Acknowledgements

Working on this dissertation has been a very involved journey for me. The process of research itself – meeting my research participants, reading reams of text about major artists of the twentieth century, observing the work of the artists – has been extremely fulfilling and a fantastic learning experience. Apart from learning about the discipline of research, the work done towards the thesis has opened many doors for self-understanding and for new ways of thinking. For this, I am especially grateful to certain individuals who made this effort possible.

I am thankful to my guide, Dr. Bino Paul G.D., for keeping an open mind and encouraging me to think for myself. He gave me the confidence to select this rather difficult and exploratory topic and also pushed me towards clarity when I was grappling with ideas too nebulous to express. Dr. N. Jayaram I am grateful to for the thorough feedback on my research proposal and the first draft of the thesis. Much of what I learnt about qualitative research I owe to him. I am thankful to Dr. Sharit Bhowmik for believing in me and sharing his feedback on my work which helped me develop a broad perspective on what was possible in this research. All this would not have been possible without institutional support and for that I am grateful to TISS, my teachers and the administrative staff who have helped me along the way.

A very big thank you is due to all the research participants who shared their stories freely – not one of them asked me whether I will mask their identities in my report. The same is true for the Principal and teachers at SIES College who permitted me free access to their students. For the time that they spent with me and for their insights that form the backbone of this dissertation, I am much indebted. Most of all, I am thankful to my husband, Ganesh Iyer, without whose help I could not have embarked on this journey at all. He not only supported me in every material way, but was also the inspiration and sounding board for many of my ideas. Although the completion of this dissertation heralds, as it were, the end of a phase in life, I hope that it also marks a beginning, of my work as a researcher and as a student of humanity so that I might take forward the thoughts, ideas and energies invested by so many people in this process.

Sangeetha Rajan