

BJPsych

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Cover picture

The Shulgins and their Alchemical Angels (2010). Alex Grey (b. 1953). Acrylic on wood, 24 × 30 in.

Dr Alexander 'Sasha' Shulgin (1925–2014), chemist, discovered and synthesised over 200 new psychoactive compounds. Recognising the limitations of animal studies, he tested these on himself and his friends; documenting the results in two books written with his wife Ann: *Phenethylamines I Have Known And Loved* and *Tryptamines I Have Known And Loved*. He famously rediscovered the drug 3,4-methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA) and introduced it to the psychotherapeutic community. MDMA's 'empathogenic' therapeutic properties make it ideal for treating post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and the UK's first clinical study of MDMA for PTSD is now getting underway. In the artist's own words: 'The painting portrays Sasha holding an MDMA molecule that has a fiery warm glow and angel's wings. Ann touches the molecule and gazes into the light. Around them radiate molecular symbols of Shulgin's many psychedelic discoveries.'

Text by Ben Sessa.

We are always looking for interesting and visually appealing images for the cover of the *Journal* and would welcome suggestions or pictures, which should be sent to Dr Allan Beveridge, British Journal of Psychiatry, 21 Prescott Street, London E1 8BB, UK or bjp@rcpsych.ac.uk.

