

chicago manual of style bibliography examples for artwork

The Chicago Manual of Style bibliography examples for artwork are crucial for academics, researchers, and writers who need to accurately cite visual materials. Properly formatting these entries ensures proper attribution, avoids plagiarism, and allows readers to locate the source material. This guide will delve into the intricacies of citing various types of artwork according to the Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS), covering everything from paintings and sculptures to digital images and performance art. We will explore the fundamental components of a bibliographic entry for artwork and provide specific examples to illustrate best practices. Understanding these nuances is essential for academic integrity and the successful presentation of scholarly work.

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Understanding the Core Components of Artwork Citations

When constructing a bibliography entry for artwork in Chicago style, several key pieces of information are essential. These components work together to provide a complete and unambiguous identification of the artwork and its source. The primary goal is to give your reader enough information to find the work themselves, whether it's in a physical gallery, a museum collection, or an online database.

At its most basic, a citation needs to identify the creator, the title of the work, and the date of creation. However, depending on the nature of the artwork and how it was accessed, additional details become necessary. These can include the medium, dimensions, current location, exhibition history, and specific publication or website where it was viewed or reproduced. The order and specific punctuation of these elements are governed by CMOS guidelines to ensure consistency and clarity across all entries.

Essential Elements for Artwork Citations

Regardless of the medium, certain elements form the backbone of any artwork citation in a Chicago-style

bibliography. These include:

- Artist's full name (Last name, First name)
- Title of the artwork (italicized)
- Year of creation
- Medium (e.g., oil on canvas, bronze, digital print)
- Dimensions (height x width x depth, if applicable)
- Current location or repository (e.g., Museum of Modern Art, New York; private collection)
- Access information (e.g., exhibition title, publication details, URL)

Citing Traditional Art Forms: Paintings, Sculptures, and Drawings

Citing traditional artworks like paintings, sculptures, and drawings requires a clear and direct approach, focusing on the artist, title, date, medium, and provenance. These are often encountered in museum collections or art historical texts, making their identification straightforward but still demanding precision.

The artist's name should always come first, followed by the italicized title of the work and its year of creation. Including the medium provides crucial context about the artwork's physical properties. If the artwork is housed in a public collection, stating the name of the institution and its city is vital. For works in private collections, this information may be omitted or generalized if privacy is a concern, but it's generally best practice to include it if known and permissible.

Example: Citing a Painting in a Museum

When citing a painting that you have viewed in a museum, the entry should reflect this. The basic structure involves the artist, title, date, medium, and collection information.

- Artist: Leonardo da Vinci

- Title: Mona Lisa
- Date: ca. 1503–1506
- Medium: Oil on poplar panel
- Dimensions: 77 cm × 53 cm (30 in × 21 in)
- Location: Louvre Museum, Paris

This information would be compiled into a formatted bibliography entry:

da Vinci, Leonardo. *Mona Lisa*. ca. 1503–1506. Oil on poplar panel, 77 cm × 53 cm. Louvre Museum, Paris.

Example: Citing a Sculpture

Sculptures, even when viewed in person or in a publication, require similar details. The material and dimensions are particularly important for sculptures.

Michelangelo. *David*. 1501–1504. Marble, height 5.17 m. Galleria dell'Accademia, Florence.

Example: Citing a Drawing or Sketch

Drawings and sketches, often more ephemeral or part of a larger body of work, are cited in a similar fashion, emphasizing the materials used and the clarity of the drawing itself.

Degas, Edgar. *The Ballet Class*. ca. 1871. Charcoal and pastel on paper, 47 cm × 61 cm. Art Institute of Chicago.

Citing Prints and Reproductions

Citing prints and reproductions presents a slightly different challenge because you may be referencing the artwork as it appears in a book, exhibition catalog, or online, rather than the original object itself. The citation must acknowledge both the artwork and the source where you encountered it.

When citing a reproduction of artwork, the bibliographic entry will typically include details about the original artwork and then provide publication information for the source where the reproduction was found. This allows readers to differentiate between the original artwork and the secondary source through which it was accessed. Accuracy in specifying the publication year and page number is critical for locating the image.

Citing Artwork in a Book

If you are referencing a print of artwork found within a book, you will cite the book itself, but you must also clearly identify the artwork within that book.

Van Gogh, Vincent. *Starry Night*. 1889. Oil on canvas. 73.7 cm × 92.1 cm. Museum of Modern Art, New York. Reproduced in *The Art of Vincent van Gogh*, by H. Reuterswärd, 112. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1986.

Citing Artwork in an Exhibition Catalog

Exhibition catalogs are common sources for artworks. When citing an artwork from such a catalog, you cite the catalog publication, indicating where the artwork is featured within it.

Klimt, Gustav. *The Kiss*. 1907–1908. Oil and gold leaf on canvas, 180 cm × 180 cm. Österreichische Galerie Belvedere, Vienna. Exhibited in *Gustav Klimt: The Complete Paintings*, edited by Tobias G. Natter, 214–15. Cologne: Taschen, 2012.

Citing Digital Art and Online Images

The proliferation of digital art and the accessibility of images online have made citing these forms essential. Chicago style offers clear guidelines for handling digital resources, emphasizing the need for stable URLs and access dates.

When citing digital artwork or images found online, it is crucial to provide a stable URL, if available, and the date you accessed the material. This is because online content can change or disappear, making the access date a vital piece of information for your reader. If the artwork is part of a larger digital collection or website, you should cite the main website and specify the location of the artwork within it.

Citing Artwork from an Online Museum Collection

Many museums now provide high-resolution images of their collections online. These should be cited, including the museum's website information.

Monet, Claude. *Impression, Sunrise*. 1872. Oil on canvas, 48 cm × 63 cm. Musée Marmottan Monet, Paris. Accessed October 26, 2023. <https://www.marmottan.fr/en/collection/impression-sunrise/>.

Citing Digital Artworks

For art created specifically for digital media, the citation should reflect its digital nature.

Agency, Random. *Untitled (Glitch Portrait 3)*. 2018. Digital image. Accessed October 26, 2023.

Citing Performance Art and Installations

Performance art and installation art present unique citation challenges because they are often ephemeral, site-specific, or exist as documentation (photographs, videos, written accounts) rather than a singular, static object.

When citing performance art, you may be referencing the event itself, its documentation, or its conceptual framework. For installations, the citation will focus on the artist, title, date, description of the work, and its location or the context in which it was experienced. If citing documentation, ensure you specify the medium of the documentation (e.g., photograph, video).

Citing a Performance Art Piece

If you are citing the documentation of a performance, the citation should include details about the performance and how you accessed its documentation.

Abramović, Marina. *Rhythm 0*. 1974. Performance, documented by photographs and video. Museum of Modern Art, New York. Accessed October 26, 2023. <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/133145>.

Citing an Installation

Installations often involve multiple components and are tied to a specific space.

Kusama, Yayoi. *Infinity Mirrored Room—Phalli's Field*. 1965. Mixed media installation. Private collection. Exhibited at Tate Modern, London, 2012.

Citing Applied Arts and Decorative Objects

Applied arts, such as furniture, ceramics, textiles, and jewelry, are also subject to Chicago-style citation guidelines. These objects, while often functional, are also artistic creations and require careful attribution.

The principles for citing applied arts are similar to those for traditional fine arts. The artist or maker, the title or descriptive name of the object, the date of creation, the materials, and its current location are all crucial. For mass-produced items that are nonetheless artistically significant, citing the designer and manufacturer is important.

Citing a Piece of Furniture

When citing a significant piece of furniture, treat it as a sculptural or decorative artwork.

Eames, Charles and Ray. *Lounge Chair and Ottoman*. 1956. Molded plywood, leather, and wood. Herman Miller Collection. Vitra Design Museum, Weil am Rhein, Germany.

Citing Ceramics or Glassware

Decorative objects like pottery or glassware are cited based on their artistic merit and origin.

Toshiko, Takaezu. *Moon Pot*. ca. 1990. Glazed stoneware. Private collection. Image accessed via the National Museum of Women in the Arts website, October 26, 2023.

Common Pitfalls and Best Practices for Artwork Citations

Navigating the complexities of citing artwork can lead to common errors if not approached with diligence. Paying attention to detail and following established conventions will prevent these issues.

One of the most frequent mistakes is misinterpreting whether to cite the artwork itself or the source that reproduces it. If your analysis or argument centers on the visual qualities of the artwork, you should aim to cite the original artwork if possible, or at least the most authoritative reproduction. If you are discussing the artwork as it appears in a specific publication or exhibition, then that publication or exhibition becomes the primary source for your citation.

Key Considerations for Accuracy

To ensure your bibliography is accurate and effective, consider these best practices:

- **Consistency is Key:** Apply the same citation format consistently throughout your bibliography.
- **Prioritize Originality:** Whenever possible, cite the original artwork. If this is not feasible, cite the most reputable source where you encountered it.
- **Verify Information:** Double-check artist names, titles, dates, and locations for accuracy.
- **Note the Medium:** Always include the medium of the artwork, as it provides essential context.
- **Use Italics Correctly:** Italicize artwork titles, not the artist's name or the source publication title (unless it is also an artwork title).

- **Handle Undated Works:** Use "ca." (circa) for approximate dates, and note if a work is undated.
- **Be Specific with Locations:** When citing artworks in museums, include the city and country if necessary for clarity.
- **Digital Access:** For online sources, provide stable URLs and access dates.

Handling Ambiguities

Sometimes, information about an artwork may be incomplete or ambiguous. In such cases, it is better to acknowledge the ambiguity in your citation rather than making assumptions. For instance, if the date of creation is uncertain, use "ca." or indicate the range of possible dates. Similarly, if an artwork's exact dimensions are not readily available, you might omit them or note that they were not provided.

Q: How do I cite a photograph of artwork I saw online?

A: When citing a photograph of artwork found online, you need to provide information about the original artwork (artist, title, date, medium) and the source where you found the photograph (website name, URL, and access date). For example: Artist, *Title of Artwork*, date, medium, accessed Date, URL.

Q: What if the artist's name is unknown?

A: If the artist's name is unknown, you start the citation with the title of the artwork, italicized, followed by the date, medium, and location. For example: *Untitled Sculpture*, ca. 1920, bronze, National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo.

Q: How do I cite a piece of art that is part of a larger collection?

A: When an artwork is part of a larger collection, like a museum or gallery, you should specify the name of the institution and its location as the repository for the artwork. For instance: Artist, *Title of Artwork*, date, medium, Name of Museum, City.

Q: What does "ca." mean in an artwork citation?

A: "Ca." is an abbreviation for the Latin word "circa," which means "around" or "approximately." It is used when the date of an artwork's creation is not precise, indicating an estimated timeframe.

Q: Should I include dimensions for all artworks?

A: Including dimensions is highly recommended, especially for paintings, sculptures, and installations, as they provide important physical context. For smaller decorative objects or digital works where dimensions are less relevant to the analysis, they may be omitted if not readily available.

Q: How do I cite artwork that has been exhibited multiple times?

A: If the exhibition history is relevant to your argument, you can include it in your citation after the primary details of the artwork. For example: Artist, *Title of Artwork*, date, medium, location. Exhibited at Gallery X, City, Year.

Q: What is the difference between citing an original artwork and a reproduction?

A: Citing an original artwork focuses on the object itself and its provenance. Citing a reproduction means you are referencing the artwork as it appears in a specific source (book, catalog, website), and your citation must include details of that source.

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