

PATTI SMITH

THE CORAL SEA

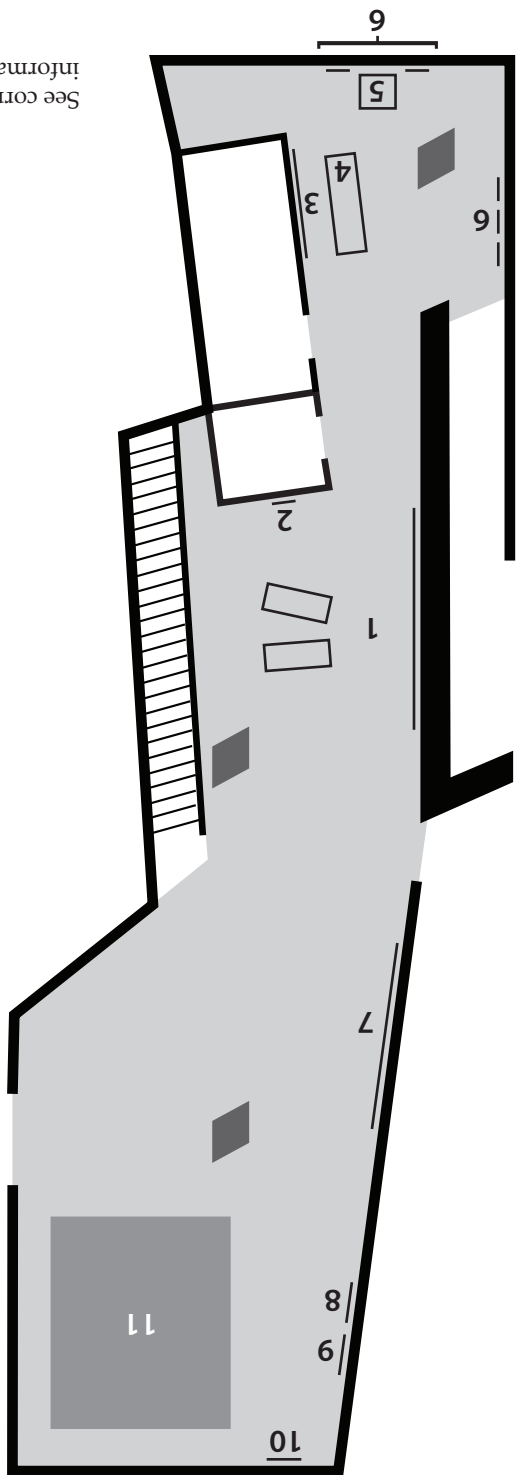
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"From a place apart, Morpheus, god of dreams, awakes. Detached from the benevolent folds of the muse he presses against the blue and burns into form. Flying high, with neither love nor remorse, he regards his charge—a young man asleep within the cloth of a voyage, which is turning, ever so slowly, even as the widening skirt of an ecstatic."
 -Prologue, The Coral Sea

Patti Smith wrote the collection of poems titled *The Coral Sea* in the wake of the passing of Robert Mapplethorpe. The text presents a metaphoric and dream-like meditation on life, death and transition. This exhibition, by the same title, explores universally familiar themes such as loss, remembrance and transcendence through a melding of language and image. *The Coral Sea* is staged in four sections—affliction, cremation, remembrance, and transformation.

Patti Smith (b. 1946), writer and performer, began as a visual artist and has been making drawings and taking photographs since the late 1960s.

Robert Mapplethorpe (1946-1989) was an artist known for his highly stylized black and white photographs. Their relationship is explored in Patti's book *Just Kids* Robert passed away from AIDS in 1989.



See corresponding information on reverse >

1. Patti Smith
The Infirmary
2008
Two vintage metal beds, ten pigment prints, and mixed media
Site-specific installation
Courtesy of the artist and Robert Miller Gallery, New York

The beds integrated within *The Infirmary* are early 20th century from a prison hospital in Melbourne, Australia. The installation presents plagues, such as AIDS, as the great equalizer, for they know not whom they strike. They affect the son of a pharaoh, a peasant, a great artist, or a homeless man all in the same manner—equal suffering, equal mortality.

2. Photograph: Robert Mapplethorpe
Negative 1989, Print 1998
Text: Patti Smith, 2008
Sleeping Cupid
Pencil on gelatin silver print
Courtesy of The Getty Research Institute
Gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation

The text included in *Sleeping Cupid* is the last letter that was written to Robert before his death.

3. Patti Smith
Robert Chelsea Hotel
1970, 2009
Two platinum prints, ed. 1/3
10 x 8 inches
Courtesy of the collection of Pym Buiten Huis and James Lahey

4. Large Vitrine
This vitrine contains personal effects that relate to *The Coral Sea*. They speak to the larger themes of mourning and transcendence that are woven throughout the exhibition.

Robert's Slippers

Contact Sheet of Work in Progress

Patti and Robert, Coney Island, September 1st 1969

Crown of Thrones, Jerusalem

The Man Condemned to Die by Jean Genet
Poem that Patti would read to Robert before he went to sleep.

Robert Photo Booth Self-portrait
"A youth in sailor garb, eyeing the world a bit suspiciously yet maintaining an air of delicate as a lash..."
-The Throw, The Coral Sea

Patti Bible School, 1950

Robert Communion, 1951

Early 20th Century Mourning Ribbon

Beggar's Cup that Belonged to Sam Wagstaff

Robert's Cobalt Ink Well

Maxey Mapplethorpe Burial Plot

Announcement of Robert's Memorial at the Whitney, May 22, 1989
"And leaves of a calendar flitted by. One such sheet cut into an exposed wrist. 22 May 1885, Victor Hugo dies."
-Monkey Shines, The Coral Sea

Mourning Box

Braided Necklace by Robert, 1969

Robert's Medal, 1969

Patti's Skull Necklace

All Courtesy of Patti Smith Archive

5. Patti Smith
The Four Elements
2013
Two bowls, water, stone tray, ashes
Courtesy of the artist

**This altar represents the four elements:
the vitrine encases the air,
the two offering bowls hold water,
the stone tray symbolizes the earth,
and the ashes of the cremated one represent fire.**

6. Patti Smith
Ryūnosuke Akutagawa's Burial Site 1, Zōshigaya Cemetery, Tokyo 1-5
2013
Gelatin silver print
10 x 8 inches
Courtesy the artist and Robert Miller Gallery, New York

The photographs are of Ryūnosuke Akutagawa's Burial Site at Zōshigaya Cemetery in Tokyo Japan. Ryūnosuke Akutagawa was an important Japanese author of "Rashomon" and "Yabu no Naka". He is often heralded as the father of the Japanese short story.

7. Patti Smith
Original Coral Sea Manuscript Pages
1996
Ink on paper
Courtesy of the artist

8. Robert Mapplethorpe
Negative 1983, Print 1998
Text: Patti Smith, 2008
The Coral Sea
Pencil on gelatin silver print
Courtesy of The Getty Research Institute
Gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation

9. Robert Mapplethorpe
Negative 1979, Print 1998
Text: Patti Smith, 2008
Lake Memphramagog
Pencil on gelatin silver print
Courtesy of The Getty Research Institute
Gift of The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation

10. Robert Mapplethorpe
Patti Smith
1987
© Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation

"Coscincera Hercules. Wingspan 35 centimeters. There was his champion! Not a butterfly at all, though extra-ordinary. The Herculean Moth."
-The Herculean Moth, The Coral Sea

11. Patti Smith
The Coral Sea Room
2008
Installation by Patti Smith and Jem Cohen
Texts and Voice: Patti Smith
Guitar: Kevin Shields
Images/Editing: Jem Cohen
Performance recorded live, Royal Festival Hall, London, 2006
16 mm transferred on DVD
Ed. 1/3
Collection Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain, Paris