

Brushstrokes of Beauty



Princess - Watercolor on Paper.

A story begins to weave itself into a blank space. In the stillness of the day, a woman's apparition pierces through the artist's reverie. A picture of muted beauty and subdued countenance. The "princess" is the artist's next protagonist on canvas. Artist Nisansala Karunaratne Rajapaksa's penchant for playing with colors and mixing the aesthetics of different art forms explores the sumptuous landscape of man, woman, and nature with mastery and completeness.

It was indeed a picture of "Serenity" inside the gallery of paintings by Nisansala Karunaratne Rajapaksa. Her solo exhibition was an invitation to forsake the chaotic world and be lost in the myriad of colors that flowed through nature's magnificence and the copious human emotions of every day. Defying the chatter of discouragement, she dived into her work to showcase them at a time such as this. Nisansala derived inspiration far from the clutter of human activity to speak to the eyes of the beholder through her paintings.

Her brushstrokes vary between being thoughtful, defined, free, subtle, and soft. They are the epitome of a master's hand in visual expressions of life's beautiful and best moments.

The sound of birds, the fragrant and colorful flowers, the trees and fruits, the setting sun, the falling rain, the silent stars, and even the numbness of nature inspire the artist. Her strokes are unhurried. They are dreamy. She is well versed in the form and feeling of her subject. Nature is her best teacher and inspiration. From combining verdant green with passionately inflamed colors to the most soothing hues of the enduringly alluring pink, she harnesses nature's lasting magnificence. Nature is meditative, and her every movement inspires her. Her work's mission is to spread joy and peace. A tapestry of colors fused with the diversity of 36 written languages illustrates the best tribute to mark International Mother Language Day, a harmonious cohabitation of many tongues.

Nisansala captures the story in commonplace scenery she witnesses during her travels in Sri Lanka with panache. A bullock cart carrying mats of woven coconut leaves. It's the story of a people. Of people that live simple lives. It depicts living sustainably amid hardship that often goes unnoticed without a complaint. She

expresses that scenery with aptness using watercolor and ink on recycled paper.

Her training as a graphic designer and fine arts photographer at California State University helps her delve into different traditions amalgamating her Asian roots to blend space and time to create a dynamic perspective of art while also deriving the western worldview of realism and accuracy.

Nisansala rediscovered the beauty of the Sapu flower, the copious flower in local temple art that she meticulously illustrates in its different stages with remarkable fluidity. Lotus flowers cascade musically along graceful waters. The flowers remind us that they are auspicious symbols found in the footsteps of Prince Siddhartha. The flaming red Ran Dothalu was offered to the Buddha by God Sumana Saman on his third visit to the island. The 45 paintings Nisansala showcased at the Serenity exhibition were a canvas of nature fusing traditional designs with an abstract color palette influenced by the west and her schooling in graphic design. Her interaction with the canvas is gentle and flows with a finesse that captures one's imagination.

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Departing from a fixed stylistic formula, Nisansala reveals her explorative nature. Her training as a graphic designer and fine arts photographer at California State University helps her delve into different traditions amalgamating her Asian roots to blend space and time to create a dynamic perspective of art while also deriving the western worldview of realism and accuracy. Dabbling in a blend has helped Nisansala carry new expressions and explorations of colors, forms, and texture. Her enquiring temperament is evident in the painting done with natural pigments. The rich terracotta of earthy tones depicts a traditional motif of Sri Lankan origin. Emulating the ancestors of temple art, Nisansala is working with a scientist to develop natural pigments from raw resources to revive and showcase natural, harmless, and sustainable methods that allowed paintings to last centuries. Her process seeks to be harmless to nature and make the practice of art expression sustainable. Her seventh solo art exhibition marked a milestone celebrating 50 years of Bangladesh-Sri Lanka relations.

Art is a symphony of expressions. There are no boundaries to what art can do to heal and allow people to thrive.

Nisansala's ties with the Bangladesh High Commission in Colombo began when she was commissioned to do a photo documentary on the traditional handloom saris of Bangladesh. Since then, the High Commission has supported her work as an artist and her role in the Cancer Care Association, founded by her husband, Dr. Samadhi Rajapaksa. The CCA runs two hospices in Anuradhapura and Matara, a haven and a refuge for cancer patients seeking treatment. The Bangladesh High Commission has supported the hospices annually. Bangladesh and Sri Lankan artists have conducted art camps, including one at the Anuradhapura hospice, whose residents, for a moment, abandoned their pain to be lost in the therapeutic expression of art. The CCA supports the children of cancer patients through the Blooming Flower project, helping them financially to complete schooling.

Nisansala wants to continue to use art to make the world a better place and has aptly named Casa Serena the "Gallery for a cause".

Art is a symphony of expressions. There are no boundaries to what art can do to heal and allow people to thrive. It flourishes where commercialism is absent but becomes burdensome when price tags become important. Commercialized art loses the very meaning of art expression. And that is precisely what Nisansala has avoided as an artist. Art says Nisansala has a purpose. It makes a statement. It impacts. Hence, part of the proceeds from selling a painting goes to the CCA. As Nisansala continues to paint at her own pace amid the serenity of nature's stillness, she plans to open her gallery - Casa Serena to artists desiring to showcase their works. Casa Serena is her nook where art buffs can view her work and commission paintings. Nisansala wants to continue to use art to make the world a better place and has aptly named Casa Serena the "Gallery for a cause".

Sometimes delicate. Sometimes intense. From depicting nature's glamorous florals and fauna to abstract figures and well-crafted shapes, Nisansala's brushstrokes vary between being thoughtful, defined, free, subtle, and soft. They are the epitome of a master's hand in visual expressions of life's beautiful and best moments.

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Bangla Paddy - Oil on Canvas



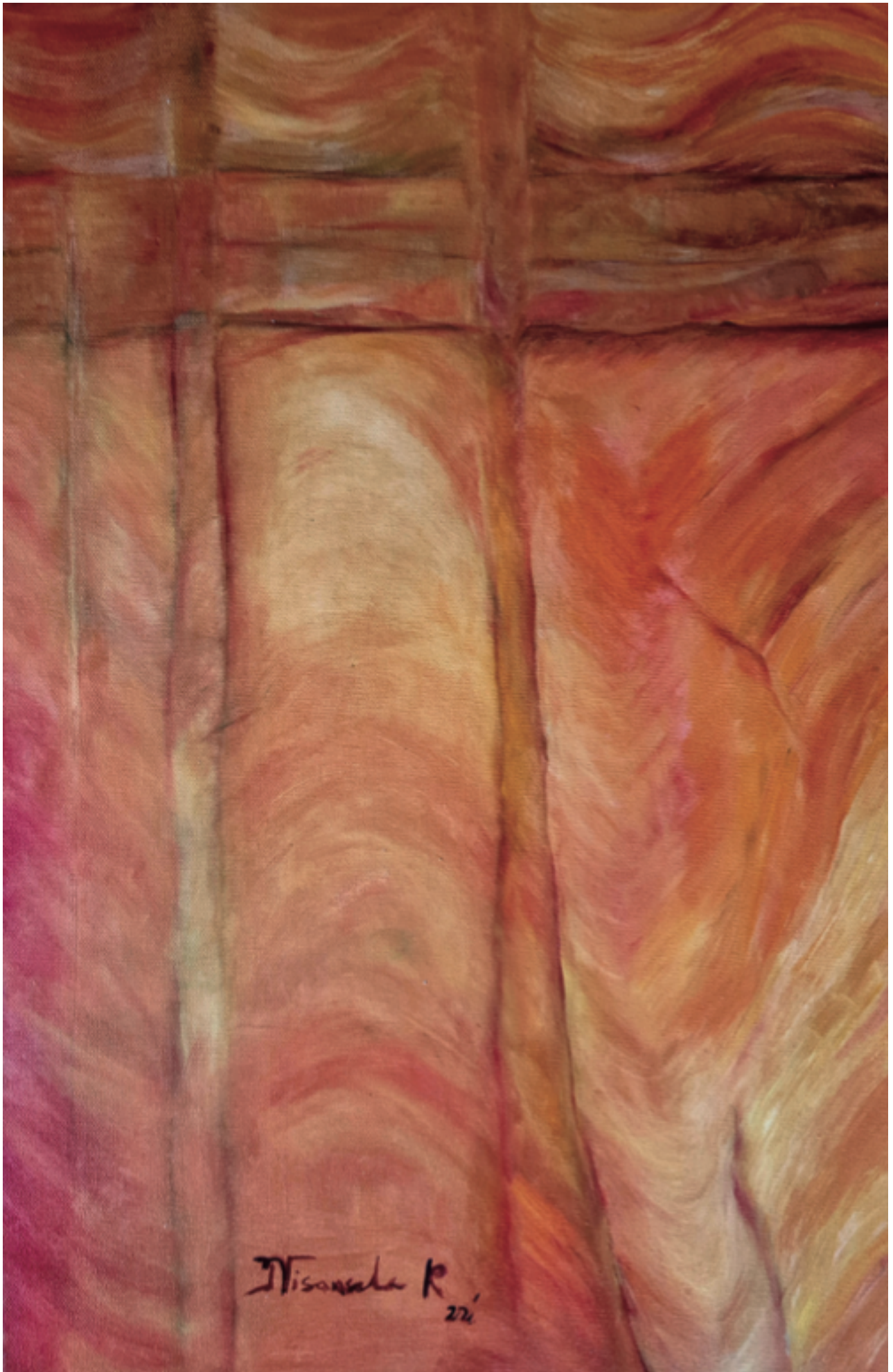
Viriya (Effort) - Watercolor on Paper.



Ran Dothalu: rare endemic palm in Sri Lanka - Watercolor on Paper.



Thuwarala (A flower in heaven) - Watercolor on Paper.



Monk's Robe - Oil on Canvas.



Tree at Paradise - Acrylic on Canvas.



Dhaka City of Bangladesh - Watercolor on Paper.