

**Public Art Donation Proposal: Photograph from Ron Reeder  
Presented to Arts Council – 12.09.20**

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Submitted: November 30, 2019

To: City of Mercer Island and Mercer Island Art Council  
c/o Ryan Daily, Parks & Recreation Director  
Sarah Bluvas, Arts & Culture Coordinator  
Amy Barnes, Vice Chair  
Erin Vivion, Chair

From: Mercer Island Visual Arts League (MIVAL)  
c/o Carol Whitaker, Program Chair  
Gerald Johnson, President  
PO Box 134  
Mercer Island, WA 98040  
(206) 280-8509 – Carol

Cc: Lorri Falterman, Immediate Past President, MIVAL  
Judith Roan, Ron Reeder Family

**Description of Donation:**

The Mercer Island Visual Arts League (MIVAL) is proposing to donate to the City of Mercer Island a photograph by late artist and longtime MIVAL member Ron Reeder.

The final image will be agreed upon between Ron's family, MIVAL, the City of Mercer Island and the MI Arts Council. It most likely will be in the form of a palladium print.

The MIVAL board has approved this proposal as consistent with its mission "to promote and encourage artistic endeavors on Mercer Island and the surrounding area, to stimulate awareness and appreciation of the visual arts in our community, and to sponsor art exhibits and workshops."

MIVAL was established on Mercer Island in 1961 and has been an uninterrupted community art organization on Mercer Island since that time. MIVAL incorporated as a private non-profit in 1969. It has operated the MIVAL Gallery on Mercer Island since 2009. Among its many activities, MIVAL sponsors a high-school senior scholarship program, junior art programs, including summer show for students in kindergarten through 12th grade, several yearly adult art shows, including a holiday show at the Mercer Island Community and Event Center. MIVAL is a member of the Mercer Island Chamber of Commerce and partners with them on Art Uncorked and the MIVAL venue program.

**Ron Reeder Resume and Artist Credentials:**

Ron Reeder was a long-time resident of Mercer Island. Ron moved to Mercer Island with his wife Judith Roan in 1991. Together they built a home at the north end of Mercer Island where Judith still resides. Ron and Judith are long-time artists and members of the Mercer Island Visual Arts.

Ron Reeder was an accomplished scientist and community member. From 1978 to 2002 Ron Reeder ran a research laboratory in the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle, WA. Quoting an article on the Fred Hutch website: "He was among the first scientists to develop a model system to study the cellular machinery that 'reads' DNA and converts it to RNA, a fundamental step in how our genes affect our biology." Ron held a PhD in biochemistry from MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology), spent a post-doctoral year of study in Kyoto, Japan, and was on the faculty of the Carnegie Institute in Baltimore, MD, before joining the Fred Hutch faculty. During his career, Ron and his co-workers published over 100 articles in research journals and book chapters. Ron retired from Fred Hutch in 2002. <https://www.fredhutch.org/en/news/center-news/2002/09/from-frog-eggs-to-photography.html>

Ron Reeder was a life-long and accomplished photographer who created beauty, advanced art through his devotion to technique and his published materials, and mentored other artists.

Ron's love of photography and his artistic outlook began during his childhood years in Japan where Ron's father gave Ron his first camera. In Japan, Ron also developed a deep appreciation for Japanese art and design, which influenced much of his art and process.

Over the years, Ron worked in numerous photographic formats and development techniques both in the dark room and on the computer using digital photography and editing. He used techniques from both the old and new worlds of photography to create his images and imaging effects. From an article on the Fred Hutch website: "Reeder took great pains to learn virtually every possible way to develop photographs, his wife [Judith] said, and would gladly share his expertise with anyone. 'Our house was always full of people who wanted to learn photographic processes from Ron.'" <https://www.fredhutch.org/en/news/center-news/2019/08/ron-reeder-obituary.html>

Ron particularly enjoyed palladium printing, a 19th century process in which a sheet of watercolor paper is hand coated with a sensitized solution of palladium metal. When dry, the coated paper is exposed to ultraviolet light through a negative the same size as the final image. Palladium prints have a warm soft tone and are among the most archival of photographic images.

Ron's particular subjects of interest were landscapes and wildlife, which he approached with a unique combination of digital skills and alternative processes, including palladium printing. He was the first to come up with the idea to apply Roy Harrington's Quadtone RIP software to the making of digital negatives, and went on to author books on that subject. These books on the technology of making digital negatives using QTR are a testament to his role as mentor of the photographers included in its pages.

Books by Ron Reeder:

*Digital Negatives for Palladium and Other Alternative Processes* (2010)

*Spruce Root Basketry of the Haida and Tlingit* with Sharon Busby (2003)

Three self-published, hand bound, large format, palladium printed books entitled: *The Fool*, *Imagine If—*, and *So Far*. This set of three resides in the University of Washington Library Special Collections and at the University of Oregon Library in Eugene, Oregon.

At the time of his death, Ron had written a new book on Digital Negatives that will be published in 2020.

Articles by Ron Reeder:

Ron had articles and photos published in *View Camera* magazine (2003 and 2010) and *Camera Arts* magazine (2004)

Galleries:

Ron showed his work in several galleries over the years with one man shows at Honeychurch Antiques, Glazer's Gallery Space, Wall Space Gallery, Blue Heron Gallery, Stacya Silverman's Galleries in Seattle; Appel Gallery and Wallspace Galleries in Sacramento. Other galleries included Benham Gallery Seattle, and Mercer Island Visual Arts League venues on Mercer Island.

From the Artist:

From Ron Reeder's artist statement: "The goal is to produce beautiful images that create an emotional connection with the viewer. – Ron Reeder"

From artist's website: <http://www.ronreeder.com/artist-statement-ron-reeder.html>

YouTube video of interview with Ron Reeder about exhibit of prints made from glass dry print negatives salvaged from Japan: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zh76bLDRgdY>

**Suggested Site for Artwork:**

Mercer Island Public Library

**Maintenance and Installation Needs:**

To be determined based on selected site for placement.

**Statement of Importance:**

Ron Reeder was a giant in both his professional lives, first as a scientist and second as an artist photographer. As a scientist, he advanced cancer research and ultimately its treatment and cure. As an artist, he respected and explored early photographic processes and images and also reimagined them with his own eye and the aid of modern computer and digital technologies. He revitalized the old with the new, creating beautiful images and valuable resources for artists who wish to follow in his footsteps.

The Universities of Washington and Oregon have recognized Ron's art in their collections. With the addition of a Ron Reeder photograph to its permanent collection, Mercer Island would both recognize an important community member and allow future Mercer Island residents to benefit from Ron's unique and timeless artistic accomplishments.

We are happy to provide more information on request!

## Image Options

