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**An Integrative Cooperative Fine Art Research Platform
from the Middle Ages up to the Present
arthistoricum.net – the Virtual Library for Art**

Ladies and Gentlemen, my fellow colleagues,

As an integrated virtual library, **arthistoricum.net** serves as both a common information structure as well as a central showcase for the special interest collections for Fine Art located in Heidelberg and Dresden. I'm very glad to have the chance to present this to you today, and to be joined by Laura Held to do so.

To begin with, I'd like to tell you something about the history of this joint effort. Next, I'll introduce the specialized areas and expertise available to users of this digital service, which, due to its multi-faceted character, is designed to continually build upon the synergies of this cooperative effort. These areas include: 1) The integrated search function, 2) Electronic publishing, 3) Digitalized versions of various thematic text and image resources, as well as 4) Networking opportunities for professional presentation and discussion among experts. Finally, for the last segment of this presentation, Laura Held, who is chairwoman of the German Consortium of Art and Museum Libraries (Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Kunst- und Museumsbibliotheken, AKMB), will discuss the project of integrating the Consortium's website into the arthistoricum.net platform, thus shedding light on a current example of a model for institutional cooperation.

The History Behind the Project

The University Library of Heidelberg's Art History collection has a long tradition dating back to the 19th century. Ever since 1949, when the German Research Foundation (the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, DFG) incorporated Heidelberg's Special Subject Collection for Art History into its funding program, these extensive historical collections have undergone further systematic expansion. In 1993, following German reunification, the Special Subject collection focusing on "Contemporary Art since 1945, Photography, Industrial Design and Commercial Graphic Arts" was taken over by the Saxon State and University Library Dresden (SLUB). Ever since then, Heidelberg University Library has

managed the Special Subject collection focusing on “**Medieval and Modern Art History (up to 1945) and Art Studies**”.

According to the DFG (in its role as external funding agency), an important goal of the Special Subject Collections—besides making print publications available to users—is to provide easy access to specialized digital information. For that reason, the Heidelberg University Library began in 2006 to create the Virtual Library for Art called **arthistoricum.net**. From the start, they took a cooperative approach, working **together** with the Central Institute for Art History in Munich as well as with the Art History Department under Professor Hubertus Kohle at the Ludwig Maximilian University Munich (LMU).

Ever since the Saxon State and University Library Dresden (SLUB) was established in 1556, collecting literature on art and art history has been part of its tradition. In 1983, the library became the "Central Library for Art and Music of the GDR," following a pronouncement as early as 1966 that had declared its function as a national collection focusing on the Visual Arts. Thus, even prior to 1990, the library was able to continually develop its collection of literature on contemporary art and art history. In 1993 it was charged with the task of maintaining the special interest collection for **Contemporary Art since 1945, Photography, Industrial Design and Commercial Graphic Arts**.

Between 2001 and 2004, the “ViFaArt – Virtual Library for Contemporary Art” was created in Dresden, again with funding from the DFG. So much for the origins of this project.

The parallels between the two platforms were certainly justifiable on a formal level, but proved to be problematic on a functional level. Despite close cooperation and communication between Heidelberg, Dresden and Munich, the fact remained that, in the densely populated information marketplace, a small pool of users was faced with two different information platforms that were very similar in nature. Therefore, in 2011, the decision was made to bring the two platforms together, thus offering the academic art community an integrated **Virtual Library for Art** under the trade name **arthistoricum.net**. The new common portal for the Heidelberg University Library and the SLUB Dresden is operated in cooperation with Professor Kohle (Munich) and other partners. By linking up the two services, the research experience for the user has become much simpler and more effective. Thus, the artificial boundary that had been

drawn between art created before and after 1945—which had been necessary for formal reasons, but which only partially met the needs of academic researchers—was eliminated.

Two Become One – Developing a Common Range of Services

The first step in developing a new Fine Arts literature and information research platform that would be both visually appealing as well as convincing and intuitive with regards to content, was to undertake a critical examination of the various modules offered by its predecessors.

Teaser elements on the arthistoricum.net home page offer users a quick overview of the most important areas of the portal. Up-to-date information regarding art and exhibitions can be found in the blog (called “arthistoricum blog lines”), in the latest issue of the online journal “Kunstform”, as well as in the “Art Aggregator”.

One Search, Many Possibilities

The search engine at **arthistoricum.net** makes it now possible to research the entire subject spectrum belonging to Art History. The **Virtual Library for Art** contains text and image resources as well as comprehensive, academically relevant information dealing with all media from the Middle Ages up to the present, with a focus on European Art and art influenced by Europe in the USA, Canada and Australia. The goal is to provide the most thorough and comprehensive overview of art historical publications possible, whether originally published in print, hybrid or purely online forms.

Using a search interface based on the discovery and delivery system “Primo®” by Ex Libris, which has been in use for the SLUB online catalogue since 2010, it was possible for developers to achieve the goal of consolidating as many relevant data sources as possible—no matter what their origin or media type—into one query. Thus, arthistoricum.net integrates a variety of Art History data sources into just one search with rapid turnaround time: the Special Subject Catalogues for Contemporary Art (SLUB Dresden) and for Art History (Heidelberg University Library), the Deutsche Fotothek (German Photographic Collection) image database, the databank of artists called “ConArt”, as well as the Online Contents Selection (OLC), an online database containing the tables of

contents from Art and Art History journals in the special interest collections. In addition, article extracts from the Electronic Journals Library (Elektronische Zeitschriftenbibliothek) and the Database Information System, as well as catalogue information from the Hamburger Kunsthalle or the documenta Archiv Kassel have been integrated into this search engine. An effort to include digitalized full-text articles of both Special Subject Collections for Art is currently underway.

The search engine hit lists for print and online publications, journals, articles, images, and artists' biographical information can be sorted according to various criteria. Insights gained in an externally-funded project dealing with "Integrating Deep-Indexing Technology for Database Information" at the SLUB Dresden in 2012 were directly applied to the arthistoricum.net website. This brought the ease of researching with this platform—as compared to similar services—to a new level.

Simply by selecting "artlibraries.net" from the research options that appear above the search field, the user can search the Virtual Catalogue for Art History, a well-established meta-search system covering several independent catalog systems. The query is passed on directly to the new research system.

Open Access Electronic Publishing

Arthistoricum.net provides access to the DFG-funded digital subject repository for Art History called "ART-Dok". ART-Dok offers scholars worldwide the opportunity to electronically publish their art historical research free of charge and without restrictions, thus supporting the Internet-based Open Access initiative for scientific research and publishing. Currently, there are more than 2,100 electronic full-text Open Access publications available, including primary publishing in Open Access journals (for example, *FONTES – E-Sources and Documents for the History of Art 1350-1750*¹), or secondary publishing of previously released texts.

So far, 29 renowned Art Historians have been able to present a large extent of their publications as electronic re-prints (secondary publications) that have been bundled into individual series.

Since May 2006, arthistoricum.net has hosted the monthly scholarly journal **Kunstform**,

¹ <http://www.arthistoricum.net/publizieren/fontes/>

which publishes reviews of current academic art literature online. Converting previously printed journals into Open Access e-journals will become an important undertaking in the future.

Some of the first cooperative efforts with publishing companies to digitalize and archive their publications online include, for example, the established journal “kritische berichte – Zeitschrift für Kunst- und Kulturwissenschaften”², which just recently went online. The Open Journal Systems (OJS) software developed by the Public Knowledge Project (PKP) was used for this project.

Collaboration Possibilities for Academic Research Teams and Individual Scholars

arthistoricum.net’s thematic portals offer more than professional literary research; they offer a network of possibilities for art historical research.

The thematic portals provide comprehensive, multi-layered access to specific major themes or time periods within art historical academic research and education.

Individual scholars as well as academic research teams can present their projects, scientific problems, and research results here, thus becoming in effect independent, autonomous editors responsible for the further development of these areas.

Cooperative networking between professionals and information providers is an important aspect of the thematic portals. For example, the portal “German Sales” presents the project *German Sales 1930-1945. Art Works, Art Markets, and Cultural Policy*, which aimed to index and digitalize all of the auction catalogues published in Germany, Austria and Switzerland in the years between 1930 and 1945, and to make them available in an online research database. The partners for this project were the Art Library of the National Museums in Berlin, the Heidelberg University Library, and the Getty Research Institute in Los Angeles.

In March 2013, the process of digitalization was completed. Since then, these digitized auction catalogues—which provide an overview of the German art market between 1930 and 1945 and thus represent an indispensable source of information for art historical and social science research, as well as provenance research—can be accessed, free of charge, at arthistoricum.net and at the [Getty Provenance Index®](http://www.getty.edu/research/indexing_provenance_indexing/), which

² <http://kritische-berichte.uni-hd.de>

Alexandra Büttner has already presented to us in detail today.

I'd like to show you one more example: the thematic portal *Artist Magazines of the GDR*. Unique mini literary magazines with original graphics, which were produced underground in the GDR between 1980-1989, were digitalized as part of a joint DFG-funded project between the Institute of New German Studies of the Technical University Dresden and the SLUB, and are now available online at arthistoricum.net. These artist magazines offer insight into the alternative art scene in the GDR, and shed light on the relationship between political subversion and aesthetic innovation in this subculture. Thus, they are important primary sources, indispensable for fundamental research in this area. Writers, painters and graphic artists who were part of the generation born after 1950 in the GDR were often unwilling to adhere to the strict requirements of the socialist cultural bureaucracy. They were marginalized, isolated from the official cultural landscape, unable to publish or present their work. With these original graphic books, they found a way to promote their work themselves.

The cultural politics of the GDR, however, did not allow for such artistic exchanges that took place outside of state censorship. Thus, these activities were subversive and involved taking significant risks, as the number of creative persons imprisoned or deported from the GDR for their involvement in producing such artists' books confirms. To highlight one more component of the Virtual Library for Art, the "Subjects" section offers digitalized versions of specialized text collections as well as access to and information about sources for images relevant to art history research.

The Blog as a Space for Discussion Among Experts

One of the arthistoricum.net modules that was already in place before the fusion with blog.arthistoricum.net was its interactive forum, which has been used by various authors for discussing relevant topics with other experts in the field, for making contacts with other authors, and for finding up-to-date information.

This collaborative component to arthistoricum.net was first managed by the WordPress platform, until being converted to the content management system TYPO3 as a result of the fusion. All blog entries dating back to the year 2009 have been archived and are researchable.

Networking

With the introduction of the new module called “Networks”, arthistoricum.net has opened its tried-and-tested model of thematic portals to institutions and organizations. Currently, this section serves as a showcase for the recently formed Research Group for Digital Art History (Arbeitskreis Digitale Kunstgeschichte), and for the well established German Consortium of Art and Museum Libraries (Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Kunst- und Museumsbibliotheken, AKMB). In March of 2013, the AKMB integrated its website into the arthistoricum.net platform, thus taking advantage of this consolidated information environment for professionals in the field. And with this, I would like to thank you for your attention and hand over to Laura...