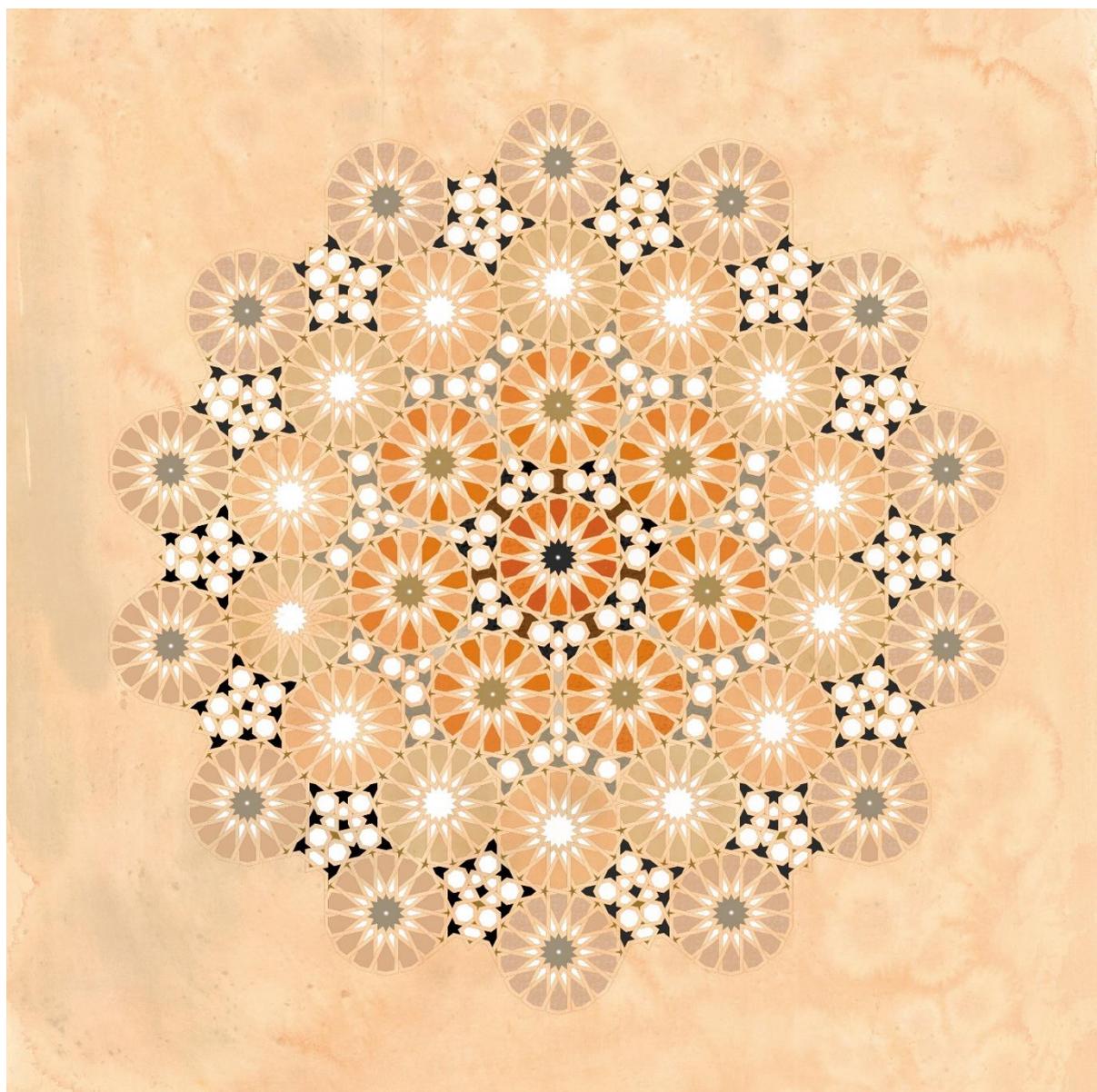


**TEMENOS ACADEMY**  
PATRON HRH THE PRINCE OF WALES

**SPECIAL TRIBUTE NEWSLETTER**

**16 MARCH 2021**



*Chronos – Father Time*  
Paul Marchant, 2020

**PERSONAL TRIBUTE TO KEITH CRITCHLOW  
ON HIS 88<sup>th</sup> BIRTH ANNIVERSARY**

**Paul Marchant**

*Keith Critchlow has one of the century's rare conceptual minds. He is continually inspired by the conception of both earliest and latest record. He lauds the work of others while himself pouring forth, in great modesty, whole vista-filling realizations of nature's mathematical structuring. Keith Critchlow has added a new all-space filling snub-tetrahedron to the set of known polyhedra – the cube, rhombic dodecahedron, asymmetric hexahedron (which latter two I had the good fortune to discover). He is one of the most inspiring young scholar-teachers I have the privilege to know.*

[Buckminster Fuller, 1969: *Order in Space*, Thames & Hudson, 1969]

I first met Keith Critchlow at the time of the publication of *Order in Space* when he was invited by Bernard Cohen and Tess Jaray to give a workshop on the subject of 'Light Structures' at the Slade School of Fine Art. Keith had studied with Bernard Cohen, Warren Kenton, Joe Tilson, Frank Auerbach, and Leon Kossoff amongst other budding artists at Saint Martin's School of Art in the late 1940s.

Keith proved to be a very energetic and cheerful project leader, optimistic and hopeful. We students were immediately aware of his profound faith and ability to create an atmosphere of camaraderie, of his regard for the highest human values and essence of unity underlying all religions. He also stressed the importance of the higher meaning of geometry and taught us to appreciate inclusivity rather than exclusivity – the survival of the fittest to cooperate. We were making a close-packing structure with a double-curved skin Keith had entitled 'Curvicostate'\*. He was highly active in the making process and we were spurred on to commit fully to the project. The group of students involved, including David Green and myself, went on to work with Keith on a succession of projects: 'Pavilions in the Parks', school and art college structural projects and 'Sound in Space' at the

Edinburgh Festival, in collaboration with composer Harrison Birtwistle and clarinettist Alan Hacker.

\*(influenced by the Hyperbolic Membrane research of Michael Burt – later used in designing the International Flower Exhibition Pavilions Haifa-Israel 1980.)

At the same time as he was teaching us at the Slade, Keith taught at various art schools around and outside London and was running the cultural studies programme at the Architectural Association with Paul Oliver. He eventually ran his own design unit at the AA and amongst his students were David Mark and Julia Barfield. ‘Mark & Barfield Architects’ were responsible for the ‘London Eye’. They also collaborated with Keith and Emma Clark (a more recent student of Keith’s, now a garden designer) on the recently completed Cambridge Mosque.

Ever since his days with Buckminster Fuller exploring the global ecological principles of ‘Spaceship Earth’ Keith instilled in his students the need for the sustainable use of the world’s natural resources. His book, *Into the Hidden Environment*, (George Phillip & Son Ltd., 1972) explored the way the oceans contribute to sensitive relationships of the web of life and the need to rediscover the right relationship for humanity to continue its role within the organism Earth. This is still an issue of vital importance today.

Over the years Keith helped set-up numerous structural design and design groups including Polyhedral Developments, Essential Structures Research and SURAT. They carried out important research with various organisations including Oxfam. Under the auspices of SURAT in 1982 Keith and I collaborated on the design of ceramic bas relief murals produced by H&R Johnson (Stoke on Trent) for the Ismaili Centre in South Kensington.

In that year Keith invited me to help with him as Director, to establish a Department within the Painting School of the Royal College of Art. Peter Laurent de Francia was then the professor at the Painting School. The Department was initially known as the Visual Islamic Art Studio. Eventually as an increasing number of students from different traditions applied to study, the Department became known as the Visual Islamic and Traditional Art. The teaching curriculum had originally been based on Keith’s book, *Islamic Patterns an Analytical and Cosmological Approach* (Thames & Hudson, 1976), and was then broadened to reflect different traditional arts of the world. The world-renowned Egyptian architect Hassan Fathy had given the Department his blessing and many eminent scholars were invited onto the lecture course, including: Seyyed Hossein

Nasr, Kathleen Raine, Martin Lings, Warren Kenton and Kapila Vatsyayan. The first students were inducted in 1983 and the first M.A. students graduated in 1985.

During the late 1980s Keith was commissioned by Krishnamurti to design the Krishnamurti Centre, which on completion was featured in HRH The Prince of Wales's book, *A Vision of Britain* (Doubleday, 1989). In 1990 Keith was approached by Issac Tigrett with the commission to build a hospital in Puttaparthi, Andhra Pradesh, India. The very extensive Sri Sathya Sai Higher Institute of Higher Medicine was miraculously built in one year and completed just before Sri Sathya Sai's birthday in November 1991.

1991 saw the founding of the Temenos Academy under the patronage of HRH The Prince of Wales:

*The Academy developed from the journal Temenos, edited by Professor Keith Critchlow (architect and geometer; d. 2020), Brian Keeble (publisher and writer), Kathleen Raine (poet and literary scholar; d. 2003) and Philip Sherrard (theologian and Hellenist; d. 1995).*

[Temenos Academy Website]

Keith was always extremely grateful to Stephen and Genevieve Overy for the consistency of their essential support of Temenos, much of it behind the scenes.

1991 also saw the founding of The Prince of Wales's Institute of Architecture and the move of the VITA Department from the Royal College to the POWIA. Keith also supported the inception of the Foundation Course of which Prince Charles said in the inaugural speech of the Institute:

*... So at the end of their course, I would like the students to leave my Institute with a feeling that they have experienced something rather special in their lives; that a new dimension of life has been revealed to them which has struck a chord in their hearts that will never stop resonating...*

[Extract quoted in an appreciation by Nichiren Buddhist president Daisaku Ikeda]

Till the end of his days Keith expressed profound gratitude and appreciation to His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales for his support and particularly in the areas of art, architecture, environmental and social issues; especially the focus on harmony in his book *Harmony, A New Way of Looking at the World*.

During the 1990s I joined Keith in the teaching of the Kairos\* Summer Schools mainly in the USA, at Santa Fe New Mexico, Boulder Colorado, and Crestone Colorado. Earlier Keith collaborated with a group of architects to build a beautiful dome for the Manitou Foundation in Crestone now used by the Dharma Sanga – Crestone Mountain Centre. The Summer Schools were coordinated by Amanda Critchlow and David Yarborough who had facilitated ‘The Art of the Sacred Conference’ and exhibitions in Santa Fe in 1990, from which the Summer Schools developed and continued till 1998.

*\*Kairos was established by Keith as a non-sectarian educational charity which takes into consideration all the revealed traditions of mankind: it is founded on the principle of the Unity of Being. That is the intrinsic unity of the viewer and that which is viewed. Krishnamurti summed this up with the phrase: ‘you are the world and the world is you’.*

[Amanda Critchlow 1991]

The VITA programme and the Foundation Course ran until 1998 with the establishment of The Prince’s Foundation. The Foundation Course closed and the VITA programme was transferred to the newly refurbished buildings in Charlotte Road, London EC2. This became the basis of further developed M.A. & Ph.D. courses within the School entitled The Prince’s Foundation School of Traditional Arts, which also runs a successful Public Programme. The legacy of Keith’s inspirational teaching continues to flourish into the future with profound effects on life and the environment. Not least of which his quest to appreciate the levels of universal principle as the reflection of the true aspect of all phenomena.

*...The purpose of geometry is to participate, body, soul and spirit, in the objective universal laws that govern and cohere our universe. This activity can lead us directly to the centre of our own understanding which unifies us with the whole...*

[Keith Critchlow: *The Hidden Geometry of Flowers – Living Rhythms, Form and Number* Floris Books, 2011]

In all his publications and very often in his lectures, Keith always expressed his gratitude to colleagues and students, of whom he touched so many with life changing inspirations. Regarding recent Temenos filming activities he gave special mention to Simon Trethewey, Daniel Docherty, Emma Clark, and Tom Bree. He reserved his deepest gratitude for his immediate family, his wife Gail, children Louise, Amanda, Matthew, and Amelia and all their children and grandchildren.

An abiding memory of Keith goes back to the days in the 1960s, when he drove a green Morris Oxford Traveller and once told me of an occasion when he had Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Titus Burckhardt and Martin Lings all sitting on the back seat.

### **Notes to the painting entitled, *Chronos – Father Time***

I spoke to Keith in the Richmond nursing home where he was staying on his birthday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2020. The last face-to-face encounter we had was in the summer of 2019 when we had discussed his contribution to the Cambridge Mosque and the William Blake exhibition at Tate Britain that I was on my way to see. The birthday celebration telephone conversation was animated, and he was excited by the view out of the window into Richmond Park where he observed deer and runners in the distance. He encouraged me about the paintings I was making, and I mentioned the colour schemes that I observed earlier at the William Blake exhibition. The colour composition for the painting '*Chronos – Father Time*' was inspired by the Blake colour harmonies. As the painting neared completion, the news came of Keith's passing. If one looks carefully at the painting illustrated, the 'almond' shapes surrounding the central star of one of the fourteen-fold rosettes have not been painted in.

I owe Keith a great debt of gratitude for all the years we worked together for his support and inspiration, and along with many others miss his spirituality, warmth, and humanity.

PAUL MARCHANT was a friend and colleague of Keith Critchlow for more than 50 years. A painter, designer, and educator, he taught at Central Saint Martin's School of Art and the Royal College of Art before joining The Prince's School of Traditional Arts in 1993, where he became Director of Education.

### **TEMENOS ACADEMY WEBSITE NEW TRIBUTE PAGE DEVOTED TO KEITH CRITCHLOW**

<https://www.temenosacademy.org/professor-keith-critchlow-birthday-tribute-2021/>