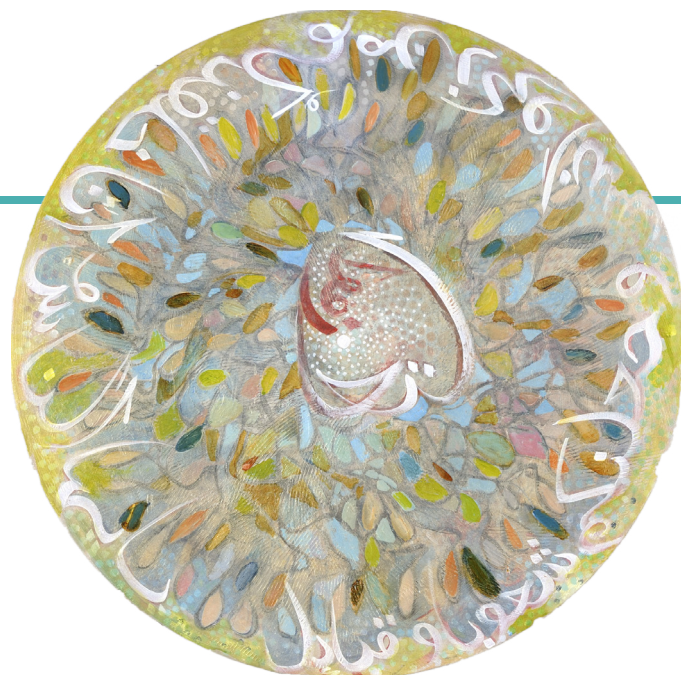


I paint to express the prayers of my heart, and intend for the energy of the calligraphy, powered by the positive messages from the texts to reveal the joy and celebration that I experience while creating them. Each verse I portray gives me strength and peace, and I hope to instill these feelings in my viewers.

My purpose is to reach out to a broad community in the pursuit of peace; to celebrate diversity, and create a positive interfaith dialogue through art that subtly penetrates the human heart to evoke response.

Salma Arastu



## Painting Prayers

### The Calligraphic Art of Salma Arastu

September 13 – December 6, 2015

Free public opening reception with the artist

Sunday, September 13 1:30 – 3:30 P.M.

Salma Arastu was born in Rajasthan, India, and graduated with a Masters in Fine Arts from The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, India. She presently resides in the San Francisco Bay area. Arastu works in a variety of media, including painting, drawing, printmaking and sculpture. Her works are found in numerous private and public collections, such as the 9/11 Memorial Museum, New York; the Museum of Modern Art, Hyderabad, India; the National Gallery of Art, New Delhi, India; the Islamic Museum of Australia, Melbourne; and the State Museum of the Arts, Harrisburg, PA.



*Healing Prayer*, 2014. Acrylic on canvas. 48 × 80 in.

top: *So That You Know Each Other: I*, 2014. Acrylic on wood. 15 in diameter. Images courtesy of the artist.

## MOCRA

Museum of Contemporary Religious Art  
Saint Louis University

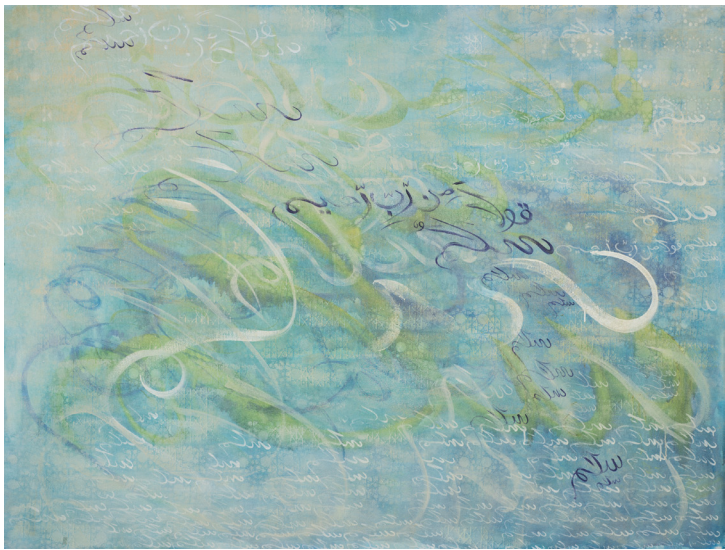
[mocra.slu.edu](http://mocra.slu.edu)

Museum hours are Tuesday – Sunday, 11 a.m. – 4 p.m.

MOCRA is located at 3700 West Pine Blvd.

on the Saint Louis University campus.

Contact us at (314) 977-7170 or [mocra@slu.edu](mailto:mocra@slu.edu)



Raised in Hinduism, Arastu later embraced Islam through her marriage. While living in Iran and Kuwait, she was fascinated by the beauty of Arabic calligraphy and began incorporating passages into her work. MOCRA will display works from two of her most recent series. “Celebration of Calligraphy” harmoniously blends traditional Arabic calligraphy with Abstract Expressionism and Color Field painting, featuring lyrical, dynamic passages from the Quran dancing across dense layers of rich color. “Unity of Sacred Symbols and Texts” comprises several distinct elements, including circular mandala-like paintings; works drawing on texts by 13th-century Persian poet Mevlana Jalaluddin Rumi and 16th-century Hindu saint and mystic poetess Meera Bai; and paintings invoking four major faith traditions through texts in Arabic, Hebrew, English, and Sanskrit.



*Painting Prayers* is a timely exhibition, for through her lyrical and spiritually rich art, Salma Arastu is a bridge builder among the world’s religions. MOCRA is pleased to introduce her work to St. Louis audiences.

from top:

*Peace – Greeting from the Beneficent Lord*, 2013. Acrylic on canvas. 42 × 72 in. Image courtesy of the artist.

“No one knows the pain of my separation . . .” (Saint Meera Bai), 2015. Acrylic on board. 20 × 20 in. Image courtesy of the artist.

“No one knows the pain of my separation . . .” (Mevlana Jelaluddin Rumi), 2015. Acrylic on board. 20 × 20 in. Image courtesy of the artist.

*God is One*, 2015. Acrylic on canvas. 48 × 72 in. Image courtesy of the artist.

## Painting Prayers

### The Calligraphic Art of Salma Arastu

**MOCRA**

Museum of Contemporary Religious Art  
Saint Louis University [mocra.slu.edu](http://mocra.slu.edu)