Explorations into the World of the Spiritual Artist:
An investigative and self-exploratory painting project to better understand artistic spiritual inspiration using sources from Tibetan Buddhist and Toltec cultures.

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Expected Graduation Date: Fall 2006
Summer Project Mentor: Anthony Droegue

Mentor
Anthony Droegue, Area Coordinator and Professor of Visual Arts, Indiana University of South Bend’s Raclin School of the Arts

Description of the Project
In researching the roots of my Mexican culture, I came across various intricately detailed ancient Aztec calendars that immediately reminded me of the Tibetan Buddhist mandala in both their physical characteristics and their cultural significance. The Aztec civilization, mostly occupying the Valley of Mexico, was relatively unknown during the 12th and 13th century A.D., but rose to be the greatest power in the Americas by the time the Spaniards arrived, in the 16th century. Tibetan Buddhism dates as far back as the third century B.C., and was proclaimed the state religion by the eighth century B.C.

I have noticed how these two cultures created visual dialogues that were very similar artistically and spiritually, even though these artistic manifestations were geographically and chronologically distant. The function of both the mandala and the Aztec calendar did not only have to do with recording time. These historically vital works of art are symbols of the spiritual dialogue that the artists would render to other human beings by way of inspiration. This source of inspiration can be said to be animistic; that is, derived from a universal spirit that is present in every object, even if it is inanimate.

As an active artist and fine art student, I am most fascinated with the concept that certain kind of art is created as a product of spiritual inspiration. Artists, like those who created the Aztec calendars and the Tibetan Buddhist mandalas, are engaged in spiritual activities while producing their art forms. It is during this spiritual experience that the artist creates a medium for communication that reveals deeper, more soulful
understandings of such intangible ideas as human existence, universal time and connecting links in our world. The artist, by way of his/her artistic artifact, plays the role of the mediator between the source of his/her inspiration and the viewer.

The purpose of my project is to further explore the artistic spirit that motivated the creation of both the Aztec calendar and the Tibetan Buddhist mandala through bibliographic research (see selected books) and through the creation of my own paintings. I will carry out my investigation not only through reading selected books on the topic and examining and comparing images of Aztec calendars and Tibetan Buddhist mandalas, but also through physically and mentally experiencing the connection between these ancient art forms by creating closely related paintings of my own. Within the compositions of these artworks, I will specifically examine the iconography, the iconology, the form, the color and the medium used in these artistic devices as well as their spiritual symbolism.

**Plan of Research and Activities:**

The expected result of my research and creative work will be either three or six paintings depending on funding. I am including a sample list of selected books that I will research. I also plan on visiting several museums and cultural centers (depending on funding) that have Native American and Buddhist art collections and information including The Sante Museum of Art at the University of Notre Dame, The Museum of Mexican Culture and History in Chicago, The Art Institute of Chicago, The Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art in Indianapolis and The Chicago Cultural Center (Buddhist Gathering Place).

My final goal would be to present the conclusions of my investigation, my paintings and some visual samples of Aztec calendars and Tibetan Buddhist mandalas in an art show setting in a local gallery or on campus.
Salvador Moya  
My first reflection  
Oil on canvas, 32" x 40"

### Time Line Budget(s)

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<th><strong>$1,500 Fellowship Plan (5 weeks)</strong></th>
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<td><strong>Week 1:</strong> Bibliography Research and Travel</td>
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<td><strong>Week 2:</strong> Painting 1</td>
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<td><strong>Week 5:</strong> Write final conclusions and Prepare for art show</td>
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<td><strong>Week 10:</strong> Write final conclusions and Prepare for art show</td>
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$1,500 Fellowship Plan (5 weeks)
Number of Paintings: 3

Travel Plans/Research Places:
1) Chicago Culture Center
   (SGI-USA Buddhist Hub)
   Expenses: Travel to/from Chicago

2) Museum of Mexican Culture &
   History in Chicago
   Expenses: Travel to/from Chicago

3) University of Notre Dame
   Snite Museum of Art
   (Pre-Columbian Collection)

4) University of Notre Dame
   Theodore Hesburgh Library

$3,000 Fellowship Plan (10 weeks)
Number of Paintings: 6

Travel Plans/Research Places:
1) Chicago Culture Center
   (SGI-USA Buddhist Hub)
   Expenses: Travel to/from Chicago

2) Museum of Mexican Culture &
   History in Chicago
   Expenses: Travel to/from Chicago

3) University of Notre Dame
   Snite Museum of Art
   (Pre-Columbian Collection)

4) University of Notre Dame
   Theodore Hesburgh Library

5) Art Institute of Chicago including
   The Ryerson Library
   Ticket Price: $12.00
   Expenses: Travel to/from Chicago

6) Eiteljorg Museum of American
   Indians and Western Art
   Ticket Price: $8.00
   Expenses: Travel to/from Indianapolis

7) Art Chicago in the Park 2006
   Ticket Price: $15.00
   Expenses: Travel to/from Chicago

Selected Books

Title: *Art and Meditation*
Author: Lama Anagarika Govinda
Synopsis: Govinda shares his profound insights into the creative process.

Title: *Art of Enlightenment*
Author: Yeshe De Project
Synopsis: A short booklet based on notes given by Tarthang Tulku dedicated to Western artists.

Title: *Art of Tantra*
Author: Rawson, Philip
Synopsis: A fully illustrated survey of Hindu and Buddhist tantric art.

Title: *Art of Tibet*
Author: Fisher, Robert E
Synopsis: The inextricably intertwined relationship between the art and spiritual life of the region is unraveled.

Title: *Reclaiming the Spiritual in Art: Contemporary Cross-Cultural Perspectives*
Edited by: Dawn Perlmutter, Debra Koppman
Synopsis: Western theories in philosophy and aesthetics are interwoven with examples of Native American, Latin American, and African American aesthetic and spiritual ...

Title: *Handbook to life in the Aztec world*
Author: Manuel Aguilar-Moreno

Title: *Art and the Native American: Perception, Reality, and Influence*
Edited by: Mary Louise Krumrine

Title: *Spirit Taking Form: Making a Spiritual Practice of Making Art*
Author: Nancy Azara

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**Research Expense Grant Request**

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**Additional Costs Associated with Project**
Please consider the following material and travel costs for a research expense grant.

**Materials for 3 Paintings (5 weeks):** $250.00
**Materials for 6 Paintings (10 weeks):** $350.00
This money will fund the cost of paintbrushes, canvas, oil paint, gesso, paint primers, linseed oil and stretcher bars. There will also be additional costs to frame these paintings for the final gallery show.

**Travel Expenses (5 weeks):** $60.00
**Travel Expenses (10 weeks):** $120.00
Travel to/from Chicago and/or Indianapolis museums and cultural centers, as well as paying the entrance fees.