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Exactly who and what is a photographic artist?
Experimenting with emic criteria in a 'Status-of-an-artist study'

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EXPERIMENTING WITH EMIC CRITERIA
IN A 'STATUS–OF–AN–ARTIST STUDY'

CONTENTS

TABLES

EXACTLY WHO AND WHAT IS A PHOTOGRAPHIC ARTIST?

Experimenting with emic criteria in a 'status-of-an-artist study'[1]

>"Art worlds typically devote considerable attention to trying to decide what is art and what isn't art, what is and what isn't their kind of art, and who is and who isn't an artist; by observing how an art world makes those distinctions rather than trying to make them ourselves we can understand much of what goes on in that world" (Becker 1984, 36).

Operationalising the artist

The article takes as its theme the problem of demarcating the population to facilitate surveys of artists. It is specifically confined to 'status-of-the-artist' studies. The term, SA studies henceforward, is used to refer to cultural-political studies of the social and economic conditions of professional artists, those typically commissioned by public art administration bodies, art institutions or artists' organisations. These may be characterised as labour-market studies of artists with a special emphasis on public art policies. SA studies are usually carried out by sociologists or economists in the form of large-scale surveys, most often postal questionnaires. (For this genre, see Karttunen 1998a, 1–2.)

To proceed with the empirical study, the SA scholar needs to conceptualise the artist and then make this concept operational. Since there are no official licensing requirements for the practice of art, other standards have to be found or devised for identifying artists. This task has proven to be profoundly problematic irrespective of the country or the art form involved. It has been established that there cannot be a universal definition for the artist, but that one has to be created separately for each context, taking each specific research question and availability of data and resources into account. (See, e.g., Frey & Pommerehne 1989, 146–147; Jeffri & Throsby 1994; Karttunen 1998a; Mitchell & Karttunen 1992; Moulin et al. 1985, 8–26.)

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[1] An early draft of this article was prepared for the European Symposium on the Status of the Artist, Espoo, Finland, May 30 – June 2, 1992. The method was further described in the final report on the status of photographic artists in Finland (Karttunen 1993, 53–62). The data has been re-analysed for the current purpose.

SA scholars have used varying criteria, or sources, for piecing together their research population, e.g., earnings from art, time spent producing art, the possession of artistic credentials or the membership of a professional organisation. Potential names have been culled from arts institutions, art journals and newspapers' cultural sections, even from telephone directories or customer lists from suppliers of artistic materials. (See Frey & Pommerehne 1989, 146–147; also Karttunen 1998a.)

Demarcation of the population is a key stage in an SA study. It may well have major impact on the findings, affecting not only the volume and constitution of the different artist groups, but also the level of their incomes and the extent of public support for them. What is more, in the cultural-political context, the establishment of the criteria for the artist may have concrete social and economic significance for the people who qualify, not to speak of those who are being rejected. These study results will be utilised in the planning of future policies, and even the criteria themselves may be adopted when eligibility for public support is decided.

Elstad (1997, 271) claims that all identification methods cover only a particular segment of the artistic fields. All definitions are partial, hence they are biased towards a certain conception of the title and its rightful bearers. This would oblige the SA scholar to reflect on his or her judgements and their implications at the scientific and political level. Moreover, as Throsby and Thompson (1994, 3) advise, the reader should be pointedly asked to take note of the definitional approach adopted and to recognise the extent and limitations of the coverage of the study when interpreting the results.

Selection of criteria for the artist involves far-reaching statements concerning the image of the artist and the nature of his work. This article will focuse on the choice between an 'emic' and an 'etic' approach[1], and its implications at the theoretical and practical levels. The question is whether we should adopt the definitions found in the art world, especially among artists themselves, or may researchers devise their own conception of the artist.

Social scientists, typical SA scholars, and the art-world participants are inclined to maintain almost opposed images of the artist. Zolberg (1990, 109) characterises the internalist theory as individualistic. It portrays the artist as a

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[1] The terms emic and etic, coined by the American linguist Kenneth Pike (1967), refer to an account made from a perspective indigenous to a social situation versus one made from an exogenous perspective.

born genius, a unique self-sufficient individual who carries out creative, non-routine work while being totally independent from external pressures. The sociological conceptualisation in contrast sees 'art as collective action' and the 'artist as worker' enmeshed in a social network. Social scientists construct the artist as a social role or type. As opposed to the romanticised image, they prefer to see artists as just one occupational group among others and focus on the institutional supports and constraints surrounding their activities. (Zolberg 1990, 8–11, 107–135; see also Peterson 1985.)

The article draws empirically on the experience in an extensive research project on the status of artists conducted at the Arts Council of Finland (ACF). Conducted between 1985 and 1996, the project covered eight art forms altogether. Membership of recognised professional associations was employed as the principal criterion for the artist. This did not however function in photographic art, and the other common methods of identification were not found to be feasible either. Eventually photographic artists were identified by means of interviews with informants coming from the world of photography itself. The definitional approach was here consciously emic: the aim was to grasp and apply the viewpoint of the system under study.

The ACF project report on the status of photographic artists was published in 1993 (Karttunen 1993). The current article is based on further analysis of the interviews conducted in 1990–1991, and the reading of the data is now somewhat different from the one received in the original setting (cf. ibid. 53–62). In the meantime the researcher has deepened her understanding of the photographic world and the occupation of photographic artist by exploring their formation from the 'social closure' perspective (see, e.g., Murphy 1988). The idea has basically been to conceive of art-world formation as being a process resembling professionalisation, involving both exclusionary and inclusionary closures, aiming at a monopolisation of scarce social and economic resources. New data was gathered in 1994–1995 through some 40 interviews with artists and other art-world participants (see Karttunen 1998b). Additionally, a statistical mapping of the allocation of state stipends in photographic art in 1969–1999 was carried out, and the ACF report was updated with respect to incomes over a new cross-section year (Karttunen 1999a, 1999b). All this constitutes a revised framework for interpretation.

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The article sets out with a detailed description of the method employed to identify Finnish photographic artists and the outcome it produced. The assets and liabilities of such an approach will then be looked into as well as its potential impact on the findings. Eventually the possibility of putting the method to wider use in similar status-of-the-artist studies will be considered. Ultimately the question to be posed is whose conception of the artistic profession – and art itself – should prevail in the art-political context?

Project on the status of artists in Finland

AIMS AND SCOPE

In the mid-1980's, the Arts Council of Finland (ACF) initiated a research project on the status of artists in the country. The aim was firstly to explore the volume and characteristics as well as the socio-economic conditions of various artistic groups, and secondly to evaluate the effects of government *artist policies*, in particular the extensive grant system established as part of a major reform of the arts administration and policies in the late 1960's. It was a question of a follow-up to a series of studies conducted at the outset of the grant system in the early 1970's.

The project was carried out between 1985 and 1996, and covered eight art forms in all: cinema, dance, graphic design, literature, music, photographic art, theatre and the visual arts. The division of art forms was consistent with the domains of the national arts councils; of the nine state-recognised art forms, only architecture remained unconsidered. I myself was responsible for the domains of visual art (painting, sculpture and art graphics) and photographic art (Karttunen 1988 & 1993).

With respect to scientific background the Finnish project was a typical SA study. It drew on the sociology of occupations, the sociology of art and cultural-economic studies of artists' labour markets. The methodological emphasis was quantitative. Instead of a questionnaire, the data was however collected unobtrusively from various archives and registers. The income data in particular was derived from the national tax register files. What was most important for the definitional approach, artists were not picked out from the files by occupation declared on tax reports, but with the help of name lists compiled by the researchers

according to criteria they had chosen as being the most appropriate for each art form.

TARGET POPULATIONS AND THEIR IDENTIFICATION

The task of evaluating the effects of state art policies reflected on how artists came to be defined in the project. In the ACF context, 'artist' refers primarily to a person who would in principle qualify for state funding. The central devices within our grant system are one-, three- and five-year stipends. In addition a minimum of eight artist-professors are appointed for a period of 3–5 years, or even permanently. On artists are also bestowed project grants for equipment, materials, rents, travel, etc. Such devices are in the first place intended for supporting professional artists of high standard. Three- and five-year stipends, as well as project grants, are meant for artists "who have already proven their creative capability", and the artist-professors are expected to be "especially outstanding artists".

In Finland, the official definition of the artist is carried out by the art world itself, or, more precisely, by a particular well-organised and institutionalised segment of it. Grants are allocated by nine art form-specific National Councils for Art and the ACF, their joint body being composed of their chairpersons. These arts councils, functioning at arms-length from the Ministry of Education, are a corporatist type of arrangement. Their members, appointed for a period of three years, are chosen from candidates proposed by prominent organisations and institutions in their respective art fields. The majority are themselves professional artists.

In the ACF project, the membership of a recognised professional association was taken as the principal criterion for the artist (Table 1). For obvious reasons, given the corporatist grant-distribution system, the level of unionisation is notably high among Finnish artists. Membership criteria vary in these associations, but usually admission is granted by a jury on the basis of artistic activity and standard. The study populations were supplemented from various auxiliary sources; for instance, recent art school graduates were included to identify would-be artists. Art-form specific biographical directories of the Who's Who type compiled by arts organisations or institutions were also frequently used, as were the grant registers maintained by the public arts administration bodies.

TABLE 1. THE ACF PROJECT ON THE STATUS OF ARTISTS 1985-1996: CATEGORIES
OF ARTISTS COVERED AND SOURCES FOR THEIR IDENTIFICATION

Art form	Principal categories of artists included	Primary sources	N
Dance	dancers, choreographers, dance teachers	associations, national umbrella or- ganisation directory, grant registers	563
Film	directors, producers, cinematog- raphers; stage, costume and sound designers	the Finnish Film Foundation, the Finnish Film Archives, grant regis- ters, associations.	524
Graphic design	graphic designers, illustrators, comic artists	associations, schools, artistic pro- duction	999
Literature	fiction writers	associations, grant registers, the Finnish Literature Society directory	1149
Music	composers, conductors, musi- cians, singers	associations	4131
Photographic art	photographic artists	interviews with informants	175
Theatre	actors, dramaturges; stage, cos- tume, light and sound designers; directors, managers	associations, schools, grant regis- ters, theatre artists' directory	1686
Visual art	painters, sculptors, graphic artists	associations, the national umbrella organisation directory, grant regis- ters, schools	1314

Sources: Karttunen 1988 (visual art), Heikkinen 1989 (literature), Irjala 1993 (music), Karhunen 1993 (theatre), Karttunen 1993 (photographic art), Karhunen & Smolander 1995 (dance), Oesch 1995 (film) and Heikkinen 1996 (graphic design).

SPECIAL PROBLEMS CONCERNING PHOTOGRAPHIC ART

The idea to take 'photographic artists' as a subject of study derived from the sta- tist division of art forms. Photographic art has been one of the state-recognised art forms since the mid-1960's[1], and the people engaged in this art form are customarily referred to as 'photographic artists'. Nevertheless, the term did not appear in the first round of the ACF studies in the early 1970's. Sihvonen (1975) conceived of his universe of study as professional photographers. The popula- tion (1 100) was compiled from photographers' professional organisations, photographic studios, telephone directories and mailing lists of importers of photographic equipment. Emphasising photography's relation to the mass me- dia, Sihvonen hardly referred to the notions of art or artist. At the time, Finnish photography was dominated by documentarism and political radicalism, and

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[1] Between 1964 and 1976 it formed 'camera art' together with cinema, but since 1977 photographic art has possessed its own arts council.

anything smacking of 'aesthetic elitism' or 'art for art's sake' ideology was banned.

Moreover, 'photographic artist' was initially defined quite broadly in the art administration. In 1969, to prepare for the enforcement of the new grant system, the ACF had called on the recently established national art councils to define the artist within their domains. The National Council for Camera Art listed the following groups with respect to photographic art: photographers, independent photographic artists, people undertaking graphic or trick photography as well as people designing photographic assemblages (ACF 24.10.1969).

At the outset of the 1990's, it seemed that photographic artists could no longer be defined as widely as Sihvonen had. The photography scene had gone through notable changes since the late 1960's, both at home and abroad. Photography had gained more recognition as an art form, and the medium had become fashionable among visual artists. (See, e.g., Grundberg 1990; Crimp 1990.) In Finland, the photographic 'art world' had in fact been constructed during this interval – largely with help of state funding – including the national museum for photography, photographic galleries and centres, training institutions and programmes, plus artists' associations. In addition, as Lintonen (1988) established in her study, towards the late 1970's Finnish photography had begun to differentiate more clearly into three separate sectors: artistic, professional and amateur. The decade witnessed the first professional photographic artists living on grants and teaching jobs without having much contact with applied photography at all.

The starting point for the current study is that not all photographers are artists at all. The population was first loosely defined as *people who make photographs with artistic intentions and/or for artistic purposes.* Christopherson (1974a, 32) characterised a parallel group as "persons who create and distribute photographs specifically as 'art'". He described them further as follows:

> "They organize their professional activities in ways which distinguish them from other photographic roles in our society and they define themselves primarily as artists rather than journalists, commercial photographers, or hobbyists. Their photographs are displayed in museums, art galleries, and are published in certain books and journals which deal with photography as an art form." (Ibid.)

The working definition seemed reasonable enough, but how can you single out such people? In contrast to the other art forms in the ACF project, associations did not appear to serve here. Among the numerous photographic associations in Finland, two employed 'photographic art' in their title, but neither seemed to

qualify as such. Membership of the Society for Photographic Art (170 in 1990) consisted of all kinds of people interested in photographic art, not just the practitioners themselves. The Union of Artists in Photography (UAP) in turn had been founded only in 1988, and had some 60 members at the time[1]. As the UAP was still in the formative phase, this group was considered too limited for the purposes of the ACF study.

Other common methods for identifying artists failed as well. Training for instance did not differentiate between types or uses of photography[2]. Exhibition spaces were similarly shared by all genres, and the same held true for the collections and archives of the Museum of Photographic Art. In like manner, the ACF grant register comprised a wide variety of photographers and could not have been used without further criteria being applied. The prevailing statist definition of photographic artist, which reflects on the distribution of grants, was based on a wide representation of the various photographic organisations, ranging from art to applied photography, and including not only professional practice but also amateur photography[3].

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[1] Admission to the UAP is granted on conditions resembling those of the other visual artists' unions. According to the statutes from 1989, a person may be accepted as a member of the UAP if he has undertaken training in the domain and has presented at least two works (photographic exhibitions, competitions, books, etc.). People without training were expected to present three works at the minimum. In exceptional cases "very valid proof as a photographic artist" may suffice.

[2] At the time, there were two major training institutions for photographers in Finland, the University of Arts and Design Helsinki (UIAH) and the Lahti Institute of Design. Both had launched degree programmes in photography in the early 1970's. At the UIAH, the subject was called photographic art, while Lahti used photography, but actually both curricula included all photographic branches. There were no special options for students wishing to concentrate on photography's artistic uses. It was only in 1997 that the UIAH established an MA option for art.

[3] The allocation of rewards depends largely on which associations and organisations are represented in the national councils. Ultimately it is up to the Ministry of Education, upon pressure from the art field, to choose which associations to hold as prominent in their domain. In photographic art the pool of organisations has extended from technical-scientific photographers to camera-clubbers, thus covering both applied and artistic uses of the medium, as well as professional and amateur activity. For the range of grant-recipients in photographic art, see Karttunen 1991 and 1999b.

Interviews with photographic informants

The more usual identification methods falling short, it was decided to construct photographic artists as *people who are known as such within the institutions and the world of photographic art.* This type of criterion is often called reputational. As the aim here was to grasp the indigenous definition of the artist, the method can be characterised as 'emic'.

In practice, Finnish photographic artists were identified by interviewing informants from within the photographic field. The main goals set for the interviews were twofold: 1) to acquire a list of names of photographic artists, and 2) to apprehend a definition of substance for the term 'photographic artist'. Making use of the concepts of philosophy, these definitions could be called *extensional* (or indicative) and *intensional.*

This kind of active, contact-seeking approach was believed to be fruitful for explorative purposes in the case of this not-yet-established and little-studied art form. This seemed especially important as the actual research data was to be collected unobtrusively. The photographic world seemed moreover limited enough to enable experimentation with such an exceptional and seemingly laborious method.

The idea of using an expert panel for identifying the population was taken from MacKinnon's study of architects' creativity (1960). He used a panel consisting of professors of architecture in five distinguished universities and the editors-in-chief of the most important architectural journals. They were asked to name 40 creative American architects and to give them scores ranging from 1 to 5. The questionnaire characterised creativity in general terms, leaving its specification to the respondent.[1] In contrast to MacKinnon, the photographic informants were not asked to rank artists according to any standard; on the contrary, definition in the sense of classification was emphasised.

The informants were informed of the goals of the study and the problem of identifying the population of artists in general terms, and they were asked for expert assistance in solving this problem. The interviews were semi-structured. When the interviewee brought up issues relevant to the social and economic status of photographic artists, additional probing was conducted. This led into open discussion on the institutions of photographic art, the income sources and

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[1] Häyrynen (1992) used MacKinnon's method in her study of Finnish architects.

strategies of photographic artists, their career patterns, the role of state art policies in shaping the occupation, and so on.

The informants were chosen by a referral process: each informant was asked to recommend others for an interview so that a comprehensive view of the matter could be obtained. To avoid circularity interviewing was started at several points in diverse sections of the field (e.g., applied photography versus art photography; variation in age and place of residence, etc.). After 14 informants contributed, the interviewing was discontinued because of a slackening off in the suggestions for further informants. There was overall considerable overlap in the referrals. As for the accrual of artists' names, a national core emerged receiving more and more mentions, while odd names kept cropping up.

The 14 informants represented both sexes (six women and eight men), different generations (from 26 to 57 years of age), varied educational backgrounds (from self-taught to MA, coming from different art schools), and diverse geographical regions (from nine different localities). The variety of photographic occupations was well-represented: besides those engaged in primary practice as photographers or artists, there were teachers, students, editors, critics, historians, gallery-keepers, etc. Eleven informants had been practising photography themselves. They had been involved in advertising, documentary, nature or press photography, or in photographic art as employees, freelancers, or independent practitioners. Many informants had also been acting as elected officials in photographic associations and public arts administration bodies. Most informants had occupied multiple roles in the field, often many at the same time. All in all, they had a comprehensive knowledge of the field and could be considered a true panel of experts.

The problem itself was an actual one for many informants. At the time of the interviews, many were preparing articles for an historical work that was to be published in 1992 to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Finnish photography. They had been pondering questions concerning the formation of Finnish photography, its canon, its central figures as well as the very definition of art and artist within photography. The book was eventually entitled *The art of photography* (Valokuvauksen taide).

The interviews were conducted in December 1990 and January 1991. Four of them were carried out on the telephone and ten face-to-face. Telephone interviews were relatively short, from a quarter to half an hour, while the latter lasted from one to one and a half hours. Seven interviews were taped and transcribed.

The non-taped interviews were noted down and a clean copy of the notes was made immediately. The 14 interviews produced altogether some 85 typewritten sheets.

Although only a few informants insisted on absolute secrecy, the interviews will be reported on anonymously (Informant 1 – Informant 14). Table 2 describes the informants' characteristics in broad terms.

TABLE 2. KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE 14 INFORMANTS

No	Sex	Age group[1]	Region of residence	Formal training in photography	Principal photographic occupations
1	M	I	Turku & Pori	–	photographer, gallery-keeper
2	F	II	Uusimaa	completed degree	photographer, teacher, writer
3	F	I	Uusimaa	–	writer-critic, teacher
4	F	II	Uusimaa	completed degree	writer-critic, photographer
5	M	II	Uusimaa	–	writer, photographer
6	M	I	Mikkeli	student / dropout	photographer, gallery-keeper
7	F	II	Uusimaa	–	gallery-keeper, writer
8	F	I	Uusimaa	student	student, photographer
9	M	II	Central Finland	–	photographer, gallery-keeper
10	M	II	Uusimaa	–	teacher, photographer, writer-critic
11	M	II	Häme	completed degree	teacher, photographer
12	M	II	North Karelia	–	photographer, gallery-keeper
13	M	II	Häme	completed degree	photographer, gallery-keeper
14	F	I	Oulu	–	gallery-keeper, writer

[1] I = under 35, II = over 35.

Intensional definition of the photographic artist

To elicit an intensional definition – a definition of substance – for the photographic artist, the informants were posed questions of the following type:

> What does the term 'photographic artist' mean in your mind?
> What kind of people would you call photographic artists?
> What do you regard as the distinguishing features of a photographic artist?

CHARISMATIC EMPHASIS

For a start, several informants characterised the photographic artist as "an artist who uses photography as his medium of expression". The definition seems medium-based, yet the stress was on the term 'artist': rather than 'photographic

artists' most informants tended to think in terms of 'artists within photography'[1]. The distinguishing features of an artist were seen as essentially the same across all art forms and media.

The photographic informants drew heavily on the mythical, or, as Bourdieu calls it, the 'charismatic' conception of the artist (see, e.g., 1993, 34–35). They relied on the traditional parameters of visual art, adopting the rhetoric painters used when separating themselves from craftsmen and artisans during the Renaissance, and opposing the bourgeois in the aftermath of Industrialism (see, e.g, Wolff 1981; Bourdieu 1969). Artists were claimed to have intellectual, humane, non-utilitarian, non-commercial goals. Their work was seen as self-expression requiring special talent, free and creative activity as opposed to routine, non-creative employment or commission that is controlled from outside and tied to strict schedules.

In photographic literature, the contrast between intellectual and mechanical work is often made with the terms 'interpretation' and 'reproduction' (see, e.g., Lintonen 1988, 12). The informants understood the artist's works as a visual expression of how he saw the world, whereas the ordinary photographer merely pressed the button, the machine recording whatever happened to be in front of it. The latter's work was seen as defined by certain objective and learnable skills, whereas the artist's work went beyond technique. In Informant 1's words, "the most essential thing is not technical skill, but vision". Informant 9 emphasised the artist's "active intervention", and Informant 8 in turn stressed the artist's world-view as the intervening factor. Informant 3 stated that the artist's works convey ideas. The mechanical tool as such was not mentioned as a hindrance to making art: the question was how you use the camera and who uses it.

The informants further claimed that in an artist's work you can perceive the 'author' and his touch. Informant 1 demanded that the artist should have his own signature and his own mode of expression. The artist was expected to be palpable in his œuvre:

> "An artist's production is epitomized by unity, by maintaining a line. It does not just consist of random good pictures. The artist has his own handwriting and his own way of thinking." (Informant 2.)

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[1] It is revealing that Valokuvataiteilijoiden liitto was first translated as The Union of Photographic Artists, but later changed into The Union of Artists in Photography. – In Finnish, the word 'photographic artist' (valokuvataiteilija) is composed of three parts: light (valo) + picture (kuva) + artist (taiteilija).

The informants nurtured the 'ideology of autonomous art' which conceives the artist's ideas as evolving from his inner world and denies extraneous influences and pressures (see Wolff 1987). According to Informant 6, "it is only the author's artistic vision and the need to produce that guide the emergence of the work". In view of the necessity of maintaining autonomy, it was questionable to start out from a theme, especially one given from the outside. Informant 10 nevertheless wished to discern two types of photographic artists, the Platonic maker-god and the Aristotelian planner. The latter, he knew, was not widely considered an artist at the time:

> "There are two types of photographic artists, the author pursuing the traditional artist's role and the planner-photographer. The first photographer type is the Platonic maker-god who creates works from inside himself by divine inspiration. — —. Having finished the works the maker-god brings them before the public. — — . The other type of photographer is an Aristotelian planner who starts out from a theme. The process and the reference can be seen in the end product; this, in other words, demonstrates something other than the 'author'." (Informant 10.)

Informant 2 and Informant 8, both primarily documentary photographers, expressed ideas similar to Informant 10. "If you make pictures on a subject matter or on a theme, it may yet be art", Informant 2 said.

Although anything at all could in principle serve as material for the artist's personal expression, most informants saw a limitation to one subject area as suspicious. Informant 4's comments on the position of nature photographers were revealing in this respect. In her opinion, the majority of them did not seem to belong among photographic artists, for they had in a way "chosen their subject and thus another field". Yet she added that "some people who photographed nature approached it on such a plane that they had clearly stepped into the domain of photographic art".

A good part of photo-journalism and documentary-making were counted as art, if seen as being carried out with humanist motives and without economic interest[1]. Informant 8 for instance stated that a documentary can be photographic art if it clearly expresses the photographer's world-view. What she defi-

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[1] In an article on Sebastião Salgado, Stallabrass (1997) uses the concept 'fine art photo-journalism', and suggests that galleries and book publishing provide today one of the few ways photographers could avoid the restrictions imposed by the mass media (p. 133). An important strand running through Finnish photographic art could perhaps be labelled as 'fine art documentary'.

nitely wanted to exclude from the category of art was "non-personalised documentary".

RELEVANCE AND IRRELEVANCE OF EXTERNAL HALLMARKS

A central tenet of the Romantic myth is that artists are born, not made (see, e.g., Zolberg 1990, chapter 5). The informants accordingly rejected studies at art schools and degrees from them as the identification livery for the artist. This held true regardless of their own educational background. (Cf. Moulin et al. 1985, 52; Adler 1979, 3.) In Informant 9's opinion, training would not turn anybody into an artist, because "you cannot teach the impulse to conscious self-expression". Informant 8 believed it to be impossible to study to become an artist: "you become an artist, if you are to become one".

The informants nevertheless admitted that training could help someone becoming an artist for reasons that could be characterised as social, or sociological. Informant 2, who had been teaching for many years at several schools, pointed to the chance of meeting people who were interested in the same issues, something which often resulted in lifelong formative contacts. Some teachers acted as crucial gatekeepers and could help their protégés to build a successful career. Attending an art school guaranteed access to the art world's networks, and it was right there that you learned how to be an artist. The art schools, especially the UIAH, mediated a model of the independent artist living from teaching jobs and grants without undertaking commercial photography. For many students, the idea of using photography for artistic purposes and then making this their career occurred only after they commenced their studies.

Informant 6 suggested training to be one of the distinguishing features of the photographic artist in terms of phylogeny. He referred to the fact that independent photographic artists had emerged in Finland only after the establishment of training institutions in the early 1970's. Informant 2 similarly emphasised the role of these institutions in the making of the photographic artist. She claimed it would be difficult to find artists outside their orbit: the majority had at some point of their lives been either studying or teaching at the UIAH or the Lahti Institute of Design. Informant 4 stated that "training is one criterion for the photographic artist in the respect that most of these people have gone through the training phase".

Like the establishment of training institutions, the state grant system was also seen as crucial for the evolution of the 'independent photographic artist'. It

had provided the economic preconditions for full-time practice. Informant 4, who herself had been involved with the state arts administration, surmised that the majority of photographic artists could be found among the recipients of state support (but there were also many non-artists).

Informant 3, Informant 6 and Informant 10 considered membership of the UAP a sufficient, yet not a necessary condition for the photographic artist. In Informant 4's opinion, it was a "basic" criterion. At the time of the interviews, it seemed that most potential UAP members had already joined it (Informant 6 had listed some 20 persons he expected still to join). A few key figures were known to have purposively remained outside it – some of them in principle resisting unions within the arts – , and its membership was believed to be skewed towards the young.

Not one informant demanded that the photographic artist live from the practice of art. Firstly, the market for photographic works was claimed to be so restricted in Finland that nobody could gain a living wage from sales. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, the income criterion would violate the fundamental principle that art is not – and should not be – made for the sake of money (Informant 2). Though opposing the market criterion, the informants debated long the typical, ideal and acceptable means of subsistence for the photographic artist. What is more, these issues appeared to have a crucial bearing who they would nominate as an artist.

Several informants maintained that subsistence from art would be the ideal for the photographic artist. It would then be a "natural" criterion; after all, occupation usually counts as the work you do to earn your living (Informant 4). In addition to sales, teaching was included as artistic work and seen as an essential part of the occupation. Grants, state grants in particular, were also mentioned as being an important source for supporting photo-artistic work in Finland. This was said to hold true especially for a certain sub-category operating in the mode of visual artist, making free artworks to be exhibited in galleries. This is the group that Informant 10 labelled as 'maker-gods': they concentrated on their aesthetic endeavours, while the state picked up the cab.

Informant 14 noted that in truth many Finnish photographic artists earned their living from something other than their arts practice. Several informants made a sharp distinction between artistic work – the artist's 'own' work – and

bread-and-butter jobs, implying that people were forced to undertake work outside their vocation for financial reasons. This usually meant entering the commercial world of applied photography rather than strictly non-photographic jobs. Informant 6 however claimed that holding multiple jobs was not caused by the impossibility of sustaining oneself by photographic art. "This illusion" was maintained only by those "who have not conceived of themselves as artists yet" and "who allow themselves too much liberty to do everything else". Informant 4 also suspected that there might be other than economic reasons for undertaking applied photography.

Informant 6, who maintained the most purist art-world ideology, demanded that the artist keep his distance from commercial work and not put his skills on the market. Informant 8 and Informant 12, both orientated towards documentary-work, were ready to approve of commissions provided that the artist was given a high degree of freedom. Informant 12 noted that assignments were quite common in many other art forms, hence they would not prevent art from happening in photography. Informant 2 claimed to have witnessed art being produced under commission, citing examples from architecture and theatre photography. In her view, a proportion of the so-called professional work might be regarded as art, even great art, yet this was quite exceptional. Informant 5 suggested as an instance that advertising photographers could be counted as artists on the same plane as industrial designers who undertook exclusively commercial work.

Most informants held consistency of artistic activity as an essential criterion for the artist[1]. Informant 4 and Informant 6 maintained that if a person persistently kept up his artistic production, he was a photographic artist no matter how he earned his living. In view of the purposes of the study, Informant 6 additionally suggested to leave out people with no evidence of practice over the last five years.

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[1] In spite of the requirement of long-term activity, a few young artists, 25–30 years old, were recognised as artists without question. Thanks to an early and vigorous start, these individuals had already managed to win a sound position. Theirs had been a pure artist's career right from the beginning. This would not have been possible for the older generation, for earlier there had been no training available in photography. Besides, there was no such thing as a photographic artist in their youth – not even as a concept.

Informant 2 emphasised that it would not suffice to be productive; the artist also had to bring his production before the public. A person who made art for his own satisfaction only could not be counted as an artist in this connection. Informant 9 stated that "to be called an artist means having a name in the public domain". He demanded that the photographic artist strove consciously to make works to be shown to other people in museums, galleries, magazines, books, etc. In his opinion, it was only through this kind of display that one attained the right to the title.

One-off masterpieces were seen as a dubious yardstick for an artist. Informant 7 maintained that it was not enough to show talent, but you had to give proof of strength, too. The interviewees noted that some people had a reputation on the photo-art scene depending on one major work, and they wondered whether to include them in the study population. Informant 8 noted that this one work was often done for the art school's diploma. Similarly, the winning of prizes was not seen as an adequate benchmark for the artist, for these were often awarded on the basis of one work or one series only. It might be just a lucky throw, Informant 2 warned.

Informant 6 stated that not everybody with an exhibition was an artist. In his view, studio photographers' exhibitions usually corresponded to proof of reaching journeyman standard. Indeed, for some people exhibitions were counted as assets, while for others they became a hindrance. This is illustrated by two press photographers of the older generation (similar pairings were picked out from among nature photographers as well). Both of them were regarded as good, even excellent press photographers. They were both exhibiting their works quite often, yet only one of them was praised for this achievement. "Even though he has earned his living as a press photographer, his frequent exhibitions and manner of working slots him into the domain of art" (Informant 4). For the other photographer, exhibitions only succeeded in offering further proof of his *not* being an artist: "You cannot turn photography into art by hanging it on a wall" (Informant 2). Informant 3 said that the latter photographer's pictures were good, but not art; they simply fell into a different category.

Within Finnish photography, being an artist was rarely a full-time occupation. Informant 8 observed that many people who "nest and stay on in the teaching and bureaucracy branch" may seem to occupy a central position on the art scene,

although their own artistic practice was merely a sideline – a pastime even. Without a connection to applied photography they enjoyed the pure artist's cachet.

Informant 7 noted that many people entered the artistic terrain sporadically, especially when they managed to raise a grant. Informant 2 was of the opinion that people "who did a bit of art every now and then" should not be regarded as artists within the realm of this study. She sensed that the title of artist had recently come to mean complete concentration on art-making within photography, too. It was no more being perceived as a sideline that you pursued when you can afford it. She understood this to be a sign of professionalisation.

INNER DRIVE AND COMMITMENT TO THE CAREER

The photographic informants gave absolute priority to subjective definition over external hallmarks of the artist. Informant 2 strongly stressed that artistry always came from inside. In her opinion, "the first and foremost criterion is that you have adopted the artist's attitude". Informant 3 likewise suggested that artists could be discerned by the particular disposition they held towards their work.

It should be emphasised that subjective definition did not mean self-evaluation or self-proclamation but rather what Rosenblum (1978, 36) calls "re-definition of the self as an artist". This included above all autonomy conceived as sovereignty and self-guidance. The artist was seen as being driven by inner motives, by a strong personal need for expression and communication. He did not take orders from the outside world, nor respond to demand or fashion. The artist "sets his own commissions " (Informant 2); "he does not take the patron's expectations as his point of departure" (Informant 4).

Re-definition of the self as an artist meant achieving an inner-directed autonomous orientation (cf. Rosenblum 1978, 38). Such a person can sustain his self-esteem and continue to work regardless of other people's opinions (ibid.); he is independent in his work, as Informant 6 said. The artist's autonomy means that he has come into his own: established a solid and mature vision and an individual signature, as cited in the quotations above.

The requirement of the particular 'attitude' when pushed to the extreme produced some curious outcomes. Some candidates were qualified if they showed a well-developed disposition and constant aspiration even though their actual achievements would not yet have earned them the title. Informant 1 would in fact have included people with the proper 'perspective' even if they had not yet produced anything visible to show. Informant 4 discerned a category of

people who "would be artists circumstances permitting". "The aim is clearly to be a photographic artist. — — Everything indicates that their goal is to be a photographic artist." (Informant 4.)

Self-definition in the informants' sense did not necessarily involve self-proclamation: people who renounced such a title were still counted as artists if seen to possess the proper attitude. Yet Informant 13 half-jokingly stated that the only way to identify photographic artists was to include people who called themselves such. Informant 7 claimed that a certain group of photographers was striving for recognition by waiving the artist's title. Informant 10 suggested that people in photography declared themselves artists by joining an organisation because the question of who is an artist is more debatable here than in the more established arts. Among the informants there were some members of the UAP who indeed admitted to using the title with a conscious political intent.

The intensional definitions had overall a strong moral tone. Informant 2 included ambition and rigour "in a positive sense" among the essential features of an artist. The artist was expected to demonstrate high professional ethics. This meant, for instance, that the artist does not put his works before the public unless he has something to say. Informant 4 required that the artist consistently try to develop in his strivings, and Informant 12 insisted he constantly renew his expression. Informant 12 further demanded that the artist control in what context his works are published. Informant 12 also suggested that the artist in principle undertake non-commercial work only: "If he had to 'sell' something, it had better be noble things, not sausages. All in all, the artist's "aims are set high and the spirit blazes." (Informant 12.)

The focus on inner qualities is assimilated with the mythical conception that delineates artworks as extensions of the artist's personality, thus moral requirements stem from the same source. Within this scheme, as Bourdieu (1969, 94) states, the artist's works are to be evaluated on the basis of the purity of his intentions. The photographic panel expressed this idea quite clearly. They hardly discussed the quality of artworks, but the aims and motives behind them. The quality of intention was more important than that of the actual outcome – even the finished article! It was the artist's (moral) person that counted in the final analysis. Rosenblum (1978, 36) observes, referring expressly to fine-art photographers, that the quality of one's work is dependent on who one is.

It is noteworthy that though the informants gave absolute priority to self-definition, a person's status as an artist was not regarded as an entirely subjective matter. Here the informants actually expressed ideas very similar to art sociologists. In their view, the status was conferred by the art world or, more precisely, peers who had already obtained the standing. An aspirant had to build up credibility to gain recognition for his own artistry. This was largely a question of displaying high occupational ethics (virtue). The validity of his commitment was read not only from his artworks, but also from the choices made between means of subsistence, exhibition venues and publication opportunities, etc.; it was the overall ethical profile that counted. In the small world of photographic art, most people knew each other in person, and could monitor their actions easily.

What the informants regarded as the distinguishing feature of an artist could perhaps be condensed in the notion of 'inner drive', an essential part of art-world lore (Zolberg 1990, 128). An artist is a person who shows an unyielding and persistent commitment to his arts practice; no matter what the contingencies of his daily life, making work has a central place. Honey et al. (1997, 46) obtained a similar characterisation in interviews with a sample of British visual artists. Inner drive emerged as the most important criterion also in an American survey of artists (Jeffri & Throsby 1994, 100).

With regard to external criteria, yet sympathetic to the researcher's need for a sharp and unambiguous profile, the informants typically defined the artist by way of negation, by denying the necessity of any particular observable characteristic, be it qualifications or union membership, even the existence of artworks. Apart from the particular 'attitude', their requirements for the artist were flexible, easily adaptable to any irregular cases, and they moreover tended to assess each candidate separately. This, again, conforms to the charismatic ideology which depicts the artist as a unique, irreplaceable individual.

Extensional definition of the photographic artist

COMPILATION OF NAME LISTS

The second goal of the interviews was to find an adequate extension — the today's flesh-and-blood counterpart — for the concept of the photographic artist in Finland. The aim was simply to compile a list of contemporary Finnish photo-

graphic artists for empirical study. To start with, the informants were asked to name some 30 photographic artists. Whatever reference material might be used, since this was not to be a memory test. For instance the informants consulted indexes of the Finnish photographic magazine *Valokuva* and their personal or work-related archives and registers (address books, note books, etc.)[1]. When searching out photographic artists, they were encouraged to consider different artistic groups and styles, schools, generations and localities. They were reminded not to overlook persons whose work or character they may not like but to include them if they otherwise accorded to their conception of photographic artist.

TABLE 3. FREQUENCY OF THE NAMES CITED IN THE INTERVIEWS (N=13)

Frequency of mentions	All persons mentioned			Persons alive in 1989		
	Number	%	Cumulative %	Number	%	Cumulative %
13	—	—	—	—	—	—
12	2	1	1	2	1	1
11	3	2	3	3	2	3
10	9	5	8	9	5	8
9	4	2	10	4	2	10
8	7	4	14	7	4	14
7	5	3	17	5	3	17
6	7	4	21	7	4	21
5	2	1	22	2	1	22
4	10	5	27	10	6	28
3	22	12	39	22	12	40
2	28	15	54	27	15	55
1	89	47	100	79	45	100
Total	188	100		177	100	

Some informants produced almost one hundred names – including some deceased celebrities – whereas others even had difficulty in finding the requested 30. One informant, Informant 10, declined to list individual names, but instead referred to the UAP membership as one – but definitely not the only – source for photographic artists. The other 13 informants mentioned altogether 188 different names. The number of living artists on these lists varied from 29 to 84 (some 44 on average); they totalled 177. No single name was mentioned by all 13 interviewees, but two names were brought up by as many as 12 (Table 3).

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[1] Since many of these sources were ordered alphabetically or otherwise, it was not possible to explore the salience of individual names.

The number of widely-recognised names was small. In alphabetical order, the five most often-mentioned (11 or 12 times) artists were Stefan Bremer, Heini Hölttä, Ritva Kovalainen, Matti Saanio and Pentti Sammallahti. Nearly half (79) of the 177 names were mentioned once only. A good part of them were young artists who had not (yet) made any major breakthrough on the photographic scene. In the interviews, they were recalled by their teachers or fellow-students who had been impressed by their talent and orientation. The great number of infrequently occurring names may also reflect individual variations in any conception of photographic art. Further, there seems to flourish quite separate little photographic worlds scattered around the country. They have their own local pool of artists not really known about elsewhere, especially not in the national hub, located in and around the capital area.

Apart from two exceptions, the correlation of each informant's list with the group was quite high (0.53–0.74). The dissenting panel members, Informant 1 (0.20) and Informant 14 (-0.24), both came from lively regional centres outside the capital area. Their lists probably reflected not only their individual tastes, but also these rather isolated photographic cultures. In addition to the national key names, Informant 1 and Informant 14 mentioned names not at all familiar to people from the other parts of the country. In fact, 40 of the 79 once-mentioned names came from these same two informants. Partially this may be a question of a deliberate attempt to secure the representation and visibility of their local photographic centres in a study conducted at the Arts Council of Finland.

CONTROL ROUND BY MAIL

After the interviews, all the names of living persons mentioned were collated, and the resulting list, containing 177 names, was mailed to the 14 informants for checking. They had been informed of this second round when being interviewed. With respect to each name on the list, they were asked whether the person was or was not a photographic artist. They could also choose "I cannot say" or "I do not know the case". They were given space to expand on their choices on the form, and they could also add new names to the list. Seven informants (50 %) returned the control questionnaire.

The idea was that the informant should pick one and one only of the four alternatives for each name on the list. As Table 4 shows, no informant dealt with all 177 names. Many moreover wavered between alternatives when it came down to

particular names. Sometimes this hesitation was made apparent by the ticking of two choices, the one smaller or fainter, or put in brackets. Some had indicated questionable cases by shifting the tick away from the centre of the box. Often the confusing cases were commented on in a few words as requested.

TABLE 4. DISTRIBUTION OF THE INFORMANTS' CHOICES CONCERNING THE QUESTION "DO YOU CONSIDER THIS PERSON A PHOTOGRAPHIC ARTIST" (N=7)

Informant no	Yes	No	I do not know the case	I cannot say	Total
2	119	5	37	15	176
4	82	94	–	–	176
6	90	35	35	6	166
9	80	24	57	–	161
11	132	–	29	2	163
12	111	3	45	10	169
13	109	10	29	12	160

It was evident that the informants' choices reflected not only their varying acquaintance with the names or their individual views on photographic art, but also their personalities at large. Some informants confined themselves to 'yes' and 'no' judgements only, while others avoided strict, especially negative statements by making extensive use of "I cannot say" or "I do not know the case". Informant 11 was the most liberal in his definition of the photographic artist: he included 132 names and excluded none; he had also provided the longest list in the original interview (84). Informant 4 and Informant 9 instead cultivated very strict definitions by approving less than half of the names; Informant 4 moreover simply divided the names into artists and non-artists. In comparison with his demanding statements in the interview, Informant 6 appeared surprisingly tolerant on his control questionnaire, rejecting only 35 names.

TABLE 5. DISTRIBUTION OF THE INFORMANTS' CHOICES AMONG THE 177 NAMES

Alternatives	Number of names ticked at least once	% of the names on the list
This person is a photographic artist	157	88
This person is not a photographic artist	109	62
I do not know the case	85	48
I cannot say	62	35

Not quite a third (51) of the 177 candidates were recognised as artists by all seven informants who returned the control form. Curiously, as many as 109

names out of the 177 were ticked as non-artists by at least one informant, and 20 names received not one yes-vote at all (Table 5). On the whole, the informants can hardly be seen as unanimous in their extensional definition of the photographic artist. More precisely, they seemed to agree on a nationally-recognised core of some 50 photographic artists, but held diverse opinions on the marginal or peripheral cases.

Integrating descriptions and name lists

PRINCIPLES OF INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION

The informants explicated the grounds for the inclusion or exclusion of individual names both in the initial interviews and on the control questionnaire form; the classificatory logic could also be detected from the choices between names. The principles looked somewhat different depending on the place and degree of explication. There was certain incoherence between verbal statements and implicit choices as well as intensional and extensional definitions of the artist. Besides, two informants with very similar intensional definitions might well end up with quite different lists of names, whereas the same names could be supported by very different arguments. Some informants offered a strict definition of substance yet named dozens of flesh-and-blood counterparts, while others with a broad-sounding definition delivered very short lists.

On the control round form, several informants quite actively took advantage of the opportunity to explicate their choices. The space being limited, most comments were short, such as 'a renowned press photographer, don't know about his artistic work' or 'a visual artist'. The most common grounds for uncertainty or outright rejection was that the person – the bulk of his work – represented quite another branch, category or genre of photography (press photography, photojournalism, advertising photography, nature photography, etc.). Sometimes the idea was expressed through such labels as 'professional photographer' or even 'businessman', the latter referring to best-selling advertising or nature photographers. Some ten persons were classified as representatives of another art form, most often visual art (painter, sculptor, graphic artist, visual artist), and one practitioner who mixed media was therefore not seen as falling properly into the category of photographic art.

The problematic cases included people who were not known to be currently practising; at least, not to have brought any work before the public lately. Some of them were labelled teachers, 'bureaucrats' or other support personnel rather than artists. Some of the names were familiar to the informants as 'photo-activists' or 'hangers-on', but not much was actually known about their artistic output. Lastly, a few were labelled as 'amateurs'; some of them were indeed hobbyists with entirely non-photographic jobs, while others were professional visual artists who were seen as photographically incompetent. Otherwise explicit references to skills or quality of work were rare; Informant 2 nevertheless rejected a couple of press photographers on the grounds of not having seen anything 'convincing' from them yet.

Interestingly, some problematic names on the list were said to belong to a different period, the time before 'photographic art'. Informant 13 explained that he had ticked "I cannot say" especially when the person had made a major part of his work in another field, or clearly "before the birth of the concept of photographic artist or art proper with the grant system". He had nonetheless decided to mark such practitioners as artists if they had "clearly developed photography in their own domain in a more artistic direction".

FINAL PRUNING OF THE POPULATION

The study population was pieced together on the basis of the interview process, yet not automatically according to the votes given by the informants. Rather the process as a whole was used as a method for eliciting information on the intension and extension of 'photographic artist'; so that in the ultimate pruning of the population all this information was taken into account. In the final analysis, it was the researcher who made the decision on the inclusion or exclusion of the most debatable cases.

Before the final pruning, the list was extended using several sources. All members of the UAP were added, since several informants had regarded its membership as a sufficient criterion an the artist; besides, union membership was the principal criterion in the other ACF studies. However, as 56 of the then 61 members had already been mentioned in the interviews, the population grew only by five, reaching altogether 182. The seven new names mentioned in the control questionnaire were also attached to the list, now totalling 189. Further, Informant 2 and Informant 3 were asked to comb through the lists of the recipients of state funding in 1980–1989. Over this period altogether 188 different

persons had been granted artist support[1] under the title 'photographic art'. Half of them (92) had been mentioned in the interviews. The two informants then picked out 30 more names from among the grant-recipients. After this procedure the list contained 219 names.

TABLE 6. THE FORMATION OF THE STUDY POPULATION OF PHOTOGRAPHIC ARTISTS

Procedure	Number of names
Interviews with informants	177
Addition of the remaining UAP members	+5
Addition of names mentioned in the control questionnaire	+7
Addition of selected recipients of state funding	+30
Deletion of the most marginal cases	−27
Study population	192
Loss (not found in the national tax database or erroneous data)	−17
Final study population	*175*

The most controversial and marginal cases were then taken up for closer inspection. The most ambiguous cases were dropped if no evidence of artistic activity (exhibitions or publications) could be found over the last three years (27). As a rule, only people with very few votes and no sign of recent artistic activity were excluded. Finally, 192 names were left. This list was then sent to Statistics Finland for culling of income data from the national tax database. Sixteen names could not be found in the database, and one had outright errors in his record. The final data set consisted of 175 persons in all.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STUDY POPULATION

The population of photographic artists generated by the interview method was conspicuously small in comparison with the other ACF populations which span from 520 (film) to 4 100 (music) (see Table 1, p. 6). This limited number was however in accordance with the grant applications coming in annually at the ACF. Besides the population was almost threetimes the then membership of the UAP. It also clearly exceeded the informants' estimates of the number of photographic artists, usually between 50 and 100. The number of recipients of direct state support under the title of photographic art in 1980–1989 was almost

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[1] An artist professorship, a state artist grant, a project grant (for an artistic purpose), a state prize, or quality support for producing photographic publications.

equivalent in size (188), but, as earlier mentioned, these two groups were only overlapping in half the cases.

TABLE 7. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STUDY POPULATION, PERCENTAGES

Attribute		*Core*	*Margin*	*All*
SEX	Women	26	18	23
	Men	74	82	77
AGE	Under 35 years	50	43	47
	35–44 years	31	41	34
	45–64 years	17	13	18
	65 or over	3	3	3
REGION of	South Finland	80	69	76
RESIDENCE[1]	– capital area	54	38	49
	Central Finland	5	8	6
	Northern Finland	15	23	18
TRAINING	University level degree	24	10	19
1) PHOTO-	Upper secondary level degree	27	20	25
GRAPHY	Lower level degree	6	7	6
	Student or dropout (any level)	10	8	10
	None	32	56	41
2) PHOTOGRAPHY,	Some	76	51	67
ART or DESIGN	None	24	49	33
AFFILIATION	Union of Artists in Photography	49	7	34
	UAP or some other photographic organisation	85	69	79
ARTISTIC	Some exhibition	84	70	79
ACTIVITY	– solo	69	51	63
1988–1990	– solo at photographic galleries	54	31	46
	Photographic publication	30	18	26
	Solo exhibition or publication	66	61	64
RENOWN,	*The art of photography* 1992[2]	82	38	67
VISIBILITY	– article on the 1980's by Elovirta	53	13	39
	Valokuva index 1980's[3]	89	52	77
	Museum register[4]	81	62	74
GRANTS	State stipend in the 1980's	32	15	26
	Some public or private grant in 1989	52	34	46
TAXABLE	Low-earners (below FIM 50 000)	34	18	30
INCOMES 1989	High-earners (over FIM 150 000)	23	21	19
OCCUPATION	Within photography (incl. students and teachers)	87	57	77
in TAXATION 1989	Within the visual arts (incl. teachers, etc.)	5	5	5
	Other	7	31	15
	Not known	1	7	3
Total (%)		*100*	*100*	*100*
Total (N)		*114*	*61*	*175*

[1] South = regions of Uusimaa, Häme, Kymi and Turku & Pori; Central = regions of Mikkeli, Central Finland and Vaasa; North = regions of Northern Karelia, Kuopio, Oulu and Lapland.
[2] Kukkonen et al. (ed.) 1992.
[3] The Finnish photographic magazine's photographer index in 1980–1989
[4] Register of photographers maintained by the Museum of Photographic Art

For purposes of analysis, the population was roughly split into two groups according to the frequency of mentions, the *core* and the *margin*. The division was not automatically based on the sum of votes, but again the researcher used her own discretion with help of the intensional definitions. The core came to comprise a total of 114 persons. They had been identified as artists by most informants, or, if being less widely known, at least not heavily contested. The margin simply contained the rest of the population, 61 persons. They were either not widely known outside their domestic or social surroundings, or had only recently started their career, or carried out artistic work as a sideline, or had not performed much recently. In the margin there were controversial cases whose labelling as artists was severely opposed by some informants, but who nevertheless received unquestionable support from others.

The differences in characteristics between the core and the margin were in the main predictable, resulting partly from the criteria of classification (Table 7). For instance, the core had been artistically more active and visible in recent years. They had also undertaken more formal training in photography. They resided more often in the southern part of Finland, especially within the capital area or close by. The core was also for the most part organised into photographic associations, half of whom having joined the UAP. They were in the habit of applying for state grants, and had also succeeded quite often in receiving them. The core for the most part generated their incomes from photography, while in the margin non-photographic occupations came up. The core had lower taxable income but drew more grants than did the margin.

In comparison with the other ACF populations, photographic artists did possess certain distinguishing features. First, they were on the average young, the core being even younger than the margin. The percentage of women was instead lower (23) than in many other artistic groups, yet it was higher than among photographers at large. The female proportion was interestingly higher in the core (26) than in the margin (18). What emerged perhaps as the most salient property of photographic artists was their low level of taxable income and high dependence on grants. This again held true for the core in particular. With respect to the level and composition of incomes, photographic artists came closest

to (the other) visual artists[1]. (For comparison of incomes of the different ACF populations, see Heikkinen & Karhunen 1996; Karttunen 1999a.)

Success and failings of the method

In the following the method of identifying photographic artists will be assessed at various levels. Firstly, how did it succeed in its main task of producing a list of artists for empirical study? As always, the outcome will inevitably be in some respects partial, thus the question will be how much bias is shown and in what direction. Further, was the bias inherent in the method itself, or was there some failure in its application here? Lastly I will consider how well the method performed in its secondary task of gaining information on the conditions of Finnish photographic artists and the context in which they pursue their career.

THE EXTENT, DIRECTION AND CAUSES OF BIAS

The problem of listing photographic artists for empirical study was discussed at length with several informants. Though not enthusiastic, they recognised the researcher's need for an externally imposed standard, or at least some explicit rules for governing the selection of artists. Some informants were critical of the chosen method yet could not propose any feasible alternative. Quite rightly they feared that the method would result in an elitist population, with an over-representation of central, successful artists. It might moreover favour people who orientate themselves towards the fine-art world and live mainly on state stipends. The conception of photographic art was in danger of being too narrow in view of the ubiquitous uses of photography and the variety of its practitioners.

There was no doubt that visibility and familiarity improved the chances of being mentioned in the interviews. Not unexpectedly, each informant's list bore indications of where they had lived, worked, studied and taught and with whom they had socialised. Informants who were currently teaching at art schools came up with more names of the young. Women mentioned female names more fre-

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[1] The Finnish term 'kuvataide' does not translate easily into English. Literally it means pictorial art (kuva = picture, taide = art). Traditionally we have understood it as including painting, sculpture and art-graphics. Recently it has been expanding to cover installation, environmental, performance, video art, etc.

quently than men did. Current affairs, like recent exhibitions and publications, had a direct influence on the lists. The *Fotofinlandia 1990* competition was at its hottest during the interviews; the winner was being announced only a few days after the last interview. One of the informants was serving on the jury, and all of them had close friends and acquaintances among the participants. Not surprisingly, most candidates for the prize were frequently mentioned in the interviews. Another recent event was the founding of the photographic magazine *Musta taide*. The two issues that had come out thus far had been perused thoroughly, and the photographers presented in them came easily to mind. One of the informants was on the editorial staff of the new magazine.

The study started out from the idea that photographic art could be distinguished from the mass of photography as a branch or sector. Along the study process, this turned out to be a partial viewpoint; what is more important, one that was not neutral with respect to art policies. My study in fact rejected the prevailing statist definition of photographic artist based on a wide representation of the different photographic organisations. The latter conception builds rather on the notion that photographic art is constituted of the cream of its different branches.

The majority of my informants in principle favoured a sectoral definition, and wished to make a sharp distinction between photographic artists and professionals within applied photography. To their mind, photographic art was not a question of quality but of category:

> "Photographic artist means somebody working as an artist in the domain of photography. It is different from a commercial photographer or a press photographer or a professional of some other branch who earns his living by making good photography within the branch in question." (Informant 4.)

Yet even the fiercest advocates of the sectoral definition admitted that it was an ideal rather than a fact. The informants characterised the Finnish photo-art world as having what Christopherson (1974b) calls 'institutional inadequacies', and saw this as causing confusion in separating specific artists from the multitude of people engaged in photography. Informant 10 described the field as yet-to-be-differentiated: the roles of the artist and the other art-world personnel were overlapping (the panel itself was proof of this). In truth people who were named as artists typically undertook many kinds of work within photography, often because of economic necessity. Identification would have been easier had

the photographic artist been a job in the sense that it provided subsistence, as noted by Informant 1.

According to Informant 4, this wavering between the horizontal and the vertical principle of division reflected the field's poor development, especially in economic terms.

> "– – it is primarily a question of socio-economic base. It provides the foundation for the divisions and demarcations of the field. There are people whom I would call photographic artists but who work as employees in the domain of utility pictures, or, that is, photography, for instance in a commercial photographer's studio. This kind of confusion still exists." (Informant 4.)

> "There is no clear 'field' yet, but it is in the process of formation. The field's development has been chiefly hindered by the fact that subsistence in this domain has been so weak. The market for works and other ways of earning a living from photographic art are missing. – – The photographic artist cannot believe that he could live from making photographs that he considers good and important and selling them on the free market." (Informant 4.)

Further, the informants noted the difficulty of treating 'art' as a neutral category as the sectoral demarcation would have demanded. As Informant 2 stated, the very labelling of something as art means that a value judgement has been made: "no matter how hard you try, quality judgement always comes in through the back door".

The concept 'photographic artist' emerged on the whole as highly controversial, and the question arises whether its usage should have been avoided in the interviews – but how could this have been done[1]? Although the term was widespread within the art administration, the interviews proved it to be unsettled and subject to hefty debate in the field. The title was ideologically loaded, and it was used for both positive identification and negative labelling.

Informant 3 assumed that some people might prefer to use 'creative photographer'. She believed 'photographic artist' to be so tightly linked to manipulated or constructed pictures that those who cherished pure photography would evade it in spite of their artistic orientation. Informant 12 recalled that in

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[1] In his articles (1974a&b), Christopherson varyingly refers to a parallel target group as 'fine art photographers', 'art photographers', 'photo-artists', 'photographer-artists', or 'artist-photographers'. Unfortunately he does not relate how he handled the problem of designation in the interviews with them.

the 1950's and 1960's only amateurs referred to themselves as artists. For him the title still had a dilettantish or snobbish tone, and although a UAP member, he did not often use it of himself. The connotations of art had been unwelcome for the 1970's generation who cherished social and radical documentary photography. Informant 11 explained that during his studies in the mid-1970's 'photographic art' had been a laughing-stock. Among the informants, it was the 1980's generation (more precisely, from the late 1970's to the mid-1980's) who had the most favourable attitude towards the designation. Informant 6, for instance, claimed the title to be simply 'accurate', but then he was a leading figure in the newly-established union.

Some informants would have favoured the term 'independent', conceiving 'art' as inherently conservative and restrictive. The concept of 'independent photography' became popular in the 1980's, especially in Britain. According to Sekula (1990, 39), the title was used to indicate disassociation from photography's instrumental applications rather than from the market. Be that as it may, 'independent photographer' seems no less ideologically loaded than 'photographic artist'; the emphasis may be different, but the extensions appear largely overlapping.

The definition of photographic artists as "people who are known as such in the institutions and the world of photographic art" was circular and led to the problem of defining photographic art and identifying its corresponding social world. The selection of informants by snowball sampling further increased the risk of moving within a closed circle and obtaining an incomplete reading of the universe. To prevent this the interviewing was started from diverse quarters of the photographic world. Despite this precaution, the interviewees constituted a kind of a network, given that the majority recommended a surprisingly similar set of others for interview. This is not necessarily a major shortcoming; after all, an art world is often defined as being a network of some sort (see, e.g., Becker 1984). The question still remains whether the informants represented only a faction of the photographic world.

One potential source of distortion was the fact that at the initial stages of the study the researcher was in close contact with Informant 2 and Informant 4 who may have influenced her conceptualisation of the universe more than others. She had become acquainted with these two informants when they had functioned within the state administration bodies. Informant 2 literally introduced

the researcher to the photographic world, inviting her to meet people at exhibition openings, seminars and other events. Informant 4 in turn had just published a study of the recent developments in Finnish photography, both as an art form and a social world. Articulate and analytical and with manifold experience from the field (see Table 2, p. 11), both seemed ideal informants. Informant 2 and Informant 4 in principle favoured a sectoral definition of the art form, and had a more or less identical view of the boundaries of the photo-art world.

Elstad (1997, 271) argues that most artistic fields have some central artists who would qualify no matter what the criterion. Around this nucleus, there are wider and wider circles where one's recognition as an artist becomes more disputed as the distance from the centre increases. Elstad concludes that all definitions include the centre, but there are many possible choices on the periphery. (Ibid.) This description would apply to Finnish photographic artists as well. No matter what features the informants emphasised in their intensional definition, their lists usually included the same core names. Most of them would have been included had I used union membership, artistic activity and grant reception as criteria. The bias in the population hence concerns principally the 'margin'; how far and in what direction it was extended and where the borders between the partitions were drawn, in particular, who or what kind of artists were entirely left out of the population (periphery).[1]

It was evident that in their intensional definition the informants described an exemplary artist (a 'true' or 'genuine' artist). The portrait was clearly far away from being reality; it was an ideal. When listing photographic artists, the informants were both more practical and liberal. The actual population comprised people engaged in applied photography as well as the subject-defined genres. Most of these people were understood as doing art as a sideline, but there were also a few whose whole œuvre was seen as art. Despite postmodernist rhetoric, dozens of representatives of pure, 'straight' photography were included in the final population, and they actually scored highest on the name list. In fact, not even 'dilettante pictorialists' or other hobbyists became entirely excluded.

Nevertheless, the extension of photographic artist seems somewhat mythically biased. The 'struggling artist' ('starving' even) was favoured as seen from

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[1] In the ACF studies it was obvious that the periphery was not to be extended far beyond those eligible for state support, hence it excludes for instance car-boot sale artists.

the differences between the core and the margin (Table 7, p. 27). The informants regarded a particular type of income profile as the most appropriate for the artist. Taking an earnings risk was interpreted as commitment to the artist's career. People who tried to manage on teaching, grants and the sale of artworks were preferred to those who earned their living from applied photography. (See also Karttunen 1998b.) "Businessmen" were looked on askance, although some of them were still listed as artists.

Is the population of photographic artists, then, comparable to the other ACF populations which had been compiled by using union membership as the main criterion (see Table 1, p. 6)? I believe that the interview method would have produced somewhat different populations in these more established art forms as well, by emphasising the most visible and active artists. The question of who deserves the title would have become widely debated – probably in the press, too. Undoubtedly the populations would have been smaller in number. On the other hand, since unions have different positions and roles in different fields (e.g., theatre vis-á-vis the visual arts), the other populations might not be comparable with each other either. Absolute comparability across art forms seems in the event almost impossible to accomplish.

It is conceivable that the method would have emphasised the 'integrated professionals' in the other, more established art forms (for the concept, see Becker 1984, 228ff). Its effect would have been conservative. Griff (1970, 145–146) for instance suggests that the Impressionists would have been excluded from the artist population had the art world of that time been the judge of it.

In photographic art, confining the study to the UAP membership would only have intensified their exceptional profile. In particular, it would have accentuated their poverty in terms of taxable incomes and their high dependence on grants, especially state stipends. The emerging union fostered a strict conception of the artist, and the empirical analysis only proved that the membership in many respects lived up to the requirements. In their praise for the original values of art they resembled the heretical opponents of the establishment as depicted by Bourdieu (e.g., 1995, 74).

EXPLORATIVE PURPOSES

The interview method was originally chosen not only as a technical solution to the problem of identifying the population for study, but also in the hope of

mapping the relatively unknown terrain. In my experience, it succeeded quite well in this task, yielding information on the structure and construction of the emerging field, as well as on the position of artists therein. Such information was all the more valuable as the ACF data was otherwise collected unobtrusively from various archives and registers.

It should be emphasised that not all information coming up in the interviews could be taken at face-value but as mainly material for interpretation. It provided hypotheses to be explored rather than facts; several interviewees were moreover well-read in art and cultural theory and supplied profound analyses themselves. Many statements reflected aims and ideals rather than the actual situation. This kind of information was nevertheless more than serviceable for the study, especially in its continuation in the social closure perspective.

In view of occupational monopolisation, the discrepancies between the informants' intensional and extensional definitions, as well as between their verbal explications and their non-verbal choices, turned out to be most revealing. One noticeable inconsistency concerned the relation between photographic art and visual art. In their verbal accounts many informants emphasised the close relation to "the other visual arts". Instead, when listing actual names, especially in the control questionnaire, visual artists using photography were often disregarded, or even explicitly rejected. Some visual artists emerged as highly controversial figures, and naming them in the interview might be understood as a political act signalling the informant's wish to open out towards visual arts at the cost of photography's 'professional circles'. The informants' attempt to disassociate themselves from ordinary photographers and hitch up with visual artists provides in fact a prime example of how an upwardly mobile group uses 'inclusionary tactics' upwards and 'exclusionary tactics' downwards (see Parkin 1979).

At the time of the interviews, a considerable number of photographic artists enthused about everything but pure photography; they, in fact, mixed media, and some had chosen to actually abandon photographing altogether[1]. Meanwhile, somewhat paradoxically, many leading visual artists were using photography as their principal medium of expression. Some informants indeed qualified them in the study population under this criterion. Yet most of these artists

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[1] Informant 10 employed the notion 'patricide' in reference to photographic artists deliberately violating the canon of art photography.

were neither informed nor interested in the specific problems of photography. They came from a different tradition and operated within alien networks – even Informant 6 had to admit that "we have mixed in different company". Some visual artists had started to use photography in the 1970's under the wings of conceptual art, others had been drawn towards it in the 1980's when it had become the paramount medium of postmodern art. To have been named 'photographic artists' would probably have come as a surprise to most of them.[1]

Making seemingly opportunist use of the post-modernist discourse, some informants claimed that the boundaries between the different art forms had been dissolving to such an extent that there was no sense in distinguishing photographic artists from the other visual artists. In my view, this was an exaggeration. At the time, photographic artists still formed something of a distinct population within the larger art world, and there was a separate circuit of institutions dedicated to photography complete with galleries, museum, training institutions, associations, etc. The state art administration system, where both visual art and photographic art had their own arts councils, maintained for its part the separation (for the conservative effect of administrative classifications, see DiMaggio 1987, 451). Besides, the status of photography as an art and the meaning and function of photography in the context of visual art are quite different matters. The use of photography by visual artists does not necessarily change the status of photographic artists (cf. Laermans 1992, 253–254).

Most informants had adopted modernist values in their formative years, and their accounts bore traces of the modernist definition legitimizing photography as a discrete branch of art exploring its own 'specific possibilities'. Some expressed the fear that photography might lose some of its 'essence' if merged with the visual arts; these informants still respected the 'photographic', and had quite a strict opinion on what constituted a good photograph.

In the analysis of interviews it is sometimes more important to pay attention to omissions rather than what is actually said. One such topic, emerging from previous research in the area, was the 'social definition of photography'; that is, the credibility of photography as an artistic medium and hence the credibility of photographers as artists. In a study pertaining to the wide variety of photo-

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[1] See Grundberg (1990) for the 'new breed' of photographic artists and the postmodern uses of photography which stand outside the conventions of fine-art photography.

graphic practices, carried out in the early 1960's, Bourdieu (with his associates) came to the conclusion that photography was always limited by its social definition as the model of veracity and objectivity; it was allegedly not art in the sense of creation, but the mechanical product of a machine. According to this view, photography can be no more than a minor art. (Bourdieu 1990/1965; see also Karttunen 1997.) The authors claim this vision to have a notable impact on the status of photographic artists. When choosing to "cultivate photography as an art", photographic artists condemn themselves to a "practice that is uncertain of its legitimacy, preoccupied and insecure, perpetually in search of justifications" (Chamboredon 1990/1965, 129).

Somewhat surprisingly my informants did not seem much troubled by the illegitimacy of photography (this was mentioned only in passing by Informant 2, Informant 4 and Informant 10). Had the situation changed so much since the mid-1960s? I would rather say that the topic was so delicate that the informants tried to avoid having it come up and thus questioning their claim to artistic status. As I see it, they denied the social definition by projecting every suspicious feature onto ordinary photography, that is, by forming a division within photography. Further, the urge to talk about 'artists in photography' rather than 'photographic artists' can in fact be seen as a way of distracting attention from the disputable medium. Photography's commercial and instrumental applications represented a risk, hence purity of means and intentions was overemphasised.

The effort to build up a new (sub-)field for professional photographic artists provides a related motive for the need to push the charismatic image to the extreme, in total opposition to the preachings of post-modern theory. The exacting definition was not only rhetoric intended to convince outsiders, but also had an important role in the formation of the emerging group. The process bears close resemblance to professionalisation by means of closure, involving both inclusion and exclusion, and seems to have similar motives: gaining and maintaining a greater share of scarce resources, here primarily state funding (see, e.g., Murphy 1988; Sarfatti Larson 1977).

The informants were asked to identify photographic artists for a particular purpose, a status-of-an-artist study. They were well aware that the study was conducted at the ACF with the aim of evaluating art policies and garnering suggestions for their improvement. Though the interviews were made in private, most informants seemed to speak to a broader public, especially those who have power over government funding. They presented with intention the photo-

graphic artist as being equal to any artist. Too wide a definition would have jeopardised photography's credibility among the more established arts. While the National Council of Photographic Art still argued for more funding based on the number of photographs – any photographs – taken annually in Finland, most of my informants chose to focus on a small number of artists undeniable by any standard.

In many art fields, state support is a precondition for full-time practice, therefore it is vital to be recognised as an artist in the ACF context; thanks to the corporatist arrangement, it moreover indicates artistic legitimacy. The statist definition of the artist commands a crucial position in the battles of the art field, determining the allocation of both symbolic and economic rewards. It is evident that the extreme ways of defining photographic art and the photographic artist would lead into totally different outcomes. Within the state art administration, photographic art was first conceived as including the best of photography. Art was understood as one aspect or potentiality inherent in any photograph. All branches of photography were represented in the art administration bodies, and all had chances of receiving funding. As against this conception, the sectoral definition of the art form would mean a radical re-allocation of resources. Professionals in applied photography would be left out of representation in the national council, and would have little hope of financial support, and the same would happen to camera-clubbers.

It needs to be emphasised that the interviews did catch hold of a transient definition of the photographic artist; they pertain to the particular 'state of the struggle' at the outset of the 1990's (cf. Bourdieu 1993, 42; 1995, 34). Had the interviews been conducted a couple of years earlier (or later), the population would have been different not only as regards actual names but also the principles by which they were chosen. Now, some ten years later, the intensional definition of the photographic artist would hardly be as uncompromising. Photography has been accepted as one medium among many others at the disposal of the visual artist, and discussion of photography's status as an art seems rather old-fashioned. With some 180 members, the UAP has a more or less established position, and several photographic artists have won national prominence on the visual art scene. Yet I would not proceed as far as to claim that as a group pho-

tographic artists have merged with other visual artists[1], or even established parity them. The social definition of photography still undermines their credibility in the eyes of the public, and through lower sales has an effect on the economic viability of the occupation as well.

Usability of emic definitions in an SA study

In the study of photographic artists I originally aimed not only to grasp but also to apply the art-world definition of the title. But why should we favour the emic viewpoint in an SA type of study? One point is that these studies are usually conducted by social scientists who are outsiders for the art world. They are often accused of not understanding what art is all about and of committing violence in forcing their externalist view on artists. The emic approach simply rings fair and true for letting the occupation itself be heard.

As demonstrated above, the emic approach has serious drawbacks as well. Bourdieu (1988, xii) criticises reliance on such indigenous conceptions for they are "too real to be true". If for instance medical doctors were given the chance to describe and demarcate their own lot, they would proclaim their altruism and indispensability to society. Similarly my informants represented photographic artists as being poor, honest and hard-working, thus not only in need of public support, but also deserving it. Evidently we need to be critical of existing classifications in the SA studies; self-description tends to be self-serving, especially within the art-political context. Our conceptualisation of the universe of study may become biased, and we may end up advocating the views of one faction only.

The panel method would be too expensive and time-consuming to be employed widely in the SA studies. Here, in the case of such a small and emerging group, the method served well for explorative purposes (but only when understood as producing data for further interpretation). As Becker (1984, 36) says, looking into emic definitions helps us in understanding what is happening in the par-

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[1] This is true though at the organisational level. In 1995, the UAP was accepted as a member of the Artists' Association of Finland, the national federation of visual artists' associations.

ticular art world and the life and work of artists therein. There exist not one but many conceptions of the artist in the art world, and as the experiment with Finnish photographic artists shows, tracing the competing definitions back to their origins might be used as an effective research tool. It provides us with a view of the artists' struggle for status and material success, thus revealing them as socio-economic players like the rest of us.

It is evident that the determination of the population of artists always requires empirical investigation, and a lot of conceptual work is needed for outlining the universe in the first place. I would suggest that SA scholars consult emic categories for constructing a sensible conceptualisation as well as operationalisation for the artist. Other relevant definitions deserve to be explored as well; for a start, the art administrators, the art audience, and the taxpayers all have their own views on the matter. The SA scholars' theory of the artist needs to be based on both internalist and externalist elements. It is their task to analyse the competing definitions, to put them into proportion with one another, and devise their own conception on this basis, arguing and explicating their choices and showing their limits of validity. They are of course restricted by the aims and context of the study, but this does not mean that they should take the patron's views as the starting point. In the Finnish case, the analysis of how the 'statist' definition of the artist is constructed and maintained in fact revealed a lot about the possibilities of practising art in this country.

My method employed interviews with informants, which brought qualitative elements into the otherwise quantitatively orientated study. I would suggest that we more often combine different approaches in the SA studies. In fact, statistical analysis of the 'whole' population, or a sample of it, may not always be needed at all; after all, a complete enumeration of artists seems unattainable. It would be conceivable to explore the status of artists focusing on certain typical or representative cases (see Honey et al. 1997); we should not neglect the 'exceptional artist', even (see Zolberg 1990, 109). The panel method would serve well for picking out such cases for study.

After re-analysing the panel data in the light of further study, I would still choose interviews with informants to collate the population of photographic artists. The method would certainly have benefited from certain adjustments. For instance, names could first have been collected from various sources, such as unions and

associations, art schools, the ACF grant register, museums and galleries, art jour-
nals, photographic magazines and newspapers' cultural sections. The list of
names would then have been discussed with informants. It would have been
most important to record not only the frequency but also the salience of each
name both in each of the sources and in the interviews. The panel itself would
have deserved a more careful analysis in its composition and its choices. Such a
procedure would by no means have produced a perfect definition of the artist,
but at least the researcher might have better understood what she was dealing
with.

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