

New Pictures 5: Jason Fulford, *The Mushroom Collection*

On view October 21, 2011–April 8, 2012



Unknown photographer, from a collection of mushroom photographs Jason Fulford found at a flea market in New York.

MINNEAPOLIS, MN, SEPTEMBER 7, 2011

The fifth exhibition in the MIA's contemporary photography series, "New Pictures," features works by conceptual artist Jason Fulford. For "New Pictures 5," Fulford offers his latest iteration of *The Mushroom Collection*—a project inspired by a set of photographs of mushrooms that a friend found at a flea market. His project at the MIA will include a selection of the found pictures alongside 40 of his original photographs and videos in the museum's Linda and Lawrence Perlman Gallery (262). Additionally, Fulford will interact with the MIA's permanent collection by distributing pictures of mushrooms throughout the museum. The installation will be on view from October 21, 2011, through April 8, 2012.

In his book, *For the Birds* (1981), avant-garde musician, thinker, and mycologist, John Cage, wrote, "It's useless to pretend to know mushrooms. They escape your erudition. [The more you know them] the less sure you feel about identifying them."

Fulford's pictures appear to be unremarkable shots of commonplace objects, people, and places. A closer look reveals humorous and subtle oddities: a crane lifting two ladders; a natural sea-plant casting a multicolor shadow; a happy trio running toward a cave as if in a travel advertisement. Instead of singular, heroic photographs, Fulford's images

reveal themselves through repetition, sequences, and relationships among form and shadow, abstraction and realism.

In addition to the works in the exhibition, Fulford will situate a number of his mushroom photographs and thought-provoking juxtapositions of objects in galleries throughout the museum. A specially printed, limited-edition booklet will be available in the gallery to provide visitors an opportunity to take a self-guided tour. His interactions with the permanent collection will include Harriet Goodhue Hosmer's *Medusa*, which will gaze at museum visitors through a mirror; John Vassos' *RCA Victor Special* portable phonograph will play The Fall's album *The Nation's Saving Grace*; Marcello Nizzoli's *Olivetti Lettera 32* portable typewriter will type out a list of nicknames; and Dieter Roth's *Bok 4(a)* will win a prize.

"The Mushroom Collection" first appeared in an Amsterdam storefront in late 2010. Inside, hidden among the furniture, were objects and prints related to Fulford's book, *The Mushroom Collector*. Visiting artists presented lectures and performances during the exhibition. The project also appeared this year in the form of a one-day darkroom at Dexter Sinister, in New York, and in the form of a scavenger hunt at ARTBOOK @ Paper Chase in Los Angeles.

Fulford, who holds a bachelor's degree from Pratt Institute, now lives and works in San Francisco. He is a co-founder of the publishing house J&L Books and the author of several books, including *Sunbird* (2000), *Crushed* (2003), *Raising Frogs for \$\$\$* (2006), and *The Mushroom Collector* (2010). His work has been exhibited in New York, Seattle, Atlanta, Kansas City, Copenhagen, and Budapest. "New Pictures 5" is Fulford's first museum exhibition.

"New Pictures 5: Jason Fulford, *The Mushroom Collection*" is organized by David E. Little, curator and head of the MIA's Department of Photography & New Media. Fulford's remix in the galleries is co-organized with the MIA's Minnesota Artists Exhibition Program coordinator, Christopher Atkins.

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