



**AMICO Press Release**

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## **Teaching Art Digitally: The Art Museum Image Consortium Offers Model Assignments**

**AMICO Headquarters; Pittsburgh, PA**

The Art Museum Image Consortium (AMICO) is pleased to announce that a variety of model art history assignments are now available on their public web site at <http://www.amico.org>. AMICO was developed to open up the vast hidden collections of art museums to teachers and students of art history. The AMICO Library's great strength for teaching is that it does not duplicate the teaching canon of an university slide library but augments it with tens of thousands of important art objects that do not appear in current printed textbooks and monographs. Since the array of entirely new material much of it previously unpublished and unstudied by scholars – that is contained in The AMICO Library™ can be overwhelming to a new user and might require some orientation, these model assignments are designed to introduce students and their teachers to the possibilities of this vast resource. These models were created by Peter Walsh, a former director of publications for the Harvard University Art Museums who has extensive knowledge of the use of museum collections in publishing, new technology, and teaching. Mr. Walsh writes and speaks frequently on the effects of technology on the perception of art and art history, was a guest lecturer on image copyright and new technology at Dartmouth College, and is the chairman of the Massachusetts Art Commission and the Committee on Intellectual Property of the College Art Association.

After surveying the studio art and art history courses offered by current AMICO Library subscribers, Mr. Walsh determined major areas of intersection with works described in The AMICO Library. The model assignments he created seek to highlight strengths of The AMICO Library as a teaching resource and to provide launching points for humanities faculty to see how images and information from The AMICO Library could be incorporated in class assignments. Mr. Walsh notes, “the depth and breadth of The AMICO Library can often be daunting to a newcomer, especially when faculty members are presented with works they have never encountered before. The hope of these assignments is to help faculty understand the range of works in The AMICO Library, as well as how the

digital format can really allow them to be creative in the ways they structure assignments and incorporate works of art into the learning process.”

The assignments may be found at <http://www.amico.org/univ/sampleAssignments/>. They range from traditional compare and contrast exercises to the curation of a virtual exhibition based on a chosen theme and a research assignment involving an auction purchase, budget management, authenticity, and collections integration and growth. “I think that this set of exercises allows educators to see many potential uses from The AMICO Library’s richness of content. I can see many ways for professors at subscribing institutions to take these templates and easily alter them for new subject areas,” states Jennifer Trant, Executive Director of AMICO. The assignments may be found at <http://www.amico.org/univ/sampleAssignments/>. Colleen Skidmore, Associate Professor in the Department of History of Art, Design, and Visual Culture at the University of Alberta, a Testbed participant and current AMICO Library subscriber, found, “the model assignments demonstrate how AMICO supports more established, traditional, and successful means of teaching visual history while showing how instructors can integrate new and imaginative approaches that captivate students’ interest. I think these will encourage both faculty and students to explore the database more extensively and add to a comfort level with the materials there.”

Educators are invited to review the model assignments and provide suggestions and reports of use to [feedback@amico.org](mailto:feedback@amico.org). All comments are welcome!

## **ABOUT AMICO**

The Art Museum Image Consortium (AMICO) is an independent non-profit corporation with 501 (c) 3 designation from the IRS. Founded in 1997 with 23 Members, the Consortium today is made up of over 30 major museums in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom. It’s an innovative collaboration – not seen before in museums – that shares, shapes, and standardizes digital information regarding museum collections and enables its educational use. Membership is open to any institution with a collection of art.

AMICO Members make annual contributions of multimedia documentation of works in their museums’ collections. This is regularly compiled and made available as The AMICO Library™ to universities, colleges, schools, and public libraries. The 2001-2002 edition of The AMICO Library will document approximately 75,000 different works of art, from prehistoric goddess figures to contemporary installations. More than simply an image database, works in The AMICO Library are

fully documented and may also include curatorial text about the artwork, detailed provenance information, multiple views of the work itself, and other related multimedia.

The AMICO Library is accessible over secure networks to institutional subscribers including universities, colleges, libraries, schools, and museums, and is now accessible by over 2 million users, including faculty, students, teachers, staff, and researchers. Educational institutions may subscribe to The AMICO Library by contacting one of its distributors. These include the Research Libraries Group (RLG), the Ohio Library and Information Network (OhioLINK), Scottish Cultural Resources Access Network (SCRAN), and other new distributor options available for the fall. A subscription to The AMICO Library provides a license to use works for a broad range of educational purposes. Potential subscribers may preview a Thumbnail Catalog of The AMICO Library, get further information and request a free, 30-day trial to the subscriber version of The AMICO Library at <http://www.amico.org>.

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