Thesaurus Introduction

Domain: Public Art and Monuments

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I Purpose of the thesaurus

Welcome to the Public Art and Monuments Thesaurus. A thesaurus is a structured, controlled vocabulary intended to optimize precision and recall in post-coordinate (meaning terms are indexed by their descriptors or terms after a document is created) indexing and searching. A thesaurus assists indexers by helping them tag terms and assign descriptors to documents that help information seekers find information best related to their queries, often within a website, database, or catalog. In other words, a thesaurus is a structured way of using language to facilitate information retrieval for users. This thesaurus focuses on the domain of Public Art and Monuments and this introduction will serve as a guide for its application and use for the purposes outlined above.

There are few thesauri that address the broad domain of visual art and cultural heritage, although the gold standard in the field is the Getty Art and Architecture Thesaurus (AAT), which is widely referenced and used to standardize nomenclature in both museum object cataloging and library book indexing. However, no thesaurus currently exists addressing the niche domain of public art and monuments. Public art is any artwork commissioned, owned, and/or displayed

publicly or by a public organization, such as a government or municipal body. Monuments has been included in the domain to additionally clarify large-scale public artworks that commemorate, elevate, and glorify people, events, and ideas, often while reflecting the ideals of those commissioning them and conveying a sociopolitical or religious agenda. This thesaurus was created to fill a gap in the larger domain of visual art and culture that would be invaluable for public art professionals and collections specialists, artists, and researchers looking for documents and information about this sub-field of visual art. Currently, these users must sift through a large and comprehensive controlled vocabulary (AAT) that neither considers nor addresses their specific needs and does little to aid in recall for documents related to the domain of public art and monuments. This thesaurus needed to be made to concatenate and contextualize the literature, expertise, and resources that exist for subjects related to this domain for professionals working in this field.

II Information system, domain, and user groups

This thesaurus is designed to index documents related to the domain of public art and monuments, a rich sub-field of visual art and cultural heritage, particularly in a library or other information system, such as a library catalog or resource database. This thesaurus uses natural language when appropriate and uses American English to standardize terms and concepts. The primary users for this thesaurus are professionals within the field of public art and monuments. Specifically, those who commission, design, construct, or care for such artworks, such as project managers, civil employees, fabricators, conservators, artists, preparators, registrars, and

collections managers. The needs, culture, and user experience for the primary users of this domain were carefully researched and considered. Users of this domain may belong to professional organizations such as the Northern California Public Art Administrator's Network, Public Art Coalition of Southern California, the Western States Art Federation, the American Institute for Conservation, Western Association for Art Conservation, and the Association of Registrars and Collections Specialists, to name a few. Additionally, state, county, and city governments across the United States and abroad have civic or public art collections and workers who would need to reference and find documents and information related to the specificities of their work and research.

Frequently, documents that are specific to public art or monuments are often categorized by form (ex. "Mural") or under the larger umbrella of visual art and culture, meaning that most information systems do not accurately recall information about these subjects that would be useful for professionals in the field who need highly specialized and specific information. Also, since there is renewed interest and movement to address public art and monuments, particularly for statues commemorating racist figures in the United States, a thesaurus addressing this particular domain is particularly timely and necessary. For these reasons, the thesaurus seeks to help indexers and other information professionals properly tag and assign terms or descriptors to documents within this domain that will better serve these users.

Secondary users of this domain include academics (particularly urban planners or art historians), researchers, students, citizen researchers, archivists, arts educators or advocates, and the general public. While these users can certainly find use for the thesaurus and the

documents it assigns terms to, their needs and preferences were not centered during thesaurus construction and final decision making.

III The parts of the thesaurus

Classified schedule

The classified schedule is the underlying structure of how terms are organized, and typically used for rapid searches and browsing. The Public Art and Monuments Thesaurus begins with five facets, or groupings, of the preferred terms. Each of 102 preferred terms, identified by their capitalization, can be seen within the arrows while using the browser view.

Also seen throughout are subfacets, characterized by square brackets and lowercase type. Subfacets are generic groupings of preferred terms, but not preferred terms themselves.

This schedule is built hierarchically. Hierarchies are the nesting relationships used within the classified schedule. Each of the five facets are the overarching categories, which contain comparable classes of concepts, each with similar traits, yet distinctive from other facets. (*About the AAT (Getty Research Institute)*, n.d.) Preferred terms are arranged from broad to narrow within their facet, with the more narrow terms retaining the characteristics of the broader terms above them. These are delineated as Broader Term and Narrower Term. The five facets are arranged alphabetically by title:

- ***Actions, Activities, and Processes***

  This facet contains terms related to actions surrounding public art and monuments. Creating the artwork, management and conservation of the artwork, as well as processes associated with the public relations aspect of the artwork.

- ***Concepts, Theories, and Ideas***

  This facet contains terms related to the more abstract reason for creating and/or maintaining the artwork.

- ***Entities, Things, and Objects***

  This facet contains terms for tangible items, from components and materials to the final artwork itself. Also included are dealings of ownership, legislation, and funding of the artwork.

- ***Space, Place, Location, or Environment***

  This facet contains concrete terms for where and/or how the artwork is presented.

- ***Time***

  This facet contains two subfacets, styles and temporalities, that delineate two definitions of time: named art movements and generalized time periods.

Alphabetical schedule

The alphabetical schedule lists, in word-by-word filing sequence, all of the 374 terms contained within the Public Art and Monuments Thesaurus. Each term is searchable, and either a preferred term or a non-preferred term. Taken along with the classified structure, the construct of the thesaurus is "intended to help both catalogers and researchers select the term(s) most appropriate for indexing and retrieval." (*III. Syntax and Structure: Thesaurus for Graphics Materials II: Genre and Physical Characteristic Terms (TGM II) | Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress*, n.d.)

IV Structure of entries

Preferred terms (Preferred labels)

This is a term that is used in indexing and is chosen to represent a concept or serve as a representation of similar non-preferred terms. These terms make up the term list within the thesaurus- the classified and alphabetical schedules. Users may be given the instruction "USE FOR or UF" to indicate which non-preferred terms lead into the preferred term.

Non-preferred terms (Equivalent terms or Alternative labels)

This is a term that is used in retrieval as a lead-in term for preferred terms and is treated as equivalent to preferred terms for indexing purposes. Non-preferred terms may refer to the same concept (synonyms/ interchangeable in ordinary language), have some similarities in usage (different in ordinary language but enough overlap to be equivalent in indexing), be

antonyms of the preferred term, or be more specific (narrower) than preferred terms. Users may be given the instruction "USE" to indicate which preferred term should be used to retrieve the concept that is being searched.

Related terms

These are terms that are "mentally associated to such an extent that the link between them should be made explicit in thesaurus, on the grounds that it would reveal alternative terms which might be used for indexing and retrieval" (Aitchison et al., 2000, p. 61). These terms serve users by expanding the results of their search to include other concepts that help explain or enhance the concept that was retrieved from the initial search.

Broader terms/Narrower terms (Broader concepts/Narrower concepts)

These terms are shown within the same facet of the thesaurus and include: whole-part relationships, inherited characteristics (all X are Y, but not all Y are X) , or when the narrower term is a named example of the broader term. The terms are often best understood through comparison.

Definitions

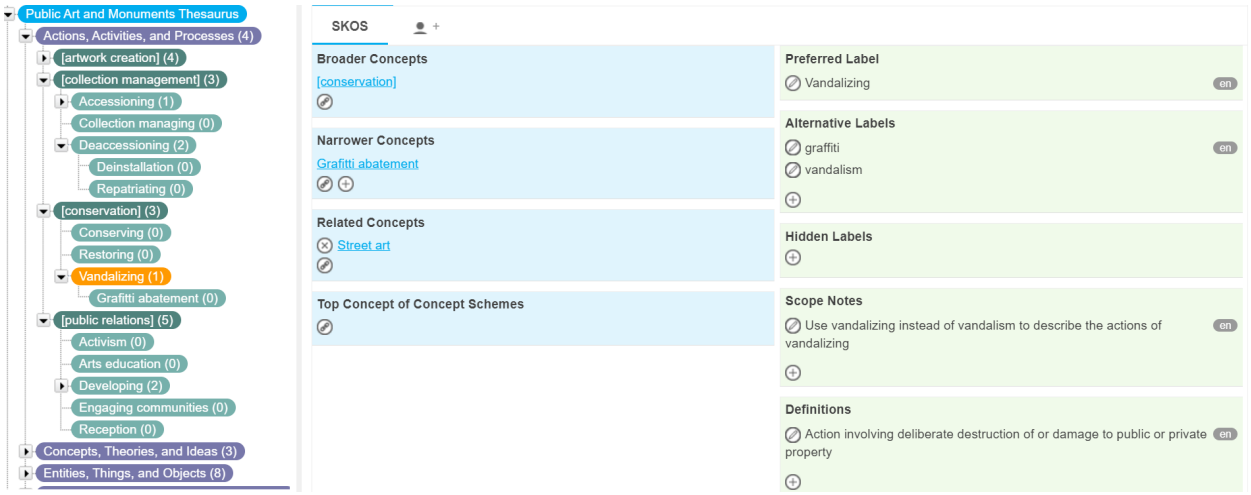
This feature is used to clarify what the term means within the context of the thesaurus not used for ordinary language definitions. This is especially useful when the term is used to represent an ambiguous concept that may be confusing within the context of the thesaurus. Definitions are helpful for indexers and users to understand how to best locate concepts.

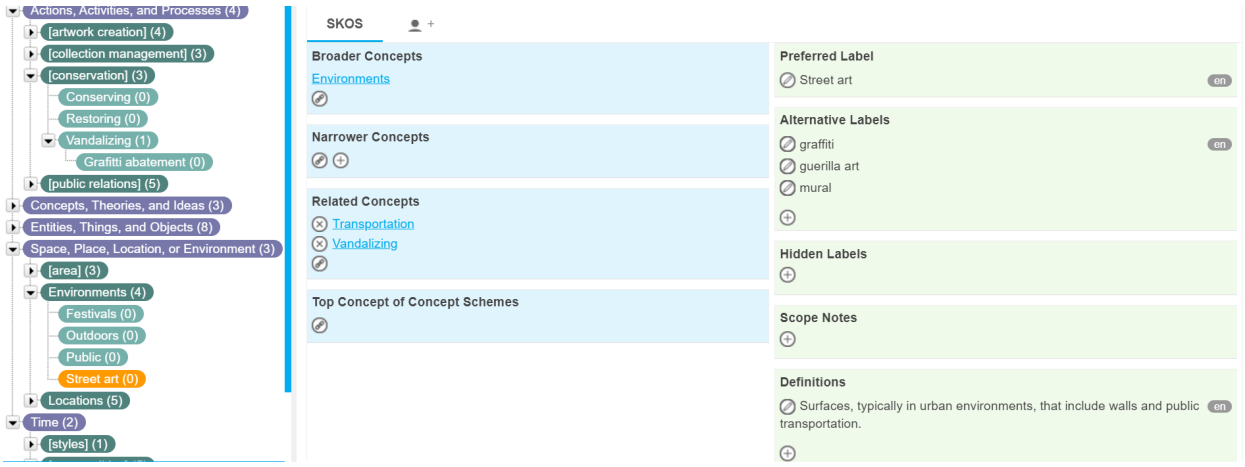
Scope notes

This feature is used to describe how to best use a term within the thesaurus. A scope note may indicate to users: "restrictions on meaning, range of topics covered, instructions to indexers, indication of 'dummy terms' (explain display structure), term histories, reciprocal scope notes" (Aitchison et al., 2000, p. 35).

Example entries

Below are entries for the PT: Vandalizing and, on the following page, the PT: Street art. These entries serve as an example of the structure that has been defined above.





V Indexing and search using the thesaurus

How to find & use search terms

A few words about search terms in this thesaurus

The Public Art & Monuments thesaurus currently contains 102 preferred search terms and 382 non-preferred terms. Terms are also called *labels* in this thesaurus; the two words are equivalent.

- Use *preferred terms* to search the thesaurus
- Use *non-preferred terms* to find preferred terms

For definitions of preferred and non-preferred terms, see *Structure of entries* above, which describes the logical structure of the thesaurus and its entries.

Spelling, number, punctuation, and case

- This thesaurus uses American English spelling conventions.
- Almost all preferred terms are in noun form, including verbal nouns such as *documenting*. Plural forms are preferred, but proper names and acronyms are generally not pluralized.
- Punctuation (e.g, apostrophes, hyphens) has been avoided as much as possible, because search in this thesaurus is sensitive to it. Where punctuation occurs, that is the usual form of the term, although an unpunctuated form is included as an alternative term to enhance findability.
- Diacritics are likewise not used. For example, the artist José Clemente Orozco is entered as *Jose Clemente Orozco,*, with no accent mark over the *e* in *Jose*.
- Term entry is not case-sensitive. This means that if you enter Jose Clemente Orozco as *jose clemente orozco* or *jose Clemente orozco*, you will still retrieve *Jose Clemente Orozco*.

Tips for searching

This thesaurus offers three ways to search:

- via the Search Bar
- visually via the Classified Schedule
- via the alphabetically-sorted Concepts Index

Searching via the search bar

To find a concept quickly within this thesaurus, enter your search term in the search bar. This will retrieve a drop-down list of concepts that contain that term in any label, including alternate terms/ labels, narrower, broader, etc. (See image below). Results are shown for all possible elements. Selecting a term from this list will expand the corresponding branch in the hierarchy tree (in the left vertical bar) and retrieves the concept's Details View. Truncating and stemming conventions do not work in this search bar. However, auto-complete initiates after 3 letters have been entered.

After having entered your search term, you will be shown a page called "Advanced Search". Here you will be given an array of matches to your term. You will also see a list of alternate labels and broader concepts. If the term is in blue and underlined, you can click the term to link through to the page for that term.

If you type in a term here without hitting "enter", a small window will drop down showing the sub-facet and any broader term that houses your search term. If you click on this window, you will see a page showing the preferred label for your term and a list of alternative or non-preferred terms immediately below, where you will find your search term. Use the preferred term wherever possible.

You can go directly to advanced search by clicking the tab *Concepts*, which you will find below the title on the opening page. Searching for terms here allows you to narrow your search to the label or term type: Any, Preferred, Alternative, or Hidden. Search by Concept is disabled. The

only language enabled is English. You can also constrain by "contains", "does not contain", or "starts with".

At the bottom of this search page, you will see a table showing the Concept facet to which the term belongs, a truncated list of alternative terms, any broader terms, and any narrower concepts. If any of these term types has no entry, you will see a *0* in that field.

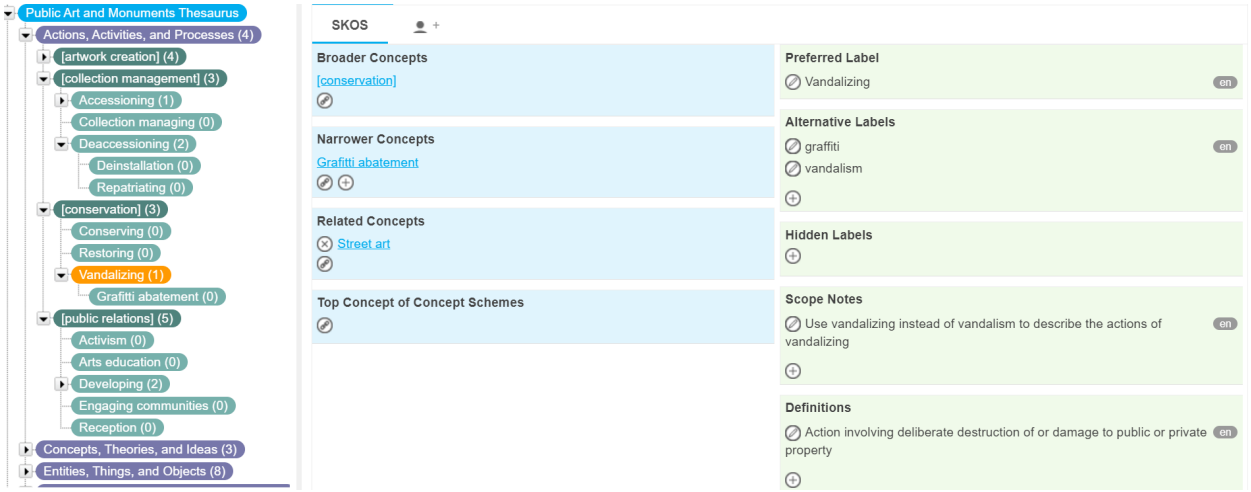
If you want to see a condensed view of the term's detail page, you can simply click on the arrow to the left of the Concept. From here, you can click through to the full list of alternative terms, broader concepts, and the concept itself.

To see the full Detail page, click on the linked *Concept*. Here you will find the full record as discussed and visualized in Example entries, above.

Searching with the classified schedule

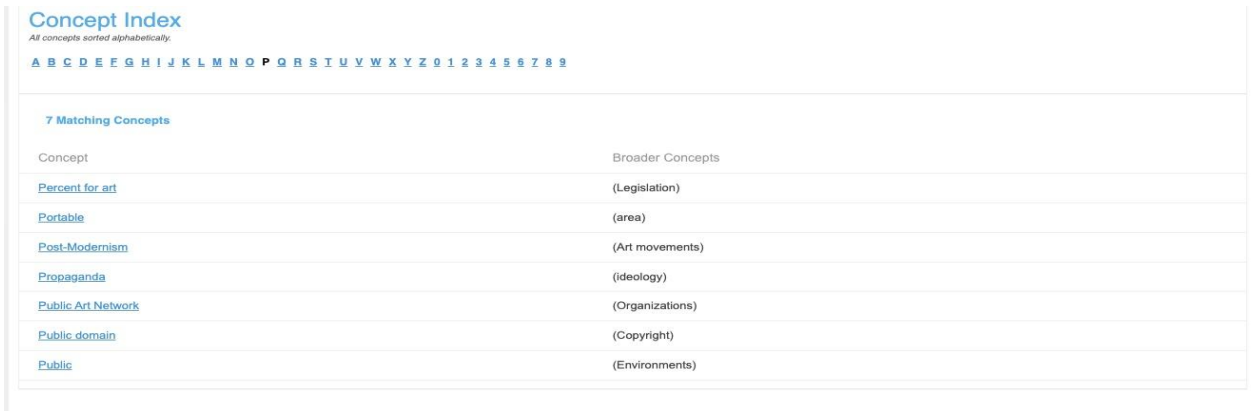
For a narrative description of the Classified Schedule, please click through to The parts of the thesaurus and how they are structured.

In the Browser view, you will see a tree diagram of the Classified Schedule. You can click on the arrows to expand any of the facets into its sub-facets and preferred labels/ terms. The number in parentheses to the right of the term in the tree refers to the number of narrower terms associated with the preferred term.



Searching with the alphabetical concept index

If you prefer to browse the concepts alphabetically, click through to the *Concepts* tab. This will take you to an Advanced Search page for Concepts. On this page, click on the *Concept Index* tab immediately below the *Concepts* tab. This will take you to a list of letters of the alphabet, which you can click through to terms beginning with that letter. Bear in mind that this is for preferred, narrower, or broader terms and their facet labels *only*. It will not retrieve any alternative terms. The terms themselves are linked to their term/ label Detail pages.



How to use Broader/ Narrower/ Related/ Top Concept Label Hyperlinks

Each term/ label page may display the above-named link (see Example Entries, above.)

Clicking through any of these links will take you to the term page for the associated term.

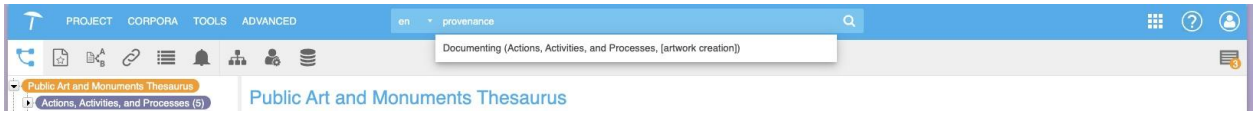
Alternative labels are never hyperlinked.

How to Search Scope Notes and Definitions

Search in this thesaurus is by label/ term only; scope notes and definitions are not searchable.

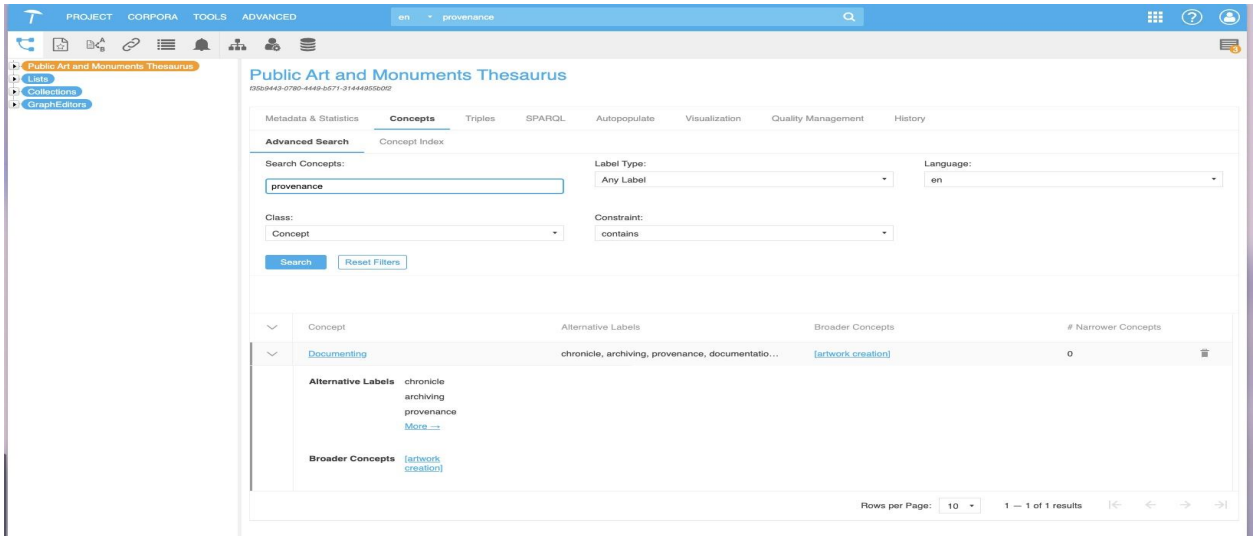
A Search Example

If you were to search for the term “provenance” by the search bar, you might use the drop-down window to click through to the Details page:



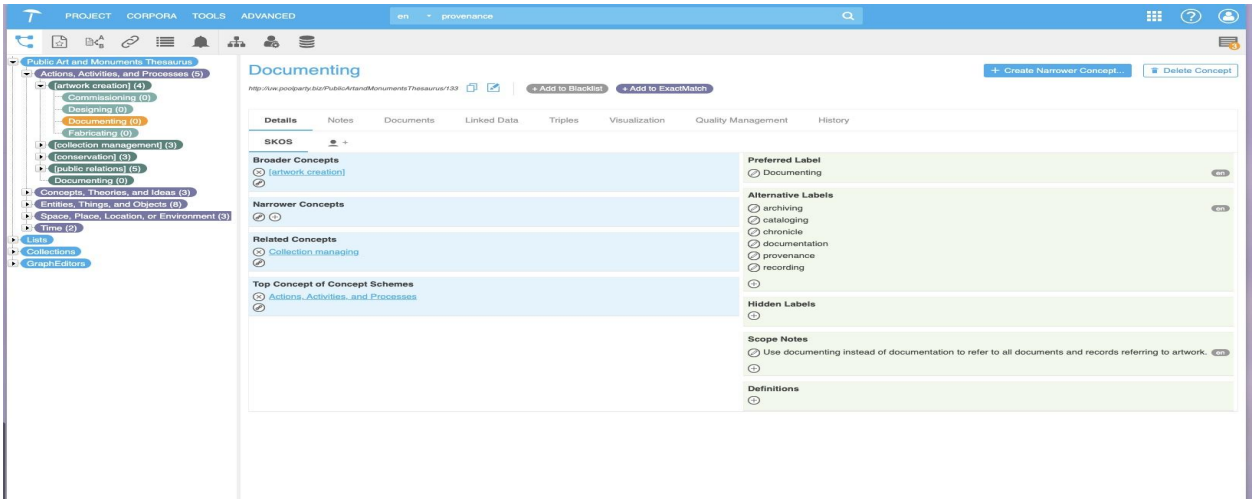
The drop-down shows you the facet (the sub-facet, [and an unsearchable label for organizational purposes only]).

If you were to search for the same term by entering the full term in the search bar, you would see something like this:

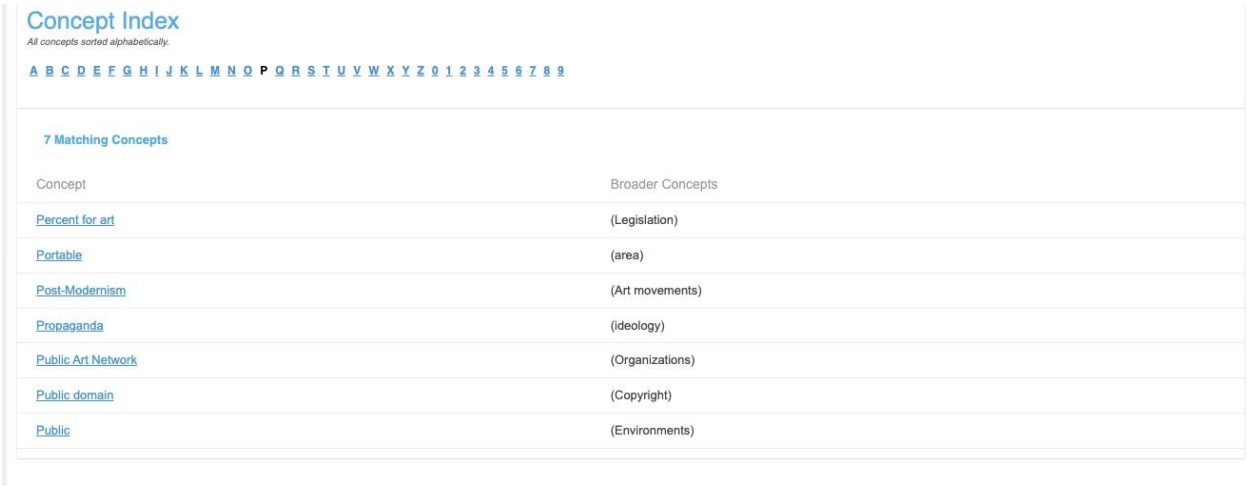


This shows a condensed version of the Details with linkable terms. You will note that because "provenance" is an alternative term/ label for "Documenting", it is *not* linked (no alternative terms are linked).

Either pathway will take you to the Details page for "Documenting."



If you choose to search by the Concept Index, you will *not* find “provenance” under *P*, as it is an alternative term. You will find its preferred term, “Documenting”, under *D*.



Concept Index

All concepts sorted alphabetically.

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

7 Matching Concepts

Concept	Broader Concepts
Percent for art	(Legislation)
Portable	(area)
Post-Modernism	(Art movements)
Propaganda	(ideology)
Public Art Network	(Organizations)
Public domain	(Copyright)
Public	(Environments)

VI Special features

This thesaurus largely leverages the Classification Research Group (CRG) fundamental facets. One significant deviation and special feature is the addition of a “Concepts, Theories, and Ideas” facet. This facet covers abstract concepts such as cultural theory, ideology, and methodology, which includes terms like memorialization, decolonization, and creative placemaking. These concepts are quite foundational to art in general and public art and monuments specifically. While they conceivably could reside within “Entities” or “Actions” to some degree, their importance to the domain, as well as conceptual distinctness from other CRG facets, is sufficient to collocate them together in their own facet to support the needs of our user groups. This is

further supported by reviewing AAT's facets as an authority in the arts domain, which includes a similar "Associated Concepts" facet, which they define as covering "theoretical and critical concerns, ideologies, attitudes, and social or cultural movements."

VII Governance

Comments and suggestions are welcome from professionals in the field of public art and public art administration. They may be submitted via form and should include concept definition, references to where it occurs, synonyms or alternate forms, relationships with any existing terms, and justification for recommendation. Recommendations are reviewed weekly.

Thesaurus query logs are reviewed on a monthly basis, covering user warrant. Existing term usage is monitored for deletion, demotion, or amendment in consideration of low volumes of use. Lead-in term usage is monitored for promotion consideration. Queries for non-existing terms are reviewed for high usage and consideration as additions to the thesaurus. Literary warrant updates are conducted on an annual basis, covering a range of publications, journals, books, websites, and legislation relevant to public art and monuments.

Every 3 years, a committee of experts representing a cross-section of public art professionals, including artists, administrators, fabricators, conservators, registrars, researchers, art historians, and archivists, convene to discuss and review more complex thesaurus challenges as well as interviewing sources for new concepts and language emerging in the space, exercising expert and scholarly warrant. To ensure fresh and diverse perspectives are cycling through the

committee's viewpoint, the committee members rotate at least every 2 sessions; however, may rotate more frequently depending on members' commitments.

No matter the process or workflow by which a potential term came under review, it may be added as a candidate term prior to being added for official use to the thesaurus. Candidate terms are reviewed monthly. Updates to the thesaurus are published on a monthly basis and include a change log to facilitate user needs to backfill or retroactively apply new terms.

VII A note on sources

A variety of sources and warrant were used in the construction of this thesaurus. Term gathering centered on expert, literary, and scholarly warrant. Expert and scholarly warrants were invoked with professional organizations, historical sources and individuals, and librarians and library research guides. Professional organizations included associations, museums, and government, which ranged from the Association of Public Art to the Museum of Art in Public Spaces to multiple local government civic art programs. Literary warrant was used across dominant theoretical positions and methodologies in the domain, as well as key books, journals, websites, and other publications central to the domain. The AAT is a key existing controlled vocabulary in the art domain that was used, as well as sources like The Public Art Archive™, condition reporting best practices document from the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, *Museum Registration Methods* in the American Alliance Of Museums series, and various art magazines and conservation journals. The Americans for the Arts Public Art Network

(PAN) Year in Review would also be a useful resource to leverage for a content audit, given its annual cadence to see what contemporary terms and areas of emphasis are emerging. For definitions and scope notes, the AAT was a primary reference. Given this thesaurus' purpose to fill the public art and monuments gap in the AAT, it was important to align with it for overlapping concepts and phrasing, as well as take inspiration from it as an authoritative source in art more broadly. The African Studies Thesaurus from the Library, Documentation and Information Department of the African Studies Centre Leiden (ASCL) was also used as a respected reference.

VIII Works Cited

About the AAT (Getty Research Institute). (n.d.). Retrieved November 10, 2023, from https://www.getty.edu/research/tools/vocabularies/aat/about.html

Aitchison, Gilchrist, A., & Bawden, D. (2000). Thesaurus construction and use : a practical manual (4th ed.). Fitzroy Dearborn.

III. Syntax and Structure: Thesaurus for Graphics Materials II: Genre and Physical Characteristic Terms (TGM II) | Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress. (n.d.). Retrieved November 10, 2023, from https://www.loc.gov/rr/print/tgm2/iii.html#