

Project Tigar – concept of moveable sculpture as a medium of inclusion of children with multiple disabilities and war veterans

Projekt Tigar – Koncept pokretne skulpture kao medij inkluzije djece s višestrukim teškoćama i ratnih veterana

Margareta Vidmar and Dražen Viljušić

The inclusive artistic Project Tigar was designed in cooperation between the day-care centre for rehabilitation 'Mali dom-Zagreb' and The Institution for Comprehensive Care 'Tigrovi'. Its goals were the psychosocial support and empowerment of children with multiple disabilities and war veterans, to be brought about by connecting them with each other through the joint creation and production of artistic actions, acting on stereotyped patterns of perception of these groups of people, promoting a social model and positive diversity and developing a network of personal relationships and transdisciplinary collaborations.

The group was introduced to the role of artists and guided through the creative process. Tigers are an endangered animal species and the quality of their lives, as well as the lives of marginalized groups, largely depends on the policies and finances of the governments. Following the author's initiative or responding to the call, the sculpture resides in different city spaces, opening space for interaction with targeted groups of citizens, developing its identity, which is visible in the change of 'skin' colour, and each colour has a symbolic meaning. The moveable sculpture is presented by storytelling about Tiger's life, followed by creative workshops. Finally, the sculpture will be cast in bronze and placed in the city area.

Veterans with experience of pain, suffering and rejection are natural helpers, and children with disabilities are intrinsically motivated, proud of their friendship with 'warriors'. Life potential is awakened, the friendship network expands, and new experiences and insights transform them into satisfied and proud people who have the power to influence changes and contribute to the

community in a creative way. The community experiences them in a new way, accessible and playful, enthusiastic and creative, which brings about changes in prejudices and contributes to the development of a more humane and healthy society in which everyone has something valuable to give.

Key words: multiple impairment, war veterans, sculpture, creative process, inclusion

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Inkluzivni umjetnički Projekt Tigar osmišljen je u suradnji Centra „Mali dom-Zagreb“ i Ustanove za sveobuhvatnu skrb "Tigrovi" s ciljevima psihosocijalne podrške i osnaživanja djece s višestrukim teškoćama i veterana te članova njihovih obitelji međusobnim povezivanjem kroz zajedničko stvaranje i produkciju umjetničkih akcija, djelovanje na stereotipne obrasce percepcije ovih osoba, promoviranje društvenog modela i pozitivne različitosti te razvoj i širenje mreže osobnih odnosa i transdisciplinarnih suradnji.

Grupa je uvedena u ulogu umjetnika i vođena kroz stvaralački proces; istraživala se metafora tigra u popularnoj i klasičnoj kulturi i oblikovala skulptura Tigra. A Tigrovi su ugrožena životinjska vrsta i kvaliteta njihova života, kao i života marginaliziranih skupina uvelike ovisi o politikama i financijama vlada zemalja u kojima žive. Slijedeći inicijativu autora ili reagirajući na poziv, skulptura boravi u različitim gradskim prostorima otvarajući prostor za interakciju sa ciljanim skupinama građana pri čemu razvija svoj identitet što je vidljivo u promjeni boje Tigrove „kože“, a svaka boja ima simboličko značenje. Skulptura se predstavlja performansom ili metodom pričanja priče o događajima iz Tigrovog života uz popratni vizualni materijal, a zatim slijede kreativne radionice. Finalno, skulptura će biti odlivena u bronci i postavljena u javni prostor grada.

Veterani s iskustvom boli, patnje i odbačenosti, prirodni su pomagači, a djeca s teškoćama ponosna na prijateljstvo s „ratnicima“ intrizično motivirana. Probuđen je životni potencijal, širi se mreža prijateljstva, a nova iskustva i uvidi utječu na oblikovanje novog identiteta kreativnih bića/aktivnih i vidljivih umjetnika i transformiraju ih u zadovoljne i ponosne ljude koji imaju moć utjecati na promjene i doprinijeti zajednici, što se odražava i na obiteljske odnose. Zajednica ih doživljava na novi način, pristupačne i zaigrane, entuzijastične i kreativne što

utječe na promjenu stavova i doprinosi razvoju humanijeg i zdravijeg društva u kojem svatko ima nešto vrijedno za dati.

Ključne riječi: višestruke teškoće, ratni veterani, skulptura, kreativni proces, inkluzija

Biography

Margareta Vidmar graduated at the School of Painting, Agora and Faculty of Educational and Rehabilitation Sciences (ERF) at University of Zagreb. At the Faculty of Medicine she finished her master degree in Psychotrauma and she trained as a practitioner of expressive art therapy. Her work as a therapist uses arts in education, rehabilitation, therapy and inclusion at the day-care centre for rehabilitation 'Mali dom-Zagreb'. She is a collaborator at the Department for Motor Disorders, Chronic Diseases and Creative Art Therapies at ERF.

She is the author of notable artistic inclusive projects and an educator in development projects in Croatia and abroad (e.g. Armenia, Serbia).

She is an artist. From 1998, she has actively participated in solo and group exhibitions in the Croatia and abroad and engages in avant-garde theatre.

She is a member of Croatian Art Association, Croatian Chamber of Educational Rehabilitators and Croatian Association for Expressive Art Therapy (HEART).

Dražen Viljušić graduated at the Faculty of Kinesiology at the University of Zagreb and completed education in therapeutic swimming according to the Halliwick concept, Watsu therapy and therapy dog handler. He works as a kinesiologist at the day-care centre for rehabilitation 'Mali dom- Zagreb'. He developed an innovative concept of kinesiotherapy treatment with a therapy dog for children with MDVI. He participated in the development of the multisensory park and the therapeutic garden in Zagreb (proGIreg). Dražen also develops concepts of innovative inclusive sports for children with disabilities and designs and produces didactic toys and special equipment for children with MDVI. He participates in UNESCO workshops on this topic and was a mentor. He is educator in development projects at home and abroad. He participated in the implementation of the UNICEF project Festival of Light and designed the medal for the UNICEF Milky Way race in 2021.

Recent publications and conference presentations

Mihalić, D. & Vidmar, M. (2019). Poster presentation: **Those Who Sit with the Wolf**, ECArTE, 15. Art therapy Conference: Imagining Windmills: Trust, Truth, and the Unknown in Art therapies, Alcalá de Henares, Spain.

Vidmar, M. (2017). Oral poster presentation: **Sculpture as a medium in integration of marginalised groups in cultural and public life – Project Rhinoceros**, ECArTE, 14. Art therapy Conference: Traditions in Transition: new articulations in the arts therapies, Krakow, Poland.

Katušić, A. & Vidmar, M. (2013). **Vibration therapy as prelude to art therapy session: case study**, International complementary supportive therapies conference: Art and Science in Development of Life Potential, Pula, Croatia (oral presentation)

Vidmar, M. (2009). Poster presentation: **Performance as a therapeutic method and media in work with people with visual impairments and additional disabilities in public life**, International complementary supportive therapies conference: Art and Science in Development of Life Potential, Lovran, Croatia

Vidmar, M. (2007). Poster presentation: **Creative processes and methods of making sculptures for multisensory park with MDVI children**, 9th ECArTE conference: Arts in Arts therapies – new challenges, new horizons, Tallinn, Estonia

Viljušić, D. (2023). **Sports games for people with multiple disabilities and visual impairments**, Scientific and professional conference with international participation Creative Puls, Zagreb, Croatia

Viljušić, D. (2010). **Therapy dog in the process of rehabilitation of multiply disabled visually impaired children**, ICEVI Europe newsletter, icevi-europe.org

Viljušić, D. (2010). Oral presentation: **Dogs as helpers and motivators in therapeutic/(re)habilitation process for toddlers with developmental disabilities**, 3rd Interdisciplinary symposium of early development and communication, Pula, Croatia

Viljušić, D. (2009). Oral presentation: **Therapy dog in the kinesitherapy process of rehabilitation of children with visual impairment and additional difficulties in development**, 1st Congress of Health Polytechnic Studies with International participation, Zagreb, Croatia

Viljušić, D. (2009). **Therapy dog and rehabilitation process of children with visual impairment and additional developmental difficulties**, 9th ADE (assistancedogseurope) conference, Umag, Croatia