

Exhibition remuneration in Europe: models, initiatives and exchange

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Fair payment for artists has long been a central issue in many European countries and for many artists' organisations and has seen various creative, high-visibility information campaigns advocating for exhibition remuneration over the years. At a regional and national level there are recommendations, fee schedules and calculators, as well as more or less binding guidelines. In order to achieve the common goal of fair remuneration for artistic work, we need both concrete models and initiatives at the local level and networking and the exchange of experiences at the European level.

This article addresses the current state of networking at the European level, especially regarding the role of the International Association of Art (IAA) Europe, as well as current noteworthy initiatives concerning exhibition remuneration.

Symposium in Brussels: the first pan-European exchange on exhibition remuneration

In 2018, the Internationale Gesellschaft der Bildenden Künste (IGBK) and the International Association of Art (IAA) Europe, a network of 40 artists' organisations jointly representing the interests of visual artists in Europe, organised a symposium in Brussels on the topic of exhibition remuneration (*Exhibition Remuneration Right in Europe*). Other cooperation partners included the VG Bild-Kunst and European Visual Artists, the umbrella organisation of European collecting societies responsible for the visual arts.

This was the first pan-European exchange on remuneration and fee models that had already been implemented as well as ongoing campaigns.

The symposium showed that many artists' associations in Europe were intensively involved with the issue of exhibition remuneration. It also became clear, however, how far removed most European countries still are from appropriate, fair remuneration practices and the introduction of budgets to remunerate artists in publicly funded temporary exhibitions – despite the existence of a number of successful models. Documentation and a comprehensive handout containing largely current contributions from 12 European countries as well as the USA, Canada and Australia can be downloaded from the IGBK website.

Lobbying for fair payment for artists

In 2019, IAA Europe developed a campaign on exhibition remuneration aimed at making policymakers and administrators at the EU, national and regional levels aware of the injustice that exists in the visual arts sector. The members of IAA Europe are striving towards an exchange on binding exhibition remuneration as well as continuously adjusted public budgets that allow fair exhibition remuneration to be maintained.

The fact that the topic has now reached the European level is also evidenced by the Voices of Culture report on the topic of the *Status and Working Conditions of Artists and Cultural and Creative Professionals* published in July 2021 as part of the European Commission's Structured Dialogue initiative involving 47 organisations from all over Europe – including IAA

Europe. One chapter of this report is devoted to the aspect of *fair pay* for artists and creative professionals and calls for the development of guidelines for all types of artistic services. A plea is going out to funding bodies to include appropriate remuneration and fair treatment of creatives from the outset as a criterion for the evaluation of funding applications in all funding programmes at the national and EU levels.

The *Fair Pay for Artists: Exhibition Payment* Symposium of IAA Europe was held in Helsinki and via Zoom on 24 September 2021, after this issue of kultur politik went to press. The symposium was jointly organised by the IAA National Committees Artists' Association of Finland and a-n The Artists Information Company (Great Britain). Speakers from the USA, Great Britain, the Netherlands and Finland, among others, shared their experiences with existing exhibition payment models. Further discussions included campaigning tools and the current experiences of visual artists in Europe in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Reliable criteria needed

In order to be able to make a European comparison, it would be helpful to have criteria that identify what (if anything) exhibition remuneration is paid for, what works best and how individual countries are doing so far. There is still a lot of work to be done. We also need to work on a common understanding of terms, proposed regulations and minimum standards across Europe. It could be helpful to focus on the distinction between exhibition remuneration and participation remuneration, which has been established in Sweden and Norway, for example: exhibition remuneration is paid to professional artists for the presentation of works from their own collections in a publicly (co-)financed exhibition that has not been organised for the purpose of selling the works. By contrast, participation remuneration takes into account the services provided by artists in organising the exhibition.

Regarding payment rules, the Dutch temporary model is an interesting example, whereby exhibiting institutions can apply for partial compensation (maximum of 50%) of artists' fees from the Ministry responsible for culture through the Mondriaan Fund. The amount depends on how many of the guidelines laid down in an agreement (to which a large number of Dutch exhibition institutions have now acceded) are met. Institutions that do not pay any remuneration must justify this decision. This pilot model is currently undergoing restructuring and will hopefully be continued in a new format from 2022 onward.

There is also a need to discuss the role that artists' associations and collecting societies should play in the implementation and monitoring of remuneration models and agreements as well as the payment of fees, and how the experience has been in the few countries where such agreements relate directly to copyright law. One example of this is Canada, where the artists' association CARFAC went all the way to the Supreme Court with its demands on the basis of copyright law – and was successful.

The bottom line is that looking at agreements and regulations in place in the Scandinavian countries, Germany has a lot of catching up to do, although the *Berlin model* implemented in 2016 and the BBK Guideline Exhibition Remuneration 2021 are also attracting international attention.

Examples from Great Britain, Ireland and Finland

In 2014, the British organisation a-n (The Artists Information Company) launched its Paying Artists Campaign in a climate where 71% of artists in the UK did not receive a fee for their contributions to publicly funded exhibitions and 63% of artists had to turn down exhibition offers from publicly funded galleries because they could not afford to work for free.

Paying Artists is aimed at securing payment for artists who exhibit in publicly funded institutions. The movement garnered strong support from throughout the sector and was met with a willingness to help implement guidelines, which were then published in 2016 in collaboration with the artists' advisory body AIR. The Exhibition Payment Guide provides guidelines and procedures for artists and institutions covering a wide range of exhibition scenarios. In 2018, a working group was established and tasked with developing the guide further and ensuring that it is as widely accepted as possible by 2022.

The work of Visual Artists Ireland, which is succeeding not only in confronting exhibition institutions with the topic, but also in raising awareness among a broader public with an interest in art, is moving along the same lines. Guidelines have been produced in consultation with artists, art organisations and funding bodies to enable artists and (exhibition) venues to charge fair fees, budget adequately for their programmes and take into account the diversity of work performed by professional artists.

The Artists' Association of Finland published some very helpful guidelines and fee recommendations for visual artists and clients last year. These guidelines pertain not only to exhibition and participation remuneration, but also cover other artistic activities, consulting services, lectures, teaching activities and public art activities.

Conclusion: What can we learn from other countries?

Where artists' associations are involved in the implementation of the models for exhibition remuneration – as is the case, for example, in the Netherlands and Sweden – there are good opportunities for control during the renegotiation of fee rates or in the event of disputes, for example. In regional models, too, it is often easier to identify and denounce rule violations if the artistic scene is well networked.

However, in the case of what are known as "soft laws" (e.g., the MU Agreement in Sweden), there are repeated complaints about inequalities, poor remuneration and a lack of transparency. The implementation of models is still voluntary, even for publicly funded museums and art galleries. Government funding is not increased as promised (in accordance with the agreements). Therefore, the long-term goal must be to anchor the right to exhibition remuneration in copyright law, as Swedish and Norwegian artist organisations are also demanding.

It is also recommended that the public funds for exhibition remuneration should not be given directly to the exhibition institutions, but rather administered, for example, via the national collecting society or a public cultural foundation. The goal here is to increase transparency and make compliance with the agreements more enforceable.