



Janet Laurence

Australian artist Janet Laurence is one of the most established and respected artists of her generation. For over forty years she has been examining the complex relationship between the natural world with its organic phenomena, and the man-made world with its constructions that impose, constrict and manipulate that former – but which ultimately rely upon it in order to build itself. Her recent notable series 'The Ferment' and 'Crimes against the Landscape' and numerous museum exhibitions in Australia, most recently a permanent installation set amidst the historic collections at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney and the award of the 2013 Glover Art Prize.

Throughout her career Laurence has been creating new departures in her artistic enquiry producing paintings, sculptures, photography, site-specific installations and architectural intervention. Laurence is not an artist easily categorised; her work skirts the boundaries of art, science, architecture, nature, the imagined world, history and memory. When referencing architectural forms or the practice of photography, Laurence maintains a distinct sense of the organic and creates a transient hybrid form which corresponds neither solely to the laws of nature or science. Like an alchemist, Laurence displays a fascination with blending materials, resulting in poetic, thought provoking pieces.

There is a duality at the heart of her work. She endlessly enjoys juxtaposing opposites including: science and nature; growth with decay; stasis and yet flux; art that is science and reality against memory. These are the ways in which Laurence takes the viewer to the heart of her practice, which is to show the 'interconnectedness of things'.

In a recent series, 'Crimes against the Landscape, Laurence has been exploring ways in which we have engaged with the natural environment – seen through her 'contextual lens' of the historical, the architectural; the museumification and the memorial. Recently her work has embraced a more environmentally political aspect in revealing and addressing the fragility and plight and loss of the natural world at the hands of man. This has led her into visiting and researching threatened sites and exploring notions of healing and caring. The 'Crimes against the Landscape' series were set in Tasmania against the backdrop of the great STYX old growth forest which was being clear felled for woodchips. Laurence photographed this are through scientific glass which both distorts the view whilst acting as the forensic lens to reveal it.

Laurence frequently employs screens and veils in her artwork which act as metaphors for memory and history. Their transparent quality recalls the passing of time and the constantly changing status of the natural world. Whether creating massive installations referencing greenhouses or small handheld photographic works, the use of translucent layers lend the pieces meditative reflections and contemplative shadows. Laurence displays a deep ecological understanding of the environment and the precarious place of humans within it, ultimately inspiring awe in the viewer when presented with the magnitude of the natural world.

Janet Laurence lives and works in Sydney. A recipient of both a Rockefeller and Churchill Fellowship, she was a Trustee of the Art Gallery of NSW, on the VAB Board of the Australia Council and is currently Visiting Fellow at COFA NSW University.

Laurence exhibits internationally and has been represented in major curated and survey exhibitions

including: *After Eden*, Sherman Contemporary Art Foundation, Sydney (2012); *Negotiating This World* (2012) NGV, Melbourne; *17th Biennale of Sydney* (2010) and *9th Biennale of Sydney* (1992); *In The Balance*; *Art for a Changing World*, MCA Sydney (2010); *Clemenger Contemporary Art Award*, NGV Melbourne (2009); The Adelaide Biennale (2008), Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennial, Japan (2003,) Australian Perspecta (1985, 1991, 1997).

Major commissioned works include: *The Australian War Memorial* (in collaboration with TZG Architects), Hyde Park, London; *Tarkine for a World in Need of Wilderness* Macquarie Bank London, *In the Shadow*, Sydney 2000 Olympic Park; *Waterveil*, CH2 Building for Melbourne City Council, *Elixir*, Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennial, Japan; and *Memory of Lived Spaces*, T3 Terminal Changi Singapore.

Key collections include: NGA, Canberra; AGNSW, Sydney; NGV, Melbourne; QAG, Brisbane; AGSA, Adelaide; Artbank Australia Macquarie Bank Collection, Kunstwerk Summlung Klein, Germany as well as numerous university, corporate and private collections nationally and internationally. In 2012 the AGNSW acquired a major installation work '*The Memory of Nature*', as part of the permanent collection.