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Photo History Research

101

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*Gathering Information

*Writing Style



*Helpful Tip

*Utilize your librarians!

*Types of Resources

Biographical Information

Books

Articles

Primary resources

Dissertations

Images



*Biographical

Use these instead of [Wikipedia](#)

Oxford Dictionary of National Biography

American National Biography

World Biographical Information System

Getty Vocabulary Program

AWARE - Archive of Women Artists

Luminous Lint





*Books

Great starting point for comprehensive overview.

[Worldcat](#)

Lets you search research libraries around the world.

[Art Discovery Group Catalogue](#)

Lets you search the library catalogs of art and architecture research libraries internationally and includes a high percentage of records for articles in periodicals, conference papers, festschriften, exhibition catalogues and exhibition books, etc.

[RIBA Library Catalogue](#)

Lets you search the RIBA British Architectural Library Catalogue which includes catalogues of the RIBA Library Photographs Collection and the RIBA Library Manuscripts Collection, a biographical database of architects, and other materials acquired by the RIBA Library Drawings Collection since 1986, with brief entries for all earlier acquisitions.



*Articles

More up-to-date than books. Peer reviewed.

[Art & Architecture Source](#)

Vended Periodical Index. Coverage: 1929 - Present.

[Art and Architecture Archive](#)

Art and Architecture Archive is a resource comprised of digitized backfiles of many of the foremost art and architecture magazines of the twentieth century, including Aperture, Architectural Review, British Journal of Photography, Eye, Graphis, and Print. Each issue is scanned from cover to cover in high resolution color and presented in page image format with fully searchable text.

[Art History Research net](#)

4 combined databases

*Primary Sources

[Archive Finder](#)

Archive Finder is a current directory which describes over 220,000 collections of primary source material housed in thousands of repositories across the United States, the United Kingdom and Ireland.

[MoMA Archives](#)

The Museum of Modern Art Archives

[ArchiveGrid](#)

ArchiveGrid is a collection of nearly two million archival material descriptions, including records from WorldCat and finding aids harvested from the web. Archival collections held by thousands of libraries, museums, historical societies, and archives are represented in ArchiveGrid.

[Privately Owned Archives](#)



*Dissertations

Utilize their bibliographies and fresh perspectives

[Dissertations & Theses Global](#)

ProQuest Dissertations & Theses (PQD&T) is the single, central, authoritative resource for information about doctoral dissertations and master's theses. Contains more than 2 million entries, including dissertations published from 1980 forward include 350-word abstracts written by the author. Master's theses published from 1988 forward include 150-word abstracts.



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*Images

Essential for art history research!

[Getty Search Gateway](#)

Search for images at the Getty, including a selection of open content images available for download.

[Google Arts & Culture](#)

Google's online platform for access to high-resolution images of artworks across partner museums and institutions.

[Life Photo Archive](#)

Search millions of photographs from the Life Magazine photo archive, from 1936 to the present.

[Metropolitan Museum of Art](#)

Thousands of images from the Met collections, many of which can be download and used. Search for Open Access Artworks



*Images

Private Archives

Museums

Estates

University Collections

Public Collections

Relatives



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*Images

Creative Commons

[Public Domain](#)

Wiki Commons



*Case Study: Tina Modotti (1896-1942)

Question the
existing narrative



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*Case Study: Ruth Orkin (1921-1985)

Using a family-run
archive



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*Case Study: Ruby Washington (1952-2018)

Researching a
lesser known artist





*Gathering Information

*Writing Style



*Helpful Tip

*Know your audience

Who are you writing for?

Is academic language necessary?

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HH Profiles

The purpose of the website is to showcase the incredible life and work of photographic heroines past, present, and future.

To achieve this:

Profiles of 200-300 words



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Who is our audience?

We intend that the website will be of interest to **non-specialists** – the general public – as well as formal **researchers**.

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Use accessible inclusive language

Try to imagine writing for someone you know, who is not an academic or who doesn't know this particular area of study. Imagine your relatives or friends reading it. Rather than 'dumbing down' what you need to say, try to focus on clarity.



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Structure of a HH Profile:

1. Who is the Heroine?
2. Describe their work.
3. Why is their photography heroic?



1. Who is the Heroine?

Tina Modotti (1896-1942), Italian-American Photographer

2. Describe their work.

Calla Lilies (1925)

Worker's Parade (1926)

3. Why is their photography heroic?

Used photography to explore formalism and to promote political change. Historically dismissed in favor of male contemporaries.

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1. Who is the Heroine

Describe who they are, including personal background as well as wider historical context.

| DO mention ... | DON'T |
|--|--|
| Frida Kahlo & Diego Rivera | Spend word count describing who they are |
| That she is from Italy | Describe her family/childhood or even husband Robo unless relevant |
| That she worked as a Hollywood actress | List all the productions she was in |
| Her relationship with Edward Weston | Beat a dead horse |
| That she worked as a Comintern Intern | Spend word count on Mella |



2. Describe their Work

Choose a few of their photographs that epitomize their output. Although images can accompany your text (with proper licensing), it is useful for you to describe them.

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Calla Lilies (1925) represents a cool appraisal of natural beauty and shows Modotti's interest in formalism, something she shared with Weston, as she emphasises the stark lighting, the near symmetry, and the tactile presence of the flowers.



In **Workers Parade (1926)**, however, while Modotti's skill in formal composition is still evident, as the lighting and angle emphasise the repeated pattern of the hats, this dramatic view of a May Day parade in Mexico City reveals Modotti's Communist sympathies and her ambition to use photography to promote political change.



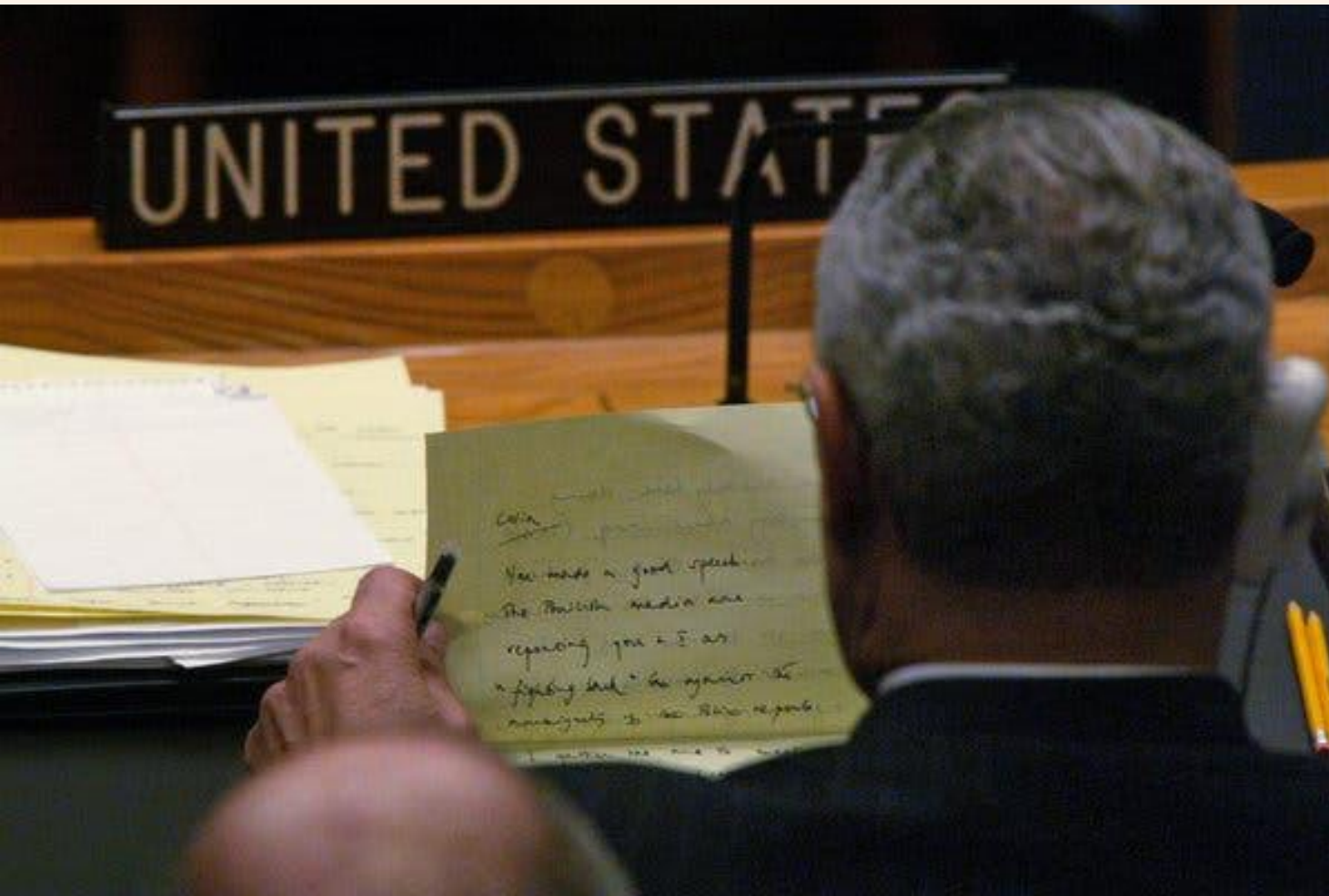
American Girl in Italy
Ruth Orkin



Couple in MG
Ruth Orkin



Autumn in New York
Ruth Orkin



Colin Powell (2003)
Ruby Washington



Hate Crime (1994)
Ruby Washington



3. Why is their photography heronic?

What makes your heroine's work unique and significant? Is there a debate among different art historians/critics on how to understand their work and what it means? Is their photography a symbol of a larger event or viewpoint?

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