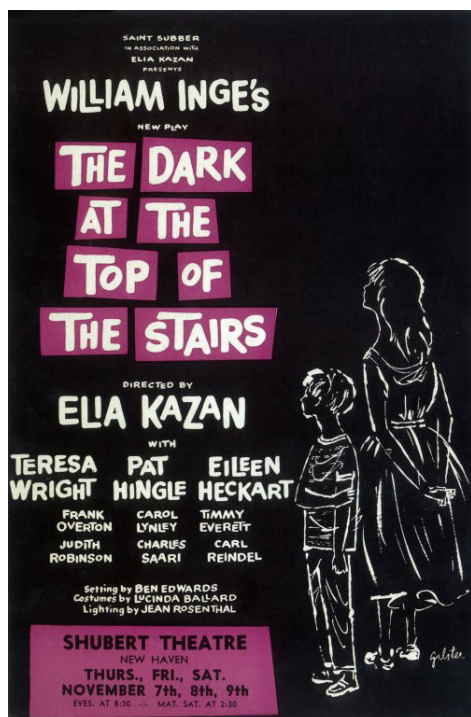
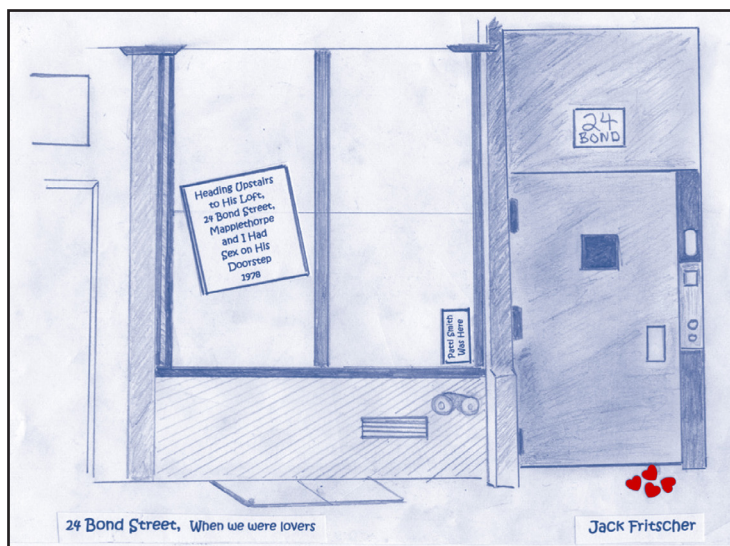
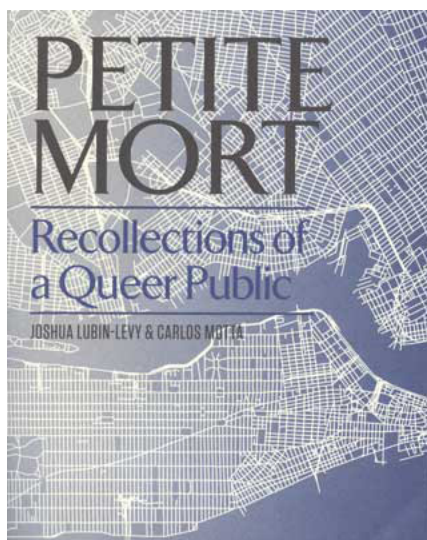


MAPPLETHORPE: 24 BOND ST.



THE DARKROOM AT THE TOP OF THE STAIRS! (ABOVE & BEFORE GENE FRANKEL)



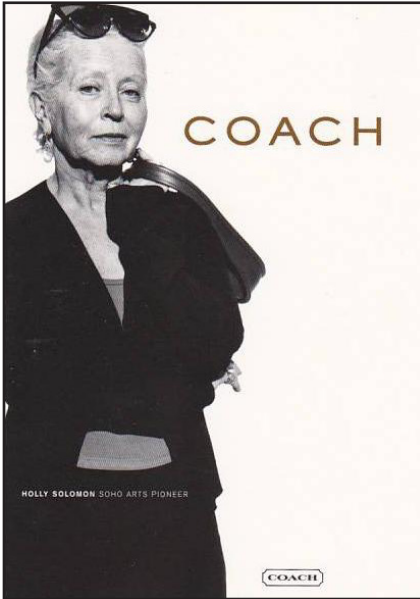
Drawing: 24 Bond Street, 1978, Mapplethorpe doorway

[PETITE MORT: Complete Drawings and Text \(pdf\)](#)

One drawing by Jack Fritscher in *Petite Mort: Recollection of a Queer Public*, edited by Joshua Lubin-Levy and Carlos Motta, published by Forever & Today, Inc. New York, 2011, 169 pages.

This limited edition art book of five hundred copies features drawings of public places in Manhattan where the artists had public sex. It includes one pencil drawing by Jack Fritscher titled “24 Bond Street: When Mapplethorpe and I Were Lovers,” depicting the front door of Robert Mapplethorpe’s 1970s home and studio. (Pages 78 and 79)

There are two captions inside the drawing. The first reads: “Heading Upstairs to His Loft, 24 Bond Street, Mapplethorpe and I Had Sex on His Doorstep, 1978,” and is collaged with four small red hearts marking the footprints of two lovers facing for a kiss. The second is an homage that reads: “Patti Smith Was Here.”



HOLLY SOLOMON SPEAKS

THE WOMAN WHO DISCOVERED ROBERT MAPPLETHORPE AT 24 BOND STREET

by Jack Fritscher

Holly Solomon, born Hollis Dworken (1934-2002), grew up in Fairfield, Massachusetts, and married Horace Solomon before graduating Sarah Lawrence College where, active in theater, she later appeared in several movies, playing a call girl in “The Plot Against Harry” (1969). As writer/producer, she directed a five-part documentary titled “98.5” about five artists in her 98 Greene Street Loft, which won an award at the 1972 Edinburgh Film Festival. She told me, “I had that alternative space at 98 Greene Street [1969-1972] before we knew what to call ‘an *alternative*

space.” She opened Holly Solomon gallery in 1975 at 392 West Broadway, moving uptown in 1985 to 57th Street, and then back to SoHo in April, 1993, at 172 Mercer Street. Rizzoli published her book “Living With Art” (1988). She was a Pop Icon photographed by Rauschenberg, Liechtenstein, and Warhol who begged in vain to cast her in “Lonesome Cowboys.” Squeezed out of the Mapplethorpe Origin Story, she needed little prodding to set history straight. I interviewed her January 5, 1994. This bespoke edit is for “Homosurrealism.”

24 Bond Street: Where Mapplethorpe Shot His 1970s Photos.

Designed as an Artist’s Residency.

Once Owned by Painter Virginia Admiral, Robert DeNiro’s Mother

[Golightly, Miss Holly: Portrait by Warhol \(YouTube\)](#)

Holly Solomon: I found out about Robert through Eddie Shostak, an artist I was representing. He introduced me to Robert whom I met at 24 Bond Street. When I saw his framed collages and sculptures, I knew he was not only a photographer, but an artist who was a photographer. I felt deeply about Robert’s conviction that photographs are primary art in their own right, not merely collectibles sealed in plastic envelopes and put away in drawers. Robert put his photographs in the power position. Robert’s evangelical mission was important. [In the late 1960s, Holly began nurturing the “Pattern and Decoration Movement” as antidote against bleak Minimalism.] Using elegant frames, Robert positioned his work to be seen. That is the power. He and Sam Wagstaff declared photography a legitimate major art. He was evangelistic about art, charming, warm and gentle. We had a short, very happy collaboration. I introduced him to fashion photography via friends who were designers. I said, “Try this. Try every venue you can.”

Jack Fritscher: You were together what years?

Holly: 1976-1978. I presented two shows of Robert in 1977. One was “Portraits.” One was “Flowers.” It was really tough going.

Jack: He was not yet the brand-name draw: “Mapplethorpe.” While you were debuting his “Flowers” and “Portraits,” I was introducing his “Leather” photos. I was editing international “Drummer” in San Francisco. He flew to my desk, portfolio in hand, aiming to build his brand in leather culture so hated by the “Village Voice.” I gave him the cover with nine select photographs inside. Job done.

Holly: Exactly. At that time, to get any kind of audience in SoHo was extremely difficult. Most people wouldn't cross 57th Street. I was even hosting Backgammon games in the back! But I did very well with photographs because Robert was extremely gracious in terms of collaboration and strategizing. Very helpful. Robert liked my showing other photographers like Bill Wegman. When people came to see their work, I'd say: "I've this young artist you have to see." Actually, I was instrumental in getting Robert into "Documenta 6" in 1977. I remember going over to the Documenta exhibit in Kassel, West Germany, and, personally helping the curator hang the god-damned show. I was trying to introduce Robert as an artist. I thought I'm not going to go all the way to Kassel, and not see Robert's pictures hung properly. That was his first breakthrough. Then we traveled entourage to Basel: Robert, Bill Wegman, his wife, and their dog, Man Ray, who was Wegman's main model....

Jack: Robert lensed your portrait and mine in 1976 and 1977. His dramatic triptych of you smoking in your bed unreels like three frames from film noir.

"Holly Solomon," Triptych, Mapplethorpe, New York Times

Holly: He wanted to join my gallery, but I had a test: how does the photographer direct the poser because I thought I could commission him to do portraits. I said, "OK. kid, I'm going to try you out." He really was so extraordinary dealing with people. As an actress, I'd dealt with awful photographers with horrible results. Every commercial job, it was "dear," "honey," "babe." He was cunning for the sitter's own good. He never miss-used that trust in terms of taking their photographs. It was tragic for me when Robert decided to move his show from my gallery uptown to Robert Miller. This was half-way through the run. My mother had just died. A particularly trying time. He did, however, exit like a mensch, presenting me the picture of his whip up his rectum. To put it mildly. I gasped, but I knew it wasn't an insult. My former husband took one look at it and said, "Tear it up." I said, "No, no. Someday I'll sell it for an awful lot."

Jack: This is why he's your former husband.

Holly: You said it. I didn't. I said to Robert, "I respect your decision, but it's your career. You could have straddled the best of both worlds. Me downtown. Miller uptown. You could have had far more power."...I continued to support his work, but neither he nor galleries ever gave me credit for discovering Robert.

Jack: When British art critic Edward Lucie-Smith, who knew Robert in mid-1970s London, recommended I contact you, he said: "Holly Solomon is very important to Mapplethorpe's career."

Holly: I'm grateful. After Robert dropped me, we drifted. When he got very ill in 1988, I wrote him a letter and he invited me to dinner. Very sad. So ill. Quite appalling. Nevertheless, we giggled and laughed. Robert thought I was terribly funny, but I was trying to be upbeat. My heart was heavy. Every time we saw each other after that dinner, it was "Hello!" with big hugs and kisses. Of course, I did go to the Whitney Retrospective. He was so sick. When I went over to kiss him congratulations, he said, "Holly, it's my retribution to be sitting here looking at your portrait all night." Where he had stationed himself was in front of my portrait. That said so much. I really wanted to cry. I said, "No, Robert. It's my pleasure you shot me. I'm so proud of you for that—and showing it." That was the last time I saw him.

Jack: You're pleased he shot you well and more than once?

Holly: Yes. When Gordon Matta-Clark died in 1978, Robert wanted to shoot me for his book about art dealers. It was the day after I heard Gordon passed. I said, "Dear Heart, I couldn't possibly do this today. I'm grieving. I don't want my photograph taken." Robert insisted that day or never. So I went, barely able to stop crying.

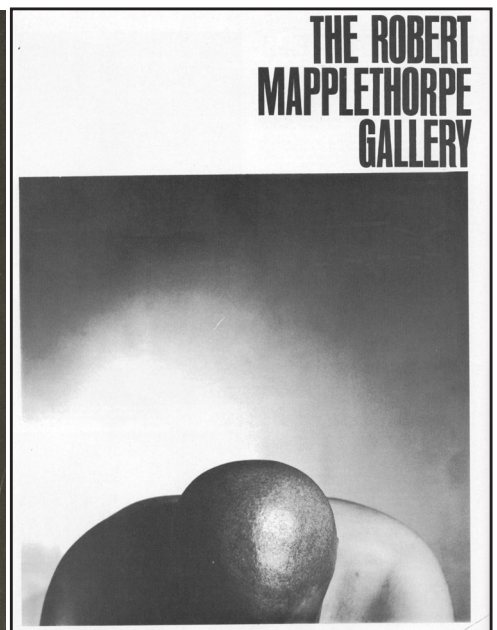
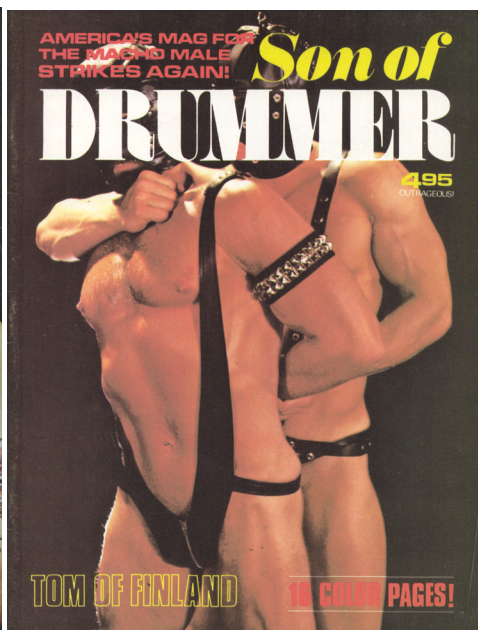
Jack: You sat twice at Bond street?

Holly: I climbed those flights of stairs in misery. I said, “You know by looking at me it’s not possible to take my photograph.” He said, “Don’t worry, Holly. I’ll touch it up.” Days later I said, “You had better show me the photograph.” I said, “You can’t print this.” Believe me. I looked like I’d been watching “Schindler’s List.” I was really over-wrought. So he retook the photograph. He understood it was much too much a private photograph, not a public photograph. I really appreciated that.

Jack: Robert had a special regard for women who had regard for him...

Holly: I admired him very much for adoring Patti. I’ll never forget he dragged me to one of her concerts somewhere the hell outside New York. I don’t know if they had sex or not, but he was very proud of her and cared very much for her. I was very proud in retrospect because I thought that she was one of the two people that he really loved, and really meant something to him. The way he took Patti’s photo and mine was just different than anybody else. ©2018 JackFritscher.com

[Holly Solomon Speaks \(YouTube\)](#)



Fritscher’s “NEW YORK ART” Special “Son of Drummer” (September 1978) featuring nine Mapplethorpe photos, and cover of “Drummer” issue 24 shot at 24 Bond Street above and before the Gene Frankel Theatre

[“The Robert Mapplethorpe Gallery” in “Son of Drummer” \(pdf\)](#)



Read How [Censorship of Leather Art and Culture](#) began in the “Village Voice,” July 7, 1975

Mapplethorpe Life at 24 Bond Street

by Jack Fritscher

Caro Roberto! He loved cameras, Kools, Coke, and
for two years me flying round-trips together SFO-JFK.
Lying in each other's post-coital arms slugabed on his mattress
on his black plank floor at 24 Bond Street,
his photographer's tongue licked my writer's eye,
in the morning rolling hard over me to reach the ringing phone,
saying "Ciao, Principessa," loving princesses and actresses
and dancers and the seven-foot calla lilies in my California garden.
"Patti's a genius," he confided, canonizing her face twinned with his,
screening me rushes of Patti in *Moving* and
Robert Having His Nipple Pierced
(with Patti keening poems on the soundtrack)
while his kitchen table caught fire from his forgotten cigarette.
There were always three people in his love affairs.
Gone, touring, singing, marrying someone else, widowed,
the Smith girl burned in his brain
She was he and he was she in his solo portraits of her and himself.
At the after-hours Mineshaft bar, the democracy of anonymous sex
leveled the playing field of stardom, yet
he was a camera, cool, coked, aloof, a voyeur
turning the two floors of wild orgy into a casting call.
He ran his career like a department store,
ambushing trendy couples in SoHo galleries, saying,
"If you don't like this picture, you're not as avant garde as you think."
He was the goat-footed Pan, holding my hand in restaurants,
shopping together down Christopher Street for small Satanic bronzes
invoking Rimbaud and Verlaine, inspiring his own
famous flowers of evil, pistils and stamens, vaginas and cocks.
Late one night I sat in the gunsite of his camera
witnessing him work his process cool without drama.
I love you, he/I said, as he shot me, until
two years of lust evaporated to sweet friendship.
At the end, dying young, he filmed flowers more than faces
because he could no longer stand eyes looking back at him
through the safety glass of his lens.
He loved. She loved. I loved.
I got his seed. She his ashes.

PREMIERE. IN THEATERS. SUMMER. 2018.
LIFE AT THE TOP. 24 BOND STREET.

MATT SMITH



MAPPLETHORPE



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