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## **GRIFFIN MUSEUM OF PHOTOGRAPHY ANNOUNCES 2016 FOCUS AWARD RECIPIENTS**

**Mingle with local and national leaders in the art, craft and business of photography at the Griffin Museum of Photography in Winchester!**

**WINCHESTER, MA – August 23, 2016** – The Griffin Museum of Photography (<http://www.griffinmuseum.org/>) announced the recipients of its eleventh annual Focus Awards.

“This year’s Focus awardees are a combination of local and international photography trendsetters and innovators. The Focus Awards recognize the hard work, dedication and enthusiasm of a select group of enthusiastic, creative individuals and organizations dedicated to the art and business of photography,” says Paula Tognarelli, executive director of the Griffin Museum. <http://www.griffinmuseum.org/blog/focus-awards-2016/>

This year’s Focus Award recipients are:

- Lifetime Achievement – Barbara Norfleet
- New England Beacon – Karen Haas
- Scribe – Teju Cole

**The Lifetime Achievement Award** is given to an individual whose ongoing commitment to photography has created far reaching impact; **The New England Beacon Award** is given to a local individual whose work brings prominence to the local photographic scene; **The Scribe Award** recognizes an individual for excellence in writing on the subject of photographic arts.

### ***Barbara Norfleet -- Lifetime Achievement Award***

This bio has been extrapolated from a Swarthmore College award ceremony with permission from President Rebecca Chopp.

Barbara Norfleet, is a renowned documentary photographer, retired senior lecturer in Visual and Environmental Studies at Harvard, and retired curator of the Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts at Harvard. She was trained as a social scientist, where she discovered a passion for photography and enjoyed a long and distinguished career exploring American social history via photography. Barbara Norfleet is one of the first to bring professional training as a sociologist to the study of photographs of everyday life. Her own work as a documentary photographer has been exhibited and celebrated in numerous museums.

Norfleet grew up in the Philadelphia area and attended Swarthmore College in the early '40s. She majored in economics and graduated with high honors in 1947, and went on to attend graduate school in a Radcliffe-Harvard program, where she earned a Ph.D. in social relations in psychology in 1951. She briefly served as a research associate, and began a 20-year teaching career at Harvard, first as a lecturer in Social Sciences and then in Visual and Environmental Studies. In the mid-'60s, Norfleet embarked on a dual career as photographer and photographic curator and scholar.

Her training in sociology enabled her to see the value in a type of photography that no one had paid serious attention to before - the work of professional photographers hired to document everyday events like weddings, beauty pageants, society balls, and local business openings. She understood that these photographers created social and cultural documents that offered both commentary and critique of modern American life.

In 1969, Norfleet began teaching a newly conceived course called Photography as Social Description. There were originally 12 places allotted to that class, but 170 students showed up to the first meeting, causing a near riot. The course became one of the most popular ever taught at Harvard. In 1972, Norfleet became Curator of Photography at the Carpenter Center and began traveling across the country, culling forgotten prints and negatives from the attics and basements of professional studios that were active from the 1930s to the '60s. She saved thousands of documentary photographs that would otherwise have been lost. She also began a long career of publishing her own photographs documenting American culture in the latter half of the 20th century.

Norfleet has published numerous articles and books on photography and its importance in documenting the details of everyday life, including, among others, *The Champion Pig* (1979), *Killing Time* (1982), *All the Right People* (1986), *Illusion of Orderly Progress* (1999) and *When We Liked Ike: Looking for Postwar America* (2001). Her own photographs appear in many collections, including the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, and the George Eastman House.

Among her many awards as an artist, teacher, and curator are a Massachusetts Artists Fellowship, a Guggenheim Fellowship, a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship in Photography and the Aaron Siskind Award. She was an Honoree of the Fifth National Women in Photography Conference. She was awarded an honorary doctorate from Swarthmore College in 2014.

Barbara Norfleet's work as a teacher, photographer, curator, and writer has broadened the horizons of both sociology and photography. Through her photographs and those of others, she has brought to public attention a complex and moving vision of 20th century American life. She has given us photographs that enable us to see the rich fabric of modern life.

### ***Karen Haas – New England Beacon Award***

Karen Haas has been the Lane Curator of Photographs at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston since 2001, where she is responsible for a large collection of photographs by American modernists, Charles Sheeler, Edward Weston, Ansel Adams, and Imogen Cunningham. The Lane Collection, which has recently been given to the Museum, numbers more than 6,000 prints and ranges across the entire history of western photography. Before coming to the MFA, she received her MA from Boston University and held various curatorial positions in museums and private collections, including the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, the BU Art Gallery, and the Addison Gallery of American Art in Andover. Her recent activities include exhibitions, such as *Gordon Parks: Back to Fort Scott*, *Edward Weston: Leaves of Grass*, and *Bruce Davidson: East 100<sup>th</sup> Street*, and publications, such as *An Enduring Vision: Photographs from the Lane Collection*; *Common Wealth: Art by African Americans in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*; *Ansel Adams*; and *The Photography of Charles Sheeler: American Modernist*.

**Teju Cole—Scribe Award**

Teju Cole is the author of *Every Day Is for the Thief*, *Open City*, and *Known and Strange Things*, and has contributed numerous introductions and chapters to books on photography. His honors include the PEN/Hemingway Award, the Internationaler Literaturpreis, the New York City Book Award, and the Windham Campbell Prize for Fiction. His photography has been widely exhibited, and he is the Photography Critic of the *New York Times Magazine*, where his "On Photography" column was a finalist for a 2016 National Magazine Award.

**Awards Presentation and Celebration**

This year's event is being held in Winchester, MA, home of the Griffin Museum of Photography. The event will take place on October 30, 2016 at the Griffin Museum of Photography at 67 Shore Road. A mimosa brunch will take place at 11 AM on October 30th, 2016 at the museum. The awards ceremony is being held at NOON on October 30, 2016 at the museum in Winchester. The master of ceremonies is nationally recognized photographer **Lou Jones**. Award presenters include **Susan Meiselas**, documentary photographer, will present the Lifetime Award; **Arno Minkkinen**, photographer and educator, will present the New England Beacon Award and **Amitava Kumar**, author and educator, will present the Scribe Award.

**Susan Meiselas** is a documentary photographer who lives and works in New York. She is the author of *Carnival Strippers* (1976), *Nicaragua* (1981), *Kurdistan: In the Shadow of History* (1997), *Pandora's Box* (2001), and *Encounters with the Dani* (2003). She has co-edited two published collections: *El Salvador, Work of 30 Photographers* (1983) and *Chile from Within* (1990), rereleased as an e-book in 2013, and also co-directed two films: *Living at Risk* (1985) and *Pictures from a Revolution* (1991) with Richard P. Rogers and Alfred Guzzetti. Meiselas is well known for her documentation of human rights issues in Latin America. Her photographs are included in American and international collections. In 1992 she was made a MacArthur Fellow and most recently was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship (2015).

**Arno Minkkinen** is a Finnish American photographer, essayist, educator and curator with over 100 solo shows and 200 group exhibitions at galleries and museums worldwide. His teaching career has been extensive and international in scope; currently he is Emeritus Professor of Art at the University of Massachusetts Lowell and tenured docent at the University of Art & Design Helsinki.

Major monographs include: *Frostbite* (1978), *Waterline* (Marval, Aperture, and Otava, 1995, 25<sup>th</sup> Rencontres d'Arles Book Prize), *Body Land* (Motta, Nathan, and Smithsonian, 1997), *SAGA: The Journey of Arno Rafael Minkkinen: Thirty-Five Years of Photographs* (Chronicle, 2005), *Homework: The Finnish Photographs* (Like, Ltd, Helsinki, 2008) and *Balanced Equation* (Lodima Press, 2010).

Minkkinen's works are held in over 75 prominent museum and institutional collections worldwide, such as the Musée d'art moderne and the Georges Pompidou Center in Paris, the Musée de l'Élysée in Lausanne, the Contemporary Art Museum Kiasma in Helsinki, the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Museum of Fine Arts Boston, the Center for Creative Photography in Tucson, the Museum of Fine Arts Houston, and the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography. Twelve galleries represent his work: Edwynn Houk Gallery in New York, Robert Klein Gallery in Boston, and Galerie Camera Obscura in Paris with other worldwide gallery representations in Beijing, Bruxelles, Helsinki, Lisbon, Luxembourg, Köln, Moscow, Oslo, and Torino.

Minkkinen is a recipient of the Order of the Lion First Class from the Finnish Government in 1993, the 2006 Finnish State Art Prize in Photography, the 2013 Lucie Award for Outstanding Achievement in Fine Art, and a 2015 John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship.

**Amitava Kumar** is the author of several books of nonfiction and a novel. His latest book is *Lunch with a Bigot: The Writer in the World*. Kumar's essay "Pyre," in *Granta* 130, was chosen by Jonathan Franzen for *Best American Essays 2016*. He is a professor of English at Vassar College and this year he is a Guggenheim Fellow for nonfiction.

For more information and tickets, please see our website, call 781-729-1158 or email [mike@griffinmuseum.org](mailto:mike@griffinmuseum.org). There are a limited amount of tickets for the mimosa brunch and focus award ceremony on October 30, 2016. Tickets are \$85 for brunch/awards ceremony. There are limited (20) FREE tickets for full-time students admission with valid school ID (for award ceremony only/brunch not included).

The Griffin Museum created the annual awards in 2006 to recognize individuals who have made critical contributions to the promotion of photography. They are one of the few to recognize the work of those who have been instrumental in building greater awareness of the photographic arts in the general public.

The Griffin Museum of Photography is a nonprofit organization dedicated solely to the art of photography. Through our many exhibitions, programs and lectures, we strive to encourage a broader understanding and appreciation of the visual, emotional and social impact of photographic art.

Sponsored in part by the Cummings Foundation and Panopticon Imaging.

Visit [www.griffinmuseum.org](http://www.griffinmuseum.org) and <http://www.griffinmuseum.org/blog/focus-awards-2015/>

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