ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Going through the phenomenon of Contemporary Indian Printmaking is in fact, a big task, there will be many exclusive questions and inquiries about some of basic requirements. First of all, what is the topic of the thesis? Where are the references? Is it enough at least to start such task, knowing that we should get a lot of things directly from the printmakers at their places of residence, knowing that they are spread all over the country. I myself worked as a lecturer of graphic art in my native country, I have also published some articles in Jordanian newspapers and related magazines. These articles were about art criticism, especially when introducing some art exhibitions, here or there. So, I felt that this field of research would be valuable to me to go further in this process since I just completed my MAF (Graphics) in 1992.

I was fortunate enough to grasp general knowledge about Contemporary Indian Art. In this particular year 1992, I was searching about somebody who has deep understanding of the distinguished qualities and who has been really involved in the realm of Indian Art, especially from the early years of this century onwards. I found my requirements and almost all my demands when I read the ‘Three Tagores,’ ‘Studies in Modern Indian Art,’ both written by Ratan Parimoo. The two books along with some further articles by this author created in the inner of myself the eagerness to acquire a place under his umbrella. My goal was not difficult since he had been my teacher in art history subjects and also I relied much on his generosity and something personal, I felt attracted to his tender yet lucid way of communication, I am lucky he accepted to guide me in my thesis.

I am grateful for the methods under which he made me compile the materials carefully and systematically. But before that, he did a great favour when he clearly defined for me the title of my thesis after a lot of suggested titles. Properly Parimoo had read my mind and also my needs then. He simply took my paper and wrote the following “Trends and Innovation in Contemporary Indian Printmaking.” I jumped up cheerfully and shouted, yes, this is the topic. In fact, this helped me latter to add to my discovery which made my guide very happy (a tit for tat); nicely done. The following statement may reveal this enthusiastic situation. Let us know, about the auspicious triangle. It is
created from the axis between the three great centres of printmaking; (a) Calcutta and Santiniketan, (b) New Delhi, and (c) Baroda. The discovery of this triangle enabled me to hold an adequate command over the text of my thesis. Before that, the situation was vague and limitless and may be impossible to be achieved. Now we easily identify the proper field of our research and no need to spread all over the subcontinent. In the introduction we will have further knowledge about this specific area of our field.

My guide supported my efforts taking keen interest in my attempts. The long discussions with him on various problems concerning my topic and also with the help of these valuable references he brought to me to enhance my knowledge and to increase my awareness about the topics, enabled me to put my finger on the required trends and also, to discover the hidden qualities of the works of some leading printmakers, which made the task easier. Innovation also requires to be picked up and then illustrated properly. Parimoo pushed me forward to grasp the proper perspective and this attitude allowed me to explore new aspects related to these innovative and striking prints. How to evaluate these prints and also how to give the intellectual, suggestive and interpretative analysis, show our joint effort to build up the body of this research according to our goals; in short, we were eager to enrich our thesis and present a worthwhile task.

When in Hyderabad, we received a warm and sincere welcome. In April 1994, we were in the region of the senior artist P.T. Reddy. I remember his erotic illustrations and his interesting personal museum, his rooted ideas and amazing viewpoints. This man invited us to take position beyond conservative boundaries to enjoy looking at the ancient Indian erotic heritage through his creative depictions. These were striking moments. I felt emotionally involved with the virtue of Indian beliefs and also the splendid representations of these stunning beliefs.

Since we are still in the wonderland of Hyderabad, let us move to another pole of Contemporary Indian erotic depictions, Laxma Goud, the distinguished printmaker. Here is the realm of daily rural sexual life. I felt, there were no curtains or taboos between my eyes and the core of Indian eroticism. This is the impression I got, after I met this man. When interviewing him, I tried to provoke him, but, amazingly, he was able to read my mind before asking him the question. In fact, it was a great privilege to approach such artist. It is also fruitful, exciting and quite unique opportunity to hold discussions with
him. In short, we gained a lot of material and slides to develop photos out of them. Other artists in the same area such as Gouri Shankar, Chandra Shaker, D.L.N. Reddy and others were eager to do their best to help us in our mission.

In fact, I received a great deal of cooperation from some particular printmakers in different places. Somnath Hore, the senior artist of Santiniketan, was very friendly, modest and eager to make every thing in the reach of my hands. He gave me important informations about Zainul Abedin, Chittaprasad and Safiuddin Ahmed. He revealed some hidden facts about the communal riots of 1946. I felt, he has some nice feeling and understanding towards the Moslem community, he also, appreciated their heritage. I was quite happy to undergo such experiences. Somnath was generous enough to take care of all my needs, giving me valuable references and allowed me to meet him three times, each time for different task. He sent to me letters after my return to Baroda. Nirmalendu Das also did his best to furnish us with some significant references. But unfortunately his thesis concerning graphic art in the 19th century was in Bengali. I would like to convey some special thanks for the art critic Pranabendu Dasgupta from Calcutta, who discussed with me some significant viewpoints about Indian art. He was happy enough to gift me his valuable book entitled, ‘The Arts of Bengal and Eastern India.’

Moving to Delhi, where we found different places, which, indeed, were very friendly and ready to make things going properly and in short time with effective results. Delhi is a dynamic city. The heart of printmaking activities in fact, located in two places, the College of Art and Garhi Studio. 12 printmakers of the new generation gathered under the name of ‘Indian Printmakers Guild.’ All of them were eager to help. In fact, they are very conscious about their mission. Special mention should go to Jai Zharotia and his brother Moti. Dattatraya Apte, Shukla Sawant and Anandamoy Banerji from the Guild were quite cooperative. Anupam Sud also did the same. Some authorities of Fine Arts establishments, viz., Art Heritage; especially Mrs. Roshen Alkazi, LKA, College of Arts and NGMA, were also very eager to help. I will not forget Vivan Sundaram, who spared me very valuable catalogues. I cherish remembering also the late Kanwal Krishna and his nice and modest wife Devyani, who were also very friendly. When I visited them in April 1993, I got a new understanding about the absolute integrity of the Indian artists’
families. This impression enriched when I started my frequent visits to Naina-Parimoo's residence between 1995 and 1998.

Visiting Bombay also had been very fruitful. Special mention should go to the authorities of J.J. School of Art, 'Marg,' the famous art magazine and also to JAG, especially the rich section of selling art books and reproductions. Art exhibitions in some famous galleries with those elegant catalogues and media coverage were also helpful. Since there is a little talking about Bombay, let us move to another aspect there. In fact, I would like to draw attention to those printmakers across the seas in the far continents, especially in Europe, viz., Sakti Burman, Viswanadhan and from U.S.A., Krishna Reddy and Charles Stroh. Fortunately I received very valuable materials from the last two professors. They sent me hundreds of printed and coloured pages as well as long yet valuable messages typed by the computer setting to convey their ideas, viewpoints, impressions and directions. They were eager to share with me their long experiences, widening my horizon and knowledge. They gave answers with a wide perspective on my questionnaire. Sakti Burman along with some other prominent printmakers in India and abroad almost did the same, viz., Dipak Benerji, Shail Choyal, N.B. Joglekar, R.M. Palaniappan, Shyam Sharma, Ajit Dubey and some particular artists in 'The Village of Artists' at Madras.

I convey my deep gratitude, first of all, to the Dhumals and then to Jyoti Bhatt, Naina Dalal, Jayant Parikh, Bhupen Khakhar, Jeram Patel and V.R. Patel. They gave their precious time to discuss about various aspects concerning my topic. They also offered me some valuable materials such as monographs on their long life career, as in the case of Naina and Parimoo. Still two more artists, who helped me in one way or other, viz., V.S. Patel and Gulammohammed Sheikh and extended me a helping hand in the beginning and afterwards.

Special mention should go to Dr. Shivaji Panikkar from our Art History Department. I express special gratitude to him for his kind communication and owe him much for the valuable books he allowed me to read and take xerox copies out of them. Discussions with him and reading his articles gave me a wide angle and the proper focus of many serious issues. Visiting him at his residence revealed some other aspects. In short, I am happy to be his student and also his friend. This man cares much about others.
I also owed much to the authorities of Nazar Art Gallery, Baroda, its owners and the management, all of whom gave me a great deal of help. The exhibitions in their nice gallery and also the magazines, art books and reproductions they displayed for selling, are also very helpful. But the most valuable thing they did to me is that they gave me the permission to make xerox copies out of these great books about Contemporary Indian Art, Contemporary art in Baroda and Contemporary Women Artists. Here, we should also convey our thanks to some other persons, who did their best to help me in the correction of my text; especially my guide, who through the years gave his dedicated efforts and long, long hours to elevate the quality of my research. He was eager to enable me to write my ideals in the proper way, giving me the right expression and helped me to avoid mistakes. In this regard, we should also mention the name of Mr. Mohan Chand, the man, who took the responsibility to type my thesis, did his work with full awareness to each paragraph in the text, corrected whatever needed and also paid serious attention to all my expressions, referring to the dictionary whenever suspected any misunderstanding. I deeply offer him my thanks.

Lastly, we convey our thanks to the authorities of 'Archives' of the Art-History Department. All the staff members did their best to give me the advantage of obtaining lots of information through the collections of illustrations as well as the catalogues, some books and magazines. 'Archives,' in fact, is a friendly place you are always received with nice smiles and welcoming gestures. There are also some other helpful persons, but I have not been able to recollect their names; they may excuse me.

Friday, 16 July 1999

Saleh Abu Shindi