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Future Systems' Jan Kaplicky dies

The founder of Future Systems, Jan Kaplicky, passed away on the 14th of January at the age of 71. Best known for designing the Selfridges building in Birmingham and the Lord's cricket ground media centre which won the Stirling Prize in 1999, Kaplicky collapsed and died in Prague only hours after his second wife Eliska gave birth to daughter Johana. Kaplicky also had a son, Josef, from his first marriage to British architect and Future Systems partner, Amanda Leveté.

Born in Czechoslovakia on April 18, 1937, he left his homeland in 1968 and settled in the UK. He joined Richard Rogers' studio in



1971 where he worked on the competition winning design of the Pompidou Centre in Paris. He later worked for Foster & Partners (1979-83) while setting up Future Systems in 1979. His modernist designs have been praised for their adventurous use of materials, like the aluminium façade of the

Selfridges store in Birmingham.

In 2007 his international design competition-winning National Library project for Prague caused uproar among local residents and politicians after it was likened to an octopus. Several architects have voiced their shock over Kaplicky's sudden death, with Norman Foster describing him as a "great architect, valued colleague and good friend". RIBA gold medal winning architect Peter Cook said: "I had tremendous admiration for him. He was one of the most exciting architects in town. I think his reputation will increase. And we'll realise that he was very, very special and ahead of his time."