

Linda Vallejo: Datos Sagrados

"It's just math," Vallejo says again, "but again, it's never just math."

When last we left our heroine, she was on the verge of something wonderful she had only begun to sense. With the evolution of the Brown Dot project into the *Datos Sagrados* works, Linda Vallejo transforms the project into something beyond narrative, beyond meta-narrative even, and into the realm of the universal. By taking a simple mathematical process that connects to her own experience, Vallejo has generated a rarefied language of mark-making that is only brown paint on paper, and yet comprises a wealth of holistic meaning from the deeply personal to the political, spiritual, philosophical, and psychological. This is not kind of thing one expects from a Minimalist.

Vallejo's is at heart an ordinary formula, just a way to approach available data. For example, in "62% of US Latinos are bilingual" somehow, in some image or pattern, 62% of the paper surface must be painted. While "30% of US Population will be Latino in 2050" is a number story representing growth, its shapes cover a mere 30% of the surface; whereas "66% of US Unauthorized Latino Immigrants have lived in the US for at least a decade" covers a full two-thirds. The math, one soon sees, always has a story to tell. In the case of *Datos Sagrados*, it's a story that transcends the census to visually embody a whole other kind of mathematics -- ancient, classical, energetic, sacred.

While they contain the same type of information as the foregoing Brown Dot pieces, the division of space is something very different. Made with gouache on circular handmade paper, these new patterns immediately, powerfully display a universal, cyclical, divine kind of math, familiar to students of da Vinci, Michelangelo, crop circles, the Fibonacci Sequence, the Golden Mean, architectural schematics, Eastern mandalas; evoking styles of the Maya, Aztec, Native American, Islamic, Northern European, Asian, and Ottoman arts. Sacred geometry is the structure of the universe; beauty is a virtue before God. "It could not be more simple," she says, "but now we are having a conversation about everything."

--Shana Nys Dambrot Los Angeles 2017

