



AFTER NATURE THEATRE OF TREES

JANET LAURENCE

Museum of Contemporary Art Sydney | 1 March- 10 June 2019



Theatre of Trees

After Nature- Janet Laurence MCA Sydney



Tree of Knowledge

After Nature- Janet Laurence MCA Sydney





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Wonder (Herbarium)

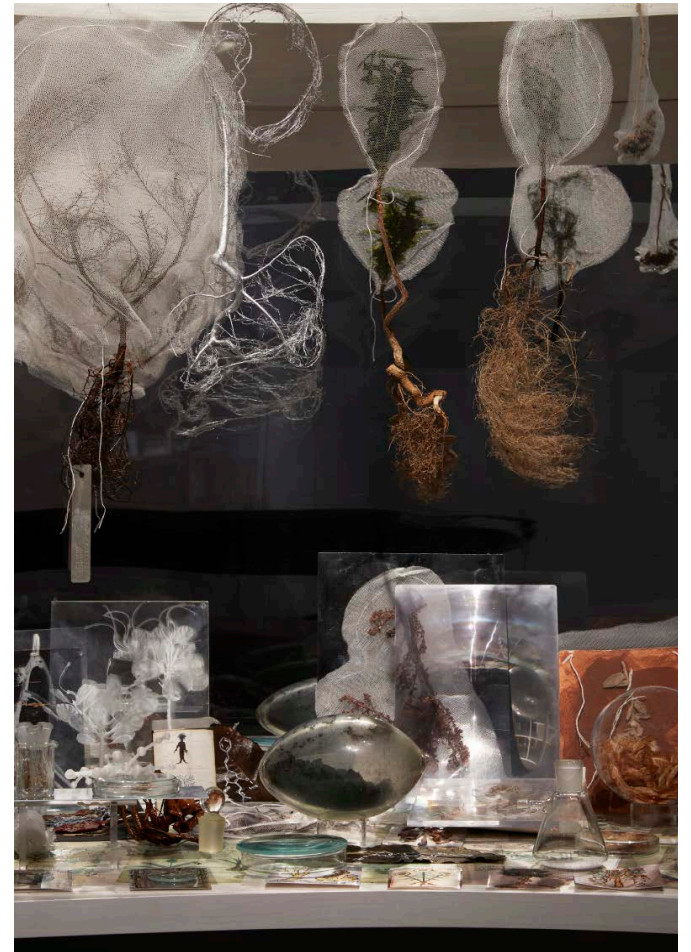
After Nature- Janet Laurence MCA Sydney





Wonder (Herbarium)

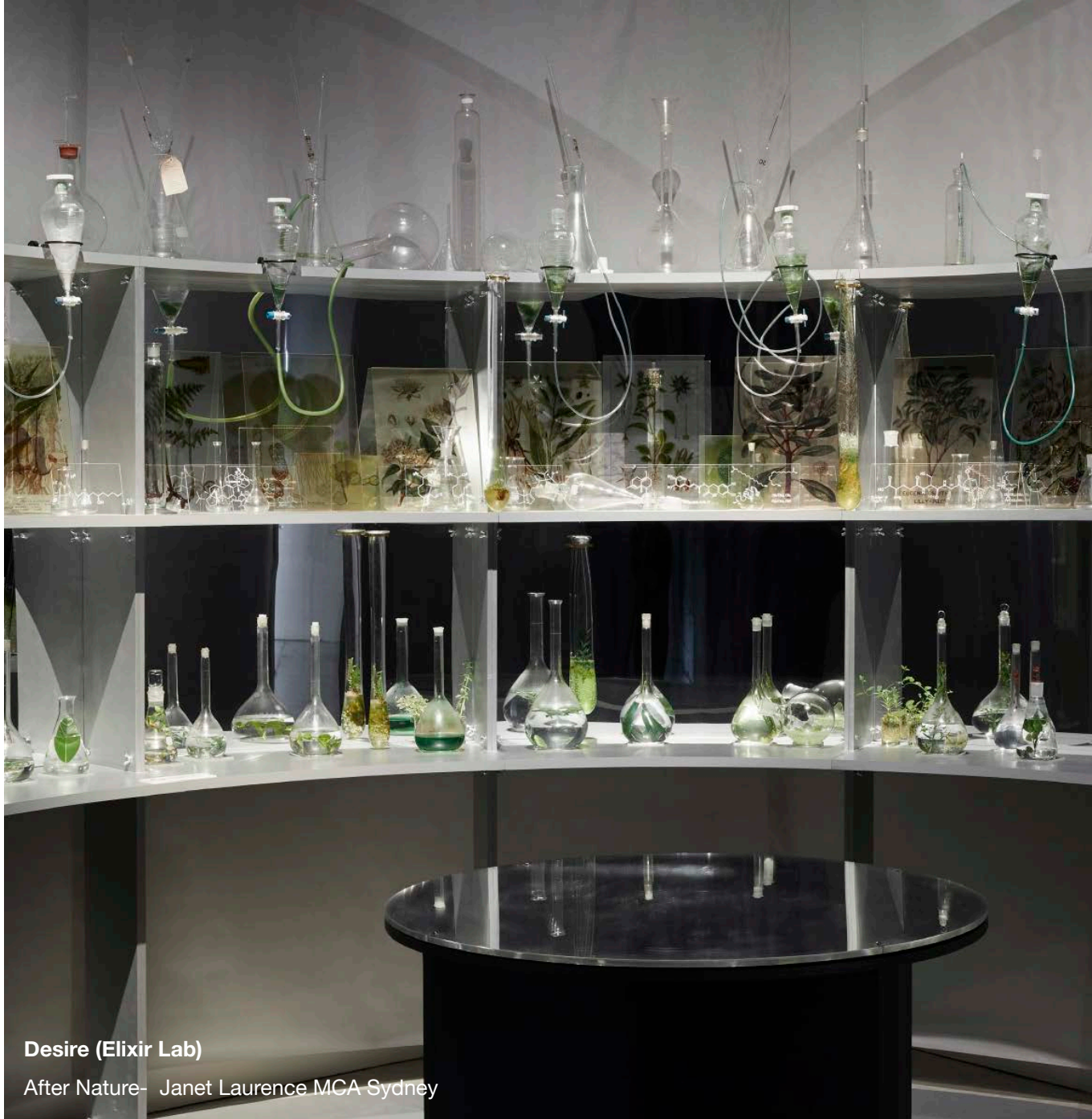
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Desire (Elixir Lab)

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Theatre of Trees

Trees have been a fixture of Janet Laurence's art since the beginning of her career. *'I've had a deep environmental consciousness for as long as I can remember. Trees factor into that consciousness, so I look also at the loss of forests and the enormity of that for our planet. I look at trees with enormous wonder and joy, but at the same time, the realisation that they are gravely threatened. There is the feeling that this can't last.'*

Theatre of Trees brings together a decade of Laurence's research into medicinal plants as a metaphor for the healing power of the planet. *Forest (Theatre of Trees)* is a large circular structure composed of three concentric rings, like those of a tree, that viewers are invited to walk within. Inside, they are literally enveloped by the towering mesh structure, which supports semi-transparent 'veils' imprinted with imagery of the natural world. Some are based on photographs taken by Laurence on her global travels through old-growth forests and wilderness environments. Others contain imagery that has been reworked by Laurence from art-historical sources, medieval books, and documentation from conservation and activist organisations.

The large circular structure is expanded by three smaller, enclosed spaces which contain a botanical library, herbarium housing 19th century botanical models, and 'elixir lab' where visitors can taste healing plant extracts over the course of the exhibition.

Trees for me are the great signals of change. They become a register of what's happening through climate change, pollution, poisoned waters... Yet we are still land clearing in a dry country like Australia, despite crippling drought and the knowledge that we should do the opposite: that we need to regenerate this planet.

—Janet Laurence