

Art & Leisure

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## Artist to paint minarets on mosque in Hamburg

HAMBURG -- The minarets of Central Mosque in the German city of Hamburg were removed temporarily Sunday to allow artist Boran Burchhardt to begin work on the building's makeover.

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The 35-year-old plans to paint the two towers with a pattern consisting of white and green hexagons.

"The sight promises to be disturbing and cheerful at the same time," Burchhardt said.

"The hexagon has been a recurring symbol for centuries in Islamic cultural circles," the artist said, adding, "Green is the color of the Prophet Mohammed."



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And yet, Burchhardt had little doubt that

people would look at the artwork and associate it with the hexagonal pattern on a football.

The 20-meter-high towers were removed with a crane and loaded onto a truck. For five weeks, they will undergo their makeover before being rebuilt on September 6.

"I am interested in the moment in art, in which an artwork engages with the sociopolitical space," Burchhardt said of the project, organized together with representatives of the Islamic community.

"The imam discovered the hexagons in one of my exhibition catalogues and was enthused by them," the artist said.

The community is less thrilled however.

"We had a controversial discussion, but eventually agreed to the project," community chairman Ahmet Yazici said.

The 20,000-euro (US\$28,000) project is being financed by donations from the community.

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