting that this work is more closely related to Mapplethorpe's body studies rather than one of his portraits.

Mapplethorpe's photograph *Patti Smith* 1976, like many of his photographs of Smith, is taken outside the studio. Captured while Smith temporarily lived in Mapplethorpe's loft apartment, the photograph relies on natural light. Looking pensive and somewhat insecure, her body, cradled in a foetal position, Smith holds onto a radiator pipe running along the wall. The geometries of Smith's body unify the geometries of the room and enhance perspective. The main axes are horizontal and vertical, but running in counterpoint to these are the diagonals of the radiator pipes beneath the windows and of Smith's arms and legs.

Despite lacking a studio, lighting and styling equipment, the image is quintessentially Mapplethorpe.



Left image: Robert Mapplethorpe *Patti Smith* 1976. Right image: Robert Mapplethorpe *Lowell Smith* 1981
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CENSORSHIP AND FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Robert Mapplethorpe became famous in the 1970s and 1980s for his male nudes and sexually explicit imagery. These images tested the boundaries of creative freedom and his work therefore holds a significant place in the history of artistic struggle to depict the world as it is with honesty and truth.

His work, including photographs of people engaged in sexual acts, polarised some people and prompted questions about censorship and freedom of expression. His work would widely be referred to as part of the so-called culture wars in the early 1990s, along with that of other prominent figures in art and popular culture such as the film director Martin Scorsese, visual artist Andres Serrano and pop star Madonna. Noticeably, all were raised Catholic and questioned the church through their art. Religious symbolism was evident throughout Mapplethorpe's career.

In *Self Portrait* 1983 Mapplethorpe shows himself in battle dress (leather jacket), posing as a revolutionary figure, rifle in hand, in front of his sculpture *Black Star* 1983, which consists of a black-painted frame in the shape of a pentagram. This particular pentagram is inverted (one point facing down) and could therefore be interpreted as a symbol of the Devil. Mapplethorpe, brought up a devout Catholic, later liked



Robert Mapplethorpe *Self Portrait* 1983

© Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation. Used by permission.

to identify with the Devil because of his own 'sinful' behaviour. Thus, he becomes a rebel soldier fighting for a cause.

Mapplethorpe once said that 'beauty and the Devil are the same thing', and his fascination with the devil was evident in his work. He would also make reference to Saint Francis of Assisi and Saint Peter. In the work *Lisa Lyon* 1982 he uses his sitter to create an effigy of Christ. The cross is a symbol which would appear in Mapplethorpe's work throughout his career, and many of his sculptures were in the shape of a cross. He once stated 'I like the form of a cross, I like its proportions. I arrange things in a Catholic way'.

SUMMARY

Key things to think about:

Key Words:

Neo-classicism • Nude • Innocence
Artists • Sexuality • Love • Death
Body • Pleasure • Black & White
Childhood • Taste • Desire
Sex • Youth • Celebrity
Popular Culture • Music • Erotic
Portraiture • Sculpture • Lines • Light
Beauty • Perfection • Athletic • Unity
Balance • Censorship

Sitters and Subjects:

Self • Friends • Bodies • Lovers • Artists
Writers • Actors • Bodybuilders
Models • Dancers • Children • Statues
Flowers • Subcultures

Process:

Sculpture • Photography

Links to other artists in National collections at National Galleries of Scotland and Tate Andy Warhol, Julia Margaret Cameron, Marcel Duchamp, Salvador Dalí, Auguste Rodin, Man Ray, Antonio Canova

Links to Art Movements

Neo-classicism, Renaissance, mannerism, rococo, baroque, surrealism, dadaism, postmodernism

GLOSSARY

ADONIS

A handsome youth in Greek mythology loved by Aphrodite. He was killed by a wild boar and restored to Aphrodite from Hades.

AIDS

A disease of the immune system, caused by the virus HIV, leading to death from infections that the body is no longer able to resist. The disease had a devastating effect on the gay community in the 1980s and many of Mapplethorpe's friends and acquaintances were victims of the disease. Mapplethorpe died from an AIDS-related illness in 1989.

ANDROGYNOUS

Combining features that are typically male with features that typically female and therefore of uncertain sex. Mapplethorpe's female models such as Lisa Lyon, Patti Smith and Grace Jones are often described as having androgynous looks.

ARCADIAN

Refers to a vision of pastoral bliss and harmony of nature and derives from a Greek region of the same name known for its wilderness and unspoilt beauty. The work *Patti Smith* 1979 is described as having an arcadian feel.

ASSEMBLAGE

Art made by assembling disparate elements often scavenged by the artist, sometimes bought specially. One Mapplethorpe's early influences, Joseph Cornell, is associated with assemblage art, as are his sitters Robert Rauschenberg and Louise Nevelson.

AVANT-GARDE

New and experimental ideas and methods in art, music and literature.

GIOVANNI BELLINI

An Italian Renaissance painter (c.1430-1516), probably the best known of the Bellini family of Venetian painters.

LOUISE BOURGEOIS

French-American artist and sculptor (1911-2010), best known for her contributions to both modern and contemporary art, and for her spider structures, titled *Maman*, which resulted in her being nicknamed the *Spiderwoman*. Bourgeois was photographed by Mapplethorpe in 1982.

MARLON BRANDO

American film star (1924-2004) who came to prominence in the 1950s with performances in films such as *A Street Car Named Desire* 1951, *On the Waterfront* 1954 and *The Wild Ones* 1953. In the latter he played Johnny Strabler, a rebel gang leader. Imagery associated with the character had a significant impact on popular and youth culture.

JULIA MARGARET CAMERON

A British photographer (1815-79) known for her portraits of prominent society figures of the time.

TRUMAN CAPOTE

American author and society figure (1924-84) who was a subject of Mapplethorpe's.

BRUCE CHATWIN

A British writer (1940-89) who was a subject and friend of Mapplethorpe.

CHELSEA HOTEL

A Manhattan hotel renowned as the home for many artists, writers and musicians in 1970s and 1980s New York. Mapplethorpe lived at the Chelsea Hotel in the early 1970's with Patti Smith.

CONTRAPPOSTO

An asymmetrical arrangement of the human figure in which the lines of the arms and shoulders contrast with, while balancing, those of the hips and legs. The most famous example of contrapposto is Michelangelo's *David* 1504. A number of Mapplethorpe's sitters pose in a contrapposto, including *Lindsay Key* 1985.

JOSEPH CORNELL

An American artist (1903-72), associated with assemblage, and a major influence on Mapplethorpe.

CULTURE WARS

Conflict of values between conservative and liberal groups characterised in the 1980s by conservative climate of the Reagan administration in the USA. During this period members of the religious right often criticised academics and artists for what they regarded as their indecent, subversive and blasphemous work.

DADAISM

Early twentieth-century movement in art and literature based on deliberate irrationality and negation of traditional artistic values. Mapplethorpe's early influences such as Marcel Duchamp are associated with the dada movement.

JAMES DEAN

Cultural icon and American film star (1931-55) best known for playing the troubled teenager Jim Stark in *A Rebel Without A Cause* 1955.

DERRICK CROSS

A New York based modern dancer who posed for Mapplethorpe on numerous occasions. Mapplethorpe's photographs of Cross often focus on body sections such as his torso, arm or buttocks.

DOCUMENTA

An exhibition of modern and contemporary art taking place every five years in Kassel, Germany. Mapplethorpe participated in Documenta 6, 1977.

GLOSSARY

MARCEL DUCHAMP

French artist (1887-1968), associated with dada, who was a major influence on Mapplethorpe.

EROS

Greek god of love, counterpart of Roman cupid.

JOHN EVERETT MILLAIS

A British painter (1829-96) and one of the founding fathers of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood.

MARIANNE FAITHFULL

A British singer-songwriter (b. 1946) who Mapplethorpe photographed on more than one occasion.

SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI

A much revered Italian Catholic preacher (1181-1225c).

KEITH HARING

American artist (1958-90) whose work is often associated with New York street culture. Haring was a subject and contemporary of Mapplethorpe.

HASSELBLAD

A brand of medium format camera. Mapplethorpe first began using a Hasselblad camera in 1975.

GRACE JONES

American-Jamaican singer, actress and model (b. 1948). Mapplethorpe photographed Jones in 1984 and 1988.

LISA LYON

Professional bodybuilder, winner of the first World Women's Body Championship in 1979. Mapplethorpe produced a book of his photographs with *Lady: Lisa Lyon* 1983.

MADONNA

American singer-songwriter (b.1958) known for her sexually provocative music videos and song lyrics.

KEN MOODY

A model, athlete and fitness instructor. Mapplethorpe photographed Moody numerous times, some of which were featured in his publication *Black Book* 1986.

MUSE

The word 'muse' comes from the Greek *mousa* originating from *Mnemosyne*, the goddess of memory and mother of the Muses. In Greek mythology Zeus and *Mnemosyne* were the parents of nine goddesses each of whom was regarded as the protectress of a different art or science. The word *muse* is now used to refer to a woman who is the source of inspiration for a creative artist. Throughout history artists have been inspired by the minds and bodies of women; Victorine Meuren inspired Édouard Manet's *The Luncheon on the Grass* 1863 and *Olympia* 1863 and Edie Sedgwick was Andy Warhol's most famous muse, starring in a number of his films.

NEO-CLASSICISM

The revival of a classical style or treatment in art, literature, architecture, or music dominant in Europe in the mid-seventeenth and the eighteenth century. Mapplethorpe acknowledged the influence of the neo-classical in his work. References to French painter Jacques-Louis David (1748-1825) are particularly evident in Mapplethorpe's work.

SAINT PETER

An early Christian leader who was one of Jesus's twelve apostles.

PUNK

A movement among young people in the mid to late 1970s, characterised by a violent rejection of established society and expressed through punk rock and wearing of aggressively outlandish clothes and hairstyles.

RAPHAEL

Italian painter (1483-1520) associated with the Renaissance.

RENAISSANCE

The revival of European art and literature under the influence of classical models in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

S&M

Sadomasochism is broadly a form of physical role play – those involved get pleasure from receiving or inflicting pain and/or humiliation.

SATYR

In classical mythology, a woodland god associated with drunken revelry and lustfulness. In Greek representations, the satyr was a man with certain attributes of a horse, such as a horse's ears and tail, and in Roman representations he was a man with the tail, legs and horns of a goat. Mapplethorpe gives his sitters the appearance of a satyr in works such as *Alan Lynes* 1979 and *Snakeman* 1981.

MARTIN SCORSESE

American film director (b. 1942) known for works such as *Taxi Driver* 1976 and *Goodfellas* 1990. His film *The Last Temptation of Christ* was embroiled in the culture wars of the early 1990s.

ANDRES SERRANO

American artist (b.1950) whose controversial work *Piss, Christ* 1987 was involved in the culture wars of the early 1990s.

PATTI SMITH

American singer-songwriter, poet and performance artist, a close friend and confidante of Mapplethorpe. Smith (b. 1946) was sometimes referred to as the poetess of punk.

TELEVISION

American rock band who were photographed by Mapplethorpe in 1977 for their *Marquee Moon* album cover.

ANDY WARHOL

American pop artist (1928-87) who had a major influence on and who was a subject for Mapplethorpe.

FIND OUT MORE

Websites

The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation:
www.mapplethorpe.org

ARTIST ROOMS:
www.tate.org.uk/collection/artistrooms/
and www.nationalgalleries.org/collection/artistrooms

ARTIST ROOMS On Tour with the Art Fund: www.artfund.org/artistrooms

The J. Paul Getty Museum:
www.getty.edu/

The Guggenheim:
www.guggenheim.org

The Los Angeles County Museum of Art:
www.lacma.org

Cheim & Read:
www.cheimread.com/artists/robert-mapplethorpe

Alison Jacques Gallery: www.alisonjacquesgallery.com/artists/Robert-Mapplethorpe

Online Films

ARTIST ROOMS Robert Mapplethorpe exhibition at Museums Sheffield:
www.tate.org.uk/collection/artistrooms/artist.do?id=11413

Watch Robert Mapplethorpe's 1988 Arena interview:
www.dailymotion.com/video/xnhqtv_robert-mapplethorpe-arena-1988_creation

Further Reading

Robert Mapplethorpe, *Perfection in Form*, London, 2009.

Sylvia Woolf, *Polaroids*, Munich and New York, 2007.

Arthur C. Danto, *Robert Mapplethorpe*, London, 2007.

Keith Hartley, *Robert Mapplethorpe*, Edinburgh, 2006.

Germano Celant, *Mapplethorpe*, Italy, 1992.

Richard Marshall, *Mapplethorpe's Vision*, New York, 1990.

Robert Mapplethorpe and Patti Smith, *Flowers*, Boston, 1990.

Robert Mapplethorpe and Joan Didion, *Some Women*, Boston 1989.

Janet Kardon, *Robert Mapplethorpe: The Perfect Moment*, Philadelphia, 1988.

Richard Marshall and Robert Mapplethorpe, *50 New York Artists: A Critical Selection of Painters and Sculptors Working In New York*, San Francisco, 1986.

Robert Mapplethorpe and Ntozake Shange, *Black Book*, New York, 1986.

Robert Mapplethorpe and Susan Sontag, *Certain People: A Book of Portraits*, Pasadena, 1985.

Robert Mapplethorpe and Bruce Chatwin, *Lady, Lisa Lyon*, New York, 1983.

Robert Mapplethorpe, *Robert Mapplethorpe: 1970-1983*, London, 1983.

