

Suggestions for Further Reading

Art History surveys and textbooks

These are frequently updated and amended as new topics become current, new knowledge is gained, new interpretations are put forward, and old interpretations are challenged or debunked. The Kleiner text listed below went through four editions or versions in less than five years. My advice would be to look at the most recent edition for current thinking or at any edition created in the current century for good solid scholarship.

Marilyn Stokstad, Art History (there is now a co-writer, but I still prefer earlier editions with Stokstad as the only author) Use editions published after 2000.

Fred Kleiner, Gardner's Art through the Ages (frequent updates as mentioned before, but sometimes more driven by AP standards than new scholarship)

Richard Lewis and Susan Lewis, The Power of Art, also a textbook, but divided between discussing the elements and principles of art, the making of art, and a global history of art. A good starting point for those interested in all three aspects. Very accessible. Would be a good place to start learning the language of art history.

Julian Bell, Mirror of the World: A New History of Art. Not a textbook but a very personal survey of global art and the intersections of various styles and cultures. Excellent writing. Thoughtful and thought-provoking.

Judith Clark. The Illustrated History of Art. A very readable survey, with good color reproductions. All the others listed include non-Western art and begin at the very beginnings. This one is only Western art since the Renaissance.

There are many more textbooks and surveys, but these are some of those that I have found particularly solid and insightful. And if you're only interested in painting, there's always Sister Wendy's Story of Painting.

There are also a number of good and accessible books about learning to "see" art or how to "read" a painting. Some of my favorites are Mary Acton's Learning to Look at Paintings, Learning to Look at Sculpture, and Learning to Look at Modern Art.

Websites

There are a gazillion sites where people post and rave about their favorites or pan their hated objects and images. Nearly all of these are done by "just folks with an opinion" not by scholars. By all means, read them if you find them fun or interesting—just don't expect them to be accurate, trustworthy, objective or any of the other characteristics we associate with honest scholarship. Also be careful of websites run by groups with an agenda, like Picasso.com or most art sites ending in .com....generally they are more interested in selling you posters, reproductions, and the like than in educating you.

On the other hand, a number of institutions of higher education and organizations like museums have excellent websites full of information that has been vetted for accuracy. Below are a few of those I highly recommend.

Metropolitan Museum of Art: the whole website is easily accessible and can take you to an image with information of most of the works in the collection. But better still for learning about art history is the Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History which is way more than a mere timeline, containing excellent brief but scholarly essays (1042 of them) on periods, styles, cultures, artists—even one on a baseball card collection. The direct link is <https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/>

While I didn't talk much about modern art, I can't leave the website of the Museum of Modern Art in NYC off this list. It too provides access to about 80,000 pieces in the collection as well as biographies, essays and learning and research tools.

<https://www.moma.org/collection/>
www.moma.org/research-and-learning/

The National Gallery of Art (US) www.nga.gov also has research and learning tools and extensive online access to the collection.

Most major museums and many smaller museums and collections have good websites. Some of them are easily navigated, others not so much. They are generally easily found by “googling.” Images found in books and periodicals must credit the repository of the image—that's a good place to start researching if you want to know more about it. Note that some museums in non-English speaking countries have excellent English translations for all parts of the website; others not so much.

One site not connected with a museum or university that I'll recommend for a very specific purpose is www.wga.hu, the Web Gallery of Art. If you're looking for a specific work of art and know the artist's name, this is a good place to go. I've never encountered an egregious error there. You'll find a good-to-great reproduction of most works of Western art from the late Middle Ages to the mid-19th century here, in many cases along with details and additional information on the works and biographies of the artists. You can also search for groups of paintings by topic.

Check out Smarthistory at <https://smarthistory.org/>. It's an amazing teaching and learning resource with essays, videos, even full courses on global art history. It's connected to Khan Academy <https://www.khanacademy.org/> which has lessons and materials for students and teachers in a number of content areas.

On the next page is a list of a few of the monographs, articles and/or websites consulted for each of the eras covered. They are sources that were either new to me in preparing the lectures or are standouts that I returned to again. As a history major, PhD, and teacher, I have read all or parts of a lot of books, have taken numerous courses, and attended many lectures about European history over the last half century—impossible to list all my “history” sources. For an introduction to the political, economic, social, cultural, intellectual and/or religious environments that informed the art, any highly regarded Western Civilization textbook would work—those by Sherman or Kishlansky, among others. Or try J. M. Roberts' one volume [A History of Europe](#) or that by Norman Davies (same title).

- Ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia
 - Smithsonian.com, “The Queen who would be King”
<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/the-queen-who-would-be-king-130328511/>
- Rome
 - Orietta Rossini, Ara Pacis
 - Nancy Ramage and Andrew Ramage, Roman Art, 6th ed.
- Byzantine and Medieval
 - Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History
 - Gianfranco Bustacchini, Ravenna: Mosaics, Monuments and Environment; by the same author, Ravenna: Capital of Mosaic
- Renaissance
 - Mary Hollingsworth, Patronage in Renaissance Italy
 - Lauro Martines, Power and Imagination: City-States in Renaissance Italy
This is the most detailed and “difficult” book on this list, assuming a lot of prior knowledge and taxing the reader with its wealth of detail—but well worth the effort.
- Baroque
 - Official website of the Chateau de Versailles, <http://en.chateauversailles.fr/>
An amazingly complete overview of the chateau, its gardens, its history, the artists, architects, gardeners and landscapers who created it as well as insights into Louis XIV and his changing desires as the work was completed and continued.
 - Simon Shama, The Embarrassment of Riches: An interpretation of Dutch culture in the Golden Age
- Modern Era
 - Peter Adam, Art of the Third Reich
 - Stephanie Barron, Degenerate Art: The Fate of the Avant-Garde in Nazi Germany
 - Marla Stone, “The State as Patron,” essay in Michael Affron, ed., Fascist Visions: Art and Ideology in France and Italy

A further note on books about art—they come in a variety of forms. One—maybe the most common—is the so-called “coffee table book”—big, colorful, weighty in the poundage sense. While they usually have an artist biography, what they generally lack are interpretative essays and analysis. There are books—usually focused on one artist or a specific genre or subgenre—that have the quality reproductions, though usually fewer in number, along with interpretation and analysis by experts in the field. “Exhibition catalogues” vary in terms of reproductions (some have limited color) but again have at least introductory essays of a scholarly nature and a statement by the curator(s) of the exhibit discussing the focus and content of the exhibit. Many have additional essays relevant to the focus of the exhibit.