

Liverpool Biennial 2021



Evaluation

PRODUCED BY

BOP Consulting



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Cover Image: Jadé Fadojutimi and Roland Persson installation view at Bluecoat, Liverpool Biennial 2021. Documented works: Jadé Fadojutimi, *Let's take a walk in a tangent*, 2018. Roland Persson, *Mouth of Medusa*, 2018. *Desire (Of a thoughtful kind)*, 2018. Photography Mark McNulty



Yael Davids, *Wingspan of the captive*, 2021.
Installation view at Liverpool Central Library, Liverpool Biennial 2021. Photography: Mark McNulty

Introduction

Dr Samantha Lackey, Director



Diego Bianchi, *Inflation*, 2021. Installation view at Lewis's Building, Liverpool Biennial 2021. Photography: Mark McNulty

Liverpool Biennial 2021: *The Stomach and the Port* took place from 20 March – 27 June, opening as the first major contemporary visual arts festival following the UK's national lockdown. Originally conceived to take place in 2020, the 11th edition was developed over an extended period through the strength and commitment of our artists, staff, and partners.

Unlike any previous edition, our programme was composed of two phased chapters, gradually supporting audiences to engage with cultural activity remotely and in-person after lockdown restrictions eased. The edition launched outside and online, reanimating public spaces across the city centre, along with a new Online Portal which evolved weekly with resources for children as well as other multi-

media content for all ages to enjoy. On 19 May this was followed by a full exhibitions programme across Tate Liverpool, Open Eye Gallery, Bluecoat, FACT, Lewis's Building, Lush Building, Dr. Martin Luther King Jnr. Building, Cotton Exchange and Liverpool Central Library.

Liverpool Biennial 2021 presented the work of 50 artists that interrogated colonial history and the resilience, political agency and strength of human bodies. Projects were hosted in new locations, including a former iconic department store, Lewis's, and a fleet of black taxi cabs. In a year which made contact difficult, we devised new ways to foster connections, from supporting emerging artists with bursaries, sharing and disseminating learning resources with libraries and primary schools, and delivering activity with Kinship Carers.

Working together with our partners we are proud to have delivered a relevant and considered programme that safely engaged with audiences and developed alternative means for those unable to attend in-person. Although challenging and unpredictable, the pandemic has initiated change in some of our operations. We have significantly expanded our digital outputs, trialling different and dynamic ways of bringing the Biennial to our audiences through podcasts, videos, virtual reality capture and online events, alongside refocusing our commitment to environmental sustainability and driving and supporting diversity, equity and inclusion not only in our programme, but in our processes too. Together with the team, I look forward to using these learnings and developing them further to inform the direction and development of our next edition from June – September 2023.

Liverpool Biennial 2021 was curated by Manuela Moscoso.

Executive Summary

Liverpool Biennial delivers a major festival of contemporary visual art every two years across the city's public spaces, galleries and historic buildings. Each edition is underpinned by a year-round programme of research, education, residencies, projects and commissions.

The 11th edition of the Liverpool Biennial titled *The Stomach and the Port* was postponed by a year because of the pandemic. Organised largely during the height of Covid-19, it was the first major national visual arts event to take place after the third national lockdown. The Biennial ran from 20 March to 27 June 2021, with some of the exhibitions extending until September. This meant delivering in a complex, uncertain environment. The edition mixed online and physical activities (hybrid model), including a phased approach across two chapters, beginning with an art in the public realm strand, before the lifting of restrictions allowed visitors to be welcomed inside the nine indoor venues. An online programme, and new website, the Online Portal, were created to engage international and UK audiences despite travel restrictions. These adaptations fuelled innovation in programme delivery, alongside major organisational change.

BOP Consulting was commissioned to deliver an independent evaluation of Liverpool Biennial 2021. Evidence for this report is based on the responses of the Biennial's core audience, key stakeholders, and staff. Building from the findings in 2016 and 2018, the evaluation explores the impact of Liverpool Biennial 2021 against four intended outcomes presented in the four chapters of this report and here summarised.

1 Liverpool Biennial plays a leading role in the UK and international contemporary art scene and in the reputation of Liverpool as a cultural destination

The international reputation of Liverpool Biennial has grown in strength and was not limited by the pandemic. The hybrid model was successful in engaging audiences nationally, as well as internationally online, suggesting the Biennial preserved its international brand name despite limited international visitor numbers due to the travel restrictions and guidance.

- Those who could visit the Biennial either in person or online, including peers, continue to report very high satisfaction with the quality of the Biennial, and especially the quality of the artists' work and the diverse programme.
- For those visiting from outside the city, 92% said that the Biennial was the main or partial motive for visiting.
- Of those who accessed digital engagement activities, more than 70% agreed or strongly agreed that the digital programme provided rich, engaging and complementary content and material and that it provided an alternative for people who could not visit the Biennial.

2 Liverpool Biennial has a clear placemaking role that works with Liverpool's cultural status to help make the city a vital place to live, work, study and visit

Residents and local stakeholders agree that Liverpool Biennial has contributed to raising the profile of the city and making residents proud by celebrating the city's assets, putting it on the map and fostering cultural tourism. Visitors from outside the city use the Biennial to discover and explore Liverpool, accessing spaces and areas less visited by tourists, as well as by residents.

- 95% of survey respondents said that Liverpool should be proud of its arts scene, and 93% said that Liverpool should do more of this type of thing.
- 86% of those coming from outside the city said that they are more likely to visit Liverpool again as a result of their experience at Liverpool Biennial.
- Liverpool Biennial is aware of the ongoing need for balance between its national and international focus, as well as its presence during non-festival periods, and strives to keep these elements in balance.

3 Liverpool Biennial's cultural, social and economic impacts contribute positively to the experience of individuals, families, communities and the city

Liverpool Biennial 2021 generated positive social impacts on the city, especially in improving the quality of life during and after lockdowns, and encouraging people to engage again with art, spaces in Liverpool and its communities. Liverpool Biennial engaged a diverse audience, meeting its programme aims and ambition to exhibit artists from underrepresented backgrounds. Liverpool Biennial intends to augment and increase this activity by continuing to work with local artists to strengthen links between the global and the local.

- After 18 months of “feeling a bit culturally deprived due to Covid”, survey respondents saw the Biennial as an opportunity to engage with the arts and culture, and reported it was “amazing to see art post-Covid”.
- Nearly one third of the visitors to Liverpool Biennial 2021 came from the most deprived 20% of English neighbourhoods.
- 18% of Liverpool Biennial 2021 audience described their ethnicity as Mixed, Asian/Asian British, Black/Black British or Other.

- 12% survey respondents reported having a disability, and 54% reported being Female.
- The main reasons for visiting the Biennial were reported as being to enjoy the atmosphere (49%), to be intellectually stimulated (46%), to learn something (45%) and to be inspired (44%). 36% of survey respondents responded that a key motivation for visiting the Biennial was to spend time with friends and family.

4 Liverpool Biennial acts as a catalyst, bringing together venues, arts organisations and other civic partners to engage diverse audiences and increase collective value

Liverpool Biennial confirmed its role as a leading visual arts institution which brings positive benefits to its partners and to other local cultural organisations. Peers encourage the Biennial to continue its catalytic role, driving local sector development.

- Local arts organisations reported that working collaboratively with the Biennial allows their audiences to be introduced to a higher number of venues locally.
- Arts organisations have reported looking at the Biennial to take inspiration and learn. For example, peers mentioned how this edition became an anticipated event for the UK art sector which was impatient to discover how the Biennial organised its operations within social distancing measures, designed its hybrid programme and engaged with its audiences during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Introduction

BOP consulting was appointed to deliver an independent report on the impact of Liverpool Biennial 2021. The evaluation is structured around four core intended outcomes for Liverpool Biennial:

- 1 Liverpool Biennial plays a leading role in the UK and international contemporary art scene and in the reputation of Liverpool as a cultural destination
- 2 Liverpool Biennial has a clear placemaking role that works with Liverpool's cultural status to help make the city a vital place to live, work, study and visit
- 3 Liverpool Biennial's cultural, social and economic impacts contribute positively to the experience of individuals, families, communities and the city
- 4 Liverpool Biennial acts as a catalyst, bringing together venues, arts organisations and other civic partners to increase value across the board

To explore the extent to which these outcomes have been met we adopted a three-stage methodology:

- Audience surveys with those attending Liverpool Biennial venues, partner venues and its online activities (receiving 464 responses)
- Qualitative interviews with Liverpool Biennial partners, 'peers' (i.e. representatives of UK and global contemporary art sectors), and visitors (13 interviews)
- Qualitative interviews with Liverpool Biennial staff and consideration of documentation and organisational policies.

This evaluation focuses on experiences and reactions to Liverpool Biennial 2021 but also includes a consideration of how this is linked to the overall organisation's priorities and operations outside of the festival period, accepting that these are clearly closely related. Findings are also mindful of the history and legacy that Liverpool Biennial has on the city of Liverpool and beyond.

Tables and charts outlining the full evaluation data are provided in the Appendix.



Neo Muyanga, *A Maze in Grace*, 2021. Installation view at Lush Building, Liverpool Biennial 2021. Photography: Mark McNulty



Teresa Solar, *Osteoclast (I do not know how I came to be on board this ship, this navel of my ark)*, 2021. Installation view at Exchange Flags, Liverpool Biennial 2021. Photography: Mark McNulty

1

Liverpool Biennial retains its national and international reputation



Christopher Cozier, *turbulence*, 2019–2021. Installation view at Lush Building, Liverpool Biennial 2021.
Photography: Mark McNulty

Outcome 1: Liverpool Biennial plays a leading role in the UK and international contemporary art scene and in the reputation of Liverpool as a cultural destination

Evidence shows that the international reputation of Liverpool Biennial has grown in strength along the years and was not limited by the pandemic that enforced a postponed and modified 11th edition. The travel restrictions imposed in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, and the resulting higher inclination to stay locally, heavily impacted on the number of visitors to the Biennial in 2021. However, engagement with the public continued to be strong, as international audiences engaged online, and the proportion of visitors coming from outside Liverpool was similar to 2016. This is an indication of the important national attention the Biennial enjoys.

- Liverpool Biennial 2021 engaged 38,965 core visitors. These visited an average of 4.2 Biennial locations, for a total of 164,730 visits.
- 98% described themselves as living in the UK, with only 2% reporting as being resident overseas. In 2018 the proportion of visitors visiting from overseas was 14%, and 9% in 2016.
- 37% of visitors came from Liverpool, 63% came from outside Liverpool, and 34% came from outside the North West. In 2018 72% of visitors came from outside the city, and 50% from outside the North West. In 2016, 60% of visitors were from outside the city, 36% from outside the North West.
- For those visiting from outside the city, 92% said that the Biennial was the main or partial motive for visiting, demonstrating that the Biennial has retained its position as a driving influence in attracting people to the city. This compares to the 86% who stated this in 2018.

In 2021 the Biennial adapted to the pandemic limitations by delivering a phased and hybrid model. This approach was successful in engaging

audiences nationally in stages, as well as internationally online, proving the Biennial preserved its international brand name, surviving the in-person visits limitations.

- The number of visitors to the website more than doubled in March 2021, reaching almost 15,000 when the Biennial launched, compared to an average of below 6,000 for the second half of 2020. This demonstrates that a large proportion of visitors were aware and interested in engaging with the Biennial online. While numbers and statistics for Twitter, Facebook and Newsletters subscribers have not grown overall in the last couple of years, the number of Instagram followers has seen a steady increase since the last edition with a current number of over 23,000.
- Almost one in four visitors surveyed (both online and physical audience) said they engaged with the Liverpool Biennial 2021 Online Portal (23%), one in five engaged with the artists' online artworks (21%), and with the online videos (incl. studio visits, interviews) (21%). 17% listened to a podcast and 3% reported accessing the VR Exhibition Tours.
- Looking at online visitors' demographics; while international travel was not easy or not possible in most cases, USA had the second highest number of visitors to the Biennial Portal, after the UK. Brazil, Canada and Australia figured in the top 10, demonstrating the Biennial online programme engaged with audiences from across the globe.
- Of those who accessed digital engagement activities via the Biennial's Portal, more than 70% agreed or strongly agreed that the digital programme provided rich, engaging, and complementary content and material (73%), that it provided an alternative for people who could not visit the Biennial, or that it was a complementary element to the in-person experience (70%).
- Audiences who engaged with the online programme reported it as "interesting" and "useful". Liverpool Biennial's online presence

was seen as a tool to plan the visit, and in some cases also as an extension of the physical exhibition.

I researched what there was to see with my kids online before coming.

– AUDIENCE MEMBER

I've really enjoyed the online presence. I think I liked the films more via the internet than I would have if they were in a gallery setting.

– AUDIENCE MEMBER

I do feel it is a good idea to include digital even after lockdown as many people find it hard to leave their homes due to disabilities or distance to venue.

– AUDIENCE MEMBER

Those who could visit the Biennial either in person or online continue to report very high satisfaction with the quality of the Biennial:

- Almost all survey respondents reported that the exhibition quality (93%) and the whole experience (95%) were either good or very good.
- When asked to score on a scale of 0-10 how likely they would be to recommend Liverpool Biennial, over 80% of survey respondents recorded a score of 8 or higher, indicating that they were highly likely to recommend the Biennial (with 46% scoring 10, 16% 9 and 19% 8).

Practitioners from peer institutions and organisations also remarked on the quality of the Biennial, and especially the quality of the artists' work and the diverse programme. This is also true for peers who could not travel to Liverpool.

It's a significant event in the arts calendar for the UK. It has the kind of international gravitas, for sure.

– PEER

It is one of the leading biennials in the UK with an international reputation, and it shows a high calibre of artists' work".

– PEER

When we were setting up our biennial and doing research (...), Liverpool was one that we often look to, for the model it has, and we always go back to it as a biennial that we try to emulate parts of, without having been there"

– PEER

Press coverage was global and extensive affirming the Biennial's status as an important player in the international visual art events scene.

- Liverpool Biennial 2021 achieved over 365 press hits.
- 80 of the press hits in 2021 came from international media - over 20 countries, including Brazil, America, Spain, China, France, Australia, Italy, India and Germany - and over 280 in both national and regional outlets, comprising 56 in-print features and 10 broadcast segments across BBC Free Thinking, BBC Front Row and Soho Radio



Activation of Kinship Activity Pack at Bluecoat, Liverpool Biennial 2021. Photography: Claire Henderson

2

Visitors and stakeholders from Liverpool are proud of the Biennial and its placemaking role



Haroon Mirza, *The Three W's*, 2021. Live performance at Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral, Liverpool Biennial 2021. Photography: Callum Mills

Outcome 2: Liverpool Biennial has a clear placemaking role that works with Liverpool's cultural status to help make the city a vital place to live, work, study and visit.

Residents and local stakeholders agree that across the years Liverpool Biennial has contributed to raising the profile of the city and makes residents proud by celebrating the city's assets, putting it on the map and fostering cultural tourism. Many visitors from outside the city use the Biennial to discover Liverpool, accessing spaces and areas less visited by tourists, as well as by residents. Liverpool Biennial is aware of the ongoing need for balance between its national and international focus as well as its presence during non-biennial periods and strives to keep these elements in balance.

Data from 2021 confirms the positive trend on how audiences feel with regards to the placemaking role of the Biennial. These figures have been consistently positive across the years.

- 95% said that Liverpool should be proud of its arts scene, and 93% said that Liverpool should do more of this type of thing. These figures are sustained from 2018, when these were reported as 89% and 91% respectively, in 2016 90% and 82%.
- 86% of those coming from outside the city said that they are more likely to visit Liverpool again as a result of their experience at Liverpool Biennial. In 2018, 82% agreed that they were more likely to visit Liverpool again based on their experience, in 2016, 63%.
- 89% think that it is important that the Biennial is happening in Liverpool. 80% of respondents said so both in 2018 and 2016.

A haven of creativity in a subject I should know more about, more of this please Liverpool!

— AUDIENCE MEMBER

Audiences also indicated an appreciation for the buildings and spread of activity across Liverpool, lending itself to a “treasure hunt style” exhibition. This was seen to afford visitors the opportunity to visit “different ‘non-art’ buildings” across the city, with survey respondents reflecting positively on the opening and creative use of temporary otherwise disused spaces, as well as economically more deprived areas. Liverpool Biennial is seen as a way to engage with the city in a creative and surprising way, especially after the lockdown months – “it’s good to wander around the city and enjoy the festival”, “It adds to the city, colourful, promotes diversity”, “Brilliant to see things happening in the city.”

I loved it! It’s my favourite one so far, it felt like one whole exhibition rather than lots of little ones. I really like going into different spaces and buildings that you wouldn’t normally see in a city too.

– AUDIENCE MEMBER

I’ve felt really safe and welcome during all of my visits to exhibitions across the city. This is my first time visiting Liverpool and I feel it’s given me a really insightful look into the diversity of history here.

– AUDIENCE MEMBER

With the Biennial you can see artworks dotted around different parts of Liverpool, including those that are traditionally known as the most economically deprived areas. (...) I felt that was a wonderful thing to include those areas that are perhaps sometimes neglected or left out from these interventions.

– AUDIENCE MEMBER

Peers and partners, both working locally and beyond, have all highlighted that the Biennial’s programme is built from and with

the urban fabric, engaging local communities and invigorating the city. It opened the doors to venues people would not normally have access to, creating a sense of engagement and discovery with the city’s infrastructure.

I certainly feel like I know the city through the lens of the Biennial.

– PEER

I think the venues they choose make it because if they were all just in art galleries... I don’t know. I like the fact that they work with local venues so you can explore a building you’d never get the chance to see the inside of. And for me this is part of the experience. The city itself is part of it, you know, because it has a beautiful architecture, and the venues they find are quirky.

– PEER

Thanks to the quality of its programme, stakeholders have mentioned that Liverpool Biennial keeps on being successful in “putting Liverpool on the map”, along with the “big cities”, in the visual contemporary arts world.

People fly from LA to visit the city because of the Biennial, people that are very much into that world of art and culture, and they come and visit for that specific reason (...) it is something of the scale for bigger cities.

– PARTNER

The Biennial aims to celebrate the city, its history, urban design, communities and institutions, while also having an international significance in the contemporary visual arts world. Some peers acknowledged the complexities for Liverpool Biennial to manage this dual local and global focus, sometime questioning if the balance has been leaning more towards the international dimension. Interviews with Liverpool Biennial staff confirmed how aware they are of the challenges and potential in this dual mission: the Biennial works to contribute to

making Liverpool a cultural destination for visitors, as well as a vibrant place to live and work in for residents and local communities.

Over the last decade I think the strategic positioning of the Biennial internationally and nationally has been the focus. And what tends to happen in those moments, is that sometimes the local element gets a little lost in the mix.

— PARTNER

The Biennial knows that engaging with local artists and communities is essential to galvanise enthusiasm, generate pride and stimulate creativity, and we have all intentions to keep working in this direction

— BIENNIAL STAFF

Similarly, some stakeholders have also highlighted the challenge for the Biennial to manage its presence in the city during ‘non-biennial’ periods. It is recognised, that by commissioning artworks that become part of the city’s landscape, the Biennial balances its temporary presence with permanent references, while supporting the placemaking agenda. As reported by key stakeholders, this is one of the main motivations behind Liverpool BID Company support to the Biennial in delivering an ambitious, five-year art strategy for the public spaces in Liverpool. There is continuing activity for the city, its residents, and visitors, that commemorates past editions and makes the Biennial resonate way after the festival has ended.

To be able to have a permanent work within the city of Liverpool that is commissioned by the Biennial, I think is really a great achievement and is really important.

— PEER

That input from Liverpool will go on, and on, and on, and touch different audiences.

— PEER



Sonia Gomes at Cotton Exchange Building, Liverpool Biennial 2021. Installation view. Documented: *Hiato*, 2019. *Timbre*, from *Raiz* series, 2018. Photography: Mark McNulty

3

Liverpool Biennial positively contributed to the wellbeing of its audiences in the city



Linder, *Bower of Bliss*, 2021. Live performance at Liverpool ONE, Liverpool Biennial 2021. Photography: Callum Mills

Outcome 3: Liverpool Biennial's cultural, social and economic impacts contribute positively to the experience of individuals, families, communities and the city

Evidence shows that Liverpool Biennial 2021 has generated positive social impacts on the city, especially for its role in improving the quality of life during and after lockdowns, and encouraging people to engage again with art, spaces in Liverpool and its communities.

- The main reasons for visiting the Biennial were reported as being to enjoy the atmosphere (49%), to be intellectually stimulated (46%), to learn something (45%) and to be inspired (44%). 36% of survey respondents responded that a key motivation for visiting the Biennial was to spend time with friends and family.
- After 18 months of “feeling a bit culturally deprived due to Covid”, some survey respondents saw the Biennial as a welcome opportunity to engage with the arts and culture, describing it as being “amazing to see art post-Covid”.
- The Biennial could be seen to act as a catalyst for social activity, providing people with the opportunity to spend time with others. Three in four visitors said they visited with other people. 67% agreed or strongly agreed that Liverpool Biennial has allowed them to spend some quality time with their friends or family (72% in 2018).

Best of all was that I got to share the experience with my friends after not seeing them for so long and it meant so much. We would react differently or the same to different artworks and it was just fab.

– AUDIENCE MEMBER

- 73% agreed or strongly agreed that their visit had made them interested in new things (76% in 2018). 58% agreed or strongly agreed

that Liverpool Biennial offers something for people of all ages (65% in 2018). In terms of wellbeing – negatively keyed – 46% of survey respondents felt that their experience has a positive effect on their general wellbeing (strongly disagree or disagree), compared to 44% in 2018.

- Evidence registered overwhelmingly positive feedback around Liverpool Biennial staff, who were regularly described as being ‘welcoming’, ‘informative’ and whose presence was seen to ‘enhance the experience’.

Great atmosphere and friendly/attentive staff, they explained everything really well and made sure we were enjoying/being informed [during] our visit.

– AUDIENCE MEMBER

The workshop we organised with Black Obsidian Sound System has been amazing. It helped our students to become a little bit looser and more creative. And to get them introduced to the Biennial. Making them aware what is on their doorstep and a bit more familiar with the Liverpool offer.

– TEACHER

Data shows that Liverpool Biennial attracts an audience that is in line with the national and sectorial figures collected by ACE and the regional figures from ONS. This means that the audience engaging with Liverpool Biennial is proportionally representative of its regional communities. These figures are in line with Liverpool Biennial’s ambition to engage with a diverse audience, as outlined in the organisation’s Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan, which references 25 different outcomes covering different areas such as workforce, engagement with communities or artists and artwork diversity.

- 18% of Liverpool Biennial 2021 audience described their ethnicity as Mixed, Asian/Asian British, Black/Black British or Other.

Data¹ from ACE shows that 10% of audiences in National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs) described their ethnicity as Mixed, Asian/Asian British, Black/Black British. This figure is 7% for NPOs based in the North of England (all artforms), and 18% for NPOs in the Visual Arts sector nationally. In 2021, this compares to 11.2% reported in 2018.

- At Liverpool Biennial 2021, 12% survey respondents reported having a disability². This figure is 10% for NPO audiences nationally, 9% for NPOs based in the North of England, and 9% for all Visual Arts NPOs. In 2018, this figure for Liverpool Biennial was 12%.
- In terms of gender, 54% survey respondents reported being female. This compares to 64% across all NPOs nationally, 63% in NPOs based in the North of England, and 63% across Visual Arts NPOs. In 2018, this figure for Liverpool Biennial was 63%.
- The North West of England is the place of residence for 68% of those who attended Liverpool Biennial in 2021. 2021 Census Projections for 2021³ report that 9% of residents are of Mixed, Asian/Asian British, Black/Black British ethnicity, 19% having a disability, and 61% female.
- Although socio-economic status as based on occupation was not collected, the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) data (based on postcode) indicates that more people attended from poorer areas than wealthier areas. Nearly one third of those attending (32%) came from the poorest 20% English neighbourhoods and 10% of attendees from the wealthiest 20%. As highlighted in 2018, this is likely also a consequence of the fact that Liverpool is disproportionately represented in the lower quintiles of the IMD.
- The programme and the artists selected by the curatorial team also aimed to increase participation of underrepresented communities and individuals, intertwining this to the city of Liverpool and introducing themes such as inequality, the enforced enslavement of people, colonialism, and environmental justice. The selection of artists was one of the most diverse to date, made up of 50% women and covering 30 countries. As reported by some key stakeholders, there is

scope for Liverpool Biennial to continue working with local artists and communities to strengthen links between the global and the local.

Inevitably, the economic impact of this edition of the Biennial has been lower if compared to the last two editions, given the reduced number of visitors. However, partners did underline the importance of this type of events as a factor influencing economic wellbeing in the city.

It normally has a huge impact in the local community as a whole because then you are bringing people and the visitor economy is benefiting from it, that's a given.

— PARTNER

I came to Liverpool, so I invest in hotels and all the rest. So all of that happens: it's about rolling the economic and social development of the city.

— PEER

- Liverpool Biennial 2021 contribution to the Liverpool economy was £3 million; and the net contribution to the broader economy of the North West of England was £3.5 million. This will provide a useful benchmark for future editions and will be used to test to what extent cultural events contribute to the local and regional economic recovery.
- The total Gross Value Added (GVA) that Liverpool Biennial 2021 generated in the Liverpool economy was £1.45 million; and the total GVA in the broader economy was £1.73 million. This is equivalent to supporting 69 permanent full-time jobs in Liverpool or 65 permanent full-time jobs in the North West, above and beyond those directly employed by Liverpool Biennial.

Considerable work went into ensuring Liverpool Biennial 2021 was accessible. Consultations with Liverpool Biennial staff confirmed that all venues were wheelchair accessible, that the team provided

Relaxed Autism & Dementia Friendly Hours and created an access guide for the first time. Large-print versions of texts were made available at every Biennial venue, and all pieces of online video and audio content were transcribed and/or subtitled. While the response to the theme was largely positive, audience members reported that the Biennial should continue to ensure that all venues are catered for disabled access, have audio description or captioning, and that interpretation and texts use a welcoming language to include a wider audience.

1 https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/Equality_Diversity_and_the_Creative_Case_A_Data_Report__201920.pdf

2 Percentage who responded 'Yes' to 'Disability -limited a little/a lot'.

3 ONS Annual Population Survey, Jul 2020 – Jun 2021

4

Liverpool Biennial brings different organisations together in a collaborative effort to maximise reach and impact



Ayesha Hameed, *I sing of the sea, I am mermaid of the trees*, 2021.
Installation view at Lush Building, Liverpool Biennial 2021. Photography: Mark McNulty

Outcome 4: Liverpool Biennial acts as a catalyst, bringing together venues, arts organisations and other civic partners to increase value across the board

In 2021, Liverpool Biennial confirmed its role as a leading visual arts organisation which brings positive benefits to its partners and to other local cultural organisations. Working together, arts organisations in Liverpool have a positive impact on the city and its communities that is bigger than the sum of their parts.

- Arts organisations have reported looking at the Biennial to take inspiration and learn. For example, peers mentioned how this edition became an anticipated event for the UK art sector which was impatient to discover how the Biennial organised its operations within social distancing measures, designed its hybrid programme and engaged with its audiences during the Covid-19 pandemic.

I've been keeping an eye on what was on there, because of work contingency planning around Covid and how we might deliver. So seeing what Liverpool were doing in that digital space was really valuable in that context.

— PEER

It has been really interesting from my personal perspective learning a little bit how biennials work and what they are faced with. It is like looking behind the scenes.

— PARTNER

- Partners have reported working with Liverpool Biennial in a variety of activities, which includes a marketing partnership bringing together key cultural venues in the city to deliver cross promotion. Through partnerships and collaborative working, it has been reported that the Biennial drives and contributes to initiatives that benefits the

local arts sector and the wider community. Liverpool Biennial is a founding member of the Performance Research Network that aims to explore models of co-commissioning performance and live events, and sustainably supporting artistic practice in partnership with artists and other stakeholders. Also, with a-nThe Artists Information Company and Open Culture, the Biennial offered five support and research artists bursaries of £1,500, within the 11th edition of Liverpool Biennial.

- Local arts organisations reported that working collaboratively with the Biennial allows their audiences to get introduced to a higher number of venues locally, as well as to drive discussion on social and historical themes, such as gender and slavery. This maximises the resonance, impact and reach for all partners involved, especially given the varied portfolio of local community venues Liverpool Biennial works with, which includes cultural venues such as the Liverpool Central Library or the Dr Martin Luther King Jr. Building, to a commercial building like the Cotton Exchange.

That kind of self-critique as a city has been so valuable this year, of course, actually working with artists that are really interrogating international slave trade, legacies of colonialism, it feels really rich and valuable for a city to consider the negative impacts, as well as the more positive things that a city has accomplished.

— PEER

It honours the local history and the community in Liverpool and works really closely with all the cultural organisations in the city, and I think that's a really strong part because the city itself has some real cultural organisations with great reputation. [...] working in partnership with those can only strengthen the values of the Biennial, but also the educational element.

— PARTNER

Partners and peers encourage Liverpool Biennial in reinforcing its catalyst role even more, continuing supporting peers' capacity building, offering mentorship, being 'a platform for experimentation and growth', or an 'incubator for artists development or a leader for smaller arts organisations'.



Martin Syms, *Borrowed Lady*, 2016. Installation view at Tate Liverpool, Liverpool Biennial 2021. Photography: Mark McNulty

Recommendations

These findings suggest six key areas to explore:

- 1 International / local. Continue to explore the dual international / local position for the Biennial and consider how the programme can help open and further this debate
- 2 Continuing engagement. Explore how to further maintain a relationship and continuity in between editions with partners, communities, and audiences, especially locally, to nurture sustainable connections
- 3 Partnerships. Consider how existing partnerships can be mutually enhanced, refreshed and renewed by experimenting with new and innovative ways to collaborate, especially across digital media and marketing
- 4 Leadership. Enhance the leadership role the Biennial plays within its network of arts organisations and consolidate capacity building opportunities
- 5 Platform. Use the Biennial's unique position to develop opportunities for local artists to be involved and benefit from the organisation's international status and connections by offering an exclusive platform for talent development
- 6 Access. Keep improving access via interpretation to ensure the programme feels approachable for communities that could feel disengaged by some of the language the visual art sector uses



Rashid Johnson, *Stacked Heads*, 2020. Installation view at Canning Dock Quayside, Liverpool Biennial 2021. Photography: Mark McNulty



Erick Beltrán, *Superposition*, 2021. Installation view at Lewis's Building, Liverpool Biennial 2021.
 Photography: Mark McNulty

Appendix 1

Survey data

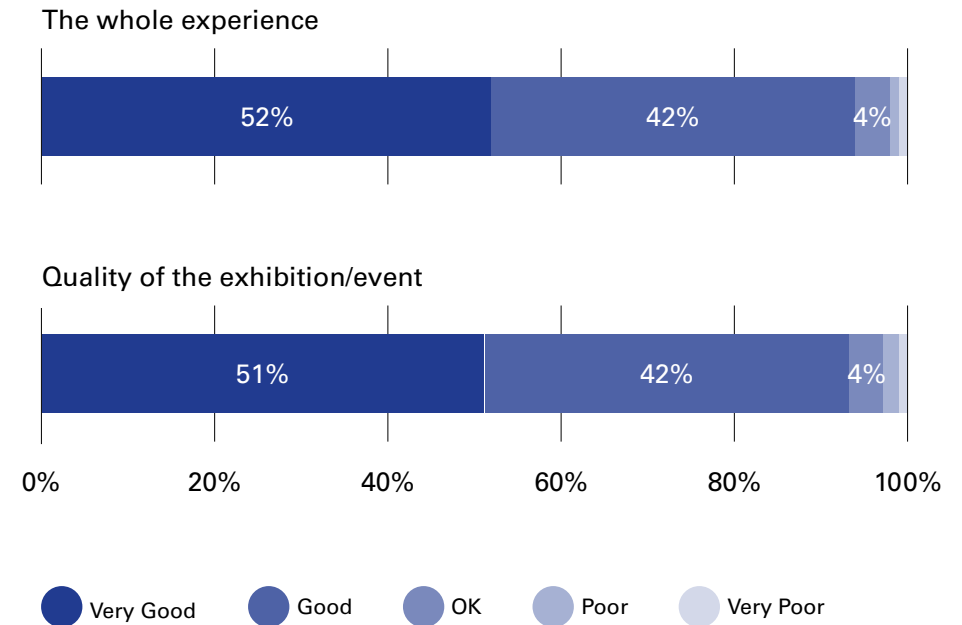
Figure 1: Visitors' figures for Liverpool Biennial 2021⁴

	2018	2021
Total visits	660,674	164,313
In venues	555,188	65,692
In public realm	105,486	98,621
Average number of reported or intended visits per visitor	4.1	4.2
Total number of core visitors	160,730	38,965

Source: BOP Consulting (2021)

4 14th July - 28th October 2018

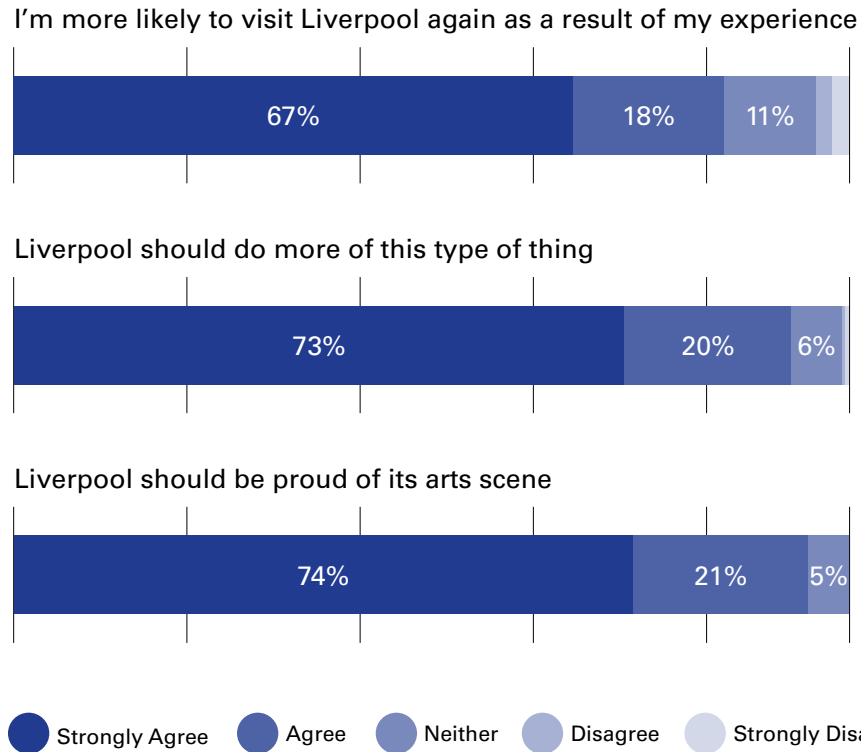
Figure 2: Overall quality and satisfaction⁵



Source: BOP Consulting (2021)

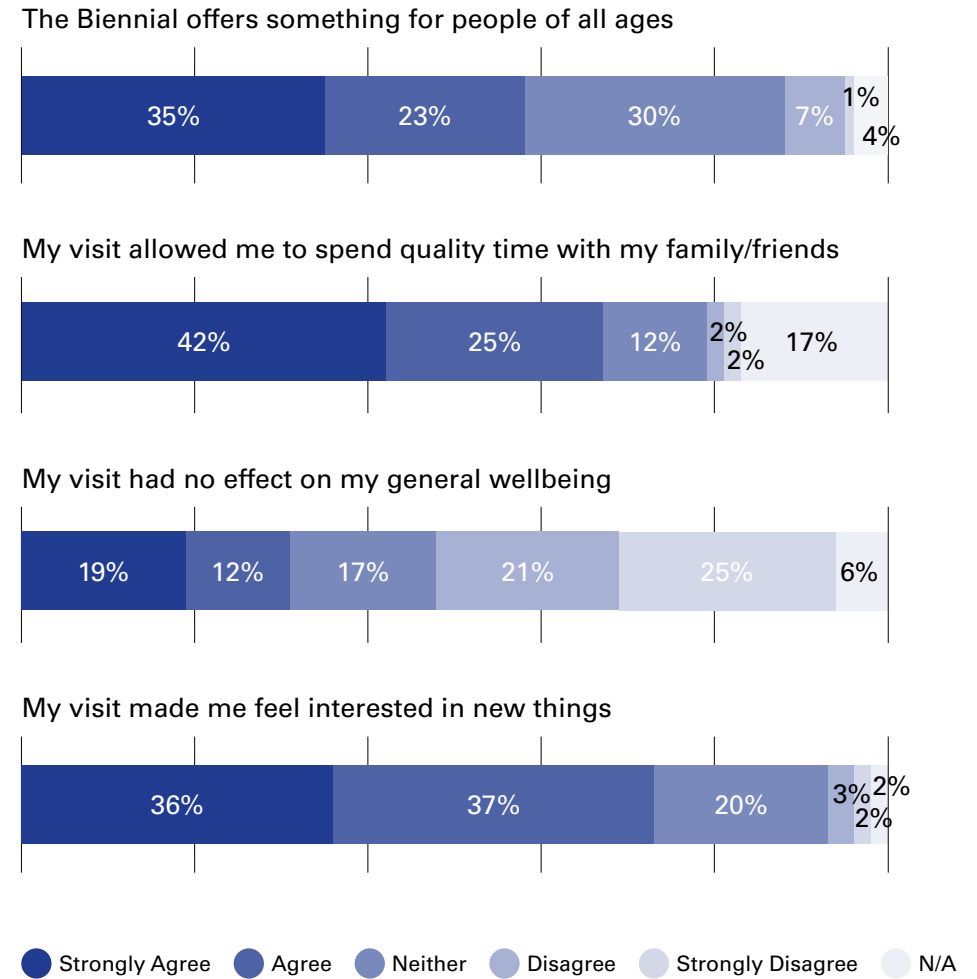
5 20th March – 27th June 2021, with some of the exhibitions extending until September. This edition of the Biennial took a phased approach across two chapters, beginning with an art in the public realm strand, before receiving visitors to indoor venues

Figure 3: Local impact



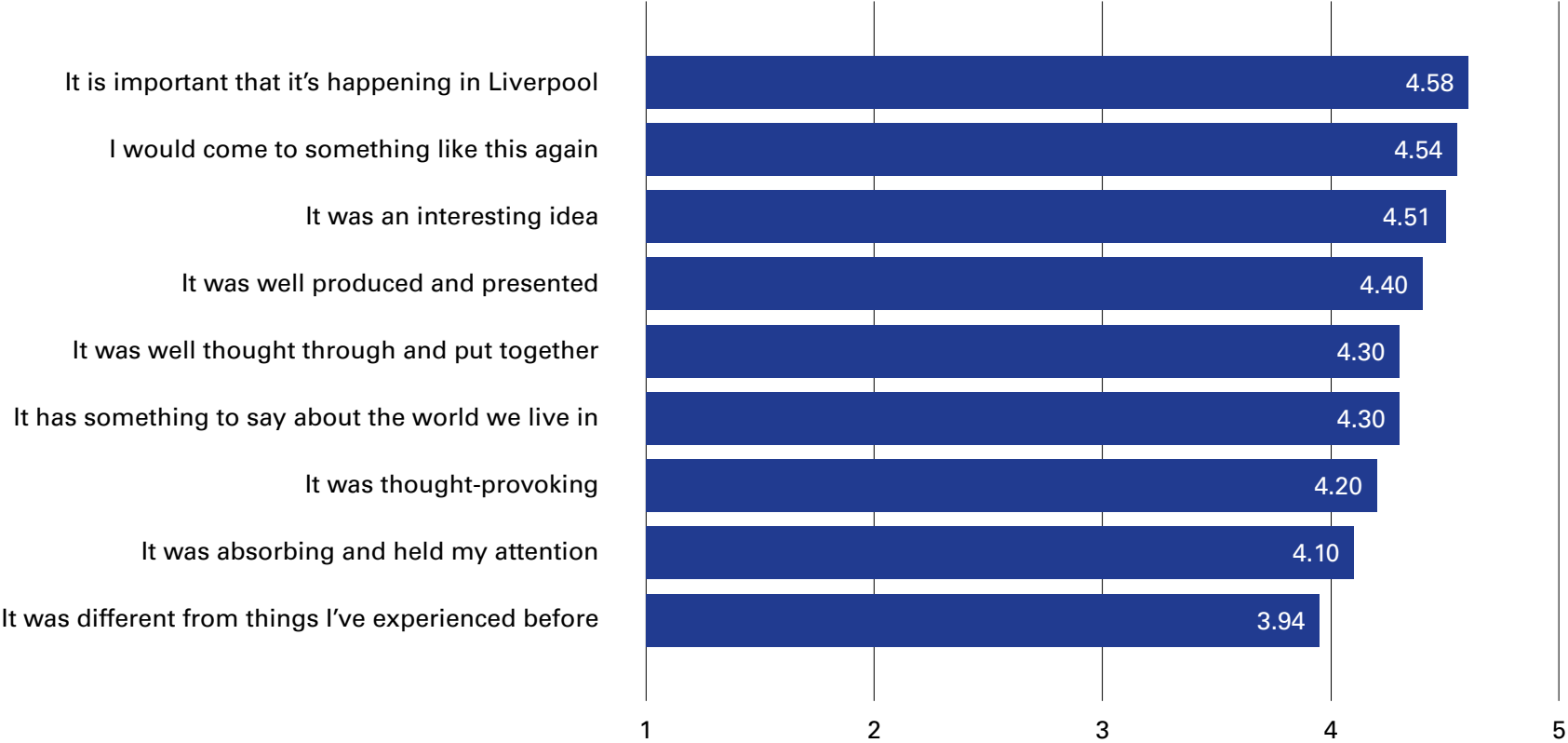
Source: BOP Consulting (2021)

Figure 4: Social and personal impact



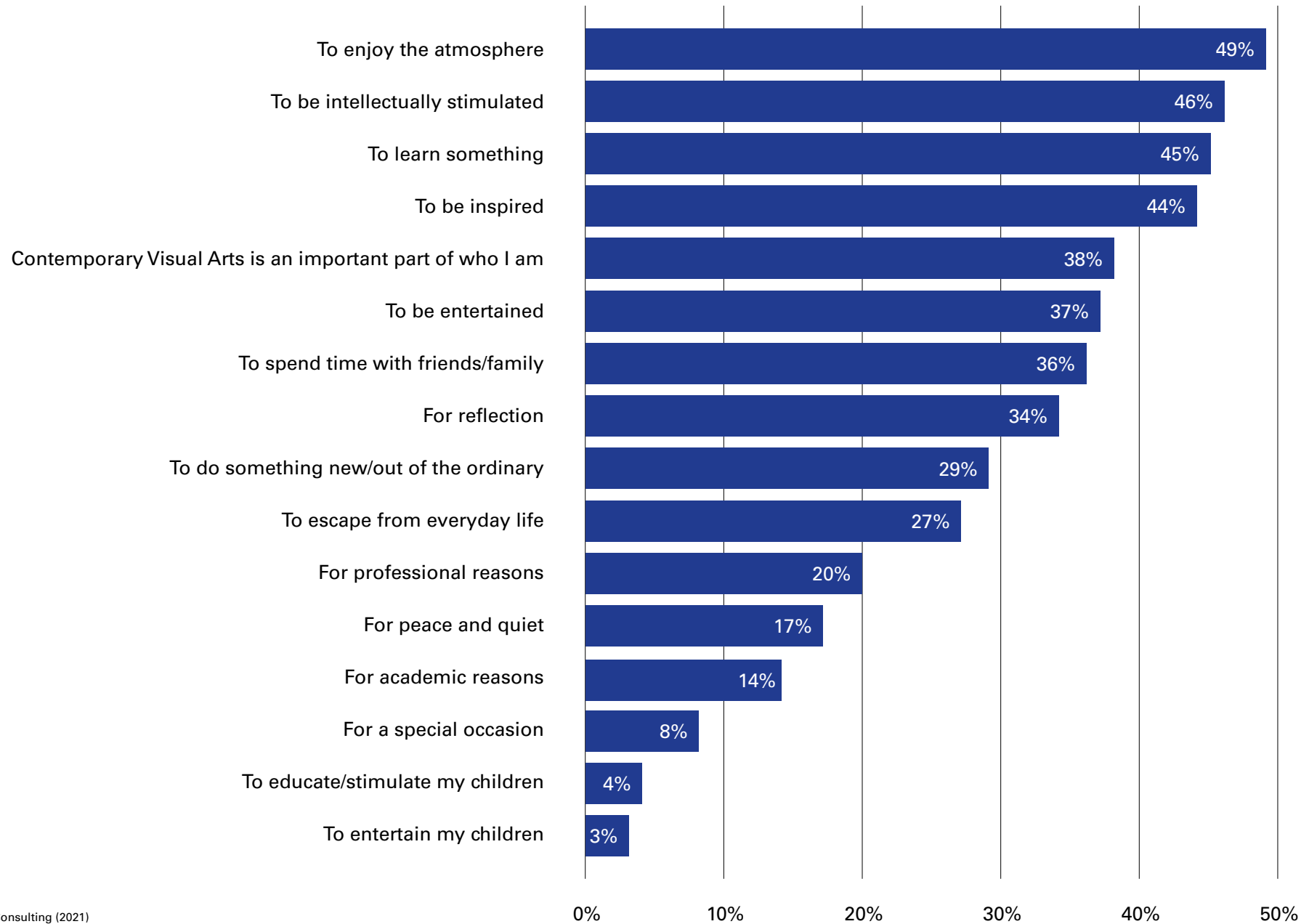
Source: BOP Consulting (2021)

Figure 5: Arts Council England quality metrics (mean scores out of a total of 5)



Source: BOP Consulting (2021)

Figure 6: Motivations for attending Liverpool Biennial 2021



Source: BOP Consulting (2021)

Figure 7: Marketing approaches seen

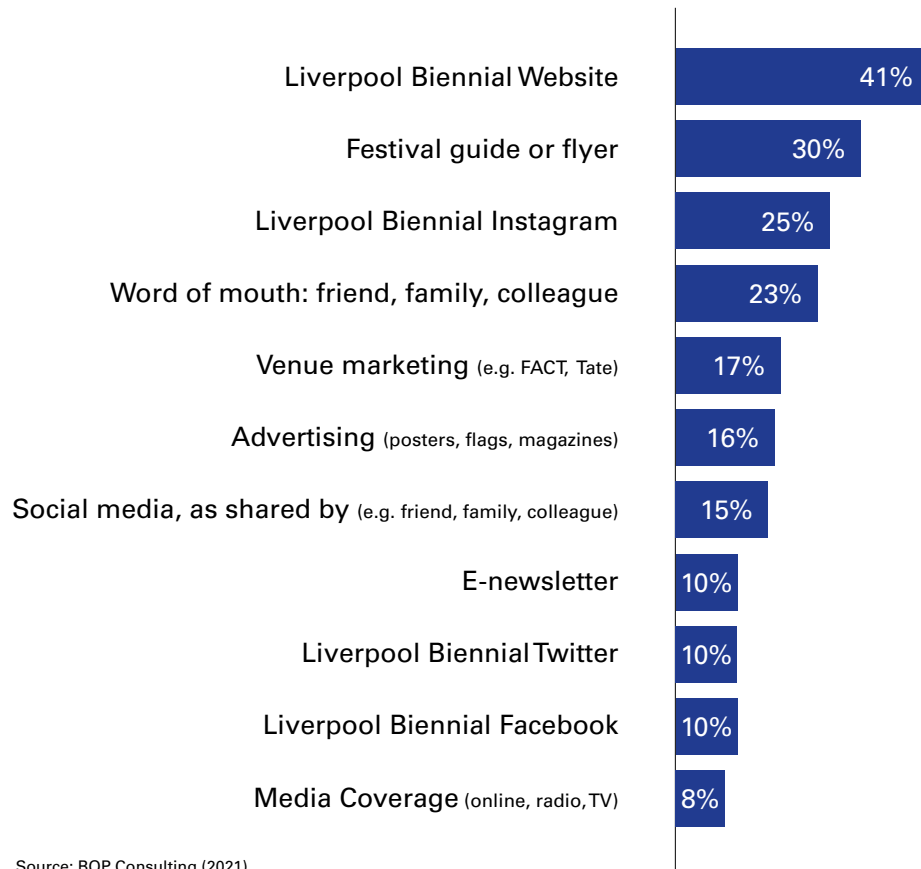


Figure 8: Elements of digital programme respondents engaged with

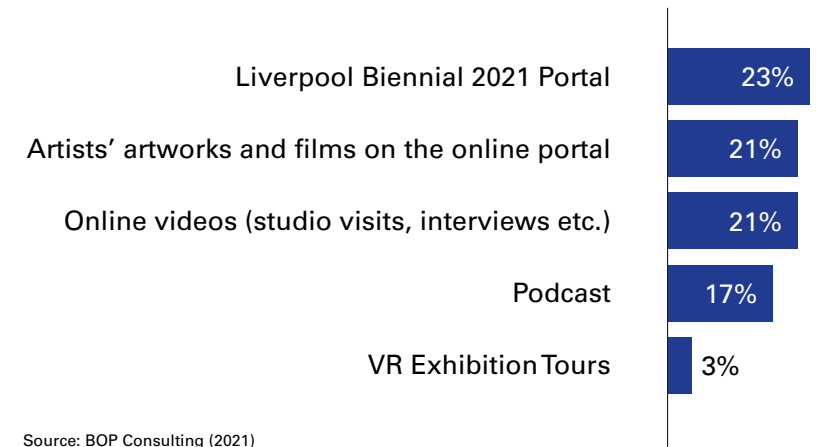
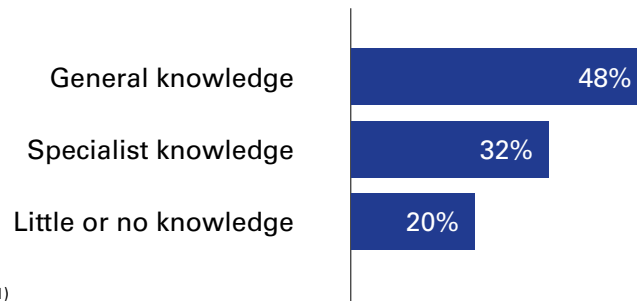
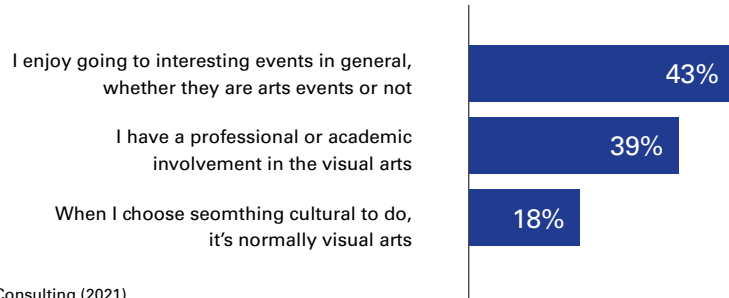


Figure 9: Knowledge of contemporary art



Source: BOP Consulting (2021)

Figure 10: Approach to visual arts



Source: BOP Consulting (2021)

Figure 11: Role of Liverpool Biennial in the decision of visiting the city

Reason for visiting	%
I came here just for Liverpool Biennial	36%
I came here to combine Liverpool Biennial with other cultural activities	20%
Liverpool Biennial did not influence my decision to visit: I did not know about it or came across it by accident	15%
Liverpool Biennial combined with visiting friends or relatives	9%
Liverpool Biennial combined with general sightseeing	9%
Liverpool Biennial combined with shopping trip	8%
Liverpool Biennial combined with business trip	2%

Source: BOP Consulting (2021)

Figure 12: Origin of UK visitors to Liverpool Biennial 2021

Origin	% visitors
North West	68%
London	14%
Yorkshire and The Humber	5%
East Midlands	4%
South East	2%
East	1%
West Midlands	4%
South West	0.4%
North East	1%

Source: BOP Consulting (2021)

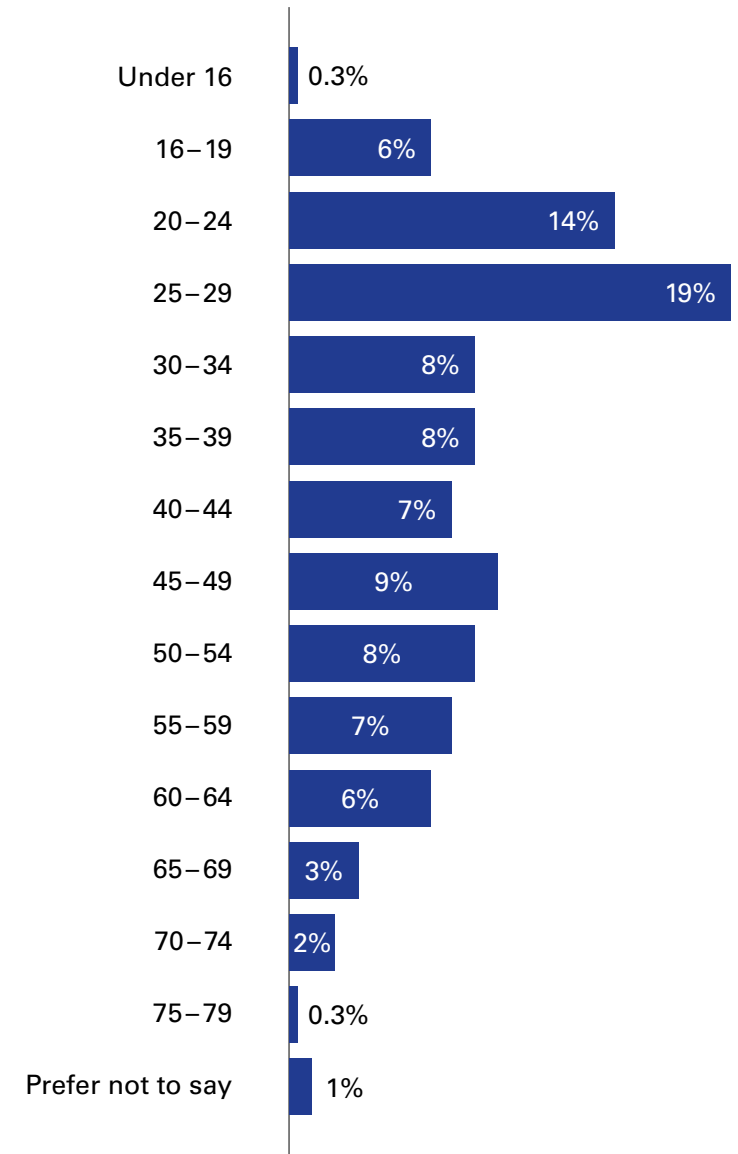


Figure 13: Ethnicity of attendees

Ethnicity	%
White – English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British	69.9%
White – Irish	1.1%
White – Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0.3%
White – Other	10.3%
Black or Black British – African	0.8%
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0%
Black or Black British – Other	0.5%
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0%
Asian or Asian British – Chinese	3.5%
Asian or Asian British – Indian	1.4%
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	0.3%
Asian or Asian British – Other	1.1%
Mixed – White and Asian	2.2%
Mixed – White and Black African	0.5%
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0.8%
Mixed – Other Mixed / multiple ethnic background*	2.4%
Arab	1.6%
Other	0.8%
Prefer not to say	2.4%

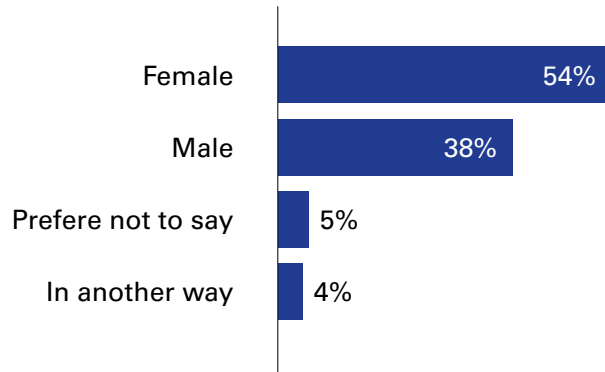
Source: BOP Consulting (2021)

Figure 14: Age of attendees



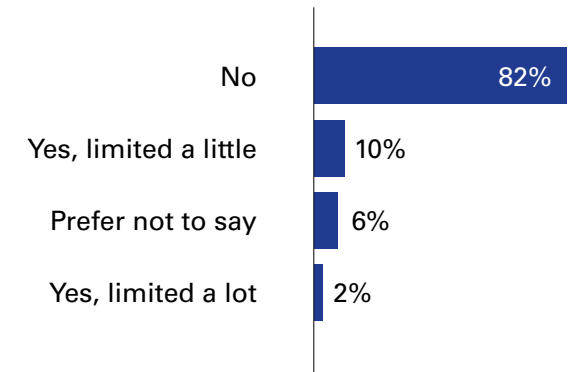
Source: BOP Consulting (2021)

Figure 15: Gender of attendees⁶



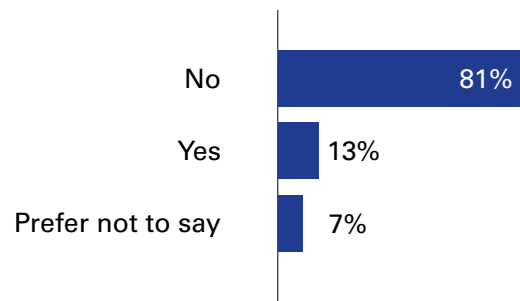
Source: BOP Consulting (2021)

Figure 17: Attendees who report their day-to-day activities as being limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months



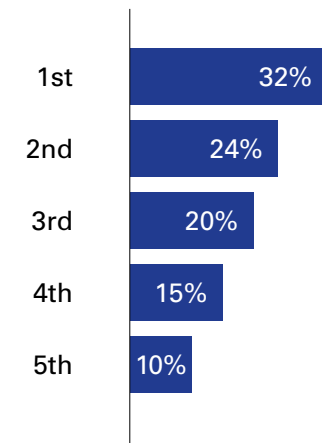
Source: BOP Consulting (2021)

Figure 16: Attendees who identify as a D/deaf or disabled person, or have a long-term health condition



Source: BOP Consulting (2021)

Figure 18: Survey respondents' origin by Index of Multiple Deprivation Quintiles (1st = most deprived, 5th = least deprived)



Source: BOP Consulting (2021)

⁶ Half of those who responded 'in another way' described themselves as non-binary, with others giving responses including transgender or queer

Appendix 2: Economic Impact

This economic impact assessment updates the approaches used to the Green Book HM Treasury standard, which is now seen as the most robust approach by government.

For the economic impact calculation, we do not include those who live in the city as it is assumed that they would be spending their money within the city or region anyway. For those visiting from outside Liverpool it was reported that the average visit was for 2.26 days, and 2.06 days for those visiting from outside the North West region. The average group size was 1.95 for those from outside Liverpool, and 2.09 for those from outside the North West. The resultant average spend data can be seen in Figure 16.

Figure 19: Biennial visitors average spend

Origin	Average spend for total visit (including food & drink, shopping, accommodation and public transport)
Outside Liverpool	£130.54
Outside North West	£158.71

Source: BOP Consulting (2021)

Liverpool Biennial is typically held every two years, and the spending in preparation for each Festival is also spread across two years. As a result, we have included the Festival spending that takes place in financial years 2019/20 and 2020/21 (including April – June 2021).

The gross impact figure is converted to net impact by adjusting for spending that is simply being displaced from somewhere else in the region, or that would have happened anyway. This is done by introducing allowances for what are called additionality and multiplier effects. These are derived from a mix of the survey responses and official government statistics.

The total net contribution that Liverpool Biennial 2021 makes to the Liverpool economy is £3 million; and the net contribution to the North West economy is £3.5 million.

Figure 20: Net Economic impact in Liverpool

Variable	Gross	Additionality effects	Net
Procurement expenditure	£550,230	0.91 × 1.21	£605,858
Staff expenditure	£900,027	0.91 × 1.21	£991,020
Visitor spend	£2,174,547	0.62 × 0.91 × 1.21	£1,484,524
Total impact			£3,081,402

Source: BOP Consulting (2021)

Figure 21: Net Economic impact in the North West

Variable	Gross	Additionality effects	Net
Procurement expenditure	£716,280	0.95 × 1.4	£952,652
Staff expenditure	£1,088,416	0.95 × 1.4	£1,447,593
Visitor spend	£1,420,529	0.61 × 0.95 × 1.4	£1,152,475
Total impact			£3,552,720

Source: BOP Consulting (2021)

The net economic impact figures are translated into estimates of the Gross Value Added (GVA) and jobs supported by the Biennial. GVA is the value Liverpool Biennial to the sub-regional and regional economy once we account for all the inputs taken to produce the net contribution (e.g. raw materials, education, roads etc.) – i.e. the ‘added value’.

Figure 22: Jobs and GVA calculation

Variable	Liverpool	North West
Net procurement + staff	£1,596,878	£2,400,245
Turnover per employee in North West cultural and creative sector	£95,880	£95,880
Jobs supported	16.7	25.0
GVA per employee contribution	£50,000	£50,000
GVA contribution	£832,748	£1,251,692
Net visitor spend	£1,484,524	£1,152,475
Turnover per employee in North West tourism sector	£28,550	£28,550
Jobs supported	52.0	40.4
GVA per employee contribution	£11,950	£11,950
GVA contribution	£621,368	£482,385
Total jobs supported	68.7	65.4
Total GVA contribution	£1,454,116	£1,734,077

Source: BOP Consulting (2021)

The total GVA that Liverpool Biennial 2021 generates in the Liverpool economy is £1.45 million; and the total GVA in the North West economy is £1.73 million. For comparison, the total GVA generated by Liverpool Biennial 2018 in Liverpool was £2.9 million and £3.2 in the North West.

This is equivalent to supporting 69 permanent full-time jobs in Liverpool or 65 permanent full-time jobs in the North West, above and beyond those directly employed by Liverpool Biennial.

Liverpool Biennial

Liverpool Biennial presents the UK’s oldest and largest biennial of contemporary art. Taking place every two years across the city’s public spaces, galleries and historic buildings, the Biennial commissions artists to make and present work in the context of Liverpool. The festival is underpinned by a year-round programme of research, education, residencies, projects and commissions. Founded in 1998, the Biennial has commissioned over 380 new artworks and presented work by over 530 renowned artists from around the world.

Liverpool Biennial of Contemporary Art Ltd

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Back cover image: Camille Henrot, installation view at Lewis’s Building, Liverpool Biennial 2021. Photography: Mark McNulty. Documented works: *Mauvaise Troupe*, 2020, *Gynegraphics*, 2020, *A Silent Scream*, 2020, *Love She Wanted*, 2020, *Milkyways*, 2020, *Expressionning*, 2020.



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