
Thomas J. Watson Library

Research Guide

Auctions and Appraisals

Finding information about a past sale or the value and authenticity of a work of art, book, map, or collectible

Thomas J. Watson Library
The Met Fifth Avenue
1000 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10028

212-650-2225

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

Research current and past sales of works by checking sales indices, price guides, and dealers' inventories. These may be helpful in estimating the approximate monetary value of works of art and other materials. Entries may be arranged by artist's last name, medium, or date of sale.

You can find a full list of Watson Library's electronic databases related to auctions and collecting [here](#), or select "E-Resources" from the menu across the top of the [Watsonline](#) homepage and then click "Auction Sales, Provenance, & Collecting" beneath the heading, "By Topic."

For research into collectibles, you may want to check nearby public libraries for collectible price guides. Examples include *Kovels' Antiques & Collectibles Price List* and *Warman's Antiques and Collectibles Price Guide*.

DISCLAIMER: The Libraries at the Metropolitan Museum of Art do not provide, endorse, recommend, or guarantee appraisal services. The Library is not affiliated with public websites referenced here nor is it responsible for their content.

Online Resources

Please note that visitors to the Library must be onsite in order to access subscription resources. Museum staff, fellows, interns, and volunteer tour guides may access these resources either onsite or remotely.

Works of Art

[Art Sales Catalogues Online](#) (1600-1900) **(Subscription resource)**

Digitized art sales catalogue from European and American auctions. This resource incorporates Frits Lugt's [Répertoire des Catalogues de Ventes Publiques](#). (Available in print - **Watson Library Reference - Open shelves - N8650 .L8 1938**)

[Artprice](#) (1962-present) **(Subscription resource)**

Search millions of artworks listed by auction houses around the world. Artprice is an active online marketplace for the buying and selling of artwork.

[AskART](#) (1987-present) **(Subscription resource)**

Auction records for hundreds of thousands of artists, along with brief artist biographies, images, and artist signatures.

[Getty Provenance Index](#) (roughly 16th to 20th c.) **(Freely available)**

Index or inventories, sales catalogs, paintings in public collections, and the papers of art collectors.

[Invaluable](#) **(Subscription resource)**

Pre- and post-sale auction records for artworks, jewelry, decorative arts, antiques, and collectibles listed by auction houses from around the world.

[SCIPIO: Art and Rare Books Sales Catalogs](#) (late 1500s-present) **(Subscription resource)**

Index of art auction and rare book catalogs.

Books, Ephemera, and Maps

[Bookfinder](#) **(Freely available)**

Search used, rare, new, and out-of-print books. Draws from inventories of over 100,000 booksellers worldwide.

[Your Old Books](#) **(Freely available)**

A guide to frequently asked questions about rare and older books and their value published by the Rare Books and Manuscripts Section of the Association of College and Research Libraries.

Print Resources

[Art sales from early in the eighteenth century to early in the twentieth century \(Graves\)](#) **(Watson Library Reference - Open shelves - N8675 .G72 1918; also freely available [online](#))**

Three-volume retrospective auction index. Old Master and early English paintings.

[The Artronix index](#) (1951-1984) **(Watson Library Reference - Open shelves - TR12 .A78 1986)**

Retrospective index of photographs at auction internationally.

[Guide Mayer](#) (1995-2005, intermittent) **(Watson Library Reference - Open shelves - N8640 .I5)**

A guide to international auction prices.

[Hislop's Art Sales Index](#) (1987-1998) **(Watson Library Reference - Open shelves - N8670 .A66)**

International sales of paintings, works on paper, miniatures, sculpture, prints, and photographs.

[Leonard's Index of Art Auctions](#) (1980-1997) **(Watson Library Reference - Open Shelves - N8602 .L46)**

Sales of American paintings, drawings, sculptures, and mixed media.

[Photographic Art Market](#) (1981-2006) **(Requestable)**

Photography sales at Sotheby's, Christie's, Swann Galleries and Butterfield & Butterfield.

[Répertoire des Catalogues de Ventes Publiques](#) (1600-1925) **(Watson Library Reference - Open shelves - N8650 .L8 1938); also available [online](#) via subscription database)**

Retrospective international index of artworks in various mediums, antiques, decorative arts, weapons, instruments, and "natural curiosities." In French.

[World Collectors Annuary](#) (1946-1959) **(Watson Library Reference - Open shelves - ND47 .W6)**

Sales of paintings, pastels, drawings, gouaches, and watercolors. Selected coverage of a limited number of auction houses. Primarily U.S. and Western Europe (includes Japan, Israel, USSR and Sweden for some years).

Contact an Appraiser

An appraiser is a professional who determines the value or authenticity of a work of art or other materials. Before hiring, you may wish to inquire about the appraiser's qualifications and fees.

[American Society of Appraisers](#)

[Antiquarian Booksellers' Association of America](#)

[Antiques Roadshow](#)

Public Broadcasting System television show. The online appraiser index includes contact information of experts that have been featured on the show.

[Appraisers Association of America](#)

[Bonhams](#)

[Doyle New York](#)

[International Foundation for Art Research \(IFAR\)](#)

[International Society of Appraisers](#)

[Sotheby's](#)

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.

Last updated 01/2023