



# CREATIVE FINLAND

From inspiration  
to implementation



## Introduction

Culture has made Finland what it is today. More recently, new creative industries and skills have taken their place alongside traditional arts, classical and popular. They range from contemporary circus to digital games and applications, the useful as well as the entertaining.

The success of Finland's creative industries stems from excellent education that begins in kindergarten. Creativity is highly valued and each child is treated equally – for example, in receiving opportunities to practice musical instruments. All teachers in creative subjects have vocational degrees in arts. After basic education, creative studies continue in Finland's top-class universities.

Another cornerstone of success, especially in architecture and design, is functionality. Without sacrificing their individual approaches to products and art, Finnish designers focus on the needs of clients and end-users. Their style is also characteristically restrained. Many designers take their inspiration from nature and natural materials.

In the following pages, we introduce Finland's creative industries and experts, and present their many assets.

**Welcome to creative Finland!**

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*Suomi*  
*Finland*  
**100**

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*The success of  
Finland's creative  
industries stems from  
excellent education.*

## Arts education paths in Finland

Finland's high-level education system is built on the principle of lifelong learning. The same idea is also important on the paths of arts and cultural education.

The cultural task of compulsory general education (basic education) is to promote pupils' cultural competence and their appreciation of the cultural heritage. Building pupils' own cultural identities is at the heart of teaching and learning in every school. In basic education, arts subjects (music, visual arts, crafts) cover 16% of all instruction time for pupils aged between 7 and 12 (grades 1–6). Pupils between 13–16 years study arts subjects at a minimum 7% of compulsory instruction time (grades 7–9). In addition to the minimum time, schools distribute locally 5% of total compulsory instruction time between music, visual arts, crafts, physical education and home economics.

The Finnish National Agency for Education has developed the general upper secondary diploma for students to demonstrate their skills and knowledge of home economics, visual arts, crafts, physical education, media, music, dance and theatre – developed from 1995.

Within the Finnish educational system there is also another goal-oriented structure; Basic Education in the Arts system. It is a unique feature of the Finnish educational system in which the studies are voluntary, enabling the learning of various art forms in a systematic and progressive long-lasting manner.

Basic Education in the Arts is prescribed in the law, supported by the state and goal-oriented in proceeding from one level to the next. The system is nationwide. It is steered by the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Finnish National Agency for Education along with early childhood, basic and upper secondary education.



### *Listen, you'll hear music*

Finland rings with music; in relation to its population, the country has more symphony orchestras, more music festivals and even more heavy metal bands than anywhere else in the world. Music is part of any definition of Finnish identity and culture. It is telling that during the three short summer months in Finland, there is a music festival nearly every day. Festivals and concert series are organised in a wide array of genres, ranging from folk music to heavy metal and from classical music to jazz and techno, and the best festivals always draw large crowds. This is because music plays such a strong part in daily life, from childhood onwards.

Finnish music has a shortish history, dating from the emergence of the National Romantic style in the 19th century. The masterful symphonies and symphonic poems of the period, composed by Finland's renowned **Jean Sibelius**, were inspired by nature and national mythology, but they have touched the whole world. Other famous

Finnish composers of classical music include **Kaija Saariaho** and **Magnus Lindberg**. Finland's top conductors include **Esa-Pekka Salonen**, **Susanna Mälkki** and **Sakari Oramo**.

#### **MUSIC EDUCATION IN FINLAND**

There are few other countries where every child plays an instrument at school. At elementary school there are music classes for at least one hour a week. Education is also shifting away from performing to creating and composing. Children are introduced to music at school but are musically beyond the classroom, too. Music kindergarten is very popular with pre-school children.

If the seed of musical interest is planted in comprehensive school, the fruit is cultivated in high-quality music institutes and conservatories, of which Finland has nearly a hundred. Offering comprehensive basic education in the arts, they support a variety of interests and activities.

Studies are goal-oriented and individualised. Their instructors have academic degrees and are professionals in pedagogics and music making. There are also private music schools as well as folk high schools and adult education centres where instruments and singing can be studied without entrance examinations.

After studies at a music institute, there are three paths for those aspiring to become professional musicians. Conservatories offer upper secondary education, while universities of applied sciences offer bachelor's degrees in pedagogics or music. The Sibelius Academy, part of the University of the Arts Helsinki, offers university curriculums all the way up to doctorate degrees, and has been designated the sixth best university in performing arts in the world. It offers a world-renowned conductor class and also provides high-quality composer education.

Finland has plenty of job opportunities in symphony orchestras; there are more orchestras

per capita than anywhere else in the world. With international competition for places in them, their quality is constantly improving. The same competition forces Finnish musicians to develop their professional skills. Alongside the professional orchestras, there is only one professional choir in Finland but there are approximately 3,000 amateur ones.

#### **FROM POPULAR MUSIC TO MOBILE APPLICATIONS**

The University of Arts and the universities of applied sciences offer quality education in pop, rock and jazz music. The Finns are very keen on their own pop and rock music, which helps explain the great number of festivals.

Finland has produced a generation of excellent composers and producers, who have risen to prominence in countries like Japan. In Asia, the Nordic style is in high demand.

Start-ups that combine music skills with digital technology are a modern success story. Developed by young **Perttu Pölönen**, Musiclock is a mobile application that makes a game out of chord names and scales and also teaches improvisation. Another mobile application, Yousician, provides interactive help with instrument studies.

#### **Further information:**

Music Finland [musicfinland.com](http://musicfinland.com)  
Sibelius Academy [www.uniarts.fi/en/siba](http://www.uniarts.fi/en/siba)



1. Composer Kaija Saariaho
2. Inventor and composer Perttu Pölönen
3. Stam1na
4. Conductor Susanna Mälkki



Pop artist Alma.  
© cyberalma.com

### Cases:

#### THE CALLING OF A CONDUCTOR

**Susanna Mälkki** is a Finnish conductor and cellist. During her career she has served as Music Director of Ensemble InterContemporain in Paris, and in 2016 she made her debut at New York's Metropolitan Opera, conducting performances of *L'Amour de loin* by Finnish composer **Kaija Saariaho**. In autumn 2016 Mälkki became Chief Conductor of the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra, and in autumn 2017 she began her tenure as Principal Guest Conductor of the Los Angeles Philharmonic. Only a small number of the world's greatest conductors are female. The prestigious classical music publication *Musical America* named Mälkki as their 2017 Conductor of the Year.

#### POP MUSIC WITH PERSONALITY

Pop artist **Alma** is one of the great hopes for Finnish music exports. This is an artist with personality, as even **Elton John** has remarked, and her unique voice and honest writing have appealed to inter-

national music markets. Her debut single *Karma*, published in June 2016, was streamed over 22 million times on Spotify in less than six months. It was then featured on *Bonfire*, a remix by German DJ **Felix Jaehn**, which was streamed on Spotify nearly a hundred million times.

#### HEAVY METAL TO THE WORLD

Finnish heavy metal has a broad international following. In relation to its population, Finland produces the most heavy metal bands in the world. One reason for the success of heavy metal is the music institute network, which produces skilled instrumentalists. Well-known Finnish metal bands include Nightwish, Children of Bodom, Apocalyptica, Amorphis, Kotiteollisuus, Stam1na and Sonata Arctica. There are many heavy metal festivals, the most popular being *Tuska*, first arranged in 1998. Metal has become mainstream, listened to by nearly everyone regardless of age or gender.

Celebrations of Finland's centenary started in December 2016 with *Sandstorm*, a hit by Finnish DJ Darude. This trance instrumental composed in 2009 is one of the most successful of all time and represents one strand of Finland's electronic dance music.

## Masters of words

Today's Finnish literature is evident as a rich selection of styles and types. Strictly defined genres are no more – the works combine fantasy, detective stories, science fiction and even social criticism.

**Sofi Oksanen** is one of the most discussed Finnish authors of the decade. The opinionated author covers Estonia's recent history and timeless love, deception and power themes in her novels. *The Purge* (2008) won the Finlandia award and was made into a film in 2012.

**Kjell Westö** writes about Finland's history in his generation novels in Swedish. His most recent novel, *Den Svavelgula Himlen*, is about friendship. The novel was published in the 2017 autumn in four languages almost simultaneously.

Immigrant authors are also highlighted in Finnish literature. *My Cat Yugoslavia* by **Pajtim Statovci**, which was published in 2014, discusses internal growth in people.

**Emmi Itäranta** wrote her debut novel, *Memory of Water* (2012), in both Finnish and English. The

award-winning speculative fiction novel has been translated into nearly 20 languages.

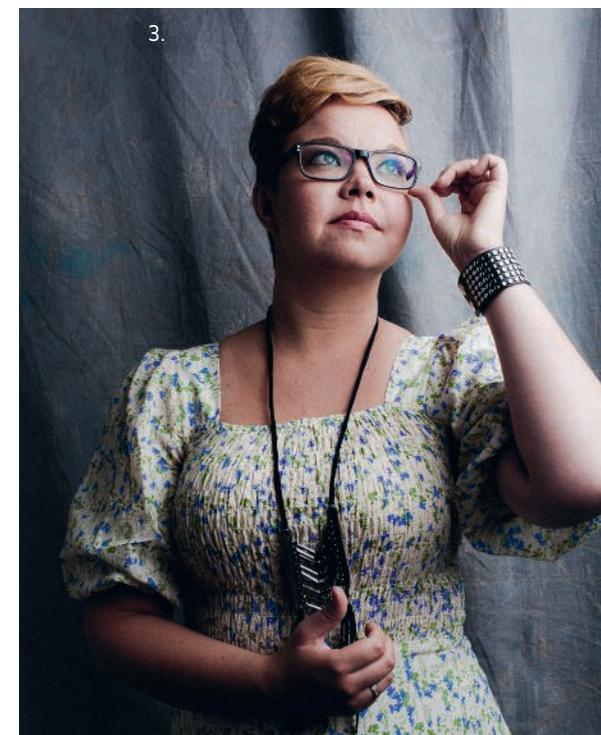
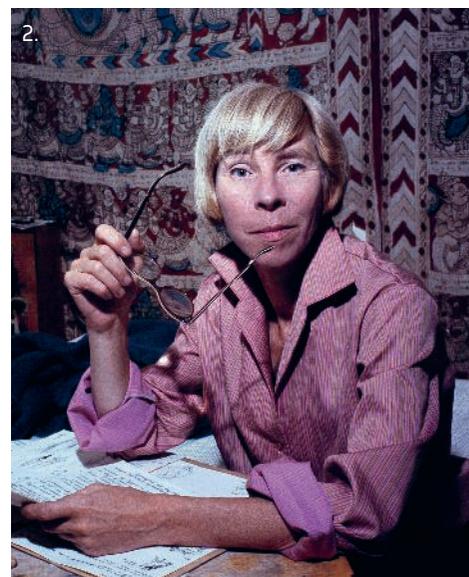
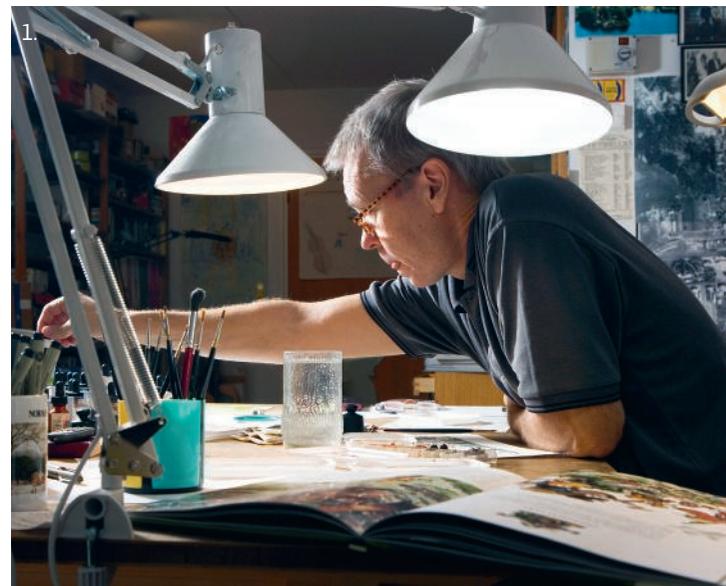
The young adult book author **Salla Simukka** became a highly successful author with her *Snow White Trilogy* (2014). The translation rights of the story have already been sold to 52 countries.

The ever-popular **Mauri Kunnas** and **Tove Jansson** appeal to both children and adults. Kunnas is best known for his children's books, which include the historical *Doghill books* and an adaptation for children of the national epic *Kalevala*. The humour and self-styled setting of *Moomins* by Tove Jansson fascinate people all over the world – in over 30 languages.

### Further information:

The Finnish Literature Society (SKS)  
[www.finlit.fi/en](http://www.finlit.fi/en)

The Society of Swedish Literature in Finland (SLS)  
[www.sls.fi/en](http://www.sls.fi/en)



### Children's literature

1. Mauri Kunnas, 2. Tove Jansson

### Young adult literature

3. Salla Simukka

### Adult's literature

4. Pajtim Statovci, 5. Sofi Oksanen,  
 6. Kjell Westö, 7. Emmi Itäranta

### FINNS LIKE TO READ

- Finland has the highest literacy rate in the world – and its people also read the most.
- In the international PISA 2015 study, Finland ranked fourth highest in reading performance.
- Finns are the second most active library users in Europe, with 744 libraries and 137 library buses.

## 04. Design



The Minna Parikka brand was born the day 15-year-old Minna decided shoes were her life's true calling. Currently Minna Parikka's shoe designs are sold in 25 different countries.

## Shaping the future

**F**innish design ranges from unique art pieces to electrical devices or service experiences. Effectiveness and user-friendliness are its defining characteristics.

Restraint and functionality: these words apply to Finnish design in both the 20th and 21st centuries. Still at its core is Scandinavian modernism, founded in nature and drawing on a tradition of craftsmanship, with simple colours and shapes. The same user-oriented thinking that brought Finnish design to prominence after World War II is now applied to designing services and systems.

Design is everywhere around us, from hospital equipment to public transport traffic signals. Good design often goes unnoticed. Things work, supporting everyday activities and giving quality to life. Products or services are sustainable; they have long, environmentally friendly life-cycles and are energy-efficient. As a high-tech country, Finland

has been a forerunner in designing user interfaces. The design industry is expanding into the design of digital services, where listening to the users and customers plays a large role.

The main trends in current design are social responsibility and applications of new, environmentally friendly materials.

There is an important role for comprehensive design in the development of services and systems, and the Finnish public sector is a forerunner in this area. Design is being used to make attractive, safe cities that are integrated with the everyday lives of residents.

A well-designed cityscape encourages the use of public areas with paving, lighting, park benches and community events such as Restaurant Day, developed in Finland. Helsinki is renowned for trying to make its public areas into a living room shared by all. Urban design is a means to this goal.

Although the job description of designers is shifting toward designing digital products or communal areas, traditional design is still present. Many designers have revitalised traditions of craftsmanship, and artistic crafts are experiencing a resurgence. Unique pieces of art, such as glass, appeal to more and more collectors.

### THERE IS ROOM FOR EXPERIMENTATION WHEN STUDYING

The design education offered by Aalto University in Helsinki is of a high international standard. Like many other top universities in the world, Aalto University and the Finnish education system have discovered the strength of allowing students to experiment. In countries and schools where tuition costs are high, people are forced to complete their degrees quickly, whereas Finland leaves room for creative thinking and the innovation it allows.

Many Aalto students come from abroad, and receive an education that is primarily intended for creating products and services for international markets.

Its fashion design programme is particularly highly acclaimed. Finnish fashion design is experiencing a period of strong international growth. A clear sign of international interest is the strong presence of Finns in France's prestigious Hyères fashion festival finals. Finnish designers were prize-winners in 2012 and 2013 and received honorary recognition in 2016 and 2017.

Finland's own clothing industry excels in intelligent clothing for all ages, and sports attire designed for demanding conditions.

### Further information:

Design Forum Finland [www.designforum.fi/en](http://www.designforum.fi/en)  
Aalto University [arts.aalto.fi/en](http://arts.aalto.fi/en)



## Cases:

### THE NEXT BIG THING

The furniture pieces of **Elina Ulvio** have been described as functional art with a unique edge and useful furniture features. In addition to product design, Ulvio has studied architecture. The combination can be seen in her work, where space and form meet to create a new dimension to furniture. Her work is fundamentally fresh and surprising, with multiple levels. Wallpaper magazine selected Ulvio for its 2016 Next Big Thing edition, introducing the world's hottest new talent.



### SERVICE ORIENTATION

Industrial Designer **Mikko Koivisto** from Hellon service design agency is a Finnish pioneer in service design. A graduate of Aalto University, he is one of the first academic professionals in the industry and has sought to create a market for service design in Finland and abroad. Service orientation and customer encounters are rising design trends. Koivisto has worked for example to improve service experiences at Helsinki University Library and to design a customer experience concept for the Helsinki region future light rail system.



### HIGH QUALITY MEETS BEAUTY

**Harri Koskinen** is one of the best-known Finnish designers. His easily recognisable products include wrist watches for Issey Miyake, active speakers for Genelec (above) and the Lantern product family for Iittala. His Block lamp is part of the collection of the New York Museum of Modern Arts. Koskinen's work is characterised by longevity, functionality and plain aesthetics. His office of creative industrial design, Friends of Industry, works in areas ranging from product design to larger industrial solutions.



### CREATIVITY STEMS FROM JOY

Textile and surface designer **Reeta Ek** was honoured with the Design Forum Finland Young Designer of the Year award 2017. Ek had previously trained as a painter, but became fascinated by the construction of continuous surfaces and continued her studies as a textile designer. Ek has designed printed and woven clothing and interior materials for Marimekko and Lapuan Kankurit, amongst others. Although Reeta Ek says creativity and pain are sometimes one and the same, the basic tone for creation stems from joy, trust and freedom.



### A DENTIST'S CHAIR THAT IS NOT SCARY

"I have worked for 30 years as a designer at Planmeca, which manufactures dental technology. Planmeca products contain diverse state-of-the-art technology but we need to ensure that all our equipment is ergonomic, easy to use and hygienic for the dentists. It must also generate trust in fearful patients, so that they remain as relaxed as possible, allowing optimal treatment. The expertise of designers shows in the way we combine these different needs, which is why we participate in the design process from the outset. The designer's work is still craftsmanship, because we work with sketches and functional prototypes of the devices, even though the design takes place on a computer. This is how we combine good functionality with good usability." *Kari Malmén works as Industrial Design Manager at Planmeca, a leading dental technology company. Its products have won several international design competitions for functionality and aesthetics.*

### Building functional solutions

The goal of high-quality architecture is a top-quality and functional built environment. Finnish architecture in the 21st century creates sustainable buildings that serve their users for a long time.

It is hard to talk of Finnish architecture without thinking of **Alvar Aalto**, one of the greats of modern architecture. Today's frontline Finnish architecture firms base their work on this strong design tradition. One significant factor in Finland's success is its advanced architectural education. The curriculum is extensive, instructors are knowledgeable and there is strong competition for admission into all three universities that offer architectural education. Finland was the first country in the world to admit women into university to study architecture, late in the 19th century.

Although Finnish building regulations are strict, the main focus in the curriculum is not on learning the regulations, but on the holistic capability of examining problems carefully and from

many perspectives. The dialogue with building regulations takes place after graduation and helps create high-quality buildings.

A large share of Finland's important buildings have been created as a result of architectural competitions. For nearly 150 years, competitions have stimulated new ways of thinking, surprising abilities and architectural perspectives. A recent example is Helsinki's central library *Oodi*, which will be completed in 2018. The competition was won by a proposal by Arkkitehtitoimisto ALA. The building has been designed to be an adaptable centre for culture and books for people of all ages.

#### THE GOAL IS TO CREATE FUNCTIONAL AND ENJOYABLE EVERYDAY LIFE

A society that promotes wellbeing cares about the quality and functionality of public buildings, such as libraries, hospitals and schools. Finnish 21st century school architecture is well-known abroad for its high quality and its new creation of new uses



Helsinki's central library Oodi will be completed in 2018.

of space to support learning, as well as sustainable construction methods. The quality of the urban environment is also a focal point in architectural education, an interdisciplinary curriculum that teaches children and young people to appreciate and read their living environment.

Functional public buildings are a part of an effective city. In the *Nordic Sustainable Cities* project, Nordic architects seek to increase vitality in cities and make them more intelligent and sustainable in terms of energy, climate, the economy and the people. The results of the project, and examples of Nordic functional cities, have

been presented in United States, India, and other countries.

Urban planning demands respect for materials and cooperation with the environs. Approximately 80 per cent of Finland is covered by forest, so wood architecture has been systematically developed. The year-long wood architecture programme at the Department of Architecture at Aalto University receives students from all over the world.

#### Further information:

Archinfo Finland [archinfo.fi/english](http://archinfo.fi/english)  
Aalto University [arts.aalto.fi/en](http://arts.aalto.fi/en)

"Humanitarian architectural education has a 25-year history in Finland. It has always highlighted the significance of good basic knowledge and cooperation with local associations and universities. It supports interactive learning by exposing students to the influences of foreign cultures while having an attitude of respect and admiration."

Saija Hollmén, Architect, Hollmén Reuter Sandman Architects Ltd.

## Cases:

### HISTORY AND LIGHT

The POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews, opened in Warsaw in 2013, was designed by Finnish architect firm Lahdelma & Mahlamäki. Its chief designer was Professor **Rainer Mahlamäki**. Approximately 150 firms participated in the competition for the design of the museum and 11 were selected to participate in the second phase. In addition to the basic exhibition, the museum's well-lit 17,000 square metres serve as an education and culture centre. Among Finnish architectural works, POLIN is regarded as one of the most significant buildings of the last five decades, and won the first Finlandia Award for Architecture. It has been acclaimed by visitors as well the client.



Photos © W. Kryński / POLIN Museum



© Pan Weijun

### SUCCESS IN CHINA

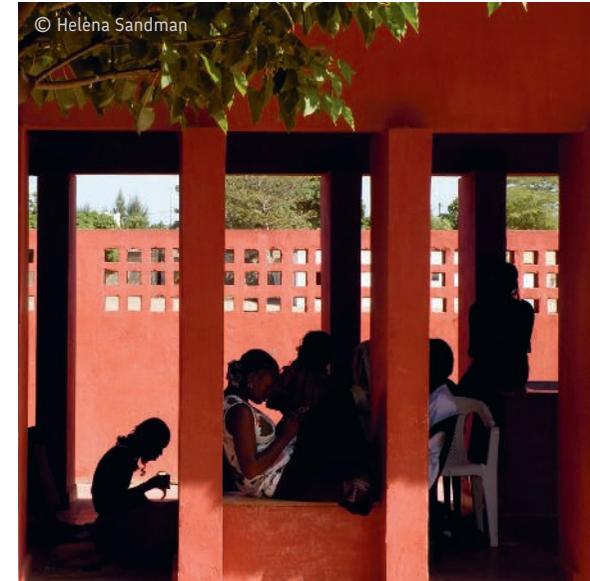
The Wuxi Grand Theatre was completed in 2012 as a symbol of the seven million residents of the city. The sculpture-like building is covered by eight steel wings of 60-90 metres. A local material, bamboo, was greatly used in the interior. The building was designed by PES-Arkkitehdit of Finland, which has become well-established in China in the 21st century and has won numerous architectural competitions. In 2018, a complex designed by the firm, consisting of five cultural centres, is being opened in Fuzhou.



Photos © Pekka Littow

### SMALL, SPECIAL FASHION HOUSE

The fashion shop designed by architect **Pekka Littow** for clothing designer **Anna Ruohonen** was completed on Boulevard Raspail in Paris in 2013. In the same year, it was included in the famous Louis Vuitton travel guide and in 2014 the Paris Chamber of Commerce selected it as the best fashion shop of the city. The small building is unique, defined by the size and shape of the lot: its five storeys fit on a triangle of only 23 square metres, and yet include a brand showroom, production space, offices and a roof terrace.



© Helena Sandman

### RESPECTING LOCAL CONDITIONS

Hollmén Reuter Sandman Arkkitehdit specialises in designing culturally and ecologically sustainable buildings in developing countries. They are built using as many local and recycled materials as possible and with respect for local conditions. The three Finnish architects in the firm have designed a women's centre in Senegal and an orphanage and women's safe house in Tanzania. They are currently working on school projects in Tanzania and Egypt.

They established the Ukumbi association in 2007 to use architecture to improve living conditions in developing countries. Other Finnish architectural task forces also work for Ukumbi. In Cambodia Ukumbi has implemented projects such as the innovative *Lab.our Ward* project, which helps improve conditions in maternity wards.

## 06. Dance & Theatre

### Art on stage

Finland is a true theatre land. The Finnish theatre network covers the whole country from south to north. About three million theatre tickets are sold in Finland every year. The dance scene is vivid, too, with about 450,000 spectators a year at a total of 3,000 dance performances.

Theatre group **sadsongskomplex:fi** is an internationally operating professional theatre company and an ensemble of independent artists. The vision of the Helsinki-based theatre company is to build artistic bridges with old and new partners between North and South, East and West.

**Tampere Theatre Festival** is the oldest and the largest professional theatre festival in the Nordic countries, serving as a showcase for the finest Finnish and international productions. The festival programme includes a wide range of genres within the dramatic arts.

**Other Spaces** (Toisissa tiloissa) is a Helsinki-based live arts collective that consists of artists

from various art fields. Other Spaces invents and develops collective physical exercises through which people can visit "other spaces". The group performs its exercises regularly in practical demonstrations, and organises public workshops for youth and adults.

**Oblivia** is an international performance company and a unique force on the Finnish performance scene. The members of Oblivias are from Finland and Germany, with backgrounds in music, dance and the literary arts. This mixture creates a vibrant and special tension and humour in the work.

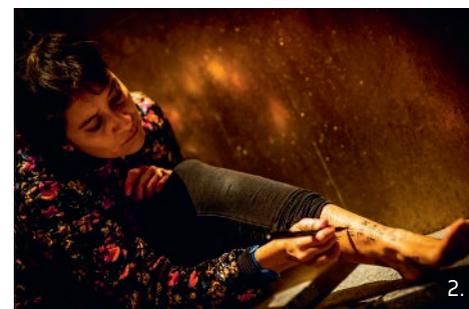
**Baltic Circle** is an international festival for contemporary theatre organised annually in November in Helsinki. It is a platform for new phenomena and an active forum for discussion. The works seen at the festival tackle the major questions of our times, and explore new interpretations of the performing arts and production methods.

1. Circus artist Milla Järvinen at Tampere Theatre Festival 2017. Photo © Carolin Büttner

2. Matraquita Soher: (A)part, Baltic Circle festival 2016. Photo © Tani Simberg

3. Tripit! Other Spaces festival 2017, Koralliriutta-rehearsal. Photo © Esa Kirkkopelto

4. Immunsystemet by Rosalind Goldbergin, Sandra Lolaxn and Stina Nyberg, Mad House Theatre. Photo © Saara Autere



5. Liisa Sofia Pöntinen in Sad Songs from the Heart of Europe / sadsongskomplex:fi. Photo © Aki Loponen

6. Morphed Choreography: Tero Saarinen; Saku Koistinen (left), Ima Iduozee, Jarkko Lehmus. Photo © Heikki Tuuli.

7. Nature Theatre of Oblivia Production: Oblivia / Marina Andersson-Rahikka and Jenny Nordlund. Photo © Saara Autere

### Contemporary circus at dangerously high levels

**F**innish contemporary circus groups tour the world and perform to large audiences. Success in this young art form, developed in the 1990s, is founded on technical skills and unique expressions.

Contemporary circus differs from traditional circus tours in being more comparable with performing arts and modern art. It asks how technical skills can be used to express the desired emotion or perspective. Contemporary circus has moved away from being act-based and sometimes also from being easily approachable – features that are usually associated with traditional circus.

The characteristics of contemporary circus include technical skills acquired through thousands of repetitions, the sense of danger and also the humour that is often included in the performances.

The most internationally successful Finnish groups combine twisted humour, melancholy, video art and digital features in their performances. Finnish contemporary circus is highly international. Most of the performances of the top groups take place in France, the home country of contemporary circus.

Traditional circus arts are also alive and well at home. **Sirkus Finlandia** tours Finland between April and November, taking traditional circus arts to rural areas, too.

The Finnish phenomenon in this field is the social circus. It aims to use art to support the wellbeing of different special groups. The goal of social circus is to inspire creativity in the participants and to create dialogue between representatives of different ethnic groups. Finnish circus

groups pioneered this phenomenon together with the University of Tampere in the early 2000s. For example, **Sirkus Magenta** tailors its performances for visually impaired children and asylum seekers. There have also been performances in Syrian refugee camps.

#### THE PROMISED LAND OF CIRCUS SCHOOLS

The number of circus enthusiasts in Finland is constantly growing. There are nearly 50 circus schools and their work with children and youth is vital for the industry. Four schools offer young people general and expanded basic education in arts. The curriculum, which lasts between 500 and 1,300 hours, explores the different forms of circus arts and their expression: acrobatics, air acrobatics, balancing, juggling and magic. The expanded

curriculum provides the ability to apply for further education.

After basic arts education, circus studies are offered at two institutions in Finland. Salpaus Further Education in Lahti offers circus arts as upper secondary vocational education while the Arts Academy at the Turku University of Applied Sciences offers a circus pedagogics curriculum on the higher education level up to a bachelor's degree. Finnish circus pedagogical expertise is also exported. In contrast, Finland does not offer master's level academic education in circus arts, so Finland's top performers acquire their education abroad, primarily at universities in Europe. This is why Finnish circus art performers are already networked upon graduation, a characteristic that can be seen in the tour destinations of the groups.

#### Further information:

Cirko – Center for New Circus [www.cirko.fi/en](http://www.cirko.fi/en)  
Turku University of Applied Sciences  
[www.tuas.fi/en](http://www.tuas.fi/en)  
Salpaus Further Education [en.salpaus.fi](http://en.salpaus.fi)



Photos © Henri Särkkä / Turku University of Applied Sciences



Super Sunday © Petter Hellman / Race Horse Company.

### Cases:

#### ENCHANTING CHAOS

**Race Horse Company** is one contemporary circus group that is in high demand internationally. Its performances include the aesthetics of chaos, humour and surprise. They do not pose questions, but leave the philosophy and thinking to the spectator. Race Horse Company has always focused on tours and its goal is to become world-renowned. The group's performances have already been enjoyed in France, Germany, New York, the British Isles and the Netherlands. They combine clown acts, juggling, acrobatics, dance and music.

#### ART AND MAGIC

One of the leading figures in Finnish contemporary circus is **Kalle Nio**, who graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts. Nio is a visual and video artist and a magician who works with visual theatre, contemporary circus, short films and video installations. As a magician, Nio specialises in developing new tricks and a new type of magic. He is also one of the founders of the theatre group WHS, which has greatly advanced Finnish contemporary circus arts. The group has performed in over 30 countries, with visiting acts at festivals, circus performances, art museums, theatres and puppet theatres.



Kalle Nio and Vera Tegelman in Lähtö. © Tom Hakala.

## Art goes underground

A fresh attraction for art lovers is situated in the heart of Helsinki. The **Amos Rex** complex consists of the art museum below ground, the Bio Rex movie theatre and foyer, and the Lasipalatsi square.

“Our principle has been to create a space that takes into consideration changes in art as well the as ever-evolving ways in which art is made and presented”, says museum director **Kai Kartio**.

### FINNISH CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS TO CHECK OUT

**Eija-Liisa Ahtila** is a contemporary visual artist and filmmaker. She experiments with narrative storytelling in her films and cinematic installations. She has dealt with the unsettling human dramas at the centre of personal relationships, family relations and death, and in her later works

she investigates the processes of perception and attribution of meaning.

**Otto Karvonen** makes art that evokes mixed responses of confusion, disbelief, hilarity and disapproval. He has worked in various parts of the world for nearly twenty years. His art is often situated in public spaces, sometimes without asking for permission beforehand; he doesn't want to spoil the surprise.

**Katja Tukiainen** works with site-specific narration. She is best known for her paintings and comics. Her works are recognisable by their joyful colours – especially pink and magenta – and sympathetic figures and expressive style. She deals with themes of daily politics, sorrow and longing as well as dreams, love and peace.

**Reetta Niemensivu** combines ink drawing, watercolour, shadow and image processing in her



1. Amos Rex art museum

artwork. Her debut album *Lempi ja rakkaus* (Amour and Love) is said to be a melancholy, beautiful and timeless love story, which could have been used for the Finnish romantic film industry in the 1950s. *Saniainen kukkii juhannuksena* (The Fern Blooms in Midsummer) tells the story of a church that was struck by lightning in the 1920s.

**Ville Andersson** is a versatile artist, both in his use of different media and variety of styles. He is known for his photographs that are often staged, dramatised situations, with actors or dancers as his models. In his latest exhibition he is interested in such non-places, which are not just a matter of absence, but also of the presence of absence.

### Further information:

Frame Contemporary Art Finland  
[frame-finland.fi/en](http://frame-finland.fi/en)



2. Katja Tukiainen, visual artist  
"La Tempesta", oil on canvas,  
Katja Tukiainen 2012

3. Potential for love – Mahdollinen rakkaus by Eija-Liisa Ahtila, 2018. Moving image sculpture. Photographed by Liisa Takala  
© Crystal Eye – Kristallisilmä Oy, Helsinki  
Courtesy of Marian Goodman Gallery, New York, Paris and London



4. Roots of the City by Otto Karvonen, 2013. Public sculpture. Aluminium signs (pointing directly at the birthplaces of various Helsinki residents). Kamppi metro station, Helsinki Finland Commissioned by Helsinki Art Museum Photo © Jonna Öhrnberg



5. Passage by Ville Andersson,  
Archival pigment print, 70x105 cm

6. From *Saniainen kukkii juhannuksena* by Reetta Niemensivu. (Published by Suuri Kurpitsa 2013, and in French by Cambourakis 2014: La Nuit de la Saint-Jean)



## Films in Finland

There may be few speakers of Finnish in the world but Finnish film directors, composers and production professionals are successfully producing content for global audiences. At the same time, they are raising their country's profile as a good production location.

Finland has a population of only 5.5 million, fewer than live in London, but despite the small domestic market, its audiovisual industry produces international gems. At the same time, Finland is becoming an attractive film location, partly thanks to new production incentives.

One of Europe's best-known auteur directors, **Aki Kaurismäki**, has directed 18 feature-length films. He received a Lifetime Achievement Award at the Cannes Film Festival in 2016. The rights to show his latest feature-length film, *Toivon tuolla puolen*, have been sold to over 80 countries. In the wake of Kaurismäki's success, other Finnish AV productions, directors and TV series are branching out abroad. For example, *Hymyilevä mies*, directed by **Juho Kuosmanen**, had its world premiere in

May 2016 at the Cannes Film Festival, where it won the Un Certain Regard award.

Finland also make a lot of high-quality documentaries, especially about nature. Its post-production and CGI expertise is also evident in the success of genre films, like the futuristic sci-fi comedy *Iron Sky* and its sequels, which have been recognised for their special effects.

Finnish programming for children is highly successful abroad. Like the other Nordic countries, Finland is known for an educational approach that does not condescend to children. The success has been fuelled by Finland's good reputation in education but also by long-term work by the public broadcaster in producing and commissioning children's content.

### COUNTRY OF FOUR SEASONS AND THE NIGHTLESS NIGHT

As a production location, Finland is often thought to be cold, remote and expensive. It can indeed be cold; one of Europe's most reliable locations



Aki Kaurismäki



Juho Kuosmanen

1. Ailo's Journey: Director Guillaume Maidatchevsky filming in Finnish Lapland. Photo © MRP Matila Rohr Productions, Borsalino Productions, Film Farm and House of Lapland.

2. Kittilä, Levi, Lapland.

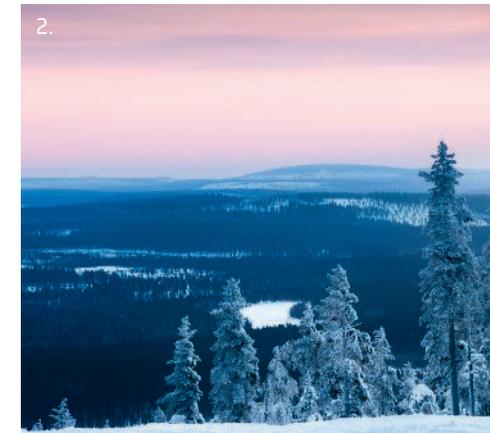
3. Midnight sun in July in Rovaniemi.

to film with snow are located above the Arctic Circle. Thanks to good national infrastructure, fell scenery is also easily accessible; flight and road connections are good and Finnish Lapland has lodging services for any need.

However, there are four seasons and, in the summer, the sun shines for most of the night, too. Finnish cities, in turn, are suitable for filming industrial environments or epochs. Production companies that have filmed in Finland have praised the flexibility of authorities; even large cities are willing to close a street for a day.

Finland is not remote. The flight time from many European cities is only a few hours – and the shortest flight route from Asia to Europe is through Helsinki.

As an incentive, production companies can apply to have 25 per cent of costs incurred in Finland reimbursed. The Finnish Film Foundation also funds co-productions involving Finnish AV operators.



Finnish AV industry workers are entrepreneurs, used to working on a variety of tasks across multiple areas of responsibility. Professional production teams are compact, agile and efficient, with a positive outlook. They are proud of their ability to solve problems. Finnish special effects and post-production expertise are also esteemed internationally.

### FINANCIAL INCENTIVES TO MOVE PRODUCTION TO FINLAND

Since 2017, Finnish AV expertise has become even more accessible. A 25% Cash Rebate incentive allows production companies from around the world to be reimbursed for a quarter of their production costs in Finland. Rebates are available for full-feature films, documentaries, scripted TV series and animations if their budget is sufficiently large and the amount spent in Finland exceeds a certain threshold. For example, the minimum total budget for full-feature films is EUR 2.5 million.

Applications can be made online at any time of the year. The rebates are granted by Business Finland, which decides in 40 days whether they are payable and then pays within 30 days of receiving the auditor's report. Any production phase, ranging from screenwriting to music and post-production, can be located in Finland. For example, if a production company's audited costs of filming in Finland are € 300,000 it can receive € 75,000 back from Business Finland.

#### Further information:

The Finnish Film Foundation [SES.fi/en](http://SES.fi/en)  
Business Finland [www.businessfinland.fi/en](http://www.businessfinland.fi/en)



#### Cases:

##### FEEL-GOOD ENTERTAINMENT

**Gigglebug** and her friends are Finnish animation characters that entertain children and the young at heart all over the world. The series of tales of the little bug have been sold to 13 countries, making it the second largest Finnish TV format since the **Moomins**. In addition to the TV series, Gigglebug has been featured in popular games, children's books, toys and children's music. It was created by Gigglebug Entertainment, established in 2013, which has also developed the series 101 Dalmatian Street for the Disney Channel.



##### FINNISH TV SELLS WELL INTERNATIONALLY

A *Nordic Noir* crime drama *Bordertown* is currently making Finnish TV history. The series, completed in 2016 and based in Lappeenranta near the Russian border, is the most broadly distributed Finnish TV drama: its rights have been sold to over 40 countries and it is also available on Netflix. Previous successful Finnish TV series have been *Madventures*, *The Dudesons* and *Kill Arman*, which were shown in over 100 countries.

*The Ultimate Expedition* series developed by Finnish Rabbit Films is the largest non-fiction TV production on the pay-TV channel YouTube Red owned by Google. In the series, nine celebrities with no previous experience of mountain-climbing climb a Peruvian mountain.

##### SPECIAL CONDITIONS

"Finland has filming locations everywhere, which is inspiring for film-makers and gives them freedom. We have freedom to move – there is plenty of public space as well as a tremendous number of nature and scenic locations accessible through public right of access. When thinking about filming conditions, there is plenty of light from spring to autumn and it has a special quality - consider for example the evening sun shining from low in the sky." *Selma Vilhunen is a Finnish film director and screenwriter. Her latest works include prize-winning films such as the follow-up documentary Hobbyhorse Revolution (2017) and family drama Little Wing (2016).*



### *Small flexible giant*

**F**ounded by inspired enthusiasts, the game industry has become Finland's largest creative exporter. The domestic market is small, so hit games like Angry Birds, Clash of Clans and Max Payne and many others were made directly for global markets.

The very first Finnish digital game was produced as early as 1979. In three decades, game industry has become Finland's largest exporter of creative arts. The world market continues to grow, with games for young and old alike. Because of the small size of the domestic market, Finnish companies develop their games directly for global audiences.

As with many other creative industries, many successful gaming companies have been founded by enthusiasts who play games and develop them for fun. The first commercial games appeared in the mid-1980s and first still existing companies were established in mid 90's. The oldest compa-

nies in the industry are already over 20 years old. This has given them solid business expertise.

Finnish game companies look after the gaming community, because players are an important resource for them. Gaming has become ever more social, involving teamwork. YouTubers and eSport events around the world also strengthen the connection between gaming companies and gamers.

Currently, there are approximately 250 gaming companies in Finland. The well-educated population is an important resource for them, and they also train the talent they need. They are already very international employers; nearly one fifth of their workers are from other countries. They recruit senior professionals both domestically and abroad.

#### **FAVOURABLE MARKETS**

Mobile gaming is one of the most rapidly growing types of gaming. Nokia Corporation contribut-

ed to this success, guiding the Finnish gaming industry and bringing mobile expertise to game companies. However, Finland develops games for nearly all existing platforms ranging from triple A console games to VR games, smartwatches and online games.

Because of the small domestic market, companies cooperate rather than compete. Game developers meet monthly and are active communicators, making cumulative expertise available to all companies. Moreover, many global gaming companies have established offices in Helsinki and other cities, or invested in Finnish companies. Most industry funding comes from international sources, but many of the companies are owned by their employees. This supports a flexible start-up culture where new ideas are boldly tested.

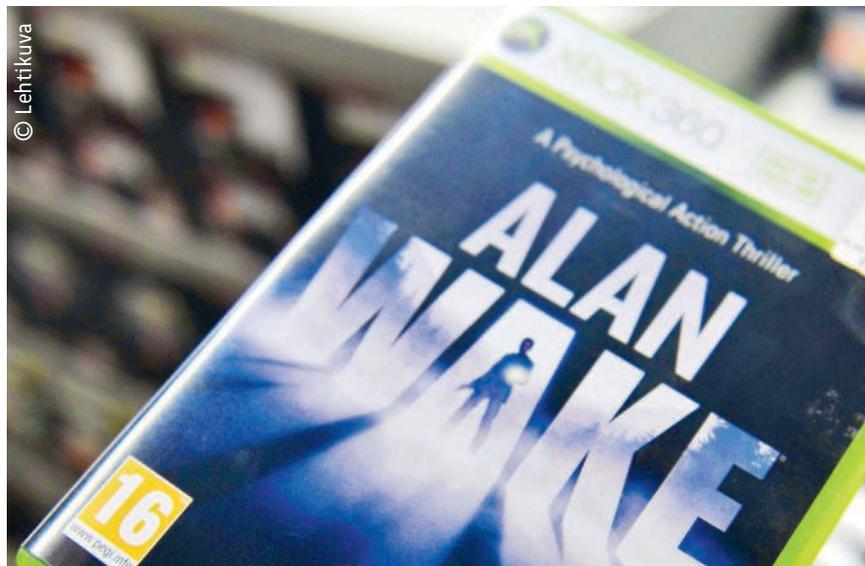
#### **Further information:**

Neogames [www.neogames.fi/en](http://www.neogames.fi/en)

#### **IMPORTANT YEARS FOR THE FINNISH GAMING INDUSTRY**

- 1979 the first Finnish digital game is developed.
- 1995 establishment of the first Finnish gaming companies still in operation.
- 2016 industry revenues in Finland reach EUR 2.5 billion, and 7% of global mobile game revenue is generated by Finnish companies.

GameXpo 2017, Helsinki.  
© Heidi Koivunen / Messukeskus Helsinki



### Cases:

#### STORYTELLERS' STUDIO

Remedy Entertainment is Finland's most successful developer of storytelling action games. The rise of the industry dates from *Max Payne*, a game published by Remedy in 2001. *Max Payne* became a global phenomenon, selling over 8 million copies, and was made into a Hollywood movie. Other well-known games by the same company are *Alan Wake* and *Quantum Break*, which is also linked to a TV series. Remedy's games are typically story-based, resembling movies, and contain skilful world-building.



#### MAKING OLD-SCHOOL WORK

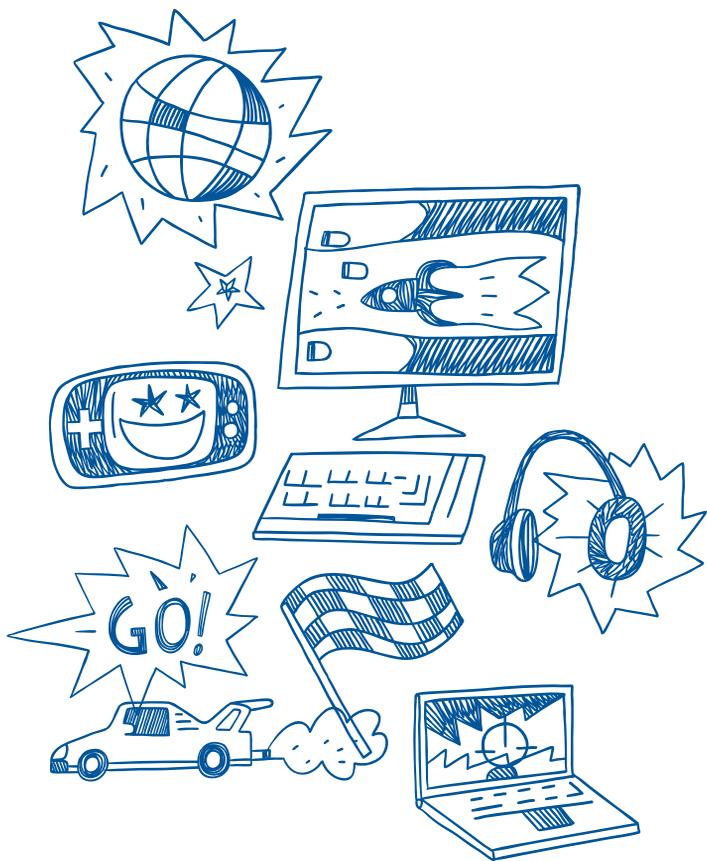
"Finland's free further education increases the availability of skilled labour and a good team spirit encourages new entrants to gaming. Information and contacts can be easily acquired through company associations, while the national technology agency (Tekes) has helped develop game development technology. The roots of the gaming industry are deep in the demo scene, and an experimental and supportive atmosphere made the first global successes possible. The hit games have served as motivators and models, and have also brought international investors and workers to Finland."

*Mariina Hallikainen, Chief executive officer Colossal Order Ltd, which specialises in developing city simulation games for PCs. The company has published three Cities games. The best known of these is the Cities: Skylines, published in 2015.*

#### THE ANGRY BIRDS PHENOMENON

*Angry Birds*, developed by Rovio, has been a huge success – both as a mobile game and a phenomenon. The original game of small birds protecting their eggs was launched in 2009 and with over 3 billion downloads, *Angry Birds* games are the world's best-selling mobile game brand. *Angry Birds* has generated an enormous amount of merchandising and a movie, which became one of the most successful game-based movies of all time.





## Did you know?

Finland has a vibrant, successful gaming industry. 98 per cent of the game production is exported, and Finnish mobile games generate roughly 7 per cent of global mobile game revenues.

The views expressed herein are solely those of the authors.

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**SUOMI  
FINLAND**

