



A TALE OF TWO TREES
RED-FLOWERING GUM & RED TINGLE
ELIZABETH EDMONDS

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DAHL FELLOWSHIP 2023

Dr Elizabeth Edmonds is a recipient of a Eucalypt Australia Dahl Fellowship 2023 for this exhibition, *The Tale of Two Trees - The Red-Flowering Gum and Red Tingle* which explores the environmental narrative of two iconic Australian eucalypt trees through art to raise awareness of the conservation issues surrounding them.

In the lead up to the exhibition a symposium was held on National Tree Day in March 2023. Insights gleaned from expert presentations helped shape the research and creative process of the project, as well as build networks and strengthen community collaborations.

THE ARTIST

As an artist and palaeoecologist, Elizabeth explores the southern Australian landscape at different spatial and temporal scales: its history, layers and depths. Her work delves into personal experiences of the wilderness area, the concept of deep time and the human impacts on vulnerable landscapes.

Within this landscape she is especially drawn to the significance of the old, large 'venerable' trees endemic to the area: the Tingles and Red-Flowering Gum. Their formation, thigmomorphogenesis - are touched and shaped by history and natural elements. When translated into artworks, the vibrant watercolour red hues symbolise life and vitality creating a striking juxtaposition with the grounding presence of dark charcoal inks.

FRONT COVER
Bunuru/ late summer
watercolour, gouche,
acrylic + wax on board

RIGHT
Three (detail)
ink, charcoal tingle ink
+ wax on board (triptych)





THE TALE OF TWO TREES

The Red-Flowering Gum (*Corymbia ficifolia* or *yorgum*) and the Red Tingle (*Eucalyptus jacksonii* or *dtingle dtingle*) are iconic trees of Western Australia. While the Valley of the Giants Tree Top Walk has afforded millions of tourists the opportunity to wander amidst the colossal Tingle trees, the Red-Flowering Gum has earned international recognition and is extensively cultivated on streets worldwide. Despite their global prominence, the ecological, biological, and conservation aspects of these species remain poorly understood. These trees endemic to the Walpole Wilderness Area and adjacent reserves, and the intricate ecosystems they foster, are vulnerable to climate change, altered fire regimes, disease and other human impacts.

LEFT
Brilliant Trusses (detail)
watercolour, gouche,
acrylic + wax on board

RIGHT
Look up
ink, charcoal tingle ink
+ wax on board





The Red-flowering Gum (*Corymbia ficifolia*) was first botanically described in 1860 and the Red Tingle (*Eucalyptus jacksonii*) in 1912. Population sizes and distribution is still relatively unknown and whether tree numbers have changed over time since mapping began. With a progressively warming and drying climate influencing fire in the landscape, understanding these gum trees, and their ecosystems, is more vital than ever.

Using contour drawn lines layered with 'red-flowering gum charcoal-ink' washes and shaded with 'tingle charcoal' symbolise edaphic features in the landscape such as topography, the contoured hills and lowlands, earth pigments and fire as wax layers creates a misty, cloud like quality. Follow the journey up the Deep, Walpole and Frankland rivers from the inlet, through tingle forests (yellow ochre watercolour wash) and red-flowering gum (vermillion pink) country.

LEFT
Endemic
ink, tingle charcoal, red-flowering
gum ink + wax on board

BELOW
Inflorescence (detail)
watercolour, gouche, acrylic + wax on board



The fall of an ancient giant has a profound ecological impact in the Tingle forest. The demise of a tree, through fire or other factors, that has likely stood for centuries signifies the loss of a unique and irreplaceable component of our natural heritage.

A fallen log marks the passing of one generation and the beginning of a new phase of growth. It creates a gap in the forest canopy, allowing sunlight to reach the forest floor. This can trigger a series of ecological changes, including providing new habitats for various organisms, from fungi to insects to small mammals.

BELOW
Ancient home
ink, charcoal tingle ink +
wax on board (polyptych)

Giant trees also play a significant role in carbon sequestration, helping to mitigate climate change. When they fall and decompose, they release some of the stored carbon back into the atmosphere. Understanding this process is important for assessing the carbon balance in forests and their contribution to climate regulation.

In this piece, tingle charcoal-infused ink washes underlay detailed drawings that follow every mark, shaped, knot, gnarl and scar of a fallen tingle. It is a contemplative process, a reflective journey tracing the historical thread and interweaving the environmental storyline by manipulation of layers of wax that preserve and uphold the narrative.





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Petrichor Gallery
8 Nockolds Street | Walpole WA 6398
www.petrichorgallery.com.au
(08) 9840 1381 | info@petrichorgallery.com.au
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LEFT
Cluster
ink, charcoal red flowering
gum ink + wax on board

BACK
Thigmomorphogenesis
ink, charcoal red flowering
gum ink + wax on board

