Repertoire: A pictorial gateway to Sri Lanka’s nature

Posted on
A Chameleon (Chamaeleo zeylanicus) -its long tongue rocketing its way out to prey on a dragonfly

“Many of the gestures frozen here were not merely captured while passing by or accidently, but were results of days of prior preparation” – Repertoire

L J Mendis Wickramasinghe

L J Mendis Wickramasinghe always had a desire to be surrounded by nature; in his teen years, he joined the Young Zoologist’s Association of Sri Lanka (YZA), which became the first turning point of his life, teaching him the reality of the laws of nature. The second turning point of his life was when, inspired by his mentor, Wickramasinghe was exposed to the world of photography, revealing the artistic nature hidden within him.

Wickramasinghe, now founder of the Herpetological Foundation of Sri Lanka, arose from humble beginnings, initially using a small camera and borrowed equipment,

and began his adventures into the wild, learning valuable lessons from his experience. He furthered his scientific knowledge of nature when he worked at the World Conservation Union- IUCN, training to be a professional in the field of herpetology; surrounded by experts and scientists, he grew as a naturalist as valuable teachings were bestowed upon him through their explorations.

“There were many sightings, which were once in a life time opportunities, that urged me to freeze these moments in time as evidence, and to share in the knowledge with the outside world.”- Repertoire

Captured exquisitely in Repertoire, Wickramasinghe’s debut publication and exhibition as a photographer, are several of these moments; a compilation of aesthetic photographs featuring the diversity of Sri Lankan wildlife. The digital layout and cover of Repertoire was done by Kasun Pradeepa Benaragama. Amongst the images are many species which are photographed for the first time.

The Repertoire showcases over 130 fascinating photographs of wildlife which are endemic to Sri Lanka and nine are shortlisted for the final round of the 2015 BBC wildlife photographer of the year award. Throughout the book, moments that occur in a split second are stunningly captured in a phenomenally alluring style that thoroughly captivates the observer; one image shows the precise instant a green and black striped chameleon latches onto its prey, an unwilling dragonfly—an occurrence that is scarcely recorded.

The book includes mesmerizing photos of lovely scenery and astounding landscapes, infused with wonder and tranquillity; it also comprises a variety of unique plants and wildlife creatures. Accompanying each astounding image is a background story, which incorporates the distinct techniques and various types of equipment used for every capture.

Repertoire will be unveiled at a book launch and exhibition at the Harold Pieris Gallery, Lionel Wendt Art Centre, 18, Guildford Crescent, Colombo 7 on 31st October and 1st November 2015.