



Australian Government

**Creative
Australia**

Creating Value

Results of the National Arts Participation Survey

Visual arts and craft factsheet

Creating Value: Results of the National Arts Participation Survey is the first survey of its kind to be released by Creative Australia and the fifth survey in the landmark research series from the Australia Council, following iterations in 2009, 2013, 2016 and 2019.

The research series provides a comprehensive overview of Australians' evolving relationships with arts, culture and creativity. By examining our engagement with creativity – both through the lens of self-expression and engagement with arts and creative activities – this series builds the evidence base on participation in the arts in Australia.

The full report includes detailed insights on engagement with specific art forms, including dance.

Key findings about engagement with visual arts and craft, including attending and creating visual arts and craft, are included in this factsheet.

In 2022:

39%

of Australians attend visual arts and craft exhibitions, events or festivals

24%

of Australians create visual arts and craft

Australians

who attended visual arts and craft events attend 8.3 visual arts and craft events per year

Introduction

Australian communities engage with visual arts and craft through exhibitions, public street art, festivals, online events and galleries, as well as making visual arts and crafts themselves.

Findings from *Creating Value* highlight the significant role of visual arts and craft in Australia.

In 2022, 8.1 million Australians, or 39% of the population aged 15 years and over, attended visual arts and craft events or festivals, up from 37% in 2019. Australians attend a broad range of visual arts and craft events, including painting, drawing, printmaking or street art events, sculpture, installation or light projection events, photography events, craft events and digital or video art events.

Although the number of Australians attending visual arts and craft events has increased, Australians are attending less frequently than before the pandemic. Fewer Australians are attending visual arts and craft weekly, and more are attending every couple of months instead. On average, the number of visual arts and craft events Australians attend has also decreased.

Despite this, almost five million Australians (24%) created visual arts and craft in 2022 – the most of any art form. Many Australians engaged in visual arts and craft during the pandemic to maintain their wellbeing and give them something meaningful to do during the COVID-19 pandemic. Diverse community groups are particularly engaged in visual art and craft creation, especially gender diverse Australians and those living with a disability. Nearly three quarters of First Nations respondents creatively participate in visual arts and craft and are more likely to do so than non-First Nations respondents, emphasising the ongoing importance of visual arts and craft for First Nations communities.

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

For the full report and online resources see: <https://creative.gov.au/advocacy-and-research/Creating-Value/>

Visual arts and craft – live attendance

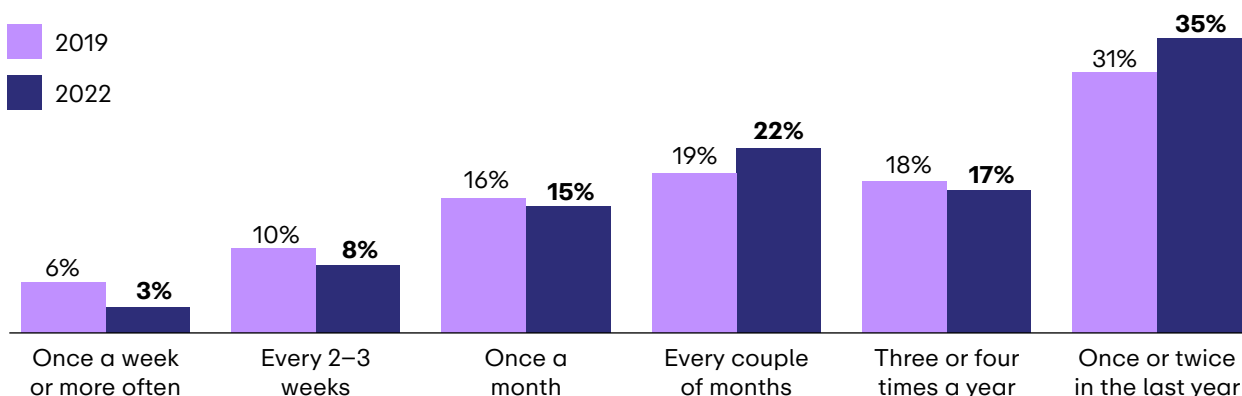
Australians increasingly attend visual arts and craft exhibitions, events and festivals

In 2022, 8.1 million Australians, or 39% of the population aged 15 years and over, attended visual arts and craft events or festivals. This is up from 37% in 2019.

Australians are attending fewer visual arts and craft events, and fewer people are attending on a weekly basis

Although the number of Australians attending visual arts and craft events has increased, Australians are attending less frequently than before the pandemic. Fewer Australians are attending visual arts and craft weekly (3% down from 6% in 2019), and more Australians are attending every couple of months instead (22% up from 19% in 2019).

On average, the number of visual arts and craft events Australians attend has decreased. Australians who attended visual arts and craft events attended an average of 8.3 visual arts and craft events in 2022, a decrease from an average of 11.1 visual arts and craft events in 2019.

Figure 1: Australians' attendance frequency at visual arts and craft events

Q2_1. And in the past 12 months, how often did you personally attend these kinds of events (e.g. exhibitions, performances, shows)? – Visual arts and Craft Base: Those who attended visual arts and craft events (2022: n=3,051 // 2019: n=2,472)

What types of visual arts and craft events do Australians attend?

- One in five Australians attend **painting, drawing, printmaking or street art events** (21% up from 19% in 2019).
- 14% of Australians attend **sculpture, installation, or light projection events** (up from 12% in 2019).
- 13% of Australians attend **photography events** (consistent with 13% in 2019).
- 12% of Australians attend **craft events** like ceramics, glass art, jewellery, textiles or woodcraft (consistent with 12% in 2019).
- 10% of Australians attend **digital or video art events** (up from 8% in 2019).

Who attends visual arts and craft events and festivals?

- Almost half of **Australians aged under 50** attend visual arts and craft events and festivals (47%). Attendance is much higher for Australians under 50 than for those aged 50 and over (28%).
- **CALD respondents** are more likely than non-CALD respondents to attend sculpture, installation or light projection events (21% compared to 12%) and are almost twice as likely to attend a photography event (21% compared to 11%).
- A third of **First Nations respondents** attend painting, drawing, printmaking or street art events compared to a fifth of non-First Nations respondents (33% compared to 21%).
- While First Nations and CALD respondents are highly engaged in visual arts, however a high proportion report feeling that **cultural and creative experiences are not really for them**. Two in five First Nations respondents and one in three CALD respondents report that **cultural and creative experiences are not really for people like me** (39% of First Nations respondents compared to 27% of non-First Nations respondents; and 31% of CALD respondents compared to 27% of non-CALD respondents).
- These seemingly contradictory results, also seen in previous iterations of the survey for some groups, suggest an ongoing disconnection between active participation and engagement, and perceptions of the arts as expensive, hard to access and narrowly defined. They also resonate with observations of the under-representation of non-dominant cultures and groups in audiences for certain forms of publicly funded arts and culture, adding important context to the body of research that seeks to understand who has access to arts and culture and why.¹

¹ Deakin University 2023, Changing Organisations to Diversity Arts Audiences: Summary of findings from national survey.

Visual arts and craft – creative participation

4.9 million Australians make visual arts and craft

In 2022, 4.9 million Australians, or 24% of the population aged 15 years or over, created visual arts and craft, making visual arts and craft the most popular art form Australians create themselves. This includes those who created visual arts to engage with their own cultural background, language group or community, and is consistent with 25% in 2019.

6% of Australians created visual arts to engage with their cultural background in 2022. This is consistent with 7% in 2019.

Excluding those who created visual arts to engage with their own cultural background, language group or community, 22% of the population aged 15 years or over, created visual arts and craft. This is consistent with 23% in 2019.

Who creates visual arts and craft?

Of the 24% who created visual arts, including to engage with their own cultural background, language group or community:

- More than half of **gender diverse** respondents created visual arts and craft in 2022 (52% compared to 29% of women and 18% of men).²
- A third of **respondents with disability** create visual arts and craft (32% compared to 22% of those without disability).
- Two in five **First Nations respondents** create visual arts and craft (40% compared to 23% of non-First Nations respondents).
- A third of **CALD respondents** create visual arts and craft (33% compared to 21% of non-CALD respondents).
- **Young Australians** are more likely than older Australians to create visual arts and craft (37% of Australians aged 15–24 compared to 25% of those aged 25–49 and 17% of Australians aged 50 and over).

What types of visual arts and craft are Australians creating?

- More than one in five Australians report creating different types of visual arts in 2022 (22%), excluding to engage with their own cultural background, language group or community:
- One in ten Australians create **paintings, drawings, printmaking or street art** (11% consistent with 11% in 2019).
- One in ten Australians creatively participate in **photography** (10% consistent with 10% in 2019).
- One in ten Australians create **craft like ceramics, glass art, jewellery, textiles or woodcraft** (9%, consistent with 10% in 2019).
- 5% of Australians creatively participate in **digital or video art** (consistent with 5% in 2019).
- 2% of Australians creatively participate in **sculpture, installation, or light projections** (consistent with 3% in 2019).

² It is important to note that the sample size of gender diverse respondents is much lower than the sample size of women and men respondents (n=41 gender diverse, compared to n=4435 men and n=4901 women. Of the n=41 gender diverse sample, n=18 aged 15–24, n=17 aged 25–49, n=6 aged 50 and over).

Case study



Drawn by Stones

Originally conceived as a focused ceramic exhibition project for 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art's gallery in Haymarket, Sydney, *Drawn by stones* was a major touring project.

Drawn by Stones brings together artists who utilise the ceramic medium to interrogate contested histories, stolen land, Indigenous sovereignty, and national identity.

The exhibition showcases artists from Australia, Hong Kong and Taiwan, and examines 'nationhood' and ownership through ceramics.

It also highlights how the ceramic form can both memorialise and tell alternative histories.

Drawn by Stones garnered the interest of audiences all over the country, and is now a major touring project, supporting conversations about contemporary ceramics and fostering connections between Asia and First Nations traditions. In 2022, the exhibition expanded to tour nationally, including at Watch this Space in NT and Wollongong Art Gallery in NSW, with newly commissioned works, as well a variety of public programs.

Jody Rallah, *Singing Country* (detail), 2021, clay bodies, charcoal (Yuggera Country), fired ceramic coolamons, looped audio track, wall drawing with Yuggera clay bodies and charcoals, dimensions variable; and Ray Chan See Kwong, *New ReNew 新新相續*, 2018, 49 ceramic cups from Chuen Lung local clay, glazed without colourant, dimensions variable, produced as part of the Hi!Hill! project, 2018, installation view, Wollongong Art Gallery. Credit: Silversalt. Commissioned by 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art, 2021; courtesy the artists and Chuen Lung community members.

Research approach

The 2022 National Arts Participation Survey was conducted in September – October 2022 and the results are based on a nationally representative sample of 9,396 people. The previous National Arts Participation Survey was conducted in 2019, prior to the disruptions of COVID-19 and provided a benchmark of Australians' arts engagement before the pandemic. The 2022 survey results, in comparison, provide an update on arts engagement in the wake of COVID-19.

The 2022 survey results provide critical insights into how Australians' arts engagement might be changing following the disruptions felt by the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in relation to the role of the arts for our individual and collective wellbeing. The 2022 survey closely examined Australians' relationship with the arts throughout lockdown periods, providing insights into the impact of COVID-19 on mental health and wellbeing. It asked participants to reflect on their digital arts engagement throughout this time and to share their own perceptions of how their engagement might have changed.