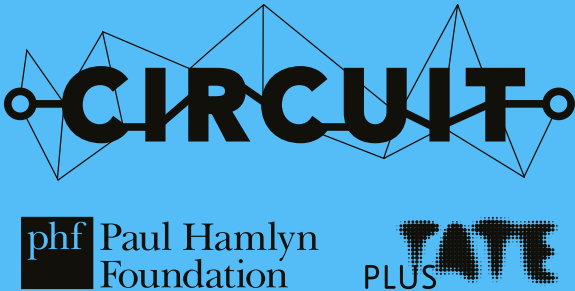


WHY
ART

INFLUENCER-LED
RESEARCH

By Social Life &
Hannah Kemp-Welch,
Circuit Programme Digital Producer



The background is a colorful, pixelated collage. At the top, there are horizontal bands of red, orange, and yellow. Below these, a large grid structure is visible. The grid has a thick black border and is divided into several sections. The top section is blue with black dots. The middle section contains the text 'WHY ART' in large, bold, sans-serif letters. The bottom section is white with black dots. The right side of the grid has diagonal stripes in green, yellow, and red. The overall style is reminiscent of early digital art or video game graphics.

WHY ART

Influencer-Led Research

Aims

For a month in 2015, *Circuit* launched a large scale, open, online consultation with young people, inviting them to contribute to our action research. Our primary aim was to collect responses on a national and international scale to extend the reach of our research, seeking to discover what young people believe the value of art is in their respective lives.

Taking inspiration from business models, rather than existing strategies employed by the arts sector, we contracted a social media agency that work with brands to target young audiences. Social Life have extensive experience of creating mass campaigns reaching young people, working with clients like X-Factor and MTV. We worked together to develop a strategy to invite responses from young people to our question, working with key digital influencers with mass followings of young people.

Method

Social Life suggested working with key digital influencers with mass followings of young people, to tap into these audience bases, which are not necessarily connected to arts organisations and frequenters of arts spaces. These digital influencers created social media content designed to generate responses from young people, pushing them out through their existing channels. Social Life then aggregated these responses both as quantitative data and examples of key statements submitted by young people.

Ensuring that the chosen influencers covered a range of interest topics and fandoms, had primary audiences of 15-25s, and reached diverse audiences, we contracted 12 influencers and briefed them on the project aims. Deciding not to proscribe the wording of the question, as this was likely to appear inauthentic to the influencers' audiences and potentially skew the results, we asked influencers to put our research question into their own words, and gave them freedom to create content as they saw fit.

The campaign was live for a month, and we engaged 74,995 young people with our question, and analysed the 1,171 in-depth responses – looking for patterns that could help us understand what it is that pulls young people to, or away from, the arts.

Influencer selection

Shortlisted Influencer	Sector	Preferred Platform
Luke Franks	TV and Pop Music	Instagram/Twitter
Poppy Jamie	Anti Bullying/Mental Health	SnapchatUsername: poppy_jamie
Josh Divine	Music / One Direction Band Member	Twitter
Laura / Laurbubble		Youtube
DJ Lady Bex	Gym/Fitness	Facebook
Claira Harmet	Travel/Vegan	Twitter/YouTube
Georgia LA	Radio and Celebrity Culture	Twitter
Riyadh Khalaf	LGBT issues	YouTube/Instagram
Charly Cox	Behind the camera with Youtubers	Instagram
Papertimelady		Youtube
Hannah Witton		Youtube
Jamie JO	Youtuber / Artist	Youtube
Lily Mercer	Music (rap r'n'b)	Twitter
Emily Ruth	Youtuber / Filmmaker	Youtube
Maisie Cousins	Artist	Instagram
Jana		Youtube
Jessie Cave	Artist / Movie	Twitter
Rose Ellen Dix	LGBT figure and comedy	Youtube
Clara Amfo	Music / BBC R1 presenter	Twitter/Instagram
Zoe London	Rock Music and Make Up	Instagram/Twitter
Phoebe Lettice	Fashion	Instagram/Twitter

Examples



Afternoon all! I'm helping out on a project at the moment and would love to spark some conversation in the comments below. Do you think art is relevant to you? Do the arts mean something to your life/your outlook? I'd love to know what you think and will be responding to your stories! #whyart #ad

Overwhelmed at the responses you left on my recent instagram about #whyart . So much intelligent discussion. To wrap it up, what exactly is it about the arts you enjoy? Is it losing yourself within someone else's creativity or finding a meaning in something you couldn't usually explain? Leave a comment below! Xx #ad

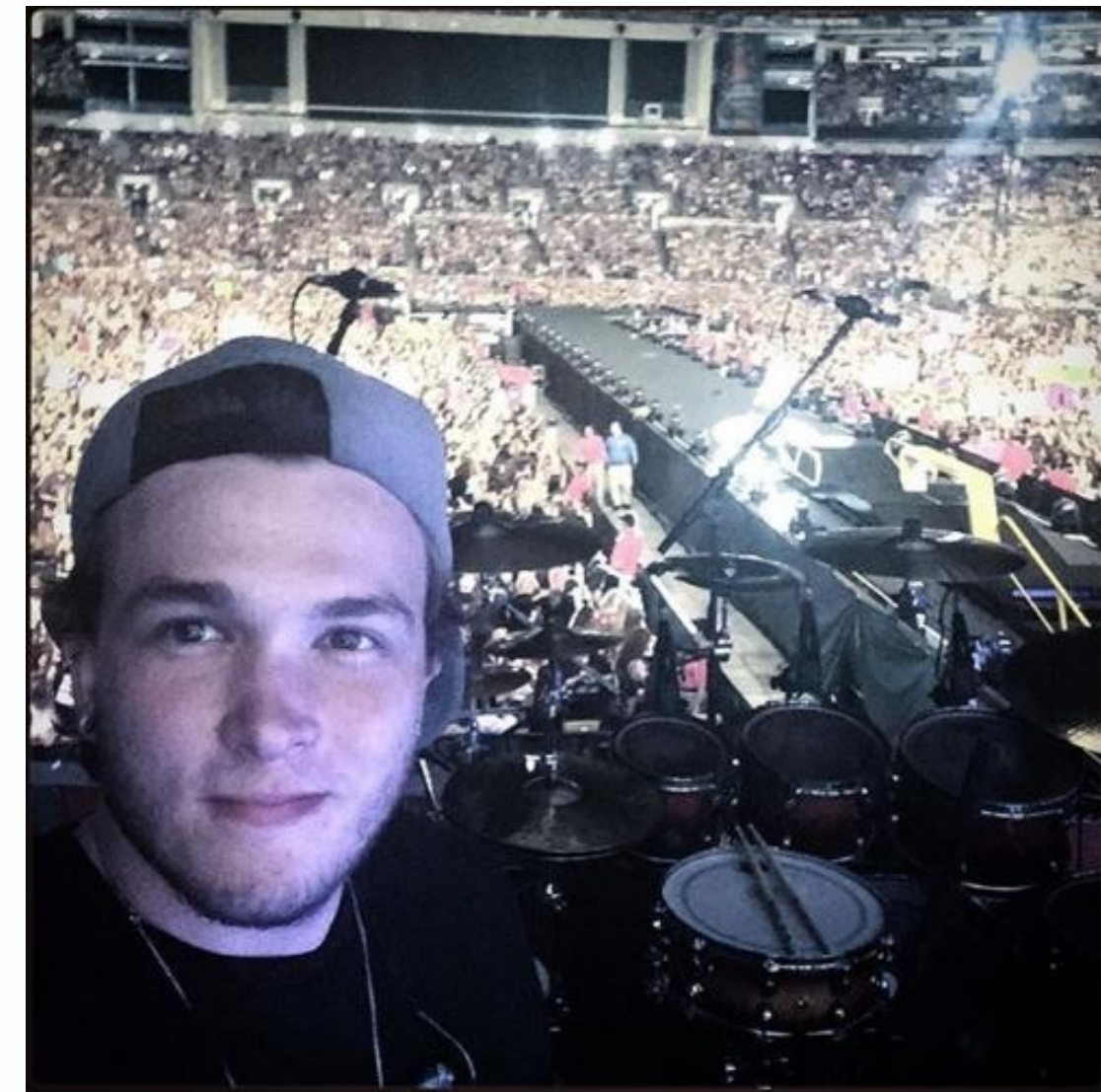


Georgia LA



Does art, in all of its forms mean anything to you or your life and why? Why not? For me it's the thing that keeps me silly, creative and happy #WhyArt #OscarWilde

Josh Devine



So I'm helping with an interesting project... Tweet me why you think art is important in YOUR life using #WhyArt hashtag! Get involved 👍

Luke Franks



Luke Franks @luke_franks · 23h


This sounds odd but it's to support a cool project. How important are things like music/fashion/photography to you? Use [#WhyArt](#) & I'll dm u



Hello! (thanks if you already did this on Twitter) Could you answer this for me, it's to support a cool project for young people. 'How important are things like art/music/fashion/photography to you and why?' Pop em below with [#whyart](#) and we'll have a chat! Thaaanks x

Numbers

 12 influencers took part in the research

 26 #WhyArt publications in total

  Across 4 social platforms

 During a 1 month campaign



5,748,558

people
reached

474 % over the starting goal

Reach Goal = 1M



74,995

people
engaged

650 % over the starting goal

Engagement Goal = 10K



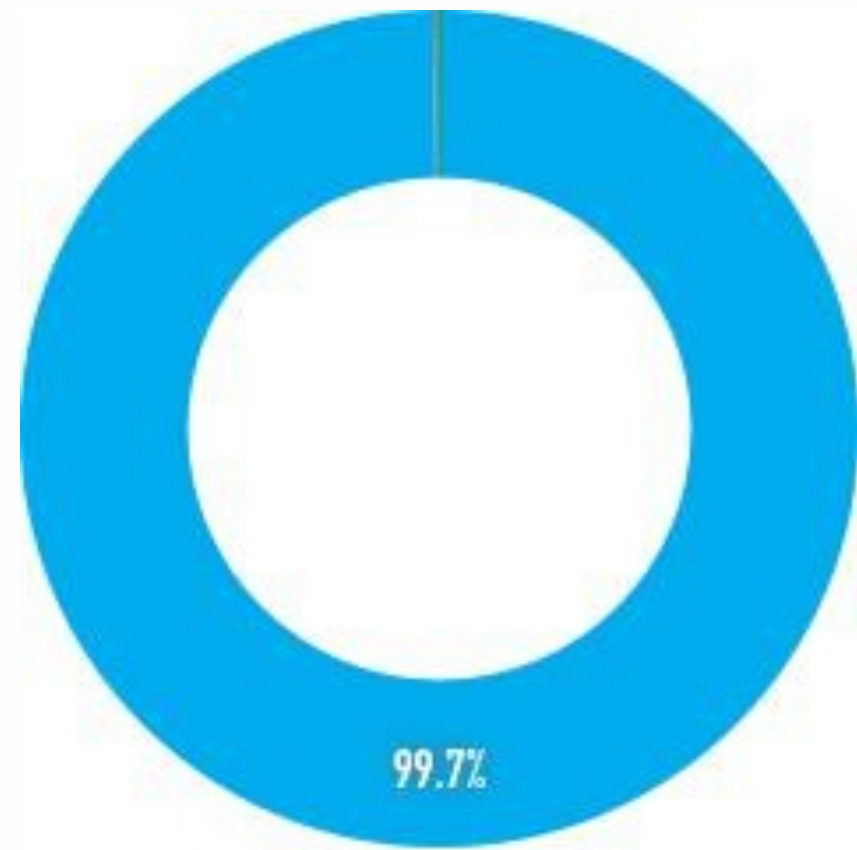
1,171

responses
gathered

17.2 % over the starting goal

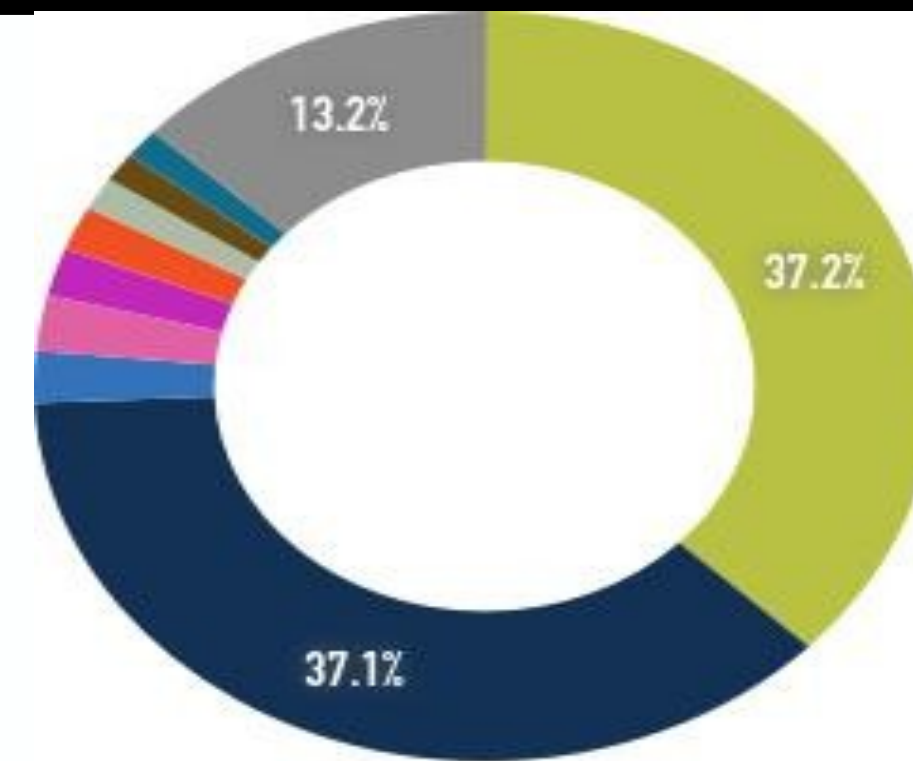
Responses Goal = 1K

Delivery



95K% ● Twitter
Instagram
Blogs

Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Snapchat were the 4 platforms Influencers chose to use during the campaign.
99.7% of responses came from Twitter. Instagram came second, with a clear qualitative added value, as responses were substantially longer.



United Kingdom
United States
Mexico
Italy
Brazil
France
Argentina
Portugal
Ireland
Other

Digital influence being a global metric, the campaign couldn't be confined to exclusively UK, though to correspond with our wider Circuit research, as a programme active in England and Wales, we were keen to reach this audience. As a large part of the audience of selected influencers was UK based, we managed to get 37.2% of entries from the UK.



1.9K mentions using #WhyArt



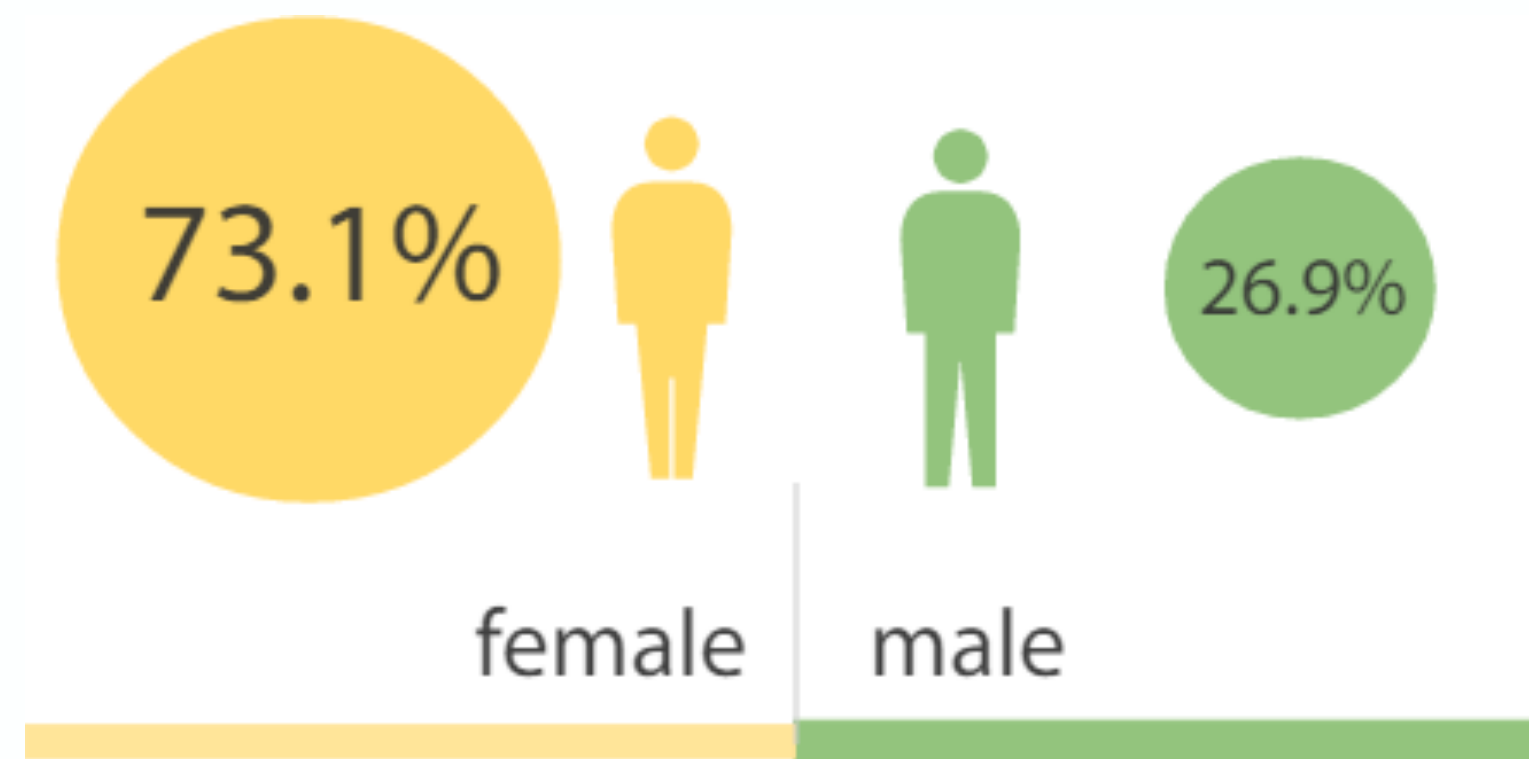
8.1M potential reach

Although not all mentions were insightful enough to be used in the research, the volume of tweets that we observed was indicative of a high interest in our topic.

Taking into account all tweets, retweets and replies, the campaign's potential reach was up to 8.1M people, 710% over our original goal of 1M.

Twitter focus

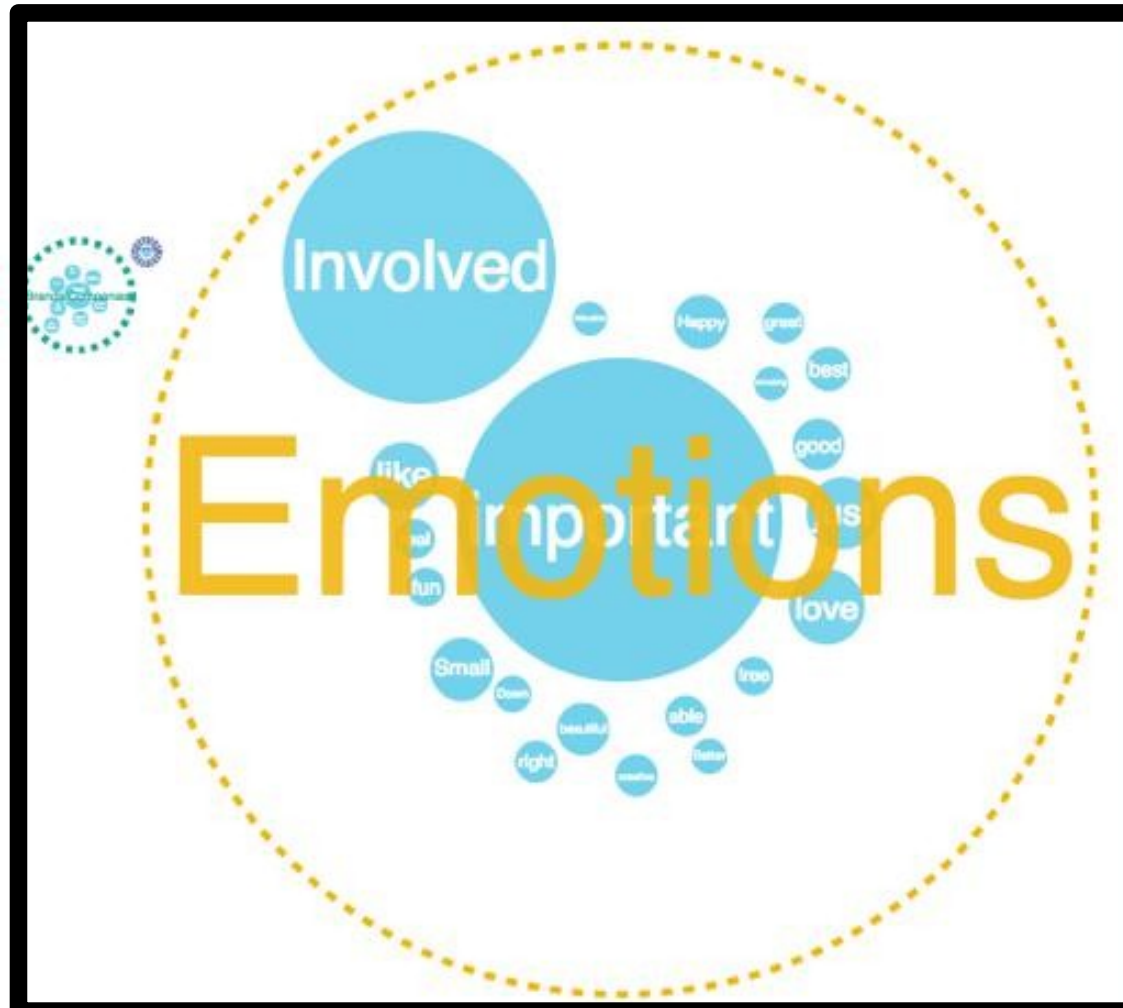
Demographics



This graphic illustrates the gender break down throughout the campaign. There was significant disparity between genders – a far higher percentage of women engaged with and responded to the research question than men.

We were not able to collect other demographic data, due to issues of data protection and privacy.

Themes & feelings

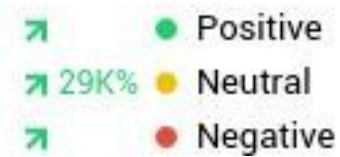
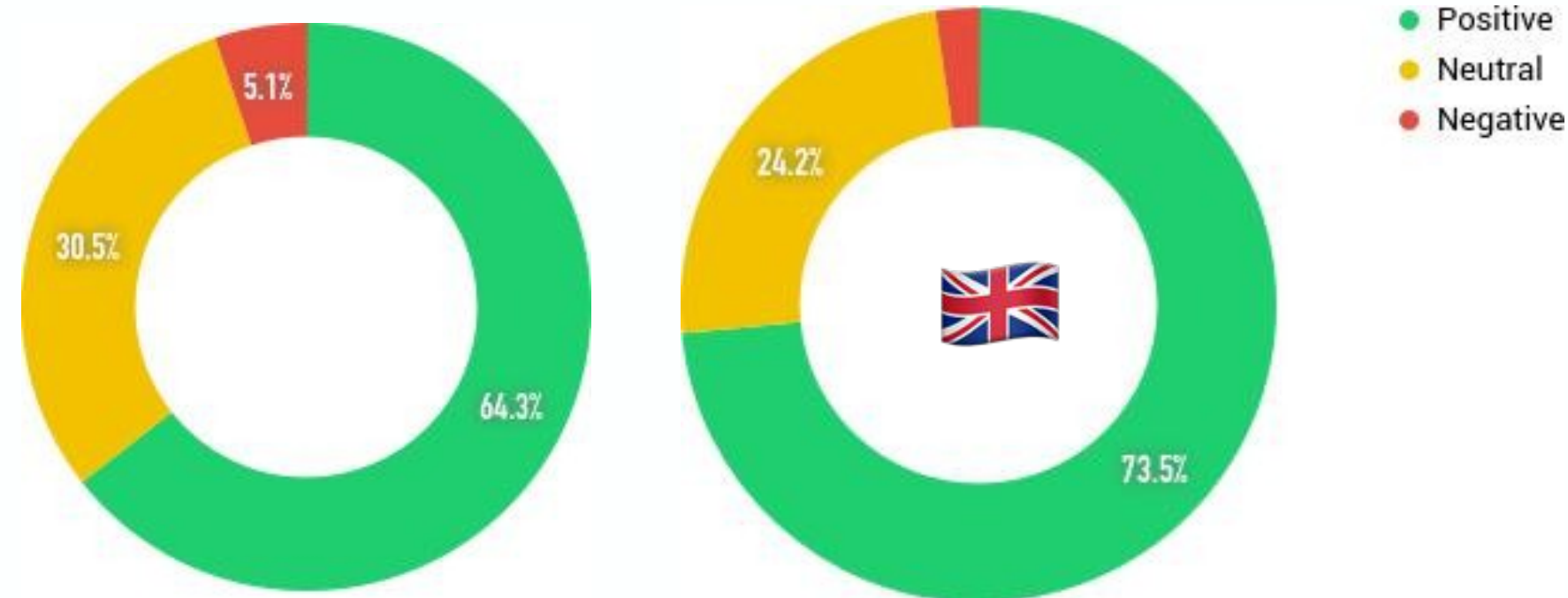


Whereas influencer-led campaigns usually focus on brand-based or people-based themes, responses to #WhyArt were articulated through emotions.

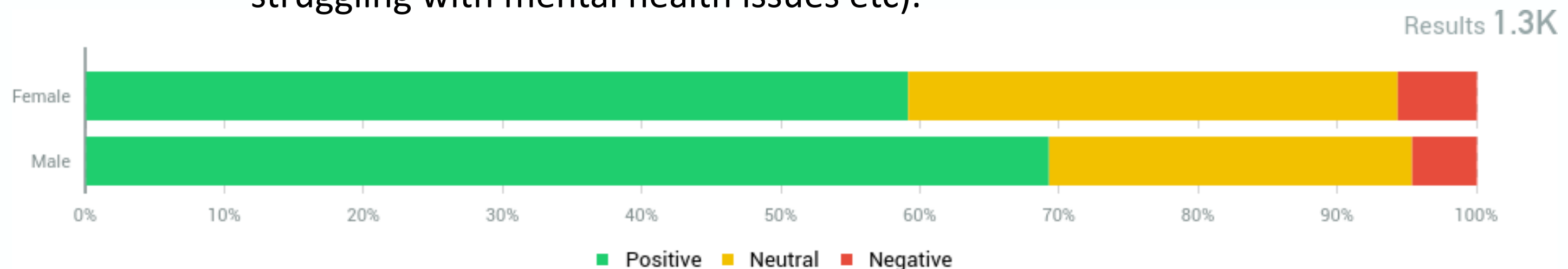
Here, we've listed the campaign's most-used words.



Audience sentiment



When analysing the entries to our campaign using this, we can see positive reactions are clearly higher in volume - 73.5% from UK based responders. Below you can also see the breakdown by gender. However, 'negative' doesn't mean entries are necessarily talking negatively about the arts, but rather talking about something that TalkWalker categorise as negative (i.e. depression, death, struggling with mental health issues etc).



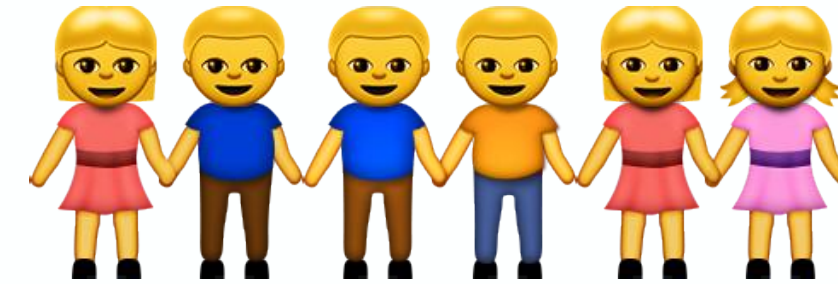
Emerging themes



SELF
EXPRESSION



MENTAL
HEALTH



SOCIAL
TOOL



GLOBAL
ISSUES



LEARNING
& PERSPECTIVE



aliweknow

4d

Art has made my the person I am today. It has allowed me expression in a world full of suppression, without art and it's therapeutic remedies I would never be where I am today!!



levyredfox16

4d

#whyart I think art as impacted on my life in a way that can't be put into words. It's an escape from the world around and for me to be let lose with my own world of imagination. Art is many things for many people but for me it's home. It's peace on paper, leave me with paper pencil and my mind and let's see what happens 😊💕💕



erykwolf

4d

Art is all about beauty, creativity and perspective. Art taught me that there is no right or wrong- that is the beauty of it. Art has helped me figure out who I really am- there in lies the creativity of it all. Art gave me a voice when I couldn't find one- I found that perspective can be louder than words.



alexrose312

4d

Art gives me a way to express my love for the things I enjoy. Creating fanart makes me feel like I've made something awesome and feel happy and accomplished. over the last 7 years art has impacted me most by helping me seriously increase my patience, diligence, and appreciation of beautiful things 💕💕



crazycuddle.art

4d

#WhyArt Throughout my depression, art has been one of the only hobbies that has continued to be fun and make me happy. Besides that, art is always a sort of constant in my life. Even when I feel completely worthless, art least I can make art which both makes me happy and gives me a feeling of value.

somethinglikelydia For me, definitely. I've struggled with confidence issues my whole life, but even when I've been at my lowest, I can still find my voice in the art I create. Equally, because I suffer from depression, sometimes words cannot express how I feel, but I'll see a painting or hear a song, that can express that feeling in ways that words never could.



shannonb220

4d

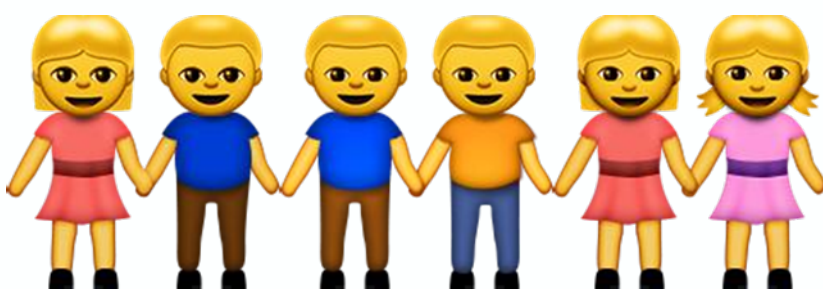
Art gives me an escape when the world gets too heavy. It helps me relax and focus on what's really important instead of worrying about every little thing. Drawing and coloring have helped me a lot with my anxiety and are things that help me through panic attacks. **#whyart**



zhuangruwooi

4d

Art has impacted me in a lot of ways, but the main impact it had on me is that I had a creative platform to channel all of my anger, sadness, frustrations, and happiness. It let me release stress and be free from judgement by other people. It let me reflect on myself and be more calm and not easily angry. I love how art is an outlet and a reflection of everyone differently. (I hope thats good xD)



[_ayee_tayy_](#)

4d

[#whyart](#) Art hasn't always been a big part of my life. I made a new friend in 2nd grade and she was really interesting to me. Really special. In her home she had tons of paintings done by her mom. She got into art and she was automatically amazing at it. The way her pencil flowed on the paper was like magic to me. I asked my mom for a sketch book and started on small things. Now here I am 8 years later. My friend from then is now my best friend in the world. We live 18 hours apart but still talk nonstop all day long. :) ❤️❤️



[sindygallegos](#)

4d

Art is a therapy that has kept me from the pits of depression. It has given me a purpose to keep on living. I battle through PTSD and nothing brings me more joy then feeling the strokes of paint come off my brushes. I want to share my art with the world because I was given this gift and it wouldn't be fair if I kept it to myself! Having one of your paintings will be a reminder that I'm not the only one who feels this way. It would be a great encouragement when I'm feeling down!



[kmillustrations](#)

4d

[#WhyArt](#) Art has impacted my life by introducing me to new forms of art, people and things. During the darkest moments of my life, art has always been the one thing that's been truly there for me. It has let me escape the harsh realities of life, and let me escape to this creative, magical realm, where I can just be me, and I can let my thoughts run wild. I have met so many wonderful people, so many friends; I honestly believe that without art, and the people and friends that I've made through it, I really believe that I wouldn't be here today.



[jenn.port19](#)

1w

[#whyart](#) music is my art. I have been playing flute for most of my life, and it has influenced my life so much. It has given my once in a lifetime opportunities like playing in a professional recording studio in Disney. It has also introduced my to some of the most caring, genuine people who I am lucky to call my friends. If I did not play flute and get involved in music, my life would be significantly different.



[wisperwynd](#)

4d

Genuinely? I've made most of my friends because of art. It's something that attracts people's attention positively and if you're as shy as me in year 5 it was the only way to make people be the slightest bit interested in me and what I do. Also joining an art website lead to me joining other websites and making all my English friends there, it's ridiculous. (Also art helps a lot when dealing with emotions and frustration.)



instanttheodora

1w

#whyart When Churchill was asked to cut arts funding in favour of the war effort, he replied: "Then what are we fighting for" 🤔



zoombiee

2d

Whether people realize it or not, art has been a major factor in our world's history. It's played its part in times of war, revolutionary uprisings and during some of society's greatest trials and victories. On a personal and much smaller scale, art has been an outlet for any and all inner emotions I am not able to express through traditional means. It's a stress reliever and beautiful form of sharing.



lea.lgp

1w

#WhyArt art is a way of bringing people together, a way of pioneering new ways of viewing the world. Free expression of human mind and senses. Art is important because it helps us understand the human experience by allowing us to put our emotions and perspectives into a real form. " Art is a way of talking to strangers " @joshdevinedrums



_katie_evans_

2d

#whyart art has always been something that I can enjoy when everything else gets a bit too stressful, it is a way to express my opinions about social/environmental/political issues. There is a freedom with all forms of art (media, painting, illustration etc) that I can't seem to find in any other area of life 😊



natters358

4d

Art has given me a way to express myself. It's a way to connect with new people and learn more about each other. We all see this world differently so why not learn from one another?
#whyart



tarryn_rich

4d

#whyart it inspires me to create new things, relax and to appreciate other people's styles and creations. I took art as a subject at school and from that I learned that, no matter who you are, what you can do or your challenges you face, be a disability, mental health or anything, even just feeling a bit down, you can create something beautiful. And NO ONE can tell you it's wrong because it's subjective and everyone has the opportunity to create
❤️



gabbyy_et

4d

#WhyArt art has impacted my life the most in the way I see the world. There are so many different artists that are unique and amazing in their own ways. I love watching people make any type of art and seeing how happy it makes them. I find art very relaxing and fun.

hicklory I think everyone's definition of 'art' can be very different. Music is art, theatre is art, a painting is art. But at the same time, there is art in science too. I'm a medical student, and I cannot count how many times a tutor has said 'medicine is an art'. Reconstruction of someone's knee joint is not just science telling you what goes where- it's crafting with your tools, it's following a lot of instinct as to which parts are damaged. Art is very relevant to most, if not all of our lives.

Key responses



Heather Macdonald @Hesterquirl · 18h

To me art is about connecting with something, then drawing from it the essence of what it is then recreating it from your view point #whyart



1



Josh Terry @JoshTerryPlays 2h

@hannahwitton when I build it, I feel self worth. When I share it I feel connected. When I art I live. #WhyArt



Chloé @irainbowfangirl 5h

@hannahwitton art is what gives me a reason, a purpose and is also a source of happiness ! #whyart



Nich D @Dyp100 · 23h

@hannahwitton I feel the outside world influences our inside world, just as much as the other way around. So more pretty means good feels.



Responses



glam.crybaby

4d

Art has impacted me many different ways from getting rid of stress to learning how to become a better artist. Art is not just a hobby that I do in spare time but it's also something that I want to develop and grow into a career in the future. Art isn't just colouring pencils and paper but there are many ways to define it. Art can be paintings, sculptures, DIY and even textiles. It plays a big part of my life due to the fact it is one of my strengths and it makes me feel special that I share that talent with others who are also growing artists. I am learning so much about art and the fact I have obtained so much from lessons in school and your videos determines me to keep going and to continue learning about the many skills as I love art do much!



niks._c

3d

[#WhyArt](#) I have loved art from a very young age but my parents were never really supportive of it and in school, I was the geeky one when what I really wanted to be was the arty one. Even though I had barely any supplies and my parents thought it was a waste of time, I continued sketching and doodling. I didn't think I was very good but I loved creating and doing art. Now I am in a new school and my best friend loves art and I'm going to do it for GCSE. I sketch and paint a lot more and I have become better and have a style almost. Art especially helped me when my Aunt died a year ago and I used art as a way of expressing my feelings so I wouldn't break down. I love art and it has helped me grow as a person xx ❤️

Key Findings

Arguably, young people who have access to internet, follow influencers online and are confident enough to respond to such a question, already have a degree of privilege and potentially are critically or culturally engaged. However, as the results are on a mass scale, and through channels unconnected to institutions, we feel we have learnt something new by listening to young people's voice in an organic space.

Interestingly, not one of the 1,171 deeper responses to the question mention art galleries, organisations or spaces, indicating that young people generally see art as something outside of this context. This is likely to be due to the terminology some Influencers chose to use – 'creativity' rather than 'art'.

Social Life commented that through all their work to date, they had not seen an audience open up to the extent to which they contributed meaningful and personal responses to this question. The decision to not impose our branding, not use the institutional voice and speak through a third party has given us new insight into the autonomous views of young people.

Next Steps

We'd be interested to hear back from youth programmers –

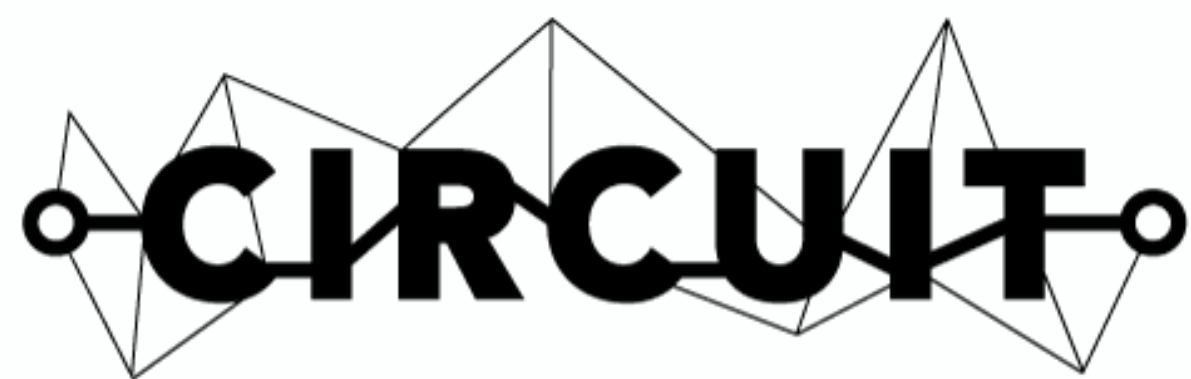
Do you recognise any of the findings as overlapping or linking to those you have uncovered through your work with young people and the arts?

How could these findings be useful when considering and developing future programme?

Could this methodology be re-purposed for other areas of audience research? If this is a starting point, what would we ask next?

Would it be an effective way to ask young people specifically about their experience of galleries, or crowd-source ideas for programme?

In addition, we are planning a second round of research using this methodology, asking young people specifically about their engagement with galleries.



phf Paul Hamlyn
Foundation

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