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The Nordic Model of Supporting Artists
Public Support for Artists in Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden
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Is there a Nordic model for supporting artists, and if there is, how does it work? The book reports the results of a comparative study on public policy toward artists in the Nordic countries.

Direct financial support for professional artists can be considered one of the characteristic features of the Nordic model of supporting the arts. The report presents the historical development of artists' support as well as the objectives, decision-making bodies and types of support allocated today in the Nordic countries, and takes a look at Nordic research on the situation of artists. It compares similarities and differences across the countries and discusses the future challenges for the Nordic model of supporting artists.

In the Nordic countries, the state's role as a supporter of individual artists has been associated with the practices of the royal courts as well as with the role of the arts and artists in the historical process of nation-building. Public support has also been considered a way of compensating for small markets, and an important counterweight against the pressures of commercial markets. In the Nordic countries, state support for artists has primarily been legitimated by arguments based on the intrinsic value of the arts.

Similarities and differences across the countries are examined especially in relation to the characteristics of bodies allocating support, the coverage of support regarding various groups of artists, and the criteria for allocating support. Several features are similar to all the Nordic countries, starting with the structure of implementing the policy, based on expert bodies working at an arm's length from the ministries responsible for cultural policy. There also are remarkable differences, regarding, for example, the role of social versus quality criteria in the allocation of the support, and the coverage of support in relation to various artistic fields and occupations.

The conclusion takes a look at challenges raised by recent changes. How will these changes influence the future of the Nordic model of supporting artists and the situation of artists in the Nordic countries?

The report is part of a larger project on Nordic cultural policy, lead by the Danish cultural sociologist Peter Duelund. Other publications of the project, published by Nordisk Kultur Institut (www.nordiskkulturinstitut.dk), include reports examining cultural policy in Faeroe Islands, Greenland, the Sami area and Åland, and a final report summarizing the findings of the project.

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