



NAHID TOOTOONCHI

Nahid Tootoonchi is an Iranian American graphic designer, artist and educator. She received her undergraduate degree in graphic design in England from Southampton College of Art, and her MFA in Communication Art from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. She has worked as a senior designer and art director for institutions such as Kaiser Permanente, National Geographic and the Nature Conservancy and is currently professor at Towson University. Tootoonchi's recent artwork and research focuses on Farsi calligraphy. She has been using letterform as design elements to create non-conformist composition.

Tootoonchi has always been fascinated by the magical effect of pen and ink on paper. As a graphic designer she sees the replacement of traditional tools and handwork with computer use. With the explosion of network access to information and digital technology, she finds a meditative state in calligraphy.

To her calligraphy is the art of writing, an artistic impression and rhythm of the music to the eye. She uses letterform to create contemporary artwork beyond reading and writing and to disassociate it with rhetoric usage of words in our daily communication for diverse viewers. Nahid works the letterforms to their essence as lines and points on surfaces in a deliberate rather than random way for self-expression. Using the letter shapes in ways that are not legible any longer. To accomplish the contextual messages of the pieces, she is using the simplest element of our communication devices, that without it our culture will be indistinct.

In her art work, Nahid uses calligraphy to create abstract images to invoke emotions. Somehow in its natural form and elementary quality she finds an infinite wisdom gravitating toward basic way of living. Calligraphy is as old as history but its use in contemporary art has a pronounced eco to the future. The letterform movement and playfulness offer inspiration and solution. The vibrancy and energy of colors speaks togetherness with harmony.

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