

# THE ARTS ECOLOGY OF SASKATCHWAN

**Artistic Practice**



Saskatchewan  
Arts Alliance

prepared by

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## Artistic Discipline

In 2014, the Saskatchewan Partnership for Arts Research, a research partnership formed in 2012 by the Saskatchewan Arts Alliance, the Saskatchewan Arts Board (SK Arts,) SaskCulture and the University of Regina, conducted two major surveys with a view to broadening their understanding of the arts ecology of Saskatchewan.

These surveys, and accompanying reports, have been foundational research into the arts ecology of Saskatchewan, and contain data on which the SAA has consistently relied, and referenced in their advocacy efforts, and therefore felt that it was crucially important to conduct a follow-up survey to examine the ways in which the arts ecology of Saskatchewan had changed in the past ten years.

In order to best facilitate comparison, the SAA maintained the original survey as closely as we were able: questions accounting for the effects of COVID-19, as well as some minor edits to language were made in order to elicit the best results, and to facilitate ease of understanding. The SAA circulated two versions of the survey for artists: one version of the artist survey was strictly limited to those who are members of the artist registry hosted and curated by the SAA, while the other was promoted more broadly, via email and social media communications, to anyone who identifies as an artist.

The SAA has decided to generate a number of smaller, 'breakout' reports from the report as a whole, to best showcase all of the findings. This particular report focuses on the artistic practices of the artists surveyed.

Among the respondents to this survey, Visual Arts/Photography/Design was the most popular discipline, followed by Creative Writing/Story-telling/Spoken Word and Craft/Decorative Arts/Creative Arts. The least popular discipline was Dance/Choreography/Interpretation/Pow-wow.

While 61% of respondents identified as Professional Artists, artists who have registered themselves on SAA's Artist Registry were more likely to have identified as a Professional Artist. 96% of participants stated their creative work had been presented to the public, with 80% indicating their work had received public or peer recognition.

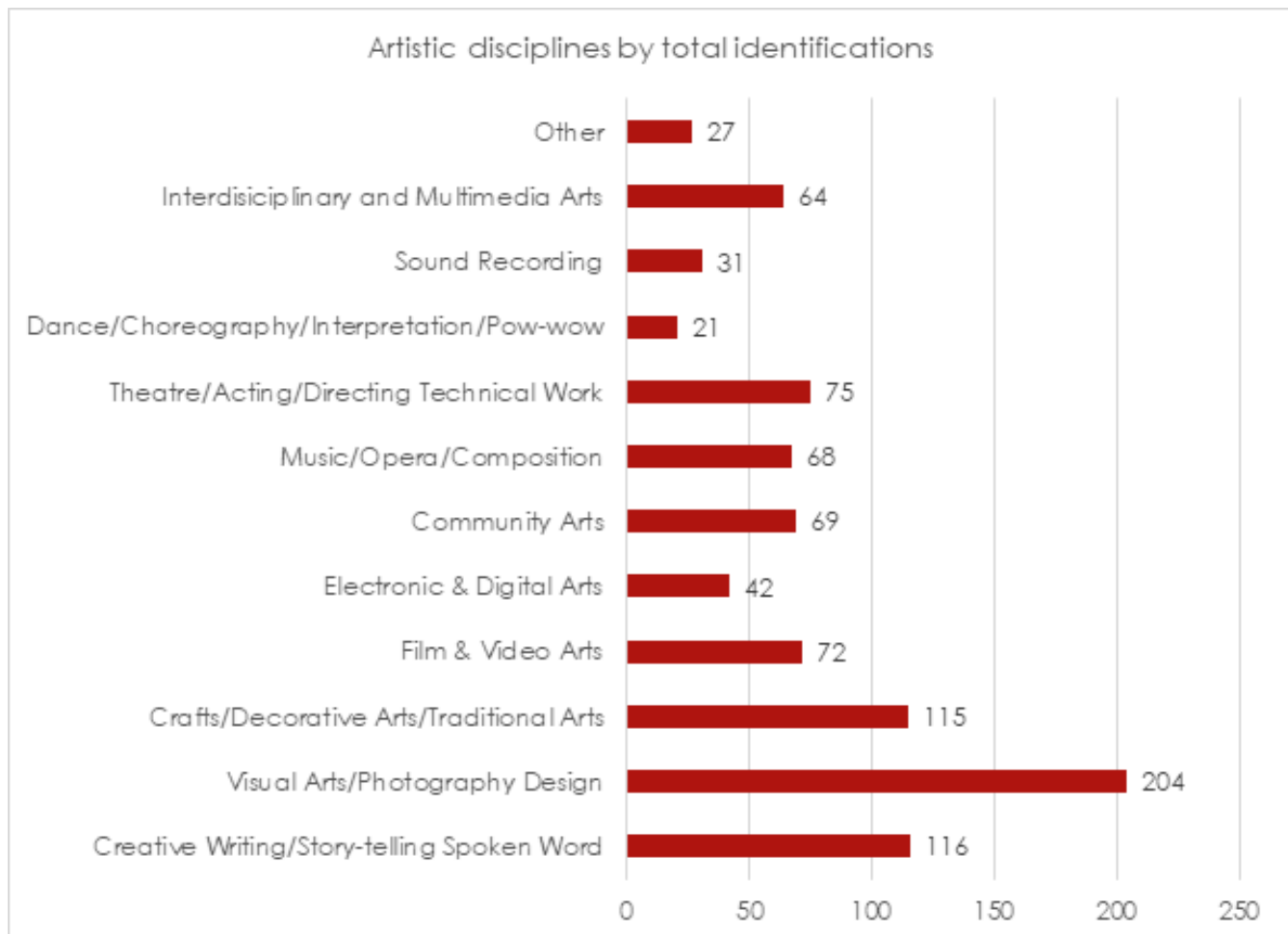
Artists were asked to identify their general arts discipline, and were able to select as many disciplines as they so wished. The results indicated that the majority of artists are cross-disciplinary artists, with 2.5 disciplines identified, on average, per person.

In the 2014 SPAR survey, only 25.6% of respondents identified a single discipline. In this survey, the number of artists indicated they only practised a single arts discipline was higher, with 33.5% of all respondents only selecting one discipline.

There was, however, a difference between the artist registry survey and the general artist survey, with 28.3% of artists on the artist registry only identifying with a single discipline (a number not too disparate from the 25.6% of the 2014 SPAR survey,) meanwhile 38.2% of the general artist survey respondents indicated they only engage with a single discipline.

Similar to the 2014 SPAR survey in which Visual Arts/Photography/Design and Creative Writing/Story-telling/Spoken Word were the two disciplines which received the largest number of responses. Unlike the 2014 survey, the third highest – and by a very close margin – in this survey, was Craft/Decorative Arts/Creative Arts.

Figure 1 Artistic discipline by total identification

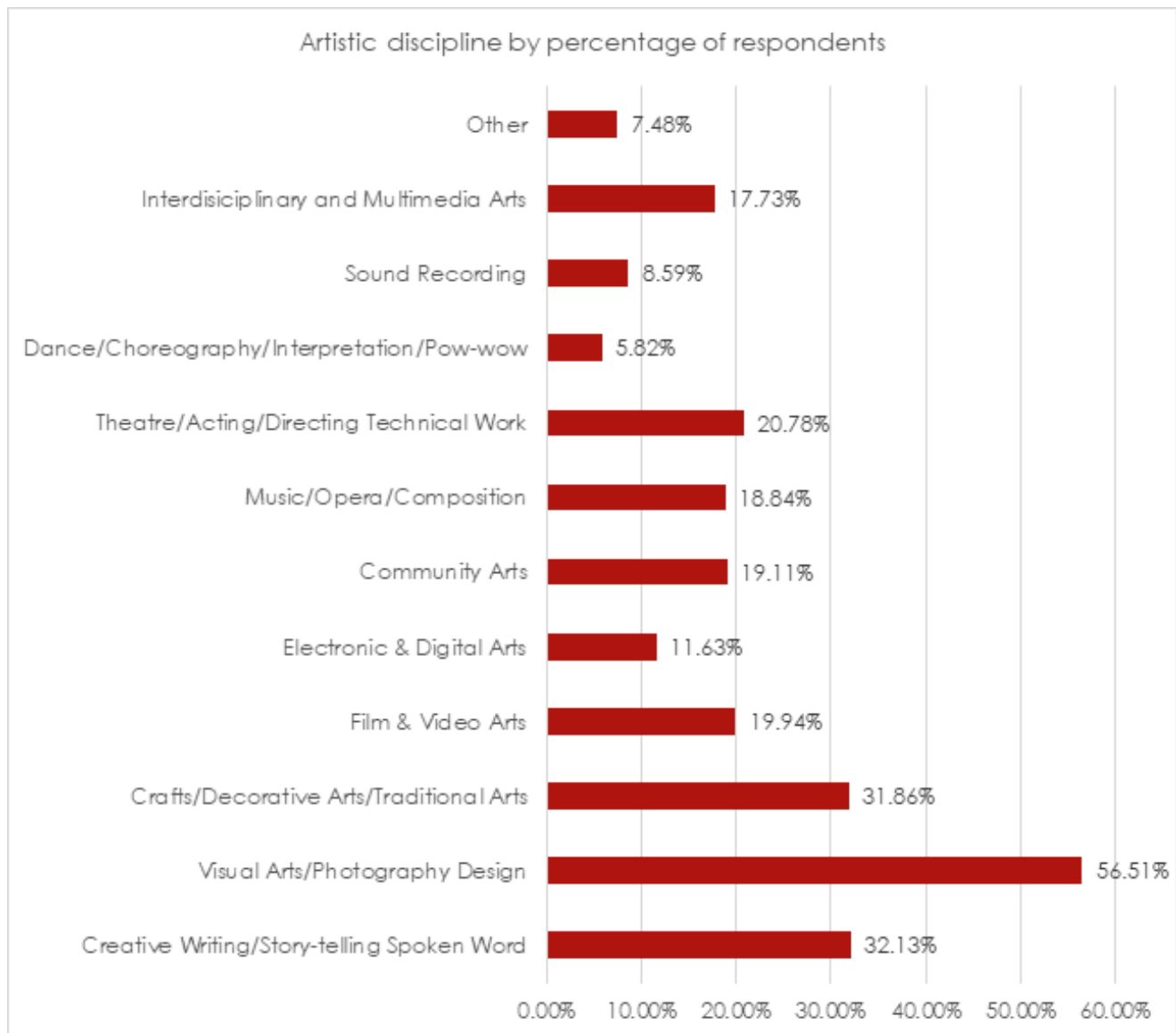


56.5% of respondents identified as engaging with in Visual Arts/Photography/Design, and overall 32.1% identified Creative Writing/Story-telling/Spoken Word as one of their artistic mediums. For the most part, there were minimal differences between the artist registry survey and the general artist survey, the only stark difference being that 37% of the artist registry respondents indicated they participate in Creative Writing/Story-telling/Spoken Word, compared to 27% of the general artist survey.

Dance/Choreography/Interpretation/Pow-wow is the least represented of all of the disciplines, with only 5.82% of respondents indicating that this is a medium with which they engage. This is less than half of the 12.10% who engaged with this same category in the 2014 SPAR survey.

Figure 2 Artistic discipline by percentage of respondents

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Respondents were asked to identify as professional, emerging and avocational artists. Definitions of these were given on the survey and are as follows:

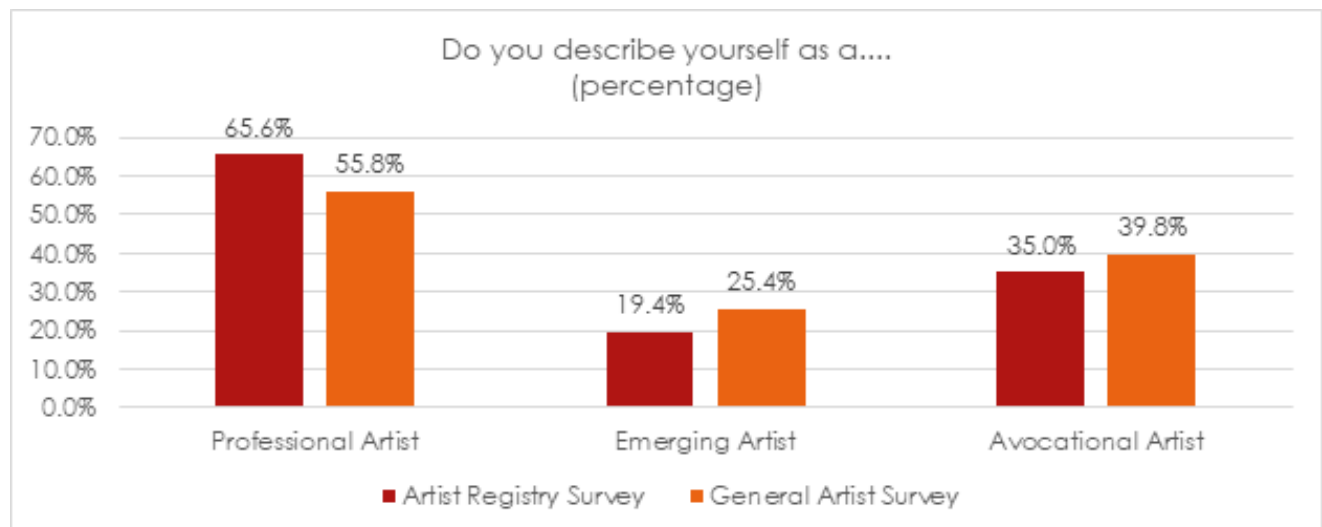
- Professional artist (receives an income from creative work)
- Emerging artist (student, recent graduate, apprentice etc.)
- Avocational artist (engages in creative work but does not receive an income or receives minimal income from it)

It was possible to select more than one identifier. Overall, 61% of respondents described themselves as professional artists, 37% described themselves as avocational and 22% described themselves as emerging. Interestingly, in the 2014 SPAR survey, it would appear that respondents were more likely to have selected more than one identifier, as all three categories saw a higher rate of response: 88.7% identified as a professional artist, 62% identified as an emerging artist and 65% identified as an avocational artist.

At first glance, the 219 professional artists identified in this survey potentially could represent 5.6% of the 3,900 professional artists in the province as per the 2021 census,[1] however, the definitions for 'professional artist' are not the same. The SAA's survey utilised a much broader definition than that of Statistics Canada: our definition incorporates anyone who receives an income from creative work, whereas the census only looks at those who receive the majority of their income from their creative work. It is therefore not possible to map the professional artists identified in this survey directly to the professional artists identified in the census.

As noted in the Introduction (pg. 6,) there are differences between the artist registry survey and the general artist survey. Namely, the artist registry artists were more likely (65.6%) to identify as professional artists than the general artist survey respondents (55.8%), and the general artist survey were more likely (25.4%) to identify as an emerging artist, than those on the artist registry (19.4%).

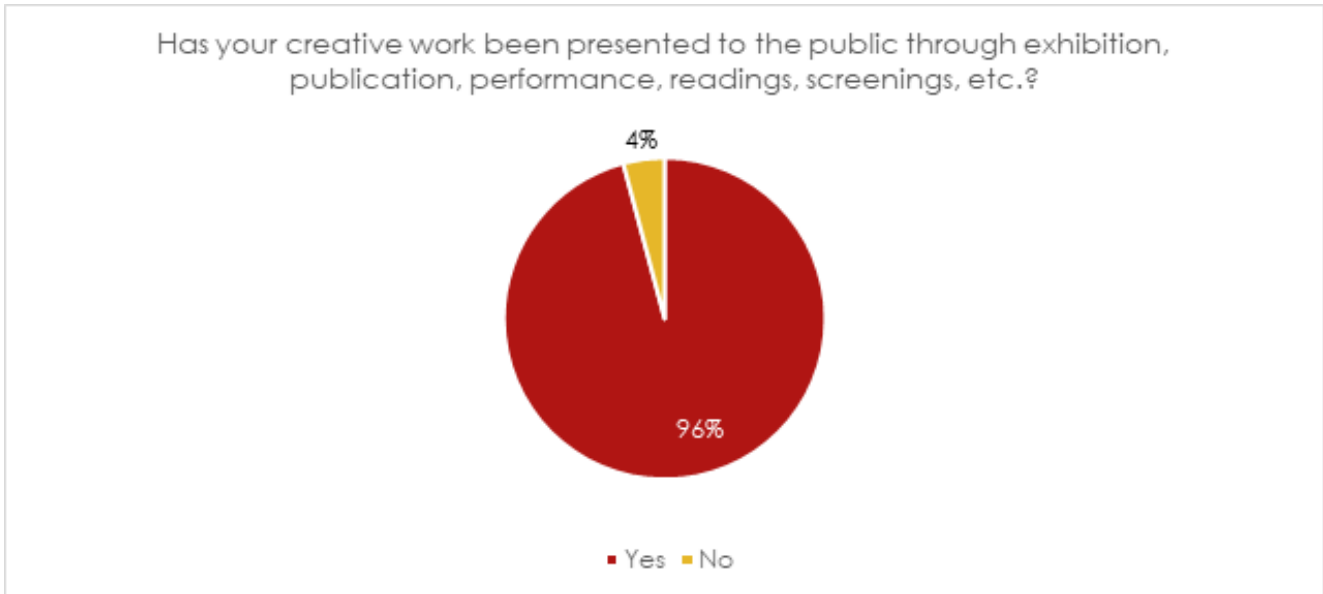
Figure 3 Artist Registry Survey and General Artist Survey comparison of self-identification (percentage)



[1] Hill. 2023. Artists in Saskatchewan 2021.

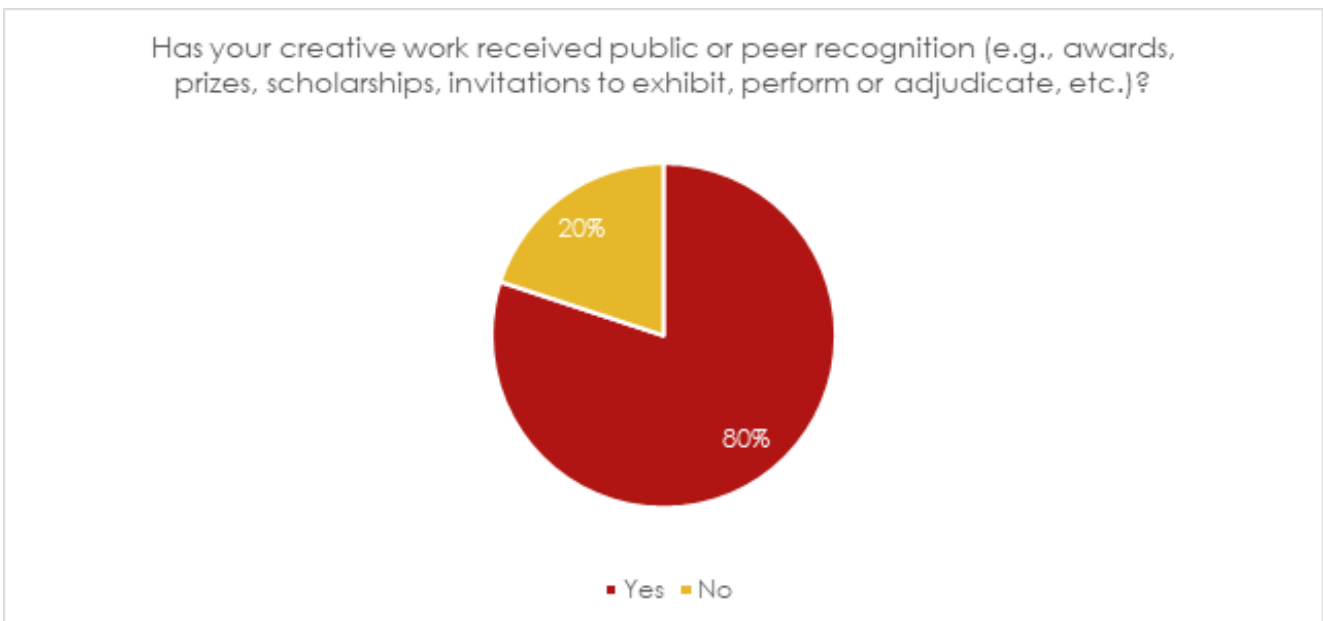
Despite this disparity, 96% of respondents indicated that their creative work had been presented to the public in some form or another. This is similar to the 2014 survey in which 98% indicated their work had been presented to the public.

Figure 4 Presentation of creative work to the public



Overall, 80% of respondents indicated their creative work had received public or peer recognition in some form. This was more likely for artists on the artist registry, in which 86% indicated their work had received public recognition, compared to 74% of the general artist survey. This is less than the 89% who indicated the same in the 2014 survey.

Figure 5 Public or peer recognition of creative work



The largest portion (18%) of overall respondents had been engaged in their artistic practice for 10-14 years; 5-9 years as well as 15-19 years both saw roughly 11% of respondents; 10% of respondents had been practising for 20-24 years and 9% had been engaged in their creative practice for 25-29 years. 5% indicated they had been engaged in their creative work for 50+ years.

Figure 6 Number of years engaged in creative work

