

new studies is headed. The medical potential of psychedelic drugs appears enormous, and they are currently being reintegrated into mainstream Western culture. This is truly a cause for celebration, and Neal Goldsmith does a marvelous job explaining this important research and tying it all together.

However, perhaps even more valuable and interesting are Goldsmith's personal story and insights, which make up a significant portion of this hard-to-put-down volume. Goldsmith's masterful blend of research summary, practical information, biographical profiles, and personal experience is delightful to read, and the book is filled with psychological and spiritual insights. I highly recommend *Psychedelic Healing* to anyone interested in the exciting field of psychedelic research and the frontiers of human psychology.

The Psilocybin Solution: The Role of Sacred Mushrooms in the Quest for Meaning
Simon G. Powell
Park Street Press, 2011, paperback,
274 pages, \$18.95

I was blown away by musician and filmmaker Simon Powell's thoughtful book about what he has learned from his visionary experiences with psychoactive mushrooms and his reflections on the biosphere. *The Psilocybin Solution* presents the best argument that I've ever read about the possibility of teleology operating in evolution, and of a higher intelligence organizing the natural world. Reading this book helped me to rethink many of my beliefs about the nature of reality, consciousness, and information. Exploding with eye-opening insights and jaw-dropping revelations about the evolution of life, I found it difficult to put this thought-provoking book down.

The ideas in *The Psilocybin Solution* are so rich and compelling, and every sentence is so eloquently written, that it is simply a joy to read and contemplate. This is truly a marvelous achievement, as writing this book— i.e., explaining the psychedelic experience, the evolution of life, consciousness, and the nature of reality—was certainly an ambitious undertaking. Powell does a masterful job at translating the grand and mysterious language of Nature into mere English symbols, and artistically articulating the shamanic voice of the Other. I think that anyone who is interested in the evolution of life and consciousness will find this book utterly fascinating.

Some other wonderful books about psychedelics that I've read recently, but don't have the space to review in this *Bulletin*, are important to mention here: Don Lattin's *The Harvard Psychedelic Club*, Richard Doyle's *Darwin's Pharmacy*, Antero Alli's *The Eight Circuit Brain*, and Ram Dass and Ralph Metzner's *Birth of a Psychedelic Culture*. My reviews of these great books are posted on Amazon.

David Jay Brown is the editor of the annual theme *MAPS Bulletins*, and author of the forthcoming book *Over the Edge of the Mind: Exploring the Interface of Psychedelics, Culture, and Consciousness*. The Spring 2012 *MAPS Bulletin*, which he is currently editing, will be devoted to Psychedelics and the Arts. It will cover how psychedelics have affected music, film, television, painting, dance, and pop culture. If you're interested in contributing, please contact David at dajabr@well.com. •



Image credit: Keana Parker

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In Loving Memory of Robert Venosa, 1936-2011

By Martina Hoffmann

AN OUTSTANDING MASTER of Visionary Art transitioned peacefully on Aug. 9, 2011. He will be remembered by an audience of many generations for his unique genius in capturing the crystalline, light-filled energy of the source. His long and brave healing journey with cancer was greatly supported by shamanic journeys with ayahwasca in the Amazon regions of South America.

Venosa experienced to lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD) for the first time in the 1960s in his Manhattan apartment while surrounded by a group of voyeurs who did not yet have the courage to partake themselves. LSD was still legal, and Robert was not afraid to stretch his mind and pituitary gland to accommodate the synesthetic merging of new concepts and visions. He felt he had become part of a liberating global revolution, the likes of which the world had never before experienced.

These experiential beginnings launched Robert onto a lifelong spiritual and artistic path that cemented his memory of the deeply transformative and healing power of psychedelics.

Throughout his life and in whichever part of the world he happened to reside, Robert felt kinship with the psychedelic community and considered many of its luminaries his friends. Amongst these friends were the archetypical psychedelic artist of the 1960s and 1970s Mati Klarwein, the renowned psychonaut Terence McKenna, the legendary Dr. Albert Hofmann, and the brilliant consciousness pioneers Stan Grof and Ralph Metzner. He had dear friends in the visionary art community, including Alex and Allyson Grey, Pablo Amaringo, and Jan Kounen, and enduring connections with shamans Louis Eduardo Luna and Kestenbetsa, to name just a few.

Awakened by his psychedelic experiences and mentored by Klarwein, Robert embarked on the path of becoming a fine artist. His accom-

plished creative and spiritual path has been beautifully recorded in three monographs, *Manas Manna* (Big O), *Noospheres* (Pomegranate Artbooks), and most recently *Illuminatus* (Fine Arts Press). *Illuminatus* features the Haiku-like poetry of Terence McKenna, probably McKenna's last published writing before his own passing in 2000.

Terrence and Robert had a special friendship that was deepened by the complementarity of their work: Venosa skillfully painted what McKenna had seen in the "hyperspace" of DMTm, and McKenna used the power of his words to describe the realms that Venosa painted. They spent special times together at each other's homes, and in 1999 Venosa presented his inspirations and views on visionary art at McKenna's AllChemical Conference in Kona, Hawaii. Here he also met fellow visionary artist Alex Grey.

Referred to by younger members of the visionary and psychedelic family as one of their seasoned "elders," Robert spoke at many conferences and events exploring human consciousness, including MindStates; the Proph-

ets Conference; Convergence, the Amazonian Shamanism Conference in Iquitos, Peru; the International Conference on Expanded States of Consciousness at the University of Cuernavaca, Mexico; as well as at Burning Man's Entheon Village and Portugal's Boom Festival. He was known to be extremely approachable, down to earth, and endowed with a great sense of humor.

My husband Robert and I have for many years been regular teachers at the Omega, Esalen, and Skyros Institutes. The exchanges that ensued between us and fellow visionary artists about the source of consciousness and its relationship to (as well as inspiration for) art were a kind of alchemy that nourished us both. Robert felt especially strongly about offering budding artists the proper support and techni-



These books and others are available

in the MAPS Store (www.maps.org/store).

All proceeds help fund MAPS' psychedelic and medical marijuana research and education.

cal tools that would enable them to create more skillful expressions of the psychedelic experience and alternative realities and perspectives.

Robert's association with MAPS and the rest of the psychedelic research community emerged through our mutual participation in their various events throughout the years. We've crossed paths many times with MAPS founder Rick Doblin at celebrations and community events all over this planet. Our annual visits to Europe brought us to meet "the good doctor" in Switzerland, and were always great highlights in our life. It was Robert's distinct pleasure to create a special portrait of Dr. Hofmann, which MAPS now uses as one of its cornerstone images connecting visionary art and psychedelic research.

Venosa's deep personal connections to the indigenous medicine community were a blessing on many levels, facilitating both his spiritual and artistic growth. Artistically,



"Portrait of Albert Hofmann" by Robert Venosa.
Oil on canvas, 35"x34", 2006.
Prints available at www.maps.org/venosa.

he was immensely inspired by the numinous quality and breathtaking visions of the "mother's realm," while his paintings took on a range of color he had never tackled before.

On a spiritual level, he experienced yet another personal renaissance. Robert was diagnosed with prostate cancer in 2003, and doctors told him he had just three months to live. The ayahuasca vine became one of his great allies in cleansing his body and strengthening his lifeline. His ayahuasca experiences helped him sort his priorities, to see what was most

essential at that point in his life, deepened his spiritual connections, and solidified his faith that there is continuation after death. Contrary to the doctors' predictions, he enjoyed another very active and full eight and a half years of life.

Thank you, Robert, for showing us all what's possible when we're unafraid to hold true to what we believe in most. •

"The role of the artist means belonging to a unique, exciting gang of outlaws. It will always be the explorers, artists, poets, curious intellectuals, musicians, and all the other existential samurai who are creatively courageous, who desire to advance their yearnings for higher truth, and who will take the leap of faith into the unknown. The art and architecture of every great, or minor, culture, was given its visual power through the artist, and, in fact, culture itself has always been defined through the artist's creativity. The artist has always been the catalyst for change."

—Robert Venosa

MAPS: WHO WE ARE

Our mission is (1) to treat conditions for which conventional medicines provide limited relief—such as posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), pain, drug dependence, anxiety and depression associated with end-of-life issues—by developing psychedelics and marijuana into prescription medicines; (2) to cure many thousands of people by building a network of clinics where treatments can be provided; and (3) to educate the public honestly about the risks and benefits of psychedelics and marijuana.

If you can even faintly imagine a cultural reintegration of the use of psychedelics and the states of mind they engender, please join MAPS in supporting the expansion of scientific knowledge in this area. Progress is possible with the support of those who care enough to take individual and collective action.

www.maps.org/donate



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Rick Doblin, Ph.D., Founder and Executive Director, earned his Ph.D. in Public Policy from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. Doblin was also in Stan and Christina Grof's first training group to receive certification as a Holotropic Breathwork practitioner.



Michael Mithoefer, M.D., Clinical Investigator/Medical Monitor is a psychiatrist practicing in Charleston, SC, where he divides his time between clinical research and outpatient clinical practice specializing in treating posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) with an emphasis on experiential methods of psychotherapy. He is a certified Holotropic Breathwork Facilitator and trained in EMDR and Internal Family Systems Therapy.



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Valerie Mojeiko, Deputy Director, earned her B.A. from the California Institute of Integral Studies. In her work with MAPS' psychedelic harm reduction project, she has trained over 200 volunteers with skills for helping people who are undergoing psychedelic emergencies.



Brian Brown, MAPS Development Associate studied medical anthropology and visual culture at the University of California, Santa Cruz where he researched social prospects for psychedelics using a community centered approach. Brian is now developing MAPS' membership base by assisting with education and outreach efforts.



Kynthia Brunette, Volunteer Coordinator has a B.A. in Political Science, an M.S. in Human Computer Interaction, and a lifelong interest in models of personality and development. Her interests have evolved over the years into a fascination with the design of institutions, organizations, and experiences that serve as vehicles for transpersonal growth.



Brad Burge, M.A., Director of Communications, earned his B.A. in Communication and Psychology from Stanford University in 2005 and his M.A. in Communication from the University of California, San Diego in 2009. His graduate work focused on the political, scientific, and cultural changes required to make illicit drugs into legitimate medicines.



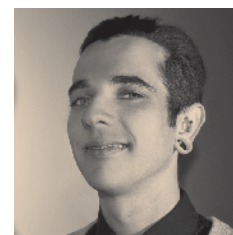
Shannon Clare, Receptionist, majored in Cultural Anthropology at the University of California, Santa Cruz and is now training in Integral Counseling Psychology at the California Institute for Integral Studies (CIIS). She values curiosity, communication, and creating community.



Amy Emerson, Clinical Program Manager, earned her B.S. in genetics and cell biology from Washington State University. She has worked in clinical development and research for the last 15 years in the fields of immunology, oncology, and in vaccine development. Amy has worked with MAPS as a volunteer since 2003 facilitating the development of the MDMA clinical program.



Ilsa Jerome, Research and Information Specialist, earned a Ph.D. in psychology from the University of Maryland. She helps MAPS and other researchers design studies, gathers information on study drugs by keeping abreast of the current literature and discussion with other researchers, creates and maintains documents related to MAPS-supported studies, and helps support the MAPS psychedelic literature bibliography.



Josh Mojeiko, Director of Finance and Information Technology, earned his B.A. in Philosophy and Religion from New College of Florida and is a chef, musician, poet, and technologist. He immensely enjoys the depths of existential experience.



Linnae Ponté, Executive and Clinical Research Assistant, earned her BA in Biological Psychology from New College of Florida. She's assisted data collection and analysis at University of South Florida's Cardiovascular Psychophysiology Laboratory, MOTE Marine Mammal Aquarium Psychophysical Laboratory, East-West College of Natural Medicine, and the West Mamprusi Civic Union in Ghana, West Africa.



Brian Wallace, Director of Field Development, studied neuroscience, philosophy, and medical sociology at Cabrillo College and UC Santa Cruz. Before coming to MAPS, Brian was a naturalist, outdoor educator, and certified Wilderness-EMT. Brian assists individual supporters in identifying and cultivating their own capacity to give. He also coordinates artist relations and artwork sales.



Berra Yazar-Klosinski, Clinical Research Associate, earned her Ph.D. in Molecular, Cell, and Developmental Biology from University of California Santa Cruz, where she also served as president of the Graduate Student Association. After attending Stanford University, she worked as a Research Associate with Geron Corporation and Millennium Pharmaceuticals.



Virginia Wright, Director of Marketing and Development brings a wealth of fundraising experience to MAPS. Her firm Wright & Associates has provided strategic thinking, marketing, and fundraising services to arts organizations and cities throughout Northern California and Nevada. She received her B.A. in International Relations from San Francisco State University, and her M.B.A. from Santa Clara University.