



NEW RELEASE

## Arno Rafael Minkkinen **MINKKINEN**

Essays by Keith F. Davis, Vicki Goldberg,  
Arno Rafael Minkkinen  
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### Two hundred seasons of self-portraiture

**Working with the body in natural and urban landscapes—without assistants and without manipulation—Minkkinen’s self-portraiture stands as one of genre’s longest, nonstop continuities in the history of photography.**

This monograph is spanning five decades of work by the acclaimed Finnish-American photographer **Arno Rafael Minkkinen** (b. 1945). The 330-page hardcover book depicts over 270 images since 1969 to the present with important works from all 50 years. More than half of the images are largely unpublished, including over 100 recent works since 2005, with numerous discoveries from the 1980s and 1990s, plus significant groundbreaking images from the early 1970s, years before the self-portrait entered the mainstream of contemporary photography.

Whether he is working along lakeshores or beaches, in cities or forests, from majestic mountaintops or buried in the snow, Minkkinen aims to create a balance between the naked human form and the natural and urban worlds wherein we exist, reminding us that we are foremost beings without clothes. The results can be surreal, spiritual, and transformative, often tinged with a profound sense of humor. Photographed in nearly 30 countries and 20 American States, the comprehensive book also operates as a kind of artistic diary, divided into ten thematic chapters, each with a preface written by Minkkinen, as well as a closing memoir titled *Voyage of the Self*.

Published and exhibited worldwide, Arno Rafael Minkkinen’s works are held in over 75 prominent collections including among others, the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; the Centre Pompidou,

Paris; the Musée de l’Élysée, Lausanne; the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; and the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography.

#### Exhibitions

Galerie Camera Obscura, Paris  
Opening 24.10.2019

Edwynn Houk Gallery, New York  
Winter 2019 /2020

Galerie Valerie Bach / La Patinoire, Brussels  
Fall 2020

Photo & Contemporary, Turin  
Fall 2020

#### Book Award

Winning title German Photo Book Award 2019 / 20 – Gold

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From the essay by **Vicki Goldberg**:

*»It seems to me that many of the finest artists (including photographers) have only one or two ideas in a lifetime and spend that lifetime exploring whatever is deep within their minds and printed on their bones. Once Jackson Pollock became Jackson Pollock he never gave that artist up, and even Picasso, who had more ideas than many a savant, stayed true to cubism, his first major idea, save for a number of now and then's.*

(...)

*Yet Arno Rafael Minkkinen is quite singular in his pursuit of a singular subject—himself naked in the land—and a singular style. For fifty remarkably fruitful years he has persisted with and rung the changes on that subject—with a few asides, including women, his son, cities—that for a while expand that subject in idiosyncratic ways.*

(...)

*An inventor of bodily adventures, he might on occasion be suspected of breathing through gills, or even of having mastered antigravity ... his body still performing outrageously well though his hair has gone gray. He is still surprising, amusing, deadly serious, tricky, a maker of visual puns and conundrums, and sometimes hard to find in the photographs. He plays hide-and-seek, he plays how did he do that, he plays things are seldom what they seem, he produces fantasies, apparitions, puzzles, jokes. And could anyone but a Scandinavian bury himself in the snow with only his hands or his feet sticking out?»*

**Vicki Goldberg** is author of *The Power of Photography: How Photographs Changed Our Lives* and editor of *Photography in Print: Writings from 1816 to the Present*. Writer and critic for the New York Times, Vanity Fair, American Photo and other publications.

From the essay by **Keith F. Davis**:

*»Minkkinen's lifelong process of invention and discovery has been the product of a seemingly simple insight: to trust the validity of his own instincts. The result has been one of the modern era's most original and powerful bodies of photographic art. Far from representing any sort of creative "limitation," Minkkinen's dedicated meditation on his own form has generated an oeuvre of remarkable depth and meaning. While the artist's basic concerns have been consistent over time, his vision has grown steadily in range and nuance.*

(...)

*Minkkinen possesses a sly and expansive genius. His work draws us in with wit and a quasi-surrealist sense of improbability. These qualities underscore the artist's talent for pictorial invention and his physical flexibility and endurance.*

(...)

*After more than forty years of looking at and thinking about Minkkinen's work, I have come to a new appreciation for its philosophical implications—its affinity with some of the greatest intellectual currents of the last century.«*

**Keith F. Davis** is Senior Curator of Photography at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City, Missouri, and founder and director of the Hallmark Collection of Photography, one of the most largest and important collections of photography in America.

## Press images



01 Saunderstown, Rhode Island, 1974  
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02 Fosters Pond, 2000  
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03 From the Shelton, Looking East, New York, 2005  
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04 Oulujärvi Afternoon, Paltaniemi, Kajaani, Finland, 2009  
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05 Coralie, Fort Foucault, Niort, France, 2009  
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07 Maroon Bells Sunrise, Aspen, Colorado, 2012  
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