

Slanted and Enchanted: The Evolution of Indie Culture

By Kaya Oakes

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Slanted and Enchanted: The Evolution of Indie Culture By Kaya Oakes

A lively examination of the spirit and practices that have made the indie movement into a powerful cultural phenomenon

You know the look: skinny jeans, Chuck Taylors, perfectly mussed bed-head hair; You know the music: Modest Mouse, the Shins, Pavement. You know the ethos: DIY with a big helping of irony. But what does it really mean to be "indie"?

As popular television shows adopt indie soundtracks and the signature style bleeds into mainstream fashion, the quirky individuality of the movement seems to be losing ground. In *Slanted and Enchanted*, Kaya Oakes demonstrates how this phase is part of the natural cycle of a culture that reinvents itself continuously to preserve its core ideals of experimentation, freedom, and collaboration.

Through interviews and profiles of the artists who have spearheaded the cause over the years?including Mike Watt, David Berman, Kathleen Hanna, and Dan Clowes?Oakes examines the collective creativity and cross-genre experimentation that are the hallmarks of this popular lifestyle trend. Her visits to music festivals, craft fairs, and smaller collectives around the country round out the story, providing a compelling portayal of indie life on the ground. Culminating in the current indie milieu of music, crafting, style, art, comics, and zines, Oakes reveals from whence indie came and where it will go next.

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Slanted and Enchanted: The Evolution of Indie Culture By Kaya Oakes Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly
In this lively and highly literate explication of various American indie scenes and art forms, Oakes argues for the value and importance of a lively, community-based do-it-yourself tradition. In discrete chapters on zines, small presses, comics, independent music labels and numerous other subjects, Oakes focuses on a few exemplary artists or companies that embody the integrity that she lionizes. Her focus on independent publishing and writing—she is a cofounder of the eclectic *Kitchen Sink* magazine—provides a worthy parallel narrative to Michael Azzerad's essential indie music history, *This Band Could Be Your Life*, with which her book shares some heroes, most notably the affable Mike Watt of the Minutemen. Oakes begins the book with a much appreciated primer on some of the intellectual forebears of her book's central characters, including the poets Frank O'Hara and Allen Ginsberg and the revolutionary street theater group the Diggers. She ends it with a mournful chapter on the co-opting of indie culture by companies like Urban Outfitters and the TV show *The O.C.* The complex effect of the Internet on traditional indie culture is given relatively little space, which weakens the book's effectiveness as a guide to current trends and artistic networks, but as an explanation and excavation of the already fading recent past, it is essential reading. *(June)*
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From School Library Journal
Indie culture exists outside of and often rails against mainstream culture—independent record stores in opposition to Best Buy, crafts festivals instead of Ikea, zines as opposed to *Rolling Stone*. As a corollary, poet Oakes (writing, Univ. of California, Berkeley; *Telegraph*) reminds us, indie culture has a strong history of reciprocity between producer and consumer; it is a creative community that should produce an equal amount of inspiration and consumption. Oakes locates the evolution of this idealism in the cultural explosion that occurred in the 1950s and 1960s. Covering musicians, zines, comics, independent presses, and homemade crafts and events, Oakes uses the concept of a creative community as a mediating theme to illustrate how indie culture has oscillated between the music and literary scene throughout the last few decades. Ultimately, she questions the future of indie culture in its currently oversaturated and corporate form. Recommended for all public libraries; this will particularly appeal to artists, musicians, writers, and kids with thick-rimmed glasses.—Joshua Finnell, McNeese State Univ. Lib., Lake Charles, LA
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Review

“Relays indie's development … with uncommon insight … [and] makes an impassioned, optimistic case for indie's vitality that doesn't assume readers are coming to [the] book already well versed in the subject…. A comprehensive approach to a subject that is too often reduced to discrete parts…. Fresh and perceptive.” ?*San Francisco Chronicle*

“[An] absorbing nonfiction study of indie culture.... Oakes is no dry outsider. She believes in what she describes, she contributes to it and she speaks its language.” ?*The Plain Dealer (Cleveland)*

“[A] lively and highly literate explication of various American indie scenes and art forms . . . [Oakes'] focus on independent publishing and writing--provides a worthy parallel narrative to Michael Azzerad's essential indie music history, *This Band Could Be Your Life* . . . Oakes begins the book with a much appreciated primer on some of the intellectual forebears of her book's central characters, including the poets Frank

O'Hara and Allen Ginsberg and the revolutionary street theater group the Diggers. As an explanation and excavation of the already fading recent past, it is essential reading.” ?*Publishers Weekly*

“As Oakes reminds us, indie culture has a strong history of reciprocity between producer and consumer; it is a creative community that should produce an equal amount of inspiration and consumption. . . . Covering musicians, zines, comics, independent presses, and homemade crafts and events, Oakes uses the concept of a creative community as a mediating theme to illustrate how indie culture has oscillated between the music and literary scene throughout the last few decades. . . . this will particularly appeal to artists, musicians, writers, and kids with thick-rimmed glasses.” ?*Library Journal*

“Oakes' entry on underground comics gives a focused history for the uninitiated, while her firsthand experiences in self-reliant publishing provide a unique insider's view of the struggles to keep such operations afloat. Luminaries such as itinerant bassist Mike Watt, Silver Jews leader David Berman and Ghost World author Dan Clowes give further insight into their respective fields.” ?*Kirkus Reviews*

“An intelligent, … passionate … manifesto for Indie culture and its ideals” ?*Synthesis Weekly*

Users Review

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Donna Gamble:

Playing with family within a park, coming to see the ocean world or hanging out with friends is thing that usually you may have done when you have spare time, after that why you don't try matter that really opposite from that. One activity that make you not sensation tired but still relaxing, trilling like on roller coaster you are ride on and with addition of knowledge. Even you love Slanted and Enchanted: The Evolution of Indie

Culture, you could enjoy both. It is excellent combination right, you still wish to miss it? What kind of hang-out type is it? Oh come on its mind hangout fellas. What? Still don't have it, oh come on its referred to as reading friends.

Brandy Felts:

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