

# Researching and Valuing a Work of Art at the Fine Arts Library, University of Texas Libraries

It is entirely possible that a work of art that you own – a painted portrait, an antique statue, an old print, or even a more contemporary piece – has a great story behind it. Here are a few resources that may help you determine the history and value of your treasure.

## Finding Information on an Artist

If you are sure you know the artist's name, you may find some information in the following resources. Not all artists will have literature written about them, but often you may find information on artists working in the same style, during the same time period, and in the same place.

### *Artist Biographies Master Index*

N 40 A78 1986 Fine Arts Library Reference

This index is the best place to start your research. It will guide you in finding thousands of sources for biographical information about artists, many of which are available here at the Fine Arts Library.

### *Allgemeines Lexikon der bildenden Künstler von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart*

N 40 T4 Fine Arts Library and PCL Reference

This 37-volume German language set, also known simply as the *Thieme-Becker*, will prove indispensable in your search for European artists working before the middle of the twentieth century. If the German language abbreviations are a problem, consult Valerie Meyer's *Index of the most common German abbreviations used in Thieme-Becker's Künstler-Lexikon* (PF 3693 M494 Fine Arts Library Reference).

### *Benezit Dictionary of Artists. / Dictionnaire critique et documentaire des peintres, sculpteurs, dessinateurs et graveurs*

N 40 D5213 2006 Fine Arts Library Reference

This 14-volume set is the first English language edition of this 1999 French publication. It serves as a guide for information on biographies, auctions, and artists' marks.

## Signature and Monogram Books

If you are unsure of the artist's name, but have a sample of their signature or monogram, these guides may aid in the identification of that artist.

### *American artists: signatures and monograms, 1800-1989*

N 45 C37 1990 Fine Arts Library Reference

### *Artists' monograms and indiscernible signatures: an international directory, 1800-1991*

N 45 C374 1991 Fine Arts Library Reference

### *Classified Directory of Artists' Signatures, Symbols & Monograms*

N 45 C36 Fine Arts Library and PCL Reference

### *Dictionary of signatures & monograms of American artists: from the colonial period to the mid 20th century*

N 45 F35 1988 Fine Arts Library Reference

## Information on Texas Artists

There is a good chance that the work you own is by an artist from right here in Texas. The following resources will aid in your inquiry into Texas's rich artistic history.

### *A History of Texas Artists*

N 6530 T4 F574 1986 Fine Arts Library and Center for American History

### *Artists of Texas*

N 6530 T4 A78 v.1-3 Fine Arts Library Reference

### *Contemporary Art in Texas*

N 6530 T4 J64 1995 Fine Arts Library Reference

### *Dictionary of Texas Artists, 1800-1945*

N 6530 T4 G73 1999 Fine Arts Library Reference

### *50 Texas Artists*

N 6530 T4 C37 1986 Fine Arts Library Reference

### *Made in Texas*

N 6530 T4 U54 Fine Arts Library Reference

A catalog from an exhibition held at what is now known as the Blanton Museum of Art in 1979.

### *Texas Contemporary Artists*

N 6530 T4 K664 Fine Arts Library Reference

Published in 1952, this resource will provide information on artists working in Texas around the middle of the twentieth century.

### *Texas painters, sculptors & graphic artists: a biographical dictionary of artists in Texas before 1942*

N 6530 T4 P69 2000 Fine Arts Library Reference

## Information on Contemporary Artists

When researching contemporary artists, you may find that you need to contact the gallery that represents the artist. These resources are a good start.

### *Contemporary Artists*

N 6490 C6567 1996 Fine Arts Library Ready Reference

### *Contemporary Designers*

NK 1390 C65 1997 Fine Arts Library Ready Reference

### *Who's Who in American Art*

N 6536 W5 2003-04 Fine Arts Library Ready Reference

### *Southwest Art's Art Source*

N 1 S6885 2002 Fine Arts Library Ready Reference

Indexes artists and galleries of the Southwest.

## Finding the Value of a Work of Art

Often the best resources for researching the value of a work of art are auction catalogs. You may need to look through more than one year to find when an artist's work was most recently at auction.

### *Christie's Magazine*

N 8610 C555 Fine Arts Library

### *Gordon's Print Price Annual*

NE 85 G67 Fine Arts Library Reference

### *Mayer International Auction Records*

N 8640 I527 Fine Arts Library Reference

Holdings of the Fine Arts Library cover sale dates from the 1970s to the present.

### *Printworld Directory of Contemporary Prints and Prices*

NE 491 P77 Fine Arts Library Reference

### *Sotheby's Preview*

N 8640 S62 S62O Fine Arts Library.

Current issues shelved in Current Periodicals area.

## Electronic Auction Resources

### [Artprice.com](#)

Provides access to 21 million auction prices and indices for over 300,000 artists as well as information on artist's marks. You must subscribe to gain access.

### [Askart.com](#)

Provides biographical and market information for American artists. You must subscribe to gain access.

### [Christies.com](#) and [Sothebys.com](#)

These online auction resources allow searches by important criteria for auctions dating back five to six years. Searches can be done by name, auction title, category and date.

### [eBay](#)

Results found on eBay will most likely differ greatly from more reputable auction sources. This site archives auctions only 30-90 days after the auction ends.

### [The Getty Provenance Index Databases](#)

Allows searches of European and American archival documents, sales catalogs, and public collections. Periods of coverage are 1500–1990.

### [SCIPIO](#)

Database that provides art auction and rare book catalogs for sales from the late 16th century to scheduled auctions. Records include the dates and places of sales, the auction houses, sellers, institutional holdings, and titles of works.

After exhausting all resources, you may want to consult a qualified appraiser. Check [The Appraiser's Association of America Membership Directory](#) for an appraiser near you.