

SAPIENT



FUNGI

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Final Major Project (CUP617)

Fungi are everywhere. They are inside us and around us; they sustain us and all that we depend upon. They are the most vital interface between all forms of life, one of the most common organisms on the planet and yet, more than 90% of the estimated 3.8 million fungi in the world are currently unknown to science. They are neither animals nor plants, and we humans are more closely related to them than we are to any other kingdom. Still, Western culture's generalized mycophobia has made us associate fungi with rot and decay and has made them remain unknown, overlooked. This was my own case not long before starting this project: I thought mushrooms looked weird and unappealing, I didn't comprehend the diversity of fungi as an entire kingdom, nor how their existence is the very basis of my own.

Luckily, not everyone has been deterred by popular notions and prejudice. Mycologists have been discovering new, extraordinary uses for fungi for decades now; from culinary and psychedelic mushrooms that help treat mental illnesses and degenerative diseases, to fungi species that can clean up oil spills, break down plastics and even rehabilitate nuclear waste sites. In this time of extreme ecological degradation, fungi present the solution to some of humanity's greatest problems. It's imperative we spread this knowledge and fund the necessary research if we want a chance of survival on this planet.

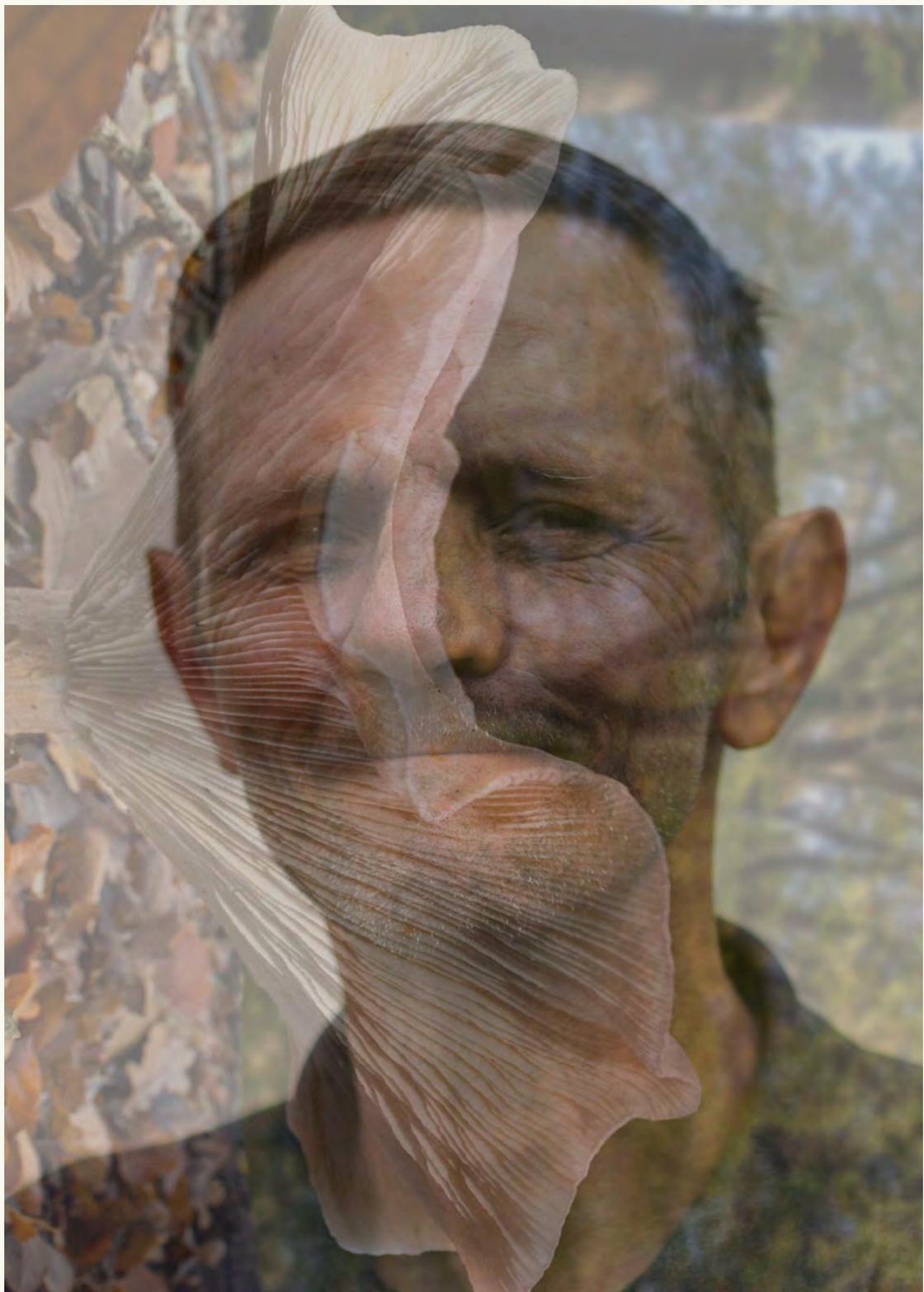
'Sapient Fungi' is a series of double exposures that merges images of various types of fungi with human portraits. The aim of this project is to visualize and explore the complex, fascinating relationship between humanity and fungi. The overall aim is to deconstruct the myth of human supremacy and to highlight the importance of species cohabitation. Its striking, maybe even slightly unsettling images are meant to catch your attention, to make you question what exactly it is that you're seeing and ultimately, to make you want to know more. About fungi, humanity and everything that binds us together.





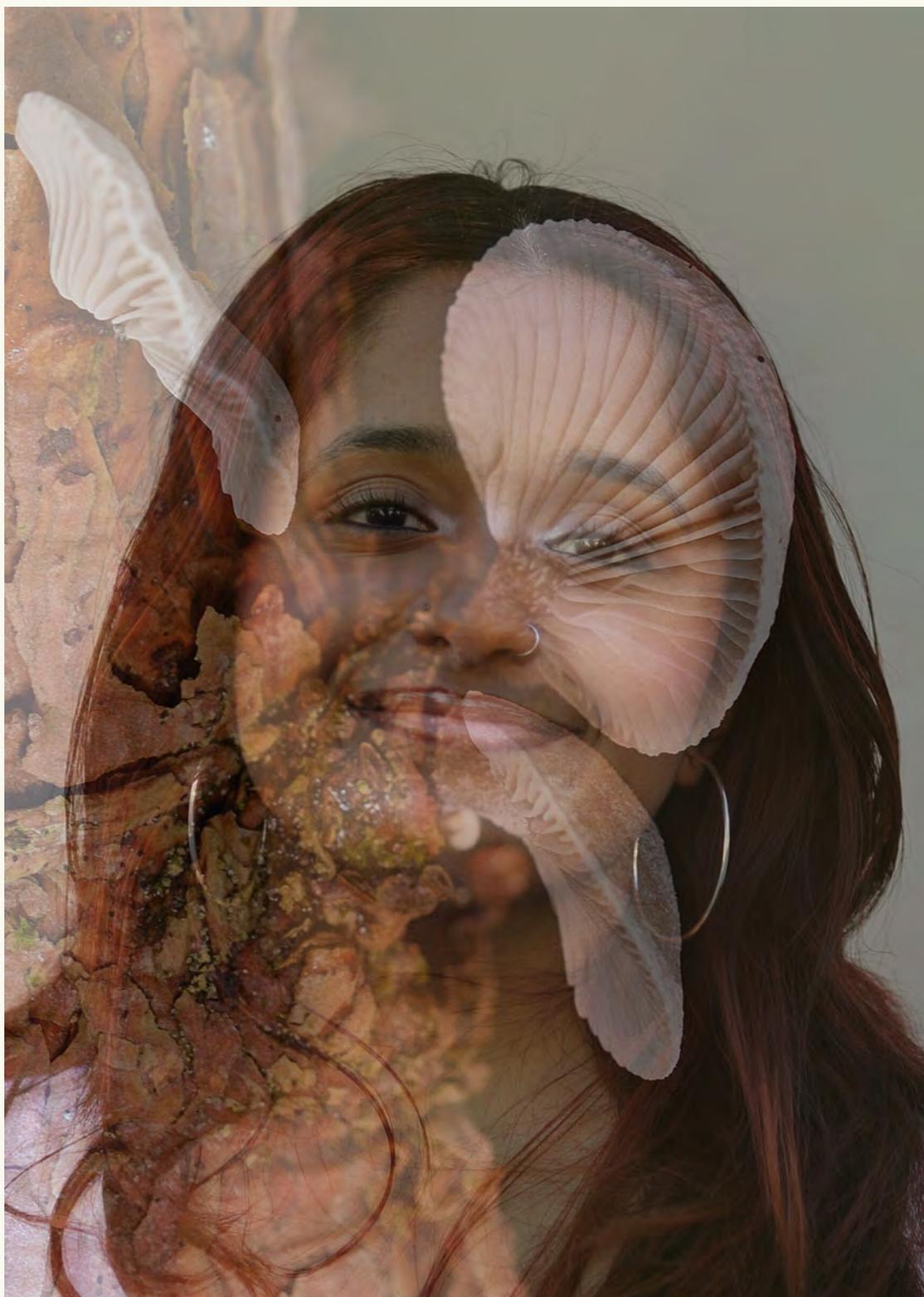












"The more we learn about fungi,



the less makes sense without them." - M. Sheldrake