

**Statement of National Need:** The Internet Archive (IA), partnering with New York Art Resources Consortium (NYARC), which consists of the Frick Art Reference Library, MoMA, and Brooklyn Museum is requesting \$240,000 for a two-year project grant in the National Digital Infrastructure and Initiatives category of the National Leadership Grants for Libraries Program. This funding will build on the momentum of prior foundational work conducted in an IMLS Forum grant, related National Symposium held in 2019, and other community building and research work done as part of the “Advancing Art Libraries and Curated Web Archives” project.<sup>1</sup> We seek funding to pursue the next phase of this work, namely to create a collaborative, consorcial entity that brings together art libraries and museums across the United States to scale capacity for coordinated curation and archiving of web-published primary source art and cultural heritage collections. The project will also expand discovery and use of these archives through the creation of a unified access portal of content from member collections. Formerly print-only records such as gallery communications, exhibition catalogs, artist websites and other primary resources are now often solely published on the web. These materials are highly ephemeral, and their preservation and access pose technical, methodological, and resource challenges to individual institutions. At the same time, the migration of valuable resources to the web has created opportunities for coordinated curation, centralized technical approaches, and shared discovery, access, and research services.

The Internet Archive has nearly 25 years of web archiving, community development, and technology services experience and NYARC has over a decade of shared access, curatorial, and archiving collaborations. Prior IMLS-funded work resulted in several publications, surveys, workshops, a National Symposium, and follow-on stakeholders meetings to conduct financial, member, and sustainability modeling.<sup>2</sup> A core group of 10-15 art and museum libraries, including Getty Research Institute, Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Indianapolis Museum of Art at Newfields, Art Institute of Chicago, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and SFMOMA have enthusiastically committed institutional buy-in for this effort already, participated in stakeholders meetings, conducted further network building, and pursued early-stage collaborative curation, while dozens more have shown interest through participation in webinars, surveys and the forum itself. This initiative has taken on an even greater importance with the current COVID-19 pandemic causing both new economic uncertainty in many institutions and an increased ephemerality of community-based art and artists’ web content identified for archiving. The pandemic has made collaborative efforts and shared funding and service models more critical to libraries in pursuing their mission. This proposal aims to create that shared, community-driven digital infrastructure for art and museum libraries and also will realize the cost efficiencies of a consorcial model mixing centralized administration, technology, and access powered by distributed, coordinated curation.

**Project Design:** The project design, work areas, and goals of this project are based on priorities identified by key museum and art library stakeholders during collaborative roadmapping and needs-gathering activities as part of the prior IMLS-funded work. Over the course of the two-year project proposed here, we will establish a consorcial entity with a grant-funded Program Manager housed at IA but reporting to the consortium, enable at least two dozen participating libraries to coordinate curation of national, thematic web archive collections of born-digital art resources, and create a unified access and research portal. This work will occur over four phases. **Phase 1: Formation** (4 months). This phase will involve hiring staff and member recruitment and onboarding for establishing a consorcial entity. This entity will include 25-30 members at launch, all working on collaborative curation to ensure the collections’ comprehensiveness and to avoid duplication of effort. The consortium members will develop protocols for governance, participation, resource sharing, and planning for future growth and sustainability beyond the two-year grant-funded project. **Phase 2: Collection Development**

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://archive-it.org/blog/learn-more/art-libraries/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://archive.org/details/aalcwanationalforumreport>

**& Governance** (7 months). This phase will utilize the centralized, non-profit technology platform of IA's Archive-It web archiving service, as well as the work of the Program Manager, to enable consortium members to build a diverse set of thematic art-related web archives encompassing a national scope and emphasizing the inclusion of at-risk content from traditionally underrepresented communities. Staffing will assist with collection management and will benefit from IA's cost-sharing of staff and technology. This phase will also establish consortial governance and organizational and operational practices, including policies and best practices around copyright, intellectual property, access, metadata standards and more. **Phase 3: Community Engagement & Building Research and Access Methods** (9 months). In this phase, the Program Manager, with assistance from NYARC, will create, support, and promote opportunities for curatorial, access, and research interactions with the project's vital library collections for a variety of end users and researchers. This will include community nomination and co-creation activities, trainings, (virtual) events, creation of datasets for computational analysis, a consortium-specific search, discovery, and access portal, and other services iteratively identified and produced in conjunction with end users. **Phase 4: Sustainability, Promotion, and Evaluation** (4 months) While the success of this project will be evaluated throughout the course of the grant, through surveys and outreach to members, peers, and users, the final phase will incorporate the cumulative results of these evaluations to ensure the long-term sustainability of the consortium and the discoverability, expansion, and use of its collections.

**Diversity Plan** The diversity of organizations included in the consortium is key to ensuring the comprehensiveness of the collections created as well as the breadth of communities served. Diversity and inclusion will be achieved via recruitment of cohort member organizations diverse in geography, institution size and budget, urban vs rural, as well as in the racial, socioeconomic and cultural diversity of the galleries, artists and arts organizations targeted for archiving, and the diversity of the end user communities served by the products of this grant. With a model built on distributed, but coordinated curation and the cost-efficiencies of centralized technical services, infrastructure, and staff for collection maintenance activities, the project allows for the inclusion of art libraries financially or practically unable to otherwise archive ephemeral web materials.

**National Impact** This project will have an immediate and lasting impact on a key domain of U.S. cultural history through the creation of a diverse national network of art and museum libraries who have demonstrated interest and engagement in the work of building thematic web collections. Building shared digital and consortial infrastructure will also remove barriers and allow a broader range of libraries to participate in the ongoing stewardship of vital born-digital art history collections. The creation of a collaborative entity for collection building, community engagement, and resource sharing, will buttress the art and museum libraries in accomplishing their missions and serving their users and will also provide a replicable model for similar initiatives addressing born-digital stewardship and librarianship. The consortial entity and governance models developed over the course of the grant will be scalable to include hundreds of art libraries and museums nationally, and will be replicable to other types of organizations and content. The project will also build a vital collection of at-risk web content and a research and access portal that will be made freely and openly available to any web users, increasing access to materials and promoting new forms of research and scholarship. Thus the project will build capacity for libraries, ensure stewardship of collections, and increase public access for all.

**Budget Summary** The total amount requested is \$240,000 to fund staffing, technical services and program support, and will also include \$30,000 of IA cost share. This includes \$170,000 (1 FTE over 2 years) salary for the consortium's Program Manager and \$30,000 (.15 FTE over 2 years, cost shared by IA) in additional administrative management. \$15,000 is budgeted for stakeholder travel to grant-related events, \$35,000 for supplies in the form of technical services, and \$20,000 in subawards for consortium member lead organizations.