

***The Prejudices and Antipathies of Art:*  
Teaching Students about Bias in the  
Library of Congress Fine Arts  
Classification During One-Shot  
Instruction**

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# Land Acknowledgement

Miami University is located within the traditional homelands of the Myaamia and Shawnee people, who along with other indigenous groups ceded these lands to the United States in the first Treaty of Greenville in 1795. The Miami people, whose name our university carries, were forcibly removed from these homelands in 1846.

In 1972, a relationship between Miami University and the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma began and evolved into a reciprocal partnership, including the creation of the Myaamia Center at Miami University in 2001. The work of the Myaamia Center serves the Miami Tribe community and is dedicated to the revitalization of Miami language and culture and to restoring that knowledge to the Myaamia people.

Miami University and the Miami Tribe are proud of this work and of the more than 140 Myaamia students who have attended Miami since 1991 through the Myaamia Heritage Award Program.

From more information on the Myaamia Center and Miami Tribe Relations, please see <https://www.miamioh.edu/miami-tribe-relations/index.html>



# Libraries are NOT Neutral

Library of Congress Reading Room



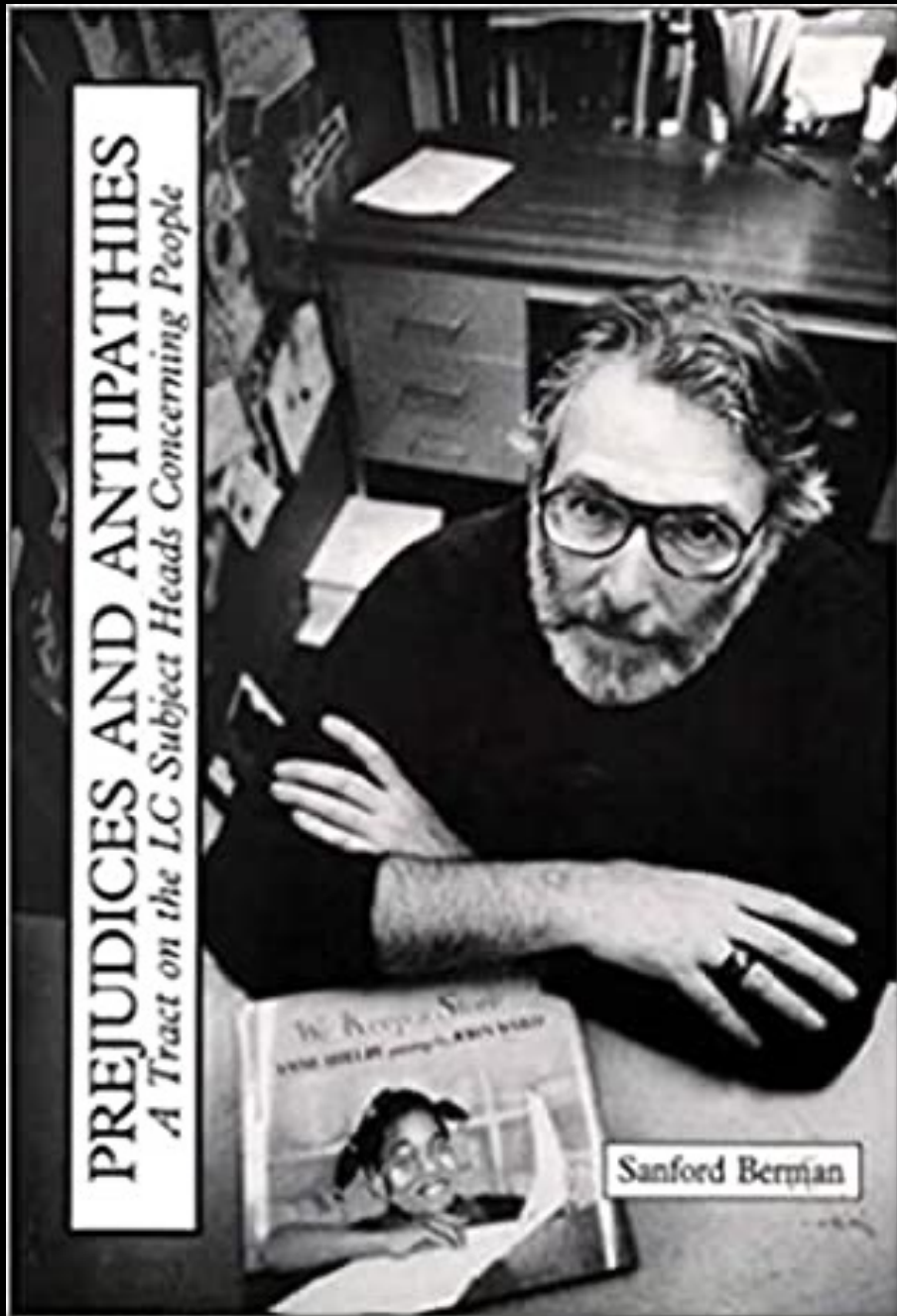
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Library\\_of\\_Congress#/media/File:LOC\\_Main\\_Reading\\_Room\\_Highsmith.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Library_of_Congress#/media/File:LOC_Main_Reading_Room_Highsmith.jpg)

Library of Congress Classification

## LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CLASSIFICATION OUTLINE

- |  |                                  |
|--|----------------------------------|
| A -- GENERAL WORKS                             | L -- EDUCATION                   |
| B -- PHILOSOPHY,<br>PSYCHOLOGY, RELIGION       | M -- MUSIC AND BOOKS ON<br>MUSIC |
| C -- AUXILIARY SCIENCES OF<br>HISTORY          | N -- FINE ARTS                   |
| D -- HISTORY: GENERAL AND<br>OLD WORLD         | P -- LANGUAGE AND<br>LITERATURE  |
| E -- HISTORY: AMERICA                          | Q -- SCIENCE                     |
| F -- HISTORY: AMERICA                          | R -- MEDICINE                    |
| G -- GEOGRAPHY,<br>ANTHROPOLOGY,<br>RECREATION | S -- AGRICULTURE                 |
| H -- SOCIAL SCIENCES                           | T -- TECHNOLOGY                  |
| J -- POLITICAL SCIENCE                         | U -- MILITARY SCIENCE            |
| K -- LAW                                       | V -- NAVAL SCIENCE               |
|  | Z -- LIBRARY SCIENCE             |

<https://libanswers.middlesex.mass.edu/faq/85519>



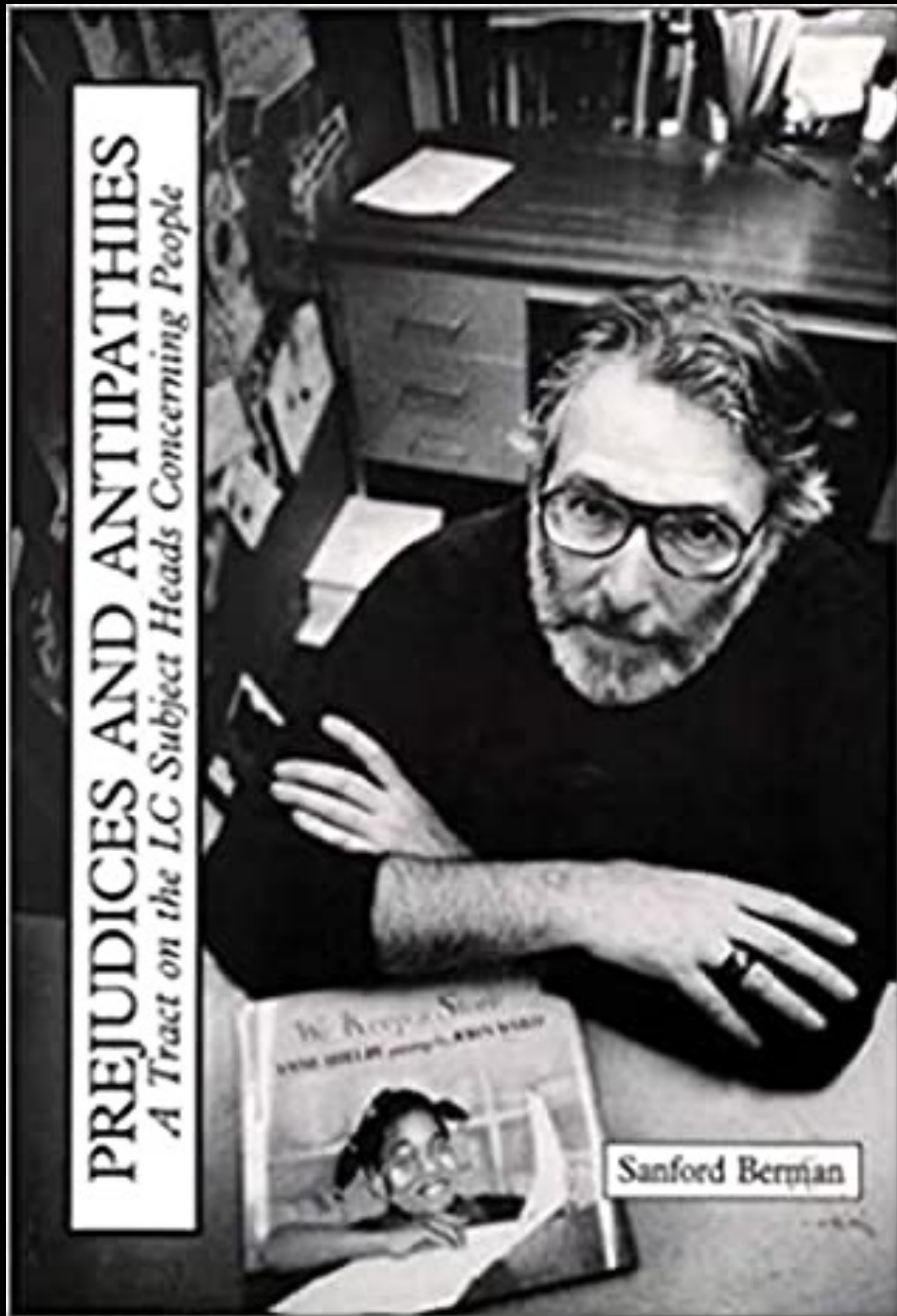
Sanford Berman

*Prejudices and Antipathies: A Tract on  
the LC Heads Concerning People*  
1971





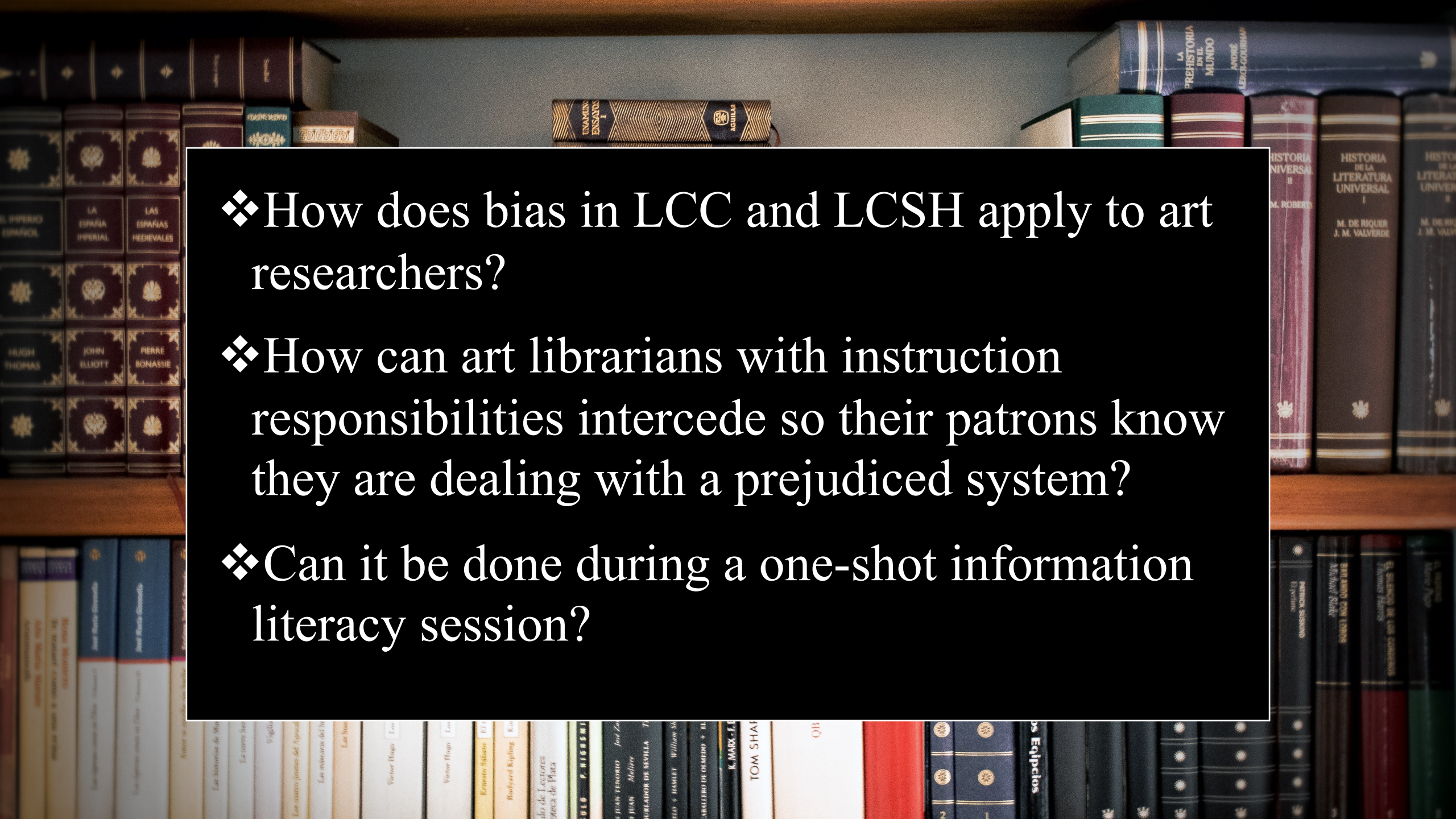





Sanford Berman

*Prejudices and Antipathies: A Tract on  
the LC Heads Concerning People*  
1971



- 
- ❖ How does bias in LCC and LCSH apply to art researchers?
  - ❖ How can art librarians with instruction responsibilities intercede so their patrons know they are dealing with a prejudiced system?
  - ❖ Can it be done during a one-shot information literacy session?





How does bias in LCC and LCSH apply to art researchers?



# Bias in the LCC Fine Arts (N) Range

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CLASSIFICATION OUTLINE



## CLASS N - FINE ARTS



*(Click each subclass for details)*

<b>Subclass N</b>	<b>Visual arts</b>
<b>Subclass NA</b>	<b>Architecture</b>
<b>Subclass NB</b>	<b>Sculpture</b>
<b>Subclass NC</b>	<b>Drawing. Design. Illustration</b>
<b>Subclass ND</b>	<b>Painting</b>
<b>Subclass NE</b>	<b>Print media</b>
<b>Subclass NK</b>	<b>Decorative arts</b>
<b>Subclass NX</b>	<b>Arts in general</b>

# Bias in the LCC Fine Arts (N) Range

## Subclass NK

NK1-(9990)	Decorative arts
NK1-570	General
NK600-806	History
NK1135-1149.5	Arts and crafts movement
NK1160-1590	Decoration and ornament. Design
NK1160-1174	General
NK1175-(1498)	History
NK1505-1535	General works
NK1548-1590	Special subjects for design
NK1648-1678	Religious art
NK1700-2195	Interior decoration. House decoration
NK1700-2138	General. History, etc. Including special rooms
NK2140-2180	Decorative painting
NK2190-2192	Church decoration
NK2200-2750	Furniture
NK2775-2898	Rugs and carpets
NK2975-3049	Tapestries
NK3175-3296.3	Upholstery. Drapery
NK3375-3496.3	Wallpapers
NK3600-(9990)	Other arts and art industries
NK3700-4695	Ceramics
NK4700-4890	Costume
NK5100-5440	Glass
NK5500-6060	Glyptic arts
NK6400-8459	Metalwork
NK8800-9505.5	Textiles
NK9600-9955	Woodwork

NK3600-(9990)

NK3700-4695

NK4700-4890

NK5100-5440

NK5500-6060

NK6400-8459

NK8800-9505.5

NK9600-9955

Other arts and art industries

Ceramics

Costume

Glass

Glyptic arts

Metalwork

Textiles

Woodwork



# Bias in the LCC Fine Arts (N) Range

## Subclass TT

TT1-999	Handicrafts. Arts and crafts
TT161-170.7	Manual training. School shops
TT174-176	Articles for children
TT180-200	Woodworking. Furniture making. Upholstering
TT201-203	Lathework. Turning
TT205-267	Metalworking
TT300-382.8	Painting. Wood finishing
TT387-410	Soft home furnishings
TT490-695	Clothing manufacture. Dressmaking. Tailoring
TT697-927	Home arts. Homecrafts Including sewing, embroidery, decorative crafts
TT950-979	Hairdressing. Beauty culture. Barbers' work
TT980-999	Laundry work

# Bias in the LCC Fine Arts (N) Range: Fine Art vs. Craft Art

BASIS FOR COMPARISON	ART	CRAFT
Meaning	An unstructured and boundless form of work, that expresses emotions, feelings and vision is called art.	Craft refers to an activity, which involves creation of tangible objects with the use of hands and brain.
Based on	Creative merit	Learned skills and technique
Serves	Aesthetic purpose	Decorative or functional purpose
Emphasizes	Ideas, feelings and visual qualities.	Right use of tools and materials.
Quantification	Difficult	Easy
Reproducible	No	Yes
Emergence	Heart and soul	Mind
Result of	Innate talent	Skill and experience



# Bias in the LCC Fine Arts (N) Range: Fine Art vs. Craft Art



Leonardo da Vinci  
*Self-Portrait*  
Red chalk on paper  
c. 1512

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portrait\\_of\\_a\\_Man\\_in\\_Red\\_Chalk#/media/File:Leonardo\\_da\\_Vinci\\_-\\_presumed\\_self-portrait\\_-\\_WGA12798.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portrait_of_a_Man_in_Red_Chalk#/media/File:Leonardo_da_Vinci_-_presumed_self-portrait_-_WGA12798.jpg)



Covered red jar  
with dragon and sea design  
Jiajing period  
1521–1567  
Ming dynasty

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese\\_ceramics#/media/File:Yellow\\_dragon\\_jar\\_\(cropped\).JPG](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_ceramics#/media/File:Yellow_dragon_jar_(cropped).JPG)



# Bias in the LCC Fine Arts (N) Range: Fine Art vs. Craft Art



Judy Chicago  
*The Dinner Party*  
Ceramic, porcelain,  
textile  
1974-79



[https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/exhibitions/dinner\\_party/](https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/exhibitions/dinner_party/);  
<https://smarthistory.org/judy-chicago-the-dinner-party/>



El Anatsui  
*Rain Has No Father?*  
Found bottle caps and copper wire  
2008

<https://www.denverartmuseum.org/en/edu/object/rain-has-no-father>



# Bias in LCSH: Primitive

## **Art, Primitive** (Not Subd Geog)

[\[N5310.7-5311](#) (General)]

Here are entered works discussing collectively the traditional art of the preliterate and nonindustrialized peoples of the world. General works on the art of indigenous peoples, not limited to a particular racial or ethnic group are entered under Indigenous art. Works on indigenous or primitive art from a specific place or specific people are entered under the heading for the art of that place or people, e.g. Art, Polynesian; Inca art.

UF Primitive art

RT [Art, Prehistoric](#)

[Folk art](#)

NT [Idols and images](#)

## **Sculpture, Primitive** (Not Subd Geog)

[\[NB62\]](#)

Here are entered works discussing collectively the traditional sculpture of the preliterate and nonindustrialized peoples of the world. Works on such sculpture from a specific place or specific people are entered under the heading for the sculpture of that place or people, e.g. Sculpture, Melanesian; Inca sculpture.

UF Primitive sculpture

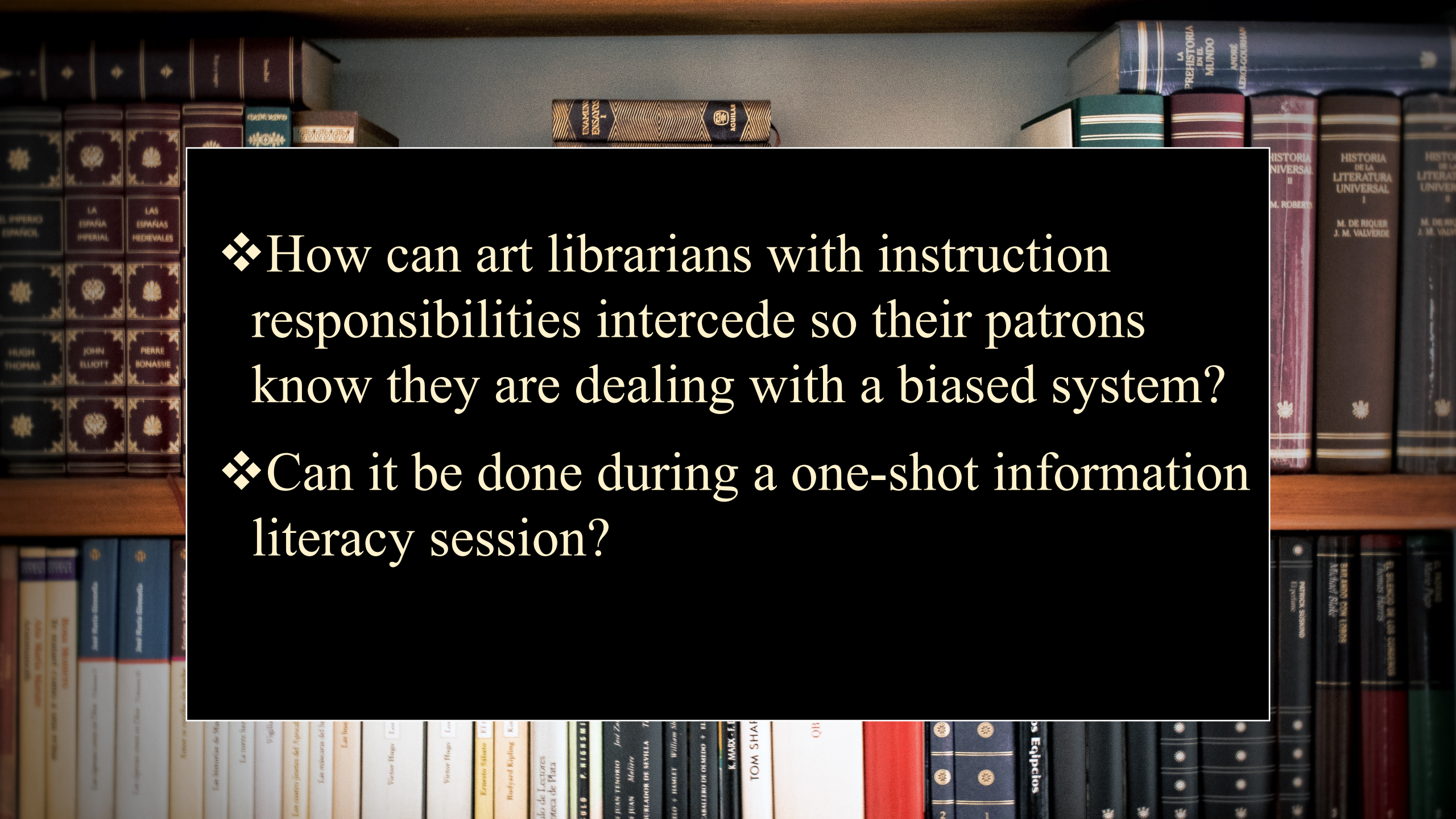
NT [Idols and images](#)

[Sculpture, Prehistoric](#)

## **Arts, Primitive** (May Subd Geog)

Here are entered works discussing collectively the traditional arts of the preliterate and nonindustrialized peoples of the world. Works on such arts from a specific place or specific people are entered under the heading for the arts of that place or people, e.g. Arts, Micronesian; Maya arts.

UF Primitive arts

- 
- ❖ How can art librarians with instruction responsibilities intercede so their patrons know they are dealing with a biased system?
  - ❖ Can it be done during a one-shot information literacy session?



# Interceding: Teaching Students about Bias in the Fine Arts Range

## **Misunderstanding Africa Research Project:**

As this class will demonstrate, and most might be already aware, the Western world mislabels African culture as something it is not. Such labels and misconceptions include “less sophisticated,” “primitive,” “tragic,” “static,” “tribal,” a misuse of the term “traditional,” and many more. These commonly embraced labels and preconceived notions are constructed narratives stemming from Imperialism and colonialism. The goal of this class and research project is to challenge and deconstruct those narratives as they relate to African art.

This project asks students to interrogate these misunderstandings and consider how the process, innovation, vitality, wittiness, functions, connection to life and larger society, and orientation of African art is indeed more sophisticated, complex and layered, than it often gets credit for. Students will thus construct their own mini narrative of art through the execution of an extensive work of art or research paper. Students will engage with (an) element(s) or influence(s) of African art in your deconstruction of Western misconceptions. Element(s) or influence(s) can be a particular artist, an artwork, a philosophy, a movement, a technique, etc. Once the influence(s) is (are) chosen, students will develop their topics.



# Format of the One-Shot Session


- ❖ Introduction to class (5 mins)
- ❖ Defining your topic with mind mapping (15 mins)
- ❖ Choosing keywords (10 mins)
- ❖ Searching for books (10 mins)
- ❖ Searching for articles (10 mins)
- ❖ Prejudice in LCC (30 mins)

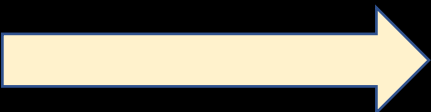
# Interceding In Person

- ❖ Instructor gives brief introduction to LCC (5 mins)
- ❖ Students watch a short video by Khan Academy, *Is There a Difference Between Art and Craft?* (5 mins)
- ❖ Think-Pair-Share activity (15-20 mins)
  - ❖ Questions: Based on what you learned in the video, what can you conclude about the Fine Arts range? What else do you notice about how books are arranged in the Fine Arts?
    - ❖ Students look at a handout of the Fine Arts Range of LCC taken from the LCC website (5 mins)
    - ❖ Discuss their observations in groups of 3-4 (5 mins)
    - ❖ Class-wide discussion (5-10 mins)



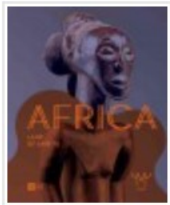
# Interceding Online

Small group discussions  Breakout rooms

Class-wide discussion  Google Jamboard

# Interceding: Teaching Students about Bias in LCSH

1. Africa : land of spirits / curators: Ezio Bassani, Lorenz Homberger, Gigi Pezzoli, and Claudia Zevi ; edited by Claudia Zevi ; with the contribution of Gigi Pezzoli ; texts by Ezio Bassani [and seven others]



Book

Milano : 24 ORE Cultura S.r.l., 2015 349 pages : illustrations (some color), map ; 32 cm Language: English

**Subjects:** Art, African -- Exhibitions; **Sculpture**, African -- Exhibitions; **Sculpture**, Black -- Exhibitions; Wood sculpture -- Exhibitions; Wood-carving -- Africa -- Exhibitions; Masks -- Africa -- Exhibitions; Art, Black -- Africa, Sub-Saharan -- Exhibitions; Art and society -- Africa, Sub-Saharan -- Exhibitions; **Sculpture, Primitive**; Museo delle culture (Milan, Italy) -- Exhibitions

## Request Item

Location	Call No.	Status
ArtArch Folio	N7391.65 .A362 2015	AVAILABLE



# Assessing Student Learning

- ❖ One student noted that craft is, quite literally, othered under the heading “Other Arts and Art Industries”
- ❖ Students have noted that subdivisions like “church decoration” exist in the handout but “mosque decoration” doesn’t, showing a Christian bias
- ❖ Others have argued that by having a subdivision for “Japanese prints” LCC assumes that all the other printmaking subdivisions are decidedly *not* Japanese, demonstrating that LCC was created from a white, Western perspective
- ❖ One student even stated they had assumed libraries were neutral until the lesson

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**Thank you!**

**I welcome your questions  
at the end of the session.**

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