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Contents

1. PREFACE	2
2. THE DATA	3
3. THE LABOUR MARKET FOR ARTISTS	5
3.1. EMPLOYMENT SITUATION	7
3.2. UNEMPLOYMENT	14
3.3. INCOME SOURCES	17
3.4. CAREER	18
4. GRANTS	20
5. FEMALE ARTISTS	24
6. TRAINING.....	27
6.1. THE IMPORTANCE OF TRAINING	27
6.2. OPINIONS ABOUT TRAINING	30
8. CONCLUDING REMARKS.....	32
KEY FINDINGS	34
SOURCES	35
ANNEX.....	38

1. Preface

The artistic labour market and its mechanisms have been subjects of growing interest during the past few years. Especially the employment in the arts has drawn the attention of both researchers and decision-makers. One reason for the interest for this area is that by examining the labour market the weight of the sector can also be evaluated or/and emphasised. The common knowledge among (cultural policy) decision-makers seems to be that the cultural sector is increasing and its importance as an employer is becoming more notable. One reason for this kind of statements is probably the fact that the more jobs there are proved to be, the more weight this sector carries.

Interesting as it might be, there are certain features which make studying artists' employment difficult. Not the least of which is that official employment/labour statistics do not usually present artists separately – consequently artists are “lost” the large category of ‘cultural workers’. This can lead to serious misunderstandings concerning, e.g., the number of employees, the employment arrangements, unemployment rate etc. For this reason information on this matter is better achieved from sector-studies or surveys.

The focus of the Graduate-surveys

- employment situation
- means of employment
- professional practises
- primary income sources
- grants and rewards
- opinions about training

This paper summarises the key findings of surveys which were launched in Arts Council of Finland (ACF) few years ago. The starting point was to examine what has happened to the art university - graduates who enter the Finnish labour market. Do they get jobs corresponding to their training? Does the training give them adequate qualifications? These questions, among others, were asked in the survey questionnaires which were sent to the artists who had got their professional training in the four Finnish art universities (Theatre Academy, University of Arts and Design, Academy of Fine Arts and Sibelius Academy).

The research populations consisted of the graduates¹ from the last 10–15 years. The aim was to map out the employment situation of artists and the correspondence between training and work. In addition, the objective was to study the professional practices and means of employment, as well as income sources and grants.

Four research reports and some conference papers have been produced during this project². To get a better picture about the variety of artists' labour market, other sources are also used in this paper. Namely, the study concerning new (recently debuted) writers (published by the ACF in 1997)³ and a survey report on graduated architects made in the Helsinki University of Technology⁴. The latter stems also from the year 1997. The attempt here is to outline a picture of the labour market of artists and to discuss the possible differences and similarities in different art fields.

2. The data

The data discussed in this paper are drawn from four separately implemented surveys. The research populations consisted of those who have gained a professional training in the four above mentioned art universities. In order to get also “drop outs” into the research populations, all those who had studied at least one year were included. The following table gives some details of the surveys and survey populations. As can be seen, the response rates were high, and consequently these results can be considered to provide evidence about the whole target population.

¹ “Graduate” is defined here rather broadly: a person who has undergone a training but has not necessarily obtained the formal degree. The aim has been to reach all with university -level training and currently working in the profession.

² See the reference list ” Publications of GA-surveys”.

³ Tuominen 1998. Study dealt with writers who debuted between 1987 – 95 (N= 63).

⁴ Teknillinen korkeakoulu 1997. The study concerns the graduates from 1990 –1996.

Table 1. Studies of the graduates from art universities

	<i>Institution</i>			
	Theatre Academy (TA) ^a	University of Art and Design (UIAH)	Academy of Fine Arts (AFA)	Sibelius Academy (SA)
<i>Survey carried out</i>	1993	1993	1995	1997
<i>Original population</i>	388	505	257	1540
<i>Graduation years</i>	1979 - 92	1983 - 92	1980 - 94	1985 - 95
<i>Number of Respondents (N)</i>	209	224	179	1045
<i>Rate of Return</i>	54 %	44 %	70 %	68 %
<i>Women %</i>	51 %	66 %	55 %	61 %
<i>Age (avg.)</i>	31	31	35	33

^a Includes the Department of Acting/University of Tampere.

With the help of surveys it is possible to get information on employment practices, career, double job-holding and income sources. These can not be traced from, e.g., the register-based statistics (graduate-statistics, labour force surveys). However, there are also reservations and problems with regard to this data. Firstly, there is a difference of time between the study populations which complicates the comparison. Also, the effects of recession⁵ should be taken into account when analysing certain results (e.g., unemployment). Moreover, the survey data comprises only those who have received formal training. This therefore excludes art professionals who work in the field but without formal training and also the older generation who has received the training earlier. Finally, many occupational groups within the arts are too small for separate consideration which tends to lead us into the common sin of generalisation. To avoid this as much as possible the notable differences between occupations are reported.

⁵ The recession period in Finland was in the first half of 1990's.

Table 2. Occupations covered in the Graduate-surveys

<i>Field/institution</i>	<i>Occupations included</i>	<i>N</i>
Theatre/Dance Theatre Academy (TA)	Actors Dramaturges Directors Light- and sound designers Dancers* /choreographers/ dance teachers	132 15 10 13 39
Crafts and design/ University of Art and design (UIAH)	Cinema artists Graphic designers Ceramists & glass artist Art teachers Stage designers Interior designers Textile designers Industrial designers Costume designers Photographers	16 14 11 82 9 22 14 20 15 12
Fine Arts/ Academy of Fine Arts (AFA)	Painters Sculptors Graphic artists Other /multiprofessional	109 36 29 5
Music/ Sibelius Academy (SA)	Conductors Composers Jazz musicians Opera singers Folk musicians Church musicians Music teachers Performing musicians (orchestra)	12 26 25 23 32 250 261 416

* Theatre Academy gives training for modern dancers. Classical dancers are trained at Finnish National Ballet School.

As the Table 2 presents, there are many different occupational groups, which in some cases could be defined under another art form than is shown here. Also, as the list of occupations shows, there are some occupations which are not “purely” artistic, namely, art teachers, music teachers and church musicians. This has undoubtedly affected the results and calls for separate handling at least concerning some findings. It goes without saying that the situation, for example, related to grants, employment situation etc. is dependent on the nature of the given occupation (artistic – art-related). It is also noteworthy that the UIAH-survey differed from the others regarding the fact that the research population also included those who were studying at the moment of the survey.

3. The labour market for artists

The term “labour market” is principally used in the meaning of the supply and demand of the labour force, the ways of getting employed, working conditions etc. as well as the structures which regulate these elements. On the supply side, training and its effects play an important role. On the one hand, the question is how a person with certain qualifications settles in the labour market’s hierarchy and on the other hand, how do trained professionals and jobs meet.⁶ It has already been mentioned, that there are grounds to speak of artists’ labour market as a special case. Another question is, whether we can talk about the artists’ labour market as such without taking account of the differences between art forms⁷. This point of view is also emphasised when looking at these survey results. A concept of “artists’ labour market” including all art fields is very complicated due to the differences between art forms and artistic occupations.

However, some common features typical to the labour market of artists can be found. These features – discussed in many studies⁸ – are, e.g., working without (permanent) contracts, temporary employment, many occupations/side-jobs, several income sources and dependency on public support. These characteristics apply to a great extent especially to Finnish fine artists. In addition, one notable feature which differs from other labour markets is that the job seeker in artistic fields can not be replaced with another in the same way as in many other areas. The employer usually seeks just a certain person or certain artistic qualities which are not replaceable.⁹

The artistic labour markets also have national characteristics. For example, in the Nordic countries, the labour market in the cultural sector is very institutionalised and heavily subsidised. Yet, the artistic labour market in Nordic countries has

⁶ Ahola – Kivinen – Rinne 1991:41

⁷ See, Towse 1996: 8.

⁸ From several extensive works can be mentioned, e.g., Throsby – Thompson 1995, Wassal – Alper 1992, Towse 1996.

⁹ SOU 1997/183: 38. See also, Towse 1996:30.

changed to some extent during the last decades. This is due to the decrease in the number of permanent engagements in performing arts. Formerly, the field of performing arts (music, theatre) was characterised by permanent jobs in art institutions. The other change has been the expansion of trained artists which, naturally, has an impact on the labour market situation.¹⁰

A special situation in this field is caused by the fact that decisions made on the artistic labour force are partly done by the cultural administration and partly within the domain of labour policy. As a matter of fact, there are voices who consider that the cultural sector has become more and more dependent on labour market policy and in fact the arts are being supported by labour policy actions. It has been suggested that by defining the artist profession in all policy sectors similarly, the controversies between labour policy and cultural policy could be solved.¹¹ In fact, the question of definition has a strong effect on the situation of the artists' labour market. On the other hand, the improvements made concerning artists' position have to be grounded on a cultural policy basis, since the "pure" labour market justifications do not apply to this field as such.

3.1. Employment situation

The diversity of employment patterns is a common feature to all artistic professions although they vary across the art forms. An artist may be self-employed, employed on contract or salaried on a full-time or part-time basis depending on art form. Moreover, it is possible that the artist's employment status includes all these elements in a certain working period. In practice, free artists can not be explicitly defined as employed or not.

¹⁰ The expansion of training has taken place in all Nordic countries, e.g. in Norway. Olseng 1995: 9.

¹¹ SOU 1997/183: 9

The survey questionnaires dealt with the employment situation by focusing on the following points:

- Employment status (employed, unemployed, freelance, entrepreneur, on grant, other)
- Ways of getting employed/recruitment
- Multiple job-holding/side-jobs
- Main income sources
- The nature of work (artistic, art-related, non-artistic)
- Difficulties of getting employed

Table 3. The employment status of the respondents at the time of the surveys¹²

<i>Employment status</i>	<i>Theatre/dance</i> (%)	<i>Craft & design</i> (%)	<i>Fine arts</i> (%)	<i>Music</i> (%)
Employee	32	48	15	58
Freelancer	38	7	21*	9
Entrepreneur	0	4	-	1
On grant	7	1	_***	0
Unemployed	3	5	2	1
Other	4	5	2	6
Multiple	16	30	60	25
	100	100	100	100
N	209	128	178	1024

* Not freelancer but "free artist" (without any contracts).

** Not included as a separate alternative (41 % fine artists had a grant).

Table 3 describes the employment situation of the respondents at the moment of the surveys. As can be seen, in the field of theatre/dance the share of freelancers and employees is almost the same (about one third). This reflects the above mentioned changes in the employment situation of theatre artists. Earlier, the field of theatre was characterised by permanent engagements in publicly subsidised theatres. According to these results, it seems that the freelance status has become more general among the younger generation of theatre artists – although self-employed work has always been more common among the young than among the older age groups. This development is partly due to the recession, which has diminished – though rather moderately – the number of permanent engagements in theatres. However, with regard to these figures, one has to remember that the share of freelancers would be somewhat different if theatre and dance were treated separately,

¹² The figures in this table do not include overlapping responses.

since the majority of dance artists work as freelancers.¹³ Moreover, the growth in the number of freelancers is not caused by the recession alone. Another important reason is the willingness of young theatre/dance artists to work after graduation as a freelancer in the capital area due to the better markets and more versatile working possibilities.

In crafts and design the share of employed was almost 50 % and only a handful of respondents worked exclusively as a freelancer. However, the number of respondents who had multiple employment status was relatively high (30 %). Differences between occupations were notable in this field. For example, among graphic designers the freelance-based work was common, while ceramists and industrial designers were mostly employed. This result is related to the employment structure of the field where industrial enterprises are important employers. Most professionals in the field of music are employed in more or less permanent jobs. However, the share of those with multiple status was rather high compared to other performing artist -group (theatre/dance). The proportion of freelancers was around the same as in crafts and design.

The employment status of fine artists cannot be compared to the other fields. Also the questions concerning employment were formulated differently for fine artists, since they do not usually have employment contracts as artists. However, it is well known that they also have other jobs in addition to their artistic occupation. The respondents in the field of fine arts were asked to characterise their employment situation by choosing one or more of the following alternatives: *artistic work as a free artist, arts-related work, other work, not working*. The alternative "free artist" was chosen exclusively only by 21 percent of the fine artists¹⁴. As much as 60 % had a multiple employment status, which is an outstanding figure compared to other fields. The most common combination was "artistic work – art-related work" (33 %). This indicates that most of the respondents hold an art-related job

¹³ The share of dancers in this data was too small for detailed treatment.

¹⁴ Actually, this can be considered as the number of those (young) artists who make their living from art.

(usually as a teacher) in order to provide an adequate income, and they use their “free” time for making art.

The figures in the Table 3 (page 7) are exclusive, and according to them the number of unemployed respondents is very low. However, on the whole, the number of those who identified themselves as unemployed, while also choosing other alternatives, was higher.

A non-artistic or art-related job has appeared to be a common feature among art professionals. These surveys also indicated the existence of non-artistic work but – apart for fine artists – the situation in this respect was rather satisfying. However, there were also some definitional problems concerning ‘non-artistic’ or ‘art-related’ job. During the first surveys (TA, UIAH) it came clear that the respondents’ views about these concepts varied a lot. Some of the respondents considered teaching as ‘art-related’ while others understood it as ‘artistic’. This tells us about the inner logic of the art fields in question and is certainly valuable information, although it also causes confusion for researcher. Consequently, to get more reliable results the questionnaire was slightly modified. In the latest surveys (AFA, SA) the above mentioned concepts were already defined in the questionnaire in order to avoid the misunderstandings. Thus, there are some inaccuracies when doing comparisons between these four surveys.

Table 4. The proportion of artists doing “other” job (non-artistic or art-related)

<i>Art field</i>	<i>Second job %</i>	<i>N</i>
Theatre	16 %	209
Music	12 %	1045
Fine arts	41 %	179
Crafts and design	24 %	224

Once again, fine artists differ from the others: over 40 % of them has a second job. Generally, the second job for artists in all fields is that of a teacher. Exceptions are theatre artists, who do not work so commonly as teachers. The other job for them was usually some diverse works in other sectors. Dancers, for their part, do make their living mostly by teaching. Teaching was the most common second

job for performing musicians, while music teachers tend to work in several training institutions.

Reasons for multiple jobs were various, but the most frequently indicated reason was economic. This became evident in all fields, but especially in the case of fine artists. However, other reasons were also stated. In music, the respondents announced that they were interested in doing other jobs and it supported their work as an artist. Also, in the fields of theatre and crafts and design, there were many who stated that they were interested in other work and found, e.g., teaching to be rewarding work.

The *recruitment* of artists differs in some respects from that of the other occupations. Reputation and personal relationships are more important regarding employment opportunities and they also affect the level of salary. In other non-artistic occupations, the formal qualifications might have a more important role in this respect. One of the main conclusions from these surveys is that the formal diploma does not influence on employment¹⁵. Table 5 presents the alternatives which were given with respect to recruitment. The list does not include ‘agents’ because at the time of the surveys there were no agents or agencies in Finland. Today, there are a few agencies or recruitment services for actors.

Table 5. Means of recruitment*

	<i>Crafts & design</i> <i>UIAH %</i>	<i>Theatre/Dance</i> <i>TA %</i>	<i>Music</i> <i>SA %</i>
By application	25	29	26
Employer made contact	22	64	30
By answering newspaper advertisement	25	2	33
By personal contacts	21	28	26
Through art university (recruitment service)	12	5	2
Through employment office	1	Not asked	1
Other means	9	7	11

*Information on fine artists is not available since they are not usually employed as artists. The sum does not add up to 100 % because of overlapping choices.

According to the Table 5 it seems that in the arts, recruitment takes place mainly through the initiative of an employer. This is the case especially in the thea-

¹⁵ Exceptions are, once again, ‘art-related’ occupations (teachers, church musicians) from whom the diploma is usually required in order to get a job/post.

tre/dance field, where the great majority had got their jobs in this way. Those who had studied in the UIAH stated that their own activity was the most important way of getting a job. Personal networks did not play as an important role for them as for professionals in other areas.

The newspaper advertisement as a means of employment was most common in case of music professionals (33 %). Those who chose this alternative were mostly church musicians. However, almost as many had chosen the “employer” – alternative. Orchestra musicians are often employed through auditions, which is included here in the group “other means”.

In Finland, there are no auditions for actors but they do nowadays exist to some extent for dancers. With regard to fine artists – and writers as well – one can not talk about “getting employed” in a strict sense of the word. Principally the question is about being able to work. For fine artists, the working possibilities (exhibitions, commissioned works) were also dependent on contacts and on reputation. Having exhibitions is one of the most important ways of getting established as an artist, and this also has to do with the personal network and marketing capabilities. The importance of personal contacts is a world wide phenomenon in the arts. For instance, the British career-study suggests that one of the most important things in artists’ career histories was “building up a presence in the arts world”, namely, creating connections¹⁶.

The work of an art professional usually comes in small pieces. For example, over half of the theatre/dance artists had *several employers* in the arts sector. Also among music professionals it was very common to have several employers (30 % of respondents). This holds true also to music teachers who usually have many training institutions as employers. When it came to small groups like jazz- and folk musicians the proportion of those having several employers was almost 40 %. Concerning crafts and design and fine arts, the information about employers was not available.

¹⁶ Honey – Heron – Jackson 1997:65.

Although the unemployment rate was rather low there was a considerable amount of respondents who stated having *employment difficulties* (Table 6).

Table 6. The share of respondents with employment difficulties

<i>Art field/institution</i>	<i>Employment difficulties %</i>
Theatre Academy /TA	48
University of Arts and design/UIAH	55
Academy of Fine Arts/AFA	Not asked
Sibelius Academy/ SA	17

The graduates from UIAH comprise a group with the highest number of employment difficulties. Textile designers in particular had these problems since about 90 % of them mentioned difficulties in getting a job¹⁷, whereas among graphic designers the proportion was one third. Difficulties in employment were quite common also among theatre/dance artists. Almost half of them reported these problems and women (54 %) seemed to have more often difficulties than men (42 %). The great majority of respondents in this field announced that difficulties were due to the general employment situation. However, about one fourth found that reasons were “other”¹⁸ and also over 20 % announced that “gender” was the reason for their difficult employment situation. In music, the situation was better, since less than one fifth of respondents had had difficulties in employment. Also music professionals considered that the main reason for the problems was the general employment situation. “Other reasons” and “gender” were mentioned as well. The study on architects did not discuss employment difficulties as such, but there seemed to be considerable dissatisfaction concerning the level of income which did not correspond with their expectations (about one third of architects). Also the black market appears to be very common among architects since around

¹⁷ This was due to the difficult situation in the Finnish textile industry after the considerable decrease in the Eastern Trade.

¹⁸ Such as the structure of engagements in Finnish theatres, the authority of theatre directors etc.

40 % of them stated that they have been involved with it. The reason for this was unemployment.¹⁹

The question about employment difficulties was not asked in AFA-survey directly but from other questions one could conclude that over half of the fine artists considered their employment situation as unsatisfactory. The reasons were, among others, insufficient income or weak opportunities for having an exhibition. Nevertheless, many of them (over one third) saw some bright sides in their situation, for example they mentioned that their work is interesting, free and non-routine. In the fine arts the differences between occupations were rather small, but according to these results painters – which were the biggest group – had more difficulties with their career than for example, sculptors.

3.2. Unemployment

The artistic labour force has some typical characteristics also concerning the unemployment. As in any discussion concerning labour markets, there are problems in defining concepts like “unemployed” or “at work”. These are further complicated by the nature of the arts: when a “normal” professional can usually without difficulty say whether s/he is unemployed or working, for artist this is not so easy.²⁰ This is due to the double job-holding, intermittent work contracts, and the high proportion of self-employed or freelancers. Sometimes it is better to use the term under-employed, which means that an artist does not get his/her whole income from the artistic profession, or that this income is very low. Because of the complex nature of employment arrangements in many artistic professions, it is difficult to get reliable statistical information about artists’ unemployment. The unemployment rate of artists is dependent on the definitional decisions and does not tell much without further analysis. For example, in some countries the unemployment rate in cultural field appears to be relatively high. This has been the case

¹⁹ Teknillinen korkeakoulu 1997:34.

²⁰ See, e.g., Towse 1996:10.

e.g., in Sweden.²¹ In reality, the unemployment rate of artists might be even higher than the statistics show, since artists are not always shown in the statistics as artists but they fall under other occupational categories (teachers, journalists etc.) and therefore a part of (unemployed) artists are missing.

Table 7. The proportion of unemployed respondents

<i>Field</i>	<i>% of unemployed</i>	<i>N</i>
Theatre /dance	11	209
Crafts and design	9	224
Fine Arts	13	179
Music	3	1045

Nevertheless, the positive message from these surveys is that the number of unemployed respondents was rather low in all fields. Among fine artists the unemployment rate was highest, 13 %, while in music only 3 % were unemployed. However, it must be borne in mind that this does not refer to the whole field but only to the younger (trained) generation. If we look at the statistics of the Ministry of Labour, the group with highest number of unemployed job-seekers are musicians (see Annex). Another point of noting is the impact of recession on these numbers. The recession period was especially hard in 1994 when the UIAH- and TA -surveys were carried out.

The relatively low unemployment rate may also reflect the fact that artists sometimes have difficulties getting registered as unemployed. For example, they may be treated as entrepreneurs or they do not fulfil the so-called working criteria defined by the labour legislation. This is often the case with young artists. As far as social security is concerned, the demarcation line between self-employed and employed artists is decisive. However, in practice it is often difficult to define which of the two categories an artist belongs to. Some freelancers are caught between the two definitions, and it is not quite clear whether their social security benefits are derived from short-term contracts, or whether they should be registered as indi-

²¹ SOU 1997/183: 59.

viduals pursuing a trade, i.e., self-employed entrepreneurs. When the authorities define an artist either unemployed or (self) employed, they make at the same time decision about the unemployment compensations and consequently about their economic situation. This has also happened to some extent with these respondents.

Over half of those music professionals who had been unemployed reported that they had not received unemployment benefits. The reasons were, for example, 'not enough working time', 'not a member of an unemployment fund' and above all, 'other reasons'. In particular, those who referred to the fact that they were defined as entrepreneurs or that their spouse's income was too high. One composer said that "*it is considered to be impossible that a composer can be unemployed*". Also in fine arts there were many respondents who stated the same reasons.²² Nevertheless, many of the fine artists had received unemployment benefit, but usually as a teacher and not as an artist.

The writer-survey did not exactly deal with the employment but merely with the main sources of income. Among the new writers there were a few who lived with unemployment benefit and could be defined as unemployed. The level of unemployment among graduated architects was high compared to the other art fields, namely 14 % (the share of unemployed women was even 18 %).²³ The situation among architects has been quite severe during the recession years. A special feature of this field is that the market of architects does not take place in the artistic sector but in an entirely different sector (the building trade). The situation is similar to that of graphic artists, who do a lot of work for the publishing industry. Thus, it seems that the core of the cultural sector is not so vulnerable to economic trends partly because in Nordic countries it is highly subsidised. The recession has however influenced the artists working in the borders of the artistic field.

²² In other two surveys this was not asked but the indications to same direction were given in some answers.

²³ Teknillinen korkeakoulu 1997:7.

3.3. Income sources

One point of interest in these studies has been whether an artist lives by the work s/he is trained for. The common knowledge is that artists have to rely on second jobs or otherwise they are on the mercy of the social security systems. This fact and the importance of multiple jobs came evident also from these surveys.

Above all, the surveys verify that there are also differences between art forms in this respect. The work corresponding with their training was the primary source of income for the majority of respondents in the fields of crafts and design and theatre/dance. Among music professionals the situation was quite similar. The proportion of art-related work as an income is relatively high due to the fact that teachers and church musicians are included in the research population (Table 8). Contrary to the others, fine artists made their living by arts-related work or by other means than working (parenthood benefits, unemployment benefits, income of spouse or parents etc.).

Table 8. Main income sources of respondents

	<i>Theatre/dance</i> %	<i>Crafts & design</i> %	<i>Fine arts</i> %	<i>Music</i> %
Artistic work	86	77	27	39
Art-related work	24	9	40	51
Other work	6	6	5	4
Other than work*	NA **	7 100	28 100	6 100
N	209	127	179	1005

*Includes for example a support from partner or spouse, social security etc.

** Concerning theatre/dance the sum does not add up to 100 % since the question was composed differently.

In the case of writers, 40 % had done other than artistic work. Only 3 % of them earned their living from royalties and copyright revenues.²⁴

²⁴ Tuominen 1998: 34.

3.4. Career

One weakness in the quite extensive quantity of studies and statistics on artists has been the lack of information particularly on the artists career paths. Career development as such was not examined in these surveys either. For example, the early years of respondents were discussed only in terms of earlier education. Throsby and Thompson have treated the career-question in their study on Australian artists by dealing with following factors: career stage, restrictions on artistic work and the time spent in artistic work.²⁵ These were not asked in these surveys²⁶ but indications e.g., concerning career stages and obstacles were found also on the basis of this data.

Artists form an interesting group both with regard to labour market situation and career patterns. While the labour market in general is changing in a direction which is characterised by temporary employment, side-jobs etc., this has been reality for artists for a long time. Some researchers have pointed out that artists' employment patterns provide useful information on the careers in general, due to the above mentioned changes in the labour market²⁷.

How can an artistic career can be measured and how to define a “successful” artist – if this kind of definition is needed? One way of examining the milestones of artists' career is to look at the grants, awards, prices and other signs of success and entrenchment.

Through these surveys the career paths can be traced by looking at the following variables:

- Situation after graduation (employment, income, number of employers)
- Grants
- Competitions and prices

²⁵ Throsby – Thompson 1994: 32.

²⁶ In the AFA-survey the working time was asked. See results in Annex.

²⁷ Jackson 1996.

Earlier studies have indicated that for artists, the transition from training to work is a gradual process.²⁸ This was the case among these respondents, too. Both in the fields of theatre and music the students had engagements even before they graduate (if they graduate). The situation of fine artists is, however, quite different. For them, it might take for a while even after graduation to get paid from the artistic work.

Although many artists work during their studies, the reality often strikes only after graduation. Many respondents felt that the professional life took them by surprise. For example, they had to face the non-art work, low incomes and the sense of isolation. The latter applied especially to fine artists. Moreover, they did not receive any more support from the training institution or teachers and other students.

The career of an artist is not so straight-forward as it might be in some other occupations. The instrument for successful career is their own art and through that their own personality which is constantly under a public evaluation. Besides the public opinion, the recognition from colleagues proved to be very important.

Employment situation and grants are discussed in individual chapters (3.1. and 4.). When it comes to *competitions*, in many art fields these might also have an impact on employment and career. However, the importance of competitions varies across the art forms. For example, for dancers, musicians, writers and architects they are an essential part of the career building. In other art fields, competitions are not so important, but there are other forms of recognition (honorary titles and awards). All in all 18 % of theatre/dance artists had got recognition of some type (see Table 9). Over half of them considered that it did not have influence on their employment situation but gave publicity which is of course necessary for a performing artist. The results were quite similar in other art fields, too. For architects, the competitions are important but not necessary for getting a job.²⁹ Writers

²⁸ Throsby – Thompson 1994: 17.

²⁹ Teknillinen korkeakoulu 1997:27.

consider competitions as significant especially before debut since they also serve training purposes by giving writing experience and feedback from their work.³⁰

Table 9. Competitions & prices of the respondents

	<i>Theatre</i> %	<i>Fine Arts</i> %	<i>Music</i> %	<i>Crafts & design</i> %
Received prices	18	34	31	17
No effect on employment*	52	63	45	65

* Concerns only those who have got some kind of awards

4. Grants

When discussing the situation of artists in Finland one can not forget the role of public support. Although the amount of money for direct support for artists is rather moderate, it is a significant way of improving the working conditions of artists and one of the main instruments of arts policy. The promotion of the arts and artistic creation as a task of the public sector is a feature common to all Nordic countries. The importance of the public authorities as financiers of culture is emphasised by the limited size of the markets and the scarcity of private sponsorship.

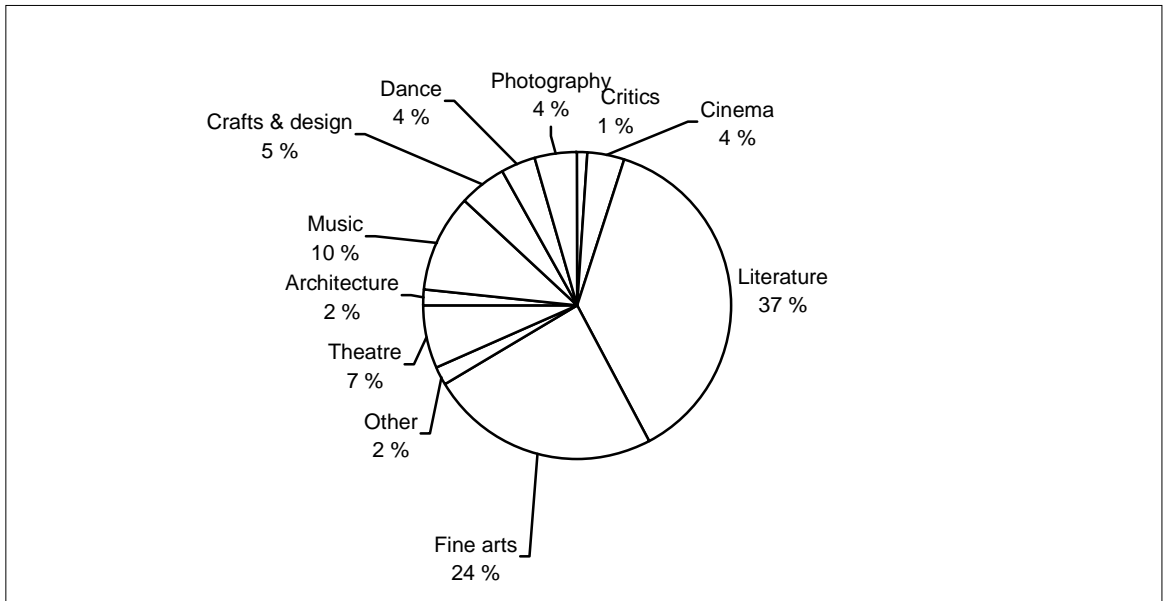
The most important funding body for artists is the state. However, it seems that foundations are reaching this position since according to these surveys, in some art fields the support received from foundations is higher also in monetary terms. However, the overall support by foundations has not got to the level of government support. In earlier studies it also became clear that foundations are a significant supporter of young artists, since state grants usually require a more established reputation. There might also be a hidden threshold for applying especially for the artist grants (for 1-,3- or 5 years). This has been recognised in the arts administration and some steps have been taken to improve the situation. For example, the change in Artists' Grants Act from 1995 has a condition that at least 30

³⁰ Tuominen 1998: 21.

one-year grants should be reserved for young artists or those who are at the beginning of their career.

In 1998 the public support for artists totalled FIM 64,3 million. This was divided by different art forms according to the following figure³¹.

Figure 1. State support³² for artists by art form in 1998 (total = FIM 64,3 million)



STATE GRANTS FOR ARTISTS

- Artist grant for 1-, 3-,5 years
- Project grants
- Travel grants
- Grants for children's culture
- Library compensation grants
- Compensation grants to visual artists

As the above figure shows, the importance of direct public support is obviously greatest among those artists who are self-employed (writers, fine artists, composers).

These groups have also special grant forms and larger quotas than other art forms. Similarly, for freelance performing artists, grants form a significant part of income. Government grants are the most important part of the support, and for fine artists or writers, they are an almost indispensable precondition for working full-time as an artist.

³¹ More about the Finnish system of artists' grants, see e.g. Heikkinen 1995.

³² In addition to grants (see the following page) this sum includes also artist professorships as well as prizes.

In these surveys, the aim was to look at the number of young artists who had received a grant and to discuss the practical impact of grants. The survey questionnaire dealt in detail with the grants (state, municipal, regional, private) of one year. In a given year, 70 % of fine artists and 78 % of theatre/dance artists had applied for a grant (mostly from the state). In music, one fourth of respondents were grant applicants.

Table 10. Some details of respondents' grants

	TA	UIAH	AFA	SA
Year	1992	1992	1994	1996
% of grant receivers in a given year	30 %	20 %	41 %	13 %
% of those who have not applied for a grant	19 %	43 %	9 %	26 %
The most important supporter (in monetary terms)	State	Foundations	State	Foundations
N	209	224	179	1045

The share of those receiving a grant varied by art form (see Table 10). Not surprisingly, the proportion of grant recipients was smallest among musicians and largest among fine artists. Almost everyone of those fine artists who identified themselves as free artists in terms of employment situation, had a grant of some size. The proportion of grant recipients in this field was significantly larger than in other fields, namely 41 % of whom 8 % had received a state artist grant (which provides a living for a period of one-, three-, or five years).

There were also variations in the number of grant recipients according to the occupations within same art form. For example, among actors the proportion of grant recipients was well over one fourth, among dancers 31 % and among photographers 42 %. On the other end, there were fashion and textile designers (7 % grant recipients), performing musicians (17 %), music teachers (11 %) and church musicians (7 %).

An interesting question in the Finnish context is the share of those who *do not apply* for a grant and for what reasons. As the table (10) above shows, among

UIAH-respondents the share of non-applicants was extremely high compared to others. This is due to the characteristics of this field: e.g., most of the professionals in design work as employees or entrepreneurs. The labour market characteristics also seem to influence the number of the music professionals, since among them one fourth had not applied. In the fine arts, for one, there was only a handful of those who had not applied for a grant. There are, of course, many reasons for not applying, but nevertheless these numbers imply different needs. Those who have more or less permanent employment contracts do not need a grant as much as self-employed artists – or for the same purposes. When asked about the reason for not applying, the most frequently stated reason was that grant was not needed due to a full-time work or the assumption that they would not get it anyway. It probably goes without saying that among fine artists there was first of all very few non-applicants and they did not choose the alternative “no need”. Writers have once again a similar situation with fine artists. Almost everyone of new writers had applied for (and most of them also received) a grant.³³

The differences between free artists and salaried workers were once again evident when studying the *importance of grants*. Table 11 (page 23) presents in details the differences concerning the purpose of grant. The information on crafts and design is missing since this was not asked in the UIAH-questionnaire. Moreover, the questions concerning the importance of grant were formulated according to the art field and that is why the given alternatives are not exactly the same for all three art fields. For theatre/dance artists the purpose of the grant seemed to be mostly to support further studies or travel.³⁴ For fine artists, the grant had made artistic work possible (91 % of respondents) and it was also an important source of income for 45 % of fine artists. Music professionals used grant – like those in theatre/dance – for studying abroad.

³³ Tuominen 1998:32.

³⁴ There were differences between occupations. For example, theatre directors and dramaturges stated that the most important way of using a grant was livelihood. Likewise, the employment status made a difference: freelancers used grant for living, employed for studies.

Table 11. The purpose of the grant

	The proportion of choices %		
	<i>Theatre/dance</i>	<i>Fine arts</i>	<i>Music</i>
Further education	35	13	36
Study abroad	59	38	52
Production	31	Not asked	18
Artistic work	Not asked	91	22
Living	20	45	17
Other	8	14	7
For buying an instrument	Not asked	Not asked	33
For participating a competition	Not asked	Not asked	13
n	143	152	607

The sum does not add up to 100 % due to the overlapping choices.

All in all, the grant income seemed to be of crucial importance for freelancers and free artists, in other words, those who get very little market income. In addition to financial support, grants also have a supportive meaning since artists feel that their work is esteemed. *"The grant gave me self-confidence and increased working motivation. It gave a feeling that somebody somewhere appreciates my work"*, wrote one respondent. In addition, a survey addressed to state grant receivers indicated that the recognition -aspect was more important than any other. Over 60 % of the respondents of grant recipient -survey stated that the main importance was the recognition.³⁵

5. Female artists

According to these surveys, the situation of female artists proved to be somewhat different than that of men. One common feature for all art fields is the strong feminisation which has taken place during last two decades. When looking at, e.g., the census data, the growth in the number of women is evident. For example, the proportion of women in all artistic occupations has changed from 30 % to 41 % between 1970 – 1995. The change has been significant in, e.g., groups of visual art-

³⁵ Minkkinen 1999: 27.

ists (from 28 % to 44 %), commercial designers (from 26 % to 50 %) and musicians (from 12 % to 36 %).³⁶ Also the statistics of art university students indicate the same. In 1998 over half of the art university students (all four art universities) were women. The largest proportion of women was in the Academy of Fine Arts (68 % of all students)³⁷. When it comes to these surveys, the majority of respondents were women in all fields except crafts and design, but also in this field some occupations were female-dominated (e.g., textile designers, art teachers). Dancers are mostly women as well as music professionals in general. Exceptions were conductors, jazz musicians and composers which still seem to be men's professions. In the fine arts, painting appeared to be a female-dominated area. In the field of theatre, the gender distribution was rather even.

Among new writers the proportion of women was 51 %. Likewise, the proportion of women of graduated architects was about half.³⁸ In fact, this field was earlier considered to be very male-dominated. According to the census data, the share of female architects was 25 % in 1970 and one third in 1995.³⁹

It is common knowledge that women hold an inferior position in the labour market in general and also in the arts. However, the studies concerning artists' conditions have proved that there does not seem to be any evidence that the artistic success is directly dependent on gender⁴⁰. Yet, some signs of inequality were found also from these surveys.

Mostly these signs were due to the family responsibilities which still lay on the women's shoulders. Family affects e.g., the working time in the arts, since women tend to do less (paid) work than men if they have children. Likewise, women leave the labour market for family reasons (maternity leave or child care leave). It is clear, that the break in professional activities can influence on both the career development and the economic situation. In these surveys, female respondents referred to family responsibilities when informing about their employment situa-

³⁶ Karttunen 1998.

³⁷ KOTA-database.

³⁸ Teknillinen korkeakoulu 1997:3.

³⁹ Karttunen 1998.

⁴⁰ Throsby – Thompson 1995:18.

tion or obstacles related to it. The study on careers of academic women points out that there are fewer women in academic professions and suggests that one reason is that women want to avoid risks.⁴¹ Since the academic work – as well as the artistic one – is often intermittent and the financing unsure, women prefer more secure jobs. In arts, this is shown by the fact that women tend to be teachers more often than men.

The survey of fine artists indicated a clear difference in the situation of men and women. This difference was shown in the income sources, volume of sold art, showing exhibitions and receiving grants. It seems that the field of fine arts is gradually becoming female-dominated but their status is not yet corresponding with their number.

Has gender then been an obstacle in the labour market for art professionals? This question was touched upon with the questions regarding employment difficulties. Among the UIAH-graduates there were no more than 3 % of those who felt that gender had been an obstacle in their career. Not surprisingly, all of them were women. When it comes to music professionals, 5 % stated that the gender had been a reason for difficulties in employment. But – which is noteworthy – the share of those women who were outside the labour market was rather high (25 % compared to 10 % of men).⁴² Very few gender-related problems were stated in the field of theatre/dance. Dancers referred to the low status of their art form which might be caused by the female-domination of this field. Some female actors pronounced that male directors and managers have hindered their career progress.

All in all, the empirical data gives some evidence of the women's inferior position in the artistic labour market compared to men. Female artists seemed to suffer slightly more from unemployment, they tended to have more side-jobs and income sources were more likely to be non-artistic. It is undeniable that there is a bias, considering the fact that female artists are better educated but men get better income. However, if we look at the female artists as a whole, it seems that com-

⁴¹ Haapakorpi 1998:191.

⁴² Reasons for being outside the labour market were such as: leave of absence, child care, parent leave, military service.

pared to the women in other occupations they do a little better. Be that as it may, these surveys and other studies confirm that what really counts is the art form and employment status and not the gender.⁴³

6. Training

6.1. The importance of training

In many artistic professions it is possible to work without formal training, but undoubtedly the importance of training in the arts has been growing during last ten years. Training gives artists as well as other occupational groups qualifications which may help their way in the labour market. Training produces technical qualifications required for certain work as well as formal qualifications such as degrees and diplomas.⁴⁴ Still, trained artists are not automatically employed, and they have to be prepared to work as a teacher or totally outside the arts. Also, an evident conclusion of many studies has been that formal qualifications (degree) have no significance concerning artistic earnings, while in other occupations income level tends to increase with the level of education.⁴⁵

Training is also a significant factor when assessing the status of certain professions. According to profession theories the training is an important instrument of social closure. The formal training criteria forms a shelter and helps professionals to develop their status and protects the occupational group from other (competing) groups. The status of the diploma is essential especially in so called “powerful professions” (doctors, lawyers etc.).⁴⁶

In Finland, the institutions giving higher education in the arts have gained university-status rather recently. This development began in the 1970's when the Institution of Industrial Arts became the University of Industrial Arts (now the University of Art and Design).

⁴³ See, e.g., Heikkinen – Karhunen 1996.

⁴⁴ Ahola – Kivinen – Rinne 1991:45.

⁴⁵ Towse 1996, Wassall – Alper 1992.

⁴⁶ Haapakorpi 1998:187, Kontinen 1993: 8 – 9.

The latest link in this chain was the Academy of Fine Arts getting university status in 1994. Administratively, the higher arts education is part of the general higher education sector and not the arts sector as it still was at the end of the 1980's. This has caused an ambiguous situation for art universities: how to cope at the same time with educational policy requirements and those from the art field? How to fulfil the common (scientific) criteria and to give professional training in practical skills? The change of status has increased the administration in these institutions, which has not always been applauded by students and teachers.⁴⁷ Also the tools of measuring art training have been criticised by some teachers who seem to consider the university status not so necessary for practising artistic profession⁴⁸ (*“Do we have better artists if they have MA or doctorate-degrees?”*).

However, the university -status has led to a growth of resources in the higher arts training. The financial resources of all art universities in Finland have doubled since the beginning of 1980's, but are still far from the average level of other (scientific) universities. In 1998 the government spending for all universities in Finland was FIM 5,6 milliard and the share of four art universities was 5 percent. Nevertheless, if expenditures are counted by degree it appears that art training costs more than the training in scientific universities in general. The expenditures by M.A.-degree were highest in Theatre Academy (about FIM 800 000 versus the average FIM 215 000).⁴⁹ The reasons for higher costs are, for instance, the performing activities of these institutions, instruments and other facilities as well as the small number of students. In fact, this rather straight-forward result is an example of the difficulties which are faced when art universities are placed on the same category with the scientific universities.

Another feature in art training has been the changes in curriculum. New training programmes have been established in all art universities. For example, in the Theatre Academy the degree programmes of music theatre and pedagogy in dance and theatre, in Sibelius Academy the programmes of art management and music

⁴⁷ Art university teachers are in most cases artists.

⁴⁸ Ollikainen 1998.

⁴⁹ KOTA-database.

technology. Also the number of training institutions has increased. The latter concerns mainly polytechnics which have been founded during past few years. Especially visual arts and media have been popular when founding new degree programmes.

Table 11. The proportion of degrees among research populations

<i>Field</i>	<i>% of formal diploma</i>	<i>N</i>
Music	71 %	1045
Fine Arts	*	179
Crafts and design	57 %**	224
Theatre/dance	48 %	209

*All fine artists have obtained the old “artist diploma” since the university degree has been available only after 1993.

** The research population included also students.

In arts, the importance of training has increased along the years, but the attitude towards a degree has not been that simple. Earlier, it was rather common to pass the courses but not to obtain the formal diploma. The number of those with formal degrees still varies according to art fields and different occupations. For example, among music professionals the majority of music teachers and church musicians had a degree, while performing musicians and composers did not seem to regard it so important. A formal degree gives more benefit in art-related jobs (mainly teaching).

Training is also an important instrument of the labour market policy. It is the helping hand when authorities are in trouble with the high unemployment rates. In the artistic field, this is shown e.g., by the fact that the post-graduated studies in art universities have expanded. However, it seems that training is not an answer for unemployment, because it rarely creates new jobs except those for teachers and training administrators.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ Ahola – Kivinen – Rinne 1991: 153.

6.2. Opinions about training

The importance of training from the viewpoint of the individual graduates was examined through the questions concerning opinions about curriculum and the usefulness of training with regard to work. Views about training were varied but some common features could be founded.

One of the aims of these surveys was to study how the work of respondents corresponds to their training and what kind of improvements they expect from training institutions. It turned out that the rate of satisfaction in this respect was relatively high among the artists in all fields (see Table 12). Over half of the theatre/dance artists stated that the training had corresponded rather well with their work. In this field the respondents emphasised especially the importance of practical skills. Theoretical subjects were considered merely a necessary evil. In crafts and design more than a third of the respondents were on the whole satisfied with their studies. Also fine artists and music professionals were satisfied with the correspondence between training and work.

Table 12. The correspondence between training and work

<i>The correspondence between training & work</i>	<i>Sibelius Academy (SA)</i>	<i>Theatre Academy (TA)</i>	<i>University of Art and Design (UIAH)</i>	<i>Academy of Fine Arts (AFA)</i>
good	33 %	40 %	45 %	42 %
partly good	55 %	51 %	46 %	47 %
not at all corresponding	5 %	3 %	5 %	2 %
no answer/could not say	7 %	7 %	4 %	10 %

However, in all fields the majority of respondents also found some shortages in their training (Table 13, page 30). The main complaint concerning the training was the lack of labour market skills and – quite surprisingly – the practical skills. Respondents in music stated that there had been, e.g., lack of courses dealing with human relations, management, marketing and pedagogy. The need for entrepreneurial skills and career preparation came evident from all surveys. This maybe

refers to the fact that respondents feel that they are not qualified enough for professional work.

Table 13. The share of respondents who found shortages in their training

	<i>The share of respondents</i>	<i>What shortages?</i>
Music/SA	61 %	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • subjects connected with practical skills, • labour market skills + some individual courses
Theatre/dance /TA	60 %	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • practical skills • labour market skills
Crafts and design/UIAH	77 %	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • practical skills, • labour market skills
Fine arts/ AFA	81 %	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • practical skills, • labour market skills + art theory

On the positive side, the respondents saw, e.g., good facilities, teachers and some individual courses.

Table 14. The good points in training

Music/ SA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • some courses • versatility of training • teachers
Theatre/dance/ TA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • versatility of training • teachers
Crafts and design/ UIAH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • versatility • independence • teachers
Fine Arts/ AFA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • teachers, personal training/tutoring • some courses

Writers have no professional (university-level) training in Finland. Professional writers are considered to be self-taught but the truth is that many of them have undergone courses on writing.

The graduated architects informed that their training has given them good qualifications for work. Specially they appreciated the artistic and creative part of the education. Architects felt that the training has corresponded well with their work. However, they were dissatisfied with their technical skills, although this is supposed to be the main subject of the curriculum⁵¹.

⁵¹ Teknillinen korkeakoulu 1997:14 – 16.

The surveys also examined respondents' needs for further education. In almost all fields there seemed to be a need for improving professional skills⁵². The great majority of fine artists (80 %) announced that they were interested in further training and over half of the music professionals stated the same. As the following table shows, the needs were rather similar.

Table 15. Needs for further education

Music/SA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedagogy • Artistic training • Career skills (taxation, social security, grants etc.)
Fine Arts/AFA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Artistic training • Career skills • Art theory
Crafts and design/UIAH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedagogy • Artistic training

To sum up, it seems that the respondents were relatively satisfied with the time they had spent in the art university. The thing which probably requires more notice is the relationship between training and labour market skills. In addition, the main objective seems to be to learn artistic profession and skills required to that and not so much to obtain a higher education diploma.

8. Concluding remarks

The statistics about professional training in the arts indicate that the number of applicants and students in this fields is constantly growing. This raises a question: why is the occupation of an artist so attractive although the reward is not secure? Permanent work-places are rare in many fields, income level is known to be low and success is unsecured. However, in spite of the fact that the career of an artist can be hard and requires risk-taking, there are plenty of those who want to try their luck. The economic-oriented explanation has been that the non-monetary

⁵² In TA-survey this was not asked.

benefits (fame, awards, publicity, inspiring work) will compensate for the low earnings and allure people into these occupations. Another explanation is that artists overestimate their future income and even a small possibility of success and high earnings makes them to take a risk.

It has been suggested that the nature of artistic occupation as an uncertain gamble makes it attractive. However, it is more likely that most of those who want to be artists do not even think about earnings and other prosaic things until they have spent some years at work. Actually, the question about economic conditions seems to be non-relevant for many artists. Also some studies have confirmed that, after all, it is not all about the money – other reasons have proved to be as important. For example, Throsby talks about the “driven” artist, namely, a person who does not work only for money but for the satisfaction of creating art⁵³. Karttunen refers to the same phenomenon in her study on Finnish photographers: people choose the artist occupation, e.g., because of the promise of autonomy⁵⁴. Also a Norwegian study on artists emphasises that the need for creation and self-expression were the reasons for choosing the occupation of an artist. The background of this kind of thinking might be the romantic idea of artist’s life.⁵⁵

The fact is that the training in these fields has expanded during past ten years, and this certainly affects the situation in the labour market and also attracts newcomers. The expanding training causes a problem, but on the other hand, it also creates jobs for artists since these institutes need teachers. Be that as it may, these surveys clearly indicate that graduates from art universities want to be first and foremost artists. Another thing is what the real life makes them to do for livelihood.

All in all, these surveys did not point towards serious employment problems or a significant oversupply of artists in Finland. Most of the artists managed to survive as an artist or at least somewhere near the arts. The unemployment in the arts seems to be smaller than in other areas and the number of those who practised

⁵³ Throsby 1994.

⁵⁴ Karttunen 1998: 86.

⁵⁵ This kind of implications are drawn from a Norwegian study on young artists (Aslaksen 1997: 160 – 161).

their profession corresponding to training was notable. In the case of fine artists the situation was not exactly bright but nevertheless the number of drop-outs was small also in this field.

Moreover, these surveys confirm the well-known fact that "artists" can not be discussed as a coherent group without getting into trouble, to say nothing about the comparability of artist occupations with other occupational groups. The large and mixed field of crafts and design is a good example of that.

What kind of impact the new technology will have on employment in artistic professions is still rather an open question. It seems that the new media will increase working opportunities, but so far there is very little research or statistics on the volume of jobs in this field and the real effects remain to be seen.

These surveys map out the labour market situation of artists in some fields. However, more information about, e.g., the career development and income strategies is needed. There is a need for both follow-up studies and also to broaden the research object. Namely, artistic training – at least in Finland – is taking place in many polytechnics which still form an unknown area when it comes to the situation of graduates. Interest for these questions is not diminishing. On the contrary, there seems to be a growing need to know more about the facts of the employment in the arts.

Key findings

	Theatre	Music	Fine arts	Crafts and design
Labour market characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing number of freelancers • Institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees • Institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free artists • Side-jobs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees
Most important employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theatres • TV • Cinema 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Music schools • Parishes • Orchestras 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-employed • Art schools (second job) 	NA
Proportion of freelancers/free artists (exclusively) %	38 %	8 %	20 %	9 %
Employment difficulties %	48 %	17 %	NA	55 %
Main income source	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Artistic work corresponding to training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Artistic • Art-related (teaching) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art-related (teaching) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Artistic work corresponding to training
Grant recipients in a given year %	30 %	17 %	41 %	18 %
Most common use for grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Studies abroad 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Studies abroad 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art work • Living 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NA

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