

shapes formed in the water after being exposed to thoughts of love and gratitude, and the shapeless blobs that appear in response to negative thoughts. We can only imagine what impact our thoughts are having on the rest of the physical world, and our own water-based bodies.

Through the connection that joins all things, scientists have shown that the ‘stuff’ that the universe is made of—waves and particles of energy—responds and conforms to the expectations, judgments and beliefs that we create about our world. The key to awakening such an awesome power is... to make a small shift in the way we see ourselves in the universe. We must see ourselves as a part of everything, rather than separate from everything. Beyond merely thinking of ourselves from this unified view, we must feel ourselves as part of all that we experience. (Braden)

This feeling of oneness
is one of the most
commonly reported effects
of psychedelics.

Psychedelics give us an opportunity to choose the course of our own evolution, to consciously evolve--the implications of which are immense. Psychedelics prepare us for future realities by reminding us of our ancient connection to nature. They reconnect us to the beauty of our planet, compelling us to realize our place in nature and protect the environment. Psychedelics, moreover, engender thoughts of oneness, love, and gratitude, and can thereby be the catalyst to create positive physical effects on our planet. Indeed, psychedelics seem already to be accelerating the evolution of the human ecosystem. It is up to us, however, to decide what we will become, and what will become of the Earth. •

References for this essay are available on the MAPS Web site: www.maps.org

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From the **Inside Out**

Rick Harlow created the beautiful art on the cover of this Bulletin. –DJB

For the past 23 years I have been traveling to the Colombian Amazon. Much of this time I spent along the rivers Apaporis and Mitití Paraná, living with Macuna, Yucuna, and Tanimuca peoples. They taught me to feel at home and at ease in the forest, how to walk without falling down, how to hunt, fish and gather food. They taught me about the different plants, insects and animals. They showed me which ones are useful, which are dangerous and which are sacred. They told me their stories of how their world was created, stories of how they came to live there, stories that explain their relationship to all living things and their place and purpose in the web of life. Stories that contain great lessons on how to live correctly, stories of the spirits that live in the rivers, in the forest, in the underworld and in the Milky Way. They invited me to participate in their rituals, dances and sacred ceremonies. They initiated me into the tribe and gave me a new name. They introduced me to the teacher plant Yajé (*Banisteriopsis caapi*) or Ayahuasca as it is more commonly known. I was taught that this sacred plant is the umbilical cord that connects us to the cosmos.

These experiences have served as the main inspiration for my paintings. In creating these works, I do my best to paint not only what I have seen, but also what I have felt or sensed. Often, as is the case with “From the Inside Out”, I combine observed landscape imagery with visions revealed to me during Ayahuasca rituals. •



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