

Query about artists' productivity

K. Bender, Gent

Three Topical Catalogues, with 7473 artworks from 2374 artists over a period of more than 500 years in three distinct regional areas in Europe, offer a unique and provocative opportunity to apply the quantitative approach in art history: time distribution of artworks, popularity and diversity of topics, productivity of artists.

A remarkable finding is the application of Lotka's law of scientific productivity, which is an inverse power function describing the rate of productivity in terms of published scientific articles over time.

My large data set fits exactly Lotka's law.

My website presents an introduction to Lotka's law and its history, the computational details are explained and a plausible interpretation of this law in art history is suggested. Of course, the application is a case study, limited to data of the general theme 'Venus', but there is little doubt that the law would not apply to other themes as well.

I am seeking comments on this finding and on the interpretation of this law in art history.

Regards,

K. Bender, independent researcher, active in the art history domain since 2004.

Email: bender@telenet.be

Ad-free website <http://sites.google.com/site/venusiconography/>

Reference:

Q: Query about artists' productivity. In: ArtHist.net, Feb 16, 2011 (accessed Dec 28, 2025),
<<https://arthist.net/archive/918>>.