

Harry Nankin: Cameraless Ecological Photography **Collection CAE1505**

Introduction/Abstract

Harry Nankin: Cameraless Ecological Photography contains materials related to ten photography projects, as well as Nankin's Master's Project and Ph.D. thesis. Materials include photography equipment, video, photographic prints, documentary photographs, negatives, digital imagery, documents, slides, notes, and press materials.

Biographical Note: Harry Nankin

Harry Nankin is an Australian photographer and environmental artist. During the 1980's, he made primarily color nature photographs for commercial publication before earning a Master's in Photography from the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology and turning to black-and-white fine art photography. After briefly exploring the gelatin silver 'fine print' in the early 1990's, he ceased using the camera and artificial optics in favor of cameraless *plein air* methods in which 'the landscape became the camera.' Through this, he "sought 'to reduce the optical and emotional distance separating emulsion, ecosystem and artist'."

Scope and Content

Most of Nankin's work now addresses the contested meanings attributed to nature and land in modernity, a concern he has described as the search for an 'ecological gaze'. To do this he often uses the camera-less 'photogram' or 'shadowgram' to record ecological phenomena: employing processes that are partly land art, partly performance, and partly photography, he endeavors to turn the landscape itself into a camera. In 1993 he created the first large-scale outdoor *plein air* shadowgrams of living ecosystems in the history of the medium (Cathexis, 1992-4). Since then he has made outdoor shadowgrams of the sea (The Wave, 1996-97), semi-arid Mallee woodland (Contact, 2003-05), precipitation falling in Tasmanian rainforests (The Rain, 2004-6) and live invertebrates (Syzygy, 2007-10).

The materials in this archive are centered on Nankin's Master's Project and Ph.D. Thesis; and, ten bodies of work: *Wilderness Photography in Color* (1979-91); *Fine Prints* (1991-93); *Cathexis* (1992-94); *I, Terra, Thou* (1993); *The Wave* (1996-97); *Contact* (2002-04); *The Rain* (2005-06); and, *Syzygy* (2007-12); *The Impossibility of Knowing the Mind of Another Living Being* (2011); and, *Minds in the Cave* (2011 - Ongoing).

This archive is currently in process.