



## *Guide to Research at Hirsch Library*

### **Research on a Contemporary Artist**

Before researching the work of an artist from the MFAH collection, the artist's work should be viewed in the museum, if possible. The cultural context and descriptions of works in books and journals will be far more meaningful if you have taken advantage of this opportunity. Most good writing about art begins with careful inspections of the objects themselves, followed by informed library research. If the project includes the compiling of a bibliography, it will be most valuable if a full range of resources is consulted, including reference works, books, and journal articles. Listing on-line sources and survey books is usually much less informative.

To find articles in scholarly journals, use indexes such as *Art Abstracts* or, the *Bibliography of the History of Art*. Exhibition catalogs and books about the holdings of other museums may contain entries written about related objects that could also provide guidance and examples of how to write about art. To find books, use keywords in the on-line catalog. Once relevant titles are located, careful attention to how those items are cataloged will lead to similar books with those subject headings. Footnotes and bibliographies in books and articles can also lead to other sources. University libraries will usually offer further holdings on a subject, and the Electronic Resources Room in the library can be used to access their on-line catalogs.

Sylvan Barnet's, *A Short Guide to Writing About Art*, 6<sup>th</sup> edition, provides a useful description of the process of looking, reading, and writing. For footnote and bibliography formats, the appendix in Barnet is helpful, as is Turabian's *Manual for Writers of Term Papers*, which is available at the library's reference desk.

For additional assistance in your research, please contact the library staff.  
Call 713-639-7325 or e-mail [hirsch@mfa.org](mailto:hirsch@mfa.org).

For purposes of the bibliography listed below:

Resources that are annotated *Ref.* or *Reference* are accessible on the main floor of the library.

*Ready Reference* books are kept behind the information desk.

For other books, give the titles and call numbers to a member of the library staff, who will retrieve the books for you.

Books must be used in the library; they cannot be checked out.

Your assessment of the resources used in your research is always welcome.

---

Listed below are some suggestions for research on contemporary artists.

#### **Reference books**

The St. James Contemporary Series: One- to two-page introductions, including biography, exhibition list, reproductions of works, bibliography, and critical text.

*Contemporary Artists.*

N6490 .C6567 1989 Ref

*Contemporary Designers.*

NK1166 .C66 1990 Ref

*Contemporary Photographers.*

TR139 .C663 1998 Ref

*Contemporary Women Artists.*

N8354 .C66 1999 Ref.

*Who's Who in American Art.* Brief biographical data for over ten thousand American artists, collectors, scholars and administrators.

N6535 .W5 1994 Ref

Numerous reference books on artists from countries or regions like Latin America, Texas, and the West. Women artists and African-American artists are available. Ask library staff members for recommendations.

### **On-line catalog**

**Books** (monographs)

Search under artist's name as subject or keyword.

**Exhibition catalogs.**

**Ephemera files** on individual artists contain press clippings, invitations, reviews, photographs, etc. **Artist Catalog** files are gallery catalogs, exhibitions, and pamphlets of fewer than 50 pages. Search for artists as subjects in the catalog.

### **Critical Reviews and Notices in Periodicals**

*ArtBibliographies Modern.* Detailed abstracts, with coverage from 1974 to present; covers art since the late-19<sup>th</sup> century, and includes reviews, dissertations, and exhibition notices.

*Art Abstracts/Art Index Retrospective.* Index and abstracting service on several hundred art periodicals, from 1929 to the present.

*Bibliography of the History of Art* (BHA). Indexes and abstracts of books and journals on Western art.

*Design & Applied Arts Index.* Index to periodical articles on 20th-century decorative arts and crafts.

*Factiva.* Full-text of recent articles in national newspapers. *djinteractive.com*

### **Information on Art Dealers and Galleries**

*Art in America* summer issue.

*Southwest Art.* Guides to exhibitions at galleries in the Southwest.

*International Directory of Arts, Vol. 2.*

### **Online resources**

*galleryguide.org, artnet.com, askart.com, artincontext.com,* search engines like **Google**, individual artist web pages, and web directories

## Additional sources

*Artist Biographies Master Index*. A guide to finding information on 250,000 artists published before 1985 in other bibliographical lexica. N40 .A78 1986 Ref.

**Index to the Museum of Modern Art Artist Files on Microfiche**. Ephemera on artists collected by MoMA between 1929 and 1993.

*Oxford Companion to Twentieth Century Art*. Artists, terms, styles. N6490 .O94 1981 Ref.

*Twentieth-Century Artists on Art: An Index to Writings, Statements, and Interviews by Artists, Architects, and Designers*. Index to verbal primary source materials. NX456 .R59 1996.

*Artspeak: A Guide to Contemporary Ideas, Movements, and Buzzwords*. N6490 .A87 1997.