

Mark Morrisroe

1959-1989

Mark Morrisroe carried a bullet in his chest and a Polaroid camera with him at all times (the former fired from the gun of a disgruntled john, the latter a gift from the Polaroid Corporation, which included a lifetime supply of film). His life was cut short, but the photographs he took remain—lush, anguished, and comedic depictions of a life consumed by ambition and disaster.

It kills me to look at my old photographs of myself and my friends. We were such beautiful, sexy kids but we always felt bad because we thought we were ugly at the time. It was because we were such outcasts in high school and so unpopular. We believed what other people said. If any one of us could have seen how attractive we really were we might have made something better of our lives. I'm the only guy that I know who wanted to runaway to be a prostitute.
--Mark Morrisroe

Mark was an outlaw on every front—sexually, socially, and artistically. He was marked by his dramatic and violent adolescence as a teenage prostitute with a deep distrust and a fierce sense of his uniqueness. I met him in Art School in 1977; he left shit in my mailbox as a gesture of friendship. Limping wildly down the halls in his torn t-shirts, calling himself Mark Dirt, he was Boston's first punk. He developed into a photographer with a completely distinctive artistic vision and signature. Both his pictures of his lovers, close friends, and objects of desire, and his touching still-lives of rooms, dead flowers, and dream images stand as timeless fragments of his life, resonating with sexual longing, loneliness, and loss.
--Nan Goldin, 1993

Selected exhibitions:

2017

The Most Beautiful Part, Museo de Arte Moderno, Mexico City (Curated by James Oles)

Screaming in the Streets: AIDS, Art, Activism, ClampArt, New York City

2016

Human Interest: Portraits from the Whitney's Collection, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York City (Curated by Dana Miller and Scott Rothkopf)

Finalists for 2016 Annual Meeting and Acquisition Vote, Art Institute of Chicago

Headshots: Contemporary Photographic Portraiture, ClampArt, New York City (Curated by Brian Paul Clamp)

Lomex, Lomex, New York City (Curated by Alexander Shulan)

2015

Boston to New York: David Armstrong (1954-2014), Nan Goldin (b. 1953), and Mark Morrisroe (1959-1989), ClampArt, New York City (Curated by Brian Paul Clamp)

America is Hard to See, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York City

Art AIDS America, Tacoma Art Museum, Washington (Curated by Jonathan D. Katz and Rock Hushka)—Traveling to Zuckerman Museum of Art, Kennesaw, Georgia and The Bronx Museum of the Arts, New York

2014

Hello from Bertha, ClampArt, New York City (Curated by Brian Paul Clamp)

Fan the Flames: Queer Positions in Photography, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto (Curated by Sophie Hackett)

Recent Acquisitions: The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Paris Photo, Salon d'Honneur, Grand Palais, Paris (Curated by Quentin Bajac)

2013

Remembering Paul Monette, Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts

New York City, c. 1985, ClampArt, New York City (Curated by Brian Paul Clamp)

I, You, We, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York City (Organized by David Kiehl)

Blues for Smoke, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (Curated by Bennett Simpson)

Blues for Smoke, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York City (Curated by Bennett Simpson)

2012

30th Bienal de São Paulo—The Imminence of Poetics, Pavilhão da Bienal, São Paulo, Brazil (Curated by Luis Pérez-Oramas)

Mark Morrisroe: Liverpool Biennial 2012, Open Eye Gallery, Liverpool, United Kingdom (Curated by Lorenzo Fusi)

Changing Difference: Queer Politics and Shifting Identities—Peter Hujar, Mark Morrisroe, and Jack Smith, Galleria Civica di Modena, Modena, Italy (Curated by Lorenzo Fusi)

Naked Before the Camera, The Howard Gilman Gallery, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City

Mark Morrisroe, Museum Villa Stuck, Munich

Hide/Seek: Difference and Desire in American Portraiture, Tacoma Art Museum, Washington (Curated by David C. Ward and Jonathan D. Katz)

B-Out, Andrew Edlin Gallery, New York City (Curated by Scott Hug)

2011

Mark Morrisroe (1959-1989), ClampArt, New York City (Curated by Brian Paul Clamp)

Mark Morrisroe: From This Moment On, Artists Space, New York City

Hide/Seek: Difference and Desire in American Portraiture, Brooklyn Museum, New York (Curated by David C. Ward and Jonathan D. Katz)

From Polaroid to Impossible, WestLicht Museum, Vienna

2010

Hide/Seek: Difference and Desire in American Portraiture, National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. (Curated by David C. Ward and Jonathan D. Katz)

Mark Morrisroe: Retrospective, Fotomuseum Winterthur, Winterthur, Switzerland

Revealed: The Tradition of Male Homoerotic Art, CCSU Art Galleries (Central Connecticut State University), New Britain, Connecticut

Revealed: The Tradition of Male Homoerotic Art, Leslie Lohman Gallery, New York City

2009

Mark Morrisroe, Kunsthalle Koidl, Berlin

Familiar Feeling: On Boston Group, Centro Galego de Arte Contemporánea, Santiago de Compostela, Spain

Kids Behaving Badly, ClampArt, New York City (Curated by Brian Paul Clamp)

2008

True Romance, Museum Villa Stuck, Munich

2007

Mark Morrisroe (1959-1989), ClampArt, New York City (Curated by Brian Paul Clamp)
True Romance - Allegorien der Liebe von der Renaissance bis heute, Kunsthalle Wien (Halle 1, Halle 2 im MQ), Vienna
People Take Pictures of Each Other, LaMontagne Gallery, Boston, MA

2006

Recent acquisitions, Fotomuseum Den Haag, Netherlands
SEHistory, Kunstalle zu Kiel, Kiel, Germany
Blow Both of Us, Participant, Inc., New York City

2005

Der Traum vom Ich, der Traum von der Welt, Fotomuseum Winterthur, Winterthur

2003

my people were fair and had cum in their hair..., Team Gallery, New York City
Phantom der Lust. Visionen des Masochismus in der Kunst, Neue Galerie Graz am Landesmuseum Joanneum, Graz

2002

Whisper - Sammelausstellung zum elfjährigen Jubiläum, Galerie Aurel Scheibler, Berlin

2001

The Nature of Still Life, Galleria d'Arte Moderna di Bologna - GAM, Bologna

1999

Mark Morrisroe, Pat Hearn Gallery, New York City

1998

Emotions & Relations, Kunsthalle Hamburg, Hamburg
The Sound of One Hand, Apexart, New York City

1997

Mark Morrisroe, 1959-1989, Neue Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst, Berlin
My Life | Mark Morrisroe: Polaroids 1977-1989, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles

1996

Mark Morrisroe, Pat Hearn Gallery, New York City
My Life | Mark Morrisroe: Polaroids 1977-1989, Ezra and Cecile Zilka Gallery, Wesleyan University, Middletown, Connecticut

1995

Nan Goldin, Mark Morrisroe, Jack Pierson, Taka Ishii Gallery, Tokyo
Borealis 7—Desire, Nordic Arts center and Helsinki City Arts Museum, Helsinki and Louisiana Museum, Humlebaek, Denmark
Boston Group, Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston (Curated by by Milena Kalinovska and Lia Gangitano)
Galleria Emi Fontana, Milan
Bernard Toale Gallery, Boston

1994

Photographs: A Survey from the Estate, Pat Hearn Gallery, New York City
Aurel Scheibler Gallery, Cologne

1993

Finalism, Victoria Room, San Francisco
Untitled Exhibition for World AIDS Day, The Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston

1992

Some People, Tom Cugliani Gallery, New York City (curated by Jack Pierson)
The Sexual Self, Galerie Tanja Grunert, Cologne
Hollywood, Hollywood: Identity Under the Guise of Celebrity, Art Center College of Design, Pasadena, CA

1991

Boston Now 10, The Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston
From Desire...A Queer Diary, St. Lawrence University, Canton NY (curated by Nan Goldin)

1990

Vollbild AIDS: The Full Blown Picture, New Society for Fine Art, Berlin

1989

Witnesses: Against Our Vanishing, Artists Space, New York City (Curated by Nan Goldin)

1988

Mark Morrisroe, Pat Hearn Gallery, New York City

1987

Michael Kohn Gallery, Los Angeles

1986

Mark Morrisroe, Pat Hearn Gallery, New York City

1985

Works on Paper, Pat Hearn Gallery, New York City (alongside works by Donald Baechler, George Condo, Milan Kunc, Andreas Schulze, Peter Schuyff, Philip Taaffe, and Stephen Tashjian)
Split Vision, Artists Space, New York City (organized by Robert Mapplethorpe and Laurie Simmons)
Boston Now, Photography, The Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston

1984

Local Visions, IV: Portraits, Hayden Gallery, Boston
Inside the Boy Next Door, Vision Gallery, Boston

1982

Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge, Massachusetts
The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

1981

11th Hour Gallery, Boston

Films:

1984

Nymph-o-Maniac, 25 min., Super 8, color/sound

1983

Hello from Bertha, 12 mi., Super 8, color/sound

1982

The Laziest Girl in Town, 13 min., Super 8, color/sound

Performances:

1983

The Brenda Troy Story, Pyramid, New York City

Who's Connie Now Francis, Pyramid, New York City

1982

A Christmas Carol, Poly Cow, Boston

International Hits, Poly Cow, Boston

The Unimportant Things, Poly Cow, Boston

Big, Bountiful, Burlesque, Poly Cow, Boston

Prewar Decadence, Poly Cow, Boston

Wild and Wonderful, Young and Exciting, Poly Cow, Boston

2 Bad 4 You, MCA, Boston

The Good Lift, MCA, Boston

Demolay: Uplifting Songs, Gallery East, Boston

You're Not Sick, You're Just in Love, Gallery East, Boston

The Basement, MCA, Boston

American Dianne, 11th Hour Gallery, Boston

1981

The Planet of Prehistoric Women, 11th Hour Gallery, Boston

The Clam Twins #1-7, Provincetown, MA

Wee Paree, Boston Wharf

Science and the Good Life, for BFVF, The Underground, Boston

Hymie and Glinda, 38 Thayer Street, Boston

Stains, Cantones, Boston

Selected publications:

Jonathan Katz and Rock Hushka, *Art AIDS America* (Seattle, Washington: University of Washington Press, 2015), pp. 182-3, illus.

Eva Respini, "Mark Morrisroe," *Aperture* (Spring 2015), pp. 130-5.

Bennett Simpson, ed., *Blues for Smoke* (The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles: Los Angeles, 2012).

Ramsey McPhillips, *Mark Dirt* (Paper Chase Press: Los Angeles, 2012).

Changing Difference: Queer Politics and Shifting Identities (Galleria civica di Modena: Italy, 2012).

Yann Beauvais, "It's all the same, you're queer anyhow!: Les films de Mark Morrisroe," *revue Gruppen* (2012), No. 4.

"Photograph #236: Mark Morrisroe," *5000 Photographs (Blog)*—

<http://5000photographs.blogspot.com/2011/09/photograph-236-mark-morrisroe.html>

Brooks Adams, "Beautiful, Dangerous People," *Art in America* (March 2011), pp. 127-133.

Mark Morrisroe: From This Moment On (Artists Space: New York City, March 2011)—with essays by Adrian Rifkin and David Joselit and excerpts from Kathy Acker, Michael Bracewell, and Peggy Phelan.

Beatrix Ruff and Thomas Seelig, *Mark Morrisroe* (Fotomuseum Winterthur/JRP Ringier: Winterthur, Switzerland, 2010).

Isla Leaver-Yap, "Mark Morrisroe: A Necessary Desire," *Mousse Magazine* (October 2010), pp. 78-85.

Manuel Segade, ed, *Familiar Feelings: On The Boston Group* (Xunta de Galicia: Spain, 2009).

Klaus Ottmann, *Mark Morrisroe* (Twin Palms Publishers: Santa Fe, New Mexico, 1999).

David Joselit, "Mark Morrisroe's Passionate Masquerade," *The Passionate Camera: Photography*

and Bodies of Desire (Routledge Press: New York, 1998).
Mark Morrisroe, 1959-1989: Eine Retrospektive in Der Reihe Unterbrochene Karrieren (Neue Gesellschaft Fur Bildende Kunst: Germany, 1997).
Klauss Ottmann, *Mark Morrisroe: Polaroids 1977-1989* (Ezra and Cecile Zilkha Gallery, Wesleyan University: Middletown, Connecticut, 1996).
Journal of Contemporary Art (Distributed Art Publishers, 1995), pp. 45-52.
Lia Gangitano, ed., *Boston School* (The Institute of Contemporary Art/Primal Media: Boston, Massachusetts, 1995).
Ramsey McPhillips, *Finalism* (exhibition catalogue, Victoria Room: San Francisco, 1993).
Fred Gehlau, *Hollywood, Hollywood: Identity Under the Guise of Celebrity* (exhibition catalogue, Art Center College of Design: Pasadena, California, 1992).
Witnesses: Against Our Vanishing, (exhibition catalogue, Artists Space: New York City, 1989).

Selected public collections:

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City
Museum of Modern Art, New York City
Whitney Museum of American Art, New York City
Fotomuseum Winterthur, Switzerland
Art Institute of Chicago
Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts
The Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston
Hammer Museum, Los Angeles
Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, Connecticut
WestLicht Museum, Vienna
The Hague Museum of Photography, Netherlands