



ALBANY MUSEUM OF ART

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AMA ART LOVERS BOOK CLUB TO EXPLORE PATTI SMITH'S *JUST KIDS*

Smith memoir focuses on the rocker's relationship with Robert Mapplethorpe

[For Release Jan 11, 2022 – Albany, GA] — *Just Kids*, rocker Patti Smith's account of her relationship with photographer Robert Mapplethorpe, will be the topic of discussion when the AMA Art Lovers Book Club meets at **6 pm** on **Tuesday, Jan 18** at the Albany Museum of Art.

The meeting, which will be conducted in the AMA's Willson Auditorium, will be facilitated by Executive Director Andrew J. Wulf, Ph.D.

Smith, a poet who grew up poor in New Jersey, sought her fortune in New York City, where she got a job in a bookstore. At the shop, she met an equally impoverished Mapplethorpe. They were "just kids," 21 years old, when they met in 1967. The young couple hit it off, getting a Brooklyn apartment together, and working their way into the eclectic art society that made the 1960s and 1970s in New York a particularly exciting time.

The book, which Smith said she wrote in fulfillment of a promise she made to Mapplethorpe on his deathbed, is described as a story that starts out as a love story, but ends as an elegy. In many ways, the city of New York is its own character in the memoir. The pair would eventually rub elbows with the famous and infamous in the Big Apple, including the likes of Andy Warhol, William Burroughs and Allen Ginsberg. Smith and Mapplethorpe, each with a highly original sense of personal style, remained a couple through 1972, and remained close friends until his death in 1989.

Smith, who supported the couple with her jobs at bookstores while they created art, sought out people with talent from respect of their artistry. Mapplethorpe, meanwhile, was driven by the opportunity to rise in the world. Both would achieve their goals.

Mapplethorpe, introduced to photography by his mentor, patron and lifetime companion art curator Sam Wagstaff, became a renowned and provocative photographer best known for his black-and-white images. In 1989, an exhibition of his work ignited debate about constitutional limits of free speech and whether public funding should be used for "obscene" artwork.

Smith, who adopted a trend-setting style and demeanor, became the singer-songwriter "punk rock laureate," finding success with her 1975 album *Horses* and the 1978 song she co-wrote with Bruce Springsteen, *Because the Night*. Now 75, the two-time Grammy winner and activist has had a long career as a singer, songwriter, spoken word performer, poet and photographer with 11 studio albums. She has written a number of books, most recently *The Year of the Monkey* in 2019.

There is no cost to attend AMA Art Lovers Book Club meetings and no formal membership requirement. Those attending may bring a favorite beverage to enjoy during the discussion. Participants are asked to RSVP via the link at www.albanymuseum.com/book-club by **noon on Jan 18** so that adequate seating may be provided.

Future meetings in this series are:

- **March 15:** *We Flew Over the Bridge: The Memoirs of Faith Ringgold*, by Faith Ringgold;
- **May 17:** *A Piece of the World*, a novel by Christina Baker Kline.

AMA EXHIBITIONS

- *The Way of Life, Works by Ray Pierotti* is in the Haley Gallery Jan 20 -April 23, 2022.
- *Prismatic, Works by Melissa Huang* is in the East Gallery Jan 20 -April 23, 2022.
- *Ordo naturalis, Works by Eric Mack* is in the McCormack Gallery Jan 20 -April 23, 2022.
- *African Artifacts of Spirituality and Identity* is in the Hodges Gallery Jan 20 -April 23, 2022.
- *Escape Plan*, installation by Elinor Saragoussi, is in the West Gallery.

ABOUT THE ALBANY MUSEUM OF ART

The Albany Museum of Art is located at 311 Meadowlark Drive in Albany, Ga., adjacent to Albany State University West Campus just off Gillionville Road. The museum is accredited by the American Alliance of Museums. The Albany Museum of Art is open to the public 10 am-5 pm Tuesdays through Saturdays. Admission is free.

For more information about the AMA please visit our website, www.albanymuseum.com or call 229.439.8400. Be sure to follow the @AlbanyArtMuseum on Twitter, AlbanyMuseum on Instagram and AlbanyMuseumOfArt on Facebook.

CAPTION INFORMATION

Rocker Patti Smith, shown performing at a concert at Copenhagen in 1976, looks back at her relationship with photographer Robert Mapplethorpe in her memoir *Just Kids*, which will be the topic of discussion when the Art Lovers Book Club meets at 6 pm on Tuesday, Jan 18 at the Albany Museum of Art. (Special photo)

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