



Serendipity's Sketchbook



Hello, friends!

I hope this finds you very well! And for those of you in the Northern Hemisphere, I hope it's as gloriously warm there as it is in Virginia right now. I spent yesterday afternoon sketching in my parents' beautiful back yard, and although I'm sorely missing the yurt life, coming home certainly has its benefits (especially when home has a pool!).

And it was while I sketched by our lovely pool that I thought over the changes of this week – the most noticeable being the weather, of course. Even at the end of my time on Salt Spring Island, I could still get away with making a fire at night without turning the yurt into an oven. But the first thing I did after arriving home on Monday was put away my boots, beanie, and the green hoodie I practically lived in all spring – and I have a feeling they won't be coming out again anytime soon.

On a deeper level, I can sense another change happening – leaving the almost hermetic time alone on Salt Spring behind and returning to life with family and friends here at home. From spring to summer, from solitude to being surrounded by those I love, there's more than one shift in season taking place right now. I'm grateful for these three weeks in Virginia to walk through the transition – and I hope that wherever this finds you in life, you too will take a moment to celebrate the cusp of a new season.



It's been about six months since I first connected with sketch artist Lotus Menezes-Robson, and I'm thrilled to introduce you to her today. Lotus is originally from Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, but as you'll soon read below, life has taken her and her husband in quite a few different directions over the past year. I love her sketches – as well as her openness to experiment with different styles and mediums – so it's a true honor for me to share her artwork and heart for sketching with you. Thank you, Lotus!



Follow along Lotus' sketching adventure on [her Facebook page](#).

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Lotus writes: My husband and I started our travels in June 2013. I am a lawyer by profession, but I have always loved art. I did do a couple of exhibitions in the past but have not found my style yet and this is a wonderful opportunity to just search for it.

I have been painting for longer than I have been sketching. Before I started travel sketching I would attack a big canvas with a brush and oil paints, and not even plan what I was going to draw

beforehand. When we started traveling a year ago now, I knew I had to change my approach.

Apart from the amazing feeling of traveling, I am adding to my experience by discovering more of the artist in me.



Plaza de Alms in Cuzco, Peru. I found a café with a view to sketch from quietly and the only other person there was a lady from Crimea doing the same thing!



At Angkor Wat, a girl picking lilies in the pond. I rushed back to take a picture and sketched her later.



One of the most memorable days of our travels was spent on a long boat on Inle Lake in Myanmar. The whole community lives on the lake with electricity poles rising out of the water.

Travel inspired sketching, and it has been one experiment after another – with types of brushes, colored pens, pencils versus pens. Everywhere we went I would find an art shop or see what local artists were using. As you can see from my sketches, I am trying different things, pencil first, pen first, just watercolors. I don't always like everything but I certainly learn something from

everything I put to paper – pen, pencil, or a brush.

For anyone thinking of trying out sketching, I would say the first thing to do is to buy a sketch pad and the first drawing instrument you feel comfortable with and do a sketch everyday. Don't worry about how amazing or not so amazing it will be, because it's all part of the learning experience.

So many people I meet say they used to draw at school and just stopped; there was obviously a talent there but all talent needs practice. So go out and enjoy the experience. It doesn't have to be a masterpiece, just your own documentation of your surroundings.

You just might notice something that is more obvious on paper once the naked eye processes it.



While having breakfast on the balcony in Inley Lake, our hotel receptionist went out to give alms to passing monks. After chasing monks in Luang Prabang, Laos, and not seeing many, this was a special treat.



Iguana in a park in the middle of Guayaquil, Ecuador. Everyone was feeding them and little girls and boys would just tug at their tails. I was terrified and worried that one would come towards me as I sketched.

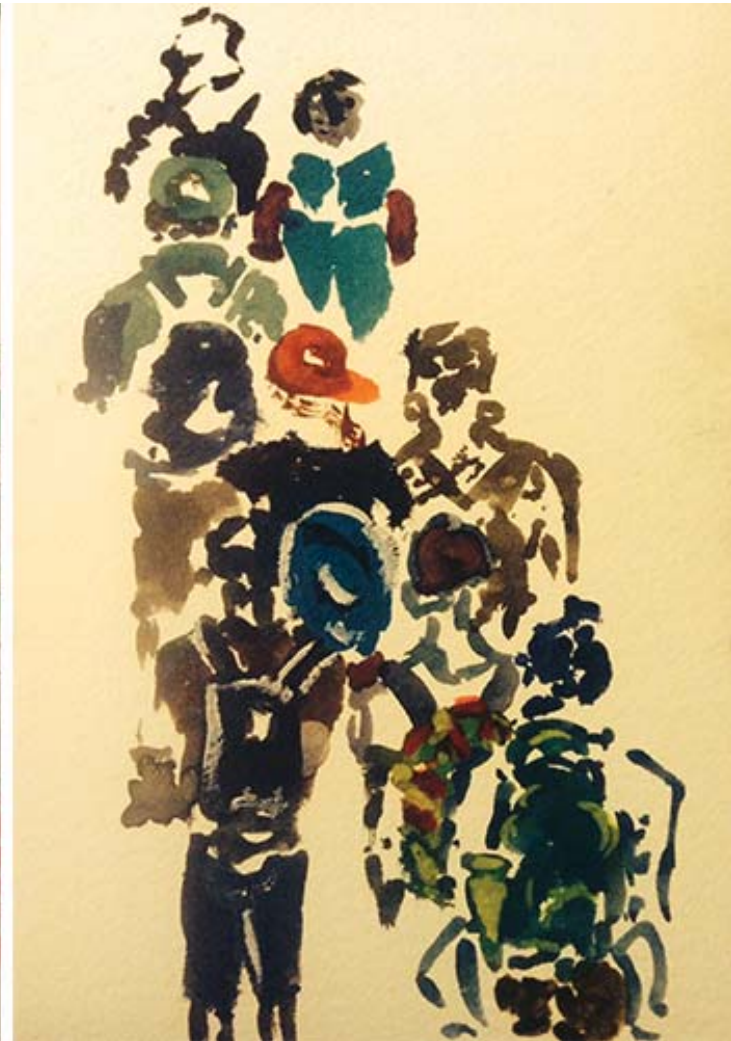
At first it was hard to spend longer than fifteen minutes drawing one scene, because I get impatient and want to move on to the next thing. But now I can go up to an hour, just sketching the details. Usually my husband is beside me reading and when I am done, if he hasn't finished reading it forces me to continue, which ends up making the sketches better.

Sketching on location was really daunting at the beginning – having people look over your shoulder, dealing with the elements, having enough time and a place to sit comfortably, and then forgetting some of your tools. But once you get over the initial obstacles it's amazing. Rather than taking a quick photo with a camera, I feel like I am really connecting with my surroundings, whether I am drawing people, buildings, or a small detail that I find interesting.

When I am done, I come away with the feeling of having truly been there, and marked my presence there so to speak.



While on the boat on Lake Titicaca, we sat next to a family playing cards. It was a Sunday and everyone was dressed up in a different type of hat.



Copacabana, Bolivia, on a hot afternoon; hiking to Machu Picchu, painting as I walked. I didn't have much water to clean my brush, but I ended up liking the murky look. It was a good souvenir of this amazing experience.



Thanks for sharing your story and sketches with us, Lotus!