

SHAFURDIN HABIB

Capturing Penang's Charms in Watercolour

BY HIRANMAYI AWLI MOHANAN



Chowrasta Market 2017
Watercolor on paper 30.5 x 45.8 cm



Customs Building (Weld Quay) Penang Waterfront 2017
Watercolor on paper 30.5 x 45.8 cm

Shafurdin Habib, a self-taught artist who pursued painting all through the 1980's was born in Kampung Basong, Perak. His innate passion for art as a schoolboy translated to pencil drawings on the pages of his school exercise books. What was a humble hobby soon became a profound hunger which led him to make a giant leap from the comfort of his village to Kuala Lumpur.

It was in the capital city where Shafurdin befriended established watercolourists, among the famed was Khalil Ibrahim, in his early twenties. It came as no surprise that Khalil played an influential role in Shafurdin's works in his early years as an artist.

The two artists have maintained a solid friendship for decades. Shafurdin's style of work highlights the simple Malaysian rural life. The fuel of his paintings was derived from the whole experience of being

in the county, from the fisherman toiling at sea to the women pounding spices on their verandahs. In addition, his paintings provide his viewers with an insight into the artist's rustic childhood in Kampung Basong, Perak.

One would say that his niche is sensitively framing the kampung life into realistic but expressive depiction. Though Shafurdin is primarily known for his watercolour illustrations, his occasional oil and acrylic works add depth to the dimension of his art.

In Shafurdin's quintessential watercolour style, he has embodied the soul of several heritage sites in Penang namely, 'Customs Building (Weld Quay) Penang Waterfront 2017' and 'Chowrasta Market 2017'. The former is simply beautiful, capturing minute details in architecture, hues and even the passing-by of cargo ships. The artist's 'Chowrasta Market 2017' epitomises the antics in a market, with the renowned Komtar as its backdrop.