

Laura Patterson

Grotesque Grotto

13 April – 1 May 2021

Jan Murphy Gallery is pleased to present our first exhibition of Brisbane-based artist Laura Patterson's work. Informed by her background in architecture, Laura's exquisitely detailed paintings present moments taken from nature, housed within elaborate framing devices. Her most recent series, which looks at pockets of remnant old growth rainforest ferns, began as a response to the early 2020 Australian bushfires.

"Grotesque Grotto offers a contemporary response to the 18th century British fern craze, Pteridomania.

These landscapes are painted from photographs taken on field trips to Tasmanian rainforests between 2015 and 2020. I am interested in examining the role Australia's old growth forests have involuntarily played within the broader context of worldwide plant trade, highlighting the dire need to protect our remnant rainforests which contain some of the oldest and rarest plant specimens in the world.

The frames of these artwork reference the designs of Victorian era glasshouses and wardian cases that have gradually become so aesthetically tied to the fern that one could be forgiven for forgetting just how strange it is to see subtropical rainforest plants growing happily in humid glass boxes on a landscape where temperatures drop and ice sets on the ground.

Grotesque Grotto is a modern interpretation of the excitement and madness of the fern craze. Rather than select specimens being taken from their ecosystem to be cultivated within manmade glasshouses, these landscapes and frames exist symbiotically. The intense beauty of these old growth forests is not dimmed by leaving them intact and their protective framing offers glimpses of the intrigue that surrounded their history."
Laura Patterson, 2021

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Laura has a Bachelor of Architectural Design and a Masters of Architecture from University of Queensland. Since graduating in 2014, Laura has worked across both the fields of visual art and architecture simultaneously, until mid 2018 when she committed to working full time on her art practice. Since 2010 Laura has held numerous solo and group exhibitions and been included in The Glover Prize, Mosman Art Prize and was the Winner of the Milburn Art Prize in 2019.