The Artist Archives Project develops information resources for the display and conservation of contemporary art. The initiative responds to a growing need for museum and archive professionals to work with artists in documenting their production methods, and building knowledge for future treatment and re-activation of their work. The first undertaking of the Artist Archives Project is to create an information resource devoted to the multidisciplinary artist/activist David Wojnarowicz. The resource will contain technical and historical information about the artist's films, video, photography, paintings, drawings, and performance work. The artist's personal archive in the Fales Downtown Collection at NYU serves as a primary source for research.

The project takes a digital humanities approach by assigning equal emphasis to the content and the database / web portal design.

Project researchers are working in conjunction with curators at the Whitney Museum of American Art who are preparing for a Wojnarowicz exhibition, along with others familiar with his work. The research team creates transcripts from interviews, annotated guides to other resources, and information regarding the challenges of exhibiting and conserving his work.
Upon launching the research, the project team immediately realized the complexity of the task at hand from a database design perspective. We needed to create a database and website that would accommodate complex relationships between objects, media, people, dates, places, exhibits, conservation reports, publications, and other archival resources regarding Wojnarowicz' life and work. These relationships proved to be challenging to conventional database design that privileges a highly structured and hierarchical arrangement of information.

Project Directors:
Glenn Wharton, Clinical Associate Professor, Museum Studies glenn.wharton@nyu.edu
Marvin Taylor, Director of the Fales Library and Special Collections marvin.taylor@nyu.edu

Technology Research Director:
Deena Engel, Clinical Professor, Department of Computer Science deena.engel@nyu.edu

NYU Project Advisors include faculty and staff from the Archives/Public History Program, Art History, the Grey Art Gallery, Cinema Studies, Computer Science, the Digital Humanities Program, the Institute of Fine Arts, the Moving Image Archiving and Preservation Program, Museum Studies, and Performance Studies.

The Center for Humanities at New York University provided initial funds for the Artist Archives Project thought a Humanities Initiative Research Collaboration grant. Additional support comes in the form of interns from the Polonsky-NYU Digital Humanities internship program.

Link to Project Website: Project Website will launch in Fall 2016