

The Audience Panel: Results from the April survey

What does art and culture experiences mean for NI audiences?

We couldn't have said it better ourselves



For adults, arts and culture provides **joy**, **broadens the mind**, and gives us **a welcome escape** from reality that other things just can't provide.



The arts and culture sector has **the power to inspire a younger generation of new audiences**.



Different artforms evoke different responses from audiences: theatre elicits fond childhood memories and the magic of the experience, while musical performances evoke a more physical response of being in the moment.

Why do audiences attend cultural experiences?

Content is king



98% of audience attend a cultural activity/event either for the content or go for both the content and the social aspect of attending. Only 2% said they attend mainly because it's a social activity. This means that **you still have to offer attractive and relevant content to convince people to attend**.

Certain types of audiences are more likely to go to cultural experiences for the **social aspect** of attending



- Younger people (aged 16-34)
- Parents with children in the household
- Infrequent cultural attenders (people who attend less than 4 times per year)

What does arts and culture give audiences that other things don't?



Joy and happiness

"Causes me to love the world."

"A time of joy, memory and thankfulness to the artists for the pleasure they give"

"The enjoyment of a live theatre experience cannot be matched, it's the on-stage action coupled with the audience reaction."



Broadening the mind

"Insights into life & its challenges, chance to grow, stop & reflect, inspiration."

"Something new, a different way of looking at the world and thinking about the human experience of it. It opens my eyes to other people's views and stories."



Escapism

"Theatre is like a good book it takes you into another world...taking part in painting classes extends my knowledge and ability and helps me mentally to let go of all thoughts and enjoy the process."

"It gives your brain some respite from reality but in an active way. It energises you in a way that stays with you long after the event has finished."

For audiences, arts and culture is different from other life experiences, including sport.



- “I particularly enjoy going to live music and my answer would reflect this medium specifically. I enjoy the live performance element, seeing music interpreted in a different way. Being in a crowd with like-minded people also enjoying the experience. Hearing new things at a festival. Time spent outside of our lives relaxing with those we want to spend time with. I like sport but it tends to be more tense and less relaxed with winners and losers involved.”
- “Provides exposure to new ideas and opinions, emotional nourishment and experiences that home and work life do not provide.”
- “Something I can’t experience anywhere else...live performances bring the arts to life for me.”

We asked people: what experience first got you hooked onto arts and culture, and why?



Most panellists mentioned **getting hooked on arts and culture from a very young age**. Many panellists described vivid childhood memories of going to the theatre with their parents or schools, equating them to a magical experience.



“...seeing Joseph and his Technicolour Dreamcoat at a big venue in Dublin with my mum during the Troubles (about 30 years ago). It was the first time mum had taken me to a big concert, and in Dublin - and the colours and the lights and music was so exciting and just more than what my life was at the time.”



Other panellists mentioned that going to **musical performances** as teenagers or young adults got them interested in arts and culture, with many noting the excitement/thrill of attending.



“First live music gig. Movement of the crowd. Bass music hitting in the chest. Anticipating the band appearing. Communal singing.”



Some panellists attributed their love for the arts to their **parents’ influence**. Similarly, parents on the panel mentioned wanting to **pass their love for arts and culture down to their children**. A few panellists also mentioned how taking their children to cultural activities got themselves interested in arts and culture.



“I’ve enjoyed going to see live comedy with my husband, I’ve enjoyed seeing live bands with my other family members, seeing shows with my mother. They’re things we talk about often and they are memories to be treasured. As a parent I feel it is important for my children to have experiences of the arts and cultural events to help them grow and develop.”

