

How Kinara Capital's Hardika Shah Found Peace in Charcoal Portrait Painting

Shah deems painting to be a great way to de-stress, considering the fact that entrepreneurship is a demanding and stressful part of her life

BY [PAROMITA GUPTA](#) MAR 24, 2024

Share [↗](#)

You're reading *Entrepreneur India*, an international franchise of *Entrepreneur Media*.



Hardika Shah, Founder & CEO, Kinara Capital

Being the force behind Kinara Capital, a Fintech-startup offering collateral free loans to Indian MSMEs, Hardika Shah holds her charcoals dear to heart. Why? Because it's her window to finding peace and balance, something she discovered early in life.

What led you to focus on portrait painting specifically?

I took up painting when I was a teenager and took a special interest in portraits because I enjoyed studying faces and expressions, eventually gravitating to charcoal medium. As a young person then, capturing portraits of older people was especially fascinating for me because it felt as if their life stories were etched in the lines on their faces.

What's the process like?

For me, I like to start with a photo that captivates me, be it of a person or an object. I prefer when the focus is squarely on one aspect of a painting versus a busy scene because the stillness is calming to me. The charcoal medium lays bare the technique and pushes one to build up the tones gradually. There is not much of a colour palette to hide away your bad brush strokes under layers of paint or hide unbalanced sketch work, even the charcoal smudging is meant to subtly bring together the work but it can't cover for the underlying sketchwork.

Artists or portrait painters who have influenced you...

I have always been fascinated by some of Spain's artists. Particular favourites of mine are Diego Velázquez and El Greco. Contemporary favourites of mine are Denis Minamora, Bev Doolittle, and Elayaraja. My rendering of Las Meninas in blue charcoal is still my alltime favourite work as homage to one of the greatest artists of all time- Velázquez.

How does painting contribute to your entrepreneurial journey?

For me, painting is a great way to de-stress, given that the entrepreneurial part of my life is so intense. But I think having started with painting portraits and hyperrealistic art also reflects the inherent perfectionism I have, and my love of a good challenge.

Any significant portrait you've painted and what's the story behind it?

It was my sister's 6th birthday party where it was the first that she remembered vividly and where she was given a chance to make her own choices with the dress, decorations, cake, and so on. She ended up wearing all of my jewellery and my Bharatnatyam dance belt, which ended up breaking. Nevertheless, the entire day was filled with so much love and laughter in our home. So, I rendered in charcoal one of the close-up photos from that day that I feel perfectly captures the burst of joy on a child's innocent face; the memory of which still brings me so much happiness.

Similarities between being an artist and an entrepreneur.

Art requires a similar mindset to entrepreneurship. You may start with a stroke here or there but the canvas may not reflect the vision that you have in mind so you have to course correct or start all over again. Nobody can push you through the process, you have to find your own way, but inspiration can come from many different sources.