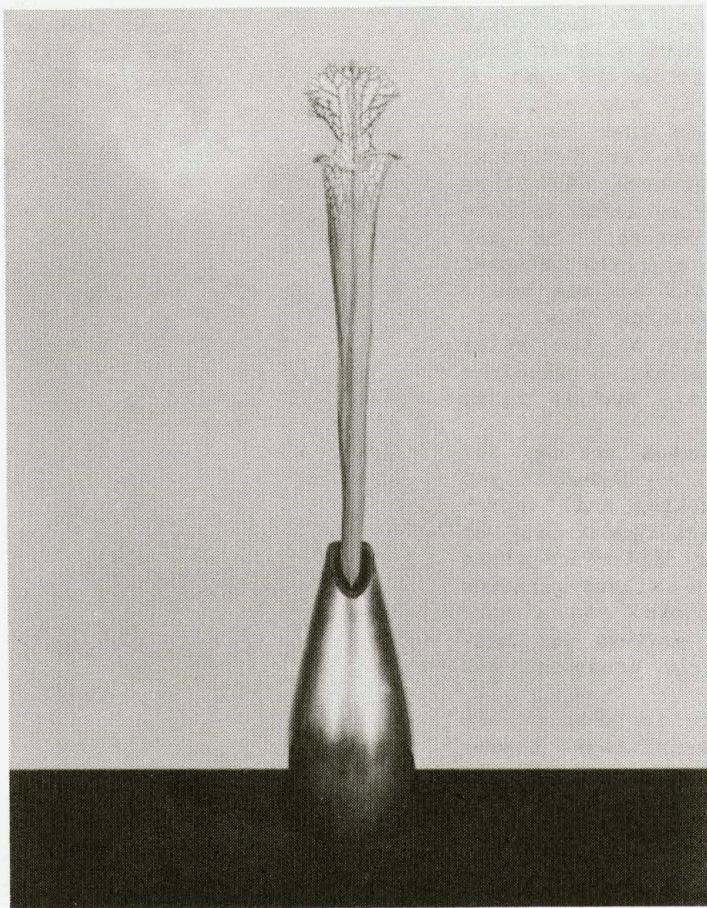


Wadsworth Atheneum  
July 28 to September 18, 1984

Robert Mapplethorpe  
MATRIX 80

From Flowers, 1983



MATRIX is supported in part  
by a grant from the National  
Endowment for the Arts, a  
Federal Agency.

Before Robert Mapplethorpe, one had thought that children and the Japanese held the monopoly on bizarreness with flowers. Anyone else's images of flowers are like old shoes - cozy, comfortable, sweetness and light. But the flowers that bloom in the spring, tra-la, have nothing to do with this set of silver moon vegetation, these lemons in the garden of love, where only peaches grow.

As an old-fashioned gesture, I once sent Mapplethorpe some flowers at Easter which, to my chagrin, were greeted with snarls. "I hate flowers," he said and pretended to spit on them. Now, if you will, he still spits on them but with his Hasselblad, or he does something perverse to them that nobody else seems to have thought of before. In any case, these are the elegant distanced shots of one whose obsessive training has perfected his aim to the point where he can hit a gladiola straight in the eye at fifty paces.

(To be museum serious for two seconds.) -- Those of you who enjoy looking will appreciate the rare opportunity of seeing what a difference there is between a silver-gelatine print (the photo) and a continuous tone gravure (no half tone dot as in newspaper and magazines).

The gravure is made by exposing a sensitized copper plate to the same negative the photo is made from. This plate is then etched with acid and printed with printer's ink in a hand press. Sounds easy, but work of this quality is rare.

Many photographers have actually preferred the gravure over the photographic print -- notably the father of twentieth century photography, the Englishman, Peter Henry Emer-

son and Stieglitz, who probably got the idea from him.

The nineteenth century liked photogravure because it wouldn't fade like many photos then. Stieglitz and his turn-of-the-century friends liked its painterly neo-impressionistic remove from life. Very few photographers make use of it today. As you can see here, even hard-edge Mapplethorpe takes on an unexpected softness, a dreamy languor.

Samuel Wagstaff  
Guest Curator  
New York City  
July, 1984

Works in MATRIX:

Flowers, 1983, a portfolio of ten photogravures, edition of 40. Each print is 22" x 18" (image size) and 31 1/4" x 24 3/4" (paper size). They are printed on Masa paper chine colle on Arches by Deli Sacilotto, New York City. Co-published by Barbara Gladstone Gallery and Deli Sacilotto, New York City. Lent by the Barbara Gladstone Gallery.

Flowers, 1983, ten black and white photographs, each image is 20" x 16" on 25 3/8" x 21 1/8" paper. Lent by the artist.

PLEASE NOTE:

Samuel Wagstaff, Guest Curator of this exhibition, will give a talk at the Atheneum on Sunday, September 16, 1984 at 3 p.m.

Robert Mapplethorpe will give a talk, co-sponsored by the Hartford Art School, University of Hartford, September 18, 1984 at 5:30 p.m.

The public is cordially invited to both events.



Selected one-man exhibitions:  
Light Gallery, NYC Polaroids  
'76; Holly Solomon Gallery,  
NYC '77 (twice); The Kitchen,  
NYC '77; Robert Miller Gal-  
lery, NYC '78, '79, '81, '83;  
Texas Gallery, Houston '79;  
International Center of Photo-  
graphy, NYC Trade Off (with  
Lynn Davis) '79; Galerie  
Jurka, Amsterdam '80, '82; Leo  
Castelli, NYC Lisa Lyon '83;  
Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris  
'83; Galerie Watari, Tokyo  
'83; St. Louis Art Museum '83;  
Barbara Gladstone Gallery, NYC  
Robert Mapplethorpe Photo-  
gravures '83; Lucio Amelio  
Foundation, Naples '84.

Selected group exhibitions:  
Kassel, Germany Documenta 6  
'77; Photographs from the Col-  
lection of Samuel Wagstaff  
'77, travelled extensively,  
inc. Wadsworth Atheneum '81;  
Corcoran Gallery of Art, Wash-  
ington, DC '77; Museum of  
Modern Art, NYC Mirrors and  
Windows '78; Santa Barbara  
Museum of Art Attitudes '79;  
Center Georges Pompidou, Paris  
Autoportraits Photographiques  
'81; The Institute for Art and  
Urban Resources, P.S.1, Long  
Island City New York/New Wave  
'81; Whitney Museum of Amer-  
ican Art, NYC Biennial '81;  
Albright Knox Gallery, Buffalo  
Figures: Form and Expression  
'82; Kassel, Germany Documenta  
7 '82; Castelli Graphics, NYC  
Three Dimensional Photographs  
'83; Leo Castelli Gallery, NYC  
Drawings, Photographs '83;  
Nexus Gallery, Atlanta Radical  
Photography '84.

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