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"Art Exhibitions: Robert Mapplethorpe, the First Retrospective in Milan," *lomography*, February 25, 2012.



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For the first time in Milan, Forma Foundation host a major retrospective devoted to the one of the most important photographers of the twentieth century: Robert Mapplethorpe - whose perfectly composed images have influenced generations of photographers and artists.



Self portrait, 1980 ©Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation photo via mapplethorpe.org

Robert Mapplethorpe was born in 1946 in Floral Park, Queens. He was an American photographer. Of his childhood he said, "I come from suburban America. It was a very safe environment and it was a good place to come from in that it was a good place to leave."

The exhibition, from the Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation in New York, comprises 178 photographs and is a unique opportunity to view Mapplethorpe's oeuvre in a single retrospective panorama: his early Polaroids dating from the seventies, the celebrated still-lives, the flowers, the portraits, the disconcerting Lisa Lyon series, the splendid images devoted to the male body (an unprecedented study as well as a celebration), the homage to his muse Patti Smith and his unusual, tender and melancholic portraits of children.



©Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation photos via mapplethorpe.org

Mapplethorpe worked primarily in the studio, particularly toward the end of his career. Common subjects include flowers, especially orchids and calla lilies, and celebrities, including Andy Warhol, Deborah Harry, Richard Gere, Peter Gabriel, Grace Jones, and Patti Smith. Smith was a longtime roommate of Mapplethorpe and a frequent subject in his photography, including a stark, iconic photograph that appears on the cover of Smith's first album, *Horses*. Also, a Patti Smith portrait from 1986 recalls Albrecht Dürer's 1500 self-portrait.



Patti Smith, *Horses*. Original lp cover, © 1975, arista records, photos by Robert Mapplethorpe