

## **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. In his projects, Nankin uses the camera-less 'photogram' or 'shadowgram' to record ecological phenomena, endeavouring to turn the landscape itself into a camera.

### **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).

Materials include photography equipment, video, photographic prints, documentary photographs, negatives, digital imagery, documents, slides, notes, and press materials.

**This archive is currently in process.**