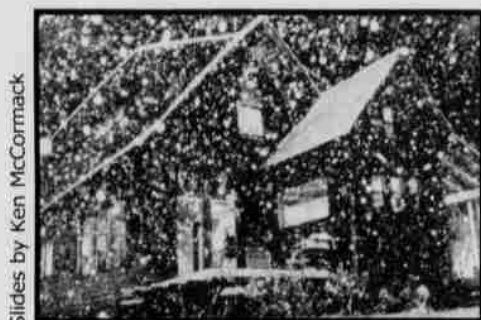


KEN McCORMACK — The power of the social and political message.



From his recent show, *Light Falling: A selection from 20 years of Photography*, McCormack showed his range with the title photograph, above, one of hundreds of shots he took of the scene to dramatize the idea of "snow being like light," and *Free Assembly*, at right, a shot that was "not art for art's sake, but to make some sort of statement."



In his recent photographic retrospective at Lincoln City's Central Coast Cultural Center, *Light Falling*, McCormack showed 52 photos, both black & white and color. This was the first time he had put together so wide-ranging a show of his life's work.

Ken McCormack is not Indian. Neither his photography nor writing focuses on Indian issues. Still, his local work at the Lincoln City *News Guard* has been an inspiration and his influence

continues to echo throughout the area in the work of local writers and photographers. McCormack is a writer/photographer whose studio walls include portraits of Beat poet Allen Ginsberg and Yippie Abbie Hoffman. His photographic inspirations include Jacob Riis and Sebastiao Salgado, photographers with "powerful social and political messages." In his recent photographic retrospective at Lincoln City's Central Coast Cultural Center, *Light Falling*, McCormack showed 52 photos, both black & white and color. This was the first time he had put together so wide-ranging a show of his life's work. At the same time, McCormack has completed a work of non-fiction, bringing together the myths of two of America's most interesting individuals. *Touched with Fire: How Aldous Huxley*

Saved Us from John F. Kennedy, A Spiritual History, takes advantage of the little known coincidence that both men died on the same day. Kennedy's life, compared with mythical Camelot,



KEN McCORMACK

is held up against Huxley's life, a forerunner to the New Age movement that has burgeoned in recent years. Huxley, as many recall, is author of *Brave New World*, a nightmarish fantasy of a totalitarian future based on individuals being bred for appropriate occupations.

Living in a home with a separate studio down the windy old Highway 101 near Neskowin, McCormack continues to grow and change as does his art.

ROBBY ROMERO — "Everything new is hidden in the past."

The Michael McCormick Gallery for the Arts in Taos, New Mexico calls Red Thunder, Robby Romero's Native rock band, "America's best kept secret."

Romero is a show-biz kid who early on "found himself in the company of filmmakers like Dennis Hopper and Sam Peckinpah," according to his biography. By the time he hit his teens, he was already singing his original songs in Taos cantinas. Later, "he wrote and toured with Ricci Danks of The Band, Gene Clark of The Byrds, and Paul Butterfield of The Butterfield Blues Band. He also appeared in several independent films including *Valley Girl* with Nicholas Cage.

"Through his mother, Robby began an apprenticeship with Latin activist Reyes Tijer and Native American activist Dennis Banks. His time and work with them helped to shape both his politics and his art," according to his biography.

Romero's output has been prodigious. Ten years of Red Thunder music is documented in the film special, "Thunderstorm: When Lightning Strikes." Red Thunder performed at Leavenworth Federal



Photo courtesy of Robby Romero

ROBBY ROMERO

in Mexico City at the International Conference on Biodiversity.

Romero's films, *All the Missing Children* and *Is It Too Late?* aim to help runaway and throw-away kids. *Hidden Medicine*, which premiered

Penitentiary in honor of Indian political prisoner Leonard Peltier. The group performed for German Chancellor Willie Brandt for the Nelson Mandela Freedom Tour, in Rio de Janeiro for the United Nations Earth Summit, in Austria at the World Uranium Hearings, and

during the 1999 Sundance Film Festival, is an "experimental, mystical film that deals with the relationship between Indigenous Peoples and the environment," according to his biography. Coming up are three new projects. One, titled, *The New Buffalo*, will be a documentary dealing with Indian casinos. The second, *Dona Marina: Lady of the Sea*, is a love epic during the conquest of Mexico. The third, *The Longest Walk*, is a film based on the story of "the most charismatic and controversial Native American leader of our time."

Romero also has a collection of hand-crafted Pueblo jewelry and lifestyle products designed in partnership with indigenous peoples.

Most recently, the group has released its first major music CD, "Paint the World," produced by Grammy award winner Steve Addabbo with art direction and photography by Dennis Hopper.

"I'm not concerned with correcting history," he is quoted as saying. "We're involved in creating it."

ROY TRACK — "See 360 degrees if you have the time and the ability."

While most of the Grand Ronde Tribe knows Roy Track as long-time emcee for the CTGR's Annual Pow-wow, this self-proclaimed "freelance hustler" says he will do just about anything in the communications field to make a buck.

He started in print journalism, writing for Indian newspapers. His work as writer and producer of Tribal videos, extolling the benefits of casino profits or securing a piece of cultural history goes back to the 1970s when he worked for KOOL-TV in Phoenix, Arizona, at the time an ABC affiliate. There, he turned down a chance to be "the first Indian television reporter in Phoenix" to learn the rest of the communications tools—lighting, sound, and the idea that "you can't have the visuals colliding with the words."

For 28 years, he has produced and hosted *21st Century Native American*, the longest running Indian television show in America.

His strengths, some hard won, also have come at the hand of chance.

"I had a reputation as a kid that I talked like an old man," he said. "I didn't learn it until later, but my parents never talked baby talk to me. I learned to read before I went to school because it was during the war, and wives of men in the war would come and visit my grandmother. Maybe out of boredom, they taught me parlor games and how to read. I guess I was just in the right place at the right time."

A Tribal member whose aunt is Kathryn Harrison, former Tribal chairwoman, Track grew

up with his grandparents in Fort Peck, Montana, and objected that his grandmother never taught him the Nakoda language of his heritage. "She said, 'because you're not going to stay here.' I didn't believe her at the time, but she was right. As soon as she died, I left."

Still pursuing the language, he got himself in trouble at a conference as a young man. An Elder was complaining that the language was not being passed on and Track recalls saying, "You've got no one to blame but yourself. Why aren't you teaching it?" I caught hell for being so blunt, but he couldn't refute it and I think that was my start."

As his skills grew, he was called on to help out the Fort McDowell Tribe, which was broke at that time, out in the middle of nowhere, and the government ordered all the Tribal members off the property so the land could be flooded for the Orme dam.

Track recalled doing a few pretty dry interviews, but then he visited a man at an old Rez house. "It had a couple cars in the backyard, and he didn't want me to come in the house. I guess he was ashamed of it, but then this big, old momma dog with its ribs showing came out of the house. It had just had pups and they were following her, and I knew this was the image I wanted. I photographed the dog, which was more visual than anything his interviews produced.

"Here were these poor people in the middle of nowhere. They were being driven off their land...." The effort was part of a larger effort including the



Photo by Brent Merrill

ROY TRACK

local newspaper and ultimately some politicians that stopped the dam from being built, one of the few times Track has seen concrete results in the work he's done over the years. "They still celebrate 'Orme Dam Celebration' every November," he said.

Track said his grandmother taught him "to survive, to see 360 degrees if you have the time and the ability.

"The key thing that I feel good about is that my family is involved, my grand kids are involved, and we can maintain the ties to the traditional value system even though we're not on the Rez anymore."