

Obituary for Karl Schlamminger
By Sussan Babaie and Avinoam Shalem

Karl Schlamminger, German artist and teacher, best known for his logo design for the Aga Khan Award in Architecture and his work on the interior of the Ismaili Centre in London passed away on 9 December 2017 in Munich. He was 82 years old.

Schlamminger was an internationally known sculptor whose monumental designs range from the Fountain sculpture for the German Embassy in Riyadh (1987), to his “Time Piece” or Clock Tower, a feature of Moshe Safdie’s design for the Harvard Business School, in Cambridge, Massachusetts (1992), to his collaborative “Island in Time” earth sculpture at the Franz Joseph Strauss Airport, Munich (1993-95), visible to travelers as airplanes approach the airport.

For many of us, Schlamminger is best known for his elegant graphic design of the logo for the Aga Khan Award for Architecture with which Allah, the name of God in Arabic, is rendered in rectangular Kufic script, repeated four times to create an interlocking central diamond pattern. His sculptural works were inspired by his obsession with complex geometries and shapes that may at first defy logic. Examples of his public sculpture range from a number of works commissioned for the garden sculpture of the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art (1965-79), to the “Floating Obelisk” (2001-02) sponsored by the Borusan Company in Istanbul, and his “Pendulum Obelisk” (2003) in Joachimstaler Platz in Charlottenburg-Berlin.

Following his graduation at the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich in 1964, Schlamminger started his career in Istanbul, where he taught at the Fine Arts Academy and the University of Applied Arts between 1965 and 1968. He moved to Tehran with his Iranian-born wife Nasrin and his family where he joined the Faculty of Fine Arts at Tehran University. In 1979, after the Iranian Revolution, he moved back to Munich.

Those who met him personally will always remember him for his extraordinarily spirited personality, his quick-thinking, his creative mind and his great sense of humor. Karl’s hunger to know and explore did not slow down with years but rather grew and was always mingled with his persistent desire to decipher the aesthetic codes of mystical dimensions in Islam.

Karl Schlamminger is survived by his son Saam Schlamminger and his daughter Turan von Arnim.

For more information, see <http://www.karlschlamminger.de>