

Norway - a response to Artists' Exhibition Payment Rights

Artists in Norway usually piece together their personal income from multiple private and public sources. This income comes in the form of grants, awards, sales, commissions, fees, etc. Some get artist's fees, but it is mostly based on negotiations and usually very low.

Norway has an exhibition remuneration agreement, in collaboration with the Norwegian Government, called Statens Utstillingsvederlagsavtale. The agreement commits the government to pay compensation for visual artists exhibiting art, at exhibitions in state-owned or state-supported institutions. This is a lease based on the artists' ownership. The remuneration is paid by the individual institutions to the artists.

- Compensation for the display of works by an adjustable rate - 2014 rate is NOK 248 (€28)
- Compensation for the artist ability to exhibit the work, for an adjustable rate - 2014 rate NOK 264 (€30)
- A value-based component of 1.5% of the works value over 2,000 NOK (€227) (Insurance sum)

NBK have worked since 2009 to include remuneration for exhibition work. A scheme is under way, very much based on the MU-agreement in Sweden. The goal is now to get a standard contract, which contains three points to discuss in negotiations, between the artist and the institution.

1. Exhibition fee/remuneration (honorar) - compensation for the work hours / time spent on the exhibition - starting with a minimum base.
2. Recompense (vederlag) - tariff-based on time that the artist cannot use the artworks and like a lease, based also on the value of the works.
3. Production costs (produksjons kostnader) - especially regarding site-specific work or new commissions that cannot be sold afterwards.

The aim is to raise the budgets of the publicly financed art institutions and to get a better contract between the artist and the institutions. NBK argue that the artist and the institution must give value to each other in the same timeframe, not through a vague promise of a theoretical economic value later in the artist's career. They argue that some artists take such a long time to get commercial success, so their work on non-commercial exhibitions should be well compensated as its own market.

The principles behind exhibition remuneration were set down in the White Paper on Visual Arts (Meld. St. 23 (2011-2012) Visuell kunst) and NBK have worked hard since in developing the idea with politicians, the media and other creative organisations - Union of Free photographers (FFF) Norwegian Association for Arts & Crafts (NK) and The Sámi Artists' Union (SD).

The government have now created a pilot programme of 2mill NOK (approx.. €227 300) to finance four state run and financed institutions. Allowing 0,5mill NOK each, over a period of two years (2015 and 2016) to test the remuneration system and collect valuable information on how it functions. In 2014 NBK also collectively managed to raise the financing on this state pilot by another 4 mill NOK (ca. 445 600,- Euro) and to include 8 more institutions. So now 12 institutions are testing this pilot initiative.

Early in 2015, a new survey ordered by the government will be released, the first since a 2006 survey, revealing the current economic situation for visual artists across the country.

A survey was conducted in 2006 (with results released in 2008) about the artist economy, which revealed that visual artists are the artist group with least income from their practice. The survey was duplicated in 2014 and the results will be released in January 2015, together with a report on the artists' economy, made by Vigdis Moe Skarstein. NBK have asked the Cultural Department to conduct a survey for the visual arts field, that is similar to the music industry survey, called 'Music in Numbers+ (Musikk i tall). This was created by the Norwegian Arts Council, and investigated the effects of what the industry produced and in a broader sense, what its economic value is in society. NBK are asking that visual arts be the next case for this survey.

Norway has a proud tradition of state scholarships and grants to encourage experimentation and innovation in the visual artist community. They have a law that ensures 5% should be paid in addition to the selling-price on all art over 2 000 NOK (€227) It is paid into the account of Billedkunstneres Hjelpesfond, a fund which gives the money back to the artists, mostly as scholarships and grants, but also to the Droit de Suite directly to individual artists.

Updated in January 2015