

Decay

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Decay is a playspace. It is a living, mycelial web where the work should be touched, felt and included, not treated as a room full of objects merely on display. It is intended as a resource center, a place of community, and an ecosystem crafted for study. *Decay* explores learning from fungi, and the concept of mycoremediation (that is, healing environmental pollution using fungi) and extends this metaphor to healing our own human environments using fungal knowledge. Fungal knowledge includes using decay to make room for new growth, sharing nutrients, fostering community and adaptability in the face of struggle. Various mushroom-growing setups are located throughout the space, inoculated with different species of *Pleurotus* (commonly known as oyster mushrooms), so we can share space with these organisms and one another. Players and play-space are connected through these living beings, as fungi connects forests through their mycelium.

Fungi have beautiful and complex ecological histories. As some of the oldest and largest living organisms on our planet, they can both destroy forests and bring them back from disruption. Fungi grow rhizomatically through their vegetative bodies, called mycelium, which connects different species of plants together underground to share nutrients. They also have inspired human histories of foraging and medicinal practices. In this, fungi have been used as powerful initiators of personal, psychological change which has created simultaneous relationships of love and fear.

We embody all these complexities and look to decay as an ecological truth that we hold dear to our hearts. This exhibition employs fungi as a lens to study and unravel oppressive structures woven by capitalism and colonialism. One of the structures that is explored is fashion- a practice that shares histories with subcultures and radical movements just as it does with aristocracy, class struggles, and harmful labor and environmental practices. The show draws aesthetic connections between 60s and 70s mushroom counterculture, foraged objects, treasures, altars, sentimentality, and play. The work in this room has been gathered from various places, including the forest, thrift stores, friends, and authors. As we consider decay, we accept its nourishment and allow ourselves to rest in its assuredness. We look to decay as a philosophical necessity as much as an ecological one, and we seek to dispel the toxic and fearful relationships to death and decay in our growth fixated consumer culture. There is not one way to experience *Decay*, and there is no single takeaway. Rather, the space exists in fluidity; revealing its individual meanings personally and contextually.

The zine you'll find in this space is a companion to the show. The middle section includes a list that corresponds to the numbers in the space, so you can find more information about each work. Feel free to take a zine home, as they are meant to exist both inside and outside the space.