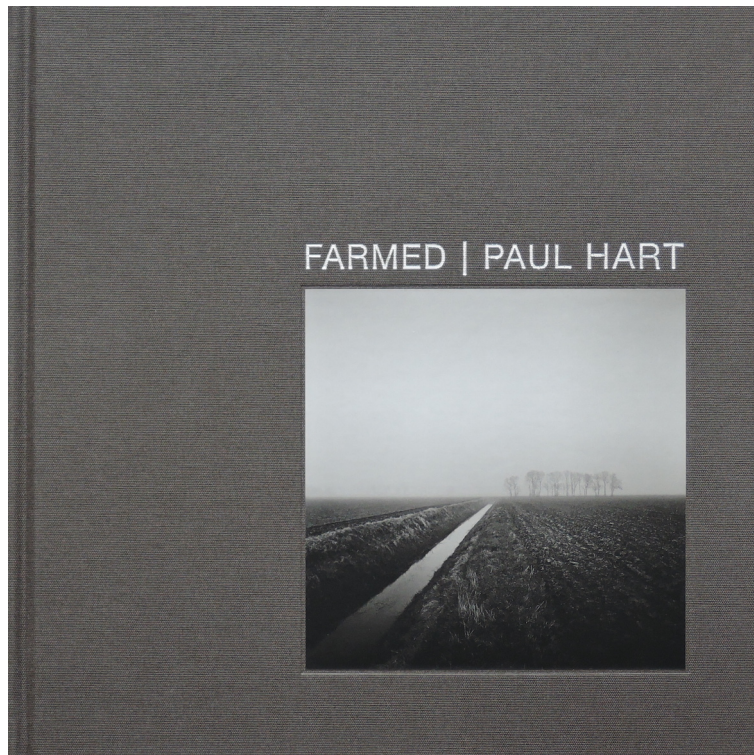


PAUL HART



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Paul Hart is interested in human interaction with the natural world whether this be traces of activity from the distant past or the more obvious present. His series usually concentrate on a specific geographical region, where he photographs intensively over a number of years.

The Fens is a region of reclaimed marshland in the east of England which is now one of the richest arable areas in the UK. It is a landscape defined by volume agricultural production, human migration & long-term reclamation from the sea. Paul Hart has been photographing this landscape of agribusiness for the past eight years which has resulted in a planned three part series : FARMED (2009-15), DRAINED (2016-17) and RECLAIMED which will be published in 2010 by Dewi Lewis. The narrative examines the complex interrelation between humanity and nature and aims to raise important questions about human-altered topography and our occupation and stewardship of this land. By focusing on the often-overlooked elements in familiar vistas the aesthetics carry a documentary sensibility that allow the landscapes to define themselves. Hart employs traditional darkroom printing techniques and aims to convey something of the soulful in a landscape that is rarely considered of aesthetic merit.

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FARMED SELECTED REVIEWS

“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, LENCULTURE

“Paul Hart’s second monograph consists of fifty-six black-and-white photographs of the farmed flatlands of the Fens. Crafted by traditional analogue means over six years, these exquisite pictures are more complex than the simple studies of light and land they may first appear to be. Hart’s managed landscapes and reclaimed marshes quietly question our relationship with a human-altered topography. In this sense Hart is more a Robert Adams than an Ansel Adams, or – in British terms – more John Davies than Charlie Waite...

Classic, but neither modernist nor pictorial, *Farmed* evokes photographic history without over-relying on any of it. Sagely ambivalent, it looks simple and obvious, but is complicated and weighty. And it is – in its own quiet way – extraordinarily beautiful. Can we ask any more of art than that?”

Simon Bowcock, Photomonitor

“When photographer Paul Hart set out to photograph the Fens his aim was not only to describe the physical place but to comment on man’s effect on it. The work sits between documentary and landscape and slips seamlessly into fine art... These images stay with you, long after the book or the print have been left behind. They are images that speak of both nature and humankind, and their sometimes difficult relationship - and, at the same time, they celebrate this uncertain liaison.”

Elizabeth Roberts, editor B+W Photography Magazine

“The landscapes in Paul Hart’s latest book, *Farmed*, are at once beautiful and beleaguered, full and empty, alive and dead. The disappearances between these conditions are the true subjects. One feels their presence in every photograph...Hart’s photographs raise important questions about possession, ownership, mobility, stewardship, history, memory, perspective - the list goes on. But none of these would matter much if these photographs were not, in their attention to the poetry of the place, earnest and moving ”

Collier Brown, Founding Editor, OD Review

“Paul Hart has spent the past six years wandering the Fens. In ‘*Farmed*’ he explores the marshlands of eastern England in all of their extremely flat and windblown majesty. His black and white pictures of trees in the mist, broken-down houses in the middle of acres of farmland and abandoned rusting caravans are as mysterious and hypnotically beautiful as the names of the places they record - Windy Corner, Caulton’s Farm and Flood Cottage.”

Sophie Batterbury, i-newspaper

Turning his attention to landscapes under cultivation, he creates aesthetically pleasing and visually rewarding images in a quiet classic style. His images remind one of those great FSA photographers of the 1930s.”

Brooks Jensen, Editor LensWork

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“FARMED by Paul Hart is a series of pastoral views where the serene landscape transports the viewer to a quieter time. The few abandoned buildings lead one to believe that the story may be ending for this stretch of land, however, on second glance, the proud trees, greenhouses and the building that is under repair tell a different story, one of continuation, a cycle that may leave some things behind but is always regenerating.”

Sandra Djak Kovacs, Editor ADORE NOIR Magazine

“Hart’s book explores the Fens, focusing on the modern agribusiness that has shaped them. His black and white analogue prints show the flat landscapes where straight dykes and furrows of dark soil stretch to the horizon. He highlights features that tell the region’s story: abandoned houses, pylons and functional modern farm buildings. There are echoes of Fay Godwin’s work in these absorbing, beautifully crafted images.”

David Clark, RPS Journal