

## A GROUNDING SPACE IN PSYCHEDELIC FESTIVALS

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In 2006, when I went to Boom Festival to work at Cosmikiva Sanctuary Project, I had just finished a degree in anthropology about the psychedelic festivals happening in Brazil, called “Psychedelic Festivals in the Planetary Era”<sup>2</sup>. The research was about the relation between trance music, dance and psychoactive substances in psychedelic festivals.

During the research I observed that in Brazil there was a small group of people starting to work in harm reduction in big parties and only in two festivals, there was healing areas where they gave support to people to process their difficulties or challenges experiences. The experience of working in this healing area made me think about the importance of having people prepared to provide a safe space for people under the influence of psychoactive substances. And that was why I decided to be a part of the group working at Cosmikiva Sanctuary.

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**COSMIKIVA SANCTUARY – BOOM FESTIVAL 2006**

The Cosmikiva Project is a community service that provides a safe space at large festivals and events for people having difficulties experiences while under the influence of

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<sup>2</sup> [http://www.neip.info/downloads/ana\\_flavia/tese\\_mes\\_ana.pdf](http://www.neip.info/downloads/ana_flavia/tese_mes_ana.pdf)

psychedelic substances and other psychoactive substances. As well as a place to share information and engage dialogue about psychoactive and their potential uses and effects.

The exchange of information that Cosmikiva provided to a group of people from different countries, all with an interest in psychoactive substances was an amazing experience. The group was composed by psychiatrists, psychologists, therapists, healers, scientists related to researches, etc.

We had training before the festival started, but during the process it was a challenge to all the professionals involved, because there were a lot of participants who mixed big amounts of substances and this behavior causes unexpected experiences. So, to deal with many different kinds of difficulty experiences we had to work hard as a team and this was something new to everybody.

The groups worked eight hours a day and each one had a coordinator. During the festival there was a few moments where the pressure got very high to everybody because some people that came in were having experiences of bad trips that took too long to end. In three cases we had the same guys, from Israel, coming back in states of suffering or in pain because they mixed a lot of substances and in the end of the festival they still tripping high. They were completely lost and when the party was over they didn't know where to go or what to do. In only a few cases we had people that had lost everything; their clothes, their documents, their friends. In cases of rupture with reality, their minds were completely confused and nothing we said or do to help was sufficient.

In the end of the festival, the group was very tired but also very satisfied with the exchange we had as a team and also because we had a good feedback from the people who came in during the festival having difficult experiences. They answered a feedback paper with their experiences and most of them were thankful to the help they found out there. So, to hear that the job we did made a difference when they were in bad trips, and that we helped a lot, to change a bad trip into a nice one, this was the gift for the group.

This project was only possible to happen now, because we are in the planetary era, where we can have people from many different countries working together in a project related to psychoactive substances. So this is something new happening in the XXI century and it has values that goes beyond boundaries and gives another perception of expanding consciousness in big festivals.

Our 2006 team recognize that grounded exploration of altered states can foster deeper personal awareness, insight and healing; but at the same time, what happened to some people who mixed substances was a bad trip with no safe ending. So, the importance

of projects like Cosmikiva is to work for expanding the amounts of this kind of good boom experiences.

So, thanks to MAPS that financed part of the project and that made possible to many people to be there. Also a special thanks to Sandra who handled the coordination and did a good job. Thanks to Boom organizers for making it possible and to all our team who accepted the challenge of doing something completely new.