

Fabulous Fungi

It's gonna get weird

Ancient Use of Mushrooms in Art

The psilocybin group of mushrooms, popularly known as magic mushrooms, shrooms or psychedelic mushrooms, is found in over two hundred varieties around the world. We know them today as a recreational drug used to induce hallucinations and a sense of euphoria, but the [ancient origin](#) of magic mushrooms goes back thousands of years. Let us take a look at some of the history that mankind shares with the psychoactive drug psilocybin and its host, magic mushrooms.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yFTLMvu19Xs&t=100s>

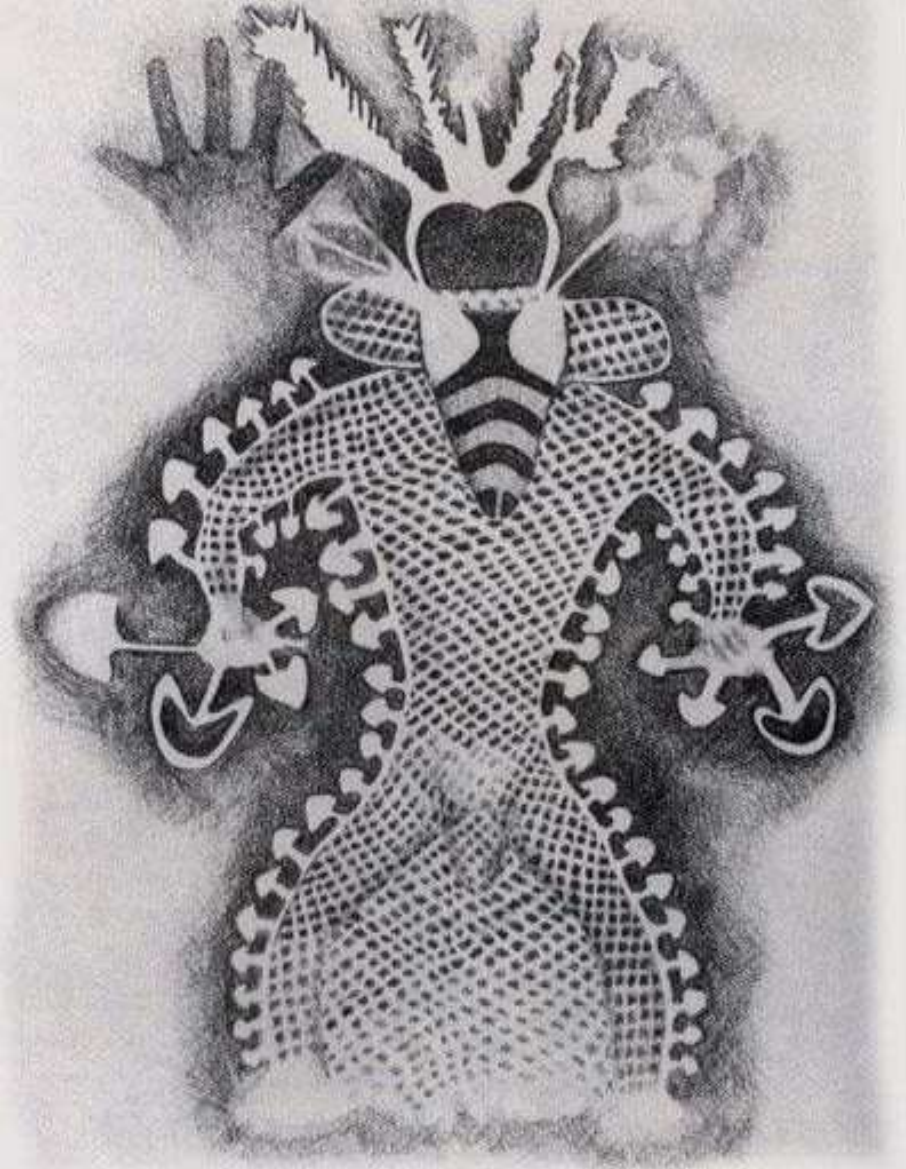


FIGURE 3. The bee-faced mushroom shaman of Tassili-n-Ajjer. Drawing by Kat Harrison-McKenna. From O. T. Oss and O. N. Oeric, *Psilocybin: The Magic Mushroom Grower's Guide*, 1986, p. 71. From the original in Jean-Dominique Vajoux, *The Rock Paintings of the Tassili* (New York: World Publishing, 1963), p. 71.









Mushroom Use by Aztecs and Maya

Native American cultures like the Mayas and Aztecs had symbols, statues and paintings which indicate that they consumed psilocybin mushrooms, especially during religious rituals, as a way to communicate with deities. The “flesh of the gods” or “*teonanácat*,” as the Aztecs called them, is believed to be a type of magic mushroom. Other tribes originating in Central America such as the Nahua, Mazatec, Mixtec, and Zapotec were also involved in mushroom use for similar reasons.

<https://vimeo.com/424129885> (mushroom stones)



A few of the estimated two hundred mushroom stones that escaped destruction, despite the concerted efforts of misdirected Catholic missionaries. The smaller mushroom stones are the ones found with metates, which were presumably used for grinding the sacraments prior to use (Borhegi 1961).





Mushrooms East Asian Art

These were specifically depicted as mushrooms with powers — yes, magic mushrooms of sorts — that could bestow people with physical and spiritual strength. Known as *lingzhi* mushrooms, they're found today in medicinal stores that promote their immune system–boosting benefits, but as far back as 2,000 years ago, they were believed to grow only at sacred sites, particularly on mountains.

<https://hyperallergic.com/367509/hunting-for-the-magic-mushrooms-of-ancient-east-asian-art/>

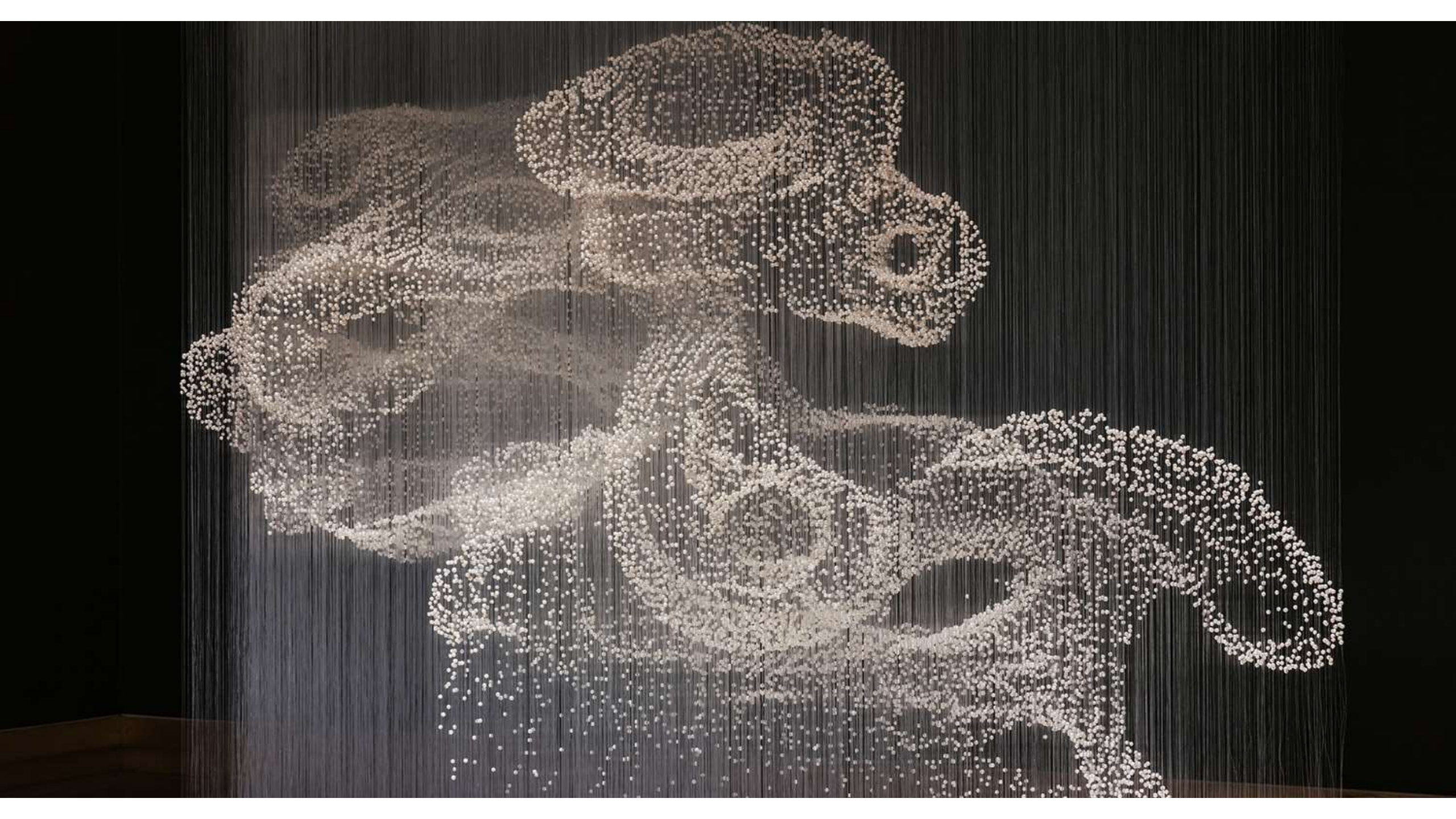




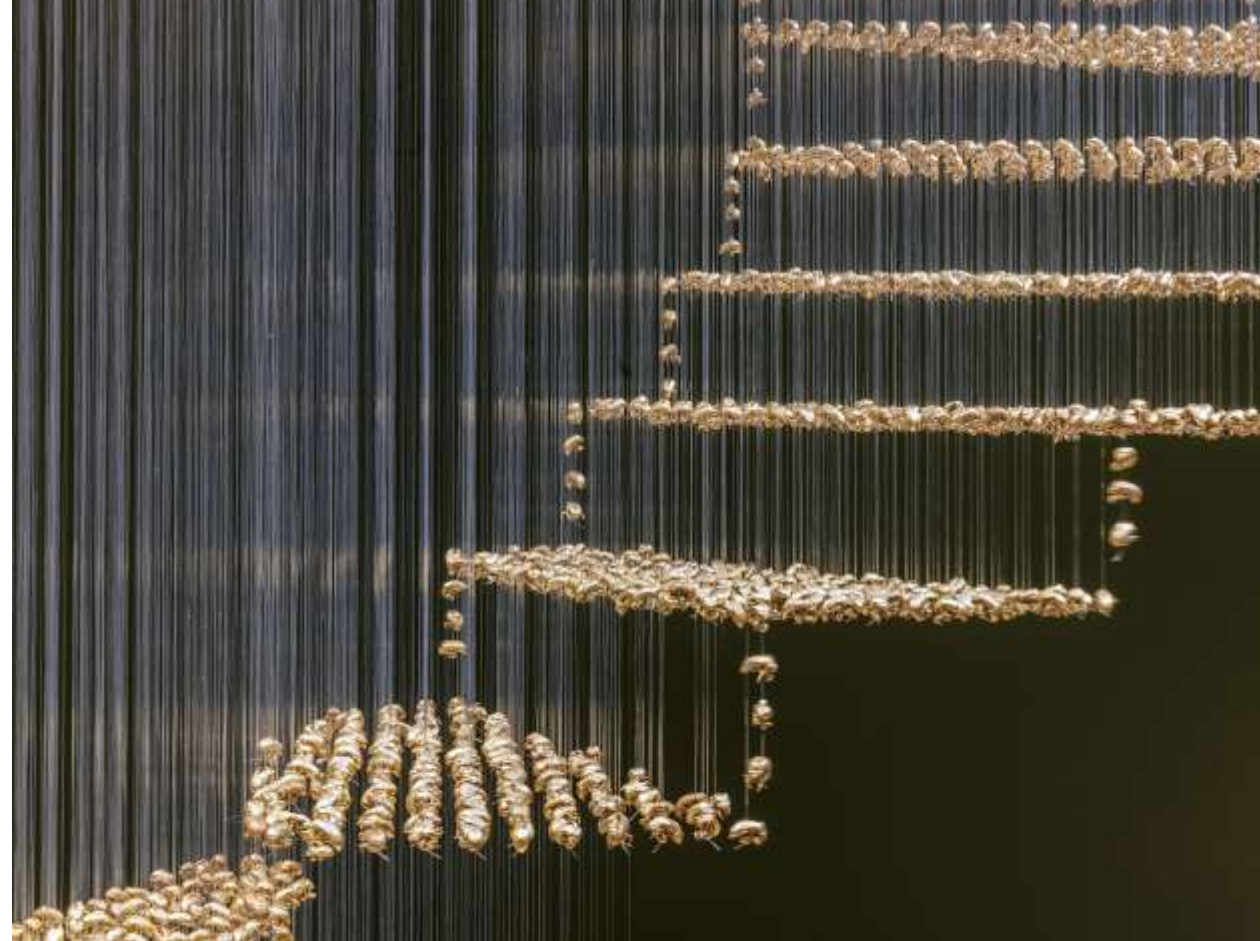
Xiaojing Yan

Xiaojing Yan is a contemporary Chinese Canadian artist known for her work in sculpture, installation and public art.

- <https://www.cbc.ca/arts/this-artist-creates-ethereal-mushroom-sculptures-like-something-out-of-a-fairy-dream-1.6639886>









Beatrix Potter

Beatrix Potter completed 350 paintings of the various mushrooms and lichen that flourished in the moist green Scottish countryside and English Lake district, locales Potter visited with her family. Before she introduced her anthropomorphic animals such as Jemima Puddleduck, Squirrel Nutkin, and Peter Rabbit in her 23 colorful children's books that she wrote and illustrated, Potter was an accomplished artist and a naturalist. Biographer Linda Lear writes Potter “never saw art and science as mutually exclusive activities, but recorded what she saw in nature primarily to evoke an aesthetic response.” Potter's experiences in those lush settings influenced her later interest in land conservation and preservation.

- <https://www.armitt.com/beatrix-potter/>

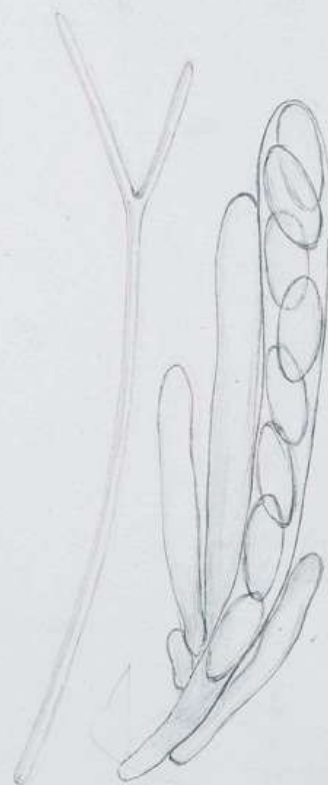




Holkerd. Windermere. Aug 2nd 95. *Boletus granulatus*.







Dasyasphyra Calycina var. *Frederici*.
 July 23 '96. Eschscholzia - on fallen leaves. x 600.



Oct 8-97

Lingholm - Kierick -





Wendover. Sept 10th 95 - on rubbish heap in shrubbery

John Tenniel

Sir John Tenniel was an English illustrator, graphic humorist and political cartoonist prominent in the second half of the 19th century. An alumnus of the Royal Academy of Arts in London, he was knighted for artistic achievements in 1893, the first such honour ever bestowed on an illustrator or cartoonist.



Bella Ormseth

In her ongoing series Human Nature, Dutch artist Bella Ormseth paints lavish domestic scenes inhabited by central mushroom characters and a cohort of plants and oversized insects. The evocative subjects stem from those the artist encounters around her home in Puget Sound off the coast of Washington and are human-like in their gestures and poses, whether draped over a chair during a nap, embracing over wine and oysters, or staring out the window.









Seana Gavin

Seana Gavin is a London-based artist. With surgical precision, she overlays and conjoins distinct images drawn from vintage photographic material to create otherworldly scenes, transforming them into dreamlike, fantasy environments where the past and future coexist. Alongside her collage work, she is also known for her photography documenting her time involved in the free party rave movement during the 1990s.

- <https://www.seanagavin.com/#/maritime/>
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Np75_rKYbl0&t=13s











Lara Ogel

What (else) grows in the dark, 2017, is an edited montage of footage found online of humans from around the world documenting and handling mushrooms. The short is reflective of a repressed subversion of sexual desire and the inability to express those desires. The evident perversion of both sexual nature and man's conflicted relationship to nature responds to conditions that are both political and personal. The video leaks into deeper aspects of human dissonance at work in intimate and public psyches. (3 minutes, 6 seconds)

- <https://laraogel.com/what-else-grows-in-the-dark>

monter hayalimle
papam
ve
varoluşuyla
ayrılır.

revansin the unknown
darker
my mind attend
to the magic of being
and
being

LARA ÖGEL



THE BENEFITS OF DIGESTING ONESELF

Lara Ogel



Exemple de rythme : celui-ci est donné par la disposition de la composition générale, structurée par le rythme des lacunes et des traits.
Diane F. Ross

volume of bacteria. The borders were never there, our skin contains and holds in place the migrating participants within. At a time when boundaries have become so pronounced, when the distinctions between self and other are constantly being redefined, when many people's deepest wish is to secure their borders and retreat from themselves, they are kept aware from the magic of living.

In my experience of the everything self, I built a series of oneness with the collective "we." The experience and realization of my connection to everything else changed the way I saw myself in nature. As distinctions between my body and that of Earth faded, I no longer contemplated death as an ending. Grieving, mourning, speculating among mushrooms has helped transform my perspective on death into a comforting awareness of the possibility of metamorphosis and renewal.

Death was my motivational cook, my metaphor, into this awareness. It revealed to me a new sensibility toward death. Playing among the mushrooms, I was playing with death. I met by consuming the mushroom's sweet nectar, my love gave birth to wild forms in a sudden pain still some olive oil. I overcame my fear, at its peak, and delighted in its earthy growth. I fertilized myself with its physical and ecological nature, which inspired me to make networks exploring its endless meanings and potentials. Among many things I learned and noticed along the way was its gift to help me visualize a shift from estrangement toward a newly understood sense of something larger.

* Here I am quoting Scott P. Officer, for Sapp and Alfred L. Tarter, "A Symbolic View of Life: We Have Never Been This Wild," *Quarterly Review of Biology* 87, no. 4 (2012): 325-41.





Alex Morrison

For more than twenty years, the practice of Vancouver-based artist Alex Morrison has explored the aesthetics of utopian thought, whether as embedded in activism and counterculture or architecture and design. Highlighting the persistent ways radical ideals and impulses are historicized, distorted and repurposed over time, Morrison's work traces the means by which even the most persuasive of vernaculars cycle from avant-garde to kitsch and commodity.

<https://cagvancouver.org/exhibition/alex-morrison-nooks-corners>





Cody Hudson

CODY HUDSON (American, b. 1971) **lives and works in Chicago.** He has presented numerous site-specific installations across the globe including in Santa Monica, Seoul, Nantes, Chicago, Bangkok, and Dresden, creating landmark murals for the Nike World Headquarters and Illumination Studios



Amanda Cobbett

After studying at Chelsea College of Art (UAL), Amanda worked for many happy years in the printed textile design industry, but after a move to the country and a gift of an old Bernina sewing machine, her long held desire to be a maker as well as a designer finally came to fruition. Inspired by nature in all its forms, Amanda's 3-dimensional, papier-mâché and machine-embroidered sculptures are created from her studio in the Surrey Hills.

<https://www.amandacobbett.com/>

<https://www.textileartist.org/amanda-cobbett-stitching-the-forest-floor/>











Hamish Pearch

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F9UEkZwwEE8&t=22s>







Carsten Höller

Carsten Höller is a German artist. He lives and works in Stockholm, Sweden.

Carsten Höller trained as a scientist before becoming an artist and plays with the intersection of games, mind tricks, scientific experiments, and scientific research.

<https://www.designboom.com/art/carsten-holler-new-long-term-project-05-10-2022/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KDBM35ckwjE>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P7WzEKK-QUM> (use this)













Yayoi
Kusama

Jana Paleckova

An affinity for fleshy spores runs in the long line of ancestors laid out in a family tree by [Jana Paleckova](#). The Prague-based artist layers antique photographs with playful oil paintings of spindly enoki or ribbed chanterelle, creating hybrid characters brimming with fungi-fueled personalities. “There are many types of mushrooms, all of which have different characteristics. Just like people,” she says.

In a note to Colossal, Paleckova says she was prompted to start the whimsical project when she was flipping through her family’s atlas of fungi. “Czech people are known mushroom hunters. It’s quite common for families to go out looking for mushrooms together,” she says. This atlas later served as a reference point for the 90 small portraits, which consist of the dozens of vintage photographs that the artist sourced from flea markets, that comprise the sprouted kin.





Dynasty

Dobrych

Najedlych

Vybornych



Ceci Lam

Hong Kong-based illustrator [Ceci Lam](#) envisions a whimsical dream world of mushroom-headed figures, adventures through tropical landscapes, and cozy nights in. Her drawings feature anonymous characters who are full of personality, whether daring and bold as they peer up at towering cacti or more subdued in their plant-filled homes.

Lam shares with Colossal that her *Miss Mushy* series was inspired after she spotted white-capped mushrooms on the roadside one day during her commute, a surprise considering the pollution in the area. The next day, the spores disappeared, spurring the illustrator to imagine a fantasy world for the small fungi to occupy. Full of quirky characters, the series is comprised of individuals defined by the color and textures of their caps, details that match the interiors of their homes and their outfits.









<https://eco-chick.com/future-fashion-designing-mushroom-mycelium/>

[Kristel Peters](#)

<http://shoedesigner.be/project/growing-shoes/>

Assignment Suggestions...

- Create your own surreal mushroom landscape
- Use a stylized mushroom pattern in a design or print
- Create an abstract work with biomorphic fungal forms