READER'S CHET

100 days of solitude

I used to love being alone, to be away from people. But without knowing the unknown and discovering strangers, life can never be fulfilled. "100 days" sounds quite romantic, mathematical and rational. Indeed, it was. It was a marathon 100 days of overlooking the next few more hundreds' knocking at the door. I never wanted to be a confirmed bachelor, at least in a literal sense. But the newly adapted 'quarantine' situation is not poetic, but rather pathetic. I have tried every moment to colour it with my wild imagination. I had my silent lover, who was a Šuperman, a Spiderman and at times, prince charming who would rescue me somehow someday.

Alas! It would never happen like before, and yet, it seems so real to be with him. He is my imaginative companion, who has no desire to be the last romantic of the century. Yet, I paid the biggest toll of my life by juxtaposing him with my locked down love.

I am locked down; I am still under the surveillance of the unknown territory. Love interests me more than leadership. Before, I had it all — art, literature, music, science, technology, innovation, brands, travel, books, ethnic vintage jewellery, everything! In fact, I own a couple of luxurious boxes of Winsor & Newton oil and watercolour too. I never counted glitter brushes which melted with glorious ultramarine.

Like the shirt he was wearing when I first met him. Everything seemed so unreal, yet very true. I did my 58th Venice Biennale art project, with an idea of visibility paradox. I thank God for each deep breath that HE allows me to take, and thank HIM for the unconditional mercy HE shows us. At times I screamed, not in fear but in grief and anger, because what have I done wrong or why the hell the dolphins have to die!

100 days taught me to fear living a secret life. I wanted to live as much as I could. Simplicity was a virtue, and I was simple enough to shrink like a dwarf. I was not Snow White, I was one of those seven dwarfs, cooking, cleaning, doing household chores. Yet, I tried to thrive through my colour palette and spatula that now know the colour of my blood, salty, and sultry.

In hundred days, hundred thousand shades were produced by the artist who can never feel the freedom again. I used to love my house, my atelier, after every trip I returned to my atelier which feels like heaven. Craving silence was an integral desire which turns into a chaotic nightmare. Dogs barking nearby, the whistle of the train not even melancholic, people are seldom free without masking the soul. My days were different, uncertainty always being the core of our existence, but to feel it so close is a new dimension.

I like questioning myself. Questions arise when I am open. One cannot escape being playful, being psychic of being judged for her/his own action. I am playful in my isolation. Dangerous but devoted like a servant to her master in an ancient story. Curious to know, ready to be alone or be daring enough to be in charge. We are like mocking birds.

How do you see yourself when you are sure of who you are? Skills can be improvised but devotion is static, like the sun. Use of colour as deep and specific, a labyrinth of abstraction on the surface. Looking at the visual interpretation of addictive repetitive black creates an endless recantation.

Are they relatively related? You know as soon as we both look at each other, the artist and the creator. It is a way to uphold its essence of the beauty of weaving myths thread by thread. Complexity is not in its natural pattern, but cohesive independence is the artist's naïve ability of strong expression, which is bohemian and neodeconstruction.

An artwork can never be new, an artwork can never be old. Hence, I knew not where it began but have no clue where it will end. No matter how an artist intends to feel while looking at it, each time the colour changes and gives rise to a never-ending, limitless query. Therefore, I am accountable to know the subject matter than the subject itself. An artists' condition is freedom. When the subject is the image, the image cannot deconstruct the proportion of the context.

Conceiving portrait was not the ultimate intension of the artist, but rather the

essence was essential to be portrayed. Lines decode, they never declare permanence, they always resolve in either atmospheric dimension or illusive continuation. Seen in public or even in private space, it's like a person with layers, engaging, exploring, navigating and discovering. Art is like a magnet, there are two sides, positive and negative.

Simplicity enacts complexity – therefore, an artist's intuitiveness is her/his simplicity that provokes the complex nature of contextual interpretation of the visual expression. So, the painter, with her work, is already at the end of the journey, where it began to start again.

As the process is ongoing, none could assume the fine lines of the pictorial history of an abstract artistic language. It's not why we see rather what we experienced through our senses, observation and imagination. Hence, the interpretation must be different.

Artistic expressions are always intrigued by the deeper statement that spurs from and within. All of these images create trajectory, the lines, colour and space determine the volume of the subject. Here, the subject itself deliver a story that is interconnected with a multi-layered dimension of the external atmosphere within an internal behavioural pattern. An artwork would never be memorable if there is no love affair in between. One must close their eyes and immediately recall what is being experienced right before. The image lingers until it's been replaced. Art, therefore is not a myth; it is a co-existence with mythical realism.

By Nazia Andaleeb Preema

The writer is one of the nation's leading contemporary artist, activist and entrepreneur.

