



NEW RELEASE KEHRER VERLAG

James Hill The Castle

Text by James Hill
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An ancestral castle in France – island of the past caught in the present

For the last 20 years James Hill has been photographing life at his wife's ancestral home in France, the Château de Maillebois. Surrounded by a walled park, the property is an island of the past caught in the present. The images, both tender and whimsical, explore the plethora of emotions that come from living in a house bearing so much history and how the family and the local community interact with it. The photographer watches his family in their role as temporary custodians of the castle, attempting to maintain its traditions and carry them into an uncertain future.

From the text by James Hill:

The incessant flurries of rain and wind, which have for centuries swept in from the Atlantic across Normandy, have barely marked the castle's towers, leaving instead a peculiar patina, equally rough and smooth to the touch, its pitted surface beneath my fingers a humbling reminder of how long this resilient building has stood here. Patterned blocks of flint stand proudly in the façade like pieces of armour. Even the low walls in front of the house, tracing the massive outline of the castle that existed before angry crowds of the French Revolution destroyed what stood above, wear the dignity of old scars.

(...)

Any lens exploring the present of the castle is exposed to the magnitude of this past. A camera captures a narrow point of focus, temporally and visually, and here the brevity of the instant stands in juxtaposition to the age of the surroundings. I have harvested this collection of images over a period of twenty years, observing

the scarce-changing patterns of the castle's routine while my family, friends and those visitors who pass through have grown older. Through the ages, many artists have drawn inspiration from this place. Some painters have depicted a true likeness, others have let their imaginations roam, embellishing the façades with baroque pediments and the grounds with alleys of trees stretching to the horizon. My images, bound within a photographic reality, are tempered by inquisitive fondness. Everyone imagines his own castle.

After studies at Oriel College, Oxford and the London College of Printing, **James Hill** began his career as a photographer in the Soviet Union in 1991. Four years later, he went on contract with The New York Times and, for the next decade, was dispatched to cover the world's conflict zones, principally across the Middle East and Afghanistan. Based in Moscow since 2003, he has focused in recent years on books and project work, as well as continuing to travel the world for the newspaper. His work has won many of photography's most important prizes, including World Press Photo, the Pulitzer Prize, and the Visa d'Or at Perpignan's Visa Pour l'Image. His last book, *Somewhere between War and Peace*, was published by Kehler Verlag in 2014.
mjrhill.com

Book Signing

Kehler Verlag@Paris Photo
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