



BEHROUZ ZINDASHTI

Born in Salmas, Iran in 1979
Lives and works in Tabriz, Iran

EDUCATION

2007 University of Kashan, Iran, Art of Handicraft

2009 University of Tehran, Iran, Arts of Handicraft

Currently Teaching Member at University of Islamic Arts in Tabriz
Distinguished Member of the Calligraphy Society of Iran

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2004 University of Kashan, Iran
Exhibition at Ministry of Culture in Salams, Iran
Exhibition at University of Kashan, Iran

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2012 *The Next Generation: Contemporary Iranian Calligraphy*, Galerie Kashya Hildebrand,
Zurich, Switzerland
2012 *Alternative Calligraphy*, Gallery Homa, Tehran, Iran

ACADEMIC RESEARCH

2005 Specialized edition of Art Monthly "Art Calligraphy: A New Chapter of Iranian Contemporary Art."

2007 Specialized edition of Art Monthly "New Visions of Nastaligh technique."

Zindashti is influenced by an architectural principle that draws a correlation between architecture and ethics. He believes that his works function as alternative spaces for prayer, repeating the text of the Prayers for Prosperity in abstracted and improvisational Seljukain and Talisman scripts. His works express humbleness and spiritual devotion, but they also attempt to revive a forgotten art ethics, where repetitions of texts become prayers in their own right. Unlike traditional calligraphy that illustrates specific Koranic texts or poetry, Zindashti creates spiritual works with no direct references.

According to the art critic Shahrouz Nazari, "contemporary Art Calligraphy in Iran can be praised because it has freed itself from its religious art origins; in appreciating it, we are freed from nostalgic memories of the mosque or church." Although Zindashti's works look traditional – like they could be from a mosque in Tabriz, a palace in Bokhara, a bazaar in Damascus, or a hamman in Casablanca – they are far from it. His geometric calligraphy style owes more to the geometric abstractionism of the second half of the 20th century than to mosque inscriptions. By stripping away its traditional cultural, linguistic, and religious references, Zindashti's calligraphy cuts through religious nostalgia and aims at direct spiritual experience. For Zindashti, the ecstasy of abstract art gives us insight into the heart of religion.

Interview with Behrouz Zindashti

What inspired you to become an artist?

Art is the highest form of blessing in humans. Each one of us is capable of activating it and inspiring viewers.

What training did you receive that influenced your career?

I studied the Arts of Handicraft, but I did most of my training in calligraphy and graphism. In 1994, before going to university, I started studying calligraphy, and I have continued my studies to the present day. My art is a fusion of traditional Iranian art, book decorating, and the style of writing seen in religious places.

Why do you always repeat the same text in your work?

In my work, I have not intended to repeat a specific text – I only wish to emphasize the visual effects that occur when some letters and words are freely interwoven so that I can create the geometric frames I have in mind.

Who have been your mentors or teachers?

My inspiration comes from architecture, mosaics, and the atmosphere created by book decorations.

Did you formally train in calligraphy?

Yes, I did. Before starting art calligraphy, I studied classical calligraphy professionally with Master Hossien Hossiennejad. He taught me all the techniques.

Have you experimented with other mediums?

Yes. I have experience in a number of different areas, including pottery, glass, wood, and metal works.

What influences your work most: politics, current events, classical history?

Artistic events of the present and past have influenced my works.

Have you ever lived outside of Iran?

No.

Have you travelled outside of Iran?

No.

Does your work make any reference to your own identity and personal struggles you have experienced?

Of course, all that touches my life can be a source of reference in my work, before or after my studies.