

Strokes of Devotion

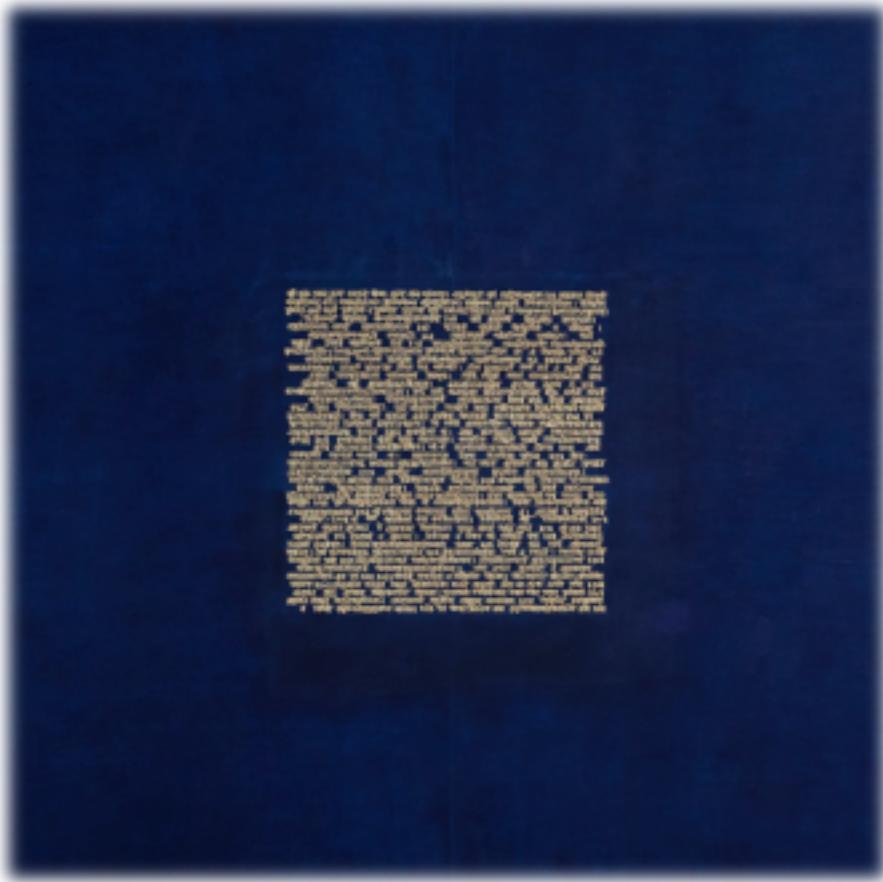
SEMIOTICS OF DESMOND LAZARO'S ART

BY AIYANA GUNJAN

AUGUST 2016

"In this new work entitled 'Blue & Gold', I revisit Krishna's circular dance although it is to the Sanskrit text rather than visual image that I return. In setting the original Sanskrit form - of the story- as a block of gold paint set within a deep indigo blue. I wanted to evoke such traditions and see how these relate within today's world. In returning to a traditional theme, I wonder how tangible we can be, especially when confronted by a sacred blue & gold' text."

- Desmond Lazaro, Jan 2014



"I was captivated by the Blue and Gold painting, at the Forms of Devotion Show, New Delhi. April 2015. Ever since then, it has not left me, and has continued to inspire me. It led me into a journey of discovering Desmond's work. One link led to another, as if the 'Blue and Gold' painting had opened a new door for me, into the realm of Art, Culture and Semiotics"

— Aiyana Gunjan. Aug 2016

"I sincerely believe that art can be understood as a joining of the material and the spiritual, the specific and the universal, the individual and the humanity."



[Decoding Art of Desmond Lazaro](#)

[Semiotics Approach & Methodology](#)

[The Cultural Foundational Framework](#)

[The *Brand* Foundational Model](#)

Culture is the fabric of meaning in terms of which people interpret their experience and guide their action.

Culture is like *tradition*- something you are used to doing.



Art is not just about the painting, the medium and the technique, but reflects the very consciousness of the Artist – everything the Artist does, experiences and believes in...the world he homes within.

Art, a self expression, is usually influenced by Culture, and which in turn helps to change Culture. It offers a powerful and democratic way of expressing, sharing and shaping values. Viewing culture through the lens of art, can help us build new capabilities and understand how to imagine and rehearse a different way of being and relating.

Applying the incisive tool of Semiotics on Desmond Lazaro's art, this research paper endeavors to decode and understand the deep and intrinsic relationship between Artist, Art and Culture.

Desmond Lazaro was born in Leeds, UK in 1968. After completing his University studies, he continued on and obtained a Masters degree from the renowned Baroda University in India. Lazaro returned time and again to his cultural roots in India and studied the art of miniature painting. He mastered miniature painting techniques by studying and working for 11 years under Jaipur Master Banu Ved Pal Sharma, one of the few living experts on this ancient tradition. Lazaro submitted a PHD thesis on the Picchvai painting tradition at the Prince's School of Traditional Arts in London.

Desmond Lazaro's contemporary work reinvents miniature painting, the tradition he was trained in. His is a boundary-pushing art that makes this traditional craft seem more current. He has earned critical acclaim and exhibitions across the world.

www.desmond lazaro.com



Desmond Lazaro
Artist & Art Historian

Semiotics is a cutting-edge discipline, decoding ***how meaning is produced in culture and society***. It is an outside-in perspective, where culture, communication and context is the object of the study. Semiotics intervention analyses all 'texts' – *any kind of message in any medium*, that impact the social construction of people's identities and the representation of the world they live in.

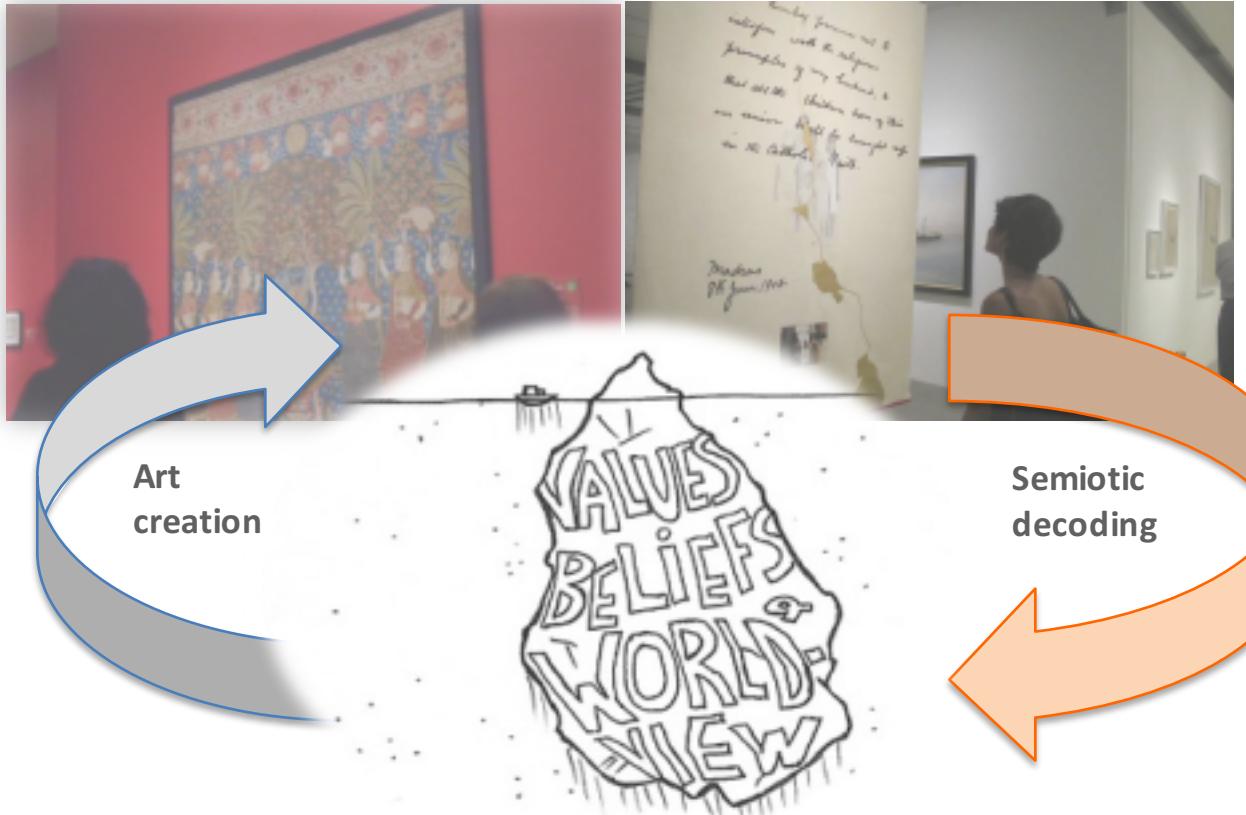
As a cultural expert, we read codes and signs consciously - *what they signify within local context*, applying techniques of cultural translation. This requires an in-depth understanding for cultural associations between codes and signs and their meanings.

At the Mumbai International airport
'Gopuram – Gods and Goddesses of south India'
an 80 x 50 foot artwork 2012/13, by Desmond Lazaro,
(in collaboration with Ramesh Kalkur)

Context is the message. At the airport, the Gods are shown as literally 'fly off' the Gopuram', and the viewer sees empty silhouettes of where the Gods should be,



Semiotics reads the visible tip of the culture iceberg to understand what's going on below the surface



Semiotics reads art and the context of the Artist/art to reveal insights into the cultural influences of the time.

By looking at the *'hidden meanings'* behind all art, texts and cultural contexts, Semiotics decodes the cultural foundational framework of the *'unwritten rules'* – codes that define the attitude, behavior and drivers behind the creation of Art.

Artist Is A Product And A Creator Of Culture

Art speaks the soul of its culture

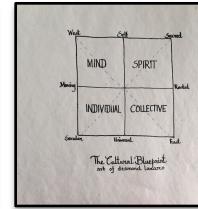
Semiotics makes the unconscious, *conscious*.



Semiotics decodes the relationship between Artist, Art and Culture

Creates a deeper understanding of the individual artist work resonating with humanity.. Brings the unconscious universe of hidden meanings in the art to surface.

The Cultural Blueprint creates an objective framework to understand and appreciate the inner world and processes that defines the Artist and the Art. Being a foundational framework, it has a predictive dimension.

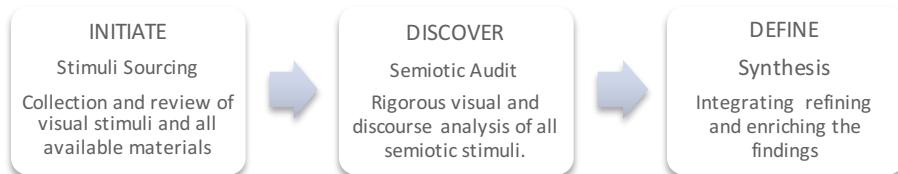


Signs of Time: Helps to clarify and evaluate the cultural complexities of that time. Get deeper insight into the socio-cultural contexts, viewing through the Artist's lens.



The Artist Brand Thumbprint distills the unique identity and language of the Artist, rooted in cultural coding.

Context is the message. Nothing is arbitrary. Everything conveys a meaning.



Semiotics decodes anything that communicates, in any medium, related to the art and the artist. Semiotics intervention involves an immersive and detailed process of sourcing, sifting, classifying and coding multi-dimensional data: text, visual, sensorial stimuli as well as cultural context. Unlike traditional research methodologies, semiotics does not involve conducting *primary interviews*. Instead we go right to the source- codes & signs.



Stimuli Sourcing

All content related to the art/artist
available in the public domain.
We do not conduct primary interviews

- All paintings and content: Artist website www.desmondiazaro.com
- Materials Methods and Symbolism in The Pichhvai Painting Tradition of Rajasthan By Desmond Peter Lazaro.2005 (Source images)
- Krishna's Painters – by Desmond Lazaro, Hinduism Today.2007
- Catalogue of the exhibition 'The hand that leads the eye leads the hand', published by Gallery Chemould (2008) by Naman Ahuja
- Desmond Lazaro in Düsseldorf by Joseph Swann, Wuppertal
- Forms of Devotion – book by Sushma Behl. 2015
- Studios of Devotion – documentary film by MOSA
- Context of Artist's studio – Pondicherry visit Aug 2015
- Incoming Passenger – Video recording by Avid Learning. 2016
- Workshop 2013 par Desmond Lazaro et Irina Bradley
- PDP 2014: 1er prix video, portrait de Desmond Lazaro, dailymotion
- Picchvai, past, present and future - Lecture by Desmond Lazaro. Delhi Craft Council, New Delhi, Sept 2015
- Pondicherry Heritage Festival – Panel discussion, Feb 2016
- Media coverage – Press clippings, online data, social media, videos

Initiate
Discover
May–Nov 2015

Synthesis
Jun–Aug 2016

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Chemould Prescott Gallery (for Contemporary Art images)

CULTURAL HYBRID
KNOW-L-EDGE
STRUCTURAL PRECISION
TRADELINE

DEVOTIONAL ART
SOMWHERE-IN-BETWEEN
UNITY-IN-MULTIPLICITY

TRADITION TRANSCEND
EVERDAY SIMPLICITY
IMAGINARY HOMELAND
MOVING IDENTITY

LINEAGE CONTINUUM
COLLECTIVE WORK
NATURALNESS
TRADITION INTEGRITY

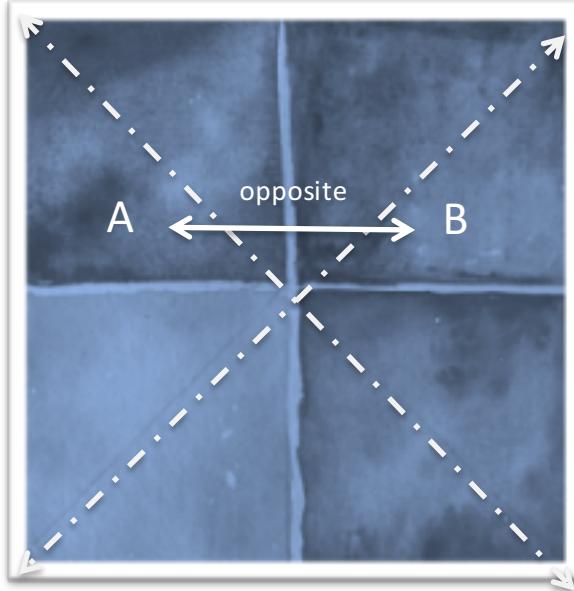
THE CULTURAL BLUEPRINT

Semiotically decoding the Cultural Foundational Framework
of Desmond Lazaro

Culture works in binary opposition.
There can be no meaning in culture without oppositions.

Semiotics is a *scientific* tool that objectively decodes the Cultural Foundational Framework, by reading the visible tip of the iceberg called Culture .

THE CULTURAL BLUEPRINT



TERRITORY

The fundamental areas that define the cultural context of the artist/art.

CODE

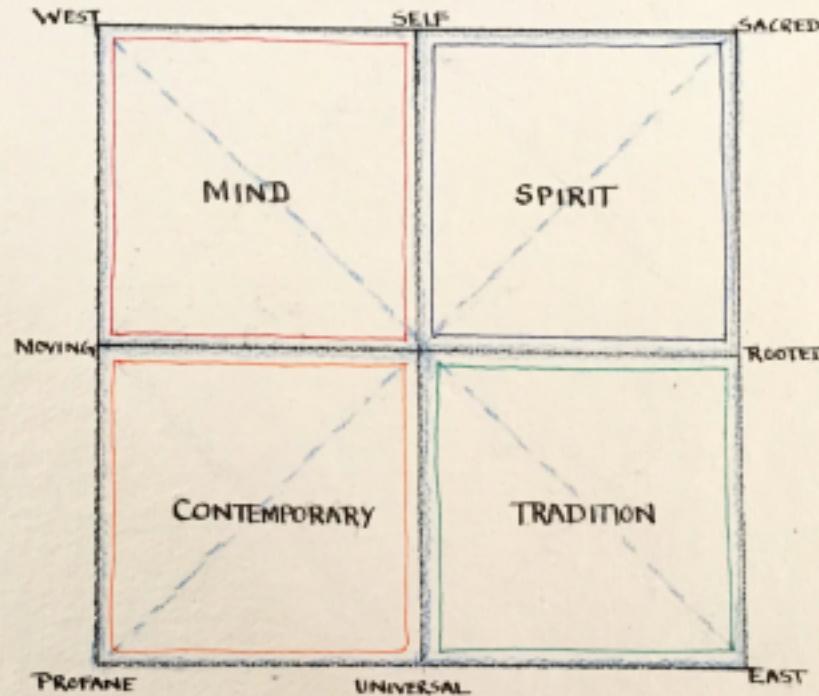
The *unwritten* rules in the cultural context that help to define the artist's inner world and practices, within the culture and within each territory. *Codes are systems of shared rules; ways in which we understand and communicate.*

DIMENSION

The key faces of how the codes work and are expressed within their territories

The Cultural Foundational Framework

Cultural Tensions Territories



The Cultural Blueprint
DESMOND LAZARO

August 2016
11032016

SEMIOTICS OF DESMOND LAZARO'S ART

Mapping the East-West dichotomy in today's context of globalisation

The core of all Arts and Culture lies in creating, discerning and negotiating Meaning—both in and out of context.

For the first time, I applied the cutting-edge technology of Semiotics, to decode the Culture of the Artist and his Art. *We don't talk to people, but go to the very source and codes.* The Semiotic Map objectively decodes how culture spaces and meanings are structured symbolically. It defines the relationship, the opposition and the boundaries within the cultural framework.

The Semiotics of Desmond Lazaro explores the entire landscape of human existence. He investigates the fundamental questions and the cultural tensions around human existence – *Who am I and Where do I come from.* The Artist delves deeper into the construct of Home, Belonging and Identity – viewing from the physical, abstract, socio-cultural lens, and yet elevates it to a spiritual level. His art is an expression of his exploring, navigating around the cultural tensions, pushing boundaries within the cultural context as an immigrant.

Colonialism to Globalization. The Cultural Blueprint of the Artist is anchored in the East-West dichotomy. It is contextualized against the movement of people and goods during Colonial rule. Interestingly, this cultural framework of an individual Artist gave me a deeper insight into the changing socio-cultural landscape of India, in the context of globalization. It resonates with the cultural tension *between local Vs.global codes* faced by global MNC brands. *Viewing from an artist's lens, it shows a path of resolution, through creativity and innovation.* This provides a valuable perspective for brands attempting to connect with the *cultural-hybrid* identity of today's global consumers.



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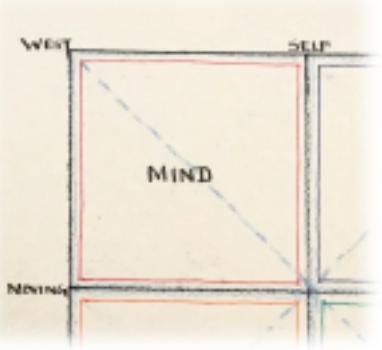
LINEAGE CONTINUUM
COLLECTIVE WORK
NATURALNESS
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THE TERRITORIES

The four key domain areas defining the Cultural Blueprint of Desmond Lazaro. The space and boundaries of the territories are defined by the Pillars.

The territory of the Mind is about the intellectual acumen of the Artist. It is anchored within the pillars of *West, Self and Moving*. This territory explores the influence of Culture Hybrid identity of the Artist, the pursuit of Knowledge, the foundation in Structural Precision and the economics of the Trade-line.

The Scholar



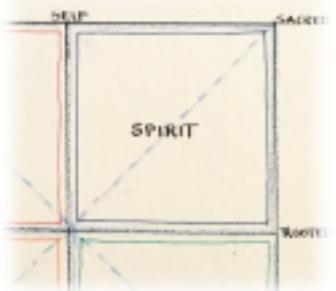
CODES

CULTURAL HYBRID
KNOW-L-EDGE
STRUCTURAL PRECISION
TRADELINE



The territory of Spirit is about *Bhakti Yoga* -the spiritual and devotional instincts of the Artist, anchored within the pillars of *Self, Sacred and Rooted*. It explores the Forms of Devotion, the essence in the meditative practice, the pushing of boundaries in navigating the Unknown, and Unity in Multiplicity of forms and faith.

The Devotee



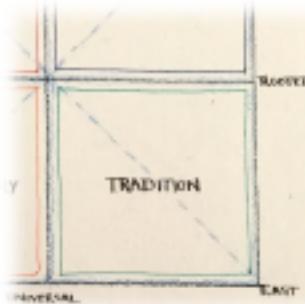
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DEVOTIONAL
SOMEWHERE-IN-BETWEEN
UNITY-IN-MULTIPLICITY



The territory of Tradition is about the spiritual lineage and Guru Shishya Parampara, anchored within the pillars of *Rooted, East and Universal*. Its about the Eastern sensibilities and practices imbibed by the Artist. Its about the continuity of Tradition, Naturalness in the materials, methods and symbolism of the ancient Miniature Art.

The Craftsman



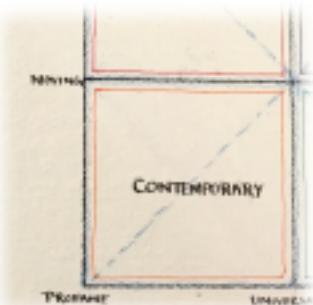
CODES

LINEAGE CONTINUUM
COLLECTIVE WORK
NATURALNESS
TRADITIONAL INTEGRITY



The territory of Contemporary is about the freedom of expression as an individual Artist, anchored within the pillars of *Universal-Profane-Moving*. Its about the spirit of innovation, transcending traditional form and yet being true to traditional methods and material. Its about the spirit of celebrating the ordinariness of everyday life, and addressing the secular themes of immigration and homing

[The Artist](#)



CODES

TRADITION TRANSCEND
EVERYDAY SIMPLICITY
IMAGINARY HOMELAND
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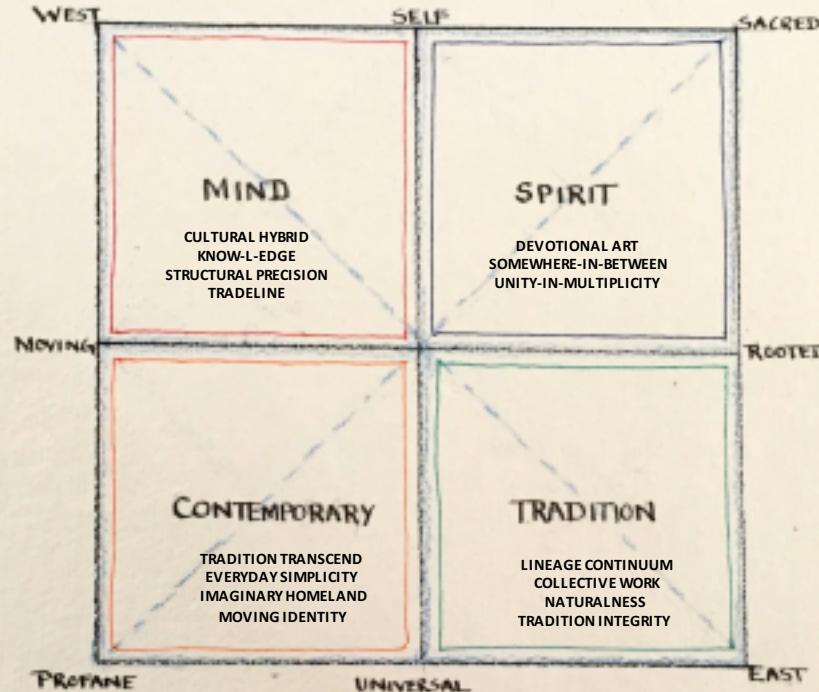
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THE CODES

The *unwritten* cultural rules that subconsciously influence and define the Art of Desmond Lazaro. It articulates the inner drivers and working of the Artist, that defines his art practice.

The Cultural Foundational Framework

Cultural Tensions
Territories
Codes



The Cultural Blueprint
DESMOND LAZARO

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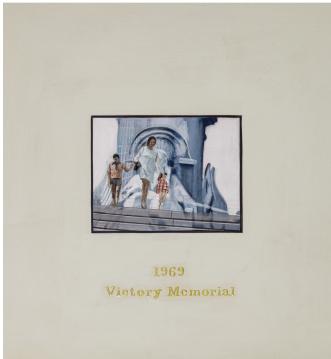
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THE MIND

“As punters and purveyors of modern and contemporary art groomed by its aesthetics and modes of production, for us Lazaro’s work thus hangs uncomfortably in the balance between ethnic craftsmanship and contemporary art”

– Naman Ahuja



1969
Victory Memorial



"My great-great grandfather moved from India (Bangalore) to Burma (Yangon) during the late nineteenth century. As a railwayman he, like many others, was sent to Burma to build the railways. If India was the jewel in the crown, then Burma was the ruby, and Empire hurried to make itself a transport system that could carry these treasures away with greater speed. A generation later and my grandfather (a railway engineer) continued to live in Insein district of Northern Yangon better known as the 'Railway Lines', a Catholic neighbourhood set aside for railway staff. My father, following the military coup and imminent civil war, severed ties with Burma and her railways when he fled to England in 1958. Today, part of our family continues to live in the 'Lines' even though the Empire and its railway have long gone. My family, like many others, moved across the Asian-Indian subcontinent as part of the wider colonial diaspora. Their story began to unravel in tiny fragments during my childhood, as the elders talked of distant lands, peoples, and places that always seemed out of reach to me growing up in Leeds in the north of England" – DL.2004



Cultural Hybrid

The multi-culturalism of the immigrant family context

Cultural Hybrid is about the Artist's identity, living the East- West dichotomy. In the context of colonialisation. the Artist delves into the impact of immigration (*not by choice*) on *real* people's lives. *This is start point of an immigrant's search for home, identity and belonging,*

The multi-cultural contexting in the Artist life trajectory: British-born, Anglo-Indian, Catholic by birth, French wife, Picchvai Artist in the Hindu temple town, widely travelled and lived across diverse socio-cultural contexts across the globe:

UK-India-Middle East: Leeds-Baroda-Jaipur-Nathdwara-New Delhi-Jordan-Goa; settled now in Pondicherry-Auroville.

Paintings reference

Cini Films (Victory Memorial 1969) 2015-16: Anglo-Indian family in UK
Union Jack, 2008: East-West dichotomy, sitting on the fence

A Portrait in Red, 2011 – (self)portrait of a traditional Indian man



DESMOND LAZARO

Education/ Ausbildung

1987- 1990 University of Central Lancashire, Preston (GB)
Bachelor of Arts in Fine Art / First Class Honours

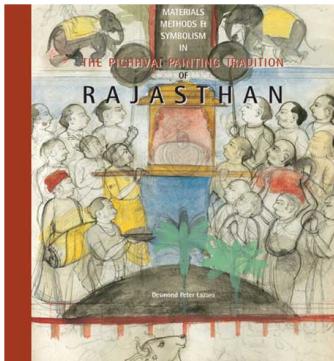
1990 - 1994 Commonwealth Scholar to India
M.S. University of Baroda, Baroda (IN)
Master of Arts in Painting

1995 - 97 Prince of Wales Institute of Architecture (P.O.W.I.A)
London, (GB)
Master of Arts in Visual Islamic & Traditional Art

1997-98 I.N.T.A.C.H Scholarship to India

1998-2000 The Prince's School of Traditional Arts, London (GB)
PhD Research: "The Pichhvai Painting Tradition"

Author of the book - *Materials, Methods & Symbolism in the Pichhvai Painting Tradition of Rajasthan* (Mapin, India)- translating the ancient wisdom of the East for the global audience (PhD thesis).



Know-L-edge

The Scholar, the Teacher and the Pursuit for Knowledge

Dr. Artist, Art Historian, Professor, Writer. Its about the Artist's intellectual pursuit of knowledge in Fine Arts and Indian Miniature Arts. The code of Know-L-edge is about seeking, practicing, teaching and preserving the knowledge gained. He bridges the traditional orally-transmitted knowledge, with the formal art education. He blends the Western academic mind, with Eastern consciousness.

Academia: PhD, Double MFA (UK-India), Commonwealth Scholarship; 11 years experience of learning Miniature Painting Art under Master Bannu Ved Pal Sharma, and working in the family studio. As a academic, the Artist holds regular workshops and lectures in India, UK and Middle East.

"When you learn a craft, it becomes your bread and butter, your skin and bones.."- DL

Structural Precision

Form, Stroke and Sacred Geometry

Structural Precision is the discipline, rigor and precision in the foundational structure of the Artist's expression. The Artist strictly follows the science in sacred geometry and traditional methods.

"The craftsman who lays the foundation of the painting in accordance with the same universal principles: through the square-circle relationship, divinity (Shrinathji) is made manifest and present."

- DL, Sacred Geometry of Picchvai

"I am reminded of the old craftsman saying: hathi, haath aur ghoda, "elephant, hand and horse." Only a master can draw each freehand. The elephant gives flow of the line, the horse the strength within the line, and through the hand, the sensitivity that is a line"

- DL, Finesse of the miniature stroke

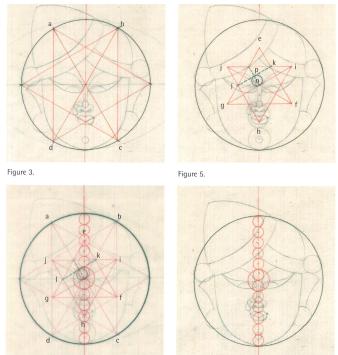


Figure 3.

Figure 5.



Foundational knowledge of the Picchvai Art: The book on Picchvai illustrates each aspect of the craft from iconography to color symbolism and geometry to pigment preparation, drawing upon a wealth of traditional painting techniques from across India, Persia, Nepal and South East Asian.

In the Blue and Gold painting, the positioning of the gold block of Maha Raas Lila text is in sync with the positioning of Srinathji, as per the sacred geometry of the Picchvai painting.





Managing Director, Lazaro & Co/-, the Indian pigment manufacturer based in New Delhi; founded in 2004.

Tradeline

East- and Economics

Trade-line is about the enterprising spirit of the Artist. His honor of tradition does not stop at the painting technique but also extends to the pigments, papers and cloth that he uses in his creative process. He has created commercial value, by putting his in-depth technical knowledge of manufacturing natural pigments and paper to use for global audience.

This code resonates with the colonial empire, trading the treasures of the East to the West . It connects back to Artist's family history, linkage to railways and trade during Colonial rule.

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THE SPIRIT

“To understand India in general and her arts and crafts in particular, one has to enter this sense of wonder and mystery. For mystery is a fundamental definition of Hindu religious philosophy, and it is from this that her artistic creations are born. To grasp that which starts, where mental comprehension ends, requires a leap of faith, guided by intuition and strengthened by love. In the Hindu tradition of Bhakti, devotional love, this is the first step towards realization; the surrender of one’s self in order to enter one’s true Self.” - DL

Devotion

Bhakti, Grace and Essence

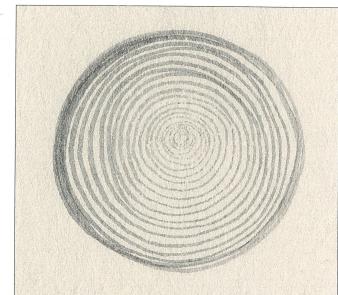
Devotion in the intuitive and spiritual sensibilities of the Artist. This code is about the Artist going beyond the intellect and mental comprehension, into the realm of Devotion.

Further to his formal education(MFA), the Artist devoted his life-learning, working and living the devotional art of Pichvai painting. Devotion is about the time, attention and love the Artist invests in the process of painting. It's the sync between the heart and the hand, infusing life and spirit into the painting - The Essence.



"For, at its heart, devotion is Grace, and that is not ours to give or take, rather ours to receive. At best, we can prepare through stringent practice and dedication, for, like the burnished image, we cleanse the heart, in the hope that one of these days Light will enter." - DL

"The circle itself represents the craftsman's journey towards technical perfection as experienced through the drawing of a spiral. The spiral is technically one of the most difficult motifs to execute as it requires both breath retention and steadiness of hand. The craftsman often practises this discipline before beginning the day's work, so that he can enter the painting in a meditative state." - DL



From the author's sketchbook, the spiral is 4mm in diameter.



The recurring subject of Single Man sleeping/ waiting signifies a state of being somewhere-in-between: conscious and subconscious, present and future.



Falling, 2008 "The Fall captures that moment when you are suspended - just hanging in there - when you don't know where or if or how you are going to fall. A state of suspended animation. The suspension is personal as much as it is sociological. Lazaro goes to the extent of saying, "It's also about the falling of the man, and the second coming of the age of the feminine to replace that". DL

Somewhere-in-between

Pushing boundaries and Faith

This is about the Artist going beyond the obvious, challenging status quo and exploring new territories, within and without. In an act of surrender, the Artist accepts the fragile state of suspension between the known and the Unknown. *It's his implicit faith that allows him to tread new grounds, and explore new spaces.* Navigating through the tensions between the two social orders creates a new perspective, a third dimension for the Artist.

"For Lazaro this letting-go is possible because of a faith that under-girds his practice. Two statements by him sum it all up, "I paint because I love it" and his realisation that being one with it, without a worry is reinforced by the faith that if you 'fall from the cliff, the angels will catch you'." – Naman Ahuja



On Devotional Art – "It's the process that slowly elevates you, as the Artist and the work you are doing. And somewhere along the line you meet. And you meet in a different space, another space, and I guess that's what we call sacred...devotional art." -DL



Perhaps Lazaro's ultimate summing up of his Guru is best delineated thus: "Through a style that liberated rather than stifled his artistic sensibility, he played with convention, borrowing from, amongst others, the Basohli, Kishangarh and Jaipur schools, creating a personal vision, but always remaining true to the art of the line..."

Unity-in-Multiplicity

Multiple faith, forms and Oneness

Unity-in-Multiplicity is about the Artist's resolution around the cultural tensions between multiple faiths, forms and methods. Its about expressing the contemporary thought of Oneness, within the Cultural Hybrididentity of the Artist.

Artist reinvents the miniature art, and transcends multiple religion (*Catholic origin to Hindu temple art to spiritual symbolism*), and multiple forms (*figurative to abstract to calligraphy*) in search of Unity.

"A Master who had travelled through each school, distilling the very essence of the tradition. In doing so he set the contemporary standard." - DL, His Guru, his inspiration

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THE TRADITION

“The preservation of traditional arts and crafts in our ever-changing and fast growing modern world is vital means of providing the timeless values that bring stability to human life and promote peace of mind, one of the highest values of civilization”. –DL



“During the next twelve years, I did practise and eventually become Bannuji’s disciple, working closely with his son Shammi. However, the technique of the craft is really half the story for in these last so many years, I witnessed the passing on of a tradition, from Master to Pupil. He had reached a state of grace- a spiritual awareness- through which he was able to transmit the deeper knowledge of the craft. A truth communicated beyond word and deed and yet as tangible as the white stone walls of his room.” - DL

“It took some years before I realised that a tradition is really the spiritual blood and bones of our ancestors” - DL



Lineage Continuum

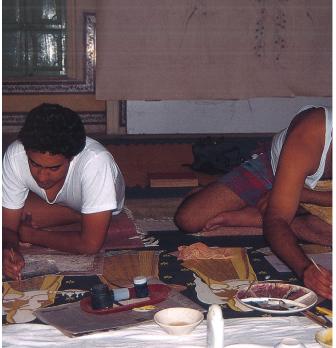
Tradition and Past-Present-Future Continuum

Lineage Continuum is about the legacy, the heritage of the past traditions, passed down the generations. It is about the Artist’s calling. There is reverence and continuity in the Guru-Shishya parampara – the passing down of knowledge, skills orally, through life and spirit. It is about the Artist, not just mastering and practicing the traditional art but actively working to preserve the traditional legacy. He also established a foundation dedicated to the promotion and revival of traditional art in India.

The code of Lineage Continuum is about the Artist finding resolution around his family history, as being part of deeper spiritual tradition, rather than colonial legacy. Catholic by birth, grown up in England, the Artist used to paint God Krishna in his student days. He ‘returns’ to India of his dreams...to breathe, live and paint the Krishna consciousness (in the context of the Temple town- Nathdwara)- a sign of coming home of the Anglo-Indian soul?

*“To know the tradition, one must know the life,
to know the life; one must live it;
only then will the deeper (spiritual) knowledge of
the craft be revealed.*

- DL



"The tricky practicalities of running a traditional painting studio in a contemporary climate are equally part of this dichotomy. The studio cannot function single-handedly. Pigments have to be made as do the papers, cloth, preparatory filling in of backgrounds, etc. This demands a complex and subtle relationship of power and exchange between the main artist / head of a studio and the others who supply or provide services of varying degrees of labour and creativity."

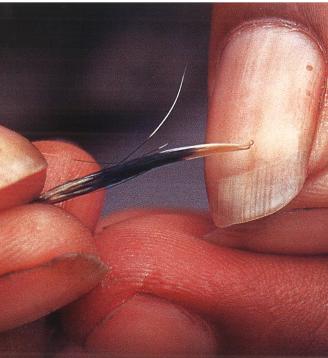
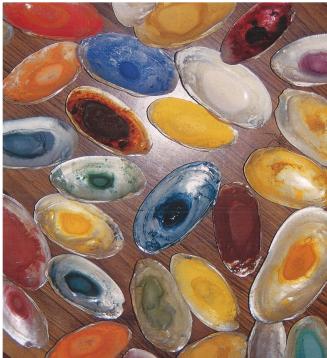
Collective Work

Painting Process, Hierarchy and Harmony

This is about the order and hierarchy in the traditional Studio setup. It involves collective teamwork with well-defined roles and responsibilities for the Master of the Studio/ Senior Craftsman/ Studio Apprentice. Each member has his own position within the hierarchy and the painting process follows this order as the work is shared according to knowledge and experience.

Its about respect, love and mutual interdependence that promotes both social and economic harmony. Traditionally the craftsmen live in close proximity to each other and they naturally support each other's livelihood as well as wellbeing. Traditional studio is the microcosm of this wider social structure, embracing this sense of harmony within the relationships it nurtures.

"Spirit is that which binds craftsmen together within the dynamic 'whole'. It is the process of 'surrendering' to the collective which elevates the 'whole' to a different level of consciousness." - DL



“Having trained as a Pichvai and miniature painter, in Jaipur, Rajasthan, my work is rooted in and inspired by, traditional language along with its methods, materials and symbolism. I continue to employ traditional techniques in a craftsman like manner through the stringent preparation of all my materials: cloth, paper, brushes and pigment colours” - DL

Naturalness

Natural, Hand-made, Method-in- Material

This is about honoring life and spirit in materials, used in the painting process of miniature art. It is about the hand-made methods and natural ingredients used to make the pigment, paper, cloth, brushes for painting. Its about preserving the century old techniques and treasuring the organic subtlety and authenticity in naturalness.

*Pigment colors classified as per method of preparation –
Minerals (below surface). Earth (Surface), Organic (Life)
and Alchemical (Human intervention);*

*Handmade Sanganeer Paper by Hussan Khagzi, following
the time-honoured Samarkhand tradition. The method
having originated in central Asia and later brought to
India during the Mughal period;*

*The traditional Pichvai painting cottonn cloth, weaved for
the Nathdwara Haveli(temple;*

*Miniature painting brushes made from either squirrels or
mongoose hair.*

Tradition Integrity

Balance of Tradition in Contemporary

This is about the Artist's trueness and commitment to his traditional materials and methods within his contemporary art practice. Its about bringing the finesse, the rigor, the depth, the naturalness, the essence of Miniature art into his contemporary art practice. Its about balancing the Individual (Artist) and the Collective (Studio work) as the Head of his contemporary Studio.

"I continue to employ traditional techniques in a craftsman like manner through the stringent preparation of all my materials: cloth, paper, brushes and pigment colours. These materials are an integral part of the process of painting however by the changing the imagery 'context and meaning' inevitably shift. All of my works follow the traditional techniques of miniature and Pichhvais, painting. The imagery may be contemporary but the methods essentially remain traditional. I continue in this manner because it is a discipline and at the end of the day I have let to find another way of working that satisfies the practical and spiritual needs. - DL



CULTURAL HYBRID
KNOW-L-EDGE
STRUCTURAL PRECISION
TRADELINE

DEVOTIONAL ART
SOMWHERE-IN-BETWEEN
UNITY-IN-MULTIPLICITY

TRADITION TRANSCEND
EVERDAY SIMPLICITY
IMAGINARY HOMELAND
MOVING IDENTITY

LINEAGE CONTINUUM
COLLECTIVE WORK
NATURALNESS
TRADITION INTEGRITY

THE CONTEMPORARY

“Sometimes I don’t know how to get home, so I constantly define and redefine it within myself. It’s the typical East-West dichotomy that has informed and continues to inform my work” - DL



"At the same time he also started deconstructing the elements of the pichhvai, isolating them and producing a large number of sections of pichhvais as complete works. These focussed usually on Krishna's cows, but could also be just the gopis or just a part of Shrinathji's face.'- Naman Ahuja



"We decided to commission contemporary paintings rather than the traditional subjects. The reason was to give the artists the chance to innovate, a blank canvas so to speak, and challenge the misconception that they cannot make new and interesting works—stagnation often means neglect rather than a lack of ability." — DL

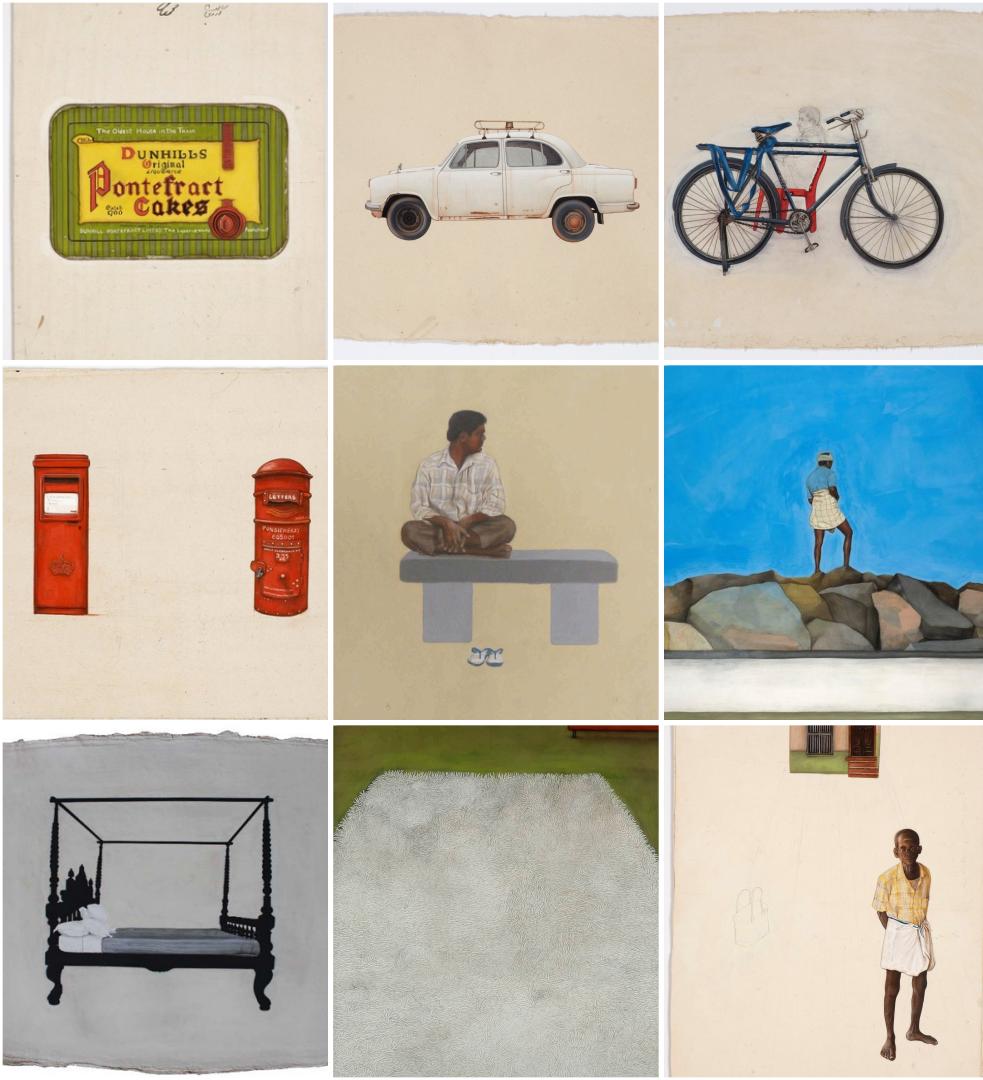
Transcend Tradition

Contemporary Art, Innovation and Aesthetics

This is about the Individual Artist and his contemporary art practice. He chooses to appropriate a craft alien British art education, and to deploy it to describe the world around him. It's about the Artist's spirit of innovation. The Artist breaks away from the traditional subject and brings originality of thought and expression. He applies the discipline and skills acquired working in the Picchvai tradition to his own body of work – meticulously-rendered paintings of contemporary subjects and concepts. The Artist bridges the two opposing territories of Tradition and Contemporary Art.



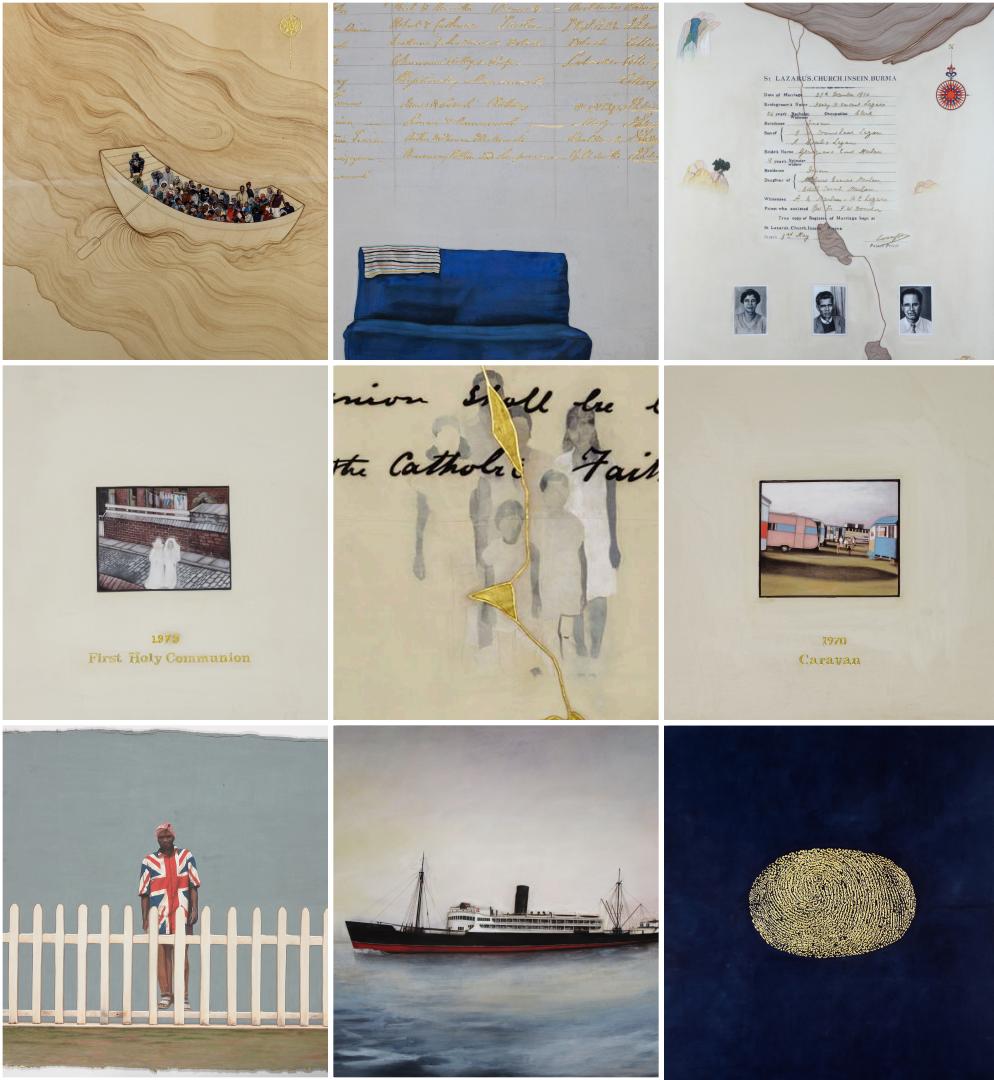
"The other things about Lazaro's work is the conscious documentation of things in the most aesthetical way possible. One could believe that it comes from the essence of a practicing miniaturist, where the tradition induces a sense of questioning, documentation, beauty and aesthetics in the practitioner." —Sushma Sabnis



Everyday Simplicity

Celebrating Ordinariness

This is about the Artist's search for simplicity, cutting through the complexity of life. As a witness, he finds joy in observing and capturing the simple moments and objects of life. It's about the ordinariness of everyday life, absence of luxury and pretentiousness. The Artist makes the objects, intrinsic to the 'traditions' of yester-years living, precious. This code brings alive the spiritual mind of the Artist, in today's materialistic life context. It's about celebrating the spirit in matter.



Moving Identity

Displacement, Migration and Identity.

The Artist delves deeper on the global tension around immigration and identity crisis, linking the trajectory of his family history. This code revolves around issues of colonial expansion, migration patterns, and the ideas of nation-hood. He brings alive the socio-cultural impact of such migrations on people's lives. *Human displacement against will Vs. immigration in hope for better life.*

He challenges the 'variable' continuum of identity - *biological, personal, social, secular, religious, national identity*. The Artist expresses all the symbols (from *homeland to certificate to religion to past memories*) that define the identity. And yet elevates the discourse to a spiritual level, in the painting, *The Cosmic Egg – the Universal Womb of Creation*. The natural pigment, meditative spirals, sacred geometry and sacred text, is a message in itself.

Through the medium of his art, the Artist evocatively brings alive collective history. He deploys the essence, materials and methods of miniature art, weaving in layers of stories within stories... *personal history documented aesthetically.*

"If the earlier series 'The Baptism Certificate' looks at how we regain personal histories, then the recent work questions what that history is, how it is dismantled and recycle to arrive at notions of self and nationhood." – DL

“While I have spent most of my life in an uneasy space, with no idea where my feet are, I have laid down my roots now (in Pondicherry). But my work will always raise questions. As an artist that’s what you do.”-DL



“For a long time I have wanted to make a shed – a small scale sculpture – a generic garden shed – a shape that would satisfy my fascination with ‘house and home’ a theme, which over the last few years. I have considered in paintings – each time trying to unravel a meaning for both – as a symbol and a personal reference” – DL”



The Airport Angel

Airport , a recurring motif, is symbolic of the moving state of the immigrant, in search of his roots. This painting is an attempt to resolve the East-West dichotomy that has informed and continues to inform the Artist's work. (a brown man wearing white robe sleeping in the transit zone.)

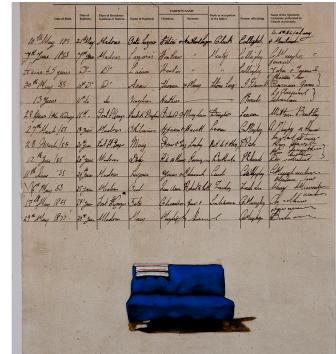


In the Blue House series, the Artist delves into socio-cultural tensions around the social symbol of a 'Home'.

'Make-do' and Permanent; Natural and Manmade; Ingenuity and Improvisation; Necessity and Desires; Have and Have-not; Social mobility and Stability; Individual and Collective; Destruction and recreation

In The Baptism Series, the Artist pays homage to his ancestral lineage. A document certifying of his Origin. A connection...a sense of belonging beyond the physical construct of a House.

Here the idea of Home is rooted in 3G of Lineage Continuum – Genes, Geography and God. Both as Abstract (inward) and the Physical(Outward)



Imaginary Homeland

In search of home and belonging

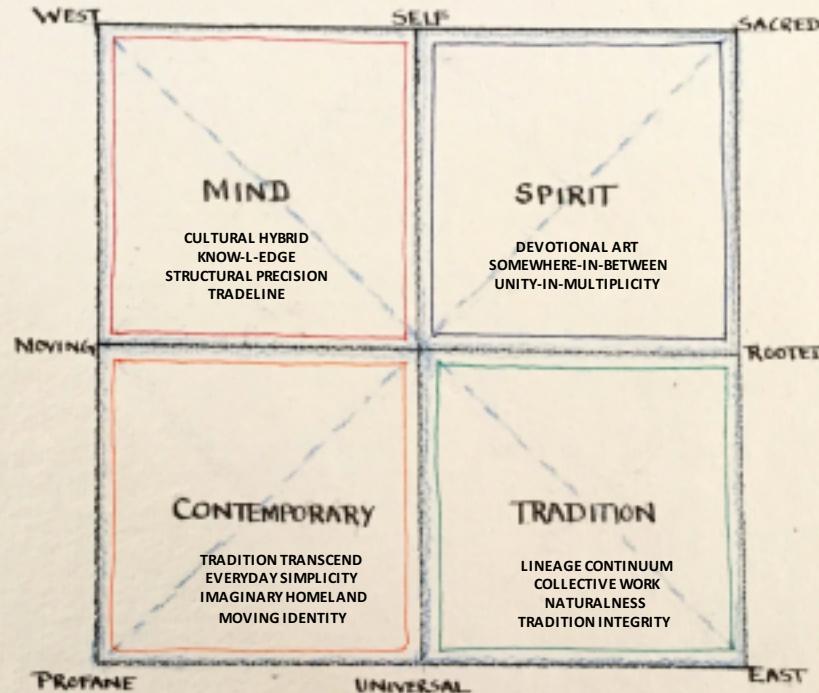
This is about the Artist's quest around the primordial and universal human need called 'Home'. Its about his journey as an immigrant, moving through life across the globe. He looks at the notion of *imagining home in strange lands*. He explores in-depth the icon of Home, viewing from physical, material, abstract and spiritual perspective. This is the central defining code of the Artist's work.



The Cosmic Egg (Hiranyagarbha in Sanskrit) symbolises the golden womb that led to creation of the universe. The juxtaposed thumbprint is the primordial symbol of identity. This signifies the Artist transcending physicality, and 'coming home' to his spiritual identity.

The Cultural Foundational Framework

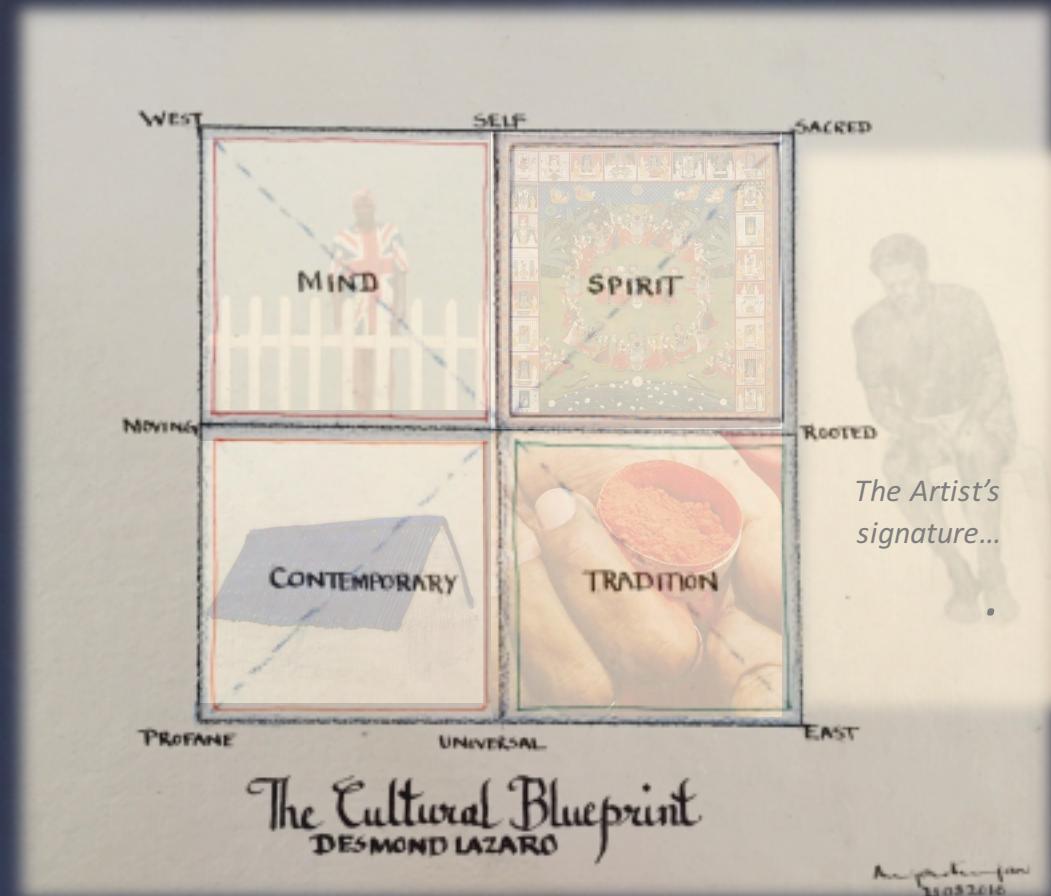
Cultural Tensions
Territories
Codes

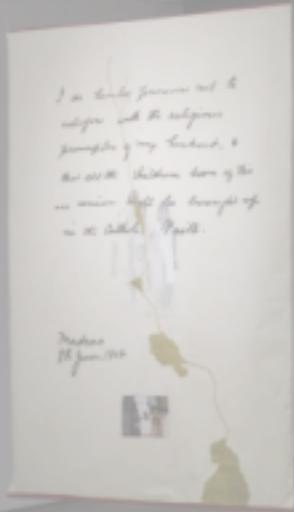


The Cultural Blueprint
DESMOND LAZARO

11032016

Defining The Brand Desmond Lazaro rooted in Cultural Coding





Brand and Culture.

Brands become active agents in pushing the cultural agenda: they link their value system with emergent cultural meanings, transform themselves into active ambassadors of culture.

Culturally tuned brands interact in new ways, places and moments by telling stories, that are part of culture and hence are more truthful and appealing. Consumers purchase brands in order to experience and be associated with these stories and enhance their own cultural identities.



Brand is a Sign.

Semiotics is a cultural expertise, helping brands distil an effective and relevant culturally-tuned Thumbprint, and elevate them into cultural icons.

Semiotics looks at the relationship between Branding and Culture through the medium of signs. Through examining signs and what they mean,, semiotics reveal often overlooked meanings and create attention and differentiation

Semiotics deconstructs brand values to uncover their broader socio-cultural dynamics and current momentum as well as how to express those through specific visual compositions, symbol and language, shapes etc. Furthermore, it can monitor how these expressions evolve linking emergent signifiers with emergent meanings.



**Brand Thumbprint is a distillation
of what the Artist does**

intuitively, subconsciously

**that gives meaning, relevance and distinction
to his Art-Brand**

**As a Blueprint, it serves to guide future direction and
actions, and provides a lens to the viewer to appreciate
and understand the Art, more closely and deeply.**

***Brand is the signature of the Artist
decoded.***

How = Unique Process

The Origin of the Artist.

The distinctive approach, materials,
methods behind the Art creation.

Tactical

What = Core Competence

The unique perspective the Artist brings
to the world through his Art practice. It is
the resolution of the oppositions within
the cultural context of the Artist

Strategic

Why = Ideology .

The Essence is the core
unchangeable truth that
defines and drives the Artist

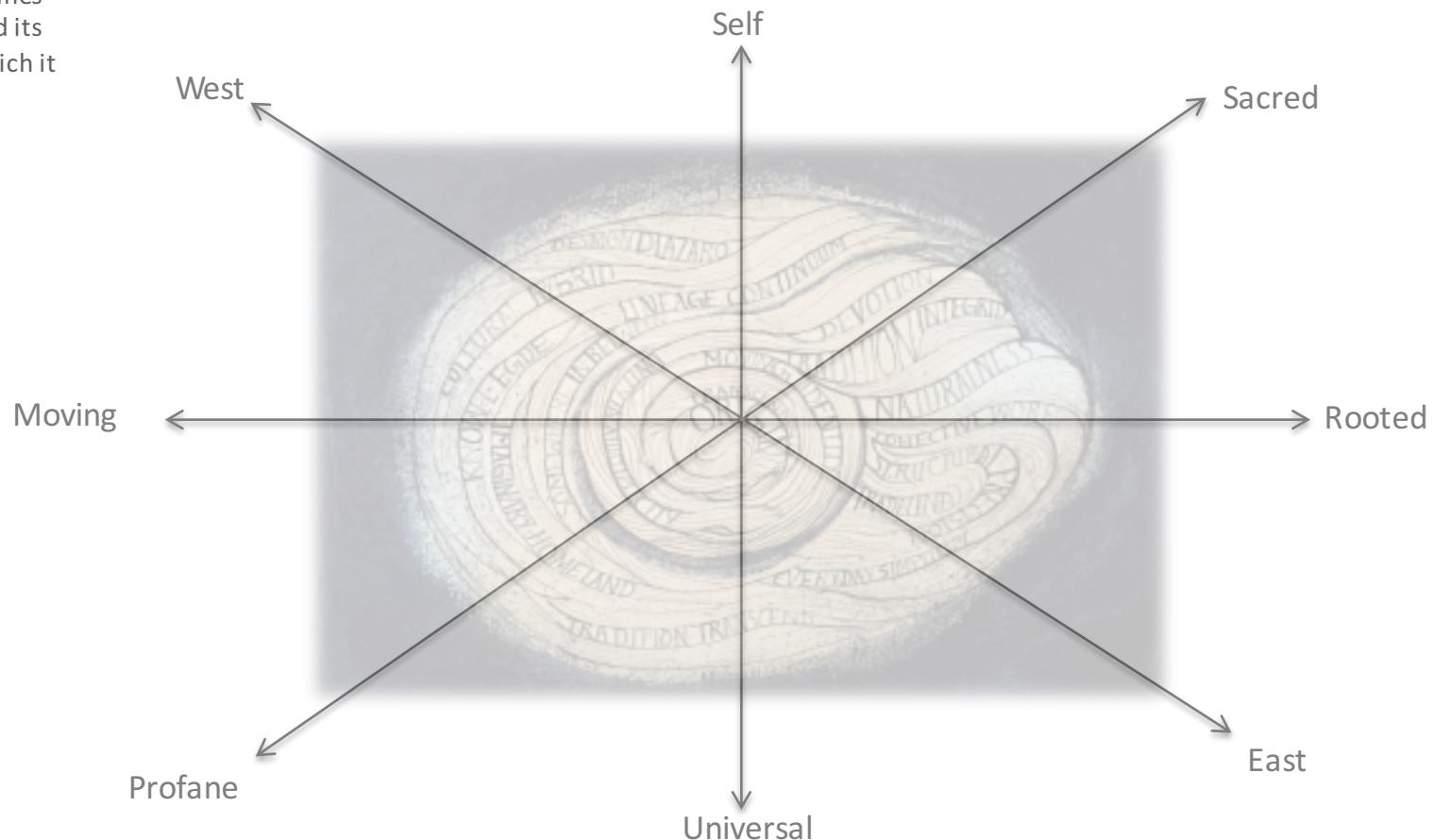
Inspirational

Brand Foundation Model

rooted in Cultural Coding



BRAND CONTEXT defines the brand domain and its boundaries within which it operates.



BRAND ORIGIN



Cultural Hybrid

Multiplicity, Diversity
Dichotomy, Conflict

Lineage Continuum

Encoded DNA Pool
Karma
Past-present-future
Timelessness

How = Unique Process

The Origin of the Artist.
The distinctive approach,
materials, methods behind the
creation of the Art.

BRAND PROCESSES



Know-l-Edge

Quest, Pursuit
Mind, Intellect
Human Evolution



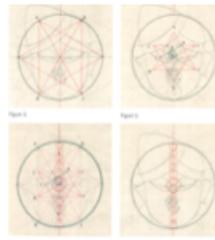
Devotion

Spiritual Love
Surrender Self
Self Realization



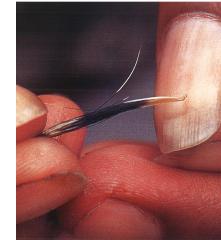
Tradition Integrity

Trueness to the Spirit In Origin
Adherence to the timeless codes
In matter and methods



Structural Precision

Foundational Structure
Precision and Symmetry
In the Universe



Naturalness

Life in Matter, Organic
Preservation
Immortality of Life



Collective Work

Microcosm in Macrocosm
One in the Whole

ROOTED IN THE CULTURAL BLUEPRINT

BRAND UNIQUE PERSPECTIVE

What = Core Competence

The unique perspective the Artist brings to the world through his Art practice. It is the resolution of the oppositions within the cultural context of the Artist

**Moving Identity**

*Who am I?
Where do I come from?
Identity Deconstruct*

**Imaginary Homeland**

*Where do I belong?
Where is Home
What makes a Home
In search of roots*

**Everyday Simplicity**

*My Living World
Everyday 'traditions' in matter*

**Somewhere-in-between**

*Challenge status quo
Exploring NEW spaces,
Navigating tensions
Hanging in between, Surrender*

**Tradition Transcend**

*Breaking out of old codes
Creating new patterns
Recreation in destruction*

**Tradeline**

*The Economics
Connecting cultures*

**Unity-in Multiplicity**

*Unity, Oneness
Spiritual Identity
Home within*

ROOTED IN THE CULTURAL BLUEPRINT

BRAND ORIGIN



Cultural Hybrid

Multiplicity, Diversity
Dichotomy, Conflict



Lineage Continuum

Encoded DNA Pool
Karma
Past-present-future
Timelessness

BRAND ESSENCE



TRANSCENDING ORIGIN

Unity, Infinity, Eternity
Carrying forward traditional codes in SPIRIT,
material and method
breaking out of stagnancy of codes repeating
in forms to create NEW patterns
Finding home and identity in the spiritual Truth

Why = Ideology.
The Essence is the core
unchangeable truth that
defines and drives the Artist

BRAND ORIGIN



Cultural Hybrid



Lineage Continuum

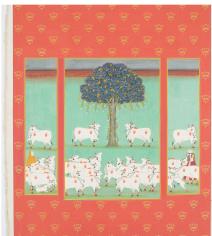
BRAND ESSENCE



TRANSCENDING ORIGIN



Unity-in Multiplicity



Tradition Transcend



Somewhere-in-between



Everyday Simplicity



Tradeline



Imaginary Homeland



Moving Identity

ROOTED IN THE CULTURAL BLUEPRINT



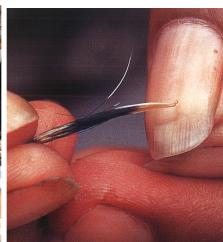
Tradition Integrity



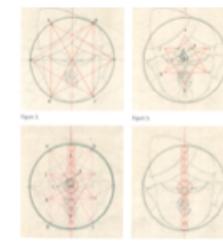
Devotion



Know-I-Edge



Naturalness



Structural Precision

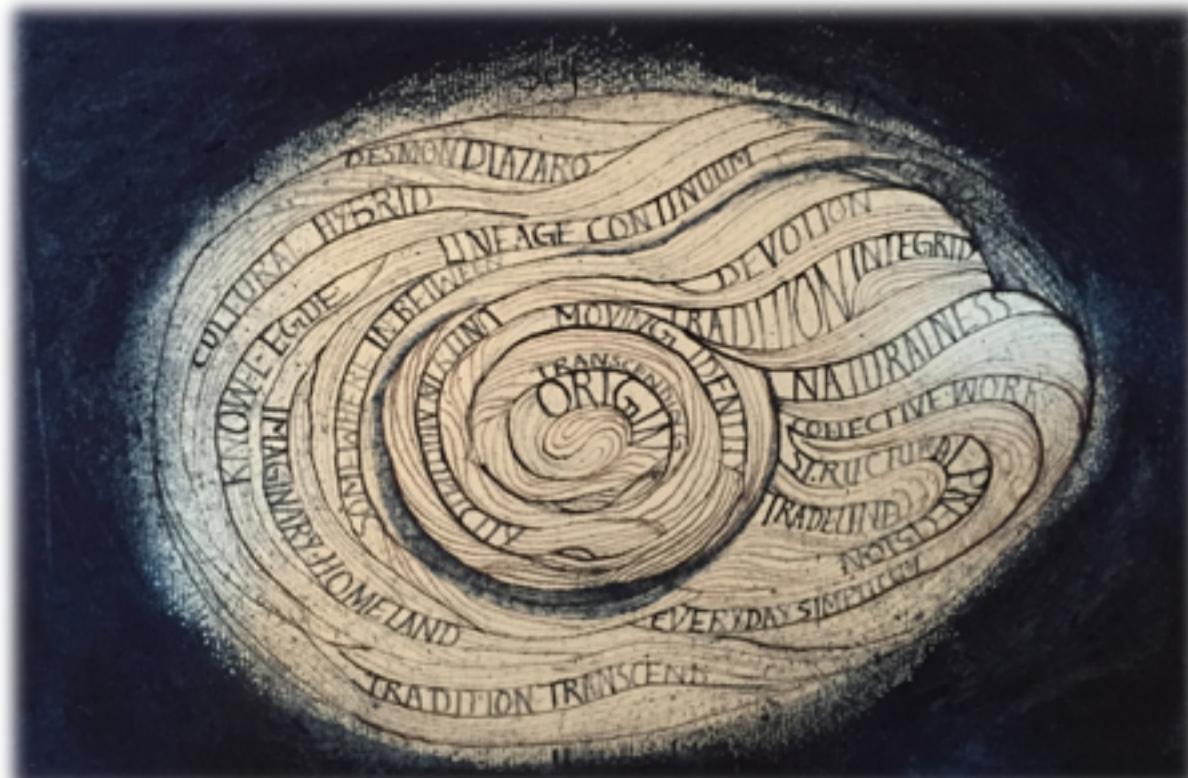


Collective Work

In his Great Concentration and Insight, the sixth-century Chinese Buddhist teacher Tien-t'ai used the phrase "from the indigo, an even deeper blue." This employs the example of the ancient process of dyeing cloth using a blue dye made from the indigo plant, where the dyed cloth takes on a deeper blue than the plant from which it was derived due to repeated immersion in the dye.

In the same way, if the mentor is likened to the indigo plant, by absorbing the mentor's teachings, the disciple can achieve an even more splendid "blue." This illustrates that the ultimate goal of the relationship is to enable the disciple to surpass the mentor.

Blue deeper than Indigo



Brand Thumbprint
DESMOND LAZARO



*In creating art
we express our journeys,
so personal,
and in sharing art
we offer it back to
the Universe- the Origin.*

*And in that
lies fr*

eedom and peace.

- AG



Future belongs to those who see possibilities before they become obvious

AIYANA GUNJAN WORKS AS AN INDEPENDENT CONSULTANT IN STRATEGIC BRAND PLANNING & SEMIOTICS.

Aiyana brings Brand & Cultural Intelligence into the marketing/brand interventions. She follows an incisive strategic approach towards the brand development process. Aiyana has been doing pioneering work in the specialized field of Semiotics, impacting global- local strategies. She has tracked the socio-cultural shifts and patterns in India since liberalization.

Aiyana Gunjan did her schooling from Modern School, Barakhamba Road, B.A.(Hons.) in Economics from Lady Sri Ram college and Masters in Business Economics (MBE) from Delhi University. Aiyana has more than two decades of experience in the strategic planning function in the advertising industry (at Ogilvy and JWT, and as Head of the Planning function at Mudra, Bates-141,Dentsu and Law & Kenneth)..

Art, culture and traveling are her passions. Aiyana is also an Artist/Calligrapher where she has taken the traditional calligraphy into the language of contemporary abstract. She has participated in several shows in India and abroad.

Aiyana is an independent Brand Semiotician, representing Indian market on global projects. Aiyana collaborates with the International network of cultural experts, to bring cross-cultural perspective on the project. She has worked on several International projects like J&J, Pepsico-Gatorade, Nokia, AstraZeneca, with UK companies (Space Doctors, Truth Consulting, & Visual Signo). Aiyana spearheaded the Ford Car Foundational Framework Project in India for Team Detroit (WPP)-Ford Motors, USA., (in collaboration with Visual Signo,UK). and Semiotics of Auroville (international township).

Attendee at Global Semiotics Conference, SemioFest, London 2012, Barcelona 2013; Shanghai 2014; Workshop by Monty Alexander & Virginia, Mumbai, 2005; Design & Semiotics Workshop, Barcelona 2013..

She has an extensive strategic brand planning experience of having worked across wide range of global and local brands, across product categories (FMCG, durables, technology, lifestyle) like Nokia, Canon, Lotus Herbals, Sony Ericsson, Samsung, Lavazza, Horlicks, Boost, Maggi range, Yamaha, RayBan, Swatch, GPI, Seagrams, Motorola, Cargill Nature Fresh, Dabur , Reckitt and Coleman Mortein.



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