

Carbon Study: Walking in the Dark

Genevieve Robertson

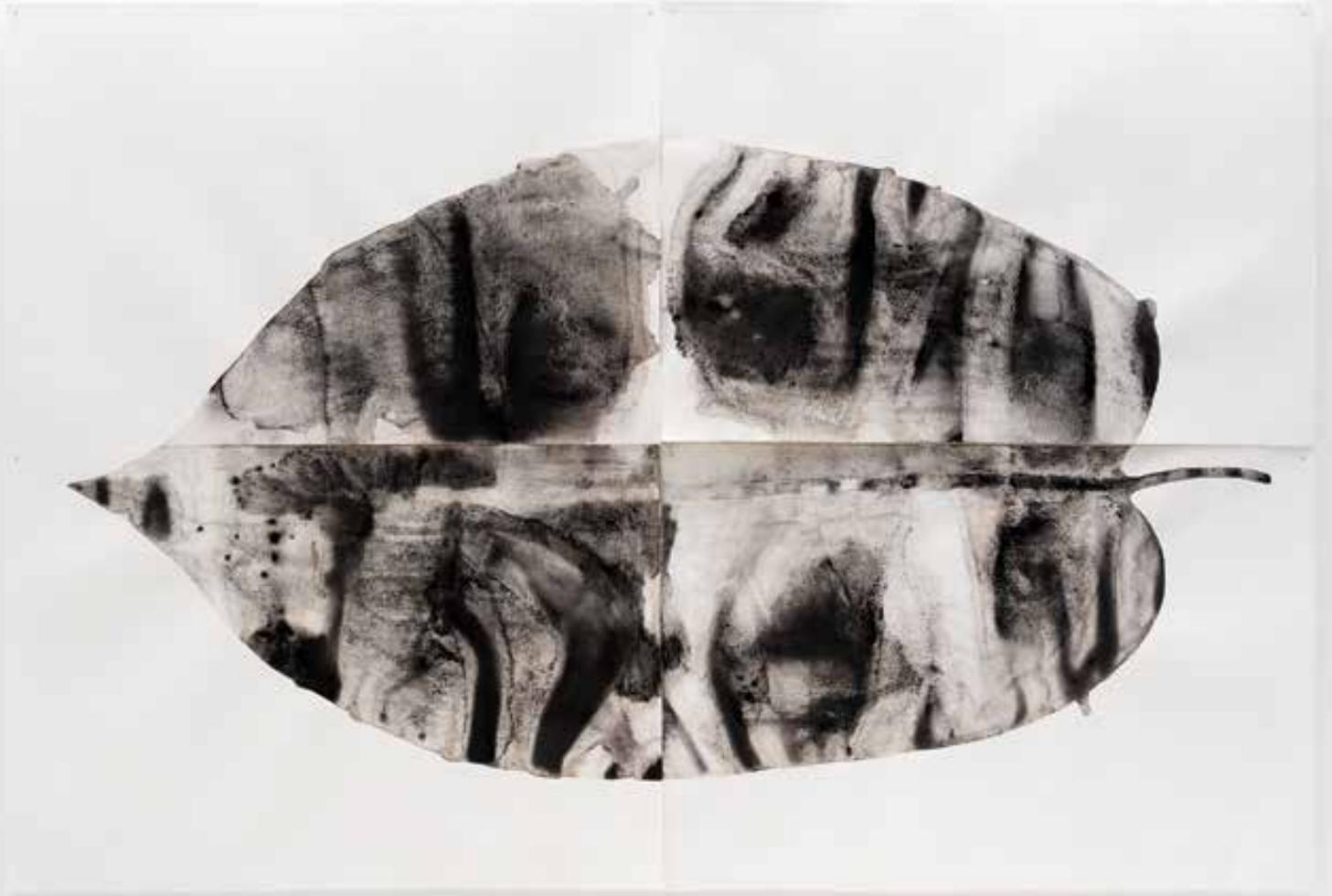
Carbon Study: Walking in the Dark begins with curiosity: how might drawing with carbon provide personal and shared reflection on this ubiquitous material and its role in climate change? These drawings are produced using found carbon-based compounds, specifically coal, graphite, and forest fire-derived charcoal, all collected in southern interior regions of British Columbia where coal and graphite are present and forest fires are becoming more destructive and widespread. The project records a sustained effort to capture an elemental and lively quality embedded in these fossil- and plant-derived materials. Reading like large-scale taxonomic or botanical interpretations, these works are meant to parse out the tension of carbon as a life-bearing element, and synthetic hydro-carbon emission as a process that is putting our planet's life support systems at risk.

Both coal and graphite are produced from plant matter and are indicators of rich ecosystems that flourished in the geologic past; our present forests also indicate a time of ecological abundance, while the increase in forest fires signifies a drastic shift. These large-scale works on paper are meant to invoke these primordial life forms and perhaps give substance to the ecological grief that many people are experiencing as our planet changes.

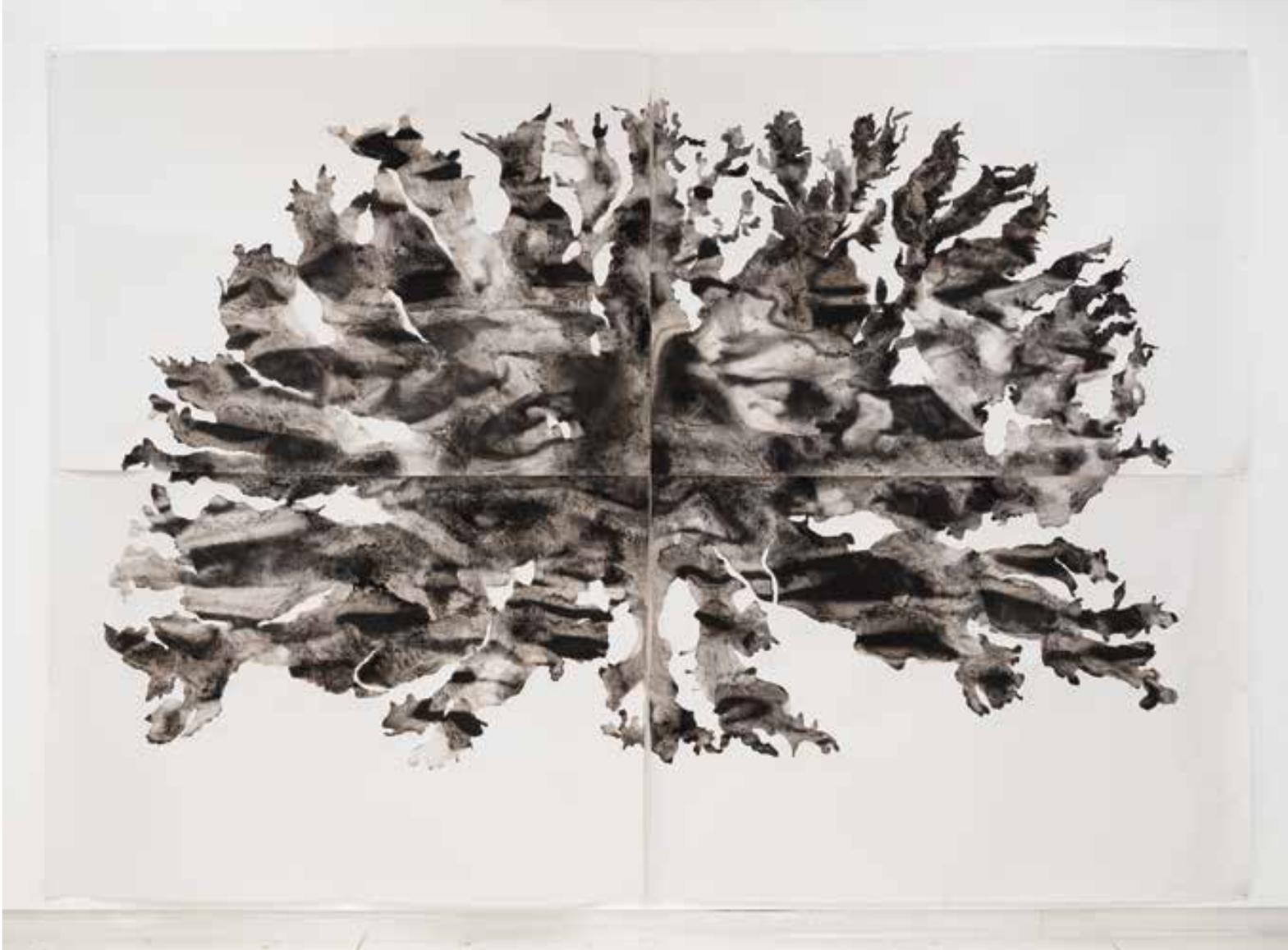
The title *Walking in the Dark* references the practice of walking to both collect carbon-based materials and to locate oneself in an unfamiliar landscape. The embodied practice of walking in the dark was taken up throughout the year that this series was produced. Sometimes in literal darkness, sometimes in an atmosphere obscured by forest fire smoke, it was a practice that paralleled the production of the drawings and a reflection on the obscurity of our shared future.

Genevieve Robertson, *Bone*, 2019
Found coal, charcoal and graphite on paper, 30 x 44 inches





Genevieve Robertson, *Broad Leaf*, 2019
Found coal, charcoal and graphite on paper, 60 x 88 inches



Genevieve Robertson, *Lichen*, 2019
Found coal and charcoal on paper, 110 x 155 inches

Genevieve Robertson, *Pod*, 2019
Found coal, charcoal and graphite on paper, 30 x 44 inches

