



BELL SQ.

BELL SQUARE

COMMUNITY COHESION RESEARCH PROJECT

Conducted by COaST

on behalf of Watermans and the
London Borough of Hounslow

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INTRODUCTION

Bell Square is an outdoor arts venue that programmes fortnightly events that people can attend for free. The venue is funded through several sources, including the London Borough of Hounslow (LBH) and Hounslow Creative People and Places through Watermans, a social enterprise engaged in delivering high quality arts provision. COaST was commissioned to conduct an evaluation of Bell Square, an outdoor arts venue in Central Hounslow, London.

CONTEXT

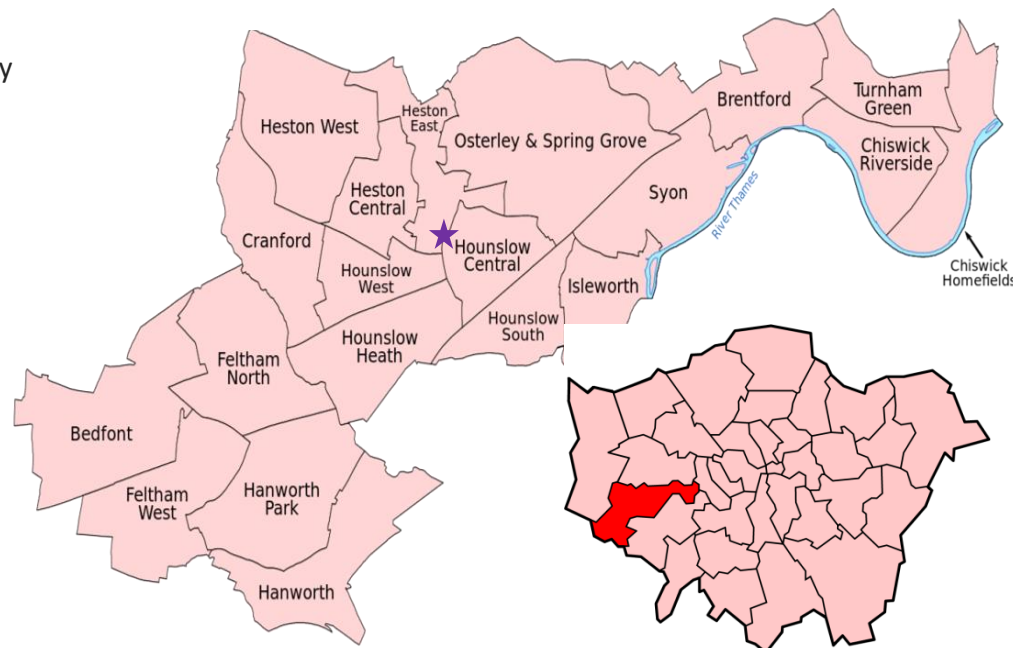
The London Borough of Hounslow (LBH) has been classified as one of 13 super diverse boroughs. With 17% of households where English is not spoken as the main language and almost half of the borough's population belong to Black Asian Minority Ethnic groups. The population of Hounslow is relatively young, with 50% of people under 35 years of age.

A consistent theme in the analysis of the local Hounslow population is that it is subject to a high level of churn, essentially with significant levels of in-migration counterbalanced by almost equal levels of out-migration. The implication of this is that the area acts as a first place of arrival for those establishing themselves in London and then as a springboard for out-migration based on economic and social aspirations. (SQW 2011)

Until recently, arts provision has been largely dispersed across the borough away from the busy centre.

The local population, many of whom do not have English as a first language, are unlikely to “seek out” arts provision that is not on their daily travel routes for work, shopping or leisure.

Bell Square, situated in the heart of Hounslow, at the end of Hounslow's High Street, is a strategic move to enable more people access to arts events of high quality whilst celebrating the borough's cultural diversity.



PROGRAMME AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The outcomes of the Bell Square offer focuses on:

- Increasing the numbers of people who regularly engage in the arts and cultural events at Bell Square
- Developing a thriving outdoors space which will attract new and diverse audiences from Hounslow and beyond
- Creating more vibrant and exciting town centre space on weekends
- Delivering high quality diverse outdoor arts events (from international, national and regional artists) that raise the positive perception of Hounslow
- Supporting town centre regeneration
- Developing and maintaining sustainable projects which support the arts and cultural sector to continue to increase reach and improve engagement
- Increasing community cohesion and appreciation for other communities and art forms through new experiences at Bell Square



Credit: Vipul Sangoi

UNDERSTANDING INDICATORS OF COMMUNITY COHESION

COMMUNITY COHESION

There are some common shared understandings regarding community cohesion. There are five widely acknowledged indicators of community cohesion:

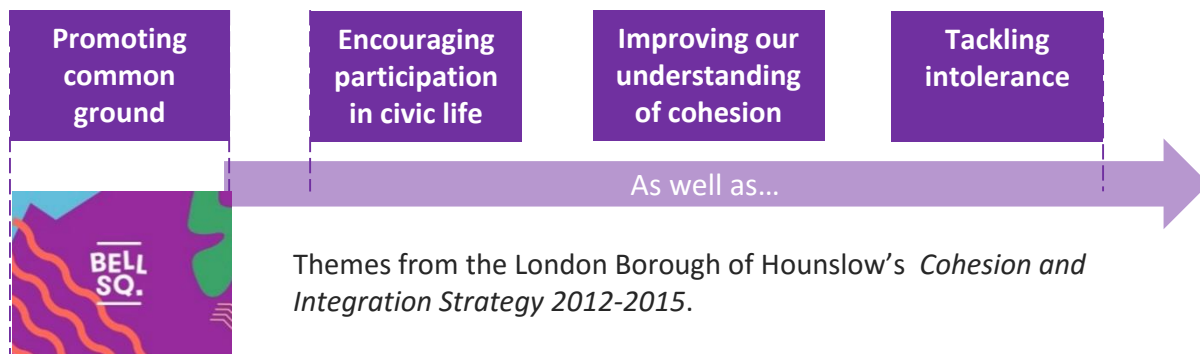
- Sense of belonging
- Neighbourliness
- Ownership & pride
- Volunteering
- Community engagement

The IPPR report 'One London?' identifies two general approaches to fostering community cohesion:

1. Economic approaches aimed at combating material deprivation
2. Cultural approaches aimed at shaping attitudes and interpersonal relationships

Bell Square addresses the second of these two approaches, acknowledging that population churn is a significant challenge in delivering initiatives aimed at promoting community cohesion.

Deprivation and material scarcity can put a strain on social cohesion and lead to tensions between different social groups. This may be mitigated through targeted efforts to enhance social cohesion (e.g. via the arts).



BELL SQUARE FOSTERS COMMUNITY COHESION THROUGH ITS ARTS PROGRAMME

In Bell Square, people are challenged to think and feel differently about what they see and experience. This can lead to community cohesion as audience members and programme participants engage in their responses to the arts presented in the Square.

Consequently, Bell Square fosters cohesion through shared experiences and the way in which it brings people of different cultures together in one space.

To evaluate the extent to which community cohesion is encouraged in Bell Square we considered the following interactions:

- How people engaged with one another in the Square
- How easy people felt it was to talk to others in the square
- What sense of community cohesion was generated through events and performances in the square.

OUR APPROACH

After an inception meeting with Watermans and the London Borough of Hounslow (July 2015), it became clear that a mixed methods approach to data collection and evaluation was appropriate to meet the aims of the project. The methods used included:

- **Review of the literature**, looking at indicators of community cohesion to inform interview design. (July 2015)
- **Scoping visit: The People's Tower, Olivier Grossetête** to observe how people interact and use Bell Square before, during and after a performance. (July 2015)
- **Development of the Investigation Station** to capture data from audiences in an unobtrusive and fun way, which could also help overcome language barriers among those who do not have English as their first language. (August 2015) [See Appendix 1]
- **Field visits to events** to conduct mini interviews with audience members and to encourage the use of the Investigation Station (July – December 2015)
- **Use of time lapse photography** to inform and underpin our observations and conclusions. [See Appendix 3]
- **Review of collected postcard data** collected by Bell Square staff for events from April 2015 – Dec 2015. (January 2016)
- **Comprehensive review of data collected at 5 events** from September to December 2015 to understand the impact of different art forms on Bell Square visitors.



THIS REPORT

This report initially focusses on feedback from 7 events where members of the COaST team were in attendance. Data collection at each event varied, but typically included a combination of mini interviews, time lapse photography, Investigation Station data and observation. An earlier report provides an evaluation of all of the postcard data from April 2015 – December 2015, although postcard data is included for these 7 events.

The report then looks in greater detail at how the data support the main findings that:

- Bell Square facilitates an arts experience for people who would otherwise not engage with the arts.
- People transition from 'passing through' to 'taking an active role'.
- Bell Square retains audiences and increases engagement in the arts.
- Cohesion is enhanced as Bell Square brings people together and gives them an opportunity to talk to someone new.

The report draws conclusions from the data and demonstrates how the achievements of the Bell Square programme of events are aligned with the overall aims of the arts initiative.

Finally, the report offers recommendations for the future.



EVENTS FEEDBACK

The events listed below are reported on in this section.

Date (Audience Figures)	Event Name	Event Time	Event Type
Saturday 18 th July (2500)	Olivier Grossetête: People's Tower	Daytime	Audience/Participation (visual arts)
Saturday 12 th September (1000)	Southpaw Dance: Faust	Evening	Performance (dance)
Saturday 26 th September (2500)	Scarabeus: Be Loved	Daytime/Evening	Performance (circus)
Saturday 10 th October (1100)	Motionhouse: Captive	Daytime	Performance (dance)
Saturday 30 th October (530)	AV Remix Set	Evening	Performance (live music)
Saturday 21 st November (1500)	Same Sky: Winter Lights	Evening	Lantern Procession and Finale Performance (visual arts)
Saturday 5 th December (2760)	Deep Mann-Kler: Neon Dogs	Daytime/Evening	Installation (visual arts)

Saturday 18 July - Olivier Grossetête: The People's Tower (a participatory event)

Time lapse camera footage recorded the event while the researcher spoke to members of the audience (and participants). The day was sunny and warm, upbeat popular music played, and visitors to Bell Square were delighted (and somewhat bemused) to see a cardboard tower being constructed by local people. According to Postcard returns (n=14), some had come to the Square specifically for the event, while others happened upon it. Regardless, everyone captured on film appeared to be enjoying themselves, either as a participant or as an observer.

People of all ages and cultures gathered in the Square throughout the day, contributing to the “buzz” of the activity, where local “construction workers” and observers engaged with each other to build and admire the tower. Much debate and discussion could be heard, as family members and strangers alike helped each other create this tower in their community. A round of applause marked the moment when the tower was lifted, with people lingering to admire the tower in its finished state.

The stewards did a great job cajoling people into helping construct the tower. Those slightly reticent were encouraged to participate and it was clear that they enjoyed themselves immensely. While adults of many ages built boxes, children ran around with rolls of tape, ready to help out. As the day wore on, people began to rearrange the space, taking ownership of it. This manifested itself in the ways that people sat, positioned themselves in terms of orientation to the tower and to each other and where they set their belongings.

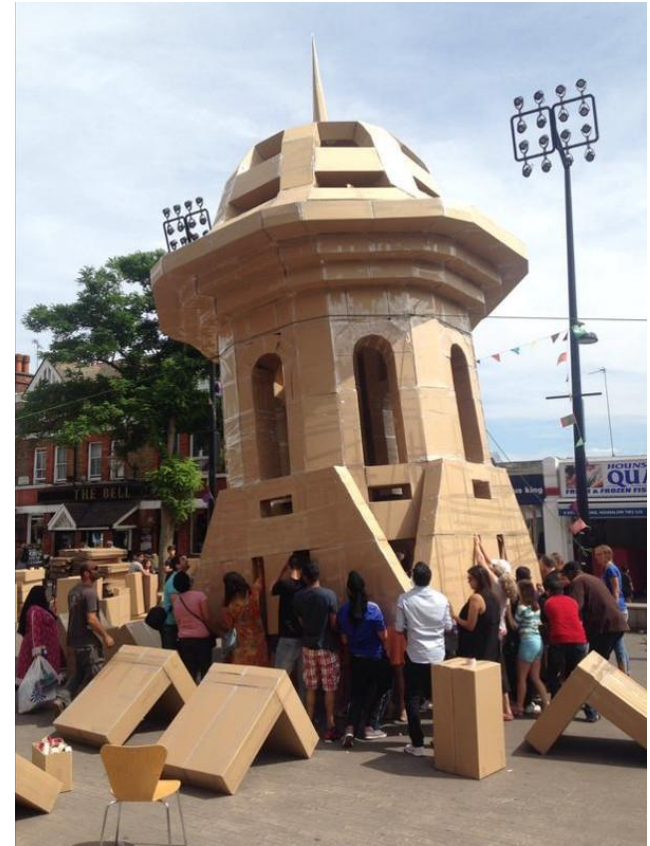
Community cohesion, through co-creation, was evident throughout the day. Comments from respondents confirm what the camera recorded:

“Great atmosphere. Great to see the teamwork taken to build this tower. Excellent”

“Amazing event with a great vibe.”

“Thanks for this event based on volunteers.”

“I think it is a brilliant way to get the community to unite. Love it!!”



Saturday 12 September - Southpaw Dance: Faust (performance)

Postcard returns (n=66) record how Southpaw Dance: Faust, a performance of dance and fire in the Square, drew both those specifically coming to watch the event (66%) and those simply passing by (34%).

Time lapse film footage shows how the cordoned-off performance area was of interest to passers by although they did not linger. As soon as the folding seating was in place, people started to gather, some taking a seat, while others leaned on the railings and observed. Stewards can be seen chatting to people, likely informing them of the upcoming event and encouraging them to stay and watch.

As the show starts, more people are drawn to the performance area until there is only standing room available. Even more gather as darkness falls and the fires for the performance are lit.

People disperse quite quickly at the end, although a few linger and help dismantle the seating area, while chatting to the stewards.



The Southpaw Dance performance of Faust was not the first Bell Square event for a majority (52%) of postcard respondents. 29% had attend two or more events in the Square, while 23% had been once before. These people really enjoyed the show, as these comments demonstrate:

"Amazing! What a great FREE show. Very professional."

"More like Faust. Bring back Southpaw Dance."

"...have more and more events like this. Illusion, magic events or shows would be nice."

Those enjoying their first event in the Square were also complimentary and sound like they intend to return:

"Very entertaining act. Really good, we enjoyed a lot. Nice :)"

"We would like the group to interact (dance) with the kids as kids love dance. Fantastic show, excellent - well done."

"Thank you for the entertainment."



Saturday 26 September – Scarabeus: Be Loved (performance)

Scarabeus: Be Loved is a modern rendition of Beauty and the Beast interpreted through aerial dance and circus. Seven *Vox Pop* interviews took place before the evening performance and captured some of the anticipation surrounding the event. One person had returned to the Square for the event because *"I think the performances, based on what we have seen before, I remember the dervish one, are really good. High standard."*

"This is entertainment and the children were silent, They watch. It was fantastic."

"and sometimes they're showing things that is worth paying the money to go and see and they're bringing to my doorstep."

According to Investigation Station returns (n=128) 29% of visitors were in the Square for their first performance. 46% had attended at least one other performance and said they had come to the Square specifically to see Scarabeus. The remaining 23% had attended performances before but were just passing by on the day. This is reflected in a *Vox Pop* interviewee:

"I walk through the high street every day or so, so if there's something happening I always end up seeing it. It's good."

Data from the 34 event postcards returned show similar attendance trends identified in the Investigation Station data. A first-time attender commented on how *"amazing"* the performance was, while someone who had been once before commented how her 8 year old daughter *"loved their tricks"*. Overall, 80% of postcard respondents *"loved it"* and 20% said *"it was good"*.

Feedback from those who had attended at least two other events were very positive about the arts activity in Bell Square, mentioning quality performance and community spirit:

"It definitely exceeded expectations and was absolutely amazing."

"It is a great idea to bring the art and music to our doorsteps."

"I honestly think these shows have brought great community spirit."

According to Investigation Station data, Scarabeus: Be Loved provided an opportunity for Bell Square visitors to:

- ✓ come together with people from other communities (80%)
- ✓ enjoy an artistic performance with family and friends (69%)
- ✓ speak to someone new (53%)
- ✓ enjoy an activity that could lead to future attendance for the performance (49%) or the atmosphere (30%)



Saturday 10 October - Motionhouse: Captive (performance)

Motionhouse: Captive was a performance of dance and acrobatics that took place in the Square on a Saturday afternoon. It attracted both local residents on return visits to the Square and new people who had heard about the performance or who were simply passing by.

Two weeks previously Scarabeus: Be Loved was performed and there is evidence in both the postcard returns (n=24) and the Investigation Station data to (n=45) to show that people who attended that event returned for Motionhouse: Captive.

"Excellent performance. Previous one a couple of weeks ago was good too. An added attraction for the town."

Of the 24 postcard responses from the event, 66% said they "loved it" and 44% "said "it was good". The performance was very well received for both its quality and its ability to bring people together.

"Amazing concept of freedom"

"Please do it more often. This brings people together. Thank you."

"Please come back and do another show. Thank you."

"Very good. Loved the event."

Comments drawn from the Vox Pop interviews echo these sentiments:

"Its something for the community to experience. Community spirit, something to do."

"I did come to see the wonderful performance."

"I was passing by and I saw these stall sitting here and I came down and I wondered what was going to happen."

Motionhouse Captive provided an opportunity to:

- ✓ provide a setting for people to get on well together (80%)
- ✓ come to a performance with family and friends (76%)
- ✓ bring people together (76%)
- ✓ return for another performance (66%) or for the atmosphere (21%)



Saturday 30 October: AV Remix Set (Musical performance to observe)

The AV Remix Set was a musical performance held on a Saturday evening. According to Investigation Station data (n=88) this type of musical performance attracts a larger number than average of male lone attendees. This finding is reflected in the fact that both *vox pop* interviews were conducted with men who had come on their own to listen to the music. They both enjoyed the performance and intend to come again to similar events in the future.

The Investigation Station data also shows that a total of 35% of respondents came to the square specifically for the event (18% having attended one other event and 17% attending at least two other events). 20% were passing by and had attended a previous event (3% passing by had attended at least two other events).



AV Remix Live provided an opportunity to:

- ✓ bring communities together (81%)
- ✓ provide a setting for people to get on well together (71%)
- ✓ come to a performance with family and friends (67%)
- ✓ return for another performance (56%) or for the atmosphere (36%)

Events like AV Remix Live have an opportunity to:

- ✓ create opportunities for strangers who share a common interest to speak to one another

Saturday 21 November – Same Sky: Winter Lights (Community Participation)

Hounslow's winter lights were turned on at dusk. According to Investigation Station data (n=71) 28% had already attended events in the Square and came specifically to the Square to watch the event. 15% had attended events in the past, but were just passing by and stayed on for the festivities. Over half (56%) of respondents were new to events in the Square.



Same Sky: Winter Lights provided an opportunity to:

- ✓ bring people from different communities together (86%)
- ✓ come to a performance with family and friends (80%)
- ✓ provide a setting for people to get on well together (70%)
- ✓ See or recognize someone in the Square (66%)
- ✓ make it easy to speak to someone new (66%)
- ✓ Speak to someone new (60%)
- ✓ return for another performance (47%) or for the atmosphere (42%)



Saturday 5 December - Deepa Mann-Kler: Neon Dogs (Installation)

Deepa Mann-Kler's Neon Dogs installation caught the imaginations of passers-by and regulars to Bell Square. According to Investigation Station data (n=72) 42% of respondents said this was the first time they had engaged with an event in the Square, while a further 42% made a point of visiting to see the installation, having been to events in the past. A further 23% had attended events in the past, but were simply passing by on this occasion.

A recurring theme in the *vox pop* interviews is how the artistic performances and installations, like Neon Dogs, add positively to the atmosphere of the Square. A real transformation has occurred, according to one woman, who said *"I often wondered where did the space come from because I really never noticed it before. You walk through and now it is kept clean. I am always looking on the board at the station to see what is on, now."* Another commented that the arts programme *"gives the area an identity"*. The events programme has created an atmosphere that is new to Bell Square, distinct from the performances.

The art and performances are also appreciated in themselves.

"It is good to have the arts here."

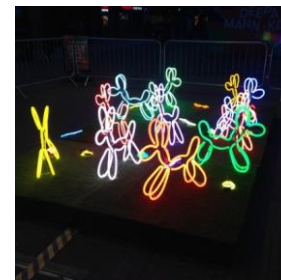
"It is nice to be able to access things locally."

"You need to bring people together through art where there is no religion or politics; just a shared experience."

"I think it is a really good idea to bring art, I think it's a lovely space, it is open, it is lovely to see the lights up when coming by."

Deepa Mann-Kler: Neon Dogs provided an opportunity to:

- ✓ provide a setting for people to get on well together (82%)
- ✓ visit an art installation with family and friends (69%) or on one's own (18%)
- ✓ bring people from different communities together (66%)
- ✓ make it easy to speak to someone new (66%)
- ✓ speak to someone new (60%)
- ✓ return for another performance (51%) or for the atmosphere (38%)



KEY MESSAGES IN THE DATA ABOUT THE PROGRAMME

Analysis of the data across 7 events has shown that:

- Bell Square facilitates an arts experience for people who would otherwise not engage with the arts.
- People transition from ‘passing through’ to ‘taking an active role’.
- Bell Square retains audiences and increases engagement in the arts.
- Cohesion is enhanced as Bell Square brings people together and gives them an opportunity to talk to someone new.



Credit: Vipul Sangoi

Bell Square facilitates an arts experience for people who would otherwise not engage with the arts (as captured by observation and photography).



Silently taking a seat at the front

The man in the centre of the image, with the cap and backpack, arrived about 20 minutes before the performance started. There were few other people around and he had the option to sit on the benches rather than stand. I approached him to interview and he very quickly said, in friendly but broken English “I’m sorry, I am Polish, I don’t speak English” and was obviously not able to have a conversation. I left him alone to enjoy the show. Half way through the performance, when the square was packed with people I noticed that he was still there, in the same spot, now enjoying the performance.

I moved closer to him and I could see that he was totally immersed in the performance. Avidly watching the artists (Scarabeus), he was clapping and cheering as the acrobatic movements became more daring.

As the performance reached its climax, he was captivated, cheering, clapping and audibly expressing his awe.

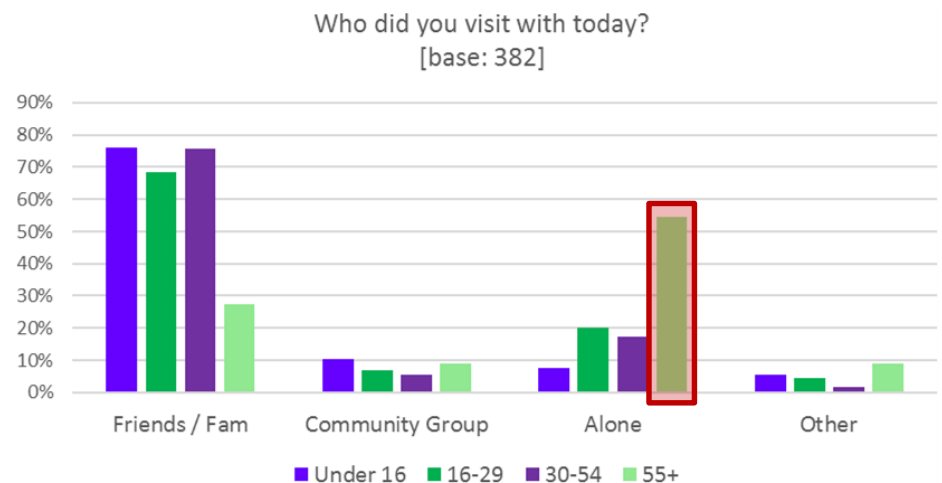
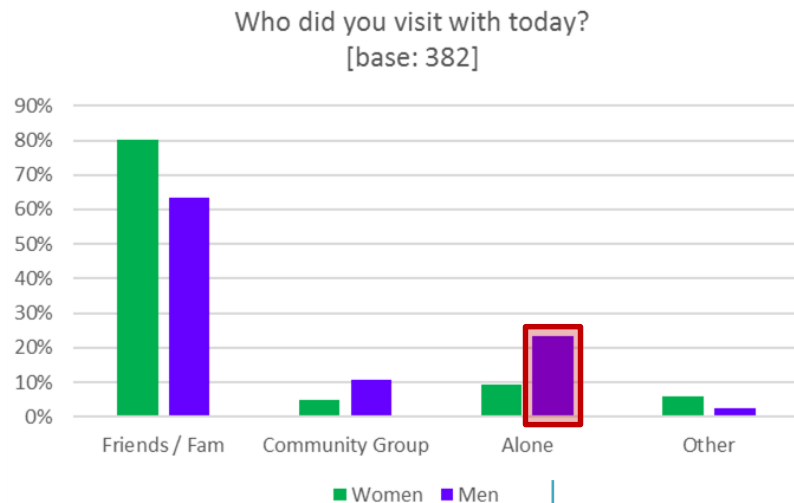
He was there on his own, clearly just passing through the square, but had taken a moment to stop and enjoy the show although it was unlikely he knew what to expect.

It prompts the thought – how many other people in Bell Square would have felt otherwise isolated by a language barrier to enjoy a performance, how many other lone men and women take time out of their day to experience something new.

There were many other instances where individuals were stopping and staying to watch a performance, almost always on the peripheries where their presence would go by unnoticed. These observations show that Bell Square reaches people who can become lost amongst the crowd, but are experiencing something quite unique.

ATTENDANCE AT BELL SQ EVENTS

- People come to Bell Square with their friends and family, but many people, predominantly men, experience a performance on their own.
- Bell Square is most often frequented by people joined by friends and family.*
- Men are often an under-represented group in the arts (DCMS Dec 2015). Of those who have come alone, 73% are men. Over a third of all people who come alone are aged between 30-54, with men aged 30-54 making up 25%.



The majority of people who came alone were men and aged between 30-54.

Based on a small sample size (22 responses), those aged 55 and over were the most likely to come on their own rather than with friends or family.

* Data drawn from Investigation Station returns from 26 Sept to 5 December 2015

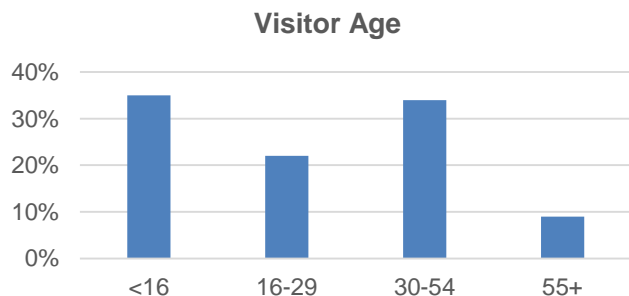
ATTENDANCE AT BELL SQ EVENTS

- According to Investigation Station data, the ‘make up’ of those attending Bell Square events varied from event to event, but there is evidence of a growing core of visitors who seek out information on events and plan their visits accordingly. Note the increase in planned visits for Scarabeus (46%) and Motionhouse (62%) performed two weeks later.
- Almost one in five (19%) has been to at least 2 events and stayed to watch, making this at least their third visit.
- On average, 42% of the audience had stayed to watch *at least* one performance before.
- 54% of all visitors were women, while 46% were men. Women (60%) were more likely than men (40%) to have watched two or more performances.
- All age groups are represented in the Investigation Station sample (see chart below).

Question: Have you been to a Bell Square event or performance before?

	26 th Sept Scarabeus: Be Loved	10 th Oct Motionhouse: Captive	30 th Oct AV Remix Set	21 st Nov Same Sky: Winter Lights	5 th Dec Neon Dogs	Average
Yes, and this is a planned visit	46%	62%	35%	28%	42%	42%
Yes, but just passing	23%	15%	23%	15%	23%	21%
No, first time	30%	22%	41%	56%	35%	37%

The Winter Lights Parade brought more first-time performance observers to Bell Square than any other event.



People transition from 'passing through' to 'taking an active role'

(evidenced through time lapse photography, mini interviews, Investigation Station data and observation).

THERE ARE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ‘INTENDED’ VS ‘ACTUAL’ ACTIONS

The majority of people we spoke to were passing through Bell Square by chance when they realised there was a performance on. They had been out to do their shopping, or had just arrived, and made a conscious decision to stay to see what was taking place, illustrating that the activity programme is effective in changing people’s behaviour.

One of the groups who stayed were families with young children who were visiting town on a Saturday. The families seemed appreciative – although previously unaware – that there was an event in Bell Square.

[What were your plans today?] *“Nothing much really, just lazing around. We were walking past, we were going to take her to the park, saw there was something going on here so we stopped”*

As a result of coming across the performance, people either decided to stay or remained at the back of the crowd to watch. Several people took a seat and ate lunch whilst the show was setting up.

The researcher spoke to a young couple who visited Bell Square in the morning. They had lived in the area for their whole lives and had come back after university, positively surprised at the changes in Bell Square. After doing their shopping they returned a couple of hours later with their lunch and took a seat at the front to watch the show. They thought Bell Square was excellent. It was now a far more interesting and vibrant place to be. They commented that they wouldn’t usually sit and eat their lunches in the square, but were prompted to on this occasion and may well do so again in the future.

Several of the people we spoke to echoed the young people’s comments about knowing they could come and take a seat in Bell Square as a performance was taking place.

“I can come here, relax, enjoy and watch, do my shopping and go home”

Behaviour identified in the interviews shows that there is a transitional phase where people pass by and then, at a later point, take a seat. This transitional phase is very personal to the individual and could take place in a matter of seconds or over a longer period, depending on other commitments.



People who had come to Bell Square purposefully for an event were more often likely to also go for a drink/meal.



The Point of Engagement captured by time lapse photography

The seating for performances at Bell Square helps people move from being a passer-by to taking a seat at the front.

Repeatedly we see that the space between seating blocks, used for disabled access, actually functions as space for people to engage with the performance and make a decision about whether or not they want to stay.

Anyone who approaches the staging can instantly assess and evaluate the barriers that they might face: is it free, do I fit in here, can I stay here even though I'm on my own, do I have time to stay and watch?

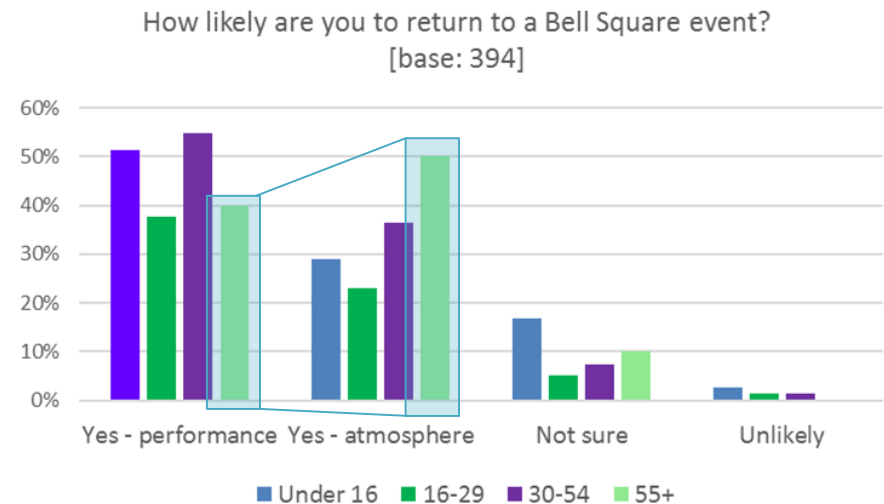
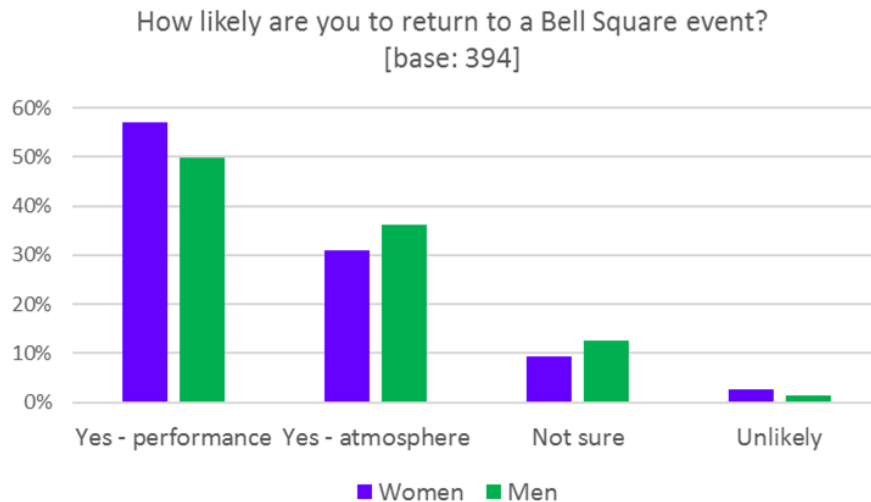
A pattern emerges whereby people approach the space (1), decide they are interested (2) and then get joined by other people who have mirrored the process (3).

The stewards have an important role in this process. They can actively enable the change from *passer-by* to *bystander* to *taking a seat at the front* through engaging individuals and groups in conversation while people gather for the event.

**Bell Square retains audiences
and increases engagement in
the arts** (evidenced through Investigation Station data).

PEOPLE WANT TO RETURN TO BELL SQUARE FOR THE PERFORMANCES AND THE ATMOSPHERE

- 53% of people will return to Bell Square to see specific types of future performances, while 34% will return simply for the atmosphere.
- The over 55s (n=22) were the only age category which predominantly stated they would come back for the atmosphere over the performance.



PEOPLE APPRECIATE THE OPPORTUNITY OF SEEING UNIQUE AND EXCITING ART IN HOUNSLOW

There is a mix of responses regarding people's other engagement with the arts. Many people state that they enjoy going to shows in London but rarely see anything locally as the quality is not as good. They feel differently about Bell Square. It's a space which brings unique and exciting arts to Hounslow and people rarely had negative comments on its presence.

Even for those who were transient in the space, stopping to take a performance in for a moment, acknowledged that the square diluted the identity of Hounslow town centre as an area with anti-social behaviour.

"It reminds me of my Polish town where I come from, because we also had a nice town square and theatre there. And we also had really high standards and I loved it and going to watch things happening there."

"What does it bring? It brings fun, when I've been at work for a long week I look forward to coming in to town and seeing what's on. And I look forward to it. Particularly since I can't go out anymore."

"It's good for the eyes and good for the soul. It's so important to have something in your backyard as people don't get to see it otherwise."

"I walked across the road and this made me smile" Why? "When you come from a community as diverse as mine, this makes all the difference."

Cohesion is enhanced as Bell Square brings people together and gives them an opportunity to talk to someone new (evidenced through Investigation Station data, interviews and observation).

Cohesion is enhanced as Bell Square brings people together and gives them an opportunity to share in an experience

There was an over riding sense that people were comfortable in Bell Square during the performances. The participatory events (e.g. Kamchatka, April 25th and The People's Tower, July 18th) led people to feel that they were working as a community. Those passing through would stop to watch and in some instances take part as a result.

Often there would be people happy to sit and watch others take part, but after time, these people become participants in the activity rather than passive observers.

"I think this was a brilliant way to get the community to unite. Love it!"

(Olivier Grossetête: The People's Tower)

"I had a great time. I took part in the show and was made to feel relaxed and accepted.

Keep the shows going." (Kamchatka)

"This is brilliant for the community." (Fanfare Le Snob: Glissando)

"Absolutely brilliant. Just what we need in our community. More please!" (AV Remix Set)

Please do it more often, this brings people together. Thank you. (Motionhouse: Captive)

I honestly think these shows have brought great community spirit. (Scarabeus: Be Loved)



COHESION: BELL SQUARE BRINGS PEOPLE TOGETHER

- The results are relatively consistent throughout the year, with the vast majority saying that events in the Square bring people from different communities together. Overall, 78% of all respondents said that the events brought people together. This proportion rises to 86% among those who attended the Winter Lights parade. Neon Dogs (22%) and Motionhouse: Captive (21%) audiences were least sure about how the events brought people together, although a majority still say that they did.
- Women (81%) were more likely than men (75%) to say that Bell Square events brought people together.
- Uncertainty about whether or not the events brought people together was highest among men, particularly those aged 19-29 (32%) and under 16 (16%).

Question: Do you think today's event has brought people from different communities together?

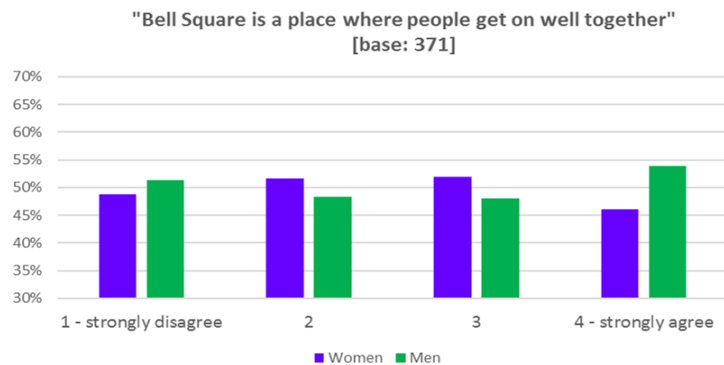
	26 th Sept Scarabeus:	10 th Oct Motionhouse: Captive	30 th Oct AV Remix Set	21 st Nov Same Sky: Winter Lights	5 th Dec Neon Dogs	Average
Yes	80%	76%	81%	86%	66%	78%
No	4%	3%	7%	2%	12%	6%
Unsure	16%	21%	12%	12%	22%	16%

People's perceptions about how Bell Square brings people together is affected by the type of performance or installation rather than seasonality or time of year.

COHESION: BELL SQUARE IS A PLACE WHERE PEOPLE GET ON WELL TOGETHER

- Almost three times the number of people ‘definitely agree’ that Bell Square is a place where people get on well together (38%), when compared to the results of the same question published in the Cohesion and Integration Strategy 2012-2015, London Borough of Hounslow.
- Overall, the results of Bell Square research are similar to that of the Cohesion and Integration Strategy showing good alignment with the general population.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that this is an area where people get on well together?	Residents Panel 2006	Residents Panel 2007	Residents Panel 2008	Residents Panel 2009	Residents Panel Aug 2010	Residents Panel Nov 2010	Bell Square Results*
Definitely agree	11%	13%	10%	12%	13%	11%	38%
Tend to agree	55%	60%	54%	54%	58%	56%	35%
Tend to disagree	13%	12%	18%	16%	21%	14%	17%
Definitely disagree	5%	4%	6%	6%	6%	6%	11%
Total ‘agree’	66%	73%	64%	66%	71%	67%	73%



- Generally women were more cautious about stating that Bell Square was an area where people got on well together.

COHESION: BELL SQUARES FACILITATES NEW ENCOUNTERS AND INTERACTIONS

- Fostering engagement between people who spend time in the square is an important element of building cohesion. Over half (60%) of audiences speak to someone new when they spend time at Bell Square. It appears that everyone (100%) attending the Neon Dogs installation spoke to someone new.
- Men (60%) and women (60%) were equally likely to talk to someone new. In terms of age groups, those aged 30-54 (69%) and 55+ (74%) were the most likely to have spoken to someone new.

Today, have you spoken to someone you didn't know before?	26 th Sept	10 th Oct	30 th Oct	21 st Nov	5 th Dec	Avg
Yes	53%	46%	50%	60%	100%	60%
No	47%	54%	50%	40%	0%	40%

- Whether or not audiences saw someone else they knew or recognised was variable depending on the type of performance or event. Performances with seated audiences saw a higher percentage of people seeing someone else they knew or recognised.

Have you seen anyone else you know or recognise?	26 th Sept	10 th Oct	30 th Oct	21 st Nov	5 th Dec	Avg
Yes	47%	65%	45%	66%	34%	50%
No	53%	35%	55%	34%	66%	50%

- Overall 60% say that it is easy to speak to someone new. It does appear, however, that performances and events where families are likely to attend provide more opportunities for speaking to someone new.

How easy is it to talk to someone new today?	26 th Sept	10 th Oct	30 th Oct	21 st Nov	5 th Dec	Avg
Extremely easy / Easy	67%	53%	48%	66%	68%	60%
Difficult / Extremely difficult	34%	47%	52%	34%	32%	40%



CONCLUSIONS, ACHIEVEMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSIONS

Bell Square represents a unique setting for creating a cohesive community atmosphere and bringing high quality arts to local residents. A permanent venue in a High Street location, with strong support from the London Borough of Hounslow and High Street retailers, provides a significant strategic advantage. There is also the fact that support emanates from the “buzz” around the arts activities in the square. This energises the community and positively contributes to greater social cohesion.

Local perceptions of the Bell Square project have also evolved from historically being an area of anti-social behaviour to an area where people choose to sit and eat lunch – even when a performance is not on – because of the ambience that exists. This has created a “sense of place”.

People interviewed in the Square said that some performances, particularly those with a participatory element, bring people together. The events provided are both an embodiment and a reflection of the diversity in the local population, mirrored in the arts on offer. This is experienced by audiences in both the programming and in the open invitation for all to enjoy the performances.

There are other signs of greater cohesion that are demonstrated in subtle ways. As an example, while attending an event in Bell Square, people often see others they recognise and are encouraged to interact with those that they are meeting for the first time. They make space for each other around the performance and share the experience.

While these interactions are likely to be more common at outdoor arts venues, there is an added benefit in that the public setting encourages the bringing together of diverse groups of people (i.e. the inhabitants of the Borough)

Perceptions of quality are often socially mediated, being the outcome of an interaction between the location, the performance and the atmosphere. In this context, it is clearly important that the arts activity on offer should have “high production values”. Respondents made it clear that their perception of quality was a combination of these factors and this is underlined by the large number of respondents who stated an intention to return based on their overall experience of the activity within the Square. Parents of young children especially valued the opportunity to have their child engage directly with the performance or activity and saw this as a significant quality indicator.

The most pertinent element emerging from this research is the way in which Bell Square has engaged people in an experience that they might not have had. Contributory factors to this success, being so subtle that they could be overlooked, include: the absence of gatekeepers; the role of the stewards in providing provenance to the experience; the development of a sense of place, resulting in the engagement of those who do not normally engage.

Traditional barriers to engagement have become something which people are able to silently identify, address and overcome in the few moments that it takes to walk through the Square.

ACHIEVEMENTS

The Bell Square project has achieved in many ways.

- It has significantly increased the number of local residents engaging in the arts and cultural events.
- Bell Square has developed into a thriving outdoor arts venue, attracting diverse audiences from Hounslow and the surrounding area.
- Bell Square has become a vibrant, interesting town centre space that local inhabitants can utilise, especially at weekends.
- It is delivering diverse arts activities with high production values to a varied and growing audience base, thus raising the positive perception of Hounslow.
- Through attracting more footfall to Bell Square, it is supporting the regeneration of the Town Centre.
- Through initiating innovative and sustainable projects which support local arts provision and the scope to increase reach and further improve engagement.
- Through contributing to community cohesion and creating the opportunity for cultural exchange, through appreciation of other communities' art and art forms through experiences in the Square.



RECOMMENDATIONS

The Bell Square team are already aware of some changes to be made. An initiative set up in 2016 has partnered with Age UK to engage with older people at Bell Square, and the forthcoming annual programme continues to challenge audience expectations. This underpins the general finding that older audiences have to date been under-represented.

Recommendations for Bell Square fall under two main themes:

- **Enhancing community cohesion**
- **Enhancing the arts experience**

Enhancing community cohesion

Establish parallel workshops drawing on the theme of the arts activities programme to support the development of local provision and provide opportunities for deeper engagement that is associated with the Bell Square programme.

Stage more events that encourage local residents to work with performers and artists, making them co-creators of the piece.

Continue to provide a varied programme of art forms to reach as broad an audience as possible, thereby creating opportunities for interaction.

Consider events that are aimed specifically at demographic groups based on age and life stage.

Enhancing the arts experience through feedback and reflection

Provide a screen in the Square that projects individuals' feedback on activities in their own language (with subtitles) to encourage participants to share their thoughts about the activities.

Provide a graffiti wall behind the audience at seated events for people to record their feelings about the events and performances, creating the reason to linger in the Square afterwards. The Neon Dogs installation (Dec 5th 2015) provoked interesting conversations between staff and passers-by and often people are willing to share their thoughts.

Engage audiences in learning how to be arts critics, providing background to the skills necessary to be an arts critic.

Appendices

APPENDIX 1 – THE INVESTIGATION STATION

We anticipated that collecting data at a public outdoor art event would be challenging, made more difficult by a language barrier and a high number of people who are not regular engagers in the arts.

We devised a data collection tool that could add to the experience of Bell Square.

Respondents were given a bag of tokens corresponding to their age and gender and asked to complete eight questions.

We encouraged people of all ages to complete the questions – adults often thought it was for children.

In total we collected almost 400 responses over five events. Given the ephemeral nature of people's visits, in the square this number of respondents was seen as a success.



APPENDIX 1A – INVESTIGATION STATION QUESTIONS

The Investigation Station
Canterbury Christ Church working with Watermans and the
London Borough of Hounslow

Have you been to a Bell Square event before?

	Yes – I stayed to watch or take part	Yes – but I was just passing	No – this is the first time
1 event	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
2 events +	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Do you think that today's event has brought people from different communities together?

Yes	No	Unsure
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

"Bell Square is an area where people get on well together?"

1 – strongly disagree	2	3	4 – Strongly agree
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Today, have you spoken to someone you didn't know before?	Have you seen anyone else you recognise or know today?
Yes	Yes
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
No	No
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Did you come with...

Friends and/or Family	Community Group	Alone	Other
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

How easy do you think it is to talk to someone new today?

1 – not very easy	2	3	4	5 – extremely easy
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

APPENDIX 2 – ANALYSING TIME-LAPSE PHOTOGRAPHY

Passing through

Bystander

Taking a seat at the front

Taking an active role

By following individual people's journey through Bell Square, we can see if and how they transitioned from someone who was passing through to taking an active role.

We identify four types of engagement in the time lapse analysis:

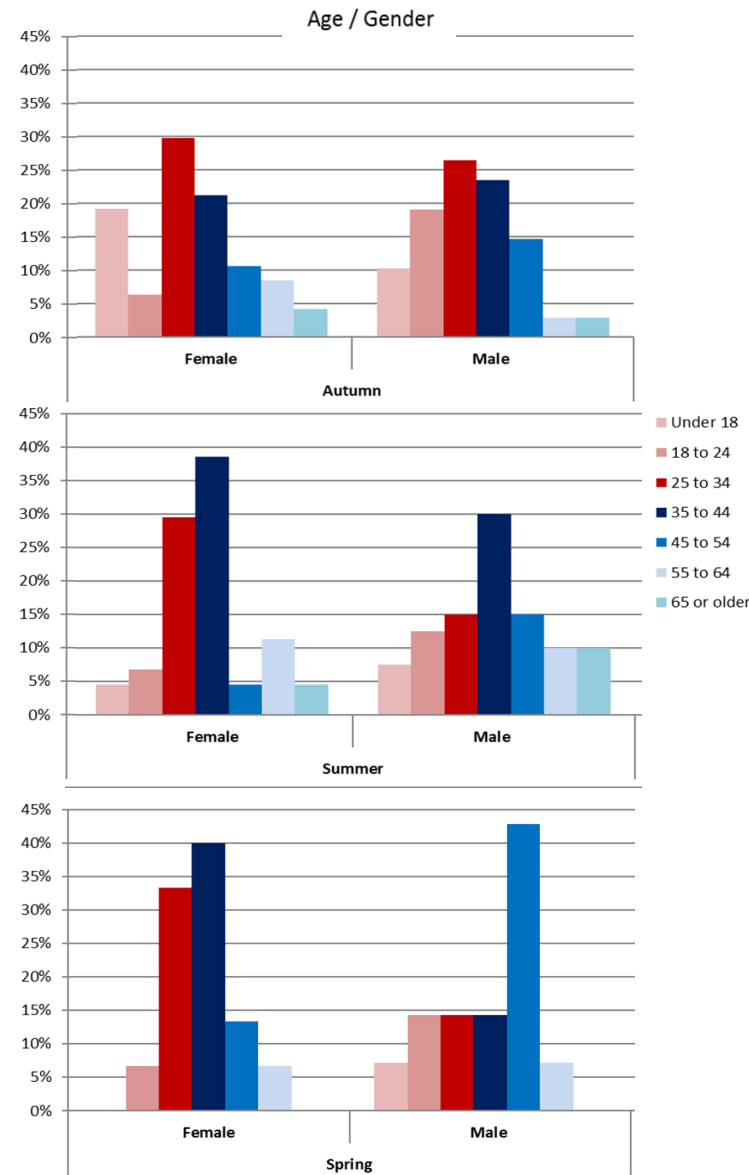
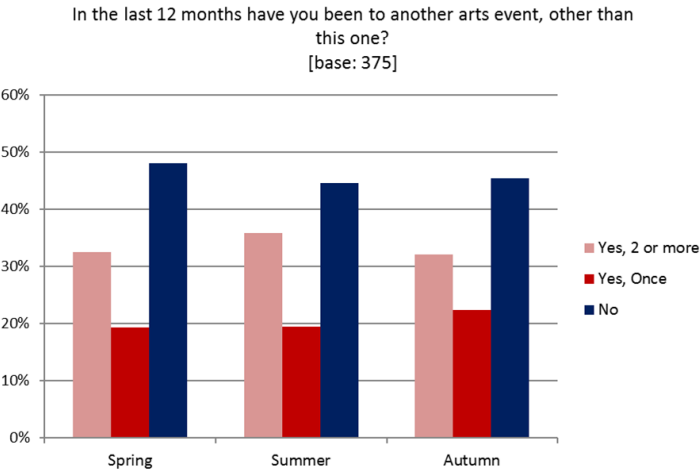
- Passing through
- Bystander
- Taking a seat at the front
- Taking an active role

A fifth type can also be identified:

- “Lingers” (those who remain after the event has been completed)



APPENDIX 3A - OVERVIEW OF AUDIENCE DEMOGRAPHICS FROM POSTCARD RETURNS



APPENDIX 3B - OVERVIEW OF AUDIENCE DEMOGRAPHICS FROM POSTCARD RETURNS

