

Exploring Ayahuasca at Psychedelic Science 2013

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PSYCHEDELIC SCIENCE 2013 WILL HOST the largest international gathering in history of researchers in the field of ayahuasca, reflecting a virtual explosion of both scholarly and popular interest in the nature, effects, and uses of ayahuasca and its components.

Thanks to the organizing efforts of Bia Labate of the Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas in Aguascalientes, Mexico, the conference will feature 25 research presentations, a full-day post-conference ayahuasca workshop, a film presentation and discussion, and a community gathering to discuss current questions regarding the safety, ethics, and commercialization of ayahuasca use in spiritual tourism and the cultural appropriation of ayahuasca in the West.

International speakers on ayahuasca will include Gabor Maté, MD, the Hungarian-born Canadian physician specializing in the study and treatment of addiction; Sidarta Ribeiro, PhD, Brazilian neuroscientist and Director of the Brain Institute at the Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Norte; his colleague Dráulio de Araujo, PhD, a specialist in brain imaging; Jacques Mabit, MD, French director of the Takiwasi Center in Tarapoto, dedicated to developing and testing an ayahuasca-based approach to drug rehabilitation and related research on traditional healing practices; and clinical psychologist José Carlos Bouso, PhD, of the Human Experimental Neuropsychopharmacology group in Barcelona.

Other scheduled presentations by scholars and researchers from multiple disciplines will showcase a wide range of scientific and humanistic approaches to the biochemistry, cognitive psychology, anthropology, ethnology, history, and therapeutic potential of ayahuasca. Of particular importance will be presentations—some for the first time—of new

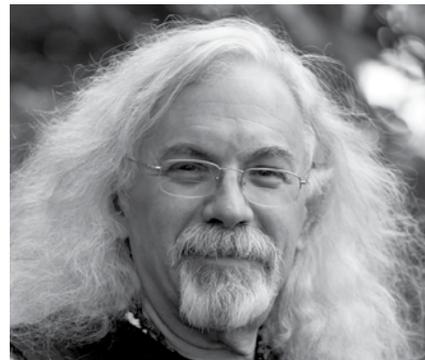
research from South America and of the ongoing work of young and rising scholars in the field.

Particular attention will be paid to claims of the potential of ayahuasca for the treatment of addiction and problematic substance use, with a full third of the presentations—a full day—devoted in whole or in part to the subject. Additional presentations will discuss recent epidemiological studies of mental health and self-perception among members of the ayahuasca-using Brazilian new religious movements, as well as related questions of ritual transfer, cultural translation, legal pluralism, and transnational economics.

The Ayahuasca Track will include discussions ranging from the botany, chemistry, and pharmacology of traditional ayahuasca admixture plants, to the human metabolism of ayahuasca, to the relation of ayahuasca visions to both mental imagery and dreaming. Anthropological presentations will address the nature of healing in ayahuasca's traditional mestizo and indigenous ceremonial settings.

In addition, an open community-wide forum at the conference will encourage discussion about spiritual tourism, the commodification of ayahuasca, and ways to balance risk and safety for people drinking ayahuasca in ceremonial and other contexts, especially in relatively remote settings. There will also be a premiere showing of the documentary film *AYA: Awakenings*, about the experiences of ayahuasca pilgrims in Peru.

Following the three-day conference, there will be a full-day workshop on the ethnobotany, safety, and expansion of ayahuasca, which will allow for longer, in-depth presentations and more comprehensive interactive discussion of significant questions in the anthropology,



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ethnobotany, biomedical research, and phenomenology of ayahuasca use.

Psychedelic Science 2013 promises to be tremendously exciting, and there is a plan to publish a volume of the presentations on the therapeutic potential of ayahuasca from the conference. The number of prominent scholars and researchers, their diversity of interests and approaches, and the length of time that will be available for presentations and discussions will create a unique opportunity for learning, inspiration, and networking. It should not be missed.

For more information about Psychedelic Science 2013 and to register visit psychedelicsscience.org.

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