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The sculptor who gave life to her sculptures of horses



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Göksin Carey

Göksin Carey, who started making horse statues after the age of 50 under the influence of a dream she had, made us proud as the first Turkish sculptor to make a monument in a public space in America.

“The woman who whispers to horses” Gökin Carey says; “The subtlety of the horse figure, to know the shoulder blade well. All dimensions of the horse are proportionally dependent on the size of the shoulder blade. We have not completed the anatomy of the horse with the shoulder blade.”

For Göksin Akman, or as she is known in America, it would be wrong to say, “She had a dream and her whole life changed”. Akman, who spent her childhood abroad due to her father’s job, went to America in her youth, got married and started a family there, and after years of dealing with completely different things, she started making horse sculptures after the age of 50 under the influence of a dream she had. Despite having almost no art education, Göksin Akman, who has displayed an astonishing mastery in such a difficult field, is now considered an expert in the field of horse sculptures in America and she shares the subtleties of her art with her students: “From the age of 13 to the age of 85, I have many students. Last year in February, I taught art at Shenandoah High School. Students who wanted to receive high art education continued on their path with the notes I gave. I am not an academic, but my knowledge, experience and certificates were deemed sufficient. In 2015, I received the best sculpture award from the Turkish committee in Washington DC and my two-meter bronze fox statue was placed on a busy street in the Middleburg area. It is a great honor to be the first Turkish sculptor to create a monument in a public area in America.

Can you tell us a little about yourself? Where were you born and raised?

I was born in Izmir, but we moved to Istanbul when I was a baby because of my father's job. My father was a pilot. We went to Vietnam when I was a child. I completed my education in Vletnam and Kenya. We also lived in Yesilyurt for a while, and I studied at Yesilkoy Secondary School for a short time.

How did you get to America?

I went to America for work and stayed there. After completing my law/paralegal education in America, I started working as an intern for an Italian lawyer and continued.

I also became interested in piloting as a hobby because of my father. I joined the Civil Air Patrol Search and Rescue team. We would search for downed planes and report them to the center when we found them. I went to New York 12 years after San Diego.

I met my husband and moved to Virginia. I currently have a son, a daughter and three grandchildren.

How did you start sculpting even though you had not received any training in sculpting?

I had no interest in art in general and I had no interest in horses either. I had a dream that told me I had to make a horse statue. One night in my dream a horse said, "Get up, make a horse statue."

In the morning, I went to the clay shop and got some clay for the statue.

However, my passion that started with a dream took over my entire life.

On the other hand, I can say that I had such talent in me,

it emerged later. When I started making statues, my hands were very hot, I could not understand how the hours passed. In the end, they turned into magnificent statues.

I took the horse sculpture I made to the American Academy of Equine Art, which combines horsemanship and horse love with fine arts. They said it was very accurate in every aspect, even anatomically, and said, "We can only show you the technique." I learned technical information about oil and mud from them. As I continued to make horse sculptures, I realized that the figures in horse sculptures were always depicted in a wild, savage manner. We have conditioned our brains to reflect them as wild.

How did you start teaching?

I am still teaching face to face classes on Wednesdays at Aim Gallery in Middleburg in Virginia for 11 years. I have nearly 500 students and train a few instructors. I am still in touch with most of my students. I also give Zoom sculpture lessons online on Thursdays.

People come from faraway countries for an annual one-week intense class. In the meantime, I have opened to the world. I plan lessons in Florence. I am in touch in London with a well-known bronze sculpture gallery. I also started teaching in Istanbul last year. I gave lessons at the Urladam Art Center in the summer. The lessons were very well received and were very successful. I am preparing to give a five-day masterclass at Decollage Art Space between December 2-6, 2024. Each lesson is a separate excitement for me.

You have a special bond with horses. How do you reflect them in your art?

I am fond of the freedom of horses, and the fact that they are beautiful creatures attracted me. One of my students is a Reiki master, who also teaches. She called me to a workshop called "I will be in contact with the horses". Seven of us held hands; we were told to close our eyes and raise our energy. They said that the horses that were moving around would choose one of you. I let go of my hand and sheard the voices getting louder. When I opened my eyes, everyone was looking at me because all the horses were behind me and touching me. My student said that my energy was sleeping incredibly well with the horses. Is there a rare situation?

What are the subtleties of your horse figure work? How do you design a horse statue, what are the stages of the creation process?

The subtlety of the horse figure is to know the shoulder blade well. All dimensions of the horse depend on the size of the shoulder blade in proportion. We do not complete the anatomy of the horse with the shoulder blade.

What place do the horses occupy in your portfolio? Why did you also focus on the horses?

Horses are in our culture and history. However, interest in horses has decreased in Türkiye. I wanted to do something to protect the endangered horses in our mountains and plains. I want to create documentary records about horses. My dream is to establish an art center in a place where they live intensively and to place my sculptures of horses running in the waters there.

I want people to not forget their existence, I want them not to become extinct. Let's not forget the love of horses of the Great Leader Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.

You do not only make horse sculptures, but you also make other sculptures. Do you always prefer to work inspired by nature?

Horse sculpture is one of the most difficult ones in terms of anatomy; I am glad that I started with it. My students create compositions with their horse sculptures, and they want to add another animal or figures next to the horses. I took a course from a famous French American sculptor named Phillip Parraut for two semesters. I can also work on and teach other figures.

Which organizations are you a member of in America? Can you briefly tell us about the exhibitions you have sheld? Where are your sculptures exhibited?

I am a member of organizations such as the National Sculpture Society, Tri State Sculptors, Saatchi, and the American Equine Artist Association in America, and my sculptures are exhibited there. I also had a solo exhibition. I teach is a region for horse riders and lovers.

Therefore, people find me for commissions to have their own horse sculptures made. Right now, I am working on a bust of Ataturk. I plan to present it to the embassy in America when it is finished with reproductions in consulates.

Can you tell me about your future projects?

My desire is to train more students... I also want to sculpt more life size statues of horses. As you can see, the projects never end as long as you live, and it is not that difficult when you love what you do.