

# photography

## The intuitive understanding of children

"children of mlc." mlc. Metropolitan Learning Center. They're reading, writing, talking, laughing, being together, being alone, relating to each other, to Chris, to you.

Who brought them to us? Who is Chris?

"MLC was started six years ago by three dissatisfied teachers. It's located in a low middle class district in Portland." He begins an explanation of the free school in the dimly lit Fishbowl on this cloudy Saturday afternoon. Upstairs in the EMU Gallery he is having a showing of photographs, portraits of children in the school. Christopher Kliks' exhibit will remain on view until this Saturday.

The classes and grades at the center are unstructured. The Portland School District supports this school where the children are the progeny of well-educated parents and are placed there by choice.

Kliks' philosophy is: "Why not permit children to grow up in an environment where they are approved of and encouraged for being themselves, without the interference of adult judgements and expectations. Childhood is playhood, a time of experimentation and



Photo by one of the mlc children

Christopher Kliks with one of the "children of mlc."

# Wheatfield

at the

## Gallon House Tavern

appearing

Adjacent to the Country Squire  
Coburg Exit on I-5  
7 miles north of Eugene.

### Friday and Saturday

### 9 p.m.

November 23 and 24  
Cover Charge. All beverages served

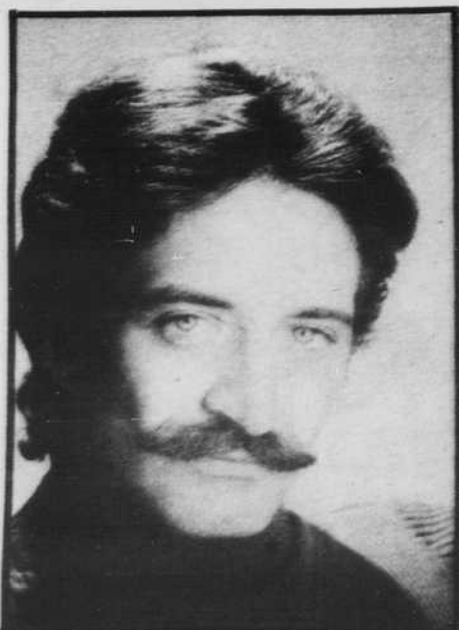
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# THE LAYERED CUT

exploration. To restrict a child's natural curiosity and creativity through programmed conditioning into 'little adulthood' is foolish. We give them too little time or credit for any intuitive understanding of their own."

Taking ideas of freedom and the need to rely on intuition from A.S. Neill, author of *Summerhill*, and J. Krishnamurti, Chris applies them to the educational process of relating to children.

His belief in the need for freedom also arises out of personal experience. In his younger years, while trying to become socially acceptable and mature, he began to feel something was wrong. In putting away the feelings a child feels, something was missing. He found that he had to recall the confidence in intuition rather than putting so much value in the external trappings of social maturity. "In order for that delicate intuitive process to work, you have to feel free and know that your thoughts have value."

He transfers that need in himself to the children. "You can't change a person but you can give them something to change themselves."

Out of this rapport with children, he has photographed the effect of freedom in education.

In the gallery, Chris picks out thoughts from the photographs.

"I see people looking at these photographs and they're asking, 'What happened to me?' So many people are not sure where their center is — what they rotate around."

"Each photograph is a relationship — not documentary. I'm one of them and they've opened up to me."

We look at a portrait of a boy with lank blond hair looking back at us. "I know his game and he knows I know, but he knows I'm still his friend. Someone called it 'Accepting acceptance though being unacceptable.' We're friends. I don't know how to explain it."

A girl puts her arm around the shoulders of a friend. "Here is where we are most successful, when the children relate to each other in this way."

"I want to feel, to explore how deeply people can know each other. If a person can be entirely free and open, what can they do? I photograph the world because I can support myself and share my life with people."

Later, I went back to the gallery to complete this review. The usual elements of critique were useless. What did spatial relations mean against the human relationships portrayed? Not much. What was composition when children feel free to show what is inside them?

No one posed but was captured by an intuitive eye. There is the value of the showing. See the children's freedom to relate to themselves, to friends, to the world, to the man who brought them to us. He has given us something to change ourselves.

Charlene Yogi

## albums

"Sold American"  
Kinky Friedman  
Vanguard 79333  
Copyright 1973

Friedman is another singer-songwriter from Nashville (originally from Texas), but he's unlike anything I've ever heard from there. He's got a gimmick (he's playing the part of a Jew in the normally conservative, WASPish world of country music), but he's also got talent, enough in fact to prevent the gimmick, perhaps, from ultimately making him a bore.

"We Reserve the Right To Refuse Service To You" is the album's opening number, a rollicking, humor-with-a-point song about a Jewish longhair who is rebuffed at a redneck restaurant and, ironically, a synagogue, and then does his own rebuffing by refusing to serve in the Armed Forces ("Let Saigons Be Bygones").

Some of the other songs are strained, but Friedman's best work is worthwhile indeed.

Robert Hilburn

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