

---

# Thomas J. Watson Library

## Research Guide

---

### Auctions and Appraisals

---

How do I find 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

212-650-2442

For current Library hours visit  
us at [metmuseum.org/watson](http://metmuseum.org/watson)

- Research current and past sales of works by checking sales indexes, price guides, and dealers' inventories
- Library resources, such as price indexes, 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.

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

**Online Auction Resources** - Please note some online resources require a subscription

#### [Art Sales Catalogues Online](#) (1600–1900)

Access to bibliographic citations and a growing number of auction catalogs in full-text, covering European and American auctions from 1600–1900. This resource incorporates Frits Lugt's Répertoire des Catalogues de Ventes Publiques (also a part of Lugt's Répertoire online database).

#### [ArtNet](#)

ArtNet's price database contains information on artworks offered for sale since 1985 from over 500 major auction houses worldwide. The works range from Old Masters to Contemporary Art and are mostly from all periods and cultures. ArtNet covers auctions for fine arts and design. **Please note, this resource can only be used by Museum staff** (On-site use only).

#### [ArtPrice](#) (1962-present)

Search an extensive array of auction prices, indices, and images. The information is aggregated from several thousand auction houses from around the world. Artprice is an active online marketplace for the buying and selling of artwork.

#### [AskART](#) (1986–present)

In so far as American artists are concerned, AskArt defines the scope as spanning from pre-Columbus settlers through modern art expressionists, and they index sales of American art from 1986 to the present. Sales of international artists only go back to 2007.

#### [Getty Provenance Index](#)

A free internet resource that contains close to one million records of indexed transcriptions from auction catalogs and archival inventories. The sales catalog portion of the database includes information from catalogs from the UK, France, Belgium, Germany, Scandinavia, and the Netherlands from 1650–1840.

---

## [Invaluable](#)

Contains pre-sale and post-sale information for sale houses across United Kingdom, Europe, North America and Canada.

## [SCIPIO: Art and Rare Books Sales Catalogs](#)

Database of over 300,000 auction catalog records of sales covering art objects and rare books from the late 16th century to present, mostly from North American and European houses. Twenty-five art organizations, including the Met, contribute auction catalog records to the database.

## **Price Resources**

### **Works of art**

#### [ArtValue.com](#)

Replaces the paper edition of Guide Mayer, which ceased production in 2005. Offers free and unlimited online access to auction results, illustrated with pictures from auction houses around the world. Sales from 1987 to present.

#### [Auktionspreise im Kunstpreis Jahrbuch](#). Munich: Weltkunst Verlag. (annual)

International sales from 1939 to the present; fine and decorative arts.

#### [Davenport's Art Reference & Price Guide](#). Phoenix: Gordon's Art Reference, 1986 –.

Sales from 1986 to the present; paintings, watercolors, drawings, engravings, lithographs, sculpture.

#### [Hislop's Art Sales Index](#). Egham, Eng.: Art Sales Index. (annual)

International sales from 1968 to the present; paintings, works of art, miniatures, sculpture, prints, photographs.

### **Photographs**

#### [Photographic Art Market](#). Langhorne, PA: Photograph Collector. (annual)

Sales held from 1980 to the present.

### **Books, ephemera, and maps**

#### [American Book Prices Current](#), Online. \*Onsite access only.

Includes foreign titles.

#### [Bookfinder](#)

Used and rare book search service with over 70 million titles.

#### [Your Old Books](#)

Rare Books and Manuscripts Section (RBMS) of the Association of College and Research Libraries has provided a guide that addresses some frequently asked questions about rare and older books and their values.

### **Collectibles**

Check nearby public libraries for collectibles price guides, for example, Kovels' Antiques and Collectibles Price List and Warman's Antiques and Collectibles Price Guide.

### **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 \(Public Broadcasting System television show\)](#)

Online appraiser index with contact information of experts that have been featured on the show.

---

[Appraisers Association of America, Inc.](#)

Search online database for association members.

[Bonhams](#)

This auction house also features valuation days when patrons can bring in a limited number of artworks for a brief appraisal.

[Christie's Appraisals, Inc.](#)

[Doyle New York](#)

Founded in 1963, concentrating on fine art, jewelry, furniture, decoration and a variety of other categories.

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

Provides authentication services (Telephone 212-391-6234). IFAR charges an initial, non-refundable \$250 deposit at the inquiry stage. This will be applied to the basic \$2,000 cost if IFAR is able to undertake the research and the client and IFAR agree to proceed.

[International Society of Appraisers](#)

[Sotheby's](#)

**Have a question?**

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

*Last updated 09/2021*