

## Biography

Fulbright Scholar Basia Irland is an artist, author, and activist who creates international large-scale water projects, featured in her books *Water Library* (University of New Mexico Press, 2007) and *Reading the River: The Ecological Activist Art of Basia Irland* (Museum De Domijnen, the Netherlands, 2017). A monograph, *Basia Irland, Repositories: Portable Sculptures for Waterway Journeys*, authored by Patricia Watts, was published in 2023. Texas A&M University Press published *What Rivers Know: Listening to the Voices of Global Waterways* in 2025 with 256 pages and 199 color photos. Irland is professor emerita, Department of Art, University of New Mexico, where she founded the Art & Ecology Program.

Irland's website, [basiairland.com](http://basiairland.com), contains extensive documentation of her work, including collaborations with scientists, essays about global rivers written for a National Geographic blog, and images from her large museum retrospective in the Netherlands. She has created worldwide projects including: *Waterborne Disease Scrolls*, based on research with epidemiologists in Nepal, Egypt, and Ethiopia; *A Gathering of Waters*, which fosters dialogue and connects communities along the entire length of rivers, accompanied by *Repositories*, portable archives of the projects; and *Ice Receding/Books Reseeding*, hand-carved ephemeral Ice Book sculptures embedded with native seed texts that are floated down streams to aid riparian restoration and raise awareness about climate disruption. Irland has constructed rainwater harvesting systems and produced documentaries about water.

In 2023 her work was shown in seven exhibitions, including *Going with the Flow: Art, Actions, and Western Waters* at SITE Santa Fe, curated by Lucy Lippard and Brandee Caoba, and she was honored as one of twenty global River Warriors by the Lewis Pugh Foundation. Irland has lectured internationally and was the keynote speaker, along with Amitav Ghosh, for an ecology conference in 2018 at Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. She was invited by the United Nations in France to write a chapter about American rivers for a book, *Water Culture*, published by UNESCO in 2023, and she is a Knowledge Network Expert for the United Nations. In 2021–22, she represented the United States in the International Biennale of Cuenca, Ecuador, curated by Blanca de la Torre. Her projects have been featured in over seventy international publications.

*Basia Irland is perhaps the most significant living example of social art in the sense that she seeks to connect people to the land and to each other in a shared respect for what sustains life: water.*

Sabino Fracas, Italian curator, author, and artistic director of CRAMUM