

RESEARCH REPORT
MARCH 2023

MAPPING PRINTMAKING IN THE SOUTH WEST



 **DOUBLE
ELEPHANT**
MAKING ART HAPPEN

Devon 
County Council



HM Government

Research undertaken and compiled by Mandy Fowler, independent cultural consultant with support from printmakers Emma Molony and Lorna Rose.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

IN SPRING 2022, DOUBLE ELEPHANT SECURED FUNDING FROM ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND AND DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL TO UNDERTAKE SOME RESEARCH INTO THE PRINTMAKING SECTOR IN DEVON, AS WELL AS THE WIDER SOUTH WEST.

Conducted between June and November 2022, the purpose of the research was to understand more about the sector and the practices of printmakers, the challenges and barriers that they face, how printmaking studios can support them and the impact that print studios have on them.

Double Elephant appointed the Independent Visual Arts Consultant Mandy Fowler to undertake the research. Mandy has over 18 years of experience in the visual arts sector, working across clients ranging from large institutions such as the National Portrait Gallery, Hayward Gallery Touring and the National Trust, through to more grassroots focused organisations such as Take A Part in Plymouth, as well as networks including the Contemporary Visual Arts Network (CVAN) and Visual Arts South West.

As the research was undertaken at the time when the social restrictions from the Covid pandemic were just being lifted, the focus of the research was desk based, largely taking the form of a South West focused sector survey, analysis and through two online focus groups (with people who were filling in the survey given the opportunity to nominate themselves to take part in a focus group).

The survey was designed to consider the following:

- to understand more about printmakers in the region, where they are based, how they are printing, their route into the sector
- to understand more about their income sources and the percentage that printmaking is of their overall income
- to understand the challenges and barriers to printmaking
- to understand the benefits to them of print studios and to understand their development needs

The survey was sent out to Double Elephant members, other print studios, colleges and universities, cultural organisations and networks including Arts Council and Visual Arts South West and was promoted via social media. 184 responses were received from across the region. 57% of the responses (104 responses) were from printmakers based in Devon, with 22% of total responses from practitioners based in Exeter (the city in which Double Elephant is based).



In addition, two focus groups were online in October 2022, attended by 15 people, during which, the participants were given a series of discussion prompts. The discussion points were decided upon following the results of the survey, so as to gather some qualitative data that considered some of the survey finding in more detail. The discussion areas were:

- accessibility of printmaking
- routes to printmaking and barriers
- sources of income from printing
- development needs of printmakers

The focus group participants were invited to illustrate the discussion with examples of their experiences and knowledge of examples of best practice from elsewhere.

The respondents were largely (77%) printmakers with 5 years experience of working within printmaking, 82% were female, 92% were aged over 35. The majority (80%) of respondents identified as White British with 4.31% identifying as being Black, Asian, and Ethnically Diverse (lower than the arts sector workforce (at 14%) and roughly in line with the South West population demographics

The number of respondents who identified as D/deaf, disabled, or have a long-term health condition at 13%, is higher than the current arts sector workforce (at 7%). The survey results also suggest that 6.45% come from backgrounds where the parental occupation when they were 14 was routine manual and service occupation and unemployed, therefore suggesting that the background of those is largely from higher earning socio-economic backgrounds, based on parental occupation.

There was a mix of responses around routes into printmaking,

with 46% having learned through attending workshops and 47% through a formal education.

The majority of respondents undertake their printmaking at home, with 23% being affiliated to a print studio and 26% attend workshops so that they can print, with some others suggesting that they undertake printmaking at their place of work, where they are employed within printmaking.

The survey suggests that people making a living from and sustaining a living from their printmaking practice is very low, with 48% of respondents stating that they do make any income from printmaking, and 40% stating that they make under £10k a year from their practice.

The barriers that were identified around printmaking sits alongside these income figures, suggesting that printmaking is costly and there are limited affordable facilities, visibility, opportunities, and knowledge with the region to make a sustained living. Barriers around accessibility of opportunity for



people with backgrounds that are underrepresented in the national arts sector workforce were not discussed in great detail, however the demographics of the survey respondents does suggest that there is much work to be done around improving access within printmaking in the region.

Respondents when asked about their development needs suggested that the business of being a printmaker, knowing how to deliver workshops in a studio and community setting, and setting up a print studio, all area of professional development connected to income streams from printmaking. These priorities varied across geographical locations within Devon itself and across the Double Elephant members who responded to the survey.

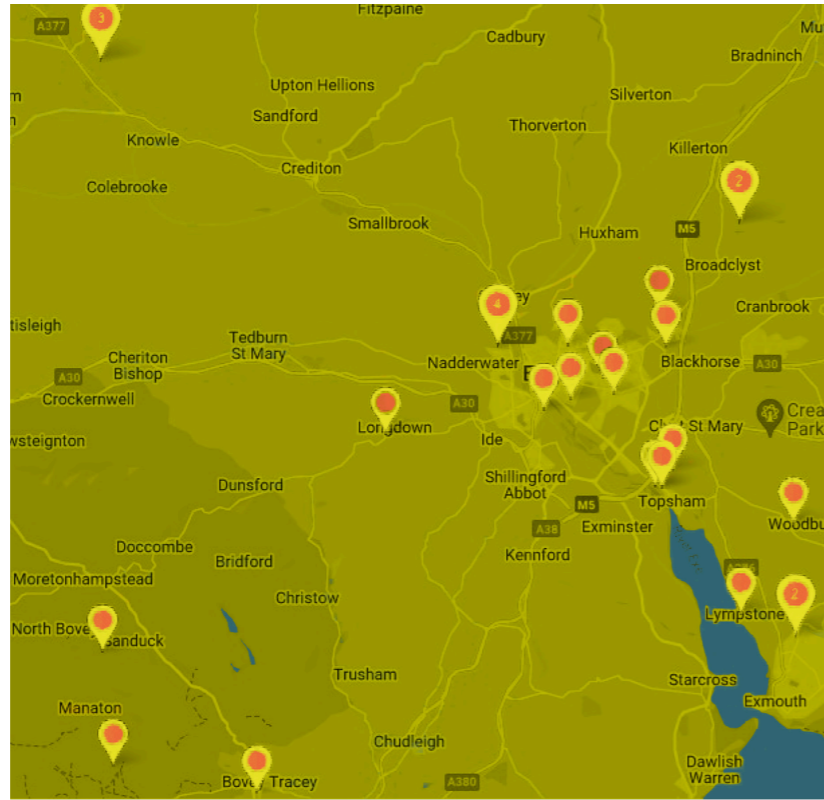
The benefits of working within a studio highlighted the importance of being able to share resources and equipment, and the opportunity to learn from and support others within the

community of printmakers has been highlighted as important.

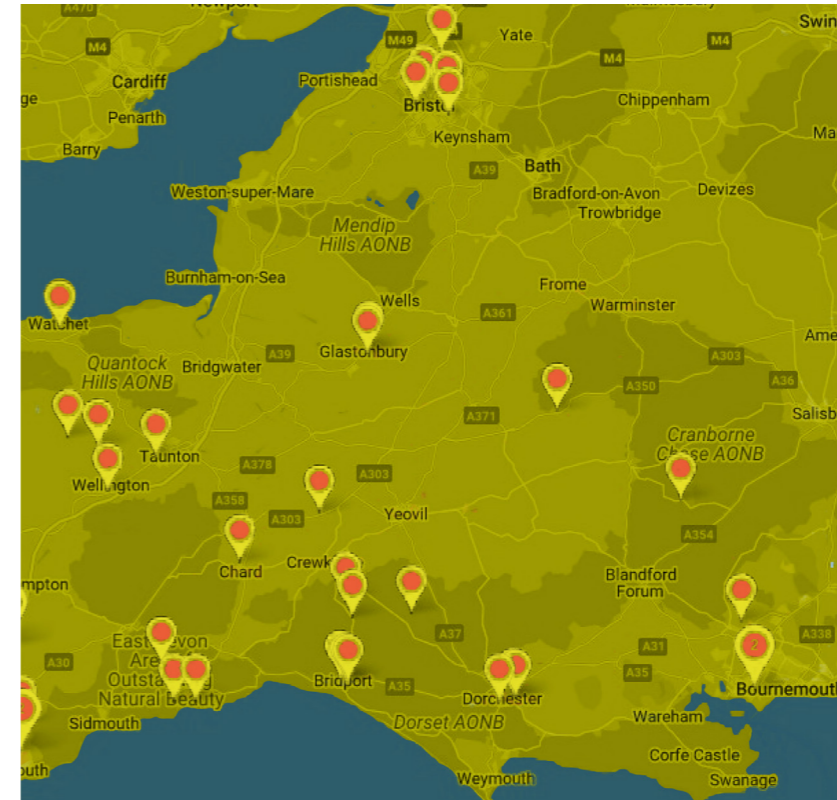
67% of respondents had connected with Double Elephant previously, with 19% of respondents being members, and the value of the quality of what Double Elephant delivers was clearly articulated, alongside access to the facilities and the sense of community, friendly and supportive environment that it creates.

There is much to consider within this research as to how the printmaking sector in the South West can develop to enable it to become more inclusive and representative, as well as accessible, creating professional development opportunities for existing printmakers and future printmakers to be able to develop ways to make a living, and a sustained living as printmakers, so that the sector in the region can thrive.

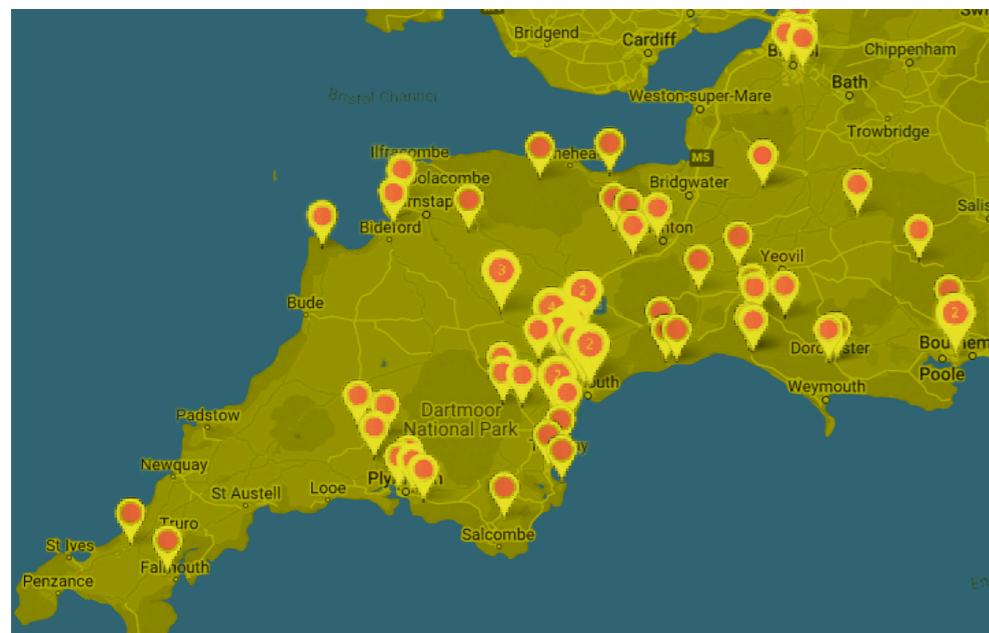
EXETER CLUSTER OF RESPONSES



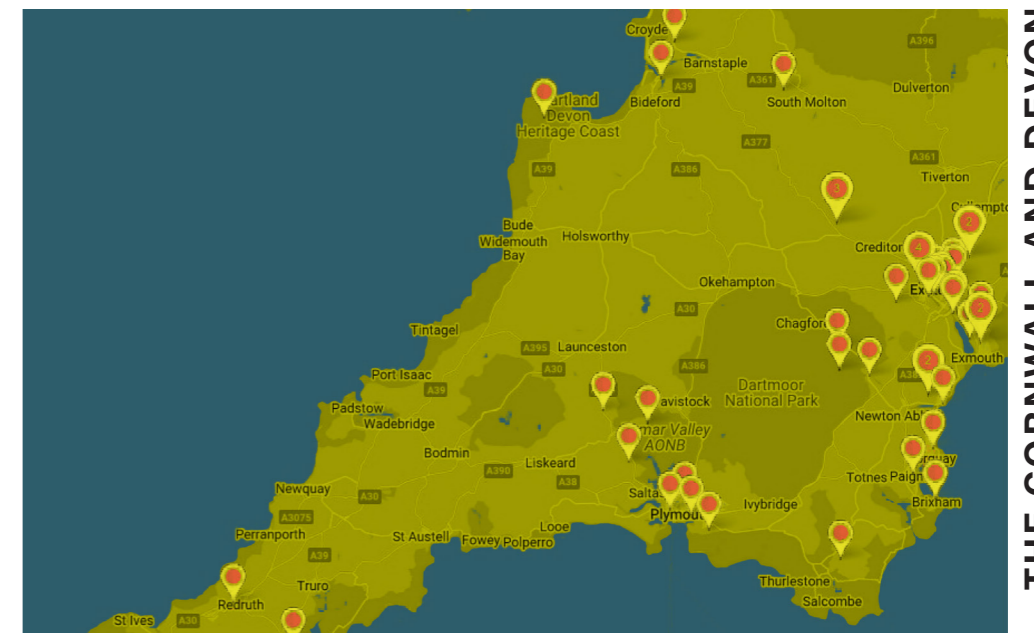
THE SOMERSET, DORSET AND BRISTOL CLUSTER OF RESPONSES



ALL RESPONSES



THE CORNWALL AND DEVON CLUSTER OF RESPONSES

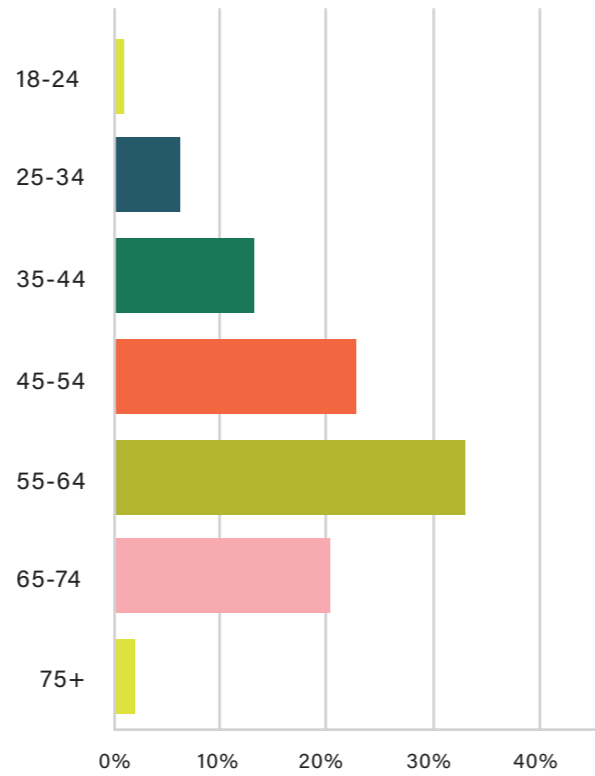


WHERE PEOPLE RESPONDED FROM

POSTCODE MAPPING WAS USED ACROSS THE SOUTH WEST, TO UNDERSTAND WHERE RESPONDENTS WERE LOCATED

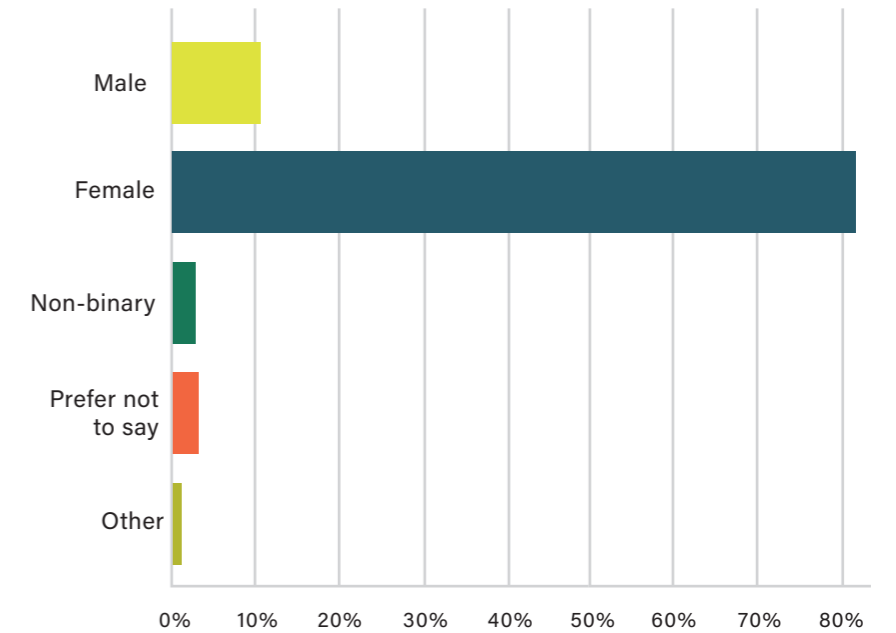
AGE

The survey was answered by a larger proportion of practitioners who were in the older age groups, and therefore are not representative of the views of younger age groups.



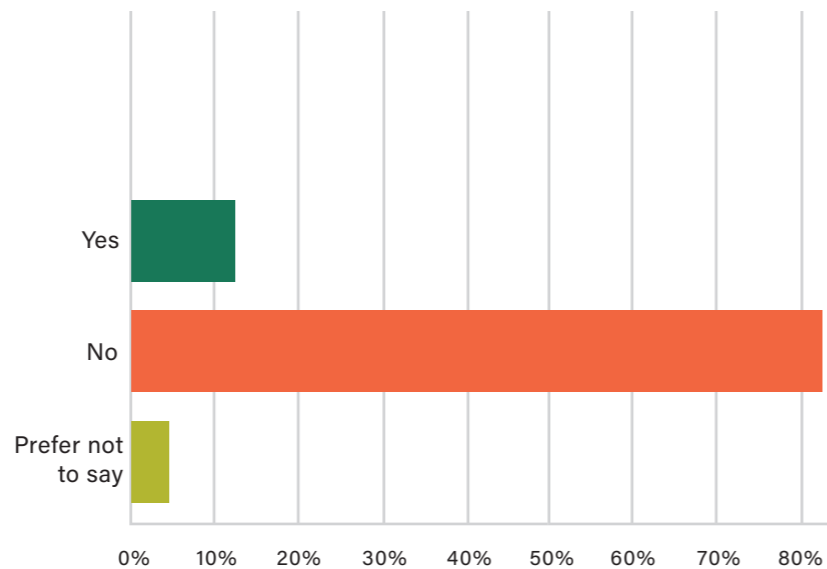
GENDER IDENTITY

The majority of people who answered the survey identified as female. This is a higher proportion than the national workforce where the Office for National Statistics percentages demonstrates 50% of working age population identify as female and of Arts Council England's sector workforce data (which includes the whole arts sector across all art forms) which demonstrates that 49% of the sector workforce identify as female.



IDENTIFYING AS D/DEAF, DISABLED OR HAVE A LONG-TERM HEALTH CONDITION

13% of people identified as D/deaf, disabled, or have a long-term health condition. This is a lower proportion than the national workforce where the Office for National Statistics percentages demonstrates 23% of working age population identify as D/deaf, disabled or have a long-term health condition, but it is higher than Arts Council England's sector workforce data which demonstrates that only 7% of the sector workforce identifies as D/deaf, disabled or have a long-term health condition.

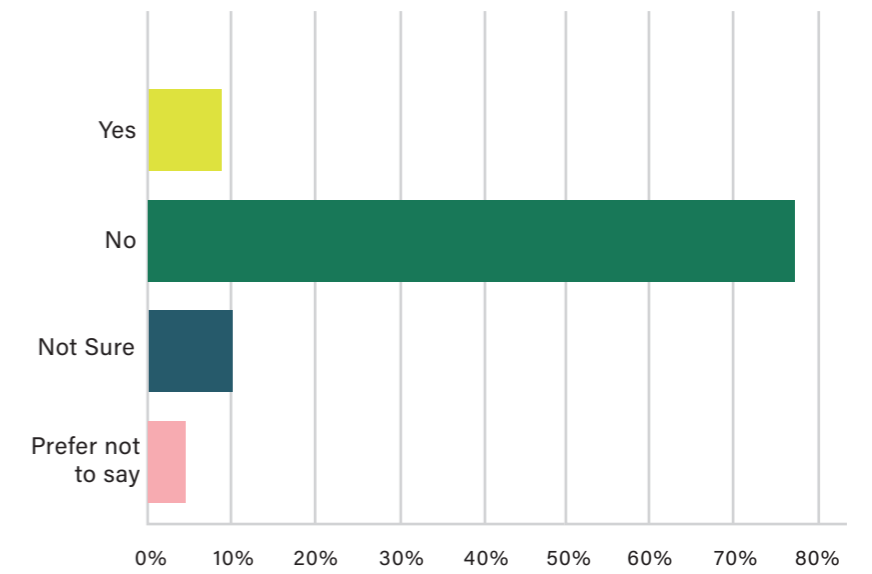


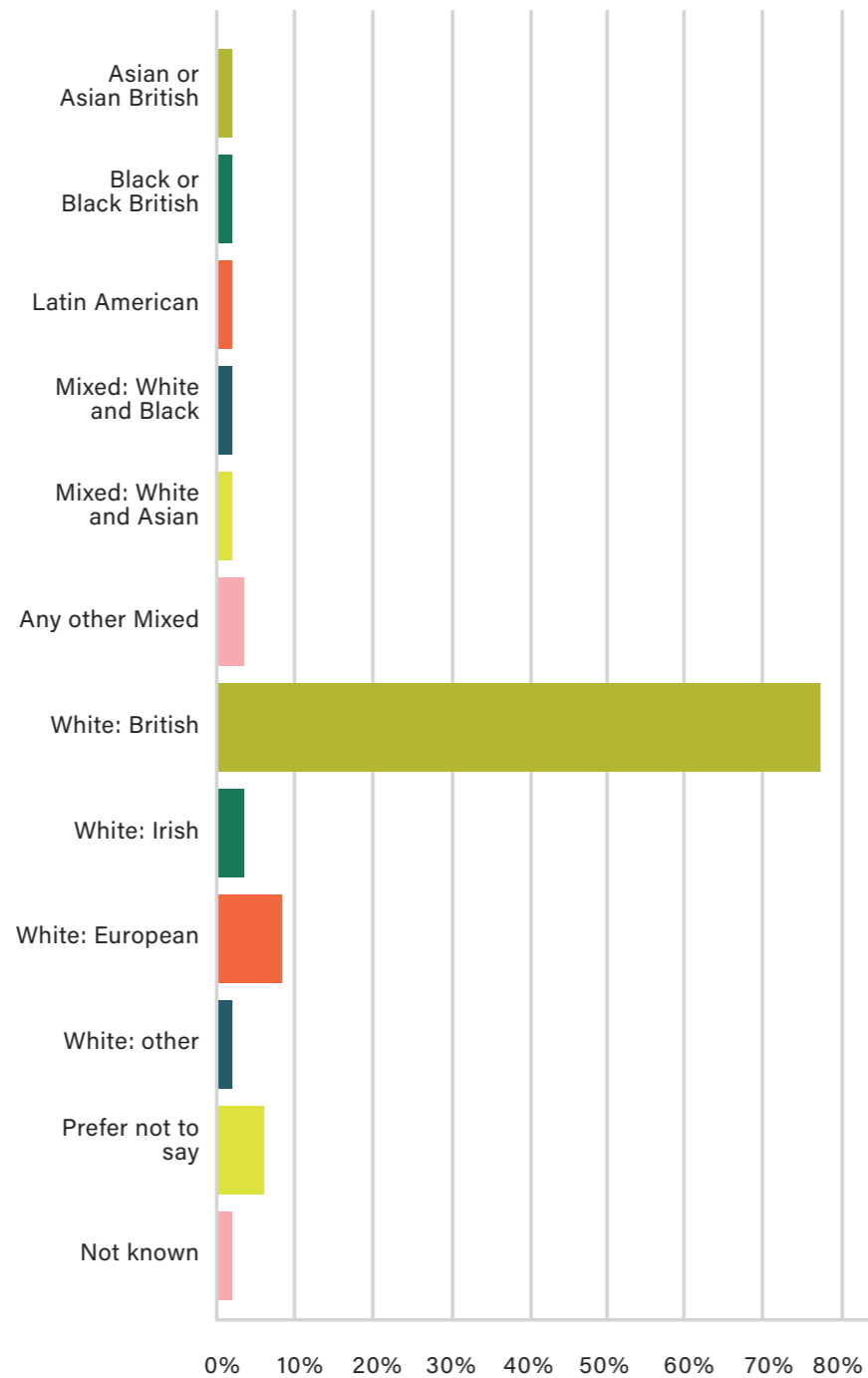
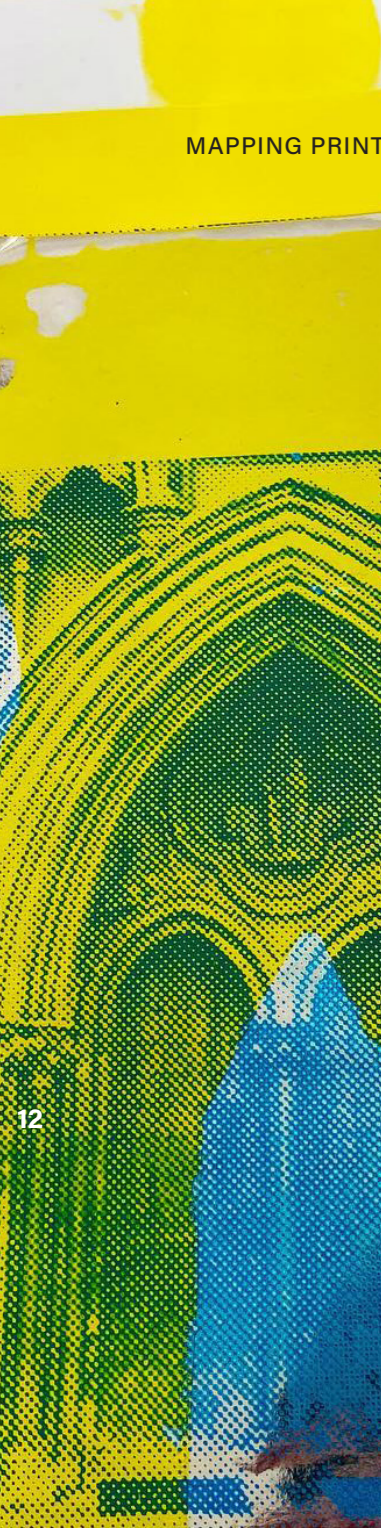
PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

THE SURVEY USED THE ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND DEMOGRAPHIC MONITORING CATEGORIES SO THAT DATA COULD BE COMPARED, WHERE COMPARATIVE DATA IS AVAILABLE.

IDENTIFYING AS NEURODIVERGENT

9% of respondents identified as Neurodivergent. There is no national workforce data to benchmark this against, nor Arts Council England data - this data is now being collected by Arts Council England, so will be available in the future. It is estimated that between 15-20% of the national population identify as neurodivergent.





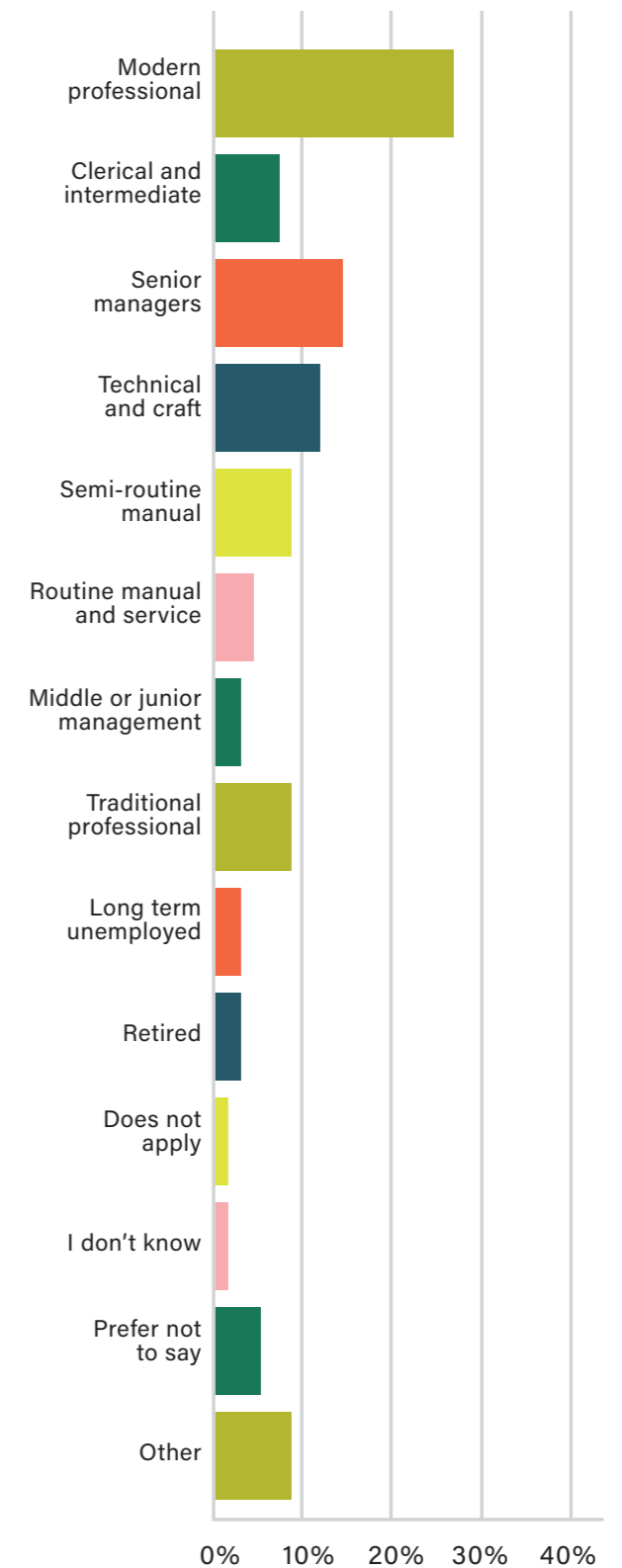
ETHNICITY

The majority (80%) of respondents identified as White British / English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish. 4.31% identified as being Black, Asian, and Ethnically Diverse. This is a lower proportion than the national workforce where the Office for National Statistics percentages demonstrates 17% of working age population identify 17% as Black, Asian, and Ethnically Diverse and lower than Arts Council England's sector workforce data which demonstrates that 14% of the sector workforce identifies as Black, Asian, and Ethnically Diverse. The South West population demographics demonstrate that 95.4% of the population identifies as White, and 4.4% as having Black, Asian, and Ethnically Diverse backgrounds.



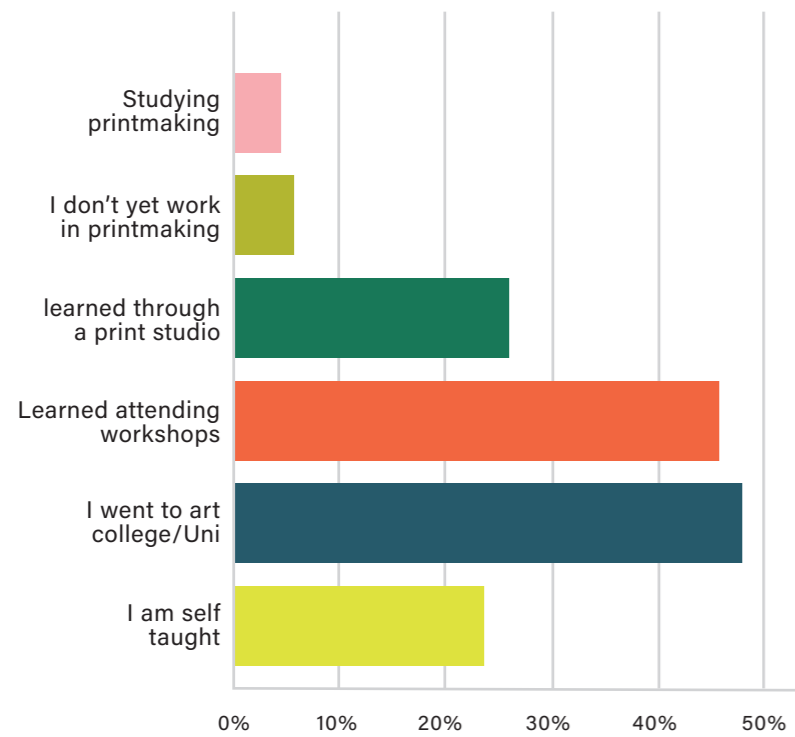
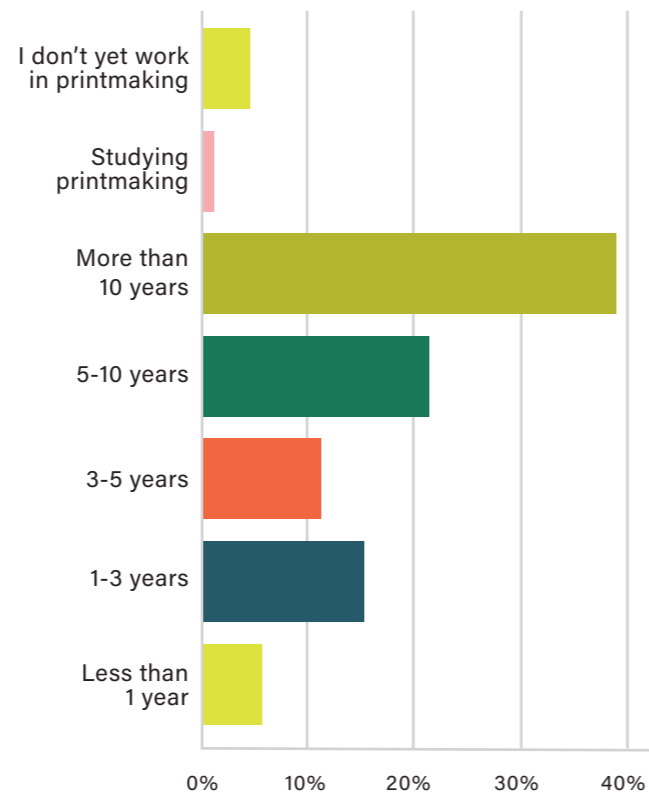
SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

There is a growing body of evidence that people from low socio-economic backgrounds are under-represented in publicly funded culture. The question used in the survey was in line with Arts Council England's data collection around this, which is based on the National Labour Force Survey collected by the Office for National Statistics. There is no Arts Council Workforce data available yet to compare this with, but the latest Office for National Statistics research suggests that 7.9% of the national creative workforce come from low socio-economic backgrounds. The survey results suggest that 6.45% come from backgrounds where the parental occupation when they were 14 was routine manual and service occupation and unemployed.



YEARS WORKING IN THE SECTOR

The majority (39%) of respondents had worked in the sector for more than 10 years, and 22% for between 5-10 years. 23% had worked in the sector for less than 3 years.

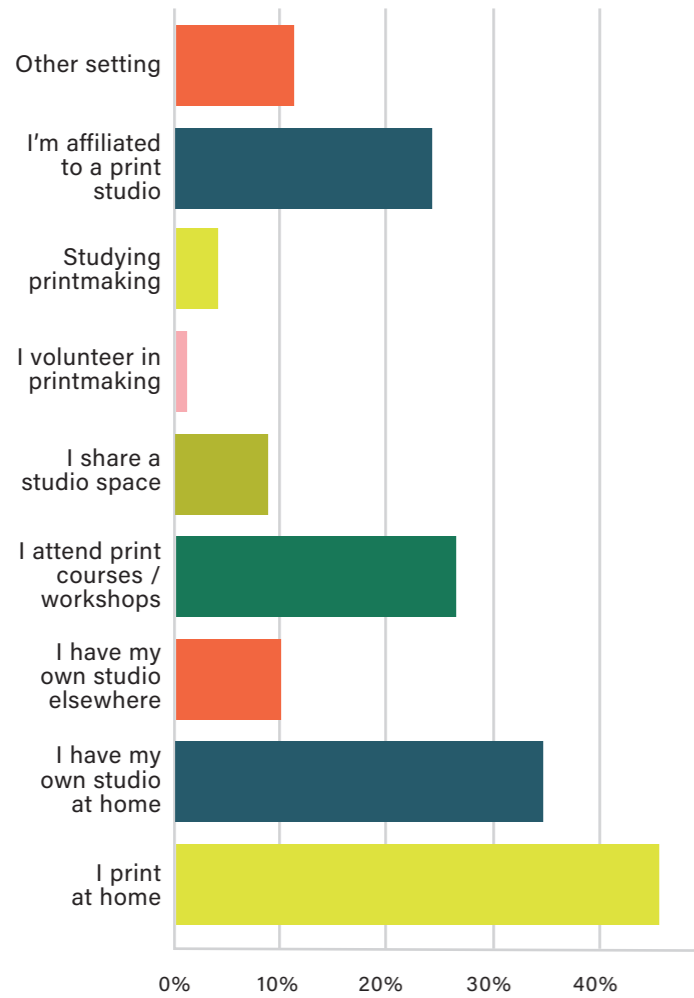


ROUTES INTO PRINTMAKING

There was a mix of responses around routes into printmaking, 46% learned through attending workshops and 47% through formal education.



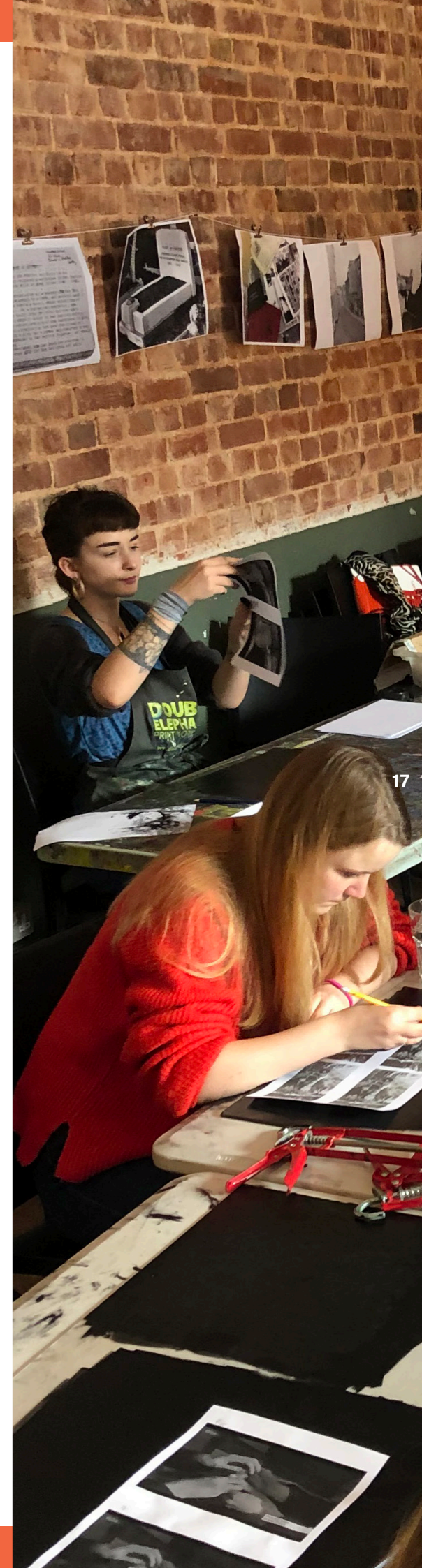
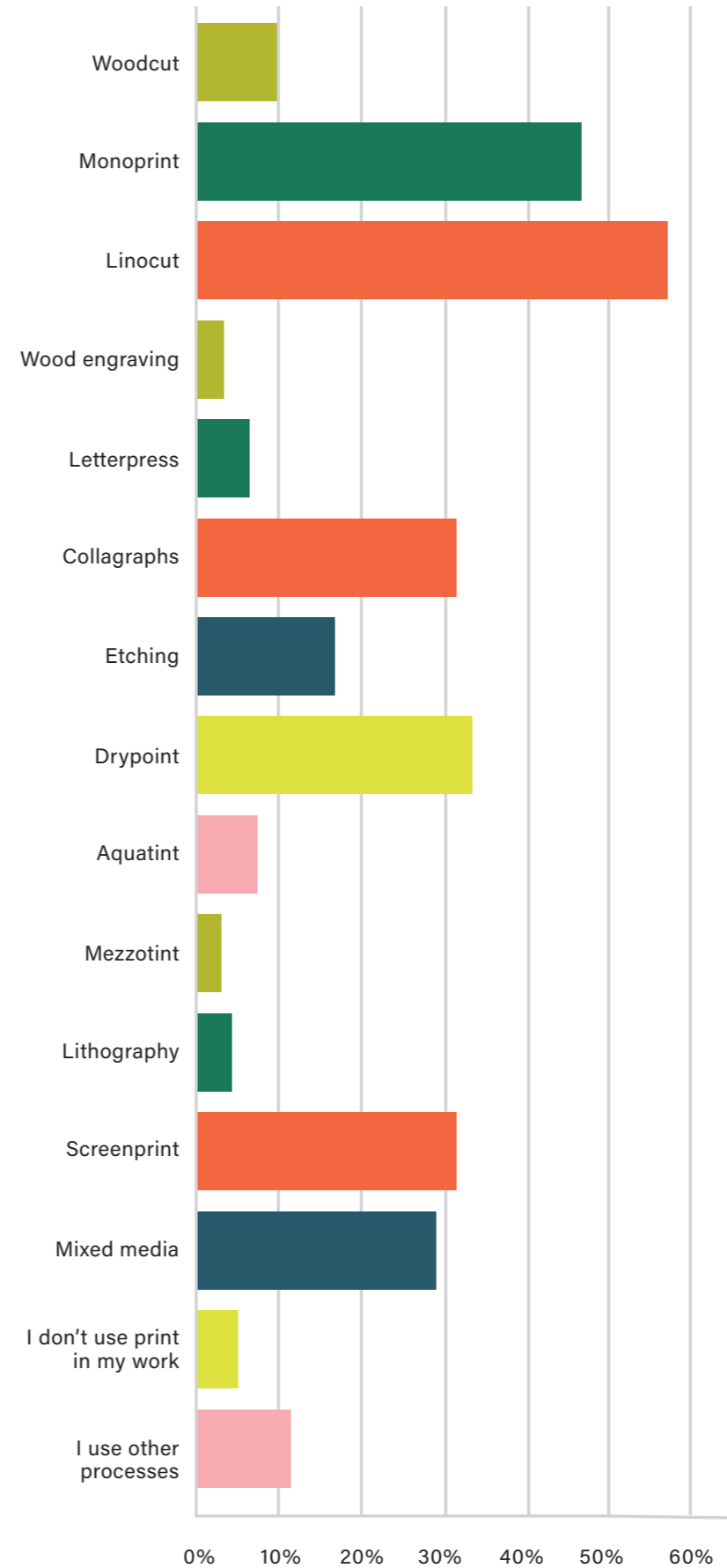
ABOUT THEIR PRINTMAKING



WAYS IN WHICH THEY UNDERTAKE PRINTMAKING

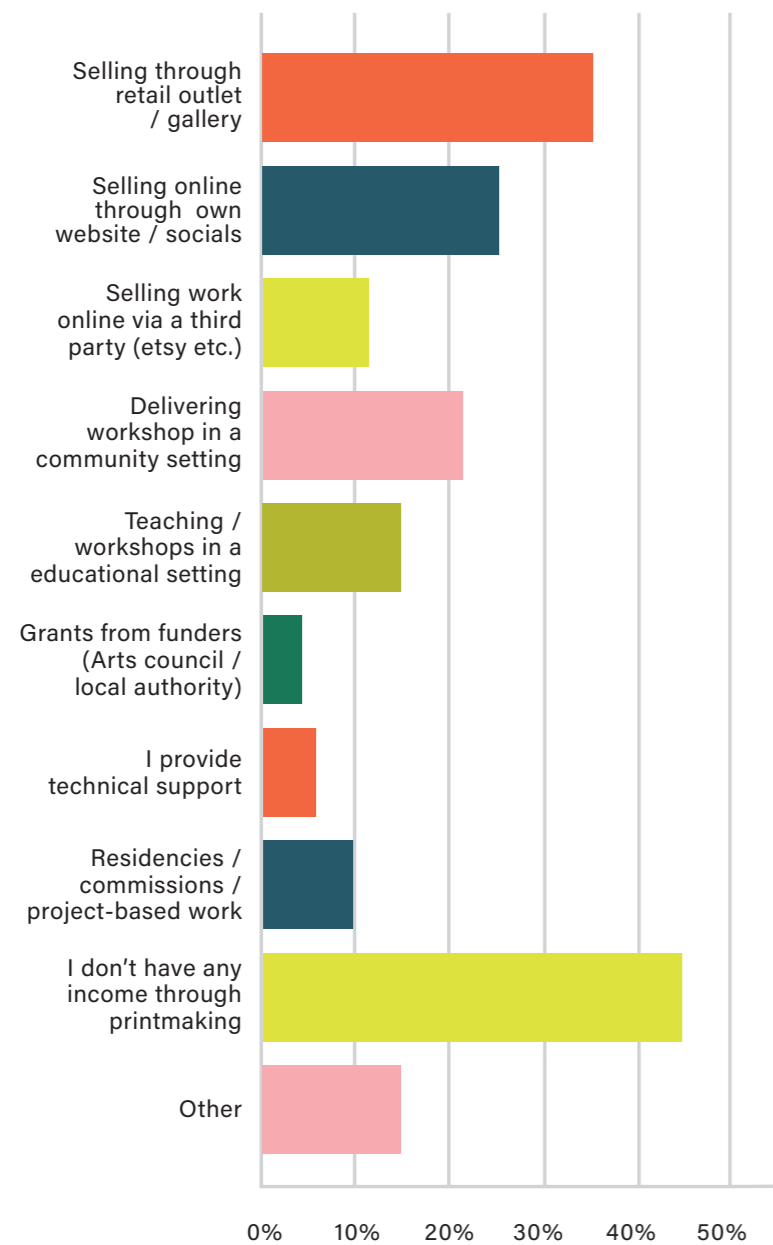
The majority of people undertake their printmaking at home, 23% are affiliated to a print studio and 26% attend workshops so that they can print. Those who answered in another way, gave responses that were a variation on the categories, as well as undertaking print at their place of work, including withing educational establishments and studios that they work within.

THEIR PRINTMAKING PROCESS



INCOME

SOURCES



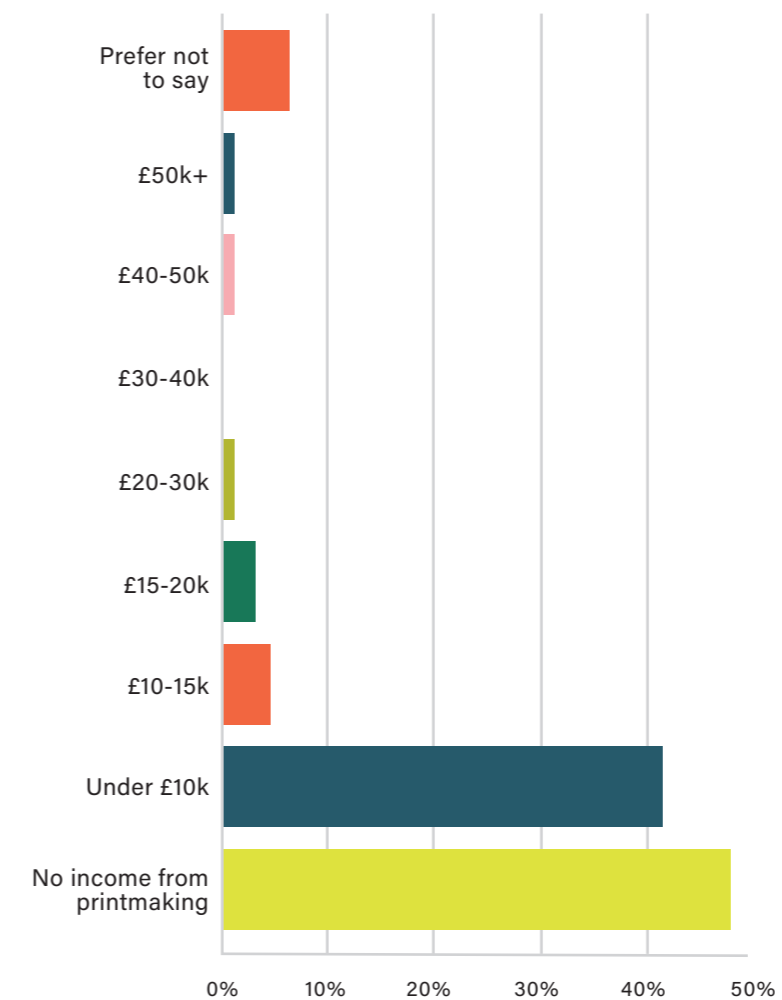
43% of respondents did not have any income from their printmaking. 34% of respondents sold their work through a retail outlet or gallery, and 25% of respondents sold their work through their own online presence. Those who answered in other ways gave examples that were variations on the categories.

Arts Council England's Livelihood of Visual Artists data report in late 2018, stated that 20% of respondent artists work three or more jobs, and of those a third have roles in fields with nothing to do with the arts. The results from this survey demonstrates that this is similar, especially given that 43% do not have any income from their printmaking.

AMOUNT OF INCOME

The respondents demonstrated low levels of income from their printmaking. 48% stated that they did not make any income through printmaking (43% stated that in the previous question), while 40% stated that their income was below £10k per year.

Arts Council England's Livelihood of Visual Artists data report in late 2018, stated that on average, artists earn £16,150 per year, of which £6,020 (36%) comes from their art.



BARRIERS TO PRINTMAKING

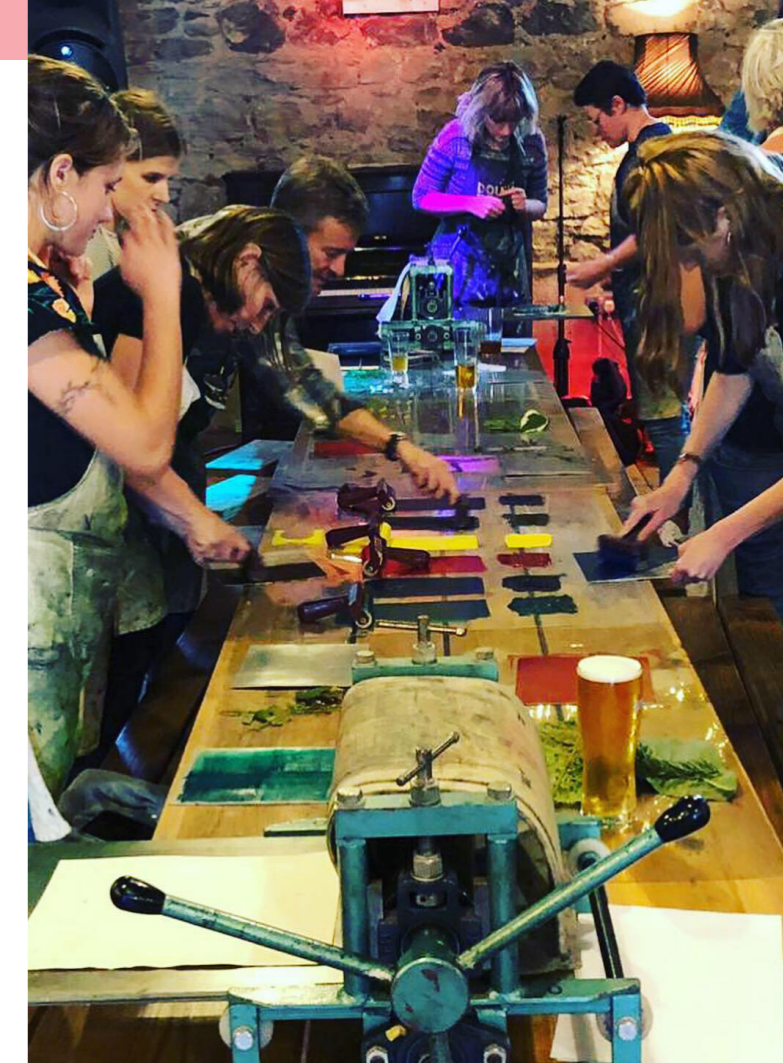
The survey asked people if they experience barriers to printmaking and what those barriers were. These responses need to be read in conjunction with the demographics of those who were responding, people who are already working in the sector. There were no responses that commented upon the lack of opportunities or barriers to participating due to facing ableism and lack of physical access, (however there were some responses around facing chronic fatigue and illness), and no responses commented upon facing prejudice or discrimination.

There were a variety of responses to this question, that fit into a folksonomy of six main categories:

- Lack of access to affordable studio spaces and equipment
- Lack of space time and money
- Lack of ways to make income from printmaking (many cited having another job and therefore lack of time for printmaking)
- Lack of selling opportunities
- Lack of knowledge of marketing & selling their work
- Lack of confidence and skills

With the focus groups, the barriers to printmaking were discussed further and also in relation to income sources and the costs of printmaking. It was acknowledged that printmaking is costly, therefore reducing barriers to printmaking costs could make accessibility more affordable; ideas ranged from the creation of mobile studios taking place in community settings alongside printmakers social networking, to taking printing equipment into schools to make printmaking more visible as a career option, alongside discussing pathway option.

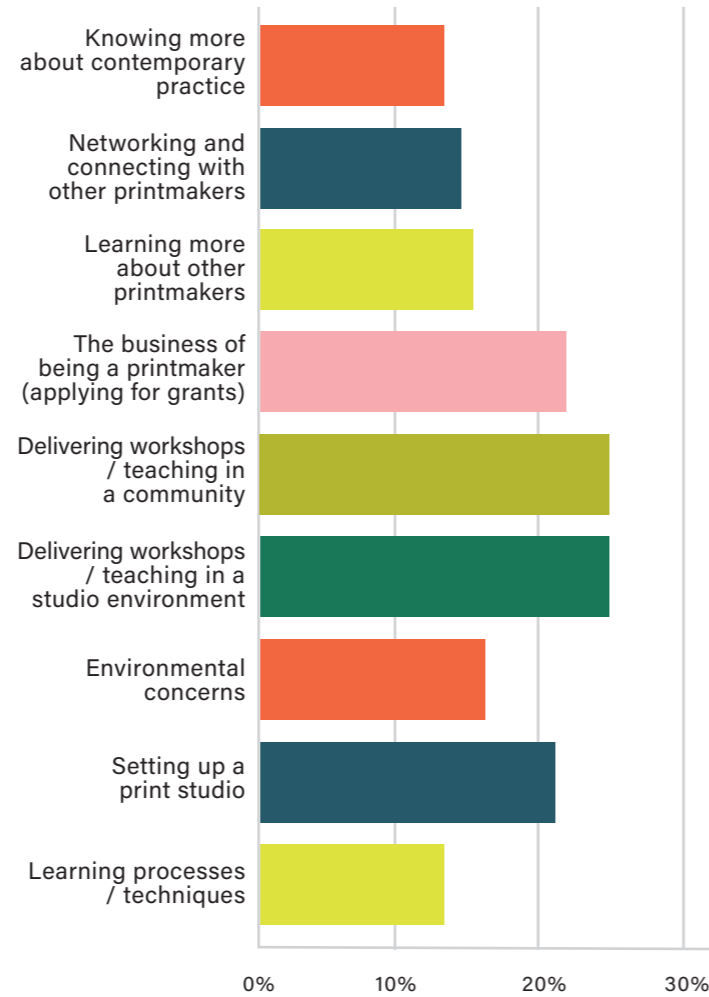
Online training opportunities were discussed further as a way to reduce geographical



barriers and physical barriers to undertake training opportunities.

The financial barrier of being able to make income from printmaking and sustain an income were also discussed, and it was felt that this is an area for further development, providing opportunities for printmakers to understand more about the business of being a printmaker – how to market their work, look for opportunities for their work and apply for funding support for their work.

There was also consideration of how the printmaking community could make itself more visible through more open studios and groups exhibitions and inviting audience to view work in a collaborative way.



DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

Respondents were asked which of these areas of development are important to them and their practice. The responses suggested that the business of being a printmaker (applying for grants and opportunities), knowing how to deliver workshops in a studio and community setting, and setting up a print studio were the most popular areas for development. These areas are all connected to income streams from printmaking.

Respondents were also asked to put into their own words if they had other development needs, beyond these categories. The responses largely fell into variations of these areas, those responses that sat outside of these areas were around specific printmaking techniques.

The development needs of the sector were discussed further in the focus groups who felt that the networking and making connections with other printmakers was very important to be able to support each other as a community and learn from each other. There were suggestions that these could be undertaken in person, based on geographical locations.

It was felt that skills development and knowledge could be undertaken through the medium of online sessions and digital content creation.

There was also a suggestion that an approach to skills development could be undertaken with consideration of existing skills levels; beginners, intermediate, advanced.





**DEVELOPMENT NEED
RESPONSES SPLIT INTO
GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS
WITHIN DEVON**

The development needs responses have been broken down into the geographical areas in Devon, ranking the categories into the most through to least important.

EXETER

- 1st Learning processes / techniques
- 2nd Knowing more about contemporary practice
- 3rd Learning more about other printmakers
- 3rd Environmental concerns
- 4th Networking and connecting with other printmakers
- 5th Setting up a print studio
- 6th The business of being a printmaker (applying for grants / opportunities)
- 8th Delivering workshops / teaching in a studio environment
- 9th Delivering workshops / teaching in a community environment

NORTH DEVON

- 1st Learning more about other printmakers
- 2nd Learning processes / techniques
- 2nd Setting up a print studio
- 2nd Networking and connecting with other printmakers
- 2nd Knowing more about contemporary practice
- 3rd Delivering workshops / teaching in a community environment
- 3rd The business of being a printmaker (applying for grants / opportunities)
- 3rd Environmental concerns
- 3rd Delivering workshops / teaching in a studio environment

EAST

- 1st Learning processes / techniques
- 2nd Knowing more about contemporary practice
- 3rd Environmental concerns
- 4th Networking and connecting with other printmakers
- 5th Learning more about other printmakers
- 6th The business of being a printmaker (applying for grants / opportunities)
- 7th Setting up a print studio
- 8th Delivering workshops / teaching in a community environment
- 9th Delivering workshops / teaching in a studio environment

MID

- 1st Environmental concerns
- 2nd Learning processes / techniques
- 2nd Networking and connecting with other printmakers
- 3rd Knowing more about contemporary practice
- 4th Learning more about other printmakers
- 5th Delivering workshops / teaching in a community environment
- 6th Delivering workshops / teaching in a studio environment
- 6th The business of being a printmaker (applying for grants / opportunities)
- 6th Setting up a print studio

TORBAY

- 1st Knowing more about contemporary practice
- 2nd Learning processes / techniques
- 3rd Networking and connecting with other printmakers
- 4th Learning more about other printmakers
- 5th Environmental concerns
- 5th Delivering workshops / teaching in a studio environment
- 6th Delivering workshops / teaching in a community environment
- 6th The business of being a printmaker (applying for grants / opportunities)
- 7th Setting up a print studio

DOUBLE ELEPHANT MEMBERS

- 1st Learning processes / techniques
- 2nd Knowing more about contemporary practice
- 2nd Networking and connecting with other printmakers
- 3rd Learning more about other printmakers
- 4th Environmental concerns
- 5th The business of being a printmaker (applying for grants / opportunities)
- 7th Setting up a print studio
- 8th Delivering workshops / teaching in a studio environment
- 9th Delivering workshops / teaching in a community environment

PLYMOUTH

- 1st Networking and connecting with other printmakers
- 1st Learning processes / techniques
- 2nd Knowing more about contemporary practice
- 3rd Learning more about other printmakers
- 3rd The business of being a printmaker (applying for grants / opportunities)
- 4th Delivering workshops / teaching in a community environment
- 4th Environmental concerns
- 5th Setting up a print studio
- 5th Delivering workshops / teaching in a studio environment

BENEFITS OF WORKING IN A STUDIO



The survey asked people what the benefits were of working in a studio space. 43% of the survey respondents stated that they worked in a studio outside of their home studio in some form.

There were a variety of responses to this question, that fit into a folksonomy of five main categories:

- Sharing resources and equipment
- Undertaking peer critical support and practice critique
- Learning, sharing skills and knowledge and gaining inspiration from other printmakers
- The social experience of supporting each other, and the wellbeing support of not working in isolation
- The opportunity to network and work collaboration

67% of respondents had connected with Double Elephant previously; 19% of respondent were members, and 48% had attended Double Elephant workshops.

27% stated that their connection was in another – through volunteering, attending open studios and exhibitions and connecting through other print studios.



These respondents were then asked what they valued about their connection with Double Elephant—there were a variety of answers that fit into a folksonomy of four main categories:

- The quality of teaching
- The quality of advice that has been given
- The access to the facilities
- The sense of community, friendly and supportive environment

CONNECTING WITH DOUBLE ELEPHANT

