

# Gatekeeping in the Arts World of Finland -Identifying Gatekeepers

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## ABSTRACT

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Abstract	
<p>An artist is not an artist before she/he has an audience, and before the artist gets an audience, there are various parties that take part in creating the artist. This study investigates who the parties are, that are involved in the creation of an artist. From an artist's point of view, the people/organisations/institutions who enable or prevent his/her art of becoming known, can be called gatekeepers. A gatekeeper is somebody, who stands at the gates of enabling or preventing something from happening, and therefore has power in deciding about the outcome. This study investigates a phenomenon called gatekeeping, and specifically so in the context of an arts world in Finland.</p> <p>The study aims to name the specific professions that are involved in the professional world of an artist. The issue is investigated from a point of views of seven different art fields: visual arts, drama, cinema, literature, music, photography and dance. The power aspects of the decision-making bodies are studied also: in other words the issues that are involved in the shaping of the Finnish arts world. Finland's Art Council's procedures of grant-awarding are also under study here, representing the government's involvement in the arts, in addition to individual professions that can all be called arts managers due to the nature of the work they perform for artists.</p> <p>The study is sociological, and is based on the ideas of Bourdieu, Csikszentmihalyi and Stallabrass, in addition to few other scholars who have investigated creation, art worlds and factors that shape the arts and the people within.</p>	
Keywords: Gatekeeping, gatekeepers, arts management, decision-making, Arts Council.	
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**TIIVISTELMÄ**  
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<b>Tiivistelmä</b> <p>Taiteilija ei ole taiteilija ennen kuin hänellä on yleisö ja ennen kuin taiteilijalle muodostuu yleisö, sen saamiseen vaikuttavat monet tahot osallistuen taiteilijan luomiseen. Tämä tutkielma selvittää keitä/mitä nämä tahot ovat, jotka ovat osallisina taiteilijan luomisessa. Taiteilijan näkökulmasta katsottuna ihmisiä/organisaatioita/instituutioita, jotka mahdollistavat tai estävät taiteen tunnetuksi tulemisen, voidaan kutsua portinvartijoiksi. Portinvartija on joku, joka toimii portilla mahdollistaen tai estäen tapahtumia, omaten valtaa lopputuloksen päätännässä. Tämä tutkielma tutkii ilmiötä nimeltä portinvartiointi suomalaisen taiteen maailman kontekstissa.</p> <p>Tutkielma pyrkii nimeämään ne erityiset ammatit, jotka ovat osallisina taiteilijan ammatillisessa maailmassa. Asiaa tutkitaan näiden seitsemän eri taiteenlajin näkökulmista: kuvataide, teatteritaide, elokuvataide, kirjallisuus, musiikki, valokuvaus ja tanssi. Päätöksenteon vallan näkökanta on tutkinnan alla myös: toisin sanoen asiat, jotka ovat osallisina suomalaisen taiteen maailman muodostuksessa. Suomen Taiteen Keskustoimikunnan käytännöt apurahojen jakamisessa ovat myös tutkimuksen alla, edustaen hallituksen osallisuutta taiteisiin, yksittäisten taidehallinnon ammattinimikkeiden ja niiden taiteiden eteen tekemän työn lisäksi.</p> <p>Tutkielma on sosiologinen, ja sen ideat perustuvat Bourdieun, Csikszentmihalyin, Stallabrassin ja muiden taiteen tiedemiesten ideoihin, jotka kaikki ovat tutkineet luovuutta, taiteen maailmoja ja asioita, jotka muovaavat taiteita ja ihmisiä taiteiden keskuudessa.</p>	
Hakusanat: Portinvartiointi, portinvartijat, taidehallinto, päätöksenteko, Taiteen Keskustoimikunta	
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## ***Introduction***

### *1.1 Background of the Study*

*Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist after one grows up.*

*-Pablo Picasso*

Picasso's quote opens up a question that is the source of inspiration for this thesis. What happens to the people pursuing art: what has happen to their careers when they do become known artists? What went wrong, if they do not? When and why does an artwork become celebrated and commercially viable cultural product and how? Are there some mediums, phases or established routes through which an art piece has to go, before truly becoming art? From the point of view of a future arts manager, the possible established routes and procedures are worth of investigating.

Arthur Danto has famously and simply pointed out that nothing is an artwork without an interpretation that constitutes it as such.<sup>1</sup> An artist is really not an artist, in the general sense, before people around him/her acknowledge and announce him/her to be that. It takes an audience: some followers, before anybody can justifiably be and be recognised as an artist. To be acknowledged and recognised as an artist is also an achievement and changes theoretically with time: the borders of the art worlds as well as the right to be called an artist are objects of constant struggle in each art field.<sup>2</sup> Art is essentially made for viewers or listeners to experience it, and without them, the works do not fulfil their core purpose. Mihael Csikszentmihalyi notes that if creativity is to retain a useful meaning, it must refer to a process that results in an idea or product that is recognised and adopted by others.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Cynthia Freeland, *But is it Art*, (London: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 57

<sup>2</sup> Merja Heikkinen, Paula Karhunen, *Focus and Functions of Public Support for Artists in Finland*, (Helsinki: Arts Council of Finland, 1993), p. 2

<sup>3</sup> Robert J. Sternberg, *Handbook of Creativity*, (UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 314

The problem of who gets to be called an artist is vast and changes with time. Heikkinen and Karhunen have studied the process of definition of an artist becoming valid, and identify a group of mediums that take part in defining the artist with these words: among the institutions participating in the definition of an artist there can be e.g. art schools, artists' organizations, and institutions which decide on publishing works or supporting arts financially. The state is always one of them at least indirectly, because of its legislative function. Legislation affects the conditions under which works of art can be produced and distributed. The state's influence is more direct when it exercises censorship or supports art.<sup>4</sup> The role of the state seems to be extensive in Finland: as being the defining body of artistic merits.

In arts management's view, an artist is really not an artist before some heavy arts management professionals work for him/her; announce, clarify and declare him/her to be so, in order for the artist to be found and recognised by the public. If it takes two to tango, it takes a few arts management professionals with an audience to create an artist. Before public gets to experience and view art, there are certain filters that it must go through to be able to be seen, heard or experienced in the first place. These filters refer to a certain group of people or organisations that act as opinion leaders, enablers: gatekeepers that have the power to make admissions and even demands for cultural products to exist.

The term gatekeeping has previously been used by a number of important scholars as Pierre Bourdieu, Mihael Csikszentmihalyi and Richard E. Caves. Whether the artist will receive grant money, or exhibition space, or a successful tour of live performances, depends on certain people, companies, associations, sponsors and a few other members: the gatekeepers.

The road to success with arts artefacts is laced with various gatekeepers, who will help and guide the artwork to the right direction on its travels, in order to become known, appreciated and celebrated. What and who these gatekeepers are, depends on the actual art form or field. In literature, in addition to the actual author, it normally takes an agent, publicist, publishing company and booksellers to reach the readers. In music,

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<sup>4</sup> Merja Heikkinen and Paula Karhunen, *Focus and Functions of Public Support for Artists in Finland* (Helsinki: Arts Council of Finland, 1993), p. 2

again with the work of lyricist, composer and producer (i.e. the creators), it takes the performer(s), manager, publisher, record company, distributor, record outlets and gig organisers (with or without live music agents) to realise the artwork to become available to the consumers. In visual arts, along with the creator, it takes the gallerist and museum intendent at least to display the work. The list grows longer and fuller with art forms as theatre and film. Personnel as costume designers, set designers, lighting and sound engineers, stage organisers and directors are added to the list of scriptwriters, producers, actors and stuntmen.

My aim to distinguish these parties, people and/or organisations, that have such an important function and meaning in an artist's career, and identify the most powerful gatekeepers in the field of Finnish arts and the reasoning behind their very existence.

## *1.2 Problem Formulation*

What is known about this subject, is that some gatekeeping seems to exist, but it would be useful to properly clarify who the gatekeepers are and how do they work in advancing or limiting the artworks' publicity and possibilities of being experienced. It is fairly unknown, in academic research and terms, also surely with novice artists, how to understand, use and benefit from the arts system.

In other words, it would help the artist to be familiar with the demands, working methods and evaluation processes of the admittance of new art that the various arts managers, gatekeepers, practice. If the term arts management refers to people who will influence, one way or another, to the careers and development of cultural life, then arts managers and artists should be the main targets of investigation in this study. According to Byrnes in *Management and the Arts*, the broad definition of an arts manager is a person who creates and arranges the meetings of artist and public.<sup>5</sup>

The basic structure and power relations of arts management personnel in Finland forms the core of this study. Abroad, professions as literary agents, booking agencies, PR-firms and artist managers definitely hold more established and stable permanent jobs, at least when compared to the Finnish markets of the arts field. For instance, the government of Finland heavily supports arts with grants to artists and admits funding for various art institutions, projects and museums among others. The system works by applications of grants, money, and the works offering and representing a premium quality will receive the financial aid. Due to this finance granting system, the government can also be seen as a controlling body, with power to legitimately control a portion of money to be invested in culture. The main purpose and mission of the Arts Council of Finland is to aid and nourish Finnish art, but with the reasoning given above, they fall into the same category of being gatekeepers as any other influential person or company in artist's career. To what extent and how does the government have power in shaping the Finnish arts world?

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<sup>5</sup> William J. Byrnes, *Management and the Arts* (Oxford: Focal Press, 2009), p. 23



### *1.3 Aim of the Study*

The general aim of this study is to identify and analyse the people and/or organisations that can influence an artist's career, in business terms and other possible ways that have an impact on artist's creative capital, reputation even. Equally important issues under the investigation here are the decision-making processes: how do the gatekeepers make decisions and justify the decisions that open the gates to some artists but not to others?

The purpose of this thesis is to identify and study the functions and respective roles of these various gatekeepers in the arts world of Finland. Some comparison to foreign countries is executed in the analysis for the purpose of establishing the separating factors in the financial and cultural execution of art worldwide. Every single one the gatekeepers play a role in shaping and creating an artwork that becomes available to the public, and without them, art might never come to live, to exist in a world that we know. The purpose of this study is to clarify and identify the core people, professions and organisations (and their actions) that have come to possess some admmissive power in relation to the selection and distribution of art that becomes public.

From an artist's point of view, to be successful in their chosen professions, they are likely to use or benefit from other parties' aid and entrepreneurial leadership. To some artists, these people, or places like galleries to a pictorial artist, may appear somewhat challenging at points, hence the term gatekeeper. Gatekeeping also resonates some aspects of power and authority to decide about annual exhibitions, bookings of the performers or admitting governmental grants. The discovery of the study should result in clear, structured picture of the current arts management field of Finland, and the gatekeepers' power aspects within.

Some comparison between separate art fields is performed for finding out whether gatekeeping appears more clearly and is executed with more power in some fields more than in others.

#### *1.4 Research Approach*

As the matters under investigation are cultural and require information collection methods that reveal what impacts human activities impose, an empirical approach is needed: the methodological approach used in this study is qualitative. The empirical approach belongs to the grouping of ethnographic research, where as mentioned above, an empirical observation is required, in addition to remaining open for elements that cannot be codified as such and for the purposes of grounding the phenomena as a whole.<sup>6</sup>

The main method of research in this study is in-depth interviewing, although also empirical observation methods are applied in this research on a smaller scale. The observational methods are used to demonstrate consistencies and similarities between the established working structures in the arts management field in order to be able to draw general conclusions of how the field operates. Interviewing is the main method of acquiring in-depth information and opinions of the people working in the arts world of Finland.

The interviewees that were chosen for the purposes of this study all represent one art field and work professionally in the arts world of Finland. The whole arts world of Finland is categorised in nine separate art fields according to the government's Ministry of Education of Finland. For clarity and relative comparison a selection based on the sub-fields are used in this study. Due to the time and space limits of this study, seven separate art fields are chosen to be at the centre of investigation: visual arts, drama, cinema, literature, music, photography and dance. An arts management professional or an artist is chosen to represent each abovementioned field; to share their views on gatekeeping issues through free-flowing in-depth interviewing. The sampling method is therefore purposeful sampling.

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<sup>6</sup> David Silverman, *Qualitative Research, Theory, Method and Practice* (London: Sage Publications, 1997), p. 8

### *1.5 Structure of the Thesis*

There are six main chapters (with relevant sub-chapters) in this thesis. The study started with an introduction of which purpose was to lead the reader to the subject through presenting the background of the study's issues. Within the introduction, some formulation of the problem and the aim to provide answers for the problem were included. A short initial presentation of the research approach was also presented.

The second chapter consists of the theoretical framework, which can also be called a literary review; basically a thorough review of the existing literature related to the subject of this thesis. The third main chapter is an inquest of the methodological matters that were used in order to be able to find the most suitable routes for finding out the aims: the approach, both data collection and analysis, completed with some critical reflections on the process.

The fourth chapter delivers an analysis of the results and findings from the interviewing process, which is shared to separate art fields entirely for clarity. Conclusions part of the study comes next as a fifth main chapter, attempting to relate the results to the theoretical section's findings and to answer the aforementioned research questions.

The final (sixth) chapter discusses the whole issue of gatekeeping on a larger scale, equipped with my personal philosophical and managerial thoughts about it.

Referencing is presented on footnotes throughout the whole thesis, and a separate complete list of references is also presented at the end of the study, on alphabetical order by the authors' surnames. The very last pages of this thesis are the appendix which includes the initial interview questions that were used as a base in the discussions with the interviewees.

## ***Theoretical Framework***

### *2.1 Theory of Gatekeeping*

The core theory of gatekeeping is presented in a book called *Gatekeeping Theory*, and although it is based on the functions of media and the selection on news that get to be seen by viewers, the basic model is adaptable to the arts world. In a nutshell, the book concentrates on investigating the way some mediators transform information of innumerable events into a manageable amount of events that the viewers can choose to consume. It is concerned about the fact why certain information either passes through the gates or does not. The term gatekeeping offers a framework for evaluating how selections occur and are performed, gates being points of decision or action. Gatekeepers determine both which units get into the channel and which pass from section to section, exercising their own preferences and/or acting as representatives to carry out a set of pre-established policies.<sup>7</sup> The pure reason why gatekeeping exists is simple, especially when looking at the arts world: there is an infinite supply of creative goods available for possible production, but limited space for the ones that actually get the possibility of being manufactured, promoted and consumed. In other words, in the arts world, the supply and demand relationship is not simple, also due to the fact that art goods are not something people even realise they would require.

Gatekeeper's position of power is summed up by a scholar named Shoemaker, with the following words: gatekeepers determine what becomes a person's social reality, a particular view of the world.<sup>8</sup> Due to the possibility of having an impact, the competition and will to enter the possibilities of mass media is great, in fact the main purpose of public and relations professionals is to ensure that as much media exposure is taking place as possible. Thus many sources, for example, government officials and lobbying groups create and carefully shape their own information and work to ensure that the messages will enter media channels and pass through all the gates. Exposure in the media means that a new idea has been accepted as important enough to be accessed into media, therefore accessed to the public. It is important to acknowledge that media

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<sup>7</sup> Pamela J. Shoemaker and Tim P. Vos, *Gatekeeping Theory* (New York: Routledge, 2009), p. 15

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3

need not to be mere newspapers or television, as the book declares: films, music, books and plays are also mass media, and, although they are less likely to be found in the gatekeeping literature, the ideas in *Gatekeeping Theory* can be useful for scholarship involving them and encourage creative thought.<sup>9</sup>

Within artistic fields, there are various alternatives to who or what stands at the gates, *Gatekeeping Theory* has generally summed up the procedures as follows: the artist provides the creative material, which is identified by an agent, who acts like a talent scout for the producer, who supplies the capital necessary the product under way. The promoter's job is to create and manage anticipated demand, while the gatekeeper stands between the industry and its consumers, deciding which products will be recommended or publicized to the public, the ultimate consumer of the product.<sup>10</sup> In a nutshell, the above description is relevant but somewhat inadequate, as for the purposes of this study, the role and identity of the gatekeeper remains unclear, in addition to the fact that all of the members mentioned in the quote can be considered to be gatekeepers from an artist's point of view.

The reasons of why something gets through the gates are various. In media, and also in art, some of the following may hold true: timeliness, proximity, importance, impact, or consequence; interest; conflict or controversy; sensationalism; prominence; and novelty, oddity, or the unusual. Also the personal attributes of the actual gatekeepers may have an effect in the selection processes: the characteristics, gender, education, ethnicity, knowledge, attitudes, feelings and behaviours of individual people. For instance, empathic people will also take into account the emotions of those the decisions impact.<sup>11</sup>

On the contrary, many of the vacancies where the gatekeeping function is executed, there are also strictly set rules of what the gatekeeper must obey and base his/her decisions on: a set of routine procedures. Admittance regulations to an arts university would fall into this category neatly. It is also worth noting that a certain spillover effect is present when making decisions: previous decisions by prior gatekeepers may affect

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<sup>9</sup> Pamela J. Shoemaker and Tim P. Vos, *Gatekeeping Theory* (New York: Routledge, 2009), p. 6

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33

future decision makers reasoning and behaviour as Shoemaker notes: today's individual gatekeeping decision may become tomorrow's selection norm.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Pamela J. Shoemaker and Tim P. Vos, *Gatekeeping Theory* (New York: Routledge, 2009), p. 52

## 2.2 Sociological Views on Gatekeeping

Pierre Bourdieu has influenced a great deal on the sociological understanding of cultural fields and the system of judgements that take place in it for culture to exist. Bourdieu also declares that there are a small group of people in the arts world who control entries to the possible success in their respective fields.

Bourdieu has established the cultural capital in great detail in his studies. In his words: for the author, the critic, the art dealer, the publisher or the theatre manager, the only legitimate accumulation consists in making a name for oneself, a known, recognised name, a capital of consecration implying a power to consecrate objects (with a trademark or signature) or persons (through publication, exhibition etc.) and therefore to give value and to appropriate the profits from this operation.<sup>13</sup>

The accumulation and possession of cultural capital certainly increases one's power in cultural industries. To have cultural capital enables one to function from a dominative position in legitimizing certain artistic practices as superior when compared to others, and the people who possess less cultural capital readily accept the views and ranking performed by the owners of cultural capital. The members of society who do not participate in the evaluation of cultural works, are led in Bourdieu's opinion, and as a result see their own practices as inferior to the established superior practices of the holders of cultural capital.<sup>14</sup> Bourdieu quite rightly points out that the specific economy of artistic field is based on a particular form of belief.<sup>15</sup>

The critics can be considered to be a very important group within gatekeepers, in terms of their power to praise or dismiss artists or artworks. Bourdieu points out that not only do the critics declare their judgement of works but they also in a sovereign manner claim the right to discuss and judge them, consequently the critics then participate in the production of the value of the work of art.<sup>16</sup> However, Bourdieu stresses the point that the art worlds are very complicated sociological phenomenon, where the participating parties do not function separately from each other. Literature, art and their respective

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<sup>13</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1993), p.75

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 36

producers do not exist independently of a complex institutional framework, which authorises, enables, empowers and legitimates them.<sup>17</sup> In a large sociological context, every single one of these parties functioning in the art worlds can be called a gatekeeper of kind. The question that Bourdieu proposes: who is the true producer of the value of the work –the painter or the dealer, the writer or the publisher, the playwright or the theatre manager? states the relevance and importance of the roles of gatekeepers rather neatly.<sup>18</sup> What Bourdieu asks, in fact, is: who creates the creator?

Another scholar, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, has researched creativity thoroughly, and he mentions gatekeepers of being an important part in the delivery of cultural goods. Csikszentmihalyi has formed and presented The Systems Model of Creativity, in which the creative domain is the field including gatekeepers and the individual who becomes the creator. He suggests that the public only recognise the creative talent, after the gatekeepers have passed it through their own selection processes and announce and recommend the person's qualifications as of being creative.<sup>19</sup>

Csikszentmihalyi has studied artists extensively for the purpose of finding out what constitutes of being creative (artistic), and more importantly how the creativity is sustained in the profession of an artist. He mentions perseverance of being equally important in one's artistic career aspirations, as the possible pure natural creativeness. In his opinion, and on the basis of his studies, some people who seemed to lack superior creativeness at a starting level, became later on celebrated as being the most creative due to their untiring motivation and relentless work towards being recognised as an artist. In fact, the lack of perseverance in pursuing one's artistic career could result in surrender if the surrounding environment did not approve one's creativeness without a doubt, upon the first deliverance of newly produced works.<sup>20</sup>

Csikszentmihalyi continues on explaining that there is an underlying assumption amongst people, that creativity is something that of an objective quality that manifests in products, or artworks, therefore the evaluating members of the societies as critics, judges and raters need simply to recognise it. What is left unnoticed is the fact that these

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<sup>17</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1993), p. 10

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 76

<sup>19</sup> Robert J. Sternberg, *Handbook of Creativity* (UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 311

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 313



experts do not actually have a set of rules or objective evaluation system by which to make ratings, but instead they rely on irrelevant and idiosyncratic preferences that are formed on the basis of past education, experience, cultural assumptions, trends and personal values. He concludes that whether an idea or product is creative or not does not depend on its own qualities, but on the effect it is able to produce in others who are exposed to it.<sup>21</sup>

The conclusions of Pierre Bourdieu's theory of cultural production are used in Csikszentmihalyi's analysis in length, from the initial definitions of what constitutes as a domain, or the field. A domain refers to a symbolic or cultural aspect, value of a product, or an artwork, that then inevitably gets reviewed and measured by the receivers: the public. Bourdieu defines the field consisting of a sub-system of a certain culturally divided area, where every member in it has some special knowledge about the particular subject in question, an interest in the products that it delivers.<sup>22</sup>

Csikszentmihalyi readily admits these social aspects, but goes further in nominating the participants of the field as gatekeepers. Bourdieu has differentiated the struggles that take place in the development of art and cultural forms by saying that the literary or artistic field is a field of forces, but it is also a field of struggles tending to transform or conserve this field of forces.<sup>23</sup> What both the abovementioned scholars mean, and refer to, is that in order for the cultural field to develop in time, new appreciated cultural and artistic views and forms are born based on the old ones, and for those changes to get included and adopted in the domain, there are middle men who make the admissions. In other words, there is a group of gatekeepers that are entitled to determinate and make decisions as to what is in fact included in being the new accepted art forms, or works.<sup>24</sup>

Csikszentmihalyi also wants to further clarify, what is meant by the field in his opinion: the social organisation of the domain –to the teachers, critics, journal editors, museum curators, agency directors and foundation officers who decide what belongs to a domain and what does not.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Robert J. Sternberg, *Handbook of Creativity* (UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 313

<sup>22</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1993), p. 21

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30

<sup>24</sup> Robert J. Sternberg, *Handbook of Creativity*, (UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 315

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 315

In a book called *Art Incorporated*, an author named Stallabrass raises an important note relating to the qualifying assessment system that exists in the world of arts. He questions who actually has the right to decide and determine whether new art works are worthy of being seen, or being discarded as mediocre trials. He uses another product to illustrate his opinion: an imaginary new version of Coca-Cola soft drink: if it does not get approved by the public's taste, in terms of being bought in volumes, the evaluating beverage specialists have indeed made a crucial mistake in their judgement.<sup>26</sup>

In certain art fields, the comments and opinions of professional art managers weight more than in others, towards the possible celebration of new art works. In Stallabrass' opinion, the popular music field illustrates perfectly this phenomenon of gatekeeper's inadequate skills in foreseeing the future success stories. He says that in the popular music field, with movies also, the specialists are notoriously unable to enforce a decision of which works will be creative and liked by the public. In their defence though, he adds that due to the economic nature and structure of the fields, it is not possible to be able to invest in every promising newcomer, as the old already paid for productions and products are still bound with contracts and efforts to make them cost-effective continue.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Julian Stallabrass, *Art Incorporated* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 324

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 326

### 2.3 Pre-Governmental Political Gatekeeping

The examples of boycott, restrictive measures and censorship on the arts are various, from the ancient history to the current day. In countries, and situations where some governmental grants have been admitted to artists, in the case of the representation of a controversial artwork, the money-granting officials have –or have been forced- to place a censorship on the works. During the times when governmental grants did not yet exist, when other powerful members, as the church, commissioned artworks from artists, they too felt that upon paying for the works they had the right to affect the creation of the piece, ultimately to either accept the work or demand it to be changed or destroyed altogether. In 1600 The Catholic Church ordered a paint work from Caravaggio to paint a portrait of St. Matthew, but as the artist's view of him was seen to be too relaxed, The Church demanded him to paint a new, more saint looking version.<sup>28</sup>

Similarly, in 1880 Van Gogh had to experience a demeaning treatment from the society of his time. During his lifetime, people mainly sneered at him and his artwork: he was considered to be a mental recluse, and his works did not sell nor were commissioned. It was only after some new quality and aesthetic assessment measures entered the scene that he was hailed as a very talented artist, but by this time he was already dead. According to an art writer Stallabrass, Van Gogh's works became creative only after a number of other artists, critics, and collectors interpreted them in terms of new aesthetic criteria and transformed them from substandard efforts into masterpieces.<sup>29</sup> As a conclusion of these advancements, scholar Stallabrass points out that creativity is the result of changing standards and new criteria of assessment, in addition to the artist's actual pure creativity.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Julian Stallabrass, *Art Incorporated* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 326

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 326

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 321

#### *2.4 Governmental Power Aspects: The Controlling of Artistic Works*

The governmental, political bodies in power have regulated the production of artistic works a great deal, even until recent times, with variations depending on the historical development of nations and the current situations nations are going through. Currently, for instance North Korea imposes very strict regulations as to what the native public can produce or enjoy, in cultural terms.

In 1995, in Finland, The Museum of Contemporary Art in Helsinki held an arts biennale called ARS -95. For this exhibition, an artist called Alfredo Jarr constructed an artwork called 'One Million Finnish Passports', which criticised Finland's immigration office's regulative rules of admitting entries for immigrants into the country. All one million creatively reproduced fake passports in the piece represented the possible accepted entries to Finland, that due to the strict admittance rules of the government, were denied, thus did not exist for real immigrants at all. The Finnish immigration officials protested this artwork in such a volume, that the artwork was first taken off the exhibition, then later on destroyed completely.<sup>31</sup>

During the very same year in 1995, a biennale was also organised in South Africa's Johannesburg, in order to make connections to the global cultural world after the liberal change in the country's political atmosphere. The history of the country had been incendiary and controversial because of the racial disagreements and power struggles, and now the city tried to correct and aid the peaceful future of it. However, any artists that were to present opinions and ideas of the restless history in their art works, were simply and thoroughly excluded from the possibility of exhibiting.<sup>32</sup>

In Soviet Union, not so long ago, the production and display of artworks has been rigorously controlled by the governmental body. Csikszentmihalyi points out that, in Soviet Union, specially trained party officials had the responsibility of deciding which new paintings, books, music, movies and even scientific theories were acceptable, based on how well they supported political ideology.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Julian Stallabrass, *Art Incorporated* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 38

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 38

<sup>33</sup> Robert J. Sternberg, *Handbook of Creativity* (UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 326

A notorious publicly heated conversation took place in The United States in 1989, when an artwork called *Piss Christ* by Andres Serrano caused it. The senator of New York Alfonse D'Amato, senator Jesse Helms and Conservative Christian Family Association started the conversation by condemning the art piece completely, requesting that it should not be displayed, as it was trash and as the money the exhibition was organised by came from National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), which on its behalf got the money from the public (collected and issued by the government). According to a writer called Cynthia Koch, the problem of whether the government should fund the arts in the USA at all, has been there since the start of issuing the grants. The controversy with NEA and *Piss Christ* was just another incident that gained a great deal of space in the national press. Yet, it escalated, when another exhibition was to take place, which had also received money from NEA: this time by an artist called Mapplethorpe.<sup>34</sup>

Republican Leader Dick Armev has declared his views on the NEA's role in the funding of the arts as follows: the National Endowment for the Arts has always been bigger than life. What makes it so big? It is made big by the concerted, well-funded, well-motivated efforts of the arts elite in America who want the focus to be not whether or not there will be funding for the arts but whether or not they will be in control.<sup>35</sup> Interestingly, Armev himself dedicated a huge section of his working hours to the demolishing of the NEA's funding procedures by attacking the art works that were funded by NEA, calling some of the works *morally reprehensible trash*. He also requested new guidelines in the admitting of the grants that would clearly *pay respect to public standards of taste and decency*.<sup>36</sup>

Those in favour for the governmental funding for the arts argue that it is the task of the government to foster nation's arts supply, to enable the creation of arts outside the rigorous capitalistic market forces and that art would diminish into being mere entertainment in the hands of the free enterprise system. Those against the governmental funding argue that the very fact that public money is used limits the independence of expression, and it is far more democratic to let the market decide what art should be produced. Besides (the opponents continue), great artists will continue the creation of

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<sup>34</sup> Cynthia Koch, "The Contest for American Culture: A Leadership Case Study on The NEA and NEH Funding Crisis", 1998, <http://www.upenn.edu/pnc/ptkoch.html>, accessed on January 2012.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

their art regardless of looming poverty and that if the art institutions were producing the kind of art the public wants, the subsidies would not be needed in the first place.<sup>37</sup>

The politics in America concerning public funding for the arts differ greatly when compared to the European established models. This is partly due to the political history of the land and the general appreciation of the arts among the public and those in power. In America, the arts have not played that big of a role in establishing the newly-born nation's nationalistic endeavors. The patronage of the rich towards artists was almost non-existent during the times when it was widely practiced in Europe during the last five centuries. The rising capitalism, however, has brought it to America later. The terms have changed from patronage to sponsorship and charity, amongst others.

When looking at the amounts the governments spend on the arts between America and some European countries, the differences are staggering. In 1998, the average money per citizen given to the arts was \$6.25, when in the United Kingdom it was \$27.40, and in Finland \$97.70, the highest in Europe.<sup>38</sup> An interesting point here arises: how come the global success and reputation is more closely associated with American artists instead of the Finnish equivalents, if the financial possibilities seem vaster for the Finnish artists?

In a book called *Art Incorporated* Stallabrass investigates the effect that America's growing political and cultural dominance does on art and international art worlds. It is typical for The United States to import little and export a lot when it comes to art works and the demands of the home market is met by local production rather than looking for ideas produced elsewhere, therefore The United States has become a culturally dominant state in the world of art.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Cynthia Koch, "The Contest for American Culture: A Leadership Case Study on The NEA and NEH Funding Crisis", 1998, <http://www.upenn.edu/pnc/ptkoch.html>, accessed on January 2012.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Julian Stallabrass, *Art Incorporated* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 4

## 2.5 Governmental Power in Finland

In Finland, the governmental funding for arts is rather extensive. According to the Arts Council of Finland, which is responsible for allocating the grants for arts, there are eight main sectors that the funding is directed to. These are:

1. National Board of Antiquities and other research of cultural heritage
2. Art museums
3. Theatres and Opera
4. Orchestras
5. Public libraries
6. Cinema
7. Direct artist and arts funding
8. Municipals' benefits for the purpose of funding societies, events and regional centres<sup>40</sup>

The Arts Council consists of nine separate national arts councils that each represent a specific field of art: National Council for Architecture, Cinema, Crafts and Design, Dance, Drama, Literature, Music, Photography and Visual Arts.<sup>41</sup>

The direct grants to artists are admitted mainly on the basis of artistic quality and excellence. This can cause some tension and possible problems in the opinion of some: the fact that excellence plays the only role results in strong boundaries between performers and audiences, high brow art competing with popular forms of art. Due to the focus on excellence, the art policies aim to support mainly traditionally defined high art of high professional standard, that implies that the artist eligible for subsidies must be defined and categorised as a professional artist. The definition of artists comprises of different factors: professional training, grants received, membership in artists' organisations, published works, inclusion in artists registers and a definition by a panel of experts are all taken into consideration.<sup>42</sup> The public's opinion does not seem to

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<sup>40</sup> Ilkka Heiskanen, Anita Kangas and Ritva Mitchell (Ed.) *Taiteen ja Kulttuurin Kentät* (Helsinki: Tietosanoma OY, 2002), p. 21

<sup>41</sup> Merja Heikkinen and Paula Karhunen, *Focus and Functions of Public Support for Artists in Finland* (Helsinki: Arts Council of Finland, 1993), p. 2

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7

matter greatly in defining the artist, regardless of his/her popularity and contribution to the entertaining of the masses.

In Finland, the commercial market for art is small and private businesses do not seem have the desire to support the arts, even though the benefits of sponsorship have slowly started to grow interest in enterprises. This means that the role of the state as the supporter of art is still big, and consequently the admittance of public support often determines who can function as an artist in Finland. The lack of public support would result in many of the traditional art forms to cease to exist, or being reduced in volume drastically.<sup>43</sup>

Interestingly, only seven percent of the governmental grants goes directly to the artists and the funding of their personal work. Of course, majority of the overall monies do end up going to the salaries of artists, through various projects finances. The traditional granting system was created in 1967, and from the start its main reason for existing has been to advance the quality of Finnish art instead of helping to employ the artists.<sup>44</sup> From the point of view of the Arts Council being a gatekeeper, it is worth noting the admission criteria: only the quality of the art works is used as a criteria for grants. The people who decide about the subsidies, are a carefully mantled group of art professionals, that need to be elected into the committee and they need to be known and commendable members of the arts world of Finland. The majority of the elected members are artists themselves, so consequently it is the artists themselves that implement the arts policies into action.<sup>45</sup>

But, how is this required quality and excellence assessed and measured in detail? Is it even possible that quality can be measured and in relation to what: international advancements in art, building the national spirit through art or what? And for the purposes of this thesis, does the increase/decrease of public subsidies increase the power aspects of governments in relation to the production of art works? One might say that

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<sup>43</sup> Merja Heikkinen and Paula Karhunen, *Focus and Functions of Public Support for Artists in Finland* (Helsinki: Arts Council of Finland, 1993), p. 4

<sup>44</sup> Ilkka Heiskanen, Anita Kangas and Ritva Mitchell (Ed.) *Taiteen ja Kulttuurin Kentät* (Helsinki: Tietosanoma OY, 2002), p. 198

<sup>45</sup> Merja Heikkinen and Paula Karhunen, *Focus and Functions of Public Support for Artists in Finland* (Helsinki: Arts Council of Finland, 1993), p. 3



just the mere admission to certain works might mean that the remaining applications were not something the government wanted to support.

The following will summarize loosely the history of the power in the delegation of subsidies, on the basis of the publications of the Arts Council itself. There are certain rules in admitting the grants. Primacy must be given to the artists who have already shown some creative credentials, and on the contrary, a part of the grants must be given to young artists that are starting out their professional careers.<sup>46</sup> Also regional and language aspects must be taken into consideration. According to the previous research about the divination of the subsidies, there are three art fields that tend to get most of the subsidies: pictorial artists, literary artists and composers. Cinema, theatre, architecture, photography and critics tend not to get so much as the three previously mentioned. The question remains, why? Does the gatekeeping function affect in a manner that prefers some art forms over others?

Jarmo Malkavaara has extensively investigated the power relations of a political body of Finnish society and its arts in his 1989 dissertation called *Kauneus ja Mahti* (The Aesthetic and the Authoritative –An Analysis of the Arts Facing Politics and Administration in Modern Society). Apart from the title and the abstract, the thesis was conducted in Finnish, of which I have translated the relevant passages to this study.

His study is focused on the control and guidance which political and administrative actors may direct towards the art and artists.<sup>47</sup> The concern in the research question is whether the increase in the public funding of the arts leads to the increment of directing, steering and controlling of the arts by the government. His main source of inspiration for the dissertation is based on the thoughts of British scholar Nicholas Pearson, who analysed the development of British visual arts during two centuries from the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In Malkavaara's summary of Pearson's analysis, the governmental body did not purely financially support the arts, but on the basis of doing that, radically

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<sup>46</sup> Ilkka Heiskanen, Anita Kangas and Ritva Mitchell (Ed.) *Taiteen ja Kulttuurin Kentät* (Helsinki: Tietosanoma OY, 2002), p. 202

<sup>47</sup> Jarmo Malkavaara, *Kauneus ja Mahti* (Helsinki: Taiteen Keskustoimikunta, 1989), p. 149

influenced the development of arts in Britain in ways that resulted the outcome through the definitions, understanding and practices of it.<sup>48</sup>

According to Malkavaara, the following adaptations can be the endeavours of external governmental controlling functions in the cultural field:

- 1) Changes in art's internal set of values, for instance by encouraging or preventing the development of certain artistic orientations by the admittance/non-admittance of funding or the regulation of it
- 2) Changes in the levels of benefits for artistic individuals or groups
- 3) Changes in the effectiveness of the production and distribution processes of art services and the equity in dividing of the utilities for artists/cultural workers
- 4) Changes in the factors that increase general knowledge and understanding through art, which manifests in the financial, political and social conditions of individuals and groups (art changing societies)<sup>49</sup>

The governmental body in any society affects the arts world of that society by various ways, by inserting and applying laws for the bare minimum. Another scholar Malkavaara refers to is Howard S. Becker, who in his turn states that the government takes part in the art world as one member within a complex co-operating system, where an artwork is produced and received. In addition to the production methods of artworks and the manufacturing and distribution of art materials, the more profound issues as art education, criticism and research on all of their levels have an impact on the development of the whole arts system.<sup>50</sup>

Malkavaara states that the political decision makers naturally have the right to define how important the arts are within the publicly funded functions of the whole social system, compared to the other social sections that also receive public funding.<sup>51</sup> He goes on explaining that to the view of arts being a public service, belongs a populist demand that the public artworks must therefore be understandable by the public and also according to their taste. These particular demands result in the usage of political power,

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<sup>48</sup> Jarmo Malkavaara, *Kauneus ja Mahti* (Helsinki: Taiteen Keskustoimikunta, 1989), p. 10

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p.12

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 126

authorised by the nation, to allow the false and unclear definitions of beauty to take hold: in other words to limit the artistic competence to a narrow and constricted area that needs to be within the boundaries of assumed reception ability of citizens. Malkavaara continues in identifying the art societies, trade unions, specialists and national artists, that are left to defend the meaning of art pieces and the creation of art, but also mentions that the definitions and development of cultural fields should not be left solely at their disposal either.<sup>52</sup>

Malkavaara also mentions some other separate and different “financial-technological” gatekeepers in his study, that have a great impact on which artworks become available to the public through established routes, but he also mentions that investigating those in length is beyond his study.<sup>53</sup> Having said that, one group of gatekeepers that he does mention are the art critics, who use the public word as their arena to create publicity for art through their actions: in fact, of them depends whether an artwork will get publicity space in the media.<sup>54</sup> The struggle takes place in the grading and evaluation methods of the critics, which inevitably gives their work some power aspects.

According to Malkavaara, traditionally the most heated political conversations about art have always had some nationalistic tones, as one of the functions of art has been the building of the identity of a nation. The arguments and tendencies in trying to direct and impact especially the public monumental art, have had an emphasis on the value aspects of national artistic monuments, when there have been disagreements whether the art works in question have expressed and represented the current national values in a correct manner. The aesthetic values on their part have not been at the core of the arguments, the specific ways of representation have, i.e. whether the work should be visually recognisable, figurative or just represent its subject in a modern or abstract manner.<sup>55</sup> Gradually with time and the development of cultural fields in whole, the understanding and stance towards the interpretation of art have shifted and changed, but even in recent public arguments the main cause of disagreements is based on different valuation systems of people.

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<sup>52</sup> Jarmo Malkavaara, *Kauneus ja Mahti* (Helsinki: Taiteen Keskustoimikunta, 1989), p.132

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 83

## 2.6 Impacts of Granting System on Artists

The positive decision of receiving the governmental direct artist grant seems to have a great impact on the artist, not necessarily in financial terms, but in terms of being publicly recognised as a professional artist. It has a big motivational impact. Merja Heikkinen has studied the impact of governmental support for artists in defining the status of the artist in her dissertation called *State Support for Artists and the Power of Definition in the Finnish Variant of the Nordic Model of Artists' Support*. The conclusion in the study was clear: the study concludes that the legitimating arguments, goals and means of the policy of supporting artists, as well as the structures and actions of the bodies implementing the policy, have an impact on the resulting artistic definitions.<sup>56</sup>

Heikkinen also declares that the state support always contains an element of power, hence the state can be considered as an important gatekeeper in the world of art, especially in those countries where the grants for the arts exist. The very fact that the subsidies exist, results in the government's position to regulate the ability of artists to practice their profession, and the actual structure of the artistic field in a given country.<sup>57</sup>

Pauli Rautiainen has studied the impacts and effectiveness of governmental subsidies for the arts extensively. Specifically the financial and artistic meaning of the grants is under investigation, as well as the overall functioning of the whole system. He looks at the system from both sides: from the point of view of the artists who have received a grant, and from the point of view of those who have not received the grant, in spite of various applications. One of his studies (relevant to this thesis) was conducted in two parts, the first one being called *Artists' Grants in Action: Functions of the State Working Grant System*, and the second part: "*Unfortunately We Could Not...*" – *Effects of Denial Decisions on Grants*.

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<sup>56</sup> Merja Heikkinen, *Valtion Taiteilijatuki Taiteilijan Määrittelijänä* (Helsinki: Taiteen Keskustoimikunta, Tutkimusyksikön Julkaisuja N:o 32, 2007), p.3

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3

At the beginning of his research, Rautiainen states that the amount of artists who receive the grants is approximately three percent of the whole artistic professionals in Finland. The power aspects of the government are addressed also. Traditionally, the thought of the freedom of expression and the respect for the autonomy of the arts has been crucial in the admissions, and has been confirmed in the constitutional law in 1995 as the right to express.<sup>58</sup> Rautiainen addresses the quality aspects of the admissions extensively. The criteria of admission generally includes the evaluation of the artist's professional career prior to the application, display and prove of previous artistic accomplishments and the quality and extensiveness of artistic actions. Also the working plan of the future work, that the grant is applied for, is in a crucial role.<sup>59</sup>

For the purposes of this study, Rautiainen's findings about the impacts of negative outcomes of applications in the artists' careers are interesting. For a start, he has found out that there are differences in the amount of approvals of applications depending on the specific artistic field. Approximately a fifth of the critics and composers who applied for government's art subsidy received a positive admission, but less than a tenth of the artists working in pictorial arts, media art or arts & crafts fields received positive decisions.<sup>60</sup> Literature has traditionally taken a huge chunk of the grant money reflecting its importance in building and sustaining the national identity, according to the aims of national cultural policy.

In Rautiainen's study, the most interesting question asked from the applicants of negative decisions is: "In your opinion, what do you think is the reason of not getting the subsidy for your art work?" The answers and reasons that were most common in the results affiliated with the quality and stylistic issues of the works, as well as the large quantities of applications compared to the available resources. A sixth estimated their negative outcome to result from the lack of personal relationships with the judging members of the committees. Almost all of these answers indicated the supposed importance of personal connections to the members of the Arts Councils in order to be able to obtain a positive admission to the grant. In several of the answers, it was thought

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<sup>58</sup> Pauli Rautiainen, *Taiteilija-apurahajärjestelmän Toimivuus ja Koettu Vaikuttavuus, Selvitys Valtion Taiteilija-Apurahan Saajista 2002-2005* (Helsinki: Taiteen Keskustoimikunta, Työpapereita 45, 2006), p. 2-3

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., p. 6

<sup>60</sup> Pauli Rautiainen, *Emme Ole Voineet Tänä Vuonna...* (Helsinki: Taiteen Keskustoimikunta, Työpapereita 46, 2008), p. 5

that the opinions and networks of the already deceased members of late committees still had a significant importance in the decision making processes.<sup>61</sup>

Twelve percent of those who received a negative decision on their application thought that the reason was their age, eight percent thought that it was the place of their residence and two percent thought that it was because of their gender. Paradoxically, the applicants who live outside the capital remarked that a substantial amount of the available subsidies were directed to the residents of the capital, whereas the residents of the capital reckoned that the competition was fiercer in the capital compared to the other areas of the country, therefore subsidies outside the capital area were assumed to be easier to get. Two interesting points worth of noting were that some applicants thought that the reasons laid in the multidisciplinary nature of the artist (7%) or the previous positive decision in the past application (6%). The latter has some truth in it. Those who mentioned their multidisciplinary held the opinion that their artistic work does not fit to the ratings of the current classification system of the Arts Council, which rates the works on the basis of specific peer reviews of artistic fields. Many of them thought that the division of art fields was dated and discriminated the new forms of art. Some other reasons for dismissals included the currently good financial situations of the applicants, the lack of highbrow aspect of the artwork (i.e. the work being considered too popular or lowbrow).<sup>62</sup>

What were the actual implications of the decisions of the governmental gatekeepers? According to Rautiainen's aforementioned study only three percent of the applicants who received a denied decision could not finance their planned artistic work at all, or did not commence their artistic work.<sup>63</sup> 41% declared that the negative decision did not affect their planned artistic work and 56% announced that their plan of the work had changed. On a general level, the denied decision resulted in the applicants having to have to do more non-artistic work than previously thought. Rautiainen concludes that this impact is the most common result of denied applications.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Pauli Rautiainen, *Emme Ole Voineet Tänä Vuonna...* (Helsinki: Taiteen Keskustoimikunta, Työpapereita 46, 2008), p. 24

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 36-37

When looking at the impacts through separate art fields, there are some varied results. In cinematic field, the applicants told that they had to do more television work than they would have done with the aid of the grant money. In literature and music, the respondents said that the lack of funding affected their artistic work in a manner of having to take commercial points of views into calculations. In arts & crafts, pictorial arts and photography, the lack of funding resulted in fewer exhibitions and the use of cheaper equipment and material. The theatre field saw a rise in actors in the national theatres. Dance artists responded that they had to perform in less ambitious projects and that they had to dance in other people's works instead of conducting their own.<sup>65</sup> But possibly the most common answer amongst all of the artistic fields was that the denied application had a great impact on the mental motivation: it caused depression, anxiety and total lack of motivation in their future work.<sup>66</sup>

The applicants also had an opportunity to give some feedback of the functionality of the granting system. The most critique was given about the principles of admittance and decision-making, as the information on the reasons of approved applications is not published. The applicants wished for the publication of general admission rules and analysis of their own work proposals compared to those that received the grant. The whole decision making process was generally seen as secretive and the role of personal relationships and networks is too big.<sup>67</sup> Interestingly enough, the present or ex-members of the arts councils' committees also write very critically about the procedures, along the same lines than the critique presented above.<sup>68</sup> Also, the concept of highbrow (or high-class) art is difficult. How is it measured that the submission criteria are in fact based on quality issues? Rautiainen performed a simple comparative test about the issue. He compared the lists of the artists who enjoy the subsidies to an international list of artists called Art Facts that lists artists based on their merits. A high position on Art Facts list did not necessarily entitle the artist to receive grant money, nor mean that they had received it in the past.<sup>69</sup> Rautiainen also concludes, that the basic principle of the

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<sup>65</sup> Pauli Rautiainen, *Emme Ole Voineet Tänä Vuonna...* (Helsinki: Taiteen Keskustoimikunta, Työpapereita 46, 2008), p. 37-38

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., p. 40

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., p. 42

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., p. 44

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., p.55

Finnish Arts Council's delegation of the grants is based on sharing the little money that is there to the largest possible group of artists.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Pauli Rautiainen, *Emme Ole Voineet Tänä Vuonna...* (Helsinki: Taiteen Keskustoimikunta, Työpapereita 46, 2008), p., 58



## 2.7 Gatekeepers and the Decision-Making Processes –What Can an Artist do?

*“Men of taste acquire certain abilities that lead to agreement about which authors and artworks are the best.”*

- David Hume

It has been said that in the United States 10,000 people in Manhattan constitute the field in modern art.<sup>71</sup> These people are truly the gatekeepers. More specifically, they hold the gates of admittance of new paintings’ emergence in the collections of museums and exhibitions, therefore they show what the public gets to experience at all. But who are they? And more importantly, how do the actual gatekeepers make their decisions about what the public gets to see and experience? An author called Freeland reckons that the critics assemble interpretations of art using diverse approaches.<sup>72</sup>

Csikszentmihalyi on his part takes an example from the academic ancient world to illustrate the point of having barriers and gatekeepers: without the knowledge of Latin or Greek language, it was impossible for the common folk to be admitted into universities and professional training. He refers to barriers, terms and preconditions that need to be fulfilled, before one can proceed to the next level in one’s aspirations. The very existence of these barriers, and the ones who execute them limit the possibility of naturally creative members of society to advance their career aspirations.<sup>73</sup>

It depends from a domain (field) how easy it is to enter it with new creative artistic work. High art field is rather more demanding to enter, whereas poetry or popular music (in some aspects) is easier, in terms of getting the work to be viewed in the first place. Autonomy of the domain within a cultural system plays a great role in this possibility of entering the field. Some art forms tend to be more popular or appreciated or in demand, depending on the particular time period and cultural atmosphere of a given place, a field. Sometimes the political environment with its rules, preferences and censorship limitations can and do influence the production of art in a sovereign manner.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Cynthia Freeland, *But Is It Art?* (London: Oxford University Press, 2001), p.316

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 151

<sup>73</sup> Robert J. Sternberg, *Handbook of Creativity* (UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 317

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 320

In aforementioned book called Gatekeeping Theory, scholars Wright and Barbour have been quoted on the discussion of theories of the decision-making processes. They have outlined several types of strategies upon which gatekeeping decisions can be made. The first one is called ‘affect-referral’ strategy. In this, the emphasis lies in the vague emotions and feelings of the gatekeeper about a particular item instead of basing the decision on comparing the details of the alternatives. The second theory is called ‘compensatory model’, where the gatekeeper subjectively evaluates the worthiness of each item’s information along specific, weighted criteria and then creates comparative overall values for the items. The ‘lexicographic’ strategy involves identifying one or more leading criteria on which the decision should be made and making comparisons on information items on the most important criterion. The ‘risk model’ is concerned about the risks or failures and the evaluation of them, resulting in choosing the one that bears the least risk on becoming successful. The last one of the theories is called ‘the satisfying model; that predicts that the gatekeeper accepts the first alternative that meets the bare minimum criteria.’<sup>75</sup>

With artistic goods, it is certainly not obvious what the public desires. In addition, creative product’s success cannot really be explained even after the established popularity has already occurred. In traditional tangible goods markets, some organisations use testing and pilot schemes for products to decide which of them to keep producing according to the feedback of the consumers. In cases like this, the actual test results act as an organizational gatekeeper.<sup>76</sup> The appearance of the various talent-scouting entertainment formats as Idols, Voice of Finland or Tangomarkkinat can be seen to comply with this strategy: the artists that will stay in the competition and finally win it are the ones that the public have voted for, hence the public has chosen which artists they want to support.

There are vast differences in the purposes of exploitation of art, some organisations concentrate mainly and only on maximising economic profits whilst others aim to preserving art forms that would be extinct without their efforts. The competitions and productions in popular music could be seen mainly profit-seeking, whereas government funded art concentrates on creating and maintaining ‘art for art’s sake.’ By all means,

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<sup>75</sup> Pamela J. Shoemaker and Tim P. Vos, *Gatekeeping Theory* (New York: Routledge, 2009), p. 40-41

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63

there are plenty of musicians that fall into the category of popular music, yet their personal motivation has nothing to do with making money, quite the contrary. However, whichever the main aim of producing creative goods is, the same core for analysing whether something is worth the efforts and capital of production remains, as *Gatekeeping Theory* asks: is the work important to the audience or will it hold their attention? Is it of known interest, will it be understood, enjoyed, registered, perceived as relevant?<sup>77</sup> In the case of aiming to the appreciation and approval of the audience, if the audience gets what it wants, it therefore indirectly dictates the content and becomes the gatekeeper itself.<sup>78</sup>

The role of education plays a huge part in the appreciation and understanding of art among the public, also with art professionals by all means. In fact, the role of art universities is rather big in the arts world in bringing and educating the future gatekeepers of art. According to Stallabrass, the task of art universities is to separate and nurture professional artists from those who create for their own pleasure in their free time. The work of the universities does not necessarily aim to train its students only in manual skills of painting or drawing or etching, but more important is that the student acquire a superior and distinct knowledge in theoretical and esoteric language of the arts, enabling them to become truly professionals and build on their status' in the world of arts.<sup>79</sup>

What can an aspiring artist do to aid his mission to become accepted by the gatekeepers? Csikszentmihalyi has observed that chance encounters take place in the careers of aspiring artists, where certain mentors will recognise the talent and aid the careers by making recommendations, introducing relevant people to them, and in various ways open doors for them. These lucky encounters naturally seem to take place where the chosen field is represented or has clustered into: certain university departments or centres of artistic creativity.<sup>80</sup> To place oneself into the chosen creative cluster, centre of the chosen art field is vital. Even Leonardo Da Vinci, one of the most creative persons in history in terms of his contributions to the arts, constantly moved during his lifetime from one place to another, in response to changing market conditions

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<sup>77</sup> Pamela J. Shoemaker and Tim P. Vos, *Gatekeeping Theory* (New York: Routledge, 2009), p. 53

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 78

<sup>79</sup> Julian Stallabrass, *Art Incorporated* (USA: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 116

<sup>80</sup> Robert J. Sternberg, *Handbook of Creativity* (UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p.328

and commission requests. Leonardo moved to wherever he could pursue his work without having to work outside the field of arts.<sup>81</sup>

Richard Cave's book *Creative Industries* is concerned with the difference of creative business compared to the other businesses. He mentions that the term gatekeeping has come from sociologists, and clarifies that each creative realm has its own set of intermediaries selecting the artists, whose main motivation almost always lies in advancing the arts but the economics and commerciality are present due to the simple fact that the costs must be covered at least in every industry. He also acknowledges the importance of education in obtaining cultural capital and states that school training defines or reinforces the standards and goals of the artist, setting up the frame of the market place where the artist is capable of functioning. As an example, he mentions musical students, who end up being judged in very strict terms, based on their performance, along with the training the student has received, rather than appraising how gifted the youngsters are.<sup>82</sup> The role of gatekeepers in Caves' view is also justifiable in terms of helping out with the interpretation of artistic goods, regardless of whether they match to the original meaning of the artist at all.

Agglomeration is a term that rises frequently to an important role in Caves' analysis. He considers it to be of extreme importance to physically locate oneself to the creative clusters: close to other artists, future employers, artistic press, critics and other gatekeepers. Agglomeration is born out of the necessity of combining and coordinating of creative actions and the business sides of them, also to facilitate artists' training, education and development, and for the filtering activities of gatekeepers. The artists need each other for keeping up the constant dialogue about the current issues and ideas in the art world.<sup>83</sup> The issues of representation of oneself within the chosen artistic field are illustrated by the example of Andy Warhol, who spent his time in circulating through gallery openings, cocktail parties, dinners, benefit galas, fashion shows, and every other happening. An interesting point is the claim that other artists actually perform majority of the gatekeeping functions for dealers in the arts, by giving tips and suggestions of the future prospective newcomers. New York's avant-garde movement

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<sup>81</sup> Robert J. Sternberg, *Handbook of Creativity* (UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 325

<sup>82</sup> Richard E. Caves, *Creative Industries* (USA: Harvard University Press, 2000), p. 21

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26

of the 1960's and 1970's is thought to have born completely out of the artistic community itself, through recommendations and evaluations of fellow artists. In addition, it is estimated that two-thirds of America's successful artists lived in New York in the 1960, and onwards.<sup>84</sup> The functions that artistic communities perform consist of the facts that within them artists can develop their skills at formulating and executing their work, help in grading and ranking them from their peers and possibilities of matching operations to galleries who are to display and promote the works.<sup>85</sup>

Equally important is the personal ability of the artist to convince the possible helpers thoroughly, first by gaining access to the right company, build an extensive network of contacts, express oneself in such a way as to be understood and generally actively promote him/herself in a confident manner.<sup>86</sup> The unwritten rules of the chosen art field must be understood and applied, opinions of the field must be known, so that the artist can choose and produce the most promising ideas that are most likely to appeal to the peers and gatekeepers in a given context.<sup>87</sup> Possibly the most important fact is to study with great detail the judgement criteria that the field uses in its evaluation of new art works and use this criteria in evaluating one's own work first.<sup>88</sup>

Pauliina Laitinen-Aho has listed eight factors that may indicate the future success of an artwork in the commercial art market. The same factors can be -to some extent- applied to the aspiring artist's future development of his career. According to Laitinen-Aho, the search for future's art classics and the signs of passing the test of time can be assessed through the following questions:

1. How much has the work accumulated conversation?
2. How luminously intense, gifted and merited the artist is?
3. Does the artist possess legendary elements?
4. Has the work risen above the rest in a compiled exhibition, to the centre of converse?

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<sup>84</sup> Richard E. Caves, *Creative Industries* (USA: Harvard University Press, 2000), p. 28

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32

<sup>86</sup> Robert J. Sternberg, *Handbook of Creativity* (UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 327-328

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 332

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 333

5. Is the work such that can be bought by private collectors?
6. Has the new style of the artist acquired followers?
7. Does the artist determinedly want to develop his own professionalism and style, and does he continuously search enough possibilities to display his work?<sup>89</sup>

Similarly, to be able to detect whether an artist's career has taken a turn to positive, more successful development and the interest into the production of an artist is growing, according to Laitinen-Aho, the following happenings are worth noting:

- An exhibition of the artist is on it's way to an appreciated gallery or museum
- A book covering the production of the artist is to be published
- The artist has been chosen as a nominee for an important award
- The produce of an artist is in the press one way or another so that the threshold of news has been surpassed
- The prices of the same time period's art works of another artist have risen or the interest has grown<sup>90</sup>

An aspiring artist should aim to make these happenings happen, and pay attention to the development and facts that Laitinen-Aho has written.

Another major gatekeeping function is performed by various competitions and contests that take place worldwide. In America, they have grown in volume by ten times from 1950 to 1990. The events are fruitful possibilities for both artists and arts managers, they are in fact trade shows where the gatekeepers go in search for future talents. Among other possibilities, the events function as first point of evaluation by one group of gatekeepers, agents, who select the ones they want to represent and undertake the matching processes to prospective partners.<sup>91</sup>

One of the artistic fields where the gatekeeping function is very visible and simple is literature. Richard Caves notes that an author simply prepares a manuscript and presses it to the hands of a gatekeeper, either the publishing-house editor or an agent. Due to the

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<sup>89</sup> Pauliina Laitinen-Aho, *Taide Sijoituskohteena* (Helsinki: WSOY, 2003), p. 50

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., p.133

<sup>91</sup> Richard E. Caves, *Creative Industries* (USA: Harvard University Press, 2000), p. 35

vast number of manuscripts, only a fraction actually gets published. There are plenty of reasons for the denials: probably the most common is the lack of quality and originality. Other reasons for negative responses include the work being too specialised to be profitable, or that it does not fit well into the publisher's style. Sometimes the luck has it that the work arrives at a wrong time, when the publisher does not simply have any resources or will to publish anything at that given time.<sup>92</sup> If the written work does get accepted, even then a substantial amount of further work is conducted between the publisher and the writer, the publisher normally assigns an employee to assist the author throughout the text and the process, where many changes and fine tuning are taking place prior to the actual publication. It is worth noting, that when a publisher considers works for publication, his/her own reputation and cultural capital is at stake also. A series of scripts that fail to gain any interest affect to the reputation and general appreciation of the publisher, both in the eyes of fellow publishers and the audience. Therefore the struggle is so high in literary field, with the role of gatekeeping also.

An audience must not be forgotten here either. As explained earlier, it is ultimately the audience to whom the art is directed to, and an artist may concentrate all of his/her efforts to a direct contact with the public. People talk, exchange information, spread the art amongst them in a way that is beyond the influences of marketing devices. Being cultural people, they invest in developing and shaping their tastes for creative goods. They consume the cultural products in social contexts, and the information that circulates among them is important for shaping future production. As Caves notes: although 'nobody knows' its fate when a new creative good appears, social contacts transmit consumers' appraisals at a very low perceived cost to them, giving 'word of mouth' its importance for creative product's ultimate success.<sup>93</sup>

The consumers are also wary of the producers' own information and recommendations about their products, they know they are puffed for promotional purposes. Therefore the trust is higher towards a peer's recommendation than an unknown critic's for instance. Also, consumers tend to trust to the decisions made by other consumers previously: best-seller lists found in book and record stores are there for a reason to aid decision-

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<sup>92</sup> Richard E. Caves, *Creative Industries* (USA: Harvard University Press, 2000), p. 53

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 173

making about new titles. Caves sums this up as follows: book buyers have shifted toward preferring the advice inherent in herd behaviour to that offered by whatever panel of experts.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Richard E. Caves, *Creative Industries* (USA: Harvard University Press, 2000), p. 200



## ***Research Method***

### *3.1. Methodological Approach of the Study*

This study and the questions it aims to answer to, benefits most from the qualitative research type. In summary, qualitative research approach is concerned with obtaining a profound understanding of human behaviour and the reasons behind it, in addition to assessing attitudes and opinions. The qualitative research approach focuses on the process that is occurring, in addition to the product or outcome: it is interested in investigating why something takes place and how.<sup>95</sup>

The research questions of this thesis impose that the information that is needed is concerned with human behaviour: findings of the reasons behind of the actions of human beings that are here called the gatekeepers. The main method of data collection is in-depth interviewing.

The chosen research type being qualitative and the data collection being interviewing, the nature of the inquiry in this study is ethnographic by nature. The purpose in investigation is to understand and describe specific aspects of the lives of particular groups and the focus is on obtaining detailed descriptions from interviewees.<sup>96</sup>

The decision-making processes are a central theme in this study: hence it is the decision makers, gatekeepers, that the investigation concentrates on, as well as the reasons and rationale behind making and executing decisions that cause effects. Gatekeepers work professionally at the borderlines of artists' worlds, executing decisions that have impacts on the professional lives of artists and their careers. The identification of the professional groups that can be called as gatekeepers is at the core of this thesis and the aim in researching is to interview a selection of people, who study or work in various artistic fields in Finland. It was found out in the literary section of this thesis that majority of people who belong to different grant and award committees, are in fact artists themselves, therefore artists are ideal interviewees in this research. For the

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<sup>95</sup> Michael Quinn Patton, *Qualitative Evaluation & Research Methods* (USA: Sage, 1990), p. 182+199

<sup>96</sup> Kjell Erik Rudestam and Rae R. Newton, *Surviving Your Dissertation* (USA: Sage, 1992), p. 36

purposes of answering to the research questions, a selection of interviewees, who do not practice art themselves but work professionally within art worlds, are also included.

The used sampling method in selecting the interviewees is called purposeful sampling, and it was used in order to reach the most fruitful and rich cases for in-depth study. The interviewees were chosen on purpose and selected for a reason: they needed to be involved with the arts world of Finland, by working in it either as an artist or an arts manager to be able to discuss the actual events that take place in the different art fields.

The access to the interviewees was obtained through social media, personal connections and recommendations from other people, bringing a degree of chain sampling also to the other used method.

### *3.2 Data Collection*

The data collection method that was used in this study is in-depth interviewing. The approach used in data collection is ethnographic, which aims to describe the nature of those who are under investigation. The questions used in interviewing were loosely structured beforehand, but the conversation could evolve freely, and in fact was encouraged throughout by the interviewer. The questions were left open-ended for the encouragement of in-depth understanding of the arts worlds of the interviewees and therefore the procedures in them and also enabling the sharing of the interviewees' personal knowledge of the exact subjects they were most familiar with.

In addition, two secondary methods of collecting data have been exercised. The literary section of this study has investigated the history of the term gatekeeping in the existing academic writings, and after completing the literature review the purpose was to identify the professions in specific art fields where gatekeeping functions occur and how. Empirical observation has been exercised throughout the thesis by following the publications of the arts world and through four months long work experience periods in two different art companies: dance and theatre company, where in both the relationships of power of admittance and decision-making routes were observed. This method was mainly exercised for a basic understanding and background information for the general writing process of this study, and is not categorically written up specifically but readable "between the lines" of this study.

Governmental power has been reviewed significantly in this study so far, especially due to the existing structure and functions of the Art Councils of Finland. The National Arts Councils perform the funding procedures for specific fields of arts and Regional Art Councils performs the same functions in local areas. According to the definitions of the Arts Councils, the art world of Finland is divided into nine different art fields, and these categories are used as a general base for selecting the interviewees, however only a selection out of the nine fields are chosen due to the limited space in this thesis.

The art fields and a short description of the chosen interviewees that are under investigation in this thesis are:

- Cinema

The interviewee for cinema is an employee of a grant-awarding foundation for film industry who has a master's degree in arts from an established arts university.

- Visual Arts

Visual arts field is represented by a professional artist and arts administrator, who has two master level degrees from two artistically orientated universities in Finland.

- Drama

The representative of the theatre arts is an actor who has two master's degrees equipped with a business degree, all three of them from Finnish universities. In addition to acting, the interviewee also professionally practices script writing and directing.

- Literature

The interviewee representing the field of literature works professionally in a well-known Finnish book publishing company as a literature publisher and is finishing an academic master's degree in literature.

- Music

The interviewee chosen to represent the music field is not an artist him/herself, but represents the functions of an agent operating in the music business in Finland. The interviewee has a bachelor's degree in business administration.

- Dance

The interviewee for dance field in Finland is a professional dancer who has studied at a well-known and appreciated ballet school since childhood. The interviewee has also been a selectee as a part of a group admitting governmental grants to dance artists.

- Photography

The interviewee representing the photography field in Finland is enrolled in one of the most prestigious universities that educate students in photography to the master's level.

A representative for every above-mentioned seven art field is interviewed. They are selected purposefully and on the basis of the assumed gatekeeping function in their professions or due to the close working relationships with personnel who can be called gatekeepers. To illustrate the reasoning behind the choices, for example an author that sits in the committee of any awarding company is chosen over an author that merely writes, and a composer whose works are played in various productions and outlets is chosen over a composer who has not been published.

In addition, educational aspects have manifested themselves thoroughly in this study, so the education of the interviewees was also considered when selecting and interviewing them.

There are two additional art fields that are included in the list categorised by the Arts Council of Finland: architecture and design, but these two are fields are not included in this study due to the limited time scale. In addition there are two professions that have nothing to do with the aforementioned categories of Arts Council, but are instead working in positions that they can be assumed of holding gatekeeping responsibilities in the Finnish cultural scene.

The actual interviewing took place from April to June in 2012 in various local places of Helsinki, Finland. Majority of the interviews were face-to-face interviews, but due to the time constraints of a couple of the interviewees, also phone interviews were conducted. The average interviewing time between all interviews was 1 hour.

### *3.3 Data Analysis*

The value of this study will present itself in terms of good understanding of the current art worlds' structures in Finland at the moment. Future artists and their close companion: arts managers will benefit most from the desired results. As the method of research is in-depth interviewing and the formed questions allowing a free flow of discussion, the analysis concentrates on transcribing the interviews analytically into chapters of relevant information based on the issues that arose on the basis of the theoretical section of this study. The basic form of interview questions can be found in the appendix of this study.

The interviewees were asked to describe the most important people and their professions that have had a profound impact on their working environments by enabling or limiting work prospects. They were also asked to identify some organisations and discuss about power aspects within their respective art fields. Some lengthy discussions arose about the rationales behind the actions and decisions that the gatekeepers execute, in other terms questioning whether there is anything an artist can do to aid his/her career aspects.

The questions that this study aims to answer to were presented formally and informally to the interviewees throughout the interview situation, and even though a full transcription of the interviews was written on the basis of the interviews, the data analysis summarises and provides the knowledge and understanding of the conditions gatekeepers professionally work. My own personal analysis is provided in the conclusions and discussion sections to follow in this thesis, upon studying and drawing conclusions from the results and words of the interviewees.

The validation of the findings is performed through crosschecking with the analytical and theoretical findings presented in the literature section. Relevant documents and observation into the fields is performed throughout the research process. Reoccurring themes were considered as most important in the data analysis: the similarities in executing power aspects regardless of art field interested me.

### *3.4 Critical Reflections on the Research Process*

For ethical reasons, in addition to conducting a research that's purpose is to identify professions instead of the actual naming the current holders of these positions, and for further care of preserving the personal attributes of contributors, no personal names are mentioned in this study. This is also done in order to prevail the autonomy and anonymous aspects, for the purposes of gaining trustworthy and honest results from the interviewees.

During the writing and interviewing processes, the true scale of the possible gatekeepers became clear. This study provides an overview of the gatekeepers by identifying the most important gatekeepers per art field, but it could be possible to conduct a more profound and definitive research, so that every single gatekeeper profession would be named. Also, a selection of more detailed analysis could be made separately from every art fields by increasing the number of interviewees per art field, or selecting a quantitative research method with very precise questions to be addressed to many targets.

## ***4. Analysis and Results***

### *4.1 Visual Arts*

The interviewee that represents visual arts in this study is a professional artist and arts administrator, who has two master level degrees from two established art universities of Finland.

For any aspiring artist in this field the most admirable things to aim for at the start of their careers are to do with the best possible exposure of their artistic work. According to the requirements of the field these include: an acceptance to a permanent exhibition (either partly with one work or with many works), entire private exhibitions in appreciated and known galleries and ultimately a sell of a work, and preferably many works. To get a chance to showcase one's work in the galleries requires an acceptance of a gallerist or a curator. In the plastic arts field, the most powerful gatekeepers in terms of deciding about the exhibitions and the artists of them, enabling the exhibitions are therefore gallerists and curators. Without exhibitions an artist does not have any substance in career building or a route of delivering his/her work to the audiences.

The important question therefore is to investigate the decision and selection methods of the curators and gallerists when they are looking for new artists to exhibit. According to the interviewee, the first and foremost qualification that they are looking for is a graduation paper from an arts university. It seems to be absolutely necessary to have the formal training in this field to be taken seriously as an artist, and although it is possible in theory to become a known artist without formal education, it is very rare in Finland. Another thing that is used in the evaluation is the amount of applied and received grants from the various foundations and the government. A third thing that is used in the evaluation is the quantity and length of other exhibitions at other galleries and public collections. The galleries themselves are ranked in terms of reputation and prestige, and if the artist has gained an exhibition in the most appreciated ones, it is more likely that the other galleries become interested and want to also exhibit his/her work. It is also important that the works are suitable and in line with the current art markets and trends, therefore suitable for sales situations.



In general, throughout the whole career of an artist, but especially at the start of his/her career, the artistic excellence and quality is measured and looked for, both in the works individually and in the artist as a whole. It seems, that the most difficult gate to pass as a plastic artist is that of the first exhibition possibility. After that first exhibition, it is easier to enter the second one, and consequently: the more past exhibitions, the more future exhibitions. For gaining access to that first exhibition, it is useful to acknowledge the fundamental differences of the available galleries: some are so-called artistically led organisations that are usually operated by art associations, where the artist can rent the space under the condition that he/she is a member of the particular arts association. The rents are also cheaper to the members of arts associations. Some galleries take works in as parts of exhibitions, where the purpose is to sell the work through the exhibition, when commissions of work are then paid to the gallery.

There are also some middle members in the plastic art field whose opinions the curators and gallerists sometimes base their decisions on, or at least take influence from. Currently the role of Internet blogging has arisen greatly, where art enthusiasts write regularly to their own blogs that are followed by various members of society. They work at the core of the given art field, and help in shaping, delivering and developing of the scenes through writing about the current happenings and general phenomenon of the fields. Art lovers get useful information about the current events via these bloggers, for instance information on trends and orientation, and respectively the art professionals get useful information on how the public and audience reacts to these occurring events. With the Internet the public normally get a chance to post own comments and opinions straight underneath the actual piece of writing.

Art critics, who work for various publications, also have a similar role in shaping opinions and providing references of artists and their work. According to the interviewee, the most important factor is that the critique occurs: whether the feedback or critique is positive or negative does not matter, the mere mentioning and acknowledgement does.

Another group that have some power in defining the art scenes are the ones who purchase art: art collectors. Traditionally the state in Finland purchases most art to its collections, and to have one's work bought by the state provides an extensive leap in the

artistic career. If a piece of artwork is purchased by an unknown collector -with a substantial amount of money, it certainly creates some interest in other collectors and curators. There seems to be so called opinion leaders in the plastic arts scene, where the behaviour and actions of certain members are closely followed and their opinions trusted and replicated. There is no definite answer as who these opinion leaders are, but generally they have established long careers in art and provide statements that make sense to others in ways that they tend to follow.

Outside Finland, the major role of gatekeeping is played by various agents, who for instance work for collectors or work as middle men in aiding the artist's career and getting exhibition space for them. Abroad it is very common and even a requisite to have an agent to be taken seriously as an artist. If in Finland the artist does the administrative work him/herself, abroad it is the agent, and therefore quite possibly the first and most important gatekeeper before the curators. For any Finnish artist who aspires to become known internationally, an agent is needed. According to the interviewee, the agents are notoriously difficult to get hold of, and they tend to find their representatives in a sovereign manner without listening any approaches by the artists themselves. In other words, they want to find the products that they will represent independently, as their own careers are dependable on the success of the works. They look for the quality in the works and in the artist similarly to the domestic gatekeepers, but they make comparisons to the international markets and developments, that may often be very different to the current national scenes in separate countries. They also look for continuous development of an artist's career, as they want the careers of their artists to continue to provide steady platform of work for them.

When asked about the personal financial strains and conditions of artistic work, the interviewee declares it to have a groundbreaking influence. Many artists work with the lowest possible income and often have to take on other jobs to finance the artistic work. In Finland, there are only a handful of artists who survive purely with the income they receive from their artistic work. The grants and subsidies form an important source of income to the artists, and on top of that also act as a form of acknowledgement and ranking system within the whole art scene. Even though the financial side of the granting system is important too, the interviewee emphasises the motivational effects and peer support that the received grants cause. The merits of the people who award the

grants are important in this sense. The biggest awarding body in Finland is the Arts Council and its separate Art Councils divided by fields, and the criteria that is used is solely defined by the sitting committee within, who are democratically chosen. To get the grant from these people is of immense importance to the artist, not in financial terms, but as a factor worth of mentioning in terms of aiding the career at other fronts. In other words, also briefly mentioned earlier in this study, to receive a governmental grant affects all the other areas of accomplishments in an artist's career.

The power of governmental factors also manifests in the professions of civil servants. According to the interviewee, the cultural minister has relatively big amount of power that affects the whole art scene substantially, for instance the current and recent renewal proposal of political restructuring the functioning of the Art Council of Finland. The minister proposes that the amounts of Art Councils are to be reduced drastically. In the opinion of the interviewee, the idea that majority of the Regional Art Councils are to be combined and limited, leads in reality to fewer selecting and awarding bodies in the art scene of Finland. Also the Art Councils would not be so broadly defined by fields, for instance one council would be shared with photography, media and plastic arts, cinema and cartooning, possibly also with arts and crafts section, instead of their current own councils. The interviewee continues that this development is clearly a system that forces the very structure of the art fields to change to a direction that is politically directed; the recent development and processes lead to politically steered conditions and therefore the autonomy of art itself is threaten and limited.

To the question of whether an artist's residency and working location makes a difference to the success or failure of his/her career, the interviewee answers that mainly due to the contacts the location matters. Over 50 % of the contacts that are needed in the field are based in the capital area. The granting system also takes the location factors into account: it might be easier to receive grants outside the capital area, as four million Euros are shared in Helsinki area between the artists living in there, so the quantities of subsidies are shared between large amount of artists.

## *4.2 Drama*

The representative of the theatre arts is an actor who has two master's degrees equipped with a business degree, all three of them from very highly acclaimed universities. In addition to acting, the interviewee also practices script writing, directing and other various roles in the theatre world. The background for the mixed education of the interviewee was due to the uncertainty of possible future professions, and even at the graduation of the final degree the plans were completely open as to what to aim for professionally. The novice actor then came across a lucky encounter, where a job was offered from a children's theatre show after a successful audition.

When asked who holds the most powerful positions in the theatre field in Finland, the answer is the state as the admitting body of artistic subsidies and money allocating body. Currently, differently to the past times, the theatres are nowadays also accountable for their ticket income: both to bring in extra income but also to justify the flow of the subsidies as the state wants to ensure that the money they give is able to sustain the audience and provide for them. The pressure is on to bring in the audience and also maintain it in the auditorium.

The money available to a theatre affects directly to the functioning and activities of that theatre. The so-called free theatres, outside the governmental support network have more power in their decision-making as what to show and programme. At the moment, there are plenty of small national theatres around Finland, and their existence is under threat of reduced subsidies. In a situation like this, the development of the programming is subsequently non-existent and dangerous. The same fact remains for both forms of theatre; it is never certain whether something in the program allures the audiences: it is always uncertain to the very end whether the performance recoups the production monies and everyone in the production team gets paid. According to the interviewee, if the actors end up getting paid in small productions, it has been a successful show. The risks of alluring the audiences are the same whether a theatre is owned by state or is acting on a freelance field.

To get a subsidy or a grant personally or for a project, mainly motivates and creates harmony in the programming of the project. The main idea is that there is no actual

trade-off between the state and the projects, in terms of the financier being able to determine the artistic content of the project: the shows take place whether they receive funding or not. Also, In Finland, one is not allowed to work if you are on unemployment benefits, so having the social security of other professions is not possible.

The government seems to have substantial power in the art theatre scene in Finland in financial terms specifically. But the interviewee points out that it is in the nature of art, that making and pursuing it needs to be a little bit difficult anyhow, for it to be able take form. The problem of defining art remains: first we should define what the exact art definition is: is painting a picture art or just copying, replicating some other form of art? The state defines the difference in art and entertainment. The artist nevertheless has always the right define her or his own art, and the power remains if the artist wishes so.

As of actual professions that hold the most power in decision-making at theatres, one term rises above the rest: a freelancer. In the theatre world it is possible to do virtually all the professions on a freelance basis, depending on the reputation of the maker and a constant flow of offered possibilities. If one is able to work on a freelance basis, the power to decide which projects to do and how is mainly at the worker him/herself. It is worth pointing out that being a freelancer is a constant struggle of surviving: the acting work is always given through auditions and competition with alternating success. With different project proposals (which the creative people in the theatre field come up constantly), it is the governing body of an association that the proposal is normally directed to, that has the power. After successful approval, the director has the power in the actual play or project. The associations often decide whether projects can proceed in financial terms: if the lighting, stage and technical personnel would get paid. The interviewee describes the latest project that took place, where the creative personnel in the production did it just for the love of their art. The financial implications of working in theatre and creative business are always that they are simply insecure. But one regardless tends to work in this business and art world, if art is close to their heart. As an important note, the interviewee points out that projects go ahead and continue taking place although there are no guarantees of the financial security.

Upon the question of what the aspiring actor can possibly do to improve the chances of getting work, the interviewee mentions that it is sometimes useful to spend time in the bars of Kallio area of Helsinki. The location of residency of an actor does not really matter greatly, apart from forming contacts with the others working in the same field. Mainly the job opportunities arise from previous work and contacts, and reputation within the working environment.

The role of criticism is substantial in the theatre world. The given and written review has an impact: the interviewee describes the effect as of either being understood through the work, or not. Whether the critique affects the audience's decisions of part taking, the interviewee is unsure of, even though it is common to add the positive critique to the promotional material of shows. The importance of critique is addressed nevertheless; sometimes one sees reviews written as if the opinion of the writer reflects the whole opinion of the entire audience, and this can have a demurring impact. The notations of media are important, especially of the ones that are most followed by the public: Helsingin Sanomat for instance. But one should remember that in Finland the critics are in fact in an employment relationship with the field, and are mainly theatre academics themselves.

### *4.3 Cinema*

The interviewee for cinema field is an employee of a grant-awarding foundation for film industry, equipped with a master's degree in arts from a prestige university.

The available subsidy and grant money for cinema in Finland is rather substantial: 50% of the finances of Finnish film industry is most likely funded by the available grant monies, the rest of the costs are provided by private funding. For some art-orientated films that are hard to fund, the share might even be 70% of their costs that covered by the grant. The large amount of available money is very rare in the cinema world, and according to the interviewee the Finnish situation and the very existence of the funding system is envied abroad.

The abovementioned comment rises a question of why the Finnish film industry is relatively unknown if this amazing support system exists. Internationally measured, the funding system may be somewhat different, but if the money is readily available, what are the reasons of the relatively unknown position that Finland has as a film producing country? The answers to these questions are not simple, states the interviewee. The international success is always measured by the amount of money a movie brings in at the end, by financial means. The measurement of an artistic success is more complicated and needs another set of definition entirely: it is easier to measure financial returns. The language barrier exists and affects almost all countries outside the English-speaking world, and the ranking system tends to concentrate on the biggest blockbuster earners. There are plenty of competitions with different categories and in the international competitions Finland has actually been quite successful, the interviewee adds.

In America, the granting system for artists is almost non-existing yet they tend to lead the cinema markets: the interviewee reckons that basic reasons for this lie in the evaluation and appreciation of project either from an artistic or financial point of view. In America the art and its success is measured financially. The whole funding structure is based on private money, which tends to lead to mean moneymaking machines, where everything is calculated for success and the made investments must recoup. American film industry also tends to concentrate on importing majority of the productions, but do

not concentrate their efforts on exporting foreign films. This fact illustrates the attitude and aim of establishing America as the leader in film markets.

The views of the public affect a great deal, also to the funding system and the amounts of granted money as it is the audience who the films are made for and who indirectly determine the available money. The appreciation of the native Finnish people towards cinema has not traditionally been as highly ranked than literature for instance, but it is growing: 40-50% of all sold tickets to cinema are now for domestic films. According to the interviewee, international co-operating is also growing in many productions, as in the currently showing film called *Iron Sky*.

When asked about the professions in the cinema world that seem to have the most power in their work, the answer is producers. As directors might be leaders action-wise, it is the producers who have most power in terms of being the enablers of products by being in charge of making funding available. Various film advisors and commissioners in many grant-admitting bodies and foundations also have a degree of power. These professions represent individual people, so the decisions of awarding grants are personally made. The profession of a film commissioner fulfils all the criteria of being a gatekeeping position. But it is worth of remembering that the audience and the commercial viability is present in all decision making: after all, films are made for audiences and the decisions of which projects to support must obey that. Even though some of the professions in cinema field tend to hold a lot of power, random execution of power as such is not used purely for the sake of it: the audiences dictate it. The point in every production and decision is always to find the good factors in each production, not the bad. The personal taste of a film commissioner matters a great deal.

The interviewee is in a position that allows the use of decision-making power and the various functions of being a gatekeeper, in terms of letting somebody through the gates that enables filmmaking, or denying the entry entirely. The decision of what gets funding are made individually and personally, the scripts do not for instance get circulated by committee members of a foundation or other evaluators. According to the interviewee, the reasoning of this lies in the aim of keeping the bureaucracy low and sustaining clarity and availability of all information about funding matters at everyone's reach. There are three forms of support that are given: for script writing, development



procedures and production matters. One production can get either one or all three forms of support.

When asked about secondary influential gatekeepers that operate in cinema world, The education entrance policies and the people behind the execution of admittance procedures of film schools are in important role. The top schools in film making exist and have power in deciding who become the future filmmakers. When the grant applications are considered, the education of the makers is crucial information and certainly helps with the application, even though it is not a requisite as such to receive funding. In the opinion of the interviewee, the reasoning for this is simply that as the education is free and available for all in Finland, it is hard to reason why one has not done it, if movies are what the applicants want to make.

There are no precise decision making procedures as such, but what is generally looked for in an application consists of a combination of the evaluator's opinions: the ability of showing sensitivity in conveying ideas and the ability to combine things and ideas from life of the applicant are mentioned as examples. The ability of co-operation of the director and other people in the film crew are important: one must be capable of accepting changes if the grant awarding body wishes so. In the opinion of the interviewee: art in general needs to be empowering and positive: in Finland there is still this misery and tendency to glorify negativity through various art forms.

Successful application processes have some similarities in their development.

The only form of personal subsidy is for the script writing, all the other applicants must be associations or registered companies in order to be able to be considered for grants. Filling in the application form with care is the first point of call, and previous successes in the cinema world are noted and considered: they definitely aid in reaching a positive outcome. One has to have some professional experience from the field and must be able to show what he has accomplished before. It is useful to attend industry events, but in Finland the personal contacts do not get the cash.

#### *4.4 Literature*

The interviewee representing the field of literature works professionally in a well-known book publishing company as a literature publisher, even though the master's degree in literature is not yet fully completed.

In Finland, according to the findings presented in the literary review of this study, literature receives the biggest share of support from available monies, and holds a firm role in the public's view as being a very important art form. Literature is one of the fields in the arts where the gatekeeping function is most obviously exercised by publishing personnel. As it was declared in the literary section of this study, an author really has no other opportunity to get his/her work published to the public than through a professional publisher, who decides whether the work gets published or not. Simply said, the author leaves his/her script to the publishing editor, and waits for the verdict. The only other option left for the author, in case of a denial, is to publish the work him/herself, but the whole publicity and promotional activity is lacking in this alternative. For instance, bookshops and retailers do not take private publications into their collection at all.

When asked to identify the most powerful professions in book publishing, the interviewee simply nominates the publishing editors themselves due to the power they have in deciding who gets published and who does not. Another group are the critics who decide about writing and reviewing new publications. At the moment the amount of book reviews has decreased drastically, which affects the industry enormously. To get the newly published book reviewed is of immense importance, even if the reviews might be negative in nature and end up not giving a good impression of the book. The very bad critique can most certainly have a negative impact both to the purchasing behaviour of public and affect the author himself. The publisher's reputation is also at stake if the negative critique is continuous about the publisher's publications. Regardless, to be able to get and receive critique and reviews is nevertheless important, even though it might not be positive: the point is to get publicity in all its forms.

When asked about the possible ways an aspiring author can do to impress the publishers, the interviewee emphasizes the importance of education: it is useful for the

author to participate in writing courses, do a degree in literature and use the extensive education system to qualify as a professional writer. Also, when releasing the script to the publishing editor, the whole script needs to be fully ready, instead of just sending the first 30 pages. It is worthwhile to write a letter of intent with the script, where the author can clarify his/her education and previous accomplishments and publications. An actual curriculum vitae is not required or wanted. The interviewee also notes that even though traditionally the only route, it is quite rare nowadays to get published by sending in the script. The publishers actively search for new writers and take recommendations from other authors and members of the literature world, also public, but mainly from the personal peers of the publishers. The competition is hard between publishers, so recommendations between publishers themselves are rare. If something good turns up, the contracts are drawn fast, and the author signed up quickly. The aspiring author should aim to actively take part in various literature events and conversations about literature, share his/her writing to any available reader, in order to be able to gain opinions and raise conversation and recommendations from the readers.

It is also important to note that some publishers are clearly profiled with some genres over others: with rare genres (for instance fantasy or sci-fi) it is worth contacting the specialised publishers. With cases like these, the publishers might make an exception and make recommendations to rival publishers, if the script clearly fits the profile of another publisher.

The decision making process about new publications consists of different matters with each publication, however there are some similarities in all positive admittances. Upon the deliverance of a script, all the merits of the author are investigated: these being previous publications in magazines and compilations, the author's education, completed writing courses and outcomes of literary competitions and possible awards. When a script is accepted for publication, the continuous development towards the whole career of an author is desired and aimed at, instead of concentrating on publishing just one piece of writing. The decisions as whether to publish the first work from an author are more difficult than deciding about the publication of second and third book: generally speaking, if an author has had one book published they will most likely get their following work published also. The selection process of new scripts in a nutshell is described as follows: once a week there is a meeting with the staff of a publishing

house, where all the scripts that have been read once are circulated to other members of staff for peer evaluation. Suggestions of approval and changes to the scripts are done and presented to the author, and if he approves them, the contract will most likely be offered then. In fact, if an author gets a corrected script back, they most definitely should approve it, as some of the work is already done by the publishing people which is a clear sign leading to the signing of the contract.

The body, form, structure and other elements of a text are at the core of inspection when evaluating whether a script is worthy of publication. When asked to describe the elements that a text needs to contain, the answer in its simplicity is that the book needs to hold the reader's attention so firmly that it is difficult to let go off one's hands.

The language and the story are most important, the way the story holds attention and curiosity as to what happens next: the tricks of the use of language are important. There is the unofficial "rule of three pages": if the book manages to hold the attention of the reader after three read pages, the chances are a lot higher for the work be interesting.

The percentage rates of published works against the available scripts are staggering. Only 1-2 percent of the sent scripts get actually published, so the reading task of a publishing editor is enormous. It is desirable though that every author receives a letter of feedback. The importance of the feedback letter is large to the authors, they take very personally what is said in the letters, therefore honest and constructive feedback is crucial for the development of the author. One should also not take denial as a destructive feedback, sometimes the publishers do not publish a good script simply if they have a similar author already in the house, or too many similar genres within their publications.

The question of whether publishing editor's own personal taste affects the choices of what gets published, receives an answer that is definitely positive, but one has to read with the eyes of vast amounts of readers also. Some genres are more popular, for instance poetry and crime, and specialists are drawn in to read them and review them to get extra opinions. Also often the promising scripts are given to other editors to be read by within the publisher, so the decisions are not necessarily entirely personally made.

Abroad, it is common to have agents working within the literary field, but according to the interviewee there are only one or two functioning in Finland. Some Finnish talent scouts operate abroad, who read the books that might be good for translations, but in Finland it is the publishers' own staff who perform the many functions of agents, for instance marketing and promotional duties.

In the literature field in Finland, there are rather extensive quantities of literary competitions and prizes that are awarded, and their role is extensive in gaining publicity and extra promotional activity: it is very important for both the publisher and the author's personal career. Even though the prizes sometimes also consist of financial aid, normally one gets a publishing contract as a prize. From the publisher's point of view, the amount of entries for competitions is larger, so the variety is larger in texts that are sent to specific competitions and the publisher might get scripts to be read that would not have been sent otherwise.

The granting system of subsidies to authors in Finland seems to be secondary in terms of aiding the starting authors to accomplish their work, as the authors that have been published extensively normally get the grants, which annoys the starting authors. Once an author has established himself, then it is easier to get through to all other available possibilities. The passing through of the first gate is the most difficult one, and normally it is the publisher who stands at the first gate.

#### *4.5 Music*

The next interviewee has a bachelor's degree in business administration and represents the functions of an agent operating in the music business in Finland. The interviewee works in partnership with a company, who has an artist roster of a large number, whose careers the interviewee guides and manages. The job description entails many functions of an artist manager: the main task is to acquire business partners to the artist within the music industry. These are: composers, lyricists, record companies, publishing companies, promoters, live event entrepreneurs, marketing companies, media production companies, music journalists and merchandising companies.

In the profession of an agent, the ones who decide about whether an artist gets either gigs or a recording contract are the most powerful gatekeepers. The interviewee identifies the bar/event/venue chiefs as one group, radio DJ's and programming directors in radio as another, and adds the power of audience to the list as well. The power to determine which music gets played, which music does the audience want to listen to, remains at the hands of public at the end, as it is them who the music is created for. However, it is the programming directors in radios, who aim to please the listeners but regardless make decisions on what they personally think the public wants to listen to, without specifically playing the music upon requests. There are certainly programs where the audience can wish for the music, but the majority of the airplay time is decided and determined by the programming administrators.

The most difficult task of an agent is to break an unknown artist through, as absolutely nobody in the business has no prior knowledge about the artist. The task entails convincing the desired co-operating party that the artist will be liked, will attract audiences and will be worth of investing, even though there is no actual proof or prior showing that it will happen. Generally speaking, the more an artist has prior co-operating partners and previous success stories, the easier it is to get possibilities and new opportunities. The desired parties that the artist wants to work with tend to base their decisions on other gatekeepers' previous admitting decisions, rather than trusting their own evaluation entirely. Therefore the ones, who have courage enough to admit a starting artist to test the ground and showcase their material without previous success, are the most powerful gatekeepers, whose decisions the other co-operating parties will

follow if the artist breaks through. These people have a profound trust on their own tastes and opinions, and include an element of risk in their decision-making processes: therefore they hold the biggest amount of power in the field.

When asked how the sale is done in a situation where an artist is previously unknown, the interviewee mentions the importance of personal relationships that have been formed with previous co-operating functions between the parties in the music industry. In other words, the agent him/herself has acquired a degree of credibility from the field by working relentlessly and honourably for entering artists that have become successful due to his/her commitment: i.e. the agent has established a gatekeeping position for him/herself that proves the worthiness of trust. If absolutely nobody is willing to co-operate with a new artist, the agent organises showcase events with 100% risk factors of failing to attract industry people or audiences, but also preserving 100% possibility of holding negotiation rights if the event proves to be successful. The job functions of an agent operate at the first possible gate in the field, convincing the other following gatekeepers that the artist is worth investing in, based solely on the opinion and view of the agent.

When planning the career of a newly formed artist, it is essential to investigate the whole structure of the field. The timing of the different separate actions must be matched and linked to each other seamlessly. To be able to start anything, the artist must have creative material, a product that is to be published for the use of the public. This in the music business is naturally a recording, be it a single or a whole album. Live events are normally organised and sold on the basis of publishing new material; radio and television airplay and interviews are admitted upon and for the release of new material. These publicity functions take place in order to sell the original product: the recording. Prior to the actual publication date of the recording, a series of gigs and events must be secured along with the visibility in the media. In other words, absolutely everything that can be done for the advancing of the recording must be planned within the same time period and timed perfectly together for the maximum publicity and interest. There is no point in releasing a record in January and organising a tour in September. The whole process itself aids all the separate functions individually summing up the whole process as one. It is easier to sell a gig when a new recording is coming out and promoted: the event organiser knows that the artist will get external

publicity due to the efforts of marketing personnel and the sale of the recording is accelerated due to the publicity and live show. In fact, mainly due to this, (that all the separate functions that take place in an artist's career must occur seamlessly within the same time period), a phenomenon called 360-deal has emerged. The 360-deal refers to an agreement that an artist signs with one company that promises to deliver all the functions that are needed to take place upon the development of the artistic career. Previously it was normal that an artist signs separate contracts with a management company, record company, live event sales company, merchandising company, media company et cetera. For the purposes of being able to match all these separate functions together for greater good, it may prove to be better for both artist and the company that all the rights are held under one roof. In Finland, it is the formal record companies that offer these 360-deals, and have therefore taken upon the functions of previously mentioned other companies.

The geographical matters of the music business in Finland are profound according to the interviewee. The decisions tend to be made in the capital area where almost all of the important industry parties reside and exist. If an artist gains success in the capital area, it is relatively easy to sell the artist to the municipalities upon the proven track record acquired in the capital. The same route does not work similarly from the municipalities to the capital area: the decision makers in the capital are not particularly impressed by the previous successes outside the capital, the artist has to prove him/herself regardless a new in the capital. The music industry members in the municipalities acknowledge this, and perhaps also therefore are more willing to accept offers from the capital in their own decision-making.

The personal opinions and musical tastes of the music industry personnel play a big role. One has to have clear enthusiasm for the artist and the music in order to be able convince others about the potential. The audience is firmly placed in the power structure, as it is them who finally purchase the music. Recently, upon the rise of the possibilities of the Internet, in terms of enabling the distribution of the music without the admittance of the gatekeeping personnel, it is the public who have more power in who they want to listen to. Record company personnel have shifted from predicting the taste of the public to following the taste of the public. The music industry personnel have not completely lost their power in the business though, due to the endless supply



of new music that is available in limitless channels in the social media: the functions of filtering and promotion have remained the same.

#### *4.6 Photography*

The interviewee representing the photography field in Finland is enrolled in one of the most prestigious universities that educate students in photography to the master's level.

Photography field in Finland consists roughly of two slightly different sub fields: art photography and commercial photography, where the latter is concerned with editorial, fashion, advertising, crime and portrait photography, generally everything that the photographer gets a payment for. For the purposes of this thesis, only art photography is investigated and interviewed for.

According to the interviewee, there is one definitive party that holds most power in determining who will become a professional (art) photographer in Finland: the university that offers the courses in obtaining a master level education on the subject, and more precisely the committee that decides of the entries. The teachers and lectures at the schools providing photography education in Finland hold an extensive amount of decisive power, in addition to entrance admissions there tends to be a strong personal connection with teachers and students during the whole education period. The guidance is very precise and intense, and can contribute a great deal on motivational aspects of the students. The methods of teaching also tend to resemble and partly follow the methods of former Soviet Union: at the beginning the concentration is on copying precisely the style of old and known pieces that are considered as master pieces in the history of photography.

Photography as a field is a complicated one due to the fact that literally every citizen can acquire the technical equipment that is needed to produce photographs, and majority of citizens have cameras. The evaluation of the artistic qualities of photographs is challenging, and the role of being academically educated as a photographer maintains a strong position in the criteria on evaluation. The public's general appreciation of photography as an art form in Finland is relatively low, if compared to the international fields, although it is on the rise according to the interviewee. The interviewee mentions that the ethnography and international aspects of photography students in Finland is interesting, as around ten percent of the students that have been admitted are Finnish, the rest are from abroad. This phenomenon refers and illustrates the point of strong

desire to establish the reputation and status of the institutions to advance their hold in the international art photography markets. It is also preliminary for the graduating Finnish students in to spend a period abroad practicing their art.

In fact, there is a special lobbying party/committee operating in Finland, which has its own director and procedures that concentrate solely on advancing the Finnish art photography scene internationally. The party solely and independently chooses inclusive members to this group, who then get a chance of being promoted internationally and with the aid of the party. The qualifications and reasoning for admittance to this group is unknown; one cannot for instance apply, as there is no formal application procedure. According to the interviewee, the admissions to this group are done on the basis of education, merits, previous showcases of works, personal connections and quality measurement that are only known to the insiders of the group. Nevertheless, although it seems that this party is very inclusive, the interviewee considers the very existence of it positive: at least there is a grouping that concentrates its functions solely on promoting the art photography scene.

The financial aspects of photography are rather extensive: the equipment and the whole process of delivering good quality material is expensive. The subsidies for the field are small but important to those who receive them, but even the money available in grants is not meant for the purchase of equipment but for aid with the exhibitions. In other words, when applying for grants, it is of no use to include justifications for the acquirement of equipment: instead, a comprehensive and precise working plan for an exhibition is required. According to the interviewee, recently it has been important to the grant admitting personnel that the desired project for exhibiting includes a strong aspect for communities and localities. Also, the agglomeration of the field reveals itself in the differences of money available in the capital area against the money available in municipals. It is relatively easier to receive subsidies in municipals, but the requirement is that the applicant resides in that particular municipal, and as the industry is otherwise based in the capital area one has to make profound decisions as where to reside. In addition, the requirements of the positive outcome of a grant application include that the applicant has already graduated, near graduation or established him/herself professionally already: which makes it even more difficult to an aspiring newly started photography artist to attain financial support.

#### *4.7 Dance Field*

The interviewee for dance field in Finland is a professional dancer who does not have an academic degree, but has studied at the well-known and appreciated ballet school since childhood. This life-long devotion led the interviewee to become an employee of a prestigious ballet institution. The interviewee has also been a selectee as a part of a group admitting governmental grants to dance artists.

The route of becoming a professional dancer is laced with auditions, from a very young age to every new production in the adulthood. Every stage that a dancer wishes to obtain, there is an audition that determines whether he/she will get included in training or production or employment. The committees who sit at the auditions consist of teachers and professors of dance education institutions and established professional dancers, who evaluate the technical skills and readiness of the probationer. These audition evaluators are indeed very clearly gatekeepers; their role is very clear in a figurative sense of whether a dancer gets a chance of admittance to the education, projects or employment. The majority of evaluators are professional dancers themselves: therefore one can relate the whole process of selection in dance field as a peer-to-peer function.

There are other professions and organisations that act as gatekeepers in a dancer's career: the choreographer of a project being one of the most important one as he/she has often the sole right to choose the dancers if the project is completely independently produced. Different dance associations have also a role to play, especially those who submit and transfer information about dance events. The third group are producers, event organisers, art houses and festival practitioners, who all organise work available for dancers. It is relatively rare to be able to get an actual continuous appointment of employment as a dancer: it is mainly opera houses who are able to do this, and the other options are independent associations or companies who are normally founded and run by the dancers themselves.

When asked about the most influential person who has had a profound effect on the career of the interviewee, a well-known professional ballet dancer / choreographer is named and the effect was imminent. This was due to the public praise the person

directed towards the interviewee, which resulted in obtaining a leading role in one production, an increase in smaller roles in other productions and an award recognising the previous work the interviewee had performed. It seemed that the mere publicly announced support and opinion of an older colleague resulted in the other peers' and public's re-evaluation and more definitive appreciation of the interviewee's work. The other people that have had an influence and held power on the career of the interviewee include especially choreographers, who are artistically in charge of productions: they decide which dancers to choose and also lead and direct the projects. In the words of the interviewee: "dancers are more as paintbrushes than painters in productions", the creative nuances and power is hold by the choreographers of the dance works.

On a larger scale, the definitive power of government is mentioned as it directs the financial resources towards art institutions: in fact an opera house for instance is owned by the state and is its institution. The building and maintaining art houses depend on the decisions of governmental committees in Finland: without the support they may not exist, at least as extensively as they do at the time. Subsequently, the directors of the art and dance houses also preserve some power over performing artists and dancers by deciding about the new productions and enabling the continuity of them.

The subject of the granting system in Finland raises a long discussion during the interview. The interviewee has both been an applicant and a selectee within the granting system. According to the interviewee, some parties do not prefer to support the dance field or individual dancers as they feel that the field receives plenty of money already from the state. The people who belong to the juries that admit subsidies do make individual and personal decisions collectively, based on their own opinions, so it is ultimately dependant of a person whether a particular artist gets support or not. In the dance field, there is often a juxtaposition situation between modern dance and ballet for instance, although generally speaking the objective is to share available money to as many different dance genres as possible.

As of the decision-making process and from the point of view of the decision maker, it is nevertheless easy to make the admitting or denying decisions: it certainly helps if the selectee personally knows and is familiar with the applicant and his/her work. This is due to the fact that if some previous work of the artist has been seen and experienced by

the selectee, there is a certain level of familiarity towards the artistic work. If the applicant and his/her work is completely unknown to the selectee, the decision must be made purely on the basis of the written application and the implication is that the applicant must be a very good writer and able to convey his/her artistic endeavours in a written form. This inevitably causes a problem, as primarily a dance artist for instance has chosen another form than writing to express him/herself artistically, and in order to be able to receive funding the literal skills are at the core of selections.

In the opinion of the interviewee, another problematic issue raises with the lack of control after admittance of the monies. The main and sole purpose of the granting system is to advance the Finnish art and make art available for all, and sometimes the audience levels of artists who have received subsidies are next to non-existent even after the help of financial aid. The interviewee raises a question asking: “what are the grounds of supporting art that regardless of aid is not able to obtain the interest of the public”? There seems to be a controversial approach to art forms that do interest people: if they are popular in the eyes of the public, they somehow are doomed of not receiving any further financial aid from the taxpayers’ monies. An artist may ask him/herself that “why am I not getting the financial support when my artistic work is clearly wanted by the public and I do not want charge them extensively to see it?” A third problem arises with the analytical question of whether the support should be given to the already established artists who have a long career behind them and probably have received direct financial returns from the participating audience, or to the promising newly started artists that are in the greater need of financial support?

In addition, the interviewee mentions that criticism and reviews are attached to the application papers. This in the opinion of the interviewee results in submitting power to the wrong hands: to those of the critics. Instead of this policy, the interviewee would prefer to see the participating levels of the public.

When questioned what could be done to prevent and alter the aforementioned problematic issues, the interviewee stresses that the decision makers in the juries and committees should be changed at regular intervals and often. The deciding bodies should not be the same people in order to be able to prevent re-occurring decision-making processes due to personal preferences. The issue of personal tastes is inevitable

when evaluating artistic works and is not likely to change due to the very nature of art, but the power in selecting processes should be dispersed regularly and effectively through rotating the people responsible for making decisions.

## *5. Conclusions*

Gatekeepers do exist in the arts world. The very term, gatekeeping, refers to a group of people who are in a position to determine and select who and what gets through certain points of decision and actions. In the world of arts, gatekeepers can also be called arts managers, as they work professionally between the artists and their audiences, enabling or preventing the deliverance of artistic goods. In addition to individual professions, whole organisations can also function as gatekeepers according to the reasoning and mission of the organisation. There is an element of power in these professions and functions that the organisations perform, which leads to a desire from the artist's point of view to understand how the decisions are made and what are the prerequisites for being able to convince the gatekeepers of one's art's worthiness.

One of the main conclusions in this thesis is that there are various gatekeepers in the arts world of Finland, and the successful careers of artists are definitely a sum of the actions that many gatekeepers perform. The more positive gatekeeping decisions are taken in a consecutive row, the more likely the success is to be. One gatekeeper's decision also affects the other's decision-making: cultural people tend to trust the opinions of their peers, as cultural products' evaluation is certainly not easy due to the very abstract nature of them. Once an artist manages to convince the first gatekeeper of one's art's worthiness, it is easier to convince the following gatekeeper by mentioning, name-dropping even, that there is someone else who was convinced.

As art is fundamentally produced for people: the public, it is them who remain ultimately the most powerful gatekeeping entity as a whole, as it was found out both in the theoretical framework of this thesis and from the results of the conducted interviews. The public have the power to decide whether they invest their financial resources towards arts at all; towards which art fields and productions within them. However, before the public gets an opportunity to choose from the enormous supply of artistic goods, there are various individuals and institutions that make the works available and deliver them –one way or another- to the audiences. Nevertheless, gatekeepers generally make decisions by supposing and trying to depict what the general public would like to experience art-wise.



Bourdieu identified a special culturally advanced group, whose opinions the public tends to follow. These people act as opinion leaders and affect greatly to the rest of the population's tastes and preferences, through ways and reasoning that still remains relatively unknown. Generally speaking, the preferences seem to be based on individual beliefs that are always personal and change regularly with time. According to Bourdieu, critics are one of the main people belonging to the elite of gatekeepers, in addition to any arts manager operating on arts fields. Simply, there are individuals in the cultural scenes, who consume and follow the cultural advancements closely, and can therefore discuss the field's development and events in such a manner that it convinces some others culture lovers. Consequently, these opinion leaders have great power in shaping the arts worlds, even though they may not work professionally with the arts.

Another massive entity that holds a considerable amount of power towards the arts is the government and the state. They execute the power through establishing the routes, routines and regulations of awarding and allocating financial resources to the arts. In the theoretical review, the issue of actual boycotting, limiting or destroying certain art works by the government was discussed, but none of the interviewees mentioned that this kind of action would have taken place in their own professional world. Also, it is worth mentioning, that whenever some actual strict political regulating of art has taken place in the history, the very same works or art orientation/style have become more valuable and celebrated in the long run: after the curfew of historical events. This, in my opinion reflects the invincible value and self-determination that art sustains, regardless of many attempts to control it.

The power that the state utilises in today's Finland, consists mainly of the allocation of the subsidies and funding for the arts. There are various possibilities and alternatives through which the monies are shared, and in Finland the majority is allocated through the Arts Council of Finland. It became clear from the interviews, that the interviewees acknowledge the state's power collectively and without a doubt, and various answers were obtained about the committees and reasoning of the many decision maker belonging to the personnel sharing the government's money that is allocated for the arts.

The respective opinions of the interviewees that chose to analyse the roles of the grant money awardees, was that there needs to be a regular and frequent rotation among the

decision makers, in order to keep the decision making fresh and valid and also guarantee the prevention from favourism. Generally speaking, the very existence of the available grant money in Finland got the support of the interviewees, but the methods and ways the allocations are done shared opinions inevitably and according to separate art fields and their representatives. The fact that decisions are indeed made based on personal opinions also caused some opinionated discussion. The people who fall into the professions, which make executive decisions affecting the art worlds, really have no regulated evaluation system of art's worthiness and therefore are simply forced to use their own opinions as a base for evaluation. Commercial and financial measurements could be used to some extent, i.e. will or has the art sold to a degree that can be ranked in popularity, but in the Finnish Arts Council's task is to support art that may not exist at all without their support. Other gatekeepers (apart from the Arts Council) do use a degree of investigation and measurement of possible future financial worthiness: in other words evaluating if the public is willing to consume towards the artistic product in question.

With the Arts Council, there are certain limitations and rules that are followed, for instance a certain amount must go to new young emerging artist and to be able to get a municipal grant, one must live in a specific area, but the groundbreaking rationale that the grant is awarded based on artistic excellence and quality remains problematic. The question of what really is excellent artistically can certainly have many answers that are all opinion based.

One issue that arose in the theoretical review of this thesis was also discussed with some of the interviewees: some art forms tend to receive more funding than the others: for instance literature. An interesting fact emerged during the research: as the grant applications are admitted in writing, one has to be very skilled in expressing oneself literally to be able to convince the committees about the excellence of one's art. This can cause difficulties with some who have primarily chosen another form of art to convey their creativeness than literature. One can justifiably ask if this could be the reason why literature gets the biggest share of money allocated to the arts: could it be that as the authors are professional writers by profession, they are more able to describe their art in writing and in a convincing manner?

One profound outcome of the granting system was similar in both the theoretical framework section of this thesis, as well as in the interviews, and it is the motivational aspect of receiving the grant money. Even though the financial aspects are important, the most important factor about getting the grant is the acknowledgement and credit that the applicant receives: he/she feels that his/her art is worthy and important in the opinion of the gatekeepers, and it hence has an enormous motivational effect.

A third large entity that holds enormous amounts of power in relation to the development of the arts world in Finland, are the education institutions, especially universities. This definite role of education in Finland seems to be very characteristic for Finland and the shaping of the arts worlds entirely. There are various reasons for this: the education is free, there are rather strict admission procedures to them (i.e. it is not easy to get admitted) and the general view is that once completed, one can call him/herself truly professional in the chosen field.

It can be said, that the granted entrance to an arts education in Finland opens up the first gate of becoming an artist, and one very rarely achieves the status of an artist without having completed the education. Education is also always something that the other professional gatekeepers look for when admitting grants for instance, or evaluate castings and auditions.

The individuals that act as gatekeepers are plenty to the addition of the opinion leaders of the general public, the state and the art schools and universities. Every art field has its own set of gatekeepers depending on the structure of the field, development of the art scenes, technical advancements and changes that come with time. The following will identify the most powerful professional individual gatekeepers in the art fields that were under investigation in this thesis, the ones that exist alongside aforementioned most powerful ones: the education institutions, the state and the public.

Visual arts field has two main major gatekeeper groups, which tend to determine whether a visual artist becomes well known and celebrated. The first group is curators, who either allow or prevent an artwork's entry to exhibitions and showings. The second group is the Art Council's democratically chosen committee, who determine and evaluate if the art works are worthy of financial support and the prestige of receiving a

grant. These two groups tend to function in reliance with each other; i.e. an acceptance to one leads consequently to greater possibility of acceptance to the other. Together these groups have the greatest power of determining the future success of a visual artist.

There are, however, also other gatekeepers working in the visual arts scene. There is an extensive commercial art market around the visual art works, and anybody whose intention is to purchase an artwork becomes inevitably a gatekeeper. The reasoning behind a potential art buyer's rationale can vary a great deal: some buy purely according to their own personal preferences (what pleases the eye) and some treat art as an investment that they hope will grow in worthiness in the future. As seen in the theoretical section of this thesis based on Pauliina Laitinen-Aho's thoughts, the reasons of why art investors decide to buy certain art works over others can be plenty: generally they try to determine the future success of an artist based on his/her past events in the professional career. The rest potential gatekeepers in the visual arts scene include various opinion leaders: blog-writers, award-admitters, art critics and as always the members of public.

The drama/theatre world of Finland has traditionally been financed by state, as majority of the theatres in Finland are national or city theatres by nature. Due to the power relations that inevitably occur through this arrangement, a selection of independent theatres exist as well, which have more freedom in deciding about their artistic deliverance. The most powerful professions in the theatre world are the producer, director and the theatre director. Freelancer as a term arose as well in the interview with the theatre representative: freelancers ultimately have the full power to decide which projects to be part of and literally every profession from lighting personnel to choreographers to actors can work on a freelance basis in the world of the theatre. This fact creates an interesting power structure to the field; the jobs are shared, taken and given through personal reputations, connections and perhaps even personal compatibilities. According to causalities, majority of the gatekeeping in the theatre world consists and is maintained within the professional group members themselves through various connections.

Cinema world is quite similar to the theatre world in terms of having the same professional titles that work within the field. The financiers, however, are more vast and

varied, and can include sponsors that do not function as extensively in the theatre. Therefore it is the financiers that form an important gatekeeping group in the cinema world, in addition to the producers, whose main task in fact in the cinema world is to accrue the finances. The financial side of the cinema consists of private or company investors and different foundations that actually receive the shareable money from the government in Finland. It is the personnel working in these foundations that are the most powerful gatekeepers, in addition to the other possible finance providers and the same personnel identified with the theatre: producers and directors.

Out of the investigated artistic fields, it is literature that stands out most as the field with one clear gatekeeper position, that being a publishing editor. In the theoretical review of this study, a scholar Richard Caves pointed out that an author simply prepares his/her piece of writing and leaves the literal work to two possible gatekeepers: either the publishing editor or an agent. This conclusion was verified in the interview with the literature representative of this thesis with the fact that it is mainly only the editor in Finland who acts as a gatekeeper as agents barely exist in here. From aspiring author's point of view, the decision-making processes of publishing editors become relevant, and according to the results of the interview, an author should try to give his/her scripts to be read to as many parties as possible, as the publishing editors seem to place a great importance to the opinions and evaluations of their close friends and peers when deciding about who to publish. In other words, if they receive recommendations from the public, they are more likely to read the literal work themselves.

Music industry as a field is something that is very vast and full of potential gatekeepers, depending on various factors, or better, depending on whose point of view the issue is looked at. From a musician's point of view, literally every profession functioning in the music industry poses as a gatekeeper, and they vary according to the specific genre of music that the musician represents.

For the purposes of this study, an agent was chosen to be interviewed due to the gatekeeping function the profession represents itself and also to gain some further understanding about the professional side of evaluating commercial music's possible potential. Gatekeeping in music tends to lean on the possible future financial revenues, specifically when other personnel in addition to the musicians or composers get

involved: the gatekeepers evaluate whether there is commercial worth in investing working hours for advancing the spread of music. By all means, music is created also without any aspirations for commercialism, but those instances are not dependable on gatekeepers to the same extent. Music's route to popularity or acknowledgement is laced with co-operating parties that act as gatekeepers: managers, agents, radio programmers, live event organisers, sound and light engineers, promoters and producers. Game, advertising and cinema industries with their respective personnel can be added to the gatekeeping group of music also, as they commission or choose the music that is added to their own products: games, advertisements and films.

Record companies employ a vast amount of gatekeepers: various professional people within the A&R (artists and repertoire), marketing, publicity, legal, art, sales and promotion departments of them. The changing nature of the current music industry has limited the power of gatekeepers in the music industry slightly: it is more possible to reach the audience directly via the latest technical advancements from a musician's point of view than it was before. This development has shifted the gatekeeping function increasingly to the hands of the public. Different musical competitions where the listeners vote their favourites manifests this development also. In Finland, musical composers and artists can apply for various grants for their work from the Arts Council and other associations advancing musical development: hence the gatekeeping function of the governmental institution exists also there where the commercialism is not primary or visible to the same extent.

Photography field's gatekeepers consist mainly of editors of media outlets and curators in art photography. Basically, the personnel working in thousands of Internet or printed media magazines, journals, newspapers and other forms of information sharing media as television, ultimately choose which photographs and photographers they want to use. Art photography gatekeepers can include book or Internet publishing personnel also in addition to the people working for exhibitions and galleries. Grant-admitting bodies are definitely gatekeepers, also in photography.

The most powerful gatekeepers in dance world are the choreographers and parties that enable dance events, shows and festivals, in addition to dance associations. The existence of auditions in the dance field forms a specific group of gatekeepers that is

characteristic for dance (by all means to theatre and cinema respectively). Differently formed committees evaluate and decide dancers technical skills and expression upon employing dancers.

## ***6. Discussion***

On a general level and according to the results presented above, it is worth noting the subtle differences in the gatekeeping positions that occur when separating ‘the commercialism in art’ and ‘art for art’s sake’ views. The actual gatekeeping professions and the reasoning behind their actions can vary a great deal when looking at the issue from both of the views, separately.

It can be argued that the artistic works that get to be published and promoted for the greatest commercial and financial returns possible, are more closer to entertainment than art. On the contrary, the works that are more difficult to digest i.e. do not open up to the viewer/listener as easily as some popular culture’s products and require some pre-knowledge and understanding about the particular form/field of art, are “more artistic”, and more purely art. But, the art regardless requires an audience so that it can fulfil its task. Would a piece of artwork be an artwork, if it existed in the middle of nowhere, with no spectators? I personally do not like to make distinctions between “commercial art” and “artistic art”, as I do not understand why something would be more artistic than another. For my own personal evaluation of art, I have nothing else to use as my personal background, experiences, education and previous viewings of different artworks than the current one in question, and I believe the same applies to every gatekeeper mentioned in this study. A person’s cultural appreciation is dependable on only the person’s previous cultural life.

Nevertheless, when the issue of gatekeeping in arts is investigated from both aforementioned outlooks’ views, the gatekeeping phenomenon reigns, although the decision-making processes at the gates are based on different justifications and arguments. There are gatekeepers that evaluate art in financial terms, i.e. whether an artwork is worth of investing time or money for greater returns and there are gatekeepers who evaluate art from cultural point of view, i.e. whether an artwork deserves to be created even if financial returns from it are minimal or extinct. Simply put, there are art organisations that non-profit and the ones that are for-profit. The gatekeeping functions and decision-making processes differ according to the aims.



Finland has a specially tuned art world due to the extensive existence of advancing the arts through the granting system. The rationale behind providing financial and motivational support for art that would or could quite possibly not survive and exist without the state's support leans heavily on the philosophical view of letting art exist through art for art's sake. However, due to the capitalistic lead and reasoning, the governmental monies appointed towards the arts are decreasing even in Finland, and majority of the cases investigated in this study exemplify that in order to be able to attract subsidies, the art should also be commercially viable to some extent. At least Finnish theatre and cinema industries require a degree of self-finance in addition to the aid from the state.

The task of being a gatekeeper is definitely and certainly not easy. One has to decide which art works deserve to get published, bearing in mind the opinions of the audience as well, so that the financial investment can recoup at least, preferably even produce financial profit to enable the future production. If the financial side is not important in the decision-making, the art works should nevertheless create interest and allure viewers and listeners regardless, as without audience the art does not exist. The very term gatekeeping has also slight negative annotations, and when analysing the functions and operations of gatekeepers, the word might just as be enablers. The fact is, that even if the tasks of arts managers include prevention and decline, to the artists who do get to go through the gates towards more artistic opportunities, these people are gate-openers. Artists do need arts administrators to advance and guide their careers.

Currently, in the arts world of Finland, there seems to be demand for arts agents and personal managers, which are more common professions abroad, especially in the USA. Literature, visual arts, drama, cinema, music, photography and dance would all benefit from the professional groups according to the interviewees. In Finland, it is currently the artists themselves who perform the functions of administrative duties. This need for professional arts managers becomes even more valid in the case of an artist's desire to gain international recognition: abroad the evaluation of an artist's worth is (also) measured by the administration co-operating parties, and their respective reputations. If in Finland the artistic excellence and quality is used a main method of evaluation, internationally the inclusion of arts administration personnel to one's career shows that there are others (gatekeepers) who have already decided that the artist is worth investing

on. Agents and managers use their own reputation of being gatekeepers to convince future co-operation parties about the artist's worthiness and quality.

This study has investigated the role of gatekeepers in certain art fields. The list and the identification of gatekeepers is ever-changing in nature, and certainly a vast number of potential gatekeepers have not been included in the lists due to the time and space limitations of the study. One very important group would be directors: theatre, production, association, record company, art gallery, etc. directors. They are ultimately responsible for employing personnel to their organisations and institutions, and it would be interesting to see on what grounds their future gatekeepers professions are fulfilled for.

Education plays an enormous role in shaping the artistic worlds; scenes and fields in Finland, especially the artist's own education is closely investigated when deciding about grants and subsidies specifically. If the artists are scrutinised on a large scale about their education, it would be important and interesting to investigate the employment routes and education of the people who are employed to the gatekeeping positions. The interviewees in this study all possess a prestige degree from various educational institutions, majority of them from art universities/institutions, which gives a prefatory inclination that also arts managers tend to have extensive and arts related education.

But when the profound analysis of who are the ones sitting in the parliament; making and executing decisions on political cultural policies, the issue grows more complicated. In Finland, members of parliament are voted democratically amongst the public, and their artistic education is never questioned, yet they ultimately may decide about the final financial policies of supporting the arts. In fact, the whole art world of Finland flared up into discussion during the last major elections, when one previously relatively small political party received surprisingly large voting rates, and upon enjoying the newly found power, declared that the governmental financial resources for art should be aimed at enforcing the Finnish identity through supporting nationalistic "old" art and all the new, post-modern art should not be supported, at least from the state's monies. The discussion ultimately steered towards what kind of art is acceptable and good, and what kind of art is pointless and too difficult for the common person to understand, therefore

bad art. The whole massive public conversation was reminiscent of the past times, when the states, and political parties within, still actively steered the development of art according to and for the benefit of their own political agendas. This phenomenon proved that art may still, in our day and time, be at the centre of power struggles in politics, and the threat of political power affecting the creation and possibilities of art is real.

To conclude the general thoughts about power relations in the arts world of Finland, it is clear that there are power struggles and there are gatekeepers of various types. I guess, the ultimate and final determination is that a gatekeeper can in fact be a keeper, or then an enabler: a gate-opener, depending purely of one's own accrued and changing personal taste and appreciation towards art, and it's separate fields and manifestation.

### *6.1 Suggestions for Further Studies*

One issue that was frequently mentioned in this study, is the vast group of independent opinion leaders and taste-makers, that may or may not professionally work within the arts fields at all, but regardless have power in shaping the cultural advancements through affecting the opinions of others via their personal evaluations of artistic products, or as Bourdieu has put it: via their accrued cultural capital. Their role in the world of arts is so influential, that it would be interesting and worthwhile to investigate it and identify them also. To identify these opinion leaders profoundly, would be a task too vast in this study, but surely possible to some extent for future researchers. The questions for such research might include for instance:

- Who is an Opinion Leader in the World of Arts?
- What Makes an Opinion Leader in the Arts?
- How is the Public's Taste for Arts Influenced by Opinion Leaders?

Artistic educational institutions have a lot of power in creating artists according to the results of this study. The people who sit in the evaluating entrance examinations and interviews have therefore a substantial amount of power and collectively work as gatekeepers to the world of arts. A more profound research into the decision-making of university entrance personnel would be very relevant according to the subject of this thesis, but it is also beyond the scale of this research. Subsequently, it would be interesting also to investigate how and on what basis the personnel have been employed to these entrance admitting professional positions. Maybe the research titles for these problems could be:

- Decision-making Processes of Entrance Admissions to Arts Universities
- Gatekeepers of Admissions to Arts Universities

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## **Appendix**

### **Interview Questions for Artists**

1. Can you tell your education, profession and the art field you work in?
2. Generally speaking, who (professions) or what organisations are the closest co-operating parties within your professional field?
3. When you were starting out your career, which were the three most important goals that were dependable on some other parties' co-operation?
4. What are your professional goals now?
5. Who/what do you think has been the most influential person/party in terms of enabling a major move/development in your career?
6. Can you name the other people/organisations that have had an impact on your career?
7. Does the place of residence have an impact on your career in any way?
8. Has any party ever tried to influence your creation/publication or your creation?
9. What is the role of the government in your art world?
10. Has the financial situation ever affected your art making, how?
11. Have you been commissioned to do artwork, were there any terms or conditions?
12. Have you applied a governmental artistic grant? Result? Feelings about it?



## **Interview Questions for Arts Managers**

1. Your profession and the art field you work in?
2. Your education?
3. Can you name the most influential/powerful professions in your field?
4. Are you in a position that determines which art projects either get a chance to showcase or financial aid for their art? Alone/part of a group?
5. Can you name other parties in your field that are also influential gatekeepers from an artist's point of view?
6. If financial aid is given, what is the application procedure?
7. How are the decisions made as to who gets admittance; any set requirements/procedures?
8. What are you looking for in an artist for them to qualify as professional artists, i.e. worthy of your support?
9. To what degree –in your opinion- personal preferences manifest in the selection processes?
10. In America, the granting system for artists is almost non-existing yet they tend to lead the arts markets, any opinions on this?