A hand is shown holding a glowing, textured sphere that resembles a planet or a cluster of stars. The sphere is covered in numerous small, bright points of light, giving it a shimmering, crystalline appearance. The background is dark, with some faint, out-of-focus light spots, suggesting a cosmic or artistic setting. The overall color palette is dominated by deep blues and purples, with the sphere's glow providing a bright contrast.

# **Young People and Arts Engagement: What We Need**

A report by ART31

The logo for ART31 KENT features the text 'ART31' in a large, bold, white sans-serif font, with 'KENT' in a smaller, white sans-serif font directly below it. The text is centered within a circular area filled with a complex, overlapping pattern of semi-transparent pink and purple polygons, creating a textured, crystalline effect.

# ART31

## KENT

*“ My name is Molisha Nyarku Williams and, as a young person, I have worked with ART31 to author this report. I am very passionate about young people being a part of the arts because it provides them with a lot of the freedom that they do not get to have at home, in school or in wider society. I was chosen to write this report because of my love and passion for the subject at hand and the challenges I have faced getting involved with the arts. ”*

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# 01

## SUMMARY

### **Young people generally view the arts as an important part of their lives.**

67.8% of the young people who completed the online survey rated the arts as 'important' or 'very important'.

### **Many young people take part in arts activities daily but are not aware of it. There are misconceptions about what 'the arts' are and many young people do not define creative activities in these terms.**

The most popular activities that young people enjoyed doing in their spare time included music and visual art.

### **Different genders appear to identify different art forms with 'the arts'.**

The survey shows females were more likely to identify 'the arts' with traditional forms such as fine arts and dance and males were more likely to identify them with gaming and cinema.

### **Identification of the arts with abstract concepts such as creativity and self-expression increases with age.**

50% of 19 to 25 year olds identified 'the arts' with creativity compared to only 15.7% of 12 to 15 year olds.

### **Young people want to get involved with the arts but often do not know how to. Many young people feel they lack resources, knowledge and opportunities.**

'Lack of opportunities in my area' and 'I don't know where to find opportunities' were in the top four responses to the online survey question around barriers to taking part in the arts.

**Anxiety and cost appear to be the most significant barriers to young people engaging with the arts.**

30.4% of the survey responses identified anxiety and 29.4% identified cost.

**Educational institutions are the main source of arts access for young people. For less privileged young people this is often the only avenue to access relevant information and opportunities. However, many schools are not offering adequate arts activity.**

71.5% of the survey responses identified 'School, College, or University' as places where young people access the arts. Young people from less privileged backgrounds who took part in the workshops had only been to arts and cultural venues through school trips.

**Many young people want to work in the arts, but a significant number are deterred due to concerns and misinformation about being able to make a living and a general lack of careers advice in relation to the creative industries.**

48.9% of the survey respondents said they would consider a job in the arts.

**The 12 to 15 age group appear to place the least importance on the arts which is of concern when you consider that this is the stage that young people choose their GCSE options.**

61% of 12 to 15 year olds described the arts as important, or very important, compared with 85% of 16 to 18 year olds and 95% of 19 to 25 year olds.

**Young people have strong opinions about the arts and their engagement that should be listened to.**

"Give us the right resources and give us help if we need it"

**Young people have an awareness of the personal, social and therapeutic benefits of arts engagement**

"Dancing because it's something that lets me get away from my thoughts"  
"I can express myself and I don't have to worry about being judged"

**Young people need regular arts opportunities in a safe environment, supported by passionate staff, volunteers and peer mentors in order to build trust and develop skills, knowledge and confidence.**

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- More opportunities like ART31 in different areas so that all young people get the chance to explore the arts.
  - Young people need to be listened to and have their voices heard. Talk to and with them, not at them.
  - Definitions of 'arts and culture' need to be reconsidered as the terminology is not accessible/meaningful to many young people.
  - More events for young people outside school like ART31's UPrising festival and more practical/participatory opportunities.
    - Arts providers need to provide authentic youth engagement and youth leadership opportunities, ensuring this is not tokenistic.
    - More activities in community centres, youth clubs and particularly in educational institutions that educate young people, parents and teachers about careers in the arts. This could include networking, work experience, taster sessions and mentoring opportunities offering practical information and advice.
  - Better advertising in and out of schools, so that young people are aware of the creative opportunities that are available to them.
- More online options for young people to engage with the arts to counteract barriers such as travel and cost, similar to the ART31 website.
  - Promote talks from arts professionals in schools about their practice, to encourage greater interest in the arts.
  - Make arts activity and facilities more inclusive and open to children and young people from all backgrounds, irrespective of gender, sexuality, ethnicity, religion, language, ability, opinion, family background or any other status. Ensure that different backgrounds are represented so that young people have relevant and inspiring role models.

- Involve and educate parents, carers and families on the personal and social benefits of getting involved with the arts.
- Run taster projects in schools, youth centres and community centres to build confidence in various types of arts, and encourage future involvement.
- More arts projects and initiatives that support young people suffering from anxiety and mental health problems.
- Arts providers need to put strategies in place to support young people to access opportunities and reduce feelings of anxiety e.g. buddy systems, peer mentors, ice breakers/warm-up games and making spaces feel friendly and unthreatening.
- Encourage integration and sharing of experiences by creating arts partnership projects between schools, young people of different backgrounds, and organisations. There should be more funding for integration projects that connect young people from different backgrounds.
- Arts providers, practitioners and funders have a responsibility to advocate for the arts in schools and offer opportunities to young people in these settings.



# 03

## PROCESS

This report will be a chance to analyse, reflect and understand how and why young people are getting involved with the arts and the reasons behind young people being less engaged. This is a big issue within the arts world, as many young people are not getting involved for different reasons.

Arts Council England commissioned ART31 to look into why young people are not accessing the arts. ART31 led the research by conducting a large-scale survey and workshops in youth centres exploring this

issue. They created an online survey that was sent out through their mailing list, social media channels, website and local schools, offering a prize of Amazon vouchers as an incentive. The questions were designed with the intention of allowing young people to share their experiences, views and problems with the arts.

ART31 tested different edits of the questions with their groups so they could ensure it was easy to fill out for participants, and to ensure that the data collected would be a good representation. They discussed within groups what their main aim was and edited the survey until ART31 members were satisfied with the questions. Based upon the information that was collected it is clear to see that young people have strong opinions about the arts and engagement that should be listened to.

A total of 659 young people aged between 10 and 25 answered the survey, expressing a range of views and opinions about the arts.

ART31 also wanted to find a more fun and active way for young people who are less engaged in the arts to give their feedback, so they held workshops in two youth centres in Ramsgate. They spoke about their vision with two local artists, Jo Dyer and Nova Marshall, who created a pop-up fairground that allowed the young people to participate in arts activities whilst answering the questions. It aimed to give the participants a fun and unique experience of gathering their opinions, so they would feel more enthusiastic about answering the consultation questions.



The workshops were very successful as participants got the chance to participate in fairground games e.g. World's Strongest Thinker, Hook a Duck, Hoop-la, Coconut Shy and Palm Reader. ART31's aim was achieved as the young people enjoyed themselves and answered the questions leading to a greater understanding of why they might not be getting involved in the arts. A total of 27 young people aged between 7 and 19 took part in these activities.

ART31 members also answered the key questions behind the research to give further information on arts engagement as young people who are regularly attending creative opportunities. Ten young people aged between 14 and 21 were consulted, including members of the ART31 Youth Board.

Therefore, in total, 696 young people aged between 7 and 25 took part in the consultation.

# 04

## ART31

ART31 is a movement in Kent that was set up to get more young people involved in the arts. They do not limit themselves to one form of art, which is what makes it such a unique experience for the young people that get involved. The ART31 group see the issue of young people not participating in the arts as an important thing.

**"it's not just a class thing, it's an everything thing... there are an infinite number of factors keeping an infinite number of young people from the arts every day. These are the factors that need to be destroyed"**

**"They should offer opportunities like ART31 everywhere, but there isn't."**

**"Difference in social class can reflect the difference in the attitudes...when it comes to the arts."**



ART31 started at Gulbenkian in 2013, taking inspiration from article 31 from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which states: 'Children have the right to relax and play, and to join in a wide range of cultural, artistic and other recreational activities'.

ART31 gives young people the opportunity to take the lead in the arts by programming activities and events for other young people and getting involved in arts and cultural decision making. Participants develop event management/front of house/marketing skills, meet companies, take part in workshops and see new and exciting artistic work.



In 2016, TECH31 launched, creating opportunities for young people interested in careers in technical theatre to learn from professional technicians and provide technical support for events in Kent. SCREEN31 also developed, giving 16-25 year olds the chance to learn filmmaking and editing skills, with sessions led by a professional filmmaker.

2016 also saw the creation of the ART31 Youth Board, where around 20 young people from locations all around Kent meet monthly at Gulbenkian to support and promote the ART31 programme across the county. In July 2017, this culminated in a multi-arts festival called UPrising. This was a day of workshops, performances, talks and panel discussions, with a focus of connecting young people to arts professionals, and creating the UPrising manifesto, campaigning for change in education, employment and mental health, through the arts.

In 2018, two other projects launched - MEDIA31 and ART(Y)31. MEDIA31 is a new creative marketing collective for 13-25 year olds. They create video content, write blogs, design marketing materials, interview artists and put young people in touch with industry professionals. ART(Y)31 is Gulbenkian's younger ART31 group for children aged 8-12 with a variety of arts interests.

In a conversation with ART31 it was recognised that for young people, a lack of representation e.g. in background, ethnicity, looks and class can lead to a feeling of uneasiness and a sense of not being welcome, which could cause them to stray away from the arts. They believe that it is important that the arts reflect diversity at all levels. Once the idea of the arts being for a certain type of person are broken, young people will see the arts as a more welcoming place. ART31 also talked about the need for integration projects which bring young people from different backgrounds together through the arts.

ART31 highlighted the fact that if young people had groups like theirs, they would get involved in the arts because it would give them the chance to explore and find something that they love about it. By creating more groups like ART31, different young people's voices would be heard and they would be given more opportunity to experiment with different art forms.

**'without ART31...I wouldn't have gone to slams...it's my network and everything just sprunged from there'**

**'I wouldn't have been doing the music stuff if it wasn't for ART31'**

**'ART31 was a spring board for me'**



ART31 see the importance of young people having an understanding that the arts are constantly evolving, with a wide range of cognitive, social, physical and mental benefits for individuals as well as across generations, communities and cultures. They discussed the importance of parents and carers seeing the benefits that the arts can bring, so they can encourage their children to be involved.

Schools offer limited forms of arts in the curriculum with students often only able to pick one arts subject per term rather than a variety. With the introduction of the EBACC in 2010, students are now encouraged to pick English language and literature, maths, science, geography or history and a language as their core subjects. This narrows access to arts subjects, which are still seen as less important or 'soft' subjects, rather than avenues to employment. ART31 also see schools careers advice around the creative industries as very limited.

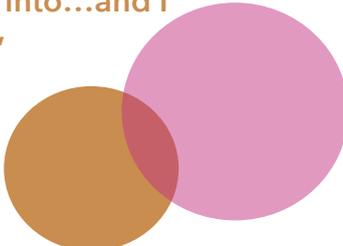
ART31 has provided an amazing stepping-stone for participants, which has led to many of them creating meaningful contacts with the people within their group and other arts practitioners. The opportunity for young people to be exposed to a wide range of arts skills has elevated the way that the participants think. Arts practitioners are guiding and mentoring these young people to be introduced to a creative talent that they may not have known they had.

**"It's had a massive impact. I mean I wouldn't be doing anything right now... For me personally, I'd still be sitting in my room, playing my guitar on my own, I wouldn't be out seeing shows and meeting people, you know? Because when you don't know what's out there, it's hard to sort of discover what's out there."**



**"Yes, we get a lot of power and freedom here...we're given a lot of responsibility and I feel it pays off because we learn a lot more and it gives us a lot more freedom to get skills, meet people..."**

**"I wish I had [ART31] when I was younger...I think it would have been a lot different. I think I would have felt like I had guidance...you need that guidance because you're not too sure if you want to get into this, you don't know if it's right and you don't know much about it...I think I would have had a broad kind of expectation of what you can do and what jobs you can go into...and I think ART31 probably would have been great for that."**



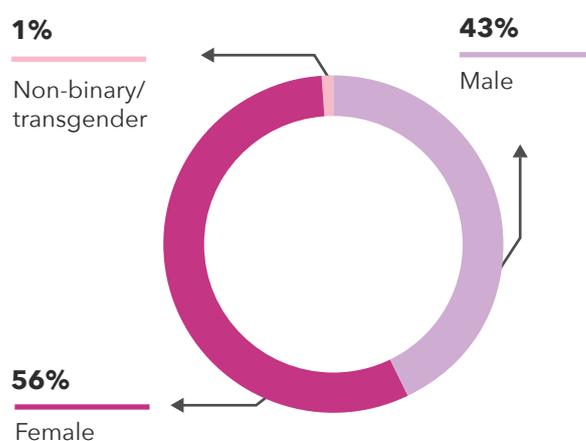
The quotes from the members of ART31 show that it is extremely beneficial. This supports the need for more projects like ART31, everywhere. Young people are aware of the benefits that these projects can have for areas such as confidence, perception of the arts and skills-building.

# 05 SURVEY

## GENDER

358 of the participants were female, 275 were male, 5 were non-binary and 1 was transgender.

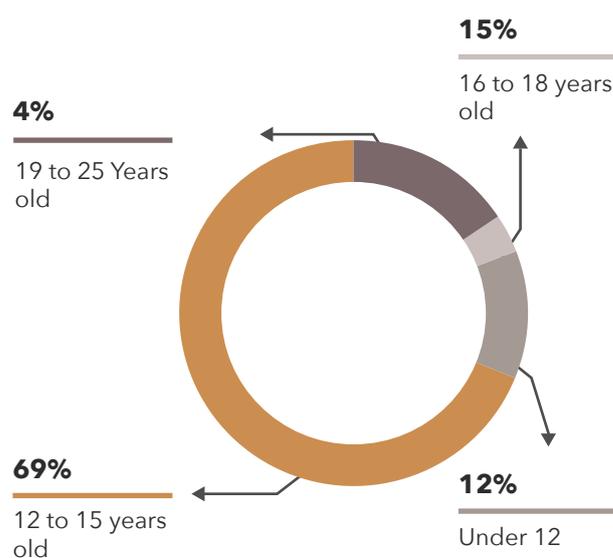
## BACKGROUND



## AGE

The data shows that the dominant age of the respondents was between 12 and 15 years old. This is likely to be a representation of the young people from the secondary schools who completed the survey in their tutor time.

It also leads to other questions that should be taken into consideration like, would this many 12-15-year olds have answered the survey had it not been something that was presented in class? How many of the participants would have answered it online or in their own spare time? For those that answered it online, did the reward urge them to complete the survey, or was it a product of wanting to voice their opinions?



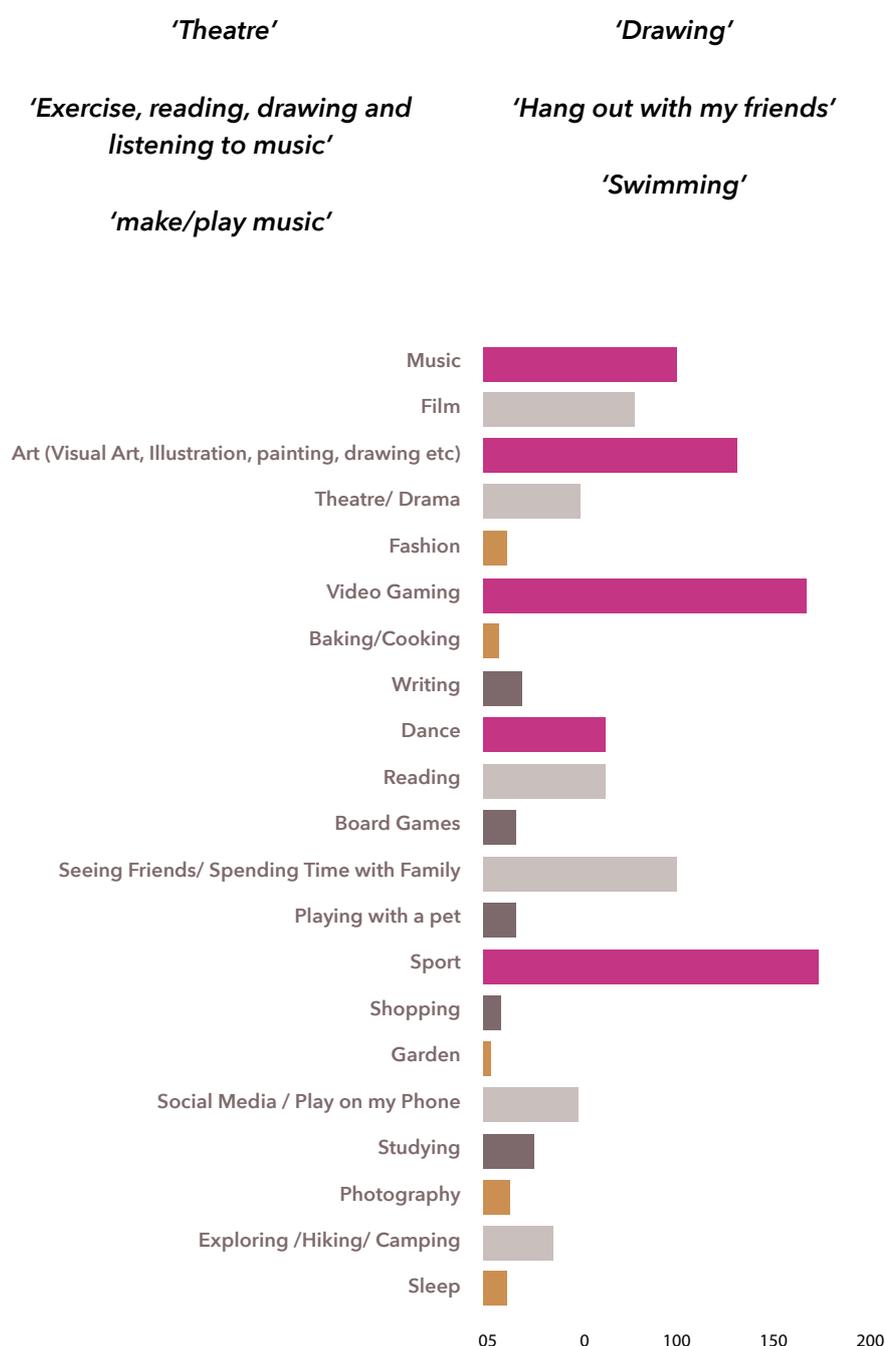
It can also be argued that those that filled it out online may already be intrigued and dedicated to the arts, considering they took the time to fill it out.

## LOCATION

Most of the respondents were from Kent and the survey reached young people from across the county. A large majority were from Tunbridge Wells and Herne Bay which was probably due to the secondary schools who took part.

**See appendix A for more information.**

## WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO IN YOUR FREE TIME?



The table on the left shows the most popular activities are music, visual art, gaming, spending time with friends and family, and sport.

The data shows that a lot of young people take part in the arts within their spare time. A key question is; are they aware that they do? This is information that should be promising for the arts as it shows that young people enjoy doing arts-based activities in their spare time. This suggests that if these activities were a little easier to access they would happily get involved in them.

## WHAT ARE THE ARTS?

*'Way to express the parts of your mind that you often ignore'*

*'Art and Drama'*

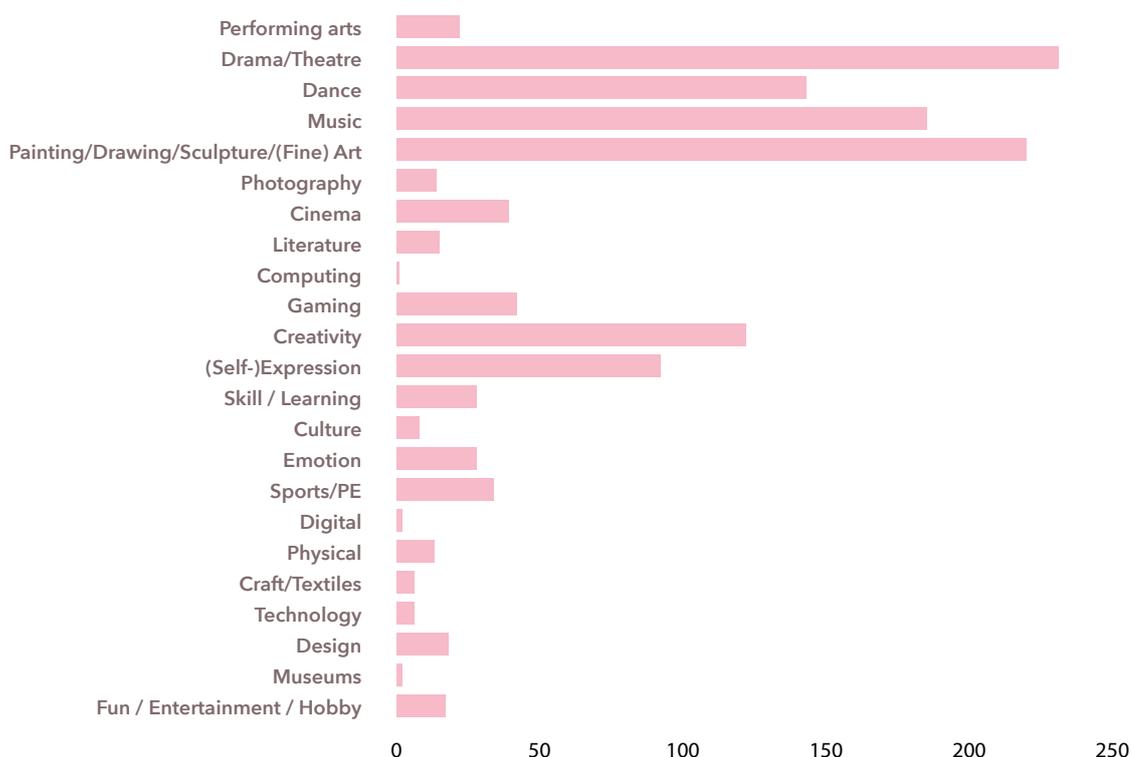
*'Theatre, Opera, Ballet'*

*'Everything! Film, poetry, Visual Art, Gaming, Digital Arts, Theatre, Dance, etc'*

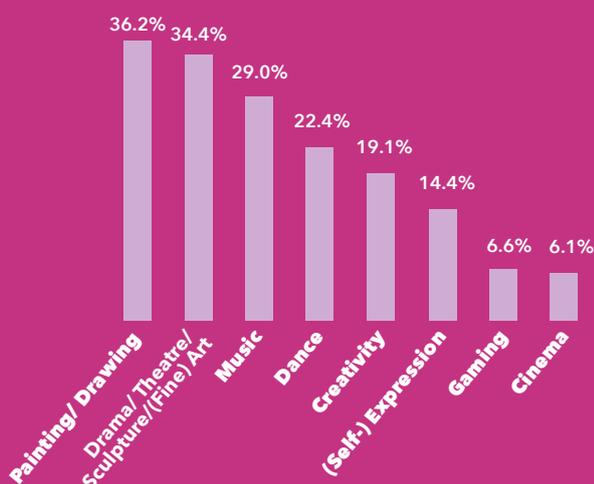
*'The expression of emotion'*

*'The arts are a collection of ways to express your feelings, send out important messages and inspire people'*

*'Dance, music, art'*



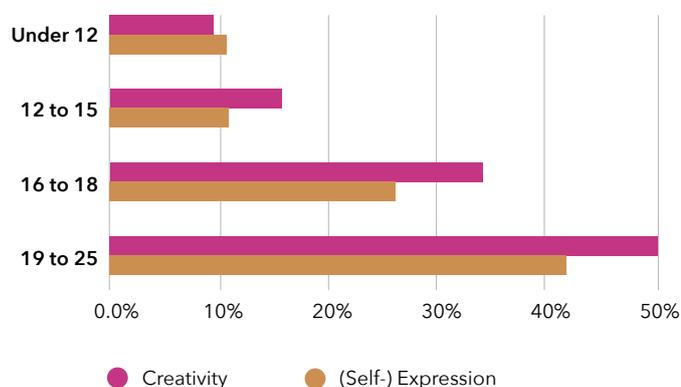
## TOP RESPONSES



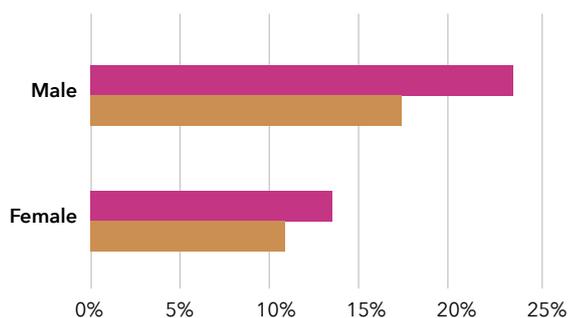
The data shows that many young people have quite a stereotypical idea of what the arts are. However it also shows that they are not simply limiting the idea of the arts as being a physical thing, but they understand that the arts can be an expression of the mind and the feelings of an individual.

This is good because it suggests that young people are starting to expand their understandings of what the arts are, which means that if they do start to get involved they are likely to be very creative and open with their art.

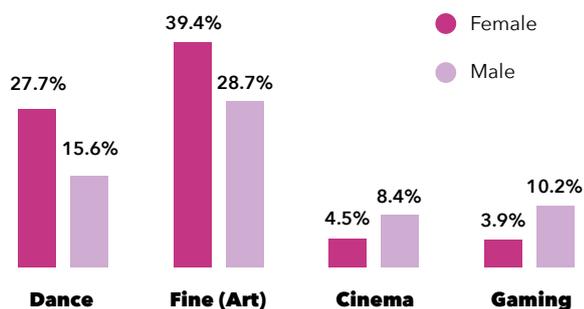
## Identification of 'The Arts' with abstract concepts such as creativity and self-expression increases with age...



## ...but also varies significantly with gender



Females were more likely to identify traditional artforms such as fine arts and dance... males more likely to identify gaming and cinema (though still less than traditional artforms)



The data shows that young people are also aware of the benefits of the arts for themselves and others. This is positive as it may mean that if the arts are accessible to them and includes things that they enjoy, they are likely to participate.

## HOW IMPORTANT ARE THE ARTS TO YOU?

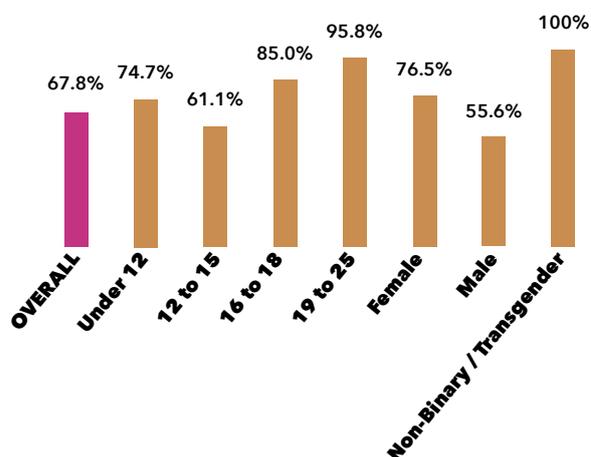
A large majority of the young people surveyed regard the arts as ‘very important’ or ‘important’ to them. This shows that the arts are an aspect of society, upbringing and life that is valued by many, including today’s young people. However, it is important to also pay attention to the fact that a significant number of young people saw the arts as ‘neither important nor unimportant’.

This may be due to cultural factors, like their upbringing or not being exposed to a lot of people that celebrate the arts, or it could be due to the way that the school system has presented the arts to them. There are many reasons that could explain it.

Another factor that must be considered is the fact that some of the young people that answered ‘unimportant or very unimportant’ may not know that a lot of the activity that they do on a daily basis is an art form e.g. playing video games, board games, using websites, movies and online video content. As this is not usually

### % of participants describing the arts as important or very important to them

The data suggests that the arts is an important part of young people’s lives, which shows that lack of participation is not a reflection of not liking the arts. This is good, as it means that there is something that can be changed or shifted to increase their participation.



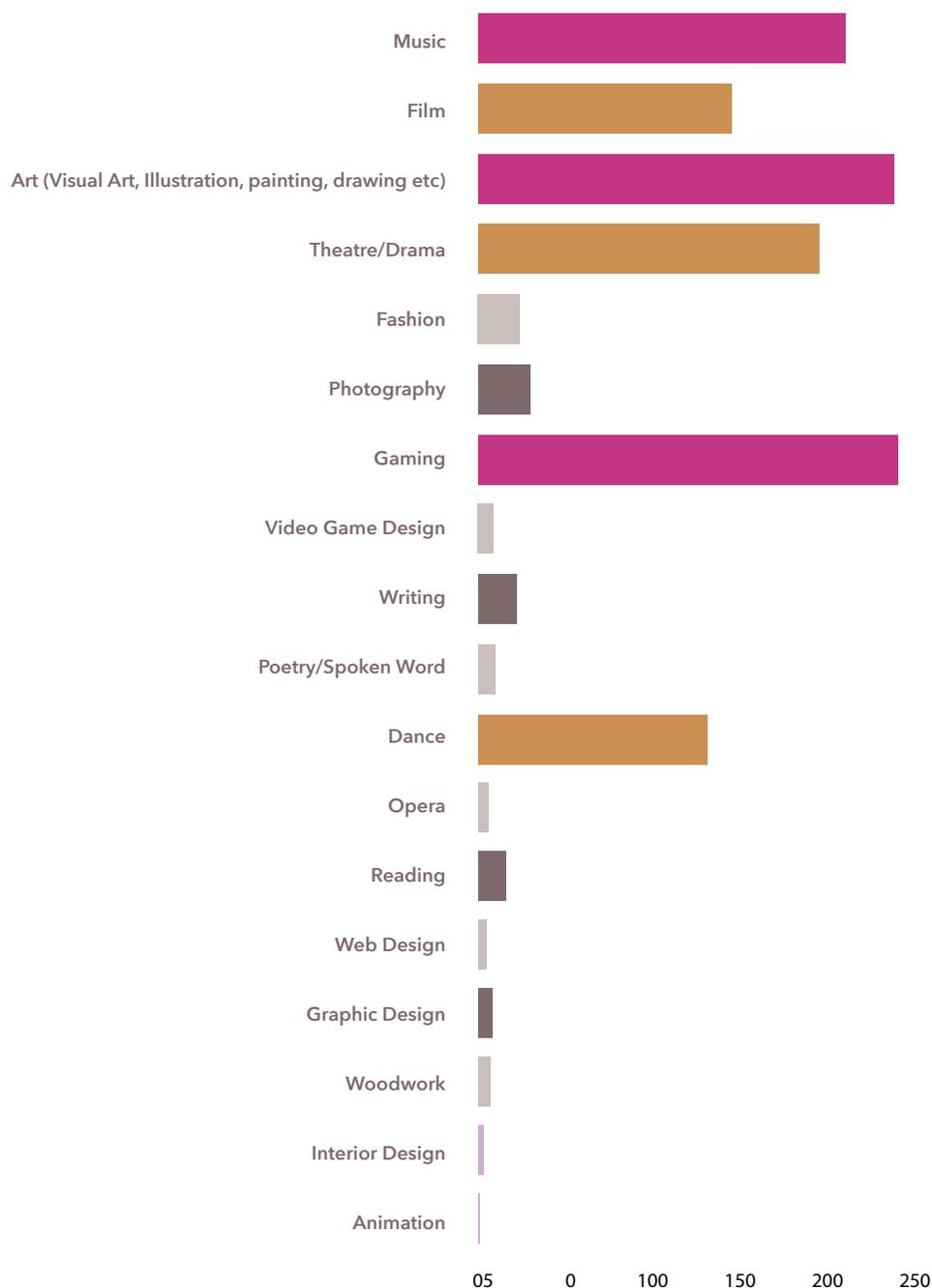
marketed as part of ‘the arts’, young people may be unaware just how much they do engage.

This may be an opportunity for people that participate in the arts to educate young people on how diverse and fun the arts can be.



It is interesting to note that the 12 to 15 age group place the least importance on the arts as this is the stage when young people choose their GCSE options.

## WHAT TYPE OF ARTS DO YOU LIKE TO ENGAGE IN?



The most popular arts activities that young people enjoy are traditional forms such as fine art, theatre and dance. However, gaming was the top answer.

## WOULD YOU CONSIDER A JOB IN THE ARTS?

*"Yes. I would be an actress, because it is one of the industries that influence people's lives and I love pretending while imagining different worlds as well."*

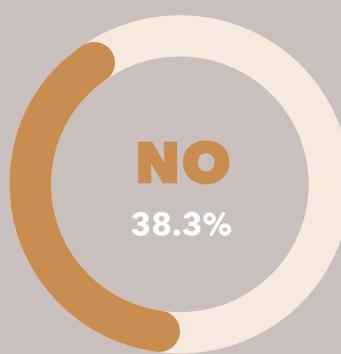
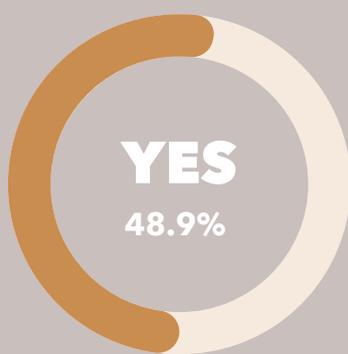
*"Yes, because I enjoy being able to express myself in my own ways"*

*"Gaming and web designing, because I like creativeness and technical things"*

*"Designer, as you can develop ideas in a unique way. No-one has the same imagination."*

*"No, typically it's difficult to get to a position that makes a good income."*

*"No because it's really difficult to get a stable, decently paid job in the arts, and many people have discouraged me from pursuing cultural interests"*



The most popular jobs that respondents wanted to pursue in relation to the arts were acting, being an artist, working in the music industry, film and teaching. **See appendix B for more information.**

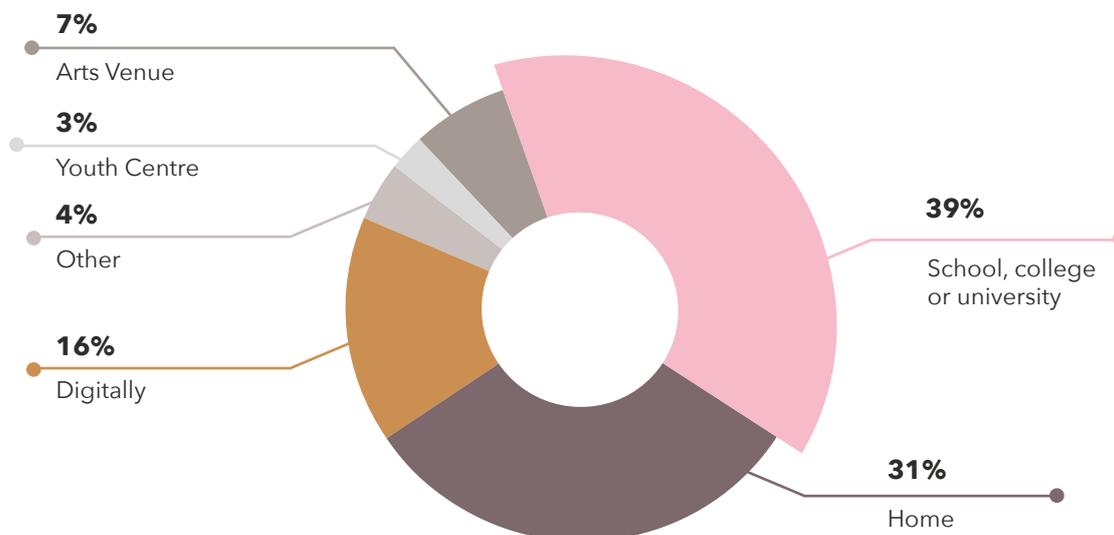
Although the obvious 'actress', 'dancer' and 'artist' were very prominent, other jobs like 'Youtuber', 'Drama Therapist' and 'Tattoo Artist' came up. This shows that some young people are aware that there are other avenues that they can take to get involved in the arts as a career.

For many of the young people who said they would not consider a job in the arts, this seems to be due to concerns about stability and being able to earn money.

Therefore, the data suggests that young people are not aware of the viability of a career in the arts, and that they have not been educated about things like freelance work.

It also suggests that young people need to be given more information on different aspects of working in the arts. The answers show that they need to be exposed to roles that aren't necessarily promoted in school, like game development and design. If they don't see a future in the arts and recognise it as a way of living, it may explain the lack of interest in it now. Also, the arts world may not be providing enough insight into what the life of an artist is truly like.

## HOW DO YOU ACCESS THE ARTS?



The data shows that educational institutions, home and digitally are the most popular ways that young people are accessing the arts; options which happen to be free. This may suggest that due to the arts being out of their price range, young people are only able to access them in the ways that mean that they do not have to ask their parents for money, or use their own money. This is a big issue as the arts should be something that all young people can engage in.

Also, as educational institutions are the main way that young people are accessing the arts, this may not be ideal, as the education system often teaches the arts in a way that does not allow students to have creative freedom. If arts subjects are bound by the curriculum and taught rigidly, with an emphasis on heavy coursework and written exams, young people may become disillusioned and find arts generally unappealing. Therefore, it may be beneficial for people in the creative industries to visit schools and lead workshops and talks that push for creative freedom.

Youth Centres should be a way to get more young people involved in different activities, considering that outside of school, they are likely to have the greatest youth participation. However, young people may not be accessing the arts in this environment, as Youth Centres don't always offer art-based activities.

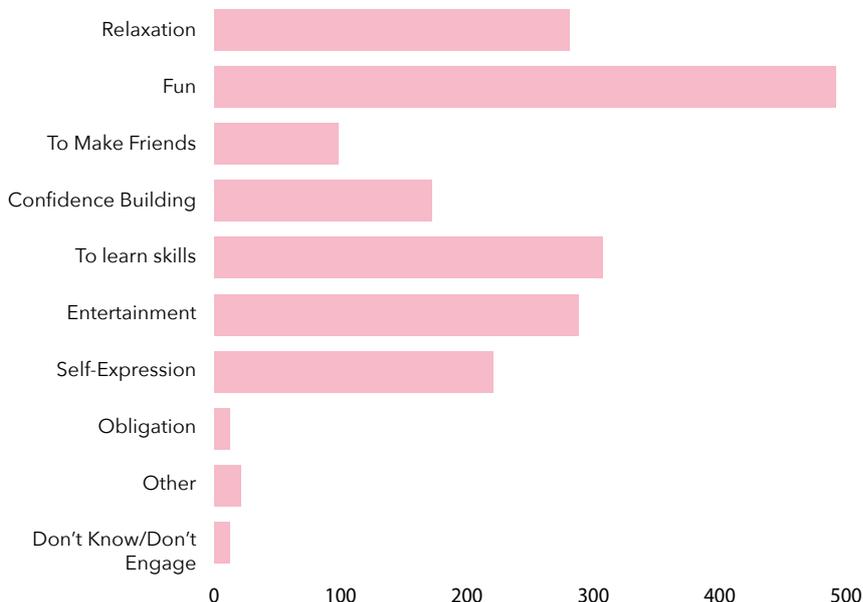
Youth Centres should all encourage a wide range of activities, and creative industry professionals need to run more art-based activities within the community, so that young people from all backgrounds get the chance to access and explore it. However, with budget cuts and less funding available for Youth Centres, it is understandable that some Youth Centres struggle to make this happen.

Therefore, young people may not be getting involved in the arts because they lack opportunities within their community and when the prices for arts-based activities are high, they settle for the free, limited options.

## WHY DO YOU DO ARTS ACTIVITIES?

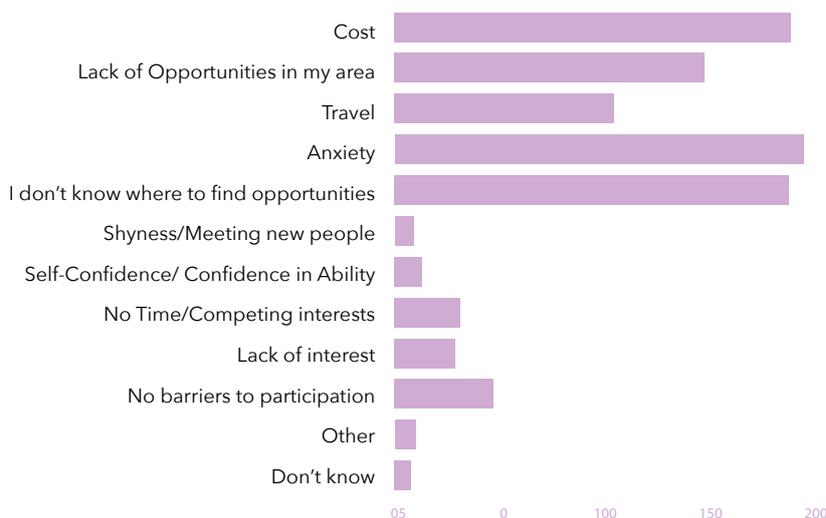
The data shows the arts are offering a positive impact on young people’s lives and they are accessing the arts to benefit themselves in some way.

This is positive as it means that the majority of young people genuinely enjoy participating in the arts, and suggests that there is a real need for arts activities in their lives.



Therefore, the focus needs to be on making the arts more accessible, and providing more knowledge and opportunities so that young people can continue to participate.

## WHAT PREVENTS YOU FROM TAKING PART?



Above are the reasons that prevent young people from getting involved in the arts. The data shows that the biggest issues are anxiety, cost and not knowing where to find opportunities.

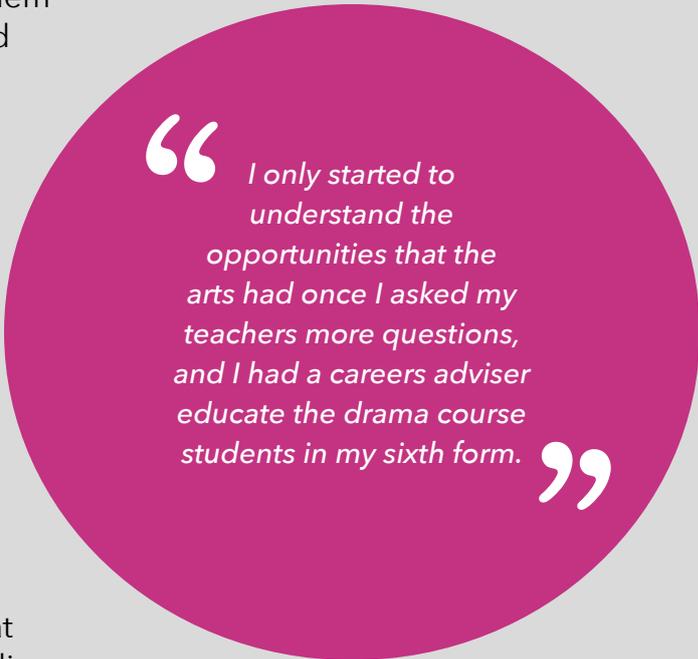
There is a constant aim for young people to get more involved in the arts, yet travel and tickets to arts events can be very expensive and a lot of arts-related groups require the members to pay. This then leads to young people only participating in the arts when they are at school or on school trips.

ART31 believe this should not be happening- young people should be able to get involved without worrying about it being a financial burden on their parents or carers. It is also a concern that many do not know where to find opportunities. The dominant age of survey participants were in secondary school, aged 11-15, so we assume that opportunities should be present and visible.

However, schools do not often advertise arts-based opportunities and they do not always take them seriously. Therefore, these opportunities need to be easier to access online and in schools. This could be done by pushing for arts advertising in schools – e.g. printing and displaying posters and getting representatives to lead assemblies. It is these small gestures that make a significant difference, with the aim of encouraging young people to build courage to seek out opportunities for themselves. If the school is not providing enough information, it becomes a job that art organisations have to take on.

The biggest barrier to young people engaging in the arts is anxiety. It seems likely that this is related to joining a new group or attending a new venue, but it may also be about fear of failure. This suggests that arts providers need to find strategies to engage and support young people suffering from anxiety in their activities.

Travel is also a significant barrier and this relates to the fact that most of the respondents live in Kent, a large county with rural communities. It therefore takes time and money for young people to access opportunities. In some cases, if they are relying on public transport, they may not be able to get home after activities which finish late in the evening. Therefore, arts providers may need to offer travel expenses and think carefully about location and timing of activities in order to make them accessible to all young people.



*“ I only started to understand the opportunities that the arts had once I asked my teachers more questions, and I had a careers adviser educate the drama course students in my sixth form. ”*

# 06 WORKSHOPS

## WORKSHOP 1



### What are the arts?

This was an open question. The data suggests that the young people who took part did not have a wide understanding of the arts. As with the online survey, their answers identify predominantly traditional forms such as dance, music and theatre.

As a result, the participants were unaware of the extent to which they participate in the arts within their daily lives. This was a truth that was slowly revealed to them as they got further into the fairground activities, as the questions they were asked and conversations that they had caused them to realise that they do a lot of creative things on a regular basis. The chart below shows that almost 50% of the activities they enjoy doing in their free time could be classed as 'the arts'.

The first workshop was at a youth centre in Ramsgate that uses the arts, particularly music, as part of their offer for young people. 17 young people aged between 11 and 13 took part. The participants had negative feelings towards the idea of having to answer questions on a piece of paper. However, that changed once they realised they would be doing activities to answer all the questions. ART31, Nova and Jo managed to make a task that would have felt boring and strenuous for them, fun and enjoyable, as evidenced by fourteen of the participants reporting that they would like to do this kind of activity again. They engaged positively with the creativity of the fairground.

PARTICIPANTS	ANSWERS
7	MUSIC
10	DANCE
13	DRAWING / PAINTING / VISUAL ART
5	CIRCUS
1	PHOTOGRAPHY
11	THEATRE / ACTING
1	EXPRESSING YOURSELF
1	FUN
1	PATTERNS AND LIGHT
1	MAKING THINGS

## What do you like to do in your free time?

PARTICIPANTS	ANSWERS
2	VISUAL ART (INCL DRAWING)
1	SCOUTS
7	MUSIC (INCL SINGING, GUITAR, LISTENING)
2	SPORT (SWIMMING, FOOTBALL)
1	TRAVELLING
4	DANCE
3	DRAMA
3	GAMING
1	SKATEBOARDING
1	READING
1	EATING
1	SLEEPING
2	USING MY TABLET / PHONE
1	RELAXING
3	HANGING OUT WITH FRIENDS
2	WATCHING NETFLIX / TV
1	TALKING ON THE PHONE

## How important are the arts to you?

Almost half of the group rated the arts as very important or important to them.



## What types of art do you do?

When asked what art forms they participate in the most popular answers were dance, drama, music, gaming and film. It is interesting to note that one participant listed 'football'. In line with the survey data, this suggests that young people do not necessarily see a divide between sports and the arts.

PARTICIPANT	ANSWERS
9	DANCE
7	DRAMA
9	MUSIC
8	GAMING
7	FILM
2	DIGITAL
2	PAINTING / CRAFTS / MAKING
1	OTHER - FOOTBALL
2	OTHER
1	OTHER - DRAWING



“ Growing up in south London I often felt exactly like these young people, the idea of being a director, actress and youth facilitator for drama sounded incredible. However, there were no opportunities in the area that I went to school in or lived in; it was as if we had been completely overlooked by the people in the arts world because we did not live in the most privileged of areas. There is talent everywhere, not just where the houses are, there is talent in a council estate, a homeless shelter and on the streets. You cannot participate in something that is not even there. ”

## What do you enjoy the most about these activities?

When asked what they most enjoyed about the arts activities they engage in, the common themes were a sense of achievement (“learning new skills”, “achieving”, “making a picture that looks realistic”) and experiencing positive emotions (“having fun”, “films make me laugh”, “relaxing, joyful”, “the thrill of gaming”). Young people were also aware that creative activities offered them an escape from negative emotions and experiences:

*“I can express myself and I don’t have to worry about being judged”*

*“Dancing because it’s something that lets me get away from my thoughts”*

They also mentioned “teamwork” and opportunities to connect with others: “chatting with my mates on PS4”. Therefore, the young people had a good awareness of the benefits of engaging in the arts.

It was clear that the idea of the arts seemed very attractive to a lot of the young people that participated but the issue was that when it came to go beyond just the thought of it, they were stuck. Many of them did not know how to access the arts and were not aware of the opportunities that are there for them to access. The question that also needs to be posed is, are there enough opportunities in places like Ramsgate for them to find?

## How do you access the arts?

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When asked how they access the arts, the most popular answers were youth club, home, school and theatre / music venues in their home town. Some of the group accessed arts opportunities more widely in Kent and fewer still accessed the arts in London. The venues they accessed in London were predominantly museums, as part of school trips. In fact, for all of them school was the trending factor.

*"If it was at school I'd do it"*

*"I've only been to the museum and theatre with my school"*

*"I do it because they teach it"*



## What prevents you from taking part?

---

The majority of the answers received were related to anxiety, embarrassment and shyness.

*"I am socially awkward, nerves"*

*"Taking part anxiety"*

*"The fear of going wrong"*

*"Embarrassment"*

*"Self-conscious"*

*"Anxiety"*

Similar to the survey data, this suggests that arts providers need to think about how to support young people experiencing these issues. This may mean making adjustments to arts programmes in order to make them accessible for young people suffering from anxiety but also developing projects that directly address mental health problems.

One respondent wrote "got kicked out of art" which is a reminder that if young people are excluded from arts activity within school they may not be able to access it elsewhere. Another respondent wrote "if it's not fun" which suggests that if young people have a negative experience in one arts setting they may

be reluctant to engage with future arts opportunities.

There was a pattern that was exposed during the workshop. The young people from less privileged backgrounds had not been to the museum, theatre and art galleries outside of the setting of a school trip. When asked why, they would say, "I don't have the money". However, the young people from more privileged background had attended theatre shows like 'The Lion King' with their family, museums in London in their own time

and lessons including music, dance and acting. This shows that there is a class gap within the arts. Similarly to the survey findings, this suggests that there needs to be more affordable ways for young people to get involved in the arts and more initiatives to educate parents and carers about the benefits of arts engagement / affordable opportunities. When they are not informed they are less likely to encourage their child to engage with the arts and make the trips happen.

## What would help you take part in the arts?

---

*"Everyone at the same levels"*

*"If someone helped me"*

*"Singing lessons"*

*"Confidence"*

*"Part of school"*

*"Friends"*

*"People"*

*"I rarely want to get involved"*

The participants found this question difficult to answer but the themes that emerged were the need for support to develop skills, the importance of being able to access arts activity within education settings and the importance of positive relationships in contexts where young people access the arts. Not a lot of

the participants answered this question. The data suggests that they either have a lack of interest in the arts all together or they genuinely do not know what can be done that would increase their participation within the arts. Poignantly, the young person who 'got kicked out of art' and was asked what would help, said "my teacher to understand".



## How would you get your friends involved in the arts?

*"Go with them / persuade them"*

*"Show them how to do it"*

*"To do it with me and not be afraid"*

*"Invite friends to join in"*

*"Show them it's fun"*

Nearly all of the responses to this question focused on young people being able to attend new activities with a friend or someone they trust. This shows the importance of young people being given opportunities to advocate for the arts amongst their peer group, particularly to support other young people's initial engagement. This could involve buddy schemes or peer mentoring opportunities.

## WORKSHOP 2

The second workshop that ART31 organised was also in Ramsgate, at a community centre in a housing estate. It was with a group of 10 young people aged 7 to 19 who have limited access to the arts and are from deprived backgrounds. They take part in an arts workshop that is run by Nova every Monday. This group came with a positive outlook on the arts because of the rapport that they had established with Nova and the activities they had been able to participate in with her and other artists. They were enthusiastic from the beginning to the end.

### What are the arts?

The majority of the answers reference visual arts, which is a direct response to the work the group had been doing with Nova. 'Willow'\* referred to the carnival structures the group had most recently been making as part of the Monday workshops. This shows that young people from more disadvantaged backgrounds have a more limited understanding of the breadth of the arts due to limited opportunities to engage with them. However, when they get the opportunity to engage they can quickly become passionate about them.

PARTICIPANTS	ANSWERS
2	MUSIC (INCL SINGING)
5	DANCE
3	DRAWING
1	ART
2	SPRAY PAINTING
3	PHOTOGRAPHY
2	SCULPTURE
5	PAINTING
3	GAMES
1	A GROUPS OF PEOPLE / ARTISTS
1	CREATIVE WRITING
1	DIGITAL
1	COLOUR
1	FUN
1	EVERYTHING IS ART
3	WILLOW*

“ I only started to take my love for drama seriously after my drama teachers showed us that being creative is a daily tool and it is an amazing thing; but it took for them to show me. ”



## How important are the arts to you?

The data shows that all of the participants considered the arts to be either very important or important in their lives. This is testament to the environment that Nova and the rest of the staff have created and the activities they have been able to participate in. It was also clear that the young people were excited about the Fairground activities because the staff were extremely enthusiastic.

They had created an environment that celebrated the arts and made it a safe space so that the young people felt comfortable to speak freely, play their music out loud and dance around. Because the young people could see that those around them held the arts to a high degree and celebrated the benefits of being a part of it, it led to them completely committing to the exercises and being interested in exploring other aspects of the arts.

There was a moment when one of the participants started playing with the camera at which point he started to ask more questions. He was not the most interested in what was happening initially but by that point he was having a lot of fun and was ready to learn. This was because he saw that the leaders and assistants in the room were celebrating their love and passion for the arts.

PARTICIPANTS	ANSWERS
6	VERY IMPORTANT
3	IMPORTANT
1	UNSURE
0	UNIMPORTANT
0	VERY UNIMPORTANT

Therefore, it would be beneficial if more mature young people and older people that love the arts engaged with young people in less privileged youth clubs and community centres as role models and mentors in order to coach them and guide their creativity. This would allow young people to fully express themselves in the most creative way possible.

From watching this group, it was also clear that when they know that they are cared for and listened to it makes them willing to try new activities without worrying.

## What do you like to do in your free time?

PARTICIPANTS	ANSWERS
4	VISUAL ART (INCL DRAWING, PHOTOGRAPHY)
2	MUSIC (INCL LISTENING, SINGING)
4	DANCE
2	GAMING
2	YOUTUBE
1	MATHS
1	REVISING (SOMETIMES)
2	SHOPPING
1	WRITING
1	PLAYING WITH FRIENDS
1	CUTTING
1	GAMES

The fact that the most common answers are arts-related is yet more evidence that the young people who took part in this workshop enjoy creative activities and are passionate about the arts.

## What do you enjoy most about the arts activities you engage in?

*"It's fun"*

*"They are entertaining and amusing"*

*"Excitement"*

*"It makes me happy"*

*"Fun and when you're angry it calms you down"*

*"It makes me happy and inspired along with new ideas of what to do"*

*"Social"*

*"I get to move"*

The answers to this question show that the young people see experiencing positive emotions as an important benefit of arts engagement. They were also aware of the therapeutic nature of the arts.

## What would help you take part in the arts?

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*"Give us the right resources and give us help if we need it"*

*"Leaflets and flyers would be important"*

*"Art Lesson"*

*"Courage"*

*"Family"*

*"Confidence"*

*"Flyers...Events...Doing it  
REGULARLY"*

*"Talks"*

*"More money, more time to myself, another opp on my back, new computer"*

The young people told us that they did not have the resources they needed to explore their passions. They also highlighted the importance of regular opportunities in order to build trust and develop skills and confidence. Their responses throughout the workshop suggested that they need more arts opportunities and to know that they are being heard and valued within the arts. The young people were keen to be involved in the arts but seemed isolated from wider opportunities. By integrating them into activities such as workshops, trips and work experience opportunities it would help them participate more.

## What prevents you from taking part?

---

*"Money"*

*"Illnesses, upsetting reasons and not having the resources you need"*

*"People not wanting to go"*

*"Money, my back, time, a very laggy computer"*

*"Friends of mine not wanting to do it with me"*

*"Mummy"*

*"Doing bad art"*

*"My club stopped"*

*"Family"*

The themes that came through here were financial barriers, the importance of being able to attend activities with a friend and the need for support from family members. As with the first workshop there is also the issue of limited opportunities for young people in their area. When asked how they accessed the arts, the predominant response was local youth club, home and school.



## How would you get your friends involved in the arts?

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*"Text, speak to them, word of mouth, posters, leaflets"*

*"Call, text, post on social media"*

*"Face to face contact, leaflets, events, calling / texting"*

*"Word of mouth, posters, leaflets, text, speak to them"*

*"Get them to try something new, talking"*

*"Texting, talking"*

*"Treats"*

*"Mention clubs, leaflets, materials"*

*"Events, Facebook"*

*"Games"*

*"Give them money"*



Although social media is mentioned this feedback highlights the importance of physical marketing material such as flyers and posters for this peer group. There was also a focus on 'talking' which suggests that young people are the best advocates for getting their peers involved in the arts, in line with the feedback from the first workshop.

# 07 Appendix

## APPENDIX A

WHAT IS YOUR  
HOME TOWN/  
CITY?

	TOTAL
ALLINGTON	1
ASHFORD	7
AYLESHAM	8
BIRCHINTON	2
BOROUGH GREEN	1
BROADSTAIRS	2
CAMBRIDGE	1
CANTERBURY	41
CHALLOCK	1
CRANBROOK	2
CROWBOROUGH	3
DEAL	3
DERBY	1
DEVON	1
DOVER	1
EAST PEAKHAM	1
FAVERSHAM	2
FOLKESTONE	21
GOUDHURST	1
GREENHILL	1
HAWKENBURY	1
HAWKINGE	2
HEMPSTEAD	1
HERNE BAY	146

HERNE BROOMFIELD	3
HERNEBAY	1
HIGH BROOMS	2
HORNDEAN	1
HYPHE	3
KENT	22
KINGS HILL	1
LONDON	7
LUTON	3
MAIDSTONE	3
MARGATE	1
MATFIELD	2
MEDWAY	1
NORWICH	1
ORPINGTON	1
PADDOCK WOOD	3
PEMBURY	33
PENSHURST	1
RAINHAM	1
RAMSGATE	2
READING	1
RUSTHALL	2
SHEERNESS	1
SHERWOOD	1
SITTINGBOURNE	1
SOUTHAMPTON	1
SOUTHBOROUGH	1
STAPLEHURST	1
STEVENAGE	1
STREET	1
TONBRIDGE/SEVENOAKS	15
TUNBRIDGE WELLS	258
WADHURST	4
WESTGATE-ON-SEA	2
WHISTABLE	17
WOOLWICH	1
WORLESTON	1
WYE	1

# APPENDIX B

WHAT JOB WOULD  
YOU LIKE TO  
PURSUE IN THE  
ARTS?

TOTAL

<b>MUSIC INDUSTRY</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>ARTIST</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>FILMMAKER/DIRECTOR</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>ILLUSTRATION</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>THEATRE DIRECTOR</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>TEACHER (DRAMA/FILM/ART)</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>ARTISTIC DIRECTOR</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>MUSIC PRODUCER</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>YOUTUBER</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>ACTING</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>DANCER</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>ARCHITECT</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>VIDEO GAME DESIGNER</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>PROFESSIONAL GAMER</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>PHOTOGRAPHY</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>FASHION DESIGNER</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>GRAPHIC DESIGNER</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>WEB DESIGN</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>MAKE UP ARTIST</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>INTERIOR DESIGNER</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>JEWELLERY MAKER</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>WRITER</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>SCULPTOR</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>CHOREOGRAPHER</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>SET DESIGNER</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>SCREENWRITER</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>STAGE MANAGER</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>STUNTS CO-ORDINATOR</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>DRAMA THERAPIST</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>ANIMATOR</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>PUPPETEER</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>WEDDING PLANNER</b>	<b>1</b>

<b>TATTOO ARTIST</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>ARTS HERITAGE SECTOR</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>MARKETING ASSISTANT</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>CINEMA PROGRAMMER</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>COSTUME DESIGN</b>	<b>1</b>



# T H A N K S

to **all of the children** and **young people** who have contributed to this report by sharing their views and experiences. Photos by **Jason Pay**.



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