

**Walter McNamara: Artist and Curator
Collection CAE2209**

Introduction/Abstract

Given Walter McNamara's prominence in Reno as an artist and curator his archive presents a critical building block in the art history of northern Nevada during the latter half of the 20th century.

Biographical Note: Walter McNamara

Walter McNamara was born in Stamford, Connecticut in 1939, and his family relocated to the Reno, Nevada area in 1947. He attended the University of Nevada Reno where he studied art. His art falls primarily into two categories: sculptures made of shaped wood and bone and collages using commonly found materials such as magazine photos and mailers. Beginning in the early 1960s, McNamara's work has been shown in venues including the Whitney Museum Annual (along with Michael Heizer, the only other Nevada artist to show at the Whitney), Drawings USA, the Denver Art Museum and the Drawing Society National Touring Exhibit. He has received many grants and awards, including Nevada Arts Council Art Fellowships in 1989 and 1984, a Reno Arts Commission Grant in 1993, and the fourth annual Governor's Arts Award. An exhibit of his work with catalog was mounted at the Nevada Museum of Art in 1994.

In 1964, McNamara was hired as curator of the University's Sheppard Art Gallery, a position he served in until his retirement in 1992. Under his stewardship the gallery introduced the work of nationally and internationally acclaimed artists to Northern Nevada audiences. Artists showing at the gallery during this period included Robert Arneson, John Altoon., Deborah Butterfield, Bruce Conner, Nancy Grossman, Robert Heinecken, Paul Kos, John Mason, Manuel Neri, Ed Ruscha, Wayne Thiebaud, and William T. Wiley. The gallery's achievements were documented in *Sheppard Gallery: 25 Years* (Sheppard Gallery, UNR, 1986).

Currently, McNamara is working on collage and metal assemblages using commercial materials.

Scope and Content

Given Walter McNamara's prominence in Reno as an artist and curator his archive presents a critical building block in the art history of northern Nevada during the latter half of the 20th century. The archive documents both his career as an artist and as a curator. Materials include slides, printed ephemera, photographs, documents, correspondence, exhibition materials, 16 collages, and artist files from the Sheppard Gallery at UNR.

This archive is currently in process.