

JUSTIN DARANIYAGALA
(1903 – 1967)
Oil Paintings

Justin Daraniyagala: Oil Paintings is a definitive monograph on the life and work of Justin Pieris Daraniyagala (1903 – 1967), the preeminent Sri Lankan painter of the twentieth century. Daraniyagala was an adventurous explorer with his paintbrush and a master at drawing. This monograph on his oil paintings brings the wealth of his oil paintings to the reader through beautifully reproduced colour plates and thoughtful articles on his method of painting and his life.

During his lifetime he exhibited in London, Paris, Venice, São Paulo, Pittsburgh and Colombo. He was awarded a UNESCO prize for his oil painting *The Fish* (1949) at the 28th Venice Biennale, in 1956. This remains the highest international award won by a Sri Lankan painter.

On reviewing his work in 1953, the art critic Georges Besson singled him out as “one of the important revelations of our time”. Until a museum is able to house his works, this book reveals to the reader some of his greatest paintings.





Review by Prof. Albert Dharmasiri of University of the Visual and Performing Arts

Justin Daraniyagala: Oil Paintings, the long awaited monograph on the life and work of Justin Pieris Daraniyagala, the greatest Sri Lankan painter of the twentieth century, fills a conspicuous vacuum that has existed on the meagre literature on contemporary art of this country. This ultimate painter in the Sri Lankan modern art scene was awarded a UNESCO prize for his oil painting *The Fish* (1949) at the 28th Venice Biennale, in 1956. This remains the highest international award won by a Sri Lankan painter.

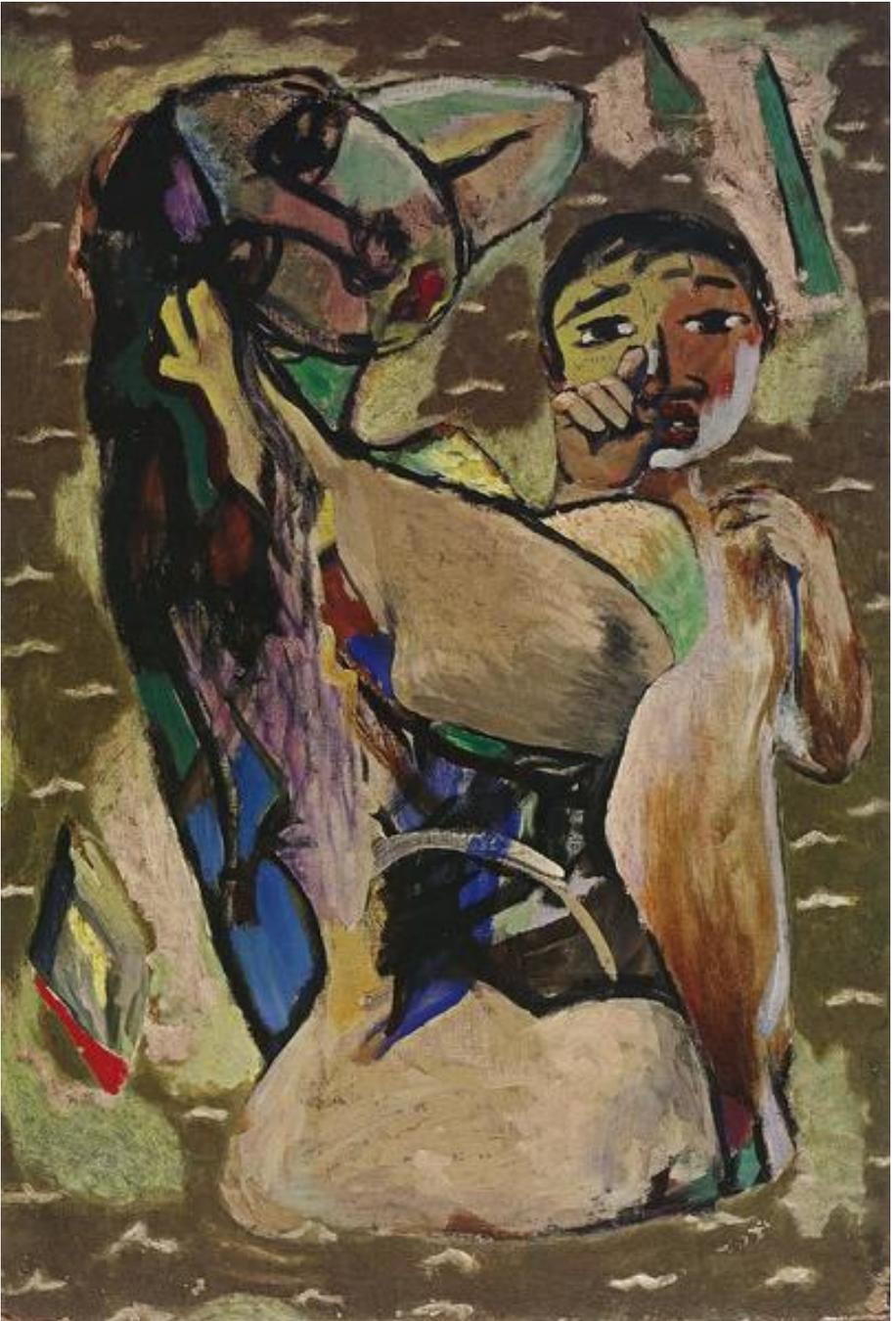
I am delighted to handle and peruse this beautifully produced book in which every full page plate has been reproduced in full colour with incredible fidelity to the originals, giving one an appreciation of the extraordinary imagination and the innovations that Daraniyagala brought to vitalize modern painting. The non inclusion of the title on the front cover is a novel and bright concept in local publishing. The dynamics of the painting would have been obscured by a title on the front cover. The painting, by itself, is the signature of the artist!

Review by Neville Weeraratne

This excellent publication, called simply *Justin Daraniyagala: Oil Paintings*, has been a long time coming but now it brings this man's fabulous work within reach of us all. It is an essential tribute to one of this country's most brilliant citizens but it is recognition within Sri Lanka that could very well have gone by default.

Daraniyagala was a highly skilled draughtsman and had the technique with which to bend his material to his needs. If that resulted in distortion then Daraniyagala has shown at every turn a masterly knowledge of his material and his capacity to manipulate it to gain his purpose. The result is that the artist communicates his experience without ambiguity but it also demands that the viewer makes the effort to participate in that experience with humility.





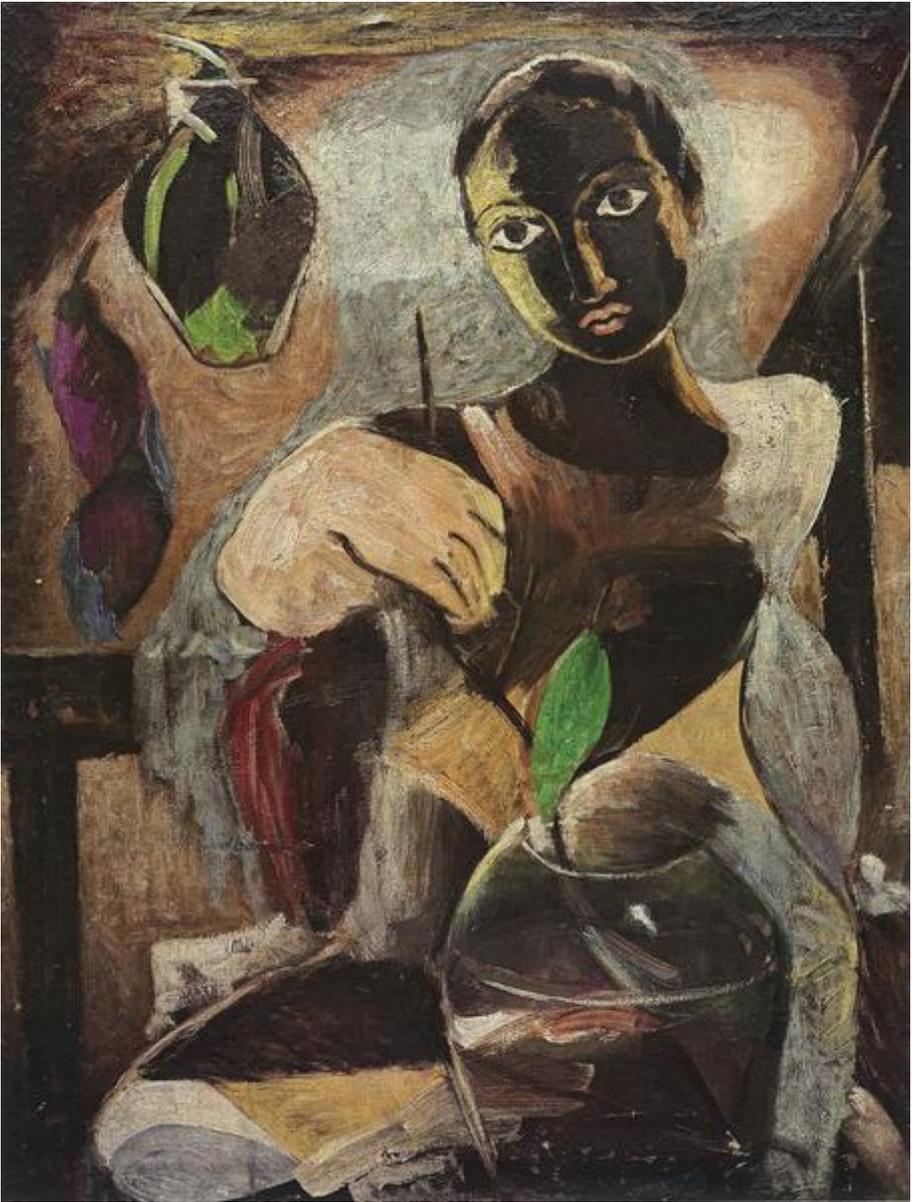
This book is an attempt to paint a picture of an incredibly boundless subject and of a highly skilled draughtsman, one who was to win acclaim in the high company of distinguished masters of his time among whom were Matisse and Picasso.

We now have, in this splendid volume, a great, sweeping view of Justin Daraniyagala's work at the easel.

Review by Jagath Weerasinghe

The monograph on Justin Daraniyagala is a kind of challenge to the reader. The image in the dust cover of the volume is itself a challenge. An elongated blackish figure of a woman with closed eyes stretches across the cover while the head of an old man in profile looks at us from behind the blackish woman. What an unexpected way to present Justin! Women in Justin's paintings are generally beautiful, pleasant and anxious, but on the cover of the monograph we meet a different woman altering our perception of the artist. The life and the works of Justin Daraniyagala that we encounter in the pages of this volume will further alter our understanding of this great master of the 20th century Sri Lankan modernist art.





Review by Ashley Halpé

Encounter with the art of Justin Daraniyagala ignites in the sensibility that undergoes that experience an especially powerful sense of making a discovery that Edmund Wilson called “The Shock of Recognition” – the intensity, depth and force of the experience validates the use of the metaphor of a shock.

It happens over and over again with the Daraniyagala oeuvre. There is no effect of repetition and certainly none of habituation, so that each encounter is indeed truly personal, which is what makes each unique. These paintings and the few drawings included in the book demand that the visitor to the exhibition spend time, even hours it may be, with each.

Possession of the book enables a surrogate experience of such a visit. The core of the book is, after all, the splendid collection of expertly printed plates, each needing the same concentrated attention as a painting or drawing at an exhibition.

Georges Besson – 1953

This realist painter, this man of vision from Ceylon, with his extraordinary chromatic range of colour, this Daraniyagala, whose name we should always remember, will be known from now on as one of the important revelations of our time.

G S Whittet – 1954

The art of Picasso in the period of the 30s is so essentially of non European lineage that it comes as something of a surprise to find that a Ceylonese follower succeeds in extracting a great deal more of reality from the vision than the great Malagan himself. *Maternity* of 1947, for example, compared with the latest acquisition by the Tate Gallery, *Femme nue dans un fauteuil*, contains an abrupt shock of contact with the facts of life which reduced the Spanish work to a voluptuous but withdrawn boudoir decoration.

Donald McClelland – 1969

One of the most significant movements in Eastern Art today can be found on the island of Ceylon. Its importance lies in the synthesis of traditional art form and those deriving from the West which has produced painting truly Eastern in inspiration, yet of universal validity. Justin Pieris Daraniyagala helped to establish this new movement and in fact was its most important member.

To purchase a copy of the book *Justin Daraniyagala – Oil Paintings*, please email jkh@keells.com or call +94 (0) 11 230 6000.

To view the complete reviews, please visit:
www.facebook.com/JustinDaraniyagala

