



ORIGINAL PAPER

Media Coverage of Visual arts from 1990 until 1995 – on the Example of the City of Zadar in the Republic of Croatia

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Abstract

The last decade of the 20 century is characterized by political changes, the transition from a socialist to a democratic political system and the reflection of these changes to almost all areas of human life and action. The hardest years during this period were brought by the Homeland War, which has left a particular mark on the first half of the nineties of the last century. With the fight for survival and existence, and other social issues in that very hard time, it was also important to preserve spiritual life. Therefore, culture and cultural activity have a special meaning in the period of war and the post-war period. Visual arts is an important segment of the culture, which is also implemented in the programme of the Cultural Policy of the Republic of Croatia, together with literature and publishing, music, performing arts, movies, media and cultural heritage. Visual arts creation and visual arts events present a contribution to the culture and cultural life which has a special value during war times. The goal of this paper is to analyse the media coverage of visual arts on the basis of articles published in the local newspapers in Zadar, Narodni list and Zadarski list. Special attention is given to the analysis of the themes of articles on visual arts. The paper applies methods of qualitative and quantitative content analysis. Corpus of the research consists of 316 articles published in Fokus, Zadarski list and Narodni list.

Keywords: *Homeland War; visual arts; culture; local newspapers; content analysis.*

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Media Coverage of Visual Arts from 1990 until 1995-on the Example of the City of...

Introduction

The beginning of the last decade of the last century is characterized by major political turmoil, the transition from the socialist to a democratic political system. The Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) consisted of "six respectively eight federal subjects (six republics and two autonomous provinces), six constituent nations, and dozens of national minorities, of which the Albanian minority had almost two million people alone. The population belonged to Orthodox, Catholic and Islamic religious confession" (Žunec, 1998: 58).

During the session of the Croatian Parliament on 25 July 1990 Croatia obtained the name Republic of Croatia. The change of the political system has reflected, among other areas of human life and work, also on the field of the media. With the beginning of December 1990 the Croatian Parliament brought conclusions on acceptance of the acts of the Council of Europe on the freedom of expression and informing: Resolution 428 (1970) containing a declaration on mass communication media and human rights, Recommendation 834 (1978) on threats to the freedom of the press and television, Recommendation No. R(81) 19. of the Committee of Ministers to member states on access to information held by public authorities with the Annex to the Recommendation, Declaration on the freedom of expression and information. *Zaključci o prihvaćanju akata Savjeta Europe o slobodi izražavanja i informiranja*, 1991).

The Constitution from 22 December 1990 in its Article 38 guaranteed "the freedom of opinion, expression and journalism" (Novak, 2011: 992). Considering the accepted acts Novak (2011: 992) finds that: "...the highest standards of democratic Europe on the freedom of expression, the media and journalism as fundamental human rights have become an essential determinant in the creation of a democratic Croatia, of free and independent journalism." Other relevant acts and directives which were concerned with the media in the nineties, among others, were: Croatian News Agency Act "HINA" (1990), Act on the Transformation of Socially-owned Enterprises (1991), Public Information Act (1992), Telecommunications Act (1994), Public Communication Act (1996).

The city of Zadar was also affected by the war during which, along with human casualties, difficult years of poverty and social issues, the cultural heritage was heavily damaged. On 25 June 1991 the Parliament adopted the "Constitutional Decision on the Sovereignty and Independence of the Republic of Croatia, the Declaration on the Proclamation of the Sovereign and Independent Republic of Croatia and the Charter on the Rights of Serbs and Other Nationalities in the Republic of Croatia" (Bing, 2006: 305) The country gained full independence on October 8 (Bing, 2006: 305).

The historic core of Zadar is rich in valuable architectural heritage dating back to the classical era, and in the early years of the war, valuable collections of movable monumental inventory were hit by "more than three hundred different projectiles from mortars, howitzers, cannons and missiles, fired from land and sea" (Domijan, 1998, 1999: 151) Miljenko Domijan in his paper entitled "Restoration of the architectural heritage in the field of activity of the Zadar Conservation Department", provided an overview of all the activities that have been performed in terms of protection and renovation of the monumental heritage in the Zadar area. He emphasizes out that already during the war some activities for the primary protection of the buildings had been undertaken. The restoration of religious buildings that were severely damaged and

destroyed begun after the liberation of the area of the Zadar hinterland (Domijan, 1998, 1999: 151).

Reberski (1994: 189) in her paper “Art and war in Croatia 1991/92. Violence against art-art against violence” emphasizes that the relation of violence in art has manifested in two ways. On the one hand, artistic heritage was destroyed, and on the other, that negativity and violence stimulated the artists to creative activities. However, this was not the first time that artists have reacted to difficult armed conflicts through creative activities. Reberski (1994: 190) emphasizes, among other things, Croatian painting expressionism during the First World War, as well as drawings, graphics and painting during the Second World War. Difficult years of the Homeland War remained recorded also in the form of applied fine arts, photography. Reberski (1994: 192) states the names of well-known photographers “Bavoljak, Brautova, Božičević and Ibrišević, Fabijanić and Filipović, Horvat, Kalodera, Kerner, Kovač, Urban.”

The Croatian history museum has collected photographs and video recordings created during the Homeland War from the beginning of the War. Mataušić (1995: 68) Photographs were taken by professional photographers and photographers-amateurs. They recorded: “first barricades, departure of the Yugo-army, casualties of war, refugees and displaced persons, destroyed homes, churches and museums, hospitals, schools, kindergartens, destroyed industrial and agricultural plants, roads, encampments, humanitarian activities, Croatian Army units in action and during moments of resting, arrival and setting of UNPROFOR units, reconstruction of devastated homes and churches...” (Mataušić, 1995: 68) Owing to collected photographs, many exhibitions were realized in Croatia, as well as abroad. (Mataušić, 1995: 69).

One of the most commonly used definitions of culture defines culture as “the totality of material and spiritual goods, ethical and social values created by mankind” (Hrvatski jezični portal, 2019a). Art can be defined as a “creative activity based on perceptibility and expressed by speech or written words, voice, line, colour, movement, plastic shape, structure and other” (Hrvatski jezični portal, 2019b) while applied arts can be defined as “artistic creation and processing of utility items” (Hrvatski jezični portal, 2019c). When talking about culture in the Republic of Croatia it is necessary to mention that in 1998 the document Cultural Policy of the Republic of Croatia was adopted, which deals with the culture industry and cultural activities (Literature and publishing, Visual arts, Music, Performing arts, Film) and Cultural Heritage (Cvjetičanin, Katunarić, 1998: 117-202).

A more detailed insight into the activities of Visual arts in the Republic of Croatia can be seen in the Ordinance on the manner and conditions of granting the right to independent artists to have the compulsory contributions for retirement and health insurance paid from the budget of the Republic of Croatia, that can be exercised by a painter, multimedia artist, sculptor, and applied to works in the field of applied arts (Photographer, Sculptor, Ceramics / Porcelain / Glass Artist, Precious Metal and/or Jewellery Designer, Model Maker, Toymaker and/or Puppet Designer, Textile and/or Leather Goods Maker, Fashion Designer, Audio Restorer/preserver and/or Sound Designer, Comic Book Artist, Illustrator, Caricaturist; works in the field of applied arts such as theatre, film and television art (Scenic Designer, Costume Designer, Lighting Designer, Designer of Theatrical Masks, Props Designer). If different artworks are exhibited, these exhibitions are recognised. Exhibitions are also recognised if they are “exposed in prominent institutions or display areas in the territory of the Republic of Croatia” and if “the artworks that are exposed outside of prominent institutions and

Media Coverage of Visual Arts from 1990 until 1995-on the Example of the City of...

display areas represent a contribution to Croatian culture and art” (Pravilnik o načinu i uvjetima za priznavanje prava samostalnih umjetnika na uplatu obveznih doprinosa za mirovinsko i zdravstveno osiguranje iz sredstava proračuna Republike Hrvatske, 2015) From a scientific point of view, according to the Ordinance on the scientific and artistic areas, fields and branches, the scientific branch of visual arts includes graphics, sculpture, painting, animated film and new media, visual technology, visual pedagogy, architecture (the art component of architecture) and landscape architecture (the art component of landscape architecture - landscape design) (Pravilnik o znanstvenim i umjetničkim područjima, poljima i granama, 2009). In 2012 the scientific branch of visual arts was complemented by the branch conservation-restoration (Pravilnik o izmjenama i dopunama Pravilnika o znanstvenim i umjetničkim područjima, poljima i granama, 2012).

A valuable contribution to the research of culture and cultural events in Zadar during the war was given by Radomir Jurić in the book, *The annals of cultural events in Zadar (1986-1996)*. In fact, Jurić had previously started to write down notes, for the needs of the journal *Zadarska revija*, later *Zadarska smotra*, regarding the cultural events in Zadar in particular regarding the “various performances of Zadar’s visual, theatre and music artists, scientists, writers and other cultural workers” (Jurić, 2014: 6). In his book he wrote about cultural events namely theatrical events, music events, exhibitions, scientific conferences, symposia, seminars, congresses, anniversaries and lectures, new books and journals, activities of the Independent squad of culture professionals at the Command of the Zadar’s sector the Croatian Army in Zadar from 1991 to 1992, as well as other events, manifestations, rewards (Jurić, 2014).

Zadar has a rich media history. Namely, first papers in Croatian *Kraljski Dalmatin* were published in Zadar in 1806. They were issued bilingually, in Croatian and Italian (Maštrović (1964: 742-743). The nineteenth century was very fruitful regarding papers publishing in Zadar. Maštrović (1964: 742) states that until 1911 in Zadar were published 68 papers in Croatian and that Zadar was an important cultural centre.

During the research period, three newspapers were published in Zadar. *Narodni list* is the oldest living newspaper in Zadar dating back to 1862 when it was published under the name *Il Nazionale*, and since 1869 under the name *Narodni list* (Vidaković, 2001:160). On the occasion of the 130th anniversary of *Narodni list* an article was published in *Narodni list* under the title “The Oldest Living Croatian Newspaper”, in which the author quoted the words of a famous academic on the occasion of the 130th anniversary of the existence of *Narodni list* on its significance, “The existence of *Narodni list* is not only important for Zadar or Dalmatia, even not only for Croatia as a whole. Voices from the pages of that newspaper have echoed in Vienna and in Pest, between which cities Croatia was crucified at that time, but they were also attentively monitored in Belgrade and Rome, where the events in Croatia were closely watched. Maybe no newspaper before nor after had that kind of international significance as *Narodni list* from Zadar” (Stupin, T, 1992: 11). The *Narodni list* as a weekly newspaper that is still publishing today. Youth magazine *Fokus* was published in Zadar in 1989 and 1990. Ražnjević Zdrilić (2005) emphasizes that this magazine was special in its many characteristics. Analysing the role of *Fokus* in the democratization of journalistic space she pointed out, among other things, that the editing policy of the newspaper was, “targeted at more liberal and critical analyzing and commenting of current socio-

political events, not only in Croatia but also in other Yugoslav republics and provinces, which was at the time forbidden, until the Public Communication Act hasn't been amended in February 1990” (Ražnjević Zdrilić, 2015: 73). At the end of 1994, another weekly local newspaper Zadarski list started to publish in Zadar, and in 1998 started to be published daily, and is still published today.

Methodology

The aim of the paper is to present the media coverage of visual arts in the city of Zadar on the basis of newspaper articles published in the local newspapers Narodni list, Zadarski list and Fokus in the period from 1990 to 1995.

The method of qualitative and quantitative analysis of content was applied in this paper.

A total of 318 articles published in the above-mentioned newspapers were analysed. By analysing the research corpus the articles were sorted by topic on the basis of similar characteristics.

A minimum of five articles was a precondition for forming a topic. Topics that were less in number than the specified number were classified under the Other topic, as well as articles featuring two or more topics/events and articles that were generally about visual arts.

Given that we classified the largest part of the corpus by topics, in the qualitative analysis of articles we included the other topic category of articles i.e. we only selected those that were written in the form of journalistic interview and were related to the visual arts culture of Zadar, so to gain insight into part of the content of the research corpus.

Research results

In the examined period the newspapers Zadarski list, Narodni list and Fokus were published in Zadar. Fokus had the smallest share of the articles in the researched corpus, which can be explained by the fact that in the said period it was only published in 1990. Zadar had also a smaller share in the corpus which can be explained by the fact that it was launched in late 1994. The Narodni list was the only newspaper to be published during all the researched years.

Table 1. Articles on visual arts in the Zadar newspapers from 1990 to 1995

	Narodni list	%	Zadarski list	%	Fokus	%	Total	%
1990	45	95.74	0	0.00	2	4.26	47	14.78
1991	31	100.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	31	9.75
1992	19	100.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	19	5.97
1993	27	100.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	27	8.49
1994	43	79.63	11	20.37	0	0.00	54	16.98
1995	68	48.57	72	51.43	0	0.00	140	44.03
Total	233	73.27	83	26.10	2	0.63	318	100.00

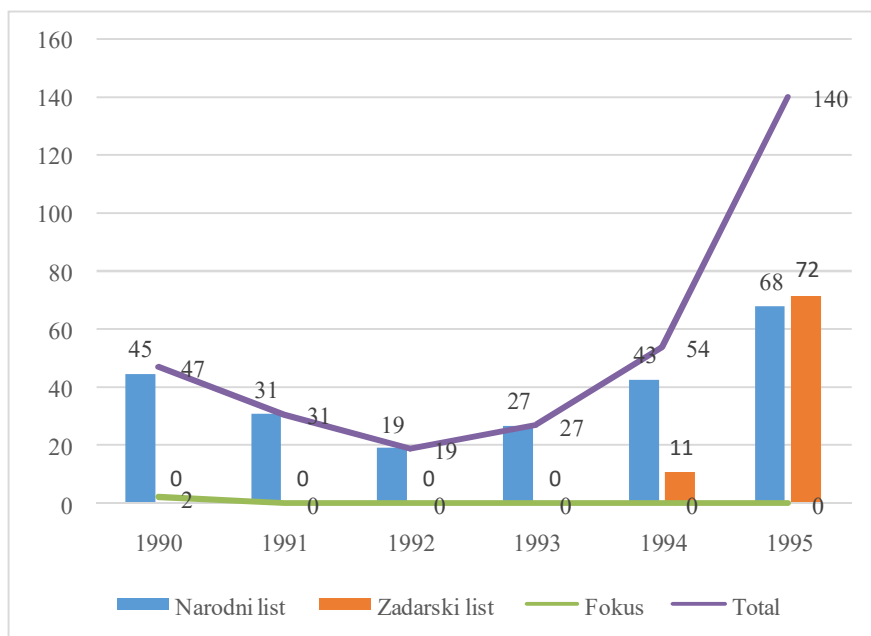
Source: Created and adapted from: Kalajžić, 2011: 94, 110, 120

Media Coverage of Visual Arts from 1990 until 1995-on the Example of the City of...

A total of 318 articles on visual arts were written in the above-mentioned newspapers from 1990 to 1995. The Narodni list published 233 articles on the research topic in the mentioned period; the share in the research corpus is 73.27%. The Zadarski list published 83 articles, with a share of 26% in the research corpus. Fokus has published 2 articles, namely a 0.63% share in the corpus.

If analysing by the years, Narodni list had a 95.74% share of the articles in 1990, while Fokus had a share of 4.26%. In 1991, 1992 and 1993, the Narodni list had a 100% share of the articles. In 1994, the share of articles that the Narodni list had in the corpus was 79.63%, followed by Zadarski list with a 20.37% share. In the final year of research, the Zadarski list was published throughout the year and its share in the corpus for the year 1995 was 51.43%, followed by the Narodni list with a 48.57% share.

Chart 1. Total number of articles on visual arts in the Zadar newspapers from 1990 to 1995



Source: Created by the autor

From the graphical overview of the total number of articles we can see a noticeable decrease in the number of articles in 1991 and 1992 compared to the initial research year.

After 1993, the number of articles is on the rise, which continues up to the last research year.

In the year 1995 Zadarski list and Narodni list have published 140 articles in accordance with the paper criteria. In relation to the initial research year, the total number of articles has increased for more than three times.

Table 2. Thematic analysis of articles on visual arts in the Zadar newspapers from 1990 to 1995

	1990	%	1991	%	1992	%	1993	%	1994	%	1995	%	total	%
Painting	17	36.17	9	29.03	5	26.32	14	51.85	22	40.74	62	44.29	129	40.57
Glass working	1	2.13	1	3.23	0	0.00	0	0.00	2	3.70	2	1.43	6	1.89
Sculpture	3	6.38	6	19.35	0	0.00	1	3.70	5	9.26	15	10.71	30	9.43
Graphics	1	2.13	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	1.85	4	2.86	6	1.89
Photography	3	6.38	9	29.03	7	36.84	7	25.93	9	16.67	24	17.14	59	18.55
Textile processing	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	3	5.56	3	2.14	6	1.89
Caricature	2	4.26	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	2	3.70	1	0.71	5	1.57
Ceramics	2	4.26	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	2	3.70	5	3.57	9	2.83
Goldsmithing	6	12.77	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	3.70	0	0.00	2	1.43	9	2.83
Other topics	12	25.53	6	19.35	7	36.84	4	14.81	8	14.81	22	15.71	59	18.55
Total	47	100.00	31	100.00	19	100.00	27	100.00	54	100.00	140	100.00	318	100.00

Source: Created by the author

With regards to the default criteria ten basic topics were formed: painting, glass working, sculpture, graphics, photography, textile processing, caricature, goldsmithing, and so on. By analysing the topics by year, it is evident that in 1990 the most written topic was painting (36,17) followed by other topics (25.53%), goldsmithing (12.77%), sculpture and photography with 6.38% each, caricature and ceramics with 4.26%, graphics and glass working with 2.13%, and there were no articles on textile processing. By analysing the topics by year, it is evident that in 1991 the most written topics were painting (29.03%) and photography (29.03%) followed by sculpture with 19.35%, and glass working with 3.23%. No articles were written on the other mentioned topics.

In 1992, three themes were represented. Most of the articles were written on the topic of photography (36.84%) and other topics (36.84%). The topic of painting was covered by 26.32% of the articles. In 1993 more than half of the articles were written about painting (51.85%) followed by photography with 25.93%, other topics with 14.81% and sculpture and goldsmithing with 3.70% each. No articles were written on the other mentioned topics.

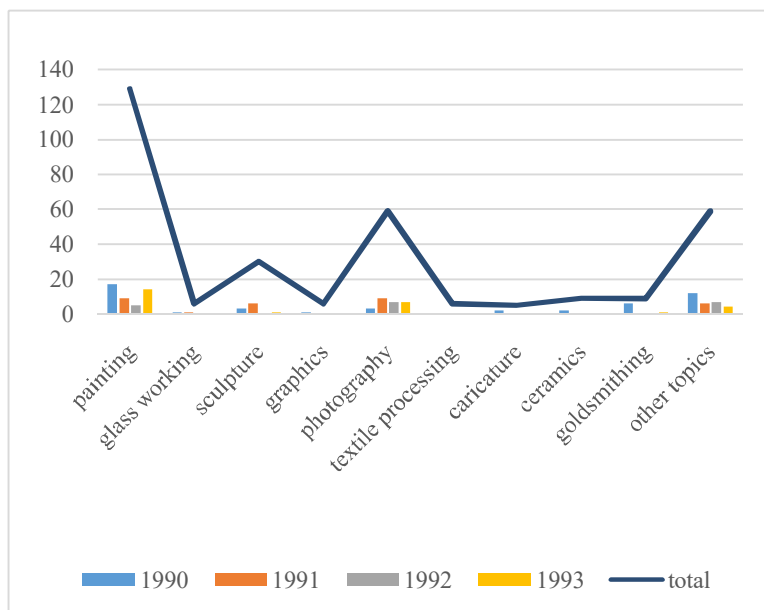
In 1994, most of the articles were written on the topic of painting (40.74%), followed by photography with 16.67%, other topics with 14.81%, sculpture with 9.26%, textile processing and general with 5.56% each, glass working, caricature and ceramics with 3.70% each and graphics with 1.85 %. No articles were written on the topic of goldsmithing.

All the above-mentioned topics were present in 1995. Most of the articles were written on the topic of painting (44.29%), followed by photography with 17.14%, other topics with 15.71%, sculpture with 10.71%, ceramics with 3.57%, graphics with 2.86%,

Media Coverage of Visual Arts from 1990 until 1995-on the Example of the City of...

textile processing with 2,14%, goldsmithing and glass working with 1.43% and caricature with 0.71%.

Chart 2. Total number of articles per topic in the Zadar newspapers from 1990 to 1995



Source: Created by the author according to the data in the Table 2

The largest number of articles were published on the topic of painting (40.57%) followed by the topic of photography with 18,55% and other topics with 18,55%. In the other topics category, we also included, besides the articles that contained different topics, those articles that did not have the minimum number of articles to form a specific topic. However, they also tell us about how the spread of representation of a specific activity in visual arts. The next topic most written-about topic is sculpture with a share of 9.43% in the corpus followed by ceramics and goldsmithing with 2.83% each, glass working, textile processing and graphics with 1.89% each and caricatures with 1.57%. Among other topics, we can, for example, include topics such as comics, restoration, religious art, numismatics, multimedia, drawing and scenography.

Qualitative content analysis

Interviews were held on topics of visual arts with a winner of an award for architectural work, a gallery director, a university professor and art historian, a gallery director and lecturer at the Faculty of humanities and social sciences, art historian and archaeologist, a horticultural expert, a visual artist, an exhibition space manager and some costume designers as well. At the beginning of the year 1990, an interview with the winner of the award for architectural work was published, discussing the importance of awards, creativity, the relevance of the visual component, the connection between architecture and art together with visual arts (Stupin, 1990a: 11). In the second half of

1990 another interview was published with the director of an art gallery in Dubrovnik, who was on the Editorial Board of the of an art event in Zadar. The reason for this interview was his conception "... of the phenomenon of spatiality in modern visual arts and of the increasingly unenviable status of museums in our universal cultural and material deprivation of the present day..." (Stupin, 1990b: 8). In the interview it was also discussed about issues of spatiality in contemporary visual arts, about a "new image" about image durability, archetypal signs. When talking about the little interest of the public, he emphasized the importance of education in schools and, among other things, pointed out that the "galleries and museums should be the cornerstones of our overall living, and the final step of education. Therefore, the transformation of the museums is an imperative these days" (Stupin, 1990b: 8).

At the beginning of 1993, an interview was published with a university professor at the Faculty of humanities and social sciences in Zadar, a Croatian art historian, was also accepted in the membership of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts (HAZU). In the interview it was talked about Zadar's paintings and sculptures, wood artworks, Zadar's goldsmithing, the valuable Zadar's goldsmith artwork - The Chest of Saint Simeon (Škrinja sv. Šimuna), Zadar's urbanism. When asked about Zadar as an inspiration in terms of scientific research, the academician particularly emphasized his love for Zadar and the value of Zadar's monuments, and also pointed out that "they belong to an elite cultural inventory, not only in a Croatian but also in the wider European context" (Stupin, 1993: 9).

At the end of 1994 an interview was published with the director of an art gallery and lecturer at the Faculty of humanities and social sciences. The occasion was the pause from art events in Zadar due to the war years. One of the topics of discussion was the international triennial exhibition of photography "Man and the Sea" that, as he pointed out, gathered photographers from all over the world and was also important for the presentation of Croatian photographers. He also talked about the impact of the war on the concept of the international exhibition, which he noted was still preserved, photography, restoration of gallery spaces, the Zadar school of photography, Zadar's visual arts and the study programme of art history at the Faculty of humanities and social sciences in Zadar, plans for the gallery and the future of fine visual arts in Zadar (Srhoj, 1994: 14-15).

In the first half of 1995 an interview with an art historian and archaeologist about archaeological finds in the area of Vukovar, difficult war days and the preparation of the exhibition in Zadar was published. He pointed out that among the most valuable archaeological finds zoomorphic figures and Roman sculptures will be displayed along with interesting old Croatian coin (Savičević, 1995: 25). On the occasion of the opening of the new exhibition space "Gema", a discussion was held with its manager on the topic of working in an exhibition space, its contents, the way it is run and its future (Meštrović, 1995: 25). In March, an interview with a horticultural expert and head of maintenance of green areas was held on the topics of the importance of trees in an urban centre and Zadar parks. During a conversation with a journalist of Narodni list she emphasized that Zadar was urbanized even in the Roman period and that the culture of parks in Zadar has been preserved. He also states that the gardens of Zadar are getting older and that they need renewal, but due to the war circumstances investments in gardens are lower (Stupin, 1995: 17).

In the article titled "Absurdity is the axis of human existence" a visual artist who received three awards on the 26th Revija hrvatskog filmskog i video stvaralaštva,

Media Coverage of Visual Arts from 1990 until 1995-on the Example of the City of...

talked about the visibility of new media, and exhibitions held in Dubrovnik, Ljubljana, his awarded work and other works, about video and installation art, and his plans for the future (Srhoj, 1995: 17).

In the second half of 1995, an interview with costume designers of the Zadar Summer Theater Festival was published in which the designers talked about the fabrication of the necessary props, plans for the future, costume design. It was pointed out that they received compliments for costumes and that “lack of infrastructure proved to be a very creative challenge” (Bujić, 1995: 25).

Discussion and conclusion

The beginning of the last decade of the last century in the Republic of Croatia, apart from political changes, the transition from the socialist to a democratic political system was marked by the Homeland War. The Republic of Croatia achieved its independence in October of 1991. The war years brought to the Croatian people difficult years of poverty, social problems and suffering. Cultural heritage has also been damaged in the war. Although the cultural and artistic heritage was being destroyed during the Homeland War, it has not prevented numerous cultural workers to turn to creative activities in the difficult times of war, as a sort of resistance towards aggression, violence. For instance, photography, as one of the forms of visual arts enabled the recording of events which represent valuable material to us in terms of present time.

The results of the research showed that in the period from 1990 to 1995, the Narodni list, Zadarski list and Fokus published 318 articles on visual arts. In terms of research of the topics of the articles, with respect to the default criteria the following topics were found: painting, glass working, sculpture, graphics, photography, textile processing, caricature, ceramics, goldsmithing and the like. By analysing the themes of visual arts in the examined years, it can be seen that in 1990 the majority of the articles were written about painting namely 36,17%, in 1991 the majority of the articles were written about painting (29.04%) and photography (29.04%), in 1992 the majority of the articles were written about photography (26.32%), in 1993 the majority of the articles were written again about painting (51.85%) and in 1994 the articles about painting were again the majority (40.74%) as well as in 1995 when the articles about painting had a share of 44.29%. The topic of painting was the most represented as well, with 40.57%, followed by photography with 18,55%, other topics with 12,58%, sculpture with 9,43%, general topics with 5,97%, ceramics with 2,83% and goldsmithing with 2,83%, glass working with 1,89%, graphics with 1,89%, textile processing with 1.89%, and cartoons with 1.57%. By analysing interviews about other topics we gained insight into a part of the research corpus; on topics of discussion with persons from the cultural life on topics related to art.

The results of the research have shown that the local newspapers in Zadar were interested in covering a broad spectrum of topics and events in the field of visual arts. The results of the research also tell us about culture professionals in the field of visual arts who, in the war years, had the will and the desire to create in the field of visual arts.

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