

*Texts from the future*  
*installation in mixed media/ceramic*

Artist Statement

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In the distant future there is a museum. In this museum there are objects from this future's past. Through an airlock, down a hall, beyond a door: here lies a room. On the shelves inside this room are books, retrieved and excavated from a ruined mansion on the terraformed world PLXRS9.

Below the books sits a placard.

*Assorted texts*

*Library of the R ----- family*

*2325 – 2430 (?)*

*These texts were taken from the ruined library of X----- and T---  
R-----, prominent dwellers of Post-Hijra Section 1. The style of the  
dwelling in which the books were found, combined with their subject-matter  
and material form, suggests the R-----s were humans of significant  
means, perhaps statespeople or medics-voyageurs.*

*It appears that the texts were damaged during the Occupation.  
Some seem as if they have been deliberately attacked or burned; others are  
infected with organic and synthetic composites. Whether these damages  
were inflicted upon them by their owners, in an attempt to hide their  
contents, or after their deaths, by those who killed them, is unknown.*



A series of different worlds and practices inform my work. As an environmental political theorist, I produce work exploring the ethical vocabularies we have for imagining the future. As a fiction and creative nonfiction writer, I tell stories depicting the tragic complexities of hubris and ecological misunderstanding. As an expat, torn between Australia and the US, between the Manhattan megalopolis and the big skies of the Australian outback, I develop different responses to my questions about home and belonging, about the technological and natural.

My work in mixed-media ceramics takes up all these themes and embodies them in satirical and pathos-oriented ways. **The goal of this particular work is to collide formats or ideas we often associate with the distant past – fragmentary remnants, archaeological displays, inscrutable purposes, semi-erasures – and formats or ideas we often associate with the distant future: temporal portals, new biomes and worlds, off-planet warfare.** Through the titles, manipulations, materials and presentation of these ceramic “books”, my aim is to prompt those who view/encounter the work towards an imaginative journey of their own.

This journey might start from the imagined owners of the books. Who were these people? How did they live? What did they do? What happened to their world?

It might start from an inkling of the place and time at which they lived. What is an “isodiagnostic protocol”? A “rain dolphin”? A “paradoxical storm”?

Or it might start from the objects of the books themselves. Why write, or own, a book on the “average suffocation times of commonly-encountered native mammals”? Is that paint on the surface of that book; or is it blood? Were these objects sacred or profane? What grows in them, and on them? Is it dangerous? What were their meanings in the worlds from which they came?

Something that is distinctive about human beings is the collision of the past and the future, the cultural and the natural, in the places of our deep imaginations. The ways we understand these collisions have profound ramifications for the ways we organise our societies and think about the meaning of our lives and of the times towards which we have already begun to move.

Our distinctiveness as creatures does not make us “separate” from nature; but it can seduce us into believing that it can, or that it does. We dream we might know everything, and so manipulate everything, and so arrange the world according to the precise parameters we set. Yet we cannot understand the marks left on rock by our own forebears, on cliffs and in caves, eight hundred, a thousand years ago. We cannot understand ourselves. How could we possibly imagine the future, or the worlds that lie ahead?