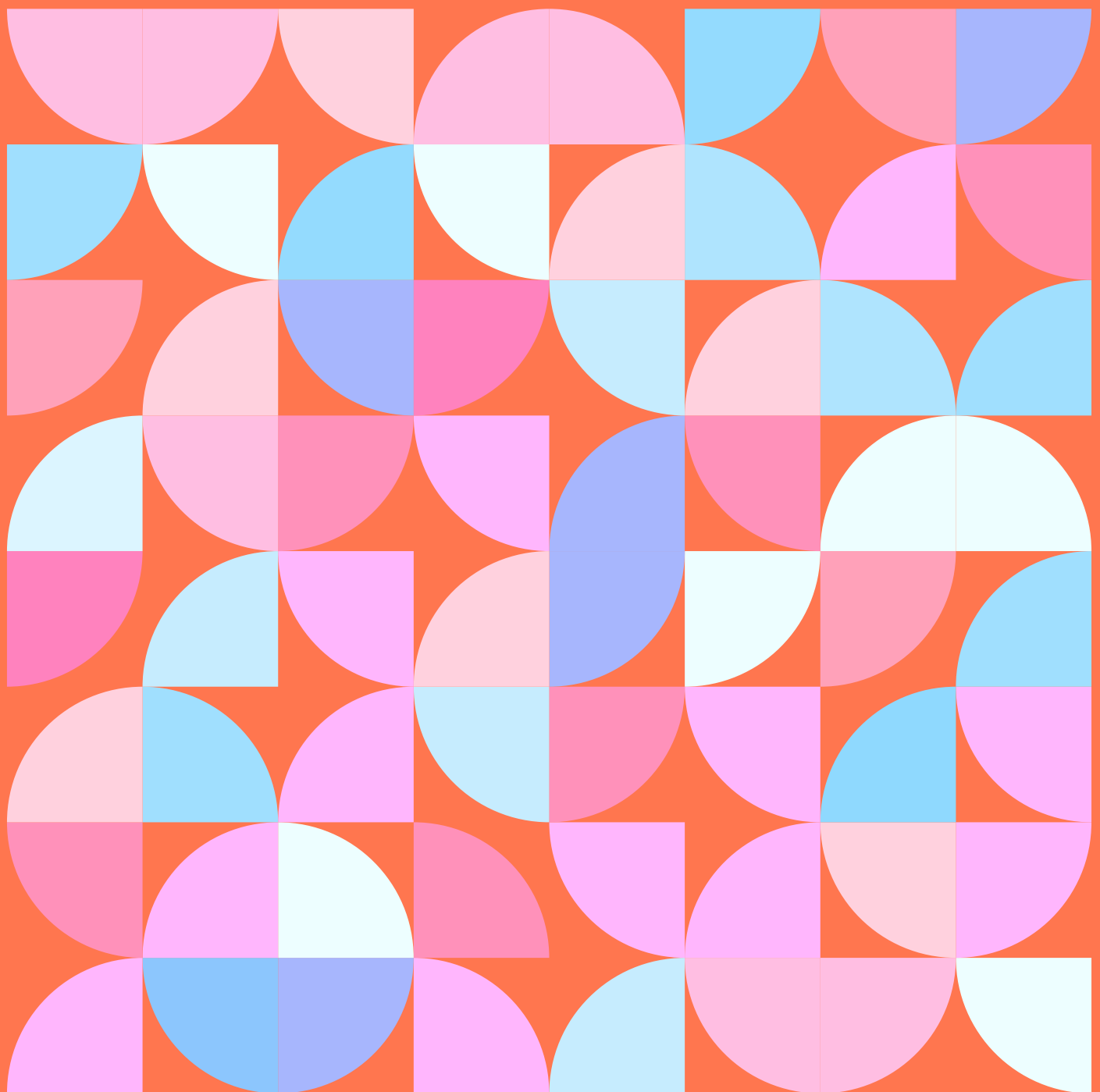




LITHUANIAN  
COUNCIL FOR  
CULTURE

GENDER INEQUALITY IN THE CULTURAL  
SECTOR: **THE ECONOMIC AND EMOTIONAL  
STATE OF FEMALE ARTISTS**

# SUMMARY



International performing arts festival ConTempo, acrobatic performance La Spire by the Rhizome troupe, 2022.  
Photo: Martynas Plepys



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Special thanks to  
Radvilė Maskuliūnaitė

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## CONTEXT

1. Since 2018, gender equality has been one of the most important policy priorities of the European Union in all areas, including cultural policy. The European Union is therefore taking resolute and proactive measures to implement the principle of gender equality in the cultural sector. These measures include formal political commitments, financial mechanisms and research on the situation of gender equality in the EU's cultural and creative industries. Lithuania has signed and adopted the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, and treaties, work plans and conclusions on gender equality in the field of culture. So at least formally, Lithuania is committed to achieving gender equality in all spheres of society and politics, and thus – in the field of culture as well. However, in national cultural policy formation and implementation documents, the goal of gender equality is almost completely undetectable.

## ECONOMIC STATE – QUANTITATIVE DATA: INCOME INEQUALITY BY FIELD OF ART

2. Based on data collected by Dr Rusnė Kregždaitė and Dr Erika Godlevska as part of the “Study on the Social and Creative Condition of Artists” study, a quantitative analysis carried out during this study showed that there is a gender pay gap in the cultural and creative industries sector. Approximately 40% more male artists (42.30%) than female artists (30.51%) have an income of €901 or more, and for the €1,201 or more income category, the proportion of men is 2.1 times higher than that of women (23.43% of men vs 11.07% of women). In terms of the €600 or less income category, which has roughly 40% more women (42.95%) than men (31.22%), the most problematic areas are **cinema, visual arts and photography** as well as the **category of several various art fields**. In the €900-threshold group, there are five areas where the largest income gap exists between women and men: **cinema, dance, interdisciplinary art, visual arts and performing arts**. Regarding the higher income category (€1,201 or more), the highest income inequality can be found in the areas of **interdisciplinary art, design, architecture, literature, theatre, visual arts and performing arts**. On the other hand, statistics for Lithuanian Council for Culture grants suggest that in many areas, the situation between men and women is fairly equal. In other words, the public funding allocated by LCC does not depend on gender.

Superkoloritas, a modern electric stage music duo, 2022. Photo: Visvaldas Morkevičius

International performing arts festival ConTempo, Šeiko Dance Company's performance Mikado, 2022. Photo: Kemel photography

## ECONOMIC STATE – QUALITATIVE DATA: WHAT DETERMINES INCOME INEQUALITY BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN BY AREA

- 3.** In a focus group discussion of female artists, the issue of women's self-worth was identified as one of the main reasons for the income gap between female and male artists. The discussion participants said that women are less confident and have lower self-esteem than men because they are affected by society and gender stereotypes. The interlocutors agreed that female artists are ashamed to talk about money, not to mention demanding a higher salary or even a fee for a commission at all. Since men tend to have higher self-confidence or value their work more, they simply do not agree to work for less, while women find lower pay acceptable.
- 4.** As for the specific fields of art, a woman working in architecture gave three main reasons why there are 3 times more men architects than women architects with a monthly income of €1,201 or more. These reasons are poor work organisation, the practice of off-the-books bonuses that is used in some architecture agencies, and a tendency not to invite female architects to expert commissions for project evaluation.
- 5.** In the field of theatre, there are two main reasons for the gender pay gap. First, the position of theatre director is male-dominated, especially at the major national and state theatres, even though half of directing graduates are women. Second, in many classical plays, the main roles are male, while female roles are more episodic.
- 6.** The tenacious gender stereotypes in the film industry and the distrust in female directors held by the expert commissions that allocate funding mean that there are still relatively few women in the most important and highest-paid positions in filmmaking, leading to a gender pay gap in the film industry.





## ECONOMIC STATE– QUANTITATIVE DATA: INCOME INEQUALITY BY AGE

8th contemporary opera festival NOA (New Opera Action), musical performance Sports Group, 2022. Concept authors: Gailė Gričiūtė and Viktorija Damerell. Photo: Ilmė Vyšniauskaitė

7. The greatest gap in income between women and men is evident in the 35-44 and 45-54 age groups, but also remains high in the 55-64 age group. For example, in the 35-44 age group, there are twice as many men than women earning €901 or more (64.21% and 30.71%, respectively), in the 45-54 age group, there are 80% as many men earning €901 or more (48.57%) than women (27.1%), and in the 55-64 age group, there are approximately 70% as many male artists earning this much money (44.25%) than female artists (26.09%). In the €1,201 or more income category, this difference increases to 2.9 times in favour of men in the 35-44 age group (32.63% of men vs 11.02% of women, respectively) and peaks in the 45-54 age group, where there are as many as 4.3 times more men earning €1,201 or more (40%) than women (9.35%). **These data basically reflect global trends, where income inequality between women and men increases with age.**

## ECONOMIC STATE – INCOME INEQUALITY BY AGE: RECONCILING ARTISTIC WORK WITH FAMILY LIFE

8. The disparity in income between women and men in the older age groups is determined by gender stereotypes and the unequal division of childcare in the family to the disadvantage of women. However, in both the women's and men's focus group discussions, a particularly sensitive problem for the cultural sector emerged – the prevailing assumption, held by the cultural community, that an artist is an independent, 'autonomous' individual without family obligations. This assumption stems from the stereotype that it is almost impossible to combine a creative career with raising children, so female artists often feel pressured to give up their career as an artist and devote all of their time to childcare. On the other hand, the fact that a man is not expected to start a family makes it difficult for male artists with young children to request additional funding for childcare costs. Thus, the experience of both fathers and mothers who are artists is united by the fact that it does not usually occur to representatives of cultural institutions or events that artists have families, and that this poses additional financial challenges due to the specificities of cultural work.

## ECONOMIC STATE – EVALUATION OF THE STATEMENT “I CAN MAKE A LIVING PURELY FROM CREATIVE ACTIVITIES”

9. Approximately 40% more women (58.04%) than men (42.11%) completely disagree with the statement “My income from creative activities is enough to live on”. Meanwhile, men (completely) agree with the statement on average 50% more than women (27.19% of men vs 18.15% of women). So compared with men, women tend to agree less that their income from creative work is enough to live on. The biggest differences between the evaluations of men and women are evident in the fields of **literature, design, architecture** and **photography**.

## ECONOMIC STATE – EVALUATION OF THE STATEMENT “MY ANNUAL INCOME VARIES”

10. On average, similar percentages of both male and female artists report (completely) agreeing with the statement that their annual income is inconsistent (67.25% and 69.94%, respectively). However, in the context of this statement, the areas of **architecture** and **ethnic culture** and **folk art** stand out. Both in the field of architecture and in the field of ethnic culture and folk art, roughly 60% more women than men (completely) agree with the statement about the inconsistency of annual income (76.92% of women and 48.53% of men in architecture and 66.67% of women and 41.67% of men in the field of ethnic culture and folk art).

## ECONOMIC STATE – EVALUATION OF THE STATEMENT “THE INCOME OF MY PARTNER/SPOUSE/PARENTS ALLOWS ME TO PURSUE AND FINANCE CREATIVE ACTIVITIES”

11. On average, twice as many women as men (26.19% and 13.45%, respectively) (completely) agree with the statement “My partner’s/spouse’s/parents’ income allows me to engage in creative activities and finance them”. **Almost all of the areas are problematic, with the exception of architecture, dance and interdisciplinary art.**

International performing arts festival ConTempo, Hold On by the Fheel Concept troupe, 2022.  
Photo: Fheel Concept



## EMOTIONAL STATE – QUANTITATIVE DATA: DISCRIMINATION

International performing arts festival ConTempo, acrobatic performance La Spire by the Rhizome troupe, 2022. Photo: Martynas Plepys

- 12.** On average, 2.2 times more women than men (18.75% and 8.48%, respectively) agree (completely) with the statement “I have experienced discrimination due to gender, age, etc. in the working environment”. **Almost all of the areas are problematic, with the exception of ethnic culture and folk art and cinema.** However, the fact that in the **film industry** roughly a fifth of both men (18.18%) and women (21.05%) indicated that they (completely) agreed with the statement should raise concerns about the extent of the discrimination problem in the film industry. Perhaps the most problematic areas are **literature, architecture, design, photography** and **music**. In the fields of literature and design, there were no men at all who (completely) agreed with the statement in question, while 7.41% of female writers and 5% of female designers did. In the field of architecture, 5.2 times more women than men reported experiencing discrimination (15.38% and 2.94%, respectively). In the field of photography, 4.5 times more women than men agreed with the statement in question (25% and 5.56%, respectively), and in the field of music, this difference is 4.2 times (with 28.13% of women and 6.67% of men (completely) agreeing with the statement).

## EMOTIONAL STATE – QUALITATIVE DATA: DISCRIMINATION EXPERIENCES

- 13.** Many of the experiences of discrimination shared during the women’s and men’s focus group discussions had a common thread: the feeling that female artists are treated differently from male artists, and that in the public sphere, female artists have to constantly fight to “earn a name” and receive recognition like men.
- 14.** The men claimed that they could see for themselves that being a female artist is much more challenging than being a male artist. The participants discussed the prevailing stereotype in society that women can be art project managers or write about art history, but that art is created by men.



## EMOTIONAL STATE – QUANTITATIVE DATA: SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE WORK ENVIRONMENT

- 15.** On average, 6.85% of women agree with the statement “I have experienced sexual harassment in the workplace”, which is 5.9 times more than men (1.17%). The most problematic areas are **theatre, music, architecture, literature, design, photography** and **interdisciplinary art**. As many as 12.28% of women in the field of theatre (completely) agreed with the statement about experiencing sexual harassment, while 9.38% of women did in the music industry, 7.69% in the field of architecture, and 5% among designers; meanwhile, 0% of men in these four areas (completely) agreed with the same statement. In the field of interdisciplinary art, the proportions of both men and women who (completely) agreed with the statement in question are the highest of all fields. Nevertheless, 2.2 times more women than men (completely) agree with the above statement (15.79% and 7.14%, respectively).

## EMOTIONAL STATE – QUANTITATIVE DATA: BULLYING IN THE WORK ENVIRONMENT

- 16.** Compared to men (7.31%), roughly twice as many women (14.88%) tend to agree (completely) with the statement that they experience bullying in the work environment. The most problematic areas are **design, architecture, literature, visual arts** and **theatre**. Theatre has the highest rates of bullying of both women and men of any art field, with 2.4 times more women than men (36.84% and 15.38%, respectively) agreeing (completely) with the statement in question.

## EMOTIONAL STATE – QUANTITATIVE DATA: CONFLICTS IN THE WORK ENVIRONMENT

- 17.** Approximately 50% more women than men (14.58% and 9.94%, respectively) (completely) agree with the statement “There are many conflicts in my work/creative environment”. Particularly problematic areas are **design, literature, architecture** and **theatre**. Both women and men experience the most conflicts in the field of **theatre**. In theatre, as many as 43.86% of women (completely) agree with the statement that they experience a lot of conflicts in their work/creative environment. This is 2.1 times more than for men (21.15%).





Urban music festival Untold City, concert by Sautės klišas, 2022. Photo: Mantas Repečka

## EMOTIONAL STATE – QUANTITATIVE DATA: CONSIDERABLE STRESS IN THE WORK ENVIRONMENT

- 18.** Roughly 30% more women than men agree with the statement “I experience much stress in the work environment” (29.46% and 22.81%, respectively). The most problematic areas are **design, ethnic culture and folk art** and **theatre**. Theatre is number one in terms of the proportion of men and women who (completely) agree with the statement about stress at work, with 61.4% of women in this sector claiming to experience considerable stress, which is twice as many as men (30.77%).

## EMOTIONAL STATE – QUALITATIVE DATA: WHAT DETERMINES THE EMOTIONALLY TOXIC WORK ENVIRONMENT IN THEATRE?

- 19.** Since theatre is primarily a group activity, it has a tradition of a strong and clear hierarchy. This results in unequal power relationships, in which the director – who is thus far more often a man than a woman – has the greatest influence. A director's power to offend and take advantage of his position can become a serious challenge. However, it is also noticeable that this clearly expressed hierarchy is gradually changing and becoming “horizontal”, with equal relations in the creative process starting to emerge.

## LEADERSHIP AND RECOGNITION: MALE AND FEMALE PROJECT MANAGERS

- 20.** Over the 2015-2022 period, women were the managers of 10,350 projects funded by the Lithuanian Council for Culture. The Lithuanian Council for Culture allocated more than €94 million for these projects. Over the same period, men managed less than half as many projects, for which the Lithuanian Council for Culture provided less than half as much funding. It would seem that, from the perspective of projects funded by the Lithuanian Council for Culture and the number of project managers by gender, women have a clear edge. However, the fact that the cultural sector is female-dominated may indicate a problem of greater inequality. It is common knowledge that wages in the cultural sector are some of the lowest compared to other areas. So even though women dominate among project managers, the situation is not unequivocally positive.



## LEADERSHIP AND RECOGNITION: HEADS OF NATIONAL CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS

- 21.** Power positions between men and women can be identified by the heads of institutions. In 2022, national institutions were headed by 25 women and 31 men (45% and 55%, respectively). So, in general, the situation can be seen as fairly equal.

## LEADERSHIP AND RECOGNITION: LITHUANIAN NATIONAL PRIZE RECIPIENTS (GENDER BREAKDOWN)

- 22.** Female artists win awards less often. Looking at the recipients of the Lithuanian National Prize for Culture and Arts from 1989 to 2022, it can be seen that women received the prize 3.5 times less than men.

### GENERAL CONCLUSION

In summary, this study suggests that there is indeed a problem of gender inequality in the cultural and creative sector, manifested as unequal economic and emotional state among male and female artists. In other words, male artists are, on average, economically and emotionally better off than female artists. In addition, men's work is appreciated more often than women's work, which also contributes to a greater emotional and economic gender divide.



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