

Transport for London

**London
Overground's
public arts
strategy**

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MAYOR OF LONDON

Transport for London



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Research conducted by Synovate

1. Executive summary

There was a high level of support for art on the Overground, with more than four fifths (85%) considering it to be 'a good idea', and over a third considering it to be a 'very good idea'. However, having art on the Overground was not a high priority for most customers: most did not react negatively if there were to be no art on the Overground.

However, the benefits of art on the Overground should not be under-estimated, and away from the core issues of service, can add value. Over a quarter of all people believed that art on the stations would make them use the London Overground more, and a quarter believed that they would feel safer using the London Overground if art was installed.

More generally, customers perceived art on the Overground to be a welcome improvement to their surroundings and good for the local area and community. Furthermore, it was felt that art would make the stations more 'attractive and vibrant', would be 'good to look at when waiting' and would 'create a good atmosphere'. It was also seen as something that can 'improve the image of the area' and be 'good for the local people and economy'.

'Community, cultural art and ethnic art' were mentioned (unprompted) as the most appropriate types of art to be shown by around a sixth of people (14%).

Unsurprisingly, types of art that were deemed to be the least appropriate were those that 'depicted nudity' and 'prompted violence or violent crime': customers wanted art that was thought provoking but not too challenging or controversial.

Generally, customers were open minded about art, and expected varied types and genres, with 'up and coming artists' the most popular type (although not significantly preferred above the other types overall).

2. Background & Objectives

2.1 Introduction

Transport for London (TfL) took over responsibility for the London Overground train service on 11th November 2007. As part of a programme of improvements for customers; employing more staff, cleaning and refurbishing all stations, introducing new trains and increasing frequency of services. TfL envisage installing art at the stations as well.

The art is likely to be wall based, e.g. posters, photographs, or murals at existing stations, which could be either, permanent or changed on a regular basis. There is also the potential to design some art features at new stations in the East London area, such as planning schemes or sculptures.

Examples of incorporation of art into public transport systems across the world have been shown to bring long term benefits for both the scheme and locality, but prior to developing the arts strategy, the views of customers and local residents are sought to help determine the direction of the strategy, and overall provide justification for its implementation.

2.2 Objectives

The research objectives were as follows:

- Gauge the level of support for art installations at stations, both permanent and temporary;
- Identify the type of arts installations they would like to see at stations, and the extent and weight of preference within this;

- Identify the perceived benefits of an arts programme amongst customers and residents.

3. Approach

3.1 Methodology

An initial qualitative methodology was used to explore the issues and inform quantitative questionnaire design. The main research was quantitative face to face interviews with London Overground customers at selected stations, and also local residents around selected London Overground stations.

3.2 Sample

A total of 40 qualitative mini–depth interviews with London Overground passengers were conducted over a two day period at Hackney Central, Gospel Oak, Willesden Junction and Kensington Olympia stations.

A total of 482 quantitative customer interviews were conducted, 362 with customers at selected stations, and 120 with residents within the area of these stations (the majority of whom were also London Overground customers, at least infrequently).

Interviews were conducted and achieved at the following stations:

Station:	Customers on station:	Local area residents:
Acton Central	24	12
Bushey	23	12
Camden Road	45	12
Crouch Hill	26	12
Hackney Central	25	36
Gospel Oak	25	12
New Cross Gate	24	12
Willesden Junction	13	12

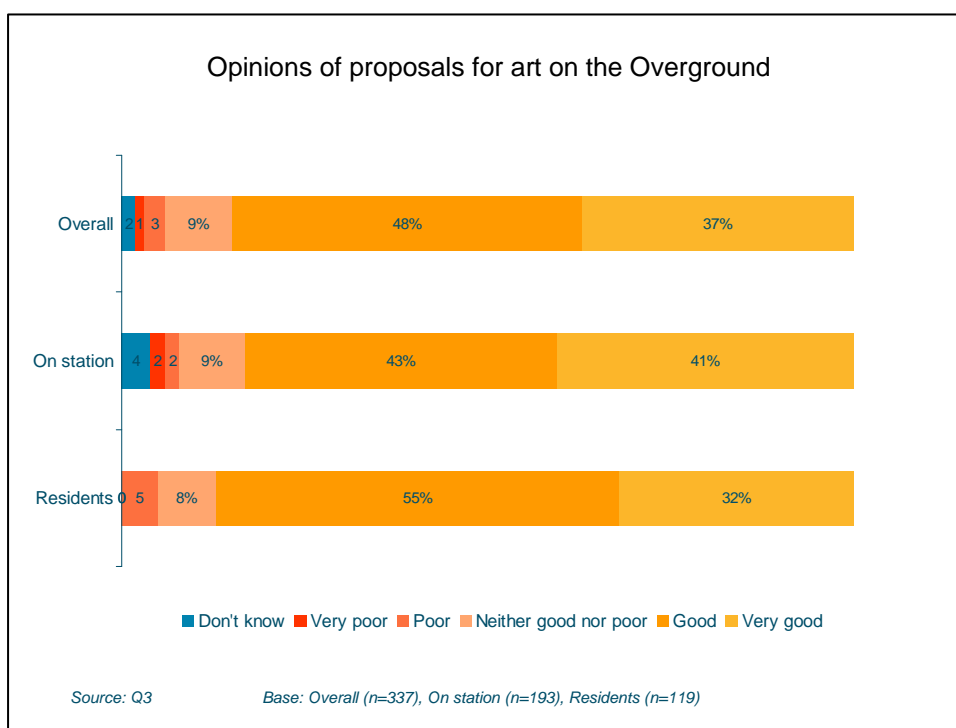
3.3 Timescales

The initial qualitative research was conducted on 14th May 2008. The quantitative research was conducted between 24th June and 4th July 2008.

4. Main findings

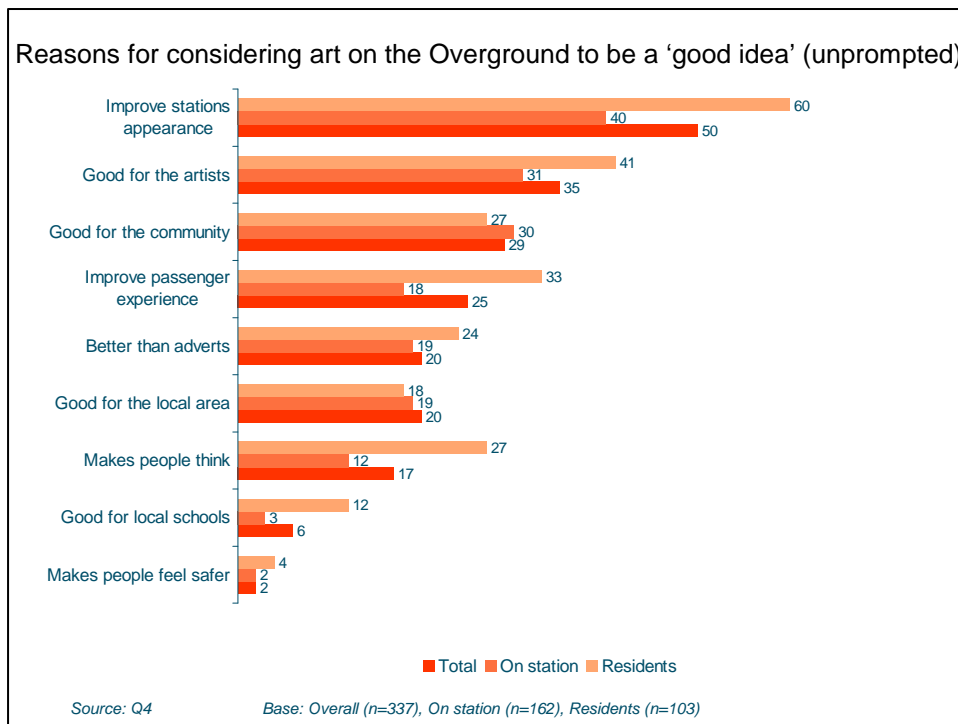
4.1 Opinions of having art on the Overground

The vast majority of people (85%) thought that having art installations at London Overground stations was a 'good idea', with over a third (37%) saying it was a 'very good idea'. Overall, residents were slightly more likely to think it was a 'good idea' than those interviewed at the station (87% vs. 84%), although a greater proportion of station customers were *most favourable* (i.e. answered 'very good').



Those interviewed at or around Acton Central (92%) and Camden Road (94%) were the most likely to think it was a 'good idea' compared with customers / residents at other stations. Those aged 55+ (14%) were the most likely to believe that it was a poor idea.

'Improving the station appearance' was the most mentioned reason for believing that art installations on the London Overground, mentioned by half of people (50%). Around a third of people also believed that art on the Overground would be 'good for artists' (35%) and 'good for the community' (29%). Residents were more likely than those interviewed at the station to believe that 'improving the station appearance', 'improving the passenger experience', 'makes people think' and 'being good for schools' were good reasons for having art on the Overground.

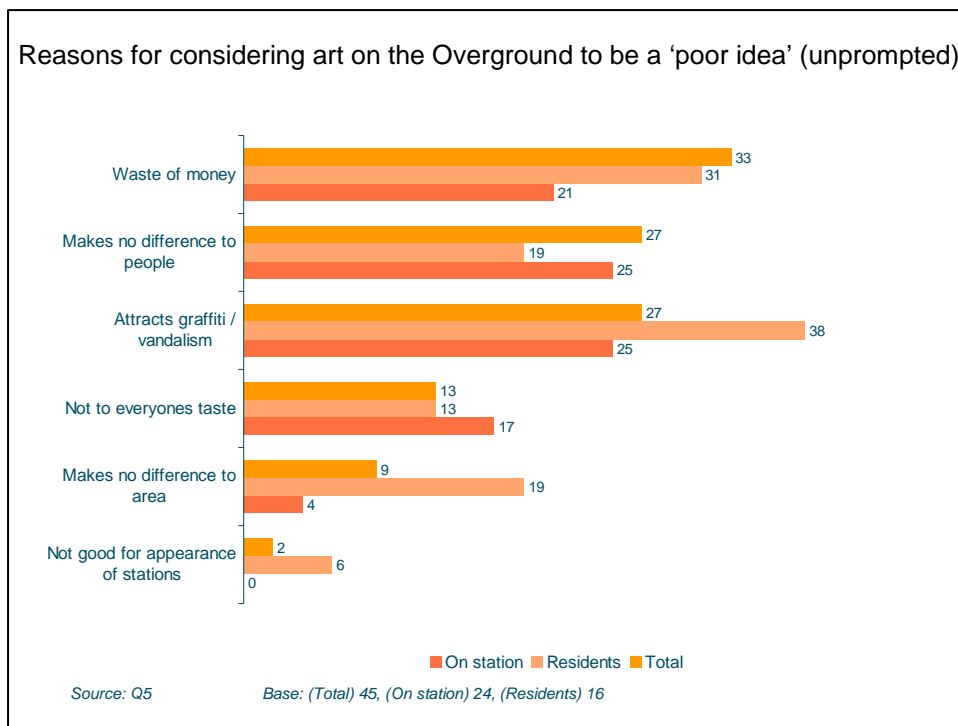


Looking at the results by station, people at or around 'Hackney Central' and 'Willesden Junction' were more likely to believe that art installations would 'improve the station appearance'. People at or around Willesden Junction were the least likely to believe that it would be 'good for artists'. People at or around Acton Central and Hackney Central were the most likely to believe that art on the stations 'would be good for the local area'. People at Crouch Hill were more likely to believe that it would 'provide a

break from adverts', while people at Gospel Oak were most likely to believe it would 'make people think' and 'be good for local schools'.

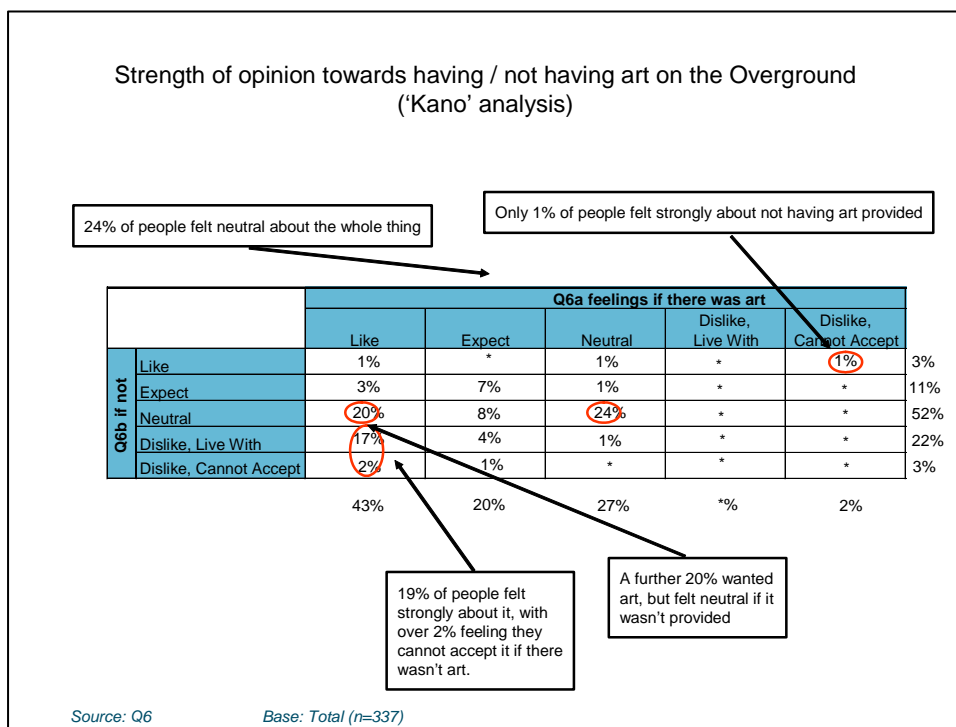
There were few significant differences across demographics, although those aged 35-54 were more likely to believe art would be 'good for schools' (14% vs. 6% of the total).

Amongst the minority who thought that art installations were not a good idea, the main reasons for this were that it is a 'waste of money, that 'it makes no difference to people', and that 'it attracts graffiti / vandalism'. Residents were more likely (than customers) to mention the first and third of these concerns.



4.2 Strength of opinion towards art on the Overground

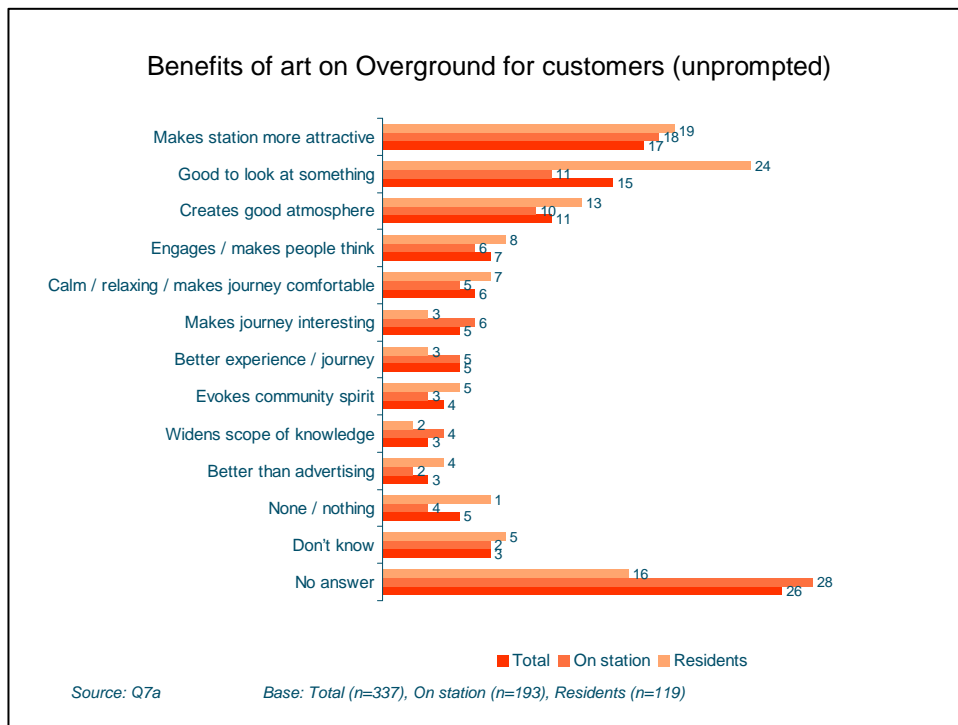
Almost two thirds (63%) of people would like or would expect art on the Overground, while just over a quarter (27%) are neutral. Only a very small proportion dislike the idea of it. However, whilst many people are positive towards the proposals, they do not hold a strong preference for art on the Overground.



Specifically, one quarter of people feel very strongly about the prospect of art on the Overground; that is, they are positive to the prospect and dislike it if there is no art. Over one quarter (28%) are warmly positive towards art on the Overground and like the idea, but they do not feel strongly if there wasn't / isn't any. A further quarter are neutral to either prospect. Thus, whilst art on the Overground is a largely positive development, it is not one that is given high importance or priority by most customers or residents.

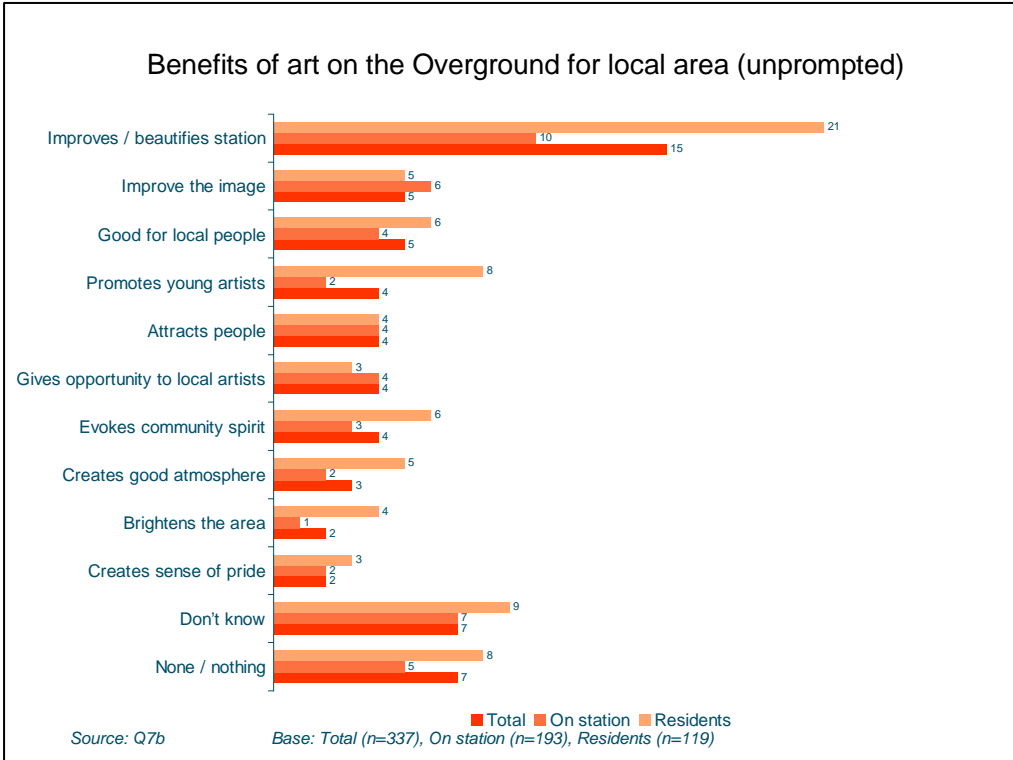
4.3 Perceived Benefits of art on the Overground

The most cited benefits of art on the Overground for customers were that it would ‘make the station more attractive or vibrant’, that ‘it was good to look at when waiting’ and ‘it creates a good atmosphere’. Residents were more likely (than customers) to think that art providing something that is ‘good to look at when waiting’ was a benefit to customers (24% vs. 11%).



People at Willesden Junction were most likely to mention that art ‘makes the station more attractive’ as a benefit for customers, while those at Crouch Hill were the most likely to think that art could be ‘good to look at / something better than waiting’.

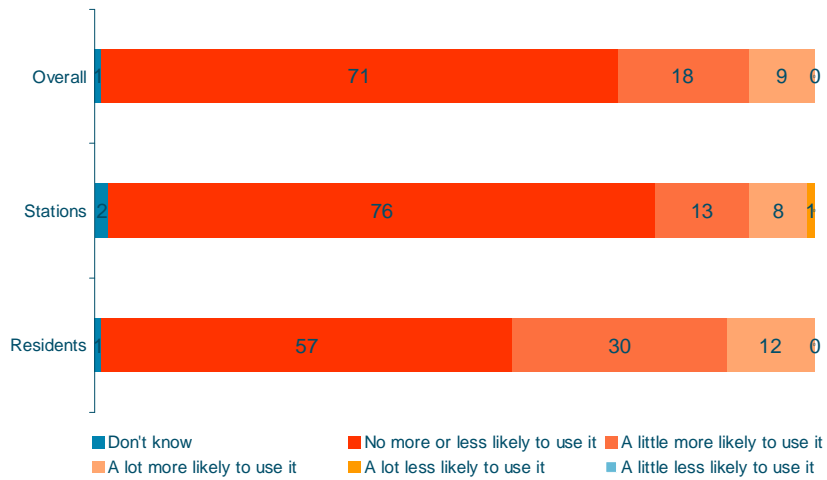
The main benefits for the local area of having art on the Overground were that it ‘makes the station attractive’, followed by improving the ‘image / standard of the station’ and being ‘good for the local people / economy’.



Residents were more likely to state the local area benefit of ‘improve / beautify the station’ (21% vs. 10% of station interviewers). Residents were also more likely to believe that art would ‘promote young talent’ (8% vs. 2%) than those who were interviewed on the station.

Whilst the majority of people said that they would be no more or less likely to use the Overground if the art proposals were implemented were added, just under a fifth said they were at least a little more likely to use London Overground if art was introduced. Residents were more likely than those who were interviewed at stations to state that implementing the art proposals would make them use the London Overground more (42% vs. 21%).

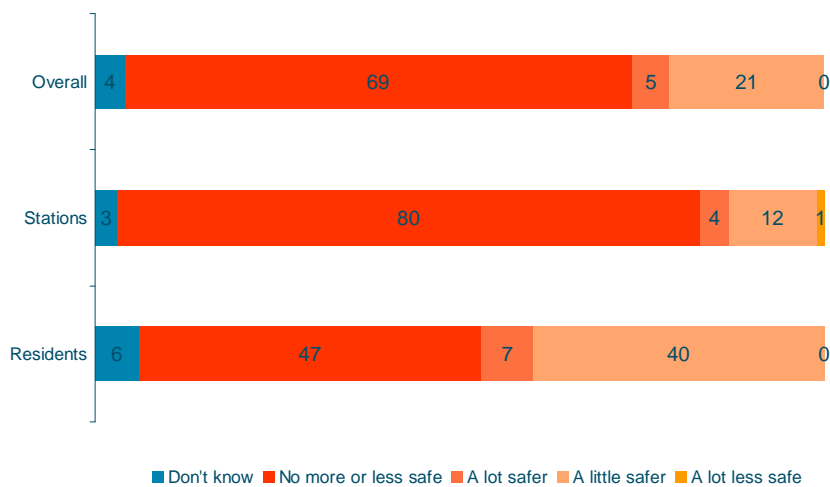
Potential impact of art on the Overground on Overground usage



Source: Q12

Base: Overall (337), On station (193), Residents (119)

Potential impact of art on the Overground on feelings of safety



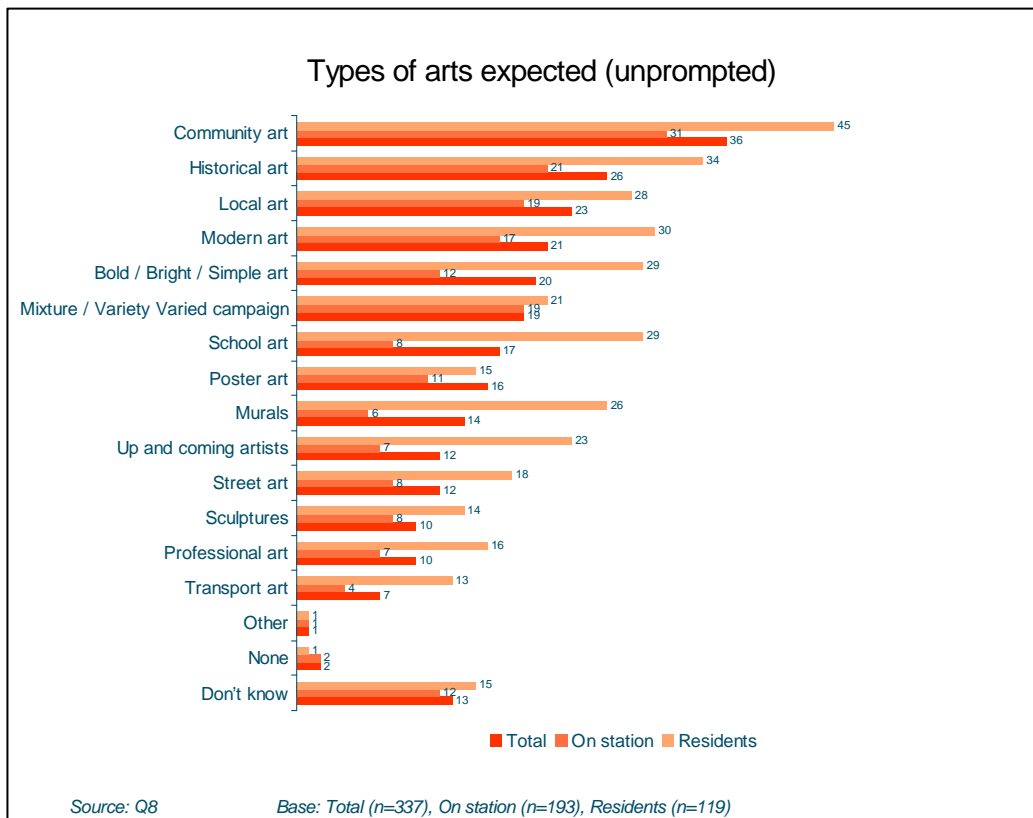
Source: Q13

Base: Overall (337), On station (193), Residents (119)

Also, whilst over two thirds of people (69%) believed that they would feel no more or less safe using London Overground if the art proposals were implemented, a fifth (21%) said they would feel a little more safe using it, and one in twenty (5%) believed that they would feel a lot safer using it. Overall, over a quarter (26%) of people believed that they would feel safer using the Overground if there were art installations added compared to less than 1% of people who said they would feel less safe.

Looking at station analysis, over four in ten people at Acton Central (42%) and Gospel Oak (41%) believed that art would make them feel safer on the London Overground. At the same time, people at New Cross Gate were the most likely to believe they will 'feel no more or less safe'.

4.4 Types of art expected and wanted on the Overground

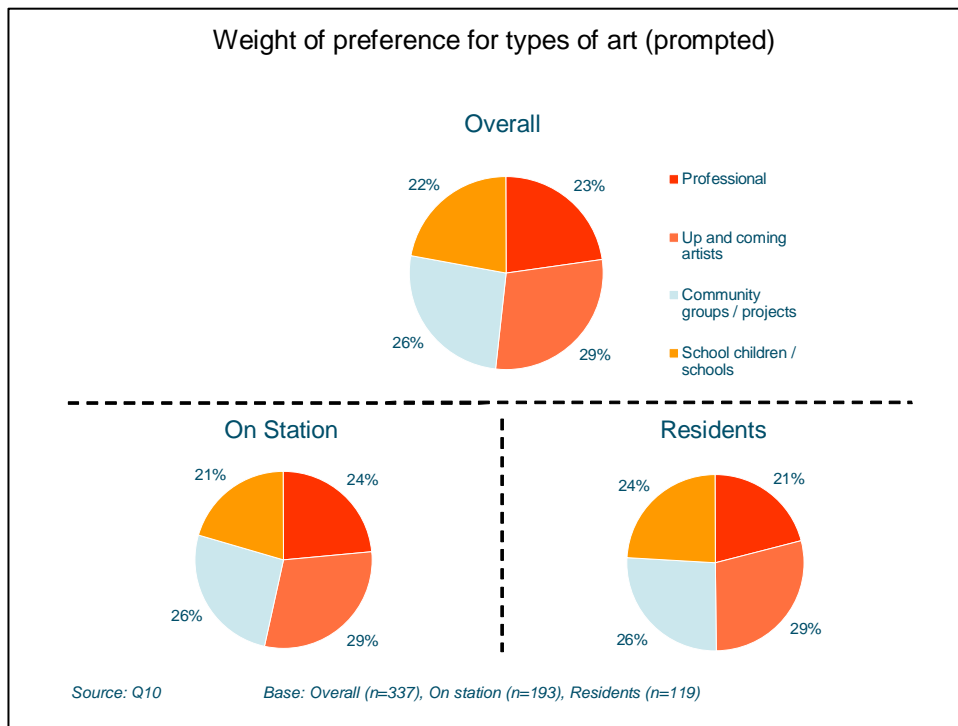


'Community art' was the most mentioned type most expected to be seen, cited by over a third of people (36%), followed by between a fifth and a quarter of people mentioning; 'historical' (26%), 'local' (23%) and 'modern art' (21%). Generally, residents mentioned more types of art than customers, (potentially) a product of the interview taking place in home rather than on station.

People at New Cross Gate were more likely to mention 'community art' (61%), while people at Gospel Oak were the most likely to mention 'historical art' (49% vs. 26% overall) as expected types of art.

Those who rated the art proposals as 'a good idea' were more likely to mention 'community art' (41% vs. 10%) and 'school art' (18% vs. 3%) as types of art expected., compared with those who were less positive to the proposals. Women were significantly more likely than men to expect 'community art', 'local art' and 'school art'. No one aged 55+ mentioned 'street art / graffiti' as a possible art campaign compared to over one in ten of 16-34 year olds and 35-54 year olds (10% and 12% respectively). White people were more likely to mention 'up and coming artists' (15% vs. 6%) than those from a BAME group.

Generally people gave roughly equal weighting to the four proposed types of art on the Overground, with 'work from up and coming artists' slightly ahead in preference for both customers and residents.



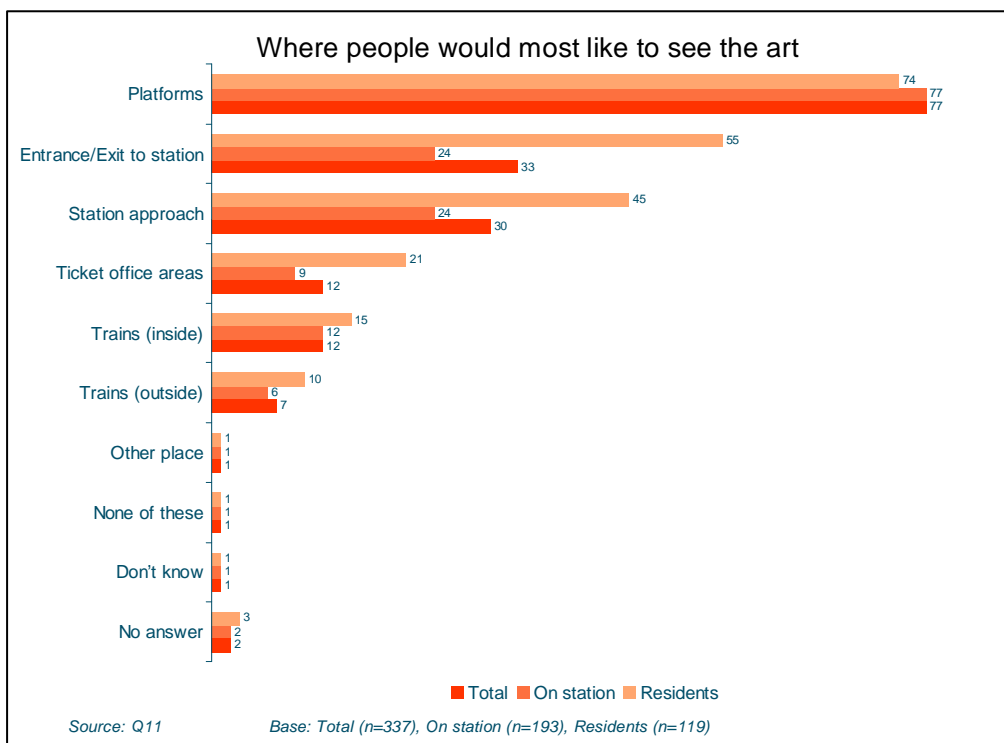
Looking at station analysis, people at Bushey and Crouch Hill, were more likely to want to see more art from the work of ‘recognised professional artists’. At Acton Central, Camden Road and Willesden Junction people had more preference for work from ‘up and coming artists’. At the same time, people at Gospel Oak and Camden Road were more likely to say that the ‘work of community groups and community projects’ were the types of art they would most like to see on the Overground. Lastly, people at Willesden Junction, New Cross Gate and Hackney Central were more likely to want see art from the work of ‘school children and schools groups’.

There was little difference when looking at the demographic analysis, though those aged 55 and over were keener to see more work from ‘recognised professional artists’ than those aged 35-54, as were those people who used the London Overground less than once a month. People who felt positive towards art placements on the

Overground art were more likely to say they preferred the work of ‘up and coming artists’ rather than those who felt neutral about art placements on the Overground. Those who only used the London Overground monthly were more likely to want to see the work of ‘community groups and projects’ on the Overground.

4.5 Where people want to see art

Platforms were by far the most popular place for art, cited by over three quarters of people (77%). The ‘entrance / exit to the station’ and ‘station approach’ were mentioned by around a third.



Those who felt positive towards art installations were more likely to want to see art on the ‘entrance / exits to stations’ and on the ‘station approach’ than those who were neutral to the idea of art installations on the Overground. People who travelled at least

once a month on London Overground were more likely than those who travelled less often to want to see art on the inside of trains (21% vs. 3%).

Looking at station analysis, people at Acton Central were the most likely to want to see art on platforms (94% vs. 77% overall), ticket office areas (28% vs. 12% overall) and on the outside of the trains (22% vs. 7% overall). People at Crouch Hill were the most likely to want to see art on the station approach (56% vs. 30% overall), whilst people at Gospel Oak were more likely to want to see it at the entrance/exit to station (59% vs. 33%) and on the inside of trains (30% vs. 12%).

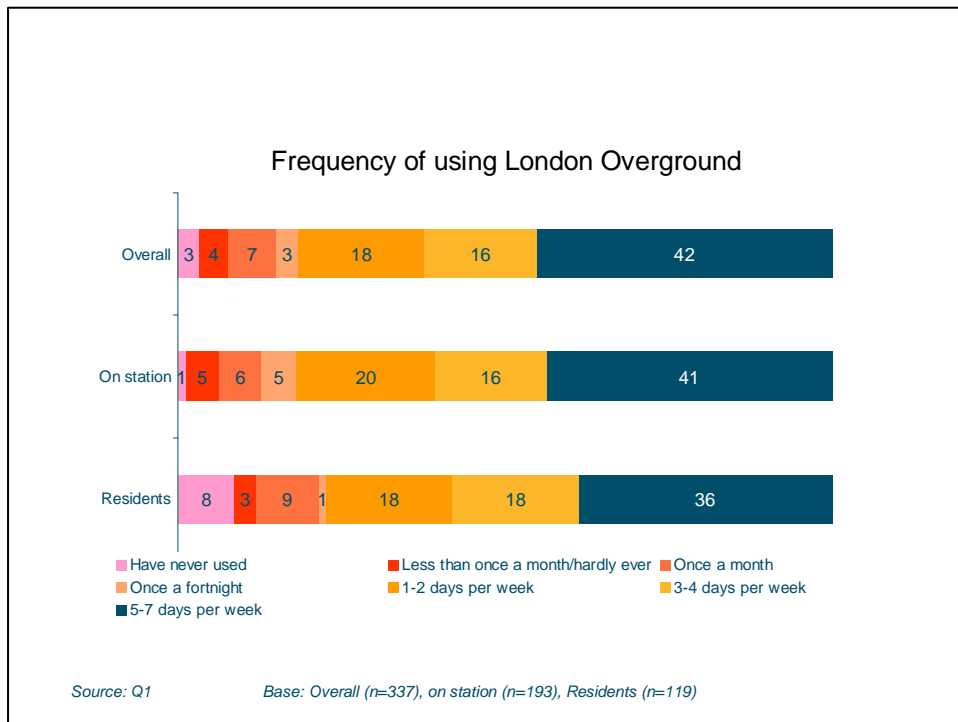
Looking at the demographics, white people were more likely than those from BAME groups to think that platforms were the best place for art (81% vs. 68%), whilst at the same time people from BAME groups were more likely to think that art should be placed on the outside of trains than white people (13% vs. 5%).

5. Appendix

5.1 Respondent Profile

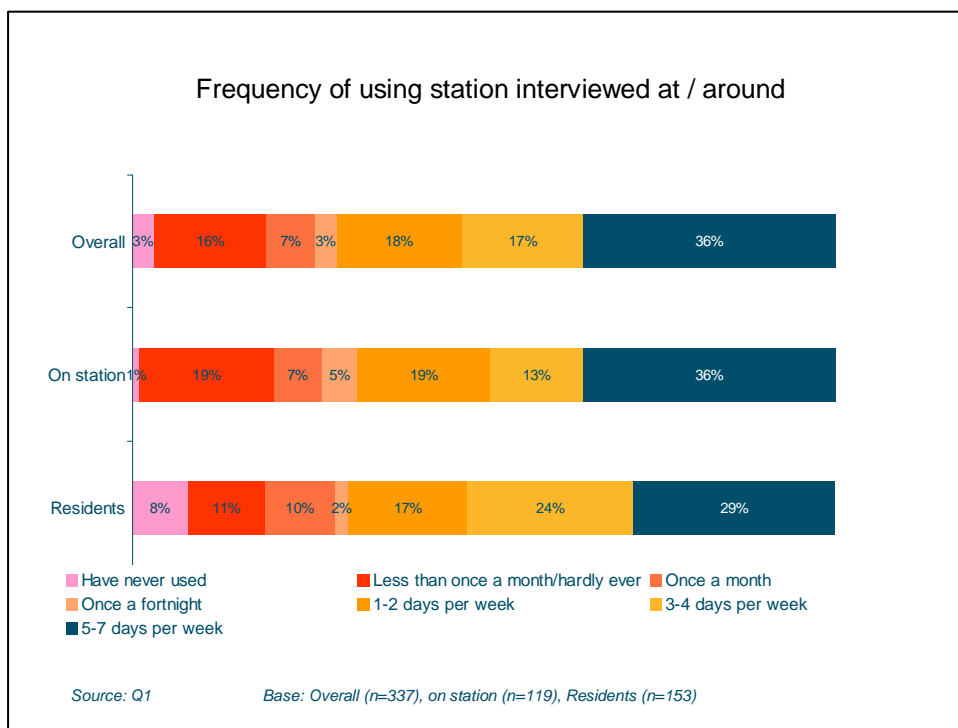
%	Total	On Station	Local Resident		Total	On station	Local Resident
Base	337	193	119		337	193	119
Gender				Ethnicity			
Male	48%	49%	45%	White	74%	75%	72%
Female	52%	51%	55%	Mixed	3%	3%	3%
Age				Asian	5%	6%	5%
16-34	54%	57%	50%	Black	14%	11%	19%
35-59	39%	38%	39%	Chinese / Other	2%	3%	1%
60+	7%	5%	11%	Working			
Social grade				Working	77%	81%	66%
ABC1	67%	67%	68%	Student	12%	10%	17%
C2DE	30%	32%	31%	Not working	4%	3%	5%
Refused	2%	3%	1%	Disabled			
				Disabled	1%	0%	2%
				Not Disabled	98%	99%	96%

5.2 Frequency of using London Overground / station



Over two fifths people (42%) used the London Overground 5-7 days a week, and a further third (34%) used the London Overground 1-4 days a week. Just over one in ten residents never used, or hardly ever used, the London Overground.

An analysis by demographics shows the those aged 55+ were the most likely to never travel on the London Overground and BAME people were more likely to travel once a week.



Looking at frequency of use of the stations interviewed at or around over a third of people (36%) used the stations around 5-7 days a week and a further third (35%) used the stations at least 1-4 times a week. Just less than one in five residents had never used their local station, or used it less often than once a month.

Looking at demographic analysis, women were more likely to use the station just once a week whilst white people and those aged 55+ were more likely to never use the station.