Challenges of cataloging art images
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GWU Visual Resources Center has used VircoCat since 2005

Advantages of using VCat:
- It is an open source cataloging product in FileMaker Pro (only need subscription to FileMaker software)
- It is VRA Core 4 and CCO compliant
- Uses multiple authority files and provides ability to reference existing controlled vocabularies and subject headings, e.g. the Getty thesauri and Library of Congress vocabularies
- As a relational database allows to connect data by multiple attributes and ensures ease and versatility of searching
- When cataloging, multiple windows can be opened at once
- Records can be exported into online catalog, in this case MDID

Questions to think about when cataloging images:
- Who are the end users?
- What do end users need?
- What cataloging standard to use?
- How much detail is necessary?
- How to approach subject cataloging?

Challenges of subject cataloging:
- Subjects are important for retrieval purposes
- In cataloging works of art subjects differ from traditional understanding:
  E.g., OF-ness (description) and ABOUT-ness (interpretation) of an art work
  Judy Chicago’s “Rejection Fantasy” drawing is OF a flower and ABOUT female sexuality
- Requires additional research (especially for contemporary conceptual art)
- Can be ambiguous (multiple interpretations exist)
- How familiar Cataloger is with the field and subject matter?
- Existing controlled vocabularies may not fit local needs

Suggestions:
- User needs should be taken into account when selecting the subject categories
- Creating customized subjects allows flexibility and helps meet local needs
- Using existing framework of Getty vocabularies may help with organization of subjects