2023

SMU DataArts

ANNUAL REPORT

5 YEARS OF RESEARCH
AND DATA COLLECTION

Note from the Director

This year-end we celebrate three major milestones in our organizational history – the five-year anniversary of the merger between DataArts and the National Center for Arts Research (NCAR), and the 10-year anniversary of the founding of both legacy organizations.

As we reflect on these milestones, we are immensely proud of how we've learned, adapted, and evolved as an organization over time, and proud of our contributions to field knowledge. These reflections also bring deep gratitude for the practitioners and leaders in our sector who have taught us so much over the years and imbued our work with meaning by applying it in their own contexts.

Though much has changed in our sector and our work over this period, our commitment to those working in and with arts communities is steadfast. Our emphasis is increasingly on partnership, which is evident in our 2023 research projects, data collection, and data integration, and core to our ongoing projects. This five-year merger anniversary is a great time to celebrate the power of what's possible through collaboration.

We remain dedicated to providing and engaging organizations and individuals with the evidence-based insights needed to build strong, vibrant, and equitable arts communities. Our deepest thanks to all who make our work possible.

Warmly,

Zannie Voss

Our Research

May 2023

Local Arts Agency Funding and Arts Vibrancy

read the report

How funding from local arts agencies impacts vibrancy and its underlying dimensions.

"These findings provide evidence that if you want to increase your community's level of arts vibrancy, support increased funding for your local arts agency. The investment will pay off," explains co-author Zannie Voss.

Image courtesy of Highland Arts Council, Highland, IL. Photo credit: Brady Kesner.

Full List of Our 2023 Research

Reports

Local Arts Agency Funding and Arts Vibrancy, May 2023

Navigating Recovery: Arts and Culture Financial and Operating Trends in Chicago, October 2023

Top 40 Most Arts-Vibrant Communities of 2023, October 2023

Distribution of Federal COVID-19 Relief Funding for the Arts, December 2023

Academic Articles

Carù, Antonella, Bernard Cova, and Zannie Voss (2023). "Disruptive Audience Performances: The Extremes of the Duet Applauses/Boos." *International Journal of Arts Management*, 26 (1), 72-81.

Park, Young Woong, Glenn B. Voss, and Zannie G. Voss (2023). "Linking Stakeholder Support, Market-based Assets, and Marketing Actions to Customer Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion." *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 51, 174-197.

Five Years of Arts Research Innovation

This summer marked the five-year anniversary of a remarkable union — the merging of DataArts and SMU's National Center for Arts Research. Staff members share some of their favorite research projects that they helped produce.

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More often than not, research within the arts sector tends to associate relevance and impact with size and growth. I appreciate the *Alchemy of High Performing Arts Organizations: A Spotlight on Organizations of Color* because it allows us to delve deeper into organizations of color and learn more about their impact within their communities.

— Monica Lewis, Engagement Manager

"

I recall how terrifying the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic was watching the bottom drop out of the live arts and cultural economy as organizations shuttered to protect their community and one another. *In It for the Long Haul* took stock of where the non-profit arts economy stood about 3 months into the pandemic and provided a framework for the sector to move beyond the crisis.

Rachelle Brisson, Events and Engagement Coordinator

"

Our emerging research using machine learning models for evaluating grantmaking opens new areas of exploration that show promise for improving equity, accuracy, and efficiency in grantmaking while also furthering computer science research in machine learning through the use of unique data about the arts and culture sector.

Daniel Fonner, Associate Director for Research

Research Spotlight: Navigating Pandemic Recovery in Chicago

SMU DataArts partnered with the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE) to produce Navigating Recovery, a first look at the health of many of the city's arts and cultural organizations before, during, and emerging from the pandemic. The project attempted to synthesize as much data as possible to understand a spectrum of trends from 2019 to 2022 for a diverse spectrum of Chicago arts and cultural organizations.

The key findings from this analysis illuminated challenges and bright spots, sparking a city-wide discussion, facilitated by DCASE and local leaders, about the future of the performing arts.

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> This report represents the first comprehensive look at the health of the city's arts and cultural organizations before, during and emerging from the pandemic.
>
> Erin Harkey, Commissioner, Chicago DCASE

read the report

Looking Ahead – 2024 Research Topics

Small Arts Organizations Landscape Analysis	Describing the landscape of very small arts organizations and the experiences of their leaders.
Federal COVID-19 Relief Funding	Tracking the flow of federally distributed COVID-19 relief funding and understanding funding outcomes in 11 communities.
Workforce Inclusion	Probing connections between demographics, equity, and inclusion in the arts and culture workforce.
Arts Vibrancy from New Angles	Understanding connections between arts vibrancy and infrastructure; examining vibrancy in rural areas and among states.
Arts Employment	Exploring arts employment and pay statistics to understand what makes for a good arts job.
The Arts and Livability	Exploring the connections between the scale and health of nonprofit arts and culture institutions and quality of life, civic engagement, and economic conditions in communities.

"

As I get to know the culture at SMU DataArts, I find the learning-centered orientation of this team to be remarkable. My colleagues truly value "purposeful disruption" that points us in new directions around what we measure, how we gather data, the kinds of tools we offer, and the ways in which we share insights out with the field. I look forward to learning with the team as we launch some truly fascinating arts research inquiries in 2024.

Jen Benoit-Bryan, Ph.D.

Joined SMU DataArts as Research Director this year

Data Tools

New Tools Enabled by Data Integration

SMU DataArts integrates data from our Cultural Data Profile with other high-quality data sources to research the arts ecosystem. In addition, we have leveraged it to create two tools that help organizations better understand their audiences and markets, powered by our partnership with TRG Arts and their Arts & Culture Benchmark.
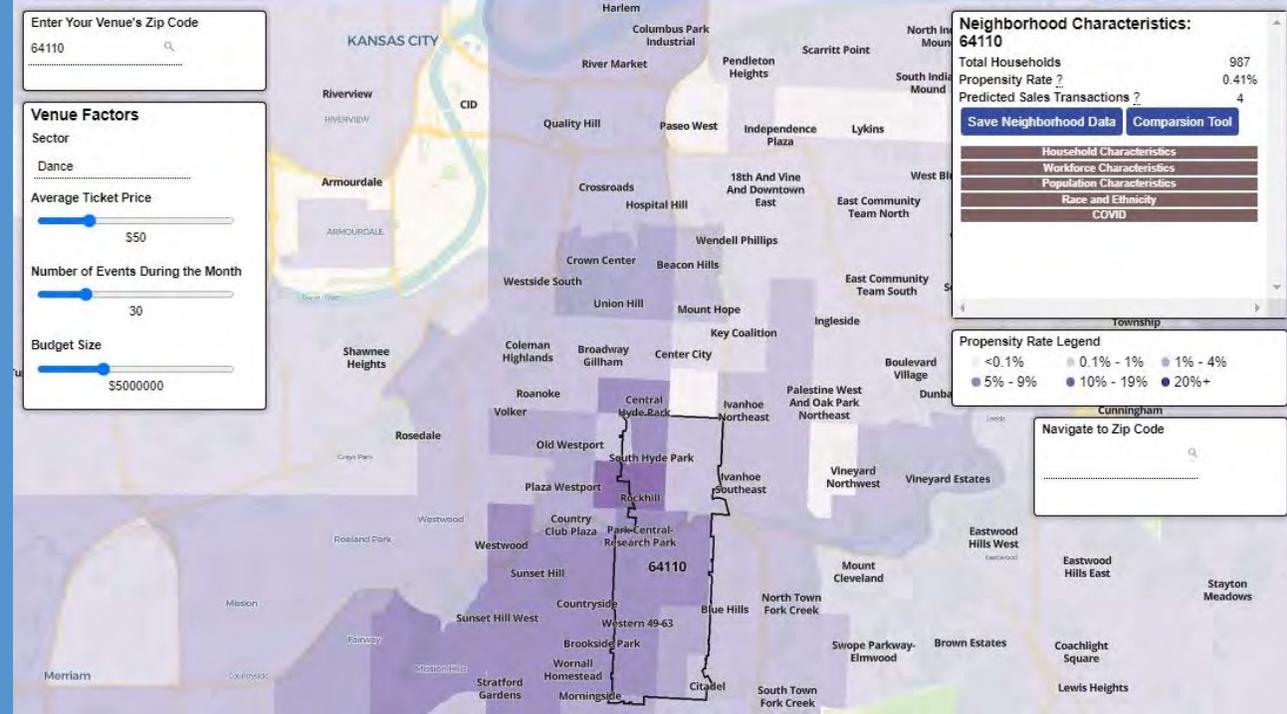
The **Market Intelligence Dashboard (MID)**, which provides arts leaders with purchasing likelihood and demographic data to support marketing, engagement, and audience development, is currently available in Kansas City via our partnership with ArtsKC.

Our in-development **audience demographics analysis** methodology uses address data from ticket buyers alongside census data to estimate audience demographics with greater accuracy and less burden than direct audience surveys. An initial group of organizations piloted the tool this year through a partnership with Chicago DCASE.

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At KC Melting Pot Theatre we have a very diverse audience with the greatest population from the Black community. We needed data-driven insights to understand what part of the city patrons were coming from to develop a marketing strategy that maximized our limited marketing funds.

With the introduction to the MID, we've gained the ability to analyze zip code demographics, identify similar neighborhoods, assess potential ticket sales, gauge income levels, gauge how far people are likely to travel and pinpoint effective advertising outlets.

This has allowed us to craft a targeted marketing strategy, which we continue to build based on the information we can now access through the MID.

Linda Williams, ArtsKC and KC Melting Pot Theatre

Press & Testimonials

SMU DataArts in the Press

With over 60 press mentions in local and national outlets this year, we are amplifying the story of the sector in the press.

Headline generating research

Our report on the distribution of Federal COVID-19 relief funding was covered on NPR's *All things Considered*.

Our report on navigating pandemic recovery in Chicago generated extensive coverage in the local area including articles in the *Chicago Sun-Times* and *Chicago Tribune*, an interview with local NPR station WBEZ, and coverage in *American Theatre* about the specific experiences of BIPOC-led organizations.

Positive coverage for local arts communities

Our annual list of the top 40 most arts-vibrant communities was featured in over 36 print, tv, and radio outlets, exemplified by articles from *Cincinnati CityBeat* and Pittsburgh's NPR affiliate WESA. This coverage provides advocacy and recognition for local arts communities.

Contributions to data-informed arts journalism

Our research team provided perspective and input to multiple articles about the state of the arts and nonprofit sectors, including pieces in *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*, *American Theatre*, and *Broadway World*.

"

It is encouraging to know the great variety of minds and perspectives that are going into collecting and evaluating data on the arts. The arts are something that should be ingrained in a society, and accessible to all, and I believe that SMU DataArts is a part of a movement towards this.

Rachel Flood Page, Arts for Learning Massachusetts

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SMU DataArts is our 'go to' resource on data and trends related to arts and culture. The heat maps and county data, in particular, provides data that is otherwise unattainable in many of our predominantly rural communities - and is a valuable tool when trying to discuss arts and culture with non-sector stakeholders.

Mary Bevans Gillett, Northwest Michigan Arts & Culture Network

2023 BY THE NUMBERS

RESEARCH AND INSIGHTS

12
COMPLETED PROJECTS

7
REPORTS AND ARTICLES

9
RESEARCHERS, FELLOWS AND DATA SCIENTISTS

ENGAGEMENT

35
★ ★ ★ ★ ★
ONLINE PRESENTATIONS

2,169
PRESENTATION ATTENDEES

153K
WEBSITE VISITS

DATA COLLECTION

3,487
COMPLETED
CULTURAL DATA PROFILES

7
DATA SETS INTEGRATED
INTO OUR SECTOR MODEL

2
WORKFORCE
DEMOGRAPHIC STUDIES

Thank You to Our Major Contributors

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ArtsKC

Donna M. Wilhelm

National Endowment for the Arts

Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events

One Chicago Fund

Mass Cultural Council

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Arizona Community Foundation

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