

The Status of the Artist in Finland 2010

The Structure of the Artist Community, Work and Income Formation

English Summary

Kaija Rensujeff, Arts Promotion Centre Finland

In spring 2011 the research unit of the Arts Council of Finland (since renamed the Arts Promotion Centre Finland) commenced a survey on the status of artists in Finland. In addition to producing demographic information about artists and their income level, the aim of the survey was to present phenomena connected to income formation and labour market status. A similar survey, which comprised artists in all fields of art, was conducted for the first time ten years ago. Previously the status of the artist has been researched within the framework of the arts administration one artform at a time through data obtained from registers during the 1970s and 1990s (e.g. Hautala 1973 - visual arts; Hautala 1977 - crafts and design; Karttunen 1988 - visual arts; Heikkinen 1989 - literature; Karttunen 1993 - photography; Irjala 1993 - music; Karhunen 1993 - theatre; Karhunen & Smolander 1995- dance; Oesch 1995 - cinema; Heikkinen 1996 - graphic design, illustrations, comics). Comparable data about artists is available through past research spanning several decades.

The present survey was carried out from May to September 2011 by means of a questionnaire (by post and e-mail). The research population comprised 1) members (22,000) of professional artist associations and unions (39) and 2) artists who were awarded state grants in 2010. The sample was selected using stratified systematic sampling. This method ensured that artists working in the most important artistic occupations were included and that the various subcategories were proportionally represented in the sample. The smallest groups were included as such, whereas the sample frequency in the larger groups varies.

The survey in particular considered the following:

1. The structure of the artist community and its development
2. The labour market status of artists and changes connected to this
3. The share of artistic work, arts-related work and non-arts work
4. Income formation and changes connected to this
5. The significance of public support within various fields of art
6. Income level (taxable income, grants and total income) and the development of the income level

The aim of the research was to map the structure of the artist community, its income level and sources of income for artists who work in various fields of art, together with their labour market status. The importance of public support for artists was also examined. For the purposes of this research, an 'artist' was defined on the basis of membership in professional artist associations and unions (various professional criteria) and artists who received state support during 2010 (on the basis of peer evaluations). This enabled a comprehensive research population to be included while excluding amateur artists.

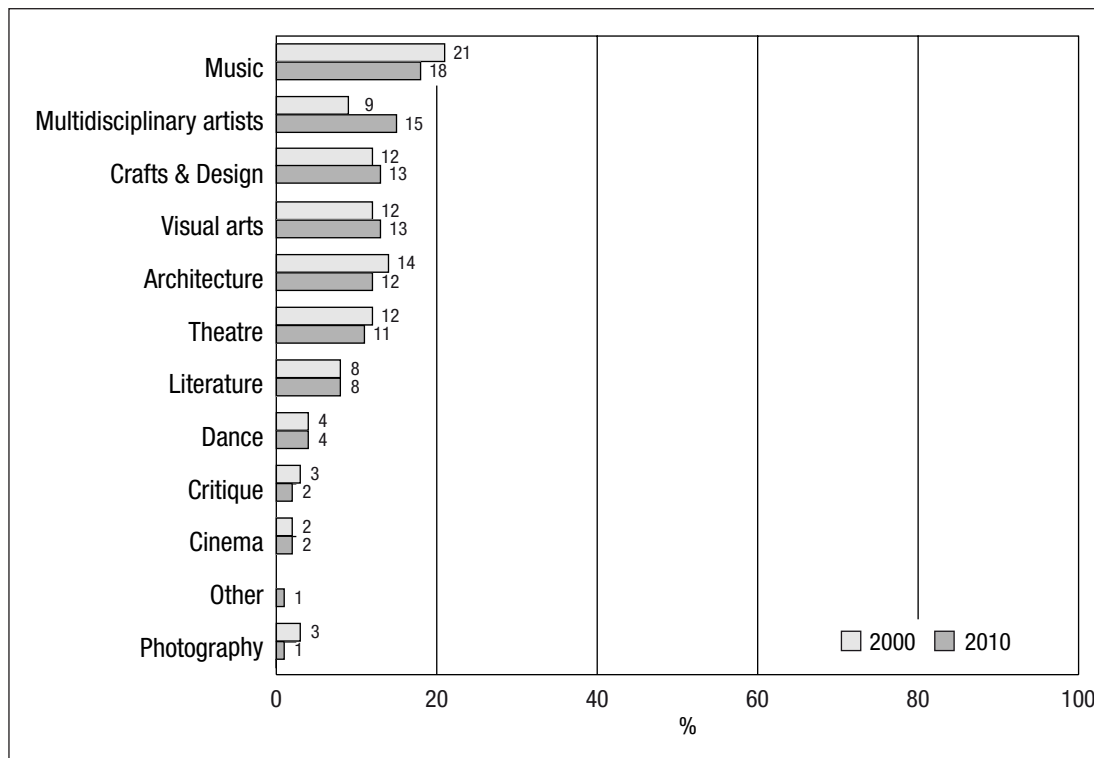
The artists were active in the following artforms: cinema, literature, critique, visual arts, theatre, architecture, music, crafts and design, dance, photography and other. Also artists who were active within several artforms were included in the research. The research material consisted of 2,475 replies to the survey, representing a response percentage of 47 (58% in 2000).

Structure and education level of artists

The total number of artists increased by approximately one fifth from 2000 to 2010. However, the growth rates between artforms during this decade varied. The biggest increase in the number of artists was in cinema (+56%), photography (+37%) and dance (+36%). The relative proportions of artists in different artforms remained almost unchanged during the decade with the exception of multidisciplinary art, where the proportion of artists increased significantly. (Figure 1.)

The proportion of females in the different artforms has continued to increase in Finland as in other countries. The average age of artists has also increased since the 1980s and 1990s. Despite the addition of large numbers of new artists to the various artforms, the age structure has shifted towards older age categories. The trend in the age structure reflects above all how artists do not leave the field as they grow older but instead continue to work into retirement age. The proportion of females of all the artists was 54 percent (44% in 2000). The majority of Finnish artists are native Finnish-speakers (91%). The share of Swedish-speakers was 7 percent, and merely 3 percent had another native language. The proportion of Swedish-speakers was highest in the fields of literature (17%), theatre (11%) and the visual arts (8%). Half of all Finnish artists lived in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area, one third in other parts of Southern Finland and a little less than one fifth outside Southern Finland. The age distribution varied according to artform. The share of artists under the age of 35 was highest in the fields of dance and cinema, while the share of artists over the age of 64 years was highest in the fields of literature and architecture.

Figure 1. The share of artists (%) in Finland in 2000 and 2010 by artform



Frequencies are weighted.

The education level of artists in Finland is high; 80 percent of the artists had completed their matriculation exam. The large majority (81%) also held a degree in art. Almost half (49%) had completed the highest vocational training in their field of art (university-level education). Women had a somewhat higher general education and vocational training than men. The survey included only a few self-taught artists.

Labour market status of artists in Finland

The artists worked in many different positions. During the year of the survey the majority was self-employed, 25 percent were employees (permanent or fixed-term), 29 percent worked as freelancers and 36 percent worked as free artists (those working without an employment contract but who are not freelancers or entrepreneurs either, often working as a grant recipient). The share of entrepreneurs was 21 percent. The typical labour market status varied according to artform (Table 1).

Working as an employee (permanent or fixed-term) was most common among those who worked in the fields of theatre (53%), music (42%) and architecture (38%). The majority of critics (65%) worked as freelancers, as did nearly half of the artists within the fields of theatre and cinema. The majority of the free artists worked in the fields of the visual arts (84%), photography (65%) and literature (64%). The highest

proportion of entrepreneurs was among artists working in the fields of crafts and design (46%) and architecture (39%) (Table 1).

Table 1. The labour market status of artists (%) in 2010 by artform

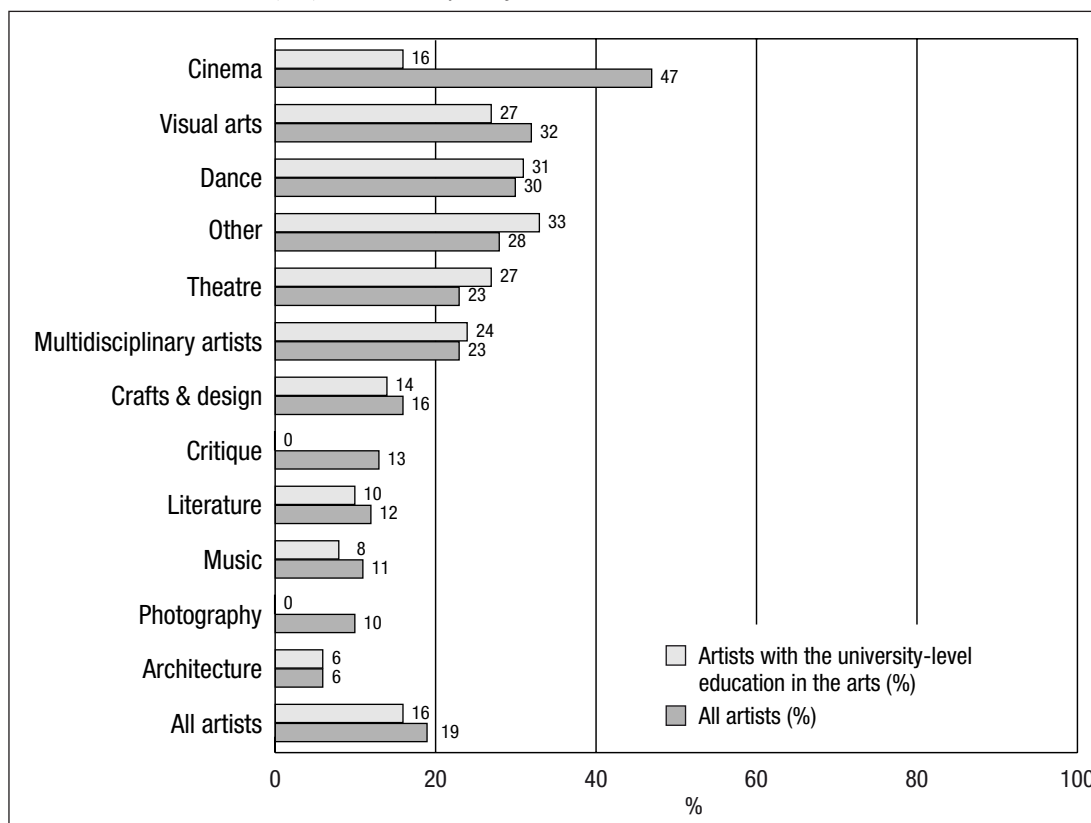
	<i>Employed</i>	<i>Free artist</i>	<i>Entrepreneur</i>	<i>Freelance</i>	<i>No arts work in 2010</i>
Cinema	28	22	24	44	11
Literature	2	64	9	23	6
Critique	3	18	8	65	11
Visual arts	3	84	11	6	3
Multidisciplinary artists	19	51	20	42	4
Theatre	53	12	7	45	13
Architecture	38	7	39	8	10
Music	42	25	17	43	5
Crafts & design	17	21	46	15	10
Dance	33	22	5	39	21
Photography	8	65	35	14	3
Other	10	52	27	44	10
All artists	25	36	21	29	8

Frequencies are weighted.

To summarise the labour market status of artists, less than half of all artists fit into the most common labour market categories: wage and salary earners and entrepreneurs. Accordingly, the labour market status of artists can be considered unstable in terms of both continuity and social/pension security.

During the year of the survey 19 percent of the artists had been unemployed at some period. Overall unemployment among artists was at the same level in 2010 as it was a decade earlier. However, employment difficulties had increased significantly in certain fields of art. The highest shares of artists who had been unemployed were in the fields of cinema (47%) and the visual arts (32%). The fields of architecture (6%), photography (10%), music (11%) and literature (12%) had the smallest shares of unemployed. The education level of artists did not have the same significance for employment as it had for the rest of the population. Only in the fields of cinema and photography did the education level of artists have a significant impact on employment. (Figure 2.) Within the field of cinema the poor labour market situation only affected those without an arts university degree. Unemployment is most common among young people (under the age of 35) and among them whose labour market status is unstable.

Figure 2. Share of unemployed (%)* of all artists and of those with a university-level education in the arts (%) in 2010 by artform



Frequencies are weighted.

*The question referred to unemployment at any point during the year 2010 regardless of the length of unemployment.

Employment among artists in most fields of art appears to be a much more considerable problem than in other fields on average. According to the Labour Force Survey published by Statistics Finland, the unemployment rate in Finland in 2010 averaged 8.2 percent.

Multiple job-holding

One of the most common features among artists is multiple job-holding. In total 39 percent of the artists were active only in arts work during the year of the survey (37% in 2000). By comparison, 44 percent of all the artists were also active in arts-related work. Approximately one fifth (21%) were active in non-arts work.

The situation regarding multiple job-holding among artists in Finland did not change significantly during the period under review in terms of the artist population as a whole. The share of artists active only in arts work as well as those active in non-arts work remained almost exactly the same. The share of artists active in arts-related work decreased slightly from just over 50 percent to just under 45 percent.

Altogether, the share of artists who are active only in arts work increased gradually, while the shares of those active in arts-related work and non-arts work decreased over a the slightly longer period from the mid-1990s to 2010.

Arts-related work was carried out due to interest and for the sake of money. Non-arts work was previously carried out almost solely for economic reasons, but in this survey the artists also emphasised the significance of interest. It seems that either more artists than in the previous survey indicated having been active only in artistic work, or that the sector of artistic work has widened to comprise an even wider spectrum of different work tasks.

Grants

Grants are important for the income formation of artists. In addition, a grant serves as a form of acknowledgement since as it is awarded on the basis of artistic merit. So-called creative artists in particular rely on grants to provide a source of income during the creation period and often also when the work is completed. Altogether 32 percent (27% in 2000) of the artists in 2010 had received various artist grants. The proportion of grant recipients was highest in the fields of photography (78%) and literature (70%). Grants were also an important source of income for artists in the fields of the visual arts and multidisciplinary art. In other fields of art the significance of grants as a source of income and their share of income were lower.

The share of artists who received state grants has decreased in several traditional fields of art. The share of artists who receive private support has increased on the whole and in many traditional fields of art, especially in the fields of cinema, photography and dance. Support from private foundations and funds has increased significantly faster than state grants since 2000.

Income level of artists

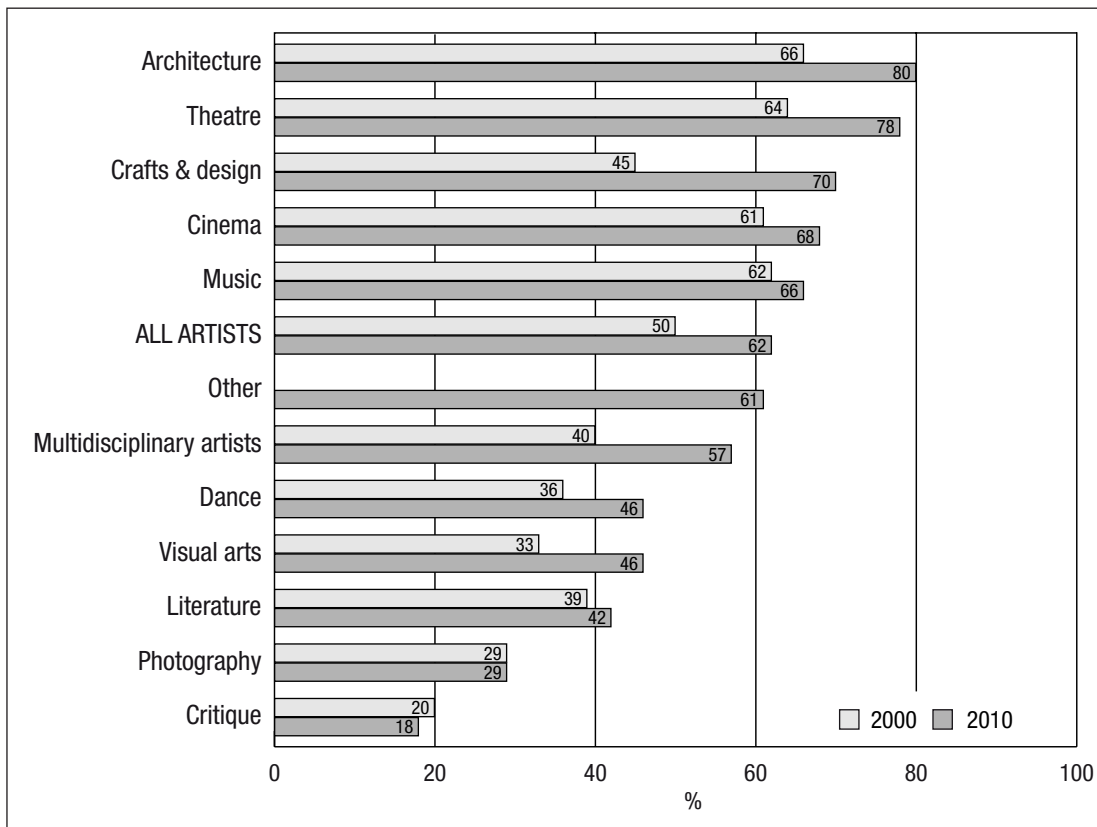
For the most part, grants are untaxed in Finland. Since grant income plays an important role in most fields of art, it was necessary to create an income category that combines taxable income and grants in order to evaluate the income level of artists. This income category, constructed total income (CTI), can be used to compare the income level of artists with that of other wage and salary earners. The income categories used in this survey were as follows: Total taxable income, grant income, income from artistic work (taxable) and CTI (Figure 4).

The taxable income of artists varies according to artform and also within specific art professions. The median taxable income of artists

is significantly lower than the average for wage and salary earners. As previous studies also indicated, only a low proportion of all artists have high income and a large proportion have very low income. The most significant factors that affect the taxable income level are artform, gender and labour market status. In addition, age has an influence on the level of earnings, which tends to rise with age also in artistic occupations. It is likely, however, that some artists will change their occupation if their income from artistic work does not sufficiently cover the costs of living. In figure 4 all artforms are listed according to the medians for total taxable income (€).

The proportion of income from artistic work of the total taxable income was on average 52 percent (62 % in 2000). Accordingly, income from artistic work has to be considered low. Other taxable income is generated from arts-related work, non-arts work, and other sources, such as pensions and unemployment benefits. The average share of income from artistic work is highest among artists active in the fields of architecture (80%), theatre (78%) and crafts and design (70%). Figure 3 presents the share of income from artistic work according to artform.

Figure 3. Share of income from artistic work (%) in 2000 and 2010 by artform



Frequencies are weighted.

Tax-free grants have an effect on the total income level of certain artforms. This is illustrated by the fact that the income sequence of artforms changes when grants are included in the CTI (Figure 4). The income development has been negative in several artforms compared to the previous income levels and other occupations in 2010 (median € in 2000-2010).

According to Statistics Finland, the income level for all wage and salary earners increased by +3.8 percent a year from 2000 to 2010¹. The medium annual income for all wage and salary earners increased by +18 percent from 2000 to 2010. During the same period the medium annual income for artists who had no unemployment periods in 2000 and 2010 increased by +11 percent. It appears, therefore, that the income level of artists in most fields of art has fallen behind that of the rest of the population since 2000. Naturally, the income level trend varies significantly according to artform. In terms of the constructed total income, the income level has improved most in the fields of photography, architecture, dance and music. The income level has decreased in the fields of critique, cinema, craft & design and multidisciplinary art. In the field of photography the income level has developed favourably due to an increase in grant funding, whereas in the field of architecture the income level has been improved by an increased in taxable income from artistic work.

Several factors therefore influence the income development of artists. Policy decisions regarding support for artists are just one factor that plays an important role only in some individual fields of art (particularly in the visual arts). The income development of artists is influenced in other artforms mostly by labour market structures and trends. It is important, therefore, to focus attention not only on supporting artists, but also on developing the labour market and expanding the market for the arts. Funding and development needs vary according to artform.

The position of artists in different fields of the art can also be evaluated by ranking the artforms in order of median income. Table 2 lists the artforms by order of CTI in 2000 and 2010. This shows how the gap between artforms has slightly widened, i.e. income differences have somewhat grown. The number of artforms below the median for all artists has increased. The positions of the visual arts and dance at the bottom of the income hierarchy have remained the same and are joined by a new category for “other” (for circus art, media art and performance art). The positions of critique and cinema had fallen to the middle of the table. Architecture, music and theatre continued to be at the top of the table and were joined by photography. (Table 2)

1 Statistics Finland.

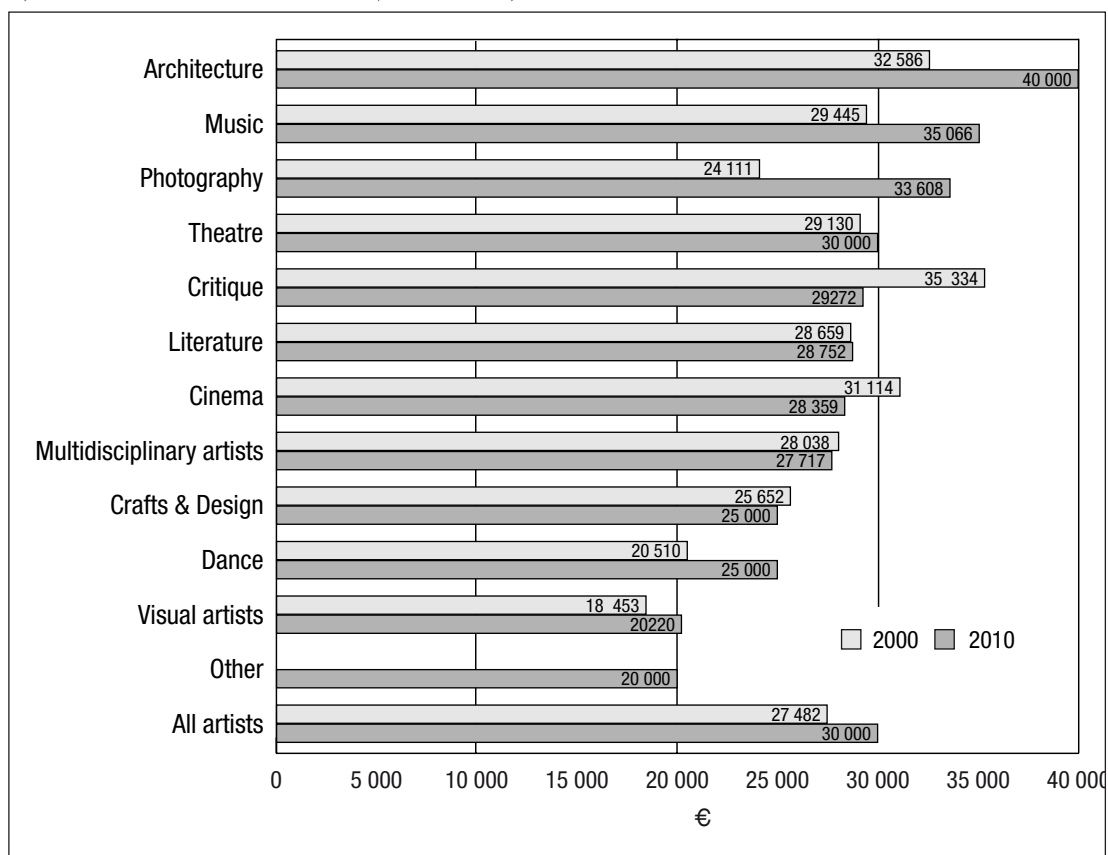
The income level for the lowest ranking artform was just above half that of the highest ranking artform in 2000, whereas in 2010 the income level for the lowest ranking artform was exactly half that of the highest ranking artform. The steady position of the visual arts at the bottom of the table appears even more to be a structural problem related to the labour market and support system. (Table 2.)

Table 2. Artforms ranked according to constructed total income (CTI, median €) in 2000 and 2010

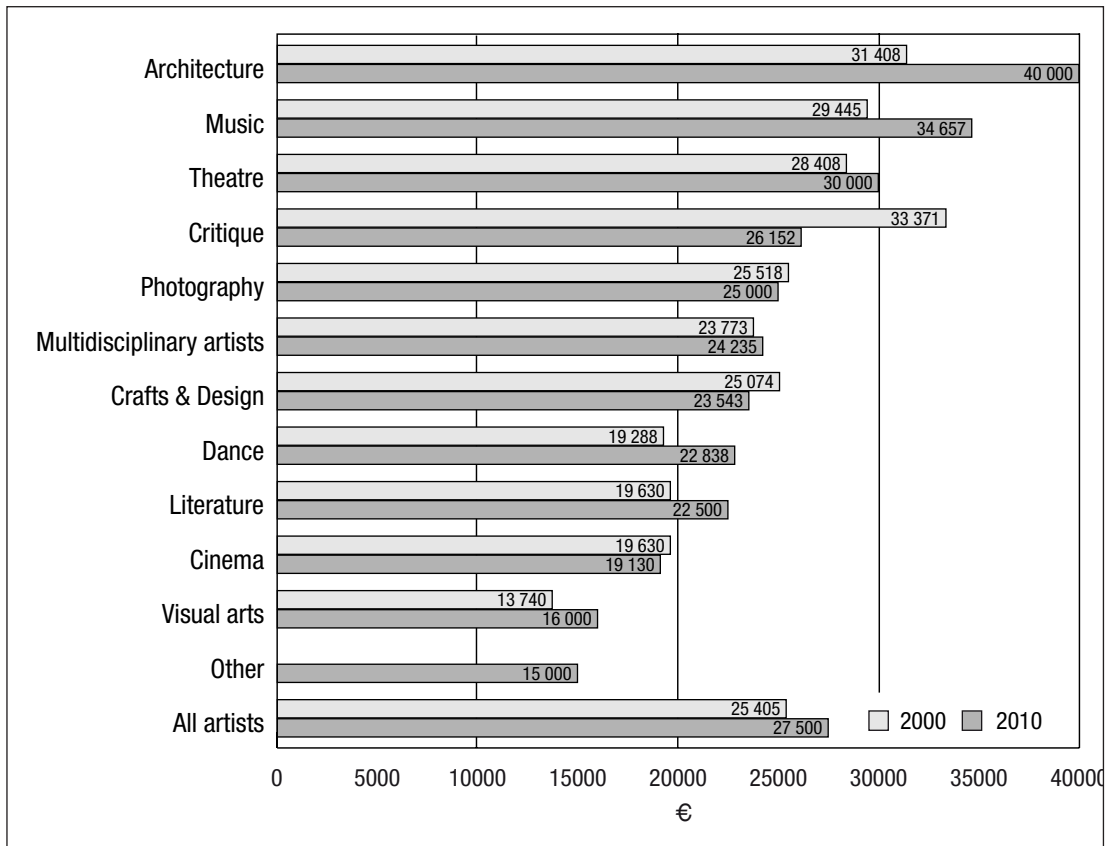
2000	€	%	2010	€	%
Critique	35330	100	Architecture	40000	100
Architecture	32590	92	Music	35066	88
Cinema	31110	88	Photography	33608	84
Music	29450	83	Theatre	30000	75
Theatre	29130	82	ALL ARTISTS	30000	75
Literature	28660	81	Critique	29272	73
Multidisciplinary artists	28040	79	Literature	28752	72
ALL ARTISTS	27480	78	Cinema	28359	71
Crafts & design	25650	73	Multidisciplinary artists	27717	69
Photography	24110	68	Crafts & design	25000	63
Dance	20510	58	Dance	25000	63
Visual arts	18450	52	Visual arts	20220	51
			Other	20000	50

Figure 4. Total taxable income (median €), constructed total income (median €), grants (median €) and income from artistic work (median €) in 2000 and 2010 by artform*

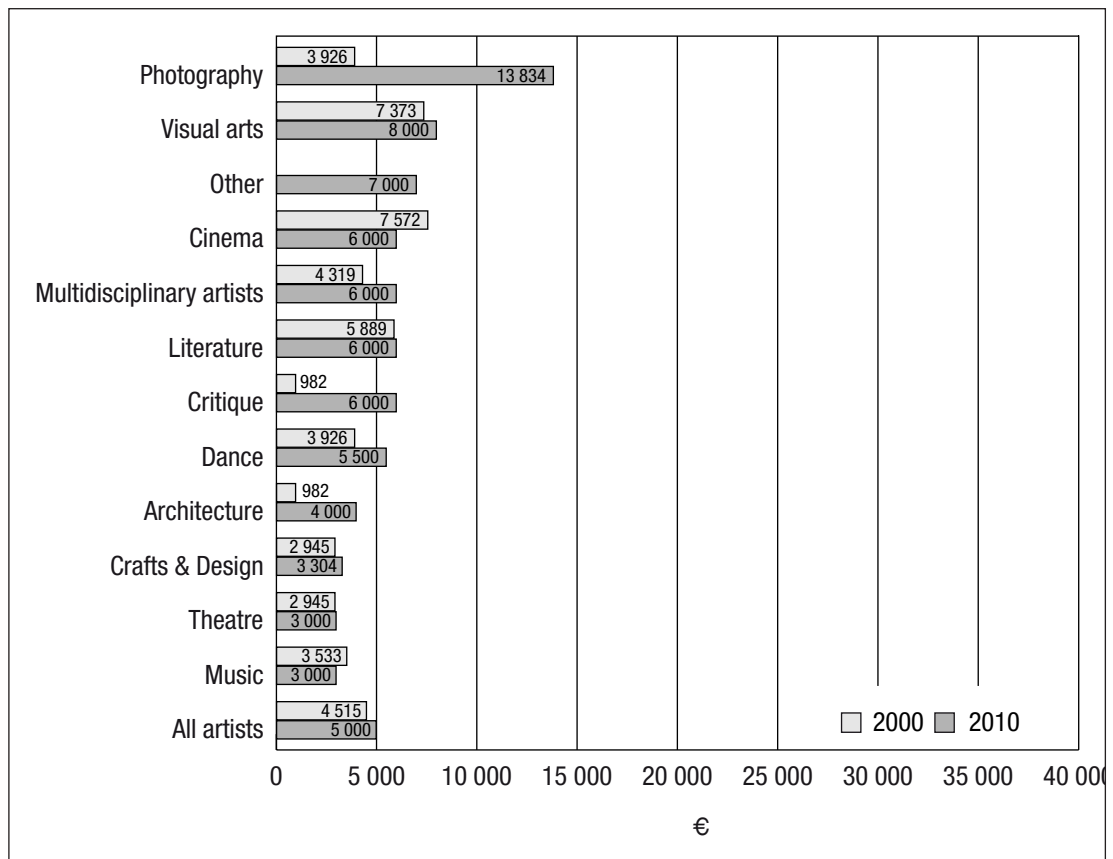
a) Constructed total income (median €)



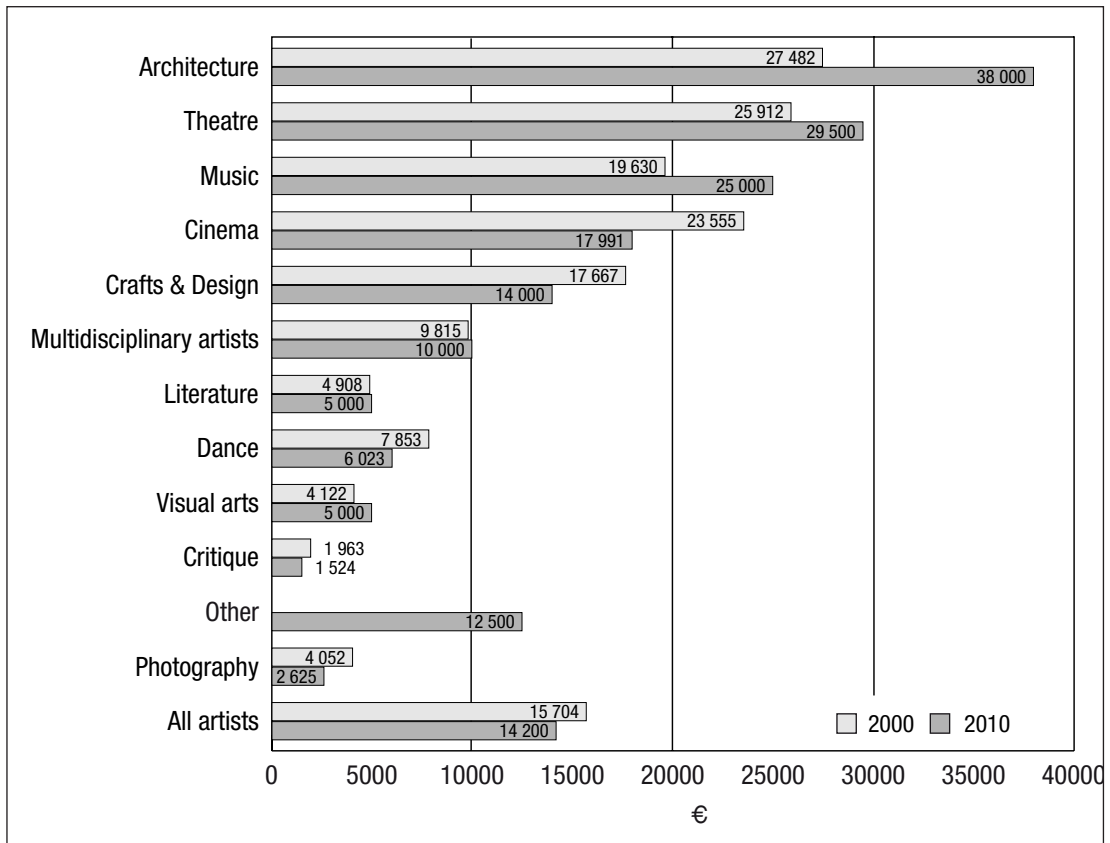
b) Total taxable income (median €)



c) Grants (median €)



d) Income from artistic work (median €)



* The values for 2000 have been converted to the monetary value for 2010 according to the cost of living index.

Translation Edward Crockford