Veronica D. McGurrin. A Content Analysis of Digital Art History Publishing Platforms. A Master's Paper for the M.S. in L.S degree. May, 2019. 49 pages. Advisor: JJ Bauer

The landscape of art history publishing has vastly shifted in the past decade as it transitions to a digital world. While various constraints have hindered the growth of digital art history publishing, cultural institutions have now started to create comprehensive publications. This paper presents a content analysis of three different art history publishing platforms: the Getty Institute's Online Scholarly Catalogue Initiative, Canadian Online Art Book Project, and Artifex Press. The results of the study show that the majority of the publications focus on white, male, Western artists reinforcing canonical ideas of art history. Important structural trends are apparent from the analysis that can be utilized to examine future publications. The conclusion of the paper highlights the various new publications that have emerged since the start of the project, further reinforcing the idea that art history publishing is truly at a tipping point in regard to the proliferation of digital formats.

Headings:

    Content analysis

    Academic discourse

    Collection development in art libraries

    Scholarly electronic publishing

    Publishers & publishing

    Museum collection catalogs

A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF DIGITAL ART HISTORY PUBLISHING PLATFORMS

by
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A Master's paper submitted to the faculty
of the School of Information and Library Science
of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Science in
Library Science.

Chapel Hill, North Carolina

May 2019

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Introduction

"Publishing art history digitally offers an important opportunity to bring the bifurcated practices of the academy- research and teaching- closer together," write Smarthistory executive editors Dr. Beth Harris and Dr. Steven Tucker.[1] They continue by stating that "the flexibility of the online environment allows for more types of content to intersect. We now have a greater opportunity and responsibility to bridge the gap between our scholarly audiences and the general public."[2]

This statement was written after Harris and Tucker attended a symposium entitled "Publishing Art History Digitally: The Present and the Future," an event funded by the Kress Foundation as well as NYU's Center for Humanities. From this statement already we can see some of the essential takeaways from the event, notably Harris and Tucker's emphasis on the "flexibility" and "important opportunity" that the platform allows, as well as the "responsibility" to draw attention to this platform for the greater public. Held in 2016, the symposium acted as an important moment in which art historians and affiliated colleagues were not only aware of the shifting landscape of art history publishing, but are also interested in calling attention to this pressing shift.

The example of the symposium is but one notation in the much larger discussion of digital humanities projects and publications in this contemporary moment. The field of

[1] Beth Harris and Steven Zucker. "Art history, digital publishing, and democratization." *Smarthistory*. 15 October 2016. https://smarthistoryblog.org/2016/10/15/art-history-digital-publishing-and-democratization/
[2] Ibid.

digital humanities, including digital humanities publishing projects, is quite broad and is usually differentiated by a specific discipline, such as History, English, and so on. The field of digital art history is particularly illuminating due to the fact that it encompasses the academic world as well as cultural heritage institutions, most especially in art museums. To complicate things further, there has been a notable amount of pushback from the academic world in regards to digital art history; although the visual format offers a unique opportunity for publication projects and are inherently tied to art history, the academic world of art history are not as accepting of these innovative platforms of which Harris and Tucker were enamored. At the center of this problem lies the fact that the discipline of art history values the printed monograph published by a respected university publisher above all other types of research which thus shapes the policies surrounding tenure and promotion for scholars. In light of this, doctoral students and junior scholars are less likely to pursue digital avenues as their main objective as scholars is to achieve a tenure-track position. Another equally thorny issue that is unique to the field of art history is the use of images in their publications. Despite the fact that the digital platform would make publishing images easier and more cost effective, there are not the same regulations for fair use and open access with image reproductions and therefore many image repositories resist allowing publication rights on online platforms.

Despite these difficulties, there are a few organizations that are creating digital art history publishing platforms. It is interesting to note that the vast majority of these endeavors are being made by the institutions outside of academia and are therefore not as constrained by the tenure and promotion policies. Moreover, as they are the same

institutions who regulate the image repositories and their publishing rights, they are more likely to make these repositories open access for all academics to use. The Online Scholarly Catalogue Initiative, or OSCI, was a Getty funded project that ran from 2009 to 2017. This extremely expansive project is probably the best example of an amazing digital art history publishing platform for many reasons, including the variety of catalogues published in their eight-year tenure. Their stated goal was to "rethink the museum scholarly collection catalogue for the digital age and helping museums work together to transition to online publishing."[3] The project's mission statement emphasized the unique quality of the scholarly catalogue and the reasons that they chose this mode of publication as the one to launch their initiative; the final report states that "[s]cholarly collection catalogues belong to a well-established genre with a distinguished pedigree, and they have been widely admired for generations for their attention to detail and high-quality production" and more importantly that "they are also one of the most important ways that museums share research findings about the works of art in their collections."[4] Museum catalogues are an interesting area to explore for digital art history publishing projects because, as author Sarah Anne Hughes has stated in her 2014 article "Contemporary publishing by national museums and art galleries and its future," museums "publish both to promote their brand, to share research endeavours associated with collections and to generate an income; curators write because books offer a

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[3] The Getty Institute. *Museum Catalogues in the Digital Age: A Final Report on the Getty Foundation's Online Scholarly Catalogue Initiative (OSCI)*. 2017. http://www.getty.edu/publications/osci-report/assets/downloads/osci-report.pdf
[4] Ibid

universally recognized means to disseminate their scholarship and visitors buy a

catalogue as a souvenir of a pleasant and stimulating experience."[5] This intersection of

interests that culminate in expansive and widely accepted publishing projects make it an

important genre of exploration for digital art history publishing projects.

   Moreover, the OSCI overview highlights the innovative ways in which the

introduction to the digital can enhance museum catalogues. Viewers can zoom in on

images, embed notations within the margins, and utilize sources that would not be

available in a traditional print catalogue such as artist interviews and conservation videos.

Overall, there were eight participating museums: the Art Institute of Chicago, the Freer

Gallery of Art and the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, the LACMA, the National Gallery of

Art in DC, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the Seattle Art Museum, the Tate,

and the Walker Art Center. Each of these museums created their own type of online

catalogue that differed from one another and that the museum is tasked with making

available to the public for no cost. Additionally, the expansive project included three

different venues of information: the OSCI Toolkit; the Web Content Management

System; and the Museum System/eMuseum. Although these technologies might seem

essential to the catalogues themselves, they are essential to the OSCI mission because

they embody the ideas that the Getty is setting forth in these projects; in addition to

funding the publication of these eight different catalogues, they also made all of the

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[5] Sarah Anne Hughes, "Contemporary publishing by national museums and art galleries and its future," *Art Libraries Journal.* Vol 39 no. 2 (2014): 35

technological support for the publications as Open Access materials so that any

institution could utilize the software to create their own publication.

Similar to the Getty's OSCI project, the Artifex Press focuses on one specific type

of art history publication: the catalogue raisonné. Comprising every single piece of work

that a particular artist has done in their life in addition to biographical information and

academic essays, the catalogue raisonné offers a unique opportunity for publishers to

create content online as printed catalogues raisonné are extremely long, very costly, and

usually consist of multiple editions. Moreover, as they are comprehensive works, the

digital platforms allows the editors to make any changes that might be needed or create

any updates as the artist continues to produce work whereas printed volumes are

essentially outdated by the time they make it to a library or other repository. Artifex Press

describes the problem as such:

> Because the information in a catalogue raisonné is constantly in flux, printed
> catalogues raisonnés cannot achieve both completeness and accuracy. Artifex
> Press was conceived to resolve this problem. We offer a solution that is more
> accessible, more flexible, more time- and cost-efficient, and above all, more
> accurate and up-to-date than the traditional printed counterpart.[6]

The mission of Artifex Press emphasizes the rigor of traditional art historical scholarship

with the flexibilities and new opportunities inherent to the digital medium. Focusing on

not only the publications themselves, but also their "patented" software, their "ultimate

goal is to leverage our expertise in software development and catalogue raisonné

publishing to preserve the legacy and intellectual property of participating artists and

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[6] "About." *Artifex Press*. https://artifexpress.com/about

estates."[7] Their patented software illuminates a deviation from the OSCI model; whereas the OSCI toolkit was created with the intention that any institution could utilize the technology to publish digitally, Artifex Press is a subscription based organization and created the patent for their software in order to make a profit from their technology.

Finally, the Canadian Online Art Book Project is a subset of the Art Institute of Canada (AIC) whose mission is to "Make Canadian Art History A Contemporary Conversation."[8] Established in 2013, the Canadian Online Art Book Project hires authoritative art history scholars all over Canada to write a relatively short monograph about Canadian artists. The institution chooses relatively unknown artists and finds Canadian art historians to research and write academically on artists who, most likely, have not received this type of intense academic scholarship. Each year, six new titles are released in both a French and English version as well as a born digital and PDF work.

Despite the prominence of these three digital art history publishing platforms, there has been little to no scholarship on the ways in which they different from one another in both structure as well as content. In this project, I will examine publications from the Getty's Online Scholarly Catalogue Initiative, Artifex Press, and the Canadian Online Art Book Project to see the way in which their organizational structures are or are not different from platform to platform as well as analyzing which artists they are discussing in their scholarship. Through this content analysis, I hope to identify emerging

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[7] "About." *Artifex Press*. https://artifexpress.com/about
[8] "About." Canadian Online Art Book Project. https://www.aci-iac.ca/art-books

trends that are found in art history digital publishing to further assess the qualities that make a good, born-digital publication.

Research Question

- Utilizing three digital art history publishing platforms, the Getty's Online Scholarly Communications Initiative, the Canadian Art Book Project, and Artifex Press, how do born digital art history publication platforms differ from each other in terms of content (i.e. which artists are discussed) and organizational structure?

- What are the emerging trends in these digital publishing platforms?

Literature Review

Like most humanities disciplines, the art history publishing industry is intrinsically tied to the world of academia but they differ from other disciplines in that they are also reliant upon other organizations as well, such as cultural heritage institutions, including art museums, as the primary publication source. In light of this, the state of the field of art history publishing has to include not only traditional art history publication routes but also museum publications and other institutional publications. Regardless of the publication source, the state of art history publishing is in a moment of transition with the advent of digital publishing opportunities.

Catherine Sousloff, chair of the *Art Journal* Editorial Board and Presidential Chair and Professor in the History of Art and Visual Culture at the University of California, Santa Cruz, grounds her 2006 article regarding the field of art publishing with the importance of art books in the history of the discipline. Sousloff states that the growth

of art books paralleled the growth in art collection circa 1600 when collectors supported

scholars who produced both art as well as books on art.[9] Collectors gained pleasure from

displaying these comprehensive texts, just as they did from displaying the objects

themselves, as well as the intellectual pursuit of contextualizing their art collection within

the history of art.[10] In this way, Sousloff argues, the art book is unique to the field:

despite the prevalence of monographs across all humanities disciplines, the "art book

could make art available to those who could not own the art it reproduced. The inherent

democracy of the reproduced image made the individually owned object accessible to

many, if owned by only one."[11] Although the initial purpose of the art book has evolved

over time, Sousloff claims that the "art book is unlike any other kind of book, because it

constructs as closely as possible, a metonymic relationship between the book itself and

the images or artifacts it represents both visually, through the images it offers, and

figuratively, through language."[12] Additionally, art history publishing straddles both the

arts and humanities and therefore engages in "traditional outlets of humanities publishing,

the journal article and monograph, but also engages and incorporates a world of artistic

production existing outside the domain of the university, within the cultural spaces of the

gallery and museum."[13]

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[9] Catherine M. Soussloff. "Publishing Paradigms in Art History." *Art Journal* 65, no. 4 (2006): 37.
[10] Sousloff, "Publishing Paradigms in Art History," p. 37
[11] Sousloff, "Publishing Paradigms in Art History," p. 37
[12] Sousloff, "Publishing Paradigms in Art History," p. 38
[13] Patrick Tomlin. "Every Man His Book? An Introduction to Open Access in the Arts." *Art Documentation: Journal of the Art Libraries Society of North America* 30, no. 1 (April 2011): 51.

Cambridge University Press's decision to cut its publication of art books in half in 2005 caused repercussions across the industry.[14] As a result, in 2006, two important studies were published regarding the state of scholarly publishing. Lawrence McGill's *The State of Scholarly Publishing in the History of Art and Architecture* provided a realistic analysis of the state of the field, highlighting the problems of the field and explaining the lack of progression compared to other humanities disciplines whereas Hilary Ballon and Martiet Westermann's *Art History and Its Publications in the Electronic Age* argued for the promotion of electronic publications for art history without discussing the documented reluctance towards electronic publishing displayed by art history professionals.[15] Both studies, funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Grant's New Scholarly Communications Initiative, were initiated and produced by scholars with Rice University Press, a university publisher that after initially closing in 1996 decided to reopen as a completely digital platform in 2006.[16] Unfortunately, the press was forced to close just a few years later in 2010 due to the high cost of publishing despite its completely digital platform. To contextualize, Sousloff writes that in 2006 "the art history book today costs at least three times what other kinds of scholarly books cost to make" and that the "costs of books rose 82 percent from 1986 to 2003."[17]

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[14] Patrick Tomlin. "Every Man His Book?" p. 6

[15] Lawrence McGill. *The State of Scholarly Publishing in the History of Art and Architecture* (Houston, Texas: Rice University Press, 2006) and Hilary Ballon and Marie Westermann. *Art History and its Publications in the Electronic Age* (Houston, Texas: Rice University Press, 2006).

[16] Jennifer Howard. "Rice U. Press to Close Its Digital Press Next Month." In *Chronicle of Higher Education*. 19 August 2010.

[17] Sousloff, "Publishing Paradigms in Art History," p. 38

Rice University Press is just one example of a larger landscape of publishing issues in the humanities and specifically within the field of art history. Maureen Whalen's 2009 article reflects upon these two studies and further explicates the issues prevailing for art history publishing by using the issues surrounding the J. Paul Getty Museum's attempt to publish papers from their 2006 symposium entitled "Looking at Landscape: Courbet and Modernism."[18] Whalen highlights the fact that even though Courbet died in 1877 and therefore all of his works should be in the public domain, museums and repositories maintain that they still hold the rights to reproduced images that they own. Whalen pays particular attention to the fact that the McGill and Ballon and Westermann studies are still the two predominant studies regarding the state of the field in art history, yet they produce contradictory conclusions.[19]

As Whalen emphasizes, most universities are still prone to produce traditional print publications, one of the reasons being that print publications are cited more than electronic publications, which is an integral way in which scholarship is reviewed within this field. Whalen believes that calling upon art museums to make their collections publicly accessible for publication would be one way in which scholars would be more amenable to electronic publishing, but she still believes that it would take almost a generational transition for fundamental change to occur because most employees working in art museums received advanced degrees in an academic setting that reinforced the

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[18] Maureen Whalen. "What's Wrong with this Picture? An Examination of Art Historians' Attitudes About Electronic Publishing and the Consequences of Their Continuing Love Affair with Print." Art Documentation: Journal of the Art Libraries Society of North America Vol. 28, No. 2 (2009): 13-22

[19] Whalen, "What's Wrong with this Picture?," p. 14.

superiority of print publishing.[20] The central issues that Whalen highlights are the cost of

reproducing images in publications, an issue that is unique to the field of art and

architectural history, and the fact that "the citadels of art history scholarship," namely

promotion and tenure committees within art history departments, are reluctant to consider

electronic publishing activities as equally worthy publications as printed monographs.[21]

Achieving tenure and promotion within your field of discipline is the key to career

advancement and with this fact looming over their heads, younger scholars will not

advocate for nor experiment with digital publishing until they achieve a tenured position.

     In a reflection on a 2013 panel entitled "The Future of Art Book Publishing,"

authors Ian McDermott and Erin C. Duningham echo the issues previously stated by

Whalen, McGill, and Ballon and Westerman. Unique to other articles, McDermott and

Duningham state that there is a great necessity for funding from foundations like Getty

and Mellon without which smaller institutions would not be able to produce digital

publishing, a facet that is troubling as there are obviously not unlimited funded grants.[22]

Moreover, Getty and Mellon grants are moving away from monograph publications and

more towards new media and multi-dimensional publication forms.[23]

     There seem to be two distinct reasons dictating the reluctance of art historians

towards digital publication efforts. Scholars fear that the quality of illustrations in print

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[20] Whalen, "What's Wrong with this Picture?," p. 16

[21] Whalen, "What's Wrong with this Picture," p. 17

[22] Ian McDermott and Erin C. Duningham. "Art Book Publishing: Past, Present, Future." *Art Documentation: Journal of the Art Libraries Society of North America,* vol. 32 (2013): 244.

[23] Susan Bielstein. "Letter from the editor: climate change in art history publishing." *Perspective*. 2 (2015): 5.

publications are much higher than in their digital counterparts.[24] Color matching, in

particular, is a concern for scholars.[25] The second is the use of images. At the center of

the crisis in publishing is the inherent use of images tied to the field of art history

publishing. In fact, "it is a paradox of the digital revolution that it has never been easier to

produce and circulate an image, and never harder to publish one."[26] Open access, defined

as "scholarly literature that is online, free for the reader, and free of significant licensing

restrictions regulating use," is intrinsically tied to the rise of technology.[27] Despite its rise

in universities in the social science and science disciplines, "the practice of fair use does

not diminish the excessive costs of image reproduction; historians of history are able to

use up to five hundred words from a historical text yet there is no equivalent of five

hundred words in regards to images."[28] This difficult process inhibits "image-based

scholarship" and "hampers experimentation with newer models of scholarly

communication."[29]

In terms of which mediums of publication are more likely to embrace digital

platforms and open access policies, journals have more reasons to adapt to the newer

technologies. There are no differences in cost between print and digital journal

publications in terms of editorial practices nor indexing or bibliographic conventions as

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[24] Sousloff, "Publishing Paradigms in Art History," p. 40
[25] Tomlin, "A Matter of Discipline," p. 55
[26] Hilary Ballon. "Editorial: Art History and Its Publications in the Electronic Age." *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*. Vol. 65 no. 3 (2006): 482.
[27] Patrick Tomlin. "Every Man His Book? An Introduction to Open Access in the Arts.' *Art Documentation.* 30:1 (2011): 4.
[28] Tomlin, "A Matter of Discipline," p. 60
[29] Tomlin, "Every Man His Book?," p. 8

these roles are expected as service to the field by academics.[30] Publication in journals is

not for profit, but rather an expectation of academics to disseminate knowledge in the

field whereas there might be a slight monetary interest of authors and publishers for

monographs.[31]

Methods

Overview

Due to the nature of the research question, this study consists of a qualitative

content analysis of three different art history digital publication platforms to examine if

they have different content and organizational structures from one another. Each of the

individual publications from these publishing platforms will be considered data.[32]

Because content analysis is a "flexible and unobtrusive method to analyze the meanings

of narratives objectively," this qualitative method will be ideal in analyzing the different

publications.[33] Content analysis can be defined as "a research technique for making

replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) the contexts of

use."[34] Qualitative content analysis was chosen as it provides "a detailed description of

the material under analysis" whereas quantitative analysis is utilized mostly to test a

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[30] Tomlin, "A Matter of Discipline," p. 55

[31] Ballon, "Editorial: Art History and Its Publications in the Electronic Age," p. 483

[32] Wildemuth, Barbara M. "Existing Documents and Artifacts as Data." In *Applications of Social Research Methods to Questions in Information and Library Science*, 2nd. Ed. Barbara Wildemuth, ed. Santa Barbara, California: Libraries Unlimited (2017): 166-167

[33] Lin, Chi-Shiou and Jeng, Wen. "Using Content Analysis in LIS Research: Experiences with Coding Schemes Construction and Reliability Measures." *Qualitative and Quantitative Methods in Libraries*. 4:87 (2015): 87.

[34] Krippendorff, Klaus. *Content Analysis: An Introduction to its Methodology*, 2nd. Ed. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications (2004) p. 18.

hypothesis.[35] This methodology is considered to be inductive, rather than deductive, as "themes and categories emerge from the data through the researcher's careful examination and constant comparison."[36] Moreover, the process of content analysis requires a systematic approach to data analysis which "counteracts the danger of looking at the material only through the lens of one's assumptions and expectations" an important aspect to this study as I am an art history graduate student and have used some of these platforms in previous research.[37]

To first begin a content analysis, one must engage in coding, "a procedure that disaggregates the data, breaks them down into manageable segments, and identifies or names those segments."[38] While I developed a list of codes before starting my content analysis, I knew that these codes would evolve over the course of the study; this "qualitative approach allows themes to emerge from the data throughout the process of analysis: the coding framework is continually shaped by emerging information."[39] In my coding, I will be dealing with both manifest as well as latent content. Manifest content "exists unambiguously in the message" and is "easily observable and countable" whereas latent content is "conceptual and cannot be directly observed in the messages under

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[35] Schreier, M. "Qualitative content analysis." *In The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis*, U. Flick, ed.. London, SAGE Publications Ltd, (2014): 173.

[36] Zhang, Yin and Wildemuth, Barbara. "Qualitative Content Analysis" In *Applications of Social Research Methods to Questions in Information and Library Science*, 2nd. Ed. Barbara Wildemuth, ed. Santa Barbara, California: Libraries Unlimited (2017): 319.

[37] Schreier, "Qualitative Content Analysis," p. 173

[38] Schwandt, Thomas A., ed. *The SAGE Dictionary of Qualitative Inquiry*. 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc., (200): 32.

[39] Spurgin, Kristina M. and Wildemuth, Barbara. "Content Analysis." In *Applications of Social Research Methods to Questions in Information and Library Science*, 2nd. Ed. Barbara Wildemuth, ed. Santa Barbara, California: Libraries Unlimited (2017): 308

analysis" and is "difficult, if not impossible to count."[40] By utilizing both manifest as well as latent indicators, it is easier to extract variables from the content. Additionally, when creating codes, they must be both exhaustive as well as mutually exclusive, ensuring that no unit could be in two different variables.[41] I will also be using conventional qualitative analysis of content "in which coding categories are derived directly and inductively from the raw data."[42]

Data Collection

In order to do a content analysis of these three different publication platforms, it is first necessary to get access to the different publications. The Getty's Online Scholarly Communication Initiative included eight different participating museums: the Art Institute of Chicago, the Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the Seattle Art Museum, the Tate, and the Walker Art Center. As each of the participating museums only produced one publication utilizing the Getty OSCI grant fund, I was able to do a content analysis on every publication published by the Getty OSCI grant. Moreover, as a caveat to receiving the Getty grant fund money, all of the museums were obliged to provide complete access of the publications to the general public, so I had access to all of the catalogues.

The second platform, the Canadian Online Art Book Project, is another open access publication. They provide translations of each of their publications in both French

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[40] Spurgin and Wildemuth, "Content Analysis," p. 308-309
[41] Spurgin and Wildemuth, "Content Analysis," p. 311
[42] Zhang and Wildemuth, "Qualitative Analysis of Data," p. 319.

as well as English, so I did not have a language barrier to the publications. The Canadian

Online Art Book Project provides two ways in which the readers can access the contents

of the book: an online version as well as a downloadable and printable PDF of the online

version. Since the PDF does not have all of the features of the online version, such as the

interactive components of videos, links, and the zooming function of images, I utilized

the online version and not the PDF version. As of December 2018, the project comprised

thirty-three publications with more books on the docket to be published in upcoming

months. Since they were relatively short publications, I was able to do a content analysis

of all of the publications.

The final digital publishing platform, Artifex Press, was not open access. They

require a subscription fee to access all of the catalogues raisonné or you can purchase

them individually. I spoke with the Head of the Sloane Art Library at the University of

North Carolina, Chapel Hill, Alice Whiteside, to make sure that we did not have access to

the publications. Whiteside advised that I reach out to Artifex Press to see if they would

offer a limited subscription to me on a trial basis. The Director of Artifex Press, David

Grosz, corresponded with me over e-mail and informed me that they do not provide such

access on trial basis, even to students. In light of this, I looked at the institutions who did

subscribe to Artifex Press and noted that Virginia Commonwealth University in

Richmond, Virginia subscribes to Artifex Press. Since they are a public university,

anyone can utilize their library resources. As such, I traveled to Virginia twice to access

the Artifex Press catalogues raisonné. As of November 2018, there were seven catalogues

raisonné published by Artifex Press with twelve forthcoming publications. As such, I was able to do a content analysis of all seven catalogue raisonné.

Data Analysis

      In order to analyze my data, I performed a hand coding using excel spreadsheets to annotate my progress through the texts. I started the coding process with certain codes in mind, such as interactive components including video, image zoom-in, external links as well as artist content such as artist biography and provenance of art objects. While coding, I added to my coding schema and developed the final criteria as follows:

Content: Artist
Gender
Ethnicity/Geographical Region
Multiple Artists (Yes/No)
Time Period
Artistic Medium
Images
Zoomable
Downloadable
Quantity
Quality
Variety
Caption Information
Open Access
Organizational Structure
Genre (catalogue raisonné, exhibition catalogue, monograph, etc.)
Type of writings (Academic writing, biographical information, image information)
Multiple authors

Temporary or permanent exhibition
Bibliography
Languages (Accessibility; the ability to translate into different languages)
Structural components
Videos
Internal Links
External Links
Navigability
Interactivity/ Mark-up
Accessibility (Screen readers/ Alt text)
Easily cite
Sign in/Membership
Guide on how to use the publication
Glossary
Print offering
About section/Information about project
Search section
Other
Has edited/added since first published
Ability to compare images
Audio
Educational materials

Figure 1. Final Codes for Content Analysis

Findings

Online Scholarly Catalogue Initiative (OSCI)

The Online Scholarly Catalogue Initiative was not a specific platform from which different publications were made but rather an initiative started by the Getty Institute in order to increase digital art history publications. The OSCI project is but one integral

example of the ways in which the Getty Research Institute is engaging with digital art

history and digital publishing. The Getty funded eight separate museums to produce a

catalogue related to either a temporary or permanent exhibition in their museum space.

Because of this, compared to the Canadian Online Art Book Project as well as Artifex

Press, each publication differs greatly from one another as there are eight different

controlling publishers. While they utilized the same toolkit, which is still freely open for

any museum or cultural heritage institution to utilize and incorporate in their own

publication despite the fact that the initiative itself concluded in 2017, they had the most

varied organizational structure as each museum was allowed to modify the toolkit to

create the publication form that best suited their museum.

Art Institute of Chicago	*Monet Paintings and Drawings at the Art Institute of Chicago*
Freer Gallery of Art	*The World of the Japanese Illustrated Book*
Los Angeles County Museum of Art	*Southeast Asian Art at LACMA*
National Gallery of Art	*Dutch Paintings of the Seventeenth Century*
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art	*Rauschenberg Research Project*
Seattle Art Museum	*Chinese Painting and Calligraphy*
Tate	*The Camden Town Group in Context*
Walker Art Center	*The Living Collections Catalogue*

Figure 2. Museums and their Publication Titles part of the Only Scholarly Catalogue Initiative

Content: Artist

As stated, the OSCI publications are comprised of eight museum's publications

varying in artistic medium, time period, as well as many other organizational features. Of

these eight publications, the artists featured in the publication are either all male, both

male and female, or unidentified/ not applicable, in the case of the publications from the Freer Gallery, LACMA, and the Seattle Art Museum. While the time period is technically varied, the images from the LACMA and the Seattle Art Museum skew the results to show a larger range of time although the majority of the works are from the sixteenth century onward. Only two of the publications, *Monet Paintings and Drawings* as well as the *Rauschenberg Research Project*, focus on one artist; the rest either have a specific group that they are writing about, as is the case with the Camden Group, or are talking about a specific genre of art, such as Chinese Painting and Calligraphy, where there are many associated artists. Many of the titles of the publications reveal the geographic region to the readers with the exception of the Monet, Rauschenberg, and Living Collections Catalogue where the reader would find out that Monet is French, Rauschenberg is American, and the Living Collections Catalogue is a mix of artists from Europe and the United States.

Organizational Structure, Images, and Featured Components

Following the format of the traditional art history exhibition catalogue, there are multiple artists with academic essays that include extensive bibliographies. The Art Institute of Chicago publication on Monet goes beyond this decision to also include conservation reports on all of the pieces within the catalogue. Additionally, all of the catalogues have high quality images with descriptive captions and five of the eight catalogues have the ability to zoom into the images.[43] As all of the publications have

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[43] The Tate Publication and the Freer Gallery Publication do not have the option to zoom into the work.

differing essential structures and features, I will describe them individually rather than speak about them as a group.

The *Monet Paintings and Drawings at the Art Institute of Chicago* published by the Art Institute has all of the features that I had prepared to notice when drawing my codes. The site is easily navigable with a side table of contents that assists the viewer in using the catalogue in addition to having a guide in how to use the publication as well as a section that explains the project. It has well developed internal links, to both other parts of the publication as well as the museum website as a whole, in addition to links to external sites. There is an option to sign-in to the publication, which allows you to comment on the publication and interact with a community as well as easily cite sections that you are utilizing. Furthermore, it provides the viewer an option in being able to print individual sections. There are a variety of images including preparatory drawings in addition to the various images that accompany the conservation reports. Overall, the publication mirrors a traditional e-book in that the reader flips its pages and it is divided into chapters as with print publication.
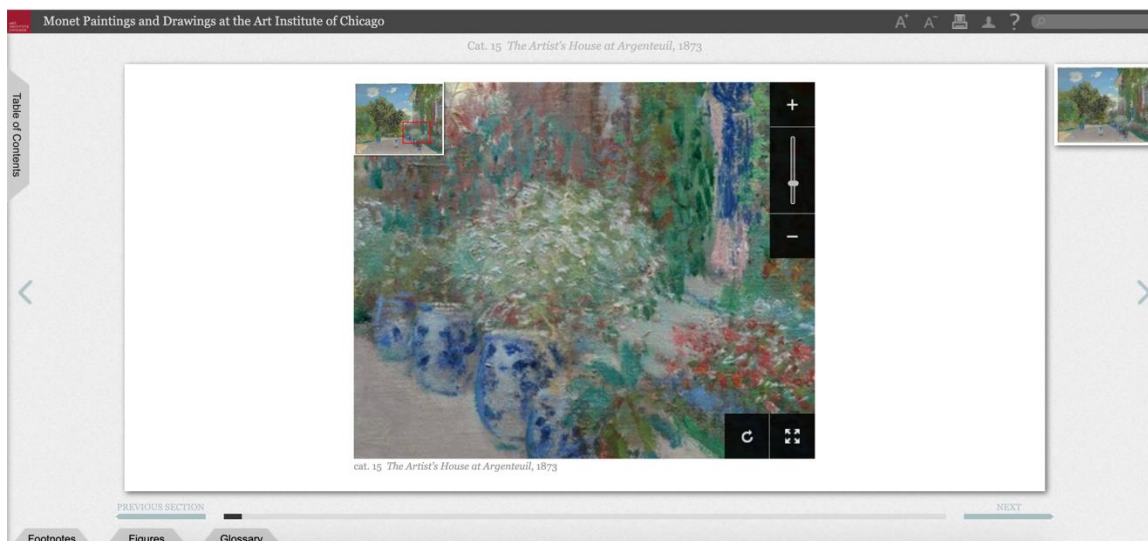
Figure 3. *Monet Paintings and Drawings at the Art Institute of Chicago*.

      Part of the Smithsonian Institute, the Freer Gallery's *The World of the Japanese Illustrated Book* is a comprehensive catalogue related to a permanent exhibition at the museum. While it has high quality images, you are not able to zoom into the images nor are you able to download the images. There is a guide on how to use the publication along with information about the project. The publication is easily navigable with a menu bar on top with separate tabs with a searchable option. You are able to comment on the publication but are required to create an account at the Smithsonian. You are able to search the publication, there are "video essays," internal and external links, and a glossary of related terms. There is not a way to easily cite the material nor print individual sections.

The World of the Japanese Illustrated Book   ABOUT ESSAYS SEARCH RESOURCES MY RESEARCH

Resources

Glossary
Bibliography
Acknowledgments
Contributor Bios
Photo Credits
Japanese Illustrated Books from the Edo and Meiji Periods
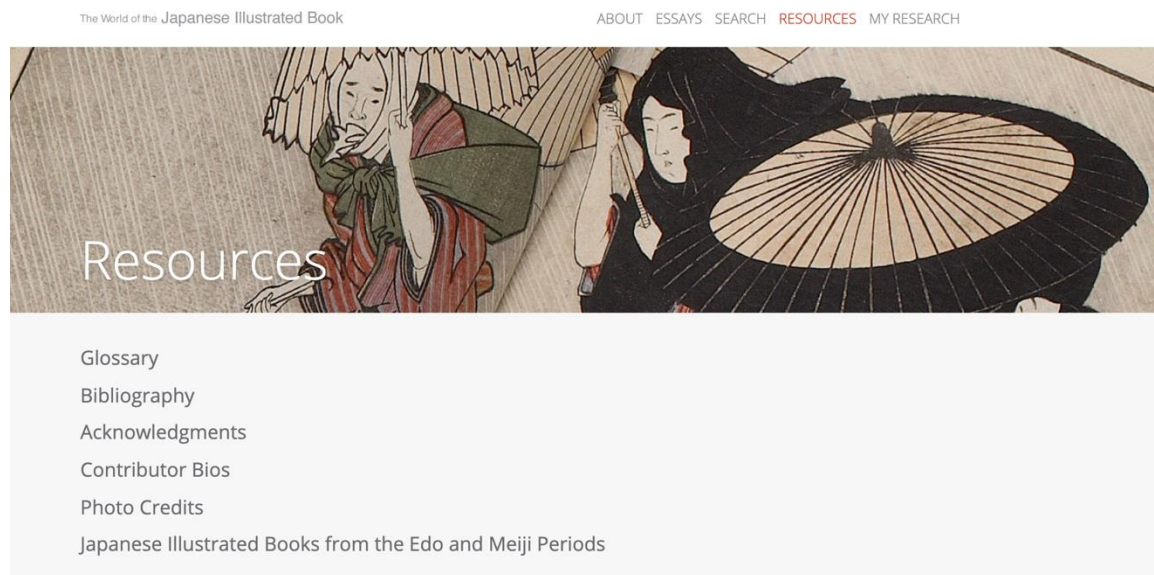
Figure 4. *The World of the Japaenese Illustrated Book*.

      Of the OSCI publications, LACMA's *Southeast Asian Art at LACMA* is perhaps the most underdeveloped. There is no guide on how to use the publication nor

information about the project. While there is a glossary of terms, there are no structural features that are one of the benefits of the online platform; there are no videos, no external inks, and a poorly developed search feature. The only internal links are to the glossary terms and images within the publication. Viewers are able to submit a comment as well as download a PDF which they can print.
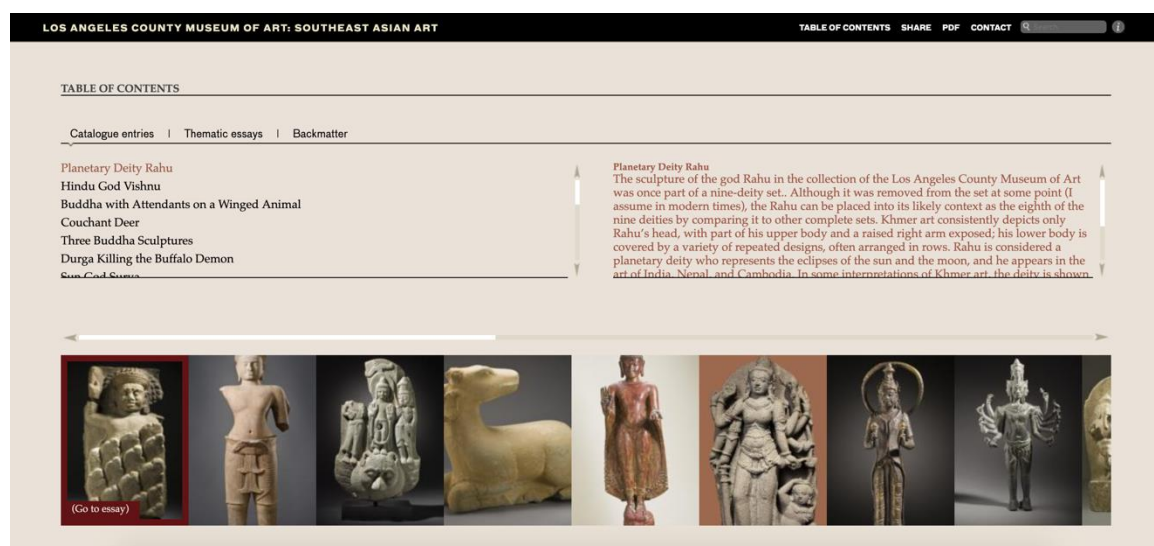
Figure 5. *Los Angeles County Museum of Art: Southeast Asian Art*.

The National Gallery of Art's *Dutch Paintings of the Seventeenth Century* is an Open Access publication with images that are able to be downloaded. There is information about the project along with a guide on how to use the publication. Although there is not a way in which you can submit a comment, all of the other features that I had outlined in the coding are fulfilled. There are videos, internal and external links, a great navigability and search section, a way in which you can easily cite the catalogue, a print offering, as well as an in-depth glossary. Additionally, the National Gallery provides information for how the publication has changed since its initial publication, noting that the online platform makes it easier to incorporate these changes.

Figure 6. *Dutch Paintings of the Seventeenth Century*.

On the opposite spectrum, SFMOMA's *Rauschenberg Research Project* does not

incorporate many of the features that are available to the online platform. As the images

are not Open Access, you cannot download them. While there is an about section, it does

not mention the Getty Institute nor the OSCI project. There are both internal and external

links and you can download a PDF, but those are the only useful features of the

publication. The search option searches the entire SFMOMA website instead of the

catalogue, there are no videos, it is difficult to navigate the publication, you can't cite it,

and there is no guide on how to use the catalogue nor ability to offer a comment.

Figure 7. *Rauschenberg Research Project.*

Chinese Painting and Calligraphy, published by the Seattle Art Museum, is not

an Open Access catalogue and does not provide a variety of images other than the images

of the prints. There is no glossary, search section, videos, nor print offering, but there are

internal and external links, an explore section to navigate the catalogue, a guide on how

to use the publication along with information about the project, and the ability to

comment on the publication if you sign in and identify as a scholar, which needs to be
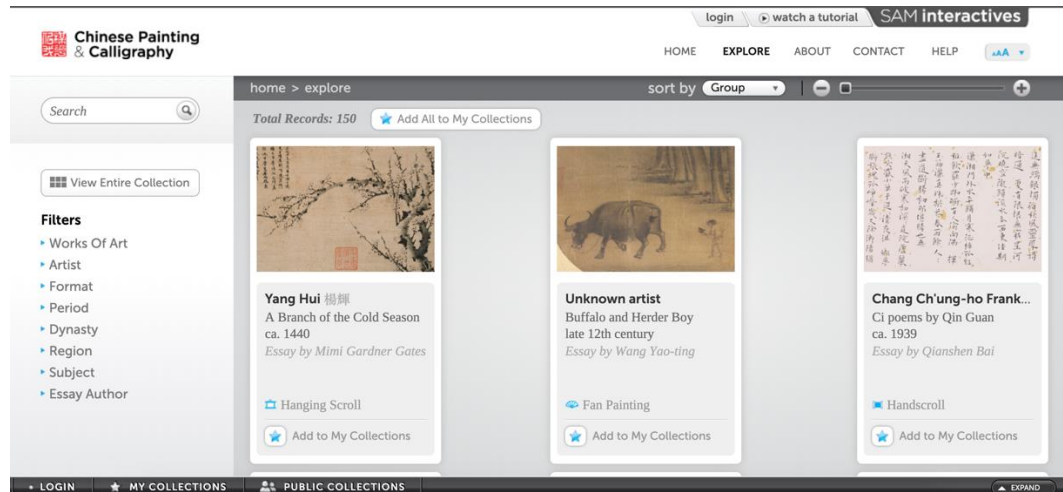
verified.

Figure 8. *Chinese Painting and Calligraphy*.

Of all the OSCI publications, the Tate's *The Camden Town Group in Context*
offers the lowest quality images and viewers are not able to zoom in, download, or
manipulate the images in any way. The navigation of the publication is also mediocre
which is matched by the search section which, similar to SFMOMA's, searches the entire
website and not the catalogue. There is an about section and information about the project
as well a guide to use the publication. There are no external links nor options to mark up
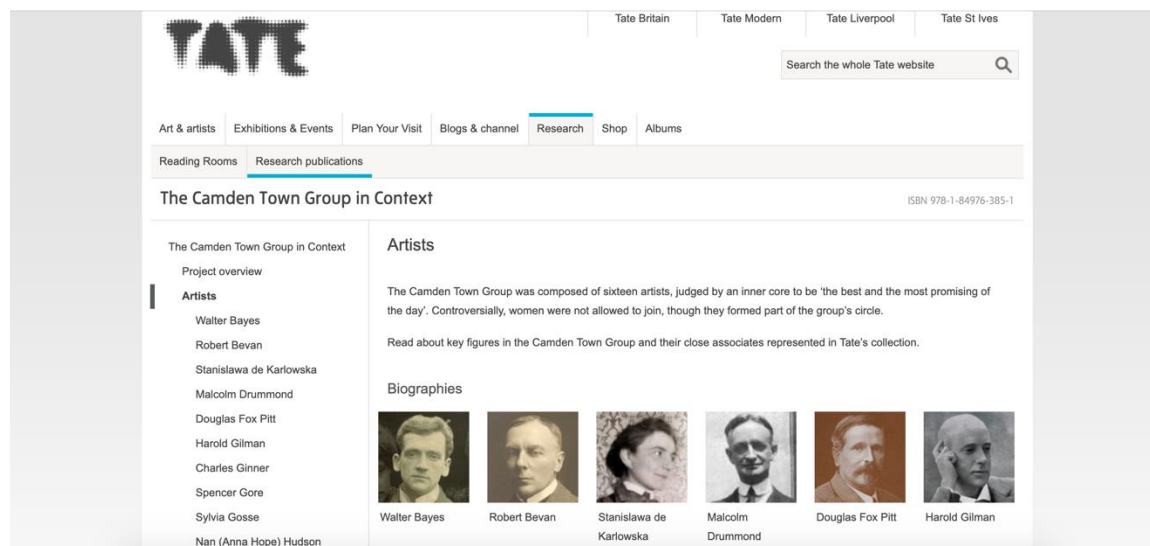the publication, but there is an option to easily cite.

Figure 9. x *The Camden Town Group in Context.*

The *Living Collections Catalogues* at the Walker Art Center is an interesting

example of the OSCI project because they started by creating two volumes: *On*

Performativity and *Art Expanded, 1958-1978.* While perhaps the most visually and

aesthetically pleasing of the catalogues, they don't incorporate many of the features that

other of the catalogues do. You can't zoom into the images and there aren't that many

incorporated compared to the other catalogues. The navigation is not intuitive and the

search feature searches the entire website instead of the catalogue. There are videos and

internal and external links, but there are no guide how to use the publication, glossary,

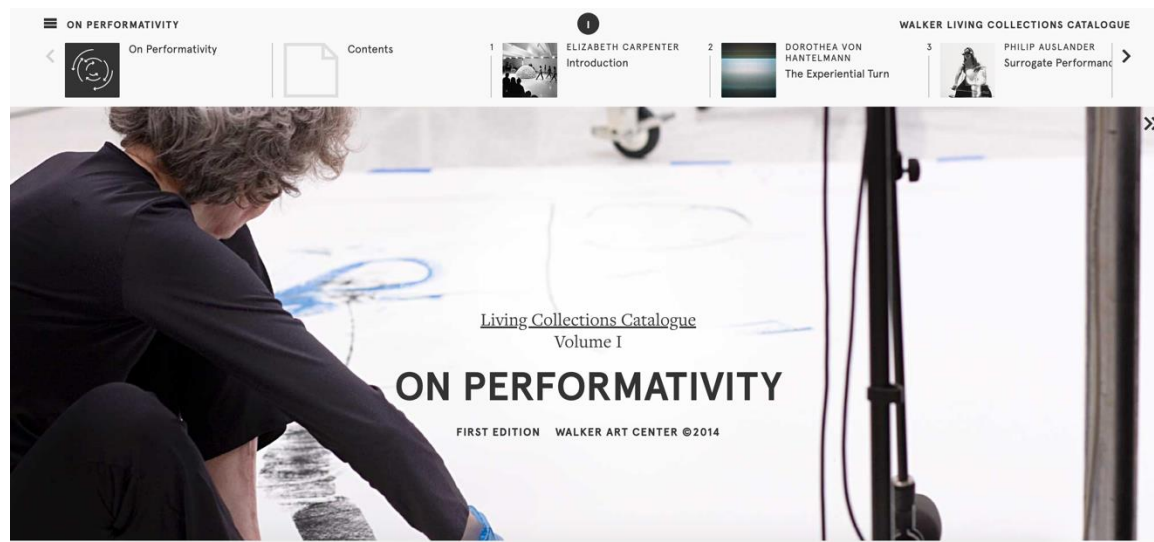print offering, cite option, nor interactivity.

Figure 10. *Living Collections Catalogues*.

Overall, the eight publications from OSCI are innovative museum catalogues. Although not all of them had every feature that was outlined in my set codes, they all incorporated features that would not be available in a traditional print publication. Moreover, each of the catalogues adapted the same technological structure to best fit their needs, highlighting the adaptability of the digital platform.

Canadian Online Art Book Project

Unlike the OSCI catalogues, the Canadian Online Art Book Project publications are comprised of far more uniform titles. As there is one central publication and editing system, all of the organizational structure as well as the features throughout the publications are exactly the same throughout the thirty-three publications. The only differentiating factor between each publication is the artist being discussed as well as whether or not a particular publication has a related video attached which was also created and published by the Art Institute of Canada; the rest of the publication, from

organizational structure to structural features are completely identical. The About Section

was for the publication as a whole instead of individual publications. As such, I will

discuss the publication features as one unit as they do not differ before analyzing the

artists found within each publication.

Content: Artist

As stated, the goal of the Canadian Online Art Book Project is to document artists

who "have made a critical contribution to the evolution of the nation's art history."[44]

Each monograph is about one individual artist and is written from an expert art history

scholar. As seen in the figures, while there is a concerted effort of the Art Institute

Canada to incorporate women artists as well as First Nations artists, the publications are

still overwhelmingly concerning white male Canadians.[45]

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[44] "Canadian Online Art Book Project." *Canadian Online Art Book Project.*
https://www.aci-iac.ca/art-books
[45] The labels regarding ethnicity and gender were determined by the scholars of each
publication; I did not actively choose these categorizations.
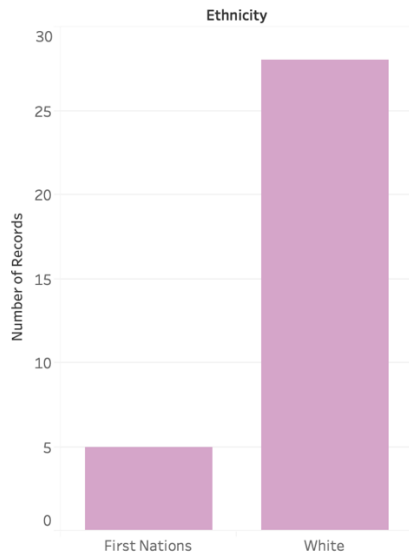
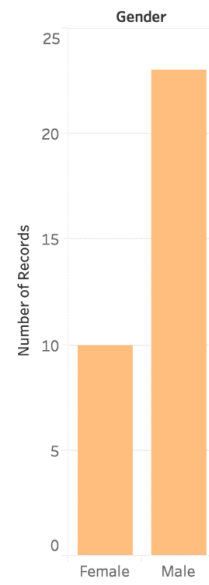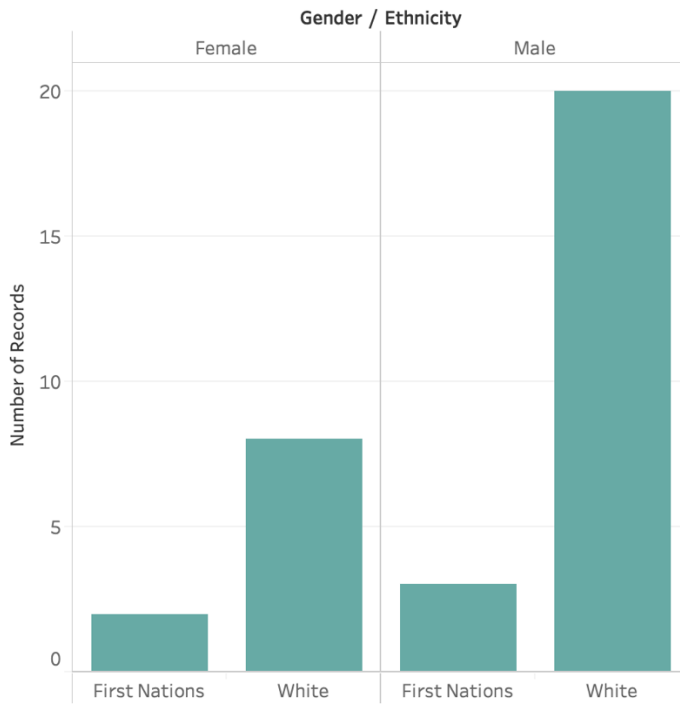Figure 11. Gender and Ethnicity of Artists from the Canadian Art Book Project

Figure 12. Ethnicity of artists broken down by gender.

Organizational Structure, Images, and Featured Components

In addition to being offered completely in both French and English options, one of

the defining features of all of the Canadian Online Art Books is that they are offered in

both a digital as well as a print medium. Upon clicking the publication that you want to

read, you are offered to either "Read Now" or "Download."
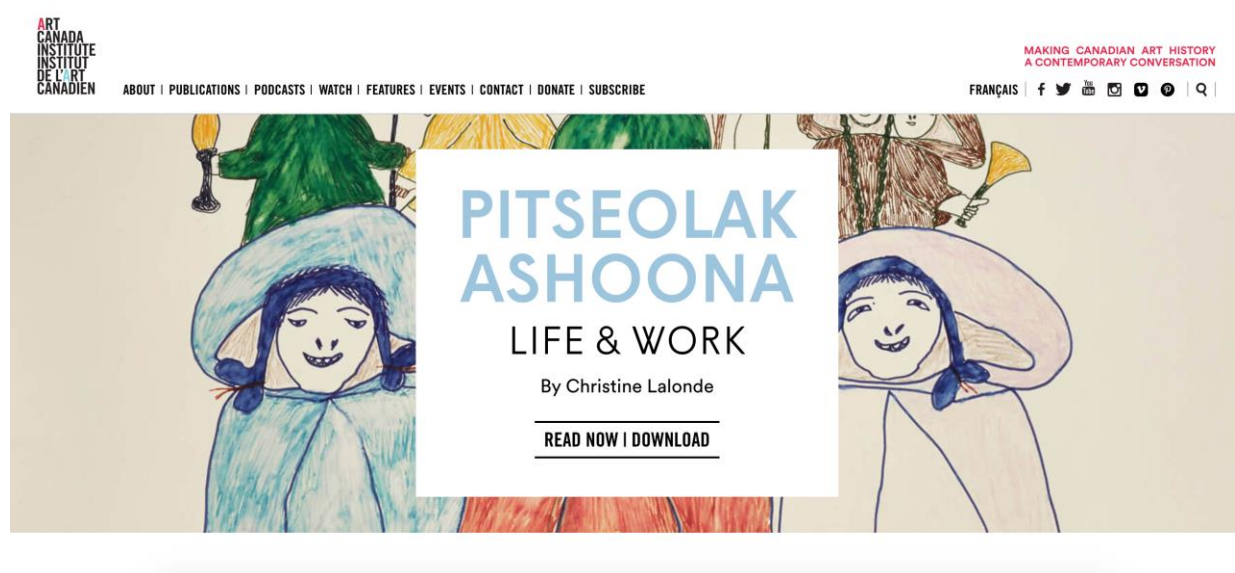
Figure 13. *Pitseolak Ashoona*, Canadian Online Art Book

The "Download" creates an automated PDF of the text and images for the viewer to read

and browse while the "Read Now" option brings you to the complete work with

interactive components, including videos and links to other sources.[46] Although the PDF

version is a great resource as it allows viewers to easily print the work, it is important to

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[46] Since the start of my work on this project, the Canadian Online Art Book Project has
expanded the project to include a printed version of some of the publications beyond the
PDF version. Currently, there are two completed publications that are able to be
purchased as a print format with six upcoming publications and the ACI states that it will
continue to publish four print versions each year.

note that it would not have the same breadth of information as the digital version. It collapses the interactive online model to a static print version, losing added materials that are one of the main benefits of the platform. As such, I will be utilizing the "Read Now" format as my main source of analysis as the PDF, in my opinion, is just a feature of the work and it is intended to be read and viewed online in its born digital format.

Figure 14. *Pitseolak Ashoona*, Canadian Online Art Book

Although there is no guide on how to use or navigate the publication, the way in which the publication is structured is intuitive to the user. After choosing the artist's book you would like to read, you are brought to a screen that resembles more of a website format than a typical codex. The top of the page has the title and author, a Home icon, a download option, a glossary, as well as an option to switch languages.[47] Beyond this

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[47] The glossary is not individual to each publication, but rather a glossary for all of the publications and is added to after each new publication is added to the collection. Additionally, the "Glossary of Canadian Art History" can be viewed outside of the publications on the Art Canada Institute Website as it has its own link. This expanded, crossover resource acts as an added benefit to the online nature of these publications.

menu bar, which is affixed on every catalogue, is the menu bar to navigate the specific work. In this menu bar, you can navigate the various sections of the work which include Biography, Key Works, Significant & Critical Issues, Style & Technique, Sources & Resources, Where to See, and finally Copyright & Credits. This Menu, which is the same on every publication, offers viewers the option to navigate the publication for their specific needs. Additionally, when you scroll over the options, a drop-down menu with the individual sections appears showing the different sections of each chapter, seen in the subheadings of the "Biography" section of Figure 14.

I would categorize the writing genre as monographs as they are individual publications about the life of the artist and include specific information about the artist's style, pieces, and impact on Canadian art history. I would also categorize the type of writing as academic, as the authors who were invited to write these art books are all academic scholars, and each catalogue is well researched and includes an extensive bibliography. As the publications are from a unified institute and not a museum or cultural heritage institution, the publications aren't related to a specific exhibition, temporary or otherwise.

The images found within the publications are of high quality with full caption information that includes the location of the works. The ability to easily identify the location of the various pieces is emphasized by the fact that there is an entire section of the publication dedicated to where you can see the art pieces discussed in the monograph along with contact information for the main owner or caretaker, if applicable, of the artist's work if their work is part of a private collection and the contact information and

website link if it is part of a public collection. Although the images are varied, including photographs, preparatory sketches, as well as the final art piece, they are not Zoomable, nor manipulable nor downloadable or designated as Open Access.

While the design of the Canadian Online Art Book Project embraces the born digital platform of presenting the monograph as a website instead of a digitized book, it does not incorporate many features that are possible in a digital project and not a printed monograph. One of the digital features that is sometimes used is the fact that some of the publications included videos that the AIC produce, mostly from a panel in which the authors discuss the publication or from promotional material. Additionally, all of the publications feature both internal as well as external links to other sections of the publication as well as outside resources, such as links to the galleries and museums that own the art pieces. There is no interactivity option beyond these links; you cannot mark-up or comment on the publication at all nor search within the publication. Overall, the Canadian Online Art Book Project is a relatively passive publication in that there is no option to sign in or become a member to the project nor engage with a community that is interested in the publication topic.

Artifex Press

At the time of this project, only six catalogues raisonné were published by Artifex Press. A relatively new publishing agent, Artifex Press specializes in the publication of catalogues raisonné which they define as "the definitive, comprehensive, and annotated compilation of all the known works of an artist."[48] In addition to the publications that

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[48] "About." *Artifex Press*. https://artifexpress.com/about

they produce and maintain, Artifex Press owns a "proprietary, patented software platform" of these publications. As such, none of these publications are Open Access; they require a subscription license which is available to purchase for individual publications or all of the publications.[49] When purchasing an individual catalogue, the subscriber is responsible for an annual fee. As publishers of catalogues raisonné, Artifex Press works exclusively with contemporary artists, preferably living artists. They stress that they have working relationships with all of the artists, or their foundations, and in addition to creating catalogues raisonné, they are creating digital archives for all of the artists.

Content: Artist

In their six publications, Artifex Press has created catalogues raisonné of the contemporary artists Chuck Close, Jim Dine, Tim Hawkinson, Sol LeWitt, Agnes Martin, Lucas Samaras, and James Siena. Of these artists, there is one woman and the rest are men and they are all white American, albeit Martin is Canadian-American and Samaras is Greek-American. The artistic medium of the artists is varied and includes paintings, sculpture, wall drawings, and multimedia art. It is important to note that in some cases, Artifex Press has limited their scope of the artists; they only catalogue Jim Dine's sculptures from 1983-present, Agnes Martin's paintings, although she has produced films, Lucas Samaras' "Boxes," and Sol LeWitt's wall drawings. The publications of the

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[49] To read more about the subscription policies at Artifex Press, please see https://www.artifexpress.com/subscriptions

other artists, Tim Hawkinson, Chuck Close, and James Sienna, describe the entirety of their oeuvre.

Organizational Structure, Images, and Featured Components

As stated all of the publications are catalogues raisonné and, with the exception of the Sol LeWitt publication, have one editor who also acts as the author. While all of the publications include a brief biographical introduction, only three of the publications include academic articles within the publication and only two of those have multiple essays. They are not related to a specific exhibition, although they provide information about the exhibitions that the artist has been involved in throughout the years. Additionally, there are multiple bibliographies provided in each of the catalogues along various themes such as publication and exhibition history as well as different artistic styles.

Each catalogue has an extensive feature on how to best utilize the catalogue. Entitled "Notes on the Catalogue Raisonné," the editor of each publication provides extensive details on the way in which the catalogue is organized in order to maximize the user's experience of using the catalogue. It explains how to navigate the index, how and why the chronology is organized in the way that it is, explanations of the subjects, descriptions and reasoning of the titles, and so on and so forth. In essence, the "Notes on the Catalogue Raisonné" offer the editor an opportunity to justify the decisions that went into the making of the publication. Additionally, in this section, the editor is able to highlight the way in which the artist, if applicable, was able to contribute to the catalogue and its publication, demonstrating the close relationship that Artifex Press values with the

artist or foundation as well as the value of these publications as a whole: they offer

unparalleled access to the oeuvre of these artists and work extensively with the artists so

that this fact remains constant.

After choosing the catalogue, each publication has the same introductory sections:

"About the Catalogue" and "About the Editor," followed by a menu that enables you to

navigate the catalogue, which is on every page throughout the catalogue. The index

allows you to navigate the catalogue and go to separate sections of the catalogue; in light

of this, it is not necessary to read or browse the catalogue sequentially or narratively like

one would in a traditional book, but rather one can easily go to specific sections that are

of interest.

The index that is present throughout the publications also acts as a filter; you can

view the work by time period, by subject, by medium, by style, and so forth. This filter is

seen in the search menu bar in which there are a variety of filters in order to narrow your

search. This first search allows you to view multiple works at a time, for example, if you

were interested in looking at "Self-Portraits" from a certain decade and is an incredible

tool for those who intend on browsing a certain section or are interested in a particular

genre or time period of the artist's work. The advanced search, different from the index,

is preferable to those who are looking for a specific art work and want to filter out their

choices.

Figure 15. Chuck Close Catalogue, Artifex Press.

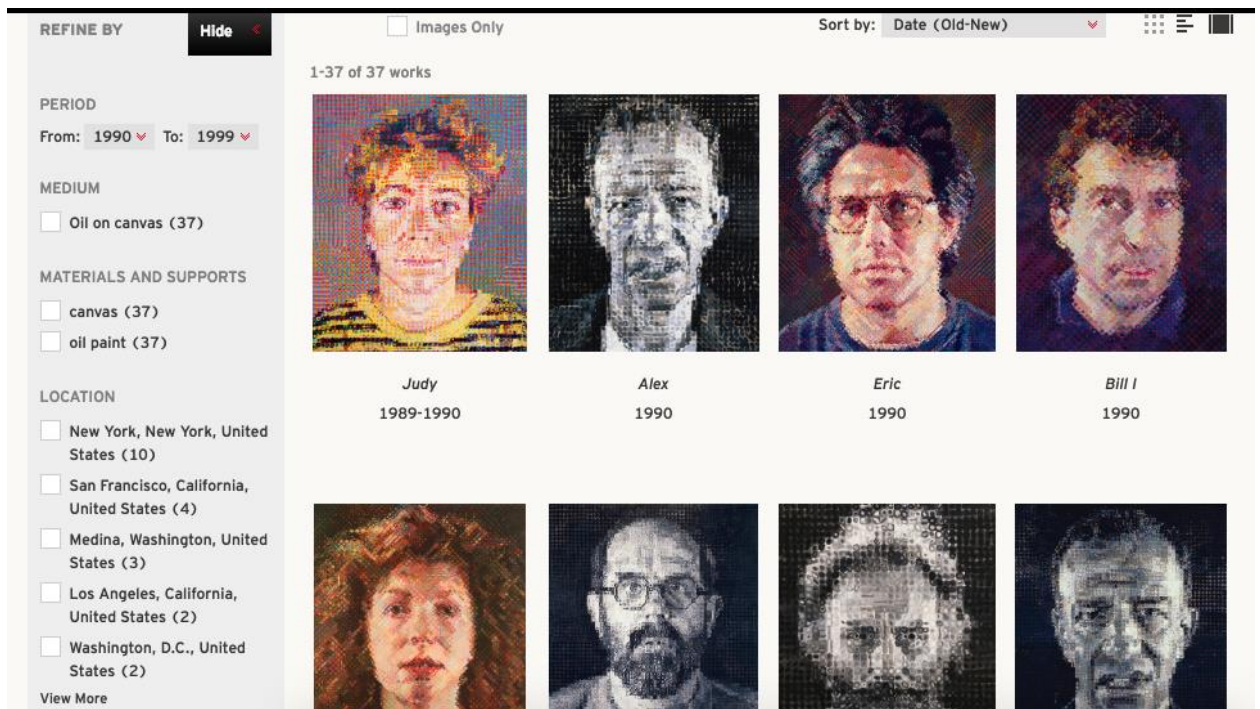Figure 16. Chuck Close Catalogue, Artifex Press.

Figure 17. Chuck Close Catalogue, Artifex Press.

These advanced search features are something that Artifex Press highlights as they are present on every page of the catalogue that is not an article or some sort of writing.

Additionally, every catalogue provides a section in which they acknowledge and outline the changes or additions that have been made since the catalogue was published. They state that one of the benefits of the online form is the ability to constantly update and change any mistakes within the publication and welcome contributing thoughts. Although there is no option to comment on the publication, each editor provides their contact information so anyone, specifically scholars or private collectors, with information about a piece of work or the artist's life is able to contact the editor.

As the catalogues are the collective works of the individual artists, the images are of the highest quality. There is a great variety of images for each artist ranging from preparatory sketches to the installation of the work in museum spaces. There are complete captions including links to museums and galleries that hold the artists' works. Additionally, you can zoom in with great detail to the individual images, although you are unable to download the images and they are not open access.

Discussion

Across these three different platforms there are over forty unique publications that differ in almost every feature of the publication, but there are some broad features that can be brought out in order to analyze them as a whole. The first point is the issue of access. One of the greatest benefits to the online platform is the ability to publish widely to a larger audience and reach a greater, and ideally more diverse, audience. While the OSCI publications and the Canadian Online Art Books are readily available to anyone with internet access, Artifex Press has a very high subscription fee that makes it virtually impossible for the majority of possible users to access the publication reflected in the fact that there are less than sixty current subscribers, all of whom are institutional subscribers, and so access is predicated on the ability to partake of that institution's collections. In creating such high subscription fees as well as individual publication fees, Artifex Press is not only limiting its audience but also marketing itself to a certain audience, namely libraries. Yet despite its aim at having university and institutional libraries subscribe to its product, the limited number of subscribers reflects the inability to pay for this platform in a world in which library budgets are significantly declining.

Moreover, the fact that they filed for a patent for their publication software illuminates the fact that it is a for-profit institution. As of this place in my research, I have not seen Artifex Press lease their software to any institution, but it will be interesting to see who utilizes this technology. In contrast to this business plan, in addition to Getty's sponsorship of the eight museums to publish these initial publications, the Getty released the OSCI toolkit so that other institutions with perhaps less funds can build off of this technology. I find this an essential defining characteristic of each of these publication platforms. As the academic art history publishing world moves closer and closer to a standardized open access system, starting with institutions designating their image repositories as open access, it is essential to create open access publication platforms.

Another theme that is important to analyze across the publication platforms is the artists that are featured. Across publication platforms, the artist being discussed is predominantly a white male artist. Even the artists from the Canadian Online Art Book Project, whose purpose is to highlight diverse artists who have specifically made an impact on Canadian art history, are overwhelmingly white men. Although they are discussing noncanonical artists in terms of Western art history in that they are documenting lesser known Canadian artists, and do include First Nations artists, they have had the opportunity to create a balanced representation of both male and female artists and instead chose to feature more male artists. Additionally, these artists, who are predominantly from North America or Europe, all lived post-1600. This limited view of the historiography of art history could become a precedent in which canonicity is reinforced in art history publishing. Areas to highlight in further publications to ensure

broad coverage of the field could include architectural history, film and video art, installation art, environmental art, Classical art and archeology, Islamic art, and African art, among others. Furthermore, in order for the digital publications to reflect current scholarly thought, future initiatives should include contemporary methodological approaches such as material culture, post-colonial, gender and queer, and Marxist theories.

Conclusion

This project began over a year ago in the Spring of 2018 where I set out to investigate the ways in which the growing field of the Digital Humanities, and specifically Digital Art History, impacted the publishing landscape. Quickly into the project I came to the realization that while the entire landscape of the publishing world seems to be shifting, very little information is being written about the new publications that are emerging in this digital realm. At the time, the three main publication platforms that seemed to be leading the pack in terms of success and noticeability were the various publications from the Online Scholarly Catalogue Initiative, Artifex Press, and the Online Canadian Artist. Since then, though, dozens of new publications have emerged in the publishing world. The Whitney Museum has created all of their biennial catalogues available in digital catalogue, hinting at the possibility of creating digital catalogues for these exhibitions in the future, the Kallir Research Institute has launched an online digital catalogue raisonné for Egon Schiele, and Mitchell-Inness & Nash has published the complete catalogue raisonné for Paul Cézanne to name but a few examples of the extensive projects that have been released within the past year.

It is clear that we are at an important moment of transition in the publishing world. As more and more institutions open their repositories as Open Access for scholars, more opportunities emerge for institutions to embrace the multitude of benefits that the digital platform allows. While the publications from within the academic community might still be resistant to the idea of publishing digitally, it is clear that cultural institutions are embracing this initiative and leading the way in which digital art history publications can be utilized for a variety of genres ranging from biographical monographs to exhibition catalogues and catalogues raisonné.

While this paper is not comprehensive in its analysis of current digital art history publishing platforms, as it began at the precipice of the emergence of these various publications which therefore could not be included in the study, it is clear that similar studies are necessary moving forward to evaluate further upcoming publications. In identifying the emerging trends from these three publication platforms, we are able to take these qualities, analyzing what works and what doesn't work, so that we are better equipped to analyze forthcoming publications. Barriers remain in terms of creating an entirely digital publication world, namely policies surrounding promotion and tenure for university scholars, which have slowly changed in recent years and thus deserve a comprehensive study. However, it is clear that there are avenues through which digital art history publishing can grow in its dominance and success. Moving forward, there needs to be a new evaluation of the state of the field in art history publishing to better evaluate the way in which these new publication forms will fit in to the established genres of art history publishing

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