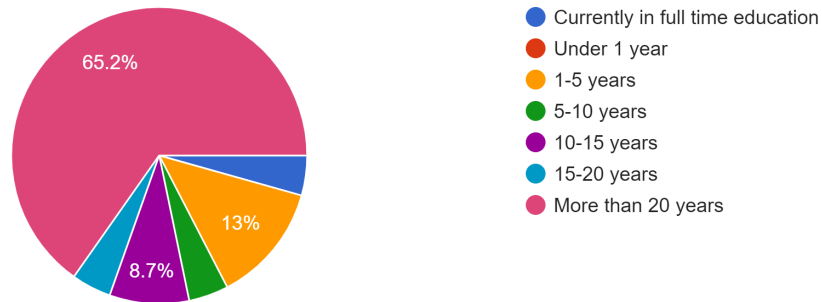# Needs Analysis for Co. Donegal
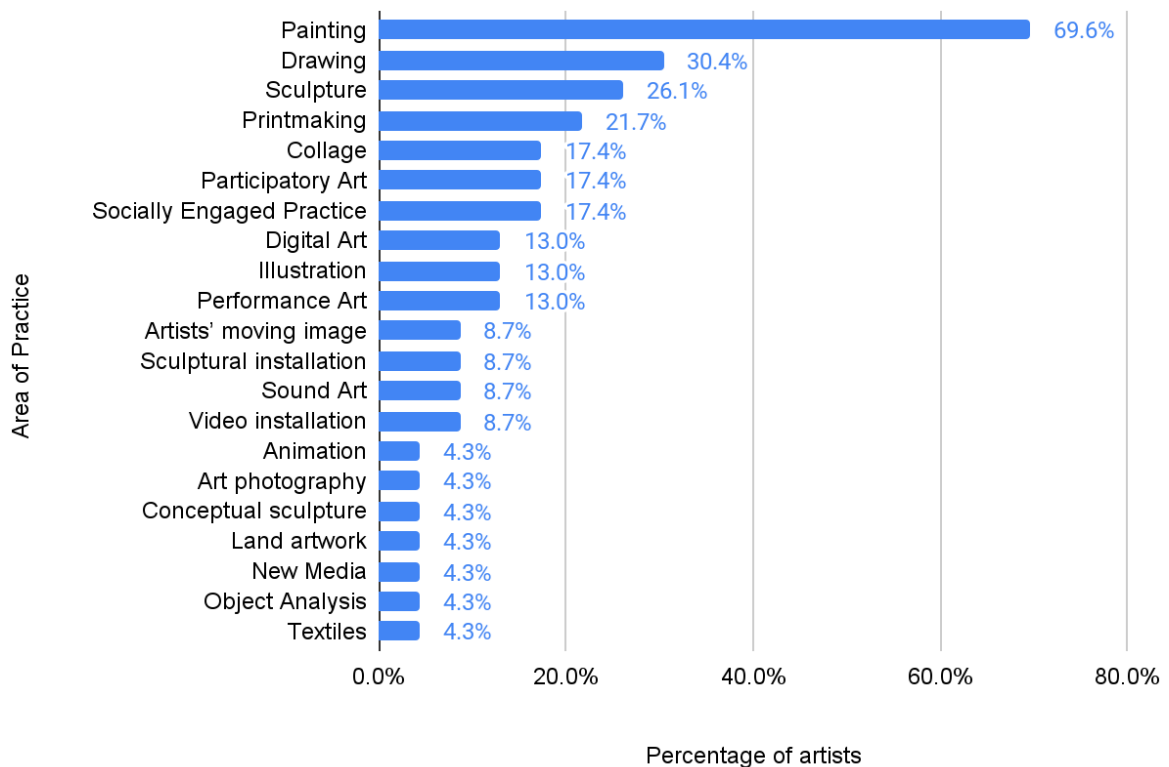
- Number of online responses: 23
- Number of attendees at online cafe: 30

Length of time practicing
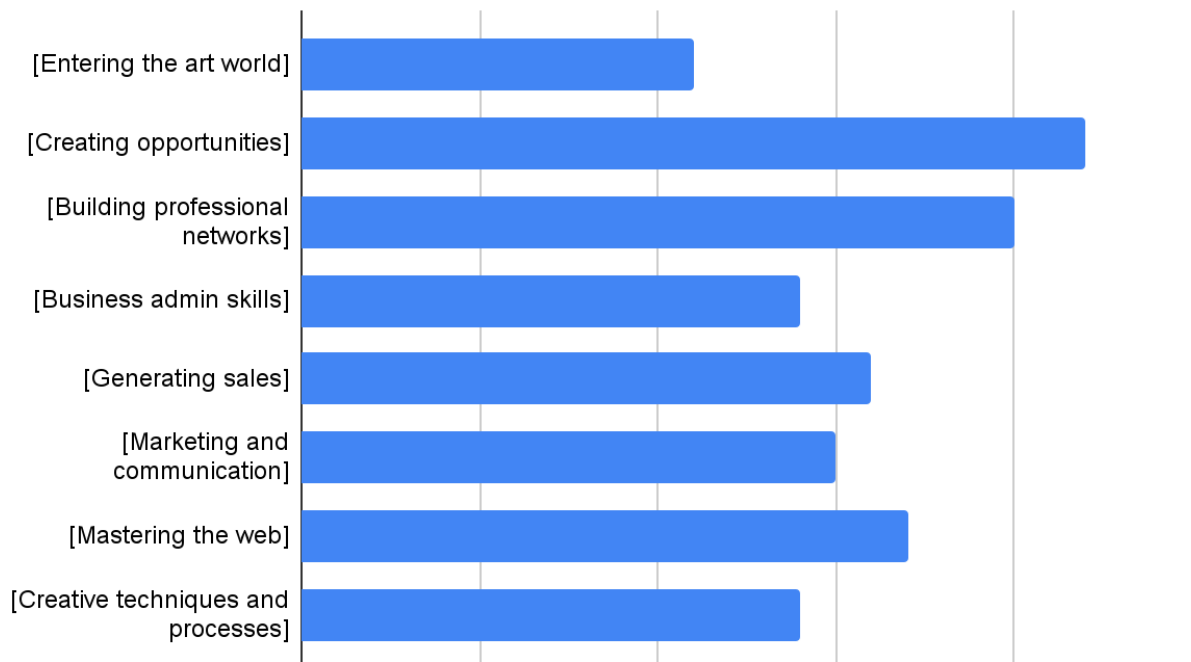23 responses

- Currently in full time education
- Under 1 year
- 1-5 years
- 5-10 years
- 10-15 years
- 15-20 years
- More than 20 years

65.2%
13%
8.7%

Area of Practice

Area of Practice	Percentage of artists
Painting	69.6%
Drawing	30.4%
Sculpture	26.1%
Printmaking	21.7%
Collage	17.4%
Participatory Art	17.4%
Socially Engaged Practice	17.4%
Digital Art	13.0%
Illustration	13.0%
Performance Art	13.0%
Artists' moving image	8.7%
Sculptural installation	8.7%
Sound Art	8.7%
Video installation	8.7%
Animation	4.3%
Art photography	4.3%
Conceptual sculpture	4.3%
Land artwork	4.3%
New Media	4.3%
Object Analysis	4.3%
Textiles	4.3%

Note: artists were able to indicate more than one area of practice.

Training & Skills

Higher numbers indicate greater need.

Top ten requested subjects for VAI during 2021 (884 responses)

1. How to write funding applications
2. Artist talks
3. Building professional networks
4. Approaching and working with curators
5. Approaching and working with galleries
6. E-Commerce
7. Making a website (practical)
8. Revenue & Tax
9. Social Media
10. Writing proposals

Jamboard from the needs analysis cafe

Skills, training and professional development

visual artists ireland — The Representative Body for Visual Artists in Ireland supporting artists at all stages of their careers

- Applying for funding
- basic income for artists
- How to set up an instagram shop
- Maria: Social enterprise: Rewilding Imagination
- Share skills between members of Donegal artist network

- Proposal writing - opportunities
- anxiety around income and funding and benefits
- How to build a website
- when you bring people together you can be very successful
- online promotion - how to attract viewers to your website

- Digital Promotion
- Need for a webinar (or sets of clinics) to inform artists about their entitlements with regard to social welfare, self employment, tax etc
- How to set up a shop on your website
- One on One sessions / Clinics
- Ways to engage local audiences
- and the RCC ran a number of these pre covid. They where a great insight into other artists work and their practices, also you area meeting other artist. Maybe a few talks could be held in different parts of the county to

- funding, local authority, bursary
- How to promote yourself
- how to get reviews of your work
- portfolio reviews - feedback on your work

Summary

The three most urgent areas of development as identified by our survey are:

- Creating opportunities
- Building professional networks
- Mastering the web

These areas are broadly reflected by our wider 2021 research from across ROI and NI, and were also reflected in the jamboard we used at the Needs Analysis event.

| Creating Opportunities	Building professional networks	Mastering the web
● Applying for funding ● Approaching curators ● Approaching galleries ● Writing proposals	● 1-to-1 sessions & clinics ● Developing local peer networks	● eCommerce ● Building a website ● Online marketing / building online audiences ● Social media

Support Infrastructure

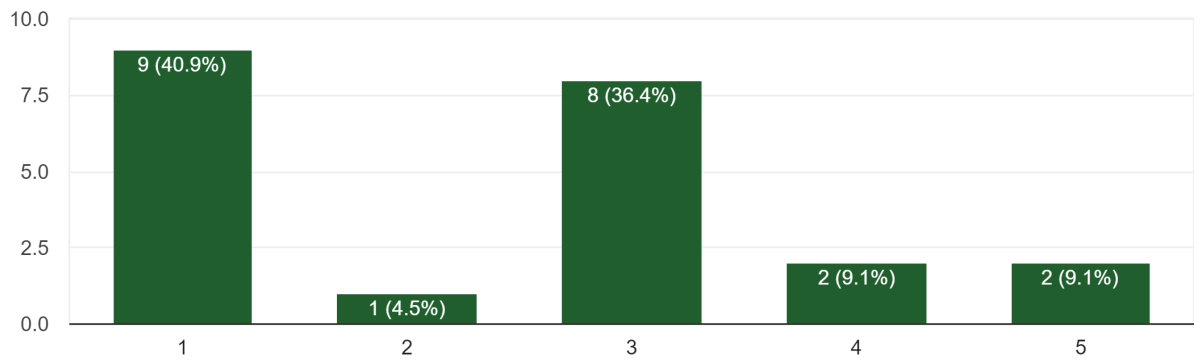1 = Strongly disagree
5 = Strongly agree
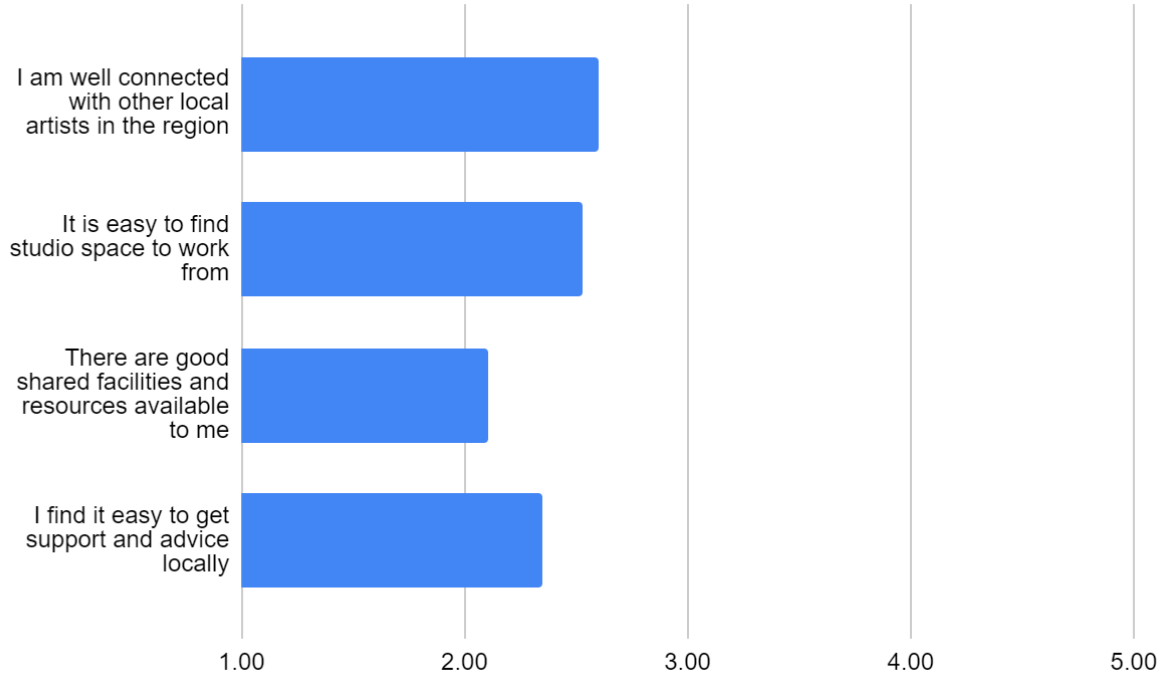
Detailed breakdown

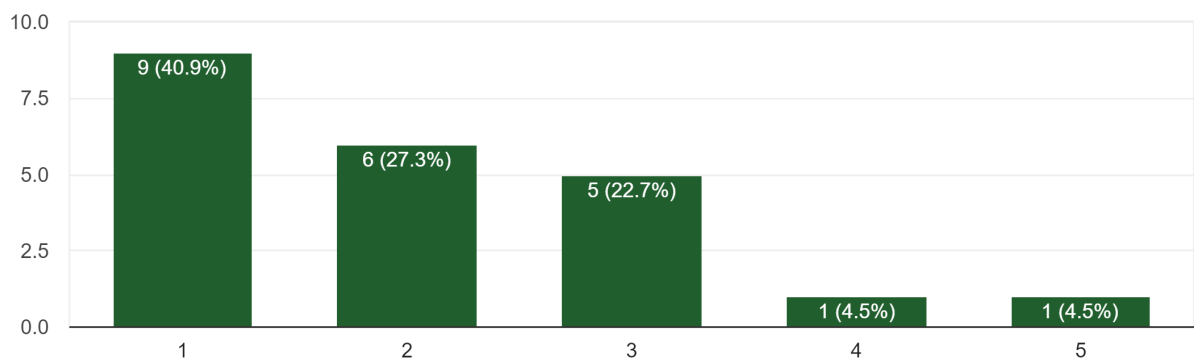### I am well connected with other local artists in the region
23 responses
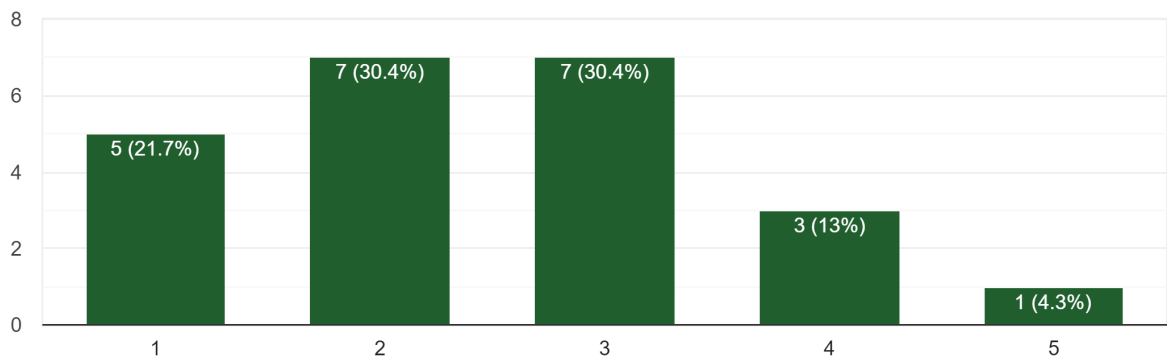
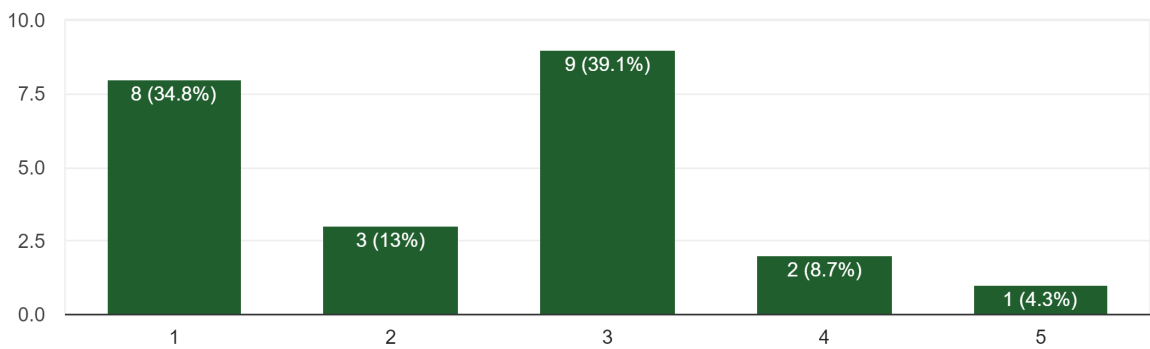## It is easy to find studio space to work from

22 responses

Bar chart:
- 1: 9 (40.9%)
- 2: 1 (4.5%)
- 3: 8 (36.4%)
- 4: 2 (9.1%)
- 5: 2 (9.1%)

There are good shared facilities and resources available to me

22 responses

Bar chart:
- 1: 9 (40.9%)
- 2: 6 (27.3%)
- 3: 5 (22.7%)
- 4: 1 (4.5%)
- 5: 1 (4.5%)

I find it easy to get support and advice locally

23 responses

Bar chart:
- 1: 8 (34.8%)
- 2: 3 (13%)
- 3: 9 (39.1%)
- 4: 2 (8.7%)
- 5: 1 (4.3%)

Jamboard from the needs analysis cafe

Other supports and resources

A network to put on group shows, apply for project funding

A network to have regular catch up with other artists, support each others shows

A network to share options to meet visiting curators

Need to revive the Donegal Artists Network (established by Eilis Lavelle a few years ago before she moved to Kilkenny)

An artist forum would help give visibility to artists who may be working form home studios in remote areas. It would also help to enhance the impression of Donegal as a place to maintain a vibrant art practice

a chance to have regular meet ups, for coffee and cake!

An artist forum would also allow the pooling of resources - if specific training was needed, it could be shared among the group etc

An online network /hub, that allows artists to contact each other ... a social platform

A network to create opportunities to work with other artists

A place where artists can meet

Online directory of artists

Facilities needed: more affordable studios

Facilities needed: print facilities

need for a centre like Leitrim Sculpture Centre in Donegal that offers support, studio space and workshops to artists

Something like Leitrim Sculpture Centre would be great

Something like Hambley & Hambley

Need a place to run workshops that has good facilities

There are lots of empty shops that could be accessed

Need places to sell work.

Travel in donegal is difficult and a barrier to connecting artists in person

We need places where the general public can engage with artists directly

A local directory would be great, centralised information to find photographers, suppliers etc

Need for studios, especially places with facilities to make large work, or with printmaking facilities

Local Hands in Ballyshannon is great, would be good to see a network of spaces like that across Donegal

VAI visual artists ireland

presentative Body
ual Artists in Ireland
ting artists at all
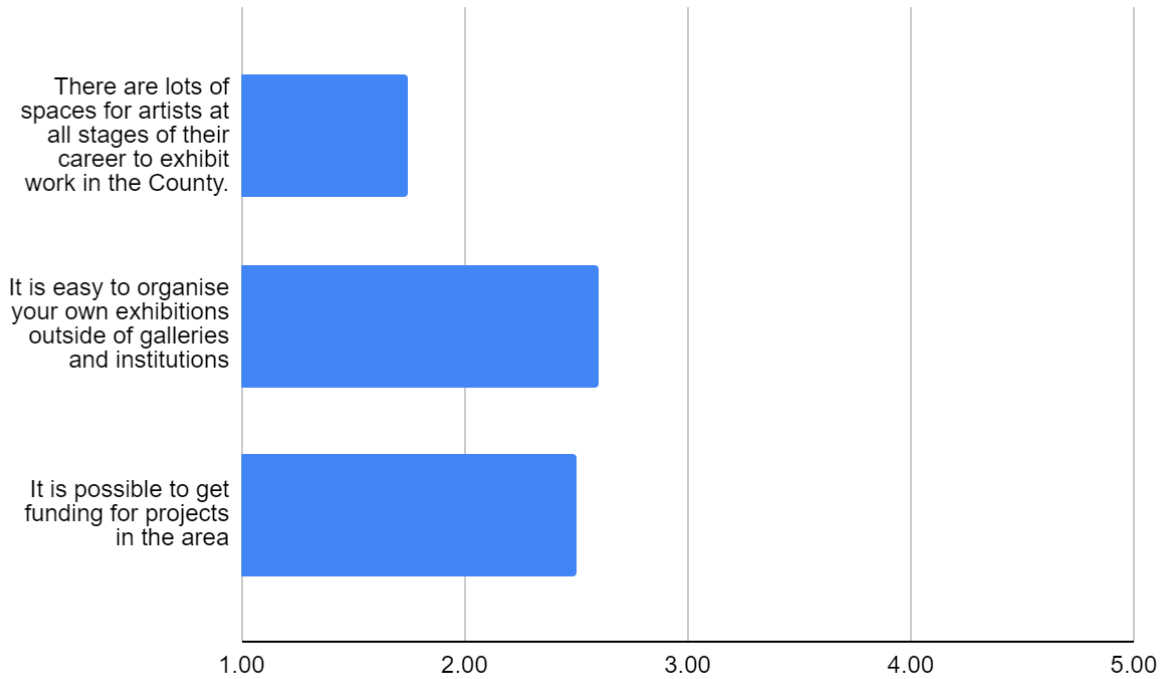of their careers

Summary

Artists indicated that they felt local support infrastructure needed improving. The biggest area of need was access to shared physical resources such as printmaking facilities and studio space. There was also discussion around the potential of a network of creative hubs across the county where artists could meet, run workshops, and hold exhibitions.
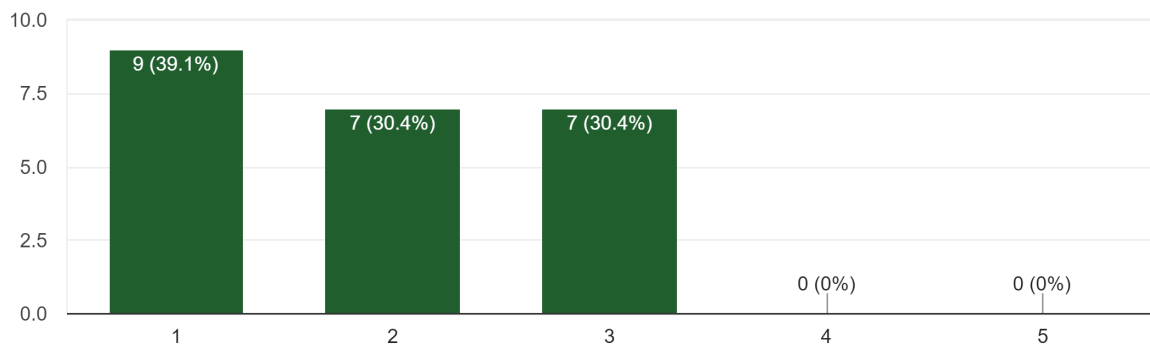
Exhibition Opportunities

1 = Strongly disagree
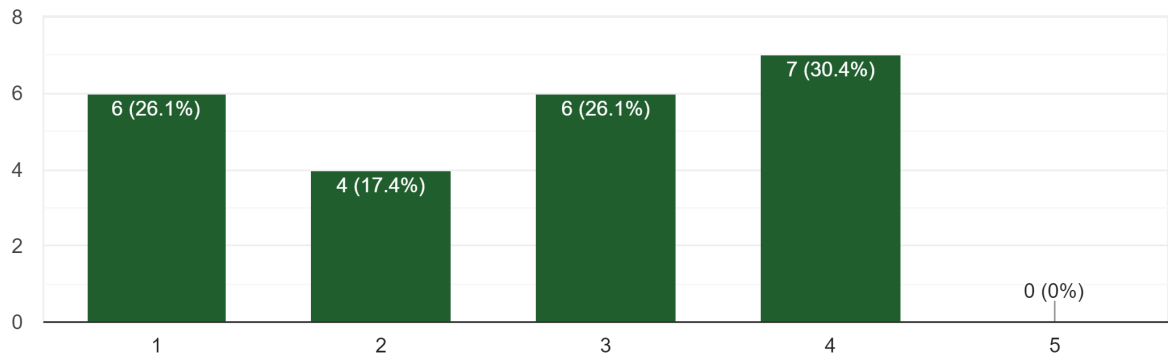5 = Strongly agree

Detailed breakdown

There are lots of spaces for artists at all stages of their career to exhibit work in the County.
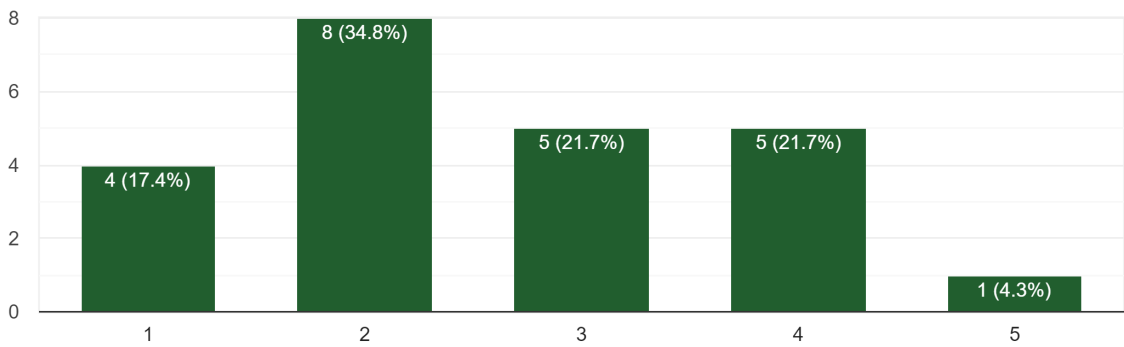23 responses

It is easy to organise your own exhibitions outside of galleries and institutions

23 responses

It is possible to get funding for projects in the area

23 responses

Jamboard from the needs analysis cafe

Opportunities to exhibit work

VAI visual artists ireland — The Representative Body for Visual Artists in Ireland supporting artists at all stages of their careers

- Need a list of what spaces are actually available to exhibit in
- No dedicated art space that belongs to artists (even ArtLink have to let their space from a military museum)
- annual group exhibition, inclusive
- organise group online exhibitions
- Pop up exhibitions during the summer to sell to tourists
- Look to Hambley & Hambley as an example
- Cross border? For today focus on Donegal
- Focus on inclusivity - bring the general audiences in, involve them
- Galleries that exist already: Artlink Dunree, Garden of Reflection in Derry, RCC, Letterkenny, Foyer of Abbey Arts Centre, Ballyshannon, An Grainann Theatre, Letterkenny, The Glebe Gallery Churchill, An Gailearaí, Gortahork.
- missing – a free space non censored!
- We noted the lack of artist-led spaces in Donegal is probably due to the lack of recent graduates living in the region
- Pop up? Outside the gallery? First fortnight festival, cafe blend (not open)
- Take group stall in Art Fairs eg. Art Source
- Places to sell work are important, not just exhibit
- need artist led spaces with studios attached
- It was noted that many of the art centres are well regarded by local artists, who perceive the staff as being very approachable about proposals from artists
- pop up exhibitions advertised on Facebook Ian Gordon
- Art Car Boot Sale
- Permanent spaces to exhibit could be supplemented by annual temporary events like outdoor markets
- Opportunities for more traditional practices
- First fortnight run an annual series of arts events and talks
- there's not studio groups in Donegal or hub
- More smaller spaces would be good
- Existing spaces are great, but need for other types of spaces for emerging/mid career artists

Summary

Whilst respondents did indicate that there were not enough spaces to exhibit across the county, they did suggest that it was not impossible to find places to exhibit outside of galleries and institutions, and that there was funding available to help do this.

There were suggestions in the discussions for regular pop up events, to both exhibit and sell work. Most discussion focussed on the need for more local places to exhibit work and there was less discussion about promoting Donegal-based artists outside of the county.

Findings

Much of the discussion was centred on the idea of building the Donegal Artists Network. Some of the key ideas that were suggested were:

- It could exist as an online platform

- There could be an online directory of artists

- There could be regular physical meet-ups

- It could be a way of disseminating information and signposting to other local supports (through digital tools such as social media or a mailing list)

- There could be a network of physical spaces (galleries, studios, hubs etc) across the county. Individual spaces could be highlighted in turn and made the 'space of the month'

- There could be regular events in established spaces

- There could be regular pop up events

In terms of skills development and training needs, the needs of artists in Co. Donegal were broadly in line with those of artists across the island of Ireland. The main thrust of this was centred on how artists can become more self-sustainable, especially in the current climate of reduced opportunities to engage with the general public because of COVID.

With that in mind much of the discussion focussed on using digital and online tools to show and sell work. This included portfolio websites, social media tools, digital marketing and online shop platforms.

There was also some weighty discussion around using one-to-one sessions to help build professional relationships. This could take the form of meetings with curators and other professionals or with fellow artists (peer crits etc).

There was some discussion about the need for basic business skills such as filing tax returns, and there was some discussion around the upcoming basic income for artists.

One thing to note is that VAI have a large archive of recordings available for members on our website. This can be found at https://visualartists.ie/members-area/webinars-recordings/

Lastly, in terms of physical infrastructure, it was clear that there is a need for more shared artist studios. These not only can act as workspace for individual artists, but also as a place to meet, share ideas, skills and information.