

CLAMP

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:

- 2024 *Pre-Nympho Pia and Other Friends*, CLAMP, New York City (Curated by George Kurz and Michael Lowe)
High Noon: Nan Goldin, David Armstrong, Mark Morrisroe, and Philip-Lorca diCorcia, Works from the F.C. Gundlach Collection, Deichtor Hallen Internationale Kunst und Fotografie, Hamburg, Germany
Blank Generation: Downtown New York, 1970s – 80s, FOTOFOCUS, Michael Lowe Gallery with Alternate Projects, Cincinnati, Ohio
- 2023 *Copy Machine Manifestos: Artists and Zines since 1970*, Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, New York (Co-curated by Drew Sawyer and Branden W. Joseph)
Drag Show, Carolyn Campagna Kleefeld Contemporary Art Museum, California State University Long Beach, Long Beach, California
Luxe, Calm, Volupté, Candice Madey, New York (Co-curated by Antonio Sergio Bessa and Allen Frame)
- 2019 *Punk Lust: Raw Provocation 1971-1985*, Museum of Sex, New York City
Fifty Years After Stonewall / A History of Photography: Selections from the Museum's Collection, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Texas
Be Seen: Portrait Photography Since Stonewall, Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, Connecticut
Art after Stonewall, Grey Art Gallery, New York University, New York City
The City (And a Few Lonely People), CLAMP, New York City (Curated by Brian Paul Clamp)
Life of a Flower, Galerie Max Mayer, Düsseldorf (Curated by Alex Fleming and Gloria Hasnay)
- 2018 *Boy Next Door (Beautiful But Dumb)*, CLAMP, New York City (Curated by Brian Paul Clamp)
Rough Trade: Art and Sex Work from the 70s, 80s and 90s, CLAMP, New York City (Curated by Greg Ellis and Brian Paul Clamp)
Under a Dismal Boston Skyline, Stone Gallery/Boston University Art Galleries, Boston (Curated by Lynne Cooney, Evan Fiveash Smith, Leah Triplett Harrington)
The Conditions of Being Art: Pat Hearn Gallery and American Fine Arts, Co. (1983-2004), Hessel Museum of Art, Bard Center for Curatorial Studies, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York

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- 2017 *Queer Fight Songs*, Art During the Occupation Gallery, Bushwick, New York (Curated by Christopher Stout and Rick Herron)
The Most Beautiful Part, Museo de Arte Moderno, Mexico City (Curated by James Oles)
Screaming in the Streets: AIDS, Art, Activism, CLAMP, 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, CLAMP, 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)*, CLAMP, 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*, CLAMP, 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, CLAMP, 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): Collected Works*, CLAMP, 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
Vision is Elastic. Thought is Elastic., Murray Guy, New York City (Curated by Moyra Davey and Zoe Leonard)
- 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

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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, CLAMP, New York City (Curated by Brian Paul Clamp)
- 2008 *True Romance*, Museum Villa Stuck, Munich
- 2007 *Mark Morrisroe (1959-1989)*, CLAMP, 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
SEEHISTORY, Kunsthalle 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 (Curated by Klaus Ottmann)
- 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

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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

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Selected publications:

- Branden W. Joseph and Drew Sawyer, *Copy Machine Manifestos: Artists Who Make Zines* (London: Phaidon Press Limited/Brooklyn Museum, 2024), pp. 94-99, 102, color illus.
- Thibault Boulvain, *L'art en sida* (Dijon, France: Les presses du reel, 2021), pp. 362-3, 365, 367–370, 375, 378, 524, 527, 546, 648, 666, illus.
- James Oles, *The Most Beautiful Part* (Mexico City: Museo de Arte Moderno, 2017), pp. 192-7, illus.
- Greg Ellis, *Screaming in the Streets: Art, AIDS, Activism* (New York City: CLAMP, 2017), pp. 21-2, illus.
- 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).
- Graham Sheffield, Kate Bush, Ariella Yedgar, et. al., *Panic Attack! Art in the Punk Years* (Merrell/Barbican Art Gallery: London, 2007).
- Bennett Simpson, *Philip-Lorca diCorcia* (Boston: The Institute of Contemporary Art/Steidl, 2007), p. 13, color illus.
- 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).
- Butler, Connie, "Mark Morrisroe: Focus Series Exhibition," *The Contemporary* (The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles: Los Angeles, 1997), p. 3, illus.
- Klauss Ottmann, *Mark Morrisroe: Polaroids 1977-1989* (Ezra and Cecile Zilkha Gallery, Wesleyan University: Middletown, Connecticut, 1996).
- Peter Schjeldahl, "Beantown Babylon," *Village Voice* (April 9, 1996), p. 81, illus.
- Holland Cotter, "Mark Morrisroe," *The New York Times* (April 19, 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
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
Art Institute of Chicago

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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