

# Android Jones at LIB Festival 2016

Interview by Flore “Flo” Muguet, French anthropologist  
Edited by Laurel Teal, historian, in 2016. Re-edited by Flo in 2025.  
Background: ‘Forward Escape’ by Android Jones

## - About Technology-

ANDROID JONES Phaedra and I both believe creativity is like a living, conscious force. There is an intelligence behind it. I can say I’ve encountered something supernatural. It is definitely beyond what I am capable of explaining.

Nature has always been somewhat of an enemy to Man. I’m a big fan of nature. I think it’s a really beautiful thing. But, we can’t separate that, without this technology, most of us would have a difficult time surviving in the world. People talk about artificial intelligence and if we were to give birth to some sort of A.I. robot that could reinvent itself in better, stronger forms... It’s more about the shadows of man that are the problem—it’s not the technology. Art is a mirror to reflect that something deeper within ourselves, intuitively and impulsively.

## - Transformational Festivals and Visionary Art-

FLO Your art is very well appreciated at transformational festivals. Could you speak about the role of these festivals and their relation to visionary art?

ANDROID JONES There are a lot of things that unify them. But, I think on one core, the intention of the people who create the festival always has a lot to play into it. Some festivals’ intention is to be a corporation or a

business and kind of drive a profit and have fun while they’re doing it. Some festivals are really about, like Boom, is really about creating a community, creating a higher degree of responsibility, like stewardship of planet Earth. A festival like Burning Man is really about the exploration of oneself and working within and against the elements to create kind of a camaraderie. I consider them to be like freedom situations. You know? We all desire a sense of freedom and to be free. I feel that they create a simulation of what freedom could really be.

This simulation could go both ways. Because you get the good, and you also get the shadow of these things too. There’s a huge amount of drug abuse and sexual abuse, and you know, the objectification of women and the misappropriation of cultures. There are so many foul things that these create. They’re not this vision of utopia that a lot of people, I think sometimes, get a little confused by.

At festivals, expression of freedom with visionary art is different from most art. There is a high degree of influence from psychedelic experiences, which also amplifies that sense of freedom and wonder and no limitations. I think that, and when you look at a lot of the visionary art together, there’s much more of like a common thread that unifies it than if you were to go to like an art fair or even like a museum. You can see trends, but when you look at a lot of the art, look at Alex Grey, Luke Brown, Robert Venosa, Ernst Fuchs or William Blake, you start to see their patterns. There’s things that

start to re-emerge. And together it creates the psychedelic experience that people often have that are at these festivals.

Having visionary art gives a whole community of people a reflection point, and they can point out, “Oh, I’ve had that kind of experience too.” Like, that’s what I, and a lot of people, don’t have the discipline or the habit of being able to paint these things, though when they see a piece of art it’s something that they can connect with, identify, and they want to be able to share that with other people in their life. To give people a hint that there’s something more out there. We are in this era of intense narcissism, and by sharing art, other people can see the reflection of that: we can’t take selfies of ourselves in there.

I could say this is almost my 10th anniversary of being and working within the transformational community. And I can say with all confidence, it has definitely transformed me in a lot of different ways. I never lacked access to a canvas or a stage to participate in. And within that, and also within the context of having psychedelics and different chemicals being so abundant and accepted, that, those things paired together. The ability to be creative as possible and go as big as I could in a community that supported and or endorsed different states of mind. But I think the bigger question is that what kind of transformation is it really making with people?

I see both sides. I see people that get into this sort of scene and they’re really blown



A series of blending onto each other's Android Jones paintings, projected on a screen.  
Photo credit: Flore Muguet, LIB 2015.

away, and all these possibilities open up, and I’ve seen tracks of the transformation just leads to like, they get almost addicted to what this is. See, there’s a lot of transformation of narcissism that happens at these events. The personality types that are drawn towards narcissistic behavior, or borderline behavior, or personality, or any kind of mental illness. These are also incredible grounds for that. Because you could have a mental illness, and be within a community like this, and no one would ever know. Like... this is not going to save the world. If the world can be saved, they’re not going to be saved because we’re having more festivals.





A series of blending onto each other's Android Jones paintings, projected on a screen.  
Photo credit: Flore Muguet, LIB 2015.

However, I believe that there is like a spirit. I believe that we are, all are, connected, that there's kind of a universal spirit, and it does deserve to be celebrated. I've seen all these different aspects and the abuse that happens. I mean, there's so much support for self-destruction. But I think everybody's looking, as a human, to try to connect on some level.

One of my definitions of freedom is for a human being to express their unlimited value. And what the festivals do, with the help of the psychedelic, is give you this free space, this sort of freedom simulation—to be whoever you want to be.

FLO So, your work points to when you actually experienced this simulation of freedom?

ANDROID JONES Yeah, without action—without taking this into action outside, then it is just fantasy. It's just like Pleasure Island, and if we don't get off pleasure island we're all just going to turn into a bunch of donkeys like Pinocchio.

### - Immersive Environments -

FLO Do you consider the environment as part of the art piece?

ANDROID JONES The perspective I have is the entire camp is like a painting. You know, all the different elements. It's this sort of alchemy. Ok, if we bring these various things together, add these speakers over here, and this stage there, like how can I cultivate an experience? And I think, if I look at the different things between the galleries, to the Phaidroid performances, to the immersive work that we're doing now where my focus is on virtual reality, and on 360 immersive environments you can come into. I'm really trying to hack the human consciousness. It's about how I can create an environment

that can immerse someone with the goal of cutting them off from all limitations of their possibilities.

It creates an opening, and within that opening is, "Ah, I never knew this was possible," or, "Wow, I didn't know that was possible." There's a lot of responsibility to take someone there. In our lifetimes, we've seen a lot of amazing progress, and that just calls for a higher degree of responsibility on how we use that. So, I'm trying to use this technology in a responsible way. There's a certain risk to it. But I make art because it allows me to connect with something that's so much more powerful than myself, and so much more mysterious, that I could never understand it.

To really get there, I need 4 to 8, 12 hours of not being interrupted. And it happens in stages. There's almost like this

subconscious reaction where, a lot of times, I'll start with pure abstraction and putting all these shapes and colors down like, "Oh, I like that combination of that edge, that color, and that texture together". Then, there's an element where it's not so much my own ego anymore, but there's like a subconscious connection I'm having with things. And, there's times when I feel that I'm connecting with something that isn't, that's beyond me, my superconscious or my subconscious.

It's very much kind of like, have you ever had a lucid dream? You know, like the lucid dream where you realize you're lucid? And as soon as you realize you're lucid, you get so excited that you wake up, or the dream ends? It's kind of like a wave. Like surfing a wave. You know, the truth is like the thing that doesn't go away. There are laws that govern the dynamics of consciousness.



"The Love Series," by Android Jones at Burning Man Center Camp. Photo credit: Flore Muguet, 2014.