

John Reid: The Fishman Project
Collection CAE1043

Introduction/Abstract

John Reid is an Australian artist who has used performance and photography since the late 1980s to heighten public awareness of threatened forests in Southeast Australia. In 1988, Reid made what he calls an "artistic discovery" of a previously unknown hominid, the Fishman, which was part of a successful effort to preserve the forests and rivers of the region, many areas of which have since been designated national parks. Materials in this archive include a portfolio, maps, large format camera plate holder, press materials, exhibition ephemera, and other supplemental materials.

Biographical Note: John Reid

John Reid, BA (ANU), MFA (UNSW), AIDIA (Graphic Design), is a visual artist and Senior Lecturer, School of Art, Australian National University, Canberra, Australia where he co-ordinates the Environment Studio and convenes Field Studies. He works with the media of photography, collage and performance to address issues of human rights, to visualize landscape as a contribution to the construction of cultural identity and sense of regional place, and to influence community acceptance of environmental protection strategies. He actively collaborates with journalists to extend his work into the electronic and print mass media.

John Reid has been awarded for teaching, raising environmental awareness and for inspiring the production of visual art from science. He co-directs the FieldScreen Research Project and is CEO of the National Environment Bank. The National Environment Bank (NEB) was established in Canberra, Australian Capital Territory, in 2002, to finance research into sustainable energy alternatives.

The NEB was conceived by visual artist John Reid as a contribution to an exhibition titled, Factor of Ten. A Future Worth Having, School of Art Gallery, Australian National University. The exhibition addressed the need for a ten-fold reduction in human energy and material consumption to achieve a sustainable use of the Earth's resources. The launch of the NEB coincided with the exhibition opening and the first NEB Branch traded daily in the School of Art Gallery from October 2 to November 3, 2002.

In 2003, NEB branches have operated from the Dubbo Regional Gallery, the Cowra Art Gallery, the School of Art Foyer Gallery, from a temporary gallery space in Tumut, the Orange Regional Gallery and the Criterion Gallery, Braidwood.

Scope and Content

John Reid is an Australian artist who has used performance and photography since the late 1980s to heighten public awareness of threatened forests in Southeast Australia. The forests, ancient stands of trees that evolved when Australia was still part of the supercontinent Gondwana millions of years ago, were being clearcut. In 1988, Reid made what he calls an "artistic discovery" of a previously unknown hominid, the Fishman, which inhabited the wild rivers of the region. By creating an oral and photographic narrative about this creature, Reid raised awareness of the region's forests through press reports, exhibitions, and lectures.

Reid's work on "The Fishman of SE Australia," as the project was known, fell into three parts. The Walks were long hikes throughout the region to explore the forests and rivers, and to "discover" the hominid; The Documentations was a series of large-format photographs of the Fishman and its habitat; and, The Swims,

which are ongoing solo performances in the wilderness conducted to explore the psychological realities underpinning the work.

The Fishman project gained national media attention in Australia, and was part of a successful effort to preserve the forests and rivers, many areas of which have since been designated national parks.

Materials in this archive include the portfolio that contains "The Documentations", a series of lithographs of the Fishman and its habitat, physical objects such as maps, and large format camera plate holder, as well as press materials, exhibition ephemera, and other supplemental materials.

Dates

1988 – 2014

Quantity / Extent

.5 cubic feet

Language

English

Arrangement

John Reid: The Fishman Project is organized into five series:

- Series 1: Portfolio
- Series 2: Objects Used in Creating *The Fishman Project*
- Series 3: Project Materials
- Series 4: Public presentations
- Series 5: Monga National Park

Related Archive Collections

- CAE1102: *Richard Black: The Murray River and Tidal Garden Architecture*
- CAE1108: *Libby Robin: Desert Channels*
- CAE1109: *Mandy Martin: Desert Channels*
- CAE1302: *Paruku Project*

Related Publications

Reid, John. *Engaging Visions: Engaging Artists with the Community about Environment*. Canberra, ACT, Australia: Australian National University, 2010.

Stellar, Robyn. *Monga Intacta: A Celebration of the Monga Forest and Its Protection*. Braidwood, NSW, Australia: Robyn Steller, 2005.

Container Listing by Series:

CAE1043/1 Series I: Portfolio, July 2010

This series of *The John Reid: The Fishman Project*, is the portfolio that contains "The Documentations", a series of lithographs of the Fishman and its habitat.

Special Object Box

1-1 The Fishman Portfolio, July 2010

CAE1043/2 Series 2: Objects Used in Creating *The Fishman Project*, Folder 1, 1977 - 2001

This series of *The John Reid: The Fishman Project*, is a collection of the objects used in creating *The Fishman Project*.

CAE Box 10

2-1 Objects Used in Creating *The Fishman Project*

CAE1043/2 Series 2: Additional Objects

CAE Box 13: Objects

2-1#3 Photography Loupe
2-1#8 Extended Air Cable Shutter Release
2-1#9 Plate Holder

CAE Flat File F5: Oversized Items

2-1#1 Discovery of the Decade or the Great Fishman Hoax, 1992
2-1#2 Bulldozers in Monga Forest threaten Fishman, 2001
2-1#4 Monga Topographical Map 8826-1N, 2000
2-1#5 Topographical Map of Nerrigundah 8825-I-N, 1977
2-1#6 Topographical Map of Corang, 1984
2-1#7 Topographical Map of the Northern Budawang Range and the Upper Clyde River Valley, 1978
2-1#11 Topographical Map of Araluen, 2000

CAE1043/3 Series 3: Project Materials, Folders 1-5, 1988 - 2014

This series of *John Reid: The Fishman Project*, contains the artist's CV, press materials generated by the project and the exhibit ephemera, correspondence, and supplemental material associated with *The Fishman Project*.

CAE Box 10

3-1 Artist CV, 2009
3-2 Press Material, 1992 - 2010
3-3 Correspondence, 1992 - 2010
3-4 Exhibition Ephemera, 1992 - 1997
3-5 Supplemental Material, 1988 - 2014

CAE1043/4 Series 4: Public Presentations, Folders 1-9, 1992 - 2011

Series 4 of *John Reid: The Fishman Project*, contains the scripts, PowerPoint, and other materials for public presentations.

CAE Box 10

- 4-1 Presentation Slides, not dated
- 4-2 Original Project Script, 1992
- 4-3 Script from Edge of Sacred, 1995
- 4-4 Script from Michael Taussig Seminar, 1996
- 4-5 Script from International Health Conference, 2005
- 4-6 Script from Science and Communication Conference, 2008
- 4-7 Script from Public Awareness of Science Conference, 2009
- 4-8 Script from Fenner Conference, 2010
- 4-9 Script from Nevada Museum of Art, Art + Environment Conference, 2011
- 4-10 Script from River Symposium, 2007

CAE1043/5 Series 5: Monga National Park, Folders 1-2, 2001 - 2008

Series 5 of *John Reid: The Fishman Project*, contains the images, and documents on the protests over the logging of the Monga State Forest, and images of Monga Forest.

CAE Box 10

- 5-1 2001 Logging Protest
- 5-2 Monga Forest Images, 2008