



# The Travellers

**Birte Kaufmann**

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- An objective exploration of an often-maligned community that exists on the fringes of society

In Ireland, around 25,000 people still live in temporary settlements in the style of itinerant workers, far removed from the amenities of Western civilisation. Moving from place to place in mobile homes without electricity or running water, the largest Catholic minority of the country are faced with many prejudices. Strangely out of step with 21st-century lifestyle, they stick to their seemingly outdated traditions while also trying to find a new identity that fits in with modern society. Even in the present day, this ambiguity continues to define life for the traveller community, whose livelihood depends on horse breeding and hunting and who keep their own language alive as part of their insular culture.

In 2011, the photographer Birte Kaufmann cautiously began to make contact with the travelling community, earning their trust and on some occasions living with them. For her portrayal of this unknown world, she needed to be in close contact with the families in order to capture their particular character and to avoid the usual stereotypes. Without a doubt, Birte Kaufmann's combination of reportage and documentary photography hits the right note and offers impressive insights into the Irish travellers' extraordinary world.