

Nezaket Ekici: FSA Artist-in-Residence + Open Studio

In the Studio: *Feeling Stained Glass*, 2024. Performance. Grace Church Cathedral, Charleston.
Live Performance: *Piece / Peace of Heaven*, 2024. FSA Inspired Garden Party and Open Studios.

Welcome to FSA's spring artists-in-residence open studios. Internationally renowned performance artist Nezaket Ekici has presented over 300 groundbreaking performances in museums, galleries, and biennials in more than 70 countries. Based in Berlin and Istanbul, Ekici studied fine arts and performance art in Germany at the Ludwig Maximilians University and Fine Arts Academy of Munich. Through intensive and task-oriented performances, she delves into the human body as a medium by exploring the deeper meaning behind philosophical and theological dictums. Blending energy and humor with moments of pain and physical endurance, she invites viewers to feel the essence of existence firsthand.

In this studio, you can see two mid-process performance works by Nezaket Ekici from her Charleston residency. *Feeling Stained Glass*, draws inspiration from Grace Church Cathedral's spiritual ambiance and architectural heritage, especially its stained-glass windows and intricate needlepoint kneelers. Ekici created tape "windows" on the studio walls and reimagined the stained glass as a two-dimensional floor graphic with photographs and real objects. Her live performance at Grace Church Cathedral on May 5th, 2024, was a meditative site-specific piece with opera singer Hälis Rünk, merging visual art and music to celebrate interfaith aesthetic traditions from Christian, Islamic, and Jewish mysticism, as well as Zen Buddhism. The studio also features her self-made costumes and performance documentation projected on the same textile in the studio closet, emulating a confessional booth.

Premiering at FSA's Inspired Garden Party, Ekici's live performance *Piece / Peace of Heaven* reflects on Charleston's sacred exteriors and the relationship between religious architecture and the heavens. Inspired by the spiritual landscape of the Holy City, which includes churches, synagogues, temples, and mosques, Ekici meditates on the faith practices of various religions under a shared sky – a common heaven. She inscribes religious texts on canvas in haint blue, a color with particular regional significance. Ekici incorporates the element of water to symbolize ablution—water purification and cleansing rites across spiritual traditions such as Baptism, Mikvah, and Wudu. *Piece / Peace of Heaven* imagines heaven's proximity to earth and explores what it might mean to commune with and become one with heaven.