

Bryndís Snæbjörnsdóttir & Mark Wilson: *Nanoq: Flat Out and Bluesome*
Collection CAE1310

Introduction/Abstract

Bryndís Snæbjörnsdóttir and Mark Wilson created an exhibition of taxidermic polar bears intended not to celebrate the hunter, the collector, the taxidermist or the collection house, but the bear itself. Materials include photographs, posters, research materials, sketches, drawings, plans, correspondence, publications, press materials, and printed ephemera from exhibitions.

Biographical Note: Bryndís Snæbjörnsdóttir and Mark Wilson

Icelandic artist Bryndís Snæbjörnsdóttir, professor of Fine Art at Gothenburg University's Valand School of Art, has been working as an artist, lecturer and researcher since 1995. She was a lecturer and research fellow at Glasgow School of Art in Scotland until 2002 and the Head of the master program New Art and Media at Valand from 2002 until 2004, when she joined the research program there and graduated with a PhD in 2009. In her current position as a Professor of Fine Art she is responsible for artistic research. UK artist Mark Wilson, who has a PhD in art, teaches contemporary art at the University of Cumbria.

Snæbjörnsdóttir and Wilson describe their collaborative practice, which they have conducted since 2001 from bases in the north of England, Iceland and Gothenburg, Sweden, as follows: "With a strong research grounding, their socially engaged projects explore contemporary relationships between human and non-human animals in the contexts of history, culture and the environment. The practice sets out to challenge anthropocentric systems and thinking that sanction loss through representation of the other, proposing instead, alternative tropes of 'parities in meeting'. The work is installation based, using objects, text, photography and video."

Scope and Content

In Nanoq: The Great White Bear: A Survey of British Taxidermic Polar Bears 2001–2004, Bryndís Snæbjörnsdóttir and Mark Wilson photographed 33 taxidermic polar bears from public and private collections in Britain. Each photograph was captioned with a researched biography of the bear: its place of capture or shooting, the name of the person responsible, the nature or purpose of the expedition, the bear's history in captivity, and its age at death. Their exhibition was a cultural, not a natural, history of polar bears, its intent not to celebrate the hunter, the collector, the taxidermist or the collection house, but the bear itself.

The traveling exhibition moved through a series of museums and art galleries between 2006 and 2009. CA+E Advisor and historian Libby Robin described the exhibition: "*Nanoq* is at the leading edge of a new art movement that challenges the place of animals and their bodies in museums. It charts 'the uneasy relationship between the wild and its representation in our museums, galleries and media [and] highlights the current plight of polar bears who are facing extinction because of the destruction of their habitat'. These bears are no longer objects, performing realistic animal activities in dusty dioramas, but rather particular bears from particular places at the time of their death, and in other particular places at the time of being photographed."

Materials include photographs, posters, research materials, sketches, drawings, plans, correspondence, publications, press materials, and printed ephemera from exhibitions.

Inclusive Dates

1987 – 2014

Bulk Dates

2002 – 2004

Quantity / Extent

2.5 cubic feet

Language

English, Danish, Icelandic, Norwegian, Spanish, Swedish

Arrangement

This archive is arranged in three series. The first series contains materials related to the development of the project, while the second series contain the project outcomes such as exhibitions, conferences, and Ph.D. theses. The third series contains press materials and publications related to the project and the exhibitions.

- Series 1: Research and Project Development
- Series 2: Project Outcomes
- Series 3: Press Materials and Related Publications

Related Publications

Aloi, Giovanni. *Antennae: a decade of art and the non-human: 07-17*. Billdal, Sweden: Förlaget 284 and AntennaeProject, 2017.

Baker, Steve. *Artist/Animal*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2013.

Broglio, Ron. *Surface Encounters: Thinking with Animals and Art*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2011.

Davies, Suzanne. *Heat: Art and Climate Change*. Melbourne, Vic.: RMIT Gallery, 2008.

Dion, Mark. *Den*. Oslo, Norway: Forlaget Press, 2012.

Dion, Mark. *Polar Bear (Ursus maritimus)*. Köln: Walther König, 2003.

Fraser, Marie. *Zoo*. Montréal, Quebec: Musée d'Art Contemporain de Montréal, 2012.

Madden, Dave. *The Authentic Animal: Inside the Odd and Obsessive World of Taxidermy*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 2011.

Northrup, JoAnne. *Late Harvest*. Muenchen, Bavaria: Reno, NV; Hirmer Verlag: Nevada Museum of Art, 2014.

Poliquin, Rachel. *The Breathless Zoo: Taxidermy and the Cultures of Longing*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2012.

Snæbjörnsdóttir, Bryndís. *Spaces of Encounter: Art and Revision in Human-Animal Relations*. Göteborg, Sweden: Valand School of Fine Arts, Faculty of Fine, Applied and Performing Arts, University of Gothenburg, 2009.

Snæbjörnsdóttir, Bryndís and Mark Wilson, eds. *(A) fly: between nature and culture = flug(a): milli náttúru og menningar*. Reykjavík, Iceland: Þjóðminjasafn Íslands, 2006.

Snæbjörnsdóttir, Bryndís and Mark Wilson, eds. *Big Mouth*. Carlisle, Cumbria, U.K.: Glasgow, Scotland: Cumbria Institute of the Arts; Tramway, 2004.

Snæbjörnsdóttir, Bryndís and Mark Wilson, eds. *Home*. Self-published: 1999.

Snæbjörnsdóttir, Bryndís and Mark Wilson, eds. *nanoq: flat out and bluesome: A Cultural Life of Polar Bears*. London, England: Black Dog Pub., 2006.

Snæbjörnsdóttir, Bryndís and Mark Wilson. *Uncertainty in the City*. Berlin, Germany: The Green Box, 2011.

Wilson, Mark. *Beyond Control: Towards an Ecology of Uncertainty*. PhD Thesis, Lancaster UK: Lancaster University, October 2012.

Wolfe, Cary. *What is Posthumanism?* Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2010.

Container Listing by Series:

CAE1310/1 Series 1: Research and Project Development, Folders 1-11, 1999 – 2014

Series 1 includes the research materials created in generation of the project. Materials include correspondence, photographs, press materials, ephemera, maps, and a catalog. This series is organized chronologically by project process.

CAE Box 107

- 1-1 Artist Information and Ephemera, 2000 – 2014
- 1-2 Polar Bear and Arctic Research, 1999 – 2004
- 1-3 Cultural Response Materials, 2001 – 2011
- 1-4 Great Britain Polar Bear Location Initial Research, 2001 – 2005
- 1-5 Polar Bear Location Correspondence, No, A – I, 2001 – 2002
- 1-6 Polar Bear Location Correspondence, No, K – W, 2001 – 2002
- 1-7 Polar Bear Location Correspondence, Yes, A – K, 2000 – 2005
- 1-8 Polar Bear Location Correspondence, Yes, L – W, 2001 – 2005
- 1-9 Polar Bear Location Summary Reports, 2004
- 1-10 Great Britain Polar Bear Images, 2000 – 2004
- 1-11 Polar Bear Related Correspondence and Ephemera, 1999 - 2007

CAE1310/1 Series 1: Additional Materials

CAE Box 14: Small Objects

1-11#2c *The Tesalia Springs Co.*, bottle cap, undated

CAE Box 56: Objects

1-7#4d National Museum of Ireland visitor badge for Mark Wilson, 2004

CAE Box 108: Large Objects

1-10#152 Peterhead polar bear, Light Box, c. 2004

CAE S-Box 20

- 1-3#14 Cooperative Bank advertisement, undated
- 1-3#15 Götenburg-Posten, Sunday, April 14, 2002
- 1-3#16 *A History of British Taxidermy*, undated
- 1-3#17 Leicestershire Chronicle, Wednesday, February 14, 2007
- 1-3#18 The Times, Thursday, February 26, 2004
- 1-10#150 Manchester polar bear, Photograph, 2001
- 1-11#7 BBC Wildlife cover, March 1999
- 1-11#8 New Scientist, Dec 1999 – Jan 2000

CAE Flat File F20: Oversized Items

- 1-3#19 Skinnboden shopping bag, undated
- 1-3#20 Svalbardbutikken, shopping bag, undated
- 1-3#21 The Guardian, Saturday, February 19, 2011

Tube Rack 6J: Oversized Items

- 1-10#151 Worcester polar bear, Photographic Print, 2004

CAE1310/2 Series 2: Project Outcomes, Folders 1-29, 2001 – 2014

Series 2 contain materials related to the outcomes of the project such as exhibitions, publications, public programming, and conferences. Materials include documents, digital imagery, objects, exhibition ephemera, press materials, design materials, and correspondence. This series is organized by date.

CAE Box 107

- 2-1 Project Proposal Development, 2001 – 2005
- 2-2 Spike Island Exhibition, Bristol, Correspondence, 2003 – 2004
- 2-3 Spike Island Exhibition, Bristol, Budget, Funding, and Loans, 2003 – 2004
- 2-4 Spike Island Exhibition, Bristol, Design Materials, 2003 – 2004
- 2-5 Spike Island Exhibition, Bristol, Transport and Install of Edinburgh, Newcastle, and Somerleyton Bears, 2004
- 2-6 Spike Island Exhibition, Bristol, Installation Images, 2004
- 2-7 Spike Island Exhibition, Bristol, Exhibition Images, 2004
- 2-8 Spike Island Exhibition, Bristol, *White Out Conference*, 2004
- 2-9 Spike Island Exhibition, Bristol, Exhibition Ephemera, 2004
- 2-10 Spike Island Exhibition, Bristol, Press, 2004
- 2-11 Oxford University Museum of Natural History Exhibition, Oxford, (Aug. 7 – Oct. 15, 2004), 2004
- 2-12 University of Iceland Exhibition, Reykjavik, (Jun. 1 – Jun. 30, 2006), 2006
- 2-13 Bristol City Museum and Art Gallery Exhibition, Bristol, (April 1 – May 14, 2006), 2006 – 2007
- 2-14 Nordatlantens Brygge Exhibition, Copenhagen, (Sept. 15, 2006 – Feb 18, 2007), 2006

CAE Box 114

- 2-15 Horniman Museum Exhibition, London, (Oct. 21, 2006 – Mar. 25, 2007), 2006 – 2007
- 2-16 *Making Animal Afterlives* Seminar, Glasgow, (Nov. 22, 2006), 2006
- 2-17 Nordic House Exhibition, Faroe Islands, (Mar. 14 – Apr. 30, 2007), 2007
- 2-18 Polar Fram Museum Exhibition, Oslo, (Nov. 30, 2007 – Mar. 28, 2008), 2007
- 2-19 Scott Polar Research Institute Exhibition, Cambridge, (May 5 – Aug. 30, 2008), 2008
- 2-20 *Heat: Art & Culture* Exhibition, Melbourne, (Sept. 11 – Oct. 18, 2008), 2008
- 2-21 *ELIA Biennial Conference*, Gothenburg, (Oct. 29 – Nov. 2, 2008), 2008
- 2-22 New Walk Museum and Art Gallery Exhibition, Leicester, (Jan. 24 – Apr. 5, 2009), 2009
- 2-23 Worcester City Art Gallery Exhibition, Worcester, (Nov. 28, 2009 – Jan. 9, 2010), 2009
- 2-24 Manchester Museum Exhibition, Manchester, (Feb. 13 – July 11, 2010), 2010
- 2-25 Tullie House Museum Exhibition, Carlisle, (Sept 18. – Nov. 28, 2010), 2010
- 2-26 Svalbard Museum Exhibition, Svalbard, (Nov. 15, 2010 – Apr. 15, 2011), 2011
- 2-27 Book Research and Production, 2005 – 2009
- 2-28 PhD Dissertation Supporting Materials, Bryndís Snæbjörnsdóttir, 2009
- 2-29 Impact Case Study, 2014

CAE1310/2 Series 2: Additional Materials

CAE Box 63: Large Objects

- 2-9#4 *nanq: flatout and bluesome*, Blanket, 2004

CAE S-Box 20

- 2-4#6 Spike Island Gallery layout, 2004
- 2-4#7 Spike Island Gallery floor plan layout, drawing, 2004
- 2-4#8 Spike Island Gallery bear and case layout, drawing, 2004
- 2-4#9 Spike Island Gallery crate diagrams, drawing, 2003 – 2004
- 2-4#10 Spike Island Gallery map of Great Britain, drawing, 2003 – 2004
- 2-10#5 Showcase, Newsletter, 2004
- 2-15#14 Telegraph Review, October 14, 2006
- 2-15#15 The Guardian, October 16, 2006
- 2-15#16 The London Paper, October 18, 2006
- 2-15#17 The Times, October 25, 2006
- 2-20#6 The Age, September 6, 2008

Tube Rack 6J: Oversized Items

- 2-27#40 *Nanoq: flat out and bluesome*, Book Launch Poster, 2006

CAE Flat File F20: Oversized Items

- 2-9#5 *nanq: flatout and bluesome*, Poster, 2004
- 2-9#6 *nanq: flatout and bluesome Spike Island Bristol*, Poster, 2004
- 2-11#16 *nanq: flatout and bluesome*, Oxford University Museum, Poster 2004
- 2-14#15 *Nanoq – Hvide Bjørn*, Poster, 2006

CAE Flat File F2: Oversized Items

- 2-27#41 Spike Island Installation, Photographic Print, 2004
- 2-27#42 Spike Island Installation, Photographic Print, 2004
- 2-27#43a-mnanq: flat out and bluesome, A Cultural Life of Polar Bears, Publication Proofs, 2006

CAE1310/3 Series 3: Press Materials and Related Publications, Folders 1-3, 2003 – 2014

Series 3 contains press materials related to the project. This series is organized by date.

CAE Box 114

- 3-1 Press Materials (1 of 2), 2003 – 2007
- 3-2 Press Materials (2 of 2), 2008 – 2010
- 3-3 Related Publications, 2007 – 2014

CAE1310/3 Series 3: Additional Materials

CAE S-Box 20

- 3-1#7 Morgunblaðið, Sunday, June 11, 2006
- 3-1#8 The Times, Saturday, April 22, 2006
- 3-1#9 Daily Mail, Friday, October 20, 2006
- 3-1#10 Morgunblaðið, October 28, 2006
- 3-1#11 Dimmalætting, March 12, 2007
- 3-2#6 El Angel, August 16, 2009
- 3-2#7 Barometern OT, August 28, 2009
- 3-2#8 Östran, August 2009