

Scholarship Application Instructions of the Finnish Illustration Association

By Minna Ainoa and Heli Halme

1. JUSTIFY. Why should this particular illustration project be funded? Is it artistically relevant or for some other reason? Justifying the relevance of the project is paramount, and mere employment or the client's reluctance to pay are not sufficient arguments.

2. SAVE. Always save your application as its own document before filling in the form. This will allow you to evaluate the application as a whole and have someone else read it, and you will notice if something essential (e.g., the amount applied for) is missing. This way you will also avoid any data loss due to a network error in the application programme, for example. You can use your text as a template for multiple scholarship applications.

3. MAKE A REALISTIC ESTIMATE. Be realistic about funding. Do not overestimate or underestimate the time you will spend on the project.

4. BE CONCISE! The scholarship jury will read a huge number of applications. If your application is too long or unclear you will be eliminated. Good applications are often quite short - but on the other hand, superficial applications of just a couple of sentences often do not receive funding.

5. BE CLEAR. In the first sentence, explain right away what you are applying for and what your project is. Carefully prepared applications stand out in a positive way. Choose your writing style carefully: an application that is too silly or too personal can be risky because the jury needs clear information.

6. READ THE INSTRUCTIONS! If the call is for expense scholarship applications, you cannot apply for an artistic work scholarship. If the call is for illustration work scholarship applications, you cannot apply for a work equipment scholarship. If the instructions state that the scholarships will not be awarded for comics, screenplays or animations, you cannot apply for a scholarship for these purposes.

7. WHO ARE YOU WRITING FOR? Think about who might be reading the application and write it for them. The applications addressed to the Finnish Illustration Association are read by fellow illustrators, so they are already familiar with the practices and demands of the illustrator's profession. If you are applying for funding from some other art organization, you can explain the illustrator's work a bit more.

8. ALLOW ENOUGH TIME FOR THE APPLICATION. The end result will be worth the effort. A wellmade application can also be used as a template for other scholarship applications. Allow time to attach images of sufficiently high technical quality to the application.

9. BE POSITIVE AND OBJECTIVE. Appealing to misery, bad contracts or low income usually doesn't improve your position in scholarship decisions. It is a better idea to explain why the project is important to you and the wider public and what makes your project special.

10. REPORT ANY CHANGES. If you receive funding for the project from elsewhere before you receive a scholarship decision from the Finnish Illustration Association, you are obliged to notify the Association of this change. If the new funding is partial funding for your project, it will not normally affect your chances of receiving a scholarship.

DON'T BE DISHEARTENED BY REJECTION! Scholarship applications by some of the most famous illustrators also get rejected all the time.

Below is an example of a short and clear scholarship application.

**Scholarship application for work
on the illustrations of the book
ODE TO STRANGENESS**

The non-fiction book Ode to Strangeness is a work that combines illustration, illustrative infographics, non-fiction and essay writing. I will be making illustrations for the book, and the text will be produced in collaboration with journalist Kaisu Tervonen.

Ode to Strangeness deals with strangeness from the perspective of both the individual and society. What is it like to be an eccentric in Finland, where being ordinary is a virtue? Is society better if it tolerates strangeness and anomalies? Our thesis is that people need both the community and those who question its rules.

Our aim is to pay special attention to the layout of the book. When we talk about strangeness, it is natural to think about what a book should look like in general and what rules are there concerning its form. My illustrations will make the book easily approachable but also challenge the assumptions associated with a non-fiction book aimed at adults.

The illustration work will take 3 months. We have received a scholarship from the WSOY Literature Foundation for writing the book. There is no confirmed publisher yet, but a few have expressed preliminary interest.

I will be working in a new way for me because the book's illustrations will play a particularly important role in terms of content and communication: to put it roughly, there will be more communication than adornment. The fact that I am also one of the writers of the book makes it possible to expand the graphic expression in terms of content: in other words, some of the content will be produced directly as illustrations, instead of illustrating text once it is finished.

- Aiju Salminen, 2020

The application concisely answers the following questions: what the project is, how it is implemented, who the contributors are, what the existing funding is, what is special about the project and why it should be funded.