

## Making an impression

City-based ARTISTS feel that CARICATURE as an art form is DYING, but it has a lot of SCOPE as it allows ONE TO SMILE

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It isn't easy to be a caricaturist, for this an art that relies heavily on one's sense of humour and sketching skills. Also, one should be able to grasp an individual's basic nature and the most prominent facets of his countenance, apart from being observant and well-read. If it takes so much to master this form of art, why is it still in doldrums? After Hours spoke to a couple of caricaturists to know what caricaturing is all about, its scope and position in Pune.

Alok Nirantar, a caricaturist who is based in Bangalore and has had his cari-

atures adorn the Aperture India Art Gallery, says, "In India, caricaturing is a dying art. There are quite a few cartoonists here but either they are not as talented as the tradition imposed by RK Laxman, Shankar Pillai, Bal Thackeray or they are not focused enough. So, as an art form, I don't see any progress. But, we do need to preserve this form of art by inspiring gifted youngsters to focus on it as a career." He says that young artists prefer painting more than caricaturing as the former is more lucrative than caricaturing. "Caricaturing takes art to another level, and therefore, it is rare and will always be," he says.

Prashant Sinha, an eminent caricaturist who has crafted caricatures of hot-shots such as Firoz and Lila Poonawala, Jackie Shroff, Shobhaa De, Tanushri Dutta, Salil Ankola and Dilip Vengsarkar, among others, gives us a more optimistic view. "Caricature artists have immense scope not only in Pune, but also in the metros of India. But unfortunately, nobody is endeavouring to do anything serious in this field. Nevertheless, caricaturing is revered considerably in Pune and is



gaining ground here. I really do not think that portraits, calligraphy, painting and sketching, are preferred more than caricaturing because of the simple reason that the latter is novel, rare, unconventional and most of all, it makes people smile," Sinha says.

Sinha says that caricaturists must have a sense of humour, but caricatures are not always supposed to be funny. "I agree that caricatures are supposed to be funny, but not always. These sketches can capture even the beautiful aspects of an individual," he reveals. He says that caricaturing is the art of entertaining people,

and that it can be used in events that ask for some form of amusement or another. "The most appealing advantage that caricatures provide is that they can be taken home. If you get a caricature of yours done at a party, you take the sketch with you and it would always stay by your side as a fond memory of the party," he enthuses.

Sinha believes that one should be adept at making portraits if one wants to be a caricaturist. He instructs, "It is always better to start off with making realistic sketches and portraits, and gradually foraying into making caricatures."

