

Press Release

TELLER ON MAPPLETHORPE

18 November 2016 – 7 January 2017

Preview: Thursday 17 November, 6-8pm

To coincide with what would have been the 70th birthday of the iconic American photographer Robert Mapplethorpe, Alison Jacques has invited acclaimed UK-based, German-born photographer Juergen Teller to curate an exhibition of Mapplethorpe's work. Teller worked in collaboration with The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation in New York to make his selection.

Considered one of the most important photographers of the 20th century, Robert Mapplethorpe is currently the subject of a major touring retrospective *The Perfect Medium*, which opened at the J. Paul Getty Museum and Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), Los Angeles in 2016. The exhibition is currently on view at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Canada (until 22 January 2017) and will travel to the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia (October 2017 - February 2018). Mapplethorpe is also the subject of a recently released, Emmy nominated, HBO documentary *Look at the Pictures* (2016).

Juergen Teller is one of a few artists who, since Mapplethorpe, has been able to operate successfully both in the art world and the world of commercial fashion photography. Alison Jacques, who has represented Robert Mapplethorpe in the UK since 1999, said: "Provocative and subversive, making images which are the antithesis of conventional fashion photography, Juergen Teller was the only choice to curate this special exhibition of Robert's work. There are obvious parallels between these two artists and I believe Juergen's eye will bring a new reading of Robert's work."

With the permission of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation, Teller has enlarged two images, each over 4 metres in scale, which, pasted directly onto the gallery's walls will provide a backdrop to the entire show. One wall will show Mapplethorpe's first partner David Croland wearing a gag and the other features the model Marty Gibson from Mapplethorpe's later work posing nude on a beach.

Teller's selection of 48 images exposes works within Mapplethorpe's archive that have rarely been exhibited before and span Mapplethorpe's entire career, ranging from the unique Polaroids of the early 1970s to his iconic medium of silver gelatin photographs from the mid-70s through to the late 80s.

Still life features as a prominent theme with unusual subjects including a spoon full of coffee, a set of antique silverware, two coconuts, a television set, and prickly unopened seedpods on a plate. Teller has also chosen a number of images depicting animals, a subject matter that Mapplethorpe is not famously associated with, including a hanging bat, plate of frogs, reclining dog, kitten on a sofa, and horses.

Human subjects include some of Mapplethorpe's key female muses such as Lisa Lyon, but also lesser-known personalities including Cookie Mueller, Lisa Marie Smith and Susan Sarandon's daughter, Eva Amurri, as a small child. Well-known people in Mapplethorpe's life are represented including Patti Smith, David Croland and Sam Wagstaff. Teller has also responded to his own German heritage and selected lesser-known portraits of German figures of the time, such as Hans Gert and the photojournalist Gisele Freund. The image of Gert was the first that Tom Baril worked on for Mapplethorpe from his Bond Street Darkroom. Baril continued to be Mapplethorpe's exclusive printer for over 15 years.

Sexually-explicit images also feature in the exhibition but by interrelating these to a more romantic view of Mapplethorpe's work, Teller has brought out the essential mission of Mapplethorpe's work: a life-long quest for perfection of form whatever the subject matter may be.

Robert Mapplethorpe (b. New York, USA, 1946; d. Boston, USA, 1989) mounted over 50 solo exhibitions during his lifetime, including numerous museum shows in the USA, Europe and Japan. Since his death he has continued to be the subject of major institutional exhibitions. In recent years the Tate, in conjunction with other UK museums, acquired 64 works by Mapplethorpe through the Artists Rooms Art Fund and The d'Offay Donation, which culminated in an exhibition at Tate Modern in 2014.

Juergen Teller (b. 1964, Erlangen, Germany) moved to London in 1986, two years after graduating from Munich's Bayerische Staatslehranstalt für Photographie. Since the late 1980s, his photographic works have gained critical acclaim and been featured in an array of influential international publications such as Vogue, W Magazine, I-D and Purple. With his unique photographic sensibility, Teller manages to strike a rare balance between creativity and commercialism, blurring the boundaries of art and advertising, and creating world-class images for collaborators such as Marc Jacobs, Céline, Yves Saint Laurent and Vivienne Westwood. Teller's solo exhibition *Woo!* at the ICA in London in 2013 was the most well-attended exhibition in the ICA's history, and in 2016 he had a major solo museum exhibition in Germany, *Enjoy Your Life* at Kunsthalle Bonn.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

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