



Red cliff landscape 1981



Hamersley
landscape 1979

At times, in the early morning, you would call this a gentle country. The new light softens it, tones flow a little, away from the stark forms ... Grey of dead wood, grey-green of leaves, set off a soil bright and tender, the tint of blood in water.

Randolph Stow, *Tourmaline*, MacDonald, London, 1963

On 15 May 1979 at Karratha Station, Williams painted three sets of gouaches, looking at all aspects – north, south, east and west – of the 360-degree view. These works were painted in the light of early morning, midday and late afternoon. It is rare for an Australian artist to create a group of paintings of outstandingly high quality on one theme (in this case the landscape of the Pilbara as an ideal of light and colour), and to paint them as an interlinking series.

Marks

There is no stretch of land more ancient than this. And it is so blunt and red and barren, littered with the fragments of broken mountains, flat, waterless. Spinifex grows here, but sere and yellow, and trees are rare, hardly to be called trees, some kind of myall with leaves starved to needles that fans out from the root and gives no shade.

Randolph Stow, *Tourmaline*, MacDonald, London, 1963

Williams developed an abstracted calligraphic mark for a tree as a singular motif for the Pilbara Series, remarking, in his 5 June working diary entry, on the 'fascinating white trunked small gum (with tubular base)'. *Red landscape*, 1981 (p. 13), *Gorge landscape*, 1981 (p. 10),