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Sveučilišta u Zagrebu – 2015 – 2.dio

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# Presence of Contemporary Art Theory and Practical Work in Fine Arts Curricula in Grammar Schools

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## Abstract

*This paper discusses the modernization of the school subject Fine/Visual Arts and the affirmation of visual arts within the educational system of grammar schools. It is extremely important that contemporary artistic theories and practices of Fine/Visual Arts be present in grammar school curricula, particularly in school curricula in general, social and natural science studies, as well as in philology grammar schools in order to form a different perception of visual information of the modern day technologies. The context of development, expansion, and transposition of theory and practice of contemporary creative work reflects the necessity to change the formal name of the school subject Fine Arts to Visual Arts. Nowadays, it is necessary to harmonize the teaching units within the global syllabi in order to preserve and nurture the traditional artistic values and to accept the new tendencies in contemporary visual language. The key to the effective teaching and instruction lies in carefully designed operational plans, which is the responsibility of Fine/Visual Arts teachers. Operational plans need to show clearly the relation between art theory, history of art, contemporary art theory and practice in order to provide students with a clear insight into areas of Fine/Visual Arts, especially in the context of the century we live in.*

**Key words:** *classroom practice; education; Fine Arts methodology (teaching methods); operational plans; students.*

## Contemporary Art and Education

*"The future: an excuse for those who do not want to do anything in the present."*

Harold Pinter



Contemporary art (It. *L'arte contemporanea*; Fr. *Art contemporain*, Ger. *Zeitgenössischer kunst*) is a term that defines creative work in our reality at the moment in time in which we live. Contemporary art is contained in the overall daily life and its meaning is present in electronic media that interact with us by means of digital image/screen (iPhone, tablets, computers, etc.). It is also visible in various forms of advertising (e.g. billboards, posters, leaflets, pictographs, signs, symbols, etc.), in performing arts, street art, but it still exists in the disciplines of classical art (painting, sculpturing, graphic works). In the second half of the twentieth century, the artistic elite already raised questions about art coming to an end. Therefore, it was understandable that new technologies, which have sped up everything inside us and around us, were embraced relatively easily since these technologies could provide art with entirely new creative dimensions. There is no universal definition of art, nor is it always easy to understand contemporary art. Any interpretation of the notion of art is based on a concept of art being a human activity that aims at stimulating the human senses and mind. The first and main goal of art is an aesthetic experience or a “feeling” that a work of art triggers. The work of art confirms itself by exposure to the audience without which it cannot exist (Panić, 2005).

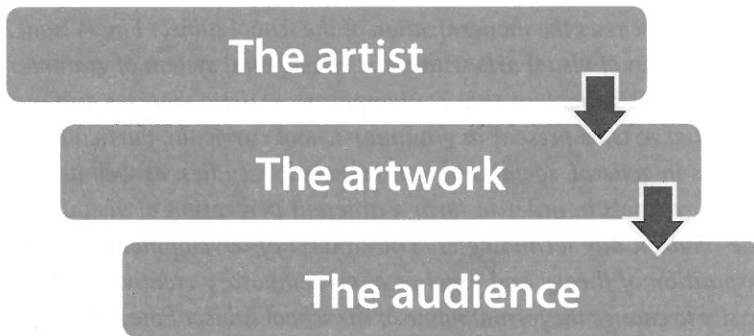


Figure 1. Interaction within art (Panić, 2005)

Panić (2005) also points out that there are a number of other objectives of an artwork, such as cognitive, educational, informational, ideological, hedonistic, motivational, etc., but there are also pragmatic objectives: technical, economic, therapeutic, documentative, etc. It is impossible for a single artwork to meet all of these goals and tasks, but its value and significance is certainly estimated in relation to its diversity. In everyday life, it is difficult to indicate the time and place where the art begins and where it ends, since it is continuously in a process of “acting”: it communicates, initiates, encourages. The era of modern technology and communication confirms that contemporary art is indeed life itself, and vice versa. In this continuous speed and progress of electronic communications, the art and science have become one. The paradigm of Contemporary Art is the visualization of scientific truths and achievements. For normal functioning in the cyber world, the issue of education and

training is superfluous. In everyday life, computer literacy and technological skills have become generally accepted. Freedman (2005) claims that true motivation and approach to an artwork and contemporary artistic practice calls for education, so that contemporary art would not be seen and understood as superficial (that is, only as a form, materials and shapes), but as a purposeful understanding of the idea and the message of the artist/creator.

In the system of education, art develops from pre-school to higher education, through formal and informal, institutional and non-institutional learning (Koković, 2009). Art is taught in schools through two (theoretical-practical) subjects of general education: Music and Fine/Visual Arts, but also through other fields (literature, modern languages, history, sociology, etc). Fine/Visual Arts as a school subject studies the spatial arts, artistic shaping and the understanding and monitoring of these subjects through the theory of forms. The language of fine arts and its disciplines (painting, sculpture, architecture, graphics, drawing) was formed through artistic materials and techniques throughout history (Shiner, 2001). With the development of society, fine arts start to encompass more and more humanities and social studies and disciplines (e.g. psychology of creativity, sociology, philosophy, aesthetics) and the emergence of the new media forms (such as graphic design, web design, comics, film, animation, video games). In this way fine arts assume multidisciplinary and multimedia character. In school curricula in Serbia, the title of this subject is still Fine Arts, although its content is more complex and it belongs more to the field of visual art and culture. This title for the subject is used in higher education (colleges of humanities and social sciences, technical colleges and colleges of natural science). Visual culture and its subdisciplines (art therapy, basics of visual culture, visual communication) are present in the course syllabi of journalism studies, special education studies, dramaturgy, directing, animation, (art) production and others. Fine/Visual arts must be present in institutional and non-institutional education, which will help in preservation and nurturing of artistic tradition, and will encourage contemporary art and build new artistic practice.

Education is a much broader concept than schooling and its aspects include curriculum, knowledge testing and grading standards. Schooling/formal education only makes sense when viewed in a broader social context and in relation to planning long-term educational and cultural policy. Culture shapes our minds, cultivates our knowledge and capabilities, and builds our worlds. Therefore, it is extremely important that the assessment of cultural state (status) of students, which is based on social circumstances, become one of the key elements for the modelling of curricula. Relations between cultural heritage, contemporary culture and culture in the future, are part of the overall cultural pattern and education strategy (Koković, 2009). Art is one of the main components of culture and its survival in education is of inestimable worth. In order to preserve the general knowledge and culture, it is necessary for Art in education to go through its own process of 'emancipation'.

Fine/Visual arts, as a school subject, is present in theoretical and practical work, not only in preschool and primary school facilities but also in secondary/high-school education. Adoption of information in this field occurs on a daily basis, directly or indirectly, and the best results are shown in practical activities such as: museum/gallery activities, the media, the Internet, interdisciplinary projects of national and international importance, artistic conferences/symposia, individual and group exhibitions. Artistic events and venues are precisely the places where art lives and operates directly. In the field of art, the principal artistic activity consists of the artist, the artwork, and the audience. The importance of this interaction is precisely in the existence of the artist who enlivens his/her creative work only through interaction with the audience. Investing in young people through visual education means building new audiences and sustenance of art.

### **Curriculum and Fine/Visual Arts in Grammar Schools**

The key to successful teaching and education lies in the syllabi and curricula. The term curriculum (from the Latin verb "to run/to proceed") refers to comprehensiveness, forecasting and planning of school lesson content, ways and means necessary to achieve a set goal and its fulfilment. The curriculum can also be interpreted as training, innovation, evaluation, communication, competence, etc. It is a directed approach to the movement, that leads to the most favourable results set within a certain field of work. It contains several basic processes: planning, organizing, execution and control (Previšić, 2007, p. 16). The curriculum is a programme of education, teaching and learning. In the broadest sense, the curriculum is a technique or technology of rational management, a methodological process of investigating a series of knowledge pathways involving elements of lesson material in order to convey knowledge to others (Koković, 2009, p. 29).

In the history of education (pedagogy), the term curriculum was mentioned at the beginning of the new century (in the sixteenth century), and clearer guidelines and interpretations were given by Komensky and Radtke (Previšić, 2007, p. 17), who introduced a Greek term *didasko* (Greek; διδάσκω), *didaskein* (to teach) as a theory of teaching in classes and in the system of education. Didactics – a new discipline in pedagogy, would develop a broader plan of organization of teaching and learning, its objectives, plans, programmes and procedures. Pedagogical theories of teaching and learning had been thoroughly developed and progressed in didactics on European soil. Germany had been the leading force in the development of didactics until the mid-twentieth century, when American educators Hilgard and Tyler thoroughly changed positions on the starting determinants of the curriculum (Previšić, 2007, p. 17). Until the 1980s there had been a clear division into European and American methodologies in curriculum design. By the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century, scientific approach to pedagogical subjects has become increasingly prevalent in Europe.

The state has the leading role in creating the national curriculum, since the state defines the strategy of education which is shaped by social, economic and political

goals. The modelling of the curriculum involves a large number of participants from all levels of the education system: politicians and ministries, representatives of contemporary pedagogy (didactics experts and methodologists), sociology of education experts, educational psychology experts, as well as representatives of various groups and orientations, teachers, students and (representatives of) agencies of other countries and non-governmental organizations. The teams involved in designing and composing of curricula for grammar schools and for each school subject individually, consist of many experts, such as educationalists, didactic experts, psychologists, supervisors, academy and college professors, methodologists and subject teachers. The responsibility for the modelling of the official national curriculum is borne by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development and the Institute for the Advancement of Education of the Republic of Serbia. Its objectives and outcomes are accurately defined and published in the “Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia - Education Gazette”, Regulations on the curriculum. The Ministry does not specify what every teacher should work on at all times to achieve the prescribed goals. The curriculum is defined in more detail in a school curriculum, and elaboration of all the details (teaching units, methods, technologies), is conceptualized by the teacher in the syllabus.

The content of the syllabus of Fine/Visual Arts must contain clearly defined objectives and tasks related to visual creative work, working methods and course outcomes (results of the acquired knowledge). The model of the syllabus has a circular form and consists of the following (Petrić, 2006): *preparatory activities*, which set the goal of learning (redefining the goals and outcomes); *syllabus design* (a document containing the teaching plans and programmes); *implementation of the syllabus* (putting the curriculum document into practice by starting a pilot project in a smaller number of schools and departments, so it can be tested and modified) and *evaluation of the syllabus* (quality assessment, practicality, appropriateness to the social context and compliance with the objectives). The importance of the circular model of the curricula lies precisely in linking the evaluation with the starting position in the new process of defining goals of the new curriculum, which, by its achieved results, surpasses the old syllabus.

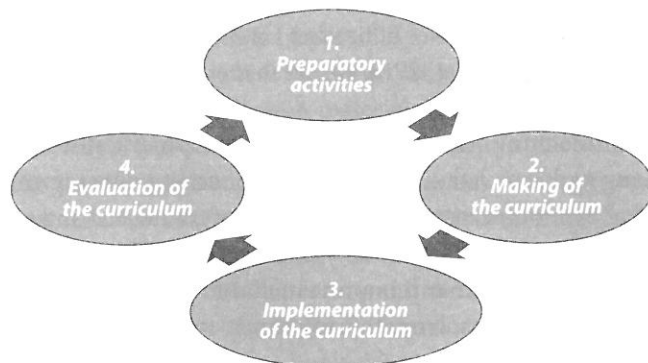


Figure 2. Circular model of the curriculum process (Petrić, 2006)

Operational syllabi for the Arts curriculum are conceptualized by teachers for each school year. Internal evaluation of the results achieved by the curriculum and amendments to its content that interfere with the learning process should be carried out after the end of a school year, without waiting for modifications to be made in the official national curriculum, in order to save time. It is clear that the operational syllabus, which is based on the school curriculum, should not be changed to a great extent. Instead, the recommendation is to modify up to 30% of individual teaching units.

Grammar school education was restored in 1990 in our education system. With the restoration of grammar schools, it can be noticed that there is a “hidden curriculum” that stands behind the formal one, which defends the general education with the goal of developing general knowledge, and which also directs young people towards higher education. Professor Koković (2009, p. 30) defines the “hidden curriculum” in the following way: “Most educational institutions have the official curriculum that covers the area of academic knowledge that students must adopt (e.g. Mathematics). However, apart from that academic and publicly taught curriculum, there is a set of values and principles – a “hidden curriculum” – which is implicitly transmitted to the students by teachers.”

### ***The Official Curriculum of Fine Arts, the Objectives and Tasks***

By analysing the Regulations on the curriculum for grammar schools, “Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia – Education Gazettes” from no. 3/1991 to no. 5/2014, it can be concluded that grammar schools are divided into the following types: general, social and natural science orientation and language grammar schools. The subject of Fine Arts is taught for two years in grammar schools of general and natural orientation (in the first and in second grade), while in social and language grammar schools it is taught throughout all four years. The total number of Fine Arts lessons in all types of grammar schools is one lesson per week, and the annual number varies from 32 to 37 hours.

The document *Regulations on the curriculum for grammar schools* (“Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia – Education Gazette” no. 17/2013 and the beginning of implementation of September 1, 2013, applies to the school year 2013/14) defines the goals and tasks of teaching:

“The goals of teaching Fine Arts are: the development and improvement of creative thinking and innovation; improvement of artistic literacy and training for visual and verbal communication through the use of traditional and modern media; encouragement of independent research, systematization and use of information from various sources; development and improvement of self-confidence, emancipation and socialization of students, empathy, tolerance, humane attitudes and skills of cooperation; the formation of a positive and responsible attitude towards cultural and artistic heritage; raising the awareness about the connection between art, nature



and society; the importance of sustainable development and the role of art in the preservation of the environment; encouraging students to connect and apply the acquired knowledge and skills in other educational contents, daily life, their further education and future occupations.

The objectives for students who attend Fine arts course are the following:

- improvement of knowledge of the artistic landmarks, processes, techniques, materials and artistic accessories;
- development of visual perception, creative thinking, curiosity, imagination and innovativeness, through a variety of artistic, problem solving and project tasks;
- the ability to visually present the world around them, their own ideas, their views and emotions by using both traditional and contemporary media to support their viewpoints and present their work;
- to be able to perform independent and team work;
- to familiarize themselves with the national and international cultural and artistic heritage, its basic characteristics and representative examples, the most significant artists, trends and tendencies, and to develop a responsible attitude towards the preservation of the cultural and artistic heritage;
- to form a critical attitude towards works of art and to be motivated to evaluate artwork, their own and others' works of art;
- to use information from different sources efficiently;
- to be motivated to observe cultural and artistic events through various media, such as visiting exhibitions, museums, legacies, and other sites. Also, to be motivated for various forms of participation in cultural and artistic activities;
- to gain insight into the importance of integration of artistic creativity with other arts, sciences and working processes;
- to apply their knowledge and skills in arranging, improving and preserving the environment and the working environment;
- to be able to apply the acquired knowledge in other teaching subjects (courses), in everyday life, in their further education and future occupation."

The goals and objectives are broad and comprehensive and therefore require a greater number of lessons, which is impossible to achieve without a new national curriculum that needs to be designed. Therefore, art professors and teachers may take the first step in summarizing the lesson material within the concept of operational syllabi. The number of lesson units should be reduced, some of them should be connected, and space for new tendencies and contents of contemporary work should be created. A new selection of examples and representative artworks from the topics of the traditional art should be made, linking them with the contemporary creative work in order to encompass the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century. A further analysis of the official curriculum document for the second grade of general and natural studies grammar schools, where the subject Fine Arts is studied for only two years, as well as for the fourth grade of social studies and language grammar

schools clearly shows a discrepancy between the existing number of lessons per week and the number of recommended teaching units. The lack of harmonization of the offered topics with the planned number of lessons clearly indicates the need for the restoration of harmony between the traditional and contemporary elements (topics) in Fine Arts, which has taken a wider scope that belongs to the concept of visual art.

According to the Regulations on the curriculum for grammar schools (*“Official Gazette of The Republic of Serbia – Education Gazette”*, no. 17/2013) effective from September 1, 2013, and applicable since the school year 2013/2014, the syllabus for the second grade of general and natural science studies grammar school (in which Fine Arts subject is taught 1 lesson a week, 35 lessons a year) goals and tasks of teaching are defined in the following way:

*“Unit II - second semester*

*General part*

Colour in visual arts. Shading as a medium for artistic shaping.

*Independent artistic (visual) expression*

Relations between colours. Colour in the open space. Presentation and painting of changes at the local tone of different sizes of the observed subject/motif (object or landscape); changes caused by the influence of reflection of the immediate or wider environment. Brightness of painting in the nature.

Works of art and cultural monuments

Nineteenth century art. Neoclassicism, Romanticism and Realism; the most significant artists and their works; Neoclassicism, Romanticism and Realism in Serbian art. Impressionism and Post-Impressionism; Artistic trends in the first half of the twentieth century: fauvism, expressionism, cubism; surrealism, abstract art, etc. Architecture and sculpture in the first half of the twentieth century; Art in Serbia in the first half of the twentieth century; Types and developments in art in the second half of the twentieth century.

Practical work: Perception and representation; Media: drawing, painting, sculpture, expanded media; Resources: fine arts techniques and didactic and methodological means.”

According to the Regulations on the curriculum for grammar schools (*“Official Gazette of The Republic of Serbia – Education Gazette”*, no. 17/2013) effective from September 1, 2013, and applicable since the school year 2013/2014, the syllabus for the fourth grade of social sciences and language grammar schools (in which Fine Arts subject is taught 1 lesson a week, 32 lessons a year) goals and tasks of teaching are defined in the following way:

*“Unit II - second semester*

*General part*

Composition, film – moving image, movement, spontaneity, rhythm, mime, expression and gesture. Puppet – play, types of puppets and puppet theatres.

### *Independent artistic expression*

Artistic potential of puppets (practical performance); puppet, shadow as artistic/visual expression; puppets imagery; video tape; animation; mechanical and visual effects for theatre and film (preparation and realization), choice of themes and genres; establishing the basic ideas and elements of plot and composition, drawing and designing of puppets in accordance with the current sociological and cultural environment and folklore.

### **Works of Art and Cultural Monuments**

Architecture, sculpture and applied art in the first half of the twentieth century; Art in the first half of the twentieth century; Types and appearance of Arts in art?; Different schools of painting: abstract expressionism, informalism, pop-art, geometric abstraction. New types of art: conceptual art, performance, new visual media, modern architecture and sculpture, postmodern art. Trends in Serbian art of the second half of the twentieth century.

Practical work: Perception and representation; Media: drawing, painting, sculpture, expanded media; Resources: fine arts techniques and didactic and methodological means.”

Excerpt from the Syllabus of *Unit II*, only for the second semester (for all departments in grammar schools) is extremely important for the analysis because it provides the insight into the planned implementation of the syllabi. When the intended school programme is brought into connection with the number of lesson in the second semester, it is clear that the syllabus is too expansive for the prescribed number of lessons for the course of Fine/Visual Arts.

### **Classroom Practice of Students of the Academy of Arts in Grammar Schools**

Within the course Teaching Methods of Fine/Visual Arts during the third and fourth years of undergraduate studies (7th and 8th semester) at the Academy of Arts in Novi Sad, Department of Fine Arts, students acquire skills in the field of Fine/Visual Arts and art pedagogy and become familiar with the pedagogical work in secondary vocational schools and grammar schools. The first and the main goal that is specified in the syllabi is that students should be familiarized with the concept of curriculum and to know how to read and apply the curriculum within the concept of modelling of operational curricula and preparation for classes. It has been a practice that every academic year, during the summer semester, within the course of Teaching Methodology of Fine Arts 4, students study grammar school curricula. The analysis of the syllabus should determine to what extent the issues related to contemporary art are present in the final units of Fine Arts in the second grade of general and natural science studies grammar schools and in the fourth grade of social sciences and language grammar schools in the second semester. Specific tasks: 1) to apply

the model of interactive teaching (Roeders, 2003) and 2) to encourage “intelligent action”, which develops a critical attitude and aesthetic assessment of the work of art and the creative work. For the purpose of teaching practice, the students are divided into groups of four students. One of the students performs ‘practical exercise’ (teaches the class), while other students observe and take notes on all the elements of the teaching process. Students’ practical work in the classroom is organized in the second grade in grammar schools of general orientation and in the fourth grade (classes with secondary school graduates) in two general grammar schools in Novi Sad – Svetozar Marković Grammar School and Isidora Sekulić Grammar School, and in Language Grammar School near Novi Sad and in Sremski Karlovci (Karlovci Grammar School). The teaching process is observed and recorded by the members of the teaching practice team: professors of Teaching Methodology of Fine Arts 4, professional associates in the course, mentors and students. Operational curricula, lesson plans for subject teachers, textbooks for students and recommended literature for the subject teachers are analysed. After defining all the parameters, the students make lists of topics that are optimum for the harmonization with the covered topics, but attention is also paid to covering the important and current artistic events of national, regional and international art scene. Other topics also include presentation of the current gallery and museum performances, informal exhibition spaces and events, presentations of the most important projects and events that have contributed to the contemporary creative work and cultural life of the community, as well as promotion of the global contemporary artistic expression. The students formulate topics that are associated with the existing teaching units in order to meet the official curriculum, but they also innovate and update the art classes. Lesson plans contain written lesson plans, class scenarios, tasks, questions (for students), motivational topics and presentations, as well as evaluation questionnaires in the reflection on the teaching process.

Operational syllabi for the school year 2013/14 for Svetozar Marković Grammar School and Isidora Sekulić Grammar School from Novi Sad, and Karlovci Grammar school from Sremski Karlovci, where the teaching practice with fourth-grade students was organized, show that the second semester of the second grade (general and natural science studies) and of the fourth grade (social and language studies) contain the topic of postmodern art as their final unit in Fine Arts as a school subject. According to the official syllabus out of the half of the annual number of lessons (15 – 17 weeks on average), students are faced with too extensive lesson material of art history, which is combined with practical work (for instance, the topic on puppets and puppet theatre, which belongs to fine and applied arts). During the month of May, in the second grade, the last topic within artistic creativity is Pop art. Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein are the last two artists that belong to the world art history, who are presented to the students in classes. In the fourth grade, the last covered unit in the class is Informalism. Current art education syllabi show that school subject of Fine Arts was mostly based on the segment of historical development of art, and less on the contemporary art. The only practical artistic work is performed through puppetry. Other forms of



contemporary artistic expression, such as the digital image, video art, computer art, street art, youth and civic activism and art are unfortunately not sufficiently covered in art lessons.

The textbook, which has so far been universal for all four years of grammar school, has for decades been passed on from older to younger generations. Amendments and additions to the official curriculum have influenced the publishing of the new textbook for Fine/Visual Arts, which is divided and published in four parts; for the first, second, third and fourth grade. The content remained the same, with small amendments related to modern and postmodern art. Modern tendencies of visual arts (if we take into account at least the beginning of the 21st century) are not included in the textbook. The answer to the crucial issue of the lack of textbooks and teaching handbooks for students and teachers lies in the fact that there is not enough investment in education and its modernization. Because of this, young people who attend classes of Fine/Visual Arts rarely know the meaning of the contemporary visual artistic practice, and are even less able to tell the difference between the modern and contemporary artist. In order to find out the right answers, the students must be provided with the proper fundamental knowledge of traditional art, because without this, it is hardly possible to understand what is “new” in our reality. Artistic performances, installations, and artistic events that are a part of a long-term artistic expression, are met with resistance and rejection if there has been no prior and timely education (Oliva, 2010). Art education in Serbia is still at the level of easel painting practice, and the artists like Picasso, Dali and Frida Kahlo are representative artists with whose names Fine/Visual art education ends. Artists like Marina Abramović, Demian Hearst, Anish Kapoor, Gerhard Richter, William Kentridge, Tomas Saraceno, Frank Gehry, Zaha Hadid, and unfortunately, deceased artists Cy Twombly (1928-2011) and Lucian Freud (1922- 2011) are unknown to young people. Unfortunately, the names of local artists of contemporary art scene (such as: Mrđan Bajić, Raša Todosijević, Čedomir Vasić, Jelena Đorđević, Dejan Kaluđerović) are not sufficiently represented and promoted either.

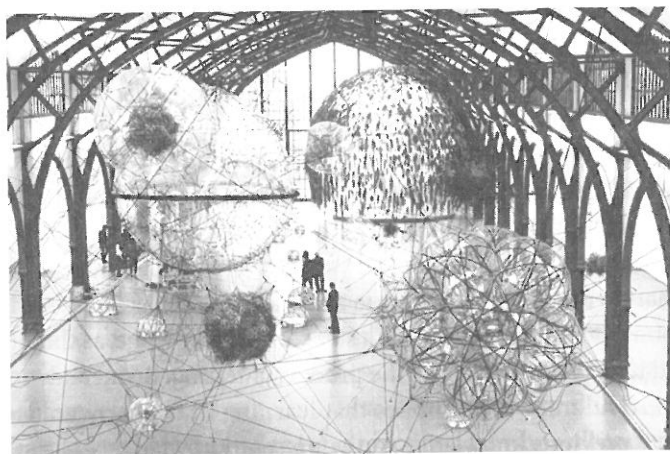


Figure 3. The installation in space, Tomas Saraceno, Hamburger Bahnhof Museum, Berlin 2011.

Significant artistic events, traditional art events, new exhibition spaces and museum and gallery houses and foundations, are the references for contemporary art expression. Venice Biennale (all five productions of film, visual arts, architecture, theatre and contemporary dance), dOCUMENTA in Kassel, the Biennale of Visual Arts in Istanbul, Biennale of Visual Graphics Disciplines (Japan, Poland, Canada, Finland), MoMA New York, MAS Antwerpen, MUMOK Vienna, Museum of Contemporary Art in Bilbao, the Foundation and the Peggy Guggenheim Museum, expansion of video festivals of short art forms and alike, are only some ways which present different forms and ways of artistic practice to us (Oliva, 2010). There are rarely students who are personally interested and motivated by various conditions to familiarize and educate themselves voluntarily and informally.



*Figure 4. Museum of Contemporary Art MoMA New York*

Because of the expansive official syllabus of Fine/Visual Arts, the following reforms should address and redefine the following: goals and objectives, teaching (lesson) units and content. Jerome Bruner, the creator of the structuralist theory of learning, argues that the purpose of learning is the understanding of the structure of a certain learning material or a group of related (school) subjects. It is more important to master the structure, which is the main connecting component between the previous and a new knowledge, than to memorize the data. The structure needs to answer two questions: what (to find out)? and how (to apply it)? The subject matter that is covered in the classroom should have a form of a structured knowledge, as this enables better cognition and it helps in developing the process of testing. Bruner advocated a spiral type of the curriculum, which implies that learning in the early grades starts with connecting the previous knowledge to the present knowledge - as a starting point to acquire new knowledge (Vilotijević, 2000, p. 255). The structuralist learning is

important for Fine/Visual Arts in order to understand the tendencies of styles, trends and artistic phenomena, principles of forming and composing, the development of technology and aesthetic values. Developing the thinking process in the structuralist mode of learning is extremely important for the observation of artwork in a systematic and comprehensive analysis, which, in that process, develops critical thinking and attitude towards the observed artwork. Dewey's theory of "Intelligent action" develops the learning process into how to think and students are asked to redefine their goals by evaluating their experiences, and by developing the interpretation and evaluation of the works of visual/fine arts.

## Conclusion

Contemporary art theory and practice in education is very important for emancipation and the creation of complete personalities of young people. Art in education develops, nurtures and strengthens sensitivity and the cognition of the audience, whose presence is necessary for the existence of the artwork and purpose of creativity. Encouraging the teenage generation to be actively involved in monitoring the cultural and artistic events and manifestations, that is, the entire creative work that cultivates and builds modern society, is one of the most important tasks in building the general knowledge. Learning about the visual/ fine arts is necessary not only for the preservation of traditional values, but also for the encouragement of innovation in visual culture, as well as for the development of visual and verbal communication in a world of modern technologies. In the transfer of learning, art shapes general knowledge, fosters and develops critical thinking and aesthetic assessment.

The key to quality education can be found in a good national curriculum design. The curriculum design process should involve representatives from all levels of the education system: ministries, representatives of contemporary pedagogy (didactic experts and methodologists), sociology education experts, educational psychology professionals, as well as representatives of various schools and professional orientations, teachers, parents, students and (intermediaries of) agencies of other countries and non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

The curriculum must arise from a circular cycle which includes the following phases: *preparatory activities* (setting the goals of learning and redefining the goals and outcomes); *curriculum design* (curriculum document consisting of syllabi); *implementation of the curriculum* (putting the curriculum document into practice by making a pilot project in a smaller number of schools and departments in order to test it and modify it) and *evaluation of the curriculum* (assessment of quality, practicality, appropriateness to the social context, compliance with the objectives). The leading role in this process is entrusted to professors of teaching methodology and teachers/professors of Fine/Visual Arts, who must have the necessary skills and knowledge, and to visual artists, good theoreticians and practitioners who will constantly improve themselves - therefore improving the teaching of art.

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