

# Padam Bhushan Shbri A. Ramachandran : A Mile Stone In Visual Arts

# Artist Column

Born in the southern Indian state of Kerala in 1935, Ramachandran received a Master's degree in Malayalam literature from Kerala University in 1957. He joined Kala Bhavana at Viswa Bharati University to study art under masters like Ramkinkar Baij and Benodebehari Mukherjee. The cultural and intellectual milieu of Santiniketan drew him closer to the art traditions of India and other eastern civilizations and began his lifelong research on mural paintings of Kerala temples. He joined Jamia Millia University at New Delhi as a lecturer in art education in 1965. He continued to work here for the next twenty eight years as a Professor and Head developing the department. It has become an important art department of India.

His first solo exhibition was at Kumar Gallery, New Delhi in 1966. Since then, he has held more than thirty two large solo exhibitions of paintings, sculptures, water-colors, graphics and drawings in major Indian cities. These include two retrospective exhibitions in 1978 ( New Delhi ) and 1983 (Mumbai). In 2003, the National Gallery of Modern Art (New Delhi) honored the artist by organizing a major retrospective of his works executed during the last four decades or so. A comprehensive two-volume book documenting and analyzing his works was also released. He has represented Indian contemporary art in many significant group exhibitions in India and elsewhere, namely, Indian Triennales I, II, III and V (New Delhi), Contemporary Indian Painting', Japan -1970, Brazil and Venezuela-1971, USA-1973, Yugoslavia, Poland, Bulgaria and Belgium-1974), Menton Biennale (France-1974) and 'Festival of India' exhibitions (London and Oxford-1982, Switzerland-1987).

In the year 2005, he was made Professor Emeritus by Jamia Millia Islamia university. The artist has written and illustrated nearly 50 children's picture books that have been published in India, Japan, England and USA. He has designed several stamps for the Department of Post & Telegraph of the Government of India. He executed several large-scale murals including those for Gandhi Darshan (1969) and Maurya Sheraton hotel (1976). In 2003, he completed the monumental granite bas-relief sculpture (125 ft X 19.5 ft) at Rajiv Gandhi Memorial at Sriperumbudur near Chennai, Tamilnadu.

In 2006, his forty years research on Kerala temple murals culminated into a voluminous book. In recent years, he has held exhibitions in New York (2007, organized by Guild Art Gallery), Singapore Museum of Art (2007), Art Museum of Seoul National University(2008), London (summer 2008, organized by Grosvenor Vadehra) and in National Museum of Modern and Contemporary

Art, Seoul, South Korea (2013). In October 2009, Vadehra Art Gallery organized a major exhibition titled 'Bahurupi' (Myriad Forms) of the artist's works, including recently executed paintings, sculptural installations, and drawings at Lalit Kala Akademi's Rabindra Bhavan at New Delhi.

Titled 'Ekalinji Fantasy', a major exhibition covering fifty-six years of drawings, sketches and studies along with recent paintings and sculptures was displayed in the entire Rabindra Bhawan, New Delhi in late 2014.

#### Awards & Honors:-

National Award for painting (1969 and 1972),  
Noma Award from Japan for children's picture book illustrations (1978 and 1980).

Conferred with the Parishad Samman from Sahitya Kala Parishad in 1991.

.Gagan Abani Award by Viswa Bharati University , Kolkata in the yr.2000.

Elected as a Fellow of the Lalit Kala Akademi. In 2002.

Raja Ravi Varma award by Government of Kerala in the yr. 2003.

Decorated with the Padma Bhushan award, one of the highest civilian honors granted by the Indian state for outstanding achievement in 2005.

Mahatma Gandhi University (Kottayam, Kerala) honoured him with D.Litt. in 2013

Kalidas Samman by Bharat Bhavan, government of Madhya Pradesh in the year 2018.

