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The legacy of Robert Mapplethorpe (1946 -1989) is rich and complicated, triggering controversy, polarizing critics, and providing inspiration for many artists who followed him. Mapplethorpe, one of the most influential figures of his time, today stands as an example to emerging photographers who continue to experiment with the boundaries and concepts of the beautiful. Robert Mapplethorpe: The Photographs offers a timely and rewarding examination of his oeuvre and influence. Drawing from the extraordinary collection jointly acquired in 2011 by the J. Paul Getty Museum and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art from The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation, as well as the Mapplethorpe Archive housed at the Getty Research Institute, the authors were given the unique opportunity to explore new resources and present fresh perspectives. The result is a fascinating introduction to Mapplethorpe's career and legacy, accompanied by a rich selection of illustrations covering the remarkable range of his photographic work. All of these beautifully integrated elements contribute to what promises to become an essential point of access to Mapplethorpe's work and practice. This publication is issued on the occasion of the exhibition Robert Mapplethorpe: The Perfect Medium view at both the J. Paul Getty Museum and at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art from March 15 and March 20, respectively, through July 31, 2016; at the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Montréal from September 10, 2016, through January 15, 2017; and at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, from October 28, 2017, through February 4, 2018.

Robert Mapplethorpe began taking photographs in the 1970s with a Polaroid camera given to him by a friend. When he died in 1989 of AIDS, at the age of forty-two, he was considered one of the most important photographers of his generation, having gained a reputation as the avatar of a rigorous formalism stunningly wed to graphic and sometimes controversial subject matter. Most of Robert Mapplethorpe's days began in the early afternoon, often by photographing flowers. Mapplethorpe used them to help focus his vision, centering and warming up for his commercial portrait work. The flowers also helped him to effect the transition to the more daring work, which he executed late at night. Pistils reproduces 120 of these ravishing images of flowers, many of which have never been published. The full range of Mapplethorpe's virtuosity is displayed here--early Polaroids; exacting still lifes in black-and-white and color; and extremely rare, toned gravure prints. Not since Georgia O'Keeffe has an artist looked at flowers with as developed an eye as Robert Mapplethorpe. In them he discovered sex, death, redemption, and, always, beauty. These photographs go far beyond decorative allure to place him firmly in the pantheon of the photographic masters.

Mapplethorpe and the Flower: Radical Sexuality and the Limits of Control is the first dedicated book-length critical study of the late artist Robert Mapplethorpe's flower photographs. The book is an interdisciplinary investigation into the symbolism of the flower as envisioned by a photographer whose production was mired in controversy-triggered in large part by his thematic exploration of radical sexuality and queer subcultural life. Mapplethorpe came into international prominence due to the public response to his polarizing retrospective exhibition, The Perfect Moment (1989-1990), a ground breaking collection of images exploring three largely traditional genres of photography: the still life, the portrait, and the human figure. If there is one characteristic that unifies the artist's approach to these genres, however, it is his meticulous attention to the materiality of the photograph as object. Mapplethorpe was a dedicated formalist, committed to locating what is most beautiful about his chosen subject-producing work under carefully controlled studio conditions that enabled the development of a unique and singular aesthetic vision. Bearing this in mind, Mapplethorpe and the Flower is dedicated to unpacking how the artist's unique brand of formal sophistication and discipline, combined with his conceptual bravado, interpenetrates all of his photographs-and reaches its formal and conceptual maturation in his flower images. There has been significant critical attention paid to the artist's more notorious photographs, namely the S&M imagery, and his now infamous persona as provocateur and sexual renegade. Fixation on this dimension of the artist's mythology overshadows the formal details and interlocking representational and political commitments crosscutting the artist's oeuvre. Mapplethorpe and the Flower is a recuperative effort: one that seeks to locate persistent threads running through the artist's seemingly disparate aesthetic and conceptual investigations.

Presents a rich collection of more than one hundred black-and-white and full-color photographs that capture the artist's remarkable flower images. 25,000 first printing.

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This ninth volume of the Artefacts series explores how artists have responded to developments in science and technology, past and present. Rather than limiting the discussion to art alone, editors Anne Collins Goodyear and Margaret Weitekamp also asked contributors to consider aesthetics: the scholarly consideration of sensory responses to cultural objects. When considered as aesthetic objects, how do scientific instruments or technological innovations reflect and embody culturally grounded assessments about appearance, feel, and use? And when these objects become museum artifacts, what aesthetic factors affect their exhibition? Contributors found answers in the material objects themselves. This volume reconsiders how science, technology, art, and aesthetics impact one another.

Known primarily for his refined aesthetic, Mapplethorpe's classical portraits, nudes, and still lifes, help redefine photography as an art form at a time when the medium was floundering. "Pictures" dispenses with the intellectual, political, and religious rhetoric surrounding earlier debates, allowing the photographs to speak on their own terms. 100 duotone photos.

From the early to the mid twentieth century, state and appellate courts in the U.S. contentiously began to undermine the grounds on which books could be prosecuted for their salacious bodily appeals. At the same time, modernist and avant-garde writers were doing their part to call into question both art and its conditions of possibility. Obscenity case law's legitimation crisis and modernism's crisis of representation converged in the critical attention both paid to language's ability to exert an effective force in the world. In particular, court opinions, prose fiction, narrative poetry, little magazines, behaviorist essays, paperback book covers, and Civil Rights activist writing all were preoccupied with the printed word's capacity to "deprave," "corrupt," "excite," or offend contemporary readers in the early twentieth-century U.S. As the heterogeneity of this archive of obscene texts suggests, the period's arguments over the criminally libidinal appeals of writing encompassed more than just the relationships embodied between mute words and their presumably lewd readers. In the proscribed writings of Wyndham Lewis, Erskine Caldwell, Lillian Smith, and Robinson Jeffers, concepts of legal obscenity reliably provided the opportunities to reflect upon the deterministic, compulsive, and naturalistic effects of writing on the body. In turn, the struggle to account for the libidinal efficacy of books insinuated itself into all sorts of seemingly unrelated debates, such as those concerning the technocratic administration of mass consumption through behaviorist-informed advertising practices, shifts in cultural hierarchies between print and visual materials, and activist strategies for desegregating the Jim Crow South before the 1950s. As the history of their textual reception and legal proscription reveals, the "obscene" texts of Lewis, Caldwell, and Smith undermined, ostentatiously thematized, and inadvertently embodied the dispossessive ends to which salacious writing could be put, such that individual readers might become aware of the naturalistic social processes by which they were being turned into mass consumers, voyeurs, and racialized subjects.