HOW A NATION ENGAGES WITH ART

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 2012 SURVEY OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE ARTS

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS

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NEA RESEARCH REPORT #57

SEPTEMBER 2013

CAUTION

On the week of June 22, 2014, the U.S. Census Bureau confirmed that it had used a different technique for identifying completed interviews for the 2012 SPPA than had been used in prior years of the survey. In 2008, cases with answers of "yes," "no," and "don't know" to the first survey item were treated as interviews. In 2012, cases with a response of "refused" were also treated as a interviews.

The Census Bureau estimates that the statistics published in this report for any "yes," "no," or "don't know" response were lower than they would have been if the 2008 method for identifying completed interviews had been used. Consequently, participation rates for individual art forms reported here should be multiplied by a factor of 1.043 to yield more reliable estimates. Aggregated participation rates, including those of demographic subgroups and those estimating participation in "at least one of" the “benchmark” art forms, should not be estimated.

The National Endowment for the Arts has requested a revised 2012 SPPA data file from the Census Bureau, and will use it to compute estimates for a forthcoming report. We apologize for the inconvenience.

If you have any questions, or would like to receive the full report when ready, please contact Research@arts.gov.

Research Report #57 September 2013

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Front cover photo: Young folklorico dancers perform in Ajo, Arizona, to celebrate the Smithsonian's *Between Fences* traveling exhibit. Photo by Jewel Clearwater

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Preface

The Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (SPPA) is the nation's largest and most reliable survey of how American adults (ages 18 and older) engage with the arts. On behalf of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), the United States Census Bureau has conducted the survey six times since 1982, with the most recent wave occurring in 2012. This report presents initial summary findings from the 2012 survey year. A more comprehensive summary report, focusing on a decade of trends revealed by the survey (2002–2012), will be available in 2014.

The study of arts participation patterns is cogent to arts organizations, arts funders, and cultural economists—who have used prior surveys to inform their understanding about arts audiences or to gauge public demand for specific arts experiences. At a more fundamental level, the survey showcases the stunning plurality of art forms, genres, venues, and events and activities that constitute arts participation as a whole. This information can be reviewed alongside—and in direct relationship to—other key variables about our nation's adult population: what it looks like, how it behaves, and how it changes over time.

Federal data on arts participation, therefore, can contribute to a more accurate profile of our citizenry. More accurate because, without addressing the proclivities of Americans from all backgrounds to explore, imagine, and create, we would have, at best, an imperfect grasp of their values and aspirations. The SPPA thus offers policy-makers, journalists, educators, and the broader public a rare glimpse of a dimension of American life that surely deserves more weight in our national discourse.

Office of Research & Analysis
National Endowment for the Arts
September 2013

About the Survey

The NEA survey was administered in July 2012 as a supplement to the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey (CPS), and therefore is nationally representative. The 2012 SPPA included two core components: a questionnaire used in previous years to ask about arts attendance; and a new, experimental module on arts attendance. In addition, the survey included five modules designed to capture other types of arts participation as well as participation in other leisure activities. (To view the 2012 SPPA questionnaire, go to: **arts.gov/publications/2012-sppa-questionnaire**.) Respondents were randomly assigned to either of the survey's core questionnaires, and then were randomly assigned to two of the remaining five SPPA modules. Most SPPA questions address arts participation that occurred in the 12-month period prior to the survey's completion. The total sample size of the 2012 SPPA was 37,266 U.S. adults, ages 18 and over, of which 31.7 percent were represented by proxy respondents. The 2012 SPPA had a household response rate of 74.8 percent. To permit analysis of arts attendance and voluntary reading trends across survey years (e.g., comparisons with the 2008 SPPA), Sections I and II of this report rely on the Core 1 questionnaire rather than on Core 2, although, where noted, findings from Core 2 are occasionally presented.

About this Report

Since 1982, the year in which Americans took the first Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (SPPA), the survey has asked questions about five broad areas, in addition to asking about a host of non-arts-related activities. The five areas are:

- Arts Attendance
- Reading Literary Works
- Arts Consumption through Electronic Media
- Arts Creation and Performance
- Arts Learning

Together, these modes of engagement make up a single dimension of human and social behavior that the SPPA has sought to capture. Yet despite the survey's longevity, it is difficult to compute an index or grand total that can allow us to track changes in arts participation over time—if by "participation" we mean such diverse and evolving categories as listed above. There are two chief reasons for this difficulty.

The first is that each of the five modes of arts participation has taken on new meaning over the 30-year period since the survey was first conducted. Changes in art forms, technology, and even U.S. demographics have led to new or different questions being asked in each of these topic areas. The 2012 survey in particular was marked by numerous changes, which benefited from consultations with arts and cultural researchers, practitioners, and policy-makers. A modular approach to the survey, and a larger sample size, afforded the opportunity for more questions about each mode of arts participation.

The second reason has to do with the NEA's conventional method of reporting findings from the SPPA. Perhaps because several key questions about arts attendance and reading have remained constant over time, NEA research on arts participation has tended to focus on those two modes, notwithstanding the occasional appearance of NEA reports on arts engagement via media, art-making, or arts-related learning. Yet even when reviewing the numbers for live arts attendance and reading, findings about other modes of arts involvement (e.g., how many adults downloaded literature or went to see a movie) can be vital to understanding arts participation as a whole.

This report offers statistics about U.S. adult participation in the arts through each of the five modes (see "Top-Line Statistics for 2012: A Year in Arts Participation," page 8). Because of the survey's modular design, however, certain questions were not combined for the purpose of the analyses reported here.

For example, questions about arts creation and performance are in two separate modules of the survey (which, incidentally, now include items about sharing art with others). Thus, one cannot arrive at an aggregate figure for this mode of participation without advanced statistical modeling, which is beyond the scope of this report. Similarly, the rate of moviegoing is reported in the section about arts attendance; and yet, because it came from a different module of the survey than did questions about visual and performing arts attendance, it was not combined with those responses to produce a total percentage.

Despite these limitations, the report offers in each section a vivid snapshot of arts participation by mode and art form. Where such comparisons are appropriate and informative, the report also describes changes in arts participation rates since 2008—both for the general population and for demographic subgroups. Thus, trend data are provided in Sections I ("Arts Attendance") and II ("Reading Books and Literature"). For 2012 alone, "top-line" statistics preceding Section I show cumulative rates of adult participation in seven broad categories, wherever arts activities could be aggregated for analysis.

The demographic variables treated in this report are gender, race or ethnicity, age, and level of educational attainment. Unless otherwise specified, **whenever year-over-year trends or changes within demographic subgroups are reported in the text, those differences are statistically significant** at the 90 percent or 95 percent confidence level, as noted in the companion charts or tables. Such changes are discussed selectively, insofar as they contribute to a distinct narrative thread for each mode of arts participation.

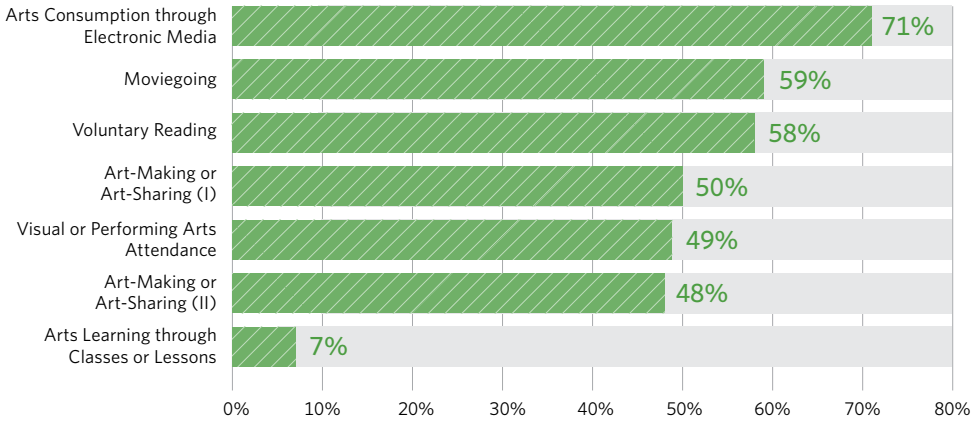
An even more detailed summary report is scheduled for publication in early 2014. That report will compare arts participation patterns and related demographic variables from 2002 to 2012, covering a decade of arts engagement. The report will also explore results from survey questions that have not been referenced heavily in this report, including the SPPA 2012's experimental module on arts attendance. Unlike the present report, it will attempt to report aggregate figures for arts participation questions across survey modules. And, finally, it will provide some degree of geographic analysis.

Beyond these two reports, the NEA seeks actively to promote availability of the raw data and metadata associated with the SPPA, not just for 2012 but for all prior survey years. This is being done through concurrent announcements of data files and user's guides on the NEA website, through a SPPA data visualization "challenge," and through an appeal to researchers to analyze this new dataset as part of the NEA's Research: Art Works grants program. Through all these methods, the NEA's Office of Research & Analysis aims to broaden and enrich public discourse about the importance of arts participation in American life.

Top-Line Statistics for 2012: A Year in Arts Participation

This section covers summary statistics for rates of arts participation in 2012. It gives aggregate figures for seven broad categories of participation. Each of the seven categories represents arts activities that can be combined to produce a single percentage: the share of the U.S. adult population who did at least one of those activities in the 12 months before the survey. The categories are listed in descending order by the number of adults who participated. Because of the survey design, activities could not be merged easily across categories for the purpose of further aggregation.

Percentage of U.S. Adults Who Participated in the Arts at Least Once During a 12-Month Period, by General Category of Participation (2012)



In this chart, adults are counted multiple times if they participated in more than one category. See page 10 for a list of the arts activities that make up the two separate categories of "Art-Making or Art-Sharing." Adult rates for individual art-making or art-sharing activities are provided in Section IV of this report.

Arts Consumption through Electronic Media

(71 PERCENT OF U.S. ADULTS, OR 167 MILLION)

Adults are included in this category if they did at least one of the following types of activity in the preceding 12 months:

Used TV, radio, or the Internet to access art or arts programming
(61 PERCENT OF ADULTS)

Types of art or arts programming may have included:
- Music of any kind (57 percent of adults)
- Ballet, modern, or contemporary dance, or dance programs or shows (11 percent)
- Programs or information about the visual arts, books, or writers (14 percent)
- Theater productions, such as a musical or stage play (7 percent)
- Books, short stories, or novels read aloud (7 percent)
- Opera (4 percent)

Used a handheld or mobile device to access art
(38 PERCENT OF ADULTS)

Types of art may have included:
- Music of any kind (34 percent of adults)
- Novels, short stories, or plays (16 percent)
- Visual artworks such as painting, sculpture, graphic design, or photography (8 percent)
- Theater or dance performances (3 percent)

Used a DVD or CD player, a record-player, or a tape-player to watch or listen to music or to programs about theater, dance, visual arts, or literature
(27 PERCENT OF ADULTS)

Moviegoing

(59 PERCENT OF U.S. ADULTS, OR 139 MILLION)

Adults are included in this category if they went to the movies at least once in the preceding 12 months.

Voluntary Reading

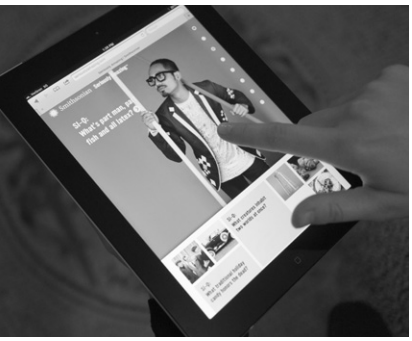
(58 PERCENT OF U.S. ADULTS, OR 136 MILLION)

Adults are included in this category if they did at least one of the following types of reading in the preceding 12 months:

Books not required for work or school
(54 PERCENT OF ADULTS)

Literary reading
(47 PERCENT OF ADULTS)

Types of literature may have included:
- Novels or short stories (45 percent of adults)
- Poetry (7 percent)
- Plays (3 percent)



Art-Making or Art-Sharing (I)

(50 PERCENT OF U.S. ADULTS, OR 118 MILLION)

Adults are included in this category if they did at least one of the following types of activity in the preceding 12 months:

Created, performed, or shared art through various activities
(50 PERCENT OF ADULTS)

Types of activity may have included:
- Social dancing (32 percent of adults)
- Weaving, crocheting, quilting, needlepoint, knitting, or sewing (13 percent)
- Played a musical instrument, either alone or with others (12 percent)
- Sang, either alone or with others (9 percent)
- Created leatherwork, metalwork, or woodwork (8 percent)
- Created pottery, ceramics, or jewelry (5 percent)
- Acting (1 percent)

Performed or practiced in a specific art form
(10 PERCENT OF ADULTS)

Art forms may have included:
- Dance of any kind (5 percent of adults)
- Choral singing or singing in a choir or glee club (3 percent)
- Classical music (2 percent)
- Latin, Spanish, or salsa music (1 percent)
- Jazz (1 percent)
- Musical or non-musical plays (1 percent)
- Opera (<1 percent)

Visual and Performing Arts Attendance

(49 PERCENT OF U.S. ADULTS, OR 115 MILLION)

Adults are included in this category if they did at least one of the following activities in the preceding 12 months:

Attended a visual arts event or activity
(39 PERCENT OF ADULTS)

Types of attendance may have included:
- Touring a park, monument, building, or neighborhood for historic or design purposes (24 percent of adults)
- Attending a visual arts festival or a crafts fair (22 percent)
- Visiting an art museum or gallery (21 percent)

Attended a live performing arts event
(37 PERCENT OF ADULTS)

Event types may have included:
- Outdoor performing arts festivals (21 percent of adults)
- Musical or non-musical plays (18 percent)
- Classical music, jazz, or Latin, Spanish, or salsa music (17 percent)
- Dance of any kind (7 percent)
- Opera (2 percent)

Art-Making or Art-Sharing (II)

(48 PERCENT OF U.S. ADULTS, OR 113 MILLION)

Adults are included in this category if they did at least one of the following types of activity in the preceding 12 months:

E-mailed, posted, or shared artwork
(40 PERCENT OF ADULTS)

Types of artwork may have included:
- Photography (26 percent of adults)
- Music of any kind (21 percent)
- Films or videos (13 percent)
- Other visual artworks such as painting, sculpture, or graphic design (6 percent)
- Dance of any kind (5 percent)
- Poetry, plays, or novels or short stories (4 percent)

Created photography for artistic purposes or did photo editing
(18 PERCENT OF ADULTS)

Created other types of visual artworks, or did scrapbooking or creative writing
(14 PERCENT OF ADULTS)

Created, performed, recorded, edited, or remixed music, dance, film, or video
(10 PERCENT OF ADULTS)

Arts Learning through Classes or Lessons

(7 PERCENT OF U.S. ADULTS, OR 16 MILLION)

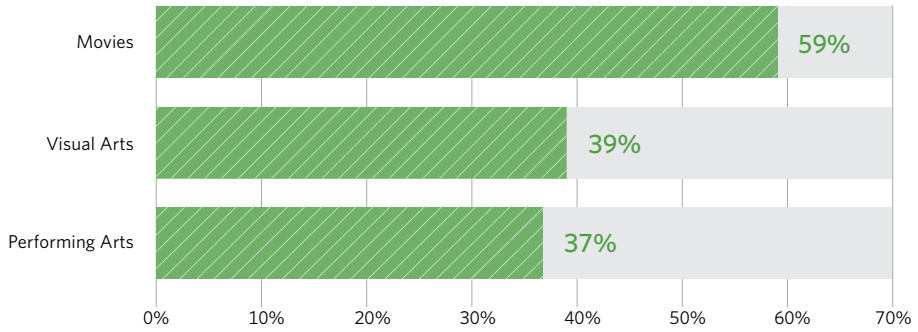
Adults are included in this category if they took a class or lesson, whether in or out of school, in at least one of the following subjects in the preceding 12 months:

- Voice training or playing a musical instrument (3 percent of adults)
- Visual arts such as drawing, painting, pottery, weaving, or graphic or fashion design (2 percent)
- Dance of any kind (2 percent)
- Creative writing (2 percent)
- Art appreciation or art history (2 percent)
- Photography or filmmaking (1 percent)
- Music appreciation (1 percent)
- Acting or theater (<1 percent)

I. Attending Arts Events and Activities

This section covers attendance at live performing arts events, visual arts activities, movies, and other types of attendance. Where possible and instructive, comparisons have been made with the 2008 survey findings.

Percent of U.S. Adults Who Attended at Least One Arts Event or Activity, by General Category (2012)



In this chart, adults are counted multiple times if they attended more than one category of event. The previous page lists the types of visual and performing arts activities reported here.

The SteelStacks campus with the Levitt Pavilion in the foreground in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Photo by Mark Demko

CHANGES IN ARTS ATTENDANCE FROM 2008 TO 2012

Between 2008 and 2012, national rates of attendance at visual and performing arts activities dropped slightly, remaining below 2002 levels. In 2012, one in three U.S. adults (33 percent, or about 78 million) visited an art museum or gallery or attended at least one of various types of performing arts events.[1]

A closer look at individual types of arts activity shows that theater attendance (musical and non-musical play-going) declined significantly since 2008. So did the share of adults visiting art museums or galleries or attending crafts fairs or visual arts festivals.

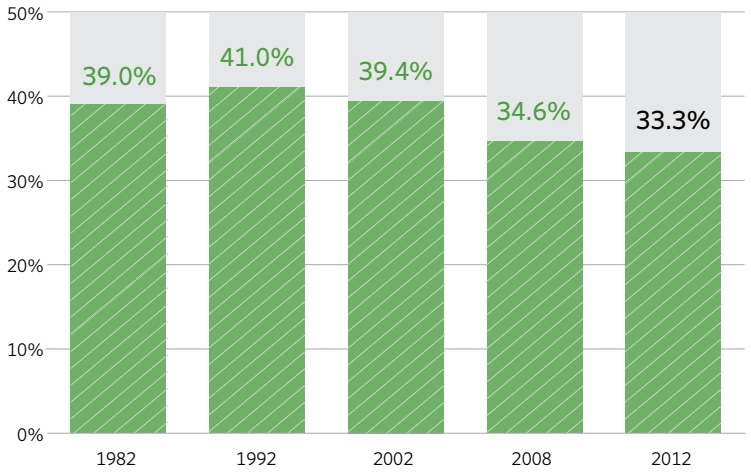
Notably, non-white and Hispanic groups upheld their arts attendance rates, and even showed increases for some activities. And more adults, from a variety of demographic groups, went to the movies in 2012 than in 2008.

Performing Arts Attendance

1) Arts attendance rates held steady (showing no statistically significant difference) for the following types of activity between 2008 and 2012:

- **Classical music** (8.8 percent of all adults nationwide, or 20.7 million people, attended at least one event in the 2012 survey year)
- **Jazz** (8.1 percent, or 19.0 million adults)
- **Dance other than ballet** (5.6 percent, or 13.2 million adults)
- **Latin, Spanish, or salsa music** (5.1 percent, or 12.0 million adults)
- **Ballet** (2.7 percent, or 6.3 million adults)
- **Opera** (2.1 percent, or 4.9 million adults)

Percent of U.S. Adults Who Attended at Least One of Various Types of Arts Performance or Visited an Art Museum or Gallery: 1982–2012



Performing arts events included: jazz; classical music; opera; musical and non-musical plays; and ballet. These are all activities for which attendance rates have been tracked since 1982.

The change from 2008 to 2012 is statistically significant at the 90 percent confidence level.

Percent of U.S. Adults Who Attended a Performing Arts Activity, by Type (Excluding Musical and Non-Musical Plays): 2002, 2008, and 2012

	2002	2008	2012
Classical Music	11.6%	9.3%	8.8%
Jazz	10.8%	7.8%	8.1%
Dance Other than Ballet	6.3%	5.2%	5.6%
Latin, Spanish, or Salsa Music	NA	4.9%	5.1%
Ballet	3.9%	2.9%	2.7%
Opera	3.2%	2.1%	2.1%

NA = This question was not asked before 2008.

Note: None of the changes between 2008 and 2012 are statistically significant.

2) Although overall attendance rates between 2008 and 2012 were unchanged for many types of arts performance, notable shifts occurred within demographic subgroups.

- *Classical music:* Adults between 35 and 54 years of age reduced their attendance. The oldest adults participated at the highest levels.
- *Jazz:* Greater numbers of non-whites and non-Hispanics (e.g., Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders) went to these performances than in 2008. In 2012, African Americans attended jazz at higher rates than did whites. Jazz attendance was also buoyed by an increase in the share of U.S. immigrants who attended.[2]

Percent of U.S. Adults Who Attended a Classical Music Performance, by Age: 2008 and 2012

CLASSICAL MUSIC	2008	2012
ALL ADULTS	9.3%	8.8%
Age		
18–24	6.9%	6.6%
25–34	7.0%	7.3%
35–44	8.9%	6.4%**
45–54	10.2%	8.2%**
55–64	11.6%	11.0%
65–74	12.2%	14.0%
75 and over	9.7%	11.0%

**change is statistically significant at the 95 percent confidence level

Percent of U.S. Adults Who Attended a Jazz Performance, by Race and Ethnicity: 2008 and 2012

JAZZ	2008	2012
ALL ADULTS	7.8%	8.1%
Race and Ethnicity		
Hispanic	3.9%	5.0%
White	8.8%	8.4%
African American	8.6%	11.2%*
Other	4.0%	7.4%**

*change is statistically significant at the 90 percent confidence level

**change is statistically significant at the 95 percent confidence level

- *Latin, Spanish, or salsa music:* African Americans nearly doubled their attendance rate. Adults with only "some college" background also increased attendance.

Percent of U.S. Adults Who Attended a Latin, Spanish, or Salsa Music Performance, by Race/Ethnicity and Education: 2008 and 2012

LATIN MUSIC	2008	2012
ALL ADULTS	4.9%	5.1%
Race and Ethnicity		
Hispanic	17.4%	18.1%
White	3.1%	2.8%
African American	1.6%	3.0%*
Other	2.7%	2.4%
Highest Level of Educational Attainment		
Grade School	8.5%	6.8%
Some High School	5.5%	5.2%
High School Graduate	3.3%	3.4%
Some College	4.0%	5.4%**
College Graduate	6.8%	6.1%
Graduate School	5.8%	6.6%

*change is statistically significant at the 90 percent confidence level

**change is statistically significant at the 95 percent confidence level

- *Dance other than ballet:* Both Hispanics and African Americans attended non-ballet dance performances at higher rates than in 2008. So did adults with only a high school diploma.

Percent of U.S. Adults Who Attended a Dance Performance Other than Ballet, by Race/Ethnicity and Education: 2008 and 2012

DANCE, NON-BALLET	2008	2012
ALL ADULTS	5.2%	5.6%
Race and Ethnicity		
Hispanic	3.2%	4.5%*
White	5.9%	5.9%
African American	3.0%	5.3%**
Other	5.0%	6.1%
Highest Level of Educational Attainment		
Grade School	1.2%	1.7%
Some High School	2.2%	1.2%
High School Graduate	2.2%	3.1%**
Some College	5.8%	6.0%
College Graduate	8.0%	8.3%
Graduate School	12.7%	12.4%

*change is statistically significant at the 90 percent confidence level

**change is statistically significant at the 95 percent confidence level

3) Since 2008, attendance rates have declined for both of the following theatrical events:

- **Musical plays** (15.2 percent of adults nationwide, or 35.7 million, attended at least one event in the 2012 survey year)
- **Non-musical plays** (8.3 percent, or 19.5 million adults nationwide, attended at least one event in the 2012 survey year)

4) The decline in musical play attendance marks the first statistically significant change in this activity since 1985. Non-musical play attendance has dropped at a 33 percent rate over the last decade.[3]

- *Musical plays:* From 2008 to 2012, attendance rates declined for whites, men and women alike, and 25- to 44-year-olds. Attendance at musicals was also lower for the most educated adults, and even for adults with only "some" high school or college education.

Percent of U.S. Adults Who Attended a Musical and/or Non-Musical Play: 2002, 2008, and 2012

				2008–2012	
	2002	2008	2012	CHANGE	RATE OF CHANGE
Musical Play	17.1%	16.7%	15.2%	−1.5pp**	−9%**
Non-Musical Play	12.3%	9.4%	8.3%	−1.1pp**	−12%**

pp = percentage points

**change is statistically significant at the 95 percent confidence level

Percent of U.S. Adults Who Attended a Musical Play, by Selected Demographic Variables: 2008 and 2012

MUSICAL THEATER		
	2008	2012
ALL ADULTS	16.7%	15.2%**
Gender		
Male	14.4%	12.9%**
Female	18.9%	17.3%**
Race and Ethnicity		
Hispanic	8.1%	7.3%
White	20.0%	18.4%**
African American	8.6%	9.2%
Other	13.4%	11.3%
Age		
18–24	14.5%	12.9%
25–34	16.0%	13.6%*
35–44	18.2%	12.9%**
45–54	17.4%	16.8%
55–64	19.5%	19.0%
65–74	18.0%	17.8%
75 and over	10.0%	12.0%
Highest Level of Educational Attainment		
Grade School	1.7%	1.6%
Some High School	5.2%	2.9%**
High School Graduate	8.1%	8.3%
Some College	17.1%	14.6%**
College Graduate	30.1%	26.6%**
Graduate School	37.9%	32.1%**

*change is statistically significant at the 90 percent confidence level

**change is statistically significant at the 95 percent confidence level

- *Non-musical plays:* As with musical play attendance, a smaller proportion of whites, men and women, and highly educated adults went to non-musical plays in 2012. But non-musical attendance also declined for 18- to 24-year-olds and 55- to 64-year-olds, while musical play attendance did not.
- For both kinds of plays, non-white and Hispanic groups sustained their attendance levels from 2008 to 2012.

-12%

decline in non-musical play attendance 2008–2012

Percent of U.S. Adults Who Attended a Non-Musical Play, by Selected Demographic Variables: 2008 and 2012

NON-MUSICAL THEATER	2008	2012
ALL ADULTS	9.4%	8.3%**
Gender		
Male	8.2%	7.2%*
Female	10.6%	9.2%**
Race and Ethnicity		
Hispanic	4.3%	3.5%
White	11.4%	10.0%**
African American	5.5%	6.2%
Other	6.1%	4.9%
Age		
18–24	8.2%	6.3%*
25–34	9.2%	7.5%*
35–44	8.9%	7.3%*
45–54	8.7%	9.5%
55–64	12.3%	9.0%**
65–74	11.0%	10.6%
75 and over	7.4%	7.8%
Highest Level of Educational Attainment		
Grade School	70.0%	0.3%
Some High School	2.8%	1.8%
High School Graduate	4.0%	3.9%
Some College	9.0%	7.7%*
College Graduate	17.5%	14.6%**
Graduate School	24.3%	20.0%**

*change is statistically significant at the 90 percent confidence level

**change is statistically significant at the 95 percent confidence level

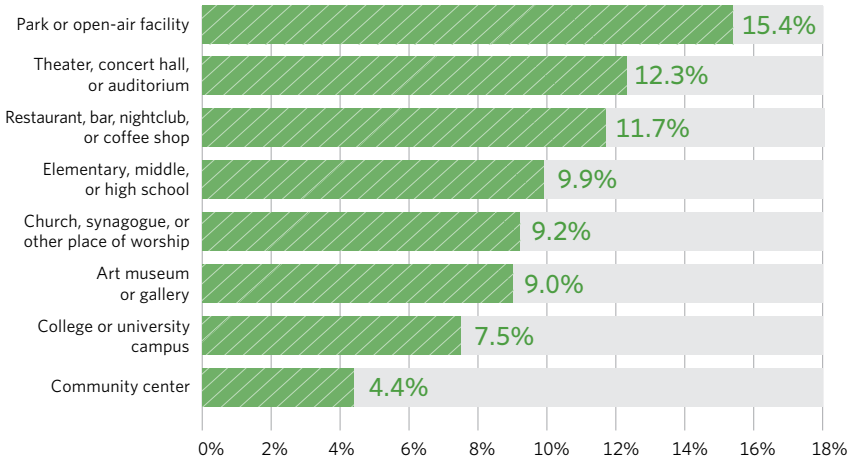
5) One in three adults attended at least one **live music performance of any type** (not solely classical, jazz, or Latin music) in 2012, the first year such data became available.[4]

- Live music attendance peaked with young adults. But every other age group attended at rates higher than 25 percent—an exception being the 75-years-and-older group (20 percent).
- Parks and open-air facilities were the most common venues for the music, dance, and theater performances or art exhibits that adults went to see in 2012, accounting for 15.4 percent of such activities. The next most common venues were theaters, concert halls, and auditoriums (12.3 percent) and restaurants, bars, nightclubs, and coffee shops (11.7 percent).[5]

Percent of U.S. Adults Who Attended a Live Music Performance (Any Type), by Age Groups: 2012

LIVE MUSIC PERFORMANCE	
	2012 (not asked in 2008)
ALL ADULTS	31.6%
Age	
18–24	40.6%
25–34	34.2%
35–44	31.8%
45–54	32.9%
55–64	28.5%
65–74	27.4%
75 and over	20.0%

Percent of U.S. Adults Who Went to See an Art Exhibit or Who Attended a Performing Arts Event (Music, Dance, or Theater), By Venue: 2012[6]



- One in five (20.8 percent, or 48.9 million adults) attended an **outdoor performing arts festival**—the same proportion as in 2008—but increases were seen for the youngest and oldest adults.
- 4.1 percent of adults attended a **literary reading or storytelling event** in 2012—the first time such information was collected in the history of the survey.[7]

Percent of U.S. Adults Who Attended an Outdoor Performing Arts Festival, by Age: 2008 and 2012

OUTDOOR PERFORMING ARTS FESTIVAL	2008	2012
ALL ADULTS	20.8%	20.8%
Age		
18–24	21.6%	25.2%*
25–34	22.8%	23.0%
35–44	24.1%	21.4%*
45–54	23.4%	21.6%
55–64	20.5%	20.7%
65–74	15.4%	17.9%
75 and over	6.8%	9.1%*

*change is statistically significant at the 90 percent confidence level

Visual Arts and Other Attendance

1) As in prior years, more Americans went to visual arts events and activities than attended most types of arts performance. Between 2008 and 2012, however, rates declined for the following activities:

- Visiting an **art museum or gallery** (21 percent of adults nationwide, or 49.3 million, did this activity at least once in the 2012 survey year)
- Attending a **crafts fair or visual arts festival** (22.4 percent, or 52.6 million adults)
- Women, non-white and Hispanic groups, and graduate or professional degree-holders visited art museums and galleries at approximately the same rates as in 2008. Museum-going rates declined for the youngest adults and for 35- to 44-year-olds, but grew for the oldest adults (75 and over).

Percent of U.S. Adults Who Attended an Art Museum or Gallery and/or Attended a Crafts Fair of Visual Arts Festival: 2002, 2008, and 2012

				2008–2012	
	2002	2008	2012	CHANGE	RATE OF CHANGE
Visited an art museum or gallery	26.5%	22.7%	21.0%	−1.7pp**	−8%**
Attended a crafts fair or visual arts festival	33.4%	24.5%	22.4%	−2.1pp**	−9%**

pp = percentage points

**change is statistically significant at the 95 percent confidence level

Percent of U.S. Adults Who Visited an Art Museum or Gallery, by Selected Demographic Variables: 2008 and 2012

VISITED AN ART MUSEUM OR GALLERY		
	2008	2012
ALL ADULTS	22.7%	21.0%**
Gender		
Male	21.4%	18.7%**
Female	24.0%	23.1%
Race and Ethnicity		
Hispanic	14.5%	14.3%
White	26.0%	24.0%**
African American	12.0%	11.9%
Other	23.4%	21.1%
Age		
18–24	22.9%	18.3%**
25–34	24.3%	22.1%
35–44	25.7%	21.2%**
45–54	23.3%	21.9%
55–64	24.3%	22.4%
65–74	19.9%	22.5%
75 and over	10.5%	15.5%**
Highest Level of Educational Attainment		
Grade School	3.8%	3.6%
Some High School	9.2%	4.3%**
High School Graduate	9.6%	9.9%
Some College	23.8%	19.7%**
College Graduate	40.6%	37.2%**
Graduate School	52.2%	49.3%

**change is statistically significant at the 95 percent confidence level

- The overall decline in craft fair attendance was driven by lower rates among whites, both men and women, middle-aged Americans, and adults from various educational backgrounds. Hispanics boosted their attendance at crafts fairs.

-9%

decline in craft fair attendance 2008–2012

Percent of U.S. Adults Who Attended a Crafts Fair or Visual Arts Festival, by Selected Demographic Variables: 2008 and 2012

ATTENDED A CRAFTS FAIR OR VISUAL ARTS FESTIVAL	2008	2012
ALL ADULTS	24.5%	22.4%**
Gender		
Male	20.5%	18.1%**
Female	28.3%	26.4%**
Race and Ethnicity		
Hispanic	13.7%	16.8%*
White	29.3%	26.2%**
African American	12.2%	11.9%
Other	17.0%	16.2%
Age		
18–24	17.8%	18.2%
25–34	22.7%	21.6%
35–44	27.2%	22.0%**
45–54	29.1%	24.5%**
55–64	28.9%	25.8%**
65–74	24.8%	26.2%
75 and over	12.7%	15.1%
Highest Level of Educational Attainment		
Grade School	4.9%	5.9%
Some High School	11.2%	8.1%**
High School Graduate	17.3%	16.3%
Some College	27.5%	23.6%**
College Graduate	35.8%	32.9%
Graduate School	41.6%	36.9%**

*change is statistically significant at the 90 percent confidence level

**change is statistically significant at the 95 percent confidence level

2) The share of adults who toured a **park, monument, building, or neighborhood** for historic or design value remained on par with the 2008 level. In 2012, 23.9 percent of all adults (56.2 million) made these kind of trips.

- The nation's oldest Americans visited these sites at higher rates in 2012.
- Less educated adults generally showed declines in this activity. Adults 35 to 44 years old reduced their attendance.

Percent of U.S. Adults Who Toured a Park, Monument, Building, or Neighborhood for Historic or Design Value, by Age and Educational Attainment: 2008 and 2012

TOURED A PARK, MONUMENT, BUILDING, OR NEIGHBORHOOD FOR HISTORIC OR DESIGN VALUE		
	2008	2012
ALL ADULTS	24.9%	23.9%
Age		
18–24	21.9%	20.4%
25–34	25.7%	25.1%
35–44	26.8%	23.2%**
45–54	28.0%	26.2%
55–64	27.6%	26.3%
65–74	24.1%	25.5%
75 and over	11.2%	15.1%**
Highest Level of Educational Attainment		
Grade School	3.8%	3.8%
Some High School	9.1%	5.9%**
High School Graduate	14.6%	13.3%
Some College	28.4%	24.9%**
College Graduate	39.4%	38.3%
Graduate School	48.1%	48.6%

**change is statistically significant at the 95 percent confidence level

3) **Moviegoing** increased significantly from 2008 to 2012.[8]

- Higher attendance rates were observed for nearly all demographic subgroups.
- 2.4 percent of adults attended a **film festival** in 2012, the first year the question was asked in the survey.[9]

Percent of U.S. Adults Who Went Out to a Movie, by Selected Demographic Variables: 2008 and 2012

	WENT OUT TO A MOVIE	
	2008	2012
ALL ADULTS	53.3%	59.3%**
Gender		
Male	52.7%	58.1%**
Female	54.0%	60.4%**
Race and Ethnicity		
Hispanic	48.1%	54.8%**
White	55.7%	61.5%**
African American	47.4%	53.3%**
Other	49.3%	57.5%**
Age		
18–24	74.2%	75.6%
25–34	64.5%	68.4%*
35–44	59.5%	68.2%**
45–54	52.6%	59.9%**
55–64	46.2%	50.6%**
65–74	31.7%	44.1%**
75 and over	18.9%	30.7%**
Highest Level of Educational Attainment		
Grade School	15.9%	21.7%*
Some High School	37.9%	36.7%
High School Graduate	42.5%	48.6%**
Some College	60.8%	64.9%**
College Graduate	68.8%	75.2%**
Graduate School	71.6%	76.8%**

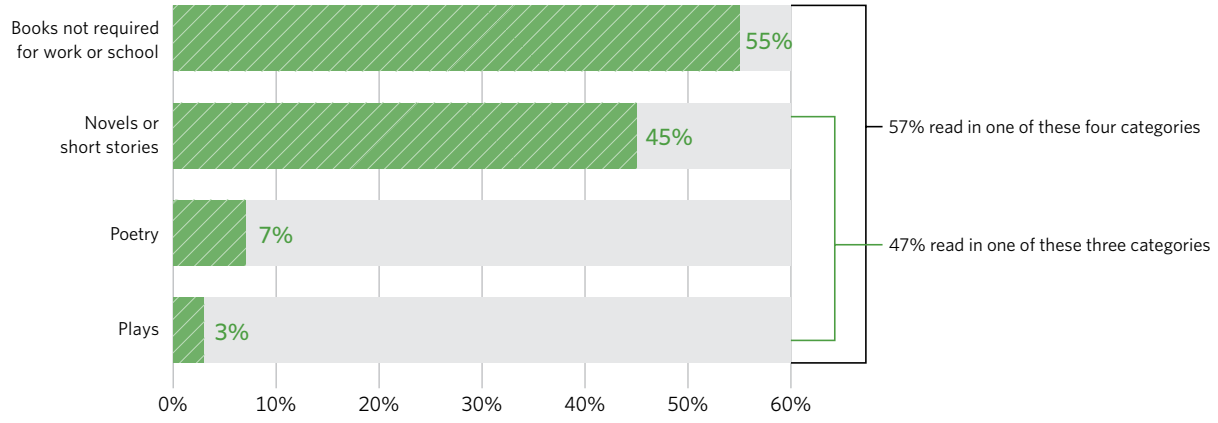
*change is statistically significant at the 90 percent confidence level

**change is statistically significant at the 95 percent confidence level

II. Reading Books and Literature

This section covers voluntary reading, including literature (novels or short stories, poetry, and plays) and books in general. Where possible and instructive, comparisons have been made with the 2008 survey findings.

Percent of U.S. Adults Who Read Books and/or Literature (2012)



In this chart, adults are counted multiple times if they read in more than one category.

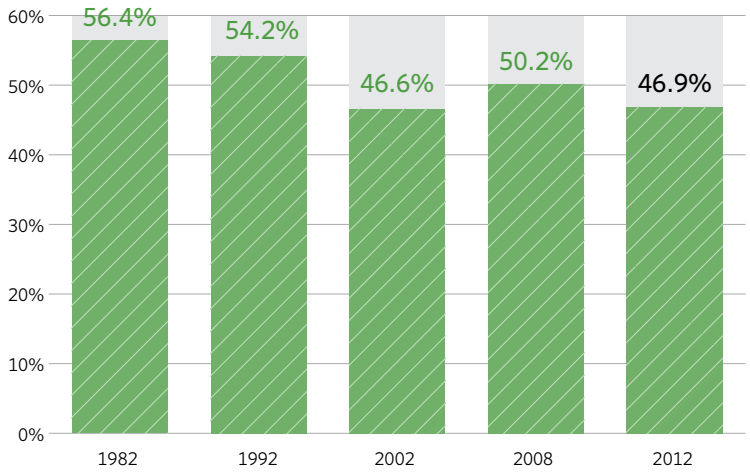
CHANGES IN READING BOOKS AND LITERATURE: 2008–2012

The uptick in literary reading rates that occurred between 2002 and 2008 has been reversed. In 2012, fewer than half of all U.S. adults (46.9 percent, or 110.2 million) read a novel, short story, poem, or play. Meanwhile, the share of adults who read any book whatsoever has remained constant.

Since 2002, the share of poetry-readers has contracted by 45 percent—resulting in the steepest decline in participation in any literary genre. Sixty-five to 74-year-olds now are among those with the highest rates of literary reading. Moreover, adults 65 and older saw a significant increase in book-reading of any type.[10]

In keeping with their arts attendance patterns relative to non-Hispanic whites, the proportion of non-white and Hispanic groups who read books or literature did not decline in 2012.

Percent of U.S. Adults Who Read at Least One Work of Literature (Novels or Short Stories, Poetry, or Plays): 1982–2012



The change from 2008 to 2012 is statistically significant at the 95 percent confidence level.

A man browses books at the 2011 Printers Row Lit Fest in Chicago. Photo by Glenn Kaupert, courtesy of the Chicago Tribune

Novels and Short Stories, Poetry, and Plays

1) Reading of **fiction** and **poetry** has declined since 2008, while **play-reading** has remained at the same, comparably lower rate.

- The rate of adults reading novels or short stories is back down to the 2002 level. From 2002 to 2012, the poetry-reading rate nearly halved.[11]
- The declines in literary reading (novels or short stories, poetry, or plays) occurred among whites, women as well as men, middle-aged adults, and adults from various educational backgrounds.

Percent of U.S. Adults Who Read At Least One Work of Literature (Novels or Short Stories, Poetry, or Plays), By Type: 2002, 2008, and 2012

				2008–2012	
	2002	2008	2012	CHANGE	RATE OF CHANGE
Novels or Short Stories	45.1%	47.0%	45.1%	−1.9pp**	−4%**
Poetry	12.1%	8.3%	6.7%	−1.6pp**	−19%**
Plays	3.6%	2.6%	2.9%	−0.3pp	−12%

pp = percentage points

**change is statistically significant at the 95 percent confidence level

Percent of U.S. Adults Who Read at Least One Work of Literature (Novels or Short Stories, Poetry, or Plays), by Selected Demographic Variables: 2008 and 2012

READ AT LEAST ONE WORK OF LITERATURE		
	2008	2012
ALL ADULTS	50.2%	46.9%**
Gender		
Male	41.9%	36.9%*
Female	58.0%	56.1%*
Race and Ethnicity		
Hispanic	31.9%	31.0%
White	55.7%	52.2%*
African American	42.6%	40.1%
Other	43.9%	41.3%
Age		
18–24	51.7%	47.6%
25–34	50.1%	47.7%
35–44	50.8%	45.1%*
45–54	50.3%	44.6%*
55–64	53.1%	48.2%*
65–74	49.1%	52.0%
75 and over	42.3%	43.8%
Highest Level of Educational Attainment		
Grade School	18.5%	16.9%
Some High School	34.3%	22.8%*
High School Graduate	39.1%	36.8%
Some College	56.2%	50.3%*
College Graduate	66.6%	63.0%*
Graduate School	71.2%	69.5%

*change is statistically significant at the 90 percent confidence level

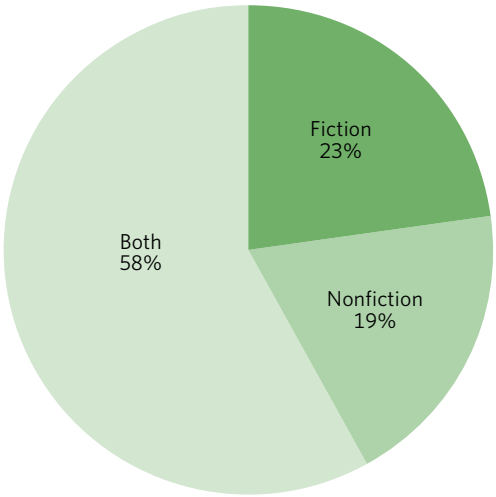
**change is statistically significant at the 95 percent confidence level

Books in General

1) More than half of all adults (54.5 percent, or 128 million adults in the 2012 survey year) read a **book of any type**, outside work or school. The share was nearly identical to that in 2008.

- Women and older adults (65 and over) increased their book-reading rates. Those gains were offset by declines among 35- to 44-year-olds and adults with only some high school education.
- Of all adults, 50.3 percent read more than one book in the 2012 survey year. Of this group, the majority (58 percent) said they had read both fiction and nonfiction, while 23 percent said they had read only fiction.[12]

Percent Distribution of U.S. Adults Who Read More Than One Book, by Type: 2012



Percent of U.S. Adults Who Read at Least One Book (Any Type), by Selected Demographic Variables: 2008 and 2012

READ AT LEAST ONE BOOK OF ANY TYPE	2008	2012
ALL ADULTS	54.3%	54.5%
Gender		
Male	46.3%	44.7%
Female	61.7%	63.6%**
Race and Ethnicity		
Hispanic	32.8%	36.3%
White	60.8%	60.6%
African American	43.4%	46.2%
Other	47.7%	49.9%
Age		
18–24	50.7%	51.8%
25–34	54.1%	54.8%
35–44	56.2%	53.0%*
45–54	54.2%	53.2%
55–64	58.4%	56.5%
65–74	54.5%	61.1%**
75 and over	47.4%	52.4%**
Highest Level of Educational Attainment		
Grade School	18.7%	21.5%
Some High School	33.4%	27.7%**
High School Graduate	41.5%	41.2%
Some College	60.0%	59.8%
College Graduate	74.1%	72.5%
Graduate School	80.8%	81.7%

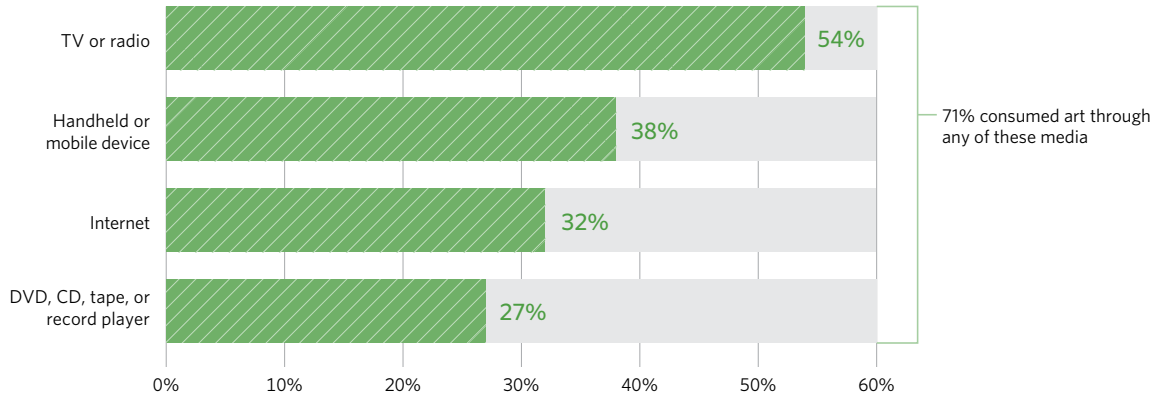
*change is statistically significant at the 90 percent confidence level

** change is statistically significant at the 95 percent confidence level

III. Consuming Art through Electronic Media

This section covers art consumption through TV or radio, the Internet, various other electronic media such as CDs or DVDs, and handheld or mobile devices. Because many questions on this topic were new to the 2012 SPPA, comparisons with the 2008 survey findings have not been attempted.

Percent of U.S. Adults Who Consumed Art through Electronic Media, By Type (2012)



In this chart, adults are counted multiple times if they used more than one media category.

CONSUMING ART THROUGH ELECTRONIC MEDIA: A 2012 SNAPSHOT

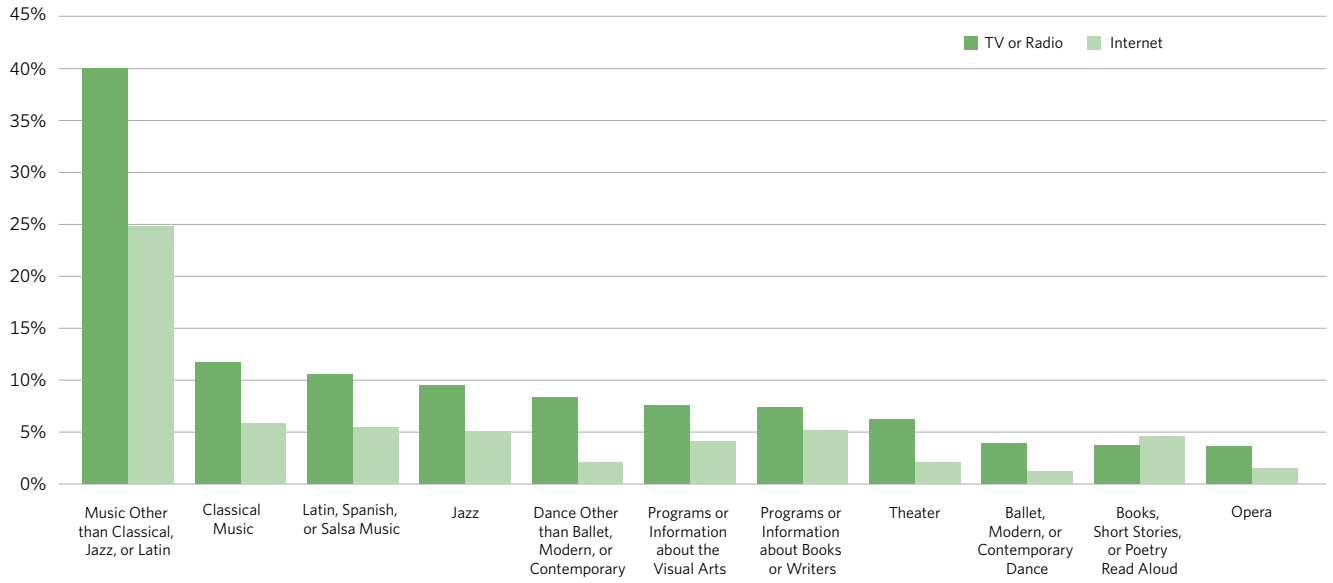
For most types of programming, Americans still use traditional broadcast media rather than the Internet to view or listen to arts-related content. Relatively large numbers from most demographic groups access music and literature via handheld or mobile devices.

Traditional Media and the Internet

1) **Music** viewing and/or listening is the most popular form of media arts participation captured by the survey—whether the medium was TV, radio, or the Internet.

- Fifty percent of adults used TV or radio to watch or listen to music. Twenty-nine percent of adults used the Internet to watch, listen to, or download music.[13]

Percent of U.S. Adults Who Watched or Listened to Various Types of Art on TV, Radio, or Internet: 2012



2) Only **literature**—books, short stories, or poetry read aloud—garnered more audiences by Internet (4.6 percent) than by TV or radio (3.8 percent).

3) Twenty-seven percent of adults used a DVD or CD player, a record-player, or a tape-player to watch or listen to music or to **programs about theater, dance, visual arts, or literature.**

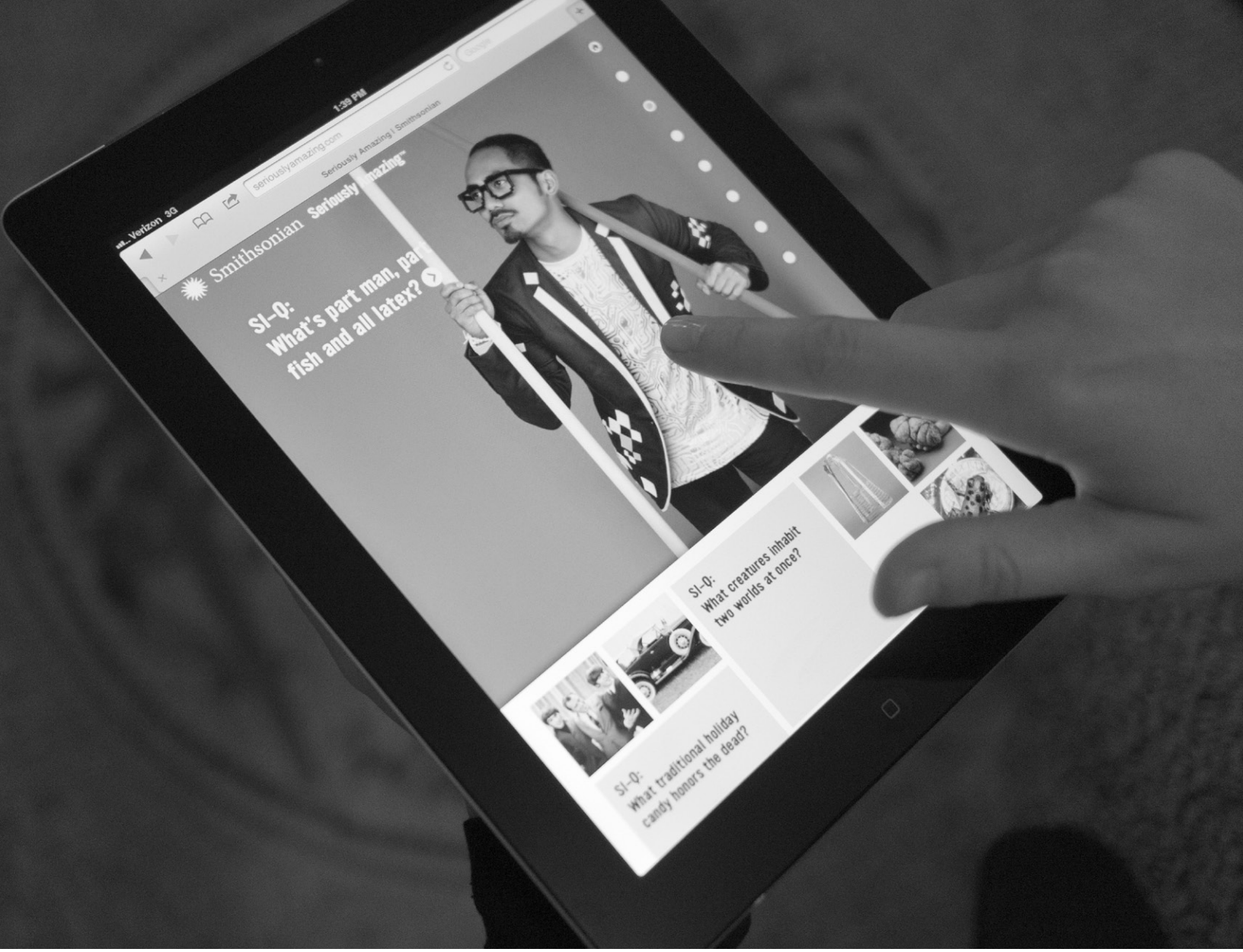
Handheld and Mobile Devices

1) One in three (34.2 percent, or 80.4 million adults) used handheld or mobile devices to download, watch, or listen to music performances.[14]

- Music access via handheld or mobile devices is one of the very few forms of arts participation that yielded marginally higher rates for men than for women.
- Well over half of all young adults (18–34 years of age) did this activity at least once in 2012.

71%

of adults consumed art via electronic media



The Smithsonian's "Seriously Amazing" website in use on a tablet computer. Photo by Brian Ireley, Smithsonian Institution

2) Among other art forms represented, literature had the next largest audience through handheld or mobile devices: 16 percent of adults used those technologies to access novels, short stories, plays, or poetry.

3) For mobile and handheld device-users, differences in arts consumption by racial/ethnic group do not appear as great as for many other forms of arts participation.

- Non-white and Hispanic adults who use handheld/mobile technologies were as likely as white adults to use these devices to access **music**, **visual art**, or **dance or theater** performances.[15]

Percent of U.S. Adults Who Used a Handheld or Mobile Device to Consume Art, by Selected Demographic Characteristics: 2012

	Used a handheld or mobile device for any purpose	To read, listen to, or download novels, short stories, or plays	To download, watch, or listen to music	To download, watch, or listen to theater or dance performances	To download or view any visual arts such as painting, sculpture, graphic design, or photography
ALL ADULTS	53.1%	16.0%	34.2%	3.4%	7.9%
Gender					
Male	54.1%	14.1%	35.0%	2.8%	7.7%
Female	52.2%	17.8%	33.3%	3.8%	8.0%
Race and Ethnicity					
Hispanic	46.3%	11.3%	31.4%	2.3%	6.2%
White	55.8%	18.1%	35.6%	3.3%	8.5%
African American	45.9%	10.5%	29.4%	4.2%	5.9%
Other	54.6%	14.8%	33.9%	4.8%	8.1%
Age					
18–24	71.8%	19.4%	59.4%	6.6%	10.7%
25–34	71.7%	20.0%	54.7%	4.6%	11.0%
35–44	62.7%	18.9%	39.3%	2.8%	9.4%
45–54	51.9%	16.6%	29.1%	3.3%	7.7%
55–64	43.2%	15.2%	22.0%	2.5%	6.2%
65–74	30.7%	9.6%	11.8%	2.1%	4.5%
75 and over	13.6%	3.8%	2.3%	0.3%	0.9%
Highest Level of Educational Attainment					
Grade School	11.8%	1.9%	5.7%	0.2%	0.6%
Some High School	31.1%	6.4%	19.8%	2.1%	3.0%
High School Graduate	40.6%	8.0%	24.2%	2.3%	3.8%
Some College	59.6%	17.3%	39.4%	3.0%	7.7%
College Graduate	70.0%	24.1%	46.0%	5.4%	13.3%
Graduate School	74.5%	34.0%	49.5%	5.8%	17.3%

IV. Making and Sharing Art

This section covers arts creation, performance, and sharing, including through electronic media. Because many questions on this topic were new to the 2012 SPPA, comparisons with the 2008 survey findings have not been attempted.

Students from DC's Levine School of Music at THEARC playing at THEARC's 5th Anniversary Gala reception. From left: Alexander Myree-Powell and Thomas Smoot. Photo by Victor Holt

MAKING AND SHARING ART: A 2012 SNAPSHOT

As in 2008, activities such as weaving, playing a musical instrument, and doing photography are among the most popular types of art-making for adults. Nevertheless, by including new questions about how Americans created, performed, and distributed art—especially through socialization and the use of technology—the 2012 survey reveals a broader spectrum of arts participants.

Sharing Art with Others

1) **Social dancing** is the most commonly reported activity among all the forms of art-making and art-sharing included on the 2012 survey.

- Nearly one in three adults (31.5 percent) danced at weddings, clubs, or other social settings.
- Among all racial/ethnic groups, Hispanic Americans have the highest rates of social dancing (36.3 percent) and account for about 18 percent of all social dancers. More than 40 percent of 18- to 34-year-olds did social dancing, and they also represent nearly 40 percent of all social dancers.

2) One in four adults (26.4 percent) e-mailed, posted, or shared **photography** in 2012, and about half that share did this for **films or videos.**

3) One in five adults (21.2 percent) e-mailed, posted, or shared music, and more than 15 percent did the same for their own photos.

Percent of U.S. Adults Who Did Social Dancing, by Selected Demographic Variables: 2012

ALL ADULTS	31.5%
Gender	
Male	29.8%
Female	33.1%
Race and Ethnicity	
Hispanic	36.3%
White	31.1%
African American	31.0%
Other	26.2%
Age	
18–24	41.5%
25–34	41.8%
35–44	32.1%
45–54	31.5%
55–64	27.1%
65–74	22.5%
75 and over	12.5%
Highest Level of Educational Attainment	
Grade School	18.1%
Some High School	21.2%
High School Graduate	25.0%
Some College	34.1%
College Graduate	40.8%
Graduate School	41.2%

Creating, Performing, or Preserving Art

1) More than 13 percent did **weaving, crocheting, quilting, needlepoint, knitting, or sewing** in 2012.

- Approximately the same share did photography for artistic purposes (12.4 percent) or did **photo editing** (13 percent). Twelve percent of adults **played a musical instrument.**

2) Roughly the same proportion of adults sang as did **leatherwork, metalwork, or woodwork** (around 8 percent). More than 6 percent did **scrapbooking**, and a comparable number did **creative writing** or created **visual art**.

3) Five percent of adults created or performed music, and just over 4 percent **recorded, edited, or remixed** music performances.

4) Roughly the same share of adults made films or videos as did editing or remixing in this medium: around 2 or 3 percent.

32%

of adults did social dancing

Art-Making and Art-Sharing Activities Ranked by Percent of U.S. Adults Who Participated: 2012

Did social dancing	31.5%
E-mailed, posted, or shared photography	26.4%
E-mailed, posted, or shared music	21.2%
E-mailed, posted, or shared one's own photography	15.3%
E-mailed, posted, or shared films or videos	13.4%
Did weaving, crocheting, quilting, needlepoint, knitting, or sewing	13.2%
Edited photographs	13.0%
Created photographs for artistic purposes	12.4%
Played a musical instrument alone or with others	12.0%
Sang, either alone or with others	8.7%
Created leatherwork, metalwork, or woodwork	8.2%
Did scrapbooking	6.5%
Did creative writing	5.9%
Created visual art	5.7%
E-mailed, posted, or shared visual arts	5.6%
Practiced or performed dance	5.1%
Created or performed music	5.0%
E-mailed, posted, or shared dance	4.9%
Created pottery, ceramics, or jewelry	4.5%
Recorded, edited, or remixed music performances	4.4%
E-mailed, posted, or shared creative writing	4.3%
Participated in a book club or reading group	3.6%
E-mailed, posted, or shared one's own music	3.3%
E-mailed, posted, or shared one's own visual arts	3.2%
Sang choral music, or in a glee club or choir	3.1%
E-mailed, posted, or shared one's own creative writing	2.9%
Created films or videos	2.8%
Used a computer, a handheld or mobile device, or the Internet to create visual arts	2.8%
E-mailed, posted, or shared one's own films or videos	2.4%
Edited or remixed films or videos	2.2%
E-mailed, posted, or shared one's own scrapbooking	2.2%
Practiced or performed classical music	2.2%
Did acting	1.4%
Used a computer, a handheld or mobile device, or the Internet to create music	1.4%
Created or performed dance	1.3%
Practiced or performed Latin, Spanish, or salsa music	1.2%
Recorded, edited, or remixed dance performances	0.9%
Practiced or performed jazz	0.9%
Practiced or performed a musical or non-musical play	0.8%
E-mailed, posted, or shared one's own dance	0.7%
Practiced or performed opera	0.3%

V. Participating in Arts Learning

This section covers lifelong learning in the arts, including classes or lessons in art subjects taken in the 2012 survey year. Because many questions on this topic were new to the 2012 SPPA, comparisons with the 2008 survey findings have not been attempted.

Antonio Douthit, a member of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, leads a class at the Center of Creative Arts (COCA) in St. Louis, where he himself recieved training. Photo courtesy of COCA

ARTS LEARNING: A 2012 SNAPSHOT

Depending on which definitions are used—whether in terms of classes or lessons, in or out of school, or whether conveyed through another method entirely—50 to 56 percent of U.S. adults have engaged in arts learning at some point in their lives. No matter how this metric is applied, though, large disparities in participation are evident by gender, race/ethnicity, and level of educational attainment. (Some of those gaps narrow when considering only adults who took art classes or lessons in the last year.) Other key differences emerge when examining the primary mode of learning for each art subject.

In- and Out-of-School Classes or Lessons

1) Half of all adults (49.6 percent) have taken an art class or lesson, whether in our out of school, at some point in their lives.

Percent of U.S. Adults Who Took an Art Class or Lesson at Any Point in Their Lives, Whether In or Out of School, by Selected Demographic Variables: 2012

ALL ADULTS	49.6%
Gender	
Male	45.4%
Female	53.4%
Race and Ethnicity	
Hispanic	30.5%
White	56.4%
African American	34.5%
Other	48.0%
Age	
18–24	58.8%
25–34	50.9%
35–44	48.9%
45–54	46.4%
55–64	49.6%
65–74	47.3%
75 and over	42.5%
Highest Level of Educational Attainment	
Grade School	8.0%
Some High School	21.3%
High School Graduate	35.6%
Some College	56.8%
College Graduate	69.4%
Graduate School	73.4%

- Forty-three percent of all adults have taken art classes or lessons in their childhood. Seven percent of adults did so in the 2012 survey year.

2) Whites, women, younger adults, and those with higher levels of education are the most likely to have taken arts classes or lessons, whether in childhood or at any point in their lives.

Percent of U.S. Adults Who Took an Art Class or Lesson in Any Subject in Childhood, by Selected Demographic Variables: 2012

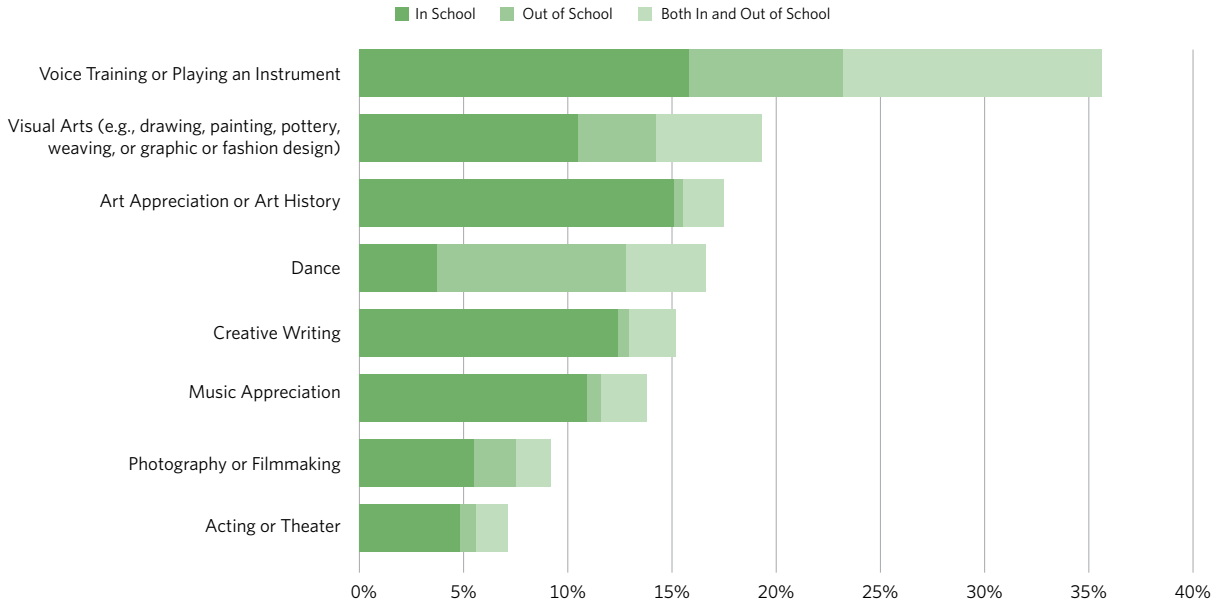
ALL ADULTS	42.7%
Gender	
Male	38.3%
Female	46.8%
Race and Ethnicity	
Hispanic	29.9%
White	49.0%
African American	31.0%
Other	39.0%
Age	
18–24	55.4%
25–34	47.3%
35–44	43.0%
45–54	39.5%
55–64	38.7%
65–74	38.7%
75 and over	31.5%
Highest Level of Educational Attainment	
Grade School	4.6%
Some High School	17.8%
High School Graduate	31.5%
Some College	49.9%
College Graduate	59.0%
Graduate School	60.7%

- Among adults who took an art class or lesson in the previous year, however, there are no significant differences in participation by racial/ethnic group.

Percent of U.S. Adults Who Took Any Arts Class or Lesson in the Last Year, by Selected Demographic Variables: 2012

ALL ADULTS	7.3%
Gender	
Male	5.7%
Female	8.9%
Race and Ethnicity	
Hispanic	6.1%
White	7.8%
African American	5.7%
Other	8.1%
Age	
18–24	16.2%
25–34	7.7%
35–44	6.5%
45–54	5.3%
55–64	6.1%
65–74	5.3%
75 and over	3.3%
Highest Level of Educational Attainment	
Grade School	0.8%
Some High School	2.2%
High School Graduate	3.6%
Some College	9.4%
College Graduate	10.7%
Graduate School	13.3%

Percent of U.S. Adults Who Ever Took an Art Class or Lesson, Whether In or Out of School, by Subject: 2012



3) Among adults who took **dance** classes or lessons at any point in their lives, most received this instruction outside school.

- For all other art subjects, the majority of classes or lessons were taken in school. Yet in the case of music classes or lessons (voice training or learning to play a musical instrument), a large proportion were likely to have occurred both in and out of school.

Other Types of Arts Learning

1) Asking about arts learning beyond classes or lessons shows a higher participation rate than asking only about receiving formal instruction.

- Fifty-six percent took art classes or lessons or learned through some other method (from friends, through a family tradition, or by teaching oneself). Discrepancies still persist by racial/ethnic group, gender, and education level.

2) **Photography or filmmaking** is the only art subject for which the majority of learning occurred without classes or lessons.

- Proportionately high levels of learning without classes or lessons also occurred in **music appreciation** and dance.

3) When learning beyond classes or lessons is taken into account, dance education—rather than **visual arts learning**—claims the next highest participation rate after music education.

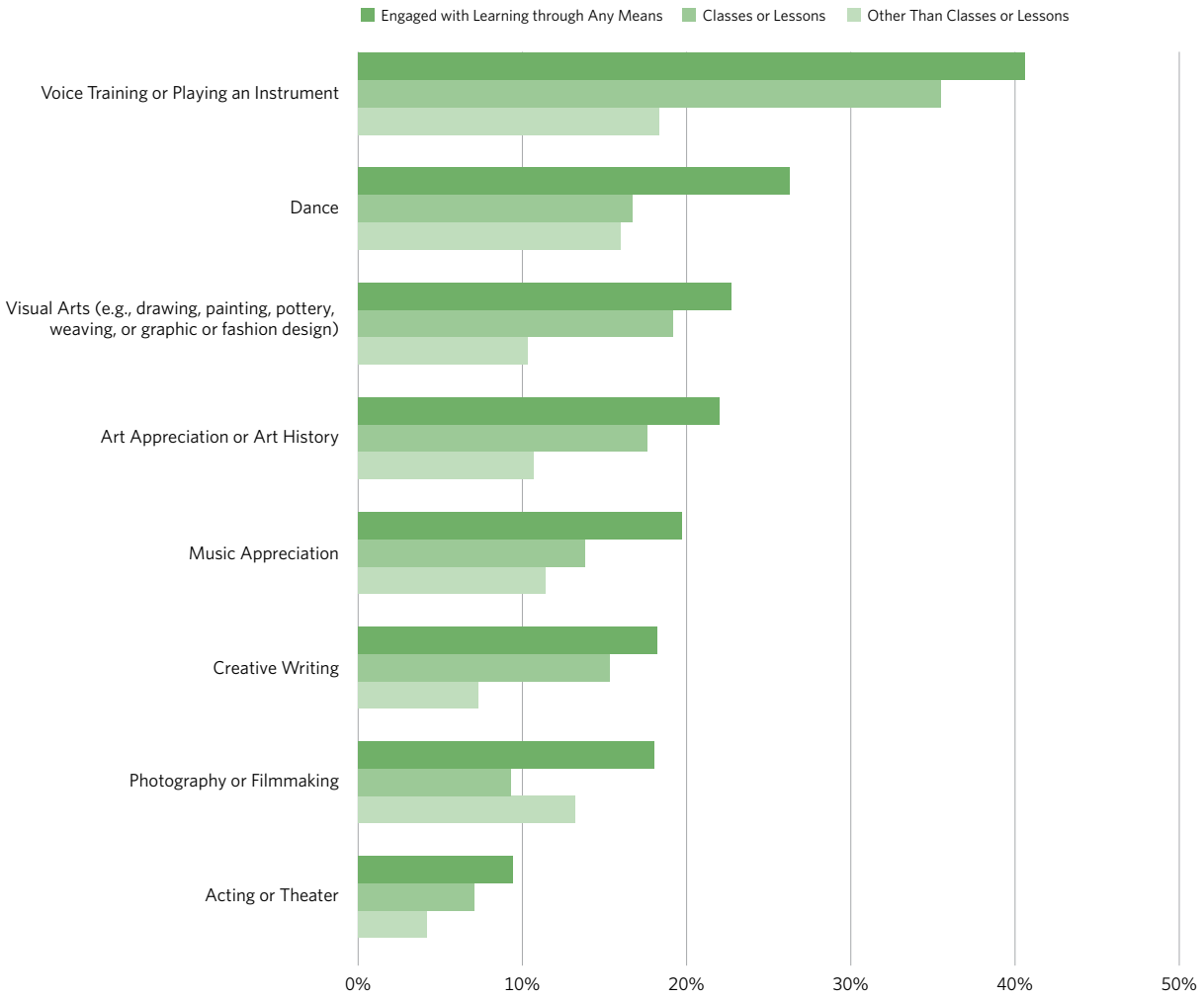
56%

of adults participated in arts learning at some point in their lives

Percent of U.S. Adults Who Ever Engaged in Learning of Any Arts Subject Through Any Learning Method, by Selected Demographic Variables: 2012

ALL ADULTS	56.0%
Gender	
Male	52.6%
Female	59.2%
Race and Ethnicity	
Hispanic	40.0%
White	61.8%
African American	43.9%
Other	53.7%
Age	
18–24	64.1%
25–34	58.0%
35–44	55.9%
45–54	50.9%
55–64	56.2%
65–74	55.8%
75 and over	50.7%
Highest Level of Educational Attainment	
Grade School	21.7%
Some High School	32.8%
High School Graduate	43.2%
Some College	62.5%
College Graduate	73.5%
Graduate School	76.1%

Percentage of U.S. Adults Who Ever Engaged in Arts Learning, by Subject and Type of Learning: 2012



Conclusions

Findings from an initial analysis of the 2012 SPPA results show that large segments of the U.S. adult population experienced at least one of various kinds of arts activity within the past year. Nearly half of the nation's adults attended at least one type of visual or performing arts activity on the SPPA core questionnaire; half of the nation's adults created, performed, or shared art of various types[16]; and more than two-thirds accessed art via electronic media. More than half of the U.S. adult population attended at least one movie, and more than half read a work of literature or a book not required for work or school.

As impressive as these top-line statistics are, they mask subtle shifts in demographic and behavioral patterns that occurred since 2008, the previous survey year. Aggregate rates of arts participation also conceal such factors as how many and what variety of Americans participate across different modes (for example, what proportion of adults access art online, but also attend visual arts events), how often they attend arts events in the course of a year (or how many books they read); and what kinds of non-arts activities they conduct.

Further, the SPPA and its host survey instrument, the Current Population Survey, include a wealth of demographic and behavioral information that can be mined for detailed characteristics of arts participants and non-participants. Also, the SPPA 2012 instrument asked other arts-related questions not covered in this report; answers to those and some of the questions referenced above, as well as geographic analysis where permitted, will appear in an NEA research report scheduled for 2014 publication.

For the present report, below is a recapitulation of key findings from each of the five preceding sections.

Attending Arts Events and Activities

- For many types of performing arts activities, attendance rates since 2008 appear unchanged. Yet declines in attending theater (musical and non-musical plays alike), crafts fairs or visual arts festivals, and art museums or galleries have caused the overall rate of visual and performing arts attendance to drop significantly.
- Non-white and Hispanic Americans saw no declines in their arts attendance rates from 2008 to 2012; on the contrary, they even saw increases in some categories.
- Moviegoing increased substantially for most demographic subgroups.

Reading Books and Literature

- Literary reading rates dropped back to 2002 levels. Poetry reading in particular has shown a pattern of long-term decline.
- As with their attendance trends, non-whites and Hispanics saw no declines from their 2008 literary reading rates.
- Older Americans reported reading books of any type at a higher rate than in 2008.

Art-Making and Art-Sharing

- Social dancing is the most popular form of art-making or art-sharing. Young adults and Hispanic Americans are among the most active in this category.
- The next most popular activities in art-making or art-sharing are e-mailing, posting, or sharing photos, music, and films or video.
- Activities such as weaving, playing a musical instrument, and taking photos "for artistic purposes" also rank relatively high.

Consuming Art through Electronic Media

- TV and radio still attract sizeable audiences for art performances or programming. Although it is unclear how many of those TV or radio offerings were accessed via the Internet, their audiences still outnumber the total share of U.S. adults who said they watched or listened to art performances or programming via the Internet.
- Relatively large numbers from all groups use handheld or mobile devices to access music and literature. Given the comparatively lower rates for accessing art directly through the Internet, this finding suggests that many Americans return to enjoy the texts or playlists they once obtained online. (They may also have used those devices to engage with arts content originally from CD or DVD.)

Participating in Arts Learning

- As of 2012, roughly half of all adults had experienced some arts learning at some point in their lives. But disparities persist by gender, race/ethnicity, and level of general educational attainment.
- A high proportion of adults who learned filmmaking, dance, and music appreciation did not take a class or lesson.

Each of these findings, and several others in this report, invite one or more research questions. Regarding arts attendance and reading, for example, one would want to know whether the long-term declines for participation in certain art forms correlate with trends in rates of artistic (including literary) production. In sum, what might be reasons for those declines in attendance and literary reading? Also, what factors accounted for the stability of attendance and reading rates among some racial/ethnic subgroups, and how might this finding shape arts participation patterns in the future? What role did e-readers and online reading play in the book-reading rate increases among older Americans? What demographic or behavioral differences do we see among people who attend large numbers of events (or read many books), compared with those who participate less intensively?

Because reliable trend data are unavailable for many kinds of art-making and art-sharing featured in this survey, future research questions based on the 2012 SPPA may want to explore demographic and/or geographic differences in arts creation, performance, and sharing. Many of these questions also apply to arts learning and to arts consumption via electronic media. Equally important are definitional issues that deserve scrutiny for future iterations of the survey: how can one more effectively capture categories of personal expression of art—across multiple platforms of technology—and how do these forms of expression (whether through arts creation, performance, and sharing, or through learning in the arts) relate to trends of live or media consumption of arts activities? For that matter, how can the survey better account for "live" and media-enabled arts experiences that occur at the same time and in the same space?

Such questions are by no means an exhaustive list, or even the most salient for arts researchers and practitioners, arts funders, and cultural policy-makers. Instead, the questions hint at the variety of unknown variables behind the statistics in this report. Not least of these variables is how the survey respondent would have described the value of the arts experiences he or she had, or how those perceptions (and the experiences themselves) align with the development of individual and social outcomes. For investigations of this scale, the SPPA alone cannot supply the answers.

Notes

1 Survey respondents were asked to exclude elementary and high school performances from their responses to questions about attending classical music, jazz, and Latin, Spanish, or salsa music performances, as well as from their responses to questions about musical and non-musical theater, ballet, other dance, and opera.

2 5.1 percent of naturalized citizens or non-citizens attended jazz performances in 2012, compared with 3.6 percent in 2008. This difference is statistically significant at the 90 percent confidence level. In 2012, 15.4 percent of U.S. adults (or 36.2 million) were naturalized citizens or non-citizens.

3 See also the NEA research brochure, *All America's a Stage: Growth and Challenges in Nonprofit Theater* (December 2008).

4 Survey respondents were asked to exclude elementary and high school performances from their responses to the question about attending a live music performance. This question was asked as part of the experimental Core 2 module of the survey.

5 In another question new to the SPPA, adults were asked about the venues where they had attended music, dance, or theater performances or gone to see art exhibits within the preceding 12 months. They were told to include any elementary or high school performances they attended.

6 These estimates may change slightly because of more sophisticated weighting techniques that will be applied for production of this report's sequel, scheduled for release in early 2014.

7 Table not shown in this report.

8 Theatrical market statistics from the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) show that 225 million people (including children) in the United States and Canada went to the movies at least once in 2012, and just over 221 million went at least once in 2011. According to MPAA, this proportion—roughly two-thirds of the U.S./Canada population above two years of age—is comparable to proportions in previous years. In terms of revenue, however, U.S./Canada box-office sales were $10.2 billion and $10.8 billion in 2011 and 2012 respectively, while sales were $9.6 billion in both 2007 and 2008. The 2012 SPPA covered the period of July 2011 through July 2012, while the 2008 SPPA covered May 2007 through May 2008. Top-grossing films during the SPPA 2012 reporting period included: *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows, Part 2; Marvel's The Avengers; The Hunger Games;* and *Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn, Part 1.*

9 Table not shown in this report.

10 Survey respondents were asked to exclude from their responses any books read for work or school.

11 See the NEA's research brochure *Reading on the Rise: A New Chapter in American Literacy* (January 2009), which reports that despite overall literary rates climbing from 2002 to 2008, the poetry-reading rate dropped by 31 percent over that period.

12 The experimental Core 2 module of the 2012 SPPA asked respondents whether they had read more than one book, and if so, which types of books. Results from these questions cannot be compared directly with the responses from Core 1 of the survey, which was used to generate results for this report's earlier findings about reading.

13 Table not shown in this report.

14 Respondents were given examples of handheld or mobile devices, including a "smart phone, MP3 player, e-book reader, or a laptop, notebook, or tablet computer."

15 Among adults who used a handheld or mobile device in the past year, racial/ethnic group differences in the rates of visual/performing arts consumption via these media were not statistically significant.

16 As explained on page 7, activities related to art-making and art-sharing fell into two separate modules of the 2012 SPPA survey instrument, and could not be merged for analysis in time for this report. Within each of those two modules, however, the proportion of respondents who reported doing at least one art-making or art-sharing activity is roughly 50 percent.

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