

MEDIA RELEASE: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Arboreal Narratives 15 October to 2 November 2019

A multidisciplinary exhibition in honour of Trees curated by Louise Fowler-Smith.

Artists: Guillermo Batiz with Dr Tamryn Bennett, Paula Broom, Dr Maria Fernanda Cardoso, Amanda Farquharson, Louise Fowler-Smith, Elizabeth Gervay, Ian Grant, Jane Green, Hobart Hughes, Haruka Kokubu, Janet Laurence, Liz Perfect, Miho Watanabe.

The Grace Cossington Smith Gallery is pleased to announce the exhibition *Arboreal Narratives* which brings together a group of multidisciplinary artists in an innovative and experimental project that critically explores the multifaceted importance and character of the longest-lived plant - the 'tree'.

The exhibition explores humanity's relationship with the tree whilst engaging conceptually with contemporary visual interpretations surrounding arboreal imagery. Repositioning the tree from a mere vernacular image to a sentient entity in and of itself, this exhibition and symposium memorialises aspects of the natural environment that we have lost or are at risk of losing.

The exhibition comprises artists from different cultures and countries, some of whom are members of the contemporary Eco-Art collective, the Tree Veneration Society (TVS), along with noted and internationally renowned environmental/eco artists such as Janet Laurence and Maria Fernanda Cardoso, who explore the importance of the tree and the natural environment in their work.

Opening Event & Symposium. Saturday 19 October 1.30 - 4.30pm

Symposium Details: 1.30 - 2.30pm.

- Introduction by Louise Fowler-Smith, Artist & Founder of the Eco-Art collective The Tree Veneration Society.
- *Planting Trees for the Future* by Dr Marlien Van der Merwe, Biodiversity Research Scientist, Royal Botanical Gardens Sydney.
- *A Double Story of Trees in the Poetic Imagination* by Peter Boyle, acclaimed Sydney based Poet.
- *Poetic Meditations upon the New Arboreal Florescence* by Dr Kim Satchell, Surfer, Poet, Performer & Environmental Philosopher.
- *Sonic Explorations of Arboreal Environments* by Dr Daniel Blinkhorn, Multi international Award-winning Composer, Sound & Digital Media Artist.

The Symposium will be followed by drinks with the artists.

Arboreal Narratives includes works by the following artists:

Guillermo Batiz is Mexican artist whose interdisciplinary practice encompasses music, sound design, installation and poetry. He has performed and exhibited internationally and across Australia. Guillermo is co-founder of the plant symphony using bioacoustics to deepen connection and communication with plants.

Tamryn Bennett is a poet and artist. She is the recipient of the Marten Bequest with residencies at Kew Botanic Gardens and California's Redwood Forests. Her books and publications include *phosphene, lines in land* and *Covert Plants: Vegetal Consciousness and Agency in an Anthropocentric World*. She co-founded the plant symphony with Guillermo Batiz.

Paula Broom is a Sydney-based artist working in expanded photo media to explore the intersection of art, environment and health, both autobiographical and collective, especially regarding trees and the health benefits they provide human societies.

Amanda Farquharson works with "found" fallen tree elements in creating organic Sculptural "Tree Creatures" and eco dyed "Paper-plays" so describing the Arboreal Narrative.

Maria Fernanda Cardoso is a leading Latin American and Australian artist who lives and works in Sydney. She graduated with an MFA in Sculpture from Yale University, USA in 1990 and in 2013 she received a PhD from Sydney University in Art and Science. She has exhibited in over 25 countries in institutions as prestigious as NY MoMA, the New Museum of Contemporary Art in New York, PS1, New York, the San Francisco Exploratorium, the Centre Georges Pompidou, Fundacion La Caixa in Barcelona, the Centro Reina Sofia in Madrid.

Louise Fowler-Smith is a Sydney based eco-artist who has exhibited nationally and internationally. Her most recent significant exhibition was held at the Muséum National D'Historie Naturelle in France. For the past 20 years her practice-led research has focused on the veneration of trees, a subject she was drawn to for the magnitude of their environmental significance and their universal, pan-religious symbolic importance. Louise is the founder of the Eco Arts collective, The Tree Veneration Society. <https://treevenerationsociety.com>.

Elizabeth Gervay is a Sydney based artist who frames her work around renewal and transformation. Her interdisciplinary art practice amalgamates re-purposed objects and arboreal narratives.

Ian Grant is a Sydney based artist who has exhibited with major galleries since 1974, has works included in public collections including the National Gallery of Australia, Art Gallery of NSW, and has been awarded prizes including the Blake Prize and the Fleurieu prize for landscape.

Jane Green is a Sydney based artist. Her work responds to the contemporary human experience, playing with artistic methods traditional to the fields of painting, drawing and photography.

Hobart Hughes is a Sydney based artist whose work addresses possible, allegorical and scientific models of consciousness. He works across installation, sculpture, animation, video art and performance.

Haruka Kokubu employs botanical dye techniques to create textile/time-based installations. Haruka has completed an MFA research degree at UNSW Art & Design and has exhibited in Japan and Australia.

Janet Laurence is considered one of the most important environmental artists in Australia. Her work explores what it might mean to heal, albeit metaphorically, the natural environment, fusing this sense of communal loss with a search for connection with powerful life-forces. Laurence was the Australian representative for the COP21/FIAC, *Artists 4 Paris Climate 2015 Exhibition*, exhibiting a major work – Deep Breathing: Resuscitation for the Reef – at the Muséum National D’Histoire Naturelle, in Paris, France. She has been the recipient of Rockefeller, Churchill and Australia Council Fellowships, and the Alumni Award for Arts, UNSW. Laurence was a Trustee of the Art Gallery of NSW, a former Board Member of the VAB Board of the Australia Council and was Visiting Fellow at the NSW University Art and Design. Laurence’s work is included in many Museum, University and Corporate collections as well as within architectural and landscaped public places, worldwide.

Liz Perfect completed her undergraduate degree in Painting and Printmaking at the Central School of Art in London and her Masters at UNSW: Art and Design. As well as exhibiting Liz currently teaches drawing painting and printmaking at Tafe and other venues in Sydney & the Blue Mountains.

Miho Watanabe. As a Japanese-Australian diaspora artist, Miho's practice and research addresses awareness of ‘between-ness’; making the invisible subject ‘between-ness’ theoretically and technically visible and becoming aware of it. She is currently a PhD candidate at ANU.

SHORT STATEMENT (58 words)

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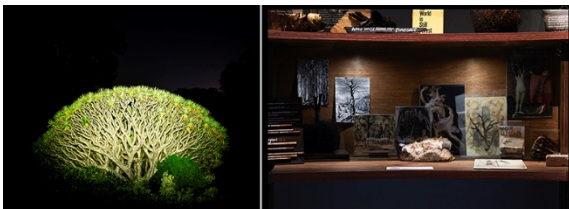
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The **Grace Cossington Smith Gallery** is a not-for-profit gallery, run by Abbotsleigh, serving the public through free admission and a changing exhibition program. The Gallery is open Monday to Friday from 10 am-5 pm and Saturday 9am – 4pm. Enter via Gate 7, 1666 Pacific Highway Wahroonga. Phone: 02 9483 7878

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High Resolution images are available.



Louise Fowler-Smith. ‘Dragon Tree’ from the Significant Trees of the Royal Botanical Gardens Series. Photograph

Janet Laurence. ‘Knowledge - From the Tree of Life Installation’ - detail. Installation