Select General Guides to Art Historical Resources
Compiled by Thomas Hill, Art Librarian

BHA : Bibliography of the History of Art = Bibliographie d'Histoire de l'Art. Santa Monica : Getty Art History Information Program, 1973- ~ Covering European and American art from late antiquity to the present, the Bibliography of the History of Art indexes and abstracts art-related books, conference proceedings and dissertations, exhibition and dealer's catalogs, and articles from more than 2,500 periodicals. BHA is updated quarterly and covers 1973 to the present. BHA includes and extends the coverage of its two predecessor art indexes: RAA (Repertoire d'Art et d'Archeologie) from 1973 to 1989 and RILA (International Repertory of the Literature of Art) from 1975 to 1989. For online access click here.

ARTbibliographies Modern. ABC-CLIO, 1972- ~ Abstracts of journal articles, books, essays, exhibition catalogs, dissertations and exhibition reviews. The scope of ARTbibliographies Modern extends from artists and movements beginning with Impressionism in the late 19th century, up to the most recent works and trends in the late twentieth century. Photography is covered from its invention in 1839 to the present. For online access click here.

Columbia University. Libraries. Avery Architectural Library. Avery Index to Architectural Periodicals. ,1975- The Avery Index to Architectural Periodicals indexes more than 1,000 periodicals published worldwide on archeology, city planning, interior design, and historic preservation, as well as architecture. For online access click here.


Art Index Retrospective and Art Abstracts 1929-. New York: W. Wilson Co. ~ Basic index to primarily English language art periodicals and museum bulletins. Coverage is comprehensive, with entries listed under author and subject. Good source for exhibition and book reviews. Reproductions of works of art listed separately under artist's name. Material Indexed between 1929 and 1984 is searchable online at Art Index Retrospective. Material indexed after 1984 is searchable as Art Abstracts (both may be searched at once).

Benezit, Emmanuel. Dictionnaire critique et documentaire des peintres, sculteurs, dessinateurs et graveurs. Paris: Grund, 1976. {Art Ref. N40 B47 1976}. ~ After Thieme-Becker, the most useful universal dictionary of artists. Contains almost 800,000 biographies of artists who have worked from the 5th century B.C.E. to present times. Frequently includes facsimiles of artists' signatures, prizes received, holding museums and collections, prices, and bibliographies.
The Dictionary of Art. Ed. Jane Turner. New York : Grove, 1996. {Art Ref. N31 .D5 1996 v. 1-34}. ~ Composed of recent extensive, scholarly articles by art historians on major and minor art forms, artists, periods, and styles. Bibliographic references accompany each article. When used for research, it is important to use the detailed index in volume 34. Well-illustrated, though you may wish to consult as a supplement the more thoroughly illustrated older work: The Encyclopedia of World Art {Art Ref. N31 E4833}.


Thieme, Ulrich and Felix Becker. Allgemeines Lexikon der Bildenden Künstler von Antike bis zur Gegenwart. 37 volumes. Leipzig : Seeman, 1907-1950. {Art Ref. N40 T4}. ~ This is the work no art history major should be unaware of. Comprehensive scholarly biographical dictionary for painters, sculptors, engravers, architects, and decorative artists. Includes signed articles by prominent scholars, as well as extensive bibliographies, and locations of important collections. Because of long publication run, early volumes more dated than later volumes. Now updated and supplemented by Allgemeines Künstler-Lexikon (Art Ref. N40 T4 suppl.). Don't miss the handlist of abbreviations at the end of the set if your German is rusty.

The Worldwide Bibliography of Art Exhibition Catalogues 1963 1987. Millwood, Kraus International, 1992. {Art Ref Z5939 W675 1992}. A compilation of more than 17,500 catalogs from museums and galleries throughout the world on exhibitions of Western & non-Western art. Volume 1 contains a geographical section; volume 2 a media section, and volume 3 the topical and monograph sections and title index. Most entries appear in more than one section. Generated from the bibliographic database of Worldwide Books, which is now searchable online at http://worldwide.com/.

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