



Fugitive

Animate/Inanimate - Tarrawarra Museum of Art, 2013.
Curated by Victoria Lynn.

Fugitive

The genesis for *Fugitive* (2013) started with my Sherman Contemporary Art Foundation project *After Eden* (2012). This was a type of Wunderkammer based on the idea of a natural history museum in our time of ecological crisis, paying particular attention to the plight of animals and their loss of habitat.

Fugitive is now part of a broader context within the TarraWarra Museum of Art, which shares a spectacular landscape setting and cultural space with the Healesville Sanctuary – a place of healing, hope, breeding and care for our native animals. On the one hand, material researched at the Sanctuary highlights our concern for and conservation of threatened native species; on the other hand it exposes widespread and ongoing ecological destruction, a blindness leading to the loss of the wild.

Fugitive expresses our relationship to our fragile environment and an awareness that we are within the era of the ‘Anthropocene’. This ecological crisis demands us to shift our focus from a human-centred perspective to a broader multispecies, environmental approach, for how else are we to live ethically and find our place in this world.

Within the gallery space I want to bring us into contact with the life-world. With a focus on the animals and their loss, I think about the loneliness of the last one of a species. What was their death? I wonder about their umwelt, the unique world in which each species lives.

I am attempting to bring these concerns into art, calling upon perception and memory, to create fugitive spaces of immersion and reflection, transparency and translucency, through a language of veiling. The veil in my work takes many forms. It creates ambiguity and takes away certainty. The veil forms enmeshed environments, slowed spaces that enable porosity and fluidity. These are swollen, cellular forms which house various groups of objects and specimens including forensic glass lenses, images in

transparent layers and films from both hidden cameras and from my research in wildlife sanctuaries. I want to bring us into intimacy with these animals and to reveal our interconnection.

The taxidermy specimens, borrowed from the Melbourne Museum enable us to look into the eyes of the dead. These specimens exist somewhere between the living and the dead. They have this incredible presence and yet they’re long past. I’m intrigued by the tiny space between life and death when the concept is infinite.

- Janet Laurence, 2013.

[Click to view: Animate/Inanimate interview.](#)





