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AN ARABESQUE TANGO

Dancing Letters

From two continents and one ocean far away my memories!

*I dedicate my thesis to my lovely mother and father.
(Tezimi sevgili annem ve babam'a adiyorum)*

An Exhibition Paper

by

FULDEN SARA

**Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Texas-Pan American
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of**

MASTER OF FINE ARTS

DECEMBER 2003

Major Subject: Studio Art

Copyright

by

Fulden Sara

December 2003


AN ARABESQUE TANGO

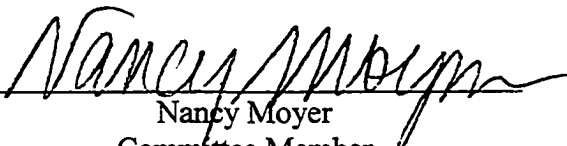
Dancing Letters

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by
FULDEN SARA

Approved as to style and content by:


Richard Hyslin
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Nancy Moyer
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Committee Member

ABSTRACT

Sara, Fulden, An Arabesque Tango, Dancing Letters. Master of Fine Arts (MFA), December 2003, 67 pp., 23 figures, references, 12 titles.

An Arabesque Tango is an exhibition that brings together many different sensibilities from my mixed heritage, Central European and Ottoman-Byzantium, Seljuk and Middle Eastern influences. I attempt to capture in my pieces the magical spirituality of the Sufi mystics and the elegant grace of Islamic Art.

Prior to deciding to pursue an advanced degree in Fine Arts I paid little attention to Islamic Art. Having grown up in the European quarter of Istanbul my political, cultural and professional focus was westward. As I searched for vehicles that would give visual form to my desire to create a personal art form that which was deeply engrained in my heritage I found myself fascinated by Calligraphy and Arabesque design sensibilities. Undergraduate art history courses lead me to believe that Europe and the United States were the only places on earth that produced significant art forms. As I began research into the artistic traditions of Turkey and the broader Islamic world I uncovered a rich treasure of eastern artists who have created fantastic paintings, sculptures and applied arts. Historically, the art forms of the Islamic world have been ignored by western world.

The deep spirituality, mystic perspective and stylistic approach of this eastern approach does not set comfortably in the limited European frame of reference. The deeper I immersed myself in eastern and Islamic art, the more I became aware that I had been misled. I realized how powerful cultural bias can be, how easy it is to make ill informed judgements and how prejudice can creep into perceptions without an individual or entire culture being aware.

In composing this thesis I have assumed that my readers have a limited understanding of Turkish history and art. Therefore, the first section provides a brief overview of Turkish history, culture and art. The second part provides an overview of Islamic Art and Calligraphy, Sufism and Dervishes. These are important motifs used in my work. The third section explores the interrelationships of motifs in my work. In particular how juxtapositions such as modern-arabesque, east-west, happy-sad, monochromatic- colorful were filtered through my 10 years graphic design experience to produce this body of work.

Specific artworks will be used to illustrate how I used formal composition and visual devices to project my concepts and create expressive energy. Technical aspects of my work will be explained; important influences on this body of work will be credited.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to several people who were there for me offering help and encouragement. First of all, my loving family, **Feyza and Ismail Sara**, who sacrificed an extraordinary amount to send me here. I know that often you ate rice rather than meat, opted for public transportation rather than a car, and made many other sacrifices to make me comfortable here. When I found myself depressed, frustrated, or overwhelmed their financial and emotional support propped me up. This MFA degree is for my family, not just me; it was a total family pursuit. I write this thesis secure in my ability and confident that a successful future stands before me and I am closer than ever to my family. This I gift I give my mother and father.

I wish to express my deep appreciation to professors Charles Wissinger and Richard Hyslin who stood beside me throughout my graduate studies. Given the fact that I had no 3D experience prior to entering the program, I am sure that their patience was sorely tried. They were always there, supporting me (even when my limited grasp of English must have been frustrating). They respected my expressive aspirations and cultural background. They provided me with the tools to bring this exhibition to fruition. I would also like to thank the support that I received from Philip Field, Nancy Moyer, Richard Phillips, and encouragement from my classmates in the pursuit of this MFA.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	iii
	iv
DEDICATION	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi
LIST OF FIGURES	vii
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER I: Historical Influence	3
Historical Background (Turkey)	3
CHAPTER II: Visual Influences	10
Subject of the Calligraphic Art	10
Styles of the Calligraphic Art	11
The art of Calligraphy in Turkey (Hat Sanati)	13
CHAPTER III: Philosophical Influences	14
Philosophy of Sufism and Whirling Dervishes	15
CHAPTER IV: Artistic Influences	16
Major influences on my work	16
Description of Specific Works	22
CONCLUSION	32
GLAZE FORMULAS LIST	33
BIBLIOGRAPHY	39
APPENDIX	40
PICTURES OF WORKS	41
VITA	64

LIST OF FIGURES	page
Figure 1— Arabesque, Earthenware Ceramic	41
Figure 2— Istanbul/Constantinople, Earthenware Ceramic	42
Figure 3— Nexus, Earthenware Ceramic	43
Figure 4— Up-Down/Right-Wrong, Earthenware Ceramic	44
Figure 5— Juxtaposition II, Earthenware Ceramic	45
Figure 6— Juxtaposition I, Earthenware Ceramic	46
Figure 7— Flash Point, Earthenware Ceramic	47
Figure 8— White Heart, Earthenware Ceramic	48
Figure 9— My name is Red, Earthenware Ceramic	49
Figure 10— Warm Heart, Sacrifice	50
Figure 11— Cold Heart, Earthenware Ceramic	51
Figure 12— Affection, Earthenware Ceramic	52
Figure 13— Mumbol Jumbol, Earthenware Ceramic	53
Figure 14— Jazz Improv., Earthenware Ceramic	54
Figure 15— Figure Study I, Earthenware Ceramic	55
Figure 16— Walls of Byzantium, Earthenware Ceramic	56
Figure 17— Figure Study II, Earthenware Ceramic	57
Figure 18— World of Sufism, Earthenware Ceramic	58
Figure 19— House of GOD, Earthenware Ceramic	59
Figure 20— Mayan Turk, Earthenware Ceramic	60
Figure 21— Turkish Plate, Earthenware Ceramic	61
Figure 22— Turkish Vessel, Earthenware Ceramic	62
Figure 23— Collision, Earthenware Ceramic	63

INTRODUCTION

My heritage is European mixed with Byzantine and Seljuk-Ottoman Culture. I grew up in Istanbul, a cosmopolitan melting pot with 15 million souls. In the broadest sense Byzantium, Constantinople, Istanbul bridges the Mystical East and the Pragmatic West. As a person of mixed culture, I am fascinated by other cultures. Living in one of the worlds most exotic cultural crossroads created in me a delight for such diversity, and a hunger to venture into the world to experience ever more.

I attempt to reflect this heritage in my work by fusing together visual elements that have opposing qualities thus creating harmony out of dissonance. Circumstance dictated that I live in a very controlled closed environment for much of the time. With two working parents, no close relatives, and few friends I spent much of my time alone overlooking the magic below, the chaotic jostle of customs, cultures and religions rubbing against each other.

Some of my most vivid memories are of emerging from my sheltered home to walk hand in hand with my parents through Istanbul's world famous Bazaars. I became swept up in the sensual soup of sights, smell and sounds, a magical world far removed from my seven story perch. It has taken quite some time and living half a world away for me to realize just how profoundly this dichotomy has shaped me.

After a decade working as a graphic design I decided to turn my visual skills toward exploring what I am about and how my past has affected me. Quite by accident and very much to my surprise, I found myself gravitating to clay.

For me clay most directly captures fluid energy while requiring patient methodical manipulation. This in itself stands as a metaphor for the East West push and pull of Istanbul. I prefer to make wall pieces that use my 2D sensibilities. My pieces mix motifs from past cultural references with my graphic design background. Thus a strong graphic style tends to produce focus on crisp geometry, which then is mingled with the Arabesque fluidity of “Turkish Calligraphy”. Strong texture against clean edges creates a sense of tension. I view this juxtaposition of rigid geometry and animated organic as a metaphor for the interplay of opposing forces that enlivens Turkish Culture.

Chapter I: Historical Influences

Historical Background

Since the dawn of history the land that is now referred to as Turkey has occupied a strategic location, central to the evolution of both eastern and western civilizations, as it is the primary bridge between Europe and Asia. It is a nation flavored with a vast array of cultural influences that are both distinctly eastern and western in character. The western one third of Turkey, including the cities of Istanbul (my hometown), Izmir and Antalya, has strong Europe and the Mediterranean ties. It is much more densely populated and boasts a much stronger economy. The remainder of the country extends eastward toward the Capitol City of Ankara and onward through Anatolia then on to the Iraq boarder, This region is solidly in the sphere of eastern cultural traditions.

Archeological sites can be found throughout Turkey that have produced extraordinary examples of art from a various cultural periods. The earliest Stone Age settlements, dating to 7500BC, have been unearthed at Catalhoyuk. Numerous civilizations have left their mark since, including Hittites, Greeks, Trojans, Romans, Byzantines, Arabs, Seljuks and Ottomans. It has provided passage for countless armies and has historically stood as a nexus for international trade. It is a nation forged from European cosmopolitanism and oriental mysticism set in a widely diverse physical environment.

Modern Turkey is a country with an area of 779,452 sq km and a population estimated at 70 million people. Istanbul, with approximately 15 million people is the largest city. It is bordered by the Black Sea to the north and the Aegean and Mediterranean Seas to the west.

The eastern border region is rimmed by high mountain ranges. The fabled Mountain Ararat sets near the border with Iran. Its 5165m slopes are thought to hold the remains of Noah's Ark.

Modern Turks descend from the Turkish speaking tribes originating on the Central Asian steppes. They gained control of Anatolia during the eleventh to thirteenth centuries where they were converted to Islam. However, they maintained distinctive language and popular culture, that made them different from the surrounding Arab Muslims. The Byzantine Christian population that inhabited Constantinople prior to its fall in 1453 and the waves of Balkan immigration during Ottoman rule have played a significant role in shaping the national identity.

Turkish people are extremely proud of their country and its history. A popular slogan is a quote from the founder of modern Turkey, Ataturk "How happy is she/he who can say he/she is a Turk" (Ne Mutlu Turkum Diyene!). Honor and virility are the most highly prized qualities for Turkish men. Turkey is unique in the Muslim world, as it is the only model of a multi-party democracy. Religion is divorced from government and affairs of state. This can be credited to one man, Mustafa Kemal Ataturk "Father of the Turks".

Islam is by far the dominant religion and is a preeminent force in shaping Turkish identity.

During the remaining 15 years of his life Ataturk carried out a series of far-reaching reforms designed to westernize Turkey and integrate it into the modern world. He terminated the caliphate, exiled the sultan, abolished the ministry of religious orders, sequestrated religious property and forbade religious instruction. In 1928 Islam was disestablished and the constitution proclaimed Turkey a secular state. Ataturk did not oppose religion itself, merely its interference in government. He held that everyone could be a devout Muslim in his private life, but that politics was a separate matter for public debate. (Cook, 1994)

It proved difficult for the Muslim sensibilities of Turkish Artists to accept radical new foreign concepts of art. In one minor area European approaches gradually took hold.

During eighteenth-nineteenth centuries, western style began to creep into landscape wall painting. The stylized floral and geometric motifs that were common to such painting were gradually displaced by Western Baroque and Rococo ornamentation that included landscapes and still lifes of flowers, fruit pots, and baskets, thus a synthesis of traditional religious art forms and western aesthetics and techniques emerged. (Wijdan, 1997, Wijdan, 1998)

Istanbul, Capitol City of the Ottoman Empire, situated on Europe's doorstep was Islam's primary gateway to the west. European influences tended to take hold first their then filter out into the further reaches of the empire. This was the case in the development of Modern Turkish art forms based on European aesthetics and techniques.

In 1883 The Academy of Fine Arts was founded modeled on European fine art training. It became Turkey's most important center for teaching painting and sculpture, where concepts of the European Renaissance and its classical foundations were first taught.

After 1910 the academy began to graduate artists who were qualified to teach in its classrooms and studios. They openly rebelled against indigenous artistic traditions and style and assumed a revolutionary attitude. Under the banner of “new” art, they took over the administration of the Academy of Fine Arts. The earlier placid landscapes of Istanbul and the Bosphorus were replaced by reclining female nudes and multi-figured narrative compositions. The public quickly accepted this novelty in Turkish painting.

In 1914, the Ottoman Government opened an Academy of fine art for women. There was an Academy for men, why not for women? Co-education was yet unheard of in Ottoman society, but painting for women was not. Young Muslim women had taken up painting as part of the finishing school curriculum to better prepare them for their social role in marriage. In 1916 co-education was introduced thus men and women shared the same studios. (Wijdan, 1997, Wijdan, 1998)

The development of Turkish modern art appears to have taken place in alternating phases of localization and internationalization, mainly evident in the subject matter depicted. From the 1940s onward, Turkish art has consistently moved along a dual track. In both style and subject matter, it incorporated Western schools of art along with local trends. The use of calligraphy in Turkey’s modern art has become a central theme that gives much of Turkish Art a unique flavor’.

Ataturk’s (Military Hero of Turkey) “language reform” in 1928 and the substitution of the Roman alphabet for Arabic severed all ties with the linguistic and aesthetic heritage of Ottoman Turkey. Thus the integration of calligraphy into modern art forms, as is the case in other Islamic countries, is totally absent in Turkey. Only since the 1960s have a few artists, such as Bedri Rahmi Eyuboglu, Elif Naci, Adnan Turani, Erol Akyavas, and

Burhan Dogancay, included Arabic characters in their abstract works. (Ali, 20)

As the first Islamic country to experiment with the European approach to modern art, Turkey developed certain traits that are distinctive.

While it was rare for women artist to gain recognition in the Islamic world, this was very much a phenomenon in the early stages of development of modern art in Turkey. It started during the Ottoman period, when women were still behind veils. Even prior to Ataturk 's revolution, which championed the cause of women's equality, women were given an opportunity in art. The trend has continued under the republic, and today Turkey has four generations of recognized women artists. (Ali, 20)

At the founding of the Turkish Republic, Ataturk declared that his greatest ambition was to elevate national culture by emphasizing the development of all the arts. Although Turkish modern art had a rather late beginning compared with European art, it has caught up with the latest postmodern artistic schools in the west in a relatively short span of time. Through experiment, debate, group support, and exposure to international art, Turkish artists have moved to the forefront in their creative concepts and their work.

By the second half of the twentieth century, a new art movement began to emerge as Arab and Islamic artists increasingly felt a need to ground imported art styles in their own regional environments. They had already proven their ability to learn new theories and apply Western aesthetics, as well as, adopt diverse new media. They were no longer satisfied with adding figures and other western motifs to tradition themes and creating their work in imported European styles. (Wijdan, 1997, Schimmel, 1984)

The struggle to integrate newly adopted Western artistic training to their cultural identity inevitably lead to the creation of the Calligraphic School of Art, which promoted the use

of calligraphic motifs as subject matter for western style painting and sculpture. This caused resentment among deeply religious conservative Muslim's who viewed this usurpation of classical Arabic calligraphy as an affront to God. As with oriental nations, such as China, Japan, and Korea the Ottoman Empire evolved a centuries old tradition of fluid graceful calligraphy. Thus it was natural that this decorative form, so central to the culture, would be transformed from an applied art to a powerful fine art expressive vehicle.

In the 1960s the calligraphic movement in art gained momentum, reaching its peak in the 1980s. Artists throughout the Islamic world discovered in calligraphy a means to assert their identity, as well as to demonstrate their artistic versatility in a personal creative manner far removed from Western traditions. Even Turkish artists, who had been disconnected from the Arabic alphabet since 1928 when Ataturk adopted the Latin alphabet as Turkey's official written form began using calligraphic forms in their works. Examples include the works of Adnan Turani (b. 1925), who included obscure letter shapes in his abstract compositions and Erol Akyavas (b. 1932), who integrated legible religious sentences in his abstractions to play an explanatory role in his *sufi* series *Passion of al-Hallaj*; and the abstract series *Homage to Calligraphy*, by the New York-based artist Burhan Dogancay. (Wijdan, 1997, Schimmel, 1984, Turkish Daily News, 1999)

By the early 1990s, the tide of calligraphic trends in art began to ebb. They were replaced with various tendencies toward realism and figurative renditions. Nevertheless, a

considerable number of calligraphic artists continued to develop and perfect their styles.

The Calligraphic School is more apparent in paintings than in sculpture, though a number of ceramists continue to use letters in their work. (Wijdan, 1997, Schimmel, 1984)

24

Chapter II: Visual Influences Calligraphic Art

In terms of subject matter, the Calligraphic School of Art follows two main themes. The first being modern calligraphic art of a religious nature. Works that deal with religious subjects communicate either spiritual or moral messages through quotations from the Qur'an. The second theme in calligraphic art is of a secular nature and divides into three subtypes: sociopolitical, literary, and decorative.

Historically, calligraphy or any other art form in classical Islamic artistic traditions has been used to reflect the social or political conditions of a nation. Sociopolitical subjects in modern Islamic art started to emerge in Turkey during the second decade of the twentieth century, at the time of the War of Independence and when Kemal Ataturk came to power. (Wijdan, 1997)

Still many Turkish artists prefer using calligraphy as a purely decorative element creating works that manipulate the aesthetic configuration of the Arabic letter in a purely abstract manner. In this fashion they transmit the western value of "Art for art's sake" which is devoid of any moral or cultural significance. (Wijdan, 1997)

In conclusion, the popularity of Arabic calligraphy among Islamic artist can be attributed to several causes. First, calligraphy not only forms a link with the artist's religious, literary, and artistic heritage, but it is also a living presence that is still vibrant. Second, the versatility of Arabic calligraphy, in either its regulated form or free styles, offers the

modern artist unlimited plastic and graphic possibilities, which can be manipulated and executed through traditional or modern techniques and media. Also, calligraphy is well suited to the depiction of spiritual as well as commonplace subjects. Finally, Arabic calligraphy appeals to and satisfies the literary aesthetic of Muslims, especially Arabs, whose preferred artistic expressive form, since pre-Islamic times, has been poetry. What an artist cannot express figuratively can be written. Very little serious academic study of *Modern Islamic Art* has been undertaken. It still remains an ambiguous and mysterious topic in western art history. (Wijdan, 1997)

Styles of the Calligraphic Art

Unlike artists in the west, such as the Impressionist or Cubists who were quick to adopt sweeping international movements, artists in the Islamic world never adopted clearly defined concepts or launched into all encompassing movements. Thus, a considerable amount of time was required for the various calligraphic art styles to develop and mature. In the 1950s calligraphic aesthetics had divided into three main styles.

-Pure calligraphic style: Based on the type of script employed and its place within the composition of the work.

-An abstract style: Based on the type of script employed and its place within the composition of the work.

-And calligraphic combination: It combines both script and figurative subject matter. Each of these styles split into additional sub styles.

Legible Script:

The first branch of abstract calligraphy uses legible script, in which the artist maintains the outward form of the letter or letters and employs them in a purely graphic manner, without taking meaning or connotation into account. (Wijdan, 1997)

Pseudoscript:

The second type of abstract calligraphy is pseudoscript, which consists of unrecognizable forms that are based on Arabic characters. In pseudoscript, the artist usually transforms the letters into unrecognizable lines and shapes, which is my style. (Wijdan, 1997)

Unconscious Calligraphy:

The characters of Arabic script exert a pervasive subconscious psychological attraction. Consequently, I have observed that many works by non-calligraphic, contemporary Islamic artists contain unconscious calligraphic forms disguised in human, animal, and abstract shapes.

“In Islam, an act is judged by the intention of the doer, so accidents cannot qualify as acts. Therefore, calligraphic forms that appear by accident in the works of Islamic artists do not identify their creators as calligraphic artists.” (Wijdan, 1997)

It is this type of calligraphy that I have chosen to use in my pieces. Often it is difficult to see the Arabic letters as they blend in to other design elements and motifs. In this style the writing, whether clear or obscure, is merely part of the overall composition and theme, although it might occupy a sizable part of the composition. Its purpose is to provide a setting for the principal characters and figures rather than to be the content, as in the central calligraphic branch. (Atabek, 2000, Schimmel, 1984)

Islamic art has borrowed from previous civilizations throughout its history. Even after its own styles matured, this intercultural exchange continued, without having a deleterious effect on Islamic aesthetics. For example, the influence of Chinese painting on Ilk-hanid miniatures of the thirteenth century seeped into Persian miniature painting of the sixteenth century and after was considered part of the Islamic Safavid school of miniature painting. (Atabek, 2000, Schimmel, 1984)

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The art of Calligraphy in Turkey (Hat Sanati)

Husn-I Hat, which is the art of beautiful and prudent writing bound by esthetic rule, holds an important place in the world of art history. This art form reached its zenith of in the hands of Turkish artists during the Ottoman Empire. The art of calligraphy, not only that which is written for ornamental purposes but also that which is intended to be read and though about, is skillfully placed according to the space they are written on. (Taskale, Gunduz, 2000)

The flowering of Calligraphy as an art form can be traced directly to the Turks conversion to Islam. They adopted the Arabic alphabet, and immediately began reshaping it. It was shaped by the rich complexity that is the heart and soul of Turkish culture and esthetic conception. The art of Calligraphy's (Hat Sanati) was applied in Turkey as follows: Qurans and Prayer Books, Kit'a (Stanza) and Murakkaa (Album), Karalama (Draft), Icazet, Icazetname (Diploma), Plates, Hilye's, Firmans, Imperial Monograms, and the art of Illumination: (Taskale, Gunduz, 2000)

Chapter III: Philosophical Influences

Philosophy of Sufism and Whirling Dervishes

Sufism is the significant influence that impacts my pieces. Far beyond being merely a motif to be used for the creation of art works, Sufism has affected my personality and broader perspective on life. There are many views as to what Sufism actually is. It evolved as Islam's tolerant, mystical and universal philosophy. It means "Peace with all". Sufi masters guide their disciples on an inward journey to unravel the mysteries of life. The first and primary function of the Sufi master is what may be called ego busting, that is to diminish the individual ego in order to establish the supremacy of God.

Sufism or *tasawwuf*, as it is called in Arabic, is generally understood by scholars and Sufis to be the inner, mystical, or psycho-spiritual dimension of Islam. Today, however, many non-Muslims, as well as, Muslims believe that Sufism is not bound by religious creed but rather exists as a universal belief system that lives beyond the bounds of Islam. Sufism is a way of life in which a deeper identity is discovered and lived. This deeper identity, reaches far beyond the surface traits of the individual, to an inner world or spiritual essence that seeks to connect in harmony with all that exists. As one divests one's self of the personal foibles and accumulated trappings that cloud our path an essential inner core is revealed that opens us to a creative world of heightened awareness, creativity and love. This world in turn is connected to the broader web of life.

Eventually it is understood that these abilities belong to a greater life and being, which we individualize in our own unique way while never being separate from it.

In Turkey, at least since the thirteenth century, Islamic mysticism has been expressed through participation in Sufi brotherhoods that serve as centers of spiritual and social life. The term *Sufi* derives from the Arabic *Sufi*, which means wool. Early Muslims used the term *Sufi* to refer to fellow believers who wore simple woolen garments to demonstrate their rejection of materialism and worldly temptations and their devotion to a life of asceticism and prayer. One example is the Mevlevi brotherhood. Its members popularly are called whirling dervishes because of the rhythmic whirling they engage in as a spiritual exercise and a means to achieve ecstatic proximity to God. The brotherhood is named after its founder, Mevlana (Jalal ad Din Rumi, d. 1273). (Robinson, 1995)

Chapter VI: Artistic Influences

Major influences on my work

Description of Specific Works

I believe that being an international person opens doors, and provides a broader perspective on the world and human interaction. The tendency toward prejudice is tempered by a more mature accepting view humanity. I believe that it is critical for an aspiring artist to broaden their world through exposure to as many cultural perspectives as possible. Knowledge, thus gained, enlivens ones world and enhances expressive potential. I have found that the curiosity that people exhibit toward me has lead to many lively encounters. Beyond my cultural heritage, design background and inspiration from Sufism I have been influenced by numerous artists from Turkey, the Middle East. European and North America.

“Bingul Basarir”, a Turkish clay artist has been very well known internationally for 40 years. She uses motifs from her cultural heritage (see image A). Currently she is concentrating on themes concerning mankind in all aspects. Prior to this recent departure her creations were mainly decorative and functional in nature. She focused on highly textured reliefs that are somewhat similar to the work that I have created for this exhibition. Where I used motifs that the Ottomans referred to as “Islamic Calligraphy” she has been using Cuneiform characters from Hittite Civilization. Another similarity is in the choice of forms we both work predominantly with wall pieces and freestanding

slab forms. She works with similar geometrical forms, especially round and triangular wall reliefs. According to her quote in *Ceramics Art and Perception*, issue 49, 2002 she explains her works as follows:

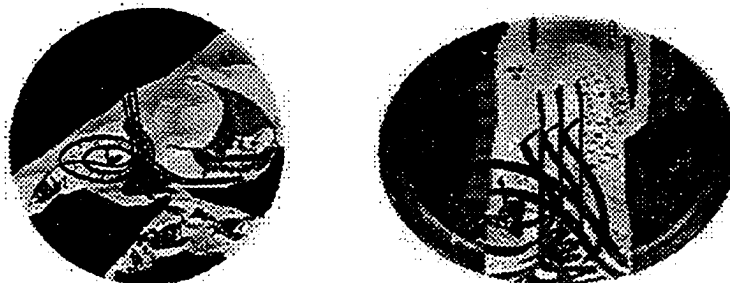
“The Hittite Civilization has always interested me. I have taken every opportunity to visit museums to observe the remains of their culture. It has reached a point where I feel I am one with them. For this reason I wanted my 40th anniversary exhibition to be about the Hittite civilization. I focused on animating the figures on reliefs and projecting their way of living which we can only imagine today, depending on their surviving artifacts. As for the colours, I think, the earth colours would have the effect of archeological artifacts. In the year 1000 BC, the sky was still this blue and the trees were this green. The fields were the same as today. For these simple reasons, I have used all of these vibrant colours in my work.” In her exhibition people experience both the past and the present at the same time like my exhibition. (Unsal, 2000)

“Zehra Cobanlı” another Turkish artist and ceramic instructor has established herself internationally. She and I both graduated from Marmara University, Fine Arts Faculty and she now holds the position of chairman in Anadolu (Anatolia) University Fine Arts Faculty, Ceramic Department. After receiving her master degree, she worked abroad at the Ferro ceramics Company in Holland and at the East Sydney Technical College, Australia, where she was introduced to high-fired stoneware processes. She was awarded the prestigious Monbusho Scholarship to study at Tokyo Fine Arts and Music University in 1993. After two years of study in Japan she returned to Turkey to assume the position at Anadolu University from where she continues to pursue an extensive international career. Her work focuses primarily on high fire natural clay surfaces that are tinted by a single engobe, thus achieving simplicity. Her motifs include traditional Turkish sayings and more recently Tugras (signatures) of the Ottoman Sultans and related calligraphic compositions. This stemmed from a project, that celebrated the 700th anniversary of the Ottoman Empire, that lead her into a new style that added oriental blues to her pallet, as

well as, Ottoman motifs and calligraphy. I, also, have become fascinated by the Tugras and have chosen blue to emphasize the Oriental flavor of my ceramics. This is illustrated in my pieces such as Juxtaposition II and my paintings. (Ceramic Art and Perception, 2002)

According to Ankara-Turkish Daily News's article:

As part of the celebration of the 700th anniversary of the foundation of the Ottoman Empire, the council's art gallery will be presenting a special exhibition entitled "Ottoman Sultans' Monogram". The exhibition features the work of the contemporary Turkish artists, *Ismet Keten* and *Zehra Cobanli*, both of whom are working with Ottoman calligraphy, specially with *Tugra*.



http://www.turkishdailynews.com/old_editions/06_02_99/feature.htm

"Nick Merdenyan", a Turk of Armenian decent, works on silky soft natural leaves that he transforms into exquisite works of art. His work incorporates elegant calligraphic writing and symbols of Jewish, Christian or Islamic origin; the pieces convey messages of love, peace and tolerance. The diverse motifs of traditional Anatolian Armenian culture and Animal figures inspired by Islamic calligraphic designs are most frequently used. Upon encountering his work I was inspired to translate some of his sensibilities into my clay surfaces. As in Nick Merdenyan's work I have sought to integrate Christian symbols

with Islamic motifs, and occasionally, other cross-cultural references. The piece entitled (Flash Point) is an example. (Ozger, 2001)

As a graphic design major I paid little attention to the world of Fine Art. Though, I was required to take several art history courses in the university, they had little impact on me as I was totally consumed by the requirements of my major. It was not until I traveled to Barcelona Spain and visited Miro's and Picasso's museums, and saw Antonio Gaudi's incredible art and architecture that I became fascinated by the Fine Arts. This trip proved to be a pivotal experience that dramatically changed my life. I realized how critical it was to be grounded in art history, and history in general, in order to more fully understand art and culture of the world. After leaving the university I worked as a successful graphic designer for a decade. Though I enjoyed the challenges and frustrations of this occupation I was left with the nagging sense that something was amiss. Thus the insights that germinated in Spain finally blossomed. I decided to discard the security of a steady paycheck from a creatively rewarding job and launch myself into the uncertainties of a career in Fine Art. Thus I became a 3D major focusing on ceramics. This media seemed best suited to my desire to combine the fluid grace of Islamic Calligraphy and Oriental motifs with my graphic design background. Finally I had found the vehicle and necessary support to explore the magic of the mixed Eastern and Western tossed salad that is my heritage.

Reflecting back on my Barcelona adventure I realized how strongly Gaudi's eccentric, spontaneous and whimsical, style had impacted me. Antonio Gaudi, who lived around the turn of the century, created architecture that is timeless. He left a legacy of controversy. His unique buildings seem almost chaotic in appearance, yet sinuous and unified at the same time. Gaudi's architectural forms and embellishments are alive with strong Moorish and Art Nouveau influences, yet the overall effect is genuinely unique. He was truly a genius. Gaudi's eclectic approach is reflected in my work in pieces such as My name is Red, Walls of Byzantium, and Collision in which I combined Islamic calligraphy and colorful glaze (Otto's red) in a format that has architectural references. (Ozger, 2001)

Antoni Gaudí's synthesis of widely diverse influences, Catholic religion, medieval architecture, Islamic art and the shapes found in nature are only some of the ingredients forming the very personal style of the Catalan architect. It is this combining of diverse elements that has most deeply influenced me. (Ozger, 2001)

Russian born artist Wassily Kandinsky began his painting career at the age of 30, rather late considering his important role as one of the founders of abstract painting. He sought to create an art form that combines the inner world of the artist with the outer world of visual influences, Kandinsky created amazingly beautiful, emotionally stirring, and intellectually challenging works that successfully united the inner world of imagination with his tangible surroundings. (Ozger, 2001)

Kandinsky was disinterested in materialism and looked to non-literal sources for inspiration. The ability of music to generate powerful emotional responses fascinated him. He sought to find a link between the ethereal nature of sound and tangible nature of color. Kandinsky also explored the symbolic significance of geometric shapes, such as the triangle, square, and the ultimate form the circle. These issues have been important in my work as well. (Ozger, 2001)

All of the above influences have provided me with important vehicles that aided my journey to find my own creative path. As Gaudi borrowed from far reaching sources I have borrowed from him and the others listed above to produce a body of work that I feel is strong and individually unique. This coupled with the extraordinary level of support that I have received through out my three years at UTPA has given me the tools to launch into the future.

Description of Specific Works

Group I of Wall pieces: **Jazz Improve**, **Mumbol Jumbol**, **Warm Heart**, **White Heart**, **Cold Heart**

Beginning in the fall semester of my second year, I decided to direct my primary focus toward creating ceramic wall pieces. I felt this approach would provide the most productive means to integrate my graphic design background with calligraphic motifs while I gained technical proficiency with clay. Besides that, I have always been fascinated by the extraordinary polychrome tile work that is so prominent in Islamic art. I grew up surrounded by mosques and public places that were encrusted with magical, colorful, graphic ornamental ceramic tiles. Every household contains decorative religious plaques, Hilye's, Firmans, and Imperial Monograms. This was a major influence on my decision to work with wall pieces. The piece, **Cold Heart**, shows legible script and pseudoscript styles of calligraphy.

Mumbol Jumbol, (Figure 13), and **Jazz Improve**, (figure 14) , illustrate the direct influence of the colorful Turkish Ceramics tiles. Turkish-Islamic tile art used in public buildings and mosques incorporates many different colors instead of using the more analogous coloration of Arabic style tile. This makes Turkish tile art very unique and different than the tile art of other Islamic countries. The primary glaze used in this piece is the vibrant raw (Otto's Red) which symbolizes my country's flag red and the blood shed by Turkish soldiers to secure democracy and freedom.

A popular quote from the founder of modern Turkey, Atatürk illustrates how strongly we Turks feel about our identity “How happy is she/he who can say he/she is a Turk” (Ne Mutlu Turkum Diyene!) Honor and virility are the most highly prized qualities of the Turkish people.

White Heart , Figure 8, is a circular 13”W X 13”H wall piece. The crescent motif borrowed from the Turkish flag is present in most of my works, In this piece its mix is beginning to soften and become more expressive in nature. Besides alluding to the Turkish flag an additional motif is beginning to creep in here. This piece is referencing to the philosophy of Sufism and in particular to its mystical followers, the whirling dervishes. As I mentioned on page 22, Sufism has affected my personal beliefs and, given me a broader perspective on life. It evolved as Islam’s tolerant, mystical and universal philosophy.

It means “Peace with all”.

Both non-Muslims, and Muslims believe that Sufism is not bound by religious creed but rather exists as a universal belief system that lives beyond the bounds of Islam. Sufism is a way of life in which a deeper identity is discovered and lived. I chose to use the heart shape for its symbolic connection to intense emotion, love hate...etc. What draws me to Sufism is its inner, mystical, or psycho-spiritual dimension, which is at the core of being an artist. When one creates an artwork complete focus is required. The reason that whirling dervishes whirl is to remove themselves from the clutter of daily life in order to

direct one hundred percent focus on God, much like an artist who must direct his/her mind and heart totally to the creative process.

Warm Heart, Figure 10 is 10" W X 12" H is a Saggerfired wall piece that incorporates much of the same underlying philosophy as figure 8. The muted natural ones present earth, and honesty. In Islam being an honest and loving person creates social good and personal strength. According to the Quaran, you must love people and be good to them. One Turkish idiom says that if you do good things for others, God gives good things back to you.

Figure 11, **Cold Heart**, is 16" W X 19" H. This wall piece combines the Sufi sensibilities with Islamic Calligraphy. The calligraphic elements interplay with bold texture and colorful glazes. Legible Script mingles with Pseudoscript calligraphy style that maintains the outward form of letters that are employed as a pure graphic motif, without meaning or connotation. This is my preferred method of employing script.

Group II of Wall pieces: My name is Red, Collision, Walls of Byzantium

Figure 9, **My name is Red**, is 24" W X 17" H is a wall piece which is composed crisp repeating geometrical shapes that emanate directly from my background as a graphic designer, The bold graphic nature of this piece played against strong texture and intense color set in a non geometric format make this one of my favorite pieces, This name of this work comes from the novel of the same name written by the Turkish writer Orhan Pamuk. This book is a compilation of historical short stories on the theme of the

Ottoman Empire. As a mystery and a reworked folktale, *My Name is Red* has some surprising twists and turns, powering a readily engaging plot; as a historical novel, its setting in late sixteenth century Istanbul is convincingly detailed; and as a novel it offers some memorable characters and complex relationships. The heavily textured glazes, the **Otto's red and crusty black**, impart a bold mystical impression and a sense of the historical which captures the essence of the novel. This piece incorporates geometrical shapes that are historically common to Islamic art, which tends to limit the use of figurative elements for religious considerations.

Walls of Byzantium, Figure 18 is 26 "W X 18" H refers to an epic of history in which Byzantine Europe was the primary force that shaped Turkish culture. In AD330 Byzantium was renamed Constantinople by Emperor Constantine as the eastern hub of Roman Empire. With the fall of Rome in AD476, the Eastern Empire (called Byzantium) emerged as the center of western civilization; it stood for a thousand years until being conquered by Ottoman Turks in 1453. The Byzantine Empire left two major legacies. These were preservation of Greek culture and the creation of Orthodox Christianity as a state religion. (Cook, 1996). The bold white geometric forms that juxtapose against a dark energetic sweep of textured tones symbolize the rational stabilizing influence of Greco-Roman Civilization. The dark light interplay symbolizes orders battle with chaos and the garments worn by Greek Orthodox clergy as they stood in the face of evil.

Collision, Figure 23 is 30" W X 14" H is a wall piece that is similar in concept to figure 9. It is however more three dimensional than the other pieces in this group. The intent was to capture an impression of the rich architecture legacy that adorns Istanbul.

Description of Specific Works

Group III of Wall pieces: Flash Point, Arabesque, Istanbul/Constantinople, Up-down/Right-wrong, Nexus

Flash point, Figure 7, 22.5" W X 20.5" H, is the piece that most directly represents the interplay of Christianity and Islam that shaped my perceptions. The outer cross form, symbolizes Christianity. This juxtaposes against an inner circle adorned with the word God written in Arabic calligraphic form. The bottom architectural element eludes to the arches from the Moorish Alhambra Palace in Spain. A small crucifixion scene is set into the Islamic arches. I am captivated, as was Gaudi, with the elegance of Moorish art and architecture. Islamic art forms of found in North Africa And Spain were quite unique. The apogee of Moorish architecture was reached in construction of the Alhambra in the 13th and 14th centuries. This luxurious palace-fortress is elaborated for its delicately worked lacy carvings. When Moorish occupation was finally ended by Christian Armies many of the great Mudehar Islamic edifices and decorative styles were adopted and preserved by the Christians. Many charming ivory boxes remain, which are adorned with scenes of court life or floral and animal motives; boxes were also made of precious metals. Filigreed, inlaid, and enameled jewelry, as well as textiles and rugs, were produced in Moorish Spain. The Alhambra Palace is a true expression of the once

flourishing Moorish civilization and is one of the finest examples of its architecture in Spain. Moorish art has had a very strong impact on my approach. (www.infoplease.com)

Arabesque, Figure 1 a circular wall piece 20" in diameter which uses stylized Arabic calligraphy with bold spontaneous sgraffito and sweeping movement to symbolize the Oriental style. These elements are juxtaposed against a circular form that is symmetrically divided into contrasting dark and light areas that symbolizes the ordered intellectual nature of western civilization.

Istanbul/Constantinople and Nexus, Figure 2-3 are approx. 20" W X 24" H circular wall pieces. The piece, **Istanbul/Constantinople**, the only city to stand astride two continents, Istanbul's geographic location, is a tapestry woven of strong threads from both Eastern Western Civilizations. This juxtaposition has generated a unique magic. No other major city can boast of having been the capital of three world empires, the Roman, the Byzantine and the Ottoman. In these guises it has worn three names, Byzantium, Constantinople and Istanbul. (Cook, 1996). The circular clay piece **Istanbul/Constantinople** combines calligraphic references with textural glazes and lineal metal elements. The piece, **Nexus**, also uses stylized Arabic calligraphy; bold spontaneous sgraffito and sweeping movement to symbolize the Arabic/Oriental sensibilities.

Up-down/Right-wrong, Figure 4 is another 25" W X 20" H wall piece. It symbolizes the shifting vagaries of daily life. Sometimes you get the bear, sometimes the bear gets you.

Calligraphic elements represent the ebb and flow nature of daily life. The upper portion of the piece refers to the more positive side of life, its excitement, challenges and successes in a fast paced world. The bottom portion of the piece projects an opposing force or more somber feel. When these opposites merge they complete each other like a husband- wife, sister-brother, and mother-father.

Description of Specific Works

Group IV of Wall pieces: Juxtaposition I, Juxtaposition II

Figures 5 and 6 are wall pieces. **Juxtaposition I**, figure 5, measures 18" W X 38" H. This piece incorporates blue charms with black centers that are commonly used as talismans to protect one against the evil eye. Both Turkish and Mexican Folk myth use these charms to ward off evil spells cast over one by an ill-wisher. These beads are readily seen in most cars and houses, an indicator of continued strong Islamic influences. Most Latin American, Mediterranean, and Middle Eastern countries have similar folk beliefs. In the Turkish culture it is very important to carry blue charms to protect against the evil eye. I used arch shapes to represent these blue glass charm shapes.

Figure 6 is also a wall piece. **Juxtaposition II**, figure 6, measures 26" W X 38.5" H. The design elements utilized in Juxtaposition II are derived from my graphic design background. The piece incorporates a stylized interplay of Arabic calligraphy with geometric shapes.

Description of Specific Works

Group I of pedestal pieces: World of Sufism, House of GOD, Turkish vessel, Mayan Turk, Turkish Plate, Figure Study I and II.

World of Sufism, Figure 18-19, and **House of GOD**, are 29" W X 43" H and 19" W X 35" H pieces include references to Arabic calligraphy, the philosophy of Sufism, and the unique landscape of Cappadocia a region of tortured badlands where Christians sought refuge. They carved churches and entire communities inside the living rock. The site was forgotten by the western world until its rediscovery by a French priest. Cappadocia is now one of the most visited and photographed places in Turkey. (Cook, 1996) I chose Fuzzy Purple/Blue/Wissinger White, Crusty Black, and Acid Yellow glazes as this combination best captures the elements alluded to above. As I mentioned before Chapter III: Philosophical Influences - Philosophy of Sufism and Whirling Dervishes, have been alive in Turkey, at least since the thirteenth century. Sufi brotherhoods thrive as centers of spiritual and social life. Initially, Sufi followers were like students whose bonds to a Sufi teacher were based on personal loyalty. One example is the Mevlevi brotherhood. Its members are popularly called whirling dervishes because of the rhythmic whirling they engage in as a spiritual exercise and a means to achieve ecstatic proximity to God. The brotherhood is named after its founder, Mevlana (Jalal ad Din Rumi, d. 1273). A mystic poet and philosopher, Mevlana believed in ecstatic universal love, a state that he induced by whirling round and round, accompanied by mystical music played on the *ney* (reed flute). The dance symbolized the revolution of the spheres. Dancers held their right hand

up to receive a blessing from above and the left hand down to dispense the blessing to the earth below. They still conduct an annual festival that is famous worldwide. (Cook, 1996)

Mayan Turk, Turkish Plate, and Turkish vessel, Figure 20-21-22 are 12" W X 14" H, 13" W X 17", and 15" W X 16" H are free standing pieces. The piece, **Mayan Turk**, alludes to both Mexican and Turkish influences. Mayan people tended to have large hooked noses. In Northern Turkey many people sport a similarly pronounced beaks that differentiate them from other Turks. These people are referred to as "Laz". **Turkish vessel** and **Turkish plate** pieces combine contemporary design with motifs from my heritage. The bottom one and one half of these vessel forms is dome shaped, which refers to the domes of Mosques. On the surface I used Islamic (Arabic) calligraphy with colorful under glazes. (Cook, 1996)

Figure 15 and 17, **Figure study I-II** are 10" W X 14" H, 13" W X 19". These very early pieces stand against traditional Islamic artistic tradition in which figures are rarely used and never in conjunction with written form that might have religious connotation.

I deeply respect Islamic art but I do not accept the religious constraints that severely limit free expression. Concise geometry and fluid calligraphy fascinate me. They seem to beg being used in conjunction with figurative elements. In particular the fluidity and expressive load of nude figures work beautifully with the elegance calligraphic script.

CONCLUSION

By combining contemporary visual elements emanating from my graphic design training with motifs that elude to my heritage and the new medium of clay I attempted to create a body of work that captures the dichotomies and mysteries of growing up in a dual world.

Istanbul was a gristmill that caught me between the world of Eastern Mysticism and Western Pragmatism. At a personal level my early childhood mirrors this juxtaposition. The media of clay emerged as the vehicle that was most suited to my expressive aspirations. Clay provided to be a highly versatile material that was responsive and adaptable. It facilitated rapid development of concepts, motifs, expressive energy and technical proficiency into a solid body of work.

This has provided me with a unique vantage point from which to view my past and a desire to find the expressive vehicles to share my perspective. Three years of graduate studies at UTPA, has sharpened my insights and equipped me with the tools to do so.

GLAZE FORMULAS LIST

CONE 06 – 04 EARTHENWARE GLAZES

The following glaze formulas were provided for me by Charles Wissinger, Robert Shay Joyce Jablonski , and Summer Bruch)

Glazes for Textured Sculptural Surfaces:

Wissinger Sculptural off white (See figure 1 “Arabesque”, Figure 10 “Figure Study II”, Figure 13 “Mumbol Jumbol”)

Gerstley Borate	45.00
Borax	50.00
Magnesium Carb.	50.00
Silica	10.00
Zircopax	10.00
<u>Total</u>	<u>165.00</u>

Crusty Black (See almost all pieces)

Gerstley Borate	50.00
Bone Ash	50.00
Cornwall Stone	25.00
Copper Carb.	100.00
Black Nickle Ox.	25.00
<u>Total</u>	<u>250.00</u>

Try base formula with out colorants

Fuzzy Purple/Blue/Off White (Figure 13 “Mumbol Jumbol”, “Cold Heart”, Figure 14 “Jazz Improv”)

Nepheline Syenite	21.75	760
Barium Carb.	45.75	1600
Lithium Carb.	1.43	50
Silica	11.43	400
Kaolin (Grolleg)	21.75	760
Copper Carb.	8.00	280
<u>Total</u>	<u>102.1</u>	

Electric Yellow

Cryolite	50.00
Nepheline Syenite	50.00
Chrome Ox.	2.00
<u>Total</u>	<u>102.00</u>

Acid Yellow ("House of GOD")

Cryolite	50.00	Try:
Soda Ash	50.00	Yellow Ochre 10%, pink
		Commercial Stains 10%
Chrome Ox.	5.00	
<u>Total</u>	<u>105.00</u>	

Add 30% Magnesium to make it crawl

Otto's Texture Red (See Figure 9 "My name is Red")

White or Red Lead	62.10	Try:
Feldspar (Custer)	20.00	Vanadium Ox. 4%, sun yellow
Barium Carb.	9.50	Vanadium Ox 8%, lemon yellow.
Cornwall Stone	4.20	Potassium Dichromate, 8%
Kaolin (EPK)	4.20	
Chrome Ox.	8.0	

Brain Soul

Frit 3134	50.15	501.50
Feldspar (Kona F4)	13.68	136.80
Kaolin (EPK)	7.60	76.00
Magnesium Carb.	9.12	91.20
Bentonite	3.64	36.40
Zircopax	11.24	112.40

Borax	3.00	4.00
Gerstley Borate	46.00	46.50
Magnesium Carb	31.00	31.00
Kaolin (EPK)	19.00	18.50
Zircopax	6.00	5.50

Shay Blue

Nepheline Syenite	55.00
Barium Carb.	26.00
Lithium Carb.	2.00
Silica	7.00
Kaolin (EPK)	6.00
Copper Carb.	4.00

Jackeeze Matt 04

Gerstley Borate	35.00	Copper Carb., 3% green
Nepheline Syenite	5.00	Copper Carb., 2.5% blue
Kaolin (EPK)	5.00	Cobalt Carb., ¼% blue
Silica	42.00	Commercial Stains, 5 – 10%
Lithium Carb.	8.00	(for stains that require calcium
Tin Ox.	5.00	such as chrome tin pinks add
CMC Gum	1.00	10% whiting for good color)

Lana's Chartreuse Moss 06 (2 big size Ottoman Bowl)

Lithium Carb.	80.00
Flint	15.00
Gerstley Borate	5.00
Tin Oxide.	7.00
Chrome Oxide	3.00

June's Suede 06 (2 big size Ottoman Bowl)

Gerstley Borate	80.00 / 400.00
Bone Ash	20.00 / 100.00

BM-3 06-04 (2 big size Ottoman Bowl, "House of GOD", "World of Sufism")

Barium Carb.	40.00
Nepheline Syenite	45.00
Spodumene	10.00
Flint	5.00
ADD Copper Oxide % 4	

Jackie's Base 04

Gerstley Borate	38.00
Lithium Carbonate	10.00
Nepheline Syenite	5.00
Kaolin (EPK)	5.00
Flint	42.00

Odyssey 04

Gerstley Borate	61.50
Kaolin (EPK)	24.60
Flint	12.30
Lithium Carbonate	1.64

Creamy Yellow 04

Gerstley Borate	80.00
Titanium Oxide	20.00

Flame Drops 06-04

Magnazium Carbonate	30.77
Lithium Carbonate	15.38
Gerstley Borate	53.85

Lizzard 06

Magnazium Carbonate	40.00
Lithium Carbonate	15.00
Borax	10.00
Gerstley Borate	70.00
Silica	5.00
Nepheline Syenite	20.00

Lichens 06-05

Gerstley Borate	40.00
Whiting	40.00
Lithium Carbonate	30.00
Borax	20.00
Kaolin	10.00
Copper Carbonate	6.00

50/50 Jp Laraque 06-04

Cryolite	50.00
Soda Ash	50.00

Acid Yellow:	Chrome Oxide	05.00
Pink:	Yellow Ochre	10.00
Crawl:	Magnesium Carbonate	30.00

Erickson's Peeling Paint 04

Gerstley Borate	80.00
Titanium Dioxide	20.00

Createred Glaze 06

Talc	45.50
Lepidolite	54.50
Bentonite	02.00

CONE 06 – 04 EARTHENWARE STAINS**Wissinger Dark Body Stain**

Gerstley Borate	2T
Red Iron Ox.	2T
Manganese Diox.	2T
Chrome Ox.	1T

CONE 06 – 04 EARTHENWARE SLIP**Bisque Slip**

Kaolin (EPK)	20.00
Frit (3110)	20.00
Nepheline Syenite	20.00
Zinc Ox.	20.00
Silica	15.00
Whiting	5.00

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APPENDIX

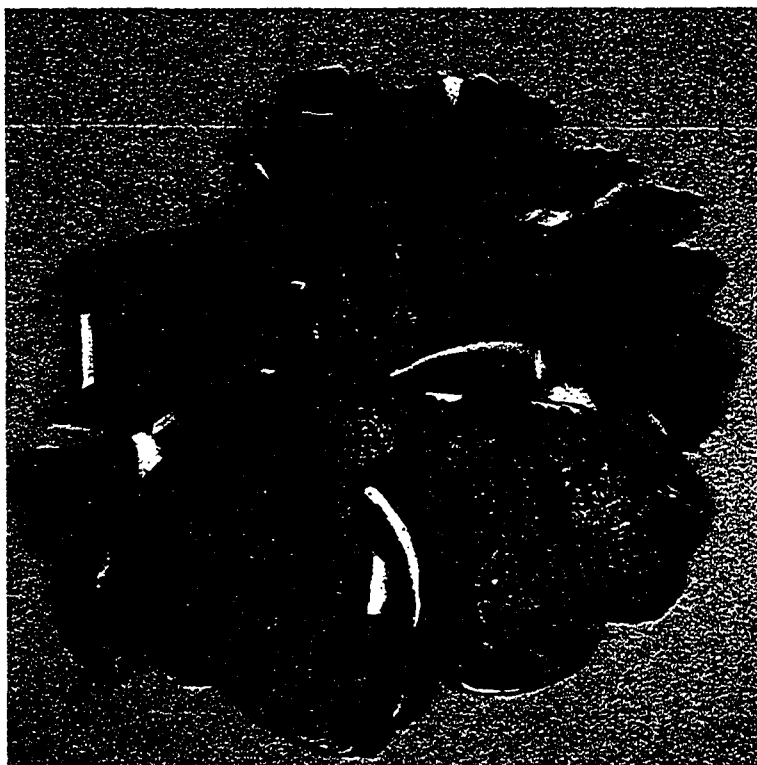


Figure 1

ARABESQUE

Earthenware Ceramic

23" W X 22" H



Figure 2

ISTANBUL / CONSTANTINOPLE

Earthenware Ceramic

20" W X 24" H



Figure 3

NEXUS

Earthenware Ceramic

13" W X 13" H



Figure 4

UP-DOWN/RIGHT-WRONG

Earthenware Ceramic

25" W X 20" H



Figure 5

JUXTAPOSITION II

Earthenware Ceramic

20" W X 39" H

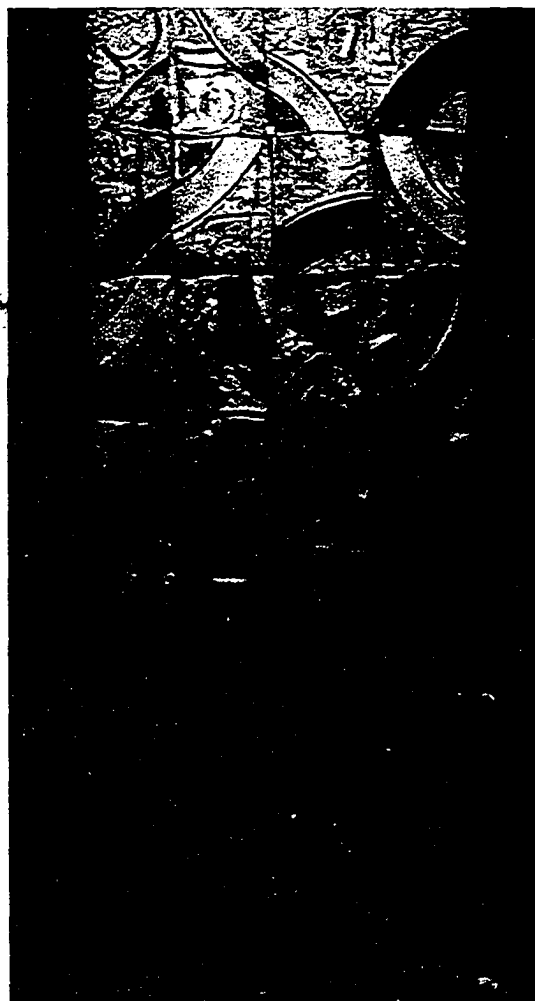


Figure 6

JUXTAPOSITION I

Earthenware Ceramic

18" W X 38" H

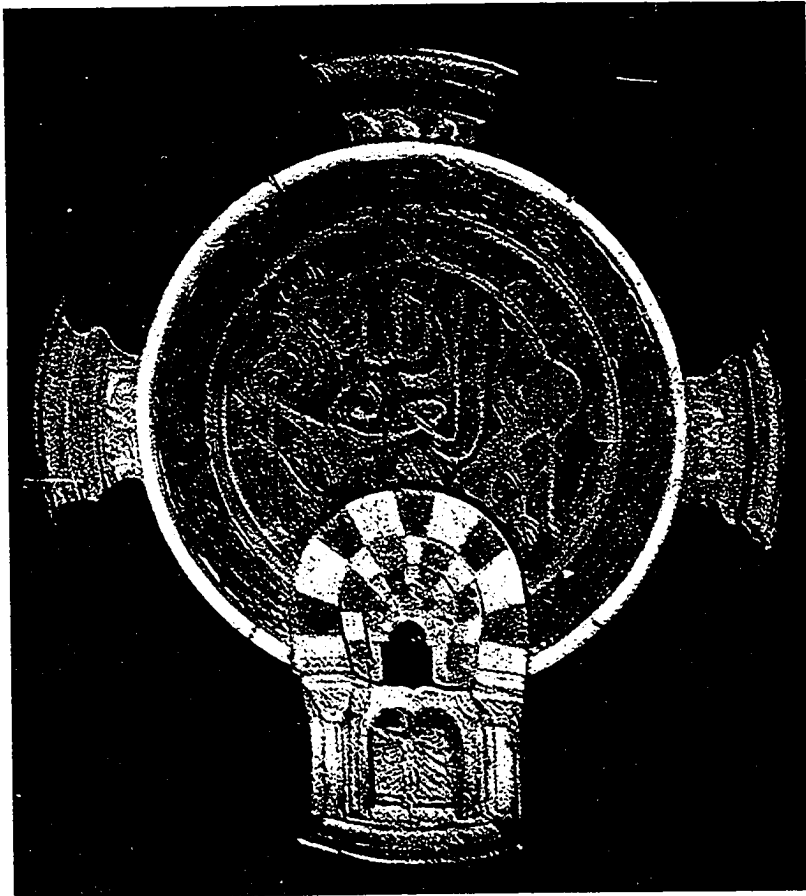


Figure 7

FLASH POINT

Earthenware Ceramic

22.5" W X 20.5" H



Figure 8

WHITE HEART

Earthenware Ceramic

13" W X 13" H

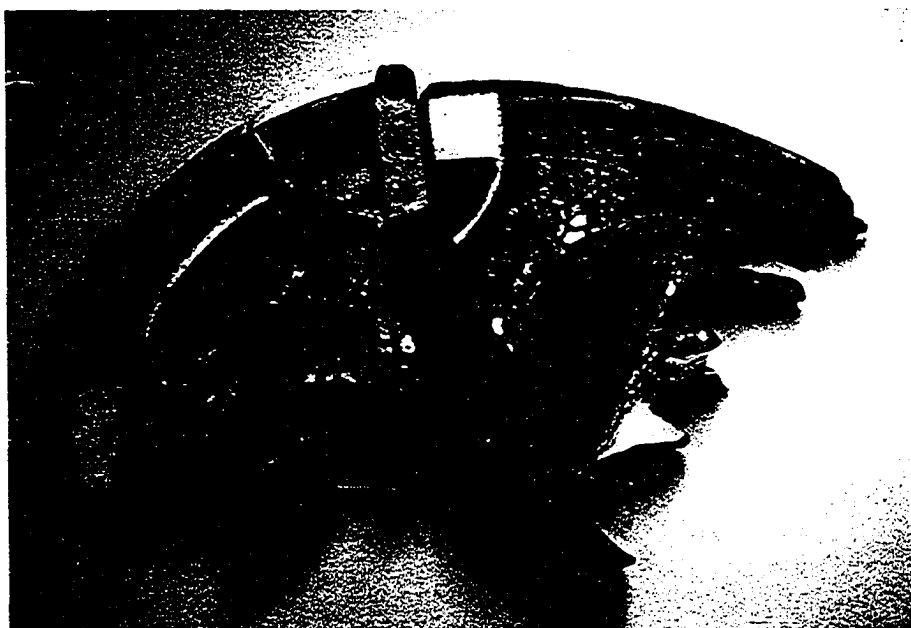


Figure 9

MY NAME IS RED

Earthenware Ceramic

24" W X 17" H



Figure 10

WARM HEART

Sagfire Ceramic

10" W X 12" H



Figure 11

COLD HEART

Earthenware Ceramic

16" W X 19" H



Figure 12

AFFECTION

Earthenware Ceramic

23" W X 40" H



Figure 13

MUMBOL JUMBOL

Earthenware Ceramic

11" W X 13" H



Figure 14

JAZZ IMPROV

Earthenware Ceramic

13" W X 13" H



Figure 15

FIGURE STUDY I

Earthenware Ceramic

10" W X 14" H

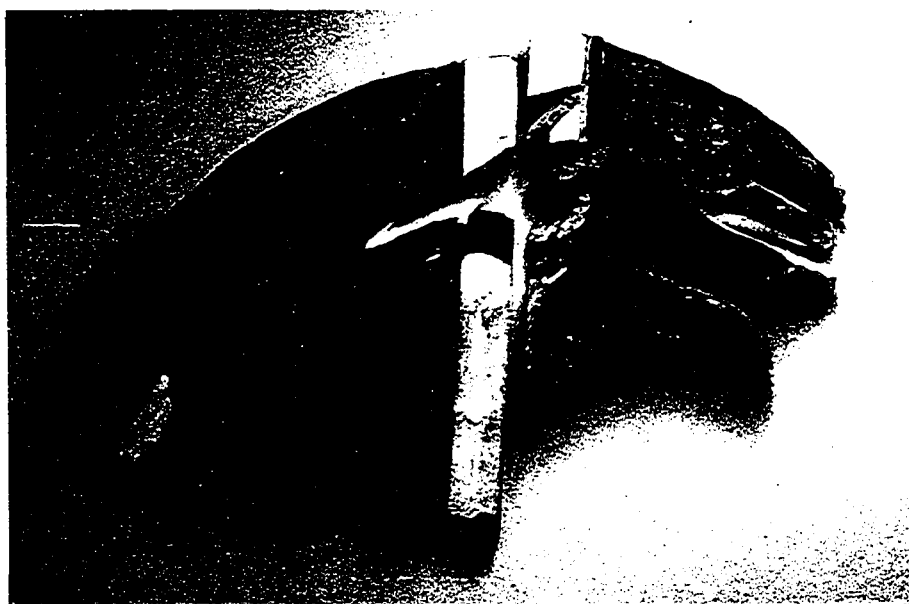


Figure 16

WALLS OF BYZANTIUM

Earthenware Ceramic

26" W X 18" H

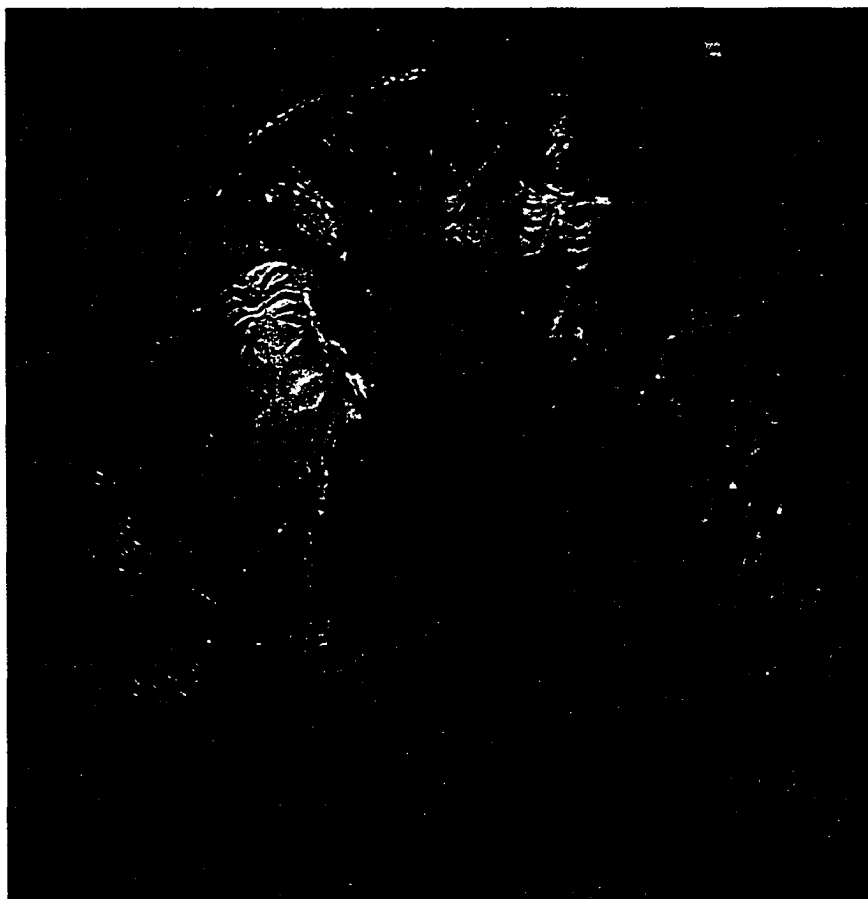


Figure 17

FIGURE STUDY II

Earthenware Ceramic

13" W X 19" H



Figure 18

WORLD OF SUFISM

Sagrifire Ceramic

19" W X 35" H



Figure 19

HOUSE OF GOD

Earthenware Ceramic

29" W X 43" H



Figure 20

MAYAN TURK

Earthenware Ceramic

12" W X 14" H



Figure 21

TURKISH PLATE

Earthenware Ceramic

15" W X 16" H

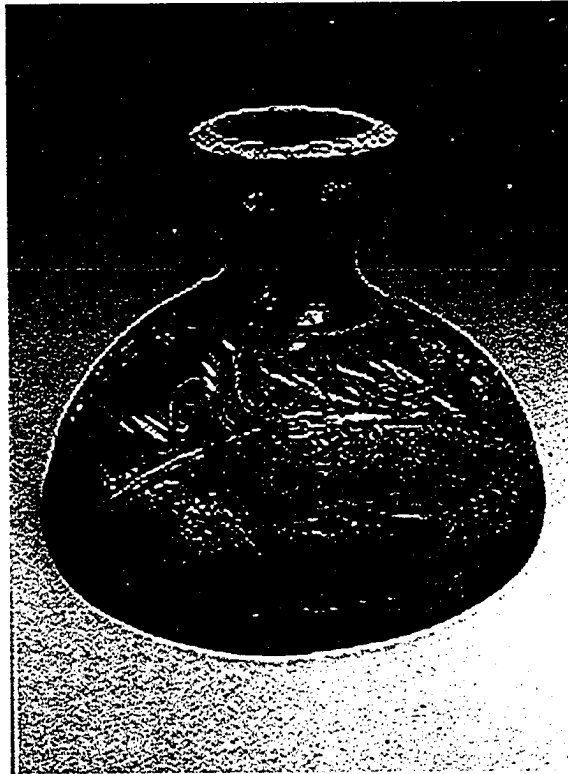


Figure 22

TURKISH VESSEL

Earthenware Ceramic

13" W X 17" H



Figure 23

COLLISION

Earthenware Ceramic

30" W X 14" H

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Teaching Assistant Art Department-The University of Texas Pan-American, Edinburg/Texas-USA

Design & Production 3333.01

2001

Graphic Designer University Relations-The University of Texas Pan-American, Edinburg/Texas-USA

Helped to develop marketing ads. For different departments of UTPA such as Music and HSHW Department.

1995-1998

Graphic Designer NOBEL ILAC SAN. & TIC A.S. (Pharmaceutical Com.), Istanbul/TURKEY

Helped to develop unique promotional campaigns for different products. Responsible for developing the design of images, logos, slogans of marketing ads.

1994-1995

Supervisor TELSIM TELEKOM (Telecommunications Com.)- Supervisor, Istanbul/TURKEY

Responsible for developing promotional materials for marketing campaigns. Responsibilities include designing chip cards for cellular phones, designing and preparing ads, preparing the display of products at various shows during the year.

1992-1994

Assistant Art Director GUZEL SANATLAR REKLAM AJA.(Marketing Com.)Istanbul/TURKEY

Responsible for developing the marketing campaigns of Turkey's most leading companies and coordinating the printing of the ads.

1991-1992

Graphic Designer AYDONAT MEDYA HIZMETLERI (Media Services Com.)Istanbul/TURKEY

Responsible for the major part of developing the marketing campaigns for various companies.

1989-1991

Intern REKTA TANITIM LTD. (Marketing Com.), Istanbul/TURKEY

A part time job as a graphic designer. Responsible for developing a Macintosh computerized system To produce advertising work that had been done by traditional manual means.

1988-1989

Intern YILDIZ PORSELEN. (Ceramic Factory.), Istanbul/TURKEY

A summer job, responsible for assisting in a variety of ceramic production processes.

1988

Volunteer SABANCI DISABLED SCHOOL. Istanbul/TURKEY

Teaching painting and drawing to disabled and handicapped students. Prepared an exhibition/sale of student work.

EDUCATION

MFA in 3D Studio art; projected; 2003

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS PAN-AMERICAN, Edinburg/TEXAS

1988-1991

BFA degree in Graphic Design.

MARMARA UNIVERSITY, Faculty of Fine Arts, Istanbul/TURKEY

1998

BLINN COLLEGE, College Station/TEXAS

1998

English Language Institute – Advance Level.

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY, College Station/TEXAS

INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION

Mezcla Imagural exhibition: a collection of Border Artists, Nuevo Progreso, Tamps., Mexico, 2002

Los 2 Lados del Rio, Consulado Casa de la Cultura de Reynosa, A.C., Reynosa, Tamps., Mexico, October, 2002

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

Riofest 2001, Harlingen, Texas, April , 2001

The First Annual Normah Knight Invitational Art Show & Sale, Harlingen, Texas, October, 2001

Freedom of Expression, Sala Arte Contemporary Gallery, McAllen, Texas, October, 2001

Explorations, UTPA GRADUATE STUDENT SHOW, Clark Gallery, Edinburg, Texas, January, 2002

Two States of Ceramics, The University of Texas- Pan American and Arizona State University, UTPA Clark Gallery, Edinburg, Texas, February, 2002

UTPA Clay Visits STCC, South Texas Community College Art Gallery, McAllen, Texas, July, 2002

Cinesol Art Exhibit, Rio Grande Valley Museum, Harlingen, Texas, May, 2002

UTPA Graduate Student Show, Edinburg Library, Edinburg, Texas, September, 2002

Los 2 Lados del Rio, Consulado de Mexico en McAllen, Texas, October, 2002

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

FIRST PLACE Award at the Brownsville Texas International Art Show March 6, 2002.

Monitor Valley&State PROFILES IN EXCELENCE "*Student of the Week*" May 30, 2002

International Student Scholarship, Fall semester 2001.

Award, "Student Advisory Council" Spring 1999

3 times "STUDENT PROGRESS AWARDS" at the English Language Institute in Texas A&M University. (Oral skills 201, Grammar 101, Listening 303)

Ranked the first among the 6000 applicants of the entrance exam for Fine Arts Academy.

COLLECTIONS

University of Texas-Pan American Permanent Collections

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Photography Club at Marmara University.

Member of Fine Arts Club at Marmara University.

Founder of the Society of Women's Rights at Marmara University.

Club for Development of Children's Art at Marmara University .

Student Advisory Council at the English Language Institute in Texas A&M University

International Student Organization in Texas A&M University, 1999.

Computer Skills: Comfortable with Aldus Freehand, Adobe Illustrator, Adobe PageMaker, Quark Express and Adobe PhotoShop.

Language Skills: Fluent in Turkish and English.