CLAIMS

1. A wellbore packer, comprising:

a mandrel;

a radially expandable packing element carried about said mandrel;

a depletive shroud disposed about said packing element; and

an actuation mechanism operatively coupled to said packing element so as to selectively radially expand said packing element, wherein said depletive shroud covers said actuation mechanism.

2. The packer of claim 1, wherein:

said depletive shroud is a sleeve or a coating.

3. The packer of claim 1, further comprising:

an anchoring mechanism carried by said mandrel operable so as to selectively fix said packer within a wellbore and;

wherein said depletive shroud covers said anchoring mechanism.

4. The packer of claim 1, wherein:

said depletive shroud is formed of a material meltable under a wellbore thermodynamic condition;

said material is a fusible metal alloy or a thermoplastic.

5. The packer of claim 1, wherein:

said depletive shroud is formed of a material dissoluble into a wellbore fluid.

6. A well system, comprising:

a wellbore formed in the earth and opening to the surface of the earth;

a conveyance extending from the surface of the earth into said wellbore; and

a packer according to any of the preceding claims, the packer carried by said conveyance and disposed within said wellbore.

7. The well system of claim 6, wherein:

said conveyance includes one from the group consisting of a drill string, a working string, a production tubing string, a coiled tubing and a wireline.

8. A method of wellbore operations, comprising:

covering a packing element of a packer with a depletive shroud;
covering an actuation mechanism operatively coupled to said packing element so as to selectively radially expand said packing element with said depletive shroud;
running said packer into a wellbore formed in the earth;
allowing said shroud to deplete under a wellbore condition; and then
setting said packer within said wellbore.

9. The method of claim 8, further comprising:
covering an anchoring mechanism carried by said mandrel operable so as to selectively fix said packer within a wellbore with said depletive shroud.

10. The method of claim 8, further comprising:
covering said packing element with said depletive shroud formed of a material dissoluble into a wellbore fluid.

11. The method of claim 8, further comprising:
covering said packing element with said depletive shroud formed of a material meltable under a wellbore thermodynamic condition; and
forming the depletive shroud from a material selected from the group consisting of a fusible metal alloy and a thermoplastic.

12. The method of claim 8, wherein:
covering comprises deploying a depletive sleeve to at least partially enclose said packing element; or
covering comprises coating the packing element with a depletive material that at least partially encases said packing element.