

[CIRCUS]
WORK AHEAD!



Culture

[Circus] Work Ahead ! s'inscrit dans le cadre du Programme Culture de l'Union Européenne 2007-2013 et court de juin 2013 à mai 2015.

Le champ du cirque s'est considérablement renforcé à l'échelle de l'UE, bien au-delà des seules France et Belgique, terrains historiques de son développement. Mais de nombreux problèmes persistent : peu ou pas de liens pour les jeunes artistes entre leur formation et leur entrée dans la vie professionnelle, déficit de mobilité internationale des productions montées par ces mêmes artistes, déficit de diffusion du cirque contemporain. Il faut encore appuyer la diffusion et l'intégration du cirque dans des lieux de reconnaissance et de valorisation des arts de la scène contemporains.

Les partenaires identifient quatre priorités autour desquelles ils conviennent de concentrer leurs efforts en tant qu'acteurs de la production et de la diffusion des compagnies professionnelles.

Pour rencontrer ces priorités, quatre activités distinctes ont été mises en œuvre par les partenaires du projet :

- 1- des masterclasses ;
- 2- une action de diffusion internationale concentrée sur des artistes qui peinent à franchir le cap d'une professionnalisation confirmée ;
- 3- un programme de diffusion locale décentralisée afin de lutter contre le déficit de diffusion locale dans de petites communautés et gagner de nouveaux territoires de cirque. Les centres culturels de petites villes ou installés en zone rurale n'accueillant que très peu de projets de cirque contemporain ;
- 4- le développement d'un axe documentaire et analytique sur le développement des publics du cirque contemporain en fonction de territoires donnés.

En quelques chiffres :

9 compagnies ont été choisies et présentées :

Marcel et ses drôles de femmes/Miss Dolly (FR)	37
Alexis Rouvre/Cordes (BE)	21
Sisters/Clockwork (SE)	19
Oktobre/Oktobre (FR)	13
Poivre Rose/Le Poivre Rose (BE)	7
Magmanus/Attached (SE)	6
DeFracto/Flaque (FR)	5
Rusparocket/La Geste (BE)	2
La Meute (FR)	2
TOTAL	112

**Diffusion dans 4 festivals
de 7 compagnies avec un total
de 46 représentations.**

**Diffusion décentralisée
de 8 compagnies avec un total
de 66 représentations.**

**3 masterclass
avec 5 mentors
et 41 participants.**

Partenaires :

KIT, Copenhague (DK), Chef de file : www.kit.dk

Les Halles, Bruxelles (Be) : www.halles.be

CIRCa, Auch (Fr) : www.circa.auch.fr

Cirqueon, Prague (CZ) : www.cirqueon.cz

**The diversity of public perceptions
of contemporary circus forms :**

The circus audiences in
four European Countries

Synthesis of numerical data

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This survey is based on the programming of contemporary circus forms created as part of Circus Work Ahead!, European project coordinated by KIT (Københavns Internationale Teater) in Copenhagen (Denmark), CIRCa, Pôle National des Arts du Cirque in Auch (France), Les Halles de Schaerbeek in Brussels (Belgium) and Cirqueon in Prague (Czech Republic). It started in October 2013 and carried on until December 2014. This kind of survey which consists in interrogating circus spectators from several European countries with the same tool has not been done before and it aims to gather material about differences between spectators and about public perceptions of circus, depending on the surveyed venue¹. Now that circus productions are many and varied (Guy & Rosemberg, 2006; Territoires de cirque, 2008), this survey follows the work from the French surveys which intended to highlight the existence of various "audiences"² of circus performances (DEP3, 1993; La Villette, 2001), in particular between "classical" circus on the one hand, and "contemporary" circus on the other hand. To be more precise, thanks to a quantitative (2.085 questionnaires processed - see table 1) and at the same time qualitative approach (37 one-to-one interviews done with adult spectators)⁴, this survey aims to provide a new point of view on how circus spectators go to see a performance and how they receive this art form (Lahire, 2009), often seen as mainstream entertainment (DEP, 1993). Given the difficulty to implement such a study in four different countries at the same time, this survey involves putting in perspective the collected data in each territory, and aims to open ways of reflection for the professionals and experts of this area. The results below, obtained from the statements of the interviewed spectators, don't pretend to tell what the "audience" of new circus forms would generally look like, but stick to the survey context⁵.

At last we wish to thank every participant: different members of the four cultural entities, university students of Toulouse Jean Jaurès (France) and Université Libre of Brussels (Belgium) as well as some colleagues.

¹More generally, "international comparisons between statistics of the cultural field are still at the beginning" (Skaliotis & Pilos, 2003, p. 33).

²The audience, "in the strict sense of the term, is not only an assembly hic et nunc of spectators in flesh and bone. In other words, an audience exists only for a given performance" (Guy, 2003, p. 164), and not according to a venue or a genre. Otherwise, some studies showed that each artistic work has its own "audience" (La Villette, 2001).

³ Département des Études et de la Prospective (Future Studies Department), Ministry of Culture and French-speaking Countries, France.

⁴ This survey is addressed to people older than 15 years old, so the proportion of children and teenagers isn't represented with accuracy. Only data about adults with children and about ticket prices give information on this point. Unfortunately, tickets for kids younger than 15 years old aren't always distinguished in the computer systems of the box offices; elements which permit to get information about the audience are heterogeneous depending on the venues. This document mainly reports the results obtained from the questionnaires.

⁵The average rate of collected questionnaires (30%), quite high compared to other studies about performing arts "audiences", allows generalizing the results to all spectators of the surveyed performances.

Table 1: Number of questionnaires processed according to the surveyed places (%)

	Numbers	%
CIRCA	596	28,6%
KIT	522	25,0%
HALLES	900	43,2%
CIRQUEON	67	3,2%
<hr/>		
TOTAL	2085	100,0%

1. Comparison of the data collected about the spectators according to each country investigated

1.1. Live circus performances

In order to make the reading easier, the distinctive features stemming from the collected data are framed with grey background. It permits the specific data of each studied area to stand out. Data are explained in detail afterwards.

An audience of adults going out together

As shown by the previous surveys on circus spectators (DEP, 1993; La Villette, 2001), **people are going to circus performances in groups**. All questionnaires show that 45,9% of the surveyed audience go out in groups of 4 or more people (32,6%), and in groups of 3 people (13,3%). Next group is people who go out in pairs (40% of the answers).

As in the previous surveys, but in smaller proportions (DEP, 1993; La Villette, 2001; Territoires de cirque, 2008), these groups are mainly formed by friends (23,6%) and then by couples (22,3%). **The surveyed performances were mainly for an adult audience** (minimum 53,9%). These results show circus performances as a collective leisure activity like other live performances and it would be interesting to check from which social networks the spectators of live performances come (Pasquier, 2003).

Among people who answered that they go out with their families (25,4%), 12,1% have explained that they went out adults and children together. Among the different ways of going out, going to see one of the surveyed circus performances with relatives reaches the third position, however it is less significant than in the survey done in 1992 (from 38% to 51%) (DEP, 1993). Thus, the rate of adults who went with children was similar for spectators of new circus at the end of the 90's (between 10 and 33% depending on the performances) (La Villette, 2001). **These data tend to moderate the idea that circus is mainly aimed at kids (Babé, 2012). They also show the change of status of children from being « escorted » to go see classical circus, to “accompanying” adults to see new forms of circus performances (Lévy, 2001).**

Escorted groups only represent 5,2%. Even if this proportion is similar to the one of the survey done in 1992 (DEP, 1993), it is probably underrated in these results, like in many surveys done with questionnaires usually not suitable for kids younger than 15 and "specific" spectators.

The collected data of each surveyed territory allow concentrating on their specificities by focusing on the data which differ from the main tendencies. In order to make it easier to read, spectators will be mentioned according to the venues CIRCA, Kit, Les Halles and Cirqueon, even if the achieved results don't match the whole audience of these four venues and even if some of the performances took place in an extramural place (*see infra*). Cirqueon's spectators first (52,2%), then Kit's (47,1%), and then Les Halles' spectators in lower proportion (42,2%) mainly went to see one of the performances considered by the survey with one other person, either as a couple (Cirqueon and Kit) or with a friend (Les Halles and Cirqueon). On the opposite side, spectators interviewed at CIRCA went to the performance(s) in groups of 4 people or more (40,3%)⁶ but also "alone" (18,1%).

A local attraction

50% of the surveyed people travelled less than 10 km to see the performance; three quarters of them travelled less than 50 km. Only a small proportion of spectators travelled a longer distance; a minority of 9% travelled more than 400 km. These results moderate the idea of circus seen as a "local leisure activity" a bit (DEP, 1993), but are very different according to the venues.

The spectators at CIRCA are the ones who travelled the longest distance on average (384,1 km). This can be explained by the fame of the festival, meaning for some people to travel from far away (United States, Asia...). Half of the audience of CIRCA travelled more than 100 km to see the performance. On the other hand, half of the audiences of Kit and Les Halles travelled more than 6 km; 7 km for spectators at Cirqueon. On average, the spectators of Cirqueon are the ones who travelled least (19,5 km); the average is around 35,4 km for Kit's spectators and 39,8 km for Les Halles.

⁶ Concerning CIRCA, this quantity of spectators going out in groups of 4 or more can be explained by the addition of families of parents and children (14,1%), circus school students (7,7%) and "escorted groups" (6,9%). Besides, differing from the others, spectators of Kit go more out in groups (7,9%) and with adult relatives (12,8%).

Audiences are already fond of circus

Surveyed spectators answered that **the first reason to go see the performance was because "they already liked circus" (44,9%)**, while only a minority of the participants said "the children wanted to go" (2,5%), like the spectators of new circus of La Villette (2001) but unlike other circus spectators (DEP, 1993). **The interviewed spectators didn't go to the performance by chance, for them (27,8%) "the communication done by the venue who organises the show" is important to motivate them to go**, more than "the comments of their close relations" (19,2%) or than "the reviews" (7,7%), which increases when a company starts to be quite famous (Lévy, 2001).

A big proportion of the spectators went to the performance for "professional reasons" (21,3%) and because "they knew someone in the company" (15%). The data about ticket prices show that 28,5% of the spectators have a close connection with performing arts, in particular with circus⁷. Finally, before going to see a performance, very few spectators (5,8%) already know the previous "work of the companies" whose fame still only seems to be noticed by the professionals of the area. This last point differs noticeably from the interviewed spectators fond of dance and theatre at Brussels (La Bellone, 2008).

The spectators at Kit seem to have been more influenced than the others by the reviews in the media (44,9%) and by the communication done by the venue about the performance (35,6%). On the other hand, the spectators at CIRCA are the ones most motivated by their professional interest (42,8%); spectators at Les Halles attended because they knew members of the company (50,8%). Quite the opposite, spectators at Cirqueon paid more attention to the comments of their friends and relative than in the other places (5,4%).

More than only one performance, a whole festival

Except at Cirqueon, the survey has been done during the festivals organised by the venues so spectators could see various performances. 58,3% of the spectators interviewed at CIRCA, Kit and Les Halles went to see at least two performances. Among them, the average number of seen performances in addition to the surveyed one is 5, with big differences between spectators (minimum 1 additional performance and maximum 50), and according to the venues. 50% of the spectators saw less than 3 and 75% less than 6.

⁷ 17,1% had been invited and 11,4% got preferential prices for professionals (like specific prices for circus school federations), in particular among spectators of CIRCA and Cirqueon.

CIRCA has the greatest number of spectators who went to see two additional performances or more (78,2%). Among them, 50% went to see more than 5 performances in addition to the surveyed one, and 13,3% of these went to see more than 12. Quite the opposite, Les Halles has the highest rate (45%) of spectators who went to see only one performance. Of course, these results depend on the number of performances scheduled during the period of the survey.

1.2. Relationship between the spectators and the circus⁸

Very few "first-time spectators"

A big majority of spectators who went to see one of the surveyed performances had already seen a circus performance (in every sense) in their lives. Only 3,5% said that they had never seen a circus performance before, which represents a **very low rate of "first-time spectators", far lower than the rate of the previous surveys on "circus audiences"** (DEP, 1993; La Villette, 2001; Babé, 2012) and than the rate of theatre spectators (Djakouane, 2011). **So interviewed spectators already had ideas and references about circus performances from their previous experience(s).**

Among the answerers (78,2%) who remember in which period they saw their first circus performance, 64,2% say it was during their childhood, seen like a key period to become familiar with circus performances (DEP, 1993). Very few interviewed spectators went to a circus performance for the first time when they were teenagers (6,4%), at this age, music and time spent with friends are more important (Donnat, 2004), and 10,4% of spectators said they discovered circus when they were adults. Thus, most of the surveyed adults got to know classical circus during their childhood and with their family before discovering new circus forms once they were teenagers or adults. These elements show that a bridge exists between these two circus forms, often seen as disconnected.

Some spectators (31%) started to appreciate circus performances more by practising a circus discipline. People who practice a circus discipline as a hobby are more likely to go see a circus performance, especially in the same discipline (MCC, 1999; Donnat, 2005; DMDTS, 2008), and this practice influences how they interpret and receive the performances (Ethis, Fabiani & Malinas, 2008).

⁸ In the framework of this survey no category has been defined and given to the interviewed spectators, especially because spectators refer more to circus as a general category than as more specific categories like "new", "contemporary", *etc.* (Territoires de cirque, 2008). It gives them the possibility to define, in the way they want, what circus means for them.

The highest number of people who have already seen a circus performance in their life are the spectators of Les Halles (96,1%). Quite the opposite, this rate is the lowest for the spectators of Kit (91%). Among people who remember in which period they went to see a circus performance for the first time, the spectators of CIRCA include the highest number of people stating that they discovered circus when they were adults (12,4%). Cirqueon has the highest number of spectators knowing and practicing a circus discipline (62,7%), whereas Kit has the lowest number of spectators doing so (17%). The second position about circus practice is for spectators of CIRCA but far after the first (38,9%).

New circus forms become the reference

Mental representations about circus play a key part in the way the performance will be appreciated and interpreted. For all surveyed spectators, the word circus mainly alludes to skilfulness and different disciplines (acrobatics, trapeze, *etc.*) (49,1%), a multidisciplinary art form (26,6%) and a festive performance (24,6%). About the performances, spectators say that they first appreciate the creativity (71,4%), the different art forms included (54,2%), the sense of humour (53,8%) and then the prowess (53,5%). **Thus, spontaneously, the interviewed spectators mention some features specific to new circus forms (multidisciplinary art, creativity), where performing is not enough anymore, more than features belonging to what we usually call "classical" circus, like the spectators of new circus surveyed at La Villette (2001).**

As opposed to other surveys (DEP, 1993), some interviewed spectators remember and name specific performances or companies whose work they like. In this case, **they first mention a performance or a company belonging to contemporary circus**, French (29,8%) then international (18,2%). Only 11,3% of the spectators mention a performance or a company of classical circus. **These results show that some of the interviewed spectators have knowledge of the changes which affected this field a few decades ago. And they also show that, for them, the "storybook image" based on the story of classical circus is tending towards disappearing (Guy & Rosemberg, 2006).**

Spectators state that they prefer to see performance in a tent (74%), in accordance with the French people's strong fondness of this place (DEP, 1993); then in outside the venues (66,9%), and finally in the street (57,8%). On the other hand, interviewed spectators at Les Halles distinguish themselves from the other spectators by a strong appetency for circus performances in the street (46,2%).

At the four venues, the spectators have their own mental representation of circus. Most of the mentioned components about circus are general and can be applied to all its forms (*see table 2 in the Appendix*); this is mainly true for the spectators of Les Halles and CIRCA. Other components, on the contrary, are specific to a certain kind of shows, like animals for instance, whose absence is considered as being

specific for new circus forms (La Villette, 2001). Only Kit's spectators spontaneously mention characteristic features of both contemporary and classical circus forms; spectators of Cirqueon refer to general and classical components.

Spectators of Les Halles, CIRCA and Cirqueon share the inclination for prowess during the circus performance, nevertheless without considering this aspect of the show as a crucial one. Like before, Kit's spectators state that they appreciate components of the performances which can be seen in both classical and new circus forms (*see table 3* in the Appendix).

References regarding circus also change according to the spectators. Kit's and Les Halles' spectators are much more fond of companies and performances from Quebec. Many spectators of CIRCA mention French contemporary companies (54,4%), some of them have been pioneers of the new circus (13,1%). 32,8% of Cirqueon's spectators have mainly been touched by international contemporary companies (not including France and Quebec), and also by companies who were part of the project Circus Work Ahead! (6%).

1.3. Spectators' habits regarding cultural activities

Spectators are used to a certain form of live performance

Some surveys show that circus spectators, regardless of type, don't go that much to see other kinds of live performances during the year, in any case less than other spectators of any kind of performing arts (Babé, 2012). Otherwise, some studies claim that most of the French people, who go at least three times a year to see a performance, go to see only one kind of performance or a "scattering" of specific shows (Guy 2003). **Yet, many interviewed spectators go out to see live performances which are not part of Circus Work Ahead!** They state to have seen an average of 2,7 performances during the last 12 months among a list of 10 propositions (*see table 4 in Appendix*). However this average is lower than for dance and theatre spectators of Brussels (Bellone, 2008). Like for spectators of new circus (La Villette, 2001), when the interviewed people go out they mostly go to the theatre⁹. Among performances seen during the year, theatre gets the first position with an average of 6,1 and is close to the number of times (7,2) that dance and theatre spectators in Brussels go to the theatre (La Bellone, 2008), but still stays below the number of times festival-goers of Avignon go to theatre (12,8 in average) (Ethis, Fabiani & Malinas, 2008). **Going to see contemporary circus performances gets the second position**, with an average of 5,8 by year, more than for spectators of new circus interrogated at the end of the 90's (La Villette, 2001) and far beyond the "circus audience", regardless of type (Babé, 2012). Then come the concerts (rock, jazz, world music) in third position (4,3). **Thus, surveyed spectators appreciate "established" forms of performing arts but also the "new ones", like contemporary circus or rock, proof of certain eclecticism for cultural tastes** (Coulangeon, 2004). This validates the results obtained at the *Espace Chapiteau de la Villette* for the spectators of new circus, keen on a plurality of cultural practices (La Villette, 2001). **However, classical circus performances appear in the last position of shows seen during the last 12 months, corroborating that interviewed spectators are not very interested in this form.**

During the last 12 months, Cirqueon's spectators are the most numerous to go to see performing arts (5,1 in average), more than at CIRCA (3,8), Les Halles (2,8) and Kit (1,5). Among the "scattering" of performances previously identified, spectators of each venue appreciate certain types of live performances more than others (Guy, 2003): theatre and concerts at Cirqueon and Kit; theatre and contemporary circus at CIRCA and Les Halles.

⁹ It should be noted that numerous festival-goers of Avignon go to see a circus performance during a cultural season (1,21 in average) (Ethis, Fabiani & Malinas, 2008).

CIRCA's spectators went to see the highest number of contemporary circus performances during the last 12 months (10,4) (*see table 4* in Appendix).

1.4. Spectators' profiles

Data like age, genre, socio-professional category, educational level, *etc.* of the surveyed spectators can help to explain how they go out and their relation with circus. It also allows situating them among other spectators of performing arts, and in a more wide way, to estimate the social diversity of the surveyed "audiences".

Young women with university degree

In accordance with the data about "audiences" of culture or circus in France (DEP, 1993; Donnat, 2005; DMDTS, 2008), and about dance and theatre spectators of Brussels (La Bellone, 2008), interviewed spectators are mainly women (59,1%)¹⁰. Spectators who answered the questionnaire are 41,5 years old in average, younger than festival-goers of Avignon for instance (45 years old) (MCC, 1999), but older than dance and theatre spectators of Brussels (40,6) (La Bellone, 2008). **Most of the interviewed people are between 20 and 40 years old (37,4%), like the "circus audiences" regardless of type (Babé, 2012),** and represent a much higher number than the dance and theatre spectators of Brussels (La Bellone, 2008). People younger than 20 represent 7,8% of the interrogated spectators, against 28% of French people who went to the theatre during the last 12 months and 14% of those who went to see a dance performance (Donnat, 2011)¹¹. People older than 60 represent 16,7%, more than the French people who went to the theatre (16%) and to a dance performance (5%) during the last 12 months (Donnat, 2011). **Thus, the age of interviewed spectators is different from the previous surveyed "circus audience", sometimes with a strong attendance of people younger than 15 (DEP, 1993), or young adults (La Villette, 2001; Territoires de cirque, 2008), or with a lower presence of the spectators older than 65 (Babé, 2012).**

¹⁰This rate is higher than the number of women in Occidental Europe: 51% (United Nations, 2013). In France, only rock and jazz concerts gather more men than women (Guy, 2003).

¹¹ Young people less than 15 years old represent 15,6% of the Occidental European population; people older than 65 represent 19,3% (United Nations, 2013).

63,5% of the surveyed people have a university education¹². This rate is lower than the number of dance and theatre spectators of Brussels (76,6%) (La Bellone, 2008), but higher than the new circus spectators (60%) (La Villette, 2001) and the festival-goers of Avignon (60%) (Ethis, Fabiani & Malinas, 2008). Spectators who don't have a degree but do have a professional training certificate are fewer than the French people who went to see a circus performance, regardless of type (14% without degree) (Babé, 2012), but more than the festival-goers of Avignon in 1999 (1% without degree) (MCC, 1999). The rate of graduates (Master's degree or more) reach 33,8% and is far higher than the rate of circus spectators, regardless of type (13%) (Babé, 2012). **Thus, the rate of the surveyed spectators without degree or graduate is closer to the one of theatre and new circus spectators, than to the one of "circus audience", regardless of type.**

A lot of spectators are senior managers or freelancers (nurses, teachers, computer specialists, *etc.* 27,7%)¹³, like numerous spectators (MCC, 1999; La Villette, 2001; La Bellone, 2008; Donnat, 2011). There are also many students and pupils (17,2%), less employees (18,2%) than in other surveys (DEP, 1993; Bellone, 2008; Babé, 2012), but more than the French people who went to see a dance or a theatre performance during the last 12 months, and more than the festival of Avignon (6% including workers) (Ethis, Fabiani & Malinas, 2008; Donnat, 2011). Freelancers like shopkeepers, company managers, restaurant holders, *etc.*, and workers represent a small part of the participants (3,8% in all), less than the French people who went to see a dance or a theatre performance during the last 12 months (Donnat, 2011). The retired and unemployed represent the same number of people as in the audiences of new circus at the end of the 90's (La Villette, 2001). **This information modifies slightly the idea of "circus audiences" being socially varied and combined (Babé, 2012). In this survey, the new circus forms, which have integrated contemporary art specificities, tend to attract intermediate spectators situated between spectators of the considered "classical disciplines" of performing arts (theatre, dance, etc.) and spectators of any kind of circus in France.**

Even if people mainly go out as a couple or in groups, numerous spectators state to be single (31,8%) in accordance with the studies which showed that cultural outing attracted more people who live alone (Coulangeon & Lemel, 2009). Besides, most of the spectators don't have children (48,6%). **The average profile of interviewed spectators is similar to the profile of the "audiences" of new circus at the end of the 90's (La Villette, 2001), however with some specificities.**

¹² The *baccalauréat* (French A-levels), considered in France as the first university degree, isn't integrated in this percentage. Detailed information about university education hasn't been asked to the surveyed spectators of Cirqueon, so they are not included in this part of the analysis.

¹³ The socio-professional categories of the survey are gathered from the European Socio-economic Classification (ESeC) project.

The number of women doesn't change that much according to the countries, even if there are more women at Kit and Les Halles than at the other places (59,8% and 59,4% respectively), and more men at Cirqueon (43,3%).

The oldest spectators in average are at Kit (45,5 years old). CIRCA's spectators are 42,1 in average; the youngest are at Cirqueon (30,6 years old) and around the same age of the spectators of Espace Chapiteau de la Villette (La Villette, 2001). Les Halles' spectators are in between, 39,4 years old in average.

Data about education are very heterogeneous according to the places. The spectators of Les Halles are far ahead the others regarding the educational level, master level and further (53,9%); they are closer to the dance and theatre spectators of Brussels (La Bellone, 2008). But Les Halles is also the venue with the highest number of people without degree (4,2%) or with a primary school level (4,3%). Kit has the highest number of spectators with a bachelor degree (28,2%), then with secondary educational level (17,4%); CIRCA has the highest number of spectators who went to high school (20,5%). At Cirqueon most of the spectators pursued professional training during the secondary level (23,9%).

Regarding the socio-professional category, Kit has the highest number of senior executives and senior freelancers (doctors, engineers, consultants, *etc.*: 16,9%), while this rate is lower among spectators of Cirqueon. On the other hand, the highest rate of managers and freelancers (31,6%) is found at Les Halles; at Cirqueon we find the highest number of self-employed workers (9%). At CIRCA we find the highest number of lower employees (clerks, commercial secretaries, caseworkers, *etc.*: 4,9%), skilled workers (1,3%) and agricultural freelancers (1,3%); these last data can be imputed to the fact that CIRCA is located in a rural area, whereas the three other cultural organisations are established in European capitals. CIRCA is where we find the highest number of spectators whose work or studies are connected with artistic and cultural sectors: this rate reaches 29,7% against 11,8% at Kit, for instance.

The biggest rate of singles is at Cirqueon (58,2%). It is also where we find the highest number of individuals without children (77,6%), higher than Les Halles (53,8%), contrary to CIRCA (50,3%) and Kit (51%), where spectators with kids are more numerous.

2. Decentralization and its consequences on audiences

"Nowadays circus is considered by professionals of the cultural sector as a wonderful lever for cultural democratisation" (Territoires de cirque, 2008, p. 24)

In this context, the four cultural organisations at the root of the project Circus Work Ahead! wished to organise shows outdoors and out of the city centres in order to perceive the consequences of this so called "decentralized" programming, on spectators and on their relationship with circus. 861 questionnaires have been collected during this "decentralized" programming which represent 41,3% of all the questionnaires. A big part of them has been collected at CIRCA (61,8%)¹⁴. However, the effects of this "decentralized" programming is complicated to analyse due to very contrasting results between the places, and within each territory, according to the observed variables.

For instance, regarding the age of the spectators, spectators of Les Halles who went to see a "decentralized" performance are older (46,2 years old against 37,4 in average) but it is the contrary at Kit (39,2 years old against 47,4 in average). However, this effect on the average of age of the spectators isn't true for surveyed people at CIRCA.

Thus, the results obtained don't allow a firm and general conclusion about the consequences of "decentralized" programming on the profiles of circus spectators. They depend too much on the local layouts, the selection of the venues, and more generally on the ways of organising the programming. A data processing for each case, each territory, and each variable of the survey seems necessary. Some professionals have already insisted on the need to set up a tent in the country side regularly and for long durations in order to quantitatively and qualitatively increase the number of spectators (Territoires de cirque, 2008). On the other hand, the differences of attendance levels between European inhabitants of urban and rural areas depend on the artistic form: for instance, the gap is less important for pop/rock concerts than for theatre (Skaliotis & Pilos, 2003).

¹⁴ It hasn't been possible to collect data from the "decentralized" programming at Cirqueon during the survey.

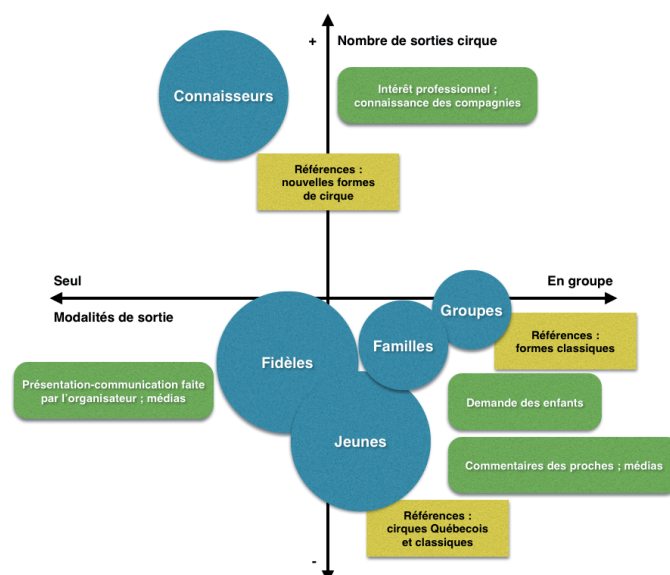
3. Typology of spectators

Some of the components seen before show that the relationship between the interviewed spectators and circus is sometimes more complex than the simple distinction between classical and contemporary circus. "*The distinction between traditional and modern turns out to be too basic*" (DEP, 1993, p. 8). If we try to identify several profiles among all the spectators, thanks to a statistical methodology of classification, five big groups show up.

Table 5: Proportion of spectators by category (%)

	Numbers	Frequency
Families	238	11,4%
Groups	186	8,9%
Connoisseurs	492	23,6%
Young People	575	27,6%
Followers	594	28,5%
TOTAL	2085	100,0%

Graph 1: Spectators breakdown according to the number and how they go out



3.1. "Families with children": A group far-off performing arts

In our sample of surveyed spectators, "families with children" represent 11,4% (*see table 5*) and are more present among spectators of CIRCA (37%). They go to see a circus performance in groups of four or more people (53,4%), then in groups of three (25,2%), mainly families with adult(s) and kid(s) 62,6%, or in pairs parent/child (15,5%). These spectators decided to see the performance mostly because the children asked (92,3%), and then because of the appreciation of close family and friends (23,3%). This group of spectators travelled 61,7 km in average (half of them more than 12 km). It's the group which travelled least in average after the « young people » (*see infra*). "Families with children" paid full price to see the performance (34,9%).

These spectators appreciate, more than the others, animals in the circus performances (13,3%). They mention them when they speak about circus (22,4%), then they mention circus disciplines and professionals (15,8%). The performances and companies of French classical circus are the most obvious references for these spectators (13,4%). These mental representations can be seen together with their circus experiences and more generally performing arts experiences: among the interviewed people, these spectators have the highest rate of people who have never been to a circus performance (8,4%). They are also the ones, just after the "young people" (*see infra*), with the lowest average number of contemporary circus performances seen during the last 12 months (1,5) as the average of live performances seen the last 12 months. Only classical circus performances differ a bit from the average of the other spectators. They don't go out regularly or have a subscription at a cultural institution more than the others (65,5%), and 45,4% of them state that they didn't go to a performing arts festival during the last 12 months.

This group, whose average age is 42,1 years old, is mainly made up of 40 to 50 year old spectators (26,1%), then younger than 20 (15,1%). These ages categories can be related to family groups with parents and children. There are more spectators in this group than in the others who have primary school level (5,5%) and professional training during the secondary education (7,6%). After the "escorted groups" (*see infra*), they are the most numerous without degree (5%). Among them there are more skilled workers (2,1%) and retired (2,5%) than in the other groups of spectators. 65,1% of them declare to have children.

3.2. Escorted groups: au audience fond of circus

"Escorted groups" represent 8,9% of the audience (*see table 5*). They are least represented among interviewed people. It appears in each surveyed place, to a greater extent at Les Halles (41,9%). It has similar features as "families with children", but also some specific ones.

There are groups of four people or more (59,7%), but they are "escorted groups" up to 51,1%.

These spectators travelled 83,18 km in average to see the performance, half of them more than 8 km. They mainly got preferential price (school groups, cultural pass, etc.) (23,7%), subscription (17,2%), and then price for young people (11,8%).

As "families with children", and even more than this group, these spectators state that they like seeing animals in circus performances (30,6%), tradition (13,7%) and friendliness (10,9%)¹⁵. As with the families, they mention circus animals and tamers (20,7%), disciplines and professionals (12%), and their references are performances of French (12,9%) and international (10,2%) classical circus. The mental representations about circus of these two groups are therefore quite close, marked by their fondness for classical forms. However their circus experiences are different.

Just after "families with children", they have the highest rate of spectators who had never seen a circus performance (7%). However, they reach the second position regarding the average of contemporary circus performances seen during the last 12 months (5), which has been their first time. They went more often to see classical circus performances during the last 12 months than the average of spectators (0,6 versus 0,5), which confirms **their interest for performing arts, first for contemporary forms then for classical ones**. They are also interested in **street performing arts and classical music concerts**, which proportion is close to the general average unlike the other kinds of performing arts. More than the "families with children", they haven't gone to a live performance festival during the last 12 months (46,8%) and they have never practised a circus discipline.

These spectators are 37,4 years old in average, but most of them are younger than 20 (23,1%) and are women (68,3%) compared to all the interviewed spectators. They also have the highest number of people without degree (8,1%), secondary school level (15,1%) and to a lesser extent than the "families with children" a primary school level (4,8%). Pupils and students are numerous (29%) and there are more basic employees (6,5%) and farmers

¹⁵ It should be noted that for escorted groups of children, the supervisors often answered the questionnaires for them. Thus, obtained results inform more on the supervisors' representations about circus than of the escorted children.

(1,6%) than in the other spectator groups. Numerous are single (44,1) and 61,8% of them state not to have children.

3.3. The connoisseurs of contemporary circus: regular attenders of performing arts

The "connoisseurs" represent 23,6% of interviewed spectators (*see table 5*), they are twice as numerous as the two previous groups mentioned. Almost half of the spectators at CIRCA are in this group (48,4%).

They go to a circus performance in groups of four or more (40%) or alone (21,7%). 29,3% of the groups are friends and 16,5% are part of a circus school. The first motivation of the "connoisseurs" is their relationship with some members of the company (66,1%), then their professional interest (56,8%), then their knowledge of the work of the company (47,5%). These components indicate a certain knowledge of the circus sector and of performing arts.

These spectators travelled 353,4 km in average to see the performance, 50% of them more than 50 km; it's the highest average of travelled distance of our sample. Thus, like the spectators of Avignon (MCC, 1999), the geographical distance between home and the venue and a certain familiarity with the kind of performing art chosen go hand in hand, and as a consequence create a certain "selectivity" of spectators. They got invitations to go to the performance (22,8%), professional price (21,3%), or preferential price (16,5%). Compared to the other spectators, they went to see more performances during the festival where the survey took place: 41,9% of them went to see more than 4 performances in addition to the surveyed one, and 10,6% more than 12. They are also the most numerous to have practiced a circus discipline, up to 73,2%.

These spectators state to first prefer social aspects (33,6%), friendliness (23,4%), and then prowess (23,2%) in a circus performance. For them, circus first evoke a profession (45,7%), then friendliness (39,2%), prowess (36%), the body submitted to physical rules (35%), and moral and physical skills of the artists (30,8%). The reference of these spectators are mainly French contemporary companies (44,7%), then international (9,1%) and at last specific sites dedicated to circus (4,3%). These spectators are the ones who, much more than the others, have seen the highest number of contemporary circus performances during the year (14,8 in average); 50% of them more than 10 performances. It is also the group of spectators who have seen the highest number of classical circus performance: 0,9 in average; **their interest for circus doesn't limit itself to contemporary forms even if they give priority to it.** They are the spectators who most go out to see live performances in average, except from classical music concerts. They **are circus connoisseurs, but they are interested in a larger range of performing arts.** In spite of often going out, many of them are not regular spectators of one venue nor do they have a

subscription at a theatre or cultural institution (62,4%). 80,1% of them went to a performing arts festival during the last 12 months. Regarding their cultural activities, this group of connoisseurs look like the French with "modern cultivated universe" (Donnat, 2004), young graduate city dwellers, who regularly go to cultural centres, who mostly appreciate new artistic forms and whose symbolic barriers are less strong.

These spectators, **who are the youngest of the interrogated people** in average (33,7 years old), are mainly between 20 and 30 (39,6%), then 30 to 40 (18,5%). This is also **the group with most males** (42,1% are men) and with many students and pupils (25,6%), but a lower number than the "escorted groups". Compared to other spectators, the most important number of people with higher education is in this group (18,9%). They also have the **highest number of people with an artistic education** (32,9% versus 17,4% in average for all the spectators).

Spectators of this group are mainly single (39,4%) or in a partnership (34,6%). 64,4% of them state not to have children. The interviews have mainly been done with this group of spectators who feel, more than the other spectators, able to evoke(?) their relationship with circus, and **at the same time they don't consider themselves an "ordinary" audience.**

3.4. "Young people": a moderate attraction of circus performances

There are "young people" (27,6%) (*see table 5*) mainly at Kit and to a lesser extent at Cirqueon (4,3%).

They go to see a performance in groups of three (17,6%), mainly with friends (47,3%), then between adults of the same family (21,2%). As the "families with children", these spectators paid attention to the comments of their relatives or close friends to go to the circus performance (41,9%), then, to a lesser extent, to the media reviews (38%).

They travelled 52,73 km in average to go to the performance, 50% of them more than 7 km and they mainly got full price tickets (31,8%), then preferential price for young people (6,8%).

These spectators state to first appreciate tradition (61,1%) in the circus performances and they are far over the "escorted groups" about this characteristic. About circus, these spectators appreciate its "humoristic" aspect (31,2%), its disciplines and professionals (30%) and a "fun performance" (30%). All these characteristics are not specific to contemporary circus forms. Their main references are companies from Quebec (15,5%), then international classical circus (8,2%). In this group, the **average of contemporary circus performances seen during the last 12 months is the lowest** (1,3), and it is the same for classical circus performances (0,2). **Thus, we can affirm that these spectators**

don't have a strong interest for circus, regardless of forms. On the other hand, they often go to rock concerts, humoristic shows and classical music concerts in the same proportion as all the interviewed spectators. 43% of them declared that they regularly go to or have a subscription at a cultural venue, but 49,2% didn't go to a performing arts festival during the last 12 months. 77,2% of them have never practiced a circus discipline.

The average age of this group is 41,6 years old, but there are mainly young people between 20 to 30 (26,8%) and the rate of women is the second one among all the groups (66,3%). After the "followers" (*see infra*), they have the highest rate of spectators with university education (69,9%), in particular medicine, pharmacy and health (10,3%). Compared to the other spectators, a big part of them work as basic employees (5,2%) and in private companies (37%). There are more singles in this group than in the average of spectators (37,6%), and 52,9% of them state not to have children.

3.5. The followers of the cultural venues: contemporary circus among other performing arts forms

The "followers" represent **the highest rate of interviewed spectators** (28,5%) (*see table 5*), they make up the highest number of spectators at Kit (32,3%).

They went to the performance in pairs (66%), mostly as a couple (57,7%) and to a lesser extent as a duo of adult and child (8,4%). Some people from this group went alone to the performance (16,8%).

The "followers" have mostly been motivated by the communication done by the venue which organises the show (55,3%), which shows that **they trust the programming**; then by the media reviews (49,4%) **and their fondness for circus** (36,8%). They travelled in average 90 km, 50% of them more than 10km, and they got preferential price (26,8%), full price (26,3%) and subscriptions (10,9%).

These spectators state to first appreciate poetry (43%) and the mix of art forms (38,9%), and to characterize circus again mention the poetic and magic aspects (38,4%), the creativity (35,8%) and the places dedicated to circus (34,8%). They refer to new circus performances (11,4%), then to international contemporary companies (8,9%), which proves that some of them have been interested in this art form for years. **As the "connoisseurs", these spectators have references specific to new circus forms.**

After the "connoisseurs", the "followers" reach the second rank of people who **see several performances** during the festivals linked to the survey: 47,2% have seen more than 2 performances in addition. The "followers" group has the highest rate of spectators who had already seen a circus performance in their lives (96,3%). Compared to the average of spectators, they don't go that often to see certain types of performing arts: street live

performances (2,83 versus 3,77), classical circus (0,3 versus 0,5), cabaret (0,4 versus 0,7) and contemporary circus (3,8 versus 5,8) ; whereas concerts (classical, rock, jazz *etc.*), humoristic shows, puppets, theatre and dance are similar to the general average. However, this group has **the highest rate of people with a subscription or people who are used to go to the same cultural venue** (48,7%).

The "followers" are the **oldest spectators**: 50 to 60 years old (20%), 60 to 70 (19,4%) and 70 and more (7,4%); the average of age is 48,5 years old. The group has **the highest number of men** (40,7%) in second position after the "connoisseurs". They have the **highest university education** (72,7%), mainly in literature, languages, human and social sciences (33,2%) and economics, management and marketing (12,8%). Compared to the other spectators, there are numerous executive managers and senior freelancers (17%), skilled employees (19,2%) and a lot of them work in the public sector (41,6%). A lot of them are married (35,5%), then in partnership (34,5%). 58,2% of them state to have children but they don't go out with them. In some ways they are close to the "classical cultivated universe" described by O. Donnat (2004), people who go to classical music concerts, dance and theatre performances, *etc.* In France, they are graduates older than 45 and middle classes born before the Second World War.

Conclusion

Whereas the previous surveys about "circus audiences" tried to distinguish classical circus and contemporary circus spectators (DEP, 1993; Lévy, 2001), these results show that a big majority of spectators of new circus forms had previously been spectators of classical circus; some of them still go to see this kind of performance. The opposition between "cultivated" and "popular" cultures (Bourdieu, 1979) is widely questioned by the contemporary period (Donnat, 2004; Coulangeon, 2004) since the cultural choices are very individualised (Galand, 2003). Thus it's important to concentrate on how and why people change from one form to another, and more precisely on the "process" of a circus spectator, all his "circus experiences" and the different "advisors" who might have played a part in that process, whether they are individuals, institutions or more symbolic elements (Djakouane, 2011).

The results of this survey show that the "audience" of new circus forms is far from being homogeneous and that several types of spectators exist. The different spectators are more or less aware of the contemporary circus offer. This distinction between spectators involves ways to go out, ability to socialise, specific profiles and different ways of receiving artistic work (Charpentier, 2006) which exists only when it meets the spectator. Among the identified groups of spectators, only two groups – the "connoisseurs" and the "followers", with more men in these groups – have their own "cultural universe" close to the new circus forms and more generally to the performing arts they regularly go to see. This observation questions the concept of "circus audience" itself regarding the diversity of cultural habits from one spectator to another, and mainly regarding performing arts. Some members of these two groups are so fond of circus that they are not afraid to travel long distances to see a few performances, sometimes alone, which is less true for the other spectators. For three other groups – "families with children", "escorted groups" and "young people with their peers" – the group is a central support which motivates them to go out. These groups have developed social representations far from contemporary circus forms, certainly based on their past cultural experiences (Ethis, Fabiani & Malinas, 2008). This observation is really true for the "families with children" and the "escorted groups", who rarely go out to see new circus forms or any of the performing arts. These different elements raise questions about possible levers to mobilise and raise awareness among the youngest (less than 15 years old) (Octobre, 2003), the "escorted groups" and the retired, less represented in this survey, since these moments of life are appropriate to discover new hobbies (Djakouane, 2011).

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Numerical data

Nota bene : In each table, blue and green data show the relation between terms of selected variables thanks to the Maximum Deviation Percentage. Green data point out that the concerned result is far over the general average; blue data under. The three highest results of the general data are highlighted in pink, yellow and then grey (see table 4).

**Table 2: What does circus evoke for spectators according to each place
(by % of participants, several answers)¹⁶**

	CIRCA	KIT	HALLES	CIRQUEON	Total
Corps et lois physiques	28,4	15,2	53,9	2,5	100
Emotions	39,1	20,6	35,4	4,8	100
Créativité	35,1	22,7	40,9	1,3	100
Métier, travail, apprentissage	39,8	19,1	35,5	5,5	100
Convivialité, collectif	55	11,7	32,7	0,6	100
Disciplines de cirque et leurs spécialistes	24,2	19,4	53,2	3,1	100
Symboles du cirque	31,3	18,1	44,8	5,9	100
Merveilleux, poétique	40,1	8,6	51	0,3	100
Spectacle, fête	33,4	22,6	41,9	2,1	100
Hors du commun, hors normes	32,7	27,4	39,8		100
Arts, multidisciplinarité	34,7	20,9	42,3	2,1	100
Lieux de cirque	25,9	34,8	34,3	5	100
Rire, humour, comédie	25,8	27,5	46,1	0,6	100
Prouesse	45,3	5,7	48,7	0,3	100
Caractère contemporain et compagnies contemporaines	25	29,3	40,9	4,9	100
Souvenirs tangibles	11,5	52,5	34,4	1,6	100
Tradition, racines, enseignes classiques	29	24,2	38,7	8,1	100
Qualités corporelles et morales des artistes	32,1	11,1	55,6	1,3	100
Animaux et dompteurs	16	28,6	49,3	6,1	100
Esthétique, beauté	35,4	15,2	44,4	5,1	100
Autres	27,8	20,3	46,8	5,1	100
Total	524	399	781	61	100,0

¹⁶ That is why the total of each column doesn't equal 100%.

Table 3: Elements appreciated in a circus performance according to venues (by % of participants, without ranking)¹⁷

	CIRCA	KIT	HALLES	CIRQUEON	Total
Autre(s)	11,5	65,6	23		100
Convivialité	22,6	28	38,5	10,9	100
Créativité	17,6	36,9	41,6	3,9	100
Originalité	14,7	43,9	36,2	5,2	100
Propos sur la société	25,7	18,6	52,1	3,6	100
Esthétique	18,9	32,7	42,9	5,5	100
Tradition	12,6	49,5	28,4	9,5	100
Présence d'animaux	10,2	45,9	42,9	1	100
Humour	13,3	45,9	36,3	4,4	100
Mélange des arts	17,4	39,6	39,5	3,6	100
Poésie	20,2	30,1	47	2,7	100
Performance	21,9	23,4	47,8	6,92	100
Total	225	476	529	65	

Table 4: Number of performances seen during the last 12 months by types of shows (average)¹⁸

	CIRCA	KIT	HALLES	CIRQUEON	GLOBAL
Danse	3,9	1,7	3,2	4	3
Théâtre	6,8	3,3	7,1	9,7	6,1
Arts de la rue	6,5	1,4	3,4	8,2	3,8
Concert de Rock, jazz, musiques du monde etc.	4,8	3,7	4	7,5	4,3
Cirque classique	0,6	0,2	0,6	1,9	0,5
Marionnettes	1,4	0,4	1,01	5,3	1
Cabaret	1	0,2	0,8	2,3	0,7
Comique	1,3	0,4	0,9	5	0,9
Concert classique	1,6	0,9	1,9	2,3	1,5
Cirque contemporain	10,4	2,8	5	5,1	5,8
<i>Moyenne par lieu</i>	3,8	1,5	2,8	5,1	2,7

¹⁷ That is why the total of each column doesn't equal 100%.

¹⁸ Numbers in green show that they really are under the general average, and vice versa for the pink colour. The black show that the number keeps close to the general average.

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