Bengisu Almila Kantarci Hekim



"If you feel what you do in your heart, rivers flow in ages."

Great Sinan

ETHICAL FASHION DESIGNER & CULTURAL ENTREPRENEUR

I am a social entrepreneur and slow fashion designer working at the intersection of cultural heritage, responsible design, and social impact. Through BANGU, I reinterpret Anatolian textile traditions within a contemporary design language, collaborating with local artisans and makers to preserve traditional craftsmanship while creating new economic and cultural value. My work explores how design can serve as a bridge between heritage and the future, combining ethical production, local knowledge, and contemporary fashion.

WORK EXPERIENCE

Design Intern
Kevan Hall Design Los Angeles, U.S.A (2018-2019)

Assistant Designer & Buyer
Sequel Brand Istanbul, Türkiye (2019-2020)

Textile Designer
Tuna Copy Center | Eskişehir, Türkiye (2020 – Present)

Founder & Designer
Bangu | Eskişehir, Türkiye (2020 – Present)

COMMUNITY BASED PROJECTS & SOCIAL IMPACT WORK

Mentorship Experience

Habitat Association (2021-2023)

Collaboration

Habitat Association x Bangu
Collaborated on an advanced textile recycling project to address post-earthquake waste issues. (2023-2024)

Mentorship Experience, Istanbul

Turkey Design Council (2023-2024)

Enheduenna Caftan Design Competition (IED Istituto Europeo di Design), Istanbul

Finalist - Designed a handcrafted kaftan merging kutnu and denim. (2024)

Circular Fashion Collective, Istanbul

Designed a capsule collection using traditional Turkish woven fabrics and vintage lace, emphasizing sustainability and upcycling. (2024)

Blue Black Texhition x YKK Brand x Bangu, Istanbul

Upcycled Denim Art - Floral Brooches from Textile Waste. (2025)

Participant, NATO Youth Summit, Montenegro

Represented Türkiye in discussions on security, youth engagement, and transatlantic cooperation. (April 25-26, 2025)

EDUCATION

Anatolian University
Eskişehir, Türkiye
Open Education Brand Management
Graduation: 2015

Anatolian University
Eskişehir, Türkiye
Bachelor's Degree in Fashion Design
Graduation: 2018

Anatolian University
Eskişehir, Türkiye
Upcoming Master's Degree in Public Relations and Advertising
Expected Start: 2027

CONTACT INFO

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Children Smile as Women Create (Eskisehir Tepebasi Municipality Collaboration)

Empowering women producers through textile based social enterprise; supporting children in need with handmade school kits. (2025 Ongoing)

Bangu for YKK Japan R&D Center Exhibition, Istanbul-Eskisehir

Designed a contemporary Bindallı design by integrating YKK products such as zippers, snaps, and sustainable fasteners. This design was selected and showcased at the YKK Research & Development Center in Japan, where it highlighted the fusion of Anatolian heritage with innovative YKK technology. (August 1-13, 2025)

Bangu for YKK x Ekoteks Sustainable Fashion Event, Istanbul

Designed a contemporary garment incorporating YKK sustainable fasteners. (Future Friendly buttons and metal look zippers). (September 23, 2025)

Bangu for Ekoteks Sustainable Fashion Event, Istanbul

Actively participated in the event by organizing a workshop with visitors, creating custom denim cases with YKK fasteners, highlighting slow fashion practices and sustainable design. (September 23, 2025)

Mercedes-Benz Shes's Mentoring Program, Istanbul

Selected as one of 33 women entrepreneurs in Türkiye for the Mercedes-Benz She's Mentoring Program (2024–2025) a seven month mentorship initiative supporting female founders in brand vision, leadership, and sustainability.

UN Women's Entrepreneurship EXPO 2025, Online

I participated in the UN Women Women's Entrepreneurship Expo 2025, having been selected as one of 30 women entrepreneurs from Türkiye. I engaged in two days of collaboration focused workshops, networking sessions and expert led training aimed at expanding partnerships and strengthening entrepreneurial capacity.

Craftwise 2026

Developing a contemporary learning module on the traditional Turkish art of Ebru and creating an original Ebru inspired design, exploring new ways to connect traditional craftsmanship with contemporary design and learning.

Slow Fashion Movement – Learning Lab, Autumn Cohort 2026

Selected Participant | Selected for the international Autumn 2026 cohort of the Slow Fashion Movement Learning Lab, focusing on slow fashion, sustainability, and community driven change.

SKILLS

Textile & Fashion Design
Handcraft & Artisan Collaboration
Project Management
Attention to Detail
Material Knowledge
Creative Problem Solving & Innovation

REFERENCES

Gökçen KAYA
YKK Brand
Corporate Communication Executive
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Abdulkadir MEKKI
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5th Generation Kutnu Maker
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Ozlem Ikiisik Barutcu
Su Espadril Founder
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