3 How Russian Art Historians Learn to Write

Natalya Smirnova and Anna Guseva
HSE University, St. Petersburg

In this chapter, we explore how writing has been taught in the domain of art history in Russia. We draw on academic literacy theory and work from two major premises: a) writing is a type of social practice and b) writing is closely linked with the knowledge-making practices in a discipline. We employed semi-structured interviews to explore how participants were taught to write in the discipline and how they have taught their students to write. The results of our study indicate that mentoring and discovery learning were the main teaching approaches and that writing was seen as purely instrumental, a skill that one acquired naturally from experience. The interview data indicates that the participants were reinventing their writing and that the major tensions in that process were closely linked to: 1) access to resources in the process of researching and producing a text, and 2) traditions of knowledge-making globally and in the particular geopolitical and socio-historic context of Russia. The findings indicate that research on the writing for publication practices of art historians has been challenging because this knowledge domain is marked by varying interpretative epistemologies within national, cultural, and or geopolitical contexts.

Academic writing for publication as a research field has been developing globally over the last 30 years (Curry & Lillis, 2015; Kuteeva & Mauranen, 2014). The majority of studies have looked into various linguistic patterns within published texts, scholarly writers' experiences and publication practices, and cultural and disciplinary variations in academic text production by academics working in hard and soft sciences (Cargill et al., 2019; Hyland, 2009; Uzuner, 2008). At the same time, little research has been carried out on how contemporary scholars learn to write academic texts within the domain of arts and humanities. In particular, research on the writing for publication practices in fields like art history is challenging because the knowledge domain of the humanities is marked by the production of mono-authored texts with distinctive authorial voices, a less rigid rhetorical structure, and interpretative epistemologies (Hyland, 2016).

Another challenge is that within all disciplines, anglophone writing pedagogy is the most researched one. For example, research into writing centers has been predominantly driven by studies which examine how U. S. writing center models are adopted or adapted in universities across the world (Shine Cain, 2011, see also Chapter 5 and Chapter 7). Yet, there have been calls in academia to acknowledge the existence of indigenous writing traditions in native languages so as to overcome the hegemony of Anglo-centric writing pedagogy (Altbach & de Wit, 2015; Canagarajah, 2005) and make local writing traditions visible to the global research community (Chitez et al., 2018; Gustafsson & Ganobcsik-Williams, 2016). Following Lillis and Curry (2010), our study explores how writing has been taught in the domain of art history in the particular geolinguistic and geopolitical space of Russia.

We draw on academic literacies theory (Lea & Street, 1998), and there are two major premises underlying our approach: a) writing is a type of social practice (Lillis, 2001) and b) writing is closely linked with the knowledge-making practices in a discipline. The chapter is based on six interviews with Russian art historians about their academic writing practices. We seek to address the following empirical questions:

- What were the educational practices in the past and what are the contemporary approaches to teaching writing in art history in Russia?
- What challenges existed and exist in knowledge-making and writing practices and how do they affect the teaching of writing?

To our best knowledge, there have been few studies which have explicitly or implicitly raised the issues of writing pedagogy in the art history knowledge domain in particular geolinguistic and geopolitical contexts. Thus, the aim in this chapter is to bring to bear understandings and questions arising from complexities in meaning making and writing in art history texts to explore contemporary Russian scholars' accounts of their educational experiences and the challenges that have significantly affected academic writing practices. In this chapter, we first address the academic literacies framework and emphasize the value of drawing on scholarly writers' experiences and perspectives on academic writing as a type of social practice. Then, we critically address art history as a contested site of knowledge production and the distinctive features of the discipline that influence its associated rhetoric. Next, we discuss the existing pedagogical approaches worldwide in this domain and reach conclusions about the state of writing and writing education in this field. We then introduce the research design and the results of the study. Finally, we discuss the key findings and draw conclusions relevant for researchers in academic writing, scholarly writers in the field, and writing instructors.

Academic Writing as Social Practice

The complexity of research on how academics produce and learn to produce academic texts is linked to the existing diversity of ideologies and theories in the field of writing for publication. Lillis and Curry (2010) have usefully suggested that there are key ideological orientations towards writers, texts, practices, and languages which underlie methodological choices for research. Thus, methodological choices in scholarly writing research have heavily depended on how writing is conceptualized and how text and context have been methodologically linked.

One key methodological strand of approaches to exploring academic text production is based on text analysis (Curry & Lillis, 2015). Text-based approaches primarily focus on variations in the linguistic features of academic texts (cross disciplinary and cross linguistic studies) with the aim of quantifying them and comparing or contrasting these features. Such studies tend to treat English-medium academic texts as a fixed norm. This methodological approach is grounded in the debatable premise that language is a transparent and bounded phenomenon (Lillis, 2013). In other words, an academic text is taken out of its context (Blommaert, 2005) and becomes the primary object of analysis.

The other key approach is ethnography-oriented research, which has been employed to explore issues related to contexts for text production and the experiences of scholarly writers in academia (Lillis, 2008). Paltridge (2017) echoes Lillis' (2003) emphasis on the idea that writing is a type of knowledge-making rather than just knowledge inscription. Such an approach is transformative in its nature because it enables both scholars and writers to explore the existing conventions and their constraining or restricting powers in the process of academic text production (Lillis, 2015). However, what constitutes context requires clarification (Blommaert, 2005), and Lillis (2008) has usefully distinguished among three levels of ethnography (as method, methodology, and deep theorizing) to indicate that there have been variations in ethnographic engagement and levels of context in the field of academic writing.

The theoretical framework for academic literacies emerged as a response to the dominance of skills-based approaches to teaching reading and writing and inequalities in access to education among students. Rooted in New Literacy Studies (e.g., Street, 2003), academic literacies theory provides a critical lens for exploring who can say what in academia and offers a viable methodological approach to learning the experiences of scholarly writers. It has a distinctive ideological and epistemological tradition (Lea & Street, 1998; Lillis & Scott, 2007). Literacy should not be treated as autonomous and "a single and universal phenomenon with assumed cognitive as well as economic benefits" (Lillis &

Scott, 2007, p. 11). Instead, it has an ideological nature: socioculturally embedded literacy practices should be taken into account along with the associated power relationships (Lillis, 2009). Thus, the high-stakes academic writing of scholars is the key component of literacy and is a social practice (as opposed to competence). It is heavily shaped by the values, beliefs, and ideologies of writers in a particular context (Barton et al., 2000; Lillis, 2001).

In *Academic Writing in a Global Context*, Lillis and Curry (2010) explore scholars' writing experiences and access to resources in four national contexts (Portugal, Hungary, Spain, and Slovakia). They reveal important resources which have been available to scholars and mobilized via local and transnational networks: contacts among scholars, information, academic materials, rhetorical resources, collaboration in writing, collaboration on research, and brokering (connections to publishing opportunities). Lillis and Curry (2006) also reveal the role of literacy brokers, a term they use to refer to actors who can influence the academic research article production and access resources in important ways, such as reviewers, editors, and translators. Other geopolitical contexts where marked center-periphery inequalities have been studied are: China (Li & Flowerdew, 2009), Spain (Pérez-Llantada et al., 2011), and Germany (Schluer, 2014).

The value of Lillis and Curry's (2010) work is its use of ethnography, a key empirical methodology of the ideological model of academic literacy. In our study of text production by Russian scholars within a particular cultural, disciplinary, and geopolitical context, the notion of writing as a type of social practice helps to identify and explore links among the objects of the research (texts, their uses, and users). Practice helps to link language with individuals at the level of the context of a situation (what is said at a certain moment, under certain conditions) and at the level of the context of a culture (what can be researched at a certain moment and under certain conditions) in three ways: 1) texts do not exist in isolation and are part of what people do (practices) in the material world; 2) these practices become the life routines of individuals and institutions when language is seen as practice-resource; and 3) academic writing shapes and is embedded in social structures (Lillis & Scott, 2007).

Art History as a Knowledge Domain

Knowledge production in the field of arts and humanities has been genuinely different from the hard sciences and social sciences (Hellqvist, 2010). Art history, like any disciplinary field, has certain features that influence meaning-making in the process of academic text production. This is a young discipline globally and is still evolving and struggling for its disciplinary boundaries. Art history has also been seen as an emerging discipline without a formal status (Grabar,

1982) and often positioned as luxury, elitist, and not meeting practical educational demands (Kent, 2012). In Russia, art history has been struggling for its independence from such root knowledge domains as literary criticism, theory of arts, and history. The standards of writing in the field have differed a lot (Sychenkova, 2014) because the cultural, epistemological, and aesthetic expectations of writers and readers have been vast and thus unmanageable.

Interpretation is important to understanding how art historians write their texts. Biglan (1973) identifies variations along the hard-soft and pureapplied dimensions. The distinction between hard and soft fields relates to the extent to which knowledge is constructed on the basis of a framework of shared assumptions. The pure sciences (hard) maintain a degree of internal unity over aims, methods of investigation and evaluation criteria, which may come to be seen as derived from reality itself, rather than constructed by disciplinary convention. The humanities and social sciences (soft), in contrast, tend to be characterized by internal discord, encouraging a view of knowledge as a matter of interpretation. Writing is a way to make meaning, yet it is surrounded by many difficulties. Grabar (1982) illustrates a few of them: fear of being obvious or doctrinaire; the risks of raising fundamental issues when there are established ways of operating which seem perfectly acceptable within the discourse community; the difficulty of choosing meaning-making and interpretation patterns from anthropology or literature; and, generally, the absence of a collectively accepted statement of what the history of the visual arts is supposed to be (p. 281).

The intellectual response to art has been constrained by the fact that each subfield has its own methods and approaches, technical vocabulary, and needs. Grabar (1982) explains that subfields in art history can be cultural, social, technical, methodological, and conceptual. He concludes that they are so different that that they need autonomy to develop, and there is no universal history of art.

The visual experiences of art historians have been central to their academic text production. Barolsky (1996) addresses the theoretical and methodological problem of how one sees in the history of art and emphasizes that seeing is a play of imagination reflected in writing. Roth (2010) addresses the future of the writing medium (when compared to visual modes) and refers to the long-standing tensions between writing and visual representation.

Writing a text in art history in the global academic context has become more difficult for art historians, and Grabar (1982) makes four key observations. First of all, the range of visual experiences offered to the historian of art has increased dramatically. There is an increased variety of historical periods and geographical areas; minor (decorative arts) and major media; paintings, photographs, and books as reproducible substitutes; and exhibitions and other visual experiences (external to the show). The second observation is that

major journals publish a limited range of methodological and conceptual approaches in art history. Art forms mostly represent the Western European heritage, from late antiquity to the late nineteenth century while published papers belong either to the patronage or attribution genres. He also observes that regions outside the western world mostly have limited access to key artworks, books with reproductions, or key readings in the discipline "out of which emerge the principles of the classical history of arts" (Grabar, 1982, p. 282). Finally, what counts as knowledge becomes the outcome of educational and academic circumstances. He questions why Western art and no other artistic tradition is privileged as the mainstream in classical history.

Grabar's (1982) observations have certain implications and consequences for meaning making and writing in the discipline and emphasize the risks of cultural imperialism. Kauffmann (2004) explains that while the traditional classification of works of art is made by country and period, the political and cultural boundaries are complex, fluid, and not always transparent. He argues for establishing the geography of art as a subject and that our assumptions about the place of art should be reconsidered and reflected in narratives of art history. Many of the regions outside the Western world have their own non-Western traditions of explaining art and its history, and while the non-Western practices are recognized, the Western methodologies and terms prevail (Elkins, 2007, 2011; Van Damme & Zijlmans, 2008).

Overall, epistemology has been related to rhetoric in important ways and defines how art history writing should and can be taught as a part of the meaning-making and knowledge-making process in higher education (Becher, 1989).

Art History, Associated Rhetoric, and Writing Pedagogy

Understanding art historians' epistemological orientations and associated rhetoric is crucial for developing academic writing pedagogies in art history. For example, Adam (2014) argues that writing in art history, particularly the fine arts domain, has been rooted in subjectivity and objectivity, when "critical examination rests on embodied, subjective understandings as well as rigorous analysis and as much on creative intuition as on calculated attention" (p. 219). This epistemological orientation results in the associated rhetoric in which "written work is presented in the form of an on-going exchange between self and world, practice and theory" (Adam, 2014, p. 219). He proposes the adoption of a performative writing strategy that "reflects both the content and context of the enquiry" (2014, p. 218). Such an approach allows for the exploration of critical concepts in practice and draws on one's phenomenological experience of continually questioning, re-negotiating, re-interpreting, and representing concepts.

Research and writing in art history is an embodied process. Adam (2014) refers to the examples of Paul Ricoeur, Janet Wolff, John Wylie, and others to signal the variety of ways in which the writers construct their narrative identities in their texts by combining subjective description with critical analysis. For example, Crème and Mckenna (2010) explored the relationship between writing and identity—how writers sense themselves as writers. They used Roz Ivanic's (1998) three writing selves: the autobiographical, the discoursal, and the authorial to look for markers that indicate writers' backgrounds, disciplinary orientations, and authorial presence.

Writing a text has been closely linked to the aesthetic tastes of individual writers. Adam (2014) says that "the writings of Irigaray, Kristeva and Cixious continue to inspire me" (p. 220). Barolsky (1996) emphasizes the importance of poetry in writing, as otherwise a text lacks passion and is neutral. He argues that there are two key reasons for bad writing in the field. First, art historians have not thought of themselves as writers. Second, writers have been afraid to employ artful rhetorical forms (e.g., passion, enthusiasm, imagination, use of metaphorical language) because they will be seen as unprofessional in a context where writers have been expected to fortify their claims. Thus, to avoid the problem of dry prose and reference to facts only, Barolsky (1996) emphasizes that good writing emerges from the imitation of good writers.

At the same time, Adam (2014) highlights that conventions have been the opposite of what is expected by the discourse community (in contrast with the natural and social sciences where writing is grounded in conventions). For example, MacLeod and Holdridge (2005) explain that "the conventionally written academic thesis does not always seem appropriate for the doctorate in fine art" (pp. 23). Moreover, Barrett and Bolt (2010) argue that the particular methodologies of the discipline have been "personally situated, interdisciplinary and diverse and emergent" (p. 2). Thus, defining rhetorical patterns and conventions is problematic and requires a writer to meet traditional expectations and challenge familiar models at the same time.

Barnet (1993) explains that producing a text in art history has been rooted in existing epistemologies and that writing style is revealed in form. She explains that after the 1970s, there was an epistemological shift from decontextualized objects towards deconstruction and demystification in knowledge making and writing. Work has always been connected to social history. The writer's own contexts will also influence their interpretations.

When writing in art history, one needs to think about "what is in front of us as well as what is within us" (Barnet, 1993, p. 1). Writing becomes a way of learning and is a way to communicate our responses to the material and interest the reader in seeing the work as the writer sees it. Thus, writing a text

involves such functions as observing, showing, and illuminating. Interestingly, unlike building an argument based on logic, as is traditional for the natural and social sciences, showing serves the function of argument building and is a way to convince the reader. Close analysis of form is a kind of analytic statement about "how the work means" (Barnet, 1993, p. 115). Elton and Nicolle (2009) emphasize that while there is writing development support at universities, there are certain risks of adopting approaches governed by a narrow emphasis on form. They question the transparency of the medium of language in the learning, teaching, and assessment of writing. Thus, apart from focusing on rules-led writing, it is equally important to read texts in the process of understanding and producing written texts.

Overall, while there is a growing body of research into epistemologies within the art history knowledge domain (Borgdorff, 2007), little is known about the writing and knowledge-making practices of contemporary scholars in various geopolitical and geolinguistic contexts (Lillis & Curry, 2010). There is considerable work still to be done to critically explore the complexity of issues which have surrounded the knowledge production and academic writing of scholars working in English and other languages in order to draw conclusions about writing pedagogies in the field.

Study Design and Data

Our study explored the experiences of six multilingual scholars in Russia within the context of English as the lingua franca of knowledge-making and production (Lillis & Curry, 2010). The methodology involved a text-ethnographic approach that traced the production of scholars' texts, with an empirical focus on specific texts, interviews conducted with scholars about the production of specific texts, and documentary data at the institutional, national, and international levels.

The key methodological orientation of this study was the critical framework of academic literacies with its "specific epistemological and ideological stance" (Lillis & Scott, 2007, p. 7) which was relevant for exploring high-stakes writing practices in academia. Our key aim was to foreground the writers' perspectives on text production and reveal academic writing practices with particular attention to emic perspectives in the course of cyclical talk, which "becomes part of sustained engagement in specific research sites and is set alongside other types of data" (Lillis, 2008, p. 362).

We followed the sociolinguistic premise that language is not transparent (Lillis & McKinney, 2013) and language indexes the real-life experiences of individuals. The interview data analysis involved working back and forth "from vertical (understanding the individual case) to horizontal (identifying patterns

across cases) orientations to the data" (Barton & Hamilton, 1998, p. 70; see also Lillis & Curry, 2018) in order to generate themes that emerged as significant.

We used our personal contacts to trace art history scholars located in Moscow and St. Petersburg via snowball sampling, and we also traced publicly available scholars' profiles. We sought experienced writers with at least 10 years in academia who work in Russia in the field of art history. We then sent an email invitation to 12 scholars, and six participants agreed to take part in the study (see Table 3.1 for participants who agreed to participate in the study).[1] The major reasons for rejecting our participation invitation included the absence of time for the interview due to heavy workload (four scholars) and lack of desire to talk about publishing at all (two scholars). Each participant had a choice in the language of the interview (Russian or English). The interview lasted 60 to 90 minutes and covered such issues as education and academic experience, research writing experience, and the linguistic profile of writer-participants.

Table 3.1. Participant Profiles: Positions, Research Interests, Number of Academic Publications, and Years in Academia

Scholar	Location	# of academic publications	Academic position[2]	Research interests	Years
Anna	St. Petersburg	12 Russian 1 English	Docent	History of European sculpture	13
Olga	Moscow	18 Russian 5 English	Docent	History of Byzantine Art	14
Diana	Moscow	19 Russian 0 English	Docent	History of European graphic art	16
Elena	St. Petersburg	21 Russian 0 English	Docent	History of Eastern art	16
Alexander	Moscow	16 Russian 2 English 1 Chinese	Docent	History of the Western and Russian Architecture	16
Ekaterina	St. Petersburg	33 Russian 1 French	Docent	History of European Graphic art	43

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1   The participants' names were anonymized.

2   Academic titles vary across countries and institutions. In Russia, there are such titles as professor (= U. S. full professor), docent (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, i.e., countries with academic traditions that stem from German-speaking countries = associate professor), senior lecturer (= U. S. assistant professor), and lecturer. These titles are given to faculty who both teach and conduct research in the majority of Russian universities at the moment.

In addition, we collected participants' current curricula vitae to analyze their working experiences and publications over time, along with additional documentary data that participants considered relevant for their knowledge-making and academic writing practices. For example, state and institutional initiatives about publishing in arts and humanities.

Results and Discussion: Art Historians at Work

In our exploratory study we sought to address two empirical questions. The first question was what the educational practices were and are in teaching writing in art history in Russia where we seek to make visible how and why art historians learned to produce texts and how their students learn to write now (see below Learning Trajectories: Past and Present). The second question targeted challenges which existed and exist in knowledge-making and writing practices and how they might affect the teaching of writing. We distinguished two major themes which emerged from the interview data: the importance of access to resources (see below Challenges in Writing Arising from Limited Access to Resources) and local traditions of knowledge-making and producing a text (see Challenges in Writing Arising from Disciplinary Traditions of Knowledge-making in a Particular Geopolitical and Socio-historic Context).

Learning Trajectories: Past and Present

Scholars shared their experiences of learning academic writing, and when we asked whether they were formally taught to write, all participants, except for Ekaterina and Elena, initially said no. However, in the course of interviews about their educational experiences, each scholar explicitly signaled that writing is and was a challenging experience and talked about the ways they learned to write. Ekaterina is the only participant who had formal training in writing. She said that in the academy of arts in St. Petersburg there was a compulsory course in writing, and they produced such genres as: "notes, essays, and reviews. (заметки, эссе и рецензии)."

When she was a first-year student, Elena says she had a seminar in writing for publication, but she believes that experience:

> Was a waste of time because we were first year students, and there were no writers among us at that time. (Это было мало полезное мероприятие, потому что нас учили на первом курсе, к тому моменту пишущих людей среди нас не было.

> Поэтому если я что-то и знала из первого курса, то я это
> забыла к моменту, когда понадобилось писать статьи.)

By contrast, Alexander said he had no formal classes in writing and had to learn to write by interpreting texts correctly:

> There were no such courses, it seems, anywhere. There was a lot
> of work with old texts that we had to understand in the con-
> temporary context and interpret correctly. (таких курсов не
> было, мне кажется, нигде. Было много работы со старыми
> текстами, которые нужно понять с современной точки
> зрения и правильно изложить. Никаких приёмов письма,
> никаких занятий не было.)

He also recalled that although his high school classes in literature with a private tutor and first year university classes in history helped him learn to organize his ideas, thinking, and argument, he was not taught to write:

> I had, like many of us did and do now, private classes before
> joining the university in literature. We briefly discussed not
> how to write but how to organize your thinking, internal logic
> so that it exists in texts. There were seminars in history during
> the first year of studies. They were not about writing but about
> thinking, how to reason as a historian who is deconstructing a
> written text. (Я, как многие в те годы и сейчас, занимался
> с преподавателями перед поступлением и, в частности
> литературой. Мы немножко обсуждали не как писать,
> а как выстраивать мысль, внутренней логики, чтобы
> она была в текстах. были семинары на первом курсе по
> истории, в которых это касалось не письма, а мышления.
> как логически выстраивать логику мышления историка,
> который препарирует письменный текст.)

Writing essays was a part of a course in literary criticism, and Diana explained she produced essays which were: "A different genre, not a research article. (но это совсем другой жанр, это не научная статья.)" At the same time, due to current publishing pressure (Curry & Lillis, 2015), she said art historians have had the strong need to be able to publish research articles apart from the more common genres (e.g., notes, essays, reviews). Overall, Diana signaled that writing texts has always been a challenging experience because: "it seemed that everything you wrote was not right, and then there comes a feeling that you are doing it right. (кажется, все что пишешь, получается

не так, потом возникает ощущение, что все получается.)" Diana empha-
sized the importance of learning to write by using the feedback from her
research supervisor in the course of writing her thesis:

> I am grateful to my research supervisor. Good supervision is
> important, when a more experienced professional guides a nov-
> ice writer. Feedback was quite harsh, but it helped me to un-
> derstand how everything should be. (Я признательна своему
> научному руководителю. Важно умное руководство
> и чтобы старший специалист правильно направлял
> начинающего. Правка была достаточно жесткой, но она
> помогала понять, как все должно быть.)

When recalling how she learned to write, Ekaterina also talked about the
importance of a supervisor. The reason for this was that sometimes the object
of study requires a specific attitude, description, and writing style. She said
that the process of learning to work with particular materials, such as engrav-
ings, was a "complex and unique process of learning" that resembled more an
artisan training with its workshop style of teaching than academic classes:

> If you are holding a portrait of the sixteenth century you have
> to understand the context [of its making]; to know the history
> from the costume to philosophy and history of religion and
> culture. That's why every student has a supervisor. сложное,
> штучное обучение. обучение идет с руки, как в многих
> творческих профессиях. есть методические материалы,
> которые ты прочитываешь, но перед тобой портрет XVI
> века, и ты должен понимать контекст, эпоху: от костюма
> до философии, истории, истории религии и культуры.
> Тьютор закрепляется за тобой как твой наставник.)

Two participants talked about the importance of learning to write by
reading texts that they like and see as exemplary in their field. Elena said
she learned to write:

> By studying samples, sample papers of more experienced
> peers, those who I respected and who were interesting and
> pleasant to read. A collection of sample texts was emerg-
> ing, and I followed them, and step by step I got into writ-
> ing. (училась вприглядку, на образцовых статьях старших
> коллег, которых я уважала, которых мне было интересно
> и приятно читать. Из них собирался банк образцов,

старась следовать которым я постепенно входила в писание.)

Reading exemplary texts in terms of quality of research and quality of writing was crucial for Olga, who said that she learned to write from reading and by paying attention both to the content and the style of a text:

> I consider the quality of research. If I see that the text I read is reliable, does not raise any doubts at the professional level. But I pay significant attention to the quality of writing like an editor. (Я ориентируюсь на уровень исследований. Если мне кажется, что то, что я читаю, заслуживает доверия, не вызывает у меня сомнений на профессиональном уровне в первую очередь. Но я очень обращаю внимание и на качество письма тоже, как редактор.)

At the same time, while reading exemplary texts guides some writers in producing texts, Diana signaled the challenge of finding her own way of writing a text which will differ from her teachers':

> I cannot say that I follow more experienced peers. We depend on the examples set by our teachers, but I do not try to imitate them. (не могу сказать, что я сильно ориентируюсь на старших коллег. Мы зависим от примера преподавателей, но я не стараюсь подражать им.)

Even more, Anna said she believes her texts have been produced themselves and she could hardly explain how it has happened: "Texts are born themselves, I only write them down. (сами пишутся они, я их только оформляю.)"

As Anna reports, art criticism classes were an opportunity to write more about art. Yet, she said that although she has always valued literary features in texts, there was no place for them in academic texts:

> We were specifically taught art criticism, but they never demanded literary features of texts, which I always liked. (Нас учили художественной критике специально и целенаправленно, но не требовали каких-то художественных достоинств текста, а мне это всегда нравилось.)

Finally, participants talked about their editing experiences, as they said it is a way to significantly improve their writing. Anna explains that:

> You learn when you edit. Most important is the experience of working with good editors. Not my own editing experience,

but external, when my texts were edited. (учишься сам когда редактируешь. больше всего помогает опыт с хорошими редакторами. Не мой собственный, а внешний, когда мои статьи редактировали.)

Apart from sharing their experiences of how they learned to write in art history, they also talked about how they currently teach writing to their students. First of all, five scholars talked about the lack (mostly absence) of formal training in writing for their students. It has proven problematic since writing for art historians, like in any other field in the humanities, is a way to make meaning and to make knowledge fixed in a written text. For example, Alexander said there still are no writing courses for his university students, and it has posed a serious limitation which students have inherited when they graduate from the university and pursue an academic career:

> It [writing skill] can develop naturally, but even in this case it is useful to learn. Very often, it [writing skill] does not develop at all, and there are many people who have problems with writing. It seems to them that they do not have problems, but the reader immediately sees that there are problems with logic, style, some things are completely ignored. (это может родится само, но даже в этом случае будет полезно поучится. Очень часто это не рождается совсем, и есть много людей, которые испытывают потом с этим проблемы. Им кажется, что они не испытывают, но читателю сразу видно, что у человека проблемы с логикой, с подачей, что какие-то вещи он просто не замечает.)

The second current challenge of teaching writing to students has been rooted in the fact that art history has a wide variety of subfields, each with a specific style and manner of writing. Olga explained that study books exist that can help writers in general writing issues, but since her field of research has been very narrow, she would need a special writing manual for her research focus:

> There are some manuals in research writing. Our field of research is very narrow, and nobody writes special manuals. When I was a postgraduate student, I learned some ideas from the book by Umberto Eco, How to Write a Thesis. (есть какие-то пособия по научному стилю письма. У нас очень узкая область, поэтому никто не пишет специальных работ. Я когда была аспиранткой, что-то почерпнула из работы Умберто Эко «Как писать дипломную раб»).

Overall, the experience of learning to write has appeared, for art historians, related to working within literature or history traditions. Deconstructing a text was more common than learning to compose a text. The participants signaled that writing is an ability that does not develop naturally and highlight the importance of introducing formal writing instruction to university students in such genres as notes, essays, reviews, and journal articles. Their orientation in learning to write toward more experienced, respected writers (e.g., their supervisors or from published texts of their peers) has signaled that the mentoring model of learning to write and produce meaning in an academic text—as well as their feedback—has served an important function by highlighting problems not only with writing but with meaning making in their texts. At the same time, the mentoring model allows space for the writer's voice and identity, as texts are born in the process of meaning making.

Challenges in Writing Arising from Limited Access to Resources

Talking about their writing experiences, the participants' comments explicitly signaled the importance of having access to particular resources in producing a text, namely, the limited access to research literature, the necessity of using foreign languages in research, limited access to objects of art which are under research focus, and lack of time for research and writing.

Limited Access to Research Literature

The participants talked about limited access to published books and periodicals due to lack of financial resources in higher education and poor libraries in Russia. For example, Olga said that most of the research in her field is published abroad and is not available in Russian libraries:

> Most of the studies on my topic are published abroad. Many periodicals about Italian art are not available in our libraries. Getting foreign literature is the hardest problem. (По моей тематике большинство работ выходит заграницей. Много работ по итальянской периодике, которые в наших библиотеках недоступны. Добыть иностранную литературу одна из самых сложных проблем.)

Diana explained that local libraries have received little funding and that travelling abroad or accessing electronic databases are the only ways for her to get access to published works:

> We try to increase our library, but we sometimes fail, in part due to financial reasons. A trip overseas is not only for vis-

iting museums but for visiting libraries. We have had access to electronic databases for the last three years. (Пытаемся расширять нашу библиотеку, но нам это не всегда удается, в том числе по финансовым соображениям. поездка за рубеж посвящается не только походам в музеи, но еще и посещению библиотек. у нас около трех лет есть подписка на несколько баз данных.)

When the published works appear to be limited, Olga also said that she seeks ways to freely access published works online: "Fortunately, now we have the academia.edu portal so that poor Russians can find papers from different fields. (К счастью, появился сайт academia.edu., чтобы бедные русские находили там темы по различным областям знаний.)" While working with foreign published literature has appeared crucial for one's work, seeking access to research literature, catalogues, and periodicals published in foreign languages has represented a great challenge for contemporary art historians in Russia.

Knowledge of Foreign Languages

Many participants talked about the importance of knowing foreign languages in order to do research, and some of them learned the local languages of Japan, Spain, Greece, and Portugal, because most of the research about an object of art has been published in the local language. Ekaterina says that any art historian should be able to read modern foreign texts and: "Must know all European languages because references are always made in the language. (должен владеть всеми европейскими языками, потому что справочные сведения опубликованы на языке.)" She also said that in order to work with engravings she had to learn Latin because: "It was the international language in the seventeenth-eighteenth centuries. (пришлось учить латынь, так как это язык международного общения XVI - XVIII века.)"

Sometimes scholars have sought the support of their peers when working with an object of art which has been described or represented in a foreign language. For example, Anna described how her peer has helped her with translations of Portuguese texts from the seventeenth century. Ekaterina usefully explained that the origin of the object of art has been closely linked to the language of its creation, description, and interpretation. While reading in foreign languages is a necessary part of their work, Ekaterina said that writing a text in a foreign language has been a great challenge. She believed writing a journal article in a foreign language required a degree in philology because she saw translation from Russian into a foreign language as the only way of producing a text:

> I write in Russian, and it is translated. You need to obtain a degree in philology to write in a foreign language. I believe that a non-native speaker is not able to translate except for a couple of geniuses. (Я пишу по-русски, и это всё переводят. потому нужно закончить филфак чтобы писать на языке. Я считаю, что не носитель языка не может перевести нормально, ну кроме парочки гениев.)

Scholars successfully use foreign languages to read published works and study the objects of art, but writing in a foreign language is challenging for many of them (see also the subsection below: Challenges in Writing Arising from Disciplinary Traditions of Knowledge-making in a Particular Geopolitical and Socio-historic Context).

Limited Access to Objects of Art

The visual experiences of art historians have been central to their academic text production (Barolsky, 1996). In fact, access to objects of art was an important theme raised by the participants and has been limited in different ways. Olga explained that only original objects of art could be studied: "Illustrations in books, however good they are, do not give a full understanding about the value of art objects. (иллюстрации в книгах, какими бы хорошими они не были, они не дают полного представления о том, насколько это ценное произведение.)" Diana said that she had to travel for internships in museum depositories in the US and Germany because it was the only way she was able to witness objects of art and learn about their conservation principles. By contrast, Ekaterina said that because of the tough political and economic situation in Russia she was able to travel quite late in her career:

> An art historian, like an artist, must begin with visiting the living art object. I am 60, and I visited Italy for the first time when I was 58. (историк искусства, так же, как и художник, должен начинать все свои практики с посещения живого памятника культуры. мне 60 лет, а я первый раз в 58 лет побывала в Италии.)

Olga explained the limited access to art objects in Russia has come from heavy bureaucratization and restrictive requirements in local depositories:

> Access to Byzantine works is given to an academic not only with a higher education degree but with a research degree and often with a recommendation from a western colleague. (часто византийские рукописи может получить в библиотеке

человек, имеющий высшее образование, но и имеющий научную степень. иногда еще рекомендацию западного коллеги.)

Interestingly, getting access to objects of art is also a problem for foreign scholars who research Russian art collections. For example, Ekaterina talked about providing access to Russian art collections to foreign scholars and the fact that online catalogues have appeared important in times of limited financial resources or travel restrictions:

> Many times, I heard abroad "Do you have it?" I said "Yes." They said, "I was wondering where the black hole is." Only now is there an internet catalogue, and foreigners were not allowed in the country in the past. Catalogues were handwritten in the nineteenth century. (много раз за границей я слышала «ах, это у вас есть?». Да, говорю. «Ах, я-то думал, ну где же есть эта чёрная дыра». сейчас появился интернет каталог, а раньше иностранцев не пускали в страну. А каталоги были написаны в 19 веке от руки.)

Getting access to objects of art is essential for a researcher but has presented certain challenges to art historians, as it has been limited by the financial, bureaucratic, and political factors surrounding a scholar's work.

Lack of Time

Many of the respondents stressed that difficulties in getting direct access to their research object is not the only obstacle. Time available for writing influences the rhetorical choices and knowledge-making practices of the scholars. Olga said that despite the fact that she values the literary features of academic texts, she had no time for such prose and had to write "boring" texts. She explained that meaning has been more important for her than the beauty and smoothness of the text when her time has been limited:

> There is more work, family requires more time as well, and I have no time for literary texts. I'd rather use the same word again and again to make my argument absolutely clear than synonyms that could obscure the meaning. (работы стало больше, семья тоже стала занимать все больше времени, и на литературные работы просто перестало хватать сил.)

Diana said that she allocated limited time for writing what she saw as important. While she said that writing museum catalogues is the key genre for

an art historian, publishing journal articles has been seen as secondary, as universities have pressed for increased research output measured in research articles. Thus, she said she experiences tensions in meeting the university research output requirement:

> The exhibition catalogue is the key genre for a museum specialist. That is why I try to find time primarily for them and write research articles only if I can. (для музейщика более частый жанр—это выставочные каталоги. Поэтому время приходится выкраивать для них, а статьи это уже если получится.)

Overall, the scholars' accounts signal that the writing practices of art historians have been rooted in work in libraries and reading foreign language (e.g., modern and ancient) literature, travelling and witnessing objects of arts, and finding time for research and writing. While access to libraries and time have been important for research and writing in many academic spheres (e.g., Lillis & Curry, 2010), one's ability to get access to specific resources, such as using foreign languages (not only English) and seeing and witnessing objects of art located in foreign countries and in Russia, has significantly influenced Russian art historians' writing practices, both for university students and researchers.

Challenges in Writing Arising from Disciplinary Traditions of Knowledge-making in a Particular Geopolitical and Socio-historic Context

The importance of epistemological orientations in meaning making and writing has been well documented in Curry and Lillis (2010). These orientations were signaled in participants' accounts. The influence of socio-political and historic contexts on meaning making and knowledge reflects the nature of writing practices as situated and rooted in their contexts of production.

Epistemological Tensions and Rhetoric

Producing a text in the discipline has been connected to local and global epistemological tensions. For example, Ekaterina explained that there have been long standing tensions between two epistemological camps in Russia, iskusstvoznanie (study of art) and istoria iskusstv (history of art). She identified herself with a global tradition, as opposed to the two local camps, and uses the English term the history of art to signal the divide between the local camps and Western scholarship:

> In Soviet times there was mainly iskusstvoznanie, istoria iskusstv [study of art, history of art] but it was not history of art [uses English term]. [Study of art and art history] were descriptions, emotions, literary studies. There were big terminological battles [in Soviet Russia] between iskusstvoznanie and istoria iskusstv [study of art and history of art]. Study of art was interpretation, art criticism, and new social and philosophic views. I do not like it. (В советское время было в основном искусствоведение, история искусств, но она не была хистори оф арт. Это было описание, эмоции, литературоведение. Были большие терминологические битвы—искусствоведение или искусствознание. Искусствознание—это интерпретация, арт критика, новый взгляд социальный, философский. Я это не люблю.)

Different epistemological camps have set certain standards in research writing, and certain tensions during the publication process have appeared. Anna indicated that when her texts have undergone review and have been edited by peers, she has seen the existing tensions between the epistemological and rhetorical orientations of editors and her own in the process of publishing a paper:

> Editors cut papers, and we cut with them. With editors from different fields, philologists, you understand that your paper is edited as a philology text, a text in literary history. Some editors work in natural sciences and explain to you that the order of images should be the following because you refer first to this and then to that picture, but they should match. (редакторы грызут статью и ты вместе с ними. Когда редакторы из разных областей—филологи, которые работают в основном с филологической литературой, и ты понимаешь, что твою статью пытаются отредактировать так, как принято редактировать филологические статьи, статьи по истории литературы. Кто-то работает с естественнонаучной литературой, начинает тебе объяснять, что последовательность картинок должна быть такая-то, потому что ты ссылаешься сначала на эту картинку, а потом на эту, и что они должны соответствовать.)

Epistemological orientations are at the core of the rhetorical choices in art history writing. Anna provided an example of how an art object does or does

not define the research rhetoric and how she had enjoyed both approaches in her own writing:

> A contemporary art object can fully construct the language of the researcher. If we believe that the research object does not construct the language of the researcher, then, in art criticism it is the opposite: the language is created by the object. I follow this approach, take both sides. I like moving close and further from the object, being under its language power and getting free from it. (Говорить о произведении современном, которое может полностью конструировать язык исследователя. Если мы считаем, что объект исследования не должен конструировать язык исследователя, то в критике наоборот язык должен конструироваться объектом. я стараюсь занять позицию, взяв и оттуда, и оттуда. Мне нравится перемещаться ближе к предмету, дальше от предмета, то есть попадать во власть его языка или выходить оттуда.)

While there are certain types of disciplinary rhetoric, scholars, like Anna in her account above, have talked about their individual rhetorical choices to express what is important in their texts. This reflects Adam's (2014) argument that writing in art history, particularly the fine arts domain, has been rooted in subjectivity and objectivity. For example, Diana talked about the important role of the context, the epoch when working and writing about an art object: "In my papers it is important for me to sense the epoch's nerve, put the art object into the epoch's context. (В своих статьях мне важно уловить нерв эпохи, вписать произведение в контекст эпохи.)" Anna said she employs a type of rhetoric which she calls "provocation" (e.g., see Crème & Mckenna, 2010, Ivanic, 1998, for a discussion of ways in which the writers construct their narrative identities in their texts). She said she learned it from reading English-medium papers written by one anglophone center art historian and which she liked very much. She called this type of rhetoric provocation because she could discuss the social aspects of art when this focus was not common in Russia:

> One of most interesting texts was written by a professional art historian. It was written in such a way that it was pure social history of art, even more than I do. The reader must make certain efforts while reading a text, follow the same discovery road as the writer did. (Когда возможно, я предпочитаю эссеистику. Один из самых интересных текстов, который я

читала был написан профессиональным искусствоведом. Он был написан таким образом, хотя там была в чистом виде социальная история искусства ещё больше, чем у меня. Читатель должен делать усилия при прочтении текста, пройти путь автора в открытии.)

Scholars' accounts suggest that local and global disciplinary traditions and epistemological orientations are key to producing research texts in art history in addition to the individual rhetorical decisions of the writers. Yet, at the local level, sometimes these orientations clash and result in writer's frustrations with the process of publishing a research paper. At the global level, there are also tensions since while the non-Western practices are recognized, the Western methodologies and terms prevail (Elkins, 2007, 2011; Van Damme & Zijlmans, 2008).

The Heritage of the Soviet Union

Knowledge-making and writing traditions in the discipline are rooted in their socio-historical and political contexts (Lillis & Curry, 2010). In Soviet times, Ekaterina explained that research on art was problematic. She recalled that when she was doing her postgraduate exam in the Soviet era, an examiner asked her about her future research topic. She said that she wanted to study English books of the eighteenth century, and he started questioning her patriotism.

> Science was made undercover. He said "don't you know that we are responsible for the North-West of the country and are allowed to research only national books. Do you say you want to move to England?" (наукой в советское время занимались подпольным образом. На что он мне сказал 'Мы отвечаем за Северо-Запад страны и можем заниматься только отечественной книгой. Вы что, в Англию собираетесь уехать?')

Being the most experienced participant in our study, she explained that the fact that Soviet academics were isolated from international scholarship and rarely able to travel abroad resulted in, what she called, "paper art history." She says academic texts were published without any illustrations of the objects of art:

> Paper art history—people wrote monographs about Rembrandt but never saw a single painting in real life. All my teachers— we had no other way—studied art history by reproductions. (Бумажное советское искусствознание—люди писали

монографии о Рембрандте ни разу произведение вживую
не видев. Все мои учителя, у нас не было другого выхода,
искусствоведением занимались по репродукциям.)

This political and socio-historical context has resulted in certain rhetorical
traditions. Ekaterina believed that the majority of Russian art history texts
have been full of lengthy descriptions and lack analysis. She said she saw it
as a consequence of the rhetorical essayistic tradition of art history in the
nineteenth to early twentieth century which continued to exist in the Soviet
times. Ekaterina commented that:

> The tradition of Soviet times was marred by descriptions
> from the nineteenth century, unsupported by any historical
> contexts. Not because they were bad researchers but because
> they were not allowed to. Sociocultural context reigns in the
> twentieth century in the West, but we were not allowed to
> study Western art. We were seen as dissidents because we read
> foreign literature. (традиция советского времени грешит
> описательностью 19 века, не подкреплённой какими-то
> историческими контекстами. Не потому что были плохие
> исследователи, а потому что этого нельзя было сделать.
> Социокультурный контекст на Западе весь 20 век, а у нас
> нельзя было заниматься западным искусством. На нас
> смотрели как на диссидентствующих людей, потому что
> мы читали западную литературу.)

Such ideological pressure on the art history knowledge domain and writing
practices of scholars has brought about certain challenges in knowledge-mak-
ing and writing when they are in the position of making decisions about their
rhetorical choices (Barnet, 1993). For example, Anna referred to a powerful
genre which, as she said, has almost totally disappeared in Russia—"Sbornik
statey"[3]:

> In collections of papers published by the Russian Academy of
> Arts I felt very free, I did not want extra scientificness, there are
> many such papers there, and nobody will be trying to verify my
> experience. It's a somewhat provocative strategy. (в сборниках
> академии художеств я себя чувствовала достаточно
> свободно, поэтому мне не хотелось лишней научности и

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3   Sbornik statey is a collection of papers which are published as conference proceed-
ings or under any topic developed by a university or other art institution.

наукообразности, потому что там и без меня такого полно, и никто не будет тогда пытаться верифицировать мой опыт. немного провокаторская стратегия.)

Small Community

Certain rhetorical orientations emerged as participants' accounts signaled that the community of art historians has generally been small both locally and globally. Moreover, each historian has worked in a very narrow field of research which has been further narrowed by the object of art. The intellectual response to art has been constrained by the fact that each subfield has its own methods and approaches, technical vocabulary, and needs (Grabar, 1982). For example, Olga says that: "Today, there are few researchers, and each works in their own field. (сегодня не так много исследователей, и все занимаются разными материалами.)" All participants say that the small professional community results in the related problem of limited readership for their texts. Olga says that in Russia and in the world: "My texts are read by very few people. (что я пишу, читает очень мало людей.)" According to scholars' accounts, this small community is becoming even smaller, as there have been closed communities built around major art history institutions which have required different epistemological, rhetorical, and educational standards that define the rhetoric of historians. Ekaterina said that:

> These are closed communities. Sometimes the editor could happily say to me "you did not study with us, that is why you put a comma here, while a semicolon is needed." Writing samples and education in the university and academy of arts that teaches art historians are different. (это закрытые сообщества. иногда, редактор радостно мог сказать «вы у нас не учились, поэтому вы поставили здесь запятую, а нужно было точку с запятой». образцы письма и образование Университета и Академии художеств, которые готовят искусствоведов, отличаются.)

Grabar (1982) explains that subfields in art history can be cultural, social, technical, methodological, and conceptual. When a professional community is small yet highly diverse, there arises a question of who art historians write for and who reads their papers if their research foci are so different and they work in very narrow fields of research. Given the publishing pressure on academics when research articles are expected to meet the journal standards (Hazelkorn, 2015), what should these standards be?

The scholars' accounts signal the impact of their epistemological orientations as well as of the socio-political and historical contexts on their meaning making and rhetorical choices. Their accounts signal the variety of indigenous local and global knowledge-making traditions and their associated rhetoric. Yet, at the same time, this desire to write differently (which is enacted in different ways) has resulted in the existing disciplinary tensions with other writers within the small professional community of art historians, each working within a particular educational, institutional, epistemological, and theoretical context.

Conclusions and Implications for Writing Theory and Practice

In our study we addressed two major empirical questions. The first one was how contemporary art historians in Russia learn to write. At the beginning, all scholars said they were not taught to write academic texts. Consequently, the accounts of the scholars revealed that learning to write was not straightforward, but, in the course of reflection, they identified particular learning trajectories. Some experiences were related to traditions of working with a written text in literature and history when both the writer's ideas and the textual form were valued.

The accounts of scholars referring to the importance of reading exemplary texts and receiving feedback from more experienced peers indicate that the implicit mentoring model has been dominant in the field both when they write in Russian and English. At the same time, participants' comments about how they learned to write and how they have taught their students signal that they were reinventing their writing pedagogies (see Bartholomae, 1985, and Lillis & Scott, 2007 for the idea of "reinventing" the university and associated literacy practices). The lack of explicit writing instruction and attention to text production issues in art history education in Russia has forced scholars to intuitively identify and read the already existing variety of rhetorical codes in the discipline.

Scholars' accounts signaled that writing ability rarely develops naturally, and they have seen explicit writing instruction as important. At the same time, writers look for opportunities to express their voices as well as identities, as texts are born in the process of meaning making. This finding echoes Halsall's (2012) argument that aesthetic judgement plays a key role in the production of an art history text because the writer's judgements of taste lie at the very heart of art history practice.

The second empirical question targeted challenges in writing, and the scholars' accounts signal that there have been significant challenges in meaning making and writing a scholarly text. The major tensions in the process of meaning making and writing were closely linked to: 1) access to resources in the process of researching and producing a text and 2) traditions of knowledge-making globally and in the particular geopolitical and socio-historic context of Russia.

The scholars' accounts indicated that access to international books and periodicals, knowing foreign languages, the ability to see (experience) objects of art, editing experiences, and time available for writing significantly impact their meaning making and writing practices. Limited access to resources has been highly consequential for knowledge-making in the field. While writing pedagogies rarely have centered around the issue of getting access to resources, we believe that these are important issues to consider.

The scholars signaled particular challenges in writing arising from traditions of knowledge-making globally as well as the particular geopolitical and socio-historic context. Writing has been an essential part of the process of meaning making and knowledge production. Writing has been essential to knowledge construction and to the creation of academic and professional communities. Writing practices and rhetorical choices have been significantly defined by the existing tensions between global and local epistemological camps (e.g., literature, literary criticism, history, art history) when writers belong to different camps. Scholars talked about tensions between the current demand for empiricist research writing and the longstanding essayistic tradition based on the dialogic nature of texts (Lillis, 2011). This finding resonates with Borgdorff's (2007) argument that contemporary art historians portray themselves in their texts and either follow or resist any form of academization out of the fear of losing the distinctiveness of their intellectual work.

Importantly, knowledge-making and writing traditions in art history have been rooted in its socio-historical and political contexts. The scholars' accounts indicate that the Soviet period and its heritage have had an impact on contemporary art history. Scholars commented that description-driven texts often have prevailed over argument-based papers in part due to the Soviet art history writing tradition and due to the absence of training in research methodology and academic writing in modern universities.

No less important were the comments that rhetorical orientations have emerged in response to the small size of the professional community of art historians in Russia and worldwide. The scholars' comments revealed that there have been few local and international researchers, and they all research different materials (objects of art). These challenges indicate that writing as

well as teaching writing in art history should be centered around making scholars aware of each other, facilitating their participation in meaningful conversations, and exposing writers to a variety of rhetorical choices and their consequential nature.

Exploring meaning making and writing practices through the lens of the academic literacies framework, where writers' voices are placed center-stage, enabled us to make the writing and knowledge-making practice of art historians more visible. In times of increasing exclusion of arts and humanities from global knowledge production (e.g., Hazelkorn, 2015; Savelieva & Poletaev, 2009), in our chapter we made an attempt to signal the need to make these practices more visible. Our findings indicate that researching the writing for publication practices of art historians is challenging because this knowledge domain has been marked by the production of single-author texts with distinctive authorial voices, less rigid rhetorical structures, and varying interpretative epistemologies within a national and cultural context and across the globe. We believe our methodological approach and key findings can be used to set an agenda for and guide the inquiry into the academic writing practices of other humanities disciplines and across various indigenous national and cultural contexts of art history knowledge production and writing. Such an approach allows overcoming the hegemony of Anglo-centric writing pedagogy (Altbach & de Wit, 2015; Canagarajah, 2005) and making local writing traditions visible to the global research community.

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