

Equality Plan for Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma

The Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma is an art museum for all. It complies with the Finnish National Gallery's Equality Plan for 2017–2019. The plan underlies Kiasma's work to develop its operational practices and structures, the aim of which is to promote the social, cultural, physical, economic and regional equality of our audiences and to take into account their diversity.

Principles of equality in Kiasma and the Finnish National Gallery

1. We are an art museum for all, with a vigorously growing and increasingly diversified audience base.
2. Our programming and audience services promote intercultural understanding and interaction.
3. The museum itself and our online services are accessible socially, physically, culturally and economically.
4. We are committed to taking the diversification of society into account in our collection operations.
5. We have zero tolerance for bullying, harassment and discrimination.
6. The diverse backgrounds of our staff are a valuable asset.
7. The staff in all our units are committed to promoting equality in their work.

In the sections below we will discuss equality in Kiasma in the context of our human resources, audiences and programming.

Kiasma as a workplace

Kiasma's operations are based on the values of the Finnish National Gallery: *together, transparent, professional*. We have zero tolerance for harassment, discrimination and improper behaviour. We continuously develop our operational culture and policies. Our new human resources programme for 2018–2019 prioritises managerial work and leadership, as well as the transparency of job profiles and salaries within the museum.

Equality and diversity among Kiasma staff

Strengths

- Job profiles and educational backgrounds of staff are diverse
- Everybody receives same pay for the same job, regardless of gender
- Staff have a broad gender and age spectrum
- Different minorities are represented on our staff

Challenges

- Most of the staff are ethnic Finns
- Many positions in the museum require high language skills in Finnish or Swedish
- The number of educated people with an immigrant background who seek entry into this field remains quite small. We create preconditions and work to lower the threshold for people to seek entry into the field through internships and various projects (e.g., internship opportunities at different stages of study, working as guides, working in

workshops, Art Testers initiative [*Taidetestaajat*]).

Equality and diversity with respect to audiences

Kiasma has from the beginning held pluralism and polyphony to be a core value of its programming and collection work. Cultural sensitivity, which here means cultural consideration for special and minority groups – and more broadly the strengthening of multicultural and intercultural dialogue – has become increasingly discerning over time.

We promote economic equality by offering free admission to all under 18-year-olds and a free admission day for all once a month. Cultural and regional equality is promoted by providing free admission for asylum seekers and creating events for specific age groups such as the *Tokaluokkalaisten taideretki* (an excursion to Kiasma for all second graders in Helsinki) and Art Testers (an initiative for eighth-graders from all over Finland, running 2017–2019). Regional accessibility is also served by our online services, such as the online collection display and our collection of online art. Kiasma Library, a library specialising in contemporary art, is free and open to the public.

Our programming and audience services also promote intercultural interaction through collaboration in connection with events (e.g., Helsinki Pride and URB Festival), and public statements (e.g., flying the rainbow flag during the Helsinki Pride festival and raising the Sami flag on the Sami National Day).

The diversity of our audiences is an important consideration in designing the museum experience. The museum itself is accessible, and physical, attitudinal and information accessibility are important in the design of programmes and services. Exhibition texts are provided in four languages (Finnish, Swedish, English, Russian). Our website offers information in Finnish, Swedish and English as well as basic information in Russian, Japanese and Chinese. The museum experience at Kiasma is also designed with gender sensitivity in mind. For instance, we have converted some of the toilets into gender-neutral facilities, we have added 'Other' as a gender option in our visitor questionnaires and we have designed our communications so as not to exclude any family configurations, genders or groups.

Equality and diversity in programming

Kiasma collects and displays topical contemporary art that reflects our age as widely as possible. Important factors in our programming are an understanding of the times, social commentary and a readiness to react to events. The invitational exhibitions and events at Kiasma cover a broad range of different phenomena, contents and media in contemporary art. Interesting debates on art and society are reflected in the selection, planning and implementation of exhibitions and events in Kiasma.

We follow the field of art on a broad front and make it a point to learn to know artists and their works, whether residing in Finland or elsewhere in the world. The presentation of artists and their works in exhibitions requires cultural sensitivity and its constant refinement. Kiasma links topical issues to their historical, artistic and cultural context to help audiences see artworks as part of the

present situation. It is important today to recognise current debates on cultural borrowing and appropriation and to point out the long history of the issue in visual art and postcolonial discourse.

Contemporary art highlights by its very nature the plurality of identities and values. Kiasma strives to make the encounter with even challenging works of art as accessible as possible. Art is contextualised in many ways in the museum: through curatorial choices, exhibition- and work-specific texts, an online guide, guided tours of all kinds, and workshops. Our planning takes into consideration different audiences, and we communicate about our work in a way that is designed to reach our potential visitors.

Kiasma employs artists in many different expert roles, including that of artist, curator, guide and writer. Kiasma also pays compensation for artists featured in its exhibitions (artist fee, copyright fee, daily allowance, production grant, or a combination of these).

Contemporary art as channel for freedom of speech and expression

Contemporary art and interpretations of contemporary art serve as a channel for the freedom of speech and expression in society. In the course of the museum's 20 years of history, Kiasma has consistently presented multicultural, socially relevant and also socially engaged art. The museum's programme has explored topical issues in art and society, highlighting such issues as human rights and environmental problems and also themes relating to cultural encounter and interaction.

Kiasma promotes the freedom of speech and expression by:

- Supporting polyphony through art and the museum's programming
- Ensuring that everyone working with the museum is guaranteed freedom of expression
- Offering different interpretations of events and exhibitions: catalogue texts and exhibition texts, both in the museum and online
- Encouraging audiences to make their own interpretations and to discuss and share their experiences