

FEELING FICTION

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This collection of 2D images explores key themes specific to Richard Flanagan's 2020 work of fiction titled *The Living Sea of Waking Dreams*. On the surface, the story is familiar – estranged families and ailing parents – underneath the feverish consequences of climate change burn and ravage without exception. The loss of animals and habitat is commonplace, as is the disappearance of body parts. "Her face had begun dissolving, as if in some awful hallucination. As well as her nose, one eye had now vanished ... and yet people brushed past her without comment" (Flanagan 2020 p. 223).

Transient materials and textile techniques became conduits for the unsettling feelings experienced while reading this novel. The orange filament pulled free from a net once housing mandarins references the endangered, Orange-bellied parrot. Plastic milk bottles add a filmy translucence. My own hands – distorted and reimagined feature, as do Andrew Crawford's exquisite photographs of critically endangered indigenous plants. The two living elements are filtered through the sleepiness of plastic or manipulated using digital tools.

The 'doing' of textiles was done in an agitated state, brought about by someone else's fiction, rather than my own. The work is an extension of the ideas explored in my PhD (2019) titled: *Post-material making: explorations for a materially-connected textile design practice*. My research seeks to find methods for sustainable textile design practices in an era of material abundance. *Feeling Fiction* imagines an unsettling future where living things can only be experienced via an artificial lens.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) and the DBCA Library Image Collection for permission to use photographs of two critically endangered plants located in Western Australia, the *Banksia Fuscobractea* (Dark-bract banksia) and *Daviesia Bursarioides* (Three Springs Daviesia).

Reference

Flanagan, R. 2020 *The Living Sea of Waking Dreams*, Knopf, New York.

Image credit: Banksia Fuscobractea and Daviesia Bursarioides by Andrew Crawford.

Materials used: plastic milk bottles and orange filament yarn pulled from a net bag used to contain mandarins.

Techniques used: photography, mixed media, stitching, digital collage

