

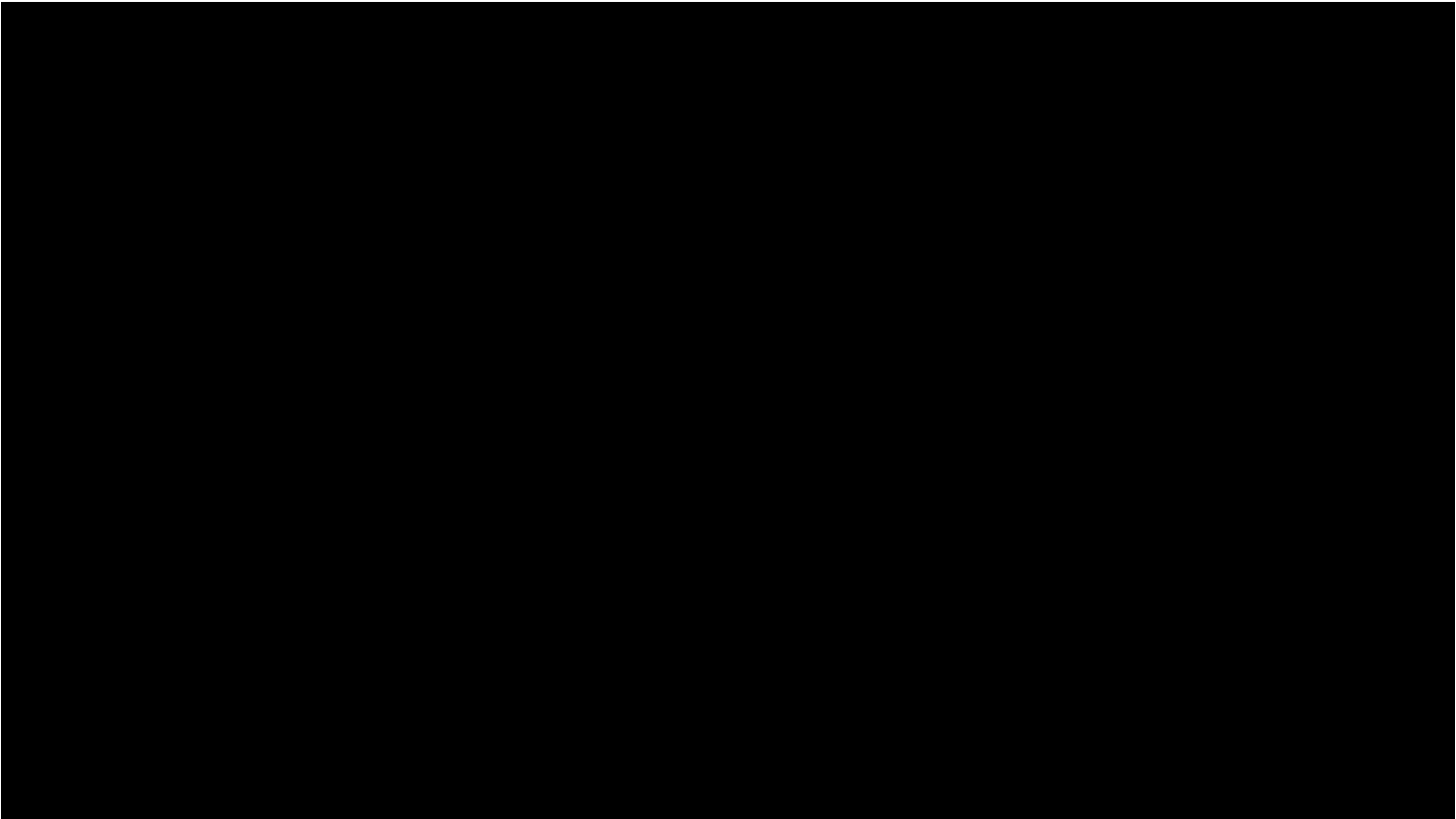
# Creative Aging Comes of Age - in Museums

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# My Focus Today

1. How we developed and expanded this initiative
2. Why and how we came to focus on museums
3. The impact of the museum programs, both on participants and the museums



# Mapping the Landscape

- Dramatically changing demographics
- Ageism everywhere
- Focus on deficits and losses of older people



# Creative Aging then = Opportunity

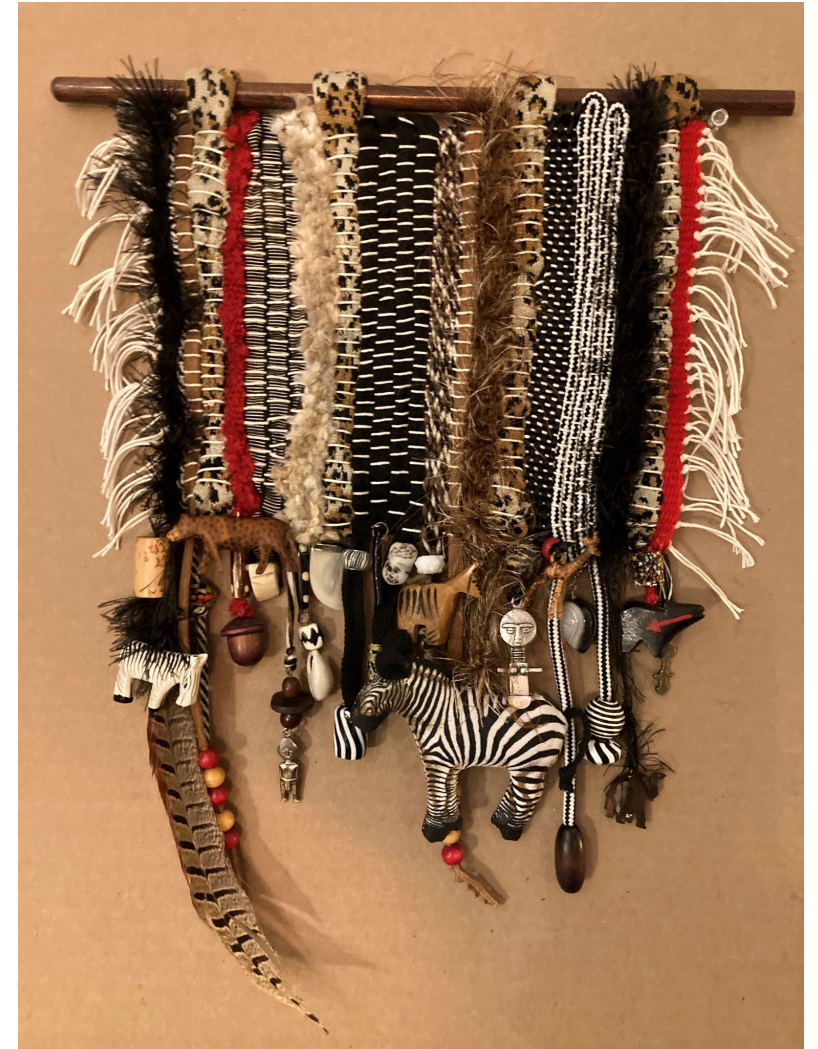
- Primarily dementia-based
- Few agreed best practices or common language
- Inadequate supply and no demand
- Vacuum in philanthropic leadership





# Seeding Vitality Arts Programs

- 4 cohorts
- Multi-year grants
- Training
- Consulting
- Peer learning
- In-person convening



# Museums and Creative Aging: A Healthful Partnership



At the Louisiana State Museum, teaching artist Baba Luther Gray led a course on the influences and rhythms of New Orleans music. Courtesy: Louisiana State Museum



# CREATIVE AGING

Older adults have vital contributions to make to society as creators and community members. Abundant evidence shows that arts participation improves the emotional well-being of older adults, supports good health, strengthens social bonds, and brings a heightened experience of purpose and joy to our lives as we mature. However, older adults all too often experience the effects of ageism, isolation and limited access to meaningful arts learning experiences. State arts agencies can help to address these gaps by facilitating creative aging programming as an antidote to isolation, an affirmation of life and a pathway to flourishing for older adults.

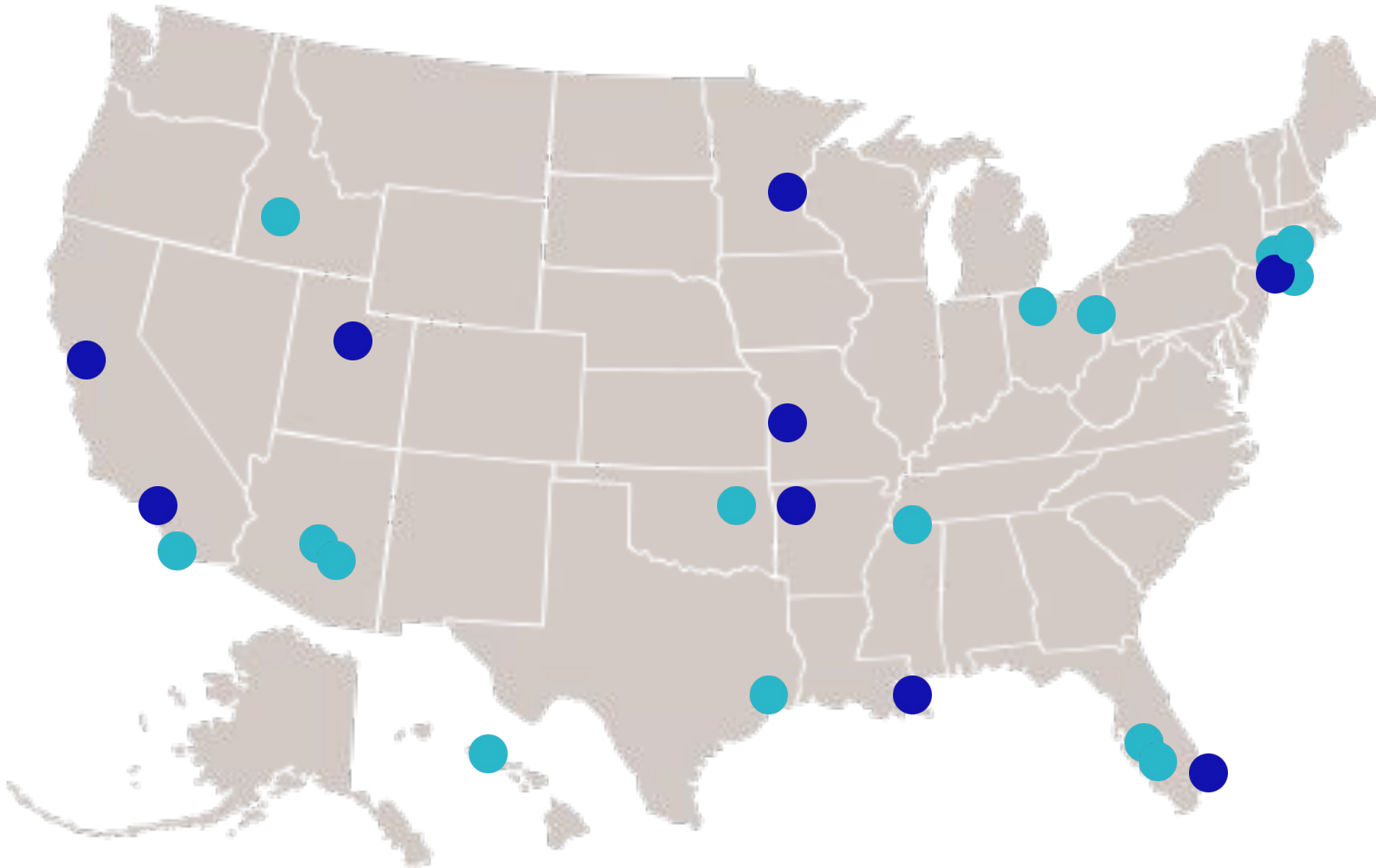


# What Do Older Adults Want?

- Adults of all ages have the same desires: to have fun, connect with others, create and learn
- Olders highly value a sense of accomplishment from creative activities - value increases with age



# Vitality Arts Project for Art Museums



25 U.S. Art  
Museums

9 in pilot group,  
16 in second  
group



# CENTER FOR AUDIENCE RESEARCH & EVALUATION







Pillsbury House + Theatre  
Minneapolis, MN

# EVALUATION MEASURES

**01**

**MOTIVATIONS**

**02**

**OVERALL EXPERIENCE**

**03**

**OUTCOMES AND WELLBEING  
MEASURES**

**04**

**MUSEUM RELATIONS**

**05**

**DEMOGRAPHICS**



## CROSS-SITE COMPARISONS

- COST
- LENGTH
- DAY
- TIME OF DAY
- LOCATION
- ART FORM

# SAMPLE

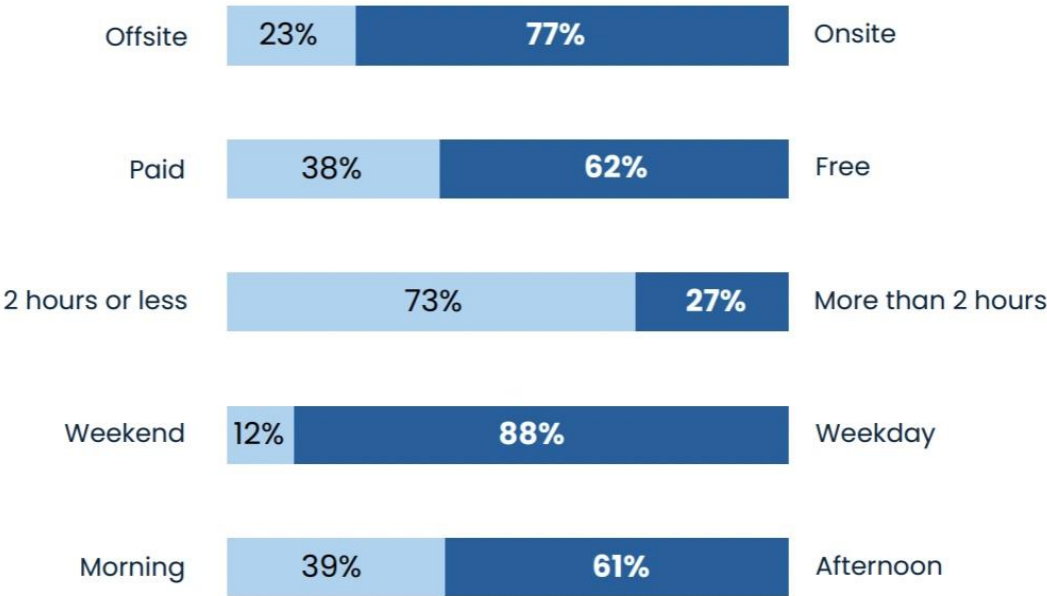
Data collected between March 2023 and September 2024, across 25 museums.

**132**  
Workshops

**998**  
Survey Responses  
637 online (51% response rate)  
361 in person (response rate unknown)

**153**  
Interviews

## Workshop characteristics in the dataset






## KEY TAKEAWAY


**This kind of programming  
impacts how older adults view  
your museum.**

# MUSEUM RELATIONS

Participants agreed or strongly agreed

 **99%** "I want to participate in future museum programs because of attending these workshops."

 **97%** "Attending these workshops made me feel more connected to the museum."

 **87%** "I learned something new about the museum's collection through these workshops."



Average of **6 visits in the past year** to host museum



## WHY ARE THEY PARTICIPATING IN THESE WORKSHOPS?

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- 1 To try something new
- 2 To learn
- 3 To connect with people



## KEY TAKEAWAY

**This kind of programming  
impacts older adults'  
well-being.**

# WORKSHOP OUTCOMES

"Provided an opportunity to try new things"  
"Stimulated me intellectually"  
"Increased my knowledge about art"

**Cognitive**

**4.73**

"Offered a sense of joy"  
"Helped me feel a sense of accomplishment"  
"Reduced my tension or stress"

**Emotional**

**4.58**

"Helped me make new social connections"  
"Helped me stay engaged in my community"  
"Helped me relate better to my peers"

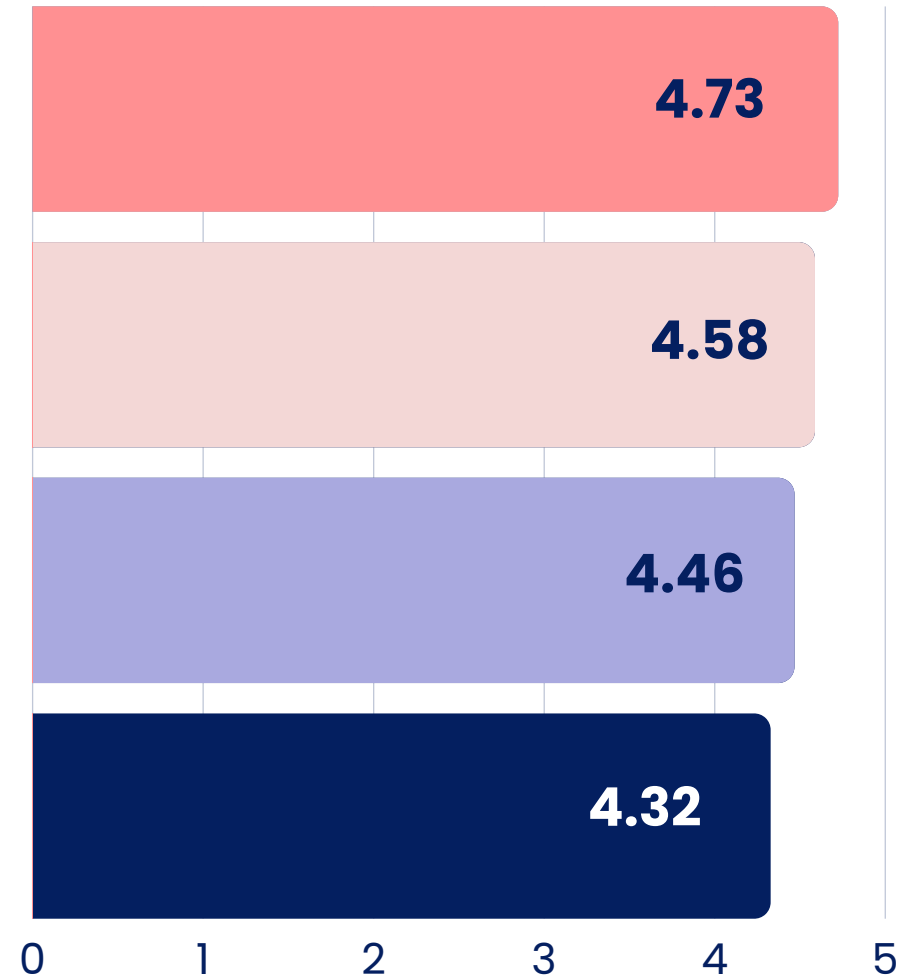
**Social**

**4.46**

"Improved my artmaking skills"  
"Gave me physical energy"  
"Helped me stay physically active"

**Physical**

**4.32**



# Evaluation Contact

Center for Audience Research and Evaluation (CARE)  
Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art

[crystalbridges.org/CARE](https://crystalbridges.org/CARE) - view section “Work Samples” for details of  
Vitality Arts Project evaluation

Contact: Emily Puckett, [emily.puckett@crystalbridges.org](mailto:emily.puckett@crystalbridges.org)

# Today

- \$25++ million in Vitality Arts grants by E.A. Michelson Philanthropy
- New awareness of ageism nationally
- Thousands of older adults benefitting across the U.S.
- Leadership by American Alliance of Museums, National Assembly of State Arts Agencies and Lifetime Arts
- Philanthropy?





Thank you!