

Art History Writing

Information collected and annotations written by Julie Schwarz

Articles

Barolsky, Paul. "Writing Art History" Art Bulletin 78.3 (Sept. 96).

Summary: This article talks about the problem with wittily written art writing. Often times it's not taken seriously, and Barolsky states that art writing can be universally boring. He is pushing for well written AND interesting art writing.

Books

Barnet, Sylvan. A Short Guide to Writing About Art, 7th ed. Boston: Longman, 2003.

Call# N7476.C37 1987

Summary: This is a terrific resource. The writing is interesting and approachable; the examples cite familiar works of art, and the text is such that one can easily find an answer. Especially helpful are the "Rule for Writers" boxes throughout the book.

Carrier, David. Artwriting. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1987 **Call# N7476.C37 1987** ISBN 0-87-023561-3

Summary: Really dense writing, great for reviews and theoretical writing. Useful to grad students and possibly seniors writing a thesis. Not for beginners to the field of writing about art.

Edwards, David J. The Handbook of Art and Design Terms. Upper Saddle River, NJ, 2004.

Summary: While touted as a handbook, this is, in fact, a small dictionary. Terms range from basic (line) to art styles (digital photography) This is an excellent addition to any art writer's library.

Fichner-Rathus, Lois. Thinking and Writing about Art (4th edition). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1995. **ISBN: 0-13-95447-X**

Summary: This is a workbook that is an accompaniment to the textbook Understanding Art. However, pages 1-28 are all terrific for handouts. As far as the writing exercises go, while some rely on the textbook to make sense, many can be used as a basic warm up for the beginning of class.

Lamm, Kathryn. 10,000 Ideas for Term Papers, Projects, Reports, and Speeches (5th edition). New York, NY: MacMillan, 1998. **ISBN: 0-02-862512-9**

Summary: True to its name this book is full of ideas. Symbols by the topics indicate if the idea is difficult, may require prior knowledge, needs examples, etc. Projects specific to art history can be found in the Art (44), Art-Decorative Arts and Crafts (47), Art-Painting (49), Art-Sculpture (51), Architecture (39), Film (172), Humanities (253), and Photography (340) sections.

Stout, Candace Jesse. Critical Thinking and Writing in Art. St. Paul, MN: West Publishing Company, 1995. **ISBN: 0-314-05874-5**

Summary: While not the most visually stimulating book (ironic no?) this is a good start for any art history student. It is also a nice resource for faculty as there are art-specific writing projects within some of the chapters. Of note is

the “Improvisations” chapter for really in-depth writing/thinking/art projects and exercises.

Sayre, Henry M. Writing About Art (4th edition). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2002. **ISBN: 0-13-041614-2**

Summary: While slim, this is a pretty info-rich book. It touts itself as a “complement to Art History survey and period texts” and takes the writer step-by-step through the art writing process using photography, painting, architecture, and sculpture as examples.

Wyman, Marilyn. Looking and Writing: A Guide for Art History Students. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2003. **ISBN: 0-13-098359-4**

Summary: A really good, basic, art writing resource. While it has none of the panache that the Barnett book does, it is still a good read. Most notable is the chapter on “Looking for Meaning” because it breaks down art work into the questions to ask yourself when you are reading a piece of art for its meaning.