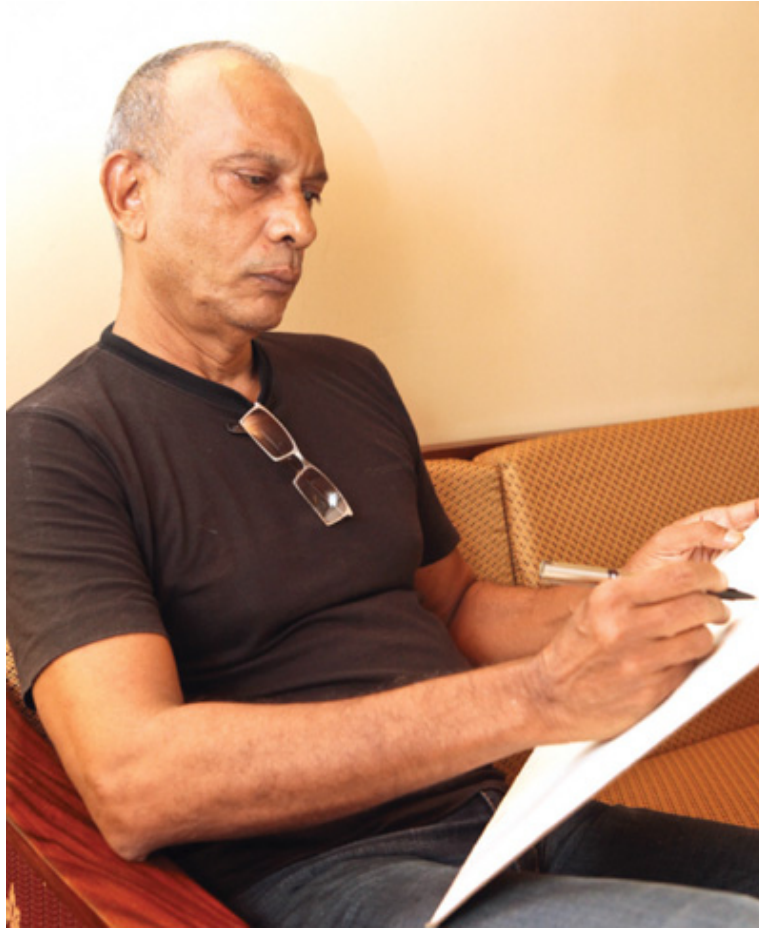


Lines of Expression



Vipula Perera penning his line drawing

“I am not an artist, I do it for my own pleasure,” says Vipula Perera. And using a graphic pen he sketches what is called line drawings. A dot and a line, a dot and a line, deftly articulated on paper materialize into the artist’s vision of his surroundings.

Words Prasadini Nanayakkara

Vipula Perera first dabbled in art as a child learning the ropes from Mudaliyar Amarasekera. However, artistic endeavours always remained sidelined as he pursued a career in Engineering. “After schooling in Japan, I learnt textile engineering there,” states Vipula of his early days. As a result his artistic expression as a draftsman found a Japanese influence of clean lines and simplicity. It was in the United States that Vipula found greater means to engage in his hobby, first enrolled in a non-diploma art course at the Boston Museum Art School. This opportunity paved the way for his chosen style of expression.

“Conventionally, line drawing is simply a line, but being in the digital age in a place like Boston, I began drawing a line and a dot much like the computer language,” he explains. It is this technique that he hopes to further and establish as his signature style. His last place of residence in San Francisco only propelled his fervor in the creative field. “San Francisco is the art capital of the world. Everyone is an artist there. You find street art, art in every coffee shop, people drawing on the roads, musical performances... when you live in a city such as that, you naturally get inspired,” he says.

Filling the pages with line drawings and photographing the many wonders across the globe have become second nature to Vipula

As far as inspiration goes, travel has held a special allure for Vipula’s artistic sensibilities and his many excursions across the globe have contributed much to his developing portfolio. “I travel a lot for my own leisure and I have a small travelling kit, which includes a small sketchpad and a camera.” Filling the pages with line drawings and photographing the many wonders across the globe have become second nature to Vipula. The Himalayas, Swiss Alps, the Grand Canyon are but a few of the better part of the scenic wonders of the world, which have served as his muse. Drawing on site or ‘life drawing’ has proved to be his preferred method of capturing a vista or a subject where movement and authenticity are frozen by the artistic hand. “If I see a subject of interest, then I decide if it is best captured by drawing or photographing, depending on its suitability for lines, or favourable lighting. There are times I take a photograph and try to do acrylic painting out of that later,” explains Vipula.

Having filled the pages of a sketchbook, sharing the scanned images on Facebook finally launched the first collection of line drawings into the limelight and with it much interest in his work. “I retired and returned to Sri Lanka where I want to spend more time engaged in art,” says Vipula. Since his return Vipula has spent much time finding the perfect escape to spend hours of undisturbed sketching. “I was looking for the ideal place to have a studio as it is quite difficult to work in this environment,” he declares on urban life. After a search that lasted over a year Vipula finally stumbled upon a scenic location 3,000 feet high up in the mountains of Beragala. The cool weather all year around and complete isolation in the high altitudes appealed to the artist’s sentiments.

“I decided to build two studios or cottages — one for my personal use and the other, to invite artists across the world to make a stay there,” explains Vipula. Thus with the perfect location discovered, the concept of an artist’s retreat took root. Simply named the Artist’s Cottage, the guest cottage section has already been completed and will be ready for occupancy by early next year. “From up there you can enjoy a view of the valley 3,000 feet down and even as far as Hambantota in the south. It’s a place of complete isolation and foreign and local artists can put up there to spend time as they wish,” he adds. The only request he makes of visiting artists is to sign a large 3X5 canvas with a small drawing and a signature. “The idea is that in ten years time the canvas will be filled with signs and scribbles from artists all over the world.”

Vipula himself prefers to spend the better part of his time in Beragala, where he finds a rare seclusion as he indulges in what is today his primary engagement, perfecting his technique of ‘digitising line drawing’ with lines and dots. “That is together with a Japanese influence of keeping things simple, after all simplicity is the ultimate form of beauty - the less lines the better,” he adds.

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