

# Zen translations in hues of blue

*Artist Bodhi Selvam talks to CE about his new art collection, his unending quest for Buddhist preaching, love for nature and more...*



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## By Express Features

CHENNAI: Zen is his way of life and zen paintings are his expressions. Artist Bodhi Selvam has travelled far and wide, observing life and nature, all to bring it down on canvas – with blue. His new collection, Tree of Enlightenment, explores the life of Buddha, meditating under the tree in Bodhgaya, all in different shades of blue.



Art works by Bodhi Selvam  
● Romani Agarwal

Talking to Bodhi at

the exhibition in DakshinaChitra, City Express learns that his life has been full of knowledge and colours but the only way he could share it was to translate it on canvas using the colour blue extensively. “Just like how I can’t stop using my mother tongue Tamil, I can’t let go of the colour blue. I don’t just use it as ‘blue’, there are different shades and layers to be uncovered. You’ll find a different shade every time you shift you eyes over my paintings,” he explains. We indeed did!

With an unending quest for Buddhist preaching and philosophy, Bodhi set out for Uruvela to personally experience the path of Buddha. Before zen and this hunger for knowledge, we wondered how his childhood and early days were spent. Laughing he says, “I got into school only when I was nine years old. I was very quiet and hardly found anything they taught interesting. What caught my attention, was nature. I would sit looking at a flower or a water for hours, observing it. It was almost like meditation.”

Now, people were quite curious but also scared of his unblinking, quiet, peculiar behaviour. It never bothered him, he would laugh it off. To his parents horror, he quit school after class four and decided to herd cows and be more acquainted with nature. For five years, he moved with nature and farming. As years flew by, he travelled to seek knowledge in religion and finally rested his belief in zen.



Where and when

did art come into the picture? “When I was 20, few December flowers grew behind my house and took over my mind. I would draw the same flowers repeatedly for

hours the next six months. Something about art, colours and canvas stuck to me and since then I've been doing it. No formal education but I learnt a lot from my senior artist friends for years," says Bodhi.

Driven by nature, he continues to dedicate his life in zen and we end our conversation with his words: "You need not believe in any follower. All you have to do is believe in yourself and trust your intuitions to attain enlightenment and understand the truths of life. My paintings are my thought reflections and I will continue to indulge in art as long as I exist."

For more details about the artist and his collection, call DakshinaChitra: 27472603

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