CONTEMPORARY FINE ART AND ISLAMIC BELIEFS CONCERNING

REPRESENTATIONAL IMAGERY: A SAMPLE SURVEY IN DURBAN

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN FINE ART,

IN THE DEPARTMENT OF FINE ART AND HISTORY OF ART,

FACULTY OF ARTS

UNIVERSITY OF DURBAN-WESTVILLE

FAIZA GALDHARI

STUDENT NUMBER: 8831627

DURBAN

1998

SUPERVISOR: MR K. THATHIAH

JOINT SUPERVISOR: PROF. S.S. NADVI

ABSTRACT

This dissertation investigates the responses of Muslims in Durban to the Islamic injunctions which pertain to art. It is argued that South African Muslims, especially those in a position of religious authority, are likely to favour a rigid application of Islamic Law. To them, the preservation of Islamic cultural values and tradition is a priority.

Other factors, apart from the Islamic Laws associated with representational imagery, are accentuated in the dissertation for their role in the Islamic aversion towards imagery. These include the suggestion that idolatry, the antithesis to Islamic monotheism, is not dead and that the norms and values advocated by modernism, capitalism and the western world, continues to impact negatively on Muslims. This, in turn, strengthens adherence to the rigid Islamic value system.

These factors have been considered in the examination of contemporary South African Muslim artistic expression. Whether the aversion to representational imagery persists strongly, or whether there is laxity on this issue, is investigated.

I hereby declare that this dissertation is my own work. All assistance and sources of information have been acknowledged. This work has not been submitted to any other university for the purposes of a higher degree.

Faiza Galdhari

(Student number: 8831627)

University of Durban-Westville

November, 1998

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation is dedicated in loving memory of my late aunt, Mrs Rahila Hussain, who will always remain my role model and source of inspiration.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The use of representational imagery, especially in the sculptural aspect of art, is generally avoided by Muslims. There is a sound theological basis for this. Representational imagery, by definition, has connotations of graven images, figures and portraits, but also more importantly, of "...statues, effigies, fetishes, icons, idols and totems" (Oxford Wordfinder,1993:745). These associations represent the antithesis of Islamic monotheism. Islam's sensitivity in safeguarding the belief in the Unity of God is very acute. That representational images sometimes have the potential to interfere with Islamic monotheism, cannot be denied. An aversion to such images, and frequently to all types of representational imagery, is explained in this context. Furthermore, the Islamic aversion to representational imagery in art is backed by specific Islamic injunctions which prohibit the use of such imagery by Muslim artists. As part of Islamic Law, the abhorrence of representational imagery has remained a permanent part of Islamic culture. However, subject to interpretation, these injunctions are not always perceived in a categorical light. Interpretations vary, with certain types of imagery sometimes being accepted. Such instances are observed.

This dissertation investigates the responses of contemporary Muslims to the Islamic injunctions which pertain to art in the form of a sample survey. The sample, which consists not only of Muslim artists but also Muslim *ulama* / religious leaders, Muslim art students, Muslim art educators and Muslim

laymen, reflects the responses of this group in an artistic, religious and spectator capacity. These responses are then presented in order to provide a clear picture of the factual state of artistic production and its reception among Muslims in Durban. It was believed that this investigation among members of the sample, would reveal tendencies to either vehemently reject all forms of representational imagery, or to accept certain types of representational imagery.

The dissertation is not a conventional fine art dissertation. Much consideration is given to the fact that Islam is a way of life which does not draw distinctions between sacred and mundane matters. As such, Muslims are obliged to adhere to beliefs, rituals, daily social transactions and ethics which together constitute a total Islamic value system. Equal attention is thus given to both theological and artistic parameters throughout the dissertation. In addition, no formal approach has been adopted in the discussion of artists and artworks according to biographies, style, or chronological details. Instead, much attention is given to details pertaining to the principles of Islamic Law, its interpretations and effects on the artistic actions of Muslim artists in Durban. This is done because it is believed that a strong relationship exists between Islamic beliefs and artistic actions. The one cannot be discussed without the inclusion of the other.

The dissertation is not strictly confined to investigating the responses of Muslim fine artists to the Islamic injunctions which affect art. It is believed

that the Islamic injunctions affect not only the production of representational art, but also the support of such art, and especially the display of this art in the home environment. These issues are highlighted in the dissertation. The reception of the representational image is also explored on other levels, such as the use of imagery on television, in the mass media, in the commercial aspect of advertising etc. The investigation is thus expanded beyond the confines of fine art, to include Muslim individuals in whose lives such images play a role. Graphic and textile design students, Muslim adults in general and even young Muslim children, were among the respondents of this investigation.

The main purpose of the study is to provide the reader with an understanding that the effects of these Islamic beliefs on Muslim artists is permanent. Even in contemporary society, these beliefs pose dilemmas which cannot be ignored. The purpose is not to provoke controversy by advocating that the prohibitions of imagery should be legalised or to influence Muslims into believing that there should be an unequivocal acceptance of representational imagery in art. From a legal point of view this is impossible. The dissertation merely investigates what is being produced by artists in the Muslim community of Durban in relation to the Islamic injunctions which affect this production.

The dissertation is divided into four chapters. The first chapter deals with the historical circumstances of Islam's aversion toward representational imagery.

Specific reference is made to the prohibitions of such imagery and the place they occupy in Islamic Law / the *Shari'ah*. How these prohibitions attempt to safeguard and preserve Islamic monotheism, is also revealed. The principles, aims, nature and importance of Islamic Law are examined with the view to accentuating that this Islamic Law has prescriptions for every aspect of the daily lives of Muslims, including art. It is acknowledged that, as part of this Law, it is the main reason that Muslims pursue a non-representational direction in art.

In the second chapter it is suggested that sometimes other factors re-inforce a strict non-representational direction in art. One such factor is the issue of Islamic identity. This chapter focuses on this issue. It is also stated that, while there is evidence of an Islamic identity crisis all over the world, the urge to preserve this identity is compounded in countries where Muslims are a religious minority. It is suggested that Muslims in Durban, as part of a religious minority are reluctant to accept any major aesthetic changes in artistic expression, which would in turn forge a modern Islamic artistic paradigm. It is assumed that their main concerns lie in the preservation of their Islamic artistic heritage and protecting their cultural values which are an important part of their basic Islamic identity. This affects representational art directly, simply because it conflicts with this identity. It is hypothesized that Muslims in Durban would favour art which reflects the principles of Islamic aesthetics and reject representational imagery in art. Of course this would be motivated; firstly, by adherence to Islamic injunctions; and then, by their

existence as a minority. This does not assume that representational imagery is wholeheartedly accepted in countries with Muslim majorities, because the Laws of Islam still prevail in such countries. It is merely suggested that the interpretations of the Islamic injunctions affecting art are more relaxed because, as a majority, their identity is not under immediate threat.

The nature of the Muslim community of South Africa and their resurgent tendencies as a minority are discussed in this chapter, bearing in mind that this does have an effect on the type of work produced by Muslim artists in the Durban community.

To test this theory of minority relevance, part of this chapter focuses on the findings of international correspondence initiated between myself and several Muslim artists and art institutions abroad. Countries with Muslim majorities were targeted in this aspect of the field research so as to compare the attitudes and artistic actions of Contemporary Muslim artists in such countries, with the artistic trends locally. The findings appear to strengthen the hypothesis.

The third chapter presents the findings of the field research consisting of the distribution of 200 questionnaires between the period of May 1993 and September 1995. Copies of these questionnaires are included in the appendix. Of the 136 responses, key perceptions of art in the Muslim community of Durban are obtained. These responses are assessed in association with the influences of the *ulama*. On the whole, this chapter confirms that representational imagery is not widely favoured by Muslims in Durban. Even

in cases where compromises are evident, these are not dramatic. These tendencies prove two things: Firstly, that there is a strict adherence to Islamic beliefs affecting art; and secondly, that this supports the notion that Muslims in Durban, as part of a minority, are reluctant to accept any changes to their aesthetic heritage.

The fourth chapter is specific in dealing with active Muslim participation in the visual arts scene in Durban. This information was obtained through a series of personal interviews conducted with several Muslim artists from Durban. The interviews with the artists show that they do not necessarily agree with the categorical nature of the *ulama's* advice. However, their non-representational visual expression indicates that they do have certain fears and apprehensions. These tendencies stem from a reaction to Islamic injunctions. It proves that Muslim artists in Durban are reluctant to pioneer a dramatic change in Muslim artistic expression. These artists prefer to continue within the safe limits of the non-representational Islamic paradigm, embarking and elaborating on calligraphic, decorative and geometric form. It is maintained that this is also in response to the demands of the Muslim market in Durban.

As a young Muslim artist residing in Durban, the issues highlighted in this dissertation affect me directly. Through personal experiences, I am only too aware that there exists a real dilemma which confronts and challenges the Muslim artist, particularly the fine artist. A strong indication of this is the sheer lack of practising Muslim artists in Durban. This is probably because

Muslims are continuously cautioned and told to refrain from the act of drawing, painting, printing or sculpting representational imagery from a very young age. This cautioning is backed by Islamic doctrine, but very often little effort is made to understand the complexities and dilemmas of the Muslim artist, especially if this is where his strengths lie. The artist finds himself alienated from the Muslim community and the Muslim *ulama* in particular. In extreme cases, artists are labelled or branded as evil. In the fourth chapter I give examples of such branding and excessiveness. It is my hope that this dissertation erases some of the misconceptions and generalisations surrounding the representational image in art by increasing the awareness of Muslims about fine art and the fact that representational images are not always harmful. I thus suggest that perhaps Muslims should be aware that certain types of representational imagery, depending on their context, can be assimilated into the lives of Muslims, without tampering with fundamental Islamic tenets. As such the *ulama* will not be alienating the artist, nor the artist the *ulama*.

In conclusion , I show that the arguments raised in the dissertation prove that the Islamic aversion to representational imagery, is not unfounded. This is done by crediting the authenticity and implications which Islamic Law have for art. It proves that the prevention of idolatry is the main cause of this non-representational thrust. It also proves that the preservation of Islamic identity, also plays an intensifying role in the artistic actions and preferences of Muslim minority communities such as the Muslim community of Durban.

On the whole, it proves that the representational image in art continues to raise very serious concerns and issues for contemporary Muslims, as is evident from the facts of this dissertation. This is the case, even though the use of such images is by no means a yardstick, for measuring one's state of spirituality or commitment to the Islamic Faith. It is suggested that there exists a difference between the use and the abuse of representational imagery and that, if Muslims choose to use representational imagery, it is their responsibility to clarify this distinction in their visual artistic expression. In cases where this responsibility has been exercised, their choices should be respected.

CHAPTER ONE

THE REPRESENTATIONAL IMAGE : HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF ISLAM'S AVERSION AND PROHIBITION

A. Imagery and Aversion

Monotheism is the foundation of the Islamic faith. Islam is based on the premise that there is no God but Allah. This is declared by every Muslim in the *Shahada*, in which he or she states: "I bear witness that there is no God but Allah and that Muhammad is His messenger". As a basic tenet in Islam, this declaration of faith has had a profound effect on the production of art among Muslims. It also has a significant bearing on the reception of art by Muslims.

The *Shahada* purposefully communicates a single concept. This is *Tawhid*, (the oneness of God). According to Al-Faruqi (Al-Faruqi, 1982:240), when interpreted in the context of art, it means the ontological separation of the Godhead from the realm of nature. It asserts that nothing is like Him and that nothing can represent Him. In other words *Tawhid* emphasizes God as being inexpressible in visual terms. The official sacred art of Islam echoes this sentiment.

Any form of compromise to *Tawhid* is unacceptable and, more importantly, unlawful in Islam. This is supported by doctrine. The Holy Qur'an, Islam's Divine Revelation, states : "God forgiveth not those who join other gods with Him, but He forgiveth whom He pleaseth other sins than this" (Al- Qur'an

4:116). Ascribing partners to God is the gravest and most unpardonable sin in Islam because it is the antithesis of *Tawhid*. This act of joining other gods with God, is known as *Shirk*. Visual art which promotes *Shirk*, even latently, is unlawful.

Representational imagery originated long before any religion came into existence. In fact it originated in the stone age with primitive renderings of images on the walls of caves. Such images served the ends of magic and ritual. Primitive man, in making them was convinced that he was genuinely creating and that his drawings had all the virtues of a magic spell or an incantation (Barry, 1964:20 ; Bazin, 1958:11 ; Gardner, 1987:30).

> "Apparently, for the men of the Old Stone Age there was no clear distinction between image and reality; by making a picture of an animal they meant to bring the animal itself within their grasp, and in "killing" the image they thought that they had killed the animal's vital spirit". (Janson,1988:16)

Thus, the primitive artist was believed to be more than an artist - he was perceived as a magician who possessed powers to create through representation. The preponderance of an element of magic and ritual, though not at all equivalent to primitive magic and ritual in the stone age, is clearly evident centuries later, in the visual arts of pre-Islamic Arabia.

i) Pre-Islamic Beliefs and the Representational Image

Several sources disclose the predominance of animism and polytheism as the religion of the pre-Islamic Arabians (Mansfield,1976:16; Lewis, 1966:30; Arafat, 1968:10). Idol-worship abounded and deities were numerous. Objects such as stones, rocks and trees were attributed with religious significance and the worshipping of deities was common. The three most important deities were Al-Manat, Al-Uzza and Allat. These were subordinate to a higher deity usually referred to as Allah.

The visual arts of the pre-Islamic Arabians was minimal, given the non-sedentary lifestyle of the Arab peoples (Okasha, 1981;3). Although the 'spoken art' of poetry dominated, evidence of a visual art existed only in the form of drawings, carvings and statuettes of various gods and deities. Some of these were brought into Mecca through Arab journeys and campaigns with the Greeks and the Sabeans (Okasha 1981:4).

In Mecca stone images were called *awthan* [sing. *wathan*] and images in wood, gold and silver were called *asnam* [sing. *sanam*] (Arafat, 1968:10). These representational images were mainly polytheistic aids of worship. Emphasis was placed on the powers attributed to these figures, rather than their artistic appeal or aesthetic quality. The spoken art of poetry, which flourished at the time, shared the platform with the visual art of representational imagery. Rhythmical prose were uttered by soothsayers who interpreted them as oracles of the gods (Gaudefroy, 1968:14).

ii) Islam and Monotheism : an Aversion to Representational Imagery

By the seventh century AD, Islam had succeeded in gathering the previously divided pre-Islamic Arabs into one nation, under one faith, one language and one social system (Okasha, 1981:3). A discard of the detrimental ways of the past was constantly mentioned in the Revelation of the new Faith. The Holy Qur'an states: "O believers, wine and games of chance and statues and (divining) arrows are an abomination of Satan's handiwork, then avoid it" (Al-Qur'an 5:92). This verse, is in all likelihood, a reference to the practice of *qidah* in pre-Islamic times. When in doubt about a decision, a person would consult the idol *Hubal*, housed in the *Ka'bah,* the place of worship. They would then draw one of seven divining arrows situated at *Hubal's* feet and ask the god for assistance in the decision. The arrows would be marked 'do it' or 'do not do it'. They followed whatever the arrow indicated (Arafat, 1968:13 &14). Thus, the representation of *Hubal*, in this instance, was actively involved in the empowerment of the divining arrows. According to the Islamic faith, this makes the image / statue itself unlawful because it essentially promotes *Shirk.*

Thus, while polytheism thrived on the proliferation of representational imagery, Islam depended on its annihilation. In 630 A.D. the Prophet Muhammad ordered that the stones, idols or representations housed in the *Ka'bah,* and worshipped by the forefathers of the Arab Muslims, be destroyed. "...He left the *Ka'bah* an empty house of an ever-present God" (Gaudefroy, 1968: 18).

With *Tawhid* as its substrate, a non-representational art became more acceptable than representational art because it was conducive to the teachings of Islam. A strict refrainment from the depiction of animate imagery in art became quintessential to the preservation of *Tawhid*, and ultimately to the preservation of Islam itself.

Thus it is true, as many have contended, that the real theological basis for the aversion of Imagery in Islam is the avoidance of idolatry (Arnold,1965:5 ; Maahir,1966:12 ; Ghamidi, 1994:5), and by extension, anything which may lead to revering an object.

B. Imagery and Prohibition

It is true that Islam places more emphasis than its sister religions on being a total prescription for the way the individual and society should conduct their daily lives (Crawford,1982:3). The *Shari'ah* has prescribed a non-representational art for Muslims by explicitly prohibiting the use of figurative imagery in the visual arts.

Islamic Law / the *Shari'ah* is a Divine Law which is higher than the formal justice of any human law. Its injunctions are thus infallible and immutable. As such it is a Law that is not easily subjected to the criticisms of the human

intellect. " We [as Muslims] are to act as in the presence of Allah to whom all things, acts and motives are known " (Doi, 1984:5).

The *Shari'ah* encompasses all aspects of Muslim life, whether sacred or mundane. Its link to the visual arts is inextricable. Sufficient knowledge on matters concerning Islamic Law, its principles, aims and importance, is thus essential to a well balanced study on Islamic attitudes toward representational imagery. This approach has been neglected in the numerous studies conducted on the subject in the past, especially by the western orientalists such as Arnold (1965), Creswell (1946), Grabar (1987) etc.

The *Shari'ah* draws directly from two textual sources. Its primary source is the Holy Qur'an, Islam's Divine Revelation. Secondary to this source is the recorded collections of the sayings and injunctions of the prophet Muhammad, known as the *Hadith*. Several *ahadith* (plural) have been recorded by the companions of the prophet Muhammad which have prohibited representational imagery in art. It is stated in these *ahadith* that the Prophet Muhammad has said :

i) Those people who draw pictures will be punished on the Day of Judgement and (to render them helpless) they will be asked to put life into these things which they have made.

ii) Every picture-maker will be in the Fire [of Hell]. A life will be created for every picture the picture- maker made and he will be tortured in Hell.

iii) The severest punishment will be meted out on the Day of Judgement to the artists who imitated the Creation of Allah.

iv) The prophet Muhammad has stated that Allah has said: ' Who does greater wrong than he who desires to create the like of what I Create? Let them create an atom! Let them create a grain of barley!'

v) Verily, the angels do not enter a home in which there are statues (or figures).

(Al-Bukhari and Muslim, Riyadh-us-Saleheen, Vol.2, Chapter 305, pp.812 & 813)

These prohibitions, as part of the *Hadith*, are usually interpreted in conjunction with Qur'anic teaching. This is because the *Hadith* are by no means an independent source of knowledge on Islam or Islamic art. The sayings always have some basis in the Qur'an. If interpreted in this way, the aims and objectives of the sayings are understood. Therefore, although there is no explicit reference to a prohibition of imagery in the Holy Qur'an, these sayings are still accepted by Muslims. According to Rahman (1982:5), sometimes the Qur'an gives an answer to a question or problem, but usually these are stated in terms of an explicit / semi-explicit ratio-legis. The *Hadith* then set out to supplement this semi-explicitness, wherever it may exist, giving rise to a more transparent theological basis. Rippin (1988:63) supports this view, saying that any attempt to reveal, and transmit to the community, the example of Muhammad in the word and deed must involve the Qur'an.

If we are to apply this method to the injunctions under discussion, it becomes easier to understand how the Qur'an and *Hadith* correlate regarding this issue. Firstly, the *Hadith* pertaining to representational imagery exist as strict prohibitions. The Qur'an, on the other hand, only repeatedly condemns the times of *Jahiliyah* (period of ignorance), when sorcery and idolatry abounded ('Surely you are in palpable error [Holy Qur'an, 6:74]). The theological basis in the Qur'an, is thus the avoidance of idolatry and the *Hadith* forbade the production of representational forms, which were almost always solely associated with these practices.

Thus, although the injunctions against images have only the *Hadith* as an explicit source, this is not at all a reason for the rejection of the sayings of the prophet altogether, as has been the case with many scholars dealing with the subject of pictorial art in Islam. The contents of both the *Hadith* and the Qur'an are to be accepted as authoritative texts by Muslims. The Qur'an is sometimes silent on particularities. For instance, it emphasises the importance of prayer but it does not mention how to pray. Prayer instructions are laid out only in the *Hadith*. This does not mean that Muslims should ignore these specific instructions. Another example is the taboo against tatooing the body. Its rejection on Islamic grounds stems only from the *Hadith*. Muslims the world over have generally not favoured this practice.

Hence, the Qur'an as the primary source of the *Shari'ah*, created the ambience for a non-representational art, through the concept of *Tawhid*. The *Hadith* reinforced this by explicitly setting limitations in the form of

prohibitions. Thus, it is not the *Hadith* alone which has ruled the Islamic artistic conscience for centuries, but also the Qur'an which is its source and inspiration. Together, as part of Islamic Law, these texts provide the proper guideline for Muslims to distinguish between what is lawful (*halal*) and what is unlawful (*haraam*).

When it comes to the interpretations of these prohibitions of imagery, there is room for re-interpretation. In other words, these prohibitions do not necessarily condemn all representational imagery, at all times. The fact that the *Shari'ah* is immutable and that Allah's Law is *ta'abbudi* i.e. Muslims have to accept it without criticism, does not mean that the *Shari'ah* is static and immobile. Many, like Akbarabadi, purport that it is indeed dynamic and adaptable to circumstances, time and place (Akbarabadi, Al-Ilm, Vol.3, pg.1). But the interpretation and application of the *Shari'ah* concerning representational imagery cannot be based on simple speculation or individual opinions. For this, juristic opinion or legal advice (*fatwa*) is necessary. These theological opinions of the Muslim *ulama* have been proven to influence the acceptance or rejection of representational imagery, depending on its content, in particular societies at particular times. *Fatwa* on the subject by learned men such as Imam Al- Nawwawi and Sheikh Muhammad Abduh etc., have varied from absoluteness to partiality. The role of the *ulama* in the context of this particular study, is thus very relevant. This will be tackled later.

Tawhid : Its Implications for Islamic Aesthetics

Although the *Shari'ah* clearly forbade a representational direction in the visual arts of Islam, its injunctions offered no prescriptions for an alternative Islamic aesthetic. "Concern with a theory of the arts or even of representations was not central to Islam" (Grabar, 1987:73). Central to Islam was the concept of *Tawhid,* which every aspect of the life of a Muslim should reflect. Within three centuries of its inception, and using *Tawhid* as its precept, Islam had developed an art uniquely its own.

Though concerned with beauty and the appreciation of beauty, Islamic aesthetics never stressed the corporeal beauty of this world alone. As such, its concerns lay, not only with the outward beauty of things but with the beauty that stemmed from within. This is in conformance with Islam's Divine Revelation in which it is stated : " He is the First and the Last, the Outward and the Inward " (Al-Qur'an, 7:3). The Islamic aesthetic reveals the inward and outward nature of a form, in reality, by ignoring the qualities of an object which make it recognisable as an object of this world. The Muslim philosopher, Al-Ghazzali, defined beauty as it is perceived in Islam : "The beauty of the outer form, which is seen by the bodily eye, can be experienced even by children and animals, ... while the beauty of the inner form can only be perceived by the eye of the 'heart' and the light of the inner vision of man alone" (Ettinghausen [Al-Ghazzali's Alchemy of Happiness], 1984:19).

The Muslim artist thus avoided the representation of living forms because of theological concerns. In addition to this, the Muslim artist avoided the depiction of the representational world of nature . His aesthetic objective was an attempt to reflect the Subliminal world of Allah. The representation of imagery, whether figurative or not; therefore, did not occupy an important place in the Islamic paradigm.

But the conscious refrainment from the depiction of figurative imagery, and by extension the refrainment from the accurate representation of the tangible world of nature, was regarded by many as an impediment. Many felt that Muslim artists were restricted. However, according to Al-Faruqi, *"Tawhid* is not against artistic activity nor is it against the enjoyment of beauty. On the contrary *Tawhid* blesses the beautiful and promotes it. It sees absolute beauty only in God and His revealed will of words" (Al-Faruqi, 1982:243). This was achieved through the sacred art of Islam, which concentrates largely on calligraphic, decorative, and geometric forms in art as well as architecture. Thus, a complex system of aesthetics emerged from the womb of *Tawhid.* The principles of this aesthetic, and their application by Muslims the world over, need to be explained at this stage.

Principles of Islamic Aesthetics

With Revelation and particularly *Tawhid* as its inspiration, the sacred art of Islam developed and flourished. This art negated two things: Firstly, it negated the practice of representing living forms, especially of Allah and his prophet because "...to realize that God ...is visually inexpressible is the highest aesthetic objective possible for man" (Al-Faruqi, 1982:244). Secondly, the negation of realism became the artist's priority because, "He is Allah, the Creator, the Originator, the Modeller" (Al-Qur'an, 50:24). With this in mind, the Muslim artist began to concern himself with the dematerializing of matter, because the Creation of matter is reserved for the Supreme Creator alone. He is the only (Shaper) *Musawwir* (Al-Qur'an, 59:24) - a word which later became synonymous with painter. Muslim artists thus reduced forms to their essence and consciously chose to ignore their three-dimensional qualities. The result was an overall flatness of form.

At the hands of the Muslim artist, surfaces - whether architectural or two-dimensional - became charged with a unified flow of pattern and calligraphy (See figure 1). This earned it the term Islamic art. But this was not an art of superficial beautification. The art of calligraphy and decorative pattern are part of a deeply contemplative art with spiritual and intellectual parallels, echoing Nasr's belief that Islam does not draw distinctions between the sacred and the secular (Nasr, 1987:12).
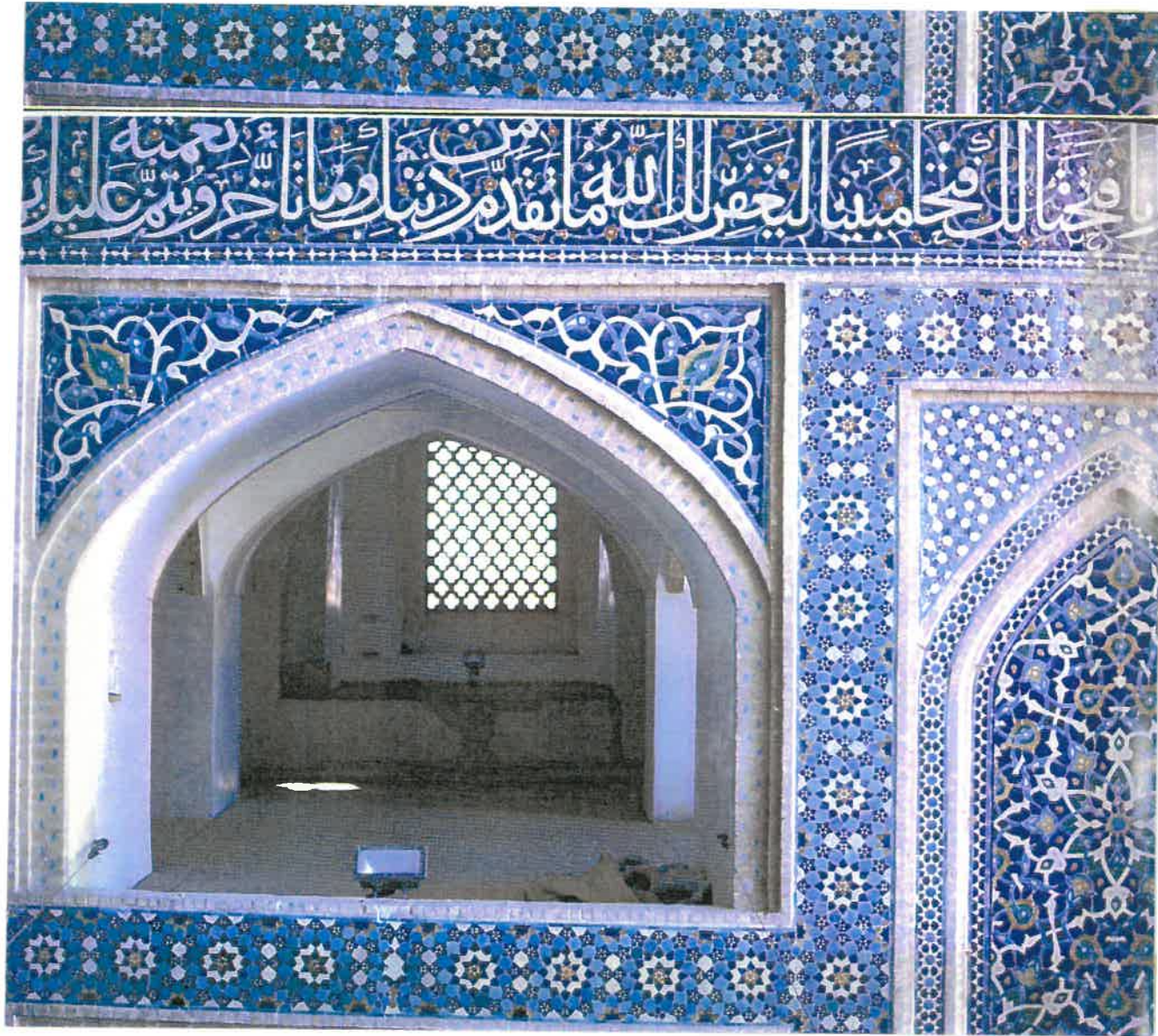
1. Yazd, Congregational Mosque, calligraphic and decorative tilework on the
interior of the south iwan, late fourteenth century

Burckhardt credits the decorative forms of Islam with the intellectuality that they possess. "... The arabesque is a sort of dialectic ornament, in which logic is allied to a living continuity of rhythm" (Burckhardt, 1991:506).

Pattern

The Muslim artist made a conscious choice to distance himself from the depiction of that which Allah Created and was capable of Creating, and that which the mortal artist created and was capable of creating. This he achieved in various ways: One of them was through the use of pattern, a visual element which outwardly negates realism. "The regular or logical form, order or arrangement of parts", denotes a pattern (Oxford Wordfinder, 1993). The Islamic aesthetic emerged from a shaping and organising into a new order, an order that is distinctly man-made. This order clarified that man created only with the use of preceding matter. Allah could create without the use of any preceding matter. " Who can be a worse tyrant than a person, who although himself a creation, attempts to imitate and become a creator like Me. Let him create an ant! Let him create a grain of barley!" (Al-Bukhari and Muslim, Riyadh-us-Saleheen, Vol.2, Chapter 305, pg.812). In Islamic art, all three-dimensional forms or figures were thus transformed in a peculiar way in order to be accepted by Muslim society. According to Ettinghausen (1944:259), every representation had to be changed from the living aspect to a mechanical one. (Figure 2 shows an example of how the artists of the Mughal period handled this transformation, by flattening, stylizing and manipulating three-dimensional reality).
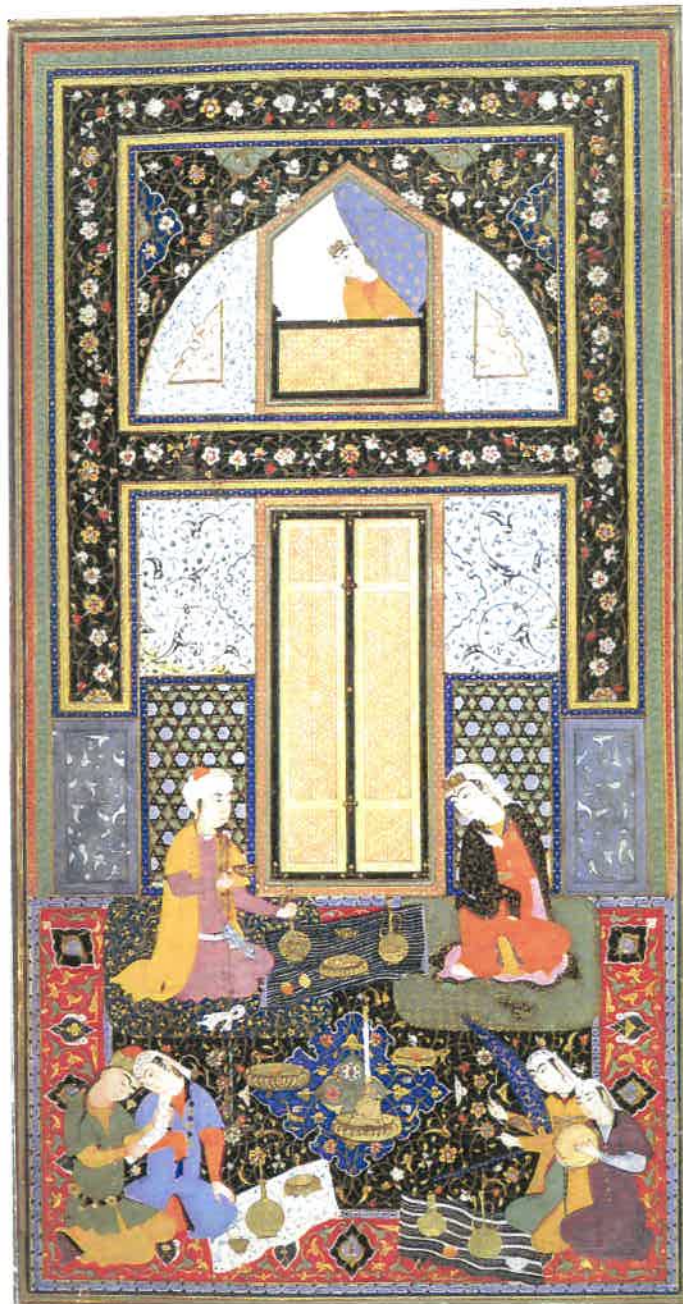
2. *Bahram Gur and the Princess in the Black Pavilion*, from Hatifi, Haft
Manzar, Bukhara, 1538. Washington DC, Freer Gallery of Art

There are two types of pattern which were introduced by the Muslim artist, viz. the *arabesque* and the *geometric pattern*. Both displayed the tendency to play with the surface so as to impress upon it a particular rhythm and order. This order defied nature as it exists in reality. In the representation of a tree, for instance, each leaf is arranged on the tree in a particular methodical way, emphasising its man-made quality and thereby separating the mortal artist from the Supreme Artist.

Abstraction

The infinite patterns of Islamic art are, first of all, abstract (Al-Faruqi, 1986:165). The arabesque was characterised by a linear network of stems ending in floral motifs and buds (see figure 3). Although derived from the naturalistic Graeco-Roman and Byzantine models, these forms were abstracted and reduced to formal structural forms. Attention was paid to their denaturalisation and stylization that rendered them suitable to the new Islamic aesthetic. The result was a complex form of shapes vaguely resembling their original model, yet imbued with a beauty which is unmistakably Islamic in its sublimity.

Geometric Pattern

Using the simplest and purest shapes, such as the circle, the square and the triangle, the Muslim artist elaborated and built upon these to form complex geometric plane surfaces of immense beauty (see figure 4).

3. Detail of arabesque patterns from a page of Qur'anic illumination created under the Ottomans (Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, 1545)
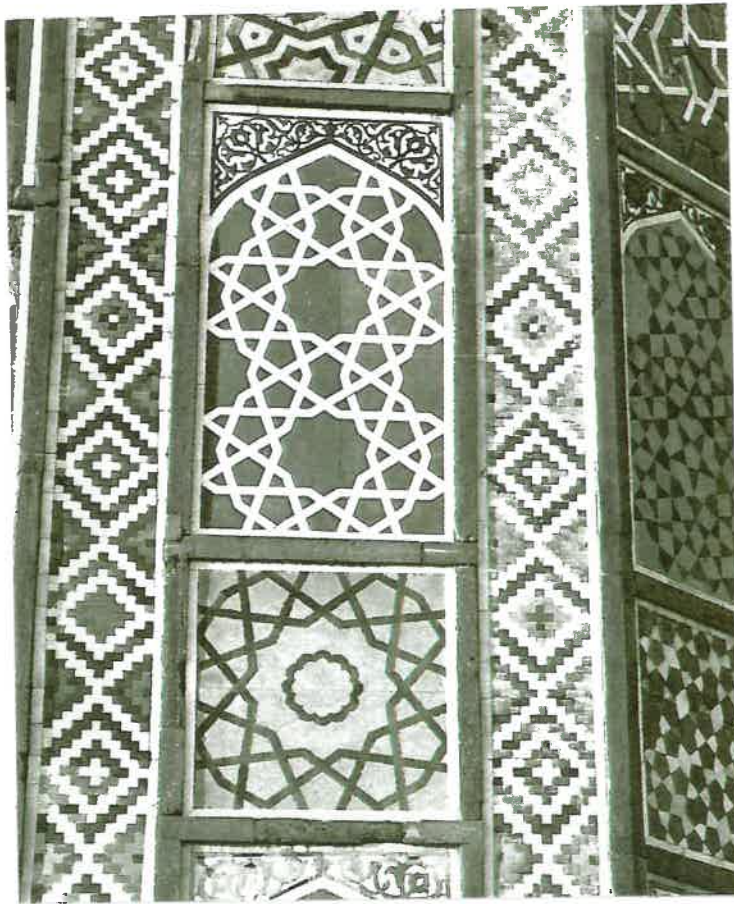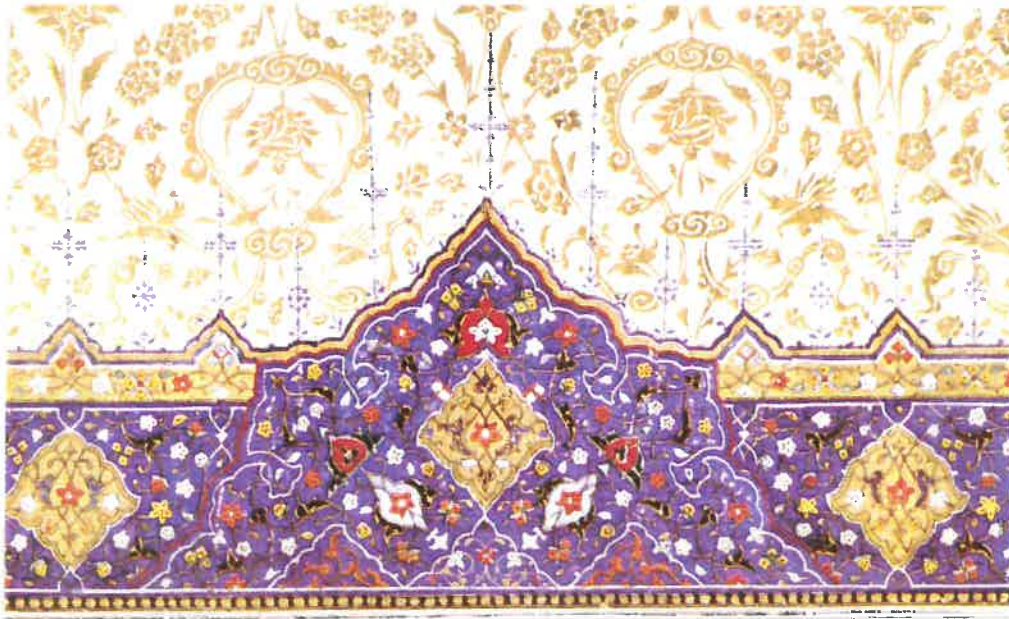
4. *Akbar's Tomb*, Sikandara, featuring geometric patterns mastered by Muslim craftsmen

Like the organic forms of the arabesque, which were much more than mere patterns, the geometric forms are much more than mere shapes. They always possess a deeper meaning. For instance, " ...the square symbolizes the earth / static perfection and the triangle, derived from the circle and the square, is the symbol of heaven and earth. The triangle expresses the relation of God to His Creation and perfectly describes the essence of the *Shahada*" (Verstraete, 1987:62).

Infinity

Both the arabesque and geometric forms were infinite patterns, having no beginning and no end. This is symbolic of two things. Firstly, these infinitive patterns testify to the infinite nature of the Supreme Being. Secondly, they reflect the character of Divine Revelation. The Qur'an is not developmental, nor is it organic; it does not work itself toward a culmination or conclusion at specific points. As a whole, the Qur'an is a book without beginning or end (Al-Faruqi 19 :109). One can open to any chapter of the Qur'an without losing grasp of its meaning and content. This is consistent with the hidden order of Allah's Creation, an element which the Muslim artist avoided.

Repetition

The many passages of the Qur'an are repetitively scattered throughout the Qur'an "...strewn like a string of pearls that has become unfurled " (Al-Faruqi, 19:109). For example the Islamic principle of *Tawhid* is repeatedly mentioned in the Qur'an. The patterns of the arabesque and geometric form,

in their repetition, are attempts in themselves to reflect the Sublime patterns of Divinity. As such, the floral motifs and complex geometric shapes are more easily understood in this context. It helps us to understand why, "Islam's concentration on geometric forms draws attention away from the representational world to one of pure forms, poised tensions and dynamic equilibrium." (Kritchlow, 1976:8).

Calligraphy

Unlike the representation of the world of nature, or the representation of living beings, the Muslim artist had no inhibitions when it came to the art form of calligraphy. The nature of the Arabic script is flowing and melodic, like the high literary quality of the grammar and poetic prose which its letters spell in the Qur'an. "Its language, Arabic, is marvellous, its imagery awesome. For a Muslim the Qur'an is a miracle; even Christian Arabs consider its language perfection" (Ahmed, 1993:31). This perfection is emulated through the beautiful inscriptive art of calligraphy (see figure 5).

While the calligraphy contains within itself alone very rich decorative possibilities, the letters of the Arabic alphabet lend themselves beautifully to the addition of the arabesque plant motifs as well as the abstracted patterns developed by the Islamic artist.
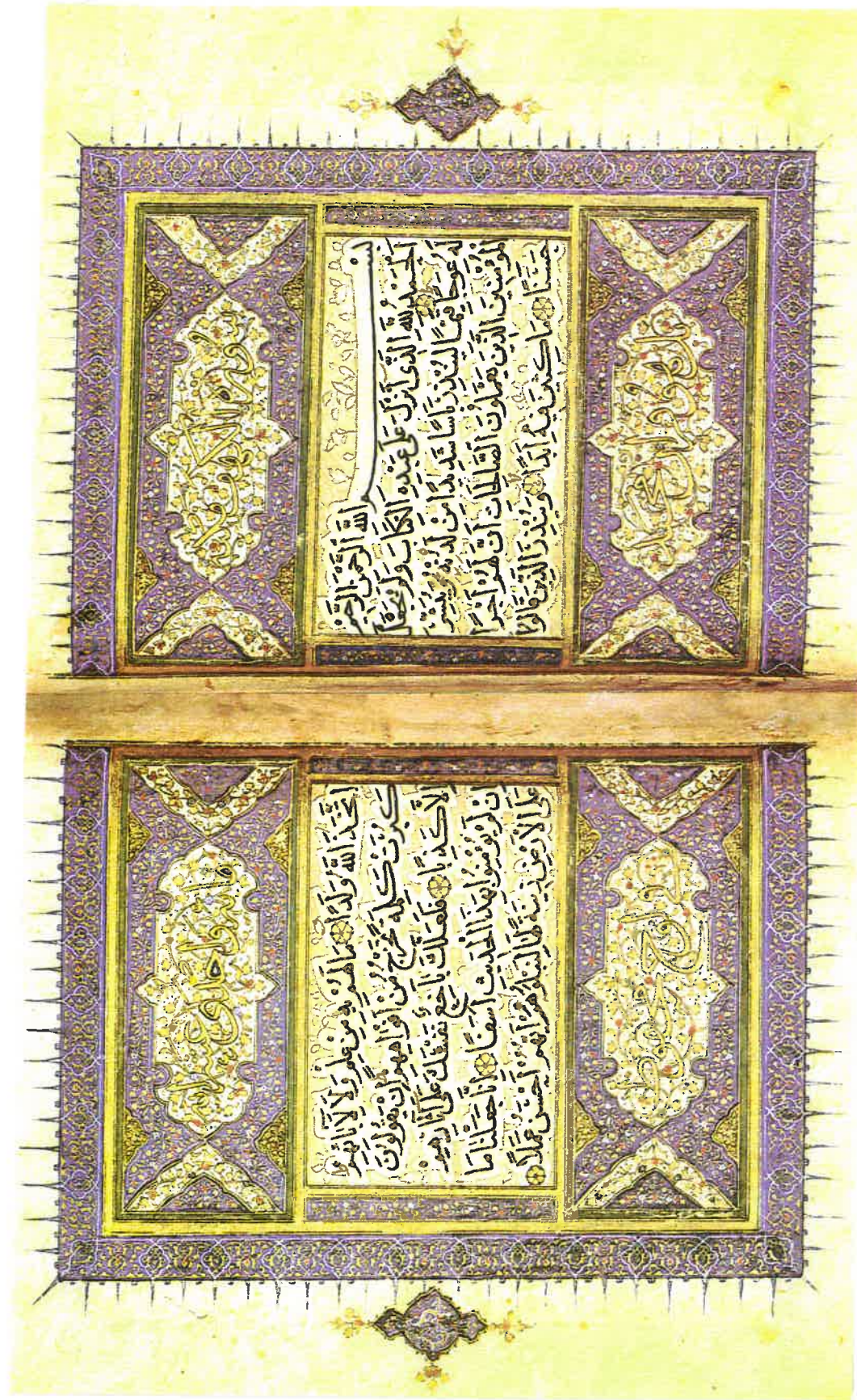
5. The inscriptive art of calligraphy seen here in the Nakshi style, 9th /15th century

The Muslim artist capitalised on these possibilities to create ornate and unified calligraphic pieces. The primary objective was, of course, to reflect the Sublime beauty of the Qur'an, to emphasize the importance of the written word in Islam, and give vent to artistic ability or the natural tendency of art vested in every human being. The first words of the Revelation, after all, emphasized the importance of the written word in Islam - First revealed to the Prophet in 610 while retreating in the cave of Hira, a voice beckoned him :

" Read in the name of thy Lord who created,
Created man, out of a clot of congealed blood.
Read ! For thy Lord is most Bountiful,
Who taught (the use of) the Pen,
Taught man that which he did not know."
(Al-Qur'an, 96:1-5)

The written art of calligraphy is thus a major contributor to the spirituality with which Islamic art is imbued.

Much more can be said of the Qur'anic art of calligraphy and illumination and of the principles of Islamic aesthetics. However, this has been researched extensively in the past by many scholarly authorities on the subject, amongst them Titus Burckhardt (1976) and Martin Lings (1976). The objective of this study is only to briefly highlight the aesthetics of Islam, which draws attention to its primary tenet, *Tawhid*, and draws attention away from remembrances of this temporary representational world in which we find ourselves.

Whether contemporary Muslim society continues this tradition in an unadulterated way, is investigated in this study. The support of a purely Islamic aesthetic, either through the spectator or the active participant, is

questioned in the context of local contemporary Muslim society. Specific attention is given to their artistic preferences with regard to the representational image.

In establishing the motive for the prohibitions of imagery i.e. the avoidance of idolatry, reverence or veneration, two questions remain: Firstly, do these prohibitions imply a categorical rejection of all forms of representational imagery, or merely to those which oppose fundamental Islamic beliefs? Secondly, do these prohibitions apply to all times, taking into account the immutability of the *Shari'ah*? To answer such questions one does not only need to seek the legal advice of the *ulama* in this respect, but it is also necessary to review and define the changing role of the representational image in the modern world.

C) The Representational Image in Contemporary Muslim Society

The acceptance of the representational image by Muslims in contemporary society, remains a contentious issue. In my opinion, the reason that such images still attract debate in the modern world, is because many Muslims believe that the threat of idolatry, and its association with magic and ritual, has not disappeared in the modern world. The reason thus comes full circle back to the concept of *Tawhid*, which has already been established in the study, as the most essential tenet in the Islamic belief system.

There are several arguments to support the view that the dangers of idolatry have not disappeared in contemporary society. I will try to point these out in the best way possible.

Firstly, the very definition of the term representational imagery, substantiates this view. According to the 1993 edition of the Oxford Wordfinder, representational imagery portrays the physical appearance of subjects such as "...figures, portraits, graven images, statues, effigies, fetishes, icons, idols and totems" (Oxford Wordfinder, 1993:745). As has been pointed out earlier in this chapter, such associations (particularly those which I have underlined), conflict with Islamic monotheism because they are very often concerned with either veneration, reverence or straight-forward idolatry. That this definition still applies in contemporary society, is proof that such associations have survived along with the survival of the representational image, largely because such images remain an important vehicle of idolatry.

On these grounds it is fallacious to assert that the Islamic aversion to images is pertinent only to the era of Islam's inception, when reverting to idolatry posed a real threat. Many scholars, such as the Egyptian scholar Sheikh Shaawish, share the view that: "That particular age has long since passed away....the disappearance of the cause [idolatry] brings about the cessation of the effect, and aversion and prohibition are no longer necessary" (Shaawish,{quoted by Maahir}, 1966:2). However, I intend to prove that it is not as simple as that. While the threat of idolatry in the early Islamic era was more palpable, the

threat in contemporary society is multifaceted and complex. The dangers are still very real. In this study, therefore, I do not claim that the prohibitions are redundant and should subsequently fall away. Instead, I would like to highlight the fact that one can look to the religious authorities to re-interpret these Laws, rather than advocate that they be changed or disregarded. In the case of re-interpretation, one can re-assess whether these Laws affecting imagery, can accommodate the representational image in certain circumstances.

At this point, however, it is necessary to highlight the dangers believed to be prevalent in contemporary Muslim society. Firstly, the universal belief in the 'power' of picture-making', and the element of magic and ritual as part of these 'powers', does not fall away. Barry supports this view. He claims that magical associations with animate imagery are still evident in modern times, not only amongst modern primitive individuals, e.g. the *Wondjina* figures of the aboriginal peoples, but also amongst the so-called fine artist in highly civilized cultures (Barry, 1964:20). If this is true, it stands to reason that Muslims have generally remained intolerant of images.

I shall illustrate, that when left unguided, many Muslims, even in contemporary society, are apt to stray from Islamic fundamentals, through their use of images. Some Muslim communities in West Africa, for instance, are a prime example of such a tendency. Even with the strict religious cautioning of the Islamic injunctions, they have used imagery specifically

because they believe that these images have 'powers'. For example, images of *al-Buraq*, a figure noted in Islam for its spiritual qualities, are mass-produced and widely sold in West African markets (see figure 6). It is usually described as a winged-horse with the head of a female, capable of tremendous speed. The popularity of *al-Buraq* is based upon the powers associated with this winged steed, which is said to have carried the Prophet Muhammad on his mystical night journey (*Isra*) from Mecca to Jerusalem and then on his nocturnal ascent (*al-Miraj*) to the dome of the seven heavens (Bravmann, 1983:74). Representational images of *al-Buraq* are usually framed and conspicuously placed on sitting-room walls or in more private quarters in the homes of some Muslims, because of the special 'powers' that they possess. These figures are termed *amburaku* in West Africa. The *Limba* tribe in the region of Bafodea regard the *amburakus* as a very powerful charm, particularly effective against *tasalima* or witches. An *amburaku* is generally left unfolded and placed above a doorway to guard against the entry of witches:"...a powerful sentinel; it is said to be capable of killing witches within a matter of days" (Bravmann, 1983:79). Bravmann explains that the protective capabilities of *amburaku* are twofold. The sacred text surrounding the illustration proclaim the fullness of Allah's majesty and power, which protects the prospective home, while the winged representational form will deflect all witches who try to wreak havoc and kill (see figure 7).

6. A typical example of an image of *al-Bur'aq*, widely sold in West-African markets
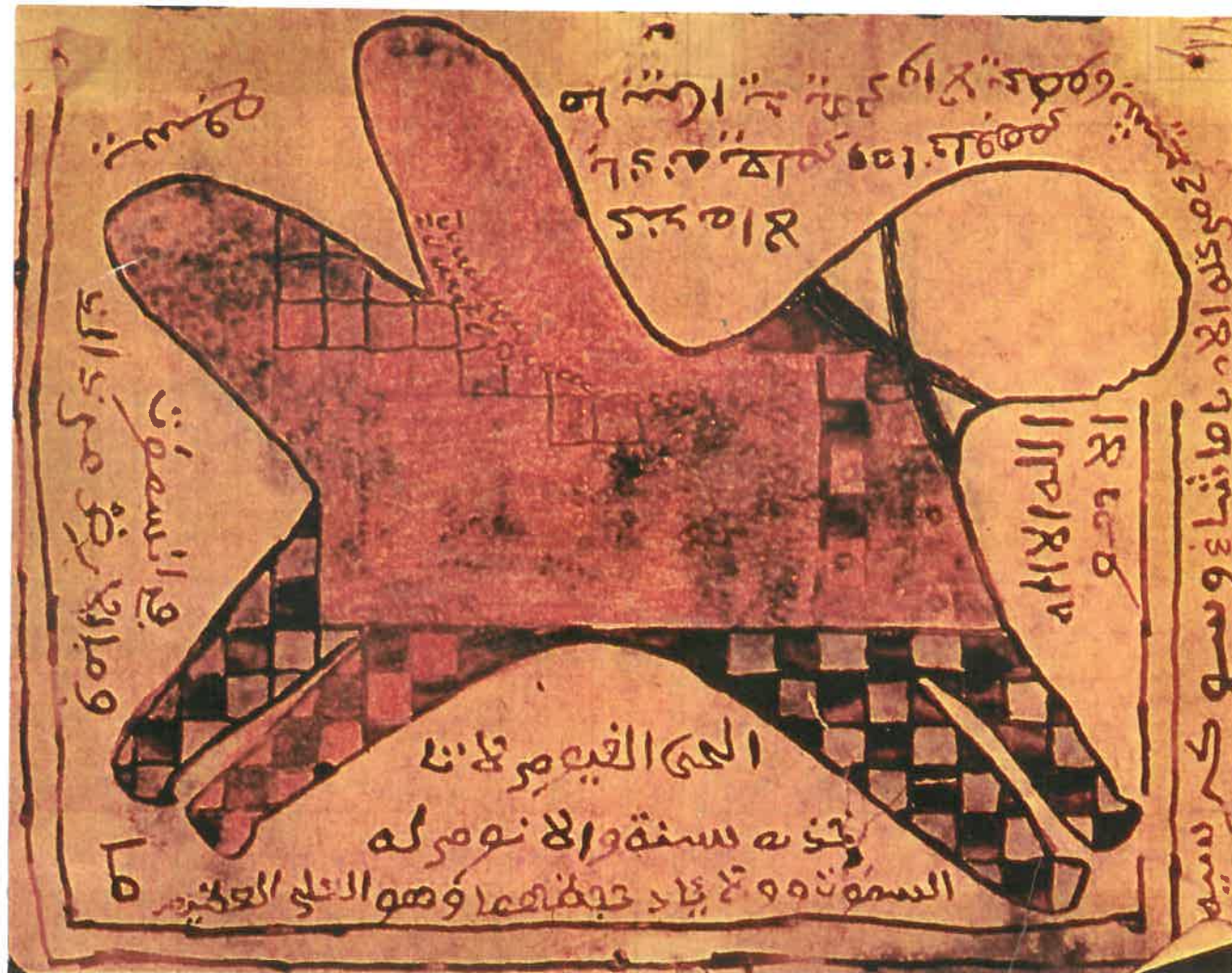
7. An amulet of the winged al-Bur'aq (*Amburaku*) surrounded by portions of the
second Sura, verse 235, the Ayat al Kursi, describing the power of Allah.

The use of the *amburaku* shows that such images still invite unwarranted sacred attention by some members of contemporary Muslim society, especially the poorer, rural members of society. The unintentional opening to avenues of *Shirk,* is thus latent in such imagery, conflicting with Islamic monotheism.

According to Al-Qaradawi, *Shirk* is divided into two categories: major and minor. Major *Shirk* is to worship beings other than Allah, or to associate other beings with Him. Minor *Shirk* involves practises such as swearing by someone / something other than Allah, or believing in the power of amulets to bring good or bad fortune (Al-Qaradawi, 1990:38). It would be safe to say that the *amburakus* contribute to the act of minor *Shirk.* Islam guards against such occurrences by making its Laws pertaining to such images, applicable to all times. One can see the logic in such religious cautioning, because such elements have still managed to crop up, despite the strict warnings. Incidentally, these images of *al-Buraq* have also found their way into several Muslim homes outside of West Africa, including some South African homes. I have personally come across this.

The use of effigies for ritualistic practice, have also found parallels in the modern world. These effigies or representations play a major role in folk festivals, rituals and carnival processions. Again in West Africa, for instance, carnival processions are held at the end of the month of *Ramadaan.* One of the most striking images used in this procession is a masquerader depicting a beautiful woman surmounted by the figure of *al-Buraq.* The illustration in fig. 8, shows an example of the Temne artist, Amara Kamara's effigy. It was

created from synthetic materials, lace, imported cloth and paint - it is a product of urban consumption brought together and shaped by an urban imagination (Bravmann, 1983:78-80).

Similar folk observances such as the *Muharram* observance, in commemoration of the Prophet's younger grandson, Husayn, are also held locally. According to Tayob, during the first ten days of the month of *Muharram*, a condolence procession (*ta'ziyyah*) honouring this event, is still enacted in the streets of Durban. An effigy of a bier, in the form of an ornamental dome, a replica of Husayn's mausoleum, is annually carried to the Umgeni River, into which it is thrown festivities and rituals such as the *Muharram* observance, in commemoration of the(Tayob, 1994:72). Effigies of the Prophet's grandson are also made in order for the ritual to be properly enacted. Similarly, in the West African processions, illuminated figures of Prophet Muhammad's youngest daughter Fatima and other Islamic holy men, is still very apparent (Bravmann, 1983:80).

Although these figures are not worshipped as such, they all contribute to the possibility of them being revered by others. They are therefore attributed more significance than is actually allowed. Such artistic actions are not condoned in Islam. These are the dangers which are still very real in contemporary society. Many religious leaders attempt to steer clear of these occurrences by vehemently objecting to all forms of representational imagery.

8. *Amara Kamara's* mask of al-Bur'aq worn in a parade in Sierra Leone, 1978

In contemporary society, the role of the 'idol' and of 'ritual' has evolved somewhat along with the nature of contemporary society, bringing about dangers which are less overt than the dangers discussed above.

Let us briefly examine the nature of society as it exists today. Contemporary Muslim society is very much a part of the single global-village of the modern world, with a unitary framework of experience. This single experience is largely mediated, either through printed or electronic means (Giddens, 1991:19). This mediated experience is relevant to this study because its success depends, in many ways, on the representational image. For example, the animated image plays a pivotal role in television and the cinema. The photographic image is almost indispensable to the media, thereby engendering mass-culture in the process. In the case of computers and the internet, images, both photographic and animated, are widely implemented. The commercial world of advertising and designing is also very dependent on the use of representational imagery. While none of these areas constitute what we would strictly define as 'art', Denny asserts that, : "...the role of such images in the era of photography, television and the cinema continues to raise questions and provoke controversy in the Islamic world" (Denny, 1984:137). As long as this is the case, it is essential that the representational images in this capacity, be included in the investigation of this study. In any case, on a theological level, these images on the screen, in magazines etc. are affected by the same Islamic injunctions which affect art. Those religious leaders who object to these images, have repeatedly used the same prohibitions of imagery

as backing for their objections. Moderate interpretations of the religious texts, however, perpetuate the view that a photograph is merely a reflection through a camera lens, and the images on television are not static or overpowering and can be switched off whenever the need arises, thereby making these images permissible. What is pertinent to this study, though, is the fact that Muslims are not always comfortable with these representational images because they share parallels with the images used by the artist. It is not so much the means of production that matters, but the image which is portrayed and the message it conveys.

Controversy surrounding images in the era of photography and television etc., is also linked to the fact that the prohibitions of imagery are not directed solely at the artist, but also to the ordinary Muslim who supports it and displays it in the home. According to the *Hadith*, Muslims are forbidden to engage in the production of figures:

> "Among the people receiving the harshest punishment on the Day of Resurrection, will be the makers of figures" (Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

In a similar *Hadith* it is stated:

> "Assuredly the angels do not enter a house in which there are statues (or figures)" (Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

This applies to the display of imagery in the home. Many Muslims take this literally, and in cases of very orthodox interpretation, the watching of television is not allowed in the home, neither is the displaying or taking of photographs allowed. The injunctions thus affect the Muslim in an active and

a spectator capacity. In the light of this, I include the responses of Muslims (both artists and laymen), to the representational image in the capacity of art as well as television, photography etc., in this study, even though it is essentially a study of fine art.

The relevance of these images to the study are also important because, as part of the single, mediated experience of the modern world, imagery assists the erosion of tradition and cultural distinctions, so essential to Islamic identity (These issues of identity are tackled at length in the second chapter). Television, photography etc. have also transformed the 'idol' and 'ritual' to fit into the contemporary context. According to Ahmed, ritual has evolved somewhat in contemporary society. For instance, huge audiences in the western world, habitually watch television for several hours daily, the television being the focus of domestic life, around which the family organizes its movements (Ahmed, 1992:211). It is not so much the imagery itself, or the means by which it is produced, that is shunned from Islamic ideology, but the concepts and ideas which these images convey to the viewer. Television and photography have been instrumental in elevating the status of the super-stars of song, dance and the cinema to modern-day 'idols'. Fashion models have also been given icon-status and are now called 'Supermodels'. In this context, although associations with idolatry have moved on from their previously overt associations, this does not make them any more acceptable to Islam. Such images become unlawful because their subject matter is unlawful. According to Al-Qaradawi, in Islam, excessive adoration or reverence of individuals,

especially immoral individuals such as actors and entertainers, is not condoned. He says, "Islam abhors excessive glorification of people, no matter how 'great' they may be, whether living or dead" (Al-Qaradawi, 1985:103). By the same token, Islam does not differentiate between the means through which they are glorified, whether these are through artistic, or the ordinary visual medium of television or cinema.

The responses of contemporary Muslims to these images, in addition to representational images in art, are thus investigated in this study. This should not be seen as diluting the importance of the study, but as acknowledging the fact that the role of the representational image has changed in contemporary society, and that these images are still affected by Islamic beliefs. The attitudes of contemporary Muslims toward images on television etc. are compared with their reception of images in art. It is also questioned why, if there is a laxity when it comes to television etc., is there less laxity when it comes to the representational image in art, even though both types of imagery are affected by the same Islamic injunctions.

CHAPTER TWO

ARTISTIC ACCULTURATION IN CONTEMPORARY MUSLIM SOCIETY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY OF DURBAN

A. Islamic art and Islamic Identity

Apart from the effects of Islamic Law, and the implications of *Tawhid* on artistic production, there is another important peripheral factor which re-inforces a strict non-representational direction in the art produced by Muslims in contemporary society. This has to do with Islamic identity and the preservation thereof. This factor is important enough to bear consideration.

As highlighted by Ahmed in Living Islam , language, religion and culture are important markers of identity (Ahmed,1993:10). For instance, "All Muslims across the ages have responded with the deepest emotion to the chanted recitation of the Qur'an and of the *adhan* (the Muslim call to prayer) even when they understand little or nothing of the Arabic meanings involved" (Al-Faruqi, 1982:235). This example applies to many South African Muslims, including myself. While we are able to read Arabic fluently and be moved by the recitation of the Qur'an, we are largely ignorant of its meaning. The same principle can be said to apply to art.

A vast number of Muslims are not knowledgeable in the area of Islamic aesthetics. They are therefore unable to extract the deeper meanings contained within an Islamic work of art. This does not, however, rule out

their strong appreciation and response to visual forms in art which exhibit a specific Islamic character. If not on an aesthetic level, their appreciation stems from a magnetism toward their heritage because the visual forms contained within the artwork are common, and have been common to Muslims all over the world, for centuries. As such, they reflect one common heritage which unifies Muslims across borders and continents. This makes Islamic art an important marker of Islamic cultural identity. In this study, I will show that this Islamic cultural identity is nurtured by a particular Islamic artistic paradigm. I will also show that the nature of this particular paradigm is determined largely by the circumstances of the Muslim community in which the paradigm is embedded.

According to Kuhn, a paradigm is embedded and elaborated in a specific community, which embraces certain laws and definitions, exchanges standard examples, and shares common values (Khun, 1970:182-92). When interpreted in the context of this dissertation, artistic preferences and actions specific to the Muslim community, are driven by particular Islamic laws and values, thereby creating a particular paradigm. In my view, the art produced by Muslims in contemporary society as a whole, exist in either one of two paradigms, depending on its content. One is the traditional Islamic artistic paradigm and the other is the modern Islamic artistic paradigm.

The traditional Islamic artistic paradigm is ideally suited to the preservation of Islamic cultural identity. This is the case simply because this paradigm

implements the system of Islamic aesthetics which essentially avoids naturalism and characterization, favours the de-materialization of nature, and a preference for stylization and limitlessness. These characteristics, which have been examined in the previous chapter, are prioritized in this paradigm. In addition to this, the traditional paradigm has no place for the representational image. In fact, its complete exclusion from the paradigm ensures the persistence of such a paradigm, and in turn the persistence of an Islamic cultural identity. Hence, in the case of the traditional Islamic artistic paradigm, the prohibitions of imagery are strictly interpreted and applied. Adherence to this traditional paradigm feeds Islamic identity because the product of this paradigm are visual forms which nourish the spirituality of the Muslim and aid him in living an Islamic life. The paradigm avoids anything which may allude to that which is unlawful in Islam. The representational image falls into this category. One may conclude, therefore, that the traditional Islamic artistic paradigm is rigid and uncompromising on this matter.

The modern Islamic artistic paradigm is one that I would view as having evolved from the traditional one, because the two paradigms share a ground rule. This is the acceptance of Islamic Law and its repercussions for representational imagery. However, the paradigms are distinct in that the interpretation and application of this Law differ. The modern Islamic artistic paradigm is open to fresh interpretations of the Law concerning imagery because not every image produced by a Muslim artist is likely to become an

idol. Therefore, theologically speaking, not every artwork with a representational content is likely to interfere with Islam's most important tenet, *Tawhid*. Instead, each case is judged individually and important factors such as the nature or content of the work, and the artist's intentions in creating the artwork, have to be considered. Hence, within this paradigm it is possible for a Muslim artist to draw the best elements from both his/her Islamic heritage and the modern world in a creative juxtaposition of styles. This includes representational images which do not have an idolatrous or demoralizing content, as well as artistic trends and styles which are derived from non-Islamic sources.

In short, the Muslim artist who works within the modern Islamic artistic paradigm, extracts and borrows elements from his non-Islamic environment, and incorporates these with elements extracted from his Islamic heritage, bringing about a paradigm shift from the traditional to the modern. This paradigm shift is characterized by a departure from a true Islamic content to a somewhat eclectic one, without losing an Islamic consciousness, so essential to Islamic cultural identity.

This type of paradigm shift from the traditional to the modern is not always easily digested by Muslims, because, according to Tayob, paradigm shifts always imply an embracing of the new and the old simultaneously (Tayob, 1995:17). Instead, old resilient paradigms such as the traditional Islamic artistic paradigm, is favoured particularly because it ensures the preservation

of Islamic cultural identity. Traditionalists like Seyyed Hossein Nasr have shown a resistance to change by advocating that Muslims, even in contemporary society follow a purely Islamic aesthetic in their work. The adoption of modern trends, which deviate from this aesthetic, are viewed as a form of de-Islamization. "To destroy this art [Islamic art] is to empty the mind and soul of the Muslim to a large extent of its Islamic content, leaving a vacuum which is then rapidly filled by the worst clutter, noise and banality of the modern world as is the case of many a Muslim today" (Nasr, 1987:198).

But it is idealistic to assume that contemporary Muslim artists will, even when advised, continue to follow the aesthetics of Islam in a pure and unadulterated way. In fact, the clutter, noise and banality of the modern world, to which Nasr refers, is intentionally used by several Muslim artists as commentary in their work. In most cases it is used in order to express their disgust with the modern world. With this kind of commentary as a basis, it is difficult to confine oneself to the visual means of communication which exist solely in the traditional Islamic artistic paradigm. Papadopoulo's (1979:2) assessment of Muslim art already indicates that many Muslim artists have wilfully departed from this traditional paradigm. He says: "In our day Muslim artists no longer make anything that can be called Muslim art. Whether in Cairo, Algiers or Tehran, they are likely to belong to the Ecole de Paris in painting, to be followers of Le Corbusier in architecture, or adhere to whatever currents may attract them; in any case painting has ceased to follow any true Islamic aesthetic since about the beginning of the seventeenth century".

At this point it is necessary to examine some of the current artistic trends in the Muslim art world, so as to determine the extent to which Muslim artists have departed from the traditional Islamic artistic paradigm, or if they have at all.

i) Contemporary Art of the Arab world

"The Arab world's cultural and artistic growth is clearly visible in the development of its art institutions, the range of its art activities, the growing number of artists it nurtures and the level of sophistication these artists have achieved in their work" (Nashashibi, 1994:116).

Information on these artists and their work reveals that Muslim artists in the Arab world have pioneered changes which have paved the way for the development of a modern Arab art. According to Nashashibi's book <u>Forces of Change : Artists of the Arab World</u> , by the mid-20th century nearly all of the Arab countries had modern art movements which encompassed Western aesthetics (Nashashibi, 1994:116). This is confirmed by Caroline Collier in her article titled 'Contemporary Arab Art : The Inner World'. She points out that contemporary Arab art still reflects strong connections with Islamic heritage because "... an awareness of the Islamic tradition is for many artists a major source of inspiration" (Collier, 1984:54). However, she also highlights the fact that these living Arab artists, many of whom have studied in the Middle

East, Europe and the United States, have assimilated Western trends in their work.

The use of representational imagery in the works of artists such as Dia al-Azzawi, Kamal Boutala, Shafiq al-Nawab, Rimah Farah and Rafah al-Nasiri, are not given realistic attention. Their shared Islamic tradition makes for an underlying point of contact, when considering Islamic art as being continuous, ideal, abstract and symbolic. These contemporary artists still prefer to look at the inner world. The external world is abstracted and reduced to its essence by means of other forms of visual expression not particular to the pure Islamic aesthetic. For example the Egyptian artist, Ahmed Nawar, has for some years balanced geometric and organic shapes in powerful, but restrained etchings. His Peace Series in 1982 illustrates this (see fig.9). This series included a number of large prints on black paper, using a variety of small printing plates and a combination of different etching techniques.

The young Jordanian artist, Rimah Farah, uses elements from Islamic architecture and from traditional textile designs, the patterns of carpets, Bedouin tents, saddle bags and saddle cloths in her drawings and etchings. In particular etching illustrated in figure 10, she shows a solitary figure against an architectural background and the treatment of the figure justifies Collier's statement that, "...when they appear in contemporary Islamic art, figures tend to be phantasms of the mind rather than depictions of actual people" (Collier, 1984:54).

9. A powerful etching from the *Peace* series by *Ahmed Nawar* - a controlled juxtaposition of naturalism and abstraction

10.1 A delicate etching by *Rimah Farah* who takes her inspiration from the traditional crafts and architecture of her native land.
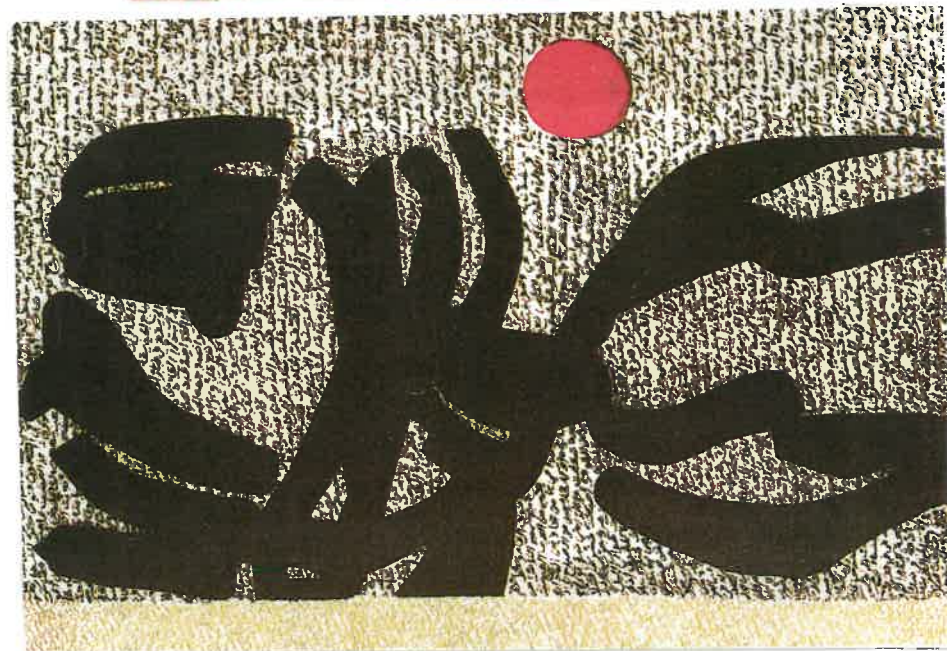
10.2. Algerian *Rachid Koraichi's* work explores the expressive possibilities of calligraphy, using script as a background, against which letters are brought alive, implying the forms of beasts and men.

Thus, even though many contemporary Arab artists are now absorbing elements from the secular style of the West, they still distance themselves from the West, which at one time professed man to be 'the measure of all things'. The aggrandizement of the human figure is dropped and "....hinders the mind from saying 'I' as an image says 'I'" (Lakhi, 1984:77). The contemporary Arab artist has transformed this concept to suit the style of modern Arab art . Thus the work of contemporary Arab artists does not always include the adoption of a true Islamic aesthetic (see Hilmi's People Series in fig.11). Nashashibi points out that, "Although Islamic art is still very much alive and practised by several Muslim artists, it is not the sole basis for contemporary Arab art" (Nashashibi, 1994:30). Artists are increasingly using their work as a tool of commentary on the atrocities of the modern world. For example, Laila al-Shawa, from Gaza, records the harsh realities of Israeli-Palestinian confrontation in a powerful silkscreen on canvas (see fig.12). The use of a photographic representational image of a young boy features as strong focal point in the work. It is clear that the artist felt that this was the most effective way to express her feelings on this issue in her work, and that there was no hesitance in using such an image. Speaking of her work, she says, "I record a method of communication and punishments which have been sanctified by the 'civilized world'...I have to criticize what is around me through my work" (Nashashibi, 1994:30). Laila al-Shawa, therefore, finds the pure forms and poised tensions inherent in the Islamic aesthetic irrelevant to the message which she wishes to put across. Regardless of the Islamic injunctions which pertain to the representational image, she chooses to use this in her work.

11. Nabila Hilmi's *People Series*, mixed media on paper, 1993

54

12. Laila al-Shawa's *Wall of Gaza*, installation detail silk-screen, 1992

Other contemporary Muslim artists like Khairet al-Saleh, who is based in England, illustrate through their work, that Islamic art which concentrates solely on Islamic spirituality, still survives. Her gouache, titled Creation 2, of 1989, focuses on Arabic manuscripts and is clearly inspired by the authentic traditional Islamic manuscripts perfected by the masters of the art centuries earlier (see fig.13).

It is clear from the sources available to us, that contemporary Muslim artists of the Arab world, though still concerned with issues of Islamic identity, do not confine themselves to working within the traditional paradigm. "While artists began to reject Western art in the 1950's and 1960's and look to their Arab-Islamic heritage for ways of expressing their social and political views, they also realized that modern art trends could be linked to their own artistic traditions. Inspired by Western artists such as Paul Klee and Henri Matisse, the heritage -revival movement picked up momentum" (Nashashibi, 1994:10).

From this information it can be concluded that the adoption of a modern Islamic artistic paradigm in the Arab world, did not lead to the disintegration of Islamic cultural identity. With regards to this study, it is believed that the adoption of such a paradigm by Muslims who exist as a minority in a non-Muslim majority, would not be so easily assimilated.

13. The contemporary Syrian artist *Khairet al-Saleh's* work titled *Creation 2* (1989)
Gouache, gold leaf and ink on paper

B. Islamic art, Islamic identity and minority relevance

In countries where Muslims are a religious minority, the issue of Islamic identity and Islamic art as an integral part of this identity, is compounded. It is likely that Muslims in this non-Islamic environment would reach out more readily to their own aesthetic heritage, and reject the adoption of an aesthetic which conforms to the dominant majority. Their rationale would be that this foreign aesthetic could lead to the diffusion of the Islamic artistic tradition into the non-Islamic majority. The demise of this aesthetic heritage would, in turn, spell the erosion or complete loss of Islamic cultural identity. On the other hand, backed with the resilience of the traditional Islamic artistic paradigm, the Muslim minority would be that much harder to assimilate.

While Muslim minorities are to be found virtually all over the world, substantial minority communities exist in places such as China, the Soviet Union, Japan, the USA, Australia, Europe and South Africa (Haddad, 1987:155).

Data on Muslims in the United States have shown that with each succeeding generation there was a decline in strict adherence to those values that are identified by Muslim leadership as specifically Islamic. In addition, a marked heterogeneity in terms of Islamic practices was revealed. The risk of diffusion of the minority in examples such as these, is extremely high. But recently, there have been very strong movements to preserve Islamic identity in the USA and these movements have also influenced art. According to a survey conducted in 1982 by Lois Lamya Al-Faruqi, Muslims surveyed in the United

States showed a marked cultural affinity toward certain artistic trends which have pertained to Muslims generally over the centuries (Al-Faruqi, L.L., 1982:97). In short, preferences for traditional abstract design and calligraphic forms in the USA were much greater than, for instance, figural art. This tradition was favoured most likely because of its strong connections with an Islamic system of values which guarantee the preservation of Islamic identity. This proves that " ... the minority groups, of which is the Muslims will seek ways and means of survival." (Naude, 1981:29). Muslims who find themselves in this situation, and who feel strongly about their Faith, would favour the return to an Islamic system of values. Keeping the visual arts within the safe limits of the universally acceptable Islamic paradigm, is a potential means of survival because it adheres to this system of values.

Most Muslim minorities have a Western education. This Western educational system has been criticised of rupturing links with a glorious Islamic past, developing in the process, a generation of culturally rootless people (Ansari, 1966:30). The patronage of a pure Islamic art ensures that links with the past are maintained and that Islamic identity remains intact. The forging of a modern artistic paradigm amongst Muslims in a minority situation, thus faces a bleak future. Instead, the prioritisation of traditional Islamic art becomes a strategy in competitive societies where Muslims are a minority. This would invariably be the case because, "...the task of the Islamist in a minority scenario are firstly to be recognised, then respected, and then accepted, without losing their unique features or Islamic identity "

(Hathout, 1990:3).

Thus, the desire of these minority groups to re-discover Islamic art and culture, and to develop it, would thus take on a very energetic, resurgent direction. Besides providing 'a shelter from the storm of the modern world' (Nasr, 1987:201), the revivalism of Islamic art would fuel the prevention of a slow absorption of the minority into the dominant culture. In so doing, the very fabric of one's Islamicity is protected.

i) The Muslim community of South Africa

South African Muslims are a typical example of a Muslim minority in a Western, capitalist society. According to Dangor, the Muslim community in South Africa came into existence ever since Islam was introduced into the country in the Cape in the 17th Century (Dangor, 1991:65). Statistics released in 1991 has revealed that this community is clearly a minority. Muslims were estimated to have constituted only 1,1% of the total South African population. Of the remaining 98,9%, the large majority were Christians of various denominations, with Judaism, Hinduism and Buddhism also existing as small minorities.

Dangor claims that many South African Muslims have been influenced by western tendencies of secularism and obsession with materialism, primarily due to the western educational system. In reaction, there has been a general resurgence of Islamic activities among these Muslims who are striving to re-establish the Islamic value system (Dangor, 1991:69). Regarding this

particular study, it is important to determine what role art plays in the re-establishment of this Islamic value system.

In Muslim minority communities such as the United States and India, a striving to re-establish the Islamic value system, has also been observed. But this is not only common to Muslim minorities. In countries such as Pakistan and Malaysia, where Islam is the official religion, many aspects of cultural life have come under scrutiny under the banner of Islamic revivalism. In Malaysia, the objective was to forge a proper relationship between Islam and the many areas of expertise such as education, politics, economics and art (Zuhra, 1989:59). Islamic revivalism or resurgence, thus does not differentiate between Islamic minorities and majorities. Ideally, they (the Muslim minorities and majorities) are '...united in seeking to cultivate a religiously determined identity ' (Mac Eoin, 1983:9). In the case of Muslim majorities, this is motivated solely by a reaction to the forces of modernism and post-modernism, which have impacted on all spheres of Islamic life, and which could have a detrimental effect on the preservation of traditional habits and customs.

It cannot be denied that in cases of Muslim minorities, this cause is intensified. Here the very survival of the community is under immediate threat. Hence, the process of modernization, which Esposito asserts, applies alien models to the political and socio-cultural development of Muslim countries (Esposito, 1984:197), is more pronounced and subsequently more threatening in non-

Muslim countries with Muslim minorities. The retention of the community's identity thus takes priority. In these cases Muslims would be more likely to favour a rigid application of Islamic Law. This is believed to be the case amongst South African Muslims, even though Islamic Law (according to several sources) is not considered to be a rigid and static Law by nature (Ahmad, 1984:2 ; Brill, 1987:322 : Akbarabadi, 1983:1).

In this section of the study, I have set out to investigate the validity of this hypothesis amongst a selected section of the Muslim community of South Africa viz. the Muslim community in Durban. The artistic preferences and rejections of this community as a result of religious injunctions, and especially as a result of their existence as a minority, is evaluated. The attitudes of this group toward representational imagery takes precedence in this study. A sample of Muslims from Durban were chosen for this purpose.

Nature of the sample:

Second to the Cape, Kwa-Zulu Natal has the largest concentration of Muslims in South Africa, a significant number of whom reside in Durban. The majority of Muslims in Durban are of so-called ' Indian ' descent. According to Tayob, along with the Cape Muslims, 'Indian' Muslim leadership structures have continued to set the agenda for Islamic practice and ritual in the country (Tayob, 1994:39). Considering their influential role in the country, I considered the selection of Muslims from Durban to be a valid sample for the

survey, because the Muslims in Durban are a microscopic reflection of the general attitudes and artistic actions of Muslims in the country as a whole.

The number of Muslim organizations in Durban show that it is an important centre for the initiation of strategies for resurgent tendencies - this is characteristic of Muslim minority communities. It is estimated that there are over two hundred Muslim organizations in South Africa. These cater for the spiritual, intellectual, cultural and social needs of the Muslims (Dangor, 1991:70). Of these organizations, Islamic resurgent organizations proliferated throughout South Africa. Those which champion the resurgent cause in Natal are, amongst others, the Natal Muslim Council, the Jami'at-ul-Ulama of Kwa-Zulu Natal, the Arabic Study Circle and the Islamic Propagation Centre, based in Queen Street, Durban (Tayob, 1994:79-99). The emergence of several Muslim State-Aided schools in Durban in the 1940's and 1950's were also part of the resurgent strategy initiated by the Natal Muslim Council. These were the first schools to integrate Islamic and modern curricula for the benefit of extracting the best from both the Islamic and modern worlds. The Anjuman Islam State-Aided School and Orient Islamic High and Primary Schools (which only became privatized last year), are two examples of such schools.

While the introduction of these schools could not guarantee the preservation of identity in all aspects, these schools exist at least as attempts within themselves. What is relevant to this study, is that the existence of active forms of resurgence amongst Muslims in South Africa and in Durban

specifically, have been established. In their handbook the Muslim Youth Movement listed as its first guiding principle, the following : "To unify South African Muslims, and make them appreciate their Islamic heritage" (Tayob, 1994:114). This reinforces the theory that the preservation of Islamic identity is an overriding priority in Muslim minority communities.

In the context of art, since resurgence is "...characterized by an emphasis on matters which reassert people's identity and their difference from the West" (Watt,1983:6), the traditional Islamic artistic paradigm in Durban would most likely be favoured. This is endorsed by a statement made in the Durban publication, The Muslim Digest, which reads as follows: "At the cultural religious level, Islamic resurgence has found expression in the assertion of an Islamic cultural identity" (Bawa, 1988:4). Islamic resurgence, therefore, does have a bearing on the nature and the direction of the visual arts in this country. In the visual arts, Muslims in Durban, and possibly in the country as a whole, would concentrate on the exclusion of the representational image from their visual expression. They would also not be willing to compromise on Islamic aesthetics.

C. FINDINGS OF THE INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE

In 1993, I conducted some field research for the purposes of this study. It was hoped that this research would confirm that contemporary Muslim artists,

in countries with Muslim majorities, do indeed favour a paradigm shift from the traditional to the modern.

A uniform letter (a copy of which is included in the appendix), requesting assistance with my research, was mailed out to almost fifteen tertiary institutions in Muslim countries with Muslim majorities abroad. These were sent out as far afield as Egypt, Jordan, Iran, Pakistan, Indonesia and Malaysia. This letter was primarily concerned with the artistic preferences and actions of Muslim artists, in relation to the Islamic injunctions affecting art in these particular countries.

Delayed responses, postal and other correspondence-related problems led to only a few valid responses. Some of the destinations of my letters posed language barriers e.g. the College of Fine Art in Indonesia replied strictly in the native language. Other Institutions such as the University of Iran located in Tehran, only confirmed that their institution '...had a very good programme in painting, photography and graphic art' (Letter, 1993:1). They went on to promise further assistance with my research, but ceased to fulfil their promise. Back-up letters proved time-consuming and yielded no responses. However, the Professor of the Fine Art Department at the University of Lahore in Pakistan as well as a practising contemporary artist in Pakistan, Mr Shahbaz Khan, made some valid contributions to the outcome of my research.

In an extract from a letter dated November 2nd, 1993, Prof. Khamid Mahmud

of the Punjab University in Lahore stated the following:

> " It is of course a big surprise to know that the Muslim
> community of South Africa is somewhat hesitant in
> figural representation in the visual arts. *This may be*
> *because this community is very small as yet and they*
> *do strictly follow the canons of the Holy Qur'an and the*
> *hadith* - which under no circumstances is something to
> look down upon with some sort of disrespect. "
> (Mahmud, Letter, 1993:1)

In a previous letter Dr Mahmud emphasizes the liberal attitudes of the Muslim

artists and art students in Pakistan. He also asserts his belief that figurative

imagery is neither strictly prohibited nor obviously sanctioned in the *Hadith*,

but that they were reserved for images with idolatrous intentions. (Similar

views have already been observed and acknowledged in the first chapter).

However, it has been explained in this dissertation, that, from a theological

point of view, 'idolatrous intentions' still have the potential to arise in

contemporary society, making the investigations of this study valid and

applicable to the modern era.

Prof. Mahmud also claimed in his letter that, historically, Muslim attitudes

concerning visual representations of human beings, were never rigorously

strict, as is evident in various periods of history which showed considerable

tolerance. Here he probably refers to cases such as the Mughal period, when

representational images flourished, particularly under the rule of Akbar (1555-

1605). In this study, it is acknowledged that such periods of laxity did exist,

but that this does not necessarily mean that Islam condoned it, but that certain

individuals condoned it. In contemporary society, for instance, laxity is evident in some cases, such as the mass-production of posters of political figures such as the Ayatollah Khomeini. This practice, however, is not accepted by Muslims everywhere, because it is not condoned by Islamic Law. This applies especially to cases where photographs or portraits are framed and sometimes even garlanded, attributing them with respect and reverence, thereby tampering with fundamental Islamic tenets. The prohibitions of imagery are thus still applicable in such instances and Muslims, bound by their beliefs, cannot simply ignore these injunctions. It is indeed a complex issue.

Concerning the artistic preferences of the art students at his institution in Pakistan, Prof. Mahmud offered the following information :

1. The art work produced at the Fine Art Department , Punjab University, Lahore, is *mostly representational both in visual realism and abstract forms*. The work of contemporary artists in Pakistan, mostly revolve around figurative art.

2. The *type of art mentioned at no.1 was not accepted in the public previously*, particularly among the people living in the remote areas of Pakistan. Most of these still do not approve of this type of work.

(Extract, Letter, 1993: pp1&2)

That a section of Pakistani society also disapproved of visual representations in art, more at some times than at others, is evident in several articles forwarded to me by Mr Shahbaz Khan. These articles date back to almost ten years ago. They attest to the fact that there has been a significant change in the artistic attitudes of Pakistani society since then. According to an article published in The Muslim in 1982, a seminar on art, artists and society was held at the Alhamra Art Centre in Lahore. This seminar was initiated by a group of artists, teachers, journalists and others who were concerned about the fate of the arts "...in a society where uninformed and misplaced religious zeal, could play havoc with all forms of civilized existence" (Najaawan Musawwar, 1982: excerpt). The plight of the Muslim artist in Pakistan, like South Africa, was thus a real one. But the artists in Pakistan did not accept this lying down. They rallied their forces and waged a bitter struggle, not only for their very existence, but for the acceptance of their artistic preferences. Many artists in Pakistan tried to please religious circles who held that the visual arts promoted obscenity and vulgar ideas, and that figural artwork was tantamount to straightforward idolatry. The artists made use of the calligraphic and abstract modes of traditional Islamic art, and then transformed this mode to fit in with modern trends of Pakistani society. However, some over emphasized this change of expression to the extent that their work appeared opportunistic. Shahbaz Khan expresses indignation at the adoption of this type of artistic action. He states in the article: "Others adopt forms of expression...like the current rash of what goes on under the name of calligraphy, though the real masters of that art refuse to entertain the work of

such new practitioners of calligraphy as genuine in any way" (Khan, Najaawan Musawwar, 1982:12). The result was that the visual arts only appealed to the intellectual elite and alienated the people. The Young Painters' Association was formed in reaction to this - its primary objective being to fight for the preservation of art in Pakistan. It supported the freedom of artists. Among the first of its members were Iqbal Hussain, Shahid Jalal and Shahbaz Khan, a new body of the younger generation of artists who emerged in the period since the end of the sixties. "All these artists...have set new trends in our art which seems already to have become the major trend - the mode of representational and realistic art" (The Muslim,1982:4).

The artists rallied in defence against the blanket denunciation of the visual arts by religious and official circles of Pakistani Government. Shahbaz Khan is quoted in an article in the Muslim : "It becomes necessary under these conditions for artists, who are serious about art, to re-determine the place of art and the artist in society" (The Muslim, 1982: excerpt from article). For artists like Shahbaz, their feelings were that representational art could end the alienation between the artist and the people. At the time of my personal correspondence with Shahbaz, his enthusiasm for representational art was still evident. He was making alterations to his studio. Unfortunately, through loss of contact, I was unable to gain access to photographic documentation of his work, which he had promised me once he had completed his new studio.

From the information he forwarded me, however, it seems that the efforts of organizations like the Young Painters' Association were successful in eradicating the misconceptions surrounding art and the artist in Muslim society. Uncertainties and fears associated with religious cautioning were thus minimised.

The layman in Pakistan also became more tolerant of the direction of the artists' work as well. This was confirmed by a visiting Muslim artist from Pakistan in 1995. Miss Faiza Butt was invited to South Africa as a resident artist at the BAT Centre in Durban. She stayed in the country for several months and produced artworks during that time, so that local artists were more exposed to some of the contemporary trends overseas. Butt delivered a talk at the University of Durban-Westville during her stay, accompanied by a slide presentation of her paintings. She spoke about her work and its relevance to the problems with which Pakistanis are faced in contemporary society. Her painting style and content revealed no link at all with traditional Islamic aesthetics. Her paintings constituted a large body of work which commented directly on the plight of woman in Pakistan. Butt felt strongly about this issue and portrayed it in visual terms, using her personal vision and creativity to convey her message to the viewer in the best way possible. Dealing with her chosen issue, it was inevitable that representational imagery be used as part of her message. These figures are rendered in a totally naturalistic style in her work. In fact, her paintings depend almost entirely on the use of visual representations. As a Muslim artist, she had no reservations

about this. A personal discussion with her revealed no rebellious, un-Islamic ways. She was an interesting person who took her occupation seriously. She had already accomplished much during her student years and her few years as a practising artist, even though she was only twenty five years old at the time.

A recurring symbol appeared throughout her paintings and her use of it was uninhibited. This symbol was a personal depiction of *al-Buraq*, (the role and purpose of which has been highlighted in the previous chapter). The use of this symbol in her work, seems respected by her contemporaries in Pakistan as well as her patrons, even though it involves the representation of a mythological figure in visual terms, and could possibly result in unwanted sacred attention by some members of Muslim society.

On the whole, the information acquired both from my personal correspondence with Muslim artists and art institutions abroad, as well as from various books on the contemporary art of the Arab world, is conclusive enough to prove the following:

Contemporary Muslim artists living in countries with Muslim majorities have adapted the modern Islamic artistic paradigm into their lives with relative ease. This supports the argument perpetuated throughout this chapter and now need only be compared with the artistic trends evident amongst Muslims in a minority situation, such as the Muslim community of Durban. The findings of this investigation, which constitutes the bulk of my research, will be presented

in the following two chapters. If it is found that Muslims in Durban are reluctant to adapt to the modern artistic paradigm, it will be accepted that the preservation of Islamic cultural identity is indeed a very important factor in this community - important enough to re-inforce a non-representational direction in the art of this community.

At this juncture, as a young Muslim artist residing in Durban, I feel compelled to include a brief discussion of my own work in relation to my Islamic beliefs and cultural identity.

I, like many Muslims my age who grew up in the apartheid era, did not live in a so-called designated 'Indian' area, neither did I attend an 'Indian' or Islamic state-aided school. My contact with Muslims, most of whom resided in the 'Indian' areas at the time, was thus minimal. The risks of the dilution of my Islamic identity were thus extremely high, as compared to my peers. However, having very influential parents who abide by the Islamic value system, and attending *madressah* daily as a young girl, created a strong foundation which moulded my Islamic identity.

As an art student at the University of Durban-Westville, my cultural identity was again at risk, given the fact that my art training was also of a predominantly Western nature. However, from my point of view, these influences in my life have enriched my knowledge and engendered a broader outlook, enabling me to grapple with the responsibilities that are coupled with

living and being educated under non-Islamic circumstances, and not losing one's Islamic consciousness in the process.

Receiving a Western art training also made available to me a visual language that was not Islamic. My knowledge of the visual language of Islamic aesthetics was gleaned only from a series of art history lectures, and therefore remained on a theoretical, rather than a practical level. No one in Durban taught or teaches Islamic art as a practical course *per se*. Those Muslims who wish to pursue higher learning in the area of artistic expertise, have no choice but to attend art institutions which concentrate largely or solely on western forms of art. A similar experience has been explained by the Iraqi artist, Wasma'a Chorbachi. Writing about her own paintings she produced around 1967, she says: "In looking at my own work at the time, I came face to face with a major problem : I suddenly felt that these paintings were not me : 'the Arab and the Muslim'. I realised that this was due to the artistic language / style in which they were painted...I had not been trained in an artistic language that would enable me to express the inner identity I so strongly felt...I was speaking with a foreign artistic language [viz. Abstract Expressionism, to express an Arab experience such as the war in the Middle East]" (Chorbachi, "Arab Art Twenty Years Later", 1989:144, quoted by Nashashibi, 1994:42).

In the case of my own work, I have resolved this issue by assimilating useful aspects of the visual language learnt from my western art training into my own artistic expression, which extracts from Islamic sources. I have not merely emulated the various 'isms' of Western art. This, I feel, is reflective of my

upbringing, my art training and last, but not least, my Islamic identity. Hence, though part of a Muslim minority community, I am not the ideal example to illustrate the point that Muslim individuals in this situation are prone to cling to traditional parameters in their work. I have instead, wilfully adopted a modern Islamic artistic paradigm into my life, without losing my cultural identity, nor tampering with fundamental Islamic tenets. Whether there are other Muslim artists in Durban who are willing to tread the same path, will be investigated in the final chapter of this dissertation.

In terms of my own work, the subject matter reveals my expressed interest in the tensions between Islamic and Western ideology and the repercussions this has for the Muslim woman living in the modern world. This is explored in a series of prints with a diversity of printmaking processes and techniques, as well as in several charcoal / pastel drawings (see fig. 14). I would, hence not categorize my work as Islamic art, but as art produced by a Muslim. Reference to my Islamic heritage, though important, is not always overt. Rather, it has to be sifted out by the viewer. For instance, black is used as a dominant colour in a lot of my work, this being an indirect reference to the stereotypical identity of Muslim women dressed in the traditional black cloak. My silk-screen, titled *Purdah* of 1994 (see fig. 15), amply demonstrates this oblique reference. In this work, as well as numerous others, I have sourced my imagery both from Qur'anic illumination and fashion magazines and have included script of both the Arabic and English languages. Phillipa Hobbes comments on this duality quite accurately. She says of my work : "Galdhari

uses the writing cunningly to manipulate her multi-cultural audience, as both languages are not accessible to all, and the viewer, like the woman in *Purdah*, is made aware of the privileges and penalties of cultural identity" (Hobbs, 1997:110). The use of this kind of textual interplay of Arabic and English is also used similarly in my silk-screen *Nikah*, produced in 1994 (see fig. 16).

Concerning representational imagery, I have freely made use of these in the majority of my artworks, even though I am aware of the Islamic injunctions which pertain to such imagery. In fact, I enjoy this aspect of my work tremendously. My personal view, is that these images, which are meant to be viewed for their aesthetic merits alone, should not be classed in the same category as those which are produced for other un-Islamic practices. In other words, I have produced these images with the aim of conveying a particular message to the viewer, just in the same way that an author uses text to make a particular point. These images should be interpreted in this light, because I have not attempted to compete with my Creator, nor have I intended to transgress the boundaries created for the preservation of *Tawhid*. In this context, I am comfortable with these images, even though I am aware that these will not be popular in the Muslim art market. In any case, I don't produce work expressly for the benefit of any particular market, but rather for my own artistic fulfilment. I, thus do not allow the market to dictate my artistic direction, in either a representational, or non-representational direction, nor am I inclined to interpret the Laws affecting imagery in a purely literal way.

My view is that every Muslim artist should be aware of the traditions governing art, but that they should also be able to exercise the responsibility to distinguish between the use and the abuse of representational imagery in art.

14. Traditional hand-drawn lithograph, *Faiza Galdhari*, 1997

15. Faiza Galdhari, *Purdah*, colour screenprint, 1994

16. Faiza Galdhari, *Nikah*, colour screenprint, 1994

CHAPTER THREE

**THE INFLUENCES OF THE ULAMA ON ARTISTIC INCLINATIONS :
THE FINDINGS OF THE SAMPLE IN THE MUSLIM MINORITY
COMMUNITY OF DURBAN**

In this chapter, I set out to prove that Muslims in Durban are inclined to adhere to cultural norms and patterns which lie within traditional Islamic parameters because the influences of the *ulama* in Durban play a pivotal role in the artistic inclinations of this particular community.

In fact, the *ulama* hold a very important position in Muslim communities world-wide. According to Tayob, the Muslim *ulama* appointed in particular communities, are instrumental in formulating "...a pattern of doctrinal beliefs and ritual practices that serve as a paradigm of religious knowledge". He refers to them as the "standard bearers of Islam" even though they are not formally ordained. He also highlights the fact that they hold a position of authority because they have the right to control the interpretation of texts in the present (Tayob, 1994:18).

These interpretations are based on their expertise in the area of the *Shari'ah* and not based on their personal whims. These religious leaders are thus in a position to either condemn or condone practices concerning all matters Islamic. Armed with this powerful religious knowledge, the fate of art in particular communities is also influenced by them. The *Khutbah* (or the

Friday sermon in the mosque) is the time when these opinions are most widely disseminated. Individuals can also seek their advice personally in order to clarify certain issues regarding the interpretation of text. This I have done as part of the field research of this study. The purpose was to investigate whether there is difference of opinion amongst the *ulama* in Durban concerning the Islamic proscriptions on imagery. This investigation was carried out with the following view in mind: "No Law in any society is ever stagnant. It develops with the development of society. Islamic Law, although authoritative, is not rigid in nature...to reconstruct a society in the context of changing conditions it is essential that its Laws be constantly revised by means of fresh interpretations" (Hasan, 1984:1). For instance with regards to the issue of contraception, although it is not advised in Islam, fresh interpretations of the Law are necessary in view of the changing conditions of society.

It is hypothesized that the *ulama* in Durban, taking into account their duty to protect the religious minority, would not be open to fresh interpretations of the Laws pertaining to representational imagery. It is assumed that their opinions would be strict on this issue and that they would display little flexibility in this regard. This would in turn influence the artistic preferences and actions of the Muslims in Durban toward a non-representational direction, and consequently steer them away from the forging of a modern Islamic artistic paradigm.

A sample of Muslim *ulama* from Durban were selected for the purposes of this investigation, the results of which would either bolster or refute this theory. Their advice was sought in the capacity of their role as religious advisers on cultural and artistic matters. From the sample of nine *ulama*, five were interviewed personally and the remaining number were handed questionnaires, because the interviews proved too lengthy and repetitive.

The Findings of the Sample Survey

Findings of the Interviews and Questionnaires directed at the Ulama:

As predicted, a consensus of opinion was reached amongst the respective *ulama* included in this study, ruling that all representational images are categorically forbidden / *haraam* in Islam. (Excerpts of the transcribed interviews are included in appendix no.2 at the back of the dissertation).

There was a general feeling among them, that the numerous *ahadith* which prohibit representational imagery were absolute i.e. pertaining to all forms of representational imagery. As such, they felt that these injunctions should be unconditionally obeyed by artists and Muslims in general, simply because the prohibitions are part of *Shari'ah*. The *ulama* even went so far as to equate representational art with blasphemy. Their disapproval of such images, particularly in the realm of sculpture, was very strong. These opinions were reflected both in the responses to questionnaires as well as interviews. As a whole, these responses represent the most important findings of this investigation because they confirm a rigid interpretation of text on the part of

the *ulama*. This bolsters the theory concerning the *ulama*, put forward earlier.

Moulana Younus Osman, the vice-president of the Jamiat'ul Ulama of Natal at the time of being interviewed (May 1993), attempted to justify this strict interpretation of text. He stressed in the interview that the artistic expression of Muslim individuals should by no means transcend the boundaries of the *Shari'ah*, because as Muslims they cannot dispute either the authenticity or the categorical nature of the *Hadith*. As justification, he raised the point of the *Hadith* being equal to that of the Qur'an as a source of the *Shari'ah*, a factor which has already been considered in the first chapter of this dissertation. This point was backed in interview no.3 conducted with a female religious leader in the community, Mrs Hafsa Moolla (see interview no.2 in appendix). With factors such as these in mind, the *ulama* in the sample survey have adhered to a strict interpretation of text. Moulana Osman comments in his interview:

> "Our Prophet Muhammad (may peace be upon him) has categorically prohibited animate objects to be painted...basically it is *haraam* whether an animate object is painted by hand or it is taken through a present-day camera. So there is no difference of opinion, and we [the Jamiat'ul Ulama of Natal] agree to that also, that a picture whether it is painted or sculpted or taken by a camera, all fall under the definition of *tasweer* and *soerat* as mentioned by the *Hadith* of the Prophet (may peace be upon him) - that the one who takes the picture and the one who poses for the picture will both be in the Fire of *Jahannam* (Hell).
> (Interview, 1993:2)

Moulana C.M. Sema, another prominent religious leader among the *ulama* of Natal, also clearly illustrates his strict interpretation of text in his interview. He says:

"We [the *ulama*] must still nip it in the bud - it must not be allowed. The whole idea is to eradicate it [representational images] from the surface of the earth"
(Interview, 1993:1)

There was a general admission amongst all the respondents, that the prohibitions of imagery were most likely introduced as a protective measure to prevent the persistence of idolatry. However, they did not relent to representational images being permissible in cases where the artworks ceased to imply such a content. This was the case even though they agreed that Allah's judgement is final and is based on the intentions and the purpose behind the actions of each individual.

The responses in the questionnaires and interviews have revealed that there are two reasons for their absolute intolerance of images. The first reason offered by the *ulama* is the fact that there are many contemporary forms of idol-worship or reverence. This was highlighted in three separate interviews. Moulana Osman used the example of some Muslims in Pakistan who attribute certain family pictures with special significance, by displaying them on the walls and even greeting them from time to time. Such portraits or photographs were defined as *haraam* since they service the unlawful act of reverence. Similarly, Moulana Patel (see interview no.2 in appendix) related an incident of an Iranian Muslim whom he witnessed kissing a photograph of the Ayatollah Khomeini three times before saying: "He is our saviour". He condemned this and went on to comment in the interview:

"Now those who argue against this [the prohibition of imagery] say that picture-making was prohibited during the times of the Prophet Muahammad (may peace be upon him), because of idol-worship at that time. To stop them our Prophet was very hard on them because people were just coming out of *kuffar* [unbelievers] and

Shirk. Now this is an argument we have to discount. No sensible person can say that these days *kuffar* and *Shirk* have become obsolete because the majority of the people in this present world indulge in *kuffar* and *Shirk*. People are still bowing down and worshipping idols....Our Prophet (may peace be upon him) has said: "Prohibition is for all times and not for or during his time only".
(Interview, 1993:2)

In the light of this first reason, the *ulama* in Durban favour the perpetuation of the Prophet's prohibitions which were to safeguard against such transgressions. The second reason offered by the *ulama* for their strict interpretation of text is the following: While the intentions of the artist (in creating non-representational images) may be noble, the interpretations may differ from one viewer to the next. This point was raised both by Moulana Sema and Mrs Moolla in their respective interviews. Moulana Sema contended:

"Your intentions may be very pure and good, but when it comes to somebody else, they may misuse it. Therefore you are at fault. You are kneading the dough and opening the doors for others. Sometimes intentions are good, but they may lead to other things. These are the things the *ulama* are afraid of."
(Interview, 1993:2)

The *ulama* included in the sample survey also reached a general consensus of opinion on the point of photography. Perceived as the modern equivalent to representational imagery, forbidden by the Prophet Muhammad, all the leaders categorically rejected the permissibility of photography. Exceptions were made only in cases of photographs taken for identity purposes, due to it being of a compulsory nature. There was an indication of only a slight difference of opinion on this matter. For instance, Mrs Moolla and Moulana Patel agreed that family photographs etc. are permissible, as long as they are kept out of view, (so as not to pose a distraction during prayer) and as long as they do not

lead to excessive pride/*kibr*, (a quality which is abhorred in Islam). The majority of the *ulama*, however, opposed leniency in this regard. Moulana Osman, for example, cited the opinions of some of the Arab *ulama* who are of the view that present-day photography is not *surah(pl.suwar),* (picture) as is defined in the *Hadith*. He, however, distanced himself and the Jamiat'ul Ulama of Natal from this view, saying that : "We don't differentiate between the *tasweer* and *surah* of a sculpture or a painting done by hand, or a photograph taken by a camera." This was echoed by Moulana Sema as well. (See Interview in appendix).

When it came to career choices, none of the *ulama* approved of young Muslim individuals choosing a career in the art field. Some, like Moulana Osman, claimed that this would inevitably lead to misery because they would find it difficult to abstain from the representational aspect of art. Others like Mrs Moolla said, "If one knows about the *Din* (the Islamic Faith), then one should keep away from such things." (Interview, 1993:1). Still others like two of the Moulanas who responded to questionnaires, claimed that they would encourage art among young Muslims as long as it was done within the parameters of the *Shari'ah*. One of the responses to the questionnaires regarding this issue reads: "It is important for Muslims to involve themselves with artistic expression pertinent to Islamic culture". Thus, when art was advocated by the *ulama*, it was only advocated in the capacity of the Islamic tradition. Islamic calligraphy and pattern, drawing elements from nature, still life and ceramics / pottery were accepted by the respondents as being within

the limits of Islamic Law, and therefore permissible. Sculpture, and two-dimensional representational images were unanimously rejected.

Considering that the *ulama* in the sample have used legitimate texts as their sources, and acceptable methods of interpretation to advise on their application, is respected, and accepted in the context of this dissertation. However, one is compelled to criticize tendencies of excessiveness or extremism that does exist among some of the *ulama* in Durban. A personal experience with such extremism was encountered during a telephonic interview with one of the *ulama*. In this particular interview, the respondent, who asked to remain anonymous, lashed out at me verbally, declaring that my questions were contradictory to Islamic teachings and the content of my study, much too controversial. On these grounds, he became extremely hostile and refused to share his religious insight with me. By denying me the opportunity to continue further dialogue with him, this particular member of the *ulama* exhibited extremist tendencies. Unlike the other *ulama* consulted for their views, his justification for his beliefs were not substantiated by specific texts, but dominated by fanatical whims. In this context, his views were unacceptable. Such individuals fail to see that Muslims such as myself, who represent the younger generation of Muslims, are not forcing the *ulama* to abandon their opinions. Instead, we are endeavouring to reveal our moderate beliefs to them, in the hope that they may see a glimpse of wisdom in it. While their opinions are backed by *Shari'ah*, our opinions, as Muslim artists, extract from the *Shari'ah*, but see the potential for flexibility. With

this flexibility in mind, I for one, am convinced that there is an acceptable niche for young Muslim artists whose creativity extends beyond the traditional Islamic artistic paradigm.

From the data available, it is evident that flexibility on matters of *Shari'ah*, were distinctly absent among the *ulama*, because they have disregarded a fresh interpretation of text on the issue of imagery. This creates an unfavourable climate for Muslim artists like myself, who deviate from the traditional paradigm. In addition, because their religious cautioning is directed at the Muslim community at large, this rules out the formation of a support structure for the Muslim fine artist in Durban. It leaves them alienated, not only from the *ulama*, but from the Muslim community as a whole.

Findings of the Questionnaires directed at the Muslim Sample in Durban:

During 1995 a sample survey was conducted with the primary aim of recording the responses of Muslims in Durban to the Islamic injunctions which affect art. It was hoped that the findings of this survey would also help to determine the relevance of the community's minority status, as well as the impact of the ulama's strict interpretations on the artistic choices of this minority community.

A set of questionnaires were distributed amongst a sample of 200 Muslims from Durban. From these, 136 responses were received. A copy of these

questionnaires, accompanied by graphs indicating the results, are included in appendix no.4 and appendix no.6 respectively.

The questionnaires were directed at Muslim individuals ranging from 12-yr-olds in primary school to Muslims in a parental role. Several different questionnaires were thus formulated to target different groups of respondents. This was done because different questions were applicable to each group. For example, artistic actions of Muslims in the sample could only be probed from some individuals such as art students, and not others eg. Muslim parents. Similarly, questions pertaining to matters of *Hadith* and *Shari'ah* were not well-suited to the young 12 yr-old respondents. To accommodate this, the nature and order of the questions had to be changed for each group. In this capacity, I have decided to present the findings of these questionnaires separately as well, and only make comparisons where necessary.

The questionnaires were categorized into the following groups:

- Muslim Art Pupils : Primary School

- Muslim Art Pupils : High School

- Muslim Art Students : Tertiary Level

- Parents of Muslim Art Pupils : High School

- Parents of Muslim Art Pupils : Tertiary Level

- Muslim Art Teachers

- Muslim Artists or Craft-persons (The findings of these respondents will be discussed in the next chapter)

- Muslim *Ulama* (the results of this group have already been presented)

i) Muslim Art Pupils : Primary School (See graph no. 1 in Appendix no.6)

The most important information obtained from the data on 12 yr-old Muslims in the sample was the following:

- There was a strong tendency to include representational imagery in their artworks, with 50% of the respondents saying that they enjoyed drawing people and a further 80% of them saying that they liked drawing animals. Therefore, in total, a 50-80% involvement with figurative subject matter was recorded among these young Muslim individuals.

This is a very significant percentage. Perhaps it is an indication that Muslims of this age are generally, not deliberately steered or influenced by the adult Muslims such as parents, who are in turn conditioned by the opinions of the *ulama*. The results have certainly revealed no tangible links to religious cautioning at this age.

Generally, the results of this group have revealed that Muslim children of this age do not display any distinct cultural differences in their artistic expression, from their non-Muslim peers. Their artistic actions were in fact, reflective of those common to any 12 yr-old. Impulsive and spontaneous, their artistic expressions were most often an extension of their experiences, environment and existence. As such, there was no discrimination between representational and non-representational imagery. Neither was this tendency curbed by

parents. According to the data, 94% of the Muslim children had been given colouring books by their parents, which in most cases have a strong representational content. At the same time there was no indication that aesthetic alternatives such as Islamic design or calligraphy are being introduced as a stimulus to young children. Of the 36 respondents, only one recorded design as his personal favourite, and it was not specified as Islamic design.

On the whole, a catalyst for the development of a traditional Islamic artistic paradigm was entirely absent from this group of respondents. Perhaps this is because preferences for a purely Islamic aesthetic only emerge when there is evidence of a knowledge of *halaal* and *haraam*. It is obvious that most 12 yr-old Muslims are oblivious to this, and that neither the Muslim parents nor the *ulama* are making concerted efforts to correct this.

ii) Muslim Art Pupils : High School (See graph no. 2 in appendix no.6)

Unlike the previous group, the findings of this group of respondents reveal both an awareness and a reaction to Islamic doctrine pertaining to art. According to the data :

- There was a high incidence of awareness (68%) of the prohibitions of imagery in the *Hadith,* with 48% of the respondents believing that all representational images are categorically forbidden.

- As a result of this awareness and interpretation, there was only a 12% involvement with representational subjects in the art that they produced at school or at home.

- Their preferences in subject matter included mainly still life, landscape, as well as Islamic calligraphy.

My interpretation of these responses is that this decline in preferences for representational subjects is possibly an indication of three things:

- Firstly, this information is useful in indicating that Muslim individuals in Durban begin to develop partiality on the issue of representational imagery, between the ages of approximately 15 and 18 years old, as is reflected in this sample survey.

- Secondly, these tendencies show that Muslim respondents in the sample start to develop distinct preferences for an aesthetic which is common to their Islamic identity, around this age as well.

- Thirdly, these statistics point to an influence from the *ulama* (either directly or indirectly), because the artistic preferences and actions of the respondents are linked to their knowledge of Islamic doctrine.

iii) Muslim Art Students: Tertiary Level (See Graph no. 4 in Appendix 6)

Again, there was a strong indication among this group of respondents that Islamic injunctions pertaining to art do have a far-reaching effect on the artistic choices of those in the sample. This implicates the *ulama* of Durban

again, whose religious authority is significant in the Muslim minority community of Durban.

- Firstly, the impact of the *ulama* seemed most palpable with regards to the choices young Muslims make in their careers. For instance, there was a steep decline in the numbers of Muslims pursuing art-related courses at tertiary institutions.

It proved a difficult task indeed, during the field research, to sift out a significant number of Muslim art students from tertiary institutions, for the purposes of the survey. In fact, I only succeeded in gleaning 12 Muslim art students from three separate institutions. Of these, only one third were fine art students. The remaining two thirds pursued commercially-related art courses. This proves two things: Firstly, that young Muslim at tertiary institutions have career preferences outside of the art field for reasons which seem to be strongly linked to their Islamic beliefs. Secondly, those who do embark on careers in the art field seem to favour the commercial aspect of art. In these instances the use of representational imagery is not subject to immediate scrutiny because they have a commercial function to sell a product, to advertise etc. and are therefore job-orientated and seemingly more legitimate.

- Regarding the awareness of the prohibitions affecting imagery, there was a high incidence of this amongst this small group of respondents i.e. 100% of them confirmed their knowledge of these injunctions.

Their responses were, however, not uniform. Opinions and individual interpretations differed. According to the data, 4 believed that the injunctions were absolute i.e. pertaining to all forms of representational imagery, 3 did not take the injunctions seriously and 5 of them believed the sayings to be partial i.e. pertaining only to those images with morally bad or idolatrous intentions. From this information one can conclude that the impact of the *ulama* in these instances were weak, but that this was irrelevant because these were the feelings of only a minute section of Muslims. The *ulama* still win because a substantial number of Muslims in Durban seem to be making career preferences which exclude art completely.

Even in the few instances that Muslims favoured a career in the art field, these choices were made along with a strong foundation of Islamic principles. The following finding proves this:

- In order to test the strength of this Islamic value system among the Muslims in the sample, two controversial questions were posed in the questionnaires. The first asked whether they would regard the artistic embellishment of a mosque with figurative drawings or paintings, as a permissible act. The second questioned whether they would regard art with a pornographic element as a permissible act. The result was as follows:

Even though 58% of the students had confirmed that they had no serious objections to drawing figures, including the figures of nudes in the life-

drawing course, there was a 0% response to the two controversial questions. This proves an unwillingness to compromise on matters which interfere with Islamic fundamentals, coupled with a willingness to compromise or make exceptions in other cases. In other words, the members of the sample exhibited strong links with their Islamic beliefs and Islamic identity, even though they proved in the process, that the *Shari'ah* is indeed adaptable and flexible. This, in essence, highlights that there are very small allowances being made for the paving of a modern Islamic artistic paradigm in Durban. This will, however, only gain momentum with a significant increase in the numbers of those who exercise such balanced options. For the time being, Muslims in Durban have a relatively long road to travel in order to achieve this. Hesitancies and fears which stem from religious cautioning , continue to deter this process, as is evident from the following summary of a discussion with a first year graphic design student from the ML Sultan Technikon in Durban in 1995:

This particular student volunteered this discussion with me because he felt that this study was beneficial to young Muslims in Durban who have artistic interests, and because this very issue tackled in the study poses moral, religious and artistic dilemmas for these individuals.

On the whole, he revealed a deep commitment to his religion as well as a deep commitment to his artistic field of study. However, he expressed serious reservations about his participation in the figurative aspect of the art course.

Due to his fervent religious beliefs, this seemed to weigh heavily on his Islamic conscience. One of the reasons for this was because of the stringent interpretation of text by the *Mujlis-ul-Ulama* of South Africa on the question of representational imagery (which he had come across in a local publication). He was consequently considering abandoning the graphic design course on account of this religious cautioning. This is a typical example of the significant hold that the *ulama* have over the community and the consequences that this has for artistic expression in the community.

The student spoke of the constant battle with the moral aspects of being Muslim and being confronted with the nudity of a model which he was expected to draw with realistic perfection. He perceived himself as a Muslim individual transgressing the prescribed limits, and consciously partaking in that which the prophet Muhammad prohibited. Notwithstanding his fear of chastisement due to his literal interpretation of text, the student said that he found it extremely difficult to abstain from all forms of representational imagery in his work. He added that he had been given a talent and felt an obligation to use this talent to the best of his ability. As part of the curriculum he was thus forced to pursue his artistic goals, even though it sometimes conflicted with his beliefs.

Even though he expressed resentment at the drawing of nudes, the student admitted that he had learned a great deal from it and that it had definitely improved his drawing skills. He said that he had learned how to look past the woman as a sensual being. Instead, she became an object to be drawn. From

the essence of the discussion, I was able to conclude that the student was torn between two loves - on the one hand his religion, of which he referred to with the utmost respect, and on the other, his art, which was also an important aspect of his life. These are thus issues which are still presently a reality for many Muslims in contemporary Durban.

iv) Muslim Parents of High School Art Pupils and Art Students at Tertiary Institutions : (See graph nos. 3 and 5 in appendix no. 6)

The most important findings obtained from the data on this group of respondents are as follows:

- There was sufficient evidence to prove that Muslim parents in Durban selected for the survey, currently continue to entrench the prohibitions associated with imagery, in the minds of their offspring.

According to the statistics, even though 87% of the parents encouraged their childrens' artistic activities, this encouragement was subject to certain restrictions. Just under half of the poll i.e. 48% of the respondents believed that representational imagery is categorically forbidden and should therefore be avoided. 92% of the respondents showed distinct artistic preferences for Islamic calligraphy and design, proving that Muslims in Durban are apt to display preferences for a traditional Islamic artistic paradigm.

- These numbers proved significant enough to affect the general interest in art, and the perceptions of art among the respondents.

Among the parents who claimed to have an interest in art, their specifications in this regard were mostly craft, rather than art-related. For instance, interests such as clothing design, sewing, embroidery, etc. were listed as their personal artistic interests and activities. The reported attendance of art exhibitions was also very low. Only 12 out of 31 parents of Muslim high school pupils said that they attended art exhibitions, and the large majority of them said they only attended these on either an annual basis or very seldom altogether.

v) Muslim Art Teachers or Lecturers (See graph no.6 in Appendix no.6)

Only a limited number of Muslim individuals involved in art education, were reached for their viewpoints on the subject. From the six members of the Muslim community who responded to questionnaires, trends seemed to echo those of the other groups previously assessed.

There was a 100% awareness of the prohibitions of imagery. Like the students at tertiary level, indications of tolerance for imagery which is not degenerative to Islamic ideology, was observed. In addition, none of the respondents agreed to the controversial questions which were posed to the students. Like the students, there was a 0% response to the support of imagery with a pornographic element, as well as to the use of representational images in a mosque or holy place.

In summary, the collective responses of the Muslims included in the sample survey in Durban, have proved that their artistic inclinations are always closely

linked to Islamic beliefs and the interpretation of the Laws, which constitute this belief system, by the *ulama*. This is substantiated by the fact that the numbers of Muslims in the survey involved in art, seemed to decrease proportionately in response to an increasing awareness of Islamic injunctions affecting art. Preferences for an Islamic aesthetic were also observed to increase along with the increasing age of the respondents. While distinct Islamic artistic preferences amongst the 12 yr-old respondents were recorded at 0%, this number had peaked to a considerable 92% among the adult Muslims in the survey.

CHAPTER FOUR

ACTIVE MUSLIM PARTICIPATION IN THE VISUAL ARTS OF DURBAN

The rigid interpretations of the *ulama*, which have been revealed in the previous chapter, have provided little scope for the Muslim artist in Durban. More accurately, they have provided no platform at all for the Muslim fine artist in Durban who wilfully departs from the Islamic cultural tradition.

In this chapter, I will provide evidence to prove the following: given the unfavourable climate in the Muslim community, Muslim artists in Durban have neither initiated, nor seriously considered the adoption of a modern Islamic artistic paradigm. I will also show that active artistic contributions, even toward the traditional paradigm, are not extensive. Once again, the investigation which was conducted in order to prove this, was carried out both through personal interviews as well as questionnaires.

During this investigation it was discovered that very few Muslim artists could be reached for comment. This already confirms the sheer lack of Muslim artists in Durban and points to the significant hold which the *ulama* have over the community. Only ten artists from Durban were eventually accessed for their opinions, and of these only five reported a formal training in fine art. The remaining five admitted that they produced art in the capacity of a hobby. In view of these distinctions, it was decided that those Muslim artists with a fine art training, would be personally interviewed. It was assumed that any

tendencies to initiate a paradigm shift would most likely occur amongst this group. Their opinions and artistic actions were thus more pertinent to the topic of this dissertation. The remaining five artists were handed questionnaires which probed their artistic actions in relation to their Islamic beliefs and values. Collectively, the opinions of all ten artists were vital in order to determine the particular artistic paradigm which is generally favoured by Muslims in Durban.

Findings of the Questionnaires and Interviews directed at Muslim artists from Durban:

The data, provided by the questionnaires and interviews, indicate that the Muslim artists unanimously agree that there is a lack of interest in the visual arts among Muslims in Durban, particularly in the area of fine art. However, the data also show that the Muslim artists are extremely selective and cautious in their choices of imagery, by sticking rigidly to aspects of Islamic aesthetics and abstaining from representational aspects of art, or aspects of art which draw from non-Islamic sources. In essence, the artists themselves have therefore avoided the forging of a modern Islamic artistic paradigm and in this way, have not paved the way for perception changes concerning art in the community. As a result, the acceptance and proliferation of fine art in the Muslim community of Durban, remains an issue of concern.

But their reluctance to forge a modern Islamic artistic paradigm has very little to do with their response to the Islamic injunctions pertaining to art, as I will

demonstrate. Both the responses to questionnaires and interviews revealed that the artists believed these injunctions to be pertinent only to those representational images with idolatrous or decadent motives. There were no strong objections to other types of representational imagery, as was observed among the *ulama*. But despite the moderate outlook of the artists on this issue, the majority of artists who answered questionnaires (i.e. 4 out of 5), showed strong preferences for a purely Islamic aesthetic in their work. Likewise, in the case of those who were interviewed, all the artists showed distinct preferences for an aesthetic which conformed to their heritage. This was obvious from the art which they made available to the community.

In interview no.1, Mrs Razia Haffajee, an accomplished ceramicist from La Mercy, north of Durban, shows that even when personal interpretations of text are moderate, Muslims such as herself are still reluctant to deliver an art which correlates entirely with their interpretations. She says:

> "Don't make a graven image representing God, you know, that I will accept, but I don't believe that Muslims are obliged to fulfil a totally Islamic aesthetic in their work."
>
> (Interview, 1993:2)

Contrary to this remark, Haffajee, who concentrates solely on calligraphic and decorative forms to embellish her ceramic pieces, has not put her moderate beliefs into practice. While her large body of work in her studio demonstrates tremendous skill and command of the ceramic medium, it also demonstrates an obvious preference for an Islamic aesthetic over and above anything else (see figures 17 - 19).

17&18. Two of *Razia Haffajee's* ceramic pieces which indicate a preference
for calligraphic and geometric aspects of Islamic art

19. Ceramic piece photographed at the L'art L'arabe Gallery in Durban, 1995

Similarly, in interview no.2, Mrs Munira Motala from Sea Cow Lake, Durban, uses the stained-glass medium in a way which shows a conscious refrainment from representational form. Like Razia, she concentrates entirely on Islamic calligraphy and design which she says, lends itself beautifully to the exciting medium of stained-glass (see figures 20-22). Yet Munira expressed in her interview that art is in many cases an inborn talent and that Muslims should be free to make their contributions to the world , even if this was done in a figurative way (See Interview no.2 in Appendix 3).

According to Ayesha Adams in interview no.5, Muslim individuals should be able to differentiate between those representations which are good/ acceptable, and those which are bad/ idolatrous. She went on to say that her view is often seen by other Muslims as heretic (See interview no.5 in appendix 3). Adams' choice of imagery, however, remains very cautious. Her drawings viewed in the L'art L'arabe Gallery in Durban, show that she presents her images to the viewer in a form which makes them acceptable (see fig.23) By abstracting and stylizing her figures, she does not leave it up to the viewer to differentiate between good and bad. Instead, she is providing the viewer with forms which she knows they will accept, because she maintains in her interview that the attitudes of fellow Muslims in Durban are steeped in narrow-mindedness and intolerance .

20. & 21. *Munira Motala's* stained-glass commissions photographed in 1993

22. Stained glass piece by *Munira Motala* bearing the name of the Prophet
Muhammad

23. Drawing by *Ayesha Adams* photographed at the L'art L'arabe Gallery, Durban,
1995

Unlike the previous artists, Mrs Kulsum Motala's artistic actions were more in line with her interpretations of text. She says:

> " Why do we have to suppress certain things [like representational imagery] that come naturally from within us? You know, as far as I am concerned it does not harm me, it doesn't harm my family...Why should I shut out certain feelings?"
> (Interview, 1993:3)

Kulsum, who experiments with the ceramic medium, including wheel-thrown work, slab work etc. as well as working with glass and wood, does not confine her work to forms which she knows that the Muslim community will find acceptable, although she is also drawn to Islamic calligraphy and design. Unlike the other artists, she also produced representational drawings and sculpted figures. These were, however, limited because most of her time was devoted to her commissions. Perhaps her more lenient artistic actions are related to the fact that Kulsum Motala achieved her fine art degree in Coventry, England, where she claims, the views of Muslims on the issue of representational imagery, were not as strict as in South Africa (see interview no.3 in appendix 3).

In fact, the intolerant views of Muslims in Durban were cited by the artists as the main reason for their deliberate non-representational choices in subject matter. They felt obligated to satisfy their Muslim clientele whose preferences were for distinctly Islamic work. Anything beyond this was not financially viable for the artists. In addition to this, they emphasized the fact that the Muslims in Durban do not identify with fine-art orientated items or artworks. For this reason, they claimed that they were forced to produce functional, household or crafty items when it came to three-dimensional work,

and specific calligraphic or decorative pieces when it came to two-dimensional artworks. For example, Kulsum Motala and Razia Haffajee mass-produced mugs, tea sets, spice jars, bowls and other kitchen items These were then decorated in an 'Islamic fashion'(see figures 24&25). In most cases this increased their chances of a sale. Munira Motala also produced many functional household items in stained-glass, such as lampshades.

From this information, it is clear that the Muslim artists in Durban are allowing the channelled preferences of the Muslim community to dictate their artistic activities. In the process, they are commercializing their art and compromising on artistic expression. Even in the case of Kulsum Motala, whose artistic actions were a little more adventurous, her artistic endeavours were overwhelmed by commissions such as bird baths for nurseries and rosaries and crosses for churches. Thus, although all the artists reported a training in fine art, none of them were exercising their artistic abilities toward the direction of fine art, in which elements such as personal vision, style, expression and communication, all play an important role. After all, according to Barry (1964:32), the term fine art is used to distinguish for example, literature from journalism, a symphony from a hit song, a masterpiece painting from a poster and a piece of sculpture from a waxwork. In concentrating mostly on commercialized items to suit the demands of the market, the Muslim artists in Durban are blurring the distinctions that exist between true fine art and art as it is perceived by the layman. This unfortunately contributes to a lowering of standards.

24. & 25. Some of the functional items on sale at the L'art L'arabe Gallery which respond to the demands of the local Muslim market

The artists, however, seem quite complacent with this situation, even though this has resulted in a lull of artistic activity in the Muslim community. This leads one to believe that the Muslim artists in Durban are not pioneering any dramatic changes in artistic expression. This is substantiated by the fact that their subject matter seems to have remained the same for a number of years. This non-developmental tendency is not characteristic of true fine art.

Hence, comparatively speaking, the Muslim artists in Durban, unlike their counterparts in Muslim countries abroad (such as those in the Arab world), are not actively contributing to cultural and artistic growth in the Muslim community of South Africa. This is only compounded by the fact that their participation in exhibitions is minimal. At the time the interviews were conducted (1993), only two exhibitions were reported by the artists. One was a showing of contemporary South African Islamic art, held at the University of Durban-Westville in 1990. The other was an exhibition of local Muslim art at The World of Islam Festival held in Pretoria in 1991. If the numbers of exhibitions, even with Islamic art as its sole basis, increased in Durban, one could report a hub of artistic activity in Durban. However, this is sadly not the case at all. While skills are evidently well-developed among the few artists who were interviewed, artistic expression and exposure of this expression, is not. This is not very flattering to the state of art among Muslims in Durban.

A visit to the L'art L'arabe Gallery in central Durban, proves that the work of Muslim artists in Durban are directed only at one specific market and that the

work is very commercially orientated. The works housed in this gallery were mainly ceramic pieces, including many functional items (see fig. 26&27). Apart from this, there was only a very minute number of works on paper, and only one oil painting. Needless to say, the subject matter was predictably Islamic, although it did not meet the standards and state of progression which is evident among Muslim fine artists abroad. On the whole, the works could not be referred to as products of contemporary fine art, created by Muslims in South Africa. It is clear that this kind of art has not yet emerged in Durban.

Perhaps this points to the fact that the Muslims in Durban, including the artists, follow the Islamic value system strictly, to the extent that it has affected their artistic production. This became evident in the interviews. For instance, it was observed that the Muslim artists in Durban did not prioritize their artistic activities, but that their art remained a peripheral aspect of their lives. Other obligations, which are more important in the Islamic lifestyle, such as commitment to family, were noted to be a priority among the artists. This was intensified by the fact that all the artists interviewed happened to be female. Gender issues thus surfaced in the process and highlighted the role differentiation between men and women in the Islamic lifestyle. (According to the Islamic value system, a woman's responsibilities lie in the home with the raising of her children and the well-being of her husband. The husband's main duty is to provide for his family.) This seems to have had some kind of bearing on the artists who were interviewed.

26. & 27. Some of the art products available at the L'art L'arabe Gallery, 1995

Firstly, there were no male artists discovered during the field research. As Muslim woman, those who were discovered, were trying to balance their roles as artists with their roles as Muslim mothers and wives. It thus stands to reason why the majority of the artists who were interviewed, worked from studios attached to their homes. In this way they could concentrate on their work without neglecting their family. Ayesha Adams testifies to this in her interview. She says:

> "My function as a Muslim woman is to raise good children and to be a good wife, without losing track of my artistic endeavours. But definitely, my priorities lie with my family. They come before my art, although my art is very important to me".
>
> (Interview, 1995:1)

This sentiment was echoed by Rashida Haffajee as well. She explained that her primary purpose in her life, as a Muslim woman, was to be totally devoted to her family. For this, it seems that she was willing to sacrifice her art altogether, because this particular artist was not producing any art at all. This had been the case for a number of years. The only evidence of her artistic interests were a few student works from years gone by. Her ceasing of artistic activity altogether, forced me to reconsider her inclusion as an artist in the context of this dissertation. After all, an artist without any portfolio or any traces of current active production, is not much of an artist after all.

With regards to the other artists, I have included them in this study and I have documented some of their works in the hope that this will reveal that these artists, as Muslim females in a religious minority community, do have an uphill struggle for their very survival. From the information provided by the questionnaires and interviews, the forging of a modern Islamic artistic

paradigm, would spell their demise in the Muslim community. It is thus imperative that their special circumstances be taken into consideration and that their artistic compromises be seen in the light of these circumstances. For these reasons, their definition as practising artists, as it is more widely understood in the western sense, has been subjected to slight changes in this dissertation.

Moderation versus Extremism

We have seen through much of this dissertation, that far too much emphasis is placed on the negatives i.e. the representational proscriptions. Little attention is given to the positives i.e. the pure aesthetic pleasure that is derived from artistic production, regardless of its representational or non-representational nature. In this climate, where negatives override positives, it is understandable that the Muslim community in Durban has showed signs of siding with orthodox, rather than moderate viewpoints, when it comes to art.

The data have revealed that the Muslims, in the sample, exercised a small amount of moderation in the interpretation and application of the *Shari'ah*. A little flexibility was evident when it came to the absoluteness of the prohibitions of imagery in the *Hadith*. Small compromises were also noted in practices such as adorning the home with figurative imagery, to sometimes wearing clothing with representational imagery and also in the open encouragement of art by a significant number of the Muslim parents in the sample.

Huge compromises were made by the sample in terms of the imagery in the media and television. However, the sheer lack of Muslim artists who are serious about art, and fine art in particular, testifies to the hesitancy and fear rooted in the Muslim community of Durban. While the numbers of those who had a keen interest in the art field was considerably high amongst the younger members of the Muslim sample, the numbers dropped proportionately when it came to art students and artists in particular. This in itself is proof of the misnomers attached to art amongst local Muslims. There are still fears and apprehensions which shroud the real significance of art and artists, or 'image-making' or 'image-makers' as they are referred to by some. These apprehensions weigh heavily on the Muslim conscience. Rather than confront them, most Muslims have been noted to avoid them.

Avoidance has sometimes unfortunately taken on extreme proportions. In these cases there is no room for a middle view, which would support the acceptance of a slightly evolved Islamic artistic paradigm. As has been proved by the survey, this has had some consequences for the future of art produced by Muslims in the community of Durban. While these influences have not been extensive, they have been sufficient enough to put stoppers on the proliferation of art in this community. Even the official art of Islam, which is widely advocated, is not a thriving art amongst the Muslim community in question.

Several of the *ulama* whom I consulted during the course of the field research, suggested that I read a particular publication on the subject which I was researching. They claimed that this book was a necessity for all young Muslims interested in art. Titled Photography, Picture-Making and Islam , by the Mujlisul Ulama of South Africa, it is a widely distributed local publication. Needless to say, its rejection of representational forms in the visual arts was emphatic. Artists are referred to throughout this book as 'picture-makers' and art as 'picture-making' . For me this is an insult to the integrity and intellectuality of artists. According to the views of the Mujlisul Ulama, artists "...should appropriately be branded ' brothers of *Shaitaan'* [the devil] " (Mujlisul Ulama : 26). Throughout the book a long list of *ahadith* have been used as backing for their opinions - this is acceptable. However, the open degradation and branding of artists, is extremely misleading to those who lack a knowledge of art.   Further, it is unnecessary, disillusioning   and inappropriate.   Lastly, it is an extremist view.   The publication sees representational art or picture-making as they call it, only in the light of 'the devil's mischief' . It is further summarised in the book that 'pictures' are invariably agents of pornography, of idolatry, of obscene art and of the 'demon of technology' (Mujlisul Ulama : 3). They argue against the permissibility of figural imagery from the generalization that , " The image-maker lives only for his images and for the manifestation of his ego which projects itself in his pictures and images " (Mujlisul Ulama : 24). However, the data made available in this study, have proved beyond doubt, that this assumption is far from the truth. All the artists, even those who openly sculpted or painted

images, had deep commitments to their Faith and did not devote their lives entirely to their art. For them, it was inconducive to the Islamic lifestyle. The extreme accusations in the publication thus stand to be rectified. Even taking into account the religious authority of the *ulama,* their unconditional branding of artists is entirely inappropriate. One cannot assume that all artists live only for their images. This has serious repercussions for the reputation of artists. Young naive Muslims who read such remarks would have a warped perception of both art and artists in the future. Sometimes, damage such as this is irreparable. This applies to the Muslim graphic design student mentioned earlier in this study, who spoke of increased apprehension and guilt after reading this particular publication.

The influence of the *ulama* on Muslim society is a tangible reality at this level. Those Muslims, like myself, who challenge their extreme views, are called modern, ultra-rationalistic Muslims who attempt to legalize the proscriptions of Islamic Law.

Yet, one of the greatest Muslim scholars of all time, Imam Al-Ghazzali himself, gained the respect of his followers through his moderate thinking. At one particular time, according to Lois Lamya Al-Faruqi (1982:42), Al-Ghazzali was faced with the task of making a juristic ruling on the permissibility or impermissibility of *Sama* , the musical activities of the Sufi brotherhoods. His ruling condemned the practice only when the music was associated with things that lead to immorality or when the time spent on this

means of recreation is unduly exaggerated. In this instance Al-Ghazzali does not hastily prohibit music on the assumption that all musicians are totally devoted to their music, neglecting their spiritual duties in the process. Their intentions are taken into consideration. After all, the Prophet Muhammad stated that, "The reward of deeds depends upon intentions, and every person will get the reward according to what he has intended" (Al-Bukhari and Muslim).

We have seen in the third chapter, however, that intentions have been ignored by the *ulama* in the sample survey, as irrelevant to the proscriptions affecting the visual arts. As a Muslim artist myself, I am inclined to favour a middle view which creates a favourable climate for the creation and maintenance of a modern paradigm. I am partial to the views of the moderates such as Dr Yusuf Al-Qaradawi. He states in his book titled The Lawful and the Prohibited in Islam that the most strictly prohibited figures in Islam are those which are made to be worshipped. Next to this in sinfulness are figures which are made with the intention of imitating Allah's Creation. After this are commemorative statues of great personalities, kings, leaders and celebrities. Next are statues of living beings which are neither revered, nor worshipped but are attributed respect. Next are portraits of great people such as rulers or kings which are displayed or hung on walls. They are strongly prohibited if the individuals are tyrants, atheists and immoral individuals. Pictures of people and animals which constitute a display of luxury are also disapproved. Photography is also impermissible when its subject matter is

impermissible. Finally, the use of prohibited animate pictures become permissible when they are defaced or degraded e.g. the figures on a rug or carpet are walked upon. (Al-Qaradawi, 1985:119&120).

A refreshing moderate view has also been obtained from a Moulana in Durban. An academic as well, Dr Moulana A.K. Aziz of the Department of Arabic, Urdu and Persian situated at the University of Durban-Westville, has a differing opinion to the *ulama* included in the sample. This indicates that there are exceptions - and that some religious leaders do favour a flexibility in the interpretation of religious text. In an addendum to a translation of Tarjuman al-Qur'an, Moulana Aziz states that the H*adith* pertaining to angels not entering a home in which there is an image or a dog, cannot be accepted in a literal sense. He uses Imam Raghib's interpretation of the word *' bayt '* to support his argument. He emphasizes that in the context of this *hadith* Imam Raghib interprets the word *'bayt'* [= house] , as meaning 'the heart'. Therefore when subject to interpretation the significance would be that "...the man in whose heart images have a place, and who bows before them, does not receive the angels of Divine mercy" (Aziz,1995:3). He advises that all the *ahadith* pertaining to imagery and their makers be similarly interpreted, including photography. He believes that in this context, all 'image-makers' or artists, as we would prefer to call them, can certainly not be classed in the same category.

> " That is only such people could be threatened with
> severe punishment as made images, drew pictures,
> took out photographs or carved out statues or idols
> for worship, because this is *shirk*, by consensus of
> opinion." (Aziz, 1995:3)

In simpler terms, the moderates raise objections to the use of figural imagery by artists when the immutable structures of *Tawhid* are in jeopardy, giving way to *shirk*. Those who support an extreme literal interpretation of text, such as Moulana Abdul Aleem Siddiqui on the other hand, propose that those who interpret the texts according to their own opinions, should be prepared to accommodate themselves in Hell (Mujlisul Ulama:iv).

While the religious commitment of the *ulama* in Durban is admirable, they should also exercise the duty to differentiate to the community between the good and the bad elements of art, which a moderate viewpoint such as Al-Qaradawi's successfully achieves. The shunning of artists from society, as 'vagabonds' and Islamic misfits, will only serve to alienate the artists from the *ulama,* and the rest of the Muslim community, who do not have a knowledge of art.

My point is this: Just as there are excesses and abuses latent in the use of representational imagery in art, there are also excesses evident in the perceptions of art and artists amongst the religious authorities. These have blinded them toward a middle view. Art will, in this context, forever be shrouded with ill-earned evil and be excluded from the aspirations of young Muslims in Durban.

The application of a moderate point of view, would conversely unite the rival artist and *ulama* camps. The *ulama* in this way would attract much more

support from the community and would be credited with the hindsight that they possess as religious leaders.   A glimpse of a new Islamic artistic paradigm, with the 'enlightened' aid of the *ulama*, is thus possible somewhere in the distant horizon.

CONCLUSION

Central to the fate of the Muslim artist in Durban, and in South Africa as a whole, are the differing perceptions of the use and the abuse of representational imagery in art. In most cases, as is evident from the reactions of the *ulama* especially, the condoning of this type of art would inevitably lead to its abuse. Some members of the Muslim community, in particular the artists, have begged to differ from this narrow view. However, their artistic actions which are largely confined to decorative and calligraphic forms, already perfected by the masters of this tradition centuries ago, is testament to the fact that Muslim artists in Durban are not equipped for dramatic change. As such, they are not entirely ready for an Islamic artistic paradigm which assimilates the forms of foreign trends, as well as representational forms.

In addition, most of the artists interviewed produced work in which functional, crafty items, outweighed serious fine art products by a significant margin. Neither have any of the artists made a concerted effort, either to create an alternative aesthetic, or to take the financial risk of functioning as practising fine artists. Their commitments to an Islamic lifestyle perhaps reflects the religious zeal of the South African Muslim community as a whole. Many have said that South African Muslims are some of the most dedicated in the world. I think that we have seen some evidence of this in the course of this particular artistic study. For South African Muslims, it appears that Islamic beliefs are placed before anything, including art. The communities

context as a minority has definitely had some bearing on this tendency. Unfortunately, the demise of fine art altogether, is imminent in such a situation. The resounding lack of artists has reminded us of this fact. While the artists themselves are in many instances prepared to forsake their art, almost entirely for their religion, by lowering standards and succumbing to the crafty demands of the local market, the future of fine art in this community is very bleak. In this situation, how can it be expected of the Muslim layman to initiate perception changes, when the artists themselves do not provide them with adequate visual inspiration which suggests an alternative?

We have assessed, through the theological attention in this study, that this type of change, if it ever occurred, would have to be a slow one. This is primarily due to the fact that these issues are tied up in the technicalities of Islamic Law. As we know, these are protected by the *ulama* - and change of attitude amongst this group is unlikely. Perhaps the strengthening and permanence of the local Muslim minority in South Africa, will eventually determine the flourishing of fine art in this country. For now, at a time when there are still many fears and doubts associated with the existence and resilience of the Muslim community, in a non-Muslim South Africa, art will forever remain a profession to be avoided by all costs. There are too many risks which come along with it. This is only compounded by the fact that religious, language and cultural barriers are slowly dissolving in a new, transforming South Africa.

With the structures of apartheid, cultural differentiation and identity was ensured. Everyone became complacent within their designated structures. The new South Africa has presented new challenges and has made communities more vulnerable to the new mosaic culture which sees separatism as a form of apartheid. Currently, South African society is forced to interact, share and relate to one another on a national level. On an international level, Muslims are also confronted with the interactions of one global community.

It is natural, in a situation such as this, for communities to clutter for identity preservation. Little wonder then, that the Muslim artists in the Durban area have not displayed a particular vivid interest in that subject matter which lies outside of the protective Islamic artistic paradigm. In fact, they have not produced what goes under the name of fine art, to begin with. For these reasons, this study has not taken on an entirely formal approach in the analysis and rationale of the artworks. Much attention has been given instead, to the theological details and Islamic attitudes. These were found to have affected and sometimes dominated the artistic actions, preferences and decisions of all those included in the sample survey.

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1

The field research of this study began with the distribution of a uniform letter to several Muslim institutions abroad. Their assistance was requested in highlighting the contemporary attitudes of Muslims, and Muslim artists abroad, on the question of the acceptance of representational imagery. Destinations of this international correspondence ranged from Egypt to Iran, Pakistan, Indonesia and Malaysia, amongst other places. It was believed that attitudes in these Muslim countries where Muslims were not a minority, were more relaxed than in countries with Muslim minorities. Here is a copy of the letter which was used for the field research:

> 125 Barracuda Road
> Newlands East
> Durban
> Natal
> Republic of South Africa
> 4051

16 March 1993

Dear Sir / Madam

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE REGARDING RESEARCH

I am a Muslim post-graduate student at the University of Durban-Westville, South Africa, currently pursuing a Master of Arts degree in Fine Art. My topic is as follows:

"CONTEMPORARY FINE ART AND ISLAMIC BELIEFS CONCERNING REPRESENTATIONAL IMAGERY: A SAMPLE SURVEY IN DURBAN".

The main content of my dissertation will be aimed at assessing the works of local Muslim contemporary artists in the light of the Islamic injunction that figurative imagery is strictly prohibited. Part of the methodology is a comparative study, which includes research on attitudes toward the visual arts in other contemporary Muslim communities. As no other resources are available here in terms of books and articles regarding the more contemporary issues, it has been suggested to me by my supervisor to correspond with foreign tertiary institutions. Hence it is that I am writing to you. I have chosen to communicate with art colleges and universities of an essentially Islamic nature. This could make a relevant contribution toward my comparative study, which would serve to highlight the differences between an Islamic art training and a Western art training that Muslim art students receive in South Africa, a country with a notable but small Muslim population.

I would be grateful for information with regards to the following:-

I) The nature of the artworks produced at your institution, or by professional Muslim artists in the vicinity, particularly noting whether these works are of a figurative nature.

ii) Whether Islam's theological principles have had an immediate effect on visual artistic expression, e.g. the avoidance of representational imagery.

iii) Articles, periodicals, papers or any research available on the subject of Islam's prohibition of imagery and contemporary artists' responses in this regard.

iv) A catalogue of courses necessary in order to obtain a degree / diploma in Fine Art and History of Islamic Art at your institution.

I would also appreciate an Index or catalogue of related resources at your institution as well as the names and addresses of artists or art students with whom I could correspond. I am prepared to meet any expenses arising from my requests. Should expenses be incurred, I would also appreciate an estimation of costs.

I look forward to your kind assistance and thank you in anticipation.

Yours Faithfully
 Mrs Faiza Galdhari

Appendix 2:

The second stage of the field research was an attempt at determining the extent of the *ulama's* influence over the local Muslim community. Personal interviews were conducted with four of these leaders who were taped and their discussions documented. These interviews, though useful, proved lengthy and repetitive. I will present excerpts of these transcribed interviews below. The influences of other religious leaders were further documented through the distribution and response to a formulated questionnaire aimed at Muslim jurists.

Excerpts of Transcribed Interviews:

Interview no. 1 - Moulana Yunus Osman (Jamiat'ul Ulama of Natal)

Q. Moulana, from your point of view, what avenues would you say are open to the Muslim artist?
A. I would say anything excluding animate objects. Well, from the beginning, Islam has condemned it - to draw or paint anything that is animate. There are several *ahadith* by our Prophet Muhammad (may peace be upon him) which categorically forbids Muslims to do this. The Prophet (may peace be upon him) has said that in the house where there is *tasweer* and *suwar* (pictures), the angels will not enter,.......some Muslim scholars in the present time differ when it comes to the definitions of *tasweer* and *suwar* - some argue that present photography etc. is not *surah* or *tasweer* as it is defined in the *Hadith*. But that is the opinion of some of the *ulama* of the Arab world. The *ulama* of Asia and the more orthodox *ulama* who have studied *suwar* and *tasweer* have stated that it is basically *haraam* whether an animate object was painted by hand or it was taken through a present-day camera. So there is no difference and we, [the Jamiat'ul Ulama of Natal] agree to that also, that a picture, whether it is painted or sculpted or taken by a camera, all fall under the same definition of *tasweer* and *suwar* as mentioned in the *Hadith* of the Prophet Muhammad (may peace be upon him) - that the one who takes the picture and the one who poses for the picture both will be in the Fire of *Jahannam* (Hell).

Some of the scholars in the past, especially people like Nawwawi who have written commentary on these things and also present-day scholars and others have said that the reasons that the Prophet (may peace be upon him) might have forbidden this is firstly because of idolatry. People in the past sculpted and painted forms which had eventually led to idol-worship. But up to the present day we still find that some people like the Hindus for instance, bow down to pictures etc. In some cases people have portraits or photographs kept on their office walls etc. They sometimes greet the person in the picture or revere that person. People will say that in the past idol-worship would be a danger, but that this

doesn't apply now. This is not true. So it does make sense to me that it does lead to idol-worship.

Number two, Islam has forbidden anything that is pride. Photography may lead to that in some way or the other, where a person, by taking these pictures...if you look at wedding pictures, in the past people have used these to perfect the next wedding or matching it - I'm just giving you an example. Islam has forbidden both idol-worship and pride. I personally have also seen Muslims in Pakistan - people who have put up pictures of their dads who have passed away or the founders of certain organisations and things like this. They have it in their offices and greet these pictures in the morning when they come in and when they're going out....and sometimes they will in conversation, say... "Look, he is looking at us, why are you doing such a thing?" So Islam has forbidden this type of thing.

Q. Would you say that the prohibitions were introduced as a protective measure so that Muslims would not be led astray?
A. I won't say that as well, you see because the reasons have not been made mention of. We would find an explanation as to why it is *haraam* and we would come to such a conclusion, but there could be a flaw in that. If we are a hundred percent sure that this was the reason, then why should we still forbid it? I would simply say that it is *haraam* because Islam has made it *haraam*.

Q. Gaging from what you have said, would you say that the intentions of an artist are irrelevant?
A. Well I won't say that I drank wine just to taste it and therefore my intentions were not wrong. It is categorically *haraam*.

Q. So are you equating the two, Moulana? Would you say that drinking alcohol and drawing pictures of animate objects fall in the same category?
A. Tasting wine is categorically forbidden in the Qur'an. But there is difference of opinion when it comes to *suwar* and *tasweer*, so we won't probably put the two in the same category. But those things which have come to be forbidden through the *Hadith* is part of the *Shari'ah*, although there isn't a word in the Qur'an which states that *tasweer* is categorically forbidden.

Q. In my readings, I have come across several references to a picture of Esa [Jesus] and Maryam [Mary] on the wall of the Kabah. It has been stated that the Prophet (may peace be upon him) instructed the *Sahaba* (companions of the Prophet) to destroy all the idols in the Kabah, but when it came to this particular image, he instructed

them to save it from destruction. **What would be the reason for this, if the Prophet abhorred all imagery?**

A. I have come across this. You see, a lot of things were done due to respect at that time.....
We would say that the Prophet (may peace be upon him) did this because the Christians at that time were closest to the Muslims. They were people of the Book (believers in God).
So the destruction of the non-believers' idols was appropriate. But because the Muslims still had a relationship with the Christians, it makes sense that their beliefs would be respected.

Interview no. 2 - Moulana Yunus Patel

Q. Moulana, what is your understanding of art?

A. Something to do with fine art? The *Shari'ah* says 'if its right its right, if its wrong, its wrong'. Although we may have the freedom in art, it must be acceptable.... There are many *ahadith,* but all come to the same conclusion - that picture-making is prohibited, especially of animate objects or selling them or keeping them in the home etc. Now those who argue against this say that picture-making in our Prophet's time was prohibited because of idol-worship at that time, and to stop them, our Prophet (may peace be upon him) was very hard on them because people were just coming out of *kuffar* and *Shirk.* Now this is an argument we have to discount. No sensible person can say that these days *kuffar* and *Shirk* have become obsolete because the majority of the people of the world today indulge in *kuffar* and *Shirk.* People are still bowing down and worshipping idols, whether it is of Jesus, Krishna or other idols in a temple. Our Prophet Muhammad (may peace be upon him) has said that : "Prohibition is for all times." (Narrates a story about an experience whilst on a flight from Karachi to Rome about an Iranian Muslim who carried a picture of Khomeini in his pocket. When Moulana asked him how the Iranian revolution was won, the Iranian kissed the picture three times before saying, 'He is our saviour'.) This is something that is not acceptable in Islam.

Q. What about the use of imagery in the modern world today, for instance in the area of television, the media etc.?

A. As far as that is concerned, there is some difference of opinion. Some jurists say that it is permissible to see anything that is outside of the screen than on the screen itself. Then again another point about television is that 90% of the content of television programs are un-Islamic. No decent Muslim parent would want to sit with their daughter and watch these.

Interview no. 3 - Moulana C. M. Sema

Q. Would you, as a religious authority, encourage Muslim students to do Fine Art as a career?

A. Be warned, besides animate objects they can do anything else. In fact in our community there are saint-worshippers, you know. Even in their homes they have photographs of these holy men, with garlands around their necks... also at the graveyards as well.

Q. Moulana, we have discussed all these things which lead to idolatry. But what would you say to art done purely for aesthetic pleasure, where intentions are purely for artistic purposes and not anything else?

A. We must still nip it in the bud... the whole idea is to eradicate it from the surface of the earth.

Q. By saying, nip it in the bud, Do you include the images on television, in photographs, etc.?

A. Yes, all - everything. In Egypt a group of *ulama* have a different view on photography. What they say (they differ from us, the Indian ulama) is that those things that cast a shadow as in 3-dimensional idols are prohibited as compared to two-dimensional photography. (Narrates the *Hadith* about the images of birds on a curtain in the home of the Prophet). According to this *Hadith*, the argument of the Egyptians fall away.

Q. Would you consider the intentions of the artists as important at all?

A. No, I don't think so. As said before, these intentions could still lead to idol-worship and so on. Your intentions may be very pure and good, but when it comes to somebody else , they may misuse it. Therefore you are at fault.

Q. But isn't Allah the Supreme judge of the artist's intentions?

A. You are right, but you are kneading the dough by opening the door for others. Sometimes intentions are good, but they may lead to other things. These are the things that the *ulama* are afraid of.

Q. So, Moulana, are there any exceptions at all?

A. As far as we are concerned, we are very, very guarded on this matter.

Q. As an artist myself, I particularly enjoy drawing images of people. Should we always have such hard-line opinions about images?

A. We should. (Relates story about the angel Gibreel (a.s) [Gabriel] being delayed because of a picture of a dog or an image in the home of the Prophet).

Q. In modern society, there are all types of images in the home, especially those on the television screen. What about these images?

A. Yes, yes, yes, there are certain things which are avoidable and certain things which are done deliberately. Things which we can avoid, we should avoid ....The *Hadith* is an explanation of the Qur'an - everything is not mentioned in the Qur'an.

Q. What about images for the purposes of children's education, e.g. book illustration?

A. A book with an illustration cannot give you true guidance. It is better to have someone demonstrate it e.g. how to make *wudhu* (ablution before praying) or how to perform *Salaah*, (the compulsory prayer of Muslims).

Interview no. 4 - Mrs Hafsa Moolla

N.B. Although Mrs Hafsa Moolla is by no means a Muslim jurist or a member of the *ulama* in Durban, her views were also sought for this particular aspect of the study. She has achieved much in the education of Muslim women in Durban. Her expansive knowledge of the Hadith and the imparting of this knowledge to her students, spurred an interview with her.

Q. What is your interpretation of what is stated in the Hadith by our Prophet Muhammad (may peace be upon him), who stated that the artists will be the severest punished persons on the Day of Judgement.

A. There is so much truth in what our Prophet (may peace be upon him) has said. Figures or images, especially when they are very life-like, are a big distraction when reading *Salaah*. Furthermore, our Prophet Muhammad (may peace be upon him), with Allah's guidance, has said that we will be asked to put life into these life-like things. This is humanly impossible. Therefore, if one knows about the *Din* (Islamic Faith), then one should keep away from such things.

Q. Do you feel that the intentions of the artist should be considered when referring to these prohibitions?

A. Definitely, if the intention is clean. But you as an artist, must think, 'How is that person accepting that art, for example the structure of the human body?' It is a big risk that you are taking because not everybody has a broad attitude. This is why still-life, flowers, trees etc. is preferred in Islam..... You have to take your *Hadith* very seriously. Some people

might say that it is only a *Hadith* or it is only a *Sunnah*. But Allah says that the Prophet only says whatever I put into the mind of the Prophet. Example, *wudhu* (the ablution or washing of the face, hands, feet etc.) was not revealed in the Qur'an but was revealed through Gibreel (the angel, Gabriel) who instructed our Prophet (may peace be upon him) on how to perform *wudhu*. Therefore, *wudhu* was given to him in his lifetime and not in the Qur'an. The same applies to the instructions on how to perform *Salaah*. The only *Salaah* mentioned in the Qur'an is *Tahajjud* and here no mention is made of how many *rakaats* one should read. Be very careful about the *Hadith*, Faiza. Don't try to be smart and criticize the *Hadith*, because Allah has said , whatever my Prophet said, I have told him to say.

Q. Do you consider the Hadith to be absolute or partial?
A. Certain cases, yes and certain cases, no. But the most important thing is that our Prophet Muhammad (may peace be upon him) is our go-between from Allah. We have to accept everything that he has said. We cannot overstep the mark.

Q. From an artist's point of view, I personally feel more in awe of Allah's creation whilst drawing, simply because it is sometimes so difficult to achieve the realistic proportions of the figure etc. I think that people miss this point. What do you feel?
A. You know, being a Muslim woman and the believer that you are, it is going to take a very long time for people to see your point of view. Perhaps in the next 100 years or so, but definitely not from my school of thought. People of my age will disagree, but the younger generation, maybe. Your thinking is so different, so beautiful. The narrowness lies in the older generation who can sometimes be fanatical....they sometimes fail to see that if your *iman* (faith) is strong you can never go wrong. But you are still very young. So be very careful. You must safeguard whatever you are going to write in your dissertation and ask Allah for guidance.

Interview no. 5 - Anonymous

This Muslim jurist reluctantly agreed to the interview. After a few questions, he refused to continue because his opinions led him to believe that my motives for doing this study were totally against the teachings of Islam. He ended the short interview by saying : "I refuse to continue with this discussion. One pebble in the sand won't make a multitude of a difference".

Appendix 3 :

The third stage of the field research involved a number of interviews conducted with Muslim artists in the Durban vicinity. Their aesthetic actions and artistic preferences were explored in relation to their attitudes toward Islamic doctrine.

Excerpts of transcribed interviews:

Interview no. 1 - Razia Haffejee (Muslim Ceramicist)

Q. As a fine art student, were you ever hesitant to draw figures e.g. in the life drawing course?

A. No, it wasn't a problem for me at all. You know, I felt that the best way to learn form is to look at nature. So no, I wouldn't say that I found a problem being Muslim and doing Life-Drawing, for instance. I sort of take the Islamic injunction against imagery as - 'Don't try to create an image of God and then try to revere that figure.' I certainly didn't worship these figures as a student, instead I learned from them.

Q. But looking at the type of work that you do, you seem to concentrate largely on pattern and calligraphic form in your pottery and ceramics. One would think that this is a conscious attempt to avoid drawing or sculpting figures. Can you comment on this?

A. I think I am drawn to this simply because I love the medium. If this included sculptural forms, which I don't really go in for, then I'd obviously be looking at figures or some sort of figurative work. But I've sort of chosen to stick to decorative pattern with my work.

Q. Do you find this type of work totally fulfilling as an artist, or do you draw or sketch anything else?

A. I don't have much time for doing other things. You know my time is so divided between family and work. If I did find the time, I would want to. When I was at school I drew figures quite often. My daughter is doing art at school and when she needs any help I am happy to assist her.

Interview no. 2 - Munira Motala

Q. What motivated your artistic interests and activities?

A. My Dad was actually an artist. He was a signwriter and he owned a printing press. He actually encouraged me to draw a lot. As a child I loved to draw people and faces and he encouraged me all the way. There was always friction between him and my mother, you know because as Muslims we are not supposed to draw figures. But then my father always taught me and encouraged me. I looked towards him as an example because he always used to sit and sketch, draw portraits....so that gift I got from him. You know, art is different things to different people...but some people are just gifted with a talent and they should make their contributions to the world in whatever way they want to and they should have the freedom to make their contributions, even if this is in a figurative way....... After high school I decided that I wanted to do Fine Art at university and I really enjoyed the course. I then taught for two years, but then my son was born. I then decided to stay at home and work from home by doing stained-glass pieces.

Q. As a Muslim artist, what is your response to the prohibitions of imagery which are stated in the Hadith?

A. You know, I took part in an exhibition in Laudium, Pretoria about two years ago. There was a Mr Tayob (a very famous architect) who showed some very interesting slides on mosques overseas as he was widely- travelled. What surprised me was one of the slides which showed a toilet sign of male and female faces...and this was an Islamic city..., so I enquired about it. I said, howcome people make such a big issue of it and he said that it was just South Africans who did this.

Q. Do you feel that Muslim artists should fulfil a profoundly Islamic aesthetic in their work?

A. No, not at all.

Q. As a Muslim, how did you respond to the Life-Drawing course at university?

A. Actually, figure-drawing was really one of my very strong subjects because I enjoyed it thoroughly, especially charcoal and pencil drawings, things like that. You know, we are part of God's creation just like the landscape and the trees and things. Why should we as artists, differentiate between what we draw?...I just think that one can't really suppress artistic talent. Maybe you can learn to draw but nine out of ten times it is an inborn talent and it doesn't matter in which medium or in which way one fulfils this inborn talent...

My interest in stained-glass and the Islamic aspect of it stems from the fact that it excites me because it is quite rare on stained-glass and more common with pottery. I feel it just works so well together...you know it is a Victorian art but then certain types of Arabic script, like Kufic and Arabesque lends itself very beautifully to the medium of stained-glass. Yes, I do a lot of calligraphy in the medium - it works well....You know, Muslim people love to adorn their homes with Islamic calligraphy and ornamental prints and paintings.

A negative aspect is that Muslim people feel that it is safe to have something they've seen in other people's homes, for example, Kalangar Ali frames set on velvet. Sometimes it becomes a matter of a status symbol for Muslims to own - it's nothing artistic or nothing original, but Muslims really love that. They feel safe to buy something like that and stained-glass is something new, they're very hesitant to venture into buying this. So I work with commissions because if I make a piece of work, someone may not like the colour and then I sit with the piece. I've done lots of interesting projects for homes. The biggest project I've done was for a home in Westville - it was an Islamic piece in the pool area. The pool is in the centre of the house. I did a stained-glass piece of a whole Kalimah in the shape of a house. That took me about three months to do. I've also done a stained-glass piece about two metres high for a niche which originally had a figure of a matador. When the Muslims bought this house, they decided to replace the figure with an Islamic, stained-glass piece.......

Personally, I don't mind having figures in the home. I also adorn my home with religious, calligraphic hangings. So I support all forms of art. I'm sure that if my father was alive he would have encouraged me with everything that I am doing.

Interview no.3 - Kulsum Motala - Ceramicist

Q. Kulsum, tell me a bit about yourself, your artistic interests, activities etc. and your experiences as a Muslim artist.

A. When I went over to England with my husband, that's where everything began. That's where I decided that ceramics was what I wanted to be with. We lived in Coventry for three years and both my husband and I studied during that time. Ofcourse, I studied Fine Art. I wasn't sure what I was going to do when I got back or whether it was going to be viable in this country, you know, whether people would accept different forms of art. You know, in Coventry there are all kinds of people. I don't think there was a problem with the Muslims when it came to drawing figures. We did all types of arts and crafts. When Envor (husband) and I got back, it was a case of trial and error. I decided to take on some students later on. We worked out of my garage initially. Basically these were religiously

conservative students whom I taught. They did a lot of form, but without the features. This shows that they do have that fear in them....

When it comes to myself, I am very versatile. I do everything. It is up to the individual whether you want to make mugs for the rest of your life and be happy with that and not offend the world. But as a true artist, you want to express all the time - it grows everyday. I'm learning and trying different things everyday. I work with clay, a lot of wheel-thrown work, with wood, with glass, anything that I can get hold of and anything that inspires me.. Part of my work is a bit of production because one can't just survive as an artist. The clienteles' demands are not fine-art-orientated. Their awareness and appreciation of artistic stuff is quite limited...I think that a lot of it has to do with fear. You know, if you are afraid of something, or if you are being victimised by other people, then obviously you are going to follow a particular path to make it easier for yourself so as not to offend others. But deep down, you are oppressing yourself. It shouldn't be like that....

I just think that the choice is up to the individual and every individual is accountable for his own deeds and should there be a judgement, then we should bear the consequences. The thing is for us to use our talents sincerely and not to abuse it.

Interview no. 4 - Rashida Haffajee

"In Islam your intentions are very important - even in prayer, your intentions are more important than the actual act. A lot of people do things at face value but their intentions are not right. In this case, what is the point? So in that way you can say that figurative imagery is okay, but as a Muslim, I still don't feel right. The very fact that our Prophet disapproved of it makes me feel that I should rather leave it out."

Interview no.5 - Ayesha Adams

"I would consider myself a liberal, but a balanced Muslim in the sense that I am strict in some ways, but prepared to give and take in others. My function as a Muslim woman is to raise good children and to be a good wife without losing track of my artistic endeavours. But definitely, my priorities lie with my family. They come before my art....

I would say that my religion has had a major influence on my work because the market for which I provide the work [i.e. the Muslim community] dictates this approach. I do enjoy other types of work, although the focus is very Islamic. I'd love to do political works, for instance, but devoting myself totally to my art would be too taxing on my children and they are my priority. Western notions of artistic involvement means complete dedication in the

field of promotions and exhibitions etc. which would be unfair on my children. In this sense I have restricted myself, not anyone else. I am very fulfilled and wouldn't want to compromise my family for my art. A few years back my ideologies would have been very different, but experiences in life change your attitudes, like marriage, for example.

Regarding the question of imagery, I think that perceptions and the ability to differentiate between what is good / acceptable and what is bad / idolatrous / revered, is needed. Some people who oppose photography and imagery conform to certain Islamic standards, but they may have shortcomings in other important aspects e.g. laxity in the way they raise their children, allowing them to go out etc. So in some ways I am very strict and in others e.g. the issue of imagery, I am not. I've been drawing since I was about three or four years old and I can remember my first drawing to be a figure and not a flower.

Generally, I don't have any qualms about adorning the home with figurative imagery, but I don't do this because it tends to offend others at times. It all just stems from the taboo associated with reverence as, we, as Muslims grew up with this and it remains instilled within us. My view though, is often seen by others as heretic or eccentric....

There is definitely a lack of Muslim artists locally. Art definitely needs to be given more credibility, not only amongst Muslims but in South Africa in general. In the past, the concentration has been on craft more than art. Art needs to be raised to an academic level and given more credibility, especially in the Muslim community."

Appendix 4:

The fourth stage of the field research involved the selection of a spectrum of local Muslims who were then distributed questionnaires and asked to respond to these. The respondents were divided into various groups and specific questionnaires designed for each group separately. An investigation into the artistic preferences amongst Durban Muslims in general, in relation to Islamic doctrine concerning representational imagery, was conducted with the aid of the questionnaires.

Responses to the questionnaires numbered 136 in total. Results were tabulated separately for each group of respondents. Combined with the lengthy interviews conducted with the artists and religious leaders, the information acquired on contemporary Muslim attitudes toward art and representational imagery in Durban, seemed sufficient enough to reach some conclusion. In closing, the findings on local attitudes would then be compared to the findings on attitudes abroad, as is revealed by the international correspondence.

I have provided a copy of the several different questionnaires which were distributed on the following page.

QUESTIONNAIRE NO. 1   **MUSLIM ART PUPILS: PRIMARY SCHOOL**

NAME:

AGE:

SCHOOL:

INSTRUCTION: PLACE A CROSS IN THE APPROPRIATE SPACE PROVIDED

1. Do you enjoy art eg. drawing, painting or modelling clay?

a)	Yes	
b)	No	

2. Do you like to draw people?

a)	Yes	
b)	No	

3. Do you like to draw animals?

a)	Yes	
b)	No	

4. What do you like to draw or paint best?

----

5. Which do you prefer?

a)	Books with colourful pictures	
b)	Books without colourful pictures	

6. Did your parents or guardians ever buy you a colouring book?

a)	Yes	
b)	No	

7. Do you like colouring books?

a)	Yes	
b)	No	

8. Do you like watching television?

a)	Yes	
b)	No	

9. Which programs on television do you prefer?

a)	Puppets	
b)	Cartoons	
c)	The News	

10. Would you like to be an artist when you grow up?

a)	Yes	
b)	No	

QUESTIONNAIRE NO. 2   **MUSLIM ART PUPILS: HIGH SCHOOL**

NAME:

STANDARD:

SCHOOL:

INSTRUCTIONS: PLACE A CROSS IN THE APPROPRIATE SPACE PROVIDED

1. Do you enjoy art?

a)	Yes	
b)	No	

2. Would you like to choose a career in art?

a)	Yes	
b)	No	

3. Do your parents encourage you to draw, paint or do anything that is creative?

a)	Yes	
b)	No	

4. Do you think that your parents would support you if you chose a career in art ?

a)	Yes	
b)	No	

5. What is your favourite aspect of art? You may choose more than one.

a)	Drawing	
b)	Painting	
c)	Sculpture	
d)	Printing	

6. What subject matter do you prefer? You may choose more than one.

a)	Still Life	
b)	Figures eg. people and animals	
c)	Landscape	
d)	Abstract design	
e)	Islamic calligraphy and patterns	
f)	Nature eg. flowers trees and wildlife	
g)	None of the above (specify)	

7.1. Are you aware that the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) condemned the drawing/ painting/ sculpting of people and animals?

a)	Yes	
b)	No	

7.2. If you answered yes to the above, how did you learn of this?

a)	Through parents or a member of family	
b)	Through a madressah teacher	
c)	Through reading of Islamic literature	
d)	Other	

8. Do you personally feel that painting a portrait or drawing a realistic picture of an animal is *haraam?*

a)	Yes	
b)	No	

9.1. Do you wear clothing with photographs, pictures or cartoon characters on them?

a)	Yes	
b)	No	

9.2. If yes, do you pray while wearing these garments?

a)	Yes	
b)	No	

10. Do you display photographs, pictures, paintings of posters of animals or people on your walls at home?

a)	Yes	
b)	No	

11. How often do you watch television?

a)	Everyday	
b)	Once / twice a week	
c)	Once a month	
d)	Very seldom	

QUESTIONNAIRE NO. 3   MUSLIM PARENTS OF HIGH SCHOOL ART PUPILS

NAME:

OCCUPATION:

ADDRESS:

INSTRUCTION: PLACE A CROSS IN THE APPROPRIATE SPACE PROVIDED

1. Did you as a parent or guardian, encourage your child/ren to draw or paint from a young age?

a) Yes	
b) No	

2. If yes, what were your reasons for encouraging them?

a)	To keep them occupied	
b)	To create a keen interest in art	
c)	Because you thought he / she was talented	

3. What materials did you buy for your child at a young age?

a)	Colouring books and crayons	
b)	Paints	
c)	Clay	
d)	Other	

4. Did you encourage your son/ daughter to choose art as a subject in high school?

a) Yes	
b) No	

5. Would you encourage your son/ daughter to choose a career in art?

a)	Yes
b)	No
c)	Only if it pays well

6. Do you personally feel that drawing pictures of animals or people is *haraam*?

a)	Yes	
b)	No	
c)	Sometimes	

7. Do you allow your children to draw pictures of people and animals?

a)	Yes	
b)	No	

8. Do you display any imagery / photographs of people and animals on the walls of your home?

a)	Yes	
b)	No	

9. Do you keep photo-albums with family pictures etc. at home?

a)	Yes	
b)	No	

10. Do you allow your child/ren to display posters of actors or pop-stars on their room walls?

a)	Yes	
b)	No	

11. Do you have a television in your home?

a)	Yes	
b)	No	

12. Do you attend any art exhibitions?

a)	Yes	
b)	No	

13. If yes, how often do you attend?

a)	Approximately once a month	
b)	Approximately once or twice a year	
c)	Very seldom	

14. Did you encourage your children to enter art competitions?

a)	Yes	
b)	No	

15. Are you as an individual, personally interested in art?

a)	Yes	
b)	No	

16. If yes, do you paint, draw or do anything creative?

a)	Yes	
b)	No	

17. If yes, please specify your artistic activities below:

----

18. Which of the following professions would you like to see your child/ren become involved in?

a)	Doctor	
b)	Lawyer	
c)	Teacher / Lecturer	
d)	Librarian	
e)	Mechanic	
f)	Artist	
g)	Other (specify)	

QUESTIONNAIRE NO. 4   **MUSLIM ART STUDENTS: TERTIARY LEVEL**

NAME :

AGE:

COURSE :

NAME OF INSTITUTION:

INSTRUCTIONS: PLACE A CROSS IN THE APPROPRIATE SPACE PROVIDED

---

1. In which of the following categories would you regard yourself as a Muslim individual?

a)	Conservative	
b)	Moderate	
c)	Practising Muslim	
d)	Liberal	

2. How would you rate your enthusiasm for your artistic field of study?

a)	Very eager	
b)	Keen	
c)	Vaguely interested	

3. Do you have the support of your family in your artistic aims?

a)	Yes	
b)	No	
c)	Partially	

4. What type of subject matter interests you most? You may choose more than one.

a)	Still Life	
b)	Figures	
c)	Abstract design	
d)	Fantasy and cartoon images	
e)	Islamic calligraphy and decorative patterns	
f)	Landscape	
g)	None of the above (specify)	

5.1 Are you aware of the prohibitions of images of living beings stated by the Prophet Muhammad in the *Hadith*?

a)	Yes	
b)	No	

5.2. If you answered yes to the above, how did you become aware of these prohibitions?

a)	Parents/ family members	
b)	Madressah teacher/s	
c)	Islamic literature	

5.3. What are your views regarding the prohibitions? Do you regard these sayings as:

a)	Absolute i.e. pertaining to all types of figurative imagery	
b)	Partial i.e. pertaining only to those with morally bad or idolatrous intentions	
c)	Unauthentic, and do not take them seriously	

6.1 Does your course include figure/ Life-Drawing?

a)	Yes	
b)	No	

6.2. If you answered yes to the above, Do you have any objections to this?

a)	Yes	
b)	No	

7. Do you regard the art of photography as permissible or impermissible according to Islamic values?

a)	Permissible	
b)	Impermissible	
c)	Permissible at some times and impermissible at others, depending on circumstances	

8. Would you regard artistic imagery with a pornographic element as:

a)	Permissible	
b)	Impermissible	

9. Would you regard embellishing a mosque with figurative imagery as:

a)	Permissible	
b)	Impermissible	

10. Do you display any figurative imagery in your home?

a)	Yes	
b)	No	

11. Do you wear any clothing with photographic or animate images?

a)	Yes	
b)	No	

12. Where do you see yourself in the future?

a)	Art teacher / lecturer	
b)	Graphic Designer	
c)	Commercial Artist	
d)	Photographer	
e)	Television Work	
f)	Advertising	
g)	Practising or Professional Fine Artist	
h)	None of the above (specify)	

QUESTIONNAIRE NO. 5   PARENTS OF MUSLIM ART STUDENTS AT TERTIARY LEVEL

NAME:

OCCUPATION:

ADDRESS:

INSTRUCTIONS: PLACE A CROSS IN THE APPROPRIATE SPACE PROVIDED

1. In which of the following categories would you regard yourself as a Muslim individual?

a)	Conservative	
b)	Moderate	
c)	Practising Muslim	
d)	Liberal	

2. Did you as a parent / guardian, encourage your child/ren to draw or paint from a young age?

a)	Yes	
b)	No	

3. If yes, what were your reasons for encouraging them?

a)	To keep them occupied	
b)	To create a keen interest in art	
c)	Because you thought he / she was talented	

4. What art materials did you buy for your child/ren at a young age?

a)	Colouring books and crayons	
b)	Paints	
c)	Clay	
d)	Other	

5.1 Did you support your son / daughter's decision to choose a career in the art field?

a)	Yes	
b)	No	

5.2. If you answered no the above, state reason/s below:

6.1. Are you aware of the prohibitions of images of living beings stated in the *Hadith?*

a)	Yes	
b)	No	

6.2. Do you agree with your son / daughter drawing / sketching / painting images of people or animals as part of his / her art course?

a)	Yes	
b)	No	

6.3. If you answered no to the above, would you prefer that your son / daughter avoid drawing such images?

a)	Yes	
b)	No	

7. Do you allow your child/ren to display posters of pop-stars, actresses or loved ones on their room walls?

a)	Yes	
b)	No	

8. Do you display ornaments / sculptures of animals or people in your home?

a)	Yes	
b)	No	

9. What kind of art do you prefer to adorn your home with?

a)	Islamic calligraphy and pattern	
b)	Abstract Design	
c)	Figure-drawings, paintings or prints	
d)	Sculptures	
e)	Photographs	
f)	Portraits	
g)	Landscape paintings	

10. Do you have a photo-album with family pictures etc. at home?

a)	Yes	
b)	No	

11. Do you have a television in your home?

a)	Yes	
b)	No	

12.1. Are you as an individual, personally interested in art?

a)	Yes	
b)	No	

12.2. If you answered yes to the above, do you draw, paint or do anything creative?

a)	Yes	
b)	No	

12.3 If yes, state this artistic activity below:

13.1. Do you attend any art exhibitions?

a)	Yes	
b)	No	

13.2. If yes, how often do you attend?

a)	Once a week	
b)	Approximately once a month	
c)	Approximately once or twice a year	
d)	Very seldom	

QUESTIONNAIRE NO. 6   **MUSLIM ART TEACHERS / LECTURERS**

NAME:

SCHOOL / INSTITUTION:

INSTRUCTIONS: PLACE A CROSS IN THE APPROPRIATE SPACE PROVIDED

1. In which of the following categories would you regard yourself as a Muslim individual?

a)	Conservative	
b)	Moderate	
c)	Practising Muslim	
d)	Liberal	

2. As a teacher, do you observe a lack of interest among the Muslim students in the field of art?

a)	Yes	
b)	No	

3.1. Are you aware of the injunctions in the *Hadith*, prohibiting the drawing / painting / sculpting of animate objects?

a)	Yes	
b)	No	

3.2. If you answered yes to the above, what are your views regarding these prohibitions? Do you regard them as:

a)	Absolute i.e. pertaining to all figurative imagery	
b)	Partial i.e. pertaining only to those images with a morally bad or idolatrous content	
c)	Unauthentic and do not take them seriously	

4. As a Muslim teacher, do you avoid teaching skills in figure-drawing?

a)	Yes	
b)	No	

6. How would you rate your involvement in your own art work, aside from teaching?

a)	Extensive	
b)	Mediocre	
c)	Minimal	

153

7. Do you make use of figures in the subject-matter of your own work?

| a) | Yes | |
| b) | No | |

8. What are your artistic preferences? You may choose more than one.

a)	Islamic calligraphy and decorative pattern	
b)	Abstract Design	
c)	Figural art	
d)	Still Life	
e)	None of the above (specify)	

9. Do you regard the art of photography as permissible or impermissible according to Islamic values?

| a) | Permissible | |
| b) | Impermissible | |

10. Do you display any figurative imagery in your home?

| a) | Yes | |
| b) | No | |

11. Do you wear any clothing with figurative imagery?

| a) | Yes | |
| b) | No | |

12. Would you regard artistic imagery with a pornographic element as:

| a) | Permissible | |
| b) | Impermissible | |

13. Would you regard embellishing a mosque with figurative imagery as:

| a) | Permissible | |
| b) | Impermissible | |

QUESTIONNAIRE NO. 7   **MUSLIM ARTISTS**

NAME:

AGE:

ADDRESS:

INSTRUCTIONS: PLACE A CROSS IN THE APPROPRIATE SPACE PROVIDED

1. In which of the following categories would regard yourself as a Muslim individual?

a)	Conservative	
b)	Moderate	
c)	Practising Muslim	
d)	Liberal	

2. How would you rate your interest in art?

a)	Enthusiastic	
b)	Mediocre	
c)	Minimal	

3. What are your artistic preferences?

a)	Still Life	
b)	Figures	
c)	Abstract Design	
d)	Islamic calligraphy and decorative pattern	
e)	Landscape	
f)	None of the above (specify)	

4. Did you have the support of parents and family in your artistic aims?

a)	Yes	
b)	No	

5. Do you feel that your religion has had:

a)	A major influence on your work	
b)	A minor influence on your work	
c)	No influence on your work at all	

6.1. Are you aware of the injunctions prohibiting the drawing, painting or sculpting of animate images, stated in the *Hadith*?

a) Yes	
b) No	

6.2. If you answered yes to the above, what are your views regarding these prohibitions?

Do you regard them as:

a)	Absolute i.e. pertaining to all forms of figurative imagery	
b)	Partial i.e. pertaining only to those images with morally bad / idolatrous content	
c)	Inauthentic and do not take them seriously	

7. Does your artistic imagery include representations of people or animals?

a) Yes	
b) No	

8. Would you regard the art of photography as permissible or impermissible according to Islamic values?

a)	Permissible	
b)	Impermissible	
c)	Permissible at some times and impermissible at others, depending on circumstances	

9. Do you display any photographs or paintings of animate imagery in your home?

a) Yes	
b) No	

10. Do you wear any clothing with photographic or animate images?

a) Yes	
b) No	

11. Would you regard embellishing a mosque with figurative imagery as:

a)	Permissible	
b)	Impermissible	

12. Would you regard artistic imagery with a pornographic element as:

a)	Permissible	
b)	Impermissible	

13. Into which of the following categories would you regard yourself as a creative individual?

a) Practising Muslim artist	
b) Hobby artist / crafts-person	

14. In the space provided below, please briefly describe the content of your art?

----

15. If you regard yourself as a practising Muslim artist, have you participated in any exhibitions to date?

a) Yes	
b) No	

16. Do you attend any art exhibitions?

a) Yes	
b) No	

17. If you answered yes to the above, how often do you attend?

a) Approximately once a month	
b) Approximately once or twice a year	
c) Very seldom	

18. Do you feel that there is a lack of emphasis and interest in the field of art among local Muslims?

a) Yes	
b) No	

19. Would you like to see an increase in the numbers of local Muslim artists locally?

a) Yes	
b) No	

QUESTIONNAIRE NO. 8   **MUSLIM JURISTS**

NAME:

AGE:

INSTRUCTIONS: PLACE A CROSS IN THE APPROPRIATE SPACE PROVIDED

1. How would you rate your knowledge of art?

a)	Extensive	
b)	Average	
c)	Minimal	

2.1. Would you as a religious leader in the community, encourage art (in the capacity of either a career or hobby), to young Muslim individuals?

a)	Yes	
b)	No	

2.2. If no, state reasons below:

----

3. How would you rate your interest in art?

a)	Extensive	
b)	Average	
c)	Minimal	

4. Do you feel that art plays an important role in Islamic society?

a)	Yes	
b)	No	

5. What are your views regarding the injunctions in the Hadith which prohibit images of animate objects eg. people and animals? Do you regard them as:

a)	Absolute i.e. pertaining to all forms of animate imagery	
b)	Partial i.e. pertaining only to those images with morally bad / idolatrous content	

6. If you chose (a), do you regard participation in artistic activity as a blasphemous act?

a)	Yes	
b)	No	

7. Do you favour a strict, literal interpretation of these prohibitions without the interference of human reason?

a)	Yes	
b)	No	

8. Do you feel that the prohibitions should be obeyed because they are part of the Shari'ah?

a)	Yes	
b)	No	

9. In your opinion, are there any exceptions to the rule?

a)	Yes	
b)	No	

10. Which of the following artistic activities would you regard as unlawful for Muslim artists from the list below? You may choose more than one.

a)	Islamic calligraphy and decorative pattern	
b)	Drawing elements from nature	
c)	Still life eg. vase of flowers or bowl of fruit	
d)	Ceramics / pottery	
e)	Sculpture	
f)	Portraits	
g)	Figurative imagery	

11. With the exception of photographs taken for identity-purposes, do you regard photography as haraam?

a)	Yes	
b)	No	

12. In your opinion, are figurative book illustrations (including those in children's books) haraam?

a)	Yes	
b)	No	

13. Would you agree that the prohibitions of imagery were introduced as a protective measure to prevent the persistence of idolatry?

a)	Yes	
b)	No	

14. If an artist's work has no hidden or overt idolatrous intentions, do you believe that his/ her work is permissible?

a)	Yes	
b)	No	

15. Do you believe that Allah's judgement of every individual is based primarily upon the intentions and purpose behind the individual's actions?

a)	Yes	
b)	No	

APPENDIX 5:

It has been pointed out earlier in the study that the Islamic injunctions affecting the production of art, are also applicable to the reception of art among Muslims and the display and adornment of the Muslim home with representational imagery. On these grounds, the questionnaires also probed the attitudes of the respondents in this regard. In addition, attitudes toward the role of the representational image in television and photography etc. , were also examined. The overall findings of the questionnaires pertaining to these issues, are as follows:

Television:

With regards to the images on television, there were inconsistencies observed in relation to images in the visual arts. The interpretations and application of the injunctions concerning the images of television were lenient and flexible amongst the Muslims in the sample survey. All the respondents i.e. 100% collectively revealed that they watched television regularly, leading one to believe that their apprehensions about imagery were confined to the use of images in the visual arts alone. This was the case even though some of the *ulama* specifically pointed out that representational images are *haraam,* regardless of their means of production.. Perhaps this is the case because the television can be switched off conveniently at prayer times, or because those who watch television are not involved in creating these images. For whatever reasons, it is obvious that Muslims are much more tolerant to the images on the screen than for instance, a picture of a bird displayed on the wall.

These findings were similar to those of a study conducted on artistic acculturation and diffusion among Muslims in the United States. In that particular study, it was observed that Muslim children were widely exposed to the non-Islamic influences of television even in the homes of Islamically committed members of the Muslim community (Al-Faruqi, 1982:97). In both cases , this was despite the fact that imagery on television poses more of a threat to the diffusion of Islamic identity than does representational imagery in art. It re-inforces the idea that Islamic principles such as *Tawhid,* with which representational images in art can sometimes interfere, is the overriding factor amongst Muslims, and that issues of identity, though relevant, are only peripheral to Islamic beliefs. This also explains why Muslims in Durban for instance, enforce rigorously Islam's abhorrence of images, but are much more lenient when it comes to code of dress etc. which is not an immediate threat to Islamic monotheism.

Photography:

The attitudes of the respondents in the sample survey toward photography were probed on two levels. When directed at art students, the questions pertained to photography as part of their respective art courses. When directed at the general Muslims in the sample, such as parents, the questions pertained to photography in the realm of family pictures and albums.

The findings revealed that the Muslims in the sample survey had no objections at all to ordinary photography because there was a 100% incidence of Muslims keeping photo-albums in their homes. Serious reservations were only observed when it came to the display of these in and around the home. Albums remain common because they are viewed and then put away at one's convenience. The opinions of the *ulama* who condemned photography altogether, were thus widely ignored. The respondents, therefore, favoured considerable flexibility of the *Shari'ah* in this regard, and very little flexibility concerning images in the visual arts.

With regards to photography as an art form, two thirds of the students believed that this was permissible, provided that the subject matter does not interfere with Islamic fundamentals. In fact, the photography of a particular student from the MLSultan Technikon in Durban concentrates largely on representational subjects. Ironically, she uses these specifically to convey an Islamic message in her work, even though the use of such images have been openly condemned by many of the *ulama*. The proliferation of such work will thus always be checked by religious zeal.

Imagery Display in the Home:

When it came to the reception of imagery in the homes of Muslims, the data on the entire sample pointed to a general abstinence from this practice. The interpretation and application of the *Hadith* in this regard was strict. The major reason for this is that images are excluded entirely from Islamic ritual and prayer because they serve as a distraction during the act of praying, or could inadvertently become the object of prayer in some instances.

The general universal Islamic tendency to reject this practice of adorning the home with images, is thus echoed by the Muslims of the sample survey in Durban. Those in the sample survey who favoured such practices were a small minority. The highest incidence of this recorded in the survey was 26% and this was common only to those Muslim art students who favoured a moderate interpretation of text. Incidences of this practice amongst the adults in the sample survey was extremely low, especially when they were

questioned about whether they displayed or allowed the display of photographs of famous people, such as entertainers and actors etc. in the home. This points to adherence of advice from the *ulama* because such tendencies of excessive glorification of people or beings other than Allah were abhorred in Islam, and could subsequently lead to *Shirk*.

The Wearing of Clothing with Representational Imagery:

Incidences of Muslims in the sample who wear clothing with representational imagery were also low, and were mostly observed amongst some of the younger respondents . Even in such instances, important Islamic principles were taken into consideration when these clothes were worn. For example, while 63% of the Muslim art pupils at high school admitted that they did wear clothing with representational imagery, only 6% of them said that they prayed whilst wearing such clothing.

Thus, although there were high incidences of an enjoyment for art as a subject at school, results were low when it came to the display of images in the home, praying in the presence of these, or wearing clothes with imagery whilst praying. These tendencies distinguish the Muslim art student from the non-Muslim art student and highlights the preservation of their Islamic identity. This also indicates that the market for art amongst Muslims in Durban are subjected to all these complex issues raised in these notes. This poses incredible drawbacks for the Muslim artist in Durban, especially those who intend making a living from their art. It seems that their art has to remain within the traditional Islamic paradigm in order to receive the full, uninhibited support of this community.

APPENDIX 6 :

The results of the questionnaires were tabulated. The most important findings of each questionnaire are indicated in the graphs below:

MUSLIM ART PUPILS: PRIMARY SCHOOL LEVEL
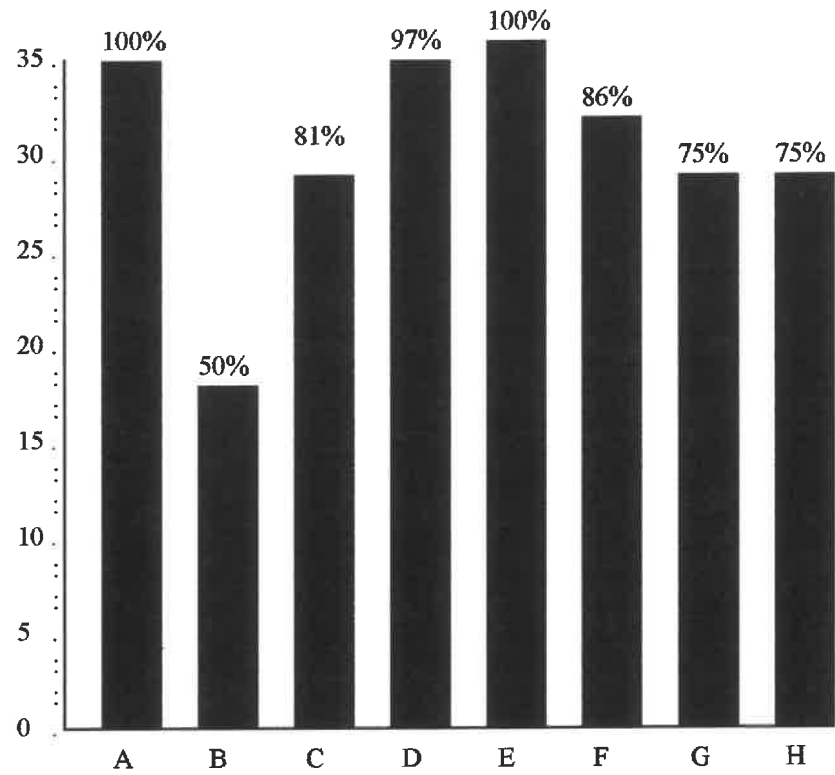
A - Enjoy art at school
B - Like to draw people
C - Like to draw animals
D - Were given colouring books
E - Enjoyed watching television
F - Choose cartoons as best television program
G - Preferred illustrated educational books
H - Wanted to be artists as adults

Graph 1: 36 Respondents

MUSLIM ART PUPILS: HIGH SCHOOL
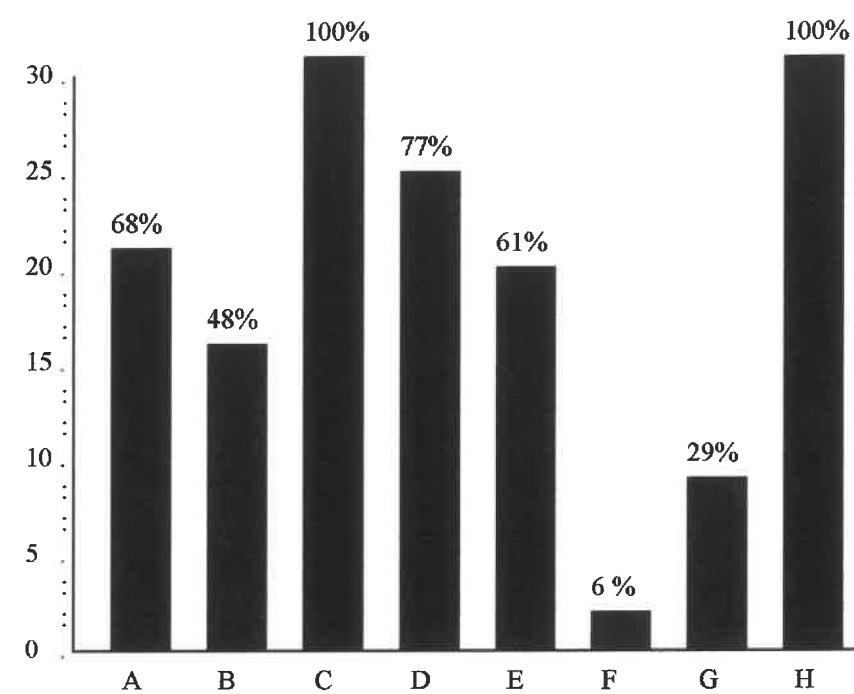
A - Aware of the hadith on representational imagery
B - Interpret all forms of representational imagery as haraam
C - Enjoy doing art as a school subject
D - Interested in a career in the art field
E - Wear clothing with representational imagery
F - Pray while wearing clothing with representational imagery
G - Display photographs/ posters of actresses etc. On room wall
H - Watch television frequently

Graph 2: 31 Respondents

MUSLIM PARENTS OF HIGH SCHOOL ART PUPILS
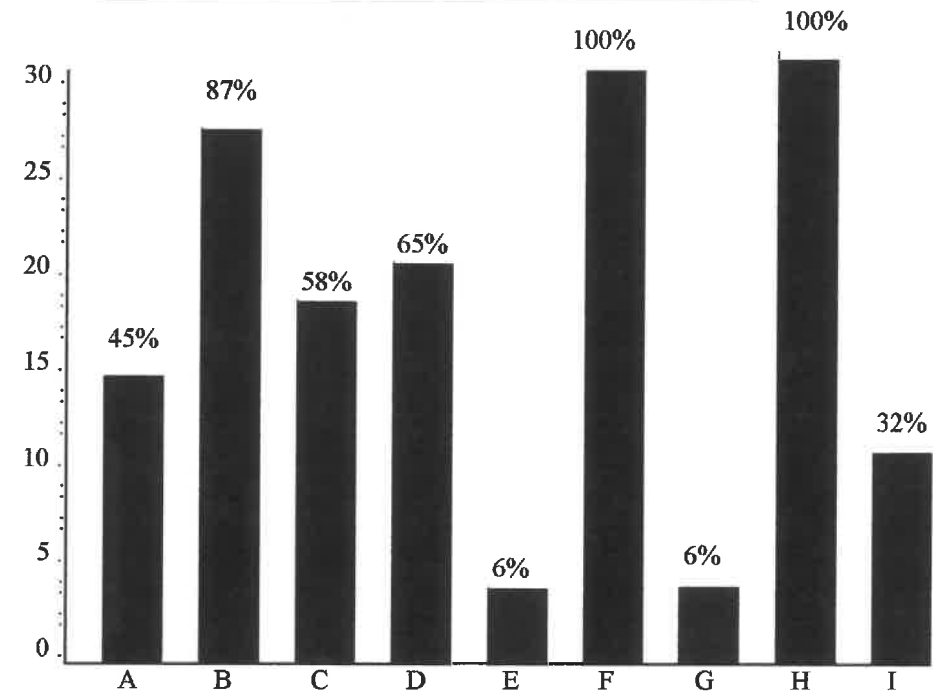
A - Regard representational imagery as haraam
B - Encouraged art from a young age
C - Encouraged art as a career
D - Allow children to draw images
E - Allow children to display posters
F - Keep photo albums at home
G - Adorn home with representational images
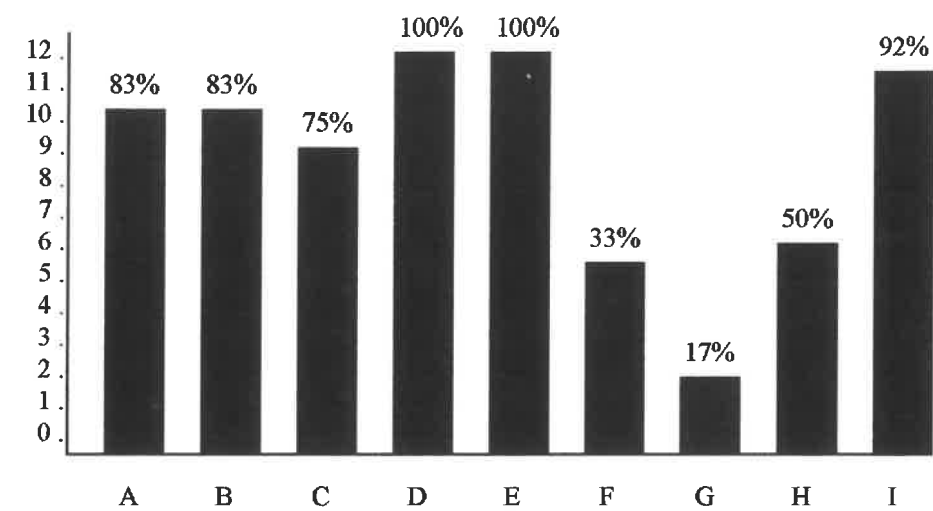H - Have television in home
I - Attended art exhibitions

Graph 3: 31 Respondents

MUSLIM ART STUDENT IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS
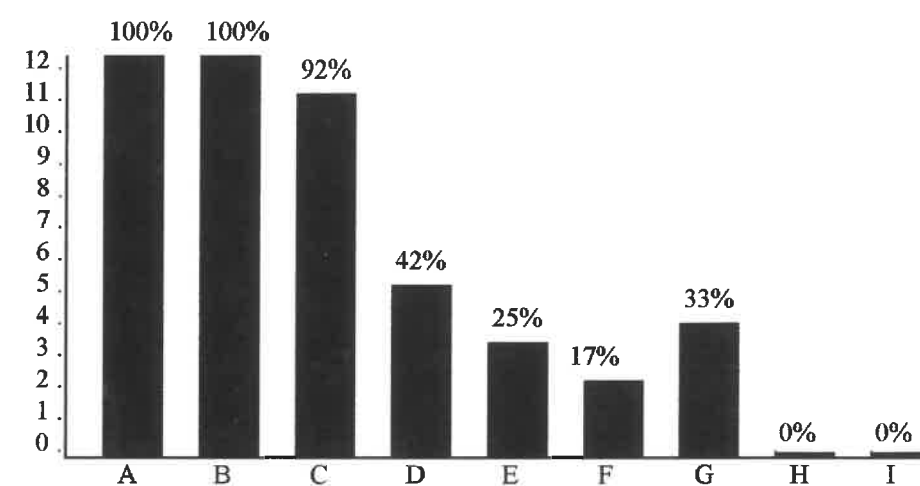
A - Aware of hadith on representational imagery
B - Enthusiastic about artistic field of study
C - Art course includes figure/ life drawing
D - Have some reservations about figure/ life drawing
E - Wear clothing with representational imagery
F - Display representational images/ posters of actors etc. in the home
G - Regard the art of photography as impermissible according to Islam
H - Regard pornographic art as permissible
I - Regard the embellishment of a mosque with representational images as
   acceptable

Graph 4: 12 Respondents

MUSLIM PARENTS OF ART STUDENTS: TERTIARY LEVEL

A - Aware of the hadith on representational imagery
B - Support son / daughter's decision to choose art career
C - Agree with son / daughter drawing images as part of art course
D - Have a television in the home
E - Keep a photo album in the home
F - Allow children to display pictures/ photos of actors etc. in their room
G - Display ornaments of animals or portraits etc. in the home
H - Attend art exhibitions
I - Prefer artworks with Islamic calligraphy and pattern in the home

Graph 5: 12 Respondents

MUSLIM ART TEACHERS AND LECTURERS
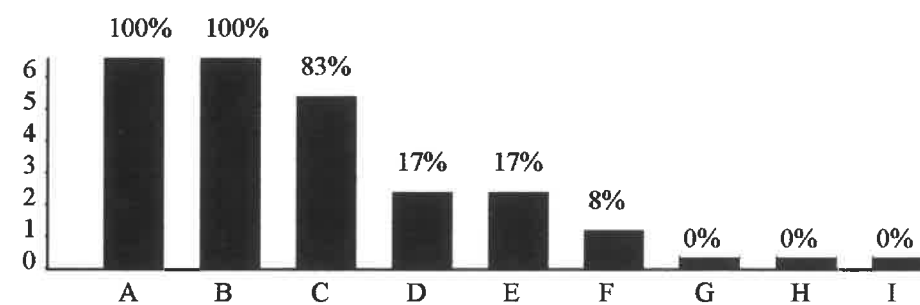
A - Aware of hadith on representational imagery
B - Encourage and promote art amongst young Muslims
C - Make use of representational imagery in their personal artworks
D - Avoid teaching skills in figure drawing
E - Wear clothing with representational imagery
F - Display representational imagery in their home
G - Regard the art of photography as impermissible
H - Regard pornographic art as permissible
I - regard the embellishment of a mosque with representational images as
acceptable

Graph 6: 6 Respondents

MUSLIM ARTISTS
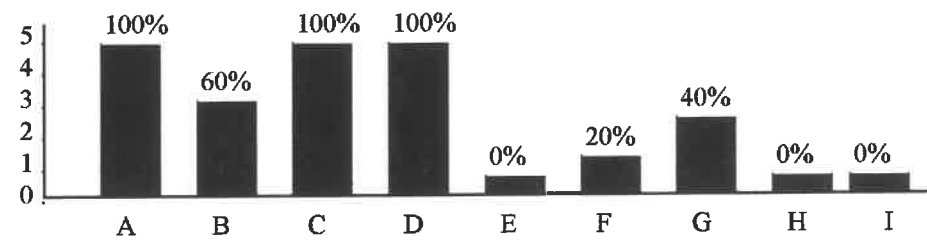
A - Aware of the hadith pertaining to representational imagery
B - Personal artistic subject matter includes representational imagery
C - Feel that there is a lack of interest in art amongst local Muslims
D - Would like to see an increase in the number of local Muslim artists
E - Display representational imagery in their home
F - Wear clothing with representational imagery
G - Regard photography as permissible
H - Regard pornography as permissible
I - Regard the embellishment of a mosque with representational imagery
  as permissible

Graph 7: 5 respondents

MUSLIM JURISTS
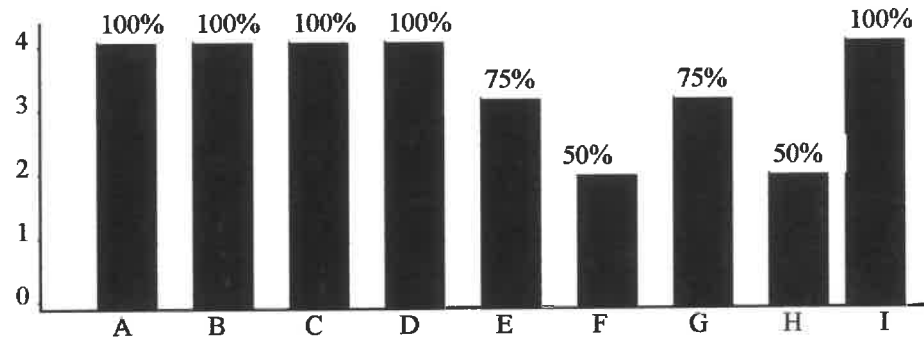
A - Regard participation in representational art as a blasphemous act
B - Regard representational imagery as haraam
C - Agree that the prohibitions of imagery were introduced to prevent idolatry
D - Feel that prohibitions should be obeyed because they are part of the Shari'ah
E - Favour a strict literal interpretation of the Hadith pertaining to imagery
F - Denied that an artist's work is permissible if it has no idolatrous intentions
G - Regard television as haraam
H - Regard illustrations in children's story books as permissible
I - Favour only Islamic calligraphy and pattern, still life or nature in art

Graph 8 : 4 Respondents

GLOSSARY

al-Buraq	:	winged steed which was used by the prophet Muhammad on the eve of his Mi'raj
adhan	:	the Muslim call to prayer, usually in the mosque
amburaku	:	West African term for al-Buraq
asnam	:	(plural) silver, wooden and golden images worshipped in pre-Islamic Arabia (sing. sanam)
awthan	:	(plural) stone images worshipped in pre-Islamic Arabia (sing. wathan)
bayt	:	house
Din	:	faith, religion, creed, belief
fatwa	:	legal opinion issued by a religious authority
Hadith	:	sayings of the Prophet Muhammad
halaal	:	lawful
haraam	:	unlawful
Hubal	:	chief of the gods in pre-Islamic Arabia / chief idol
iman	:	faith, belief
Isra	:	Prophet Muhammad's night journey from Mecca to the heavens via Jerusalem
Jahiliyah	:	the pre-Islamic era, referred to in Islamic literature as the 'period of ignorance'
Jahannam	:	Hell
Ka'bah	:	the grand mosque in Mecca, Saudi Arabia
kalimah	:	the phrase declaring belief in the oneness of God and the prophethood of Muhammad ; one of the basic tenets of Islam
khutbah	:	the Friday sermon conducted in the mosque
kibr	:	pride
kuffar	:	a denial of the belief in God and in His oneness
madressah	:	Islamic school attended by Muslims, especially children
al-Miraj	:	Prophet Muhammad's nocturnal ascent to the dome of the Seven Heavens.
Moulana	:	the title given to Muslim religious leaders

Muharram : the first month of the Muslim calendar

Musawwir : one of the 99 attributes of Allah meaning Fashioner, Shaper, Creator

purdah : garb worn by some Muslim women to cover all parts of the body except the eyes, hands and feet

qidh : pre-Islamic Arabian practice of throwing divining arrows to seek advice

Qur'an : the holy book / Divine Revelation of Muslims

raka'at : (sing. rak'ah) one section of prayer completing prostration and kneeling

Ramadaan : the ninth month of the Islamic calendar; Month of fasting in which the Qur'an was revealed

Sahaba : (sing. sahabi) the companions of the Prophet Muhammad

salaah : the five daily prayers compulsory for Muslims

sama : session of devotional singing organised by certain Sufi orders under very rigid and strict conditions

Shahada : Declaration of faith: I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship besides Allah and that Muhammad is his messenger

Shaitaan : the Devil (Satan)

Shari'ah : Islamic Law

Shirk : the unlawful act of ascribing partners to Allah

surah : (plural: suwar) picture

sunnah : the actions / lifestyle of the Prophet Muhammad

ta'abbudi : Absolute acceptance of Allah's commands

tasalima : West African term for witches

Tahajjud : name of the voluntary prayer performed during the very early hours of the morning before dawn-break

tasweer : (plural: tasawir) picture

Tawhid : the central Islamic belief of the oneness of God

ta'ziyyah : a condolence procession held on the 10th of Muharram (1st month of the Islamic calendar) observing the martyrdom of Husain, a grandson of the Prophet Muhammad,

generally observed by Shi'ite Muslims

ulama : Muslim religious scholars

ummah : the Muslim community of the world

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abdel-Meguid, A.A. (1955), The impact of Western Culture and Civilization on the Arab World (India, Islamic Quarterly Vol.8 pp.36 - 54)

Adams, Ayesha (1995), Unpublished Interview (by F. Galdhari) Reservoir Hills, Durban (June)

Agger, B. (1992), Cultural Studies as Critical Theory (London, Farmer Press)

Ahmed, F.A. (1992), Young Muslims Forging a New Identity (India, Today Magazine, Cover Story)

Ahmed, S.A. (1992), Post - Modernism and Islam (London, Routledge)

Ahmed, S.A. (1993), Living Islam (England, Clays Limited)

Akbarabadi, S.A. (1983), Islamic Law in Modern Times (South Africa, Al-ilm Journal of the Centre for Research in Islamic Studies Vol.3 No.1)

Albarn, K. (1974), The Language of Pattern : An Inquiry Inspired by Islamic Decoration (London, Thames and Hudson)

Al-Bukhari and Muslim , Riyadh-us-Saleheen (1986), Vol.2 (International Islamic Publishers Limited, Pakistan)

Al-Faruqi, A.R. and L.L. (1986), The Cultural Atlas of Islam (New York, Macmillan Publishing Company)

Al-Faruqi, A.R. (1980), Islam and Culture (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, Angatan Belia)

Al-Faruqi, A.R. (1982), Tawhid : Its Implications for Islamic Thought and Life (U.S.A., International Institute of Islamic Thought)

Al-Faruqi, L.L. (1982), ' Al- Ghazzali on Sama' and 'Artistic Acculturation and Diffusion Among Muslims of the United States ' in Essays in Islamic and Comparative Studies (U.S.A., Temple University, International Institute of Islamic Thought)

Al-Qaradawi, Y. (1990), Islamic Reawakening Between Rejectionism and Extremism (U.S.A., American Trust Publications Limited)

Al-Qaradawi, Y. (1985), The Lawful and the Prohibited in Islam (U.S.A. American Trust Publications Limited, Reprinted by International Book Services, Queen Street, Durban)

Ansari, Z.A. (1966), 'Some Thoughts on Our Educational and Cultural Problems' (South Africa, Islamic Educational Quarterly)

Arnold, Sir Thomas W. , (1965) , Painting in Islam - A study of the Place of Pictorial Art in Muslim Culture (London, Dover Publications Limited)

Arafat, W.N. (1968) , Fact and Fiction in the History of Pre-Islamic Idol Worship (Islamic Quarterly, Vol.12 , No.1&2)

Asad, M.A. (1994) , 'Alien Forces of Disunity' (The Muslim World League Journal VOl.22 , No.6)

Bailey, K.D. (1987) , Methods of Social Research - 3rd ed. (London, Collier Macmillan Publishers, The Free Press)

Barry, G. (1964) , Man and the Artist - His Creative Imagination (London, Mac Donald and Company Limited)

Barzun, J. (1975) , The Use and Abuse of Art - The A.W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts (London, Princeton University Press)

Bazin, G. (1958) , A Concise History Of Art (London, Thames and Hudson)

Bravmann, R.A. (1983) , African Islam (U.S.A., Washington D.C. Smithsonian Institution Press)

Bravmann, R.A. (1974) , Islam and Tribal Art in West Africa (U.S.A., New York, Cambridge University Press)

Brend, B. (1991) , Islamic Art (London, British Museum Press)

Brockelmann, C. (1982) , History of Islamic Peoples (Great Britain, Routledge and Keagan Paul Limited)

Broni, A.K. (1978) , 'Religious Minorities and Muslim Communities' in the Muslim World League Journal (Mecca, Rabitat al-Alam al-Islami Vol.5, No.12)

Burckhardt, T. (1976) , Art of Islam : Language and Meaning (London)

Caesar, E.F. (1970) , Islam (4th ed.) (U.S.A., Barron's Educational Series Inclusive)

Collier, C. (1984) , 'Contemporary Arab Art : The Inner World' in Ahlan Wasahlan, Arabian Airways Magazine (United Arab Emirates)

174

Creswell, K.A.C. (1946) , *'The Lawfulness of Painting in Early Islam'* in Ars Islamica (Vol.11/12)   pp. 159 - 66

Creswell, K.A.C. (1961) , Bibliography of the Architecture, Arts and Crafts of Islam (Cairo,   University Press, Vol.1)

Dangor, S.E. (1991) , 'The Muslim Community in South Africa' (South Africa, Durban, Al-ilm   Journal of the Centre for Research in Islamic Studies, University of Durban-Westville, Vol.11)

Daniel, N. (1960) , Islam and the West , the Making of an Image (Edinburgh)

Dimand, M. (1944) , A Handbook of Muhammadan Art 2nd ed. (New York, Metropolitan   Museum of Art)

Dimand, M. (1937) , 'Studies in Islamic Ornament' in Ars Islamica (Vol. 4 pp. 293 - 337)

Dodd, E. and Khairallah, S. (1981) , The Image of the Word (Lebanon, The American   University of Beirut)

Doi, A.I. (1984) , Shari'ah : The Islamic Law (London, Ta-Ha Publishers Limited)

Doi, A.I. (1970) , Islamic Thought and Culture : Their Impact on Africa With Special Reference to Nigeria, (London, Islamic Quarterly, Vol. 14, Chapter 3)

Doi, A.I. (1992) , 'Duties and Responsibilities of Muslims Living in Non-Muslim States' (Al-ilm Journal of the Centre for Research in Islamic Studies Vol.11, University of Durban-Westville)

Eaton, L.G. (1985) , Islam and the Destiny of Man (U.S.A., New York, State University   of New York Press)

Encyclopaedia of World Art (1958) , Vol.8 (London, Mac Graw Hill Publishing Co. Limited)

Encyclopaedia of Islam (1978) , (Brill, Netherlands, Leiden, Vol.4)

First Encyclopaedia of Islam (1978) , (Brill, U.S.A., Leiden)

Esposito, J.L. (1980) , Islam and Development : Religion and Socio-Political Change (U.S.A., Syracuse University Press)

Ettinghausen, R. and Grabar, O. (1987) , The Art and Architecture of Islam (England, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books)

Ettinghausen, R. (1984) , 'Al-Ghazzali on Beauty' in Islamic art and Archaeology : Collected Papers (Berlin, Gebr. Mann Verlag)

Gardner, H. (1991) , Art Through the Ages (U.S.A., Harcourt Brace and Company)

Gaudefroy, M. (1968) , Muslim Institutions (London, John Dickens and Company Limited)

Gibb, H.A.R. (1975) , Islam (London, Butler and Tanner Limited)

Gombrich, E.H. (n.d.) , The Story of Art , eighth edition revised, (London, Phaidon Press Limited)

Gombrich, E. (1979) , The Sense of Order : A Study in the Psychology of Decorative Art (New York, Ithica)

Grabar, O. (1987) , The Formation of Islamic Art (New Haven and London, Yale University Press)

Grabar, O. (n.d.) , 'Islamic Peoples, Arts of, iv : visual arts' in Encyclopaedia Brittanica - 15th ed. pp. 1001 - 2 , Mamluk Art

Grube, E.J. (1967) , The World of Islam (London, Paul Hamlyn)

Haffajee, Rashida (1993) , Unpublished Interview (by F. Galdhari) Haffajee's Reservoir Hills residence, Durban (August)

Haffajee, Razia (1993) , Unpublished Interview (by F. Galdhari) Haffajee's La Mercy residence, North of Durban (May)

Haddad, Y.Y. and Lummis, A.T. (1987) , Islamic Values in the United States : A Comparative Study (New York, Oxford University Press)

Haddad, Y.Y. (1984) , The Islamic Impact (New York, Syracuse University Press)

Hamidullah, M. (1983) , Introduction to Islam (Pakistan, Lahore, Ashraf Printing Press)

Hasan, A. (1984) , The Doctrine of Ijma in Islam : A Study of the Juridical Principle of Consensus (Islamabad, Islamic Research Institute)

Hathout, M. (1990) , 'Strategies for Muslim Minorities' in The Muslim Digest (South Africa, Durban, Makki Publications Limited)

Hill, D. (1964) , Islamic Architecture and its Decoration (London)

Hourani, A. (1992) , A History of the Arab Peoples (London, Faber & Faber Limited)

Hourani, G.F. (1985) , Reason and Tradition in Islamic Ethics (London, Cambridge University Press)

Islahi, S. (1988) , 'The Real Nature of Muslim Personal Law' in The Muslim Digest (South Africa, Durban, Makki Publications Limited)

Janson, H.W. and A.F. (1988) , A History of Art for Young People (London, Thames and Hudson)

Kelly, M. (1984) , Islam - The Religious and Political Life of a World Community (U.S.A., New York, Praeger Publishers)

Krishtany, K. (1984) , 'Islam, the Semites and the Graven Image" in Arts and the Islamic World Vol.1, No.4 (London, New Century Publishers)

Kroeber, A.L. (1963) , Have Civilizations a Life History - an Anthropologist Looks at History (Berkley, Collected Papers)

Lakhi, C.M. (1984) , 'Islamic Aesthetics : A Reassessment' (Durban, Al-ilm Journal of the Centre for Research in Islamic Studies, University of Durban-Westville, Vol.4)

Leedy, P.D. (1989) , Practical Research (New York, Macmillan Publishing Company)

Lewis, B. (1966) , The Arabs in History (Great Britain, Anchor Press)

Lings, M. (1976) , The Qur'anic Art of Calligraphy and Illumination (England, World of Islam Festival Trust)

Maahir, S. (1966) , 'Pictorial Art in Islam' in The Islamic Review (London)

MacEoin, D. and Al-Shahi, A. (1983) , Islam in the Modern World (Great Britain, Croom Helm Limited)

Mansfield, P. (1976) , The Arabs (London, Cox and Wyman Limited)

Mawdudi, A.A. (1985) , Towards Understanding Islam (United Kingdom, The Islamic Foundation)

Michelle, J. (1978) , Architecture of the Islamic World (London)

Moolla, H. (1993) , Unpublished Interview (By F. Galdhari) Sydenham Islamic Guidance School   Premises, Baizley Ave., Overport, Durban (September)

Moosa, E. (1994) , 'The Muslim Situation in South Africa" in The Muslim World League Journal   (Vol.21, No.12)

Motala, Munira (1993) , Unpublished Interview (by F. Galdhari) Motala's Springfield Park   Residence, Durban (May)

Motala, Kulsum (1993) , Unpublished Interview (by F. Galdhari) Motala's Westville Residence   (June)

Mujlisul Ulama of South Africa, (n.d.) , Photography, Picture-Making and Islam (South Africa, Benoni, Young Men's Muslim Association)

Musawar, N. (1982) , 'Art, Artist and Society' in The Muslim 8th ed. magazine (Forwarded by Mr Shahbaz Khan from Lahore, Pakistan through correspondence with him in 1994)

Nahm, M.C. (1975) , Readings in Philosophy of Art and Aesthetics (.S.A., New Jersey, Prentice   Hall Inclusive)

Nashashibi, S.M. (1994) , Forces of Change : Artists of the Arab World (U.S.A. , Washington D.C. , The National Museum of Women in the Arts)

Nasr, S.H. (1964) , Ideals and Realities of Islam (London, Cambridge University Press)

Nasr, S.H. (1964) , Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines (U.S.A., Massachusets,   Cambridge University Press)

Nasr, S.H. (1987) , Traditional Islam in the Modern World (U.S.A., KPI Limited)

Nasr, S.H. (1987) , Islamic Art and Spirituality (England, Ipswich)

Nasr, S.H. (1991) , Islamic Spirituality Manifestations (U.S.A., New York, Crossroad Publication Company)

Okasha, S. (1981) , The Muslim Painter and the Divine (London, Park Lane Press)

Osman, Y. (1993) , Unpublished Interview (by F. Galdhari) Jamiat'ul Ulama of Natal branch in Durban (May)

Papadopoulo, A. (1979) , Islam and Muslim Art (U.S.A., New York, Harry N. Abrahams Inclusive)

Patel, Y. (1993) , Unpublished Interview (by F. Galdhari) Islamic School in Asherville, Durban   (June)

Pinder, W.R. (1957) , Islamic Art (Benn, London)

Pizzineli, J. (1968) , The Life and Time of Muhammed (London)

Rahman, F. (1966) , Islam (Great Britain, William Clowe and Sons Limited)

Rahman, F. (1982) , Islam and Modernity (London, University of Chicago Press Limited)

Rasjid, H.M. (1980) , Islam and Secularism (Mecca, Muslim World League - The Journal Rabitat al-Alam al-Islami)

Renda, G. (1988) , A History of Turkish Painting (London, University of Washington Press)

Rice, D.T. (1965) , Islamic Art (London)

Rippin, A. (1988) , Approaches to the History of the Interpretation of the Qur'an (London,   Clarendon Press, Oxford)

Saleem, S. (1994) , 'Renaissance' in The Monthly Islamic Journal (Pakistan, Institute of Islamic Research and Education)

Salman, I. (1969) , Islam and Figurative Art in Sumer (Baghdad)

Sayyid, Q. (1977) , Milestones (International Islamic Federation of Student Organizations)

Sema, C. (1993) , Unpublished Interview (by F. Galdhari) Overport, Durban (May)

Stewart, D. (1982) , Patterns and Precision (National Committee to Honour Fourteenth Centennial of Islam, Incl.)

Tayob, A. (1994) , Islamic Resurgence in South Africa - The Muslim Youth Movement (Cape Town,   University of Cape Town Press)

Tulloch, S. (1993) , Reader's Digest Oxford Complete Wordfinder (London, Berkley Square House, The Reader's Digest Association Limited)

Ul-Haqq, M. (1971) , Religion, Secularism and Secular State : The Muslim Case (Journal of Religion and Society, Vol.8 pp. 36 -54)

Verstraete, F.M. (1987) , 'Islamic Art : The Aesthetic Implications of the Shahada' (South African   Journal of Culture and Art History Vol.4, No.1)

Waines, D. (1995) , An Introduction to Islam (Greta Britain, Cambridge University Press)

Watt, W.M. (1996) , A Short History of Islam (England, Oneworld Publications)

Welch, G. (1979) , Calligraphy in the Arts of the Muslim World (Austin, University of Texas Press)

Zaki, M.H. (1956) , Atlas of Muslim Decorative and Pictorial Arts (Cairo, Cairo University Press)

Zuhra, N.N. (1989) , 'Islam and the Modern Theatre in Malaysia : Issues of Theory and Dramatic Criticism' (Muslim Edcational Quarterly Vol.7, No.1, The Islamic Academy)

Additional Reading:

Barkan, L. (1986) , The Gods Made Flesh, Metamorphosis and the Pursuit of Paganism (London, Yale University Press)

Frascina F. and Harris, J. (1992) , Art in Modern Culture (London, Phaidon Press Limited)

Raman, S. (1989) , A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory (Great Britain, Billing and Sons Limited)

Werhane, H. (1984) , Philosophical Issues in Art (New York, Prentice Hall Inclusive)

Von-Grunnebaum, G.E. (1970) , Logic in Classical Islamic Culture (Germany, Otto Harrossowitz)

Yeomans, R. (1994) , 'Islamic Art in the Primary Classroom " in The United Kingdom Muslim Educational Quarterly , Vol.11, No.2 , The Islamic Academy)