



Guide to Research at Hirsch Library

Pre-Columbian, Mesoamerican Art & Artifacts

Before researching a work of art from the MFAH collection, the work should be viewed in the museum, if possible. The cultural context and descriptions of works in books and journals will be far more meaningful if you have taken advantage of this opportunity. Most good writing about art begins with careful inspections of the objects themselves, followed by informed library research. If the project includes the compiling of a bibliography, it will be most valuable if a full range of resources is consulted, including reference works, books, and journal articles. Listing on-line sources and survey books is usually much less informative.

To find articles in scholarly journals, use indexes such as *Art Abstracts* or, the *Bibliography of the History of Art*. Exhibition catalogs and books about the holdings of other museums may contain entries written about related objects that could also provide guidance and examples of how to write about art. To find books, use keywords in the on-line catalog. Once relevant titles are located, careful attention to how those items are cataloged will lead to similar books with those subject headings. Footnotes and bibliographies in books and articles can also lead to other sources. University libraries will usually offer further holdings on a subject, and the Electronic Resources Room in the library can be used to access their on-line catalogs.

Sylvan Barnet's, *A Short Guide to Writing About Art*, 6th edition, provides a useful description of the process of looking, reading, and writing. For footnote and bibliography formats, the appendix in Barnet is helpful, as is Turabian's *Manual for Writers of Term Papers*, which is available at the library's reference desk.

For additional assistance in your research, please contact the library staff.
Call 713-639-7325 or e-mail hirsch@mfaah.org.

For purposes of the bibliography listed below:

Resources that are annotated *Ref.* or *Reference* are accessible on the main floor of the library.

Ready Reference books are kept behind the information desk.

For other books, give the titles and call numbers to a member of the library staff, who will retrieve the books for you.

Books must be used in the library; they cannot be checked out.

Your assessment of the resources used in your research is always welcome.

Research on non-European objects can require more imaginative approaches in the library, than some other subjects. For instance, a comparative method could be used, in which the art work being studied would be considered in relation to other objects in the MFAH collection or in another collection such as the Menil Collection or the Museum of Natural Sciences. Another example would be the comparison of ceramics and mural painting—in technique, style, and subject matter. If the object being researched is in the MFAH collection, refer to the *library's Guide to Research: Objects in the Museum's Permanent Collection*.

Publications about MFAH

- A Permanent Legacy: 150 Works from the Collection of the MFAH* (sec. 1). Ready Ref.
- The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston: A Guide to the Collection* (p. 184-192). Ready Ref.
- Janet Landay. *The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston: Visitor Guide* (p. 264-289). Ready Ref.

To establish historical periods, regions, styles, and movements general surveys of art history are usually useful.

Surveys

- Gardner's Art through the Ages* (pages 502-518) N 5300 .G25 Ref.
- Stockstad. *Art History*. (pages 445 and following) N 5300 .S923 1995 Ref.
- George Kubler. *Art and Architecture of Ancient America*, (3rd ed. on order) E 59 .A7 K8
- Esther Pasztor. *Pre-Columbian Art*. E 59 .A7 P38 1998
- Mary Ellen Miller. *The Art of Mesoamerica*. F 1219.3 .A7 M55 2003
- Paul Westheim, et al. *Prehispanic Mexican Art*. F1219.3 .A7 P7313

Books on Pre-Columbian subjects

- Michael Coe. *Atlas of Ancient America*. E 61 .C66 1986 Ref.
- The *Oxford Encyclopedia of Mesoamerican Cultures*. F1218.6 .O95 2001 Ref.
- The article on "Mexico" in the *Dictionary of Art*, volume 21. N31 .D5 1996 Ref.
- David Carrasco, ed. *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Mesoamerican Cultures* F 1218.6 O95 2001
- R. Blanton. *Ancient Mesoamerica: A Comparison of Change in Three Regions* F 1219 .A595
- R. Townsend. *Ancient West Mexico: Art & Archaeology of the Unknown Past* F 1219 .A597
- Karl E. Meyer. *Teotihuacán*. F 1219 .M756 1973
- Curt Muser. *Facts and Artifacts of Ancient Middle America*. F 1219 .M97 1978
- Hasso von Winning. *Pre-Columbian Art of Mexico and Central America* F 1219.3 .A7 V6
- Clara Luz Diaz Oyarzabal. *Ceramica de sitios con influencia teotihuacana* F 1219.3 .P8 D53
- Mary Miller & Karl Taube: *Gods and Symbols of Ancient Mexico and the Maya: An Illustrated Dictionary of Mesoamerican Religion* F 1219.3 .R38 M5 1993
- Frances Berdan. *The Aztecs of Central Mexico: An Imperial Society* F 1219.73 .B47 1982
- Karl Taube. *Aztec and Maya Myths* F 1219.76 .R48 T38 1995

Diego De Landa. <i>Yucatan Before and After the Conquest</i>	F 1376 .L24613 1987
Michael D. Coe. <i>The Maya</i> .	F 1435 .C72 1992
L. Schele & D. Freidel. <i>Forest of Kings: The Untold Story of the Ancient Maya</i>	F 1435.3 .K55 S34 1990
Rebecca Stone-Miller. <i>Art of the Andes: from Chavín to Inca</i> .	F 2230.1 A7 S77 1996
Clark & Pye. <i>Olmec Art and Archaeology in Mesoamerica</i> .	N 386 .UT A3 v. 58
Muriel Porter Weaver. <i>The Aztecs, May a and Their Predecessors</i> .	on order
Nigel Davies. <i>Voyagers to the New World</i> .	
Linda Schele and Mary Ellen Miller. <i>The Blood of Kings: Ritual & Dynasty in Maya Art</i>	F1435.3 .A7 S34 1986
M. Miller. <i>Maya Art and Architecture</i> .	on order

On-line resources

List of web sites recommended by Dumbarton Oaks at www.doaks.org/pcnetsites.html.