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Art Crime and its Perception by Citizens in Slovenia

Abstract: The characteristics of crimes which relate to works of art belong to a kind of “noble” tradition of organized crime, encompassing the high value and extensive “pedigrees” of the stolen objects and even larger incomes and profits from the criminal enterprises. Money gained from the sale of stolen works of art can be used, in addition, for other illegal purposes and actions. This article first analyses the current state of play in the field of art crimes in Slovenia, which has (in terms of protecting works of art as objects of crimes) adopted good legislation, but unfortunately the measures are not fully and properly implemented. Due to this state of affairs, the authors have carried out pilot research about art crime in Slovenia – research which identifies and examines the problems surrounding art crime and people’s opinion about art culture in Slove-

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nia. The results show that most respondents do not own or possess important and valuable works of art and art culture does not play a significant role in their life. They do not often go to museums, and do not feel any connections to any specific types of artwork, neither in Slovenia nor in the world. On the other hand, they would in any case be very affected if somebody stole their work of art from their home. Besides, respondents said that they would protect and secure works of art using combination of physical and technical measures (respondents have more trust in technical protection measures than in the human factor). The vast majority of respondents would not buy works of art on the black market.

Keywords: art, national heritage, art crime, public opinion, Slovenia

Introduction

Art crime has a millennial tradition, but it has become even more attractive to perpetrators in recent decades due to the high financial gains and low rates of successful investigations.¹ For years the international community has exerted considerable efforts to protect the world's cultural heritage in its various facets, and one of the negative aspects which affects cultural heritage concerns crimes related to the arts/cultural heritage.

Art crimes involve deceit, theft, damage, or a combination of thereof (subsumed under the rubric of art crime are such activities as diverse as art thefts and confiscations, vandalism, faked and forged art, illicit excavations, and export of antiquities and other archaeological materials).² Deceit occurs in the production and marketing of fakes and forgeries, a problem that has plagued the trade in fine art prints in recent years. Deceit also occurs in the distribution of authentic works of art, where it involves fraud by collectors, dealers, auction houses, and museums. Another type of art crime is theft, which is probably the most well-known. There are different motives and opportunities for the theft of artworks, with criminals using different techniques, reconnaissance of targets, and the use of insiders and "fronts", etc. There is also the issue of damage to and/or destruction of art – so-called vandalism. Conventional vandalism is deliberately committed for various reasons, and

¹ S. Kuhar, *Criminal Investigation of Art Crime in the Republic of Slovenia*, "Revija za kriminalistiko in kriminologijo" 2016, Vol. 67(4).

² S. Manacorda, *Criminal Law Protection of Cultural Heritage: An International Perspective*, in: S. Manacorda, D. Chappell (eds.), *Crime in the Art and Antiquities World. Illegal Trafficking in Cultural Property*, Springer, New York 2011.

works of art are also damaged by thieves in the course of robberies and burglaries, as well as by the legitimate owners themselves through neglect, and during wars.³

Art crime is profitable and extensive, crossing international boundaries and presenting a challenge to law enforcement and policy makers in all regions of the world.⁴ These crimes are not, however, always punished – sometimes no one even reports the crime to law-enforcement agencies; sometimes the offender is not apprehended even if the crime is reported; sometimes the offender is dealt with as if the crime was a civil and not criminal matter; and sometimes people are not even aware they had a work of art in their possession. Worldwide, today we still do not have a systematic approach to properly gathering criminal statistics which would offer an accurate analysis of such crimes.⁵

Given the low level of recovery of either works of art or the proceeds from art crimes and lack of police and prosecutorial investigations, protection and prevention are highly important in this area. As Saša Kuhar determined, safeguarding art works is a very demanding and responsible task.⁶ The key elements are to reduce the opportunities to commit such a crime, to make the risks of such crime greater, and to reduce the proceeds which can be attained from such crimes. A combination of different security measures is essential; physical and technical monitoring and protection; internal and external video surveillance; as well as forensic marking. According to Kuhar, it is also important to raise public awareness of the value of artworks for society.⁷

According to Justin T. Pickett, public opinion changes in response to crime rates, and criminal justice policies and practice respond to movements in public opinion.⁸ This is why public awareness and opinion is so important when it comes to art and crimes related to art, and this is the reason why we carried out our research concerning the significance of art, problems of art crime, and people's opinion about art culture in Slovenia.

The Extent of Art Crime Worldwide

Calculating the amount of art crime that is committed is made difficult by obstacles that have traditionally confronted criminologists seeking international data

³ J.E. Conklin, *Art Crime*, Praeger Publishers, Westport, CT 1994.

⁴ S. Manacorda, D. Chappell, *From Cairo to Vienna and Beyond: Contemporary Perspectives on the Dialogue About Protecting Cultural Artefacts from Plunder*, in: S. Manacorda, D. Chappell (eds.), *Crime in the Art and Antiquities World. Illegal Trafficking in Cultural Property*, Springer, New York 2011.

⁵ S. Manacorda, op. cit.

⁶ S. Kuhar, *Art Crime and Preventive Measures for Museums, Churches and Sacred Objects*, "Varstvoslovje. Journal of Criminal Justice and Security" 2018, Vol. 20(2).

⁷ Ibidem.

⁸ J.T. Pickett, *Public Opinion and Criminal Justice Policy: Theory and Research*, "Annual Review of Criminology" 2019, Vol. 2.

on crime. Patrick J. O’Keefe believes that it is impossible to determine the extent and scope of art crime, since statistical data are scant because such crime often remains unreported.⁹ Besides, nations have different laws on theft, fraud, and smuggling, and even if all countries gathered complete and accurate crime statistics, it would not be possible to add their figures together to get a complete count of art crimes. In addition to differences among nations’ laws and their methods of gathering crime statistics, countries also differ in their law-enforcement priorities. Some countries, such as Italy with its 80-person art squad, focus resources on the problem of art theft; others, such as Peru, which are poor and face threats from terrorists or drug traffickers, devote few resources to preventing the looting of their patrimony.

We must also bear in mind that many art crimes are rarely reported. Museums, for example, fail to report thefts and acts of vandalism because they are reluctant to draw attention to the vulnerability of their holdings, fearing that this would scare off donors and attract more thieves and vandals. Collectors conceal their losses out of fear of alerting potential thieves to the value of their possessions and their vulnerability to theft. Antiquities collectors do not report thefts for fear of attracting the attention of the governments of the countries from which their pieces were originally smuggled. Collectors who have bought stolen art or who have purchased art legitimately with money that was dishonestly acquired or not reported on tax returns are also reluctant to report thefts, for obvious reasons. Even more, crimes other than theft often go unreported.

Inasmuch as complete and reliable statistics on the extent of art crime do not exist,¹⁰ it is consequently also hard to obtain statistics on police recovery efforts (investigations and court cases) of art crimes – it is estimated that the recovery rate is between 6% and 20%.¹¹ This needs to be improved and corrected, as Noah Charney demonstrates the importance and extent of art crime by categorizing it as the third most profitable criminal activity, immediately after drug trafficking and arms smuggling. According to his estimates, art crime generates proceeds ranging from US\$2 to 6 billion per year, most of which is used to support international organized crime groups.¹² Bonnie-Magness Gardiner, the Director of the FBI Art Theft Programme, estimates that annual losses incurred due to art crime amount to US\$8 billion per year.¹³

⁹ P.J. O’Keefe, *Difficulties in Investigating Art Crime and Recovering Its Proceeds: An International Perspective*, in: D. Chappell, S. Hufnagel (eds.), *Contemporary Perspectives on the Detection, Investigation and Prosecution of Art Crime: Australasian, European and North American Perspectives*, Ashgate, Farnham 2014, p. 151.

¹⁰ J.E. Conklin, op. cit.

¹¹ R.E. Spiel, *Art Theft and Forgery Investigation: The Complete Field Manual*, Charles C. Thomas, Springfield, IL 2000.

¹² N. Charney, *Art and Crime: Exploring the Dark Side of the Art World*, Praeger; ABC-CLIO, Santa Barbara, CA 2009.

¹³ M.J. Wylly, *Motives of Art Theft: A Social Contextual Perspective of Value* [Ph.D. diss.], Florida State University 2014, <http://diginole.lib.fsu.edu/islandora/object/fsu:185344/datastream/PDF/view> [accessed: 15.03.2019].

The State of Play and Different Types of Criminal Offences Concerning Works of Art in Slovenia

Slovenia is rich in sacral objects and objects that are attached to sacral buildings, involving both religion and culture, including objects from the time of the Turkish invasions, the Roman Empire, and the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. Every subject and every part of it – culture, art, painting, architecture, crafts, and the development of civilization – bears witness to the life and work of these periods, and the alienation of individual objects of historical heritage results in a lack of material confirmation and produces irreplaceable damage. Cultural heritage is a mirror of the nation and an irreplaceable and invaluable source of information about the way of life of its ancestors.¹⁴

Bojan Dobovšek stated that the most common types of art crimes in Slovenia include theft of objects from sacral, secular, and residential buildings, illicit or unauthorized archaeological excavations and thefts of archaeological finds, illegal export and import of works of art, and fraud and illegal trade in copies and forgeries of works of art by renowned Slovene and foreign artists, which are then sold as originals. The majority of stolen paintings are from the 20th century, while impressionist paintings are the most valuable. When it comes to statues, the period of their creation is more difficult to define, as it is often – just like the artist him or herself – unknown. Most stolen paintings and statues are of smaller size, which is not surprising as these are easier to conceal and transport to the client.¹⁵

Due to its geographical location, Slovenia is a transit country for works of art and cultural heritage travelling from Eastern Europe and the former Yugoslav republics to the Western European markets, and as in other countries thefts of works of art are common in Slovenia.

The Criminal Code of Slovenia (2012)¹⁶ places art crime among following crimes:¹⁷

- Art theft (Larceny – Article 204, Grand Larceny – Article 205, Larceny in the Form of Robbery – Article 207);
- Art smuggling or illegal export and import of art (Illegal Export and Import of Goods of Special Cultural Significance or Natural Curiosities – Article 218,¹⁸ Misappropriation – Article 208);

¹⁴ N. Orel Trampuž, D.J. Heath, V. Hudnik, *Spectrometric Research of the Late Bronze Age Hoard Finds*, in: B. Teržan (ed.), *Hoards and Individual Metal Finds from the Eneolithic and Bronze Ages in Slovenia*, Narodni muzej, Ljubljana 1996.

¹⁵ B. Dobovšek, *Problematika trgovine z umetninami* [The problem of trafficking works of art], in: M. Jager (ed.), *Kraja umetnin*, Inštitut za kriminologijo pri Pravni fakulteti v Ljubljani, Ljubljana 2007.

¹⁶ English translation available at: <https://www.wipo.int/edocs/lexdocs/laws/en/si/si045en.pdf> [accessed: 16.03.2019].

¹⁷ S. Kuhar, *Criminal Investigation...*

¹⁸ "(1) Whoever, without the permission of the agency responsible, exports goods of special cultural significance or natural curiosities to a foreign country or imports the same, contrary to the principles of in-

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- Vandalism and damaging or destroying goods of special cultural significance or natural curiosities (Damaging or Destroying Goods of Special Cultural Significance or Natural Curiosities – Article 219,¹⁹ Damaging Another's Object – Article 220²⁰);
- Violation of material copyright or art fraud (Violation of Material Copyright – Article 148, Fraud – Article 211, Concealment – Article 217).²¹

According to the Slovene Police data, which was gathered by Kuhar, 100 art crimes are processed on average every year (see Table 1 below). With respect to the number of art crimes per capita and the size of the country, Slovenia is comparable to some neighbouring states, such as Austria.²²

Table 1. Number of art crimes in Slovenia from 2005 till 2015

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	TOTAL
Larceny	60	57	35	67	33	29	51	39	29	31	24	455
Grand Larceny	52	38	42	44	35	28	35	31	36	77	23	441
Larceny in the Form of Robbery			1									1
Misappropriation			1	5	1	2	2	2			2	15
Fraud	1		2		1	1		1	3	1	1	11
Concealment	3			4	1	3	1	1	1		3	17
Damaging or Destroying Goods of Special Cultural Significance or Natural Curiosities	1	2	2	1	1	4	5	3	6	6	7	38
Damaging Another's Object	9	17	11	24	20	14	7	16	14	15	10	157
TOTAL	126	114	94	145	92	81	101	93	89	130	70	1135

Source: S. Kuhar, *Criminal Investigation of Art Crime in the Republic of Slovenia*, "Revija za kriminalistiko in kriminologijo" 2016, Vol. 67(4).

ternational law, shall be sentenced to imprisonment for not more than three years. (2) If the goods under the preceding paragraph are of extreme cultural importance, the perpetrator shall be sentenced to imprisonment for not more than five years".

¹⁹ "(1) Whoever unlawfully damages or destroys goods of special cultural significance, natural curiosities, other protected natural resources or a public resource, shall be sentenced to imprisonment for not more than five years. (2) If the damaged or destroyed goods represent a cultural monument or a natural curiosity of extreme importance to the Republic of Slovenia, or if the damage caused is of high value, the perpetrator shall be sentenced to imprisonment for not more than eight years".

²⁰ Intentionally destructive and illegal damage to a work of art.

²¹ Forgery and illegal trade in copies or fakes of works of renowned domestic and foreign masters, to be sold as originals.

²² S. Kuhar, *Criminal Investigation...*

Methodology

Aim of Research

Up until now, there has not been any research in Slovenia on the common public opinion regarding art crime, vandalisms, and felonies in connection with works of art. Because of this lacuna we decided to prepare and distribute a questionnaire to look into the matter. During our work, we explored:

- a) General public opinion concerning works of art – are people visiting museums, do they have works of art at home, do they care about culture, etc.?
- b) How do people in Slovenia assess art crime and other felonies regarding works of art?
- c) What kind of sentences should be handed down in Slovenia regarding art crime?
- d) Are people offended by – or how do they feel – when it comes to art crime?
- e) Do people think that art crime is connected with organized crime and/or with terrorism?

Method of Research

In order to measure and/or obtain a general picture concerning works of art as objects of criminal offences or of vandalism in Slovenia, we decided to use a questionnaire. By doing so we tried to become familiar with people's way of thinking about works of art, art crimes, criminal offences regarding works of art, security measures in place, buying works of art on black markets, connections with organized crime and terrorism, etc.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire was comprised of 45 questions, divided into the following groups:

- a) Demographic data – gender, age, degree of education, personal monthly net income;
- b) General data concerning works of art – what part do works of art play in public life?; Do people have works of art at home?; Do they visit galleries or museums?;
- c) Data concerning the seriousness of vandalism and criminal offences associated with works of art. Assessment whether a certain illegal transaction connected with works of art is a small thing or a serious crime;
- d) What is the respondents' opinion on whether there is a connection between works of art and organized crime and terrorism;
- e) Suitability of sentences for vandalism; criminal offences regarding works of art; What is the most suitable sentence for different ranges of criminal offences?;

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- f) The personal feelings of respondents regarding vandalism and criminal offences connected with works of art;
- g) Protection and security of works of art, and some other issues.

The respondents expressed their opinion based on a five-point scale, with 1 meaning total disagreement with the claim and 5 meaning total agreement with the claim.

Empirical Part

Description of Sample

The questionnaire was sent to 450 interviewees. We received 171 completed questionnaires, or 38% of all the questionnaires sent. The interviewees who responded to the questionnaire are further called respondents. The ratio of sample at research is 0.77 (KMO) (Table 2) and ratio of stability of the sample (Cronbach's Alpha) is 0.90 (Table 3). Because the value is higher than 0.8, we can conclude that our scale is reliable enough and there is high level of possibility to get the same or similar results through repeated sampling.

Table 2. KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.773
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	4003.167
	Df	1081
	Sig.	.000

Source: Own elaboration.

Table 3. Reliability statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	No. of items
.900	43

Source: Own elaboration.

Results

Demographic data

The structure of the respondents was very diverse; composed of 67 (39.2%) men and 104 (60.8%) of women (v1²³). The average age of the respondents was 33 years. We divided age structure into different groups and got the following results:

²³ The letter "v" with a number means the number of the question in the questionnaire. For example, v5 means the fifth question in the questionnaire.

Table 4. V2 – age structure by groups

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	from 17-20	5	2.9	2.9	2.9
	from 21-30	94	55.0	55.0	57.9
	from 31-40	26	15.2	15.2	73.1
	from 41-50	21	12.3	12.3	85.4
	from 51-60	16	9.4	9.4	94.7
	from 61-70	8	4.7	4.7	99.4
	from 71-80	1	.6	.6	100.0
	Total	171	100.0	100.0	

Source: Own elaboration.

As can be seen from Table 4, the highest number of respondents were in the age groups 21-30 and 31-40 years, but inasmuch as the 21-30 group dominated, the average age was 33 years old.

The respondents were asked to determine their education (v3). Nine respondents (5.3%) finished primary school, most finished high school (102 – 59.6%), 54 (31.6%) finished university studies, and six respondents completed their master's or doctoral studies, which represents 3.5% of the sample.

As to our next question (amount of monthly income, v4), 154 (90.1%) persons responded. Most respondents (59, i.e. 34.5%) had a monthly net income of less than €450. The second largest group of respondents (44, or 25.7%) had a monthly income between €450-700, while the next group (34, or 19.9%) had an income between €700 and 1200 monthly. Seventeen respondents (9.9%) had an income of €1200 or higher per month.

General data concerning works of art

The next set of questions concerned general data about works of art in Slovenia, namely how people interpret the term, if they own any, what is their cultural conduct, etc.

In the first question (v5) in this set, we asked if the respondents owned an object which they evaluated as an expensive and important work of art. The responses were very instructive, with 10.5% of all respondents replying that they do not know if they have any important work of art in their home. This is a rather small percentage and shows that few were not educated enough to recognize works of art. At the same time, 107 respondents replied that they have no important or expensive works of art at their home, while only 43 respondents (25.1%) replied that they have such important and valuable objects.

This information is connected with next question (v6): Do works of art play an important part in your life? Respondents replied according to the same 5-point scale – 1 meant not important; 2 not very important; 3 rather important; 4 quite important; and 5 very important. The average answer was 2.35 (not very important). This means that works of art do not generally play an important part in re-

spondents' lives in Slovenia. Only 21 respondents (12.2%) claimed that works of art played a quite or very important part in their lives.

We also wanted to find out how often people visit galleries, museums, or other places which are connected with works of art (v7). Respondents also used the scale from 1 (never) to 5 (very often). The average of all answers (2.22) shows that the respondents on average almost never or rarely visit galleries or museums. Just 14 respondents (8.2%) visited them often or very often.

As concerns the last two questions in this group – Do you feel any personal connections to any work of art in the world (v8) and in Slovenia (v9) – 21.6% of respondents felt a personal connection, while 78.9% did not.

Data concerning the seriousness of vandalism and criminal offences connected with works of art

The next large part of the questionnaire referred to the matter of how respondents assessed different criminal offences against art works. We should stress that the majority of those listed for assessment concerned minor delinquent offenses with respect to works of art, but we also added other, more serious, criminal offences, like resale for drugs, international resale for drugs, art smuggling, weapons smuggling, trade with people involved in international terrorism. We added this to compare how people demarcate the seriousness of criminal offences with criminal offences connected to works of art. In these questions the respondents' answers were spread across the 5-point scale as follows: 1 referred to an "action of minor importance"; while 5 meant a "very serious criminal offence".

The respondents tended to view most of the listed crimes as at least serious (the average mark was 3.74), and assessed theft of protected valuable objects from sea and riverbeds as less serious. The most serious crimes connected with art sales – with an average of 4.9 – were those connected with human trafficking. The average mark of the seriousness of those crimes which are connected with arts was 4.12, but the average mark of seriousness of those crimes which are not connected to works of art but are considered in the Criminal law of Republic of Slovenia as more serious was 4.77. We can thus see that the respondents assessed the overall seriousness of crimes connected with works of art as very high.

Respondents' opinion as to whether there is a connection between works of art and organized crime and terrorism

In the next four questions we wanted to determine the respondents' opinion regarding the connection between works of art and terrorism (v25) and between works of art and organized crime (v26). In addition, we were interested if people's opinions would change if they knew that the resale of stolen works of art was aimed at financing terrorism (v27), and if they knew that organized crime is involved with the resales of stolen works of art (v28). As regards the latter two questions, the re-

spondents had to choose from a 5-point scale ranging from 1 – “My opinion does not change at all” and 5 – “My opinion is totally different”.

Table 5. Statistics

		v25	v26	v27	v28
N	Valid	171	171	171	170
	Missing	0	0	0	1
Mean		2.87	3.75	3.11	2.90
Std. deviation		1.082	1.024	1.315	1.304
Variance		1.172	1.048	1.730	1.700

Source: Own elaboration.

As we can see from Table 5, respondents assessed the connections between works of art with any kind of terrorist activities on average as 2.87. They found a more important connections (average 3.75) between works of art and organized crime.

When we told respondents that it is a fact that the resales of stolen works of art are also used to finance international crime, their opinion changed on average at a level of 3.11 (based on 1 – “My opinion does not change at all”, to 5 – “My opinion is totally different”). When respondents were confronted with the claim that it is a fact that organized crime also engages in stolen works of art, their opinion also changed at the level of 2.90 (based on the same scale as above).

Suitability of sentences for vandalism and criminal offences regarding works of art: What is the most suitable sentence for different ranges of criminal offences?

In this set of questions, the respondents were asked which sentence²⁴ is suitable for:

- a) a perpetrator who stole a very valuable and famous picture from a National Gallery:
 - The most respondents (58, or 33.9%) chose a prison sentence from 1 to 3 years; and 50 (29.2%) respondents chose a prison sentence from 3 to 5 years. The least number of respondents chose a prison sentence of 15 years or more.

We should note that for this group of questions we use an average answer based on the average of marking the 5 level value of the scale from 1 to 5. This is not the most accurate indicator of what is the most suitable sentence, but it clearly shows the relationship of the level of sentence from 1 to 5.²⁵ In this question the average answer was 2.79, which means a prison sentence from 3 to 5 years.

²⁴ Sentences in questionnaire: 1 - Fine, 2 - Prison from 1 to 3 years, 3 - Prison from 3 to 5 years, 4 - Prison from 5 to 15 years, 5 - Prison from 15 years or more.

²⁵ Sentences in questionnaire: 1 - Fine, 2 - Prison from 1 to 3 years, 3 - Prison from 3 to 5 years, 4 - Prison from 5 to 15 years, 5 - Prison from 15 years or more.

- b) a perpetrator who has stolen a valuable and famous picture from a National Gallery at home and is aware of the fact it is stolen:
 - For this crime, compared with above question, the sentence considered appropriate by the respondents decreased from 2.70 to 2.46, which means a prison sentence from 1 to 3 years.
- c) a perpetrator who stole a monument in/from a public park:
 - Here, the majority of respondents chose the prison sentence of 3 to 5 years, with the average indicator being 2.61.
- d) a perpetrator vandalizes a work of art (tearing a piece off, breaking it, painting with spray paint, writing graffiti, etc.):
 - On this issue the average indicator significantly decreased, to 2.04. This means a sentence somewhere between a fine and a prison sentence from 1 to 3 years.
- e) a perpetrator who stole a protected and valuable object from a sea bed or riverbed:
 - Here the average answer was 2.12. This is a little higher than the previous question, and shows that respondents would give this perpetrator a prison sentence from 1 to 3 years.

The average for the most suitable punishment/sentence for all the crimes regarding works of art was 2.40, which means a prison sentence from 1 to 5 years.

Personal feelings of respondents regarding vandalism and criminal offences connected with works of art

In this set of questions we tried to determine the respondents' personal feelings when it comes to crimes regarding art: e.g. whether the respondents would be affected if a) somebody stole a valuable and important picture from a National Gallery (v34); b) somebody stole a public monument (v35); c) somebody painted or wrote graffiti on a public monument (v36); d) somebody tore off a piece of or broke a public monument (v37); e) somebody stole an important, valuable, and protected object from a sea bed or riverbed (v38); and f) somebody stole a valuable and important picture from a wealthy private collector of works of art (v39).

Table 6. Statistics

		v34	v35	v36	v37	v38	v39
N	Valid	171	171	171	170	169	170
	Missing	0	0	0	1	2	1
Mean		2.61	3.44	3.22	3.21	2.66	2.36
Std. deviation		1.266	1.227	1.176	1.157	1.175	1.097

Source: Own elaboration.

As we can see in Table 6, people felt the least hurt or affected if somebody stole an important and valuable picture from a wealthy private collector of works

of art (v39). People would be the most hurt and affected if somebody stole a public monument in/from a public park (v35).

Protection, security of works of art, and some other questions

The next set of questions concerned the protection of works of art and some other questions (such as buying artworks on the black market, etc.).

The first question was: If you had some important and very valuable work of art at home, would you take steps to protect it (such as an insurance policy)? (v40). All told, 80% of respondents replied that they would. The second question (v41) was: How much would it affect you if somebody stole an unprotected (e.g. uninsured) work of art from your home? Respondents had to choose between 1 (Not affected) and 5 (Very affected). The majority of respondents (57.9%) said that they would be very affected.

In comparison with next question (v42), where we asked: How much would it affect you if somebody stole a protected (e.g. insured) work of art from your home?, the respondents did not change their opinion much. A majority of them (53.2%) still replied that they would be very affected. We can conclude that the question of protection and/or insurance was secondary to the respondents, but that in any case they would be very affected if somebody stole a work of art from their home.

The next question (v43) was: How, in your opinion, should works of art be protected? Respondents had to choose between three possibilities: a) technical measures; b) physical supervision; or c) a combination of both. The majority of respondents (64.9%) chose a combination of both, while 31% chose protection by technical devices.

The respondents then assessed the next statement (v44) using a 5-point scale: How much would the protection of works of art with technical devices (cameras, sensors, etc.) reduce thefts or other crimes? The average indicator was 3.71, which suggests that respondents place a great deal of trust in technical devices, but not totally. The average indicator of the next question (v45) – How much would physical protection (guards, etc.) of works of art reduce thefts or other crimes? – was 3.40. This means that the respondents place less trust in guards (physical protection) than in the technical protection of works of art.

The last question (v46) was: Would you buy any kind of work of art on the black market? The vast majority (85.4%) of respondents said that they would not, while 25 respondents acknowledged that they would.

Table 7. Statistics

		v40	v41	v42	v43	v44	v45	v46
N	Valid	171	171	171	171	171	171	171
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		1.19	4.35	4.22	2.34	3.71	3.40	1.85
Std. deviation		.396	.910	.991	.921	1.054	1.130	.354
Variance		.157	.827	.982	.849	1.112	1.276	.126

Source: Own elaboration.

Conclusions

Researching art crime is very important in order to raise public awareness of it. In our research concerning works of art which are objects of criminal offences, vandalism, and other forms of criminal activities, we obtained some very interesting findings. Based on a sample of 171 respondents, we found that the majority of our respondents fit within the age range of 21 to 40 years, and consisted of 40% men and 60% women, a majority of whom have an average monthly income of less than €450 and have finished only high school.

In the set of general questions about works of art, the predominant finding was that people in Slovenia are uneducated regarding works of art and are not engaged in art nor supporters of art culture. This conclusion is reflected in the fact that 20% of all respondents did not even know whether they have some important and valuable work of art in their home, and only 12.2% of all respondents stated that works of art played an important role in their lives. Besides, only 8.2% of respondents regularly visited museums or art galleries. Most respondents either do not visit such institutions, or do so rarely.

The next set of questions concerned the assessment of the seriousness of criminal offences, vandalism, and other forms of criminal activity regarding works of art. We were able to reach the conclusion that the most serious crime is the destruction of cultural heritage, as 42% of respondents evaluated this crime as the worst and most serious criminal offence regarding works of art. The most harmless and the least serious art crime was deemed to be stealing important and valuable objects from sea beds or riverbeds.

The order of assessment – from the least serious to the most serious crime concerning works of art – was: stealing important and valuable objects from sea beds or riverbeds; painting and using colour sprays on public monuments; a person has in her/his home a stolen valuable and important picture and he/she knows it is stolen; theft of a famous, valuable work of art from a National Gallery; theft of or tearing off part of a public memorial monument; vandalism of a public monument; smuggling of works of art; theft of a sculpture or monument in a public place; and destruction of cultural heritage.

It is surprising that the least seriously assessed criminal activity concerning works of art is stealing an important and valuable object from a sea bed or riverbed; especially in comparison with the next lesser assessed, i.e. painting and/or using colour sprays on public monuments. It is also astonishing that respondents claimed that human trafficking is a more serious crime than international terrorism.

The respondents thought that works of art are to a middle extent (average 2.78 on a scale from 1 to 5) connected with any kind of terrorism; and to a considerably larger extent (3.74) connected with organized crime. However, respondents' own opinions or convictions concerning this connection changed (but only to a medium extent) after we informed them of the fact that such connections exist and are proven.

Also interesting were the answers given regarding the suitability of punishments/sentences for various kinds of criminal activities. The respondents assigned the smallest punishment (an overall indicator of 2.07, or prison from 1 to 3 years) to a perpetrator who vandalized and damaged a public monument. The highest punishment/sentence (2.79 – prison from 3 to 5 years) was ascribed to perpetrators who steal important and famous works of art from National Galleries.

In our research we also asked respondents about their personal feelings about various crimes concerning works of art. Respondents were the least concerned if somebody steals an important and valuable picture from a wealthy private collector of works of art. At the other side of the spectrum, respondents would be the most affected if somebody stole a public monument in/from a public park.

The findings from the last set of questions – regarding protection and security measures, the black market, and other issues – were not surprising. Most respondents replied that they would be very affected – regardless of whether some work of art of their own was insured or protected or not – if somebody stole such a work from their home. In accordance with the high sentences which they would give to criminal activities regarding works of art, they would protect and secure works of art of their own using a combination of physical guarding and technical surveillance. However, we also got feedback that the respondents have more trust in technical devices than in human surveillance.

Only 15% of respondents acknowledged that they would buy a work of art on the black market. This finding fits and conforms to the common conclusion of our survey – that people in Slovenia are not interested in art and it does not play an important role in their lives. But we must point out one very important thing here; namely that despite the fact that the respondents are not very actively engaged in art/culture, they still declared that crimes regarding works of art are very serious and that criminals should be given high sentences and punishments for their criminal activities.

To conclude, we can describe the average respondent in our research as: A woman, aged 33, who has finished high school and has an income of less than €450 monthly. She does not have important and valuable works of art in her apartment and art and culture do not play an important role in her life. She does not go often to museums and galleries, and does not feel any particular connection to any work of art, either in Slovenia or in the world. She assesses the theft of an important and valuable work of art from a sea bed or riverbed as the least serious crime against art, and the destruction of cultural heritage as the most serious one. Average suitable punishments/sentences for a perpetrator of an art crime is prison from 1 to 5 years. Our “average respondent” is the least hurt or offended if somebody steals an important and very valuable work of art from a private collector, and is the most hurt and offended if somebody steals a public monument from a public park. For our average respondent, regardless of whether a work of art is insured/protected or not, in any case she would be very affected if somebody stole a work

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of art from her home. If she did decide to protect and secure a work of art, she would use a combination of physical and technical surveillance measures. But we also got feedback that our “average respondent” has more trust in technical surveillance than in the human factor. Most of our respondents would not buy a work of art on the black market.

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