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## **Beyond the West: Barriers to Globalizing Art History**

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### INTRODUCTION

If your campus is anything like ours, we imagine you've participated in lots of conversations about how to globalize higher education. Around the world, study abroad programs have been designed, branch campuses established, and new universities created to prepare students to live and work in a global world. Yet a look at what gets taught at many US universities reveals that the curriculum remains quite Eurocentric. What explains this disjuncture between ideals and practice? If so many agree that our students need to know more about the world beyond their own doors, what gets in our way?

We take up these questions through the lens of art history—a discipline where discussions about the globalization of the art world and about globalizing art history have been underway for some time. When we analyze the most prominent texts used in introductory art history survey courses, however, we find that Western cultural production still predominates. It seems that scholars outside of Europe and the US feel the need to teach about Western cultural production while scholars from the West do not reciprocate by including Non-Western materials in their classrooms in equal measure. What explains the enduring disconnect between aspiration and reality, despite what appears to be a widespread disciplinary commitment to do things differently? What economic, political, and institutional barriers prevent greater change?

Our paper is organized as follows. We begin by briefly reviewing the debates in the field about globalizing art history and art history pedagogy. Next, we present results from our analyses of the modern and contemporary art sections of the three most widely used introductory art history texts which reveal the limited changes in content that have been made to date. We then present findings from our interviews with editors and authors that allow us to tease out the epistemological, economic, and pedagogical factors that shape the pace of change. Our study, however, stops short of reception. A necessary next step would be to study how instructors actually use these texts in the classroom, and the online interactive materials that go along with them, to see if what actually gets taught is more globally oriented than these teaching materials might suggest.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

In 2007, James Elkins worried that no amount of scholarship on how to change the canon would do the trick if what he called “the story of art” was not retold. If we do not rewrite the standard narrative that the history of art stretches from Egypt, Greece, Rome, the Renaissance, and then modernism in Europe and the US, he warned, nothing will change. Simply shifting our attention to more local canons, and away from the sweeping “story of art” would not go far enough to produce an art history that was “less beholden to what used to be called ‘dead white males’” (Elkins 2007, 55-56).

Elkins’ comments reflected the fact that while contemporary art grows ever more global, with a more diverse group of artists creating a broader array of works, this is not automatically reflected in the way that art is represented in museums or in the academy. A recent study of diversity at 18 major museums in the US finds that 85% of artists in collections are white, 87% are men, and 89% are from either Europe or North America (Topaz et al. 2019). Just as curatorial decisions make museums spaces of cultural production, “our pedagogical choices make classrooms political spaces of cultural production” (Chandra and Cempellin 2016, 1). In response, many art history departments have taken up the charge of revising the introductory survey. How to do this is particularly fraught at this moment because scholars of the humanities in general, and art history in particular, feel their disciplines under siege.<sup>1</sup>

But concerns over the introductory survey have a long history. For over a quarter of a century ago, art historians critiqued the ways in which the discipline excludes women, minorities, and Non-Western artists, along with new forms of thought, such as feminism, multiculturalism, and postcolonial theory. Critics derided art history pedagogy for its reductive emphasis on historical chronology, preference for coherence rather than complexity, lack of interdisciplinarity, and reluctance to reject memorization in favor of critical thinking.

And there is no lack of ideas about how to move forward. Sven Spieker (2017) argues that the art historical method is inherently Western. It mistakenly assumes that all groups have histories and that almost everything under the sun can be subsumed under that label. Atreyee Gupta writes that “the geo-politics of knowledge goes hand in hand with the geo-politics of knowing” (Gupta 2017, 23). We must shift our attention, she says, from what is enunciated to the place of enunciation. Patrick Flores believes this is not just a matter of including or excluding but of acknowledging the limits of current practice and broadening what we understand as the global and the art historical. “It is a deconstructive and a foundational maneuver,” he writes, “to initiate post-colonial critique and to transcend the critique so that a different theoretical cosmos comes into being.” By recognizing how what have been considered Western and Non-Western

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<sup>1</sup>Disciplinary struggles over the art history survey, however, predate the current “crisis of the humanities,” as evidenced by a 1995 issue of *Art Journal* titled “Rethinking the Art History Survey” (301Project 1995, Alpers 1995, Collins 1995, Condon 1995, Cothren 1995, Dietrich and Smith-Hurd 1995, Graham 1995, Hales 1995, Mathews 1995, Schwarzer 1995, Silk 1995, Sowell 1995).

categories are mutually constituted, the Non-Western will be allowed to “feel entitled to its own promise of emancipation, in its capacity to renew itself” (Flores 2017, 33). Radha J. Dalal’s (2016) way forward would be to stress shared visual cultures instead of discrete art histories.

Central to these visions is including more voices—the only way to fundamentally change the canon (Elkins 2016). Iskin calls this a pluriversal canon; she is not, she says, calling for a post-canon (2017, 28-29). We still need to know why certain works have lasting value based on which cultural frameworks. Nor is she urging us to create more canons and compare them to one another. Instead, she also calls for art histories based on relations of exchange and circulation within and across continents. The result would be a flexible, multiple, dynamic metric, not meant to be applied to all cultures, and that acknowledges the economic, political, and cultural interests upon which it is based.

Despite such suggestions for addressing Westernist bias in art history, many concerns remain. While the field now includes a broader range of content, many still believe there is much work to be done. Because Western/Non-Western binaries persist, the Non-West is still judged in relation to the West using Western-centric categories (Mukherji 2014). Organizational schemes based on Western assumptions about time and progress still prevail (Murayama 2016). The uneven presence of art history as a discipline across regions, as well as the low visibility of work written in languages other than English, mean that entire groups continue to be left out (Kim 2016).

Alongside the discipline’s soul searching are practical pedagogical recommendations for moving forward. Kristen L. Chiem (2016) suggests using introductory courses to get students to think about what a satisfactory art historical inquiry would look like rather than teaching them about a specific topic or region. For students to be able to do global art history, she believes, they need a strong foundation in formal analysis, the process of art-making, and the role of art in society. Abigail Lapin Dardashti’s (2016) pedagogy tries to explode the false binary between West and Non-West by focusing on circulation and multidirectional exchanges.

Empirical analyses support the view that not enough has changed. In their study of 91 institutions of higher education in the United States, Chiem and Colburn found that the discipline “has yet to grapple with the pedagogical implications of building a world art history from the ground up” (Chiem and Colburn 2015, 177). They analyzed the extent to which local histories of art get introduced and integrated into the art history curriculum. For the study of world art to move forward, a global foundation must be taught from the outset and this is still sorely lacking at most institutions. Their analysis of department mission statements, for example, revealed that most schools simply add Non-Western content without addressing the ideological underpinnings of curricular choices. They continue to use the term “Non-Western” to describe this innovation which just perpetuates old binaries and exclusions.

As we describe below, our analysis of the modern and contemporary sections of the three most important art history introductory textbooks yields similar findings. Despite widespread calls for

change from many corners of the discipline, what gets in the way? What are the economic, cultural, and institutional barriers that impede greater progress?

## EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF TEXTBOOKS

Our methods for investigating empirically the changing pedagogical canon of modern and contemporary art include qualitative and quantitative content analysis and selective interviews with editors and publishers of art history texts. We focused on three of the leading introductory survey textbooks used in university and advanced placement high school courses throughout the US: Janson's *History of Art: The Western Tradition*, Gardner's *Art Through the Ages*, and Stokstad's *Art History*. Although no publisher would share market data with us, almost all of the professors and publishers we consulted agreed that these were the most influential texts in the discipline. Our analyses tracked the changes in the texts over time with respect to what art is included, how the editors described their selection process, and how they position and interpret the materials presented. We recognize that in addition to introductory survey courses, art departments also offer courses about particular regions—African art, Asian art, Latin American art, and so on—and would require art history majors to take several different surveys. Nonetheless, the majority of American students taking art history courses are not likely to become majors. The materials included in these introductory texts, therefore, may well be the only exposure non-majors have to works of art and how to interpret them—a powerful influence indeed.

The texts we examined are increasingly accompanied by online supplements that offer students a range of additional learning experiences, including exposure to a wider range of artists. Instructors also have access to a growing number of Open Education Resources (OERs), including open access textbooks and journals, digital commons, electronic archives, and online museum resources. Although permissions and rights issues hinder the development of OERs for art history in unique ways, recent research suggests that the availability of these materials is opening up the canon (Hohensee 2018, Langlois 2017, Boffa 2018). Therefore, our analysis of the print editions should be understood as an analysis of the pedagogical canon in its most conservative and narrow sense. We believe, though, that a certain legitimacy and gravitas comes from being included within the covers of the principal hard copy text. What's more, if our experience in the classroom is any indication, many students, despite their best intentions, never get to the wealth of supplementary materials available online.

Each of the texts we studied has a unique history and was written with particular goals and readers in mind. It is not our goal, however, to evaluate each individually. Rather, we ask what kind of pedagogical canon they create when taken together. To determine if and how this canon has changed over time, we sampled an early, intermediary, and recent edition of each textbook. Our three sample groups consisted of Janson's first edition (1962), Gardner's sixth edition

(1975), and Stokstad's first edition (1995) for the early period; Janson's sixth edition (2001), Gardner's eleventh edition (2001), and Stokstad's revised second edition (2005) for the intermediary period; and Janson's reissued eighth edition (2016), Gardner's fifteenth edition (2016), and Stokstad's fifth edition (2014) for the recent period (see Table 1).<sup>2</sup>

Finally, we conducted semi-structured interviews with a purposive sample of authors, editors, publishers, reviewers, and instructors to ask their views on how and why art history survey courses are changing. We interviewed twenty-eight people in person or by phone, transcribed our conversations, and then analyzed them using qualitative methods.

### *What Is Art?*

To understand how the materials in the texts we examined are positioned and explained, we analyzed the text of the prefaces and introductions from each edition, as well as the introductions to the modern and contemporary chapters. These were qualitative, thematic analyses to identify differences in how art, history, and the world at large are presented and described.

Variations in the text, tone, and presentation of editorial content in art history textbooks reflect changes in how art, education, and globalization are understood. For example, to varying degrees, each text stresses increasingly that art is produced in, and therefore reflects, its social context. It must be understood in terms of the broader context in which it is made. Each text, for example, offers a broad brushstroke history of the modern and contemporary era and highlights the general ideological dynamics of social change. Because history is treated so superficially, there is a great deal of consensus around the important stops along the way: industrialization, urbanization, capitalism, fascism, communism, postmodernism, and colonialism and independence figure prominently in all three texts. As we move from early to recent editions, textbook prefaces and introductions affirm authors' consensus that the world is rapidly globalizing, and therefore artists from a more diverse group of countries must be included in the art history canon. That means, they explain, including women and artists of color as well as showcasing cultural production from diverse parts of the world.

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<sup>2</sup>Although we were able to achieve chronologically consistent samples of the three texts for the intermediary and recent periods, representing the decades of the 2000s and 2010s, we were unable to construct an early period sample that drew on all three texts in the same decade. Our initial intention was to use the first edition of each book, which would cover a 33-year range. However, due to the spotty availability of outdated textbooks, we were unable to obtain a first edition copy of Gardner. Instead, we began with Gardner's sixth edition, which was published midway between the first editions of the Janson and Stokstad texts and, significantly, was the first edition of the Gardner survey text that claimed "world" representation. Although the grouping for the early period covers a wide time range, our objective is not to make comparisons between the titles, but rather to establish a "baseline" against which to measure change in the subsequent periods.

The texts also recognize the changing nature of knowledge production along with the epistemological assumptions that underlie it. There are no longer (if there ever were) absolute truths or facts. Therefore, the way that art is interpreted has become more contingent and subject to interpretation. Even in the early edition of Janson, he writes that “There are no plain facts, only degrees of plausibility... Man today having cast off the framework of traditional authority, which confined and sustained him before, can act with a latitude both exhilarating and frightening. In a world where all values can be questioned man searches constantly for his own identity, for the meaning of human existence, individual and collective” (1962, 453). In fact, he goes on, the modern period is all about adjusting to the chaos and sense of being unmoored that arises when there are no longer many simple, universal truths that bring people together. For art history, that means that there are fewer clearly identifiable styles or periods. What continuity there is comes from the ebbs and flows between movements and counter-movements, “spreading like waves, these ‘isms’ defy national, ethnic, and chronological boundaries.” As a result, art history has to be organized around movements not countries. “Modern art is as international as modern science” (Janson 1962, 453).

In this context of heightened relativity and recognition of different kinds of knowledge production, recent editions reframe how art is defined to include a wider range of cultural producers and genres. Painting and sculpture, long considered the epitome of “art” by according to European practice and definitions, are no longer enough; textiles, furniture, jewelry, photography, and monuments must also be included. If women and Non-Western artists are to be showcased, then so must the varied kinds of cultural materials they produce. Already by our middle period, Stokstad focuses more on how objects speak and on what they have to say. This edition, she writes, includes things that were once considered utilitarian and things like performance art, installation art, and digitally produced art. The world is changing, she writes:

With increasing migration and the expansion of global communications and economies...[t]he art of our own times may be the most difficult to classify and analyze, but it has increasingly focused on global issues, raising questions about national identities; ethnic and racial identities; colonial and postcolonial identities; human rights; global economic, political, and natural environments; the widening divide between the rich and poor, more powerful and less powerful, nations of the world; and technological change in every aspect of our lives.  
(Stokstad 2005, xii)

This means that instructors not only need to impart new information. They must also learn to teach about different kinds of cultural production.

This stance is also reflected in Gardner’s changing self-presentation. By the 15<sup>th</sup> edition, we read that multicultural artists who had been marginalized have become part of the mainstream. The world is a global village and arts play a political role: “Some of the most eloquent voices raised in protest about the major political and social issues of the day have been those of painters and

sculptors, who can harness the power of art to amplify the power of the written and spoken word” (Kleiner 2016, 995).

### *The Artists*

Given these proclamations that art history, as well as contemporary art, must be understood in a rapidly globalizing context, how globally representative are the artists featured in art history texts?

We coded all of the artists with work dated from 1900 to the present in the nine textbooks we sampled.<sup>3</sup> To measure degrees of Eurocentrism and global inclusion, we placed artists in one of two groups: one comprising European, American, and Canadian artists and the other comprising all other artists. For simplicity, we label these groups Western and Non-Western, recognizing that these names are imperfect, conceptual constructs that do not easily map onto geographical boundaries. The Western/Non-Western distinction indicates proximity to centers of power, as in a world systems approach. We use place of birth to formally code nationality; however, many artists live transnational lives, studying and working outside the places they were born, so we also noted their ties to other countries.<sup>4</sup> Finally, we coded racial/ethnic identity for US artists.

The texts we sampled included a total of 495 modern and contemporary artists. The vast majority of artists came from the West. Early editions are almost exclusively Western, with nearly all modern artists coming from Europe and North America. Representation of Non-Western artists increases slightly in the middle and recent periods. In the middle period art history texts, Non-Western artists rose to almost ten percent of the modern and contemporary artists featured. In recent period texts, Non-Western artists made up 23% of the modern and contemporary artists included. (See Table 2)

The early edition texts in our sample featured a total of 213 artists, 97% came from the West. Eighty-nine (45%) came from the US while twenty-six artists hailed from France and Germany respectively (12%). The Non-Western modern artists included during this period are Mexican, Japanese, Korean, and Cuban. There is relatively little agreement among authors/editors about

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<sup>3</sup> We include artists featured in chapters on modern and contemporary periods as well as any modern and contemporary artists that appear in chapters specific to any regions of the world. 1900 is used as a historical divider because it best allows for comparison between the different textbooks, given their organizational schemes. Many items of contemporary art from Africa, Oceania, and the Americas—for example, figurines and ceremonial masks—are attributed to a tribal group rather than individually-identified artists. We have included these works, coding them by group named.

<sup>4</sup> Discrepancies in national identity also plague how artists are classified in exhibitions, rankings, and prize competitions.



which artists to include in their texts; only about 20% of artists appeared in more than one textbook.

In the intermediate editions sampled, a total of 316 modern artists are included, with 283 (90%) from the West and 33 (10%) from Mexico and Cuba, as well as countries in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. Editors disagreed almost entirely about the Non-Western artists worthy of study; only two appeared in more than one text. By contrast, a growing census emerged among textbook editors about the importance of particular Western artists, with about 50% appearing across multiple textbooks.

The recent editions we catalogued included 327 modern artists. Of these, 251 (77%) are Western and 76 (23%) are Non-Western. Non-Westerners in this period include artists from Asia, Africa, South America, Oceania, and the Middle East. More artists from Indigenous groups in the territories of America, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand also found their way into these pages. Editorial convergence around Non-Western artists continued to be low, though, with only nine artists (12%) appearing in more than one textbook. In contrast, for Western artists, there is an even greater editorial convergence, with 54% of individually-identifiable artists included in this period appearing in more than one textbook. Western modern artists are almost seven times more likely than Non-Western modern artists to be included in multiple recent art history textbooks.

Although textbook editors do not agree entirely with one another, there is clear, growing consistency in the pedagogical canon of Western modern artists. Sixteen Western artists form the “Enduring Core” of modern art history, appearing in all three of the sampled texts across all time periods; of these, fifteen are European and one is American; all are men (See Table 3). An additional fifty-four Western artists, as well as five Non-Western artists, have appeared in all three most recent editions of the textbooks. Another four Non-Western modern and contemporary artists have also achieved increasing recognition across these art history textbooks, though falling short of complete consensus among the most recent editions. Thus, we identify nine Non-Western modern and contemporary artists who achieved substantial recognition across the pedagogical canon (see Table 4). Although we formally coded artists by birthplace, we also took note of their ties to countries other than those of their birth. As shown in Table 4, Non-Western artists who achieved canonical recognition are a cosmopolitan group: all have lived and worked in multiple countries, most having spent substantial time in the US and Europe. In contrast, artists born in the West, who live and work outside their countries of origin are much less likely to have ties to nations outside of the West.

To what extent might our use of the broad regional designations “Western” and “Non-Western” obscure important changes in representation? While the pedagogical canon remains stubbornly Western-focused as measured by country of origin, do the artists included come from a wider variety of racial and ethnic groups? Because the largest number of artists in our sample are from the United States, we examined racial and ethnic diversity within this group. Of the 185 modern

artists represented, 21% (N=39) represent minority racial/ethnic groups. Breaking this down by period, we see a growing representation of American artists of color, increasing from 8% in the early period, to 20% in the middle period, and finally 26% in the recent period (see Table 5).

In sum, empirical content analysis reveals that art history introductory survey texts are inching toward telling a more global story—rising from 5% to 23% Non-Western artists between 1962 and 2016. These changes, we believe, are driven by increasing pressures from within and outside the discipline to move beyond its Western focus. However, there are clear limits to the pace and breadth of change.

## CHANGE AND CONTINUITY

Art history textbooks are cultural objects that must be understood in connection to the social worlds in which they are produced and consumed (Griswold 2013). We draw here on content analyses of the prefaces and introductions from the texts, as well as interviews with editors and publishers, to understand how producers think about the factors shaping their content. By analyzing how producers write and talk about textbooks, we see that a textbook is not a mere material object nor a cultural product. Instead, it is simultaneously an object of epistemology, of economy, and of pedagogy. Though these facets overlap and intersect, each is subject to unique dynamics that affect text production differently. To fully understand what impedes change, we must consider the forces at work in each field of power.

### *Epistemology*

So far in this article, we have asked what knowledge textbooks convey about what art is and who is an artist worth knowing—that is, we have primarily considered textbooks as epistemological objects for representing, creating, and disseminating knowledge. This is also the primary way that textbook authors talk about textbooks: they are first and foremost things that are conceived in relation to a field of academic scholarship. How editors decide what to include and how to categorize it determine what gets considered legitimate knowledge and how it is interpreted.

Textbook authors and editors are certainly aware of new developments within the academic study of art history. For example, when we asked Fred Kleiner, the current author of Gardner's *Art Through the Ages*, about the need to include a more diverse body of work by more diverse artists and the extent to which he felt compelled to “select one from column A and one from column B,” he jokingly replied, “Not in a crude sense, but it is on my mind. I would be lying if I said I didn't want to make sure that there are Hispanic or Black artists or artists from the Middle East.” Sharon Poore, the former Project Manager at Cengage Learning, who worked with Kleiner, also stressed the importance of including enough women and minority artists. When asked to talk about how art history textbooks represent art globally, authors spent considerable

time discussing questions of identity and about the challenges of achieving greater inclusivity and including the most important works of modern and contemporary art.

To reconfigure introductory art history as a global enterprise means that authors face difficult questions of how to identify modern and contemporary artists, as well as questions of where they should be placed in texts. Since so many of these artists are born, study, and work in different places, how they position themselves and how they are labeled by the art world are political choices. Not only do these political choices strongly influence how likely it is that an artist will be collected and exhibited, they also influence whether artists will be included in textbooks. “Where do you put work by a contemporary Japanese artist?” asked Fred Kleiner. “If you take it out of the chapter on Japan, it looks like Japanese art stopped at 1980, but if you put it in that chapter, it ghettoizes it and does not put it into international context.” He decided that “intellectually, contemporary art is part of a global phenomenon, and these artists should be treated together. I decided to put them into one modern chapter.” This stance is also reflected in Gardner’s changing self-presentation. By the 15<sup>th</sup> edition, we read that multicultural artists who had been marginalized have become part of the mainstream.

Virginia Spivey, author of the Modern and Contemporary chapter in the current edition of Stokstad’s *Art History*, similarly points toward the difficulty of using textbook revision to create and communicate epistemological meaning:

The survey text seems to me an emblem of much that is wrong with art history....The practice of endless revisions that have tried to expand the canon through the addition of new examples doesn't address the real need (and work that scholars have done) to rethink the biases of art historical practice and how they inform our understanding of the art of all periods and cultures. (Virginia Spivey, phone interview with authors, April 12, 2017.)

Indeed, textbook inclusion of artists from beyond Europe and North America alone sets the bar quite low for measuring how global art history education. It does not capture the extent to which the more fundamental epistemological changes—in the conceptual, temporal, and material production categories needed to create a more inclusive, post-colonial, and global art history—have actually occurred.

Though rooted in contemporary art history scholarship, an author’s decision to include or exclude an artist is a subjective decision which introduces a certain capriciousness into knowledge production. This subjectivity helps to explain the idiosyncratic inclusion of artists that we discovered in our textbook analysis. “I am on the receiving end of many reviews,” said Kleiner. “None of which agree on what should be included because there is no fixed canon yet. I get many suggestions. I look into all of them. I am constantly reading the current art magazines: who is making a splash, who has a one man show at the Met, who are the most popular African American artists. There is no one at the publisher telling me what to do. I joke on the side that

whoever pays me the most, gets in the book.” Though Kleiner clearly said this in jest, he noted that the general lack of a consistent contemporary canon we found in our textbook analysis does not surprise him. The more recent the art, he believes, the less agreement he would expect among reviewers. However, even Kleiner’s insider view misses the collectively-produced reality of a growing consensus around Western contemporary artists alongside the highly unpredictable inclusion of Non-Western artists.

Kleiner’s comments about how he decides who to include in his text speak to the power that art markets and mainstream institutions’ curatorial choices exercise over the introductory survey. They also help explain why a consistent canon of non-Western contemporary artists has not yet emerged. The slice of artists who make it into auction houses and museums are generally those who make it into textbooks. This is not surprising. This same select group also dominates the biennale and art fair circuit and features prominently in the art journals and magazines that editors consult to find the new “must-include” artists they feature in their texts. When lesser-known artists get included, there is a heavy dose of happenstance involved. According to Kleiner,

I can make any decision I want on content. The only constraints I face are when commission fees get out of control. For the 14<sup>th</sup> edition, one of the new artists I introduced in the contemporary chapter—again, no one told me to do this, I just discovered her and said, “this would be interesting”—was an aboriginal, Australian, female artist, whose work sort of looks Jackson Pollockish but it is based on local fabrics created by local women. So an all-in-one artist whose work happens to be high quality, otherwise it wouldn’t go in the book, no matter how PC [politically correct] it is. So I included her in the book. I wrote her into the mainstream history of art. For the 15<sup>th</sup> edition, her people wanted \$5000 dollars to reprint her work, so I told the staff to tell her handlers that I am not bluffing “that she can be written out of history of art as easily as she was written into it.” We will pay the same fee. They refused, and she is out.

Kleiner is referring to Emily Kame Kngwarreye. He included her work because it is, in his opinion, “high quality,” “beautiful,” and combines Western and Non-Western techniques and aesthetics. By doing so, he catapulted her, albeit fleetingly, into the center of the US art history pedagogy and increased her visibility and marketability, thereby allowing her to demand much higher royalties the next time around. Kleiner went on to explain an interesting “side line” to his story, one that points to the relationship between textbooks as epistemological objects and the institutional structures of education. As he described:

Over 30,000 students take the [Advanced Placement] art history test each year. The College Board has changed the curriculum, and you have to teach 250 core works. Each teacher has to follow this now. That is teaching to the test epitomized. And [Kngwarreye’s] work is now among the 250. That happened

because she was in my book and [the College Board] found it interesting for the same reason that I did...But not in a million years would I pick it as one of 250 works representing the entire history of art.

Though Kleiner exercised his editorial power to write Kngwarreye into the mainstream of art, as luck would have it, institutional forces made it much harder to write her out.

Kleiner's story about Kngwarreye also highlights another consistent constraint in publishing art history texts: royalties. Royalty costs are harder to predict than they used to be. When art history was primarily about dead artists, royalties were easier to manage, since dead artists no longer have a say in the monetization of their work. But including living artists as a legitimate field of study made it harder to predict and control production costs, especially for Non-Western artists whose careers can be dramatically changed by "discovery."

### *Economic Factors*

This points us toward a second meaning of textbooks: they are economic objects that need to be copyrighted, manufactured, and marketed, creating a different set of constraints on canon change than those imposed by epistemological considerations. Publishing is big business and textbooks are important moneymakers. Market considerations loom large in editorial choices. The choice of artists and works to include is strongly driven by copyright and production costs. Reflecting on his first foray into the world of for-profit publishing, Michael Cothren, a co-author of Stockstad said, "I found it an interesting puzzle. How to make this useful to teachers but also be responsible to the history of art"( Michael Cothren, phone interview with authors, January 10, 2017.) As he explained, books cannot continue to grow exponentially, so if editors include ten new images in an updated edition, then something else has to go.

As objects to be marketed, textbooks are aimed at an audience of consumers. All of the texts we reviewed are clearly written with a North American audience in mind. Each editor expressed his or her ambition to make art accessible to all. Although, again, Pearson and Cengage would not provide us with figures about market shares, they claim that their books are used at all kinds of institutions, from liberal arts and community colleges to large public universities. "As you can imagine," said Sharon Poore, formerly of Cengage, "the biggest numbers are with the biggest institutions because they have more students taking the course. More students are at state schools and community colleges so from that standpoint we sell more books—print and digital—to those students" (Sharon Poore, phone interview with authors, January 2017.)

Each new edition is revised based on considerable market research. Publishers conduct large surveys of students and instructors to find out what material actually gets taught, what images get used, and what content adopters consider necessary. As more supplementary materials go online, publishers can count the number of "clicks" particular links receive, such as those to flashcards, quizzes, or supplemental materials. This research reveals a story about how brand loyalty and

custom strongly influence instructors' textbook selections. The instructors who used Gardner or Janson when they studied, our interviewees reported, were more likely to use them in their own classrooms. Professors who studied with one of the authors or their protégés are likely to do the same. In contrast, some actively reject Janson because, according to one interviewee who asked not to be named, he was not well liked in the field. For better or for worse, the book always carried "the burden of his name."

Each new edition consists of something between a major revision to fairly superficial changes in content. They are, therefore, close or distant cousins of their predecessors, showing obvious family resemblance because of this path dependency. Editors' early priorities and decisions about content continue to shape what gets included today. Moreover, the textbook industry experiences a constant tension between creating something sufficiently new to merit a new textbook edition at substantial cost but not so new that instructors are required to do a lot of homework to update their syllabi and lecture notes.

Satisfying such a broad audience necessarily involves hard choices. One way that publishers are responding is to allow instructors to customize their texts—to create their own readers that include only certain periods or genres. Most textbooks include multiple versions: a full version, an abridged version, a customized version, and online supplements. However, the "full version" still matters, because it affects the chances that an artist will be included in an abridged or customized version—and if so, where—which in turn shapes the pedagogical canon. Returning to Kleiner's discussion about how to treat contemporary Japanese art, if a work is first discussed in the chapter on Asian art it may be less likely to be picked up for a customized version than if it is included in the modern and contemporary chapter. This ability to tailor and abridge also means that the next generations of students taking Art History 101 will consume very different versions of the basic survey textbook, including light, medium, intensive, and globally or regionally focused.

Publishers, though, are not the only ones making economic decisions about textbooks. Textbooks are expensive, and students also face budget constraints. Students at both public and private four-year colleges spend an average of \$1,240 per year on books and supplies (Ma et al. 2018). As David Boffa describes: "To get the latest edition of Volume 1 of *Art History* by Stokstad and Cothren, for example, requires buying into their REVEL online platform. For \$48.99 you buy a subscription to the text and online resources for the duration of the class... While that price is less than the cost of most physical textbooks, you also don't end up owning anything (for that you'd have to buy the more expensive option of REVEL plus the textbook); you don't even own a digital copy" (Boffa 2018). At some universities, administrators encourage the use of OERs (see, for example, CUNY 2017) to reduce students' costs and to help decolonize pedagogical practices (Hohensee 2018, Langlois 2017, Boffa 2018). On the other hand, so far, the more prevalent response to rising textbook costs has been the tremendous market for used books. This means that even if the 16<sup>th</sup> edition of a textbook is considerably more inclusive than earlier versions, many students may still be using a second-hand version of the 13<sup>th</sup> edition. In spite of updates

and revisions, older textbook editions influence the pedagogical canon for a long time after they have been replaced. Thus, our selective analysis of textbook editions may actually exaggerate the pace of change for all but the most privileged students.

### *Pedagogy*

Ultimately, textbooks are objects of practical use for pedagogy. In order to succeed as economic objects, textbooks must be adopted by instructors. Differing pedagogical philosophies affect the fate of the general survey course, and faculty preferences drive at least some editorial decisions. For example, some instructors believe that all students need a basic art history foundation before moving on to more sophisticated analyses and specialized areas. Other professors get bored teaching the same thing year after year and want to offer more specialized content rather than providing the same old broad overview.

Pedagogy, however, is never merely a matter of ideology or instructor preference; it is also a matter of institutionalized practices (Bryson 2005). Institutional requirements shape curricular choices. Professors who teach at private, well-endowed institutions have more time and resources to propose innovative new courses and constantly revise what they teach. Professors teaching at large, under-resourced institutions with heavy teaching loads may lack autonomy to propose new courses, as well as the time and energy to regularly revise their syllabi or to search out and assemble their own mix of OERs. When we consider the number of high school AP courses using art history textbooks, we see additional layers of bureaucracy affecting content changes, since key content decisions are influenced by the remote and powerful College Board.

While we would need a reception study to provide clearer evidence of how instructors actually use textbooks and other teaching materials, we can infer from our content analysis of preface materials some of what publishers believe about faculty preferences. Seemingly in response to faculty time pressures, we found that the preface in each text usually included a basic guide to the most recent textual changes so instructors did not have to figure these out on their own. Publishers believe that instructors get used to using a particular text with particular content and that they do not have the time or energy to make significant changes. Market research, for example, reveals how strongly images can influence adoption choices because instructors will only continue using the text if it includes images that they cover in their syllabi. If a publisher can no longer get the copyright for that work or they decide not to include it, it can make or break lucrative adoptions. Moreover, including too many new artists from unfamiliar regions of the world makes some faculty uncomfortable because it pushes them too far from their areas of expertise. Editors often visit potential users to explain new materials and teaching tools to help instructors overcome the inertia they feel about changing what they do in the classroom.

In other words, as pedagogical objects, textbooks must strike a balance between continuity and change. As Gardner's 6<sup>th</sup> edition explains, "a corpus of monuments essential to the art-history survey course has long been forming...[R]adical departure from the corpus might well obliterate

the outlines of the study... To avoid the random, system-less distribution of material that might result we have generally adhered to the corpus, occasionally introducing monuments not well known or not customarily treated in surveys” (Gardner 1975, vi). Too much change for some professors, both in terms of content and format, can lead to the same sense of discomfort in the classroom that characterizes the rudderless world outside its doors, which is no longer organized around universal, constant truths.

Changing textbook features are also oriented toward satisfying the requirements of the increasingly bureaucratized field of higher education. Because instructors and departments face greater pressures to quantify student performance, changes in textbooks that enable them to meet these practical demands may drive choices more than changes that decolonize knowledge. New textbook features, such as enumerated lists of “Learning Outcomes” or online quizzes that allow students to evaluate their own progress, are just some of the new features texts included in response to these institutional demands. More and more, the study of art, like the study of the humanities in general, needs to justify itself by showing how it can lead to gainful employment. Measuring student “outcomes” helps make that case.

Finally, changes in textbook format and content are driven by academic and market research on how students learn. In the preface to Stokstad’s fifth edition, the editors describe the listening tour they embarked upon to help them “learn about how students learn facts” before beginning their revisions (Stokstad and Cothren 2014, xiv). They discovered, which will not surprise those of us who spend many hours in the classroom, that students expect the classroom experience to be interactive and fun. Publishers believe that technology profoundly shapes students’ capacity to absorb materials and to pay attention. Since students grew up being constantly stimulated by rapid changes in content, rhythm, and tone, still images no longer suffice. Multiple clicks, maps, sidebars, and visual enhancements are touted as tools for deepening learning by making it more engaging and entertaining.

## CONCLUSION

Our content analyses of the modern and contemporary sections of the three principal texts used to teach introductory art history revealed small changes in the art historical pedagogical canon. We imagine that instructors teaching upper level courses focusing on particular periods or regions have made more fundamental changes. Still, from our perspective, and from the perspective of the many art historians we interviewed, the introductory survey, that will be many students’ only exposure to art history, must change much more if the academy is to achieve its self-professed ideal of providing students with a global education.

Our conversations with the producers of these textbooks showed that changing epistemologies and pedagogical techniques are driving textbooks toward greater inclusivity at the same time that



market pressures and institutionalized practices constrain change. The economics and politics of the textbook industry weigh heavily. Since many students work with used texts, they learn from older materials even when more recent versions include a wider variety of content. Institutional pressures such as heavy teaching loads, limited freedom to make curricular changes, and limited expertise in different periods or regions make it difficult for many professors to change what they do. Strong intellectual genealogies also limit change—the field values deep specialization, and many instructors continue to train their students as they were trained. The changing nature of the publishing industry, students’ changing learning styles, and increased emphasis on measurable learning outcomes also constrain attempts to diversify the pedagogical canon.

The present study analyzes textbooks themselves and the goals that the editors and publishers who produce them hope that they achieve—how the object is constructed and how the constructors hope it is used. To fully understand the practical role of textbooks as pedagogical objects, and the ways in which they may or may not reshape the pedagogical canon, we would need to do a reception study. A next step would be to interview art history professors and instructors about how they actually use these materials in the classroom and the extent to which globalizing art history drives their choices.

None of the scholars we spoke with seemed particularly concerned that a strong consensus about a modern and contemporary art canon had yet to take shape. Still, the percentage of Non-Western artists should be higher, especially if we take the globalization of the critical and financial art rankings as a baseline. Moreover, our findings concern us because of the contrast between growing strength of consensus around Western artists and seeming capriciousness of the inclusion of their Non-Western counterparts.

Can we create more humble canons by having them focus on particular styles, genres, or time periods? Can we think of them as processual rather than fixed, thereby acknowledging the way canons constantly change, expand and contract? Virginia Spivey described herself as “trying to present a global view of what has happened... this is not a canon as much as it is a document that shows students how we got to where we are now. Let’s study the survey as being a problematic enterprise” (Virginia Spivey, email communication with authors, March 13, 2018). This means acknowledging that canons are continuously rewritten and that their influence ebbs and flows. It means recognizing that current practices and social issues influence artists to make new things. They adopt an artistic vocabulary from the past and adapt it to say what they feel they need to say. The teaching materials that chronicle their journeys should do so as well.

Though this article focuses on art history, the discipline is by no means alone in taking on these challenges. All fields—including our own discipline of sociology—would be better served by rethinking the idea of canons and the work we expect them to do. It is not enough to achieve greater inclusivity. We need to go far beyond “add in and stir” which results in a kind of cultural affirmative action if it is not accompanied by more fundamental intellectual change. We need to teach students to critically unpack the assumptions behind the categories used to produce

knowledge and to identify which voices feature loudly and which are silenced. We need to retrain ourselves and our students in epistemologies, theories, and ways of making both art and knowledge from around the world. We need to experiment with new ways to organize libraries, disciplines, and universities that forge conversations which fundamentally shakeup the intellectual status quo.

TABLES

TABLE 1: TEXTBOOK EDITIONS INCLUDED IN ANALYSIS

	EARLY PERIOD	INTERMEDIATE PERIOD	RECENT PERIOD
Janson <i>History of Art</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> edition (1962)	6 <sup>th</sup> edition (2001)	Reissued 8 <sup>th</sup> edition (2016)
Gardner <i>Art Through the Ages</i>	6 <sup>th</sup> edition (1975)	11 <sup>th</sup> edition (2001)	15 <sup>th</sup> edition (2016)
Stokstad <i>Art History</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> edition (1995)	Revised 2 <sup>nd</sup> edition (2005)	5 <sup>th</sup> edition (2014)

TABLE 2: COMPARISON OF WESTERN AND NON-WESTERN ARTISTS BY PERIOD

	Period 1		Period 2		Period 3	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
<b>Western artists</b>	206	97%	283	90%	251	77%
<b>Non-Western artists</b>	7	3%	33	10%	76 <sup>5</sup>	23%
<b>Total</b>	213	100%	316	100%	327	100%

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<sup>5</sup> Of these, 44% (29 works) are anonymous (that is, no individual artist is named).

TABLE 3: WESTERN MODERN ARTISTS FORMING AN “ENDURING CORE” IN ART HISTORY TEXTS

ARTIST	SEX	NATIONALITY (BIRTH)
Umberto Boccioni	M	Italy
Constantin Brâncuși	M	Romania
Georges Braque	M	France
Salvador Dalí	M	Spain
Marcel Duchamp	M	France
Max Ernst	M	Germany
Walter Gropius	M	Germany
Wassily Kandinsky	M	Russia
Le Corbusier	M	Switzerland
Fernand Leger	M	France
Henri Matisse	M	France
Joan Miró	M	Spain
Piet Mondrian	M	Netherlands
Henry Moore	M	England
Pablo Picasso	M	Spain
Jackson Pollock	M	USA

Table 4: NON-WESTERN MODERN ARTISTS FEATURED MORE FREQUENTLY IN THE ART HISTORY PEDAGOGICAL CANON

ARTIST	NATIONALITY (BIRTH)	OTHER RESIDENCE	# TEXTS IN EARLY PERIOD	# TEXTS IN MIDDLE PERIOD	# TEXTS IN RECENT PERIOD
El Anatsui	Ghana	Nigeria	0	0	3
Zaha Hadid	Iraq	Naturalized British citizen	0	1	3
Shirin Neshat	Iran	US permanent resident	0	1	2
Nam June Paik	South Korea	Naturalized US citizen	1	2	3
Frida Kahlo	Mexico	US	1	3	3
Diego Rivera	Mexico	US	1	2	3
Ana Mendieta	Cuba	US, Italy	1	2	2
Kenzō Tange	Japan	US, Canada	0	1	2
Wu Guanzhong	China	France	0	1	2

TABLE 5: US MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS BY RACE/ETHNICITY

	EARLY		INTERMEDIATE		RECENT	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
WHITE	78	92%	98	80%	83	75%
AFRICAN-AMERICAN	4	5%	13	11%	17	15%
NATIVE AMERICAN	1	1%	6	5%	6	5%
ASIAN AMERICAN & PACIFIC ISLANDER	1	1%	5	4%	3	3%
HISPANIC/LATINX/ CHICANX	1	1%	0		0	
OTHER	0		1	<1%	1	<1%
TOTAL	85	100%	123	100%	110	99% <sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Does not equal 100% due to rounding.

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