

# **Time for Visual Art**

**Advocacy Objectives for the Visual Arts Sector,  
Government Term 2027–2031**

These objectives outline current developments in the Finnish visual arts sector and proposed actions for the 2027–2031 government term. Additional insights for developing the visual arts field can be found in the policy frameworks and objectives of the **Artists' Association of Finland**, **Frame Contemporary Art Finland**, and **Kuvasto**.

**Artists' Association of Finland** is an advocacy and expert organisation representing more than 3,000 professional visual artists. It promotes the status and working conditions of visual artists and strengthens the role of visual art in society.

**Frame Contemporary Art Finland** is an expert organisation and information centre for contemporary art. Frame supports international presentations, networks, and export of Finnish contemporary art and produces data on the visual arts sector in Finland.

**Kuvasto** is a copyright society for visual artists. It safeguards artists' rights and promotes the conditions necessary for artistic work. Kuvasto represents more than 3,600 Finnish and about 100,000 international visual artists.

## Visual Arts in Finland

- 5.3 million visits to visual arts venues annually (Frame 2024)
- 3,300 professional visual artists
- 67 art museums
- 120 art galleries
- 40 art lending services
- 45 visual arts events
- 5.2 million euros in artwork sales by galleries
- 31 % of municipalities are committed to the Percent for Art Principle
- 77 % of citizens want public art in their everyday environments (Verian 2024)

## Supporting Visual Art generates positive impact

Enabling opportunities for all to create and experience art and culture is a fundamental responsibility of a democratic state. A vibrant visual arts field generates a substantial positive impact. Visual art attracts and moves people, as nearly **5.3 million visits** are made annually to visual art destinations in Finland. Additionally, art exhibitions create significant spillover effects for tourism and restaurants, for example.

Art export generates income, visibility, and networks for Finnish contemporary artists. International exhibitions also contribute to creating a memorable country image.

Public art brings art close to people, for example, into schools, hospitals, and everyday routes, which Finnish people value. Art has been shown to promote comprehensive wellbeing.

We need visual art professionals to tackle various future challenges. As AI develops, visual literacy becomes ever more important in society.

## Challenge: Visual art faces a funding gap

Relative to its popularity and significance, visual art is underfunded in Finland, compared to most other art forms. Visual artists' livelihoods are the weakest among the artist groups, and the structures that enable professional practice and sectoral development have not been sufficiently reformed. This has been recognised in studies by the Cultural Policy Research Centre Cupore, analyses by the Ministry of Education and Culture, and in the Cultural Policy Report (2025).

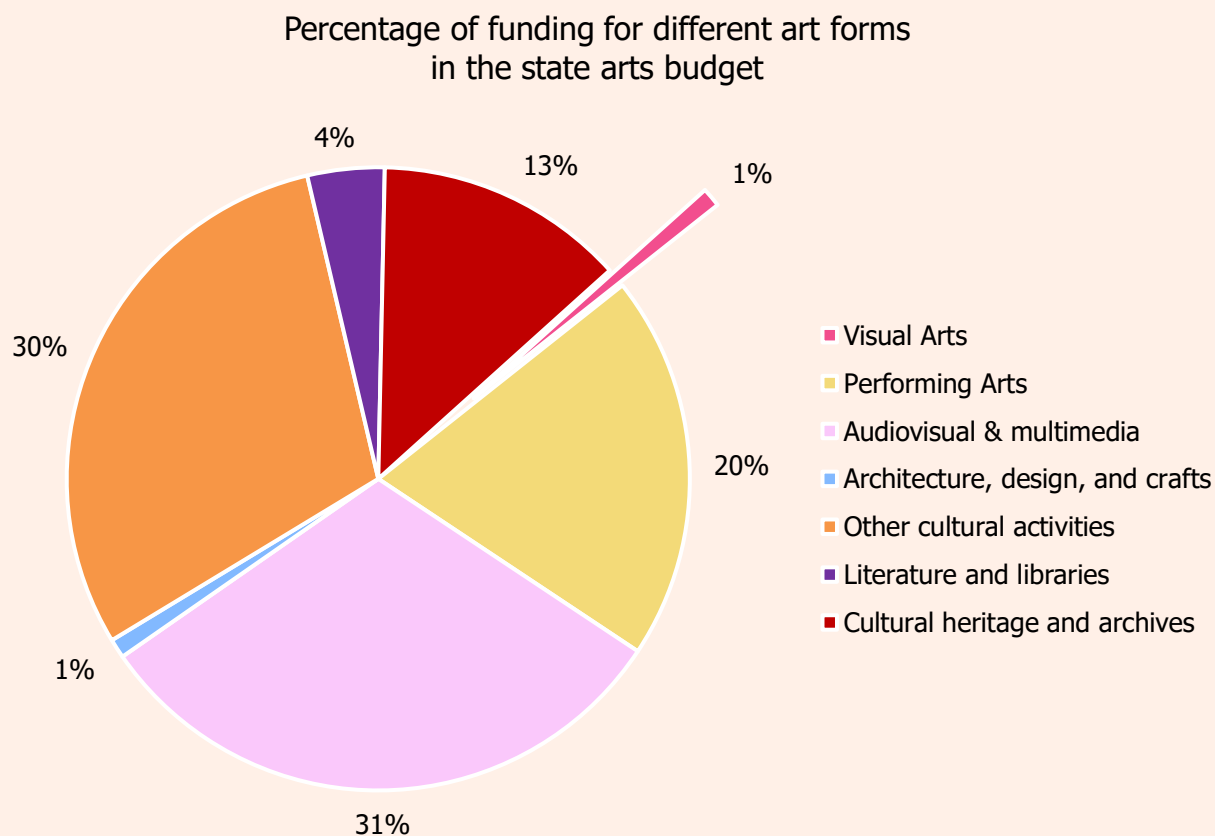
Improving artists' remuneration and compensation practices, strengthening international networks and export of contemporary art, and reinforcing the visual arts organisations will enable growth and development in the field.

By investing in opportunities to create and experience art in Finland, we generate cultural value, which has a positive impact on well-being, employment, regional economies, and Finland's international recognition.

Now it's time for visual art!

# Visitor numbers in Finland (2023/2024)

- Visual art venues: 5,300,000
- Popular music venues: 3,800,000
- Theatre, dance, circus and opera: 3,495,262
- Popular music festivals: 3,000,000
- Symphony orchestras: 2,616,044
- Ice Hockey League (regular season 2024–2025): 2,236,155
- Football, Veikkausliiga: 443,504



Source: Cupore: Possibly Culture? – working paper, 2021.

During the 2027–2031 Government Term:

1. Equal funding for the visual arts
2. Visual artists are entitled to remuneration when their works are shown and used
3. Making Finnish art visible locally and internationally

## 1. Equal funding for the visual arts

Arts funding in Finland lags behind the general European level. Nevertheless, the creative industries account for around 3.1% of GDP (Statistics Finland 2021), a larger share than many traditional industrial sectors.

Following the reform of the state funding for the performing arts (VOS funding) in the early 2020s, the sectors left outside require renewal, as their basic structures have significant shortcomings. Visual art is one of these sectors, as numerous studies have found. Even before the latest cuts, visual art accounted for only about 1% of the state's total culture funding.

Raising visual arts funding to an equal level with other artforms would significantly strengthen accessibility of the visual arts, employment in the field, and international success.

The state should also set an example for municipalities by committing to the Percent for Art principle (1% of construction costs for art) in all its construction and renovation projects via state-owned Senate Properties.

## What is needed?

- Arts and culture funding must be raised to at least one percent of the national budget.
- Lift visual art out of the funding gap. Visual arts funding must be brought to an equal level with other artforms.
- The state must commit to following the Percent for Art principle in its own construction through Senate Properties.

## 2. Visual artists are entitled to remuneration when their works are shown and used

Although visual art has large audiences, artists may not receive any compensation or remuneration for (exhibiting) their work.

Most visual art is experienced by viewing it at exhibitions and events. Therefore, alongside sales, the income in visual art should rely on the artist receiving copyright remuneration whenever their works are used or displayed. This presupposes a functioning copyright system that safeguards artists' rights and ensures remuneration also in a changing digital environment.

Research shows that visual artists must often do other work alongside their artistic practice, and the specific characteristics of the artistic profession are often not recognised in public administration.

The Exhibition Payment Model introduced in 2021 is an important policy step for visual art, welcomed by both artists and art museums. The work must be completed by expanding the model to cover the independent field such as galleries and other professional exhibition spaces in line with the Ministry of Education and Culture working group's recommendation. Expanding the model requires increasing organisational funding for visual art.

In artforms like visual art, where there are few or no salaried employment, working grants are a key form of arts funding. The Finnish artist grant system is highly cost-effective and culturally significant, although it accounts for less than 3% of the state culture budget. Grant levels and volumes have lagged the growth in the number of artists and rising costs.

*exhibition remuneration =  
a copyright remuneration paid for  
the public display of artworks, with  
municipalities playing a significant role in  
funding.*

*exhibition payment = a fee paid to an artist for  
the work involved in an exhibition, such as planning,  
installation, transport, and communications.*

## What is needed?

- Let's put the Cultural Policy Report into practice: in line with its policy, the compensation and remuneration system for visual artists must now be developed. Visual artists are entitled to compensation when their works are viewed or experienced.
- Expand the Exhibition Payment Model to cover, in addition to art museums, all professional exhibition venues in the visual arts field.
- Strengthen visual artists' copyrights in digital environments. Digital remuneration for publishing museums' art collection online should be comparable to e-lending compensation. Reform compensation for private copying to a market-based model.
- Find ways to increase salaried employment for visual artists, for example, in cultural institutions, municipalities, higher education, and the private sector.
- Improve artists' social security. Public authorities must increase their understanding of the nature of artists' and grant recipients' work.
- Maintain and further develop the artist grant system by raising grant levels toward Finland's median income.

## 3. Make Finnish art visible near and far

We live in uncertain global political times, and the role of arts and culture in building democracy and providing a platform for international dialogue must be recognised.

Finnish visual art is attracting interest internationally, but in recent years the preconditions for international mobility and art export have been weakened. Breakthroughs abroad are not possible without a solid springboard at home.

Supporting international activities in visual art means enabling artists' mobility and networking, presenting and selling contemporary art on international platforms, and increasing the global visibility of Finnish art.

International activities and art export have been recognized in both the Creative Economy Growth Strategy and the Cultural Policy Report: they promote the visibility of Finnish art and its commercial success abroad.

A significant portion of Finnish exhibitions, art lending services, and professional support services for artists are maintained by visual art organisations and local artist associations. They act as an important intermediary between artists, audiences and buyers.

Funding cuts have hit the independent arts field hard. The visual arts sector includes many organisations such as galleries and residency operators that rely on discretionary grants and cannot access the state subsidy system (VOS funding).

Their long-term development requires confidence in the future without constant fear of additional cuts in funding and operations.

## What is needed?

- Support the international activities of the creative industries and the export of contemporary art, such as art professionals' mobility and international exhibition activities. The art market needs a funding instrument for participation in international art fairs to replace the one discontinued by Business Finland in autumn 2025.
- Funding for the independent field must be more stable and predictable. Funding for visual arts organisations must be secured.