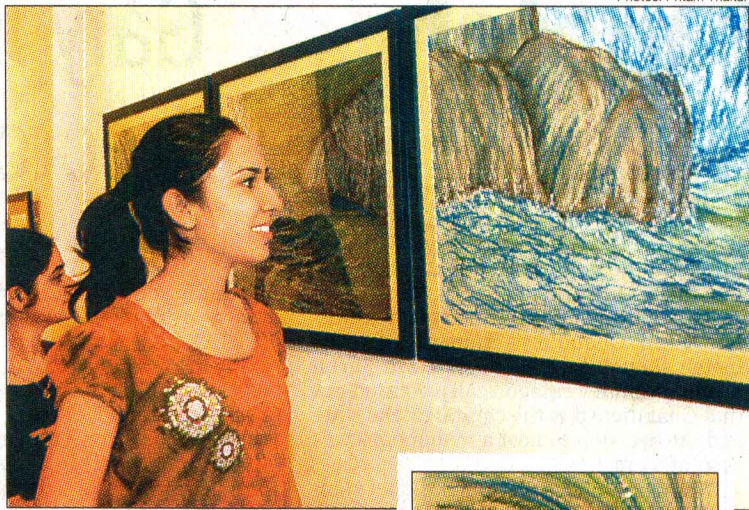


THE TIMES OF INDIA

Artist Payson R Stevens, draws inspiration from the many secrets that mother earth harbours. His paintings are in beautiful shades of aqua blue, sea green and grey. Besides, there are more robust works that evoke wonder



Photos: Pritam Thakur

WHEN NATURE BLENDS WITH SPIRITUALITY

By Seema Sharma/TNN

*Take me to the place
Where the oaks snarl and twist
Where their dusky trunks
Catch cords of light
And velvet Himalayan meadows
Undulated and throb*

This excerpt from a poem 'Stillness' written by American earth scientist and artist, Payson R Stevens reflects his love for nature, which he has articulated again, but this time in a different medium, through painting. 'Energy flows' is the new series of his paintings on nature and spirituality, which is on display at the Government Museum and Art Gallery.

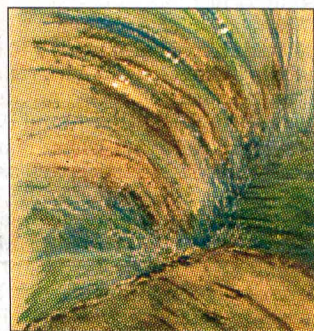
This series has other sub-categories, 'Stream Suite' that focusses on environment and movement or energy of flowing water; the Bardo Series and the Moksha Series that focus on the soul as it moves through numerous, mysterious energy states.

The 43 paintings which have been done using mixed media on khadi

paper and clay-coated paper depict nature in a mosaic of beautiful shades of aqua blue, sea green and grey. The gushing seawater, hitting against cobalt and dark-greyish rocks looks quite real in a painting titled, 'Monsoon Mists and turbulent flow.'

Payson draws his inspiration from the many secrets that mother earth harbours, which he has also explored as an earth scientist. The robust oil paintings on big canvases which hang from bamboo rods, display the Moksha and Bardo series.

Talking about these two series, Payson said, "It was in spring this year, that I lost my father-in-law and a dear French friend. I have been living with my Indian wife in Kullu for the last seven years, but it was the first time that I saw a cremation being conducted in the open, which lasted for four hours. And those four hours made me realise the impermanence of life and the harsh reality of death. It was after this incident that I started working on the Moksha



and Bardo series."

In Tibetan Buddhism the term Bardo refers to the intermediate state between life and death. It is a period of great opportunity which has the potential for awakened consciousness, liberation or enlightenment as seen in the Eastern concept of reincarnation. It is a passage of the soul from one life to the next. The Moksha series is inspired from the concept of Moksha or liberation from the cycle of birth and rebirth and rising above the trappings of worldly desires and passions. "The work is a continuation of my preoccupation with energy flows, that goes back over thirty years. It reflects the deeper unravelling that goes in nature and the larger spiritual dimension that embraces us all. The Moksha Series has evolved out of the Bardo Series. Here my work is more abstract, depicting the energy states which permeate our conscious and super-conscious awareness," he added. This energy flow is shown emanating from the human body (depicting the unending cycle of activity in an individual's life) in the form of multi-circles in the Bardo portraits.

(The exhibition is open till October 14)