

ROBERT MAPPLETHORPE

ROBERT MAPPLETHORPE CURATED BY ROBERT WILSON

SALZBURG VILLA KAST

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The Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac takes pleasure in announcing an exhibition of important works by the American artist Robert Mapplethorpe. The show will be curated by the American stage director, writer and artist Robert Wilson.

The concept behind the exhibition is for a contemporary artist to rediscover one of the most impressive photographic blocks of late 20th-century work, and to apply his sensitive, individual perspective to transposing famous works by Mapplethorpe into a completely new context.

This exhibition is part of a series in which famous artists explore Mapplethorpe's photographic work, which is still a landmark for many young artists. Interpretations have been presented by Cindy Sherman in New York (2003), David Hockney in London (2005), Hedi Slimane in Paris (2005) and Vik Muniz in São Paulo (2005).

Robert Mapplethorpe is known especially for his black-and-white photographs of male and female nudes, flowers, celebrities, friends and anonymous persons from the New York SM scene. His works have become icons of 20th-century photography, characterised by a synthesis of technical precision and strictness of form. The wide range of his motifs is permeated with a classicist use of leitmotiv and a strong sense of proportion and symmetry. "I look for the perfection of form", Mapplethorpe once remarked. "I do this in portraits, in photographs of penises, in photographs of flowers."

The exhibition will include works from Mapplethorpe's estate as well as works lent by major private collections and international museums including the New York Guggenheim.

Not only did Mapplethorpe make portraits of Robert Wilson and his artist companions such as Philip Glass and Susan Sontag, but Wilson and Mapplethorpe were close friends and maintained a constant artistic dialogue. Both were central figures in the New York art scene of the 1970s and '80s. This exhibition of Wilson's multi-media sound installations focuses, on the one hand, on a comprehensive collection of portraits, and on the other, on works reflecting a formalistic treatment in the categories of close-up, middle ground and horizon.

Susan Sontag once said of Robert Wilson: "His artistic career has a signature of a major artistic creation. I can't think of any body of work as large or as influential." Wilson's Salzburg exhibition is a meeting of two kindred artistic spirits whose lives crossed in many ways, in a place - Salzburg - where Robert Wilson has experienced major triumphs over the past 20 years.