

PERSONAL STATEMENT

AYŞE EDA TARAKCI, TURKEY, ARCHITECTURE

After receiving my undergraduate degree from Bilkent University, I decided that computation is a key element in architecture that enables optimization, offers very practical design tools and improves designs immensely when integrated responsively. I am seeking a master's degree in the US because I want to infuse my knowledge of architecture with the emerging technologies and explore the possibilities and limitations of architecture within the context of the 21st century. There are schools in the US that offer very extensive master programs with rich curriculums and cut edge design and fabrication labs. These combined with the international education environment, will help me expand my knowledge and perspective, and make me a better designer. The experience and education I will acquire in the US can equip me with the skill set that I need to acquire to become an accomplished practicing architect. If I receive the Fulbright grant, I will have the opportunity to come back to Turkey with the knowledge of the novel architectural approaches and techniques, and contribute to the improvement of the built environment in my home country.

Since I was a child, drawing has been my medium of self-expression. I made drawings on the walls of the living room, I made sketches on the pages of my textbooks, I carried a drawing kit with me wherever I went. But I distinctly remember how fascinated I was when I discovered something drafted could actually be realized. This was when I decided as an 8-year-old that I wanted to be an architect, and though my reasons for wanting to become an architect have evolved in years, I still share the passion of the 8-year-old as the college graduate I am now. Architecture gave my drawings a purpose and having graduated from college, my motivation in wanting to become an architect has gained plurality.

I studied high school at an institution that offered bilingual programs such as IB and IGCSE which helped me to express myself in languages other than my mother tongue at an early age. I learned English and German during my high school years and synthesized my own local culture and the global culture. Growing up in Anatolia, I had the chance to juxtapose oriental and western styles and see the very examples of their intertwined manifestations in the built environment. I took art classes that helped my drawings gain versatility in different media such as charcoal, pastels, aquarelles, and acrylics; and my technique gained competence as well as my composition skills. I learned one of the design principles that I value the most here during an English Literature class when my teacher suggested that no discipline is confined to itself and that I needed to incorporate acceleration, digestion, reaction, utility, and derivation if I wanted my narrative to gain motion. I internalized this principle and later applied it to my designs by incorporating my knowledge from different disciplines in constant relation with each other.

I was introduced to fencing at the age of 11 and I still do this sport professionally. I won over 20 regional championships and became a national champion two times. I was a member of the Turkish National Fencing Team for two years and had the privilege of representing my country in five international tournaments in four different countries. During those years, I learned how to compete individually while also growing bonds with my team members. As a team, we motivated each other, cheered for each other and competed against each other. I learned a lot about how to direct my ambitions and how to be constructively competitive while doing this sport. I learned to acknowledge the value of failures in elevating an individual to the status of a winner.

During my undergraduate studies at Bilkent University, I had the chance to gain a more profound comprehension of the multi-disciplinary nature of architecture. Having been introduced to the international circle of my college and having had the chance of working with foreign instructors helped me to keep an open mind and gain multiple perspectives. I learned how architecture can influence more than the mere micro-context of a building by also transforming the intangible circumstances of the region the design is meant for. As I gained an understanding of how a powerful and long-lasting tool architecture is, I started to aspire for filling the voids in our environments with meaningful spaces. I believe the way of achieving this is through bringing the space profundity by

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integrating the design several layers of aesthetically, functionally, economically, socio-culturally and environmentally conscious attributes. Only then the design can belong to its site and its context.

My internship at the site of the LEED Gold-certified residential project “Park Mozaik” introduced me to the execution process of a sustainably designed neighborhood helping me gain insight on the scope of the design process beyond the delineation of the concept. After I did my office internship at “A Architectural Design”, I became aware of the parties and the stakeholders involved in the design process. I always appreciated teamwork as it facilitates coordination and enables constant feedback during the design process. Yet, it was after the internships I truly recognized the importance of teamwork in architecture especially in the execution of large-scope and long term projects.

I have always admired the designs of Snohetta, Murcutt, and Studio Libeskind and their approaches to dynamic forms. As I learned using design software and parametric computational tools, I started to experiment with form and was amazed by the extensive opportunities that are rendered possible by the new technologies towards more fluid forms and more sustainable development. Therefore, after I received my B.Arch. with a degree of high honor, I decided to pursue Fulbright and receive a Master’s Degree abroad to supplement my undergraduate studies.

I have acquired many qualifications throughout my academic life, and I want to continue doing so to establish a more nuanced architectural expression. I believe in the changes that could be made in the world through more consciously and sustainably designed spaces and I want to make my own contribution to a better world that can be achieved through responsive design. Many aspects of human behavior are already shaped by the designed environments, yet I believe that now more than ever we need the design to shift human behavior to a more sustainable trend. A trend that is more reversible and less consequential. If I can be a part of such a shift, then I will feel the relief of undertaking the responsibility of living on this planet as a human being.

I believe that synthesizing contextually conscious ideas with contemporary representation methods can create a change in the paradigm of architecture from what it was into what it can be. I want to design novel spaces and buildings that are optimized and refined by the integration of technology, and responsive by means of contextual thought. I contemplate that if I receive Fulbright and study the master’s degree in the US, I will have the chance to consolidate everything I have learned so far through a greater context and understanding of the discipline of architecture. I am exhilarated about all the resources and the opportunities that I can have if I receive the Fulbright grant and I am looking forward to augmenting the education I will receive with hard work.