

Psychedelics and Art Therapy:

Building a Bridge Between Two Worlds

American Art Therapy Association 55th Conference
Paper Presentation

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Introductions



Close-up of Alex Grey's Godself

Objectives

- Attendees will identify 3 benefits and 3 risks of using psychedelics in therapy.
- Attendees will differentiate among psychedelic preparation, psychedelic administration and psychedelic integration.
- Attendees will list 3 applications for working with client using psychedelics.

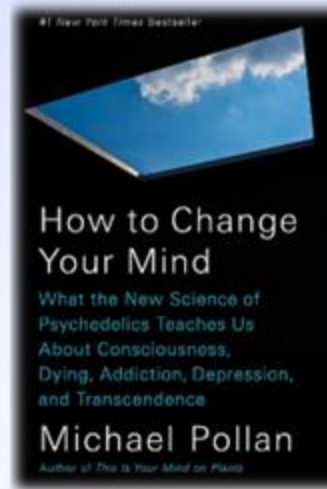
Our Aspirations

- Give you familiarity with the world of psychedelics and how they're being used in therapy.
- How this might help with your clients
- How you might begin to see how art therapy can fit into this work

Psychedelic “Renaissance”



Legalization
Decriminalization



Michael Pollan's book
and Netflix series



Been Around for Years
Maria Sabina Mazatec Mexico
Psilocybin Mushrooms



For Millennia



Psychedelics Science Conference
June 2023 13,000+ attendees



What Next?

Why NOSC and How to Achieve Them?

How

- Breathwork
- Meditation
- Fasting
- Ecstatic Dance
- Psychoactive Substances

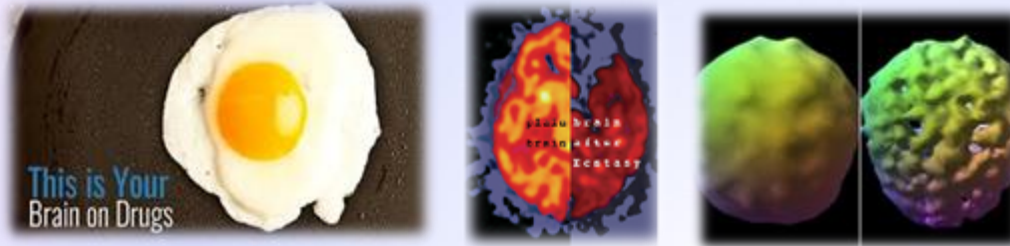


Martina Hoffmann
Lysergic Summer Dream

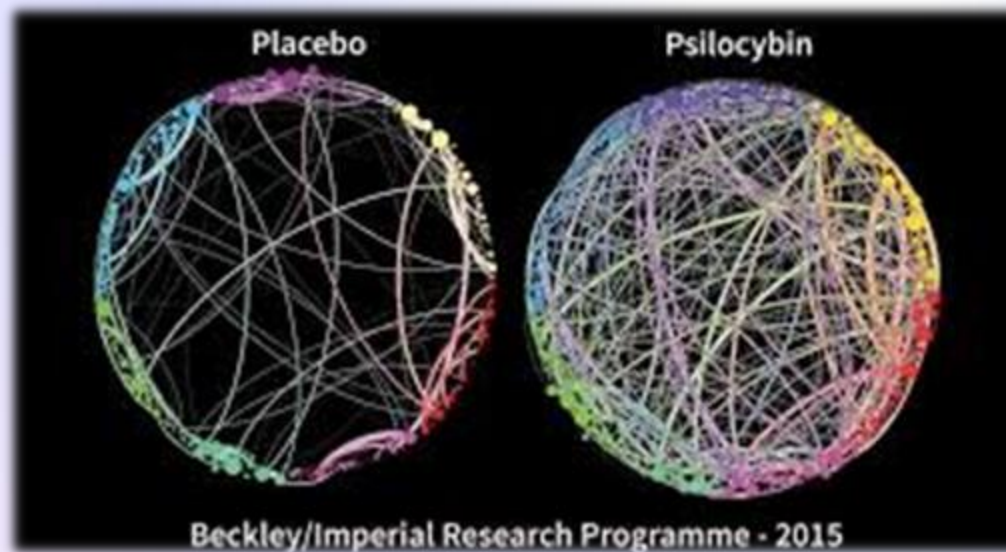
Why

- Expand Consciousness and Self Development
- Enhance Creativity & Problem Solving
- Induce Spiritual or Religious Experiences
- Diversion
- Escape Reality
- Address Trauma, Depression and Other Mental Health Concerns

The Brain on Psychedelics



Old Tropes



New Model

- Serotonin Increase
- Decreased DMN Activity
- Dampening of Fear Responses
- Neurogenesis
- Increased neuroplasticity

Effects of Psychedelics

“Therapy on Steroids”



- Dissociation/detachment
- Ego dissolution
- Altered visual perceptions
- Altered sense of time
- Revisiting the past
- Mystical Experiences

Risks of Psychedelics/NOSC



- Adverse physiological reactions
- Death
- Psychotic break
- Challenging experiences/“Bad Trips”
- Therapist/facilitator abuse
- Spiritual bypass
- No response
- Experiences not integrated
- Difficulty integrating back into “The matrix”
- Relapse of symptoms
- Contraindication with other medicines

Why Trauma-Informed is Crucial

- Recognizing the widespread impact of trauma on mental, emotional, and physical well-being.
- Preparation sessions are key
- Discuss safety, boundaries , consent and touch in advance
- Know your clients' triggers
- Duration of session is longer
- Greater possibility one has a trauma history
- More vulnerable with in a NOSC
- Create a safe environment and connection
- Cultural sensitivity
- Medical considerations
- Ongoing training
- Promote empowerment before a journey



Charmaine Husum

Harm Reduction

- **Harm Reduction Focus:** Focuses on minimizing negative consequences of substance use, rather than solely promoting abstinence.
- **Safety and Integration:** Emphasizes informed consent and the importance of integrating lessons learned after the psychedelic experience.
- **Prevents Overuse:** Helps prevent dependency by focusing on the opportunity for expansive healing that continues after the session through integration, inner healing and growth.
- **Balancing Risks:** While psychedelics aren't considered addictive, the desire for heightened experiences can be, making harm reduction essential.
- **Resisting Commercialization:** Harm reduction shifts the focus from ongoing medicine use to long-term personal growth and healing.

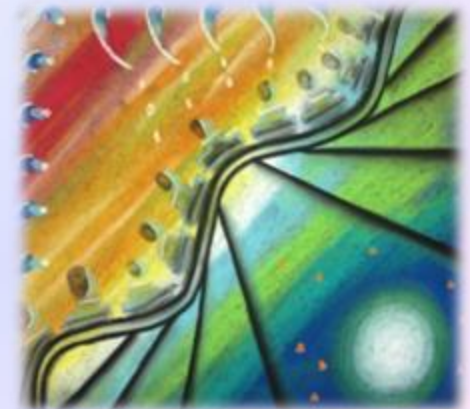


Charmaine Husum
Angelic Guidance

***The therapist does not advocate for or against
the use of psychedelics***

Working within Transpersonal and Spiritual Psychology

- **Deep Self-Exploration:** Facilitates deeper understanding of the subconscious and spiritual self.
- **Enhanced Healing:** Promotes emotional and psychological healing through transformative states.
- **Inner Empowerment:** Activates the "inner healer" for self-reliance and growth.
- **Holistic Integration:** Addresses mind, body, and spirit for comprehensive healing.
- **Creative Processing:** Uses art therapy to help integrate and express psychedelic experiences.
- **Reduced Dependency:** Encourages connection with the medicine's spirit, minimizing substance reliance.
- **Lasting Transformation:** Supports long-term change by tapping into inner healing resources.



Charmaine Husum

Indigenous Ceremonial vs. Western Medical Perspectives

1. Healing Scope
2. Role of the Facilitator
3. Ceremonial Structure



Spiritual interaction in indigenous Ceremonies

- Spiritual interactions are seen as essential to the healing experience.

Westernized uses of psychedelic Medicine

- Emphasizes psychological and therapeutic benefits without the same degree of spiritual engagement.

Impact of the Psychedelic Renaissance on Indigenous Communities

Negative Consequences

- Cultural Appropriation and Misrepresentation
- Economic Exploitation
- Legal and Ethical Issues
- Impact on Indigenous Knowledge and Practices

Potential Positive Impact

- Sharing Cultural Wisdom
- Encouraging Initiatives to Protect and Preserve Traditions
- Cross-cultural Dialogue About Mental Health, Spirituality, & Healing,



Psychedelic Landscape

- Decriminalization
- Legalization
- Difference in access?
- Where these drugs are coming from?
- How are they grown/Sustainability?
- Natural versus lab (man made?) Is it the same?
- FDA rejection of MDMA
- Underground/Overground



Treat California Team

Ethical Implications

Variables:

- Touch
- Informed consent
- Time boundaries
- Access



Rebecca Wilkinson Response to NOSC

Barriers/Limitations

- Stigma/bias around use of psychedelics
- Many of the medicines are still illegal
- Fear of reprisal
- Wariness in minority cultures
- Cultural appropriation
- Expensive
- Access
- Time consuming
- Disruptive
- Can be physiologically demanding
- Inadequate preparation and integration
- Unethical practitioners

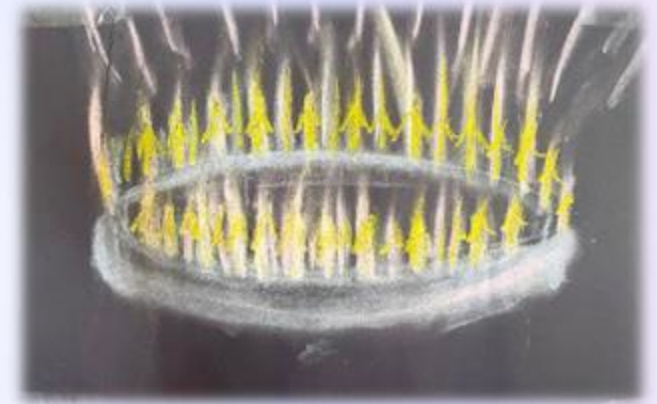


Charmaine Husum

Set and Setting

Each is unique and can vary widely depending on factors such as:

- Set (the individual mindset, personality, and mood of the person at the time of taking the medicine) - we will discuss more later
- Setting (the physical, social, and cultural setting in which the journey is taking place)
- Medicine and dosage
- Expectations and Intentions



Amelia Laver Preparation for a Journey

Safety, Safety, Safety!

Phases of Psychedelic Work

Preparation ~ Journey ~ Integration



History of Art, Psychedelics & Non-Ordinary States of Consciousness

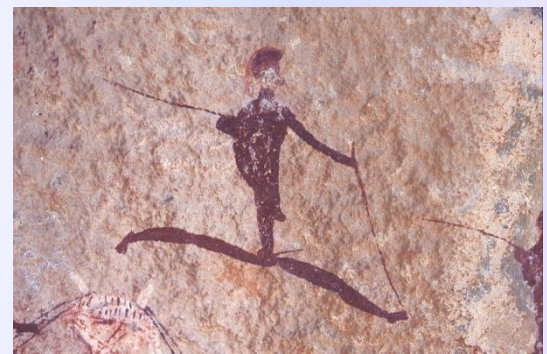
Throughout history, artists, mystics, and shamans have explored non-ordinary states through various means, including ritual, dance, prayer, meditation, and the use of psychoactive substances.



Renaissance and Baroque Art: Visions of Saints:
Caravaggio depicting saints' ecstasies, Galleria
Borghese in Rome.



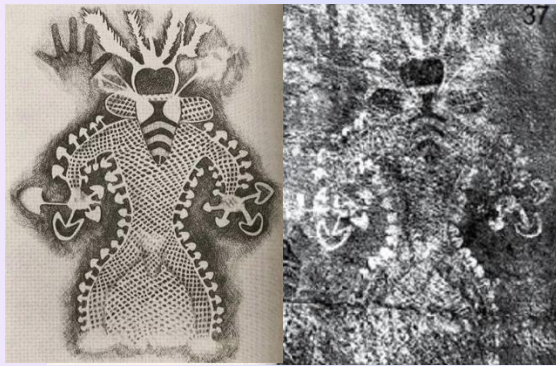
San Rock Art (Drakensberg Mountains, Southern
Africa): Depicting trance dances and shamanistic
rituals.



Chauvet Caves in France: Hallucinations
believed to be created through Hypoxia

History of Art, Psychedelics & Non-Ordinary States of Consciousness

Cave Art from around the world from as early as 36,000 years ago exemplifies this.



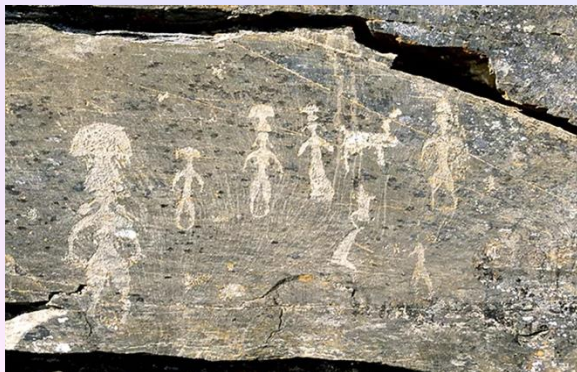
Tassili n'Ajjer Cave Art (Algeria):
4700 BC



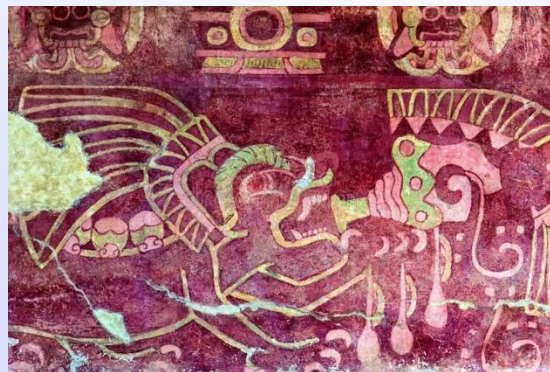
Indigenous American Rock Art:
Datura wrightii flower



Mesoamerican Mushroom-Human Stone
Figurines, circa 3000



Siberia, 2000 yrs old: dubbed "Fly
Agaric People"



Temple Carvings and Murals at
Teotihuacan MX.



Eastern Spain, Selva Pascuala:
6000- 8000 years old

Art and Art Therapy In PAT

- Freud
- Jung
- Grof
- Kellogg
- Krippner
- Janiger & Dobkin De Rios



Joan Kellogg



Stan Grof Oceanic Womb



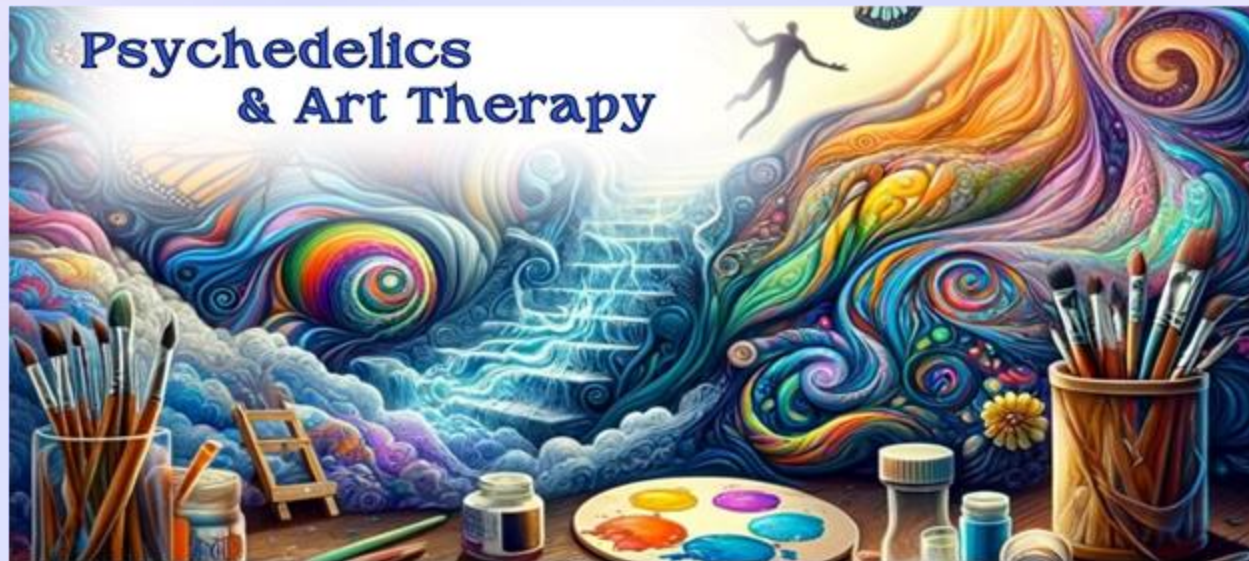
Alex Grey's Portrait of Grof

What Art Therapy Contributes

- Promotes Neurogenesis
- Extends the liminal state
- Captures the ineffable
- Externalizes internal experience
- Presents the gestalt
- Provides dialogue with different aspects of the self
- Connects one to their Inner Healer
- Access to the personal and collective experience
- Rich metaphorical content supports meaning making in integration
- Enhances other theoretical approaches
- Creates a meaningful thread through the different phases of psychedelic experiences
- Documents the process and experience for future reference
- Promotes creativity



Future Directions



- Teach Art Therapists Effective Ways to Work with Psychedelics And NOSC
- Teach Psychedelic Therapists About the Benefits of Art Therapy
- Train Psychedelic Therapists to Use Art Safely and Ethically In PAT
- Publish On Psychedelic Art Therapy
- Research Combining Art Therapy with Psychedelics
- Promote the Profession of Art Therapy as an Imperative Component of PAT

Questions & Resources



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Resources & References