

CREATIVE BOOM

Growing Up Travelling:
Photographs that reveal the inside world of Irish traveller children

WRITTEN BY: TORA BAKER - 2 April 2020



When American photographer [Jamie Johnson](#) visited Ireland for the first time in 2014; she immediately felt connected to the Irish travellers living there. She spent the next five years going back to Galway, Limerick, Cork and Tipperary, taking portraits of the communities, particularly the children.

These images have been brought together in a new book, published by [Kehrer Verlag](#), *Growing Up Travelling*, giving us a glimpse at a world that we don't often see – one between freedom and ostracism. There's a sensitivity to her photographs; a kindness and understanding—a hint at shared intimacy; always with an authentic feel.

As the book's description reads: "Fascinated by the resilience and optimism of the children, who are proud of the culture and traditions of the Irish Travellers, Johnson's portraits aim to promote the perception and respect of children as such, far removed from the common prejudices of society."

In the foreword by Mary M. Burke, she writes: "Contemporary Travellers share common descent and history and possess discrete cultural practices: boundary rules against outsiders, strict gender roles, an aspiration to be mobile, an adaptive tradition of self-employment and involvement in marginal trades, a preference for flexibility of occupation over job security, a pattern of providing short-term labour in accordance with market demands, adherence to Catholicism involving public displays of religiosity, early school-leaving, early marriage and substantial dowry payments when the families are affluent, unique material and oral cultures, a tradition of meeting with other Travellers at certain major annual festivals, and distinct rituals of death and cleansing."

Growing Up Travelling by Jamie Johnson will soon be available via kehrerverlag.com.









