

Basic Detail Report

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Title

Huts and gum trees in the bush

Date

1976

Primary Maker

Ken Warby

Medium

Oil on masonite, fibre glass resin

Dimensions

Overall: 72 x 121 x 12 mm, 0.1 kg

Name

Paper weight

History

When Ken Warby started on his dream to set the world water speed record, he was on his own with no sponsors or donors. Warby was responsible for purchasing all the materials he needed, including the jet engine he would need to propel the hydroplane at over 500 km/h. During these early years Warby was living in suburban Sydney and working as a salesman of power tools. He and his wife had a young family and SPIRIT OF AUSTRALIA was taking shape in the family's backyard. Financial restrictions and a test-as-you-go approach kept the building pace slow and friends and volunteers helped out when they could. Early testing showed Warby that SPIRIT OF AUSTRALIA was on the right track to attempt the water speed record but more adjustments and trials were needed. In May 1975 Warby felt he now should spend more dedicated time on getting the boat ready. He left his full time job and as part of a funding effort, Warby started painting although he had never done so before; "I gave up my day job and started doing some oil paintings in shopping centres to earn some money. It allowed me to take some time off from full-time work and concentrate on what I needed to do on the boat. I didn't have a background in art but I remembering seeing an artist at a road show and remarking to myself that I could do it." Warby sold works for \$5 to \$20 a piece and later added boat shows and caravan shows to his selling field. To generate further interest in his work he also bought SPIRIT OF AUSTRALIA along at times while he set up and painted next to the boat. Warby managed to make money from this change in career and it was the following year from when this scene was painted that Warby would set his first world speed record.