



Journeys of Return: Indian Psychology, Collective Imagery, and Decolonial Artmaking

Mugdha Shivapurkar

This two-hour workshop explores the idea of *homecoming* in arts and health through the intersecting perspectives of Indian Psychology and analytical art therapy. Engaging with the conference theme of *Ithaca* as a metaphor for return and rediscovery, the session views artmaking as a journey that reconnects individuals with cultural memory and embodied knowing. Indian psychological thought, through the interrelated dimensions of *manas* (mind), *chitta* (consciousness), *buddhi* (intellect) offers a cyclical and integrative understanding of the psyche. These ideas resonate with Jungian concepts of the collective unconscious and the function of art as a bridge between the personal and collective. Together, they suggest a pluralistic framework through which creativity can be understood as both psychological and cultural.

Drawing from my work in art psychotherapy, education, and arts and health in India, the workshop presents artmaking as a medium of decolonial inquiry. Participants will engage in guided creative processes incorporating *rangoli* (coloured sand), *toran* making (Wall/door hangings), and other vernacular forms, exploring how ritualised artmaking can hold affect, memory, and identity in culturally congruent ways.

Through experiential artmaking and reflective dialogue, we will consider ethical and cultural questions surrounding adaptation, representation, and access in arts-based practice. The participants will leave with a framework for integrating Indian psychological principles and collective imagery into their own clinical, educational, or community contexts. The workshop aims to offer a space for critical and creative engagement with the idea of homecoming, where returning to indigenous forms of expression becomes a way of renewing therapeutic language and presence.



Biography

Mugdha Shivapurkar is a registered Art Psychotherapist (HCPC, UK) and Psychologist based in Pune, India. She holds an MA in Clinical Psychology (2015) and an MA in Art Psychotherapy from the University of Roehampton, London. She brings a decade of diverse experience in integrating creative arts into mental health work across corporate, educational, and counselling contexts. Mugdha's therapeutic approach is anchored in the arts, with a strong emphasis on cultural identity, intersectionality, and accessibility. In 2019, Mugdha co-founded The Secret Ingredient Mental Healthcare (www.tsimentalhealth.com), an initiative aimed at expanding access to inclusive mental health services in India.