



Third Culture Muslim Kid (TCMK)

The art that I create is seeing my world through the lens of the Arabic script. My craft is self-taught and style is developed in the past 10 years taking influences from the rich tradition of classical Arabic calligraphy and visual elements of HipHop and popular culture at large.

The themes of my artworks are based on the various aspects of my identity as a Muslim and a Third Culture Kid (TCK). A TCK is someone who is raised in a culture other than their parents' or the culture of their country of nationality. Being brought up as a practicing Muslim this element is an essential characteristic of my identity, hence I label myself to be a Third Culture Muslim Kid (TCMK).

Influential factors on my identity are Islam, the Pakistani culture of my parents, growing up in a multicultural neighbourhood in The Hague during the 80s and 90s, and with that the various aspects of popular culture I have been exposed to. This all adds up to an eclectic mixture of themes that form the basis of the subjects I work with. Be it people, objects or events.

Examples of my work include paying tribute to role models from globally known 13th century Muslim poet Rumi to one of the greatest rapper to have ever lived Tupac, from legendary Dutch football player Johan Cruyff to current world champion in MMA Khabib Nurmagomedov from Dagestan, Russia.

Besides people, I have a strong attachment to objects that have played some role in my upbringing and that of many other Third Culture Muslim Kids around the globe. Be it a very specific rosewater lemonade syrup brand called Rooh Afza that is found in the summer in every Pakistani and Indian household, or the classic Nike Air Max shoe that was the must-have sneaker for every boy growing up in the 80s and 90s.



I also commemorate historic events and present-day situations that I want to highlight through the art of the Arabic script. Be it the blessed month of Ramadan or the recent death of George Floyd which has caused great pain to the African American community and People of Colour at large globally.

Sculpture

Stylistically my work is set apart from other practitioners due to my usage of pictures along with my hand style. As I use imagery and typography, and manipulate both digitally as though they are intertwining with each other, I have wondered for a long time how this would look if it were a real sculpture. For that reason, the next natural step in my artistic development is to put this into practice.

I am convinced working and designing in 3D space will allow me to explore new ways of telling stories and also discover new insights on the possibilities of this new medium. Working in three dimensions, elements of gravity, surroundings, materials and even the potential of animation at some point will add more depth to my work, literally and also figuratively.

Islamic view on sculptures

Within the Islamic art sphere, the majority of the art is found in the field of calligraphy, illumination, Islamic geometry and architecture. Sculptures are less seen due to broadly held view of the impermissibility of sculpting living beings, which is an attribute solely ascribed to the God, the Creator of creations. This also applies to paintings and drawings as well. For this reason, Muslim households generally tend to only have paintings or plaques of Quranic verses or names of Allah and Prophet Muhammad.

Due to this I will focus on objects, to stay within the legal framework of my religion, but push the envelope to create sculptures of non-living things and still hold significant value. I say this as I have seen how people have positively reacted to my artworks online, and confident a sculpture will have a similar if not stronger positive sentiment as people are able to observe and interact with it in a different way than a digital art piece.

Arabic calligraphy and sculptures

Using Arabic calligraphy to make sculptures is not new, but the style that I want to see and hope to develop through this grant is missing. Most, if not all sculptures tend to be simple extrusions of a 2D work. Others are abstract renderings of an Arabic word or phrase that builds on the recognizable characteristics of the calligraphy form so that public can see it to be Arabic.

From a narrative point of view, I do not want to highlight just one part of my identity but bring them together as much as I can. I aim to work with recognizable shapes as I base it on objects and words that have meaning to a Third Culture Muslim Kid like myself. The current sculptors are mostly speaking from solely Arabic/Middle Eastern perspectives which I can relate to, but only partial, hence I want to show in my way how West meets East, and East meets West.

Representation (Nike Air Max 1)

Fashion is one of the staples of a culture. The way you dress speaks volumes about the person and tribe he or she belongs to. For that reason, the first sculpture I want to go for is inspired by the sneaker culture: the Nike Air Max 1.



Tribute art for Nike Air Max Day 2019

Growing up these were the pair everyone I knew wanted and had. To this day I still wear them and I want to pay tribute to this iconic shoe that has been part of my wardrobe ever since I can remember. It is a small glimpse into the life of many other Third Culture Muslim Kids. To enhance the attraction, the sculpture will be true to size.

In essence this work, as with all my other works, is about representation and inclusion. A sneaker is more than a shoe. It holds wishes, memories, dreams growing up as kids of immigrant parents, going through the journey of life and navigating between two different cultures. Sneakers are but one of many artifacts of our childhoods, one that

has survived the test of time and today the sneaker culture is bigger than it has ever been. The fondness of these shoes is one that is rooted in nostalgia and ever-growing appreciation.

The second reason I have opted for this is that making sculpture is a time and cost consuming endeavor, and I would want to generate sufficient exposure with the first sculpture so I am able to secure funds for future works so there is more longevity in this next chapter of my art career. I am fully aware of the potential coverage that I can generate with the advent of social media and rise of streetwear fashion online through help of influencers and famous blogs. There are also early conversations with vice president of Nike in Dubai in Dubai to have the sculpture on display in their flagship store.

Professionalization

WORKSHOPS

To achieve the objective of making the sculpture there are specific skillsets required to ensure that I have my first sculpture to present as the centerpiece to reveal at my first solo exhibition:

1. 3D modelling
2. 3D printing
3. Sculpturing, Molding, Casting & Finishing.

In the first phase I will be following courses in 3D modelling using Cinema4D software. Along with digitally sculpting a piece, the challenge lies in finding a workflow that allows me to 'write' calligraphy in 3D space.

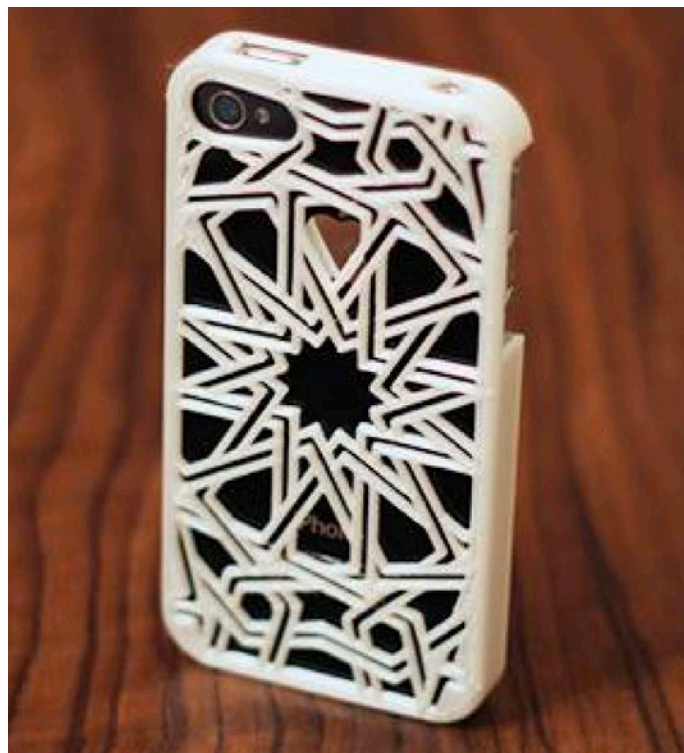
With eye on creating a sculpture, I will follow an additional course focusing on modeling for the purpose of 3D printing which will also help me in gaining a better comprehension of the various techniques and materials available and the challenges of each of them.

CONSULTATION

I am fortunate to have access to several people to help guide me in this journey, and I will briefly explain their role in my process.

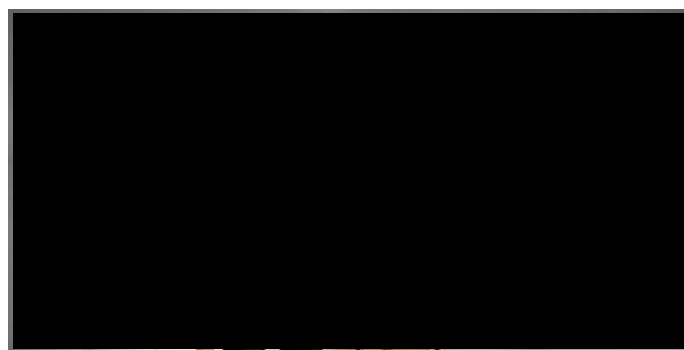
██████████ is a longtime friend and a The Hague based entrepreneur and inventor of one of the earliest 3D printers on the market called ██████████. In 2013 I

designed an iPhone cover with Islamic geometric art and he provided the support by making the first sample using his printer. Though that was the first and unfortunately the only experiment, due to lack of financial resources. But it planted the seed of pursuing the idea of taking my art beyond 2D. Sasan's expertise in the printing technique will be helpful in ensuring the technicalities of my design and digital model meet the requirements to have it printed.



My first 3D printing experiment: Islamic Geometry for an iPhone cover

Secondly, I will be approaching ██████████ who is an extremely successful Amsterdam-based painter and sculptor whose work I have been following with keen interest for that past few years. Through various video interviews he has already provided significant insight into his process, but I hope to be able to onboard him as a consultant for not only production of a sculpture, but also his business and marketing-savviness, in which he excels when it comes to usage of social media to generate exposure for himself and his work.



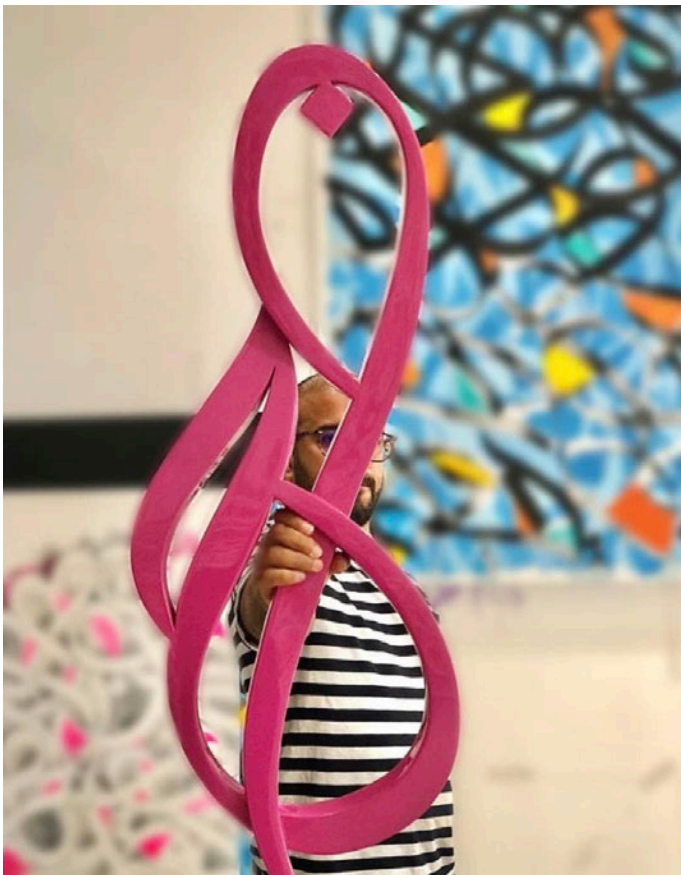
██████████ with his ██████████ sculpture in Amsterdam

Last but not least I will be requesting the insight and training of [REDACTED], a French-Tunisian calligrapher and sculptor based in Dubai, and a vanguard of modern Arabic calligraphy. He transitioned from painting to sculpturing a few years ago and his growth has inspired me immensely. With his help and training I will not only be to solidify my understanding of the techniques but also how to navigate the art scene, as this sculpture will expose me to a new world. There are some concerns around travel restrictions, so I am planning to have him on as one of the main consultants due to his understanding of my artform, the sculpturing techniques and how they can come together.

I will also reach out to various contacts that I have that are influencers and online media publications in the fashion-industry to give exposure to this sculpture. I hope

As COVID-19 measures are slowly but surely being loosened, I want to do an unveiling in my home town of The Hague. There are two venues I have in mind, the first is [REDACTED] with whom I have worked in the past and currently creating an artwork for them as we speak. The other venue is the [REDACTED] who are a local arts and culture organization promoting elements of Hip Hop culture. Sneaker culture is part and parcel of Hip Hop and an unveiling there would make as much sense as at [REDACTED].

Though in very early stages, there are preliminary conversations with Nike wanting to have it on display in their flagship Nike Town store in Dubai (United Arab Emirates). The regional Vice President has expressed interest in the idea and it could potentially be seen there in 2022, after the 14-month process has finalized.



[REDACTED] holding one of his sculptures in his studio in Dubai.

Presentation

The presentation of this project will be both online and offline. I will use my Instagram (nearly 10K followers) to share the whole journey from start to finish through Stories and updates on my Feed. This will allow me to have more points of interaction and take people 'behind the scenes' of me learning and applying my newfound knowledge. It makes sense to do so on Social Media as that it provided me the platform to connect with other TCMKs around the globe.

Budget

Free budget	€14.000
--------------------	----------------

Monthly stipend (Sept 2020 - Aug 2021)	€12.000
--	---------

Contingency for Presentation: Exhibition costs	€ 2.000
--	---------

Professionalization	€ 5.000
----------------------------	----------------

Cinema4D 3D Modeling Course	€ 1.000
-----------------------------	---------

Consultation + Training:		€ 500
--------------------------	---	-------

Consultation + Study Trip		€ 1.500
---------------------------	--	---------

Consultation + Study Trip		€ 2.000
---------------------------	---	---------

Presentation	€ 5.000
---------------------	----------------

Sculpture Prototyping in Plastic	€ 500
----------------------------------	-------

Sculptur 3D printed in Metal	€ 4.000
------------------------------	---------

Product Photography	€ 500
---------------------	-------

Year Plan

Phase 1:	Training, Research & Consultancy	Sep 1, 2020 - May 31, 2021
Phase 2:	Design & Prototyping	Feb 1, 2021 - Jul 31, 2021
Phase 3:	Production & Presentation	Aug 1, 2021 - Oct 31, 2021

