art history

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The study of works of art and architecture. In the mid-19th cent., art history was raised to the status of an academic discipline by the Swiss Jacob Burckhardt, who related art to its cultural environment, and the German idealists Alois Riegl, Heinrich Wölfflin, and Wilhelm Worringer. The latter three saw art history as the analysis of forms and viewed art apart from any function it serves in expressing the spirit of its age. Major 20th-century art historians include Henri Focillon, Bernard Berenson, Aby Warburg, émile Mâle, Erwin Panofsky, and Ernst Gombrich; the succeeding generation has included Michael Fried, Rosalind Krauss, Donald Kuspit, and Giselda Pollack. Modern art history is a broad field of inquiry embracing formal questions of stylistic development as well as considerations of social and cultural context. Since the 1970s, a heightened awareness of gender, ethnicity, and environmental issues has marked the work of many art historians.

See Hauser, A., The Social History of Art (4 vol., 1958-60);
Podro, M., The Critical Historians of Art (1982);
Gombrich, E. H., The Story of Art (16th ed. 1995);
Davies, P. J. E. et al. Janson's History of Art (8th ed. 2010);

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