ABSTRACT
Photography is nearly one hundred and seventy years old. It had its ups and downs, subjected to criticism and showered with accolades, but not only did it hold its ground against the onslaught from artist and critics belonging to other medium of fine arts, it shattered their monopoly convincingly by sharing the same pedestal on which they stood. In fact it is no longer earth-bound but ventured into deep space to capture the majestically raw beauty of nature’s marvel – the universe. What else could be so magnificently artistic? Consider also the underwater photography which has exposed us to the mysteries of hidden blue in an unimaginably amazing and beautiful manner. The world of fine arts may not belong totally to photography today or in the foreseeable future but it will certainly remain astride with other medium of fine arts.
Sadly enough, despite its age, photography as contemporary fine arts had not caught the imagination of Pakistani artists in the same way as it had of our western counterparts. It seemed to have remained buried under the shadow of other fine art medium for very long, but the wind of change has finally caught up with us in Pakistan during the last five years or so. Despite its commercial downside, the younger generation is looking forward towards the eye of the camera, and many artists practicing other forms of art have realized the necessity of incorporating photography to their repertoire of expertise.
Why it took so long, and what were the major obstacles confronting the assimilation of photography so slowly as contemporary art in Pakistan, and to discover its evolving character within the last five years is the main theme of my dissertation.