


Creating Our Future

Results of the National Arts Participation Survey

Visual arts and craft factsheet



Woorambinda Art. Samantha Meeks & Jobe Adams, 2019 *Home will always be home*, Synthetic polymer paint on canvas. Credit: Central Queensland University Woorambinda Art.

Creating our Future: Results of the National Arts Participation Survey is the fourth report in a landmark series by the Australia Council for the Arts, exploring Australians' engagement with and attitudes towards the arts and creative activity.

Building on the 2009, 2013 and 2016 editions, *Creating Our Future* provides vital new evidence about the essential role that arts and creativity play in Australian communities, showing the arts are a public good infused and embedded in the fabric of our daily lives.

The survey was conducted not long before the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted our world, lives and the cultural and creative industries. The survey results provide a benchmark of Australians' arts engagement before the impacts of the pandemic, providing much needed information as doors reopen, audiences are rebuilt and the cultural and creative industries are re-ignited.

The full report includes detailed insights into different art forms, including visual arts and craft. Key findings about attending and creating **visual arts and craft** are included in this factsheet.

37%

of Australians
attend visual arts
and craft events

3

visual arts and craft
events attended for
every Australian in 2019

23%

of Australians
create visual arts
and craft

Introduction

Australians are increasingly captivated by our thriving visual arts and craft sector. Millions of Australians attend visual arts and craft events and create visual arts and craft themselves. Visual arts are central to contemporary Australian life and are experienced every day through attendance at exhibitions, encounters with public street art, engagement online or in the creation of art itself.

Nearly one in four Australians create visual arts and craft themselves, including creating to engage with their cultural background, language group or community. Connection and wellbeing remain key drivers of arts engagement.

The visual arts sector plays a powerful role in social cohesion and community wellbeing. Increased engagement across diverse community groups highlight the role of visual arts to deepen our understanding and connect the many diverse cultures who call Australia home.

For tens of thousands of years, First Nations visual arts has been a vitally important part of Australia's culture, and now more than ever, Australians are engaging with their beauty and history.

Attendance was strong prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, with the equivalent of three visual arts events attended for each Australian aged over 15 in 2019. During the pandemic, engagement with visual arts remained strong. Many visual arts organisations pivoted to virtual projects that continued to engage audiences and foster connections and community wellbeing in an uncertain time. Throughout the pandemic museums and galleries were the most-attended arts activity.¹

Read on for more on Australians' engagement with visual arts and craft...

For the full report and online resources see:

<https://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/research/creating-our-future>

Millions of Australians attend visual arts and craft events and create visual arts and craft themselves.

¹ Patternmakers 2020, Audience Outlook Monitor research, available at <https://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/research/audience-outlook-monitor/>

Attendance

The equivalent of three visual arts and craft events were attended for every Australian in 2019

In 2019, 7.6 million Australians attended visual arts and craft events or festivals, or 37% of the population aged 15 years and over – up from 33% in 2016.²

Those who attended visual arts and craft attended 11.1 visual arts and craft events in 2019 on average. Across the Australian population, this equates to three visual arts and craft events attended for every Australian aged 15 years and over.³

What types of visual arts and craft do Australians attend?

- One in five Australians attend **painting, drawing, printmaking or street art** (19%).
- One in eight Australians attend **photography events** (13%).
- 12% of Australians attend **sculpture, installation or light projections**.
- 12% of Australians attend **craft like ceramics, glass art, jewellery, textiles or woodcraft**.
- 8% of Australians attend **digital art**.

Who attends visual arts and craft events and festivals?

- Attendance at visual arts and craft peaks **between the ages of 25–34 years** (48%).
- Three in five **First Nations respondents** attend visual arts and craft (62%).
- More than half of **CALD respondents** attend visual arts and craft (53%).
- Nearly half of **parents with children aged under 16 years** attend visual arts and craft (45%).
- **Those with the highest household income** (more than \$200,000) have strong attendance (46%). Attendance at visual arts and craft decreases steadily with household income to 41% for those with a household income of \$70,000–\$99,000 and to 28% for those with a household income under \$40,000.

² For consistency with the 2019 methodology, 2016 figures are reported for the online sample only and may differ from those published in the previous National Arts Participation Survey report, *Connecting Australians*.

³ Frequency of attendance does not include attendance at festivals.

Tenant Creek Brio at the Biennale of Sydney

NIRIN, the 2020 Biennale of Sydney was First Nations-led for the first time. It showcased more than 700 artworks by 101 artists and collectives from around the world, including the work of the Tenant Creek Brio, an artist collective based in the remote town of Tennant Creek, in Warumungu country, Northern Territory. The collective began in 2016 as an Aboriginal men's art therapy program through Anyinginyi Aboriginal Health Organisation to help men with issues of alcohol and substance misuse. The group's work is a dynamic interplay of influences including Aboriginal desert traditions, abstract expressionism, action painting, found or junk art, street art and art activism. *NIRIN* opened to acclaim in March. Due to the pandemic, it closed to the public after only 10 days, reopening as COVID-safe in June.

Tennant Creek Brio, *We are the Living History*, 2020. Image courtesy of the artists and Nyinkka Nyunyu Art and Culture Centre. Credit: Jessica Maurer.



Creative participation

An increasing number of Australians create visual arts and craft

In 2019, 4.7 million Australians created visual arts and craft, or 23% of the population aged 15 years and over – up from 20% in 2016.

What types of visual arts and craft are Australians creating?

- More than one in ten Australians creatively participate in **painting, drawing, printmaking or street art** (11%).
- One in ten Australians creatively participate in **photography** (10%).
- One in ten Australians create **craft like ceramics, glass art, jewellery, textiles or woodcraft** (10%).
- One in twenty Australians create **digital or video art** (5%).
- 3% of Australians create **sculpture, installations or light projections**.

Who's creating visual arts and craft?

- Nearly one in three **women** create visual arts and craft (28%).
- Creative participation in visual arts and craft peaks **between the ages of 15–24 years** (33%).
- A third of **First Nations respondents** create visual arts and craft (35%).
- One in three **CALD respondents** create visual arts and craft (31%).
- Almost one in three **respondents with disability** create visual arts and craft (30%).
- A quarter of **parents of children under 16 years** create visual arts and craft (26%).
- A quarter of **respondents living in regional areas** create visual arts and craft (26%).

Digby Webster

Using strong and evocative colours, Digby Webster's art brings joy to everyone who sees it. Art making is part of Digby's everyday life. An accomplished visual artist working across a range of mediums, Digby has exhibited in solo shows and group shows across Australia including Tin Sheds Gallery, Riverside Theatre Parramatta and the Sydney Opera House. He has painted murals across the inner west of Sydney, collaborated with companies and is recipient of a number of accolades. Arterie, an international award-winning art program based at RPA Hospital invited Digby to be Artist in Residence in 2018. Also in 2018, Digby brought the Special Olympics Australia logo to life, creating the first inclusive games logo and capturing the essence of the South Australian landscape for the 2018 National Games in Adelaide. Digby's portrait of Neil Tomkins was a finalist in the 2020 Archibald Prize, as part of the joint entry, *Ernest Brothers*.

Digby Webster at work on portrait of Neil Tomkins 2020.
Credit: David Webster



Research approach

The 2019 National Arts Participation Survey was conducted from September to November 2019 with the survey sample of 8,928 Australians aged 15 years and over weighted to be nationally representative based on age, gender and location (by states and territories and metropolitan/regional Australia).

Evolving with the times, the survey went online in 2019 after being conducted through a mix of telephone and online surveys in 2016. Due to this change, the results that are most comparable for showing trends over time are the results from the surveys conducted online in 2016. **Given the changes made to the National Arts Participation Survey, the previously published results in the *Connecting Australians* report are different to the 2016 data used for trend analysis in the *Creating Our Future* report.**