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## Artists' Manuals and Material Catalogs Explored in National Gallery of Art Exhibition



Faber-Castell, *Preis-Liste der Bleistift-Fabrik*, Stein bei Nürnberg, c. 1908, trade catalogue, National Gallery of Art Library, David K. E. Bruce Fund

Washington, DC—From art instruction manuals to trade catalogs, artists' materials are valuable resources that enable scholars and conservators to better understand the physical attributes of the artworks they study and preserve. ***In the Library: The Intersection of Commerce and Instruction in Art*** presents approximately 50 examples of trade literature, from handwritten and early printed manuals containing formulas for various dyes, varnishes, and inks to illustrated trade catalogs and instruction manuals on techniques. Organized by the National Gallery of Art Library, this exhibition is on view from February 22 to June 3, 2016, in the East Building, Ground Floor, Study Center.

### About the Installation

Catalogs from companies such as Winsor & Newton and Faber-Castell as well as instruction manuals ranging from watercolor techniques to wood engraving by John Wilson Carmichael, Edward Groom, and Perran Garnier, among others, examine the impact of commercialization on artists, especially following the Industrial Revolution. Traditionally, artists ground their own pigments to make paint and crafted pencils and brushes based on techniques handed down from master to apprentice in an artist's workshop. But the mechanization of the Industrial Revolution allowed a greater number of materials to be produced for artists. Tubes for oil paint and cakes for watercolors were especially important developments that enabled artists to work more freely outdoors.

As companies developed these new products, they published manuals with abbreviated catalogs describing various artistic techniques. Expanding their consumer base beyond professional artists, these manuals targeted a growing middle class of hobbyists. As techniques were dispersed beyond the walls of the academies, artists were able to experiment and push boundaries, giving rise to a number of modern art movements, including impressionism, Dada, surrealism, and abstract expressionism.

Organized by the National Gallery of Art and curated by Yuri Long, rare book librarian, this exhibition is open from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

### Library and Rare Books Collection

The National Gallery of Art Library contains more than 400,000 books and periodicals, including more than 15,000 volumes in the rare book collection, with an emphasis on Western art from the Middle Ages to the present. The National Gallery of Art Library was founded in 1941, the year the Gallery opened to the public. In 1979, with the move to a seven-story facility in the Gallery's new East Building and the establishment of the Center for

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Advanced Study in the Visual Arts (CASVA), the library broadened its purpose and the scope of its collection. Its goal has been to establish a major national art research center, serving the Gallery's curatorial, educational, and conservation staff, CASVA members, interns, visiting scholars, and researchers in the Washington art community.

The library's department of image collections is a study and research center for images of Western art and architecture and is one of the largest of its kind, numbering over 14 million photographs, slides, negatives, microforms, and digital images. The department serves the Gallery's staff, CASVA members, visiting scholars, and qualified researchers. Access to the library is by appointment only, from Monday through Friday. Call (202) 842-6511 or [refdesk@nga.gov](mailto:refdesk@nga.gov) for more information.

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**General Information**

The National Gallery of Art and its Sculpture Garden are at all times free to the public. They are located on the National Mall between 3rd and 9th Streets at Constitution Avenue NW, and are open Monday through Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Sunday from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. The Gallery is closed on December 25 and January 1. For information call (202) 737-4215 or visit the Gallery's Web site at [www.nga.gov](http://www.nga.gov). Follow the Gallery on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/NationalGalleryofArt](http://www.facebook.com/NationalGalleryofArt), Twitter at [www.twitter.com/ngadc](http://www.twitter.com/ngadc), and Instagram at <http://instagram.com/ngadc>.

Visitors will be asked to present all carried items for inspection upon entering. Checkrooms are free of charge and located at each entrance. Luggage and other oversized bags must be presented at the 4th Street entrances to the East or West Building to permit x-ray screening and must be deposited in the checkrooms at those entrances. For the safety of visitors and the works of art, nothing may be carried into the Gallery on a visitor's back. Any bag or other items that cannot be carried reasonably and safely in some other manner must be left in the checkrooms. Items larger than 17 by 26 inches cannot be accepted by the Gallery or its checkrooms.

For additional press information please call or send inquiries to:

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