Survey Says

Councilmember Rue Landau's 2024 Artist Survey

We surveyed Philadelphia's artist community for information on their lives, their challenges, and the changes they want the city of Philadelphia to make.

RUE LANDAU

COUNCILMEMBER AT-LARGE

Released February 2025

Summary

In a continued effort to make Philadelphia a thriving hub for artists, the Office of Councilmember Rue Landau conducted a survey of Philadelphia's multidisciplinary artists to better understand the needs and challenges faced by the city's artist community.



The results gathered from **354** respondents during August to October 2024 offer a nuanced perspective on the barriers artists face, with an emphasis on the lack of access to opportunities, affordable studio spaces, and the difficulty in securing grants or donations.

This report outlines the key findings of the survey and presents actionable insights that will guide future advocacy efforts with the Philadelphia City Council, ensuring that artists in the region have the resources and support needed to thrive.

This survey was promoted via social media and arts organizations, and this is not a scientific study.

RUE
LANDAU
COUNCILMEMBER AT-LARGE

Audience

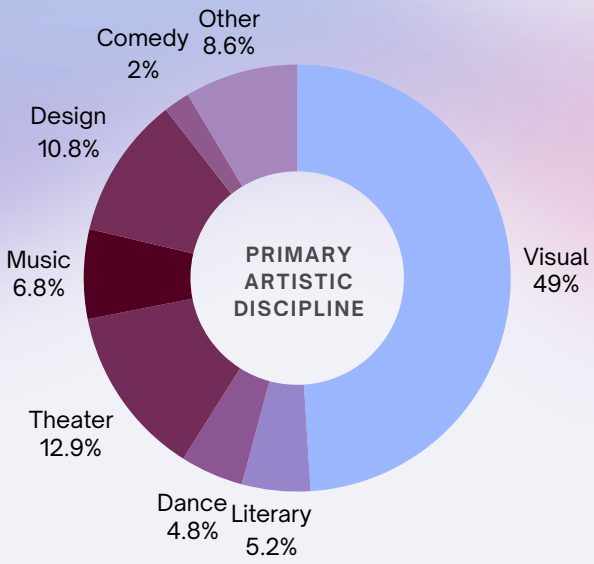
The goal of this survey was to gather insights from artists across all areas of Philadelphia to shape policy and advocacy efforts aimed at improving the local arts ecosystem.

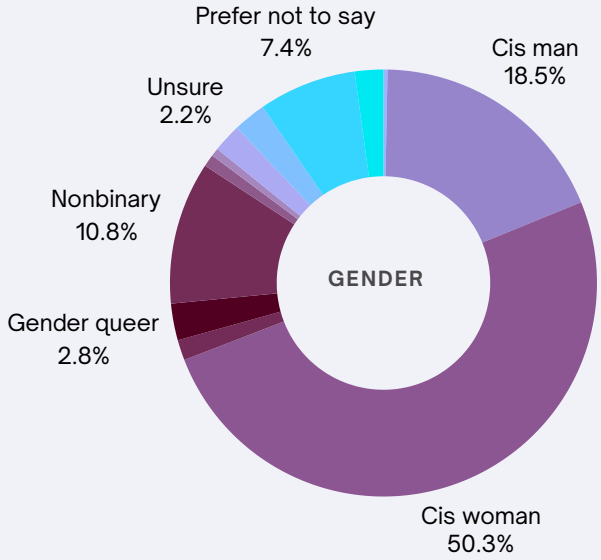
By understanding the specific needs of these artists, we hope to push for policies and initiatives that address their most pressing challenges.

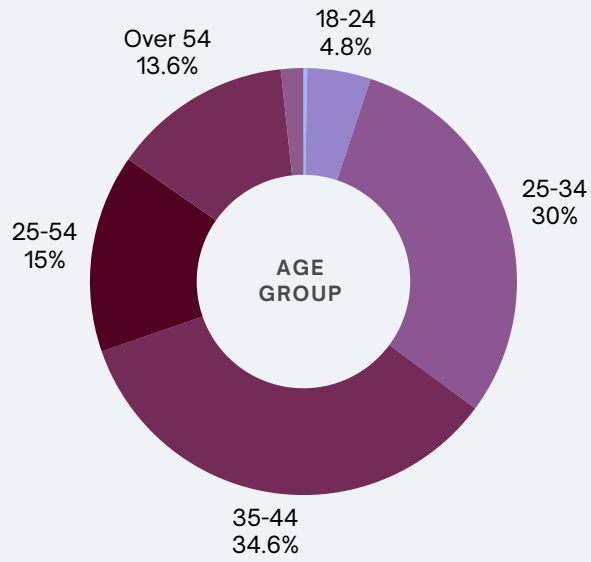
The survey was open to all local multidisciplinary artists, and participation was voluntary. As a result, the respondent pool reflects those who chose to engage and is not a scientific representation of all artists in Philadelphia, with the majority identifying as visual artists, cisgender women, and falling within the 34-44 age range.

While we aimed to capture a broad range of perspectives, the final composition of respondents was shaped by who opted to take part, and the survey results were not weighted.

The survey was conducted online from August 7 to October 31, 2024.







Key Findings

This survey found that artists are concerned about gentrification, loss of affordable spaces and institutions, and the need for better access to centralized resources for opportunities, events, and tools.

Affordable Spaces
Artists consistently expressed concern over a lack of affordable studio space, rehearsal space, housing, and accessible tools (e.g., woodshops, jewelry shops). Many noted that neighboring cities like New York provide more affordable options.

Centralized Information & Access to Opportunities
Artists feel there is a lack of an easily accessible, centralized directory for arts opportunities, events, grants, and exhibitions.

Displacement and Gentrification
Many felt that gentrification was displacing artists from their workspaces and noted the loss of arts institutions, calling upon the city for intervention to protect and maintain affordable spaces.

What are the biggest challenges you face as an artist in Philadelphia?

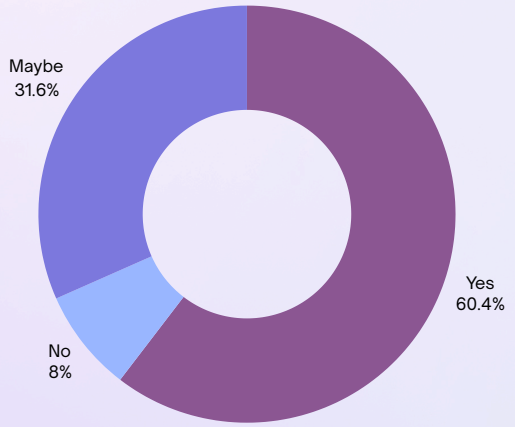
201 ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITIES	**196** SECURING GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS	**194** AFFORDABLE WORKSPACE
146 AFFORDABLE HEALTHCARE	**144** NO DIRECTORY OF EVENTS AND OPPROTUNITIES	**141** AFFORDABLE HOUSING

*Number of survey respondents

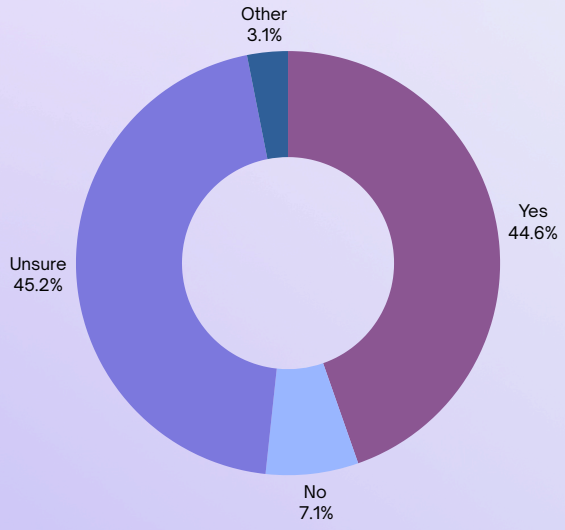
The Arts Drive Community Building:

- The **community-building power of the arts** was a topic for many who took the survey. They stressed that their work contributes to social activism, mental health, and the cultural landscape of the city.
- **More city-sponsored opportunities for public art**, including small public works and projects in addition to larger organizations like Mural Arts, were requested as solutions.
- Many respondents cited their **personal networks and community support** as their most valuable resources.
- Social media was cited as an instrumental tool in helping artists promote their work and build networks, especially groups found through Instagram and Facebook. According to artists, social media and marketing promotion is essential in their work and building community.
- Almost 90% of respondents feel that **an arts union** would or could be beneficial to them.

Would you attend an informational fair for resources of housing, workspaces, networking, and more?



Would an arts workers union be beneficial as a support network for you?



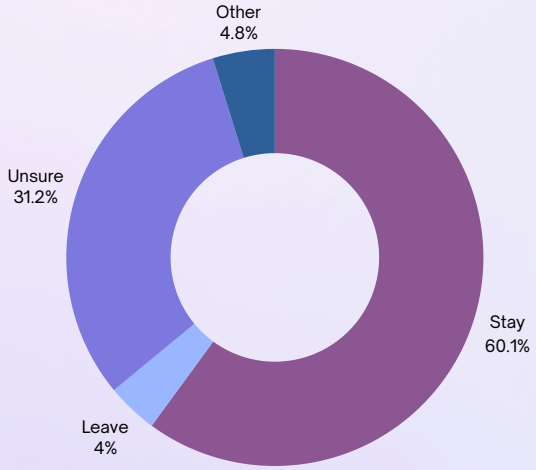


Arts Organizations and Institutions are Integral Parts of the Philadelphia Ecosystem

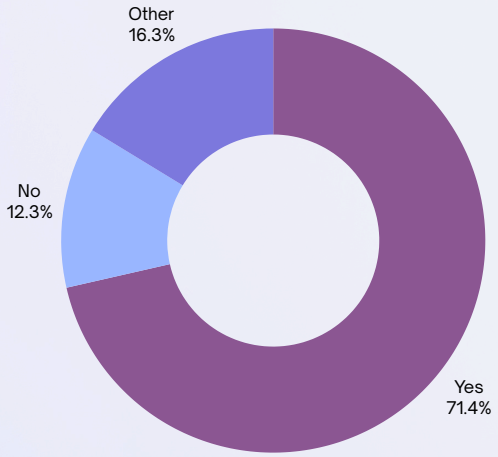
- Local arts organizations such as Fleisher Art Memorial, InLiquid, DaVinci Art Alliance, and Mural Arts Philadelphia were commonly mentioned as **vital resources**, offering opportunities for exhibitions, funding, and professional development.
- Educational institutions like UArts, Tyler School of Art, and PAFA were also highlighted as important networks for artists, helping them build their careers and connect with the Philadelphia community. **Of the respondents, 226 went to high school, college, or post-grad in the Philadelphia area.**
- Artists expressed disappointment in the city's failure to protect these spaces and the impact this has on the local arts community. **Many artists fear for the future of Philadelphia's cultural infrastructure.**

The future of Philadelphia as an arts home hangs in the balance.

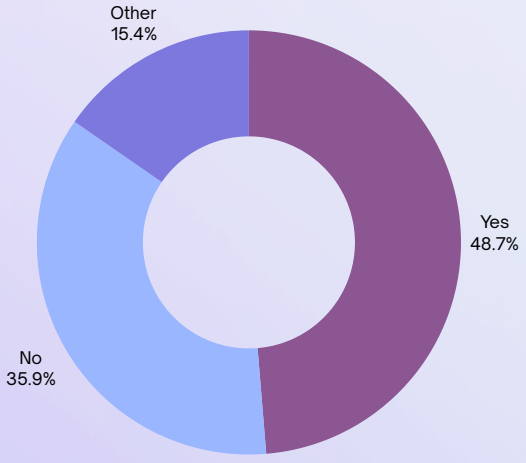
Are you planning to stay here in Philadelphia or leave?



Do you feel welcome in Philadelphia as an artist?



Do you feel optimistic about your future as an artist in Philadelphia?





Frustration Over Lack of Support:

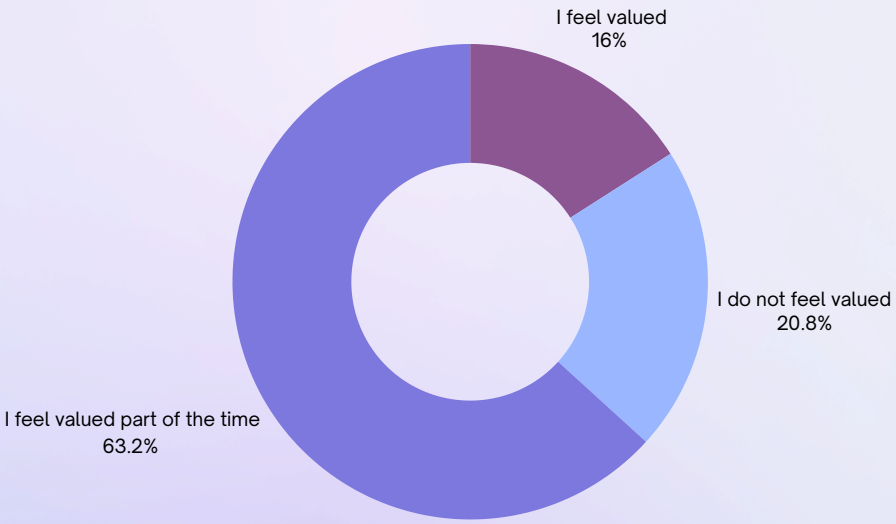
- Several artists expressed **concern over the growing challenges of making a living in Philadelphia.** This is due to the rising cost of living, lack of affordable studio spaces, and limited financial support from grants and jobs. Many artists feel they are being pushed out of the city due to gentrification and the favoring of developers over creative spaces.

Social and Economic Trends Drive Conditions for Artists:

- Many respondents expressed concerns about how larger social and economic trends - such as **gentrification, homelessness, and income inequality** - impact the arts. Several called on the city to consider broader policy interventions.

Philly artists feel supported, but are worried about economic barriers and gentrification disrupting this support.

Do you feel your work as an artist is recognized and valued in Philadelphia?



"Protect artist work spaces. Art workspaces and even gallery spaces get gentrified and lost constantly."

"The cost of living in Philadelphia was affordable when I moved here 9 years ago, slowly it is becoming unmanageable. "

"This is my city. Born and raised. I intend to stay despite gentrification..."

Artists are Seeking Stable Revenue to Continue Working:

- Grants and funding programs such as the Illuminate the Arts Grant, Pew Fellowships, and Bartol Foundation have provided critical financial support for artists. Of respondents, **305 said their work is entirely or partially self-funded**, and **257 said grants/fundraising professional development workshops would be beneficial to them.**
- Income and payments play a large role in an artist's sense of security, with **83% of respondents making under $75k/year, and 41% of respondents reporting missing bill payments due to lack of funds.**

Affordable Studio Spaces Are Key for Artists:

- Affordable spaces like NextFab and community-run studios like Vox were highlighted as valuable, but respondents also noted that such spaces are shrinking, making access more difficult. The high cost of rent for these spaces was also mentioned, with **194 citing finding affordable studio/work/rehearsal space as one of their biggest challenges.**

Artists are focused on finding access to opportunities, financial support, affordable spaces, and more.



From the Artists

Philadelphia for Artists

"I really love Philadelphia. Moving here after college was a fantastic decision... This is my home."

“Philadelphia should be a leader in arts education and support for artists. We all deserve more space in the city budget line. Art will save Philadelphia.”

“I genuinely believe that Philadelphia could be viewed as one of the premier art destinations in the world if the correct resources were directed towards artists and art institutions.”

Network of Opprotunity

“Arts organizations like InLiquid, Da Vinci, and CFEVA helped me immensely when I was just starting out. They helped me hone my skills and professional practice and build my resume.”

Concerns and Challenges

“If the city thought about it as community investment rather than arts investment, maybe it would be funded.”

"The biggest struggle is securing funds. Many community-focused projects go undone because of lack of funds. If the city thought about it as community investment rather than arts investment, maybe it would be funded."

“Artists here are scared. With the schools and galleries closing, and the perception that the city government doesn't care about or value small businesses and artists, we are all talking about whether we should leave or even quit the arts. We matter and we need support."

In Conclusion

The survey reveals key challenges faced by Philadelphia's artist community, with significant barriers to entry including a lack of affordable studio spaces, accessible tools, and a centralized directory for arts opportunities.

Gentrification and the displacement of artists also emerged as critical concerns, with calls for city intervention to protect affordable spaces.

Artists expressed the need for more comprehensive support beyond funding, such as healthcare, affordable housing, and business resources. Many advocated for universal basic income or unrestricted grants to alleviate financial pressures and improve job security in the freelance arts sector. Despite these challenges, artists emphasized the community-building power of the arts, highlighting their contributions to social activism and cultural vibrancy. Respondents urged the city to create more opportunities for public art and small community-driven projects. These issues intersect with concerns of all working Philadelphians.

In summary, while Philadelphia's artist community is resilient and collaborative, systemic change is needed to ensure long-term sustainability. Addressing financial, social, and space-related barriers will be critical for keeping the city a thriving center for the arts.



Thank you!



Stay connected with our office!

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