



# *ALLAH SWAMI* *Artist's Statement*

*Ohm Sri Gurubhyo Namaha.* Salutations to the divine teacher (in Sanskrit language).

I take the blessings of my Ustadhs (gurus/teachers) Ustadh Majed Seif (Arabic Calligraphy) and Ustadh Ahmed Essawi (Arabic Language) as I present this creative endeavor.

*As-salāmu Walaykum* (Peace be upon you in Arabic) &

*Namaskaram* (Salutations to the divine in you in Sanskrit), welcome to my exhibition Allah Swami.

*Allah* means God in Arabic, *Swami* means God in Sanskrit (a more endearing, personal, less scholarly way).

My name is Sangeetha Kowsik and I serve as Hindu Chaplin at NYU and am the founder and creator of NYU Hindu Center. Born and raised in Fremont, California, I did my undergraduate studies at Parsons School of Design in NYC, and have an additional degree in Arabic Calligraphy.

*Why Arabic Calligraphy?* I was the Head Designer for the Metropolitan Museum of Art for close to 5 years, when the beautifully renovated Islamic Galleries reopened. I wanted to learn an art form that ties Morocco all the way to India and beyond and design product for the shop.

*Arabic Calligraphy* (type/words) is used to praise God, the language of the holy Quran (the only "Islamic art form" ) that ties all cultures/countries/peoples of Islam together. My love affair with the Arabic language continues to this day.

I studied typography/graphic design in college, am a designer/artist by profession, and am basically a type nerd.

Years of working in the fashion, luxury, music, streetwear, skateboarding, and museum industries have strongly influenced my work as well as my training in South Asian performing arts whose roots lie in worship: Carnatic (South Indian) and Hindustani (North Indian) vocal, Bharathanatyam, Odissi, and Kathak dance.

*My inspiration and passion for art, music, design stem from faith (all faiths).*

"*Alankara/Alankaram*" in Sanskrit (the language of Hinduism) means to adore, ornament, or decoration. I am affectionately known as the #pujaqueen because I love making flower garlands for worship and my pujas (ritualistic prayer) at the temple.

*This exhibition is a presentation of all that I love and all that has influenced me over the years.*

**In eternal gratitude and huge thank you:**

Yael Shy (Director of Global Spiritual Life) and Ariel Ennis (Assistant Director of Global Spiritual Life) for their friendship, openmindedness, dedication, and for bringing forth the Hindu faith into the Global Spiritual Life family.

Shaykh Faiyaz Jaffer (Shi'a Chaplin / Scholar) and Feraidoon Mojadedi Ana (Sufi / Rumi Scholar) for their love, support, friendship, patience, and guidance in helping me with my artwork.

My father for giving me the gift of faith and my mother for giving me the gift of music. (My name means music in Sanskrit). All my friends and family who have always supported me in my creative pursuits.

I offer my art and exhibition as a form of worship to the almighty divine.

I dedicate this exhibition to Imam Khalid Latif (Director of the Islamic Center at NYU)

My dear friend, your kindness, your compassion, your guidance, your support, your openmindedness, your bhakti (devotion), your patience, your ability to always be there for everyone (no matter who and how busy you are) is a huge source of inspiration to me. You never cease to amaze me.

Much love/blessings to you and your family always!

**All my love, in eternal gratitude, Sangeetha**