

***What is art for?  
...AND HOW SHOULD IT BE FUNDED?***

**TEEMU MÄKI**

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A presentation in the EU Theme Day 2019 programme,  
at Creative Europe Desk Danmark & Danish Film Institute, 19.6.2019.

# ***WHAT IS ART FOR?***

***(The Four Purposes of Art)***

# *The Four Purposes of Art*

## **1. Pleasure**

- A) The pleasure of escaping reality. (= Escapism.)
- B) The pleasure of facing & researching reality. (= Critical art.)
  - We often do both of the above simultaneously.
  - Creating new reality, bit by bit, through fantasy.
  - Creating new forms of pleasure. (From boredom to beauty.)

## **2. Discussion**

- A) Art sparks discussion.
- B) Art can also be a special form of discussion. (All art, but especially participatory art.)

## **3. Wisdom**

- A) Art researches and proposes solutions to concrete problems: "How to help refugees? How to fight poverty, climate change and income disparity?"
- B) Art deals with overwhelming, eternal questions: "How should I live? Why should I keep on living? How to face mortality? What is good life?"
  - In other words: Art is a holistic method for testing, modifying and creating moral and existential values.
  - These questions are more compositional challenges than clear-cut problems.

## **4. The cultivation of emotional life**

- A) Use art to become more aware of what we feel and why. To understand and rationally control our inner life. (= An utilitarian value.)
- B) Use art to increase the intensity and diversity of our emotional life or experience of existence. (= An intrinsic value.)
- C) To rehearse and intensify compassion and other good emotions. (Virtue ethics.)

Two characters from  
[THE GOSPEL OF CHRISTMAS](#),  
a theatre/dance/music  
piece by  
Teemu Mäki, 2018.



Another character from  
[THE GOSPEL OF CHRISTMAS](#),  
a theatre/dance/music:  
Wille Rydman, a Finnish MP  
speaking about what Jesus really meant.

A man with dark hair, wearing a dark suit, light blue shirt, and patterned tie, is shown from the chest up. He is looking slightly to his left and appears to be speaking. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

**Jesus does NOT teach that  
raise the tax rate to 70 %**

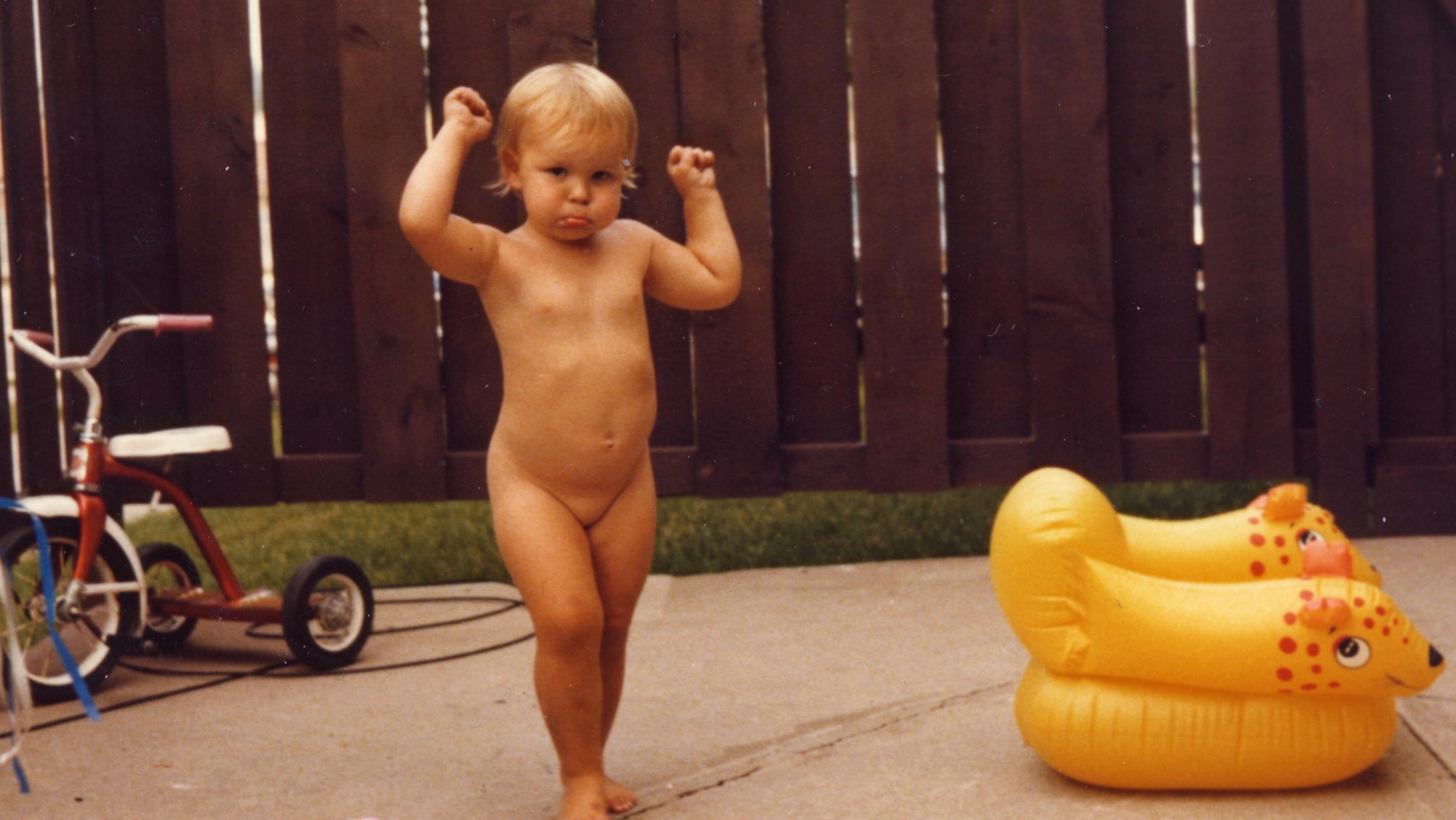


*Portrait of Jamie MacDonald (transmasculine)*  
by TEEMU MÄKI

Six photographs, 2018.

Image sizes: 80 x 114 cm, 160 x 128 cm, 80 x 120 cm, 160 x 128 cm, 80 x 53 cm, 160 x 128 cm. The external dimensions of the prints are 207 x 150 cm.

From the series *Transgender*, a subcategory of [\*How to Be a Woman or a Man?\*](#).









Director:  
Teemu Mäki  
Painters:  
Hanna Aav  
Meri Ahlfors  
Susanna Alanne  
Antti Auvinen  
Krista Heikkinen  
Elise Hujanen  
Juuli Jyrkänköski  
Saija Sipilä  
Oona Suikkanen  
Ville Vilhunen  
TEEMU MÄKI  
17.7-21.12.2006  
HELSINKI, FINLAND

**Home Alone / Yksin kotona**

2006–2007, acrylic on canvas, triptych, 300 x 600 cm, collective painting, Teemu Mäki & a group of teenagers (15–19 years old): Hanna Aav, Meri Ahlfors, Susanna Alanne, Antti Auvinen, Krista Heikkinen, Elise Hujanen, Juuli Jyrkänköski, Teemu Mäki, Saija Sipilä, Oona Suikkanen ja Ville Vilhunen, in a URB06-workshop produced by Kiasma Theatre Helsinki.





A view from  
*YOU'LL BE A TREE*

<http://www.teemumaki.com/theater-koivu-english.html>

a theatre/dance/music  
piece by  
Teemu Mäki, 2017.





*Grozny Street Scene*

an extract from the  
multipartite /  
installation  
*Chechnya (in  
Putinist Russia)*.

A collective  
painting by Teemu  
Mäki & Sanna  
Halme, Maria  
Petrova, Sofia  
Tarassenko, Janne  
Vasama.

2012, oil on  
canvas, 200 x 300  
cm

[http://www.teemumaki.com/  
coll-chechnya-grozny-street-  
scene.html](http://www.teemumaki.com/coll-chechnya-grozny-street-scene.html)



## Russian Interior

an extract from the multipartite / installation *Chechnya (in Putinist Russia)*.

A collective painting by Teemu Mäki & Elizabeth Buset, Sanna Halme, Hanna Peräkylä, Maria Petrova, Hannele Rosenbröijer, Sofia Tarassenko, Matti Vainio.

2012, oil on canvas, 200 x 300 cm

<http://www.teemumaki.com/coll-chechnya-russian-interior.html>





A detail from  
*KLARA, HELMER OCH ASSAR*  
a painting by  
Teemu Mäki, 2008.



# How Does Art Relate to Knowledge?

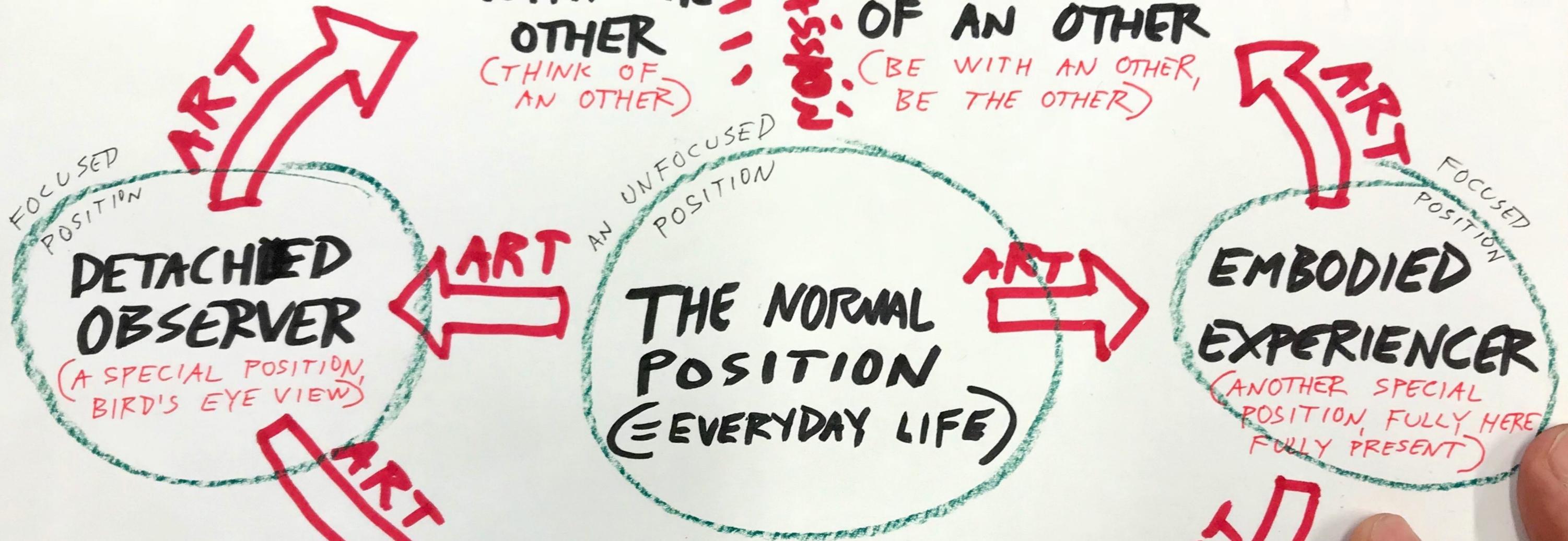
- 1) 'Normal knowledge'. Art produces that as well.
- 2) Art **transmits knowledge** in compact and catchy ways.
- 3) Art **embeds knowledge into us deeply**, so that it really takes root and becomes a part of us. (To know in your head >>> To feel it your gut.)
- 4) Art creates and conveys **silent knowledge**. Knowledge and skills that can be verbalised only partially or not at all.
- 5) Art is a **way of developing our world view** (*Weltanschauung*) in its most extensive form and in a holistic manner. *World view* is the multisensory vision and understanding we have on how the world is, how it could be and how we would want it to be.
- 6) Art is **great way to deal with overwhelming and unsolvable questions** like: "**How should we live? What is good life?**" (David Hume: "There is no ought from is").
- 7) Not only for knowledge: "It's more difficult to read a good poem than to write one." (**Joyful toil**, The skills of pleasure are as important as the skills with which we reduce suffering and remove the obstacles of pleasure.)

TEEMU, 1.5.2018

MODE 2:  
EMPATHIZE WITH THE OTHER  
(THINK OF AN OTHER)

COMPARISON

MODE 3:  
WALK A MILE IN THE SHOES OF AN OTHER  
(BE WITH AN OTHER, BE THE OTHER)



WHAT ART DOES TO OUR EXPERIENCE OF SPACE AND MODE OF EXISTENCE?

MODE 1:  
RATIONAL, VERBAL REASONING

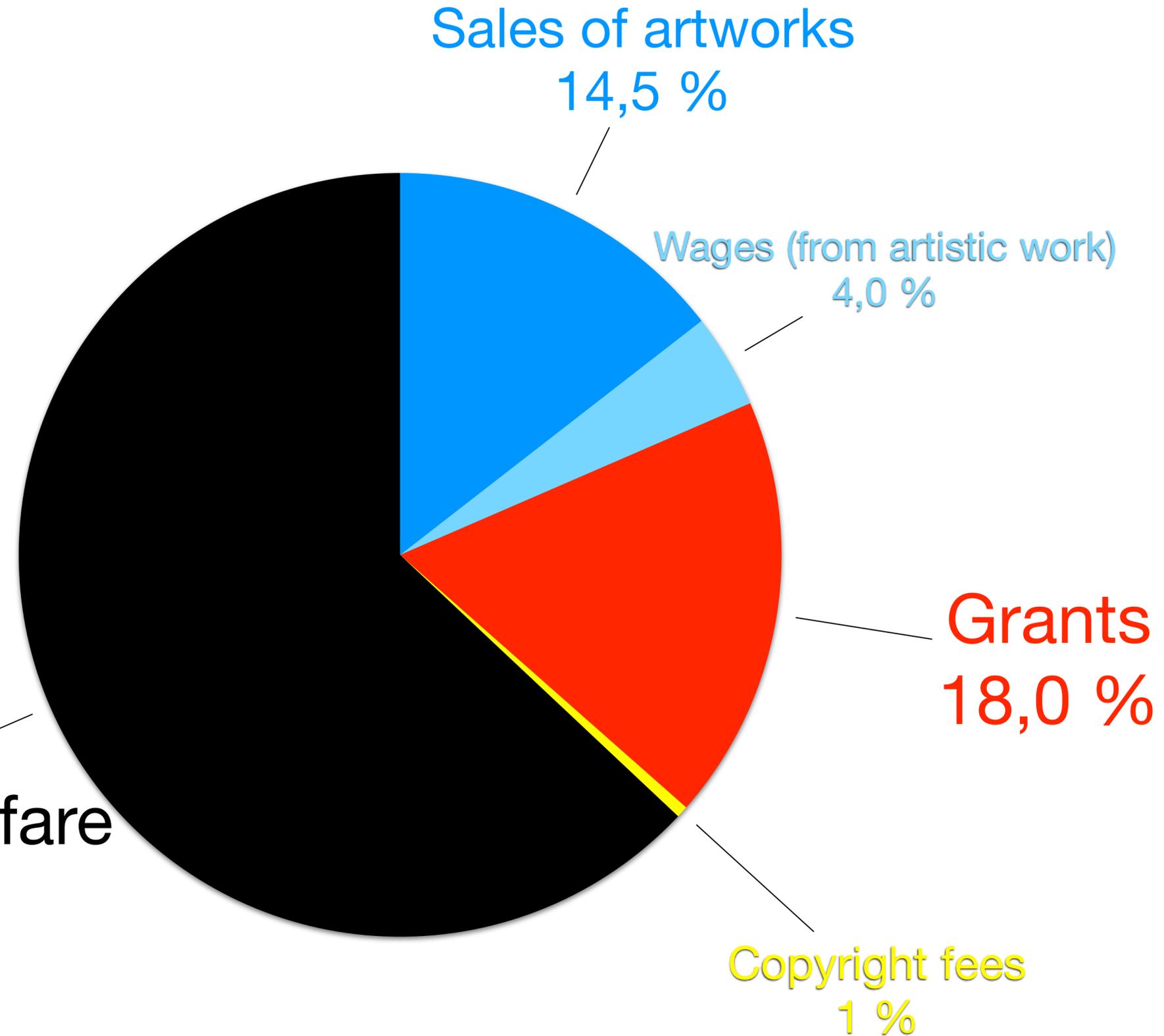
***...and how should the arts be funded?***

## The visual artists' income in Finland

...and a few quick facts:

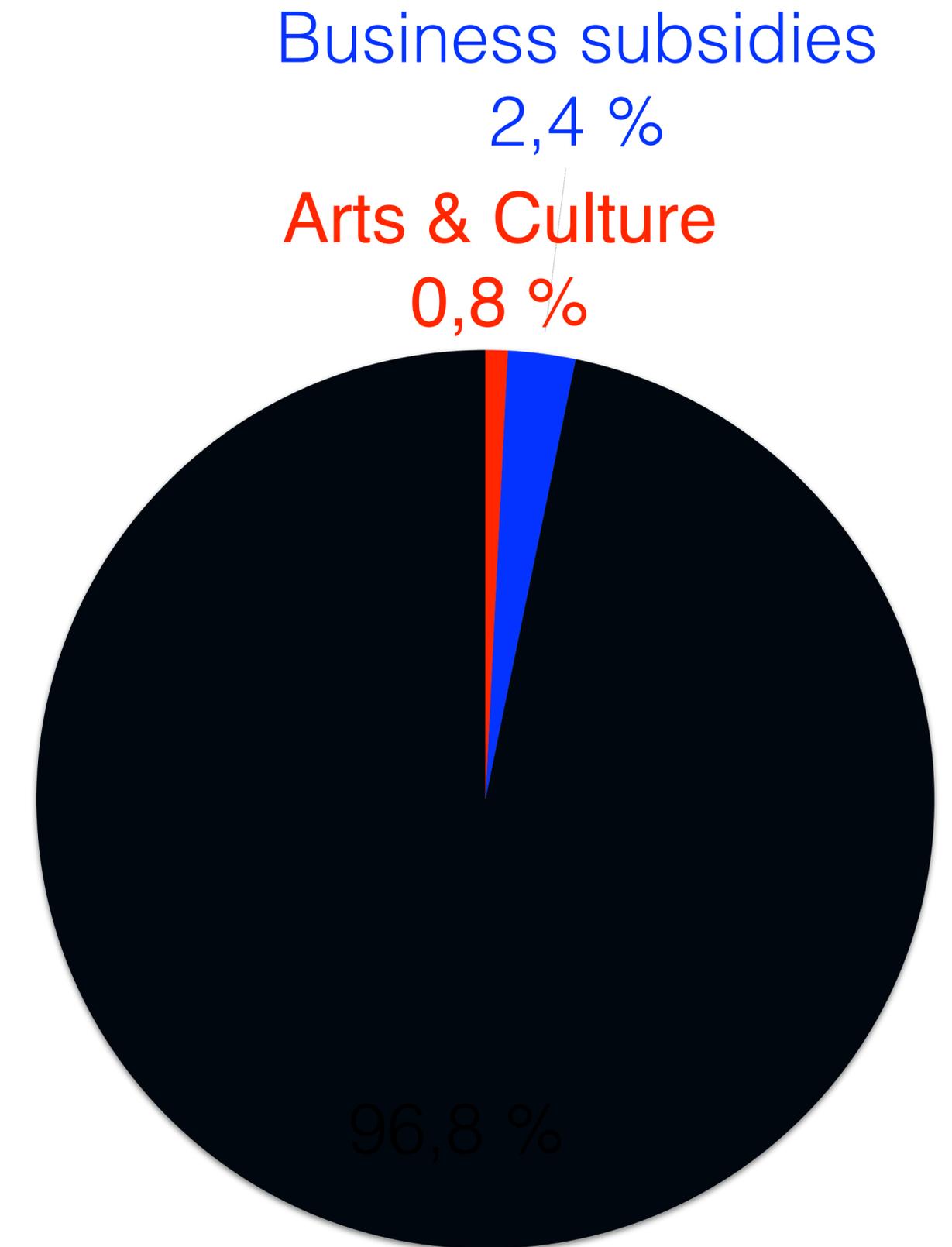
- 3000 professional visual artists.
- Visual artist's average total income per year is about 60 % of the Finnish median income.
- Poverty is common in other arts too: There are 770 professional writers in Finland. Their average income *from artistic work* is 2000 € per YEAR. (The median income in Finland is 3000 € per MONTH.)
- The main "business model" thus is redistribution of income.

Non-artistic work + welfare  
63 %



## Some numbers

1. **The budget of Finland (2019): 55,7 billion €.**
2. **0,8 % of that (0,45 billion €) goes to arts & culture.**
3. **2,4 % (1,4 billion €) from the state budget goes to business subsidies.**
4. **A detail in the arts & culture budget: only 22 million goes directly to artists as grants.**
5. **A detail in the business subsidies: 95 million per year "to increase the competitiveness of Finnish shipping companies".**
6. (Not included in the budget: Finland gives 3,3 billion's worth of tax breaks to businesses. And Finnish agriculture is subsidised by EU with 1 billion €.)



[http://budjetti.vm.fi/indox/tae/frame\\_year.jsp?year=2019&lang=fi](http://budjetti.vm.fi/indox/tae/frame_year.jsp?year=2019&lang=fi)

<https://tutkibudjettia.fi/talousarvio/menot/31/30>

[http://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/79863/TEMrap\\_22\\_2017\\_verkkojulkaisu.pdf](http://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/79863/TEMrap_22_2017_verkkojulkaisu.pdf)

<https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-10597377>

# ***How the Arts Benefit the Society?***

***(the six most common explanations)***

1. "**Art creates our national identity**, our common culture, language and social cohesion." (The creation & preservation of the nation and the people.)
2. "**Art refines us**, elevates us from the barbarity and makes us more sophisticated."
3. "**Art is an efficient form of rest and relaxation** with which we can for a moment forget our worries and charge our batteries."
4. "**Art is an indispensable form of critical thinking.** Free and open society needs critical art, because it's the most holistic and free form of critical inquiry and debate."
5. "**Art can be a flourishing sector of economy**, creating huge financial added value."
6. "**Art can make a powerful contribution to health and well-being.**"

## Arts funding

# Arts contribute more to UK economy than agriculture - report

### Funding cuts threaten further growth of £10.8bn sector, warns chair of Arts Council England

Mark Brown Arts correspondent

Wed 17 Apr 2019 00.01 BST



▲ Dancers at the Merce Cunningham centenary celebration at the Barbican theatre in London. Photograph: Alastair Muir/REX/Shutterstock

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# *How the Arts Benefit the Society?*

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# ***Why the Arts Have Public Funding?***

**States, cities and foundations keep funding art**

1. **...to increase the quality of art.** (Public funding gives the artist more freedom, time and resources than what the markets would allow. The same as in *basic research* in science.)
2. **...to increase the versatility of art.** (Markets boost only a narrow selection.)
3. **...because otherwise the arts (as a basic right) would not be available to all citizens.**
4. **...because otherwise the rich alone would decide what kind of art is good.**
5. **...to make the arts independent and foster them as a form of critical thinking.**

***How Will the Arts Be Funded in Future?***

**The old struggle remains: MARKET-DRIVEN VS. TAX-FUNDED.**

**The market-believers claim:**

1. "**The slide to** (political) **right is inevitable.** The ideological support for tax-funding of the arts fades away."
2. "**The arts must adapt** to this and learn new, clever and more profitable business models."
3. "Challenging and **critical art can also become** commercially **profitable IF** it's marketed well."

## The tax-believers claim:

1. "**Art is a basic human right** like health care and education **and should be mainly tax-funded to guarantee quality and equality.**"
2. "**Arts is** a valuable form of public *spending* that improves the quality of life — and which also *indirectly* leads to economic growth. It's **the kind of investment that only public sector has enough patience for.**"
3. "**A kind of communist utopia has been achieved in the arts, but only for the consumer.** The whole history of the arts is available for everybody, for free or with a nominal fee." This sharing is a great achievement, which should be developed further so that artists would get paid fairly."
4. "We have created a system, where **the arts are now largely a PUBLIC GOOD or COMMON-POOL GOOD.** The system has three sources of funding: taxation, business and the artists themselves. We must tirelessly defend the tax-funded part, explain its justification and meaning."

## ***Market-driven (commercial) means of funding the arts***

1. **Sales** of physical artworks (or physical media) or entrance tickets, files, streams.
2. **Wages.** (Paid for artistic work.)
3. **Copyright fees.** Might fade away... ...or make a comeback, big time.
4. **Ad revenue.** (Good for some, but increases the income disparity and does nothing for critical art.)
5. **Sponsorships.** (The same pros and cons as with ad revenue.)
6. **A day job** for funding the real (artistic) work. Artists do it, but also organisations do it. It's "internal redistribution of income": a person or an institution sponsoring its artistic side with its commercial side. (Examples: Cable Factory, Von Krahl Theatre.)

## ***Tax-funded means of funding the arts***

1. **Public art institutions** (libraries, museums, orchestras, theatres...)
2. **Grants & subsidies** (for artists and production companies).
3. **Tax breaks** (for artists, art organisations and artworks).
4. **Welfare state** (welfare and unemployment benefits, free education).

# *The challenges (for art) in this mixed economy*

1. It's hard to maintain the ideological support for the tax-funded culture.
2. It's hard to keep the public funding criteria healthy (= merit-based, peer-reviewed, enough focus on critical art).
3. The problem of double identity: art as a market commodity vs. art as a public good.
4. When the arts have become largely a public good, it's difficult to make money with it — people have learned to take it for granted, like tap water.
5. Constant, **unintentional DUMPING** that artists tend to do (= selling their works at a price that's lower than the production costs) makes the art business difficult.
6. The falling unit prices makes it very hard for the arts to reach the break-even point. (The huge unfairness Spotify / YouTube / Netflix pricing.)

# ***WHAT TO DO? How to improve the arts economy?***

- 1. Improve business models** in the arts.
  - Artists must learn to charge more for their work. (Through unions and copyright organisations.)
  - Lobby for basic income. (But be aware of its risks.)
- 2. Improve the business environment** of the arts. (An example: extend the economic part of copyright term to eternity: 50 years after the author's death the state gets the royalties, uses them on art.)
- 3. Lobby for public funding.** To keep it and to increase it. All states, cities and nations can afford it. **...and get funding from all the ministries**, not just from the ministry of culture. (ministries of commerce, health, environment...)
- 4. Increase art education.** It's not enough to guarantee access to art for everybody, you also have to teach the skills of how to use, understand and enjoy the arts.
- 5. Promote artistic research.** To make universities ideal places also for *making art*.
- 6. It's the other way around! Art can be an anti-consumerist force** that changes the way people live and how the economy functions. (The risk: hypocrisy.)

Thanks for listening.

**TEEMU MÄKI**

Artist (Doctor of Arts) / Writer / Director (theatre/film) / Researcher

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Chair, The Artists' Association of Finland

[www.artists.fi](http://www.artists.fi)



That was my personal view.

Here are the strategic goals of  
The Artists' Association of Finland  
for 2019–2023:

[https://artists.fi/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/STS\\_hallitusohjelmataavoitteet\\_web\\_ENG.pdf](https://artists.fi/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/STS_hallitusohjelmataavoitteet_web_ENG.pdf)