

“Zen is not something that can be understood at the surface level; it’s something that needs to be experienced and that has become a part of me.” - BodhiSelvam

Zeal of a Zen artist

He rides on colors to the Zen way of life, his very name, Bodhi Selvam, connoting the philosophy he draws on canvas and practices in life. His works decorating the walls in the galleries look effulgent and enigmatic; the silhouette shapes of Lord Buddha sitting on one another against the gray background speak volumes for the poise and balance of the artist’s inner self and style and uniqueness of the art.

The 52-year- old artist, with shrunken beard glistening in black and eyes radiating undying dreams, speaks in a voice that has echoes of Zen sages. He says, “ I have been greatly influenced to a great extent by Zen ideology and I have incorporated it into my life. It has greatly guided my work and is largely visible in all my works.

While there are several schools of thought in painting such as expressionism, impressionism, post-modernism et al, he has belonged to none of them; rather he has plumbed for the esoteric and awesome Zen school of spiritualism; a seemingly unlikely plain for painting.

Maybe, from the very beginning, he has been a spiritualist and later, chose palette to give expression to his thoughts mellowed in meditations. He says, “Zen is not something that can be understood at the surface level; it’s something that needs to be experienced and that has become a part of me.”

His childhood was spent among the still winds, swaying leaves and blossoms, meditating mountain ranges and whirring and chirping birds in his native village, Vadapathi, (near Mamandur Kanchipuram.) has had a great impact on his art. He admits that he has been bringing his lonely teen life teeming with thoughts to bear on his paintings that have a melancholy streak. The existential ‘being and nothingness’ amply suffused all through his works stand a testimony to his inner personality that keeps the commercially conscious.

“Way back in 1994, I attained clarity through deep meditation and from then on, it has helped me gain greater clarity and inner happiness. For the past two decades, I have been following the path of Zen and it’s that guiding force that is reflective in all my endeavors. My life is filled with art and meditation”,

Bodhi Selvam has constantly been working on various series that have a strong underlying tone of Buddha and Zen throughout. For the artist Buddha and Lao Tzu have been a strong influence. In several

ways their sutras have guided his journey of exploration and self realization . It's the sutras of the Buddha and Lao Tzu that are reflective in his work and have in all ways channeled his thought process.

The artist finds it difficult to express in words his thoughts and it's only through this art work that he communicates his deep thought process and inner self. All these art forms are an outcome of his calmness and his deep sense of inner peace. In fact most of these are done during the night.

A painter with no formal education, Bodhi Selvam calls 'Sambodhi' the fruit of his most recent journey into the Zen way of life. There were times when I went on journeys to find answers to the mysterious, He had been searching for answers to certain troubling questions about life and universe. He got an answer from the inspiring Nature. The name of the answer is Zen Buddha painting.

Being an artist is just one form of expression. He is a mentor to many and a keen listener. His quest for knowledge also makes him an unassuming explorer who travels several places within India.

He regularly conducts meditation camps and engages in motivational classes for young and old. He has a unique camp and several activities that condition the mind and help to restore the balance that we tend to lose in this constantly changing world. The unique feature about his sessions is the strong emphasis on silence and the process of self exploration .He offers specialized workshops for several industrialists and many from the corporate world to overcome the stress.

To many he is fondly called the "**Master**"...