IXIA'S PUBLIC ART SURVEY 2012

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.

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SUMMARY

The Cultural Olympiad masked a significant fall in the size and value of the public art sector in England. In addition, the sector experienced a loss of younger workers, including younger artists, as well as officers within local authorities.

During autumn 2012, ixia undertook its second public art survey.[1] The findings of the survey have been compared to those from 2011 and this has enabled us to begin to identify and examine trends relating to the public art sector in England. However, it has to be stressed that both surveys revealed a sector that is fragmented. Public art 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 public art 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 about the public art sector in England:

- During 2012 there was an active and core public art sector of at least 1,000 people (20% less than in 2011) working within a market with a value of at least £53m (6% less than in 2011). The fall in market value was less than the sector was anticipating, with the Cultural Olympiad contributing up to £11m to ameliorate the impact of the recession;

- The main driver for the public art sector continued to be private sector money aligned to public sector policy, although we estimate that funding for public art via the planning system and capital projects undertaken by local authorities fell from £33m during 2011 to £22m during 2012;

- Art and architecture and socially engaged practice remained the most typical forms of public art projects, with events-based activities becoming more common within local authorities and arts organisations;

- The most important role for public art was shaping local, regional and national identity. This was followed by improving the design of the environment and performing an important social function;

- Commercial and retail developers valued public art as something good to do that improved the design of the environment and performed an important social role;

- Some housing developers believed that public art improved 'kerb appeal' and enhanced the impact and quality of their developments, but the main reason that they commissioned public art was because planners within local authorities requested its provision;

[1] Nearly 600 people participated in ixia's Public Art Survey 2012. Of these, 400 worked in the public art sector in the UK. However, the sample sizes for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland were too small to be used, so the key findings focus on the public art sector in England.

- Consultants and artists were more optimistic about the future than in 2011, but those workers closer to funding sources remained more pessimistic;

- In the longer term, recovery in the construction industry should eventually drive growth in public art. However, changes in planning policy guidance and a loss of officers within local authorities mean that new approaches to commissioning and delivery will need to evolve;

- Overall, the age profile of the workforce was older in 2012 than it was in 2011. Those in the 25 to 44 age group decreased from 45% to 38%, whilst those in the 45 to 64 age group increased from 49% to 55%;

- The survey continued to show a predominantly female workforce: 62% female vs. 38% male, with the female age profile being distinctly younger than the male age profile. Compared with the 2011 survey, there was a 5% increase in the percentage of male workers;

- 94% of workers were white and 3% of workers were disabled. These percentages were consistent with those for 2011.

TYPES OF WORK

- The two most typical forms of public art projects continued to be:

  - art and architecture (including art integrated within urban design and landscape architecture), although there was a slight decrease in popularity which can be linked to the recession within the development and regeneration sectors;

    and

  - socially engaged practice (i.e. artists working with community groups), which became more important to local authorities and arts organisations.

- Projects within the rural environment and landscape were significantly less typical than other areas of public art.

- Events-based activities (i.e. festivals) continued to grow in importance for local authorities and arts organisations.

- Large-scale permanent or temporary public art projects remained of interest, but were less common than art and architecture, events-based activities and socially engaged practice.

VALUES

- Artists, consultants and organisations largely agreed that public art: plays an important role in local, regional and national identity; improves the design of the environment; and performs an important social role. Support for the more intrinsic concepts of freedom of expression and challenging the establishment was less clearly defined, with over 32% disagreeing that public art had a role in challenging the establishment (up by 2% since 2011), and 20% disagreeing or having no opinion about public art being an important freedom of expression.

- Whilst the overall picture for 2012 remained broadly consistent with 2011, there are significant trends. In the areas of improving design, its social role and contribution to local, regional and national identity, the value placed on public art by artists and arts organisations remained at a similar level to 2011. However, the value placed by consultants on these areas shifted: 20% fewer consultants strongly agreed that public art improves design; 23% fewer strongly agreed that public art performs an important social role; and 16% fewer strongly agreed that public art plays an important part in identity. Overall, 95% of consultants agreed that these were public art’s core values, but there was a weakening in their belief in these core values. There was a similar but less pronounced shift within local authorities.

THE MARKET

- We estimate that the public art market[2] had a value of at least £53m in England during 2012, 6% less than during 2011.[3] 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 overall fall in the value of the public art market was less than expected as it included up to £11m attributable to the Cultural Olympiad.[4]

- The main driver for the public art sector continued to be private sector money aligned to public sector policy, although we estimate that funding for public art via the planning system and capital projects undertaken by local authorities fell from £33m during 2011 to £22m during 2012.

- Overall, 90% of the funding for public art during 2012 was linked to public art policies within local authorities and the regeneration, health and education sectors. This includes the Cultural Olympiad.

- In the longer term, recovery in the construction industry should eventually drive growth in public art. However, changes in planning policy guidance and a loss of officers within local authorities mean that new approaches to commissioning and delivery will need to evolve.

THE WORKERS

- In England during 2012 there was an active and core public art sector of at least 1,000 people, a fall of around 20% since 2011.

- The overall value of the employment market (salaried posts, artists and consultants) fell by around 28% from an estimated £23.3m during 2011 to an estimated £16.7m during 2012.

- The sector was highly educated with 87% having either an undergraduate degree and/or a postgraduate qualification, and 6% having a doctoral level qualification. Over 62% had qualifications in the area of Arts/Fine Art practice, and a further 17% had qualifications in the area of Arts/Cultural theory.

- The age profile of workers was older than in 2011. The number of workers in the 25 to 44 age group decreased from 45% to 38%, whilst the number of workers in the 45 to 64 age group increased from 49% to 55%.

- The survey continued to show a predominantly female workforce: 62% female vs. 38% male, with the female age profile being distinctly younger than the male age

[2] This included salaried posts, consultants' fees, artists' fees and production costs.
[3] Caveat: public art projects tend to be developed and implemented over a number of years and are mostly tied to capital budgets, making annual financial estimates more difficult.
[4] Caveats: income and expenditure for projects relating to the Cultural Olympiad could have taken place across a number of years; the description of all the projects relating to the Cultural Olympiad as public art could be challenged and debated; and during 2011 it was reported by the Olympic Development Authority and Open-City/Art in the Open that £33.7m was allocated to public art across the Olympic Park between 2008 and 2011. This included a private donation of £22m by ArcelorMittal for the Anish Kapoor/Cecil Balmond designed Orbit, a project led by the Greater London Authority (see *Square pegs and round holes: a report on the ODA Arts and Culture programme*).

profile. Compared with the 2011 survey, there has been a 5% increase in the percentage of male workers.

- 94% of workers were white and 3% of workers were disabled. These percentages were consistent with those for 2011.

Salaried Posts

- There were approximately 400 people working in salaried posts with varying degrees of responsibility for public art, a fall of around 20% since 2011. In 36% of these posts, public art accounted for more than half of the workers' time.

- The public art element for all salaried employees represented an employment market of around £4.9m, a decrease from £7.3m in 2011. At least 72% of these posts were wholly or partially dependent on public sector funding.

- Within local authorities there was an increase in part-time working and fixed-term contracts, and a decrease in full-time posts. Less than a third of posts were exclusively focused on public art. The proportion of male to female workers has shifted from 22% male/78% female in 2011 to 33% male/67% female in 2012.

- The average full-time salary was £32,526 (down from £34,265 in 2011) and the average part-time salary was £14,048 (down from £14,417 in 2011). The largest distinct group of employers with posts which have some responsibility for public art was local authorities with around 180 posts, followed by publicly funded arts organisations with around 65 posts.

Consultants

- There were approximately 200 consultants working in the public art sector, a fall of around 15% since 2011.

- The employment market for consultants in England over the past 12 months was worth around £4.5m, a fall from £6m in 2011. The average day-rate remained static at around £266.

- Consultants were largely involved with the project management of public art projects, with over 85% regularly undertaking work for local authorities (up by 10% since 2011). On average, consultants' earnings rose from £22,711 in 2011 to £23,558 in 2012, although more than half earned less than £15,000, which was up from a third in 2011. 37% have no public liability insurance (or don't know), which was up from 30% in 2011. Half have professional indemnity insurance, which was up from a third in 2011.

Artists

- There were approximately 400 artists working in public art across the UK, a fall of around 20% since 2011.

- The employment market for artists in 2012 in England was around £7.3m, a fall from £10m in 2011.

- Around 38% of artists earned less than £10,000. This is consistent with the figures for 2011.

- There are two distinct groups of artists:

  - for 58% of artists, public art was their primary source of income (up from 47% in 2011) and their average earnings fell from £28,200 to £25,200. Around 11% of this group earned over £50,000, and around 9% earned more than £75,000;

  - for 42% of artists, public art was their secondary source of income (down from 53% in 2011) and their average earnings from public art fell from £11,679 in 2011 to £9,556.

- During 2011, the average day-rate for artists was around £250, irrespective of whether public art was their primary or secondary source of income. During 2012, the average day-rate for artists where it was their primary source of income had risen to £262 (an increase of 4.8%). Where public art was a secondary source of income the average day-rate fell to £215 (a decrease of 14%).

- Despite many artists preferring not to, 70% would apply for public art commissions where no fee is available for the preparation of indicative or final ideas.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND PLANNING POLICY

- 71% of participating local authorities had a public art policy and/or a public art strategy. Of these, 43% had a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for public art.

- A third of local authorities with public art policies and/or public art strategies said they were updating their public art documents to conform to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

- 10% of officers within local authorities with public art policies and/or public art strategies said they were planning to adopt the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and use it to fund public art. 3% were not planning to adopt CIL and 87% either didn’t know about CIL or skipped the question.

DEVELOPERS

- Overall, commercial and retail developers were very positive about public art. They: considered public art to be intrinsic to developments; had an understanding of different types of public art practice; did not see the cost of public art to be an issue; expected and planned to deliver public art; and supported public art’s inclusion within the planning system. Public art was considered to be an important part of place-making, contributing to local life and to what makes a place interesting - public art was seen as something good to do.

- Some housing developers believed that public art improved ‘kerb appeal’ and enhanced the impact and quality of their developments. Furthermore, they would consider commissioning public art on a development site even if a local authority was pooling funding for art and culture via CIL. However, the main reason that they commissioned public art was because planners within local authorities requested its provision.

THE CULTURAL OLYMPIAD

- The financial contribution of the Cultural Olympiad to the total value of the public art sector was up to £11m. This included around £1.2m on artists' fees, and around £575,000 on consultants' fees. The majority of the funding went to local authorities, although this may in turn have been passed on to arts organisations.[5]

OUTLOOK

- Levels of uncertainty remained high across public sector organisations, but to a lesser degree than in 2011. In local authorities, only 47% of officers felt secure in their posts. Of these, the officers who felt most secure were those whose jobs were primarily focused on public art. The only sector to register a significant increase in uncertainty was the private sector arts organisations.

- Among self-employed workers, there was a slight increase in optimism with 63% of artists and 64% of consultants expecting their fees to remain the same or increase.

REGIONAL VARIATIONS

- Per head of population, the most pronounced regional variation was a significant shift in weighting of work opportunities towards London, and to a lesser extent towards the North East and North West.

[5] Caveat: this may have caused some 'double counting' within the figures received by ixia via the survey.