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Celebrated painter and artist Akbar Padamsee breathes his last at Isha Yoga Center

7 January 2020, Coimbatore: One of India's most influential artists, a pioneer of the progressive-modernist movement, Akbar Padamsee, passed away last night at the Isha Yoga Center in Coimbatore where he was a long-time resident. Padamsee was 91 and died of natural causes. His last rites were performed at the Yoga Center yesterday in the presence of his family.

Paying tribute to the artist, Sadhguru, Founder, Isha Foundation said "Akbar Padamsee, a genius of color and craft, it has been our fortune to have you spend the last part of your life with us at Isha Yoga Center. Generations to come shall relish and be inspired by your magic of color."

For the last few years, Padamsee and his wife Bhanu were residents of the Isha Yoga Center. After visiting the Yoga Center a few times, they decided to move in permanently. "When my wife and I came to know about the wholeness program, we registered. When I introduced myself to Sadhguru he said that he has heard of me. The next time when I came to the ashram someone came and told me that Sadhguru would like to meet me. I was awestruck. Sadhguru spoke about the Art Department that he was planning to start in Isha Home School and asked me for suggestions," Padamsee said.

Padamsee refused to fit into any artistic compartment and said, "Do not label me or my art." His paintings extensively depicted the elements and senses. "It is actually Shiva's Metascape," he said of a form he seemed to have a special affinity to. "I came to know about Dhyanalinga through books. The moment I saw the picture of the Dhyanalinga

temple on the cover of a book, I knew that I was looking at a 21st century temple,” he said referring to the famous yogic temple at the Yoga Center.

Though Akbar Padamsee was best known for his radical paintings, he was also a photographer, sculptor, filmmaker, engraver and lithographer. But Padamsee was most recognized and decorated for his paintings which have found a place of prominence in eminent galleries in India and around the world.

His brother was the celebrated late filmmaker and adman Alyque Padamsee. Born into a Muslim family, Padamsee embraced a free-spirited seeking that reflected in the versatile themes of his work. He was deeply influenced by Vivekananda’s commentary on the yogasutras of Patanjali. He studied Shilpa Shastra, the ancient text on the art of sculpting and confessed to spending hours perfecting the dimensions that the text specified.

Padamsee was awarded the Padma Bhushan in 2010. “The announcement happened on a night when I was preparing to leave for the ashram. When something good happens to me, it is important that I come and visit the ashram,” Padamsee had said referring to the Isha Yoga Center. He was also awarded Fellowships by the Lalit Kala Akademi and the JD Rockefeller Foundation apart from recognition by several global art bodies.

The family took on the name “Padamsee” when his grandfather earned the title “Padmashree” after he distributed his entire granary to his village in Kutch during a famine.

If you would like to know more about this, please write to mediarelations@ishafoundation.org.