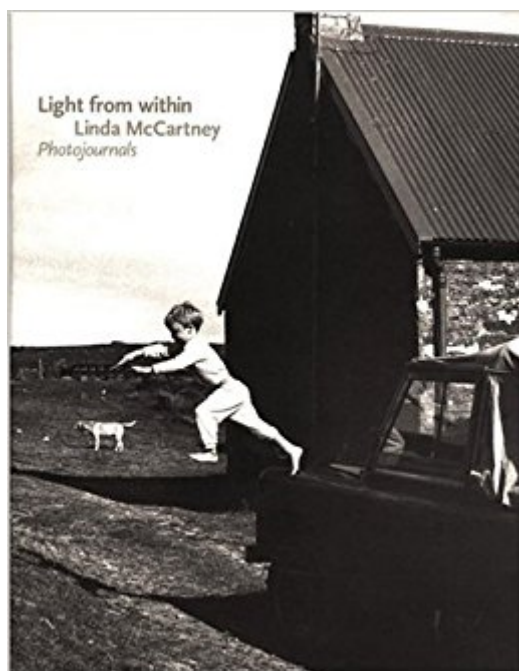


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# Light From Within: Photojournals



## Synopsis

The images of *Light From Within* reflect Linda's wide range of passions and interests. The photos chosen include portraits taken during her years as the Fillmore East photographer in the 1960s; more recent portraits of her family and illustrious friends; landscapes some quietly lovely, some revealing a sense of irony; and finally, photos from every era of her life that seize the passing moment and convey a spare beauty as well as Linda's own unique brand of surrealism. This unique collection is intuitive, poetic, and resonant with meaning.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The late Linda McCartney was a prodigious filmmaker, cookbook author and photographer. *Light from Within: Photojournals* follows Linda McCartney's Sixties and other collections of her b&w shots, taken mostly in the late '60s, '70s and early '80s. Forty duotone and 75 color shots including Allen Ginsberg standing in front of the Hampton Jitney bus; Paul, Stella and James McCartney in a farmyard; the Grateful Dead in Central Park were chosen by daughter Mary and Martin Harrison, with a foreword from McCartney's Beatle husband. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc.

Linda McCartney photographed for over 30 years, and her work has been exhibited in more than 70 cities in 12 countries. Her previous books include *Linda McCartney's Sixties*, *Roadworks*, *Wide Open*, and *Sun Prints*, as well as several cookbooks.

Light from Within was one of Linda McCartney's last projects, completed by her daughter Mary and Martin Harrison, and subtitled "photojournals". Before the advent of photography, journals were written records, of journeys, or just life, and keeping a journal is often recommended to writers, as a way of capturing moments of revelation and reflection that might be of use in another sort of work altogether. In fact, the word photography means writing with light. This book is a real journal, a record of the author's preoccupations, her perceptions, and most of all, her tastes in life. The phrase "light from within," of course, is also a lyric from another of her last projects, a song named from the chorus: "Oppression won't win. The light comes from within." She's clearly thinking of another kind of light than sunlight, which was crucial to her photographic methods. She preferred to photograph natural light falling on unposed people and the natural world, usually animals or landscapes. But the light from within is a different concept, and seems to have meant the light of the human mind and spirit, shining out from people's faces. It can mean curiosity, warmth, passion, humor, vision, and above all, creativity. So this book has been organized by the artist to reflect the light from without falling on the light from within. In fact, I think Linda McCartney had a positive genius for finding something revelatory in the most ordinary scenes. (Which reveals that they weren't ordinary at all?) The cover photo is a case in point, and one we have seen before, unlike most of the photos in the book. It is not a conventionally well composed picture--there are too many focal points: a boy, a girl, a man, and a dog haphazardly arranged in an unimproved yardscape. But it is a great shot of a family: a flying five-year-old boy, a nine-year-old girl hunkered down over something in the grass, and the pater familias, who, from his expression, is offering admonishment to the flying child. The dog is calmly doing his dog thing. We will probably never know what the boy is doing: from the way he's holding his hands, he might be making a shadow figure, and watching to see how it will change when he moves. Perhaps, like any kid that age, he just feels like \*jumping.\* It is also not clear what the girl finds so fascinating in the grass, or why the father (clothed so conventionally in robe and slippers) is taking a morning stroll on top of a fence. (And \*if\* the father is telling the boy not to jump carelessly from Land Rovers, he's missing the irony of his own perch, one of the many pitfalls of parenthood.) The people and the animal are all related-- and busy being themselves. Did Linda McCartney go out looking for scenes that might attract her? It seems more likely that she waited for them to happen next to her elbow and then whipped her camera out. She finds what she's looking for in faces very often: children's faces, artists' faces, aged faces, in people unaware they're being photographed, or carelessly aware. The first photo in the book is of her son James peering over her shoulder, trying perhaps to understand the magical act his mother performs with a camera, not

conscious that his curious face in the rear-view mirror is magical. She catches Simon and Garfunkel in intense conversation under a leafless forest of microphones. She loves the contrast (and resemblance) between youth and age: a springy five-year-old riding a mechanical giraffe and an elderly man in suit, tie, and wedding ring, making his slower way with two canes. If a picture composes itself accidentally, she has no objection to snapping that, as when the three plump dancers in blue, yellow, and pink confront Brian Clarke who is stork-like in black and offers them cheerful homage. But the subjects are the point, not the abstract composition. Twice she takes a great shot immediately after a more conventionally composed photo has broken up: of a group of aged men in front of a wall, and a group of children wearing hats like flowers. There is innocence in the children's waves, and merriment in an old man's grin. In fact, the sight of this photographer tends to elicit grins and sometimes waves: in the case of her husband, he waves one foot from a ladder in one of his vaudeville imitations. And there is a stunning photo of McCartney's grown daughters, Mary and Stella, who glow with quiet inner passion and seem quite unaware of their own beauty. McCartney was in love with the life and beauty of animals, and one glorious shot is of an animal of transcendent homeliness, the javelina, standing on a lawn transfigured by the setting sun. Besides getting drunk on her own senses, the photographer got the shot. The mystery of beauty is everywhere in this book, especially the most unlikely places. And the last series of photos is particularly moving, in the context of the photographer's life at the time she was composing it: a set of shots of tables and whole walls wrecked by the efforts of artists to render their visions in paint. They are like battlefields after the shooting stops. The next-to-last photo in the book is a self-portrait of the artist looking into a cracked mirror, standing straight and serene, a woman with very good bones and very short hair, who was an instinctive and accomplished artist. It's a beautifully composed picture of meanings that I cannot render in words. If we wish to learn to see the beauty that is all around us, all the time, this book is a fine place to start--to start looking at the faces we pass in the street, at our own families and friends, at the people who sell us newspapers, and at the passing poodles and javelinas of life.

I love Linda McCartney's work, but I especially enjoy the pictures of her family and her home-life. It is a great book for those who want to have a look through the McCartney's home window. I find it amazing that she has had the courage to show such personal treasures as these pictures.

Its even more interesting than I expected! Wings fans will love it. Its a great gift for a Wings fan!

As a long time Beatles fan, it was great to get a peek into some of the private photo's of Paul McCartney and family. Love the photo's at the farm in Scotland. Linda McCartney had opportunities we can only dream of. Can you imagine, being a receptionist at Town and Country and excepting an invitation to be on a Yacht with the Rolling Stones, you bring your camera, take some great pictures and your life takes off in a whole different direction. Great pictures, great memories, nice book to add to the Beatles Library.

Liked it. She took some beautiful photos. But not enough of Paul for me. But some really nice ones. But I would liked to have more of Paul and the kids.

I thought there would be more family photos, so, I was disappointed. But, the photos are nice.

Over 30 years of photography from the wild 60s of life among musicians & travel to her later years in & around her home this photographer has recorded her life with wit & grace in the form of surreal landscapes, spontaneous portraits reflecting her eclectic passions & interests. Linda McCartney's particular point of view of America, Japan & England capture moments in time most of us wouldn't give a second glance to until you see her photos. Musicians in action: grimacing, angry, jaunty or sad. Children in motion: happy, sad, lost or hungry; elders in groups: talking, walking & looking back at us. Sumo wrestlers preparing; billboards like wallpaper - all in colors or black & white - all the busy-ness of our hectic world. I like especially Linda's love of textures - the smooth with the rough, the close-up with distance, fabric upon brick, shadow over land. The pink water pistol tucked into a girl's hip pocket. Linda McCartney's books of photographs grow on you, make you want to share her visions & talk about them.

I became interested in Linda McCartney after seeing the TV movie about her. I think as a mother, wife, cook and friend she was terrific. But as an amateur photographer I am not that impressed by her pictures. Are the rave reviews as one reader suggests because she is "Linda McCartney"? If she was Linda Doe would the accolades still apply? I feel like I am looking at friend's photo albums. The most famous photo (not counting Linda's 60's) is the one of Paul holding infant Mary. It's a cute photo, in fact I have similar ones with my kids, but because we are not famous no one is telling me to publish a book and quite frankly I take really good pictures as good as Linda's. I guess it is in the eye of the beholder, this is a review and being honest I would take it from the library and not buy it.

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