

citing artwork chicago manual of style

Citing Artwork: A Comprehensive Guide to the Chicago Manual of Style

citing artwork chicago manual of style is essential for academic integrity, scholarly communication, and avoiding plagiarism. When presenting visual materials in research papers, essays, dissertations, or any academic publication, adhering to a standardized citation method ensures your audience can locate and verify the sources of your images. This guide will delve deeply into the intricacies of citing artwork according to the Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS), covering various types of artwork and the necessary bibliographic information. We will explore how to cite paintings, sculptures, photographs, digital art, and even performance art, detailing the specific elements required for both footnotes/endnotes and the bibliography. Mastering these citation practices will enhance the credibility of your work and demonstrate your commitment to scholarly rigor.

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Understanding the Importance of Citing Artwork in Chicago Style

The Chicago Manual of Style provides a robust framework for acknowledging the creative and intellectual labor of artists and creators. Properly citing artwork not only prevents accusations of plagiarism but also allows readers to explore the original works, enriching their understanding of your research. When incorporating any visual element, from a Renaissance masterpiece to contemporary digital art, into your academic work, meticulous citation is paramount. This practice is fundamental to scholarly discourse, ensuring that credit is given where it is due and that the foundation of your arguments, built upon visual evidence, is transparent and verifiable.

In academic and professional writing, the visual element often serves as a critical piece of evidence or illustrative material. Therefore, the provenance and source of this material must be clearly established. The Chicago Manual of Style, widely adopted in the humanities and some social sciences, offers specific guidelines to ensure consistency and clarity in how such sources are presented. By following these guidelines, writers demonstrate a deep respect for intellectual property and contribute to a more rigorous and trustworthy academic environment. This attention to detail in citing artwork is a hallmark of professional scholarship.

Core Components of Citing Artwork in CMOS

Regardless of the medium or origin of the artwork, several core components are typically required when citing it according to the Chicago Manual of Style. These elements help readers identify the specific work and its creator, and locate it for further study. While the exact order and inclusion of some elements might vary slightly based on the type of artwork and its availability, understanding these fundamental pieces of information is the first step towards accurate citation.

Artist or Creator Information

The attribution of the artwork to its creator is the most crucial element. This usually includes the artist's full name. If the artist is unknown or the work is attributed to a studio or workshop, this should be clearly indicated. For well-known artists, the surname is often sufficient in footnotes/endnotes after the first full mention, following CMOS conventions for author names.

Title of the Artwork

The title of the artwork should be presented accurately and in italics. If the artwork does not have a formal title, a descriptive phrase may be used, enclosed in quotation marks or presented as is, depending on the context and if it's a descriptive title versus an official one. The original language title should be provided if applicable, followed by an English translation in brackets.

Date of Creation

The year or period of creation for the artwork is vital for contextualizing it historically. This can be a specific year, a range of years, or a general period (e.g., "ca. 1505," "17th century"). If the exact date is unknown, approximations or statements of uncertainty should be noted appropriately.

Medium and Dimensions

Information about the materials used to create the artwork (e.g., oil on canvas, bronze, watercolor on paper) and its dimensions are often included, especially in scholarly contexts. Dimensions are typically given in inches and/or centimeters. This information can be crucial for distinguishing between different versions or for understanding the physical presence of the artwork.

Collection Information or Location

Where the artwork is housed is a key identifier. This includes the name of the museum, gallery, private collection, or archive where the work can be found. If it's part of a specific exhibition, the exhibition name and dates are also important. For online reproductions, the website name and URL are necessary.

Accession Number

Many institutions assign accession numbers to their holdings. Including this number, if available, is highly recommended as it provides a unique identifier for the artwork within that specific collection, making it easier for others to locate.

Citing Specific Types of Visual Art

The Chicago Manual of Style recognizes that different forms of visual art require slightly tailored citation approaches. While the core components remain, the emphasis and specific details might shift depending on whether you are citing a painting, a sculpture, a photograph, or digital art. Understanding these nuances ensures your citations are precise and informative.

Citing Paintings and Drawings

For paintings and drawings, the focus is on the artist, title, date, medium (e.g., oil on canvas, watercolor), dimensions, and the current location (museum, gallery, private collection). If you are referencing a reproduction from a book or website, you will also include the publication or website details.

Example in footnote/endnote:

- 1. Leonardo da Vinci, *Mona Lisa*, ca. 1503–1506, oil on poplar panel, 77 x 53 cm, Musée du Louvre, Paris.

Example in bibliography:

- Da Vinci, Leonardo. *Mona Lisa*. Ca. 1503–1506. Oil on poplar panel, 77 x 53 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris.

Citing Sculptures

When citing sculptures, similar information is needed: artist, title, date, medium (e.g., bronze, marble, mixed media), dimensions, and location. For sculptures that are part of a larger installation or series, this context should also be noted.

Example in footnote/endnote:

- 2. Auguste Rodin, *The Thinker*, modeled 1880, cast 1904, bronze, 183 cm (6 ft) high, Rodin Museum, Philadelphia.

Example in bibliography:

- Rodin, Auguste. *The Thinker*. Modeled 1880, cast 1904. Bronze, 183 cm (6 ft) high. Rodin Museum, Philadelphia.

Citing Photographs

For photographs, it is crucial to identify the photographer, the title of the photograph (if it has one), the date it was taken, and its current location or source. If the photograph is an artist's print, the edition number might also be relevant. If you are referencing a published photograph, the publication details are essential.

Example in footnote/endnote (original photograph):

- 3. Ansel Adams, *Moonrise, Hernandez, New Mexico*, 1941, gelatin silver print, 25.4 x 35.6 cm, Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Example in bibliography (original photograph):

- Adams, Ansel. *Moonrise, Hernandez, New Mexico*. 1941. Gelatin silver print, 25.4 x 35.6 cm. Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Example in footnote/endnote (reproduced photograph from a book):

- 4. Dorothea Lange, *Migrant Mother, Nipomo, California*, 1936, photograph,

reproduced in *An American Exodus: The Dust Bowl Migration*, by Dorothea Lange and Paul Schuster Taylor (New York: Reynal & Hitchcock, 1939), 28.

Example in bibliography (reproduced photograph from a book):

- Lange, Dorothea. *Migrant Mother, Nipomo, California*. 1936. Photograph. Reproduced in *An American Exodus: The Dust Bowl Migration*, by Dorothea Lange and Paul Schuster Taylor, 28. New York: Reynal & Hitchcock, 1939.

Citing Digital Art and Online Images

Citing digital art and images found online requires special attention to accessibility. Include the artist, title, date of creation, and then provide the name of the website or platform, the date you accessed the image, and the URL. If the digital artwork is part of a specific online exhibition or project, that information should also be included.

Example in footnote/endnote:

- 5. Refik Anadol, *Machine Hallucination*, 2019, AI data sculpture, presented at MoMA PS1, New York, accessed October 26, 2023, <http://www.refikanadol.com/machinedhallucination>.

Example in bibliography:

- Anadol, Refik. *Machine Hallucination*. 2019. AI data sculpture. Accessed October 26, 2023. <http://www.refikanadol.com/machinedhallucination>.

Citing Artwork in Footnotes or Endnotes

Footnotes and endnotes serve as the immediate source acknowledgment within the text of your paper. When citing artwork, the Chicago Manual of Style requires a specific format to ensure clarity and conciseness. The first time an artwork is cited, the note should be as complete as possible, providing all essential bibliographical details. Subsequent citations of the same artwork can be shortened, often using the artist's last name and a shortened title.

The structure generally follows: Artist's Name, *Title of Artwork*, Date of Creation, Medium, Dimensions (optional but recommended for scholarly work), Name of Collection or Location, Accession Number (if available).

For reproductions in books or articles, you would include the author/editor of the book, *Title of Book*, publication details, and the page number where

the artwork appears. For online sources, the website name, access date, and URL are crucial.

Citing Artwork in the Bibliography

The bibliography provides a comprehensive list of all sources cited in your work, presented alphabetically by the author's last name. When listing artwork, the format generally mirrors the full citation used in the first footnote or endnote, with some stylistic differences. The primary goal is to provide enough information for a reader to locate the original artwork or its reproduction.

The general format for the bibliography entry is: Artist's Last Name, First Name. *Title of Artwork*. Date of Creation. Medium. Dimensions. Name of Collection or Location. Accession Number.

For reproduced artworks, the format would be: Artist's Last Name, First Name. *Title of Artwork*. Date of Creation. Medium. Dimensions. In *Title of Book or Article*, edited or authored by Author Name, Page Number. Publication City: Publisher, Year of Publication.

For online sources: Artist's Last Name, First Name. *Title of Artwork*. Date of Creation. Medium. Website or Platform Name. Accessed Month Day, Year. URL.

Common Challenges and Solutions in Artwork Citation

Citing artwork can present unique challenges, particularly when dealing with less conventional art forms or when the source material is not readily identifiable. The Chicago Manual of Style offers guidance for many of these situations, emphasizing thoroughness and clarity.

- **Unknown Artist or Title:** If the artist or title is unknown, use descriptive phrases. For an unknown artist, state "Artist unknown" or "Attributed to [Artist's name]" if there's a scholarly consensus. For an unknown title, use a descriptive phrase in quotation marks.
- **Works in Progress or Exhibitions:** For works shown in temporary exhibitions, clearly state the exhibition name, dates, venue, and city. If citing a work that is part of an artist's personal archive or studio, provide as much detail about its accessibility and context as possible.
- **Performance and Digital Art:** Citing performance art requires describing the performance, performers, date, location, and any archival documentation (videos, photographs). For digital art, focus on the platform, creator, title, date, and accessibility via URL.
- **Reproductions in Secondary Sources:** When citing an artwork that you have only seen reproduced in a book or article, it is crucial to cite the

reproduction itself, not the original artwork directly unless you have also consulted the original. Provide full details of the book or article, including the page number.

Addressing these challenges requires careful attention to the details provided by the source and a commitment to accurately representing the information according to CMOS standards. When in doubt, consult the latest edition of the Chicago Manual of Style for the most up-to-date and comprehensive guidance.

Mastering the art of citing artwork using the Chicago Manual of Style is an investment in the quality and credibility of your academic work. By understanding the core components, specific requirements for different art forms, and the distinctions between footnote/endnote and bibliography citations, you can confidently present visual evidence in your research. The challenges associated with artwork citation are surmountable with careful attention to detail and a thorough understanding of CMOS guidelines. Ultimately, accurate citation is a cornerstone of ethical scholarship and a testament to your engagement with the visual world.

FAQ

Q: What is the primary difference between citing artwork in a footnote/endnote versus a bibliography according to the Chicago Manual of Style?

A: The primary difference lies in the level of detail and purpose. Footnotes/endnotes provide a brief, in-text citation for immediate reference, while the bibliography offers a complete, alphabetized list of all sources used, allowing readers to locate them easily. The first footnote/endnote citation is typically more comprehensive than subsequent ones, while the bibliography entry is consistently detailed.

Q: How should I cite a painting if the artist is unknown but the artwork is well-documented?

A: If the artist is unknown, you would begin the citation with "Artist unknown," followed by the title of the artwork (in italics), the date of creation, medium, dimensions, and location. If there is a scholarly attribution or consensus about who might have created it, you can use "Attributed to [Artist's Name]".

Q: Is it necessary to include the dimensions of the artwork in my citations?

A: While not always mandatory for every citation, including dimensions is highly recommended in scholarly contexts, especially when discussing the physicality or scale of the artwork. It provides a more complete picture and can be crucial for distinguishing between similar works.

Q: What is the best way to cite a photograph I found on a museum's website?

A: For a photograph found on a museum's website, treat it as a digital image. You would cite the photographer (if known), the title of the photograph, the date it was created, the medium, the museum's name, the website name, the date you accessed it, and the URL.

Q: How do I cite artwork when I've only seen it reproduced in a book?

A: If you've only seen an artwork reproduced in a book, you must cite the reproduction itself. The citation should include the artist's name, title of the artwork, date of creation, medium, and then details of the book: author/editor of the book, title of the book (in italics), publication information (city, publisher, year), and the specific page number where the artwork appears.

Q: Does the Chicago Manual of Style have specific rules for citing performance art?

A: Yes, citing performance art requires describing the performance, identifying the performer(s), the date and location of the performance, and any available documentation such as videos, photographs, or written accounts. The format will adapt to the nature of the documentation you are referencing.

Q: What if the artwork is part of a private collection and not publicly accessible?

A: For artwork in a private collection, you should still provide the artist, title, date, medium, and dimensions. However, for the location, you would state "Private collection" and, if possible and appropriate, the city or region. You may also mention how you accessed information about it (e.g., personal communication with the collector).

Q: How do I handle artwork with multiple creators or an unknown creation date?

A: For artwork with multiple creators, list them as they are credited, typically separated by "and." If the creation date is unknown, use approximations like "ca. [year]," "late [century]," or "mid-[period]," or indicate uncertainty with "[date unknown]." Always strive for the most accurate available information.

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