Welcome to the Greater Boston Culture & Community Convening
Culture & Community Research Sequence

2020

Wave 1 national audience & community survey*

2021

Qualitative interviews with Black adults across the U.S.

Wave 2 national audience & community survey

Focus on Massachusetts
in partnership with the Barr Foundation
January 2022

Focus on Massachusetts: Regional Reports
A series of 9 companion reports highlighting regional findings in MA
Spring 2022
Building Connection and Consonance: Black Perspectives on Creativity, Trustworthiness, Welcome, and Well-being

Melody Buyukozer Dawkins, PhD
Researcher
About the Study
Insights, not absolutes...

...to help the cultural sector, broadly and democratically defined, better understand the dynamics of equity and relevance by exploring the experiences and amplifying the perspectives of Black people in the US, who have been historically excluded in past research studies and planning efforts in the field.

The study does not claim to be a comprehensive view of all Black and African American communities in the US. Rather, it shines light on the specific experiences and perspectives of the 50 people we spoke with, as Black people are not a monolith.
Research Team & Collaborators

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Slover Linett Audience Research

Ciara Knight
PhD Candidate and Consulting Researcher

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Slover Linett Audience Research

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Slover Linett Audience Research

...and key collaborators

Katrina Bledsoe, PhD

Esther Anthony-Thomas, Black Storytellers
Jessica Anne Bratt, Grand Rapids Public Library
Leila Haile, Ori Art Gallery
David Norville, Castle of Our Skins

Ellice Patterson, Abilities Dance
Hatuey Ramos-Fermín, Laundromat Project
Carlton Turner, SIPP Culture
Tiffany LaTrice Williams, TILA Studios
Research Methods

Design:
- Interviews held between February 26\textsuperscript{th} 2021 and May 11\textsuperscript{th} 2021
- 90-minute-conversations over Zoom or phone

Notes on building rapport:
- Conversational, open-ended interviewing
- Promoting comfort and openness via personal connection
- Intentional word and phrase use to avoid leading the conversation
A Holistic Picture of Study Themes
Key Themes & Insights
During the pandemic era, many of those we spoke with have been:

- **focusing** on their mental and physical health
- **making** meaningful connections with family, friends, and community members
- **bringing** themselves into peaceful, healing environments
There was an arts institution that I like, and it was a grieving session. It was stressful, but collective grieving was really great. It’s a time for people to **gather and grieve**. Two artists facilitated it, and it was on Zoom. There was voice, meditation, collective singing, and chant. And they would put the name of someone you were thinking of, passed away, or holding space for. They were able to hold us together really well. It was fascinating. It was also great because one thing I’ve been obsessed with is the lack of acknowledgement in the US of half a million people who’ve passed away, plus those who’ve passed away due to Covid neglect. You have to grieve to get over something, and you have to acknowledge it. The US doesn’t consider 20% of the population as fully human. Because of white supremacy you can’t fully grieve and move on. Actively not seeing it happening in a collective way has disturbed me.
Self-care

Key take-aways for connecting people through self-care:

• Self-care as a core frame, not an add-on
• Build on new public recognition of self-care
• Creativity = wellbeing
Creativity

Every person we spoke with valued and practiced creativity and self-expression in their lives – although not everyone identified as creative or artistic.
Creativity

1. Self-expression through artistic practice or art-based crafts

2. The act of physical creation

3. The generation of new thoughts, ideas and creative connections

4. Documenting to preserve authentic history

5. Embodiment of creativity
Creativity

Key take-aways for tapping into creativity:

• Foster creativity ≠ celebrate creativity
• Validate, amplify, and extend
• Bridging individual to collective creativity
Many mentioned that trust is dynamic, provisional and built over time. It is also evidence based.

For many, trust was a result of trustworthiness.

People focused on trustworthiness through:

- **Consistent action** (e.g., recognition and accountability to the past, efforts)
- **Meeting community needs** (e.g., immediate needs identified by the community)
- **Communicated evidence** (e.g., community presence)
Trustworthiness & Trust

“...It goes back to trust in the people who are around. If I go to an opening, my friend has a new pop-up gallery, I trust that because of what her mission is. I go to [large art museums], and half this stuff is stolen. This is not trusted, this is booty that I’m looking at. Does that make sense? I don’t trust you. This ain’t yours. I’ll remember.”

“...Some of these organizations I’ve worked with, they’ve posted these Black Lives Matter statements, but I don’t think that’s true in some situations. Because you look at their staff, or their board...If your mission is serving the general population, then that needs to be represented on the staff. You need that cultural expertise on your staff in order to be effective at cultural presentation. A lot of organizations don’t acknowledge that, or they only do that in front of funders. I’ve seen that first-hand. It’s kind of frustrating.”
Key take-aways for increasing trustworthiness and building trust:

• Attendance ≠ Trust
• Cognitive consonance over cognitive dissonance
• Aim for progress and not perfection
• Commit to a long-term process
• Show, not tell (consistently)
• Mutually beneficial alliances/collaborations with other trusted entities
When people talked about belonging, they highlighted that it **exists in every setting** and that it’s more related to being able to express one’s authentic self in settings.

People focused on welcome through:

- Small acts of kindness
- Visible and invisible cues
- Holistic representations
In reality, I belong here, because my ancestors built this country, and history then, now, affirms that I do not. So that’s belonging. In the spaces where I am, I create belonging, I affirm belonging. To isolate and create our own worlds, because we know that outside that belonging is tenuous, it’s transactional, it’s fragile. There’s the layers of belonging.

There are conscious and unconscious things. I think any space that requires people to be there, I think you can tell. It’s very subtle, especially if it’s talking to you. You can tell if they have someone represented in that process. It always turns up tone deaf.”
Welcome & Belonging

Key take-aways in fostering welcoming environments:

• Representation at every step of the process
• Avoid tokenism, support new people
• Good "customer service"
• Celebrate a wide variety of Black experiences (e.g., joy, vulnerability and positivity)
• Recognize and embrace Black visionaries without othering
Living in Boston and having lived here all my life, it’s a weird place. It’s a very liberal city. I don’t think I could live anywhere more liberal than the east coast in Massachusetts in Boston. It’s politically the way I align, but also as a Black person, I am not unaware of the segregated neighborhoods. I’m not unaware of Boston’s history of racism and prejudice. Sometimes it feels kind of like, how could this stuff happen here, in an area that is so supposedly liberal and aware of different things like class and race? At other times, it is not surprising. Reading about those experiences [racist incidents at a prominent arts organization] and the media I follow, it was quite a story. It’s a reminder that for people of color, no matter how liberal an area you live in, racism happens anywhere and everywhere.”
Reflections on findings from Black arts leaders

Catherine Morris
Doneeca Thurston
Marquis Victor
CULTURE + COMMUNITY IN A TIME OF TRANSFORMATION

Focus on Massachusetts: Greater Boston
Research Team & Collaborators

Jen Benoit-Bryan, PhD
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...and key collaborators

Katrina Bledsoe, PhD | Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Expert

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Anh Vu Sawyer | Southeast Asian Coalition of Massachusetts
Siddhartha Shah | Peabody Essex Museum
Rosario Ubiera-Minaya | Amplify Latinx
Research Topics

• How to support communities
• Patterns of engagement & connection
• Value, use, and future of digital engagement
• Perceptions of systemic racism
• Role in addressing social issues
• Desires for change
What Distinguishes This Study

Community Centered

This research centers a representative sample of Massachusetts residents rather than focusing just on cultural attenders. The survey was translated into nine languages to increase accessibility for non-English speakers.

Large Scale

We collected more than 8,000 responses from people across the state of Massachusetts with 5,606 responses from Greater Boston, 935 of which were from BIPOC Bostonians. Nationally, we collected more than 75,000 responses.

National Implications

A national benchmark allows us to identify where Massachusetts residents are similar and different compared to response patterns across the country.

Open Access

We believe that transparency and access are critical to this crisis-response work, and we’ve made all materials publicly available including research instruments, data tables, and the underlying dataset. Find more information at: https://sloverlinett.com/cctt/
*Among greater Boston respondents, 935 identified as BIPOC with the following proportions: American Indian or Alaska Native (2%), Asian or Pacific Islanders (33%), Black or African American (28%), Hispanic or Latinx (31%), and Multi-racial (5%).
Role of cultural organizations
Among Bostonians, BIPOC and non-BIPOC, arts & culture are deeply integrated into people’s lives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Past year (2020-2021)</th>
<th>Pre-pandemic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Personal creative activities | 92%  
88% | Greater Boston (n=5,606)  
BIPOC Greater Boston (n=931) | 57%  
57% |
| Arts or culture online | 73%  
78% | 96%  
94% |
| In-person arts or culture | 57%  
57% | 57%  
57% |
| Community-based or participatory arts | 57%  
57% | 57%  
57% |

ARTS ENGAGEMENT IS ALIVE AND WELL IN MASSACHUSETTS

Q1. Have you been doing any of the following creative activities during the past year? Please select ALL that apply.
Q5. Have you done any online arts or culture activities or events over the past year? This might have been via your computer, a streaming service, mobile phone or tablet. Please select ALL that apply.
Q13. Have you done any of the following activities in person in the past few years (before or during the pandemic)? Please select ANY that you did at least once in the past few years.
Q11. People can be involved in culture, creativity and community in many different ways. Have you done any of the following types of participatory activities in the past few years (before or during the pandemic)? Please select ALL that apply.

^ indicates significant difference from all Greater Boston respondents at 95% level
Arts and culture organizations are quite important to the majority of Greater Boston BIPOC residents—especially among Hispanic/Latinx Bostonians.

**IMPORTANCE OF ARTS & CULTURE ORGANIZATIONS**

Q23. In general, how unimportant or important are arts or culture organizations to you, personally. (Top 2 Box: Those that selected “Strongly agree”)

\(^\text{^ indicates significant difference from all Greater Boston respondents at 95% level}\)
Across all racial and ethnic groups, Bostonians want to see arts organizations helping their communities—with most looking to the arts as a place for emotional outlet and connection.

THREE WAYS ARTS & CULTURE ORGANIZATIONS CAN HELP THEIR COMMUNITIES

Q21. How would you want arts or culture organizations to help your community during times like these? Please check ALL that apply. Help my community…

- Emotional outlet: 85%, 85%
- Connection and learning: 79%, 83%
- Practical help: 57%, 60%

For more information about each dimension within these factors, see detailed data tables.
BIPOC Bostonians are particularly likely to want to see arts and culture organizations collaborating with communities—a desire that’s almost universal among Black/African Americans.

**IMPORTANCE OF CO-CREATION AND COLLABORATION**

Q24. Arts or culture organizations should involve their communities and collaborate with them to create programs. - How much do you personally agree or disagree with the following statements? (Top 2 Box: Those who selected “Strongly agree”)

^ indicates significant difference from all Greater Boston respondents at 95% level
Digital engagement
During the pandemic, BIPOC Greater Boston residents had similar levels of awareness of, participation in, and payment for arts & culture activities online as the region overall.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Greater Boston (n=5,577)</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
<th>BIPOC Greater Boston (n=928)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Awareness of Online</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts &amp; Culture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participated in</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Arts &amp; Culture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paid for Any Online</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts &amp; Culture Activity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ENGAGEMENT WITH ONLINE ARTS & CULTURE DURING THE PANDEMIC

Q5. Have you done any online arts or culture activities or events over the past year? This might have been via your computer, a streaming service, mobile phone or tablet. Please select ALL that apply.

Q10. Over the past year, have you paid for any online arts or culture activities? Please select ONE.
Online offerings engaged many Greater Boston residents who had not attended similar programs from performing arts organizations in person in the past several years.

% Online attendees who HAVE NOT BEEN IN RECENT YEARS (DIGITAL ONLY)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>% Online Attendees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>World music group (n=538)</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jazz music group (n=602)</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performing arts center/Music venue (n=2,961)</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opera (n=780)</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classical music group (1,727)</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dance Group (n=1,127)</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folk music group (n=623)</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theater group (n=2,103)</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Festival or fair (n=724)</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MAKEUP OF DIGITAL ARTS & CULTURE AUDIENCES

Q7. Who provided the online arts or culture activities that you did? Please select ALL that apply.
Q8. You shared that you participated in an online activity offered by a museum over the past year. Which kind(s) of museum were those? Please select ALL that apply.
Online offerings engaged many Greater Boston residents who had not attended similar programs from museums and other cultural organizations in person in the past several years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% Online attendees who HAVE NOT BEEN IN RECENT YEARS (DIGITAL ONLY)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Architectural tour or design museum (n=416)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Park (n=678)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library (n=2,205)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Botanical garden (n=650)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History museum or historical attraction (n=1,255)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural history museum (n=435)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science or technology museum or planetarium (n=588)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art museum (n=2,652)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoo or aquarium (n=571)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

58% 48% 38% 38% 37% 32% 32% 28% 19%
Most BIPOC Greater Boston residents valued that online arts & culture activities let them experience organizations and artists from other locations that they normally wouldn't see in person.

Q9_2. …allow me to experience organizations or artists located in other places, that I normally wouldn’t see in person. - Thinking about the kinds of online arts or culture activities that you’ve done, how important are the following qualities… (Top 2 Box: Those who selected “Strongly agree”)

^- indicates significant difference from all Greater Boston respondents at 95% level
And over half of BIPOC Greater Boston residents value the opportunity to connect online with arts and culture content from local organizations—also at higher rates than the region overall.
Similarly, the majority of BIPOC Bostonians value the opportunity to connect online with arts and culture content from organizations they've attended previously.

**Importance of Personal Connection with Online Arts and Culture**

Q9. ...come from organizations or venues I’ve attended myself or have a personal connection with. - Thinking about the kinds of online arts or culture activities that you’ve done, how important are the following qualities? It is important to me that online arts and culture activities... (Top 2 Box: Those selecting ‘Very Important’)

^ indicates significant difference from all Greater Boston respondents at 95% level
Although most BIPOC Bostonians expect to prefer in person over online engagement with arts and culture in the future, Hispanic/Latinx residents are evenly split in their preferences.

The Future of Digital vs In-Person Preferences

Q44. When you are able to engage in (or engage in more) in-person arts or culture activities, how do you expect you'll split your time between online and in-person experiences? Please select ONE option.

“Agnostic” refers to those selecting either “I’ll prefer online and in-person activities equally” or “I’ll make my decisions solely on the basis of the content”
Cultural justice
Most Greater Boston area residents value arts and culture organizations that are welcoming, and among BIPOC residents, broad diversity is almost equally as important.

**Most Important Qualities of Arts & Culture Organizations**

Q22. What qualities or values are most important to you in an arts or culture organization? Please select up to FIVE.

- **Being welcoming for all kinds of people**
- **Widely accessible prices and operating hours**
- **High quality**
- **Broad diversity of perspectives and voices**
- **Serves as a community gathering place**
- **Experiences that are fully accessible to people with disabilities**
- **Deep ties to their local communities**
- **Preservation of heritage or culture**

^ indicates significant difference from one group at 95% level.

**Greater Boston (n=5,581)**

**BIPOC Boston (n=929)**

**44% for Asian and Pacific Islanders**
Nearly all BIPOC Greater Boston residents (97%) want to see changes in arts or culture organizations. Four main types of change are desired:

- **Access and new works**: 77% of BIPOC Greater Boston residents want changes in this area, compared to 71% of all Greater Boston respondents.
- **Equity and inclusion**: 62% want changes in this area, with a significant increase to 79% among BIPOC residents.
- **Belonging and welcome**: 56% want changes, with a significant increase to 68% among BIPOC residents.
- **Community rootedness**: 49% want changes, with an increase to 56% among BIPOC residents.

For more information about each dimension within these factors, see detailed data tables.
The majority of Greater Boston residents want to see arts & culture organizations address social issues—and among Asian/Pacific Islanders and Black/African Americans in the region, this desire was nearly universal (99%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>% Selecting at least one social issue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greater Boston (n=3,746)</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIPOC Greater Boston (n=518)</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islander (n=215)</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African American (n=89)</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latinx (n=130)</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White (n=2,906)</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiracial (n=79)</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ARTS & CULTURE ORGANIZATIONS SHOULD ADDRESS SOCIAL ISSUES

Q48. Which of the following social issues (if any) do you think arts or culture organizations should address? Please select up to THREE or tell us in your own words.

^ indicates significant difference from all Greater Boston respondents at 95% level
Quick question: What social issues have been addressed through your organization or artistic practice over the past few years?
While systemic racial injustice was the top issue that residents wanted to see arts and culture organizations tackle, BIPOC Bostonians were more likely to want to see income inequality and food insecurity addressed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Issue</th>
<th>Greater Boston (n=3,746)</th>
<th>BIPOC Greater Boston (n=518)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Systemic racial injustice</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income inequality and the wealth gap</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climate change and natural disasters</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The political division in the United States</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food insecurity/hunger</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Covid-19 pandemic</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The opioid/heroin epidemic</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

79% for Asian and Pacific Islanders

37% for Hispanic and Latinx
35% for Black and African Americans

^ indicates significant difference from one group at 95% level
Greater Boston residents are more likely than Americans overall to believe that systemic racism is present in every genre of arts and culture organizations.

**PERCEPTIONS OF SYSTEMIC RACISM IN ARTS & CULTURE ORGANIZATIONS**

Q26. Based on what you’ve seen or heard, do you think systemic racism is present in each of the types of organizations below (Top 2 Box: Those that selected “Strongly agree”)

![Bar chart showing the percentage of respondents in Greater Boston and nationally who believe systemic racism is present in various arts and culture organizations.](chart_image)
And BIPOC Greater Boston residents are more likely to believe systemic racism is present in arts or culture organizations than Bostonians overall across all genres - with particularly high ratings for theater, science museums, and dance groups.

**PERCEPTIONS OF SYSTEMIC RACISM IN ARTS & CULTURE ORGANIZATIONS**

Q26. Based on what you’ve seen or heard, do you think systemic racism is present in each of the types of organizations below (Top 2 Box: Those that selected “Strongly agree”)
Finally, Black and African Americans in the Greater Boston area are significantly more likely than BIPOC Bostonians as a whole to believe that systemic racism is present in most genres of arts or culture, particularly in theaters, art museums, and history museums.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Organization</th>
<th>Black/African American in Greater Boston (n=158)</th>
<th>BIPOC Greater Boston (n=854)</th>
<th>Greater Boston (n=4,805)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>History museums</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science museums</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art museums</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opera</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Festivals or fairs</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theater groups</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parks</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jazz music Orchestras groups</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World or folk music</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural history museums</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoos or aquariums</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Botanical gardens</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dance groups</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libraries</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The true impact of cultural research lies in the conversations it sparks, the priorities it shifts, and the experiments it inspires in cultural practice, philanthropy, and policy.
Taking Action

1. Becoming an anti-racist organization and combatting systemic racism
2. Seek deeper community participation and collaboration
3. Support all people in feeling actively welcome to your space, programs, or events
4. Explore your digital frontier (and the new audience it brings)
5. Find your role in social change
Community Leader Perspectives on Action Areas

Ben Hires
Harold Steward
Emily Ruddock