



MACHINE PROJECT PRESENTS Γ PRESENTS

FUNGI

FEST



FUNGIFEST

SATURDAY JANUARY 16TH, 8PM

MACHINE PROJECT

Mushroom collecting tutorial, screening of mushroom-themed short films, mushroom flavored gelato from Scoops, chanterelle schnapps, slime mold racing and more!

MONDAY JANUARY 18TH, 7:30PM

MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

A Meeting of the Los Angeles Mycological Society, at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles will be open to the Public.

THURSDAY JANUARY 21ST, 6-9PM

HAMMER MUSEUM

Ask a mycologist, mushroom dancing, special mystery guest, mushroom-themed short films and more!

SATURDAY JANUARY 23RD, 8PM

FRANKLIN CANYON PARK

Guided mushroom walk, through Franklin Canyon Park. Mushroom Identification session, harvesting and cooking of oyster mushrooms, and mushroom music. Franklin Canyon Park is 605 acres of land near the center of Los Angeles between the San Fernando Valley and Beverly Hills.



INTRODUCTION

WRITTEN BY JASON BROWN

The reflexive assumption that Los Angeles is a vapid wasteland is actually one of the things that makes it so interesting. In beloved and admired cities, people expect to find wonderful things. But when those wonders are obscured by traffic, pollution, or the myriad annoyances of a living city, it can provoke an existential malaise. Did the city fail? Was the attempt to experience the city a failure?

LA doesn't have this problem, because it is blessed with an almost universal hatred. Although hate is too strong a word - it's often more a sense of disregard, a widespread belief that there is no reason to even bother paying attention to LA. Instead of living with the disillusion of a charming image, LA is hidden behind negative clichés, like a cloaking device protecting it from the predations of misapprehended desires¹.

Over the years, this cloaking device has caused destruction of its own, with irreplaceable treasures and resources paved over for no better reason than total conceptual blindness to the fact that they existed². But at least low expectations also make room for the unexpected. How amazing to expect a parking lot and find a forest. To brace yourself for gaping idiocy, and find tribes of passionate experts. To expect suburban blight and find mounds of wild mushrooms.

Of course we found mushrooms in Los Angeles. A mountain range is the literal heart of the city, dividing Hollywood from the Valley with chaparral hills and forested canyons. Yet it is still surprising to find fungi erupting lush and musty out of a desert dystopia. LA is like that sometimes. Dry, beige, stucco, and then, surprise! A lurid eruption³. The most extravagant example of this is the city itself, a tiny village suddenly exploding out of its borders and metastasizing up the hills. An unholy growth, a contagion, a sprawl.

LA is frequently used as the archetypal example of a sprawling centerless cityscape, its very name used as a metonym for everything that's wrong with this structure. Disconnection, confusion, solipsism, erasure - Los Angeles! But maybe one reason LA is so universally disliked and mistrusted is because it is the shape of things to come. From the first freeway running up a dry riverbed to the first signal transmitted over the Internet, landing in Silicon Valley like a spore, the network form of its sprawl has been spreading. And it has won.

Most of the countries in the world have fewer residents than the urban area of Los Angeles. Which is not to re-state the obvious point that most people now live in cities, but rather to point out that the term "city" has already lost its meaning as a descriptive term⁴. Most of the largest cities are not comprised of an arboreal urban core with outward-branching suburbs. They are thickly woven, multipolar meshworks of infrastructure, spreading across entire regions, swallowing mere cities in their agglomeration. Landscapes like this are where most people now live.

Which leads to an interesting statistical quirk - LA is the most densely populated urban area in America. Not the "city," mind you, but the Los Angeles Metropolitan Statistical Area, more dense on average than the New York Metropolitan Statistical Area, which grows relatively sparser as it branches ever farther outward from its arboreal center point⁵. LA's infrastructure is more of a fungal form, oozing interwoven mycelia, occasionally sprouting tuberous organs to the sky.

With dense urban areas extending to the horizons, the fabric of these post-cities must be interwoven with nature. Not in the sense of a park, a small preserve that references nature. They must become a part of nature. Given any number of urgent problems facing us, it is no longer relevant to ask if such a thing is possible, but to simply find the best ways for it to happen. While Los Angeles does not serve as the model for how to build this, the fact that Los Angeles went first into this sprawling future may make it an ideal testing ground. Because LA is broken in interesting and relevant ways, or at least in ways that make it full of surprises.

And Machine Project likes surprises. This sense of wonder and discovery has guided what we do as we try to see what's around us and find poetic conjunctions in what's been ignored. Mushrooms don't seem to have an obvious connection to a disjointed megalopolis, but there they are, their rhizomorphic forms an evocative mirror of each other, occasionally sprouting a fruiting body which may be poisonous, hallucinogenic, delicious, or all of the above.

Let us rejoice in the humble mycelia, spreading beneath fields and forests, parks and parking lots, with their quiet surprises and subtle beauty. Let us delight in the alien logic of intricate, sprawling, hidden organisms, and the secret fabric woven among us.

NOTES .

¹ One major exception is Hollywood. The ostensible objects of most tourist traps actually exist, but even historically, most of the movie industry wasn't located in the Hollywood area, and it certainly isn't centered there now, leaving thousands of Hollywood-seeking tourists gazing forlornly at the apartment buildings and t-shirt shops of Los Angeles. At the turn of the millennium, a massive shopping mall was finally built to corral this mythopoetic misdirection, a towering abattoir where disappointment could be processed for consumption.

² The most iconic example is the river the city was named after. But one of the most infamous-yet-forgotten examples was Clune's Auditorium, later known as the Philharmonic Auditorium, a 2,600 seat Spanish Gothic theater built in 1906. Location of the world premiere of Birth of a Nation, home of the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra for more than 40 years, it stood across from Pershing Square for nearly 80 years until 1985, when it was demolished for a failed building project.

The site was used as a parking lot for almost twenty years, when it was finally replaced with a non-descript office building.

³ The 1997 movie Volcano was a notable example of the idea that literally anything could erupt out of LA. The film was also remarkable for overtly blaming the newly opened Red Line subway for causing "Mount Wilshire" to burst out of the La Brea Tar Pits. Blaming public transit as the cause of the only natural disaster that the region is not susceptible to—easily one of the most Dadaist critiques ever made of LA. Review of Volcano: Is this really a disaster movie? I think people around the globe would agree, if a volcano blew up Los Angeles, the world would be a better place...

Dunmore, Jon. "You Maniacs! You blew it up!" 20 Mar 2009.

<<http://www.poffysmoviemania.com/Volcano.html>>.

⁴ There is no single definition of a "city" and "size"—there is only an array of variables such as morphological contiguity and demographic behavior. Official municipal boundaries may actually be one of the least useful ways to describe modern megacities. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World's_largest_cities>.

⁵ Although parts of the officially demarcated city limits of Los Angeles are very dense, it only contains about four million residents—by global standards, that's barely a burg. But the Los Angeles Metropolitan Statistical Area has around eighteen million people (depending on how you measure it) with the density distributed widely across the entire area. The population of the New York Metropolitan Statistical Area is similar to Los Angeles—around 20 million people—but about half those people live within the city limits. The surrounding urban area of New York is a vast tundra of low-density urban sprawl, and as such, it is not to be spoken of in polite company.

FUNGIFEST BREAKS THE FESTIVAL MOLD

LA TIMES ARTICLE

Machine Project gets into some mycological mischief (mold racing!) around L.A.

Jan. 14, 2010 | By Alie Ward

It's not easy to bring up slippery plasmodia and foul-smelling toadstools in art world cocktail party conversation. Such is the dilemma of a fungi enthusiast. But this weekend, Machine Project launches a two week mycological affair that brazenly celebrates mushrooms, molds and other members of the oft-maligned fungus kingdom.

"The stranger it was, the more excited he got about the project," says mushroom hunter and FungiFest co-curator David Fenster, about pitching the exhibit to Machine Project director Mark Allen.

A filmmaker by trade, Fenster envisioned a room full of art showcasing "beautiful and visually arresting" mushrooms in their quiet dignity, but after meeting with Allen, the two were soon dreaming up a festival of wacky events.

Saturday's opening night include the screening of Fenster's short film "Fly Amanita," in which an actor wearing an elaborate, red-speckled headpiece portrays a human-sized toadstool and waxes existential "He's a very philosophical mushroom," Fenster offers.

Saturday also features an appearance by botanist and mycological consultant Bob Cummings. A professor at Santa Monica City College, Cummings will be on hand for a question-and-answer session and to help identify mushrooms brought in by attendees.

He'll also oversee the mold racing. A race track made of agar will be dusted with dried *Physarum polycephalum* -- a species that technically belongs to the kingdom Protista but is often included in mycological study. A starting gun will pop, and the slime molds' progress will be evaluated the following week, after they've had time to ooze toward a finish line 110 millimeters away.

Also on Saturday, the gelateria Scoops will dish up black truffle gelato, and patrons can sip dubiously palatable chanterelle-infused vodka. "I suspect it will be undrinkable," Allen says.

"It looks like urine, and that's another reason it's not super appealing," Fenster quips.

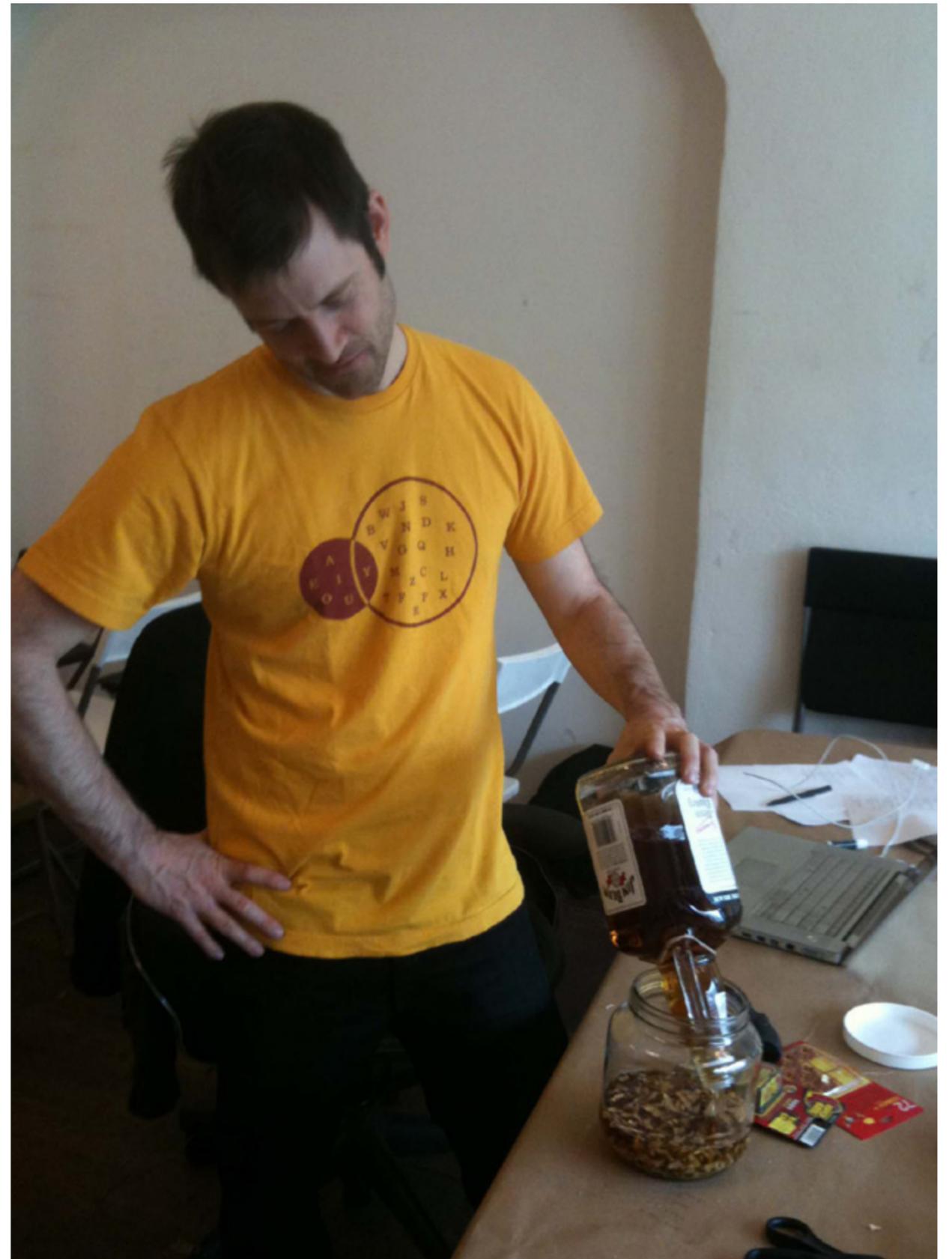
The fungal festivities resume on Monday at the Natural History Museum for an L.A. Mycological Society meeting covering varieties of fungus "from *Aspergillus* to zoospores."

Next Thursday, the FungiFest takes over the Hammer Museum with microscopes projecting spore slides, and a station for wild mushroom identification and a modern dance piece based on the fungal life cycle.

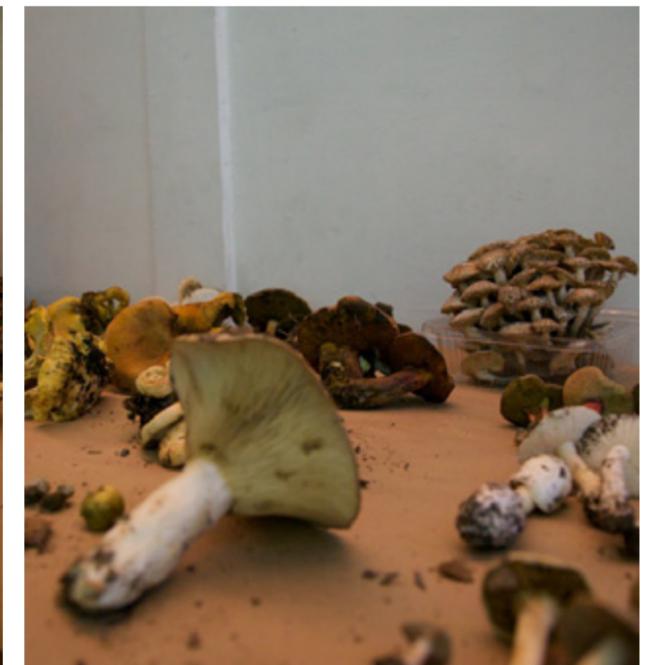
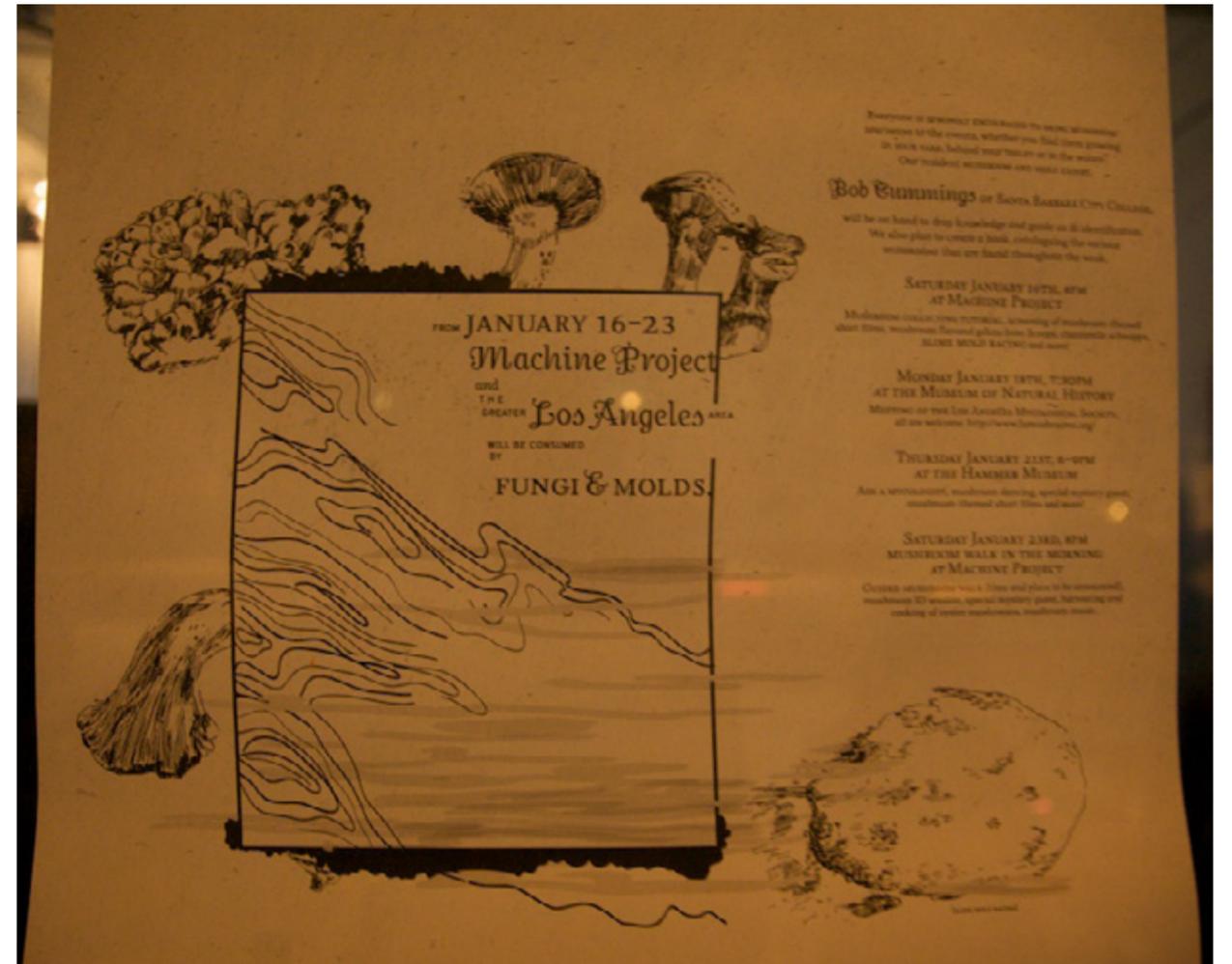
The whirlwind concludes at Machine Project on Jan. 23 with a toadstool collecting expedition, followed by an oyster mushroom sauté and dreamy music by Ambient Force 3000. What makes it mushroom music? "I'm not sure exactly," Fenster concedes.

Though some amateur mushroom enthusiasts may gravitate toward the hallucinogenic lore, Fenster notes that mycology should be celebrated for its diversity, including "culinary aspects, a connection with ancient religion, and even mushrooms that clean up toxic waste."

"There are things all around us, like mushrooms, that we filter out," Fenster continues. "And when we start to notice them, the world becomes much richer."



Mushroom collecting tutorial, screening of mushroom-themed short films, mushroom flavored gelato from Scoops, chanterelle schnapps, slime mold racing and more!



Fungi are classified as a kingdom separate from plants, animals and bacteria that includes micro-organisms such as yeasts and molds, and the more familiar mushroom.



PHOTO: DAVID FENSTER



MUSHROOM

COLLECTION
FORM

IMPORTANT

Take pictures of the mushrooms in the ground **BEFORE** you dig them up and pictures of the gills or pores once they are out of the ground.

DATE:

TIME:

LOCATION

Where did you find the mushroom? Include: street and closest cross street, GPS coordinates, address, name of park, etc. The more specific the better.

HABITAT

Lawn? Soil? Wood chips/mulch? Dung? Leaves/needles? On a tree (dead or alive tree? What kind?) Down wood or stump? Forest or woodland?

.....
What is the nearest tree species as well as the predominant tree species in area?

.....
Were other mushrooms growing nearby? Were they the same kind?

.....
Does the mushroom have a specific odor?

.....
Is the cap slimy or dry?

NOTES ON THE FIND

.....
How did you find this mushroom? What were you thinking when you found this mushroom? How does looking at this mushroom or touching it make you feel, etc.?

Remember to take pictures of the mushrooms in the ground **BEFORE** you dig them up. Also take pictures of the gills or pores once they are dug out of the ground.

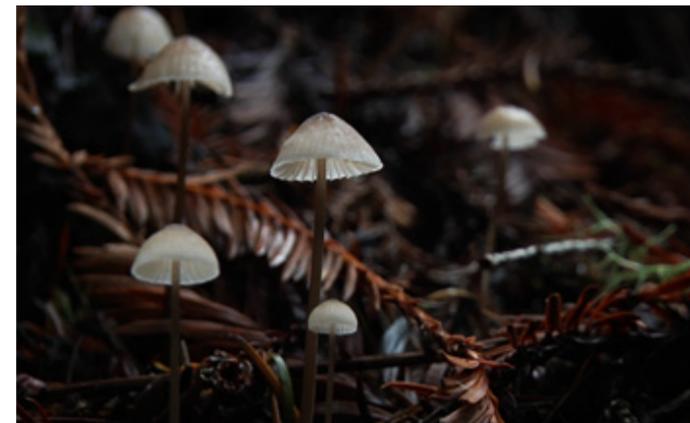
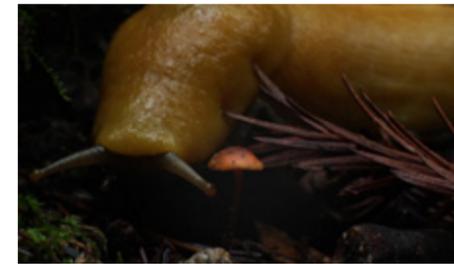
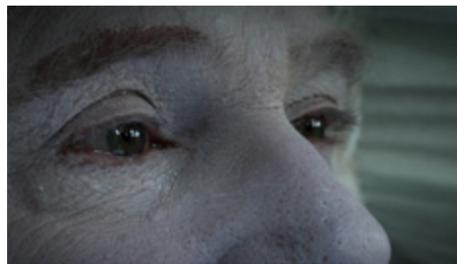


FLY AMANITA

The thoughts of an *Amanita muscaria* (aka Fly Amanita) mushroom on his species' relationship with humans. Mushrooms remind us that there are interesting things all around us, but until we decide to notice them and acknowledge them, they might as well be invisible. Once we start to see them it's difficult to understand how they were there all along and we had never noticed them, because now we see that they are everywhere.

Directed by David Fenster.
Starring Jan Johnson. Costume by E.B. Brooks.

view the film at:
<http://vimeo.com/8804372>





1-UP MANHATTAN

- Shitake-Infused Rye
- Red Vermouth
- Angostura Bitters
- Fungal Bitters

In an ice-filled shaker, mix 2 oz shitake-infused rye, 1 oz red vermouth, a dash of bitters. Kick turtle across room. Punch cabinet with fist. Strain shaker into chilled cocktail glass. Garnish with a cherry-soaked crimini, and chocolate gold coin served on the side.



TOM YUM

- 1 Rum
- 1 Coconut Milk
- 1/4 Lime
- Ponzu Sauce
- Thai Hot Sauce
- Sliced Ginger
- Oyster Mushrooms

In an ice-filled shaker, mix 2 oz rum, 1 oz coconut milk, juice of 1 lime, dash of ponzu, dash of hot sauce, and a slice of ginger. Place 3-5 oyster mushrooms in a small clay pot. Strain ingredients over them. Garnish with sliced ginger and a sprig of lemongrass



DIRTY SHITAKE

- Gin
- Dry Vermouth
- Olive-Shitake Brine

Remove half the olives from the olive jar. Fill with shitake mushrooms up to the top of the brine. Shake. Wait 2 days. While waiting, chill a martini glass.

Pour a small amount of vermouth in a chilled martini glass. Swirl around to coat the sides, pouring out the excess. Using a long toothpick or short skewer, make an olive-shitake kabob. Place in martini glass at a jaunty angle. Add a splash (to taste) of olive shitake brine.

In a shaker of ice, add 1/2 oz vermouth, 2 1/2 oz gin, one olive, one lump of brined shitake. Shake the crap out of it. Set shaker aside. Pause to briefly reflect on what we've done.

Strain shaker into glass.



BLOODY JESUS AND MARY CHAIN

- Vodka
- Tomato Juice
- Fungal Liquor
- Worcestershire
- Tabasco
- Horseradish
- Lime

Garnish with a mashed up handful of unwashed wild mushrooms

Sing verse from "Mushroom" by Jesus and Mary Chain: "When I saw mushroom head / I was born and I was dead." Chug. Repeat until done.

To make this a cocktail a Bloody Krautrock, when half-finished with drink, scream "I'm gunna give my de-spair!" Then explain at length how the song "Mushroom" was actually recorded by Can in goddamn 1971 and the entire so-called canon of 80's pop goth is a cheap distorted rip-off of people old enough to be their fathers, but they're all old enough to be grandfathers now, so god, what's even the point. Put celery stalk behind ear, chug rest of drink. Be careful not to get it on your turtle neck.



IRISH FAIRY BOMB

- Irish Stout
- Irish Cream
- Irish Whiskey
- Irish Mushroom

Find a mushroom with a large deep cap, preferably plucked from a fairy ring on an Irish moor. Carefully remove the stem of the mushroom as close as possible to the cap, creating a small shallow bowl.

Half-fill a rough-hewn stone bowl with Irish stout. Allow it to settle. Fill mushroom with equal parts Irish cream and Irish whiskey. Drop mushroom into the stout. Drink as quickly as possible.

Toss bowl over left shoulder. Throw mushroom high into the air. Spin on your heel while saying in a clear, loud voice:

"Iocfaidh mise don gach rud!"

("I will pay for everything!")

Try to catch mushroom in your mouth as it falls. If you succeed, you must pay for everything. If you fail, a cat will eat you and the devil will eat the cat.

IICHELADA HONGO

- 12 Oz Beer
- Juice Of 1 Lemon (Or Lime)
- 4-6 Button Mushrooms
- Worcestershire Sauce
- Soy Sauce
- Tabasco Sauce
- Black Pepper
- Salt

Fill a pint glass 1/3 with ice. Top with 11 button mushrooms. Add 2 dashes of Worcestershire, Tabasco, and soy sauce. 1 dash pepper and salt. Squeeze in one half lemon and one half lime. Slowly fill glass with Mexican beer.



MUSHROOM COCKTAILS AND DRAWINGS BY JASON BROWN

Commercial mushroom farming began in the early 20th century. Pennsylvania and California are the largest mushroom producers.



An open meeting of the Los Angeles Mycological Society, at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles.

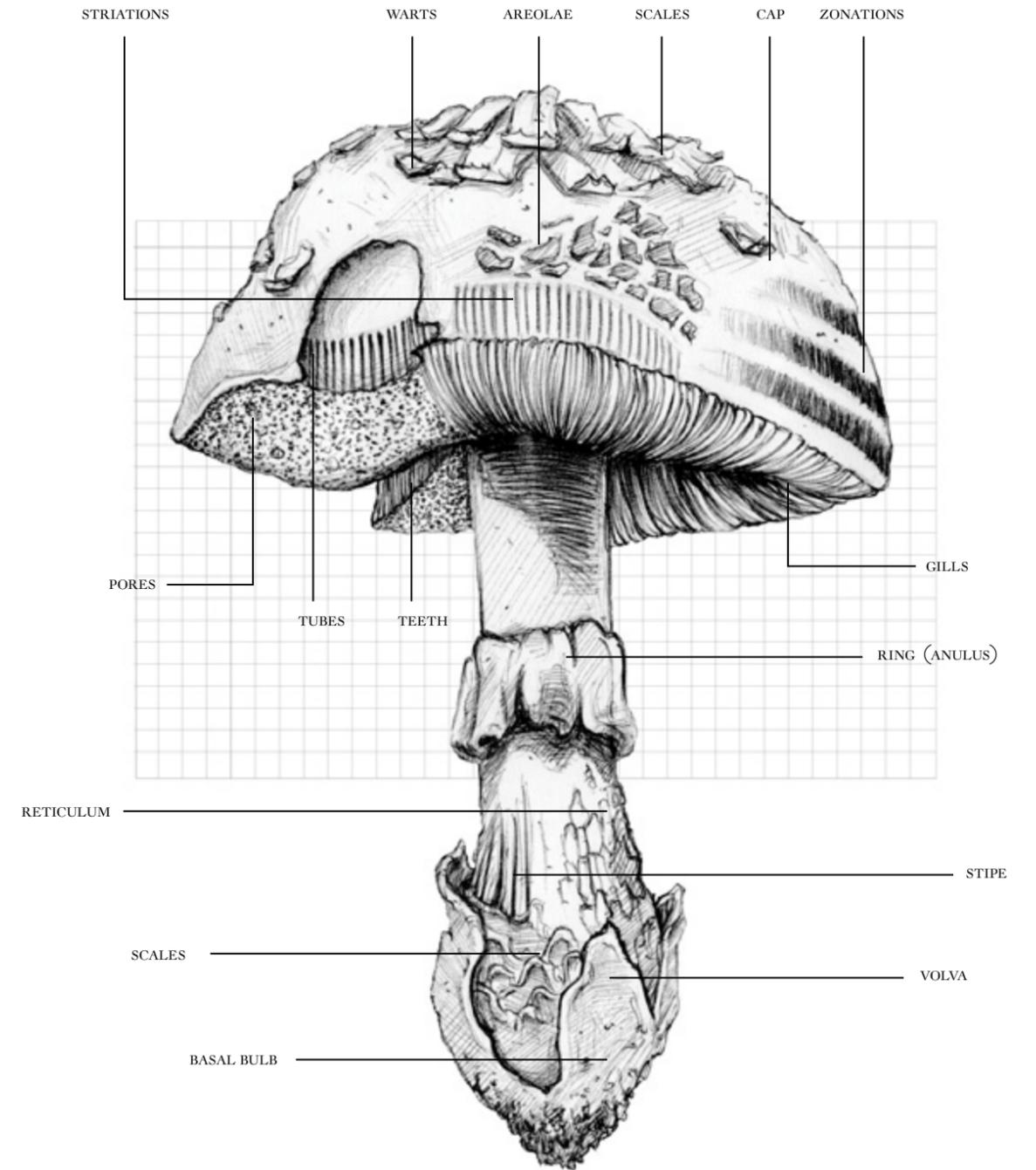
LOS ANGELES MYCOLOGICAL SOCIETY [LAMS]

LAMS is a non-profit group whose purpose is to foster and expand the understanding and appreciation of mycology - the study of fungi of all kinds including mushrooms, molds, truffles, yeasts, lichens, plant pathogens, and medically important fungi.

LAMS creates and sponsors fun mushroom related events to help people learn about and identify mushrooms they find in the greater Los Angeles area. For more information go to: lamushrooms.org

NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM OF LOS ANGELES

The mission of the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County is to inspire wonder, discovery and responsibility for our natural and cultural worlds.



MUSHROOM DRAWING AND DIAGRAM BY JAY DORONIO

*Mushrooms contain Selenium,
when combined with vitamin E they
produce antioxidants that neutralize cell
damaging free radicals.*



PHOTO : DAVID FENSTER

Ask a mycologist, mushroom dancing, special mystery guest, mushroom themed short films and more!



FUNGI DANCING



MUSHROOM MUSIC PROVIDED
BY AMBIENT FORCE 3000





WARNING!

This music was not designed for human consumption.

For millennia, music was written by and for a very small segment of the plant and animal kingdoms. In fact, the vast majority of music has been made for humans, a tiny fragment of the smallest kingdom of life. *Entire kingdoms have been left out of the musical experience!*

Now, at long last, there is music for the fungus kingdom.

As you may know, we humans are built similarly. If someone were to scream in your presence your heart rate would increase—there is no way for you to prevent it. You would not, however, respond similarly to the alarm call of a squirrel or let alone the subtle signals of a distressed yeast or an unhappy mycelium.

In the geological, biological and cultural worlds we can detect some populations of interacting entities with intense propensities to engage in self-organizing processes, and these special populations are the key to a *new theory* of innovation, allowing us to foresee an end to species-specific cultural production.

While there may be plenty of music for cats, fish and houseplants, it is *not enough* to reject our specieist assumptions. We must also overcome the harsh boundaries of Order, Class and Phylum. Let us abandon our plant and animal chauvinism as the artifact of a less enlightened time. Let us now reach out to the alien life forms who truly *rule our planet*, interacting with them on their own terms. Let us look *forward* to that day when people will have to be taught that music was once available only to plants and animals!

Studies have shown that fungi are largely indifferent to human music. However it has been *proven* that our slimy little pals respond to specifically fungal music, including a demonstrated tendency toward less aggressive fungal behavior. Interestingly, some humans also experience a similar beneficial calming effect. It must be noted that *some humans experience quite the opposite effect*. You have been warned.

This music was designed for fungus.

The yeasts, molds, slimes among us, and of course our cute little mushroom associates. As a "human," you are hereby permitted to experience this performance. However, AMBIENT FORCE 3000, Machine Project and the various lifeforms who comprise the True Audience for this music are *in no way responsible* for any reaction – pleasant or unpleasant – which you may have.

Good Luck!

- AMBEINT FORCE 3000



*Mushrooms are low in calories,
have no cholesterol and are virtually free
of fat and sodium.*



Guided mushroom walk, through Franklin Canyon Park. Mushroom Identification session, harvesting and cooking of oyster mushrooms, and mushroom music. Franklin Canyon Park is 605 acres of land near the center of Los Angeles between the San Fernando Valley and Beverly Hills.

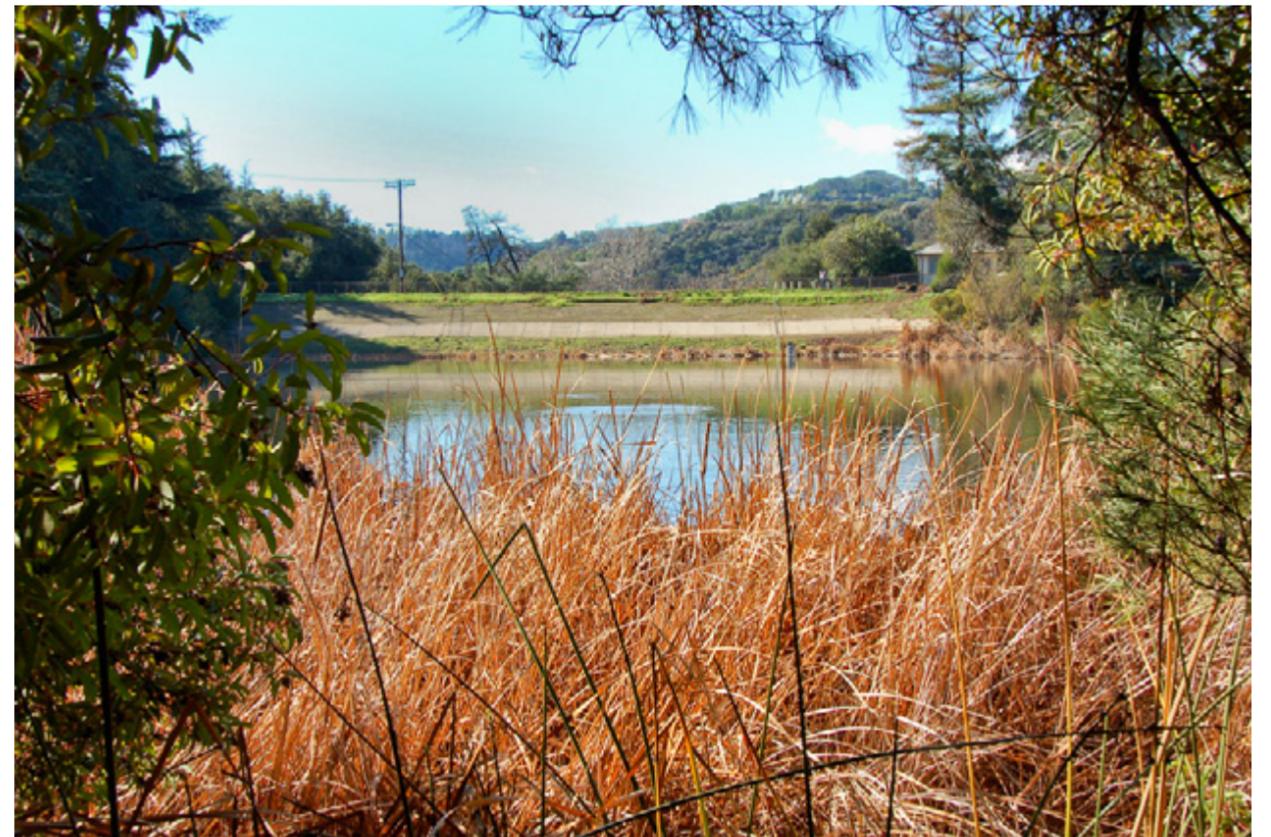


FUNGI HUNTING



Yeasts, used in making beer and bread, are a kind of fungus.





Wild mushrooms can be found in many wooded areas. If you choose to harvest wild mushrooms, have a professional identify your pick. Many mushrooms resemble safe mushrooms but are actually quite poisonous.



FUNGI FEST WAS MADE POSSIBLE THROUGH
THE COLLECTED EFFORTS OF THE FOLLOWING:

DAVID FENSTER
DR. BOB CUMMINGS
MACHINE PROJECT
MARK ALLEN
MICHELLE YU
JASON BROWN
APOLONIA PANAGOPOULOS
J.R. HUGHTO
TERRY CHATKUPT
JAN JOHNSON.
E.B. BROOKS.
HAMMER MUSEUM
LOS ANGELES MYCOLOGICAL SOCIETY
SCOOPS ICE CREAM
AMBIENT FORCE 3000
MUSHROOM DANCERS

FRONT & BACK COVER PHOTOS
J.R.HUGHTO
DESIGN BY
SHANNON LOSORELLI

