

Mycosymbiosis



MYCOSYMBIOSIS

Mycosymbiosis is an installation by
Xiaojing Yan

**Mobile Gallery Concept, Design, and
Fabrication:**

Roberta Buiani, University of Toronto,
Lorella Di Cintio, Toronto Metropolitan
University, Ilze Briede (Kavi), York
University

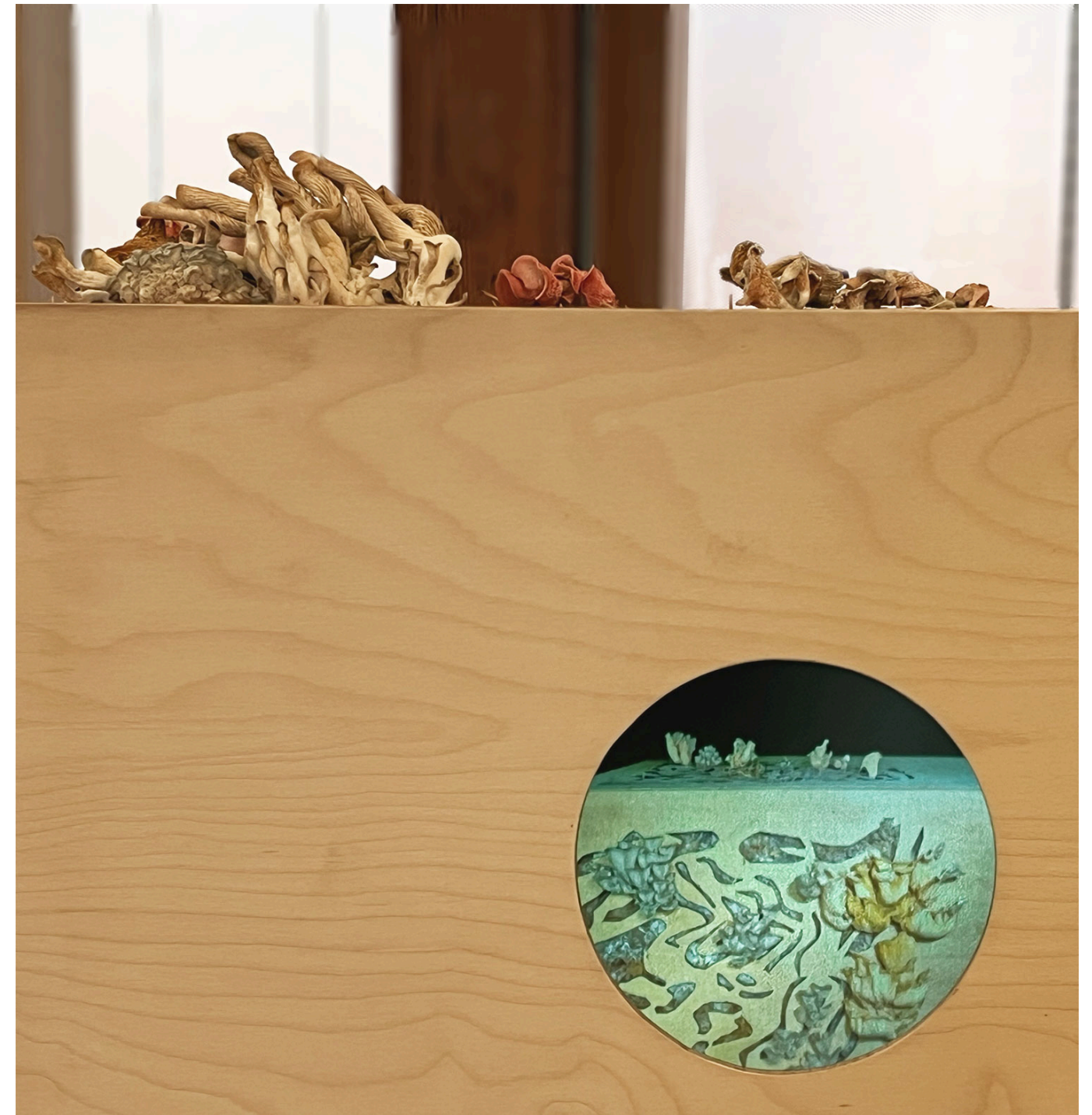
Scientific advising: James Scott, Dalla
Lana School of Public Health

The Creative School, Toronto Metropolitan University – May 7, 2023
Glendon Campus, York University – Fall 2023



Yan weaves together ideas of identity as both complicated and complex, and a perspective on nature as transcending the boundaries of self and other, inside and outside, familiar and foreign. Yan inoculated the space adjacent to the external walls of the mobile gallery with three cultures of Oyster Mushrooms and recorded them as they emerged and gradually populated its interstitial space. A timelapse of their growth is projected inside the gallery. The resulting living sculpture continues to transform in the next weeks as temperatures and humidity fluctuate, welcoming a variety of symbiotic organisms that support, compete with, and feed off the mushrooms.

Mycosymbiosis thrives, dries, shrinks, and decays together with, and thanks to, the myriads of living and non-living elements that host, sustain, and interact with it inside and outside



This installation is a constantly changing living sculpture. The vessel (the Mobile Gallery) was stained by spores and other microbial “juices”; and the mushrooms went through various stages of fruiting, drying, decaying, and falling victims of other organisms. The mushrooms were as important as the other organisms feeding off, consuming and coexisting with them

With this installation, it was very important to reveal the process leading to the moment of the actual exhibition. In fact, the mushrooms continued growing and fruiting even after the mobile gallery was transferred to its first location at TMU. The timelapse only records the initial 3 weeks of growth, creating a meta-gallery inside the material gallery



< <https://flic.kr/p/2oCeg8E> >

a few shots of the fruiting process



< <https://flic.kr/p/2oCf4Wh> >

we employed three types of oyster mushrooms



< <https://flic.kr/p/2oCf4TX> >

Fruiting has been constant as mushrooms grow at different rates

Emergent #2 was exhibited in two completely different settings: one was created indoor in a controlled environment while the second one was located outdoor, in a DIY greenhouse. In both cases, we obtained inoculated oyster mushroom spawn from the same provider and we used the same technique and substrate to trigger fruiting. However, given the different conditions of our venues, the results were wildly different. mushrooms microorganisms and molds populated the two installations at different rates, size and intensity, coexisting with, and transforming the mobile gallery in ways we could not predict.



Fruiting in the first three weeks of exposure (mid October). The mobile gallery has mostly retained its original color and shape



State of the mobile gallery at the end of the cycle before dismantling (end of December). Mold, yeast and other organisms now inhabit the artifact. Mushrooms have grown, and decayed at least twice



View of the green house in the evening. The greenhouse protected the mobile gallery for the entire time



Before it found its permanent location in the side balcony of the Glendon Manor, the Mobile Gallery went for a tour of the campus on October 2, helped by the students of the bilingual program in Communications. The artist and the fabrication team were in attendance.

mobile Gallery Launch, Oct 2, 2023





Students help colonize the substrate. The process has to be done in close-to-sterile conditions to avoid contamination with hostile bacteria, thus allowing healthy and fast fruiting



View of the location of the mobile gallery from the side entrance of the terrace of the Glendon Manor



The pattern created by the organisms which populated the mobile gallery during its outdoor exhibition

More information and documentation:

Craig, A. G. (2023, September 29). Watching mushrooms grow: A new lesson in communications. *YFile*. < <https://yfile.news.yorku.ca/2023/09/29/watching-mushrooms-grow-a-new-lesson-in-communications/>>

Xiaojing Yan documentation < <https://yanxiaojing.com/works/mycosymbiosis/>>



XiaoJing Yan < <https://yanxiaojing.com/>> is a Chinese-Canadian artist whose work embraces her sense of having a hybrid identity. Settling permanently in the Toronto area, her work reflects her journey through these various cultures, arriving at her own personal vocabulary. Her unique point of view unites the past and the present, encompassing culture and nature, art and science.

Her work has appeared in solo exhibitions at institutions including the Chinese American Arts Council in NYC, Richmond Art Gallery in Canada, Suzhou Museum in China, Hermès Maison in Shanghai, and Varley Art Gallery in Canada. Her projects have been featured in venues throughout Canada as well as China, France, USA and Greece. Yan is a recipient of numerous awards and grants including InStyle's Women InCreation Prize in Visual Arts (2021), Project Grants from the Ontario Arts Council (2022, 2020), Project Grants from the Canada Council (2022, 2021), the Annual Conference Support Grant from College of Art Association (2021), Chalmers Arts Fellowship from the Ontario Arts Council (2016), Young Alumni Achievement Award from Indiana University of Pennsylvania (2014).