



ADVISOR REVIEWS—STANDARD REVIEW

Oxford Art Online

Date of Review: August 15, 2009

Composite Score:

★★★ 3/4

Reviewed by: Colleen Lougen

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## Pricing Options

Oxford Art Online offers concurrent level pricing for academic institutions and small public libraries. Also available is unlimited access pricing for academic institutions based on FTE and for public libraries based on population served. More specific pricing and licensing terms are determined on an individual basis; pricing inquiries should be directed to <oxfordonline@oup.com>.

## Product Description

Oxford University Press, a trusted publisher, launched the Oxford Reference Online gateway in 2008. Oxford Art Online is a platform through which one can search Oxford Art reference products, one of which is the Grove Art Online (formerly the Grove Dictionary of Art). Oxford Art Online contains the full text of *The Grove Dictionary of Art*, *The Oxford Companion to Western Art*, ed. by H. Bristocke; *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Art Terms*, ed. by M. Clarke; and *The Encyclopedia of Aesthetics*, ed. by M. Kelly. In sum, the database contains over 23,000 subject entries, 21,000 biographies, 40,000 image links, 5,000 images, and 500,000 bibliographic entries. Access to these authoritative reference materials in a single online interface makes Oxford Art Online a gateway for art research.

## Critical Evaluation

### BASIC FEATURES

Oxford Art Online includes many basic features that users will find helpful:

- An attractive, easy-to-use interface with numerous search and browse access points throughout the site.
- Specification on the main page of products included in one's institutional subscription.
- Distinctly labeled e-mail, print, and cite functions for each reference article and image.
- The option to export a citation to bibliographic management systems such as EndNote, ProCite, Reference Manager, and RefWorks.
- Clearly displayed and hyperlinked navigation to related articles, images, and content across all reference products.
- Access to educational materials such as timelines of world art, lesson plans, and thematic guides.
- A comprehensive Help section.

### SEARCH FEATURES

- Users have the option to execute a basic search limiting by source, limiting to images (only), or performing a cross-search of all sources and materials.
- Users have a number of sophisticated search tools in the advanced search, such as the use of Boolean operators and wildcards.
- Users have a number of advanced search options, including the ability to further refine their search by subject categories within Grove Art Online: art and art forms; geography; people; styles and cultures; and time periods.
- Users have the choice of further refining or limiting their search results by source, subject categories, or material type (biography, subject entry, or image) or simply starting a new search.
- Users can browse descriptions about the products included in their institutional subscription, as well as perform searches in these particular sources.

### STRENGTHS

The major strength of Oxford Art Online is the breadth of authoritative content. Combining the Grove Art Online with these distinct encyclopedias provides the user with a complementary collection covering individuals, images, key concepts, periods, movements, critical theories, and philosophies.

There is a substantial amount of scholarship covered by the Oxford Art Online and the interface supports the discovery and utilization of it. For example, a search for "Futurism" returns 265 results, all of which are either subject entries or biographies from the encyclopedias included. In the results list, each entry is labeled by type (subject entry, biography, image, etc.) and clearly specifies the source, for example *The Oxford Companion to Western Art*. The first result is a subject entry for "Futurism" in Grove Art Online. The lengthy article is broken down into hyperlinked headings that are displayed at the beginning of the article under Article Contents. In addition, tabs at the top of the article display the images embedded in the article, as well as the Related Content, or more articles on Futurism in the other encyclopedias, or Related Articles within Grove Art Online. Entries also include cross-references and within the entry text there are hyperlinks to images and external articles. All of the entries are of the highest quality and are written by scholars in the field.

Oxford Art Online is not a source for new and emerging artists because of the obvious discontinuity between popular recognition and academic acknowledgement. However, the Grove Art Online is updated frequently and may eventually include these artists. For example, a search for the contemporary group the "Guerilla Girls" yielded



## Oxford Art Online Review Scores Composite: ★★ ★ 3/4

*The maximum number of stars in each category is 5.*

### Content: ★★★★★

The Oxford Art Online is a collection of scholarly and critical encyclopedias that complement each other and provide the user with a background to critical art theory and philosophy. It is unmatched elsewhere.

### Searchability: ★★★★★

The Oxford Art Online interface is easy-to-use and intuitive.

### Pricing Options: ★★★

Pricing is on the expensive side, but Oxford University Press does offer concurrent and unlimited access pricing options.

### Contract Options: ★★★★★

The Oxford Art Online contract options are reasonable.

a subject entry dated October 20, 2006, from Grove Art. The other encyclopedias available in Oxford Art Online are not updated.

Another way to find information within Oxford Art Online is to use the browse options at the top of the page: All Content, Biographies, Subject entries, Images, and Tools and Resources. For example, one can browse Biographies from Grove Art and limit the search to Africa and Women Artists, Architects, and Craftsmen. Other available browsing subject categories are: Art and Art Forms; Geography; People; Styles and Cultures; and Time Periods. The other encyclopedias and dictionary do not have this search and browse capability.

The images available in Oxford Art Online are embedded in the articles and are not comprehensive collections of an artist's works. However, Oxford Art Online provides external links to images at museums and in Art Resource and the ArtStor database (the administrator can add their ArtStor subscription link in the administrative module).

Oxford Art Online offers direct-linking so users can link to articles or images from their course-management systems. An administrative module is also available with COUNTER usage statistics, OpenURL linking, MARC records, and other account customizations available.

### WEAKNESSES

Each article is written by a scholar. When one clicks on the contributor's name, information about how to cite the article in MLA, Chicago, and Export a Citation appears. The contributor's name should

be hyperlinked to a page with their credentials and a list of all of the articles they have written that appear in the Oxford Art Online should be cataloged.

Oxford Art's search engine is not forgiving and does not automatically correct misspellings or suggest terms if one gets low or zero results. For example, a search for "Jackson Pollack" garnered 1 result, whereas the correct spelling had 158 results.

### CONCLUSION

Oxford Art Online is highly recommended for academic and large public libraries. It is the ultimate, online gateway to critical reflection on art and artists.

### Contract Provisions and Authentication

The contract provisions for Oxford Art Online database seem to be standard and equitable. Access to the Oxford Art Online database is available via IP address authentication via proxy server.

### Author's Selected References

Boyd-Byrnes, Mary Kate. "Grove Art Online/The Dictionary of Art Revisited." *The Charleston Advisor* vol. 7, no. 3 (Jan. 2006): 25–27.

Nilsen, M. "Oxford Art Online." *Choice: Current Reviews for Academic Libraries* vol. 46, no. 1 (Sept. 2008): 58–60.

Roncevic, M. "The Emperor's New Clothes." *Library Journal* vol. 133, no. 12 (July 2008): 106–106.

### About the Author

**Colleen Lougen** is Electronic Resources Librarian at the State University of New York at New Paltz. She is the liaison to the School of Business and provides research assistance and instruction. Colleen graduated from the University at Buffalo with a B.A. in 1998 and earned her M.L.S. from the University at Albany in 2000. She also holds a M.B.A from Mount Saint Mary College. ■

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