Artist's Studio Museum Network

2019 Survey Report
Magnus von Wistinghausen

ARTIST'S STUDIO MUSEUM NETWORK

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Contents

The following report details the findings of the 2019 Artist's Studio Museum Network (ASMN) survey. The survey investigated the every-day running of the over 150 studio museums within the network, exploring business models, visitor numbers, staffing, programming, exhibitions, accessibility and more. Carried out/conducted before the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic, this report provides us with a unique insight into this unique area of the museum sector prior to the unprecedented closures that have taken place in 2020. Going forward, this study will act as an invaluable benchmark as studio museums across the ASMN continue to adapt, develop and evolve in response to Covid-19.

We would like to thank all of the museums who took part in the survey to help us paint a picture of the network. We would also like to thank the Tavolozza Foundation for its continued support. Finally, we would like to thank Magnus von Wistinghausen for producing the following report into the full detail of the survey's findings.

Introduction

Of a total Artist Studio Museum Network membership of 151 museums (as of September 2019), 73 institutions from 23 different countries completed the survey. This has provided a significant and varied sample from which to analyse artist studio museums as a distinct sub-group within the museums and heritage sector, to consider what sets them apart from this wider peer group and which challenges they may currently face.

Collectively, the Artist Studio Museum Network membership brings together a remarkably diverse group of organisations. Artist studio museums can be found at the centre of the large metropolis', in regional cities, local towns and in isolated rural locations.

This is an active and vibrant community, which is expanding with some organisations approaching their 200th anniversary while others are only very recently established. Many studio museums actively invest in their present and future through significant refurbishment and development projects to enhance their offering to the public.

The network is composed of mostly original working studios and homes, belonging to some of the leading artists of their generations. Many studio museums have retained their historic interiors and hold rich collections which provide a unique insight into artists' creative processes, allowing an immersive encounter with their personae within the authentic setting for their lives and work. The abundance of archives which form part of the holdings of many studio museums is also significant. These provide important contextual material and represent a significant resource for the wider academic and curatorial community.

Today, studio museums are a great deal more than sanctuaries to artists and their legacies. Through collaborative research projects, temporary exhibitions and lively public programmes, they have become places in which to investigate art practice(s) and re-evaluate the legacies of artists and their periods for the present time. This also includes sustained engagement with contemporary art practice (through residencies, collaborative projects and exhibitions) which can be found across the network membership. Moreover, studio museums provide highly attractive and characterful spaces which lend themselves as venues for a wide range of cultural events.

Due to size and (sometimes) location, studio museums do not necessarily attract large visitor numbers, with 26% reporting fewer than 5,000 visitors per annum, although 11% reporting annual visitor numbers in excess of 100k.. The core of their audiences tend to be domestic (rather than international) and many engage actively with their communities (through their education and events programmes). In aggregate their annual attendance is not to be underestimated – based on the survey results this could amount to anywhere between 3.6 and 5.2 million visitors per annum for the Network membership as a whole.

Over half (64%) of artist studio museums operate on modest annual budgets (of 250k or under) and (mostly) very limited staff (in many cases supported by volunteers).

Just over half (56%) of the Network members are embedded within larger (state or municipal) museum structures. Others are run as independent not-for-profit structures, often without secure sources of core funding and rely on a 'mixed economy' based on income from admissions, trading activities, grants and donations. The longer term sustainability of such operational models represents a challenge for some studio museums. It relies on the initiative and enterprise of small teams, operating in collaboration with academic and other organisations, as well as with individuals (in particular artists) and with the support of volunteers.

The survey has shown the considerable collective resource and experience held within the network membership, with a great deal to be shared. This offers the potential to build a lively community across borders, able to speak with one larger voice to advocate the role and importance of a distinct group of organisations with a shared purpose and cultural mission. This will strengthen the narrative, add visibility, raise profile and create opportunity to join forces and unlock additional resources.

Key Facts - Survey Highlights

General

- Artist studio museums range from town centre apartments and small, landlocked buildings to purpose-built museum structures and large sites with multiple buildings; many are set within gardens, and in some cases form part of entire estates.
- The oldest studio museum surveyed was founded in 1837 and the most recent in 2017 (one of 16 to be founded since the year 2000); the majority of studio museums were founded within the lifetime of the artist, around the time of their death or within the following two decades; yet some are created many generations after the artist's death.
- 57% of studio museums form part of a larger entity, usually state or municipal museum structures (but also universities or foundations); the remainder are independently governed, and a few are privately/family-owned and run.
- 75% of surveyed museums comprise the artist's original studio; in a few cases these still function as working studios; others have reconstituted the artist's studio, sometimes by re-assembling the original within a larger museum setting.
- Studio museums hold exceptionally rich and diverse collections; 46% of surveyed museums report in excess of 2000 items and 86% hold archives; 58% have catalogued their collections either partially or fully and are available in print or online.
- Just over half of surveyed museums have undergone (or plan) a major refurbishment or other significant project to enhance their facilities for the public.

Access and Audiences

- Eight out of ten studio museums open ten or more months a year to the public, and 85% are open five or more days a week.
- Most studio museums do not attract large audiences, although some of them do. Almost half (45%) of surveyed studio museums report less than 10,000 visitors per annum - of which 26% report less than 5,000; 21% report in excess of 50,000, or which 11% report more than 100,000 visitors per annum.
- Less than a quarter (23%) of studio museums currently attract more than 25% of visitors from overseas.

- Whilst in some instances school visits account for as much as 50% of total visits, for the majority (84%) of artist museums report school visits accounting for less than 25% of total annual visits.

Activities

- 90% of studio museums regularly hold temporary exhibitions; 78% have a dedicated temporary exhibition space and 82% regularly lend works from their collections.
- 70% of studio museums have an education programme catering for a variety of publics including schools, adult education, families and community programmes.
- Eight out of ten studio museums work with contemporary artists, by offering residencies, exhibitions, commissions and other activities.
- 57% of surveyed studio museums are actively involved in partnerships with academic institutions, including research projects, placements, exhibitions.
- All studio museums host a wide range of events and activities on their premises, frequently including live music, and sometimes theatre performances and entire festivals.

Funding and resources

- 55% of surveyed studio museums operate on an annual budget of 250k or less, with 23% operating on an annual budget of less than 50k. Although 19% report an annual budget of 1m or over.
- 50% of studio museums report that public subsidy is the most prevalent source of income; the second most significant source of income is admissions income, followed by commercial and trading income from shops, café and events.
- More than two-thirds of surveyed museums have staff numbers of ten or less (and 50% of five or less).
- More than half (61%) have volunteers; studio museums reporting the largest number of volunteers (50+) are mostly in the UK.

Challenges

- Long term financial sustainability is a frequent concern, especially amongst studio museums with no recurring core revenue funding and a reliance on visitor footfall as the main source of income.
- Small and restricted sites, in rural locations and limited marketing resources are barriers to visitor growth. Where visitor footfall is already high this can cause its own problems in terms of preservation of a fragile site.
- Limited staffing restricts organisational capacity which tends to be wholly absorbed by day-to-day operations and sets limits for developmental activity.
- A need for restoration of the spaces, both internally and externally, to preserve them and make them more accessible and how this restoration work will be funded is a concern for many respondents.

Context and scene setting

Artist studio museums are not a new phenomenon. The origins of artist studio museums as places memorialising the person and achievements of individual artists go back a long way. Their emergence as a museum 'type' by the beginning of the 20th century reflects the rise in the status of the artist since the early 19th century and the growth in the social and economic status of the profession which also fostered the creation of numerous bespoke studio-homes. These factors have continued to play out, with studio museums of (long ago and recently) deceased as well as living artists still being established into the twenty-first century.

The Artist Studio Museum Network membership reflects this. The survey results show the 'oldest' museum as being founded in 1837 and the 'youngest' as being launched as recently as 2017.

Just over half of the surveyed museums were founded after 1950 and nearly a quarter again since the year 2000. So far, there is no end to the studio museum movement in sight. This is also attested by the fact that more than half of surveyed museums report significant capital investment in refurbishing and otherwise developing their site to modernise and enhance their offer.

The motivations for the creation of artist studio museums differ, although they are broadly one of the following:

- The stated will and initiative of the artist during their lifetime and/or of their spouse or family upon their death;
- Private initiatives to keep alive (or revive) the memory of the artist (friends, pupils, collectors, artist societies, foundations, universities) – this tends to happen within a generation of the artist's death (but sometimes later);
- Public entities securing the site of the artist's former studio or home for civic commemoration and/or as a cultural amenity for the community and to support cultural tourism – sometimes generations after the artist's death.

Museum foundation date		
Before 1900	4	*6%*
1900–1919	3	*4%*
1920–1949	11	*15%*
1950–1979	22	*31%*
1980–1999	15	*21%*
Since 2000	17	*24%*

Museum Founders		
Artist	9	13%
Spouse	6	8%
Family	6	8%
Public Entity	26	36%
Other	25	35%

Current ownership and governance arrangements reflect these historical origins. Overall, the surveyed museums split more or less evenly between independently run organisations (trusts, foundations) and publicly & state owned organisations, with a small number in private ownership.

Public sector ownership is slightly more prevalent amongst continental European museums than in the UK (where the largest proportion of current network members are based). 57% of studio museums are run under the umbrella of larger organisational entities (eg. national and regional museums and independent institutions, such as universities or larger bodies such as for instance the National Trust in the UK). This is more frequently the case in continental Europe (than in the UK) and applies to most studio museums in Central Europe and Russia. Studio museums embedded in national/state/city museum structures have access to a larger pool of organisational resources than the size (and budgets) of their immediate operations suggests. Therefore, issues of sustainability and organisational capacity are mostly raised by independent studio museums without access to core public funding.

On the other hand, some survey comments also suggest that public sector ownership comes with strings and limitations to entrepreneurial initiative. As always, there are exceptions to the rule and counterexamples to challenge any broad generalisations.

The following sections look more specifically into what the survey results reveal about the breadth and scale of studio museum audiences, the visitor offer, as well as organisational resources, funding and sustainability.

Ownership		
Independent Trust/Foundation	29	40%
Public Sector Entity - State	18	25%
Public Sector Entity - Local	14	19%
Other	10	14%
Private	2	3%

Audience

By their very nature, many artist studio museums are domestic in scale. Their spaces are rarely designed with public access in mind. This limits their ability to accommodate large visitor numbers at any given time. Their locations tend to be off the beaten track, even where they are located at the centre of large cities and easily accessed by public transport. With their (mostly) single artist focus, their offering is by and large a 'niche', even where they offer a rich and diverse programme of activities.

Arguably, limited visitor numbers are a significant part of the appeal of studio museums and define the intimate quality of the visitor experience. This means that managing visitor flows and crowd control can be an issue, as highlighted by some of the museums with high visitor numbers (or physically restricted sites).

Most of the surveyed studio museums are open for ten or more months of the year, with only few opting for shorter seasonal openings. Weekly opening regimes tend to be generous, with 85% of surveyed museums open five or more days per week. This represents a significant commitment to public access. The majority of studio museums charge for admission (82% of museums surveyed), this being the norm with the exception of some UK national and local authority museums.

Visitors

45% of the surveyed museums have less than 10,000 visitors per annum, and 26% have less than 5,000 visitors. Of these, more than half are in rural (and small town) locations.

Annual Visitors		
<5000	18	26%
5000 - 10,000	13	19%
10,000 - 20,000	4	6%

20,000 – 30,000	12	17%
30,000 – 50,000	8	11%
50,000 – 100,0000	7	10%
>100,000	8	11%

The surveyed museums include a number of examples reporting over 50,000 and in some cases in excess of 100,000 visitors per annum. These outliers benefit from one (but not necessarily all) of the following factors:

- The national and international notoriety of the artist
- City centre locations
- The studio museum itself being part of a larger museum/site with a consequently wider visitor appeal
- Free admission (in one case only)

Adding the data from the survey submissions produces a total number of visitors across the surveyed sample (itself 46% of the Network membership in number) of anywhere between 1.8m and 2.6m – taking the lower and upper end of the brackets in which the data is reported. This suggests that the total Network membership could account for anywhere between 3.6m and 5.2m visitors per annum as an estimate. This represents a considerable captive audience on which to build for the future.

International visitors

The majority of museums in the survey report that less than 25% of their visitors are international and have flagged that this is an area to develop.

In general, the percentage of international visitors is not correlated to total visitor numbers (nor to the scale of the organisation, as measured by the size of the reported budget for instance). Location as such is not a factor *per se* either, with museums reporting the lowest share of international visitors spread evenly across city centre, town and rural locations, and not necessarily distant from public transport connections.

More revealing perhaps is the small number of museums that go against this trend, with 15 studio museums reporting international visitors in excess of 25% of total visitors, and five as much as 50% or more. Most (but not all) of these *are* located in city centre locations and close to public transport. More significantly (and predictably) perhaps, they are museums of artists with a widespread international notoriety and located in cities and regions attracting a large cultural tourist audience - or where they are amongst the main local cultural attractions.

Developing an international audience is a declared priority of many survey respondents and reflects a widely shared imperative to grow visitor footfall (and the income that comes with it). This provides an opportunity for network-led marketing and promotional initiatives, by raising the profile of studio museums as a category in its own right and building on the reputation of those members with an established international profile already.

International visitors		
<10%	20	30%
10%-25%	31	47%
26%-49%	10	15%
>50%	5	8%

Not every institution will necessarily see this as a priority (or indeed a realistic prospect) with some instead looking to focus more on developing their local audiences. In the age of the climate change agenda (and in response to Covid-19) a structural downturn in international travel and cultural tourism is a distinct long-term possibility. In some cases, this might make hyper-local audience development a more appropriate and promising prospect.

Education visits

Studio museums provide a rich terrain for educational activities. They take their role in providing an educational offer seriously. By their nature, they offer great scope for engagement across a range of subjects and disciplines, and a more personalised context for addressing these than is the case in a traditional art (or historical) museum. This is reflected by the survey results which show two thirds of studio museums running education programmes, and a large number across the full range of schools, family, education and community programmes. In addition to this, individual museums are offering activities targeted at specific groups – such as visitors with disabilities, visitors with dementia, refugees, hospital patients and those within the prison system.

Education programmes offered		
Schools	48	66%
Adult	34	47%
Families	34	47%
Community	26	36%

Total education programmes offered		
4	18	25%
3	14	19%
2	9	12%

1	10	14%
None	22	30%

For some studio museums, educational visits account for a significant share of total visitors. 11 museums report education visits as accounting for in excess of 25% of total visits, and five in excess of 50% of total visits. This is not correlated to visitor numbers and can be found amongst both very small and some of the largest museums in the survey sample.

The breadth of the educational offer is not related to museum size, and can be found across both larger and smaller organisations and in all countries covered by the network membership. This demonstrates, overall, a high level of commitment to outreach and the museum's role as educator.

School & education visits		
<10%	23	32%
10%-25%	34	47%
26%-49%	5	7%
>50%	6	8%

This is particularly prevalent in Central European countries and Russia, where some of the museums with the largest proportion of educational visits can be found. Overall, education is an area where the network can draw on considerable and diverse experience, across many different cultural contexts. This presents many opportunities for sharing practice, research initiatives and collaborative partnerships.

Activities

Despite being for the most part small organisations (with limited staff resources), many studio museums offer a broad range of public events and activities to their audiences. This shows their ability to capitalise on the unique character of their sites and their spirit of place, which lends itself to hosting a diverse programme for both general and specialist audiences. This activity is in addition to the educational offering and shows the extent to which studio museums engage with their communities (and special interest groups), by making themselves available as venues for their publics in diverse and innovative ways – and also by working in partnership with other organisations.

Percentage that offer the following activities and events		
Talk and lectures	64	88%
Tours	62	85%
Workshops	52	71%
Family activities	50	68%
Live music	43	59%
Late openings	31	42%
Research seminars	27	37%
Film screenings	25	34%
Theatre shows	12	16%

Festivals	10	14%

The most frequent activities are talks and lectures and tours, followed closely by workshops and family activities. Live music events too are a frequent programme feature, offered by over 50% of surveyed museums, and film screenings by a third. Less numerous are studio museums hosting live theatre performances or indeed whole festivals which require a range of facilities and spaces. Where they do, the setting provided makes for intimate and memorable experiences.

Looking at the sum total of activities, it is noticeable that 64% of surveyed museums report hosting five or more different types of events. Museums with the largest number of reported events are not necessarily large sites (although some of them are). And while the breadth of events is not a driver of overall visitor numbers (many events being small), it certainly reflects a depth of audience engagement and the level of effort and resource committed to it. With more than 50% of surveyed museums charging separately for events, this also represents an additional source of income.

No. of of activities offered		
10	1	1%
9	4	5%
8	6	8%
7	7	10%
6	11	15%
5	18	25%
4	12	16%

3	4	5%
2	7	10%
1	3	4%
None	0	0%

Contemporary Artists

81% ofstudio museums engage with contemporary artists. Eight out of ten surveyed studio museums report working with artists and makers in a variety of ways – including, by order of frequency, through temporary exhibitions, public event programmes, commissions and residencies. In the case of four museums, the historic studios have remained working studios or workshops offered to artists and practitioners for residencies or long term use. Two of these are recently established organisations.

Percentage working with Contemporary Artists' in the following ways:		
Work with contemporary artists	59	81%
Workshops, talk, lectures	42	58%
Exhibitions	38	52%
Commissions	18	25%
Residencies	17	23%

For some studio museums, a sustained commitment to contemporary art practice is core to their mission. A small number of surveyed museums report working across all areas of activities listed, as well as hosting contemporary art exhibitions. Those museums that do not engage in this field are usually part of larger organisations for which this may not be a priority, or where these opportunities are pursued elsewhere within these organisations.

Studio museums are of course not alone amongst museums to make spaces and their collections available to contemporary practitioners – although they do of course lend themselves exceptionally well to it and clearly have embraced this widely. This certainly constitutes a field with an extensive experience to be shared amongst the network membership.

Academic Partnerships

Many artist studio museums are actively engaged in partnerships with universities and other academic institutions. 56% of surveyed museums report working with academic partners through research projects, exhibitions and placements – regardless of size. Some are themselves owned and run by academic institutions.

Academic partnerships		
Yes	41	56%
No	31	42%

Academic partnerships (types)		
Collaborative exhibitions	21	29%
Research projects	20	27%
Research placements	11	15%

Other	8	11%
Research seminars	27	37%

For studio museums such partnerships allow access to the resources and expertise of much larger and generally well funded institutions. Equally, studio museums are able to 'trade' on their own assets – including archives, libraries as well as unique and idiosyncratic collections – and provide a rich context for enquiry across a range of disciplines. It is indicative that all studio museums (bar one) reporting joint research projects hold archives. The fact that collections (as well as archive) catalogues (published and online) are widely available may in some instances result from partnerships. Their availability certainly facilitates an active engagement with the academic and curatorial profession. 10% of studio museums have a range of collaborations with universities, offering teaching and residencies for students, which can provide the basis for a future career in the Arts and Heritage industry.

This is an area in which studio museums offer great potential, in ways which are distinct from the museums of fine art for instance. Arguably studio museums provide a uniquely rich territory for investigation – as laboratories for a holistic exploration of the artistic process and the relationship between the artist and the context for their practice and careers. There is certainly scope to build upon this, for example through network wide collaborative research and other projects with selected academic partners. These should lever in funding and other resources – and also produce related spin-offs such as exhibitions and publications.

Site and spirit of place

The majority of artist studio museums are set within the domestic setting of the artists' homes. These can be single apartments or townhouses but are also often set within a larger site with a number of features. In each case, the footprint of the artist lends each site its very particular character. This is one of studio museums' main attractions, providing a visitor experience of great authenticity (be it real or perceived) – and entirely distinct, for instance, from what most fine art museums are able to offer. By connecting the life and work of the artist, studio museums give space to the imagination.

Many studio museums are able to draw on a wide range of site features and facilities, the most commonly found include a permanent display, a temporary exhibition space and gardens.

Facilities and site features		
Permanent display	64	88%
Temporary exhibition space	58	79%
Garden	56	77%
Shop	55	75%
Domestic buildings	30	41%
Cafe	28	38%
Sculpture garden	25	34%

Artist in residence studio	17	23%
Restaurant	10	14%
Religious building	7	10%
Bar	6	8%

No. facilities and site features		
9	2	3%
8	6	8%
7	7	10%
6	9	12%
5	14	19%
4	17	23%
3	13	18%
2	4	5%

1	1	1%

Artist Studio

The artist's studio or former working space is the *inner sanctum* of most artist studio museums. 75% of surveyed museums incorporate the studio in its (more or less) original state. 14% have chosen to recreate it in its original location, and in a few cases studios have been dismantled and reassembled - usually within the context of a larger museum. As already mentioned, a small number of studios are still used as working spaces for artists and makers today.

As spaces, studios tend to be highly evocative in capturing the imagination – especially where these are purpose-built and retain most of their original features and decor. They also provide a rich terrain for interrogating the nature of the creative process (including the mythologies attached to it) and the representation of the artist. This uniquely allows both emotional response and critical engagement.

Original studio	55	75%
Studio replica	10	14%
Neither	8	11%

Collections

For the most part, studio museums can draw on rich and diverse collections which, by their very nature, are personal and idiosyncratic – bearing witness to the artist's life, personae and the nature of their practice. Almost half of museums surveyed report collections with in excess of 2,000 items - less than 10% report less than 100 items (most of these collections were established long after the artist's death and therefore have had to be re-assembled).

Collections - number of items		
<100	5	7%
100-500	15	21%
501-1000	10	14%
1001-2000	8	11%
>2001	32	46%

The survey results also confirm the breadth of studio museum collections holdings – with one third of surveyed museums reporting holdings across all categories listed (see table below for full list). Eight out of ten collections include original artist materials and photographs. In addition to the categories listed, and as could be expected, many collections contain tools, furniture and domestic objects, clothes and other personal effects, textiles, ephemera and memorabilia as well as decorative art objects and sometimes whole collections (ethnographic, textile etc.) established by the artists themselves. These are more frequently found where there has been continuity of ownership following the artist's death, allowing original interiors and the paraphernalia of the artist's life to be preserved.

Museum collection includes No.museums		
Drawings	65	89%
Paintings	60	82%
Photographs	58	79%
Artist materials	57	78%
Sculptures	53	73%
Prints	50	68%
Decorative objects	50	68%
Archives	32	44%
Library	30	41%

Collection categories held No.museums		
7	24	33%
6	21	29%
5	10	14%
4	8	11%

3	4	6%
2	1	1%
1	1	1%
None	3	4%

This particular feature of the studio museum underpins their ability (at their most elaborate and complete) to offer a holistic view of the artist's work – as well as providing a window into the artistic practice(s) and material culture, as well as the socio-economic context for artist lives and careers. In contrast to the traditional museum presentation this is more reflective of recent moves towards 'immersive' or 'experiential' curatorial approaches.

A further and important feature of studio museum collections is the abundance of archives (reported by 86% of museums), as well as libraries (40% of museums). This provides studio museums with important contextual source material with which to inform and enliven their interpretation and the narrative for visitors, as well as being a significant resource for the wider academic and curatorial community. 50% of archives are presently catalogued (with a third of catalogues available online) and therefore collectively represents a considerable cultural asset already easily accessible. The fact that half of existing archives are yet to be catalogued also points to numerous opportunities for collaborative projects, drawing on considerable level of experience amongst the membership already.

Finally, it is worth highlighting that a significant proportion (in excess of 50%) of surveyed museums continue to grow their collections through acquisitions. The propensity to engage in acquisitions is not related to size (or ownership structure), and is likely to be determined by the terms under which the museums have been established. Non-collecting museums with 'closed' collections were usually established during the lifetime or relatively soon after the artist's death along with collections left in, or brought back at that time. Where they occur, acquisitions are opportunities for re-evaluating aspects of an artist's work and practice and for generating public and scholarly attention.

Exhibitions

A large majority of studio museums (90%) hold temporary exhibitions to complement their permanent displays. Many participate actively in the museum exhibition economy by making regular loans from their collections to (and borrowing works from) other institutions.

Exceptions to this are mostly found amongst studio museums embedded within larger museum organisations which hold exhibition programmes on their principal site(s).

Seven out of ten surveyed museums have dedicated spaces for their exhibition programmes, ranging from as little as 20 sqm to more than 250 sqm. Others curate their exhibitions in and amongst their permanent display spaces.

The scale of exhibition programmes varies, with 56% surveyed studio museums mounting up to three exhibitions per annum. The number of exhibitions does not correlate to visitors numbers with even the smallest hosting as many as 7-10 exhibitions per year.

Exhibitions		
Hold temporary exhibitions	66	90%
Regularly receive works on loan	48	66%
Regularly loan works	58	79%

Exhibitions per annum		
1-3	41	56%
4-6	19	26%
7-10	5	7%

Thematically, the exhibition programming is varied, and rarely focused on the homeartist alone. Their contemporaries or period are also frequently covered, as is contemporary art (including artists in residence and local artists). Other strands of programming include genre related exhibitions.

Just under half of surveyed museums hold exhibitions curated from amongst their own collections (this is not determined by scale and breadth of the collections). Where there is a single thematic focus, this tends to be on either the artist, the in-house collection or contemporary art.

The survey results confirm that exhibitions are an essential part of studio museums' core offer to their visitors - and a key driver for attracting repeat visits. This is also evidenced by the fact that only 15% of surveyed museums charge separately for exhibitions, in addition to a general admission charge.

Exhibitions programme		
Focussed on the artist	41	62%
Inspired by the artist's era	34	52%
Featuring contemporaries of the artist	34	52%
Drawn from own collection	30	45%
Contemporary art	41	62%

Access

'Full accessibility is an ongoing issue'

The domestic nature and scale of most buildings and sites housing studio museums imposes limitations on their ability to offer full accessibility. Moreover, with buildings usually protected as historical monuments, the scope to make interventions to enhance physical access can be limited. This is a common issue and is reflected in the relatively small numbers (21%) reporting full wheelchair access, although a further 51% of surveyed museums offer partial wheelchair access (and yet more the provision of accessible toilets).

Access provision		
Partial wheelchair access	37	51%
No wheelchair access	18	25%
Full wheelchair access	15	21%
Accessible toilet	46	63%
Accessible parking	35	48%
Wheelchair provision	21	29%
Lift	19	26%
Hearing loop	15	21%
Large print	11	15%

Access awareness trained staff	20	27%
Sign language trained staff	3	4%

As set out in the above table, some studio museums also make a range of further provisions for visitors with disabilities – including hearing loops (21%), large print information (15%), and over a quarter with access awareness trained staff.

No. of access provisions No. museums		
8	2	3%
7	1	1%
6	8	11%
5	5	7%
4	14	19%
3	13	18%
2	12	16%
1	7	10%
None	11	15%

Access awareness training for staff is currently offered by 20 surveyed museums (across a number of countries). This shows a shared level of engagement and experience in this field, and provides a knowledge base on which to build for the network membership as a whole.

Resources and Sustainability

'Absence of long term core funding [is an issue]' 'Limited footfall income is always a challenge' 'We need more income from visitor admissions' 'We lack experience with income generation' 'There is a lack of staff time – for training, evaluation and reflection'

In common with many museums and heritage organisations of small to medium size, organisational capacity and financial sustainability are frequent challenges for studio museums. This is borne out by the survey results, although the sample of responses on which this report is able to draw is smaller due to the lower number of submissions for this part of the survey. The majority (though not all) of the 21 surveyed museums (28% of the total sample) that chose *not* to submit financial information are part of a public sector organisations (such as national or city museums in particular), or another larger entity (eg. universities). It is noteworthy that survey respondents which have highlighted issues of sustainability as a particular challenge are all independent.

Operating budgets

Annual operating budget (in €)		
<50,000	12	23%
50,000-100,000	8	15%
100,001 - 250,000	9	17%
250,001-500,000	9	17%
500,001-1,000,000	5	9%
1,000,001-2,500,000	8	15%
>2,500,000	2	4%

Not reported	22	

There is a fairly equal split between the budget ranges of the surveyed museums, reflective of the variations in size and visitor numbers across the network. However, the largest proportion (23%) report a budget of 50,000 or less and only two organisations (4%) report an annual budget in excess of €2.5m – one of which is city funded and the other an independent museum. Comparisons are complicated by the geographic diversity of the sample, covering a range of countries with widely diverging levels of costs, and the fact that a number of respondents are incorporated into a larger museum structure or public sector entity.

Income and funding sources

The table below shows the main sources of income and funding ranked by order of importance, based on a total of 51 submissions. Overall, the responses show the predominance of funding from grants, subsidies and admissions, although they also show many studio museums operating a mixed economy which includes commercial and other earned income sources.

Sources of income (ranked from 1 for the largest to 5 for the smallest)

	1	2	***1&2***	3	4	5	No ranking
Annual subsidy and grants	23	12	***35***	4	4	2	27
Admissions income	13	14	***27***	5	7	3	30
Commercial and trading income	5	12	***17***	19	3	6	27
Donations and sponsorship	6	7	***13***	10	14	4	31

Endowment and investment income	4	1	***5***	5	7	15	40

State subsidies and grants are listed as the first and second most significant source of income by the largest number of respondents – as is to be expected considering the prevailing governance model for studio museums (and the museum sector in general). Unsurprisingly, three-quarters of respondents in this segment are public sector governed, in one way or another, and only one-quarter are independently constituted. Of the latter, only one is based in the UK, which is geographically the country with the greatest number of survey submissions. That said, half of the museums ranking this source of income as second most important *are* UK based.

Admission fees are the second most important source of income, with 82% of surveyed museums charging for admission. In this category, two-thirds are independent museums, and one-third public sector organisations. This makes visitor footfall the main driver of earned income – and also the main source of income growth and financial sustainability. An increase in visitor numbers and visitor spend are both crucial factors for economic sustainability for the majority of studio museums, and an area identified by many as requiring support and investment.

Commercial and trading activities are next in ranking first and second place. There are very few public sector organisations within this category. A large number (over 50%) are based in the UK. Noticeably, this income stream was ranked as third largest the highest number of times. This is consistent with the high number of museums with shops and cafés – and also the broad range of activities and events for which 50% of studio museums charge. Amongst the 31 museums which rank commercial and trading income their second and third most important: 27 have a shop, 22 charge for events and 15 have a café. As with admission fee income, this is an area for growth where the expertise could readily be shared, and new funding streams jointly explored – such as image and other forms of licensing.

Donations and sponsorship is the second least important source of income, although still listed in first place by as many as six organisations, and 12 list this as first and second source. These are for the most part independent (and privately owned) museums – and the majority operate on lower operating budgets. Of the three larger organisations in this category, only one is independent and two are part of larger organisations – and all are based in the UK or Ireland where philanthropic support for the cultural sector is most developed.

Endowment and investment income is the least prevalent source of funding. Those few respondents which list it as first have a history of being established, along with a capital endowment supplied by the artists or the founder. With one exception, they are all independent organisations or based in the UK. That being said, a total of 32 studio museums report at least some level of investment income so this remains an area shared by a reasonable section of the Network membership, and therefore of possible interest.

Organisational capacity

Staffing

The majority of studio museums have low staff levels, with 72% of surveyed museums reporting operating with less than ten staff members. 50% of studio museums report between 0-5 permanent staff members. . More than two-thirds of surveyed museums report operating on less than ten staff, with half reporting five staff or less. Amongst the 43 museums reporting their staff numbers in full-time equivalent figures, seven report less than two.

Permanent staff		
0-5	34	50%
6-10	15	22%
11-20	9	13%
21-30	4	6%
31-40	2	3%
41-50	1	1%
51-75	3	4%

Not reported	5	

Importantly, amongst museums with less than ten staff, almost half are part of, or affiliated to a larger organisation. This implies that they have access to additional staff resources (such as central services for management, finance, HR and estates).

At the other end of the spectrum, a few organisations of much larger size can be found, with three museums surveyed reporting in excess of 50 members of staff.

Noticeably, the number of staff does not necessarily correlate with either the number of visitors or indeed the extent of programme activity (exhibitions, education or event based), nor the size of collections either. For instance, even the smallest museums in terms of staffing for the most part run their own education programmes, stage exhibitions and work with contemporary artists. Many are also actively engaged with a range of collaboration, providing access to a wider pool of resources and expertise.

Volunteers

In addition to their core staff, 60% of surveyed studio museums report having volunteers. The remainder who don't are, for the majority, public sector run. Geographically, volunteers feature across most of the countries represented in the network, although the UK accounts for more than half of surveyed museums with volunteers, reflecting a highly developed culture of volunteering in the UK arts and heritage. There is certainly significant experience to share amongst the Network..

Number of volunteers		
None	28	40%
0-10	19	27%
11-25	11	16%
26-50	5	7%
51-100	4	6%
101-200	2	3%
201+	1	1%

Opportunities for the Network

The survey has provided the opportunity to seek input from the Network membership on the areas of concerns, opportunities and priorities which studio museums presently face and perceive, and the areas lending themselves for future collaboration, exchange and collective action supported by the network.

Priorities for network support **Ranked 1 - 5 (1 being highest, 5 lowest)**		
Topic	**Average score**	**Rank**
Shared marketing	1.8	1
Funding opportunities	3	2
Research & collaboration	3.2	3
Professional skill sharing	3.2	3
Exhibition exchange & tours	3.6	5

Shared marketing is ranked as the number one priority by surveyed museums. This of course has already been a focus for the network with the creation, and recent comprehensive upgrade, of the network website – along with a social media presence on Instagram. Individual comments submitted corroborate further the interest in joint marketing and communication campaigns to raise the awareness of artist studio museums as cultural tourist destinations.

Funding opportunities are ranked second highest priority. Few specific examples are given by survey responses but these could range from, at its simplest, the dissemination of information about eligible funding programmes at individual country or international level, to pan-network funding opportunities where the network itself could be eligible to bid for funding to both government funded programmes (national, EU) or philanthropic funders (trust, foundations) with a declared interest in supporting cultural heritage related cross-border initiatives. There may also be opportunities to approach a group (or coalition) of such institutions, across countries representing the network membership, to fund either a network wide collaborative project or a series of projects open for individual member participation. This could include research or professional development/skills-sharing and training initiatives (see below), or indeed a significant cross border marketing initiative.

Research and collaboration more generally forms the area with the next highest ranking. This could include curatorial initiatives (leading to exhibition projects or not), research projects (on topics drawing on a common theme; exploring specific aspects of collections, including archives, across a range of member organisations), seminars and conferences. Such activities could build on the existing network of partnerships with academic institutions or allow new partnerships to be formed at network level. A number of specific topics to illustrate the potential were submitted by survey respondents and are listed below.

- Digital (new technology) versus analog methods [of audience engagement]
- Making archives and [reserve] collections accessible [as part of the interpretation]
- Art criticism [in the studio museum context]
- Artists and international trends
- Engaging contemporary artists [in studio museums]
- Artist studio residencies – open calls
- Conservation of collections in 'non-museum buildings'
- Conservation of artist materials (and ephemera)
- Fashion and textiles (in studio museum collections)
- Gardens and landscapes – the privacy of the artist
- Authenticity vs. re-presentation and preservation / 'the meaning of authenticity'
- Working under the (strict) rules of artist bequests

Professional skill sharing was ranked equally in third place with Research and Collaboration, with a number of specific suggestions of possible areas of common interest submitted by survey respondents.

- Working with inclusive groups / hard to reach audiences
- Developing/engaging with new/different audiences
- Developing educational programmes in a small museum context
- Working with contemporary artists / how to make artist residencies work
- Volunteering (recruitment, training etc.)
- Disabled visitor access (physical and other)
- Cultural mediation in the artist studio (incl. schools and families)
- Keeping the visitor offer fresh and appealing (other than through temporary exhibitions)
- Use of digital technology

- How to develop and profitably run:
  - Venue/event hire
  - Image licensing
  - Merchandising/museum retail
- Preventative conservation in the studio museum context
- 'Sharing new and bold ideas'

Exhibition exchanges and joint touring exhibitions are ranked lowest overall. This may reflect the diversity of exhibition programming strategies, the complexities of joint programming across venues of very different sizes, security standards and costs. That being said, the Network membership does represent a pool of possible collaborations and partnerships, with some respondents specifically declaring their interest in this.

This report provides the opportunity for the membership to consider these findings as the basis for a discussion about the focus for the Network's activities going forward.