

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:

2013

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)

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 ClampArt, New York City

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, Hamburger Kunsthalle, 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

1995

Nan Goldin, Mark Morrisroe, Jack Pierson, Taka Ishii Gallery, Tokyo

1988

Mark Morrisroe, Pat Hearn Gallery, New York City

1986

Mark Morrisroe, Pat Hearn Gallery, New York City

Selected public collections:

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York City

Fotomuseum Winterthur, Switzerland

Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts