Chapter 3
Research Methodology

3.1. Clarifying the approach

The purpose of this research is to explore and describe the mind of the artist. A review of literature around this subject matter led to the conclusion that Gardner’s (1983) theory of Multiple Intelligences (MI) is the only theory of cognitive ability that directly includes artistic thinking within its construct. Research through the ages has linked artistic ability with mental ability in many ways. Early research concentrated on defining and measuring specific artistic talents such as Seashore’s (1919/1940) measures of musical ability or Meier’s (1926/1942) measures of visual art ability. Studies through the last century repeatedly found correlations between artistic ability and other cognitive abilities (e.g. Lewerenz [1928], Tiebout and Meier [1936], Buttall [1971], Vernon, Adamson and Vernon [1977], Hermelin and O’Connor [1990]), but were unable to delve deeper into this relationship. Research in the last twenty years established the instrumental nature of arts by finding a causal relationship between training in the arts and various highly valued cognitive skills (Raucher [1999], Keinanen, Hetland and Winner [2000], Vaughn and Winner [2000], Schellenberg [2004, 2005, 2011]). But these findings were riddled with caveats about problems with design or with the sample severely limiting the generalizability of results. One of the confounding factors was that there is a huge non-cognitive component to the arts and the other was that the concept of mental ability was restricted to what is usually referred to as IQ. Applying Gardner’s theory helps overcome both these problems to some extent. His descriptions of intelligence manifest in not only in what are traditionally seen as mental tasks such as solving word problems or number puzzles but also in bodily performance, in relationship skills, in abstract thinking (with words, numbers, musical notes, images, movement, etc.) and even self-understanding. The theory includes aspects of performance closely associated with intelligence that were previously left out or considered separate variables and moves considerably outside the boundaries of IQ. I therefore zeroed in on MI theory as a framework that could be used to understand artists.

Clarifying the research approach to be adopted was a lot more difficult. The subject matter under study posed some inherent contradictions to begin with. Measurement of mental ability requires a research paradigm that makes objective assessment possible going by the vast amount of research that has gone into the concept of IQ and related constructs. Psychometrically, a test of any ability is required to be reliable, valid and objective. A score is supposed to indicate an individual’s standing on that ability as compared to his/her peers. Personality questionnaires are
also expected to satisfy standards of goodness although a profile of scores or other patterns in scores are more meaningful for interpretation than absolute scores. Psychometric standards for interest inventories are not so rigid and the robustness of an inventory depends more upon the norm data of experts in various careers available for comparison. The problem arises because of the broad definition of intelligence in MI theory. Gardner (1983) defined intelligence as ‘the ability to solve problems or create products that would be valued in at least one culture’. Descriptions of any of the eight intelligences include what I would for convenience term as pure ability, but they also include interest, skills which are partly learnt, and even opportunity! Studies using MI theory have been mainly qualitative, applying the theory to help development in an educational context. Assessment of MI in these studies has been done primarily through observation, supported by other measures. Even the studies that offer statistical support for MI theory use self-report questionnaires (such as Shearer 1997, 2006) and not speeded or powered ability tests. The very feature of MI theory that made it attractive as a frame of reference to investigate the artistic mind also posed the maximum difficulty when it came to defining the research approach. There is no doubt, based on the literature that the multiple abilities encapsulated in MI theory exist. But what is the best way to reconcile the theory with ground reality? Defining the research question was the first step towards addressing this issue.

### 3.2. Research Questions

The research problem being addressed in this study is to understand the artistic mind. The goal is to describe and draw a picture of the artistic mind, identify factors that influence its form/shape and search for patterns that may emerge as common across artists. In particular, the questions that the research attempts to answer are:

i. Are there common patterns in the MI profiles of artists?

ii. How does it happen that some individuals choose to live artistic lives/choose artistic careers?

iii. What kind of early experiences and growing up environment contributed to creating these individuals?

iv. Is there any other common factor among artists that could answer why they became artists?

The last three research questions are straightforward. Primarily concerned with how and why rather than what and how much, the research approach that they require is definitely qualitative. The first question is a complex one subsuming several other questions. There are many kinds of patterns that I could look out for in the mind of the artist. The most straightforward one arising
from the studies validating MI theory is to locate a correspondence between scores on the intelligences and the line of work of the artist. That is, to find out whether painters are actually more gifted in terms of visual-spatial intelligence than other artists? Or are dancers more kinesthetically tuned? Do musicians actually manifest greater musical intelligence? And so on. This part of the question, arising from theory and earlier research would involve a hypothesis-testing model of research, since the variables are very clear. But if I wish to locate a common pattern across artists of all types irrespective of the art they practice, the question becomes more open ended. That is, if the attempt is to construct a picture of the artistic mind as a whole, the research model would need to work bottom-up. Either way, it is necessary to arrive at a method to measure/capture multiple intelligences in order to answer this question.

In going through the literature on MI, it was found that there were only two main self-report questionnaire style measures - one developed by Armstrong (2009) which was more of a self-reflection guideline and the Multiple Intelligence Development and Assessment tool (MIDAS) built by Shearer (1997). Since adequate norms, reliability and validity data were available for the MIDAS, it was the tool of choice to collect data on MI. However, on examining sample questions, I estimated that the domain of each of the intelligences was not sufficiently covered. For example, items in kinesthetic intelligence were more inclined towards sporting activities rather than dance or other expressions of kinesthetic ability such as touch. This is a limitation that Shearer (1997) himself refers to. A secondary issue was the wording of some of the questions – such as ‘did you ever learn to play a musical instrument’ which refer more to the opportunities offered in the person’s life rather than an expression of intelligence. Note that the question does not stress how well the person played or if the person enjoyed playing the instrument. Hence, I created a new questionnaire to capture an individual’s MI profile and help address the first research question, ‘Are there common patterns in the MI profiles of artists?’ A detailed account of how this questionnaire was constructed is given a little later. But I wished to use the tool to aid in constructing a picture of the artistic mind not merely finding a correspondence between career choice and MI scores. Since I was still unsure about the best approach to do this, the research got divided into two phases.

The first phase was an engagement with the content of MI theory and primary field data, exploring a way to measure/capture the multiple intelligences and understand whether the subject matter of study responded well to quantitative methodology. The second phase was intended as a qualitative exploration especially of the last three research questions. However, it got defined finally by the experience in the first phase.
3.3. Phase 1: Exploring measurement of MI

The first phase of the research had the limited objective of testing the newly developed MI measure. It was required to resolve the dilemma of MI measurement. Creating proper ability tests for any one of the intelligences would be a very large task. For example, developing a test for musical intelligence or kinesthetic intelligence becomes a complicated thing since they would not be sufficiently captured through a paper-pencil test. This is probably one of the reasons why a comprehensive measure of MI has not been made available yet and Gardner himself does not concern himself much with the measurement of the intelligences. There is also the basic issue of whether a test score can at all reflect an individual’s intelligence when that intelligence works in reality with several non-cognitive factors and other intelligences too. When working with children as in the educational projects that use MI, there may be no other option but observation as a measurement tool, but with adult participants it is a simple matter to administer a questionnaire or test. Researchers such as Shearer favored the questionnaire and were able to achieve good results with it. The questionnaire as a tool has certain advantages over a test. It can take into account interest, opportunity and other manifestations of an intelligence in daily life. For example, in capturing musical intelligence, a repeated item in several MI questionnaires is about “having music in my head” or “I listen to music all the time.” Even in numerical intelligence which is easily captured in a paper-pencil test, MI theory would include manifestations such as memory for strings of numbers like car number plates or phone numbers, or ability to do mental math versus counting on the fingers when asked to calculate everyday accounts.

A questionnaire is better suited to capturing this wide range of expression of any intelligence since it asks the respondent to reflect on their own experiences/ behavior/ interests and answer rather than only assessing task performance. It is also possible to create a profile indicating individual strengths and weaknesses from questionnaire output. While it is not as definitive or objective as a test, it could still be a starting point for a discussion around an individual’s MI profile. Given the exploratory nature of this study, this was sufficient and the idea of a questionnaire was retained.

3.3.1. Construction of the questionnaire. The MI questionnaire used in Phase 1 of this study was created based on Gardner’s (1983) description of the seven intelligences. In his book he talks about core functions and major applications for each of the intelligences described in Table 3.1. A number of items were developed to tap each core function and application. Some items tapped into more than one core function and there were a few that did not fall within any of the core functions, but were still integral to that particular intelligence. To solve this problem, new categories were created within each intelligence. An example of the original categories and sample items for linguistic intelligence is given in Illustration 3.1.
Table 3.1: Core functions and applications of the seven intelligences; from Gardner (1983)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Intelligence</th>
<th>Core functions</th>
<th>Major applications</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Linguistic</td>
<td>phonology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics</td>
<td>rhetoric (to argue, convince others), mnemonic (to remember information), explanation, especially in learning, and to explain its own activities, engage in ‘metalinguistic’ analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Musical</td>
<td>pitch/ melody, rhythm, timbre, emotional feel of music</td>
<td>from appreciating differences in individual tones or phrases to applying larger musical structure that exhibit their own rules of organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Logical-mathematical</td>
<td>basic numerical operations (numbers, mathematics), symbol manipulation and the ability to handle skillfully long chains of reasoning</td>
<td>applying numerical operations in tasks of daily life (adding, subtracting, multiplying, dividing), algebra, mathematical functions, recognizing and solving significant problems, using abstract relations to order chaotic/ unwieldy fact such as in the practice of science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Spatial</td>
<td>perceiving the visual world accurately, performing transformations upon one’s perceptions, recreating aspects of visual experience even in absence of stimulus, complex imagery</td>
<td>Orienting oneself in various locales, recognizing objects and scenes, graphic depictions and other symbols like maps, diagrams and geometrical forms, sensitivity to lines of visual force in a display, metaphorically discerning similarities across diverse domains e.g. Darwin’s vision of the “tree of life” or Freud’s concept of the iceberg as a parallel to the psyche</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Kinesthetic</td>
<td>mastery over bodily movement, manipulation of objects with finesse</td>
<td>whole body/ gross motor activities, fine motor movements and delicate activities involving precise control, understanding of machinery/ tools and ability to manipulate them, physical timing, balance, physical expression and mimetic skills like in dance and acting, bodily control like in athletics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Interpersonal</td>
<td>access to one’s own feeling life, capacity to discriminate between feelings, label them, and draw upon them to understand and guide one’s behavior</td>
<td>from the capacity to distinguish pleasure from pain to symbolizing complex and highly differentiated feelings such as is done by therapists or introspective writers, or drawing upon wealth of own experiences to advise others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Intrapersonal</td>
<td>Ability to notice and make distinctions among other individuals – their moods, feelings, temperaments, motivations and intentions</td>
<td>From detecting moods in others to influencing others as is done by skilled parents, teachers, therapists, counselors, political and religious leaders</td>
</tr>
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Illustration 3.1: Original categories and sample items for linguistic intelligence

**Semantics:** I find it easy to translate an idea from one language to another

**Pragmatics:** I think that the choice of words is very important when you want to express yourself accurately

**Syntax:** I am good with crosswords, word searches or other word puzzles

**Phonology:** When talking to someone, I tend to listen to the sound of the words they use not just what they mean

**Rhetoric:** I enjoy trying out different turns of phrase or words when conversing with people

**Mnemonic:** My conversations include frequent references to things that I have read

**Learning/ explanation:** I learn very easily by reading

**Metalinguistic:** I enjoy experimenting with words

**Multiple functions:** I often talk to myself—out loud or in my head

**Fluency/ articulation (extra category):** I find it easy to express complex ideas in words
In every intelligence category other than the core functions were created. For example, the core functions for musical intelligence as described by Gardner include pitch, rhythm, timbre and understanding the emotional content of music. The first three are heavily linked to auditory perception and can only be checked by presenting individuals with tasks involving discriminating tones or reproducing rhythmic sequences. But they may not by themselves represent musical intelligence. Gardner talks about a mix of bottom-up approach (focus on the building blocks of pitch, rhythm, etc.) and the top-down approach (focus on global properties of music and the metaphorical characterizations of music – is it triumphant or tragic, crowded or sparse?) creating an eclectic approach to understanding the components of musical intelligence. Illustration 3.2 describes the categories and sample items for musical intelligence.

**Illustration 2: Categories and sample items for musical intelligence**

- **Auditory sensitivity to tone and timbre:** When a machine is not working properly (such as a fridge, a car, etc) I can tell by the sound
- **Rhythm:** I have a good sense of rhythm
- **Pitch/ melody:** I sometimes walk around with a television jingle or some other tune in my mind
- **Musical structures:** When I listen to certain tunes, I am often able to predict what notes will follow
- **Emotive aspect of music:** Music moves me very much
- **Multiple categories:** I often remember tunes that I have only heard once or twice

Other existing MI questionnaires were also used as references from which specific item content was drawn. Of the rough list prepared, repetitive items were dropped, items that were prima facie ambiguous were dropped, and a shorter list of items that would appear in the questionnaire was created. These items were re-written to record how frequently a particular behavior/thought or feeling occurred. The idea of using frequency was taken from Shearer’s MIDAS, and since most of the questions had to do with behavior, thoughts, feelings or decisions, they were amenable to a frequency scale. A four point scale was used with the idea of preventing central tendency as much as possible, which is a usual problem with normative scales. A total of 93 items were finally used in the MI questionnaire (Appendix A). The questions were presented in random order and jumbled up so that the respondent would not be aware of the scoring patterns at the time of completing the questionnaire. Field data was collected to check whether this MI questionnaire worked as it should – that is differentiating between individuals on an intelligence and differentiating between intelligences for an individual so that distinct MI profiles emerge. Details of the respondent group and other data that emerged are described below.
3.3.2. Questionnaire respondent group. The 126 students who participated in this study were volunteers from the final year at SIES College of Arts, Science and Commerce. The college was chosen since it was one that promotes diversity and has adequate number of students in each stream. There were 74 women and 52 men in the respondent group; totally 45 from Arts (Economics, History, Philosophy, Hindi and Psychology), 51 from Science (Maths, Physics, Biotechnology, Botany, Biochemistry, Microbiology and Statistics) and 30 from Commerce. The Commerce group was treated as one since only a few elective papers differed amongst the group. Along with the MI questionnaire, the students completed a form requiring biographical information and responded to seven open-ended questions. These questions pertained to extra-curricular activities, likes and dislikes, and future career plans. These are also given as part of Appendix A. The tentative plan behind choosing a college sample was that if the questionnaire should work well, then the study could be extended by administering it to specialized colleges teaching various arts such as the JJ School of Art or Rachna Samsad, both schools for the visual arts, Nalanda Nritya Kala Mahavidyala which teaches dance, Mumbai University’s music department, and so on. The assumption was that the population at the arts colleges would be more homogenous, thus giving less opportunity to test the questionnaire. Hence a more diverse, generalist population was chosen for the study. There were some promising lines of inquiry that the study opened up, but the questionnaire performance was not as expected.

3.3.3. Patterns from the field data. At the outset, the data proved unsuitable for factor analysis. The scores were too dispersed to extract statistically meaningful factors. Ideally, to extract meaningful factors, alphas should be in the range of 0.7 and above. On manually examining the correlation matrix it was found that some of the items do indeed seem to correlate with one another, but the coefficients were not always high enough. On considering inter-item correlations of 0.4 and above, the themes that emerged on a manual check (in order of strength) were i) Music, ii) Dance, iii) Sport, iv) Math, v) Logic, and vi) Language/linguistic. Music, dance, sport and math had practically no overlap with other factors, and logic and language had a few items inter-correlating. But another theme ‘Visual-Spatial’ had a lot of overlap with Linguistic, Kinesthetic and even Interpersonal items, while themes of Interpersonal and Intrapersonal were very weak. The conclusion was therefore, that the questionnaire does not discriminate between intelligences for an individual as well it should. There remained the question of whether it discriminates between individuals on an intelligence. A look at the distribution of scores in the sample surveyed (Illustration 3.3) indicates a fair range of scores among the respondents in each of the intelligences indicating that the items on the questionnaire did discriminate between people. There was no substantial difference between groups of students who took different subjects on the various intelligences, except in the case of logical-mathematical intelligence, where the Science
students scored the highest (mean = 38.92), Commerce second highest (mean = 36) and Arts the lowest (mean = 31.11).

**Illustration 3.3: Showing distribution of scores (percentages) for the different intelligences**

3.3.4. Observations about the tool. Many respondents felt that the questionnaire was a bit long, although the incidence of skipped questions was minimal. There was no benefit to jumbling up the questions as there was no incentive for respondents to be untruthful while answering the questionnaire. Questions 3-7 do not seem to generate rich answers and there was no correlation between preferred subjects and intelligences. Questions 3 and 4 pertain to subjects that the individual likes/ dislikes. Since the study was on one particular college, informal conversation with the participants revealed that liking/ disliking of a subject was more influenced by a particular teacher who taught the subject well rather than the subject itself. Item 5 of this section was irrelevant – most subjects were funded by their parents. Item 7 was also irrelevant – most indicated that their stream of study was their own choice or on advice of significant others. Item 6, about dream career, also did not work very well. The responses were quite varied, but it probably requires an in-depth discussion with the participant to understand the reasons for choosing a particular career and maybe even their understanding of what jobs in that career will be like.

3.3.5. Observations about MI. There were interesting patterns that yielded some insights about MI and related concepts. Of the second section of the questionnaire which contained open ended questions, question 1 and 2 concerned extra-curricular activities and the level of seriousness with which they were pursued. The second one (pertaining to awards, prizes or the level at which the hobby was pursued) showed definite differences in the intelligence scores.

**Relationship between hobbies and intelligence scores:** A total of six different categories of extra-curricular activities emerged – Music/ Singing, Social Service, Dance/ Sport, Drawing/ Painting/ Designing/ Animation, Languages/ Writing, and Not Serious/ not pursuing any hobby. Those who reported receiving prizes for writing, debates and completing language courses
showed the highest mean score for linguistic intelligence. Similarly, the highest musical mean score was for those pursuing music seriously, the highest kinesthetic score was for those pursuing dance or sport at a serious level and so forth. Those who pursued languages/writing also recorded the highest scores for Spatial and Interpersonal intelligence indicating some possible overlap in the constructs, but the second highest scores for these intelligences were for those pursuing drawing/design (spatial) and those doing social service (interpersonal).

Relationship between parental educational level and pursuit of extra-curricular activities: Maximum parental educational attainment was categorized into the following: Not educated, school (12th grade or below), vocational (diploma courses and similar), graduate, professional (law, medicine, engineering, etc.), and post graduate. The observed relationship is described in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Showing relationship between parental education and hobbies of respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parental educational level</th>
<th>No. of respondents</th>
<th>Hobbies/interests pursued by students (no. of respondents given in brackets)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not educated; in occupations such as main servant, milk service, carpenter</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Few interests like social service, reading, cricket, but nothing at a formal or competitive level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School level (12th std or below)</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>27 reported interests such as singing, reading, dance, sports, painting and social service, but nothing formal 18 reported similar interests but also reported winning awards at school, college or university level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocationally trained</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1 reported trophies for dance and sports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduates</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>13 reported winning prizes, completing certificate courses, playing at state level or working actively in area of interest 26 reported several active areas of interest such as Bharatanatyam, guitar, photography, planting trees, cooking, languages, aerobics, etc., but no formal achievements in the same</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-graduate</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10 reported seriously pursuing their hobbies at professional or state level or at least as part of an amateur band</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional (engineering, medicine, law, dentistry)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5 reported seriously pursuing their interests at the school, college, district, state or even professional level</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Clearly there is a relationship between parental educational achievement and the type of and level of hobbies pursued by the children. Two possible explanations for this phenomena – i) that the relationship is moderated by economic conditions of the family and consequently access to opportunities to explore interests other than academics; ii) parenting practices change with educational attainment and reflect in the kind of opportunities sought for their wards. Either way, socio-economic context seems to be critical to the exploration of hobbies and interests, and, by an extension of that to the exploration of multiple intelligences.
3.3.6. Implications for Phase 2. The measurement of MI is a tricky business. Gardner himself, in the three decades since the concept of MI was first proposed, has not focused much on measurement in his research. There are several issues around this that might have a bearing on how we read the results of the first phase of study:

a) The manifestation of any intelligence may take such varied forms depending on the context the individual is working in that it may be possible to point out and label that intelligence only in that context; and the same activity or instance may have little meaning for someone else. To illustrate, kinesthetic intelligence may equally express itself at a potter’s wheel or when playing tennis, but the instance of tennis may be meaningless to the potter and the instance of finer tactile expression meaningless to a tennis player. According to Gardner, no single tool can capture this diversity of expression. This variety of expression may explain why the dance items do not ‘go with’ the sport items in the first phase results or why math (lower math) and logic (higher math) stand apart. The relationship of the sub-components to the main intelligence therefore needs to be more closely examined before proceeding.

b) The intelligences do not operate in isolation. They work together in various combinations. The same output could result from different intelligences put into operation. For example, the simple act of cooking a dish may apply linguistic intelligence (if reading from a recipe book), interpersonal or intrapersonal intelligence (to know preferences of those who will eat the dish), kinesthetic intelligence (tactile skill to cut, mix, measure ingredients) or even logical-mathematical intelligence (recipe book gives measures for two and cooking is for 8), and so on. The intelligences, therefore, are separate only in construct, but in practical life, they work in an integrated manner and this makes measurement complicated.

c) Intrapersonal intelligence is a key moderating variable in how valid the output of a self-report measure is for an individual. Shearer (1997) found that students who scored themselves low on the personal knowledge subscale of intrapersonal intelligence had lower and flatter MI profiles whereas those who rated themselves high generally had higher MI mean scores and greater variability in their profiles especially in specifically developed areas of ability. Therefore, getting an accurate measurement for those who are lower on intrapersonal knowledge would be very difficult. Read together with Harris and Sykes (2010) finding that the effect of the intelligences may be emergent in students, progressing with their education, an inquiry with a more mature group seems to be indicated.

d) The data highlights the importance of the environment in development of intelligence. Students whose parents were more educated reported taking up more hobbies at a serious level, and those who were seriously engaged in a hobby reported marginally higher scores for the corresponding intelligence. Although the sample size for each hobby domain was small, it is still worth exploring especially through interviews with seasoned professionals. Further, the
impact of paralyzing and crystallizing experiences also needs to be considered – paralyzing being those which inhibit the development of an intelligence, and crystallizing being those that support it.

Based on the results of the pilot, the methodology for the rest of the research study was charted out. The questionnaire was redesigned and an entirely qualitative approach adopted to address the research problem. The sample chosen for interviews was a more mature group and a biographic study of some major Indian artists of the 20th century was undertaken to support the data generated through interviews. The details of the research approach and methodology are outlined in section 3.4.

3.4. Phase 2: An in-depth inquiry into the mind of the artist

Based on the first phase of the research, it is possible to conclude that mental ability or intelligence is a complex quantity. There could be many indicators of intelligence including, among others, intelligence test scores. Any one indicator, such as a paper-pencil test, would be quite inadequate, and can only be treated as one of the data sources about the individual. To measure intelligence as defined by MI theory, it may be necessary to use multiple methods like observation, tests, questionnaires and so on, and even then we may only have an estimate of intelligence and not an accurate reading. Additionally, mental ability is not treated as a stand-alone variable. The line that separates intelligence from personality, affect and conative factors is a porous one so that intelligence in a particular area can impact and be impacted by any of these factors. Hence an open-ended inquiry is the mandate of these assumptions. The artist’s perspective is sought in creating a theory about the things that are important to the making of an artistic mind and an artistic life. This is the ontology and the epistemology of this research and the research questions, methodology, tools and analysis all originate in these assumptions.

3.4.1. Research Approach. Janesick (in Denzin and Lincoln 2000) compares qualitative research to a dance – a “series of minuets and improvisations”. That describes very well the research approach of this study. Each piece of the puzzle surfaced once the earlier pieces had been located. Based on the results of the Phase 1 study and the assumptions of the research, a qualitative approach was clearly indicated. Woolgar (in Richardson Eds. 1996) says that while qualitative research methods have a fairly long history in anthropology and sociology, they are relatively new in psychology. Nevertheless, given the research questions and the ambiguities inherent in MI theory, this was the approach of choice. The qualitative paradigm shares a number of characteristics with the grounded theory approach (Pidgeon 1996, in Richardson Eds.). For example, constant comparison of each case studied to the next one studied. All analysis is by
nature comparative. There is also the dominance of inductive logic in building concepts and a focus on the research participants rather than any pre-conceived theories.

There are however, certain issues in directly applying grounded theory in its entirety. Strauss (1987) says that, “the methodological thrust of the grounded theory approach to qualitative data is toward the development of theory, without any particular commitment to specific kinds of data, lines of research or theoretical interests.” The focus on empiricism in grounded theory suggests that there is an underlying assumption that reality is objective. Hence analytical methods such as counting the number of times certain key words are used in a conversation, detailed coding methods such as line-by-line coding, and other techniques that capture, compare and analyze factual material are important. It is a realist tradition, with a focus more on objectivity and less on subjective meaning. This research however, not only considers external reality, but also tries to address internal processes – such as how artists make decisions to pursue artistic life, what they thought of and how they responded to certain events, and so on. Also, the logic of this research cannot be described as wholly inductive. There has been a literature review done prior to entry into the field, and while there were not structured hypotheses as there would have been in a quantitative study, there were still a lot of ideas about what kind of data might get generated. The process of this research has been a constant dialogue between deduction and induction, which is a departure from traditional grounded theory. On the other hand, the contribution of grounded theory in terms of its rich and rigorous procedure cannot be ignored either.

Addison (in Crabtree and Miller, 1992) talks of a grounded hermeneutic approach which he says is more suited to research questions aimed at (a) understanding the meaning and significance of complex human interaction and events in the context of their everyday settings, and (b) understanding the relationship between behavior, practices or events and the socio-cultural, historical, political and economic background against which they take place. With research questions aimed at understanding the home and early social environment of the artist, and the manifestations of intelligence in everyday life, the socio-cultural backdrop of the artistic mind is brought into focus indicating that this kind of grounded hermeneutic approach may be appropriate for this research. Keeping with this approach, the slant that this research takes is interpretive, and lot of method has been borrowed from grounded theory (as described by Charmaz 1995, in Smith, Harre and Langenhove) including:

a) Simultaneous data collection and analysis
b) Creation of analytic categories from data (rather than from theory)
c) Development of mid-range theories (and hence the search for negative cases)
d) Memo-making – analytic notes to fill out categories
e) Theoretical sampling
The last point that Charmaz mentions is the delay of literature review. In this instance, some literature review was done in advance. This was supplemented with further reading throughout the research, even after the analytic categories emerged. In this manner, a research design was woven from within the qualitative paradigm, borrowing methods from grounded theory, retaining the focus squarely on the research participants/cases selected for study, with the analysis and subsequent hypotheses being derived from but not restricted to the data generated.

3.4.2. Research Design and methods of data collection. The method of choice for inquiry into the process by which an individual becomes an artist and the early social environment and growing up experiences that contribute to this process was clearly the in-depth unstructured interview. The perspective of the artist was central to this inquiry and the interview was the best way to ensure that the artist’s voice was prominent in the data. Interviews were therefore undertaken with mid-career artists, those who had been immersed in their art for at least two decades and had some experience of practicing their art. But the findings of Phase 1 suggests that intelligence is probably emergent in students, gaining clarity with experience and maturity. The interviews with practicing artists was a good way to gain insight into their perspective, but patterns from a more mature population, those at the forefront of their fields, maestros in their disciplines who have contributed a lifetime of work were also required to make it possible to understand the mature expression of intelligence and provide confirmation for any concepts emerging from the interview data. Therefore, a biographic study of some of the leading Indian artists of the 20th century was undertaken as well.

The questionnaire used in Phase 1 of the study was modified and retained to be used within the context of the interview. It is not traditional to use questionnaires within a qualitative study, but it was necessary to have some structure to the discussion on the multiple intelligences without which inquiry into eight separate intelligences could get very unwieldy. Being able to profile individuals on MI also allows interpersonal and intrapersonal comparisons which, however limited, was important to addressing the first research question pertaining to the mind of the artist. According to Bryman (1988) even participant observers “…conduct unstructured interviews, examine documentary materials, and even carry out structured interviews and postal questionnaire surveys. One reason for the employment of a variety of techniques is that it allows inferences or ‘leads’ drawn from one data source to be corroborated or followed up by another.” In any case, the questionnaire output was only used as a data source within the qualitative study and not as the primary methodology.

In almost every case – of the interviewed research participants and the biographed artists, I experienced the artistic product of the individual. This was a purely supplementary way of obtaining data and helped generate leads as well as supported observations arising from the questionnaire, interview or biography. Applying these methods together, it was possible to obtain
a picture of the artistic mind and the process by which an individual becomes an artist. What follows is a detail of how each of these methods was applied and how the methods together crystallize to improve the quality of the study.

*Interviews:* The problem that this research addresses concerns the why and the how. The open-ended questions used in the Phase 1 study did not reveal much, due to two possible reasons: one because the population was very young and their choices just emergent; and two because participants just did not want to write lengthy answers to questions. In informal conversation with the respondents I found that answers to questions about career choice and future were as yet unresolved and it was quite likely that they might end up in jobs or careers quite different from what they dreamt of today. Their responses in the survey were often led by the perceived “coolness” of a career (disc jockey was a favorite career) or influenced by parents or important others in their environment. Their answers were also restricted to one or two words rather than details about choices. All in all, there emerged from the Phase 1 study a need to understand the process of becoming an artist by speaking to artists who were well into their careers, so that they could reflect on their lives and share their insights. A much more collaborative process of data generation was indicated and the unstructured in-depth interview was the best method for this purpose. Each research participant completed the questionnaire on multiple intelligences (Appendix B). Details about the questionnaire and how it was used are described separately a little later. The interview took the form of a conversation with the participants. The opening question was usually either about their identity (If you wanted me to introduce you to a third person or announce you at a formal gathering, how would you like me to introduce you?) or a request for a bio-sketch of their lives. From then on, the conversation was open-ended with a view to gathering information on:

- Their perspective on their own MI strengths and weaknesses and expressions of MI
- Factors that influenced the choices in their lives including crystallizing and paralyzing experiences impacting their choices
- The social environment of their growing up years, especially the home environment and exposure to the arts
- The larger social, political and technological context of their art and lives (if at all)
- Constraints, pressures or obstacles they had to overcome
- How they experienced their art and their relationship with other arts

During the interview, the data was captured by writing down what the participants were saying as much as possible. Where complete sentences were not possible, key words and phrases were noted down and the rest filled in during transcription. Voice recording was not used as the
participants in the initial interviews were not very comfortable with that medium. Watching me write, they could also see what was written and correct me if I missed a point or noted something incorrectly. Only one participant indicated that he expected a voice recording in an interview and that was the youngest of the artists. All the other participants preferred to treat the interview more as an informal chat for which the writing method was more conducive.

All the interviews took place within the participant’s own environment, mostly the work environment. Two interviews happened over coffee, but that was the participant’s own choice. This way, they were able to share with me examples of their work and in some cases, such as Amey’s, I was able to witness a work in progress. Some of the interviews took place in one session, while several required a second meeting. The interview invariably concluded with my asking whether they had any questions for me. If they had queries about the research, I answered them suitably, and promised to send each of them a summary of results by email, which was done subsequently. The coding and analysis began side by side with data collection. Each interview, as it was transcribed, was also scanned for codes and themes. An example of preliminary analysis done for one research participant is shown in Illustration 3.4. These themes were continually collated across cases and revised with each additional interview. The concepts and hypotheses generated thus were then reinforced through the data obtained from the biographic profiles of major artists in India.

**Illustration 3.4: Preliminary analysis for Divya: Themes emerging from interview (only sample codes included)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Sample Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Music:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Music is something of my own choice, not what I got from my parents</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Narayan uncle saw me playing with the keyboard and I was able to play simple tunes, and he suggested that I should try music</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dance/ kinaesthetic:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- When I went to sing for one of my mother’s students at Narada Gana Sabha in Chennai, that’s when I woke up and decided that I wanted to dance, I was in 12th standard at that time.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Am good at juggling/ balancing things (e.g. loading things on a tray or flipping an omelette)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Literature:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Dad used to give me books to read always – I did not enjoy classics but unconsciously writing and literature became something important</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Learnt Tamil simply by being in a Tamil locality (not taught at home or school)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Biographies:** In the case of the college students, the intelligences and their choices were as yet only developing. The interviews covered artists who are well into their careers so that they may have enough experience to know their own preferences and reflect on their journeys this far
to create understanding. To extend the same point further, it would be useful to look at the lives of people who have made substantial contributions in artistic fields so that we have a view of not just an artist in the making, but an artist that has travelled a full circle in life. The contributions that each of the chosen artists have made in their fields is tremendous often reaching across geographical or cultural boundaries. They have every one of them, been prolific in their idiom, even creating artistic disciplines out of nothing. Each biography is analyzed for the main themes emerging from the person’s life as well as possible answers to the research problem. The search for information around the individual’s life was guided by the same points discussed in the interviews, that is:

- Evidence for their MI strengths and weaknesses and expressions of MI
- Factors that influenced the choices in their lives including crystallizing and paralyzing experiences impacting their choices
- The social environment of their growing up years, especially the home environment and exposure to the arts
- The larger social, political and technological context of their art and lives (if at all)
- Constraints, pressures or obstacles they had to overcome
- How they experienced their art and their relationship with other arts

The study of each artist was a multi-step process. Firstly, an outline was prepared of their lives – basic facts such as date of birth, place of birth, etc., important events with their dates where available, their body of work/ contribution, major awards, etc. Then a detailed study was done of their family and social environment. The information here was often sparse, but by cross-checking references, a context was built for each artist and captured in a biographic profile. Incidents in their lives were analyzed for patterns and recurring patterns were captured in themes similar to the way it was done for interview data. Available information about their lives was searched for evidence of the eight intelligences as per Gardner’s framework and tentative MI strengths were listed out for each artist. The coding and analysis began side by side with data collection. The biographic data has been applied as a secondary data, used more for verifying concepts and strengthening hypotheses generated through the interviews.

Questionnaire: Henwood (in Richardson Eds. 1996) says that qualitative methods are privileged within the qualitative paradigm. But it is possible to use numerical methods, tools and techniques with a predominantly qualitative epistemology. The MI questionnaire used here (Appendix B) is an example of a numerical data source/ tool used within a predominantly qualitative study. It is used very differently than a survey-questionnaire would typically be in a quantitative study. The way the questionnaire was used in the interview context allowed for a lot of participation by the interviewee. Apart from marking their answer in the multiple-choice
format, they were free to express opinions on questions, add comments to their scores, qualify their responses and illustrate by giving examples. Each of these questions could have been posed in an open-ended manner, but the data generated would have been far too varied, difficult to compare, and taken too much time to collect. In the first interview, one of the points of feedback was that the long-answer questions should all be converted to multiple-choice. This format was appreciated by many of the participants – either because they are more used to completing survey type research questionnaires or simply because it is less taxing.

The positivist quality of any questionnaire usually arises from the pre-determined categories around which data is sought by the researcher. Although the questions for each intelligence were drawn from MI theory, participants were free to blur distinctions between intelligences or indicate if they felt the content of a question was irrelevant either conceptually or to their own life situation. The score is only a clue to the MI profile of the participants and any information supporting or contradicting the scores have also been recorded in the data. The interpretation is based on the sum total of all this data rather than the score alone. However, as it happened, the scores were quite indicative of an individual’s MI capabilities most of the time. Bryman (1988) quotes several examples of researchers using the survey-questionnaire within a qualitative study. In some cases, they are used as a sort of study within a study to clarify certain points or collect particular data. In others they might be used to directly throw light on the subject of study. For example, Fuller (1984) used the Bem Sex Role Inventory along with qualitative interviews to study school children’s perceptions of gender. By using a questionnaire to collect data on multiple intelligences, it was possible to gather the participants own evaluation of themselves on all eight dimensions. Given a stimulus (in the form of the questions), they were able to talk about MI, their strengths and weaknesses and factors which influenced their development as artists. How I see it is that the questionnaire was a (structured) way to understand participants’ perspectives and hence does not conflict with the epistemology of the study, the way only assessing task performance might have.

This questionnaire is not a test. There is no time limit, but participants are asked to respond quickly without thinking too much over each item. It does not actually measure intelligence. A proper measure would need to include batteries of tests, including performance tests and be supported by observation. This self-report questionnaire is used only as a tool to explore the individual’s position on the eight intelligences. Each research participant was given the option of either starting with the questionnaire or taking it up sometime later during the conversation. All except four participants chose the latter course. Based on the results of the Phase 1 study, the original questionnaire was revised to work within the context of an interview/ one-to-one interaction. There were several changes made to help the questionnaire work well.
a) Questionnaire format: In the first version, questions were mixed up so that it was difficult for respondents to know which item contributed to what score among the intelligences. This was revised so that the questions were presented intelligence-wise. As a result, the questionnaire became more transparent, less of a test, and gave participants a context to answer as honestly as possible. The college sample, on which the pilot version was used, tended to view it as an evaluation, wanting to know whether the data was being used for some talent identification or to launch some courses, whether it would be shared with the administration, etc. But the research participants, who completed the revised version, were clearer about the purpose of the questionnaire. There were also fewer doubts about the meaning of the questions. The former questionnaire format might have been more useful if the purpose was to measure some personality variable accurately, with consistency checks built into the test. But where the purpose is to explore and understand, the revised version of the questionnaire was useful.

b) Scale: The earlier version carried a four-point scale measuring frequency with options of ‘Hardly ever’, ‘Sometimes’, ‘Frequently’, and ‘Almost always’. The same options were used for all questions. In the later version, these answer options were more customized depending on the content of each question and a fifth ‘0’ option was added. The ‘0’ helps to account for opportunity. It permits the individual to say that he/she has not had the opportunity to explore an intelligence/activity and the item is dropped from the numerator as well as the denominator while calculating the score. The score becomes less stable with each item dropped, but clearly reflects the individual’s position on that dimension. That is, if the individual has not yet had a chance to try adventure sports, for example, the only way he/she will be able to say whether they enjoy such activities or no is after trying it out. The score for that item therefore, could go either way once the person has had the opportunity. By choosing ‘0’ the individual indicates that the answer to a question is as yet, unresolved. If there are too many ‘0’ choices in a particular dimension, the score needs to be interpreted with a pinch of salt. If there are too many ‘0’ options chosen across dimensions, then intrapersonal knowledge of the individual comes into question. The ‘0’ option also reduces the problem of central tendency by giving a definite choice for those who are not able to make up their minds on a question.

c) The eighth intelligence: Naturalist intelligence was added as one of the dimensions in the questionnaire. This was not included in the first version because it was not part of Howard Gardner’s original conceptualization of Multiple Intelligences. Additionally, the questions for naturalist intelligence are less amenable to being presented as a test. When the questionnaire was revised it was possible to include this dimension.

d) Question content: Items that were high on social desirability were dropped or modified. For example, the item, ‘I can get along with most people’ showed a clustering of choices around 3 and 4. The item, ‘I dance very well’ showed a reverse social desirability with participants
rating themselves low. Similarly items that showed too much central tendency were dropped or modified. In re-wording of the items, the focus was more on behavior rather than use terms such as ‘I am good with…’ or ‘I find it easy to….’ In the pilot version, the focus was on covering the maximum possible domain of a particular intelligence (which led to a longer questionnaire of 93 items), whereas in the revised version (a questionnaire with 72 items), the focus has been on trying to capture the individual’s enjoyment of an intelligence (interest/preference), opportunity for exploring that intelligence, competence in that intelligence (skill, whether learnt or innate), and in some cases where applicable, commitment to activities that employ that intelligence. For example, in the linguistic scale, the item ‘I find pleasure in reading’ taps interest/preference, ‘I speak multiple languages…’ taps competence, ‘I have learnt a language not taught at home or school’ allows for opportunity, and ‘I enjoy writing (diary, stories, poems, blogs, etc)’ with answer options of ‘do not enjoy, ‘Occasionally, but only at a personal level’, ‘Often, some work shared publicly’ and ‘Prolific, several published work’ captures commitment. The revised questionnaire has 72 questions including the eighth intelligence. Treatment of the data generated from the questionnaire is done a little differently than would be in a quantitative research. Since the sample is small (24 participants) and the goal of the research is not generalization, any of the usual metrics such as correlations or testing for the difference between mean scores carries little meaning. Instead, the data is applied to understand how participants perceive their own intelligences/abilities and analyzed to explain what that says about the artistic mind. Each participant’s responses to the questions are considered in the light of other data. These patterns are then verified across all the participants to generate hypotheses about the artistic mind.

Observation of work: Observation/experience of a participant’s work was a purely supplementary data source. Where it was possible to experience their work before meeting in person, this helped to generate leads to discuss in the interview. In the case of Divya, whose example I used before to illustrate the preliminary analysis, I watched her solo dance performance as well as another dance performance where she acted as the vocalist. In Soumya’s and Pavan’s case, I watched plays that they had directed. Amey shared photographs of several works with me and took me on a tour of the current project at the time we met. Cyrus had several of his sculptures at public places around Mumbai where they could be easily viewed, and so on. With the biographed artists also, at least one work of each artist was also used as an input into the study to understand the individual better – in the case of RK Narayan, it was his novels The Bachelor of Arts and The English Teacher, with Guru Dutt, it was his film Kagaz ke Phool, with Raj Kapoor, it was his film Mera Naam Joker – in all three cases their most autobiographical works were chosen. Where this autobiographical aspect did not apply, an available sample of their work was experienced. The exceptions were Mrinalini Sarabhai, Zohra Sehgal, and Uday Shankar who do
not perform anymore. Put together, the four methods used – interview, biographical study, questionnaire and observation helped generate an understanding of artists, their minds, their work, and their life stories. How these knit together to make the research more credible is discussed next.

**3.4.3. Triangulation: Checks and balances in the research design.** Any research design is put together with a view to ensuring that the results generated from the research be as close an approximation of ‘the truth’ as possible. In a quantitative study, the research design would be created with consideration for reliability, validity and generalization. In a qualitative study, these issues could be addressed by using multiple methods for collecting data and by viewing the same issue from different vantage points – in other words, triangulation. Denzin (1978) spoke of four types of triangulation – data triangulation, investigator triangulation, theory triangulation and triangulation of method. This research uses data triangulation in a couple of ways. For each of the artists profiled, multiple sources of data have been used (questionnaire, interview, observation). And for the artists biographed, every fact has been verified by multiple sources of print/on line data. Triangulation of method also occurs. Three primary methods used are the in-depth unstructured interview, self-report questionnaire and study of documents (biographies). A secondary method used is observation/experience of the artist’s work.

There is an overlap between the data sources and the methods used. Richardson (In Denzin and Lincoln 1994) talks about crystallization as an alternative to triangulation. The premise of crystallization is that there are many more than three sides from which to approach the world. In a crystal, what we can see depends on our angle of repose. ‘Crystallization without losing structure deconstructs the traditional idea of validity…and provides us with a deepened, complex, thoroughly partial understanding of the topic’ (Richardson 1994). Illustration 3.5 describes the way crystallization occurred here.
This kaleidoscopic view is an appealing one, and it explains overlaps, assumes that boundaries (between the artist and his/her work, between method and data source, between researcher and participant) keep shifting, and assumes that there is no one right answer or truth. Richardson also proposes the notion of credibility instead of validity to evaluate the quality of a research. Pidgeon (in Richardson Eds. 1996) suggests that radical alternate criteria must be sought to evaluate trustworthiness or goodness of a piece of research such as laying of an audit trail, checks to over-interpretation such as negative case analysis, considerations surrounding the potential transferability of the research to other settings, and the extent to which researcher reflexivity is built into the process. The checks and balances in this research, such as negative case analysis (interviews with non-artists from an artistic heritage), an audit trail through use of multiple data sources that can be cross-verified, have been put together keeping these criteria in mind. An important part of the credibility of the study is the way the sampling was done. This is described in the next segment.

3.4.4. Sampling Principles. Having decided that the primary modes of engagement with the subject matter would be through interviews and biographies, the decision to be made next was on sampling. How should the decision to include or not include someone in the sample be made? There were two principles that guided the sampling:

Homogeneity – Heterogeneity: Kuzel (in Crabtree and Miller 1992) says that the method of choice in qualitative inquiry is to sample for maximum variation. This way, the investigator can challenge purposefully his/her preconceived understanding of the phenomena under study. Where this is not possible, he says, one might defend the use of a more homogenous sample in order to understand a particular group of individuals well, while searching for the unarticulated diversity in the sample. The sample sought for this research is homogenous in the sense that they are all artists living and practicing in Mumbai. They are all artists of some proven merit; they are recognized as artists by society and their work is in the public domain. Hobbyists and those who practice art as therapy or relaxation etc are not included. This criterion was applied due to concern for the quality of data that would emerge from the interviews. For good data to emerge, I believe it is important to engage with those who have a depth of experience in any discipline. I am aware that this is a debatable point. The definition of artist itself is so unclear. If I create a flower arrangement at home, if I am a bathroom singer, if I draw beautiful diagrams in my biology journal, would not all that qualify as art? And would I not qualify as an artist?

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1 In the case of positivist research, validity is usually concerned with finding congruence between the data and the absolute truth. The idea of exploring the notion of crystallization was to locate a paradigm of evaluation more in sync with the assumptions of qualitative research rather than use positivist criteria.
For clarity, I refer to Alexander (2003) who, in her book The Sociology of the Arts, outlines certain characteristics of art. She says that art can be so defined if:

- there is an artistic product
- art communicates publicly
- it is experienced for enjoyment
- is it an expressive form
- it is defined by the context

Of all the points, I think that the last one is the most important in terms of the definition of art. There are forms of art where the artistic product is inseparable from the performer – like in music or dance and the line between the artist and the artistic product is blurred. And while it is true that art realizes itself publicly, a famous painting by Da Vinci or Raja Ravi Verma does not cease to be art just because it is kept in storage. Art expresses the thoughts and feelings of the artist, but all expressions of thoughts and feelings even by highly gifted artistic persons does not classify as art. Art does give enjoyment, but enjoyment is a vague and highly situational term. What about tragic plays that make one weep? Or a movie that inspires? Can they all be included in enjoyment? But the last point, I think is definitive. Art is art only within a context. And that context as Young (2001) says is an art world. Arthood, Young says is a relational quality, dependent on the perspective of an art world. He gives the example of Michelangelo’s ‘David’ – which has certain physical/ material properties such as it is made of marble. These properties would not change even if people did not think it was made of marble. However, the sculpture is considered art only because people think it is art.

A famous social experiment by the Washington Post had the violin virtuoso Joshua Bell playing at the Washington DC Metro station on a cold January morning in 2007. The musician played continuously. In a space of 45 minutes only 6 people stopped and listened for a short while. About 20 gave money but continued to walk at their normal pace. The man collected a total of $32. In one hour he finished playing. Silence took over, no one noticed, no one applauded, nor was there any recognition. He had played one of the most complex pieces of music ever written with a violin worth $3.5 million. Just two days before that he had performed to a full-house at Boston where the cost of a ticket averaged at $100 apiece. Art, even the best of its kind, is sociologically defined. Therefore, the sample consists of individuals who are recognized as artists in an art world and whose artistic product is recognized as art sociologically.

Since the study is conducted in English, the group becomes even more homogenous. I recognize that in many ways the research seeks to understand the world of which I am a part. I believe that if the same criteria were applied in any major city in India, or maybe even some places outside India, the research participants identified would have much in common being part
of an art world that consumes geographical boundaries and identifies itself by socio-cultural criteria that are constantly in a state of flux and quite loosely structured. Within these limits, the study seeks to maximize variation in the sample by covering diverse artistic disciplines, by including men as well as women, by reaching out to individuals from different linguistic communities, religious groups, and socio-economic backgrounds.

India is home to literally hundreds of art forms. Each state has its own style of dance, music, painting, sculpture, architecture, textile design, theatre and many more forms that are in between. Some states have martial disciplines that are now practiced as art, while many communities use art integrated with their religious worship. It would be a mammoth task to even prepare a compendium of the arts of India, leave alone connect with and interview at least one practitioner of each art. It is also probably not necessary given the exploratory nature of this research. So when we speak of maximum variation, it does not refer to finding representation for every different art form within the research (as in representative sampling). I consider instead, what could be called the “mainstream” arts and try to understand some of its practitioners a little better. If the ideas generated are promising, the research could later be pursued on a larger scale and in different contexts.

The Sangeet Natak Akademi and Lalit Kala Akademi, both apex bodies for the promotion of art and culture in India recognize the following categories of art: Music, Dance, Drama, Painting, Sculpture, Graphics, and Photography. The Indian Council for Cultural Relations includes Music, Dance, Theatre and Puppetry, and Folk dance and music (including magic) in their empanelment categories. Film is another major art vertical, and it finds state support through the National Film Development Corporation of India under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India. Although my original sample list was longer and included forms such as puppetry, juggling, etc., my final sample includes the following artistic disciplines: Dance, Music, Photography, Theatre, Film, Poetry/Literature, Design, Pottery (Crafts), Sculpture and Painting (10 in all). Some of the sub-categories were dropped as I felt they would be redundant. For example, Puppetry has a lot of overlap with Theatre and Crafts, and the form of dance or music (western/classical/ folk/other genres) did not seem to make much difference to the data generated in the interviews. The principle of homogeneity-heterogeneity helped decide the nature of the sample. A second principle – of divergence – saturation decided the limits of the sample.

*Divergence – Saturation:* This principle has been borrowed from Grounded Theory. Since the objective is to understand artists, it was important to select each research participant with a view to maximizing the richness of data generated. Each participant selected is quite different from the others. There is a wide age range maintained; the youngest participant interviewed is twenty eight (one of the non-artists, among artists the youngest is thirty years of age) and the oldest is in her fifties. While some of them do know each other, they primarily operate in distinct art worlds with little overlap. If there is an overlap in the art world, the decision to include that individual in the
sample is made for other reasons – for some possible insights that the person may share by virtue of their gender, seniority, or other unique features about their career. In this way divergence was maintained in the sampling.

Saturation was possible to check for due to preliminary analysis that was ongoing. Along with writing the transcripts, I started the analytical process, making notes, observations and generating ideas for concepts/hypotheses from each interview. For example, after my interviews with three photographers, I concluded that there was probably not much merit in interviewing multiple individuals within a single discipline as the themes generated were overlapping and had little to do with the artistic discipline itself. When I started with dancers, I tried the same thing with a variation – I interviewed two full time and two part-time dancers (one male and three female, one of the female being my pilot interview) to understand whether having parallel careers/roles would impact the data that was generated and explore whether gender mattered in the decision to be an artist. In this manner I continued meeting new participants until I reached a point where further questioning along the same lines would not, I believe, have generated new data.

3.4.5. Sampling process. The process of sampling followed was theoretical sampling. Having its roots in Grounded Theory, theoretical sampling chooses new cases based on their potential for contributing to theory about the phenomena under study rather than for testing hypotheses (Pidgeon 1996, Kuzel 1992). A part and parcel of this process is the constant comparison of each case to the previous ones studied without which it is not possible to select the next research participant. This is how the sampling worked in this study too. In this research each participant was approached for the specific reason of creating understanding about the artistic mind. The study is entirely exploratory in nature and aims to generate some theoretical concepts about how the artistic mind works.

Snowball sampling was not a planned strategy when I started the research, but some of the research participants gave me promising leads that I followed up. There are therefore referrals of up to one level removed in the sample. That is, I did meet a few individuals who were referred by research participants, but I did not follow up and meet with any of the individuals that the referred participants put me through to. An important point here is that I did not do any “cold calls”. That is, in no instance did I pick up a person’s contact number from the telephone directory and approach them only as a researcher. This, I believe, would not have worked. Even in cases where there was a context to the interaction, some potential research participants did not respond to emails, calls or messages. The groups where I had maximum trouble of this kind were with authors and painters. I had connected with one resource person who organizes literary festivals and is generally in touch with authors. Although willing, she was finally unable to put me through to any published author on the plea that her word was probably just not important enough to persuade the authors to spend time on my interviews. I connected with two authors with whom I had previously interacted on facebook and only one of the leads resulted in an interview. With
musicians and dancers it was easier, possibly because I belong to the same art world or have easy access to their art world.

My own status as a performing artist was critical to getting me audience with several research participants. In cases where the participant was unknown to me personally, the strength of their relationship with the individual (or organization) that connected us was important in getting me time with them. Although snowball sampling or chain sampling is not considered a preferred method in research, in a specialist group such as the one I sought to understand, it works well. If I had wanted to explore more concepts, I would have approached the next line of references that got generated from the research as the most promising line of data collection.

As Kuzel (1992) says, confirming and disconfirming cases are important to deepening the initial analysis which is why towards the end of the study, I met and interviewed three individuals who came from an artistic background and chose careers that they themselves see as definitely non-artistic and as of now, they are not in any way practicing any art form that they have been trained in or exposed to. These three research participants were difficult to locate. Most of those coming from a rich artistic heritage, I found, were at least nominally involved in the arts, even if not full time professionals. For example, a dancer’s daughter trained to be a veterinarian abroad and had for many years given up dancing altogether. But on her return to India, she has taken up dance once more and is now actively performing. Such was the case with many more individuals I considered approaching for an interview. For those coming from an artistic heritage, choosing lives that did not involve the arts is an exceptional choice and therefore these individuals were interviewed. The presence of these three research participants in the sample, I believe makes the ideas generated about the artistic choice a little more convincing.

3.4.6. Sample. Kuzel (In Crabtree and Miller 1992) says that 6-8 data sources or sample units will often suffice for a homogenous sample, while 12-20 are commonly needed when looking for disconfirming evidence or trying to achieve maximum variation. The sample of this research consists of 24 interviewees; three non-artists and twenty one artists. A brief description of the interviewed research participants is given in Table 3.3. Ten individuals including the three non-artists come from a rich artistic heritage, eight of them come from backgrounds that were sensitive to the arts even if not fully immersed in the arts, and six of them come from entirely non-artistic backgrounds.

This categorization of artistic background is something that emerged from the data. At the outset, I only sought those who came from artistic or non-artistic backgrounds. During the course of some of the early interviews it emerged that this distinction was not so clear-cut. Some of the research participants spoke of how their parents or others in their environment were not practicing artists, but were artistic in everyday things or otherwise sensitive to the arts. They may have trained in the arts but do not practice professionally or were untrained but attracted by what the arts had to offer. So a third category for the background of the research participants was included.
These categories are only indicative and not really water-tight compartments. The definitions for the categories emerged during the interviews and are an output of this research. The definitions are as follows:

**Artistic Heritage:** A family background where one or both parents are deeply into an art form, an early social environment where the arts are viewed as integral to life, even as a career option, a family setting where the individual can observe and participate in the artistic process on a daily basis. A good part of the individual’s artistic learning happens within the family group where there is a rich artistic heritage.

**Arts Sensitive:** A family background where both or more often one parent is inclined towards the arts, where one or both parents have received training in some art but not pursued OR where they have not received training and are hobbyists, an early social environment where the arts are viewed positively but not as the mainstay of existence. While practice of the art is encouraged at home and they may even receive feedback from family members, considerable learning happens in “classes” that the individuals attend outside the home.

**Non-artistic:** The kind of words that research participants used to describe this type of background was “nothing to do with the arts”, “very different (from me)”, “they are all lawyers and accountants type..”, etc. Hence the term non-artistic was used to describe this kind of background in a single term. It refers to a family background where neither parent nor any significant other is involved with the arts. Acquaintance with the artistic process is limited to occasional observation. There is a lot of experimentation in the learning process of these individuals, and there is very little direct contribution that the immediate family makes towards their artistic careers. Most of their learning happens outside the home.

To clarify the assumption underlying these categories, it is not that social environment is given more importance than heredity, or that individual will is not considered. It does not matter for this research whether art is in the blood or in the diet that one is fed at home. It is the result of a particular combination of things in the family background that I wish to inquire into. Clearly, there are people who do not have art in the blood, who do become artists of merit and there are people who presumably have art in the blood (not sure how we can verify this idea though), who also become recognized artists. But what are the factors that propel these people into an artistic life? Are the same for those from different backgrounds? Are they different for those with/without an artistic heritage? It is in order to explore answers to these questions that these categories are considered.

A brief bio-sketch of each research participant interviewed is given in Table 3.3. It is not in the chronological order in which the interviews occurred. Although chronology was very important in the earlier part of the research deciding the direction that the rest of the interviews would take, towards the later part of the study, it was more influenced by availability of the
research participant. Therefore, the descriptions have been grouped as per domain to give a clearer idea of the sample spread.

**Table 3.3: Summary profile of the research participants interviewed (all names have been changed to protect the identity of the individual)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artistic Domain</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Artistic Heritage</th>
<th>Arts Sensitive</th>
<th>Non-artistic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dance</strong></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Anil (Bharatanatyam, Marathi)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Divya (Multi-style, Malayalee), Soumita (Kathak, Bengali)</td>
<td>Gayatri (Bharatanatyam, Tamil)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Music</strong></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Venkat (Sound engineer/Composer, Tamil)</td>
<td>Shiva (Mridangam, Tamil)</td>
<td>Siddharth (Western vocal, Christian)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Geeta (Carnatic Flute/Vocal, Tamil)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theatre/Film</strong></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Pavan (Theatre and Film, mixed community) Avik (Film, Bengali)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Amrita (Theatre, Punjabi married to Muslim)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Soumya (Theatre, mixed community)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Visual Arts</strong></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Dinesh (Photography, Marathi)</td>
<td>Rajeev (Photography, Bengali), Anurag (Design, Oriya)</td>
<td>Anjan (Photojournalism, Bengali), Amey (Painting, Marathi)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Neela (Design, Punjabi)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other</strong></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cyrus (Sculpture, Parsi)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
<td>Anagha (Poetry/Literature, Tamil)</td>
<td>Prema (Pottery, Marathi)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-artistic</strong></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Rajesh (CA, Tamil), Sameer (Engineer, Tamil)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Sandhya (Journalist, mixed community)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Dance: Divya* is a thirty one year old dancer, accomplished in three styles of Indian Classical dance. She performs Bharatanatyam, Mohiniattam and Odissi. She is also a trained Carnatic vocalist and performs in concerts, primarily as a dance accompanist. She comes from an environment immersed in the arts with her mother being one of the senior dance Gurus in Mumbai and her father working in the area of script writing for film, theatre and voice-overs. She
hails from the Nair community in Kerala. Divya holds a BA in English Literature and an MA in Sanskrit. She is married and has a three year old daughter who has also started basic training in dance. Divya was my first research participant with whom I did the pilot interview. After the interview I sought feedback on the basis of which I modified the approach in the later interviews.

**Soumita** is a PhD in Sociology from Mumbai University and a Visharad in Kathak dance. She grew up in an arts enriched environment where her father is a dancer and also played the sitar. Her mother is a trained singer. She started her formal training in Kathak at age six and is also trained in music. Her areas of work currently lie in the performing arts by way of stage shows and teaching and management development by way of her work with corporate clients. More recently she has also got into management education by starting a school along with her father. Soumita’s case was an interesting study because she is not a full-time dancer, although she does perform at a professional level. Her dual career and choices that led to that kind of life were the focus of the interview.

**Gayatri** is a Bharatanatyam dancer and dance teacher who started training at the age of six. She grew up in Calcutta where she also learnt music coming from an arts sensitive household. Her father was into sales of steel and her mother was a housewife, but very fond of dance. Initially she wanted to pursue a career in medicine, but gave it up when she realized that dance would have to be sacrificed for it. She got married to her teacher’s son at the age of 19 and got a lot of encouragement to continue her dance career from her parents as well as her in-laws. Her younger brother is a marketing professional, but also plays mridangam. Both of Gayatri’s daughters are trained in dance, but only one of them is interested in continuing the tradition.

**Anil** is also a Bharatanatyam dancer. He grew up in Mumbai and joined dance as a hobby class in the local community hall. After his tenth standard, he joined Nalanda Nritya Mahavidyalaya to study dance full time. He qualified with a BA and MA from Nalanda, after which he took up a teaching job there for 15 years. He quit to start his own dance company and is currently a well-known performer, travelling with his troupe and performing for the most prestigious banners. Anil’s father worked in the area of painting contracts and mother was a housewife. His two sisters are both married, one runs a home-cooking business and the other works for CNBC as a copywriter. As a family, they were not particularly artistic, but they loved seeing Marathi theatre and supported Anil when he chose to pursue a career in the arts.

**Music:** Venkat is by his own definition a “wannabe musician”, although he has successfully scored tracks for commercial film, released albums with his own songs and is known as a musician and music composer. He is trained in the Carnatic tradition, but works with a wide range of sounds. He is a graduate of the IIT, Mumbai and has a post-graduate degree in sound engineering from Clemson University in the United States. Venkat, now in his forties, comes from a Tamil Brahmin family immersed in the musical tradition. His mother is an accomplished
vocalist and though his father is not himself an artist, he worked consistently to ensure the presence of art, especially music, in the lives of his four children. Venkat, his siblings and his mother used to regularly perform as a troupe and currently the entire extended family is involved with the arts.

Shiva is a banker by profession, but is also one of the leading mridangists in Mumbai. He regularly performs as an accompanist in music concerts as well as dance. He started working with State Bank of India in 1988 and continues to date. He comes from a Tamil Brahmin family where his mother was a violinist, although not on a professional scale. His two sisters also trained in music and dance and in general the environment at home was alive to the arts. His mother’s dream to see him play at the Music Academy propelled Shiva, who was sixteen at the time, to take up music seriously when she expired. His case was especially interesting to explore as he has, with equal energy, pursued a dual career over a span of two decades.

Siddharth is a musician who composes his own music, singing at live concerts as well as for movies, although his objective is not to be a playback singer. Coming from a Roman Catholic family and an entirely non-artistic background, Siddharth is primarily self-taught and sings in English and Hindi (Western type of music). His father is an engineer and his mother is a homemaker. He is an erstwhile earth scientist, with a Masters in Geology. He spent the initial years of his career working as a geologist on oil rigs, then with an academic publishing company and also with a firm in Muscat. He returned in 2007 to launch himself as a full-time musician. He is now thirty years of age making him one of the two youngest artists to participate in the research.

Geeta is an accomplished flautist and musician who performs regularly in the classical dance and music circuit. She comes from an arts sensitive family where her parents were not practicing musicians, but there was always a lot of music in the home. She also trained in dance for eight years, but never pursued it seriously like music. The different aspect of her career is that she started performing professionally quite late, well into her marriage around the age of thirty, and her formal training in flute started only after she started performing. For most of her career, she worked in banking and music was only a second profession. Two of her eight siblings are into music professionally and one more creates a sort of record of attending music concerts and reviewing performances.

Theatre/ Film: Amrita is prominent theatre personality on the Mumbai arts landscape. She belongs to the Punjabi community, comes from a non-artistic background, and spent her early years in Zambia, Africa. She moved to India to join the FTII in Pune and was the first in her family to move out to pursue a career. She is also the only one in her family to work in an artistic line. After graduating from FTII, went back to Africa and worked in Community theatre, then worked for a while in UK, then back to India and married her celebrity actor husband. They
together started a theatre company in 1984 and launched several productions under the banner. She regularly conducts workshops for children, amateurs and professionals and works in theatre full-time. Amrita and I were co-participants in two workshops, where she shared her workshop methodology and approach to acting.

**Avik** comes from a Bengali home that is seeped in the arts. His mother is a leading Odissi dancer and father gave up a scientific career to practice full-time as a sculptor and painter. At his home, the arts were always considered important, much more so than formal education, and Avik was home-schooled until the fourth standard. He is in his early thirties and is a National award winning young film-maker. His films have received much critical acclaim. He is a currently a free-lancer who writes for film. He is a graduate of Rishi Valley School and St. Xavier’s College after which he trained for filmmaking at the FTII in Pune. He is married and has a year-old daughter.

**Pavan** is a trained cinematographer and theatre director. His is the only child of artistic parents – his father being a name in acting, especially famous for some of his television roles. His mother too has done some work on the stage, but primarily works in the area of development, as a consultant to UNDP, with Lintas, etc. Pavan’s early childhood was spent in Calcutta, but the family moved to Mumbai where he did his schooling and college. He studied in Bristol, UK, started a theatre company in Mumbai and has created several very popular productions. His is a name in the Mumbai theatre circuit and he has several mainstream films to his credit as cinematographer.

**Soumya** is a theatre person who comes from a rich artistic heritage. Her father is a major force in theatre in India and her mother is a writer in Hindi. Since both parents were always in rehearsals or some artistic endeavor, the home environment was full of art. As a child, she performed in a few plays, but her focus now is more on direction/ production. Soumya set out to be an architect, but gave up her studies half-way when she realized she did enjoy it. She currently works in education and theatre and is fast becoming a name in children’s theatre. She regularly travels with her troupe to do shows and was recently in England on a scholarship to study children’s theatre there. Her sister in Bangalore is a painter.

**Visual Arts – Photography, Painting, Design:** **Rajeev** is a successful photographer in his early thirties whose identity is around “making negatives into positives”. Known for being a versatile photographer, Rajeev is represented internationally by Getty Images and travels all over the world for photo assignments, teaches photography at various institutions like IIT, and holds the record for maximum number of exhibitions by a single photographer – his most recent one being images from Israel. He grew up in Jamshedpur and comes from an arts sensitive Bengali Brahmin background. His father, who was in service at Glaxo for most of his career, was always a hobbyist photographer, but took it up professionally around the time that Rajeev launched out on his
career. His mother trained at the Government Arts College at Calcutta, but does not practice her art professionally. Rajeev’s younger sister is a writer for Outlook Traveller in Delhi and also pursues photography as a hobby.

Anjan is an award winning photojournalist and Pulitzer prize nominee with several covers of international magazines like TIME and Newsweek to his credit. His work has also appeared regularly in The New York Times, Washington Post, The Economist, etc. Rated one of the top photographers in the world, he has worked for Indian Express, The Telegraph and Reuters. Currently in his mid-forties, Anjan spent his early childhood in Delhi, growing up in a “black and white Doordarshan kind of economy”. Anjan comes from a non-artistic Bengali background. His father was a professor of matgeetatics at Delhi University, but expired when Anjan was very young. His mother effectively raised him as a single parent. She was a PhD in Psychology and worked initially in a hospital and later with UNICEF.

His being a photojournalist, reporting wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and Kargil, covering leading sporting events, there was a little doubt as to whether he should be included in the category of an artist. But his work satisfies all of Alexander’s (2003) criteria, and he himself does not disagree to be labeled an artist. Additionally his powerful pictures are decidedly artistic in their portrayal of events. For example, his photo of a soldier in Afghanistan standing on an army tank silhouetted in the setting sun, or his post-tsunami picture of the grieving woman, or the one of Afghan war widows walking to get their rations. Journalism may not be considered an artistic profession, but photojournalism sits somewhere on the line defining what is artistic.

Dinesh belongs to Maharashtra and comes from an artistic heritage, with his father being a Head of Department at the JJ School of Art. Interestingly, photography was not the career of choice for Dinesh. He trained to be a television engineer and when technology changed so that he would be required to retrain entirely or pursue a different career, he took up photography. He is today in his early fifties and recognized as an accomplished photographer working with all the leading brands and ad agencies. He is known especially for his artistic styling and tgeetatic pictures. During the course of the interview, he shared a lot of samples of his work, especially some of the tgeetatic calendars and other shoots that are not in the public domain.

Amey is a painter who comes from a non-artistic background. He grew up in Akola near Nagpur where his father worked as a stenographer at the local agricultural and engineering college. His mother is a homemaker. Inspired by his art teacher, he took the plunge to become an artist and enrolled in the JJ School of Art, being one of the first students of his teacher to do so. He completed his MFA from JJ School of Art and the same year got the opportunity to hold his first solo show. Since then he has participated in many group shows and practices full-time as an artist. His goal is to do a solo show every three years, which he has been fulfilling since the time he graduated. He is married and has one child.
Anurag works in the area of creative design. He belongs to the Oriya community, but hails from Vishakapatnam. His home was an arts sensitive one where his mother used to paint. He says he tried many things such as sports, arts, various things, but art is what stuck with him. His father was a doctor and the family generally had hopes of his becoming an engineer when he chose to go to National Institute of Design. He himself used to paint and draw, but now is moving towards curating exhibitions. In his early thirties now, he runs a design studio, which is his main line of work. He has worked in Delhi, Bangalore, and now in Mumbai and spent most of his career freelancing.

Neela is Anurag’s partner in his design studio. She comes from a Punjabi family that was like Anurag’s, arts sensitive. Her mother used to be a hobbyist interested in crafts, decorating and other artistic pursuits. Neela went to all different classes like swimming, art, music, sports (her mother was also a basketball player). But she found her calling in design. She grew up in Calcutta and Delhi and is also a graduate of the National Institute of Design after which she did a one year course in Vancouver on Interactive media. Neela’s father was running a ship broking firm and both she and her sister take after him in the entrepreneurial nature of their ventures.

Other Arts: Anagha is a well known author and poet with several publications to her credit. She grew up in Mumbai and after her Master’s, she taught English for a brief period. After the teaching stint, she freelanced, doing lots of writing on art related subjects. She worked with a prominent arts promotion organization for 15 years. In 2003 she went to Scotland and UK on a fellowship from the University of Stirling and once more in 2006 on a fellowship from the Poetry Society. Anagha’s father used to work for Rallis, but was very keenly interested in the arts. Her mother was a trained singer who taught music as well as sang for programs, although not on a professional scale. There were others in her environment inclined to the arts such as her older sister and her aunt, who together, created an arts sensitive backdrop for her development as a poet.

Prema is a potter, ceramist and creative consultant with Hobby Ideas. She also has her own studio where she teaches pottery and related crafts. A graduate of JJ School of Art, she hails from a Maharashtrian family and grew up in Nashik. Her father was a physics professor and mother was a school principal. Prema’s family was non-artistic and her initial choice of career was medicine like her older brother. When that did not pan out, she chose art and then later, pottery as a career. In her late thirties, she is married to an artist husband and has one son.

Cyrus is a well-known sculptor who has exhibited his works all over the world and has several commissioned public works to his credit. He has received awards from the Bombay Arts Society, the Rachna Samsad, and the Indo-American society among others. Cyrus grew up in Mumbai and qualified as an architect from the Rachna Samsad. He even practiced as an architect in his father’s firm, but eventually started sculpting full-time. The second of three children, Cyrus
is the only son of an architect father and a nursery school teacher mother who have always supported him in his work. He hails from the Parsi community, is married and has two children.

**Non-artists:** Sandhya is a journalist and writer by profession. She grew up in an arts rich environment where her mother is a leading Kathak dancer and her father is a film-maker. She learnt dance and is very interested in film too as a result. However, she stopped dancing during her tenth and re-prioritized, focusing on her education. She qualified in Mass Media after graduation and has been working in journalism ever since. She is currently the Dance Editor of Time-Out Mumbai, curates her mother’s annual dance festival that promotes young artists and does not rule out the possibility of becoming more heavily involved with the arts sometime in future. She is now 27 years old, making her the youngest participant in the study. Although the age minimum was thirty years, I met Sandhya since it was very difficult to locate individuals who came from an artistic heritage and are not currently practicing the arts that they are trained in or exposed to. As of now, she does not classify herself as an artist.

Sameer is the son of a flautist mother and was exposed to a lot of music while growing up. His father was into freight forwarding and not much involved with the arts. Sameer learnt the flute in the Carnatic tradition like his mother, but was more interested in Hindustani music. He became proficient enough to win several competitions and even performed in some concerts and with his college band. He gave it up eventually and went more deeply into engineering. He currently runs his own engineering business which he has been working at for the last six years. While he does not entirely rule out a future return to music, he is much keener on continuing his work.

Rajesh comes from an arts rich background with his mother being a dancer and dance teacher and his father being keenly interested in the arts – music, dance, film, etc. He used to attend all the concerts in town and even learnt the violin for sometime. However, studies dominated his goals and he eventually qualified as a CA. He got straight into working life and never considered getting back into music. Rajesh still attends concerts and says that he has a keen ear for music of any genre, but his life is oriented around his work. He currently works with Godrej in Mumbai. Rajesh, now in his forties, is older than the other two non-artists and is definitely settled into the rhythm of his life.

Apart from the research participants interviewed, similar sampling principles were applied to the artists chosen for biographic study. The list of people chosen is not exhaustive. There are many other artists who could as well be studied – India with her rich cultural diversity has a fathomless pool of artists to choose from. The process of selecting a suitable sample for this research was difficult. If a question is posed: “Why not Balasaraswati? Or Begum Akhtar? Or Girish Karnad? Or Mulk Raj Anand? Or Meena Kumari?” there is no answer. Each of them and
many others merit inclusion and would definitely make for interesting study. Keeping in mind the constraints of the research, certain criteria have been applied to select the artists for study. These criteria are as follows:

- That they were born in the early 1900s (before 1940) – they have been a part of the transition of India into a free country and been active in contributing to the new artistic identity that has not changed much in the last hundred years. More sub-disciplines and specializations have evolved, perhaps technology has impacted the way people interact with art, but by and large the disciplinary silos have remained

- They have made a substantial impact culturally – the ones chosen for study are all outliers in a sense, and what is true for their exceptional lives may not always be true for all practicing artists, but combined with the interview data opens analytical possibilities

- That there has been enough information about them available in the public domain to facilitate such a study (this is only possible with the outliers) – the internet has been extensively used, but in every case, corroborated with a print source, either a biography or an autobiography where available

- That they each come from different artistic disciplines and/or represent different socio-cultural backgrounds. The sampling criteria of artistic/ non-artistic background has been used here and the attempt has been to maintain as much diversity as possible

The final list of artists studied in this part of the research (12 in number) is given in Table 3.4 along with the data sources used to collate their biographies. Four artists come from an ‘Arts Heritage’ background, four from an ‘Arts Sensitive’ background and four from ‘Non-Artistic’ background. Four of the artists are women and eight are men. Together, they represent seven different art genres, and eleven different cultural communities (RK Laxman and RK Narayan being from the same family). The choice of sample was an iterative process that happened as I read and wrote about each artist. With some preliminary reading, it was possible to arrive at a rough list that was much longer. Balasaraswati got dropped out as she is from the same community as MS Subbulakshmi (Isai Vellal or the Devadasi community). Mrinalini Sarabhai was chosen as she was from a non-artistic background and the process of her becoming an artist was so different than the others in that she had substantial financial backing. Both RK Laxman and RK Narayan were retained to find out the role of familial influences. Once their profiles were written, Ravi Shankar was dropped as the process would have repeated with him and his brother Uday Shankar. Instead I studied Bhimsen Joshi who was from a similar arts sensitive background and whose life presented a very different story. Zohra Segal was preferred over Meena Kumari as being from a totally non-artistic background. Kamala Das was chosen over Anita Desai because a lot more information was available in the public domain about her.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name of Artist</th>
<th>Field of work/artistic discipline</th>
<th>Main data sources for biographies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
I preferred to write about Kelucharan Mohapatra over Birju Maharaj as I have myself trained under the former. I continue to learn from his senior-most practicing disciple in Mumbai and what I know about him is multi-layered, coming from many sources over the years, including Guruji himself. Experiencing his multi-talented personality was one of the things that set me off on this quest. I was very keen to include RD Burman or Lata Mangeshkar, but it would have just overlapped the domains of film and music and so they did appear as part of the final sample. In this iterative manner, the sample for biographic study evolved over the course of the research.

The results of this research are discussed in detail in the following chapters which are arranged thematically. The first chapter discusses the findings relating to the Artistic Mind, using the MI framework. The second chapter looks at the Artistic Personality – themes that emerged as the data was being sorted and analyzed. The third chapter looks specifically at the Artistic Choice; the turning point in the lives of these artists where they committed to a life in art. And the fourth chapter considers the impact of the Artistic Environment. The last chapter on the Artistic Composite attempts to collate the hypotheses generated and formulate suggestions for a theory about artistic thinking and being.