

Artist's Statement

As a child, I used to sometimes dream about being chased and I would be running away frantically to escape the clutches of an unknown force. I would keep running deliriously, and all of a sudden I would spread my wings and fly away into the blue sky. At this point, I would suddenly wake up in a frenzy. It was those dreams which sowed the seeds of imagination in me. And it was from that moment on I began painting.

At the time, the ingredients were minimalistic. Ground burnt rice were soaked in water and decomposed, which turned into ink for writing.

Small bamboo twigs were used as pens to write alphabets on palm leaves. The smelly, decomposed burnt rice ink became my first colour. Cotton wrapped on tips of broomstick became my first brush. On most afternoons, I would sit beside the window, alone and oblivious to my surroundings, immersed in painting, using torn, unwanted paper from notebooks. Although it was quite a long time ago, these memories are still fresh in my mind. Painting is both my life and my livelihood. After completing my schooling in art college, I moved onto my professional and family life. But painting stayed with me, accompanying me through this journey like my shadow. It became my constant companion, ushering in wherever I lived.

Art is surreal, it takes form when imagination and fantasy mix. There is no greater joy in reality than in imagination. My paintings are not just for the sake of art, they are more of an expression of self-realization, which in the process may give joy to others. Many a times, I ask myself what is the definition of art? I feel that art is a representation of an artist's perception and execution of his/her subject, a way to look at life differently. It should be a mix of form, content and aesthetics, and when blended properly would give an art lover eternal bliss. Thousands of years ago, primitive man illustrated their lives on cave walls. They had no formal education, but they were driven by a strong desire and intent to highlight the story of their lives. History of art started from within these caves, and every day, there has been a new addition to it.

My course of life has changed over the years. I have traveled across the world and was fortunate to see works of some of the greatest artists in the world. I have

absorbed, enjoyed and was inspired by the essence of these creations. In the last five months, I have visited some of the most famous museums in the US. I felt, we have so much more to learn, and fear that an entire life may not be enough. Many days, I have waited, struggling for new ideas but in vain. Then suddenly, and quite miraculously, an idea would dawn and transform into a new creation. At times, I cannot even recognize my own work. This is not fiction, or a figment of my imagination, this is the journey of my life. Sometimes, white canvasses speak to me, asking me to fill its emptiness with colours and forms. And on completion, the canvas turns alive.

In life, artists are alone. Their only companions are their thoughts and creativity. Their inner voices take the form of rebellion, gratification, anguish, and many such strong emotions. Today, the language of art has changed, and so has the medium, and many of us are embracing the new advancements in technology. It is only natural that the new generations will come with new ideas and expressions. Any worthwhile art can easily be absorbed by a sensitive mind. I love to express myself in a simple way, and my current works are a reflection of that. My current series, titled 'The Lady and the Cat' was inspired from a book gifted to me by my daughter, which contains stories of world-famous artists and their pets. I was suddenly reminded about the numerous pets I have had over the years —Mohanlal the Cockatoo, Gobindo the Mynah, Haha and Hehe my Tortoises, Dali our Rough-Collie and Hooch the huge English mastiff. Presently, we have Krishnamurthy, an African gray parrot - he sometimes calls me by my name or 'baba'.