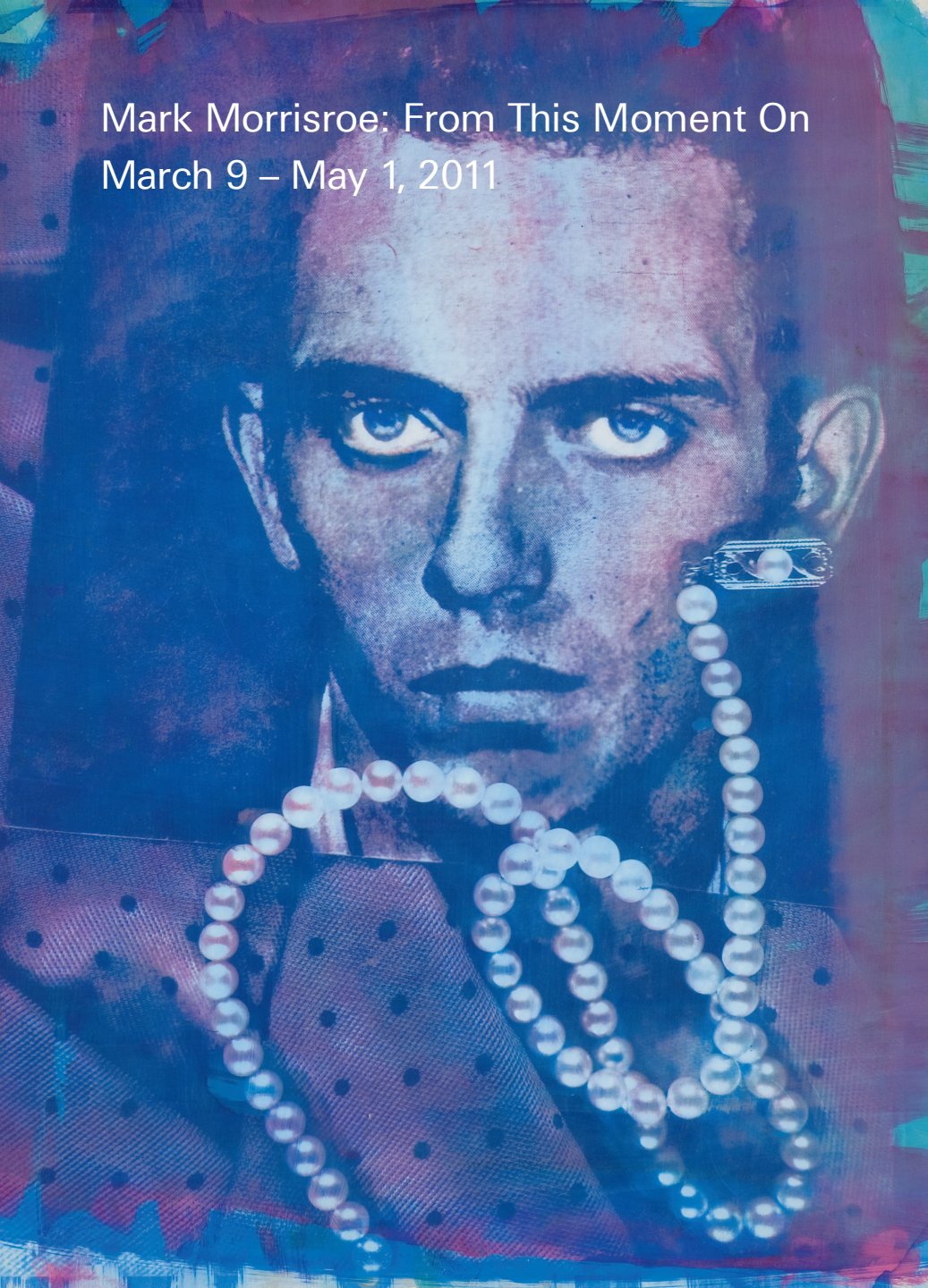


Mark Morrisroe: From This Moment On
March 9 – May 1, 2011



Mark Morrisroe's work was intrinsically tied to his elaborate personae and his sexual and social relationships. He grew up in Boston where he worked as teenager hustler and where he later went to art school, before moving to New York City in the mid 1980s. He died at the age of thirty from AIDS related illnesses.

Morrisroe's subjects were his friends, lovers, and his everyday surroundings. The imagery of his photographs and 8mm films combines the diaristic with the melodramatic, presenting the post-punk scenes in Boston and New York through a lens of vivid and romantic degradation and decay. He worked with the immediate medium of Polaroid, while also experimenting with the photographic process, creating layered and hand-painted prints, photograms and cyanotypes. His resulting works are searing and frank portrayals of the display of selfhood, sexuality, illness and death.

While his photographs and collaged prints often appear offhand, and at times depict intimate moments and desires, they also present individuals, couples, and groups as aspirational, posturing starlets, adopting the faded hues of 1950s Hollywood publicity shots and the classical nude compositions of Man Ray. Drawing equally from popular culture, and drag, cabaret, club and drug scenes, the performativity of his subjects was paramount.

Mark Morrisroe was born in Malden, Massachusetts in 1959, and died in Jersey City, New Jersey in 1989. He attended the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston from 1977 to 1981. His work was exhibited by Pat Hearn Gallery from 1985 onwards, including solo exhibitions in 1986 and 1988. His photographs have also been included in two group shows at Artists Space: *Split Vision*, 1985 (curated by Robert Mapplethorpe); and *Witnesses: Against Our Vanishing*, 1989 (curated by Nan Goldin). After his death, his work was at the centre of the survey exhibition *Boston School*, ICA Boston, 1995 (curated by Lia Gangitano); solo exhibitions of his work have included *Mark Morrisroe, 1959-1989*, Neue Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst, Berlin and *My Life: Mark Morrisroe, Polaroids 1977-1989*, MOCA, Los Angeles (both 1997).

Published on the occasion of *Mark Morrisroe: From This Moment On*, curated by Richard Birkett and Stefan Kalmár (Artists Space, New York), and Beatrix Ruf (Director, Kunsthalle Zurich).

The exhibition takes as a starting point *Mark Morrisroe* at Fotomuseum Winterthur (November 2010 - February 2011) – curated by Beatrix Ruf and Thomas Seelig – and has been organized in collaboration with the Estate of Mark Morrisroe (Ringier Collection) at Fotomuseum Winterthur.

This exhibition is made possible through the generous support of The New York State Council on the Arts, a State Agency, public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, in partnership with the City Council, The Friends of Artists Space, and the Estate of Mark Morrisroe (Ringier Collection) at Fotomuseum Winterthur. With thanks to Matthew Marks, Brent Sikkema, Eelco and Marc Wolf, and all other lenders to the exhibition.

Exhibition supported by The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation.

All images are courtesy The Estate of Mark Morrisroe (Ringier Collection) at Fotomuseum Winterthur, unless listed otherwise here:

p. 1: Courtesy Brent Sikkema
p. 24: Courtesy Artists Space

Image captions:

Cover: *Untitled*, c.1981, gum print
p. 1: *Self-Portrait (to Brent)*, 1982, C-print, inscribed with marker
p. 10: *Untitled* [Nymph-O-Maniac], 1984, Xerox copy material
p. 14-15: *'Nymph-O-Maniac' Promo Still Spectacular Studios* [Pia, Richard, Nathan], 1984, C-print, negative sandwich
p. 18: *Untitled* [Stephen, filmstill 'The Laziest Girl in Town'], 1981, C-print
p. 22-23: Excerpt from *Dirt* fanzine, issue 4, 1976, produced by Mark Morrisroe and Lynelle White
p. 28: *Untitled*, undated, typewritten text on paper

All texts copyright the authors and publishers as listed. All efforts have been made to contact the rightful owners with regards to copyrights and permissions. Please contact info@artistsspace.org with any queries.

Graphic Design: Manuel Raeder
with Manuel Goller

Printed by: GM Printing

ISBN: 978-0-9663626-1-9

To Brent,

1/1

SELF PORTRAIT TAKEN TO ANSWER
SEX ADD, SUMMER 1980
© Matt Monreal



a little something for all those words of wisdom
that you've been offering me all these years
Matt



Untitled [Stephen and Mark], c.1984
T-665 Polaroid

The Value of Mark Morrisroe

Adrian Rifkin

You are a full-spread faire-set Vine,
And can with Tendrills Love intwine,
Yet dry'd, ere you distill your Wine.

Excerpt from *A Meditation for his Mistress*
Robert Herrick (1591-1674)

It's well known that New York in the 1970s and early 80s was a mess, on a scale no European city could imagine, from finance to the politics of race and class oppression; and for all of that it was a place of visceral beauty, distension of the soul and unexpected modes of self discovery. For a gay man of my generation the Saint Marks or the Club Baths were hardly on the same scale of sexuality as the Euro Men's Club in the passages of old Paris or London's Savoy in its death throes. They were rather on the measure of the sublime, a new world of the flesh, of the self as the trashy outcome of an immeasurable and endlessly repeated pleasure in its own transience. Mark Morrisroe was yet to come to Jersey City, and though, arriving as he did in 1985, New York was already rather a different place, he was to bring with him new ways of showing us who we were, who we had or might have been, as a poetic of the city. With the bits and pieces of his Boston life he brought enough to make an afterlife – desiring as deferred action in the oh-so difficult years that killed him, came after him, and which took so much of that away.

A deferred time in the making of the photograph as well – in the reworking and augmentation of an image and its surface, of which he was, let us say, a Master; and which is also, as a way of making images, the afterlife of Pictorialism on the verge of Photoshop. Like Heinrich Kühn around the turn of the nineteenth century; oiling, drawing, coloring, transforming gentlemen and ladies with their

alpenstocks into photographic works that wanted to be art; but, in Morrisroe's case, for a more fragile, more febrile and frenzied way of being in a world.

Everywhere in the 1980s, students and young artists were squeezing and scratching and destroying Polaroids, reworking negatives. But Morrisroe invented a figure of fugitive brashness; of a desire that would dare to speak its name but was too fickle to have one or to need one. The New Romantics in England, in contrast, sought easy attention on the weaker edge of straightness and propriety. Derek Jarman too, I believe, was too quick to make things, too easily resolved, too middle-class in his vision of apocalypse, yet pretending to much more than surface.

I doubt that Morrisroe believed in more than surfaces; but surfaces were enough, and the surfaces he found, or made, turned out to be spaces where edges of phantasm and daily life might be supposed, and then traced, and turned over into the visible.

I came to call that desire – the one I see in Morrisroe's work, on his surfaces – expectancy, or expectation. It was the desire one had hurrying through the streets at dusk or night to a bar, a sex club or the baths. The faces of young men on Columbus Avenue or Brompton Road, always alert for what might happen even before one got to an intended destination. It was the shadow of the piers, and the stairs up to cold water flats in the East Village or Earls Court. Its proper name eventually became Queer. It got a capital Q, and in becoming proper it began to lose its queerness. Morrisroe died before this could befall him, and his work seems to have survived it.

You might say that I come queer all over when I leaf through the photograms, which dialogue with memories of *Pink Narcissus* as a way of putting things. Especially in the images of overlapping and overlaid male bodies, where faces and asses merge and emerge – at times penetrated by color, at times surrounded by color, or simply drowning in color. The spitting and the spotting and the splitting materialize the desires of endless expectation, that is also indecision, the dread of settling for an outcome and its entropy. In a pair of untitled photograms from 1987, the image of a male

nude is turned through a simple, lateral inversion – which is not the old, queer inversion of upside down, of the invert’s sexuality, but rather the inversion of classical rhetoric. Apparently simple enough; whether to put the adjective or the adverb on this side or that of the noun or the verb; but immense in its effect, in the time of scanning the phrase, in its weight, in its affective charge. Here its intensity is in the trailing tear-line along a tricep and the shadow of the biceps just behind, in the inversion of color, in this promiscuous more-than coupling and doubling of surface with and across itself. I hardly know whether to use my mouth, my imagination or just to hold my breath to take it in. Here I know that seeing is not enough. This is what it means to be given something to see; that it is not enough, and that the edge between our own utopia, and a new and singular desire that belongs to no one in particular, is at the limit of the visible.

One night in New York in 1979 I went down to the Mineshaft, and another too, and on both I hovered outside, distraught between desire and fear, longing and timidity. In the end I gave in to my fear and went elsewhere. Luckily I guess. For without this weakness, no doubt, I would not be here today; careful, careful, careful – one reason to need a careless art, a generous expenditure of life.

When he arrived from Boston the store-front galleries had begun to open on the streets near the St Marks baths, and despite coy names like Urban Warfare you could still believe in their edginess, and the piers still had an edge, and the Bar was still funky, Tompkins Square was a place of real vice, and AIDS had struck. And Andrew Holleran had published *Dancer and the Dance* in 1978, and it had seeped into and structured a certain affective expectation of fatality long before the disease was to strike in real life. Holleran – in his almost strange and often ecstatic grammar – had shown how the flickering subject, you or me, in our multiple attractions and distractions, might flicker out as well as on and off – all in the breathless expectation of something, or of nothing – and that New York was the space of such a flicker, disco’s exhausting ecstasy.

In a different record of this long moment – Martha Rosler’s

The Bowery in Two Inadequate Descriptive Systems – everything is frozen by her sophisticated hold of left economics and linguistic theory, which is commonly taken as the main point of the work, but which the accidental and extreme beauty of the work's framings successfully outlives. Nonetheless, today it is Mark Morrisroe's and Holleran's works that continue to hold and so perpetuate those uncertainties that we loved, and which were after all our life. Look at those solemn figures of transient bodies, such as *Paul Henderson* (1983); the astonishing conjunctions of idleness and energy in the 1984 Polaroid portraits of Stephen Tashjian and Jonathan Pierson – sexual tensions as evanescent as the self itself. And painful beauty such as afflicts anyone who imagines desire in this way, and tries to seize it on the run.

I've seen him elsewhere, this *figura* – on the streets, in films, the internet, in other artist's work; Guillaume Bijl's *235 Major and Minor Photographs from the Second Half of the 20th Century* (1986-1995) for instance. There he is caught stepping out of a shower with a toothbrush in his mouth, a boy of our days, of our collecting new feelings for the world; truly a fiction of longing's movements.

(Rooftops, bodies posed and friends posed as bodies being together with more clothes or less clothes, smiles, dicks half-erect and draped across thighs, a little dog, facial expressions that demand we attend to a feeling, abdomens that insist we have a feeling quite other than the one solicited by the face, which shares an intensity with the rooftops rather than with sex, none of which add up to the movements of Morrisroe's eyes and hands, which, in turn, can never predict the turns that they will take)

Mark Morrisroe does what Charles Baudelaire struggled too hard to extract from Constantin Guys in his *Painter of Modern Life*. Morrisroe undoes the flâneur's detachment in his undistanced submersion in a self that discloses the self-alterity of the image. It took a gay man and that moment, at last, to see that it was only out of the transience and fragility to which he so fully belonged that he could make scars that would never heal. In this Morrisroe was unlike Jarman – who played at being bad on the roof of the Oxo

Tower – or Baudelaire, who played at Spleen.

Holleran's prose predicts Morrisroe's work and life, although it is only in the smallest parts – the breathing of a phoneme – that they resemble one another. But it is only in fragments that Morrisroe resembles himself at all, and this is why he is so different from his friend and colleague Nan Goldin. This is why he is still so much of our days; or of the days of thinking about the queer that were to follow him, and in some ways to efface him as theory took command of being gay, or of just not fitting in. Morrisroe is not a drama queen like a great queer theorist; he pronounces on nothing whatsoever, he has no point to make. Nor is he pointless, for his work plays with the edges of expectation, and how the point of its fulfillment is also entropy or death, and that this is a matter of beauty, or of beauty's substance.

This is why his Super 8mm films don't work in the same way for me. I see too much, I hear too much, and the immense refinement of his photography pales in the artificial radiance of self-conscious trash – the cultivated amateurism of self-conscious 'acting out'. A sweet corn up the ass smells too much of a Soviet heroine on a tractor in 1934. It goes too well with the queer studies that were to come – transgression's civil code as it turned out.

For Morrisroe's art, even as it has no message, must be both obsessed with its effects but at the same time quite indifferent to them; too much absorbed in the day to day making, too immersed in some life that he led to hold anything other than a sublime indifference to how a viewer, if there was one, might react. I write this willfully, despite the evidence of things he said and the written descriptions of him as ambitious and audience hungry. There is no such evidence in the photographic work – it is too complex, often far too beautiful, to take us into account, to please or to frighten. It possesses me with the immensity of the scale of everydayness when it is transmuted into figure.

Doubtless now, when I look at his work or read the fury of David Wojnarowicz, or John Preston's porn and memoirs, it's not so much that I feel that they died so that we might live, but that it

is only in the contemplation of such a possibility that I can imitate the substance of what I lost or never knew; imitatio, empathy, melancholy. Imitating their desire, through the record of their actions that they left, I learn to feel; as it is with other artists whose work delivers me from certainty. The certainty of salvation for example; the Master of the Legend of Saint Ursula, whose painted panels depict the saint and eleven thousand virgins on the edge of death, in a suspended here and now that only came into being as these forms, these marks, the images that let us know that there was once an event.

But still there is this other certainty; the flaky, febrile inevitability of desire, of the ensnaring matrices of expectation that smear the surfaces of Morrisroe's work, and which trap the figure between its appearance as itself, to which I try to hold, and the bluntly material processes of combining and layering, that that make it visible and overwhelm it at the same time.

Morrisroe's pursuit of surface identifies the fullness and the shock of affect at the level of infinitesimal detail; irreducibly, and thus as near to a universal as you can get; a gay ray of light, a gay cut or a layering. His is one of the secrets of sexuality and forms.

What a hell

For eyes and ears, what anarchy and din

Barbarian and infernal - tis a dream

Monstrous in colour, motion, shape, sight, sound!

Excerpt from *The Prelude* (1805)

William Wordsworth

Adrian Rifkin is a Professor of Art Writing at Goldsmiths College, University of London. His books include *Street Noises: Parisian Pleasure 1900-1940*, MUP, Manchester, 1993; *Ingres Then, and Now*, Routledge, London, 2000. He has also edited *Other Objects of Desire, Collectors and Collecting Queerly*, Blackwell/Association of Art Historians, Oxford, 2001, and contributed texts to recent publications on Jacques Rancière and Cornelius Cardew.



Untitled, undated
Magazine clipping

Nymphs to Menia



her
mother
her sister
her best friend
two lesbians
a weird
chick

and
two guys
she didn't
even know. No
one could
help her
xxx



SPECTACULAR STUDIOS proudly presents
an evening of art comedy featuring the films
of **MARK MORRISROE**. Benefit screening
for **Eventworks 84**.

MARCH 2-3 longwood audit.
364 brookline ave. Boston.

In order of appearance
kathy goldman, PIA HOWARD,
kacie stelson, ruby cadillac,
lynelle white, anne smith,
jane brody, nathan shapiro
and richard morel

Great Expectations

Kathy Acker

There is just moving and there are different ways of moving.
Or: there is moving all over at the same time and there is moving linearly. If everything is moving-all-over-the-place-no-time, anything is everything. If this is so, how can I differentiate? How can there be stories? Consciousness just is: no time. But any emotion presupposes differentiation. Differentiation presumes time, at least BEFORE and NOW. A narrative is an emotional moving.

It's a common belief that something exists when it's part of a narrative.

Self-reflective consciousness is narrational.

Mother wanted me to be unlike I was. I got 'A's in school – it wasn't that I was a good girl, in fact even then I was odd girl out: school was just the one place where I could do things right – but mother said getting 'A's made me stand out too much. Otherwise I was just a failure. I felt too strongly. My emotional limbs stuck out as if they were broken and unfixable. I kissed mother's friends too nicely when they were playing canasta. I was too interested in sex. I wasn't pretty in a conventional enough way. I didn't act like Penelope Wooding. When I washed a dish, I wasn't washing the dish. Since I didn't know if mother was god, I didn't know if I loved her. My friends told me I perceived in too black-and-white terms. "The world is more complex," they said. I said, "I get 'A's in school." Unlike.

"What was my father like, mommy?"

My mother looks up from a review of her newest hit. In those days she always got fabulous reviews.

"I mean my real father." When I had turned ten years old, my mother had carefully explained to me that the man I called my father had adopted me.

"He was very handsome."

"What exactly did he look like?" I had no right to ask, but I was desperate.

"His parents were wonderful. They were one of the richest families in Brooklyn."

Talking with my mother resembled trying to plot out a major war strategy. "What did his family do?"

"I was very wild when I was young. You remember Aunt Suzy. I'd sneak down the fire escape and Aunt Suzy and I'd go out with boys. I'd let them pet." My mother was high on Dex. "Your father was very handsome, dark, I fell in love with him. It was during the war so everyone was getting married." My mother refused to say anymore.

When I asked grandmamma Siddons about my real father, she said he was dead. I replied I knew he wasn't dead. She said he was a murderer.

Why is anybody interested in anything? I'm interested when I'm discovering. To me, real moving is discovering. Real moving, then, is that which endures. How can that be?

Otherwise I lived in my imaginings. If anyone had thought about me rather than about their own obsessions, they would have thought it was a lonely childhood, but it wasn't. I had all of New York City to myself. Since mother was an actress we had to live in New York or London, and I hugged New York to me like a present. Sometimes I'd leave the apartment and walk down First Avenue to the magic bookstore of brightly-colored leatherbound books. Book and dress stores were magic places I could either dream or walk to. Then I walked up Madison Avenue and fantasized buying things. I walked down to Greenwich Village where the most interesting bookstore held all the beatnik poets but I never saw them. I had to happen upon what I wanted. I was forbidden to act on my desire, even to admit my desire to myself. Poetry was the most frightening, therefore the most interesting appearance. Once or twice a monthly afternoon I'd avidly watch a play I had no way of comprehending.

When it was all happening around me and I had very few memories of what was happening, I didn't need to understand and, if I had understood, I probably would have been too scared to keep moving.

Mother was a real actress. I never knew who she was. I had

no idea until after the end that she was spending all of her money and, then, that she was broke. She had always been very tight with me: taking away my allowances, never buying me anything. She madly frittered away money. Suddenly, surprisingly, she asked me if I wanted gifts and she bought me three copies of a gold watch she liked. At the same time she owed three months' rent, two of her bank accounts were closed, all of her charge cards had been revoked. The 800 shares of AT&T grandmama had given her were missing. She was becoming gayer and less prudish. I would have done anything for her. She didn't talk to me or to anyone directly. She lifted up her favorite poodle, walked out of the apartment house, and didn't return.

Do I care? Do I care more than I reflect? Do I love madly? Get as deep as possible. The more focus, the more the narrative breaks, the more memories fade: the least meaning.

Excerpt from Kathy Acker, *Great Expectations*, Grove Press, NY, 1982, pp. 58-60.





Mark Morrisroe's Photographic Masquerade David Joselit

It is a paradoxical effect of these works that flesh seems disembodied, but the rich, hazy surfaces through which it moves is thick with carnality. This effect is produced through Morrisroe's distinctive practice of sandwiching together color and black and white negatives: a process that creates rich, dark shadows and a palpable atmosphere of muted tints. He would make a color photo first, rephotograph the picture in black and white and then superimpose them in order to make prints, each of which bears the traces of its unique developing process so that no two images produced from the same dyad of negatives looks alike. Morrisroe further accentuated the relationship between negative and print by allowing specks of dust, scratches, and fingerprints to emerge in the picture: even when he did retouch them he often did so in such a way, like using contrasting colors of retouching paint, so as to emphasize the "imperfections" of the negative.

Photographic negatives are presumed to be doubly passive – they are "exposures" of an event on the one hand, and templates for a print on the other – but Morrisroe took great pains to manipulate them, to interrupt their supposedly neutral transfiguration of thing-in-the-world into thing-in-the-picture. Existing between these two positions, the negative is a site where the labor of photographic representation is undertaken – where "identities" are produced. Morrisroe understood better than any artist of his generation that the photo negative is literally the locus of masquerade. Nowhere is this clearer than in comparing his Polaroid prints, made as casual "sketches" of various poses and attitudes struck playfully by himself and friends, with the more formal C-prints, produced by his sandwiching technique. In the latter, similar and sometimes identical posturings to the banal and often childish attitudes in the Polaroids

are invested with gravity and poignancy through a dense surface haze, whose grain is the photograph itself. As Barry Schwabsky aptly commented, this process “conveys a peculiar split in what might be called the inner consistency of the depicted figures; certain people in these photographs...seem to escape the ordinary comfortable fleshliness of merely human existence, being compounded instead of something like the ethereal translucence of angels and the all-too-solid stone of statuary.”¹ What Schwabsky calls “a peculiar split in what might be called the inner consistency of the depicted figures” I want to understand as an instance of masquerade, or “performativity.” It is this split, originating in a dyadic negative and resulting in a visual synthesis of photographic difference – black and white and color – that allows Morrisroe to “write a new life” for the subjects he represents; to open up a space of manipulation and self-invention which transforms the ostensibly “truthful” spontaneity of photography into a meaningful texture of “lies.”

Excerpt from David Joselit, ‘Mark Morrisroe’s Photographic Masquerade’, *Boston School*, ed. Lia Gangitano, ICA/Primal Media, Boston, MA, 1995, pp.68-70.

1 Barry Schwabsky, ‘Irresponsible Images: The Photographs of Mark Morrisroe’, *Print Collector’s Newsletter* (May/June 1994), p.50



An Evening of Fun in the Metropolis of Your Dreams

Michael Bracewell

The common denominator between the art fashion aesthetes of the mid-1970s and the post-punk and early 1980s circle of artists, designers, and underground club world celebrities was a belief that the most interesting contemporary creativity was taking place *as a consequence* of subcultural lifestyle. This was a defining trait of punk, many of whose originating participants – for example: Malcolm McLaren and Jamie Reid, the members of the punk group WIRE, John Maybury and Cerith Wyn Evans, and equally important and influential, Peter Saville and Linder in Manchester – had strong connections to art schools.

[...]

During the later 1970s and the first half of the 1980s, the broader consequences of punk began to spread with seismic force. Almost immediately, punk confounded single containment and became a multi-component cultural entity, comprising many small cliques and outposts which were united less by their current activities than by the events and attitudes which had inspired them.

This was a situation which the fanzine, *The Secret Public*, produced by Jon Savage (who had trained in London to be a barrister before becoming a writer for the newspaper *Sounds*) and Linder (who had studied graphic design at Manchester Polytechnic) did much to articulate and define. Comprising a series of collages and photomontages made between 1976 and 1977, *The Secret Public* (its title taken by New Hormones record label founder Richard Boone from a US sociological treatise) was published in January 1978. It contained no text save a hand written quotation from Iggy Pop and David Bowie's song *The Passenger* (running along the lower edge of one of Savage's photomontages) and, on the back page, an advert for a new release by New Hormones group Buzzcocks.

The first release from New Hormones had been the iconic EP (vinyl 7 inch single), *Spiral Scratch* by Buzzcocks. The second release was *The Secret Public*. As Linder's collages, inspired in part by the political photomontages of John Heartfield, described a world in which pornography and television age mass media and consumerism had become interchangeable and interlinked, and those by Savage deconstructed and reassembled the components of advertising, urbanism and popular culture (with a twist of gay sexual politics), so this indisputably "punk" production blurred the boundaries between fine art and pop cultural artefacts, social commentary and wit. Central to its impact was the manner in which it made modernity itself the basis of its visual language.

As a phrase, *The Secret Public* was both precise and inscrutable – a poetically loaded label, more than edged with a sense of covert organization. The term implied a social sub-group whose activities were carried out parallel to, but separate from, those of a broader society. A further example of such activities were those conceived and orchestrated by the Neo Naturists in London. Founded in 1980 by Wilma Johnson and sisters Jennifer and Christine Binnie, the Neo Naturists were a performance-art-based group that used naturism as a medium for art-making and, subtextually, social and political commentary.

Their activities balanced anarchism, comedy, absurdist "happenings" and protests stunts. Playing games with subcultural fashion as much as with sexuality and sexual politics, the Neo Naturists posited (their own, disrobed) bodies in terms of corporeality (as opposed to sexuality), emphasizing a messy, exuberant, tribal and feminist approach to the subcultural lifestyles and the importance (in fashion and "style" terms) of image. Their activities took place within the context of (largely male and often gay) exquisite dandyism enacted at clubs such as the Blitz (in Covent Garden) and Le Beat Route, as much as on the new pages of *i-D* magazine (founded the same year). The Neo Naturists deployed a near slapstick, confrontationally self-promoting approach to their activities – delighting in ungainly physicality and making a visual

and performance fetish of strident nudism. This, at a time when the fashion was for finely-stylised, dehumanized supercool, was in many ways a female and feminist precursor to the equally flamboyant, male homosexual use of body and image which Leigh Bowery would develop during the 1980s.

Indeed, by the late 1980s, Michael Clark, Bowery, Trojan et al. would comprise a further (but highly significant) clique which stood on the furthest fringes – if not entirely outside – the better known subcultural groupings of punk and post-punk. Certainly, their extremism, games with identity, sexuality and appearance, and creative attitudes placed them – like the Neo Naturists, and the individuals chronicled by Stephen Willats in his various projects, such as *Dressing Like A Goya* (1982), in an entirely different and unique category to the more conventionally style conscious network of “New Romanticism”.

[...]

The London streets which Jon Savage photographed in the early new year of 1977 showed a city in depression. Within five years the horrors of AIDS – itself like some disease from science fiction – would have compounded the sense of a society *in extremis*. But this urban landscape would be the venue throughout the 1970s and the early 1980s for a remarkable flowering (although the characterization is perhaps too delicate) of loosely networked individuals – fed on the traditional subcultural diet of drugs, flamboyance, sex, boredom, and intense emotional drama. As such, the early milieu out of which the *Secret Public* developed their artistic vision can now be regarded as the historical (and historic) witness to the end of an age – the late twentieth century equivalent, perhaps, to the “Weimardaemmerung” observed by Stephen Spender in German society and youth culture during the 1920s.

Excerpts from Michael Bracewell, ‘An Evening of Fun in the Metropolis of Your Dreams’, *The Secret Public: The Last Days of the British Underground 1978-1988*, Kunstverein Munich, Munich, 2007

EDITORIAL



We the editors of Dirt magazine get the impression that you, our readers, are Misunderstanding us. We are really very cute and very naive, only pretending. After all, we are only kids. Or at least the youngest members of the Boston scene. We are too young to be really vicious and senselessly cruel. So keep showing us how w/ your cards and letters, assholes... everyone else likes us.

hot Flashes



- Fonzie (Henry Winkler) is a queer.
- Farrah Fawcett had a sex change operation.
- Barbarino used to be Patti Smith's boy. Robert Mapplethorpe brought him to their apartment when he was still a hustler on 53rd & 3rd, and Patti thought he was adorable.
- Divine was'nt always the beautiful and sophisticated actress that she is now. Ho Ho Ho. Once her name was GLEN MILSTEAD, and she lived in Baltimore.

WAYNE SPILLS

Well, let me tell you, this Seymore Stein, he runs Sire records, and when a Band has cute guys in it, he offers them a record contract and invites them home to "discuss" it with him and his wife,. Then they get the Boys high and ravage them. That's how the Ramones got their records. Keep it up DeeDee.

and Cherry Vanilla is still fucking everything. Including D.H. , New Yorks favorite Bleach Blonde.

Richard Nolan is an asshole and not a good one



GLENN MILSTEAD

DONT READ

SEND FOR IT AT

MONO-MANIA

OR

ADDRESS ON BACK

What happened to ROLLER BABE? Lynn Chuilla found true love and abandoned it.

Despite a story printed in a certain other local publication, DIRT contributing editor Wayne County is not going to have a sex-change operation.

NOTED ITALIAN MOVIE STAR CAUGHT at Italian airport, with six gold watches, antique of course, stuffed up her snatch. Due to subject matter papers reported that she was trying to smuggle out Italian currency. ↘

JACKIE O. TO WED OLD BLUE EYES?



... FROM RAGS TO RICHES.



HER AGAIN



KIETH RICHARDS.

Extremely reliable sources have it ,that that noted drug fiend gets patched up when he's too

unhealthy by going out to Switzerland and doctors in a private hospital there freeze his body and give him a complete blood change Every drop of blood is drained away and fresh blood is put in.

GENE SIMMONS SETS MAN ON FIRE. At a Kiss show in L.A., Gene Simmons did his fire spitting bit and set a man in the front row on fire. When questioned he said he still liked

Kiss, has no regrets.

DIRT INTERVIEW

LIZ CORNERO

LITTLE

DIRT Mag. met with Liz at

Fernando's in Boston

Here is the interview she granted us before she had us thrown out.

DIRT: How many face lifts have you had? Is that one in Ash Wednesday real?

Liz: What? ha-ha. No. ~~It~~ I'm not going to make any more films.

DIRT: Did you have any other rival actresses?

Liz: Well, I used to have fistfights w/ Ava Gardner. Is that what you want?

DIRT: Fine. Do you miss Dick?

Liz: alright kids, that's about enough Get out of here. (Liz cries and yells.)



PLEASE DIRT



Untitled, c.1981
Gum print

Unmarked: The Politics of Performance

Peggy Phelan

The primal scene [of psychoanalysis] is remembered and (re)visited through the dream and the symptom – through the imaginative attempt of the unconscious to replay the (past) scene on the stage of the present. Self-identity needs to be continually reproduced and reassured precisely because it fails to secure belief. It fails because it cannot rely on a verifiably continuous history. One's own origin is both real and imagined. The formation of the "I" cannot be witnessed by the "eye." The primal scene itself is (probably) a screen memory for the always-lost moment of one's own conception. Moreover, within the logic of psychic displacement, the memory of the primal scene also functions as a rehearsal for one's own death. The primal scene is a psychic revisiting and anticipation of the world without oneself. This vision is devastating and liberating; but it cannot be endured very long. One prefers instead to see oneself more or less securely situated. The process of self-identity is a leap into a narrative that employs seeing as a way of knowing. Mimetic correspondence has a psychic appeal because one seeks a self-image within the representational frame. Mimetic representation requires that the writer/speaker employs pronouns, invents characters, records conversations, examines the words and images of others, so that the spectator can secure a coherent belief in self-authority, assurance, presence. Memory. Sight. Love. All require a witness imagined or real.

But what would it take to value the immaterial within a culture structured around the equation "material equals value?" As critical theories of cultural reproduction become increasingly dedicated to a consideration of the "material conditions" that influence, if not completely determine, social, racial, sexual, and psychic identities, questions about the immaterial construction of identities – those processes of belief which summon memory, sight, and love – fade from the eye/I. Pitched against this fading, the words I have lined

up here attempt to (re)develop the negative, not in order to produce a clearer print, but rather to see what it would mean to use the negative itself as a way of securing belief in one's self-image. [...]

In his essay 'Mourning and Melancholia,' Freud suggests that the subject responds to loss by internalizing the lost other. The incorporation of the lost other both disavows the loss and deepens the grief. Judith Butler has argued that this incorporation happens across genders – in other words, when the girl child “loses” the beloved father she incorporates him. After this internalization, her own gender can no longer be self-identical, but is rather “doubled.” It is the same for boys and mothers ('Imitation and Gender Insubordination': 26-7). Our “own” body, then, is the one we have and the history of the ones we've lost. Our body is both internal and external; invisible and visible; sick and well; living and dead. Noncontinuous, full of jerks and rears, the body moves, like an awkward dancer trying to partner someone she can never see or lay hold of.

Within the radical contingency of this psychic and material Real, subjectivity is performed. This subjectivity is encoded as always already gendered. And always already more insecure for and about women. Representation functions to make gender, and sexual difference more generally, secure and securely singular – which is to say, masculine. (She ghosts him.) Representation tries to overlook the discontinuity between subjectivity and the gendered, sexual body, and attempts to suture the gap between subjectivity and the Real. The common desire to look to representation to confirm one's reality is never satisfied; for representation cannot reproduce the Real. This keeps us looking – and keeps us hoping. And so we are, most of the time, kept. More particularly, we are kept suspended between the depressing loop of dis-appointment and the aspiring arc of hope.



Installation shot of *Witnesses: Against Our Vanishing*, Artists Space, 1989

Tell me what is the greatest gift from Gôd than when you look into another guys eyes and you can see that you are the one who is uniquely gifted to satisfy~~ing~~ his physical desires. Better yet. He's hotter than anything you had hoped to meet. You kiss and feel his cock thru his pants. Your tongue is in his mouth and your bare bock is in his hands He has been playing with it in his dreams so long he cant controll himself. He squats down and takes the whole length into his mouth. It's smooth hot wet and tight in the back of his throat. He sucks on you like a machine. He takes the first squirt into his mouth and then the rest of it on to his face. He stands up offering his dick. You grab hold and bury your tounge into his mouth. Both your faces are wet with come. He moans while he shoots in your hand. You embrace for about 15 minutes and exchange names between embraces. Somebody is pounding at the door. You wipe your faces and adjust your clothes, kiss goodbye and leave the booth both erect and high as kites.

This is designed to be printed on a mirror so that you can see your own eyes.

Board of Directors

Honorary Lifetime Members

Kynaston McShine
Irving Sandler
Cindy Sherman

Igor DaCosta,
President
Allan Schwartzman,
Vice President
Christopher Apgar,
Treasurer
Liam Gillick,
Secretary

Shane Akeroyd
Carolyn Alexander
Negar Azimi
Saskia Bos
Virginia Cowles Schroth
Martin Cox
Carol Greene
Rachel Harrison
Mark Hughes
Joan Jonas
Lawrence Luhring
Seth Price
Amanda Sharp
Andy Stillpass
Rirkrit Tiravanija
Gordon VeneKlasen
Andrew Weinstein
Catherine Woodard

Supporters

Core Contributors

Louise Bourgeois Trust,
Carnegie Corporation of New
York, Lambent Foundation
Fund of Tides Foundation,
The Andy Warhol Foundation
for the Visual Arts, The New
York State Council on the Arts,
a State Agency

Contributors

The Milton and Sally Avery
Arts Foundation, The Brown
Foundation, Con Edison,
Cowles Charitable Trust,
The Cultural Services of
the French Embassy, Credit
Suisse, The Danish Cultural
Council, The Federal Cultural
Foundation of Germany,
Foundation for Contemporary
Arts, Gesso Foundation,
Graham Foundation for
Advanced Studies in the
Fine Arts, Herman Goldman
Foundation, The Horace W.
Goldsmith Foundation,
The Jewish Community
Federation of Cleveland,
Puffin Foundation Ltd.,
The New York City Department
of Cultural Affairs, The National
Endowment for the Arts

Friends of Artists Space

Helene Winer

Dirk & Natasha Ziff

Alexander Brenninkmeijer
Michael Ringier
Jerry I. Speyer

Shelley Fox Aarons & Philip Aarons
Gavin Brown
Gladstone Gallery
David Zwirner

Brooke Alexander, Charles Asprey
Esq., Luhring Augustine Gallery,
Blum & Poe, Tanya Bonakdar
Gallery, Suzanne Deal Booth, Cecily
Brown, Spencer Brownstone, Melva
Bucksbaum & Raymond Learsy,
Constance Caplan, Jonathan Caplan,
Sadie Coles, Paula Cooper, Peter
Darrell & Jane Ormerod, Elizabeth
Dee, Thomas Dozol & Michael Stipe,
Frederick & Diana Elghanayan,
Marian Goodman Gallery, Wade
Guyton, Marieluise Hessel, Rocio
& Boris Hirmas, Marguerite Steed
Hoffman, Jill & Peter Kraus, Andrew
Kreps, Yvon Lambert & Olivier Belot,
Galerie Lelong, Toby Devan Lewis,
Dorothy Lichtenstein, Anthony
& Celeste Meier, Sara Meltzer,
Maureen Paley, Friedrich Petzel
Gallery, Cindy & Howard Rachofsky,
Deedie & Rusty Rose, Alex Sainsbury
& Elinor Jansz, Cindy Sherman,
Ann Tenenbaum & Thomas H.
Lee, Alice Tisch, Kelley Walker,
Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP, Thea
Westreich & Ethan Wagner

We thank all Members and Friends
of Artists Space for supporting our
program.



Artists
Space

38 Greene Street
3rd Floor
New York
NY 10013
T 212 226 3970
www.artistsspace.org
info@artistsspace.org

