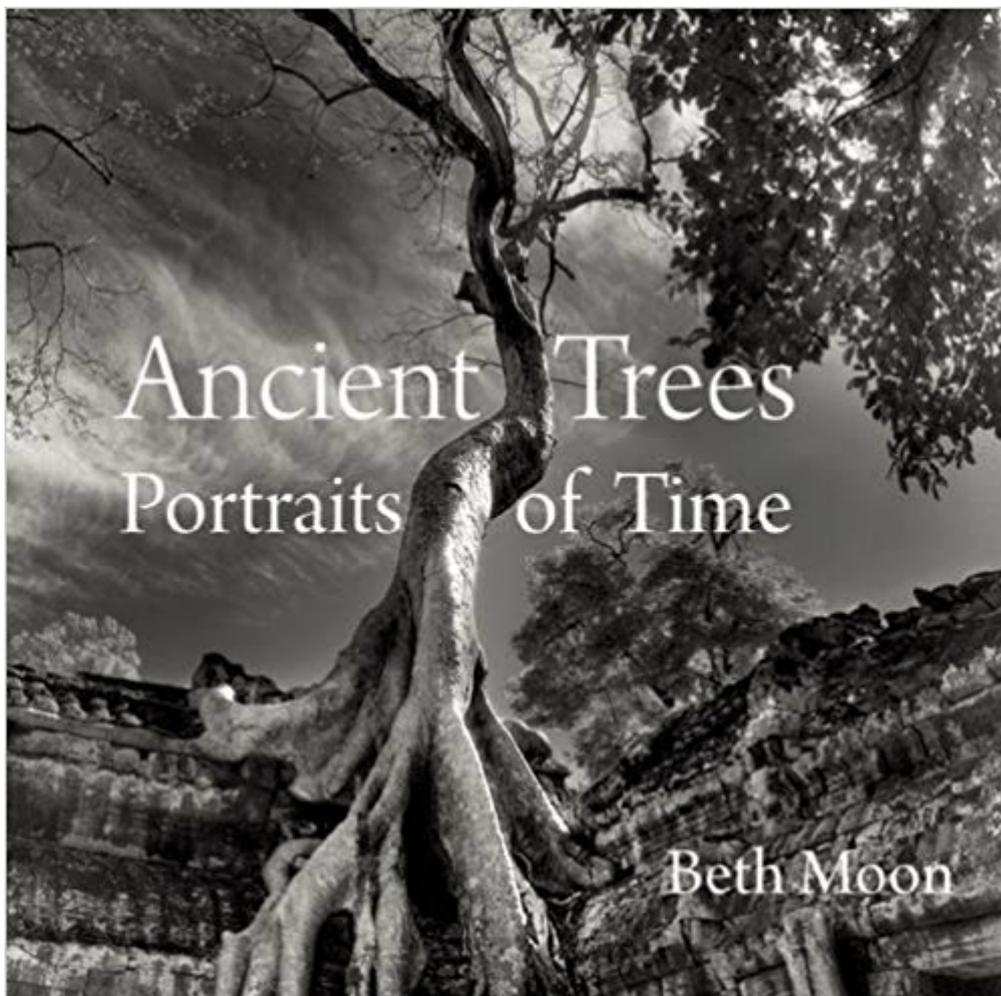


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Ancient Trees: Portraits Of Time



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's-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

San Francisco Chronicle Holiday Gift Guide Selection "A project with weight and lasting beauty"; Ancient Trees provides the kind of thorough and thoughtful portrait that each of these majestic long-lived survivors deserves. Christian Science Monitor [Moon] creates magical images that in their blacks and whites, silvers and grays, capture the marvel of arboreal forms and textures . . . [a] jewel of a book. Booklist, Starred Review "Ancient Trees: Portraits of Time is well named. One cannot look at Beth Moon's images of gnarled, overgrown trees and not feel the intrinsic gravity of time." Printers Row Journal, Chicago Tribune Featured in the Wall Street Journal's Weekend "Exhibit" spotlight "Trees are notoriously hard to photograph, but Moon captures their individuality with reverent portrayals; these are lavish, awe-inspiring pictures... Crossing with ease between realms of natural history and art, this will appeal to all with even the mildest horticultural or photographic interests. Library Journal Beth Moon's stunning images capture the power and mystery of the world's remaining ancient trees. These hoary forest sentinels are among the oldest living things on the planet, and it is desperately important that we do all in our power to ensure their survival. I want my grandchildren and theirs to know the wonder of such trees in life and not only from photographs of things long gone. Beth's portraits will surely inspire many to help those working to save these magnificent trees. Dr. Jane Goodall

Beth Moon, a photographer based in San Francisco, makes her exhibition prints exclusively with the platinum/palladium process, which affords the greatest possible permanence and tonal range. Moon's work has been published widely in magazines, and she is represented by galleries in the United States, Italy, Israel, Brazil, and Dubai.

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.

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.

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.

The book is a solid amount of images and the tree's themselves are all very unique - though more info about the tree's themselves could have been written - especially considering how much white

space there is. There are some real gem's no doubt, with great detail and composition. However, it seems this photographer has her own artistic style of producing the images that are either nicely detailed, highly grainy, or washed out. There are too many of these grainy/washed images for my liking. I'd much prefer to see some of these tree's in greater detail and study their intricate bark lines. I understand some (or many) may love this style, but I feel for the price there should be larger and higher resolution versions instead. It might be more acceptable if some of the images were in color but alas they're all sepia or black and white. I've attached a few closeup images to help you get an idea.

I don't think the print quality did the pictures justice. I returned the book.

Beautiful, precious book. The photos are stunning and do justice to their subjects. The trees are gorgeous.

Beautiful black and white photography of exotic trees. We used this book as our wedding guest book actually and it was perfect, with spaces to write above the photos. Perfect coffee table book or gift for tree lovers.

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