

Art History Research Tips + Annotated Bibliographies

ARH 141 Spring 2024

What Counts as a Good Source?

Steer away from places like Wikipedia, SmartHistory, Khan Academy and artstory.com. These are a little too basic for us – we want to find interesting scholarly articles with perspectives and in-depth research to guide our work! Great sources for your paper could include...

- Books and Book Chapters
- Scholarly Articles and Journals
- Exhibition Catalogs
- Exhibition Reviews/News Articles

How to Search for Sources

Use the Art and Art History Research Guide on the Library website:

<https://libguides.lehman.edu/art>

Don't just look up your singular artwork – think about other ways you can get information that will help you understand your artwork, artist, and their place in modern art history as a whole. Try looking up the **artist's name**, the **art movement** they are a part of (Impressionism, Symbolism, etc.) and explore other works and general biographical information. Even if there isn't a lot of work written *directly* about the one artwork you chose, what else can you find out about this artist and their visual approach? How does their work compare to other artists in the same art movement? Who are they influenced by? Who did they influence after them?

OneSearch on the library page is going to be a great starting place to search lots of things at once. Some other helpful sites include:

- **Artstor**: great for searching for hi-res artworks
- **JSTOR**: excellent source for academic articles and even book chapters
- **Met Publications**: catalogues published by the Met Museum
- **NYTimes Digital and Historical**: great for finding exhibition reviews
- **MoMA Publications**: archives and books through MoMA

What Is an Annotated Bibliography?

An annotated bibliography is a bibliography that includes a short summary of each source and why you are planning to include it in your paper. You can put the summary in 1 paragraph (3-5 sentences) after the bibliography entry. See example below:

Berger, Martin A. *Seeing Through Race: A Reinterpretation of Civil Rights Photography*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011.

Berger's book presents a compelling reading of Civil Rights photographs that focuses on their circulation and contextualization within Black media as well as liberal White media. Berger examines how media narratives of Black suffering and White aggression were constructed in order to appeal to a sympathetic White audience, in many ways limiting representation of Black people to a form that would not ultimately threaten White power structures. I hope to use Berger's book to demonstrate that these limiting narratives continue and evolve in the present—as in the Civil Rights era, editors and photographers are still primarily White, and portrayals of unrest and activism in liberal mainstream publications still circumscribe the kinds of Black resistance and existence that are deemed comfortable for White audiences.

Using the Library

Don't be afraid to reach out for help! The library has a lot of helpful resources, including librarians you can chat with 24/7 online (yes, even at 3am). You can also email them or visit in person during regular hours (check the website) and you can make an appointment to get one-on-one help. You can also reach out directly to Martha Lerski, who presented to us and is a great person to talk to about art research! EMAIL: martha.lerski@lehman.cuny.edu

Miscellaneous Tips

Efficient Reading: Skim your sources as you find them to see what's useful. The first and last paragraphs will give you a good sense of what's in there (as will headings and chapter titles in a book). You might not have to read the *whole* book to get what you need – skip to the parts that are most relevant for you and spend the most time reading the sources that you decide are most useful to your paper.

Note-taking: Find a system for yourself to take notes or mark things that are important. Maybe you do this on paper or digitally, but put post-its or highlight or underline important things you find in your readings. This will make it easier to go back and cite things and to find that exact page you saw an amazing quote on!