

Time Out

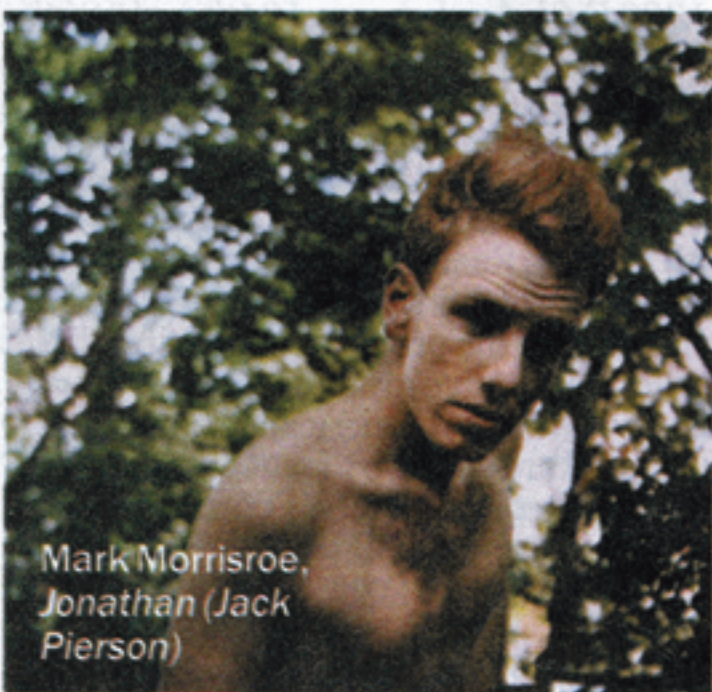
New York

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“Mark Morrisroe (1959–1989)”

★★★★★

ClampArt, through Oct 6
(see Chelsea)



Mark Morrisroe,
Jonathan (Jack Pierson)

sexual need. In *Untitled (Portrait of a Man)*, for example, a handsome face appears behind a network of cracks that resemble peeling paint. *Untitled (Two Men in Silhouette)* layers the shadow of a well-hung youth with negatives of an S&M scene, suggesting the elemental force of libido. A group of black-and-white Polaroids records the artist and his friends, many posing seductively in the nude. The photos' haziness and close-up focus enhance their diaristic quality while suggesting evanescence: The subjects communicate both their sexuality and vulnerability. Morrisroe used the medium to create visual poems, though not all of the pieces here achieve the poignant beauty his best work obtains.

Still, as a small selection of works by fellow Boston School artists Nan Goldin, David Armstrong, Jack Pierson, Tabboo!, Gail Thacker and Philip-Lorca diCorcia demonstrates, Morrisroe's role in the development of the raw, revealing photography of the 1980s was crucial. And the impact of his legacy remains, from the influence his craft exerted on artists like the Starn Twins to the example his lifestyle set for Dash Snow and friends.—*Joshua Mack*

Mark Morrisroe, whose résumé included stints as a teenage hustler, arrived in New York from Boston in 1983 as part of an influx of young gay artists sick of being marginalized by society. What ensued was a creative boom as communities formerly consigned to the cultural closet came out and asserted their right to equal artistic expression.

Morrisroe died of AIDS in 1989 at age 30, but not before producing a body of photographs that meditate on friendship, emotional longing and