

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MARK MORRISROE (1959-1989)

March 24 – April 30, 2011

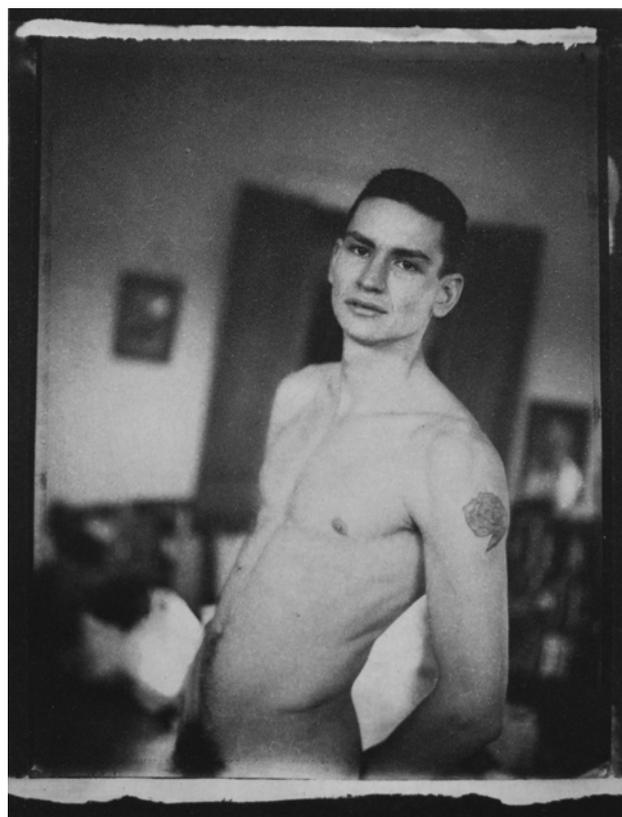
Opening reception:
Thursday, March 24, 2011
6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

ClampArt is very pleased to announce an exhibition of photographs by artist, Mark Morrisroe (1959-1989). The show is scheduled to coincide with the comprehensive exhibition at Artists Space in New York City, which is drawn from work in the estate (Collection Ringier). This is ClampArt's second exhibition of Morrisroe's photographs—the first mounted in 2007.

Mark Morrisroe's life and art are inextricably entwined. The son of a severely depressed alcoholic mother and an absent father, Morrisroe often claimed that he was the son of Albert de Salvo, a.k.a. the Boston Strangler, who was in fact his mother's landlord and a close neighbor. (As a child, Morrisroe kept a crumpled-up photo of de Salvo pinned to his bedroom wall, and indeed, he shared a striking resemblance!) A restless youth, Morrisroe left home early and began working as a teenage prostitute in order to support himself financially. At the age of 17, he was shot by a disgruntled john, and the bullet, which landed close to his spine, remained embedded in his chest for the next thirteen years until his death, causing him to walk with an exaggerated limp, which is often remembered. However, Morrisroe was creative and also unusually ambitious, and despite great obstacles, he amazingly was able to gain admission to the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, where he soon met such artists as Nan Goldin, David Armstrong, Jack Pierson, and Philip-Lorca diCorcia—who became lifelong friends and are now collectively coined "The Boston School." Nan Goldin wrote:

"Mark was an outlaw on every front—sexually, socially, artistically. He was marked by his dramatic and violent adolescence . . . 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."

Astonishingly prolific, Morrisroe produced a rich and varied array of layered and hand-painted photographs and photograms, in addition to 8mm films. Constantly experimenting with the limits of the



photographic medium, his subjects were friends and lovers and his everyday milieu.

Morrisroe moved to New York City in 1985 and began showing at Pat Hearn Gallery. Pat Hearn was a close friend from his college days in Boston, and would eventually become the executor of his estate when he died of AIDS-related complications in 1989 at the young age of 30. Morrisroe continued to produce work up to the day of his death utilizing makeshift darkrooms he rigged up in his hospital bathrooms. He was hell-bent on fame, and desperately hoped for his highly personal artwork long to be remembered. It is wonderful that after more than twenty years of relative obscurity, he is finally getting his wish.

For more information and images please contact Brian Paul Clamp, Director, or see www.clampart.com. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday, 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Image: Mark Morrisroe (1959-1989), "Self Portrait," 1980/1996, Photogravure (Edition of 46), 4.25 x 3.25 inches, Courtesy of the Estate of Mark Morrisroe (Ringier Collection).