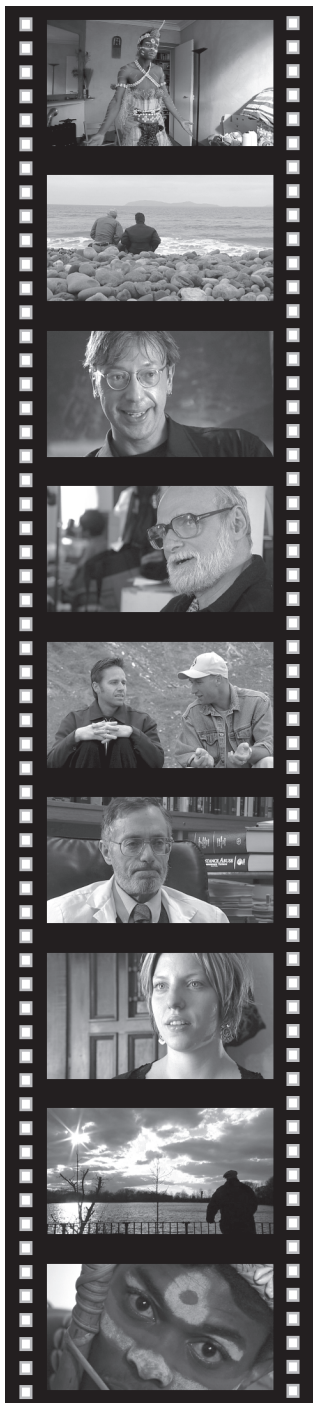




New Ibogaine Documentary an appeal for funds

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Derived from the root of the African plant *Tabernanthe iboga*, which grows in Gabon, ibogaine was originally used during initiations of the Bwiti culture. In the 1960s, the anti-addictive properties of this psychoactive substance were discovered by Howard Lotsof. Since then, ibogaine has been surrounded by controversy. The decisions about the use of ibogaine in the treatment of addiction appear to have been made on a political and economical, rather than rational basis.

I have always been very interested in addiction and other social problems. I started researching ibogaine two years ago, and developed a concept for a documentary—Retrospection on the Future—for my final exam project for the Utrecht School of the Arts in Holland. Since then the project has grown significantly, to the point where it has become a professional production. During these two years of hard work, it became clear to me that ibogaine is something people should know about. In the media, ibogaine has so far been portrayed as either a miracle cure or a dangerous hallucinogen. By showing the different aspects related to ibogaine I want to invite the viewer to form his or her own opinion on the subject.

This film project will visualize the diversity of ibogaine uses by showing personal experiences from the Iboga Therapy House in Vancouver, the Ibogaine Association in Mexico, and Sara's House in Holland, as well as the traditional initiations in Gabon. The film includes interviews with scientists, treatment providers, ex-addicts, parents and the Bwiti community. It offers an intriguing, personal insight into the lives of different addicts during their life-transforming process. Even more unique, we will show the opinion of the Bwiti people on the use of ibogaine in the Western world, something that has never been brought into the discussion around the subject.

Of the three shooting periods for the film—one in Holland and France, one in Mexico, Canada, and the U.S., and one in Africa—the first two are complete. During the first shooting period we filmed a treatment at Sara's House, close to Amsterdam. We also interviewed several people, including Howard Lotsof and the Dutch addiction expert Peter Cohen. In Paris we interviewed a famous Gabonese *Nganga* (shaman) called Mallendi, who has initiated about a thousand people so far. During the second shooting period we filmed one treatment in Mexico at the Ibogaine Association and one in Vancouver at the Iboga Therapy House. We also conducted interviews—in San Diego, Vancouver, New York, Albany, Miami, Gainesville and Sarasota—with the treatment providers Randy Hencken, Sandra Karpetas, and Eric Taub; scientists such as Stanley Glick and Kenneth Alper; ex-addicts; the father of an ex-addict; and a psychotherapist.

The shooting period in Africa is planned for July, but a lot of production work still needs to be done, and the most urgent issue is funding. We already have the cooperation of the local people; they are proud of their culture and have a lot to say to the Western world. There is a young African woman who has agreed on being filmed during her initiation. Now we need to obtain the funding to make this possible. To do that we still need about \$3500 to pay for the flights, the equipment rentals, food, and permits.

The film has become very important to addicts who want to change their lives, the people that conduct research and treatment with ibogaine, and of course myself. My goal is to distribute the film internationally, so as many people as possible will learn about this substance. Tax-deductible donations to MAPS can be made for this project. •