



Udruženje “Balkanska mreža muzeja”

PRIMJERI INKLUZIVNIH MUZEJSKIH PRAKSI U BOSNI I HERCEGOVINI

Balkan Museum Network Association

EXAMPLES OF INCLUSIVE MUSEUM PRACTICES IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Sarajevo, 2020.

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Za izdavača: Aida Vežić, MA

Urednica: Anida Manko, MA

Lektura: Lidija Sejdinović

Prijevod na engleski: Lejla Turalić

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INTRODUCTION: TOWARDS INCLUSIVE MUSEUMS IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Cultural institutions, such as museums, are becoming meeting venues for diversities which should be a starting point when designing content and activities. Museums strive, therefore, to become institutions intended for everyone, resulting in the need to provide an environment which will provide for the various needs of its audience. Museums in Bosnia and Herzegovina have been attempting to respond to challenges they face, because they want to be accessible to all. The state of the cultural institutions is far from satisfactory, which reflects on all areas of museum activity. Nevertheless, this handbook strives to represent the ways in which the rights of all have been observed equally. The handbook includes positive practices introduced with the aim for everyone to be able to participate in museum activities equally. Obstacles tend to be stronger and overcome enthusiasm in the first step, but the examples of various activities realized in several museums in Bosnia and Herzegovina demonstrate that all the efforts and hard work can overcome and compensate for the obstacles wherever there is willingness, understanding and respect for others and for differences.

Museum pedagogy in museums of Bosnia and Herzegovina is kept alive thanks to the efforts of individual curators to respond to the educational role of museums. Museum activities globally are shifting towards reprogramming and designing content adapted to various age groups and all individuals equally. Worldwide, this is the task of museum pedagogues, but in museums in Bosnia and Herzegovina it is the curators who perform the work, due to the lack of qualified staff. Museum accessibility has recently become the point of interest. In addition to the Convention on Human Rights (1950) and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006), Strategy for advancement of rights and status of persons with disabilities in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (2016-2021) states specific goals which emphasize the importance of improving the quality of life for all. In order to provide accessibility, it is stated that it is necessary to provide for persons with disabilities to be included in all areas of life on equal terms, especially in the area of education, culture, sports and public affairs. In order to ensure that human rights are respected, they need to be discussed and realized in practice. Guided by the paradigm, museum curators have strived to create an inclusive environment which ensured that everyone felt accepted and welcome in museums. Ideas were born and implemented within the project "Tinkering and Making for Human Rights – improving cultural participation of children with disabilities", but there are examples of museums which have realized workshops tailored to the needs of its audience. Learning from others and learning together is an important basis for considering an inclusive environment. The concept of inclusive environment incorporates various means of ensuring accessibility (of museums, in this context) to all, while continuously improving the full range of activities of the institution to be able to satisfy various needs of its audience. The need for introducing and improving the concept where the museum

adapts to the audience, and not the other way around, has arisen to ensure the respect for the rights of all individuals.

Examples shown below represent possible ways of realizing museum activities, which may be reflected on and applied to museum venues different from what was offered, after some adjustment. Examples from museums in Zenica, Tešanj, Trebinje and Sarajevo show that the museum is and can be a place for learning, growth and development for all. The desire for professional advancement in a field of study seemingly unrelated to her profession has led the curator of the Art Gallery of Bosnia and Herzegovina into the world of the autism spectrum children. Enabling autistic children to be a part of the gallery and awakening their curiosity was the guiding idea which resulted in numerous guidelines for future work with autistic children in a similar environment. Women with disabilities are equal members of communities and demonstrate the importance of preserving the tradition in Tešanj by participating in workshops organized in the museum. "Trebinje Pigeon Post" is reinterpreted to represent means of communication that are adapted to make information transmission and receiving accessible to all the children who participated in museum workshops. The tactile area constructed in the History Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina invites the audience to develop sensitivity and understanding of persons with visual impairment, but it also provides for equitable treatment of such persons allowing them to grasp and discover the content according to their own needs. By designing materials, enlarging the print, providing tactile exhibits, video and audio guides, the Zenica City Museum has organized inclusive workshops resulting in a core value of inclusion, i.e. reciprocity. Workshop participants learned from one another and all together, but the curator herself emphasizes that the experience of working in an inclusive environment is an opportunity for improving skills and conceiving new ways of improving future practices and activities.

This publication presents the ways in which museums may teach human rights by establishing an inclusive environment. It serves as an example for other museums so that they can move towards openness to all, which could become the fundamental framework in which new ideas will be developed and implemented. When designing an inclusive environment, we should bear in mind the famous Confucius' quote: "Tell me and I will forget, show me and I may remember; involve me and I will understand." Guided by the intention to involve everyone in the museum activities, as community members whose rights are respected, these museums have become places that incite curiosity, creativity and motivation, hoping that they will lead by example other museums on their path towards new challenges making sure that their resources are available to all.

BLUE ARTISM: AN EXPRESSION OF THE PURE VISUAL ART

Aida Šarac

Art Gallery of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Abstract

The paper presents a selection from the history of education and inclusion initiatives from Western museums. It includes a case study of the “Blue Artism” museum outreach program that was implemented in 2018 - 2019 from children with autism spectrum disorders, aged 10 -14, in the “Art Gallery of Bosnia and Herzegovina” art museum. Setting up an exhibition of art work created in the six months of program activities and opening it to the public on 22 March 2019 contributed to building the participants’ self-confidence and involving the sensitive target group in designing museum program activities. The results of observation performed of the program participants demonstrated an improvement in communication, socialisation and cognitive skills of some participants. In some participants, making art contributed to reducing the incidence and frequency of stereotyped movements.

The most important practical experience from the “Blue Artism” pilot project were establishing the trust between the parents/guardians and persons in charge of the program, the implementation of the social model of disability in the museum collective, performing a review of the interpretation strategies and creating alternatives, and adapting the method of describing and explaining the vocabulary and concepts used.

Key terms: *art museum, alternative interpretation strategies, alternative educational program, children with autism spectrum disorders, informal lifelong learning, outreach program.*

MUSEUMS AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

An art museum, as an institution of informal education, with a valuable resource - the collection it keeps, and the social responsibility of a public institution, cannot remain neutral towards specific needs of schoolchildren with autism spectrum disorders, as a sensitive group. The museum, as a socially relevant public institution, therefore, bears responsibility for the ever-changing needs of the community in which and for which it exists. One of such needs and rights of persons with disabilities is the access to the museum and its contents.

Due to the radical social changes in the 1960s (human rights movements and radical student movement, anti-war activism in the midst of the Vietnam War, etc) museums were forced to shift their predominant focus from collecting to satisfying specific needs of their audiences (Mandić, 2014). So, simultaneously with defining the modern museology that advocates audience diversification and democratisation of museum programming, during the last four decades, Western museums began creating special programs with the aim of satisfying the specific needs of different socially sensitive groups or minorities. In terms of museum inclusion, it can be analyzed in two ways: according to the target group we wish to include and according to the type of activities which the museum offers to them. Western museums, incited by recommendations of museum associations¹ and other demands of the society, take into consideration the needs of persons with disabilities when they design specific programs.

Forms of museum inclusion range from destigmatisation of persons with disabilities as regular visitors to museum exhibitions, to designing special (educational) programs aimed at satisfying specific emotional, socialisation, communication and other needs.

¹ In 1965, the National Art Trust and the National Trust for the Humanities funded programs which strive to involve a broader audience; the “*Great Society*” program “ensures new educational approaches to socially sensitive groups in museums (1965); “*America’s Museums: the Belmont Report*”(1969.) A report published by the American Alliance of Museums formally defines the educational function of museums, necessary to include a wider social circle. A publication of the same Alliance from 1992, titled “*Excellence and Equity: Education and the Public dimension of Museums*” emphasizes the division of social responsibility of museums with other educational institutions in the context of developing a more humane society. Information taken from Mandić, A. “*Izazovi muzejske edukacije*” (Challenges of Museum Education). *Sarajevo: Dobra knjiga*, 2014. p. 60-68. In the context of Great Britain, the main role of museums in social inclusion was performed by the Department for Culture, Media and Sports from 1993 to 1998, which identified museum education as a powerful weapon in fighting social exclusion. Taken from Galloway, Scheila. Stanley, Julian. “*Thinking out of the Box: Galleries, Museums and Evaluation*” in *Museum and Society Journal*, July 2004. 2 (2), 127.



Figure 1. Group painting by four children with autism spectrum disorders and two typical children (Blue Artism 2018-2019, AG BIH)²

A prerequisite for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in museum activities is the implementation of the social approach throughout the museum staff structure. When speaking about persons with disabilities in the museum context, we must first consider their specific needs and revise accordingly the museum interpretation strategies³ to offer appropriate alternatives.

ART MUSEUM AS AN ALTERNATIVE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION

According to the current definition⁴ by the International Council of Museums - ICOM from 2007, a museum is a non-profit public institution in the service of society and its development, equally satisfying the needs of collection: acquisition, conservation and restoration, scientific and research activities and exhibiting tangible and intangible

² The inclusive workshop titled: "Dubrovnik Dundo's Odyssey", exhibition context: a solo exhibition of watercolor paintings and sculptures by Jagoda Buić in the Art Gallery of Bosnia and Herzegovina, watercolor on paper, 300 cm x 100 cm.

³ Interpreting museum contents means explaining the meaning of individual objects and exhibitions. Interpretation strategies include methods of exhibiting objects, exhibition design, labels and text, publications and guided tours. The interpretation is usually the results of concepts intellectualized by curators, which may present a barrier for a typical visitor, let alone persons with disabilities. For more information on interpretation strategies, see *"The Educational Role of the Museum"*, ed. Hooper-Greenhill, Eilean. New York : Routledge (Leicester Readers in Museum Studies), 1997. p. 44-52.

⁴ Adopted in the 22nd General Meeting of the ICOM, held in Vienna in 2007, revised in 2016 during the Council meeting in Milan, due to changes to the society and global social functioning. The revision lasted until the end of 2019, when the Executive Board of the ICOM held a meeting in Kyoto in November, and proposed a new definition of museum which should listen to the needs of the society and satisfy them in a timely manner, providing an equitable access to all contents, with not harm to the sustainability of natural resources. A historiography of the museum definition is available at http://archives.icom.museum/hist_def_eng.html (website accessed on 15 April 2020 at 12:28) and the newly proposed definition of a museum from 2019 is available at <https://icom.museum/en/resources/standards-guidelines/museum-definition/> (website accessed on 15 April 2020 at 13:38)

heritage of the human kind and its environment. If we place the museum in the context of education, we need to consider what are the characteristics that can make it a competent institution, equal to formal educational institutions. Before it begins with educational processes, the museum must be competent in theories of knowledge, learning and teaching, to be able to determine its educational policies and implement them in practice. In addition to educational theories, as the basic prerequisite, it is also necessary for visitors to opt for this form of education, so that their affinity for lifelong learning could be developed by continuously maintaining the interest. It is also true that museum educational activities are of an informal character since they are not prescribed by the official school system curriculum, which gives the museum pedagogist the freedom to choose themes, methods and learning outcomes.

The fundamental didactic resource in the museum's possession is the collection, according to which its type is determined in the museum studies. Therefore, a specific form of a museum is the museum with an art collection, in which objects are valued according to the aesthetic criteria and which, unlike in other museums, exhibits must not have a tactile component (Gob and Drouguet, 2007).⁵ Museums that keep other types of collections (natural, historical, archaeological and others) can teach visitors on the object's use value, the historical sequence of events, the chronological development of the human kind or the specifics of a cultural, and other aspects. Such an educational component is not obvious in an art museum due to the nature of the collection, whose status is the result of the efforts of *larpurlartism*⁶ and the socially engaged art⁷ (Mandić, 2014). Even though museums still use biographism and positivism as kao theoretical approaches to criticism in the attempt to introduce visitors to various styles and lives of famous artists, that is not the ultimate achievement of the specific form of pedagogy in this form of museums. If we observe the value of art through its ambiguity, symbolism, diversity of themes and the ability to confront individuals with their emotions and sense of self, it is easy to conclude that its formal, emotional and narrative contents may be used as didactic resources to teach critical thinking, but also other cognitive skills.

5 The absence of the tactile component in case of art objects related to the sensitivity of various media used to make art. Touching the sensitive surface of a painting may cause long term damage. This is also true of the esthetic values of the art that do not include using it in everyday life, which implies that art is intended for observation and contemplation.

See Gob, Andre. Drouguet, Noemie. "Muzeologija: povijest, razvitak, izazovi današnjice" (Museology: History, Development and Current Challenges). Antibarbarus: Zagreb, 2007, p. 12.

6 Larpurlartistic (*l'art pour l'art*, French: art for art's sake) notion of art which states that the artwork is its own purpose and that one should not search for connotations in the context of its origins, authorship or style to which it belongs. The contents of the larpurlartistic art are usually abstract, hermetically sealed to interpretation by a wide social circle. This attitude led to the inevitable elitism in art museums. For more on larpurlartism, see: Greenberg, C. (1982.) "Modernist Painting" in Frascina, F. i Harrison, C., ed. "Modern Art and Modernism: A Critical Anthology". New York: Harper and Row Publishers, p. 93-105.

7 Over the years, specific art styles advocated its tendentiousness in order to effect social change (e.g. the art of socialist realism).

The theoretical debate between the art use value and its self sufficiency led by Benjamin Ives Gilman and John Cotton Dan in early 20th century US is available in Mandić, Asja. "Izazovi muzejske edukacije" (Challenges of Museum Education). Sarajevo: Dobra knjiga, 2014, p. 56-58.

This attitude was accepted by educators and pedagogues from Western museums, who have been developing the so-called Visual Thinking Strategies since the 1960s, which are based, in the context of guided tours, on directed inquiries of a group of visitors (Mandić, 2014). Visual Thinking Strategies⁸ as the museum education approach within classical instruction theories are based on learning by discovering. These activities in the specific physical context of museums, which carries the unique experience of “here and now”, by interaction with original artwork⁹, set, as their educational goals, developing visual and verbal literacy, critical examination of the world, extending the esthetic experience and comprehending one’s own and other people’s emotions (Mandić, 2014). It is on these educational potential of art museums that the possibility lies for utilizing collection resources as a cognitive bridge towards persons with disabilities. In the reference books for pedagogical education of schoolchildren from the same group, it is recommended to use visual aids for communication in class, but also to explain concepts (Agency for Education and Upbringing).

PERSONS WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS IN AN ART MUSEUM

According to the International Classification of Diseases published in 1993 by the World Health Organization, autism is a life-long pervasive disorder characterized by repetitive and stereotypical models of behavior, interests and activities. Persons with autism have difficulty to understand what they see, hear or feel. This leads to difficulties in social relations, communication and behaviour (Agency for Education and Upbringing). The same reference book states that, in inclusive education, teachers use cards for augmented communication, to explain concepts and to communicate. The cards contain symbolic visual displays/pictograms with the help of which a child with autism may express its need or understand a concept better. Visual, symbolic and emotional contents of art in the structured educational museum context may serve as a template to bring a child with autism spectrum disorder closer to the everyday world that surrounds it, to their own emotions and emotions of others, with the help of different interpretation strategies of

⁸ Philippe Yenawine and Abigail Housen, US art and esthetics theoreticians created in the 1960s the Visual Thinking Strategies as an educational approach for art museums, which they attempted to transfer to the context of schools. For more details on Visual Thinking Strategies, please consult Mandić, Asja. “Izazovi muzejske edukacije” (Challenges of Museum Education), p. 213.

⁹ The claim that the architectural context of the museum with the original artwork carries a unique experience of “here and now”, stems from the philosophical studies by Walter Benjamin, who identified “aura” as the specificity of art. The aura is the singularity of an artwork that lies in its uniqueness, artist’s authorship, and can be perceived only from the original, and not from a photographic reproduction or a copy. A person faced with a high-value original art piece, within the physical context of the museum that carries with it the sense of a ritual, becomes flooded by associations, emotions and other manifestation that the artwork elicits from them. In a repeated encounter with the same artwork in the same physical context, the experience will be completely different.

For more on the concept of aura of an artwork, see Benjamin, W. (1969.) “*The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*”. New York: Schocken Books, and for the ritual character of museums see Duncan, C. (1995.) “*Civilizing Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums*”. London: Routledge

museums experts¹⁰. As a form of additional museum programs, primarily designed to provide access to the socially sensitive group, modern museums use *outreach* methods. An outreach program includes the museum's cooperation with the local community in which the social group exists, which, for some reason, cannot access museum contents. If the museum wants to implement such a program for children with difficulties, it should establish cooperation with experts, schools, inclusive education advisers, associations, parents/guardians of potential participants, and participants themselves. The cooperation will provide the museum with necessary information on specific needs of the group and facilitate activity design and implementation. The fundamental prerequisite for such a program for persons with disabilities, as we have already established, is the implementation of the social model of disability. Unlike the previously dominant medical model that observed the "problem" as a difficulty and demanded that the person adjust to the environment, the social model recognizes the problem in the environment with the intention to adapt it to specific needs of persons with disabilities.

"BLUE ARTISM", AN EDUCATIONAL MUSEUM PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS IN THE ART GALLERY OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA HERCEGOVINE

"Blue Artism" was designed as an outreach museum program in cooperation with the Special Education Institute "Mjedenica", the Association "Dajte nam šansu" from Old Town Sarajevo and the Department of Pedagogy of the Faculty of Philosophy, University in Sarajevo. The pilot program was aimed at identifying cognitive barriers of schoolchildren with autism spectrum disorders in the perception of visual arts. The attempt was made to minimize the barriers by employing various interpretation strategies in activities spanning the period of six months: alternative narrative explanations of the exhibition, individual interaction of participants with the artwork by making inquiries while playing games in the exhibition space, etc.

The main goal of the program was the destigmatisation of persons with disabilities as regular visitors to the art museum. After the program was completed (March 2019), participants of the "Blue Artism" project became regular participants in the educational activities of the AG BiH, especially the "Alternative Classroom", a program for schoolchildren that had been implemented for seven years in the institution. Specific goals of the project, which individual activities were supposed to affect, included developing communication and cognitive skills by verbalizing the contents of selected artworks, developing socialisation skills by organizing inclusive workshops, and initiating social relationships with secondary group members and the museum staff. The activities and structure of the "Blue Artism" Program was designed and implemented by the

¹⁰ Museum educator/pedagogue or museum expert who works with the audience.

museum educator of the AG BIH, a historian of art and literature of the peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina, currently attending the final year of the Master's program for art history teachers at the Faculty of Philosophy University in Sarajevo. Her interdisciplinary Master's Thesis titled "Social Responsibility of an Art Museum: Working with Children with Disabilities in the Art Gallery of Bosnia and Herzegovina" discusses the inclusive potential of an (art) museum, its educational role in the society, with special emphasis on persons with disabilities and the methodology designed for "Blue Artism", the museum education program for children with autism spectrum disorder.

After the cooperation was initiated with the participating institutions, program participants were selected using the age criterion (ages 10 - 14) and the affinity for visual expression. Participants were selected by educators of the "Dajte nam šansu" Association and the defectologist from the "Mjedenica" Institute, in consultation with art teachers to identify five children, from each institution, with autism spectrum disorders who show such an affinity. That criterion was necessary due to the interests of the children from the spectrum.

By combining participants from two schools, we wanted to compare the possible effects of the school environment to the reception and visual perception of children with autism spectrum disorders. The results of observations that monitored positive and negative manifestations of participants in the categories of communication, socialisation, cognitive processes and visual perception show no drastic differences between children with autism spectrum disorders who attend the regular and special schools. Participants from the regular school were more functional, but also showed more hyperactive behavior patterns. Significant differences in the visual perception were not observed, which would exceed the differences between individual participants.



Figure 2. Workshop titled "Komosar's vegetable patch"¹¹

¹¹ The photo on the left shows participants with whom tactile and olfactory activities were carried out, using fruit and vegetables in the context of the theme and the still nature exhibition, after which the creative manual activities (drawing) took place, based on the composition set up, using dry pastels on colorful papers. The photo on the right shows activities using a tactile box, a didactic aid designed by the educator, after which participants painted wooden cubes in the context of the exhibition of wooden sculptures in cubic forms.



Figure 3. "Aranea" workshop

In order to identify the specific needs of each participants, it was necessary to obtain as much information, in the initial stages of project implementation, from their parents/guardians using a questionnaire, and perform consultations and hold parent/teacher conferences as required, and to send regular questionnaire on the children's behavior at home after the workshops. Having been presented with detailed program activities and the goals set, parents/guardians¹² signed participation approval forms, and gave their permission for the use of photo and video materials of participants for the purpose of future scientific and research activities and promoting educational museum activities of the AG BiH.

Before the inception of the museum program activities, the AG BiH educator spent two months learning about the specific needs of individual participants in art lessons at the "Mjedenica" school and in informal creative activities with participants from regular schools in the premises of the "Dajte nam šansu" association. To the same purpose, student's parents/guardians were handed questionnaires about the specific needs of their children, the visual sensitivity and stereotypic movements. Before they entered the museum building, participants' parents/guardians were disseminated the so-called 'social story' told as the first person narrative, followed by the photographs of the museum building exterior and interior, the staff whom the participant would meet. This procedure is applied to prepare the child with autism spectrum disorder for the place where she or he would come, and minimize possible unforeseen situations that could cause the child to feel insecure or distrustful of the environment and persons involved in the project.

¹² Among the ten selected participants, six parents/guardians gave their approval for the children to participate in the "Blue Artism" program.

Workshops with six participants, divided into two groups of three¹³, were held on Saturdays, in the afternoon hours, in the museum, for a period of six months. Ten different workshops were held¹⁴ for both groups, in six exhibition contexts of the AG BiH: permanent exhibition "Spacialized Intimacy", the solo exhibition of sculptures by Josip Mijić titled "Aranea", a group of portrait sculptures in wood and metal from the AG BiH collection, posters from the XIV Winter Olympics held in Sarajevo, from the museum archives, the "Mirko Komosar Collection" and the solo exhibition of watercolor paintings and sculptures by Jagoda Buić. For some of the workshops, it was necessary to create a special exhibition context, as was the case of selected portrait sculptures or posters from the Olympics, to test methods, didactic materials and artistic techniques and visual materials.

WORKSHOP STRUCTURE

Each workshop had the same defined structure, and began by breathing exercises while walking, aimed at reducing anxiety, preparing participants for the cognitive activities ahead, but also to minimize the urge to move during the project activities. Then there would be a guided tour of the exhibition applying adjusted interpretation methods and adapted language. During the guided tours that employed Visual Thinking Strategies, of three selected¹⁵ artworks, simple inquiries about what is painted in the picture, would lead the participants to verbalise the content before them. Even though there were no nonverbal participants, those who use echolalia¹⁶ were only comprehensible thanks to the interpretation by parents/guardians¹⁷. For their activity while discussing artworks, participants were awarded stickers, which they could trade for refreshments in the five-minute breaks between activities.

13 Participants of inclusive workshops were occasionally joined by typical children from the regular AG BiH children's educational programs. Groups of three participants interchanged their members occasionally.

14 Each workshop was given a unique name related to the exhibition context and the planned theme: "Seaside Motifs", "Sandy Landscapes", "Aranea", "Komosar's Vegetable Patch", "Komosar in Charcoal", "Dubrovnik Dundo's Odyssey", "Fingers in Clay", "My Free Space", "Skier Installations", and "Stećak". It is noteworthy that a lesson plan was made for each workshop, including the theme elaborate, didactic materials, exhibition and physical context, the activity sequence narrative, educational outcomes and art supplies. The plan was disseminated to all persons present in the activities before each encounter with the participants in the museum (asistents and the program photographer).

15 Artwork is selected according to the theme of the workshop (still nature - fruits and vegetables, the human figure, portrait, landscape, geometric forms, etc.), but also according to the realistic style expression which makes it easier for persons with disabilities to notice and follow narration.

16 Echolalia is a form of communication of persons with disabilities. It includes repeating words and/or phrases from before or ones that the person hears at the time. Echolalia was long perceived as the absence of communication skills, but it was determined that any form of it presents the desire of the person with disability to communicate.

17 In addition to recording observations on each participant, the program assistants (a pedagogy student and a psychology student) recorded any relevant statements in verbalizing the artwork contents.

Between two cycles of discussion about selected artworks, the educator draws cards with cropped motifs from paintings in the exhibition that participants are required to find. Those who find the painting that contains the motif from the card are awarded with a sticker, to be used as explained above. That activity directs the participants' attention to each individual artwork within the exhibition; although it stimulates motivation and competition, it extends the attention span and improves the aesthetic experience.

A separate cycle of activities include tactile and olfactory exercises, which were supposed to activate participants' other senses used to comprehend concepts. Tactile exercises employed original wooden and metal portrait sculptures¹⁸ from the AG BiH collection, specimens of fruits and vegetables¹⁹ and a tactile box designed specifically for this occasion, which is included in the exhibition as a didactic tool. To make the box, we used an old wooden crate used to transport museum objects, which we then covered by thin, soft sponge in various colors. As the next layer, we applied feathers, beans, mirrors, buttons, velvet ribbons, cotton wool and fleece so that participants would interact with the tactile stimuli and verbalize the sensations of their fingers by answering the question: "What does it feel like under your fingertips?" The penultimate workshop activity included creative manual work with art supplies. Participants were encouraged to experiment with the following techniques and materials: collage, oil on canvas, combining glue, sand and color, clay modelling, drawing in charcoal and dry pastels, group painting, painting wooden cubes and designing installations using various materials.

Before ending the workshop by a three-minute exercise of breathing while walking,²⁰ participants are asked to perform a self-evaluation of their post-activity emotional state, after no more than 60 minutes of the workshop activity. To this end, we designed a vertical scale with labels on the left (from top to bottom): happy – satisfied – sad, and on the right there is a strip colored in red, green and blue from top to bottom. Next to the visual scale with the written labels for matching emotions, there is a scotch tape to which participants are asked to place an appropriate emoticon to depict their current mood.

18 Within the theme of portraits and the human figure to which children's creative designs refer by employing charcoal on paper.

19 Within the theme of still nature and composition, which were realized in the creative segment by drawing the composition set up using dry pastels. The workshop titled "Komosar's Vegetable Patch" that covered the theme in question was held in the context of "Collection within the collection: Mirko Komosar" exhibition, in the still nature genre group.

20 This procedure, repeated in the beginning and the end of each workshop, creates in children with autism spectrum disorders a sense of predictable safety and routine, which is very important in creating a solid structure.

PROGRAM RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

As instruments of evaluation, we employed observation lists to monitor the communication, cognitive, socialization and emotional manifestations of individual participants during each workshop. In addition to the participants, program assistants²¹ used a similar list to observe the museum educator's behavior: her language/communication skills, affinity and attention paid to individual participants and help offered in practical activities. Each workshop was filmed using a hidden camera, for the purpose of self-evaluation by the museum educators. Segments of the footage were edited into a seven-minute video, which was presented with the workshop photographs as the documentary layer of the "Blue Artism" exhibition to show the museum education process.

The third evaluation instrument is in the form of a questionnaire for participants' parents/guardians, which deals with the behaviour of individual participants at home, between two workshops. By evaluating the results, we concluded that the majority of participants had a positive verbal attitude towards the Gallery and activities in which they participated. Also, the results showed that some participants asked for art supplies they used in the previous workshop and that they drew/colored/made motifs from the previous workshop.

As we anticipated when we defined the program goals, encouraged by the educator and assistant during the intentional maintenance of focus and concentration while working creatively, participants gradually improved their fine motor skills, curiosity, creativity and sensory stimulation. Following the evaluation of observation results for the program implemented, however, we observed that the described activities contributed to mitigating and decreasing the frequency of stereotypical movements in some participants. We can, therefore, conclude that creative work in the context of exhibitions of high-value artwork, with a solid and meaningful activity structure in the context of an art museum, can produce therapeutic effect on children with autism spectrum disorders and help them express emotions.

In terms of variety of supplies and visual techniques we employed in the program, participants showed excitement whenever a new type of art supplies was presented to them: dry charcoal and dry pastels with wide range of visual effects, Chinese paper and other forms of collage paper (transparent paper, crepe paper, colorful metallic paper), painting sand glued onto cache fabric. It was extremely interesting to observe tactile exercises, in which participants were asked to verbalize the sensation of each material under their fingertips. In these exercises, the participants showed an unusual perception of the world using associations and metaphors, which is considered a trait of persons with autism spectrum disorders.

²¹ Senior year students from the Department of Pedagogy and Psychology, University in Sarajevo, experienced at working with children/persons with developmental disabilities.

Among the challenges we experienced in the program implementation, we would mention the first inclusive workshop and the self-evaluation of the participant's emotional state. For the first inclusive workshop with three participants, we selected five typical children who regularly participate in museum education programs of AG BIH. There were fourteen persons present in total (eight participants, two assistants, two educators and photographers), which caused difficulty in implementing activities, and a lack of concentration or anxiety in some participants. moreover, typical children were reserved during the activity implementation, even though we organized a meeting with their parents so that the children could prepare for an inclusive workshop. From that situation we learnt that only a minimal number of people should be present during the workshops, and that we should make small groups of children with whom we would work before organizing inclusive workshops. The self-evaluation of participants' emotional state was not successful in practice. Having in mind that persons with autism spectrum disorders have difficulty understanding their own and other people's emotions, they were confused when facing the board, and after they placed one emoticon, they would continue to place them in other available spots on the velcro tape. We then removed the scale and asked them to choose between only two emoticons: a happy face or a sad face, and they could only pick one. That proved to be much more efficient.

For the Art Gallery of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the implementation of "Blue Artism" meant an opportunity to diversify its audiences, to consider the interpretation strategies offered by the museum and the accessibility to a wider audience in terms of the possibility to understand exhibitions and objects. Participants of the "Blue Artism" program became regular participants in other museum education programs of the AG BIH. The circle of persons with autism and other developmental difficulties who participate in the AG BIH educational programs in 2018 grew. As another step in achieving inclusion, we hired a volunteer, a 17-year old student of the High School of Applied Arts in Sarajevo, with the Asperger's Syndrome, to work as an assistant to the museum pedagogist in workshops for typical and atypical children.

With the help of the Goethe Institute, the "Blue Artism" methodology got its digital form as an Android application for tablets, titled "ARTsee" that employs visual, audio and textual interpretations of objects to provide persons with developmental difficulties with alternative forms of interpreting art.

AUTHORS' BIOGRAPHIES

Lejla Agić graduated with a degree in psychology in 2004 from the University of Sarajevo. Since 2005, she has been working as a museum educator in the field of creating accessibility and inclusion in the museums in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Balkans region via the Balkan Museum Network Access Group (BMAG). This group has been recognised as an innovative practice of 2018 by the The Zero Project, an initiative of the Essl Foundation, that focuses on the rights of persons with disabilities globally. The Zero Project provides a platform where the most innovative and effective solutions to problems that persons with disabilities face, are shared. Lejla designed and implemented numerous creative and educational workshops for children (Through play to yourself, Detective in the museum, From sheep to carpet, Stories from the past), accompanying publications, tactile replicas for permanent exhibitions, and legends in Braille. She has actively participated in many seminars, meetings and workshops on education and accessibility in museums.

Emina Čalija was born on 14 March 1991. She finished her primary and secondary education in Sarajevo. In 2010, she entered the Faculty of Philosophy in Sarajevo, the Department of History, where she earned her Masters' Degree in 2017. Emina worked as a volunteer in the Museum of Literature and Theatre Arts of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the period of 2013 – 2017. She has co-founded the Scientific Archaeological Society that was established in 2016, with the aim to promote and protect the cultural and historical heritage of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Emina has worked in workshops implemented within projects titled Readers' Fall, Readers' Winter organized by the Goethe Institute. She was one of the creative designers and workshop leaders on the inclusive Living Ancients project aimed at providing education and organizing exhibitions. She is the co-author of the Ancient Theatre exhibition, appropriate for all ages and social categories. She has gained experience in working with children with difficulties and persons with disabilities through numerous workshops.

Vesna Isabegović was born in 1960, in Tuzla, Bosnia and Herzegovina. She graduated at The Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade, at the Department of Ethnology. Vesna worked in the Institute for the Preservation of the Cultural and Historical Heritage of Tuzla (1984 to 1992), as the expert associate for ethnology. During that period, she conducted research and performed ethnological recognition in the area of Tuzla and Kladanj municipalities, based on which scientific studies of cultural heritage of the two municipalities were conducted. Since 1996, Vesna has been employed by the Museum of East Bosnia in Tuzla, as Curator-

Ethnologist. In February 2002, she was promoted to the position of Museum Advisor. From 2002 to 2012, Vesna was the Director of the Museum of East Bosnia. Then she returned to her post as the Museum Advisor in the Ethnological Department of the Museum. During her engagement in the Museum, Vesna has participated in all forms of museum activities: research, collecting, valorization, systematization and presenting of the museum objects. She is the author of numerous museum exhibitions, as well catalogues and professional papers on ethnology and museology; she has also participated in different round tables and conferences on cultural heritage. Since 2007, she has been a member of the ICOM. Vesna has been working on Project B.A.R.C.A. in the Adrias Kolpos financed by European Commission, as the Project Coordinator. On behalf of the Museum of East Bosnia, she participated in the EU Projects – Culture I and Culture II in cooperation with the Tuzla Municipality.

Amar Karapuš (born 1981 in Sarajevo, Bosnia & Herzegovina) is a Senior Curator at the Historical Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina. He is currently also a postgraduate student in History at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Sarajevo, and received his university Diploma from this Faculty in 2006. He has been employed by the Historical Museum since 2007, and during this time has overseen the organization of numerous exhibitions (both for the Historical Museum and other institutions), and participated in a number of workshops and conferences, both regional and international. Much of his current work and interests cover themes that include the Second World War in the Former Yugoslavia, interpretation of contentious histories, historical interpretation for the public, and preventive conservation techniques. He currently oversees the weapons collections of the Historical Museum, and is actively engaged in researching and inventorising these collections. He is actively engaged in promoting cultural and historical heritage among blind and visually impaired persons.

Manko Anida was born in Sarajevo, where she finished her postgraduate studies in pedagogy. She is employed at the Department of Pedagogy of the Faculty of Philosophy as a Senior Assistant, where she has been attending the doctoral studies of “Creative Education Theories and Research”. Anida is especially interested in pedagogical topics in the area of special pedagogy, specifics of researching educational activities with students with disabilities, museum pedagogy, educational policies and intercultural education.

Mensura Mujkanović was born on 28 November 1985. She finished her primary education in Jelah, and high school in Tešanj. In 2009, Mensura graduated from the Department of History of the Faculty of Philosophy, University in Tuzla, with a thesis titled “Colonization of the Territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the Roman Period”. She finished her postgraduate studies in the same Faculty in 2014. Since 2011, she has been employed at the Public Institution of the Tešanj Museum as the Curator-Historian. In 2016, Mensura was promoted to the position of a Senior Curator. She implemented numerous exhibitions, projects and workshops as an author and co-author, and also participated in professional seminars and scientific meetings. She is the author of several papers published in scientific magazines. She has worked as the Director of the Public Institution Tešanj Museum since 2019.

Simo Radić was born in Trebinje in 1994. He finished primary and secondary school (2000-2012) in Trebinje, and primary (2012-2016) and master studies (2016-2017) at the Department of History of the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Novi Sad. Since 2018, he has worked at the Museum of Herzegovina in Trebinje as an intern, and since 2019 as a museum pedagogue. He is one of the initiators of educational museum workshops at the Museum of Herzegovina in Trebinje. He deals with local history, genealogy, ethnology. He is a collaborator on the project "Educational activities for children with disabilities in museums" run by the Balkan Museum Network, and funded by the US Embassy in BiH, within which organized and implemented three inclusive workshops at the Museum of Herzegovina in Trebinje.

Aida Šarac was born in Sarajevo in 1991, where she finished the High School of Applied Arts, Department of Painting. She received her bachelor's degree at the Department of History of the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Sarajevo, where she started her postgraduate teacher training program in 2014. She volunteered at the Art Gallery of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the period of 2013-2017, when she started to show interest in the educational role of the art museum. During this period, she designed methodologically based educational museum programs for her employer, titled "Our Story" and "Alternative Classroom", intended for preschool, primary school and highschool children. In 2017, Aida became a full-time employee of the Art Gallery and became involved in art museum inclusion. She designed the specialized methodology of educational museum activities for children with autism spectrum disorders titled "Blue Artizam", as the practical segment of her scientific and research work for the interdisciplinary Master's Thesis titled "Social Responsibility of an Art Museum: Working with Children with Disabilities in the Art Gallery of Bosnia and Herzegovina". After the implementation of the pilot-project, she hired a student with Asperger's Syndrome from the High School of Applied Arts, as her assistant. She is the creative designer of the digital version of the methodology in the form of an Android application "ARTsee" for children with disabilities which she developed with the support of the Goethe Institute. She realized numerous museum outreach programs for socially sensitive groups in the local museum community, and participated in many inclusion and accessibility seminars and conferences in the region and world-wide.

Aida Vežić is Secretary General of the Balkan Museum Network and freelance consultant, facilitator, researcher and trainer. She finished master programme "Cultural Projects for Development" organised by the International Labour Organisation and The Polytechnic University of Turin. Aida has been developing civil society organisations in the last 18 years. Her work has been cross-border focusing on the Balkan region. As a member of the Executive Board of the Network of European Museum Organisations she is the bridge between EU member countries and candidate countries in the area of museums and heritage. Her guiding principle is the notion that every individual is responsible for creating the society (s)he wants to live in and for developing systems that ensure fairness and equality.

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