

Policy on Queries [Q]

ArtHist.net is a scholarly community of numerous members worldwide who bring to this network a range of interests and expectations. Since we are all busy professionals, the editors try, as a primary goal, to insure each message's utility to the maximum number of members. Conversely, we try to avoid postings that will be of limited interest or which could even bother or alienate subscribers. Many of our subscribers approve of this editorial function and appreciate receiving less mail from ArtHist.net than from other e-mail networks. For this reason, we would like to re-state our policy on queries:

1. All queries should concern research or teaching problems in art history only.
2. All queries should be sent ONLY AFTER all other easily available sources of information (such as the library reference room) have been exhausted. In other words, ArtHist.net should not be the reference source of first, but of last resort. Each query, then, should list those sources ALREADY TRIED that have failed to produce the information sought. Among other things, this will save the valuable time of well-meaning subscribers, who will otherwise respond with suggestions one has already considered. Simple bibliographic queries will not be posted unless it has been shown that other resources have been exhausted.
3. All queries should be as informative as possible. Provide background information so that ArtHist.net members who know little about the topic can still benefit from the discussion. If, for example, you simply need the address of an institution, try telling the membership exactly what service the institution performs. If you need bibliographic information, explain the context of the problem for which you need additional reading. If you need teaching materials, explain the problem that you are trying to deal with in the classroom and the methods which you have tried so far.
4. The longer the query the better; short queries are likely to be returned to their authors for more background information so that the entire network can benefit. Medieval scholars should be able to read a query about postmodern topics and learn something, etc.
5. Queries will be posted as soon as practical, depending upon the current traffic on ArtHist.net. In a particularly busy period, some queries that meet these guidelines may have to wait several days before being posted.
6. New subscribers to ArtHist.net must wait at least one month before posting a query, so that they may become accustomed to how ArtHist.net deals with queries and other matters. No query will be posted for the benefit of non-subscribers.

Your suggestions for further revisions of this policy are welcome. Thank You.