
FEMINA

December 15, 1997

Emerging Forms, Flowing Colours

COLOURS flow, merge and forms emerge at Manav Gupta's exhibition of watercolours and creative furniture, held recently at the Taj Bengal, Calcutta.

What is interesting is the use of paper to give the effect of water sprays, shafts or just space, so essential in creating a composition. The show consisted of watercolours, oils and furniture made of roots, burnt wood, wood pulp and bamboo. Watercolours, though, were the artist's forte. On wet, handmade paper, he handles the paint such that forms are allowed to emerge, grow and develop simultaneously. Though they are not autobiographical they serve as a diary of emotions and events.

The awareness of the collective unconscious makes Gupta's images universal. His sequence of brush marks which creates the image always seems to have an easy flow. There is an essence of relaxation permeating his landscapes. The labyrinths of the blues, umbers and greens with shafts of orange and red entice the viewer. Gupta always keeps a substantial degree of contrast between the colour on the picture surface (the field colour) and that of the shapes that he establishes on the surface. His forms can be read as phrases and statements, and he uses them again and again, always in different ways. His formats are arenas on which colour forms meet or pass by, come into conflict or stand together convivially.

In the creative furniture section, Gupta has used treated tree roots as the main support for tables which have been shaped into antelopes and playful dogs.

The murals and small wall decorative pieces have been constructed so as to give an effect of totems, jungle gods and drums, conveying a catchy aura of primitivism. A limited, though personal contribution to the art of living.