

# VISIBILITY MATTERS

## KIA KITEA NGĀ TOI E TE MAREA

### Arts and culture coverage, reporting and artist portrayal in New Zealand media

This study from Creative New Zealand Toi Aotearoa explores arts and culture media coverage, reporting, and artist portrayal in New Zealand media between 1 July 2021 and 30 June 2022. The report covers traditional media content (print, online and broadcast).

Our artists and creatives are our storytellers. They entertain, provoke and inspire us. Their work connects us, helps build our sense of identity, and is a source of national pride.

Visibility matters. The media is an important bridge between artists and the public — sharing the stories of our storytellers.

It is through media that this whakatoki can come to life:

#### **Kia kitea ngā toi e te marea — let the arts be seen by the masses**

As the arts development agency for Aotearoa, we thought it was important to get a sense of how the depth and breadth of creative activity is reflected in the media. Gathering data is the first step. It creates a benchmark to build from. By mapping the landscape, we can see where the gaps are and where the potential is — and where we can advocate to strengthen coverage and support media.

This study completed by Isentia provides a combination of data breakdowns and high-level insights. 270,000 media items were collected, sampled and refined for relevance down to 9,112 mentions — which were then coded for key markers.



## KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS

### Discussion of arts and culture is often crowded out of traditional media

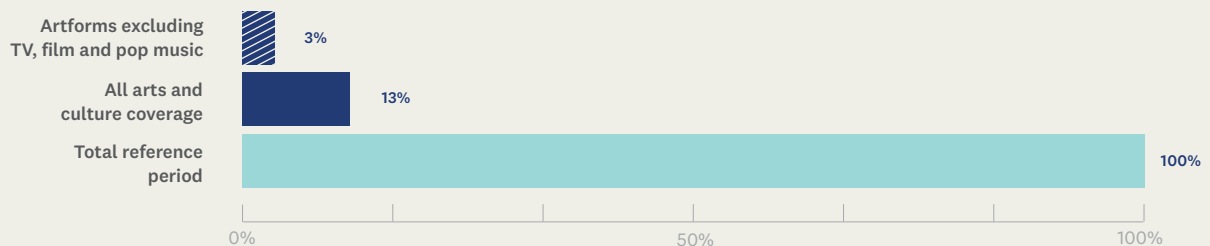
While 13% of total media coverage over the reference period was related to arts and culture, some 75% of that was driven by coverage of TV, film and pop music — primarily pop culture and entertainment.

3.25% of all news coverage in New Zealand related to other art forms, sector news, cultural heritage and various cultural activities. Other arts and culture forms include but are not limited to visual

arts, performing arts (including theatre and dance), craft and object, poetry and literature, multimedia, Māori arts, Pacific arts. This broad range of content across a limited media space dilutes the attention given to any single artform, outside of popular television, film and music.

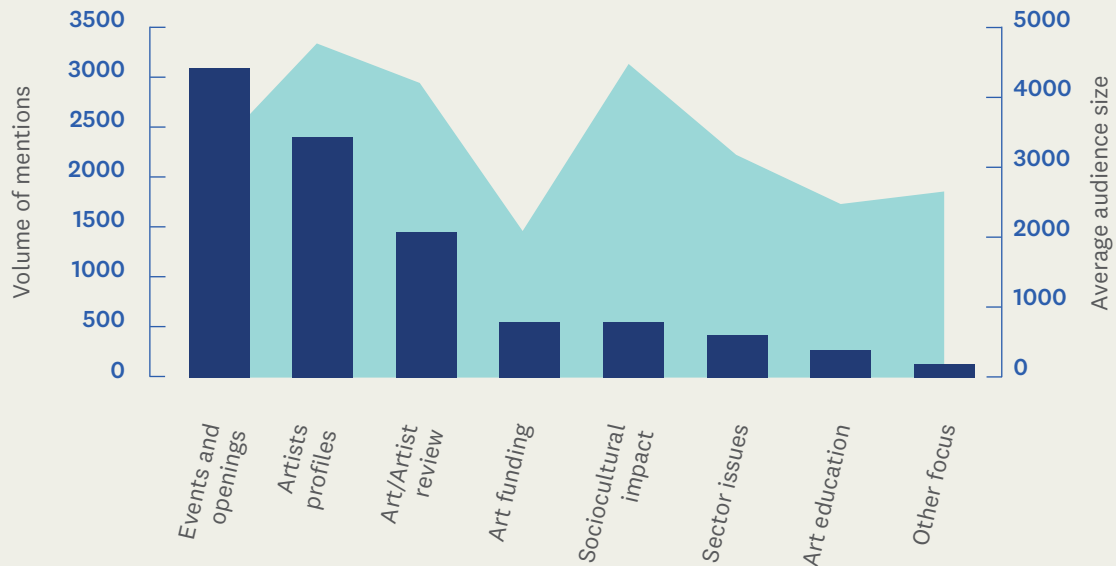
This sparse coverage can cause difficulties in promoting lesser-known artists, such as those from underrepresented communities, emerging artists and local talent.

For comparison, about one quarter of media coverage in New Zealand was focused on sport over the same reference period.



## Events are the primary driver of media coverage

Events and openings accounted for the largest share of traditional media coverage over the reference period. While this type of coverage is beneficial for arts and artists, it can create imbalance for forms of arts and culture that are less event driven. Artists profiles reach the greatest audience.



On this chart, the bars capture the volume of mentions of the main themes in the coverage. The light blue area in the background maps the average audience size for each theme.

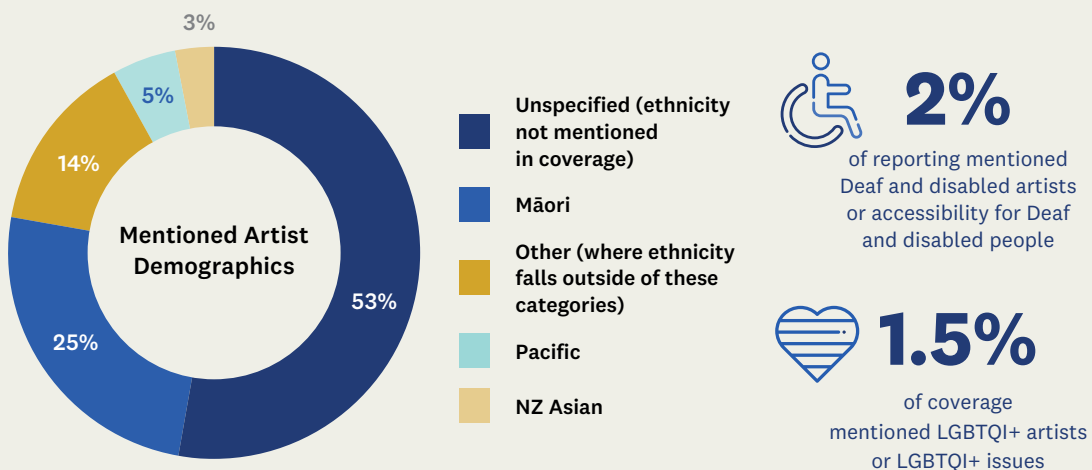
## Arts and culture coverage could be more diverse and representative

The coverage analysed revealed that a number of communities were underrepresented in arts and culture coverage. While not all coverage specifically identifies the demographics of the art or artists discussed, where artists self-identify, 10% of coverage references Māori arts and culture, even though 25% of all artists mentioned were identified as Māori.

This indicates strong elevation of individuals, but that outside of these individuals, there is limited

focus on Māori arts and culture or ngā toi Māori in coverage. Pacific arts and culture and artists were only present in 5% of coverage, while the starkest area of underrepresentation is for NZ Asian arts & culture and artists, at only 2% of analysed coverage. There was also limited coverage of LGBTQI+, gender diverse and Deaf and disabled artists (<2% each). International artists were more likely to be covered than most of these key groups (14%), and 66% of these international artists were male.

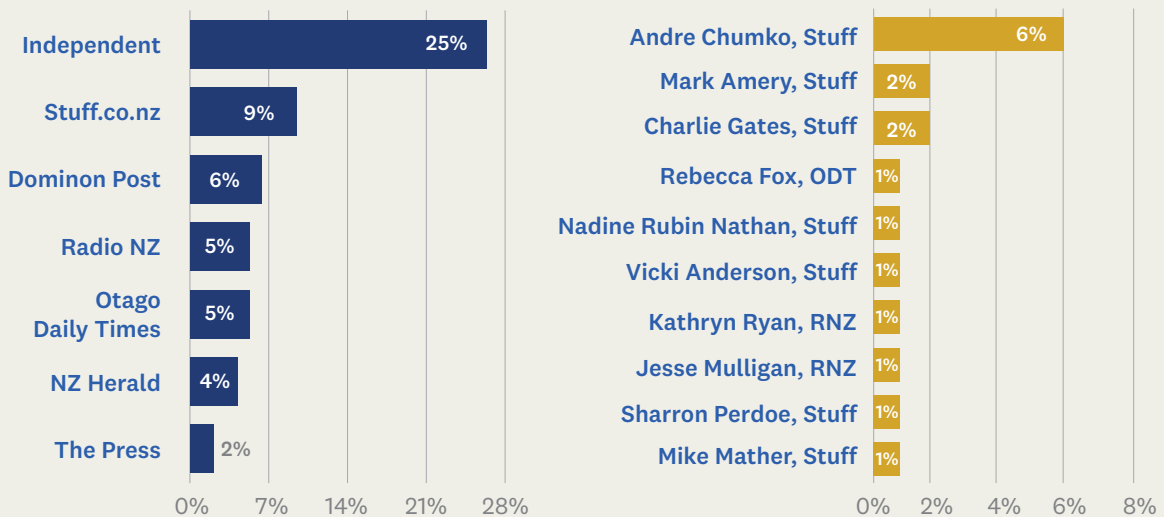
As well as the art and artists covered, the images analysed only amplified this underrepresentation, with all groups mentioned above appearing in smaller shares of images when compared to their total coverage.



## Independent and industry-specific media help drive conversation and fill gaps

The largest proportion of arts coverage (25%) was driven by independent and niche publications (such as The Spinoff, The Big Idea, or Te Ao Māori News) rather than the major media networks in NZ. This content was more likely to include underrepresented voices, be longer form and utilise the arts and culture sector itself to support content generation and analysis.

**Breakdown of Independent media:** The Spinoff (5%), The Big Idea (5%), Gisborne Herald (2%), Te Ao Māori News Online (1%) Others (12%)



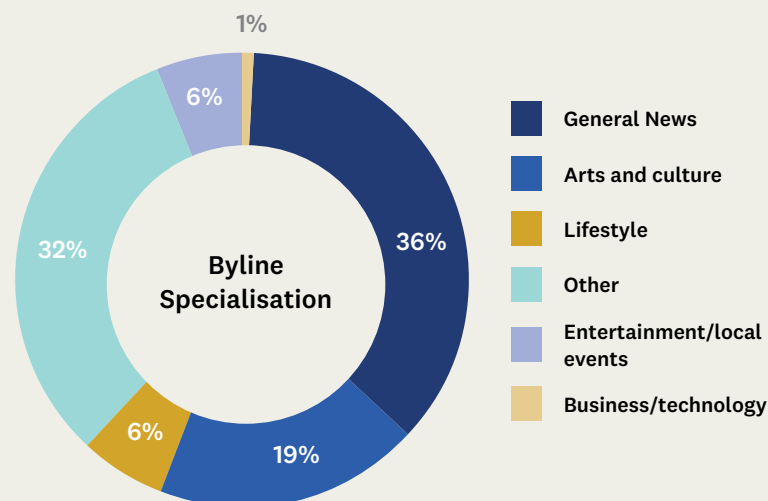
Note: These graphs include the top 7 outlets and 10 bylines across categories

## There is a significant opportunity to grow the coverage of arts and culture in Aotearoa New Zealand

Dedicated arts and culture coverage supports greater depth and breadth of arts and culture coverage, but it lacks consistency. This presents a significant opportunity to grow coverage, and better

express the depth and value of arts and culture in New Zealand. Research data shows large audience sizes for artists profiles and content on art and culture's sociocultural impact.

Dedicated arts and culture journalists help drive depth and variety, but there are currently very few of these journalists across the major media networks.



Artists and arts organisations have long understood the role of the media in helping share their work with New Zealanders and the world. This report is the first step towards deepening our understanding of how things currently are. From here, we can work towards better reflecting the depth and breadth of arts and culture, sharing more of our stories, celebrating our achievements, increasing public understanding of the value of arts, culture and creativity, and supporting artists to do what they do best: inspiring the creativity that exists in all of us.

This report allows us to start important conversations. Alongside the soon to be released companion study, it gives us clear data and insights to explore what we might do to strengthen and grow arts and culture coverage in Aotearoa. We'll consider our role in this, as Creative New Zealand, and how we can do this work with others.

We also hope the report helps the arts and culture sector more broadly, giving arts organisations, artists, publicists and advocates a clearer understanding of what currently exists and what the current trajectory of coverage looks like.

For those working within the media, we hope that this report acknowledges the great work many of you do every day. We look forward to connecting with media to discuss these findings and working together to strengthen arts and culture coverage in Aotearoa.

To read the full research report, which includes specific art form coverage data, head to the Creative New Zealand website.

[www.creativenz.govt.nz/visibilitymatters](http://www.creativenz.govt.nz/visibilitymatters)

A social media analysis report will be released later in 2023.

**We'd love to hear your thoughts on the research.  
Get in touch with us!**

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