

THE NATURAL MANDALA

Meditations from the Sacred Book of Nature



The Cinnamon Branches Ring creates what I believe to be the single greatest visual spectacle within The Natural Mandala. In addition to it being a prominent feature that is difficult to overlook, it has the distinction of taking on another dimension due to a unique sub-characteristic. When one maintains a constant gaze at this ring and allows its negative space to become prominent, the branches begin to recede and the negative space moves forward. This visual duality is something that one can easily switch back and forth between; first from the actual branches and then to the creamy-white negative space of the sand ground behind it. Depending upon the aberrant lighting conditions within the exhibition space, shadows cast from the branches and the cinnamon filigree may also take on another dimension as well. When brought into prominence, the negative space has an almost floral appearance, like the petals of a daisy flower radiating out from its center. Others have noted that this negative space ring feels like an aural burst of energy emanating from the solid central structure. For some, this feature is what gives The Natural Mandala its rather kinetic energy feel, that is, as you bring this negative space forward and hold it in a gentle stare while still focusing your eye on the center void, this ring begins to rotate counter-clockwise to the egg-shell ring and inner arena feature. Hypnotic and kaleidoscopic, centering your relaxed gaze upon this mechanistic, and yet very illusionary, component prepares your loosening conscious mind for going within.

What does the duality of these alternating positive and negative “spaces” symbolize for you? When you see the shift of alternating views, consider your own shifting negative and positive dualities within your life. How do you navigate shifting perceptions you experience daily? What does a “shift in perception” mean for you? How can you use this concept to better understand what life puts in your path? Consider that every time you gaze upon these shifting modalities what archetypal aspects they might symbolize and then accept in to your *knowing* that every situation has an alternative (and symbolic) point of view.



Each “Y” branch establishes a single point along the interior arena wall and two points of contact along the outer egg-shell ring. These two rings seem to create a rigid stabilization bridging these to features. What does this mean to the illusionary counter-rotations we see when we gently gaze into the center? Consider these points of connection as if they were floating electrical contacts, like negative and positive energy moving within the mandala form, a kind of energy creating magnetic rotation. Consider that this magnetic energy is a protective force surging throughout the mandala. What might this mean to the whole mandala? What does it mean to/for you? How can you access this energy and when you enter the mandala, how does it effect your energy? Conversely, consider that it is the energy you emit by your act of meditation that put these rings into motion; if so, what does that say about your energy? What does it mean to have the ability to access the mandala in this way? Isn't it like finding a resource for solving problems or being handed the map to a lost treasure or being given the key to unlock a secret of nature or access the wisdom of the Universe?

What about the canal below; why does there need to be a bridge over it and why so many? Is there something below the branches that must be avoided, like a rushing river or a deep gorge? Yet, it is dry sand. Perhaps the opposite is more true that the branches are not a bridge but a shield or a collecting or protecting fan or a kind of Islamic screen or Gothic tracery that permeates cinnamon into the air like Tibetan Prayer Flags sending out sentiments of peace, joy and love, wave after wave upon the breeze. Consider it to be like a Native American Dream Catcher where the actual scent of cinnamon tames negative energy just as the scent of vanilla is associated with the presence of angels. What does the aroma of cinnamon create in your mind? What does its essence symbolize for you? Have you ever smelled cinnamon on the air? What did you feel from its effects? Did it stay with you for very long? Did its aroma penetrate you deeply? Did you feel a shift in your emotions or your conscious mind?

The Sand Canal can be thought of as a range of structures; a dried riverbed, a canal, a channel or a stylized version of a gorge or canyon cut by a once flowing river. What is the metaphor for the depth of this channel and so many bridges above it? In relationship to the rest of the mandala, its depth and expanse is the greatest within it. It is an open channel, free and clear of barriers, banks or obstacles, perhaps a deceptive trap that doesn't seem to be as deep as it is. The channel is a visual respite for the eye wandering about the architecture of the mandala. Within it the bed of sand receives the subtle shadow play from the cinnamon filigree above without variation; calm and serene, stillness. What does the sand symbolize for you? All sand was once solid rock, whittled down by Sun, wind and water over the millennia. In this channel there are no rocks, just the remnants of rock, pulverized down to its most basic and infinitesimal state. How deep is the sand? Do you imagine the sand hard and dry or wet like pliable quicksand? Is this channel a place that you would want to be or is its depth, expanse, consistent level plane and continuous circling too intimidating – like walking across an endless dessert landscape or adrift on the calm open sea? What does the sand symbolize for you? Consider it the broken remnants of troubles past, negative energies soon to be renewed.