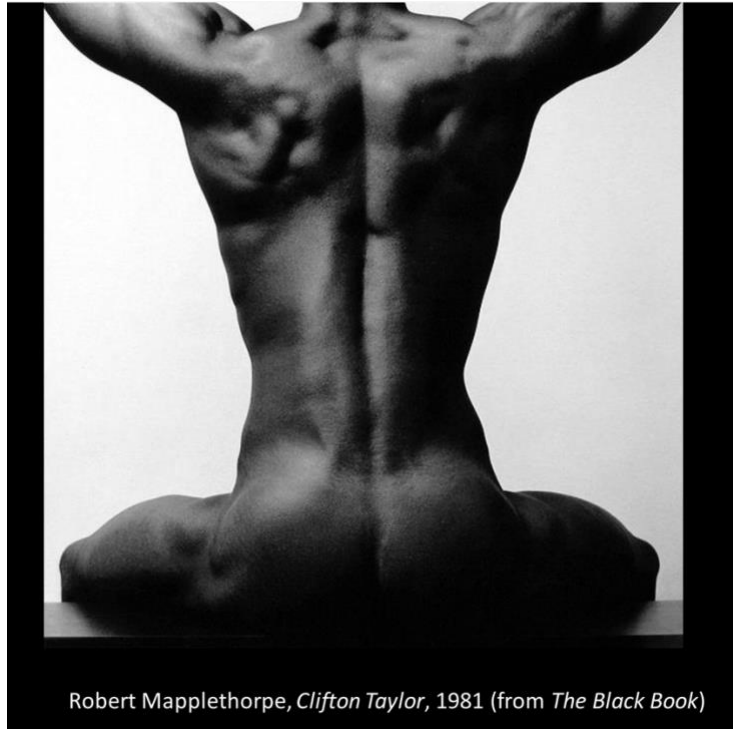


APC Event “Producing the Mapplethorpe Moment:
Artistic Expression in Fraught Times”

*Commemorating the 30th anniversary of the Mapplethorpe *The Perfect Moment* exhibit at Penn’s Institute of Contemporary Art, this panel discussion used the conflict surrounding the exhibit as a launching off point to consider artist expression in our present moment of heightened reactivity about the (false) incompatibility of free speech and safe spaces.*



*Robert Mapplethorpe: The Perfect Moment, ICA, Philadelphia (Meyerson Hall)
December 9, 1988 - January 29, 1989*



Robert Mapplethorpe, *Clifton Taylor*, 1981 (from *The Black Book*)

From Kaja Silverman Presentation, February 5 2019. Institute of Contemporary Art.

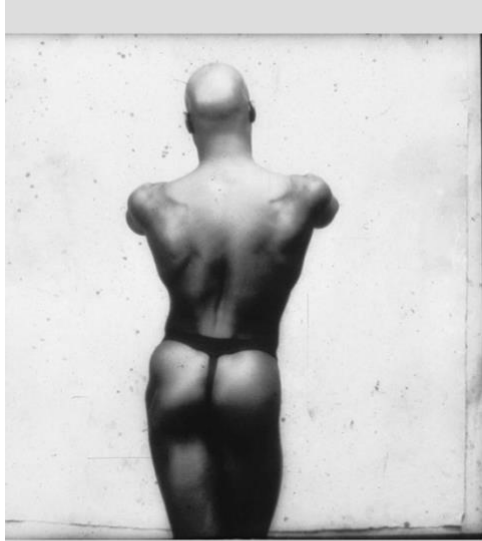


Self-Portrait, 1980

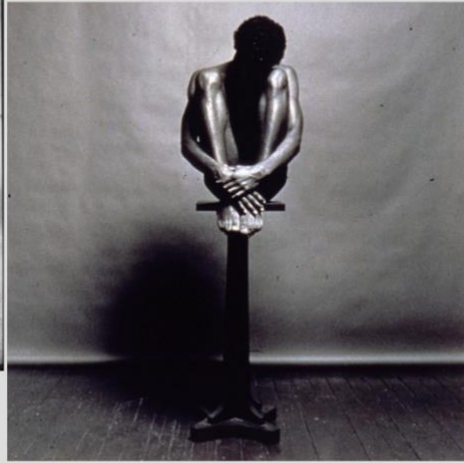


Self-Portrait, 1980

From Judith Tannenbaum Presentation, February 5 2019. Institute of Contemporary Art.



Ken Moody, 1984



Philip Prioleau, N.Y.C., 1979



American Flag, 1977

From Judith Tannenbaum Presentation, February 5 2019. Institute of Contemporary Art.

Panelists and works

[Amy Sadao, Daniel W. Dietrich, II Director of the Institute of Contemporary Art](#)

[Judith Tannenbaum, former curator, associate director, and interim director of the Institute of Contemporary Art](#)

[The Beginner's Guide to Curating: Judith Tannenbaum Revisits ICA](#)

[Kaja Silverman, professor of Contemporary Art at the University of Pennsylvania](#)
[Kaja Silverman Publications](#)

[Sophia Wallace, interdisciplinary artist](#)

[CLITERACY, 100 Natural Laws, 2012 © Sophia Wallace](#)

[Zach Blas, artist, filmmaker, and writer](#)

[Contra-Internet Installation](#)

[Wayne Modest, head of the Research Center of Material Culture](#)

[WE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN MODERN: Museums, Collections, and Modernity in the Caribbean](#)

Key terms & concepts

Freedom of Expression:

The power or right to express one's opinions without censorship, restraint, or legal penalty.¹

Censorship:

The suppression or prohibition of any parts of books, films, news, etc. that are considered obscene, politically unacceptable, or a threat to security.²

More on The Perfect Moment

[Whipping up a storm: how Robert Mapplethorpe shocked America](#)

[Robert Mapplethorpe: The Perfect Moment at the ICA](#)

[Robert Mapplethorpe Guggenheim Profile](#)

[Why Mapplethorpe's Photographs Remain Subversive, Even without the Shock Value](#)

[How a Museum Cancelling a Controversial Mapplethorpe Exhibition Changed My Life](#)

¹ 2019 Oxford University Press

² 2019 Oxford University Press



A demonstration against the decision to censor Mapplethorpe's work.
Photograph: John Stamstad/Contemporary Arts Center.³



Important Readings:

[Welcome to the jungle: new positions in Black cultural studies by Kobena Mercer](#)

[Reading racial fetishism: the photographs of Robert Mapplethorpe by Kobena Mercer](#)

³ "Whipping up a storm: how Robert Mapplethorpe shocked America", The Guardian, 2015.

[Performative Remnants: Re-reading the Black Male Body in Mapplethorpe's Black Book by Erich Kessel](#)

[Words Matter Publication by Material Culture](#)

That words and norms around language are constantly in transition can cause confusion and discomfort to those accustomed to these words; this is also true within museums. But society changes, and language changes with it. Our objects may be timeless, but the ways we speak about them are not. But precisely which words are these? And, more importantly, why are particular words understood as derogatory or offensive, and by whom?