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ARNO RAFAEL MINKKINEN**Performing for the Camera: Forty Years of Self-Portraits**

April 26 – June 29 2012

NEW YORK – Barry Friedman, Ltd. is pleased to present *Performing for the Camera: Forty Years of Self-Portraits* by the Finnish American photographer Arno Rafael Minkkinen. A reception for the artist will be held on Thursday, April 26, from 6-8 pm at Barry Friedman, Ltd., located at 515 West 26th Street.

Minkkinen was one of the first photographers, along with Cindy Sherman and Francesca Woodman, to turn the camera towards their own bodies. As Minkkinen states, “In 1971, at Apeiron Workshops in Millerton, New York, I stood naked in front of a mirror I had placed in the grass [*Self-Portrait, Millerton, NY, 1971*]. The following year I am floating on ice surrounded by flames [*Pachaug, CT, 1972*], a performance artist I suppose, but performance art with a purely photographic intent didn’t come into full swing until much later.” In Minkkinen’s work, there is a distinct separation between process and product—not a document of the performance and not a photograph to be manipulated afterwards. For Minkkinen, performance and process stop the moment the shutter fires. “You don’t need the rocket after the satellite is in orbit.” *Performing for the Camera: 40 Years of Self-Portraits* is a survey of more than 80 works spanning the course of Minkkinen’s 40-year career. The photographs are arranged in groupings that stress the visual and poetic connections between works from different periods of time.

Minkkinen’s single negative, black and white photographs of his own naked body interacting with the physical environment constitute a unique and ground breaking contribution to contemporary photography and have been exhibited in numerous museums around the world. Literally immersed in his surroundings, Minkkinen’s images show him buried in snowdrifts [*Fosters Pond, 1996*], submerged under rapids [*Waterfall, Pachaug, 1973*], hanging over precipices [*Grand Canyon, 1995*], seemingly walking on a pristine lake [*Fosters Pond, Millennium, 2000*] and performing a headstand on the hull of an upturned boat [*Kilberg, Vardø, Norway, 1990*]. Minkkinen’s photographs envision the human body as a powerfully unfamiliar form, transformed by its encounters with the world.

In her anthology, *Auto Focus, The Self-Portrait in Contemporary Photography*, curator Susan Bright writes, “The freedom associated with the nude body in a landscape has been explored extensively in painting, especially in Northern Europe and Scandinavia. Minkkinen celebrates this genre and has made it his own with his particular lightness of touch, energy and humor. ...With his acute understanding of how to transform a landscape through the insertion of his body, Minkkinen is one of the few contemporary photographers consistently using the pure body form in the making of self-portraits.”

In 2005, a retrospective of his work, *Saga: The Journey of Arno Rafael Minkkinen*, opened at the DeCordova Museum and Sculpture Park, Lincoln, MA. The exhibition has toured through Europe, China, and Canada. A catalogue of the same name, published by Chronicle Books, is available. The artist has had more than 30 solo museum exhibitions, including at the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography; Musée de l’Élysée, Lausanne; Centre d’Art Santa Monica, Barcelona; Musée d’Art Moderne et Contemporain, Nice; Fotografiska Museet at Moderna Museet, Stockholm; and Gällenkallala Museum, Helsinki. Minkkinen’s work is in the collection of many institutions, including The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Addison Gallery of American Art,

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d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris.

Arno Rafael Minkkinen was born in 1945 in Helsinki, Finland, and moved with his family to America in 1951. He received his MFA from Rhode Island School of Design, where he studied with Harry Callahan and Aaron Siskind. He is Professor of Art at the University of Massachusetts Lowell and Docent at Aalto University School of Art, Design and Architecture in Helsinki.

For visuals or additional information, please contact Tracey Norman, tracey@barryfriedmanltd.com