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VELIK

**You're small, I'm big!**  
**Ana Kuzmanić**

# You're small, I'm big!

*Artist's book I (big)*

*Artist's book II (small)*

*Transdisciplinary research project*

*Exhibited: 2015 You're small, I'm big!, Gallery Miroslav Kraljević, Zagreb, Croatia*

*"It is in speaking their word that people, by naming the world, transform it, dialogue imposes itself as the way by which they achieve significance as human beings", then it is crucial that children are included in social dialogue that has been typically reserved for adults (Freire, 2000, p. 69).*

*Freire, P. (2000). Pedagogy of the Oppressed. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.*

You're small, I'm big! is a transdisciplinary research project focused to ideological constructions of childhood in two different societies: socialist ex-Yugoslavia, and late capitalist Croatia.

Research starts from the book I can hardly wait to grow up: messages of children to adults (1980) edited by Branka Praznik. The book, published in Yugoslavia during the Week of the Young Child and the Universal Children's Day, contains children's messages about important things and events in their lives.

Based on methodology used in I can hardly wait to grow up, in collaboration with a team of children pedagogues I designed a series of interactive workshops for children aged 6 to 8. The workshops, which took place in Zagreb during October and November 2015, had been divided in four sections: Adults, Environment, War and Conflict, and Personal Wishes. The themes had been critically introduced using a selection of picture books and interactive materials which fostered spontaneous and direct approach. Children's thoughts had been documented in various media.

I selected the produced documentation and made an artistic book which confronts two sets of materials. The first part of the book is a direct product of conducted workshops, and contains selected testimonies which reflect ideological constructions of the contemporary society. The second, shorter part of the book contains selected testimonies from I can hardly wait to grow up, which have been produced within a radically different context of space, time and ideology.

The exhibition consisted of the artist book and selected workshop materials: interactive map of city, propositions for new city monuments, children's letters and collages, human silhouettes annotated by children. The exhibition also included a collection of picture books from various historic periods and in various languages that visitors could read.

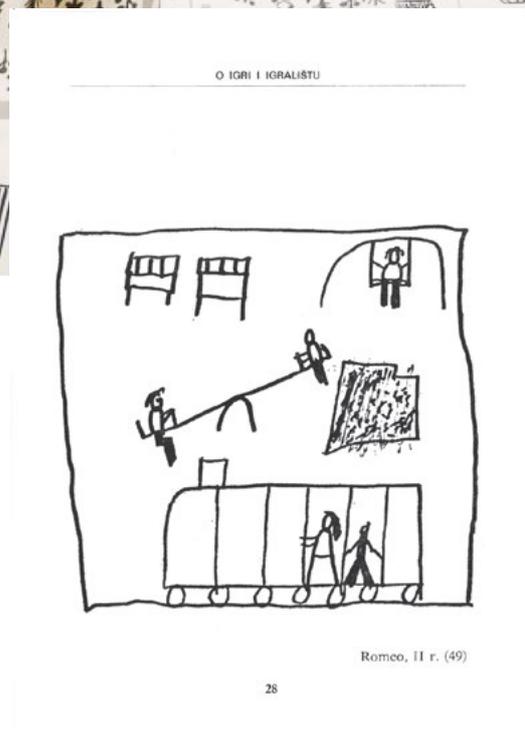




## Workshop 2

Topic: Living spaces

In order to foster discussion about the topic, we read the picturebook *A Lion in Paris* by Beatrice Alemagna. This introduced the first task, where children were asked to draw suggestions for new city monuments (first picture left). Picturebook *The Promise* by Nicola Davies introduced the second task. Using an interactive map of an imaginary city made of modular combined urban elements (streets, buildings, parks, shops, green surfaces, factories, institutions, traffic signs, parking lots, shop windows, written permissions and restrictions) children were asked to develop own utopian city. The process of 'building' an utopian city was interactive: children co-wrote, co-drew, moved, added, and removed elements. The workshop resulted in a new neighborhood dominated by indoor playgrounds and the School with the new curriculum.



## Workshop 2

Drawing originated in 1980s shows an open-air park with swings, chutes, and flagstones, and the drawing originated in 2015 shows an indoor playground as a multi-functional polygon modelled at shopping centers.



### Workshop 3

Topic: Conflict

In order to foster discussion about conflict, we watched the animated film *Piccolo* by Dušan Vukotić. The first task was to use collage in order to display a potential beginning of conflict. First photo right is example of that task and translation would be "Mum: Please make lunch. Dad: Why always me?"

The discussion of conflict soon moves from personal to social matters and touches upon themes such as war and refugees.

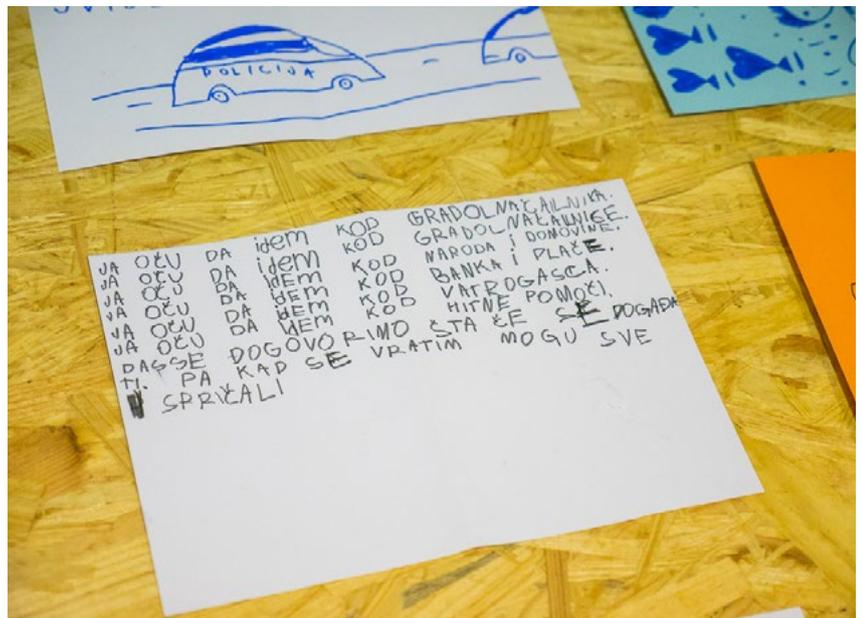
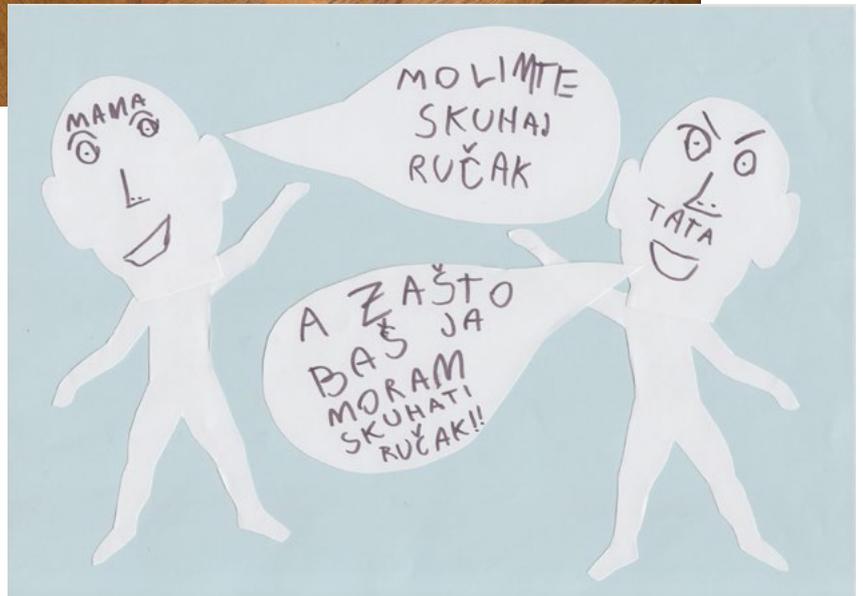
"Refugees means that they are never home, that they are constantly somewhere else, that they visit and relocate."

"Some countries do not let refugees in, to have more for own citizens."

"Refugees run from their countries, they want to go to Germany, and Germany does not allow that because there is a border."

The next task was to write letters to people responsible for changing the world (second photo to right). Unlike children from socialist Croatia, who saw power as concentrated into the hands of one political leader, contemporary children wrote to various persons: mayors, politicians, police, and also financial sector.

"When there is a fight about something, the bank could change it. It could lend money just for one day."





2015, exhibition You're small, I'm big, Gallery Miroslav Kraljević, Zagreb, Croatia



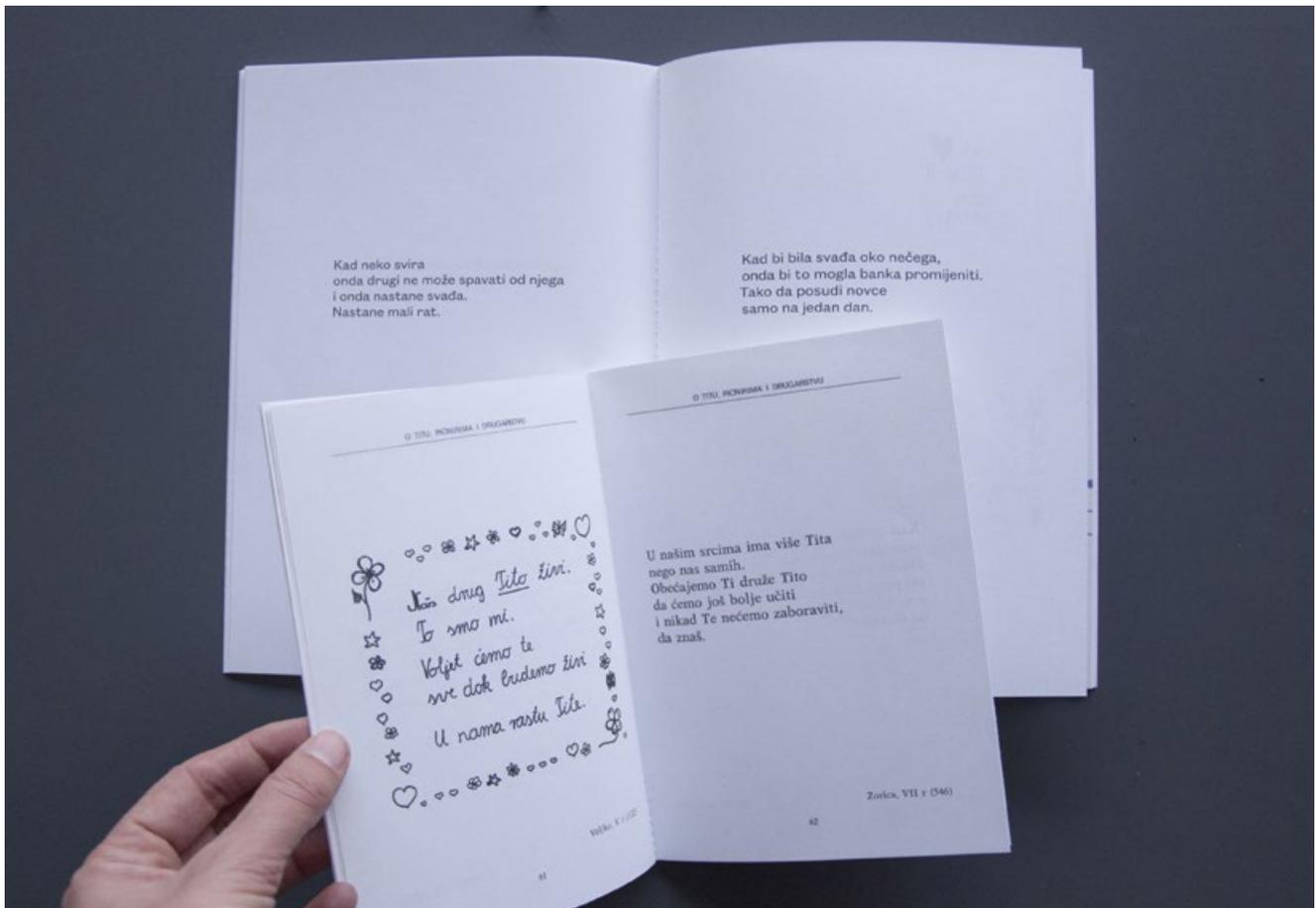




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Collection of picture books from various historic periods and in various languages that visitors could read.





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