

chicago style citation examples artwork

Chicago Style Citation Examples for Artwork: A Comprehensive Guide

chicago style citation examples artwork are crucial for academic integrity and acknowledging the visual sources that enrich scholarly work. Whether you are referencing a Renaissance masterpiece, a contemporary sculpture, or a digital art installation, proper citation ensures that your audience can locate and verify the original work. This guide delves into the nuances of citing artwork in Chicago style, covering various mediums and contexts, from museum collections to online databases. Understanding these principles is fundamental for art historians, researchers, students, and anyone wishing to present visual information ethically and accurately. We will explore the different components of a Chicago citation for art, the distinctions between notes and bibliography entries, and provide clear, practical examples to illuminate the process.

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Understanding Chicago Style for Visual Arts

Chicago style, also known as The Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS), offers two primary citation systems: the notes-bibliography system and the author-date system. For art history and visual arts scholarship, the notes-bibliography system is generally preferred due to its ability to incorporate detailed descriptive information alongside citation elements. This system utilizes footnotes or endnotes for in-text citations and a bibliography at the end of the work to list all sources consulted. The emphasis is on providing rich context for the artwork being discussed.

When citing artwork, the goal is to provide enough information so that a reader can identify the specific piece, its creator, and where it can be found or viewed. This includes details such as the artist's name, the title of the work, its medium, the date of creation, and its current location. The specific format may vary slightly depending on whether the artwork is being cited in a note or in the bibliography, but the core information remains consistent. Attention to detail is paramount to avoid ambiguity and ensure proper attribution.

Key Components of an Artwork Citation

Regardless of the specific medium or source, several core components are essential for accurately citing artwork in Chicago style. These elements provide the fundamental information necessary for identification and retrieval. Each piece of information contributes to the clarity and completeness of the citation.

The essential elements typically include:

- **Artist's Full Name:** The creator of the artwork.
- **Title of the Artwork:** This should be italicized.
- **Date of Creation:** The year or period the artwork was produced.
- **Medium:** The materials used (e.g., oil on canvas, bronze, digital photograph).
- **Dimensions:** Often included, especially if significant.
- **Collection or Location:** Where the artwork is housed (e.g., museum name, private collection, gallery).
- **City of Location:** The city where the collection or gallery is situated.
- **Accession Number:** If available, this unique identifier is helpful.
- **Date of Access:** For online sources, the date you viewed the image or information.
- **URL or Database Name:** The web address or the name of the database where the artwork was found.

Citing Artwork in a Museum or Gallery

When you have viewed an artwork in person at a museum or gallery, your citation should reflect this direct experience. This type of citation often appears in a note and then is expanded in the bibliography. The primary focus is on the artwork itself and its physical location.

Artwork Citation in a Note (Museum/Gallery)

A note citation for artwork viewed directly in a museum or gallery typically includes the artist's name, the

italicized title, the date of creation, the medium, the dimensions (if known and relevant), the name of the museum or gallery, and the city.

For example, a note might look like this:

1. Vincent van Gogh, *The Starry Night*, 1889, oil on canvas, 29 x 36 1/4 in., Museum of Modern Art, New York.

If you are discussing the artwork in relation to a specific exhibition, you would include that information as well.

Artwork Citation in a Bibliography (Museum/Gallery)

The bibliography entry for artwork viewed directly in a museum or gallery will expand on the note. It generally follows the same structure but may be more formal.

For example, a bibliography entry:

Van Gogh, Vincent. *The Starry Night*. 1889. Oil on canvas, 29 x 36 1/4 in. Museum of Modern Art, New York.

If the artwork was part of a temporary exhibition, the bibliography entry would include exhibition details.

Citing Artwork from Books and Exhibition Catalogs

Artwork referenced from books or exhibition catalogs requires citing the publication as the source of the reproduction. This means you are citing the book or catalog, not necessarily the original artwork directly, though you should still provide details about the artwork itself.

Artwork Citation in a Note (Book/Catalog)

When citing an artwork reproduced in a book or exhibition catalog, the note should include the artist, artwork title, creation date, medium, and then information about the publication, including the author of the chapter or entry (if applicable), title of the book (italicized), publication details (city, publisher, year), and the specific page number(s) where the artwork is depicted or discussed.

For example:

2. Edgar Degas, *The Dance Class*, ca. 1874, oil on canvas, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, in Carol Armstrong, *Degas: The Dance*, exh. cat., ed. Jane Doe (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2019), 78, plate 34.

Note the inclusion of the exhibition catalog details and the specific page/plate number.

Artwork Citation in a Bibliography (Book/Catalog)

The bibliography entry for artwork from a book or catalog will be more detailed than the note.

For example:

Armstrong, Carol. *Degas: The Dance*. Exh. cat. Edited by Jane Doe. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2019.

And, if you were listing the artwork itself as a distinct entry in your bibliography (which is less common when citing the reproduction), it would look similar to the museum entry, but you would ensure you clarify that it's from a specific publication. More typically, the artwork is cited within the description of the book.

Citing Artwork from Online Sources

The internet has become a vast repository for images of artworks. When citing artwork found online, it's crucial to provide a stable URL and the date you accessed the information, as web content can change or disappear.

Artwork Citation in a Note (Online)

A note for artwork found online should include the artist, artwork title, creation date, medium, the name of the website or database, and the URL, along with the date of access.

For example:

3. Frida Kahlo, *Self-Portrait with Thorn Necklace and Hummingbird*, 1940, oil on canvas, The Art Institute of Chicago, accessed October 26, 2023, <https://www.artic.edu/artworks/111628/self-portrait-with-thorn-necklace-and-hummingbird>.

If the artwork is from an online exhibition catalog, the citation would integrate those publication details as

well.

Artwork Citation in a Bibliography (Online)

The bibliography entry for online artwork citations generally follows the same pattern as the note but may be formatted more fully.

For example:

Kahlo, Frida. Self-Portrait with Thorn Necklace and Hummingbird. 1940. Oil on canvas. The Art Institute of Chicago. Accessed October 26, 2023.

<https://www.artic.edu/artworks/111628/self-portrait-with-thorn-necklace-and-hummingbird>.

It is important to ensure that the URL is active and leads directly to the artwork or relevant information.

Citing Reproductions of Artwork

Sometimes, you might be citing a reproduction of an artwork that doesn't clearly identify the original source or might be a widely distributed print. In such cases, cite the reproduction itself, providing as much detail as possible.

Artwork Reproduction in a Note

If you're citing a postcard or poster of an artwork:

4. Jasper Johns, Flag, 1954–55, encaustic and newspaper on canvas, Private Collection, postcard from The Museum of Modern Art Design Store, October 2023.

Artwork Reproduction in a Bibliography

Johns, Jasper. Flag. 1954–55. Encaustic and newspaper on canvas. Private Collection. Postcard from The Museum of Modern Art Design Store.

The key is to be as specific as possible about the object you are using as your source.

Special Considerations for Artwork Citations

There are several nuances to consider when citing artwork, such as when the artist is unknown, when an artwork is part of a larger collection, or when dealing with digital art.

Unknown Artist

If the artist is unknown, start the citation with the title of the artwork.

For example, in a note:

5. The Arnolfini Portrait, ca. 1434, oil on oak panel, National Gallery, London.

And in a bibliography:

The Arnolfini Portrait. Ca. 1434. Oil on oak panel. National Gallery, London.

Part of a Larger Work

If the artwork is part of a larger installation or series, make sure to mention this.

For example, if discussing a specific piece within an artist's ongoing project:

6. Kara Walker, A Subtlety, or the Marvelous Sugar Baby, 2014, commissioned by Creative Time, Domino Sugar Factory, Brooklyn, New York.

Digital Art

Citing digital art, including interactive installations or net art, requires careful attention to the platform and access method.

In a note:

7. Refik Anadol, Machine Hallucinations, 2019, data sculpture, installation at MoMA PS1, New York, viewable via specialized projection system.

In a bibliography:

Anadol, Refik. Machine Hallucinations. 2019. Data sculpture, installation at MoMA PS1, New York.

Ensure that the citation accurately reflects how the artwork is experienced.

The consistent application of these Chicago style citation examples for artwork ensures that your research is credible and respectful of intellectual property. By meticulously documenting your visual sources, you enable readers to engage with the same material and build upon your findings.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is the most critical element when citing artwork in Chicago style?

A: The most critical element is providing enough identifying information for the reader to locate the specific artwork. This typically includes the artist, title, date, medium, and location. Accuracy and completeness are paramount.

Q: How do I cite a sculpture viewed in person?

A: For a sculpture viewed in person, your note would include the artist's full name, the italicized title of the sculpture, the date of creation, the medium (e.g., bronze, marble), the dimensions (if available), the name of the museum or gallery, and the city. For example: Auguste Rodin, *The Thinker*, modeled 1880, cast c. 1904, bronze, 71 1/2 in. high, Rodin Museum, Philadelphia.

Q: What if I can't find the accession number for an artwork?

A: While accession numbers are helpful for precise identification, they are not always essential for a basic citation. If you cannot find it, omit it from your citation. Focus on providing the other core identifying details like artist, title, date, medium, and location.

Q: How do I cite a photograph of a painting from an art history textbook?

A: When citing a photograph of a painting from a textbook, you are primarily citing the textbook as your source for the reproduction. Your note should include the artist of the painting, the painting's italicized title, its creation date, the medium, and then details of the textbook: author of the chapter or book, title of the book (italicized), publication city, publisher, year, and the page number where the photograph appears.

Q: What is the difference between a note citation and a bibliography entry for artwork?

A: A note citation (footnote or endnote) is a concise reference used within the text. A bibliography entry is a more detailed, alphabetized list of all sources consulted, appearing at the end of the work. The bibliography entry typically expands upon the information provided in the note.

Q: How should I cite artwork found on a museum's website?

A: For artwork cited from a museum's website, include the artist, the italicized title of the artwork, the date of creation, the medium, the name of the museum, the URL of the specific artwork page, and the date you accessed it. For example: Georgia O'Keeffe, *Jimson Weed/White Flower No. 1*, 1932, oil on canvas, The Art Institute of Chicago, accessed November 15, 2023, <https://www.artic.edu/artworks/111629/jimson-weed-white-flower-no-1>.

Q: What if the artwork is contemporary and has no traditional medium listed?

A: For contemporary or digital art where the medium might be unconventional (e.g., code, interactive software, mixed media installation), describe the medium as accurately as possible based on the information provided by the artist or gallery. Be descriptive. For example: "digital projection and sound installation," or "interactive mixed-media sculpture."

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