



**School: School of Fine Art**

**Researcher: Mariele Neudecker**

**Project Title: Forests And Trees**

**UOA: 32**

## 300-Word Statement

Widely represented historically in the Arts, Forests and Trees now have renewed symbolic significance in relation to pollution, sustainability and human survival. Drawing from the Romantic Sublime in 19th Century painting, and her childhood experiences in Germany Neudecker adapts ideas that impact our conscious and subconsciousness exploring notions of the Contemporary Sublime to ask:

1. How have our perceptions of Forests and Trees changed and what is their metaphorical significance today?
2. How can the legacy of the Romantic Sublime and urgent environmental concerns interconnect ?
3. How does the viewer experience the collision of the real and imaginary, and the political and historical in these works?

Neudecker's research is brought together in 3 vitrine works and 2 audio visual installations. Commissioned by the Dulwich Picture Gallery in 2018, **Breathing Yellow** is the most significant of the vitrines, featuring a dense section of Romantic forest submerged in a toxic yellow solution. Playing with both psychic and physical scale, the real and imaginary collide, questioning our perceptions of landscape and nature.

Working in the Ecuadorian rainforest, slowly deteriorating from human impact, Neudecker took vertical tracking shots and sound recordings to create 2 immersive installations. Firstly, **Figure of 8** 2015, a soundscape recreating a nocturnal experience in the rainforest, shown at Art Basel, Miami in 2015. Secondly, commissioned for the New Cancer Centre at Guys Hospital, London, **Parallel Lives** 2016, is an installation in 3 lifts, screening Neudecker's rainforest footage, alongside the real time city views from the lift windows, connecting and synchronising the growth height of a rainforest with the building within the urban jungle.

Neudecker's methodology of layering coexisting opposites aims to provoke a new awareness of space, an exploration of the semiotic realm and our perceptions of both, moving us toward a new understanding of what constitutes the Contemporary Sublime.