

Contemporary Photographers at Soho Photo Gallery
is pleased to announce a lecture, free and open to the public

**Allen Ellenzweig: "'Dirty Pictures'
in an Age of Political and Moral Hypocrisy "
Friday, April 14, from 6 to 7:30 p.m.**

Statement

The homoerotic photograph was first identified in the popular imagination with the cancellation of the Robert Mapplethorpe exhibition at the Corcoran Gallery, Washington, DC, in 1989. His work was suddenly used by members of Congress, especially Senator Jesse Helms, as a stick to start a drumbeat of moral outrage. Mapplethorpe's work survived, and the term "homoerotic" entered the common lexicon, but Helms succeeded in fashioning restrictive guidelines for the National Endowment for the Arts, and similarly for the Humanities, in which the word "homoeroticism" was sandwiched between "sodomasochism" and "the exploitation of children." What might that experience portend in our current situation? The extreme Christian right and its allies, gorging on their own moral virtue, have helped put into power a man without a moral compass, a fact which they conveniently ignore though he is recklessly misogynist. As the new president gears up to eliminate the National Endowment for the Arts and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, how can we respond to threats against art about and by women and sexual minorities?

Bio

Allen Ellenzweig is an arts critic and author of *The Homoerotic Photograph: Male Images from Durieu/Delacroix to Mapplethorpe* (Columbia University Press, 1992; paperback, 2012). His cultural commentaries and criticism have appeared in *Art in America*, *The Village Voice*, *The Gay & Lesbian Review Worldwide*, *The Forward*, and the online journal, *Tablet*. He is currently working on a biography of the mid-twentieth-century photographer and gay cosmopolitan, George Platt Lynes, for Oxford University Press. He teaches in the Writing Program at Rutgers University.