

**Robert Mapplethorpe Icon**

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McCabe Fine Art  
Artillerigatan 40  
114 45 Stockholm  
Sweden

Robert Mapplethorpe is a cultural icon. He began his career taking Polaroids in the 1970s and went on to become one of the twentieth century's most important artists. Well known for his provocative nudes, Mapplethorpe also took sensual photographs of artists, celebrities, friends, lovers, and flowers. The artist's first commercial exhibition in Sweden features a diverse selection of portraits, landscapes, and still lifes from the 1970s and 1980s. All of the works on view, have been provided by the Mapplethorpe Foundation.

Regardless of whether or not Mapplethorpe's subjects themselves are icons - as many are, including Grace Jones, Iggy Pop, and Patti Smith, whose portraits are included in this exhibition - his photographs are iconic in the way that they portray people, places, and things in an idealized, spiritual, manner. Always searching for perfection in his subjects (while holding himself to equally high artistic standards), Mapplethorpe strived to maximize the splendor and elegance of the human body and the natural world. Carefully controlling light and shadows, he meticulously staged his subjects to enhance sumptuous textures, ranging from smooth skin and frothy water, to hard marble and soft petals. By cropping his photographs in unexpected ways, he created dynamic compositions that highlight idealized forms.

Mapplethorpe's passionate fascination with the human body evokes Classical sculpture. His cropped nudes, which focus in on muscular thighs and buttocks, sinewy arms, or perfect breasts, are as powerful, idealized, and fetishistic as Greek Gods and Goddesses. By shooting subjects whose bodies are already chiseled works of art, Mapplethorpe celebrates the human form as the epitome of beauty, strength, and goodness. His nudes are erotic, not exploitative; romantic, not raunchy. Bringing the same precision lighting, framing, and composition to still life subjects that he did to his live models, Mapplethorpe likewise improves upon perfection in the natural world. Through his lens, a single delicate Calla Lily or Orchid bud appears robust, majestic, and everlasting. Instead of capturing fleeting moments, Mapplethorpe's photographs are imbued with a profound sense of timelessness. This is perhaps why his images - so striking, so thoughtful, so perfect, and so iconic - remain deeply etched in our collective memory, nearly thirty years after the artist's death.