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Terry Evans

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Terry Evans : Disarming the Prairie (Creating the North American Landscape) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Disarming the Prairie (Creating the North American Landscape):

In Disarming the Prairie, noted landscape photographer Terry Evans offers haunting and hopeful images of the impact of America's military-industrial complex on the environment and the transformation of a former military base into a unique nature preserve and public recreation area. Located 40 miles southwest of downtown Chicago, the Joliet Army Arsenal was once the world's largest TNT factory. Wartime security and safety measures demanded that the Joliet installation be surrounded by 19,000 acres of open lands -- farmlands, meadows, wetlands, and forest. Abandoned by the post-Cold War era military, the munitions plant and its vast prewar farmland and wilderness setting now has a new purpose. Inspired by the vision and efforts of environmentalists, preservationists, and Chicago-area residents, the federal government in 1997 transferred the land from the Department of the Army to the U.S. Forest Service and created Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie. In her photographs of the Midewin Prairie, Terry Evans captures this moment of transformation, contrasting the decayed monuments of twentieth-century warfare with the pastoral beauty and historic structures preserved within the boundaries of the former installation. Through her evocative images of the arsenal (abandoned bunkers, disused railway tracks, crumbling factory buildings and offices) and the countryside

around the base (tallgrass prairie, a blackbird's nest, grazing cattle, a meandering creek, as well as a prehistoric burial mound and a Civil War-era fieldstone fence), Evans explores one of this country's most troubling and least understood legacies -- the militarization of the American landscape. In his informative introduction, Tony Hiss notes that installations similar to the Joliet Arsenal were built across the United States during the Second World War and at the height of the Cold War, eventually occupying 30 million acres of land. Approximately 20 million acres (an area the size of Austria) remain under military control today, and the debate over what to do with the sprawling munitions factories for which the post-Cold War military has no further use has begun in earnest. Joliet's transformation to Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie will serve as a model for future conversion of military lands into civilian use, and Terry Evans's photographic record of this change provides hope that renewal is possible.

"Numerous color photographs chronicle the abandoned and decaying facilities of the area and demonstrate its potential as a prairie park. The essay and photographs are clear witness for how other areas of this type might be transformed into valuable national natural resources in the next millennium." -- Choice "Terry Evans's pictures combine the pleasures of picturesque beauty with a tempered awareness of mankind's destructive potential. Without compromising either truth or beauty, her photographs are instructive and unforgettable reminders of life's fragility and resilience." -- Merry Foresta, Senior Curator of Photography, National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution

About the Author Terry Evans is a photographer who lives in Chicago. Her work has been exhibited in museums nationwide, including the Art Institute of Chicago, the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American Art, and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. In 1996, she was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship. Her other books of photographs are *Prairie: Images of Ground and Sky* and the forthcoming *The Inhabited Prairie*. Tony Hiss writes frequently for the *New Yorker* and is the author of *The Experience of Place*, among other books.