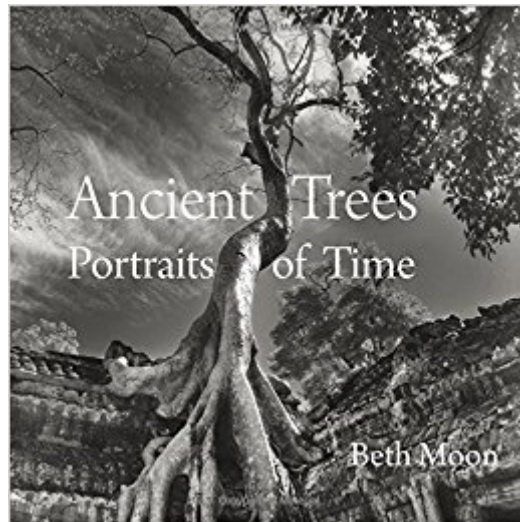


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# Ancient Trees: Portraits Of Time



## Synopsis

Captivating black-and-white photographs of the world's most majestic ancient trees. Beth Moon's fourteen-year quest to photograph ancient trees has taken her across the United States, Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and Africa. Some of her subjects grow in isolation, on remote mountainsides, private estates, or nature preserves; others maintain a proud, though often precarious, existence in the midst of civilization. All, however, share a mysterious beauty perfected by age and the power to connect us to a sense of time and nature much greater than ourselves. It is this beauty, and this power, that Moon captures in her remarkable photographs. This handsome volume presents nearly seventy of Moon's finest tree portraits as full-page duotone plates. The pictured trees include the tangled, hollow-trunked yews—some more than a thousand years old—that grow in English churchyards; the baobabs of Madagascar, called 'upside-down trees' because of the curious disproportion of their giant trunks and modest branches; and the fantastical dragon-blood trees, red-sapped and umbrella-shaped, that grow only on the island of Socotra, off the Horn of Africa. Moon's narrative captions describe the natural and cultural history of each individual tree, while Todd Forrest, vice president for horticulture and living collections at The New York Botanical Garden, provides a concise introduction to the biology and preservation of ancient trees. An essay by the critic Steven Brown defines Moon's unique place in a tradition of tree photography extending from William Henry Fox Talbot to Sally Mann, and explores the challenges and potential of the tree as a subject for art.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Photographer Beth Moon's "Ancient Trees" is the unique product of an unusual quest, to capture in beautiful black and white the images of many ancient trees, from Britain to the United States, to Cambodia, Africa, and beyond. This well-executed coffee-table format allows the viewer to approach each unique tree on its own terms, to be appreciated for its age and its disposition. Some grace churchyards, some inhabit monuments such as Angkor Wat, and some are to be found with others of their kind. The book features a couple of short essays and an index of the pictures, but mostly this book is about the trees. Recommended.

Hard-to-believe 8-inch x 10-inch black and white photographs of unusual trees from around the world. This is a great coffee-table book which displays the wonders of nature. And the price of \$35 is also hard to believe. The book is nicely balanced with an introduction by the author, an article on the form and function of ancient trees by Todd Forrest, 62 tree pictures followed by 15 pages of captions, closing comments on the art of the tree by Steven Brown, and a 2-page index of the trees shown. I highly recommend this book for those interested in unusual trees and nature in general.

Over the past fourteen years Beth Moon has traveled the world to photograph the "oldest souls" living on earth, its ancient trees. She has shared these portraits with us in her new book, Ancient Trees, Portraits of Time. Her images along with essays by Todd Forrest and Steven Brown makes this book a treasure. We had the chance to ask Beth a few questions on her work. The best portraits are taken when the photographer feels a connection with the subject, what connection did you feel to the subjects in these images? It's hard to describe the connection I have to these trees. To say I felt wonder and admiration is putting it lightly, rather it felt like being struck by lightning! Being able to visit these old trees was an experience that I wanted to repeat again and again. Have you been able to revisit them? Yes, there are a number of trees that I have gone back to and many others I would love to revisit. For me, it is especially interesting to see changes the seasons bring to the trees. Did you always know that you wanted this body of work to be a book? The deeper I got into the project and realized how challenging it was to get to a lot of these locations, it became clear that I wanted to share these images with people who would not be able to see them, so yes, I thought a book would be the best way to do this. What do you hope people will take from this work? I have a reverence for nature and certainly it is hard not to sense the majesty of these very large, old trees when in their presence. I hope it permeates my work to some degree. If this comes through in my portraits then I am satisfied. Ultimately, I would hope we could find a better way to live with the environment. This is a book that should be in your collection if you are a lover of art and nature.

I anxiously awaited the arrival of this book for 6 weeks and when it finally came I was so disappointed with it that I was sure I must've gotten a knock-off copy. Many of the images were very grainy, there were some digital artifacts and that particular clipping of tones in the shadows I associate with ink jet printing. I immediately made some high res scans of the worst examples and emailed the publisher and the artist to verify it. The publisher explained that they worked closely with the artist and that the scans I made were indeed of their work and not a knock-off and that the artist supplied the proofs and files for the printing. So, the publisher is not to blame for what I perceive as a poor job and it was apparently what the artist intended. I can't understand why one would go to all the trouble of making platinum/palladium prints, known for their tonal range and high Dmax, and then compromise it so much IMHO. The artist never did reply to me. Ah well, you be the judge; none of the other reviewers have mentioned it. Perhaps I was expecting Ansel Adams like impact from these images, for they are well composed and lighted, and the book itself is well made with nice thick pages.

This is far more art than reference or trees/woodworking. Moon took gorgeous pictures of some amazing trees & then processed them in a special way (platinum/palladium mix?) to make them last forever. They're kind of B&W, but glow a bit more even on the printed page. Lovely. And the trees are incredible as is the way she captured them. Unfortunately, she made the decision to put just a plate on each page, then put a separate section in the back with thumbnails & a very brief explanation for each. At least she got the Latin names & locations for them. She could have easily put the explanation on most pages & on a facing page otherwise & I wish she had. Flipping back & forth sucked. The paucity of information was just plain frustrating. Luckily, I do have good references. As a coffee table book for someone who really appreciates photography & trees, this is a darn good book. I'm such a person as is my wife.

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