

The Metaverse and the arts

At the 2022

AMA Conference

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A word from HdK

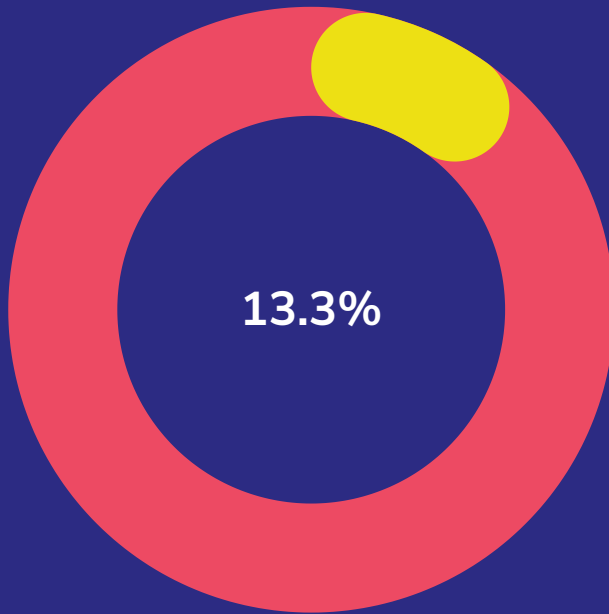
The concept of the Metaverse has been buzzing around for some time now. We became interested in how rapidly developing technologies will impact the arts and culture sector.

So, we put it to our network. We asked over 100 arts marketers including many AMA members to give their opinions on all things Metaverse.

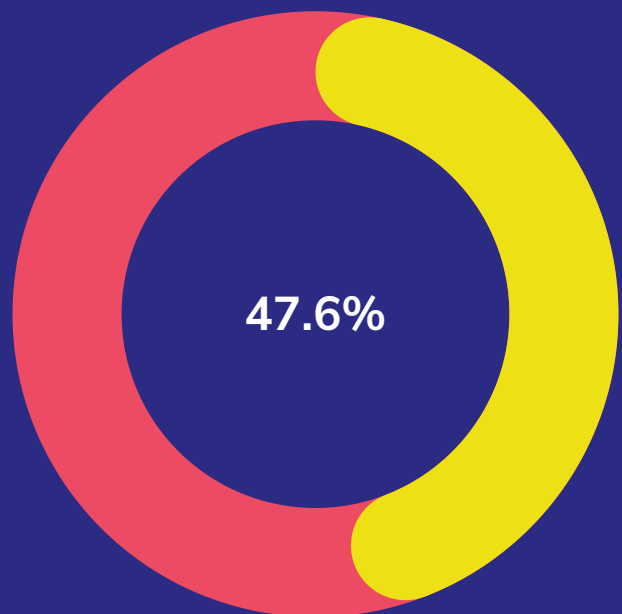
At the time of writing this, the Metaverse may be a buzzword but it's certainly not a part of everyone's vocabulary. What we are sure of is it has the potential to impact the ways we interact with arts experiences on a regular basis.

Over to the voice of the people for a sense check on how the Metaverse and the arts might intersect, and how we are all feeling about it.

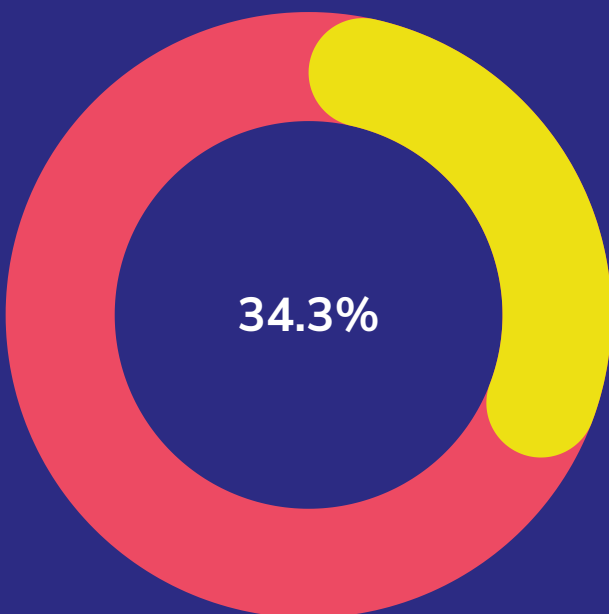
How well do you understand the Metaverse?



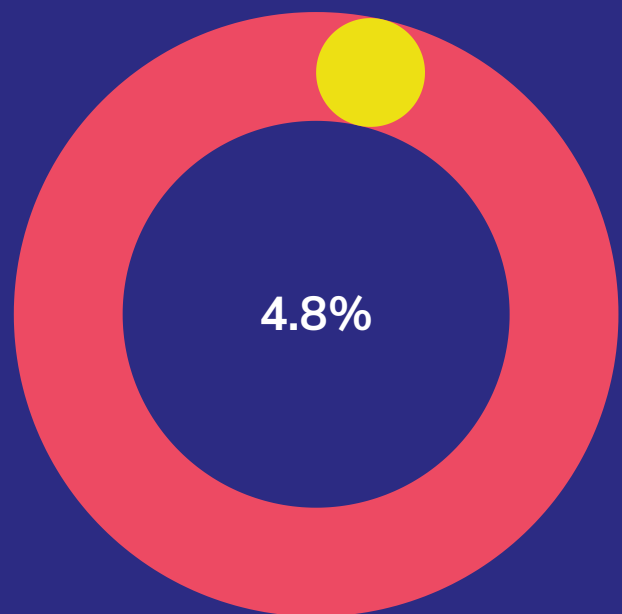
I understand it and can describe it to others



I think I understand it but might not be able to describe it to others

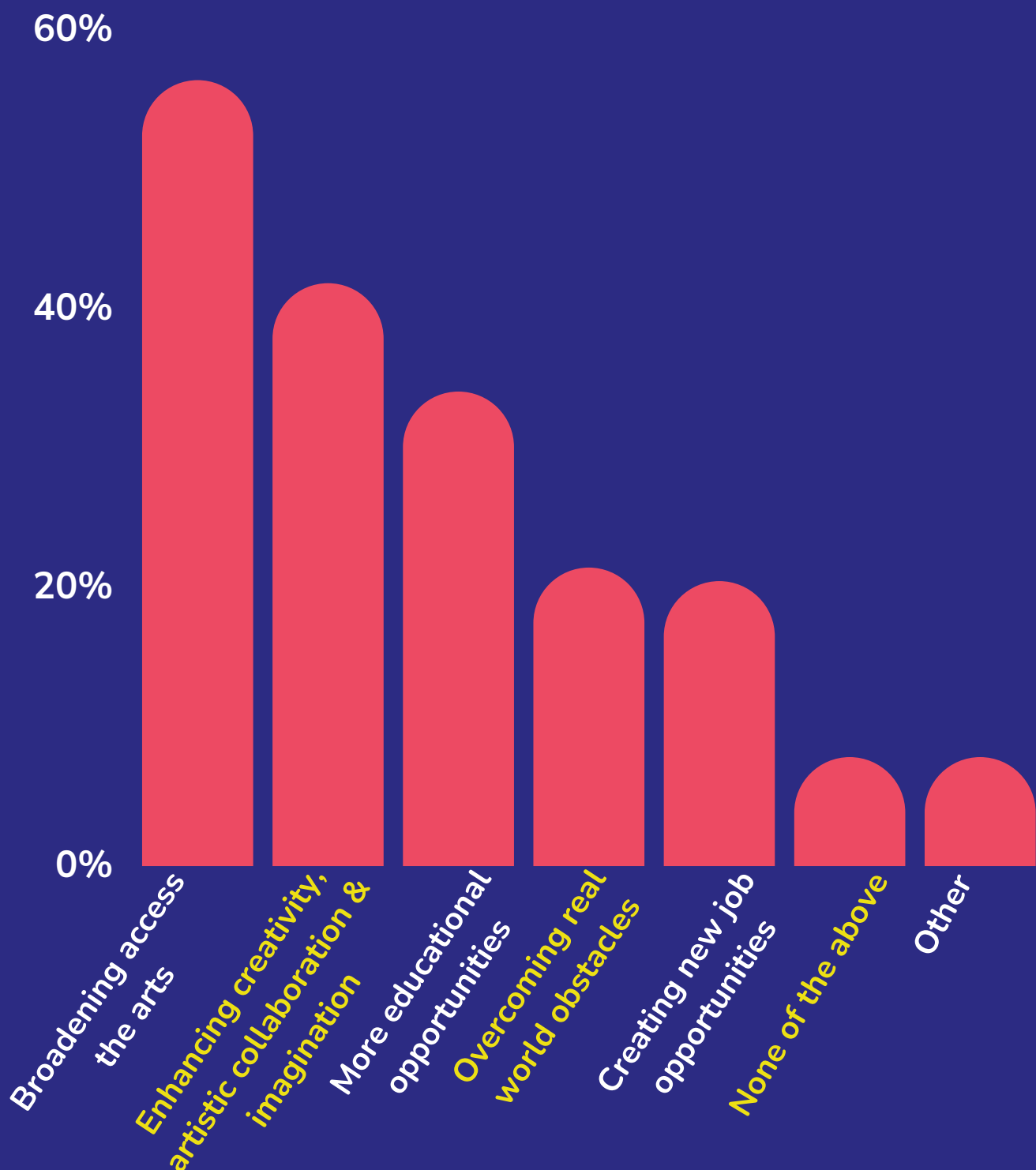


I have heard of the Metaverse but not sure what it means



I've never heard of the Metaverse

Which of the following do you see as being the biggest benefit of the Metaverse to the arts and cultural sector?



What do you see as the largest limitations to your organisation or client's use of the Metaverse?

22.86% Difficulty translating what the organisation/client offers with the technology

20.95% Questions around ROI

17.14% Our audiences have limited knowledge of the technology

11.43% Other*

9.52% Changes to technology are too fast paced to keep up with

5.71% Negative sentiment about the technology

4.76% Perception that it lacks a real world touch

2.86% Platforms and hardware are not user-friendly

2.86% Lack of interest amongst organisation/clients

1.9% None of the above

What do you see as the largest limitations to your organisation or client's use of the Metaverse?

11.43% Other

The technology is not as advanced as the media is portraying it

Lack of budget to invest in such technology. Money needs to be used sparingly, particularly post-covid

It will be a niche application within a niche interest

Lack of capacity and budget to add another technology to our to-do list

Cost

Unknown

No idea

Which of the following would you consider prioritising with the organisation you work for or the clients and brands you work with?

35.29%

Hosting live artistic outputs in the Metaverse in order to reach new audiences

24.51%

Running ads/marketing campaigns in the Metaverse

15.69%

Having an event in the Metaverse (first night reception, launch event, discussions, etc.)

9.80%

None of the above

7.84%

Purchasing a virtual space for exhibitions, performances, events

4.90%

Other

0.98%

Buying virtual office space for meetings

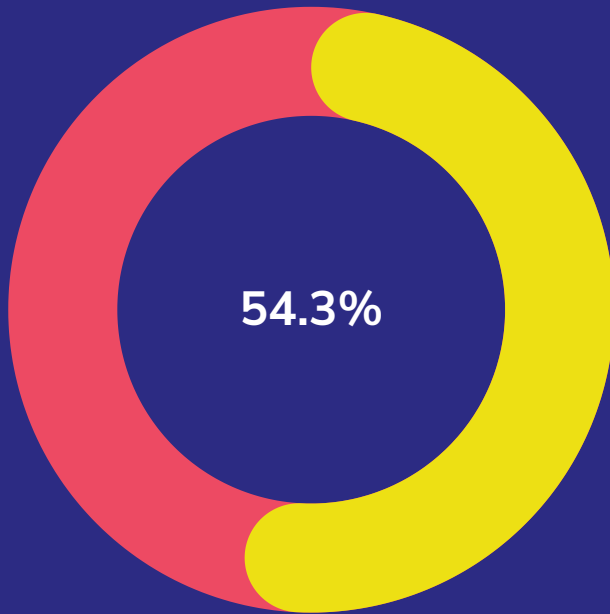
0%

Accepting cryptocurrency

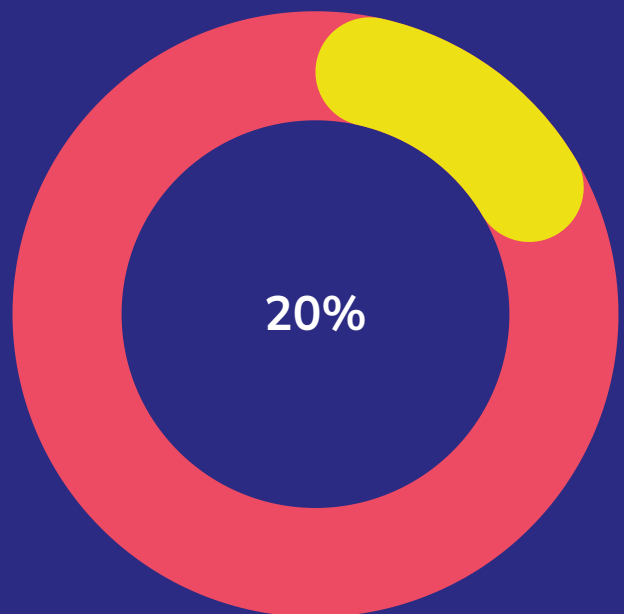
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Producing branded NFTs or tokenizing products

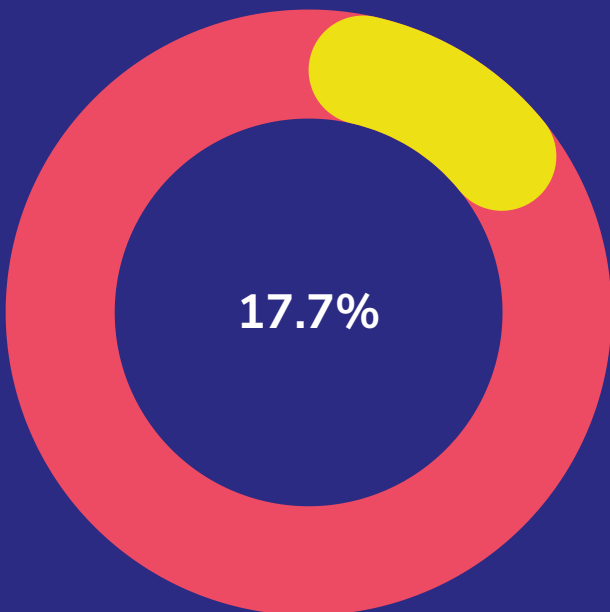
What impact do you think the Metaverse will have on Arts Marketing in the future?



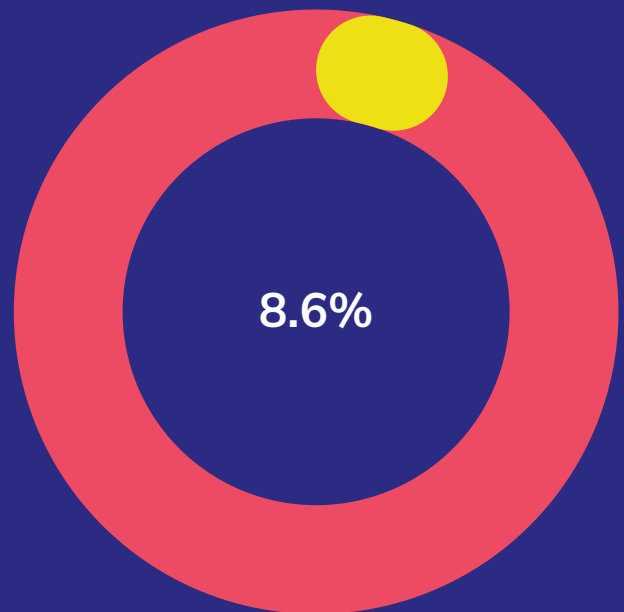
Not Sure



Neutral

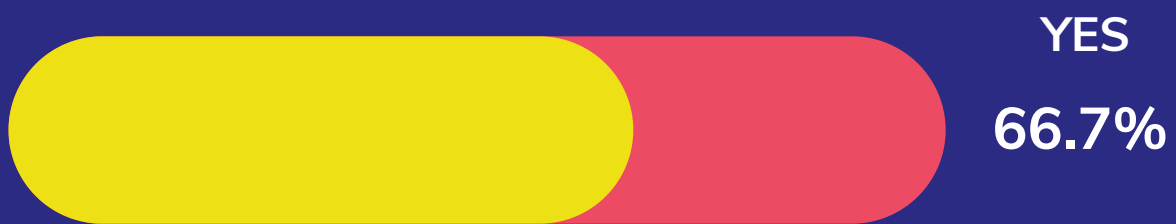


Positive



Negative

Has this survey inspired you to learn more about the Metaverse's potential for arts marketing?



If you can, write your own
description of what you currently
understand the Metaverse to be



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Operating in a virtual world, much like the real world, whereby one can interact, discuss, meet, do business, see parts of the world they wouldn't normally be able to see/experience and discover new things. Moving the internet from a place to get information into a place to share with others

A digital framework that incorporates all aspects of communication and finance

The Metaverse is a virtual space. Chat room 3.0. It includes digital buildings/venues which can be constructed (and sold/rented) with avatars. These spaces will be connected allowing avatars to access - some free, others paid for access. Currently the Metaverse does not exist. They are independent closed systems

Multi-platform virtual space for networked relationships, and working

A virtual world

All is digital with huge social media outputs. It feels like smoke and mirrors. It only works for the very young and I am not sure how much real impact it has

A blend of existing social platforms with virtual reality? Facebook but supposedly more interactive?

Virtual alternative universe? I have read articles but still find it hard to understand. And a lot of what I have read has been about negative implications (prevalence of racism & sexual assault in the metaverse for example)

An expansion of our concept of reality to also include our virtual lives

Web three, a space in which characters can interact, a new place in which to own property and buy and sell space. A construction of a digital world

Online world where you interact with people in real-time in real-life situations and swap files etc while moving around the space and into private break out rooms etc. It's as if you were in the building, but you're not!

Why go to the theatre when you can go to a space time continuum?

Another phase of the digital world we already have - this one more interactive, more experience led and motivated by the desire to connect more meaningfully

Shared online space with multiple users interacting with the same event eg. Minecraft

Virtual world

Place for people to do any everyday normal activity online

The wild west

An online platform with extensive capabilities to offer work and leisure alternatives to IRL enabling potential to develop cross-border relationships, and communities

The digital world and potential global (universal!) reach to everything

A digital reality or meeting space, like Second Life or the Sims

Advanced technology incorporated into your marketing strategy and subsequently delivered to your audiences

A digital space where people can interact with each other, explore spaces and have experiences, all online using VR

A platform or space mimicking existing traditional events, paintings / objects or activities but in a virtual or non-physical mode

A way of driving share prices for tech companies

The Metaverse is the Internet in 3D. Virtual reality and actual reality intersect to create interactive spaces in a virtual world. Additionally the virtual data of the internet/cloud engages with objects, information systems and communicates and further promotes human interaction with AI technology

A virtual reality space where one interacts with the digital world encompassing everything from purchasing art and to gaming and other experiences outside the real world

Online social platforms to share work and ideas as well as interacting digitally with others

A world where we can connect with each other virtually via VR

A virtual world that aims to replicate the 'real world' as closely as possible

No idea

I just thought it was Facebook's new company name

Virtual universe owned by Mark Zuckerberg

Immersive platform to share knowledge and experiences that can be complementary to these services in real life.

Living online

A virtual world. Singular internet. Social connection space

I have no idea and find it really scary

A bit scary, unknown, reminds me of 'the dark web'

A parallel virtual space that mirrors real world dynamics reachable from anywhere with the right kind of technology and economic status

In your own words, how do you imagine the Metaverse will most impact marketing in the arts and cultural sector?

I worry most arts organisations won't be able to compete in the Metaverse for a long time. The most likely application would be to use the Metaverse as a brand licensing opportunity - your building, performance or exhibition becomes content for the Metaverse. This could be another revenue stream for organisations.

Data on audience

Accessibility and disability

I think it will take a long time for the arts and cultural sector to catch up with the rest of society so the arts/cultural sector may even become dated.

Dead in the water

Open up the arts to new audiences. Allow marketing to those audiences in new exciting ways - literally in their living room sitting on the sofa with them...I imagine!

I think it will take a long time for the arts and cultural sector to catch up with the rest of society so the arts/cultural sector may even become dated.

There's bigger scope for immersive cultural experiences, and there are more possibilities for accessible experiences that are brought into audiences homes.

New markets

The Metaverse will create a totally new platform which will add and potentially (long term) override the social media platforms that now dominate marketing strategies. It will require 3D technology and immersive, and possibly interactive communications and increase the need for advanced digital and communications skills in the industry and financial investment. The full impact of the metaverse may not be felt for another 20 years when young people grow up in it. New technology always demands a new literacy.

Creative shows in imaginative spaces, or digital shows

It will be an entire new platform to get to grips with and with that an entire new audience. Learning how to harness that will be tricky.

It will employ more people to work in it but most that I have worked with are superficial thinkers which goes with the territory.

I think it's actually a really positive thing, it will bring creativity and technology together in a way that's never been done before.

It will broaden access to the highest tiers of the arts, which will make it harder for arts with only regional appeal or smaller budgets to succeed

Really not sure, advertising space perhaps. I have used Vortic's software before, which allows you to interact with an exhibition in a different way, so we could be using this in order to bring audiences closer to art in a way that isn't really allowed in reality.

I wonder if only the bigger organisations will take notice/try and incorporate it - I can imagine some organisations trying hard to make metaverse events happen but it not really taking off across the board

It will create more work and more technical innovation to try to keep up with!

It may open up the arts for those currently disengaged with experiencing arts in person

I think it will impact some arts sectors more than others. For example, in Theatre and Contemporary Music it might allow artists to be more creative, but in for example Classical Music, how would this be implemented? Could create even more of a divide between art forms with traditionally different aged audiences.

Make it more expensive but not sure it will change the effectiveness - social media hasn't

With hugely important questions about privacy

Modernising but isolating, will take time to implement

The metaverse could offer a pre-performance experience and enhance engagement assisting audience development and aiding participatory activities.

Create an area of exclusivity and will challenge organisations to reach another market with its own culture language and idiosyncrasies

Really not sure. I think people are still cynical of Facebook, so how well Metaverse will take off I just can't say. I already know artists/creative marketers who are taking an active interest in it, but my concern is that- as with any new technological development- it is likely to replicate the inequalities we already experience and see in the world around us.

I think, similar to current platforms, content will be key. If you can promote the experience of an exhibition or performance, this will only enhance an ad more - in a similar way to imagery and video.

I am concerned it is an additional expense that may not get a ROI until it is explored further

Adding another fast-paced platform to keep up with is going to put pressure on the sector especially given the investment involved compared to small budgets of arts and culture venues/organisations

New channels, new narratives, new storytelling

Another thing to work on that is ultimately making money for someone else.

New advertising channel New place to hold events over coming geographic boundaries

It will be yet another tool up our sleeves to either benefit or slow us down...

Although the possibilities are truly exciting, the Metaverse will make our marketing roles even more challenging. We are already well over capacity, and some of us are experiencing burnout. Learning new technology and needing to do more digital work will create further pressure and more work. In my experience, cultural organisation leaders do not understand the online world enough, making it a struggle to get enough resources to do our jobs properly. Small organisations don't have enough money to pay for extra staff to manage the digital world, so the whole burden can rest on the shoulders of a sole, part-time staff member, who is often in the marketing role.

I'm not sure it will impact the marketing, although it has potential to change the audience demographic - but it will almost certainly change what is being marketed

New advertising channel New place to hold events over coming geographic boundaries

At the moment I can't see it having much of an effect as there is so little understanding of it.

I think that digital is changing so rapidly and people's attention spans are getting shorter so I think in some aspects of arts marketing it will become more difficult to engage people in what we are doing and to get audiences to interact with the work in person as well as online.

It will provide a platform for testing ideas, promoting activities and brands and engaging with younger people.

Putting the power of word of mouth marketing into the virtual space

Negatively. Those who don't have the funds (freelancers) will be pushed out.

Do you have any other comments about the Metaverse?

VR worlds can quite easily make me feel a bit queasy, and I'm not sure how I'll do in surround VR environments. I also think many of us could do with more of the natural world, and not getting even more absorbed by the internet. So though I'd be totally up for experiments in this direction - if in a few years time we spend as much time in the metaverse as we now do on zoom - I would find that a bit of a dystopia.

I hate it

I feel a bit bamboozled by it but know it's something I need to get my head around!

Looking forward to seeing what will happen!

We desperately need regulation in this expanding realm, that protects those doing the right thing and using the space for good. With many large tech companies having the resources to exploit these spaces financially and US law (Safe Harbour provision) then they will never be held accountable and citizens will not have the power to be protected against harm.

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The biggest concern for clients is cost and reluctance to be an early adopter but then this moving too fast and it being too late to join

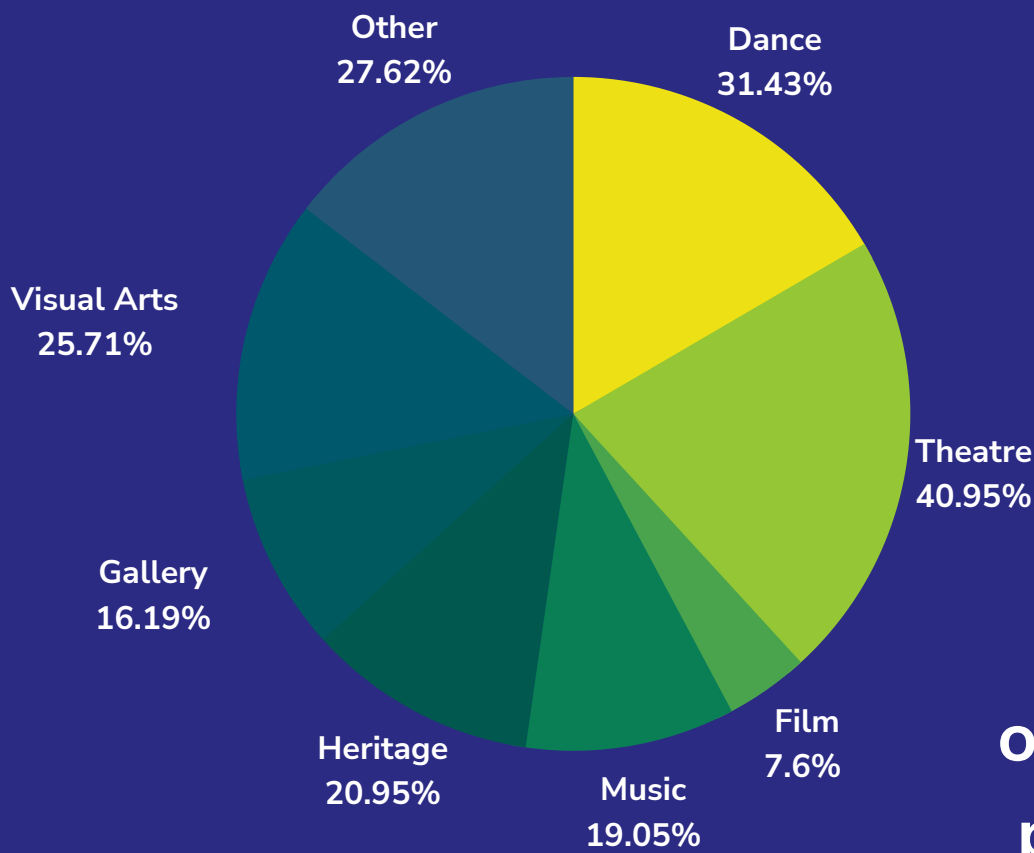
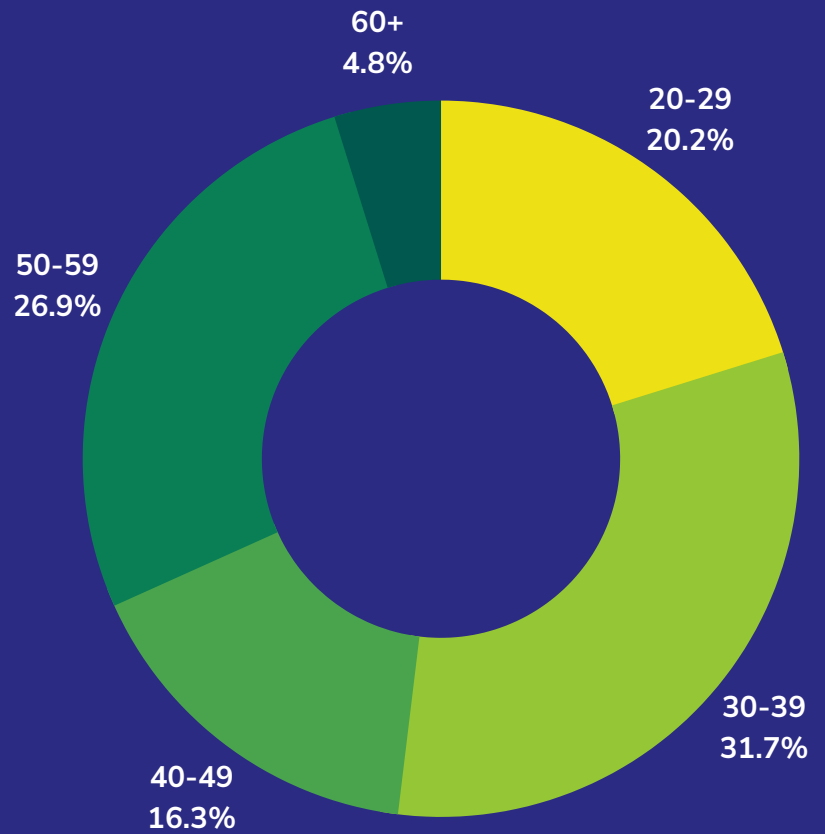
It's truly exciting, but we are a long way from having the technical knowledge to make the most of it, within the arts sector. It also relies heavily on tech that is not yet cheap and available enough (VR) and does have some health consequences for some members of society, for example more women than men experience motion sickness while using VR headsets.

Deeply suspicious

Early days - I hope they sort out some of the issues with it - privacy, social issues

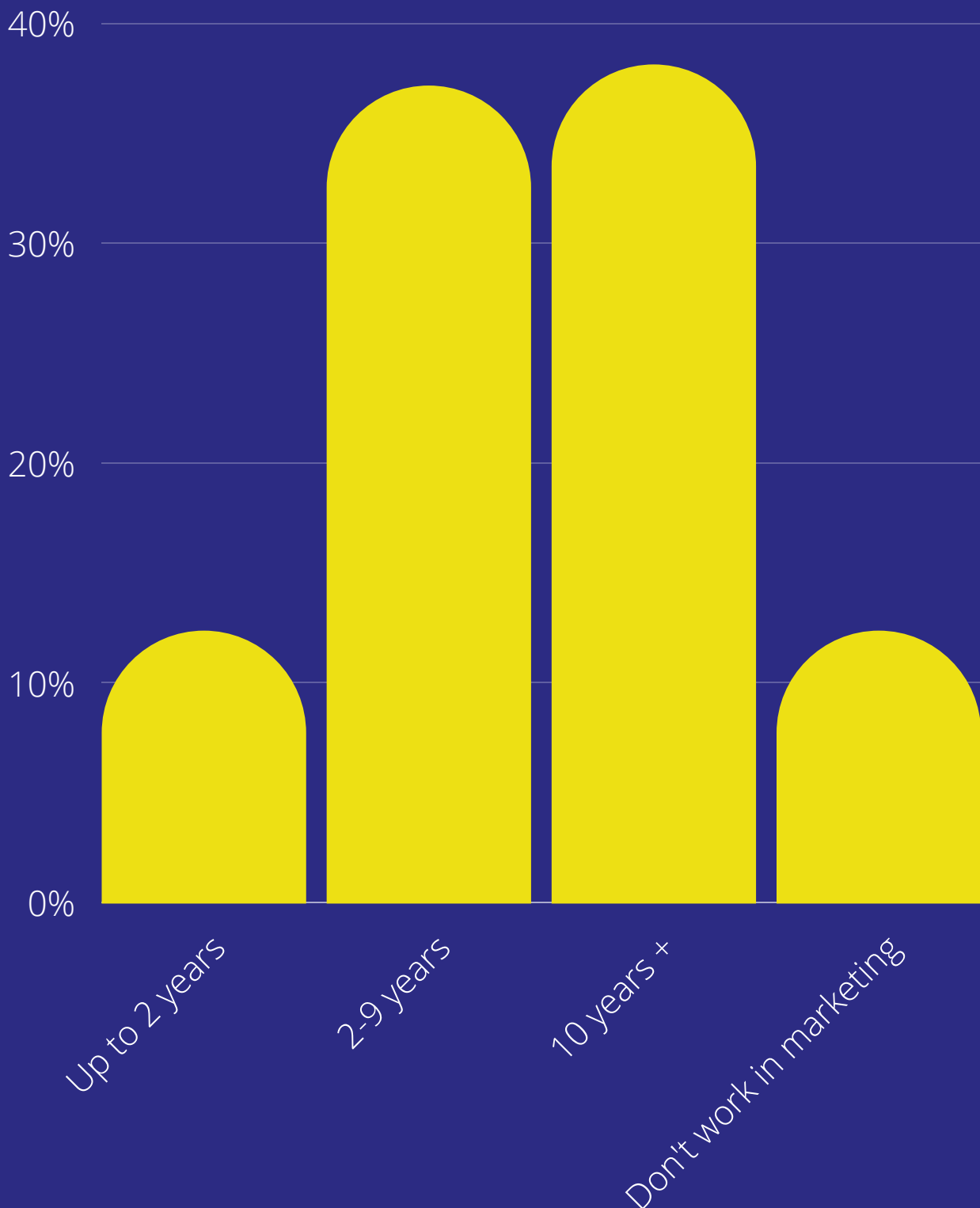
It's the future!

Participant Age



Type of organisation participants work with

Years worked in marketing in the arts, cultural and non-profit sectors



Metaverse Roundtable

Hans de Kretser

Jannick Moth

Tugay Topju

Miles Dorsey

Peter Klip

Research and Administration

Meg Edwards

Victoria Knights

Raf Malanga

Alexandra McDermott Brown

Kate McInnes

Olivia Ward

Danny Skahill

Phoebe Cleghorn

The logo consists of a white circle centered on a dark blue background. Inside the circle, the letters 'HdK' are written in a bold, dark blue, sans-serif font.

HdK