
Thomas J. Watson Library

Research Guide

A Guide to Conducting Biographical Research Online

Thomas J. Watson Library

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For current Library hours visit us at metmuseum.org/art/libraries-and-research-centers/thomas-j-watson-library

In addition to the numerous print exhibition catalogs, monographs, reference books, and auction catalogues in Watson Library's collection, which can be found on [Watsonline](#), the library provides access to many electronic resources to help you develop an understanding of the lives of artists.

In general, Watson Library's electronic resources are available onsite for visitors, and onsite or remotely for Met staff, volunteer tour guides, interns, and fellows; visitors who would like to use these resources from offsite should check if their affiliated institution or local library provides access. Resources that are denoted as free in this guide are exceptions and may be accessed onsite or remotely by visitors.

For up-to-date biographical information on living artists, you may also want to search the Internet for the artist's personal website and social media accounts.

Biographical Dictionaries, Encyclopedias, and Bibliographies

General

[American National Biography Online](#)

Biographies of significant or influential figures in American history.

[Oxford Dictionary of National Biography](#)

Biographies of figures who shaped British history and culture, from the Romans to the present.

[World Biographical Information System Online](#)

Biographical index entries with basic information for notable figures from around the world who lived between the 8th century B.C. and the present. Includes linked full-text access to some digitized French biographical texts.

Art-Specific

[Allgemeines Künstlerlexikon: International Künstlerdatenbank](#)

Biographical dictionary of artists from around the world who lived from antiquity to the 21st century. Entries include lists of the artists' works and exhibitions as well as bibliographic references. Entries are in German.

[African American Visual Artists Database \(Free\)](#)

Biographical information, bibliographic references, exhibitions, lists of holdings in public collections, and more, for artists of the African Diaspora and Africa who have lived,

worked, studied, or exhibited in the U.S., Canada, and the Caribbean.

[Native American Artists Resource Collection](#) (Free)

Index of traditional and contemporary Indigenous American artists, performers, and writers represented in the physical files of the Native American Artists Resource Collection at the Heard Museum. Entries include basic biographical information (name, alternative name(s), gender, heritage, and specialties or mediums for which the artist is known, and sometimes life dates, birthplace, exhibitions, and awards).

Genealogy Databases

[Ancestry Library Edition](#) (Onsite use only for all users, including Met staff, volunteer tour guides, interns, and fellows)

Census, vital, church, court, and immigration records, primarily for the U.S. and the U.K.

[HeritageQuest Online](#)

Complete U.S. Federal Census Records from 1790 to 1930, full-text family and local histories, banking and military records, genealogies, and other primary source materials.

General Art Research Databases That Feature Biographical Information

[EBSCO Art & Architecture Source](#)

Full-text articles as well as detailed indexing and abstracts for an array of journals, books, and more in a broad array of subject areas. Enter the name of the artist of interest in the search bar to explore. In the advanced search, you can set the Document Type to Biography, though you may find more results without this search filter.

[JSTOR](#)

Full-text access to thousands of periodicals, e-books, and images across disciplines. All journal coverage starts with the first issue and continues to within 3 to 5 years of the current date. Search by artist name.

[Oxford Art Online](#)

Access art reference works published electronically by Oxford University Press. These include the *Benezit Dictionary of Artists*, which provides artists' biographies and information about the sale and collection of artists' works.

Have a question?

Reach a reference librarian at watson.library@metmuseum.org or use our virtual chat service, Ask a Librarian, Monday-Friday, 10am-4pm, from the [Watsonline](#) homepage.

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