

Towards an exhibition payment system – the Finnish experience

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Symposium 'Exhibition Remuneration Right in Europe 2018', IAA, Brussels, 22.11.2018.

How do art museums pay the artists? (the Finnish situation)

1.
Museums **buy** art.

2.
Museums pay **copyright fees**.
 - The law says that museum must pay copyright fees, when the museum exhibits works that the artist owns.

3.
Museums pay **exhibition payments** (= exhibition remuneration).
 - Paid to artist for the work done by the artist in connection with an exhibition.

The museum-related problems



1.

Museums buy art, but

...the their budget for purchases has been in decline for a long time now.

...and most of the works shown are just borrowed from the artists.

...what about artworks that are not permanent or not objects? (Performances, events, participatory art, etc.)

2.

Museums pay **copyright fees**, but

...some museums say: "We really want to have your show, but can only afford it if you waive your right to the copyright fees." And some artists give in.

...the fees are small: for example 60 € per painting in a typical museum exhibition.

...the fees are *really* small: 7 cents per museum visitor (Copyright fees paid by museums total per year divided by the number of museum visitors per year.)

3.

Museums pay **exhibition payments** (= exhibition remuneration), but

...only some museums do it, because it's not mandatory.

...many museums are against it, either because they think the idea is not justified or because they think they can't afford it.

General problems

1.

Visual artists in Finland are economically very poor. Statistically it's the profession with the lowest income level – even lower than artists of other fields.

2.

In Finland visual artists get most of their income from other jobs or from welfare benefits. Artists' grants are very important, but only 9% of applicants actually get a grant. Sales are rare. Exhibition fees and other copyright fees don't amount to much yet.

3.

The traditional assumption is that visual artists should get their main income from selling their artworks, but that assumption is irrational: the audience enjoys visual art mostly for free (all galleries), or with nominal payments (some museums).

Exhibition remuneration (= exhibition payment or fee) test period in Finland

- Artists' Association started to lobby for exhibition payment system in Finland in 2014.
- The Ministry of Education and Culture set up a committee to investigate the idea.
- The exhibition payment is for the hours spent on the show – it's not for making the artworks, unless the artworks are site-specific and for the particular show only. (Thus it can NOT replace the copyright fee.)
- This led to a three-year test period (2017–2019) that is voluntary for the museums.
- The test means that if a museum wants to start paying exhibition payments, it can apply for extra funding from the Ministry. The funding covers 80 % of the museum's expenses. In 2018 the budget for this is 250 000 €.

Artists' Association's goals regarding the exhibition payment

1.

The 3-year test period should lead into a permanent system.

2.

The exhibition payment should be mandatory for the museums. (The state should say to museums: "From now on we'll give you funding only if you promise to always pay *copyright fees* and *exhibition payments*.")

3.

The payment rates must be fair, for example:

- Participating in a group show \approx a payment that equals two weeks' salary.
- A solo show \approx a payment that equals at least one month's salary.

4.

The next step should be expanding the exhibition payment system from museums to many galleries too. (In Finland most galleries are actually rented rooms that artists pay for, and the sales are rare.)

Thanks for listening.

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