

# By the Pen

## AN INTRODUCTION TO CALLIGRAPHY IN THE ISLAMIC TRADITION

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Calligraphy is the most prominent art in Islamic culture. With roots in the Qur'an, the practice of calligraphy is a multidimensional endeavor. The practice of calligraphy requires patience and discipline, promotes an understanding of space and design, and engages the intellect in a contemplative way. Mastery of the craft comes only after years of effort, but the rewards that come from perseverance along the path truly enrich the soul.

In its classical form calligraphy is taught one on one, master to student, at a pace that meets the needs of the individual student. In this less perfect world, we offer a two-day intensive workshop to a small group of students, taught by a teacher who is nearly a master (and who has the permission of her teacher to teach others.) We will echo the classical methods as best we can.

We will start our workshop with the *mufradat*, or letter exercises, in the tradition of the Ottoman masters. These exercises have been assigned to beginning students for a thousand years, and involve the practice of letter connections in the Arabic script. We will begin with the *Rika* style, then move on to *Thuluth*—a well-known, beautiful hand—once students gain more control of the tools used in this art. In addition, we will work together on a sentence that will offer sufficient challenge to both beginning and advanced students.

In addition to hands-on lessons, students will be given a historical overview of Islamic calligraphy. Presented as a slide show, this overview will acquaint students with the magnificent art of calligraphy and form a solid foundation for our study of letterforms in the Arabic script. The slide show will be open to any interested parties (it will not be a hands-on session.)

The instructor will provide materials for students, including a pen made from a reed, paper, and ink, for a fee of approximately \$20.00. Additionally, students will need to purchase a wood carving knife before or after the workshop (see the instructor for details.)

*Elinor Aishah Holland holds a degree in Religious Studies from Temple University and studied Arabic at the University of Pennsylvania. Her passion and enthusiasm for calligraphy began during a visit to Istanbul as a teenager, and she has studied the art form ever since. As a freelance lettering artist in Roman and Arabic scripts, she is involved in all aspects of calligraphy art, including exhibiting, teaching, and working on commissioned and commercial projects. She has been a student of Master Calligrapher Mohamed Zakariya for many years, and travels to Turkey for intensive study as often as possible. Ms. Holland has studied with leading teachers in the Western calligraphy tradition as well, and continues to hone her craft and knowledge of calligraphy, related book arts, and illumination at every opportunity. She regularly teaches, presents, and exhibits in locations across the USA and Canada. Clients include the Smithsonian Institute, The NY Public Library, the Clinton Global Initiative, NY Society of Scribes, and Long Island University. She resides with her family in the suburbs of New York City.*

# Workshop Details

## DATES:

June 18 - 20, 2010

*Registration cut-off: June 1. Workshop subject to cancellation if fewer than nine people apply.*

## REGISTRATION:

Download the registration form at [stonypointcenter.org](http://stonypointcenter.org) (under the Programs tab) and mail it to:

REGISTRATION  
STONY POINT CENTER  
17 Cricketown Road  
Stony Point, NY 10980

Or call 845-786-5674 x107 and ask to speak with Karen

## COST:

\$350 (double occupancy with hall bathrooms; single with hall bathroom available for \$40/night more) + \$25 materials fee, checks payable to Stony Point Center. Visa/MC accepted.

Participants who plan to arrive by train or fly into Newark Airport may arrange pickup with Stony Point Center in advance.

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