



Mycorest

Wool Biorituals

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This proposal features the co-design of a wool-felted funerary urn integrating locally discarded wool, mycelium, and bio-design principles, with the purpose of innovating Land-based biorituals that reflect the Arctic cycle of life and death. The proposal aims to highlight how sustainable burial practices using wool can nourish the earth whilst fostering ecological connection. The proposal, initially intended as a burial vessel for beloved animal companions, aims to expand into human funerary vessels.

The project emerged through the designer's interest in biomaterials and discarded fibre. The process was an act of reflection: are there new ways of relating to the more-than-human world? This project is rooted in Land-Based knowledge of wool and mushrooms and material sensitivity.

The co-design process engaged two designers who interpreted fungal forms, organic shapes, and the wavy lines of wool fibres into the form of a funerary urn (Figure 1). Samples of sterilised wool+mycelium were developed at the biolab of the Art and Design Faculty, inoculated with the Oyster mushroom species (*Pleurotus ostreatus*), and nurtured with moisture and warmth to support mycelium colonisation. The co-designing process included sessions to sketch, research, create sewing patterns, test wool fabrics and design the compartment to hold the mycelium pad (Figure 2).

◀ **FIGURE 1.** Urn sewing pattern and raw wool.
Photographs: Fabiola Hernández Cervantes, 2025.

▼ **FIGURE 2.** Wool urn proposal design, prototype.
Photograph: Fabiola Hernández Cervantes, 2025.

► **FIGURE 3.** Illustration of burial and growth processes. Drawings: Fabiola Hernández Cervantes, 2025.



▼ **FIGURE 4.** Microscope close-up of mycelium and wool fibres; sample under glass dome. Photographs: Fabiola Hernández Cervantes, 2025.



The idea for this funerary urn is to promote new biorituals rooted in the Land. These biorituals would encompass a series of steps and acts that could go as follows:

- a. The person mourning the deceased places the ashes in the empty woollen vessel and closes it with the lid.
- b. The lid contains a mycelium pad of mushroom spores grown on raw, sterilised wool in a fruiting-body phase. This lid provides enough space for the mushroom to grow when the vessel is buried.
- c. After a few weeks, the urn (containing the cremated remains) decomposes in the ground, supporting the growth of fungi and completing the cycle of life (Figure 3).

Materials and techniques

1. Sewing patterns, thick wool fabric.
2. Discarded wool from Kainuun Harma and Finn-sheep fleece.
3. Biolaboratory tools that included an incubation tent or box, mini greenhouse, thermometer, sterilised gloves, and a spray bottle, among other things.

As an experimental project, we encountered many challenges. At the testing phase, we realized it was difficult to keep track of the progress daily; the moisture levels had to be kept continuously (Figure 4). Unfortunately, the inoculated pads dried after a few weeks, and during the final phase we were unable to bury the vessel due to the freezing temperatures in the Arctic; when the vessel was ready, the mycelium pads needed to be grown again. The outcomes and challenges are reflected in detail in the account written by Arrafiani (2025).

Mycorest aims to reframe death as a soft passage and return to the soil that births new life. The term bioritual refers to the combination of biological processes and death care rituals. Mycelium symbolises decay, renewal, and connection to unseen life networks; whereas wool represents warmth, community, and human care.

References

- Arrafiani, F. R. (2025). *Living wool: Co-creating with mycelium and wool in sustainable practice*. [Master's thesis, University of Lapland]. Lauda. <https://lauda.ulapland.fi/handle/10024/66879>