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ABSTRACT

Eleven artists and sixteen art historians teaching in five liberal arts colleges and three universities were interviewed to discover their information needs and the resources they use, not only for their own work, but for teaching purposes. The participants almost all subscribe to art journals, and many read newspapers. They visit libraries frequently, usually more than one library, and, unlike previous reports, a majority are willing to ask the librarian for help. Also, in marked contrast to previous reports in the literature, a large percentage of both art historians and artists are using computers. All 27 use slides extensively in the classroom, supplemented in most cases by textbooks, but also by journal articles and other readings on reserve in the library. Some take students to visit museums and galleries locally, and a few take students to nearby cities or even Europe. Approximately 50% of both groups of participants use the computer for teaching purposes. Some recommendations are made for ways in which academic librarians might use the information gleaned in this study to better serve their arts faculty. A copy of the interview questionnaire is appended. (Contains 28 references.) (Author/MES)

INFORMATION-SEEKING BEHAVIOR OF PROFESSORS
OF ART HISTORY AND STUDIO ART

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A Master's Research Paper submitted to the
Kent State University School of Library
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for the degree Master of Library Science

by

Jacquelyn Challener

August, 1999

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ABSTRACT

Twenty-seven artists and art historians teaching in five liberal arts colleges and three universities were interviewed to discover their information needs and the resources they use, not only for their own work, but for teaching purposes. There were sixteen art historians and eleven artists. They all read widely, as been noted in past reports concerning humanists and art professionals, but the participants in this study almost all subscribe to art journals, and many read newspapers. They visit libraries frequently, usually more than one, and, unlike previous reports, a majority are willing to ask the librarian for help. Also, in marked contrast to previous reports in the literature, a large percentage of both art historians and artists are using computers. All twenty-seven use slides extensively in the classroom, supplemented in most cases by textbooks, but also by journal articles and other readings on reserve in the library. Some take students to visit museums and galleries locally, and a few to nearby cities or even Europe. Approximately fifty percent of both groups of participants are using the computer for teaching purposes. Some recommendations are made for ways in which academic librarians might use the information gleaned in this study to better serve their arts faculty.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

It is stated often and generally accepted that studies of the information-seeking behavior and needs of social scientists are fewer than those involving the natural sciences, and that studies of humanists' information needs are fewer still. For example, Blazek (1994,4), in his fairly comprehensive guide to information sources in the humanities, states that “.....there have been fewer user studies in the humanities than in other fields....” Within the humanities the information-seeking behavior of those working in the fine arts has been studied even less than most others in the field, as the reference list at the end of this paper will attest. In addition, a number of these reports are anecdotal.

According to Eugene Garfield (Garfield, 1980) there are fundamental differences in information retrieval in the sciences and the humanities. Scientists are interested in the latest information pertaining to their work, which they find in part in journals. Current discoveries supersede those of the past, although the scientist needs references to past work upon which to build. In contrast, discoveries in the humanities are not superseded. A work is as relevant today as it was in 1400 A.D., although new interpretations may be put upon it. Humanists' chief source of information is the original work, or primary source. Scholarly work in the humanities does not develop out of previous work, and humanists are much more interested in books and monographs than in journals. It is proposed by the author of this paper that this description of one working in the field of the humanities does not fit the creative artist. Blazek hinted at such a difference when he said that the library is the heart of the humanist's research but that the

creative artist is more like the natural scientist with the library playing a supporting role for the laboratory.

There are numerous professors of the studio arts and of art history teaching in the colleges and universities of this country. In addition to the sparseness of studies of the information needs and methods of satisfying such of artists and art historians, no mention at all was made in the literature of the information requested and required by professors of studio art and art history, independent of their own work. What sources of information do they use in their classroom, and what would they like to have available for their students? Professors in academic institutions have available to them not only all of the resources of their colleagues “on the outside” but the advantage of the academic library with its reference librarians, connections to other institutions, access to electronic resources, sometimes rare book collections, more extensive access to art journals than a public library, and an art department with whatever additional resources it has to offer such as slide collections or even an art library. The professor of fine arts, of all the art professionals, has ready access to a great deal of information. The library in an academic institution is there for the purpose of serving its faculty as well as students, and the fine arts department constitutes one of the major parts of a college or university offering one or more degrees in the fine arts or art history. Librarians in such institutions have an obligation to their arts faculty to know more about their needs.

Purpose of the Study

It is the intent of this study to explore the information needs and resources used by professors of art history and studio art in liberal arts colleges and universities. The professors of studio art are intended to be limited to those who teach painting, drawing and sculpture, but there may be overlap in types of courses taught, especially in the smaller institutions. One of the chief aims of the study is to determine if the information sought for teaching purposes is different from that for the participants' own work, and what types of information and resources they apply to both areas. It is hoped that the knowledge gained of the information-seeking behavior applied to their own work will add to that found in other studies. Since the artists and art historians participating in this study are working in an academic environment with ready access to an academic library, a major purpose of the study is to determine if the participants use their library and other libraries, how much they use them and what information they seek there. The results should assist the academic librarian to serve these faculty. It should be possible also to discover what information sources the professors would like to have available for their students, and whether or not they expect the students to go outside their own library for information.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following terms are defined as follows:

Liberal arts college: an institution of higher learning offering only an undergraduate degree in art or art history (one also offers an associate degree in art) designated as a college and enrolling from slightly over 600 students to 4,700 students. This enrollment varied from over half part-time students to no part-time students. The student:faculty ratio ranged from 8:1 in one of the smallest colleges to 15:1 in the largest, and all had part-time

faculty, as many as somewhat over two-thirds in the largest college. The latter has 600 graduate students.

University: an institution of higher learning offering either an undergraduate degree in art or art history or a bachelor's and master's degrees in fine arts or art history and designated as a university. Enrollment varied from approximately 4,500 students including 300 part-time and 800 graduate to approximately 15,500 students including 3,500 part-time and 3,500 graduate to approximately 24,000 students including 2,500 part-time and 5,000 graduate. Student:faculty ratio varied from 10:1 to 19:1, and all had part-time faculty, as many as approximately half in the largest university.

Art museum: the museum of art of a major moderate-sized midwestern city.

Art institute: the only institution of higher learning in the geographic area included in the study devoted exclusively to the study of studio art.

OhioLink: the electronic network linking over 70 institutions of higher learning in the state of Ohio, permitting the free exchange of books and monographs among member institutions, with a specified borrowing period.

Limitations of the Study

This study, similar to others reported in the literature, is limited primarily by the small number of participants (27). In this case the percent of participation was moderately good, but the number of persons who could be interviewed was limited by the length of time over which the study was conducted (3 months). The study was conducted by means of interviews of forty-five minutes to one hour, and therefore the number of subjects that could be discussed was limited by the time necessary to obtain information from each person. Time along with

transportation costs imposed the constraints of a limited geographic area, in turn limiting the number of suitable institutions. The study also was limited to professors teaching courses in just three areas of the studio arts, which limited the number of art historians in order not to overweight the study in favor of the latter. In addition, there may be the bias imposed by those chosen who did not wish to participate. Perhaps the greatest limitation is in the nature of the interviewer who almost invariably became involved in the conversation, sometimes neglecting to ask certain questions, and, out of courtesy to the interviewee, not taking time to go over the list. In spite of these limitations, the study is worthwhile because it adds to our knowledge of the information-seeking behavior of studio artists and art historians, taking into the account the technology explosion; because it has taken place in a major although moderate-sized metropolitan area and involves personal interviews; and because it specifically targets information needs, requests and sources of studio artists and art historians who are also professors actively teaching in institutions of higher learning.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Examination of the library and information science literature and the humanities literature reveals a number of journal articles, particularly in the 1980's, and an occasional book, treating the subject of artists' or art historians' information needs. There are, however, very few actual user studies. There is no study or discussion of the information needs or interests of art educators as a separate group. Since the college and university professors are artists or art historians as well as teachers, the literature relating to the information needs of these professionals is relevant.

Dierdre Stam (1984) studied art historians in two museums and two colleges by means of interviews (8) and survey questionnaires, and sent questionnaires to 50 colleges and museums across the country. Her study illustrates one of the problems with reports in the literature on information-seeking behavior of art historians and artists: the sample was small. Although the overall response rate was 41%, only 13 college faculty returned completed questionnaires. Of the 11 sent to the remaining faculty at the colleges chosen for interviews, only 2 were returned completed. It was not stated how many questionnaires were sent to art historians working in colleges across the country. Stam was interested in any differences in information-seeking behavior between art historians working at museums and those on college faculty, and she was also interested in differences related to distance from New York City. Some of her findings nevertheless are pertinent to this study. Art historians in both types of institutions made

frequent use of their own institutional libraries and regular trips to other libraries; they depended heavily on their personal collections including significant slide collections owned by about two-thirds of the participants; art historians in both museums and colleges “report very high use of three image formats: printed reproductions in books and journals; black-and-white photographs; and photocopies. College faculty used slides even more often than these three formats...” (Stam 1984, 117). Stam also found in this study that art historians had almost no experience with computerized databases. They maintained a communication network with colleagues, not restricted to other historians, the so-called “invisible college.” Their major source of information was the art object itself, and they looked for authoritative information about the object or related ones, accuracy not being a primary concern. Stam concludes that the art librarian can best make use of a study such as this by conducting a small-scale study of his or her own to determine local needs. This study was summarized briefly in Art Documentation, Winter, 1984 as “How Art Historians Look for Information”, and this report was reprinted in 1997 as part of a retrospective of the Art Libraries Society of North America (Stam 1997). No comments were made at that time about any possible changes in behavior of the art historians, particularly in regard to use of the computer.

The collaborative Getty Art History Information Program – Institute for Research in Information and Scholarship study (Bakewell, Beeman and Reese 1988) investigated the same subject by in-depth six-seven hour interviews with eighteen art historians, as well as two long-term case studies. The problem of a small sample was present in this study also, and, in addition, there was no tabulation of data. Summaries were made at the end of each section of a sampling of responses to a question. These scholars came from locations in the United States and Europe, from museums, teaching institutions and research centers, and were specialists in a number of

areas. They also were heavy users of research materials. "In striking contrast to the widespread image of scholarly isolation, this study finds the participants immersed in a rich matrix of interactions....." (Bakewell, Beeman and Reese 1988. viii). The study found that for most of the participants the original works of art were the starting point of their research, and that they often used photographic reproductions such as photographic prints, slides and published illustrations. This study also found that archival search is vital to many historians' understanding of the art object within the context of the time in which it was created. Secondary sources varied widely, "but timely information is often gleaned through informal contacts with colleagues." (Bakewell, Beeman and Reese 1988, 44). As in Stam's study the art historians did not feel that the computer contributed to their research at that time. They imagined, however, that the computer might be very helpful with indexing, cross-referencing and analysis of reproductions. It could also be used to make unpublished information available and to sort visual materials. There were two mentions of teaching in the study. One scholar said that he encourages his students to work with originals. "And those who taught the history of art imagined the computer in the slide room as a tool that would allow them to introduce a broader range of images in the classroom." (Bakewell, Beeman and Reese 1988, 52).

As early as 1975 an art librarian at a small provincial art school in England (100 students) noted all requests received at his library during two months of the school year (Toyne 1975). He was attempting to provide some information of the type not available to him when he set up the library eight years previously. Although the total number of requests is not given there might have been many in two months. This study does involve art students, and although their basic information needs should be similar to those of faculty, there is no question they cannot bring to any information source the same knowledge and 'experience of living' that someone

several years their senior, working in the field, would have. The findings are pertinent to the present study, however. Twenty-eight percent of the requests were for specific books, and 25.5% for information that one might reasonably expect to find in a book. Seventeen percent were for specific artists, and only 7.5% were for illustrations of non-art objects and 7.5% for illustrations of specific works of art. Toyne set up the library on the basis that most of the requests would be for information about specific artists, so the statistics concerning books were a 'shock' to him. He concluded that for the librarian, knowing one's books and talking to one's clientele are just as important as the refinements of librarianship, but he admitted this might apply to only one librarian. This also was a small library in a small school with a homogeneous population. What is significant for the present study is the high percentage of requests for textual material compared to the percent of requests received for visual material. These numbers belie the statements of those who note that images are paramount in importance for the art historian and artist and that textual or reading material is secondary (Pacey 1982, Nilsen 1986, Powell 1995, Stam 1995). Of course some of the requests for books in Toyne's study may have been made because of knowledge of the images contained within them.

In 1993 Downey surveyed art students and faculty in one large university to determine their information-seeking practices, but in this study also the response rate was low (33%) in spite of two mailings. This left only 17 participants in the study. They were supplied with nine general categories of resources and asked to identify the sources of use to them in their work and instructional activities. Art journals and artist reproductions were the most heavily used, the percentages of respondents reporting their use being 88% and 82% respectively. Exhibition catalogues were used by 65% of the artists, and art history resources by 59%. Reference sources were used by only 29% of the artists, and computer databases not at all.

Eighty-eight percent of the artists relied heavily on their own personal libraries for work-related information although they visited libraries of all types. They depended on libraries for current information in journals. The artists did consult with their colleagues but infrequently with a librarian. Their general comments about their institutional library particularly was that it was difficult to use, including the OPAC, that the arrangement of the library (classification) was not conducive to browsing.

Dierdre Stam surveyed artists indirectly in 1995 to determine their information needs in order to improve library service to them. She mailed questionnaires to selected librarians in public and art school libraries and placed the questionnaire on the ARLIS (Art Libraries Society) electronic discussion list, ARLIS-L. She did not state the number of questionnaires mailed or any numbers associated with specific responses. The characterization of artists, Stam stated, assumes they begin with abstract ideas, implying wide interests. She acknowledged Ferguson in stating that artists' reading is omnivorous and eclectic – books, magazines, advertisements, ephemera (Ferguson 1986). “The need for intellectual stimulation is met, both artists and librarians seem to agree, by a wider culture than the world of art.” (Stam 1995, 22). Artists need information about artists and their work, art movements, art forms, iconography and criticism. Most characteristic is their need for images, especially color images, usually very specific ones. Stam gave a number of examples of such requests, all of which should be possible to find in a general academic library. Some of the art librarians reported that artists have little use for reference tools such as indexes, that they don't have the time to learn how to use them, and they don't want to learn. The artists did note some complaints about the library and some innovations they would like to have. The Library of Congress classifications are inappropriate, making the catalog a hindrance. A similar complaint was registered in the

AHIP-IRIS study (Bakewell, Beeman and Reese 1988) and Downey's study (Downey 1993). There is no indexing for illustrations, and there is inadequate treatment of media sources. The treatment of artists as authors rather than subjects is a hindrance to finding specific artists, and some artists participating in group shows are not recorded in the catalog. In spite of these objections, there were some artists in the study who do use Art Index and less frequently other indexes to find images, exhibition catalogs and galleries.

Also in 1995 Powell studied the information-seeking behavior of nine studio artists on the faculty of the University of North Carolina (Powell 1995). She interviewed the participants for from 15 minutes to one hour in order to explore the ways practicing artists use the library. She stated in the beginning that it is difficult to trace the creative process because it is composed of ideas, abstractions, and their relation to one another. She considered that her findings confirmed the findings of previous research relating to humanists and stated, "Research seems to support that both books and journals are heavily used by humanities scholars in their research." (Powell 1995, 5). She also remarked that "More broadly, and perhaps most differently from other disciplines, artists use the library to generate ideas by browsing, by consulting visual rather than textual information, and by consulting the literature of other disciplines." (6). Powell wanted to examine the role of the library in the artists' information world, recognizing that it is only a part of that world. The questions she used were open-ended. The participants in the study had easy access to a departmental art library, an extensive campus library system, and two public libraries in the county. Although the artists did not like to characterize themselves as working in a particular field, one was a performing artist, four were painters, four sculptors, three working with drawings, and 6 intermedia. All nine artists used the departmental art library, particularly to help students and to locate examples for class. Four browsed new art magazines, and "many"

mentioned the importance of browsing. Six subscribed to art journals. As is evident from almost every study, the artists mentioned”an incredible array of subjects that influenced their work.....areas that they read in regularly.” (Powell 1995, 19). The artists considered comfort and convenience in a library very important. They wanted electronic image banks that they could access from the classroom and visual indexing so that they could find what images are available in a book without going to the library to look at it or retrieve it. The artists varied in their use of electronic resources. Four used none, three used OPAC’s, two used electronic databases, one e-mail, and one had just purchased a modem at the time of the study. Powell stated that her findings concerning artists are in line with those for humanists in general. “Based on my interviews, artists don’t have clearly defined information needs....But they do have peculiar search techniques that they use when hunting for ideas and inspiration.” (23). The author also stated, “...artists at academic institutions in teaching roles most likely have different needs and habits than independent artists.” (25).

A study published in 1996 by Cobblestick utilized interviews with only four artists, each working in a different field of the studio arts (Cobblestick 1995). These were in-depth interviews intended to provide a framework for a survey instrument and further research. The artists were members of the faculty of a large midwestern university with a strong art program. Cobblestick was interested in information needs about shows, commissions and sales; technical information; visual information and inspirational sources. She found that print materials on a wide variety of topics, generally non-art related, were the most important source of inspirational and/or visual needs. She also found that the artists had a considerable interest in verbal content, unlike the authors who stress the predominance of images. “This research suggests.....(images) they are no more important than ideas in the creative lives of the artists

interviewed.” (Cobbledick 1995, 361). All four artists visited libraries, usually more than one, and 75% of them used the OPAC but did not consult the librarian. They all browsed, but unlike the browsing described by several authors (Pacey 1982, Phillips 1986, Downey 1993, Stam 1995), finding ‘just the right thing’ by accident, all of the artists in this study visited the library with a specific need in mind and then browsed within a limited subject area. Subscriptions to art journals constituted the source of current developments in the arts, except for local developments, and the artists did not use art journals in the library. One of the artists described himself as computer illiterate, and the other who had no computer had no strong feeling about them one way or the other. A third artist acquired a computer so that she could learn a design program to teach her students, but she was very concerned about computer-aided design as being too perfect, too mechanical-looking. The fourth artist had a computer and used it for word processing and simple design and was quite interested in using it more, such as downloading images for manipulation. Cobbledick suggested that a library designed with artists in mind should have a large variety of print materials, including those with visual content, but without undue emphasis on art. This, however, is what a public or academic library with an extensive collection is. She also suggested that the MARC record might be enhanced to include information about illustrations, and she expressed the hope that future artists are more receptive to the access to knowledge that computers can offer.

The remainder of the reports in the literature concerning the information needs and information-seeking practices of artists and art historians are anecdotal or in the form of essays. A few are concerned specifically with electronic resources. Philip Pacey’s anecdotal study in 1982 is often referenced. It describes a number of the requests made by students on a typical morning in an art college library. Pacey came to several conclusions from his observation. “Art

students use libraries as reservoirs of images, visual information, example and stimulus; written texts are of secondary importance.” (Pacey 1982, 35). He suggested a rather unrealistic solution to fill this need: collections of illustrations whose scope ranges over the whole of the visible world besides the art illustrations. He also noted that students only used the library in an ‘academic’ way in conjunction with art history requirements for writing, notetaking, etc. He said the art student is a compulsive browser, but he phrased this in terms of as often as he seeks a specific book or subject, he comes to browse but not aimlessly. Pacey made the important point noted often in the literature of librarianship that one cannot determine library use by statistics of loans because of in-house use. He said the students wanted current information. The fine artist wanted exhibition catalogs and the latest journals. Requests for information on specific artists were a significant proportion of the requests made by students. Pacey did not say what percent, but he did say that often illustrations of the artists’ work were enough to satisfy the student. Monographs and exhibition catalogs along with indexes and periodical files could fill this need. Pacey noted that the good thing about an art library is that it is close to the studios, but he also mentioned that there are advantages to a centralized library, although he wasn’t specific.

A quite interesting report was one by Nilsen (1986) from the Creative Arts Library, the only branch library of Montana State University. It is the only academic art library in the state of Montana. Nilsen stated that there is a “lively art community” and that, “The library assumes the role of link between the schools or local artists and the art world.” (Nilsen 1986, 151). Nilsen echoed Philip Pacey in saying that art students use libraries for images and visual information with texts of secondary importance. Thus materials of importance for the library are serials and exhibition catalogs with a strong emphasis on contemporary artists and architecture. Presumably because of the school’s isolation the students constantly requested current information on trends

and happenings in the art world. A partial creative solution to this demand was short circulation of current magazines, and a second more far-reaching solution that required much effort was the writing of 300 letters to major art galleries or museums in the U.S. requesting to be placed on their exhibition mailing list. The response to these requests was good, and it also yielded a high percent of advance notices, “a sense of the pulse of the art world”. (Nilsen 1986, 151).

Acquisitions decisions were strongly influenced by requests of the faculty; everyone the librarian met asked for exhibition catalogs. Since the administration would not agree to an approval plan for catalogs, the librarian used every possible means to acquire them. This library also discovered that exhibits of artists’ work greatly benefited students, librarians and the image of the library.

In 1986 at a joint session of the College Art Association/Art Libraries Society four artists discussed their reading habits, exemplified by Lawrence Weiner’s comment that he read “everything that comes across my table.” (Ferguson 1986, 72). The purpose of this joint session was to explore the ways in which printed, non-visual sources inform the content of artists’ work. “Even among only four artists, the range of reading was enormous.” (Ferguson 1986, 72). Importance was placed on the accidental – chance discoveries. When the question was raised of what a library for artists should contain besides books on art, one of the artists rejected the whole idea of artists’ libraries, saying that money should go into good local public libraries. “He had great praise for librarians, even suggesting that an ideal library would consist of a series of knowledgeable reference librarians to direct people to other sources.” (Ferguson 1986, 72).

Dane commented in 1987:

In the ‘artists’ issue of Art Libraries Journal (v.11 no. 3 1986) several of the artist contributors noted that access to the literature of other disciplines such as poetry, philosophy, cultural history, fiction, religion, social sciences and psychology was truly necessary for an understanding of the mystery of pictorial expression. (Dane 1987, 30)

He did not mention science, but for some artists an understanding of some aspects of science is important to their pictorial expression. He was talking about a public library, but it is equally true of an academic library, that a collection of works in all of these disciplines is housed under one roof, organized by subject.

Three artists commented on libraries in Art Libraries Journal in 1986, one of them being a librarian. He said that his approach to the library differed little from other artists, in spite of his training, and that he continued to browse the library for current awareness (Trepanier 1986). Their comments were quite varied. As Phillips said, “Artists use libraries in strange ways and it is difficult to suggest how a librarian can predict their needs, except not to de-accession anything with pictures, . . .” (Phillips 1986, 9). Opdahl commented that he found excellent results with browsing, that he found the pictures he needed in books and that the ones that interested him most were those of other artists (Opdahl 1986).

Richard Brilliant in 1988 made some pertinent comments about art historians, how they work and the kinds of information they need. He noted that “Every scholar begins research with known bibliographic sources and moves from known sources to the unknown through the references, the footnotes, and the bibliography provided by the source.” (Brilliant 1988, 126). The art historian has a need for images as well as text in reference works, which can be found in catalogs of exhibitions, notebooks of artists and reproductions of photographic archives. Some of the latter are just not available because of copyright restrictions. He also mentioned that laser disk technology, digitalized color processing of paintings and computer aided design, the latter to capture the three dimensional appearance , are things for the future provision of images.

An unusual slant on sources of material about artists was treated in an essay presented to the 3rd European Conference of the IFLA Section of Art Libraries in 1988 (Robertson).

Robertson stated that there are two distinct types of primary documents: the works of art and the artists' words. The latter can be found in exhibition catalogs, and the author was most interested in catalogs of group exhibitions where such words are found frequently and for which there is no controlled means of access. He mentioned some indexes that offered a partial solution and made some suggestions for the future.

In 1994 Sara Layne discussed the information-seeking behavior of artists and art historians and stressed the need for visual as well as textual information in art. Several authors whose works are reviewed above have attributed to her statements that artists and art historians prefer visual information, and that textual information is of secondary importance. This does not appear to be correct. She says that art information is both visual and textual, that it includes any information that may be used in the creation of art works or in understanding them or giving context to them. "Indeed, almost any information might at some time or another be considered art information...." (Layne 1994, 24). In this particular report Layne has chosen to discuss the problems of visual information, including technological complexity, and current solutions. She also mentioned the art history student, his need for access to images, which is the same as artists and art historians, and his need for linkages between these images and textual information about the images. In addition she discussed the importance of authority files and thesauri as well as access to images and the role of the reference librarian in providing artists and art historians with the visual information they need. They can also influence the future by being knowledgeable about the problems of visual information, creating image files for their own institutions and "affect the development of rules for the cataloging of images, the design of access vocabularies, and the structure and content of image databases...." (34) Another paper presented to the IFLA Section of Art Libraries, at the 1994 Conference, came from the Russian State Library in

Moscow, and its author pointed out a number of characteristics of artists that visited her library (Artamonova 1995). She stated that artists frequently used pictorial materials; that they came to the library for various reasons such as seeking inspiration; knowledge about some person or place; to learn from other artists' works and when they wished to create a new work based on an old one. She said, "Many artists are involved in the publishing industry....with the help of library graphics collections". (29) Artamonova noted that the library was often visited by restorers, and that young artists studied there, using different kinds of materials and computer databases. (Organizing exhibitions) "is undoubtedly one of the best ways of advertising graphics collections and acquainting society (artists included) with works of art." (Artamonova 1995, 29)

A notable paper was published recently in January, 1998 discussing the information needs of the artist in relation to the documentation center of the Musee national d'art moderne in Paris (Oddos 1998). Oddos emphasized the range and variety of information needed by the artist and felt it is unlikely this can be provided by a specialized art collection. The latter, however, has the advantage of the specialized librarian. The BPI (Bibliotheque publique d'information) is juxtaposed to the Musee, and there is a project for cooperation between these two libraries, providing current information for the artist as well as more specialized treatment. Various ways of accomplishing this are mentioned:

While this current information is to some extent already available in traditional documents, it can be enhanced by the increased use of high quality photographic records....rather than published or reproduced images; by the use of video documents recording art events; and by making information resources available on the networks. A great deal of this material could be brought together into a local database of digitised images; (Oddos 1998, 19).

How much interest do art professionals have in technology, in images online, in communicating on the Internet? As noted above in the AHIP-IRIS study (1988), Stam's study in 1989, Downey's study in 1995 and Cobbleidick's study (1996), the art historians and artists

involved in those studies had no interest in using computerized databases although artists interviewed in the AHIP-IRIS collaboration expressed a wish for world-wide communication, indexes of images and computers that could be helpful in the classroom. It bears repeating that this study and even Stam's study took place "a long time ago" in terms of the advances in computer technology. Downey's and Cobbedick's results are somewhat more difficult to understand, but there may be the element of fear for some artists that the computer will take away the individual nature of art, and it may be that the artists are just too busy with their work and teaching to take time to learn how to use the computer.

Tong addressed the question of new art technologies in 1993. She described artists in four countries collaborating on a drawing by fax, an artist-based bulletin board and artists interacting with each other in different countries by videophone. She went on to discuss some electronic art projects, issues of concern and implications for libraries. She concluded that "...the new electronic art forms may call for new structures, new ways of organizing, archiving, and making accessible artworks and art information in cyberspace". (Tong 1993, 117). A recent paper presented in August, 1997 to the IFLA Section of Art Libraries at the ARLIS/UK and Ireland Conference discussed the Research Libraries Group in terms of the collaboration among its members; the several services it provides; its recent partnership with the Getty Information Institute resulting in art documentation work such as the Art and Architecture Thesaurus and the Thesaurus of Geographic Names, and its current work with Getty in the museum field attempting to bridge the gap between the areas of primary and secondary materials in the field of art research (Martinez 1998). At the same conference a paper was presented discussing DutchESS (Dutch Electronic Subject Service), an Internet guide for the academic community in cooperation with a number of Dutch academic libraries (Peereboom and Wishaupt 1998). DutchESS is of

particular interest because of its rigorous standards and quality requirements for inclusion in the database and because sites to be included are chosen by subject specialists. Also, the author confirmed the opinion of librarians in general that much of the material on the Internet, at least on the World Wide Web, whether it be art or some other discipline, is not worth consulting.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The primary research method used was face-to-face interviews.

The College Blue Book was consulted to find colleges in the area offering Bachelor of Arts in Studio Arts or Bachelor of Arts in Art History degrees, and universities offering Master of Studio Arts or Art History degrees as well as undergraduate degrees. Next statistics concerning these institutions were obtained such as number of students enrolled and number of full, part-time and graduate students in order to match institutions by size and degrees offered. It became apparent readily that lines between “college” and “university” were sometimes blurred, and that it was not possible to match institutions since each one in the study is unique in some way. One university had to be eliminated and a smaller one with only an Art History program substituted because the chosen university holds all of its art classes in either the metropolitan art museum or the institute of art. It was possible to obtain statistics on degrees offered and general enrollment, but the attempt to obtain enrollment figures for each art program was abandoned because it did not seem particularly relevant and was difficult to obtain. Of the three universities chosen, two are state affiliated and one private. Of the five colleges, two are private and three church affiliated. One university offers a bachelor’s degree in Art History, one a bachelor’s degree in Art with courses in both studio arts and art history, and one university bachelor’s and master’s degrees in Studio Arts and bachelor’s and master’s degrees in Art History. All of the colleges offer bachelor’s degrees in Art with courses in studio arts and art history, and one also offers an associate degree.

The institutions included in the study are all within 40 miles of the downtown metropolitan area. One college is 40 miles distant, and one college and one university are

approximately 30 miles from downtown. All of the other institutions are located in suburbs, only a few miles from the downtown area. The art museum is within the city but about five miles east of the main public library such that distance from it varies with location of the institution on the east or west side of the city.

Next it was necessary to obtain a list of arts faculty members with their specialties and addresses, from individual institutions. Some of these are listed on the World Wide Web page of the institutions; for the others it was necessary to call the college or university and speak with the departmental secretary. Course listings, where available, were consulted to determine specialty. The initial idea was to choose professors of painting, sculpture and/or drawing and a comparable number of those teaching art history in each institution, but this was not possible. In fact, two colleges were added that originally were not intended to be in the study in order to help balance participants in universities and colleges and in studio arts and art history. Twenty-four letters of introduction and request for participation in the study, illustrated by the letter in Appendix B, were sent to the universities, fifteen to professors of art history and nine to those in the studio arts in the areas of painting, drawing and sculpture. Twenty identical letters were sent to the colleges, seven to professors of art history and thirteen to artists teaching in the areas of painting and sculpture. The original plan was to follow up the letters with a telephone call within two weeks to arrange a convenient time for an interview. In some instances, particularly for adjunct faculty, no telephone number is available, requiring that a message be left with the secretary. These faculty also have no e-mail address at the institution. In many instances where e-mail addresses were available, this mode of communication was used in place of telephone calls.

Of the 24 potential university participants, 13 agreed to participate, 4 declined, 3 were on leave, and 4 could not be reached by 'phone or e-mail. Since professors specializing in areas not originally intended to be included in the study, particularly in art history, often teach introductory and/or art appreciation courses, 2 additional letters were sent, and these 2 professors agreed to participate. Thus, subtracting the 3 professors on leave and adding 2 substitutions, of 23 professors asked to participate 15 were willing, an acceptance rate of 65%. Ten of 14 art historians agreed (71%), and 5 of 9 artists(56%).

Of the 20 potential college participants, 10 agreed to participate, 4 declined, 1 did not answer the e-mail message, 1 agreed but did not follow up, 1 was on leave, 2 could not be reached, and 1 did not receive the message until the conclusion of the study. Thus, subtracting the 1 professor on leave and the 1 the message did not reach and adding 3 substitutions, of 21 professors asked to participate 12 were willing, a participation rate of 57%. Six of 7 art historians agreed(86%), and 6 of 14 artists(43%). There is no satisfactory explanation for the low participation rate of artists.

Those consenting to participate were interviewed for between forty minutes and one hour. The vast majority of the interviews were for one hour. During the interviews the approximate age of the interviewee in terms of decades was established, determination of specialty and any subspecialty, and number of years teaching studio art or art history. The interviews took the form of informal conversations, beginning with demographic data and including a discussion of the participant's philosophy, the nature of his work and the types and sources of information used primarily for that work. Questions were then asked about resources for teaching. Specific questions are listed in Appendix A, but not every question was asked of every participant.

Of the 16 art historians, 10 were teaching in universities and 6 in colleges. They ranged in age from 7 in their 50's, 5 in their 40's and 4 in their 30's. There were 9 men and 7 women. Of the 11 artists, 5 were teaching in universities, 5 in colleges and 1 taught part-time in both. The artists ranged in age from 2 in their 50's, 6 in their 40's, 1 in her 30's and 1 in her 20's. Thus the artists as a group were slightly younger than the art historians, but as one historian remarked with some exaggeration, "It takes until one is 60 to be in one's prime." Four of the artists were men and 7 women. Both art historians and artists had been teaching anywhere from three years to thirty-three years, including teaching as a graduate assistant in some cases, and in a few cases at a different academic level as high school or elementary. Seven of the art historians had been teaching less than 10 years, four between 10 and 20 years, one between 20 and 30 years and four 30 years or more. Three artists had been teaching less than 10 years, five between 10 and 20 years, one 20 years and two 30 years or more.

It is difficult to place the art historians into specialty categories because several of them have more than one interest, and particularly because many of them teach more than one period of art history. There were three art historians who characterized themselves as specializing in Northern Renaissance art, and three in Italian Renaissance art. Of those specializing in Northern Renaissance art, one said "medieval and Northern Renaissance" with an interest in medieval manuscripts. One said Netherlandish and medieval, and one Northern Renaissance and Baroque, especially 16th and 17th century prints. One historian characterized himself as specializing in 13th century French sculpture and 14th century Italian painting. He teaches Northern and Southern medieval art and Northern Renaissance art, also a survey course in Prehistoric to 13th century art and contemporary art in seminars. Needless to say, he is one of those who has been teaching over 30 years. Three art historians specialize in American art, and one of these also paints. One

specialized in German art as well as contemporary American art, particularly post-modern art. One specializes in 20th century American art and 17th century Dutch art. One art historian specializes in late 19th century art and teaches contemporary art (1750-2000), and one teaches modern art with some surrealism along with one criticism class. He is also a photographer and is interested in architecture. Two are architectural historians. One of these specializes in local buildings and medieval buildings in England. He teaches American architecture, the history of the city, a seminar on skyscrapers. The other architectural historian specializes in American architecture and teaches 19th and 20th century painting, architecture and sculpture. One historian characterized herself as a Greek and Roman archaeologist. She specializes in Greek and Roman art and architecture and classical literature and history. She teaches Greek and Roman sculpture and a seminar in ancient art. One art historian is also an artist, a craftsperson, and said she has taught eleven different courses “over the years” from ancient art to 20th century modern. All of the art historians teach survey courses in art history, and many teach courses in art appreciation.

Six of the artists characterized themselves as painters and three as sculptors. One artist not only teaches drawing but creates drawings. One artist who teaches drawing is a craftsperson, specializing in a craft related to drawing. Categorization of the artists is not simple, either. Each of the painters has some special type of painting he or she wishes to create along with various influences on the paintings and different media. One painter said she paints landscapes influenced by aspects of science, particularly light, and teaches “some of everything”. One painter reads a great deal about science, especially perception, and technical books about color, all of which influence his paintings. He teaches advanced painting, sometimes drawing, and occasionally late modern art history. One painter draws inspiration from various places, particularly different areas of reading and the four other artists with whom she shares a studio.

She teaches drawing, painting and experiencing visual art. Another painter produces surrealist paintings, in oil, and is inspired by other artists' work and various areas of reading, particularly biology and medicine.. She teaches upper and lower level painting and figure drawing. Another painter characterized herself as a watercolorist, a realist, inspired by nature. She teaches painting at one institution and computer graphics and design at another. The last painter paints landscapes and figures and takes his inspiration primarily from nature. He is also a builder and a craftsman. He teaches drawing and painting. One sculptor characterized herself as conservative, classical, interested in nature, particularly the structures of early Americans. She casts in various media and teaches sculpture in general and ceramics. Another sculptor works with ceramic sculptures, glass and crafts. She works with sculptural installations. She teaches ceramics and design. The third sculptor characterized himself as a conceptual artist, interested in "the contingency of meaning in art". He works through computer programmers and is beginning to use lasers in his work. He teaches sculpture. One artist does pastel and charcoal drawings and teaches drawing. He used to do graphic design and still lifes, now he is a surrealist. He works in series and is inspired by pop art and by a number of artists, especially northern Italian painters. The last artist teaches advanced drawing and is interested in figures. She is a craftsman, inspired by topics of caretaking as found in old first aid books, psychology and child development and also by biology books.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF DATA

INFORMATION USED FOR TEACHING AND TO HAVE AVAILABLE FOR STUDENTS

There are several types and sources of information the art historians and artists participating in this study use as teaching aids. Some of these they would like to have available for their students, particularly in the library, and some they make available to the students themselves.

1. Visual Sources

- A. Slides All 27 of the participants, art historians and studio artists, use slides in the classroom. Seven (44%) of the art historians and 3 (27%) of the artists use slides exclusively. Where a departmental collection is available as is the case with 10 of the art historians and 1 artist, use is made of these, supplemented by personal collections, ordering from museums, borrowing from the art museum and art institute, slides made by A-V services, ones that accompany textbooks, and often slides made by the professor himself, taken as photographs or from reproductions in books. As one art historian said, "wherever I find good color images". In the case of 7 (44%) of the art historians slides used come from the departmental collection alone.

Because of the nature of some of the institutions, studio arts and art history are in effect separate departments, and studio arts has no slide collection. In some of the smaller colleges there is no departmental collection or only a modest one. In one institution there is no departmental collection, but there is a collection in the library. These factors account for the scant use of a departmental slide collection by artists. Eight of the 11 (73%) artists make slides themselves, but they also use the same methods art historians do for obtaining slides except for seldom ordering them.

The fact that all of the participants in this study use slides as their primary means of supplying their students with images of works of art in the classroom indicates that the quality of slides today is quite good. As one art history professor pointed out the quality of printing has improved tremendously in the last 10+ years, allowing excellent slides to be made from reproductions in books and even journals. If a slide curator is available, good slides are almost guaranteed and can be made quickly. This person also can catalogue the slides in a manner that makes them readily available to the professor. Cataloguing was mentioned as a problem by an artist and an art historian in two separate small colleges. The art historian has done some cataloguing herself over the years. Slides made by an audio-visual department of a school library may have the same quality as those in a departmental collection, but they may not be available quickly, and distance can be an inconvenience, both for procuring the finished slides and for communicating with the persons responsible for their production.

- B. Videos Six (38%) of the 16 art historians and 5 (45%) of the 11 artists use videos occasionally. Some of these are borrowed from a regional branch of the County Library that specializes in art resources, some are in the school's library, and two artists make or have made tapes of themselves working or of their studio, etc. Whether the study participants would use videos more if they were more readily available was not asked, but video collections pertaining to art in the participating institutions generally are small or nonexistent. The regional County library apparently has a sizeable collection, but it is about an hour's drive from one institution and 40 minutes from another.

C. Other Six of the art historians use photocopies or reproductions from books in class, 1 brings some of her own books and magazines to class, and the same art historian brings plaster casts from the college museum. Three of the artists use photocopies or reproductions in class, 4 bring books and magazines to show the class images, 1 uses the blackboard and computer printouts, and one takes apart inexpensive books to pin images up on the wall. This same artist also brings to class original works of art in the form of paintings, his own and students’.

2. Reading for Students

Regardless of the debate in the literature about the relative importance of textual and visual sources of information for artists and art historians, all of the participants in this study require some type of reading by their students, and most encourage their students to read. Nine (56%) of the 16 art historians and 6 (55%) of 11 artists use a textbook, but not necessarily for all classes. One artist did not mention this specifically. The textbooks are almost invariably supplemented by journal articles on reserve in the library, sometimes some optional, or in a few cases essays. Beyond these basic reading materials the professors varied widely in their approach. Among the art historians some recommend books if the student is interested, one requires students to make a journal of readings, one recommends Art Newspaper and images to view, one gives a list of slides, and one considers understanding of art history of uppermost importance and gives exams primarily from lectures. Among the artists several include a bibliography in the syllabus; one uses published versions of artists’ journals, diaries and letters; one recommends a textbook but doesn’t require it; one attempts to teach lower level students how to look at works of art and rarely uses a textbook; one gives a packet containing material not readily available as from exhibition catalogs or out-of-print

books; and one encourages students who become “enamored” of an artist to borrow books, even buy books about that artist.

Several of the art historians mentioned that it is difficult to find suitable textbooks for survey courses but much easier when classes are taught about individual artists or periods of art. The professors of studio art stressed that the student primarily “learns by doing and critique of his work” but that he can learn much by reading about how artists work.

Obviously the library is important to the art and art history students, not only as a source of required reading (materials on reserve) but as a source of additional reading when they are interested in a particular artist or period of art or style.

3. Research Papers, Projects

The professors of art and art history in this study rely primarily on the library of their own institutions to supply information for students to complete research projects, occasionally other institutions such as the art museum. The lines between “papers” and “projects” are blurred often when referring to the teaching of both art historians and artists. Six (38%) of the art historians and 2 (18%) of the artists specifically mentioned research papers required. Three of the art historians and 2 of the artists were not asked this question, but one of these art historians stated that the purpose of the course is to read, 1 of them stated “student searching varies”, and 1 gives a 7-page handout on searching technique, indicating that the students need to learn how to do research. Two art historians mentioned art museum assignments such as visual analysis and comparing and contrasting works of art, 1 assigns projects as viewing and writing about local outdoor sculpture. One art historian said that last semester she required two papers but that there was so much plagiarism no research is required this semester.

The studio artists varied greatly in their requirements, from sending the students to the County Regional Library to look at art books or work on the human figure to a “research presentation” needing a visual component such as slides, to “responsive drawings” after looking up a master, to surfing the computer for images, to spending 75% of the time in class drawing, with the professor walking around critiquing.

In general, the art history professors tend to require typical research papers whereas the artists require “projects” that involve more of a visual component.

Eight of the participants, mostly art historians (this question was not asked of most artists) indicated students need searching help, along with the one professor who gives the handout on searching. In addition, one of the art historians has access to a person who teaches a course on research tools, and one said a writing-intensive course is required, which is coordinated with a research skills course. This is an area where the library definitely can be of help to the professor and his students. There is much discussion today among librarians as to whether to offer bibliographic instruction and what type. It seems the art history and art students are one group who can use this help. These professors might be willing to have some instruction given in class, coordinated with the beginning of some research or other writing assignment, or it might be possible to coordinate a course of instruction given in the library with the students’ writing and research needs. Since a number of the professors said their students do need help with searching technique, they might be willing to give up some class time to have this help provided by a knowledgeable instructor.

4. Trips for Students

Taking students to art museums and galleries provides them with a major source of information. As with all humanists the primary source, the original work of art, is the best source of information for artists and art historians. It is not often possible to have original works of art available for students. Fortunately for the setting of this study the art museum, a contemporary art center and several galleries are within a reasonable distance, but even then students may not have transportation readily available to them or may not feel that they have time to travel there on their own.

Approximately one-third of the art historians and one-third of the artists were not asked specifically if they take students to view original works of art. Of those asked, however, 7 (44%) of the art historians take students to the art museum, 3 of these as part of the introductory course, which is taught in the museum. One professor said he used to take students to the museum, but the class now is too large. At the one college with an art museum of its own, some classes are taught there. Six (55%) of the artists take their students to the art museum, and one teaches an art history course which meets at the museum. In addition, 4 of the art historians take students to centers such as New York or Washington or Chicago, and one gives the students information about exhibits within a radius of 100 miles. Two take students to Europe every year, and one to the contemporary art center downtown. One of the artists takes good students to centers such as Pittsburgh, Toledo, Detroit as well as to galleries. Two others take students to galleries, and one to the contemporary art center as well as to his own studio.

The participants in this study were not asked about funding for such trips for students, but one art historian who takes students to Europe every year said that the college funds these

trips. Undoubtedly financing is a major consideration in the ability to provide original works of art as information sources for students. The professor's time also is a consideration, but of course he or she would benefit as well.

5. Computer Resources

Eight (50%) of the art historians and 6 (55%) of the artists said either that they do not use the computer for teaching purposes, or they did not mention use of the computer. Of the six art historians who said they don't use the computer for teaching 1 said the sites available are too limited, offering only major works, 2 professors do not have facilities for use of the computer in class, and 1 doesn't use the computer now but would like to use it for his syllabus and a Wisconsin survey course. Of the six artists 1 said he is not a computer person, 1 said students had trouble with the Web, and she doesn't have computer access in her office. One artist said she is encouraging students to do research using the computer, and 1 said students are taking a workshop through the Education Dept. on how to use the computer in art. Two art historians and two artists did not mention any use of the computer for teaching.

Of the art historians using the computer directly for teaching, the type of use varies widely from 1 who uses a CD-ROM of the college museum's collection to 1 who has created his own Web site for his classes with the syllabus, research, some images, some museum sites, relevant links for exams, images around the Web for upper level classes – virtually an alternate text. The historian who uses only the CD-ROM, however, said she would like to do a collection of images and put them on the college Web site. One art historian gives the students some Web sites such as the Getty Information Project, the Louvre, the Chicago Institute of Art and the sculpture center of the Cleveland Museum of Art, and has begun transferring slides to a computer disk. She stated that the mission of her college is directed

more and more toward use of the computer. One historian has her syllabus on the computer, and a database of images has been made for her. She also mentioned that some textbooks have Web sites with them, as did 1 other art historian, who added that the virtual museum selection is not good, agreeing with 1 of her colleagues who does not use the computer, that only famous works are available. 1 art historian recommends some virtual museums such as the Bibliotech de Nationale and has found some very good images of manuscripts online. For 1 historian the librarian demonstrates the use of Art Bibliographies Moderne to the class, she has taught a class entitled "Art in Cyberspace", and she considers one CD-ROM very good. One art historian likes a classroom with Web access for information and some images. He does not feel that images are technically good enough yet for painting, but they are quite satisfactory for architecture, giving a 3-dimensional quality. He also gives the students a list of sites with good images, but said it is too much work to put the whole design of the class on the computer.

Thus in this study 8 of the 16 art historians, or 50%, are actively using the computer for teaching purposes. Of the artists who use the computer for teaching, two are painters but also teach computer graphics. Both use the computer in class for combining colors. One used the computer in a design class to have the students solve a problem. The other uses it a great deal in drawing classes for illustration. She draws on the computer and projects or prints the drawings and draws in class. She has her students surf for images and feels that there are some good Web sites for images. As an aside, it is interesting that one of the artists who teaches computer graphics and uses the computer otherwise in class describes herself as a "non-computer person" and uses it little herself. One artist has links on the school Web page to art resources. Another artist teaches high school art as well as college and institute

levels. She said that library resources at the high school are minimal, that her students are working too much to go elsewhere to the library, so even though she is a “non-computer person”, she gives the students computer resources to consult. Her comment is priceless in today’s world of the technology explosion and the mixed feelings of so many about it: (referring to the computer) “in lieu of nothing, it’s fantastic!” One other artist recommends a few “slides” on the computer to her students. Although one artist is not using the computer for teaching purposes, she noted that the students are using the Web more and also noted with pleasure that a handicapped student was able to visit the National Gallery of Art on the Web.

In this study 5 of the 11 artists, or 45% are using the computer for teaching purposes. What is remarkable about these “facts and figures” regarding computer use is not how many art historians and artists do not use the computer as a teaching aid, but how many do. Even though past studies of art historians’ and artists’ information-seeking practices were not focused on teaching, they are notable for revealing virtually no interest by participants in use of the computer. This study reveals a definite change from attitudes of the past, although it bears the limitation of a small group clustered within and about one metropolitan area. Also, the percentages of artists and art historians using the computer as a teaching aid are approximately the same, but these are deceptive. The art historians who are using the computer in class or to direct their students to resources are using it to a much greater extent than the artists interviewed in this study.

INFORMATION-SEEKING BEHAVIOR RELATED TO THE PARTICIPANTS’ OWN WORK

Only one type of information-seeking behavior practiced by the participants in the study can be said to be “strictly” applicable to their own work, but even in the area of travel to visit original

works or specific exhibits or to search archives, the knowledge and experience garnered will benefit their students.

Twelve (75%) of the 16 art historians travel to Europe, some more frequently than others. Of the remaining 4, 2 have done past work in France or Germany, 1 travels to archives in the United States, and 1 said she did not have time except with students. Of the 12 who travel abroad, 2 also visit archives in the U.S., and 2 have traveled in the U.S. to view original paintings for the purpose of writing a book or a paper.

Of the 11 artists only one (9%) travels abroad, frequently, 2-3 times per year. Of the 10 remaining artists 4 have been in Europe in the past, 1 spending a summer in France to paint, 1 who grew up in Belgium and lived in London, and 1 who spent 2 summers in Venice as a student. Four travel to New York and/or Chicago and/or Washington to see exhibits., even as far as Los Angeles. Two of the artists mentioned travel to see exhibits in local museums and galleries, but probably there is a much greater number who do this and didn't mention it because they don't think of it as "traveling". At least 7 of the artists exhibit their work locally, and 5 exhibit nationally, some in nearby midwestern cities and some in New York or as far away as Texas. When the artists participate in exhibits they have the opportunity to view the work of other artists, garnering information about current trends in the art world, viewing the styles of other artists' work, and the opportunity to purchase exhibition catalogs.and/or to visit galleries in the area. They are visiting an exhibit the same as if they traveled there specifically for that purpose.

Obviously there is a marked discrepancy between the percentage of art historians traveling abroad and that of artists in this study. That seems understandable in light of the nature of the work the two groups are pursuing. The art historians in this study are concerned primarily with

works of the past including medieval manuscripts, Greek and Roman art, Renaissance art. Even contemporary art is sometimes defined as from the 1700's onward. Many American artists spent time in Europe, and some of their works are to be found there. In addition, many of the most extensive archival collections, photographic and otherwise, such as the Courtauld-Warburg Institute, the Bibliothec de Nationale and the German archives in Rome, are to be found in Europe. The artists are creating art today, and they need to go to where they can witness aspects of the current art scene. This is not to say that the artists have no affinity with artists of the past. Several mentioned artists' work that they admired as Durer and Sargent. They are after all American artists, so one would expect them to be interested primarily in American art today. The one artist who travels abroad stated that America no longer is the center of the contemporary art scene, but for those who are involved in exhibiting their works, there is just so much time. Financial considerations may also be important.

INFORMATION SOURCES APPLICABLE TO BOTH TEACHING AND THE PARTICIPANT'S OWN WORK

The participants in this study were asked nine specific questions within the general category of types and sources of information used that can be applied to both their own work and their teaching. These are listed in Appendix A and include questions pertaining to subjects and sources of reading material; journals to which they subscribe and/or read in the library; libraries they use; willingness to ask the librarian for help; use of exhibition catalogs; use of indexes; use of OPAC's (online public access catalogs) and OhioLink; whether they have their own computer; and communication with colleagues, either by e-mail or other means.

1. Reading Materials It was apparent immediately and continued to be from the first interview with an artist to the last with an art historian that the participants in this study read widely. Seven art historians mentioned history, and one architectural historian reads the history of the buildings he writes about. Five read religion, 3 philosophy, and 2

“culture”. As one art historian put it, she reads “all about the period in which the artist worked – literature, politics, social history, science, other artists.” In addition, according to individual interests, the art historians in the group read about gender and race, psychoanalytic theory, mythology, Latin, material about computers, humor, sports, and “escape literature”. A few read biographies. Seven of the art historians read newspapers – the NY Times either daily or Sunday, the Plain Dealer, the Washington Post, even foreign newspapers. Although 2 said they read the newspapers to keep up with the art world, 1 said he reads the NY Times every day to try to make medieval art relevant to today. As 1 art historian expressed it, she “reads a lot outside of her field, to keep up with the world and the humanities and how theoretical things are applied.”.

The artists participating in the study are so individual in their reading that it is difficult to choose any one category read by more than one of them, except for newspapers. Six artists read the NY Times, some only on Sundays, one once per month because of lack of time, 1 for science as well as art, and 1 on Thursdays for computers. The latter artist, who draws, also reads 3 newspapers per day – the Plain Dealer, the NY Times, and USA Today or the Wall Street Journal. One painter reads newspapers in general to keep up with world events. Two artists mentioned physics, both sculptors – one when she was younger and it was connected with her work, one ‘art in physics’ recently. One painter reads a great deal of science-related material and applies it to his work, particularly about perception and structure. Sources include Scientific American and the Science section in the Tuesday, NY Times. Two sculptors and 1 painter did mention reading philosophy, and 1 sculptor reads literary texts, mostly French. One painter reads mythology, some poetry, “lots of descriptive things with visual imagery”,

artists' biographies and biographies by other women. One artist who does drawing reads literature about the computer. One painter reads about the Southwest – Tony Hillerman – and Native American culture along with keeping up with current happenings in computer graphics. One painter reads much about cultural criticism, science fiction, biology, revisionists' history, societal history anthropology, the history of technology and medicine, and the driving forces in society. One artist who teaches drawing reads old textbooks from the 50's and 60's, old first aid books, psychology, child development, health care, critical theory and analysis, a French philosopher about post-modernism, the British about art, and enjoys fiction. Two of the artists, one a sculptor and one a painter characterized themselves simply as “reading widely”. The painter said he reads “whatever interests him”. As one painter said who reads history, about realist painting, theory and content, he wants to know what motivated artists at the time they painted. This gives perspective to his own work. He also said that, “reading is a way to help with teaching”. Only 2 artists mentioned reading as a means of keeping up with the art world.

This is an almost unbelievable array of reading material, particularly in view of all the responsibilities the study participants have. To say that the participants in this study “read widely” is an understatement. It is in line, however, with descriptions of humanists in general and art historians and artists in particular. For an artist anything can be a source of inspiration, and as Peter Murray remarked, “.....you have to know a little about an awful lot of things to be any good at art history.” (Murray 1985, 42).

2. Journals

Fourteen (88%) of the 16 art historians subscribe to one or more art journals. At least 7 of these subscribe to Art Bulletin, the journal of the College Art Association, and there may be more who did not specify. Three of the historians subscribe to specialized journals related to their specialties such as the Journal for the Society of Architectural Historians, the journal of the Center for Medieval Art in New York or the newsletter of the Historians of Netherlandish Art organization. One reads the latter in the library. Seven other art historians indicated they read art journals in the library by stating that they try to keep up with “current things” in the art world. Three subscribe to or read Art Newsletter, 1 reads Dialog, and 2 subscribe to the New Yorker, one for biographies and reviews. One art historian said he keeps up with journals but that online is more convenient. Only 2 stated that they do not keep up with current events in the art world except through Art Bulletin.

Of the 11 artists 9 (82%) subscribe to at least one art journal. One of the 2 others uses art journals in the library, partly to copy articles, and the other goes to New York once per month to keep up with the current art scene. Two other artists mentioned reading art journals in the library in addition to having their own subscriptions to some. Five subscribe to or read Art in America, 3 subscribe to New Art Examiner, devoted to the regional art of Chicago (1 used to and would like to do so again), and 2 subscribe to Dialog. Three of the artists subscribe to journals devoted to their specialties – Sculpture International Magazine or Newsletter, two ceramics journals and a magazine for nature artists (important for illustrations) - but 2 of these artists do not limit themselves to these journals. One painter said nonspecifically that she subscribes to “some” journals for the

art world today, and another painter, in addition to subscribing to Art Calendar for upcoming shows, Art in America and World Art, reads others in the library. One painter subscribes to Modern Painter from the British Arts Council (she used to live in England), National Geographic, and reads Sister Wendy's articles and reviews. One artist who teaches drawing subscribes to Art Calendar, New Art Examiner, Contemporary Impressions, Newsweek and the literary supplement of Harper's. The painter who reads much about science and incorporates it into his work subscribes to and reads scientific journals in addition to Scientific American. He has "a lot of his own art journals because the ones he wants are not available".

The humanist has long been identified with books and monographs as opposed to journals, as having no particular interest or concern with current events. These claims have been disputed in some studies, and there are differences within the humanities. Some studies of artists' and art historians' information sources have found that journals play a major role. One would expect artists to read art journals in order to discover information about exhibitions, shows and other living artists. The high percentage of art historians subscribing to and reading art journals may be surprising, but these art professionals are in constant contact with students, who are very much interested in current events in the world of art.

3. Exhibition Catalogs

The interviewer neglected to ask half the art historians if they have any use for exhibition catalogs and, if so, where they find them. This was a definite oversight but somewhat understandable in view of the tendency of the conversation to be concentrated on the search for archives and original works, the search for medieval manuscripts, or

Netherlandish art of the 15th century, in addition to concentrating on teaching resources. Of the 8 remaining art historians 1 said she is somewhat removed from the current art scene and does not look for exhibition catalogs. All of the remaining 7 look for catalogs in different places and obtain them by different means. One teaches contemporary art in a college with its own museum, and the museum exchanges catalogs with other museums. She also acquires catalogs from art journals and in New York. One architectural historian said publishers send him catalogs, and another architectural historian said certain schools collect catalogs for architectural exhibits, which can be ordered by the artist's name. One historian who teaches Greek and Roman archaeology said the librarian is helpful in obtaining catalogs (this school has an art library). One historian who is also an artist said she doesn't look for catalogs unless she is researching an artist. Then she calls the art museum to ask for a catalog or to find out who in the area has one. She finds the catalogs by artist's name. Sometimes she buys a catalog if she has seen an exhibit. One art historian who teaches contemporary and post-modern art goes to Europe to acquire exhibition catalogs, especially Germany. She has spent time in Germany in the past, says they have more innovative exhibitions than those in America and do have exhibitions of American art. One art historian who uses the computer a great deal said that he might find exhibits through searching for an artist on the Web and catalogs through OhioLink.

All of the 11 professors of studio art seek and acquire exhibition catalogs. Their means of doing so are as varied as those of the 7 art historians. Four said that along with other methods, they order catalogs after finding information about exhibitions in art journals or newspapers such as the NY Times, and 1 orders from Amazon.com. Five

artists said they pick up catalogs when they attend exhibits, and 2 said they sometimes go to New York to get the catalogs. Other sources ranged from Half Price Books to a Border's outlet store locally to the art institute and art museum, and 1 artist gets back issues of catalogs when he attends an exhibit. Only 1 artist was not asked about exhibition catalogs, but he does acquire them because he sometimes has items from them in his packet for the students.

One use for exhibition catalogs is to make slides since sometimes they have good images. None of the participants in this study mentioned that type of use for the catalogs. The artists, and the art historians who were asked, indicated they wanted the catalogs simply for information about artists.

4. Libraries

For the professors of art history and studio art interviewed in this study, the question was not, "Do you use the library?", but, "Which library (almost always libraries – plural -) do you use?" The geographic area in which the institutions chosen for the study are located contains a wealth of libraries. The main metropolitan public library in the downtown area is also a research library, and connected to it electronically is a network of small libraries in the suburbs and surrounding area. Many small libraries not connected to this network are part of the county library system, which includes a regional branch specializing in art resources, located in one of the suburbs. The art museum has a significant collection, and the art institute has a library. Another city, of moderate size and not far from one of the universities, has a fairly large public library

Thirteen (81%) of the 16 art historians said they use the library in their own institutions although seldom exclusively. Their "own" library almost always was

mentioned first with occasional comments such as “all the time” and ,”a good library”, and “very good – a portal to what I want”. The art museum library was mentioned next in frequency of use – by 7 (44%) art historians. The metropolitan public library was mentioned as a favorite library by 6, and 1 said he uses it quite frequently. One art historian uses one of the smaller public libraries frequently and the regional county library frequently. Four use the smaller public libraries, one for genealogy, and 2 use the public library in the moderate-sized city. Other academic institution libraries were used by 4 art historians, particularly one institution that has a sizeable collection. One art historian participating in the study said he looks up the books he wants on OhioLink and then goes to the library to get them. Another said he has little need for libraries other than the art library in his own institution because of OhioLink.

The studio art professors interviewed use the libraries in their own institutions much less frequently than the art historians., but it should be noted that several of these teach in institutions with only modest collections. Of the 4 artists teaching in the largest institution with a substantial art collection, however, only 1 mentioned use of the institution’s library, whereas 1 other artist teaching in a small college felt that that she can find most of what she wants in the college library along with the use of OhioLink. Five (45%) artists use the regional county library, 2 of these frequently. The metropolitan public library was mentioned by 6 (55%) artists as a library they use, and 2 of these use it frequently. One orders books online through the public library catalog. Two artists use the art institute library, 1 because she received her degree from there and is familiar with the library in addition to having some privileges. Three use the art museum library some. Some of the artists’ comments were interesting, such as “uses libraries a lot, mostly art

journals for painters”; a sculptor who uses the regional county library – “knows where things are for sculpture”; the artist who draws and uses the computer some for drawing – “always the library before trying the Web”; the sculptor who is “usually looking for topics”; and a professor of advanced drawing who uses the library especially for teaching.

Much has been made of the humanist’s penchant for browsing in the library. The author was derelict in this regard, in not asking every participant about browsing. Of the 7 art historians asked, all said they like to browse, 3 mostly in their own areas. One said browsing is a good research tool, and 2 said they like or love to browse, but there is not enough time. Of the 11 artists, 4 were asked about browsing, and all said they do browse, 2 “some”, one of these other books by the same author.

At this point it is appropriate to mention that many of the professors buy books as well as borrow them. Not every participant was asked this question, but of the 10 art historians who were, 9 said they do buy some books, varying from “not too many” to “most recently his own personal library with most of the information he needs there” because it is difficult for him to find books on his particular topics. One art historian spends about \$2,000 per year on books and journals, partly because what she wants is not readily available. One said he “buys a lot”, especially out-of-print books through Bibliophile. Of the 6 artists who were asked the question, all said “yes”. One painter said she buys some of her own, and 1 belongs to a book club. One painter mentioned specialty book stores in New York, with a couple devoted to art books, specialty journals and artists’ publications as well as a good book store at Ohio State University. One drawing professor browses Good Will stores since she collects old textbooks. One painter has her own collection and an ongoing collection of catalogs and articles, and 1

painter not only has a library on his favorite artist but buys books when he finds something he wants on whatever topic and then finds much of the information he seeks in his own library.

Not all of the professors were asked about their idea of an ideal library because the answer to the question several times in the beginning interviews was always “an art library”. There was some variation on this, however. One art historian said accessibility is more important than an art library. One painter recommended a combination art and architecture library. One professor who specializes in drawing expresses his ideal as a library with “a great reference librarian and a collection that spans historical as well as contemporary art”. The ideal is relative, however, since for those professors who are teaching in an institution without a departmental slide collection, this is their first wish. The most interesting comment on the ideal library came from a sculptor in one of the smallest colleges with a very modest library, also the greatest distance from the center of the city: “can’t complain”. Only once did she have to get information from out of town.

It is gratifying to realize how much artists and art historians, at least those participating in this study, use libraries, particularly the library of their own academic institution. There is no obvious explanation of why the artists use their institutional library less than the art historians. This might be a subject for further exploration. It would take another set of interviews to acquire a glimmer of all the reasons the participants have for visiting the library at various times. A few mentioned using the library to develop a syllabus for courses, and they place materials on reserve in the library for their students. Reading art journals is a reason for trips to the library, and the vast amount of reading both artists and art historians do would account for heavy library use.

5. Librarian

Thirteen of the 16 art historians were questioned as to their willingness to ask the librarian for help. Twelve of these said “yes” (75% of the total participating in the study). One art historian in a college with an art library said the librarian helps with discussion list locations and database searching and sends potential acquisitions to the professors for their opinions. One art historian teaching in a college said she asks for help with research or even asks the librarian to do research for her. One in the smallest university said the librarian orders books for her through OhioLink at her institution and at the art museum. One art historian teaching in a college said he has frequent contact with the librarian, who has become a friend, and he has been on the library committee. Another professor in the college with the art library said the librarian is very helpful, and the third from this college said she likes to look for information herself for her own work, but the librarian is helpful with teaching needs. One said he asks the librarian for help “some” but mostly to learn what he can do at home on the computer, and 2 professors in the smallest university said “not much”.

Four of the 11 artists were questioned about willingness to ask the librarian for help, and one additional professor said that part of his ideal library would be a great reference librarian. Of the 4 artists asked directly, all said “yes”. One said the librarians were a great help with a special project, particularly the map librarian. One painter said the former art librarian at the regional library is a friend, and that she curates some exhibits for them. Another painter said that she sometimes calls ahead to a library to ask for help with a particular question.

At least with this group of scholars working in academic institutions, there does not at present seem to be any danger of libraries being replaced by the Internet or librarians being out of a job. The willingness of these artists and art historians to ask the librarian for help is in contrast to the usual picture of the humanist and to the findings of some of the studies of artists' or art historians' information-seeking behavior. There is no obvious explanation for this finding, either. One can speculate that the busy life these scholars lead with teaching responsibilities, a desire to pursue their own work, and sometimes administrative duties prompts them to ask for help. It may be that their frequent contact with colleagues and students, and familiarity with the libraries they visit, make it easier for them to communicate than an artist or art historian working in isolation.

6. Indexes

The 16 art historians were all questioned about the use of indexes. Fourteen (88%) said they do use indexes, usually more than one. One art historian said “not much” although she uses a general periodical index at her institution. Nine (56%) use BHA – RILA (the Bibliography of the History of Art was formed in 1991 by joining RILA, Repertoire international de la litterature de l'art , and Repertoire d'art et d'archeologie). Nine (56%) use Art Index, and 7 use both of these indexes, with 2 art historians saying they use BHA, RILA “a lot” and Art Index some. All of the BHA users are using the hard copy except that one also has access to the CD-ROM, and one art historian can use BHA online at the art museum, free, because of a project he did for the museum. One of the art historians said he uses BHA mostly to search for periodical articles for his research and Art Index for special artists. Another said he uses BHA to look for books, periodical articles and exhibition catalogs and that he doesn't use Art

Index as much because it doesn't have many foreign journals. Two use World Cat, 1 "a lot", and the latter historian, who teaches 'art after 1945', relies heavily on Carl Uncover and Uncover Reveal. She acquires full-text articles through Carl Uncover and has them faxed to her by means of Uncover Reveal. The art historian who has traveled widely and used many photographic archives to attempt to track down the provenance of paintings attributed to one painter, uses the Getty Provenance Index. One historian uses the iconographic index at the art museum, and he also consults Lois Swan Jones' book on art resources (Jones, 1990). Two art historians, when questioned about indexes, replied first that they rely much on dictionaries – 1 Benizet's 6-volume dictionary in French (she also uses BHA some) and 1 Grove's 40-volume Dictionary of Art (he also uses Art Index).

As for studio artists, 8 were asked specifically if they use indexes. One wasn't asked specifically, but she searches for artists in art journals in the library. Three said they use Art Index, 1 of these for the purpose of finding articles she can print at home. Three artists said they do not use indexes very often. One of these said she usually knows what she wants from having discussed it with someone else. One artist who described himself as a non-computer person does not use indexes.

7. OPAC (Online Public Access Catalog), OhioLink

Since all of the libraries the participants in this study use, except one, have OPAC's, all of the art historians and artists participating in the study are familiar with them. A few comments are worth mentioning. As noted before 1 art historian uses the school OPAC at home and then goes to the library to get the books. One artist does the same, except that he uses the OPAC of the main metropolitan public library and reserves books. Another artist searches for books on particular topics through the OPAC.

The presence of OhioLink lends an added dimension to this study, providing an extra means for obtaining information in a few days, which might otherwise necessitate a trip to a distant library. Of the 14 art historians who were asked about using OhioLink, all said “yes” with the qualification that 1 does not use it personally, but the librarian orders books for her through OhioLink. Five art historians said they use it frequently, and 1 uses it often for teaching purposes but not for his own work. One who uses OhioLink frequently requests books for her own work as well as slides, and one who uses it “all the time” gets new catalogs from shows, for example, from the college with its own museum. Two art historians said they use OhioLink some, and 1 said he uses it, but he can't get books for his own work through it because his work is too specialized. Two art historians were not asked about the use of OhioLink, and it was not mentioned.

Eight of the 11 artists were asked about OhioLink, and 5 of these said they do use it. Three said they use it “a lot”, 1 going on to say that he uses it more than anything else in the library, chiefly for out-of-print books. One of the artists who uses OhioLink often said that for some artists there is only one book and that he gets most of his information through catalogs, some of which have good images sometimes. Three artists said they do not use OhioLink, 1 of these stating that she is able to get books from other libraries very easily through the regional county library.

OPAC's have been available in many libraries for some time, and all of the participants in this study seem able to use them easily in different libraries and, generally, to find what they want. All of the institutions in which these artists and art historians are working are members of OhioLink, and for each, especially the smaller ones, this increases the size of their collection tremendously. Almost all of the study participants

are familiar with and use OhioLink regularly, giving them access to a far greater number of books than they would have otherwise, and even exhibition catalogs. The participants, particularly the art historians, are using indexes also, especially BHA and Art Index. This is in sharp contrast to a few years ago when, according to reports in the literature, art professionals were not interested in indexes or in using the computer in general. BHA is available on CD-ROM, and if a library has the equipment, the CD-ROM should be a good investment where there are a sufficient number of faculty to use it.

8. Computer

The professors of art history and studio art taking part in this study were asked simply if they have their own computer at home, and from the answer to this question followed a discussion of how they use it, if they do. Fourteen (93%) of the 15 art historians asked the question said they do have a computer at home, and 1 said she is in the process of getting one, but she already has a laptop for word processing. The art historians, as with everything else, vary in their use of the computer, ranging from 1 whose computer is “not hooked up” but who does some word processing at school to 1 who has two computers at home. The latter historian uses CD-ROM’s in addition to the Internet. The art historian with his own Web site for teaching also uses his computer at home to search for books and request exhibition catalogs from another college through OhioLink and to search for artists on the Web, which can lead him to exhibits. He would like to see all full text. One art historian who teaches post-modern art does much research on Carl Uncover and has full-text articles faxed to her. Only 1 mentioned just word processing in connection with his own computer; that is, with no qualifying statement as to intent to do more.

All of the studio artists were asked about having their own computer and general use of the computer. Eight (73%) of the 11 said they either have their own computer or use the computer in various ways. One artist who does drawing takes a photograph of a drawing, scans it, inputs it into the computer and then manipulates it. He then prints the resulting images, yielding a large number of images from one idea. One artist who does printmaking and teaches drawing uses the computer in the process of making silk screen prints. She also searches for sites on the Internet discussing safety in printmaking, which requires the use of hazardous chemicals, She uses Amazon.com to order exhibition catalogs. One painter said he uses his computer to find gallery exhibitions through Gallery Guide on the Web, for e-mail, for word processing, and for storage. A sculptor said she uses hers for word processing, e-mail, and some for research. One painter said she uses the Internet “a lot” for information. One sculptor said she doesn’t have her own computer, but she uses the Internet for “contemporary work”. One painter said she is in the process of getting a computer and is thinking of putting her portfolio on it. One painter and craftsman who does not have his own computer and has little interest in them nevertheless takes advantage of what’s available by having his work advertised on the Web site of a gallery in Rochester that sells it. Only 1 painter said flatly that she is “computer illiterate”, but she isn’t at all when it comes to teaching.

The uses the art historians and artists participating in this study are making of the computer are in sharp contrast to what has been described in the past. The technology explosion seems to have caught up with them, and they are taking advantage of it in several ways, chiefly by using the Web for searching and by connecting to various sites that provide them with information. Some of the artists are using the computer in a

creative way, and some of the study participants are placing resources on the school Web site.

9. “Invisible College”

The definition of “invisible college” is somewhat fuzzy. Some have defined it as all the categories of persons comprising the “art world”. Some have defined it more simply as anyone with whom the artist or art historian communicates about art at least three times per year. The art historians and artists participating in this study were asked specifically if they communicated with colleagues, former students and mentors by e-mail, but this prompted a broader discussion of whether they communicate and with whom and by what means. Ten (63%) of the 16 art historians said they communicate with colleagues by e-mail, but which colleagues and where varied. One said he communicates with colleagues “a lot”, 1 with colleagues around the world, 1 with colleagues in Germany about German literature and with her academic advisor, 1 with colleagues and a number of former students. Five art historians said they communicate with colleagues locally, 1 locally and across the country, 1 mostly internally and with one of her former students, 1 with colleagues in another university locally, and 1 with people buying books similar to the ones he buys. He makes appointments to speak with them. One historian said it is “hard to talk about art on e-mail”, but she discusses students’ work extensively within the department, especially with the studio artists. Two of the art historians use the fax machine to communicate with colleagues, but one said she will use e-mail when she gets a computer. Two prefer telephone and hand-written letters for communication with colleagues. One art historian participates in online discussion lists sometimes, 1 is on a couple of list serves, and 1 reads online bulletin boards for personal

interests or travel photography, finds discussion lists uninformed and doesn't communicate with colleagues very much.

When asked about communication with colleagues, 8 (73%) of the 11 artists responded that they do communicate, 5 by telephone and/or personal letters. One telephones colleagues locally and around the country. One communicates with colleagues she has met, both by 'phone and letter, and they arrange to meet at shows. She also keeps in touch with a former mentor. One communicates with colleagues, former students and some mentors, mostly by 'phone. One has "a lot of pen pals, even in the Czech Republic" with whom she exchanges "real letters". One communicates with friends around the country, mostly by 'phone. One painter does not use e-mail and stressed the importance of direct discussion with colleagues at art shows. Some of his best visual art discussions are with musicians. One painter said she does not communicate with colleagues. The three remaining artists use e-mail extensively, 1 to communicate within the department, with friends from graduate school, sometimes one of his former professors involving a recommendation. One painter uses e-mail to confer with colleagues and former students, and 1 uses e-mail for personal correspondence and for work. He also confers with colleagues around the country and overseas, and friends keep him posted of interesting events. He keeps in touch with former professors. One painter does not communicate with colleagues, and 1 painter used to communicate with school friends, but not now.

Whether the communications described constitute a true invisible college is debatable. It is significant that so many of the artists and art historians do communicate with colleagues in various settings and occasionally with former mentors, former students

or graduate school friends. Undoubtedly some discussion of art or art-related subjects goes on, and most of these communications are being made frequently.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was three-fold. The first was to determine the information-seeking behavior of artists and art historians in academic institutions and to determine if those used for teaching purposes are different from those used for the artists' own work. A second purpose was to add to the sparse literature on the information-seeking behavior of artists and art historians. The third purpose was to discover information that might be useful to academic librarians.

Results of the study that may be compared or contrasted with past reports in the literature, and results related to teaching, which has not been a focus of any past reports, are noted first. The 27 artists and art historians participating in this study read "widely" in several disciplines besides art and art history. This behavior has been noted in several reports about humanists in general and art professionals in particular. They also read current art journals, however, which is in contrast to the classical picture of the humanist who is concerned with books and monographs versus the scientist who wants current information. This behavior has been noted above in several reports concerning artists (Downey 1993, Powell 1995, Pacey 1982, Nilsen 1986). Not only do the participants in this study read art journals in the library, but nearly all subscribe to one or more such journals (88% of the art historians and 82% of the artists). Seventy-five percent of the art historians travel abroad to visit original works of art or archives - what one would expect from scholars in the humanities. Only one artist travels abroad, but the others attend exhibits locally and elsewhere in this country to exhibit their works, which gives them the opportunity not only to view other living artists' work but to confer with colleagues. A

moderately high percentage of art historians and somewhat higher percentage of artists communicate with colleagues via e-mail or 'phone or personal letter, locally, nationally and some internationally. Whether this can be designated an "invisible college" is debatable, but undoubtedly art is being discussed in many of these communications. A striking finding in marked contrast to past reports in the literature about humanists and art professionals is the high percentage of art historians and artists actively using the computer, not just for word processing or even e-mail, but for searching the Web and research databases and indexes. Ninety-three percent of the art historians said they have a computer at home, and 73% of the artists said they either have one or are at least using the computer. Many of the study participants in both fields are using the computer for their own work and also for teaching purposes.

There has been an ongoing debate in the literature about the importance of images versus textual material for both artists and art historians. For the participants in this study both are of equal importance. They not only read a great deal and provide reading materials for their students other than textbooks, as well as encourage their students to read, but they all use slides in the classroom to provide the best quality images available for students to view works of art that they are unable to view in the original form.

As for differences between sources of information for teaching and for the artists' and art historians' own work, one of the primary ones is the extensive use of slides in the classroom. The professors in this study are always searching for good images to be made into slides and asking a slide curator to make the slides, or taking slide photographs themselves or even making slides themselves from reproductions in books or journals. This adds considerably to their need for image information. Some also now spend time looking for good images on the computer to recommend to the students, or other ways to use the computer to benefit their

students, which are not necessary for their own work. All of the professors in the study spend time compiling reading material for their students, much of which may already be familiar to them, and some read newspapers and journals to search for material that may make their subject matter more relevant to today. Some are compiling bibliographic instruction aids or recommending such courses to their students.

The results of this study indicate that the academic environment, that is, primarily, the presence of students, influences the information-seeking behavior of the artists and art historians working there. They not only are in frequent contact with students, who want the latest information about the art world, but they are in frequent contact with colleagues in a relatively confined space, allowing for the sharing of information. In the academic environment today, although the fine arts departments may be the last to be “hooked up” to the institutional network, art professionals eventually will have access to many of the latest computer resources, including indexes, research databases and in this fortunate state OhioLink. They also have access in many cases to a large collection of slides, should they require these for their own work as well as teaching, and they have access to an extensive collection of books and monographs, whether in their own institutions or through OhioLink.

The art department in some of the institutions involved in this study has a program of significant size, and even if the programs are smaller, the college or university is awarding a degree that should have more meaning than a piece of paper. The academic library has a significant role to play in these institutions. Most colleges and universities with an art or art history program or both do not have art libraries. Therefore the main library is responsible for the needed services. Although the artists and art historians in this study thought an ideal library would be an art library, it would seem more appropriate to have a good art department

within the main library, with a competent specialist librarian, if possible. The reason for this is that the art professionals read in so many areas that an art library could not begin to have adequate reading material. In fact, probably no library can, but it can do its best to have as broad a collection as the budget will allow. The objection to a strong art department in the main library is distance from the art buildings, but most academic institutions today are not going to be building new libraries, art or otherwise.

One of the reasons the artists and art historians would like to have an art library is to have a more extensive collection of art journals. The participants in this study concentrated on a few art journals and subscribed to them generally, but some did go to the library to browse journals. Therefore it behooves the library to have as many “good” art journals as it can afford. One of the artists interviewed in this study pointed out that some art journals that are not in the collection are not only well worth having but are inexpensive. The answer to some of the problem of a better collection of art books and journals is cooperation with the art faculty in choosing those books and journals. That always raises the librarian’s fear that individual faculty members will demand esoteric journals and books, but surely some compromise is possible. With the presence of OhioLink cooperation can take place between libraries to ensure that most of the books requested by the art faculty can be obtained at one institution or another. For those libraries not so fortunate, attempts can be made to form library consortia to broaden the collections available to academic library patrons.

Browsing has been mentioned in some reports in the literature as very important to humanists, art professionals included, and in others it hasn’t been mentioned at all. In Stone’s comprehensive review of the information needs and uses of humanities scholars she noted that the importance of browsing has not been well documented (Stone 1982). Nevertheless, in some

reports artists in particular have made a strong case for browsing, even finding things purely by accident. It is difficult to imagine the busy people interviewed for this study having time to browse let alone standing in front of a bookshelf at random and just pulling out a book. Perhaps the artists who are involved in browsing do not have teaching responsibilities. In any case, as has been mentioned in some reports, the Library of Congress classification is not conducive to browsing in a certain subject area because all the books about that subject will not be in the same area. The only remedy for this is a good reference librarian who can direct the artist or art historian to other areas of the library where he might find more on the subject if he would like to browse.

In this study many of the professors, particularly art historians, said that their students need help with searching. This is an area where the librarian can be most helpful if a suitable method of bibliographic instruction is chosen. There is always debate in the library literature about the advantages and disadvantages of such instruction, but more librarians today seem to be recognizing a need for it because of the wealth of electronic materials and the students who are "surfing" the Web on their own. The willingness of the participants in this study to have some instruction for their students suggests that they might also be willing to allow the librarian time for such a course in class or at least to cooperate with her or him as to when the instruction is most needed. Because some of the faculty are just developing an interest in the computer or acquiring one, there may be some interest in a course of instruction for arts faculty.

With regard to indexes and databases, the academic librarian could be very helpful in this area. Since a number of the art historians use BHA, if a library has the equipment to use CD-ROM's, the purchase of BHA on a CD-ROM would speed up searching for the art historians. Although BHA is online, such an expenditure probably would be prohibitive.

Databases of images are still sorely needed, but this presents a thorny problem. Art historians and particularly artists can want images of “anything”, so much of the answer to this problem lies with the reference librarian who knows where certain types of books are that might be likely to contain such a subject and image. Databases of certain periods of art, or certain groups of artists’ work, could be made. This may be more the purview of the art slide curator, but an interested and/or specialist librarian could contribute much to the effort.

It is hoped that this study contributes to the knowledge of the information-seeking behavior of artists and art historians, particularly in the capacity of professors, and that some of the information gleaned will be useful to librarians.

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

I. Information Sought and Resources Used for Teaching

A. What visual sources of information do you use most often?

1. Slides?
2. Videos?
3. Reproductions from books? (Photocopies)
4. Other?

Where and how do you obtain the above sources?

B. Reading Material for Students

1. Do you use textbooks?
2. Do you use journal articles? On reserve in the library?
3. Other?
4. Do you encourage your students to read?

C. Research Papers, Projects

1. Do you require research papers?
2. What types of assignments or projects do you give the students?
3. Do your students need help with searching?

D. Do you take your students on trips to museums, galleries, exhibits – locally, other cities, Europe?

E. Computer Resources

1. Do you use the computer for teaching?
2. Do you recommend 'virtual museums' or other image collections on the Web to your students?
3. Other ways of using the computer for teaching purposes?

II. Information Sought and Resources Used for Own Work

A. Do you travel to view original works of art?

B. Do you travel to use archives?

C. (For the artist) What is the source, or what are the sources, of inspiration for your work?

1. Nature
2. Reading
3. Other artists' works?
4. Other?

D. What kind of work do you do?

F. (For the artist) Do you exhibit your work? Locally? Nationally?

III. General Topics and Sources of Information Applicable to the Participants' Own Work and to Their Teaching

- A. What do you read (subject matter)?
- B. To what journals do you subscribe or read in the library?
- C. What libraries do you use, and which most frequently? Own institution's library, art museum, public libraries, county libraries?
- D. Are you willing to ask the librarian for help?
- E. Do you have use for exhibition catalogs, and how do you acquire them?
- F. What indexes, if any, do you use in the library or otherwise?
- G. Do you use OPAC's and OhioLink?
- H. Do you have your own computer?
- I. Do you communicate with colleagues and/or former students or mentors by e-mail?
Other means?

APPENDIX B
COVER LETTER

Re; The Information-seeking Behavior of Professors of Art History,
And the Painting and Sculpture Subdivisions of the Visual Arts

November 18, 1998

Dear Professor _____:

I am a graduate student in the School of Library and Information Science at Kent State University. As part of the requirements for my master's degree I am conducting a study about the information needs of professors of fine arts or art history in small liberal arts colleges and mid-size universities. I would like to interview you for forty-five minutes to an hour at your convenience to gain some knowledge about your information needs and the sources you prefer both for yourself and for your students. Your input along with that of other professors would be very useful to academic librarians in colleges and universities offering degrees in the fields covered by this study.

Confidentiality and anonymity are guaranteed; only the investigator has access to the survey data. Neither you nor your academic institution will be identified in the study. There is no penalty of any kind if you should choose not to participate in this study or if you would withdraw from participation at any time. While your cooperation is essential to the success of this study, it is, of course, voluntary. A copy of the results of the study will be available upon request.

I will call you in the near future for an interview appointment at a time that is suitable for you. If you have any questions, please contact me at (440) 605-0620, or my research advisor, Dr. Richard Rubin at (330) 672-2782. If you have any further questions regarding research at Kent State University you may contact Dr. M. Thomas Jones, Vice Provost and Dean, Research and Graduate Studies, at (330) 672-2851.

Thank you very much for your cooperation; it is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Jacquelyn S. Challener
Graduate Student

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