How-To Guide: Image Citation

Students at the Academy of Art University (AAU) follow the Modern Language Association (MLA) format for research papers. This How-To guide provides explanations and examples based on the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, 8th ed.*, which is available at the AAU Library under the call number *LB2369.G53 2016*.

The intention of this guide is to help students follow MLA format and appropriately credit creators of works of visual art used in their research. This not only helps authors avoid plagiarism and copyright infringement, but also helps readers successfully locate the same resource.

Image citations can be confusing at times, so just keep in mind:

- *The citation of an original work of visual art differs from the citation of an image/reproduction from a secondary source, such as a book or a website.*

- *You may not always be able to find each source detail mentioned in the format guidelines. Just do your best to provide as much information as possible in your citations.*

- *Instructors may have specific requirements for each class. Always check with your instructors early in the assignment to confirm their expectations for your final work.*
An Original Work of Visual Art

To cite an original work of visual art (a lithograph, painting, photograph, sculpture, etc.) in an institution such as a museum or in a private collection, follow this format:

**Artist’s last name, first name. Title of artwork. Year. Medium. Name of institution/private collection housing artwork, city where institution/private collection is located.**

**Examples:**


An Image/Reproduction of a Work of Visual Art from a Print Source

To cite an image/reproduction of a work of visual art from a print source, follow this format:

**Artist’s last name, first name. Title of artwork. Year. Name of institution/private collection housing artwork. Title of print source. Author/editor’s first name last name. Publication city: Publisher, year. Page/plate number. Medium of reproduction.**

**Examples:**


To cite an image/reproduction of a work of visual art from the Web, follow this format:

**Artist’s last name, first name. Title of artwork. Year. Name of institution/private collection housing artwork. Title of database or website. Publisher/sponsor of database or website. Date of access.**

*Note about publisher/sponsor: When known, include if it is not related to the housing institution/collection; is a parent entity of the database or website; or offers the source in additional formats.*

**Examples:**


About URLs

URLs are now an optional component of a citation, but it is still recommended to include this information if the reader will not be able to locate a resource without it, or it is part of an instructor’s requirements.

When providing a URL, enclose the complete address in angle brackets following the date of access, period, and a space. End the entire entry with a period after the closing angle bracket:

Artist’s last name, first name. Title of artwork. Year. Name of institution/private collection housing artwork. Title of database or website. Publisher/sponsor of database or website. Medium consulted. Date of access. <URL>.

Examples:


<http://www.googleartproject.com/museums/tate/a-garden-152>.
Image Captions

Captions appear below the image and typically begin with the abbreviation for Figure (Fig.), then followed by assigned Arabic numerals and a brief description.

An entry in the works-cited list is not necessary if an image caption provides complete information about the source, and it is the only time the source is referenced in the text.

Don’t get overwhelmed by the process and details of citations! Just remember that MLA guidelines are designed to be flexible, and the more research and writing you do, the task of building different types of citations will become less daunting. And when you do need help, don’t hesitate to contact your instructor or ask any of the AAU librarians for assistance.

If you have questions or comments about this How-To Guide, please contact Sean Briscoe, Visual Resources Librarian, at (415) 618-3817 or sbriscoe@academyart.edu.