



mushroom grown by Taro, 2016

Mycelium Network Society

Proposal for International CoProduction Fund
Goethe-Institut

Producers/Partners

Shu Lea Cheang/cycleX (Taiwan/USA/France)
<http://cyclex.info>

Zavod Kersnikova (Ljubljana, Slovenia)
<http://kersnikova.org/>

Stadtwerkstatt (Linz, Austria)
<http://stwst.at>

Partner in Germany – transmediale (Berlin, Germany)
<http://transmediale.de>

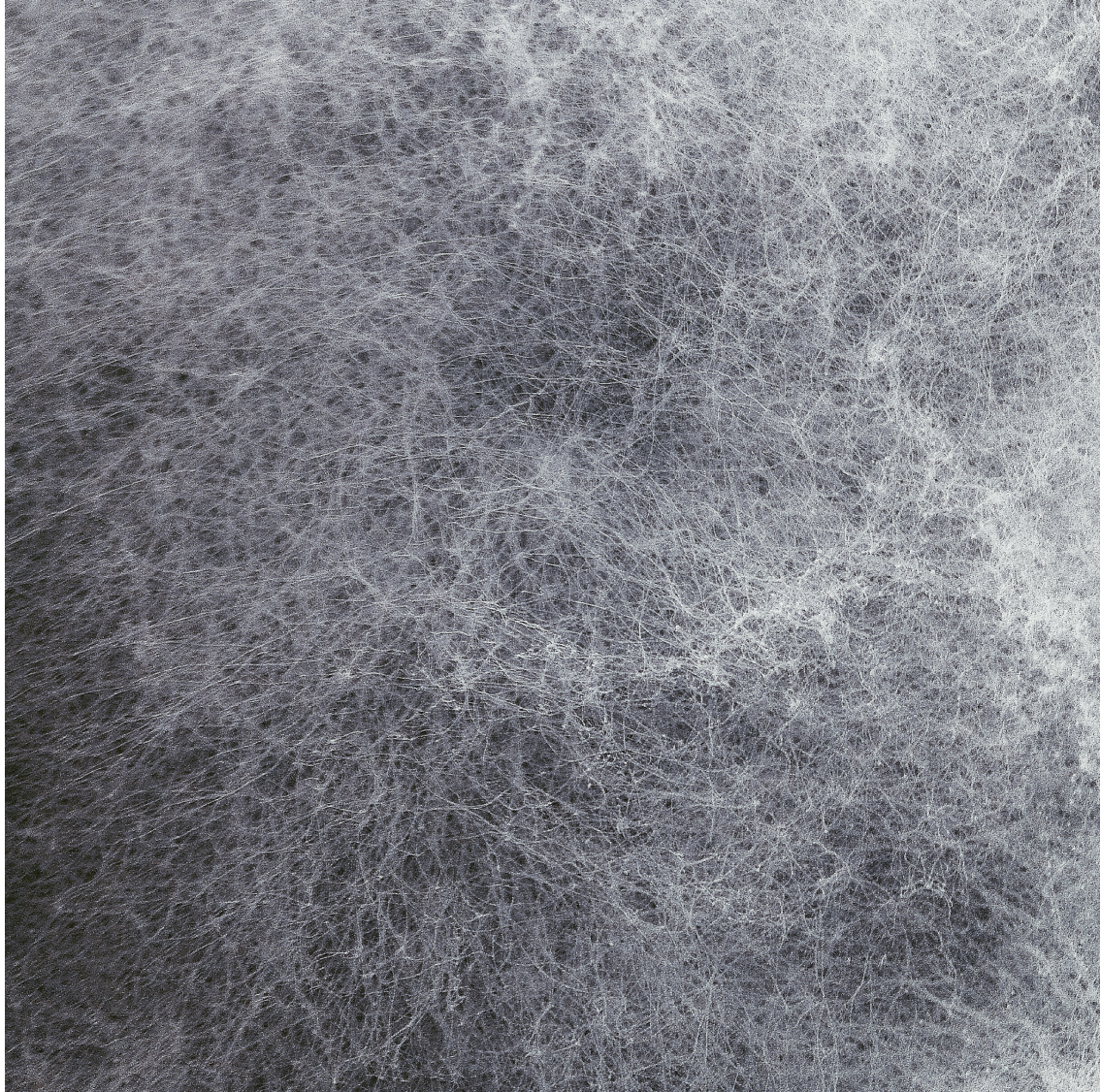
CONCEPT | PROPOSAL

Mycelium Network Society is an underground network imagination powered by fungus, spores, culture, kitchen, radio, transmission, installations, workshops and performances.

Mycelium Network Society, a brand new network initiative situated in a post-internet mudland, diverts the pursuit of magic mushroom, from a state of hyper-hallucination to collective fungal consciousness, and investigates the fungi culture, its network capacity to communicate and process information.

"My mycelial network is nearly immortal, only the sudden toxification of a planet or the explosion of its parent star can wipe me out... all my mycelial networks in the galaxy are in hyper light communication across space and time." - Terence McKenna "The mushroom speaks".

Mushroom as a commodity, a medium, an element, commands its own domain in human-disturbed forests. Sprouting across the moisture of rich soils, expanding its colonies, sharing informations, networking co-habitants, mycelium is ordained by Paul Stamets as "the neurological network of nature". In this post-digital, post-media, post-internet, post-enlightenment phase of current-day investigation into cultural practices, we seek out mycelium to lead us out of the ruins, to construct political tactics, to salvage economic meltdown. Ultimately at nature's mercy, we artists/cultural producers strive to convene a nature's network merging our research in technology, biology and ecology, persisting in constant molecular communication a la mycelium mode.



Mycelium close up view in MYCONNECT by Saša Spačal, Mirjan Švagelj and Anil Podgornik

Our production team – Shu Lea Cheang/cycleX, Zavod Kersnikova, Stadtwerkstatt, have been engaged in research and experiments in cross-genres of art and life for decades. We have observed the recent emergence of artists who take up mycelium as the medium for artistic expression in sensing, transmitting and connecting. On the occasion of the 30 year anniversary of transmediale and in conjunction with its Excursion III Ecologies on 24 February 2017 to be held at Silent Green Kunstquartier, we propose to assemble a group of selected artists for the launching of Mycelium Network Society. This hybrid network construct is a social event grows out of fungus fields where culture mutates, kitchen smells, radio transmits, workshops study and performance gone fungi existential. After this initial transmediale launch, we will travel Mycelium Network Society to partner art/cultural spaces - cycleX (USA/Taiwan), Galerija Kapelica (Slovenia), Stadtwerkstatt (Austria) during 2017-2018. Along the way, we plan to pick up more mushroom artists in the fields to join the excursions.

PARTNERS | PRODUCERS

Shu Lea Cheang/cycleX (Taiwan/USA/France)

An artist, filmmaker and networker, born in Taiwan, lived in New York City through the 80s and 90s, Cheang engaged herself in media activism, media art, net art, installation, performance, filmmaking, most noted, BRANDON (1998-1999), a web art commission and collection by the Guggenheim Museum. She is founding director of cycleX (Andes, New York), a non-for-profit land trust with a mission to conserve its farmland by engaging in organic farming and cross-disciplinary artistic activities. Relocated to Eurozone in 2000, Cheang has worked, exhibited, presented with many media art labs, cultural spaces and museums across Europe, including the three co-producers for this Mycelium network Society project. <http://www.cycllex.info>

Zavod Kersnikova (Kersnikova Institute) (Ljubljana, Slovenia)

A parent institution that incorporates 3 programs - Kapelica Gallery, BioTehna Lab and RAMPA Lab. Kapelica Gallery was established as an art space since the 90s with a strong and uncompromised programming that focuses on Contemporary Investigative Arts and stress on research, exploring and experimenting the limits of artistic discourses and urban poetics. The wetlab BioTehna and hackerspace Rampa Lab engage in scientific and technological applications, biopolitics and urban phenomena, that rapidly change our everyday reality. Together we form an active production platform which encourages, facilitates and showcases investigative artistic production, create public debate and stimulates a critical understanding of the time we live in. <http://kersnikova.org/>, <http://kapelica.org/>

Stadtwerkstatt (Linz, Austria)

Based in Linz, Stadtwerkstatt is an innovative cultural space founded in 1979 by a group of socially engaged art students. In advocating open source software and free spaces, they add a political dimension in confronting contemporary issues across borders, creating and presenting interdisciplinary projects in public space, radio and the Net. Among their many projects - Eleonore (once a measurement vessel) artist in residency; circulate Gibblings as community currency designed yearly new edition by artis; Café Strom, a bar interface for Linz local and international visitors; Versorgerin, quarterly newspaper on art, culture and politics. In 2015, Stadtwerkstatt takes up "the nature of information" as a matter of inquiry and launches information LAB to house its many ongoing information research projects. <http://stwst.at>

transmediale (Berlin, Germany)

transmediale is a Berlin-based festival and year-round project that draws out new connections between art, culture and technology. All activities of transmediale aim at fostering a critical understanding of contemporary culture and politics as saturated by media technologies. In the course of its 30 year history, the annual transmediale festival has turned into an essential event in the calendar of media art professionals, artists, activists and students from all over the world. In 2017, The 30-year anniversary of transmediale will be celebrated throughout a month of events distributed across Berlin, including Excursion III Ecologies that elaborates on critical investigations into the ecology of the infrastructural and resource heavy reality of technology.

<http://transmediale.de>

ARTISTS (to be expanded)

myco-logick by TARO (Linz, Austria)

Taro grows, eats, senses and disseminates the bio-diversified fungi creatures. Myco logick is a series of projects interacting with our fungal cohabitants, presently in research mode. In 2015, during festival STWST48, two weather balloons filled with fugal spores were launched onto stratosphere, anticipating their burst to release the spores onto outerspace or back to somewhere on earth. In 2016, *sk-dekomposition* designates fungi as decomposers to revive the human species' contaminated living environments.



myco-logick at STWST48 (2015) and STWST48x2 (2016)

Radio Mycelium by Martin Howse (Berlin, Germany)

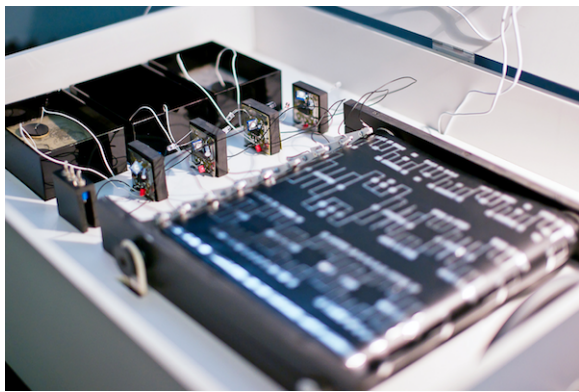
Martin Howse is occupied with an artistic investigation of the links between the earth, software, and the human psyche (psychogeophysics). Radio Mycelium proposes the construction of a series of experimental situations examining a new networked imaginary - the single organism of the fungal mycelium in relation to pathogenic, electromagnetic communications. http://fo.am/radio_mycelium/



workshop radio mycelium tutorial at [foam], Brussels. (2011)

Mycophone_emergence / Mycophone_unison / MY CONNECT
by Saša Spačal, Mirjan Švagelj and Anil Podgornik (Ljubljana, Slovenia)

Artist Saša Spačal has collaborated with Mirjan Švagelj, doctor of biomedicine and Anil Podgornik, DIY enthusiast, on mycelium bioart, bio technology works since 2012. Mycophone_emergence / Mycophone_unison explores technological organisms through listening, interlinking organisms which include machines, humans, fungi, bacteria and archaea. Myconnect is an interspecies connector on becoming with the otherness, i.e. the fungal mycelium. In the Myconnect capsule nervous system, a person is integrated into human-interface-mycelium feedback loop via heartbeat. <https://mycophone.wordpress.com/>
<https://projectmyconnect.wordpress.com/>



Mycophone_emergence 2012



my connect 2016

T-shroom by Katrina Neiburga with Pēteris Ķimelis, Unit Open (Riga, Latvia)

The tea-mushroom, grown in a 3 liter glass jars in homes across Post-Soviet territory, is an agent of open network, trading from home to home, crossing borders from country to country. The T-shroom project is an enterprise, investigating the life and systems of distribution of this social mycelia in a marketing and consumer driven world paradigm. By adopting a t-shroom, one becomes a symbiosis partner joining the network of mushroom-based autonomy. <http://open.x-i.net/tsene/indexs.html>



t-shroom (since 2002)



SPEAKERS (to invite)

Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing (USA) is professor of anthropology at the University of California, Santa Cruz, and a Niels Bohr Professor at Aarhus University in Denmark, where she codirects Aarhus University Research on the Anthropocene (AURA). Her latest book *The Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist ruins* "investigates one of the world's most sought-after fungi... presents an original examination into the relation between capitalist destruction and collaborative survival within multispecies landscapes, the prerequisite for continuing life on earth." – Princeton press.

PRESENTATION | PRODUCTION

The selected art works will be presented in a 'processing' mode as the ever-evolving mushroom growth. The launch for Mycelium Network Society at transmediale2017 is conceived as a hybrid form of production – mixing the mushroom growing with hot plate cooking, taking the t-shroom during the afternoon tea time, entering the mushroom state of hyper-realism or the alien state of capsule nervous system, release the spores into outer space while checking in on electromagnetic fungi sprouting underground. It would combine installation, performance, screening, talks, network social for the day's event. This launch helps us to kick off the "collection" of world-wide web of artists, cultural workers, designers, bio-technologists working in the field of fungi networking. As a response to Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing's *The mushroom at the end of the world*, we highlight artists' contribution in building a sustainable-growing mycelium network. With the touring exhibition planned and more artists/individuals/collectives to be recruited, we believe that Mycelium Network Society will be sprouting and making impact across the rich soils where human species holds tight the notion of 'mushroom saves the world'.

VIDEO SAMPLE

SHU LEA CHEANG SAMPLE – collective large scale performance /installation.

*MOVING FOREST (2008) is a 12 hour performance event held at Haus der Kulturen der Welt at transmediale2008. <https://vimeo.com/18465980>

*STWST48x2 (2016) is a 48 hour installation/performance event programmed for Stadtwerkstatt in conjunction with Ars Electronica2016. <http://stwst48x2.stwst.at>

ARTISTS' VIDEO SAMPLE

*MY CONNECT documentation - <https://vimeo.com/89187582>

*T-shroom documentation - <https://vimeo.com/25225607>

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