



One Tree Art Prize

Artist: Irene Perry

Title: Ancient Paperbark

GPS: -33.805050, 121.7998480

Many years ago, I was making my way slowly through the dense the paperbarks growing on the edge of Lake Monjingup (a salt lake near Esperance).

When I emerged at the water's edge, I saw this beautiful ancient paperbark (probably *Meleleuca cuticularis*).

It had nothing other than its shape to suggest it was a paperbark.

The living tree was now devoid of its paperbark, no leaves or blossom.

What stories it could tell, the storms it had weathered, the people who had used the bark for



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starting fires, the birds, bees, insects that lived in or on it.

As dead as this tree seemed it still lived on - birds still landed on it, built nests in the twisted branches - even with the slow disintegration of this tree it will continue to contribute to nature's conservation & continuation.

On that day (years ago) I took photos of this ancient paperbark. I knew that one day I would want to use it in my art.

Recently, while researching the coordinates of “my tree”, I found a recent photo of it. It still stood gracefully reaching for the sky. It looked nearly the same as years - in my photos - albeit the twigs were getting smaller, but it was instantly recognisable as the same tree.