

*"The Heart has a question.
The Heart must be Satisfied."*

Avatar Adi Da Samraj



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Video Introduction:
The Art of Adi Da Samraj



**Transcendental Realism: The Art of Adi Da Samraj
Opens in Florence – Exhibition Feb. 23 - June 22**

The City of Florence has chosen Avatar Adi Da's Divine Image-Art as the centerpiece of its 2008 Winter in Florence arts festival—and the City's first venture in enlivening its rich artistic heritage by engaging with contemporary art.

Shown here is Adi Da Samraj's Exhibition in the Cenacolo di Ognissanti, a former refectory, adjoining the Church of Ognissanti, which also houses one of Florence's prize Renaissance masterpieces, Domenico Ghirlandaio's fresco, *The Last Supper* (circa

1480), visible on the far wall. *This is first time the Cenacolo as been opened to display art by a non-Italian, living artist.*

"This exhibition is the result of an experiment that we intended to offer to the City of Florence for the first time . . . Artworks that are so contemporary presented in a space that has such unique artistic value and heritage. . . . We finally beat the Louvre to something!"

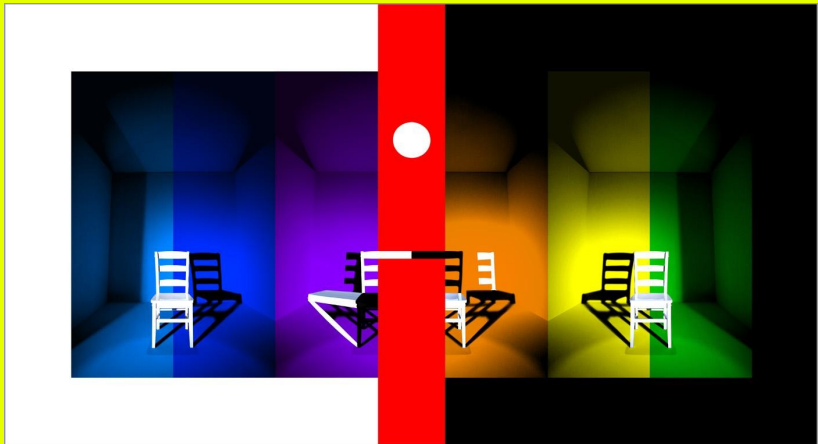
– Dr. Cristina Acidini, Superintendent of Fine Art in Florence

Read a Press Release about Florence Exhibit

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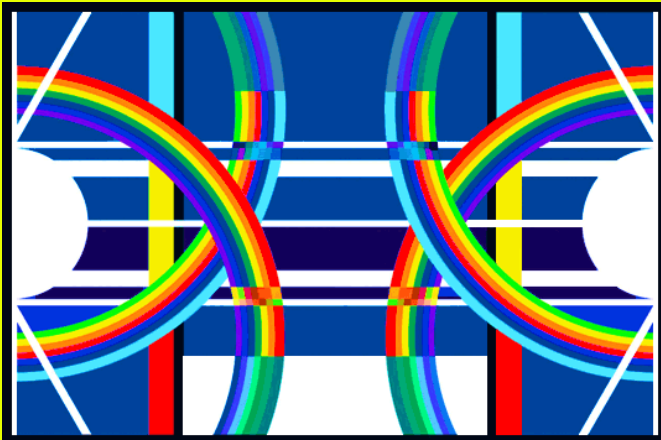
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“The art I make and do has a profound purpose. Therefore, the art I make and do can only be fully rightly viewed within a context that supports that purpose . . . A traditional temple or church is culturally and artistically purposed to open up into something beyond. A life-transforming space that is profoundly protective, and yet demanding.”



The “First Room” Trilogy I

– Adi Da Samraj



Equal 1

Humans and Pigs are Equal—at Heart

“It is not that only human beings are full of 'soul' and everything else should be chopped up and eaten for lunch! . . .

“All is One. All is the same.

“All equally require Divine Compassion, Love, and Blessing, the thread of Communion with the Divine made certain and true and directly experienced.

“All.”

– Adi Da Samraj



Pigs develop deep bonds in their social lives. Yama (above, in Christmas decoration) lost his close friend, Niyama. After he recovered from the loss, Yama found a new friend in Stryder (the horse pictured behind Yama). They now roam the hills of the Auckland Ashram together.

Find more Wisdom about Non-Humans at the Fear-No-More Zoo website



John Wubbenhorst

A devotee writes . . .

MUSIC FIRE ECSTASY WITH [THE] BELOVED

As many have said, the leela of going on retreat starts well before retreat...so it was for me in the fall of 2007. Due to financial circumstances, I was convinced that I would not be able to go on retreat and do music service as I had done for many recent celebrations. I was not happy about this, but it seemed to be the most responsible path to take. In October, I was specifically asked to come to Naitauba for the celebration time. It was amazing to feel the shift in my awareness now that I knew I could be going to Naitauba. I could tangibly feel my relationship to Beloved Adi Da become more direct. And I could see the value of having service that directly relates to His circumstance, because music brings the faculties back to Him.

There was still the problem of no money and besides myself, there was a request for Neela Bhagwat, an Indian singer, to come. I did not see how this total amount of money could be raised in such a short time. But I felt I should just go ahead with energy toward this. Quite literally, I now "had" to put a lot of attention on writing fundraising letters, arranging and performing benefit concerts and communicating with many others about our progress. I felt the grace of this right away. It felt as if I was already on Naitauba and often like I was at Darshan. It was now getting within a week of the celebration and still we were well short of money needed to also bring Neela.

Adi Da had already been told that Neela was coming and she had prepared. But it looked like we weren't going to be able to fund her travel. At the last moment, we heard that a public person who had been invited to the island for the celebration, was happy to gift the travel money for Neela.

It turned into a wonderful time of music in Beloved Adi Da's presence. He in the many and often spontaneous occasions of Darshan. A few times Adi Da walked to His house while we followed Him in the sand. Twice, He simply stopped, turned around and gave the most sublime standing Darshans. I played the flute with my toes almost in the water. The waves gently lapped up on the beach with just the sound of the bamboo flute.



Later there were notes from Beloved Adi Da that there should always be sacred music happening around Him. That is now our challenge. After two weeks I was back in the USA feeling ever more strongly the responsibility to provide Adi Da Samraj with what He needs to do His work. We are now working to always have musicians on Naitauba.

John is the foremost Western student of the Indian bansuri flute master, Hariprasad Chaurasia. Billboard Magazine wrote, "The bansuri flute is one of the most sensual and serene instruments to come out of India. Only a couple of Westerners have mastered its intricacy—one is John Wubbenhorst." John tours internationally and has released six CDs under his Facing East label. John has been a devotee of Adi Da Samraj since 1999. He lives in Fairfax, VA.

[Listen to John Wubbenhorst play bansuri flute at www.facingeast.com](http://www.facingeast.com)

A devotee writes . . .



Leah Fleisher

Leah Fleisher is a physical therapist and professional harpist living in the Washington, DC area. She has been a devotee of Adi Da Samraj since 1992.

On Retreat with Beloved Adi Da

My three week retreat started with an intense bodily purification on the boat ride to Naitauba. I have never been so seasick and wretched in my whole life! It did not take much to recognize, however, that the previous year—which was full of travel for work, service, family and pleasure, and had included plenty of liberality with the disciplines and the diet—in essence warranted that purifying boat ride! I'm happy to report the boat trip *leaving* Naitauba was smooth and simple—but I'm getting ahead of the leela.

When I arrived on Naitauba I found that although previously Beloved Adi Da had been granting Darshan liberally and usually daily, events had now shifted such that access for retreatants would consist now of “only” two Darshans a week.

The first Darshan was (for me) simply about the happiness of seeing one's Guru in His physical Body, after a year's time away. Just Happy! Full of Joy! In the second Darshan occasion, several days later, I heard Instructions from Beloved Adi Da in my head—which almost never happens in my experience. What I heard was “I am not in your body-mind”. The Instruction surprised me—first that I had heard them in that way, and second because Beloved Adi Da was perfectly showing me that I was looking for Him via my own experiencing. I was checking the signs in my body and mind in order to know whether I was finding Him or not. And He was saying “I'm not in there.” It was a fantastic moment of Grace, because truly I was not aware of what I had been, and always am, doing in

relationship with Him. That Instruction is one that will endure, always. (As a side note, a couple of months earlier I had a dream in which Adi Da gave me a *niyama* to “Be in Him Always”.)

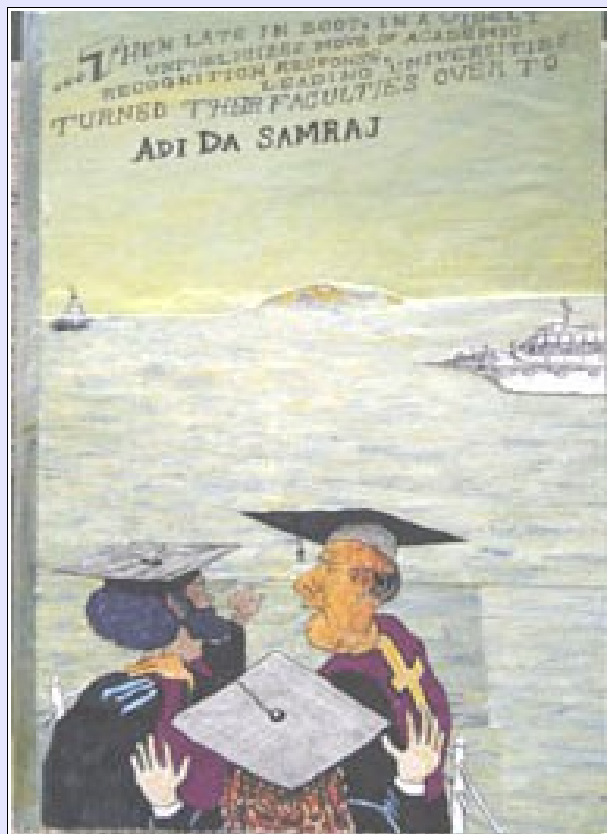
I came to recognize the reality that the island of Naitauba is Beloved Adi Da's Form. Simply setting foot on His island initiates a process in relationship with Him—whether or not one ever sees Him.



During my three week retreat, I saw Beloved Adi Da in Darshan no more than five times, yet so much occurred in meditation, puja and service that I always felt in devotional relationship with Him. That didn't lessen the desire to receive His formal Darshan, but it was liberating and sobering to note that His Influence was present all the time. Even here, now, thousands of miles away from His Hermitage, it is clear that there really never is any obstruction of access to Him. Turning to Beloved Adi Da is always possible.



It Was in the Cards



Danavira Mela card handmade for Adi Da Samraj by Charles Crumb. Charles works as a bookkeeper in the Washington, DC area. He has been a devotee of Avatar Adi Da since 1995.

During the December holiday season, called Danavira Mela in Adidam, or “The Celebration of the Hero of Giving”, devotees of Avatar Adi Da around the world are invited to send holiday cards to Him.

This year at the Washington, DC, center a Sunday afternoon in December was spent around a table covered with colored paper, glue, sequins, color sprinkles, cut-up magazine pictures, scissors, pens and markers—creating cards for Adi Da Samraj.

Charles Crumb, a DC area devotee, began a card in the style of R. Crumb, an artist Avatar Adi Da has considered and appreciated over many years (and a distant cousin of Charles'). The card took many days to complete. Time was squeezed from other pressing tasks—Charles even dropped plans for his birthday celebration and spent the day working on it, and still it wasn't finished. For days it was forgotten. With too much else to do it appeared there was no way it could be completed in time. The card would go to Adi Da Samrajasham in Fiji with Leah Fleisher, a retreatant scheduled to depart soon.

As often happens in the complex, tension-rich and unpredictable milieu of devotees in devotional relationship to Adi Da Samraj, when difficult, seemingly intractable situations are unexpectedly resolved and “Brightened” by His Grace, just in the nick of time, with help from another devotee, the card suddenly came together.

As pictured at the left, it portrays three university professors on the prow of a ship gesturing excitedly at Naitauba Island on the horizon. Written at the top, in a pastiche of R. Crumb's handwriting, the caption states “...Then late in 2007, in a widely unpublicized move of academic recognition response, leading universities turned their faculties over to Adi Da Samraj.”

“Recognition response” is a primary element in Adi Da's Teaching, i.e., recognizing Him as the Divine, and responding to Him as That. And “turned their faculties over” refers to the fundamental devotional practice Beloved Adi Da has given to devotees, as stated by Him in Verse 7 of His essay, “The Searchless Essence of Radical Devotion to Me”.

“The principal exercise of the devotional relationship to Me is the (moment to moment) turning of the four principal faculties (of the body, emotion, mind and breath) to My Avatarically-Born bodily (human) Divine Form and Person.”

Leah took many, many cards to Naitauba from devotees around the world. During her retreat, as a service she hung these cards where Adi Da Samraj could see and enjoy them. Because Charles' card was particularly unusual, Leah pointed it out one day to Adi-Dasya Quandra Sukhapur Rani, Adi Da's principal attendant.

The card was taken into Adi Da Samraj's room where He carefully looked it over, and reportedly “chuckled”. Later the card was given to Leah to take back to Washington as prasad (blessing) for Charles.

Charles with prasad, Potomac, MD, January



Postscript It is interesting to note that Charles, who had not been on retreat at Adi Da Samrajasham in over ten years and had, in the intervening time, undergone an intensive process of deepening his self-understanding and “radical” devotion to Avatar Adi Da, went on retreat to Fiji again in February this year. He will tell his story Saturday, March 8. (See the Local Events calendar on the next page for details.)



Charles (second from left) receiving Darshan of Adi Da Samraj, February 18, Adi Da Samrajasham, Fiji.

LOCAL EVENTS

Retreat Leela from Adi Da Samrajashram

("Leela" means a story of the play of the Guru)

Charles Crumb of Potomac, MD, returned March 1 from a two-week meditation retreat in the company of Adi Da Samraj on Naitauba Island, Fiji, and will share the extraordinary tale of Adi Da's Grace.

Please join us in person or by phone.

When: Saturday, March 8, 5:00-6:00 pm. **Where:** Adidam Revelation Bookstore, 10610 Falls Road, Potomac, MD or via Teleconference: 605-475-6100, Code 54#. **Cost:** \$5 donation.

For those attending by phone, checks made out to "Adidam" can be mailed to: Howard Rontal, Adidam Revelation Bookstore, 10610 Falls Rd, Potomac, MD 20854. For further information call 301-983-0250.

3-Day Contemplative and Spiritual Retreat Weekend in Windham, NY Based on the Teaching of Avatar Adi Da Samraj April 18, 19 and 20

Come and participate in a deeply enlivening and heart-awakening retreat at the Windham Retreat Center, located at the base of Windham Mountain in the Northern Catskills in upstate New York (near Albany).

A detailed retreat flyer will be coming soon.

Adidam Study Groups

Ongoing Study of The Wisdom Teaching of Avatar Adi Da Samraj

Each session includes a video Darshan (sacred sighting) of Adi Da Samraj

Washington, DC

March 20 & April 17, 7:30 pm
10610 Falls Rd, Potomac, MD
Requested donation \$9
Contact: Michael Dustrude
301-983-0250 or info@adidamdc.org

Richmond, VA

March 13 & April 10, 7:00 pm
Requested donation \$9
Contact: Jackie Harwood
804-282-8770 or richmond@adidam.org

Mount Pleasant, SC

March 12 & April 9, 7:00 pm
Contact: Michael Torricelli
843-367-8884
miktorricelli@hotmail.com

Chapel Hill, NC

Contact: Elizabeth Ragland
919-619-7369

New Orleans, LA

Contact: Sean or Leanne
985-645-0556. No charge.

St. Augustine, FL

Contact: Brenda Dyson
443-244-3719

Third Congregation Invitations

Retreat Days for DC area devotees

March 15 & April 12, 10 am-1 pm

Teleconference Gatherings for those living

at a distance: March 9 & April 13, 7-8 pm

Special Worldwide Teleconference

with Anne Henderson on the devotional prayer of changes. March 8, 3:00-4:00 pm EST

Location: 10610 Falls Road, Potomac, MD. Contact:

Michael Dustrude, 301-983-0250 or info@adidamdc.org

Contact: Irene Bruce, 301-983-0250 or info@adidamdc.org

For call-in number and code, contact Michael Dustrude at 301-983-0250 or info@adidamdc.org.

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In the next (May-June) issue:

Avatar Adi Da's Divine Image-Art

A devotee from the Washington, DC area recently returned from a 3-month retreat at Adi Da Samrajashram directly serving Adi Da in His Divine Image-Art process, as part of a team of devotees in Picture Perfect, Adi Da's art studio. A first-hand witness to Beloved Adi Da Samraj within this creative milieu, she will offer glimpses of His approach to art, and recount the self-understanding and Divine Blessing she received in the crucible of Adi Da's artistic creation.

Orpheum at Oxford

A surprising story from a professor of English at a college in Hagerstown, MD, and a long-time devotee of Avatar Adi Da, who was inexplicably invited to present a paper last fall at the prestigious Oxford Round Table at Oxford University in England. His thesis, on the subject of *Orpheum*, by Adi Da Samraj, highlighting its capacity to shed light on pressing global issues, was presented to a receptive audience of academics in September. It has since been accepted for publication in the *Forum on Public Policy: a Journal of the Oxford Round Table*, forthcoming.

Letters to the editor may be addressed to info@adidamdc.org.