Creativity is a celebration of life - my celebration of life. It is a bold statement, I am here! I live life! I love me! I can be anything - I can do anything!” says Joseph Zinker. This is true on the life of Raja Segar.

Though the discovery of his inner talent came later in his life, since then his life has been changed because of his creativity. His passion for painting, which is his distinctive nature, has put him in the orbit of one of the best Sri Lankan professional painters of the age. The biography of his becoming what he is today is awesome. His consistent career had been an accountant and then a public relations officer at the Elephant House in the early eighties. His promising profession was that he was known to his employer there. This position paved the way for coming in contact with the people. As an artist, he wanted to see the world and human character with a clear and realistic gaze. His leisure was a time of self-sufficiency and adventure towards the noble creativity of art the nonverbal language of the inner world. One fine day in June, the month of Goddess Jui, one of his clients requested him for his suggestion for something to do with his three sons.

The idea that came was “time to make greeting cards, make during his leisure. The surprise was such that he had been earning the beautiful artistic greeting cards as “...Segar, you don’t belong here!” The realisation of his hitherto unrecognised talent brought him the urge to produce more greeting cards.

First painting

His first painting was the ‘fisherman’ who stopped by this dazzling day. This showed that Segar was a people or retail person and most of his paintings still reflect this.

Segar could not resist the temptation of framing the ‘fisherman’, the hit of his creation, hearing the pessimistic remark of his family members. The disappointment of the cynical comment by his mother: “what a waste of the glass and the frame” made him so angry that he dumped the painting into the garbage. But the urge was so strong that he obeyed his inclination to paint more and more.

His ability got refined as he used his biology and chemistry notebooks to sketch human figures in different lifestyles and actions. More and more paintings on greeting cards were the outcome of his hard work. They took the places in the shelves of the famous bookshops like Tabloidene and Lake House. Demand was such that he declined being an employee of the Elephant House at that time for his suggestion for some-thing else, “Segar has some complaints and stories. This also gave him the chance to be aware of the fact that he belongs to a certain profession. Unlike the arts of other artists who are free now to choose the style of art, even to the extent of tracing the evolution of his love for cubism culls” (to his early days of crumpled living in a housing estate in Colombo). However, he faithfully holds on to his style and gives the reason that a professional painter, he himself, changing his style, would lose his identity.

Segar loves the works of art of Gogh, Picasso, of India and Vincent Manansala of Philippines. He is well known for his reputation of cubism which has its roots in Paris. The real style of his paintings is in ‘guerilla cubism’, he says. This philosophy behind his style of art, even to the extent of tracing the evolution of his love for cubism culls to his early days of crumpled living in a housing estate in Colombo. However, he faithfully holds on to his style and gives the reason that a professional painter, he himself, changing his style, would lose his identity.

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