WORKBOOK

The Active Archive

Easily Document, Organize, and Preserve Your Art

Artwork Archive

artists/ collectors/ organizations

What to expect:

Your Archive Is the Backbone of Your Practice

Welcome to The Active Archive Workshop with Artwork Archive. In this workbook you'll learn why inventory is imperative for your art career and your artistic legacy, as well as your peace of mind.

This workbook is for you if you want to:

- **Build a professional art inventory** that reflects the full scope of your practice and supports your career at every stage.

- **Present your work with confidence** when opportunities arise—whether that's applying for a grant, preparing for a show, or meeting with a collector.

- **Adopt professional standards** for documenting your artwork so your records are accurate, complete, and ready to share when needed.

- **Refine your existing system** so your inventory becomes a tool that strengthens your reputation, not a task you put off.

It's also for you if:

- **Your artwork details are scattered** across spreadsheets, notebooks, or your camera roll, and you want everything in one reliable place.

- **You want the peace of mind** and professional confidence that comes from being able to answer questions about your work—like when it was created, exhibited, or sold—without stress or guesswork.

BUILD YOUR ARCHIVE. STRENGTHEN YOUR PRACTICE.
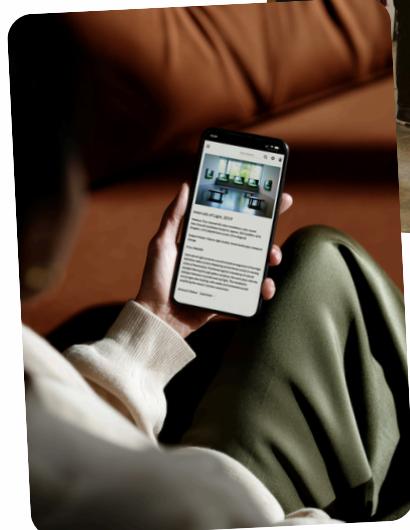
Your Guide to Building a Professional Archive of Your Art
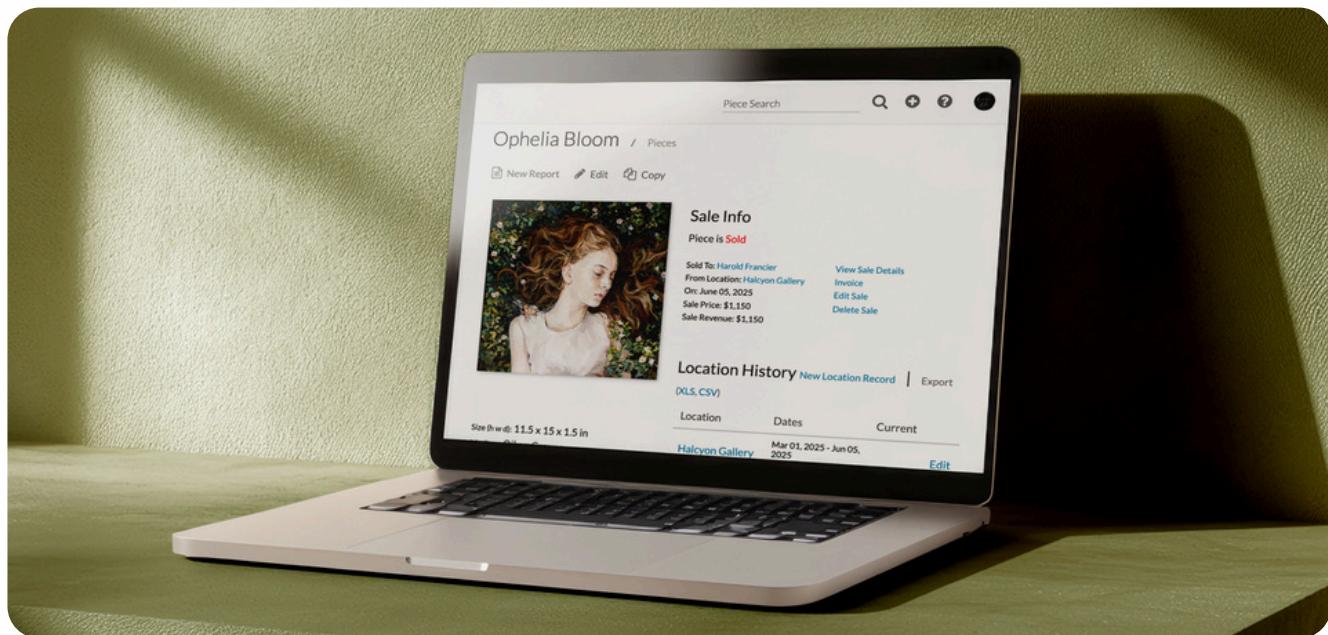
Written by Artists, for Artists

This workbook is a personal note of encouragement from the team at Artwork Archive.

It was created by artists who understand the realities of creative work and the challenges of building a sustainable career.

Think of it as guidance from peers who want to see your work supported, documented, and taken seriously.

Learn Professional Practices

Inside, you'll learn how to catalog and inventory your work using proven, professional methods.

You'll discover how strong documentation supports opportunities now and in the future. Along the way, you'll learn from examples drawn from art history and contemporary artists working today.

Build Your Artistic Legacy

You'll be introduced to the archive as an active, ongoing part of your art career.

This workbook helps you set up a simple system to maintain so you can spend less time managing details and more time creating.

With your archive in place, you can move forward knowing your creative legacy is documented and preserved.

A note before you begin

If the idea of an archive feels dusty or outdated, this workbook invites you to rethink it.

Creating an archive is not just about preservation. It is about taking control of your creative story and voice.

As the artist, you decide what is documented, how your work is contextualized, and how your career is understood now and in the future.

ARTWORK
ARCHIVE

About Artwork Archive
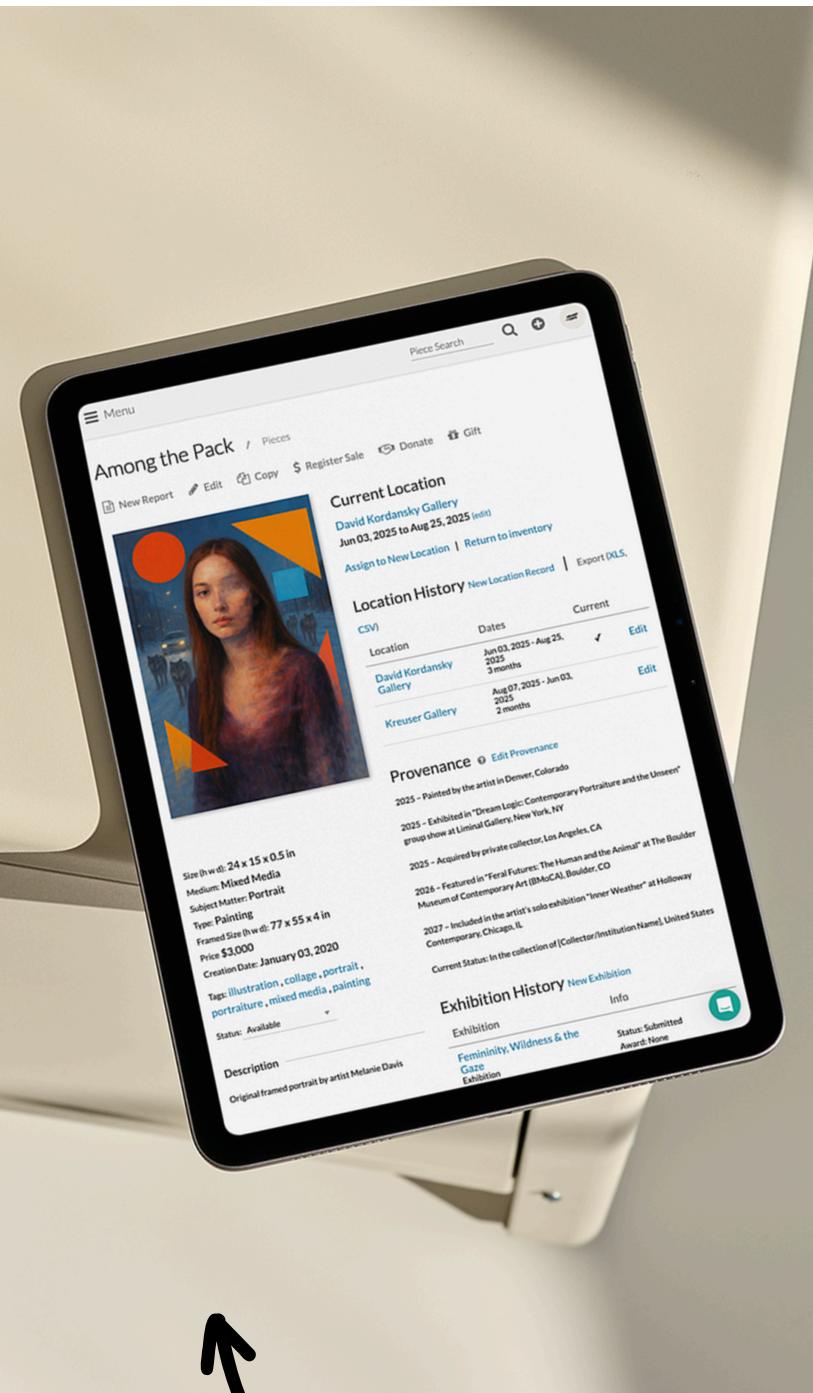
ONE PLATFORM TO ORGANIZE, TRACK, AND SHARE YOUR ART.

At Artwork Archive, we're artists and innovators building the world's most trusted art management platform.

Since 2010, we've helped creators, collectors, and organizations worldwide catalog, track, and showcase their artwork with confidence.

Our platform has evolved from a simple cataloging tool into a complete archive management solution – with tools to tell the story of the artist alongside the artwork, and a place to showcase the fuller story of each piece by including documentation of its creation, exhibition, locations, relationships, provenance, publication, and its ongoing impact in the world.

As artists ourselves, we have created the tool we always wanted. We have made it simple to catalog our work, build a comprehensive archive that plays an active part in our career, showcase our work publicly while maintaining complete records privately, and protect our creative legacy as the future unfolds. Whether you choose to use Artwork Archive's cloud–based platform to manage your own art inventory is up to you – this workbook will be relevant to any system you choose.

ARTWORK ARCHIVE

Chapter 01

THE BENEFITS OF AN ART INVENTORY

What Are the Benefits of Inventorying Your Art?
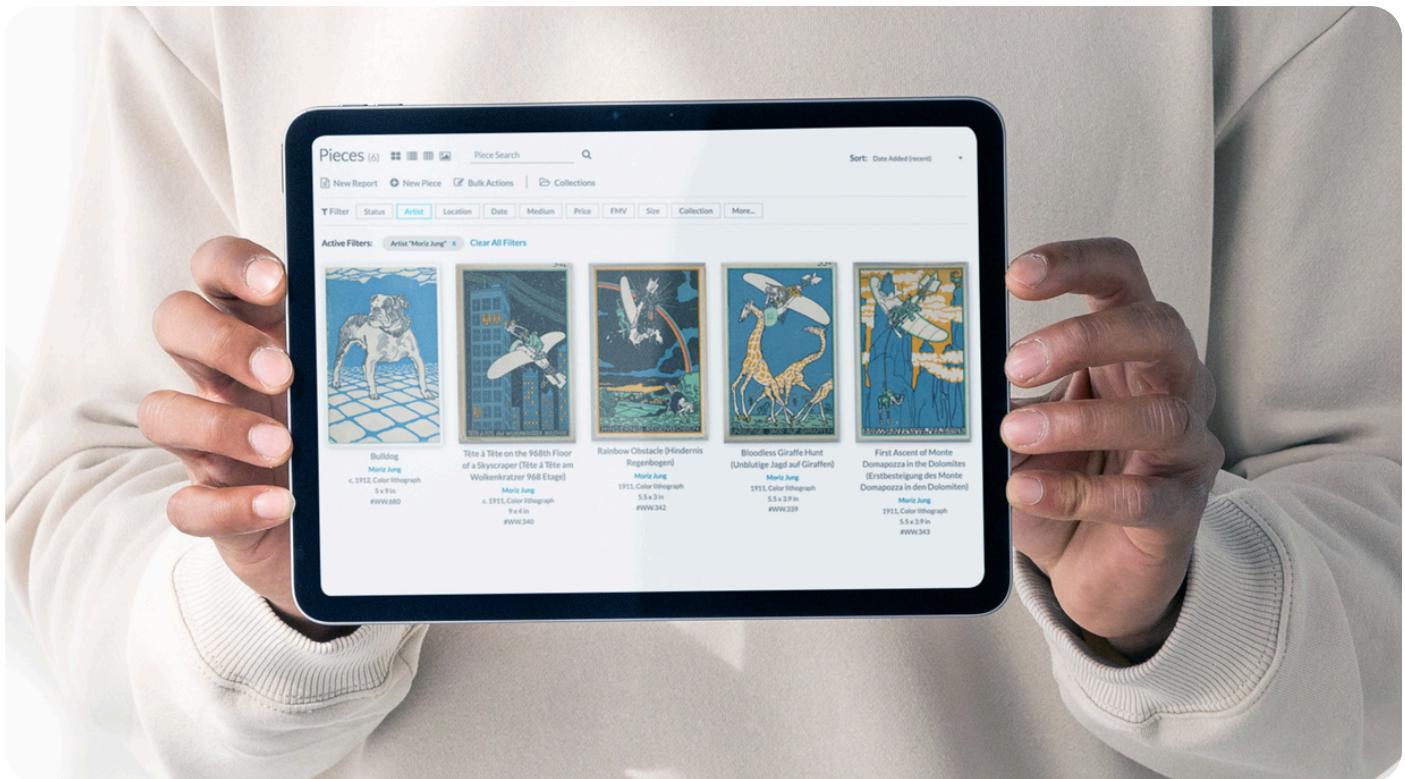
Build a Professional Foundation

Inventorying your artwork is essential to both your art career and your peace of mind.

Your inventory is more than a list of works. It is a living archive that documents the details of your artwork, your growth, and the impact of your practice over time. In this chapter, you'll get an overview of what this workbook covers and a preview of the concrete results you will create by completing the assignments.

Be prepared for Opportunity

A well-maintained inventory frees up mental space for creative work.

When your records are current, you are ready for applications, collaborations, exhibitions, and sales opportunities without scrambling for details.

With cloud-based inventory tools, your records can generate reports, support online presentations, create curated viewing experiences, and help your work reach a wider audience quickly and professionally.

Shape Your Artistic Legacy

Art inventory management plays a critical role in shaping your artistic legacy at every stage of your career.

By cataloging your work consistently, you begin to see connections across bodies of work and the larger arc of your practice taking shape.

Legacy is not something reserved for later in life. Emerging and mid-career artists can actively use their archive to guide decisions, strengthen visibility, and direct how their work is understood while they are still creating.

ARTWORK ARCHIVE

Before we begin.

Before we dive into how to build your archive, it's important to first understand why this work matters and to set clear intentions for the workshop ahead.

Documenting and organizing your artwork is one of the most powerful professional steps you can take as an artist.

A complete, well-managed archive allows you to confidently share your work with curators, collectors, and collaborators, pursue new opportunities, and protect your career against loss or uncertainty.

It builds value by preserving your story, establishing provenance, and communicating professionalism through accurate records and polished presentation.

More importantly, it gives you control over your data, your direction, and the legacy of your creative life.

USE THE WORKSHEETS ON THE NEXT PAGES TO IDENTIFY YOUR WHY

Color In Your Core Motivation for Creating an Archive

If the idea of an archive feels dusty or outdated, this workbook invites you to rethink it.

Freedom

Time & Ener

Longevity

paperwork

Reduce mental lo

career record

Focus on art, not.

Free up admin tim

Create a lasting
archive of work

Connection &
Recognition

Gain recognition

Build credibility

**My Core
Motivati**

Reduce overwhelm

Know what you have

Confidence
& Clarity

Be prepared for grants

Commission &
exhibition-ready

Spark inspiration

Connect across your

pportunity
iness

body of work

Creative Flow

Define What Success Looks Like to You

CIRCLE THE EXAMPLES THAT RESONATE.

WHY SET UP YOUR
ART INVENTORY?

Time & Energy

Professional Growth

Creative Flow

Protection

Opportunity Readiness

Value & Money

**My Core
Motivation**

Confidence & Clarity

Legacy & Impact

Connection & Recognition

Visibility

Longevity

My Version of Success:

Freedom

Color In Your Core Motivation for Creating an Archive

Every artist has a reason for creating an archive. Some want clarity and control. Others want to be ready for opportunities, share their work more easily, or build a lasting record of their career.

Naming your core motivation helps you build an archive that supports your practice.

WHY SET UP YOUR ART INVENTORY?

Freedom
- paperwork
- Focus on art, not.

Time & Energy
- Reduce mental load
- Free up admin time

Professional Growth
- Share work easily
- opportunities
- Unlock new

Longevity
- career record
- Create a lasting archive of work

Connection & Recognition
- Gain recognition
- Build credibility

Protection
- loss/damage
- Safeguard work against

My Core Motivation

Value & Money
- Increase value
- Price professionally

Confidence & Clarity
- Reduce overwhelm
- Know what you have

Opportunity Readiness
- Be prepared for grants
- Commission & exhibition-ready

Creative Flow
- Spark inspiration
- Connect across your body of work

Visibility
- Online portfolio
- Share with curators & collectors

Legacy & Impact
- Preserve your story
- Amplify your impact

Define What Success Looks Like to You

Time & Energy

Aftersetting up systems, no more late nights scrambling for deadlines. You freed emotional energy and reclaimed time for your art.

Professional Growth

By consolidatingyour catalog, you pursued opportunities and landed your first solo show with a polished, organized portfolio.

Protection

When your studio flooded, you had your archive inventoried and backed up. You kept selling and working with no interruptions.

Value & Money

Acollector respectedyour pricing after seeing your catalog. Professional presentation made the sale an easy yes.

Legacy & Impact

Acomprehensivearchive allowed others to curate and advocate for your work, ensuring your story would live on.

Visibility

Acurator found your work through your online portfolio and invited you to an exhibition. Everything was ready to send instantly.
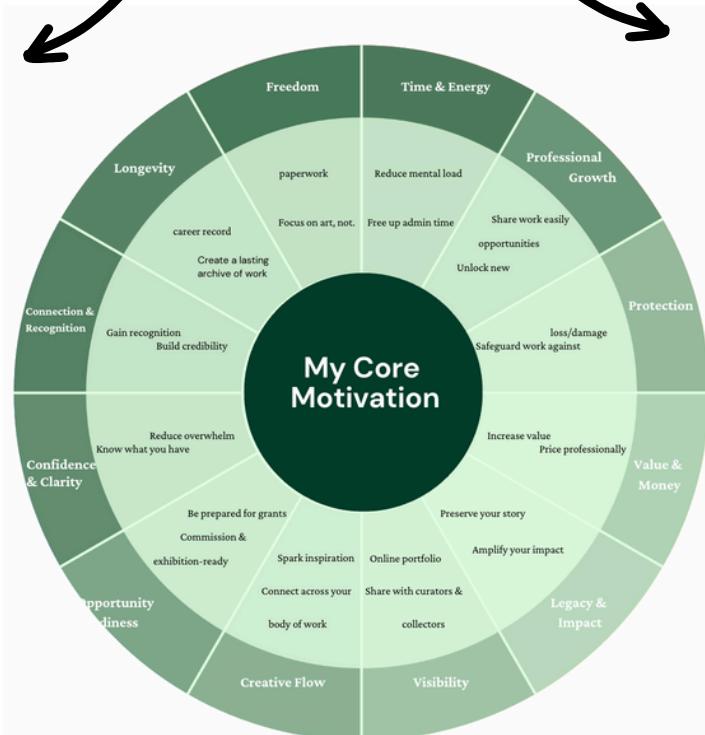
Creative Flow

Looking back through older work sparked new ideas and epiphanies that led to a breakthrough series.

Opportunity Readiness

Agrant deadlinecame upand you applied in an afternoon. Your materials were ready—you weren't even late to dinner.

Confidence & Clarity

Nomore guessing.Ataglance, you knew what was available, sold, on loan, or in storage.

Connection & Recognition

Yourpublic archive led toan invitation to speak at a conference, recognizing your work and expertise.

Longevity

After 25years, you had peace of mind with a complete career record. You could celebrate your past and plan your future.

Freedom

With your systems in place, you finally spent most of your day in the studio doing the work you love.

My Core Motivation

Freedom

Time & Energy

Longevity

paperwork

Reduce mental load

Focus on art, not.

Free up admin time

Professional Growth

career record

Share work easily opportunities

Create a lasting archive of work

Unlock new

Connection & Recognition

Gain recognition
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Confidence & Clarity

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Know what you have

Increase value
Price professionally

Value & Money

Be prepared for grants

Preserve your story

Commission & exhibition-ready

Spark inspiration

Online portfolio

Amplify your impact

Opportunity Readiness

Connect across your body of work

Share with curators & collectors

Legacy & Impact

Creative Flow

Visibility

My Version of Success:

Set your goal for the workshop.

Documenting your work is one of the most direct paths to long-term success as an artist, and it is something you can actively shape and control.

In the following worksheets, you will take your core motivation and define what success looks like for you in practical terms by setting a clear, measurable goal for the workshop.

This is your opportunity to decide what you want to accomplish by the end of the process, whether that means completing a specific section of your inventory, organizing a body of work, or creating a system you can continue to build on over time.

Setting a concrete goal helps turn the broad idea of "getting organized" into a focused, achievable outcome. Instead of feeling overwhelmed by everything that needs to be done, you will identify a specific milestone you can work toward, track, and complete.

Based on our experience working with thousands of artists, collectors, and arts organizations worldwide, establishing a clear inventory goal is one of the most effective steps toward building a sustainable, long-term art practice.
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USE THE WORKSHEETS ON THE NEXT PAGES TO SET YOUR GOALS

Define What Success Looks Like to You

Using your core motivation that you identified above, map our your goal for archiving your artwork.

MAKE YOUR GOALS "SMART"

S M A R T

Specific
Clear and focused, describing exactly what you will do.

Measurable
Trackable with evidence of progress.

Achievable
Realistic and doable given your time and resources.

Relevant
Aligned with your motivations and values.

Time-bound
With a clear deadline or timeframe.

Core Motivation: Time & Energy

Example goal: By March 15, I will upload 50 artworks into my inventory system so that I can apply for upcoming residencies without scrambling.

Core Motivation: Professional Growth

Example goal: By the end of this quarter, I will create a polished digital catalog of my 20 best works to submit to at least 3 gallery opportunities.

Core Motivation: Protection

Example goal: Within the next 30 days, I will back up my complete archive (images and records) to a cloud drive.

Core Motivation: Visibility

Example goal: By next month, I will update my public portfolio with 10 new works so curators and collectors can discover me online.

Core Motivation: Freedom

Example goal: This year, I will dedicate 1 hour every Friday morning to updating my inventory, freeing studio time for creative work.

Core Motivation: Confidence & Clarity

Example goal: By maintaining my system weekly, I will always know which artworks are available, sold, or on exhibit without guessing.

Example Goal: Establish an archive system for my new work

Specific
Create a consistent digital archiving system with a clear process for documenting artwork and a central, easy-to-update storage location.

Measurable
The system will be set up and used to inventory all new artworks over the next three months, allowing retrieval of any piece's details and images within five minutes.

Achievable
I will choose and set up a sustainable system that fits my artistic legacy goals, matches my skills and resources, and allows easy data entry and retrieval—whether a platform like Artwork Archive, a spreadsheet, or organized folders.

Relevant
Building this habit now ensures all future work is documented from the start, saving time, expanding career opportunities, and strengthening my long-term artistic legacy.

Time-bound
The system will be fully operational and consistently in use as part of the process of creating new work within 30 days.

Define What Success Looks Like to You

Write your goal down, and post it in your workspace where you can see it often. By connecting your unique vision to your tangible SMART goal, you'll move forward with clarity, confidence, and momentum.

DEFINE YOUR GOAL HERE

Define Your SMART Goal

GOAL:

SPECIFIC: I WILL …

MEASURABLE: I WILL KNOW I'VE SUCCEEDED WHEN …

ACHIEVABLE: THIS IS REALISTIC BECAUSE …

RELEVANT: THIS MATTERS TO ME RIGHT NOW BECAUSE …

TIME-BOUND: I WILL COMPLETE THIS BY ..

Reflect on the Bigger Picture

Before diving into the logistics of building your archive, take a moment to reflect on the bigger picture. These prompts will help you clarify your motivations, define what matters most to preserve, and connect your archiving practice to your long-term vision as an artist. Use this space to anchor your goals in meaning and intention.

The reason I am building my archive at this moment in my career is...

At this stage of my career, the most important things I want my archive to contain are:

One professional opportunity I want my art inventory to support me in is...
(grant, exhibition, sales, teaching, commissions, collaborations, etc)

The highlights, defining work or milestones in my career that I most want to preserve are:

More Goal Setting

Before diving into the logistics of building your archive, take a moment to reflect on the bigger picture. These prompts will help you clarify your motivations, define what matters most to preserve, and connect your archiving practice to your long-term vision as an artist. Use this space to anchor your goals in meaning and intention.

By the end of this workbook, I will have documented _____ artworks with complete records, containing essential information such as images, key details, and context.

By the end of this year, I want my archive to clearly show my expertise in
_____ (theme, medium, body of work).

The long-term vision I have for my artistic legacy and archive is…
(for example, ensure my entire career output is documented, publish a catalog of a defining body of work, exhibit a career retrospective, create a record for my heirs).

Up next …

Up next, you'll learn how to build your own active archive for your artwork—one that not only keeps your records organized but also supports your growth, professionalism, and visibility.

START ARCHIVING

SKILL BUILDING

Your art inventory deserves more than a spreadsheet. Get started with a system that helps you stay organized, professional, and ready for opportunity.

Starting your free trial of Artwork Archive lets you follow along with this workshop in real time—so you can immediately apply what you're learning, build your archive, and see the impact of documenting your work in one central place.

START ARCHIVING WITH YOUR FREE ARTWORK ARCHIVE TRIAL

Creating your account only takes a few minutes. Once you're in, you can start adding artworks, uploading images, and exploring features designed to make inventory management easy and enjoyable.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- Use the free trial to practice uploading, tagging, and organizing.

- Bookmark your dashboard and log in during each workshop session to build momentum.

TODAY'S ACTIONS

Start Your Free Trial of Artwork Archive ➜

- Go to www.artworkarchive.com
- Click Start Free Trial
- Choose your plan type (Artist, Collector, or Organization)
- Bonus: No credit card or automatic payments at the time of trial. You can try it out completely risk-free!

BONUS: ARTWORK ARCHIVE DEMO

GETTING STARTED WITH ARTWORK ARCHIVE
FOR ARTIST ACCOUNTS

We walk you through how to get your Artwork Archive account set up and the first steps you should take to get started.

Watch here ➜

02

Chapter 02

THE IMPACT OF ARCHIVES & PREPARING FOR THE PROCESS

Archives in the Arc of History

The potential impact of a work of art is often greater than the limitations of the human who created it. Whether you are setting up your archive simply for yourself, or intend to accelerate your professional growth and establish a legacy that outlives you, take the work of advocating for your art seriously.

Your point of view is powerful and it contributes to our collective history and culture.

THE ROLE OF THE ARCHIVE

Consider the legacy of artist Frida Kahlo (1907–1954)

Consider the legacy of Frida Kahlo (1907–1954), whose work was intensely personal, emotionally charged, and deeply intimate. Living through revolution and reconstruction in Mexico, Kahlo turned inward while her husband, Diego Rivera (1886–1957), chronicled public struggle through vast murals that sought to inspire action and shape history. From the privacy of her bedroom, she painted self-portraits that confronted pain, identity, and endurance.

Though Rivera's fame eclipsed hers during their lifetimes, Kahlo's honest portrayal of the inner world proved timeless. Her vision transcended the personal to become universal. Today, her art and image are recognized around the world, her exhibitions draw record crowds, and her legacy endures as one of the most powerful examples of personal expression becoming cultural history.

BUILD YOUR ARCHIVE.
SHAPE HOW YOUR WORK
IS REMEMBERED.

Left: Frida Kahlo, Magda Pach
*National Portrait Gallery,
Smithsonian Institution*

Right: Museo Frida Kahlo
Google Cultural Institute

A R T W O R K
A R C H I V E

The Lasting Power of an Artist's Archive
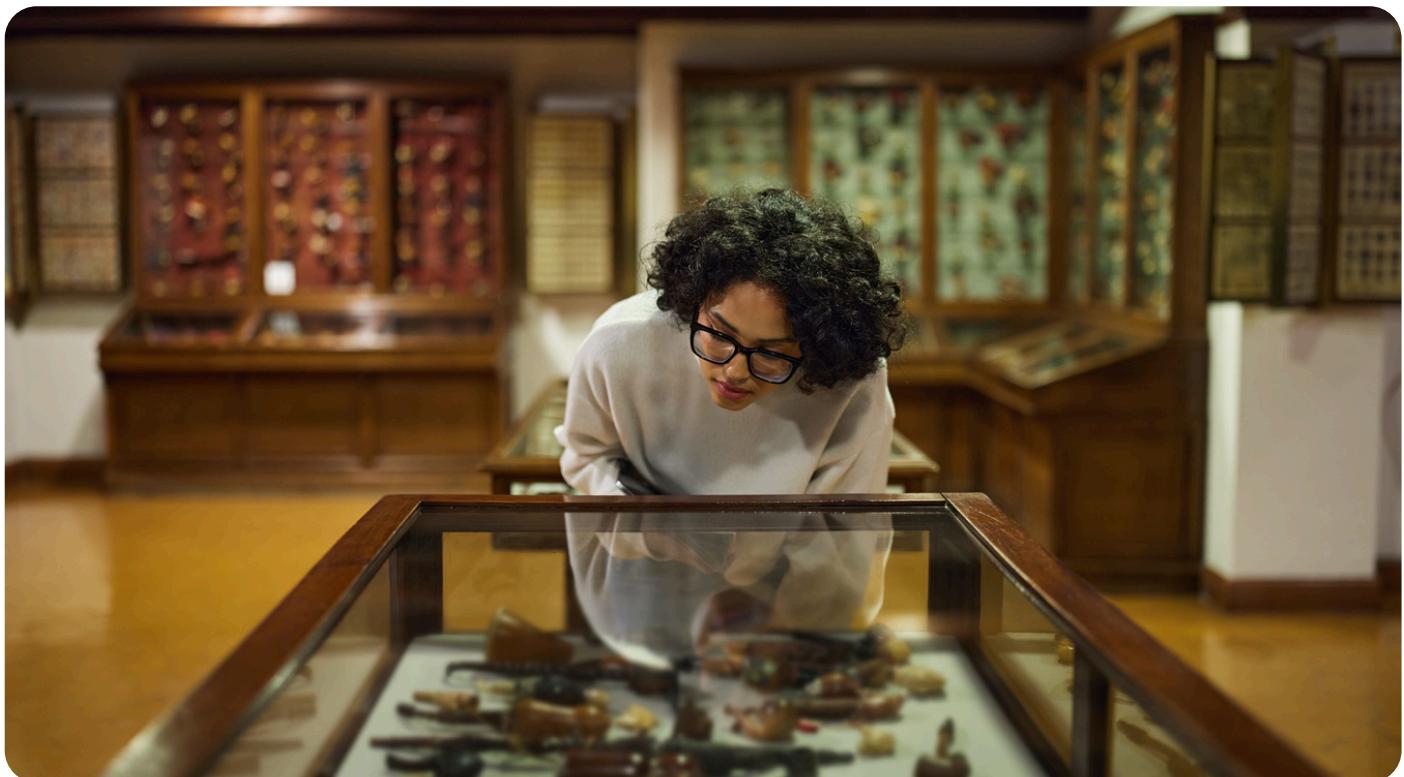
The Power of a Personal Record

What we choose to document determines how we are remembered.

Frida Kahlo's paintings were deeply personal. But it is the preservation of her journals, sketches, letters, photographs, and studio records that allows her voice to live on today. These personal records give context to her work and allow future generations to understand not only what she created, but why.

Because her archive was protected and maintained, her story remained intact. Her work can be studied, exhibited, and understood long after her lifetime.

An archive does more than store artwork. It ensures that the artist's point of view is not lost to time.

Make Your Voice a Part of History

Most artists will not have their studio turned into a museum. But today, we have something Kahlo did not: the ability to archive our work digitally.

A digital archive allows your body of work to live beyond your physical space. It keeps your images, records, and stories accessible. It makes your work discoverable now, not only later.

By documenting your work intentionally, you author your own record. You decide how your work is seen, shared, and remembered. You ensure your story is told in your own voice.

ARTWORK ARCHIVE

Assess Your Archive

To prepare for the process of documenting and cataloging your work, first do an assessment of what already exists.

We will give you detailed worksheets to expand upon tracking the key details, creation, and impact of each artwork so that you know exactly how to build each artwork piece record in your archive. For now, this is just a high-level assessment so we can align it with your priorities and make meaningful progress.

Locate & Assess:

Where is your digital information currently stored?

Where is your physical artwork & paperwork?

TAKE INVENTORY OF WHAT ALREADY EXISTS.

ARTWORK ARCHIVE

Assess Your Archive (cont.)

Continue your high-level assessment here. You'll work through more detailed exercises later to build complete artwork records.

For now, this step simply helps you understand where you are starting so you can make focused, meaningful progress.

CIRCLE ONE

Images & key details:

Do you have clear images of each piece?   YES / NO

If not, which pieces need images?

Can you easily locate key details (like title, size, medium, date etc) for each artwork?   YES / NO

Are there pieces that are missing key details, or images?

Assess Your Archive (cont.)

Creation and context:

Do you have notes, sketches, or photographs that trace the evolution of your artistic process over time?

Were there grants, residencies, commissions, or partnerships that supported the creation of your work or influenced its direction?

Who has played a role in the development of your practice—peers, collaborators, mentors, or organizations that have shaped your work?

Assess Your Archive

Provenance & impact

Can you track where your works are now and who owns or stewards them?

Where and when has your work been exhibited, collected, or featured?

Do you have photographic documentation of your work on display, in situ, or in use?

Has your work been published, written about, or included in catalogues, articles, or archives?

Begin Your Inventory

Use can use this spreadsheet as your first step in the inventory process.

Name	Medium	Size	Price	Location

Pro Tip:

:You can import your artworks into Artwork Archive using an import template. Reach out to team@artworkarchive.com to get a copy and learn more about the process

Find Your Zone of Archiving Genius

Balance between chaos, clutter, and perfectionism to create an archive that tells your story.

Keep Nothing / Loss of Archive

WHERE DO YOU NATURALLY FALL?

Utter Chaos / Random

Zone of Archiving Genius

Perfection / Control

Save Everything / Clutter
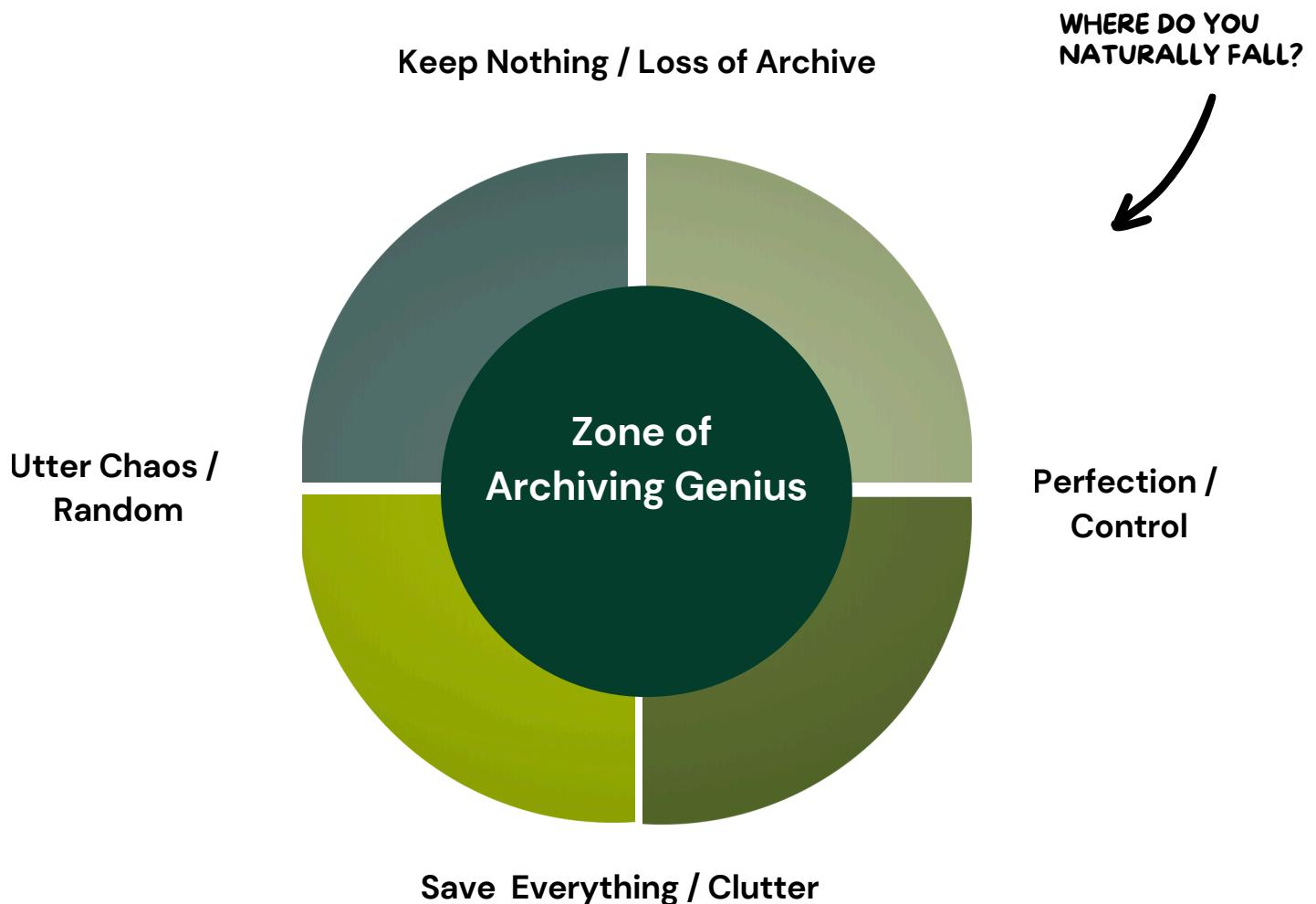
Too Much Clutter

An artist who saved every scrap and never curated their digital image library; too much information cluttered their records. Deadlines were missed because nothing was findable and it was difficult for others to access or understand their work.

Stuck in Perfection

An artist who worked endlessly on improving their system but never uploaded images or shared their work for fear of them not being good enough. Curators couldn't include them in exhibitions, the world missed out on their work

Benefits of A Personal Archive

How we categorize, save and reference information has a role in how histories are recorded and stories are told.

The internet is changing the way we can document and preserve our work – and make it accessible to other people in ways that have never been done before.

Digital databases have greater reach than traditional archives, and thus greater potential for impact on other people and the world at large. Showing and sharing our work online makes it accessible. And when we make our work accessible, it can be included in the greater cultural conversations of our time.
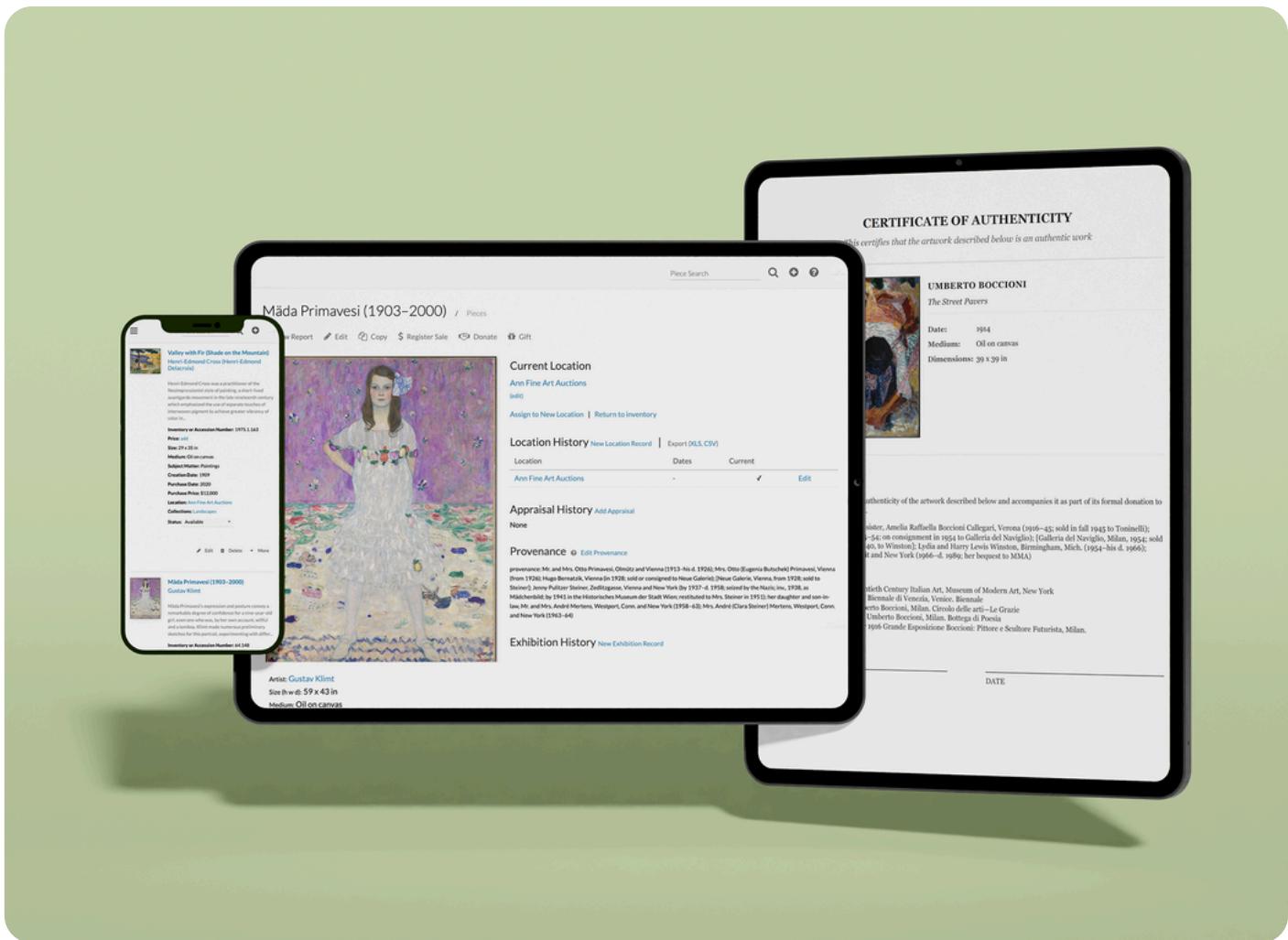
ARTWORK ARCHIVE

SKILL BUILDING

Every artist needs a strong foundation for their archive.
Join an Artwork Archive Live Demo to see how easy it is to start organizing your art, uploading images, and building your professional record—with guided support every step of the way.

In this introductory session, you'll get a live walkthrough of key tools, learn how to set up your account, and see real examples of how artists use Artwork Archive to stay organized and ready for opportunities. You'll leave confident and equipped to start building your own archive right away.

HOW TO GET STARTED WITH THE LIVE DEMO

This free, guided session is the best way to explore the platform in action. You'll learn how to add artwork records, upload images, create reports, and connect all the parts of your art career in one place—so you can begin managing your archive with clarity and ease.

TIPS FOR THE SESSION

- Bring one or two artworks to practice uploading during the session.
- Ask questions about your workflow or goals—our team is there to help.
- Take note of time-saving features you want to explore later.
- Keep your momentum by logging in weekly to add new work and updates.

TODAY'S ACTIONS

Register for a Live Introductory Session ➜

- Go to artworkarchive.com/webinars
- Choose an upcoming Live Demo that fits your schedule
- Enter your name and email to register
- Check your inbox for the confirmation email and Zoom link

Join the Live Demo and Follow Along ➜

- Log in to your Artwork Archive account before the session starts
- Follow the guided walkthrough as the team demonstrates key features
- Take notes and ask questions during the Q&A portion

ARTWORK ARCHIVE LIVE DEMO (45 MIN)

Learn directly from the Artwork Archive team:

➜ Get a guided tour of the platform
➜ Discover time-saving workflows
➜ See how artists use Artwork Archive to stay organized
➜ Ask questions and get personalized advice

Register here ➜

03

Chapter 03

PHOTOGRAPHING & DOCUMENTING ARTWORK: CREATING ARCHIVAL IMAGES

How to Inventory Your Work

Now that you understand the value of inventorying your artwork and have seen the systems that support it, it is time to begin. This process works whether you are using Artwork Archive or building a system on your own. The key is to start with a clear, repeatable method.

Here is a recommended approach for inventorying your work.

GATHER INFORMATION + WORK BACKWARDS

Inventorying an entire body of work can feel overwhelming. A practical way to begin is by working backwards. Start with your most recent pieces where details are still fresh in your mind. This creates momentum and builds a foundation you can expand over time.

YOU ARE HERE

TAKE PHOTOGRAPHS

Don't cut corners and forget to take photos before you sell a work! It is so important to have a visual reminder of your work, because it can be easy to forget which works goes with what title and details. High-quality images are the visual anchor of your archive. Photographs help you identify, share, and present your work professionally.

NUMBER YOUR WORK

Assigning a consistent numbering system helps you reference each piece clearly and maintain organized records. Whether or not you use inventory numbers, Artwork Archive's search and filtering tools allow you to quickly locate work by title, date, medium, location, or status. You'll always be able to find what you need, exactly when you need it.

ARTWORK
ARCHIVE

Photographing & Documenting Artwork: Creating Archival Images.
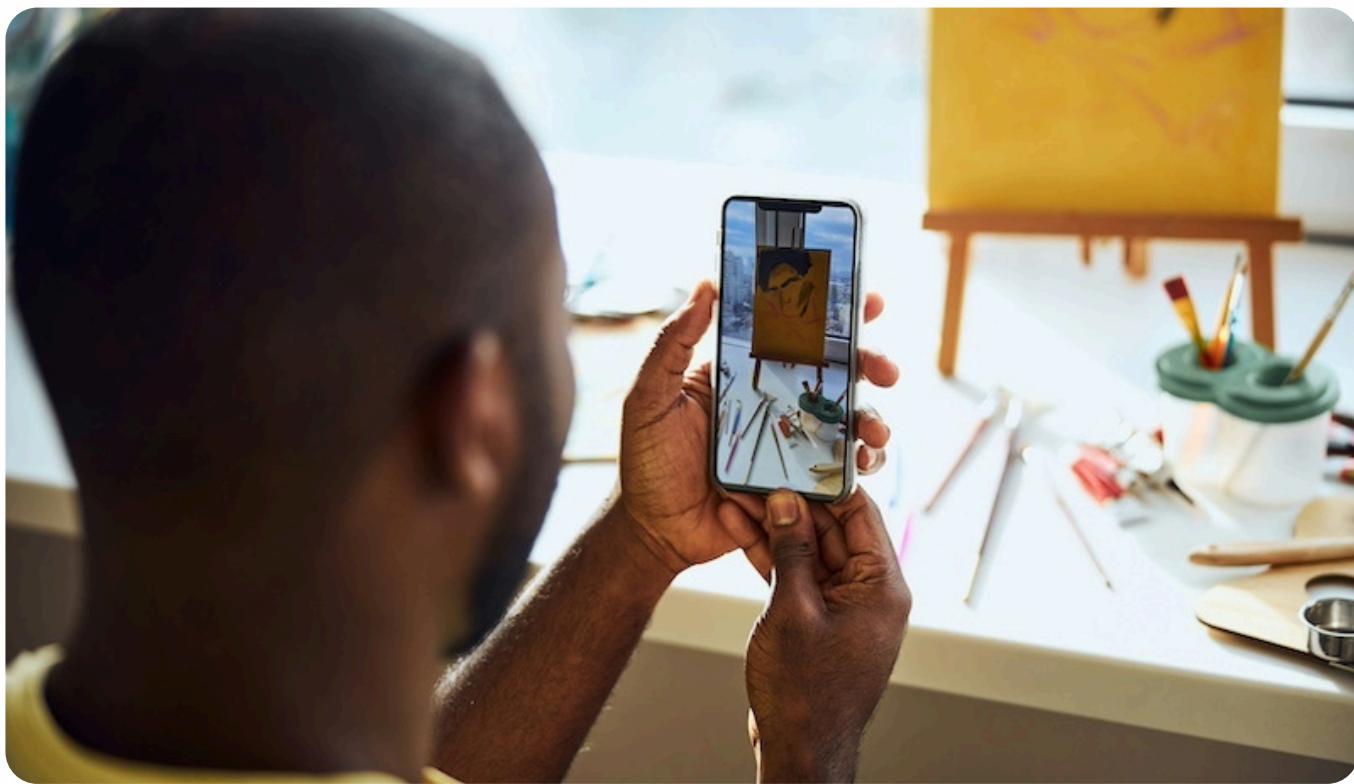
What Are Archival Images, and Why Do They Matter?

Archival images are the highest-resolution, best-quality images of your artwork.

In this lesson, we are going to talk about how to create them and why they are important for your art inventory, archive, art career, and artistic legacy.

Your artwork images are the lasting record of your artworks. They are how most people will experience your work and what remains after the original piece has left your hands. Together, they form a valuable asset and an essential part of your artistic legacy.

The Benefits of High-Quality Images

Your artwork images are essential for both your inventory and sharing your work online.

With archival images stored in a central system like Artwork Archive, you can quickly access them for any opportunity.

High-quality images are crucial for juried shows, press features, reproductions, licensing, and building your portfolio. They also support collaborations, collector communication, and applications for grants and exhibitions.

Begin Now with the Tools That You Have

Do not wait to document your artwork until you have professional equipment or advanced skills. Start now with the tools you have and refine your process over time.

Establishing your archive today is more important than waiting for perfect conditions.

We will walk you through three simple ways to improve your images right away using your current camera or smartphone.

You will also find resources to learn more about archival image capture and workflow.

ARTWORK
ARCHIVE

Three Tips for Better Images

TIP #1

Even Lighting

Bright, indirect natural daylight is optimal. Even lighting will eliminate glare, shadows, and bright spots. Natural daylight allows the camera you are using to most accurately capture the true colors of the work.

Bright, even lighting allows your camera to have as little distortion of the colors, and the most accurate value contrast, detail, and surface quality as possible.

Seek out a place in your life where you can dependably find bright, indirect lighting to photograph your work. This could be a North-facing window (in the Northern Hemisphere), photographing the work outside on an overcast day, or draping a thin white cloth over a window to diffuse the daylight.

TIP #2

Neutral Background

Choose a clean, uncluttered, and neutral backdrop to photograph your artwork against. A plain white, gray, or black background helps ensure that the artwork is the focus of the image and that no surrounding colors or visual noise distort the viewer's perception of the piece. A neutral background also allows for accurate color correction later and helps maintain consistency across your archive of images.

TIP #3

Photograph the Work Straight-On

Position your camera so it is directly facing the artwork, with the lens centered and parallel to the surface of the piece.

Photographing straight-on will help prevent distortion, crooked edges, and perspective warping that can misrepresent the proportions of the work. Ensure the artwork fills the frame and that the camera is level.

Whether you are lining up your camera with the work on the wall, or climbing above the artwork to photograph it horizontally if it is laid out on the floor or a table, this results in a clear, true-to-life capture with minimal distortion from the angle that the photograph was taken.

Artwork Photography Checklist for Archiving

Tasks	Resources	Status
Preparation		
Clean artwork surface and remove dust or fingerprints	Cleaning cloth, gloves	☐
Check artwork condition and note any damages	Condition Notes (attach in Artwork Archive)	☐
Choose a neutral, uncluttered background	White or gray wall, backdrop sheet	☐
Set up space with bright, indirect natural light	Near a window or under diffused daylight bulbs	☐
Mount or stabilize artwork for photographing	Easel, wall mount, or tripod setup	☐
Gather tools and check battery/storage	Camera or smartphone, tripod, charged battery, memory card	☐
Photographing the Artwork		
Align the camera straight-on to the artwork	Tripod, level or grid lines	☐
Take test shots and check for glare or reflections	Adjust angle or lighting	☐
Capture full, uncropped image of the artwork	Main artwork photo	☐
Photograph close-up details and textures	Additional images in Artwork Archive	☐
Capture edges, signature, and back of artwork	Documentation images	☐
Take a scale reference photo (optional)	Include ruler or object for size	☐

Artwork Photography Checklist for Archiving

Tasks	Resources	Status
Editing and File Management		
Transfer images to computer or cloud storage	Artwork Archive, Drive, or Dropbox	☐
Rename files consistently	Format: Artist_Title_Year_01.jpg	☐
Crop, straighten, and color-correct images	Editing software (Lightroom, Photoshop, or phone editor)	☐
Export high-resolution archival version	Large JPG (300 dpi or higher)	☐
Create web-ready version	Compressed JPG for online use (Artwork Archive automatically provides these)	☐
Gather tools and check battery/storage	Camera or smartphone, tripod, charged battery, memory card	☐
Archiving and Uploading		
Upload final images to Artwork Archive	Artwork Record → New Piece	☐
Add image credits or copyright info	Use notes section for this	☐

Why High-Quality Images Strengthen Your Art Career

Sleep Study, No. 3
January 03, 2020, Mixed Media
24 x 15 x 0.5 in
#0004
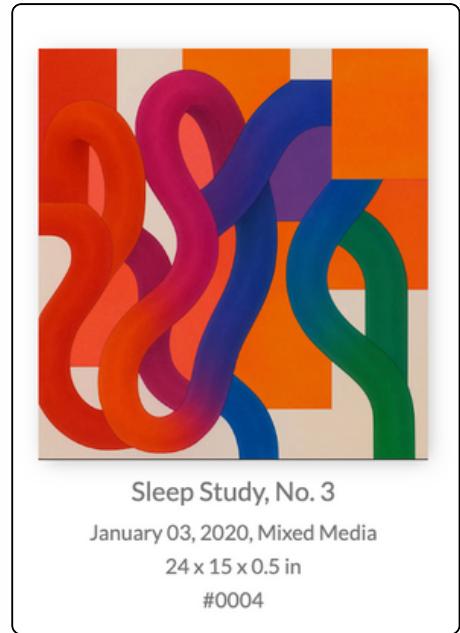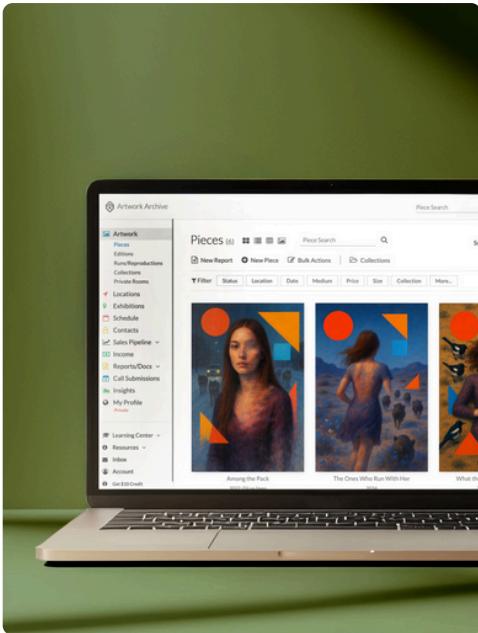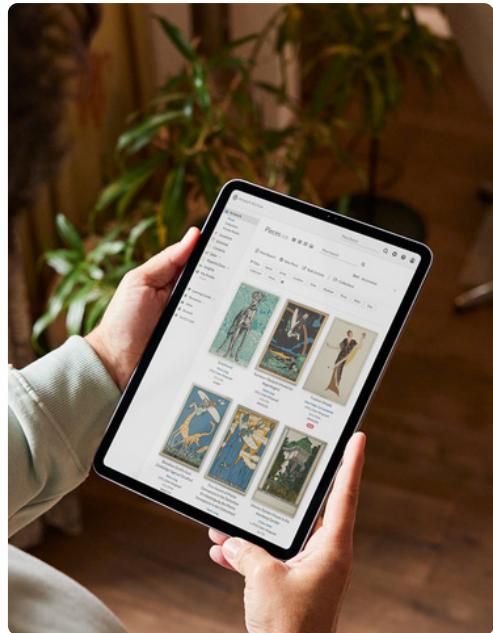
Professionalism: Make a Strong Impression

High-quality archival images present your work clearly and professionally, whether for online viewing, print publications, or submissions. Strong images make your art more compelling and credible to collectors, curators, and the public

Quality: Reflect the Power of Your Craft

Investing the time in taking high-quality images of your artwork ensures that you have the best possible images and are able to make reproductions and reference the work long term.

Legacy: Build a Record That Lasts

Archival images ensure that your artwork is preserved long after the original leaves your studio or is sold. Clear, accurate documentation safeguards your body of work and contributes directly to your long-term artistic legacy.

Key takeaway:

Do not delay documenting your work. Use the equipment that you have along with these basic tips to create strong archival images. With even lighting, a neutral background, and straight-on photography, you can create high-quality, accurate images of your artwork using the camera you already have. Begin now, apply these foundational techniques consistently, and you will build a powerful visual archive that supports your art practice today and preserves your legacy for the future.

ARTWORK
ARCHIVE

SKILL BUILDING

Your images are the most lasting record of your artwork. Once a piece leaves your studio, your photographs become the way your work continues to live, circulate, and represent you.

Storing those images securely in Artwork Archive ensures they're protected, organized, and always accessible—no matter where your physical artwork ends up. By uploading your images to Artwork Archive, you're creating a reliable, centralized home for your visual history.

HOW TO UPLOAD AND ORGANIZE YOUR IMAGES

Your Pieces section in Artwork Archive is where your image archive lives. Each artwork record can hold multiple images, from full views to detail shots, making it easy to access, share, and reuse your high-resolution images.

TIP: ACCESS AND USE HIGH-QUALITY IMAGES

• You can download images directly from your Artwork Archive account for reports or submissions.

• Generate a Portfolio Page or Inventory Report with images automatically included.

TODAY'S ACTIONS

Add or Update Your Artwork Images ➜

- Log in to your Artwork Archive account.
- Go to the Pieces tab and open an existing artwork or click Add New Artwork.
- Upload a high-quality image of the piece (JPG, PNG, or TIFF).
- Add detail shots, installation photos, or images of the back or signature.

VIDEO: UPLOADING YOUR IMAGES TO YOUR ARCHIVE
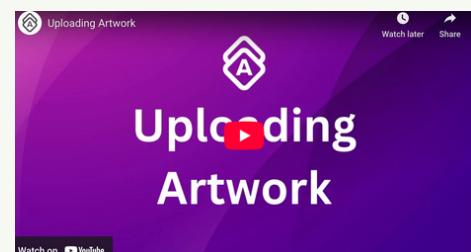
Learn how to:
➜ Add a new artwork record and upload images
➜ Attach multiple views or detail shots
➜ Replace older photos with updated versions
➜ Store and access all images in one secure location

Watch here ➜

Chapter 04

INVENTORY ESSENTIALS

Capturing the Core and Adding Context

Why This Work Matters

Artists have always kept records. From Renaissance workshop ledgers to museum catalog raisonnés to contemporary digital archives, documentation has long been how creative legacies survive. Many artists from history are known not only because of their artwork, but because someone recorded what was made, where it traveled, and who encountered it.

Today, opportunities move faster than ever. Galleries request images overnight. Grant applications require detailed histories. Collectors expect provenance. Curators research online before making contact. Without organized records, even exceptional work can be overlooked or undervalued.

Every opportunity you pursue will ask for the same information:
A gallery wants dimensions and images.
A grant panel wants work samples and descriptions.
A collector wants provenance.
A printer wants high-resolution files.
An insurance provider wants values and condition notes.

If this information lives across folders, emails, notebooks, or memory, you lose time searching or recreating records. An inventory system keeps everything in one place so you can respond quickly and professionally.

DOCUMENTATION

ARCHIVE

LEGACY

INVENTORY

ACTIVE USE

NOW LET'S TURN PURPOSE INTO PRACTICE.
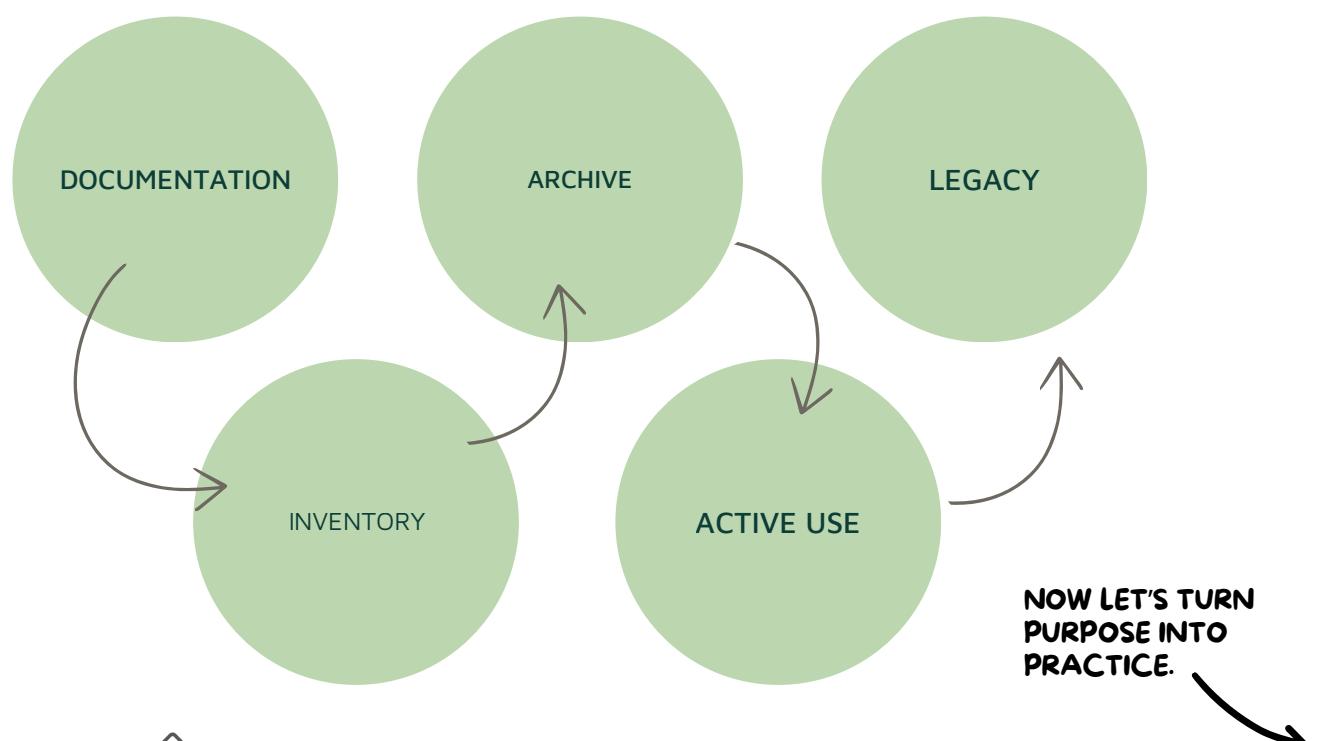
ARTWORK
ARCHIVE

Building Strong Artwork Records

A strong artwork record combines high-quality images with clear, consistent information. When these details are stored in one place, you can quickly identify each piece, share accurate information with galleries and collectors, and keep track of where your work lives.

Building complete records now saves time later and ensures your artwork is always ready for opportunities that require professional documentation.

Artwork Images

Images are arguably the most important aspect of your art inventory and your archive. The high-resolution image of each artwork is the way that the majority of the world will meet your work. Your images represent your work online, help you show and share the work in reports and applications, and can also for some visual artists, the images allow you to license your work and make high-quality reproductions.

Essential Information

Essential information describes the finished artwork itself. This includes the title, medium, dimensions, creation date, description, subject matter, and price. These core details are the first step toward building a professional archive. They allow you to easily identify, share, and manage your artwork and ensure that each piece is clearly documented for future reference.

Core Details

- Title of the artwork
- Date created
- Medium or materials used
- Dimensions (height, width, depth, or duration if time-based)
- Price or value
- Description or statement about the work
- Subject matter or keywords
- Edition number if applicable
- Inventory number or unique ID
- Current location (studio, exhibition, collector, or storage)
- Condition notes
- High-resolution image file
- Detail or installation images if relevant

NEXT, DOCUMENT ONE ARTWORK FROM START TO FINISH.

ARTWORK
ARCHIVE

Documenting Each Artwork

Start by documenting just one artwork. This worksheet guides you in gathering the essential details, materials, and context for a single piece so you can build a complete record and repeat the process for the rest of your archive.

Name of Artwork:
....

CREATION PROCESS

- ☐ High-resolution photograph
- ☐ Sketches or drawings
- ☐ Written notes or voice memos
- ☐ Project proposals
- ☐ Process photos
- ☐ Exhibition images
- ☐ Video
- ☐ Artist statements

Where stored:
....

ESSENTIAL INFO

Medium
....

....

Date Created:
....

Dimensions:
....

Price:
....

inventory number:
....

Artwork Description:
....

....

....

....

....

Notes:
....

....

....

....

Documenting Each Artwork

Start by documenting just one artwork. This worksheet guides you in gathering the essential details, materials, and context for a single piece so you can build a complete record and repeat the process for the rest of your archive.

Name of Artwork:
....

LOCATION

- ☐ In Studio
- ☐ Sold
- ☐ On Display
- ☐ Consigned
- ☐ Donated

SALE INFO

Sale Price
....

Sold to:
....

Sold from:
....

Sale date:
....

Exhibition history:
....
....
....
....
....
....

Provenance notes:
....
....
....
....
....
....

Documenting Each Artwork

Once you have created the core artwork record, continue by documenting what happens to the piece over time. Use this as a checklist for what you have available for this work.

Name of Artwork:
....

Archive Items Beyond the Artwork Record

CREATION & PROCESS

- [ ] Inspiration or concept notes
- [ ] Sketches or studies
- [ ] Material tests
- [ ] Project proposals or grant applications
- [ ] Technique notes
- [ ] Studio reflections

AFTER THE WORK LEAVES THE STUDIO

- [ ] Exhibition history
- [ ] Press and publications
- [ ] Collector or buyer information
- [ ] Sales invoices and receipts
- [ ] Loan agreements
- [ ] Condition reports
- [ ] Awards and residencies
- [ ] Talks and presentations
- [ ] Social media highlights
- [ ] Restoration or conservation notes

Note:

In Artwork Archive, you can log exhibitions, sales, collectors, locations, and documents directly within the system. Your artwork's journey becomes searchable, sortable, and ready for reports.

Provenance Fundamentals

Provenance is the documented history of an artwork's ownership, exhibitions, and publications. It protects authenticity, increases value, and reassures collectors and institutions.

Many artworks lose value or recognition because their histories were never recorded. By keeping provenance information inside Artwork Archive, your records remain consistent, organized, and accessible whenever verification is needed.

Name of Artwork:

Archive Items Beyond the Artwork Record

ARCHIVAL MATERIALS

- ☐ Bios and artist statements
- ☐ CVs
- ☐ Press materials and reviews
- ☐ Process photos and videos
- ☐ Sales records
- ☐ Exhibition documentation
- ☐ Catalogs and books
- ☐ Contracts
- ☐ Certificates of authenticity
- ☐ Key correspondence
- ☐ Affiliations
- ☐ Memberships
- ☐ Awards, and grants

BEST PRACTICES

- Start with recent work while details are fresh
- Record information after exhibitions or sales
- Use consistent naming conventions
- Upload documents directly into Artwork Archive
- Review your archive monthly

What Makes a Good Inventory Number

An inventory number (Unique ID) acts as the artwork's permanent reference code.

A strong inventory number is:

• Unique & Consistent
 • Human-readable and easy to understand
 • Scalable so it works as your body of work grows

Include a year, name or series element.

• Year helps you sort work chronologically
 • Name or initials link the number to you as the artist
 • Series element groups related bodies of work

Example:
KC-2026-0004 → Fourth piece created in 2026

Use Leading Zeros
Keeps lists neatly ordered.

Example:
• 2026-001
• 2026-010
• 2026-100

Instead of:
• 2026-1
• 2026-10
• 2026-2
(which sorts incorrectly)

EXAMPLE OF INVENTORY NUMBERS IN ARTWORK ARCHIVE

Inventory Number. Must be unique.

KC-2026-0004

Recent numbers: Water_inv_000001, TW82930, Oil_2017_00006

Inventory Number. Must be unique.

OIL-2026-0004

Recent numbers: Water_inv_000001, TW82930, Oil_2017_00006

Best Practices for Inventory Numbers

Keep the Format Simple
Choose a structure you can repeat easily.

Recommended examples:
- 2026-001 (year)
- KC-2026-001 (Initials)
- FL-2026-001 (Series Flower Series = FL)

Avoid:
- Painting3FinalFinal
- BlueSeriesSmallOne
- Titles as identifiers

Common Numbering Formats Artists Use

- YEAR–SEQUENCE → 2026-014
- INITIALS–YEAR–SEQUENCE → KC-2026-014
- SERIES–YEAR–SEQUENCE → WTR-2026-006
- YEAR–MEDIUM CODE–SEQUENCE → 2026-OIL-003

Simpler is usually better

In Artwork Archive:

- Assign a unique inventory number to each artwork record

- **HOWEVER,** you don't need inventory numbers to find works in a database. You can find works instantly using search and filters

EXAMPLE OF INVENTORY NUMBERS IN ARTWORK ARCHIVE

Inventory Number. Must be unique.

KC-2026-0004

Recent numbers: Water_inv_000001, TW82930, Oil_2017_00006

Inventory Number. Must be unique.

OIL-2026-0004

Recent numbers: Water_inv_000001, TW82930, Oil_2017_00006

Quickly Locate Any Artwork Record

Inventory Numbers provide a reliable way to uniquely identify each artwork, but ….

But in a dynamic database like Artwork Archive, you don't need to memorize or reference those numbers to find your work. Powerful search, sorting, and filtering tools make it easy to locate any piece in seconds, using the information you naturally remember.

Instead of searching by a numeric code, you can quickly find artwork records by:

• Medium or type of art
• Size
• Collection or series
• Creation date
• Price range
• Current location
• Availability status
• And, much more.

This means you can pull up exactly the records you need without needing to recall an inventory number.

Search	Use the search bar to instantly locate artworks by title, tag, medium, or keyword. This is often the fastest way to find a specific piece when responding to opportunities or requests.
Sort	Sort your records by date created, price, title, or last updated. Sorting helps you review recent works, prepare price lists, or organize submissions quickly.
Filter	Filters allow you to group artworks by status, location, collection, medium, or custom tags. For example, you can instantly view: • All available paintings • All works in a specific collection • All pieces currently on loan • All works created in a particular year

Quickly Locate Any Artwork Record
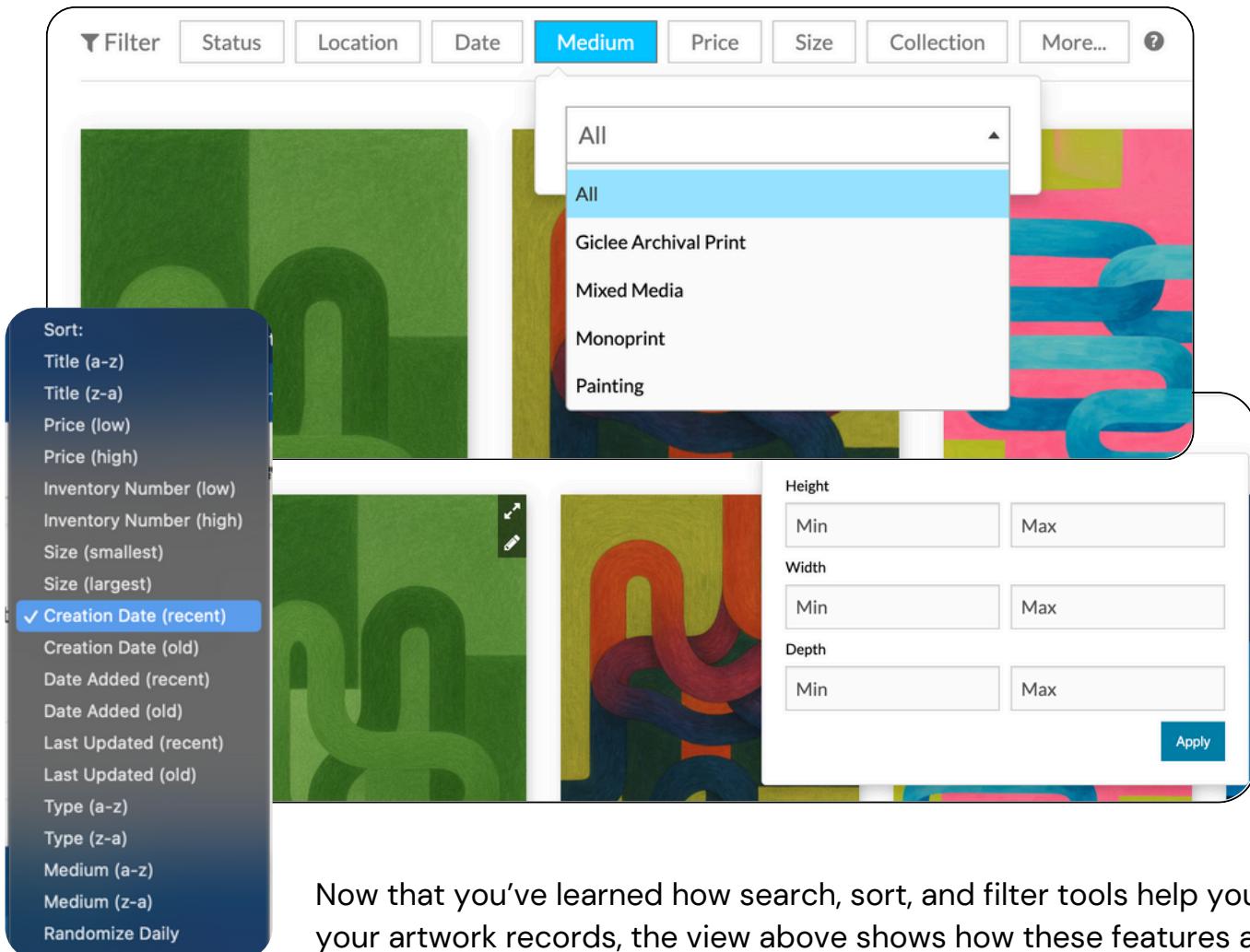
Now that you've learned how search, sort, and filter tools help you find your artwork records, the view above shows how these features appear inside an art inventory system (in this case, Artwork Archive).

This dashboard allows you to narrow, organize, and browse your inventory using intuitive controls, without needing to rely on inventory numbers or manual lists.

Tip: Keep Your Fields Consistent
Search and filters work best when your fields use consistent language. For example, choose one way to describe a medium (such as "Oil on Canvas") and use it for every similar piece, rather than switching between "Oil painting," "Oil on canvas," or "Oil on linen."

Consistent field naming keeps your filters accurate, your searches reliable, and your archive easier to navigate over time.

The Foundation of Your Archive

Now that you understand what to document, it's time to put it into practice

Here's how this looks in Artwork Archive. Each piece record includes essential details like title, dimensions, medium, price, and provenance—helping you maintain a complete, searchable archive of your work.

Add in the Right Details

You'll need to record the title, dimensions, inventory number, date, price, medium, and subject matter to have a detailed catalogue of each piece.

Archival Fields: A Guide

Creating strong artwork records is the foundation of a reliable archive. Each field in an artwork record captures a specific piece of information that helps you stay organized, locate works quickly, and share accurate details with galleries, collectors, and opportunities.

While you do not need to fill in every field at once, understanding what each one is used for will help you build consistent records that grow with your practice. Use the guide below as a reference as you begin creating your artwork entries..

Field Name	Best Practice for Entering This Information
Title	Use a consistent naming approach across your body of work. Avoid duplicate titles. If a piece is untitled, use a structured format such as *Untitled (Year)* or *Untitled #1*. Keep capitalization consistent.
Piece Images	Upload high-resolution, color-accurate images. Include at least one full view and detail shots if texture or dimensionality matters. Crop cleanly with neutral backgrounds. Name files clearly before upload (for example: *LastName_Title_Year.jpg*).
Video Links	Add video documentation for time-based, performance, or installation works. Use stable hosting platforms (Vimeo, YouTube, cloud storage). Label links with descriptive titles and include timestamps if relevant.
Audio	Upload audio files for sound-based works or performances. Use clear file names including artwork title and version. Store original master files whenever possible.
Medium	Use consistent terminology and stick to a controlled vocabulary. For example, always write "Oil on canvas" rather than alternating between "Oil canvas," "Oil painting," etc. This improves search and filtering later.
Subject Matter	Add keywords describing themes, motifs, or visual subjects. Think about terms a curator, collector, or researcher might search.
Type of Art	Select the closest category from the dropdown. Use the same category consistently across your archive to keep filtering reliable.

Archival Fields: A Guide

As you continue building your artwork records, these next fields help you track the life of each piece beyond its basic description. From inventory numbers and dimensions to pricing, provenance, and location, these details support sales, exhibitions, shipping, insurance, and long-term record keeping.

Again, you do not need to complete every field immediately, but adding this information over time will strengthen your archive and make your records more useful in real-world situations. Use this guide as a reference as you expand your entries.

Field Name	Best Practice for Entering This Information
Tags	Add flexible keywords for grouping and search. Include series names, techniques, or recurring themes.
Status	Keep status updated as work moves. Build a habit of updating immediately after sales, loans, or exhibitions.
Archived	Use archive status for inactive works instead of deleting records. This keeps your history intact.
Piece Condition	Record condition upon completion and update after exhibitions or transport.
Condition Notes	Add specific details about wear, damage, or conservation. Date your notes when possible. Use consistent terms such as "Excellent," "Minor wear," etc. and note specific damages.
Creation Date	Use for non-standard entries such as "2020–2022" or "20th Century." Only use when needed.
Creation Date Override	Use for non-standard date formats like decades or date ranges when needed.
Price	Enter retail price consistently. Update when pricing changes.
Wholesale Price	Use if you offer gallery or discounted pricing. Keep clearly differentiated from retail.

ARTWORK
ARCHIVE

Archival Fields: A Guide

Field Name	Best Practice for Entering This Information
Inventory Number	Assign a unique number using a consistent system (for example: Year-Series-Number). Never reuse inventory numbers, even for archived works.
Dimensions (H, W, D)	Measure carefully using the same unit system across all works. Always record unframed dimensions unless noted otherwise.
Dimension Field Override	Use only when works have irregular or variable sizing.
Framed Size	Record framed dimensions when applicable.
Paper Size	Use standardized paper size labels when possible (A4, Letter, etc.) or exact dimensions.
Duration	Enter length for time-based works using consistent time format (HH:MM:SS).
Weight	Record when relevant for shipping or storage planning. Include unit of measurement.
Description	Write concise public-facing text. Focus on context, concept, and materials.
Notes (Always Private)	Add internal reminders, to-dos, or planning notes. Keep short and dated.
Provenance Notes	Record ownership history, exhibitions, and sales as they occur.
Signature	Indicate whether the work is signed. Be consistent.
Signature Notes	Note signature placement or variations if relevant.
Public Info / Make Piece Public	Decide intentionally which works appear publicly. Review periodically.
Purchase Link	Add direct sales links when available. Test links regularly.
Collections	Group works into series or bodies of work. Use consistent collection names.
Location	Update whenever work moves. Record studio, gallery, storage, or collector location.

What stories can an archive tell?

Once you've recorded the essential details of your artwork, you can bring your records to life by adding context. Using the Description and Notes fields, you capture the story behind each piece, document your process, and record important care or background information. These details help others understand your work and help you build a richer, more meaningful archive over time.

Creation & Process

Every artwork has a backstory. In your Notes, you can record how the piece came to be, what was happening in your life while you created it, your materials and methods, sketches, proposals, or whether the work belongs to a larger series. Documenting this process builds valuable context that strengthens artist statements, grant applications, and future reflections on your practice.

The Artwork's Life in the World

After a piece leaves your studio, it begins its life in the world. Use Notes to care instructions, process notes, firing or glaze specifics, paints you used, or any other specifics about your work that you would like to remember. Over time, these details help you maintain your work properly, answer collector questions with confidence, and preserve the knowledge behind your practice.

ARTWORK ARCHIVE
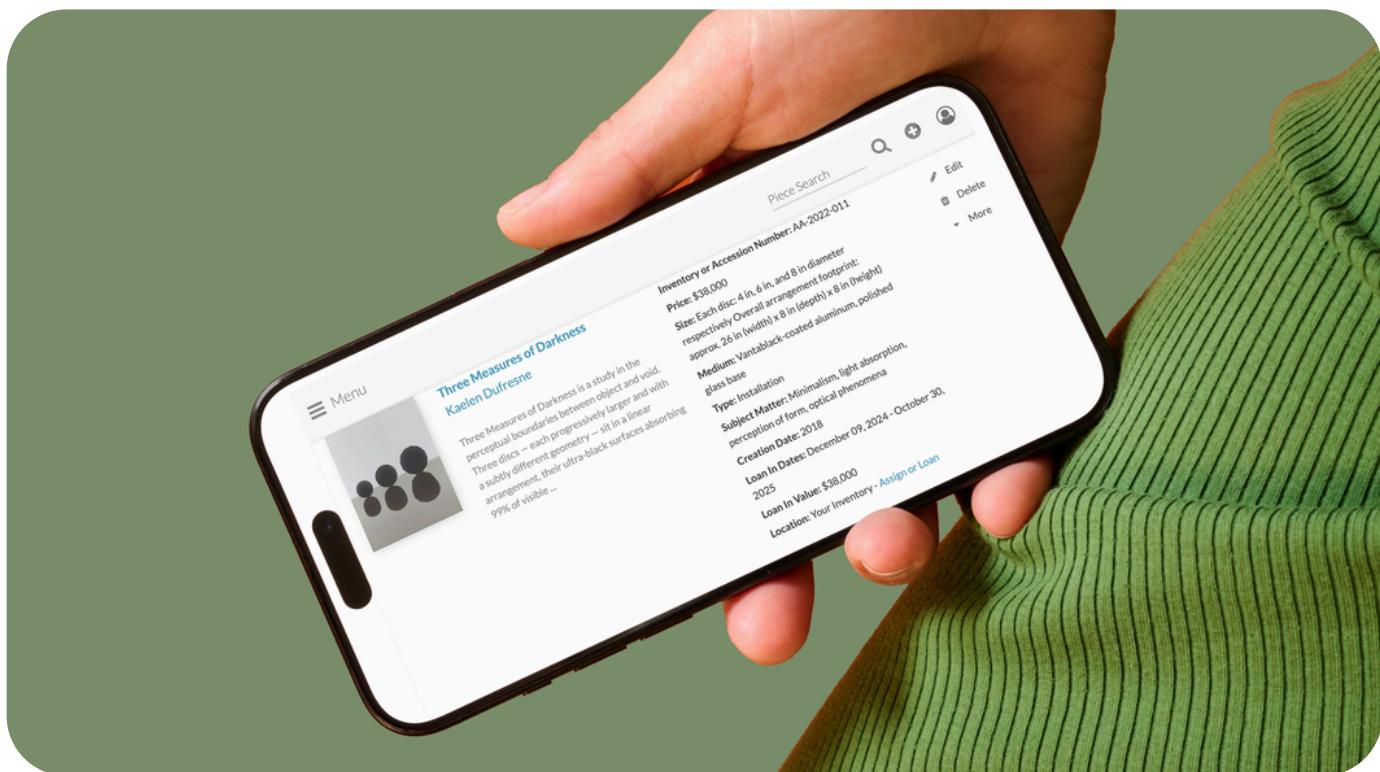
ADD THE STORY BEHIND YOUR WORK.

Add Context and Care Notes to Your Records

Once you've added the essential details to your artwork record—like title, medium, size, and price—you can take it a step further by writing a description and adding notes. These fields help tell the story behind each piece & keep important care details organized.

Description

Chromatic Drift (2023) is a site-responsive installation of over one hundred vertical glass panels in tints of amber, rose, aqua, and violet. Each panel hangs from stainless steel cables at staggered heights, catching and refracting daylight. As the sun shifts, the glass casts moving bands of color across the floor and walls.

Viewed in motion, the work creates a soft optical shimmer, turning solid glass into fleeting color. Korrin's craftsmanship balances exacting control with a sense of impermanence, using light to make the gallery itself part of the piece.

Notes

Care Instructions:

Handle all glass panels with clean, lint-free gloves to prevent oils or smudges.

Clean gently with a microfiber cloth and distilled water; avoid ammonia-based cleaners to prevent streaking or chemical etching.

Check suspension cables periodically for tension and wear; replace if fraying is observed.

Maintain consistent indoor humidity and temperature to prevent stress fractures.

Avoid direct handling of panels during daylight hours when glass may be warmer from sun exposure.

ADD CONTEXT AND CARE DETAILS HERE TO YOU WORK

Add a Description and Notes on Each Piece

In Artwork Archive, you can use the Description field to tell the public story of your artwork—what it's about, how it was created, and what viewers should know. This description appears on your Public Profile, Private Rooms, and reports, helping others connect with your work.

You can also use the Notes section to record private details just for you. Capture your inspiration, materials, process insights, or reminders about where the piece has been shown. These notes stay linked to each artwork and help you write stronger statements, track your progress, and prepare for future opportunities.

ARTWORK
ARCHIVE

30 Day Action Plan

Follow one step each day to build a professional archive that supports your art career.

01 Create your Artwork Archive account and explore the dashboard.	**02** Gather existing images of your artwork into one folder.	**03** Choose 10 recent finished artworks to inventory first.	**04** Gather information for the works using the worksheet	**05** Photograph artworks needing quality images.
06 Upload the first 3 artworks into Artwork Archive with images.	**07** Enter essential details for those 3 artworks.	**08** Upload the next 3 artworks with images..	**09** Upload the final 4 artworks from your first set.	**10** Enter essential details for those artworks.
11 Add descriptions to each of the 10 records.	**12** Record current locations for each artwork.	**13** Upload any available details or installation images.	**14** Attach process materials to at least 3 artworks	**15** Create your first exhibition record in Artwork Archive.
16 Enter one past sale or collector record if applicable.	**17** Upload your artist statement into documents.	**18** Upload your current CV into documents.	**19** Upload one press article or review.	**20** Record one sale or collector record if applicable.
21 Generate an invoice for a sale	**22** Generate an Inventory Report or Portfolio PDF.	**23** Upload any remaining artwork images into your Archive	**24** Finish entering essential details for any remaining artworks.	**25** Add locations for all remaining artworks
26 Review your full inventory & check for missing fields or images.	**27** Create your first Private Room to share selected works.	**28** Publish your Public Profile to share your archive online.	**29** Join a live demo and learn tips to streamline your archiving workflow.	**30** Celebrate. You have built a professional archive.

Archiving as a Professional Practice

Your archive represents both your creative journey and your professional record. By maintaining complete and accurate information, you make your artwork easier to manage, present, and preserve. This level of organization also supports your future exhibitions, publications, estate planning, and legacy documentation.

A well-documented archive tells the full story of your art. A complete piece record will tell the story of how it came to be, where it has traveled, and the impact it continues to make on people and the world.

Complete records are more than the inventory information

Documenting both essential details and contextual information strengthens your professional record.

It adds value to your artwork by connecting each piece to its creation, meaning, and impact.

When you maintain thorough records, you can easily share accurate information with galleries, curators, collectors, and collaborators. Your archive becomes a trusted source of truth for your career.

Context tells a powerful story

Adding context transforms your inventory from a list of artworks into a story of your evolution as an artist.

It allows you to track your growth, reflect on your creative patterns, and see the connections between your ideas over time.

This practice not only enriches your professional documentation but also strengthens your confidence in presenting your work.

NEXT, LEARN THE SKILLS THAT KEEP YOUR ARCHIVE ORGANIZED.

A R T W ◈ R K
A R C H I V E

SKILL BUILDING

Your archive is more powerful when it's organized.
 Sorting and filtering your records in Artwork Archive helps you find what you need instantly—whether it's work by size, medium, collection, or status.

By using the fields you've entered, you can view your inventory from any angle: what's available, what's on loan, what's framed, or what's part of an exhibition. Stay organized and opportunity-ready with just a few clicks.

HOW TO LEVERAGE SORTING & FILTERING IN ARTWORK ARCHIVE

Use the filters and sorting tools in your Artwork Archive account to see your data clearly and manage your career with ease.

Quickly pull reports, check availability, group works by theme or medium, and track where everything is.

TODAY'S ACTIONS

Sort Your Artwork Records ➜

- Go to the Pieces section of your account.
- Click the Sort by dropdown to organize your works by title, price, date, or creation order.
- Use this view to spot missing info or patterns in your practice.

Filter to Find What You Need ➜

- Click Filters in the sidebar.
- Search by medium, status, collection, location, or exhibition.
- Combine filters to create focused views—for example, Available Paintings over $1,000 or Works on Loan in 2025.

TIPS FOR STAYING ORGANIZED

- Use consistent categories and tags so your filters return accurate results.
- Update artwork statuses regularly to keep your records current.
- Export filtered lists or reports to share with galleries, collectors, or curators.

HOW TO: SORT + FILTER YOUR INVENTORY

Learn how to:
➜ Sort your artwork records by date, price, or title
➜ Filter by medium, status, or location
➜ Export custom reports
➜ Stay organized and ready for every opportunity

Short tutorial ➜

ARTWORK
ARCHIVE

Lesson 5

DIGITAL PRESERVATION

How to Protect, Organize, and Future-Proof Your Digital Archive

Artists typically manage their inventory in three ways.

Keeping track of your artwork is essential to running a sustainable art practice.

Whether you are recording pieces as they leave the studio, preparing for exhibitions, responding to opportunities, or sharing work with collectors, your inventory system becomes the foundation that supports everything else.

Artists typically manage their records in a few common ways, each with its own advantages and limitations. Understanding these approaches will help you choose a system that fits your current needs and supports your future growth.

Artists typically manage their inventory in these three ways.

Paper-Based Systems

Index cards or notebooks are easy to start with, but difficult to search, duplicate, or share. They also separate your physical records from your digital images.

Spreadsheets

Spreadsheets are familiar and flexible, but they are "flat" systems. They struggle with complex searches, linking documents, and generating formatted reports with images.
Inventory Management Databases

Databases built for artists:

• Efficient data entry without repeating information
• Storage for reference images and PDFs
• Professional reports for galleries, collectors, and institutions
• Advanced searches across all your records
• A centralized system that supports your website and outreach

LET'S BREAK DOWN WHICH INVENTORY SYSTEM FITS YOUR NEEDS.

A R T W O R K
A R C H I V E

Choosing the Right Archiving System

System	Pros	Cons
Paper-Based Systems	• Simple and inexpensive to start • No technical learning curve • Easy to jot quick notes	• Difficult to search or duplicate • Not connected to digital images • Hard to share or back up • Becomes cumbersome as your archive grows
Spreadsheets	• Familiar and flexible • Easy to edit and customize • Low cost and accessible	• "Flat" structure limits complex searches • Difficult to link images and documents • No automated reports • Prone to inconsistencies and manual errors
Inventory Management Databases	• Efficient data entry without repetition • Stores images and documents with records • Advanced search, sort, and filter tools • Generates professional reports • Tracks location, status, and provenance • Centralized system that supports sharing and outreach	• Requires initial setup time • Require internet or data access

Our Recommendation

Paper systems and spreadsheets are useful starting points, but as your body of work grows, they become harder to maintain and search. Inventory management databases are designed specifically for artists and provide the structure, flexibility, and automation needed to manage a professional archive over time.

This is why many artists transition from spreadsheets to dedicated database systems as their practices expand.

ARTWORK
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Our recommendation

To build a sustainable archive, we recommend using a cloud-based inventory management system as the foundation of your digital archive. This approach keeps your artwork records, images, documents, and professional history connected in one secure, searchable location.

Cloud-Based Archiving Systems
Examples: Artwork Archive (Google Drive, Dropbox for images)
Benefits
• Accessible anywhere, from any device • Automatically backed up and synced • Easy to share files with collaborators or curators • Searchable and organized in one secure location
Best for: Artists who want accessibility, collaboration, and integrated tools for inventory, sales, and professional presentation.

TIP: Using a dedicated art management platform like Artwork Archive keeps your inventory, images, contacts, and provenance in one place—and automatically links your digital preservation to your professional records.

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What is an art inventory database?

An art inventory database is a digital system designed to store, organize, and manage all the information related to your artwork in one central place. Rather than keeping separate spreadsheets, folders, and paper notes, a database connects your artwork details, images, documents, and history into a structured archive that can grow with your practice.

This kind of system allows you to track where your artworks are, how they've been shown or sold, and what stories and records are attached to each piece. The table below outlines the core elements that make an art inventory database a powerful tool for organizing, protecting, and sharing your work.

Artwork Information	Captures the basic details that identify each piece.
Visual Documentation	Keep images and media connected to each artwork record.s
Location Tracking	Know where each artwork is stored, exhibited, or loaned.
Exhibitions and History	Records where artworks have been shown or included.
Context and Provenance	Stores background details, process notes, and ownership history.
Contacts	Keep galleries, collectors, institutions, and collaborators linked to your records.
Reports	Generate professional documents for galleries, collectors, and opportunities.
Public Sharing Options	Control which artworks are visible on your public profile or shared privately.
Storage and Access	Keep your archive secure, backed up, and accessible from anywhere.

Best Practices for File Naming

Clear and consistent file naming keeps your files organized, searchable, and easy to manage over time. When images, documents, and supporting materials are named thoughtfully, you can quickly locate the right file, avoid version confusion, and ensure your digital records stay connected to the correct artwork.

The guidelines below provide a simple, repeatable system for naming and versioning your files so your archive remains orderly, scalable, and professional as your body of work grows.

Recommended Format

YYYY_TitleOfWork_Version.ext
Example: 2026_AmongThePack_v02.jpg

File Naming Guidelines

• Avoid spaces or special characters; use underscores (_) or hyphens (–).
 • Keep the title short and consistent.
 • Use version numbers (v01, v02, FINAL) for clarity.
 • Include your Artwork Archive inventory ID when possible:

AA1234_AmongThePack_v02.jpg
• Apply this system to all file types—images, statements, CVs, and press materials.

Version Control & Tracking Changes

Version control helps you stay organized as your work evolves. It prevents lost edits and confusion between drafts, updates, and final versions.
Simple Version Workflow
  1. Save your original file as the master (RAW or highest quality).
  2. Create new versions when editing.
  3. Label each version clearly.
  4. Keep one "FINAL" version ready for submission or publication.

When to Update Versions:

• After image edits or cropping
• After a title change
• After publication or new exhibition documentation

UP NEXT: FILE FORMATS AND DIGITAL LONGEVITY.

A R T W ◇ R K
A R C H I V E

File Formats and Longevity

Not all file types age well. Proprietary formats (like Photoshop files or Pages documents) can become obsolete over time. To ensure your files remain accessible for years, use universal, open formats whenever possible.

Artwork Archive accepts most standard image, video, document, and audio file types, so you can confidently upload the materials that support your practice—without worrying about compatibility.

When you upload an image to Artwork Archive:
• The high-resolution version is stored securely in your account.
• A web-optimized version is automatically created for fast viewing and sharing.
• You can download the original high-res file at any time from your record.

Recommended File Types and Formats
Combining local and cloud systems creates the most secure, flexible solution.

File Type	Recommended Formats	Artwork Archive Notes
Images	• Resolution: At least 3000 on the smaller side (For example: 3000x4000 or 4000x3000) • File Formats: JPG and PNG tend to work best	Upload files up to 30 MB for best results. The high-resolution image is preserved and automatically downsized for online display. Avoid working file types such as Photoshop (.psd) as hese files are large, require specialized software, and may become obsolete as programs update over time.
Documents	.pdf, .docx, .txt, .csv	Ideal for statements, CVs, and bios. Upload to the "Documents" field to keep records connected to each artwork or project.
Video	.mp4, .mov	Add videos to your Artwork Archive records by pasting a YouTube or Vimeo link under Add Video Links. This keeps your archive fast, easy to manage, and ensures your videos play beautifully anywhere.
Audio	mp3, wav, aac, flac, ogg, aiff, m4a	Add up to 5 audio files to a single artwork record to give context and add an immersive experience for the public archive.

File Format Audit

Not all file types age well. Proprietary formats (like Photoshop files or Pages documents) can become obsolete over time. To ensure your files remain accessible for years, use universal, open formats whenever possible.

File Type	Current Format	Recommended Format	Conversion Needed?	Notes
Artwork Images		**.jpg / .tif / .png**	☐	Use .tif for very large images (for reprints) and high-resolution .png for archival storage. Use .jpg for web and uploads.
Exhibition Photos		.jpg / .png	☐	
CV / Résumé		.pdf	☐	Export as a PDF to preserve formatting.
Artist Statement		.pdf	☐	Convert and upload new version for consistency across devices.
Certificates of Authenticity		.pdf	☐	<< add in about generating these on aa>>
Press / Articles		.pdf	☐	Save web articles as PDFs for long-term access.
Grant / Residency Applications		.pdf	☐	Save web articles as PDFs for long-term access.
Video Documentation		**.mov / .mp4** and YouTube or Vimeo link	☐	Save web articles as PDFs for long-term access.
Audio Documentation		.mp3 / .wav	☐	Keep original and compressed versions for flexibility.
Artist Bio		.pdf	☐	

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File Format Audit

Not all file types age well. Proprietary formats (like Photoshop files or Pages documents) can become obsolete over time. To ensure your files remain accessible for years, use universal, open formats whenever possible.

File Type	Current Format	Recommended Format	Conversion Needed?	Notes
Artwork Catalogs		**.pdf**	☐	Generate in Artwork Archive and auto store in Reports.
Artwork Lists / Inventory		.csv / .pdf	☐	Export from Artwork Archive for backups or portfolio packets.
Project Proposals / Statements		.pdf	☐	Use clear naming conventions tied to project or exhibition.
Condition Report		.pdf	☐	

Archiving & Preservation Plan

Regularly caring for your records—through consistent documentation, file organization, and digital preservation—ensures your work remains accessible, protected, and ready for any opportunity. This plan helps you outline where your files live, how they're preserved, and how often to update them so your archive stays current and enduring.

Type / Purpose	Where It Lives	Preservation Method	Routine Archiving Step	Primary Access / Responsibility	Cadence
Photographing Artwork	Camera / Phone / Studio Setup	Capture high-resolution images (300 DPI, natural light, accurate color). Save as .jpg, .tif, or .png.	Photograph new works as they're completed. Rename files immediately and upload to Artwork Archive.	Self / Photographer	Monthly
Core Archive	Artwork Archive	Secure cloud storage with redundant backups and export options	Update records with images, provenance, and exhibition details.	Self / Studio assistant	Monthly
Personal Backup (Redundancy)	External Hard Drive / Cloud-Storage	Store master files in external drives or cloud storage	Review annually. Ensure final artwork images, catalogs, and publications are saved in archival formats (.tif, .pdf).	Studio Assistant	Annually
Reference Materials	Printed Files / Local Folders	Scan or photograph documents. Store digital copies in Artwork Archive.	Digitize new materials quarterly (press, catalogs, letters, certificates).	Self	Quarterly
Public Access	Artwork Archive Public Profile	Web-based portfolio synced to your account	Add new works, update statements, and activate "Show Embedded Videos."	Self	Quarterly
Access & Continuity Planning	Contact List / Legacy Notes	Maintain record of who can access your archive if needed.	Confirm that a trusted person has instructions for accessing your Artwork Archive account.	Self	Annually

ARTWORK ARCHIVE

SKILL BUILDING

Your original artwork images are one of your most valuable assets. High-resolution files protect your legacy, support your professional growth, and ensure your work looks its best across every application and opportunity.

Store, organize, and access your image files in Artwork Archive—where they stay securely preserved and always within reach.

WHERE TO STORE AND ACCESS YOUR HIGH-RESOLUTION IMAGES

Keep your high-resolution images organized, easy to find, and connected to your artwork records.

Upload your full-size files to Artwork Archive, where they're safely stored and automatically optimized for sharing. You can download the original high-resolution version anytime for printing, publication, or portfolio use.

TODAY'S ACTIONS

Upload your high-res images ➜

- Go to your Artwork tab and select a piece record.
- Click Edit Details and scroll to the Images section.
- Upload your high-resolution file (.jpg, .tif, or .png).
- File size: We can support image file sizes up to 30MB.

Download or replace your original image file ➜

- Open a piece record.
- Click the image thumbnail to view full details.
- Choose Download Original File to access the stored high-resolution version.
- You can also replace or add alternate images as needed.

WHY THIS MATTERS

- Your artwork images are the lasting record of your work
- High-resolution files power submissions, portfolios, and publications
- Connected image records keep opportunities stress-free
- A strong image archive grows in value over time

TIP: DOWNLOAD OR SHARE ORIGINAL IMAGE FILES

• Upload your highest-resolution image first
 • Artwork Archive automatically creates optimized versions
 • Your original file is always preserved for future use

Learn more➜

INVENTORY REPORT

August 18, 2025

$44,000

Marina Holt
Entangled Orbits
Carved basalt
22 x 37 x 16 in
Location: The Menil Collection, Houston, TX

Attribution: Acquired through Desert Edge Contemporary, 2024.

$36,000

Marina Holt
Holding the Void
Carved basalt
18 x 29 x 10 in
Location: Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, TX

$48,000

Eveline Marceau
Intervals of Light
Five-channel HD video installation, color, sound
Overall installation footprint: approx. 18 ft (width) x 10 ft (height) x 14 ft
(depth) Each screen: 55 in diagonal
Location: The Broad, Los Angeles, CA

Attribution: Acquired directly from the artist, 2024.

$178,000

Alaric Voss
Lunar Field ... in. 6 × 6 × 3 m ... g eclipse diameter: 280 cm (110 in)
Room: var... ad, Los An...CA
Location: ...

Attribution: ...quired ...Galleria Lenz, 2024.

$148,000

Elias Corwin
The Time It Takes ...isappear ... om wood panels, seating cushions
Earth pigments on Beig... linen
72 x 72 in

$38,000
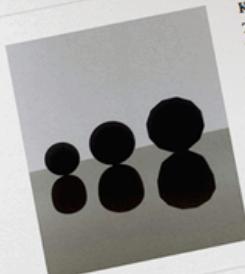
Kaelen Dufresne
Three Measures of Darkness
Vantablack-coated aluminum, polished glass base
Each disc: 4 in, 6 in, and 8 in diameter respectively Overall arrangement
footprint: approx. 26 in (width) x 8 in (depth) x 8 in (height)

Lesson 6

THE ACTIVE ARCHIVE

Using Your Archive As A Living System In
Your Practice

The Active Archive

Your archive is more than a record of the past. It is a living system that supports your art career today.

An active archive helps you manage, share, and protect your work while building long-term value and legacy. When your archive is active, it becomes part of your daily practice rather than a task you return to only when needed.

The Value Of An Active Archive

When your inventory is active, it supports your current career goals, not just your history. It helps you save time, reduce stress, and stay ready for opportunities. It protects against loss and provides a complete record of your growth as an artist.

An active archive grows as you grow. When you build it alongside your career, your archive documents the full picture of your practice, including artwork details, provenance, exhibition history, sales, and related materials.

Stored securely in a cloud-based system, your archive protects your records from damage and loss. And when your information is entered once and connected across features, your archive becomes a time-saving tool for the everyday operation of your art career.

What Makes An Archive Active?

A static archive stores information, while an active archive uses information.

When your archive is active, you can:
• See what work is available at a glance
 • Know where every artwork lives
 • Share curated selections instantly
 • Generate professional documents on demand
 • Maintain clear relationship histories
 • Present your portfolio publicly without rebuilding it

Your archive becomes part of your workflow rather than a separate administrative task.

SEE HOW AN ACTIVE ARCHIVE WORKS DAY TO DAY.

ARTWORK
ARCHIVE

Know Where Your Work Lives

Knowing where each artwork lives is essential for managing your practice professionally. Locations in Artwork Archive let you track where every piece is at any moment.

When locations stay updated, you always know:

- What is available
- What is sold
- What is on exhibition
- What is out on loan

This prevents misplaced or forgotten work and makes it easy to answer questions quickly from galleries, collectors, or insurers.

EACH TIME A WORK MOVES, UPDATE ITS LOCATION.

YOUR ARCHIVE BECOMES A REAL-TIME MAP OF YOUR INVENTORY.

ARTWORK ARCHIVE

Use Your Archive As A Relationship Tool

Your archive is not only about artworks. It is also about people.

Contacts in Artwork Archive store collectors, galleries, curators, collaborators, and institutions. You can link contacts directly to artworks, sales, exhibitions, and communications.

This allows you to:
• See who owns specific works
• Track exhibition partners
• Maintain relationship histories
• Prepare targeted outreach for new opportunities

Over time, your archive becomes a relationship record as well as an artwork inventory.

WHEN YOU ADD A NEW SALE OR EXHIBITION, LINK THE CONTACT.

YOUR RECORDS STAY CONNECTED AND COMPLETE.

ARTWORK ARCHIVE

Share Work Instantly And Professionally

Opportunities often require sharing selected works quickly and professionally.

Private Rooms let you create curated viewing experiences for:
• Galleries
• Curators
• Collectors
• Grant or residency reviewers
• Collaborators

You choose which works to include. Artwork Archive automatically formats images, titles, and details into a polished presentation.

No PDFs to design. No folders to organize. No last-minute formatting.
Your archive becomes a tool for immediate action rather than last-minute scrambling.

SHARE CURATED PORTFOLIOS WITH CONFIDENCE AND EASE.

ARTWORK
ARCHIVE

Keep Your Portfolio Updated Automatically

Your Public Profile transforms your archive into an online portfolio.

With a few clicks, you can:
• Share selected works publicly
• Display your artist bio and statement
• Embed video documentation
• Present a professional, searchable portfolio

Because your Public Profile pulls directly from your archive, updates happen once and appear everywhere.

Your record keeping and public presentation stay aligned without extra effort.

LET YOUR ARCHIVE POWER YOUR ONLINE PRESENCE.

ARTWORK ARCHIVE

Increase Visibility With Discovery

When your Public Profile is active, you can choose to show selected works on Artwork Archive Discovery, where collectors and curators browse artwork on the platform.

Discovery pulls directly from your archive, using the information in your artwork records. This keeps your public presence consistent with your inventory.

Plus, You stay in control of what is public. You decide which works are visible, whether your profile appears on Discovery, and what information viewers can see. If you prefer, you can keep everything private and use your archive only.

If you want broader visibility, you can enable Discovery when you are ready.

Discovery helps you:
 • *Reach new audiences on your own terms*
 • *Present professional, consistent information*
 • *Avoid re-entering data in multiple places*
 • *Keep your archive as the single source of truth*

REACH COLLECTORS AND CURATORS ON YOUR OWN TERMS.

Holding the Void
Marina Holt
Carved basalt, 2008
INQUIRE

The Ones Who Run With Her
Annika Rowe
Oil on canvas, 2019
INQUIRE
PURCHASE

Cloudform No. 7
Elara Veyra
Cast resin with iridescent finish, 2021

A R T W **◇** R K
A R C H I V E

Create Professional Documents In Minutes

Your archive becomes a report-making engine. With an archiving system like Artwork Archive, you can generate polished, professional documents directly from your records —without rebuilding information each time.

With a few clicks, you can:
- Generate inventory reports
- Create price lists and catalog pages
- Produce exhibition and consignment documents
- Prepare certificates of authenticity and reports for insurance
- Export clean, shareable PDFs for galleries and collectors

Your record keeping and professional documentation stay aligned, saving time and ensuring accuracy whenever opportunities arise.
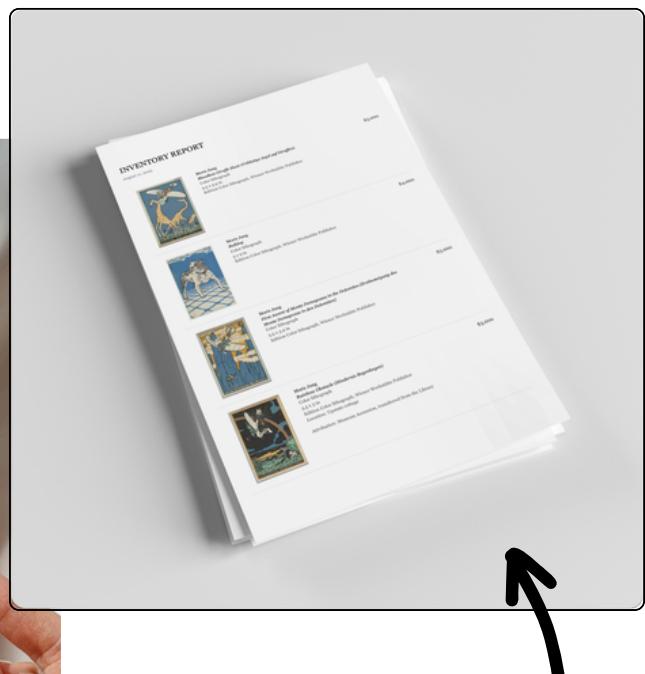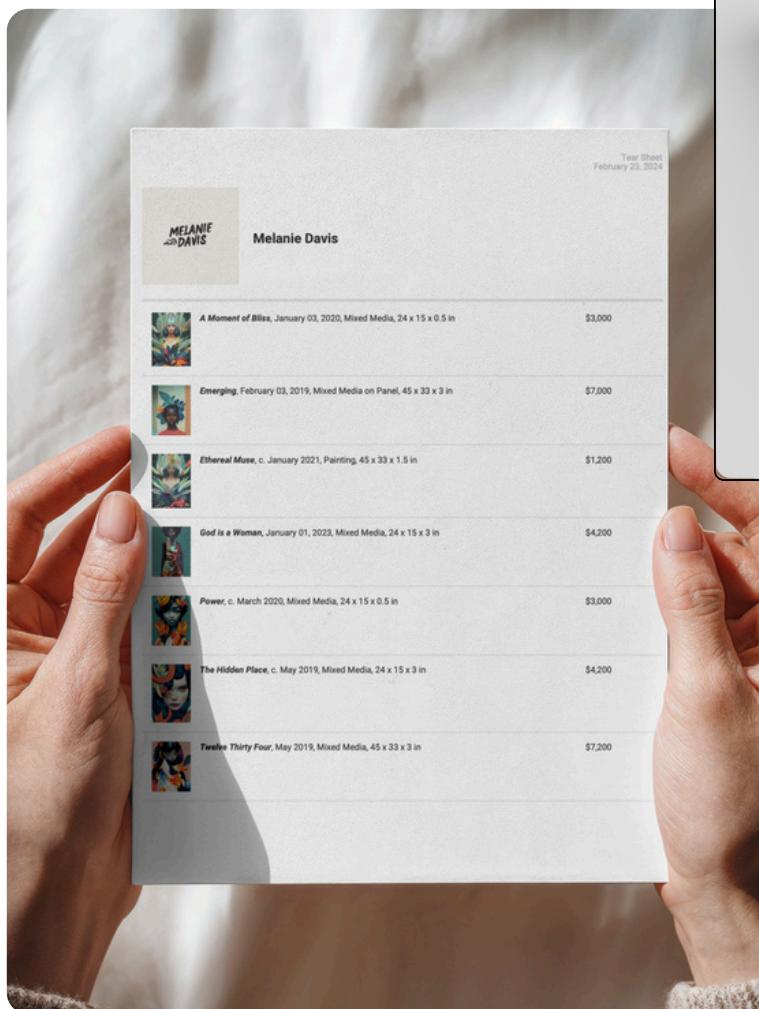
CREATE POLISHED DOCUMENTS WITHOUT REBUILDING INFORMATION.

ARTWORK ARCHIVE

Activating Your Archive

Use this worksheet to identify where your archive can become more active in supporting your current career goals.

Upcoming Opportunity	Which Archive Feature Will Help?	What Needs Updating?	Action I Will Take	Deadline
Collector studio visit	Private Room	Prices and dimensions missing	Update artwork records	
Update online portfolio	Public Profile	Artist statement outdated	Upload new statement	
Prepare for art fair	Locations + Reports	Unsure which works are available	Update locations and run inventory report	
Grant application	Reports	Artwork descriptions incomplete	Add descriptions and export catalog pages.	
Price list for gallery	Reports	Price field missing on older works	Add prices to records & run tear sheet report.	
Insurance renewal	Reports	Dimensions and values outdated	Review records and run inventory report	
Artist talk proposal	Documents + Reports	Bio and CV outdated	Upload new CV and run biography report	
Archive sales records	Contacts + Documents	Invoices not uploaded	Attach invoices to sold works	

Location & Inventory Check

Use this worksheet to confirm you always know where your artworks are and which works are available.

In Artwork Archive, the location of a new artwork record defaults to your own inventory or studio until you update it. As you share, sell, or loan work, you'll change the location to reflect where the piece currently lives.

Example:

Artwork Title	Current Location	Status (Available, Sold, On Loan, etc)	Last Updated	Next Action
Among the Pack	Blue Ridge Gallery	Available	Jan 5	Pick up date
Red Line Drawing	City Museum	On Loan	Jan 8	Check loan end date

Your worksheet:

Artwork Title	Current Location	Status (Available, Sold, On Loan, In Transit)	Last Updated	Next Action

Relationship & Sharing Plan

Use this worksheet to plan how your archive will help you build and maintain professional relationships.

Contact or Institution	Relationship Type	Archive Tool to Use	Purpose	Next Step
City Arts Council	Organization	Reports	Grant support	Generate exhibition report
Museum of Contemporary Art	Curator	Private Room	Portfolio review	Curate 10 works
Residency Program X	Organization	Reports + Public Profile	Application	Update statement

SKILL BUILDING

Reports turn your archive from stored information into action. When your records are complete, you can instantly generate professional documents without rebuilding information each time.

This is where your archive begins supporting your practice in real time.

USING REPORTS TO ACTIVATE YOUR ARCHIVE

With complete records, you can create polished documents in minutes. Generate inventory reports to see what is available, price lists for galleries, catalog pages for exhibitions, consignment forms, and certificates of authenticity.

Every report pulls directly from your archive making it easy to create polished materials in just a few clicks.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Reports turn your archive into a tool you can use immediately.

Use them to:
 • Respond quickly to galleries and collectors
 • Prepare professional application materials
 • Share pricing and availability
 • Generate documents without re-entering information
 • Present your work confidently when opportunities arise

TODAY'S ACTIONS

Generate your first inventory report ➜

- • Go to your Reports tab
- • Select Inventory Report
- • Choose which fields to include
- • Click Generate PDF

Create a price list for galleries ➜

- • Go to your Reports tab
- • Select Price List Report
- • Confirm prices are filled in your artwork records
- • Click Generate PDF

Build catalog pages for an exhibition ➜

- • Go to your Reports tab
- • Select Catalog Pages Report
- • Choose the artworks to include
• Click Generate PDF

BONUS TUTORIAL

Creating Reports in Artwork Archive

This guide will walk you through the process of creating reports, customizing them, and managing your report templates.

Learn more ➜

Lesson 7

PRESERVING YOUR ARTISTIC LEGACY

Building An Archive That Endures Over Time

Your Archive is Your Artistic Legacy

Maintaining your archive means creating systems that keep your records updated, protected, and accessible.

When your archive becomes part of your regular practice, it supports your career today and preserves your artistic legacy for the future.

This chapter brings together everything you have built so far in your inventory and archiving practice. It focuses on maintaining systems that protect your life's work, document your creative process, and ensure your story continues to be understood and valued over time.

More Than Inventory

Your legacy is not only the artworks you create. Your legacy is your impact in the world. An archive includes your inventory, but it also includes the stories, process materials, records, and relationships that surround each artwork. A comprehensive archive captures how each piece came into being, what materials were used, where it has traveled, and how it has been encountered by others.

Sustaining your legacy means keeping this information in a central, organized location and establishing systems that make it easy to care for. This ensures that others can find, learn from, and appreciate your work in the future.

The inventory feature has been invaluable for organizing my work and providing easy access to details for clients and collaborators. Artwork Archive is incredibly user-friendly and efficient. It allows me to focus more on my creative work rather than administrative tasks.

—Molly Gambardella, Sculptor

I chose to start using an art inventory platform like Artwork Archive because I needed a reliable and efficient way to manage the growing complexity of my art business. Before Artwork Archive, I relied on a combination of spreadsheets, physical records, and disjointed digital files.

—Nicky Myny, Painter

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Reflect on Your Legacy

Use this worksheet to consider the impact you want your work to have, the audiences you hope to reach, and the narrative you want your archive to preserve. There are no right answers. This is a space to define your intentions so they can guide how you document, organize, and sustain your archive going forward.

Reflection Prompt	Your Response
What do you want to be remembered for in your art practice?	
What stories or themes run through your work that you want others to understand?	
Who do you imagine discovering or learning from your work fifty years from now?	
What does legacy mean to you personally in your own words?	

Assess Your Records

Use this worksheet to review how your artworks and related materials are documented today. This will help you prioritize updates, set realistic next steps, and build an archive that remains accurate, accessible, and ready for the future.

Assessment Area	Current State	What Needs Attention
Where are your artworks documented right now?		
What records are missing or out of date?		
CV, artist statements, or process notes saved with artwork records?		
Are digital files backed up in at least two locations?		
Where is physical work stored and is it climate safe and organized?		
Are high resolution images available for each finished work?		
Are exhibition histories recorded for past shows?		
Are sales, consignments, or loan records documented?		
Are care or handling instructions recorded?		

ARTWORK
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People and Continuity

Thinking ahead about continuity ensures your work and archives remain understandable, accessible, and protected, even if you are not the one managing them in the future.

Use this worksheet to identify who understands your work, what guidance they might need, and how you can make your wishes clear so your archive can continue with care and intention.

Continuity Question	Your Notes
Who understands your work well enough to help care for it or make decisions about it?	
Have you written down or discussed your wishes for your work in the future?	
If you were suddenly unavailable, could someone locate and understand your inventory?	
Who could you trust to help maintain or place your archives?	
How can you make this clear to them?	

Actions to Sustain

Sustaining your archive happens through small, consistent actions over time. Rather than trying to do everything at once, focus on realistic steps that strengthen your records, storage, and systems bit by bit.

Use this worksheet to identify specific actions you will take in the short term and long term. These commitments help turn your archive from a one-time project into an ongoing practice that continues to support your career and protect your legacy.

Action Area	Action I Will Take	Target Date
Three actions to strengthen my archive this month		
One action to support my long term legacy this year		
Ongoing habits to keep my archive active and accurate		
One system I will put in place for regular archive maintenance		
One area of my archive I will review quarterly		

Congrats, you've built the foundation of a working inventory system.

You now have a clearer picture of your artworks, your records, and the structure needed to keep everything accurate as your practice evolves.

With these systems in place, your archive becomes a living resource that grows with your practice — saving time, reducing stress, and keeping your work ready to share.

Ready to start your active archive?

Start transforming your organized records into a living archive that supports your art practice every day.

With Artwork Archive, you can catalog your work, store images and documentation, track locations and exhibitions, and share polished portfolios and reports whenever opportunities arise.

Learn more at artworkarchive.com

PUT YOUR RECENT WORK INTO ACTION

Start your free trial of Artwork Archive to catalog your work, organize your records, and present your practice professionally.

GET STARTED