



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

Research Brief #4: Gender, Race and Ethnicity, and Age of Arts Participants

This research brief uses the 2014 and 2015 waves of the Annual Arts Basic Survey (AABS) to report the gender, race and ethnicity, and age distributions of arts participants—adults who attended visual and performing arts events and read literature (2015 AABS), and those who participated through personal performance and creation of artworks (2014 AABS).

In addition to showing participation rates by demographic characteristic, this brief reports an “index of representativeness,” which measures a demographic group’s over- or under-representation in the total number of arts participants, relative to that group’s share of the U.S. adult population.¹

Summary

- With notable exceptions, women participate in the arts at higher rates than men.
 - * Female attendance rates at live music, theater, and dance events, and at art exhibits, are 3 percentage points greater than male attendance rates.
 - * While women compose 52 percent of the U.S. adult population, they are nearly 60 percent of literary readers (readers of plays, poems, shorts stories, or novels).
 - * 19 percent of women do weaving, crocheting, or other textile arts, versus fewer than 2 percent of men.
 - * Men are more likely to play a musical instrument—11 percent versus 8 percent of women.
 - * Men are also much more likely to create leatherwork, metalwork, or woodwork—11 percent versus 2 percent of women.
- For some events, male and female attendance rates are similar.
 - * Men and women visit buildings, neighborhoods, parks, or monuments—specifically for historic or design value – at an identical rate (27 percent).
 - * Male and female movie-going rates are comparable (58 percent).

- Non-Hispanic whites are highly represented in most forms of arts participation captured by the AABS.
 - * These whites compose 65 percent of the U.S. adult population, but they are 74 percent of the audience for live music, theater, or dance performances.
 - * There are, however, certain forms of arts participation favored by African Americans and by non-Hispanic, non-white people of “other” races or ethnicities (e.g., Asians, American Indian and Alaskan Natives, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders, and people of two or more races).
 - ◇ People from these other racial/ethnic groups are highly represented among adults who play a musical instrument and those who do creative writing.
 - ◇ African Americans are highly represented among adults who practice and perform singing.
 - * Hispanics are underrepresented in all forms of arts participation tracked by the AABS.
- Compared with other age groups, young adults aged 18-24 are more likely to attend performing arts events, to see movies or films, and to make artwork of their own—whether through playing a music instrument, creating visual artworks, and doing creative writing.
 - * While 32 percent of U.S. adults attend live music, theater, and dance events, nearly 37 percent of adults 18-24 go to these events.
 - * The share of young adults that play a musical instrument is 14.1 percent—a rate exceeding that of adults of all ages who do this activity—9.6 percent.
- Literary reading rates are highest for adults aged 65-74.
 - * Among adults who read literature, the share that fall in this age group, relative to its share of the U.S. adult population, has been rising.
 - * People aged 65-74 make up increasingly larger shares of the nation’s literary-reading population.

Index of Representativeness

*The index of representativeness measures over- or under-representation of a particular group in a population of arts participants, compared with its share of the total population. An index of “1” indicates that the composition of arts participation exactly reflects its share of the population. **If the index is positive, the group is over-represented; if the index is negative, underrepresentation is evident.***

For example, women compose 51.8 percent of the U.S. adult population. Yet women make up 59.9 percent of literary readers. In this case, the index of representativeness is:

$$[(59.9 / 51.8 * 100) - 1]$$

Women, therefore, are overrepresented in the population of literary readers by 1.156, or 15.6 percent.

Gender of Arts Participants

Similar to findings from the SPPA, the AABS shows that women generally participate in the arts at higher rates than men do.² In 2015, for example, 33.2 percent of women attended a live music, theater, or dance performance, while the performing arts attendance rate for men was 29.9 percent.

That same year, 20.2 percent of women attended an art exhibit. The corresponding rate for men was 17.1 percent.

Women also compose a large majority of adults who read literature (poetry, plays, short stories, or novels). A female literary-reading rate of nearly 50 percent, compared with a male literary-reading rate of 36 percent, contributes to a higher representation of women in the U.S. adult population of literary readers.

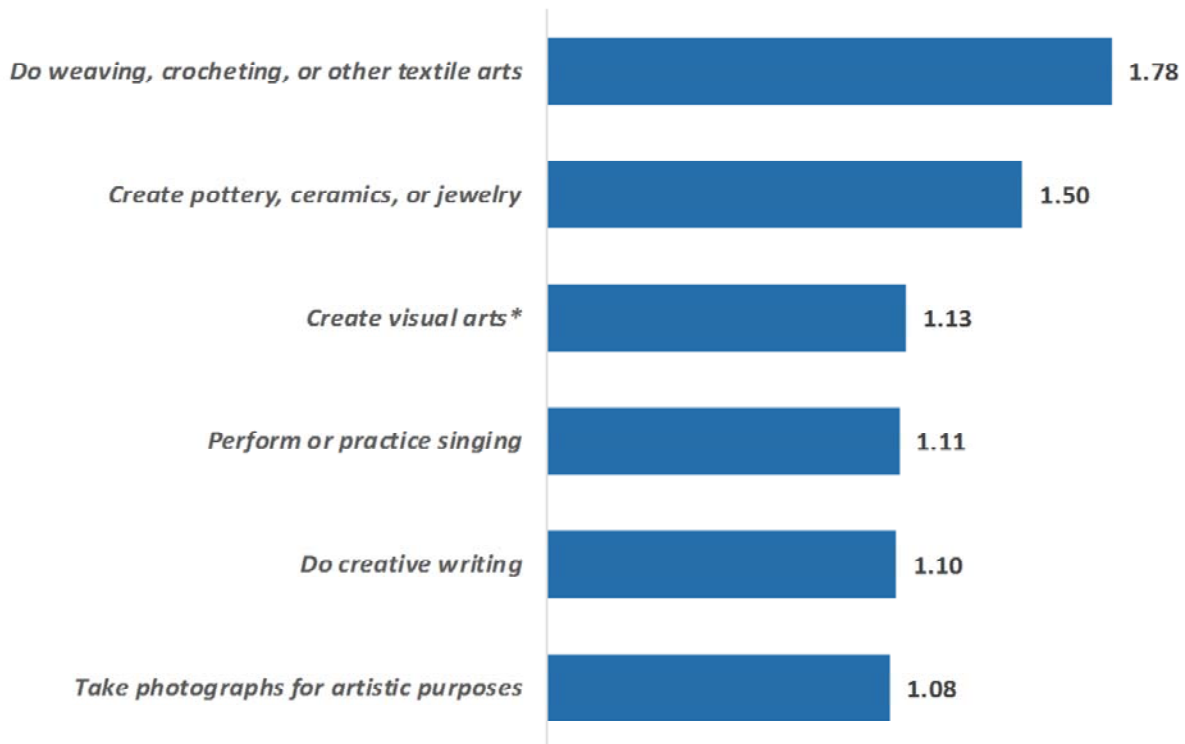
In 2015, women composed 51.8 percent of the U.S. adult population, yet they were 59.9 percent of all literary readers. The index of representativeness for women readers was 1.16, indicating a strong presence.

Women are also highly represented among adults who create pottery, ceramics, or jewelry; take photographs for artistic purposes; or do creative writing. However, among creators of artworks, female representation is strongest for weaving, crocheting, or creating other textile arts. In 2014, women composed 92 percent of adults engaged in that activity. The resulting female index of representativeness was 1.78.

There are, nonetheless, several categories of arts participation in which men engage more. In 2014, for example, 11.3 percent of men played a musical instrument, compared with 8 percent of women. And men compose a disproportionately large percentage of the population creating leatherwork, metalwork, and woodwork; this share resulted in a 2014 index of representation of 1.68.

Moreover, men and women participate in the following activities at equal rates: visiting buildings, neighborhoods, or other sites for their historic or design value (27 percent visit); going to movies or films (58 percent attend); and doing acting (1.4 percent participate).

Index of Representativeness for Selected Categories of Personal Performance or Creation of Artworks, Women: 2014



An index of "1" reflects a perfect correspondence between the share of women in the U.S. population and their presence as art-makers.

* Includes creating paintings and sculptures

Data source: Annual Arts Basic Survey (AABS), National Endowment for the Arts

Race and Ethnicity of Arts Participants

Non-Hispanic whites are highly represented among adults who engage in most of the arts categories covered by the AABS. Examples include attending live performing arts events, in which the 2015 index of representativeness was 1.14 for whites, and literary reading, in which the index was 1.16 for this group.

Still, there are exceptions. In 2014, 9.2 percent of Non-Hispanic African Americans performed or practiced singing. That participation rate resulted,

for this racial group, in an index of representativeness of 1.07.

Additionally, non-Hispanic people of "other" races (a category that includes Asians, American Indian and Alaskan Natives, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders, and people of two or more races), are highly represented in several arts-participation categories.

While 9.6 percent of all U.S. adults played a musical instrument in 2014, 11.5 percent of adults in “other” racial/ethnic groups played. People from other racial/ethnic backgrounds were also active as art exhibit-goers and as creative writers.

In 2014, the percentage of Hispanics doing acting was 1.4 percent, a share comparable to that for non-Hispanics who acted. However, Hispanics were underrepresented in all other arts participation categories captured by the AABS.³

Age of Arts Participants

The AABS shows that 18-24-year-olds tend to participate in the arts at higher rates than adults in general, particularly when it comes to attending live performances, book-readings, or poetry or storytelling events, and creating artworks or performances of their own.

In 2015, relative to their share of the U.S. adult population, young adults were overrepresented among performing-arts attendees by nearly 17 percent. Similarly, adults aged 44 and younger were overrepresented at live book readings and poetry and storytelling events—by approximately 20 percent.

While 9.6 percent of all U.S. adults played a musical instrument in 2014, the rate among 18-24-year-olds was 14.1 percent—leading to an index of representativeness of 1.48 for this group. The index for young adults was even larger for creating visual artworks such as paintings or sculptures (1.71); doing creative writing (1.97); and acting (2.14).

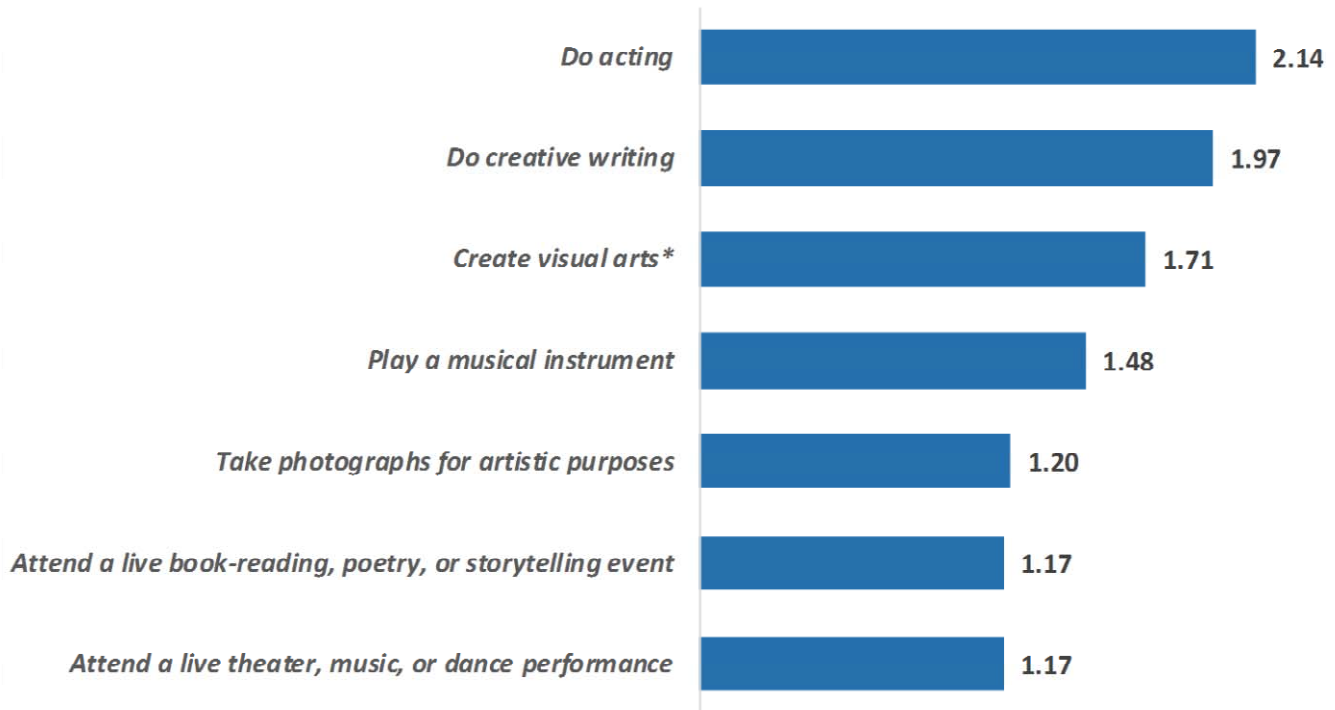
Still, there are examples of older adults being highly represented among arts participants. Most notable is weaving, crocheting, and other textile art.

Engagement in this activity generally rises with age, resulting in high shares of older adults among the population of textile art-makers. The 2014 index of representativeness for this art form was 1.27, 1.43, and 1.51, respectively, among adults aged 55-64, 65-74, and 75 and older.

In 2015, 43.1 percent of all adults read literature. That same year, however, the literary-reading rate among adults aged 65-74 was 49.1 percent, leading to an index of representativeness of 1.15 for this group. In 2015, 65-74-year-olds were the only age group highly represented among literary readers.⁴

In the years tracked by the Survey of Public Participation in the Arts and the Arts Annual Basic Survey, adults in this age group have made up increasingly larger shares of all literary readers.⁵ For younger adults, the index of representativeness has remained fairly stable or exhibited no discernable trend.

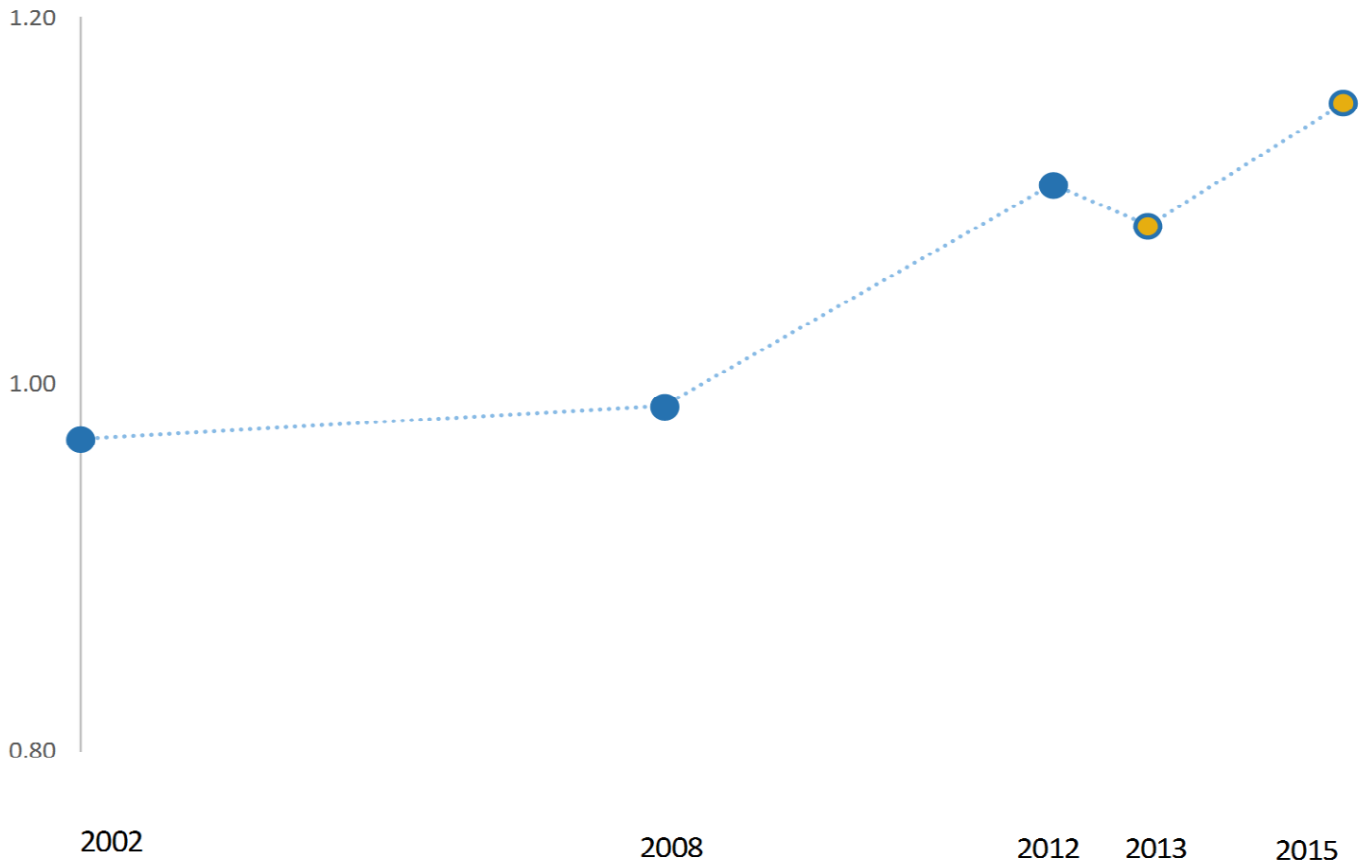
**Index of Representativeness for Selected Arts Attendance
and Personal Performance and Creation of Artworks Categories,
Adults Ages 18-24: 2014-2015**



* Includes creating paintings and sculptures

Data sources: Annual Arts Basic Survey (AABS), National Endowment for the Arts

Index of Representativeness for Reading Literature, U.S. Adults Ages 65-74: 2002-2015



Note: Questions about literary reading are worded similarly, though not identically, in the SPPA (2002-2012) and the AABS (2013-2015)

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

Endnotes

¹For an illustration of the index of representativeness, see Stern, M., *Age and Arts Participation: A Case Against Demographic Destiny*, also referenced in the Addition Readings section of ADP #11.

²See *A Decade of Arts Engagement: Findings from the Survey of Public Participation in the Arts, 2002-2012*.

³The Survey of Public Participation in the Arts, a more detailed arts participation survey than the Annual Arts Basic Survey, showed that 18.1 percent of Hispanics attended a Latin music concert in 2012. That rate was 13 percentage points greater than the U.S. average Latin-music attendance rate of 5.1 percent.

⁴Among literary readers, the index of representativeness was 1.02 for adults ages 55-64 and 25-34.

⁵See *Comparing the Annual Arts Basic Survey with the Survey of Public Participation in the Arts*, included in Arts Data Profile #10.