

# snap shots

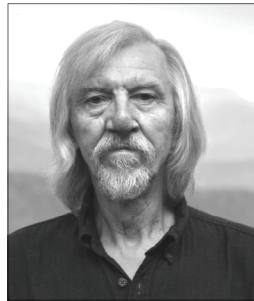
Volume 19 Number 8

April 2014

## ***Special Event: Arno Rafael Minkkinen Presents *Holding My Ground**** ***“Nothing has changed since day one, 43 years ago”***

**Sunday, April 6, 2014, Morse Auditorium at Boston University 1:00 P.M.**

Arno Rafael Minkkinen has been looking very closely at himself for over 43 years, and sharing what he sees with us. His thoughtful, occasionally startling and often humorous photographs of the body as elemental in the landscape have the power to make us look more carefully at the world; maybe make us laugh a little at what we see, or fail to see at first glance. They grace museum and gallery walls from New York to Moscow and Beijing, have been published in numerous magazines and at least three books, and serve as a basis for his continued work as a teacher of art and photography all over the world, most recently in Lowell, at the University of Massachusetts.



He says in a letter to PHSNE about his upcoming talk, “At this age, the past and future, windscreen and rear view mirror, have never been more fascinating,



*Arm, Fosters Pond, 1996*

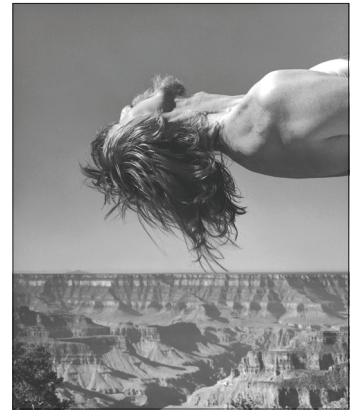
likely because the looking back part for folks my age is packed with decades of amazing twists and turns, up and down, while what's in front of the hood is now this incredible panorama, a crazy collage filled with everything to come, all demanding to get into the picture at the same time. It makes you want to stop the car and just breathe in the view. Sure, that's because life is short and we never know when that windscreen will suddenly shut down.

The title, *Holding My Ground*, means staying true to the fundamental tenet of my work: the lens decides what the picture will be. And now, using the “raw” digital file, I can control the output to produce an image as the camera saw it. The title also refers to many other aspects of a life in photography, about going the distance, discovering what that distance could and should be, and exercising enormous patience in the process.”

PHSNE is enormously proud to be able to host, in collaboration with the Photographic Resource Center at Boston University and the New England School of Photography, an afternoon of images and conversation with this world-renown photographer and teacher.

Morse Auditorium is located at 602 Commonwealth Ave., Boston. Parking is difficult, and public transportation is *strongly* advised. The Green line MBTA stop for Blandford Street is right in front of Morse, one stop west of Kenmore Square.

Courtesy of Robert Klein Gallery, Boston



© Arno Rafael Minkkinen  
*Grand Canyon, 1995*

### **Coming Soon: *Photographica 81***

Join us on April 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> at the Americal Center in Wakefield, MA for the 81st *Photographica*. Once again managed by John Dockery, this popular bi-annual event draws dealers, members, and guests from near and far. We look forward to a busy and enjoyable weekend. There will be an auction after the show closes on Saturday. The list of items to be auctioned can be viewed at [phsne.org](http://phsne.org). See page 4 for directions to the Americal Center.

## More from Sally Matson

PHSNE members who attended the February meeting enjoyed a highly informative and entertaining presentation by Sally Matson, portraying famed photographer Margaret Bourke-White. Following up on questions asked by audience members, Matson wrote,

“I was asked if she was a mentor to others. I wouldn't call her a mentor—she didn't take the time to help younger or less experienced photographers. But she did influence hundreds of photographers. Those who credited her were Gordon Parks and Robert Frank, both noting that the Bourke-White-Erskine Caldwell collaboration *You Have Seen Their Faces* made a huge impression on them as documentary photography. Daisy Chappelle also credited Margaret; she was killed covering the Vietnam War.

One of audience members asked if there is a Bourke-White photograph from the Elgin Watch Factory. I found it....making machinery look like art. It is listed on my bibliography: *Margaret Bourke-White* by Susan Goldman Rubin, page 34; taken in 1930 for *Fortune*. That book has some of her most powerful photos; you can go to your libraries to find it.”

Her email ended with this statement: “What a warm and welcoming group you are.”

Recently we came across a website featuring unusual photos of Margaret Bourke-White at work. See [www.shootingfilm.net/2013/06/interesting-portraits-of-margaret.html](http://www.shootingfilm.net/2013/06/interesting-portraits-of-margaret.html).

### PHSNE Membership

**New members are invited to join for half the rates for the first year.** PHSNE membership is \$15 for students, \$35 for individuals and institutions, \$40 for a family, and \$45 for foreign membership. Join or renew online at [phsne.org/join](http://phsne.org/join) or [phsne.org/renew](http://phsne.org/renew), or send a check in U.S. dollars, drawn on a U.S. bank or dollar denominated international money order. Members should check the expiration date on the *snap shots* mailing label before sending in dues.

Send payments, changes of address, and other contact information, to Joe Walters Jr, PHSNE Membership Chair, P.O. Box 650189, West Newton, MA 02465. (Call: 617-826-9294; email: [membership@phsne.org](mailto:membership@phsne.org); or use the Web form at [phsne.org/contacts](http://phsne.org/contacts)).

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## Archivists Warn of Vanishing Visual Heritage

Digital photography is posing a serious problem for archivists. Digital files aren't permanent and must be restored in new formats periodically, involving software purchases and high labor costs, a significant concern at a time when museum and archives budgets are strained. Photographs, on the other hand, can be stored indefinitely at no cost beyond the original archiving. While it is true that photographs don't last forever, black and white photos will last about a hundred fifty years or more, and most color photographs, if stored properly, about fifty years except for highly specialized formats with limited shelf life.

Nicolette Bromberg, Visual Materials Archivist of Special Collections for the University of Washington Libraries, wrote in a letter to the editor

of *New Strait Times* ([bit.ly/1ahwsq4](http://bit.ly/1ahwsq4)), “I can get the Smith family photographs that Grandmother Smith put into a shoebox 50 years ago and forgot about it until her family cleaned out the house. I have packed up photo collections from families, businesses and organizations that contained images well over 100 years old that are perfectly fine. But if Grandmother Smith sticks some photo disks in her shoebox, by the time an archive gets them, they will be long gone.” She adds that digital files “are commonly destroyed and the creator only keeps the one or two (images) that the creator thinks are important.”

PHSNE member and past president Ruth Thomasian, Executive Director of Project SAVE Armenian Photograph Archives, and Suzanne Adams, Project SAVE's Archivist, echo these concerns. They add that the challenge of preserving digital images is multifaceted and requires much thought and adjustment of procedures, initially and on-going.



Project SAVE Archives/  
Araxie Zakian, Drexel Hill PA  
Photographer unknown

## Terence Falk: Archiving the Photographic Discovery of a Lifetime

My work as a photo historian and archivist began in 1975 when I received a phone call from my brother that would lead me on an incredible journey. He was starting his career as an art researcher and historian, specializing in forgotten or overlooked American artists.



“Do you remember me telling you about the research I am doing on Alfred Waud, the Civil War artist”, he says, “well, I have tracked down his present day descendants living in Vermont. I found something in their attic and I need your expertise. We need to go back to Vermont right away. I’m not going to say more. You’ll see for yourself.”

With that enigmatic proposal, we drove to a quintessential country home in the southern part of Vermont. After greeting the owners, we climbed up into the attic and there before me was an old trunk. I turned back the

ancient lid and inside were stacks of boxes and folders wrapped in paper. I carefully unfolded one of the paper folders and was immediately stunned. Glowing albumen prints depicting the Civil War lay before me. They looked as if they were made yesterday. Under that print was another, then another, then



*Confederate Dead in Ditch, Antietam, Maryland 1862; Alexander Gardner. Library of Congress*

more. It was overwhelming. The condition was incredible. Perhaps the dryness of the attic held back the onslaught of mold. Perhaps the layers of paper and the trunk kept light from destroying the images. Even though acidic materials surrounded the images, they survived beautifully!

I gazed in stupefied wonder as one iconic image after another appeared: images of the aftermaths of bloody battles, views of decimated cities, the series of “The Execution of the Lincoln Assassination Conspirators”, by Alexander Gardner. The work of O’Sullivan, Russell, and The Brady Studio were all here.

The people we were visiting were not related to the photographers but to Alfred Waud, a Civil War era artist and illustrator for newspapers. While creating illustrations for articles about the war, Waud befriended the photographers and received prints from

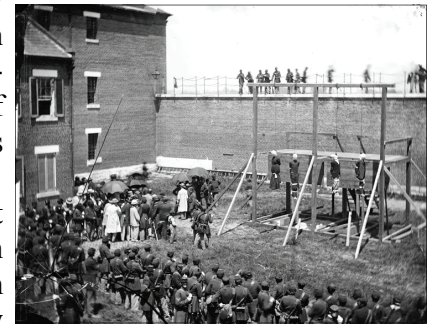
them to use as source material. This collection remained in the Waud family for over 110 years.

It didn’t end with the Civil War, however; the subject changed from war to the exploration and dominance of the American West. Print after print of images such as Timothy O’Sullivan’s iconic view of his wagons in “Desert Sand Hills near Sink of Carson, Nevada”, as well as views by Muybridge, Watkins, and Russell. The collection reflected perfectly not only the photographers’ interpretation of the Civil War, but revealed how they adapted their vision to a new subject matter: the landscape of the west and man’s interaction with it.

A few weeks went by and the collection was purchased from the owners. Now my work truly began. I meticulously inventoried each and every print, housed them in archival enclosures and created a master list organized by photographer, size, subject, date and other notations if available. The collection consisted of over 500 albumen prints from the Civil War and the American west. It is considered to be one of the finest and most comprehensive collections of its kind ever found.

Ultimately, the collection was sold to a gallery in New York City, and my work as archivist was done. I will never forget the experience of gently cradling the rich chocolate brown prints in my gloved hands and feeling a direct connection to the photographers who labored to create them.

~Terence Falk



*Execution of Lincoln's Assassination Conspirators, A. Gardner, photographer. c1865; Library of Congress*

### Biographical information:

Terence Falk is a fine art photographer, archivist and educator who has worked in the photography world for over thirty-five years. He has taught at The International Center of Photography and the Fashion Institute of Technology in NYC and Maine Media Workshops, Rockport, ME. Presently, Falk is on the faculty of Paier College of Art, Hamden, Connecticut.

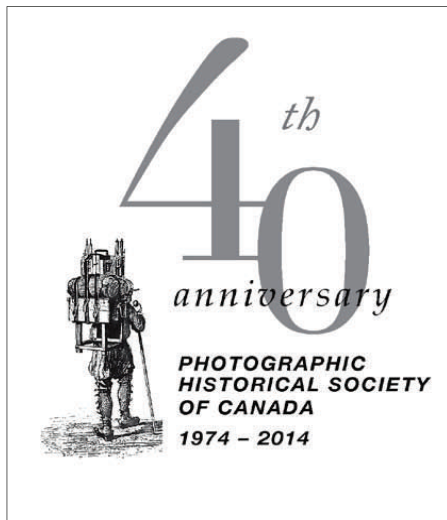
Falk created the service Archiving Solutions, which specializes in the preservation and archiving of collections of historic material for organizations and companies. He worked as editor for *AskArt.com*, an online artist database, creating over 5,000 artist’s biographies for artists from the 1700’s to the present.

## Congratulations to our Canadian Colleagues

The Photographic Historical Society of Canada (PHSC) is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year. In his newsletter message to members, PHSC President Mark Singer highlighted the many events that would mark the celebration. He noted that, “The fact that a club dedicated to photographic history has thrived for 40 years testifies as much to the hard work and dedication of the individuals involved as to the enduring popularity of photography.”

Anyone living near or traveling to Toronto might want to take in one of their special events: a special Image Symposium on April 26th and 27th or a month-long display and special programs at historic Campbell House in May as part of the Scotiabank CONTACT Photography Festival.

For more information, visit [phsc.ca](http://phsc.ca).



Special 40th Anniversary PHSC logo

### PHSNE Meetings

Meetings are usually held on the first Sunday of each month, September to June, at 1:30 p.m. preceded by a mini trade fair at 12:30 and an open meeting of the PHSNE Board at 11:00 a.m.

### Upcoming meetings:

**May 4**—Jay Landry, Owner, Panopticon, discusses his book *Instant Connections*, at the Woman’s Club Workshop in Newton.

**June 1**—Field trip. TBA.

### Driving directions to Americal Center:

I-95 to exit 39, North Ave. toward Reading/Wakefield (right turn on North from the south; left turn from the north). Drive approximately 1.5 miles, then turn left at Main St. Destination is on the left: 467 Main St., Wakefield, MA 01880.

Free parking available next door at the school, behind the building, and on Main St.

### Public transportation:

The Wakefield station of the Haverhill rail line is within 1/2 mile of the Center, and MBTA buses #136 and #137 stop in front of the building. Details are available at [mbta.com](http://mbta.com). Use weekend schedule

### PHSNE Online

PHSNE’s Web site is online at [phsne.org](http://phsne.org). Join the PHSNE Forum online discussion moderated by Joe Walters; sign up and log in at [phsne.org/forum](http://phsne.org/forum). For an archive of back issues of *snap shots* and PHSNE history, visit [phsne.org/archive](http://phsne.org/archive). Scheduling changes due to weather conditions or other factors will be posted on this website.

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Photographic Historical Society of New England  
Next Meeting: Sunday, April 6, 2014, 1:00 P.M.  
Morse Auditorium, Boston University  
Photographica 81—Americal Center, Wakefield MA  
April 12-13, 2014; doors open 9:00 A.M.



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