



Hillert Ibbeken

**California – Impressionen aus dem amerikanischen Westen / Impressions from the American West**

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»He had had a hole drilled in the floor of the aircraft so that vertical exposures could be taken as well. We flew a lot, and shared the fuel costs. Whenever we took off he let out a great cry of joy. A fantastic chap. We flew not only over the Hayward tidelands, but also over the whole southern bay, where the intricately branching channels make bizarre patterns at low tide. We also flew over the San Andreas Fault along the Lower and Upper Crystal Springs Reservoirs to Half Moon Bay. From here you can see the big city, San Francisco, with its skyscrapers and the Golden Gate Bridge. Or over Palo Alto and the Stanford Ranch with its tall library tower, over the coastal mountain range to the Pacific, to Año Nuevo Bay. I was able to take photographs through the hole in the floor with both the Leica and the large-format camera. I never got back to the Hayward Air Terminal without a good haul of photographs ...

Perhaps the fascination of American landscapes, particularly the desert landscapes, is their featurelessness. In Germany, in Brandenburg, for example, the much plainer landscape lives on its history. This is where the Great Elector won his victory, and Napoleon's army lost a battle. Actual nature, unaffected by human beings, is hidden under woodland and heath. The American West, the desert landscape, is dominated by grandiose nature without human beings or human interventions. Here the history of the earth is to the fore, exercising a particular fascination, and anyone who can read it enjoys a double gift.«

Hillert Ibbeken was visiting professor at California State University in Hayward on San Francisco Bay. He used the weekends and lecture-free periods to travel around the country photographing the mountains and valleys, the coastline and the nature reserves. In old-fashioned black and white, with a large-format bellows camera.

But he visited not only the countryside, but also encountered people, which is bound to happen over a year's stay. He writes about American friendliness, students and colleagues at the university and the friends he made music with.

Until his retirement, Hillert Ibbeken was professor of geology at the Freie Universität Berlin. He has photographed architecture throughout his life. His acclaimed trilogy about the Prussian architects Karl Friedrich Schinkel (2001, with Elke Blauert), Ludwig Persius (2005) and Friedrich August Stüler (2006) was published by Edition Axel Menges.

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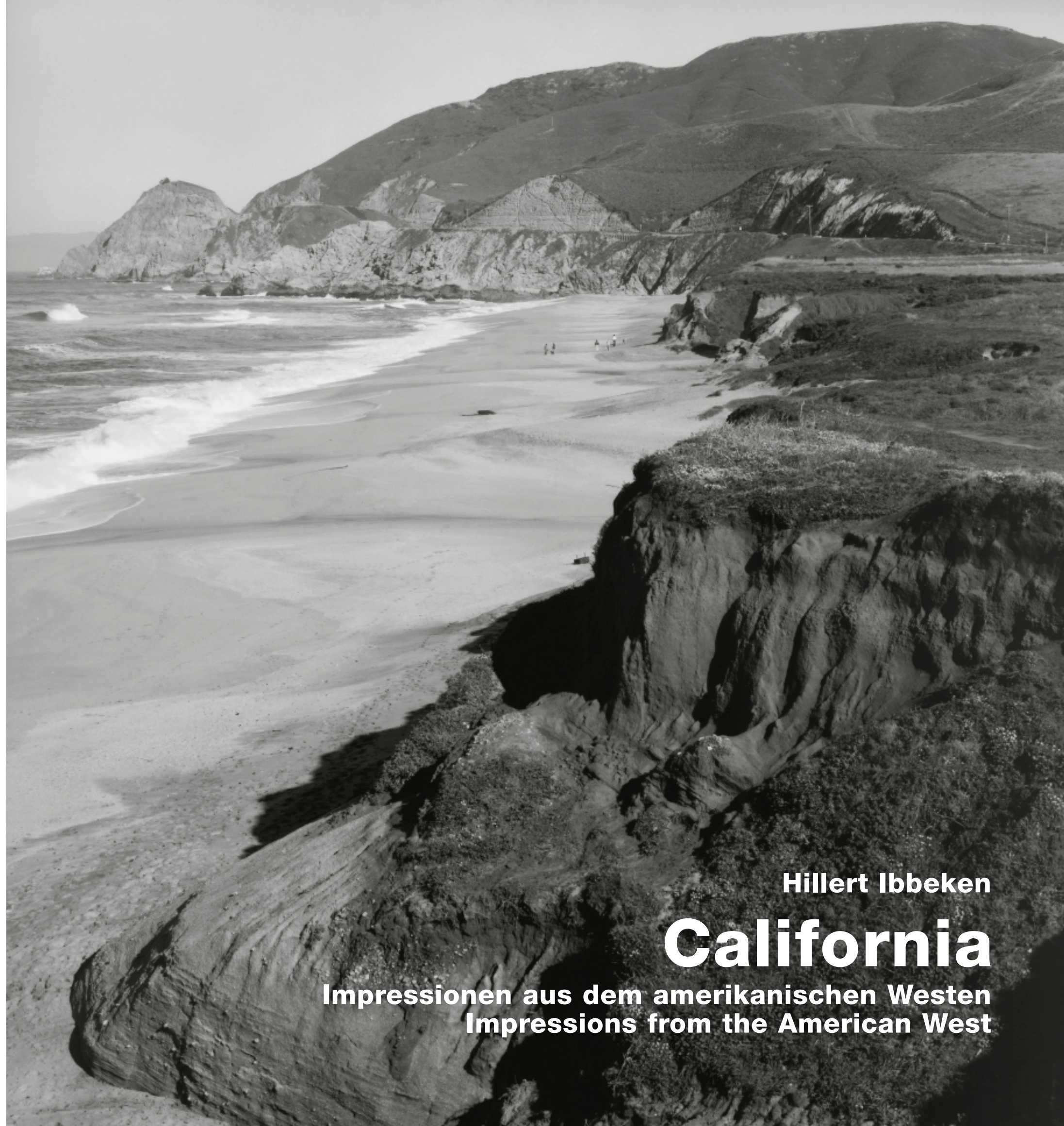
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Menges

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California



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Impressionen aus dem amerikanischen Westen  
Impressions from the American West

»Im Rückteil der Kabine hatte er ein Loch in den Boden des Flugzeugs bohren lassen, so daß man auch Senkrechtaufnahmen machen konnte. Wir flogen oft und teilten uns die Spritkosten. Immer, wenn wir abhoben, tat er einen lauten Jauchzer vor Freude. Ein toller Kerl. Wir flogen nicht nur über das Wattgebiet von Hayward, sondern über die ganze südliche Bucht, deren vielfach verästelte Priele bei Niedrigwasser bizarre Muster abgeben. Wir flogen auch über die San Andreas Fault entlang der Lower and Upper Crystal Springs Reservoirs zur Half Moon Bay, von wo aus man San Francisco liegen sieht, die Metropole mit ihren Hochhäusern, und die Golden Gate Bridge. Oder über Palo Alto und die Stanford Ranch mit dem hohen Bibliotheksturm, über die Küstenberge zum Pazifik, zur Año Nuevo Bay. Ich konnte durch das Bodenloch mit beiden Kameras fotografieren, sowohl mit der Leica als auch mit der Großbildkamera. Nie kehrten wir ohne üppige Photobeute zum Hayward Air Terminal zurück. ...

Vielleicht liegt die Faszination der amerikanischen Landschaften, gerade der Wüstenlandschaften, in ihrer Geschichtslosigkeit. In Deutschland, etwa in Brandenburg, lebt die eher schlichte Landschaft von ihrer Geschichte. Hier hat der Große Kurfürst gesiegt, dort hat Napoleons Armee eine Schlacht verloren. Die eigentliche, menschenlose Natur ist unter Äckern, unter Wald und Heide verborgen. Im amerikanischen Westen, in den Wüstenlandschaften herrscht eine grandiose, menschenlose Natur ohne menschliche Eingriffe. Hier herrscht die Erdgeschichte, ein Faszinosum besonderer Art, wer sie lesen kann, ist doppelt beschenkt.«

Hillert Ibbeken war 1980/81 Gastprofessor an der California State University in Hayward an der Bucht von San Francisco. Er benutzte die Wochenenden und die vorlesungsfreie Zeit, um sich im Lande umzutun und die Berge und Täler, die Küsten und Naturparks zu fotografieren. Ganz altmodisch in Schwarzweiß und mit einer großformatigen Balgenkamera.

Er kam aber nicht nur mit dem Land, sondern auch mit den Leuten zusammen, wie das bei einem einjährigen Aufenthalt nicht ausbleiben kann. Ibbeken erzählt von der amerikanischen Freundlichkeit, von Studenten und Kollegen im Universitätsbetrieb und von den Freundinnen und Freunden, mit denen er musizierte.

Hillert Ibbeken war bis zu seiner Pensionierung Professor für Geologie an der Freien Universität Berlin und beschäftigte sich zeitlebens mit Architekturphotographie. In der Edition Axel Menges erschien eine vielbeachtete Trilogie über die preußischen Architekten Karl Friedrich Schinkel (2001, zusammen mit Elke Blauert), Ludwig Persius (2005) und Friedrich August Stüler (2006).



77. Death Valley National Park. Titus Canyon in den Grapevine Mountains.  
78. Bizarrer Baum am Ostende des Isabella Lake.  
S. 90/91  
79. Grand Canyon National Park. Yava Point.

77. Death Valley National Park. Titus Canyon in the Grapevine Mountains.  
78. Bizarre tree at the east end of Isabella Lake.  
p. 90/91  
79. Grand Canyon National Park. Yava Point.





