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Canvassing for love

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Once upon a time in Mahi Jalgaon of Kolhapur district, there lived a poor boy who's life was nothing but a story of intense strife, hard work, lack of education. The poor boy didn't even get two proper meals a day. But he was an artist. And a very good one indeed.

"Sometimes we had to go without water for days," says the artist. But he refused to be cowed down by circumstances, found his way into art school, became a commercial artist, graduated to become a

creative director, an illustrator, a book cover specialist (he did about 500 of them!), gained recognition and then gave it all up to take the plunge into full time painting.

That's Buwa Shete for you. Shete is arguably the city's most talked about "young painter" today. "Taking up painting full time was a risk. But it paid off," he says. Advertising gave him contentment and painting, pure thrill.

"The kick that I get in painting lasts for a longer time than 'the one day show' in advertising," Buwa continues matter of factly.

The paintings of the exhibition titled 'Still Shakti' is a part of his 'Mother and Child' series. In the paintings, Buwa has juxtaposed his rural upbringing with modern values. His canvases are spread with large expanses of rich reds and blues and a kind of warmth emanates from his paintings. They reflect a closely knit bond of love between mother and child symbolically shown riding piggy back, or on the jhoola. Or, the child listening entranced, to his mother playing the flute, or just the mother-child embrace....

Shivani Virani, gallerist for this show says, "I have been selling his work over four years. His paintings are colourful and soothing. I have a lot of NRI clients inquiring about his works."

In 2003 Buwa Shete's works sold for about Rs one lakh a piece. Today they sell for nothing less than Rs four to six lakh a piece.

Shivani further said, "Half of his works were sold even before the opening, when I had sent out his brochure to potential buyers and collectors."

Quite clearly Buwa Shete has exceeded his brief. Unlike his days in advertising where he had to stick by it.



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