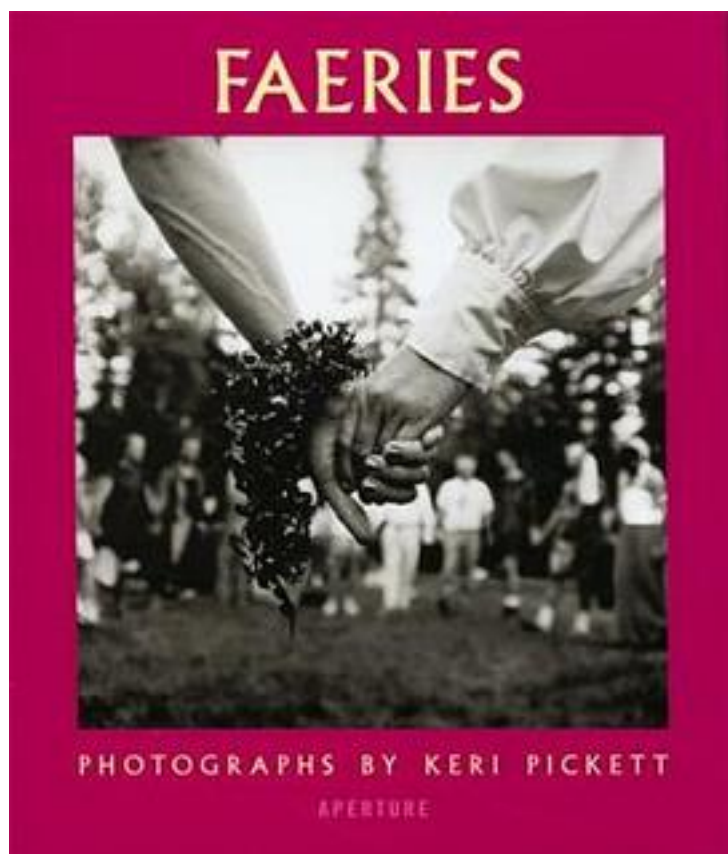


Faeries



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著者:James Broughton

出版者:Aperture

出版时间:2000-06-30

装帧:Hardcover

isbn:9780893818968

Faeries, photographer Keri Pickett's latest project, welcomes us into a secluded community in the wooded Minnesota sanctuary of Kawashaway, home of the self-proclaimed "radical faeries," a name chosen by a group of mostly gay men to express pride and solidarity in their differences. Here, in this idyllic, remote setting, an annual retreat takes place: a week of camp fires, communal bonding, and gender

bending.

Pickett's photographs span six years of these summer gatherings, at which people from across the country join together as friends and family. This group forms a circle of souls, individuals seeking to find their place in a culture that seems to prize individuality but frequently distrusts those who are different. As the book relates through interviews with participants of the gatherings, the faerie community provides for much more than a frolic in the woods. It has become a stabilizing support network--a new radical means of extended family.

Pickett's elegant black-and-white images are intimate records of the spiritual exploration and the unique closeness found far away from everyday life. Her photographs convey comfort and comedy, solace and joy, exuberance and contemplation. The surprising sight of men in drag against the backdrop of a forest lends the volume an unusual visual drama. She captures the poignant gesture of an embrace, the naturalness and beauty of naked bodies, and a gleefully chaotic abundance of fancy frocks. Through these details Faeries reveals the cautious and joyful evolution of a community with members across the United States.

An extended text, transcribed and edited from conversations with members of the faeries, accompanies the photographs. In their own words, they discuss friendship, the process of coming out, magic, religion, and ritual. The voices speak of self-discovery, personal growth, and a sought-after sense of safety--themes gracefully and effectively echoed by Pickett's classically beautiful and often humorous photographs.

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