



to her inner voice

PLAINS WHY HER ARTWORKS ARE DEEPLY PERSONAL



tion. I see sculpture as an extension of painting, something physical.

You are a traveller. Which places inspire you?
Many locations are embedded in my memory. I live in Ras Al Khaimah and find painting here very rewarding as it has a stunning beach, mountains and island. The city has heart. It's evolving constantly – observing, capturing and documenting that process is fascinating for me.

Other specific places that have appeared in my work are the Karachi Clifton beach, the Jebel Jais mountains of Ras Al Khaimah, Hampstead Heath London, Wassenaar the city, the Singapore Botanical Gardens, to name a few.

Where do you draw your creative inspirations from today?

I am from Karachi, a city known for instability, violence and corruption. I have responded to this particularly through my calligraphy landscape paintings. A landscape is vast and it covers a large expanse – we are part of a landscape. Some of the darker, more tonal works are my interpretation of the city of Karachi. They have a certain haunting and poetic quality to them, and explore a personal narrative. They are my interpretation of living in a volatile city. I respond and cope with the challenges of my environment by turning to painting; through my art I tell stories. I also paint flowers as a self-preservation thing.

You also send messages through your work...

Yes, I use my work to start a dialogue and at the same time, send a message. I thought the symbols of flowers were most effective. It is non-preachy, subtle and has a universal poetic quality to it. Flowers act as a positive reinforcement to get the audience's attention, and at the same

time, offer sanity in the middle of crisis. And most importantly, since most art is deeply personal, coming from a personal space, for me, painting flowers in the middle of chaos and destruction was a self-preservation thing. It's how I expressed and interpreted the environment around me. I paint the landscapes of Pakistan but these are seen from an inner eye. And the calligraphic landscapes are the city of Karachi as seen from the mind's eye. They have a dark poetic, hauntingly beautiful quality to them. This is the context, mixed with my subjectivity.

What do you believe is a key element in creating a good painting?

All art is subjective and deeply personal. A successful work of art can act as a portal; a gateway, between one realm and another. It can transport you to unknown spaces.

What is the coolest piece of creative advice you ever received?

(Laughs) Squint your eyes, now see.

Tell us something that not many people know about you?

I have never painted a seascape or a landscape indoors. I always go outdoors to paint.

I started my career with painting sketches of people, before moving on to making studies of floral patterns and organic forms. I am deeply inspired by the designs I find in flowers and shells. There's geometry there. To understand light and shade better, I study roses and lilies.

Before I start painting, I work with different lighting to dramatise shadows and create strong contrasts in my work. I don't paint as often as I should. Often I am inundated with queries for my work and it's all sold out; it takes me a while to conserve for a big solo show.

Oh, and I cannot repeat my artworks. They are inspired and no two works are the same. Each is new, with its own unique voice and style.

Finally, why do you love art?

It is a powerful medium to convey a visual image and draw attention to simple details. Art has fluidity and always outlives its creator. For each person, a picture conveys a different meaning; and with time, its message either changes or becomes more relevant. Art can bring people together, start a dialogue, promote a social change or on a personal level, activate something much larger within the human psyche. It humanises us. Through art I am exploring a personal subjectivity. It's a personal narrative.

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Fitness & Wellbeing

With Dal Dhaliwal

Small square of pleasure

CHOCOLATE is very popular because of its unique, rich and sweet taste, with millions enjoying this delicious treat.

Chocolate is also considered the ultimate comfort food, a mood-enhancer and many indulge in it for the feel-good factors.

However, it is also associated with causing weight gain, along with a number of medical conditions including obesity, diabetes, coronary heart disease and acne.

So what are the facts and is chocolate bad for us? Obviously, if you over-indulge regularly, (especially with the high sugar type), it could cause health issues. But there are medically proven ways in which chocolate can be good for you, dark chocolate in particular.

Dark chocolate is made from the seed of the coca tree and is a very good source of antioxidants. Research has shown that high-quality dark chocolate may be beneficial for health-related issues such as obesity, diabetes, Alzheimer's and even ageing in general.

Numerous research and studies have revealed facts about chocolate. It has been associated with conditions such as diabetes, coronary heart disease and hypertension; some research shows that chocolate has antioxidant properties, while other experts reject this claim; chocolate can lead to tooth decay due to the high sugar content; chocolate contains a large number of calories; and the darker the chocolate, the more flavanols and flavanols it contains.

There is no doubt that dark chocolate is loaded with nutrients that can positively affect your health. These include:

Making you feel better: Chocolate contains phenylethylamine (PEA), which encourages your brain to release feel-good endorphins. It is the same chemical your brain produces when you feel like you're falling in love.

Weight loss: Neuroscientist Will Clower said: "A small square of good chocolate melted on the tongue 20 minutes before a meal triggers the hormones in the brain that say 'I'm full', cutting the amount of food you consume. Finishing a meal with the same small trigger could reduce subsequent snacking."

Memory and blood flow: Flavanols found in dark chocolate are thought to reduce memory loss in older people. It also helps with blood flow in the brain.

Healing: The anti-inflammatory qualities have been found beneficial in treating brain injuries such as concussion.

Nutrients: High-quality dark chocolate is rich in fibre, iron, magnesium, copper, manganese and a few other minerals.

There is a lot of evidence and studies that show cocoa can provide many positive health benefits. However, this does not mean people should consume lots of chocolate. It is still high in calories. If you are going to eat it, opt for dark chocolate, which does contain some sugar, but the amounts are usually small. The darker the chocolate, the less sugar it will contain.

Buy high-quality organic, dark chocolate with 70 per cent or higher cocoa content. Stick to having a square or two after dinner and try to really savour them. Chocolate is best consumed and enjoyed in moderation.

Health and fitness expert Dal Dhaliwal is the founder of the Body Perfect personal training studio. She is also a TV and radio presenter. Log onto www.bodyperfectpt.com to find out more or follow her on Twitter: @daldhaliwalPT and Facebook: Dal Dhaliwal

