



**IXIA'S PUBLIC ART SURVEY 2011**  
**SUMMARY AND KEY FINDINGS**

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## **About ixia**

ixia is England's public art think tank. We promote and influence the development and implementation of public art policies, strategies and projects by creating and distributing knowledge to arts and non-arts policy makers and delivery organisations within the public and private sectors, curators, artists and the public. ixia is funded by Arts Council England (ACE) and is a charitable company limited by guarantee.

For further information about ixia please visit [www.ixia-info.com](http://www.ixia-info.com) and [www.publicartonline.org.uk](http://www.publicartonline.org.uk).

## ixia's Public Art Survey 2011: Summary

*Public sector cutbacks and the wider economic downturn are fuelling a general pessimism in the public art sector, although there remains significant optimism amongst many of the more established artists.*

Nearly 700 people participated in ixia's Public Art Survey 2011. Of these, 500 work in the public art sector in the UK. However, our sample sizes for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are too small to be confident in using the data, so the key findings concentrate on public art in England.

The survey is the first of its kind, and deals with a fragmented public art sector that can be difficult to define. The sector encompasses a variety of disciplines and organisations including: arts, planning, local authorities, development, regeneration, health and education. As a result, there are a wide range of work contexts that include: self-employed, which applies to the majority and comprises artists and public art consultants; full-time and part-time public art employees; full-time and part-time employees who have some involvement with public art; voluntary workers; and students.

Having correlated the survey's sample with known population distributions, ixia's databases and other data sources, we are able to make the following observations and estimates:

- In England, during 2010-11, there was an active and core public art sector of at least 1,250 people in a market worth at least £56m;
- The public art sector is largely driven by private sector money aligned to public sector policy. We estimate that 80% of public art funding can be linked to public art policies within local authorities and the regeneration, health and education sectors;
- Many artists are optimistic about the future, but those workers closer to funding sources are much more pessimistic, predicting a fall of around 40% in the overall size of the market during 2011-12;
- We expect the recessionary trend in funding to continue in 2012-13 (and beyond), but there may be some amelioration as a result of public art projects linked to the Olympics;
- In the long-term, a recovery in the development and regeneration sectors could drive growth in public art. This is dependent upon there being staff in place to implement planning policy structures for public art. We expect these policies to remain – in some form – in many local authorities. However, around 60% of local authority employees with responsibility for public art are either unsure about, or expecting to lose, their jobs;
- Overall, the survey shows a predominantly female workforce: 64% female vs. 36% male. This breaks down as follows:
  - For artists: 54% female vs. 46% male, with an older age profile for both females and males tending towards the 45 to 64 range;
  - For consultants: 70% female vs. 30% male. The age range for females is evenly distributed between 25 to 44 (47.5%) and 45 to 65 (47.5%). For males, 66% are aged between 45 to 64;
  - For salaried posts: 70% female vs. 30% male, with 67% of females aged between 25 to 44, and 62% of males aged between 45 to 64;
  - The workforce is predominantly white (95%);
  - 4% of respondents have a disability.
- The cost of individual public art projects ranges from nothing to millions of pounds. The average cost of a public art project commissioned by a local authority, or via the regeneration, health and education sectors is approximately £73,000;
- The most important role for public art is believed to be shaping national and regional identity. This is followed by improving the design of the environment, and then by performing an important social function.

## ixia's Public Art Survey 2011: Key Findings

### Types of work

- The two most common types of public art projects are:
  - art and architecture (including art integrated within urban design and landscape architecture);  
and
  - socially engaged practice (i.e. artists working with community groups).
- Projects within the rural environment and landscape are significantly less common than other types of public art.
- Events-based activities (i.e. festivals) are perhaps a growing area and are more common than large-scale permanent artworks.

### Values

- Artists, consultants and organisations all largely agree that public art plays an important role in national and regional identity. This is then followed by its role in improving the design of the environment, and then by performing an important social role. Support for the more intrinsic concepts of freedom of expression and challenging the establishment were less clearly defined, with over 30% disagreeing that public art had a role in challenging the establishment and 20% disagreeing or having no opinion about public art being an important freedom of expression.

### The market

- We estimate that the public art market was worth at least £56m<sup>1</sup> in England during 2010-11, but there is an expectation that this could fall by around 40% in 2011-12.<sup>2</sup> Our sample sizes for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland were too small to enable us to be confident about estimating market worth in these areas.
- The public art market is largely driven by private sector money aligned to public sector policy. We estimate that 80% of public art funding can be linked to public art policies within local authorities and the regeneration, health and education sectors.
- We expect the recessionary trend in funding to continue in 2012-13 (and beyond), but there may be some amelioration as a result of public art projects linked to the Olympics.
- In the long-term, a recovery in the development and regeneration sectors could drive growth in public art. This is dependent upon there being staff in place to implement planning policy structures for public art. We expect these policies to remain – in some form – in many local authorities. However, around 60% of local authority employees with responsibility for public art are either unsure about, or expecting to lose, their jobs.
- The most pronounced regional variation appears to be that there were more projects with smaller budgets in the Midlands and the South of England, and fewer projects with larger budgets in the North and the East.

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<sup>1</sup> This includes salaried posts, consultant and artist fees, and production costs.

<sup>2</sup> Caveat: public art projects tend to be spread out over several years and are mostly tied to capital budgets, making annual financial estimates more difficult to quantify.

## The workforce

- In England, during 2010-11, there was an active and core public art sector of at least 1,250 people.
- Overall, the survey shows a predominantly female workforce: 64% female vs. 36% male, with the female age profile being distinctly younger than the male age profile.
- The gender balance for artists is 54% female vs. 46% male, with an older age profile for both females and males tending towards 45 to 64.
- The gender balance for consultants is 70% female vs. 30% male. The age range for females is evenly distributed between 25 to 44 (47.5%) and 45 to 65 (47.5%). For males, 66% are aged between 45 to 64.
- The gender balance for salaried posts is 70% female vs. 30% male, with 67% of females aged between 25 to 44, and 62% of males aged between 45 to 64.
- The workforce is predominantly white (95%).
- 4% of the respondents have a disability.
- The public art sector is highly educated with around 61% holding an undergraduate degree; a further 52% with postgraduate qualifications; and 5% with doctoral level qualifications. Over 61% of respondents have qualifications in the area of Arts/Fine Art practice, and a further 24% in Arts/Cultural theory.
- There are approximately 500 salaried posts with some responsibility for public art. For around 36% of these, this responsibility represents more than 50% of their job. The public art element of these employees' work represents an employment market of around £7.3m. At least 85% of these posts are wholly or partially dependent on public sector funding.
- The average full-time employee's salary is £34,250 and the average salary for those in part-time posts is £14,400. The largest distinct group of employers with posts which have some responsibility for public art is local authorities with around 210 posts, followed by publicly funded arts organisations with around 100 posts.
- There are around 230 freelance consultants who are largely involved with project management. Nearly 75% of these regularly undertake work for local authorities. We estimate that 32% of consultants earn between £20,000 to £30,000 per year, 38% earn less than £15,000, and 5% earn more than £50,000. Approximately 30% have no public liability insurance (or don't know), and only a third have professional indemnity insurance. The employment market for public art consultants over the past 12 months has been worth around £6m, with the average day rate being £267.
- There are approximately 500 artists working in public art in England, with around 40% earning less than £10,000 last year. There are two distinct groups: artists for whom public art is a secondary source of income (53%) and artists for whom public art is a primary source of income (47%). Those artists for whom public art is a secondary source of income had average earnings from public art last year of £11,700, whilst those for whom it is a primary source of income averaged £28,400. We estimate that 15% of this latter group earned over £50,000, and 10% earned more than £75,000. The employment market for public artists over the past 12 months has been worth around £8m, with the average day rate being £248.

## **Public art projects**

- The cost of individual public art projects ranges from nothing to millions of pounds. The average cost of a public art project commissioned by a local authority, or via the regeneration, health and education sectors is approximately £73,000.
- On average, the breakdown in costs for a public art project delivered by the local authority, regeneration, health and education sectors is: 16% on project management; 14% on artists' fees; and 70% on fabrication and production. We would expect the costs for project management and artists' fees to be proportionately larger for smaller projects or smaller for very large projects involving significant production and fabrication work.

## **Outlook**

- Employees within local authorities are the most uncertain about the future, with only 40% feeling some level of job security. Among the freelancers, 45% of consultants expect to see their fees drop, with 9% not expecting to earn anything. On the other hand, 57% of artists expect their earnings to stay the same or to increase - and this rises to 68% for those artists for whom public art is their primary source of income.