The Art Festival Newsletter™

News, trends, developments, resources and advice
for art festival artists.

The Sixteenth Art Festival Newsletter Survey:

"Art Festival Artists: Who We Are 2013"

Survey Report and Analysis

September, 2013

This nationwide survey is sponsored by: The Saint Louis Art Fair

This year marks the 20th annual Saint Louis Art Fair, a juried fine art and fine craft event regularly ranked among the top art festivals nationwide. Held in the streets of Clayton, Missouri, one of the nation's most affluent and prestigious business and residential communities, the Saint Louis Art Fair attracts over 150,000 art enthusiasts who purchase an estimated $2 million worth of art at the festival.

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www.theartfestivalnewsletter.com

INTRODUCTION

On August 25, we invited 9.321 artists, working in 13 different mediums and living and exhibiting in all areas of the nation, to take part in The Art Festival Newsletter's seventh national artist survey via the internet.

The subject of the survey was "Art Festival Artists: Who We Are 2013." The survey topic and questions echoed the survey of the same name conducted in August, 2010, 2011 and 2012.

The goal of the survey was to again build a factual, broad-based portrait of the artists who participate in outdoor art festivals and to compare the survey results with those gathered in earlier years. The information we received paints a specific, interesting and informative picture of these artists, with insights into how their identities influence their own festival participation and shape the character, scope and, in important ways, the future of the festivals themselves.

The survey was composed of 24 questions, each with multiple-choice answers, encompassing three areas of importance to the topic: demographic information, festival participation related to demographic information and future plans for participation. Taken together, answers to questions in these areas provide a detailed and poignant view of the artists who make up the art festival community.

As a broad overview, the survey results again indicate that art festival exhibitors constitute a highly professional, dedicated group of artists who are committed to the festival industry as the most important--and often overwhelmingly significant--way they earn a living. Art festival participants exhibit in numerous shows each year, spend many years doing so, travel long distances to and from shows and plan to do so for years to come. The effect of the recent and ongoing economic downturn have made, to date, minor incremental changes in the makeup of the community of artists who exhibit at art festivals,

The survey results also indicate that, in important ways, art festival artists still comprise a cross-section of America, well integrated into the national landscape, living and working in all parts of the nation. Artists' lives flow equally through the American experience, even if their days and weeks are not structured in the same rhythm as those of nine-to-five workers.

A single discordant and somewhat troubling note arose once again in the survey results: the age of art festival participants continues to rise. Unfortunately, our survey indicates that younger artists are not entering the industry. Close scrutiny of the survey results yields several other interesting and important trends. These are discussed in detail in the Fall, 2013 issue of The Art Festival Newsletter.

The Art Festival Newsletter is pleased to provide artists--and other industry members--with the results of its sixteenth national artist survey.

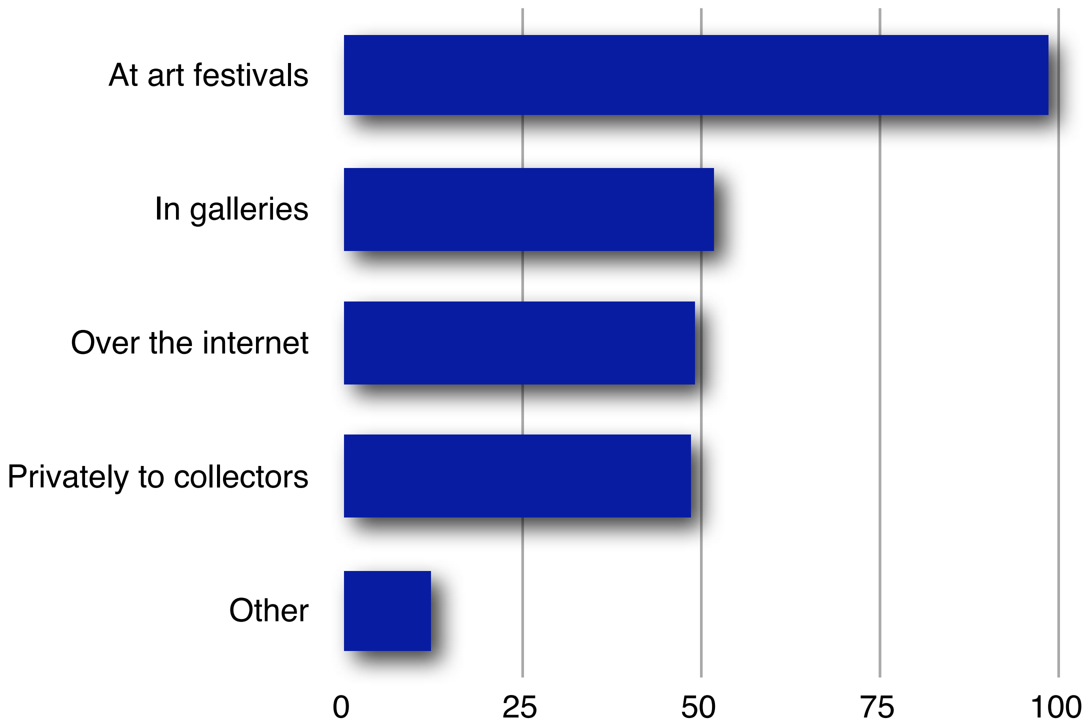
Survey Questions, Answers and Interpretation

The following pages contain the artists' responses to each survey question, accompanied by response levels in percentages and brief interpretations of the answers' importance to the art festival industry and the artists themselves.

An Analysis and Conclusions section follows the individual survey questions.

(Note: All Numbers Shown in Charts are %'s)

1. I sell my artwork (please check all that apply):



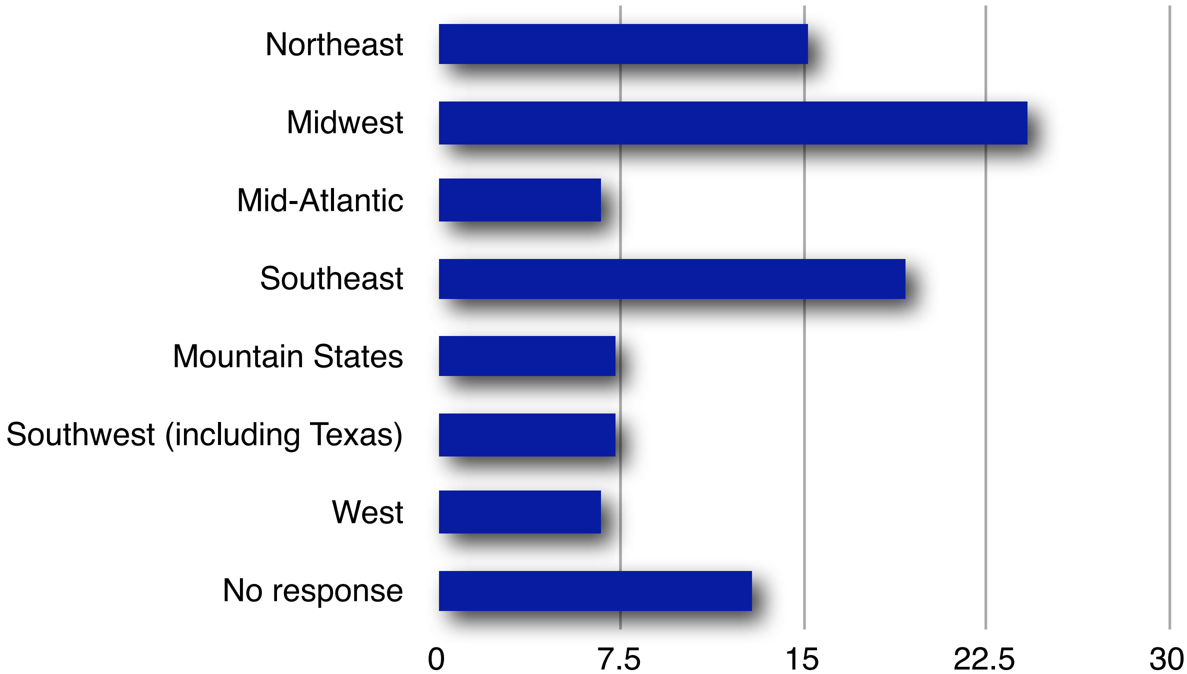
This year's survey reveals that percentage of artists who sell their work in venues other than art festivals continues to drop--precipitately so. While, last year, nearly two-thirds of artists reported sales through galleries, this year only 50% do so. Even the internet has produced fewer sales for artists, down from just above to just below one-half of artists reporting. Another 12% of artists reported that they use "Other" ways to make sales, nearly the same level as last year.

Comparison with last year's survey: artists are decreasing their sales efforts through channels outside art festivals, whereas, from 2010 to 2011, these efforts increased measurably. The downtrend may also recognize a general lowering of sales of artwork across the nation.

Still, in pursuit of their careers--and income--artists continue to explore numerous avenues of sales. The data does, however, call into question the overall health of the art market and the value of the internet to artists' sales.

Looked at another way, fully two-fifths of survey respondents sell their work only at art festivals, emphasizing the importance of these events to their livelihoods.

2. I live in the:

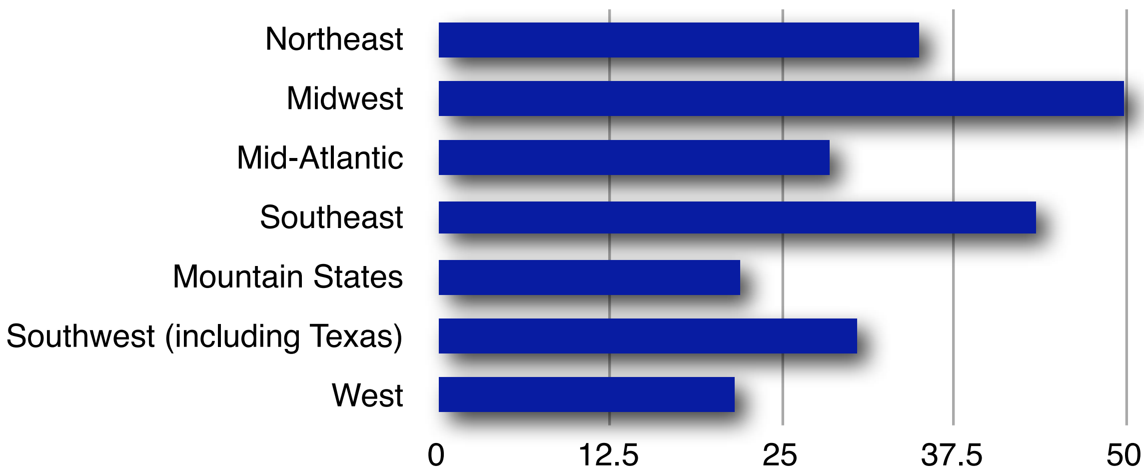


Art festival artists live in all corners of the nation, yet certain regions have more resident art festival artists than others: the Midwest (24.2%), the Southeast (19.2%) and the Northeast (15.2%), dominate. Other regions, most notably the West (6.7%) which includes California, have fewer art festival exhibitors in residence than their overall populations would seem to indicate. Responses from other areas include: Mid-Atlantic (6.2%); Mountain States (7.3%); Southwest, including Texas, (7.3%). Comparison with last year's survey shows little change in area of residence.

As noted last year, there may be a reason for this: artists live where show availability dominates. The Midwest and Southeast have more festivals located there than other regions, with the Northeast, Southwest and other geographies hosting fewer festivals.

A historical imperative may also come into play here. Population growth in the western United States, compared with the country east of the Mississippi, is a relatively recent phenomenon. The eastern US has had many decades longer for communities of artists to arise, and for festivals to be established. Distances between major population centers tend to be longer, as well, forcing artists to travel greater distances to participate in festivals--which, especially today, many artists do not want to do.

3. I apply to and/or exhibit in festivals in the (please check all that apply):

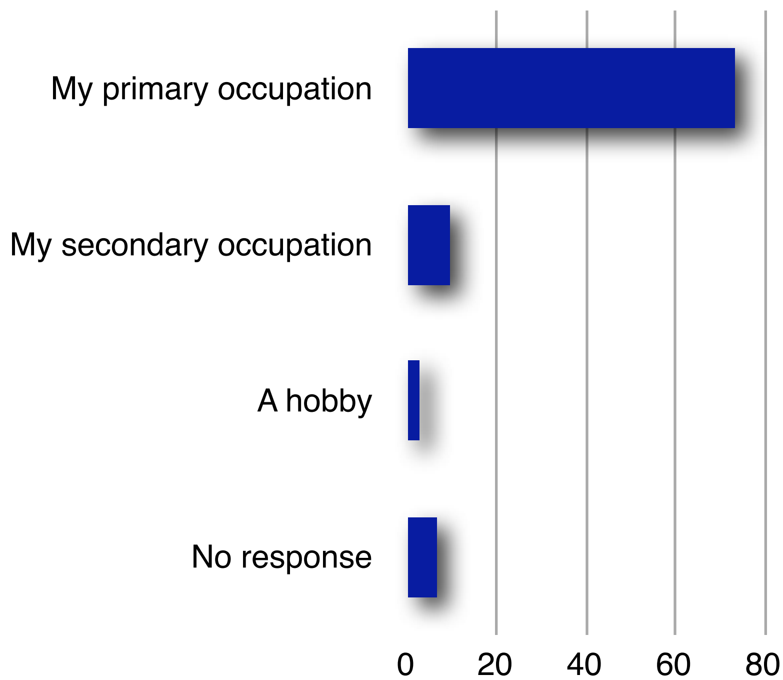


As would be expected from their regions of residence, artists continue to apply to and participate in shows more predominantly in the Midwest (50.0%)and Southeast (35.0%) than in other areas; participation in the Southeast which dropped nearly 10 percentage points from 2011 to 2012 has stabilized.

By comparing responses to this question from this year to last, we can see that artists have continued to reduce their travel significantly, preferring, or having been force by economic circumstances, to exhibit closer to home.. They still tend to apply on a geographic basis, that is, by travel distance required to participate. The ongoing reduction in Southeast festival participation indicates a break in the tradition of travel to the Florida during the winter season. This could lead, in the near term, to reduced numbers of applications to Florida shows and, in the medium and long term, to fewer events.

Answers to this question may be the most forceful representation to date of the slowdown in artists' sales, as well as the depth of the relationship between art sales and the overall economy.

4. Creating and selling art are:

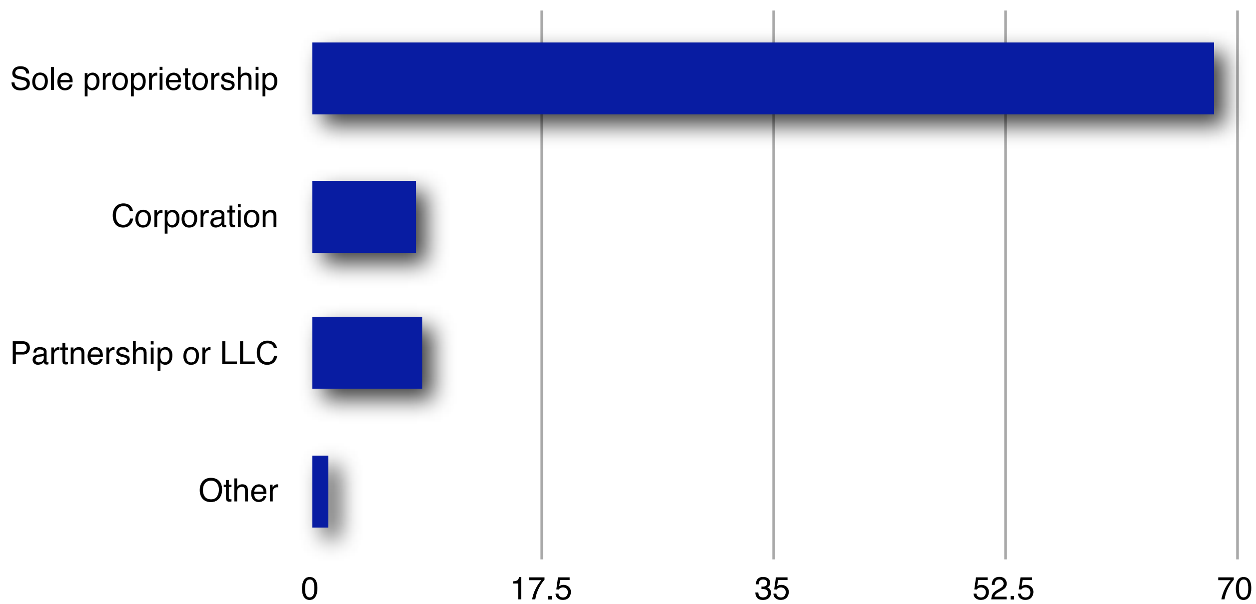


The survey conducted in 2011 reported that for an overwhelming number of artists--79.2%s--creating and selling art form their primary occupation. Last year's answers told a very different story: the percentage reporting art as their primary occupation dropped by ten points, to 69.2%. This year's survey returned data that indicates nearly the same level of "primary occupation" responses as in 2012 (73.4%). The conclusion is that no significant number of artists have returned to creating art as their primary means of earning a living. Why this is so--the economy, age, changing interests--is difficult to surmise; it may be that a combination of factors have produced the trend. Creating and selling art is a secondary occupation for 9.6% of respondents and a hobby for 2.8%.

Still, it is important that seven out of ten artists participating in art festivals are career artists. While many tens or hundreds of thousands of other people create art sporadically or as a hobby, for most who participate in festivals, art remains the mainstay of their working lives.

Art festival artists continue to have a huge personal stake in the success of the industry.

5. My business is organized as a:

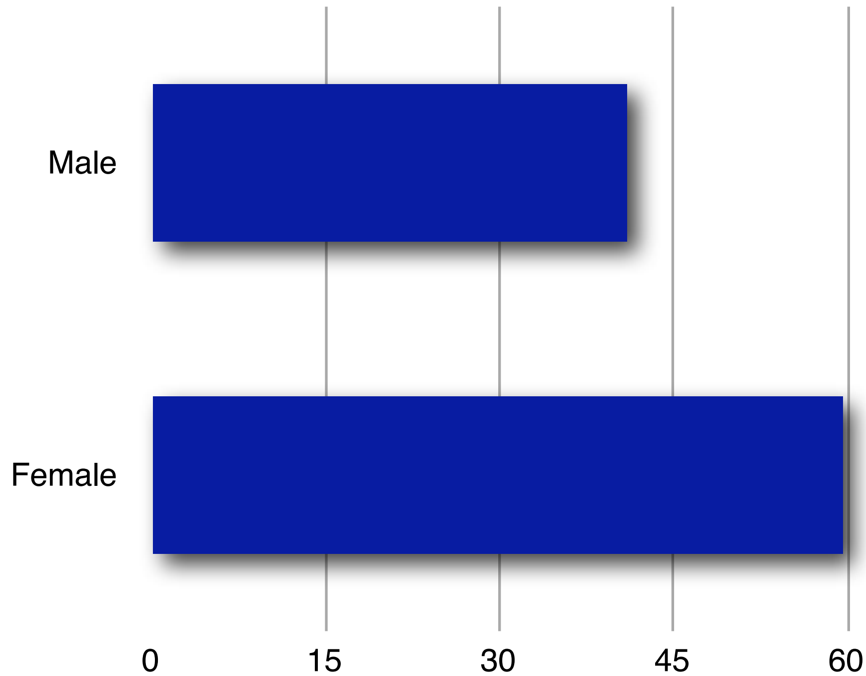


Most art festival artists (68.3%) continue to operate their festival businesses as sole proprietors, the simplest form of business organization. Another 7.9% are incorporated, while 8.4% operate as partnerships or limited liability companies.

While the number of sole proprietorships is not surprising, the responses from artists who have organized corporations is, with the added legal, accounting and filing requirements corporations face. Other factors can certainly affect the decision on how to organize a small business, including limits of liability, protection of business assets and estate questions. Also, two artists working together may opt for a partnership or LLC, providing an orderly ownership structure.

Compared with last year's survey, response levels remained approximately the same, with a slight reduction in artists using a sole proprietorship as their business structure.

6. My gender is:

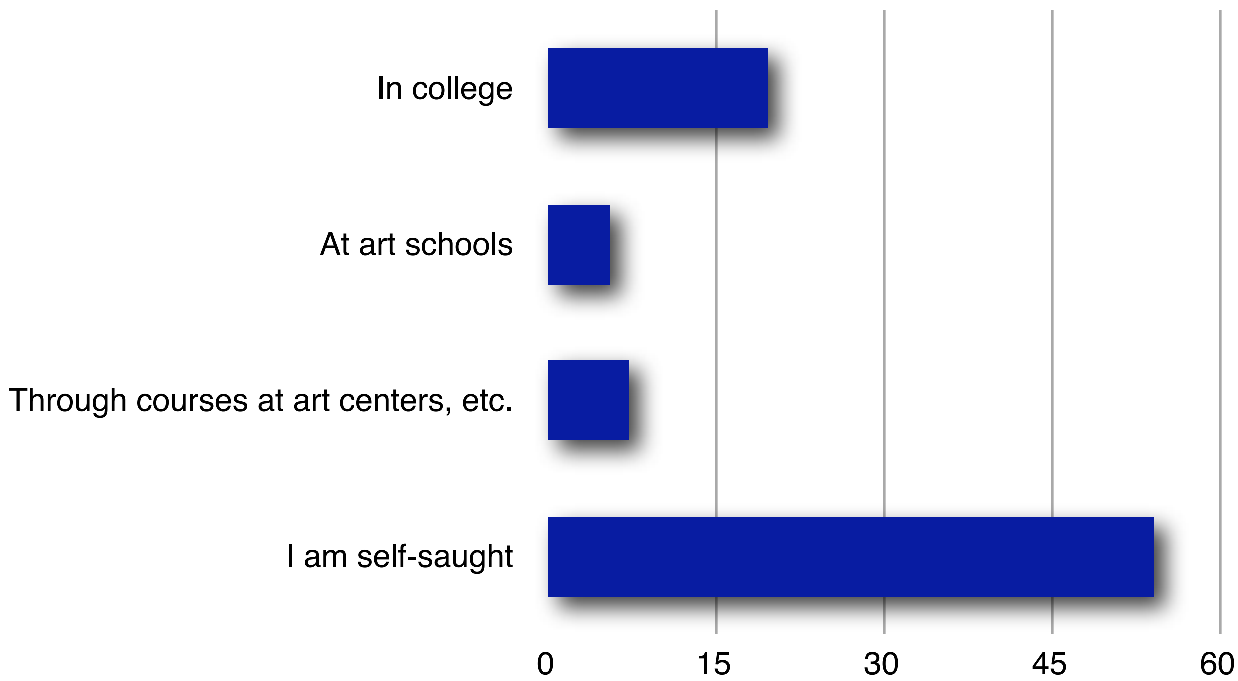


Again this year, more women than men (59.6% versus 41.0%) participate in art festivals. This represents a continuation of the shift toward more females that the 2011 survey showed.

This difference does not, however, tell us whether, in any given festival, female participants outnumber male participants. Applications to art festivals are not gender specific and it is unlikely that festival juries, directors or committees consider the male/female ratio of exhibitors in their shows.

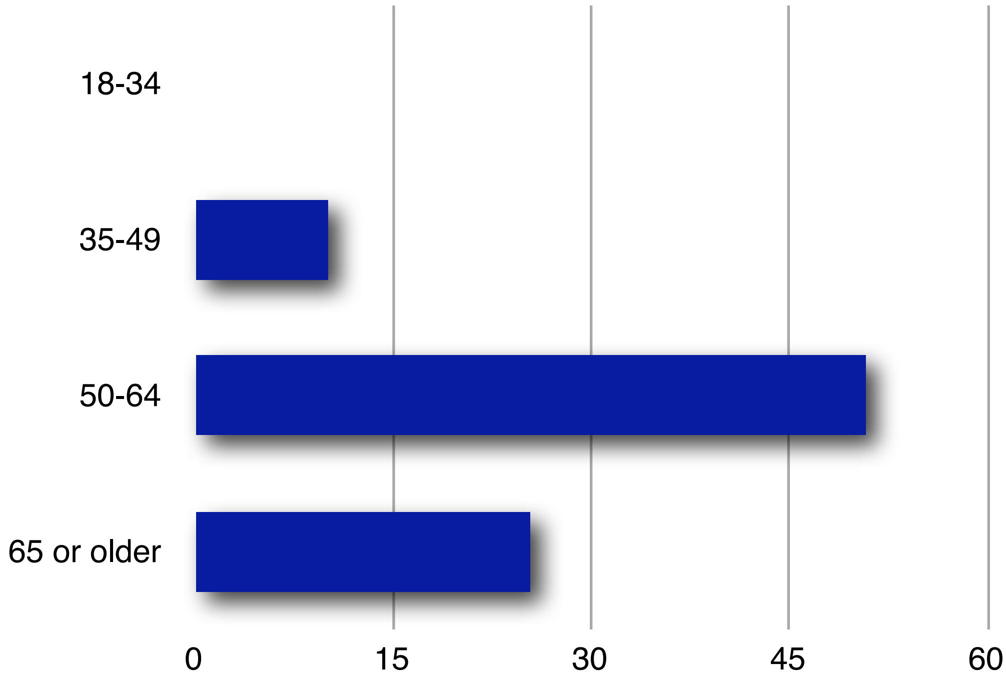
We also cannot tell whether female artists earn more than their male counterparts, sell more art at festivals or exhibit in more shows than men. While individual festivals may be able to determine the female/male composition of their shows, it remains clear from the response to this question that festivals should consider the needs of both sexes in how their shows are designed and operated, from load-in, load-out through artist amenities and availability of accommodations.

7. I learned to create art:



This year’s responses to this question remain very similar to those of the last three surveys:, about one-half (54.2%) of art festival artists report that they are self taught. Given that seven out of ten art festival exhibitors consider art their primary career, this is an impressive number. While another 40% of artists have some formal training, the time and commitment required to learn and develop artistic skills--and master selling at art festivals--indicates a strong commitment to the festival industry, and art as a career.

8. My age bracket is:

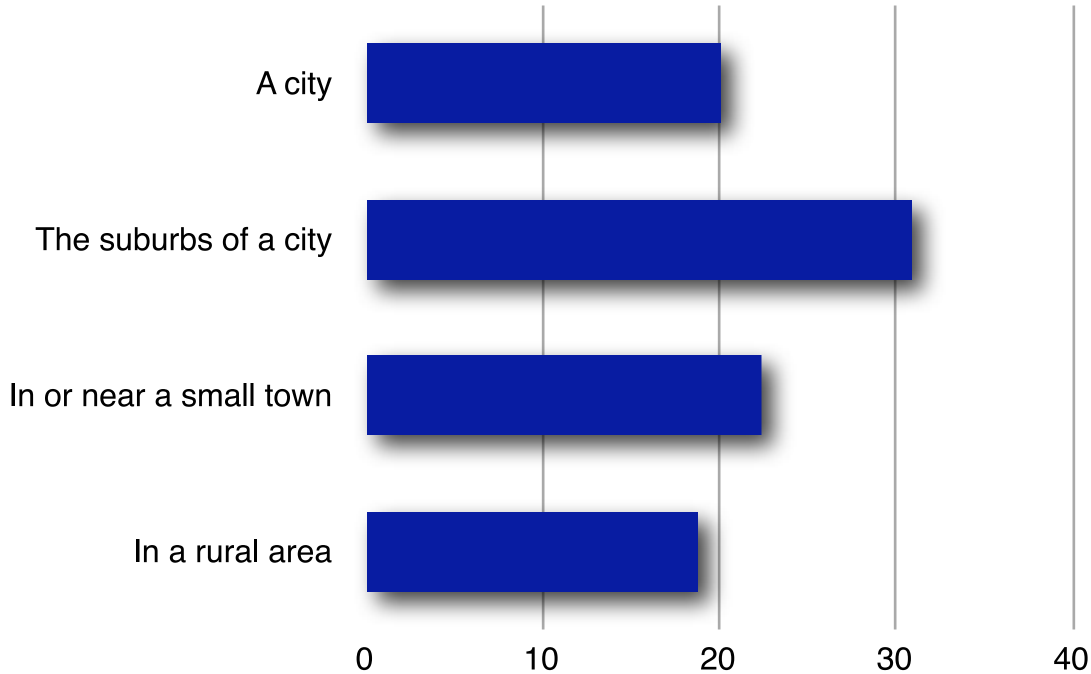


More than three-quarters of art festival artists (76.2%) are still 50 years old or older, nearly the same percentage as in 2012. However, an age shift is occurring on the scale, Last year, those 50-64 comprised 54.2%, while another 13.5% were above 65 years of age; this year, the 50-64-year-olds have dropped to 50.8%, while those over 65 have increased to 25.4%, this last a quantum shift. Those aged 35-49 make up 10.4%, down four points from least year. And those in the youngest age bracket have dropped from 1.3% last year to nil this year. *Importantly, this year's survey shows no letup in the aging of the exhibitor population*.

These statistics continue to be a cause for concern, both to artists and festivals--and in another way to the public that attends art festivals. To be sure, the aging of the art festival artist population tracks with the aging of the US population. However, simply because the nation is aging does not mean that people who provide goods and services are following along in all areas of our economic and social life.

Art festival participation--especially in recent years--can be a highly speculative and uncertain way to make a living, and young people may be understandably hesitant to follow a tentative career path in a very tumultuous and unsure economy. While art festival artists indicate that they will remain in the business for years to come, the lack of younger artists may in itself make the business less viable: as artists retire or deeply curtail their participation, shows will have difficulty replacing them, especially on a qualitative basis, with younger exhibitors.

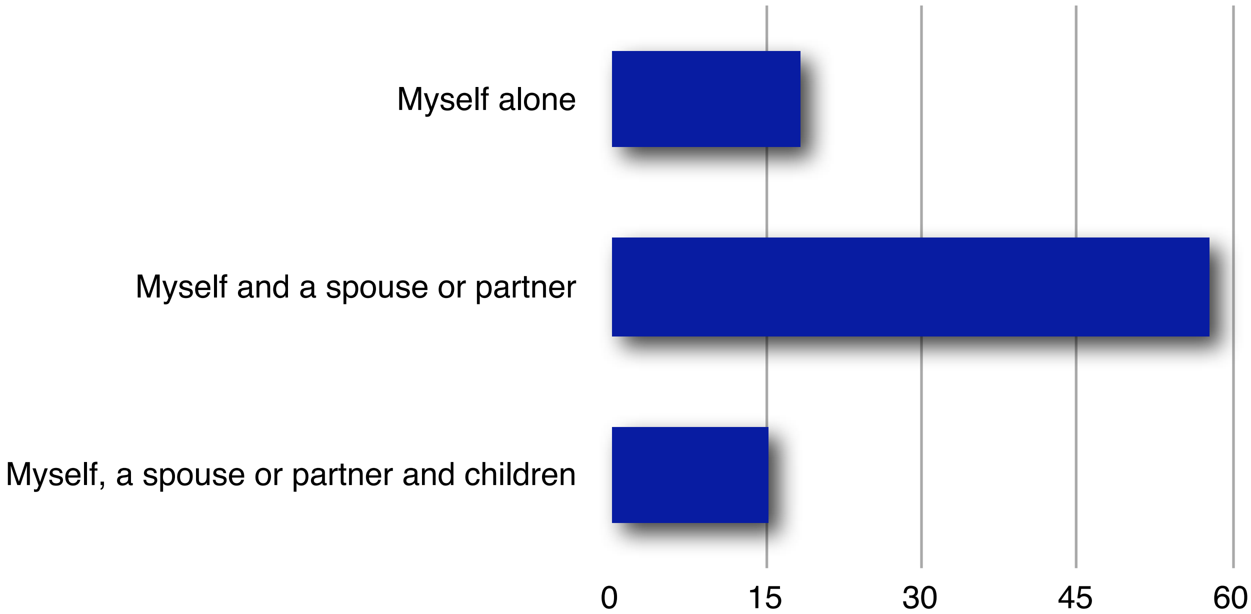
9. I live in:



This year's survey indicates that the distribution of where artists live continues much the same as over the last three years, with a slight trend toward more living in cities and rural areas. More than four in five (82.5%) of artists still live in cities, suburbs or small towns. They are fairly evenly distributed between cities (20.1%), suburbs of cities (30.9%) and small towns (22.4%). Another 18.5% of he artists surveyed live in rural areas.

The small town residents continue to total more than might be expected, which may be attributable to lower living costs than in urban environments. Artists may also prefer quieter living environments. This may also be influenced by the lack of a need to commute to and from nine-to-five jobs.

10. My household consists of:

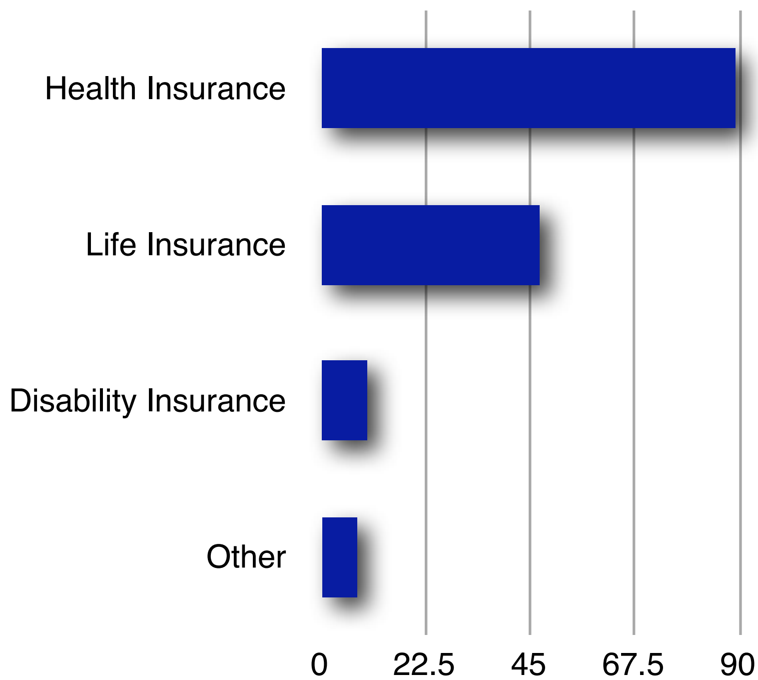


Most artists do not live alone. About three out of five live with either a spouse or partner (57.3%), or a spouse or partner and children (11.4%). Only 17.4% live alone, a percentage nearly equal to that of earlier surveys. The percentage with children at home is much lower than the national census, but may be attributable to the age of art festival artists. Pursuing an art festival career, with its inherent travel requirements, may also be more difficult for an artist with children living at home--possibly even more so for female artists.

In these times, with two-income households the norm in order to earn enough money, having children may be a large barrier to entry into the art festival business, not due just to the travel needs, but also with the uncertainties of being able to bring in sufficient income. Younger artists who are planning to have families may see pursuing an art festival career as presenting too many obstacles and thus follow other occupational paths.

Compared with last year's survey, the percentages remain approximately the same.

11. I am covered by (please check all that apply):

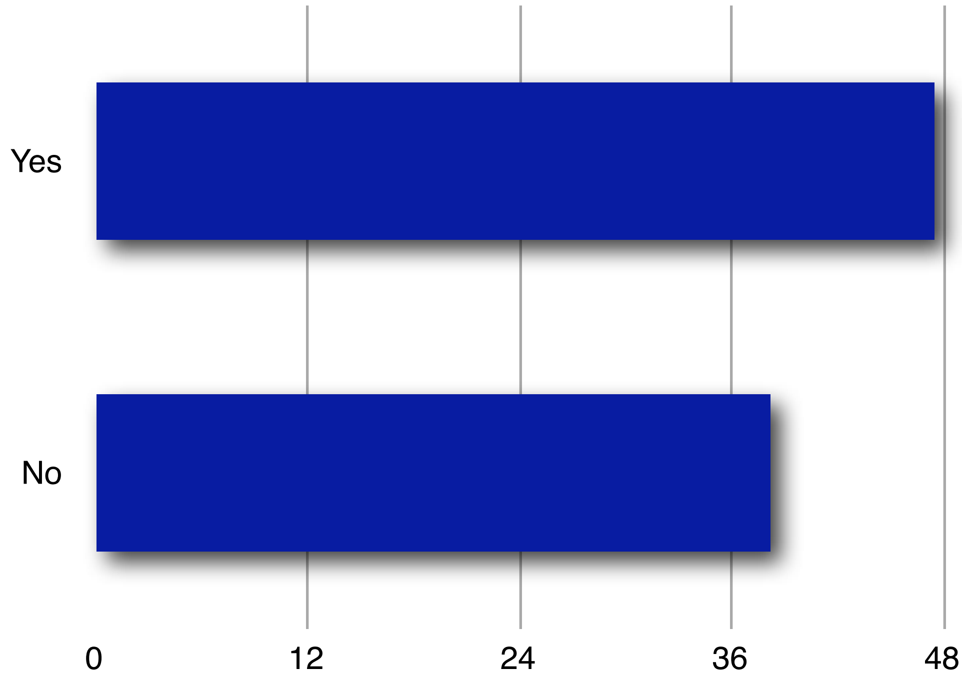


Artists consider carrying health insurance important, judging by the 89.2% of respondents who are covered (much better than the US population at large, with more than 16% *not* covered, at lest until the implementation of The Affordable Care Act). Another 47.1% have life insurance, while 10.0% pay for disability insurance and 7.8% have other types of coverage.

The percentage of artists with health insurance may be impacted by those who are covered on spouse's insurance obtained through their employers, or through Medicare in the case of older exhibitors. Even with that proviso, the number of artists who carry health insurance is impressive. At the same time, in an aging artist population, those who carry either life or disability insurance seems lower than optimal.

No companies have organized to offer artists an insurance plan--health or otherwise--that could be advantageous to artists and insurance firms alike, probably due to the many states in which artists live and the different state regulations for insurance issuance.

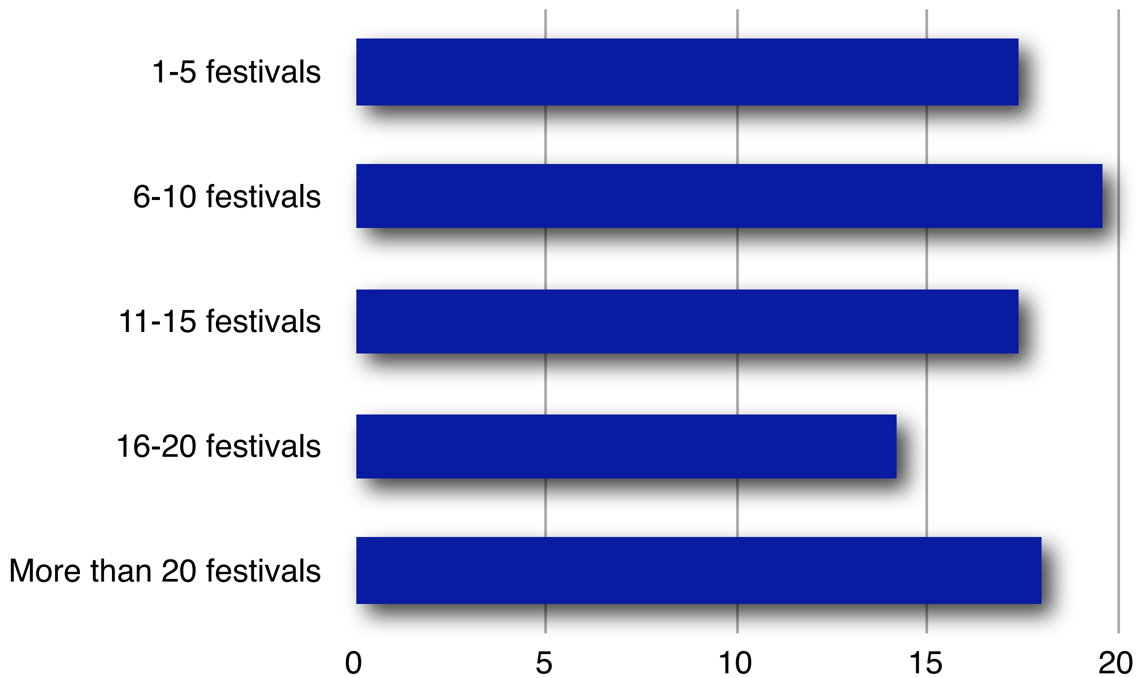
12. I belong to an artists' association or other similar organization:



This year, about half (47.5%) of our respondents belong to an artists' association or similar group, while 38.2% do not. This link to their fellow artists would seem to be important to many art festival artists. The responses correlate closely with those from both earlier surveys.

Some artists' association sponsor art festivals. These may require that exhibiting artists belong to the association, motivating artists to join. Most artists' groups provide at least a limited form of exhibition of their members' work. Others offer classes and are active in their municipalities' visual arts and related cultural life. Artists may therefore have multiple reasons to belong to artists' associations.

13. Annually, I participate in:

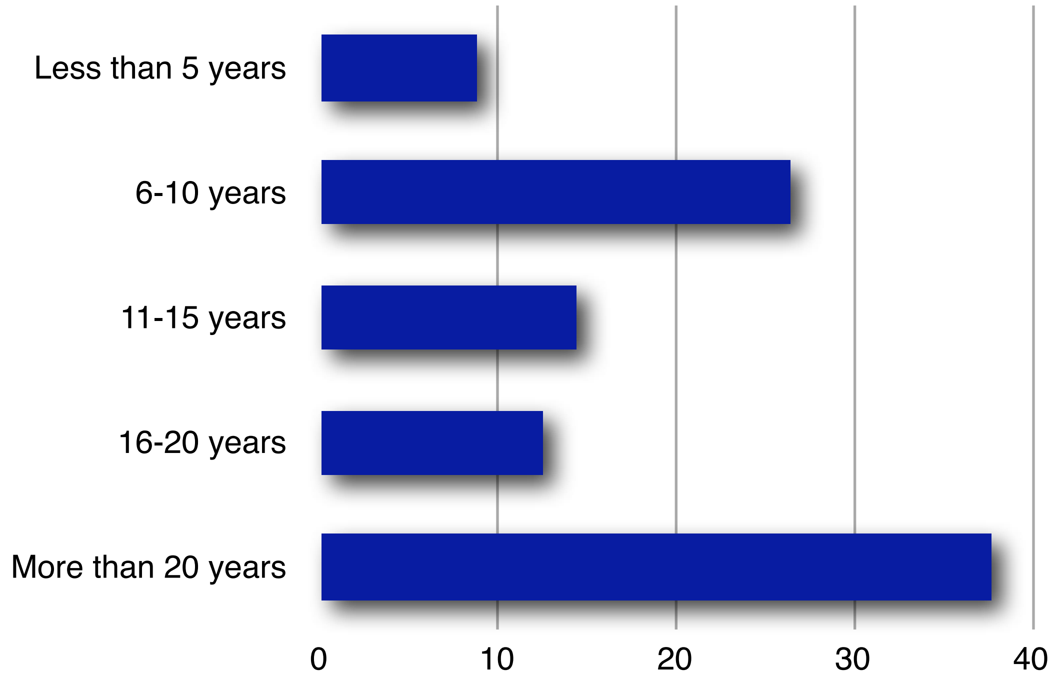


Art festival artists remain likely to participate in numerous festivals annually, although the number participating in some brackets continues to fall. This year, 17.4% reported they take part in five or fewer festivals, while last year 18.3% recorded the same response. In the 6 to 10 show category, 19.6% participate, down from 22.4% last year. The percentage who exhibit in from 11 to 15 shows dropped from 20.1% to 17.4%, while the bracket of 16 to 20 events has gone up slightly, from 16.5% to 18%. In the Above 20 show category, a drop from 14.3% to 13.1% was recorded.

Festival artists look to shows for their primary income, or significant portions of their income, and many may find that they need to exhibit in a large number of festivals to earn adequate money. Those who participate in the largest number of shows may find themselves away from their home bases for a third of each year, or more.

The shift in this year's responses display a decrease that correlates to other data, most importantly the reluctance of artists to travel long distances to exhibit, and the correlation between art show sales and the overall national economy. The aging of the artist population may also be a contributing factor. The implications for the future of the art festival industry may be important and signal an overall reduction in festival participation, long-term and nationwide.

14. I have participated in festivals for:



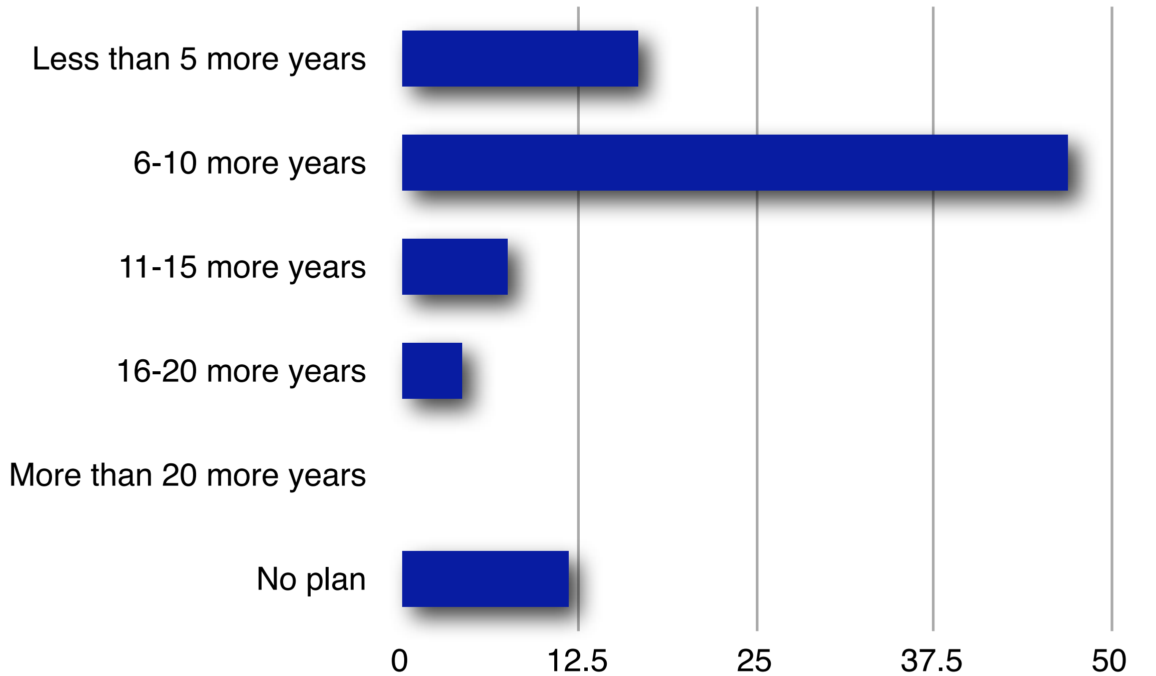
This year's responses to this question show a sharp, and somewhat alarming, drop in artists new to the industry. In stark contrast to last year, which showed a 10% increase in artists new to the festival industry (Less than 5 years exhibiting), the number this year dropped by eight percentage points, from 17.2% to 8.9%, without a corresponding increase in the next higher participation bracket (6 to 10 years). Clearly, fewer new artists are entering the industry. At the same time, longer-term participants are either reducing in number or about equal to last year.

The highest concentration of artists was reported in the over 20 year category: 37.7%, as increase of almost ten percentage points from last year--and a poignant representation of the aging of the art festival artist population.

About 8 out of 10 artists have been exhibiting for longer than five years, which would indicate a satisfaction with the results of festivals and the industry. However, without an influx--and a growing influx, at that--of new artists, the total participation will, eventually, be greatly reduced. The implications of this trend are unsettling: a smaller cadre of artists exhibiting in festivals will ultimately either reduce the number of artists in shows, or force some events out of business.

While this is not an inevitable outcome, as the number of artists who retire due to age increases, which it will given the aging of the baby boom generation, the pool of artists will grow smaller, decreasing the number of show applicants and straining the industry's ability to offer fresh art to the public.

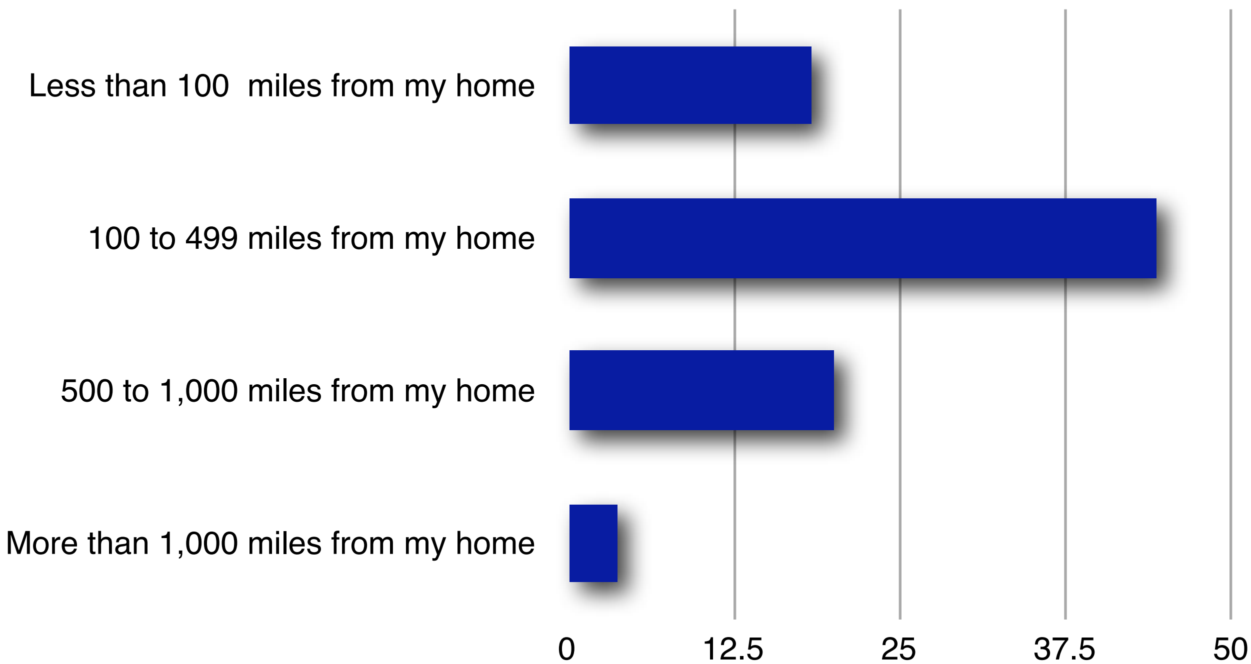
15. I plan to participate in festivals for:



Last year, this question yielded a surprising result: the number of artists who had no plan for how long they will stay in the art festival industry was 28%. This year, that number is down to what would seem a more rational 11.8%. At the same time, most artists do have a plan, with 47.0% planning to exhibit for 6-10 more years, a healthy increase of 13% from last year, although this may be due to a need to work longer than planned before the Great Recession. Those planning to leave the industry within the next five years have decreased to 16.7%, which, while still high, may signal a recovering optimism among artists. No artists reported that they planned to remain in the industry for more than 20 years, once again reflecting the aging of the festival artist population.

Other scenarios exist, of course, but they need to be fueled with a slower exodus from the industry and a large increase in new exhibitors. It is impossible to tell whether national events--a strong upsurge in the economy, for example--would, or given the aging artists, could--influence artists' plans, both about remaining in the industry and, if they are younger, making a career of it.

16. Typically, I exhibit at festivals:

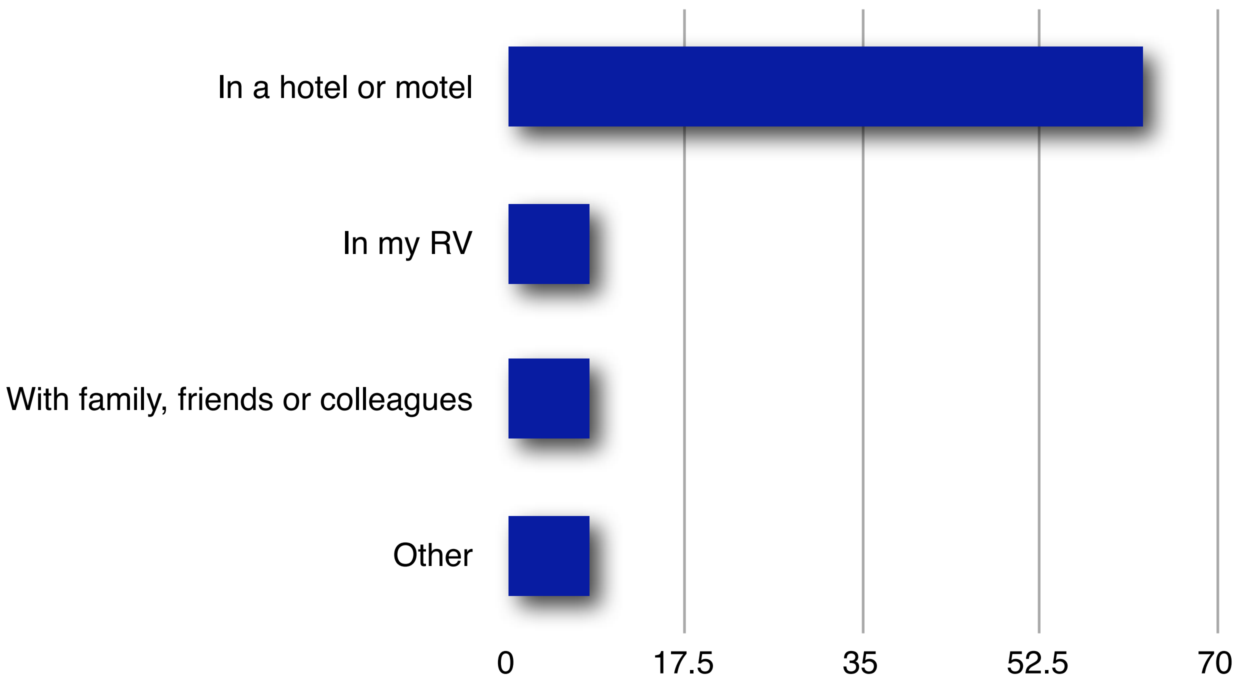


Compared with 2010 through 2012, artists may be starting to travel farther to participate in festivals, although the data is not conclusive.

Those who will go more than 1,000 miles away now make up 3.7%, down from 5.8% last year, which was down from 13.7% in 2011; from 500 to 1,000 miles now make up 20.0%, down from 23.0%in 2011 but slightly higher than last year; from 100 to 499 miles now comprise 44.3%, a three point rise form 2012. And 18.3% of respondents venture less than 100 miles, down from 26.9% last year. *This shift to closer festivals reflects lower sales and higher costs, and may result in fewer, certainly different, artists applying to many events. Some artists who ventured farther afield are now staying closer to home, while others are seeming spreading their wings, if tentatively, to exhibit in festivals father away.*

Travel distance to shows influences artists' choices of which festivals they will exhibit in and, depending on where they live, may bear on whether an artist pursues an art festival career. For artists whose home bases are not near the nation's top-selling events, distance may be a limiting factor with a large effect on their incomes.

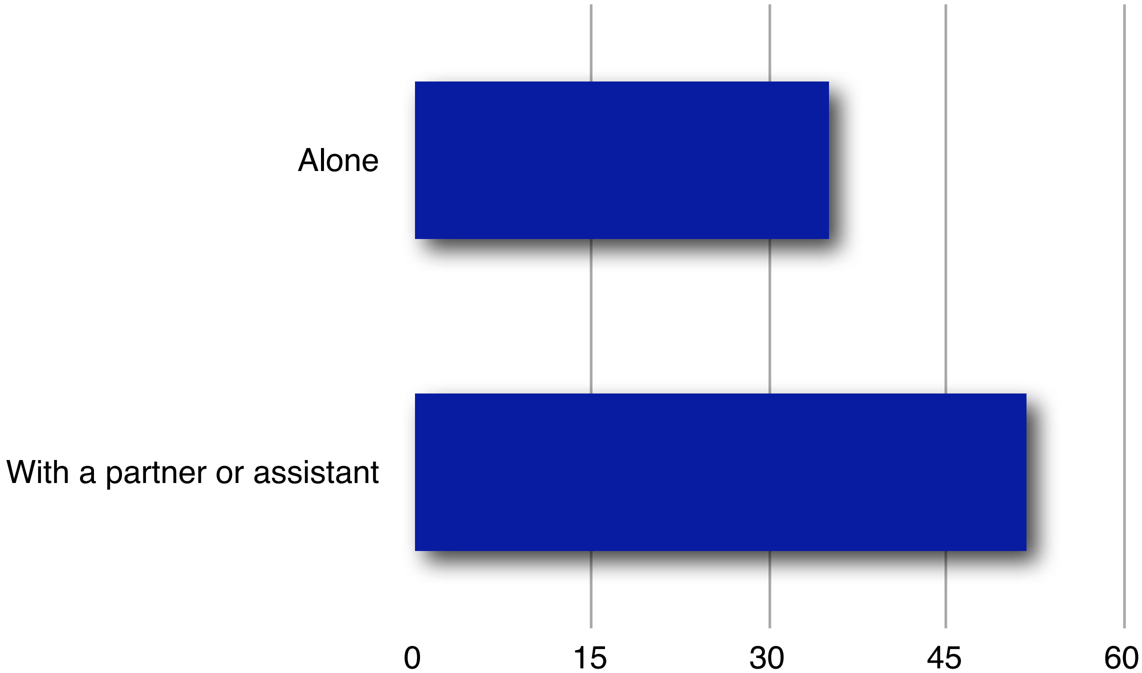
17. On the way to or during festivals, I usually stay:



Two-thirds of artists (62.7%) continue to stay in hotels or motels while on the road and exhibiting in festivals. Other categories remained very close to the same as last year.

With many thousands of artists using paid lodging on the road, the value of discounted rooms is high. Festivals that arrange discounted rates for their exhibitors do a great service to them since, along with food costs, lodging and fuel charges make up--after booth fees--the largest component of show costs for artists.

18. Usually, I attend festivals:

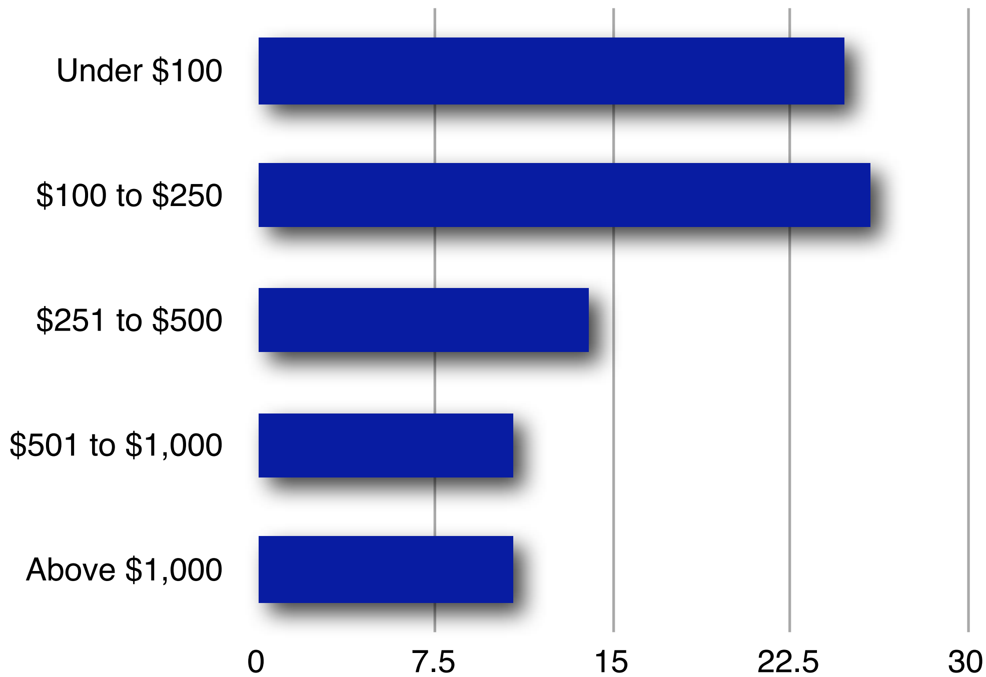


The majority (51.8%) of artists continue to attend festivals with another individual, while about one-third (35.1%) travel and exhibit alone. These responses are consistent with what artists told us last year and the years before. Participating in festivals--and traveling to and from them--is certainly easier with two people to handle the tasks rather than one. Setup, teardown, loading and unloading go faster and are less tiresome. During shows, having another person along allows artists to take breaks more often, and, in many instances, relate more effectively with the public.

Why, then, do so many artists travel and exhibit alone.? For some, it may be a choice--they would rather pursue the festival business on their own. For others, more likely, it is a function of their life situations: young children at home; spouses who have their own careers; not enough income from shows to afford either travel for two or a paid assistant.

With this knowledge, festivals can shape their appeal to artists by providing support for those who work alone--assistance during setup and teardown, arranging booth sitters, convenient load-in and load-out, nearby parking, among others--but, knowing money is a large factor, at little or no cost to the artists.

19. The majority of my artwork sells for:

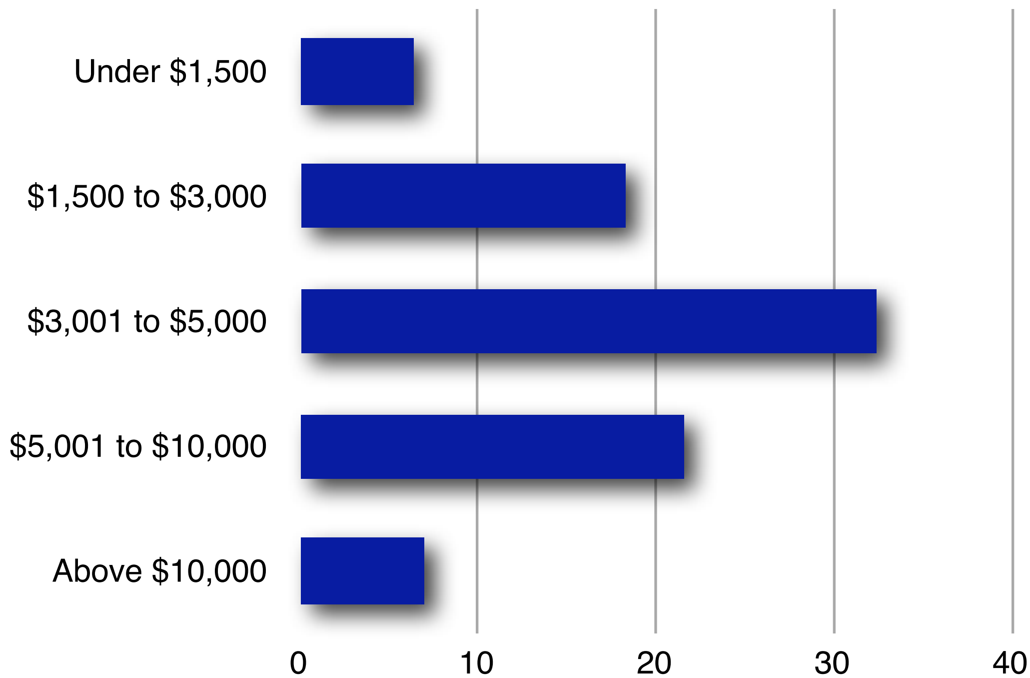


The responses to this question show a slight upward trend in the price of art sold at festivals.

Above the $1,000 level, sales this year have increased from 8% to 10.8, Between $500 and $1,000, the number has diminished from 11.2% to 10.8%. Typical sales price levels are even between $251 and $500, and slightly higher below $250. At a sales level below $100, the percentage has decreased five points, to 24.8%%

While most artists are continuing to sell at levels equal to last year, the levels remain much lower than in 2010 and 2011. Put another way, any increase in the nation's economy has not, as yet, translated into widespread spending increases, by price of work sold, at art festivals. Still, he upward movement, however small, is cause for optimism.

20. I consider sales at a show good if they are:

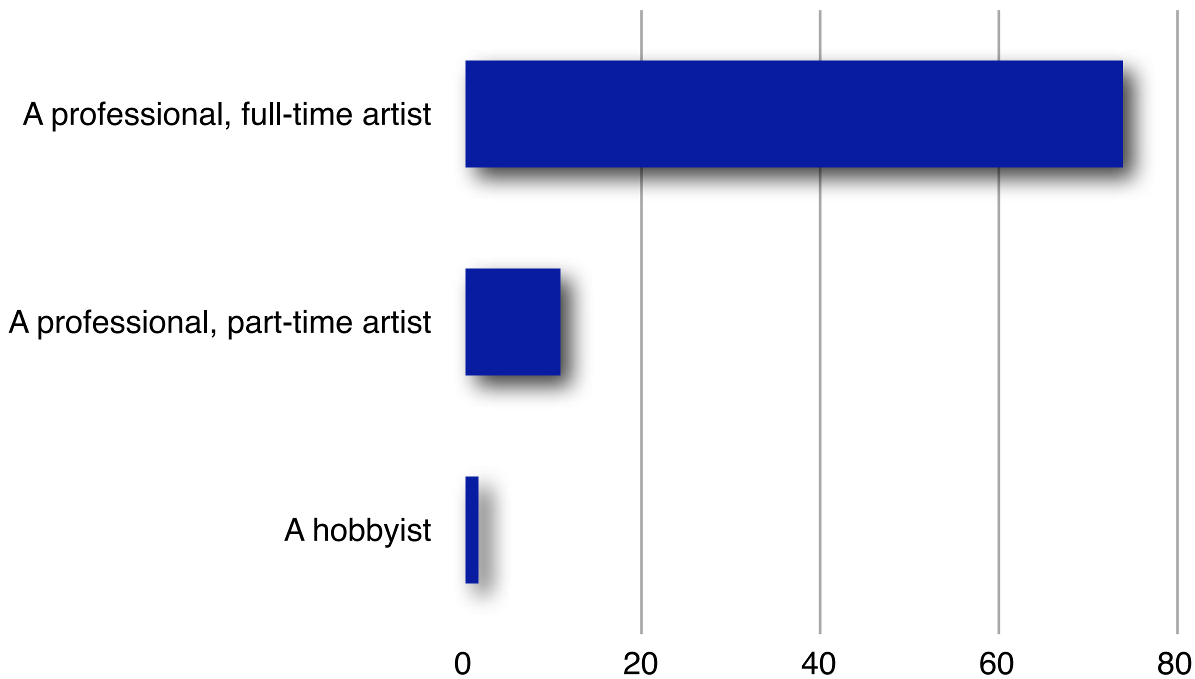


This year's responses to this question signal a mixed experience among artists. In 2010, only 1.2% of respondents said revenue below $1,500 constituted a good show; in 2011, 6.7% chose that sales bracket. In 2012, that number rose to 8.0%. This year, while down slightly, it returned 6.7%.

Other response levels changed also, but moderately. Last year, 29.5% surveyed reported that, to them, a good show produces sales between $3,001 and $5,000; this year, 32.4% selected that answer. Last year, too, 19.7% responded that a good show brings in $5,001 to $10,000, this year, it is at 21.6%. Again last year, 21.1% considered between $1,500 and $3,000 in sales a good show; this year the percentage rose to 29.5%. A smaller group still believes a show that yields above $10,000 is a good show (7.0%). This is double the number reporting that level in 2012.

No absolute conclusions can be drawn from the data, other than a mix of artists' expectations, with possibly fewer concerns that sales prices will continue to erode as they did at the height of the recession.

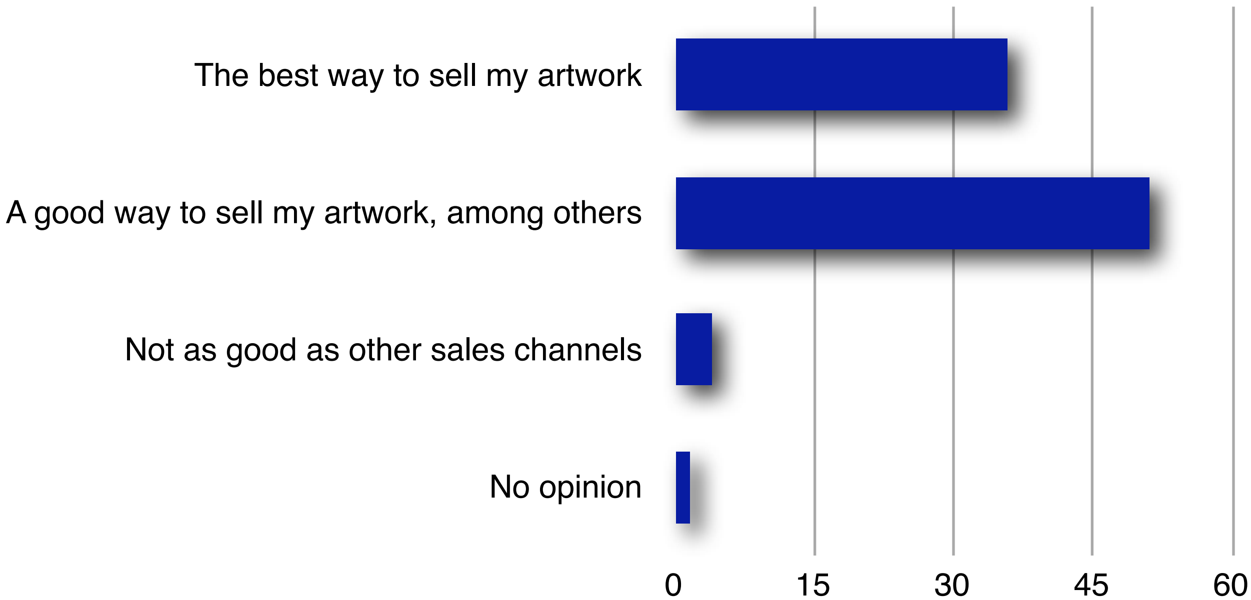
21. I consider myself:



Three quarters (74.0%) of festival artists consider themselves full-time professionals. The number who call themselves part time professional artists has, meanwhile, decreased from 23.3% to 10.8%. This may mean that full-time professional artists are finding festival exhibition attractive, while some part-time professionals have found it necessary to take on other income-producing jobs or careers since the start of the recession.

Judging by our respondents, however, the art festival industry is still populated to a great extent by full-time professionals, for whom art is their life's work. Whether the festival-going public realizes this is open to question. Successfully communicating this fundamental fact--the public is seeing, often at no admission fee, a wealth of high-quality art by hundreds of professional artists--should be a primary and essential mission for both artists and festivals.

22. I believe art festivals are:

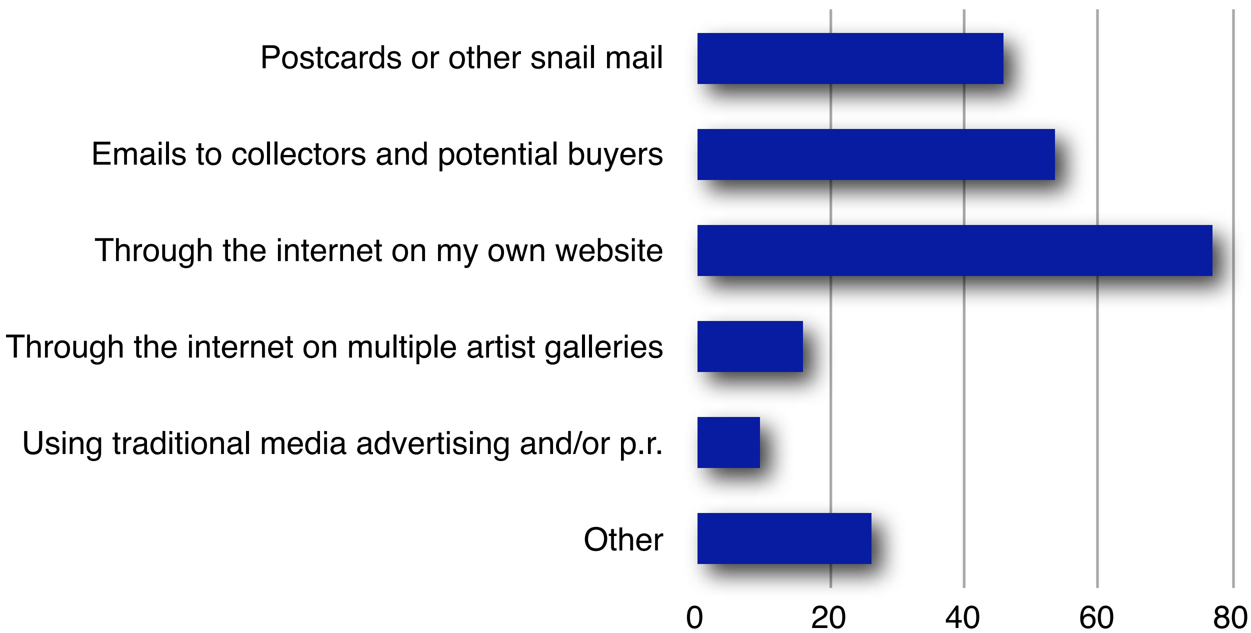


One-third of artists (33.5%), still believe festivals are the best way to sell their artwork, consistent with the answers to this question in prior years. Another 45.4% believe festivals to be a good way to sell, among others. Another 5.9% responded that they believe shows are not as good a way to sell as others are, while a few (2.1%) have no opinion.

A very large portion of artists--above 79 percent--believe festivals provide either a good way or the best way to sell their work. This high response implies that artists have been successful participating in festivals, a fact born out by the growth of the festival industry over the past two to three decades. The data supports the number of festivals artists participate in, the many years they have remained in the industry and their plans to continue in the festival business.

It does not, however, predict the future, or, as the survey data bears out, motivate younger artists to enter the industry. For the benefit of both current and future exhibitors, this information should be communicated to potential new exhibitors--by festivals and artists. Importantly, artists who have participated in festivals for many years have been through, and survived, economic downturns and other obstacles to sales--and will continue to do so.

23. I market my work using (please check all that apply):

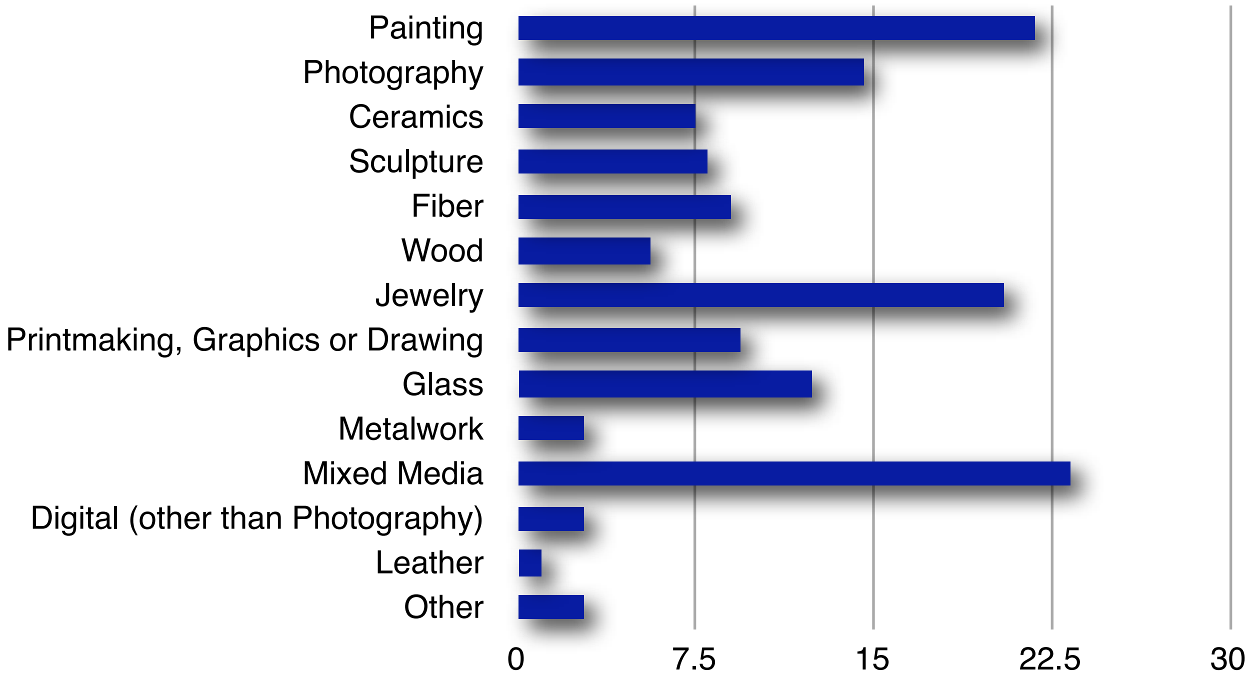


Artists still aggressively market their work, as earlier surveys also showed, often employing several marketing techniques in their efforts. More than three-fourths (77.0%) have and use personal websites as a marketing tool; about half (45.8%) send traditional mail to collectors and potential buyers; another half (53.5%) send emails to buyers and one in six (15.9%) participate in multiple-artist internet galleries. Traditional marketing channels--advertising and public relations--are used by 9.5% of festival artists. This year's responses showed little statistically significant difference in the answers artists gave.

It is clear that festival artists have embraced modern technology to market their work, and that artists who exhibit at festivals recognize that marketing via a number of methods has value to their careers. Yet, with more than half of the artists still communicating with potential buyers via postcards and other paper missives, artists have not abandoned traditional ways of approaching their customers.

Most artists are not relying solely on festivals' advertising to attract their customers to their booths. They are pursuing sales from their own databases, at their own expense, as a part of their festival practice, and they are employing multi-channel marketing strategies to best leverage their festival participation.

24. Please check the medium or mediums of the work you display at festivals:



The composition, by medium, of this year's survey respondents showed very little change from last year, providing an excellent opportunity for comparison of responses to the same questions.

Artists who responded to the survey came from every medium usually represented in art festivals, both fine art and fine craft endeavors, as in past surveys.

Medium percentages tracked closely to the percentages represented by each medium in most festivals, painters and mixed media artists leading with a combined total of 45% of respondents .

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS

Defining and characterizing as large, diverse and independent a group as art festival artists is, in itself, a challenge. Relating the information gathered to how those artists pursue their careers in another large and diverse group--art festivals nationwide--adds measurably to that challenge.

The artists themselves who, as independent business people, rarely give voice to their own career, festival and personal choices in any organized way, have provided the answers. Taken together, their responses to the questions asked in the survey are stunning--and potentially far-reaching in consequence.

This year's survey enables artists and art festivals to draw conclusions about important trends in the industry, with artists nationwide providing the data to support those conclusions as they did in the survey on the same topic over the last three years.

Some areas of who artists are and how they pursue their art festival careers have changed in the past two years; other areas have stayed nearly the same.

Art festival artists remain committed to the festival industry as a primary, sometimes the only way, they sell their creations. They are not dabblers or dilettantes, but--more than two-thirds of them--full-time, professional artists for whom art festivals form the foundation of their ability to sell their artwork and, thus, continue to make it.

More than 18 percent of artists surveyed continue to exhibit in over 20 festivals each year, although this number has diminished from 20% in 2011. The fraction grows to above 50 percent for artists who exhibit in more than 10 shows a year, but that has also diminished, by 10 percentage points in just the last two years. The artists who responded continue to have a long history of festival participation, with 28% having exhibited for more than 20 years. Yet here, too, the percentage is down, from more than one-third in 2011. Last year's nearly two-thirds who have participated for at least 10 years is down by the same amount this year.

These, and other questions' responses, tell an important tale: at least on the surface, the art festival industry, as evidenced by the artists who participate in it themselves, would appear to be on something of a downward slope. While a single year's results, 2011 in this instance, might be simply a change, two years of similar declines in important characteristics of how artists participate in art festivals signals a trend--one that may set off alarms among festival organizers and promoters. Without question, the slow, nearly imperceptible recovery in the national economy has had a deep impact on the art festival industry--and the lives of the artists for whom the industry represents most, if not all, of their livelihood.

Other responses to questions in the survey carry importance as well. Women continue to outnumber men and. Last year's survey indication that women outnumbered men by about ten percentage points, to 65.3% women and 35.6% men; that differential has diminished only slightly this year. Women remain a dominant force in the industry and festivals would do well to assess any special needs this implies.

In an important continuum of demographics, the survey results show that nearly three-fourths of festival artists are still 50 years of age, or older, with only one in four artists under the age of 50. This demographic holds great potential impact for the industry, especially when combined with the survey responses to another question: how long artists who now exhibit intend to stay in the business. The number of artists who plan to remain in the industry for many years to come is steadily falling.

Last year, we noticed, on a positive note, many new artists entering the field, with the percentage of those aged between 18 and 34 nearly doubling since 2010. However, this age group has once again diminished, now representing nearly no new artists. Thus, there is no evidence of a growing cadre of younger artists entering the field. Attracting younger, or at least new, artists continues to be a major stumbling block for festivals looking to attract younger, or at least expanded, public audiences.

The percentage of artists surveyed who plan to exhibit in festivals for less than 10 more years grew this year once again, crossing over the midpoint to 55% of artists. With relatively few young artists entering the festival industry, this may signal a deep future reduction in the total number of artists exhibiting. In turn, this could lead to fewer exhibitors in many shows, fewer festivals overall and, should festivals choose to fill booth spaces by lowering quality standards, marginal artwork presented to the public. While this is not a certain outcome--other scenarios, such as a large number of retirees from other jobs turning to festivals for income, do exist--it is a serious ongoing potential that should be addressed by the industry at large as well as by individual festivals.

The travel characteristics of festival artists, something of a bellweather for application to and participation in festivals, continues to show that artists are traveling less--or, put differently, staying closer to home. While nearly eight out of ten artists still traveled more than 100 miles to exhibit in festivals in 2011, this year that percentage is down by ten percentage points. All other distance categories show similar changes. On the road, artists continue to stay in motels and hotels, for the most part, with some occupying RVs and others lodging with family or friends. Most spend a full month every year going to and from shows. Approximately three in five continue to travel and exhibit with another person, while the remainder work and travel alone.

In all, this year's survey again paints a poignant portrait of art festival artists as dedicated, thoughtful professionals whose success is tied deeply and bound tightly to the art festival industry. They have devoted years--or decades--to their careers, using the festival business as their primary sales channel, and they plan to spend more years on this path. Still, the portrait shows a markedly graying population, with little visible support in the background from younger artists with long careers ahead. Artists' expectations for festival sales are down and they are reacting to lower sales by traveling less and reducing their plans for how long they will remain in the festival industry. Festivals are having a difficult time attracting younger artists, which may be related to the difficulty in making significant incomes at shows in the current economic climate.

In its entirety, the survey continued to paint a less discouraging picture of the art festival industry today, while at the same time illuminating the artists who participate in it. The art festival industry continues to garner enormous support from thousands of artists nationwide, and millions of people who visit, enjoy and purchase artwork at art festivals. As the nation renews itself economically, the festival industry--and the artists who participate in it--should benefit.

Artists who participated in the survey create artwork in at least 13 mediums, in proportions generally consistent with participants in most art festivals.

Once again. we offer our profound gratitude to all artists who took their valuable time to participate in this survey. Equally, we appreciate their thoughtfulness in considering and answering the questions it contained.

“Art Festival Artists: Who We Are 2013” is the fourth artist survey The Art Festival Newsletter has conducted this year, and the sixteenth overall. We hope all artists who receive invitations to the surveys will respond and contribute to the overall knowledge available both to art festival artists and the festivals themselves. This report will be distributed to more than 1,500 art festivals, to enhance their knowledge of artists’ experiences, opinions, needs and desires. It is our great hope that artists, and the art festival industry at large, will benefit from the information and insights the survey provides.

The Fall, 2013 issue of The Art Festival Newsletter will offer extensive analysis of the survey results, in addition to other outstanding editorial content. If you are not already a subscriber, please visit www.theartfestivalnewsletter.com for more information. And take a moment to visit www.art-linx.com, the incredible (and free) homepage for artists!

We welcome your comments and suggestions. Our email address is: info@theartfestivalnewsletter.com.

A complete dataset of the survey, with response levels for each medium from each question, as well as medium comparisons and interpretation, is available from The Art Festival Newsletter. Please inquire at: info@theartfestivalnewsletter.com

We offer our appreciation to The Saint Louis Art Fair for its generous sponsorship of this nationwide survey.