



[www.hillstrategies.com](http://www.hillstrategies.com)

## STATISTICAL INSIGHTS ON THE ARTS

# Demographic Patterns in Canadians' Arts Participation in 2016

SIA report 48

February 2019

Prepared by Kelly Hill

## Executive Summary

© Her Majesty in right of Canada, 2018

ISBN 978-1-926674-44-5

Statistical Insights on the Arts series ISSN 1713-3556

Report funded by



Canadian  
Heritage

Patrimoine  
canadien



Canada Council  
for the Arts

Conseil des arts  
du Canada



ONTARIO ARTS COUNCIL  
CONSEIL DES ARTS DE L'ONTARIO  
an Ontario government agency  
un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario

## Overall arts attendance rates are high for many demographic groups

*Demographic Patterns in Canadians' Arts Participation in 2016*, the 48<sup>th</sup> report in the *Statistical Insights on the Arts* series from Hill Strategies Research, highlights demographic patterns in arts participation in Canada, based on the survey of arts participation with the largest sample size (9,844 respondents) – Statistics Canada's 2016 *General Social Survey (Canadians at Work and Home)*.

The report examines 11 indicators of arts participation, including eight arts attendance activities, two summary indicators of arts attendance, as well as participation in making or performing art.

The broadest indicator of arts attendance (which includes all eight arts activities) shows that the arts appeal to a large majority of Canadians in all demographic groups.

The report examines the influence of a wide range of demographic factors on arts participation rates, including education, family income, language, sex, age, and many others.

This summary highlights areas where there are patterns in arts participation, that is, areas where there appear to be demographic influences across many different arts participation activities.

## Education is the strongest pattern in arts participation

The strongest pattern in arts participation found in the analysis is that higher education equates to higher arts participation. In fact, education is the only demographic factor that is important for all 11 indicators of arts participation.

## Partial patterns in arts attendance

Patterns of higher attendance rates were found for many demographic groups, including women, youth, Canadians with high family income, and non-religious Canadians. However, there is at least one pattern breaker for each of these groups (i.e., an arts activity that does not follow the general pattern of higher attendance rates):

- Women tend to have higher arts attendance rates than men, except for cultural festivals. Arts attendance differences between women and men tend to be small but consistent across many activities.
- Youth 15 to 24 years of age tend to have higher arts attendance rates than older respondents, except for classical music and other kinds of cultural performances.
- Canadians with higher family income levels tend to have higher arts attendance rates than other Canadians, except for heritage or ethnic performances and other kinds of cultural performances.
- Canadians without a religious affiliation tend to have higher arts attendance rates than Canadians with a religious affiliation,

except for one category (other kinds of cultural performances).

## Many groups have similar overall arts attendance rates but different rates for certain arts activities

Many demographic groups have similar overall arts attendance rates, including racialized and non-racialized Canadians (based on a survey question related to respondents' "racial or cultural groups"), Indigenous and non-Indigenous respondents, as well as immigrant and non-immigrant respondents. However, for each of these demographic groups, there are differences in the attendance rates for some of the eight arts activities.

### Racialized and non-racialized Canadians

Overall arts attendance rates are similar between racialized (88%) and non-racialized Canadians (86%). However, racialized respondents have higher attendance rates than non-racialized respondents at cultural festivals, and other kinds of cultural performances but lower attendance rates at theatre and pop music performances. In addition, attendance rates for racialized Canadians are higher for heritage or ethnic performances, a question that included specific wording related to dance, theatre, or music performances including "Aboriginal Peoples, Chinese or Ukrainian". Racialized Canadians have lower attendance rates than non-racialized respondents at theatre and popular music performances.

### Indigenous and non-Indigenous people

For Indigenous respondents, the overall arts attendance rate is similar to that for non-Indigenous respondents (84% and 86%, respectively). Indigenous respondents have much higher attendance rates than non-Indigenous respondents at heritage or ethnic performances, which, as noted above, specifically referred to performances involving "Aboriginal Peoples". On the other hand, Indigenous respondents have lower attendance rates than non-Indigenous respondents at public art galleries, classical music performances, and cultural festivals.

### Immigrant and non-immigrant Canadians

Immigrant Canadians have a similar overall arts attendance rate to non-immigrants (84% and 87%, respectively). Immigrant Canadians have much higher attendance rates than non-immigrant respondents at heritage or ethnic performances and other kinds of cultural performances but lower attendance rates at theatre and popular music performances.

Where there are differences between recent and earlier immigrants, the pattern is for recent immigrants (i.e., between 2006 and 2016) to have higher attendance rates. For example, the overall arts attendance rate is 90% for recent immigrants and 82% for earlier immigrants. There are similar differences for five of the eight arts activities.

### Other demographic groups

The pattern of similar overall arts attendance rates but differences for some arts activities is also the case for other demographic groups, such as speakers of different languages as well as Canadians with or without children at home.

## Making or performing art: Some patterns differ from arts attendance

Unlike the overall arts attendance pattern, participation in making or performing art is very similar to the national average (50%) for Canadians of different family income levels. While urban respondents tend to have higher arts attendance rates than rural respondents, the two groups have similar participation rates in making or performing art.

Studies that focus exclusively on arts attendance would miss these nuances in arts participation.

## Intersectional analysis of arts participation by women and racialized Canadians

The report provides a rare intersectional analysis of arts participation by women and racialized Canadians.

For women, the report examines the arts participation rates of women who are racialized, are immigrants, or have particularly low or high income levels. Variables such as disability and sexual orientation could also be part of an intersectional analysis, but they are not available in the dataset.

There are no overarching arts participation patterns for racialized women, compared with either non-racialized women or racialized men. For example, the overall arts attendance rate is similar for racialized and non-racialized women (90% and 87%, respectively) as well as between racialized

women and racialized men (90% and 86%, respectively). There are also similar attendance rates at classical music performances (19% for racialized women, 16% for non-racialized women, and 18% for racialized men).

Similarly, there are no overarching arts participation patterns for immigrant women, compared with either non-immigrant women or immigrant men. The overall arts attendance rate is 84% for both immigrant women and immigrant men, and 88% for non-immigrant women.

There are much larger differences in arts participation rates between those at the highest and lowest family income levels. For example, the overall arts attendance rate is 95% for women at the highest family income level (more than \$125,000) but only 77% for women with family incomes below \$25,000. (Men with low family incomes also have a relatively low overall arts attendance rate: 77%.)

Data reliability limits the intersectional analysis for racialized Canadians to racialized immigrants and non-immigrants, an analysis that showed no consistent patterns.

## Discover more findings related to the demographics of arts participation

The full report contains ample details about demographic factors in many different arts activities, including:

- Overall arts attendance
- Public art galleries
- Theatre or comedy performances



- Classical music performances
- Popular music performances
- Heritage or ethnic performances
- Artistic or cultural festivals
- Making and performing art

Tables appended to the report provide full details about participation in these activities, as well as movie theatres and the catch-all category of "other kinds of cultural performances".

The *Statistical Insights on the Arts* series, created by Hill Strategies Research in 2002, is co-funded by the Canada Council for the Arts, the Department of Canadian Heritage, and the Ontario Arts Council as part of their shared commitment to making arts research available to inform the work of Canada's arts community and inform the general public about Canada's arts sector.



Photo credit: Matthew Kalapuch via unsplash.com