

by Meera Sharina

Raja Segar and his visual experience

“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 in the life of Segar.

Though the discovery of his inborn talent came later in his life, since then his life had been changed because of his creativity. His passion for painting, which is his distinctive nature, has put him in the forefront of being one of the best Sri Lankan professional painters of the age. The biography of his becoming what he is today is awesome. His incipient career had been an accountant and then a public relations officer at the Elephant House in the early eighties. “A promising professional” that was how he was known to his employer there.

This position paved the way for coming in contact with the people, as he listened to their complaints and stories. This also gave him the chance to be aware of the fact that he belongs to a community that comes into contact with others. 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-discovery and adventure towards the noble creativity of art the nonverbal language of the inner world. One fine day in June, the month of Goddess Juno, one of his friends approached him for his suggestion for something to place in the church sale.

The idea that came was the hand-made greeting cards, made during his leisure. The surprise remark of his friend on seeing the beautiful artistic greeting cards was “...Segar, you don't belong here!” The realization of his hidden talent discovered gave him the urge to produce more greeting cards.

First painting

His first painting was the ‘fish monger’ who stopped by at his dwelling daily. This showed that



Segar was a people oriented person and most of his paintings still reflect this

aspect. Segar could not resist the temptation of framing the ‘fish monger’. He hid his creation, fearing

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 Tabrobane and Lake House. The demand was such that he declined being an employee of the Elephant House to a self-taught modern artist.

Donavan, the Dutch connoisseur valued his first painting so much that he bought it. The gratefulness is reflected on naming his boy child after him. A couple of his paintings occupied the space of art gallery of the renowned artist Senake Senanayake. The enthusiastic young artist in a week's time found that his painting was missing. Nevertheless he was overwhelmed with joy to know that it was sold. Here began his career. Unlike the artists who were

“eclipse of symbolism”.

Shades of amber

When Segar took to painting as his profession, he began to study its mode and style all by himself. His interest in photography and plastic arts urged him to a lot on painting from the encyclopaedias. This with his almost total adoration of Leonardo da Vinci's painting, provided the necessary framework for a self-disciplined study and practice of the art.

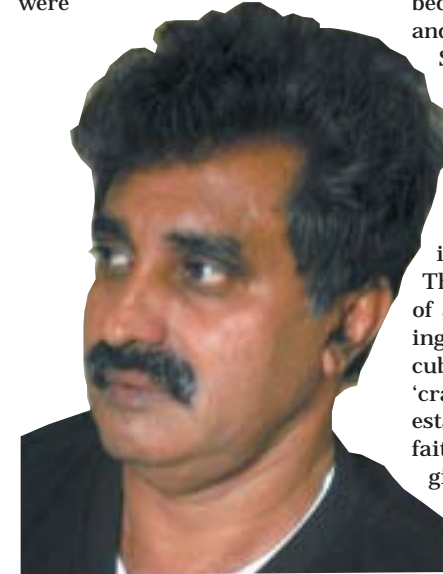
Shades of amber toning into subtle yellow and brown are Segar's forte in blending colour. There are reproductions of his works on t-shirts, greeting cards, bed sheets and tablecloths, with and without the artist's consent.

Segar's paintings are an unusual visual experience in that they are a combination of realistic and abstract. The angular lines reflect Cubism, which has its roots in Paris.

The real style of his paintings is ‘figurative cubism’, he says. The philosophy behind his style of art, even to the extent of tracing the evolution of his love for cubism goes to his early days of ‘cramped living’ in a housing estate in Colombo. However, he faithfully holds on to his style and gives the reason that a professional painter, if he goes on changing his style, would lose his identity.

Segar loves the works of artist Ganesh Pyne of India and Vincent Manansala of Philippines. He derives his inspiration from life and tries to depict his emotional feelings through colour and composition. Like many other artists of his ilk, Segar is somewhat temperamental at times. It is said that he used to throw away or destroy his own paintings when he found them loathsome. He tries to express his feeling of anger and disappointments in his painting.

Raja Segar's art exhibition will be held from August 7 to 27 at the Alliance Française de Colombo Auditorium.



Raja Segar

inclined to draw traditionally devout religious art and iconography, he followed the modern artists who are free now to choose from a bewildering variety of art styles: realism, impressionism, expressionism, surrealism, cubism, abstraction, abstract expressionism, pop-art, neo-realism and so on.

In the process Segar originated his own style “reflective effects in cubism” as his famous subjects were physics and mathematics. (Refraction of light when it travels through different density) The age of traditional art seems past and some have spoken of the



“Now I've got this moniker that I'm the foot-in-mouth gal, and I keep thinking, In what way? Because I said something you don't agree with? Because I said something you don't like? I'm just telling you my opinion. I hate the idea that I can't be honest about how I feel about things because it's going to piss somebody off who feels differently. That seems preposterous to me.”

TEAM PLAYERS
She may be from the Bronx but Jennifer Lopez is proud to be a jersey girl at a press event Tuesday in New York City announcing hubby Marc Anthony's stake in the Miami Dolphins. “Jennifer loves Miami,” Anthony told PEOPLE. “So she's really, really happy about this because we're going to be spending a lot...MORE



HANK BASKETT AND KENDRA WILKINSON
The mom-to-be shows off her growing baby bump in a sweet pink bikini while strolling in Malibu with her husband. Katherine Heigl Speaks Her Mind On Being Honest...



ACTION FIGURES
G.I. Joe: The Rise of Cobra stars Sienna Miller and newlywed Channing Tatum promote their new film across the pond on Wednesday, posing in front of London's famed Tower Bridge aboard the HMS Belfast. The duo's action thriller hits theaters on Aug. 7.



SEEING SPOTS
After supporting hubby David Beckham (not pictured) at his first match back with the Los Angeles Galaxy recently, a dotty Victoria Beckham makes a chic arrival Tuesday at London's Heathrow Airport



PHYSICAL THERAPY
After chilling with her girls over the weekend, Jessica Simpson continues to move on from her recent breakup with Tony Romo as she reportedly leaves a personal-training session in West Hollywood on Tuesday.