
ILLUSTRATING FUNGI — 4

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PAINTING FUNGI WITH GOUACHE — Part 2

For this article I have chosen to illustrate it with a painting on a coloured background instead of white, because I think that this shows the versatility of gouache to its best advantage. The picture features a family of *Agaricus silvicola*, which was growing near pine trees at the bottom of a garden.

If it appeals to you to try painting with gouache, you may find the choice of colours rather bewildering when you come to look at a colour chart in an art-shop. Notice in the chart that each colour is graded according to its degree of permanence to light. 'AA' means 'absolutely permanent'; 'A' infers 'reasonable permanence'; 'B' is 'moderately permanent'; but colours marked with a 'C' are fugitive colours and should be avoided altogether.

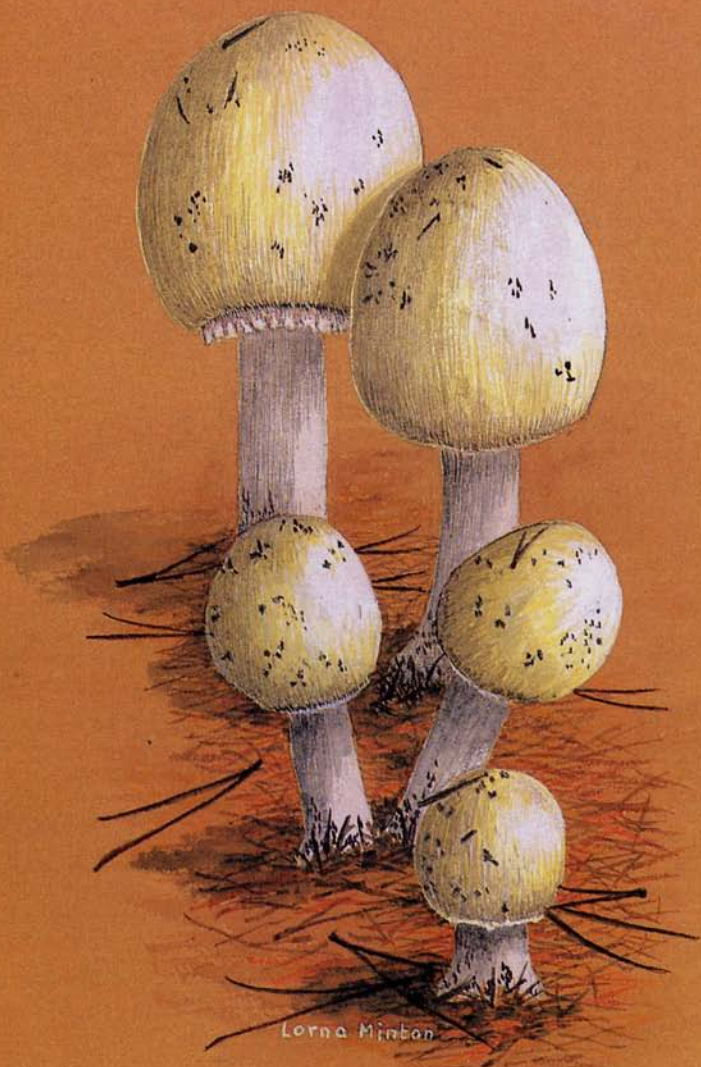
Some pigments used in the manufacture of paints are more expensive than others, and this is reflected in the price of the tube. 'Series 1' paints are in the cheapest price bracket, whilst 'Series 2, 3, 4 and 5' colours become progressively more expensive. Since many of the colours in each colour band are very similar, it is sensible to choose ones which are marked with an 'AA' or 'A' for permanence, and 'Series 1' for economy. Do not be tempted to buy an introductory boxed set of colours, because the manufacturers always include two or three useless colours in these. It is far better to make your own selection and, as a guide, the following colours will be enough to get you started. They have been taken from the Winsor and Newton list of 'Designers Gouache', and at the time of going to press these are about £1.50 per tube:

**Spectrum Yellow; Alizarin Crimson; Spectrum Red; Ultramarine;
Oxide of Chromium (green); Burnt Umber; Indigo; Zinc White.**

Gouache paints are sometimes referred to as 'Body Colours', and, because they are water-soluble, they can also be mixed with pure water-colours to give them more 'body' or covering power. So if you already possess water-colours, and do not want the additional expense of buying a range of tubes of gouache, try buying just one tube of **Zinc White**, and mix this with your water-colours. Naturally the white will lighten any colour which you have mixed, but you will find out how well the colour covers the paper, and thus what is meant by 'body colour'.

The illustration accompanying this article was painted using colours from the above list, and the paper was fawn 'Canson Paper'. Because the shape of these fungi was quite simple and the colouring almost featureless, it was important to emphasise the roundness of the caps. This was done by adding fairly strong colour to the shadow side, and fading this shadow gradually until just pure white paint was used on the highlight side. The same technique was also applied to the stipes, but extra shadow was also needed at the top of each stipe under the cap, and together these darker areas help to give the painting its three-dimensional feel. To complete the painting, a little bit of habitat was suggested, and the colours used here are 'Burnt Umber', mixed with a touch of 'Alizarin Crimson' to give a little warmth.

In the next article, I will discuss essential equipment for the mycologist/painter, together with some useful accessories.



Lorna Minbon