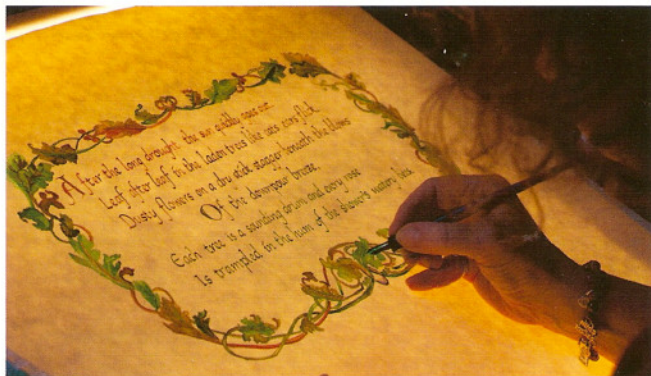


# THE BEAUTIFUL WRITING OF ANNE KAESE

SEEING HISTORY AND HUMANITY IN THE ART OF CALLIGRAPHY

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PHOTOGRAPHER: CLASSIC PHOTOGRAPHY



**T**he word calligraphy means, “beautiful writing,” and it is the art that Anne Kaese practices, teaches and loves. Kaese, born and raised in South Africa, is a fifth generation African with Irish, English, and Scottish roots. “I grew up in Port Elizabeth,” Kaese said. “It’s the Detroit of South Africa with an automotive focus.”

Kaese began doing calligraphy at the age of twelve, lettering certificates for church usage. “I didn’t know broad nib tips existed. I just took a fine line and filled it in.” But in an old world art shop full of tapestries and musty papers, Kaese found a friend. “There was an older woman in the shop who told me about calligraphy pens, inks, and papers, and I fell in love with it.”

Kaese joined different calligraphy groups and guilds. She was on the board of the South African Calligraphy Society in Johannesburg. She studied under some of the best calligraphy teachers in the world.

Kaese moved to Minneapolis in 1997. “I thought I was gonna die that first winter!” Kaese said. “I was terrified of the snow and ice, and I was afraid I’d drive on the wrong side of the road.” Kaese’s life at that time was in the high-flying corporate world of software manufacturing. “I’d fly to all the biggest cities in the world, and then on weekends come home to Minneapolis. I joined a biking club. I loved the fresh air and exercise.”

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Kaese met John, her husband-to-be, at the bicycle club. They were married in 1999. In April of 2001, their daughter Rebecca was born. Two years later their son, Arthur, was born.

“I had been living in a fast moving executive world with little color in it,” Kaese said. “I wore navy, black, and gray. It was practical. All those years were very good, but they were sterile. I knew it was time to get back to my art. So I began to dabble in watercolor.”

About that time Kaese’s husband was transferred to Fargo. “I did not want to move north—I am a child of Africa and love the sun. But we’ve been here for over five years now and I just love it.” Kaese continued, “It was hard, but the people were very welcoming.”

Kaese joined the Red River Watercolor Society. “They knew I did calligraphy, spread the word, and the floodgates opened.” Today, Kaese teaches calligraphy to beginners and intermediates. She teaches different lettering styles, painted letters classes, and borders classes. She is a member of Colleagues of Calligraphy in the twin cities.

Each variation of font or style in calligraphy is called a hand, and each hand is a picture of the culture and time that produced it. “All of the hands

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I teach are historically correct,” Kaese said. “Uncial, for instance, is a 1700-year-old hand. It is a picture of history. “

Although Kaese believes that calligraphy is available to anyone — whether in a restaurant with a paper napkin or on a forty-dollar sheet of paper — she thinks it is best learned in a personal teaching situation. “The internet just doesn’t cut it for learning calligraphy,” she said. “You can watch it and do it, but you don’t know if what you are doing is good or bad, right or wrong.”

Kaese teaches calligraphy through community education classes. She also does individual calligraphy



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work such as addressing wedding envelopes, anniversary certificates, and family tree rings. “Art is very personal,” Kaese said. “You can’t hit an “undo” button. You need confidence to put ink on paper.”

“My natural handwriting is chicken scratch awful,” Kaese said, “but if I sit down with a pen in an intentional way, it makes me slow down. When I’m stressed, and I practice lettering, it’s relaxing.”

One of the projects that Kaese is most excited about is the Saint John’s Bible project. “The first ink was put onto the paper on Ash Wednesday in 2000,” Kaese said of the project. “And now, against all odds, Donald Jackson is finishing up the last book of Revelations.”

Kaese will offer free public lectures on the St. John’s Bible when it comes to the Hjemkomst Center this October. “The Saint John’s Bible is a work of art, but it is more than that,” Kaese said. “It stands as a testament to truth, love, forgiveness, and grace. Art tells the story of the human condition and what we aspire to be.”

For more information about Anne Kaese, visit [www.annekaese.com](http://www.annekaese.com) or call 701.205.INKS (4657)

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