

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Culture: So What?!? Award-Winning Broadway Producer, Vivek Tiwary, Answers

Vivek Tiwary · Wednesday, May 7th, 2014

Culture: So What?!? In this ongoing series, we ask thought leaders from all walks of life to answer the question: What is Culture and Why Does it Matter? They each find their own creative way of doing so.

This Week's Contributor: [Vivek Tiwary](#), award-winning producer of Broadway shows, film, television, and graphic novels.

Have you seen her, have you heard? The way she plays there are no words to describe the way I feel...
– The Stone Roses, *She Bangs The Drums*



Vivek Tiwary. Photo: Jarett Bellucci

What is culture?

Culture is the beat of Reni's drums in a song by The Stone Roses.

It's the brushstroke of Andrew Robinson and Kyle Baker's paints in a panel of *The Fifth Beatle*.

It's Kane destroying his bedroom, and Luke letting his father look on him with his own eyes.

It's the redemption of Londo, and the grief of Zoë.

It's the fear of Martians... and quickly learning not to believe everything you hear.

It's your first game at Yankee Stadium. In October.

It's feeling several stories high, just knowing you're on the street where she lives—and it's the dark turns and noise of the wicked little town that brought you there.

It's blue skies from the First Days of Spring, as seen through the eyes of a mustachioed Spaniard... and those same skies revisited decades later in one Belgian's Empire of Light.

It's the Gates of Hell in a tranquil Paris garden, the beating of butterfly wings upon its bronze, and

the oblivious laughter of nearby children playing.

It's the laughter of *your* children—the joy they bring, the sleep they steal, the passions they discover and those they allow you to revisit... even when you think you're too old for that stuff.

It's learning that you're never too old.

It's both *The Firebird* and the Muppets.

It's *Othello* and *Otello*.

It's a camel, a weasel, and a whale. Yes, very like a whale.

It's the twisting tunnels of the Cave of Time, the fantastic forests where Wild Things roam, and the harrowing haunting grounds of Christmas Ghosts.

It's the plainsong of mass and the shloka of puja.

But it's also in the electric shock of discovering a lie.

In disappointment, anger, and pain.

In fear and foreclosure.

In accusation, entrapment, judge, jury, and sentence.

In the quiet and dark empty of loss.

Culture is embracing that feeling of being comfortably numb... and knowing you'll get by with a little help from your friends.

Culture allows us to be born and reborn.

It defines us—then allows us to redefine us.

Culture is dream and waking dream.

It is everything that inspires us to be human.

— *New York City, 2014*

Vivek Tiwary is the author of *The Fifth Beatle*, the New York Times best-selling graphic novel that tells the story of Beatles manager, Brian Epstein. Its been nominated for two Eisner Awards, the comics' industry's equivalent of the Oscars. If you're a member of the comics industry, register and vote at www.eisnervote.com

BACKGROUND IMAGE: Salvador Dali's *First Day of Spring*

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