

Immigrant artists in the Finnish support system for the arts

Summary

Research objectives and material

This research on the position of immigrant artists as applicants and recipients of grants is based on a practical need. On the general level it has been known that both society on the whole and the field of the arts are diversifying. Since the beginning of the 2000s, attention has been paid in annual grant statistics to the group whose native language is neither Finnish nor Swedish. The question has arisen as to how “diverse” the field of art in Finland really is and to what extent a multicultural art policy has been implemented in Finland.

This study aims to clarify how persons classified as immigrants are treated within the Finnish support system and by art policy. Is equality realised or are some applicants overlooked within support policies?

The main source of material is the joint grant register of the Arts Council of Finland (since renamed the Arts Promotion Centre Finland) and the Ministry of Education and Culture, which includes information about all support awarded as discretionary grants or subsidies. The support material discussed in this study includes all forms of support awarded by national arts councils and grant boards to private individuals¹.

The focus of the study is on persons who applied for support from the national arts councils between 2002–2012 and who specified their native language on the application form as “other”². Persons who specified their native language accordingly could be immigrants, persons of Sami origin or even Tatars, for example. In order to clarify this and to restrict the material to include only those who have immigrated to Finland, supplementary material is used. This material includes artist CVs, websites and interviews published in various media.

1 Arts councils refer to the Arts Council of Finland, national arts councils for individual art disciplines, boards for grants and subcommittees.

2 Regional arts councils have been purposely excluded from this study, as they generally do not require applicants to state their mother tongue when applying.

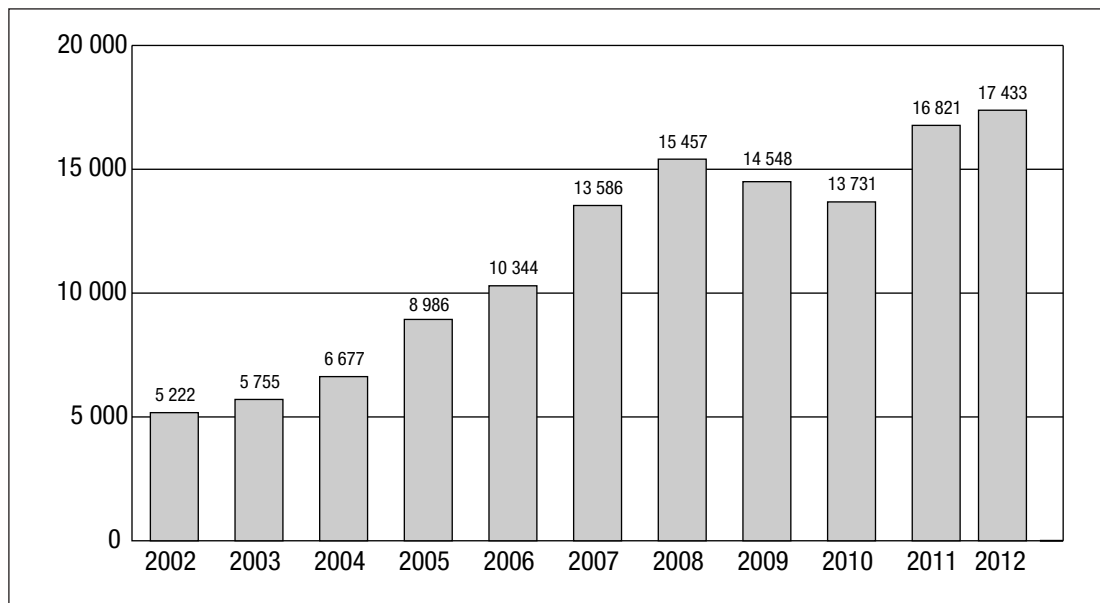
The classification of applicants according to artform is also based on the register, i.e. the application material. The classification conforms to that used by the Arts Council of Finland comprising a total of 13 separate artforms³. Applicants are classified according to what they stated in their applications and not, for example, by profession. Accordingly, the same person can be classified according to several different artforms in different years or even within the same year.

The source material for this study includes 15 semi-structured interviews carried out in spring 2009. The interviews were used to fill in information beyond the scope of the above-mentioned register information, such as the applicants' backgrounds, professional activities and experiences in Finland.

Immigrants in Finland

Immigrants from nearly all countries in the world currently reside in Finland, and the number of immigrants has increased quite steadily throughout the 2000s. In 2012, a total of 31,280 persons immigrated to Finland from abroad, marking a new record high since the country's independence. So-called net immigration⁴ amounted to over 17,000 persons in 2012 and has more than tripled in the past decade (figure 1).

Figure 1. Annual net immigration to Finland 2002–2012



Source: Statistics Finland

3 Critics, cinema, literature, visual arts, media art, other, theatre, architecture, circus art, music, design, dance, photographic art.

4 Net immigration equals immigration minus emigration.

At the end of 2012, almost 270,000 persons (5 % of the population) whose native language was not Finnish, Swedish or Sami lived in Finland. The number of persons who live in Finland but were born elsewhere totals approximately 285,000 (5%), but in terms of nationality they can be just as well Finnish as they can be citizens of other countries.

The number of persons residing in Finland whose registered native language is not Finnish, Swedish or Sami has increased quite rapidly in the 2000s. In 2002 they numbered approximately 117,000, but by the end of 2012 this figure had more than doubled to almost 270,000. The largest group of persons whose native language is not Finnish, Swedish or Sami comprises Russians, who numbered over 62,000 (1 % of the population) at the end of 2012, followed by Estonians (0.7 %) and then, in roughly equal numbers, by Somalis, English-speakers and Arabic-speakers (0.3% each).

Non-native speakers and support for the arts

The Finnish arts council system dates back over 40 years, during which there have been relatively few changes. The biggest change came at the beginning of 2013, when the name of the main administrative body changed from the Arts Council of Finland to the Arts Promotion Centre Finland and the allocation of some of the funds to support the arts was transferred to other official bodies. Nevertheless, the cornerstone of the system, artistic peer reviews, has been retained in the distribution of funds to support the arts. Peer reviews account for approximately 65 % of the total funds awarded by the Arts Promotion Centre Finland to support the arts.

Each year the national and regional arts councils distribute support for artistic activities in the form of different types of grants (working grants, project grants, etc.), state grants for communities, awards and salaries⁵. In 2012, the total sum awarded in these forms amounted to EUR 33.6 million.

There are no regulations or restrictions regarding ethnic background or native language for the support awarded by the arts councils, and Finnish citizenship is not a requirement for recipients of state grants. The so-called basic support offered by arts councils (artist grants, project grants, travel grants, etc.) does not include separate allocation for immigrants but can be applied for by all persons without quotas. Immigrants were not considered a separate target group for support by the Finnish support system for the arts before 2009, when a new form of support was launched for multicultural projects and artists belonging to minorities (so-called grants for multiculturalism).

5 Salaries of regional artists and artist professors.

The majority of the support awarded by the national arts councils is allocated to the visual arts, literature and music. There has been little change in the relative distribution of funds for over four decades. New artforms have been added, and some artforms have increased their relative shares, but in practice the ratio between artforms has remained the same with little change from year to year (table 1).

Table 1. Support (%) awarded by national arts councils to individual persons and working groups by artform, 2002-2012*

<i>Artform</i>	<i>2002</i>	<i>2003</i>	<i>2004</i>	<i>2005</i>	<i>2006</i>	<i>2007</i>	<i>2008</i>	<i>2009</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>2011</i>	<i>2012</i>
Cinema	3	3	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	4
Literature**	35	36	34	34	32	32	32	31	30	29	28
Visual arts	24	22	22	22	23	23	23	23	22	23	23
Media art	0	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Other***	2	2	3	2	3	3	2	2	3	3	3
Theatre	7	7	8	7	8	8	8	8	8	8	7
Architecture	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Circus art	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Music	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	11	12	12	12
Design	6	6	6	7	6	6	6	6	6	6	7
Dance	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Photographic art	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	6	6	5
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
EUR million	11.8	12.2	12.9	13.1	13.6	13.7	14.1	16.2	16.8	17.5	18.2

* Includes grants and subsidies but not awards or salaries for artist professors.

** Includes non-fiction.

*** Includes interdisciplinary artforms and critics.

Each year over 5000 individual persons apply for support from the national arts councils. Although the majority of these applicants (approx. 90 %) are Finnish speakers (table 2), the group whose native language is neither Finnish nor Swedish is growing faster. The annual increase in applicants has averaged around one percent among Finnish and Swedish speakers, whereas the annual increase in applicants who belong to “other” language groups has averaged 10 percent. Despite this, their share of total applicants is still small (4 % of applicants).

Table 2. Applicants of support from national arts councils by language group***

<i>Year</i>	<i>Finnish speakers</i>	<i>% of applicants</i>	<i>Swedish speakers</i>	<i>% of applicants</i>	<i>Language group "other"</i>	<i>% of applicants</i>	<i>Total applicants</i>
2002	4 182	91	316	7	102	2	4 600
2003	4 315	90	363	7	128	3	4 807
2004	4 574	90	365	7	138	3	5 077
2005	4 609	89	399	8	141	3	5 149
2006	4 693	90	408	7	137	3	5 238
2007	4 762	90	374	7	144	3	5 280
2008	4 630	90	352	7	191	3	5 173
2009	4 602	88	364	7	276	5	5 247
2010	4 558	89	342	7	223	4	5 123
2011	4 683	90	312	6	219	4	5 223
2012	4 734	89	329	6	236	4	5 299
Average annual increase %	1 %		1 %		10 %		1 %

* Includes all forms of support allocated by national arts councils (see appendix x).

** Individual persons and contact persons for working groups.

The trend in the number of recipients of support corresponds quite similarly to the trend in the number of applicants (table 3). As with the increase in the number of applicants, the increase in the number of recipients of support has been biggest among non-native speakers. The average annual growth for this group has been 14 percent, so it appears that the number of recipients has increased faster than the number of applicants.

Table 3. Recipients of support from national arts councils by language group 2002–2012 *

Year	Finnish speakers	% of recipients	Swedish speakers	% of recipients	Language group "other"	% of recipients	Total recipients
2002	1611	88	181	10	30	2	1822
2003	1599	88	181	10	31	2	1811
2004	1834	88	195	9	47	2	2076
2005	1870	89	169	8	55	3	2094
2006	1954	90	166	8	58	3	2178
2007	1981	91	158	7	45	2	2184
2008	1958	90	140	7	67	3	2165
2009	2008	90	149	7	85	4	2242
2010	2047	89	149	6	100	4	2296
2011	2067	90	136	6	90	4	2298
2012	2091	90	132	6	92	4	2315
Average annual increase %	3 %		- 3 %		14 %		3 %

* Individual persons and contact persons for working groups.

In all groups the number of non-native speakers has increased among both applicants and recipients of support, albeit very little. The biggest percentage increase has been in media art (average annual growth 44 %). The biggest increase in actual numbers has been the number of non-native applicants in the visual arts (by approximately 30 applicants during the period under review).

Native language does not appear to play a big role in the allocation process for support. On the basis of the research material, it cannot be concluded that a particular language group is discriminated against. However, the results do suggest that for certain art forms, more attention should be paid to the language group distribution (these art forms include, for example, literature, dance and photographic art). In the language group distribution for state artist grants⁶ there are some differences between art forms. The annual grant for literature has never been awarded to an immigrant writing in a foreign language. Similarly, the artist grant for cinema has not been awarded to a non-native speaker during the period under review (2002–2012). The research material suggests that non-native applicants have been integrated most successfully in the support system for the visual arts and music. For example, state artist grants have been awarded to 15 immigrant visual artists, in some cases more than once, over the past decade.

⁶ State artists grants, i.e. annual grants that can be awarded for 0.5–10 years to support artistic work.

Grants for art projects promoting multiculturalism

In 2009 the Ministry of Education and Culture allocated funds of EUR 100,000 to the Arts Council of Finland to support art projects that promote multiculturalism. The Arts Council of Finland accordingly established the Subcommittee for Multiculturalism to award the grants to projects promoting the artistic activities of immigrants and ethnic minorities in Finland.

The new form of support proved to be quite popular, attracting approximately 250⁷ applicants in its first year, around half of whom were completely new applicants, i.e. those who had never before applied for any kind of support from the national arts councils. In addition, over half the applicants were non-native speakers. The biggest groups comprised native speakers of Russian (17 %), Spanish (17 %) and English (10 %)⁸. Two percent were native Sami.

Subsequently, the number of applicants for grants for art projects promoting multiculturalism has varied from nearly 250 in the first year to fewer than 90 applicants. The number of recipients has varied between 30 and 40. Non-native speakers have comprised approximately half of all applicants and over 70 percent of recipients excluding the last year of the period under review. The proportion of non-native speakers among recipients has been significantly higher than among applicants.

Among applicants for grants for art projects promoting multiculturalism, visual artists have represented the largest group. On average they have accounted for one-fifth of all applicants in the four application years, whereas musicians have accounted for 15 percent and artists representing “other” artforms (interdisciplinary art) 13 percent of applicants. Visual artists have also been the largest group among recipients (approximately one-fifth of grant recipients during this period), followed by musicians (average 18%).

The amount of funds allocated for grants for art projects promoting multiculturalism has remained the same (EUR 100,000) since these grants have been awarded (over the past five years). The average amount of the grants awarded has been quite small. In 2012, for example, the amount varied between EUR 2000 and 4000 depending on the artform⁹. The average amount awarded to non-native speakers was a few hundred euros less than the amount awarded to Finnish and Swedish speakers, but the total amount awarded to non-native speakers was greater (EUR 53,350, i.e. more than half the total allocated funds).

7 The number of applicants for other project grants (other artforms) has varied between 50–250 depending on artform.

8 The application form for this form of support asked applicants to specify their native language.

9 The lowest average amount was granted for circus art and the highest for media art.

Artists who have immigrated to Finland

Interviewees

The interviewees were selected among those whose native language was entered as “other” in the grant register and who represented different art forms, age groups, genders and language groups. In addition to collecting basic information, the interview included two themes: the artistic activities of the artists, and the experiences of the interviewees when applying for support. The questions covered the professional history of the interviewees in Finland (for professional artists), art education, experiences in applying for support, and contact with Finnish artists and the art world.

The interviewees represented 9 different art forms, 15 different nationalities, and 9 different native languages. Eight of the interviewees were female and seven male. They had lived in Finland for 4–30 years. The majority of the interviewees had immigrated to Finland for personal reasons, either to study or because of a relationship. Two of the interviewees had arrived as refugees and one through the official repatriation programme.

Although the experiences of the interviewees concerning working as an artist in Finland varied, all had experienced difficulties finding employment and establishing themselves in Finnish art life, particularly in the early stages. It was much easier for those who had either continued their studies or begun full-time studies in Finland to establish contacts in their field and in Finland in general. Having a Finnish spouse clearly did not guarantee that it would be easier to integrate and find employment. It would appear important above all that some kind of contact with the art world was established either through studies or contacts with other artists. However, this too did not yet ensure employment or acceptance in the Finnish art world.

Artists who immigrate to Finland from abroad might find it hard to understand the importance of artist associations, for example, as a tool for establishing oneself and exchanging information, and also partially for employment. Some of the interviewees had not even tried to become members of Finnish artist associations, either because they disliked the idea or because they simply had not thought about it. Others had become members almost immediately (often those who had studied in Finland). Some had tried to become members but had been rejected, which they felt was very frustrating. It was hard for them to understand why a non-Finnish degree, artistic work or awards were not accepted in Finland.

Although finding employment and earning a living as an artist varied, almost all faced difficulties in the beginning. Their stories regarding employment and establishing themselves were very individual and were not always dependent on whether the person spoke Finnish or

not, for example. It could be that language is not so essential in artistic professions, with the exception of those active in the fields of literature and theatre. Nevertheless, language skills are important for integrating with society outside the art world.

The interviews also covered income from artistic work. The majority of interviewees had received at least a portion of their income from artistic work or from art-related teaching work. One of the interviewees was currently an undergraduate student but also received a grant related to artistic work. Grants were indeed a significant form of support for their work, although none had received multi-year artist grants, for example.

Many viewed the issue of quotas or special treatment with ambivalence – some felt that quotas increased equality, while others felt that they were stigmatising. On the other hand, most felt that all artists should be on an equal footing.

Experiences concerning Finnish vs. foreign identities were also highly individual. One interviewee felt that Finland was the only country in which he/she had felt like a foreigner, whereas another considered Finland their homeland from the moment he/she arrived. A third interviewee emphasised that there were no special “immigrant problems” but that the problems concerning artistic work, for example, were the same for everyone. Most of the interviewees praised Finnish society and public authorities, although a few had experienced negative feelings due to the attitudes or behaviour of certain individuals rather than by society or the art community in general.

On the whole, the interviewees had succeeded in establishing at least some kind of artistic career in Finland, but they had also encountered a number of obstacles that were more or less troublesome depending on the individual. These obstacles included exclusion and the difficulty of making contacts. In this regard it was clearly easier for those who had studied for a professional career in the arts in Finland or who had continued their studies here.

Overview of immigrant artists in Finland

For the purposes of this research, immigrants have been defined on the basis of their native languages. The research population for closer study (immigrant artists living in Finland) were selected from the grant register of the Arts Council of Finland on the basis of having applied for some form of grant or subsidy from national arts councils between 2000–2012 and having specified their native language as other than Finnish or Swedish. Altogether 842 individual persons¹⁰ fulfilled these criteria. Of these individuals, 16 percent either lived abroad when ap-

10 This represents 4% of all individual persons who applied for support during this period.

plying for support, had later moved away from Finland, had a Finnish mother or father, or had been born in Finland. In addition, persons of Sami or Tatar origin (on the basis of native language or other sources of information) were excluded from the research population. After these exclusions, a total of 708 individual persons were categorised as artists who had immigrated to Finland. Background information (country of origin, native language) could be ascertained for over 90 percent of these individuals.

Table 3. Immigrant artists in Finland: country of origin, share of women, share of young people

<i>Region</i>	<i>% of group studied</i>	<i>Share of women, %</i>	<i>Share of persons under the age of 35, %</i>	<i>N</i>
EUROPE	59	47	24	395
Southern	10	26	31	
Eastern	28	61	17	
Southeastern	7	41	29	
Central	24	55	24	
Western	19	29	15	
Northern*	12	49	29	
ASIA	18	41	22	120
South	6	13	25	
East	46	63	23	
Middle East /Caucasia	48	20	20	
AMERICA	15	38	17	104
South	52	33	20	
North	48	43	14	
AFRICA	6	10	26	42
Southern/ Eastern	43	
Western	40	
Northern	17	..	–	
OTHER	2			11
TOTAL %	100	42	22	
N**	672	282	151	

.. = Less than five persons.

– = No cases.

* Includes other Nordic countries with the exception of Sweden.

** Persons whose backgrounds could not be ascertained have been excluded from this table. Age information was available for 659 persons.

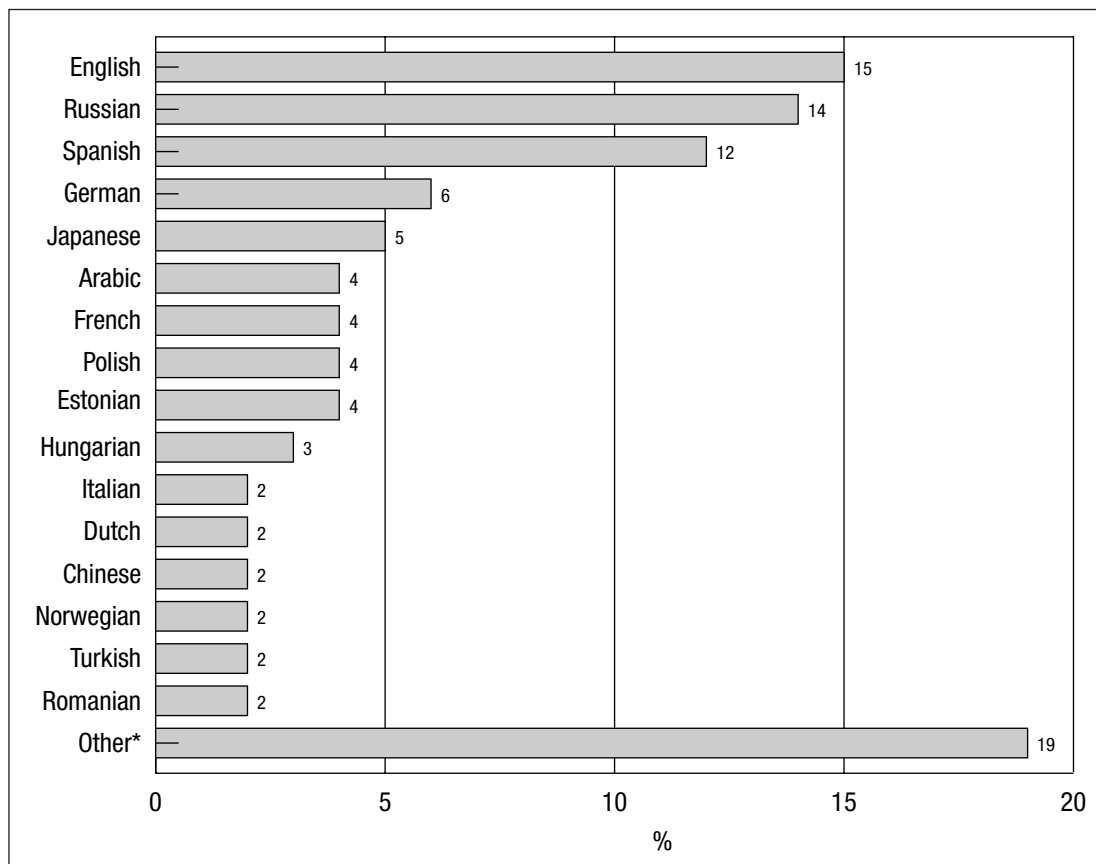
Almost all indicators suggest that immigrant artists do not form a cohesive group. They differ from one another in terms of native language,

ethnic background, educational background, profession, religion, age and gender. The immigrant artists studied here speak over 60 different languages, come from over 90 different countries, represent over 10 artforms, and have been educated as artists in different countries and in different levels of educational institutes.

The majority of immigrant artists in Finland (59 %) came from Europe (including Russia). Generally, therefore, the concept of art that they represent does not necessarily differ from the “western” concept of art that dominates in the Finnish art world.

The largest language groups comprised speakers of English (15 %), Russian (14 %) and Spanish (12 %); speakers of these languages accounted for more than 40 percent of the total group studied (figure 2). The biggest single group, however, comprised speakers of “other” languages, which includes all languages with less than 10 speakers in the group studied. Compared to statistics for non-native speakers in Finland as a whole, the relative low proportion of Estonian speakers (4 %) and Somali speakers (included in the group “other” with less than 10 speakers) among immigrant artists stands out in this research¹¹.

Figure 2. Immigrant artists in Finland by language group (N = 688)

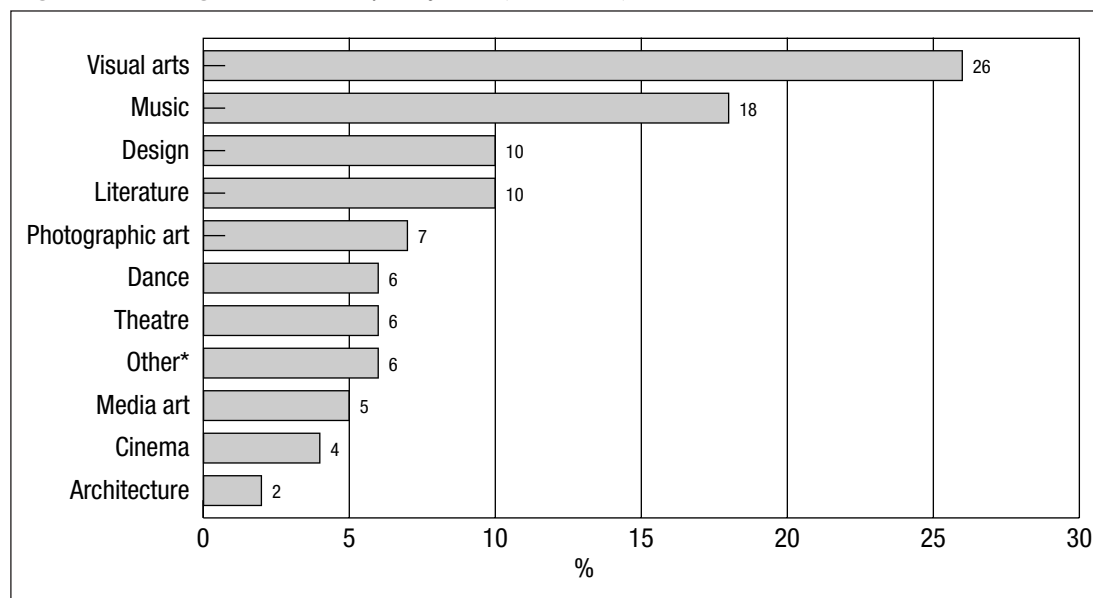


* Languages with less than 10 speakers.

11 Estonian speakers comprise 14% of all non-native speakers in Finland and Somali speakers 6% (Statistics Finland, population structure).

The largest groups of immigrant artists in Finland by art form comprised visual artists (26 %) and musicians (18 %). These groups accounted for over 40 percent of the total group studied. The next biggest groups were literature and design (10 % each). Altogether, artists representing these four art forms accounted for over 60 percent of the immigrant artists studied in this research. (figure 3.)

Figure 3. Immigrant artists by artform (N = 708)



* Other = unclassified by artform (26 persons), interdisciplinary art (7), critics (2) and circus (5).

In terms of geographical backgrounds, there is little difference in the relative shares of the art forms with the exception of artists from Asia, among whom there was a relatively high proportion of designers (15 %) in addition to visual artists. The majority of artists from Africa were musicians (38 %).

As with other artists in Finland, immigrant artists tend to live in Greater Helsinki, are similar in age distribution to native Finns and would appear to be highly educated for the most part. This is the general picture that can be formed, although differences appear when immigrant artists – as with native Finns – are studied in terms of art form.

The share of immigrants among all artists in Finland is similar to their proportion of the population (3–4 %). Nevertheless, the immigrant artists studied in this research differ somewhat from the rest of the immigrant population, for example in terms of language distribution, age distribution and – to a certain extent – also employment. The largest language groups among immigrant artists are Russian, English and Spanish speakers. Russian and English speakers are also the largest group among the entire immigrant population. On the other hand, Somali and Estonian speakers, which represent large language groups

in the overall immigrant population, are clearly underrepresented among immigrant artists. Of the 708 immigrant artists studied in this research, less than ten were Somali speakers and just over twenty (4%) were Estonian speakers. Since these are two clearly different types of language groups, the reasons why they are underrepresented are not and cannot be the same.

On the whole, the age structure of the immigrant population in Finland is younger than that of Finns on average. However, there are differences among language groups. For example, the age distribution of Russian and Estonian speakers is quite similar to that of the native population, whereas the age distribution of Somali and Arabic speakers differs considerably, as they are younger than other groups. The gender distribution among immigrant groups also varies according to the country of origin, with a high proportion of females among artists from Russia and the Baltics. On the other hand, immigrant artists are more similar to native Finnish artists than to the rest of the immigrant population in terms of age distribution. The average age of immigrant artists in Finland is 44, and persons below the age of 35 account for around one-fifth. In terms of gender distribution too, immigrant artists are similar to the artist population as a whole, albeit with a slightly smaller share of females. As with the immigrant population in general, the share of women among artists from Russia is large (63 %).

Artists who have immigrated to Finland have mostly applied for travel subsidies (38% of support applied for) or other project-based support (project grants, project grants for children's culture, etc.), which was applied for by almost half of the immigrant artists. Grants for art projects promoting multiculturalism accounted for just over a quarter of the support applied for by the artists studied in this research, although it should be noted that this form of support was introduced only in 2009. Artist grants (annual grants) would appear to be most important among visual artists, as over half of these have applied for annual grants during the period under review.

Altogether 41 percent of the artists studied in this research had been awarded one or more grants or subsidies, although here too the differences between art forms are quite large. The highest share of recipients (50% or more) was in the fields of architecture, media art and theatre. However, all of these are relatively small groups in this study – especially architecture.

Of the immigrant artists who had received support, 52 percent had been awarded only one grant or subsidy during the period under review (over half of these had only applied once). For most recipients, the first form of support was either a travel subsidy or a project grant. Library grants have also been awarded to artists applying for the first time. Among recipients of literature and media art grants, over four-fifths

had been awarded the grant after the first application, whereas the corresponding figure for dance grants was just over one-third.

Immigrant artists in Finland would not appear to differ much from native Finns as applicants for support. For them, the art form in question would appear to be more decisive than their immigrant status or native language.

Conclusions

What is the position of the immigrant artist within the Finnish support system for the arts?

The research material demonstrates that the group of applicants for Finnish support for the arts is diversifying, albeit rather slowly. For most art forms, the number of immigrant applicants amounts to just a few dozen rather than a few hundred. The only art forms in which the number of immigrant applicants can be considered somewhat significant are the visual arts and music. At the same time it should be noted that the number of immigrant applicants in many art forms has grown steadily, and in some it has even exceeded the number of Swedish-speaking applicants. Such art forms include the visual arts and music, as well as media art and dance.

Support for non-native speakers has increased significantly over the past decade, almost by a factor of five since 2002. Immigrants also receive support in relation to their share of applicants. Despite this it should be noted that, on the whole, support for the arts awarded in the form of grants and subsidies does not meet the demand among both native Finns and immigrants.

This research demonstrates that immigrant artists in Finland are treated quite fairly within the support system for the arts. This is illustrated, for example, by the findings of this research that the share of immigrants among recipients of grants and subsidies is proportional to their share among applicants. However, for some art forms more attention should be paid in the future to certain phenomena. These include the obstacles faced by non-native speakers in receiving artist grants in the field of literature, as well as the smaller proportion of non-native speakers compared to other language groups who are awarded grants in certain other art forms (e.g. photographic art).

In connection with this research, and based on the source material, several proposals for future consideration have been made regarding support for the arts. One of these proposals concerns the composition of the national and regional arts councils. In the future it would be important to expand the group of people who propose members for the

arts councils to include also immigrant artists¹². In addition to changes to the composition of the arts councils, it would be important in the future that the continuing diversification in the field of the arts in Finland be taken into consideration more within the field of the arts itself, i.e. among artist associations and other organisations.

A comprehensive and easily available information package about grants and the application process should be made available to professional artists who are non-native speakers/immigrants¹³. The possibility has also been raised of applying for support anonymously in order to ensure that applying is based entirely on CVs and work samples.

One concrete form of support that was suggested in the interviews was a kind of start-up grant in order to support artists to begin working (in Finland). In the future, when updating or expanding the forms of support for artists, this kind of grant could be considered.

Similarly, the experiences with grants for art projects promoting multiculturalism and any possible development needs should be evaluated comprehensively. Based on the material assessed in this research, it is apparent that these grants for multiculturalism have not necessarily directed artists who have applied for and been awarded them towards more “mainstream” forms of support, rather the opposite has occurred.

Is Finnish art policy multicultural?

How can multiculturalism in the Finnish art administration and support system for the arts be evaluated? One of the problems with such an evaluation is the seeming lack of a commonly agreed understanding of what is meant by multiculturalism or cultural diversity and what the aim is. Carrying out such an evaluation also puts demands on the available material. For example, there should be sufficient long-term statistical data to show that the situation in Finland (in terms of arts promotion statistics) is relatively good.

Explicit wishes that were expressed regarding immigrant artists/art policy were related mostly to developing the support system for professional artists belonging to ethnic minorities, which has been set as a goal since 2003. This goal can be seen to have been realised in 2009, when the Ministry of Education and Culture allocated – admittedly modest – funds of EUR 100,000 to the Arts Council of Finland to support art projects that promote multiculturalism. It should be noted, however, that this solution marked a switch to a policy of spe-

12 It should be noted, however, that according to the current law on the promotion of the arts, the nominating body, i.e. the Central Arts Council, does not have to comply with the proposals as such but can also appoint members who were not proposed.

13 This kind of activity has previously been carried out, for example, in connection with the multiculturalism forums organised by the Subcommittee for Multiculturalism of the Arts Council of Finland.

cial treatment for immigrant artists, which has not been entirely without problems based on international experience.

The artists interviewed for this research were ambivalent about these special arrangements; while a separate (new) grant was naturally welcomed, the idea that immigrant artists should be “compartmentalised” was shunned.

Prior to 2009, multiculturalism did not have any real position in Finnish art policy, even though immigrants were supported before then – in principle since the introduction of the system, albeit when the number of immigrants and especially immigrant artists was very small. The implementation of multiculturalism in Finnish art policy has been slow for many reasons. One of these has been the unspecific and intangible nature of goals concerning multiculturalism. Another has been the practice of quality-based peer reviews, which can lead to the slow handling of multicultural issues since all other non-quality-based criteria are considered an instrumentalisation of art and infringement on the autonomy of art. There is no denying that the practice of quality-based peer reviews is in contradiction to the belief that attention should be paid not only to artistic merit with regard to support for artists, but also to other characteristics, such as the applicant’s linguistic, ethnic or geographical background.

Although Finnish art policy is multicultural in its aims, the reality is not yet multicultural in the sense that the number of immigrant artists is small and in some art forms even marginal, and multiculturalism is not apparent in the field of the arts, for example in the goals set by art organisations. To make more concrete conclusions, however, requires time. The decade reviewed here in this research reveals the situation of immigrant artists in Finland for the first time. It would be good to review these conclusions and possible actions in a few years’ time. Research and monitoring should also be continued in the future using the materials available from the Finnish art administration and other research methods.