

Experience Report:
20th International Fungi & Fibre Symposium

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The 20th International Fungi & Fiber Symposium took place from 12th to 19th January 2025 in the Dominican Convent in Teror (Gran Canaria, Spain) and was highly anticipated for mycological enthusiasts and professionals alike. It brought together artists, scientists, and hobbyists from around the globe, all eager to share their experience with fungal colorants and learn from one another.

The symposium featured several keynote presentations and interactive workshops that provided insights into a variety of topics, e.g. *Cortinarius* spp. and their colorful pigments. Well-known artists and authors shared their experiences about printing, weaving, staining, tinting and laking firsthand. As an invited speaker, I gave a talk titled "Let's Try Mycelium for Color!", in honor of the late Miriam C. Rice and her book "Let's Try Mushrooms for Color!" that was published in 1974 and laid the foundation for this event series and the whole community evolving around mushroom dyes. I showcased our research about the orange laetiporic acids synthesized by *Laetiporus sulphureus* (chicken of the woods) and the yellow pigment hispidin, which is produced by *Inonotus hispidus* (shaggy bracket) and displayed actual samples at the summit's exhibition. The confectionary and wool I brought were colored with *Laetiporus sulphureus* mycelium, which was cultivated in liquid nutrition medium. This approach enables the production of pigments from mushrooms on a larger scale, making them available to a broader audience in the future.

I am very grateful that I was able to share our results with the international community of mushroom dyers and fuel the dialog between science and application. Throughout the week, I connected to incredible artists and scientists from all over the world, each and every one motivated by the incredible colors mushrooms have to offer and their potential to replace petrochemically synthesized dyes. The organizers, Palma Christian and her team, did an exceptional job coordinating the event, ensuring that all attendees felt welcome on the island and spoiled us with concerts, culture and delicious local food. Staying at a convent in the mountains of the Canary Islands really was an extraordinary once-in-a-lifetime experience. At last, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the International Mushroom Dye Institute for the generous travel grant, as I would not have been able to attend the symposium without it. Thank you!

More details about the research presented at the symposium are published here:

Bergmann, Pia, et al. "Pilot-scale production of the natural colorant laetiporic acid, its stability and potential applications." *Fermentation* 8.12 (2022): 684.

<https://doi.org/10.3390/fermentation8120684>

Bergmann, Pia, et al. "Cultivation of *Inonotus hispidus* in stirred tank and wave bag bioreactors to produce the natural colorant hispidin." *Fermentation* 8.10 (2022): 541.

<https://doi.org/10.3390/fermentation8100541>