

EDWYNN HOUK GALLERY

ARNO RAFAEL MINKKINEN
50 YEARS

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4 January — 8 February 2020

Opening reception & book signing with the artist on Saturday, 4 January, 4-6pm

Edwynn Houk Gallery is pleased to announce *Arno Rafael Minkkinen: Fifty Years*, an exhibition of black and white photographs commemorating the artist's half a century long career. Selected from his expansive oeuvre, these fifteen images encompass every decade since Minkkinen began photographing in the early 1970s and span the globe, featuring his native Finland, his later homes of New York City and Andover, Massachusetts, as well as locations ranging from China to Portugal.

Celebrating fifty years since Minkkinen embarked on his epic exploration of the central theme of his nude body in nature, the exhibition illustrates his work's continuous capacity for innovation and self-reflection. Relying purely on the primal abilities of his own body, Minkkinen contorts his limbs into gravity defying poses that often appear physically impossible. The artist never digitally manipulates his negatives and works alone using a simple 9-second shutter release, affording him just a few moments to pose for each photograph. The resulting images are characterized by stillness and tranquility, but the process can be quite difficult or even dangerous, as Minkkinen pushes the limits of his body to capture each shot.

Deeply inspired by nature, Minkkinen allows the organic forms in his outdoor surroundings to guide the compositions of his images and the shapes his body assumes. He creates surreal self-portraits by seamlessly blending his own body with the natural elements so that each photograph becomes a visual puzzle of where the landscape ends and his limbs begin—as he “makes communion” with nature. His works are a reminder of the fickle nature of perception, and his process is a meditation on the interconnectedness of humans and nature, and how we experience the world around us through our physical bodies. Minkkinen's photographs are at once visceral and poetic, each one a new discovery in what he describes as his “continuity of vision.”

Arno Rafael Minkkinen received his MFA from the Rhode Island School of Design in 1974 and is a professor emeritus at the University of Massachusetts Lowell. The recipient of the 2006 Finnish State Art Prize in Photography, the Lucie Award for Achievement in Fine Art in 2013, and a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship in 2015, Minkkinen has also been knighted by the Finnish government with the Pro Finlandia Order of the Lion medal. Minkkinen's work has been the subject of eight solo monographs—most recently *Minkkinen*, a 300-page retrospective of his career released in November 2019—and has been exhibited internationally with over 100 solo shows and nearly 200 group exhibitions in galleries and museums worldwide. His photographs are in the permanent collections of the Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Musée d'art moderne de la Ville de Paris; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; High Museum, Atlanta; Maison Européenne de la Photographie, Paris; Kiasma-Contemporary Art Museum, Helsinki; Museo Nazionale Alinari della Fotografia, Florence; and the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.