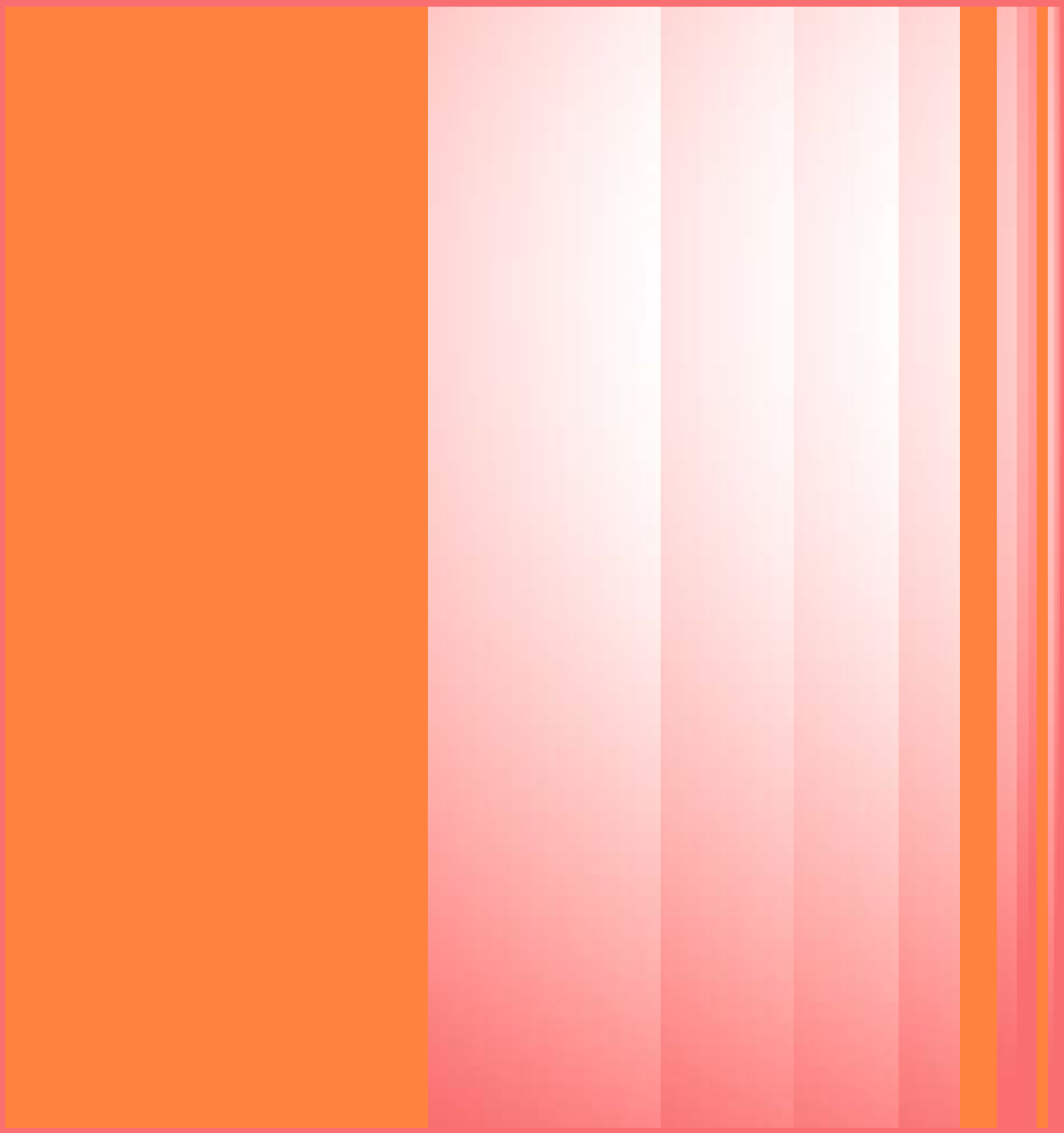
MODERN PATRONS

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CORPORATE PARTNERSHIPS WITH VISUAL ARTS COMMUNITIES

THE ARTISTS' ASSOCIATION OF FINLAND
2025–2026



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We also thank the arts organisations, businesses and their representatives that participated in the pilots and built new partnerships with an open mind and shared their expertise with the project partners, as well as the numerous trainers, panellists and speakers who shared their expertise at our events.

We also wish to honour the memory of **Ari Tolppanen**, who passed away in February 2026. His encouragement and expertise as a member of the steering group left a lasting mark on the project. Tolppanen was known for his sustained work in developing the film and culture sectors in Finland and as an important patron of the arts.

Modern Patrons steering group

Nina Elomaa, Chief Sustainability Officer, S Group
Nana Salin, entrepreneur and creativity expert, developer of funding, partnerships and public relations at the University of Helsinki and expert art consultant at the Bank of Finland
Virpi Vaittinen, foresight expert and strategist, futures curator and founder of the Vivian White futures studio
Janne Ylinen, CEO of Kokkolan HalpaHalli and Chair of the Finnish Cultural Foundation's Central Ostrobothnia Regional Fund
Ari Tolppanen, founder of the private equity company CapMan Oyj, influential figure in business and the film industry, and art collector

Project partners from the arts sector

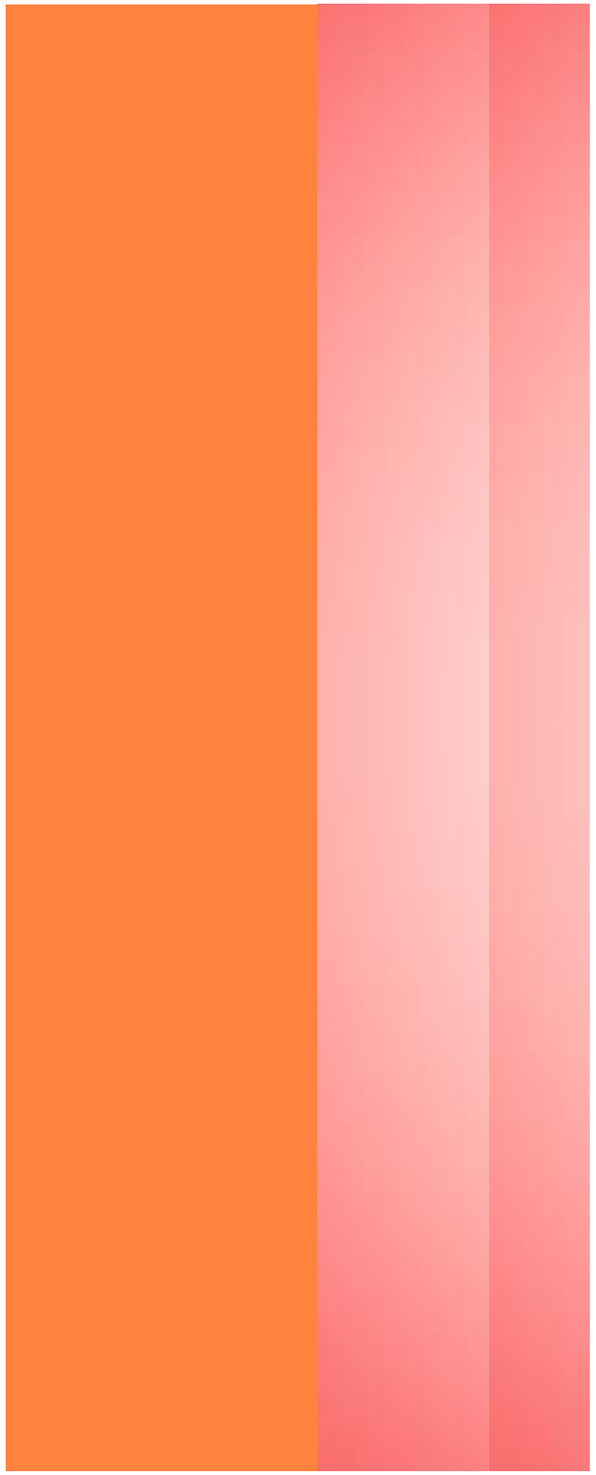
Nina Toppila, Kunsthalle Helsinki
Terese Kühl, RCBA Oy, Terese's Art Agency
Jere Lahdenperä, RaumArs ry
Hannele Kolsio, RaumArs ry
Anna Akins, Forum Box artist cooperative and gallery
Kamilla Billiers, Forum Box artist cooperative and gallery
Heli Innala, Tampere Artists' Association
Senni Uusikartano, Tampere Artists' Association
Jasmin Virtanen, student, Metropolia

Corporate partners in the partnership pilots

YIT
Outshine
Telinekataja Oy
Teollisuuden Voima (TVO)

Foreword

Noora Pitkälä



In the 2030s, corporate support for art and culture has become established practice in Finland and cultural considerations are firmly embedded in companies' corporate responsibility activities. Collaboration with visual arts organisations and donations to the visual arts are no longer a rarity, instead companies compete to develop the most ambitious arts programmes, be it art acquisitions, support for employee wellbeing, strategy development through artistic methods or implementing marketing solutions intertwined with art. Operators in the arts sector proactively build relationships with businesses and design services suited to their needs. Corporate partnerships offer platforms for organising impactful events and exhibitions.

How close are we to turning this vision into reality?

This was the question explored by the Artists' Association of Finland as part of the Modern Patrons project, funded by the Finnish Cultural Foundation. During 2025–2026, we piloted corporate partnerships with four visual arts organisations and met companies at networking events and partnership negotiations, in online meetings and at companies' art collections. One of the concepts introduced was corporate cultural responsibility: a model under which companies take actions to support cultural institutions and thereby deliver positive social impacts. We discussed practical measures that businesses could take to be more involved in safeguarding the liveliness of the culture sector, particularly non-profit organisations. We also examined how arts partnerships could support business objectives, for example by enhancing employee wellbeing, nurturing creative thinking and building bridges to customers and other stakeholders.

We discussed practical measures that businesses could take to be more involved in safeguarding the liveliness of the culture sector.

The Modern Patrons project pilots focused on developing corporate

For companies, art is a strategic resource: it can be a means to reach new customer segments, enhance employee wellbeing, challenge conventional thinking and strengthen capacity for renewal.

sponsorships and services aimed at businesses. The participants were all small or medium-sized visual arts organisations, mainly non-profits engaged in exhibition activities. Although their activities vary in scope, they all carry out impactful work to broaden the diversity of artistic content, increase job opportunities for professional artists, improve art education and promote local interest.

These organisations are, in some ways, similar to local sports clubs, helping to foster a vibrant local culture, wellbeing and expertise. However, they have so far been largely unsuccessful in building corporate relationships. The sector urgently needs more expertise and working hours allocated to networking, fundraising, developing sponsorship models and creating services for businesses. It also needs to be courageous and take pride in its work, learning to recognise how activities carried out by arts organisations can benefit companies. The project thus sought to address these needs through training and hands-on pilots.

The development project, which lasted almost two years, showed that companies have mixed feelings about collaboration with the arts sector, including sponsorships, donations, art acquisitions and purchases of arts-related services. Bleak economic prospects prevent many companies from seeing the potential of arts partnerships, but others are considering ways to support what is an ailing culture sector. Within the project, companies typically expressed a belief in the importance of cultural responsibility but also an unwillingness to invest given the current economic climate.

This project began with the aim of strengthening the prominence of culture in companies' continually evolving responsibility work. We realised, however, that strong arts programmes are rarely established within corporate sustainability strategies rather they tend to be championed by influential individuals with a fondness for art. These individuals organise corporate events in artistic settings and help to advance art acquisitions and sponsorship negotiations. Yet, for companies, art is a strategic resource that goes beyond personal preferences: it can be a means to reach new customer

segments, enhance employee wellbeing, challenge conventional thinking and strengthen capacity for renewal.

Given the rapid changes currently being brought about by the proliferation of artificial intelligence, companies increasingly regard creativity, curiosity and problem-solving skills as competitive advantages. In 2025, The Future of Jobs report by the World Economic Forum identified creative thinking as one of the most important skills for workers in the future, and one of the fastest growing areas of demand. From this perspective, too, art and artists offer companies value that extends far beyond cultural activities. Nurturing this value could be linked more closely to responsibility work in the future, as Nina Elomaa, Chief Sustainability Officer at S Group, writes in this publication (p. 42).

This project has taken the Artists' Association of Finland into a new territory. It has required considerable perseverance and creativity, as well as several changes of direction. Most of the challenges involved were the same as those faced by any arts organisation arranging corporate partnerships and private fundraising. How do you demonstrate to companies the benefits of cultural responsibility and the opportunities offered by arts partnerships? What are the most suitable networks for sharing this message? Is it acceptable to send one more friendly reminder to a prospective corporate partner? Will a project last long enough for partnership pilots to be implemented when responses are scarce and negotiations drawn out?

Sponsorship and fundraising professionals invariably say that securing partnerships is an arduous task and requires perseverance. This was also one of the main lessons from the project for partner organisations that are already operating with very limited resources. However, work on the project has continued for over a year and suggests encouraging prospects for the future. Companies that joined the partnership pilots have been proud to support cultural initiatives. Several partnership ideas that could not be realised within the project window are on companies' agendas for next year. The arts services developed during the pilots will continue to be marketed with renewed confidence.

The first part of this publication introduces the partnership pilots and presents key results. The second part outlines sponsorship and fundraising guidelines intended to help associations in building partnerships. The third part looks to the future: we invited experts in business and responsibility to consider how acts of cultural responsibility could help build both a better corporate culture and a better society from the perspectives of corporate responsibility, organisational culture and strategic development.

Noora Pitkälä
Producer of the Modern Patrons project
Artists' Association of Finland

The Modern Patrons project piloted corporate partnerships at the Young Artists 2026 exhibition at Kunsthalle Helsinki. Photo: Kunsthalle Helsinki.





1

Partnerships between businesses and visual arts organisations

Experiences and lessons from the Modern Patrons project

Experiences of building partnerships in the Modern Patrons project

Noora Pitkälä

We developed corporate partnership models with four visual arts organisations as part of the Modern Patrons project. The participants in the pilots were **Kunsthalle Helsinki**, the artist cooperative and gallery **Forum Box in Helsinki**, the Rauma-based **Art House RaumArs** and the **Tampere Artists' Association**, which operates the Mältinranta Artcenter and the Art Lending Service.

The pilots focused on developing and selling reciprocal sponsorship concepts to businesses rather than seeking donations. The aim was to create partnership models that generate value for both arts organisations and businesses. Working with the arts organisations, we also developed services for businesses, such as venue hire services, art breakfasts and art-lending services.

The work included joint brainstorming, service conceptualisation, development of pricing models, planning of communications and marketing activities, target-group mapping and services and partnerships sales. The participating arts organisations attended a training course on opportunities for corporate partnerships held by **Terese Kühl**, an expert in arts brokerage and sponsorship, as well as being provided individual coaching. Pilot participants were also given legal advice for preparing and negotiating contracts with corporate partners.

Developing the pilots and finding partners took about 12 months. During this period, the Young Artists 2026 exhibition at Kunsthalle Helsinki secured several partners: construction company **YIT**, digital advertising company **Outshine** and **Telinekataja**, which supplied scaffolding for an installation. The exhibition marked the beginning of YIT's year-long partnership with Kunsthalle Helsinki.

Art House RaumArs, which offers three artists graduating from SAMK Kankaanpää School of Fine Arts a five-week exhibition at Art House RaumArs, as well as an exhibition fee. Meanwhile, **Forum Box** undertook a range of initiatives, including developing venue- and art-related services for companies as well as exploring opportunities for pro bono collaboration with a marketing agency.

The aim was to create partnership models that generate value for both arts organisations and businesses.

In addition to becoming Kunsthalle Helsinki's annual partner, YIT began collaborating with the Art Lending Services in Helsinki, Tampere and Turku. It now offers gift vouchers that allow new homeowners to acquire art from these services. The house-warming gift creates value for new customers while attracting new interest in the Art Lending Services.

Teollisuuden Voima (TVO) became a sponsor of the Young Artists in Rauma project organised by

The organisations involved in the pilots were all very different, so the individual partnership models were developed around each organisation's strengths. Results varied, reflecting the nature of corporate partnerships: success is influenced by a range of factors, including an organisation's public profile, existing networks and capacity to invest in sustained partnership development. Particularly encouraging results were achieved at Kunsthalle Helsinki, where a partnership consultant had begun the process of developing corporate

Noora Pitkälä was a producer in the Modern Patrons project 2025–2026.

At their best, corporate partnerships attract new audiences and generate expertise that an organisation could not acquire by itself.

partnerships even before the project launched.

The Modern Patrons project demonstrated how demanding development work can be for arts organisations operating with limited resources. Sponsorship and fundraising are becoming increasingly competitive as public funding for non-profit organisations in different sectors has been reduced. The project also highlighted companies' caution given the challenges of the current economic climate. Fundraising and corporate partnership development require sustained commitment, active networking and sales.

Development efforts are most successful when the entire organisation is committed to them. Clear policies on the parameters of a potential collaboration, support from management and the board, and realistic resource allocation provide the foundations for long-term work. Non-profit organisations should make good use of their board members' networks and business expertise.

Corporate partnerships are not solely about broadening an organisation's funding base but also increase their impact and profile. At their best, partnerships can increase visibility for a visual arts community, strengthen its networks, attract new audiences and generate expertise that the organisation could not acquire by itself.

Based on their experiences, the participating arts organisations summarised some key lessons to be shared with similar visual arts communities:

- Securing partnerships takes a considerable amount of time. Results are not achieved quickly; collaborative relationships are built over months and years.
- Personal engagement and strong networks are more effective than resource-intensive mass outreach, such as email campaigns.
- Invite prospective corporate partners to engage with art and learn about the organisation's activities. It may open company representatives' eyes.
- Assigning adequate resources is essential to success. Dedicated staff time must be allocated to developing and marketing corporate partnerships. It is difficult to ensure sufficient time is devoted to partnership development given the operational constraints that non-profits face.
- A clear, well-thought-out partnership model provides a good starting point for negotiations and concept development with a business. Corporate needs and expectations vary considerably, but tangible benefits and joint events always generate interest.
- It is always worth proposing a partnership: it is impossible to predict the potential positive outcomes.
- Partnerships require active management. Collaboration does not end when an agreement is signed.

Project partnership pilots and arts organisations

Kunsthalle Helsinki – Partnerships for the Young Artists 2026 exhibition

Kunsthalle Helsinki secured partners for the Young Artists 2026 exhibition as well as a year-long partnership. Under the agreement it offered a range of benefits, including private events, complimentary tickets and invitations to sponsor stakeholders, as well as content for joint events and marketing.

New partnership concepts were developed, and significant corporate collaboration initiatives were launched during the project (YIT, Outshine and Telinekataja). The project also initiated discussions about future partnerships. RCBA Oy's partnership consultant Terese Kühl, who secures partnerships for Kunsthalle Helsinki on a commission basis, worked alongside the producer of the Modern Patrons project.

Forum Box gallery – Corporate events against a backdrop of contemporary art

Forum Box, the Helsinki-based artist co-operative and gallery, focused on corporate and stakeholder outreach, particularly in relation to venue hire, encompassing event pricing, marketing materials and corporate hire packages. The venue partnership packages included hosting corporate events at the gallery at a special rate, as well as opportunities to incorporate artistic content as part of customer and stakeholder events and corporate away days.

A wide range of prospective new target groups were contacted during the project. No actual partnership pilots were launched, but venue hire at the gallery increased during the project.

RaumArs ry – Corporate partnerships for a new art house

The newly opened Art House RaumArs, located in central Rauma, developed a corporate patron/sponsorship model that serves as an inviting proposition for businesses. The partnership encompasses joint marketing activities, exhibition previews, private events at the Art House, art workshops and encounters with international artists. Several discussions were held with companies about future collaboration opportunities.

The project also piloted the Young Artists in Rauma initiative, sponsored by Teollisuuden Voima (TVO). It provides artists graduating from the art school with an opportunity to exhibit their work early in their professional career while strengthening Rauma's profile as a city of art. The partnership gives TVO visibility and access to guided tours of the exhibitions.

Tampere Artists' Association – Art for the office and corporate gifts from the Art Lending Service

The Tampere Artists' Association developed the art for the office service to set up rotating art exhibitions in company premises. The service includes curation of an exhibition from the Tampere Art Lending Service collection, as well as delivery and installation of the works.

The project also developed other corporate services offered by the Art Lending Service, such as staff wellbeing workshops and breakfast events. A collaboration model was developed with YIT under which YIT gives selected customers an art service voucher as a house-warming present when they move to a new home. It is worth EUR 200–400 and can be used to purchase or borrow works of art from the Tampere, Turku or Helsinki Art Lending Services.

The project's corporate partners as supporters of arts

The companies involved in the pilots regarded arts collaboration as an opportunity to combine their business objectives with support for culture. Each partnership was built on a different premise, but they shared the aim of doing something meaningful for both customers and wider society.

Construction company YIT joined the project to enhance its customer experience. **Pekka Helin**, YIT's Senior Vice President in charge of Living Services, described the partnership as an opportunity to create value for customers and support culture: "We can offer our customers a gift of art that brings lasting value and joy. At its best, it can be passed down from generation to generation." Digital advertising company Outshine approached the partnership with the urban environment and culture in mind. Outshine's Commercial Director **Tommi Fäldt** was delighted that the partnership offered an opportunity to bring art and meaningful events and experiences into people's daily lives. "I think that integrating culture and art into commercial media creates added value not only for artists but also for people who see our media displays."

Telinekataja, a scaffolding specialist, was involved in the Young Artists 2026 exhibition by facilitating the creation of a work from scaffolding. The company wanted to support a new generation of artists in a practical way. **Laura Kataja**, the company's Director of Marketing and Communications, saw the collaboration as a natural way to apply the company's expertise in support of the arts.

Teollisuuden Voima (TVO) decided to support the Young Artists in Rauma project as it was an obvious next step from the company's other sponsorship activities, which focus on promoting recreational and development opportunities for children and young people. The collaboration sought to create opportunities for future actors while promoting the vitality of Finnish cultural life.

Through the partnerships, companies want to do something meaningful for both customers and wider society.

The companies' experiences in the pilots demonstrate that art-related partnerships can offer businesses new ways to strengthen customer and stakeholder relationships and to contribute to the liveliness of culture in wider society. They also open up opportunities for arts organisations to network and reach new audiences.

Artist cooperative and gallery Forum Box was one of the project's partners. Satu Rautiainen's work *Garden of Empathy* (2025) on the gallery's facade. Photo: Navid Afzalnia.





2

Sponsorship and fundraising through donations

Practical tools for arts organisations

A guide to sponsorship for visual arts organisations

Terese Kühl

Terese Kühl is an art manager and entrepreneur who specialises in providing arts brokerage services through her company Terese's Art Agency. She holds degrees in Business and Visual Art. She has planned arts sponsorships and secured partnerships for dozens of professional artists, arts associations and arts institutions since 2021. Kühl also shares information about arts sponsorship on her blog and podcast Taide ja raha (Art and money), offering inspiring examples of sponsorship.

What is arts sponsorship?

Arts sponsorships can serve as a source of private funding and an opportunity to build fruitful collaborations for operators in the visual arts sector. Both arts organisations and individual artists can enter sponsorship arrangements with businesses and non-profit organisations.

Desired outcomes from sponsorships vary and can include financial and/or communications objectives. While sponsorship is often confused with support or patronage, the aim is goal-oriented collaboration. It should not be viewed as a mechanism for providing donations or grants but rather a mutually beneficial, results-driven and transactional arrangement. Sponsorship is not a sales agreement for the provision of products or services between companies, nor is it a vehicle for selling advertising space or providing exposure to a logo.

A range of terms are applied to denote specific types of sponsorship: partnership, collaborative partnership, corporate partnership and corporate collaboration can all refer to sponsorship-type arrangements. I have also heard the terms strategic marketing and marketing communications used in this context. For clarity, however, I use the term arts sponsorship in this guide to refer to transactional, goal-oriented and value-based collaboration between an artist or arts organisation and a sponsor.

Businesses provide sponsorships with the aim of generating revenue: they do not provide arts organisations with products, services or financial support purely out of goodwill. They are investments intended to strengthen their brand and increase sales. Businesses seek to use sponsorships to shape their image amongst target audiences by leveraging the values, image and brand of the artists and arts organisations with which they are associated.

The purpose of a sponsorship arrangement is to create added value and promote sales for both the sponsor and the sponsored party. A further aim is to create added value for their shared audiences as well as the potential audiences they are trying to reach, including customers and other stakeholders. When partners engage in joint initiatives, such as providing a shared service, cultural event or campaign, it can benefit large numbers of people. A sponsorship campaign seeks to communicate with target audiences and influence their attitudes, values or buying behaviours, for example. It can also help tell a story within wider society about the campaign's social, societal and environmental responsibility. Companies are required to meet certain statutory environmental, social and governance criteria, and arts sponsorship is an excellent instrument for putting cultural and corporate responsibility into practice.

For businesses, sponsorship arrangements are investments intended to strengthen their brand and increase sales.

Benefits of sponsorship

Sponsorship agreements offer numerous benefits to both artists/arts organisations and sponsors. At its best, the value of a partnership exceeds the monetary value of the contributions exchanged. The mutual benefits can be tangible or intangible: intangible benefits include positive effects on brand, image, visibility, perceptions and networks while tangible benefits include funding, products and services.

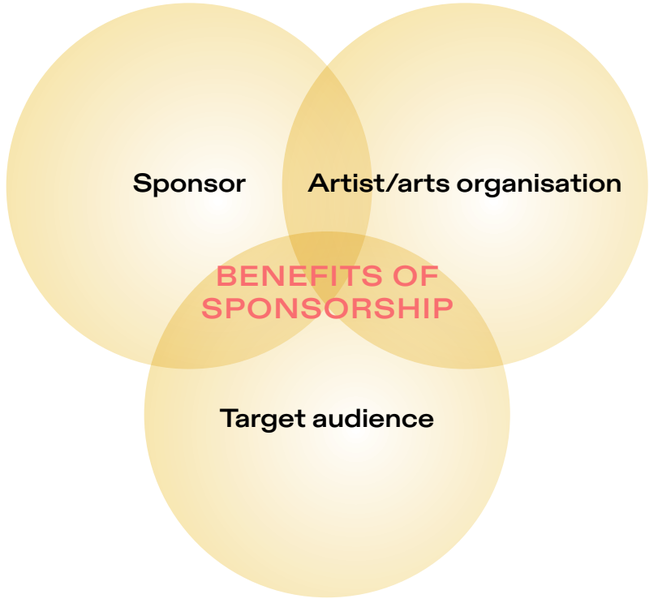
Sponsorship can also generate sales of a partners' products and services, both directly and indirectly, although these do not always materialise immediately. Reaching new target audiences is another benefit: partners can use sponsorship as a means of introducing their brand(s) to new audiences and new markets, increasing awareness and recognition. Sponsorship can also improve customer or user experience and enhance engagement, thereby increasing sales of the partners' products and services.

At its best, sponsorship can also provide a competitive edge and distinguish a business from its competitors. A company can use sponsorship to demonstrate leadership by communicating responsibility through concrete actions. When an artist or arts organisation secures a sponsorship, it can attract further commitments from other actors, thus increasing the appeal and growth of the sector as a whole.

The sponsorship acquisition process

Securing sponsors is a multi-stage process that can take several months. For me, the process has sometimes meant repeated contact, meetings, proposals and contract revisions, sometimes over a period of 12 months or more.

The process begins with an arts organisation preparing a sponsorship plan. When preparing the plan, define the sponsorship objectives and the intended scale of potential partnerships. Assess your needs in terms of products and services and consider whether a sponsorship arrangement could help in meeting them. Decide which business sectors you wish to work with and which



should be excluded. Base the sponsorship plan on your strategy, brand identity and responsibility guidelines.

The plan should cover preliminary ideas for contributions, joint activities and content production. It is also important to assess your organisation's resources and division of responsibilities and recognise resource constraints. Consider who will prepare sales presentations and contact prospective partners. Could board members use their business networks and make introductions to potential partners? Have sufficient working hours been allocated to finding partners alongside core activities?

Since partnership acquisition is time consuming, an organisation must ensure that it has sufficient expertise and make use of existing business contacts. Sometimes it makes sense to outsource this work to an arts broker, such as an art agent or producer.

Packaging sponsorship benefits

Before approaching potential partners, arts organisations should package the tangible benefits they can offer in return for sponsorship: existing products, services, premises and specialist expertise are a good starting point.

It is advisable to choose benefits that can be delivered to a high standard with the resources available. Businesses can be offered exhibitions curated for their premises or access to artists' expertise for marketing or product development. Tickets, art gift vouchers and arts services can be offered to employees and stakeholders. Businesses can also be offered permanent artworks for their customer-facing and back-office spaces, which can even be made to order. Allowing sponsors to use art exhibition spaces for corporate events can be a valuable benefit. Events can be accompanied by activities tailored to sponsors' needs, such as guided exhibition tours, meet-the-artist events, discussions and art workshops.

At its best, sponsorship gives the sponsor a competitive edge and a point of distinction.

Hospitality benefits include VIP treatment for sponsors, e.g. VIP tickets and areas, refreshments and special programmes. Benefits should be presented as exclusive, signalling the sponsor's special status and the value of the relationship. Tailored benefits are not available off the shelf; they are reserved for sponsors and create added value for them.

An arts organisation can also offer influencer marketing as a promotional benefit through featuring the sponsor's products and services on social media. Social media visibility is valuable when it reaches the sponsor's specific target audiences. Effective communication with the sponsor's target audience is more important than numbers of followers. Promotional benefits may also be delivered through several channels, for example by displaying products and services in a sponsor-branded lounge at an exhibition space.

Story-led, compelling advertising campaigns that reach both partners' target audiences are another valuable form of marketing communication. Benefits may also include free entry to an exhibition on certain days, either for the general public or specific, clearly defined groups, such as young people.

Sponsorship benefits must be easy to understand and straightforward to sell. I recommend describing them in plain language rather than high-flown art jargon. Another benefit could be a joint product or service that combines the strengths of both brands. A joint campaign designed to create positive associations is known as co-branding.

Benefits may include exhibitions curated for the sponsor's premises or access to artists' expertise.

What can a sponsor offer the sponsored party? In addition to financial support, it can provide its own products and services. This is known as a barter partnership. A part-barter arrangement combines financial and service-based benefits.

A barter partnership can be particularly valuable in cases in which the sponsored party would purchase the products or services in question anyway. These may include materials, tools, goods or transport services. Benefits offered by a sponsor may include marketing services, contractual and consultancy expertise and staff time that benefits the sponsored partner.

A sponsor can also offer promotional benefits. A company that has a large chain of shops or premises can use them as a platform for advertising the sponsored party's event or exhibition. It can also publish articles and blog posts about the collaboration on its website, include content on joint activities on its social media channels or make its premises available in the form of workspaces for artists or spaces for exhibitions and events.

Identifying potential sponsors and suitable sectors

Artists or arts organisations should start identifying potential sponsors by determining the business sectors in which it is seeking to collaborate. The focus should be sectors populated by companies with a positive attitude towards arts and culture and potentially previous experience of sponsorship arrangements.

When narrowing down sectors and businesses, consider your needs in terms of products and

services and which companies can offer them. Partners of arts organisations have included hotels, restaurants and caterers, breweries and wine companies, media, communications and tourism businesses as well as providers of consumer products and services. Banks and insurance companies as well as consulting and law firms have also sponsored the arts sector.

When selecting sectors, it is important to avoid those with negative associations and conflicting values to your own. Collaborating with an unsuitable partner can, in the worst-case scenario, damage your reputation. Red flags include greenwashing or pinkwashing, unethical activities, litigation and adverse publicity.

After selecting suitable sectors, you can identify businesses for potential collaborations. The main criteria are shared values, aligned responsibility objectives, compatible brands and shared target audiences. A local connection is also an advantage, particularly for artists or arts organisations that operate locally and have not *yet established a widely recognised brand at a national level. Begin with a long list of companies and narrow it down to the strongest prospects that are worth contacting.

Securing sponsorship: from sales presentation to agreement

Once the strongest prospects have been identified, prepare a template for a sponsorship

Benefits offered by a sponsor may include marketing, contractual and consultancy expertise.

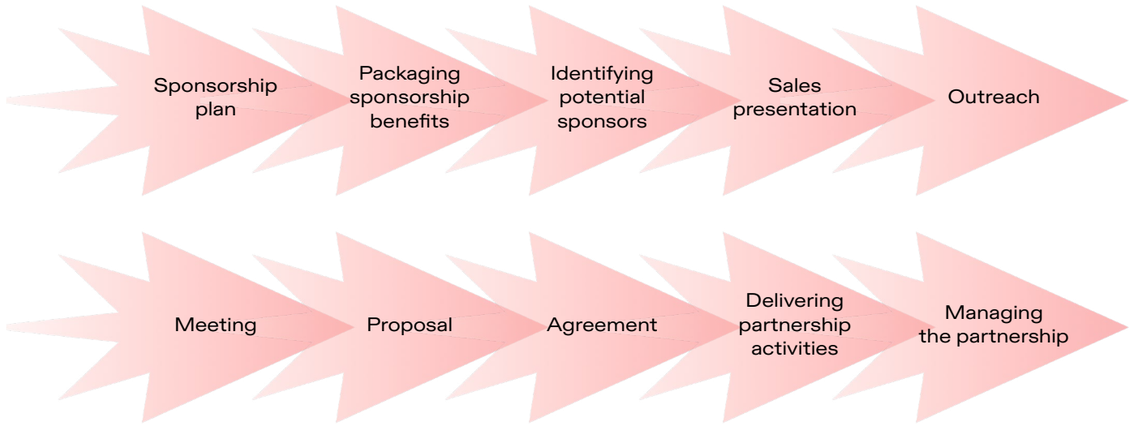
It is essential to consider what the sponsor will gain from the collaboration. What business objectives could the partnership advance? Examples include increasing sales or reaching new audiences and markets. Decide in advance whether to propose a financial or barter partnership and determine its monetary value. What form of partnership would best serve the sponsor's needs: a high-value naming rights deal or annual partnership, or perhaps a short campaign or event partnership? Does the sponsor need anything the sponsored party could provide, such as event spaces or content? Could the sponsor reach specific target audiences through the partnership?

An arts organisation can have several corporate partners, but to avoid a situation in which competing companies from the same sector are partners simultaneously, a single partner should be granted exclusivity within any one sector.

sales presentation that can be customised to each potential sponsor. Customising a presentation shows thorough research and preparation and ensures your message is more impactful and relevant.

A visual sales presentation should set out the benefits of the partnership and the proposed offer, together with information about the scope of the sponsorship and preliminary ideas for benefits. The monetary value of the sponsorship should also be made clear from the start, establishing the expected level of investment, whether in the form of a financial or barter partnership. When the presentation is ready, send it to the personal email of the individual responsible for their company's branding, marketing, communications or partnerships. If the potential sponsor is a small company, email the presentation directly to the managing director.

Sponsorship acquisition process



It is essential to consider what the sponsor will gain from the collaboration.

Make sure to pay attention to the covering email: a short, engaging message may be the factor that encourages the recipient to open the presentation. If you are unfamiliar with the potential sponsor company, the sales process should include a follow-up call. Calling a stranger may be daunting the first time, but there is nothing to be afraid of: you will be speaking to another human being. Prepare a short elevator pitch to explain who you are and why you are calling. The recipient will probably have seen the email and remember the presentation. The purpose of such a call is to establish whether the company is interested in the proposal and to arrange a meeting.

If the contact person agrees to a meeting, it should be taken as a sign of genuine interest in collaboration. A well-prepared and hospitable meeting, accompanied by refreshments and a guided exhibition tour, will offer a good first impression. During negotiations, listen carefully to the company's wishes and ideas for the partnership.

Once the partnership has been discussed and both parties wish to proceed, prepare a partnership proposal that covers the company's wishes and requirements. If the company accepts, it is time to draw up an agreement. A partnership agreement is a legally binding document. It should always be made in writing and should specify the partnership's value and each party's obligations and benefits in as much detail as possible.

Delivering sponsorship activities and managing the partnership

Implementation of an arts sponsorship begins once the partnership agreement has been concluded. The partnership should be seen as a long-term project to be developed step by step in a goal-oriented manner. Most importantly, each

party must deliver, preferably over-deliver, the agreed benefits. This ensures the best conditions for continuing the partnership beyond the term of the agreement.

As in all sales activities, a satisfied corporate sponsor generates goodwill and recommendations both for the artist or arts organisation and the arts sector in general. Securing new partnerships is always more difficult than maintaining and renewing existing ones. For this reason, the sponsored party should treat its sponsor like royalty. Close collaboration and active dialogue with a sponsor can cement a partnership that grows and flourishes.

I encourage artists and arts organisations to be bold, believe in the value of collaboration and communicate that value in an engaging manner to potential partners.

Best of luck with securing sponsorships!

Further information about sponsorships

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Cultural organisations and fundraising – Supporter membership as a foundation for sustainable funding

Ilmi Villacís

Ilmi Villacís is Executive Director of the Union of Finnish Writers. She has extensive experience in specialist and leadership roles within cultural administration, both in central government and the non-profit sector. Villacís previously served as Executive Director of the Finnish Reading Centre and the Finnish Cultural and Academic Institutes, as well as Senior Specialist at the Ministry of Education and Culture.

Funding options for cultural organisations amidst change

Cultural organisations have traditionally financed their activities with public grants, support from foundations and project funding. However, changes in public funding in recent years have demonstrated that an operating model that relies on individual funding sources is vulnerable, and cultural organisations are increasingly expected to demonstrate that they make an impact, generate their own income and have the capacity to build new partnerships.

The insights presented here are based on my experiences in the Rastor Institute's professional fundraising programme, developing the funding base for a number of previous organisations and activating fundraising operations at the Union of Finnish Writers in my current role. This year, a fundraising professional helped the Union to prepare a fundraising strategy.

The Union of Finnish Writers has historically relied on supporter memberships: it was set up 130 years ago with the help of supporter members. Recently, supporter membership was again chosen as a primary fundraising instrument because it entails a lighter administrative burden and is well suited to the principles of the organisation's activities. The Union is also developing a legacy fundraising model and arranges small-scale collections when necessary. The intention is to apply for inclusion in the Finnish Tax Administration's register of eligible donation recipients in the future.

Fundraising refers to all measures through which an organisation secures financial resources for its

activities outside of, or alongside, public and project funding. Donations can include one-off gifts, regular monthly donations, gifts to mark special occasions, memorial gifts or legacies. Additional funding can be secured through small-scale collections, crowdfunding, events, campaigns and merchandising. Corporate collaboration and sponsorship are a distinct method of fundraising that often involve transactional partnerships and operate under special rules.

Fundraising is mainly about communication. People donate to organisations based on shared values and a belief that they are making an important contribution to society. A supporter membership scheme should be marketed as an opportunity to make a difference. People become supporter members because they want to be

People become supporter members because they want to be involved in safeguarding the future of culture, art or creative work.

Every fundraising method has advantages and disadvantages. Not every method is suitable for all organisations, and before embarking on systematic fundraising activities it is important to consider the organisation's needs and options. Options should be assessed carefully as fundraising requires resources and commitment from throughout an organisation, including the board. Organisations must be prepared to invest time and money and understand that it will take time to achieve results.

Impact, communication and engagement – Why do people decide to support a cultural organisation?

While the importance of culture is widely recognised, its value is not always articulated in a way that resonates with sponsors, businesses or donors. Donating to cultural activities and organisations is still relatively rare in Finland, and Finnish people are reluctant to donate to cultural causes. According to the 2025 donor survey commissioned by the Finnish Fundraising Association (VaLa ry), only 7% of individual donors would be willing to make a cultural donation.

It is not easy to persuade individuals and organisations of the significance and potential benefits of gifts and support without providing anything in return. Fundraisers are advised to lean on emotions over facts, while also demonstrating that the receiving organisation is trustworthy and ensuring that any gift or donation is used for the purpose promised.

Fundraising is mainly about communication. People donate to organisations based on shared values and a belief that they are making an important contribution to society. A supporter membership scheme should be marketed as an opportunity to make a difference. People become supporter members because they want to be involved in safeguarding the future of culture, art or creative work. At best, a supporter member is not just someone who donates money but an ambassador, advocate and long-term partner.

The most impactful messages combine emotions, stories and facts as well as testimonials, i.e. recommendations from influencers in the field and from other donors or supporter members. It is particularly important to describe what has been achieved through donations and other types of support.

It is advisable to turn fundraising communications into a campaign and use a brand that stands out from the organisation's usual identity. Depending on the target audience, campaign communications can be delivered via social media, traditional media, direct mail or events. The Union of Finnish Writers uses events, such as book fairs, to promote supporter membership.

One of the most common mistakes is to assume that fundraising is solely the responsibility of a director or single member of staff when, in reality, successful fundraising efforts require commitment from throughout an organisation. As well as approving fundraising objectives and taking part in strategic planning, board members can provide access via their networks and open doors to potential partners. Meanwhile, staff are

Supporter membership was chosen as the Union of Finnish Writers' main fundraising instrument as it entails a lighter administrative burden and is well suited to the principles of the organisation's activities.

responsible for implementation, communications and maintaining relationships. When an organisation works as one to achieve a shared objective, fundraising becomes part of everyday operations.

A supporter membership scheme makes fundraising easier

For cultural organisations, a supporter membership scheme means less administration and a more accessible way to start raising funds than, for example, launching a large-scale donation campaign. Such schemes do not require a money collection permit, a complex reporting system or a separate audit as they are based on an association's existing membership rules. Paying membership fees is also a means of support that many Finnish people are familiar with and trust. It should be noted, however, that a money collection permit is required if a supporter membership is marketed solely as a mean to raise funds.

Supporter members can provide a predictable, regular stream of income with low administrative costs, but effective communication is still essential. Supporter members can form a strong community around an organisation, which, in turn, can create opportunities to develop donor relationships over the long term.

Before introducing a supporter membership scheme

If your organisation plans to launch a supporter membership scheme, you should consider at least the following points:

- If not already provided for, the organisation's rules must first be amended to permit supporter memberships alongside ordinary memberships.
- Supporter members can support an organisation's activities without taking part in its ordinary activities and decision-making processes.
- Just like donations, a customer register system is required to administer supporter memberships. If no such system is in place, there will be additional costs, but a simple spreadsheet is a good starting point.
- A supporter membership scheme cannot be advertised as a fundraising effort; it must be presented as comparable to a membership scheme so that it cannot be interpreted as a form of donation that would be subject to a money collection permit.
- Generally, public grants awarded in Finland cannot be put toward fundraising activities. Therefore, unless otherwise agreed with the grant-awarding body, government grants cannot be put toward the development of any supporter membership scheme that serves as a fundraising instrument.
- An organisation cannot be included in the Finnish Tax Administration's register of donation recipients on the basis of supporter memberships; registration only applies to organisations that receive donations. To take advantage of tax deductions, an organisation must be included in the register.
- Supporter membership schemes, like other forms of fundraising, take time to deliver results. It may take two or three years before efforts start to pay off.

Other fundraising methods to complement supporter memberships

No money collection permit is required to receive legacies, but there may be significant administrative work involved. Organisations should weigh the administrative burden against the income received in relation to their needs when deciding whether to accept a legacy gift. A will may also specify a particular use for funds, preventing the beneficiary from spending them as needed. Legacies carry a significant tax incentive as inherited funds are generally exempt from inheritance tax if the beneficiary is a non-profit organisation, association or foundation.

Small-scale collections and crowdfunding are suitable for individual projects, events or publications. Small-scale collections may raise up to EUR 10,000 over a maximum period of three months; these may be organised no more than twice in a calendar year and require the submission of a written notification to the police department. Receiving donations worth more than EUR 10,000 requires a money collection permit.

Tips for successful fundraising

The operating environment is changing rapidly for cultural organisations, but this is also creating new opportunities for them to build a more sustainable funding base.

The cornerstones of successful fundraising are:
- demonstrating impact
- building trust
- proactive communication
- diverse funding sources
- comprehensive organisational commitment
- alignment between fundraising activities and available resources
- strict compliance with administrative requirements (rules, permits, reporting and accounting)

Fundraising activities are not merely a means of raising money but also a way to strengthen an organisation's standing, increase its impact and safeguard the vitality of culture for the future.

Further information

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New rules on tax deductions will create new opportunities for associations from 2027 onwards

Ilmi Villacís

An amendment to the Income Tax Act will enter into force at the beginning of 2027, extending tax deductions for individuals to cover cultural organisations. This is a welcome incentive for organisations to engage in active fundraising. To claim deductions and be included in the list of eligible donation recipients, an organisation planning to actively solicit donations must apply to the Tax Administration for approval as a qualified organisation.

It is advisable to monitor this development as other practices may also change when the legislative amendment enters into force. Actively soliciting donations requires a valid money collection permit issued by the National Police Board, and at least one of the purposes specified in the permit needs to fall within the scope of donation deductions. Meticulous accounting and reporting practices are prerequisites for receiving a money collection permit and being registered with the Finnish Tax Administration.

It should be remembered that the acceptance of any donations is subject to the inclusion of such a provision in the organisation's rules. A money collection permit is required when an organiser solicits donations from the public on an ongoing basis without providing anything in return. Obtaining a permit can now take up to a year; the conditions are relatively strict and should be examined carefully. It is useful to review the wording of permits that have already been granted when assessing whether your organisation's activities are likely to qualify. For a money collection permit to be granted, donations must be intended for uses that clearly benefit the public. Permits may not be granted that solely support an organisation's own activities or those of a small interest or professional group.

Further information

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Tampere Art Lending Service. Modern Patrons networking breakfast was held at the Mältinranta Artcenter in March 2026. Photo: Timo Höyssä.





3

Perspectives on the future

Collaboration opportunities for cultural organisations and businesses

Corporate cultural responsibility strengthens trust and local vitality

Nina Elomaa

When artists and company experts work together, they often generate insights that can support business development, customer experience or organisational culture.

Businesses often see responsibility as related to the environment, the climate and social impacts. However, cultural responsibility, supporting culture, arts, creativity and community as part of a company's role in society, is increasingly a topic of discussion. It is, therefore, useful to consider what opportunities arise when a company regards art and culture as part of its value-creation and strategy.

A culturally responsible company recognises its impact on society and seeks to strengthen cultural vitality while creating opportunities for diverse expressions of creativity. This is not merely philanthropy but a strategic choice that can create value for a company, its employees and society alike. Companies need to recognise that the strengthening of cultural vitality is a strategic element of their responsibility activities.

Cultural responsibility creates value for businesses and society

Cultural responsibility is closely connected to a company's identity and values. Businesses are significant forces in society, and their decisions affect people's lives, wellbeing and sense of inclusion. By supporting local cultural organisations, art projects and creative communities, they can promote vitality in their region and increase social capital. This also builds trust among stakeholders and demonstrates an understanding of the broader meaning of responsibility.

Collaboration with the arts sector offers companies a wide range of practical approaches to fulfil their cultural responsibility obligations. This can include traditional sponsorship, but partnership models in which companies and arts organisations jointly develop new content, events or services are increasingly popular. Initiatives such as holding community art projects, hosting exhibitions in business premises and providing sustained support for cultural events can lead to meaningful encounters between participants.

Arts collaboration fosters innovation, wellbeing and inclusion

Collaborations within the arts sector can bring fresh ideas and innovation to a company's operations. Art has the capacity to challenge established ways of thinking, stimulate debate and deepen understanding of complex phenomena. When artists and company experts work together, they often generate insights that can support business development, customer experience or organisational culture. The use of creative methods can improve employees' problem-solving abilities and enhance wellbeing at work.

For employees, cultural responsibility initiatives can provide opportunities to get involved in arts and cultural activities. Cultural experiences can increase one's sense of belonging, enhance wellbeing at work and create opportunities for creativity amidst the pressures of everyday routines. The current work environment is characterised by constant change and continuous learning, and art can provide a point of strength that supports employees' wellbeing and ability to take on new perspectives.

Art belongs to everyone, and companies, as a part of society, help make cultural experiences available for their stakeholders through cultural responsibility initiatives.

Nina Elomaa is Chief Sustainability Officer at the S Group. She has more than 20 years' experience in corporate responsibility and related strategic development. Her previous roles include working as Corporate Responsibility Director at the Fazer Group.

Room for thought – The role of art at Kiilto

Eeva Solja-Wulff

We live in a period of unprecedented change. Geopolitical tensions, climate and environmental crises, technological developments, artificial intelligence and social polarisation are transforming our operating environment in increasingly unpredictable ways, while businesses are expected to deliver rapid results, operate efficiently and make data-driven decisions.

But what happens when the future can no longer be predicted?

Companies are used to thinking about the future as a sequence: forecast, plan and implement. But in an uncertain and rapidly changing world, we also need other capabilities: to observe, question, imagine alternatives and change direction. I think it is here that art has much to offer.

Businesses often see art as an opportunity for sponsorship, an act of responsibility or a branding tool, but it is not merely a driver of visibility or an expense in the budget. It helps us understand and engage with the world and complex phenomena, not just through data points and numbers but as experiences and emotions. It shows us perspectives that we might not otherwise see. It allows us to step outside our box for a while and view the world through another person's eyes.

Perhaps this is why art's most important function is to broaden our thinking. It provides room for creativity and imagination, brings people together and builds a sense of community across cultural and ideological boundaries. It reminds us that the world can be viewed from many different angles.

This is also important in leadership. In an increasingly complex world, it is not just the data we collect that matters but how we view and interpret it. Good leaders must understand who should be invited into the room but also which views are left outside.

Art brings something to the room that data and analyses alone cannot: empathy, imagination, tolerance of uncertainty, creative thinking and the ability to examine issues from a wide range of perspectives. Artists seldom start with an answer. They observe, experiment, question and build their understanding as the work progresses. These are the skills organisations need when the future can no longer be drawn on a map.

In the age of artificial intelligence, art is becoming even more valuable. When information and analyses are available more readily than ever, it is the capacity for curiosity, creativity and empathy, the ability to think, imagine and see differently, that differentiates.

Kiilto is a family-owned company with a history that dates back over a hundred years. Our vision stretches ahead to 2080 – we do not need to optimise our operations for the upcoming quarter. We are free to pursue initiatives that make a difference in the long term.

Supporting art is one way for us to do something meaningful. By making art part of life at Kiilto and in our local communities, we seek to create room for different perspectives, encounters and ways of thinking.

Art is also a means of improving our readiness for the future. In a world where answers are rarely simple, art may not solve our problems for us but it helps us see them in a different light, ask better questions and have the boldness to imagine futures that do not yet exist. This is often how the best solutions are found.

Not everything of value needs to, or can, be measured, optimised or justified in the name of efficiency. Things can have value despite this, or perhaps it is the source of their value.

The wall of Kiilto's head office along Tampereentie features a text that means: *Believe in the future, but do not forget to shape it.* Supporting art is a powerful expression of this idea.

Eeva Solja-Wulff is Deputy Chair of Kiilto's Board of Directors. She is a business management professional with a strong academic background (PhD) and more than 20 years' experience in senior marketing and brand management roles in consumer products and industry. Kiilto is a Finnish, family-owned company founded more than a century ago that develops, produces and sells chemical industry solutions.

Principles of Kiilto's collaborations within the arts sector

- Long-term partnerships are favoured over one-off projects
- Collaboration is based on values, not visibility
- Enable artists to pursue their work
- Bring art into work and local communities

Examples

- Collaboration with the Academy of Fine Arts and art grants for emerging artists
- Public art projects in areas near Kiilto's sites
- Art competitions and exhibitions of artworks at Kiilto's sites in nine countries
- Partnerships with local cultural organisations

The future is still taking shape – What can art bring to future-oriented thinking and strategy work?

Virpi Vaittinen

No one knows what is coming.

Businesses have to make decisions with long-term consequences in a world defined by constant changes in technology, geopolitics, climate, demographics, work and consumption. Projecting into the future from the present moment, it is possible to arrive at many markedly different visions of the future, all well founded.

But decisions must be made. It is often necessary to make decisions about new growth opportunities with limited information and in an environment of uncertainty. Not everything can be predicted, and decisions cannot always be postponed until the uncertainty has passed.

The further we extrapolate beyond familiar developments, the more we must rely on early signals that are open to interpretation. Weak signals may herald dramatic changes to come. They complement trend-based analysis and help us challenge assumptions about possible futures. (Sitra 2025)

Room for the unfinished

When dealing with early-stage changes that are difficult to interpret, it is impossible to know or name every phenomenon. This is a strategically difficult phase for businesses: the significance of emerging trends, or their possible implications for businesses, may be unclear. It can be useful, therefore, to stop and reflect, consider a range of interpretations and ask what is ahead before making any decisions.

During such periods of uncertainty, artistic endeavours offer an intriguing way of exploring changes that are still unfolding. While outcomes may be uncertain at first, the artistic process may serve as a means of exploring, reflecting and finding direction. Detection, intuition, knowledge and skills can go hand in hand. The artist experiments, selects, combines and omits; little by little, something shapeless starts to exhibit form.

The idea of embracing incompleteness also features in philosopher **Erika Ruonakoski's** article *Epäsuoran filosofian mahdollisuudet*. Ruonakoski examines philosophical methods inspired by artistic practices that can create room for imagination, independent thought and open interpretation. Such approaches can also render complex concepts visible without the need for explanation. This leaves more room for openness, ambiguity and new ways of thinking. (Ruonakoski 2023)

Room for new connections

As free detection shifts into interpretation, material about the future must be analysed and put in perspective. At this stage, signals, phenomena and viewpoints are closely scrutinised to identify connections between them. In this sense, anticipating the future resembles curatorial work. Understanding can gradually emerge from random observations of what is changing around us and what this could mean for businesses.

Such interpretation takes time. In corporate settings, in may be useful to leave room for foresight activities and strategy work so that obscure phenomena can be examined before moving on to opportunities and decisions. Working collaboratively during the interpretation process helps organisations explore the key aspects of any identified changes, what they might mean for the business and which merit closer examination.

There is also a creative dimension to strategy. It requires the ability to imagine something that does not yet exist and the courage to start building it.

Conditions that encourage this kind of thinking can also be created intentionally. Vivian White's *Soirée of Serendipity* brought together people from business, arts, science and other areas of society at Kunsthalle Helsinki to explore the future through art, questions and encounters. The people, venue, art and questions were brought together for the event, and space was provided for emerging ideas and connections.

Not everything of value can be anticipated, but it is possible to create conditions that are more favourable.

When a vision takes shape

Creation and expression of a personal vision are fundamental to art. An artist realises their interpretation and presents it for others to see, hear or experience. This takes courage: the vision may be unfinished, unconventional or provoke resistance. One can never tell in advance how it will be received, but it is given shape nevertheless.

A similar dynamic is at play in strategy work. Organisations can gather information about the future, identify potential points of change and develop responses, but at some point they must form a view on the kinds of futures that are possible and worth pursuing and what they want their role to be in that context.

A new opportunity cannot be assessed by the same metrics as established business operations. While strategic assumptions and potential future courses of action can be explored and tested at an early stage, before strong commitments are made, uncertainty cannot be eliminated completely, and at some point organisations must have the courage to make decisions based on their vision.

Strategy acquires meaning through decisions and actions. Businesses are involved in shaping the future through their products, services, investments, partnerships and other actions. In this sense, there is also a creative dimension to strategy. It requires the ability to imagine something that does not yet exist and the courage to start building it.

The future is still taking shape, which leaves room for agency. Creating opportunities for new ideas to be seen may make it easier to detect change. When an opportunity has been recognised and taken shape, it may also strengthen our resolve to make strategic decisions in response. Art can teach us something about this process, in which detection leads to vision and vision offers the courage to make decisions and begin building the future.

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Virpi Vaittinen is an expert in strategic foresight and the founder of the futures studio Vivian White.

Value creation at the intersections of expertise

Nana Salin

Solutions are being created across all sectors as operating environments and structures are transformed and different forms of expertise collide. In this context, collaborations and partnerships, in whatever guise, represent not just forms of support but collaborative approaches to building the future through multi-sector frameworks that embrace unconventional thinking.

The age of hybrids

This trend is clearly visible globally. Since the early 2000s, universities in the United Kingdom have developed hybrid funding models in which public support, corporate collaboration and community-led fundraising efforts are combined within a structure that enables multidisciplinary development. In Canada, community impact lab initiatives bring together the public sector, businesses and communities to address complex issues.

Cultural partnership programmes in Germany connect the arts, science and technology to create cultural impact, while in France, mécénat culturel programmes and companies' cultural foundations set up long-term projects in which the arts, businesses and communities create value through shared learning rather than transactional sponsorships.

In Denmark, Metropolis Lab, the Danish Design Centre and BLOXHUB have created platforms for connecting the arts, design, technology and urban development. Within these structures, partnerships are not just funding instruments but ecosystems in which value is created across sector boundaries.

These examples share a central tenet: partnerships are not charity but structures that facilitate the sharing of knowledge and expertise across sectors to support the renewal of the individual parties.

Art as a space for encounters

Arts communities work with phenomena related to identity, community, cultural wellbeing and change. These are themes that businesses, cities and communities across the world are looking at as part of their own renewal processes. Within these structures, art is not a separate sector but a specific form of expertise among many.

The Swedish economist and former President of the Stockholm School of Economics, **Lars Strannegård**, has described knowledge in his book *Kunskap som känns* (2021) in a way that reinforces this idea. Knowledge arises from both measurable and non-measurable values, and it is often experiential dimensions that matter most. This idea offers a natural connection to the role of art in multi-sector partnerships. Art provides ways of exploring identity, community and cultural wellbeing that other sectors cannot. Strannegård says: "It always starts with art," not because art is a solution for everything but because it permits questions that enable new forms of shared thinking. This does not mean that art is an instrument rather it is one of a complimentary range of expertise.

The situation in Finland

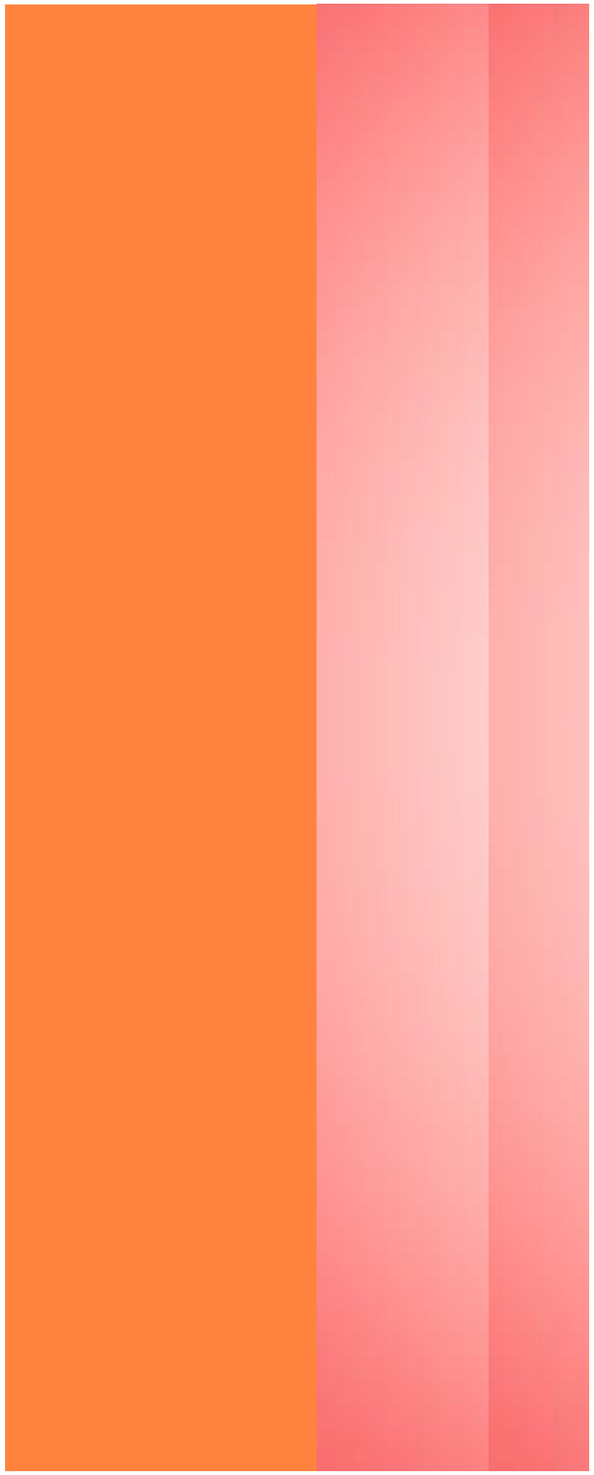
In Finland, sponsorships, donations and supporter memberships are already established methods of raising funds. There is a growing need to build structures that allow different sectors to learn from each other and develop shared understanding. An individual organisation can only meet some of its partners' needs. Perhaps a multi-sector framework could lead to structures that promote both an artistic mission and organisational renewal, while also advancing the objectives of all parties in terms of financial sustainability.

It is reasonable to ask whether new forms of multi-sector partnerships and network-like initiatives represent a future we could not have imagined without the changes currently taking place and whether this new development could improve the standing of art to not just preserve but elevate its significance in society.

Do new forms of multi-sector partnerships represent a future we could not have imagined without the changes currently taking place?

Nana Salin (MA) is a visionary leader who has restructured organisations operating at the intersections of art, education and societal impact. She has developed new concepts, operating models, partnerships and funding solutions for public- and private-sector organisations, including EMMA – Espoo Museum of Modern Art, the University of the Arts Helsinki and Aalto EE. Salin now works as an expert art consultant at the Bank of Finland and in the development of funding, partnerships and public relations at the University of Helsinki. She is also an entrepreneur and runs a consulting agency to support organisations in their strategic development, renewal and growth through creative and arts-based methods.

Focus on the value of culture



Afterword

Annukka Vähäsöyrinki

The Modern Patrons project started as a response to a practical need. The environment in which visual arts organisations operate is changing; given prevailing cuts to public funding, it is useful to explore new sources of funding and forms of collaboration. The project produced tangible outcomes, resulting in new partnerships, services and, above all, knowledge. It demonstrated that, at its best, corporate collaboration can create opportunities for cultural organisations and businesses alike, while also raising a broader question about how we talk about the importance of art and culture.

Cultural researcher **Kaisa Murtoniemi** has described how discussions about the value of culture have changed over past decades. Cultural activities are increasingly justified in terms of competitiveness, attractiveness, innovation, creative economy and growth. While this economic perspective has not supplanted other rhetorics on culture, it has become more prominent in cultural policy debate.

Amidst this development, it is important to remember that the value of cultural activities cannot be reduced to their economic impacts alone. Cultural activities can generate measurable added value in terms of new customer relationships, regional attractiveness, wellbeing at work and innovation, but culture also plays a key part in education, democracy, critical public debate and people's ability to understand themselves and the world around them, and it is wise to keep this perspective in mind when developing private fundraising activities and corporate collaboration.

Perhaps the most important question is not whether there will be more private funding for the culture sector but whether the value of culture will change as a result. This may be the question that drives at the heart of cultural responsibility. Companies should not support culture just because it is good for business but because it has an important role to play in a flourishing, forward-looking society, one that companies play an important role in building. Individuals and organisations in the culture sector must also learn to demonstrate the value of their expertise and how art and culture can contribute to companies' thinking, operations and renewal processes. When culture is recognised as a positive force in building a better society, a foundation is laid for collaborations that create value for the collaborators and society alike.

Annukka Vähäsöyrinki is the Director of the Artists' Association of Finland.



MODERN PATRONS

Artists' Association of Finland

Finnish Cultural Foundation