



## Arts Data Profile #10: Results from the Annual Arts Basic Survey (2013-2015)

### Research Brief #2: Personal Performance or Creation of Artworks

In 2014, 45 percent of U.S. adults, nearly 108 million people, personally performed or created artworks. These activities may have included: playing a musical instrument; performing or practicing singing; doing acting or dancing; making visual art (including paintings, sculpture, photography and films); doing crafts; or doing creative writing.

In total, the share of U.S. adults who personally performed or created artworks remained stable from 2012 to 2014. Over the two-year period, however, certain categories of performance or creation have declined. For example, the percentage of adults doing social dance (i.e., dance performed at weddings, clubs, or other social settings) declined by more than 6 percentage points, while the share doing weaving, crocheting, or other textile arts fell by 2.5 percentage points.

This Issue Brief uses data from the 2012 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (SPPA) and the 2014 Annual Arts Basic Survey (AABS) to report trends in the personal performance and creation of artworks. AABS is a new survey, which, like the SPPA, is conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau as a supplement to the Current Population Survey.<sup>1</sup>

Note: The 2014 AABS estimates for personal performance or creation of artworks cannot be easily compared to estimates from the 2008 SPPA (or earlier waves of the SPPA), due to changes in the SPPA survey questionnaire. With certain exceptions, the 2014 AABS questionnaire was designed similarly to the 2012 SPPA. However, where 2008 and 2014 question-items were worded similarly, trend data are reported in the text below.

## Summary

Between 2012 and 2014:

- There was no significant change in the percentage of adults who: performed or practiced singing; did acting; took artistic photographs or created films; created visual arts such as paintings or sculptures; or did creative writing.
- There were small declines in the share of adults who: played a musical instrument; performed or practiced dance; created textile arts such as weaving or crocheting; created leatherwork, metalwork, or woodwork; or created pottery, ceramics, or jewelry.
- The percentage of adults who did social dancing (such as dancing at weddings, clubs, or other social settings) fell by more than 6 percentage points.

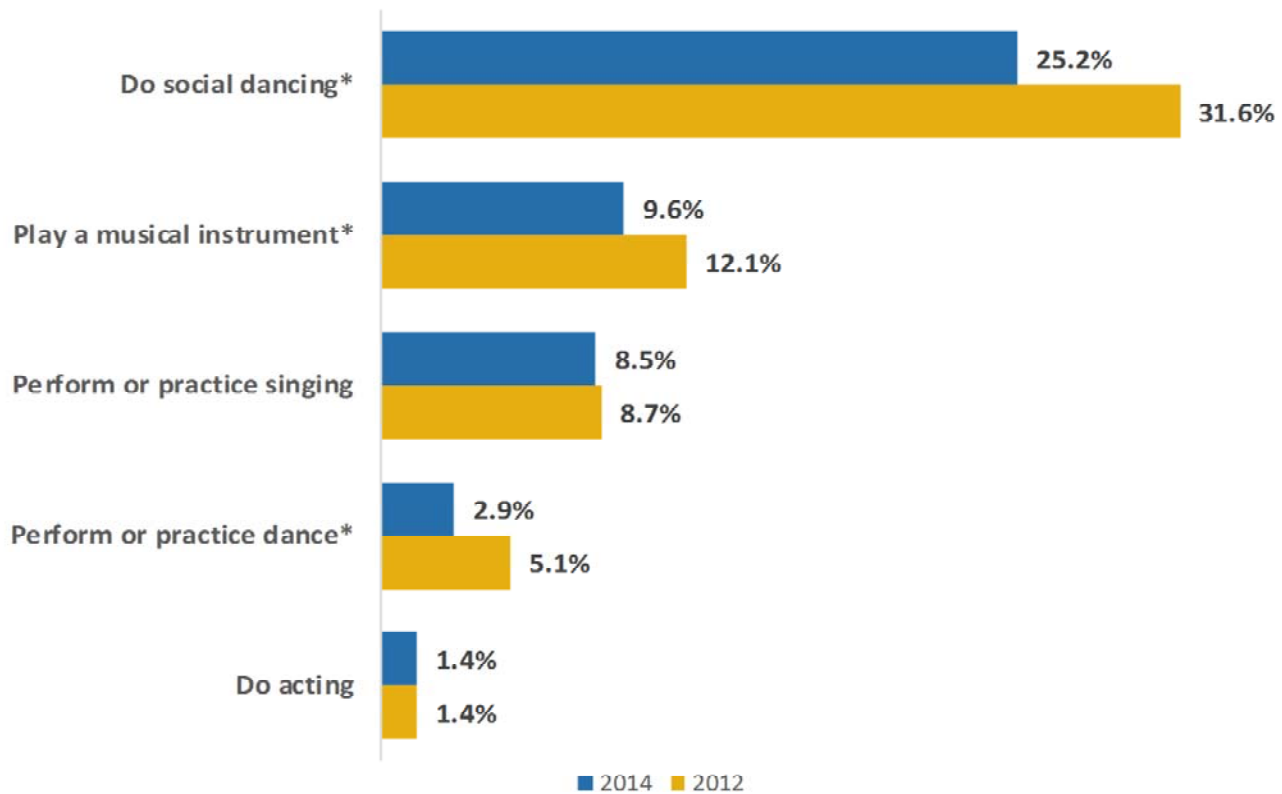
### Performing Art

In both 2008 and 2012, roughly 12 percent of U.S. adults reported having played a musical instrument. In 2014, that rate fell to 9.6 percent. A similar percentage-point decline is reported for the share of adults who practiced or performed dance. In 2008 and in 2012, 5 percent engaged in this activity. But in 2014, the share fell to 2.9 percent.

Social dancing, an activity first captured by the 2012 SPPA, and which refers to dancing at weddings, clubs, or other social settings, also declined in popularity. In 2012, nearly 32 percent of adults did social dancing. In 2014, the rate was 25 percent.

Nevertheless, personal arts participation through singing and acting showed no declines. In 2014, 8.5 percent of adults performed or practiced singing, and 1.4 percent did acting. Virtually the same corresponding rates were reported in 2012.

## Percent of U.S. Adults Who Personally Perform Artworks: 2012-2014



\* Indicates statistically significant difference at 95 percent confidence.

Data sources: Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (SPPA) and Annual Arts Basic Survey (AABS), National Endowment for the Arts

### Personal Creation of Artworks

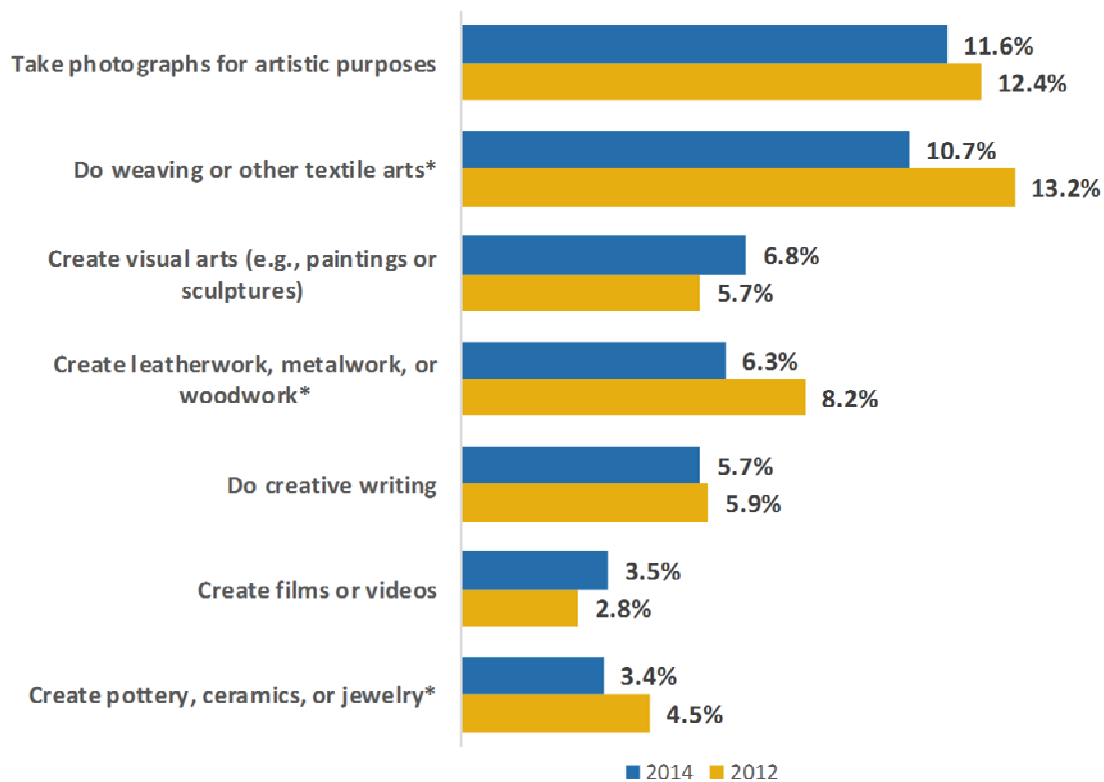
Engaging in textile arts such as weaving and crocheting is among the most popular forms of personal arts creation. In 2008 and in 2012, 13 percent of the U.S. adult population created textile art. In 2014, the share dipped to 10.7 percent.

Small declines were also evident in the share of adults who did leatherwork, metalwork, or woodwork, or who created pottery, ceramics, or jewelry. The share who did crafts such as leatherwork fell from 8.2 percent in 2012 to 6.3

percent in 2014. And rates of creating pottery, ceramics, or jewelry dropped from 4.5 percent to 3.4 percent over the two-year period.

For several other types of arts-creation, however, personal participation rates are holding steady. For instance, the share of adults who, for artistic purposes, took photographs—also a popular art form— was roughly 12 percent in both 2012 and 2014. The share of adults who created film was also steady: approximately 3 percent in both years.

## Percent of U.S. Adults Who Personally Create Artworks: 2012-2014



\* Indicates statistically significant difference at 95 percent confidence.

Data sources: Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (SPPA) and Annual Arts Basic Survey (AABS), National Endowment for the Arts

Additionally, trends in creating visual arts (e.g., paintings or sculptures) are stable. In 2014, the percentage of adults engaged in this activity was 6.8 percent, a rate comparable to the 5.7 percent reported for 2012.

Similarly, approximately 6 percent of adults did creative writing in 2012 and in 2014.

Although stable between 2012 and 2014, the share of adults creating visual arts and doing creative writing had been slightly greater in 2008. That year, 8.6 percent of adults created visual art, while 7 percent did creative writing.

### Endnote

<sup>1</sup>For more information, see *Comparing the Annual Arts Basic Survey with the Survey of Public Participation in the Arts* [hyperlink], included in NEA Arts Data Profile #10.