

The art gallery as a place to foster a sense of social identity

Aleksandra Sowa

165750@stud.prz.edu.pl |  <https://orcid.org/0009-0008-9249-0575>

Marek Gosztyła

gosztyla@prz.edu.pl |  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6131-7162>

Rzeszow University of Technology,
The Faculty of Civil and Environmental Engineering and Architecture

Scientific Editor: Mateusz Gyurkovich,
Cracow University of Technology
Technical Editor: Dorota Sapek,
Cracow University of Technology Press
Typesetting: Anna Pawlik,
Cracow University of Technology Press

Received: August 11, 2025
Accepted: December 8, 2025

Copyright: © 2026 Sowa, Gosztyła. This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

Data Availability Statement: All relevant data are within the paper and its Supporting Information files.

Competing interests: The authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

Citation: Sowa, A., Gosztyła, M. (2026). The art gallery as a place to foster a sense of social identity. *Technical Transactions*, e2026003. <https://doi.org/10.37705/TechTrans/e2026003>

Abstract

The article presents the results of sociological research, which were taken into account in the selection of means of architectural shaping of the architecture of art galleries.

The aim of the study was to present how the residents of Rzeszów and the surrounding area perceive cultural institutions, to determine what architectural and urban planning solutions potential visitors to art galleries expect, and to examine the impact of cultural institutions on social integration. A survey was used as the research method to find out the opinion of the study group. The study was also intended to identify the criteria used by respondents when choosing cultural institutions. The study proved that active participation in artistic activities can contribute to the creation of social bonds and help combat loneliness and depression. Respondents pointed to the ineffective marketing activities of cultural institutions and the lack of effective communication about opportunities to participate in workshops as reasons for low attendance. In addition, visitor preferences were analysed and the marketing campaigns of cultural institutions in Rzeszów were evaluated. Respondents chose social media as their main source of information about cultural events. At the same time, they highlighted their uncertainty about the information obtained. Factors influencing the choice of cultural institutions were identified, including attractive exhibitions/performances, ticket prices and familiarity with the author/actor/creator. The results show that the group of respondents interprets the concepts of social bonds and social integration in an ambiguous way. Nevertheless, the study demonstrated that social integration through art is viewed positively by respondents.

The results of sociological research became a key premise for the development of a modern art gallery in Rzeszów. The architectural design also emphasised the value of the historical site.

Keywords: museums, culture, works of art, workshops, integration, social bonding

1. Introduction

Art has accompanied us since the beginning of our existence. Humans are creative beings by nature. The first documented works of art are related to religious worship; through their creativity, humans sought to implore the gods for fertility, offspring and prosperity. This is evidenced, among other things, by the paintings in the Lascaux cave in France and the Venus of Willendorf figurine. Art therefore played an important integrating role, bringing individuals together around shared values and experiences. From a sociological point of view, art is a set of social relations associated with the specific creativity of a given period. Institutional theory of art focuses on the relationship between a work of art and its reception by society. It examines how works of art function in the social consciousness. This is the moment when art connects with the viewer and the artist's intention is subjected to criticism by art consumers. It is then possible to examine the quality of the relationship that develops between the artist and the viewer. This relationship depends on the artist's level of awareness and on how society interprets and responds to a given topic. A modern art gallery should continue to promote community integration and, in addition to its exhibition function, should also serve an integrative function. In light of current social research, the growing problem of loneliness, isolation and accompanying mental disorders such as depression and anxiety is being highlighted¹. These phenomena are often associated with rapid technological changes, the intensive development of digital media and changes in communication methods, which tend to limit direct interpersonal relationships. Creating places where social integration is possible is a key factor in improving the current social situation.

Art is a social phenomenon that combines various scientific disciplines. It can be considered from a cultural, historical, anthropological, humanistic and sociological perspective. Art is a carrier of important symbols with religious or political connotations (Hauser, 1974). Its aesthetic values are assessed and examined in terms of the value they bring to society (Schopenhauer, 2009). For centuries, art has been an autonomous sphere of social life. It has been a carrier of the values of a given culture and has reflected the moral and religious standards of a given community (Niziołek, 2015).

As a public space, an art gallery becomes a place for social gatherings and integration. City residents, their habits and lifestyles determine the direction of development. The identity of a city is a mixture of many features, including the history of the city and its community. These resources are related to art and the aesthetic value of the city, both in urban spaces and in museum galleries. Architecture and the quality of public spaces are key factors in assessing the identity of a city (Bierwiazzonek, 2015).

The space in which works of art exist socially is called their form of presence. This form of presence intertwines space, the work of art and the viewer in a kind of knot that determines a number of conditions and rules of contact, and also has a certain influence on the work itself. Thus, the presence of a work of art depends on the viewer's perception of art. This is influenced by their perception, evaluation, reading and interpretation of the values contained therein and their connections (Golak, 2008).

Local culture is characterised by spontaneity and dynamism, is easily understood by the local community, and features a significant number of symbols related to the everyday life of residents. Presenting one's own artistic achievements, exchanging experiences and views brings residents together and strengthens the bonds between them. Local culture has a key influence on the creation of links between specific social groups and on their education.

¹ The Bertelsmann Stiftung report (2024 data) shows that among young adults (18–35), the proportion of people experiencing at least moderate loneliness is high, exceeding 50% in EU-wide samples (with significant differences between countries: for example, France, Poland, and Spain stand out with higher rates compared to some Northern European countries). The level of loneliness has remained elevated following the pandemic period.

The pedagogy of place, together with local culture, shapes co-creative attitudes based on social dialogue among residents (Pietrzak, 2017).

Through contact with art, the viewer should become aware of the issues surrounding us in the world. Art should encourage deep reflection and empathy, and help us to see different points of view. It broadens our worldview and sensitises us to independent reflection. It shapes creative thinking and a creative attitude towards reality (Shuna, 2025). This function applies equally to the recipient of art and the creator. Art can become an inspiration for social activists. The artist's free vision presented in a work of art transforms into a spark for action in the mind of the recipient. A work of art fulfils pro-civic functions that are intended to support the process of beneficial social change (Niziołek, 2015). Personal space defined as consisting of two dimensions. One consisted of physical forms, while the other was constructed from behaviors. Different configurations of these two groups result in an environment (Bańka, 2003).

Museum education does not focus solely on children and schoolchildren, but also involves universities of the third age, retirement homes, people with disabilities and groups at risk of social exclusion. Museums and galleries provide opportunities for artistic projects and offer substantive support. Such organised activities will contribute to an increase in the number of visitors to a given cultural institution (Mierzecka, Zybert, 2017).

The growing scale of mental health issues faced by both individuals and entire communities today, combined with the documented positive impact of exposure to art on mental well-being, prompted the authors to conduct an in-depth analysis of this issue. The considerations and conclusions drawn became the basis for developing the design assumptions for a space where art can directly and consciously meet its audience. Supporting the wellbeing of city residents by creating a place that meets their real needs, conducive to both mental regeneration and socio-cultural activity.

Research on the profile discussed in the article finds its place in scientific studies. The authors cited only those publications that allow them to highlight current issues in the design of interiors intended for cultural purposes.

Research conducted by Ireneusz Kaczmar entitled 'The impact of marketing on building lasting relationships between cultural institutions and their environment' proves that marketing tools influence the creation of lasting relationships with audiences, but their effectiveness is not uniform and depends on the specific characteristics of the target group. This means that cultural institutions should adapt their marketing strategies to the expectations and needs of their audiences in order to effectively build relationships and increase engagement. Of particular importance in this context is relationship marketing, which aims to create long-term relationships with audiences that exceed the value of one-off transactions (Kaczmar, 2025).

The importance of promoting, sharing and making art accessible is highlighted in research commissioned by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) in the United Kingdom, in collaboration with experts from University College London, which is one of the most important contemporary studies on the impact of culture and art on mental health. Media and Sport (DCMS) in the United Kingdom, in collaboration with experts from University College London, which is one of the most important contemporary studies on the impact of culture and art on mental health and social functioning. Regular participation in artistic events, visiting museums, taking part in creative workshops and using the services of cultural institutions are significantly correlated with better mental health. Among the many positive effects of such activities are: reduced anxiety, improved self-esteem, increased sense of meaning and satisfaction with life, reduced feelings of loneliness and alleviated symptoms of depression.

According to the analyses contained in the report, contact with culture also acts as a form of mental health prevention, especially among older people, young people and groups at risk of social exclusion. The psychological mechanisms described by the authors include: intellectual stimulation, building a sense of

agency, learning new skills, stimulating creativity and experiencing emotional bonds with others through shared participation in culture (Culture and Heritage Capital, 2024).

Participation in art significantly improves psychological well-being. A study of 430 Chinese students showed that participation in various forms of art has a significant positive correlation with 'flourishing' (psychological well-being). The reception of art strongly correlates with higher levels of life satisfaction. The greatest effect was observed among people who regularly participated in the performing arts and visual arts, while a lower level was observed in the case of literary arts. The authors of the study showed that art supports the process of creating a stable identity through expression, strengthening authenticity and building autonomy (Psychological Benefits, 2024).

2. Research method

The subject of the research was to analyse the experience of recipients in cultural institutions through the prism of artistic activities, promotional messages and architectural solutions among the residents of Rzeszów and the surrounding area. A survey was used as the research method in order to familiarise ourselves with the opinions, attitudes and comments of the residents. The survey was conducted online and the study group consisted of residents of Rzeszów and the surrounding area. The study group consisted of 61 respondents. The study group consisted of 42 women (69%) and 19 men (31%). The survey was conducted between March and May 2024.

The aim of the research was to determine the extent to which the residents of Rzeszów and the surrounding area perceive art galleries as places of social integration, as well as to establish what influences this assessment. The survey also aimed to examine what architectural and urban improvements are currently lacking in cultural institutions in Rzeszów, which could increase interest among residents and make a given facility more popular among visitors.

The results of the research conducted became the key basis for the development of an art gallery design, whose functional and spatial structure and programme offer will be closely tailored to the identified needs and expectations of users. A cultural institution designed in this way has the potential to serve as a significant centre for social integration, conducive to building and strengthening local ties. Furthermore, by creating a space conducive to contact with art, reflection and creative activity, this facility can contribute to improving the mental well-being of the residents of Rzeszów, constituting an important element of the infrastructure supporting the socio-cultural development of the city.

2.1. Research problem and hypothesis

Main research question: How does participation in cultural events contribute to strengthening relationships and creating community?

Specific issues:

1. Are deficiencies in architectural and urban infrastructure a reason for not participating in such activities (e.g. lack of parking, no bus stop near the venue, building not adapted for people with disabilities, no lift, etc.)?
2. Where do residents obtain information about cultural events (posters, advertisements, etc.)?
3. Do residents see the possibility of combining the functions of an art gallery and social activities in the form of, for example, art classes/workshops/lectures on art?
4. How do the residents of Rzeszów and the surrounding area understand the concept of social integration and social bonds?

- Are the classes currently held in institutions related to art and exhibitions in Rzeszów conducted in a way that is attractive to residents?

2.2. Research hypotheses

The lack of adequate infrastructure around cultural facilities causes a decline in visitor numbers. An insufficient number of parking spaces near the facility or difficult public transport connections (lack of transport links, no bus stop nearby) may discourage people from visiting a given institution.

Due to ineffective marketing activities currently carried out by cultural institutions, the information conveyed does not reach the target group.

Active participation in activities can contribute to the creation of social bonds. It can also be an alternative to acquiring new skills and an opportunity to spend free time in an intellectual way. In addition, participation in activities can help combat loneliness and depression among both older and younger people. Engaging in artistic activities will help build a sense of belonging to a group and create opportunities to meet new people.

Enriching the art gallery with an additional function, such as catering, will make the facility more attractive to visitors. Locating a restaurant or café on the ground floor near the main entrance will make the art gallery part of urban social life.

3. Analysis and conclusions of the research

3.1. Impact of the research on the designed art gallery building

An important issue addressed in the study was to examine the criteria used by respondents when choosing cultural institutions. Knowledge of these factors and their categorisation facilitated the development of an individual cultural facility design. The introduction of defined requirements means that the design has a chance to gain recognition among visitors and will consolidate the facility's position as a popular destination.

For the surveyed group (the surveyed group consisted of 42 women, representing 69%, and 19 men, representing 31%), an important factor in choosing a cultural institution (Chart 1) was an interesting exhibition/performance, indicated by 24% of respondents. The price of tickets and the possibility of taking advantage of various types of discounts, e.g. for students, seniors or people with disabilities, was also considered a decisive factor, as indicated by 20% of respondents. Equally important for respondents was their familiarity with the author/actor/creator whose works they would admire

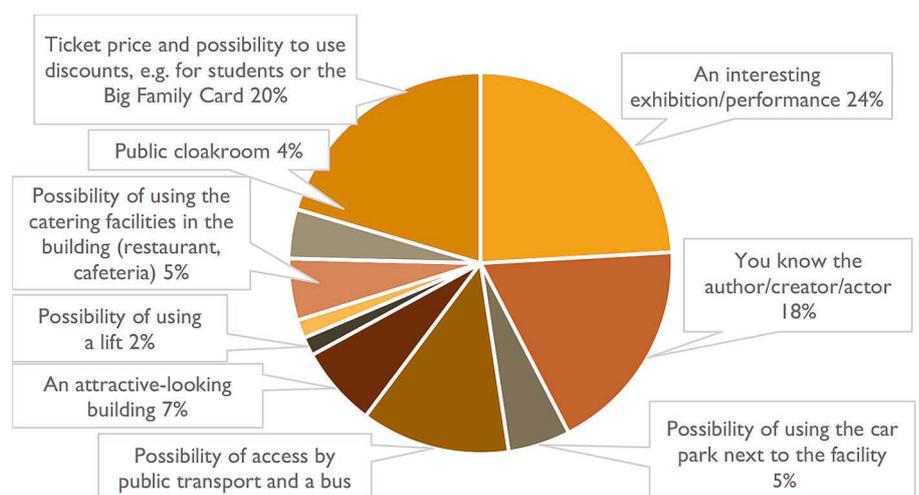


Chart 1. What categories do you use to guide your choice of cultural institution?
Source: own development

at the chosen cultural institution, with 18% of respondents selecting this answer. The possibility of travelling by public transport was indicated by 13% of respondents. The attractive appearance of the building was important for 7% of people. Less important was the possibility of leaving a car in the car park next to the building, with 5% of respondents choosing this answer. Only 5% of respondents considered the possibility of using a restaurant/café located in the facility to be important. Access to a public cloakroom was important for 4% of respondents. It should be added that when choosing a cultural institution, respondents paid attention to the possibility of using lifts, indicated by 2%, and facilities for disabled people, indicated by only 2% of participants.

3.2. Evaluation of the marketing campaign of a cultural institution in Rzeszów

The most common goal of a marketing campaign is to increase awareness, promote and build local identity. A properly conducted marketing campaign should promote a given cultural institution and facilitate the dissemination of information.

When asked to assess the effectiveness of the marketing campaign, respondents indicated (Chart 2) that they perceived shortcomings in it, with 51% of respondents giving this answer. Among the respondents, 25% had no opinion on this issue. Only 13% of respondents believe that the campaign is being conducted properly and is producing the desired results. A smaller group are those who did not notice any marketing activities (11%).

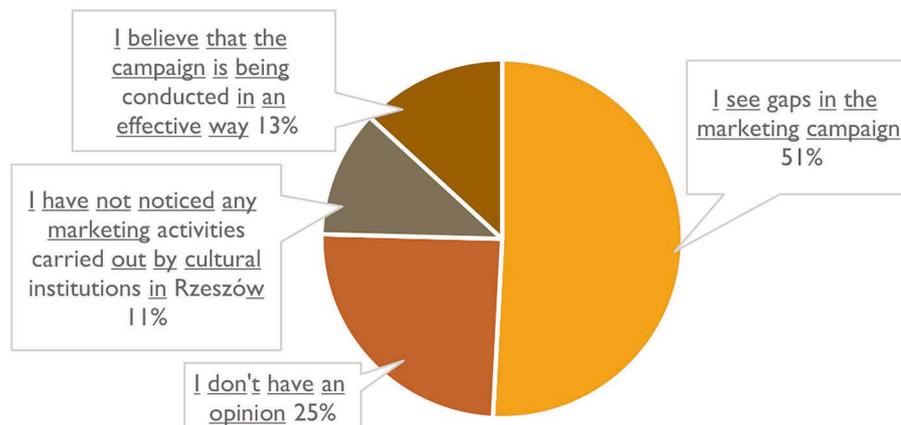


Chart 2. Do cultural institutions in Rzeszów run an effective marketing campaign that adequately communicates their activities? Source: own development

The group provided the following answers to the question about the reliability of the source from which they obtain information about artistic events in Rzeszów (Chart 3). 39% of respondents indicated that they were not sure where to obtain information about programmes. Only 31% are certain about this, and 30% do not have such knowledge.

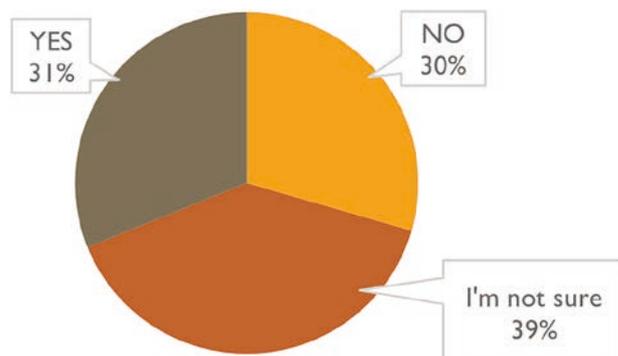


Chart 3. Do you know how to get reliable information about artistic events implemented in Rzeszów? Source: own development

When asked where they obtain information about programmes (Chart 4), the vast majority of respondents indicated that their main source of information is social media, with 39% of respondents giving this answer. Posters placed in public places are less popular, with 22% of respondents using them. Another way of obtaining information about cultural events indicated by respondents (17%) was talking to someone who actively participates in such activities. Radio/television advertisements are used by 8%. Advertisements on public transport are used by 7% of respondents. Another 7% declare that they have not been able to obtain any knowledge on this subject, and therefore did not know about the possibility of getting involved in artistic activities.

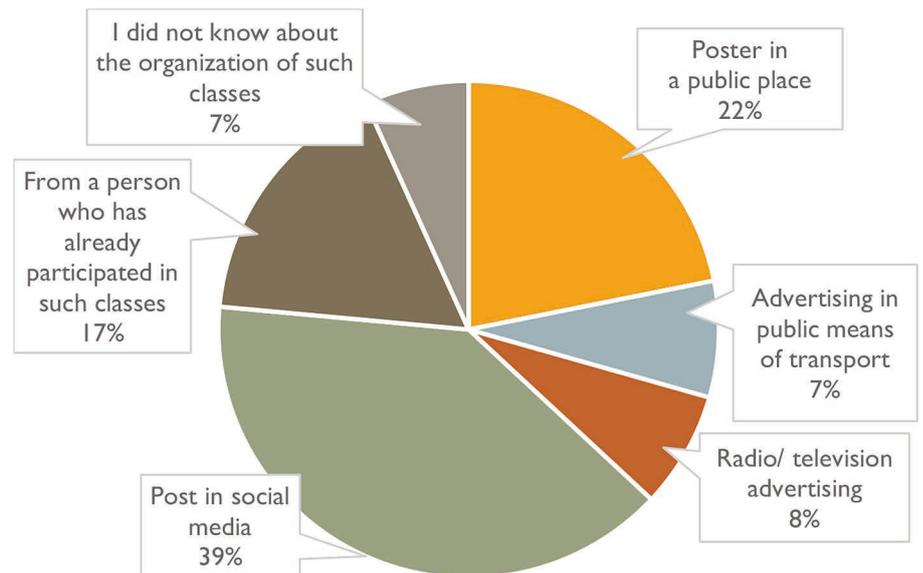


Chart 4. Where do you usually get information about the possibility of using art-related activities (workshops, classes, courses, etc.)? Source: own development

3.3. The impact of the combination of art and social

Respondents were asked about their understanding of the key definitions under investigation and about their own observations.

When asked to interpret the definition of social bond (Chart 5), the most common response was that it meant building a sense of belonging to a community, as indicated by 48% of respondents. Building relationships between people was indicated by 36%. For 8% of respondents, social bonding was understood as having certain obligations and rights resulting from

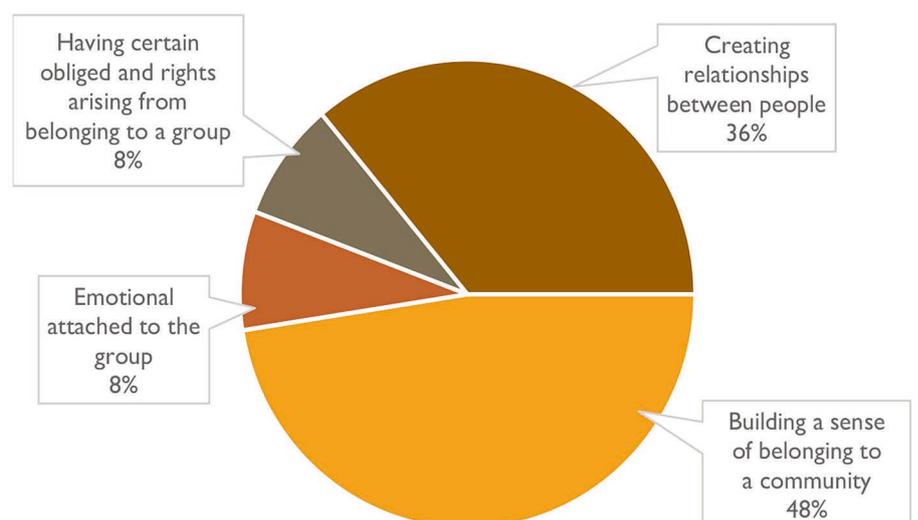


Chart 5. How do you understand the concept of social bond? Source: own development

belonging to a group. For 8% of respondents, social bonding was an emotional attachment to a group.

The respondents asked about the development of the definition of social integration (Chart 6) replied that it is for them to meet new people (37 people, 27%). For 23% of respondents, this is the creation of new social ties. The cooperation of various groups was indicated by 12, or 20%, and 17% of respondents chose to learn about new cultures and customs. Six respondents (3%) indicated that this is the inclusion of rejected and minorities in the group. One respondent replied that social integration is cooperation with a group of people with whom it is not possible to get to know the social, financial, cultural, and religious divisions daily.

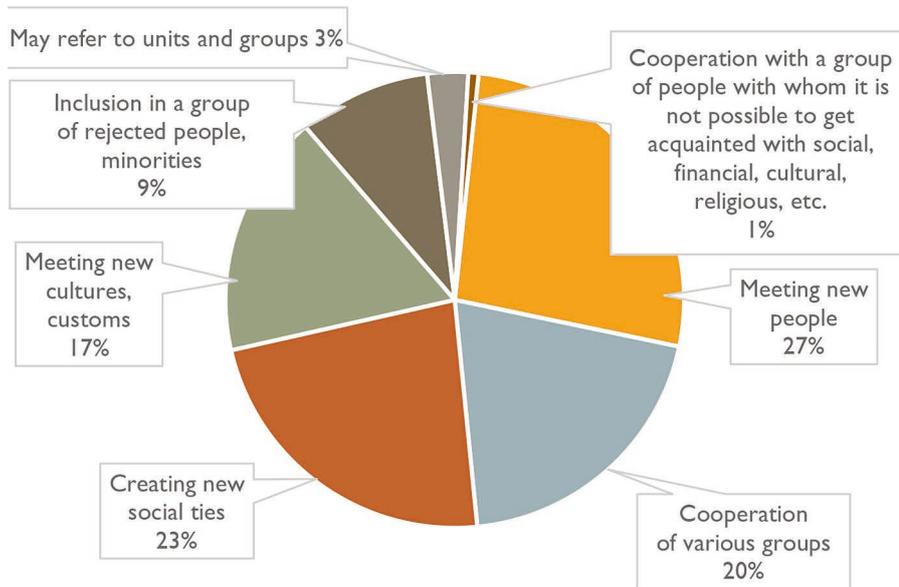


Chart 6. How do you understand the concept of social inclusion? Source: own development

At the question about the impact of a combination of cultural institutions and art-related activities (Chart 7), the vast majority of respondents (95%) indicated that they think engaging in this type of activity can bring positive effects. Two respondents have no opinion on this issue (3%). According to one respondent (2%), such activity will not have any influence on the community.

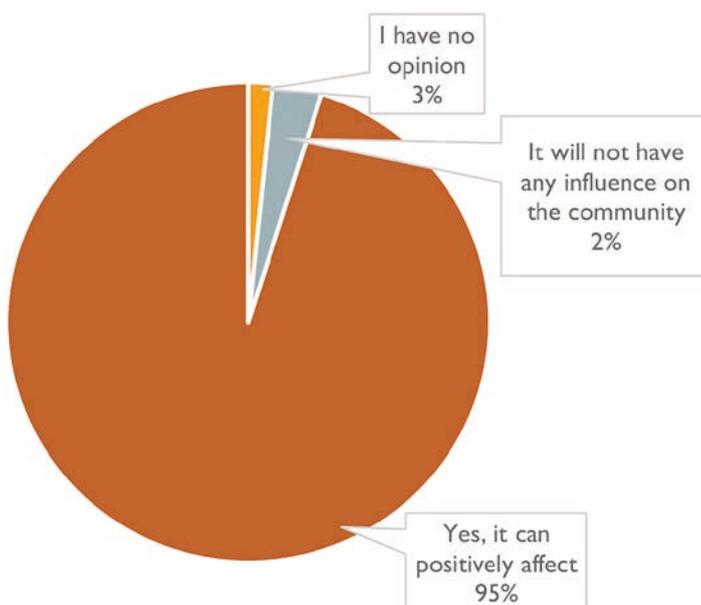


Chart 7. Do you think that the combination of cultural institutions with additional art-related activities can have a positive effect on the community? Source: own development

3.4. Social activity in artistic classes

We were asked to share their opinion in terms of various activities that can be found in cultural institutions and their assessment. The results show (Chart. 8) that as many as 34% of respondents did not know about the possibility of taking advantage of such classes. 18% of respondents knew about the possibility of participating in the meeting with the authors, creators and works of art. Subsequently, there were answers: ceramics workshops (16%), lectures and lectures (13%), vernissages (10%), holidays, and semi-camps combined with artistic workshops (9%).

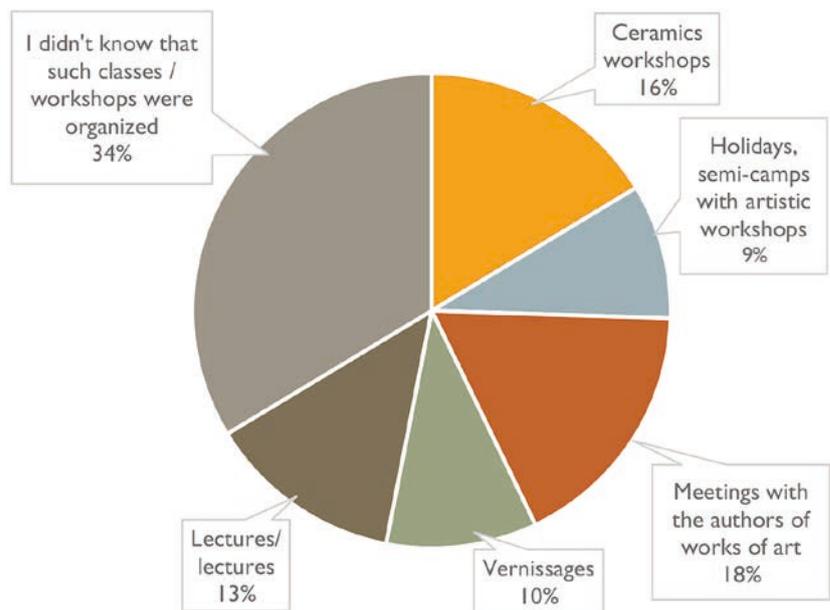


Chart 8. What attractions, apart from sightseeing, currently in my offer, institutions dealing with museums and exhibitions in Rzeszów? Source: own development

Regarding the question, regarding the impact of participation in classes on students (Chart 9), most respondents replied that such activity may positively affect people participating in the courses. They can develop new interests and skills (26%). At the same time, he can give you a sense of belonging to a social group (20%) or allow you to make a new acquaintance (20%). For 17% of

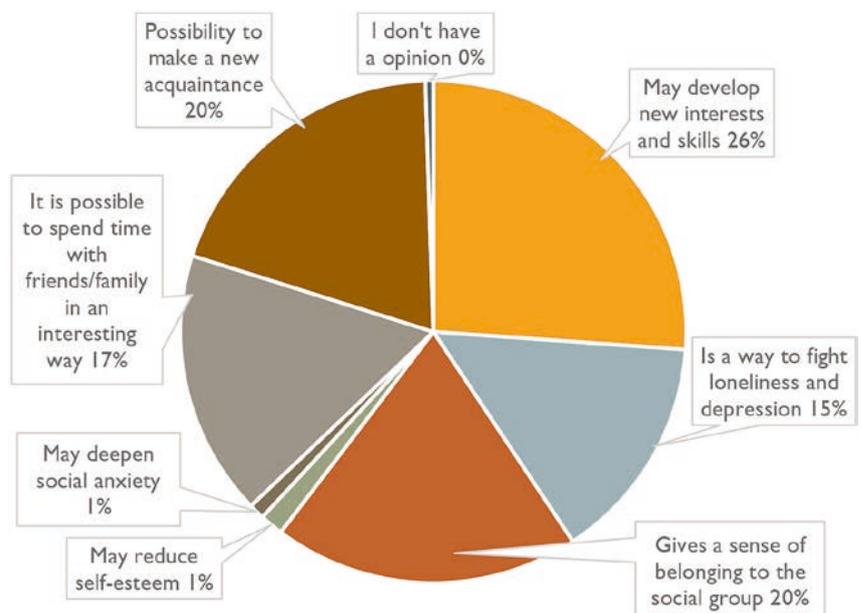


Chart 9. How can participation in workshops affect students? Source: own development

respondents, classes allow spending time with friends or family in an interesting way. They are a way to fight loneliness and depression (15%). The smallest percentage of respondents pay attention to the negative effects of activity, for 1% of respondents, participation in classes may deepen the felt social anxiety and may reduce self-esteem (1%) by the student.

Participation in artistic activities such as workshops, courses, social projects and cultural interventions helps to strengthen social bonds. Participation in activities increases the sense of belonging to a group. It also increases social trust and willingness to cooperate. It reduces social distance between generational, ethnic and economic groups. Participants in artistic programmes are more likely to declare openness, willingness to cooperate and a higher level of trust in other members of the community. In some cases, a reduction in local conflicts has also been observed, as joint artistic activities have enabled agreement to be reached despite differences in worldview or social background (Relationships between arts participation, 2025).

4. Summary of the research part

In summary, participation in artistic activities is an effective tool for strengthening social integration and building new interpersonal relationships. Creative activity promotes cooperation, exchange of experiences and mutual support, which leads to an increased sense of belonging to a group. At the same time, participation in the artistic process allows for the expression of emotions, reduction of tension and development of social skills, which directly translates into an improvement in the mental state of participants. Thus, artistic activities serve a dual function: they integrate the community and support the well-being of the individual.

When analysing the results of the research, it should be noted that the most popular choices are specific exhibitions/performances that the audience already knows or knows something about. Meetings with authors/artists are also often chosen, which shows the bond-forming idea of art. Knowledge of the performer or the content of a given work is even more important than architectural and urban amenities. Information about planned artistic activities is most often noticed on social media, which is where the respondents mainly obtain their information.

Research shows that marketing activities have a significant impact on the number of people participating in extracurricular activities. Effective promotion, both traditional and digital, raises awareness, attracts new participants and encourages regular attendance. The results of this research emphasise the importance of strategic communication and promotion planning in the context of organising workshops, artistic activities and other educational and cultural initiatives. The marketing campaign and its quality are not producing the desired results. Half of the respondents point to shortcomings in the way it is conducted. Respondents are unsure of the sources from which they can obtain reliable information about events taking place in cultural institutions. The hypothesis regarding the marketing campaign and the method of communicating information assumed that the activities undertaken by cultural institutions are ineffective, resulting in unsatisfactory attendance at artistic activities. The respondents confirmed this assumption.

Research shows that social bonding is largely understood as building a sense of belonging to a group. When it comes to understanding the concept of social integration, it should be noted that it is interpreted individually and there is no clear dominance of one answer. However, understanding these concepts can influence the positive perception of social activities related to art. People meeting in groups and talking or creating art together has a positive impact on the community. It is perceived by the residents of Rzeszów as an opportunity to spend quality time. However, it should be noted that the marketing campaign

itself was not conducted in a professional manner, and advertisements about the activities were not communicated to the target audience, which resulted in a lack of participation in the activities.

The hypothesis was that participation in art-related activities would facilitate networking and assimilation. Participation in classes can also help combat loneliness and depression in adults and young people. In addition, participation in classes will facilitate the development of a sense of belonging to a group and the opportunity to acquire new skills, which will lead to meeting new people with similar attitudes.

Comparing the results of our own research with previously published studies, we can see similar conclusions. Both our observations and earlier studies confirm the positive impact of art on social integration, regardless of country or cultural context. Similar results were obtained in studies conducted in Rzeszów, the United Kingdom and China, which indicates the universal nature of art's impact on strengthening social bonds and improving interpersonal interactions.

5. The impact of research on the design of the modern art gallery in Rzeszów

5.1. Idea process

The research part was a key stage in the design process, enabling us to understand the real needs, expectations and behaviours of future users of the planned art gallery. The collected data allowed for a precise definition of the functions that this space should fulfil, not only to exhibit art, but also to create an environment conducive to social integration, cultural activity and the improvement of the mental well-being of residents. The analysis of the research results revealed the significant needs of the study group, which were constructively taken into account in the final architectural and functional solutions. As a result, the art gallery design gained a functional and social dimension, responding to real challenges and strengthening the potential of the place as an open, inclusive and audience-oriented space.

The project was created in response to the needs of the local community. The functional and utility programme allows for the potential of the plot and its surroundings to be exploited, providing opportunities for education and recreation and creating a place that encourages social activation for different age groups, thus counteracting loneliness.

Respondents indicated how they understand the concept of social bonds and social integration. In the next stage of the survey, 98% indicated that combining art-related activities and cultural institutions can have a positive impact on the community. The respondents highlighted the positive aspects of participating in workshops and courses. These include the development of interests, the opportunity to make new friends and a sense of belonging to a group. Therefore, the functional programme of the designed facility has been expanded to include a workshop segment.

The choice of land for investment plays an equally important role in the design process. The location of the facility determines both the nature of the surroundings and the profile of the audience and users who will visit the art gallery. The location of the investment affects transport accessibility, visibility, integration potential and the possibility of incorporating the facility into the existing social and cultural structures of the city. Thus, a properly selected location becomes a key factor determining the functioning of the gallery, its attractiveness to residents and its socio-cultural impact. The planned plot is located in the Podkarpackie Province in the city of Rzeszów. It is located close to the centre in the northern part of the city. The plot is located on Jana Kochanowskiego Street and is part of the Railway Area. The plot

designated for the investment is located in the city centre, which significantly increases its accessibility and potential for use. On the north side, the area is adjacent to multi-family residential buildings, which promotes the integration of the newly built facility with the local community. There is also a primary school in the immediate vicinity, which creates an opportunity to include the shopping centre's offer in educational and cultural activities aimed at children and young people.

In addition, key transport hubs are located nearby: the Rzeszów Główny railway station, bus station and local station, providing easy access for users from outside the city. All these factors make the location of the plot a favourable and strategic place for the construction of an art gallery with a wide reach.

The main idea behind the design process was to create a building whose architectural expression would refer to the industrial character of its surroundings. At the same time, its form was to commemorate the history of the place and contain the characteristic features of the demolished old locomotive shed. The shape was created from picture frames. The building, consisting of fragmented forms resembling picture frames emerging from the ground, was intended to suggest its function and purpose. The structure should intrigue the viewer and encourage them to visit the art gallery or take part in art workshops. An art gallery designed in this way will become a recognisable landmark and an important point on the tourist map of Rzeszów and the region.

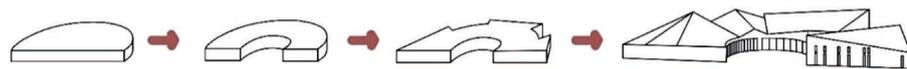


Fig. 1. Ideat process of the block. Source: own development

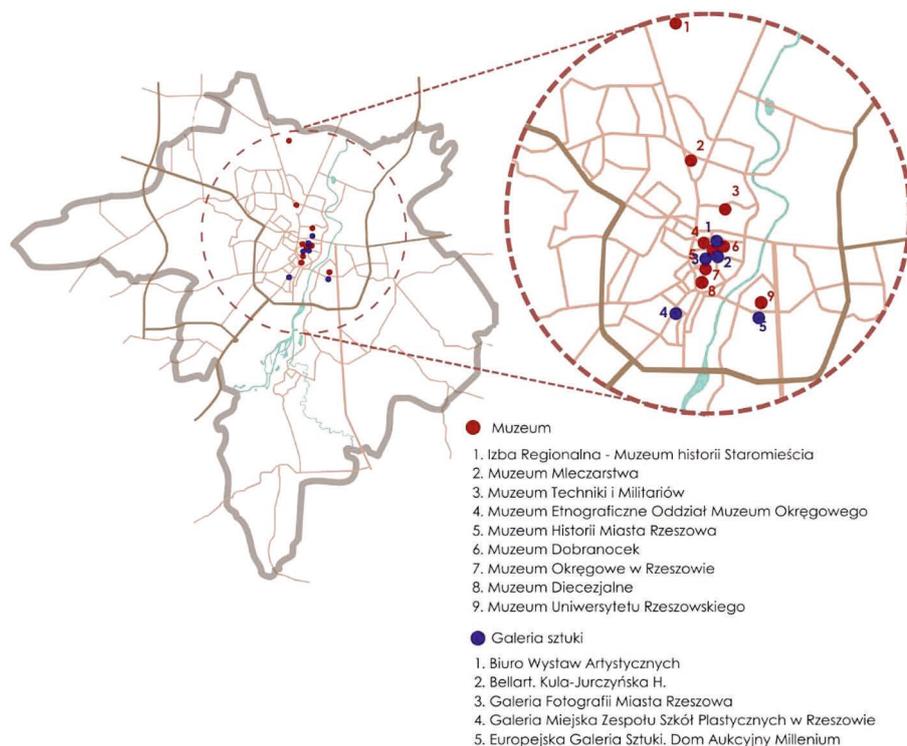


Fig. 2. Analysis of the placement of museums and art galleries in Rzeszów. Source: own development

5.2. The architectural form of the designed building

The starting point for designing the projections was a circle, which was cut just past its midpoint. This created a symmetrical, harmonious shape. The central part of the semicircle was cut out. The result was a horseshoe-like shape. It refers to the shape of the fan-shaped hall located on the neighbouring plot and is a reference to the history of the place. The newly designed building was

created on the site of a demolished hall identical to the one located next door. The modernity and dynamism of the structure are given by triangles cut out of the semicircle, which were then extended beyond the outline of the basic structure. The sculpted, fragmented form is a contemporary interpretation of the fan-shaped hall. The final form of the projections has been enriched with a space for a tree, which will be located in the central part of the building. The aim is to draw attention to the natural environment and introduce vegetation into the industrial area. Thanks to this solution, the form of the projections fits in with the character of the place and is the result of analyses and observations, while at the same time introducing modern solutions.



Fig. 3. Land development. Source: own development

Contemporary art, raises important topics and problems of the modern world. The tree placed in the center of the gallery symbolizes climate change that can now be observed. The tree is visible from virtually every gallery point, thanks to the glass hall and the restaurant. It is also visible even from level -1, thanks to the glazing in the flat roof in the main exhibition hall.

The gallery's elaboration has been finished with Corten sheet panels and columns from the same material. It refers to the industrial character of the place, at the same time it symbolizes the passing of time and be its witness. Corten sheet changes depending on the season and its final appearance is difficult to predict because the degree and pace of rust depends on many external factors. Thanks to this the gallery will be intrigued with its appearance over the years.

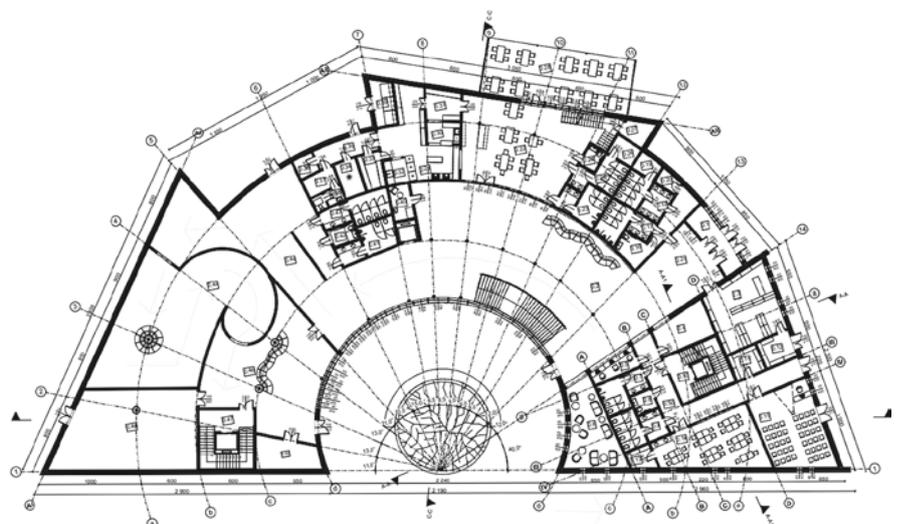


Fig. 4. Throw off the ground floor of the designed art gallery. Source: own development

Analyzed survey results indicate that respondents pay attention to the appearance of the cultural institution building and this is a determinant

factor when deciding to visit it. This is an important factor indicated by 20% of respondents.

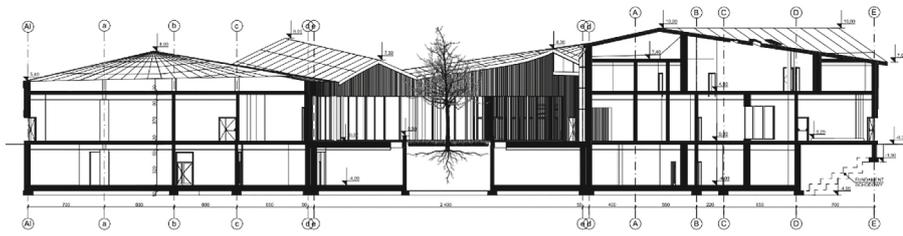


Fig. 5. Cross-section through the designed art galleries. Source: own development



Fig. 6. Visualization of the Art Gallery – front facade. Source: own development



Fig. 7. Art gallery visualization – rear elevation. Source: own development

5.3. The functional and utility program of the object

Has two parts: one- and two-storey, in the higher part there is administration. The facility is divided into four segments: exhibitions, restaurant, workshop lecture part and administration. Exhibitions start on the ground floor, from where visitors are directed to the underground floor, where the main part of the exhibition is located. The art galleries eliminate the access of natural light to exhibits. This is due to the natural variability of sunlight, which can give adverse reception of exhibits. Works of art are illuminated by artificial light. The main halls of the exhibition were transferred to level –1. The exhibitions were created in such a way that they blend in in a continuous room. A specific sightseeing

scheme ends in the largest room under the tree in the central part of the gallery. Exhibition rooms, creating a kind of maze, are aimed at making visitors to be able to immerse themselves in the world of art. There are evacuation doors in each room that will enable quick evacuation.

Research on museum gallery layout conducted by Ioannidis and his team analysed how architecture and interior design influence visitor behaviour and narrative construction. The researchers used methods from the fields of cultural sociology, user observation and spatial analysis. The study covered three institutions: MoMA in New York, the Yale Centre for British Art in the United States, and the Herbert Museum of Art & Gallery in the United Kingdom. The aim was to understand the relationship between the permeability and visibility of a space and how it is used by the public. The study shows how people choose their routes, where they linger longer, and how they connect the content they see into personal stories of art appreciation. The open-plan layouts and central atriums, particularly prevalent at MoMA, encouraged exploratory movement, short passages and viewing of multiple works in a single sequence, which translated into more frequent interactions between users in common spaces. The findings of the study provided important evidence that museum architecture and gallery layout have a real ‘causal impact’ on the cultural experience. Space is not a passive backdrop, but a tool for communication: it can invite, guide, support dialogue between works and audiences, or create a temporary atmosphere of calm and focus. Researchers emphasised that conscious museum design should take into account different styles of audience participation: quick exploration paths, reflection zones, rest areas and social contact points (Museum Gallery Layouts, 2009).

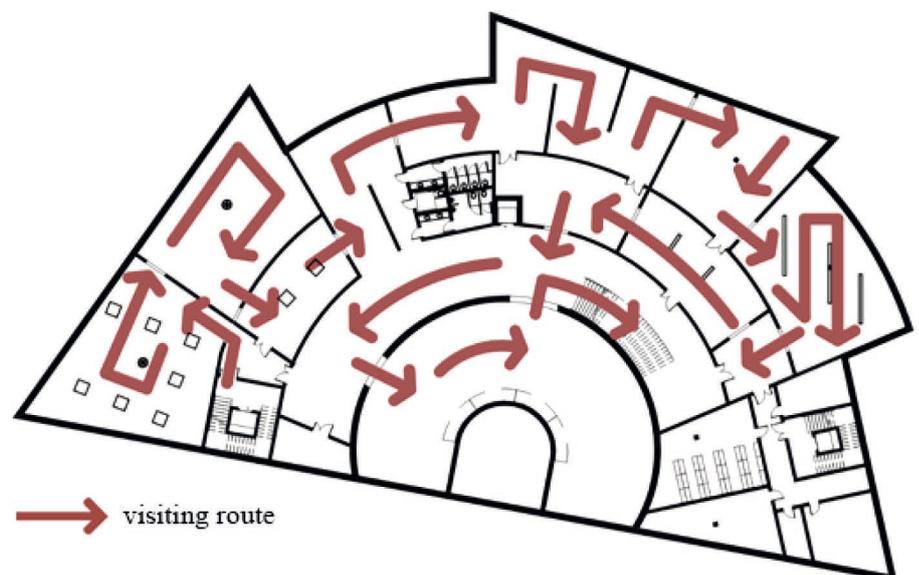


Fig. 8. Sizing scheme – level –1. Source: own development

5.4. Availability for people with disabilities

Social integration involves not only creating spaces conducive to meetings and activities, but also ensuring full accessibility and eliminating barriers that could lead to exclusion. For this reason, the art gallery design pays special attention to the needs of people with disabilities, the elderly and parents with small children. Solutions facilitating movement around the facility, ergonomic functional layouts and equipment elements supporting the comfort and safety of all users have been taken into account. As a result, the designed space is inclusive, responding to the diverse requirements of its users and reinforcing the idea of universal access to culture.

The design of the art gallery building and its surroundings takes into account

the needs of people with disabilities. Right next to the main entrance to the gallery, there are two marked parking spaces measuring 3.6 × 5 m. Taking into account the terrain, two ramps have been designed to meet the needs of people with disabilities. Inside the building, there are lifts to facilitate communication between the different levels. Toilets for people with disabilities have been designed on each floor. Wide corridors will facilitate wheelchair access.

Taking into account the needs of elderly people and people with disabilities, the workshop area has been located on the ground floor, ensuring easy access without the need to overcome architectural barriers. In addition, all floors are connected by a lift, allowing for comfortable and safe movement between the levels of the building. Such solutions significantly increase the functionality of the gallery and reinforce its character as a fully accessible and user-friendly space for all visitors.

References

- Bańka, A. (2003). *Forma i przestrzeń w świadomości użytkowników i projektantów*. Poznań: Stowarzyszenie Psychologia i Architektura.
- Bierwiaczonek, K. (2015). *Przestrzeń publiczna jako przedmiot badań studiów miejskich w kontekście współczesnego definiowania miasta*. Katowice: Instytut Socjologii Uniwersytetu Śląskiego.
- Golak, M. (2008). *Socjologia sztuki*. Warszawa: Difin.
- Hauser, A. (1974). *Spółeczna historia sztuki i literatury*. Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy.
- Kaczmar, I. (2025). Wpływ marketingu na budowanie trwałych relacji instytucji kultury z otoczeniem, *Marketing i Rynek* 02/2025.
- Kozłowski, T. (2019). *Architektura a sztuka*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Politechniki Krakowskiej.
- Mierzecka, A., Zybert, E. L. (2017). *Instytucje kultury jako ośrodek życia społecznego*. Warszawa: SBP.
- Mizia, M. (1995). *O kompozycji malarskiej w projektowaniu architektonicznym*. Kraków: Arcana.
- Museum Gallery Layouts and Their Interactions with Exhibition Narratives and Space Use Patterns: An Investigation of the YCBA, the MoMA and the HMA Galleries*. (2009). İpek Kaynar Rohloff.
- Niziołek, K. (2015). *Sztuka społeczna. Koncepcje – dyskursy – praktyki. Tom 1*. Białystok: Fundacja Uniwersytetu w Białymstoku.
- Norberg-Schulz, Ch. (1991). *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture*. Rizzoli.
- Pietrzak, M. (2017). *Działalność artystyczna jako forma edukacji w lokalnych instytucjach kultury*. Warszawa: SBP.
- Psychological Benefits of Arts Participation for Emerging Adulthood: A Pathway to Flourishing. (2024). *Behavioral Sciences*, 14(6), p. 448; <https://doi.org/10.3390/bs14060448>
- Culture and Heritage Capital: Monetising the impact of culture and heritage on health and wellbeing*. (2024).
- Relationships between arts participation, social cohesion, and well-being: an integrative review of evidence*. (2025). *Frontiers in Public Health*, <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2025.1589693>
- Schopenhauer, A. (2009). *Świat jako wola i przedstawienie*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.
- Shuna, G. (2025). Research on the Function of Art Education for Children in Art Museums, *American Journal of Art and Design* 10/(2).
- Stangel, M. (2013). *Kształtowanie współczesnych obszarów miejskich w kontekście zrównoważonego rozwoju*. Gliwice: Politechnika Śląska.
- Strzemiński, W. (1974). *Teoria widzenia*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie.
- Zumthor, P. (2021). *Thinking Architecture*. Bazylea: Birkhauser.

Appendix (questionnaire)

The impact of art on social integration

I am a fourth-year student of Architecture at the Rzeszów University of Technology. The questionnaire will help me to find out the opinion of the inhabitants of Rzeszów and its surroundings on cultural institutions. Based on the results of the survey, I will design a modern art gallery that will meet the needs of the local community. The survey is fully anonymous.

I invite you to fill in the questionnaire.

Thank you for your answers and your time.

Gender

- a) Female
- b) Male

Age

- a) 18–25
- b) 26–35
- c) 36–45
- d) Over 46

Place of residence

- a) 10 km from Rzeszów
- b) 20 km from Rzeszów
- c) 30 km from Rzeszów
- d) more than 30 km from Rzeszów

Education

- a) Primary education
- b) Vocational
- c) Secondary
- d) Higher

State of health

- a) I am a fully fit person
- b) I have a disability group
- c) I am a fully able-bodied person who looks after someone with a disability
- d) I do not want to answer

How often do you visit cultural institutions (theatre, philharmonic, museums, art galleries, etc.)?

- a) Once a month
- b) Once every two months
- c) Once every six months
- d) Once a year
- e) Less frequently

Which cultural institutions do you choose most often?

- a) Cinema
- b) Theatre
- c) Philharmonic hall
- d) Museum
- e) Art gallery
- f) Photo gallery
- g) Other ...

What categories do you use to select a cultural institution? (you can select more than one answer)

- a) An interesting exhibition/performance
- b) Knowing the author/creator/actor
- c) Possibility of using the car park at the venue

- d) Possibility of access to public transport and a bus stop close to the venue
- e) Attractive-looking buildings
- f) Possibility of using a lift
- g) Facilities for the disabled
- h) Possibility of using the catering facilities in the building (restaurant, cafeteria)
- i) Cloakroom facilities accessible to all
- j) Ticket price and possibility to use discounts e.g. for students or Big Family Card

Do cultural institutions in Rzeszów run an effective marketing campaign that adequately communicates their activities?

- a) I think the campaign is run in an effective way
- b) I notice deficiencies in the marketing campaign
- c) I have not noticed any marketing activities carried out by cultural institutions in Rzeszów
- d) I have no opinion

Do you know where to get reliable information on in artistic events taking place in Rzeszów?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) not sure

Where do you most often get information about opportunities for arts-related activities (workshops, classes, courses, etc.)? (you can select more than one answer)

- a) a poster in a public place
- b) advertising on public transport
- c) Radio/TV advertising
- d) post on social media
- e) from someone who has already participated in such activities
- f) I didn't know about the organisation of such activities

How do you understand the concept of social bonding?

- a) Creating relationships between people
- b) Building a sense of belonging to a community
- c) Having certain obligations and rights deriving from belonging to a group
- d) Emotional attachment to the group
- e) Other ...

How do you understand the concept of social inclusion? (you can tick more than one answer)

- a) Meeting new people
- b) Interaction between different groups
- c) Creating new social bonds
- d) Getting to know new cultures, customs
- e) Including rejected people, minorities in the group
- f) can refer to individuals as well as to groups
- g) Other

Do you think that a combination of cultural institutions and additional arts-related activities can have a positive impact on the community?

- a) Yes, it can have a positive impact
- b) Yes, but it will hurt the community
- c) It will not have any impact on the community
- d) I have no opinion

Apart from sightseeing, what attractions do museum and exhibition institutions in Rzeszów currently offer? (you can mark more than one answer)

- a) Ceramics workshops
- b) Holidays, half-schools with artistic workshops
- c) Meetings with authors of works of art
- d) vernissages

- e) Lectures
- f) I didn't know there were such activities/workshops

How might taking part in a workshop influence your students? (you can tick more than one answer)

- a) Can develop new interests and skills
- b) It is a way to fight loneliness and depression
- c) Gives a sense of belonging to a social group
- d) May lower self-esteem
- e) May aggravate social anxiety
- f) Opportunity to spend time with friends/family in an interesting way
- g) Opportunity to make new friends
- h) I have no opinion

Have you ever participated in workshops/classes/courses etc. organized by cultural institutions?

- a) Yes
- b) No

Section for non-participants in workshops/activities/courses etc.

1. Why do you not participate in workshops/ classes/courses etc.?

- a) I didn't know there were any such activities
- b) There are no workshops on topics that interest me
- c) I have found activities of interest, but cannot attend due to a lack of facilities

Section for people attending workshops/classes/courses etc.

2. How often do you attend workshops/ classes/courses etc. related to the arts?

- a) I have only been once
- b) I attend occasionally
- c) I attend regularly

3. What kind of art-related workshops/ classes/courses etc. were these?

4. How would you rate the workshop/class/course etc.?

- a) They met my expectations, everything went according to plan
- b) Partially met my expectations
- c) Didn't meet my expectations
- d) I have no opinion