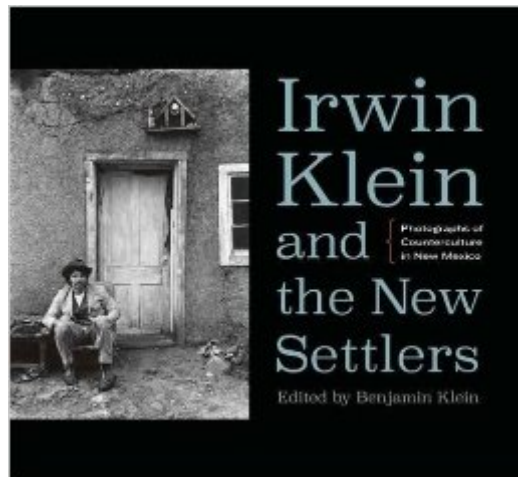


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Irwin Klein And The New Settlers: Photographs Of Counterculture In New Mexico



Synopsis

Dropouts, renegades, utopians. Children of the urban middle class and old beatniks living alone, as couples, in families, or as groups in the small Nuevomexicano towns. When photographer Irwin Klein began visiting northern New Mexico in the mid-1960s, he found these self-proclaimed New Settlers "and many others" in the back country between Santa Fe and Taos. His black-and-white photographs captured the life of the counterculture's transition to a social movement. His documentation of these counterculture communities has become well known and sought after for both its sheer beauty and as a primary source about a largely undocumented group. By blending Klein's unpublished work with essays by modern scholars, Benjamin Klein (Irwin's nephew) creates an important contribution to the literature of the counterculture and especially the 1960s. Supporting essays emphasize the importance of a visual record for interpreting this lifestyle in the American Southwest. Irwin Klein and the New Settlers reinforces the photographer's reputation as an astute observer of back-to-the-land, modern-day Emersonians whose communes represented contemporary Waldens.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I was a close friend of Irwin Klein and after his death did my best to collect his photographs and present them to museums. The hard work of Benjamin and Nikolai Klein has now made one set of his photos accessible to photographers, scholars, and the general public. The University Press of Nebraska has issued a beautiful book with eighty large photos--there was no skimping here. Prof.

Benjamin Klein has provided an excellent, well documented, scholarly analysis of social movements like that depicted here, with numerous suggestions for further reading. Irwin's own introduction to a collection of these photos is reprinted in this volume. What he caught in these photos were not merely wild, immature hippies who could easily be dismissed, but, he wrote, "American archetypes like the pioneer and the yeoman farmer." When I lived overseas, I hung many of these photos on my walls to remind me of home: they were a great comfort in a difficult situation. They also made a great impression on two photographers who saw them and evaluated them on their artistic merit. I hope that there will be another book showing Irwin's photos of New York City's street scenes. Most of his subjects were not aware they were being photographed because he covered his camera with black tape and literally "shot from the hip" much of the time. Both the configuration of the City and the emotions of those passing through it were revealed. Kudos to Benjamin, Nikolai, and Alan Klein for the gift they have given us.

A thoughtful look at the counter culture in the 1960s. Lisa Love got the headliners while Klein focused on those who were truly trying to change the way they lived/were brought up. I knew some of these people and a lot more like them. The Millennials today ought to be reading about these folks. This generation took down a President and changed the world.

Benjamin Klein and his collaborators have gathered a visual time trip "and love letter" to a time and place filled with hope, romanticism, and broken dreams. At center stage are the evocative photographs of Klein's uncle, photographer and canny observer Irwin Klein whose documentation of this vision quest of the late 60s captures both the ideological naivete and the tragic grandeur of the New Mexico commune. Sensitive essays heighten the reader's enjoyment without getting in the way of the beautiful, sad images. The New Settlers were every new settler following a dream to an uncertain outcome. Baby boomers will see themselves on every page, whether or not they answered the call to live on the land or not. The book is filled with those lost dreams, dusty homesteads, and beautiful youth. I read it through and then started going through the pages all over again.

Irwin Klein and the New Settlers is a hauntingly beautiful book! For more than four decades I've beheld the late Klein's photographs in various media -- most recently via the website his family put up to curate his oeuvre: [...]. But beholding these images in large format expertly printed on glossy stock made the experience as though I were seeing them for the first time. This publication ensures

Klein's place in the pantheon of 20th-century artist-documentarians. Scholars who work on the back-to-the-land and communal movements of the Vietnam War era, historians and visual anthropologists alike, will find Klein's photos to be an indispensable source on the quotidian past. For counterculture radicals who reinhabited the American Southwest during the long 1960s, this book offers an FSA-quality survey of their latter-day pioneering.

No one captured the spirit and essence of the '60s southwest American communes better than Irwin Klein. With a Leica, black and white film, and natural lighting, he created an authentic and artistic record of this unique and short-lived period of back-to-the-land '60s idealism. Poet Gary Snyder, in *Earth House Hold*, described the '60s communards: "Men, women and children" all of whom together hoped to follow the timeless path of love and wisdom, in affectionate company with sky, wind, clouds, trees, waters, animals, and grasses "this is the drive." In this newly-published book, you can see the optimism, the earnestness, and yes, the impracticalities of these young, mostly urban people who left the cities for the harsh climate of the high desert of New Mexico. Irwin was a photographer who was obviously in tune with his subjects, and they with him, so you are getting an inside look at a period now lost in time, with these spare and artistic photos.

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