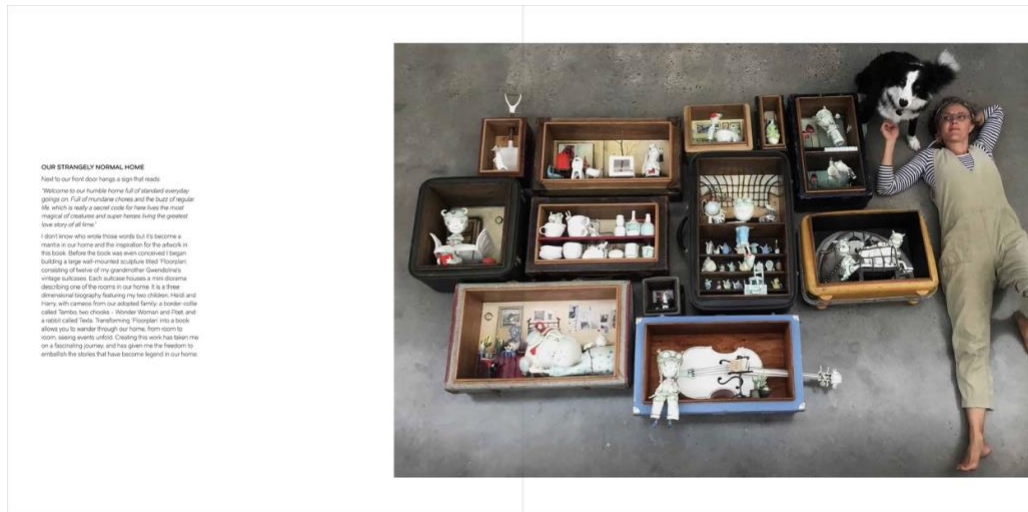
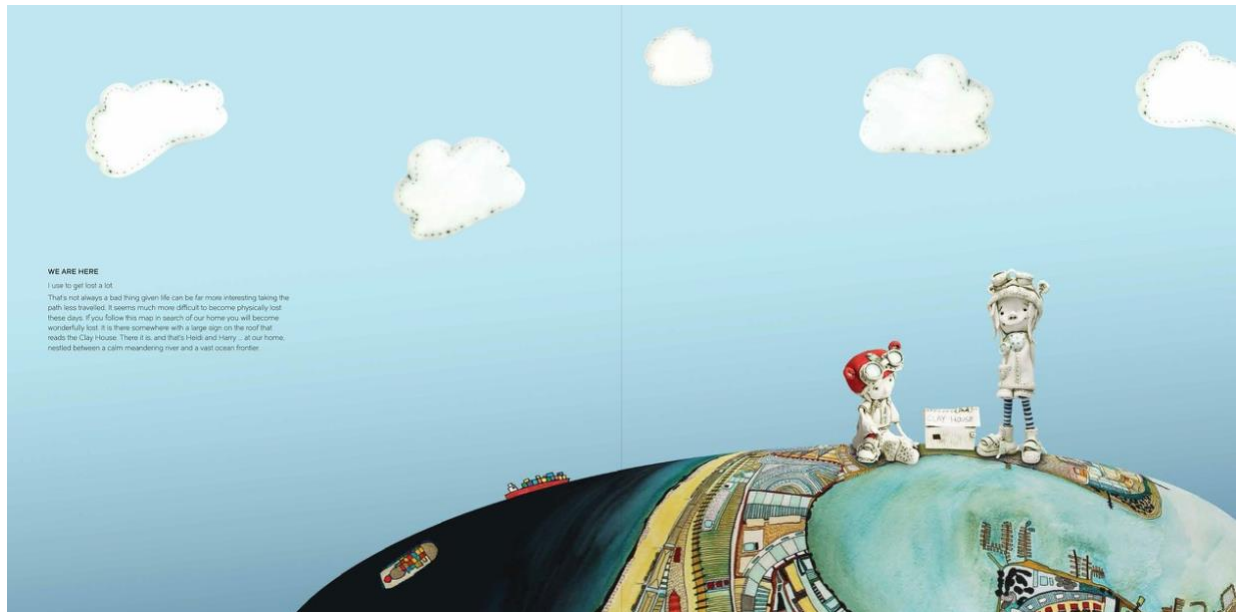


Our Strangely Normal Home Publication by Fleur Schell 2019

This project showcases the magical relationship between porcelain and illustration.







WE ARE HERE

I used to get lost a lot.

That's not always a bad thing given life can be far more interesting taking the path less travelled. It seems much more difficult to become physically lost these days. If you follow this map in search of our home you will become wonderfully lost. It is there somewhere with a large sign on the roof that reads the Clay House. There it is and that's Heidi and Henry... at our home, nestled between a calm meandering river and a vast ocean frontier.



Master Bedroom

Our bedroom is hidden away and dark which is why we call it the Bat Cave! It's where we all escape through stories to imagined worlds and grand adventures, before eventually falling asleep.

It's also where Heidi, Harry and Tambo remind us that getting an early start on saving the world is much more important than sleeping in!

THE GARDEN SHED

We store the seed maize to feed our chickens in the garden shed. It often spills all over the cement floor, attracting unsolicited rodent neighbours. When I open the door it feels like I am interrupting a well-planned feast.



TEMBO'S ROOM

Although our dog Tembo has a perfectly warm and cozy house of his own, she usually prefers to sleep at the end of our bed. So, since she wasn't using that cozy space, the chicken moved in. And it doesn't seem to matter that Tembo can't speak chicken and Wonder Woman can't speak dog. They have an understanding.

THE KITCHEN

The first night we moved into our home we heard strange rattling noises emanating from the kitchen. The cat had also moved in and our party had become three superheroes! We now accept that missing chocolate and chipped cups in the pantry are not always Dash's fault.



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THE MUSIC ROOM

We all love music in our family. So much so that we have dedicated an entire room to a giant collection of musical instruments. It's normally free of craziness... until Heidi starts playing her cello. As soon as her bow strikes the strings it's like Tarzan calling the wild! All manner of creatures who call our house their home come running.



HARRY'S ROOM

Strange happenings are routine in Harry's bedroom. Like the time his room filled with lava and we all had to leap across it to reach his bed without melting. One night Harry's bed began to lift off the ground and he was convinced it was a monster drooling over his precious collection of football cards.

The Bathroom:

Our bath is a contemplative place where we wash away our daily worries. There is always a queue for the bath in our home. At the strangest thing, but every time we'll run the bath, the Tooth Fairy jumps the queue!



My Mum and Dad work from home. Dad spends his days studying maps and insects, while next door mum is sculpting clay.

Harry let me in on a secret... He has discovered the portal that connects their worlds!





THE SHOWER

It's something Heidi still ponders whenever she's in the shower:
"Where does the water go?"

The story in our house is that the water flows to the deepest,
darkest part of the ocean, where a curious angler fish lives.

About the Artist

From as far back as I can remember, I knew I needed to spend large chunks of my day building things with my hands. Mum was always inserting new projects for me with her special mix of clay dough, until my fifth birthday when my wonderful Lily Aunty spotted me a parcel of polymer clay.

I grew up on a farm in the wheatbelt of Western Australia. Summer days were often hot as from the age of seven, I have fond memories of riding my motorbike to a clay den to keep cool. I would spend hours at the water's edge building lines of clay teapots with strange wares and large bowls. Occasionally I would save the best as he passed by perched high in a dusty combine harvester. The most I built through all my hands, the more successful I became at it and through my school days I was labelled the kid who was good at art.

All the while, summing numbers and words seemed right and slightly logical at school, so I would gravitate towards the Art Room in a mindful environment where I lost track of time, and where there was simply no wrong way of doing things.

After school I studied a Production Pathway Diploma followed by a Visual Arts Degree and Post Graduate Studies in Industrial Ceramics. Art School for me was the most natural and liberating experience. Amongst the most creative, it was a place where I was able to get lost in the act of making, and where experimentation was valued as a fertile library of possibilities.

Once I finished university, I spent several years travelling to other parts of the world to work in art schools and artist studios. Later I returned to Western Australia to raise a little family with my husband Richard and we launched a Clay Centre and International Visiting Artist Residency.

Everything changed the moment our first child Fred was born. My world instantly transformed from shades of grey to vibrant colour. Inspired by the conversations and perspective shared by both of our children, I now spend my days being their creative stories through sharing in their childhood has deeply influenced my art practice and helped me stay connected as a family in a world in constant flux. Fred and Harry remind me that the most amazing stories unfold whilst we are busy waiting.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Here at the end of this book, it is important to me that you know how grateful I am to those people who have never stopped caring throughout the journey. I know that you will make the stuff, make or save the world through impossible things. The foundation has not been laid.

I am so thankful for Deanne and Terry, my kind & patient parents, and for our siblings with my brother Christopher as a farm near the small Wheatbelt town of Goomalling in Western Australia. They encouraged my creative pursuits, allowing endless hours exploring forms with clay, bricks and bits of farm machinery that remain scattered throughout the house, the garden and the paddock. Their pride in having an artist in the family meant I never had to decide - I could just be what I was meant to be - a perpetual maker of stuff. I love you Mum and Dad.

My art makes my life - surrounded by the group of my family, without my children's insight that leads to magic and the value they place on the seemingly less important or insignificant things around us, I would have a far less interesting story to tell. Fred, Harry and our animal friends are the muses in my work. I love you.

I am grateful for the day I met the clearest and kindest person in the room, my husband Richard. 'Impossible' doesn't exist in his vocabulary, only 'Love' is a try you have my life to lose and everything to gain. Those words keep in my head as I work on projects that take forever and nearly always crack, keep or explode the feel and second time round. I am forever grateful that your sponsorship landed in my world. I love you.

Life is so much about timing and serendipity and I am grateful to have been in the right place at the right time to meet many amazingly talented people. These creatives have kept me focused and continue to inspire me to take the path of most resistance - because it's more interesting and satisfying. Katherine Dutton-Smith, who helped transform the tiny Bakers into our home and assisted in the reworking of the sculpture in this book. Thank you for always sharing your bag of magic tricks. Graphic designer, Lenore Bibby and photographer, Robert Pitt, magnificently shone down, balanced and posed together the drawings and sculptures scattered across my studio benches, so that they feel at home within the pages of this book. Thank you.

