



JANET LAURENCE
THE FERMENT

12 April - 11 May 2013

The Fine Art Society
CONTEMPORARY

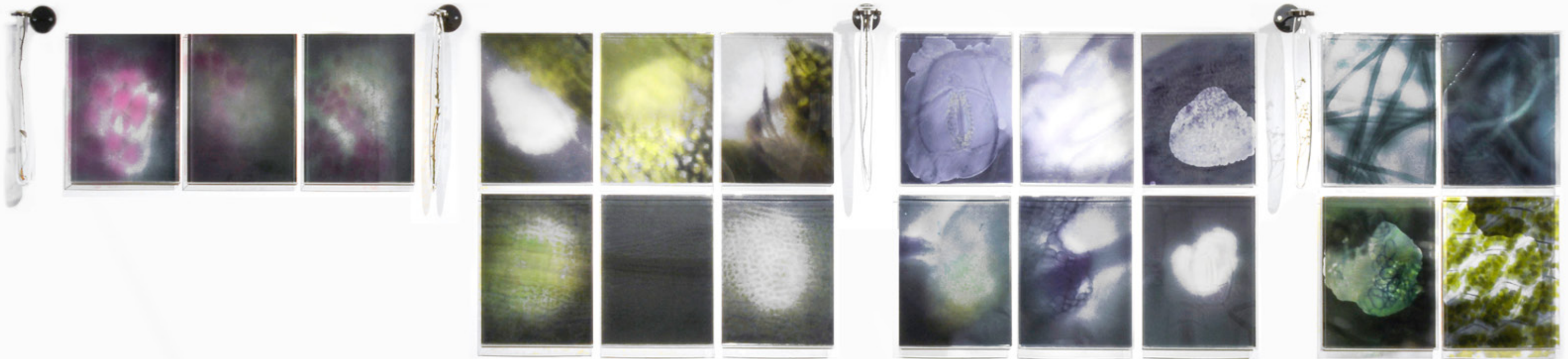
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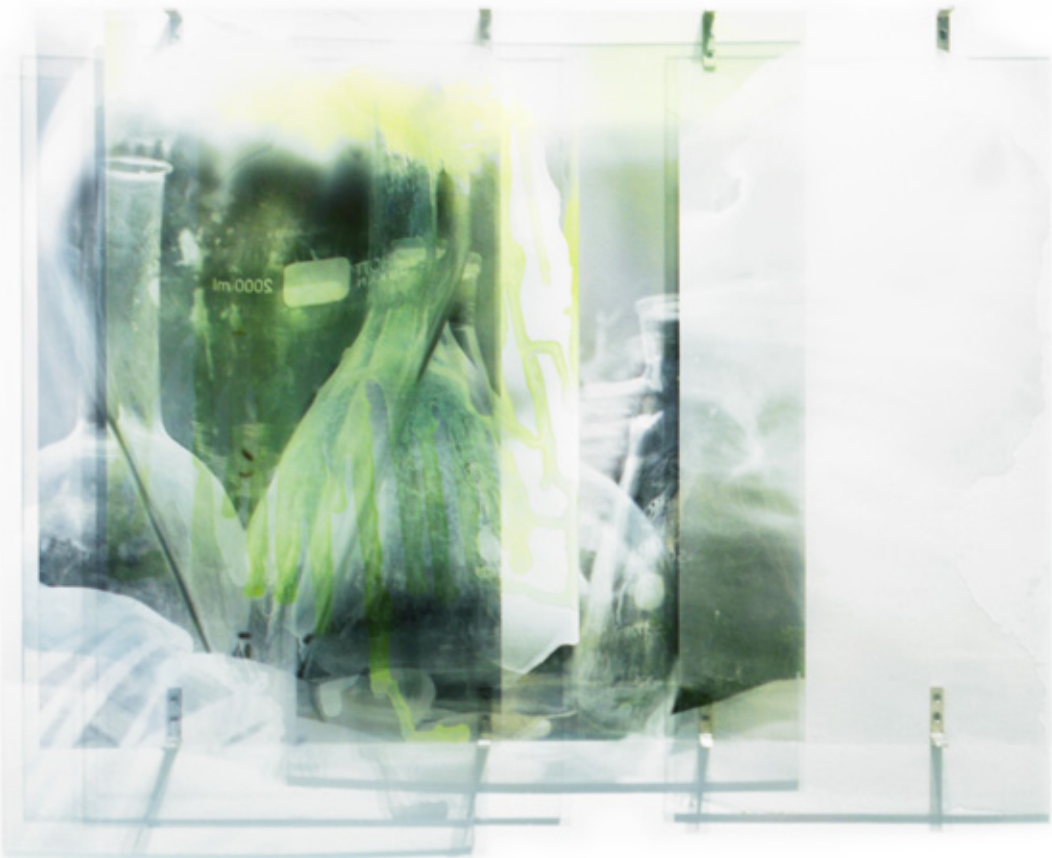
An owl watches as the tree it calls home is engulfed by a raging fire. The old tree is giving way to the golden flames licking away at its interior. The heat is almost palpable and the smoke pungent, acrid - though, in reality, you are far from a real conflagration and safe in the heart of London, at the Fine Art Society.



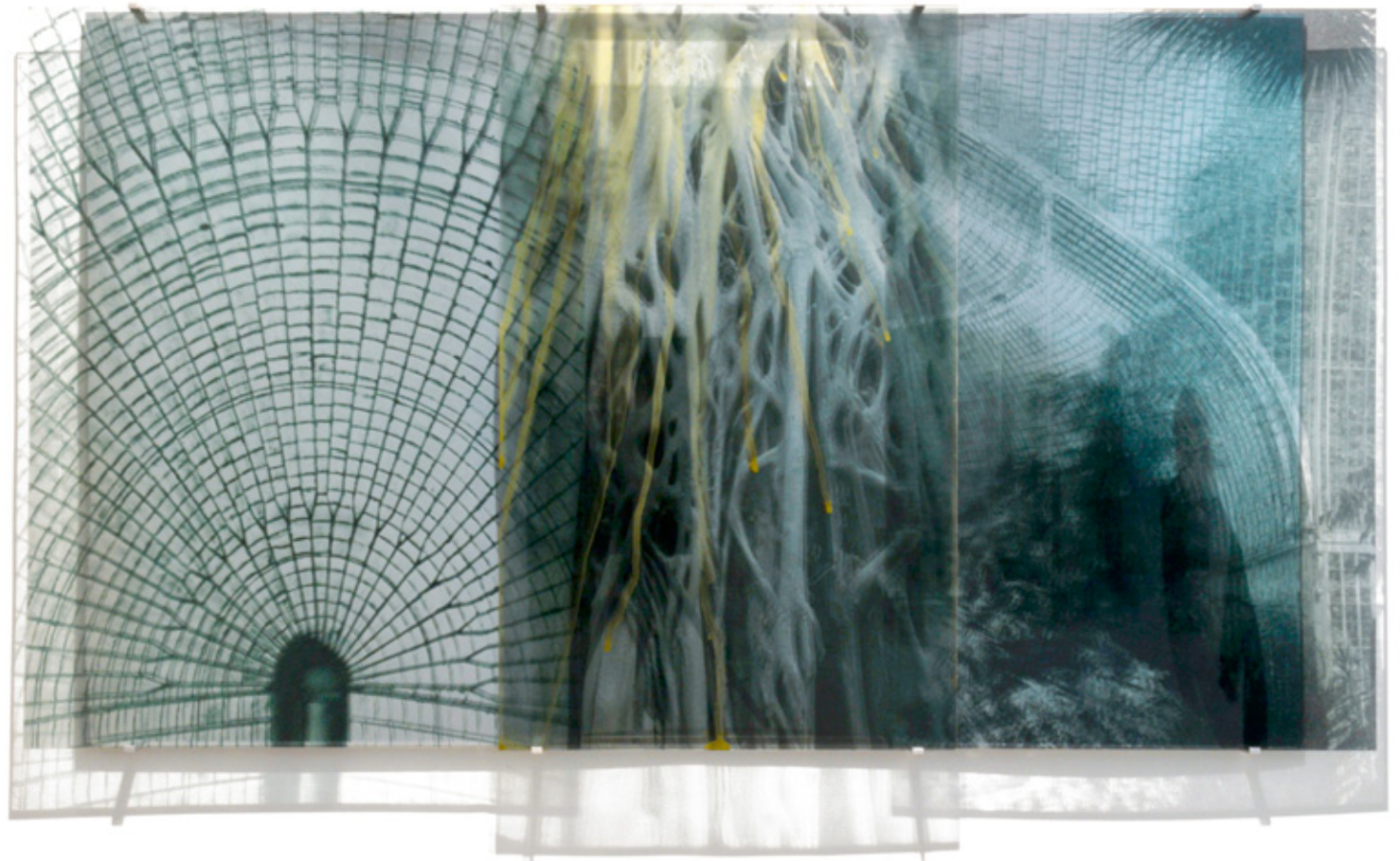
Broken Hearted Wood (2011-13)
duraclear photograph, mirror, acrylic, gold leaf, pigment & specimen
1000 x 2480mm



Photosynthesis (2013)
duraclear photograph on acrylic, blown glass vials, pigment & plant specimen
1000 x 3200mm



Measuring Loss (from Crimes Against the Landscape series) (2010)
Duraclear, photograph, acrylic and mirror
1000 x 1400mm



Traded Roots (from Botanical Residues series) (2008-2013)
Duraclear, photograph, acrylic and mirror
1000 x 2050mm

But are you really safe? Environmental artist Janet Laurence's new show, *The Ferment*, implies, as the organisers say, both a "stirring up and a sense of environmental undoing". She is an artist whose unusual techniques leave you unsettled, uneasy.

Standing in front of *Broken Hearted Wood*, it is as if you are inside the owl's tree, a disconcerting ghostly apparition that won't go away. When you accidentally catch sight of yourself in the glass covering the work, it's really difficult not to feel that you are part of the picture.

That, of course, is what Laurence is about: she wants you to care about the relationship between the natural and the human worlds.

She draws you in with a powerful mixture of paintings, photographic images and installations. There are transparent images on acrylic, mounted on a background that is sometimes the wall, sometimes a mirror or just a coat of paint. And a "layering" technique adds to the astonishing sense of being there.

Then with more traditional material like oil glaze, and some novel materials like gold pigment and burnt wood, she captures the impact humans have had on our fragile ecosystems.

Gold pigment is what creates the compelling sensation of fire in *Broken Hearted Wood*, which is from Laurence's *Crimes against Landscape* series, inspired by the international fight to save the Styx forest in Tasmania, Australia.

She visited the forest, taking with her lab glassware through which she takes photographs, plus special filters for her camera to capture other images she would use later.

REVIEW

Sekar, S. 'Environmental art of loss and wonder', *New Scientist*, 15th April, 2013.



The Ferment (2013)
Mixed media installation (detail)