



**Independence and Interdependence
A Snapshot of the Visual Arts Scene in Sheffield**

**"Sheffield is
a good place for an artist
to live and make work —
economically, it is a relatively
cheap place to live, it is a nurturing,
friendly city, and its location
and proximity to nature are
inspirational."**

Kate Dore, Director, Yorkshire Artspace

Art City

This report is the second of a three-part series commissioned to highlight Sheffield's huge wealth of creative talent. Sheffield is a city of makers, its creativity reflected in the input from both universities, the range of festivals in the city and its spirit of independence. These three reports cover music, art and the beer industry, all of which cross over and link creatively between each distinct sector.

This snapshot of the visual arts scene in Sheffield is part of the University's cultural engagement strategy that has contributions from the City & Cultural Engagement team and academic colleagues. The report looks at ways we can create the conditions to support artists to thrive here and make their voices heard.

We are indebted to John Clark, author of the report and to researcher Ellen McLeod, as well as the many hundreds of artists who have participated.

In the Year of Making 2016 we are sharing these findings and enabling everyone in the visual art sector and beyond to explore how, collectively, the city continues to inspire artists, support growth, provide routes to market and add vibrancy. It demonstrates that we truly are a City of Makers.

Thank you for being part of it.

Professor Vanessa Toulmin, Director of City & Cultural Engagement, University of Sheffield.



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The visual arts make up a sector largely unaccounted for and one perhaps populated by those who prefer to be unaccountable.

It resists statistics, avoids headcounts and won't be pigeon-holed: it is a veritable counter culture to the socio-political tendency of everything and everybody being countable and accountable.

Unsurprisingly then, the initial focus of this research was the now oft quoted article from The Guardian in December 2011, which stated that Sheffield, “now has the most artists’ studios outside London”, and is variously cited as “the most artists” or “the most artists per square mile”. These are upbeat claims and seemed a good place to start when looking at the vibrancy of the visual arts in the city.

As we tried to unpick that quote, the resounding response from other cities, quickly echoed in Sheffield itself was, “It depends what you mean by an artist”. And initially, this seemed the most common of ground – a presumption that artists not only can't be counted but that they will resist attempts to define what they do. In spite of that, as this four month research exercise drew to a close, there was also another unifying voice: artists do want to count and they want their voices, collective and individual, to count and be heard.

What we are able to present in this research report is a snapshot based on feedback from a lot of voices. We have gathered a large amount of data from almost 500 individual artists and arts professionals in the city, which helps build a picture of the rich tapestry of Sheffield's visual arts. Our research also extended beyond the city, looking at regional and national trends in the form of reports and figures, to offer some kind of context for what we have reported on locally.



Key areas of interest:

- the number of practicing artists in the Sheffield region
- the number of studio complexes and artists in those studios
- artist's practice and relationship to income and other jobs
- demographics including age, gender, postcode
- to examine the idea that Sheffield is a city of artists and makers
- to find out what works and doesn't work for artists in the city
- to make recommendations for further research and action

Key findings and statistics:

- Sheffield's art sector is currently expanding but in recent years has been outpaced by its near neighbours.
- £2.9 million was raised for capital investment, or earmarked for investment, in two new spaces in 2015 – ROCO and The Art House.
- Site Gallery is aiming to invest £1.7 million in an ambitious expansion programme beginning in 2016.
- Sheffield has 19 studio groups providing 362 artists with studios. There is outstanding demand.
- Sheffield has over 50 small independent arts organisations.
- Sheffield's artists' studios collectively turnover more than £1 million each year.
- Millennium Galleries is the most visited free attraction in the North of England with twice the number of visitors as Yorkshire Sculpture Park and half as many again as The Baltic.
- Sheffield is the fourth largest city in England and Wales but has the third lowest population density of any major city.

This report brings together an enormous amount of local research data, as well as setting it in a national context: it reveals something of the scale and reach of the visual arts in Sheffield, highlights the main strengths and weaknesses, and questions some of the mythology surrounding Sheffield as a city of artists.

Our Approach

Our brief was to examine the artistic vibrancy of the city, focusing upon the organisations and individuals who make up the sector, paying particular attention to artists' studios and their role in the arts economy.

The city is defined as the Sheffield Postcode Area for the purposes of this research and therefore takes in satellite towns of Chesterfield, Worksop, Rotherham, Barnsley, and nearby towns and villages of the Peak District. This is an area with a population of 1.35 million according to the 2011 Census.

The main methods of collecting data were one to one interviews, targeted surveys, and desk based research.

Our starting point was a series of interviews with 13 individuals involved in running artists' studios. The studios were then asked to play an active role in endorsing the research via social media.

We conducted further interviews with over a dozen artists and arts organisations in the city, as well as others outside which filled in gaps in the survey based research.

We embarked upon and continued to build a database of artists throughout the research phase, with the list eventually containing over 940 names. We are aware that this list is incomplete. Nevertheless, 390 artists responded to our survey (from a predicted artist population in the city of between one and two thousand based on national figures) so this represents a healthy sample.

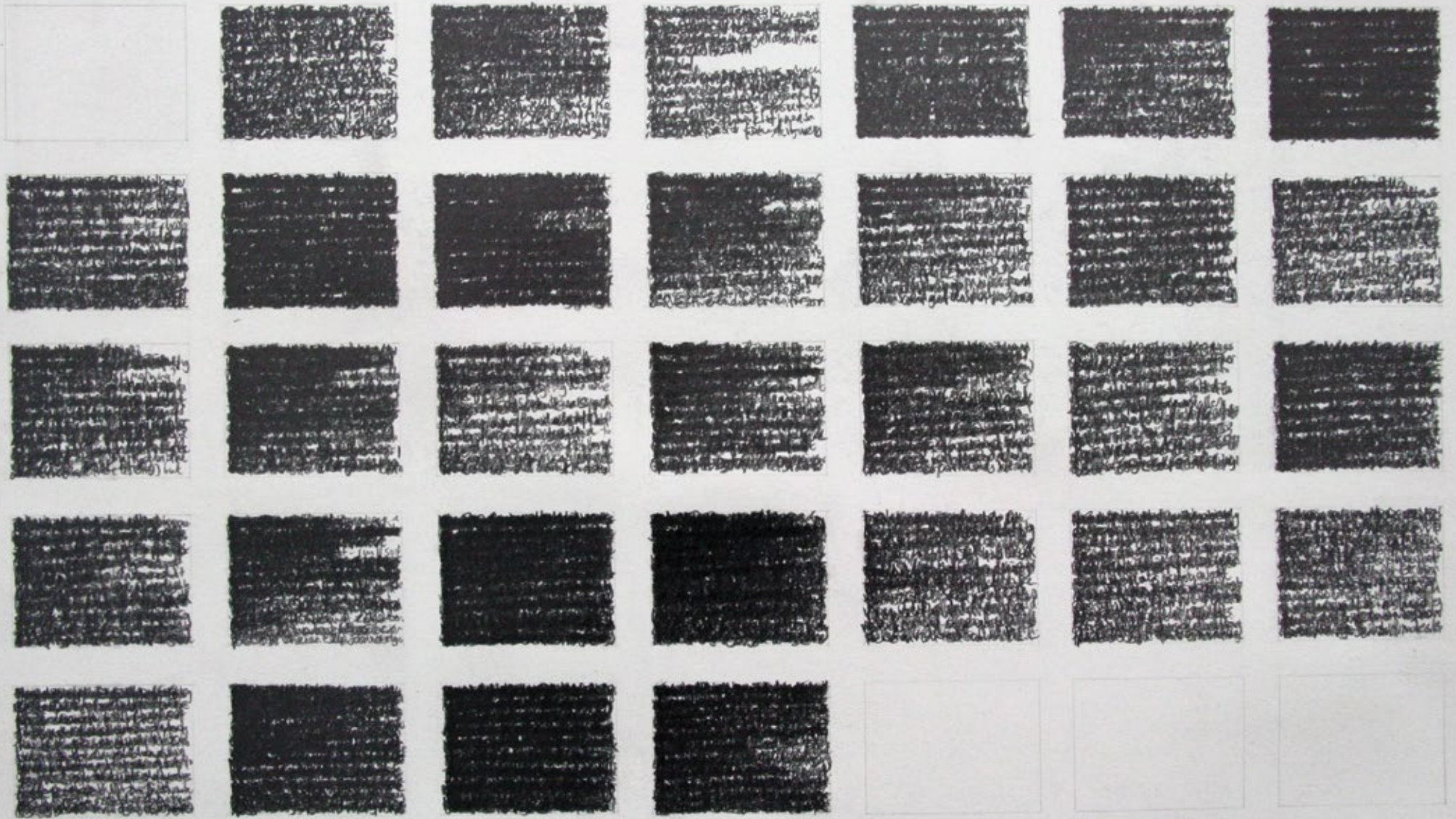
In terms of limitations of the research:

- we have no idea how many artists came across the survey link and did not respond nor how many artists simply did not come across the link. We do, however, know such figures for artists in studios.
- our reach in terms of individual artists was limited to those having an online presence or being part of a network. Rural artist communities that are more isolated and do not connect with organisations in the city will be poorly represented, as will artists and groups who seldom engage with the main Sheffield art scene.

390

artists responded to our survey





January 2013

1. WHAT IS AN ARTIST?

National studies looking at the Arts often lump 'artists' under the 'Creative Industries' banner, a catch-all category grouping largely unrelated practices. An example of this locally can be seen in the city's labeling of a 'Cultural Industries Quarter'.

Other studies, which narrow their field of reference, rarely compare like with like, so artists are grouped with performers, craftworkers, heritage workers, musicians or any combination of the above. Artists are rarely the sole focus of research. When they are, all studies seem to begin with and stress the difficulty of defining their terms of reference.

The problem of definitions and labeling can be seen in the 'most official' of statistics. According to the 2011 Census there are 54,021 artists in England and Wales, with men and women almost equally represented. This figure is based on a reliable population count and a very high Census return rate and is extrapolated from responses to a number of questions about "Occupation". Therefore it should be reasonably accurate. The Census questions concerning 'Occupation' are as follows:

Answer the remaining questions for your main job or, if not working, your last main job. Your main job is the job in which you usually work (worked) the most hours

- In your main job, are (were) you: an employee? self-employed or freelance without employees? self-employed with employees?
- What is (was) your full and specific job title?
- Briefly describe what you do (did) in your main job.
- At your workplace, what is (was) the main activity of your employer or business?
- In your main job, what is (was) the name of the organisation you work (worked) for?
- If you are (were) self-employed in your own organisation, write in the business name.
- In your main job, how many hours a week (including paid and unpaid overtime) do you usually work? 15 or less; 16 – 30; 31 – 48; 49 or more.

However, any artist who works more hours in any other job will clearly not be classed as an artist in Census statistics. Furthermore, the questions are so business-related that any artist with another job may find it easier to describe their non artistic work. The category "artist" is also a problem: it includes illustrators but not craft-workers. In reality, the Census figure is neither comprehensive nor entirely satisfactory but it provides a baseline for any research.

Unlike writers, actors and musicians, artists have no single national representative body and no collective voice. A newly formed trade union, Artist's Union England (AUE), is hoping to address this and describes its membership as follows:

In order to join Artists' Union England:

- You have to be a professional visual or applied artist.
- You have to live and work in England, and for a minimum of 6 months.

In addition, you need to meet at least 3 of the criteria below:

- You are regularly making and exhibiting artwork.
- You have received professional grants or awards.
- You are involved in organising self-created professional opportunities, for example, running an artist-led studio or project.

- You have a degree/BTEC/Diploma in visual or applied arts at undergraduate and/or post-graduate level.
- Your work is socially engaged, you work as a participatory or community artist.
- You have been commissioned as an artist by a public institution.
- Your artwork has been purchased by a public collection.
- Your artwork has been reviewed or featured in an art journal, magazine, newspaper or on-line curated platform.
- You are represented by a gallery.
- You have taken part in a recognised residency or artist placement scheme.

Rather than defining the word "professional", the AUE leaves it open to qualification in that each artist must meet at least 3 of the criteria given. This definition of an artist draws upon criteria already used by the more established Scottish Artist's Union, but would clearly allow part-time artists, craft-workers, and those earning little or no income from their practice to be members.

There are several other organisations representing artists, offering a mixture of advocacy, networking support and information. Two of the more prominent are Axisweb and a-n. Axisweb is clearly aimed at 'contemporary' artists and applications are assessed for:

- Distinctive visual qualities.
- A meaningful subject or concept.
- Technical accomplishment or successful realisation of ideas.
- Evidence of enquiry and reflection.
- A critical framework that is 'contemporary' rather than 'modern'.
- Good photographic documentation.
- A CV showing evidence of your professional activity.
- Awareness of current debates and issues in visual arts practice.
- A clear and informative statement about your practice.

a-n (an online news and information platform) employs the term 'professional artist' but then uses a check list similar to AUE to define this, and extends membership to all "visual and applied artists".

Other organisations represent specific sectors of the visual arts such as the Association of Illustrators and the Live Art Development Agency: their membership is defined by their specific area of concern. DACS is a visual arts rights management organisation. It collects and distributes royalties to artists and campaigns on their behalf. Its membership is complicated due the varying types of royalty payments it makes to both artists and their estates. Nevertheless, its membership numbers over 15,000 artists and estates in the UK. Members tend to be professional artists and practitioners across the visual arts spectrum including fine artists, sculptors, photographers and illustrators. It does not define the term 'professional'.

There is a very loose alliance of key national membership associations called Visual Arts UK but even they admit to extending "across the major areas of visual arts and crafts practice".

One of the only national bodies working directly with visual artists across a diverse range of practices is the National Federation of Artist's Studio Providers (NFASP). Having recently lost its funding, the organisation is currently little more than a website but it remains an invaluable source of assistance, advocacy and information.

NFASP's membership represents a diverse sector - from small artist's groups to large studio providers managing property portfolios. A 2010 NFASP survey listed 144 studio organisations managing 252 buildings and providing 5,450 studios for 7,250 artists in the UK, although key NFASP members point out that the survey was not comprehensive and is now out of date.

NFASP Membership was based upon 'affordable studio provision', defining studio members as:

An affordable studio provider is a group or organisation that manages buildings, or parts of buildings, providing low-cost studio space to non-commercial artists who are generally on low incomes.

and an artist thus:

A non-commercial artist is one who makes art work primarily for its creative, cultural, intellectual or philosophical value, rather than its commodity value.

NFASP's definition therefore allows both full-time and part-time artists to be counted amongst their number although it is artists in the middle of the economic range that are most likely to be in studio groups.

Beyond such definitions and more broadly within the social sciences, groups are defined on the one hand in terms of **interdependence** - people who interact with one another, share similar characteristics, and collectively have a sense of unity, or via some form of self-election in terms of those who identify themselves as "**members of the group**".

Taking the above into account, in our correspondence and survey mail-outs, we used the term **artist/maker** to avoid the research becoming thwarted by nuance. We have consulted professional partners throughout the city region and allowed individuals to 'opt-in' or 'opt-out' of being the subjects of this research. Our focus throughout has been on individual practitioners and not companies or commercial enterprises and we have excluded actors, writers, musicians, graphic and other designers unless they have an art practice in addition to that work.

This would seem to be consistent with the existence of professional bodies representing those other occupations and means that whilst we have cast the net wider than the simple gallery exhibiting artist to include street/graffiti artists, sonic and live artists, cartoonists, illustrators, painters, sculptors, ceramicists, jewellers, and textile artists, we feel that there is homogeneity in the study, that it is anchored by a common sense approach and that the issue of definitions would in any case be evident in the detailed survey responses.

The disparate nature of the visual arts sector as witnessed in its representative bodies nationally is echoed in the sector at a local level.

The number of artists in Sheffield

Given the contingencies already outlined above, it would be a brave man or woman who would attempt to quantify how many artists live/work in Sheffield. Our original brief was to research both the studio sector and the size and vibrancy of the artistic community but it may be best to call time on one of these three aims as far as this research is concerned.

Information from the 2011 Census listed 54,021 artists in England and Wales. Given the population of England and Wales as 56,075,912 one would expect there to be 1308 artists in Sheffield (S Postcode region with a population of 1,358,186) if artists were spread evenly across the country, and more if Sheffield had proportionately more artists. It would of course be foolish to assume artists are spread evenly around the country when they are not spread evenly around Sheffield. In our survey of 390 artists there were more than eight times as many artists in S7 as S5 although the population of S5 is over 3 times higher than the population of S7.

In 2014, DACS distributed £15 million in royalties to 19,000 artists and artists' estates. DACS provided us with a breakdown of Sheffield based members. Out of 4,149 UK based artists and estates that DACS directly represents across Artist's Resale Right and Copyright Licensing, only 20 (0.5%) are Sheffield based. DACS also makes royalty payments (called Payback) to artists based on the re-use of works, such as photocopying etc. Of 12,343 UK based artists receiving such payments, at least 123 (1%) are based in the Sheffield area. Trying to make correlations based on these figures would be a statistician's nightmare. What we can infer, based on this large sample of artists, is that there is nothing to suggest that Sheffield has a particularly high number of 'professional' artists.

A 2013 study entitled "Artists in Greater Manchester" stated as one of its specific aims, "to assist towards finding out how many artists are living and/or working in Greater Manchester". The remit of the Manchester survey was much narrower than this present survey with a more quantitative bias.



Despite that, the artist population in Manchester was estimated at somewhere between 1300 and 3000. Whilst the researchers felt there was clear scope to narrow this down, they also stated that it would always remain somewhat unknown.

Axisweb, an online artist's platform, registers exactly the same number of artists in Sheffield (41) as Manchester, out of its 2000 plus Membership: however, by no means all artists list their place of residence and Axisweb does not collect such data. Of more significance, in what otherwise might seem a pointless statistic, Axisweb is very much a professionally oriented contemporary art platform and the fact that Sheffield makes up at least 2% of its membership is significant when Sheffield makes up only 1% of the total population.

Our own database of artists in Sheffield numbered over 940 at the point we ceased to add to the list of names. Based on the number of art students in Manchester, the number of artists in studios and the gross population of GM we would estimate that in comparison Sheffield is likely to have fewer artists: perhaps somewhere between 1200 and 2900. Had our sole aim been to count the number of artists, I'm sure we too would have been able to narrow it down, but that would neither make the figure any less contingent nor necessarily any more useful.

"Do not put your faith in what statistics say until you have carefully considered what they do not say".

William W. Watt



2. ARTISTS' STUDIOS

There are currently at least **19** organisations providing studio spaces to artists in Sheffield. They vary in size from those offering a large single shared space or a handful of smaller studios to organizations that provide spaces across multiple buildings.

The studio groups vary not just in size but also in terms of governance, day to day running, public access and the other work they do. The types of building used as artists' studios range from the modern and purpose-built through to renovated and adapted office or industrial space, right down to meanwhile-use temporary accommodation sometimes lacking basic facilities. Prices reflect this range and Sheffield is not atypical when compared to the other cities in this sector as a whole.

Many of the studio providers also support complementary or additional spaces. Most have galleries of some sort, many can be hired or are used for performance or other events, some have selling spaces whilst others are even more multi-use, renting office space to commercial businesses or even running nightclubs or tertiary enterprises. The numbers we have for studios in the city are based on figures given by studio managers relating to artists/makers and this accounts for the discrepancy between the number of studios and the number of artists in our figures.

We also know that many artists work from studios in buildings that would not be classed as artists' studios, per se – these range from multi-use industrial complexes to short term office lets. Such artists may well be very successful and simply go about their work quite apart from any of the networks that exist in the city and they will be joined by an even greater number of artists working from their homes, sheds, or of no fixed abode who render the total number of artists in the city uncountable.

Name of org.	Studios	Artists	Description
35 Chapel Walk	3	2	Gallery with 3 studio units
Bank Street Arts	26	13	Studio complex with individual units, shared jewellery co-op and gallery space
Bloc	55	70	Studio complex with individual units and gallery space
CADS	100	16	Studios & offices spread over 6 buildings. Gallery and events space
KIAC	20	24	Large shared studio spaces & gallery space
Mesters Works	14	4	Studio complex built into old factory space
Portland Works	32	5	Large studio complex with workshop-type spaces and offices
ROAR	10	6	Studio complex, with a co-operative working space and gallery
S1 Artspace	23	23	Studio complex and gallery
Sheffield Print Club	4	3	4 studios and a co-operative space with shared printing facilities
The Hide	1	4	Large shared studio space with event/exhibition space and café
Vulcan Studios	7	7	Blacksmiths forge plus seven other individual studios for artists
Yorkshire ArtSpace	155	136	Largely individual studio spaces, as well as 3 communal supported studio spaces across three buildings in different parts of the city
Hangingwater Studios	1	8	Large open-plan studio space
West studios	5	13	Five large shared units
The Harley Gallery	24	19	Individual studio spaces
Butcher Works	3	3	Large specialist educational complex with individual studios, teaching spaces, gallery, café, shop
SOAR Works	5	5	Individual offices and studio/workshop space
ROCO	10	1	Brand new Creative Hub. Co-operative. Opening November 2015. Mixed Use – businesses and makers
Totals:	498	362	

Key findings

- In Sheffield, 19 studio groups provide a total of 498 studios to 362 artists. (128 survey respondents (38%) stated that they work from a studio)
- The average price of a studio space is £7.40 per square foot: the highest rate being £14.00/sq ft and the lowest - £4.00/sq ft. All of the studio groups interviewed receive business rates relief.
- There is little information about additional demand as most studios do not keep waiting lists and those that do reported them as out of date and doubled up. Of the groups interviewed, a total of 49 artists are on waiting lists, whilst SUM Studios have a waiting list of 60 artists but no current development plans to convert the next phase of buildings.
- The turnover of studio holders in Sheffield is low. The studio groups interviewed stated that they were either at capacity all year round, or only ever had one or two available spaces at any one time, with vacant spaces often reserved for occupants to move into at a later date.
- Of the organisations in the interview sample there were 20 paid members of staff: 10 employed on a part-time basis, and 10 full-time. Two organisations interviewed were run on an entirely voluntary basis, with a total of 5 unpaid staff members. Of these staff members, most are practicing artists. Others undertake additional work including teaching and lecturing, arts fundraising, consultancy, curating, and mentoring.
- 8 of the organisations interviewed worked with volunteers. There were a total of 45 volunteers working in 8 organisations. The main volunteer tasks are studio maintenance, installing exhibitions and staffing events.

Many of the studio groups also offer other arts-based facilities/spaces to bring in revenue, for example:

- 10 have galleries
- There are a total of 10 communal studios where artists can share facilities/equipment and space.
- 10 have designated events spaces, where they host evening events, hire out space or run workshops.

In general, and with the exception of Yorkshire Artspace, Sheffield's artists' studios are still very much DIY in nature. Of those interviewed, several had developed organically after a building taken on had proven larger than needed and was then sub-let to artists and others in need of workspace. Mesters Works is an example of this: the former spring factory was originally leased by events management company Mesters Events. Upon realising that they had more space than required, they began subletting to artists and other creative practitioners. Similarly, CADS developed when founder Steve Rimmer took on three spaces in Kelham Island to house equipment for his music promotions company. The spaces proved too large so he invited other artists to take on two of the studios. An increasing demand for space led to the creation of CADS.

In general, the studio groups define their own remit with only Yorkshire Artspace receiving core funding from Arts Council England. Sheffield has a very high concentration of studios in the central S1 area, which adds to the perception that there is a lot going on in the city. Few other cities in the UK can have the concentration of old and underused buildings in its central area as Sheffield: though this looks set to change over the next few years.

Yorkshire Artspace is the largest studio provider in Sheffield, one of the most established groups nationally and a founder member of NFASP. YAS restricts applicants to individuals "currently involved in [their] own creative visual art/craft work for a significant portion of [their] time or engage[d] in the production of art/craft work within a community education context." Yorkshire Artspace has a selection process though says it only occasionally turns down applications at interview when the applicant can't demonstrate how they meet the selection criteria.

S1 Artspace is comprised of (mainly) open plan studios, aimed at encouraging collaboration. It has a focus on contemporary art, with longstanding and close links to Sheffield Hallam University's Fine Art Department. It has a permanent gallery space on site and a temporary gallery space at Park Hill: S1

Artspace commissions new work by contemporary artists working locally and internationally.

Bloc Studios is an established studio provider housing visual artists along with, more recently, contemporary designers and makers. It contains Bloc Projects, a newly enlarged and extended gallery space showing a mix of local and national artists with a contemporary art slant.

CADS is Sheffield's second largest studio provider and now has 100 studios across 7 different buildings though it caters more for musicians than visual artists per se. CADS has a wider social remit.

"I think with our remit, artistically, we want to increase access at the very bottom, and increase confidence and skills in marginalised groups. We have more of a social kind of policy. The people we serve are more creative in general rather than being specifically artists."

KIAC is a collective of visual artists studios in an old warehouse in a now developing part of the city, just outside the centre. It hosts regular exhibitions in its gallery space and runs weekly classes.

Bank Street Arts provides space for artists, makers, writers and arts related businesses and although small is the most diverse in its remit. In terms of exhibitions, Bank Street Arts stages on average 60 exhibitions a year.

The Harley Foundation has established 3 sets of subsidised studio spaces alongside an established gallery within the historic Welbeck Estate near Worksop in Nottinghamshire.

ROCO is a brand new space opening at the end of 2015. It is a co-operative and aims to provide the space, tools and route to market for artists and makers: it houses studios, shared making spaces and retail outlets under one roof. It seems likely to focus on the business of art and making.

Does Sheffield have more artist's studios than any other city in England outside London?

It would seem unlikely. We have tried to gather figures for Sheffield's two largest neighbours, Manchester and Leeds, by way of comparison. It would appear that Sheffield does have more studio provision than Leeds but less than Manchester. The answer to the above question is heavily contingent on how you define an artist, a studio and a city or city-region. There may well be more artist's studios in Brighton than any other city outside London if you take into account a city's relative population.

In 2006, research in the form of a mapping exercise carried out by Acme studios in London (in conjunction with NFASP), did in fact report that there were more artists' studios in Sheffield than any other city-region in England, outside London. However, that includes studios in Worksop (S Postcode) and the data was based on figures supplied from each city. In Sheffield, the figures were based upon the broader definition used by Yorkshire Artspace (counting artists and craftworkers), whereas had the NFASP/Acme's definition of an 'artist' been adhered to then the final figures would certainly have been lower for Sheffield.

What is significant here is that ten years ago, Sheffield appeared to be well ahead of other major cities in terms of its studio provision whereas today it appears to have slipped behind.

Despite the fact that studio provision in the city has risen over that period, it has been outpaced by some of its Northern neighbours. Sheffield still has a concentrated volume of studios in the city centre and more studios than many other large cities of a similar size but others are closing that gap.

Open Studios Communications, the international network of open studios, was founded by Sheffield artist Keith Hayman who inaugurated Open Up Sheffield 17 years ago.





3. GALLERIES AND SELLING

How you define a 'gallery' can be as problematic as defining an artist. If it is 'anywhere art is displayed' then every temporary venue would need to be included, every café displaying and selling art on its walls, every pop-up space from church hall to Winter Gardens and every fair at which there is some art on display.

An in depth analysis of the breadth of artistic vibrancy in the city would require a measure of all of these elements and more. That is beyond the scope of this study. What we have done is to map those places whose remit or main objective is to exhibit and sell art and focus on a select few to support our artist based research.

Sheffield's most prominent galleries are The Graves and Millennium Galleries run by Museums Sheffield, and Site Gallery. Graves Gallery has been home of Sheffield's municipal visual art collections since 1934. It stages a handful of large scale shows each year, usually Modern and contemporary art and visitor numbers for 2014/15 were 52,550.

Millennium Galleries is a series of purpose built galleries in the heart of the city, adjacent to the popular visitor attraction, The Winter Garden.

There is an eclectic mix of permanent collections including decorative metalwork and The Ruskin Collection, pop up shops and exhibitions, events, and a large gallery space that hosts a handful of exhibitions per year, including touring shows and exhibitions curated by Museums Sheffield.

The Millennium Galleries is something of a thoroughfare, linking Sheffield Hallam University and major transport hubs to the city centre, so whilst visitor numbers can appear distorted, the spaces do attract a public not otherwise on the look out for art galleries. Site Gallery is the city's flagship contemporary art gallery but is small in comparison to those in other cities. It specialises in moving image, new media and performance. Site stages up to half a dozen exhibitions each year, usually of cutting edge contemporary art by national and international artists. Sheffield has at least 20 other smaller galleries and these are an eclectic mix of commercial shop-style galleries devoted to the work of a single artist or genre, and spaces that can be hired within studio complexes. Only four of these (S1A, BSA, Bloc and SIA) have a consistent and permanent programme of non-commercial exhibitions not arising principally from hire.

In terms of major art venues, Sheffield lags well behind other cities in the visual arts. In 2008, Liverpool was European Capital of Culture and boasts an offshoot of the Tate on its quayside. Newcastle / Gateshead has the Baltic; Margate, Turner Contemporary; Walsall, The New Art Gallery; and Norwich, The Sainsbury Centre. Bradford and Manchester have major art mills.

Closer to home Wakefield has The Hepworth and Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Leeds has The Tetley and Henry Moore Institute, whilst Hull is set to be UK City of Culture in 2017. Such buildings and accolades do not automatically translate into much for artists working on the ground in these cities but they do raise each city's profile in the visual arts and they do bring both inward investment and visitors.



We don't shout about some things enough but there is also a tendency to fall back on myths.

Jane Dawson, Development Officer,
Sheffield Creative Guild

Selling Art

We conducted three in-depth case studies which largely focussed on selling work, in part because this had been a recurring theme in our artist's survey. We selected very different organisations, Cupola Gallery, Open Up Sheffield, and Art in the Gardens and used a combination of interview, supplied data and a targeted survey during this phase of the research.

What follows is a brief summary; one which chimes with aspects of the larger artists' survey while providing some contrasting ideas and views.

What?

Cupola Contemporary Art (CCA) was established in 1991 by Karen Sherwood, who set up the gallery after graduating in fine art in Sheffield. It is primarily a selling and exhibiting gallery, and has an adjacent picture framing business. Cupola stocks work by over 300 local, regional, national and international artists.

Open Up Sheffield (OUS), the annual open studios event has been running in Sheffield since 1998. It claims to be, "one of the largest free events in the region". Open Up runs over two weekends and offers the public an opportunity to visit artists in their workplace whilst artists are able to both showcase and sell their work. Approximately 100 artists participate in the event each year; the majority are painters, ceramicists, and sculptors.

Art in the Gardens (AitG) is an annual art market held in Sheffield's Botanical Gardens. It claims to be "arguably the largest outdoor art exhibition in the North of England". The event was first run in 2004 and has been held on an annual basis for the last 11 years. A survey completed by 41 stallholders (from 100 contacts made during the 2015 event) informed the third case study.

Who?

OUS is a grass roots, artist-led and run event. It is publicised primarily through a print brochure and relies upon its own resources. AitG is organised by the city council's large events team: participation is more expensive than for OUS but footfall was 9000 visitors in 2015, each paying £6 admission to what is ostensibly a selling event.

CCA first opened its doors due to a lack of provision locally.

"There was nowhere to sell or show contemporary art. So [we] decided to put on a show above a butcher's on Wolsteholme Road. 60 people came to the opening, and they bought things. The things we were selling weren't expensive, but they were unusual. Based on this I decided that people were buying art but they weren't buying art in Sheffield because they couldn't, there wasn't an outlet for it."

It has developed much over the years, and customers are now a mix of local people and those from further afield. Their demographic is however interesting.

"The largest group of people that buy artwork is other artists/creatives. They're not the highest spenders, but they are the largest group. The second largest group is people who work with those who have learning difficulties, or those who work in mental health services...The third group is academic interested, people who are educated to a certain level, often those who work in universities, a noticeable proportion of whom are scientists. The fourth group is the self-employed. There's one character trait that joins them all, and that's strength of their own opinion. People massively underestimate the strength of character needed to buy something someone else may not like. I learned this over years. I see it time and time again."

Of those who responded to the AitG survey, all but 2 regarded themselves as artists although only 57.5% cited art as their main source of income. 42.5% had other sources of income and were mainly part-time artists.

Other income streams included running workshops, teaching and pensions. Almost half of the participants visit similar markets throughout the year. 47.37% (18) attend between 1 and 4 similar markets a year, with 10.53% running stalls on a monthly basis. The majority of those participating in OUS work from home and only a small percentage are in large studio groups.

How Much?

Art in the Gardens and Open Up Sheffield host events where artists are responsible for selling their own work, without commission but they do of course pay to participate. AITG costs between £185 and £385 and OUS £95. Some artists will effectively end up paying more in fees than they earn from sales if they don't sell enough work.

We know little about sales at OUS other than that it varies greatly from artist to artist.

"Sometimes artists make over £1,000, a glassmaker last year made £3,000"

The reported turnover by artists at Art in the Gardens, based on our survey, varied enormously, from as low as £10 to as much as £4,500. Of the 35 respondents who answered the question the average turnover was £821.00 each out of a total of £28,729.50. Cupola has built its customer base and reputation over a 24 year period. It has gained more financial stability in each year of operation:

"My turnover grew 30% year on year right from the word go ... my first year's turnover was £27,000. Now total turnover is about £170,000. Last year's gallery sales were £130,000, including the artists' amount."

Where?

Open Up Sheffield is primarily a Sheffield based event aimed at a predominantly local audience. Cupola Gallery stocks work by a lot of local artists but has a much wider reach. Art in the Gardens has a high level of participation from Sheffield artists (29 respondents on our survey, 70.73%). 75% of those work from home. 20% work from a studio, and 5% worked elsewhere.

Karen Sherwood of Cupola said that there is a perception that location is a problem for an art gallery. Our survey suggests that S6 has the highest number of Sheffield artists in terms of postcode region. Despite that,

"People still say 'Hillsborough is a strange place for an art gallery', not a week goes by where someone doesn't say that. There are more artists living and working in S6 than anywhere else in the city."

We also asked interviewees about problems encountered. With respect to competitors, Karen stated that there was an issue in recent years due to pop-up galleries, fairs and markets not having the overheads that come with fixed premises.

"Basically things have changed a lot because, yes, there is an increase in the number of venues to view and buy artwork. The biggest change is pop up shops and markets. Many do not charge a realistic sales commission because they are not sustainable businesses, so artists often, to their own detriment, undercut the market price for their work. "

For Open Up Sheffield however, the biggest competitor was seen as the large studio groups who are better funded and therefore can undercut participation fees of a self financed grass roots event.

"I think Sheffield is lacking something ... because of the sort of groups that are set up in the city and the way that they visualise themselves. I don't know how you'd make them work together ... because there is competition in the city it gets diluted. We need to all be behind something big to make it work."

Sheffield is seen as being supportive and friendly both by and for artists but as a place where artists have to work hard and rely on their initiative to show and sell art.



Cupola Gallery celebrates its 25th Anniversary in 2016 and has sold over
£2 million
worth of artwork, much by local artists.



4. BEYOND THE GALLERY

Kid Acne's Kill Your Darlings exhibition at Museums Sheffield in 2011 attracted over 50,000 visitors.

Beyond the buildings, Sheffield is outpaced by other cities in terms of major art events. Liverpool hosts an internationally acclaimed art biennial, Manchester a major International arts festival bringing in global names, Sheffield missed out in its bid to be the first UK City of Culture and major touring exhibitions such as The Turner Prize bypass Sheffield in favour of other cities.

Sheffield is the fourth largest city in England, a lot of artists live and work here and yet this is not reflected in the institutions and resources the city has to offer. Major venues and events attract a disproportionate amount of funding to a region and although Sheffield misses out in this respect, it does have a very resilient arts sector.

In art education, for example, Sheffield is very strong. 80% of research in Art & Design at Sheffield Hallam University is regarded as world leading and internationally excellent (REF 2014), one of the highest scores in the UK. There are around 225 students studying a mix of BA, MA and PhD degrees every year. Elsewhere in the city-region there is also Higher Education provision at colleges in Sheffield, Norton, Chesterfield, Rotherham and in Barnsley, where the Open College of the Arts is also based.

There are over 400 students studying art at foundation level and above in the city region, more if related subjects are taken into account.

The greatest resource in the visual arts is artists and Sheffield is rich in terms of both breadth and numbers. Sheffield has a large number of small arts organisations and a very dynamic, if small scale, independent art sector. In addition to the large quantity of artists' studio providers, The Sheffield Galleries and Museums Trust is a £4 million pound business.

Art Sheffield hosts a small contemporary arts festival every two or three years and alongside other festivals which also include some visual art, this makes for a rich cultural programme (festivals include, but are not limited to, Off the Shelf, Festival of the Mind, Sensoria as well as a host of smaller DIY style festivals that also include visual art).

Sheffield is internationally recognized for events such as DocFest and The Sheffield International Artist's Book Prize, there are several innovative artists' residency programmes in the city, it is the home of acclaimed performance groups Forced Entertainment and Third Angel (despite the city not having a live art/ performance venue), and it has no fewer than 50 visual arts organisations city wide.

Sheffield is without doubt under resourced but its artists and arts scene is very resourceful. It retains a DIY feel and in general is small in scale. This, however, results in a high turnover of arts organisations.

In the four months it has taken to research and write this report several new arts organisations have appeared and several others have disappeared. Over recent years no fewer 12 small independent spaces (galleries and studios) have disappeared whilst even more have opened up and established organisations have grown, shrunk or moved premises.

Whether this current state of flux is exaggerated by the bleak economic picture on a national level or is a reflection of the transient nature of many arts organisations would require further research. Change, renewal and new ideas might put a positive spin on a dynamic and fast moving area and arts organisations may well lack solid business plans, nevertheless this degree of turnover reflects some of the difficulties the visual arts experience in the city and this was echoed in our survey by the dozens of artists struggling to make a living here.

5. ARTISTS' SURVEY

A total of 390 Sheffield based artists completed a detailed online survey. All respondents were asked to verify their postcode and this was used as the basis for defining the geographical reach – all S postcodes were included.

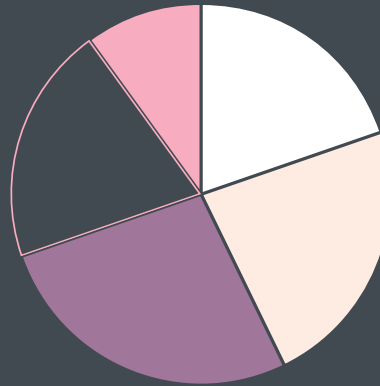
684 artists were sent a direct link to the survey whilst others received the link as a mail-out from third party organisations or through Social Media. The link was also shared on a designated Facebook page. There was a good spread across the sample in terms of age of respondents. 60% of respondents were female.

Over half of all respondents live or work in only 4 postcode areas – S1, S6, S7 and S11 – these postcode areas do not correspond well with the city's districts: S6 includes Walkley and Hillsborough whereas Nether Edge is divided between S7 and S11. It is unclear whether the number of artists recorded in outlying postcodes simply reflects the poor reach of the Survey.

73% of respondents have a degree or qualification relevant to their practice.

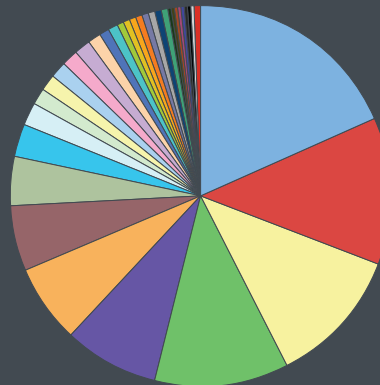
This is one of the key criteria used by organisations such as Unions and trade bodies and represents a solid sample group. 61.94% (153 respondents) have a BA related to their practice, 22.67% (56) have an MA and 5 have a PhD. 44 respondents have other related qualifications such as Diplomas, City and Guilds, NVQ. Almost half (46.7%) of those who responded did their degree or qualification at a Sheffield-based institution.

Number of respondents by age group



Age	No. of respondents
34 or under	74
35-44	88
45-54	101
55-64	84
65 and over	39

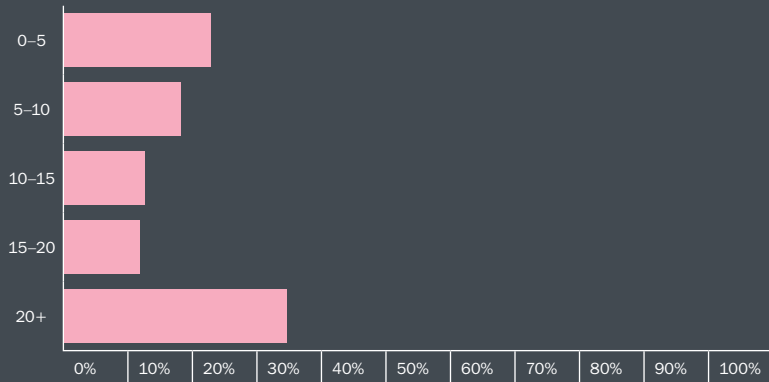
Postcode of respondents



No. of respondents													
1	2	3	4	5	7	10	15	20	23	29	41	45	66
S9	S18	S12	S36	S5	S4	S3	S17	S2	S10	S8	S7	S1	S6
S14	S21	S20		S13							S11		
S33	S25			S35									
S42	S26			S40									
S44	S41			S80									
S60	S66												
S61	S74												
S64	S75												
S70													

Q4 How many years have you been a practicing artist?

Answered: 362 Skipped: 28



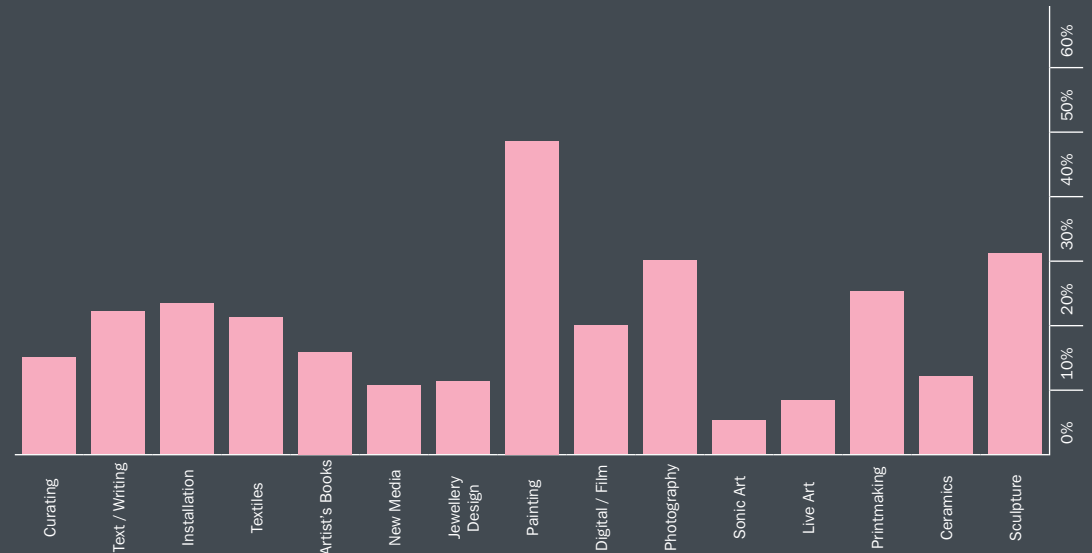
There was also a good spread in terms of experience. 40.6% have been practicing artists for 10 years or less and 34.25% for over 20 years.

In terms of artistic practice, the sample again reveals a good cross section of disciplines. Whilst some practitioners come from what might appear to be more traditionally 'craft' sectors (eg. jewellery), the majority are from visual arts disciplines and have a mixed practice. The largest individual medium is painting.

Over half of the sample stated that they work from home while over a third (37.65%) rent a studio space (128 respondents). 7.35% work from a communal or shared studio space and 3.82% (13 respondents) are not based anywhere (for example graffiti artists, those who work with commission-based sculptures). Just under half (45.34%) of those who rent a studio use it on a full-time basis.

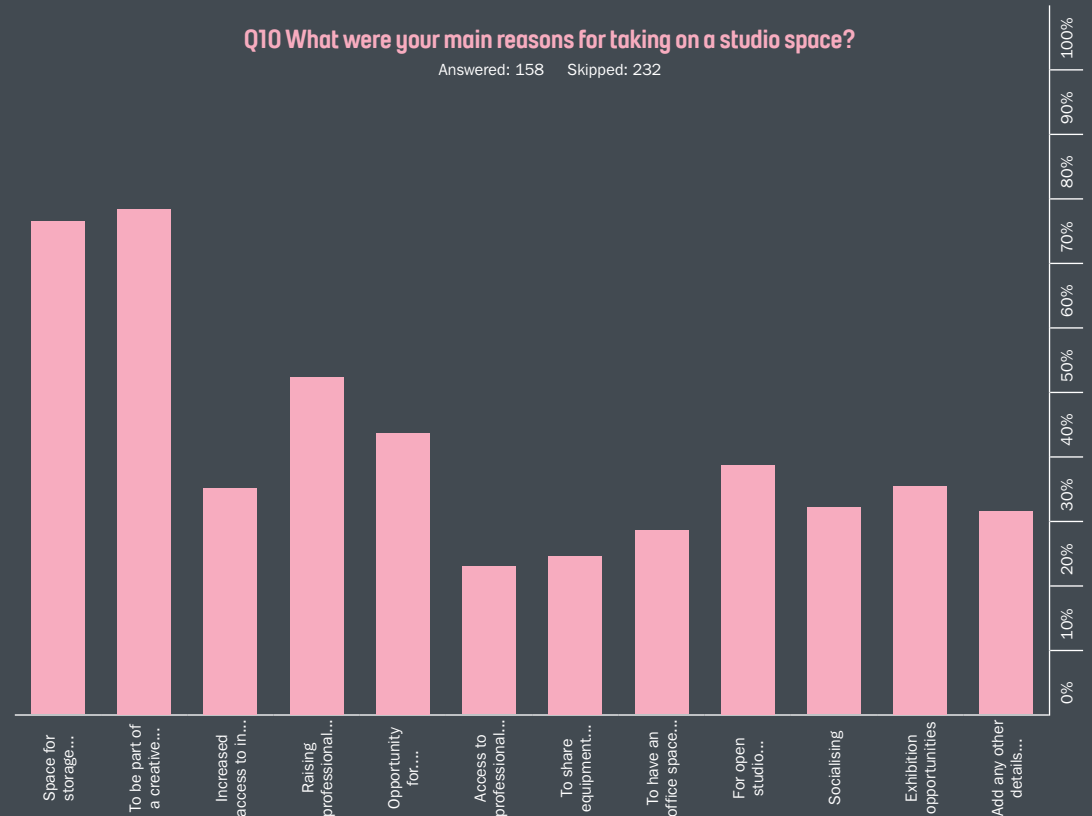
The reasons artists rent studios are both practical and social. Nearly 80% stated that they take on a studio space for storage of equipment and materials (77.85%) with almost the same figure (79.11%) reporting that it is to be part of a creative community.

Additional comments reveal that for many respondents a studio space is a place away from home and free from 'distractions'.



Q10 What were your main reasons for taking on a studio space?

Answered: 158 Skipped: 232



Answer Choices	Responses	
n/a - my practice is my only source of income	15.68%	53
Running workshops for the public	22.78%	77
Public art commissions	7.99%	27
Other funded projects	11.54%	39
Residency	3.25%	11
Teaching for an institution that's related to your practice	20.41%	69
A part-time job that is unrelated to your practice	23.96%	81
A full-time job that is unrelated to your practice	9.17%	31
Other (please specify)	32.25%	109

Total Respondents: 338

Almost a quarter of those surveyed generate the majority of their income from their art practice whilst over 40% generate little or nothing. A great deal more research would be required to reveal what this says about the type of work artists do and the relationship to income but we know from national statistics that artist's salaries are exceptionally low and many live below the poverty line. It is particularly telling that almost a third of respondents to the question, "Which of the following contribute towards generating your income?" gave their reason as 'Other'. In the main, these artists either used pensions, other state aid or are supported by a partner.

Finally, it would seem from the figures that many artists who earn little or no income from their practice do exhibit and show their work.

Most respondents show their work locally, with almost a half showing UK wide and over 20% internationally.

How artists view the city

The final two questions in the artist's survey were open-ended and required a qualitative response. Common themes were identified, grouped and counted, and quotes that were particularly revealing or typical for each theme are highlighted below.

Firstly, we asked artists about their view of Sheffield as a city in which to live and work: the responses were overwhelmingly positive. The common themes identified were as follows:

- A Supportive Community
- Great Location
- Affordable



"A very supportive city"

Artists in the city feel that the community, both artistic and wider, is supportive. 187 respondents mentioned the following: a high number of artists and a strong artist community; an interested and supportive community/public/city; lots of opportunities for artists (e.g. exhibiting, events, workshops); opportunities for collaborative working; a diverse range of disciplines practised within the city; the high quantity of studios.

"Sheffield has an amazing community feel to it- "Everybody knows everybody". From a collaborative, business and networking point of view, this is invaluable. There are great opportunities for creatives, and the "friendliness" of the city only serves to increase the chance of being able to make the most of the opportunities available."

"Strong network links, encouraging community feel."

"There is an excellent network of people to work with and learn from."

"Generally speaking, the artistic community in Sheffield is friendly and supportive to one another and not as competitive as other places."

"There are still collaborative opportunities available to artists that are not inaccessible or contrived."

Many respondents considered Sheffield to have a high volume of artists, stating that this was a draw to living or staying in the city.

"[There is a] high concentration of artists, designers, makers & curators. Sheffield has a very broad spectrum of artistic activity."

"There are lots of practitioners here making for good networks and high levels of artist led activity."

Artists frequently expressed the view that Sheffield has strong networks for artists, offering opportunities, and is generally a supportive environment for artistic practice. The word 'inclusivity' featured heavily.

For others, however, there was a lack of professional opportunities and their positive comments about the city related to factors beyond the arts, such as location and affordability.

Sheffield is seen by many as, **"Good for making work, not for making money from work' and lacking in opportunities for artists"**.

A total of 150 respondents commented that there were lots of opportunities for artists within the city whilst 107 expressed the view that they felt opportunities were lacking. Common themes recurred such as the difficulty of making art a career, and a lack of opportunities to exhibit.

"It is cheap, there is an excellent network of people to work with and learn from. There is however a chronic lack of opportunities and means by which to generate income locally. Nearly all of my income is earned outside Sheffield."

"There is a very broad based art & craft community but Sheffield is not a great place for selling work."

"A vibrant artistic community although there could be more scope for exhibiting."

"There are lots of practitioners here making for good networks and high levels of artist led activity."

"There is a great artistic community to draw support and knowledge from. It is a very inclusive environment."

“A source of inspiration”

Over 63 respondents mentioned the location of Sheffield either in terms of its proximity to the Peak District or its central location, making travel to other cities straightforward.

“I’m from Sheffield and moved back after studying in London. I found it impossible to find the time, money or the will to make work living in London once my MA was over. It wasn’t an art scene I felt comfortable in. The environment is highly stressful, expensive and overwhelming and I’m so glad I made the decision to move back here. The large supportive network of similar minded artists provides a sense of community and closeness.

There are great connections with other Northern cities and their art scenes allowing the opportunity to collaborate and exhibit. Sheffield has interesting geography, inhabitants, culture and history and is surrounded by beautiful open space ... It isn’t too over-crowded and provides the mental and physical space to think and act. The studio and living space is affordable. There is a lack of pretension and people seem less money driven and genuinely care about their practice.”

“It is geographically well placed for getting around the country.”

“Lots of studio provision. Good location to travel to other UK locations for projects and work. Good quality of life.”

For many artists, the Peak District is a source of inspiration.

“Long may Sheffield continue to be a city which feels like a village. It is unique in its setting, so close to inspirational countryside and being set upon, and within, hills which allow freedom of vision, with trees never out of sight.”

“Being on the edge of the Peak District is a good source of inspiration.”

“Sheffield is a great place to live as an artist. [It is] a big and busy city yet nearby is lots of open space and the chance to be alone on the moors or in other rural environments...”

For some artists, this means they ‘live’ in Sheffield but ‘make a living’ as artists in other parts of the UK.

“Costs are low, people are great”

27 respondents commented on the affordability of the city, in terms of the cost of living, housing costs, and cheap workspaces.

“Sheffield is a fairly cheap place to live so I have a decent quality of life despite not earning a great deal from my practice.”

“Affordable studio spaces. Great creative community. Physical and mental space to develop ideas without too much competition but enough vibrancy to feel pro-active.”





The arts economy in Sheffield

In the final question we asked artists about the arts economy: their ability to earn income from their artistic practice; difficulties encountered; and any help received from inside the city and beyond.

Many respondents mentioned the difficulty of earning an income. Despite being a great city in which to live as an artist, there is a perceived lack of selling spaces, the cost of selling through galleries is considered high and there is a general lack of art-buyers in the region. 16 artists expressed the view that such things were better in other cities, stating that they live in Sheffield and travel/sell work elsewhere to generate income.

A lack of galleries and opportunities to sell artwork was noted in 25 of the responses.

“There are very few private galleries in the city which means that if you need to sell your work to earn a living, you would need to work with galleries outside of the city. But fundamentally I feel Sheffield is a city of makers, not a city known for its galleries (both private and public).”

“There is a lack of city centre commercial galleries, and a reluctance on the part of municipal galleries to promote and support local artists. I create, promote and fund my shows myself, and the city lacks a large enough venue to do this effectively.”

18 respondents commented that high commission rates were a problem for them in terms of selling work, making it difficult to generate an income,

“There are a lot of artists [in Sheffield], most of whom find it difficult to cobble together an income. There are places to exhibit and sell however mostly at a cost which cannot always be justified, such as gallery commission on sales, hiring of galleries/venues etc...It's hard to make a living as an artist in Sheffield”.

“It is difficult to get work into galleries for new artists due to their very high commission rate.”

**I don't make art
to make money,
I make because it's
my vocation.**

Difficulties	No. of respondents
Lack of exhibition space/events	25
High rents/commission rates from galleries/events	18
Shortage of funding/hard to access	16
Lack of public money/art-buying culture in region	13
Work not commodifiable/hard to exhibit	12
High overhead costs	12
Undervaluation of art by the public/time-consuming to make	11

“The type of work I do is not really commercially driven, it is purely a fine art practice the main focus of which is my personal artistic exploration, although it does generate some income. The difficulty with this is that I can never obtain funding and so have a full time job unrelated to the arts. This means I don't have much time to do art.”

Many artists feel that people in Sheffield are unwilling to spend money on art and that those who do buy often have little understanding of the cost of making the work.

“People in Sheffield will gladly pay £300 for a pair of walking boots but would quibble over paying that for a painting. We could do with a few more collectors here, and maybe a couple of galleries that dealt in high end art - the more public galleries could also help by having a better policy towards selling work. On the other hand a purpose built art centre that focused on contemporary art for all perspectives would go some way to educating the public more about this kind of art. It's complex and needs money.”

“I find people aren't prepared to pay very much for work. Even once they appreciate how much time a piece takes. There seems to be a ceiling of around £40. That's about 2-3 hours work. Most of my drawings for example, take around 3-4 days. I had a show at the beginning of the year, part funded by the Arts Council. I wouldn't have been able to afford to produce an edition of catalogues, and promotional material without their help. I didn't make any sales from the show. I don't make art to make money, I make because it's my vocation. And I suspect I'll be scraping by until I die - that's just the decision I made.”

A handful of artists stated that they generate their income from online sales, commissions, and selling in other cities with 11 artists saying that they live in Sheffield and sell their artwork elsewhere.

“Sheffield is not a retail city. 99% of my sales are made in the south of England.”

“I sell work in the UK, but not locally - people are too poor. In capital cities like Tokyo, Rome and Paris there is a bigger market for my work.”

“I think that if you can make it in the north and sell it in the south, you should be ok.”

Whilst we did get the sense that Sheffield lacked commercial galleries, we have no idea how this compares with other cities outside London.

16 respondents commented on a shortage of funding,

“Arts funding has become increasingly scarce and it is now far harder to access ACE support. Financing arts practice with other employment is inevitable, but this mostly detracts from and decreases arts work. Related teaching and workshops require time, effort and enthusiasm (often without any job security) and non-arts jobs can be less demanding, but oddly demoralising”.

Whilst 12 discussed the commodifiable nature of work,

“If my practice was more commercial ie landscapes, still life paintings etc ... I might be earning income from it. However my work is experimental and not so commercial as far as selling in the North of England. I have artist friends who sell similar work in Scotland and France, plus Europe, I keep on painting and exhibiting as I believe it is important to progress with one's own work and ideas. I earn my living with the very commercial craft of gilding, but my ideal is to have an income from my art but without compromise on the subject matter.”

CONCLUSIONS

Whilst we are wary of conclusions given the contingencies expressed elsewhere in this report, consistent themes did emerge throughout our research. As often as we were asked what we meant by an artist, we were told Sheffield had a lively art scene or was underfunded and under resourced. The following are perhaps the most salient points to arise from the huge volume of data:

- Sheffield has a large and in general tightly knit artist community. It may not be the largest of any city, it is certainly not the best funded and it is poorly supported by local government, which means it tends to be self-reliant. There is something of a DIY culture, with respect to events and organisations; they are quite small in scale, scattered, sometimes transient but generally resilient.
- Sheffield has a very strong studio sector which may not be the largest in the UK outside of London but is nevertheless solid, established and expanding. With the continued growth of city centre housing, the sector in S1 will face problems over the years ahead and may need to spread beyond its established base. Demand for studios remains high.
- More generally, we have noted that the demand for artist's studios increases with supply. This is quite the reverse of how the studio sector appears to be perceived by major funders. Investment in new studios is not simply the meeting of individuals' needs but rather it helps to grow the whole visual arts economy, something that we believe is misunderstood at policy level, particularly nationally.
- Sheffield is historically known as a city of makers and this tradition continues to this day. There is a formidable contemporary art strand, bolstered by the art school, but it is true to say that contemporary art is better represented and promoted in other cities.

The large scale 'Going Public' exhibitions that took place at the end of 2015 (a collaborative venture between a number of Sheffield galleries and esteemed private collectors) is an example of how the city can bring contemporary art to a wider public.

- Sheffield is not an easy place to make a living as an artist. Despite (or because of) being more affordable than many cities, it lacks a buying public or tradition. It lacks the inward tourism and investment that might help in this respect or rather the inward tourism is not joined up with the arts sector in any way. Sheffield is a great place to live with a good quality of life but an altogether tougher place to make a living as an artist.
- The arts scene is made up of many tightly knit groups but these disparate worlds rarely come together and this is not helped in terms of policy both within and outside the art world in the city.
- Sheffield has a very supportive local media with a broad reach. Its local papers and radio offer a lot of support to arts initiatives and ventures assisting greatly with the dissemination of what is happening within the city. The city also has good networks and there is a great sense of the familiar and familiarity for those who live and work here.
- Sheffield has an eclectic and established festival programme with new festivals regularly cropping up, many of which are dedicated to art, and others which have a strong arts strand.
- There is a lot of investment and change currently happening and it has been difficult to track this, even over the few months it has taken to research and publish this report. How much of this reinforces independence at the expense of interdependence remains to be seen.

Sheffield is a large city and has a very lively arts scene, commensurate with its size.

Sheffielders often feel that the city is somewhat overshadowed by or overlooked in favour of near neighbours on both sides of the Pennines and this breeds a certain insularity coupled with a determined if friendly bravado.

The visual arts in Sheffield does seem underfunded given the size of the city and without a major contemporary arts venue, the city lacks a certain inward pull and the financial clout that goes with a 'destination venue'. That said, there are cities of a similar size that don't have the breadth, diversity and accessibility of visual arts that Sheffield both seems to offer and is perceived as offering by those we consulted.

If this paints a somewhat mixed picture, then that is due to the difficulty of unpicking the sometimes contradictory responses, coupled with the fact that we have no real barometer of comparison from other cities beyond international capitals such as London and Berlin. And there, the visual arts are a very different phenomenon both commercially and culturally.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is sometimes easier to see what works and doesn't work than it is to see how changes can be made and what changes would be of real benefit. Further research can be of assistance in helping to provide answers to some of the questions raised in this report and with other things, maybe you just need to try them and see.

Perhaps the creative and experimental spirit of artists needs to be applied to the arts economy: we shouldn't be afraid of trying things just because they might not work. They equally might, and if they don't, we may learn something in the process.

Further research

This study and other similar research tends to focus on artists. Much of the comment that emerged related to an 'art public'. This would seem to be a fertile area for further research. The art world needs to reach out beyond artists, especially in a funding environment where so much emphasis is placed on 'reach' and 'impact' and we would like to find out what non-artists think about some of the areas of this study, particularly with respect to opportunities to buy and view art.

Sheffield's institutions are very open to outsiders, and artists from outside the city often comment on its friendly, lively and welcoming arts environment. We would like to see this dialogue extended to look at what goes on in organisational and planning terms in other cities both elsewhere in the UK and beyond. What works and what doesn't; what we can learn from good practice elsewhere; and what we can offer to other places in return.

We have not looked at or analysed visual arts funding in Sheffield, how it is used and how this compares to other cities. Such data should be available in the public domain and some further research here would be welcomed, not just in terms of accounting but also to account for. Whether or not Sheffield is actually comparatively less well funded than other cities will not necessarily change the perception of those involved nor will it detract from the issues of underfunding. It will simply give us several points of comparison from which we can then look at how funding is apportioned here and in other cities.

Further demand

There is clearly a demand for more gallery space in the city and more opportunities to sell. However, the casual if well intentioned free or heavily discounted meanwhile-use of empty buildings for galleries, studios, and selling events further threatens what is an already fragile economy and this needs careful consideration.

Much more can and needs to be done at local government level to assist artists and arts organisations in the city. Whilst this is difficult in the current economic environment, many initiatives would not require cash, only thought, time and a better use of the resources that are already at our disposal.

If Sheffield's 'USP' is its independent DIY feel (this has already been expressed in a recent report on the music sector in the city), then greater effort is needed to cross fund and collaborate rather than looking to take on other cities by creating showcase venues or events. Research that looks into how we might square this circle would also be most welcome.

Whilst Sheffield is not short of festivals, there is plenty of room for expansion in this area with respect to the visual arts. It is easier to link festivals to other sectors of the local economy, festivals generate more interest and participation and they do not require significant capital infrastructure.

They can range from small DIY efforts to city-wide jamborees. 2016 sees both the Year of Making and the Hillsborough Festival, but at this stage we don't know whether these will be one offs or how visual art will be represented.

It would be great to see a large street art festival to rival those in Birmingham and Bristol (Sheffield is not short of sites all over the city), and something to replace Galvanise, to supplement the city's smaller visual arts festivals and Art Sheffield's more established contemporary art event.

Increased communication

We heard on many occasions the comment that the different sectors of the art economy do not really come together. 'Talking shops' can strain the tight commitments of a largely volunteer sector and perhaps this is an area where leadership or outside help is needed. Initiatives such as The Year of Making and The Creative Guild are a step in the right direction, more joint marketing initiatives might be another.

There is already an information platform in the city called Art Sheffield run by a group called Art Sheffield (this latter, a consortium comprising Bloc, S1 Artspace, Yorkshire Artspace, Site and SHU). However, the website and newsletter provide only limited coverage of the range of visual arts events across the city, and therefore given the name, Art Sheffield, and in particular its pre-eminence on search engines, it needs to be properly resourced and run if it is to represent the sector as a whole.

Learning from other sectors

The visual arts has at times an 'outsider' mentality and perhaps some who work in the sector prefer to keep it that way. Managing artists' studios is however ostensibly the same as any property management enterprise; running a gallery is most definitely about running a venue catering to visitors; and setting up a business in the arts is as much about setting up a business as it is about art.

The visual arts could not only learn from other sectors in all of these respects but could learn valuable lessons about alternative forms of funding and different types of governance. John Newbiggin, Chairman of Creative England, recently gave a talk in Sheffield and addressed the issue of the arts needing to look at mergers and takeovers in other sectors of the economy and look at what can be learned and the potential benefits. Whilst the writers of this report do not necessarily advocate such an agenda, the need for consideration is evident around the city.

The recent sale of The Riverside by Point Blank theatre company into the private sector and the subsequent loss of Sheffield's only performance venue, Yorkshire Artspace's search for additional long-term studio space, S1 Artspace's difficulty in finding a permanent home, and CADS's stated desire to buy buildings as part of its next phase of development all point to a need to examine options if Sheffield is to start making up for lost time and adapt to the current climate.

The visual arts and other sectors of the local economy could co-operate more for the mutual benefit of the city. Great strides have been made in this respect in recent years by The University of Sheffield and there are good examples of other smaller initiatives such as DLA Piper's exhibition programme. This is not about asking other sectors to hand out cash to the arts but rather ensuring more joined up thinking in city-wide initiatives. A pilot study to bring together different sectors would be a welcome starting point.

This report and similar initiatives should be disseminated well beyond the visual arts community.

Better Planning

The visual arts in Sheffield have a great reputation well beyond the boundaries of the city, and artists in Sheffield are tremendously proud of where they live and the local arts scene. Much more could be made of this to promote the city for tourism, leisure, business and a great place to live and work. This does not seem to be taken into account in matters of urban planning and in generally making use of assets in the city. The city council does help in many ways but there seems a lack of joined up thinking and sometimes this help can be counter productive.

We would like to see more communication between local government and the visual arts; wider, better and more experimental use of buildings before they are sold off and perhaps instead of being sold off; more help across the arts sector rather than just for flagship projects; and most of all a reciprocity of the feeling that the visual arts matter for the city in the same way that the city matters to its visual artists.



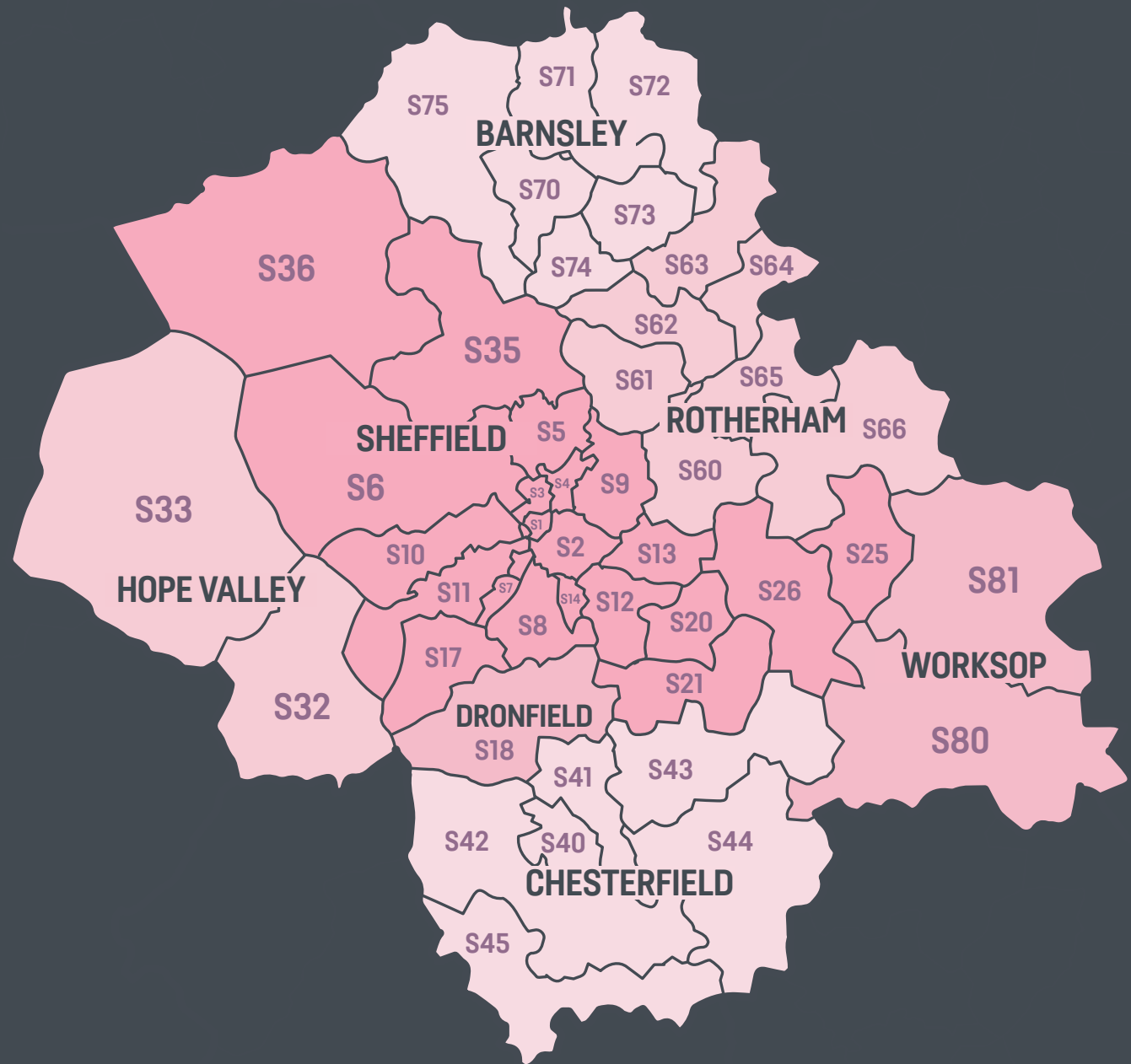
Artists in the 2011 Census

Very early in the research process we commissioned the Office of National Statistics (ONS) to produce figures from the 2011 Census showing a breakdown of artists in England and Wales by Postcode District. These figures were finally released on 14 December 2015 after completion of all other sections of this report.

2011 Census

This data is from the 2011 Census. The completion rate for the Census is believed to be around 94%. The question that deals with "Occupation" is referenced on page 6 of this report. There are three points worth highlighting here with respect to the Census data.

- The number of artists given is based on a response to questions about 'primary occupation', so the figures will exclude any practicing artists who 'earn more of their living' from another job. For example, of the artists surveyed in the 'Artists in Greater Manchester' report, only 22.6% stated that they reported their primary occupation as 'artist' in the Census, 52.7% stated that 'artist was not their primary occupation', and 24.2% 'could not remember'.
- The classification of artist used by the ONS includes those who define their occupation as "artist, illustrator, portrait painter and sculptor" amongst others but excludes "craft workers".
- The ONS data provides a breakdown of where artists live, which is not necessarily where they work. The data is based on residents in England and Wales only and includes figures for both Postcode Areas and Postcode Districts. There are 105 Postcode Areas in England and Wales. The S Postcode Area known as the Sheffield postcode (and used in this report) has 45 postcode districts. Since Postcode Areas comprise both densely populated urban conurbations and very large rural areas then any conclusions from comparisons across the data need to be made with care.
- The ONS data reports upon all residents over the age of 16, regardless of their employment status, so gross populations include unemployed, retired etc.



Rank	Postcode Name	Postcode Area	Artists	Population over 16
1	London	N	2,425	590,160
2	London	SW	2,404	664,245
3	London	SE	2,391	698,428
4	London	E	2,277	647,179
5	Brighton	BN	1,663	628,235
6	London	W	1,481	391,887
7	London	NW	1,318	382,022
8	Bristol	BS	1,197	719,248
9	Truro	TR	1,018	231,689
10	Tonbridge	TN	925	518,431
11	Norwich	NR	883	565,769
12	Newcastle	NE	880	879,523
13	Birmingham	B	864	1,314,013
14	Gloucester	GL	815	470,443
15	Guilford	GU	798	552,206
16	Oxford	OX	797	466,942
17	Exeter	EX	796	432,299
18	Manchester	M	781	834,835
19	Swansea	SA	741	555,375
20	Portsmouth	PO	730	637,558

Rank	Postcode Name	Postcode Area	Artists	Population over 16
21	Bath	BA	718	334,957
22	Ipswich	IP	715	461,464
23	Nottingham	NG	711	874,355
24	Sheffield	S	704	1,013,535
25	Cambridge	CB	687	321,747
26	Plymouth	PL	645	420,918
27	Coventry	CV	630	612,414
28	Leicester	LE	589	725,560
29	Kingston	KT	587	400,054
30	Cardiff	CF	575	745,622
31	Peterborough	PE	561	590,160
32	Shrewsbury	SY	551	664,245
33	Derby	DE	550	698,428
34	York	YO	550	647,179
35	Reading	RG	546	628,235
36	Canterbury	CT	541	391,887
37	Twickenham	TW	530	382,022
38	Bournemouth	BH	509	719,248
39	Torquay	TQ	498	231,689
40	Redhill	RH	496	518,431
41	Liverpool	L	490	565,769
42	Leeds	LS	485	879,523
43	Llandudno	LL	480	1,314,013
44	Southampton	SO	480	470,443
45	Stockport	SK	445	552,206
46	Swindon	SN	435	466,942
47	Taunton	TA	422	432,299
48	Dorchester	DT	413	834,835
49	Colchester	CO	406	555,375
50	Hemel Hempstead	HP	405	637,558

Where artists live

Of the 54,021 artists in England and Wales, the four Postcode Areas with the most artists are all in London. Outside London, the areas with the most artists are Brighton and Bristol. This bears out our own research into artists' studios.

Sheffield is 24th on the list and, as stated elsewhere in this report, has a relatively high number of artists commensurate with a city of its size.



From the above we can see that there are relatively few artists in the Sheffield Postcode Area per head of population with only Birmingham amongst major cities having less artists per head of population. However, Birmingham and Sheffield are by far the largest urban areas in terms of their Postcode Area.

If we look at where artists actually live in Sheffield then the picture changes again. The final tables here show artists in Sheffield according to Postcode District. The greatest density of artists is in 7 Postcode Districts (all in the West of the city – S7, S11, S17, S3, S6, S10 and S8). In total there are 292 artists in a population of 180,132. The Postcode Districts S60-S66, which make up Rotherham, have a similar population (178,250) and yet there are only 66 artists living there.

Postcode Name	Postcode	Artists	Population over 16	Cited population of main city in '000s
Brighton	BN	1,663	628,235	273
Bristol	BS	1,197	719,248	428
Newcastle	NE	880	879,523	280
Birmingham	B	864	1,314,013	1,092
Manchester	M	781	834,835	503
Nottingham	NG	711	874,355	305
Sheffield	S	704	1,013,535	552
Cardiff	CF	575	745,622	346
Liverpool	L	490	631,512	466
Leeds	LS	485	579,974	751
Bradford	BD	306	388,306	522

Postcode Name	Postcode	Artists	Population over 16	Percentage of Artists per head of population
Brighton	BN	1,663	628,235	0.264709862
Bristol	BS	1,197	719,248	0.16642382
Newcastle	NE	880	879,523	0.100054234
Manchester	M	781	834,835	0.09355142
Leeds	LS	485	579,974	0.083624438
Nottingham	NG	711	874,355	0.081317085
Bradford	BD	306	388,306	0.07880383
Liverpool	L	490	631,512	0.077591558
Cardiff	CF	575	745,622	0.077116823
Sheffield	S	704	1,013,535	0.069459861
Birmingham	B	864	1,314,013	0.065752774

If we look at the same cities and take the artist population per head of population then we get a somewhat different picture in some cities.

Beyond cities such as Brighton and Bristol (and many parts of London), there are a number of Postcode Areas which are ranked high on the above list but are largely rural areas such as Truro. To help make sense of the data, we have compared the artist population of larger cities outside London. We have cited the problems of defining a city elsewhere in this report, so the chart below gives both the population of the Postcode Area and the cited population figure for the principal city in that area. There are some notable anomalies in this chart.

For example, the population over the age of 16 of the Sheffield postcode region is double the cited population of Sheffield itself. This is to be expected as the S postcode takes in large towns such as Rotherham and Barnsley. However, the population over the age of 16 in the Leeds postcode region is considerably less than the cited population of Leeds. For this reason, Leeds appears to have relatively few artists.

Postcode district	Population over 16	Artists
S7	12,379	43
S11	27,109	64
S17	12,257	21
S3	11,248	18
S6	45,183	66
S10	36,999	44
S8	35,249	36
S1	7,982	7
S12	26,779	7
S13	23,119	10
S14	6,731	6
S18	19,848	15
S2	31,329	31
S20	24,476	6
S21	16,297	10
S25	15,978	7
S26	19,927	18
S32	4,602	3
S33	4,065	3
S35	32,735	15
S36	21,296	20
S4	7,602	6
S40	27,664	20
S41	28,063	21
S42	22,332	12
S43	30,336	12
S44	16,525	7
S45	10,480	2
S5	39,692	15

Postcode district	Population over 16	Artists
S60	27,246	12
S61	26,665	6
S62	14,740	9
S63	27,824	8
S64	22,960	10
S65	24,172	8
S66	34,709	13
S70	28,998	12
S71	33,543	12
S72	18,635	5
S73	20,045	4
S74	13,376	6
S75	33,969	19
S80	22,207	12
S81	28,821	16
S9	17,343	7

Postcode district	% of artists
S7	0.348
S11	0.236
S17	0.171
S3	0.160
S6	0.146
S10	0.119
S8	0.102
S2	0.099
S36	0.094
S26	0.090
S14	0.089
S1	0.087
S4	0.078
S18	0.075
S32-33	0.069
S21	0.061
S40-45	0.054
S80-81	0.054
S35	0.045
S13	0.043
S25	0.043
S9	0.040
S70-75	0.039
S5	0.037
S60-66	0.037
S12	0.026
S20	0.024

We are very wary of drawing any conclusions based on the Census data or even asserting that the data supports or contradicts our own research. What we can say is as follows:

We surveyed 390 artists in our main survey and established an artist database in the city of over 900 artists.

The 2011 Census lists only 704 artists in Sheffield. However, of our own respondents, only 30% earn more than half of their income from their art practice. This concurs with one of the main findings of our survey, namely that artists find it difficult to make a living from their art practice. We also believed that we had only received responses from a small proportion of artists in the city and this is also borne out by the ONS data.

Our own research concluded that Sheffield had a large artist population but not necessarily larger than one would expect for a city of its size and this is again borne out in the Census data. Our own surveys showed that most artists in Sheffield live or work in the relatively few Sheffield postcodes and this is again borne out in the ONS figures.

Most significantly, our research revealed that artists in Sheffield believe the city has a large artist community, which is true in terms of the areas in which artists live. There are more artists per head of population in S7 than in Brighton: there are 66 artists in S6 out of a population of 45,000 and the same number in Rotherham in a population of 178,000. Sheffield's artist community is very concentrated, not only in terms of where artists have studios and show work, as revealed in our research, but also in terms of where artists live.

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Naomi Gordon Chapel Walk
Chris Harvey Museums Sheffield
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Louise Hutchinson S1 Artspace
Sara Hill Mesters Works
Cassie Kill Site Gallery
Thomas Mann Bank Street Arts
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Charlotte Morgan Bloc
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Jo Wilson a-n The Artists Information Company

Key websites – artist's organizations:

a-n www.a-n.co.uk
Artists Union England www.artistsunionengland.org.uk
Association of Illustrators www.theaoi.com
Axisweb axisweb.org
CuratorSpace www.curatorspace.com
DACS www.dacs.org.uk
Live Art Development Agency (LADA) www.thisisliveart.co.uk
Open Studios Communications www.openstudioscomms.org
Scottish Artists Union www.sau.org.uk
Visual Arts UK - visualartsuk.tumblr.com

Key websites – artist's studio providers in Sheffield and beyond:

www.acava.org
www.acme.org.uk
artspace.org.uk
bankstreetarts.com
www.blocstudios.co.uk
cads-online.co.uk
eaststreetarts.org.uk
www.harleygallery.co.uk/harley-studios
nfasp.org.uk
www.s1artspace.org

Key websites – national data:

Arts Council England www.artscouncil.org.uk
Creative and Cultural Skills ccskills.org.uk
Creative England www.creativeengland.co.uk
National Federation of Artists Studio Providers nfasp.org.uk
Office for National Statistics www.ons.gov.uk
Visit England www.visitengland.com

Key reports and data

A register of artists' studio groups & organizations in England [ACME Studios, June 2006](#)
A survey of artists' studio groups & organizations in England [ACME Studios, May 2005](#)
Artists in Greater Manchester, [MIRIAD, MMU and Castlefield Gallery, 2013](#)
Artists' Workspace Study. Report and Recommendations
[Greater London Authority, September 2014](#)
Classifying and measuring the Creative Industries [Creative Skillset, February 2013](#)
Creative Industries Economic Estimates (Experimental Statistics) Full Statistical Release
[Department for Culture Media and Sport, December 2010](#)
Measuring the economic benefits of arts and culture [Arts Council England, May 2012](#)
The Creative Industries: background, definitions and recent policy development
[Northern Ireland Assembly, September 2011](#)
Scoping Study into the Economic Impact of the Arts and Creative Industries in Scotland
[Creative Scotland Research, September 2011](#)
Sau Membership Survey 2015 [Scottish Artists' Union, October 2015](#)

Sources

Information on local organizations is from the organization concerned. National statistics are from the Office of National Statistics. Tourist numbers are from Visit England. Creative Industries data from Creative and Cultural Skills and Arts Council England. Data collected on Manchester relied on help from Castlefield. Data on artists' studios nationally relied on the National Federation of Artist's Studio Providers with assistance from ACME and ACAA studios in London.

About the Authors

Ellen McLeod is an Arts Administrator working for The Poetry Business in Sheffield. John Clark is an author and educational consultant and has worked internationally in the field of education and learning. He set up and ran Bank Street Arts, an independent arts centre in Sheffield in 2008, and he retired to pursue other projects at the end of 2015.

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