Textbook Name:

# Art History

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Textbook Authors:
Boundless

Reviewed by:
Johanna Movassat

Institution:
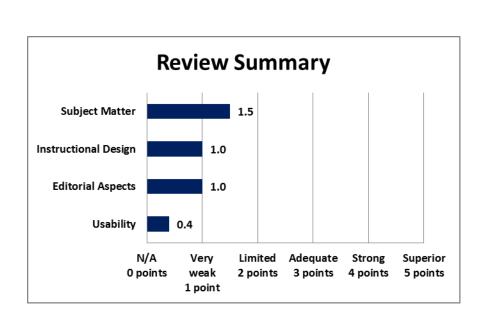California State University, San Jose

Title/Position:
Professor

Format Reviewed:
Online
A small fee may be associated with various formats.

Date Reviewed:
August 2015



**Review Summary**

| | |
|---|---|
| Subject Matter | 1.5 |
| Instructional Design | 1.0 |
| Editorial Aspects | 1.0 |
| Usability | 0.4 |

N/A 0 points | Very weak 1 point | Limited 2 points | Adequate 3 points | Strong 4 points | Superior 5 points

## California OER Council eTextbook Evaluation Rubric
**CA Course ID: ARTH 110**

| Subject Matter (30 possible points) | N/A (0 pts) | Very Weak (1pt) | Limited (2 pts) | Adequate (3pts) | Strong (4 pts) | Superior (5 pts) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Is the content accurate, error-free, and unbiased? | | X | | | | |
| Does the text adequately cover the designated course with a sufficient degree of depth and scope? | | | X | | | |
| Does the textbook use sufficient and relevant examples to present its subject matter? | | X | | | | |

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Does the textbook use a clear, consistent terminology to present its subject matter? | | | X | | | |
| Does the textbook reflect current knowledge of the subject matter? | | X | | | | |
| Does the textbook present its subject matter in a culturally sensitive manner? (e.g. Is the textbook free of offensive and insensitive examples?  Does it include examples that are inclusive of a variety of races, ethnicities, and backgrounds?) | | | X | | | |

Total Points:  9 out of 30

Please provide comments on any aspect of the subject matter of this textbook:

- Boundless text
- Generally:  not impressed with the choice and number of images.  Since this is an e-version, there should be plenty of images used and discussed.   It's very hard to find the images and requires a number of redundant clicks to get to them
- The text is high school or below level – a good middle school might use this.  This is hardly college material and doesn't compare favorably with Gardner or Stokstad (the standard texts used by most college art history classes).
- Throughout the text I find common mistakes in English grammar (lack of commas, lack of quotes, some words that should be italicized, lack of proof reading, etc.).
- I've only taken a snapshot here of things that were glaring as I read through 6 of the chapters.  These comments below, however, have been taken seriously by both Gardner and Stokstad (for both of which I have been a reviewer), and were corrected.  Why are we starting all over again with a simplistic and puerile text?
- Chapter 1-2:
    - Organization of Stone Age periods is for convenience in discussing art history, however, these are not terms (Paleo – Meso- Neo- )that are in use among archaeologists and scholars today.  At least some reference to this fact should be made.
    - Spell out centuries (that's how scholars use it): twentieth century, seventh millenium BCE, etc.
    - No discussion/image of Stonehenge – the most famous "neolithic" structure in Western Europe.
    - It's inappropriate to use the term chiaroscuro when talking about cave paintings – that wasn't the intent of the artists.  The sense of three-dimensional modeling is obtained by using the natural outcropping/outjutting of the rock surface to enhance the sensation of looking at a living creature and its volume.
    - Chauvet's image is terrible!
    - For "Venus" figurines – one of the most famous Brassempouy is mentioned but no image.
    - Why are the Narmer Palette and the Statue of Seated Gudea depicted in the section on "Bronze Age" – there were certainly bronze pieces (such as the foundation statuettes) that could reflect the change from stone to bronze.
- Chapter 3:
    - Edit/Proof – "Ubaidians" needs its second quote.  Also it's better to use the term Ubaid Culture or Period rather than Ubaidians.
    - Reference to the Epic of Gilgamesh but no image – an image of the partial cuneiform tablet from which the Epic comes and an explanation of what it is should be included.  Also Ubaid pottery should be included.
    - Akkad and Akkadian are a Semitic (language) group.
    - No images for Akkadians.
- Chapter 4:
    - To reach a series of images on discussion here is very awkward – you have to know that mastaba is a tomb and click on tomb when you get to that link.  Then images appear.  Too many pages within pages.  Also mastaba is not included under "architecture" ... ?
- Chapter 5:
    - Important to note that Minoan painting portrayed faces with the Egyptian eye – not true profile as the text states.
    - For Mycenean art the plan of Tiryns is used with numbers indicating certain areas of the structure, but the numbers are not explained.  This actually comes from Wikipedia and is one of the reasons

why I am so against using Wikipedia as a teaching tool.
- o For "rhyton" you have to click on four things to get to the images.
- Chapter 11:
  - o The suggestion here is that the Dome of the Rock is a mosque (masjid – although this word is not indicated here, which would be more appropriate than the French word "mosque").
  - o It is important to emphasize that figurative art is not accepted in a religious context. It is mentioned under "themes" as "it is feared by many Muslims" – clearly misstating the concept of non-figurative art in a religious context. This explains why calligraphic, geometric, vegetal ornamentation reached such heights and such expanse. Not saying this leads the student to feel that Muslim artists couldn't do figures – a very common misconception, or that they "fear" to do them; rather Orientalist viewpoint, wouldn't you think?
  - o The Sasanians are mentioned in a couple of places but nothing on them or how important they were for designs and motifs that spread across Asia along the Silk Road and were picked up by many cultures.
  - o No works of silk in luxury arts, no carpets, no jewelry (Mughal jewelry?), and many more areas?

| Instructional Design (35 possible points) | N/A (0 pts) | Very Weak (1pt) | Limited (2 pts) | Adequate (3pts) | Strong (4 pts) | Superior (5 pts) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Does the textbook present its subject materials at appropriate reading levels for undergrad use? | | X | | | | |
| Does the textbook reflect a consideration of different learning styles? (e.g. visual, textual?) | | X | | | | |
| Does the textbook present explicit learning outcomes aligned with the course and curriculum? | | X | | | | |
| Is a coherent organization of the textbook evident to the reader/student? | | X | | | | |
| Does the textbook reflect best practices in the instruction of the designated course? | | X | | | | |
| Does the textbook contain sufficient effective ancillary materials? (e.g. test banks, individual and/or group activities or exercises, pedagogical apparatus, etc.) | | X | | | | |
| Is the textbook searchable? | | X | | | | |

Total Points: 7 out of 35

Please provide comments on any aspect of the instructional design of this textbook:
- Please see my comments above

| Editorial Aspects (25 possible points) | N/A (0 pts) | Very Weak (1pt) | Limited (2 pts) | Adequate (3pts) | Strong (4 pts) | Superior (5 pts) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Is the language of the textbook free of grammatical, spelling, usage, and typographical errors? | | X | | | | |
| Is the textbook written in a clear, engaging style? | | X | | | | |
| Does the textbook adhere to effective principles of design? (e.g. are pages latid0out and organized to be clear and visually engaging and effective? Are colors, font, and typography consistent and unified?) | | X | | | | |
| Does the textbook include conventional editorial features? (e.g. a table of contents, glossary, citations and further references) | | X | | | | |
| How effective are multimedia elements of the textbook? (e.g. graphics, animations, audio) | | X | | | | |

Total Points: 5 out of 25

Please provide comments on any editorial aspect of this textbook.
- See my comments above

| Usability (25 possible points) | N/A (0 pts) | Very Weak (1pt) | Limited (2 pts) | Adequate (3pts) | Strong (4 pts) | Superior (5 pts) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Is the textbook compatible with standard and commonly available hardware/software in college/university campus student computer labs? | X | | | | | |
| Is the textbook accessible in a variety of different electronic formats? (e.g. .txt, .pdf, .epub, etc.) | X | | | | | |

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Can the textbook be printed easily? | X | | | | | |
| Does the user interface implicitly inform the reader how to interact with and navigate the textbook? | | X | | | | |
| How easily can the textbook be annotated by students and instructors? | | X | | | | |

Total Points: 2 out of 25

Please provide comments on any aspect of access concerning this textbook.

- I had great difficulty going from page to page, trying to find images, trying to access definitions of specific terms.  Navigation is unclear and tricky.  I couldn't print a clear page, but perhaps that's my printer.  I don't know about the other formats as I am not a tech-person.

| Overall Ratings | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Not at all (0 pts) | Very Weak (1 pt) | Limited (2 pts) | Adequate (3 pts) | Strong (4 pts) | Superior (5 pts) |
| What is your overall impression of the textbook? | | X | | | | |
| | Not at all (0 pts) | Strong reservations (1 pt) | Limited willingness (2 pts) | Willing (3 pts) | Strongly willing (4 pts) | Enthusiastically willing (5 pts) |
| How willing would you be to adopt this book? | X | | | | | |

Total Points:  1 out of 10

## Overall Comments

If you were to recommend this textbook to colleagues, what merits of the textbook would you highlight?

- There are no merits in comparison with the textbooks that I use now and have used in the past.

What areas of this textbook require improvement in order for it to be used in your courses?

- Why reinvent the wheel?  Stokstad and Gardner are the best out there right now and both of them are available as e-versions.  But they may not be OER.

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