


VADc

23/24 IGBK

Visual Artists
Diverse Conditions



Visual Artists
Diverse Conditions

This documentation has been assembled on the occasion of the 2023 and 2024 project "visual artists | diverse conditions" organized by the Internationale Gesellschaft der Bildenden Künste (IGBK).

Content

I Project Presentation

Editorial	page 9
"visual artists diverse conditions" 2023/2024	page 11
Listing of Events	page 15

II Associations and Structures

A Sigh of Relief Between Crises – Diversity Oriented Change Processes in the Arts Cordula Kehr and Dr. Sandrine Micossé-Aikins	page 23
Organizational and Political Work with Equality and Diversity, Danish Visual Artists Marie Thams	page 27
Causing Change Is One Thing, but Embedding Change Is a Longer and More Arduous Journey Noel Kelly	page 29
UTOPIAN INSTITUTION. A Loveletter to Myself Anike Joyce Sadiq	page 31

III Social Security and Pensions

Social Security and Pension in Germany: Challenges and Perspectives for Visual Artists Anna Panagos and Doris Weinberger	page 39
The Artist's Statute (Cultural Reconciliation: The Only Alternative) Social Security and Pensions in Spain isidro López-Aparicio	page 41
Key Features of the Pension System for Freelancing and Self-employed Artists in Finland Teemu Mäki	page 45

IV Funding and Working Spaces

Reflections on Artists-in-Residence Programs Interview with artist Nezaket Ekici	page 51
K&K – Bündnis Kunst und Kind (Initiative for Visual Artists with Children): For a More Family-Friendly Art World Gabi Blum and Anna Schölß	page 57
Residency Programs with a Focus on Inclusive Structures or Challenges in the Composition of Juries Jan Stradtman	page 61

V European Cooperation and Scientific Perspective

Diverse Conditions Sara Edström	page 67
Racist Structures in Contemporary Art Institutions Macarena Dusant	page 69
How Do We Talk to Each Other? Interview with artist Sofia de la Fuente	page 73
Not Another Single Story Sheri Avraham	page 75
Beyond the Buzzwords: Why Germany's Cultural Institutions Need More than a Diversity Poster Dr. Mutlu Ergün-Hamaz	page 77
Authors	page 83
Bibliography and Credits	page 89
Imprint	page 91

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Project Presentation

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Editorial

What impact do characteristics such as age, gender, origin/language and geographical location (or place of residence) have on the work of visual artists in Europe in addition to country-specific cultural policy, art policy, and socio-political conditions? To what extent is the presence or absence of diversity structures in institutions, for example, noticeable to artists and reflected in their work?

Based on these initial questions, the Internationale Gesellschaft der Bildenden Künste (IGBK) – the German National Committee of the International Association of Art (IAA) – launched the "visual artists | diverse conditions" project in early 2023.

The concept of diversity is increasingly being recognized in democratic and pluralistic societies as a resource and as a positive potential. However, the diversity of identities and cultures is not reflected in all areas of society or in its institutional structures. Furthermore, the concept of diversity must be approached from a critical perspective that provides for the dismantling of hierarchies and the compensation of disadvantages associated with inequality.

We launched the project in 2023 with a workshop on Critical Whiteness and subsequent working groups of IGBK delegates who then accompanied the project for its duration. We would like to thank the Deutscher Künstlerbund, on whose premises we then came together for a panel discussion in June 2023, for its support as a cooperation partner with the public launch of the project. Our initiative received a positive response and we were able to garner important participation from our European partners. During the project's 2023 workshops, we heard input from the National Committees of the International Association of Art (IAA) Europe in Spain, Finland, Austria, Sweden, and the UK, among others.

With this in mind, we would especially like to thank the Artists' Association of Sweden, particularly its president Sara Edström, who then co-hosted, co-led, and co-moderated the 2024 "visual artists | diverse conditions" conference in Stockholm, Berlin, and online. We are also very grateful to the IAA Europe as another key partner and supporter of the conference. Our sincere thanks also go to On The Move, a further cooperator in the event and its Director of Operations Yohann Floch, who co-moderated the conference. Last but not least, we would like to express our deep appreciation to the German Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media (BKM) and the Kulturstiftung der Länder for their support of the IGBK and its projects.

This documentation, which was assembled at the end of the two-year project and will be published online, includes a number of texts submitted by people who took part in the project in 2023/2024 as well as written records of the ample input we received at the various events. Over the course of the project, it became very clear that many important aspects could not be addressed adequately due to the breadth of the topic. The structure of this publication follows the frameworks that we had set ourselves – social security and pensions, institutions and structures, and funding and working spaces – to best discuss the issues on which the project was focused, and the material is supplemented by further contributions from our European cooperation activities and from the scientific field. It is intended to act as a starting point for continuous development and the introduction of further political measures.

Berlin and Leipzig, December 2024

Christine Düwel, María Linares and Marcel Noack

Co-project leaders of "visual artists | diverse conditions" and co-chairs of the board of the IGBK

visual artists | diverse conditions 2023/2024

The concept of diversity is increasingly being recognized in democratic and pluralistic societies as a critical resource and as a positive potential, supporting de-hierarchization and balancing disadvantages linked to inequalities. However, the diversity of life circumstances, identities, and cultures is not yet reflected in all areas of society or in its institutions. There are structural obstacles that prevent participation within social groups.

Against this background, the Internationale Gesellschaft der Bildenden Künste (IGBK) examined the conditions of artistic work in Europe from a critical perspective of diversity in 2023 and 2024. A series of workshops, delegate group meetings, and a conference were organized under the title “visual artists | diverse conditions.” We met with representatives of a number of European artists' associations as well as other partners, institutions, and researchers to develop approaches and formulate concerns.

What impact do characteristics such as age, gender, origin/language, and geographical location (or place of residence) have on the work of visual artists in addition to country-specific cultural policy, art policy, and socio-political conditions? To what extent is the presence or absence of diversity structures in institutions, for example, noticeable in the work of artists? And how can we highlight and counteract the resultant disadvantages?

Three frameworks were identified in which to examine these questions on the basis of a comparative European perspective:

- Visual artists associations and structures
- Social security and pensions
- Funding and working spaces

The following aspects were highlighted at the “visual artists | diverse conditions” events

- **Fair pay** – Campaigning for appropriate remuneration for artists and denouncing disadvantageous socio-political regulations is one step toward making as many different voices as possible heard in the arts. Poor pay in particular prevents members of structurally disadvantaged groups from choosing an artistic profession and succeeding in it.
- **One has to be able to afford an honorary post** – The same goes for civic and political engagement, for instance in artists' associations, which is often on a voluntary basis. Precarious income can restrict participation in opinion-forming and policy-making activities in the cultural and visual arts sectors, because the working time required to earn a basic living leaves few resources for other activities, such as honorary work.

- **Systemic deficits and discrimination** place further obstacles in the way of certain groups with regard to a successful artistic profession. The visual arts are also part of social structures that are marked by racism. Prejudice and bias are sometimes visible and clearly identifiable, but they can equally take a more subtle form that is only recognizable over a long period of time. Other forms of discrimination, such as sexism, bi-, trans- and homophobia, ableism, antisemitism and anti-Muslim racism, etc., can further overlap and create barriers.
- **Artists' associations that strive for a large, broad-based, and renewable membership** are being challenged to develop policies to break the vicious circles mentioned in the previous points and to adapt their structures. This involves a shift in mindset and requires patience and a prioritized approach, as associations are largely dependent on voluntary work with comparatively small teams and budgets.
- **International exchange is extremely helpful here.** Best practice can be learned from different contexts. Peers can counsel each other, even if regional and structural circumstances vary. But international crises can also challenge collaboration. The will to come to an understanding is important. At times over the course of the project, we simply asked each other: How can we speak?
- **Where you live and work** – In many cases, artistic professions are associated with a high level of (international) mobility. This movement is often voluntary, but can also be a forced mobility against the background of restricted resources and artistic freedom. Access to reliable legal framework conditions and dependable institutions varies greatly depending on the geographical location – within and between countries. Artists' associations can be helpful in this context by continuously drawing attention to different starting conditions, facilitating intercultural peer exchange and by working with experts to break down administrative barriers – both internationally and between rural areas and urban centers.
- **Age intersects with all other dimensions** – Recognizing the relevance of age as a measure of diversity sheds light on the challenges faced by visual artists within social security systems in Europe. The risk of old-age poverty is notably high among visual artists. There is an urgent need for pension systems that better acknowledge the living circumstances of visual artists. In addition, many funding systems in the arts limit access to certain age groups.
- **Gender Gap** – There is still a verifiable and significant gender pay and show gap in the visual arts. Furthermore, the compatibility of care tasks with the professional lives of self-employed artists is extremely challenging. In view of evolving family patterns and simultaneous demographic changes, however, recognizing the undertaking that such tasks represent (by financing them or otherwise assisting with their organization) is of the utmost importance. Even today, women still take over the majority of caring responsibilities, both short-term and long-term, and including the care of the elderly. These conditions act as systemic obstacles that prevent women from pursuing successful artistic work.

Suggestions and calls for action in order to change and adapt existing structures

- **Associations and their members** – Artists' associations are challenged to identify groups who have so far been little represented or visible as part of their membership, and to actively approach them. They are challenged to strive for better inclusivity in their decision-making processes, which will help foster a desired change.
- **Creating synergies** – Associations, also those involved in different fields, can build networks and aim to learn from each other with regard to combating discrimination and making processes more inclusive. Consideration could be given to developing joint policies and structures for this purpose.
- **Funding** – Funding systems must work continuously on setting up diverse juries and providing special support to small, community-focused organizations. Furthermore, limiting funding to younger age groups cannot be justified in most cases.

- **Fair pay and gender pay gap** – Associations will continue to campaign for fair pay and for a reduction in the gender pay gap. Government intervention could be very effective in this regard, e.g. supporting projects with wider funds that actively counteract the predominant show/pay gap.
- **Social security, solo entrepreneurship, and honorary work** – Pension systems need to be adapted to the work profiles of visual artists, who in most cases work solo/on a self-employed basis and – due to low remuneration throughout their artistic careers – fall through the cracks of the calculation schemes of pension systems. Voluntary work in civil society could be given greater recognition, including via social security schemes, for example by counting volunteer work towards pension points.
- **International mobility and barriers** – International exchange and the commitment to removing administrative barriers to artist mobility remain an important task, e.g. to facilitate work and residence permits for international students after graduation or for the lifting of visa restrictions. The state must work actively to remove these barriers that hinder the international work of artists.
- **More data** – Further studies on aspects of diversity, on the aforementioned correlations and on current measures are necessary to supplement existing data and substantiate results. There is great potential here, particularly from a comparative European perspective.
- **Appeals addressed at the governmental and administrative levels** – These proposals must also be initiated and negotiated at a governmental and administrative level in order to change established cycles and social structures. While it cannot be up to the artists' associations alone to take on these challenges, they can provide important impetus here as well as raising awareness and trying to implement the changes they can make in their fields of action.

Background and further steps

The IGBK unites Germany's three most important supra-regional artists' associations on the basis of equality: the [Bundesverband Bildender Künstlerinnen und Künstler](#) (BBK – Federal Association of Artists), the [Deutscher Künstlerbund](#) (Association of German Artists) and the [Verband der Gemeinschaften der Künstlerinnen und Kunstfördernden](#) (GEDOK – Federation of Women Artists and Patrons of the Arts). The IGBK represents more than 14,000 visual artists in Germany.

The IGBK operates on the basis of a concept of diversity that recognizes the differences between groups and individuals as an enrichment of society. At the same time, we want to take a critical look at the discourse surrounding this concept as a harmonization policy that does not aim at effecting any actual change, and commit ourselves to mitigating barriers, gaps, and disadvantages within the visual arts sector.

This text is being published together with the project documentation and represents a record of challenges and goals at a specific point in time. It acts as a starting point for a continuous development of the association's work and its office.

The project leaders of "visual artists | diverse conditions" are Christine Düwel, María Linares, and Marcel Noack (all three are also members of the IGBK board).

Listing of Events

OVERVIEW OF ALL PARTICIPANTS AND PARTNERS IN THE 2023 AND 2024 WORKING GROUPS AND EVENTS

[Andrea Cochius](#), [Andreas Schmid](#), [Angelica Olsson](#), [Anike Joyce Sadiq](#), [Anna Schölß](#), [Anna Stina Svakko](#), [annette hollywood](#), [Christina Zück](#), [Christine Düwel](#), [David Larsson](#), [Doris Weinberger](#), [Dr. Katharina Koch](#), [Dr. Yvette Mutumba](#), [Elsa Hagelskamp](#), [Ergül Cengiz](#), [Ermas Ekube](#), [Iris Hoppe](#), [Isidro López-Aparicio \(iLA\)](#), [Jan Stradtman](#), [Jerome Ince-Mitchell](#), [Julia Kasten](#), [Katarina Renman Claesson](#), [Lars Apelmo](#), [Linda Marie Karlsson](#), [Macarena Dusan](#), [Marcel Noack](#), [María Linares](#), [Marie Thams](#), [Dr. Multu Ergün-Hamaz](#), [Nezaket Ekici](#), [Noel Kelly](#), [Ola Öhlin](#), [Pham, Minh Duc](#), [Roland Eckelt](#), [Sara Edström](#), [Sheri Avraham](#), [Sofia De La Fuente](#), [Teemu Mäki](#), [Theresa Lekberg](#), [Tony Karlsson Savci](#), [Valentina Karga](#), [Yohann Floch](#)

WORKING GROUPS OF IGBK DELEGATES IN 2023 AND 2024

We launched the project in 2023 with the formation of working groups amongst IGBK delegates who then accompanied the project for its duration. We started this process together with a Critical Whiteness workshop under the guidance of Dr. Beyhan Şentürk, intended as an introductory contribution to the discussion of racist mechanisms in organizations and aiming to raise awareness on the topics of diversity.

PANEL DISCUSSION "CONDITIONS OF ARTISTIC WORK IN RELATION TO DIVERSITY DIMENSION"

8 JUNE 2023

The panel discussion at the exhibition space of Deutscher Künstlerbund was the public opening of the project "visual artists | diverse conditions".

What impact do characteristics such as age, gender, origin/language and geographical location (or place of residence) have on the work of visual artists in Europe in addition to country-specific cultural policy, art policy and socio-political conditions? To what extent is the presence or absence of diversity structures noticeable in institutions, i.e. also in artists' associations?

The panelists were Anike Joyce Sadiq, visual artist based in Berlin and Valentina Karga, visual artist and professor at Hochschule für Bildende Künste (HFBK) in Hamburg.

Valentina Karga is working on questioning the concept of the "self" by proposing non-anthropocentric narratives of the future. She expanded the diversity discussion to include the perspective of neurodiversity.

[Input Valentina Karga \(Audio\)](#)

In her artistic work, Anike Joyce Sadiq "consistently reconsiders the extent to which social dynamics, intersectionality, and perspectives of difference are negotiated within institutional structures" (excerpt exhibition text "Mit Glück hat es nichts zu tun").

[Input Anike Joyce Sadiq \(Audio\)](#)

Moderation: Mutlu Ergün-Hamaz, research associate at Deutsches Institut für Menschenrechte in Berlin and former diversity officer at Universität der Künste Berlin.

Welcome and introduction: María Linares.

The event was a collaboration of the IGBK and Deutscher Künstlerbund.

WORKSHOP "SOCIAL SECURITY AND PENSIONS"

25 OCTOBER 2023

The online session focused on "Social Security and Pensions" for visual artists in Europe against the background of diversity aspects. Inputs were given a.o. by

- Teemu Mäki (Artist and Doctor of Fine Arts, Chair of Artists' Association of Finland and President of IAA Europe) and
- isidro López-Aparicio (iLA) (Visual Artist, University Professor & Curator. Unión de Artistas Contemporáneos Spain)

The session was moderated by María Linares.

[Video of the input by Teemu Mäki](#)

[Video of the input by isidro López-Aparicio](#)

WORKSHOP "VISUAL ARTISTS ASSOCIATIONS AND STRUCTURES"

8 NOVEMBER 2023

The online session focused on "Visual Artists Associations and Structures" in Europe against the background of diversity aspects.

The speaker was Sheri Avraham (Visual Artist, Curator, Theater Maker, Board Member of IG Bildende Kunst Austria, Co-Curator at D/Arts).

The session was moderated by Christine Düwel

[Video of the input by Sheri Avraham](#)

WORKSHOP "FUNDING AND WORKING SPACES"

15 NOVEMBER 2024

The online session focused on "Funding and Working Spaces" in Europe against the background of diversity aspects. Inputs were given a.o. by:

- Jerome Ince-Mitchell (Visual Artist, Vice Chair of a-n The Artists Information Company, Member of the IAA Europe Executive Committee)
- Sara Edström (Visual Artist, President of The Artists' Association of Sweden, Vice-President of IAA Europe)

The Session was moderated by Marcel Noack.

[Video of the input by Jerome Ince-Mitchell](#)

[Video of the input by Sara Edström](#)

"VISUAL ARTISTS | DIVERSE CONDITIONS" - CONFERENCE 24 MAY 2024

On 24 May 2024, IGBK together with the [Artists' Association of Sweden](#), and in partnership with [IAA Europe](#) and [On The Move](#), hosted the hybrid [project conference "visual artists | diverse conditions"](#).

In both Berlin and Stockholm, an interconnected round table took place. Representatives of national and European artists' associations, visual artists, experts and cultural politicians discussed diversity aspects in the visual arts in Europe.

Moderation: Sara Edström (Artists' Association of Sweden) and Yohann Floch (Director of Operations/ On The Move)

Artist Pham, Minh Duc gave an [artistic performance as part of the conference](#).

The aim of the conference in 2024 was to exchange further knowledge and experiences of how to work with aspects of diversity in the context of working conditions for visual artists in Europe. We live in similar contexts within Europe in many ways, but there are also so many differences. We, as artist organizations working daily to strengthen the conditions for professional artists, see how it gets increasingly more important to secure the freedom of expression and the possibility for as many diverse voices as possible to be heard.



About the conference partners

The [Artists' Association of Sweden](#) (Konstnärernas Riksorganisation) has 3,500 members who are artists, designers, and craftspeople. The association represents Swedish visual artists in political issues concerning art and artists' financial and social situation.

The [International Association of Art \(IAA\) Europe](#) is a network of about 40 national member organizations within Europe, representing professional visual artists. Founded in 2022, it is one of the five cultural regions of the International Association of Art (IAA), the largest international non-governmental association of visual artists, with more than 100 member organizations worldwide.

[On the Move](#) is an international information network dedicated to artistic and cultural mobility, with 79 members from 29 countries. Since 2002, it has provided regular, up-to-date, and free information on mobility opportunities, conditions, and funding and advocated for the value of cross-border cultural mobility.

Conference project leads: Sara Edström (artist and president of the Artists' Association of Sweden), Marcel Noack, Christine Düwel, and María Linares (all three artists and chairpersons of the board of IGBK).

ROUND TABLE PARTICIPANTS A.O.:

STOCKHOLM: [Anna Stina Svakko](#), [David Larsson](#), [Ermias Erkube](#), Jakob Dalunde, [Katarina Renman Claesson](#), [Lars Apeldo](#), [Lina Marie Karlsson](#), [Macarena Dusant](#), [Noel Kelly](#), [Öla Öhlin](#), [Sara Edström](#), [Sofia De La Fuente](#), [Theresa Lekberg](#)

BERLIN - [Andreas Schmid](#), [Anike Joyce Sadiq](#), [Anna Schölß](#), [annette hollywood](#), [Christina Zück](#), [Christine Düwel](#), [Jan Stradtman](#), [Jerome Ince-Mitchell](#), [Julia Kasten](#), [Dr. Katharina Koch](#), [María Linares](#), [Pham, Minh Duc](#), [Mutlu Ergün-Hamaz](#), Thomas Weis, [Yohann Floch](#), [Dr. Yvette Mutumba](#)
VIA ZOOM, [Marcel Noack](#), [Marie Thams](#), [Sheri Avraham](#)

Friday, 24 May 2024, 10 am CEST Berlin/ Stockholm

10:00 am | Welcome and Introduction

with co-moderators Sara Edström (Artists' Association of Sweden, also co-conference lead) and Yohann Floch (On The Move)

and project leaders Maria Linares, Christine Düwel, Marcel Noack (all three IGBK)

10:30 am | Two Keynotes

Macarena Dusant (independent art historian, editor and writer, Stockholm)

Dr. Yvette Mutumba (Co-Founder and Director of 'Contemporary And' (C&) and lecturer at 'Institut Kunst im Kontext' of Universität der Künste (UdK) Berlin)

11:00 am | Q&A and moderated round table

11:30 am *coffee break*

11:45 pm | European Parliament perspective

Julia Kasten (Accredited personal assistant to Member of Parliament Romeo Franz, vice chair of the Culture and Education Committee) and

Jakob Dalunde (Member of Parliament, Committee on Transport and Tourism)

12:30 pm | Q&A and moderated round table

1:00 pm *lunch break*

2:00 pm | Welcome back and Inputs Visual Artists Associations in Europe

Marie Thams (Danish Association of Visual Artists, National Committee of IAA Europe in Denmark) and

Noel Kelly (Visual Artists Ireland, National Committee of IAA Europe in Ireland)

2:40 pm | Q&A and moderated round table

3:15 pm | Artistic Performance by Pham, Minh Duc

3:45 pm *coffee break*

4:00 pm | Reflections between Pham, Minh Duc, Sheri Avraham, and Jerome Ince-Mitchell

4:25 pm | Q&A and moderated round table with reflections by the organizers

4:55 pm | Summarizing and farewell by the moderators and the project leaders



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Associations and Structures

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A Sigh of Relief Between Crises – Diversity Oriented Change Processes in the Arts

CORDULA KEHR AND DR. SANDRINE MICOSSÉ-AIKINS

Wherever you look, we live in a world of multiple crises. When social cohesion appears to be under threat, art and culture are often used to compensate for sociopolitical shortcomings or to counteract the erosion of solidarity in society. Art as a universal remedy! In addition, many cultural practitioners also like to see themselves as indispensable, progressive bridge-builders.

In the best case scenario, this may work. Art can affect us, give us new perspectives, and initiate social change. But apart from the question of whether art should be used in this way at all, it is clear that in many cases the experiment fails. Surprising? No – after all, how is art supposed to connect people and help them to bond if the cultural sector itself is such an exclusionary space?

The Berlin Senate Department of Culture launched Diversity Arts Culture (DAC), the cities design and consultation office for diversity development in the Arts in 2017 with the aim of reducing this exclusion and promoting diversity within the cultural sector. Since then, DAC has been advising cultural institutions, individual cultural practitioners, and the Senate Department of Culture on anti-discrimination, diversity, and inclusion.

Through DAC's work and its exchange with other organizations, projects, and initiatives such as the Arts Council England, 360° – Fund for New City Culture (a funding program set up by the German Federal Cultural Foundation) and Making A Difference (a Berlin-based network for promoting the work of artists with disability in dance), we have been able to gain important insights into the prerequisites for successful diversity-oriented change in the cultural sector. We outline some of them below:

Encouraging personal initiative

Many cultural practitioners want to get involved in making the cultural sector fairer and more accessible. It is worth picking up on this impetus and making a start wherever there is initiative.

Smaller cultural institutions or collectives who are members of the independent arts scene usually lack financial resources more than the will to change. As they rarely benefit from large-scale funding programs, funding providers should pay particular attention to them.

It is important for those who manage larger cultural institutions to support their committed employees and involve them in change processes. For example, employees should be able to form diversity working groups during their working hours in order to address structural diversity development issues across departments.

Cultural practitioners should themselves become active, network, and undergo further training. They can convey to colleagues why anti-discrimination and diversity are important and help them to better understand these issues. They can also make a significant contribution to keeping learning and discourse spaces open.

Creating external incentives, formulating minimum standards

There is often a lack of commitment when it comes to cultural policy. Funding institutions and cultural administrations should make diversity development their long-term priority; they must promote it, create financial incentives, and monitor progress. One important step in this respect is to demand and support the enforcement of existing laws, particularly with regard to accessibility regulations.

At the same time, cultural institutions must be able to work independently in terms of content and politics. It makes sense for them to set their own diversity development goals within the scope of their possibilities and needs.

Designing feasible measures

Diversity development requires resources. In addition to the financial incentives provided by cultural funding institutions for diversity development, measures and processes should be adapted to reflect existing resources. Institutions must ask themselves what they are able to implement using their current resources and where they can supplement scarce means with creative solutions.

Intersectionality and prioritization of measures

When institutions start focusing on diversity development, often, a great number of requirements become apparent, with countless access barriers, knowledge gaps, needs, and requirements suddenly coming to light. It is therefore important that institutions consider what the most urgent fields of action are and which measures have the greatest potential. External assessments by *critical friends* or focus groups can be helpful. At the same time, however, it is important not to play off experiences of marginalization against each other – not least because many people experience discrimination at the intersection of various social exclusions.

Seeking exchange and advice

Not every institution has to reinvent the wheel. Institutions can learn together from successes and failures through peer-to-peer exchange. If this approach does not yield the desired results, it is worth seeking external advice. This can take the form of long-term facilitation or a focus group with marginalized experts, for example. Diversity competence is knowledge that experts have acquired over years – through biographical experience, (self-)study, voluntary community and paid work. Even if it is not always formalized, this knowledge deserves to be recognized and rewarded.

In the meantime ...

There are already many people working in the cultural sector who have experienced marginalization. They need support (e.g. from qualified mentors or through resource sharing), representation of their interests, and protective structures (such as (General Equal Treatment Act/AGG) complaints offices or supervision). Last but not least, diversity development has to do with building trust. Marginalized cultural practitioners and those interested in culture must rediscover the institutions with which they have had bad experiences. However, this can only work if real change has taken place.

We don't know what challenges the next few years have in store for us. Perhaps art can imagine utopias and create counter-spaces that allow us to breathe a sigh of relief between crises. But this will only succeed if the cultural sector itself becomes a space of solidarity and builds bridges – also internally.

At the time of initial publication of this text, in mid-December 2024, the work of Diversity Arts Culture (DAC) is in jeopardy. Current budget negotiations in Berlin are threatening the existence of the structure and its many dedicated employees. It is being negotiated that the funding for DAC (and its umbrella organization Stiftung für Kulturelle Weiterbildung und Kulturberatung) will be completely cut or cut to such a considerable extent that a large part of the work, in particular the diverse range of free advisory services, will no longer be possible.

Organizational and Political Work with Equality and Diversity, Danish Visual Artists

MARIE THAMS

WRITTEN EXTRACT BY VINCENT BRUCKER AND MARIE THAMS

The intrinsic motivation of European cultural institutions to increase diversity in the art world and make a positive impact on social processes leads to various actions and approaches. The Danish Visual Artists organization ([Billedkunstnernes Forbund, BKF](#)), which was founded in 1969 and today has over 2,100 members, has been addressing the topics of equality and diversity for many years and at various levels. Its aim is to help improve inclusion and representation and secure equal opportunities for all artists, regardless of their cultural backgrounds or identity markers. The organization does this work both internally, in order to keep developing its structure and activities, and political voice, and through external projects and debate aimed at strengthening diversity-sensitive initiatives and development in institutional structures and across the ecosystem of the Danish visual arts field.

As a result of constructive discussions within the organization and its Board, a comprehensive Equality and Diversity Policy was developed in 2021 that addresses the topics of equality and diversity internally, and externally in the Danish art field.

One aim of this policy is to broaden and qualify the organization's existing diversity agenda. To this end, diversity-sensitive discourse within the Danish Visual Artists is continuously expanded by bringing in experts to offer perspectives as part of workshops, talks, and other events for both staff and board members on topics such as anti-racism, how to create safer spaces, and structural racism, among others.

With regard to its external activities, BKF has developed a set of diversity recommendations for Danish museums and other exhibition spaces, which were launched in 2023 and call for collective

work on the topic and for lasting, systemic change. In addition, BKF collects data on this topic on a continuous basis, which serves to consolidate current discourses. In 2022 BKF initiated a concrete cultural program to support artists with visible and invisible disabilities by founding an [Accessibility Pool](#). This undertaking complements the organization's ongoing political work on equality and diversity in the visual arts field.

Reflecting on the organization's own perspectives with the support of external expertise and exchanging ideas with one another is an important way of engaging in development both on an organizational level and in the broader field. Considering not only gender inequality but also other visible and invisible identity markers and parameters that can be a reason for discrimination against artists (with minority backgrounds) in cultural organizational structures and the art world is an important element of the internal approach and external debates and goals. According to the Danish Visual Artists, these include racialization, religion, sexual orientation, social class, age, disability and more. The goal of [BKF's work on this topic](#) is for all artists, regardless of identity markers, to be able to create their art without being excluded or met with discrimination, transgressive behavior or rights violations.

At the same time, Danish Visual Artists is endeavoring to collect data that provide insights into the complex interdependencies within the art world and inform cultural policy debates with a focus on diversity.

In this context, artists with disabilities represent an important target group within the cultural institution's practical action strategies. Recognizing the lack of accessibility for artists with physical, cognitive, psychological, and sensory handicaps in the Danish art world and the lack of funding opportunities for state-supported artists with disabilities, the Danish Visual Artists Organization wishes to help develop concrete sources of assistance.

These include the aforementioned Accessibility Pool, which provides low-level economic assistance to minimize or overcome the extra barriers artists with disabilities are facing in terms of artistic processes. It is also intended to raise awareness of the working conditions of artists with disabilities by collecting relevant data. To this end, the Accessibility Pool collects feedback from the artists with disabilities it supports concerning their specific needs and wishes. This data will and is to be incorporated into the further development of the work.

BKF wishes to continue working consistently on the topics of equality and diversity, to keep pursuing its goal of being an inclusive organization, to be able to represent all professional Danish visual artists, to be a diverse political voice within the art field and within Danish cultural politics, and to keep pushing for change. BKF's agenda for equality, diversity, and inclusion also carries a wish to create greater awareness across the art ecosystem, i.e., talent development, preparatory art schools, art academies, exhibition venues and artistic platforms, professional organizations, foundations (both private and public), cultural policy agendas, criticism, curatorial practice, dissemination, research, art collectors, audiences etc. Only through collective action can we achieve lasting change.

Marie Thams is a visual artist and the chairperson of Danish Visual Artists (Billedkunstnernes Forbund, BKF), the main trade union and interest organization for visual artists in Denmark. She gave an update on BKF's activities in the areas of equality and diversity at the "visual artists | diverse conditions" conference in May 2024, which is the basis for this text.

Causing Change Is One Thing, but Embedding Change Is a Longer and More Arduous Journey

NOEL KELLY

WRITTEN EXTRACT BY VINCENT BRUCKER

Art associations and organizations, like all cultural-political institutions, are determined by constant change and social demands. [Visual Artists Ireland's \(VAI\)](#) objective to strive for the highest possible level of social representation faces various challenges.

In practice, as an impartial and independent advice service, VAI is committed to supporting visual artists, focusing in particular on their professional careers. The aim is to positively recognize the great heterogeneity of life realities in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland and to represent this in its own membership and team structure. In addition, VAI follows the premise of maximizing fairness and justice in access to resources, opportunities, and rights in order to create an environment where everyone has equitable opportunities to access supports that enable them to work towards their own personal excellence, regardless of their cultural background, socioeconomic status, race, gender, career stage, disability status or any other characteristic set.

From VAI's perspective, part of any cultural association's own critical reflection is to make challenges discursively visible and to address them openly. This also includes an awareness of possible dangers when addressing diversity issues. For example, the superficial representation of artists from marginalized backgrounds or the reinforcement of power dynamics faced by all artists and arts organizations. This perpetuates inequalities and limits the opportunities for genuine collaboration and exchange. Furthermore, tokenistic policies and practices can also lead to surface-level interactions that fail to challenge stereotypes or address systemic issues of inequality and exclusion.

Becoming aware of the diversity of challenges and the complexity of the interrelationships on the one hand and practicing continuous self-reflection on the other are integral components of the development of concrete recommendations for action and approaches by VAI.

In order to embed diversity-sensitive practices in the change processes, VAI has developed over the years [comprehensive policies and procedures](#) that are compliant with leading national and international human rights regulations. The culture of equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) is not seen as something that has to be done. Instead, EDI is regarded as a central practice and is addressed at all levels of the association's delivery – including strategy & planning, communications, status reporting, and impact measurement.

An integral part of the EDI action plan is to take account of external perspectives. The VAI strives to involve the broader arts community and voices of marginalized artists within the context of professional art careers in its own discourses in order to promote dialogue, awareness, and action around issues. At the same time, internal processes and procedures are based on diversity-sensitive practices, the provision of diversity training and clear guidelines to prevent discrimination.

To stimulate further change, the culture of equity, diversity and inclusion is also taken into account in the range of services and advice offered. In addition to the promotion of networking and collaboration practices, the VAI team continuously provides information and assistance regarding grants, funding opportunities, and artist residencies that are available to artists from diverse backgrounds. VAI also actively promotes the work of artists from diverse backgrounds and seeks to increase their visibility by ensuring the inclusion of under-represented artists in VAI's artists' profiles, learning events, publications and projects.

In the context of complex interdependencies and long change processes, it is inevitable that mistakes may be made. Therefore, importantly, VAI operates as a learning-organization that acknowledges errors and openly learns from them. The negotiations and practical approaches of VAI show how important it is to utilize the power of art practice in order to develop a culture of learning from each other. This culture embraces diversity positively and takes it into account in its own mission, values, and strategic planning in the long term, as well as promoting dialogue and engagement amongst VAI members and visual arts organizations on the island of Ireland.

Noel Kelly is the Chief Executive Officer/Director of Visual Artists Ireland (VAI), the representative body for professional visual artists in all Ireland. Noel Kelly contributed on the challenges of being a representative organization in times of change at the "visual artists | diverse conditions" conference in May 2024, which is the basis for this text.

UTOPIAN INSTITUTION A Loveletter to Myself

ANIKE JOYCE SADIQ

[Utopian Institutions](#) is a survey first conducted as part of the 2022 exhibition "Mit Glück hat es nichts zu tun" ("Luck's nothing to do with it") at Künstlerhaus Stuttgart (curated by Eric Golo Stone).

The survey is based primarily on my own experiences as an artist collaborating with art institutions in relation to working conditions, equality, "diversity," and accessibility. I am particularly interested in the structure of associations, as these can be presumed to offer a democratic basis to members. In contrast to other institutional structures, members are generally empowered to make changes to the statutes and propose motions. The opportunities for co-determination are regulated either in the association's own statutes or otherwise by the Associations Act.

Against this background, the survey is addressed to all members, the executive board, the advisory board, the artistic management, and all employees of the institution. All questions are multiple choice, with the most commonly selected responses ultimately generating a result text about the institution, which can be read for information or as a warning for artists who intend to work with the institution.

While the text reflects the status quo and the racialized, gendered, and classed consciousness that currently defines the institution in question, the survey is not a scientific/sociological demographic study – rather, the questions are formulated in the respondent's own voice, from a position of questioning that is deeply (inter)personal. The actions of asking questions, examining the questions, and answering them are conceived as equal elements in a critical engagement with art institutions.

The following images and texts are taken from the survey conducted at the Kunstverein Langenhagen as part of the annual program entitled "Der Kunstverein in der Katastrophe" ("Art Associations Amid a World in Disaster") at the invitation of curator Kathy-Ann Tan.

In a joint process with the management of the Kunstverein Birte Heier and Sebastian Stein, as well as the employees Theresa Tolksdorf and Gregor Kieseritzky, a presentation of the survey was created in a space that made the structures of the art association visible in the sense of an inventory. The material pool, the warehouse, and the office were moved into the exhibition space. The warehouse became the archive – the back end of the institution, so to speak – and the survey questions were shown in the display window facing the street (front end). The record "Playing the

Structure," created with sound artist Judith Hamann, also made the structures in Langenhagen vibrate in a very concrete way.

The situation of art institutions continues to deteriorate, and they are exposed to the pressure of a policy that seeks to revise the achievements of recent years. The space for postcolonial approaches and critical discourse is narrowing. This growing constriction is reflected in the ever-expanding list of questions and prompts, which address specific local as well as current (cultural) political issues:

"How is the independence of the artistic program ensured?"

"I think canceling exhibitions, disinviting artists, or dismissing directors and curators because of their stance on the conflict in the Middle East is.."

"What do you think about constitutional screening of artists?"


"Does the institution support artistic projects even if those in charge of the institution have a different opinion about the project?"

"In your opinion, what form of funding provides the greatest possible freedom in terms of content and programming?"

"Have there been conflicts of interest in the past between funders and content/programmatic orientation?"

"Does the artist's/employee's contract specify what happens if they are directly discriminated against while working with the institution?"

"How do you see the role of the art institution in a world that is in a state of disaster?"



Denken Sie, die Institution hat
eine gesellschaftliche Verantwortung,
auf soziale und politisch
aktuelle Themen zu reagieren?

Liebe Anike,

ich bin nur ein Computerprogramm mit eigenen Vorurteilen und Beschränkungen, aber ausgehend von deinen Fragen an die Institution und der Mehrheitsmeinung der Umfrageteilnehmer*innen-lässt sich (ohne Gewähr) Folgendes über die Institution sagen:

Es scheint, als hätten kaum Mitglie*der an der Umfrage teilgenommen. Dafür, dass die Institution ein Verein ist und sich grundsätzlich auf eine aktive Mitglie*dschaft stützen sollte, spricht das wohl für sich selbst. Die Mitglie*der hoffen, dass ihre Interessen vom Vorstand und den Mitarbeiter*innen vertreten werden. (...) Der Vorstand ist zwar die Vertretung der Mitglie*der, aber es scheint keine Auskunft darüber zu geben, wie er mit der Mitglie*dschaft arbeitet. Trotzdem fühlen sich die Mitglie*der einbezogen. Abgesehen von den Mitglie*dersammlungen scheint es keine Räume zu geben, in denen man sprechen, zuhören und gehört werden kann. Vielleicht geheime? (...)

Künstlerische Freiheit wird sehr hoch gehalten. Es scheint, als hätten sie sich damit auseinandergesetzt. Die Leitung wird nicht von einem unabhängigen, künstlerischen und vielfältigen Ausschuss selbst ausgewählt. Der Vorstand hat das Sagen. Aber die Leitung hat eine sichere Arbeitsstelle und könnte es wagen, sich für dich einzusetzen. Wie präsent sie dich unterstützen können, ist auf Grund ihrer Arbeitsbedingungen fraglich. Du kannst dich erstmal freuen, weil du in einem nachhaltigen und konstruktiven Umfeld offen Kritik üben und mitarbeiten kannst. Die Leitung geht mit gutem Beispiel voraus.

Die Institution ist kein Kunstblase, auch tagesaktuelle politische und soziale Themen werden laufend diskutiert. Die Institution versteht sich selbst als ein Ort des zeitgenössischen Diskurses. Die Institution versteht sich als ein Ort, der immer wieder neu genutzt oder verändert werden kann, wozu immer wieder neuer Input benötigt wird. Ran an die Strukturen! Sie ist an gesellschaftlich und politisch informierter Kunst interessiert, die gut aussieht. Das kann man nicht übel nehmen, aber wie groß das tatsächliche Interesse an gesellschaftlichen Fragen ist, ist schwer zu sagen. ... Von der Trennung zwischen Staatsinteressen und Kunst hält sie offenbar nicht sehr viel. Zum Glück hält sie von Propaganda nichts. Sie ist sich der Wichtigkeit der Kunst für die Gesellschaft und Nachbarschaft bewusst und kooperiert mit unterschiedlichen Institutionen. Es scheint als geht die Institution mit der Zeit und hat vermehrt dekoloniale Theorien und kritische Theorie in ihr Programm eingebunden. Was deren Umsetzung in den eigenen Strukturen angeht, brauchst du keine großen Hoffnungen hegen.

Sie wollen durch die Kunst in ihren Ansichten herausgefordert werden. Du hast einen Job angenommen und musst dich wirklich in die Institution eindenken. Sie erwarten eine enge Zusammenarbeit. Organisiere dir eine Assistenz! Wenn du Themen ansprichst, die der Institution nicht passen, könntest du auf Mauern treffen. Vielleicht ist dein Projekt zu Ende, bevor du angefangen hast.

Da wir bereits über Verpflichtungen sprechen: die Förderung der Institution kommt aus öffentlichen und privaten Geldern. Du magst das für eine gute Sache halten, aber hinter diesem Geld stehen immer Absichten. Es scheint, dass es bisher keine Fälle von (Selbst-)Zensur gegeben hat in Bezug auf Themen wie Palästina oder alle Themen, die auf die finanziellen Unterstützer*innen ein schlechtes Licht werfen könnten. Ich nehme an, sie haben es einfach perfekt vertuscht. Die Gesprächskultur ist weitgehend transparent und sehr respektvoll. Konflikte und Meinungsverschiedenheiten werden gewertschätzt. Es könnte also hitzig werden, aber sie engagieren sich auch für die Lösungsfindung. Es gibt zumindest Potenzial. Erstaunlicherweise gibt es anscheinend ein Verfahren für alle Beschwerden oder schlechten Erfahrungen, die du innerhalb der Einrichtung machen wirst. Leider kannst du nicht darauf vertrauen, dass Vorfälle von Diskriminierung und Aggression auf konstruktive Weise behandelt werden, ohne die Betroffenen erneut zu traumatisieren.

(...)

Dear Anike,

I am just a computer program with my own biases and limitations, but based on your questions to the institution and the majority opinion of the survey participants—the following can be said about the institution (without guarantee):

It seems that hardly any members took part in the survey. Given the fact that the house is an association and should basically rely on an active membership, this probably speaks for itself. They try to make sure membership voices are heard and recognized by the board and employees. (...) The board is the representative of the membership, but there seems to be no information about how they work with the membership. Nevertheless, the members feel involved. Apart from the membership meetings, there seem to be no spaces to speak, listen and be heard. Perhaps secret ones? (...)

Artistic freedom is held in very high regard. It seems as if they have come to terms with this. The directors were not chosen by an independent artistic and diverse committee themselves. The board decides. But the directors have a secure work position and might dare fighting for you. How present they can support you is questionable due to their working conditions. You can be glad because you can openly criticize and collaborate in a sustainable and constructive environment. The directors are leading by example.

The institution itself is not an art bubble; even current political and social issues are discussed on an ongoing basis. The institution sees itself as a place of contemporary discourse. The institution understands itself as a site that can be reused or reiterated with the continuous need for additional input. Get to work on the structures! The institution is interested in socially and politically informed art that looks good. You can't blame them, but it's hard to say how interested they really are in social issues. They obviously don't give much of the separation between state interests and art. Fortunately, they don't believe in propaganda. They are aware of the importance of art for society and the neighborhood and cooperates with various institutions. It seems that the institution is moving with the times and has increasingly incorporated de_colonial theories and critical theory into its programme. As far as their implementation in its own structures is concerned, you don't need to have high hopes. But they like to be challenged in their perspectives through art. You've taken a job and you really have to get into the institution. They expect you to work closely with them. Organise yourself an assistant! If you raise issues that don't suit the institution, you may hit walls. Maybe your project is over before you start.

Since we are already talking about the strings attached, the funding comes from public and private money. You may think this is a good thing, but there are always desires behind this money. It seems, until now, there have been no cases of (self-)censorship concerning topics such as Palestine and any topics which put the financial supporters in a bad light. I assume they just covered it up perfectly. The communication culture is mostly transparent and very respectful. They do appreciate conflict and dissent. So it might get heated, but they will also be invested in solution finding. There is at least potential. Amazingly there apparently is a procedure in place for any complaints or bad experiences you make within the institution. Unfortunately, you cannot trust that incidents of discrimination and aggression will be dealt with in a constructive way that does not retraumatise those affected.
(...)

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Social Security and Pensions

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Social Security and Pension in Germany: Challenges and Perspectives for Visual Artists

ANNA PANAGOS AND DORIS WEINBERGER

Recognizing the relevance of age as a measure of diversity sheds light on the challenges faced by visual artists within the German social security system. Because age intersects with many other dimensions of diversity, this topic was particularly relevant within the project "visual artists | diverse conditions" – especially as the risk of old-age poverty is notably high among visual artists, who play a vital role in the vast cultural landscape of Germany. This underscores the urgent need for a more inclusive approach that better acknowledges the varied living circumstances of visual artists, for whom income stability is rare.

The social security system in Germany is designed to protect from life's various risks and vulnerabilities, such as illness, old age, unemployment, and work-related accidents. While health and long-term care insurance are mandatory for all employed and self-employed individuals, pension insurance is not yet compulsory in the freelance sector. Freelancers, including visual artists, can only insure themselves voluntarily against accidents at work and occupational disability under specific conditions.

Among the diverse social groups covered by the social security system in Germany, freelance visual artists represent a unique category. They generally earn their income through entrepreneurial activity, often relying on a combination of project-based work, exhibitions, commissioned projects, and teaching. This varied income base can lead to significant fluctuations in earnings. Visual artists contribute significantly to the cultural and creative sectors in Germany, yet they often face precarious financial situations, making it difficult for them to secure their futures – particularly in the form of pensions. Germany's social security system is financed through contributions from employees, employers, and sometimes the state, with benefits based on the amount and duration of contributions paid during an individual's working life. The German Artists' Social Security Fund (Künstlersozialkasse, KSK) is a specialized institution that supports freelance artists within this system. The KSK helps to provide social security coverage for

freelance artists, publicists, and journalists by covering 50% of the necessary statutory social insurance contributions with funds from federal subsidies and business shares. It ensures that creatives are included in the health, long-term care, and pension insurance systems. Artists must meet certain criteria to qualify for this support, including earning a minimum of 3,900 euros annually from their artistic work. More lenient conditions apply for up to three years for artists starting out in their careers. However, despite the existence of such support, the reality remains that many artists and creatives in Germany struggle to build sufficient financial security for their retirement years.

Recent reforms in the German pension system: the introduction of the Grundrente

The German pension system is intended to provide financial security in retirement for all, but it is not without its challenges, for example with regard to low-income earners – a category into which many visual artists fall. Recognizing the need to address this issue, the German government introduced the Grundrente (basic pension) on January 1, 2021. The Grundrente is intended to acknowledge the lifelong contributions of individuals who have worked for many years with low earnings. Under the scheme, eligible retirees with at least 33 years of contributions from employment, child-rearing, or caregiving can receive a pension supplement. This supplement is granted automatically if the criteria are met, without the need for an application. The average supplement is 86 euros per month, but the actual amount varies depending on individual contribution histories. Although the Grundrente has been a great achievement, its eligibility requirements still present significant hurdles for many low-income workers. Only those who have earned at least 30% of the average income in Germany during their contributing years are eligible. Income is calculated monthly and must not reach or exceed 80% of the average income. In 2023, for example, the threshold was around 1080 euros per month. Months where earnings are more than 30% below this level or 80% or more above it do not count towards the required 33 years of contributions.

Consequently, many low-income workers, including visual artists and creatives, are still excluded. Visual artists' incomes fluctuate often and are generally low, with an average monthly income of just 904.16 euros. Thus even those who have contributed to the pension system for decades may struggle to meet the minimum earnings requirement. The COVID-19 pandemic has made the precarious financial situations of many artists even clearer. The cultural sector was hit hard by the crisis, with many artists experiencing significant income loss. This situation underscores the need for more flexible criteria for the Grundrente that reflect the realities of those working in the arts. Proposals have been made to consider annual income averages or to eliminate the minimum income requirement altogether, especially for those who have been members of the KSK.

The need for a more inclusive pension system

To conclude, the ongoing debate about the basic pension or the entitlement to a retirement income that covers basic needs, highlights the need for more comprehensive reforms to the German pension system. We must ensure that the contributions of all workers, particularly those in low-income and unstable occupations such as the arts, are fairly recognized. While institutions like the KSK provide essential support, many visual artists still find themselves vulnerable to old-age poverty due to fluctuating incomes and inflexible requirements such as those set by the Grundrente. The current system, while recognizing the need to supplement the contribution-based social security scheme, often overlooks the unique conditions of freelance workers in the creative sector, where stability is rare. Addressing these issues requires a more inclusive approach—one that not only acknowledges the vital cultural role played by visual artists but also adapts to the diverse and often precarious nature of their work. Ensuring that the social security system reflects these realities is essential to protecting the livelihoods and dignity of visual artists in their later years.

The Artist's Statute (Cultural Reconciliation: The Only Alternative) Social Security and Pensions in Spain

ISIDRO LÓPEZ-APARICIO

The Artistic Workers Union was already meeting with the Ministry of Culture of Spain to demand their statute as far back as 1977. Nevertheless, it is only in the last 10 years that any change has occurred – and the steps taken have been minimal.

The number of artists and cultural workers in Spain is enormous and their contributions of unquestionable quality. However, under current conditions, the market and economic activity that moves the art sector is limited and is therefore insufficient to support the livelihoods of these individuals.

In a recent interview, Luis García Montero, Director of the Cervantes Institute stated that "living off poetry is not possible; you have to find a job that allows you to live off poetry." This is a reality for most professionals in the art world. Failing to take this into account when drawing up policies in defense of culture is a huge mistake and does not reflect the realities of the art world in Spain, instead leading to partial and isolated visions.

But why does the Artist's Statute provide for so few measures – and why don't these measures address the real context and issues?

First, the Artist's Statute is an impossible ideal. The statute is intended not only for the artist but also for the performer and the cultural worker. At the same time, it encompasses all artistic expressions, from dance to literature, from film to the circus. When you consider the breadth and

complexity of situations, contexts, and specific working conditions involved, it becomes clear that legislating or finding common tax solutions for such diversity is impossible.

In Spain specifically, barely 2.7% of visual artists can generate art-related income for long enough to contribute to social security as self-employed individuals to the extent sufficient to grant them access to a retirement pension. Income from art is intermittent and insufficient to live on. In addition, artists' incomes fluctuate throughout their working lives, meaning that current tax systems do not reflect their reality, that is: the fact that they are forced to turn to other types of work to make a living. Artists who pursue their artistic careers with great effort and sacrifice, along with their families and friends who support their activities, whether financially or by taking on other roles, are the true patrons of culture in Spain.

Of all the measures taken to date based on the proposals made in the first Artist's Statute, only one has changed an aspect that actually has a minimal impact on visual artists: the ability to continue receiving royalties from copyright after retirement. In the case of visual artists, however, the income involved is negligible.

Self-employed visual artists struggle to pay the minimum monthly social security contribution of 294 euros/month due to their highly intermittent and fluctuating incomes. This is where the real problem lies for those working in the cultural sector, and if we ignore it, we will not have solved anything. The Artist's Statute in its present form will turn its back on the reality of art in Spain and, despite proposing some positive changes, may even harm the sector by creating a greater gap between those who reach a certain level of income and those who do not.

In addition to all this, another fundamental factor that directly affects artistic careers is systematic longevity. This longevity not only presents an opportunity to enjoy the creativity of individuals who in other times would have passed away at a younger age but is also a chance to benefit from their experience and knowledge. Currently, however, older artists cannot reconcile their pensions with their creative activity as soon as the latter results in any income. The reality in Spain is that once a creator accesses the pension system, they are unable to combine income from their creative activity with retirement.

The most significant achievement we have obtained after all these years is the Royal Decree-Law 1/2023, which improves social protection for artists (popularly known as the Artist's Statute) and will affect professionals in the cultural field. The most relevant changes this law has brought about are as follows:

1 Compatibility of retirement with income derived from creative and artistic work

The regulation introduces compatibility between contributory retirement pensions and the exercising of artistic and creative activities, not only with income derived from intellectual property rights but also from other related activities (e.g., lectures, book presentations, etc.). However, the law does not explicitly specify whether one can sell artistic work produced after retirement. Artwork created prior to retirement may be sold as personal assets.

2 Introduction of a new unemployment benefit with fewer requirements, taking into account the intermittent nature of the sector

The new law includes a specific unemployment benefit for workers who fall under the special employment relationships of artists that engage in performing arts, audiovisual, and music sectors. However, this does not affect visual artists since they rarely have a labor contract for their artistic work.

3 Improved social protection for artists with low incomes integrated into the Special Regime for Self-Employed Workers (RETA)

A reduced monthly contribution base has been established for self-employed individuals with annual incomes of below 3,000 euros, which is set at 526.14 euros per month for 2023 (resulting in a monthly contribution of 161 euros). While this appears to be a positive development, when you

consider that the annual fee amounts to 1,932 euros and that the income must be less than 3,000 euros, it becomes apparent that most of the income would go towards paying the fee, which is absurd.

4 Creation of new commissions or working groups

The new law provides for the establishment of the following:

- A working group dedicated to studying and promoting measures to recognize the intermittency in income and social security for artists and self-employed workers in the cultural sector.
- A commission to promote the assessment and recognition of certain occupational diseases arising from specific activities in the cultural sector.

From the above, it is clear that we are in the midst of a process in which there is hope because after many years of advocacy, we are beginning to see concrete action. However, the reality is that in view of the existing fiscal social security and pension systems in Spain, addressing these issues will be challenging without a major paradigm shift.

After nearly 10 years of working for artists' rights, I have come to the conclusion that for Spain (and for most of Europe), the solution lies in "cultural reconciliation," which allows for the reconciliation of intermittent or stable employment situations, including retirement with artistic activity. This would enable artists to issue invoices regardless of their employment or retirement status, applying a significant reduction on the invoice to contribute to the public expenses: social benefits, health, pensions. It would also allow for the deduction of expenses related to research, production, and dissemination of artistic creation, either in full or to a significant extent.

Key Features of the Pension System for Freelancing and Self-employed Artists in Finland

TEEMU MÄKI

WRITTEN EXTRACT BY VINCENT BRUCKER AND TEEMU MÄKI

The topics of old age provision and pensions do not usually play a major role in artistic debates. While low pensions and economic circumstances that force artists to work into old age are viewed critically, the lack of concrete action to tackle these issues in some cases reflects a failure to acknowledge their great importance. One useful perspective here could be to look at the systems in other European countries and use comparative approaches to exert a positive influence on domestic discourses.

The Finnish pension system has a positive reputation and is regarded as one of the best such systems in Europe. In Finland, pension contributions are automatically deducted from all taxable income by law. This means that in Finland it is (almost) impossible for a retiring person to despair and say: "Oh no, I never set up a pension plan – I didn't want to spend my money on such a thing (or I simply could never afford it) – and now that I'm older I'll have practically no pension at all!"

The national insurance system provides all Finns with a 'guaranteed pension.' In the Finnish system the basic state pension currently amounts to just 900 euros per month (2024). However, this income, usually referred to as the 'guaranteed pension,' is just the base-level pension, on top of which a person's actual pension accumulates throughout their career.

Since pension contributions are deducted from (almost) all taxable income by law, the actual income a person will receive on retirement depends directly on how many years (/months/weeks/days) they have worked – either as an employee or as an entrepreneur – and the extent of the person's income during that time.

Entrepreneurs have their own separate pension system, but it's also mandatory, meaning that if you have a business, you automatically pay pension contributions and when you retire you will have a pension that is equivalent to an employee's pension, with similar income levels.

It's also good to know that in Finland pensioners are entitled to additional benefits if their pension is very low. These benefits enable the pensioner to pay for housing and public transport, for example.

As in other European countries, grants are an important source of income on the Finnish art scene. Indeed, the working grants given directly to artists in Finland are perhaps even more important here than anywhere else. In Finland, the grant recipient receives a certain amount of money each month for one, three, or five years – which means that it closely resembles a normal wage or salary. The main differences are: 1) unlike a normal employee, the grant recipient has complete artistic freedom, i.e. can do whatever the artist wants, 2) the grants are tax-free.

Grant amounts — the monthly sum disbursed to the grant recipient—vary between 2,000 and 3,800 euros per month, but since they are tax-free they are the equivalent of much higher taxable income.

Unlike all other forms of non-taxable income in Finland, the working grants nowadays issued to artists contribute to the person's pension. When this system was initially put in place, some artists and researchers were against it because it meant that their monthly grant payment was slightly lower since a part of it was deducted as pension insurance. Now, however, everybody seems happier about this arrangement because it helps them to be more financially secure by the time they reach retirement. In addition, the mandatory pension plans in Finland always include input from the employer or state: the pension I will get consists not only of my accumulated insurance payments, but also of the contributions made by my employers and the state.

However, things are not all rosy for artists in Finland with regard to their pensions: Many freelance artists suffer within this pension system because they fall between the cracks. This means that some artists receive neither the benefits that normal employees receive nor those offered to registered entrepreneurs.

The following two examples illustrate this very clearly. Firstly, artists who have mainly received work grants for very short terms (1–3 months) during their careers may have accumulated very little pension (on top of the "guaranteed pension") because under Finnish law, only working grants that are issued for 4 months or longer entitle the grant recipient to pension compensation. Sometimes artists are paid for short gigs such as performances, lectures or short workshops in the form of "non-wage compensation," which again does not contribute to their pensions. If a freelancer has only or mainly received these kinds of short-term grants or non-wage compensation during their career, the pension they receive when they retire may be as low as it would have been if they had never worked at all. This can happen fairly easily to a visual artist who does not receive long-term working grants and who also does not sell many artworks – especially if the artist doesn't have another, non-artistic job to finance their pension.

Secondly, artists who achieve significant sales at a certain stage in their careers must also register as entrepreneurs. Consequently, the entrepreneur's insurance payments are then paid into their pension. This makes sense but can prove problematic if the artist's sales then drop later on as the mandatory minimum amount for an entrepreneur's insurance payments can be punishingly high for an artist who isn't selling much of their work. However, the majority of visual artists in Finland do not achieve such high sales volumes that they would be categorized as entrepreneurs against their will.

In practice, then, there are some holes in the safety net that the Finnish pension system is intended to be.

An additional special feature of the Finnish system is what is known as the "Supplementary artist pension," which the state grants to a select few among the population each year. The recipient must be above the age of 60 or have a permanent disability preventing them from working, and must currently be living in Finland or have lived there. This pension is about 1,600 euros per month (as of 2024) and is paid out in addition to any other pensions the person may have accumulated.

Those recipients of the supplementary artist pension whose income from other pensions and other sources (excluding the "guaranteed national pension") is less than 1,600 euros per month will be paid the supplementary pension in full. Recipients whose income from other pensions and other sources is between 1,600 and 3,250 euros per month (2025) will only receive a partial supplementary pension, while pensioners who already get more than 3,250 euros per month cannot apply for the supplementary artist pension.

The supplementary artist pension is a really good addition to freelancing or self-employed artists' pensions in Finland, but it has one flaw: you have to apply for it and only a small minority of applicants get it. In other words: in practice, the supplementary artist pension is just another type of working grant – you have to be older to apply for it, but if you get it, it's for life. Currently the state of Finland awards the pension to 51 artists annually, but the number of applications is many times higher. About 1,000 Finnish artists who work across all art forms are currently receiving the supplementary artist pension.

From a diversity-sensitive viewpoint, it should be noted that an artist doesn't have to be a citizen of Finland to apply for a grant or the supplementary artist pension – it's enough for the artist to live and work in Finland – or have lived and worked there in the past.

Nevertheless, as in many other European countries, it can be really difficult for artists to obtain long-term residence rights in Finland. Many foreign artists come to Finland to study at the University of the Arts Helsinki and some of these wish to stay in Finland after their studies. This can be tough, however, because the Finnish Immigration Service demands that the graduate prove they can support themselves financially in Finland. This means that they must either have a steady job (with a monthly salary of at least 1,331 euros) or a significant amount of money in their bank account. For a freelancing artist, this can be challenging or even impossible.

In order to increase the visibility of diversity-sensitive discourse in the future and expand the opportunities open to artists with a migrant background especially in terms of the pension system, it is important that the economic and other support structures in Finland be developed further.

Based in Helsinki, Globe Art Point can be seen as an exemplary response to the growing demand for advocacy for cultural justice, diversity, and inclusion in the arts and cultural sector in Finland and an example of the improvement of the position of artists with migrant backgrounds. The association functions as an information-sharing hub for artists who don't speak the official languages of Finland (Finnish, Swedish, Sámi) at all or well enough and it also actively lobbies to improve the status of those artists in Finland with immigrant backgrounds.

Teemu Mäki is a visual artist, writer, and director of numerous theatre, opera, and film projects. In his capacity as Chairperson of the Artists' Association of Finland and President of IAA Europe he was part of the 'Social Security and Pensions against the Background of Diversity Aspects in Europe' workshop in October 2023 and contributed valuable input on Finnish pension systems with respect to the economic status of freelance and self-employed artists. This contribution forms the basis of this text.

IV

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Funding and Working Spaces

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Reflections on Artists-in- Residence Programs

INTERVIEW WITH ARTIST NEZAKET EKICI

Who are you and what does your work as an artist look like?

My name is Nezaket Ekici. I was born in Turkey and have been living in Germany since I was three years old. I am an international visual artist specializing in performance. I live and work in Berlin, Stuttgart, and Istanbul.

My work deals with cultural identities and social norms. Cultural tensions are often at the center of what I do. I also explore issues relating to religion, art history, architecture, and much more. I use my body as a central medium to make aesthetic, visual, emotional, and powerful images. I create live performances, video performances, installations, sculptures, films, and photographs.

My performances are often very physically demanding and require a certain level of stamina. I incorporate both humorous and strenuous elements into them. These tensions are important in order to invite the audience to engage more deeply with the subject and reflect on it. For me, art becomes valuable when it creates an emotional connection with the audience and encourages them to question cultural and societal perspectives. My motivation is to get people to think beyond the norms and conventions of their own cultures and to find a deeper way to access art and themselves.

Why did you participate in the "visual artists | diverse conditions" project and why were you interested in the AG Förderungen und Räume (working group – funding and spaces)?

The issue of diverse conditions and diversity has been with me for a long time. I have been a member of the Deutscher Künstlerbund (Association of German Artists) since 2016. The AG Diversity (working group – diversity) was founded within the Deutscher Künstlerbund in 2018, and I have been involved from the very beginning. We have engaged in intensive discussion of topics such as migration, internationality, inclusion, poverty, and more, as well as establishing an exhibition, a symposium, and various workshops on these topics. We also organized an information event for new members of the Deutscher Künstlerbund because it is important to ensure that everyone in the Künstlerbund is informed about what the organization does.

I was appointed by the Deutscher Künstlerbund as an honorary delegate to the IGBK in 2019. Various working groups were then formed around the IGBK's annual theme for 2024. I got involved in the working group on funding and spaces because I wanted to bring my own experiences with funding and spaces to the group. We discussed how certain factors such as age, origin, or place of residence influence an artist's chances of success, as well as how artists as

parents with children take advantage of opportunities to apply for artists-in-residence (AiR) programs. I always find age in particular to be a strange and arbitrary barrier. Many programs set an age limit of 40, which I see as problematic. There should be more flexibility here so that older artists also have access to such funding programs.

It is also important to me that the funding programs and AiR programs become more diverse. These programs should reflect as closely as possible the social structures in which we as artists are active. It is important to create spaces that reflect the diversity of our society and promote artistic exchange.

Can you tell us about some of your experiences during your residencies, abroad but also in Germany?

I have participated in several AiR programs, both in Germany and internationally. In Germany, I've worked at Schloss Wiepersdorf, the Künstlerhäuser Worpswede, the Künstlerdorf Schöppingen, and the Ebenböckhaus in Munich-Pasing. Abroad, I have spent time in places such as the German Academy Villa Massimo in Rome, the Tarabya Cultural Academy in Istanbul, the Schlingensiefel Opera Village Africa in Burkina Faso, the Foundation for Spirituality and the Arts in Charleston SC, USA, and the SESC Sao Paulo, Brazil.

The AiR programs I have experienced personally are all very different and range in length from three weeks to ten months. In general, I think that programs like these are a wonderful opportunity for artists. They allow us to break out of our daily routines, get to know new people and cultures, and build valuable networks with other artists. These experiences are always enriching for me and I can only recommend them.

For me, the difference between AiR programs abroad and in Germany often lies in the language and the cultural adaptation. While in Germany you usually know the language well, it is always a challenge to manage linguistically and culturally abroad. I've always noticed how important language is during my stays, and I try to familiarize myself with the local languages and integrate them into my work whenever possible. This advances my own openness and enriches my artistic work immensely.

One important aspect to bear in mind is to find out exactly what the conditions of the AiR programs are beforehand: Does the program offer an artist's fee and financial support to help with running costs, production costs, accommodation, a studio? These things are not always a given, and sometimes you have to be creative and find solutions on the spot.

What advice would you give to readers?

I would recommend lobbying for AiR programs and funding schemes to remove age restrictions and residency requirements. In the federal state of Berlin, for example, but also in other federal states, many programs are open to applicants whose main place of residence is in a specific area or country. Removing these requirements would make the programs much more appealing by ensuring a more diverse participant base. Many are put off by such requirements, even though they are very good artists and would enrich the AiR programs. Furthermore, the different AiR institutes should cooperate more closely with each other, and exchange and share their experiences. This could create a larger network that would benefit the artists.

Have you ever been on the other side of the process, i.e. in charge of allocating funds or inviting people to apply? What can you tell us about that?

Yes, I have indeed been on the other side, for example as a co-decision-maker on art juries in Germany and abroad. It really is not an easy task, as you have to assess many different perspectives and artistic approaches in a short space of time. However, in doing so, I have learned how important it is to take greater account of the different backgrounds and perspectives of jury members and to make the committees more diverse overall. After all, the only way to make the selection of applicants fairer and more diverse is to make the composition of the jury more diverse. Diversity on the jury allows for a more nuanced view of the projects and ultimately leads to better opportunities for artists from different contexts and with different experiences.

Interview and questions by IGBK office in October 2024



K&K – Bündnis Kunst und Kind (Initiative for Visual Artists with Children): For a More Family-Friendly Art World

GABI BLUM AND ANNA SCHÖLB

Today, more women than men study art and emerge from art academies as well-trained graduates. They embark on promising careers, thanks in part to increased support for women and the introduction of quotas. However, far fewer women manage to make a permanent living from art, let alone make it to the top. One of the reasons for this is that starting a family still often leads to a career break for female artists.

Statistics show that artists are actually more likely to have children than people in other professions: 38% of artists have children, compared to 25% in other professions (cf. Studio Berlin III, IFSE 2018).¹ And yet, of the top ten female artists in the international art rankings, only three are mothers of one child each, while nine of the top ten male artists are fathers of a total of 32 children (cf. Horst and Gantner: 2020).

What is the reason for this considerable imbalance?

¹ 38.5% of the artists surveyed currently care for children or have done so in the past.

On the one hand, the problem is a societal and systemic one: women still take on much more unpaid care work such as childcare, caring for relatives, and housework than men – taking up time that they could otherwise use for paid work. The gender care gap in Germany is currently 44.3% (cf. BMFSFJ: 2024).

On the other hand, female artists face a triple burden when they have children, as very few of them can make a living from art alone. They therefore have to juggle care work and paid work while trying to maintain their artistic practice. Indeed, pregnancy and breastfeeding can also often have a negative impact that restricts women's artistic work and thus leads to a reduction in income. Financing a studio often becomes a burden and it is not unusual for female artists with children to work from the kitchen table from the first child onwards. As a result, the dimensions of their work become smaller and their work less visible.

This is accompanied by absenteeism due to illness (of the children) and bottlenecks in the (still poorly developed) childcare infrastructure, which leads to a sharp increase in mental load and loss of time in the studio, resulting in a long-term reduction in productivity. This in turn makes women artists with children less competitive; they are no longer able to keep up with their colleagues in application procedures, there are gaps in their CVs, and their artistic oeuvres are less dense. However, this does not mean that the quality of their work is inferior to that of their colleagues. What is lacking are the right support programs that would create the necessary framework to enable female artists to re-enter the art world.

Unfortunately, the art world in general still has some catching up to do when it comes to family-friendliness:

Important networking events are generally limited to evenings, which makes them difficult to attend for those with children without a babysitter; residencies are too long and incompatible with having school-age children – younger children are often not welcome; grants still too often have age limits and periods of parental leave are not recognized; gallery owners tend to part company with female artists when they have children, and so on. There is a real taboo on motherhood, and only women who combine art and children as invisibly as possible and continue to perform as well as childless artists are accepted.

The situation is even worse for single parents: fixed costs increase rapidly, as does the burden of responsibility.

Many female artists give up their artistic work sooner or later because of this heavy burden. This also means that their work disappears from the art market and their perspectives are no longer represented in public discourse. As a result, our art world is becoming less diverse and important issues and views are not being discussed. If more works by female artists with children were visible, what issues and theories would they address? What messages, ideas, and perspectives would reach the art world and transform it?

Based on these questions, we, Gabi Blum and Anna Schölß, founded [K&K – Bündnis Kunst und Kind](#) in Munich in 2018. With a constantly growing network, we operate at the intersection of artistic collective and political initiative and are committed to improving working conditions for artists with children and other care responsibilities by organizing exhibitions and political campaigns. Parallel to K&K, similar alliances and initiatives have been founded all across Germany, such as [Mehr Mütter für die Kunst](#) (Hamburg), [kunst+kind berlin](#), [fairshare! Sichtbarkeit für Künstlerinnen](#) (Berlin), [Mothers', Warriors and Poets](#) (Stuttgart), and, most recently, the [Caring Culture Lab](#) established by Sascia Bailer.

Through joint national campaigns, we are demanding, among other things, the introduction of a re-entry grant for female artists with care responsibilities, funding programs that operate independently of location, gender-equitable acquisition and exhibition policies, increased representation of works by female artists² with care responsibilities, and much more. The outdated patriarchal structures of the art world, which is supposed to be the cradle of visionaries and thinkers, must finally be dismantled.

As the author Jo Lücke aptly puts it in her book *Für Sorge*: "Part of the re-evaluation of care is the political decision to no longer treat care work as a private matter, but as a collective task whose implementation is legally and financially secured accordingly." (Lücke: 2024)

² This text is also intended to include the assumption of care responsibilities for relatives in need of care. In this text, we deliberately refer to mothers working in the arts. Of course, the issues it addresses also apply to artistic fathers, who often experience similar disadvantages when they take on greater care responsibilities in the family, but such cases are unfortunately still severely underrepresented. That is why we are consciously focusing on improving the working conditions of female artists as long as the figures remain so disparate.

Residency Programs with a Focus on Inclusive Structures or Challenges in the Composition of Juries

JAN STRADTMANN

The "Passage" project sets up and implements temporary residencies in the Dübener Heide (Saxony and Saxony-Anhalt) for artists from other regions or countries who work in the fields of photography or film. The project was initiated and continues to be supported by the Polygona Kunstverein e.V. art association in Bad Dübén in cooperation with the Kultur- und Kunstverein Kemberg e.V. culture and art association. ["Passage"](#) aims to look at the Dübener Heide region through artistic approaches using photography and film. The goal is to highlight current trends and future focal points in a region in transition. Between 2021 and 2024, the associations were able to award two four-week residencies each year.

Selection process and form of support

Artists are selected through an open call for applications. There is no age limit. Applications must be submitted by e-mail and in English. The application process is free of charge. A jury of five to six members from the art world selects the participating artists from the submissions.

Since 2022, the two artists-in-residence for the current year have also served on the jury for the following year.

The selected artists are provided with housing and a workspace for the duration of their residency. In addition, they receive a living stipend and are reimbursed for travel to and from the residency as well as local transportation costs. The associations finance this support with funds from local and EU funding programs.¹

Improving equal opportunities for female artists with children

Since 2022, one of the two available residencies each year has been reserved for a female artist with children with the aim of improving equal opportunities for female artists. In many areas, female artists with children are denied access to the art world or find it difficult to enter. Reconciling work and family life is particularly challenging for women, who bear the main burden of childcare in many cases. In addition, the decision to have a child often puts a female artist's career on hold. For artists with children, the residency also covers the children's travel and childcare costs.

Experiences and possible demands

What experiences can we share and how can the residency program continue to improve the conditions for artistic work from a diversity perspective? The following can be shared and underpinned with demands:

Hosting a residency in a rural area has some advantages. For example, as rental costs are lower there than in an urban location, artists-in-residence programs have a wider range of options to choose from when it comes to the housing and workspace the organizers rent for the artists. The rural seclusion also offers a break from everyday (artistic) life, which we see as an opportunity to stimulate creative processes. In addition, challenges faced by the organizing associations can be resolved quickly in rural areas, as many people working within the same fields of activity know each other. For example, children of participating artists can often be accommodated in local daycare centers and schools without much bureaucracy. While this form of accommodation is not always possible under general circumstances and depends on the age of the child, we believe that comprehensive childcare is necessary during the residency. The financial resources should be fully available for this care.

At the same time, organizing residencies in rural areas means more travel, as the infrastructure in these areas is often poor. Nevertheless, we encourage artists to use public transportation where possible. Increased funding to cover both travel to and from the residency and local travel would be desirable. This would allow artists from more distant regions to participate in the residency as well. It is important that this can be resolved without any excessive red tape. We propose fixed travel costs based on public transportation rates and depending on the country of origin.

Reservations regarding the compatibility of parenthood and artistic work can be communicated openly and the public can be involved through artist talks or artistic projects: Support for artists with children should be the norm, not the exception. Comprehensive public relations work to

¹ The program was supported by the LEADER program in the Dübener Heide (Saxony-Anhalt, Saxony) and received funding from the European Social Fund fund (ESF, 2021 to 2022) and the Rural Development Program (Regional) - Saxony-Anhalt for rural areas 2014-2020 (2023 to 2024).

communicate this is essential. Organizing associations or institutions should plan for the necessary human and financial resources and receive appropriate support. Artists should be able to bring not only their children, but also their partners with them. The necessary framework conditions, such as appropriate accommodation, should be a given.

The composition of the jury plays a crucial role in the selection of artists. Indeed, it is the first step in increasing the diversity of an artist-in-residence program. If the jury is diverse, this will be reflected in the artists participating in the residency program. In our case, we feel that it is important to invite artists who are also mothers to join the jury. Depending on the focus and content of the residency program, we can also set different priorities and increase diversity in other ways.

The circulation of the call for applications on various internet and social media portals – which draw attention to calls for applications in the arts and culture context – should be extended to other communication channels in order to open up the circle of potential applicants. For example, this could be done by utilizing platforms outside of Europe and thereby communicating the call for applications to a wider, more international audience.

Residency programs such as "Passage" should become part of grants to support those returning to work or study that are generally available to all female artists with children. These grants should enable female artists with children to return to artistic production or to continue their studies or doctoral work regardless of their age. An artist-in-residency stay should be recognized as such a re-entry to professional life and the associations hosting such residencies should be supported accordingly.

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**European
Cooperation and
Scientific
Perspective**

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Diverse Conditions

SARA EDSTRÖM

Diverse conditions. Yes, there is no doubt that we live in diverse conditions as human beings on this planet. But what does it mean in this context? As we gathered with our invited guests, all either artists or other professionals working in the field of art from all over Europe, in Berlin and in Stockholm for the "visual artists | diverse conditions" conference in May 2024, what was the question we were trying to solve?

When I asked one of the panelists beforehand if they wanted to join the seminar, we discussed the feeling of exhaustion. Would yet another seminar take us even one little step closer to a more just (art) world? After all, we see inequality, we see discrimination, we see norms and hindrance and economic injustices that impact how, where and when art can be made and displayed – and by whom. Working under these circumstances on an everyday basis can be quite overwhelming. But after agreeing on the fact that the task we faced was a daunting one, we also quickly agreed that these are the rules of the game: you have to keep addressing it, you have to keep talking about it. Changing the world is a frustratingly slow process, but I also feel empowered by the fact that we are all important cogs in the democratic machinery.

The Artists' Association of Sweden was happy to collaborate with IGBK, not only in organizing the conference on May 24th, but also by taking part in the ongoing two-year project that addresses these topics. We have gained a lot of knowledge and input from all the participants, which we are incorporating into our everyday work.

The UN report titled [*The Right to Freedom of Artistic Expression and Creativity*](#) (2013) states that "artistic creativity is necessary for the development of vibrant cultures and the functioning of democratic societies." However, the report also clearly states that there is a huge inequality between the artists and those who commission their work, and that this inequality constitutes a threat to freedom of speech. The Artists' Association of Sweden always stresses the fact that fair payment for artists and a safe, secure working life which includes sick leave and pensions are essential for a truly diverse art scene. However, it is not just money that determines who can choose to pursue a career as an artist. It is, of course, also about the cemented, intricate hierarchies of power in which the white, male, able-bodied, academic, rich, traditional, and rigid Western culture is enmeshed.

Those who have been accepted into the art scene, those who have never even considered the possibility that they wouldn't be welcome there, often view addressing the inequalities as unnecessary. "Go ahead, just step in! Anyone can buy some cheap oil paint and canvases and become an artist! And if you can't handle the cutthroat competition and the taste police who serve as gatekeepers at every corner, well maybe it's just because you're not good enough. Get a haircut, get a real job, and stop complaining!"

But of course the answer is not as easy as access to cheap oil paint. If one is convinced that both practicing and participating in art and cultural expression are basic human rights (as stated in The

Universal Declaration of Human Rights), the fact that not everybody has access to this choice is a true failing on the part of society.

Guaranteeing reliable access for anyone to an artistic profession not only requires safe working conditions with good economic terms, but also depends on a collegial, social, and welcoming atmosphere where people can grow and be challenged. For so long, the art world has fostered a belief that success means elbowing your way ahead to claim your place on the scene as the solitary genius. The art market thrives on creating the kind of art stars that bring buyers both cultural capital and old-fashioned monetary capital. And we all know we live in a postcolonial, patriarchal world where the capital is concentrated among a few white men. Therefore it is absolutely crucial that there is an art world that exists outside the commercial one. We need the publicly funded institutions and grant givers to balance things and give voice and space to a much more diverse population. This is important not only for equality reasons, but also to ensure that art stays relevant for all citizens (and all taxpayers).

Sometimes when I am doing advocacy work and campaigning for better conditions for artists, I tend to believe that politicians and policymakers are simply not well enough informed. I focus on bringing them the facts and arguments as to why fair payment and all these other things are so important. As if the only reason artists still struggle is a lack of knowledge on their part. But every now and then, I am reminded of how strong the nationalistic, racist, bigoted opinions are in all corners of society. We cannot keep turning a blind eye to the fact that a lot of people are genuinely opposed to any kind of diversity, and see free art and free artists as a threat to their worldview. This is another reason why it is absolutely essential to keep addressing these topics of diversity and fair working conditions within the art field. All our voices are needed.

Racist Structures in Contemporary Art Institutions

MACARENA DUSANT

As a practitioner within the Swedish institutional art field since 2003, when I began my art history studies at university, my "social mobility ladder" has run parallel to a journey of whiteness. The more time I spent in the field, the whiter my surroundings became – my classmates became whiter, my colleagues became whiter, the way I dressed became whiter, I found myself in a white neighborhood as I found myself with a white partner. Very soon I realized that the art scene is a field of white normative structure upheld by hierarchies, elitism, contempt of the working class, etc., where contemporary art and its institutions are addressed primarily to a very small group of people who share the same background and experiences.

Departing from this insight, I felt the need to ask the question: how can I be part of the art scene and at the same time maintain some kind of dignity? This question has been decisive with regard to my attempts to position myself and my work within the field of contemporary art for the past 15 years.

When I started working, there was no expertise in post-colonial theory or decolonial work at art institutions. The only discussion around diversity was dominated mainly by whites for whites in homogenous Swedish institutions. A discussion about how "they" would allow "us" in.¹

Meanwhile as I was trying to understand my own position in the art field, something was happening within the public discussions in society. The issue of racism and racist structures began to be addressed among a younger generation from a non-white, decentralized and queer perspective via self-organized online platforms, social media, and youth initiatives, aided by a language that came from poets, activists, and scholars as well as cultural workers. And the voices speaking up were unapologetic.

The [website Kultwatch](#),² which started in 2014, was an example of such a platform. It offered a place where the homogeneity and exclusion present in Swedish culture could be examined and

¹ The use of the word 'inclusion' has shifted from targeting attitudes to non-white people specifically to denoting the more general incorporation of other perspectives and other experiences, meaning an audience or participants outside of the norm.

² Kultwatch.se was intended to create movement and ripples within contemporary cultural debate, broaden the cultural field and give room to voices that had hitherto been excluded from the Swedish art sphere. Kultwatch.se served as a platform where BIPOC and queer folk could write and publish their works, critique, discussions etc. on their own terms.

highlighted voices that would otherwise not have a place within mainstream media. I became part of Kultwatch in 2017 when I joined a new editorial group.³ Here, I found a place where questions about invisibility and racism within culture were an obvious starting point. For me it became both a community and a space where I could dream about a cultural field that was open to many.

Being a critical public voice within the contemporary art field can have negative consequences, but it has also brought the opportunity to work for change by raising the visibility of exclusion mechanisms. There is a pre-established rule for how criticism should be addressed, and that is formulated by the white academic middle class. White people often want to define the discussion about racism themselves, preferably through the concept of diversity and in certain manners, and rarely starting from white people's spheres, behaviors or privileges.

In my last study, [*Structural Patterns and the Monster of Whiteness*](#) (2022),⁴ I investigated what it is like to be racialized as a non-white employee within contemporary art organizations and institutions. The piece is a smaller study that was based on the question: Do employed art workers, freelance curators, and artists who are racialized as non-white face racism and racist structures? The study consisted of two parts: 10 in-depth interviews⁵ with employed art workers and a survey of freelance curators and artists.⁶ The study showed that:

1. Exposure to racism and racist structures occurs very frequently.
2. Art workers have to develop and create strategies to respond to racism and racist structures.
3. Racist structures affect the wellbeing and health of employed art workers in a radical way.

The in-depth interviews gave an indication of what things are like in the workplaces. Many of the respondents lack active engagement with respect to internal diversity work, and several also answered that their workplaces were not at all interested in the question of racist structures or whiteness norms. They also highlighted the lack of competence and knowledge about the subject within the institutions.

Several respondents told me that they were exposed to strong reactions and in some cases even retaliation when expressing opinions regarding workplace diversity issues. Two of them had been in contact with unions concerning cases of structural racism but could not get help due to a lack of competence on the part of the unions. They also stated that their wellbeing was affected negatively in the workplace due to racist structures. Some of the respondents had been on sick leave and one person was burnt out because the combination of high workloads and racist structures created an unsustainable situation.

Both my own experience and the aforementioned study show that working within the contemporary art field with the experience of being racialized as non-white is, to say the least, challenging. There is a lack of understanding of how structural racism and whiteness norms affect

³ I was a member until 2021. Kultwatch.se is currently not active.

⁴ A project by the [People's Movements for Art Promotion \(Folkrörelsernas Konstfrämjande\)](#) organization, whose mission is "art for everyone." The project was initiated by Swedish curator Ulrika Flink and I was assigned as a producer and to develop the study. The material collected resulted in three short animations by Amanda Casallenas, aimed at addressing the issue to a white audience while at the same time resonating with those affected by racist structures within the art scene. The purpose of the study is to function as a starting point for a broader survey of the working conditions of art and cultural workers who are racialized as non-white.

⁵ When conducting the in-depth interviews, anonymity was ensured for all respondents, as the interviewees were in higher-level producer positions as well as artistic roles. This itself is an indication of the vulnerability of these workers within their fields.

⁶ Due to lack of space, I will only discuss the findings from the interviews in this text and will thus not present the results of the surveys. The total number of respondents to the survey is 51.

people who are racialized as non-white in their artistic professional lives. This dearth of knowledge from white colleagues is often accompanied by an arrogance that is excused through productions in what is understood as post-colonial exhibitions here and there, which do not change the exclusionary white structure of an organization. Just because a white (hetero) woman quotes Audre Lorde in her exhibition program doesn't mean she's working towards other tools are being used to rebuild the house.

How Do We Talk to Each Other?

INTERVIEW WITH ARTIST SOFIA DE LA FUENTE

Who are you and how do you work as an artist?

My name is Sofia de la Fuente, I am an artist educated in fashion design (ORT Institute Argentina) and cultural leadership (Linnaeus University, Sweden). I was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina in 1977. In 2009, life (and love) led me unexpectedly to leave Buenos Aires to live in the countryside in southern Sweden, just outside a small town named Sölvesborg. Today, I'm an artist producing on my own terms, maybe approaching activism. I also work as Art Director at Kulturcentrum Ronneby Konsthall in southern Sweden.

I introduce myself as someone who works within diverse roles, wearing "many hats" as we say in Sweden.

As an artist, I work primarily with participatory art projects exploring civic awareness. My mediums are textiles, the written word, and performative action. Paradoxically, I am drawn to humanity just as much as I fear it. I long for community although I am at home working in solitude. There is a tension in my practice between loneliness and community – a contradiction in which I enthusiastically inhabit.

As a committed artist, I am an active member of the board of the Artists' Association of Sweden and of the executive committee of the International Association of Art (IAA/AIAP). I am also the board's coordinator for the European region.

Why were you part of the "visual artists | diverse conditions" conference and what happened there?

I attended the "visual artists | diverse conditions" conference to participate in the conversation; to listen and to be heard. In listening, I wanted to understand realities other than my own, to acknowledge the diversity of the members we represent. My second objective was to be heard, to enrich the room with the complexities of my own identity, and to share my experiences within the art world as a woman, as a migrant, as a worker...

My intention is to incorporate wider perspectives into the work of our various organizations – on a national level within the Artists' Association of Sweden, on a European level within the IGBK, and as part of the global representation for which the IAA/AIAP stands for.

When IGBK invited the Artists' Association of Sweden to participate in the "visual artists | diverse conditions" project, our interests in diversity were provided with a forum in which these ideas could be manifest within our organization's work. These perspectives, although challenging, must be recurrent in all representative work.

Tell us about the conference setting...

The conference was a hybrid event, taking place simultaneously in Stockholm and in Berlin. Each city hosted in-person meetings while everyone was connected digitally to each other. Experts, artists, politicians and cultural workers within the art field came together, allowing participants in both cities to enrich the conversation. It was a safe environment: a round table in Berlin, a room in Stockholm and a public community on the internet. All these spaces were filled with people who were genuinely invested in openness and diversity – and yet, it didn't feel like it was enough.

Dialog occurs when one listens and then talks. The participants in both rooms were unarguably prepared to listen; there was a clear sense of attention to others during the conference. But there was also silence. What did not happen in these rooms?

From the participant's perspective, I realize that putting oneself in a position of learning does not automatically imply sharing. Still, I wish many more next to me had made their voices heard. Trying to open the room to plurality and to artists in diverse conditions may seem like an extremely ambitious task. As I struggle to acknowledge my own complexities, I see others facing the same challenges. Taking the floor requires conviction that is driven by the hope of being heard.

I want to raise the sense of democratic duty to listen, but also to share. Participating in a conversation requires a willingness to exchange ideas. The work undertaken during the "visual artists | diverse conditions" conference was ambitious and must therefore continue. Because at the end of the day, the question remains: *How do we talk to each other?*

Hope is what enables dialog.

Interview and questions by IGBK office in October 2024

Not Another Single Story

SHERI AVRAHAM

The following comment reflects aspects of my identity and experiences shared by many others, voices that seem to be cast into the shadows. I believe this contribution speaks to the multiplicity and nuance the conference aimed to foster. But before I would like to emphasize one point regarding the work I was invited to share.

Having long been involved in IG Bildende Kunst and, more specifically, with the working group Pay the Artist Now (PTAN), I was delighted to join the 2024 IGBK conference "visual artists | diverse conditions" that highlighted the urgent need to address diversity, and inclusive representation in the arts. I see our work within PTAN as an active advocate for fair pay and the optimization of the working conditions of visual artists. It is about nothing less than the queer-feminist, postcolonial and intersectional restructuring of the field and thus for more equal opportunities, especially for artists from underrepresented backgrounds.

By prioritizing payment regulations and challenging systemic barriers, we seek to ensure that diverse voices have sustainable careers and are valued within the cultural sector. I was invited to share my perspective bringing insights from PTAN's efforts to improve conditions and visibility for marginalized artists in Austria. However, given the recent events in the Middle East and the global responses to the Hamas-Israel war, I would like to add a personal view on that.

I'm writing this out of a heavy cloud of sadness and helplessness wrapped around me. A kind in which I have gotten used to for the last year. More than 365 days since Hamas showcased a brutal penetration of the sovereignty of the state of Israel. More than 365 days since Antisemitism once again proved itself as the strongest force uniting people who would not tolerate each other otherwise.

As a pro-Palestinian, pro-Israel, Arab-Jew, queer, working-poor migrant living and working in the elitist art world of Vienna, I call here to challenge the whitewashing imposed on Jewish people to legitimize the sudden surge of antisemitism. Despite, and perhaps because of, the polarizing language, I insist on joining a complex conversation that holds multiple narratives and conflicting realities. I refuse to remain silent while my colleagues in Vienna—artists who teach and write PhDs in critical theory—normalize the call of "death to Israel" not only as a "legitimate threat but as a moral imperative..." (Instagram, 28.09.2024). These statements, along with other Instagram history of the Middle East experts calls of violence, awaken in me a deeply inherited existential threat, one that has been reaffirmed repeatedly over a thousand years.

My call here is not to justify any violence nor all of the actions of the Israeli government in response to these attacks. It is rather out of necessity, out of a refusal to be silenced by populist over-identification.

What is required in Israel and Palestine, as in the world at large, is a rejection of the worship of death and a commitment to nurturing life through universal human values. These values stand against the suffering inflicted by radical ideologies, the rise of extreme right-wing influences, and alliances that divide rather than unite. Too often, these forces abuse religion, unafraid to wield brutal violence to achieve their goals. As you read these words, a person is being raped, terrorized and tortured.

True progress hinges on the self-determination of both peoples, rooted in mutual respect and fairness, without interference from external agendas that amplify division. And when leftists who live in the comfortable west wish to eradicate the concept of national state ideology, I encourage them to start that kind of critical movement right where it began.

Sheri Avraham is an artist, curator and theatre maker. She is a board member of the Interessengemeinschaft (IG) Bildende Kunst in Austria and was part of the workshop "Visual Artists Associations and Structures" in November 2023. For the conference in May 2024, Sheri Avraham was invited to provide further input. The text is based on her conference contribution and was completed in November 2024.

Beyond the Buzzwords: Why Germany's Cultural Institutions Need More than a Diversity Poster

DR. MUTLU ERGÜN-HAMAZ

The discourse surrounding diversity within cultural institutions has intensified in recent years. This heightened focus is rooted in a recognition that these spaces often reflect broader societal inequalities, particularly relating to race, gender, and socio-economic status. Despite the growing acknowledgment of these issues, tangible change within institutions remains slow and, in many cases, superficial. To better understand this dynamic, we can draw from the recent findings of various studies, such as those conducted by [Citizens For Europe](#) and the ["Vielfalt im Film"](#) (Diversity in Movies) initiative.

The landscape of cultural institutions in Germany

A recent study conducted by Citizens For Europe revealed significant disparities in representation within Berlin's cultural landscape. Among the staff surveyed (a total of 243 people) from institutions such as the Staatsballett, the Berlinische Galerie, and the Stiftung Berliner Mauer, approximately 43% reported experiencing discrimination, particularly based on gender, age, and sexual identity (Vielfalt entscheidet – Diversity in Leadership, 2019). These reported experiences reflect not just individual grievances but systemic issues that hinder the participation of marginalized groups. The overwhelming presence of *whiteness* within leadership positions further exacerbates these problems, highlighting a lack of inclusivity in decision-making processes that could foster genuine change.

It is crucial to examine the implications of these findings in the context of Critical Race Theory (CRT), which posits that racism is not merely the product of individual acts of prejudice but a structural and institutional phenomenon. In the realm of cultural institutions, this perspective challenges us to interrogate how policies and practices perpetuate inequalities, particularly against BIPOCs and other marginalized communities. The findings suggest that while institutions may be implementing diversity initiatives, these efforts often fall short of addressing the underlying power dynamics that sustain systemic racism.

Experiences of discrimination

The study highlights a critical issue, namely that the prevalence of discrimination within cultural institutions affects not only the emotional well-being of employees but also the broader cultural output of these organizations. A significant portion of respondents reported feeling alienated in their work environments, which can stifle creativity and innovation. This alienation is compounded by a lack of support for professional development opportunities, especially for women* and individuals from marginalized backgrounds.

Moreover, many respondents indicated that they do not report discrimination for fear of reprisal or further marginalization. This silence perpetuates a culture of impunity, wherein discriminatory behaviors continue unchecked. Such an environment not only dissuades individuals from advocating for their rights but also reinforces a cycle of exclusion that permeates the cultural landscape. This echoes the principles of CRT, which emphasizes the importance of listening to marginalized voices to understand the complex realities of racism.

The need for structural change

The findings of the "Vielfalt im Film" study reveal that discrimination in the film industry is equally pervasive. Over half of the respondents surveyed as part of this project (from a total of approximately 6,000 participants) reported experiencing discrimination within their work settings, predominantly based on gender, age, and race (Vielfalt im Film, 2021). This data indicates that the film industry, much like cultural institutions, is grappling with deeply-rooted inequities that undermine the contributions of diverse voices.

To address these issues effectively, cultural institutions must make significant structural changes. This includes diversifying leadership roles, implementing robust anti-discrimination policies, and fostering environments where marginalized voices are not just heard but prioritized. Creating an inclusive culture requires more than just token representation; it demands a commitment to rethinking the ways in which cultural narratives are constructed and disseminated.

Institutions must also engage in a critical examination of their funding practices. Many cultural organizations rely on a model that disproportionately favors established, often *white*-led institutions, while neglecting smaller, community-focused organizations. This inequitable distribution of resources perpetuates a cycle of exclusion and reinforces the dominance of a narrow set of narratives within the cultural sphere.

Moving beyond tokenism

As the conversation around diversity evolves, it is essential to move beyond tokenistic approaches that often prioritize superficial representation over substantive change. The risk of merely addressing diversity in a performative manner is evident in many cultural institutions, where initiatives often fail to engage with the complexities of race, class, and other intersecting identities.

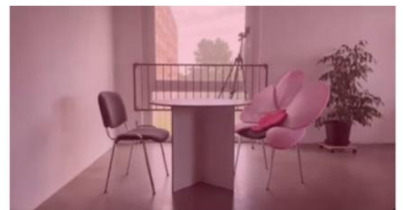
Real change requires a shift in mindset that acknowledges the historical and ongoing impact of colonialism and systemic racism. This entails a commitment to decolonizing cultural spaces and practices, which includes re-evaluating who gets to tell stories and whose stories are valued. In this context, it is vital to recognize that critical diversity initiatives should not be seen as an end in

themselves but rather as part of a broader struggle for equity and justice within cultural institutions.

Conclusion: a call to action

In conclusion, the findings of various studies underscore the pressing need for cultural institutions to reflect critically on their practices and structures. By embracing a framework that is grounded in Critical Race Theory, these organizations can better understand the systemic barriers that persist and take meaningful action to create inclusive environments. This involves not only re-evaluating hiring practices and leadership structures but also actively engaging with the communities they serve.

As we move forward, it is imperative that cultural institutions commit to dismantling the structures of oppression that inhibit diversity and inclusion. This call to action is not just about improving statistics or meeting quotas; it is about fundamentally transforming the cultural landscape to reflect the rich tapestry of human experience. By doing so, we can begin to forge a cultural sector that is truly representative, equitable, and just.



AUTHORS

Sheri Avraham is an artist, curator and theater maker. Her work reflects on contemporary forms of art production and offers new dimensions of interaction within artistic, social and political institutions. Through her transdisciplinary work, she aims to create new models of expression, production, and shared structures of life.

She is Co-Founder of D/Arts, Project Office for Diversity and Urban Dialogue and artistic director of the artistic research project ze_R0!Ayn. Avraham is a board member of the Interessengemeinschaft Bildende Kunst in Austria and works together with the Tiroler Künstler*innenschaft on the implementation of Fair Pay for artists.

Gabi Blum (*1979 in Michelstadt, Germany) lives and works in Munich. She combines large-scale walk-in installations with performance, painting, and video. Her works, mostly site-specific, place people in stereotypical spaces that resemble stage sets and are considered to be process-based experimental arrangements of material, actor, and time-based media. Making of, construction, and reconstruction are always part of her work. With reference to our visual memory as shaped by pop culture and the question of the role of the visitor, she shifts and varies ritualized action sequences and contexts until new configurations emerge from the chaos or repetition. Together with the artist Anna Schölß, she founded K&K – Bündnis Kind und Kunst in Munich, an initiative campaigning for the interests of visual artists with children.

Vincent Brucker is a political scientist specializing in cultural policy. Following various experiences abroad and internships, such as at the Goethe-Institut in Brussels and the German Bundestag, he completed a Master's degree in "Cultural Mediation, Cultural Policy and Transformation in the Context of the Arts" in Hildesheim and Bordeaux. He currently works as a project assistant at the IGBK, where he is involved in the realization of the project series "visual artists | diverse conditions" and this publication. At the same time, he works as an assistant to the managing director of the German Composers' Association (DKV).

Macarena Dusant is an independent art historian, editor and writer. Her work focuses mainly on power structures, the notion of the public realm and mechanisms of exclusion within western contemporary art. She has published books and texts about migrated artists, the diaspora experience and conditions as part of the racialization processes in the Swedish art field as well as texts on public art and the public sphere. Dusant has been involved in different independent cultural and artistic organizations, working mainly with art collectives. As part of the editorial group Kultwatch.se, an online platform for the arts and intersectional cultural analysis founded in 2014,

Dusant has been an important public voice challenging whiteness and hierarchies in the Swedish art field. Her writing practice explores a process where she experiments with the hybridization of academic writing, essay, lyric, collective being and dreams, mirroring her diasporic background as part of the global majority. Currently she is the curator and process leader for the project Samlande tankar/Collecting Thoughts, a three-year art project where Grafikens Hus - a museum for contemporary printmaking, together with scholars, curators and artists investigates and formulate a vision and methods to build a collection from a post-colonial and intersectional perspective.

Christine Düwel (* 1962) is a visual artist and curator based in Berlin, Germany. She got her M.A. of Fine Arts in sculpture and graphics at the University of Applied Arts, Vienna and received a M.A. in Philosophy and Art History at the Humboldt University, Berlin. Her work has been shown internationally in solo and group exhibitions. Her visual investigations focus on the question of how different semiotic systems relate to each other, are perceived and generate meaning.

Her work is represented in both private and public collections (i.a. Albertina, Vienna and Schering Stiftung, Berlin). She has received grants and is giving public talks on art. She has curated several exhibition projects (e.g. The Other Capital – Brandenburgischer Landtag 2018, F. – Jahrhundertwanderungen 2019, Stiftung Schloss Neuhardenberg).

2012 - 2018 she was member of the board of GEDOK Brandenburg, in 2018 she became member of the federal board of GEDOK Bundesverband. Since 2020 she is one of the three chairpersons on the board of IGBK. She is co-leader of the project "visual artists | diverse conditions".

Nezaket Ekici (*1970 in Kırşehir, Turkey) is a visual artist working internationally with a focus on performance art. She lives and works in Berlin, Stuttgart and Istanbul. At the age of three, she emigrates with her family to Germany. She studied sculpture at the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich and earned a master's degree in art education at the Ludwig-Maximilians University in Munich. Ekici was a master student of Marina Abramović in the field of performance at the Braunschweig University of Art.

Ekici has presented over 300 different performances and installations in more than 70 countries on four continents, in museums, galleries and biennials. In 2013/2014, she was a fellow at the Tarabya Cultural Academy in Istanbul and in 2020, she received the Cultural Exchange Fellowship of the State of Berlin (Visual Arts: ISCP New York). In 2021/22 she took part in the Artists-in-Residence Program at the Afrika Schlingensiefel Opera Village in Burkina Faso and in 2024 in the FSA (Foundation for Spirituality and the Arts) Artists-in-Residence Program in Charleston SC.

2016/17, Ekici received the Rome Prize of the German Academy Rome Villa Massimo and in 2018 the Paula Modersohn-Becker Art Prize.

Ekici has been a member of the DKB (Deutscher Künstlerbund) since 2016 and of the Berufsverband Bildender Künstler*innen Berlin (bbk berlin) since 2023. She works as a volunteer on several committees and is a delegate of the Deutscher Künstlerbund in the IGBK.

Sara Edström is a Swedish artist and performer. She lives and works in Luleå, Stockholm and Berlin. In Luleå in the north of Sweden, she has been running the feminist self-organized art space Galleri Syster since 2006. The collective work of the project space of Syster is a vital part of her artistic practice. After working with sculpture as her main expression she started making music five years ago, which became her Midlife Crisis Pop Songs. Nowadays her artistic expressions are solely text, music and performance.

Sara Edström is the president of the Artists' Association of Sweden as well as the vice president of International Association of Art Europe.

Dr. Mutlu Ergün-Hamaz has been a research fellow at the German Institute for Human Rights since 2023. His work and research focus on human rights education and racial discrimination. Currently, he is researching reactions to addressing racism in adult education.

Dr. Mutlu Ergün-Hamaz is an education and literature scholar and holds a PhD from the Sociology Department at the London School of Economics & Political Science (LSE). He previously worked at the Berlin Universität der Künste (UdK) as a diversity and anti-discrimination officer.

Since 2001 he has been working at Phoenix e.V. with a focus on the critique of racism, critical whiteness and empowerment in political education. As a freelance author, he writes both non-fiction and literary texts. In 2010, his book *Kara Günlük - Die geheimen Tagebücher des Sesperado* (Kara Günlük - The Secret Diaries of Sesperado) was published, which satirically deals with the topic of everyday racism in Germany.

Sofia de la Fuente is an artist, working with participatory art projects exploring civic awareness in public space. Working in culture is inevitable for her. "I hold the conviction in my heart that our similarities are greater than our differences. Trained in textile in Buenos Aires (Argentina) and as cultural leader educated in Linnaeus University (Sweden); art director of Kulturcentrum Ronneby konsthall (Sweden)."

Sofia de la Fuente is Board member in the Artists' Association of Sweden and in the International Association of Art (IAA/AIAP).

Cordula Kehr is a literary scholar. She has worked for the press and PR team at Schauspiel Frankfurt and the Brandenburg Association of Music and Art Schools as well as editorially for Theater der Zeit and Unionsverlag. At Diversity Arts Culture she was responsible for the conception and implementation of the barrier-free website, among other things. She is part of the control group of FAIRSTAGE and advises cultural institutions on diversity development.

Noel Kelly is Director of Visual Artists Ireland. He leads their strategic and advocacy programs. Noel is a Life Fellow of the Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufacture and Commerce, member of the International Programming Panel for Cukrarna, Ljubljana, a former President and current member of AICA Ireland, former governing council member of the Royal Dublin Society, a former board member of IVARO (The Irish Visual Artists Rights Organisation) and of Culture Action Europe. He is a published writer and has been translated into multiple languages.

Key highlights since joining VAI include the creation of Get Together the national day for Visual Artists; The Social, Economic, and Fiscal Status of the Visual Artist in Ireland Survey (Ireland and Northern Ireland); The Payment Guidelines for Visual Artists (Ireland and Northern Ireland); Social Protection for Visual Artists; Visual Artists Cafe Networking & Information Events, Speed Curating; and commissioning the Best Practice Guidelines for Internships. His current areas of research are in The Development of Sustainable Culturally Rich Neighbourhoods, and Workspace Provision (Urban and NonUrban).

María Linares (*1970 in Bogotá, Colombia) is a visual artist and lives and works in Germany since 1996. Fields of work are public art, video and participatory art practices. Her main interests are interpersonal relations; in her own art pieces as well as in the projects she herself organizes and curates.

Linares is less concerned with the person who attends an exhibition of their own volition, but rather with those individuals she can take by surprise in the public sphere.

Linares is one of the co-project leaders of "visual artists | diverse conditions" and member of the board of IGBK since 2020. She is the spokesperson of the Deutscher Künstlerbund, and also deputy spokesperson of the Deutscher Kunstrat. Between 2015-2022 she was a deputy for the Künstlerbund in the Advisory Committee for Art (BAK) of the Berlin Senate and since 2017 she is member of the district commission for art in public space in Steglitz-Zehlendorf.

She is founding member of the artists collective daily services and initiated in teamwork the Citizen Art Days in Berlin.

Isidro López-Aparicio is an artist, curator and university professor. Since its beginnings, López-Aparicio's work has had a marked political and social nature and has become one of the main references. In his projects he aims to condense the instability of nature and of humanity itself in a constant process of change, forcing us to stop for a moment to reflect on the futility of what surrounds and conditions us.

With great international projection, this social activist has managed to escape from cataloguing in order to develop a solid presence and professional recognition based on art as an element of reflection and social commitment, frequently participating in international fairs and offering numerous individual and collective interventions on the five continents: from Tate London (United Kingdom) to Darat al Funun (Amman, Jordan), and including the GAM Galleria d'ARTE Moderna di Palermo (Italy) POMPIDOU (Málaga, Paris), CCEMx (México), MNCARS (Madrid) and the ARTIUM (Vitoria-Gasteiz). PhD in Fine Arts, Professor at the University of Granada, Honorary President of the Fine Art European Forum, President of the Union of Artists, member of the Peace and Conflict Research Institute and of the Artist Pension Trust, he has given lectures and seminars and curated international festivals and exhibitions all over the world.

Teemu Mäki (*1967) is a director (theatre/dance/film/opera), visual artist, writer and theorist based in Helsinki, Finland. He studied painting in Academy of Fine Arts Finland (1986–1990) and got his doctorate (Doctor of Fine Arts, 2005) from the same institution. Since 1990 he has been an independent, freelancing artist, except for the years 2008–2013, when he was the Professor of Fine Arts in Aalto University (Finland). Teemu Mäki has had 60 solo exhibitions, participated in about 250 group shows, has written nine books and directed and wrote numerous theatre plays, films and operas.

Mäki is also active in cultural politics. He is for example Chairperson of The Artists' Association of Finland and President of IAA Europe.

Dr. Sandrine Micossé-Aikins manages Diversity Arts Culture and consults the cultural department of the Berlin Senate. She is a cultural studies scholar, curator and equity manager whose work focuses on racism and empowerment in the arts. Her work also examines the power and effects of colonial imagery, politics of the body, and representation and equality in the German speaking arts and cultural sector.

Anna Panagos has been working as part of the IGBK office since 2022 and on a regular basis for the touring artists information portal and advice service, while supporting a wide range of topics related to the visual arts. She's been involved in organizing the residencies mapping on the IGBK website and coordinating network meetings for residency operators. Recently, Panagos has worked on revising the touring artists funding database. With a background in Anthropology and Art Therapy, she brings a strong interdisciplinary perspective to her work, focusing on social issues and the intersection of art and culture. Prior to joining IGBK, Panagos worked on various projects related to the arts and community building."

Pham, Minh Duc (*1991 in Schlema, Germany) is an artist based in Berlin, Germany. In 2019 he graduated with a Master's degree in Exhibition Design and Scenography at the Karlsruhe University of Arts and Design Karlsruhe and studied performance and design theory as a guest at the Berlin University of Arts. Working in the fields of Visual and Performing Arts, Pham Minh Duc examines the subject of identity on the intersection of gender, race, and class.

Marcel Noack (*1980 in Bad Muskau) is a freelance artist, photographer, curator and editor with international exhibitions and publications. He is chairperson of both BBK and IGBK, and he is active in the Executive Committee of IAA Europe and IAA/ AIAP. Marcel Noack is the founder and curator of the Leipzig art space PING-PONG and an appointed member of the German Society for Photography.

Based on his living environment, Marcel is engaged in observing changes in urban and rural structures. In his conceptual work, he combines different artistic and scientific practices and methods: photographic, documentary, installation strategies, interviews, long-term observations of places, as well as the appropriation and use of archive materials. They culminate in space-related exhibition presentations.

Anike Joyce Sadiq (*1985) is a visual artist. She works and lives in Berlin. In her performative-poetic yet minimalist conceptual practice, Anike Joyce Sadiq interweaves questions about the individual and society with historical, social and spatial realities. Through the use of her own body and experience, she not only addresses "the personal as political," but also engages with the logic of representation and the right to opacity. She examines the extent to which social dynamics, intersectionality and perspectives of difference are negotiated within institutional structures.

In several works, Sadiq collaborates with other artists, musicians and performers, resulting in a multivocality, which reflects the way she uses text from different sources. Although the performativity of reading does play an important role in almost all of her work, her focus lies less on recreating discursive approaches, but rather in setting the frame for experiential relations.

Anna Schölß is a visual artist, curator and Co-Founder of K&K – Bündnis Kunst und Kind. Her works operate at the interface between abstract painting, spatial installation and experiment, which she negotiates in the context of socially relevant issues, particularly on the subject of transformation. In this context she also deals with the value and changing values of care and thus raises the question of the significance and visibility of care work.

Based on her own experiences as an artist and mother, she founded K&K – Bündnis Kunst und Kind together with Gabi Blum in 2018 – an initiative of visual artists with care responsibilities. K&K organized numerous exhibitions, political actions and projects and is now active nationwide. With alliance partners are organizing nationwide campaigns to draw attention to the problem of the poor compatibility of care work and art and the low visibility of female artists.

Anna Schölß completed her studies in stage design and painting at the Academy of Fine Arts in 2012. She is curator of the exhibition series "Transformationen". In 2023 she took part in the exhibition "Waschen Putzen Sorgen. Care Work in Art since 1960" at the Josef Albers Museum Bottrop.

Jan Stradtman, since graduating with an MA in Photographic Studies from the University of Westminster in London, he works as an artist specializing in photography. In his projects he explores architecture as a form of representation as well as human interactions with landscapes after historical events. His work has been presented in several solo and group exhibitions.

Together with Andrea Jaeger, Jan Stradtman has been Artistic Director of the 'Passage' Artist-in-Residence program in the Dübener Heide (Saxony, Germany) since 2021. The program provides temporary residencies for artists from the fields of photography and film and enables them to spend four weeks working in the Dübener Heide. "Passage" provides financial funding for the residencies and particularly supports female artists with children.

Marie Thams (*1982, Denmark) is a visual artist based in Copenhagen. She holds an MFA from the Schools of Visual Arts, Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, Copenhagen (2011) and a BA(Hons) in Fine Arts and History of Art from Goldsmiths, University of London (2009).

In her work, Thams unites many artistic disciplines, installation, sculpture, sound, film, poetry and performance, in a unified expression. She thereby creates more entrances for conversations that deal with topics such as gender and equality, working life and productivity as well as rhetoric. Marie Thams examines how our voices, bodies and actions are shaped in response to society's expectations and currents. Characteristic of Thams is the use of her own voice and language, just as she often works with dissecting and dismantling structures and patterns – pictorially and textually.

Her works have been presented in various national and international institutions such as Copenhagen Contemporary; Kunsten Museum of Modern Art Aalborg, DK; Den Frie Centre of Contemporary Art, DK; ARKEN Museum for Contemporary Art, DK; Heartland Festival, DK; Kunsthal Nord, DK; ActionAid, DK; Overgaden Institute of Contemporary Art, DK; Screen Festival, Barcelona; URBANEK, London; Milestone Institute, Budapest; and Viborg Kunsthal, DK.

Her work is part of the collections of Danish National Gallery, Aalborg Municipality's Art Foundation and private collections. Since 2022 Thams is Chairperson of Danish Visual Artists (Billedkunstneres Forbund, BKF, part time). She was a member of the Board of Representatives of the Danish Arts Foundation 2017–2020, and in recent years has been a guest teacher at Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, Copenhagen; Malmö Art Academy; Funen Art Academy; and Bergen Academy of Art and Design.

Doris Weinberger, who grew up in Germany and Japan, is a freelance artist with an inter/national exhibition/interaction and performance practice in semi/public spaces.

Doris Weinberger's work as an artist is primarily interdisciplinary and collaborative in the formats of installation/interaction/performance. Her main areas of interest are mechanisms of representation and projection in the production of hegemonic imagery and (linguistic) structures, their creation of legends, their deconstruction and transformation. Doris Weinberger is a founding member of the artist collectives mark and ANTZ!. She teaches performative methods and participative strategies at universities and colleges, gives lectures and advises organizations.

She is an active member of the board of the BBK Bundesverband and the IGBK as well as various committees.

Bibliography and Credits

Listing of Events, page 19

Images of the conference in May, 2024. © Photos by Andreas Schmid, © VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2024

A Sigh of Relief Between Crises – Diversity Oriented Change Processes in the Arts, pages 23-25

About [Diversity Arts Culture](#): Berlin is more diverse than the Berlin cultural sector. To ensure that Berlin's cultural sector better reflects the city's diversity the Senate Department for Culture and Europe has created a design and consultation office for diversity development: Diversity Arts Culture (DAC) was founded in April 2017. Its goal is to encourage and support diversity-focused structural change within Berlin's cultural sector.

Diversity Arts Culture advises cultural institutions and the cultural administration on diversity issues. DAC develops education programs for cultural professionals, in which they teach diversity competence and strengthen artists and cultural workers who experience exclusion in the cultural sector. DAC also offers anti-discrimination consultation and are committed to collecting equity data for Berlin's cultural sector.

UTOPIAN INSTITUTION. A Loveletter to Myself, pages 31-36

Images of Anike Joyce Sadiq's exhibition at Kunstverein Langenhagen as part of the 2024 annual program entitled "Der Kunstverein in der Katastrophe" ("Art Associations Amid a World in Disaster") at the invitation of curator Kathy-Ann Tan. © VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2024

© Photos by Andre Germar, 2024.

Reflections on Artists-in-Residence Programs, page 55

Image: Nezaket Ekici "Die Nähe der Ferne" Reise mit der Kutsche, three day performance, 22-24 August 2021, Schloss Wiepersdorf to Berlin, as part of Artist-in-residence program of the Kulturstiftung Schloss Wiepersdorf, 2021.

© Photo by Andreas Dammertz.

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Further links:

Other writers need to concentrate <https://other-writers.de>

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Image, page 81

Collage of screenshots of the artistic performance by Pham, Minh Duc at the "visual artists | diverse conditions"-conference in May 2024. © Pham, Minh Duc/ IGBK.

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