

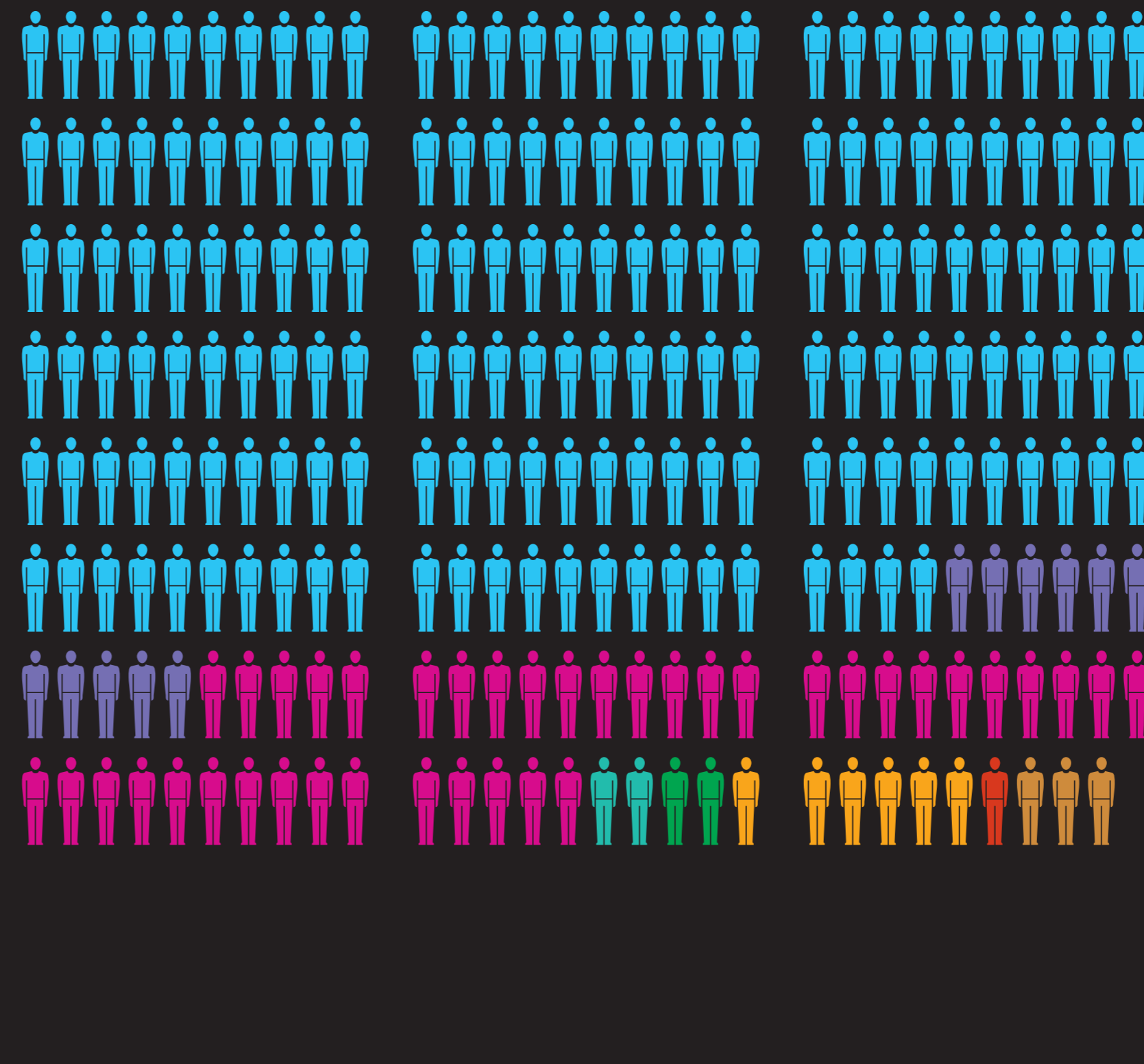
Answers women

Woman: Skirt, close to standard shape

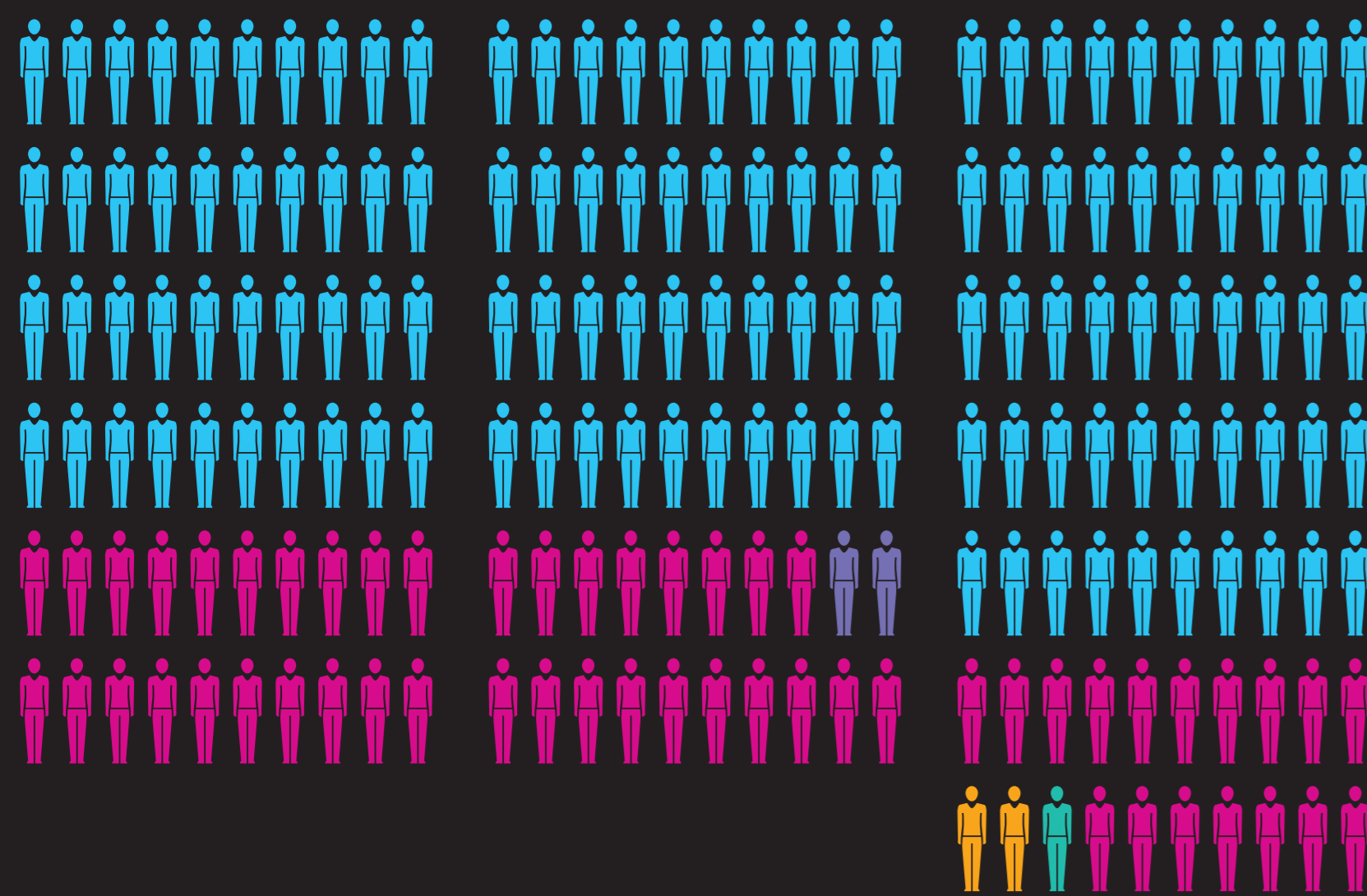


Answers men

Man: T-Shirt, long sleeve style, close to standard shape



Woman: Trousers, feminine shape



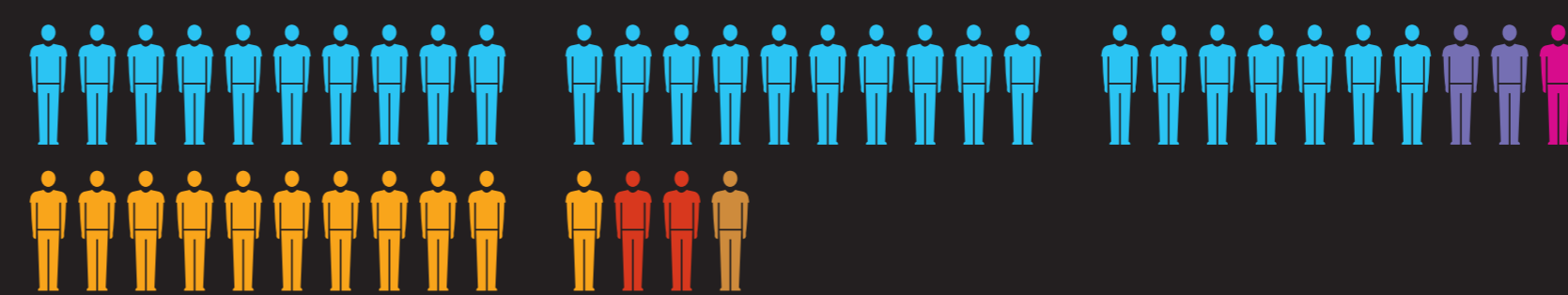
Man: T-Shirt, long sleeve style



Woman: Skirt, leg covering shape



Man: T-Shirt, short sleeve style



Woman: Dress, knee covering shape, straight collar



Man: Shirt, long sleeve style, straight collar



Woman: Skirt, ground long shape, pareo style



Man: Shirt, short sleeve style, epaulette shirt



Woman: Sari



Man: Kurta



Woman: Abaya



Man: Dishdasha



Pictonalities.com Intermediate result of the first 1000 participants February 24th to April 17th 2009

Starting position
On 24th February 2009, we started the project of an online poll to find out if there are universal standards in the use of icons within different cultures around the globe. In the survey one can choose from seven different couples. The couple – male and female – differ in the representation of their clothes. The participants of the survey were asked by which of the seven couples they felt most likely represented. Then, we asked for the general preference between standardized or culturally specific pictograms. Finally, we asked about age, gender and origin. The survey was conducted by a "double opt-in" procedure. This means, participants enter their e-mail address. A confirmation e-mail is sent automatically to this e-mail address. If participants answer that confirmation e-mail, the voting is immediately registered. Repeated voting is blocked by registering the e-mail address.

Participants
Invitations to this survey were sent by e-mail to an audience of about 200 people. These people are primarily of the fields of design and communication. So it is clearly noted that the participants are not representative for a cross-section of the population. Among these 200 invited people, we obtained more participants through an e-mail "snowball effect" and several media reports. People attracted by these reports were mainly of the fields of media, design and communication. Similar characteristics are recognisable with regard to the global distribution of the voting. Important points of reference were Europe, Mexico, Brazil, China, Japan, New Zealand and the USA – and from there came the predominant number of participants.

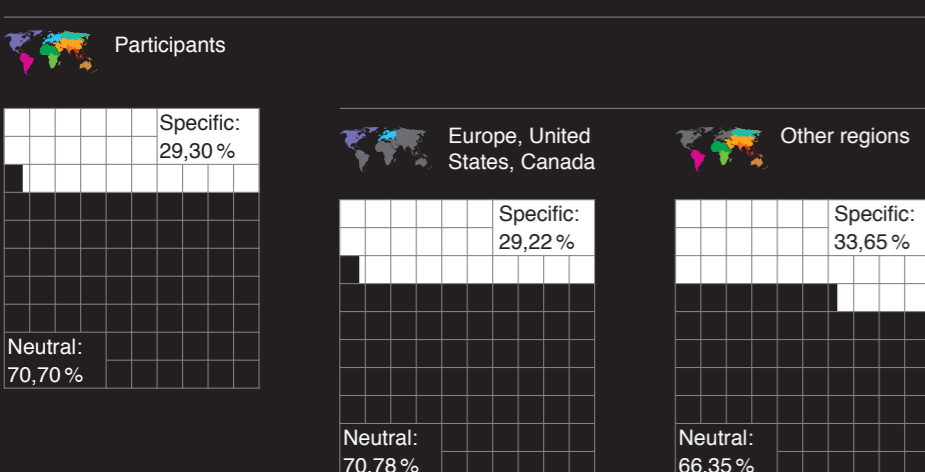
Significance
The results on the basis of the first 1000 voting results are in no way representative – however, they show interesting trends, which are certainly worthwhile to deepen in an appropriate way. At first glance the data offer no surprises: Approximately one third of all participants seem to be in favor of culturally specific symbols – regardless whether male or female, whether in Europe / North America or other parts of the world and across all age groups. At second glance, however, surprise evokes, particularly shown in the accompanying detailed picture statistics, shown on this report: It seems that the interest in a less traditional gender-specific representation is exceedingly large: more than one third of all participants chose the pictogram couple in which both sexes are presented in trousers. And something else catches the eye: the number of votes from South, East and South-East Asia remains nearly the same within the distribution on the pictogram couples. This indicates that their share in proportion to the votes for each of the different pictogram couples is clearly increasing – moving away from the pictogram couple that is most likely the established standardized form.

Relevance
The question of the relevance of such a survey is not quite obvious at first glance. Should it activate a revolution among the established standard pictograms for toilet signs? Does it call upon a higher diversity at the expense of a good orientation? No, not at all. With this short report, we interpret the survey results as a call for more diversity wherever possible. Good examples may be instruction manuals or educational media, where significance on a long distance is not the most important thing. Moreover the idea suggests that the representation of the female pictogram with its traditional forms such as knee-long petticoat, possibly ought to be modified. Conceivably there could be an expanded choice of pictograms published by the ISO Central Secretariat in Geneva.

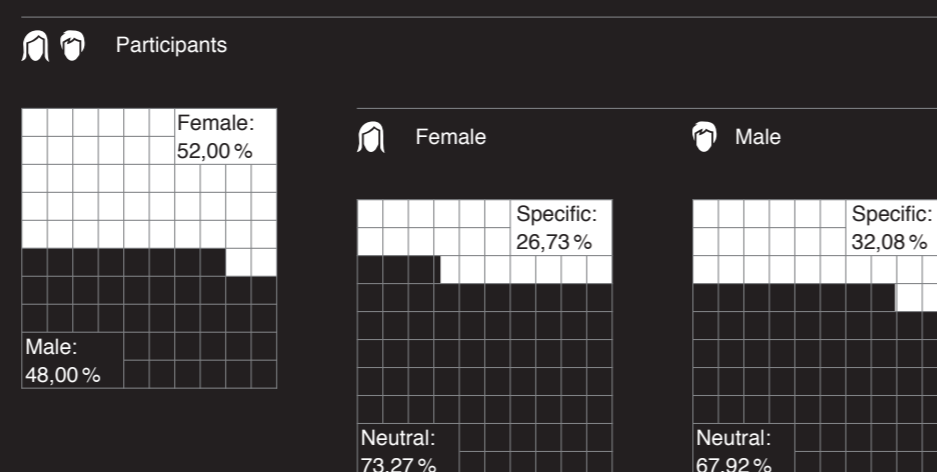
Outlook
Pictonalities.com is an online survey which is going to run for six months – from February 24th to August 24th 2009. The existing test is an important extension to the current research project "ICONICITY" at the Zürcher Hochschule der Künste. The project is about the methods and the adaptation of pictorial expressions within different scales of iconicity. Besides statements concerning the acceptance of pictograms Pictonalities.com delivers also concrete evidence of the relevance and methodology of such investigations. The fact that about one half of all participants are interested in further information on this project raises the question of usable information and appropriate forms of communication. Furthermore the existing procedure also encourages to expand the basis of investigation on personally guided, quantitative surveys on a wider scale in different countries. Therefore we would like to invite any interested parties to contact us. Comments and suggestions on the survey are greatly appreciated. info@pictonalities.com

Prof. David Skopec
Zurich University of the Arts, May 2009

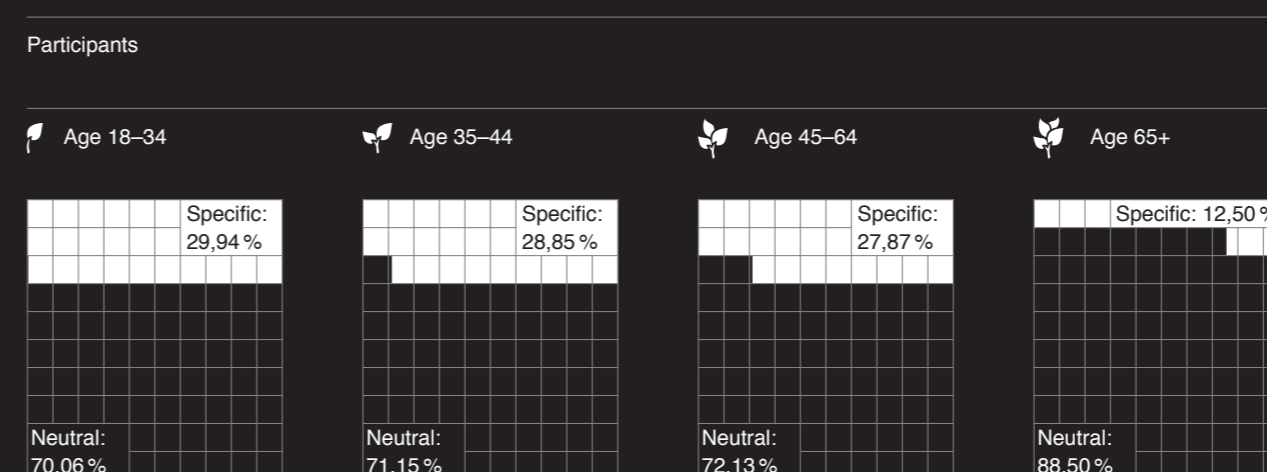
How do people outside of Europe and North America rate the value of neutral pictograms?



Do women prefer more cultural specification in pictograms?



Are there any significant differences in the perception of pictograms by age?



Marks to: "I want to receive more information about this project."

