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Saving creative industry during COVID–19 emergency –who are the winners and losers?

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The emergency caused by COVID-19 –virus has caused a profound stagnation in the creative industry, particularly in activities in arts and culture. The losses in event economy are cumulated in catering and tourism services as well as in services of technology. Government measures have been addressed to the creative industry for promoting survival over the emergency with resilient patterns of action for avoiding substantial damages in the industry and related services.

Governments in the European countries have supported creative industry with different patterns and in the frame of the economic capacity to deliver support. In Finland, the remarkable measures have been delivered by the state authorities of both education and culture, and economy and labour, as well as by NGOs and regional authorities. The modes of support have been manifold with respect to organisations and people working around them. Despite the multiplicity of the funding sources and the delivery patterns, the financial measures have been targeted at the institutionalised organisations; this logic has left free artists and professionals in the industry in a marginal position. Artists have interpreted this categorization as a sign to treat them as not contributing to society through "real work".

This awkward situation is, in essence, embedded in the changing structures of the labour market and retarded welfare systems. The reason for dropping out from support channels originates in the basics of institutional welfare systems in society, built on the traditional division into employees or entrepreneurs. Artists and professionals in the creative industry are categorized as multiple job holders into neither of these, for their employment pattern is in the non-institutionalized area of entrepreneurship and salary earner. The COVID-19 -based financial measures have been delivered through institutionalized channels failing to recognize artists and professionals in the creative industry at the margins of support systems.

Our project "State of emergency and resilience in the cultural economy organizations"(projects.tuni.fi/resilience-in-cultural economy/) studies the situation of culture industry during the emergency caused by COVID-19 and the survival patterns over the pandemic.

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