

MUSHROOMS: THE ART, DESIGN AND FUTURE OF FUNGI **GOES ONLINE FOR THE FIRST TIME**

New Virtual Tour released on 18 May to mark International Museum Day

Online at www.somerset-house.org.uk



To mark International Museum Day on 18 May, Somerset House will release a brand-new virtual tour of its exhibition *Mushrooms: The Art, Design and Future of Fungi*. The exhibition explores the colourful cultural legacy of the humble mushroom and its powerful potential in the planet's survival, as innovative designers experiment with the sustainable material of mushrooms in fashion, homewares and architecture. Curated by writer and curator Francesca Gavin, *Mushrooms: The Art, Design and Future of Fungi* was halfway through its run when lockdown began, so for those who missed it in person, this virtual tour is the first chance that they will be able to see inside this original show and discover why the simple fungus fascinates us still.

Five works to look out for whilst virtually browsing *Mushrooms: The Art, Design and Future of Fungi*:

- 1. Beatrix Potter's collection of mushrooms illustrations.** The show includes a selection of Potter's watercolours, of which she produced over 300 before she made her beloved children's books. Her exquisite, scientifically accurate drawings of mushrooms form a significant contribution to the study of natural history and are still used by researchers today.
- 2. Carsten Höller's spinning, solar-powered mushrooms.** A striking example of the acclaimed conceptual artist's recurring mushroom motif can be found in his Pilzkoffer (Mushroom Suitcase) which sees small casts of the hallucinogenic fly agaric mushroom revolving on mechanical stands inside a suitcase, powered by solar energy situated above.
- 3. Adham Faramawy's hypnotic film.** Faramawy's psychedelic piece discovers the mysticism surrounding the mushroom, inspiring artists through the generations. Shown in the round in the exhibition, the full feature will be shown from 13 – 19 May as part of Somerset House's weekly *Pause* series.
- 4. Seana Gavin's hand-cut collages of mushroom-human hybrids.** Gavin creates collages of fungi-filled worlds featuring imaginative anthropomorphic mushroom characters and architectural structures. She has also hosted a collage making masterclass, which is currently live online to enjoy at any time from home.
- 5. Shoes and shades made from mushrooms.** Set to transform design and manufacture in the future, mycelium (an underground fungal mass - mushrooms are the fruiting bodies of mycelium) is used as a sustainable material for shoes from Belgian shoe designer Kristel Peters and for pendant light shades from Sebastian Cox and Ninela Ivanova.

MUSHROOMS: THE ART, DESIGN AND FUTURE OF FUNGI

New Virtual Tour released from 18 May 2020

Somerset House is London's working arts centre. Its central London site is currently closed to the public, but its offer of inspiring contemporary culture can still be found online. A summer-long digital programme – entitled **I Should Be Doing Something Else Right Now** – includes **live streams of new commissions from its resident artists**, ordinarily based inside Somerset House Studios; **making masterclasses** for all ages to get involved, creatively recycling household items; **workshops aimed at creative professionals** on how to cope through the crisis, and **new cuts of content from its archives**, bringing the best of Somerset House at home. Much of this online offering celebrates this year's International Museum Day theme of Diversity and Inclusion.

Mushrooms: The Art, Design and Future of Fungi is part of the Charles Russell Speechlys Terrace Room Series and supported by Origins as Beauty and Wellness Partner, as well as Gaia Art Foundation and Adonyeva Foundation.

Find the full programme, including the new virtual tour of *Mushrooms: The Art, Design and Future of Fungi*, at www.somerset.org.uk

Mushrooms: The Art, Design and Future of Fungi Artist List:

Adham Faramawy, Alex Morrison, Amanda Cobbett, Andrea Zucchini, Aniela Hoytink, Annie Ratti, Beatrix Potter, Carsten Höller, Cody Hudson, Cy Twombly, Daniel David Freeman, David Fenster, Donlon Books, Graham Little, Hamish Peach, Hannah Collins, Haroon Mirza, Jae Rhim Lee, Jason Evans, Jeremy Shaw, John Cage, Kristel Peters, Lara Ögel, Laurence Owen, Lois Long, Mae-ling Lokko, Perks and Mini, Salvatore Arancio, Seana Gavin, Sebastian Cox and Ninela Ivanova, Simon Popper, Stephan Doitschinoff, The Mycological Twist, Tom Dixon.

FOR PRESS ENQUIRIES, PLEASE CONTACT:

press@somerset.org.uk/0207 845 4624

ABOUT SOMERSET HOUSE

London's working arts centre

Somerset House is London's working arts centre and home to the UK's largest creative community. Built on historic foundations, we are situated in the very heart of the capital.

Dedicated to backing progress, championing openness, nurturing creativity and empowering ideas, our cultural programme is ambitious in scope. We insist on relevance, but aren't afraid of irreverence, and are as keen on entertainment as enrichment. We embrace the biggest issues of our times and are committed to oxygenating new work by emerging artists. Where else can you spend an hour ice-skating while listening to a specially commissioned sound piece by a cutting edge artist?

It is this creative tension – the way we harness our heritage, put the too-often overlooked on our central stage and use our neo-classical backdrop to showcase ground-breaking contemporary culture – that inspires our programme. Old and new, history and disruption, art and entertainment, high-tech and homemade, combined with the fact that we are home to a constantly shape-shifting working creative community: this is our point of difference. It is what we are proud of. And it is what makes the experience of visiting or working in Somerset House inspiring and energizing, urgent and exciting. www.somerset.org.uk

MUSHROOMS: THE ART, DESIGN AND FUTURE OF FUNGI

New Virtual Tour released from 18 May 2020

ABOUT FRANCESCA GAVIN

Francesca Gavin is a curator and writer based in London. She is an editor-at-large at *Kaleidoscope*, Art Editor of *Twin* and contributing editor at *Good Trouble*, *Beauty Papers* and *Semaine.com*. She was the co-curator of the Historical Exhibition of Manifesta11 and has curated exhibitions internationally including at the Palais de Tokyo, Site Sheffield and Mu. Gavin has written six books including *Watch This Space*, *The Book of Hearts*, *100 New Artists* and *Hell Bound: New Gothic Art*, and contributes to numerous publications including *The Financial Times*, *Dazed*, *wallpaper**, *Mousse*, *AnOther* and *Newsweek*. She has a monthly radio show *Rough Version* on NTS Radio on art and music. francescagavin.com
@roughversion

ABOUT THE CHARLES RUSSELL SPEECHLYS TERRACE ROOM SERIES

The Charles Russell Speechlys Terrace Room Series of free exhibitions profiles the work of living artists in one of the most accessible spaces at Somerset House, bringing the public into contact with a diverse and engaging range of creative thinkers. The series provides a platform for artists to develop and amplify the messages within their practice and engage openly with Somerset House's visitors. Every exhibition in the Charles Russell Speechlys Terrace Room series is free and contributes to our on-going commitment to public access and engagement with arts and culture.

ABOUT CHARLES RUSSELL SPEECHLYS

Charles Russell Speechlys works with clients in the UK and throughout the world. Our lawyers are based in 11 locations across the UK, Europe, Asia and the Middle East and through each of these locations clients are able to access the full range of the firm's skills and expertise.

We have a broad range of skills and experience across the full spectrum of business and personal needs. This gives us a wider perspective, clear insight and a strongly commercial long-term view.

It has made us a leader in the world of dynamic growth and family businesses, and among the world's leading creators and owners of private wealth and their families. Major corporates and institutions find our more considered and personal approach a refreshing alternative to conventional business law firms. www.charlesrussellspeechlys.com

ABOUT ORIGINS

Powered by nature and proven by science – Origins combines the highest-quality plant, earth and sea-based ingredients with non-toxic-to-skin alternatives and advanced science to create safe, high-performance skincare, bath & body and makeup products that deliver visible results. Since its inception in 1990, Origins has travelled the world to discover nature's most potent ingredients and unleashed their unique powers to deliver transformative products and experiences for the consumer. Origins believes it's the brand's responsibility to give back to nature and strives to make choices that help reduce our overall impact on the planet. Learn more at origins.co.uk and join the conversation @OriginsUK

ABOUT DR ANDREW WEIL

Andrew Weil, M.D., is a world-renowned leader and pioneer in the field of integrative medicine, a healing-oriented approach to health care which encompasses body, mind, and spirit. Combining a Harvard education and a lifetime of practicing natural and preventive medicine, Dr Weil is the founder and director of the Andrew Weil Center for Integrative Medicine at the University of Arizona, where he also holds the Lovell-Jones Professor of Integrative Medicine. The Center is the leading effort in the world to develop a comprehensive curriculum in integrative medicine.

Dr Weil is a *New York Times* bestselling author, editorial director of DrWeil.com and an internationally recognized expert for his views on leading a healthy lifestyle, his philosophy of healthy aging, and more. Dr Weil partnered on the Dr Andrew Weil for Origins™ Mega-Mushroom Relief & Resilience franchise—a skincare line infused with skin soothing medicinal mushrooms—with beauty brand, Origins.

ABOUT THE GAIA ART FOUNDATION

Gaia Art Foundation is an independent non-profit organization dedicated to support and nurture diverse cultural initiatives and to build a platform to encourage interdisciplinary dialogue through visionary artistic practices and partnerships.