The renowned Gernsheim Photographic Corpus of Drawings, housed at Rome’s Bibliotheca Hertziana, Max Planck Institute for Art History, consists of approximately 190,000 black-and-white photographs of European drawings from the 15th to the early 20th century from more than 150 museums, archives, and libraries. The photographs were taken by Dr. Walter and Dr. Jutta Gernsheim over 80 years, beginning in the 1930s.

Collaborative Tools for the Gernsheim Project

Artstor and the Bibliotheca Hertziana plan to implement new collaborative digital humanities tools to bring together museum, library, academic, and public scholars from German and American institutions to improve metadata and to make a larger portion of the Corpus available for educational purposes.

The Details

1. Image recognition software (also known as computer vision) will compare the entire Corpus with the 1.8 million images in the Artstor Digital Library (ADL), potentially finding matches between drawings in the Corpus and other important photo archives and image collections.

2. We will develop an online collaborative space with three layers of scholarly and public discourse:

   a. Enable curators from institutions with works in the Corpus to discuss attribution for drawings and other data points that may be in need of updating. The Bibliotheca Hertziana’s role as convener will be crucial for gathering key curators and scholars to set up the goals and the rules of the project, present scholarly contributions, and discuss new findings.

   b. Facilitate commentary and suggestions from other scholars, including those at universities.

   c. Expose the images to all ADL users and users of Bibliotheca Hertziana’s online photographic collection, and, pending permissions from the museums, to the general public, and invite user tagging to crowd-source additional metadata.