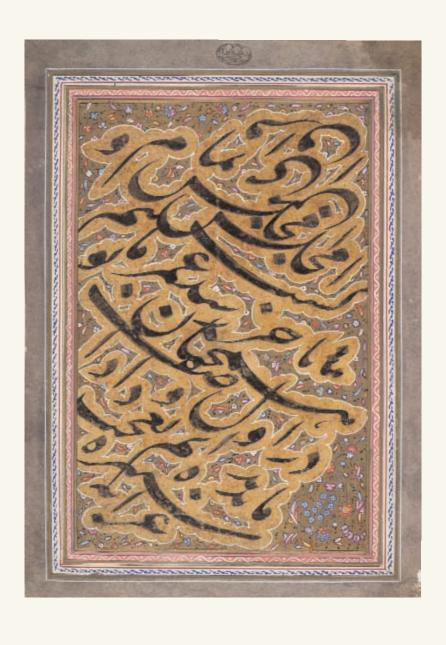


## Artist Talk and Demonstration The Living Art of Islamic Calligraphy

Sunday, October 28, 2007, 2:00 p.m.



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Brown Auditorium Theater The Caroline Wiess Law Building The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston 1001 Bissonnet 713-639-7300 lectures@mfah.org www.mfah.org

Admission is open to the public and free for museum members and members of cosponsor organizations.

A reception and demonstration follow the program.

Front: Attributed to Mir Damad, Calligraphy exercise (siyah mashq) in nasta'liq script comprising a couplet of poetry from the preface to the Gulistan ("Rosegarden") by Sa'di, 1800s–1900s, ink, opaque pigment, and gold on paper, Harvard University Art Museums, gift of John Goelet, 1958.196.

Above: Mohamed Zakariya, Indigo, 2006, soot ink, gouache, and three alloys of gold on ahar paper; borders of marbled paper, courtesy of the artist. © Mohamed Zakariya

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Based in Arlington, Virginia, Mohamed Zakariya is the most accomplished Islamic calligrapher in the United States, and the only American to receive certification from master Turkish calligraphers. "Proper calligraphy is supposed to expand your heart to the meaning of a text," says Zakariya.

"In the 45 years I have been developing my approach, I have worked through the art from its very origins, through its many technologies and its varied regional, epochal, and cultural strains. The great challenge is to present the great truths in a way that, while remaining loyal to the traditions of the past, is new and fresh and vital. In this way, the ancient texts can speak for themselves, revealing their meanings spontaneously to the viewer—sometimes gently, sometimes grandly."

In this special Houston appearance, Zakariya talks about the history and practice of Islamic calligraphy, and will demonstrate his exquisite style during the reception. This program is presented in conjunction with the opening of the exhibition *Traces of the Calligrapher* and *Writing the Word of God: Calligraphy and the Qur'an*.

This program is generously cosponsored by His Highness Prince Aga Khan Shia Imami Ismaili Council for the Southwestern United States and the Asia Society Texas Center.

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