

From the Desk of Rick Doblin, Ph.D.

This issue of the Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies (MAPS) *Bulletin* is our 13th special theme edition, starting in 2000 with our special issue on Psychedelics and Creativity. Given how profoundly public policy has influenced the field of psychedelic research, it's somewhat surprising that it's taken us this long to focus on Psychedelics and Policy. Now, with psychedelics and medical marijuana clearly moving back into the mainstream, we feel the time has come to take a broad, multidisciplinary look at current opportunities and challenges for psychedelic and marijuana policy in the early 21st century.

I began my policy work in 1984, when the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) first moved to criminalize MDMA. When I learned of their plans, I traveled to DEA headquarters in Washington, D.C., to file paperwork requesting a DEA Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) hearing to protect the legal therapeutic use of MDMA. We won the lawsuit, but the ALJ's recommendation was rejected by the DEA Administrator. I founded MAPS the following year, in 1986, to begin the work of going through the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the only route still available to restoring MDMA's use in therapy, even though—at the time—the FDA was also blocking all MDMA research.

For several decades beginning in the early 1970s, U.S. government policy (followed by almost all governments around the world) was to prevent all psychedelic research. That changed in 1992 when the FDA decided to prioritize science over politics and open the door to scientifically rigorous research into psychedelics and marijuana. An article in the Summer 1992 *MAPS Bulletin* (Volume 3, No. 3) describes the historic meeting at which the FDA changed its policy, in response to a protocol submitted by MAPS to study the use of MDMA-assisted psychotherapy in cancer patients experiencing anxiety about death.

While MAPS' psychedelic research is currently proceeding without regulatory obstructions in the U.S. and around the world, our medical marijuana drug development research is

still fundamentally obstructed by federal policies protecting the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) monopoly on the supply of marijuana for research. In contrast, MAPS has its own legal DEA-licensed supply of MDMA for research; we also obtained a legal supply of psilocybin for a planned study of psilocybin for obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), and used LSD licensed by Swissmedic for our completed study in Switzerland.

Once the policies blocking privately funded medical marijuana drug development research are ended, MAPS and other organizations will be able to make much more progress. When the science is conducted without political interference, we will be able to collect the safety and efficacy data required by the FDA to evaluate their approval for prescription use. The Compassionate Access, Research Expansion and Respect States (CARERS) Act, a new bipartisan Senate bill originally sponsored by Sen. Cory Booker (D-NJ), Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), and Rand Paul (R-KY), is focused in part on ending the NIDA monopoly and the redundant, obstructive Public Health Service review process for medical marijuana research (see article page 6).

The FDA's approval of the prescription use of any psychedelic or marijuana will initiate a series of policy discussions about how to regulate these drugs as medicines. Policy questions to be evaluated and decided will include: (a) what types of training will be required of prescribers, (b) in what settings will the prescriptions be permitted (different policies will be required for psychedelics, which will be used under therapist supervision, than for marijuana, which will be a take-home drug), (c) how the drug will be manufactured and distributed to reduce drug diversion, (d) how will off-label prescriptions be monitored, (e) what total number of uses will be permitted for each patient, (f) will a patient registry will be created, (g) how will advertising and marketing be regulated, and a host of other questions.

Policy also impacts psychedelics and psychedelic users in

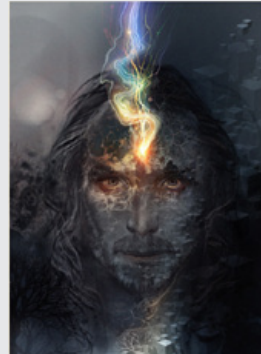
the area of non-medical uses. This includes laws surrounding religious freedom and cognitive liberty, since limiting legal access of psychedelics to people with a psychiatric diagnosis is too limited; so many people can benefit from psychedelics regardless of whether they have a formal psychiatric illness. We also desperately need policy reform regarding the provision of psychedelic harm reduction services at festivals, clubs, and other group settings since the RAVE Act criminalizes harm reduction services and threatens those providing such services with prosecution and asset forfeiture. The RAVE Act has directly impacted MAPS' work by reducing some festival organizers, concert promoters, and club owners' willingness to work with the Zendo Project (zendoproject.org; also see article page 32).

In 2015, MAPS' 29th year, our culture is actively reviewing and reforming policies regarding psychedelics and marijuana. We are grateful and fortunate to include in this edition of the *MAPS Bulletin* so many timely and thoughtful articles from some of the advocates, researchers, policymakers, and writers helping to nurture this long-awaited cultural shift. To keep psychedelic and medical marijuana policy moving forward, please consider continuing and deepening your support of MAPS in this time of historic opportunity.



Rick Doblin

Rick Doblin, Ph.D.
MAPS Founder and Executive Director



Android Jones

COVER ARTIST

Title: *March Fourth*
by Android Jones
Materials: Electro-Mineralism

Android Jones' pictorial work is one strain of a larger project that he calls "Electro-Mineralist Art." Moving "beyond the traditional organic vegetable and animal technologies of pencils, ink, and brushes," Android takes up emergent technologies that are crystalline, metallic, electronic, and digital in their materiality and aesthetic feel, implicating a historical scheme that echoes the integral view of planetary evolution from physiosphere to biosphere to noosphere to theosphere; where the techno-media of exhibition artworks have been, by and large, as the artist says, bound to or associated with the biologic. Android is classically trained in academic drawing and painting and this traditional art background is the foundation through which he bridges the knowledge of the past and brings it into the future. For a post-postmodern art of high noospheric and theospheric expression, Android instead upgrades to more resonate noospheric vehicles; where the crystalline or "mineralist," proper to the physiosphere, is recovered as a marginalized inorganic principle for the artistic celebration of the energies of life.

The content of these marvelous works ranges vastly from the cosmic to the micro, from tantric beloved to sacred civics, from expansions of consciousness to reconfigurations of our three bodies. The pictorial syntax is at the very least proper to a teal register; a collage mode descending from synthetic cubism. Subtle radiance and causal voids abound throughout.

Honoring the history of art, the mystical projects of the later Dalí come to mind, Android taps into pre-modern, modernist, and post-modernist aesthetic idioms, advancing an Electro-Mineralist Art as Integral Alchemy.

—Michael Schwartz, January 2014

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