

chicago style bibliography for art history

The Chicago style bibliography for art history is a fundamental component of scholarly writing in the visual arts. Mastering its nuances ensures proper attribution, facilitates further research for your readers, and demonstrates a commitment to academic integrity. This guide will delve into the intricacies of formatting citations for a wide array of art historical sources, from primary artworks themselves to secondary scholarly texts, exhibition catalogs, and digital resources. We will cover the essential elements required for each type of entry, the specific punctuation and order of information, and common pitfalls to avoid. Understanding how to construct a robust bibliography in Chicago style is crucial for any art historian aiming for clarity, accuracy, and credibility in their academic endeavors. This comprehensive resource will equip you with the knowledge to confidently compile your own art history bibliographies.

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Understanding the Chicago Manual of Style for Art History

The Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS) is a widely adopted citation style that provides a comprehensive framework for academic writing, and its application in art history is particularly important. While CMOS offers two systems—notes-bibliography and author-date—art historians typically favor the notes-bibliography system for its ability to incorporate detailed footnotes or endnotes that can include extensive commentary or descriptions alongside citation information. This system allows for a more fluid integration of visual analysis and contextual information within the text, with the bibliography serving as a curated list of all sources cited in the notes.

The specific requirements for citing art historical materials can sometimes deviate from general CMOS guidelines to better accommodate the unique nature of the discipline. For instance, artworks themselves are often treated as primary sources and require specific formatting. Understanding these nuances is key to producing a bibliography that is both compliant with Chicago style and appropriate for the demands of art historical scholarship. This section will lay the groundwork for understanding the overarching principles that govern these specific applications.

Core Principles of Chicago Style Citation

At the heart of any Chicago style bibliography are several core principles that ensure consistency and clarity. The fundamental aim is to provide enough information for a reader to locate and consult the original source. This involves identifying key bibliographic elements, such as author, title, publication details, and date, and arranging them in a prescribed order. Punctuation also plays a critical role in distinguishing these elements and guiding the reader's eye through the citation.

The Chicago Manual of Style emphasizes a clear hierarchy of information. For books, the author's full name (or editor's name), the full title of the work, and then publication information—city, publisher, and year—are paramount. For articles, the author, article title, journal title, volume, issue number, and publication date are crucial. When it comes to artworks, the artist's name, title of the work, date of creation, medium, dimensions, and current location are indispensable. Adhering to these core principles across all source types creates a cohesive and reliable bibliography.

Citing Artworks in a Chicago Style Bibliography

Citing artworks as primary sources is a unique and vital aspect of art historical research. These entries are distinct from citations of texts about art. The primary goal is to identify the artwork definitively and provide its provenance. The standard format begins with the artist's name, followed by the title of the artwork in italics. The date of creation of the artwork is then provided, usually in parentheses. Following this, the medium of the artwork (e.g., oil on canvas, bronze, watercolor on paper) and its dimensions are listed.

Finally, and crucially for identification and context, the current location of the artwork is included. This typically involves the museum, gallery, or private collection name, followed by its city. If the artwork is in a specific collection within a larger institution, that detail should also be specified. For example, a typical entry might look like: O'Keeffe, Georgia. *Jimson Weed/White Flower No. 1*. 1932. Oil on canvas. 121.9 x 101.6 cm. Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, AR.

Considerations for citing artworks also include what to do when an artwork is no longer extant or its location is unknown. In such cases, the bibliography entry should reflect the available information, perhaps noting "private collection" or referencing a historical exhibition where it was last seen, if that information is available and relevant to your research. The key is accuracy and providing the most concrete identification possible.

Citing Books in Chicago Style for Art History

Books form a significant portion of the research materials for art historians, and their proper citation in Chicago style is straightforward yet requires attention to detail. The general format for a book includes the author's name (last name first), followed by the full title of the book in italics. The publication information follows, consisting of the city of publication, the publisher's name, and the year of publication, separated by colons and commas as prescribed.

For example: Gombrich, E. H. *The Story of Art*. 16th ed. London: Phaidon Press, 1995.

When citing edited volumes or works with multiple authors, variations in formatting apply. For edited volumes, the editor's name is used instead of the author's, and "ed." or "eds." follows their

name. If a book has multiple authors, the first author is listed last name first, followed by first name, and subsequent authors are listed first name first. Chapter citations within edited volumes require citing the chapter author, chapter title (in quotation marks), followed by "in," the title of the edited book (in italics), and then the page numbers of the chapter.

Special attention should be paid to editions. If you are using a specific edition other than the first, such as a revised or updated edition, this should be noted after the book title. For instance: Honour, Hugh, and John Fleming. *A World History of Art*. 7th ed. London: Laurence King Publishing, 2009.

Citing Journal Articles for Art History Research

Scholarly journal articles are indispensable for current research in art history. The Chicago style for journal articles requires specific formatting to ensure easy retrieval. The entry begins with the author's name (last name first), followed by the article title enclosed in quotation marks. Next, the name of the journal is provided in italics. This is followed by the volume number, issue number (often preceded by "no."), and the year of publication in parentheses.

A common format is: Krauss, Rosalind E. "The Originality of the Avant-Garde and the History of Art." *October*, no. 18 (Autumn 1981): 47-66.

The page range of the article is typically listed at the end of the citation, preceded by a comma. It is important to note that some journals number issues sequentially throughout a volume, while others restart numbering with each issue. Always check the specific journal's conventions. Including the season or month of publication, if provided by the journal, can also aid in pinpointing the exact issue.

When citing online journal articles accessed through databases, it is generally not necessary to include URLs or DOIs unless the article is not paginated or cannot be found through standard library resources. However, if the article is only available online and not in print, or if you want to provide the most precise locator, including the DOI (Digital Object Identifier) is highly recommended. For example: Jones, Amelia. "Body Art: Performance and Paradox." *Art Journal* 60, no. 3 (Fall 2001). <https://doi.org/10.2307/777876>.

Citing Exhibition Catalogs and Reviews

Exhibition catalogs and reviews are crucial sources in art history, providing insights into specific exhibitions, artists, and critical reception. Citing exhibition catalogs follows a format similar to books, but with an emphasis on the exhibition context. The entry begins with the author(s) or editor(s) of the catalog, followed by the title of the catalog in italics. This is then followed by the exhibition details, including the name of the exhibition venue and the dates of the exhibition, if applicable.

A typical entry for an exhibition catalog would be: Ad Reinhardt. *Ad Reinhardt. With an essay by Robert Motherwell*. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1966. Exhibition held at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, March 16-May 31, 1966.

For exhibition reviews, the author of the review is listed first, followed by the title of the review in quotation marks. The publication in which the review appeared is then cited, including the name of the periodical (in italics), the date of publication, and the page numbers. For example: Smith, Roberta. "A Visionary of the Domestic Sublime." *The New York Times*, November 12, 2019, C1, C6.

When citing a specific artwork discussed within an exhibition catalog, you would cite the catalog itself, and in your notes or text, you might reference the specific page number where the artwork is discussed or illustrated. The bibliography lists the catalog as a whole. If the catalog author is also the artist, this should be clearly indicated, as in the Ad Reinhardt example.

Citing Digital and Online Resources in Art History

The digital landscape has profoundly impacted art historical research, making the ability to cite online resources correctly in Chicago style essential. For websites, the author or organization responsible for the content is listed first, followed by the title of the specific page or document in quotation marks. The name of the website (in italics) is then provided, along with the publication date or last updated date, if available. Crucially, the full URL and the date on which you accessed the site are included.

An example would be: The Metropolitan Museum of Art. "Highlights of the Costume Institute." The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Accessed October 26, 2023.

<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/highlights/costume>.

When citing online databases or digital archives, you would cite the database name and provide the URL. If you are citing a specific image of an artwork found online, the citation should include the artist, artwork title, date, medium, dimensions (if available), and the source of the image, including the website and URL, along with the access date. If the image is from a museum collection database, it's good practice to include the museum name and accession number if provided.

For online scholarly articles or digitized books that do not have a print equivalent or DOI, the URL and access date become even more critical for source verification. It is always best practice to err on the side of providing more information when citing digital resources, especially the date of access, as online content can change or disappear without notice.

Common Challenges and Solutions in Chicago Style Bibliographies

Several common challenges can arise when compiling a Chicago style bibliography for art history. One frequent issue is dealing with sources that lack essential bibliographic information, such as a publication date or author. In such cases, the CMOS provides guidelines for using abbreviations like "n.d." for no date or "n.p." for no place of publication. However, it is always preferable to find complete information through diligent research.

Another challenge is the citation of archival materials. These require careful attention to the specific finding aids, collection names, box numbers, and folder titles. The format for archival materials often involves the name of the archive, followed by the collection name, and then specific references to the material within that collection. For instance: National Archives and Records Administration. Records of the Public Buildings Administration, Record Group 121. "Photographs of Federal Art Project Murals," box 15, folder "New Deal Murals, Ohio."

The sheer volume and variety of art historical sources—including primary source documents, interviews, and unpublished materials—can also pose difficulties. For interviews, note the interviewee's name, the interviewer's name (if different), the date and place of the interview, and the

format (e.g., personal interview, recorded interview). For unpublished manuscripts, cite the author, title, and describe its status (e.g., "typescript," "manuscript") along with its location or how it was accessed.

Consistency is paramount. Whichever approach you take for handling unusual sources, apply it uniformly throughout your bibliography. Consulting the latest edition of *The Chicago Manual of Style* or reliable online resources dedicated to its application is always recommended when encountering unique citation dilemmas.

Proofreading Your Chicago Style Bibliography

The final, critical step in creating a Chicago style bibliography for art history is meticulous proofreading. Errors in a bibliography can undermine the credibility of your entire work, even if the content is otherwise sound. Begin by systematically checking each entry against your notes and the original sources to ensure accuracy of names, titles, dates, and publication details. Pay close attention to the correct use of italics for titles of books and journals, and quotation marks for article and chapter titles.

Verify that all punctuation—commas, periods, colons, and parentheses—is used precisely according to Chicago style guidelines. Ensure that the order of elements within each citation is consistent across all entries of the same type. For example, all book entries should follow the same author-title-publication information sequence.

Alphabetize the bibliography correctly by the author's last name (or by title if no author is listed). If multiple works by the same author are included, arrange them chronologically by publication date, using an em dash for repeated author names after the first entry. Additionally, check for any formatting inconsistencies, such as the use of abbreviations or the inclusion of URLs and access dates for online sources.

A thorough proofread not only catches errors but also enhances the overall professionalism and polish of your academic paper. It demonstrates a commitment to scholarly rigor and allows your readers to navigate your sources with ease and confidence, a hallmark of excellent art historical scholarship.

FAQ

Q: What is the primary difference between the notes-bibliography and author-date systems in Chicago style for art history?

A: The notes-bibliography system, preferred in art history, uses footnotes or endnotes for citations and includes a separate bibliography at the end. This allows for more detailed explanatory notes alongside citation information. The author-date system, conversely, uses parenthetical in-text citations (Author Year, Page) and a reference list that is functionally similar to a bibliography but may have slight differences in content and formatting.

Q: How do I cite a painting in a Chicago style bibliography if I saw it in person at a museum?

A: For a painting viewed in person, you would cite it as an artwork. The format typically includes the artist's full name, the title of the artwork in italics, the year of creation, the medium, dimensions, and the name of the museum where it is housed, followed by the city. For example: Picasso, Pablo. *Guernica*. 1937. Oil on canvas. 349 cm × 776 cm. Museo Reina Sofía, Madrid.

Q: What is the correct way to cite a chapter from an edited book in Chicago style for an art history paper?

A: To cite a chapter from an edited book, you start with the chapter author's name (last name first), followed by the chapter title in quotation marks. Then, you use "in" followed by the title of the edited book in italics, the editor's name(s) preceded by "edited by," and finally, the page range of the chapter and the publication information (city, publisher, year). Example: Berger, John. "Ways of Seeing." In *Ways of Seeing*, edited by John Berger, 1-12. London: Penguin Books, 1972.

Q: Should I include DOIs or URLs for online journal articles in my Chicago style bibliography?

A: Yes, it is highly recommended to include the DOI (Digital Object Identifier) for online journal articles if one is available, as it provides a persistent link to the article. If a DOI is not available, but the article is only accessible online, include the URL and the date you accessed the article. This helps readers locate the specific version of the article you consulted.

Q: How do I format the bibliography entry for a contemporary artist's website?

A: For a contemporary artist's website, treat it as a web page. List the artist's name (or organization if applicable) as the author, followed by the title of the specific page or section in quotation marks. Then, provide the name of the website in italics, the publication or last updated date (if available), the URL, and the date of access. Example: Kapoor, Anish. "Selected Works." *Anish Kapoor*. Accessed October 26, 2023. <https://www.anishkapoor.com/works>.

Q: What is the proper way to cite a review of an art exhibition in Chicago style?

A: To cite an exhibition review, you begin with the reviewer's name (last name first), followed by the title of the review in quotation marks. Then, you cite the name of the publication where the review appeared (in italics), followed by the date of publication and the page numbers. Example: Darby, Luke. "Picasso's Ceramics Are Not His Best Work—But They're Still Fascinating." *New York Magazine*, February 20, 2023. <https://www.vulture.com/2023/02/picasso-ceramics-exhibition-review.html>.

Q: How do I handle multiple works by the same author in my Chicago style bibliography?

A: When citing multiple works by the same author, list the works alphabetically by title. For the first entry by that author, write out their full name (last name first). For subsequent entries by the same author, replace the author's name with an em dash (—) followed by a period. Arrange these entries chronologically by publication date.

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