
THE OBSERVER

June 9, 1999

A Poet and a Painter

By Nandini Dasgupta

Manav Gupta's work of watercolours are exuberant and expressive and reflects the sensitivity of his subject.

Caught in the rat race of this fast moving mechanised world, the most exhilarating events for a common man are, perhaps, the memories of his childhood. Walking through the woods and collecting pebbles from the riverbed, fabricating and designing of mud huts, gathering flowers moistened by dew drops — these are the small and common instances of childhood which one experiences.

Manav Gupta, in his first-ever exhibition in New Delhi, attempts to depict these childhood memories which often appear as dreams and keep coming back to us from time to time. And along with portraying his thoughts, he pens them down too with a rare sensitivity to his subjects.

With a fine sense of colour, the paintings titled Timeless Metaphors of Dreams are exuberant and reflective. The delicate shades of watercolours exploit the ambient fluidity of the medium for a language that is poetic.

The 50-odd collection, displayed at the Capital's Taj Palace, represented the freshness and originality of thoughts that only a poet could think of. One such work which attracted quite an attention was a painting which depicts a young village woman gazing into the open sky from a window. Titled Flight, the rare piece of art reflects the dreams of the world she will take off to.

Of particular mention was the painting Mind, echoing the labyrinthian darkness which evoked images that one no longer can recognise. Manav pens his thoughts on this work as: 'desires and dreams blind my rage and a thousand tulips flow out of the iridian consciousness.' It is his thoughts — the last line of his poems — that makes Manav tick. The sensitive exploration of earth's and life's different hues springs out of his thoughts on the memories.

His expression on earth's metamorphosis in his paintings is a reflection of his imagination. His work titled River is a confluence of more than three shades of watercolours which bring out differences in the various layers of water in the river signifying the different phases of happiness and sorrow which fills a man's life. Manav writes: 'Filling my vacuums with weightless pebbles, I drink from the river of time... I assert I am alive.'

Continuing in the same line he further expresses: 'So much to carry, so much to think, the man goes the distance seeking shadows in blinding light.'