

# Oklahoma Native Artists Project: Using Linked Open Data to Promote Oral Histories and Native Artists

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## Introduction

The Oklahoma Native Artists (ONA) project consists of interviews with Native American artists in Oklahoma. Wikipedia articles for Native American artists have been rejected due to artists' "lack of notability." OSU Library is implementing LOD via Wikidata to increase representation of Native American artists featured in this collection and to challenge the concept of "notability" for persons from underrepresented communities. However, an oral history collection featuring living people presents unique challenges and ethical questions, especially given the fraught relationship between representation and data collection for Native American artists.

## ONA Collection



## Acknowledgments

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## Questions

- How do we respect the rights of Native American citizens and living persons while representing them as a dataset?
  - What workflow/checklist must we establish to ensure artists maintain agency, involvement, and control of their representation throughout changes that occur during data lifecycles?
  - Can we offer training for communities to edit their own entries? Or should we maintain curatorial authority and responsibility to reach out when changes are needed?
- Are Wikidata and Wikipedia the most effective platforms for our project and its concerns of representation?
- What Wikidata properties may we use without violating privacy rights and the right to self-representation?
- Do we trust our data and data sources? How much data needs to be verified against additional resources?
- Who benefits from a project of this nature? The Native American artists? Their communities? Researchers?

## Methods

To establish "notability," we scoured the oral histories of the ONA collection, newspapers, databases, published artist biographies, and exhibition catalogs to identify works of art and other relevant grounding information by which the artist might be deemed credible for inclusion on the Wiki platforms. Using reconciliatory services provided on OpenRefine, we hope to supply such relevant, non-invasive information as identifiers, textual sources, occupation as an artist, works or exhibitions, and corresponding oral history interview at OSU Library:

| Label (do not override)              | Fields, Anita (English)   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| place of birth (P19)                 | Hominy (Q2932032)<br>▶ 1 references   |
| VIAF ID (P214)                       | 96616077<br>▶ 1 references  |
| Union List of Artist Names ID (P245) | ulan/500126670<br>▶ 1 references  |
| oral history at (P9600)              | Edmon Low Library (Q5338821)<br>▶ 1 references  |
| occupation (P106)                    | artist (Q483501)<br>▶ 1 references  |
| has works in the collection (P6379)  | Minneapolis Institute of Art (Q1700481)<br>▶ 1 references<br>Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art (Q5350016)<br>▶ 1 references<br>Heard Museum (Q2061039)<br>▶ 1 references<br>Gilcrease Museum (Q14708424)<br>▶ 1 references |
| instance of (P31)                    | human (Q5)<br>▶ 0 references  |
| ethnic group (P172)                  | Osage Nation (Q947650)<br>▶ 1 references<br>Muscogee (Q51705)<br>▶ 1 references   |

The goal is to create Wikidata entries for potentially 140 Native American artists identified in our ONA oral histories, as well as other artists represented in campus collections and exhibitions in the future.

## Future steps

We will contact Native American artists for their involvement and permissions. For practical purposes, data will be added according to the following groupings:

- 1) Artists already in Wikidata
- 2) Artists with ULAN/VIAF IDs
- 3) Artists with artwork in permanent collections
- 4) Artists with Wikipedia articles
- 5) Artists with websites on the ONA site
- 6) Artists without Wikipedia articles or websites

Some valuable information requires more time and intensive research:

- Additional Wikipedia entries for art works and exhibitions
- Reconciling source and reference data
- Data verification and cleanup
- Site links to Wikipedia, Wikimedia, and Wikibooks
- Suggesting edits to authority resources

## Further information



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