

## **Report - Wagstaff: Before and After Mapplethorpe by Philip Geffer**

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The book is a biography of Sam Wagstaff, a seminal curator, collector and patron in world art circles from his entry in about 1960 through to his death in 1987.

Of greatest interest to FAP:O might be the effect his collecting had on the market in photography. He, along with a very few other collectors and dealers, shaped the market between 1972 and 1984. Before that there was no Sothby's Photography Auction and historic prints might be worth a few hundreds of dollars each. During that time they created a vibrant market and, in the end, each of them sold their collections to museums for millions of dollars.

But the money wasn't Sam's main interest. He has often been praised for the attention he gave to the act of viewing.

"Collector or beachcomber, Sam taught us all his life that it is less the object at which we look that gives value to our experience, than the intensity with which we look at it. It is the intensity of the pure act of seeing which illuminated Sam's life, and which now reflects ours." Pierre Apraxine at Sam's memorial at the Met, March 2nd, 1987.

As a curator he was the first to display Minimalist Art in a museum. He brought modern art to Detroit and Hartford. He affected and added value to the display of Robert Mapplethorpe's art through all of Robert's career. Finally, he totally curated the display of 140 photographs from his own collection at the Corcoran Gallery in Washington DC and promoted its tour through the whole world in about 20 exhibitions.

As a patron he influenced a number of modern artists before 1972 by buying their work or connecting them with people who could help them. He met, and fell in love with, Robert Mapplethorpe in 1972. After that he was Mapplethorpe's patron.