



Non-Ordinary States of Consciousness Contest: Psychedelic Cryptography (Innovate)

AUTHOR
Andrés Gómez-Emilsson

AFFILIATION
Qualia Research Institute

PUBLISHED
June 1, 2023

CITATION
Gómez-Emilsson, 2023

Contents

[Methodology](#)

[Winner](#)

[2nd Place](#)

[3rd Place](#)

Check out the original contest announcement and rules here: <https://qri.org/blog/contest>

We strongly recommend viewing the content at its highest resolution on a large screen size to perceive the effects in their entirety.

Methodology

Judges: A panel made up of members of QRI's international phenomenologist network rated from 0 to 10 each piece by these three criteria:

Effectiveness: Distinguishes between sober and tripping people - is it just a little easier to see tripping but you can kinda see it anyway? Or is it impossible to see sober and effortlessly available above a certain dose?

Specificity: How specific and concrete the information encoded is - think "how many bits per second can be transmitted with this piece".

Aesthetic Value: Does this look like an art piece? Can it pass as a standard work of art at a festival that people would enjoy whether tripping or not? Note: smaller contribution to overall score.

The scores were weighted by the level of experience of each participant (based on a combination of self-report and group consensus). And to get the final score, a weighted average of the three features was taken, where “Effectiveness” was multiplied by 3, “Specificity” by 2, and “Aesthetic Value” by 1. As with the Replications contest submissions, the weighted average excluded the ratings of one of the participants for pieces that they themselves submitted (so that nobody would be evaluating their own submissions).

The main result of this exercise was that only three submissions seemed to have any promising psychedelic cryptography effects. The three pieces that win stood out head and shoulders (and trunk and even knees and ankles) above the rest. It turns out that in order to decode these pieces you do require a substantial level of tracers, so only members of the committee who had a high enough level of visual effects were able to see the encoded messages. Some of the members of the panel reported that once you saw the messages during the state you could then also see them sober as well by using the right [attentional tricks](#). But at least two members of the panel who reported seeing the messages while on mushrooms or ayahuasca were unable to then see them sober after the fact no matter how much they tried.

The three winners indeed are using the first classic PsyCrypto “encoding method” described in [“How to secretly communicate with people on LSD”](#). Namely, a method that takes advantage of [tracer effects](#) to “write out” images or text over time (see also the fictional [Rainbow God Burning Man theme camp](#) where this idea is explored in the context of festivals). That is, the fact that bright colors last longer in your visual field while on psychedelics can be used to slowly construct images in the visual field; sober individuals see lines and squiggles since the features of the hidden message don’t linger long enough for them to combine into a coherent message. All of the judges were stunned by the fact that the pieces actually worked. It works! PsyCrypto works!

At a theoretical level, this confirmation is significant because it is the first clear demonstration of a real perceptual computational advantage of psychedelic states of consciousness. We anticipate a rather incredible wave of PsyCrypto emerging within a year or two at festivals, and then in movies (even mainstream ones) within five years. It will seep into the culture at large in time. Just remember... you saw it first here! :-)

It is worth pointing out that there are possible alternative PsyCrypto encoding methods, and that there are two ways of identifying them. First, a strategy of casting a very wide net of possible stimuli to experience on psychedelics and in that way arrive at patterns only people can trip “from the bottom up” is promising. If this does work, it then opens up new avenues for scientific research. Meaning that as we find PsyCrypto encoding schemes we demonstrate undeniable computational advantages for the psychedelic states of consciousness, which in turn is significant for neuroscience and consciousness research. And second, new advancements in neuroscience can be used “from the top down” to create PsyCrypto encoding methods *from first principles*. Here, too, this will be synergistic with consciousness research: as artists figure out how to refine the techniques to make them work better, they will also be, inadvertently, giving neuroscientists pointers for further promising work.

Without further ado...

Winner

Can You See Us



Score: 87.3

Artist: Raimonds Jermaks (Symmetric Vision)

Title: Can You see us?

Description: “Just a video loop of a bunch of weird wavy *noodles*, nothing to see here, right?”

Encryption method: “I can’t linguistically describe it because it’s a lot of trial and error, but so far, the message has been decoded by a person who didn’t even know that there was supposed to be a message on 150ug 1plsd. I believe that any psychedelic/dissociative substance that causes heavy tracers could be helpful in decoding the message. Also, a person needs to be trained to change their mode of focus to see it. Once they see it, they can’t unsee it.”

Website: <https://www.symmetric-vision.xyz>

Commentary:

One of the judges estimated that the “LSD-equivalent” threshold of tracers needed for being able to easily decode this piece was approximately 150µg, whereas another one estimated it at roughly 100µg. What made this image stand out, and receive the first prize relative to the other two, was how relatively easy it was to decode in the right state of mind. In other words, this piece easily distinguishes people who are sufficiently affected by psychedelics and those who simply aren’t high enough. More so, it doesn’t require a lot of time, dedication, or effort. The encoded information simply, allegedly, “pops out” in the right state of consciousness

2nd Place

We Are Here



Score: 74.8

Artist: Raimonds Jermaks (Symmetric Vision)

Title: We Are Here. Lets talk

Description: “Short video loop containing a secret message from outer space. Can you see it?”

Encryption method: “The message text is illuminated in scanner fashion. The speed of sweep is dependent on the video frame rate, so whenever a person is in an altered state and experiencing heavy tracers they would see a clear message instead of one that’s broken apart. Entire message can be seen clearly by using video editing software and applying a tracer/echo effect and having 60 images in a trail that each are 0.033 seconds after the previous. This process can also be repeated with code.

The message can be seen in any altered state that induces heavy visual tracers, like medium-high doses of the most popular psychedelics, it also depends on a person at which doses they would start seeing heavy tracers. If experiencing heavy tracers and still unable to see the message, try looking at the center of a video and relaxing your eyes and defocusing them.”

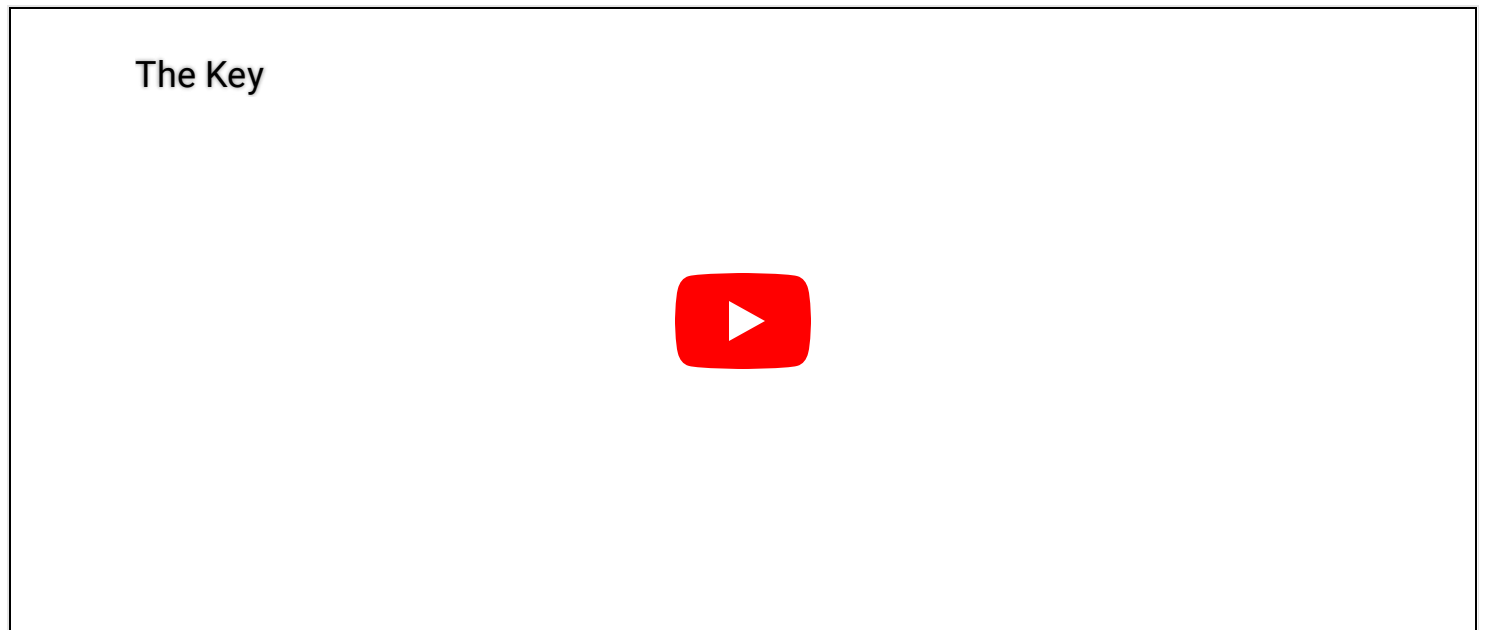
Website: <https://www.symmetric-vision.xyz>

Commentary:

As with the submission that got the 1st prize, the same judges estimated 150µg and 100µg of LSD, respectively, as the threshold needed to easily decode the secret messages in this piece. That said, decoding this piece turned out to be more difficult for the majority of the judges, and it wasn't as immediately readable as the first one. It takes more time, effort, and dedication to put the message together in one's visual field than the first one.

People also commented on the aesthetic richness of this piece, which gave it an extra boost.

3rd Place



Score: 73.9

Artist: Rüdolfs Balcers

Title: The Key

Description: “Artwork depicts the connection between the subconscious and the universal energy. The key of everything is defined by the observer of their own mind.”

Encryption method: "Images edited in a way where only one going through a psychedelic experience and seeing large amounts of tracers would see the encrypted message fully. Based on "How To Secretly Communicate With People On LSD" first example of tracer-based encrypted message. I believe that DMT or 150-200ug of LSD or any substance delivering the tracer visual effect could be used to decode the artwork."

Website: <https://www.instagram.com/bearfromvoid/>

Commentary:

The judges who were able to see the message in this piece had very different opinions on how intense the effects of psychedelics needed to be in order to easily decode the information hidden in it. One of the judges said that in order to read this easily with ayahuasca you would need the dose equivalent to approximately 40mg of vaporized DMT (i.e. a really strong, breakthrough-level, trip). This seems to be in stark contrast with the opinion of another judge, who estimated that the average person would need as little as 75ug of LSD to decode it.

The judges speculated that seeing the hidden information in this piece was easier to do on DMT than other psychedelics like mushrooms (for intensity-adjusted levels of alteration). When asked why they thought this was the case, it was speculated that this difference was likely due to the crispness and characteristic spatiotemporal frequencies of DMT relative to mushrooms. DMT simply produces more detailed and high-resolution tracers, which seem to be useful properties for decoding this piece in particular.

Alternatively, one of the judges proposed that, on the one hand, the effects of mushrooms on the visual field seem to be less dependent on the color palette of the stimuli. Therefore, whether the PsyCrypto uses colors or not doesn't matter very much if one is using mushrooms. DMT, on the other hand, makes subtle differences in colors look larger, as if the effects were to "expand the color gamut" and amplify the perception of subtle gradients of hues (cf. [color control](#)), which in this case is beneficial to decode the "psycrypted" information.

Additionally, all of the judges agreed that this piece had very significant aesthetic value. It looks extremely HD and harmonious in such states of consciousness, which is a significant boost and perhaps even a Psychedelic Cryptography of its own (meaning that the increase in aesthetic value in such states is sufficiently surprising that it's a packet of information all by itself).

Despite the very high aesthetic value of this piece and that it did work as a PsyCrypto tool, the reason it got the third place was that (a) it is still difficult to decode on psychedelics, and (b) that it is not impossible to decode sober. In other words, it is less secure and discriminating than the other two, and therefore not as good as the others in terms of its PsyCrypto properties. It is, however, still very impressive and effective in absolute terms.

Congratulations to the winners and to all of the participants! We look forward to seeing secret messages at PsyTrance festivals and Psychedelic Conferences inspired by this work from now on ;-)

Infinite bliss!

References

Citation

For attribution, please cite this work as

Gómez-Emilsson (2023, June 1). Non-Ordinary States of Consciousness Contest: Psychedelic Cryptography (Innovate). Retrieved from <https://www.qri.org/blog/psycrypto-contest>

BibTeX citation

```
@misc{gómez-emilsson2023non-ordinary,  
  author = {Gómez-Emilsson, Andrés},  
  title = {Non-Ordinary States of Consciousness Contest: Psychedelic Cryptography (Innovate)},  
  url = {https://www.qri.org/blog/psycrypto-contest},  
  year = {2023}  
}
```



Qualia Research

Institute

Subscribe for News and Updates

Email Address



About

Mission

Team

Principles

Blog

Careers

FAQ

Contact Us

Sign Up

Research

Research
Publications

Research
Lineages

Affiliated
Research

Glossary

Support

Donate

Our Donors

Logo/Press Kit

Media

Appearances

Volunteer
Projects

Share Data

Community

Merchandise

Scents