



Australia's mangroves: living on the edge

Deirdre Bean

The Anthony Gallery

Friday 12 October 2018 – Sunday 17 March 2019

I developed a fascination for mangroves as a child when I swam amongst them in the Myall River, NSW. On learning more of their ecological importance and vulnerability, I undertook a self-funded project to document these unique plants.

A mangrove is a plant that thrives in the intertidal zone. They play an essential role in our tropical and subtropical coastal ecosystems as the breeding grounds for fish and crustaceans. Described as the lungs of the sea, mangroves form a protective buffer between ocean and land against runoff, storm surges and cyclones. Recent scientific research confirms that mangroves are vulnerable to increasing temperature in seawater and rising sea level, and so face a problematic future.

I studied 34 of Australia's 47 species over a seven-year period. Each species was located in the field, collected, and painted from life. I encountered many hazards: torrential rain, mosquitoes, ants, heat, mud, dehydration and, of course, crocodiles. My equipment included my camera, water, insect repellent, collecting bag, and phone - with variable coverage. Once my specimens were secured, many hours were spent in the studio developing a botanically accurate watercolour painting, the results of which are featured in this exhibition.

Deirdre Bean, 2018

Deirdre Bean is represented by Mitchell Fine Art, Brisbane, and Stella Downer Fine Art, Sydney.

Deirdre Bean

Sonneratia caseolaris 2015

watercolour and graphite on Arches 300 gsm hot pressed paper, 48 × 40cm

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