

Dear Sir / Madam

My name is Zeynep Ege Odabaşı and I am a senior architecture student at Bilkent University - one of the best schools in Eastern Europe and the Middle East. Throughout the 4-year education that I received, I had the opportunity to communicate with and learn from an array of international academicians and students. I believe that this is one of the best aspects of my education. I have been exposed to many design sensibilities and processes, and I have tried to evaluate and incorporate the best of those offered.

Architecture can be a subjective profession, in which the notion of right and wrong can be discussed. I soon realized that I do not want to be limited by these “taboos”, but instead I chose to focus on possibilities and begin synthesizing various approaches to design and develop unique and relevant solutions to the issues at hand. I have considered the studio as an environment in which we could explore, experiment and execute with impunity. A place where we can design idealistically, realistically and futuristically. I have always tried to make a difference and I did not let “difference” frighten me.

I embrace new tasks, new forms, and new experiences. I view these as a chance to learn and discover and soon, if I work hard enough, technical and theoretical disabilities disappear. I am determined and persistent in this manner. The profession and the way it is practiced is rapidly changing. The transition to the computer and an array of new software was a part of this. It was simply a step by step learning process. At times arduous as well as gratifying. I am now fluent in many new and relevant software and design processes.

The challenge for me is trying to bring unusual solutions to structural, mechanical or formal problems by trying to relate the essence of the problem to other methodologies and variables. For instance, I believe that the solution to many structural issues should not only be searched for in construction texts. Like engineers might examine birds to build an airplane, nature has always answered many complex problems. I am very willing to be part of the growing technological developments instead of waiting for a suitable one to emerge to solve my

problem. I have made an effort to challenge my limitations. And now through this Fulbright opportunity I would like to try and evolve through extending my vision, experiencing a new culture and then adapt these to my own culture and accumulation of knowledge.

I believe that the best works of architecture or great developments of technology are a result of brain storming and collaboration. During the long hours of working in the studios, I have always tried to help my friends and discuss mutual problems and we have always helped each other. When I could help others with a problem, this kept me motivated because I believed that if I can help others, I can also help myself. The best ideas always seem to come with collaborative brain storming. That is why we have always studied for exams together and helped each other while working in the studios with my colleagues. I believe that this attitude directly helped me receive a merit scholarship from Bilkent University two years in a row and rank number three in the department. We have all felt this satisfaction and have made collaboration out motto. I attach credence to the fact that if we collaborate and remain selfless, we can improve the world and create better solutions.

In addition to our studio collaboration, we have had the opportunity to work with Italian students and faculty during a workshop in Bari, Italy. Here I observed how our methods are very different from those of our Italian colleagues. After this workshop I started to realize that international cooperation would really be beneficial for me to develop myself, share and introduce my culture and knowledge, and expand my vision. It was exciting to see that my idea or contribution actually helped someone from a different culture with the development of a new idea. I have tried to reach out and communicate more and more during my education. This began with students, academicians and our student organizations. I attended Design Architecture Society of Bilkent University and worked in the organization team of Tasarım Bilkent, which is the biggest student-based design event in Turkey. After I worked on the current event organization, I believe that we are putting our signature to a great organization and it is very flattering to hear the participants' and attended architects' appreciation. Collaboration is a central part of our profession, and the Tasarım Bilkent event in which I helped organize, was and is still a great opportunity for me to meet and share ideas with the

very successful architects from both Turkey and outside of Turkey. It also assisted me in the ability to handle stress because it was a great work load that was added to our school load. This was real-world stress and matured me.

I am applying to Fulbright Student Program as a female candidate from a country with a great culture and rich background. And, as a candidate from a country which early on gave women the right to vote and stand for election. I wish to share my culture and accumulation of knowledge as well as learn from others in a country like the United States – a melting pot at the intersection of cultures from all over the world. I then wish to return to my country as a woman professional and share these experiences with colleagues and young women and their future aspirations.

I am excited and willing to learn and discover and become a part of growing technological revolution. I believe that I can accomplish new solutions to current problems with educational opportunity and a strong work ethic. I think that the Fulbright Program is a great opportunity for me to develop myself and share my experiences with others so that I can be prepared not only for the present but also for the future. I want to contribute to the world that I live in.