

The Subjects of Linked Data:

Facilitating Informed Decisions & Securing Permissions
to Implement Linked Open Data for Oklahoma Native Artists

Code4Lib, May 25, 2022

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Potential of Linked Open Data (LOD) for Oral History

For libraries & archives

- Improved discovery
- Increased visibility
- Inclusion

For living individuals

- What are their priorities?
- Their privacy preferences?
- How do they want to represent themselves?

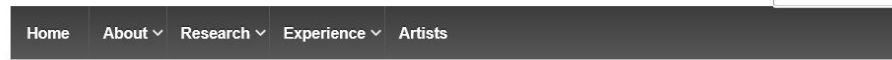
“On whose terms should inclusion take place?”

Kathleen Ash-Milby and Ruth B. Phillips, “Inclusivity or Sovereignty? Native American Arts in the Gallery and the Museum since 1992,” *Art Journal* 76, no. 2 (2017): 12.



Oklahoma Native Artists (ONA) Oral History Series

- 140 interviews with Indigenous artists, art gallery owners, festival organizers, & collectors
- Developed by the Oklahoma Oral History Research Program at OSU
- Oklahoma Native Artists Oral History Project



Welcome to the Oklahoma Native Art Portal

The content and links we provide come from a variety of sources— interviews from tribal media, newspapers and magazines, academic scholarship, museum catalogues and exhibitions, and culture blogs, among others. Not all artists whose work is featured in the portal are Oklahoma all have roots in the state or ties through their respective tribal Nations or residency.

The purpose of this site is to allow you to experience and explore the creations of Oklahoma Native Art in a broad but practical context. Like the art itself, it is meant to be a growing body of connections. If you see something we need to point to or an event or collection to add, contact us and let us know.

Oklahoma Oral History Research Program,
Oklahoma State University

The Impact of Oklahoma History on Data Sovereignty

- 39 Sovereign Nations from across North America live in Oklahoma

Federal land seizures

- 1818: Treaties for land in Oklahoma first signed
- 1830s: Indian Removal and Trade Acts established Indian Territory - Nations displaced from southeastern US
- 1850s - 1900 American wars of expansion - Nations displaced from Northeast, Midwest, and West



The Impact of Oklahoma History on Data Sovereignty

Federal land seizures (continued)

- 1862: Morrill Act established land grant universities on Native American land
- 1887: Dawes Act crafted to connect tribal membership to private land ownership and induce statehood
- 1890: Oklahoma State University founded as a land-grant institution
- 1907: Oklahoma Statehood



The Impact of Oklahoma History on Data Sovereignty

Layers of complexity for Indigenous people in Oklahoma

- Data collection is a pervasive theme throughout this history
- Data determined land ownership and targeted them for further violence
- Data structured and collected by colonizing institutions, whether a land-grant university or Wikidata, reinforces these harmful systems.



The Impact of Oklahoma History on Data Sovereignty

Regulation of Native American Artists

- 1974: “American Indian Arts and Crafts Sales Act of 1974,” [Okla. Stat. tit. 78 § 71 \(1974\)](#) required tribal membership to sell Native American art
- 1990: Federal [Indian Arts and Crafts Act](#) regulates who may call themselves a Native American artist



“No word for art”

“‘No word for art’ in their language’...indicates an Indigenous rejection of how Native arts are perceived in non-Native contexts such as museums, cultural centers, galleries, and scholarly texts—contexts that imbue fine arts with the Western values of individualism, commercialism, objectivism, and competition, as framed by an elitist point of reference....



“No word for art”

“...A rejection of the term ‘art’ is then a rejection of Western culture as capitalist, patriarchal, and, ultimately, shallow, one that does not value the central principles of Indigenous identity, such as land, language, family, and spirituality.”

Nancy Marie Mithlo, “No Word for Art in Our Language? Old Questions, New Paradigms,” *Wicazo Sa Review* 27, no. 1 (2012): 111—26, <https://doi.org/10.5749/wicazosareview.27.1.0111>.



Why Create LOD for the ONA Oral History Series?

“Institutional practices that accurately reflect twenty-first century art worlds can only emerge when Native American and settler arts remain in dialogue.”

Ash-Milby and Phillips, 38

Goals for creating LOD in Wikidata for ONA oral history series:

- greater online visibility for Native artists
- more access to unstructured oral history interview transcripts
- promote grassroots/academic research on Indigenous art
- engage students in scholarship on Indigenous culture
- draw connections between siloed collections



Why Create LOD for the ONA Oral History Series?

- Structured data would extend exhibition history data
- Increase awareness of Native art
- Activate artists' archives for inclusion in discourse
- Connect exhibition metadata and oral history interviews
- Link professional profiles, art work, exhibition venues, publications, interviews and other collections



Implications of Linked Open Data project

- Data on an obscure library website appears on Google knowledge panel
 - Open data is easier to share and repurpose
 - Oral history provides more context and a platform for the artists' voices
 - LOD risks reductionism and misrepresentation
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- Concept of linked open data unfamiliar to most outside of libraries
 - Communication with artists essential to align with CARE Principles of Indigenous Data Governance and the Oral History Association's Principles and Best Practices



Communication Process

- Liaison: Original interviewer, oral historian Julie Pearson-Little Thunder
- Phone conversations with artists who consent or decline
- FAQ documents help answer questions during the conversation
 - uses of Wikidata,
 - possibility of greater representation
 - publicity for individual artist
 - potential proliferation/modification of data
 - commitment to facilitating changes to the data and offer training and support for editing Wikipedia and Wikidata
- Artists who agree are asked if they would provide a CV
- Outcome documented by email with the artist and internally



Communication Process

Contact artists by phone & share project and FAQs

- Yes to Wikidata?
 - Follow up with email, ask for CV
- No to Wikidata, but yes to OSU-curated Linked Open Data
 - Follow up with email, ask for CV
- No to any kind of profile
 - Document locally, do not follow up further

Record communications (email, spreadsheet)



Communication Process

- Project progresses slowly
- The small number of responses have been positive
- Ongoing project work in the meantime:
 - Shifting gears from LOD creation to research
 - History PhD student researcher
 - Developing bibliographies for artists
 - Identifying museum holdings and exhibition histories
 - LOD for citations may occur before artist LOD



Thank you for your time today and to our project collaborators, Dr. Julie Pearson Little-Thunder and Sarah Milligan, and to the artists for sharing their experiences

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