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CONTEMPORARY SCULPTURE THROUGH THE EYES OF A CHILD - IVAN MEŠTROVIĆ

Summary: The objective of this research was to examine the reactions of pupils attending lower grades of primary school to the presented artworks of contemporary sculpture, in this case the artworks by the well-known Croatian sculptor Ivan Meštrović. The survey was conducted in the area of the Split-Dalmatia County and included 300 primary school pupils attending 1st to 4th grade, including 151 boys and 149 girls. The pupils were shown three very important artworks by the mentioned artist which differ in the approach to the volume design and composition type. These are the following works: *Mother and Child*, *Monument to Indians in Chicago* and *The Spring of Life*. The results of the research have shown that there is a statistically significant difference in the perception and acceptance of certain works by Ivan Meštrović with regard to the age and gender of the pupils. In open-ended questions, the pupils presented their observations on certain works of the well-known artist, which due to their directness and originality represent the most valuable part of this research.

Keywords: *pupils, visual arts, contemporary art, sculpture*

INTRODUCTION

Artistic knowledge promotes and develops the cognitive life of a child, opens the door to expressive communication and nonverbal ways of creating and exchange of knowledge and meaning. With its contents, art encourages children to think critically, imaginatively and creatively, allowing pupils the intellectual flexibility (Brajčić, Kuščević, 2016). Art, as well as science, should certainly be present in the upbringing and education of young generations. "Auconturier and Lapierre believe that participation in artistic disciplines contributes to the emotional and social development of children and the young: it establishes, develops and promotes concrete artistic abilities and skills, influences the design of aesthetic criteria and assessments, encourages cooperation and two-way communication" (according to Vidulin-Orbanić, 2009: 141). According to Vigotski, art "compels us to strive beyond our life to what is on the other side of it... for a reason the art since ancient times has been observed as a part and means of education" (Ivon, 2009: 15).

Artwork is one of the very important educational resources during art education activities. An artwork has the task of encouraging and engaging the intellectual activity of children in order to raise the awareness of the visual arts language and to encourage the cognitive development of a child (Brajčić, Kuščević, 2016). Although a work of visual art in visual arts education presents a suitable artistic stimulus by

means of which the planned task should be clarified to pupils, thanks to its complexity and openness it can contribute to the development of the entire child's experience in her/his knowing the world, which undoubtedly contributes to the pupil's intellectual, moral and aesthetic development.

In order for children to understand the meanings of artworks not primarily intended for them, it is necessary to introduce them to the complexity of the artwork to develop their visual-artistic and thus as well cultural-aesthetic sensitivity (Brajčić, Kušćević, 2016).

CONTEMPORARY ART AND ITS PEDAGOGICAL VALUE

In the culture of the 20th century, art has a significant place since the 20th century presented a highly fertile and dynamic period of artistic creation. Never before has the history of art seen so many important changes, fundamental innovations that laid the foundations for understanding the reality through different ideas and freedom in visual expression. The social changes present in artistic endeavors have determined the internal logic of many movements and artistic impulses, therefore visual art and artistic production provoked by the spirit of the times cannot be observed isolated from the time and space, that is from the 20th-century culture in which it has been immersed. 20th-century artists do not respect traditional values, opinions, and ways of art expression, and are not marked or linked by a single style, but there is a simultaneous existence of a variety of styles. Though 20th-century artists often revealed common goals, common manifestations proclaiming the ideas present in their artwork, yet based on the foundations of existing styles of their times, they explored and built personal, sometimes very different artistic styles. The art of the 20th century is constantly in search of new values, engaging in constant research and experimenting as well as science (Brajčić, Kušćević, 2016).

Acceptance of works of visual art is developed in communication with an artwork, and is based on a culture of viewing, observation, perception, reflection and interpretation of the perceived contents. Goodman claims that "artworks are messages that convey facts, thoughts, feelings; their study belongs to the newly-born omnivore called 'theory of communication'" (Goodman 2002, 2014). Feldman (Feldman, 1970) and Chapman (Chapman, 1978) talk about aesthetic education of younger children and believe a preschool child possesses a capacity for aesthetic response. Feldman argues that a child can perform spontaneous activities as early as in kindergarten, in the way performed by professional art critics - describing, analyzing, interpreting and evaluating, but in random order. According to Feldman, teaching in art is to a large extent an activity of systematization of child's uncontrollable desire to talk about art.

When communicating with a work of visual art during visual art classes, an important segment proves to be as well the introduction of works of contemporary art. Understanding contemporary art is a prerequisite for quality pedagogical work, while the presence of contemporary art in pedagogical work is indispensable (Zupančić, Duh, 2009).

On the basis of these hypotheses, we carried out a research on the reactions of children to contemporary artworks of sculpture. Since modern sculpture is an extensive and wide term, we focused on the work of one of its significant representatives, the sculptor Ivan Meštrović, who marked not only the Croatian but also the world contemporary sculpture. Protić states that he has “transformed, raised and was first to take the Croatian sculpture to the world stage, himself becoming the concept of values thereof on the path from the real and the mythical to the sacral” (Protić, 1982: 28). The sources and incentives of his creation are found in Paris impressionism and the Vienna secession, but also in the ancient sculpture of the Mediterranean peoples and the rich tradition of his own people (Kečkemet, 1983). His monuments can be found both in the country and abroad. Adding to this his public and special pedagogical work, it is clear this artist gave not only a significant contribution to the contemporary sculpture of his homeland, but also to all mankind.

METHODOLOGY

The aim of this study was to examine the reactions of lower graders of primary school to the artworks of contemporary sculpture, in this case, the works by the sculptor Ivan Meštrović as a prominent representative thereof. The works included “Mother and Child”, “Monument to the Indians in Chicago”, and “The Spring of Life”.

The tasks that have arisen from the research objective were:

- to identify possible differences in understanding and experiencing the chosen works in terms of pupils’ age and gender
- to explore the impressions of the pupils in the contact with the sculptural artwork.

HYPOTHESES

The following hypotheses have been set in this research:

H 1 - It is assumed that more higher graders (grade 3 and 4) of primary school will recognize the motif compared to lower graders (grade 1 and 2).

H 2 – The research will examine the difference in pupils’ responses regarding their impressions on the observed sculptures in terms of pupils’ gender and grade.

METHOD OF CONDUCTING THE RESEARCH

For the purposes of this research, a questionnaire was made to examine the reactions of lower graders to the famous works of Ivan Meštrović. The survey questionnaire was anonymous and was used solely for the research purposes.

Pupils completed the survey questionnaires by first looking at a given artwork, then answering the questions asked, or expressing their views. The questions were closed type, while the last question was an open type in which children expressed their impressions of the artwork.

Responses from the completed questionnaires were processed in the SPSS - 17.00 statistical program, using the following statistical procedures for data processing: relative numbers and Chi-square.

RESEARCH PLACE, TIME AND RESPONDENTS

The survey was conducted in the area of Split-Dalmatia County and included 300 primary school pupils attending from 1st to 4th grade. The results showed that boys prevailed in the surveyed schools, i.e. 151 of them compared to 149 girls. Speaking in percentages, there were 50.3% of boys and 49.7% of girls (*Table 1*).

Table 1. Respondents in terms of their gender

	Number of pupils	Percentage (%)
male	151	50.3 (%)
female	149	49.7 (%)
Σ	300	100.0 (%)

Out of a total of 300 pupils, 75 pupils were surveyed in each grade. According to *Table 1*, out of 75 surveyed pupils in the first grade, 40 were boys and 35 girls. In the second grade, the situation is similar, with 75 pupils among whom 38 were boys and 37 girls. The third grade shows the same results like the second grade. In the fourth grade, out of 75 pupils there were 35 boys and 40 girls.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this research, three significant works by Ivan Meštrović were used: “Mother and Child”, “Monument to the Indians in Chicago”, and “The Spring of Life”.



Photo 1. Mother and Child



Photo 2. Monument to the Indians in Chicago



Photo 3. The Spring of Life

PHOTO 1. MOTHER AND CHILD

Do you recognize the motif on this sculpture?

Table 2. Pupils' responses to the question if they recognize the motif on the sculpture

	Number of pupils	Percentage (%)
yes	234	78.0 (%)
no	66	22.0 (%)
Σ	300	100.0 (%)

Table 2 shows pupils' answers to the question if they recognize the motif on the sculpture by Ivan Meštrović entitled "Mother and Child". Out of a total of 300 pupils, 234 pupils said they recognized the motif, and 66 pupils stated they did not recognize the motif. Speaking in percentages, 78.0% pupils said they recognize the motif, and 22.0% of them did not recognize it.

Table 3. Pupils' responses in terms of their gender

Do you recognize the motif on this sculpture?	Gender		Σ
	male	female	
Yes	115	119	234
No	35	31	66
Σ	150	150	300

Table 3 shows pupils' answers to the question if they recognize the motif on the sculpture with regard to their gender. Thus, out of 150 pupils, 115 recognized the motif, while 35 did not recognize it. Female pupils have similar results; out of 150 girls, 119 of them recognized the motif, while 31 did not recognize it.

Table 4. Pupils' responses in terms of the grades they attend

	Do you recognize the motif on this sculpture?		Σ
	yes	no	
Grade:			
first	62	13	75
second	58	17	75
third	55	20	75
fourth	59	16	75
Σ	234	66	300

Responses to the question if the pupils recognize the motif are arranged according to the grades they attend and are shown in Table 4. In the first grade, out of a total of 75 pupils, 62 pupils said they recognize the motif, and 13 did not recognize it. In the second grade, out of 75 pupils, 58 recognized the motif, and 17 did not recognize it. In the third grade, out of 75 pupils, 55 recognized the motif, and 20 pupils did not recognize it. In the fourth grade, out of 75 pupils, 59 of them said they recognize the motif, and 16 pupils did not recognize it.

Table 5. Chi-Square test results

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1,943 ^a	3	,584
Likelihood Ratio	1,954	3	,582
Linear-by-Linear Association	,558	1	,455
N of Valid Cases	300		

a. 0 cells (,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 16,50.

The results of the Chi-square tests shown in the table indicate that there is no statistically significant difference in the pupils' responses to the question if they recognize the motif on the sculpture "Mother and Child" by Ivan Meštrović.

What are your impressions of this sculpture?

Table 6. Pupils' responses regarding their impressions of the observed sculpture

What are your impressions regarding this sculpture?	Number of pupils	Percentage (%)
I was impressed	202	67.3 (%)
I have no impressions	62	20.7 (%)
I was not impressed	36	12.0 (%)
Σ	300	100.0 (%)

Table 6 shows the results of pupils' impressions of the observed sculpture. Out of a total of 300 pupils, 202 pupils stated they were impressed by the sculpture, 62 pupils did not have any impressions, and 36 pupils reported that the sculpture did not impress them. The results shown in the percentages are as follows: 67.33% of pupils chose the first response, meaning the sculpture impressed them, 20.67% remained indifferent, and 12.00% of pupils decided that the sculpture did not impress them. The results show this sculpture left an impression on most pupils.

Table 7. Pupils' responses in terms of the grades they attend

Grade:	What are your impressions of this sculpture?			Σ
	I was impressed	I have no impressions	I was not impressed	
First	42	23	10	75
Second	55	11	9	75
Third	51	16	8	75
Fourth	54	12	9	75
Σ	202	62	36	300

Table 7 shows pupils' answers ranked by grades. Out of a total of 75 pupils in the first grade, 42 pupils answered that the sculpture impressed them, 23 pupils did not have any impressions, and 10 pupils stated that the sculpture did not impress them. In the second grade, out of 75 pupils, 55 confirmed that the sculpture impressed them, 11 pupils had no impressions, and 9 of them were not impressed. In the third grade, out of 75 pupils, 51 pupils confirmed the sculpture impressed them, 16 pupils said they had no impressions, and 8 pupils were not impressed. In the fourth grade, out of a total of 75 surveyed pupils, 54 pupils stated that they were impressed by the sculpture, 12 pupils had no impressions, and 9 pupils were not impressed.

Table 8. Chi-Square test results

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	8,043 ^a	6	,235
Likelihood Ratio	7,856	6	,249
Linear-by-Linear Association	1,768	1	,184
N of Valid Cases	300		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 9,00.

The results of the Chi-square tests show that there is no statistically significant difference in responses with regard to the age of the pupils. Most of the pupils in all four grades were impressed by this sculpture.

Verbalized impressions of pupils of the observed sculpture “Mother and Child”:

Grade 1:

- *The sculpture leaves every and any impression on me*
- *I think the sculpture shows a woman who holds a baby and wants to kiss it*
- *It is a mother and a child*
- *This sculpture is beautiful*
- *Leaves a nice and tidy impression on me*
- *I have a feeling that a woman loves her child*
- *It reminds me of when I was a little girl*
- *Leaves me with an imaginative impression*

Grade 2:

- *I see a woman holding a baby in her arms*
- *It could be Mary with Jesus*
- *It is a woman who looks at the baby and tells something to it*
- *It leaves a happy impression*
- *This is the mother who gave birth to a child*
- *Leaves a religious impression on me*
- *Mother breastfeeding her baby*

Grade 3:

- *They are a mother and a child, as if in the time of Jesus Christ*
- *It is a mother who loves her child*
- *Very nice, the baby hugs the mother meaning that it returns love to her*
- *It's nice to see them so happy*
- *Leaves the impression of love*
- *It reminds me of when I was born*
- *Emotional!*

Grade 4:

- *The sculpture is beautiful and reminds me of the Pharaoh's daughter who took Moses out of the river*
- *I see Our Lady who holds Jesus*
- *Looks like a babysitter putting a baby to sleep*
- *It gives me a nice impression because a new soul has come to the world*
- *It is Our Lady who sleeps and holds Jesus in her arms*
- *Leaves a happy, beautiful and joyful impression!*
- *That is life!*

PHOTO 2. IVAN MEŠTROVIĆ, "MONUMENT TO THE INDIANS IN CHICAGO"

Do you recognize the motif on this sculpture?

Table 9. Pupils' responses to the question

Do you recognize the motif on this sculpture?	Number of pupils	Percentage (%)
yes	237	79.0 %
no	63	21.0 %
Σ	300	100.0 %

Table 9 shows that out of a total of 300 surveyed pupils, 237 stated that they recognized the motif on the sculpture, and 63 pupils did not recognize the motif. Speaking in percentages, 79.00% of pupils confirmed they recognize the motif, and 21.00% of them did not recognize it.

Table 10. Pupils' responses in terms of their gender

Do you recognize the motif on this sculpture?	Gender		Σ
	male	female	
yes	120	117	237
no	33	30	63
Σ	153	147	300

Table 10 shows pupils' responses with regard to their gender. Out of 153 male pupils, 120 recognized the motif, and 33 of them did not recognize the motif, while out of a total of 147 female pupils, 117 recognized the motif, and 30 of them did not recognize it.

Table 11. Pupils' responses in terms of the grade they attend

	Do you recognize the motif on this sculpture?		Σ
	yes	no	
Grade:			
First	64	11	75
second	61	14	75
Third	56	19	75
fourth	56	19	75
Σ	237	63	300

The results shown in *Table 11* are arranged with regard to the grade the pupils attend. Out of a total of 75 pupils in the first grade, 64 pupils recognized the motif, and 11 pupils did not. In the second grade, out of 75 pupils, 61 pupils recognized the motif, and 14 pupils said they did not recognize it. In the third and fourth grade, the results are the same. Out of 75 pupils, 56 recognized the motif, while 19 pupils did not.

Table 12. Chi-Square test results

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	3,757 ^a	3	,289
Likelihood Ratio	3,848	3	,278
Linear-by-Linear Association	3,368	1	,066
N of Valid Cases	300		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 15,75.

The results of the Chi-square tests show there is no statistically significant difference in the responses regarding the grade the pupils attend, indicating that in all grade there is an equal proportion of pupils who do not recognize the motif of the presented artwork.

What are your impressions of this sculpture?

Table 13. Pupils' impressions of the sculpture

What are your impressions of this sculpture?	Number of pupils	Percentage (%)
I was impressed	187	62.3 (%)
I have no impressions	81	27.0 (%)
I was not impressed	32	10.7 (%)
Σ	300	100.0 (%)

In *Table 13*, out of the total of 300 surveyed pupils, 187 confirmed that they were impressed by the sculpture, which makes 62.33% of the pupils, 81 pupils stated that they had no impression, which makes 27.00% of the pupils, and 32 pupils stated they were not impressed, which makes 10.67% of pupils.

Table 14. Pupils' responses in terms of their gender

What are your impressions of this sculpture?	Gender		Σ
	male	female	
I was impressed	117	70	187
I have no impressions	27	54	81
I was not impressed	9	23	32
Σ	153	147	300

Table 14 shows pupils' responses in terms of their gender. Out of a total of 153 surveyed male pupils, 117 stated that sculpture impressed them, 27 pupils had no impression, and 9 pupils stated that the sculpture did not impress them. The situation with female pupils is different. Out of the 147 female pupils, 70 confirmed that the sculpture impressed them, 54 pupils had no impression, and 32 pupils stated that the sculpture did not impress them. The sculpture is more appealing to boys than to girls, as expected with regard to the motif of a horseman that is potentially more interesting to boys and more immanent to their preferences.

Table 15. Pupils' responses in terms of grade they attend

Grade:	What are your impressions of this sculpture?			Σ
	I was impressed	I have no impressions	I was not impressed	
first	37	32	6	75
second	48	18	9	75
third	50	22	3	75
fourth	46	24	5	75
Σ	181	96	23	300

Table 15 shows the pupils' responses as to how the sculpture impresses them. In the first grade, out of a total of 75 pupils, 37 confirmed that sculpture impressed them, 32 pupils were indifferent, and 6 pupils stated that the sculpture did not impress them. In the second grade, out of 75 pupils, 48 were impressed by the sculpture, 18 were indecisive, and 9 pupils stated that the sculpture did not impress them. In the third grade, out of 75 pupils, 50 were impressed, 22 pupils had no impression, and 3 pupils stated that the sculpture did not impress them. In the fourth grade, out of 75 pupils, 46 stated that the sculpture impressed them, 24 pupils had no impression, and 5 pupils stated that the sculpture did not impress them.

Table 16. Chi-Square test results

	Chi-Square Tests		
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	15,924 ^a	6	,014
Likelihood Ratio	16,255	6	,012
Linear-by-Linear Association	9,885	1	,002
N of Valid Cases	300		

a. 0 cells (,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 8,00.

The results of the Chi-square tests show there is a statistically significant difference in the pupils' responses with regard to the grade they attend ($\chi^2 = 15,924$; $df = 6$; $p < 0,05$).

We conclude that the sculpture gives a better impression to third and fourth grade pupils, which means that older pupils better accept it.

The pupils' impressions on Ivan Meštrović's sculpture "The Monument to the Indians in Chicago" were verbalized by the pupils as follows:

Grade 1:

- The situation is tense
- It's ban Jelačić on the horseback
- Leaves an average happy impression
- The picture is exciting
- Leaves a strong impression
- It's a man on a horse

Grade 2:

- I see a horse and a pharaoh, leaves an artistic impression
- It's a cowboy on a horse but I do not know where he is going
- The statue leaves an excellent impression
- I think this is an Indian with a bow and an arrow, shooting at the enemies
- I think that's the chief
- Maybe it's a horse in the race
- Bravery!
- Beautiful!
- The statue makes me sad
- It gives me the impression of killing

Grade 3:

- I see soldiers with a torch on a horse
- I see a horse and a horseman, I think it's the Alka of Sinj
- It could be a toy of a horse and an Indian, as if in a hurry
- This is ban Josip Jelačić in Zagreb
- I think this is Moses on horseback
- Leaves the impression of pensiveness
- Leaves a nice impression, I love horses
- It's genial!
- The picture is great!

Grade 4:

- Reminds me of an Egyptian on a horse and how the Egyptians went to the Israelites towards the Red Sea and the sea flooded them
- Reminds me of a man on a horse who prepares the people for attack
- An exciting statue, shows the strength of the Indians
- The picture has the power
- I think it's a man on a horse going to war
- It could be the statue of the Mother of Freedom

PHOTO 3. – IVAN MEŠTROVIĆ „THE SPRING OF LIFE“

Do you recognize the motif on this sculpture?

Table 17. Pupils' responses to the question

	Number of pupils	Percentage (%)
yes	151	50.3 (%)
no	149	49.7 (%)
Σ	300	100.0 (%)

Table 17 shows the results of the responses to the question if pupils recognize the motif on the sculpture “The Spring of Life”. Out of the 300 pupils, 151 or 50.33% of them recognized the motif on Meštrović’s sculpture. On the other hand, 149 or 49.67% of them did not recognize the motif.

Table 18. Pupils' attitudes in terms of their gender

	Do you recognize the motif on this sculpture?		Σ
	yes	no	
Gender:			
male	76	75	151
female	75	74	149
Σ	151	149	300

Table 18 shows pupils' attitudes with regard to their gender. Out of a total of 151 male pupils, 76 recognized the motif, while 75 did not recognize it. Also, 75 female pupils said they recognize the motif, while 74 pupils did not recognize it.

Table 19. Pupils' responses in terms of the grades they attend

	Do you recognize the motif on this sculpture?		Σ
	yes	no	
Grade:			
first	34	41	75
second	38	37	75
third	43	32	75
fourth	36	39	75
Σ	151	149	300

Table 19 shows the results of the responses arranged with regard to the grade the pupils attend. In the first grade, out of a total of 75 surveyed pupils, 34 pupils confirmed that they recognized the motif on sculpture and 41 pupils did not recognize the motif. In the second grade, out of 75 pupils, 38 pupils recognized the motif, and

37 pupils did not recognize it. In the third grade out of 75 pupils, 43 recognized the motif and 32 did not recognize it. In the fourth grade out of 75 pupils, 36 recognized the motive, while 39 did not.

Table 20. Chi-Square test results

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2,387 ^a	3	,496
Likelihood Ratio	2,393	3	,495
Linear-by-Linear Association	,322	1	,571
N of Valid Cases	300		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 37,25.

The results of the Chi-square tests show there is no statistically significant difference in the pupils' responses to the question if they recognize the motif on Meštrović's "The Spring of Life" sculpture, with regard to the grade they attend.

What are your impressions of this sculpture?

Table 21. Pupils' responses regarding the question about their impressions of the sculpture "The Spring of Life"

	Number of pupils	Percentage (%)
I was impressed	136	45.3 (%)
I do not know	84	28.0 (%)
I was not impressed	80	26.7 (%)
Σ	300	100.0 (%)

Table 21 shows the responses to the question regarding pupils' impressions of the sculpture "The Spring of Life". Out of a total of 300 surveyed pupils, 136 confirmed that sculpture impressed them, 84 of them were without response, and 80 of them said the sculpture did not impress them. Speaking in percentages, 45.33% of them were impressed, 28.00% remained indifferent, and 26.67% of them were not impressed.

Table 22. Pupils' responses in terms of their gender

	What are your impressions of this sculpture?			Σ
	I was impressed	I do not know	I was not impressed	
Gender:				
male	67	47	37	151
female	69	37	43	149
Σ	136	84	80	300

Table 22 shows pupils' responses in terms of their gender. Out of 151 pupils, 67 of them said they were impressed, 47 were without response, and 37 of them were not impressed. Similar results can be seen with the girls. 69 of them were impressed, 37 without response, and 43 girls were not impressed by the sculpture.

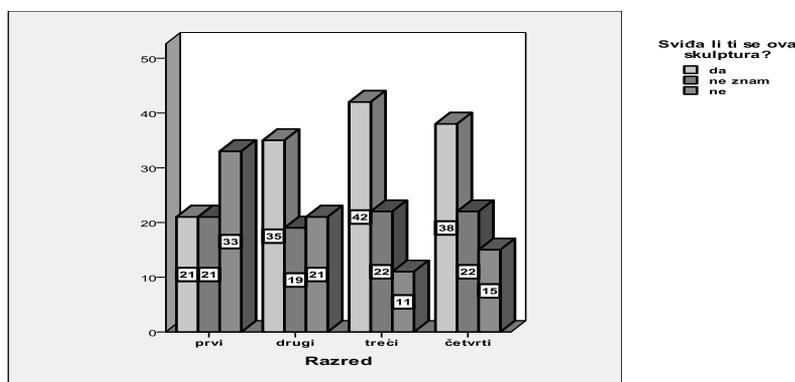


Figure 1. Graphical presentation of pupils' responses in terms of the grade they attend

Figure 1 shows a graph of the results arranged by the grade the pupils attend. In each grade, 75 pupils were surveyed. In the first grade, 21 pupils said they were impressed, the same number of pupils was without response, while 33 students said the sculpture did not impress them. In the second grade there are 35 pupils impressed by the sculpture, 19 pupils without response, and 21 of them said the sculpture did not impress them. In the third grade 42 pupils were impressed by the sculpture, 22 pupils without response, and 11 of them said the sculpture did not impress them. In the fourth grade, 38 students were impressed by the sculpture "The Spring of Life", 22 pupils were without response, and 15 of them were not impressed.

Table 23. Chi-Square test results

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	21,439 ^a	6	,002
Likelihood Ratio	21,603	6	,001
Linear-by-Linear Association	14,434	1	,000
N of Valid Cases	300		

a. 0 cells (,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 20,00.

The results in the table indicate the existence of statistically significant differences in pupils' responses regarding the impression of "The Spring of Life" sculpture. The results are arranged according to the grade the pupils attend ($\chi^2 = 21,439$; $df = 6$; $p < 0,05$). In this case as well it has been shown that higher graders have a more positive impression and a better reaction to the artwork than the pupils attending the first two grades.

Verbalized impressions of the pupils of Ivan Meštrović's sculpture "The Spring of Life":

Grade 1:

- Those are people dancing
- I see people without clothes
- I think those are people who swim around some water
- As if something fell down into the well and they cannot reach it
- It's a creamy cake
- Old-fashioned!
- I see a lot of people gathered around the water
- I think they are thirsty and tired
- I see a basket

Grade 2:

- In the sculpture I see more people in one place and this leaves a positive impression on me
- I see people who save money, it's not easy for them!
- Together we are stronger!
- These are the people who pray
- This monument leaves me with a sad impression
- It is baptism
- I think those are people who drink from the well
- I see something but I do not know what it is
- I think those are angels gathered around the water
- This is the most beautiful monument of all
- I feel good mood when I look at this sculpture
- It's a well
- It is nice

Grade 3:

- Looks like a crown, as if somebody is to be crowned
- These people are gathered in the circle talking about important things
- Looks like a chocolate cake, yummy!
- Reminds me of people who wash their hands
- The monument is crazy
- This is obviously a monument
- Leaves me the impression of abandonment and fear
- I already saw it in Zagreb

Grade 4:

- I think those are people around a jug
- The picture is quite interesting, I think it shows people around a baptistry
- Leaves me with an impression that people will die
- Thirsty people drink water at the well

- It's a tribe
- It is the source of life
- It's in Zagreb, I remember

CONCLUSION

The research has shown that lower graders accept well the works by Ivan Meštrović, a representative of contemporary sculpture. However, in the case of the works entitled “Mother and Child” and “Monument to the Indians in Chicago” pupils understood the motif better. The third artwork “The Spring of Life” proved to be more difficult to understand in terms of the motif, which can be expected because the shape of the bodies interwoven around the well, especially when viewed in the photograph, is more difficult to understand for younger generations. Although the set hypothesis H1 assumed that more higher graders (attending grade 3 and 4) of primary school will recognize the motif in relation to the lower graders (grade 1 and 2), this hypothesis was not confirmed in the research results as the pupils regardless of their age equally recognized or did not recognize the motif of the sculpture.

Hypothesis H2, which assumed a difference in the pupils' impressions of the observed works in terms of their gender and age, was confirmed by two sculptures, namely “The Monument to the Indians in Chicago” and “The Spring of Life”. In the case of these two sculptures, there is a statistically significant difference in the responses in terms of the grade the pupils attend, i.e. higher graders (grade 3 and 4) showed a more positive response to the observed sculptures and said they were impressed by the sculpture. There was also a difference in terms of pupils' gender, as it was found that boys liked “The Monument to the Indians in Chicago” more than girls.

Open-ended questions have shown that children in a peculiar way experience contemporary sculpture, which is reflected in their answers that are above all original and provide an insight into the associations the sculptures provoked in them. These responses have shown that pupils can experience an on instinctive and associative ground. The teacher's task would be to direct the pupils towards the observation in which the accent would be on the discernment and recognition of the visual arts language, as this enables a better understanding of the visual artwork and visual arts in general for pupils.

Previous researches on the preferences of pupils in terms of artistic fields, carried out by Kušević, Brajčić, Mišurac (2009) and Brajčić, Arnautović (2002), showed that pupils prefer modeling as a form of primary school activity. This research similarly proves that pupils show interest in works of contemporary sculpture. Therefore, our recommendation for the teachers would be to give this area of visual arts more space in the curriculum of visual arts education. The research can serve teachers also in the selection of works of contemporary art, as it gives them guidelines as to which works are to be more easily accepted by lower graders. Additionally, the research has shown that children experience a work of visual art in a peculiar and unique way, yet with a professional approach to observing an artwork, they should be guided from

the instinctive and associative to the targeted perception and recognition of visual arts language in an artwork.

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