

DENİZ ÖKTEM-BEKTAŞ

Department of Fine Arts

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EDUCATION:

M.A., Communication, Culture and Technology, Georgetown University, Washington D.C., May 2002.

B.A., English Language and Literature, Boğaziçi University, Istanbul, May 2000.

TRAINING AS AN ISLAMIC CALLIGRAPHER:

* Intensive calligraphy lessons with Calligraphy Master Mohamed Zakariya (Virginia), Calligraphy Master Hasan Çelebi (Istanbul) and Calligraphy Master Davut Bektaş (Istanbul) between 2001-2007.

* Studied the scripts of *Riq'a*, *Thuluth* and *Naskh*.

* Received *ijazah* (calligraphy diploma), signed by her three masters, at ceremony organized by IRCICA (Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture), Istanbul, 2007.

LECTURES AND CONFERENCES:

(1) Lecturer at the conference "**In Praise of the Artisan**" on Islamic arts and crafts across the Islamic geography with the presentation titled "An in-depth exploration of the Basmalah's artistic journey in the history of Calligraphy," ITHRA (King Abdülaziz Centre for World Culture), Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, 2024.

(2) Lecturer for an online series "**Gateway to a Sacred Art: The Hidden Treasures of Islamic Calligraphy**", Scripts'n'scribes, Virginia, 2021-.

(3) Gave an online presentation titled "The History of Islamic Calligraphy" for the course "Introduction to Islam" at the Department of Religious Studies, **The College of William and Mary**, VA, April 2023.

(4) Gave a presentation titled "The significance of master-student relationship in the training of calligraphers" at the symposium "**Living Line, Living Legacy**," Reed Society for Sacred Arts and QAIC (Qatar America Institute of Culture), Washington D.C., May 2022.

(5) Online guest instructor and lecturer for a 12-week calligraphy course offered at the Department of Islamic Art, Social Sciences and Liberal Arts at **IBA Institute of Business Administration Karachi**, Karachi, Pakistan, August 2022- April 2023.

INTERVIEWS:

(1) Interviewed by **TRTWORLD** on how art can combat Islamophobia, Istanbul, 2025.

(2) Interviewed and filmed for the documentary "**In Praise of the Artisan**," on Islamic arts and crafts across the Islamic geography, as part of the exhibition at ITHRA, Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, 2024.

(3) Interviewed for *Scriptsit*, the journal of the Washington D.C. Calligraphers Guild, on Arabic Calligraphy, Washington D.C., 2023.

(4) Wrote an article titled "**Power of the Word**" interviewing Calligraphy Master Mohamed Zakariya about his life, art and specifically his calligraphy composition for the Muslim stamp issued by the United States Postal Service, *Islamic Horizons*, Washington D.C., October 2001.

ACTIVITIES:

(1) Calligraphy instructor for an intensive program called "**Art Immersion**," organized in Istanbul by Scripts 'n' Scribes, based in Virginia. Gives a workshop and lecture and attends their field trips to museums, mosques and studios of artists to share knowledge, Istanbul, 2025-.

(2) Calligraphy instructor for a summer intensive program on art and spirituality titled "**Meetings with Masters**." Gives a workshop and lecture and attends their field trips to museums, mosques and studios of artists to share knowledge, Istanbul, 2023-.

(3) Instructor at the art gallery, **Muhibbi**, Istanbul, 2023-.

(4) Instructor of private online calligraphy lessons to train calligraphy candidates from various states across the United States, Canada, Pakistan and cities in Türkiye, 2021-.

(5) Instructor for an introductory calligraphy workshop including a presentation for university students from Holland, **Mustafa Çelebi Art Studio**, Çamlıca Mosque, Istanbul, 2023.

(6) Guest Calligrapher for an introduction workshop on calligraphy to the public during an Asian festival at **Sackler and Freer Galleries**, Washington D.C., 2022.

(7) Calligrapher for a Qur'an project in collaboration with 36 female calligraphers at Çamlıca Mosque. Selected by Master Hasan Çelebi, received the privilege of writing the 1st chapter of the Qur'an, Istanbul, 2017.

(8) Calligrapher for "Multıqa Ramadan," a project in collaboration with 30 calligraphers from various countries. By writing one chapter, contributed to the Qur'an written during the holy month of fasting, organized by Dubai Ministry of Culture, United Arab Emirates, 2014.

AWARDS:

(1) 3rd Prize, National Calligraphy Competition, Department of Religious Affairs, Istanbul, 2015.

(2) Award of Success, 17th Turkish Ornamentation Arts Competition, Turkish Ministry of Culture, Ankara, 2013.

(3) Encouragement Award in Naskh, 7th International Calligraphy Competition, IRCICA, Istanbul, 2008.

(4) Encouragement Award in Naskh, Sharjah Calligraphy Exhibition, Department of Culture, Sharjah, United Arab Emirates, 2008.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

* Accepted to the **PhD** program at the Department of History of **SOAS University of London** in 2002 to receive a degree in the history of Islamic Calligraphy. However, discovering her strong passion to learn and practice the art itself, declined the offer and moved back to Istanbul to study with Master Hasan Çelebi and Master Davut Bektaş.

EXHIBITIONS:

2025- 3rd Yeditepe Biannual, organized by Fatih municipality and Classical Turkish Arts Foundation under the patronage of the Turkish Presidency, Istanbul.

2024- In Praise of the Artisan, an international exhibit on Islamic arts and crafts across the Islamic geography, ITHRA-King Abdülaziz Centre for World Culture, Dhahran, Saudi Arabia.

2024- Sharjah Calligraphy Biannual, 11th Edition, Sharjah, United Arab Emirates.

2022- 2nd Yeditepe Biannual, organized by Fatih municipality and Classical Turkish Arts Foundation under the patronage of the Turkish Presidency, Istanbul.

2022- "Living Line, Living Legacy," Mohamed Zakariya and His Students, Reed Society for Sacred Arts & Qatar America Institute of Culture, Washington D.C., United States of America.

2020- "Beauty in Solitude," online exhibition during the pandemic organized by Reed Society for Sacred Arts, Washington D.C.

2019- Women's Signature on Art, Exhibit of Female Artist, Istanbul, Turkey.

2018- "Hasan Çelebi and His Students," Istanbul, Turkey.

2016- 60 Magical Touch on Art, Municipality of Pendik, Istanbul.

2015- 60 Magical Touch on Art, Municipality of Pendik, Istanbul.

2011- International Calligraphy Exhibition of Qur'an Calligraphers, organized by King Fahd Glorious Qur'an Printing Complex Forum for World Renowned Qur'an Calligraphers, Madinah, Saudi Arabia.

2010- "International Women Calligraphers' Exhibit," IRCICA, Istanbul, Turkey.

2009- Traditional Arts Exhibition, organized by the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Ankara, Turkey.

2009- Classical Arts in Uskudar, Istanbul, Turkey.

2009- "From Istanbul To Timbuktu, Ink Routes," Cape Town, South Africa.

2009- Classical Arts Exhibition, Classical Turkish Arts Foundation, Ankara, Turkey.

2008- 3rd Kuwait International Islamic Arts Convention, Kuwait.

2008- Calligraphy Biannual, Sharjah, United Arab Emirates.

2008- Calligraphy Exhibition, Kartal, Istanbul.

2008- Classical Ottoman Calligraphy Exhibition, Spain.

2007- International Exhibit of Hasan Çelebi and His Students, Istanbul.

LANGUAGE SKILLS:

Turkish: (native)

Dutch: (native)

English: (advanced)

German: (intermediate)

Arabic: (low intermediate)

TRANSLATIONS:

- (1) *Acquaintances*, Arnold J. Toynbee, Klasik publications, 2005.
- (2) *History Unveiled: A History of Modern Turkey*, Nicole & Hugh Pope, Gelenek publications, 2004.
- (3) *The Faces of Janus*, A. James Gregor, Gelenek publications, 2003.
- (4) *Muslims of Europe and America*, John. L. Esposito, Larry Poston, Yvonne Haddad, S. Sayyid, Shireen T. Hunter, Huma Malik, Marciea Hermansen, Gelenek publications, 2003.

ADDITIONAL WORK EXPERIENCE:

- (1) Private English tutoring to students from all age groups, 2001-.
- (2) Assistant to Professor Sylvia W. Önder, Department of Turkish Studies, Georgetown University, Washington D.C., 2000-2002.
- (3) Assistant to the Dean's Office, Georgetown University, Washington D.C., 2000-2002.
- (4) Free-lance translation from Turkish into English for organizations based in Washington D.C., 2000-2002.
- (5) Private Turkish tutoring to professionals from various fields in Washington D.C., 2000-2002.