

I Hear Too: Live and Minster Nights: Audience Research Pilot Project

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Contents

Contents	2
List of Figures.....	3
Acknowledgements.....	4
Introduction.....	4
Background.....	4
Objectives	5
Methodology.....	5
Potential for fulfilling long term objectives.....	6
1. Audience Survey Demographic.....	7
1.1 Gender Distribution	7
1.2 Age Distribution	7
1.3 Origin.....	8
1.4 Education	9
1.5 Occupation of main income earner	9
1.6 Ethnicity.....	11
2 Motivation for visit.....	12
2.1 Reasons for visiting Minster events.....	12
Conclusion	17
2.2 Uses of the Minster	17
Conclusion	19
3. Public perceptions of contemporary art in a heritage space	20
3.1 Public perceptions of the Minster as a venue for contemporary art	20
3.2 Public perceptions of the Minster as a venue for contemporary art according to demographic categories.	27
Conclusion	28
4. Impact of art events on public perceptions of heritage.....	28
4.1 Impact of art on public perceptions and understandings of the Minster.....	29
Conclusion:	38
4.2 Impact of art on public perceptions and understandings of the Minster according to demographic categories.	39
4.3 Impact of art on public perceptions and understanding of cultural heritage	39
Conclusion:	48
4.4 Impact of art on public perceptions and understandings of cultural heritage spaces according to demographic categories.	48
5. Art and music events as incentives for repeat visits to cultural heritage spaces	49
6. Conclusion.....	52

List of Figures

Figure 1: Gender distribution of respondents (total sample of 160 interviews)	7
Figure 2: Age distribution of respondents (total sample of 160 interviews)	8
Figure 3: Origin of respondents (total sample 160 interviews)	8
Figure 4: Highest education qualification of respondents (total sample of 160 interviews)	9
Figure 5: Occupation of main income earner in the household (total sample of 160 interviews)	10
Figure 6: Ethnicity of respondents (total sample of 160 interviews)	11
Figure 7: Main reasons for attending the Minster events (total sample 160 interviews)	16
Figure 8: Attitudes towards the use of the Minster as a venue for contemporary art (total sample of 160 interviews)	20
Figure 9: Other reflections and comments on the use of the Minster as a venue for contemporary art amongst respondents who stated they felt 'positive' or 'very positive' towards the use of the space as a display and performance venue (total sample of 160 interviews)	22
Figure 10: Art connecting with the meaning of the Minster (total sample of 160 interviews)	30
Figure 11: Reflections on how art enabled connections with the Minster (total sample 160 interviews)	31
Figure 12: Contemporary art changing public perceptions and attitudes towards heritage space (total sample of 160 interviews)	39
Figure 13: Impact of contemporary art on public perceptions and attitudes towards cultural heritage (total sample of 160 interviews)	41
Figure 14: Art and music events as incentives for repeats visiting to the Minster (total sample 160 interviews)	49
Figure 15: Reasons for repeats visits to art and music events at the York Minster (total sample 160 interviews)	50

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Introduction

The Institute for the Public Understanding of the Past (henceforth IPUP) conducted two pilot audience research projects at the York Minster October 2009 and January 2010 as part of a wider project to assess public perceptions of the cultural heritage of York. This audience research project was designed to explore what the Minster means to visitors and non-visitors, and to gain an insight of the values and meanings that different groups attach to the York Minster. In particular, the research was an effort to address the impact on audiences of contemporary art interventions in heritage spaces. Contemporary art interventions hereby refer to installations and site-specifics works by contemporary artists, including sound art, which are presented to the public in a heritage venue.

Background

The audience research project took place at two separate events, *I Hear Too: Live* on the 23rd November 2009, and *Minster Nights* on the 9th January 2010. The two events were very similar in their programme of performances and art installations, and therefore the audience data collected at both events can be collated into a single data series. The audience research questionnaire was identical for both events, and the data was collected by the same interviewers on both nights.

I Hear Too – Improving heritage experience through acoustic reality and audio research, is a research cluster set to explore how audio and acoustics research can be employed in the interpretation, understanding and representation of heritage materials and artefacts (for more

information see <http://iheartoo.blogspot.com/>). *I Hear Too: Live* showcased sound-art and music in the historic setting of the Minster; it features seven specially commissioned music, performance and sound-art installations in various locations around the Minster which explored and (re) interpreted the space, architecture and daily life of the Minster. Tickets for the event were £10 (£5 concession). The full programme of events and artists is available in Appendix 2.

Minster Nights is an evening event which takes place every few months at the Minster, showcasing artworks and installations from local and national artists. The audience research took place on the third *Minster Night* which presented light and sound installations, sculptures and performances across various locations in the Minster. In addition to this programme of events were 'Hidden Minster' tours, which allowed visitors to experience areas of the Minster not normally accessible to the public, along with tower trip tours and the possibility to view the Undercroft and the Treasury after hours. This event was free for York residents and for non-York residents normal Minster admission prices applied (£8 Adult, £7 concession). The full programme of events and artists is available in Appendix 3.

Objectives

The aim of this research is to gain an insight on the impact of sound art interventions in heritage settings in terms of audience engagement.

The first objective of this audience research was to investigate the perceived value of heritage spaces as venues for contemporary art. In particular, the research sought to examine how visitors perceived the connections between the contemporary artwork and the heritage space, and to assess the impact of sound art on people's perceptions and understanding of heritage.

Related to this objective, the audience research asked respondents to reflect more generally on the wider implications of contemporary art in heritage spaces in terms of their thoughts and feelings towards the heritage site. Finally, the research considered contemporary art and music events as a tool for attracting new audiences and repeat visitors.

Methodology

For the purposes of the *I Hear Too: Live*, 72 face-to-face interviews were conducted in various locations across the Minster and at various points of the evening. Many of the interviews took place before and after the main performances, so as to not disturb them. For *Minster Nights*, 88 face-to-face interviews were conducted in a similar way, across various locations in the cathedral and at different points in time of the evening. As such, a total sample of 160 face-to-face interviews was collected for the purpose of this pilot audience project. The audience survey attempted, as much as

possible, to engage people from as wide a background as possible. Focus was however placed on individuals above 16 years old (adults).

The open-ended questionnaires, retaining the anonymity of the respective respondents, were digitally recorded to allow for careful transcription. The main part of the interviews consisted of specific questions addressing the values, meanings and public perceptions related to site-specific contemporary art installations and performances in a cultural heritage site (see Appendix 1). Question related to the whether such events would encourage repeat visits were also included. In addition, general background information on the respondents was also collected in order to assist in the identification of any patterns with the regard the responses. Both the qualitative and quantitative (demographic) data gathered from the interviews have been coded in line with the specific objectives of the audience research project and have been analysed with the use of Microsoft Excel. All of the transcribed interviews are included in a separate document (see Appendix 2), which also includes the background information for all individual respondents. Every interview is labelled according to the relevant audio file and the initials of the person conducting the interview (e.g. NM 01 or SAC 17a and 17b respectively). The first set of interviews (interview 1 to interview 72) correspond to the *I Hear Too: Live* event, and the second set of interviews (interview 73 to 160) correspond to the *Minster Nights* January event.

Potential for fulfilling long term objectives

The audience research conducted at the York Minster can serve in the future as the basis for a more extensive project utilising qualitative methodologies to provide evidence of the value of contemporary art for public engagement with cultural heritage. The research can point to new ways of interpreting and representing heritage to a wider audience.

Furthermore, the audience research can form part of a larger research project to better understand public perceptions of the York Minster as a place of worship and as a cultural heritage attraction. The employment of qualitative research methodologies can potentially contribute to the identification of visitor needs and expectations as well as to engage with a wider audience of users and non-users. Indeed, such interventions can serve to introduce contemporary art to an audience that primarily visits historic sites for their heritage value, whilst at the same time encouraging a contemporary art audience to visit historic and heritage sites.

1. Audience Survey Demographic

1.1 Gender Distribution

In November 2009 and January 2010, a sample of 160 face-to-face interviews was collected during the *I Hear Too: Live* and *Minster Nights* events at the York Minster. Just over half the respondents were female (52%), while 48% were male (Fig. 1)

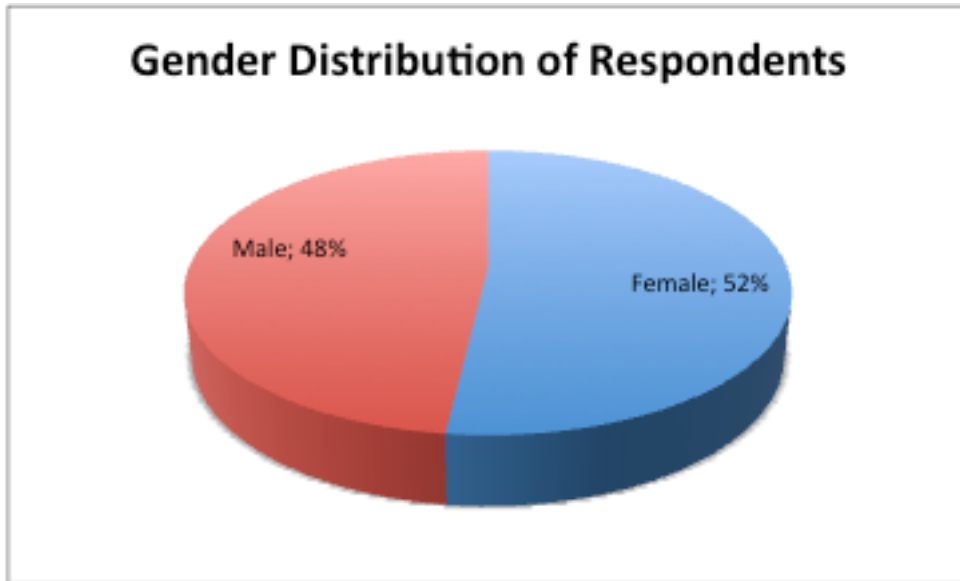


Figure 1: Gender distribution of respondents (total sample of 160 interviews)

1.2 Age Distribution

The overall age distribution for respondents from the age groups 25-34, 35-44 and 45-54 were fairly evenly distributed (22%,19% and 21% respectively), with the largest group represented by the 25-34 year olds (Fig. 2). The younger age groups Under 16 and 16-24 accounted for 1% and 10% of the total sample, while the older age groups 55-64 and 65+ accounted for 16% and 10% respectively.

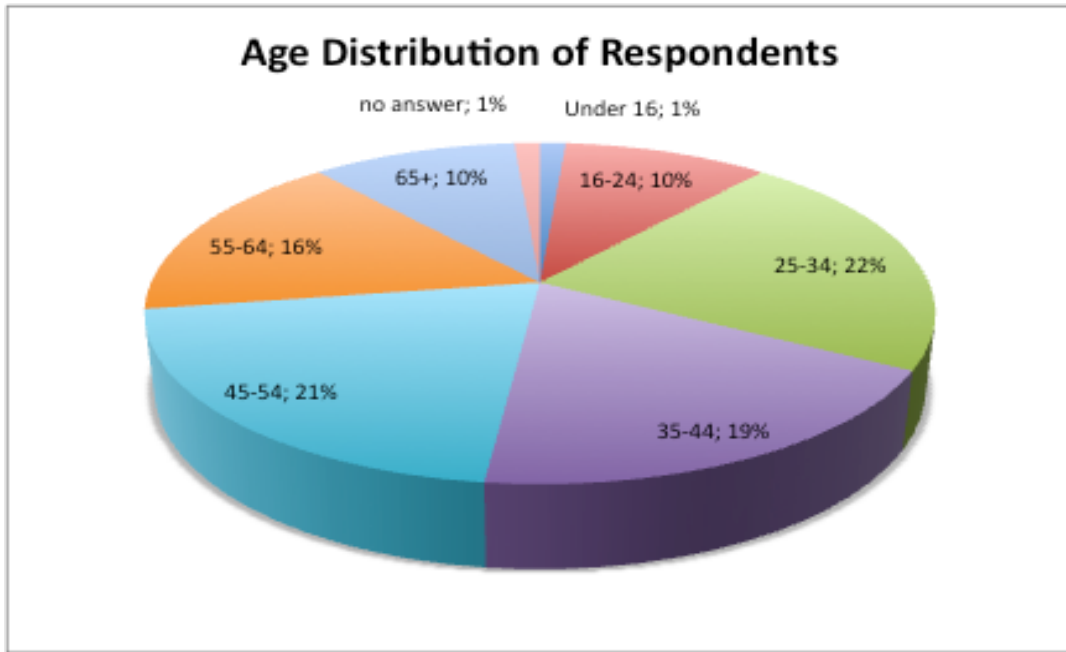


Figure 2: Age distribution of respondents (total sample of 160 interviews)

1.3 Origin

The overwhelming majority of respondents stated that they were York residents (79%); 7% stated that they were part of the 'Yorkshire resident' group (Fig. 3). UK Visitors (visitors from outside Yorkshire but from within the United Kingdom) accounted for 15% of respondents and overseas visitors made up only 1% of the total audience sample.

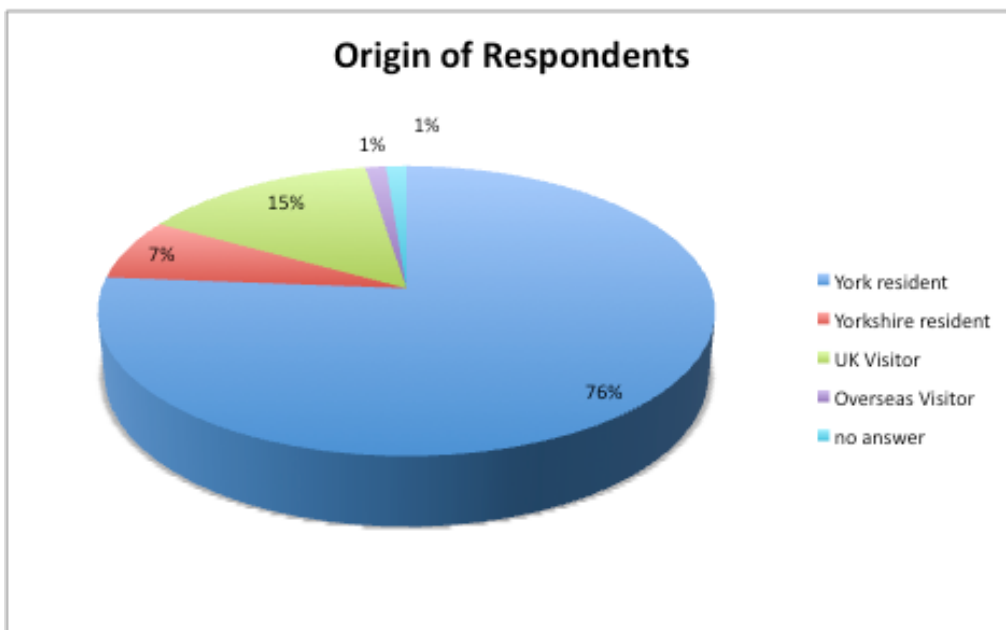


Figure 3: Origin of respondents (total sample 160 interviews)

1.4 Education

The majority of people interviewed had a background in tertiary education, with over half (53%) having a Postgraduate level qualification, and 24% an Undergraduate level qualification (Fig. 4). HNC/Technical qualifications and Trade qualifications accounted for 7% and 3% of the total sample respectively. A Level/High School educational levels accounted for 5% and GCSE/Secondary levels accounted for 7% of the total sample of respondents. Two percent of respondents stated they had no formal qualifications.

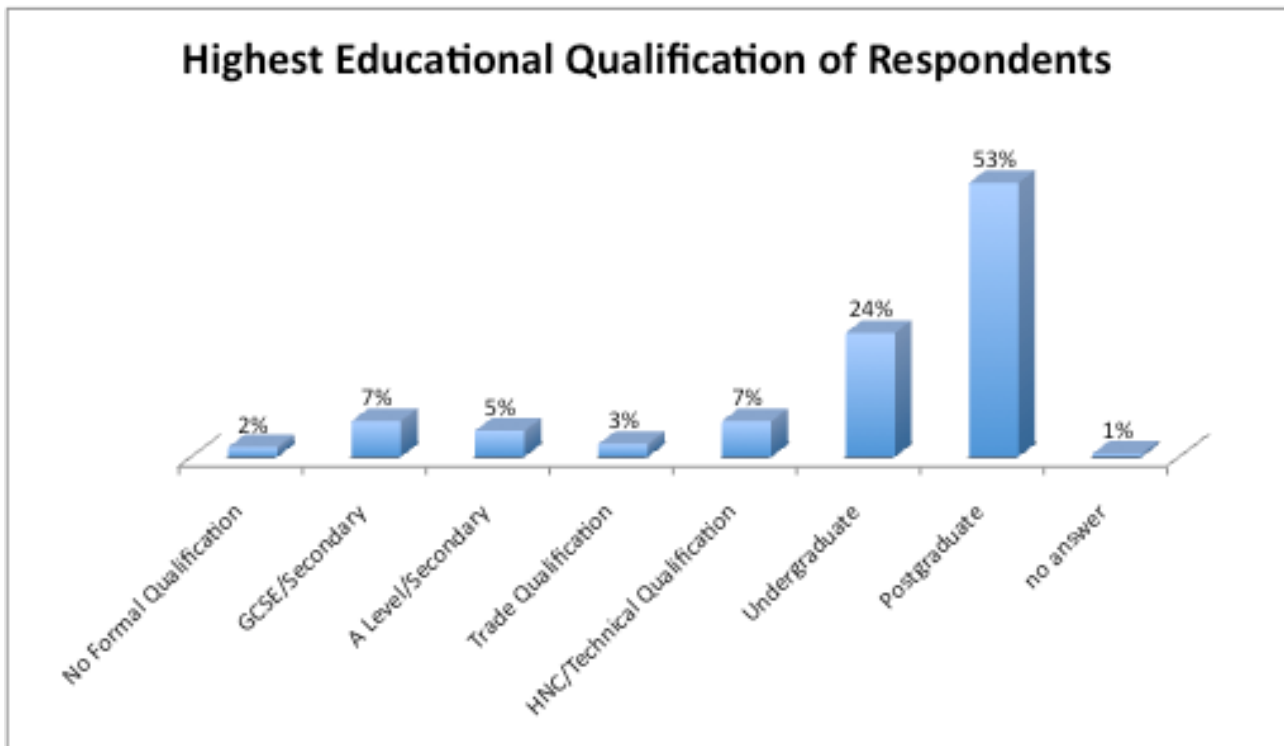


Figure 4: Highest education qualification of respondents (total sample of 160 interviews)

1.5 Occupation of main income earner

Over half the total sample of respondents stated that the main income earner in their household held a managerial or professional position – 35% with a higher managerial or professional occupation, and 25% with a lower managerial or professional position (Fig. 5).

Many of these respondents stated that the main income earner in their household held managerial and professional positions across the arts and cultural sector, the educational and academic sectors or the IT sector (64 out of 96 responses see Fig. 5, or 67% of respondents with a higher or lower managerial or professional occupations). Below is a list of examples of jobs and professions included in the interview sample:

- From the arts and cultural sector: writer, theatre technician (2 respondents), actor, creative director, photographer, artist, fashion designer, librarian, freelance arts manager, artistic

technician, programme manager in the arts sector; musician, sound engineer, composer (2), radio producer; heritage consultant, arts and museum practitioner (2), visitor services, museum director, visitor services, curator (3).

- From the higher educational sector: education officer (4), teacher (3), educational consultant, school assistant, academics (12), University Pro-Vice Chancellor, University Professor (2), University research associate, researcher (2).
- From the IT sector: software developer (5), IT Technician (2), IT researcher, computer programmer.

Considering the age distribution (Fig. 3) and highest educational qualification of respondents (Fig. 4), it is very likely that the occupation of the main income earner of the household corresponded to the occupation of the person interviewed. This data would indicate that the two Minster events attracted a very specific audience group composed of visitors whose professional occupations were related to the event programme.

The third largest audience group of this sample was made up of unemployed and retired people, accounting for 13% and 10% of the total sample respectively. Intermediate occupations (described in the National Statistics Socio-economic classification manual as clerical, administrative, sales and services, technical and auxiliary and intermediate engineering occupations) accounted for 8% of respondents. Students accounted for 6% of the sample, while small employers and own account workers (2%), semi-routine (2%) and routine occupations (3%) made up the rest of the audience sample. A fairly significant percentage of respondents (6%) opted out of answering this question.

Occupation of main income earner in the household	Frequency	%
Higher managerial and professional occupations	56	35%
Lower managerial and professional occupations	40	25%
Intermediate occupations	13	8%
Small employer and own account workers	3	2%
Lower supervisory and technical occupations	0	-
Semi-routine occupations	3	2%
Routine occupations	5	3%
Students	10	6%
Unemployed (including retired)	21(16)	13%(10%)
No answer	9	6%

Figure 5: Occupation of main income earner in the household (total sample of 160 interviews)

1.6 Ethnicity

The sample of 160 respondents represents almost exclusively people from the United Kingdom, with 76% identifying their ethnicity as White British, White English or British, and one respondent described himself as Scottish (Fig. 6). The rest of the sample was made up of respondents who described their ethnicity as Chinese, Japanese, Taiwanese, American, Australian, Irish and Danish or less precisely as European, Mediterranean or Mixed. Eight percent of the sample decline to answer this question of ethnicity.

“How would you define your ethnicity?”	Frequency	%
White (including Caucasian)	10	6%
White British (including British, English, White English)	121	76%
Irish	1	0.6%
Scottish	1	0.6%
Japanese	1	0.6%
Chinese (including British Chinese)	2	1.3%
Taiwanese	1	0.6%
American	1	0.6%
Australian	2	1.3%
Danish	1	0.6%
European	2	1.3%
Mediterranean	1	0.6%
Mixed	4	3%
No answer	12	8%

Figure 6: Ethnicity of respondents (total sample of 160 interviews)

2 Motivation for visit

2.1 Reasons for visiting Minster events

The first part of the audience research questionnaire sought to establish respondents reasons for visiting both the *I Hear Too: Live* and *Minster Nights* events (Fig. 7). A small majority of respondents (22%) indicated that they were participants in the event. Nine percent of people interviewed were artists or performers. Just over half the respondents who stated they were artists or performers were interviewed during the first Minster event *I Hear Too: Live* (10 out of 14 responses, see Fig. 6), of which two respondents were part of the Ebor Singers (interviews 20 and 40), and another three respondents were Minster guides (interviews 5, 35 and 61) who had taken part in the performance “Semantic cloud” during the *I Hear Too: Live* event. During the second event *Minster Nights*, four artists/performers were interviewed in the total audience research sample.

Thirteen respondents stated that they were in the Minster working in a support role on those two evenings, eight as stewards (6 on the *I Hear Too: Live* evening, and 2 on for *Minster Nights*) and four as part of an equipment and technical support staff (2 for each evening event). During *I Hear Too: Live*, two respondents indicated that they were part of the team that had organised this event. Other respondents indicated that their main reason for attending *I Hear Too: Live* was also linked to work surrounding the event, either as First Aider (interviews 13 and 26), photographer (interviews 36 and 38), Minster policeman (interview 59) or as a funder assessing the event (interview 12).

Audience members gave a varied response as to their reasons and motivations for visiting the Minster events. The majority (11%) stated that they were specifically interested in the type of event on offer at the Minster on those two evenings, an interest which several respondents linked to their wider interests in sound and music (5%), in art (2.5%) and in light and sound (0.6%). It should be noted that respondents with an interest in sound and music predominantly attended *I Hear Too: Live* (8 out of 9 respondents), while respondents who stated an interest in art attended the *Minster Nights* event exclusively.

Male Researcher, 35-44, York resident “*I’m interested in the music and in the effect of the music in the building. Ehm, some of what I do is surround sound recording so, the link ties in there.*” (Interview 27, *I Hear Too: Live*)

Male University Professor, 45-54, York resident: “*I think I’m just interested in being able to*

listen to this experimental music and sound in the special space.” (Interview 44, *I Hear Too: Live*)

Male, 35-44, York resident: “*Connected with art and very interested to see what ehm, the opportunity is, you know, to enable visual artists to set up and do their thing in York Minster.*” (Interview 76, *Minster Nights*)

Thirteen respondents (8% of the total sample) stated that they had come to the Minster on one of those two evenings in order to experience something different and unique. Many respondents spoke of coming to see the Minster “in a different light”; most of these comments (11 out of 13) were given during the *Minster Nights* event.

Female Civil Engineer, 55-64, UK Visitor: “*We just wanted to try a different sensation really.*” (Interview 70, *I Hear Too: Live*)

Male Musician, 25-34, York resident: “*Intrigue, to see the space used in a new, different way.*” (Interview 104, *Minster Nights*)

Six percent of people interviewed across both evenings stated that curiosity had been the main motivation for attending the events (4 “curious” respondents for *I Hear Too: Live*, and 6 for *Minster Nights*).

Male Arts and Museums Practitioner, 45-54, York resident: “*Ehm intrigue as to what could be done with the Minster as a canvas. Ehm ... it’s about that really, I think that’s enough isn’t really?*” (Interview 101, *Minster Nights*)

Many respondents indicated that they had been invited to the event (8%, of which 11 out of 13 respondents had attended *I Hear Too: Live*, and 2 out of 13 had attended *Minster Nights*), while 5.6% of respondents said that the event had been recommended to them by friends and family, with this response distributed evenly across the two events.

Other respondents (7.5%) stated that they knew someone involved in the event (6 out of 12 responses for both events). Ten percent of the audience sample stated that they had seen the events advertised which had encouraged them to attend – 5 respondents for *I Hear Too: Live* and 3 respondents for *Minster Nights*. For the *I Hear Too: Live*, one respondent (a University Professor, interview 9) stated that he had seen the event advertised on the university website, while another respondent indicated she had seen the event advertised on a poster inside the York Minster (interview 66). For the *Minster Nights* event, two respondents (interviews 62 and 70) added that they had also seen the event advertised both inside and outside the Minster. Another two respondents who stated other motivational factors to their attendance commented on seeing the

event advertised either in the Minster or on the Minster website. Other respondents stated they had heard the event advertised on local radio, referring to the *Minster Nights* event only – five respondents in total mentioned having heard the event publicised on the radio, with three stating that this was their main reason for attending the *Minster Nights* January event.

Several respondents (5.6%) stated that they had been attracted to the fact that both events were evening events (starting around 6pm until midnight) and this provided them with a unique and privileged opportunity to experience the Minster late at night. This response was given particularly in reference to the *Minster Nights* event (8 out of 9 responses, see Fig. 6).

Female, 16-24, Japanese, UK Visitor: “*I found there is event tonight so it’s rare to get inside a church at night so I said to come tonight.*” (Interview 126, *Minster Nights*)

Female, 45-54, York resident: “*Well I wanted to show my youngest daughter the Minster at night, the different atmosphere that the Minster has.*” (Interview 137, *Minster Nights*)

During the *Minster Nights* event, 'Hidden Minster' tours of areas not usually accessible to the public, including the Mason's Loft and the Chapter House roof void, the crypt passages, the walkway over the Five Sisters window and the tour of the West End Bell Towers. These tours had a limited number of spaces and tickets had to be booked in advances at a cost of £8 per person. Regular tower top trips were equally available throughout the evening, costing £5 (£3 concession). Eight respondents stated that their main reason for coming to the *Minster Nights* event was to take part in one of these special tours.

During the audience research at *Minster Nights*, a further three respondents stated their reasons for attending the events were to learn about history, and more particularly, learn about the history of the Minster:

Female, 65+, York resident: “*I’ve been in the Minster many times from being a child, I love history, I like to know how things began, I like to know how the church founded its foundations. (...) But my main reason is I like history.*” (Interview 117, *Minster Nights*)

Female, 25-34, York resident: “*I just want to know some history or something special for the Minster.*” (Interview 138, *Minster Nights*)

Other respondents (3) for the January *Minster Nights* event, the third of a series, stated that they had enjoyed previous events in the Minster and this had encouraged them to attend the latest *Minster Nights*.

Female Education Officer, 65+, York resident: *“I’ve been to something else in the Minster which was absolutely brilliant, where they used the whole of the Minster. It was when they had all the different children’s bands and choirs and dancing, using every part of the Minster, and that was just so superb. So I thought that we would come tonight.”* (Interview 112, *Minster Nights*)

Female, 35-44, York resident: *“We live locally, we have personal faith, and we’ve been to some great events here, and we’ve also been to the art stuff that was in the half term when they projected the graffiti on the walls. So we saw that and thought, yeah, and the kids enjoyed it.”* (Interview 116, *Minster Nights*)

A number of visitors (3 respondents) stated that their reason for attending the events was to spend the evening in a religious space:

Male Musician, 35-44, Overseas visitor: *“ I was wanting to visit the church [sic] and a friend of mine lives here and he knew about this event and then we decided to ... to do all them together: come to the building and the church.”* (Interview 96, *Minster Nights*)

Other reasons given for attending the events included the opportunity to attend a free event (*Minster Nights* only), or to take part in a family event:

Male HR Manager, 35-44, York resident: *“[W]e’re a Christian family so it also had an aspect of worship also, so we’re interested in participating in that as a well as a family.”* (Interview 82, *Minster Nights*)

Two respondents indicated that they had come to the events in order to admire the architecture of the Minster buildings:

Female, 45-54. York resident: *“Because I generally am interested in ehm, medieval churches and architecture and the like and I wanted to see what the event would be like in this kind of setting.”* (Interview 81, *Minster Nights*)

Finally, individuals gave number of other reasons for visiting which are illustrated in figure 7.

Main reason for attending	Frequency	%
Work	35	22%
Artist/performer	14	9%
including Minster guides	3	2%
Ebor Singers	2	1.3%
Event steward	8	5%
Equipment/Technical support	5	3%
First Aid	2	1.3%
Photographer	2	1.3%
Organiser	2	1.3%
Minster policeman	1	0.6%
Funder (assessing event)	1	0.6%
Interest	19	12%
General interest	5	3%
Interest in sound	9	5.6%
Interest in art	4	2.5%
Interest in light and sound	1	0.6%
For a different experience	13	8%
Invited	13	8%
Know someone involved	12	7.5%
Saw it advertised/Heard it on radio	10	6%
Curiosity	9	5.6%
including professional curiosity	1	0.6%
Evening event	9	5.6%
Recommendation	9	5.6%
For 'Hidden Minster' tour	8	5%
For history (and history of the Minster)	3	2%
To visit religious space	3	2%
Enjoyed previous event	3	2%
Free event	2	1.3%
Family event	2	1.3%
To see building architecture	2	1.3%
Inspiration/research for book	1	0.6%
Academic research	1	0.6%
First visit	1	0.6%
Birthday outing	1	0.6%
On holiday looking for evening entertainment	1	0.6%
Supporting IPUP	1	0.6%
Part of wider visit to York	1	0.6%
Patron of Ebor singer	1	0.6%

Figure 7: Main reasons for attending the Minster events (total sample 160 interviews)

Conclusion

This audience data reveals the majority of respondents attending were actually involved in the event. It is interesting to note how the art and sound events interacted with and involved the Minster community, notably involving Minster guides in one of the artworks ‘Semantic cloud’ during *I Hear Too: Live*.

It is interesting to note how a significant number of respondents indicated that they attended the art and sound events to experience new ways of engaging with the Minster. This underlies a public desire to interact with the Minster in different ways, through different approaches and different angles, and suggests that parts of the audience were looking for new ways of connecting with the meaning of Minster, both its historic and contemporary meaning.

2.2 Uses of the Minster

Respondents to this audience research project were asked whether attending the events accounted for their first visit to the Minster. An overwhelming majority of respondents (91%) stated that this was not their first visit to the York Minster, while 9% (14 respondents) stated that they had never visited the Minster before (9 out of 14 for the *I Hear Too: Live* event, and 5 out of 14 for the *Minster Nights* event). This ‘first time visitor’ group gave a number of different reasons for attending the events (see Fig. 5). For *I Hear Too*, these included being invited to the event (2 respondents), knowing someone involved in the event, having an interest in sound, using the event for personal academic research, working as a volunteer steward, or attending out of curiosity (2) and for new experiences. For *Minster Nights*, the main reasons given included the opportunity of attending an evening event, of visiting a religious space and the opportunity of seeing contemporary art. One respondent stated that this first visit to the Minster was part of a wider visit to York. Although these first time visitors did not explicitly state that the art and sound events were the main reason for their visit, it can be assumed that the nature and timing (late evening) of the special art and sound events in the Minster was an important part of the reason which attracted first time visitors to the Minster. Of this group of people who had never visited the Minster before the two events, 8 were UK visitors, 4 were York residents, and 2 were overseas visitors.

For some interviews, respondents were asked to comment on their habitual and everyday uses of the

York Minster. However, this question was not included in the original questionnaire and it was not asked systematically by each interviewer. Nonetheless, a significant number of respondents did comment on their uses of the Minster but these answers were often limited only to comments on the frequency of visit. As such there were substantial gaps in the data and it was not possible to draw out any statistically significant conclusions about the audience sample's habitual uses of the Minster outside of the timing of these special events. However it is worth noting some of the recurrent answers to this question.

The majority of visitors stated casual visits as their main use of the Minster. Casual visits were sometimes associated with the notion of wandering, strolling and walking around the building. Often respondents added visiting the Minster for concerts, special events, ordinations, confirmations, Christmas carols, school events, to see the stained glass windows, and others indicated that they sang in the Minster (interviews 20, 21, 29, 51, 57 and 159). A large number of respondents spoke of using the Minster as a space to bring visitors, which may indicate that they considered the Minster as a landmark and 'must see' for visitors to York.

A small number of visitors spoke of the Minster as a space for quiet (interview 150 and 154) and spiritual (secular) contemplation (interviews 18, 86, 101, 102); spoke of the Minster as a source for personal inspiration (interviews 37 and 78)

Many visitors stated multiple uses of the Minster, and quite often spoke of using the space both for casual visits (alone or with friends and family) *and* as a religious space for services (especially Evensong) and worship. Respondents did not seem to express any tension in this dual secular/religious use of the space. Only a very small minority of respondents spoke of using the Minster for services and as a space of worship – 15 respondents altogether, 10 for the *Minster Nights* and 5 for the *I Hear Too: Live* event. Many of these respondents also stated that they worked at the Minster, often as volunteer guides and stewards. No single respondent stated worship as the single and exclusive use of the Minster; other times for visiting the Minster included attending events and concerts, to bring visitors, to wander and to 'refresh': "*as a place to go as a student in York, ehm, you know, just sort of refresh your brain when you're studying*" (Male Museum curator, 25-34, York resident, Interview 11, *I Hear Too: Live*). Although it was expected that respondents who regularly used the Minster as a space for worship may feel unease or upset towards the use of the Minster as a space for contemporary art, this was not the case and all respondents stated they felt either positive or very positive towards this contemporary use (see section 3.1 below).

The audience research sample indicated a wide variety of responses with regards to visiting

frequency to the Minster. Some respondents stated that they were frequent visitors, with some visiting once a year, once a month, others having visited the Minster since childhood, to one respondent stating an average of four visits per week for the last 40 years (interview 16, *I Hear Too: Live*). Other respondents stated that they had only visited the Minster once, some up to 15 years ago.

Conclusion

The audience research sample revealed that the majority of people interviewed in this audience research project were casual occasional visitors. As discussed in sections 1.5 and 2.1, a large part of this audience sample held professional and personal interests which were related to the evening events. As such, the Minster events were successful in attracting occasional visitors with a particular interest in heritage, art and sound for a repeat visit of the Minster. The event further attracted a small number of first time visitors.

However, only a very small minority of the audience sample used the Minster as a space of worship. The events did not seem to attract members of the Minster congregation. This indicates that such art and sound event may risk to be seen as excluding the traditional Minster audience, and more research is needed to establish the traditional congregation's views on the use of the Minster as a venue for contemporary art.

3. Public perceptions of contemporary art in a heritage space

3.1 Public perceptions of the Minster as a venue for contemporary art

The main objective of this pilot audience research was to examine audience's attitudes towards the display of contemporary art in a heritage space. The audience questionnaire asked visitors to the Minster “how do you feel about the use of the Minster as a venue for contemporary art?” Figure 8 presents the overall feelings towards the contemporary non-religious use of the Minster. Eighty seven percent of respondents felt very positive or positive towards the use of the Minster as a venue for contemporary art and sounds performances and installations. A further 5% felt “Ok”, suggesting they did not feel particularly strongly about the evening events either way. Six percent stated that they felt unsure about the events – in particular, these respondents expressed a concern that the art work should be appropriate to and respectful of the religious space of the Minster:

Male, 65+, York resident: “[I]f it’s going to be avant-garde art I wonder about the relevance of it. I can understand that art can be in its way exciting, and in its way, well, on-turning I suppose, but whether it is relevant to a place like this; I think it could stand out here and appear obnoxious.”(Interview 39, *I Hear Too: Live*)

Female, 45-54, York resident: “It wouldn’t have to be boardy [sic] or in any way contrary to Christian belief or anything like that. I wouldn’t be in favour of anything that ...” (Interview 81, *Minster Nights*)

Female Education officer, 65+, York resident: “I’m not very sure because I some of it think is very self-indulgent.” (Interview 112, *Minster Nights*)

Male Oil and Gas Consultant, 35-44, York resident: “[M]ixing the secular and the profa – and the sacred sorry – I’m not completely against it (...) I’ve just got mixed feelings about it I think.”(Interview 108, *Minster Nights*)

“How do you feel about the use of the Minster as a venue for contemporary art?”	Frequency	%
Very Positive	66	41%
Positive	74	46%
“Ok”	8	5%
Unsure	10	6%
No answer	2	1%

Figure 8: Attitudes towards the use of the Minster as a venue for contemporary art (total sample of 160 interviews)

A significant number of respondents (9) who stated they felt positively or very positively about the use of the Minster as a venue for contemporary art added that that they were also concerned that these events should be appropriate to the Minster setting and respectful of the religious nature of the space:

Male, 35-44, York resident: *“Well, you wouldn’t want some artistic installations would you? (...) such as Tracy Emin’s bed (...) A lot of people would find that just totally unacceptable in what is a sacred space.”* (Interview 76, *Minster Nights*)

Female, 45-54, York resident: *“I think it’s good so long as the artists who are invited are of a good standard. I was here a few weeks ago at something (...) technically it was very poor. (...) [T]here were people performing in the Chapter House who had no idea of the building that they were in and its acoustic abilities and they were using equipment, they were using microphones and an amplifier in the Chapter House (...) to use that sort of equipment was just heresy really.”* (Interview 2, *I Hear Too: Live*)

Female IT Researcher, 35-44, York resident: *“I think as long as the artwork is kind of respectful to [the religious history] in some way, then I think it works very well.”* (Interview 55, *I Hear Too: Live*)

Female Hospital Doctor, 25-34, York resident: *“I guess you just have to make sure that whatever you show is kind of appropriate and it’s nothing particularly – that people would find offensive because obviously it’s in a cathedral.”*(Interview 93, *Minster Nights*)

One respondent (interview 11, *I Hear Too: Live*) added that the art on display should make connections with the space in order for the event to be meaningful (and successful):

Male, 25-34, York resident: *“I think there needs to be a connection for me with the building or the context so, it needs to be there for a reason, there needs to be some sort of synergy between the art and the Minster, it can’t – I wouldn’t like to see the Minster just as a venue for contemporary art per se, it needs to be about ‘why here’, yeah.”* (Interview 11, *I Hear Too: Live*)

Another two respondents added that the art and sound events should be accompanied by an explanation and guidance to the artworks to make them accessible to the public:

Female, 45-54, York resident: *“If you are kind of treating this as something you can drop in and drop out of, which I think is how the Minster saw it, actually coming in in the middle might be quite difficult if you weren’t kind of orientated or given some sort of a framework in which to sort of being to enjoy and think – understand a little bit about what you might expect.”* (Interview 42, *I Hear Too: Live*)

Female, 55-64, Yorkshire resident: *“I don’t have an objection to it, if it’s well structured, and you’re guided, and the booklet tonight is very helpful, very useful.”* (Interview 69, *I Hear Too: Live*)

Reflections on the use of the space as a venue for contemporary art.	Frequency	%
Brings in new audiences	24	15%
Space should be used for non-religious and secular events	14	9%
Enables new experiences of space	10	6%
Including: enabling more careful contemplation of space	2	1.3%
enabling use of other senses (sound) to explore space	2	1.3%
Enables non-religious experience of space	7	4%
Makes use of the exceptional acoustics of the building	4	2.5%
Creates events for the community	4	2.5%
Brings past and present together	2	1.3%
Free evening event	1	0.6%
Support for the arts	1	0.6%

Figure 9: Other reflections and comments on the use of the Minster as a venue for contemporary art amongst respondents who stated they felt ‘positive’ or ‘very positive’ towards the use of the space as a display and performance venue (total sample of 160 interviews)

Figure 9 presents the further reflections and comments of respondents who felt positive or very positive towards the evening events. In particular, respondents expressed a clear appreciation of the potential of these events for attracting new and wider audiences, with 15% of the audience reflecting on this theme:

Female, 65+, Yorkshire resident: *“I think it’s important to use the Minster in as many, varied and diverse ways as possible to bring different parts of the community and people with different interests into the Minster.”*(Interview 5, *I Hear Too: Live*)

Female member of the clergy, 35-44, Yorkshire resident: *“I think it’s great actually because it gets more people in who wouldn’t come in otherwise, and even people who do come in, it gives them an excuse to revisit the space.”* (Interview 80, *Minster Nights*)

Male Musician, 35-44. UK Visitor: *“It’s a really – it’s a brilliant idea and it’s a great initiative and you seem to get different sorts of people as would ordinarily come in.”* (Interview 97, *Minster Nights*).

Female, 16-24, York resident: *“I think it’s really fantastic, it sort of brings a completely different range of people in I think, especially as, well, it’s got a lot of different types of art in it, as well, so some art’s of religious base, sort of talking about the Minster that sort of thing, and then the one in here in the Chapter House is very interactive, it’s – I really think it’s wonderful.”* (Interview 130, *Minster Nights*)

Female, 45-54, York resident: *“[T]he acoustics is just so wonderful, and if it just gets other people in who wouldn’t normally come, I just think it’s brilliant. It doesn’t – you know I mean I am*

Christian but it doesn't bother me, I just think we've got this huge space why not use it? I just think it's fine." (Interview 136, *Minster Nights*)

Male, 55-64. York resident: *"I think it's just a, it's a community thing. So you want to get people in this place, understanding a bit more about it, and I suppose it's an attraction to encourage people in."* (Interview 150, *Minster Nights*)

In particular, some respondents stated that hosting such events in the Minster could introduce contemporary art to traditional audiences:

Female, 16-24, York resident: *"[I]t's a great building, obviously great footfalls so it could probably bring contemporary art to new audiences, which I think would be a good thing definitely."* (Interview 10, *I Hear Too: Live*)

Other respondents spoke of the potential of art events to attract traditional 'art audiences' – people who frequently visit art galleries – and those who do not have an interest in historic buildings to come in and visit a religious heritage space:

Female Freelance theatre technician, 16-24, Yorkshire resident: *"[T]he idea of an organised religion allowing new art into its own space is really nice. And it opens it up, and brings new people in, and people that wouldn't normally come to a Minster would get to see just how pretty it is on the inside."* (Interview 120, *Minster Nights*)

Male Charity development manager, 25-34, York resident: *"I think it's brilliant that they're opening up spaces like that to bring people in to get the use of the historical buildings, people that would never get the opportunity to come in here."* (Interview 68/140, *Minster Nights*)

Male, 25-34, UK Visitor: *"Quite a lot of people don't visit heritage buildings these days for a number of reasons, especially the, I would say the 13 to 30 year old (...) and if contemporary art is used in the right way and it can bring those people in, then, then definitely it's a bonus."* (Interview 143, *Minster Nights*)

Female Educational Officer, 25-34, York resident: *"I think it's quite a creative way to get a kind of new audience in I suppose so people can appreciate it for what it is, as well as a venue for other things."* (Interview 145, *Minster Nights*)

Several respondents stated that such events would encourage local residents back into the Minster, and crucially re-establish the Minster a space for the local community:

Female University Research Associate, 55-64. York resident: *"[I]t's nice to be able to get in, walk around in the spaces without, you know, huge crowds of tourists, it feels more like part of York, part of the home town as opposed to sort of a tourists place"* (Interview 19, *I Hear too: Live*).

Male University Lecturer, 45-54, UK visitor: *"I guess it's just good for trying to embed the*

church in a community beyond the religious which is obviously is also their key mission but I think it's important these spaces still provide that sort of function in a variety of ways, as well as the religious services, and the religious duties, and pastoral duties that they obviously are here for the in the first place.” (Interview 24, I Hear Too: Live)

Male Human resources manager, 35-44, York resident: *“I think the Minster has a very strong tradition within the community of being an open space, being an inviting and a public space, the number of events in addition the services that happen, I think they work very hard to use the space for the community of York, I think that's a good thing.” (Interview 82, Minster Nights)*

Female, 25-34. York resident: *“I think it brings people, especially residents back into the Minster again and make them aware of what's in the city and so because I think that residents mostly don't go to the York Minster because yeah, they don't have a reason to go in” (Interview 147, Minster Nights).*

It can be said that both events succeeded as community events as the audience profile primarily made up of York residents (76%, see Fig. 3)

It is possible that respondents across this group may have been referring to themselves when talking about “new audiences”. Indeed, although this might not have been their first visit to the Minster, and they may not have indicated that the art and sound installations were the main reasons for their visiting the Minster that night, it is possible that the broad reference to new audiences might in fact be a specific reference to the respondent himself/herself. In any case, it is very interesting to note that such a significant number of respondents stated their support for events that would attract wider and more diverse audience.

A significant group of respondents, 9% of the total sample, further reflected on the on how the space of the Minster should be used for different events and occasions outside of the religious function of the Minster. In particular, several respondents (6 respondents) reminded that the Minster had always been a public space where many non-religious activities such as markets would take place.

Male, 55-64. York resident: *“It's fine, it was always intended to have both religious and civil use and it's a great space and should be used.” (Interview 15, I Hear Too: Live).*

Male Project Manager, 35-44, York resident: *“You've got to try these events and see what happens and things like this. You can't just stick to the old, to everything being the same.” (Interview 26, I Hear Too: Live).*

Female Hotelier, 55-64, York resident: *“[T]he Minster was always - at one point the Nave was a market place, the Minster has always been used for lots more things than people realise and I'm perfectly happy for it to continue doing stuff like you're doing tonight.” (Interview 35, I Hear Too: Live).*

Male Medical Doctor, 55-64, York resident: *“It’s a great space and I understand historically that’s what happened anyway, hundreds of years ago. There were markets and all sorts that went on in there. So to go back to that I think is good.”* (Interview 100, *Minster Nights*)

Male Musician, 25-34, York resident: *“It was always used as a contemporary art space, it was built for a community space, a community should come back into it.”* (Interview 114, *Minster Nights*)

Female Teacher, 55-64. York resident: *“We both feel that the Minster and any church should be multi-functional and should have lots of uses not just contemporary art, could be anything really.”* (Interview 149, *Minster Nights*)

A large number of respondents spoke of the ways in which music and sound installations and performances enabled new experiences of space (6% of total sample), in particular, such events encouraged a more attentive contemplation of the building, notably through stimulating the sense of sound and hearing. These reflections were particularly evoked during the *I Hear Too: Live* event (6 out of 8 responses)

Female, 35-44, UK visitor: *“The idea of using sounds which is a very neglected area of visitor experience, to actually enhance the experience of the visitor to a heritage property I think is a great idea. (...)you can go round these places and you can get the atmosphere and you can touch and you can see but you, you know, the two dimensions sound and smell are something that rarely com across, so the more work that’s done on this the better.”* (Interview 12, *I Hear Too: Live*)

Male Creative Director, 25-34, York resident: *“I think the more kind of diverse things you can have in the Minster, the different ways in which it showcases the space and allows people to see it and experience it in a different light. I certainly think tonight with the different audio pieces, it’s certainly done that.”* (Interview 18, *I Hear Too: Live*)

Female, 65+, York resident: *“I have surprised myself recently. I’m elderly and until fairly recently I would have said it should be left simply for worship but I am finding it a rewarding place for other events.”* (Interview 32, *I Heart Too: Live*)

Male, 25-34, York resident: *“I think it just helps you to, gives you a chance to sort of sit back and have an actual think about what actually goes on here, and has gone on here, which you wouldn’t perhaps normally do if you were going about your own sort of meandering around the place.”* (Interview 34, *I Hear Too: Live*).

Male Artist/Archaeologist, 35-44, UK visitor: *“I’m very keen for, ehm, buildings, landscapes, heritage locations or otherwise to be experienced and used in different ways. I mean it can only help people to think, see, feel, have an emotional response to a place by, if you like maybe thinking through other people’s ideas. So what we’re seeing this evening is a whole series of, a montage of different ways of engaging with the place. And I think that’s good for the past, for the buildings specifically, and I think it’s good for the future because people are seeing these places as still alive, still living, still doing things, and moving forward, not just being stuck in time.”* (Interview 37, *I Hear Too: Live*).

Male Software Developer, 16-24, York resident: *“I think it’s an excellent idea because I wouldn’t normally come down here, or, I don’t know if the events would normally attract me, whereas this is something different (...) I think you appreciate it in a slightly different way. So I probably wouldn’t have come here otherwise, if you see what I mean, so it’s a nice way of exposing myself to a different building.”* (Interview 47, *I Hear Too: Live*)

Partly related to this, four respondents indicated how the event made a great use of the unique acoustics of the Minster:

Female student, 24-34, York resident: *“[B]ecause I think it’s an amazing atmospheric space, and I particularly like – I’m a musician I can’t help it so I like the idea of taking advantage of the acoustic of the Minster, for any kind of sound art, even if it isn’t directly related to the purpose of the Minster.”* (Interview 22, *I Hear Too: Live*)

Male University Lecturer, 45-54, York resident: *“I think it works very well, ‘cause it offers, I suppose, an acoustic palette in terms of what you can do which you can’t find anywhere else. And I suppose the other thing is that you can experience another acoustic simply by walking around the same space which is extremely unusual. It’s so big.”* (Interview 71, *I Hear Too: Live*)

Seven respondents (4% of the total sample) stated that the events had provided an opportunity to experience the Minster space beyond its history and contemporary function as a centre for Christian belief. These respondents stated that the art and sound events provided a welcoming context in which non-Christians and non-believers could experience the Minster without feeling as though they were intruding into a sacred space, as the events were endorsed and supported by the Minster itself. For this group, the Minster events changed the atmosphere of the space into a space in which they felt more comfortable to visit.

Female Archaeologist, 35-44, UK Visitor: *“I’m not a Christian, and although I’m very interested in religious spaces I feel very uncomfortable generally in visiting them because I feel I am being intrusive. Ehm, so it’s very, it’s very good to feel like ‘Ok, I can explore it’, without intruding on anyone else, but at the same time in a broader sense, you know, to sort of feel, you know, welcome.”* (Interview 31, *I Hear Too: Live*)

Male Radio Producer, 45-54, UK Visitor: *“I think for someone like me – I’m not a religious person – so when you come to a church, you’re never quite sure what your reaction is meant to be, whether you’re meant to be reverent, or ... And a place like this is also a tourist attraction and there’s loads of tourist mingling around and in a way that’s put me off coming here in the past (...) it’s funny I don’t really believe in it, but at the same time I don’t want to be with a bunch of tourists. And the third thing about (...) my whole feeling about it is I do feel that in some way these buildings belong to us, the people, so why should I not be allowed to come in? Which I have felt. And I think this is a very good way of experiencing it because it’s, ehm ... it makes you feel the scale of the place but not in a church way.”* (Interview 33, *I Hear Too: Live*)

Female Programme Manager in the arts sector, 45-54, York resident: *“I think the most*

interesting part of it is being here at a time with a group of people doing something which isn't worship but it something slightly different, together, it's a different atmosphere, and I can't think of how to describe it right now, but it's very different and quite exciting." (Interview 67, *I Hear Too: Live*)

Female student, 25-34, York resident: *"[N]either of us are actually religious, ehm, but we do really like religious buildings, (...) I'd say it's nice to appreciate it in a slightly different context, and obviously the main purpose it still going to be worship, but then, you know, if slightly less religious people can enjoy it for other reasons I think that's very good."* (Interview 85, *Minster Nights*)

Male Theatre Technician, 25-34, York resident: *"[W]ell this is my first visit to see some contemporary things going on in the Minster. It's blown me away tonight. (...) normally you come into the building and you know, you treat the place – well I wouldn't want to say treat the place with respect but you've got a different feeling for the building and to come in and see sounds and light and projection installations in places, just, it's all inspiring – very inspiring really."* (Interview 99, *Minster Nights*)

Female Arts and Museum Practitioner, 35-44, York resident: *"I think one of the few ways that the church has been connected with non-religious people as well at the moment is through art. It's just the one connecting feature that everybody loves."* (Interview 101, *Minster Nights*)

Others respondents reflected on how the events had provided an opportunity to visit the Minster for free of an evening (interview 87, *Minster Nights*), and how the events showcased and provided support for different art (Interview 116, *Minster Nights*). Two respondents stated that the past and the present were brought together in these events:

Female, 25-34, York resident: *"I really like how, sort of new artworks can sort of interpret and re-interpret, ehm, the space, and sort of bring past and present fused together. So I think it's a really refreshing and exciting way of engaging with the Minster."* (Interview 66, *I Hear Too: Live*).

3.2 Public perceptions of the Minster as a venue for contemporary art according to demographic categories.

Partly as a result of the overwhelmingly positive response to the use of the Minster as a venue for contemporary art performances and events, the audience data showed no statistically significant correlations between the different demographic categories and the perceptions and attitudes towards the use of the Minster for art events.

Conclusion

The data revealed that the overwhelming majority of the audience felt positively about the use of the Minster as a venue for contemporary art. The data from the pilot audience research project suggests that art interventions in heritage spaces have the potential of introducing audiences to new ways of engaging with a heritage building, its history and its contemporary use. In this case study, the art enabled many members of the audience to move beyond the religious meaning of the Minster as a space of worship to different understandings of the space, often contemplative and inward-looking. The art worked to break down some of the interpretive barriers for access to the Minster by opening up the space to alternative meanings and enabling new experience of space. This enabled individuals who described themselves as ‘non-religious’ to explore the space at ease without feeling as though they didn’t belong in the Minster. At the same time, several individuals who described themselves as practising Christians spoke of the spiritual dimension of the art. As such the art provided open avenues of interpretation which attracted new audiences without distancing the more traditional Minster audience.

The audience data further suggested that many respondents felt that the Minster should have a role within the community beyond its function as a space of worship. Many respondents stated that the Minster should open up to wider audiences by organising more ‘secular’ events. Respondents recognised the potential of art and music events for attracting wider and more diverse audiences to the Minster.

4. Impact of art events on public perceptions of heritage

The main objective of this pilot audience research was to examine the potential role of art for providing audiences with new ways of looking at and engaging with heritage. Section 3 revealed that a significant number of respondents felt that the art and sound installations and performances in the Minster during the two evening events had enabled them to engage with the space in a new way. Some respondents noted how the art had encouraged them to look more carefully and with more attention at the buildings and architecture of the Minster.

In the second part of the audience questionnaire, all respondents were asked to reflect on how the art on display helped them connect with the meaning of the Minster.

4.1 Impact of art on public perceptions and understandings of the Minster

Figure 10 presents the overall responses to whether the art enabled connections with meaning of the Minster. Over half the total sample of respondents (59%) stated that the art and sound installations and performances had enabled them to connect with the meaning of the Minster space. Significant number of respondents (18%) did however indicate that they were unsure about the ways in which the art could help them connect with the meaning of the space (10 ‘unsure’ respondents for *I Hear Too: Live*, and 19 for *Minster Nights*). Six respondents explained that connecting with the meaning of the Minster was dependent on the art:

Female Student, 25-34, York resident: *“[S]ometimes I see an art installation in a sacred building that doesn’t seem to have anything to do with the sacredness of the building and sometimes that creates a strong message because of the conflict between the space and the art, and sometimes it just confuses me.”* (Interview 20, *I Hear Too: Live*).

Male University Lecturer, 45-54, UK visitor: *“[I]t’s the quality of the intervention really, I mean if it’s a good piece of art then fin but I think it’s also the sensitivity of the artists (...) to the space itself. You know, whether, how involved they do get with the space in (...) in terms of engagement.”* (Interview 24, *I Hear Too: Live*)

Male Radio Producer, 45-54, UK visitor: *“I think it does have to be done with care ehm, and I think a lot of contemporary art doesn’t move me because it’s just like a one liner, it’s like a joke, and once you’ve got the joke you move on. A lot of it leaves me cold.”* (Interview 33, *I Hear Too: Live*).

Female, 25-34, York resident: *“If [the art] is too abstract I think then it detracts more from the meaning of the building than is really helpful, but sometimes it can of course bring back the meaning in focus, so it depends how it is made I suppose.”* (Interview 147, *Minster Nights*)

It should be noted however that many of the respondents who stated that they felt unsure as to how the art might enable them to connect with the Minster added they still felt positively about the alternative use of the Minster as a venue for contemporary art. Several respondents stated that although they could not identify a precise feeling of connecting with the meaning of the Minster, the art and sound installations nonetheless provided a pleasant and interesting experience.

Ten percent of respondent did not provide an answer to the above question, and many (9

respondents) stated that they had only just arrived at the event and felt they had not had enough time to reflect on their experience of the artworks in the Minster space.

Art enabling connection with the space	Frequency	%
Yes	94	59%
No	21	13%
Unsure	29	18%
No answer	16	10%

Figure 10: Art connecting with the meaning of the Minster (total sample of 160 interviews)

Thirteen percent of respondents gave a negative response, stating that the art had not enabled them to connect with the meaning of the Minster space (9 negative responses for *I Hear Too: Live*, and 12 for *Minster Nights*).

A small number of respondent stated that the art and sound events detracted from the religious or spiritual meaning of the Minster (interviews 62 and 70, *I Hear Too: Live*, and interview 152, *Minster Nights*):

Female, 55-64, overseas visitor: “I relate more to the meaning of the Minster through the Choir and the idea that it’s always been used for worship. (...) The modern noises were ...noises.” (Interview 70, *I Hear Too: Live*)

Male Occupational Therapist, 25-34, York resident: “I’m not sure actually if it helps you connect with the meaning of the space, ‘cause obviously it’s a religious space and ... I’m not sure putting art within it is really helping you connect with the spiritual side of it. Maybe it is, but in a sort of secularised way which isn’t what a religious space is about, is it?” (Interview 152, *Minster Nights*)

Two respondents stated that parts of the acoustic art were “hostile” or “irritating” in the Minster environment:

Female University Pro-Vice Chancellor, 65+, York resident: “I find it quite, ehm, hostile, the noise.”(Interview 146, *Minster Nights*)

Male Professor, 45-54, York resident “[T]he piece that we just heard in the Nave [Craig Vear?] I just find, I mean I could see the point of it, of using this enormous space in which to project this sort of abstract soundscape, but ehm, I just, I found that I suppose irritating rather than, ehm, a creative experience.” (Interview 44, *I Hear Too: Live*)

However, nearly all the respondents who stated they felt no connection with the Minster had previously stated that they felt positive about the use of the Minster as a venue for the display of contemporary art and sound installations (18 out of 21 respondents). Although this group did not think the art enabled any form of connection with the Minster this did not preclude them from supporting and enjoying such events.

“How does the art help you to connect with the meaning of this space?”	Frequency	%
Enhances experience of space Including:	52	33%
Enables new experiences of space	22	14%
Encourages more careful contemplation of space (art reveals architecture)	20	12.5%
Opens up space to new meanings	10	6%
Connects with historical meaning	9	5.6%
Connects with spiritual meaning/enables introspective contemplation	9	5.6%
Connects with people who work in the Minster	4	2.5%
Creates communal space	3	2%
Brings building to life	3	2%
Connects with religious meaning	3	2%
Aesthetic connection between art and space (art enhances space)	2	1.3%
Stimulates imagination	2	1.3%
Art ‘speaks’ what words can’t	1	0.6%
Music provides uplifting experience	1	0.6%
Stimulates curiosity about building	1	0.6%
<i>No comment</i>	7	4.4%

Figure 11: Reflections on how art enabled connections with the Minster (total sample 160 interviews)

Figure 11 describes respondent’s reflections on the ways in which the art on display during both Minster evenings enabled them to connect with the different meanings of the Minster. A significant proportion of respondents (one third) reflected on the many ways through which the art and sound displays and performances enhanced the experiences of seeing, hearing and being in the Minster. In particular, respondents spoke of how the art and sound enabled to see the buildings in “a new light”, to have new and unique experiences of place as seen through the eyes of the artist. Several respondents described how the art and sounds displays had encouraged them to look more closely and more carefully at the Minster building and architecture which they stated was revealed through the art and sound. Some respondents added that the art events had allowed them to discover spaces of the Minster which they had never noticed or accessed before.

Many respondents described how the art enabled new experiences of the space, especially non-

religious experiences of the Minster. Other respondents described how the art worked to open up the layers of meaning of the Minster, as well as adding new contemporary meanings to the space. The audience data collected described how the art and sound enabled visitors to access the Minster building physically, intellectually and emotionally in ways which had not been opened to them before. The art and sound events created an atmosphere which enabled self-directed and introspective connections with the building for many respondents who felt some unease towards the perceived imposed meaning of the Minster as static and somewhat dogmatic. The art enabled a different and wider form of engagement with the Minster space beyond its religious function.

One respondent further added that the art and sound installations could go beyond words to connect with the meaning of the Minster: *“there’s lots of things written about the Minster but there are – art in a place like this does extra-verbal things that you can’t achieve with books and guides and that kind of thing.”* (Male Academic, 35-44, York resident, interview 21, *I Hear Too: Live*).

Art encouraging more careful contemplation of space (art revealing architecture)

Male P.A., 25-34, York resident: *“I think it just helps you to, gives you a chance to sort of sit back and have an actual think about what actually goes on here, and has gone on here, which you wouldn’t perhaps normally do if you were going about your own meandering around the space.”* (Interview 34, *I Hear Too: Live*).

Male University Lecturer, 45-54, York resident: *“One thing about sound I think is that it allows you to, ehm, to stop. ‘Cause you’re standing listening, stopping and standing and listening, you do, you reflect on what you’re looking at as well as listening to, so it does give you another way of appreciating what’s around you in terms of the windows and the pillars and all sorts of things that are in the building.”* (Interview 71, *I Hear Too: Live*).

Male Medical Doctor, 55-64, York resident: *“It makes me look at [the space] in a totally different way, that you see all sorts of little bits of intricate carvings and interesting things like that which you wouldn’t have normally done”*(Interview 100, *Minster Nights*)

Female Freelance Theatre Technician, 16-24, Yorkshire resident: *“I think because you’re seeing art in a space you start to appreciate the space for its artistic-ness [sic] (...) Like if you’re looking at something that is very aesthetically pleasing you start to notice other things about it, around that piece of art that are also aesthetically pleasing, and that could be, you know, the altars or the ceiling or bits and pieces, so you start to appreciate the space it’s in as well.”* (Interview 110, *Minster Nights*)

Female Museum Director, 25-34, York resident: *“I did just see a sound and light installation and it really was highlighting some of the architectural details in quite a startling way, and so it does make you look a little bit harder, and it also take you into different space that you wouldn’t normally wander into.”* (Interview 111, *Minster Nights*)

Art enabling discoveries of new spaces:

Male Charity Development Manager, 25-34, York resident: *“I’ve just seen a window I didn’t know existed, I’ve just been in a part of the building I didn’t know existed. And if it hadn’t been for the art I wouldn’t have been looking around and seeing what was there.”* (Interview 140, *Minster Nights*)

Art enabling new experiences of space

Female, 35-44, UK visitor: *“You think of churches as being very, sort of silent, a bit like a library, somewhere where you can’t talk, you’re not allowed to speak apart from when the services are going on and people are singing and you have your various priests and vicars (...). And the fact that a lot of people are coming in and they’re making noise, ehm, I think is an amazing thing, it changes the whole aspect of the building. It’s quite eerie, creepy in a way but in a good way. And, ehm, it almost makes it five dimensional you know? Sort of three dimensional.”* (Interview 12, *I Hear Too: Live*).

Male Fashion Designer, 25-34, UK visitor: *“I do think that the link is in experiencing the space, not only as looking at it, experiencing in a different way (...) this morning for example I was impressed with the beauty, and with the architecture, and with the details, and scale. And then tonight for example you’re impressed by the acoustic, or you’re impressed by the light, I mean things that you will not notice.”*(Interview 41, *I Hear Too: Live*).

Male University Lecturer, 35-44, UK visitor: *“[The art] transcends the usual, it transcends that fact that this is a religious space, it transcends that fact that this is a beautiful piece of architecture. We’re experiencing it in a way that is not as a tourist would experience, not as someone coming to a service would experience it, not even as someone coming to an ordinary concert. That space is, it sounds quite cheesy, but we’ve kind of, it’s here for people to explore, to experience, and to look at, and most of all to listen to in a way that they never have another opportunity to do that. So in that way it becomes something more than just sound in the Minster.”* (Interview 64, *I Hear Too: Live*)

Female Event Steward, 16-24, York resident: *“Obviously I sort of know the space very well working here, it’s making me look at it in a very different way because, sort of normally it’s just like looking around, you’re looking at stonework, things like that, whereas tonight it’s very, very different; it’s a space full of other things happening.”* (Interview 130, *Minster Nights*)

Art changes atmosphere of space:

Male York Minster Policeman, 35-44, Yorkshire resident: *“It adds to the whole atmosphere of the whole event I should think. So people will get a lot out of it that way. Not just the music but the whole surroundings.”* (Interview 59, *I Hear Too: Live*).

Male Theatre Technician, 25-34, York resident: *“I don’t think it helps me connect I think it completely disconnects me from the building but – and to see it more as a performance space rather than an art space rather than a cathedral in that kind of form. I’m totally disconnected from the building as I normally feel when I come in here. Which is very interesting.”* (Interview 99, *Minster Nights*)

Art challenging viewers:

Male, 35-44, York resident: *“[The meaning] seems incongruous. (...) either visually or audibly in terms of sound, the type of things you think, actually it doesn’t seem to fit this space (...) it doesn’t seem tight – and I think it’s interesting as well, to follow that kind of line of thought. So that’s provocative, it’s something that you feel is, you know, becoming the setting, (...) stuff that disturbs*

as well as stuff that feels, feels at home here.” (Interview 82, Minster Nights)

Female Civil Servant, 45-54, York resident: *“I think [the art] makes you look at the space in a different way, it can challenge you, it makes you actually look at it rather than just kind of walk around with your eyes shut.” (Interview 135, Minster Nights)*

Art opening layers of meaning of space:

Male Artist-Archaeologist, 35-44, UK visitor: *“I think it’s a way of opening up doors if you like, doors of perceiving a place? I hope that’s what other people see, and it doesn’t come up against them and they resist that. Hopefully it’s a way of opening up those experiences that you may have had before if you’ve been here a lot of times because it’s being done by people who are trying to create a different experience, who are thinking a lot about the building, the place, the atmosphere, their relationship to it and in that sense, I suppose art has the capacity to ... to reach places. Both the places themselves as a structure but also out emotional relationships to it.”(Interview 37, I Hear Too: Live)*

Male Composer, 45-54, UK visitor: *“I think it gives you a lead into maybe how to respond to, you know, places like this can be quite daunting, and if you’re not sure, and sometimes art can facilitate that move from something that’s quite opaque into something that’s a little more tangible. (...) So maybe, I think, you know, it brings more the place to people who weren’t necessarily able to access their own.” (Interview 72, I Hear Too: Live)*

Female Educational Officer, 25-34. York resident: *“I think this maybe gives people a kind of way in, I suppose, so they come, see the art, but at the same time there’s a bigger, bigger picture. And there’s a real kind of feeling in here, ehm, and maybe ... you’ve kind of opened up to that a bit through the things that you see and that you’re watching in here. (...) So yeah I think it does give you, definitely, kind of opens you up to – the sound makes you look at things a bit differently than perhaps you usually would.” (Interview 145, Minster Nights)*

Male Computer Programmer, 35-44, York resident: *“I guess the thing that is does is that normally when you come in here it’s all, you have kind of an idea of what it is, imposed on us, probably not quite the right word but obviously suggests to you and this suggests a different thing, it’s a completely different setting, so yes, it lets you see it differently.” (Interview 43, I Hear Too: Live)*

Male Hospital worker, 35-44, York resident: *“I think it helps you to see [the space] in a different light, you know, you’re sort of used to certain ways of thinking about the Minster and it helps you to give another way of thinking about it.”(Interview 97, Minster Nights)*

Art enabling public engagement with space:

Male Minster Nights Artist, 25-34, UK visitor: *“For me it’s, it brings it alive, (...) it doesn’t necessarily make it more fun, that’s a different word, but it makes it more interesting and entertaining to people. It’s also more engaging, which is the main, main reason I wanted an interactive thing and I think most kind of contemporary art forms that involve any kind of interaction will automatically engage people and [they will] appreciate the space better. I think that’s what it’s all about.” (Interview 143, Minster Nights)*

A further 5.6% of the audience data sample interviewed on those two evenings drew connections

between the art and sound displays and the historical meaning of the Minster, in particular, respondents reflected on the previous use of the Minster as a community space in the city. Other respondents considered how the contemporary art works created connections between old and new, between past and present. One respondent connected the sound art experience to his own personal past as a boy singing in the Minster choir (interview 27, *I Hear Too: Live*, below)

Art revealing historical meaning of the Minster:

Female, 45-54, York resident: *“After the first piece, when we came out of the Choir, it made me think of the Minster as being such a large space which seemed so safe, and I could understand why people would want to come here for shelter. So I’m thinking about what – some scenarios that could have occurred a few centuries ago.”*(Interview 9, *I Hear Too: Live*)

Female, 25-34, UK visitor: *“I’m very interested to see how it brings out the hidden stories (...); an enormous building like this can seem to, you know, glide serenely along like nothing’s ever changed, or you know, it doesn’t take a lot of effort to run a place like this and you don’t realise the army of people involved, so I think that hopefully (...) some of the art will bring that out. But also the previous uses of spaces like this, you know, they’re such hushed and reverent buildings now, ehm, it’s goofy to introduce some sound and clatter and noise and smell,(...), a cacophony of sense just to really bring out what these places were used for previously.”* (Interview 22, *I Hear Too: Live*)

Male, 35-44, York resident: *“[S]ome of [the art] has to do with what’s happened in the building, and some of it the auditory experience, ehm, which is embedded in youth and perhaps singing in a cathedral, which I’ve done more as a child, ehm, so it’s part of my past (...) hearing something very modern, very contemporary in a very ancient setting is, is very appropriate, as well as quite surprising, ehm, but a good experience too.”* (Interview 27, *I Hear Too: Live*)

Female Programme Manager in the Arts Sector, 45-54, York resident: *“[B]ecause I come from a Jewish background, there’s something to do with the sound piece and I’m not quite sure why it’s making me think in this way, but I have, the big question is “was the Jewish population in here?” – and when was it built, 12...? I can’t remember – were they allowed in here or not? And it’s just, it’s actually making me question the space in terms of history for some reason. In a different way to the way I’ve thought about it before. Less as a – (...) as well as a place of worship, as a place where you’d, that had great political significance. And the installations somehow, and the way in which the event’s been set up, for me, interrogating those sorts of political elements.”* (Interview 67, *I Hear Too: Live*).

Nine respondents (5.6% of total audience data sample) described how the art and audio works had enabled to connect with the Minster building on a spiritual (secular) level, provoking an introspective contemplation and reflection. This mood of introspection was dominated to the second Minster event, *Minster Nights* (6 out of the 9 responses).

Art enabling (self) contemplation:

Female Freelance Arts Manager, 35-44, York resident: “[S]paces like these are meant for reflection, and I think especially sonic art works really, really well, just helping you to sit back and reflect. Whether that’s on the building or whether that’s just on whatever’s going on in your head or the world around you at the minute.” (Interview 55, *I Hear Too: Live*)

Female, 25-34, York resident: “I think most people find [the Minster] a quite reflective space anyway, and even if you’re of any faith or of no faith, or church goer or whatever, I think it’s really important to have these reverential spaces where you can just reflect, and I think events like this help you in a different way. So even if you are familiar in coming into this kind of space and sitting quietly, or saying a prayer, thinking about things, and I think this is a really great way to sort of connect differently and to think about that act of sitting in the space and what goes through your mind and everything.” (Interview 66, *I Hear Too: Live*).

Male Arts and Museum Practitioner, 45-54, York resident: “It’s about giving you the opportunity to – whilst everyone else is in the same sort of mood of silence and just absorbing, absorbing, it really helps you to get an idea what it would be like to kind of feel that connection if you were religious.” (Interview 101, *Minster Nights*)

Female Arts and Museum Practitioner, 35-44, York resident: “[A]n event like this it makes you connect with yourself. And I think that this kind of art event can help you, stimulate you to connect in your own contemplation, and it’s not necessarily an imposed message, and that’s why I enjoy it.” (Interview 102, *Minster Nights*)

Male Retired Engineer, 55-64, York resident: “I think [the art] makes you think, you look at the pieces and it makes you think ... perhaps a different sort of meditation if you like.” (Interview 153, *Minster Nights*)

Similarly, two respondents spoke of how the artworks and soundscapes presented inside the historic spaces of the Minster served to stimulate the imagination of the listener:

Male Composer, 35-44, York resident: “[T]here was a coal piece that made it for me because it was a stunning blend of old and new, in a format that one acknowledged would be in the space really, so, ehm, that was the best moment of connection I felt, rather than the sort of literal video or sound, ehm, it’s where you have to use the imagination, that’s a good thing,” (Interview 33, *I Hear Too: Live*)

A further four respondents commented on how the art and sound installations reminded them of the people who work in the Minster. This was especially related to the ‘*Minster Voices*’ art work in the Zouche Chapel which was presented in the Minster on both evenings. The artwork was composed of sound clips of interviews with individuals who work in the Minster retelling their everyday uses of the space:

Female 45-54, York resident: “I was listening to the human voices (...) and the sort of digitally engineer sound and then there’s something about the human voice coming completely unadorned, there’s something really powerful about that moment that was fantastic. Ehm, and I’ve also been

sitting and listening to the 'Minster Voices' in the Zouche Chapel (...)hearing them talk about what they do (...) that brought some really interesting sort of insights and the pleasure in people's voices that they got from being here and being part of it. (...) There's something about the quality of the human voice in this space, detached I suppose from the normal services, I thought that was great." (Interview 42, *I Hear Too: Live*)

Female Minster Visitor Services Staff, 16-24, York resident: *"The one, the 'Minster Voices' in the Zouche Chapel, is especially brilliant, it means more especially because I know a lot of the voices obviously from working with the staff, I thought that was really good because it gives visitors an idea of like, you know, the procedures they go through, things they experience, so I thought that was really good, a really good idea. It's more personal."* (Interview 122, *Minster Nights*)

Several other respondents (2%) reflected on how the art and sound events helped resituated the Minster as a shared public space for the wider York community, including non-believers and people of different faiths.

Female University Lecturer, 45-54, UK visitor: *"I think in terms of, let's say, the meaning of the Minster as a place of encounters, of the centre of the city, ehm ... I think it helps me connect with that very well. Because it offers an opportunity to use it for the best possible way really, as a social place where people can come and think and enjoy things."* (Interview 23, *I Hear Too: Live*)

Three respondents spoke of the ways in which the art and sound works helped bring the Minster buildings to life:

Male, 25-34, York resident: *"I guess there's the thing that the Minster is a growing building, it's constantly changed and it's been added to and there was a time when, you know, the art that we now view as a heritage building was contemporary art (...) it's constantly contemporary because that's what it is, it's a living part of York, it's a changing part of the city."* (Interview 11, *I Hear Too: Live*)

Another small group of three respondents stated that the art enhanced the religious connections between themselves and the Minster space:

Female, 35-44, Yorkshire resident: *"[The art] helps me connect with God I think. Good art helps me connect with God because I believe God inspires good art. Whether it be through Christian artists or secular artists."* (Interview 80, *Minster Nights*)

A further two respondents, one who was an artist part of one of the *Minster Nights* performances, commented on how the space enhanced the art on display, and the artist explained how is

perception and understanding of the meaning of the Minster had influenced his own performance that evening:

Male Sound Engineer, 45-54, Yorkshire resident: *“[B]ecause I’m working with Kayla [Kavanagh] there, and she’s singing here, so we’ve taken account of the actual space itself in the way we’ve performed, because the Minster itself (...) enhances acoustically what you do, so you perform differently to if you were performing in a normal concert hall. And I think from the point of view of the religious aspect of the building, (...), the way we’ve set up, the things we have and haven’t done, have been influenced by what we feel is right to do in a place like this that makes sense. So having respect for the place.”* (Interview 128, *Minster Nights*)

One respondent added that the art and sound stimulated the visitor’s curiosity to find out more about the building and its function:

Female Taiwanese Student, 25-34, UK visitor: *“I don’t have much idea about the Christian or Catholic religion so maybe that’s oh well. But it does make me want to know more about it.”* (Interview 92, *Minster Nights*)

Conclusion:

The audience research data suggests that the art and sound events at the Minster enabled visitors to experience and engaged with the Minster in new ways. The art and sounds installations were seen to reveal the architecture and acoustics of the space, exposing hidden or neglected elements of the building for the public to discover. The art also encouraged visitors to look harder: to take the time to explore the spaces through the artwork. The events also enabled new experiences of space by encouraging visitors to explore the buildings using different senses, exploring the Minster through sound.

The artwork further enabled visitors to reconnect with the historical meaning of the Minster, especially its historical use as a community space.

The art events enabled new experience of the York Minster by opening up the cathedral to new interpretations. Often contemplative and introspective, these moments enabled audiences to view the Minster as something other and often more accessible than the generalised public perception of the Minster as a place of worship, a heritage space and historically important place.

4.2 Impact of art on public perceptions and understandings of the Minster according to demographic categories.

The audience data showed no statistically significant correlations between the different demographic categories and the responses to the question “ how does the art help you to connect with the meaning of this space?”

4.3 Impact of art on public perceptions and understanding of cultural heritage

As part of the main objective of this pilot audience research project, the audience questionnaire asked all 160 respondents for their general reflections on the contemporary art installations in heritage spaces. Respondents were encouraged to consider the wider cultural heritage setting, either hypothetically or reconsidering previous experience of art in a heritage space. Respondents were thus asked “in general, how does contemporary art in a heritage space change the way you think and feel about it?” Figure 12 shows an overview of responses.

It should be noted that although this question attempted to consider the wider cultural heritage context, many respondents referred back to the Minster in their responses to this question. It should also be noted that the structure of the question caused some confusion among respondents who asked whether the question referred to the contemporary art or the heritage space. Respondents were encouraged to answer this question in either or both manners.

Contemporary art to change thought and feelings about heritage space	Frequency	%
Yes	104	65%
No	21	13%
Unsure	22	14%
No answer	13	8%

Figure 12: Contemporary art changing public perceptions and attitudes towards heritage space (total sample of 160 interviews)

A large majority of respondents, 65%, stated that contemporary art interventions in heritage space would change the way they thought and felt about the heritage setting. Just under a quarter (14%) stated that they felt unsure whether the art would change their feeling towards cultural heritage spaces. Three respondents explained that this would depend on the art on display and how it

interacted with the heritage space. One respondent stated that it would equally depend on the heritage site used for the intervention: *“I think it depends on what you feel you want to get out of heritage spaces, what you personally think they’re for.”* (Male, 65+, York resident, interview 4, *I Hear Too: Live*). Another respondent added with reference to the Minster, that such changes in the perceptions of heritage would only ever be transient and momentary:

Female Artistic Technician, 16-24, York resident: *“While I’m here tonight I do [feel art changes perceptions of heritage spaces], but I imagine if I came back another day it would go back to being that same space. I don’t know whether that’s a good thing or a bad thing for them, but I think it would revert to being a religious space afterwards.”* (Interview 62, *I Hear Too: Live*)

Other respondents (3 respondents) added that although they were unsure how to answer the question, many restated their support for such artistic events and reflected on how art could enhance the experience of heritage.

Male Software Developer, 25-34, York resident: *“Oh ... I don’t know (...) any form of art, music or art in somewhere like this, I think, it does kind of, I don’t know how to say it, it’s like a catalyst maybe; it makes it a bit more exciting and – well, not exciting, but I don’t know. It gives something a bit more maybe.”* (Interview 105, *Minster Nights*)

Male Engineer, 45-54, York resident: *“Gosh I’m not really into contemporary art as I said I’m a bit of traditionalist (...) I think everything’s got its space. Everything should be given a chance, everything should be ... given room and utilised to its best potential.”* (Interview 133, *Minster Nights*)

A small group of respondents (13%) stated that the art would not change the way they thought or felt about heritage spaces. However, many of these respondents (8 out of 22) added that they would still support such events, recognising the many ways such events could provide enhanced experiences of heritage space, events during which old would connect with new, and commending how art interventions in ecclesiastic spaces could enable non-religious experience of sacred spaces:

Female, 45-54, York resident: *“Well this isn’t a heritage space is it? Well it’s a heritage space secondary to being a religious, Christian space. I don’t think contemporary art would change my view of it but I think contemporary art would complement both the religious space and the heritage space, if it’s appropriate, yeah. So again it could add depth if correctly done.”* (Interview 2, *I Hear Too: Live*)

Female, 65+, Yorkshire resident: *“Change how I feel about heritage? [Art] doesn’t change it does it? It enriches it, doesn’t change it. It adds in, but it’s not changing it, because I don’t think it could.”* (Interview 5, *I Hear Too: Live*)

Male Fashion Designer, 25-34, UK visitor: *“I don’t think it changes (...) I would not blame my*

experience of tonight for example, it would not affect what I think of the Minster for example, it's just a separate emotion” (Interview 41, I Hear Too: Live)

Male 45-54, York resident: *“I think you can blend the old and the new ... I don't think it changes the way you feel about it.” (Interview 94, Minster Nights)*

Female University Pro-Vice Chancellor, 65+, York resident: *“I don't think the area in which it is is going to make me feel differently about the art. I will respond to it or not respond to it according to how it has meaning or delights me. How it makes me feel about the heritage space ... I don't think it makes me interpret the actual architecture any differently but I think it might please me that the space is being put to secular, albeit secular of a more sort of spiritual nature, ehm, that's good.” (Interview 146, Minster Nights)*

Of the 56% of respondents who answered this question positively, figure 13 presents their comments and reflections on the ways that contemporary art would change their thoughts and feelings towards heritage spaces

“In general, how does contemporary art in a heritage space change the way you think and feel about it?”	Frequency	%
Creates living heritage spaces	23	14%
Enables new engagement and new experiences of heritage space (opening up space to new meanings)	21	13%
Encourages more careful contemplation of heritage spaces	13	8%
Connects past and present	11	7%
Enhances heritage space	9	5.6%
Connects with new audiences	6	4%
Enables non-religious experience	5	3%
Connects with historical meaning	3	2%
Connects with local community	3	2%
Makes space more comfortable	2	1.6%
<i>No comment</i>	3	2%

Figure 13: Impact of contemporary art on public perceptions and attitudes towards cultural heritage (total sample of 160 interviews)

Fourteen percent of respondents stated that art interventions helped maintain heritage spaces as living spaces. Many commented on how contemporary art could help make heritage appear relevant in today's contemporary society, as well as helping preserve them for future generations. Similarly, 7% of respondents stated the presence of contemporary art helped create connections between past and present, between the heritage spaces and contemporary society.

Art interventions creating living heritage spaces:

Female, 16-24, York resident: *“I think it’s important in bringing heritage spaces into today, in a way making them feel like they’re – they’re not just for one thing, which is going to go and visit on a day out for example, it actually makes it alive really, a living space.”* (Interview 8, *I Hear Too: Live*)

Female, 35-44, UK visitor: *“I like to think of it as the fact that these are living buildings, they existed for thousands of years in some cases, what makes them interesting to us is the fact that they have changed. They’ve see so much in their lifetime, they’ve seen so much change, and they’ve been used in different ways, and I think for them now to remain static, preserved almost in amber would be a very bad thing. Ehm, so you know, having them used for contemporary art, as I say, yes it’s a bit of a jolt but no, I think it’s great, but it can be a little unnerving. You’ve got to wrap your head around it.”* (Interview 12, *I Hear Too: Live*)

Male University Lecturer, 45-54, UK visitor: *“[I]f I’m in a historic building and I see this contemporary art I feel that the building has, obviously has some sort of life, it’s not frozen itself in a space where everything has to be, ehm, it can only be used in a very traditional manner and it has to be, you know, have a sort of seamlessness with the, its, well I suppose, sense of history. And I think, ehm, if you have contemporary works in there it just, yeah, it gives a sense of place, you know, in the here and now.”* (Interview 24, *I Hear Too: Live*)

Male Student, 16-24, York resident: *“I guess it makes you view it in a more modern way. I mean normally you’d only come in a place like this for worship or to look at it, and having it as a venue for contemporary art just makes it more relevant to the modern world in away, at least from my point of view.”* (Interview 45, *I Hear Too: Live*)

Male Arts and Museum Practitioner, 45-54, York resident: *“It’s sort of – it’s the sign of a health living culture that’s not insular”* (Interview 101, *Minster Nights*)

Male Oil and Gas Consultant, 35-44, York resident: *“I think it connects it to the outside world slightly. Makes it more relevant to something that’s going on outside. (...) And maybe it gives it a sense of connectedness perhaps”* (Interview 108, *Minster Nights*)

Female, 35-44, York resident: *“I think it becomes a lot more dynamic doesn’t it, I think – rather than thinking this is a place that was special to people in the past, this is a place that’s special to people now.”* (Interview 116, *Minster Nights*)

Female University Lecturer, 45-54, York resident: *“[Art] re-creates a purpose that some people may find is lost that, you know, that kind of sense that a heritage space is only museum. And it gives it some other kind of purpose for that.”* (Interview 131, *Minster Nights*)

Female, 45-54, York resident: *“Well it makes more, comes more alive, not just pieces of stone and pieces of glass.”* (Interview 137, *Minster Nights*)

Male Charity Development Manager, 25-34, York resident: *“It’s brought it into our world. It’s a living, historic piece that we can interact with.”* (Interview 140, *Minster Nights*)

Contemporary art creating connections between past and present:

Female University Professor, 45-54, York resident: *“I’m certainly all for seeing something that’s*

heritage, seen as a heritage landmark, in a new light because whatever we've brought from the past needs to be interpreted for where we're living, where we're at with our living today (...), Rooted in the past is good, but the present and looking to the future is also important, so being able to use spaces for applications that are good for today and for tomorrow, that's great." (Interview 9, *I Hear Too: Live*)

Male Professor, 45-54, York resident: *"[A]s a historian it makes me kind of think of multiples layers I guess, that I'm thinking about the age of the building, and the contemporary nature of what it is that I am seeing, or hearing, and thinking about the distance between those, but also the continuities that make it possible to have one with the other. So it's about an appreciation of time I guess."* (Interview 44, *I Hear Too: Live*)

Female Writer, 35-44, York resident: *"I think it makes a connection between today and the origins of the place, somehow, and it makes it meaningful, it makes that space meaningful for today."* (Interview 78, *Minster Nights*)

Male Student, 25-34, York resident: *"It's interesting, especially in a space like this that's been added to and remodelled and re-done so many times over the years, to see just the sort of continuation of art through the ages and so I think it's good to have contemporary art in this space, it keeps that tradition alive."* (Interview 150, *Minster Nights*)

A further 13% of respondents stated that the contemporary art interventions enabled different forms of engagement with heritage spaces. Many respondents explained how the artworks could provoke new interpretations and new understandings of heritage spaces by enabling respondents to look at heritage spaces from different perspectives. Several respondents added how contemporary art could open up heritage spaces to new meanings beyond what was seen as more proscriptive heritage messages.

Art enabling new engagements with heritage spaces:

Male Artist/Archaeologist, 35-44, UK visitor: *"[A]ctually to be honest from my perspective the reasons why I've been doing more and more, what you might call art, is simply because otherwise more traditional ways of engaging with buildings became insufficient. And art, if you like, is a way of moving beyond certain constraints, it may be a strong word 'constraints', but certain ways that we're used to engaging with places, and it opens up those other possibilities and that's what, why I think it's really, really critical."* (...)

"I'm a practitioner of art in heritage locations, so there is a definite context within which I'm speaking, ehm, I think we could even do more, maybe take more risks in how we use these places. Risks in a sense of pushing the boundaries of how we might experience, getting beyond expectations of how the buildings might be experienced, I think that's what art can do. It can bring something into the world that didn't exist before. And this building did that, and that's what this building has to be about, and now, in a way, it's a legacy that we can do something onto the future, to make the future more exciting, more varied, more interesting. I think that's the power of art." (Interview 37, *I Hear Too: Live*)

Male Archaeologist, 45-54, Yorkshire resident: *“I think it creates more of an emotional connection with the place than just having the place on its own, so I think having some sort of contemporary interventions certainly make you look at it differently and provoke all series of emotional responses that you otherwise probably wouldn’t have.”* (Interview 38, *I Hear Too: Live*)

Female Programme Manager Arts Sector, 45-54, York resident: *“I don’t think it’s a question of change when you get contemporary art in, it’s a question of moving your perceptions around. (...) So I think having contemporary works in heritage spaces makes one maybe think about the context of the space. Because you have such a contemporary element in it. And the other thing is that it also, if you have contemporary work, it challenges ideas about the use of the space.”* (Interview 67, *I Hear Too: Live*)

Female, 16-24, York resident: *“I think that contemporary art in a heritage space makes you look at the place in a completely different way and it does give a completely different feeling to a place (...) it’s a completely different experience.”* (Interview 130, *Minster Nights*)

Art opening up spaces to new meanings:

Female, 25-34, UK visitor: *“It’s always fascinating to see other people’s take on a space, ehm, it makes you realise that it’s not just you experiencing these sites [sights?]. I think that it opens your eyes in a number of ways, and ears as well on a night like tonight. It makes you realise there’s not just one way of seeing things.”* (Interview 22, *I Hear Too: Live*)

Female Archaeologist, 35-44, UK visitor: *“I think it opens it, you know, I think an awful lot of the things that happen in heritage spaces are very directive. This is what happened, this is what you should be thinking, this is what we know, this is what we have found out, this is what happened here, all that stuff. Whereas when there’s some contemporary art there is much more space for reflection, it requires you to reflect, it requires you to be there, to put yourself there.”* (Interview 31, *I Hear Too: Live*)

Female, 45-54, York resident: *“Well I hope what it does is help people think of places in – that places can be all sorts of different things at one times. And just because you’re used to seeing this particular building as a church, well actually it can also be a theatre, a concert hall, a meeting place, ehm, somewhere to chat about things, and that we shouldn’t try and impose a sort of single sense of what buildings are about. And it’s hard when you’ve got something that’s so clearly, you know, is what it is, but it’s still receptive to being used in different ways.”* (Interview 42, *I Hear Too: Live*)

Female Arts and Museum Practitioner, 35-44, York resident: *“I think it does give you a sense of place, again without an imposed message, I think sometimes in heritage sites and museums you feel that you’re being told what to feel and understand. And this kind of event – you can think about anything. Bring your own space to it.”* (Interview 111, *Minster Nights*)

Female Museum Director, 25-34, York resident: *“I think it just, it makes you look at it in a different way, I’m so used to seeing the heritage angle on it, it’s nice to see the different ways in which I can be used, as I say, it focuses your attentions in different ways.”* (Interview 121, *Minster Nights*)

A small group of respondents, 8%, stated that contemporary art in a heritage setting encouraged viewers to take more time and pay closer attention to the heritage spaces to discover new aspects of

a building or new elements of architecture:

Male Museum Curator, 25-24, York resident: *“[A]gain I think it just draws attention to where you are, it just makes you stop and think where you – things that you wouldn’t otherwise notice.”* (Interview 11, *I Hear Too: Live*)

Male P.A., 25-34, York resident: *“I guess by the fact that using the space differently that enables you to perhaps think about things that you wouldn’t normally come to the fore.”* (Interview 34, *I Hear Too: Live*)

Female 35-44, York resident: *“Oh just makes you look at things in a different light and add a bit of interest, makes you go back to places you’ve already seen, because it’s, you know, it’s a bit different and we’d like to go back if there’s something new going on there.”* (Interview 139, *Minster Nights*)

Male Architect, 35-44, York resident: *“It makes you sort of linger a bit longer and sort of contemplate the space (...) if you’re sort of spending longer looking at the modern art pieces you might find yourself sort of spending more time round at the Minster itself as well.”* (Interview 141, *Minster Nights*)

Female, 25-34, York resident: *“[Y]ou change the way how you look at things maybe because you become more aware of some things that you hadn’t see at first glance”* (Interview 147, *Minster Nights*)

Male Retired Engineer, 55-64, York resident: *“I think it’s just a different format, a different way of thinking that just stops you and makes you think.”* (Interview 153, *Minster Nights*)

Nine respondents reflected on how contemporary art could enhance heritage spaces to make them more interesting venues to visit, and to reveal old historic buildings themselves as pieces of art:

Female Student, 25-34, York resident: *“I guess it transforms the space a bit from having once been a space that was simply a useful space, it served the purposes of the building but now it’s a heritage space and we’ve preserved it to experience the building itself not just the functions that happen in it; I guess seeing art, or concerts of anything like that within that space reminds me of the facts that the space itself has come a work of art, in a way.”* (Interview 20, *I Hear Too: Live*)

Female, 55-64, York resident: *“I think it’s absorbing the realness of the building as well, and taking on the soul of the building. So you know, I think that, the two go together quite nicely.”* (Interview 111, *Minster Nights*)

Male Scientist, 45-54, York resident: *“I think it really, really reinforce the wonderful nature of the space (...) it’s just an amazing piece of architecture and kind of like to bring it into modern contemporary art is just an amazing thing to do.”* (Interview 125, *Minster Nights*)

Male, 55-64, York resident: *“[B]eing an older person than yourself, I’m 60, I’ve been around a bit, I’m a Christian (...) I think it enhances it. (...) anything that does that gets my vote. Simple as that really.”* (Interview 158, *Minster Nights*)

A significant group of respondents commented on how contemporary art events could attract new audiences to heritage space (4% of respondents), and several respondents (5 respondents) added once more that such events could attract non-religious audiences to experience sacred space. Two respondents, both UK visitors who described their ethnicity as Taiwanese and Japanese respectively (see below), further stated that the presence of contemporary art in religious spaces could help make these spaces more accessible to different audiences by ‘softening’ these spaces and making them more comfortable to visit.

Art attracting new audiences:

Female, 25-34, UK visitor: *“I think it makes it more relevant to a different audience, new audiences but also audiences that thought they knew everything there was to know about a space like that.”*(Interview 22, *I Hear Too: Live*)

Female Freelance Arts Manager, 35-44, York resident: *“I love the fact that it’s bringing, well one bringing new audiences to the space, in terms of the contemporary art audience coming into a heritage space, but also bringing contemporary art to an audience that maybe just be coming here because of the heritage building who then get to experience ehm, contemporary art and possibly then explore that a little bit further after they’ve left the building.”* (Interview 55, *I Hear Too: Live*)

Male University Lecturer, 35-44, York resident: *“I think it potentially brings in a new audience to it, because you’ve got a gallery based audience, and a heritage based audience.”* (Interview 64, *I Hear Too: Live*)

Female University Lecturer, 45-54, York resident: *“I think one has to think really carefully about what the installation is and why, and I don’t think that’s always done, but on the other hand I do think that installations and performances will bring people in heritage spaces who might not otherwise come in.”* (Interview 131, *Minster Nights*)

Art enabling non-religious experiences of space:

Male Charity Development/IT, York resident: *“[N]ot being a religious person I wouldn’t come here in terms of sort of practice (...) this allows me to an interaction with the space on a level that I can kind of get.”* (Interview 49, *I Hear Too: Live*)

Male University Lecturer, 45-54, York resident: *“[H]aving [the Minster] as open to things that are not written for religious services makes you look at the building in another way.”* (Interview 71, *I Hear Too: Live*)

Female Health Administrator, 55-64, York resident: *“I suppose having an event like this would bring more people in and use the building to maximum really. I mean how many people were here who would not normally come into the Minster? Well we wouldn’t normally come into the Minster I suppose; we’re residents of York, but we don’t come here to worship. But it’s brought us here.”* (Interview 77, *Minster Nights*)

Female Educational Officer, 25-34, York resident: *“I can imagine some people don’t like this and it makes them quite uncomfortable, they think that this is a space where you come to contemplate and be quiet, but for – I think there’s a whole other group of people who don’t connect on a kind of religious/spiritual level who can come here and think ‘wow, what an amazing place’,*

so I do think that's quite important to do and so I think it's quite, maybe a brave thing to do (...) and I'm definitely coming back." (Interview 145, *Minster Nights*)

Art making spaces more comfortable:

Female Taiwanese Student, 25-34, UK visitor: *"I used to think about abbey or cathedral or Minster very seriously and dark, and very cold. But with those things which would help me to feel more relaxed."* (Interview 92, *Minster Nights*)

Female Japanese Teacher, 16-24, UK visitor: *"I feel much closer to this space (...) Before I came here I just thought I can see some stained glass or some decorations inside but when I was attending this event I just feel this is much familiar to this space"* (Interview 137, *Minster Nights*)

A small group of respondents (3 respondents) stated the contemporary art events worked to connect the heritage space, in this case reflecting on the example of the Minster events, with the local York community. Such 'special' events were seen as directed towards local communities and not tourists. This feeling of disconnect between local York communities and their cultural heritage is a theme that has come out of other IPUP audience pilot research projects.

Female University Research Associate, 55-64, York resident: *"I really think a good idea because it makes the space seem a though it's part of the community, it's some place where you can go and experience something that's different."* (Interview 19, *I Hear Too: Live*)

Female Minster Visitor Services, 16-24. York resident: *"I work on the tills, generally it is tourists, and a lot of York residents don't even realise that they're able to use this space, like come and out for free as much as they want. And like something like this, like putting contemporary art in, and just like giving the Minster a new look, and people experiencing the spaces differently, I think it's a brilliant idea."* (Interview 122, *Minster Nights*)

Male Doctor, 25-34, York resident: *"I think the main thing for this kind of event is that the Minster is an organisation if you like, open-minded about using it in different ways (...) and quite often getting different parts of the community involved in the cathedral. So from that point of view it just seems like a nice inclusive way to run events."* (Interview 127, *Minster Nights*)

Three respondents reflected on how the contemporary art could reconnect with the historical meaning and historical significance of heritage spaces:

Male Creative Director, 25-34, York resident: *"I think nowadays we tend to see heritage sites as a sort of very preserved site and something that you go in an you look around rather than, rather than necessarily in a lot of places, likes churches, likes places of worship or something that actually had a historical significance or a use, ehm, and I think it kind of reconnects you with that."* (Interview 18, *I Hear Too: Live*)

Male Photographer, 45-54. York resident: *"I'm imagining that this building when it was first*

conceived, for instance, nine hundred thousand years ago [sic], I mean this was probably cutting edge technology, I can imagine the craftsmen involved and the architects involved; I've absolutely no idea how they built the thing without modern technology and cranes and scaffoldings and what have you. So I can only imagine this was as cutting edge as it got, for the day, so modern art using, I suppose you'd say cutting edge technology isn't that far removed from that. I think the two complement each other to many degrees." (Interview 36, *I Hear Too: Live*)

Female, 16-24, York resident: *"Maybe it's thought provoking: like what it was used for in the past, and the people who've past through."* (Interview 124, *Minster Nights*)

Conclusion:

This data suggests that respondents were concerned with the contemporary use value of heritage spaces and were interested in heritage spaces that actively made the connections historical significance and contemporary society. The data seems to suggest that audiences were not concerned with a fetishised or nostalgic version of heritage but rather were in support of efforts to maintain heritage spaces as active, living spaces. Art and music events were seen to provide this link between the past and the present, as well as reviving public interest in heritage spaces.

As discussed in section 3, the art and music events enabled renewed engagements with the Minster by opening up the space to alternative meanings. Indeed, the data suggests that the public perceived the Minster as presenting a somewhat monolithic interpretation of the building and its history, while the art and sound events initiated alternative fluid interpretations of and reflections on the Minster.

4.4 Impact of art on public perceptions and understandings of cultural heritage spaces according to demographic categories.

The audience data showed no statistically significant correlations between the different demographic categories and the impact of contemporary art on public perceptions and understanding of cultural heritage.

5. Art and music events as incentives for repeat visits to cultural heritage spaces

The final part of this pilot audience research questionnaire attempted to establish whether contemporary art and music events would encourage visitors to come again and more often to the Minster.

“Would more contemporary art and music events encourage you to come again or more often to the York Minster?”	Frequency	%
Yes	123	77%
No	19	12%
Unsure	15	9%
No answer	3	2%

Figure 14: Art and music events as incentives for repeats visiting to the Minster (total sample 160 interviews)

Figure 14 shows that 77% of respondents agreed that more music and art events would encourage them to come again and more often to the Minster. The majority of respondents who stated answered this question in the negative forms stated that they were already frequent visitors to the Minster, and though they may come to these art events, this would not change their already high visiting frequency. Other respondents in this groups stated that as they lived outside of Yorkshire it would be difficult for them to visit the Minster on a regular basis.

One respondents did however stated that *“the Minster has got so much going for it already, (...) it doesn’t need yet another layer of occasionally rather extraneous materials laid upon it”* (Male, 65+, York resident, Interview 4, *I Hear Too: Live*)

Of the visitors who stated they were unsure whether art and music events would encourage them to visit the Minster again and more frequently, several stated that they were already regular visitors to the Minster.

Again, respondents reflected on similar themes and issues as discussed in the previous part of the audience questionnaire. Figure 15 presents some reflections on why art and music events would encourage respondents to visit the Minster again and more frequently.

Reasons for repeat visits to art and music events	Frequency	%
Enables different engagement with space	17	11%
Brings in new audiences	8	5%
Enables non-religious experience	4	2.5%
Evening event	4	2.5%
Unique/unforgettable experience	3	2%
Community/shared experience	3	2%
Makes use of building acoustics	3	2%
Inspiring experience	3	2%
Creates living space	3	2%
Interest in contemporary art	3	2%
To support local groups	2	1.3%
Family event	2	1.3%
Enjoyable experience	2	1.3%
Space should be used for different events	2	1.3%
Different venue to view art	1	0.6%
Fun experience	1	0.6%
Connects past with present	1	0.6%

Figure 15: Reasons for repeats visits to art and music events at the York Minster (total sample 160 interviews)

Once more, the main reasons attracting respondents to attending another art and music event in the Minster were the opportunity to engage the Minster in new and different ways, especially non-religious engagement with a space of worship, and the possibilities these events present for attracting new and wider audiences. Such events were described as providing unique, unforgettable and inspiring experiences for visitors, events which were often experienced as shared community events. Below are some interesting quotes which complement some of the themes discussed throughout this pilot audience research data report.

Art and music events enabling ‘fresh’ experiences of space:

Male IT Researcher, 35-44, York resident: “[Y]ou just forget about [the Minster], it’s just this building you walk by and (...) you don’t even notice. And I think an event like this can bring you in

to experience the Minster in a fresh way.” (Interview 53, *I Hear Too: Live*)

Female, 25-34, York resident: *“I think it does keep it fresh for you, so if it’s somewhere you visit a lot or you see all the time then it just renews that relationship and gives it another dimension and can either challenge things or deepen things.”* (Interview 66, *I Hear Too: Live*)

Art and music events as enjoyable, unique and inspiring experiences:

Male Radio Producer, 45-54, UK visitor: *“I guess it’s just very enjoyable, it’s entertaining, not in a shallow way.”* (Interview 33, *I Hear Too: Live*)

Male Hospital worker, 35-44, York resident: *“When [art and music events] work in an amazing place like this, when they work, you know, it’s something you don’t forget”* (Interview 97, *Minster Nights*)

Male Charity Development Manager, 25-34, York resident: *“I think because it’s probably the best venue in York and it’s magical you know, when you come here you feel like you’ve really experienced something.”* (Interview 140, *Minster Nights*)

Art and music events bringing in new audiences:

Male Professor, 45-54, York resident: *“I think something like this might possibly generate a rather different audience, and an audience that would also have a deeper, sorry I mean a different engagement with and appreciation of the building.”* (Interview 44, *I Hear Too: Live*)

Female, 55-64, York resident: *“I just think it brings the art to people who wouldn’t normally probably come and see that, and then brings the Minster experience to people who are interested in contemporary art.”* (Interview 111, *Minster Nights*)

Male, 55-64, York resident: *“If it gets people into these buildings and in to appreciate what they are, because they’re all part of our heritage, whether you live in York, whether you live in Wales, whatever. This is built by our ancestors. Yours, mine, even if your ancestors came from, I don’t know, the other side of the world. So, and this is what keeps these places alive and this is our heritage, and it is for your children’s children too. Is it no?”* (Interview 158, *Minster Nights*)

Art and music events enabling non-religious experiences of sacred spaces:

Female Arts and Museum Practitioner, 35-44, York resident: *“[T]o be quite honest about it I feel more invited in. Sometimes I come in here and I feel like I’m intruding on somebody else’s worship space or, and I have to be quiet, and I have to behave, and I’m a voyeur. It’s a voyeuristic feeling rather than a taking part feeling.”* (Interview 102, *Minster Nights*)

Female Teacher, 25-34, York resident: *“It’s more of an interaction between the building or people who are maybe a little bit, ehm, put off maybe by religious venues, they might be a bit more encouraged to come in, so I’d definitely come back.”* (Interview 103, *Minster Nights*)

One respondent added how special one off events would encourage repeat visitors who would otherwise postpone their visit:

Male Museum Curator, 25-34, York resident: *“I think without it, you know, you would be a repeat visitor but you’d put it off because you’d think ‘oh I’ll come another time’ but you know, with a diary date, you know, it encourages you to turn up, so purely for that, as a motivator.”* (Interview 11, *I Hear Too: Live*)

Several respondents stated that such events helped to re-establish the Minster as a space for the local community of York:

Female Actress, 25-34, York resident: *“It’d be nice as a community – to be used more as a community building rather than just a tourist attraction because at the end of the day we see it every day and it is our city.”* (Interview 113, *Minster Nights*)

Other respondents congratulated the events on being open to the whole family:

Female, 35-44, York resident: *“The reason we brought the kids as well is because all of us connect in that way (...) All of us would come in and, for us, church is rubbish at doing multi age stuff, whereas this is perfect because we all access it on our own level.”* (Interview 116, *Minster Nights*)

6. Conclusion

The main objective of this audience research project was to investigate the impact on audiences of art interventions in heritage spaces. The demographic data was collected in order to determine the profile of the visiting audience to York St. Mary's, and examine how art interventions in heritage spaces have the potential of attracting wider and more diverse audiences.

The audience profile suggests that art and sound events have a wide appeal across all age groups. Under 16s were not interviewed as part of this pilot audience research project, and it should be noted that there were not many children present at the event, presumably due to the events being late evening events (between 6pm and 11.30 pm). The events succeeded in attracting a local audience of York residents. In terms of educational background and occupation of main income earner, the audience profile was in both cases in the highest brackets or categories. The events principally attracted individuals across the arts and cultural sector, the IT sector and the higher education sector. The events succeeded in attracting a repeat visit from individuals who had already visited the Minster several times.

In terms of public perceptions concerning the use of the Minster as a venue for contemporary art, this audience data demonstrates clearly that visitors feel positively about these events. In particular,

the audience data revealed that many visitors were looking for new ways to engage with the Minster beyond its function as a sacred space of worship, especially visitor who described themselves as 'non-religious'. The art and music events enabled wider audiences to access intellectually and spiritually a space which they felt was reserved to Christian faith and religious understandings. Furthermore, the data reveals that the art and music events enabled audience to rediscover heritage spaces by encouraging more careful contemplation and the use of different senses.

The art and music events enabled a small group of visitors to reconnect with the historical meaning of the Minster, especially its historical use as a public and community space. In terms of the historical meaning of the Minster, the audience data suggest that visitors are stimulated by interpretations that actively draw the connections between historical significance and contemporary use and showcase the heritage space as active, living spaces in the community. The audience data suggests that many respondents felt that the Minster should open up to wider audiences and recognised the potential of art and music events for attracting wider and more diverse audiences to the Minster.