

PAUL HART | BIO

PAUL HART British, b.1961

Paul Hart is recognised for his photographs of the British landscape. He is interested in our relationship with the landscape from both a cultural and an environmental perspective. His work examines human-altered topography and our occupation and stewardship of the land, usually concentrating on one specific geographical region where he photographs intensively over a number of years. He works primarily with the black and white analogue process, using large and medium format film cameras, and his practice involves all aspects of the photographic process from the negative through to the gelatin silver print.

Hart studied at the London College of Printing (*UK*) and Nottingham Trent University (*UK*), graduating in 1988 with a BA (Hons) in Photography. He has photographed the natural world for over thirty years. His first major series TRUNCATED (2005-08) received much critical acclaim and was published as his first monograph (*Dewi Lewis Publishing, 2009*) with an essay by Gerry Badger. In 2020 he concluded a significant long-term study of The Fens (*England*), published as stand-alone monographs : FARMED, DRAINED and RECLAIMED (*Dewi Lewis Publishing 2016-2020*).

Hart's work has been internationally exhibited - recent solo exhibitions include ; THE FENS (*Etherton Gallery, Tucson, USA*), POETRY OF PLACE (*The Photographers' Gallery, London, UK*) and EDGELANDS (*Fen Ditton Gallery, Cambridge, UK*), with group exhibitions at venues including ; The Austrian Cultural Forum (*London*), The Royal Academy of Arts (*London*) the Royal Photographic Society (*Bristol*) and Centre Culturel ARCADE (*Sainte-Colombe, France*).

His work resides in major collections including ; the Victoria & Albert Museum, the Martin Parr Foundation, the Hyman Collection, TATE Library, the MoMA Library Collection and the Ivor Braka Collection. He has received a number of international awards ; in 2019 he received the inaugural Wolf Suschitzky Photography Prize (*UK/Austria*) and was shortlisted for the HARIBAN Award (*Japan*) and most recently has been nominated for the 2023 Foundation Louis Roederer Photography Prize for Sustainability.

Hart's work is often profiled in the press and a number of leading critics have written about his photography. Recent publications include RECLAIMED (*Dewi Lewis Publishing, 2020*), ANOTHER COUNTRY (*Gerry Badger, Thames & Hudson, 2022*) and THIS PLEASANT LAND (*Rosalind Jana, Hoxton Mini Press, 2022*). He is represented by the Etherton Gallery and Joseph Bellows Gallery in the USA and regularly collaborates with the environmental non profit organisation VITAL IMPACTS.

Hart lives in Lincolnshire (*England*) and is currently working on a new series for publication early 2024.

REVIEWS

“Hart’s landscapes create a dialogue between art and document, lyricism and storytelling, the sublime and the ordinary. Almost everywhere, rectilinear and regular shapes unfold, impeccably drawn furrows responding to rows of trees, industrial constructions and metal structures... No movement animates this nature morte, no bird awakens these low and heavy skies and endless horizons... Unlike the sort of landscape photography that long incarnated the collective and historical body of the nation, Hart’s images take on a universal value : the battered and exhausted Fens resonate like a subtle metaphor for what humanity engenders and inflicts on itself.”

Isabelle Bonnet, DENATURED LANDSCAPE, March 2020

“Paul Hart is a photographer interested in the slow harvesting of hidden truth from the ordinary places that most of us pass by. He works in an unfashionable idiom with slow cumbrous equipment (not just old-fashioned analogue photography, but medium format analogue photography, slower still) in an unfashionable place. He seeks to find the bits of the land that speak their stories, and to transmit their importance in views in which, typically, the absolute lack of melodrama demands slow looking and brings slow revelation. Hart’s placid, formally peaceful landscape is pregnant with stories that lurk in the mud or the mist. His magic lies in soliciting from his viewers the same half-historical, half-romantic reaction to ploughed fields and straight drainage ditches as he has to them himself.”

Francis Hodgson, PICTURING THE POLDER, October 2018

“Among many other resonant lines in Walden, Thoreau wrote, “It’s not what you look at that matters, it’s what you see.” These words find fulfilment in the dedicated, delicate vision of Paul Hart. While other photographers dash to the corners of the earth to “discover” something new, Hart has realised that the challenge of seeing is great enough on its own and can be realised by simply opening your door and taking a fresh look at the world which is waiting, right in front of you”.

Alexander Strecker, POETRY OF PLACE January 2018, Lensculture

“British photographer Paul Hart’s photographs address the issue of environmental stewardship of human-altered land. For over a decade, in the “slow harvesting of hidden truth,” Hart photographed an area of eastern England, known as the Fens, a naturally marshy area, drained centuries ago, producing flat, dry agricultural land, supported by a system of dykes, man-made rivers and pumping stations. An unintended consequence of this land reclamation is that the Fens is sinking and subject to flooding. Both formally beautiful and quietly powerful, Hart’s work has never been more relevant than this summer as Britain and Europe suffer record breaking temperatures, and wild fires, something that we in the West are all too familiar with.”

Etherton Gallery, August 2022