

The Spencer Art Reference Library Research Guide Series

AUCTIONS & RELATED SALES, INCLUDING PROVENANCE INFORMATION

Selected Reference Sources

More and more individuals are becoming interested in collecting and researching artworks as seen by the popularity of programs such as the PBS *Antiques Road Show*. Information about objects, their provenance and sales are contained in auction catalogs and related reference sources.

In researching an object the term “provenance” may appear. The Grove Dictionary of Art defines the word provenance as the “Term used for the record of ownership of movable works of art. A complete provenance provides an accurate account of the locations of a work of art from the time and place of its manufacture to the present. The nearer such a pedigree approaches this all too seldom state (due to the vicissitudes of chronicling a rarity), the more secure the attribution of the work is likely to be. To elicit plausible provenances from often confusing data, or lack of data, is a necessary part of the complex history and psychology of collecting and cataloguing art works.”

Auction and related sales catalogs (e.g., dealers’ catalogs) are an important type of literature in an art museum library. The Spencer Art Reference Library collection of The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art includes more than 40,000 auction sale catalogs. Most of the collection dates from the 1970s onward but the earliest catalog was published in 1819. Auction house catalogs are collected for Christie’s, Sotheby’s, Skinner and other companies.

The Library’s staff is trained to assist visitors and researchers in the use of the resources listed on this guide, and in many other topics.

I. AUCTION GUIDES AND INDEXES, PRICE GUIDES

A. PRINT & ELECTRONIC AUCTION-RELATED DATABASES

(These subscription databases are accessible in the Library.)

Art Sales Index Database (previous title: Art Quest). Available in print and online:
artauctionresults.com 1958–present; selectively back to 1920.

NAMA SARL INDEX N 8670 .A55 1999–2000

ArtFact.com is particularly good for decorative arts.

ArtNet.com has color images available for half of the artworks.

Artprice.com covers 1986 onwards; no images included.

AskArt.com specializes in art of American artists.

Gordon's Print Price Annual. 1972+. NAMA SARL REF/INDEX NE 85 .G5

Website at gordonsart.com, limited access without subscription.

Leonard's Annual Price Index of Art Auctions. 1982–1997.

NAMA SARL REF/INDEX N 8602 .L46

Leonard's Annual Price Index of Prints, Posters & Photographs. 1991–1997.

NAMA SARL REF/INDEX NE 85 .L46

Mayer, Enrique. *International Auction Records*. 1972–1999.

NAMA SARL REF/INDEX N 8640 .I5

Mei/Moses Fine Art Index: Art on a Fine Track. meimosesfineartindex.org.

Prices4antiques. prices4antiques.com/netlogin.asp

Printworld Directory: Contemporary Prints and Prices. 1982+.

NAMA SARL REF/INDEX NE 491 .P77

SCIPPIO (Sales Catalog Index Project Input On-line). Research Libraries Group, 1981+.

Accessible at eureka.rlg.org. Provides subject access to the contents page information of art and rare book auction catalogs that are primarily in English and major European languages. Includes Christie's, Sotheby's and many other auction houses.

Theran, Susan. *Leonard's Price Index of Latin American Art at Auction*.

NAMA SARL INDEX N 6502 .L46 1999

I. AUCTION GUIDES AND INDEXES, PRICE GUIDES CONT'D

B. WEBSITES

The Library's Reference-area PCs have an icon in the Desktop's "Library Resources" folder for the "Bookmarks File" that consists of 11,000+ URLs organized into over 330 subject categories. Listed below are some of the website addresses currently listed in the category for "Auctions, Sales, Trading, & Indexes."

Bonham's & Butterfields: bonhams.com

Christie's: christies.com

Drouot: drouot.fr

ebay: ebay.com

Internet collector: icollector.com

Northeast Auctions: northeastauctions.com

Phillips de Pury and Company: phillipsdepury.com

Skinner: skinnerinc.com

Sotheby's: sothebys.com

Swann Auction Galleries: swanngalleries.com

C. BUYER'S, COLLECTOR'S, PRICE, & MARKET GUIDES/INDEXES

The Art Newspaper. *Guide to Art Auctions: Worldwide*. First Edition. London, etc.: Umberto Allemandi & Co., 2002. NAMA SARL REF DESK N 8602 .G85 2002

Collectors' Information Bureau. *Collectibles Market Guide & Price Index*. Burlington: Collectors' Information Bureau, 1982+. NAMA SARL INDEX NK 1133 .C64 1998

Hothem, Lar. *Indian Artifacts the Best of the Midwest: Identification & Value Guide*. Paducah: Collector Books, 2004. NAMA SARL INDEX E 78 .M67 H68 2004

Kaufman, Mervyn and Eli Wilner. *Antique American Frames: Identification and Price Guide*. New York: Avon Books, 1995. NAMA SARL INDEX N 8550 .K26 1995

Kovel, Ralph and Terry. *Kovels' Antiques & Collectibles Price List*. New York: Three Rivers Press, 1968+. NAMA SARL stacks/REF/INDEX NK 1125 .A39

The following Miller's guides come in various sizes, formats, lengths and title variations, and they are all exceedingly useful titles. They are all illustrated with images and/or diagrams. Miller also publishes a series of pocket-size subject-defined antiques checklists, without price information.

Miller's Antiques, Art & Collectibles on the Web. NAMA SARL REF DESK NK 1125.M487 2000

Miller's Ceramics of the '20s & '30s: A Collector's Guide. NAMA SARL INDEX NK 4085 .L45 1999

Miller's Chinese & Japanese Antiques Buyer's Guide. NAMA SARL INDEX NK 1133 .M54 1999

Miller's Collecting Furniture. London: Miller's, 1996. NAMA SARL INDEX NK 2240 .P39 1996

Miller's International Antiques Price Guide: Professional Handbook. 1979+. NAMA SARL INDEX NK 1125 .M486 1999 & 2006

II. SALES, EXHIBITIONS, & PROVENANCE RECORDS/GUIDES

- The Annual & Biennial Exhibition Records of the Whitney Museum of American Art 1918–1989 Incorporating the Serial Exhibitions of The Whitney Studio Club, 1918–1928, The Whitney Studio Club Galleries, 1928–1930, The Whitney Museum of American Art, 1932–1989.* Madison: Sound View Press, 1991. NAMA SARL READING ROOM N 5020 .N489 W5 1991
- The Archives of American Art. Collection of Exhibition Catalogs. Boston: G. K. Hall, 1979. NAMA SARL REF Z 5939 A73 1979
- Bibliothèque Forney. *Catalog of the Catalogs of Sales of Art Bibliothèque Forney Paris/Catalogue des Catalogues de Ventes D'Art Bibliothèque Forney Paris.* Boston: G. K. Hall, 1972. 2 vols. NAMA SARL REF Z 5939 .P224 1972
- Crespon-Halotier, Béatrice. *Les Peintres Britanniques dans les Salons Parisiens des Origines à 1939: Répertoire.* Dijon: L'Échelle de Jacob, 2002. NAMA SARL REF ND 461 .C74 2002
- Franklin, Jonathan. *Index to Nineteenth-Century Canadian Catalogues of Art/Index des Catalogues d'Art Parus au Canada au XIX^e Siècle. Library and Archives, Occasional Paper = 6/Bibliothèque et Archives, Document Hors Série; 6.* Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada/Musée des Beaux-Arts du Canada, 2002. Two volumes. NAMA SARL REF N 6544 .F73 2004
- Gordon, Donald E. *Modern Art Exhibitions 1900–1916.* München: Prestel-Verlag, 1974. 2 vols. NAMA SARL READING ROOM N 6490 .G82 1974
- Graves, Algernon. *Art Sales from Early in the Eighteenth Century to Early in the Twentieth Century: (Mostly Old Master and Early English Pictures).* London: Algernon Graves, 1918–1921; reprint, New York: Burt Franklin, 1970. NAMA SARL REF N 8675 .G72
- The Index of Paintings Sold in the British Isles During the Nineteenth Century...: The Provenance Index of the Getty Art History Information Program.* Ed. By Burton B. Fredericksen assisted by Julia I. Armstrong and Doris A. Mendenhall. Santa Barbara and Oxford: ABC-CLIO, 1988–1990 (vols. 1–2); Munich, London, New York, Paris: K. G. Saur, 1993+ (vols. 3+). NAMA SARL REF ND 47 .I62 The Provenance Research section of the Getty website also offers a wealth of other material: getty.edu/research/conducting_research/provenance_index
- Lancour, Harold. *American Art Auction Catalogues 1785–1942: A Union List.* New York: The New York Public Library, 1944. NAMA SARL REF DESK Z 5939.A1 L3 1944
- Library Catalog of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.* Second Edition. Revised and Enlarged. Boston: G. K. Hall, 1980. Vols. 46–48 (Sales Catalogs). NAMA SARL REF Z 881 .N6624 1980
- Lugt, Frits. *Répertoire des Catalogues de Ventes Publiques Intéressant l'Art ou la Curiosité: Tableaux, Dessins, Estampes, Miniatures, Sculptures, Bronzes, Émaux, Vitraux, Tapisseries, Céramiques, Objets d'Art, Meubles, Antiquités, Monnaies, Médailles, Camées, Intailles, Armes, Instruments, Curiosités Naturelles, Etc.* La Haye: Martinus Nijhoff, 1938–1987. 4 vols. NAMA SARL REF N 8650 L8
Online database: idcpublishers.info/lugt.
- Marlor, Clark S. *A History of The Brooklyn Art Association with an Index of Exhibitions.* New York: James F. Carr, 1970. NAMA SARL READING ROOM N 11 .B76 M37 1970
- Mireur, Hippolyte. *Dictionnaire des Ventes d'Art Faites en France et à l'Étranger Pendant les XVIII^{em} & XIX^{em} Siècles: Tableaux, Dessins, Estampes, Aquarelles, Miniatures, Pastels, Gouaches, Sépias, Fusains, Emaux, Evaentails Peintes et Vitraux.* Paris: Maison d'Éditions d'Oeuvres Artistiques, Chez de Vincenti, 1911–1912. 7 vols. NAMA SARL REF N 8675 .M6
- Naylor, Maria. *The National Academy of Design Exhibition Record 1861–1900.* New York: Kennedy Galleries, 1973. 2 vols. NAMA SARL READING ROOM N 5020 .N631 1973

II. SALES, EXHIBITIONS, & PROVENANCE RECORDS/GUIDES CONT'D

- Perkins, Robert F., Jr. and William J. Gavin III. *The Boston Athenaeum Art Exhibition Index 1827–1874*. Boston: The Library of the Boston Athenaeum, 1980. NAMA SARL READING ROOM N 5020 .B67 B67 1980
- Sanchez, Pierre and Xavier Seydoux. *Les Catalogues des Salons des Beaux-Arts*. Paris: L'Echelle de Jacob, 1999+. NAMA SARL REF N 5065 .S26 1999
- Wilson, Raymond L. *Index of American Print Exhibitions, 1882–1940*. Metuchen and London: Scarecrow Press, 1988. NAMA SARL READING ROOM NE 505 W54 1988
- The Worldwide Bibliography of Art Exhibition Catalogues 1963–1987*. Millwood: Kraus International Publications; Ithaca: Worldwide Books, 1992. 3 vols. NAMA SARL REF N 5010 .W675 1992
- Yarnall, James L. and William H. Gerdts. *The National Museum of American Art's Index to American Art Exhibition Catalogues From the Beginning Through the 1876 Centennial Year*. With the assistance of Katharine Fox Stewart and Catherine Hoover Voorsanger. Boston: G. K. Hall, 1986. 6 vols. NAMA SARL READING ROOM N 6507 .Y37 1986
- Yeide, Nancy H., Konstantin Akinsha, and Amy L. Walsh. *The AAM Guide to Provenance Research*. Washington, D.C.: American Association of Museums, 2001. NAMA SARL REF DESK N 3999 .Y45 2001

III. OTHER INFORMATION SOURCES

It is not possible to list every resource in the Library on this guide. To find listings of library materials related to art sales and auctions, consult the LEONARDO online catalog for the Spencer Art Reference Library and the Linda Hall Library at leonardo.lindahall.org or access the library online catalog from the SARL page on The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art website at nelson-atkins.org.

To start your search by subject, some of the useful Library of Congress Subject Headings are:

Art—Prices	Auctions
Art—Prices—Periodicals	Auctions—Catalogs
Art Auctions	Auctions—Computer network resources
Art Auction—Periodicals	Auctions—Periodicals
Auction catalogs	Auctions—United States

See also this recent basic guide to the literature of art history:

Marmor, Max and Alex Ross. *Guide to the Literature of Art History 2*. Chicago: American Library Association, 2005. SARL REF DESK Z 5931 .A672 2005. Chapter C, "Sales Records," pages 46–51.

Please contact the Library staff at 816.751.1216 or send an e-mail to library@nelson-atkins.org for reference assistance or to check on the library's hours. The staff is here to assist you in learning about information sources to research your objects!

Compiled by: Marilyn Carbonell, Head of Library Services
Jeffrey Weidman, Senior Librarian for Public Services & Collection Development