



ANNEX A - KEY FINDINGS OF THE 2019 POPULATION SURVEY ON THE ARTS

Some of the key findings from the 2019 population survey include:

i) Increased recognition of the value of the arts

Singaporeans' perceptions towards the role of the arts continues to improve based on findings from the 2019 survey, where majority of Singaporeans appreciate the holistic benefits that the arts bring to their lives, on an individual level and nationwide.

- In particular, in creating a greater sense of belonging and identity (82%), being a source of pride (80%), and improving the quality of life (78%) - all of which reached their highest observed levels in 2019.
- PMEBS² are the most likely group of Singaporeans to view the arts as representative of our society and country (87%), while students agreed that arts and culture events are attended by their social circle of family and friends at least once a year (66%).
- As compared to five years ago, Singaporeans are more appreciative of the presence of arts and culture in their lives (72%).

In 2019, there was a plethora of Singapore Bicentennial-related arts and culture activities, where over 100 partner events and ground-up programmes were organised to share untold stories of our communities.

ii) Increased overall engagement in the arts

Overall engagement in the arts continued its upward trajectory:

- Physical attendance increased among all segments, to 69% in total in 2019 (up 15 percentage points from 2017). This was driven by a surge in attendance in Literary Arts³

² PMEBS are defined as Professionals, Managers, Executives and Businessmen

³ In 2019, "Reading stories, poetry or graphic novels" was asked as a standalone question to better reflect the nature of reading, and more accurately capture the incidence of reading among residents, which likely contributed as well to an increase in attendance for Literary Arts.



events (41%, more than five times of the attendance in 2017), and climbing numbers in Heritage (40%), Theatre (22%) and Visual Arts (20%) events.

- On average, the number of events attended per person increased to 7.6 events, compared to 5.4 events in 2017.
- Over 1 in 4 Singaporeans cited the top reasons for attending arts events as supporting friends and family, for social bonding, enjoyment and relaxation.
- 1 in 3 Singaporeans (33%) participated in the arts, rising by 11 percentage points from 2017 (22%).
- Participation in arts events have increased across the board, except for seniors. Students and PMEBS continued to be the most engaged, with the two groups being the most likely to have attended arts events.
- Music remained the most common art form for participation.

Some prominent arts and culture events that aimed to increase accessibility for audiences include NAC's year-round ancillary programmes for the Singapore Writers Festival (SWF) such as Words Go Round and SWF Pop, as well as the launch of new trails such as The Kallang Story and the Katong Joo Chiat Art Circuit by other cultural entities.

Mr Adel Ahmad, Managing Director, Sri Warisan commented, "Local audiences perceive the arts in a more positive light these days as the arts is now more accessible through a wider array of events and activities to enjoy. To remain relevant and relatable to audiences of different generations, Sri Warisan innovates and incorporates contemporary elements into our traditional arts performances."

iii) Rise in digital consumption of the arts

- 3 in 4 Singaporeans now enjoy the arts via digital/online means, up by 14 percentage points from 2017 (75%).
- Music continues to be the most consumed art form digitally. It saw the second-most notable increase at 52% (up by 13 percentage points), followed by Theatre (up by 9 percentage points).



- Several art forms saw an increase in participation on online platforms, with Literary Arts⁴ seeing the biggest jump to 39% (up by 30 percentage points from 2017).

In 2019, NAC has actively encouraged the adoption of technology to grow new audiences, through digitalisation efforts as part of Singapore Art Week, Noise GIF Fest, and commissions under the Public Art Trust in conjunction with the Singapore Bicentennial.

Mr Jeremy Monteiro, Music Director, Jazz Association (Singapore) said, “With more consuming the arts on digital platforms, artists should tap on the digital medium to showcase our works. I have been actively exploring the online space, especially during this time where ‘live’ performances cannot take place. With live streaming performances, I am able to stay connected with my audience and I can continue to uplift the spirits of many through my music during this challenging time.”

iv) Increased awareness of arts development programmes for youths

- More Singaporeans felt that there were more opportunities to nurture young Singapore artistic talents (77%, 5 percentage points more than 2017).

In 2019, mentorship opportunities for youth were offered under programmes such as Noise Singapore, and NAC launched new programmes such as the SWF Youth Fringe, and the Asia Creative Writing Programme with Nanyang Technological University (NTU).

Ms Wong Seet Fun, Founder and Partner, Art Loft shared, “Parents and educators are increasingly aware of the benefits of the arts on young minds and are keen for youths to develop their talents in this area. Arts educators like myself are hoping to continue to contribute to this positive trend and provide ample opportunities for youths to interact with and grow through the arts.”

⁴ Literary Arts include reading fiction or non-fiction books, stories, poetry or graphic novels. The question was extracted and asked separately in 2019.



v) Key barriers to attendance

For survey respondents who did not attend any arts events in the past 12 months, the main barriers to attending arts events are:

- Perceived lack of familiarity with the artists (26%)
- Perceived lack of relevance (22%)
- Perceived lack of companions (20%)

Findings also revealed that:

- 31% of these seniors surveyed felt that their physical health was the key barrier to attending arts events.
- Engaging in arts and cultural activities was preferred by 11% of respondents in 2019, a slight increase by two percentage points from 2017. However compared to other leisure options such as visiting friends and family, engaging in sports and exercise and overseas travels, attending or taking part in any arts and cultural activities remained one of the lower-ranking leisure activities preferred.

vi) Reduced interest and frequency of arts attendance in the next 12 months

Despite the increase in overall arts engagement in 2019:

- 2 of 10 attendees expect themselves to attend fewer arts events in the next 12 months (19%), with Students and PMEBs being the most likely to do so.
- Current interest in the arts has also reverted to 2008 and 2013's level of 29%, a drop of 8 percentage points compared to 2017.

This may be an after effect of the COVID-19 pandemic, where the expected downturn in the economy may negatively affect participation in the arts in the months to come.