

A Quest for Ultimate Happiness

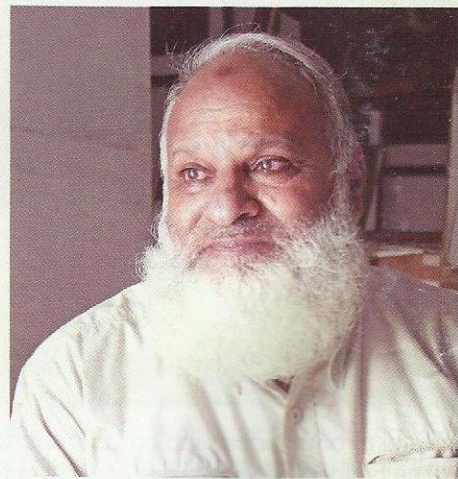
Anyone can draw, anyone can paint but a true artist is the one who dives into the depth of emotions, paints the canvas with passion and heals the one beholding the view. Shafique Farooqi earns the credit for possessing the power to change human souls

By Marian Sharaf Joseph

It is always an honor to meet people who can move you, touch your heart and even if you never get a chance to meet them again you can always feel their presence around you. Artists, writers and thinkers are supposed to be such people with the power to thrill human souls through their work. Amongst the artist fraternity Amin Gulgee and Collins David are those who have influenced my life deeply. There is no other artist I would credit as influential as them. However, I must admit I was wrong. A chance meeting with Shafique Farooqi of Hamail Art Gallery gave me a chance to explore the work of art that possesses immense power to heal you spiritually and touched me personally.

Born in 1942, Shafique Farooqi's quest to explore the realm of spirituality began early. A graduate of NCA, most of his life

was spent in Turkey where he went for higher studies at ITU Istanbul, and later on taught at Turkey Fine Art University. Living in Turkey helped Shafique to gain a broader insight into the domain of spirituality. It transformed his soul, changed his perspective about life and strengthened his convictions. Since then began his artistic journey of expression; quest for ultimate happiness, be it in calligraphy, paintings of whirling Dervish, landscapes or voyage of lines and symbols. Shafique has won his view about landscapes in his paintings. "There is a whole world of divinity in the landscapes I paint and the most beautiful feature in the nature is the tree. Nature is bare without it. Its beauty is divine. It grows, bears fruit and withers away but it does not die because it disperses its seed to give new life to the landscape. This is what makes it so beautiful." While painting



Shafique Farooqi-The artist in focus

landscapes there is always a central object that engages the attention of the viewer. This is 'the soul of nature' that he breathes into his painting that brings the landscape to life.



Sufism is the core theme of his art. He believes that Sufism is a step by step process that requires time and dedication. His zeal for spirituality is presented in his calligraphy and whirling dervishes, but it's not mere words painted on a canvas. His calligraphy technique is unique; he paints with his fingertips and palm of his hand. "I do not use a paint brush. I use palm of my hand to paint the canvas, my finger tips, thumb and knife to sharpen the edges. I feel that each letter has a character of its own, which the artist must portray with beauty. The letters must speak through the medium to present its meaning," he says.

Shafique was inspired after a personal encounter he had with a Turkish artist Tyfoor Khawaja. He has also explored the domain

of lines and symbols in the world of art. All his pieces are made without any recess depicting the mystery of life. This theory that he has developed is called 'Symbiosis Concept' in Art and is the journey of lines through symbols. It is interesting to note that Shafique has created his own version of beauty that was formerly unaccepted by other artists. "Symbiosis concept is a beautiful idea. I never draw anything with an image in my mind. I start and keep drawing without stopping my pen. Finally I end where I began drawing. The final picture always has a story to tell and it's always about the quest for ultimate happiness."

Shafique Farooqi is a true artist by nature; full of passion and presents his emotions

in a unique mood. Each of his painting is different whether it is calligraphy, whirling dervish or landscapes. As quoted by many renowned art critics, 'He has suc-

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ceeded in bringing anguish in the soul of his art. Though trained on the conventional lines, he has evolved his vision of creative consciousness and has completed a work that affirms his originality. Unlike the psychedelic art of upcoming artists, the art of Shafique Farooqi has a spiritual power that has a therapeutic affect on those who display his art at home or at a showroom. His art is a precious gift to this age; it's conceived of divine fulfillment and inner satisfaction. ■