

IN MEMORIAM: KEITH CRITCHLOW
(March 16, 1933 – April 8, 2020)



‘A Geometer and Contemporary Pythagoras’

Keith Critchlow’s publications include *Order in Space* (1969), *Islamic Patterns* (1976), *Time Stands Still* (1979), *The Hidden Geometry of Flowers* (2011) and *Golden Meaning* (2014).

In 1981 Keith Critchlow was, along with Brian Keeble, Kathleen Raine and Phillip Sherrard, a founder of the review *Temenos*, out of which grew the Temenos Academy, established in 1991. He was President, and later President Emeritus, of the Temenos Academy; he was also a Fellow, served for a time on its Academic Board and its Council. All of those involved in Temenos looked up to him as a source of inspiration.

Professor Critchlow founded the Visual Islamic Arts Studio with Paul Marchant in 1984 at the Royal College of Art, which developed into the Visual Islamic and Traditional Arts (VITA) department; it later moved to The Prince of Wales’s Institute of Architecture, with Keith as Professor and Head of Research, and is now incorporated into The Prince’s Foundation School of Traditional Arts, in Shoreditch, London. He was awarded a Higher Doctorate by the Royal College of Art in 1991.

Critchlow was the architect of the Krishnamurti Centre, Brockwood Park, Hampshire, and the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences in Puttaparthi, India, a hospital that is free to all inmates. Another important project was the charity KAIROS, which organised visits to sacred sites such as Chartres Cathedral and published a newsletter, full of Critchlow’s ideas and research, and worksheets of practical geometry.

In Memory of Keith Critchlow

By Seyyed Hossein Nasr

Huwa

With the death of Keith Critchlow, the scholarly world has lost one of its leading authorities in the all-important field of the science and art of sacred geometry. I met him some fifty years ago in London and remained a close friend and colleague of this remarkably gifted man until his death. Soon upon meeting him I became amazed at his knowledge of traditional geometry and introduced him to the world of Islamic metaphysics, cosmology and art and commissioned him to write his book on Islamic geometry which he composed soon thereafter. It remains a major reference book on this subject to this day. I also invited him to Persia where he experienced traditional Islamic art directly.

His writings and films cover subjects as outwardly separate but inwardly united as the maze of the Chartres Cathedral in France and the mosques of Isfahan in Persia. He was also a major force in the creation and administration of the Prince of Wales Institute devoted to traditional art where he trained numerous students from the West as well as the Islamic world. With the collaboration of such outstanding scholars in the field of sacred art and architecture as Khalid Azzam and Emma Clark he created a program in traditional and sacred art and architecture, combining theory and practice, a program that is unique and has produced many very gifted and accomplished specialists in the field.

Critchlow was a very gentle and kind person totally dedicated to his work as teacher, writer and artist in the traditional sense. His presence will be much missed, but his heritage will remain. May God bless his soul. "Verily, we come from God and to Him is our return." (Quran)