

Visual arts are a municipal asset

Objectives of the Artists' Association Finland in the 2025 municipal elections

Art exhibitions, summer events and well-known sculptures - visual arts are remembered. Artists and art organisations create cultural, social and economic value through their work, attracting tourists and locals alike. Another reason to invest in visual arts is that it is a relatively low-threshold art experience. Finns make 5.2 million visits to visual arts exhibitions and events each year.

However, visual artists need support and motivation from municipalities. The Artists' Association of Finland highlights three things that a municipality can do to promote the visual arts:

- ⇒ Supporting the work of artists by providing grants, studios, residencies and by employing artists in municipalities.
- ⇒ Supporting local art organisations such as galleries and artotheques and by safeguarding museum finances.
- ⇒ Commissioning public art.

1. Without local artists there would be no local art

A studio and the opportunity to hold exhibitions are important enablers for visual artists. Municipal grants are a significant incentive to apply or stay and work in a locality. Residencies, i.e. short-term work spaces and resources for artists, give a municipality a high profile at home or internationally. Hiring a visual artist for an employment relationship is also gaining traction in municipalities. Visual artists have creative thinking skills that can be utilised in many ways and can be hired to work with communities or wellbeing, for example.

→ Supporting the work of artists by providing grants, studios, residencies and by employing artists in municipalities.

2. Exhibitions and artotheques attract the public

More than 5 million visits are made to art exhibitions and events in Finland each year. Local art sales and exhibition organisations, often in the form of associations, which run galleries and artotheques are a key enabler. Cuts to central government funding for culture are

challenging the capacity of visual arts communities. Municipal grants and subsidised spaces for organisations and galleries, as well as safeguarding museum finances, ensure that the public has access to quality visual arts.

→ **Supporting local art organisations such as galleries and artotheques and by safeguarding museum finances.**

3. Finns want art in their everyday surroundings

Public art has the solid support of Finns. More than 70% of citizens want art in their everyday surroundings, such as workplaces, schools and neighbourhoods. Art projects create a high-quality built environment for residents and provide work for professional artists. Art placed in everyday surroundings is accessible to everyone. Almost a third of Finnish municipalities have already committed to the percentage principle, i.e. spending part of their building budgets on art. A municipality can also require private developers to purchase art. There are many ways to commission and finance art. In the case of public art, provision should also be made for the restoration of existing works, the funding for which must be allocated from sources other than the cultural budget in the spirit of the percentage principle.

→ **Commissioning public art.**

Culture is the main reason for travel of around 40% of leisure travellers in Finland.