2019 Annual Artist Survey Report

Introduction

During the summer of 2019, 1,283 artists from across Washington State participated in the Artist Trust Annual Survey. The results of this annual survey allow us to better understand the artists we serve and share information from responding artists with other artist-serving organizations. With greater knowledge about the needs of artists around the state, we can all work to provide better support and further elevate the voices of Washington State’s artists. Survey findings by region, as well as the raw data, are available by contacting Artist Trust.

Artists who took the 2019 Annual Artist Survey indicated the major challenges in their careers are marketing, building new audiences for their work and finding financial stability. With 2/3 of responding artists working out of their homes or home studios, they shared perspectives on accessing space and space affordability in Washington State. Throughout the survey, open-ended questions provided space for further explanation, revealing many artists are looking for more support for their work, as well as community. This year, a number of new topics also emerged, including concerns about the climate, LGBTQ and gender equality, and access to continuing education.

The key takeaways from the 2019 Annual Artist Survey are:

- **Arts funding, affordable health insurance, and affordable housing** ranked highest among Washington State artists when asked about local/city/state/federal issues they’re concerned about.
- 67% of responding artists work out of their home.
- Within the open-ended questions concerns about climate change, aging as an artist, and the importance of community emerged.
- In 2019, 31% of respondents report making at least half of their annual income from their art practice and related activities, while 60% reported that less than half of their income comes from their art practice.
- 87% of responding artists report that they vote when asked how they engage politically, compared to the national voting average of 61%, according to the United States Census Bureau.
- When it comes to accessing space to make/practice their art, 57% of artists reported that space is not affordable where they live.
- 67% of respondents living in urban areas feel racial equity in the arts is important where they live, compared to only 40% in suburban and rural areas.
- When asked how they engage politically, voting, donating time and money, and volunteering, ranked highest among Washington State artists.
- 28% of responding artists feel artists are supported where they live, with another 58% indicating that artists are only somewhat supported where they live.

About Artist Trust

Artist Trust is a nonprofit dedicated to helping Washington State artists of all disciplines thrive. Founded in 1986, AT was formed by a group of artists and arts lovers who came together to create support for art at its source: the artist. Since then, Artist Trust has invested over $11 million in Washington State artists through funding, trainings, and resources and has provided programs that meet the changing needs of artists. Artist Trust approaches our work through a lens of racial equity and helps artists establish and maintain careers through direct support, connections, and advocacy. Learn more at artisttrust.org.
Survey Findings and Data

How supported and valued are artists where you live?

- Not at all: 8%
- Somewhat: 58%
- Supported: 28%
- Extremely: 6%

What are the major challenges you face in your practice? Select your top three.*

- Marketing: 51%
- Financial stability: 42%
- Building national/international audience: 35%
- Building local audience: 22%
- Time management: 18%
- Affordable studio/practice space: 15%
- Support outside of the arts community: 14%
- Building community: 13%
- Business practices: 12%
- Affordable housing: 12%
- Determining clear career goals: 11%
- Finding a mentor: 9%
- Other: 9%
- Access to specialized tools/equipment: 8%
- Career development training: 5%

Please select two services you would like to see from artist supporting organizations across Washington State.*

- Funding/grants: 64%
- Presentation opportunities: 35%
- Networking opportunities: 27%
- Business training: 27%
- Career counseling: 16%
- Advocacy: 15%
- Other: 8%

How important is building community/connecting with other artists to your art practice?

- Extremely: 48%
- Important: 37%
- Somewhat: 14%
- Not at all: 1%
- Not so important: 0%

Where do you make/practice your art?

- Studio space: 18%
- At home: 67%
- Arts center/maker space: 6%
- Other: 9%

What is the biggest barrier for artists in your community when it comes to accessing space to make/practice their artwork?

- Space is not affordable: 57%
- Space is not available: 17%
- There is space, but no support to make it functional: 11%
- Other: 15%

* denotes questions that were non-exclusive, making the total percentage greater than 100
How accessible are artist support services in the town/city where you live?

- Somewhat accessible: 42%
- Accessible: 25%
- Not accessible at all: 15%
- Not sure: 14%
- Extremely accessible: 4%

How much of your annual income comes from your art practice? This includes income from your art and related grants, teaching, and activities.

- Prefer not to specify: 10%
- All: 17%
- More than half: 7%
- About half: 7%
- Less than half: 60%

Do you live in a rural, suburban, or urban area?

- Rural: 24%
- Suburban: 27%
- Urban: 49%

What Washington State county do you live in? (this is broken into AT designated regions in the chart below)

- Pugest Sound: 69%
- North Central: 2%
- South Central: 5%
- West: 16%
- East: 8%

What local/city/state/federal issues are you most concerned about?*

- Arts funding: 64%
- Affordable health insurance: 61%
- Affordable housing: 55%
- Racial equity: 45%
- Immigration issues: 33%
- Jobs: 28%
- Changes to tax codes: 20%
- Other: 17%

Is racial equity in the arts important where you live?

- Yes: 55%
- No: 9%
- Not sure: 28%

* denotes questions that were non-exclusive, making the total percentage greater than 100
Demographic Information

In 2019, all questions regarding demographic information were optional. We use the demographic information collected to better understand the communities we serve and inform our programs across Washington State.

What is your artistic discipline? *

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Visual</th>
<th>Literary</th>
<th>Craft</th>
<th>Multi-disciplinary</th>
<th>Cross-disciplinary</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Music</th>
<th>Theater</th>
<th>Media</th>
<th>Dance</th>
<th>Social practice</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2019</strong></td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>19%</td>
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<td>11%</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2018</strong></td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>13%</td>
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<td>4%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2017</strong></td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>12%</td>
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<td>11%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2016</strong></td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
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What is your age?

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>18 to 24</th>
<th>25 to 34</th>
<th>35 to 44</th>
<th>45 to 54</th>
<th>55 to 64</th>
<th>65 to 74</th>
<th>75 to 84</th>
<th>85 or older</th>
<th>Decline to state</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>3%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2018</strong></td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2017</strong></td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
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<td>17%</td>
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<td>1%</td>
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</table>

What is your gender?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Self-Identify</th>
<th>Decline to state</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2019</strong></td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2018</strong></td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2017</strong></td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2016</strong></td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* denotes questions that were non-exclusive, making the total percentage greater than 100

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How do you define your race or ethnicity? *

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Alaskan Native</th>
<th>Asian/ Asian American</th>
<th>Biracial/ Multiracial</th>
<th>Black/ African American</th>
<th>Hispanic /Latino</th>
<th>Middle Eastern</th>
<th>Native American</th>
<th>Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander</th>
<th>South Asian</th>
<th>White/ European</th>
<th>Prefer not to specify</th>
<th>Self- Identify</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>6%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
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<td>2018</td>
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<td>7%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
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<td>80%</td>
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<td>4%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>4%</td>
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Background and Methodology

In summer 2015, Artist Trust launched a preliminary survey to explore artists’ needs. This survey proved instrumental to building responsive support mechanisms for artists, and in 2016 the Annual Artist Survey was launched as a new initiative to collect data from artists across Washington State. The Annual Artist Survey continues to serve as a yearly research process that gathers information and feedback from artists around the state.

The Annual Artist Survey is one of the many ways Artist Trust collects feedback from artists to inform our support approaches and programing. Survey data is supplemented with information from our work with partner organizations and through one-on-one conversations, focus groups, program evaluations, direct requests from artists, and other feedback loops. Through this mix of formal and informal research, we work to build relevant, comprehensive programming for artists in all communities across Washington State.

All self-identified artists in Washington State were welcome to participate in the 2019 Annual Artist Survey. Multiple efforts were made to reach as many artists as possible, including utilizing AT’s email distribution lists of over 16,000 individual artists, direct promotion to program participants and grant applicants, and by sharing the survey with more than 200 organizational partners around the state and inviting them to share with artists in their networks. All survey respondents self-selected to participate, providing a valuable, but not statistically accurate picture of artists in Washington State. The 2019 Survey launched on April 29, 2019 and closed on June 14, 2019. All answers were recorded anonymously.

Conclusion

The 2019 Annual Artist Survey provides information that will continue to inform our programming and artist support services here at Artist Trust. We make our findings and this report available publicly with the hope that other artist-serving organizations, artists, and arts advocates can learn from and utilize the results. Through this research, we continually work to gain a deeper understanding Washington State’s artists and better meet their needs.

Special thanks to Humanities Washington and Artstra for their feedback while developing questions for this year’s survey.

For additional information, questions about this report, or for access to the raw data from the survey, please contact Artist Trust Program Manager, Lydia Boss at 206-467-8734 x25 or lydia@artisttrust.org.