

Fungi The World of Mushrooms

About Dale M Reid's Oyster Mushroom 1

The sculptural qualities of an oyster mushroom (*Pleurotus ostreatus*) are clearly revealed in all their glory in this image by Canadian photographer Dale M Reid (b, 1948). Recalling the series of bell pepper photographs by celebrated American photographer Edward Weston (see p. 19), Reid sets the popular edible mushroom against a stark black background, allowing it to take center stage and reviewing the intricate curling layers and gills in remarkable detail. Photography was a constant passion in Reid's life, but it wasn't until 2004 that she left her career in the corporate world to become a full-time artist. She explored a diverse range of subjects, from landscapes and urban, industrial scenes to still life and small botanical studies in the studio, which have since become her main focus. These studio images allow a freedom of experimentation, and Reid developed her signature monochrome aesthetics with meticulous attention to lighting to elicit the remarkable tonal range seen on her gelatin silver prints. Reid stated that her artistic "vision uses the mushroom's bizarre and varied shape, alien textures ... to create crisp images with a dose of abstraction." For Reid, the oyster mushroom was a gateway to a new world; it was the first mushroom Reid photographed and started an ongoing obsession with all things fungal – thanks to their variety of shapes, texture, and form – that continues today.

Text Credit

Anita Cory

About the book

Explore the wondrous world of fungi, mushrooms, and mycelium in this captivating visual survey

With millions of species worldwide, fungi and mushrooms are some of the most diverse living things on the planet, and have inspired everything from spirituality, pop culture, and art to design, fashion, and film.

This beautifully illustrated book celebrates the indelible role of mushrooms and fungi in visual culture. Readers will discover more than 200 full-page images arranged into artful pairings: a pre-Columbian gold pendant next to a Tiffany Studios glass table lamp; a Hermès scarf across from a sixteenth-century botanical

illustration; a Yayoi Kusama painting juxtaposed with a plastic figurine of the Nintendo character Toad. Work by Marc Chagall, Hilma af Klint, Andy Warhol, and Takashi Murakami appear alongside ancient Roman frescoes, drawings by pioneering mycologists, iconic children's picture books, classic films, and vintage ceramicware.

Together, the images reveal how fungi and mushrooms have intrigued and inspired humankind across time and around the world.

About the author

Phaidon Editors

Francesca Gavin is Editor in Chief of *EPOCH Review* and Director of Visual Arts at Murmur. She is the author of twelve books on art and visual culture and regularly contributes to publications including the *Financial Times*, *Konfekt*, and *CURA*. Among her curatorial work, Gavin has produced three exhibitions on mushrooms in contemporary art and design, including shows at Somerset House in London and Fundação de Serralves in Porto, Portugal.