

Kassel, July 12, 2023

Press Release:**Great appeal for young people and long visitor stays: documenta presents visitor surveys on documenta fifteen. Sustainability survey also conducted for the first time**

Representative visitor surveys have a long tradition at documenta. Since documenta 9 (1992), the non-profit limited company has been conducting representative visitor surveys for the documenta exhibitions, held every five years, in cooperation with retired professor Dr. Gerd-Michael Hellstern, so as to obtain information on audience structure and interests. For the first time now, an online survey on the topic of sustainability was conducted for documenta fifteen under the direction of Prof. Dr. Christian Herzig.

documenta fifteen Evaluation

The fifteenth documenta ran from June 18 to September 25, 2022. A total of over 738,000 visitors attended the exhibition.

The general documenta fifteen Evaluation examines which audience groups are addressed by the exhibition and which expectations or information requirements exist among the visitors. It also analyzes audience profiles (origin, motives, interests), audience attitudes (perception, perceptions), and visitor behavior (economic impact).

The topic of antisemitism is dealt with in detail elsewhere, for example in the research project "Anti-Semitism and postcolonial debates using the example of documenta fifteen", conducted with the participation of the documenta Institute.

The survey on documenta fifteen demonstrates the unique position of documenta as a brand with a global reputation on the basis of the origin and structure of its visitors. The audience in Kassel is both international and also strongly anchored locally, regionally and nationally. The proportion of regular visitors (63.8%) has fallen compared to documenta 14 (in Kassel: 77%), but new groups of visitors have been

attracted: it was predominantly younger visitors up to the age of 40 (65.5%) who visited a documenta exhibition for the first time.

Although visitors from some 86 countries were among those surveyed, the overall composition of the documenta fifteen audience was less international than at previous documenta exhibitions. This may be due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but possibly also to the war in Ukraine; there is no specific research as to the reasons. The largest shares of foreign visitors came from the Netherlands (16.4%) and Switzerland (10.5%), followed by Austria (7%), France (6.3%), the United Kingdom (6.3%), and the United States (6.3%).

Traditionally, documenta attracts a comparatively young audience. The mean age for visitors from abroad at documenta fifteen was 44, with the median at 42. National visitors, by comparison, were slightly older: the mean for visitors from Germany was 47 years, with the median at 51. The proportion of younger visitors up to 20 years of age increased as compared to documenta 14 – five years earlier there were only 6.6% visitors in the group up to 20 years of age, now there were 8.2%.

The analysis shows high overall satisfaction among respondents with their visit to the exhibition (mean score of 2.19). In particular, the atmosphere of the exhibition, the principle of communality (lumbung), and the international mix met with high approval ratings. Over 94% of the visitors were satisfied with the overall service of guided tours and offers. Plans to visit in the future were cited as an important indicator of success: Over 63% of all visitors stated they would like to attend the next documenta exhibition.

The survey also provides results regarding the regional economic impact of the documenta exhibition. For 89.8% of the non-local visitors, the exhibition was the reason for a trip to Kassel. The percentage of visitors who spent two days or more at documenta fifteen was high despite the economic climate and the pandemic. Non-local visitors from Germany stayed in Kassel for an average of about 3 days, international visitors from outside Europe for an average of 5 days.

Overall, it can be concluded that although the antisemitism issue left its mark on visitors to documenta fifteen, they largely rated their time at the exhibition itself in positive terms (international visitors even more so than their German counterparts), that content-related terms such as "lumbung" will remain fresh in their memories, and that the vast majority plan to visit again. Furthermore, the audience could be even younger.

Under the scientific direction of Prof. Dr. Joanna Ożga, a total of 7,002 interviews were analyzed, which were obtained in the form of systematic random selection and combined standardized questions with face-to-face interviews.

Sustainability Survey

With a view to the exigencies of our time and ruangrupa's artistic practice, the theme of sustainability was approached holistically at documenta fifteen and taken into account in all areas of exhibition planning and execution. In addition to addressing ecological factors, the focus was on cultural, social, political, and economic aspects.

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For instance, the "sustainability euro" included in the admission ticket generated 375,000 euros for reforestation. In addition, the ticket covered local public transportation for the first time. In the case of merchandise, the focus was on sustainable and/or regional products, print products were Blue Angel certified where possible, and were largely offered in digitally optimized versions via QR code at the distribution points. Ecological, regional, and low-waste food offerings were promoted through the use of reusable tableware, organic food, and regional, vegan, and vegetarian dishes. documenta fifteen was particularly committed to circular material flows, becoming a member of the Aktionsnetzwerk Nachhaltigkeit in Kultur und Medien (Action Network for Sustainability in Culture and the Media), funded by the Minister of State for Culture, as early as 2020, and initiating the founding of the umbrella association for Germany-wide material distribution and logistics initiatives (IfM) via a symposium in 2021. In line with this cross-cutting mission, documenta fifteen also had sustainability issues or its efforts in this area evaluated for the first time.

The overall assessment of documenta fifteen's Sustainability Efforts is predominantly positive. The environmentally friendly focus of documenta fifteen was recognized by 63.9% of respondents, or as many as 91.1% if those responding "partly/partially" are included. Over half the respondents took note of documenta fifteen's sustainability projects and over 90% were in favor of supporting sustainability projects.

90% of visitors polled expressed the view that the documenta exhibitions should be aligned to be as climate-neutral as possible. Just over 80% of those surveyed were in favor of organizing the exhibition with as little negative ecological impact as possible, even if this meant that prices, such as for admission or food offerings, would increase by a few euros. The Sustainability Efforts in the food and beverage sector were praised by many of the respondents. For instance, 8 out of 10 respondents positively viewed the fact that sufficient organic products and sufficient vegetarian alternatives were offered.

The main means of transport used by travelers to Germany from abroad were train (38.8%), car (29.5%), and plane (26.2%). To travel to Kassel within Germany, the most frequently chosen mode of transport was the train (long-distance) (40%), followed by the car (33.7%) and local public transport (20.1%). More than half (60.1%) therefore traveled by comparatively climate-friendly means of transport (local and long-distance). This was also the case for visitors from Kassel, who most frequently used local public transport (41.4%), which was included in the ticket for the first time, closely followed by the use of bicycles (36.7%). The existing Park & Ride offer was used only by one in ten visitors arriving by car. Within Kassel, visitors most frequently moved around on foot. The second most common option for local mobility was public transport. Cars, bicycles and e-bikes were hardly ever used to travel between the exhibition venues.

Over half the respondents rated the communication on sustainable event management as honest and appealing, with a quarter partially agreeing. Wishes on the part of visitors for more prominent communication on sustainability relate, for instance, to a stronger focus on sustainability information on the website, to inform for visitors regarding climate-friendly travel to the event, or to the further reduction of paper-based communication and mediation materials.

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The online survey on documenta fifteen's Sustainability Efforts was conducted on behalf of documenta und Museum Fridericianum gGmbH by the University of Kassel/Justus Liebig University Giessen under the direction of Prof. Dr. Christian Herzig. Of the more than 738,000 visitors to documenta fifteen, 2,916 visitors took part in the survey.

Download of both evaluations.

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