

AS AN ARTIST IN FINLAND: PROFESSIONAL ARTISTS IN FINLAND IN 2019

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Professional artists are a central focus of arts and culture policy in Finland. This fact booklet provides information about Finland's professional artists in 2019.

The information has been compiled by Cupore, the Center for Cultural Policy Research, as part of the research project "As an Artist in Finland".

The purpose of the research is to compile information about professional artists in various fields of the arts in order to support policies regarding the arts and artists, as well as to promote the working conditions of artists in Finland.

The professional title of "artist" is an open one that cannot be defined unambiguously.

We use four criteria to define the profession, which are described on the following page.

"As an Artist in Finland" is based on registry research, which guides the research data, methods and knowledge base.

This is so far the most comprehensive dataset about professional artists in Finland.

The research project is being conducted in collaboration with the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture, the Arts Promotion Centre Finland (Taike) and Statistics Finland.

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1. Data and methods

The primary source of data for this research is Statistics Finland's register data (FOLK data) for 2019. This data comprises basic information for the entire population of Finland, including income, degrees, employment and residence information.

Statistics Finland's register data was supplemented and delineated with data provided by Taike, grant-making foundations and artists' associations.

Taike provided data about individual applicants who had been awarded a grant in 2015–19.

Grant-making foundations provided data about artists who had been awarded an individual grant in 2018–20. This data was obtained from four foundations:

- Kone Foundation
- Finnish Music Foundation (MES)
- Finnish Film Foundation (SES)
- Finnish Cultural Foundation

Member register data was provided by the following artists' associations:

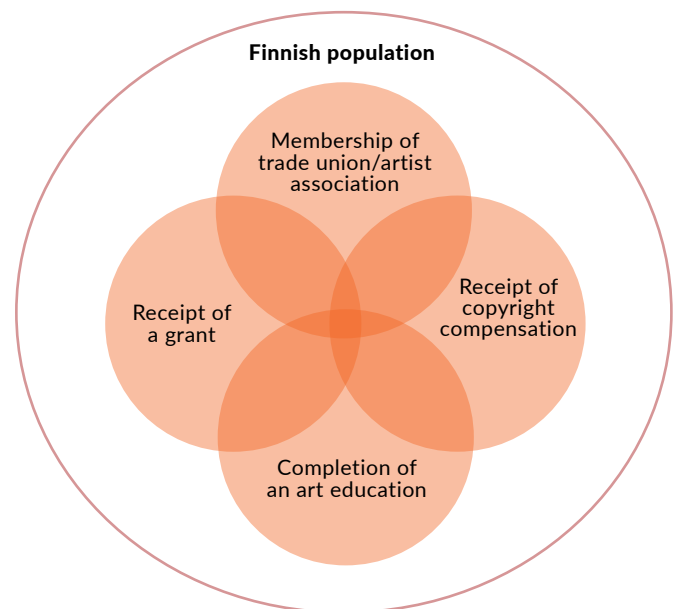
- Society of Swedish Authors in Finland
- Finnish Illustration Association
- Artists' Association MUU
- Union of Finnish Writers
- Association of Finnish Sculptors
- Association of Finnish Printmakers
- Finnish Painters' Union
- Trade Union for Art and Culture Professionals TAKU (artist members)
- Trade Union for Theatre and Media (Teme)
- Association of Photographic Artists
- Association of Visual Communication Designers in Finland (Grafia)

Many other foundations and associations were interested in providing data for this research, but their data protection policies currently prevented the disclosure of data for research purposes.

The register data for the “As an Artist in Finland” research was collated by delineating professional artists from the FOLK data by four criteria based on profession research. The criteria are:

1. **Completion of an art education**
2. **Receipt of a grant for artistic work**
3. **Membership of a trade union/artist association**
4. **Receipt of copyright compensation for use of (art)work**

FIGURE 1. Delineation of “As an Artist in Finland” research data.



A comprehensive description of the research approach and the basis of the criteria can be found in a separate working paper (Hirvi-Ijäs et al., 2021).

The aim of the research was to obtain comprehensive data on all individuals meeting the criteria. In practice, however, there are some gaps in the material, as data on all artists who meet the criteria in Finland is not available.

2. Number of professional artists in Finland according to the research data

The criteria used in the research delineate the research group in different ways.

All individuals who have received a grant and have already undergone a peer review are included. Also, membership in an artist association alone is a sufficient criterion for being a professional artist, as the criteria of the associations themselves require professional qualifications.

An art education or copyright compensation alone are not sufficient to describe active participation in the artist profession.

Among those who have completed an art education and received copyright compensation for the use of their works, only those individuals who also fulfilled

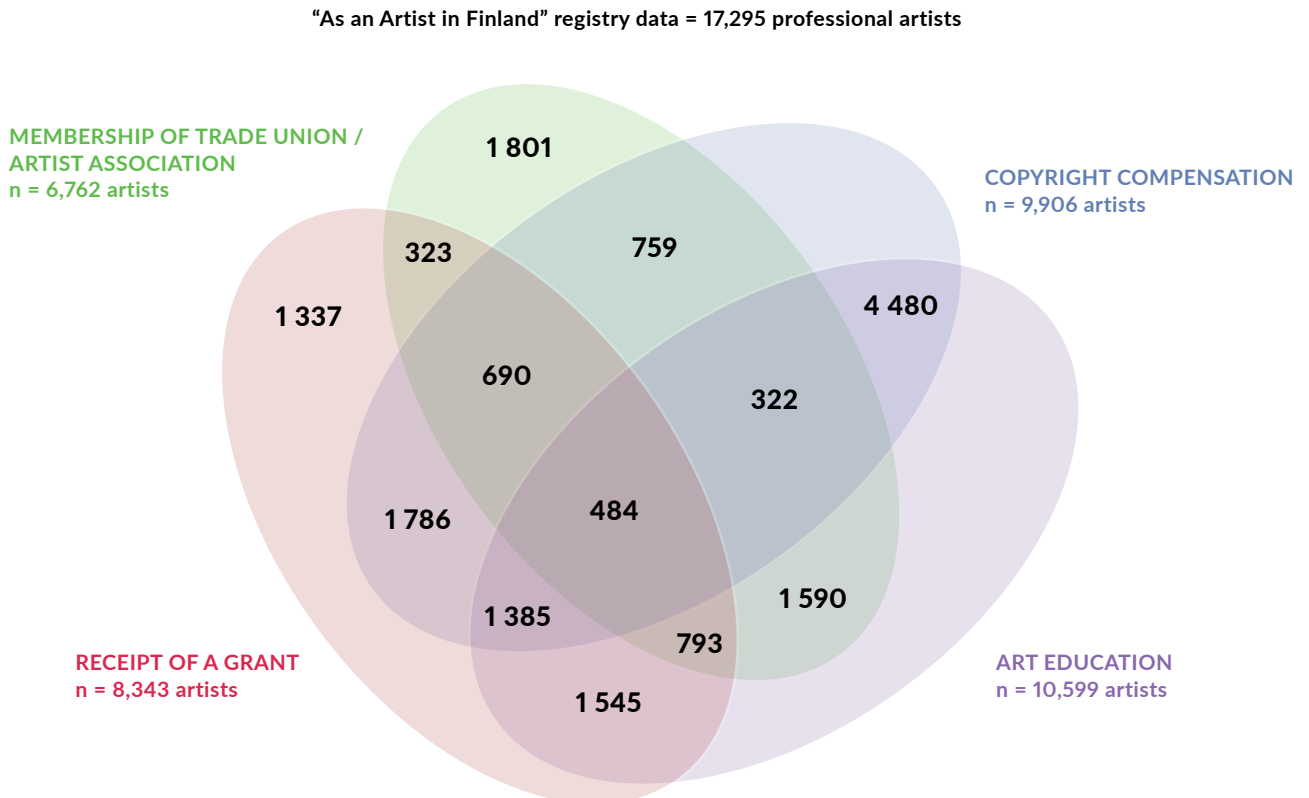
at least one other criterion were included in the research group. The education criterion was limited here to a university degree (universities of applied sciences and universities).

In certain fields of the arts (architecture and design, music), individuals who received an art education were also examined separately in order to identify gaps in the material.

Previous studies have estimated that there are approximately 25,000 professional artists in Finland.

The registry data for the “As an Artist in Finland” research comprises 17,295 professional artists. This group will be examined next on the basis of Statistics Finland’s data.

FIGURE 2. Formation of “As an Artist in Finland” research data.



3. Fields of the arts in “As an Artist in Finland” research

In this research, professional artists are divided into six fields of the arts:

1. Architecture and design
2. Audiovisual arts (cinema, media art)
3. Performing arts (theatre, dance art, circus)
4. Literature
5. Music
6. Visual arts (visual arts, photographic art, illustrations and comics)

These fields of the arts are based on the main divisions used in arts administration and statistics.

The importance of the criteria used in the research varies among different fields of the arts. For example, the significance of grants is emphasised in the fields of the visual arts and literature, whereas the significance of copyright compensation is emphasised in the fields of music and literature.

Architecture and design: Research data for artists in these fields of the arts is obtained via the education and grants criteria. Identifying as a professional artist in these fields varies.

Audiovisual arts: Research data for artists in these fields of the arts is obtained via all criteria.

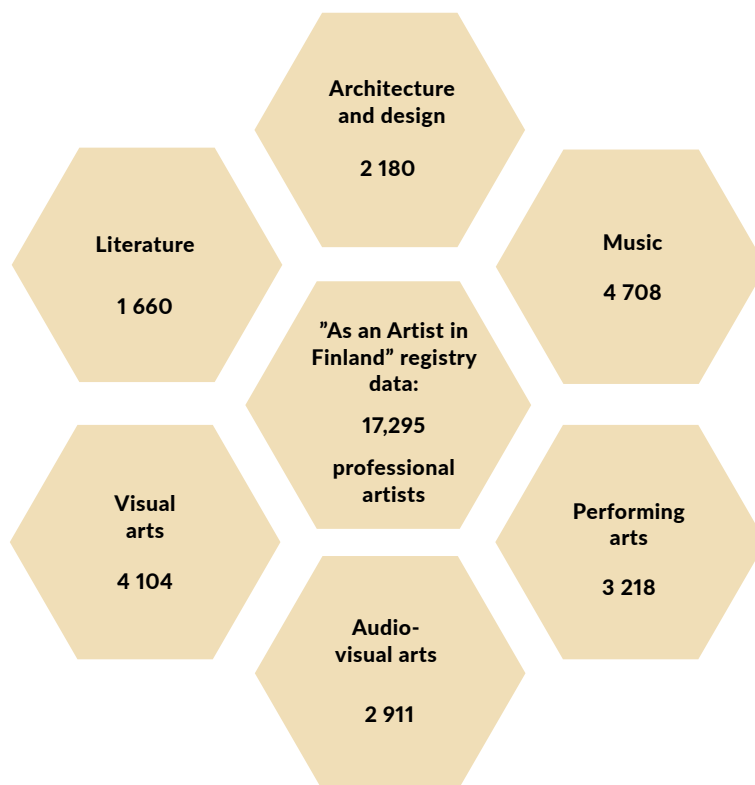
Performing arts: Research data for artists in these fields of the arts is obtained via all criteria. Separate data is not available for employees of art and culture institutions.

Literature: Research data for artists in this field of the arts is obtained via all criteria except education, as education leading to a degree is not available for literature.

Music: Research data for artists in this field of the arts is obtained via the education, grants and copyright compensation criteria.

Visual arts: Research data for artists in these fields of the arts is obtained via all criteria.

FIGURE 3. Artists in different fields of the arts in the “As an Artist in Finland” research data.



(Note: Some artists work in more than one field of the arts – total number: 18,781)

4. Education

Education is offered at different levels. For most of the artists in the “As an Artist in Finland” research data, the highest degree obtained is higher university degree or a lower university of applied sciences degree.

Statistics Finland's degree statistics cover those who have completed a degree in Finland. They do not include data about persons who have studied without completing a degree or have completed a degree abroad if this degree has not been recognised in Finland.

TABLE 1. Highest degree obtained among artists.

Education level	Number	%
Higher university degree (Master's)	7 002	40,5 %
Lower university of applied sciences degree (Bachelor's)	3 869	22,4 %
Upper secondary education	1 285	7,4 %
Lower university degree (Bachelor's)	1 260	7,3 %
Vocational upper secondary education	1 218	7,0 %
No information	893	5,2 %
Institute	690	4,0 %
Doctoral degree	498	2,9 %
Higher university of applied sciences degree (Master's)	274	1,6 %
Further vocational qualification	162	0,9 %
Licentiate degree	80	0,5 %
Specialist vocational qualification	38	0,2 %
Higher vocational degree	15	0,1 %
Unrecognised education level	6	0,0 %
Postgraduate specialist training in medicine	5	0,0 %
Total	17 295	100

The highest degree obtained by 64% of the artists in the “As an Artist in Finland” research data was an arts degree.

Not all fields of the arts (literature, for example) have an education leading to a degree.

TABLE 2. Field of education of highest degree obtained by artists.

Field of education	Number	%
Arts	10 986	63,5 %
General education	1 285	7,4 %
Educational field	1 182	6,8 %
Other or no information	899	5,2 %
Languages	674	3,9 %
Business and administration	341	2,0 %
Humanities (except languages)	295	1,7 %
Architecture and construction	284	1,6 %
Social sciences	216	1,2 %
Communications and information sciences	167	1,0 %
Health	164	0,9 %
Mechanical, process, energy and electrical engineering	157	0,9 %
Wellbeing	119	0,7 %
Personal services	117	0,7 %
Humanities and arts, general education programmes	67	0,4 %
ICT	66	0,4 %
Material and process technology	55	0,3 %
Biology and biosciences	37	0,2 %
Law	32	0,2 %
Agriculture	28	0,2 %
Physical sciences, chemistry and geosciences	26	0,2 %
Mathematics and statistics	22	0,1 %
Others or unrecognised fields of education	21	0,1 %
Forestry	18	0,1 %
Environmental fields	15	0,1 %
Security services	11	0,1 %
Transportation and logistics	8	0,0 %
Health and wellness fields, general education programmes	3	0,0 %
Total	17 295	100

5. Artists as a population group

The FOLK data describes the population living in Finland in the last week of the year, which is why data was unavailable in the Statistics Finland data for some of the professional artists identified according to our criteria. The FOLK data provided data on a total of 16,756 individuals.

In this section, population group data comprises age, gender, language and origin.

AGE

Professional artists in Finland in 2019 were most commonly between the ages of 35 and 44. These represented over a third of all artists. The average age of artists was 45.

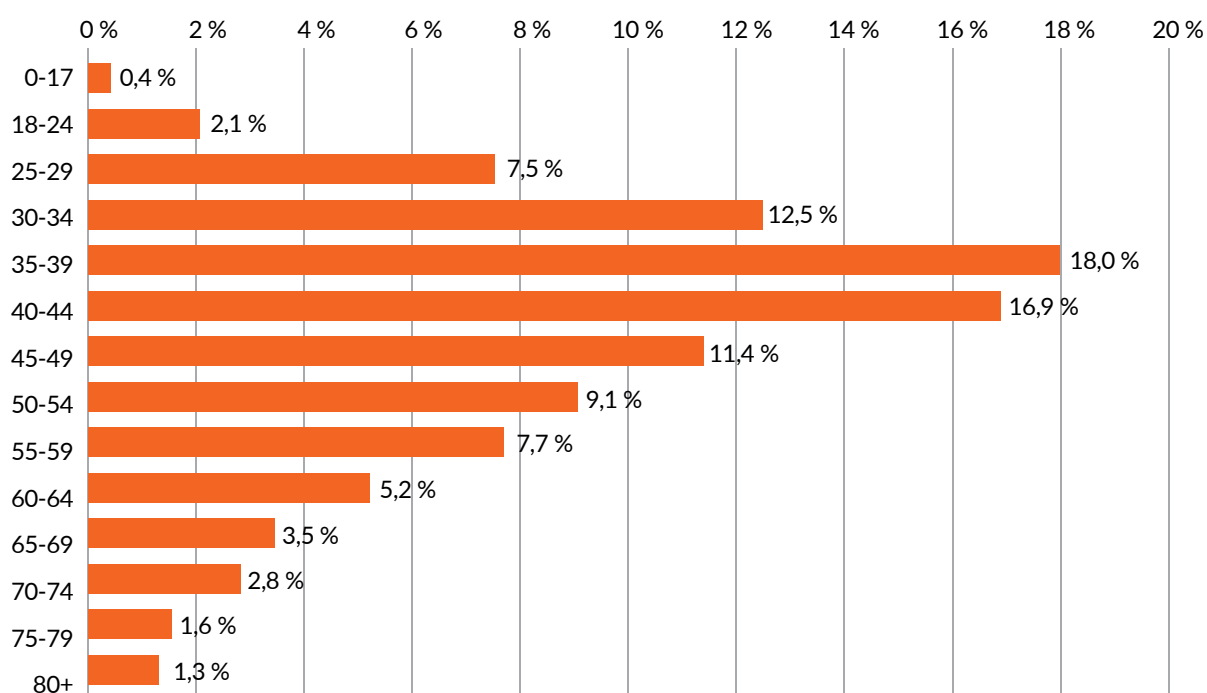
The youngest professional artists were minors working as actors and musicians, for example.

Professional artists over the age of 65 represented nine percent of the total. In the artist profession, reaching the age of retirement often does not signify the end of professional activities.

TABLE 3. Average age of artists in different fields of the arts in the "As an Artist in Finland" research data.

Field of the arts	Average age in 2019
Architecture and design	46
Music	41
Performing arts	44
Visual arts	48
Audiovisual arts	41
Literature	54

FIGURE 4. Age distribution of professional artists in 2019.



GENDER

Among professional artists in Finland in 2019, 54 percent were female and 46 percent male.

Women represented a higher share of artists than men especially in the fields of the visual arts, architecture and design, and the performing arts.

Men represented a higher share of artists than women in the field of music.

The registers used for the data of this research do not include information about gender identity.

LANGUAGE

The language distribution among professional artists in Finland in 2019 was as follows:

- 90 % Finnish speakers
- 6 % Swedish speakers
- 4 % other

Finnish speakers represented 87 percent of the total population of Finland in 2019, Swedish speakers five percent and others approximately eight percent.

ORIGIN

The origin of professional artists in Finland in 2019 was as follows:

- 96 % Finnish
- 4 % other.

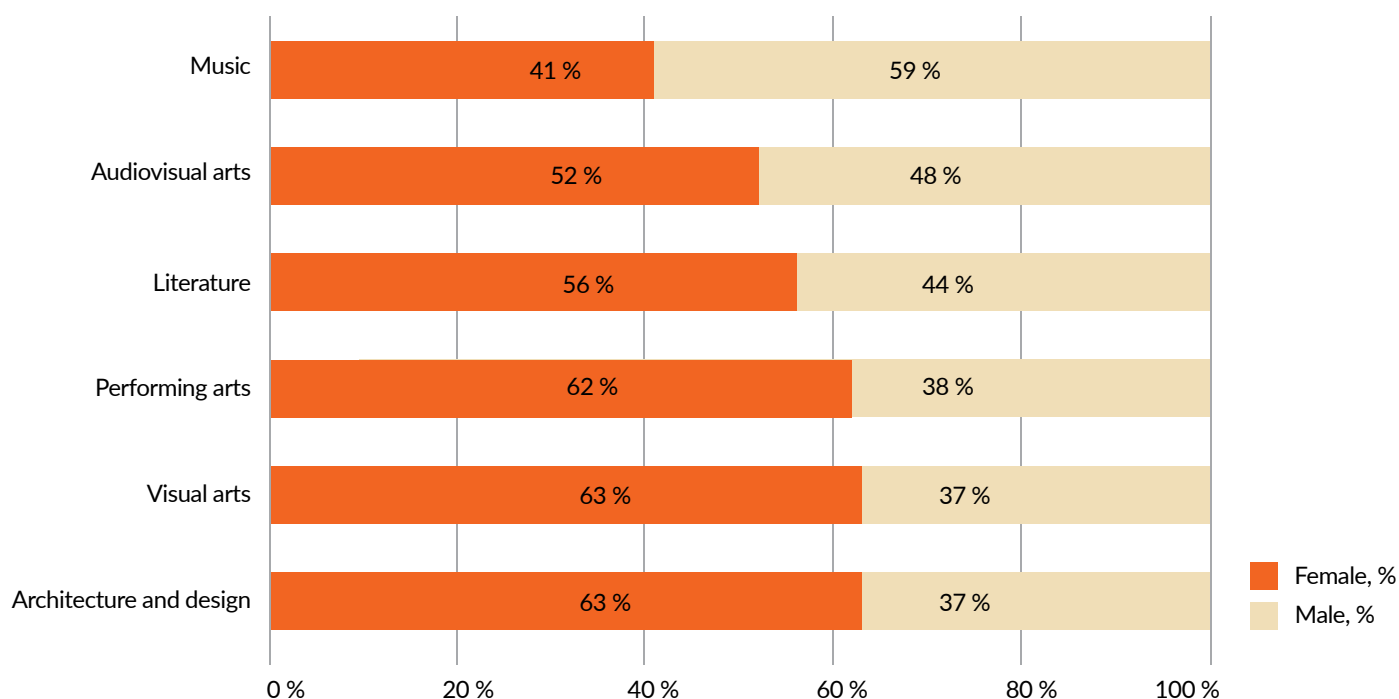
Of the total population of Finland in 2019, 92 percent were of Finnish background and eight percent of foreign background.

In Statistics Finland's registers, all persons with at least one parent born in Finland are considered to be of Finnish background. Persons whose both parents or the only known parent were born abroad are considered to be of foreign background.

In the field of literature, the share of artists of foreign background is slightly lower than other fields, two percent.

In the field of the visual arts, the share of artists of foreign background is six percent.

FIGURE 5. Gender of artists in different fields of the arts in the "As an Artist in Finland" research data.



6. Places of residence

Professional artists in Finland are concentrated in the southern Uusimaa region and especially Helsinki.

In 2019, 48 percent (8017) of the artists in the “As an Artist in Finland” data lived in Helsinki.

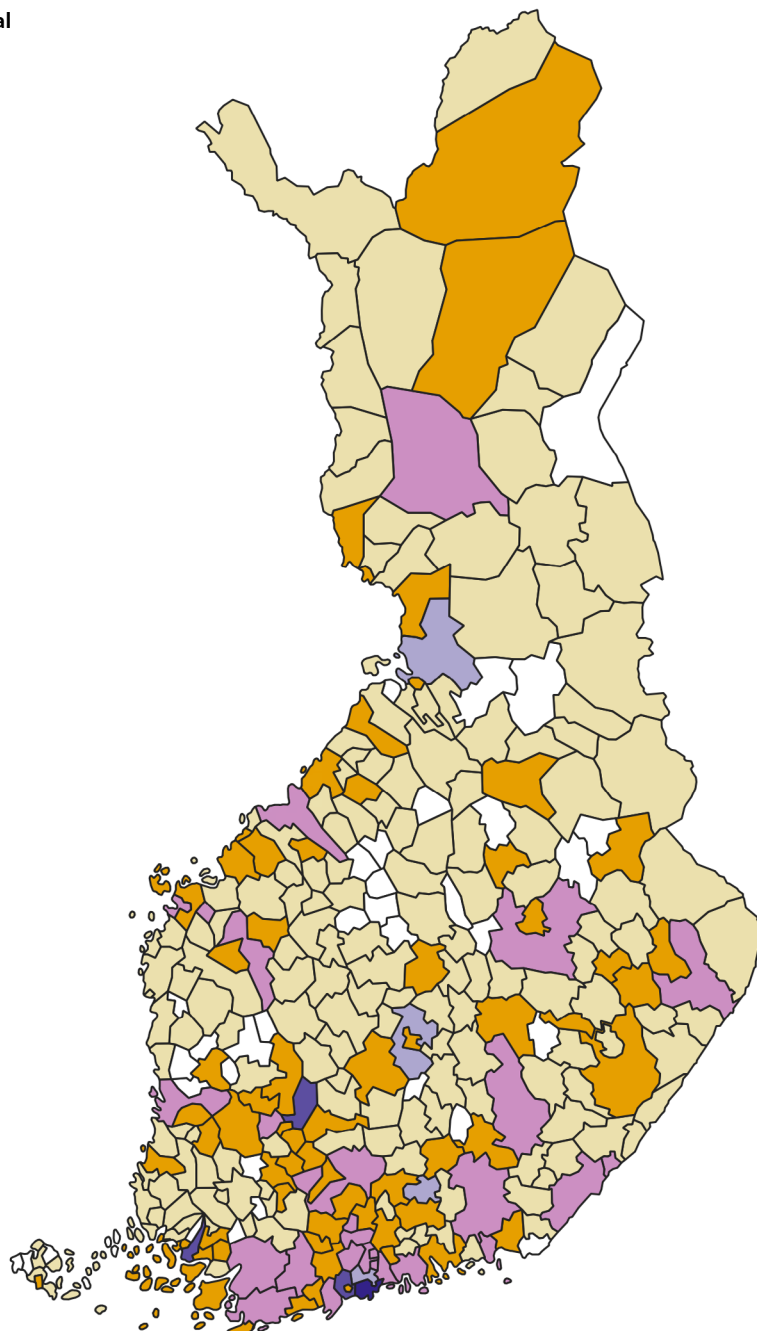
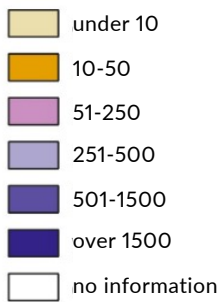
Altogether 63 percent of artists lived in the Uusimaa region, and 32 percent of the professional artists in the data were born in Uusimaa.

The Pirkanmaa region (centred on Tampere) was home to eight percent of artists in 2019, while six percent lived in Southwest Finland (centred on Turku). Approximately seven percent of artists were born in Pirkanmaa and six percent in Southwest Finland.

The share of artists living in other regions among all professional artists in Finland was approximately three percent or less per region.

FIGURE 6. Number of professional artists by municipality in the “As an Artist in Finland” research data.

Number of professional artists by municipality



7. Employment and occupation of artists

Many artists combine wages, self-employment and working on grants. The classification for primary occupation and employment used in the FOLK data does not reflect the diversity of artists' work.

The data used in this research for primary occupation describes the situation in the last week of 2019 (TVM). There are no statistics for working on grants, so this form of work is not reflected in the data.

The status of professional artists in the "As an Artist in Finland" research data for 2019 was as follows:

- 72 % employed
- 10 % unemployed
- 10 % pensioners
- 4 % students and pupils
- 4 % others outside the labour force

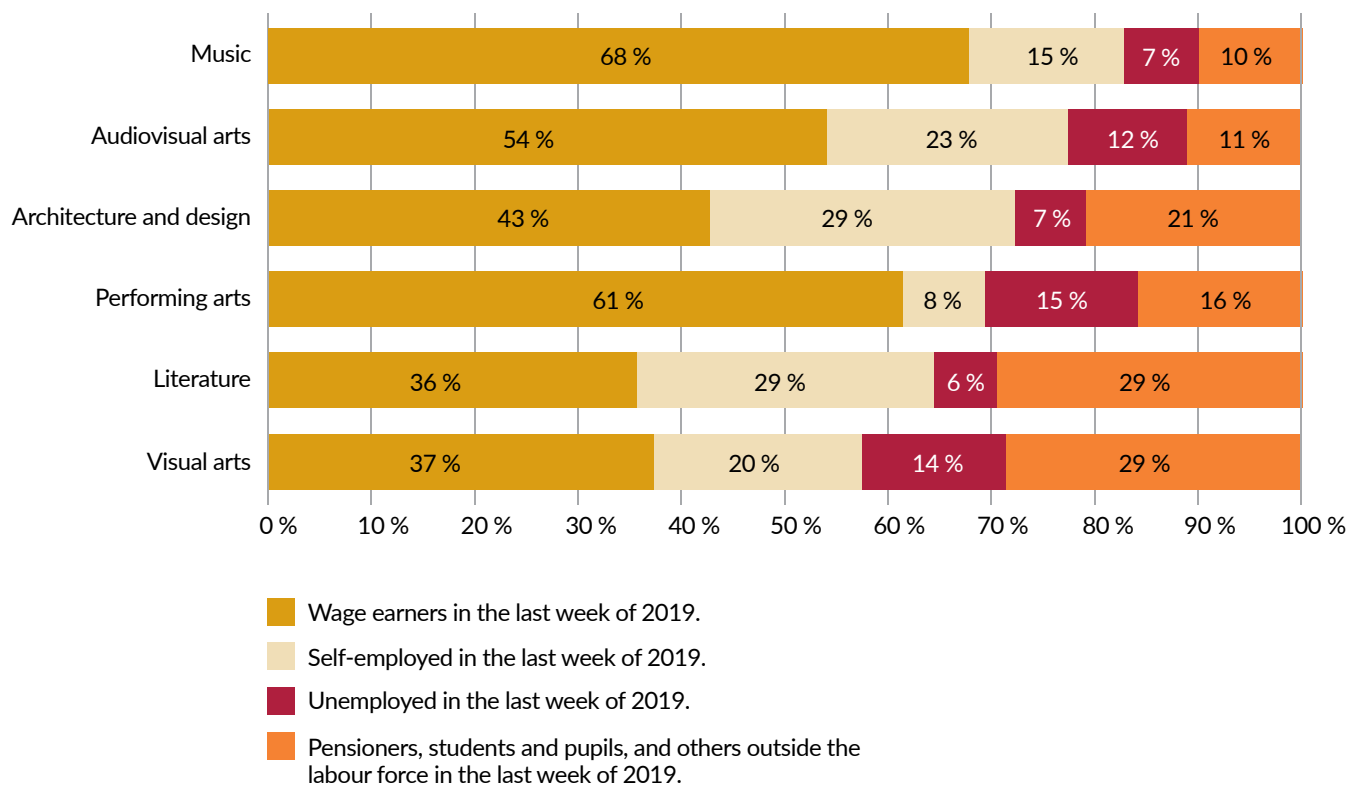
By comparison, among the entire population (ages 15–64), 73 percent were employed and seven percent unemployed in 2019.

The employed include the self-employed and wage earners. In the last week of 2019, 75 percent of the employed professional artists in the "As an Artist in Finland" research data were wage earners and 25 percent self-employed. By comparison, 86 percent of the employed among the entire population were wage earners and 14 percent self-employed.

Artists working in different fields of the arts have different opportunities for earning wages. For example, in the performing arts and music fields, the art institution structure employs artists as wage earners.

In the "As an Artist in Finland" research data, the performing arts and music fields accounted for the largest shares of wage earners among employed artists in 2019. The field of literature accounted for the smallest share of wage earners and correspondingly largest share of the self-employed among employed artists in the last week of the year.

FIGURE 7. Primary occupation of professional artists in different fields of the arts in the last week of 2019 in the "As an Artist in Finland" research data.



8. Sectors in which artists work

Artists work in many different sectors in society.

The sectors used in this research are defined by the classification of sectors used by Statistics Finland, which classifies companies, organisations and individual workplaces according to their primary economic function.

The largest shares of artists in the “As an Artist in Finland” research data worked in the following sectors in 2019:

- **Performing arts (90010): 14 %**
- **Higher university and university of applied sciences education (85420): 8 %**
- **Art and music education (85520): 7 %**
- **Folk high schools, adult education centres, evening institutes, etc. (85591): 4 %**
- **Unrecognised sector (00000): 5 %**
- **Creative arts and entertainment activities (900): 4 %**
- **Motion picture, video and television programme production activities (59110): 4 %**

Three percent of employed artists worked in the artistic creation sector (90030).

In these statistics, the artistic creation sector comprises the creation of original works by independent artists, including sculptors, painters, comic artists, printmakers, illustrators and other visual artists, composers, fiction and non-fiction writers, artisans and photographic artists.

In addition, the artistic creation sector comprises conservators of artworks and museum objects as independent actors, as well as freelance journalists and technical writers (such as writing user manuals).

Social activities are commonly divided into the public sector, the private sector and the third sector.

In Statistics Finland’s classification of sectors, units are divided according to ownership, nature of activity and method of funding.

For these statistics, the sectors are companies, financial and insurance institutions, public entities, households and non-profit organisations serving households.

Employed artists in the “As an Artist in Finland” research data for 2019 worked in the following sectors:

- **25 % in private domestic companies**
- **22 % in non-profit organisations serving households**
- **16 % for municipalities**
- **10 % in the households of employers and other traders**
- **9 % in other state administration units**
- **18 % in other sectors or no information about sector.**

9. Earnings

EARNED INCOME

Earned income is a concept used for personal taxation. Earned income includes income paid by the employer or withdrawn from one's own company, pension income and taxable social benefits, such as unemployment and parental allowances.

In 2019, the largest share (20%) of the professional artists in the "As an Artist in Finland" research data earned between ten and twenty thousand euros.

Among all professional artists in the data, the median earned income was 26,908 euros and the average was 30,907 euros.

The median earnings of professional artists registered as employed in the last week of the year was 31,648 euros and the average was 34,936 euros.

The median pension income of professional artists registered as retired was 26,186 euros and the average was 26,509 euros.

TABLE 4. Earned income of professional artists in the "As an Artist in Finland" research data in 2019.

Earned income, € 2019	Number of artists	Share, %
0 or no information	163	1,0 %
-9 999	2 862	17,1 %
10 000-19 999	3 363	20,1 %
20 000-29 999	2 907	17,3 %
30 000-39 999	2 529	15,1 %
40 000-49 999	2 061	12,3 %
50 000-59 999	1 326	7,9 %
60 000-69 999	678	4,0 %
70 000-79 999	330	2,0 %
80 000-89 999	180	1,1 %
90 000-99 999	118	0,7 %
100 000-149 999	185	1,1 %
150 000-	54	0,3 %
	16 756	100,0 %

SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS

Finnish social security covers the need for sufficient livelihood due to old age, disability, illness, unemployment, having a child, loss of a guardian, rehabilitation or studying. Some social security benefits are based on previously earned income or work, while others are independent of income or previous work.

Professional artists in the "As an Artist in Finland" research data for 2019 received the following social security benefits:

- unemployment security 26 %
- housing benefit 18 %
- income support 3 %
- study grant 7 %
- sickness allowance 8 %
- parental allowance 4 %.

EARNED INCOME OF WAGE EARNERS

Wage income includes wages, bonuses and other benefits and compensation that is paid for work performed for the employer in exchange for compensation.

The median wage income of professional artists registered as wage earners in the last week of 2019 was 22,480 euros and the average was 26,371 euros.

TABLE 5. Wage income of professional artists in the “As an Artist in Finland” research data in 2019.

Wage earnings, €	Number of wage earners among professional artists (last week of 2019)	%
-9 999	1 525	17,0 %
10 000-19 999	1 645	18,3 %
20 000-29 999	1 379	15,4 %
30 000-39 999	1 419	15,8 %
40 000-49 999	1 371	15,3 %
50 000-59 999	888	9,9 %
60 000-69 999	372	4,1 %
70 000-79 999	160	1,8 %
80 000-89 999	98	1,1 %
90 000-99 999	40	0,4 %
100 000-149 999	67	0,7 %
150 000-	7	0,1 %
	8 971	100,0 %

CAPITAL INCOME

Capital income includes income from property, profit from the transfer of property and other income that can be considered to have been accumulated from the possession of wealth.

The majority (59 %) of professional artists in the “As an Artist in Finland” research data did not have any capital income in 2019. In 2019, the average taxable capital income in Finland was 5,459 euros. The median taxable capital income was 282 euros.

ENTREPRENEURIAL INCOME

Entrepreneurial income includes income from carrying on trade, agriculture and forestry, and copyright fees.

The median entrepreneurial income of professional artists registered as self-employed in the last week of 2019 was 6,990 euros and the average was 15,674 euros.

TABLE 6. Entrepreneurial income of professional artists in the “As an Artist in Finland” research data in 2019.

Entrepreneurial income, €	Number of self-employed among professional artists (last week of 2019)	%
0	468	15,6 %
-9 999	1 250	41,6 %
10 000-19 999	446	14,8 %
20 000-29 999	314	10,5 %
30 000-39 999	189	6,3 %
40 000-49 999	122	4,1 %
50 000-59 999	79	2,6 %
60 000-69 999	43	1,4 %
70 000-79 999	25	0,8 %
80 000-89 999	21	0,7 %
90 000-99 999	13	0,4 %
100 000-149 999	25	0,8 %
150 000-	9	0,3 %
	3 004	100,0 %

TABLE 7. Capital income of professional artists in the “As an Artist in Finland” research data in 2019.

Capital income, €	Number of artists	%
0 or no information	9 870	58,9 %
Under 1 000	3 946	23,5 %
1 000-9 999	2 315	13,8 %
10 000-19 999	361	2,2 %
20 000-29 999	106	0,6 %
30 000-39 999	50	0,3 %
40 000-49 999	26	0,2 %
50 000-	81	0,5 %
	16 756	100,0 %

TOTAL INCOME

Total income includes taxable earned income and capital income but not tax-exempt grants.

The median total income of professional artists in the “As an Artist in Finland” research data in 2019 was 27,983 euros and the average was 33,808 euros.

There are considerable differences in the median total income between different fields of the arts and between men and women. Part of the difference can be explained by the importance of grants in different fields of art. For example, in the field of the visual arts, the median total income is significantly lower than in the fields of music and the performing arts in particular.

DISPOSABLE MONEY INCOME

Disposable money income includes wages and salaries, entrepreneurial income, capital income and current transfers received, from which current transfers paid, such as direct taxes and social security contributions, are deducted. Grants are included in disposable money income.

The median disposable money income of professional artists in the “As an Artist in Finland” research data in 2019 was 26,126 euros and the average was 29,255 euros.

The median disposable money income of professional artists in the “As an Artist in Finland” research data was highest in the field of literature and lowest in the field of the visual arts. The median disposable money income was higher among male artists in all fields of the arts except music.

TABLE 8. Total income of professional artists in the “As an Artist in Finland” research data in different fields of the arts in 2019.

Field of the arts	Total income, median, €	Female, median, €	Male, median, €
Architecture and design	29 087	25 130	37 784
Audiovisual arts	29 811	27 202	32 866
Performing arts	31 408	28 713	36 581
Literature	27 712	27 119	28 259
Music	31 754	31 351	32 160
Visual arts	16 985	16 171	18 188

TABLE 9. Disposable money income of professional artists in the “As an Artist in Finland” research data in different fields of the arts in 2019.

Field of the arts	Disposable money income, median, €	Female, median, €	Male, median, €
Architecture and design	26 761	24 001	31 007
Audiovisual arts	27 276	26 445	28 430
Performing arts	28 162	26 777	29 895
Literature	29 333	29 220	29 382
Music	27 017	27 409	26 647
Visual arts	20 890	20 723	21 221

10. Grants

Grants are of great importance to artists, especially in fields of art that do not have structures that enable artists to be employed as wage earners. Statistics Finland does not separately cover work performed on grants, so it is not included in the FOLK data.

Data about grants awarded by the Arts Promotion Centre Finland (Taike) and some grant foundations is provided by partners to the “As an Artist in Finland” research project.

The median amounts are for grants awarded by Taike in 2017–2019 together with grants awarded by three foundations in 2018–2020. The Finnish Music Foundation is not included, as the size and nature of these grants differ significantly from those awarded by other foundations.

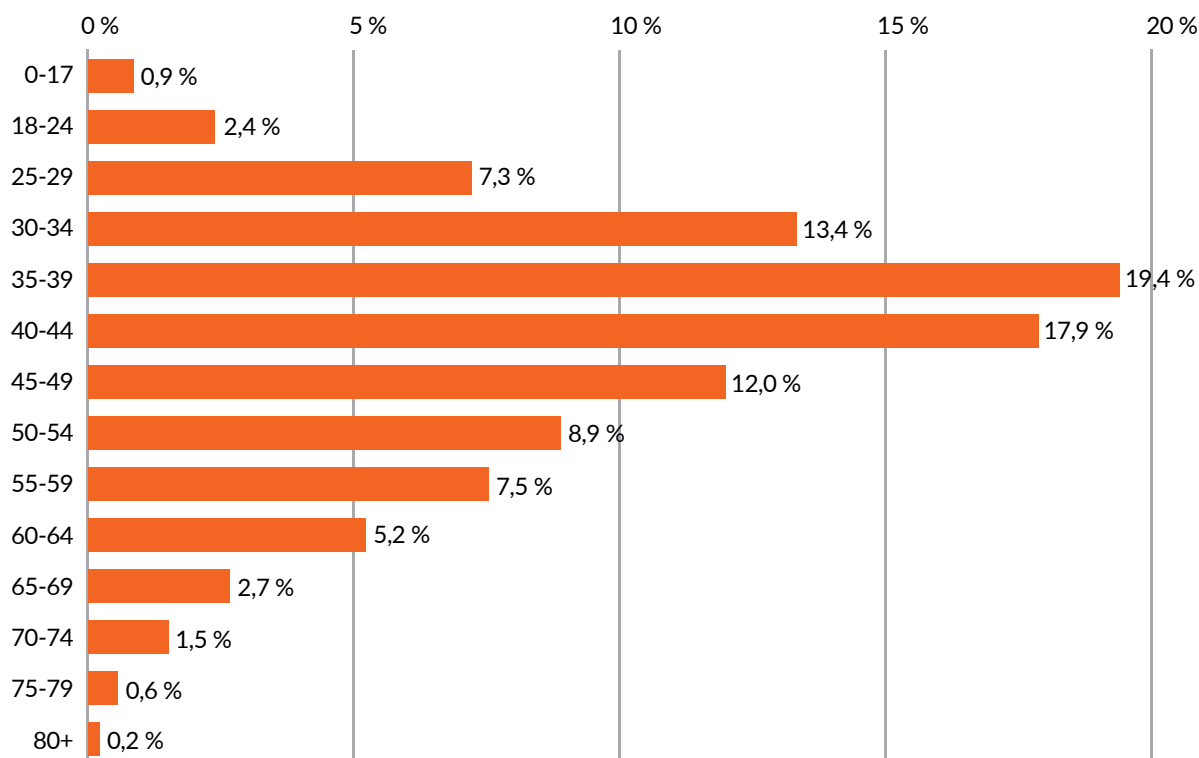
Among the artists in the “As an Artist in Finland” research data, 48 percent (n=8343) had received a grant.

Of these grant recipients, 53 percent were women and 47 percent men.

The share of Finnish speakers among grant recipients was 90 percent, while Swedish speakers accounted for five percent and others six percent.

The professional artists in the research data were able to receive grants in multiple fields of the arts.

FIGURE 8. Age distribution of grant recipients in the “As an Artist in Finland” research data.



The shares of grant recipients in the examined data varied in different fields of the arts. The largest share of grant recipients was in the field of the visual arts (31 %). The highest median was in the field of literature (16,000 euros).

TABLE 10. Grant recipients in different fields of the arts in the "As an Artist in Finland" research data.

Field of the arts	Share of grant recipients, %	Median, €	Median, female, €	Median, male, €
Architecture and design	9 %	10 000	11 000	10 256
Audiovisual arts	19 %	10 575	10 203	10 641
Performing arts	21 %	11 000	11 450	12 000
Literature	18 %	16 000	14 000	15 800
Music	21 %	7 200	7 000	9 000
Visual arts	31 %	13 000	12 200	13 025

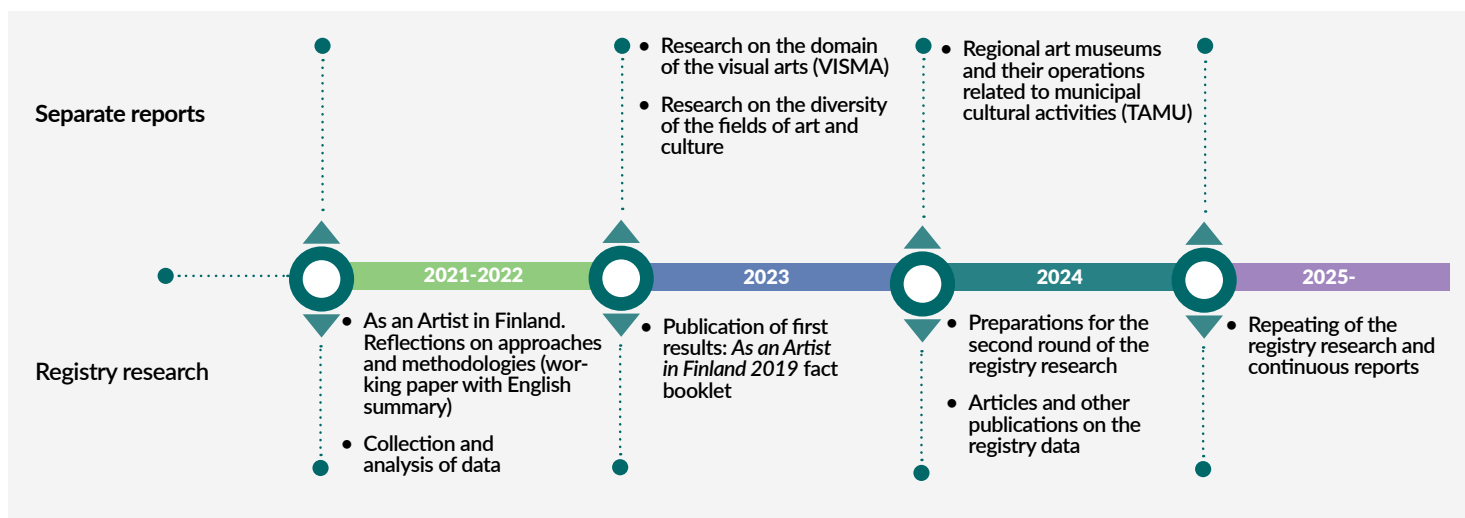
The share of artists who received a grant from the state (Taike) or foundations was largest in the field of the visual arts. Among artists who received a grant from foundations, those in the field of music also stand out.

TABLE 11. Share of grants awarded by the state (Taike) and three foundations in different fields of the arts in the "As an Artist in Finland" research data.

Field of the arts	Taike, share of grant recipients, %	Taike, median amount of grants, €	Foundations, share of grant recipients, %	Foundations, median amount of grants, €
Architecture and design	10 %	8 000	8 %	12 000
Audiovisual arts	18 %	8 000	22 %	8 950
Performing arts	22 %	7 000	20 %	12 000
Literature	23 %	11 750	13 %	13 000
Music	16 %	6 000	25 %	8 000
Visual arts	36 %	8 000	29 %	13 000

The median amount of grants awarded by foundations was higher than that of grants awarded by Taike.

FIGURE 9. Timetable for “As an Artist in Finland” research project.



▶ 11. Summary and further research

This fact booklet compiles extensive register-based data about professional artists in Finland in 2019. The data will be further analysed in the “As an Artist in Finland” research project in the form of reviews and articles. The results will be compared with qualitative materials, such as surveys and interviews, as well as data about professional artists in other Nordic countries.

The “As an Artist in Finland” research project will continue in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Culture, Taike and Statistics Finland. The goal is to repeat the compilation of the register material for the situation in 2024 with the aim of including data from artists’ associations and grant foundations as comprehensively as possible.

▶ 12. Data and sources

Hirvi-Ijäs, M., Renko, V., Lahtinen, E., Sokka, S., Jakonen, O. & Kurlin Niiniäho, A. 2021. *As an Artist in Finland. Reflections on approaches and methodologies*. Cupore’s working papers 15. Center for Cultural Policy Research Cupore.

Sokka, S., Renko, V., Hirvi-Ijäs, M., Karttunen, S. & Lahtinen, E. (2023). *Visual Arts in Finland. Financing, structures and development needs*. Cupore’s web publications 73. Center for Cultural Policy Research Cupore.

Statistics Finland: *FOLK-longitudinal data modules on personal data*

Statistics Finland: *Concepts*

