

# THE ARTS ECOLOGY OF SASKATCHWAN

**Community**



Saskatchewan  
Arts Alliance

prepared by

***Ariana Malthaner. PhD***

2023/2024

# THE ARTS ECOLOGY OF SASKATCHEWAN

## Community

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.

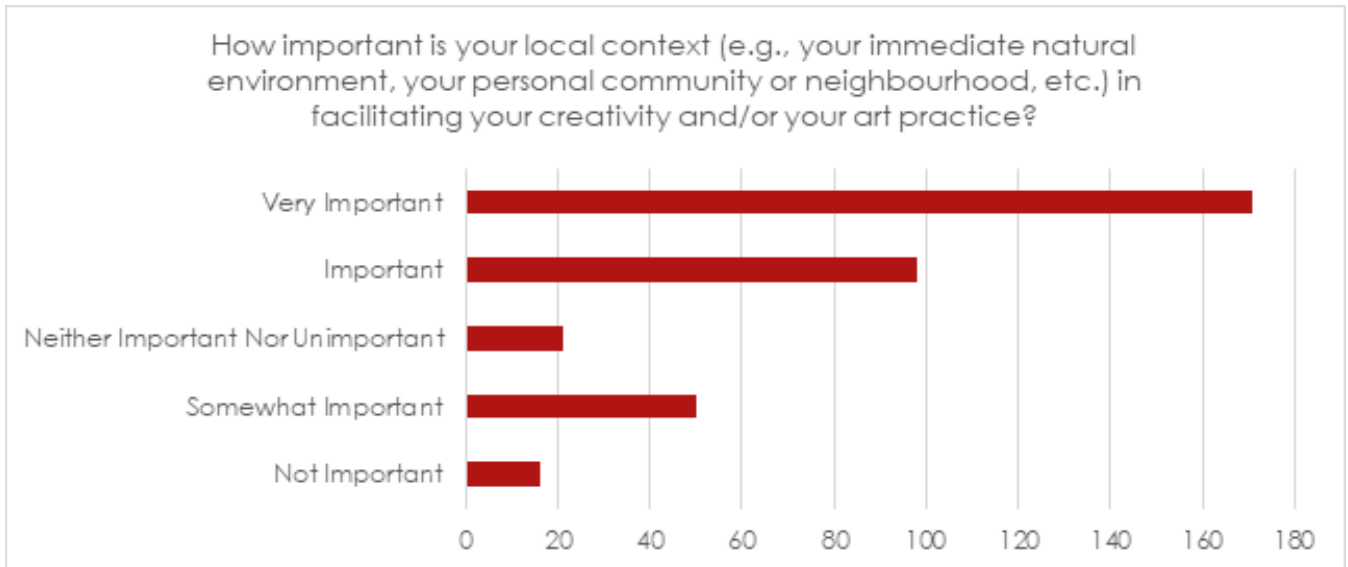
The SAA has decided to generate a number of smaller, 'breakout' reports from the report as a whole, to best showcase all of the findings. This particular report focuses on the communities of the artists surveyed, and how they relate to their communities.

The artists surveyed were, for the most part, involved in their communities, with 75% indicating that their local context was either Important or Very Important to their creativity, and 56% of respondents indicating that they were involved in some way; although only 12% of artists had volunteered in the last year. The majority of respondents (65%) saw no change in their levels of involvement in their community on account of COVID-19.

The artists who responded to the survey were asked a number of questions about their perceived importance of their community, as well as their involvement in their community.

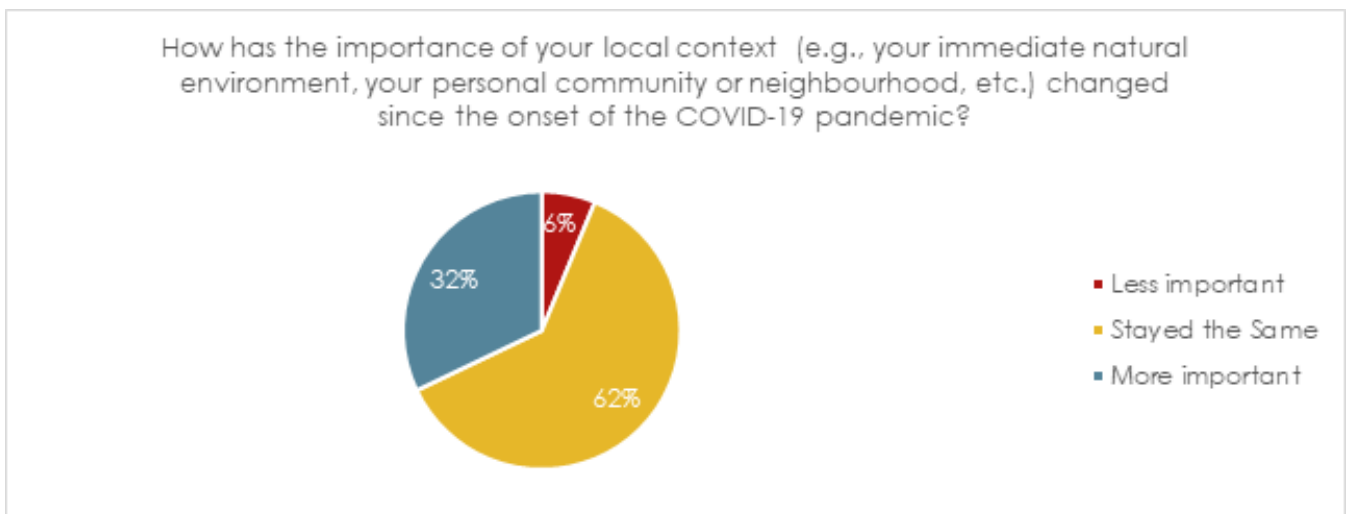
48% of respondents indicated that their local context is Very Important in facilitating their creativity and/or their artistic practice; 27% indicated it was Important, 14% indicated it was Somewhat Important with the remaining 9% indicating it was Neither Important nor Unimportant or Unimportant.

Figure 1 Importance of local context



62% of respondents indicated that importance of their local context was not affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, while 32% stated it increased in importance and only 6% indicated a decline.

Figure 2 Importance of local context in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic

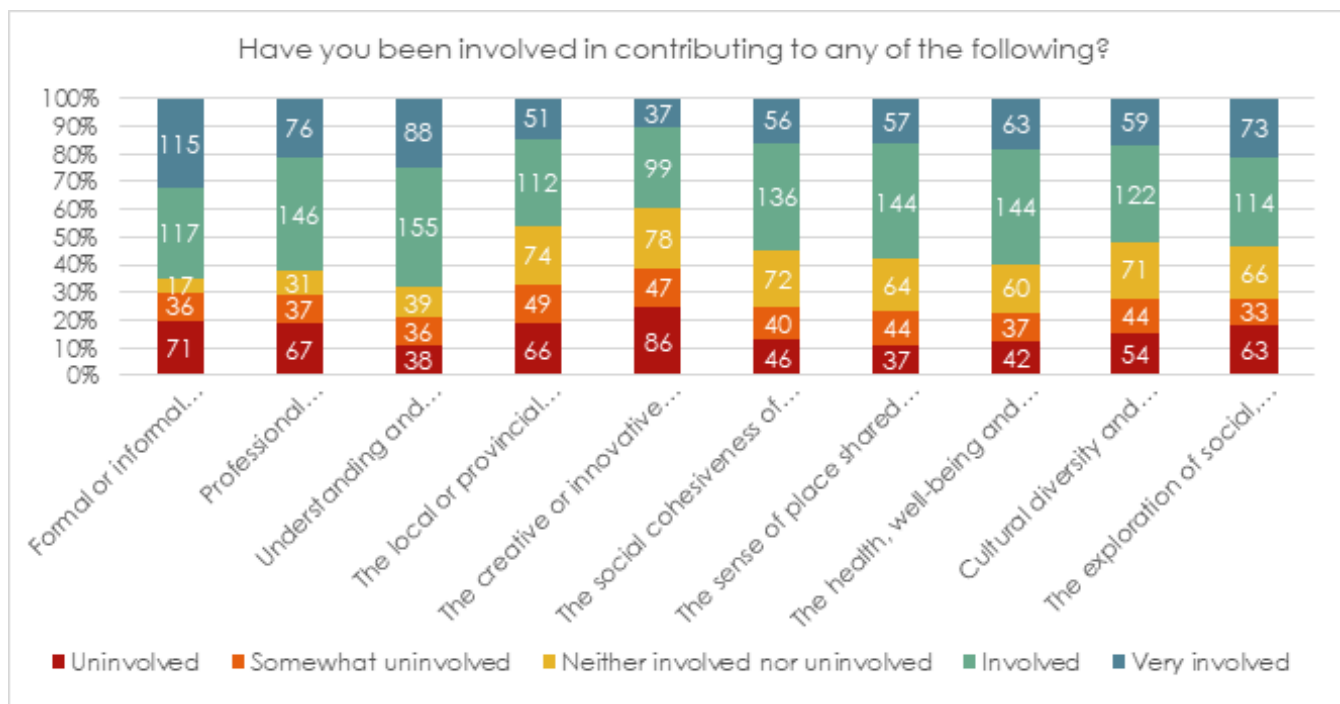


Artists were then asked how involved they were in the following community activities:

- Formal or informal education at the elementary, secondary and post-secondary levels
- Professional development or mentorship of other artists
- Understanding and appreciation of the arts among the general public at the local or provincial levels
- The local or provincial economy
- The creative or innovative capacity of other local or provincial businesses or professionals
- The social cohesiveness of your local community
- The sense of place shared by individuals in your local community
- The health, well-being and sustainability of your local community
- Cultural diversity and development (the preservation and/ or evolution of a particular culture)
- The exploration of social, economic and/or political issues (e.g., related to gender, sexual or political orientation, cultural identity, the environment, etc.)

The artists who responded to the survey were, for the most part, involved in their community, with 56% overall stating that they were either Involved or Very Involved in community activities across all of the above categories. Only 28% stated they were Not Involved or Not Very Involved, and 16% were Neither Involved nor Uninvolved. The only noticeable difference between artist involvement was that 70% of respondents from the artist registry noted that they were Involved or Very Involved in the category of 'Formal or informal education,' while only 60% of the general artist survey indicated the same.

Figure 3 Artist involvement in the community

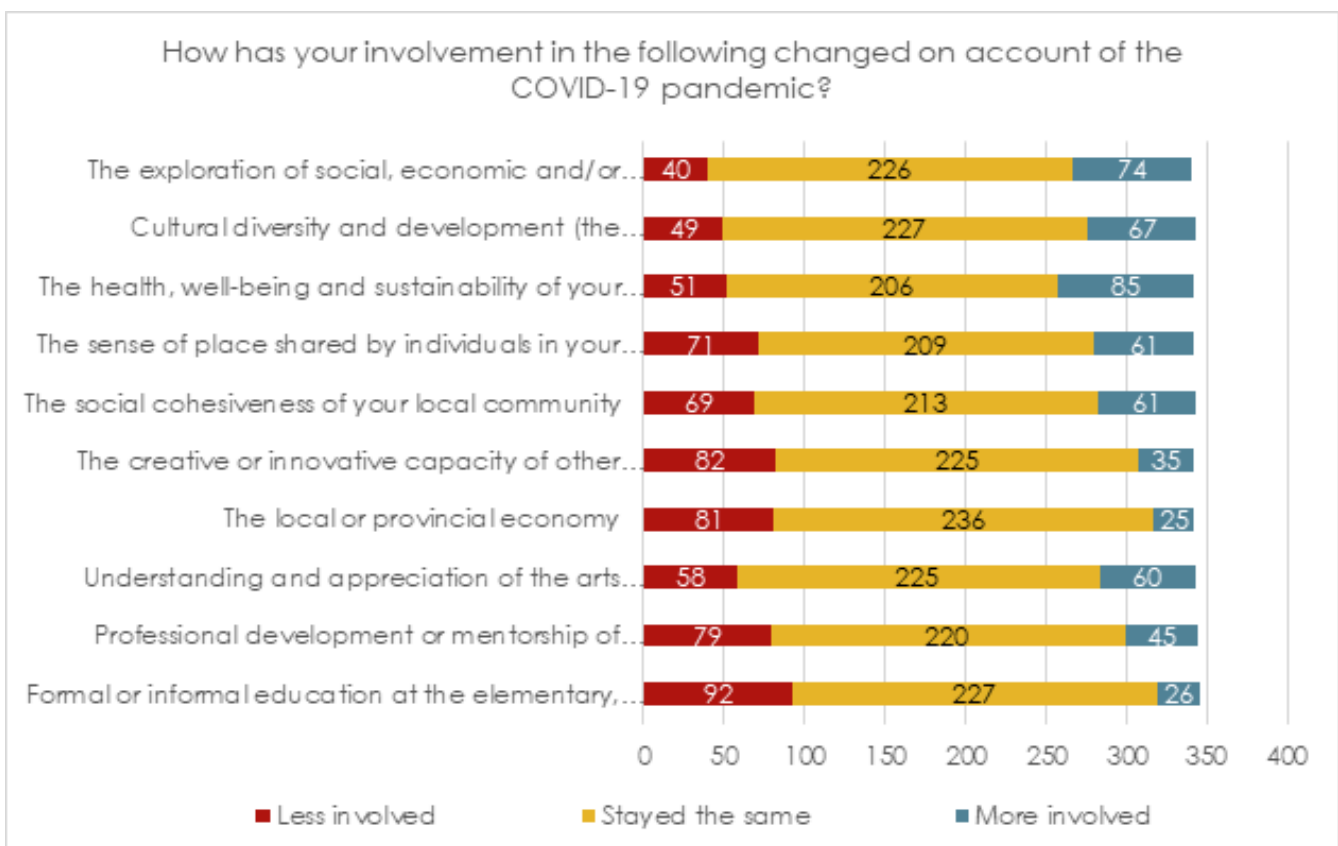


Across all of the above categories, 65% saw no change in their involvement due to the COVID-19 pandemic: 20% indicated that they were less involved, while 16% were more involved. Education showed the largest number of individuals who stated they were Less Involved, while participation in the 'health, well-being and sustainability of the community' saw the most amount of respondents indicate they had increased their involvement.

There were only two notable differences between the responses in the artist registry survey and the general artist survey. 20% of the artist registry respondents stated that they were Less Involved in the 'understanding and appreciation of the arts among the general public' on account of the COVID-19 pandemic, in contrast with the 20% of general artist survey respondents who indicated that they were more involved.

Similarly, 27% of the general artist survey respondents indicated that they were More Involved in the 'exploration social/economic and/or political issues' due to the pandemic, compared to only 17% of the artist registry respondents who indicated increased involvement.

Figure 4 Effects of COVID-19 on community involvement



A significant majority of respondents (88%) stated that they consider arts organizations and artists to be either Important or Very Important in contributing to the above community categories: 55% alone indicated that the arts are Very Important across all categories.

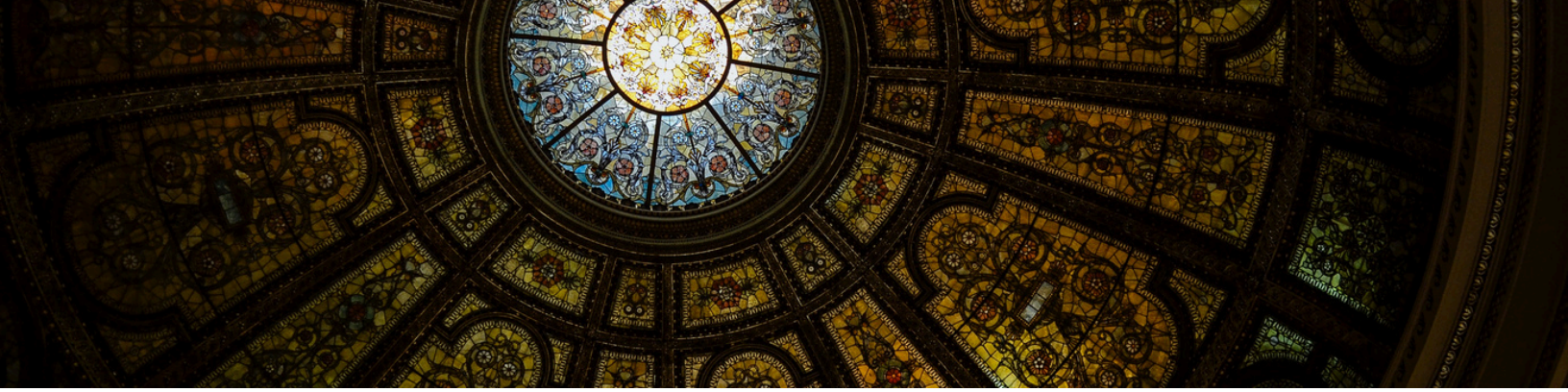
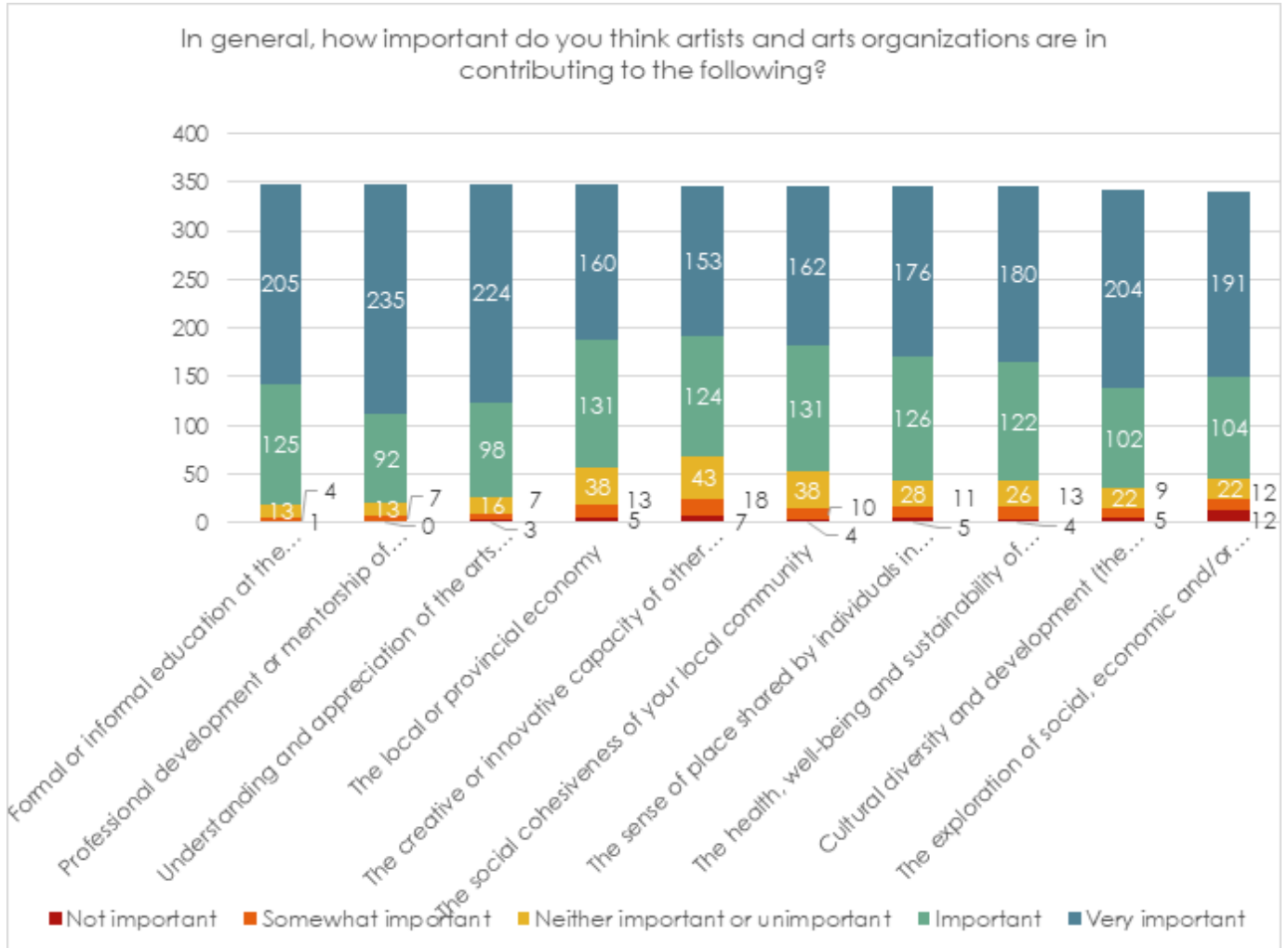


Figure 5 Importance of arts organizations and the arts in community



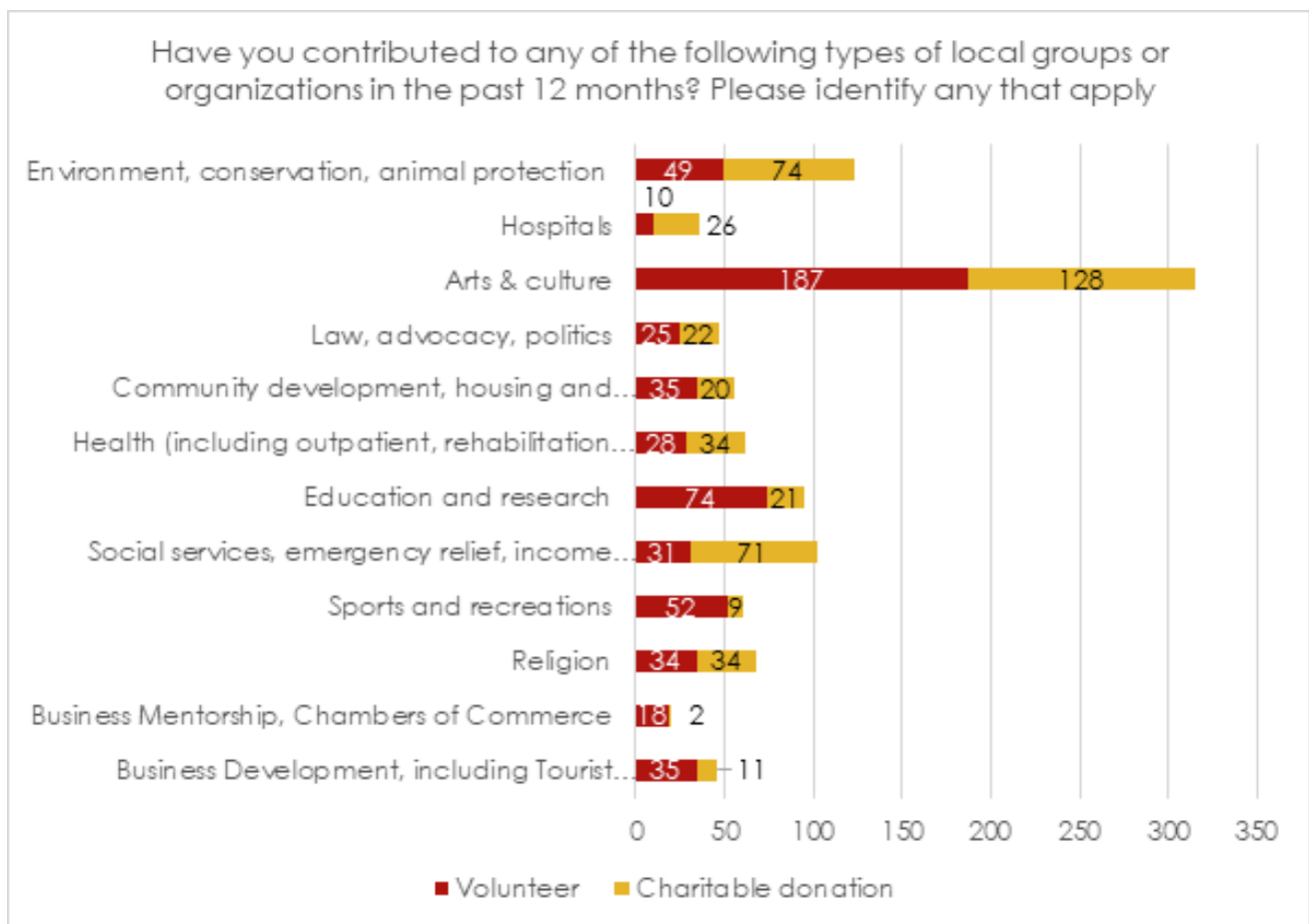
Artists were then asked if they had either volunteered or made charitable contributions to any of the following categories in the past 12 months:

- Business Development, including Tourist Associations
- Business Mentorship, Chambers of Commerce
- Religion
- Sports and recreations
- Social services, emergency relief, income support
- Education and research Health (including outpatient, rehabilitation and support services)

- Community development, housing and employment training
- Law, advocacy, politics
- Arts & culture
- Hospitals
- Environment, conservation, animal protection

Overall, 12% of respondents had volunteered in some capacity while 8% had made some sort of charitable donation. Arts & culture was, far and away, the category in which participants had provided the most amount of contributions, with Business Mentorship, Chambers of Commerce seeing the least amount of involvement.

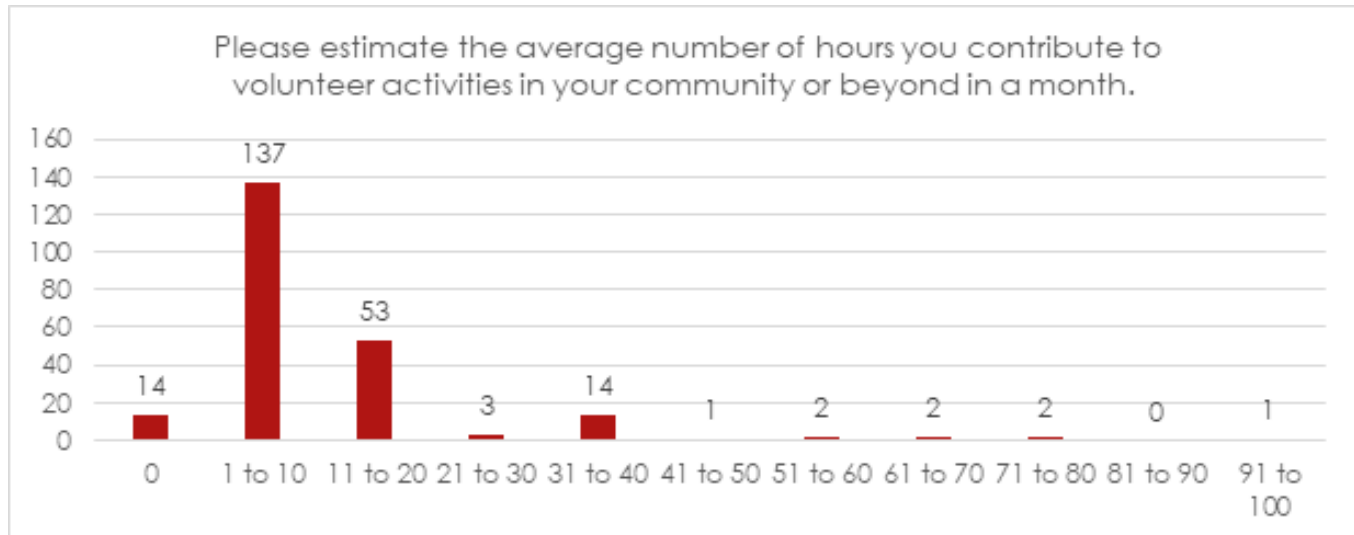
Figure 6 Contributions to local groups or organizations



Of the artists who stated that they had volunteered, 60% indicated they spent 1-10 hours per month volunteering, with 11-20 hours being the second most common.



Figure 7 Average number of monthly volunteer hours



iRespondents were then asked to identify which, if any, arts disciplines with which they had been involved, either as patron or creator, performer or interpreter, in the past 12 months. Participants had the ability to select more than one option. Visual Arts/Design/Photography saw the most amount of engagement, as both patrons and performers.

Figure 8 Involvement in arts disciplines as patrons and creators, performers, interpreter

