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**Taiteilija-apurahajärjestelmän toimivuus ja koettu vaikuttavuus.  
Selvitys valtion taiteilija-apurahan saajista 2002-2005**

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## **ENGLISH SUMMARY**

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## **ARTISTS' GRANTS IN ACTION: FUNCTIONS OF THE STATE WORKING GRANT SYSTEM**

### **BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

In Finland, direct state support for individual artists plays a major role in their situation. The current schemes of artists' support were established in the 1960s when the Promotion of the Arts Act and the Artists' Grants Act were adopted. The Promotion of the Arts Act established the Arts Council of Finland along with the national art form councils. They work as an arm's length body allocating state support to artists. The Artists Grants Act established the support schemes of working grants, project grants and artists' professorships.

Working grants for artists are the most important form of support in terms of both finance and prestige. They are awarded for periods ranging from six months to five years. Some 500 artists representing all fields of art receive working grants annually. The annual sum granted is the same for all recipients (€14 782 in 2005). The applicant's social and economic situation is not considered in the decision-making process. The basic criterion for distributing state support for artists is purely artistic quality. According to the artists' grants legislation, working grants for periods of three years or longer must be awarded primarily "to artists who have already proved their creative capability" and at least 30 grant years have to be reserved for "young artists and artists at the beginning of their careers". In addition, language and regional aspects must also be considered in the distribution of grants.

The Finnish social security system is largely based on statutory payments remitted by employers, and the amount allotted to the recipients depends on their income.

In Finland all state grants for artists are tax-free income. This causes several severe problems, because tax-free income does not combine well with the earning based social security system. Except for the system of extraordinary artist pensions, there are no special legal arrangements for artists as such. Several governmental committees (such as the Taisto I committee, Taisto II committee, Taisto II follow-up committee and the working group on the social security of scholarship recipients) have been appointed to examine these problems. They have proposed, for example, that mandatory pensions insurance should be established for state grant recipients and that the annual income that the pension insurance is based on could be used as the grounds for calculating the amount of benefits according to the Health Insurance Act.

## **AIM, DATA AND METHODS**

This study looks at the functionality and effectiveness of the state's working grant system. The study has two parts. The first part contains statistical analyses of all artists who obtained a working grant between the years 2002 and 2005 (in total 1003 artists). The data has been obtained from the joint grantregister of the Arts Council of Finland and the Ministry of Education (Harava-register). The second part contains the results of the survey based on recipients' assessments of both the financial and artistic impact of working grants. The study population of the survey consisted of artists whose working grant period began in 2002 or later, and ended before 2006. A questionnaire was sent to a total of 584 working grant recipients and the response rate was 93 per cent.

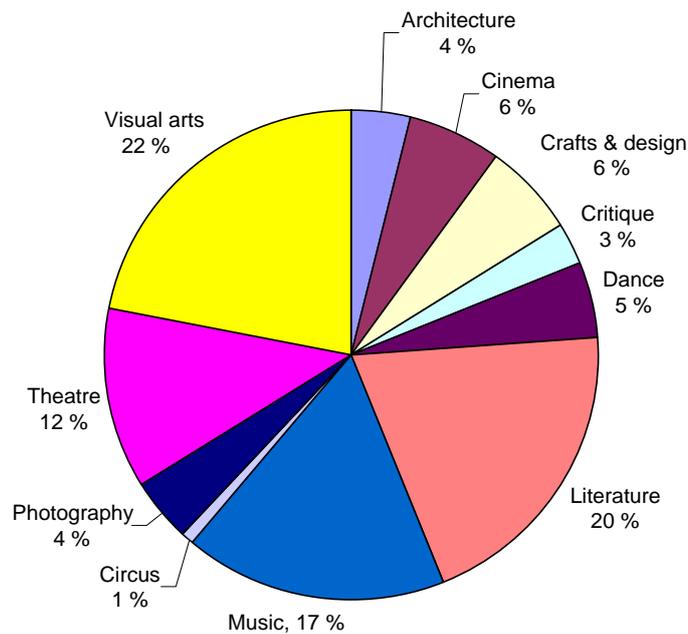
## **RECIPIENTS OF STATE WORKING GRANTS 2002-2005**

In total 1,003 artists obtained working grants between the years 2002 and 2005. Table 1 shows that 56 per cent were male and 44 per cent female. It also shows that 91 per cent spoke Finnish as their mother tongue, 7 per cent Swedish and 2 per cent other languages. As much as 61 per cent lived in the Helsinki metropolitan area and as much as 41 per cent had received a working grant only once during their career. Figure 1 shows the recipients of the state working grants in 2002-2005 by the field of art

**TABLE 1** Comparison of recipients of the state's working grant 2002-2005 and all artists, %

	Working grant recipients	All artists <sup>91</sup>
Women (%)	44 %	44 %
Finnish as mother tongue (%)	91 %	91 %
Lives in Helsinki metropolitan area (%)	61 %	49 %
Average age (years)	41 years	46 years

**FIGURE 1** Recipients of the state working grants in 2002-2005 by the field of art



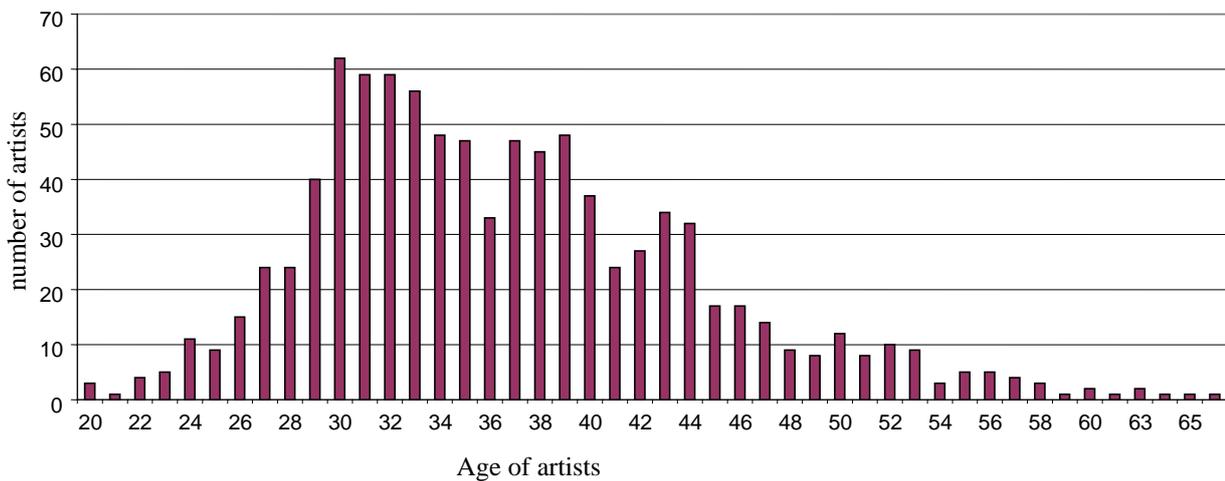
On the average, artists who had obtained working grants between 2002 and 2005 had obtained in total (accumulation) about 4 years of working grants during their career. The dispersion, however, was wide. During their career one third of the artists had obtained grants totalling one year, while one fourth had obtained grants totalling over five years. One artist had obtained working grants consecutively from 1971 to 2004, a total of 33 years. A short accumulation of working grants was typical for artists representing theatre and architecture, fields in which more than 60 per cent of the working grant recipients had obtained grants totalling one year or less. A long accumulation of working grants was typical for artists repre-

<sup>91</sup> Data concerning all artists is taken from the publication: Rensujeff, Kaija 2003: Taiteilijan asema - raportti työstä ja tulonmuodostuksesta eri taiteenaloilla. Taiteen keskustoimikunnan julkaisuja n:o 27 (Rensujeff, Kaija 2003: The status of the Artist in Finland - Report on Employment and Income Formation in Different Fields of Art). The publication contains an English summary.

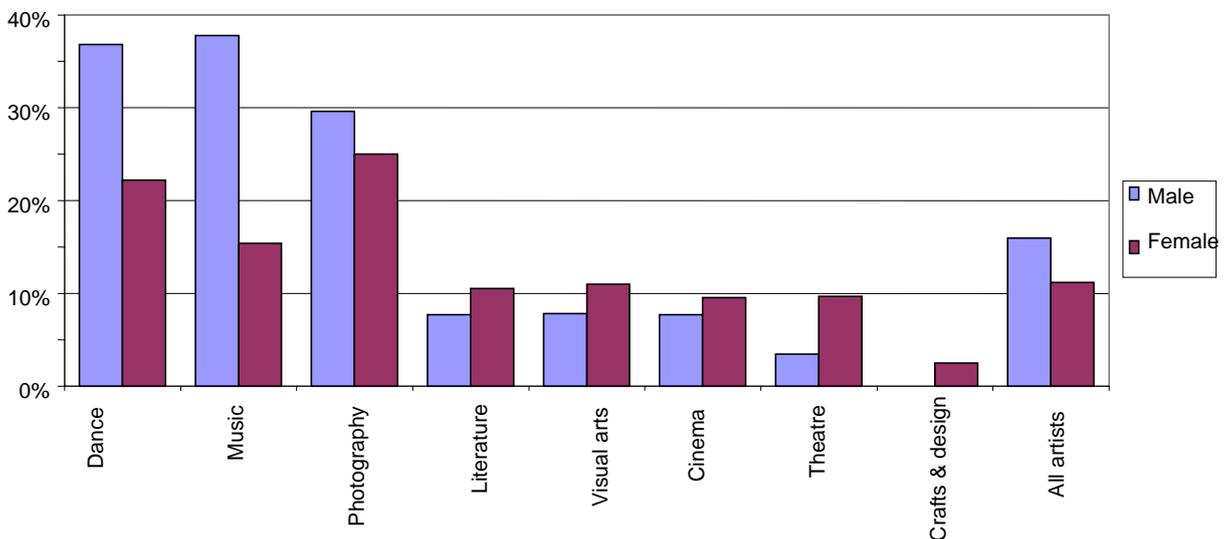
senting literature and visual arts, and for male artists representing photography. Over 40 per cent of these groups had obtained working grants of over five years.

On average, the artists had received their first working grant at the age of 36 (mean 36 years 9 months, median 36 years). The dispersion was considerable. The youngest first-time working grant recipient was 20 years old and the oldest was 67 years old. Figure 2 shows the dispersion. Previous studies have shown that artists obtain grants at a younger age from private foundations than from the state. It also seems that they receive state grants other than working grants (i.e. project grants) at a younger age. Figure 3 shows that it is more common to receive the first working grant before the age of 30 in the fields of dance, music and photography than in the other fields of art.

**FIGURE 2** Age at which the artists received their first working grant (n=1003)



**FIGURE 3** Percentage of artists who received their first working grant under the age of 30 by gender and field of art



## RECIPIENTS' EXPERIENCED FUNCTIONALITY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE STATE WORKING GRANT SYSTEM

According to the survey, the majority of working grant recipients found the working grant system quite functional and useful. Nevertheless, 15 per cent of the respondents identified certain problems connected with the pension system, social security system, taxation and the fixed amount of the working grant. Women identified problems more often than men. About one fifth of the women artists born in the 1960s and 1970s identified problems connected to the social security system. The problem most often mentioned was the low level of maternity allowance. Since working grants are tax-free income, the artist gets only the minimum maternity allowance (15.20 euros per day). Also, as high as 13 per cent of female artists representing the visual arts reported that the working grant was too small to live on, while only about 2 per cent of other artists (including male artists representing the visual arts) said the same. This can be attributed to the fact that the income level of female artists representing the visual arts is the lowest of all artists.

The survey indicates that a working grant can have a significant effect on the working and living conditions of artists. More than 80 per cent of the recipients related that the working grant gave them more time for artistic work and financial security as well as greater incentive in their work. It appears that the working grant may have a high prestige value since it is an important sign of approval and recognition of artistic quality gained through peer-group evaluation.

**TABLE 2** *Significance of the working grant from the artist's point of view*

The personal significance of the working grant	% *
Encouragement	87 %
Realizing the project	61 %
More time for artistic activity	84 %
Securing a living	85 %
Acquiring equipment/materials	27 %
Other functions	18 %
n	579

\* >100 because of overlapping choices.

## CONCLUSION

According to this study the state working grant system functions well, but it appears to have different functions for different artist groups. The study indicated

that female artists identified problems more often than men. The working grant system itself seems to operate quite equally between the sexes, but its relation to other systems (such as the social security system) and to real life situations seems to cause more problems for women than for men.