



A Fine Arts graduate from KSS School of Arts, Kottayam, **Shijo Varghese** started his career as an art teacher in his native village. He later moved to Bengaluru to work as an illustrator. He has authored three books and now heads the design department at Planetsurf Creations.

Soulful Distortion

He observes, delves and emerges with his own version of reality. Caricaturist Shijo Varghese remains true to his subjects while reflecting his observations. Concentrating on parts, he lets them come together to narrate the true character and spirit portrayed by unreal proportions. He explains how.

A caricature should appeal to the soul. When a caricature is taken up with a conscious mind, the result is impressive. However, when it is taken up with a desiring heart, the result is appealing. A true caricature charms not just the eye, but the soul. A caricaturist must take to his drawing board as meditation, losing himself to the organic growth of the thought and lines. That's when the subjects rise to become what he wants them to be, while staying as close to the true character as possible.

Humans are a sum total of parts. A caricaturist not just observes, but dissects. He studies not just the character of every person, but the characteristic features as well. The eyes, nose, lips or hair complements the happy, sad, positive or negative vibe that the subject exudes. Generally, subjects have distinctive features that instantly catch the eye of an artist. In such cases it becomes easy to exaggerate them and create the caricature. In other cases, the artist needs to dig deep into the subject and find out which feature or aspect to play with. Distortion can go to any extent but the fact remains that it should not take away the person's soul →



01 **Messi.** Personal work. About the football superstar.

02 **Danny-DeVito.** Personal work. About the comedian-actor.

03 **Sreesanth.** For Stumped!, a collection of 2011 world cup winning Indian team.

36

37

Style grows forever. A style that blossoms with time is an accomplishment. There is no greater joy than creating a new phenomenon every time the pencil gets to work. Creations that evolve naturally, liberally and timelessly are the ones that bridge the real world with the virtual. However, the focus should be on getting the subject's essence, whichever style you may choose. Strokes, textures, patterns and everything else follows. Spontaneity is a big tool that every caricaturist must employ. Ideas come in when you are not looking for it. Making that the trigger point often results in uninhibited, impartial creations.

Know it before distorting it. For every caricaturist, it is very important to have a very good understanding of anatomy and proportions to do good work. We should know the basics before distorting or exaggerating. It is alright to look at subjects with an eye of humour. But ultimately, the job of a caricaturist is to express the characteristic essence of the subject.

Humour with care. There is a thin line that separates humour from sarcasm. Therefore it is important to honour the former while communicating the core message. Employing free-spirited strokes, ever new shading techniques and an understanding of the subject results →



04



07



08

04 Harbhajan Singh. Done for Stumped!, a collection of 2011 world cup winning Indian team.

05 Shijo and Tintu. Personal work. Caricature of self and wife.

06 Vroom!. A collection of Formula One drivers' caricatures.

07 Bernie Ecclestone. Personal work about personalities of F1 2011 in India.

08 Yuvraj Singh. Done for Stumped!, a collection of 2011 world cup winning Indian team.



05



06

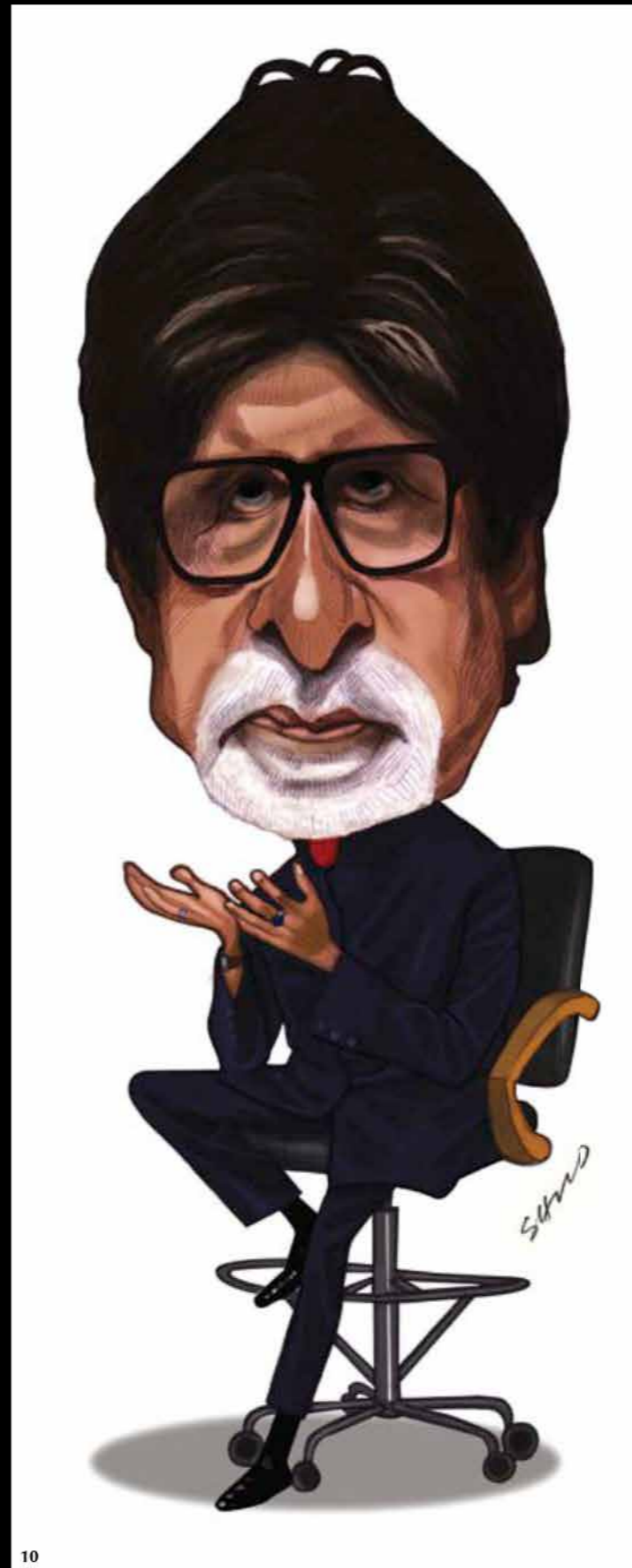


09

in insightful humour and most importantly, being true to the character. Who said caricatures can only tickle the rib? It has all the power to take care of the mind too!

There is a Ctrl Z for everything. That's one benefit of the digital technology. One doesn't need to worry much about the final product. The 'ctrl z' solves everything for everyone. At the same time, it takes away the raw charm of working with pencils. The basic process of putting pencil to paper brings with it lots of adventure, experiment and learning. Pencils can be used in various ways as per the need. Strokes and shading style moulds itself as per your thought. And there is a virtue in it. You'll love every moment of creating, distorting and destructing. And this can never be delivered by any software.

Never give up. Being able to draw is a gift from god. One should keep practising to improve one's talent. Whatever time it takes, never stop or compromise with the quality. Make observation a habit and then a process. Most importantly, be your own critic. Remember, you loved it that's why you are at it. And you can't give up anything you love so easily! ←



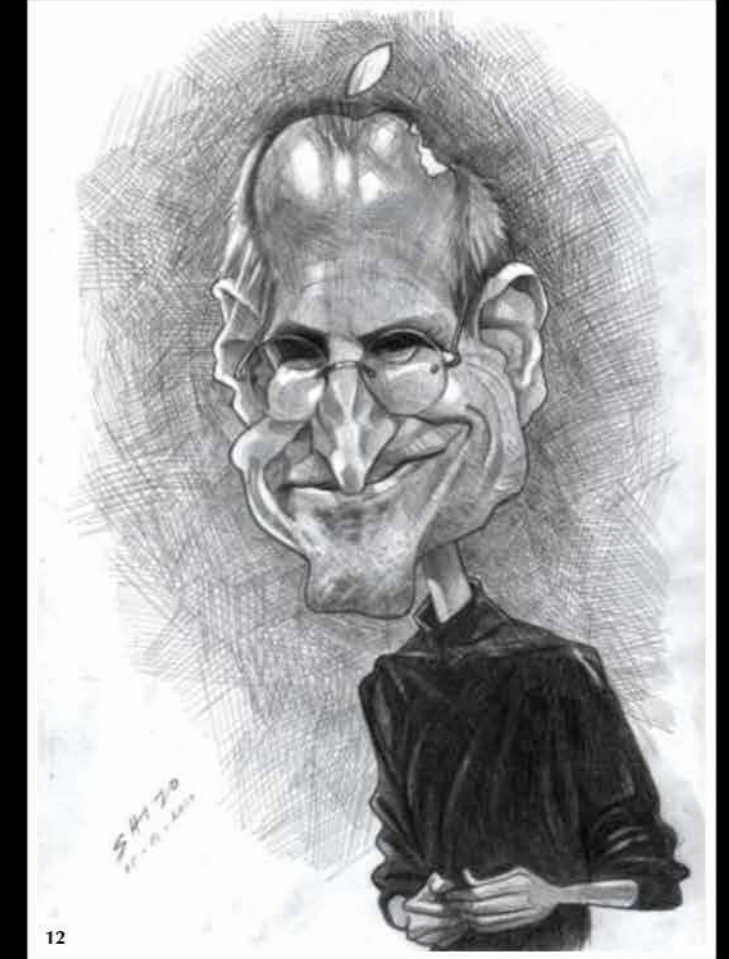
10



11



13



12



14

09 Sachin Tendulkar. Done for Stumped!, a collection of 2011 world cup winning Indian team.

10 Amitabh Bachchan. Personal work. A take on the icon.

11 Roger Federer. Personal work. Interpretation of the tennis superstar.

12 Steve Jobs. Personal work. Recreating the charm of the genius.

13 Dwayne Bravo. Done for Howzaat, a collection of caricatures of members of the Chennai Super Kings team.

14 Dhoni. Personal work. A take on the skipper.