

# Aspects of Trees

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*Aspects of Trees* is a series of graphite pencil drawings displaying some of the surprising, enigmatic, forms of trees found in diverse regions of Australia. The aim is not that of botanical realism but a more romantic expression and respectful awe of these idiosyncratic forms.

Outside my studio at Mt Rumney I found knobbly gumnuts, fallen from a large eucalypt. In the Botanical Gardens were clipped tree fern trunks and a palm tree with young leaves sprouting. Trees, in the Tasmanian highlands, burnt and drowned, rise from the Hydro lakes. On the Midland Highway are quaint, whimsical topiaries – trees sculpted into animal, bird and human forms. Contrasting with these is the wild tangle of the horizontal scrub in Tasmania's rainforest. And on King Island are the eerie tree substitutes of the calcified forest.



**Dawn Redwood, Tasmanian Arboretum** 2015, graphite pencil on paper, 76 x 56cm

The astonishingly complex mangrove prop roots rise from Queensland swamps and sandy beaches. In the Kimberley a sturdy 'upside down tree' – the bottle-shaped boab – reaches upwards, its scraggy branches outlined against a blue sky seeming like roots that should be underground. In southwest Western Australia grass trees sprout tall, multiple brown spikes.

On Norfolk Island is the 'paradise' discovered by early explorers; there are giant tree ferns whose huge frond whorls show various stages of unfurling. On their trunks are oval patterns, the imprint left by fallen fronds. Also on Norfolk Island is a row of fig trees with flat, sinuous walls of buttress roots. And an incredible banyan tree, a strangler fig, ever-spreading over a vast area of ground has long, thin aerial roots which dangle, take root in the ground, and form a forest through which it is possible to walk.



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