

The Parkville Frame Gallery

Newsletter

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Subject: The International Foundation for Art Research (IFAR)

What is IFAR?

The International Foundation for Art Research (IFAR) is a 501(c) (3) not-for-profit educational and research organization dedicated to integrity in the visual arts. IFAR offers impartial and authoritative information on authenticity, ownership, theft, and other artistic, legal, and ethical issues concerning art objects. IFAR serves as a bridge between the public, and the scholarly and commercial art communities.

<https://www.ifar.org/about.php>

Background

IFAR was established in 1969 to fill a need for an impartial and scholarly body to educate the public about problems and issues in the art world and to research the attribution and authenticity of works of art. In the 1970's, IFAR's purview expanded to include art theft and looting, and art and cultural property law and ethics. IFAR serves a broad audience and operates at the intersection where the interests of art law, art collectors, museums, galleries, scholars, and the public meet. Among other goals, it works to prevent the circulation of forged, misattributed, or misappropriated art. IFAR has earned a reputation for objectivity, scholarship, and independence, and its assistance is sought world-wide by law enforcement and government agencies, collectors, educational institutions, researchers, journalists, and the vast public interested in the visual arts, who often have nowhere else to turn. IFAR is headquartered in New York, and most of its public programs are also in New York.

IFAR's Collectors' Corner

There is a new and expanding resource on the IFAR website. It provides practical information for collectors, both experienced collectors as well as those getting started on researching, authenticating, documenting, insuring and caring for their artworks. Peace of mind is a valuable commodity. Purchasing, maintaining and securing artworks can be daunting. To help bring assurance, IFAR's Collectors' Corner contains useful tips and information gleaned from their extensive experience with topics from provenance research and stolen art registration, to authentication, insurance and security.

[More Here](#)

Purchasing Art: Where to Begin?

Forging relationships with galleries, art professionals, and other collectors is key both to becoming educated about works of art and knowledgeable about the environment of buying and selling art. Join collectors' groups at museums to experience how museums themselves select works for purchase. Introduce yourself to curators and get to know more about the kind of art you are interested in. Discover which galleries and dealers you can safely trust, but at the same time keep your own independence of mind by educating yourself through research at art-related libraries and on the Web and, most importantly, through *looking* at art in your local museums, galleries, and art shows. Some collectors advise beginning with smaller works, such as drawings or prints, by artists you like so as to understand their work process. Others advise focusing on a particular format or genre (such as landscapes or still-lives) and then broadening out. Investing your time is as important as investing your money. You can obtain help from dealers' organizations, such as the [Art Dealers Association of America](#), the [Fine Art Dealers Association](#), and the [Private Art Dealers Association](#). Major auction houses such as [Christie's](#) and [Sotheby's](#) also offer advice.

Provenance Research

Provenance is the detailed history of ownership of an artwork (See [2022 Newsletter #22-4](#)). Not all works will have a fully discoverable provenance; but you may be able to supplement the information provided by the vendor and, in certain cases, fill noticeable gaps. A good starting point for conducting provenance research, particularly for Old Master paintings, is the [Getty Provenance Index](#), a computerized set of databases containing nearly 1,000,000 records on Western European works from the late 16th century to the early 20th century.

Catalogues Raisonnés

Catalogues raisonnés are scholarly compilations of an artist's body of work (See [2023 Newsletter Supplement 23-2](#)). They are also very useful in conducting provenance research. The catalogue should contain provenance information on all known authentic works by a given artist. You can consult IFAR's [Catalogue Raisonné Database](#) for published and forthcoming catalogues raisonnés to discover whether a catalogue on a particular artist is available. For works that do not appear in an artist's catalogue raisonné, there are many other ways of researching provenance. See IFAR's [Provenance Guide](#) for a more detailed guide to this process, particularly concerning objects with gaps in ownership during the years 1933-1945, and antiquities. IFAR also offers a Provenance Research Service for a modest fee.

Security

Your valuable artworks should be protected from theft, as well as from potential damage from handling, displaying, storing, and shipping. The more valuable a collection, the more sophisticated its protection should be. Security experts recommend a balanced combination of physical, electronic, and procedural security systems.

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