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Foreword

Europe's broad assortment of academic journals has a newcomer – *ADAMarts*. This journal, dedicated to both architecture and media arts, constitutes a rarity. Architecture is usually more associated with engineering, given the close ties between the two fields, especially in practice, while media arts is more often affiliated with literature, from where it draws considerable inspiration and material.

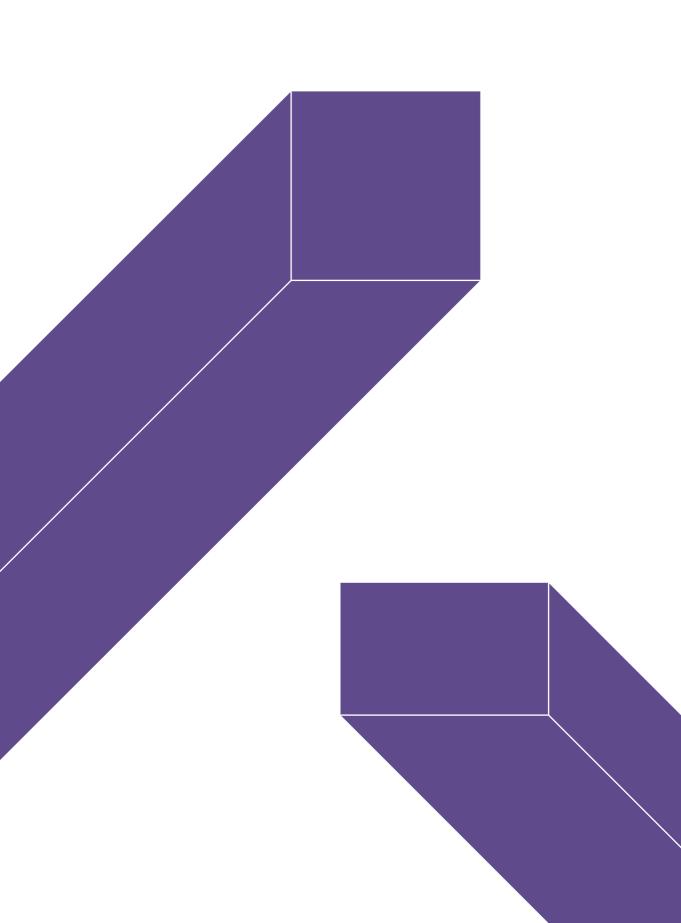
Ever since the Dutch cultural historian Johan Huizinga discussed the importance of play in culture and society in his 1938 work *Homo Ludens*, we continue to construct our identity in a deliberate fashion. Today's individuals, having lost their ties to nature, perceive their surrounding environment conditionally and are subject to the power of authorities and technologies. For architects, the construction of the physical environment goes hand in hand with media artists' simulation and modification of layouts in the virtual environment.

RISEBA's motto "Business Meets Art" is not an empty phrase. *ADAMarts* is ready to meet the challenge of combining research on architecture and media arts with another element – analysis of market players' economic interests.

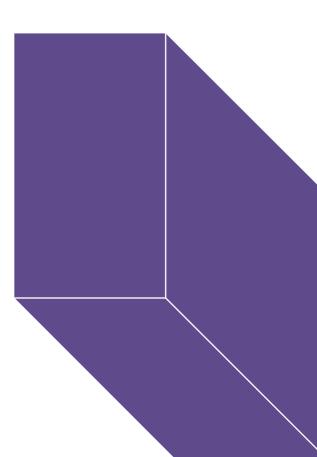
Meanwhile, some contributors' excursions into the history of twentieth-century city planning and architecture may serve not only as reference material for future researchers, but also as instructions for correcting future mistakes.

The first issue includes a broad spectrum of topics, from artistic research in the network society and the aesthetics of 360° filmmaking to analysis of uninhabited quarters of the shrinking capital city and the challenge of interpreting Riga's early medieval centre in architectural forms pleasing to contemporary society.

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Architecture and Design



Linda Leitane-Smidberga 25 Years of Ambivalence: Architecture Competitions in Latvia since 1991

Abstract

25 years since regaining independence in 1991, Latvia is marked by unprecedented socio economic processes that have distinctively reshaped thinking and practice in architecture, requiring adaptation to the demands of the free market. In the course of this period more than 500 architectural competitions constitute half of the total number of architectural competitions in Latvia since the mid-19th century.

Identifying five consecutive phases of accelerated architecture competition practice over the last 25 years, the paper examines procedures, outcomes and reasons behind success and failures. The specifics of Phase I: *Confusion* (1991-1996) are explained through substitution of state commissions with the first private interests and funding. The information exchange initiated in taking on the latest trends in international experience characterises Phase II: *Acceleration* (1997-2002). This is followed by Phase III: *Controlled Utopia* (2003-2008), when the building process reached its peak momentum. Phase IV: *Lower Level* (2008-2011) was initiated by the global economic crisis, eventually leading to Phase V: *Integration of Knowledge* (2012-2016).

Providing multiple narratives on each of the phases, the paper critically reflects on the current potential of architectural competition practice, arguing that the building processes have not only provoked a spontaneous and hectic architectural and urban environment, but also allowed accumulation of knowledge to challenge good practice guidelines and rigid legal frameworks. The paper concludes with comments on the omnipresent uncertainty about whether competition practice still has the ability to be an instrument to evaluate the potential of the building sites and to be turned into a design tool to acquire the best architectural solutions.

Keywords

architecture competitions, organizational process, competition regulations, competition culture in Latvia

Introduction

The practice of architectural competitions as a democratic model of designing architecture has been in place in Latvia since the middle of the 19th century. Over these 160 years, more than 1 100 competitions in architecture and urban design have taken place under different politico-economic systems (Leitane-Smidberga, 2014). The last 25 years, since the restoration of Latvian independence in 1991, have seen more than 630 competitions take place in Latvia, and over 320 in Riga. The aim of this paper is to determine what features have characterized the last 25 years - change of political system, rapid economic growth, an increase in the gross domestic product (GDP) and with it, the development of the construction industry. The paper will reflect critically on the current potential of the practice of architectural competitions, arguing that unique building processes have not only resulted in impulsive and disordered architectural and urban environments, but have also enabled the accumulation of knowledge that challenges the guidelines of good practice and rigid legal frameworks. A number of quantitative and qualitative research methods have been used in the analysis of architectural competitions. The choice of methodological principles is based on data from the research paper *The practice* of architectural competitions in Riga. 1991-2013 (Rigas pilsetas arhitekta birojs, n.d., Leitane-Smidberga, 2015), commissioned in 2015 by the municipal agency Riga City Architect's Office, and is informed by the ongoing doctoral thesis of the author. The most important sources of data are publicly accessible Internet resources (webpages dedicated to architectural competitions, publications and webpages of architects' offices, etc.), archives, periodicals, materials from the archives of architects' offices and other sources previously unpublished.

Five consecutive periods are distinguished in the paper. This division is somewhat conditional, and the periods are not distinctly separable, but they are optimal for the evaluation of the characteristic changes and processes that have influenced the practice of competitions. Thus, each section contains the following:

an account of the politico-economic aspects

- of each period;
- an analysis of the most important changes in legislation through the study of planning instruments and legal acts;
- an evaluation of competition types;
- an analysis of the consequences of completed competition projects and the development of architectural thought.

Phase I. Confusion (1991-1996)

From 1940 to 1990, Latvia was part of the Soviet politico-economic system based on state property and central planning that limited the use of private property. Within a few years of the restoration of independence, countless reforms of state structures and economic systems were adopted. These changes had a considerable impact on processes related to the industries of construction and real estate. Land reforms, transference of state property to municipalities, denationalisation of house ownership and the privatisation of state companies and real estate followed. The way architects worked was restructured from large architectural institutions to, firstly, cooperatives and later private practice and medium-sized offices. The assortment of formerly used prefabricated materials and standard catalogues was replaced by fundamentally different construction technologies and materials.

The practice of competitions in Latvia initially developed as an undefined planning instrument. Professional organisations and unions of architects issued multiple regulations that were in force from the middle of the 19th century. The understanding of the legitimisation of competitions through formal planning instruments (e.g. urban planning, detail planning) and through the regulations of normative legal acts (e.g. regulations of the Council of Ministers, laws proclaimed by the Saeima) formed slowly over time.

During the first years of independence, architectural competitions were held based on Act No. 642 "Par konkursu sarikosanu unikalu eku un kompleksu individualo projektu izstradei" (On the organisation of competitions for the individual design of unique buildings and building complexes), adopted by the Cabinet of Ministers of the Latvian Soviet Socialist

Republic (Council of Ministers of the Latvian SSR Act No. 642, 1965). These regulations were binding from 1965 to 1993. There were attempts to define the goal of a competition - to generate the most economically beneficial proposals with high architectural quality and to develop individual proposals for unique buildings and complexes through the organisation of competitions. From 1995 to 2014, "Noteikumi par kartibu, kada organizejami buvprojektu un teritorialplanosanas projektu skicu konkursi" (The regulations of the order in which building and urban design sketch project competitions are to be held), developed by the Cabinet of Ministers, was in effect (The regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 324, 1995) [1]. This document adopted the practice of competitions that existed under Soviet rule, defining more precisely the process of an open or closed competition and mandating the inclusion of information about the contractor, the qualification of the participants, the criteria of evaluation, the jury, the prizes, etc. in the brief.

Statistically, most competitions were held for administrative, government and commercial buildings. They related typically to the development of reconstruction, renovation and interior projects. In the early 1990s, the Riga City Council provided support for the first competitions and projects that brought private investment to key areas of the city and marked the beginning of cooperation between local and foreign architects (e.g. the renovation of Convent Yard and the development of Jacob's Barracks in 1993; recurring competitions for the regeneration of buildings on City Hall Square in 1990, 1997 and 1998). Roughly one in three competitions involved private investment these were typically proposals concerning cafes, retail buildings and hotels. For the first time in over 90 years, competitions were organised for churches. An outstanding example in terms of architectural quality was the proposal for the new Riga branch of the Bank of Latvia (competition in 1994, building completed in 2001, Kronbergs, Karklins un partneri). Data on the realisation of most proposals is lacking,

as "there is a lack of a systematic database of the jury members, organizers and participants; therefore, it is difficult to compare the architects' previous work and review their architecture practice development progress" (Leitane-Smidberga, 2015).

Phase II. Acceleration (1997-2002)

The publicly financed demand of the state gave way to strong private investment from both domestic and foreign entities. For architects, this was an opportunity to practise cooperation with developers and other members of the real estate sector, which had been virtually impossible under the Soviet system. A mortgage lending industry was created, fuelling the market with aggressive lending for nearly a decade.

This phase is characterised by the development of the Latvian territory planning system, which combines elements of Soviet planning principles with Western best practice. Masterplans for cities saw regular corrections and changes as planned (legal) use of land was expanded. The bulk of the construction and investment (and most competitions) took place in Riga, the political and economic centre of Latvia and home to a third of its population. The first masterplan for Riga since the restoration of independence, and the first of its kind in the Baltics, was confirmed in 1995, outlining city development up to 2005. Architect Peteris Bajars (2008) said of the plan: "Clear, transparent and conceptual. As such, perhaps, unacceptable to investors. The next version is already in the works without the participation of Mr Andris Roze [2], without succession, full of illogical urban construction mistakes. 'People vote with their money', is what the deputy mayor, Ainars Slesers, will say years later. True, that's not the case with the masterplan. But it is precisely in the masterplan where this vote can be influenced the most."

In 1997, following an initiative by the State Inspection for Heritage Protection (SIHP),

The regulations became invalid on 1 October 2014, when the most recent version of the Construction Law was adopted.

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Andris Roze, architect and urban planner from Detroit and Toronto. Served as Head of the Riga City Planning Office, participated in the creation of the Riga City Masterplan.

the historic centre of Riga was inscribed in the UNESCO World Heritage List due to the city's unique medieval structure of urban construction as well as its wooden and Art Nouveau architecture. The architectural and construction quality of buildings erected in the Old Town, however, was subject to broad discussion in society. In 2002, the responsible authorities decided to issue a moratorium prohibiting construction in the Old Town until the confirmation of a development plan for the historic centre of Riga (Amolina, 2002). Projects already approved or under construction were exempt from the moratorium. Juris Dambis, Head of the SIHP, noted in 2004 that "balanced development of the capital's historic centre is at risk due to a disparity between construction speed and surrounding infrastructure, attempts to build in natural environments and public spaces, the construction of large-scale retail and entertainment centres, unjustified urbanization of the underground, changes in planning to appease investors, the domination of private interests over the public good, and the impotence of NGOs" (Latvijas Vestnesis, 2004).

Over 120 competitions took place in this period (twice as many as in the previous period); roughly half were privately funded proposals for the development of large public complexes with the following functional typology: banking, retail, offices and hotels. The moratorium affected competitions in Riga, which saw only 20% of the total competitions in the period. The most significant competition objects were situated in the historic centre of Riga or its vicinity. An example of this is one of the first buildings in the high-rise cluster [3] in the spatial composition of the river Daugava's left bank based on a concept developed in the 1970s. Several objects saw repeated competitions and a change in developers of the final project like the reconstruction of Riga Central Station and the adjacent square in 1998-1999. This was usually due to the inability of private investors and proposal authors to reach an agreement on further cooperation.

The state and various municipalities held competitions for administrative and cultural buildings, including theatres and education institutions. No new theatres were built in this period - instead, competitions were held for the reconstruction, renovation and extension of existing buildings (e.g. the competition for the reconstruction of the Latvian National Theatre in 2000, Graf-X). Competitions for education institutions can be divided into several types:

- Renovation of an existing building;
- Reconstruction of an existing building with an extension (e.g. the competition for Agenskalns Gymnasium held in 1999 and realised in 2000 by Briniskigo projektu birojs; or the competition for the extension of the Art Academy of Latvia in 2002);
- Construction of a new, typically multifunctional building - a school (of music or art) combined with a library or a social centre (e.g. the Alternative School of Jurmala, 2002).

Phase III. Controlled Utopia (2003-2008)

The politico-economic situation in this period was defined by Latvia's accession to the EU in 2004. According to banker Girts Rungainis, "with new crediting opportunities, foreign speculators, and an initial accumulation of capital as well as with people becoming wealthier and foreigners from Ireland, Italy, Russia entering the market, real estate prices in central Riga and nearby Jurmala started rising" (Korna and Lusis, 2013). Ill-considered tax policy created a misbalance between the assessed value of real estate and the tax rate applied, which in turn fuelled the rise in housing value, causing apartment prices in Riga to reach and even surpass housing prices in certain Central and Western European cities. For comparison – in neighbouring Lithuania and Estonia, housing prices rose in 2005 but stabilized in 2006. In Latvia, however, the boom continued, as total mortgage value rose 100-fold in the space of a decade (1997-2007) (Korna and Lusis, 2013). These changes contributed to the rise of Latvian GDP and facilitated the development of the construction industry, which was directly linked to the housing supply. The construction sector expanded by a factor of 2.36 between 1995 and 2004.

In 2003, the Law on Preservation and Protection of the Historic Centre of Riga took effect, designed to avoid spontaneous, uncontrolled construction and to promote quality architecture in the historic centre. Article 14 states: "Construction of new buildings in the public outdoor space of the historic centre of Riga shall be admissible only according to proposals acquired in open architectural competitions, public evaluation and examination thereof in the Council and coordination thereof with the State Inspection for Heritage Protection in accordance with the procedures specified in regulatory enactments" (LR Law on Preservation and Protection of the Historic Centre of Riga, 2003). Juris Dambis (2007), Head of the SIHP, commented on the necessity of this law: "There were certain problems from 2000 to 2003, when the realisation of architectural objects of poor quality was offered. To achieve a certain level of competition, to improve the quality of architecture, and to prohibit cheap or illconsidered architecture in the historic centre of Riga, constraints had to be placed on project design. We had reached a situation where only about three architects' offices did all the proposals and the others received no orders. In order to implement an open system and free competition as well as to comply with the recommendations of EU experts and UNESCO, the law prescribed that in the historic centre of Riga, also defined in law, a competition is obligatory. Looking back on competition results since the adoption of the law, the quality of architecture has risen; totally dubious proposals can no longer be pushed through. The practice where developers push for a maximum amount of square meters, a cheaper contractor and cheaper project design has been limited." The architect Bajars (2008), who is one of the most vocal participants in discussions in the architecture sector, is only partially in agreement with this reasoning, noting that "the law has resulted in the legendary troikas competitions where only three (the mandatory minimum) participants are invited. The holy trinity - in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The latter has often managed to prepare more thoroughly than the other two contestants, bringing a much more detailed

proposal with a broader range of materials submitted".

In addition to the abovementioned law, the Spatial Planning of the Historic Centre of Riga and the Protection Zone Thereof (SP HCR PZT) was completed in 2006 (Riga City Council Act No. 832, 2006), mandating that the programs of open architectural competitions must be approved by the Construction Board, by the SIHP and by the Council for Preservation and Development of Riga Historical Centre. Until 2013, when the planning was amended, competition rules also needed approval from the Latvian Association of Architects (LAA). The most recent amendment to the SP HCR PZT was done in 2013 defining several areas (development areas of bodies of water, islands in the Daugava, greenery and parks) that would require open architectural competitions. Open competitions are also mandated for 17 squares. So far, competitions have been held for Castle Square (2009), Livu Square (2002, 2003, 2012), Dome Square (2006), Freedom Alley (2010), and Theatre Square (2013). None of the competition proposals have currently been realised. The planning regulations also allow for exceptions if a competition results in an architectural proposal of outstanding quality, which has to comply with building standards. This has sparked discussions about the compatibility between, on the one hand, the interests of society and urban development and, on the other hand, the often contradictory, competing and even mutually exclusive laws, regulations, standards, and property rights and the customer's commercial conditions as set out in the competition manual.

Several towns have followed Riga's example by adopting municipality regulations – masterplans – which define areas that require an open architectural competition procedure for significant construction designs in order to ensure a conceptual solution that is complete in terms of spatial, infrastructural and architectural (solutions of urban construction accents, number of floors and location) considerations [4]. There is currently no data on whether competitions have been held in areas

thus defined by the municipalities.

At the turn of the millennium, a common type of urban planning competition (besides open and closed competitions) was the plenary. Plenaries were attended by both foreign and local architects and urban planners, who then solved a certain task for three to five days, presented it to a jury at the end of the plenary, and received immediate evaluation. The possibility of international plenaries and competitions is explained by the increasing openness of Latvia to Western markets, while foreign architects were attracted by a somewhat exotic destination, a polygon for new ideas and attractive prize money. In order to exchange experience and build cooperation with foreign specialists in the practice of organising competitions, the Europan international urban planning competitions for young architects took place in Latvia from 2002 to 2009. The most important competitions and their topics were: Europan 7 in 2002, on Kipsala, the Old Town, the vicinity of Livu Square in Riga, and Ostasgals in Ventspils; Europan 8 in 2006, near Lake Kisezers, in the vicinity of the so-called Fishermen's Village; Europan 9 in 2009, on the development of Rumbula. The victories of foreign architects' offices in these competitions required local architects to realise competitive ideas and to build new cooperation models for the continued development of projects. One example of this was the international architects' plenary of 2003 for the architectural vision of the Tornakalns Congregation House, attended by 7 architects from Denmark, Finland, Norway and Latvia. The project was realised in 2011 by plenary winner Christian Cold from the Copenhagen architects' office Entasis in cooperation with the Latvian Postform projekts.

The mid-2000s saw several significant urban planning competitions in Riga, e.g. an international competition held in 2007 for the construction of an administrative complex for the Riga City Council and the state in Tornakalns was based on ideas from a 2005 local plenary of 5 architects' offices. The London architects' office Fletcher Priest Architects placed first among 17 participants. One of the

first buildings erected in this territory was the University of Latvia Academic Centre of Natural Sciences, completed in 2015. The proposal was acquired in a 2010 competition, when negotiations resulted in the second-place design being implemented. Competitions for the remaining buildings of the University of Latvia campus were scheduled for 2016. Another example was the development proposals of 2004 for the greater Skanste area and for the financial and lifestyle centre New Hanza City. In mid-2016, the international closed competition for the design of the Latvian Museum of Contemporary Art took place in the Skanste area, commissioned by the private investment fund ABLV. The competition was won by Adjaye Associates in cooperation with the Latvian architects' office AB3D (Lynch, 2016).

Ideas from widely publicised local and international competitions are most often included and specified in the detail planning, or included in the masterplan. The most appropriate model for these competitions is two or more stages, which is rarely used. This is an opportunity to obtain a complex proposal for the development of an area, and it allows for more rational development planning in phases, while preserving a common concept. If, however, the development and the physical construction of buildings and infrastructure is not carried out on time, a necessity to update the planning may arise over time, influenced by the changing politico-economic situation. This point is also emphasised by architecture critic Artis Zvirgzdins (2011), who points out that Riga failed to use the years of economic upswing to develop sufficient social capital, which is necessary to realise significant public projects or large-scale commercial complexes that would be successful from an urban planning perspective. Looking back at recent years, it is clear that public spaces were not a priority during this time.

Data on competitions reveals over 270 competitions held in this period, an average of one per week, with roughly half of these in Riga [5]. The amount of competitions peaked at 90 per year in 2006. As there was no unified methodology or cooperation between institutions, the limited capacity [6] of the Riga City Construction Board and the LAA made it impossible to provide a quality evaluation for each competition object. The LAA thus published a template for competition briefs, the use of which became a technical and professional habit, with competition organisers setting only functional requirements, which participants had to illustrate; this practice became routine. This is particularly striking in competitions for housing projects, most of which (about 100) have been held in Riga. Over 20% of these proposals have been realised. In the aftermath of the financial crisis of 2008, some of the proposals are currently in the detail design phase, while for others construction is in progress. The proposals from these competitions are typically designed as freestanding structures, as filling for street corners in the city centre or a continuation of a perimetrical block, as reconstructions of existing residential housing, or as housing for new city blocks, where the commercial function dominates along with the residential. Competitions have mostly been open, often open with invited participants, and rarely international. Controlled utopia and a gamble to add to architect Ilvars Metnieks's (2013) description of this period: "The lack of bitter experience in society, the admirable faith in a brighter future shown by experts at banks and various commercial structures, along with the global surge in development of the real estate industry in the new millennium – these factors were the foundation for unprecedented optimism on the borrowers' behalf, and for the surge in new housing in Latvia from 2004 to 2008." The functional and architecturally spatial designs for some housing competition projects were changed and adjusted due to ownership changes and economic and other circumstances. State and municipality investment in the expansion of the housing fund led to public procurement procedures for standardised social housing projects as well as for the renovation of Soviet-period block housing.

This time period also saw a lot of activity regarding closed international competitions for regional cultural objects (concert halls, multifunctional centres and museums) and their construction. This is in part explained by the fact that no significant, technologically complex cultural buildings had been realised since the restoration of independence. For their part, the clients commissioning these buildings saw an opportunity for considerable publicity. Thus, for instance, a closed international competition for the Liepaja Concert Hall in 2003 was won by the German architects' office Giencke & Company, whose proposal was realised in 2015 and sparked discussion about construction quality and the architect's ability to adapt the initial design for additional functions. In a different Latvian town, Ventspils, an international plenary was held in 2005 [7] and 2006 for invited teams of participants in order to design the spatial organisation and facilities for the central town square, and to propose an architectural image for the prospective concert hall. The detail design is currently in progress under David Cook from Haas Cook Zemmrich STUDIO2050, and the concert hall is to be opened in 2018.

Unlike in other regions of Latvia, competition briefs for cultural objects in Riga in the early 2000s often mention a desire for a "new symbol", an icon – in essence looking for a repeat of the "Bilbao effect". One of the most striking examples of this is the proposal Lineamentum, designed by the Riga architects' office Silis, Zabers un Klava and awarded first place among 11 participants in the 2006 closed international competition for a new concert hall in Riga. The proposal was never completed due to lack of financing. The Head of the Riga City Architect's Office, Gvido Princis, noted in 2016 that "the lack of an acoustic concert hall in Riga reduces the international competitiveness of Latvia's economy, culture and tourism" (Zvirgzdins, 2016). The alternative proposals that have currently been drawn up adapting or reconstructing existing or new buildings into transformable, multifunctional concert halls through the creation of a public-

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For a long time, the LAA competition commission consisted of only one to three members, none of whom worked full-time.

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The results of the plenary were used in 2006, when an international competition for the design of the concert hall was held, inviting the first and second-place offices from the plenary: the "German Behnisch Architekten" and the Estonian "Luhse & Tuhal".

private partnership – do not indicate a strong governmental interest in the provision of a concert hall of high acoustic quality in the capital.

The foreign education of a new generation of Latvian architects along with increased information exchange have brought changes to architectural design as Latvians adopt the methods of foreign architects, follow the latest trends, and gain local and international recognition and awards in project shows. The architects' office Jaunromans un Abele, for instance, began their practice in this manner – having won the 2008 competition, they realised the reconstruction of the closed hall at Dzintari Concert Hall in Jurmala in 2015. Several proposals for educational institutions acquired in competitions have, after construction, received the Annual Latvian Architecture Award (the highest architectural award in Latvia), awarded by members of the LAA and an international jury. One such project is the Parventa Library in Ventspils, erected in 2009. Procurement competitions for the library were held twice - in 2006 and 2007. Both competitions were won by the architects' office India. In 2013, the Latvian Architecture Award was given to the new building of the Saldus Music and Art School, completed by Made Arhitekti, who won the public procurement competition held by the Saldus District Council in 2007. These examples serve as a testament to the ability of the new generation of architects, engineers and construction workers to complete buildings that are complex from a spatial and design perspective.

Phase IV. Lower Level (2008-2011)

The global financial crisis had a profound impact on the labour market and peoples' standard of living. Latvian commercial banks saw the beginning of the crisis in mid-2008. The construction industry contracted by 60% as a result of the downturn. Looking back at the preceding period, it is safe to say that the experience from real estate crises in neighbouring countries – Finland, 1991-1994;

Sweden, 1992 – was disregarded in Latvia (Ketners, 2013). The 2010 amendments to the Immigration Law (Amendments to the Immigration Law, 2010) offered residence permits to foreigners (mostly Russian or Chinese) in exchange for investment or the purchase of real estate worth over 250 000 EUR in Riga or the largest towns. These amendments were intended to combat the consequences of the financial crisis and to reinvigorate the construction sector. Statistics from 2016 suggest that this instrument has been temporary, and that investment in the real estate market by non-residents has fallen. Private investment has only been attracted to Riga and comprises a quarter of the total competitions in this period mostly for housing, hotels and commercial buildings.

Since Latvia's accession to the EU in 2004, there have been countless amendments to the *Public Procurement Law* [8], the aim of which is the efficient provision and use of the means at the disposal of the state, municipality institutions and state-owned enterprises (procurement objects – construction work, delivery of goods, various services, including architectural design competitions), as well as the promotion of fair competition between participants. This period is characterised by procurement procedures that leave the creation of a quality cultural environment in the background, choosing project costs as a priority.

Most commissions in this period came from local municipalities, which used their own financing and EU funds to realise countless projects for state and municipality representation needs as construction proposals in the form of local procurement competitions. 80% of the total competitions for the reconstruction (or, less often, new construction) of administrative and governance buildings were realised outside of Riga. One of the rare examples from Riga was the 2009 procurement competition for the construction of the Riga District Court, which attracted 25 participants and was won by the Riga architects' office *Mark Arhitekti*.

The building has not been erected due to a lack of financing. Cultural buildings constitute about 20% of all procurement competitions. One of the largest competitions of this kind was the 2010 international competition for the proposal for the reconstruction and annex of the Latvian National Museum of Art. The Lithuanian architects' office Processoffice was awarded top place among 28 participants. The building was completed in 2015. Unlike the Riga Concert Hall project, the competition jury for the museum chose to support a proposal which does not stand out visually or change the landscape of the surrounding park (Zvirgzdins, 2010). In other regions of Latvia, competitions were mostly held for the reconstruction and renovation of museums. One of the rare competitions for a new building was the 2009 international competition for the design of the Liepaja Maritime Museum. In the aftermath of the financial crisis, the competition attracted 45 participants - the most at any single competition for a cultural building since the restoration of independence. The proposal has not been realised.

Phase V. Integration of Knowledge (2012-present)

In 2014, Latvia joined the Eurozone, introduced the Euro and continued the absorption of EU structural funds. Geopolitical changes in Europe and the unstable economic situation in Russia influenced the Latvian finance and construction sectors. Private investors have become much more guarded in planning potential investments. For the practice of competitions, this means a relatively low number of competitions held – mostly only when mandated by regulation (the HCR law). The global financial crisis of 2007-2010 put the development of many projects on hold. Investment optimisation is taking place in the real estate market - some of the unfinished projects are being reconstructed, while most will never be completed. Juris Dambis, Head of the SIHP, noted in a meeting of the Council for the Preservation and Development of the HCR that "an acceptable solution was reached in a discussion on the evaluation of competition results: competitions that took place over 7 years ago may be considered to have taken place according to the law. This period of time has

been chosen due to the time of the economic downturn, which postponed the development of many projects, leaving proposals of competition winners unrealised. In this situation, the competition could be recognized as having taken place [...]" (The Council for Preservation and Development of Riga Historic Centre Meeting No. 244 protocol, 2014). Considering that many competition objects were not confirmed with the Riga Construction Board, which would allow construction, or that construction permits have run out on projects that were approved by the Board, an increasing tendency to hold repeated competitions is evident in 2016.

Although the Ministry of Culture stated in 2009, in the guidelines "Arhitekturas politikas pamatnostadnes no 2009. lidz 2015. gadam" (Architectural Policy Guidelines 2009-2015), that the promotion of architectural quality by improving the regulatory basis and necessary mechanisms is one of the chief policy directions (LR Ministry of Culture, 2009), competition practice can only be positively influenced in those state institutions and municipalities where an understanding of the significance of architecture already exists. This is because institutions have lacked experience and administrative and financial resources. The same can be said of newer players in the construction sector and the real estate business. Even though the "Latvijas Arhitektu savienibas konkursu labas prakses nolikums. Rekomendacijas" (Manual for good practice in competitions. Recommendations) by the LAA (2010), which explains competition practice, protects the interests of architects in the project design process and outlines the basic principles of fair competition, has been in effect since 2010, the LAA has only taken an active (not merely formal) role in this most recent period by reviewing competition programs and briefs and consulting developers for state, municipality and private projects. Thus, in order to spread an understanding of good competition practice among architects, competition organisers and commissioners, Article 7.11 of the regulations "Arhitektu sertificesanas kartiba" (Architect Certification Order) of the LAA Centre of Certification was amended in 2015 to state that "projects in the architect's professional practice that have been created as a result of

competitions recognized as non-compliant with good practice by the LAA will not count towards the completion of the certification criteria set out in Article 7.3" (Latvian Association of Architects Regulations, 2015). When a competition has been deemed non-compliant with good practice, the LAA sends a notice to the organisers, requesting amendments in the competition process, and informs certified architects and its members of the consequences. Due to limited resources and capacity, the LAA cannot review all procurement procedure competitions, and there is a lack of information on private, closed competitions.

Conclusion

In five consecutive periods (Confusion (1991-1996), Acceleration (1997-2002), Controlled Utopia (2003-2008), Lower Level (2008-2011), *Integration of Knowledge* (2012-2016)) (Figure 1), rapid economic progression in Latvia has provoked spontaneous, not always thoroughly considered urban development that has affected competition practice. Most competitions were held to determine the possible development of areas and to test programmatic solutions. In some cases, this added value to a plot of land and improved investment opportunities. For architects, this was an opportunity to cooperate with private investors; for new talent, it was an opportunity to receive commissions. Zvirgzdins (2011) states that it has beyond doubt influenced both the look of Latvian cities today and the public perception of contemporary architecture. In the aftermath of the financial crisis, as the workload for architects decreased, discussion on whether competitions have a goal and whether winning them is attractive (whether competitions are held to acquire the best potential design and whether this constitutes an opportunity to sign a design contract) has become increasingly relevant, although it existed, on some level, in the preceding periods. However, participation of architects in competitions that do not meet good practice standards, and can be considered intellectual, moral and economic dumping, can, over time, damage architects' credibility and destroy the possibility of convincing investors and society that competitions can lead to finding adequate partners. Therefore, the main challenges for competition practice in order to

promote competitiveness in the search for the best ideas for more remote long-term goals are currently:

1. The balancing of strict rules and guidelines (recommendations). Considering that currently (in 2016) the organisational methodology of competitions is formally only determined in the Procurement Law, and that approval of competition rules by the Latvian Association of Architects is no longer mandated by law, it is necessary to create an understanding of the various possible types of competitions, carry out a critical, experience-based evaluation

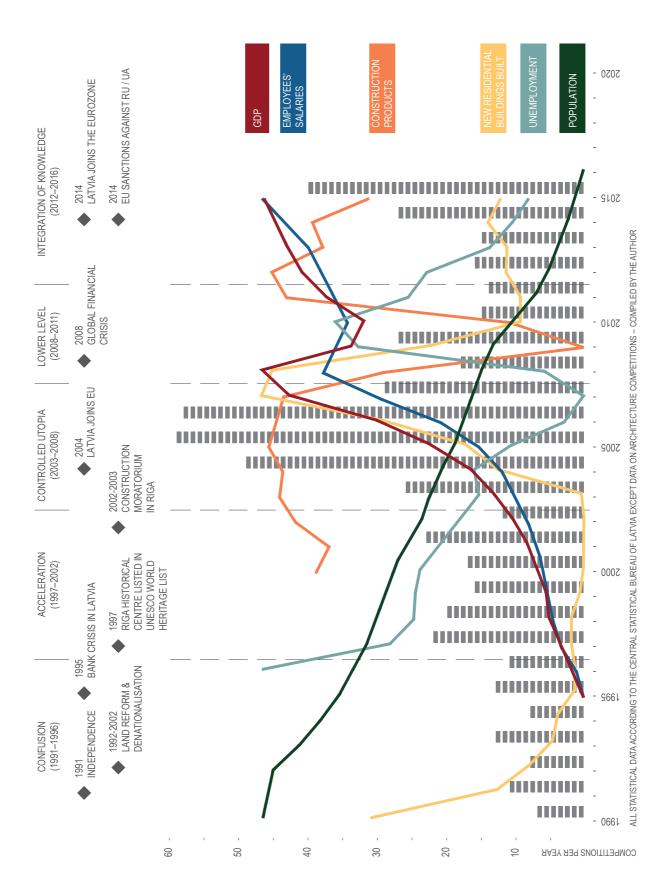
of competition rules and programs, and

(like the LAA) and investors.

demand the creation of a rational model for cooperation between municipalities, NGOs

- 2. Compliance with international (UIA, ACE) regulations. Lowest price, which dominates as a requirement and criterion in public procurement and private competitions, can cause irreversible damage to the search for quality solutions and degrade competition practice. Also, qualification and experience requirements should be commensurate with local market conditions, should not limit competition, and should be clearly defined in the evaluation criteria of competition rules. Competition rules often state that winners forfeit their right to any compensation for the creation and transfer of the layout, and for the transfer of copyright from the author to the commissioner, also transferring all rights concerning any future use of the layout, including the right to change, rework, divide and publish the layout without the author's permission. Such conditions are also illegal under Latvian Copyright Law.
- 3. Detailed briefs and professionalism. A detailed listing of the documentation necessary for a competition, which has a significant impact on the proposals offered by participants, e.g. 3-D models of the historic urban environment and surrounding buildings; digitized floor plans of existing buildings to be reconstructed; cross-sections and other technical data.

Figure 1. Competition amount per respective period and year (Riga: Linda Leitane-Smidberga, 2018)



Size of the premiums, which would, in the context of the size of the competition object and compliance with the requirements, be brought in line with Western European-level costs and which would cover (at least) the costs of preparing proposal documentation. The composition and professionalism of the jury [9] along with the creation of unified evaluation criteria would allow for the possibility to find a balance between the wishes of the developer and the concept for urban development.

4. Publicity and transparency. By informing society on the competition process from the beginning and forming a publicly accessible systematic database, which would contain visual, descriptive and analytically critical information about public procurement and private competition origins, proposals and the complete evaluation by the jury and experts [10], a significant hurdle for a

quality planning process for the development of urban spaces as well as for research on the history of architectural practice can be removed.

The architect Bajars (2008) notes that "all of the freshness of new architecture, all the conceptual solutions are the contribution of a few individuals, who, while going after the possibilities of a broad, united Europe, have not shied away from opportunities to obtain education and experience in foreign offices. And clients, too, have become more educated (read: more demanding). This is why the time has come to offer a new architecture". This quote may be extended to describe competitions, which are necessary for Latvia as an instrument, as an experimental and conceptual aspect. This would mean innovative solutions through the creation of new situations and landmarks in the city.

As of 2015, the LAA only nominates its representatives to a competition jury if the rules and program of the competition are in line with good practice.

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Liga Treija Municipal Housing: Development Possibilities of Uninhabited **Buildings**

Abstract

Since the mid-twentieth century Riga has been experiencing the phenomenon of migration to suburban communities, thereby allowing the city to grow physically, but at the same time leaving the city centre deserted. The aim of this research is to find out the possible causes of the empty building formation process and to discover ways that reduce the number of these buildings.

The research paper explores the urban development strategy with the associated planning tools created by the Municipality of Riga and examples of revitalization program development strategies of two other European cities that offer insight into how to lead rehabilitation projects successfully. The following methods are applied in the context of the research subject: historical sources, economic analysis and analysis of the real-life situation aimed at examining the reasons why a building is not exploited. In order to assess the potential of uninhabited buildings in the creation of a local government housing fund, Maskavas Forstate has been chosen as the study subject.

According to the study, it is concluded that, although the Municipality of Riga has conducted several studies and has highlighted recommendations on favourable development of the city by prioritizing neighbourhoods in need and by indicating the structure of the housing stock and its distribution, the city itself at the moment is unable to present a common action plan and an example that would lead to sustainable urban development; the future result is based on unknown strategies.

Keywords

uninhabited buildings, empty buildings, degraded areas, housing fund, rehabilitation, development

Introduction

For various reasons, several hundred uninhabited and empty buildings are found in the urban landscape of Riga City today. The geographical location of these degraded buildings does not serve as an objective reason why the buildings are not being exploited, as according to data provided by the Riga City Council Property Department on the website www.riga.grausti.lv, it is possible to conclude that buildings of this nature are located in the central part of the city, which has always been perceived as a strategically valuable area for both living and working. However, in analysing the economic and historical background of this area and the buildings, it is clear that the location of the buildings actually plays an indirect role in the degradation process. As the number of such buildings is growing, it is crucial for the city to find ways of limiting and reducing this number [1] in an economical and reasonable manner. That is also the main reason why uninhabited buildings in Riga have been chosen as the main research object.

However, the historic centre of Riga is not the only region where a noticeable part of the current urban environment consists of uninhabited buildings. A similar situation is also seen in the Agenskalns and Maskavas Forstate districts. The historical background of the Maskavas Forstate district of the Latgale suburb - initially a settlement of traders that, under the influence of the German authorities, was established as a Jewish ghetto in 1941 (Cita Riga, 2008) - most probably caused the low degree of development and overall negative perception of the Maskavas Forstate district today. This is evidenced in the large number of abandoned and rundown buildings in the Latgale suburb [2]. As per the internet site www.grausti.riga.lv, in the context of Riga City, the Maskavas Forstate district has the highest number of uninhabited buildings at the moment. Also, the poor performance of the real estate market in the Maskavas Forstate district reveals the unattractiveness that the area holds

in the eyes of potential residents, although the geographical location of this territory in relation to the city centre is considered to be very attractive. The question arises as to how to revitalize the territory, which is located close to the heart of the city but at the same time far from society - the residents and tourists of Riga.

Riga municipality explicitly suffers a lack of housing accommodation for the local population entitled to it according to the law "Par palidzibu dzivokla jautajumu risinasana" (Law on Assistance in Solving Apartment Matters) (LR Law on Assistance in Solving Apartment Matters, 2001). According to the Riga municipal housing development program for the year 2014-2018, there were 4612 families in line for municipal flats on 31 March 2014 (SUS, Rigas domes Pilsetas attistibas departaments, n.d.). Since 2002 Riga municipality has focused its work on supplementing the housing fund, in order to ensure the necessary number of living spaces of adequate quality. A local government-owned corporation, SIA Rigas pilsetbuvnieks, has been established as a part of the action plan, responsible for the provision and management of the municipal housing fund, but not the creation of the identity of the city. The municipal housing fund, with its current financial instruments and resources, is insufficiently developed; as it turns out, people registered and entitled to have a living space will be able to receive it only in about 7-8 years. Since such a waiting period is unreasonably long, it may lead to a decline in the population of Riga, if we anticipate a scenario in which registered people will move to other cities, or even other countries, where they will receive the necessary housing support and an acceptable level of welfare.

In order to assess the potential of uninhabited buildings in the creation of a local government housing fund, the Maskavas Forstate district has been chosen as the main study subject of this work. At the moment it is an area with a large number of uninhabited buildings and a low population density, but at the same time it

According to data from www.grausti.riga.lv, there are 671 buildings that are uninhabited or under inspection (accessed 04.11.2015).

According to data from www.grausti.riga.lv, in the Latgale suburb there are 164 buildings that are uninhabited or under inspection (accessed 04.11.2015).

is the location of many high-level educational institutions and offers a variety of sports and leisure opportunities. The Maskavas Forstate district has a very good public transport infrastructure and it is the district with the most medical institutions (SUS, Rigas domes Pilsetas attistibas departaments, n.d.). The aim of the study is as follows: to investigate the location and condition of uninhabited buildings in the Maskavas Forstate district as well as the main reasons for their formation, to find out the indices that characterize and promote development, and to analyse the future of these buildings by locating the municipal housing stock in them.

To achieve the aim of the study, the author will use the strategy of the comparative and systematic method stated in the *Spatial Development Planning Law* with the objective of examining the development programs, strategies and mutual interconnections of the research. In order to analyse the development and adopt the most appropriate planning principles, the analytical and comparative method for the assessment of Riga City and its abandoned buildings is applied by assessing the correlations and the action plan of uninhabited buildings of Riga and two other cities.

The stronghold of Riga City development – society, the economy and the urban environment

Riga City territory development and planning is provided by the Riga City Municipality Development Department. It is based on the city's long-term Sustainable Development Strategy of Riga until 2030 (hereinafter referred to as the Strategy) (The Riga City Development Department long-term document, 2014) and medium-term Development Programme of Riga for 2014-2020 (The Riga City Development Department document, 2014) planning documents, as well as a plan on the use of land and zoning development and realization. In 2002, Riga Municipality established a local government-owned corporation, Rigas pilsetbuvnieks (further in the text – RPB), which is responsible for municipal housing development and implementation and carries out The program for 2014-2018 of Riga municipal housing development ("Rigas pasvaldibas

dzivojama fonda attistibas programma 2014.-2018. gadam") (SUS, Rigas domes Pilsetas attistibas departaments, n.d.). As the municipal housing fund is to be developed in the administrative territory of the city, both the city's development strategy and the housing development program should be based on the same principles of development. After getting acquainted with the information mentioned in the Strategy, it is possible to specify key development objectives. It is stated that by 2030 Riga must be a compact city that saves resources, respects its cultural environment, identity and history and focuses on developing its urban environment into an educational and comfortable place for the local population. According to the analysis of the Strategy objectives, it follows that the strongholds of the city are: society, the economy, and the urban environment. The unifying element is the Riga citizen, who is trying to achieve a desired quality of life on his own.

The research conclusions and the summaries obtained are used in creating a normative database that supports the needs of the city for planning, development and maintenance. These planning tools are considered as the theoretical basis. The inco-operated partnership RPB created by the local municipality describes the role of the practical activity that focuses on housing-related issues. This organization ensures the development and maintenance of the housing fund owned by the local municipality. At the moment, the development of The program for 2014-2018 of Riga municipal housing development designed by RPB mainly envisages new multi-apartment block building projects along the outer border of Riga City (Figure 1). Nevertheless, the aim referred to as IM2 of the Strategy states that the economic development of the city should be stimulated by reactivating the already built but economically ineffective and degraded territory. Similar criteria are also set for the objectives of aim *IM*3, where it is shown that the city has many degraded areas where building humanization and an increase in quality of the environment should be facilitated. At the same time, this aim highlights the previously mentioned conditions that the city needs to be compact and should provide a comfortable commuting system; furthermore, it should also respect the

appropriate use of energy resources.

According to the Strategy, the suburb must be monofunctional with affordable housing that revitalizes existing buildings. This setting must be assessed in depth, in accordance with the UN-Habitat program (UN-Habitat, 2014) developed by the United Nations; nowadays, areas have to be mixed-use in order to promote job creation, reduce road use and ensure the provision of services closer to home. Singlefunction areas already caused problems in urban planning in the 19th century, after which the New Urbanist movement (New Urbanism) promoted mixed-function areas.

To successfully resolve the development of the building area and urban environment as well as the preservation of the character and prominence of the local area, Riga is divided into 58 neighbourhoods. One of the objectives of the Strategy is to define neighbourhood centres. The development activities mentioned in the Strategy are clearly focused on the goal of achieving compact and socially responsible urban development zones – defining priority areas around the city centre and mentioning the Maskavas Forstate district as one of the priority districts for development, with a focus on the living environment, by creating affordable housing. It reiterated that existing buildings should be revitalized, thus maintaining the neighbourhood's character and identity. The second-most important priority is the revitalization of neighbourhoods with buildings constructed in Soviet times by maintaining and improving the structure of the inner courtyards and recreational facilities.

The action plan of the city included in the Strategy is focused on creating a building area close to the border of the city as well as on increasing the tax rates for degraded buildings, which mainly leads to the demolition of the buildings and thus, the loss of the area's urban identity and historically established structure and the reduction of the population and economic activity in the territory. Currently, it is obvious that the basis of the theoretical material created by the municipality - the study of the current situation with the development proposals offered - does not constitute a common action plan with practical solutions,

which causes a number of negative factors, for example, the extinction of the nearby districts of the city centre, the weakening of economic growth, population decline and the loss of the identity of the city.

Housing standards in Riga and their relevance to the needs of the population. The new municipal housing complexes

The area division of an apartment is regulated by several EU countries; for instance, the following rules are applied in Latvia's neighbouring countries: Lithuania requires 14 m² per capita, while in Estonia the regulations have several sub-conditions; for example, one person needs 18 m² plus 15 m² per family for a common use area. In the European Union on average, the current per capita housing area is 35 m² (SUS, Rigas domes Pilsetas attistibas departaments, 2014). This is an acceptable size for a one-bedroom apartment, but not a multiroom apartment where the family also has a common use area, and each family member does not require 35 m2, which, taking into account the Latvian climate, would require heating during the winter. In Latvia, currently there are no rules determining the minimum area of the apartment, but there should be such regulations, in order to provide a property that would satisfy people's needs and improve their well-being in the long term.

Riga Municipality's housing development program for 2014 to 2018 outlines the projects of the planned apartment areas, which stipulate 35 m² for a one-room apartment and 55 m² for a three-room apartment. This distribution of area is acceptable. On closer inspection of some of Riga City Council's latest projects, it is clear that self-imposed parameters of apartment size are not observed. For example, the municipal residential buildings currently undergoing renovation on Ieriku Street 28 and Aglonas Street 35 are being constructed with an average area of 16 m² per apartment (Figure 2). The total number of apartments on Ieriku Street is 45 in a total area of 1505.22 m², while on Aglonas Street the total is 299. The building reconstruction contract of Ieriku Street 28 provides for a reconstruction cost of 756.34 EUR / m2.

Thus, it is clear that although the city

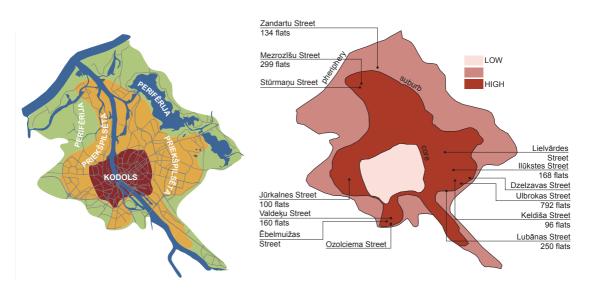


Figure 1. Riga City Strategy of density vs. planned housing fund and proposed density (Riga: Rigas domes Pilsetas attistibas departaments, diagram adapted by Liga Treija, 2014)

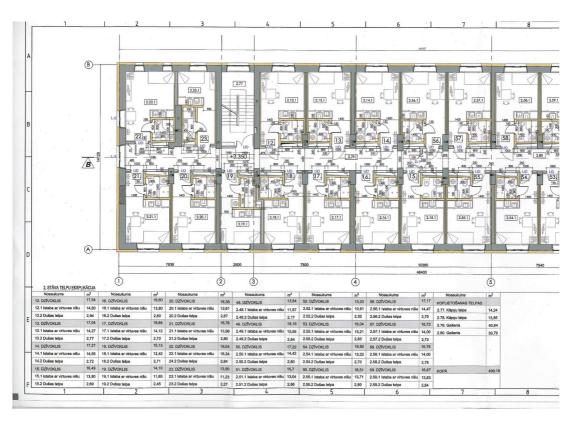


Figure 2. Floor plan of the municipality property reconstruction of social housing at leriku Street 28 (Riga: Liga Treija, n.d.)

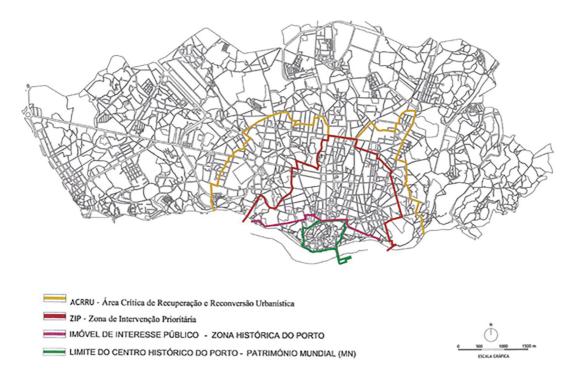


Figure 3. The priority intervention zone marks the borders of the Baixa district (Porto: Porto Vivo SRU, 2012)

has developed a number of studies and recommendations based on sustainable urban. development, the general idea and a common action plan have not been clearly defined and do not provide a clear vision for future development.

Examples of good practice: the Porto and Ghent rehabilitation programs

In order to better address population growth and socio-environmental development in Riga as well as to see examples of how a local municipality can facilitate the urban development of a city, it is important to analyse the practices of other cities. The study looks at two other European cities: Porto (Portugal) and Ghent (Belgium); it analyses the state and local government action plans that aim to rehabilitate the parts of the city that have experienced an increase in empty buildings, physical and social environmental degradation and population migration to the city outskirts.

In 2001 a part of the historic centre of Porto

called the Baixa district had reached the lowest point of its downturn: approximately 80% of the residential buildings were empty or halfinhabited (Lobato and Alves, 2014). In the case of Porto City there are several different types of causes, which can be divided into groups. The reasons include historical-political aspects: the freezing of the rent law which was in force from 1950 to 2005 and did not foresee the increase in rent prices in case of changes in economic conditions (Teixeira and Povoas, 2011). As a result, the landlords were not able to properly maintain their property. In 1996, the city centre was recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage site, which entails restrictions to save the uniqueness of the environment. Nowadays, the demands have changed, starting with the functional planning of the apartments and ending with the areas adjacent to the living environment, where one should have a recreation area and parking lots.

In 2005, the masterplan of the Baixa district's urban and social renewal (Porto Vivo SRU, 2005) indicated the priority zones in need of

development (priority intervention zones) (Figure 3), where the town government identified the key elements of development: residents, business, tourism, culture and recreation. In order to complete the set tasks, in 2004 the town created the Urban Rehabilitation Society (SRU) *Porto Vivo* with two stakeholders, the city of Porto (40%) and the Institute of Housing and Urban Rehabilitation (IHRU) (60%), whose responsibility is to implement the projects in real life by attracting financing and regulating the recovery process and to perform monitoring after implementation.

A public-private partnership model is used in the Porto rehabilitation process which draws on the support of the European Investment Bank and EU funds. In addition, there are payment facilities to stimulate the market. These include the creation of various institutions that offer different types of support for inhabitants, a tax reduction from 20% to 5% when purchasing or renovating a building, and special bank credit lines. The rehabilitation process uses two proprietary types: the organization *Porto Vivo* created by the local municipality buys privately owned properties and rebuilds them for renting out or the owner-individual, by using the support tools offered, renovates his/her property and uses it according to the housing function regulations set by the local municipality.

Another example is the Ledeberg district in Ghent, Belgium. Ledeberg is partly made up of 19th century buildings located around the historic centre of Ghent. The Ledeberg district mostly consists of 2-3 story perimetrical buildings that are located on both sides of narrow streets. The main reason why this district has experienced a degradation process is the fact that the local population has chosen to migrate to the outskirts of the city since 1970.

In 2008, the local government launched the project *Ledeberg Leeft* [3] and set forth six development directions: green, energy-saving, traffic, active travel, transport, and community. For the development of each direction an organization was created that specializes in the

relevant field or an already existing organization was engaged. In order to encourage citizens to get involved and demonstrate good practices, an organization called Sogent (established 1998) that is contractually tied to the local municipality bought 8 dilapidated corner houses in the Ledeberg district and built new energyefficient apartment buildings with adjacent green spaces instead. The apartments are sold or rented out, but the profit is invested in other projects. The program provides the local government's subsidies of 30% and not more than 10 000 euro to support the renovation of one building. The grant assessment procedure looks at the maximal income level per household (Step Up, 2015). Overall within the Ledeberg Leeft project, a new transport connection to the neighbourhood street has been implemented, 8 corner houses have been renovated on behalf of the local municipality, a multi-story parking lot and 20 social apartments for seniors have been designed and 1,400 applications for subsidies of privately owned building renovation have been received.

Abandoned buildings and the evaluation of the future potential of Maskavas Forstate

According to the record managed by the Riga City Council Property Department, on December 16, 2015, Riga had 670 buildings that were considered degraded or were being monitored. This study tries to discover the possible reasons why the buildings are neglected and empty. Here again, historicalpolitical causes are considered. Among them is a law adopted in 1991 on denationalization of housing in the Republic of Latvia, which was followed by the Law on Residential Tenancy in 1993, which approved rent caps. Rent caps were then abolished in 2007. During the time when this law was in force, owners of denationalized housing were not able to properly maintain their properties at the minimum rent, and consequently the housing was neglected and was no longer attractive for living.

Existing building areas with abandoned housing in Maskavas Forstate are located in the building protection zone *Maskavas*

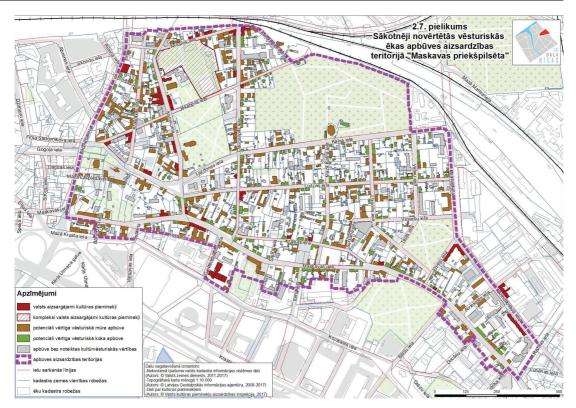


Figure 4. Building protection zone "Maskavas priekspilseta" (Riga: Rigas domes Pilsetas attistibas departaments, 2016)

Forstate District ("Maskavas priekspilseta") (Figure 4) and are thus considered unique and worthy of conservation. The problem with successful habitation of this area lies partly in the fact that buildings of the 19th-20th century, especially wooden constructions, are often missing utilities networks; they may lack central heating or even showers. The Maskavas Forstate district has been greatly affected by its historical and social background and therefore it is one of today's most undeveloped districts with the lowest sales and rental prices, although the district is in a good geographical location with a good transport infrastructure and many green zones. The Riga City Council Development Department also conducted a survey that showed that this area is considered unfavourable due to its antipathetic people and neglected buildings, while closeness to the city centre, good transport connections and parks were cited as positive characteristics (Purmale, n.d.)

The neighbourhood's current low market value in combination with its positive geographical

aspects could be successfully used to carry out a revitalization project with a reasonable financial investment. The study assumes that by taking into account the existing building structures (low and medium-height buildings), the population density of the Maskavas Forstate district could be raised to at least 100 inhabit. per ha from the current 42 inhabit. per ha. As the Maskavas Forstate district is located within 2-2.5 km of the city centre, it is one of the priority residential areas to be developed. Neighbourhood revitalization would coincide with the Riga City development strategy, which is responsible for creating a compact city with a clean urban environment.

Conclusions and proposals

At the moment, Riga has no specific strategy that aims to attract people. In addition, the existing planning and interpretation documents of the housing stock project lack regulation and monitoring, because theoretically pre-planned measures are not carried out in practice as they are supposed to be carried out according to the

documentation. In rehabilitation projects in both Porto and Ghent, the critical importance of citizens' attraction and involvement in the organizational structure of rehabilitation is emphasized. This means that the rehabilitation of a big city cannot happen without a specially designed leading organization that takes part in creating a financial strategy that monitors and controls the process and acts as a mediator between the local government, investors and citizens. When looking at the results, it is clear that, for example, Porto Vivo SRU played a fundamental role in the revitalisation process. Porto City faced similar political decisions that facilitated the growth of the number of abandoned buildings, but nowadays, the Portuguese government and the Municipality of Porto adopt political decisions in order to rehabilitate the environment. For Riga not to lose its population, and to preserve its urban environment, it is necessary to rehabilitate the degraded environment at national and local levels.

Some measures have already been implemented, such as decisions on the demolition of degraded buildings or forced organization of estates through property tax penalties. The Binding Regulations No. 165 adopted by Riga Municipality provide co-financing of 14 000 EUR for renovation of buildings with a cultural monument status, but it is too early to make any conclusions on the impact of this decision on the abandoned building organization process, as the law was adopted only on August 25, 2015.

Porto's financial support for the rehabilitation of buildings is divided between three actors: the municipality / state, investors and EU funds. As a matter of fact, in Porto private property is repurchased and the private person is not an

actor. In Ghent, they deal with the situation in a different way – properties remain with private persons or are transferred to the developer and the financial resources are divided between two actors: the owner / developer and the municipality. Riga's financial model could be made up of three parts: the owner / investor, local government and EU funds, with the option of excluding the owner, in case the investor or a local government repurchases the property.

The mixed-use principle of functions – residential, public open space or interior and commercial functions – should be implemented. Public and commercial functions would act as a "third space" for residents / neighbours in creating relationships and a social belonging to a particular territory. Following the well-functioning solutions of Porto and Ghent, the ground floor of a building would be devoted to commercial use, which gives a place vitality and addresses the social and environment structuring factors.

Based on the examples of other countries discussed, it is clear that rehabilitation of a degraded environment is a socially responsible, environment-structuring and identity-retentive solution. From an economic point of view, it may be less advantageous, depending on the building type, number of floors and physical condition. From the perspective of the physical condition of the building it is possible to conclude that the sooner empty buildings are rehabilitated, the less financial investment they will require and the sooner Riga will achieve its previously set aims: a compact city with a growing population, which altogether forms a socially responsible, educated and environmentally friendly society.

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Andis Alksnins The 21st Century "Hillfort" – A Historical Guide to the Present **Transformation**

Abstract

The culture of the Baltic people is one of the oldest according to many investigations in the fields of anthropology and archaeology. The main aim of this research is to update and reanimate ancient heritage and promote society's interest in the historical roots of the nation.

During the research a map was created with all known and registered hillforts and other manmade earth formations using cartographic materials and literature from the period of the early 20th century until today. The research paper analyses the link between the hillforts as protective structures and ancient mounds which do not comply with the characteristics of hillfort construction and location. These mounds, using the term of folk language and historical writings, are called sacred hills and have a significant role in Baltic culture.

The output of the research is a design proposal that intends to establish a centralized institution to preserve the informative materials of the past and promote the development of modern research in the field of Baltic culture. The design is based on a free-standing building – a cultural centre with scientific and public information functions for the Baltic nations, including the latest research on archaeology, anthropology, language and genetic studies. The function of the centre would be to collect the latest research materials from many scientific institutes to obtain comprehensive information and release it to the public. Speaking metaphorically, the building symbolizes a way of knowledge which sets visitors on a journey to the past and future.

Keywords

Baltic culture, historical heritage, hillforts, scientific research, centre of knowledge

Introduction

Nowadays the foundation of society is individuality and knowledge. People are gradually losing touch with their own culture and native country, and this is today's reality. The identity of the individual has grown in importance. One of the biggest threats is excessive globalization, which creates a disparate society with no historical, spiritual or cultural background. Nations may lack unity. The same can be said about knowledge. The great variety of opinions diminishes principles that were important for a long time. It is important to use historical ideas and knowledge as a basis when forming new structures around us. The consequences of the assimilation processes of nations and cultural uniqueness and the loss of the knowledge of our ancestors are the biggest threats to modern society. If there are no longer people who are interested in keeping alive traditions and ancestral knowledge, it may endanger the existence of the respective nation in the future.

Today, historical information on design processes is no longer the main factor. Various interpretations of historical artefacts have led to a situation where people no longer pay attention to principles that were important for our ancestors. Historical research and preservation of monuments promote the transfer of information for further generations. Nowadays, in Latvia, the protection is provided by the Nature Protection Board and State Inspection for Heritage Protection - in cases when monuments are located in the territories of cultural heritage. The list the institution has created of archaeological and natural monuments, such as hillforts and other ancient mound formations, is a step in the right direction, but there is no mechanism that transmits this information to the public. Also, the monuments have not been explored together as one integral system. Their locations or positions can provide information for further research that will help us to understand whether there is a greater interconnection or not. The available information and literature are studied only from the archaeological point of view and do not provide the whole picture of the overall system.

There are many different kinds of natural and manmade objects with mythical and historical backgrounds, such as caves, giant stones, springs, mounds and even large trees located throughout the current territory of Latvia. All of them are mostly located next to each other, forming a complex structure. These objects were very important in Baltic culture and, to a certain extent, have remained so up until today. Baltic culture, with its fundamental values, constitutes one of the oldest societies on the territory of Europe that still exists, maintaining its traditions, perceptions and way of life. Ancient mounds have been a part of this culture for a long time, especially with regard to the construction and architectural shapes of the first megastructures - hillforts.

Over the past 100 years, important research has been conducted in the field of hillfort detection, surveying and cartography. Archaeological excavations confirm that the majority of the mounds mentioned as hillforts in the nation's oral traditions and historical testimonies were inhabited during a specific period of time. However, not all researched mounds hold traces of civilization and a cultural layer. This suggests that without the construction of fortification structures, these mounds also served a different or additional purpose. Archaeologists of today do not provide a clear answer to this finding.

The selected topic is historically significant and up-to-date at the same time. There are several possible ways of finding the most appropriate materials. Historical information can be found only in libraries and it constitutes about 80-85% of all the materials used in this research. Printed materials can be divided into two categories:

- Periodically collected brochures and maps with drawings and descriptions of newly founded hillforts and other mound formations from the period of the 1920s till today;
- History-based books about Baltic culture, including materials related to research on ornaments, archaeology and anthropology. Other information is available on different

websites or by interviewing people who work in fields related to the topic of this research, for instance, scientists, teaching staff at universities and book authors. Gathering information helps to establish a closer link with the real situation.

Historical exploration and classification

The etymology of the word 'pilskalns' (the Latvian word for hillfort) and pyleskalnis (the Lithuanian word) is related to the words 'pilstīt' (in Latvian) and istpilti (in Lithuanian), which mean "to toss up the earth or sand". These earth embankments characterize prehistoric fortifications in the territories of the Baltic people (Brastins, 1923). The first hillforts in Latvia - specially fortified structures - were constructed at the end of the Neolithic Period or the late Stone Age and early Metal Age (Urtans, 1991). The periods of Latvian hillforts were identified and clarified with the help of modern archaeological research. The oldest hillforts were built at the end of the 1st century BC (Urtans, 2013); for example, the Daugmale and Padure hillforts are the oldest known formations in Latvia. The fortified settlement was built because of the accumulation of material goods, which had to be protected from intruders. In a further development, fortified castle mounds appeared with small villages forming next to them. The traditions of local hillfort construction were slowly discontinued after the invasion of German feudal lords. They built mainly stone fortifications in order to remain in the region for a longer time. This pioneered a new phase in Baltic history - the domination by a foreign power. The new stone fortifications were built near existing hillforts or directly on top of them, for example, in Valmiera. Other stone fortifications were built in places where no information about hillforts from the pre-German period is available, for example, in Rujiena (Urtans, 1991).

The hillforts, as a significant element of the Latvian cultural landscape, have attracted the attention of travellers and researchers for nearly two centuries. For example, the poet and lawyer Ulrich von Schlippenbach (1774-1826) described many hillforts in his travel notes on Courland. But the first scientific interest in hillforts emerged in the middle of the 19th century through the leadership of the Baltic-German pastor August Bielenstein (1826-1907), who was known as a researcher of Latvian ancient history, ethnography and language (Urtans, 2006). He visited more than 30 hillforts and created descriptions that were later published in an edition of the Latvian Association of

Literature. Further exploration of hillforts was initiated by Latvian researchers after the proclamation of the Republic of Latvia in 1918. The greatest merit in this field should be given to Ernests Brastins (1892-1942), a researcher of the prehistory of Latvia. He organized and participated in several expeditions all around Latvia from 1922-1927. Within the context of his official duties, he led these expeditions with the goal of obtaining information about hillforts, ancient battlefields and other fortifications for the needs of the War Museum. He tried to find the specific locations of hillforts using historical materials from previous Baltic-German researchers. Furthermore, he carried out all his expeditions by visiting all the regions of Latvia on foot. He walked more than 1500 km during his first expedition in Kurzeme (Brastins, 1923). This great work was crowned by the publication of four books dedicated to Latvian hillforts. Each hillfort was textually and graphically described with surveys, cross sections, location plans and pictures. The work carried out by Brastins provided the opportunity to make a variety of summaries and conclusions about the typologies, classifications, topography and building periods of hillforts (Urtans, 1995). Archaeological research continued after WWII during the occupation by the Soviet Union.

One of today's best-known archaeologists and researchers is Juris Talivaldis Urtans (born 1952). He started his career in archaeology in the mid-70s while researching different archaeological monuments, including hillforts. In the mid-80s, which is often referred to as the Awakening Period, the Latvian people, in investigating their national identity, slowly started to focus their attention on regional research and on the more ancient past of Latvia. Due to this initiative, new hillforts were discovered (Urtans, 2009). Even today, work on hillfort detection continues and new discoveries are being made. For a hillfort to be considered as discovered, it has to be confirmed by an authority in archaeology, by a historian or a regional researcher who states that the hill can be designated as a hillfort (Urtans, 2006). All information should be available for researchers and public use. Currently, about 500 hillforts (data from the year 2009) and ancient mounds are registered under state supervision but not all of them have the necessary characteristics

to be called hillforts (Urtans, 2009). Hillforts differ considerably in terms of appearance and are characterized by a peculiar set of features. These features distinguish them from manmade earthworks or naturally formed hills. Some features are described in the book Ziemelvidzemes pilskalni (Urtans, 1991):

- Firstly, a hillfort is built with a levelled surface. This was necessary for protection and construction of living spaces and auxiliary buildings.
- Secondly, a hillfort is characterized by specially built slopes. Usually these gradient surfaces were scarped. It was necessary to create one or more terraces in order to keep these slopes safe and to prevent them from collapsing.
- Thirdly, there is a system of ramparts and ditches protecting the hillfort against enemy attacks. This system was usually combined with gates and fortification buildings.
- Fourthly, a cultural layer formed in hillforts used for a long period of time. The cultural layer, which is usually black-colored, consists of the inhabitants' waste, the remnants of buildings and structures - wood chips, bark, straw, ashes of burned buildings, coal, livestock manure and layers of sifted earth. The cultural layer is the source of history which tells us about the life of the respective period in the language of material evidence.

Since the 19th century, many systems have been developed that could introduce a classification according to the allocation of external characteristics. Typological schemes of hillforts have been developed mostly by archaeologists. Some research was conducted by the Latvian professor Fricis Balodis (1882-1947), who determined regional structure features of hillforts. He mentioned that hillforts with steeped slopes or with terraces and slopes are typical and common in the region of Latgale, while in Kurzeme and Zemgale hillforts typically have a high rampart at the end of an assailable plane surface (Balodis, n.d.).

Many hillforts were partly destroyed during the numerous wars that Latvia underwent, since many entrenchments and bunkers were dug (for example, Vecpils hillfort). Approximately two dozen Latvian hillforts were excavated during the 20th century. Only some of them have been

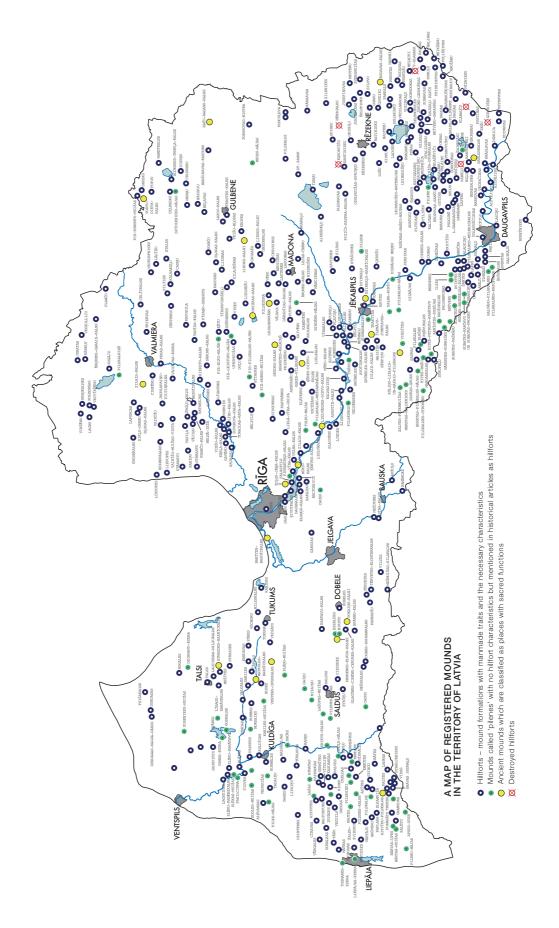
archaeologically investigated.

Geographical and functional network

At the moment, there are no publicly available maps that provide an overall picture of Latvian hillforts and other ancient mounds; therefore, it is essential to change the current situation by creating one common map. Of course, it is possible that such a map might not be complete, since there might be some hillforts which have not been announced or discovered yet. Historically, hillfort researchers divided Latvia into 5 districts: Kurzeme, Zemgale, Augszeme, Vidzeme and Latgale. It is possible to highlight one aspect that helps us to understand the creation principles behind historical hillfort maps. If all hillforts were indicated on a 19th century map, it would be possible to conclude that hillforts are located near the biggest roads of that time. This could mean that the first discovered mounds were simply easier to access (Urtans, 2006). The overall situation becomes clear when all hillfort maps are put together (Figure 1). The map shows the current situation using all available materials since the early 20th century. The blue dots mark mounds with hillfort characteristics; green dots mark mounds called 'pilenes' (earth embankments with no hillfort characteristics); yellow dots mark mounds classified as places with sacred functions; red dots with a cross mark destroyed hillforts.

It is evident that hillforts and other mounds are located throughout the territory of Latvia. There are regions with a lot of hillforts, for example, southwest Kurzeme and central Latgale. And there are regions where hillforts are not a widespread phenomenon, for example, northern Kurzeme, central Zemgale, northwest Latgale and northern Vidzeme (Urtans, 1991). Undeniably, riverbeds, geographical borders and relief play an important role in the location of mounds. The map shows that all the biggest or oldest rivers like the Daugava, the Gauja, the Venta and the Abava are marked with hillforts, because rivers served as trading routes

Next page: Figure 1. A common map of hillforts and other mounds in the territory of Latvia (Riga: Andis Alksnins, 2015)



in ancient times. The second factor is related to the geographically advantageous position, influenced by the topography of the earth and proximity of ancient borders. This fact was already observed in the 1930s by Professor Fricis Balodis. He mentioned that the borders of fortifications are clearly visible on the network of hillforts, especially along the Livonian-Latgalian and Latvian-Russian borders. A large number of Curonian hillforts are located next to rivers, as this was the main route from the Baltic Sea to the western inland (Balodis, n.d.). Most cities of present-day Latvia have their own hillfort. This means that these structures served as a seed of urban development with centres and living space around them. The map and various sources of literature show that hillforts are surrounded by many other mounds that are not classified as fortifications. These mounds or earth formations are often located not far from hillforts or directly near them. They are mentioned in folklore, historical writings and many legends. The most common place names are Baznickalns (Church Hill), Elkakalns (Spiritual Hill), Svetkalns (Sacred Hill) and Upurkalns (Sacrificial Hill). Early researchers expressed confidence that no Christian churches, chapels or altars had ever been located. According to Brastins (1923) the word 'baznīca' (church) must be an old local word and can be derived from the words bags, bog (in Sanskrit), which mean god in English; and 'zinica' (in Latvian), žijnica (in Lithuanian), which is related to the Latvian words 'zintenieks' and 'zināt' (to know, to understand in English). Meanwhile, the word 'elks', in the opinion of researchers, comes from the Scandinavian word helg or the German heilig and means 'svēts' (in Latvian), *šventas* (in Lithuanian) and *sacred* (in English) (Brastins, 1923). Archaeologists tend to base their work only on information obtained during excavations. Modern science reacts very carefully to everything that is not quantifiable or measured yet. This is the reason why many of these mounds have not been archaeologically investigated. The cognitive value of archaeological materials is very high. Many domestic objects and their fragments are found in the cultural layer of the living space; therefore, there are very few findings of this type at cult typology sites, while all the other findings transmit their sacred significance

(Urtans, 1993). Few publications provide information about archaeological excavations of sacred or cult hills and mounds. So far, the most important research on cult hills was conducted by archaeologist and historian Eduards Sturms (1895-1959) during the 1930s. The researcher often refers to these places in his conceptual article Elka kalni un pilskalni Kursa. He raised the hypothesis that these mounds are specially arranged places for sacred cult activities and remained near hillforts as political centres. He also expressed the opinion that ancient sacral places had a complex character (Jakovics, 2005). There has been a lack of findings during the excavations, and this is the reason why it is difficult to interpret these sacral places only from the viewpoint of archaeology.

One way to obtain information is through archaeology, but another way is through exploring history by using folkloric materials. They contain a collection of historical facts in most cases. The spiritual heritage of the Baltic people is a part of the oral traditions. It is possible to find information about natural sanctuaries or energetically active regions in various old writings, chronicles and contemporary literature. These natural processes play an important role in the daily life of the Baltic people. This is one of the reasons why Latvian archaeologists have not discovered the significant characteristics of cultural and sacred buildings. Some modern researchers argue that no evidence has been found of sanctuaries with temple buildings. This would confirm the fact that our ancestors used natural sanctuaries only for sacral activities (Urtans, 1993).

Ancient mounds as sanctuaries and hillforts as fortifications are part of the Latvian landscape with necessary functions. Large groups of sacred sites in Latvia have been registered that were probably intended for bigger events. For example, Mujanu Zilais kalns is the central cult hill in Vidzeme, while in Latgale the central cult hill is Sauleskalns near Kambuli. Aside from major sanctuaries, there were also local ones that belonged to a small number of people or just one household (Rotbaha, 2006). Ancient mounds are different in shape and construction compared to other artificially modified hills. It is difficult to say anything about regional

features, but many mounds are similar in form to each other with a round structure, concentric ramparts around the perimeter, terraces and several "entrances", for example, Aizviku Hill and Matkules baznickalns in Kurzeme or Skudru Hill in Vidzeme (Urtans, 1993). Archaeologists have found hills without a cultural layer or even artificial modifications (ramparts, etc.) of the surface. But the geometrical shape, as a whole, is different from the rest of the surroundings.

All ancient mounds with sacral functions are characterized by the fact that usually there are other natural elements or places with energetic and sacred significance located near them, for example, a huge stone in the hill below Rites Stupelu Hill (Urtans, 2006). These components are indicators of places that had sanctuary functions in the past. The cultural historian and writer Janis Polis noticed that the energy centres of ancient mounds were created at the intersection of many underground waters. He considers that historically these places served as health centres (E-Misterija, 2006). Today, scientists have already developed equipment capable of measuring dowsing networks. Underground bodies of water are observed relatively accurately in places with ancient sacral and burial functions.

One well-known local sacral place is Zilaiskalns located near Koceni. It has the opportunity to become a sacred place of national importance. Since only a few sanctuaries have been archaeologically investigated in Latvia, there is a lack of comprehensive information. Together with Christianity's encroachment on the territory of modern Latvia, systematic destruction of Baltic sacred sites has taken place; such sites have been regarded as incompatible with Christian ideology. This could be one of the reasons for the incomplete information provided in scientific studies. If no material is left, no conclusions are drawn. Currently, all ancient mounds are categorised as hillforts. For example, Jena Hill in Trikata is known as an ancient sacral place, but at the same time it is perceived as a hillfort. It is necessary to examine all the available information to ensure correct classification, conducting further archaeological research and studying the oral tradition of our ancestors.

A step towards the future

It is apparent that public access to hillforts and other mounds was very different compared to today. If we look at recent history, hillforts were mostly free of chaotic vegetation during the 1920-30s, but nowadays all ancient mounds are partly or fully covered with trees. Also, a lot was done to improve accessibility. Ernests Brastins mentioned in his publications that it is not necessary to do additional rebuilding of hillforts, because each intervention causes damage to the monument. This means that there is no need for renovation processes and historically created earth formations or other structures should stay as they are today. In other words, there should be no falsification of the past.

Undeniably, hillfort and mound structures held a significant place in Baltic culture. Nowadays, stone fortifications and Christian churches are perceived as more valuable structures than ancient mounds and hillforts. After assessing the value of cultural-historical data together with questions of national identity preservation, it is necessary to form an informative and technical database to stimulate the research quality of subjects related to the history of the Baltic people's way of life - the fields of archaeology, anthropology or language - and update such topics as Baltic gene engineering or even radiesthesia. One of the important tasks is to come up with the right tools to transfer the information to the public.

The place of knowledge

The political and economic life of modern Latvia happens in the cities, which historically have formed next to the territories of ancient hillforts. The power of centralization is much more pronounced than it was in many individually built areas during the past. Historically hillforts were also used as a protection mechanism for spiritual and material knowledge. In today's world – the age of information – knowledge is no longer concentrated but is scattered between the virtual environment and archives of printed materials. In order to preserve ancient information from our ancestors, it is necessary to carry out collection processes and find



viable forms of public information. This should be based on historical principles using new methods, addressing as many interested people as possible. It could be called a hillfort of the 21st century – an information facility for Baltic culture. Our ancestors had the ability to maintain their own culture, language and way of life despite external influence. The interests of contemporary Latvians are changing in their priorities and becoming more disparate. This is the time when a small but durable nation like Latvia has to activate the mechanism of selfpreservation. The formation of a contemporary hillfort or "temple of knowledge" will be presented in understandable language and form for contemporary people. It will include a comprehensive essence of the cultural heritage of Baltic nations and function as a platform for new research development and publications. The culture of the Baltic people is one of the oldest according to numerous studies in Europe and Asia.

The main objective of the project *The Cultural*,

Educational and Science Center of Baltic Nations is to restore and reanimate the cultural heritage, and to promote public interest in the field of our national roots. Currently, there are already several public buildings or centres in Latvia that have the mission to preserve our ancestral traditions and way of life in general. But there is no focal point that could attract more interest around the country and beyond its borders. This project should be easily accessible, as people would be participating with the specific goal of acquiring new knowledge or simply communicating with other visitors; it should be a welcome place for all.

The centre of Baltic culture must comply with several criteria, reflecting the historical context, the presence of nature, and at the same time the urban environment, because it should be close to its visitors. Historically, all scientific institutes, national museums, and cultural and educational establishments are located in city centres. The project idea continues this historical succession, creating a centralized

place where the past meets contemporary knowledge. The existing situation is such that all research and available information about Baltic culture, way of life and archaeological investigation is dispersed in various museums and institutions all over the city. There is no physical or virtual infrastructure for finding valuable information. This has led to a situation in which people do not have an exhaustive picture of what is happening in the field of Baltic culture. One of the goals is to change the current situation and gather together both past and present research materials related to the fields of ethnography, history, archaeology, anthropology, writing, language and genetics, which will create one common informational space about Baltic peoples. The centre would serve not only as a spot for knowledge acquisition and exchanging ideas but also as a place to hold various events, scientific conferences, and celebrations or as an environment where you can relax your mind.

The city of Riga has taken on the role of a common centre of Latvia and the Baltic states. It is important to realize the potential of the centre of Baltic culture. Therefore, Riga as a location would serve the development of the centre and attract considerable interest. The choice of location is determined by the context of the past, the influx of people and accessibility. Esplanade Park, located in the city centre, is a very important place in the urban fabric and has a good location between all the historically established museums, scientific institutes and other cultural buildings and facilities (Figure 2). Esplanade Park, as a historically multi-layered area, is a place next to the green boulevards of Riga city and has the necessary characteristics to become an important public space, creating a new contribution in the language of contemporary architecture. Historically this territory developed gradually, adding layer after layer over many centuries (Figure 3). As shown in historical information and drawings, the current area was occupied by the ancient Kubes Hill – a mythical place with sacred functions. The new building, as a contemporary structure, will represent this ancient mound or hillfort theme as a reference to the past situation. Currently, the area is not sufficiently developed and historically built structures are still visible in a landscape created

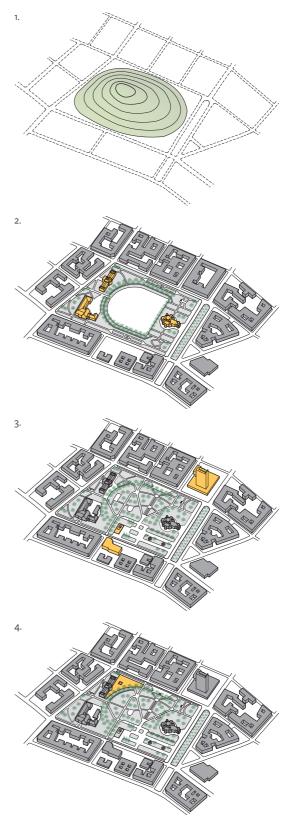


Figure 3. Esplanade Park historical development stages include: 1. ancient period until late 18th century, 2. 19th century, 3. 20th century, 4. 21st century (Riga: Andis Alksnins, 2015)

- Main entranceMain circulation areaVertical mobilityOutdoor space

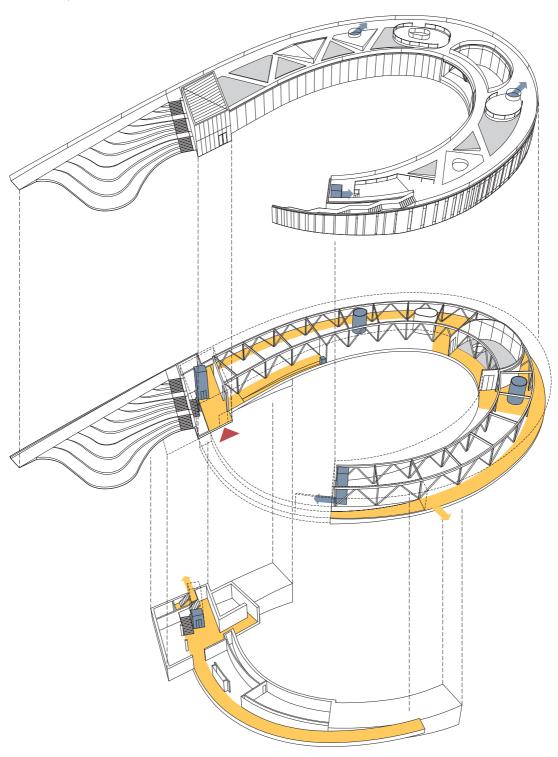


Figure 4. Circulation diagram (Riga: Andis Alksnins, 2015)

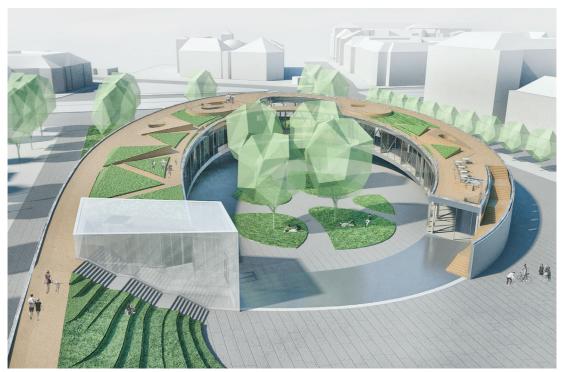


Figure 5. Visualization (Riga: Andis Alksnins, Reinis Salins, 2015)

by foreign powers. This project would improve the surrounding environment and infrastructure and give impulse to the regeneration processes of Esplanade Park, restoring the spirit of the newly established Latvian state in the 1920-30s.

The project design is based on a freestanding building - a cultural pavilion with scientific and public information functions for Baltic nations, including studies on archaeology, anthropology, language and genetics. Building functions will not overlap with information available in existing museums in the city centre. The idea is to collect the latest research materials from many scientific institutes and folk museums, obtaining comprehensive information and giving it to the public. Basically, the building is a one-storey structure, ensuring the possibility of continuous circulation through the building, and symbolizes the idea of infinity (Figure 4). Speaking metaphorically, the building symbolizes "the path of knowledge", which sets visitors on a journey to the past and future. Part of the building structure is raised, forming a building line along Brivibas and Kalpaka Boulevards and ensuring free pedestrian circulation as well as necessary views to the

monument of Latvian poet Rainis. The fifth façade of the building is a publicly accessible roof plane, creating many visual links between the inside and outside space. The roof is specially designed for pavilion visitors and all city residents or guests as well. It offers many views of Esplanade Park, creating a new meeting spot in the city (Figure 5).

Visitors make a full circle passing through the indoor installations, research exhibition halls and creative spaces, accessing a wide range of information about historical and modern research topics (Figure 6). It is possible to pass the same way again, returning to the starting point, which is like a never-ending pattern of life improvement.

This project will perform an important social function in summing up the knowledge of our ancestors and transferring it to public use. It will promote a better understanding of our nation's history and way of life over the centuries. Each step towards truthful information will give impulse to further development and research (Figure 7).

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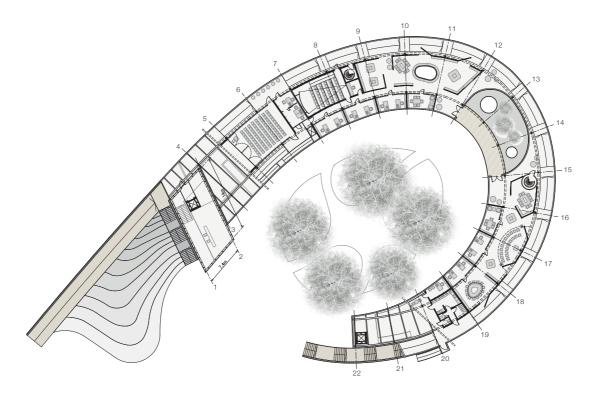


Figure 6. Ground floor plan of the building (Riga: Andis Alksnins, 2015)



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Atis Kampars A Man Between the Four Corners of the Earth

Abstract

The study *A Man Between the Four Corners of the Earth* outlines, firstly, the role and position of the beholder as a central unit in a spatial area and, secondly, the relevance of the concept of the flat surface of an image in the current practice of image-making. The latter aspect seems important for discussion because of its discrepancy with general knowledge on the spherical character of the surface of celestial objects. As long as there is an attempt to perceive the image as a substitute for real scenery, the conflict between incontestable knowledge and the rational features of an artificial space will trigger substantial arguments on both sides.

The development of the concept of depicted space in Early Renaissance art shows both true scholarly discipline and pragmatism, the validity of which is still undoubted. Accordingly, the flat surface concept of linear perspective should be understood as a rational and conscious decision which was implemented by researchers of the 15th century and recognized by the broadest community of professionals in the centuries that followed. This study offers a classification of the kinds of spatial conceptions as well as the formation of an image based on natural coordinates and the basic principles of observation. The conformity between the subjective origins of perspectival viewing and the rational application of the principles of linear perspective is a phenomenon that substantiates the sovereign existence of an artificial space of an image.

Keywords

image, natural scenery, encompassed space, linear perspective, coordinate axes

Introduction

The purpose of this discourse is to explain and substantiate the rights of a spatial image to remain a sovereign entity constructed in accordance with its own inner rules and capable of supplying the rational intentions of an architect, artist, or designer. This discourse attempts to address the essence of the spatial image as a visual synthesis of the observed and comprehended environment.

Every representation of space is initially a subjective attempt to visually access the environment and react by means of visual expression. The image in this context is an outcome of observation, intention, visual thinking, and individual capabilities to transform them into an artificial yet personalized reality. The ability of the human mind to arrange sensations, to imagine and rationally model relationships of both existing and imaginary things relates to visual thinking in complex categories that significantly exceeds the task of depicting a single, local object and demonstrates greater awareness of the sensations caused by the natural environment. However, conceptions of spatial appearance are not fully conventional - several varieties of depiction may be identified as spatial representation, from accurately depicted objects within an understandable environment (Figure 1) to emotionally alienated geometric structures (Figure 2). Apart from their stylistic differences, both examples share one of the most important spatial characteristics - the decrease in size of depicted objects (flagstones in Vermeer's painting and black squares in Doesburg's painting) in relation to the general scale of the format.

Comprehension of artificially recreated space seems to be one of the most substantial factors of the culture of visualization, indicating the evolution of both individual thinking and the degree of general knowledge of the time. Widespread application of a "systematic space" (Panofsky, 1997) which unifies all represented objects demonstrates a reasonably high degree of human intelligence as such. Input of the creative individual develops from the observation, cognition and representational methods applied during the transformation of

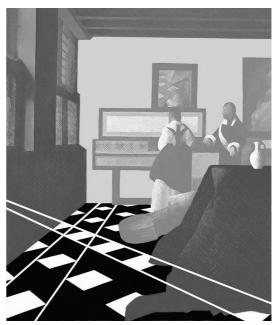


Figure 1. Schematic analysis of Vermeer's "A Lady at the Virginals with a Gentleman" (Riga: Atis Kampars, 2018)

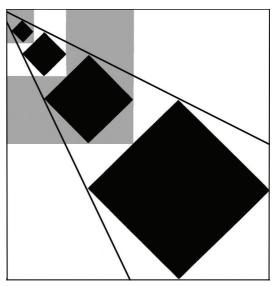


Figure 2. Schematic analysis of Doesburg's "Arithmetic Composition" (Riga: Atis Kampars, 2018)

the observed information into the depiction; the accessible knowledge demonstrates commonly accepted values or the common sense of a society. The interaction of the two demonstrates the way an individual's insight becomes a collective point of view, a new convention.

Many of the fundamental problems in spatial representation refer to its thematic content – there is always something meaningful to be represented, the objects of interest of the beholder. Space, in turn, can easily be perceived as a void – a distance that separates one object from another. Altogether this provokes the question of the extent to which the spatial features of the existing natural scenery can be transferred to the self-contained space of an image.

Coincidently, while contemplating the issues of spatial representation, I was touched by the powerful and imaginative Old Testament phrase "[...] gather together [...] from the four corners of the earth" (Holy Bible. The Old Testament, 1978). My attempt to better understand the meaning of a "corner of the earth" resulted in a more profound spatial explanation, about the most distant known point or the extremity.

"The word translated "corners" [...] is the Hebrew word, *KANAPH. Kanaph* is translated in a variety of ways. However, it generally means extremity. It is translated 'borders' in Numbers 15:38. In Ezekiel 7:2 it is translated 'four corners' and again in Isaiah 11:12 'four corners', Job 37:3 and 38:13 as 'ends'. The Greek equivalent in Revelation 7:1 is *gonia*. The Greek meaning is perhaps more closely related to our modern divisions known as quadrants. *Gonia* literally means angles, or divisions. It is customary to divide a map into quadrants as shown by the four directions." (Morton, 1978)

Apart from the original meaning of the Biblical text, the phrase reveals a surprisingly humanistic approach to space as an environment managed from the centre to its extreme distances by a kind of gravitation of the human will. No less astonishing was the apparent overlap of this vague scholarly concept of the rectangular area with the doctrine of planar perspective. This confusing coexistence of the purely geometric doctrine of perspective

and subjective assumptions about space and distances oriented this study towards the anthropocentric origins of spatial perception. Consequently, the title *A Man Between the Four Corners of the Earth* outlines the role and position of the beholder as a central unit in a definite spatial area and the true origins of the spatial organization of an image.

It was my conscious intention to overlay this study with an "orthodox patina", firstly, to stress the importance of the basic natural concepts in spatial representation and, secondly, to demonstrate that the viewpoint of a mere image-maker can also be validated in our century of sophisticated theories and technologies. I feel a genuine necessity to assist in restoring the former prestige of the rational and spatially charged image which involves the elements of planar perspective - once the undeniable favourite of spatial representation and scholarly research. Personal devotion to it shown by professionals on both aesthetic and intellectual grounds since the early 15th century has partially evaporated as a result of the introduction of mechanical image-capture technologies or programmed image-making procedures that require almost no profound intelligent initiative and imagination at this point. Furthermore, a professional reliance on the arranged image on scientific grounds seems to be surpassed by a dominating desire for unlimited self-expression.

Since this discourse is about the rational approach to the art of image-making, there is no need to discuss intuitive forms of depiction of natural scenery such as French impressionist paintings, which I fully admire. It should also be clarified that I intend to analyse only the manmade images generated by natural observation and non-mechanical visualization. I should clarify here that the discourse on spatiality exclusively relates to the most natural form of spatial observation, i.e., standing on the ground. Other forms of observation such as from a position high above the surface are therefore irrelevant. Observation and the record of a light signal made by use of a lens are also not relevant here because this produces imagery according to its own rules determined by the means of optics and not by dynamic interaction between the eye and space.

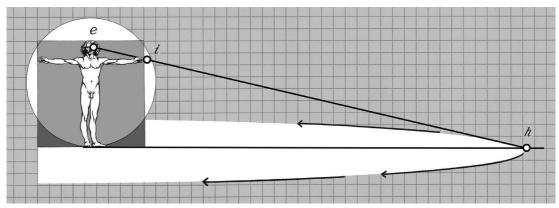


Figure 3. Anthropocentric area of vision (Riga: Atis Kampars, 2018)

The Anthropocentric Concept of Spatial Representation

It would be a complicated task to find an image that better exposes the anthropocentric concept of space than Leonardo da Vinci's drawing Vitruvian man. This graphical scheme has already provoked a large number of intriguing interpretations, as it does for this study on artificial space. Although the recognized purpose of this schematic drawing was the exploration of proportions of a human body or the "Vitruvius canon" (Elam, 2001), the meaning of a man as a universal measurement may be far broader than the delimitations of its extremities located within the square and circle. The location of a human figure in the centre of the most rudimental geometric shapes determines the potentiality of outer-directed (Arnheim, 1988) spatial development towards the larger spatial module. The transition of da Vinci's scheme into the broader area is generated by tracing the projection line (central optical ray) connecting the eye (e - eye), the index finger (i - index), and the most distant point on a surface (h - horizon) (Figure 3). The point of intersection marks the extreme border of the visible area which, in fact, "belongs" to the human sense of sight. So the whole area that lies between the eye and the relative horizon becomes sensorily real and eligible for depiction.

The simple possibility to point with a finger at an object at a great distance is to a certain extent comparable to a tactile sensation. This geometric connection by the imaginary ray defined by Euclid (Gregory, 1997) conceptually connects the observer's eye and the object, establishes a virtual touch and makes the visible space virtually accessible. This interconnection is not a phantom since it has some consistency it may be restored by the beholder as many times as the representation needs, so it is neither an occasional nor irrational instrument of spatial investigation. In this regard, the observation as such is a kind of continuous interaction and relationship between the spatial environment and the individual (Figure 4).

Pointing with a finger to an object of observation usually means directing the sight line (central optical ray) towards something particular in the surrounding area. This particularity factor is also relevant to the relative horizon – the most distant physical limitation of the sight line on the ground. In the context of visual observation, the relative horizon is a true object of attraction. There should always be something meaningful available for representation and the most elementary act of depiction of scenery is the division of the picture plane into two horizontal areas, above and below. Even a simple horizontally traced line across the picture plane indicates these two spatial opposites and somehow provides the clue of how the image-maker's sight line is directed towards the ground. In visual composition, this is called a *low*, *centred*, or *high* horizon. Thinking in terms of Leon Battista Alberti, a Florentine architect, artist, and outstanding intellectual, the horizon is a quantity (Sinisgalli, 2011), or something calculable that is involved in the interplay of concentrated observation and successful reconstruction of a viewed space.

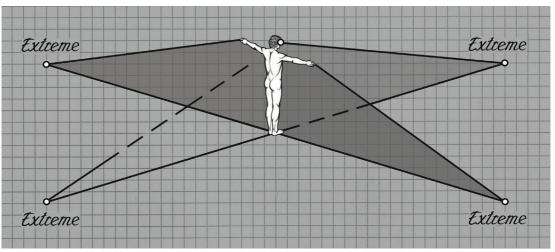


Figure 4. Extreme distances of anthropocentric space (Riga: Atis Kampars, 2018)

The spatial extension of the Vitruvian man's scheme shows that it is not only about intimate notions like here, but eventually also about essential spatial notions like there. The man's body not only generates the projections but also acts as a fully independent system of spatial orientation that includes the six natural coordinates (or spatial orientators) already mentioned by Aristotle: front and back, left and right, up and down (Figure 5). The relationships of axes connecting the opposite elements of every pair correspond to the three-coordinate system of space and no spatial representation can reliably appear without properly showing these elementary natural coordinates. The basic norm of the individual coordinate system is the vertical direction (up and *down*), which is determined by the gravitation pull. This universal force of nature imposes the orthogonal position of the other two coordinate axes and so do the spatial abilities of the beholder's body itself, including the potential of individual vision and observational circumstances.

The ability of an individual to interact with the environment or to virtually establish control over an area is limited by his or her visual or tactile senses (the focus on these two kinds of senses is because of their relevance to the means of visual expression). In natural spatial relationships between the individual and the environment the body is embraced by space from all possible directions. The body constitutes a constant centre of a unified

volume of space, a purely picturesque concept that was defined by Panofsky (1997) as a "content of a finite vessel". This conception of a separate spatial unit allows us to develop a number of spatial prototypes, from the intimate module to the broader module of space. The degree of a module's finitude is determined by its content and function – to what extent the represented object tends to interact with the surrounding area.

Variety of Spatial Conceptions

The substantial value of represented space is its credibility. There is a temptation to assume that visual credibility is interconnected with the degree of correspondence to the fragment of natural scenery the image seems to represent. It is quite easy to amalgamate one with the other, especially if the depiction reliably reveals the recognizable features of natural scenery. Although the image doubtlessly possesses overall similarities in its content, maintaining certain links with the scenery it has been derived from, it has a number of its own distinctions defined by the media expression and by the cognitive involvement of the image-maker. For example, the perspectival image contains a number of features the natural scenery cannot possess – geometrically developed measurements, scale and a striking degree of accuracy - and vice-versa: no representation can completely represent the amount of visual properties nature has at its disposal. The substantial common feature

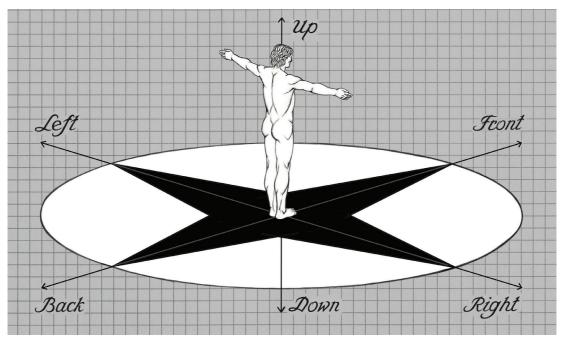


Figure 5. The system of eight natural coordinates (Riga: Atis Kampars, 2018)

between the making of an image and the observation of natural scenery is the continuity of the process - viewing the scenery means perceiving an array of separate "snapshots" made by human vision. Representation is a similar process, involving a continuous confluence of numerous observations with previous knowledge and aesthetic attitudes synthesized by the physical means and methods of representation.

Every depiction of near and distant objects shows the human ability to perceive and concentrate on specific spatial aspects such as comprehensible distances and logical decreases in sizes of visible objects. This aspect is also relevant to artificially arranged images such as perspective constructions, even though some distinct characteristics of the original scenery may be missing. Representation of a totally empty space with no recognizable objects in it seems an almost impossible task because of the visualization itself – every development of representation contains references to some spatial qualities, such as superimposition, relative scale and also the change of colour contrast. The sheaves of converging perspectival lines provoke thinking about the division of the picture plane into categories of ground and sky

and the geometric grid created by projections on the ground would be easily perceived as *flagstones*. Apparently, the perceptibility of space is revealed by its very essential properties, which include the change in size of a recognizable object and superposition (Arnheim, 1988) of near objects over distant objects.

During the Proto-Renaissance and the Early Renaissance the elaboration of credible and systemically perfect representation of space with scaled objects was "the end towards which the invention is directed" and it "should be considered desirable" (Kemp, 1990). A public presentation of the central projection of linear perspective made by Florentine architect Filippo Brunelleschi in 1413 (Kemp, 1990) indicates both the professional and social necessity in the early 15th century of establishing a new visual convention as such and there is no better proof of this than the rapid dissemination of the concept of perspective in artists' professional practice and common acceptance of constructed spatial images after 1413. Since then and throughout the centuries the linear perspective as mathematically calculated spatial relationships became a standard requirement for a classically educated architect and artist. I assume that the obvious dominance of the principles of perspective became possible not only because of its flawless scientific nature but because it also incorporated direct correspondence with the natural way we view the environment. The convergence of these two opposites is a confusing but happy correlation of mathematics and sensory reactions.

The principal evolutional difference between the precepts of visual space of the Middle Ages and the advanced structures of "spatially unified" imagery of Early Renaissance art is the presence of spatial coordinates, correct use of scale and the arranged angle of observation applied in the latter stylistic formation. No less significant than these intelligible spatial solutions is the profound involvement of theoretical research in the field of visual representation. The reason and necessity for reforming the spatial rules of a picture can be explained in different ways, including the social context of post-Medieval society, and, in particular, the greater awareness of natural processes and thorough studies of objects and the environment. This new way of viewing was inspired, firstly, by the developments in the urban environment and the subsequent necessity to depict regular forms and, secondly, by fresco paintings and decorative sculpture where the spatial structure of the work of art was expected to correlate with the surrounding interior spaces and with a fixed position of observation. Although today we regard perspective as a highly rational and mathematically based principle of spatial representation, the new structural properties of depiction show their relation with natural observation – the presence of a definite position, distance, and arranged angle of viewing - the qualities that characterize the properties of the "new naturalism" (Kemp, 1990) of the Renaissance.

The terms *space* and *spatial* seem commonly understandable when they refer to human sensations of "real scenery". Yet these terms are not that homogeneous in their content when contextualized by the artificial environment of an image – the conception of space may differ with regard to the visible area and the objects it refers to. This reflects the assumption that

what we call spatial is, in fact, the likeness of the depiction to the experienced view of natural scenery or well-known objects, our ability to calculate space according to categories such as distances or coordinates or our ability to sense something particularly aerial. This variety of approaches indicates the possibility to define three alternative categories of space:

- Conceptual space the universal, infinite space that surrounds all possible objects and involves distances yet is not completely verifiable by human vision and therefore exists as a scientific axiom;
- Encompassed space the visually perceptible environment actualized by rays of light which may be experienced through vision;
- Tangible space as an environment at a close proximity that can be immediately experienced not only by vision but also by touch.

These terms may not be fully conventional academically; however, they adequately communicate the principal differences between these conceptions - conceptual space is the cognitive structure, the existence of which lies in the possibility to be contemplated by the resources of one's mind. The scale of conceptual space is so immense that it should be accepted without any visual proof and thus its existence depends on human intelligence; it exceeds human abilities to completely visually engage with it and the spherical character of the Earth's surface cannot be captured by observation even in the most appropriate circumstances, e.g., when standing on the seashore. The approximately 30-degree angle of visual perception does not allow one to perceive the minor curvature on the horizon line, so there is no rational need to apply the spherical concept to any kind of image, whether perspectival or panoramic. The spherical surface is neither perceptible nor calculable from the viewpoint of the beholder; therefore, conceptual space cannot be a subject of visual communication and appears to be a purely impractical concept for an image-maker.

Encompassed space and tangible space correspond to areas of the visible environment and can be visually managed and therefore translated into an image by means of visual expression. They both involve the body of a human being

as their origin (Figure 3). The characteristics of encompassed space need more explicit clarification - it is not only visible but relates to the space "accessible by means of vision". The difference between "visual" and "accessible by vision" is as follows: to call something visual basically means a reference to one's sensations evoked by the perceived light impulses reflected from or transmitted by the objects in an environment. The condition of being accessible by vision refers to the objects and space that are in "visual reach" yet not necessarily actualized by light impulses in the moment; it is about the potential of being visible from the position, location, abilities, and intentions of the beholder. The concept of encompassed space also involves the area behind the beholder which is systemically determined by the *front* and back coordinate axis. The controversy of this statement is in the comparison of already depicted scenery and scenery which could be depicted because it is in visual reach of the image-maker. Although ordinary image-making exclusively shows the part of space in front of the beholder, we should not exclude, for example, the possibility to integrate a mirrored image of space from the back or involvement of the reflected light, or long shadows that fall on the ground from the objects behind. This synthetic nature of depiction is a standard procedure that constitutes the visible "world of objects" (Arnheim, 1974) in front of us.

The Four Corners of an Image

The principles of spatial observation determine the fragmentary character of a representation of space and objects reflecting a small part of the entire natural scenery. In this way, every single representation shows the concentration of the beholder's attention and the attempt to visually refer to a particular visible area, the objects, and distances separating the objects. When processed into an image, the fragment of natural scenery ceases to represent an open and unlimited space and becomes a closed artificial entity charged with objects within its format.

One of the most fundamental properties of a non-panoramic image is its organization around the fixed direction of viewing. Accordingly, the fixed virtual space has its sides defined by a *left and right* coordinate axis (x-axis) in a

constantly perpendicular position to the sight line (z-axis) similarly to the tangent being perpendicular to the radius (Figure 6). All three coordinate axes are mutually perpendicular but the perpendicular disposition of the x and z axes specifically establishes the preconditions for perception of the rectangular character of the horizontal plane. This is a constant feature of an image as long as we apply the anthropocentric spatial orientators left and right, up and down, and front and back. The rectangular area fixed by natural coordinates constantly follows the sight line, maintaining its orthogonal approach to the visible environment (Figure 7). The doctrine of perspectival representation requires the horizon to be shown in a frontal position to the beholder's sight line (z-axis) and the central vanishing point v of converging parallel lines marks the most "extreme" distant point on a horizontal surface of an image.

Viewing as such indicates that there should be an object or a cluster of objects that attracts human attention and which should be visually investigated in the visible environment. The general concept of perspective also explains spatial viewing as a projection of the natural scenery on the "projection plane", which is a perpendicular intersection of the optical pyramid. According to this cognition, the virtual format of perceived scenery (its regular external dimensions) is established by the beholder's

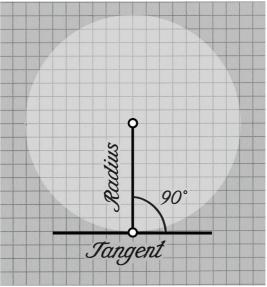


Figure 6. The orthogonal disposition of the tangent and radius (Riga: Atis Kampars, 2018)

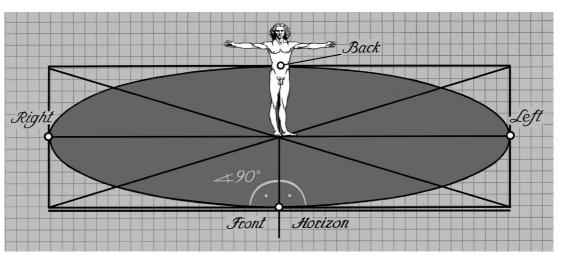


Figure 7. The rectangular area of encompassed space (Riga: Atis Kampars, 2018)

inquisitiveness about objects and surrounding space. We are mentally able to modify the size or viewing area in relation to the reason for choosing the content – either formal or thematic. This initially subjective origin of the represented fragment of objects-and-space has obvious relevance for the basic principles of linear perspective by sharing the same three preconditions:

- The concentration of the sight line (central optical axis) at a distinct fixed point at an extreme distance;
- 2. The estimation of the dimensions of the horizontal plane;
- 3. The overall organization of an image by horizontal division (the so-called *high*, *central*, or *low* position of the horizon within the format).

I assume that it is important to separate simple seeing from purposeful and methodical observation if we discuss the role of perspective in our spatial perception. Seeing of the visible world is an automatic and unavoidable reaction for every individual with standard capacities of vision. Simple seeing could even be described as semi-conscious scanning of the visible environment without any creative desire, but this state of consciousness does not result in visual perception as recognition of any particular characteristics of objects or space. Observation in turn is about the intellectual involvement of the beholder - concentration and evaluation of the properties of a particular "module" of objects-and-space or the formatted part of scenery. In this regard, the perspective, through its geometric means of visualizing, assists and reflects a truly natural form of looking and perceiving.

"Mechanical" performance in the arts, meaning the use of repetitive methods without any creative involvement from an image-maker, has been criticized for centuries. Application of the doctrine of perspective in image-making is, without a doubt, a kind of mechanical approach with limited possibilities of interpretation. Yet the genesis of the artificial environment of perspective evolves, firstly, from the original sensations of the beholder about his or her location in space and, secondly, from his or her perception of the properties of the investigated object. So the spatial structure of depicted scenery primarily reflects these arbitrary selected prerequisites, providing the framework for technical drawing methods of the science of perspective.

I suppose that the term *scientific* should be used in as broad and flexible a sense as possible, i.e., related to the logical construction of principles of depiction that, firstly, can maintain their systemic unity and, secondly, can provide reasonably good methodical support for the community of practitioners – all kinds of imagemakers. The scientific component of depiction, of course, constitutes the method of technical drawing of the geometric grid of converging and intersecting lines of projections of perspective. A no less important scientific aspect is the

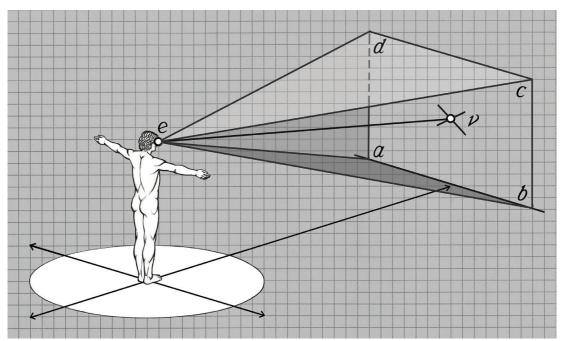


Figure 8. The formatted part of space is marked by the rectangle "abcd" with the central vanishing point "v" at its centre (Riga: Atis Kampars, 2018)

method of observation in which, following Alberti's original expression, "vision takes place by means of a pyramid of rays" (Sinisgalli, 2011). Appearance of a potential image is not a coincidence but rather a result of goal-directed observation since "the base of the pyramid is the surface seen" (Sinisgalli, 2011) (Figure 8). Alberti's concept of an optical pyramid is truly important because it explains the procedure of shaping the dimensions of the image frame, the viewing itself, and is, in fact, rooted in simple practical methods of image-making.

Alberti's optical pyramid induces the geometric principles at the earliest stage of image-making and substantiates the subsequent application of methods of perspective. Geometry appears as an organic element of viewing; moreover, the geometric shape of the pyramid channels the viewed image to the beholder's eye and obviously supports the perception of space by introducing the "extreme borders" of the accessible visual space. Still, it does not compromise the spatial position and role of the beholder in perceiving the module of objectsand-space.

The meaning of the concept of linear or planar

perspective in the representation of space and spatial objects is still valid in our day; however, there are reasonable counter-arguments as well. The critical remarks are addressed not only to the deformations of the regularity of shapes in the periphery of the perspective's plane but to the principal axiom of the whole concept that the represented surface is flat instead of spherical. It would be incorrect to blame thinkers of the Early Renaissance for ignorance - conceptions of the solar system were still in the developmental stage and the fundamental work De revolutionibus orbium coelestium by Nicolaus Copernicus was published only in 1543. It is also worth mentioning that Columbus substantiated his plan to reach India to the King of Spain by presenting maps which he obtained from the Florentine cosmographer Paolo dal Pozzo Toscanelli, who knew the architect Brunelleschi and also collaborated with Leon Battista Alberti (Kelly-Gadol, 1998).

A significant part of the concept of perspective reflects the need of architects, artists and designers for a kind of universal and efficient means at hand for the rational construction of space and scale. Although a part of linear

perspective may seem too "mechanical", and it cannot embrace the whole range of cases of visualization, the efficiency of the principles of perspective cannot be challenged, at least in the context of creating rational, calculable space. I am convinced that the flat surface concept of linear perspective elaborated during the 15th century was a rational and conscious decision made by professionals and researchers that reasonably improved the ability to understand spatial relationships of objects and correctly apply the methods of spatial depiction. Disregarding the fact that the convex character of the planet's surface was apparently recognized, the continuous and serious developments of the principles of perspective in the following centuries prove the rational meaning of the flat surface concept.

Conclusions

I consider myself a moderate sceptic of the planar perspective, especially because of its systemic inability to avoid peripheral distortions, but the formal elegance of its geometric grid is undeniable, especially in combination with the approach of representing the compound of objects-and-space that reflects

truly spatial sensations. I should note that the spatial representation system of perspective clearly corresponds to the concept of *four-corner space* in four fundamental aspects:

- It treats the horizontal surface as a principally flat plane;
- The depiction of space and scale is based on the transformations of rectangular shapes;
- The whole depiction reflects the rectangular shape of the surrounding environment;
- The depicted scenery indicates its evolution from the human being in its centre.

I should add that the term *four-corner Earth* is, of course, a metaphor, but it also describes the anthropocentric origin of viewing the environment, allowing the perception of space as a comfortable and controllable spatial configuration. This aspect is, in fact, very important for an image-maker who feels obliged to create a truthful and usable depiction of natural scenery. Although the image directly exploits only the frontal direction, a complex of natural sensations that there should be something potentially accessible to our left, right and back is involved as well when we find ourselves in an open space.

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Dina Suhanova **Theoretical** Writings on Architecture in the Latvian SSR, 1945-1991

Abstract

Theoretical Writings on Architecture in the Latvian SSR, 1945-1991 is an overview of the ideas represented in theoretical writings during the period of Soviet Latvia. In the context of this research, theoretical writings are understood as general and original views and judgements on architecture. The article provides an overview of the main topics and most prolific authors. The systematisation and interpretation of the main themes are based on consideration of the actual developments in architecture and building realisation, of the inevitable presence of Soviet ideology and rhetoric, and of parallel historical developments in the territory of the USSR and the West. In the course of the research, theoretical articles are accepted as part of Soviet Latvian architectural history. The topic of the paper is deemed to be relevant as society has undergone a period of neglecting Soviet heritage, yet in recent years recognition and appreciation of Soviet architecture has begun in both a Latvian and European context.

Keywords

architecture, theory, Latvian SSR

Introduction

Architectural theory, parallel to design practice, shapes the discourse about architecture, analyses developments, methods and ideas, summarises observations, makes a prognosis about the future, and forms the basis of architectural education. So far, writings on architecture in Latvia have not been studied and analysed according to their historical period; thus, there is a lack of a general overview on the ideas and persons that have shaped theoretical concepts in thinking about architecture in the past. The field of architectural theory also lacks attention in current architectural education, which is related to the absence of traditions and of succession among theoreticians. This has resulted in a vague impression of the theoretical notions, problems and interconnections within the discourse in the context of Latvia and beyond, a lack of tradition and continuity, and a weak basis for knowledge and understanding of the global context.

Significant initiatives to advance research in this context include the anthology of theoretical articles by Latvian architects Latviesu arhitektu teoretiskie raksti un manifesti 20. gs. (Latvian architects' theoretical articles and manifestos in the 20th century), edited by architects Janis Lejnieks and Zanda Redberga and published in 2007, as well as the initial publication from the doctoral dissertation Eizena Laubes teoretiskas atzinas (Eizens Laube's theoretical insights) by architect and researcher Sandra Levane. It came out in 2009 and comprises a study of one author's theoretical work. If there were any doubts before then, these studies confirmed that it is possible to talk about architectural theory in Latvia.

The period of Soviet Latvia from 1945 to 1991 was chosen as a seemingly marginal and divergent historical stage of Latvian history. The selection promised to provide an idea of the theoretical ideas and thinking and the intellectual knowledge and techniques that were available and employed in Latvian architectural and urban planning practice from the end of

WWII until the 1990s.

The choice of period is also related to the ideological and rhetorical factor in Sovietera theoretical perspectives, which inevitably becomes the background and interest in a review of architects' writings from this time. Western architectural history shows consideration for constructivist and Stalinera architecture, allotting it specific chapters in history books, but when regional Soviet modernist architecture is evaluated, the overriding idea is of a degraded, abandoned and homogenous environment created by planning bureaus. Even in the 21st century Eastern Europe is regarded as "Europe's surplus" (Pjotrovskis, 2012). This can also be applied to theoretical architectural writing: there is a common conception of the Soviet era as comparable to a "black hole", where nothing was written or anything that was written falls into the category of ideologized and standardised propaganda texts created in the framework of restricted KGB-controlled information space.

Preconceptions about Soviet architecture also exist in Latvia. They manifest themselves in negative attitudes and protests against Soviet architectural heritage (even an initiative to tear down the current Ministry of Agriculture building). Intensive implementation of building façade insulation projects threatens to destroy Soviet-era buildings' original forms, proportions and aesthetics. Overall in the first decades of the 21st century there is a growing interest among architectural researchers in Soviet architectural heritage, including architects' theoretical writings [1].

The study will focus on the theoretical work of architects, art historians and other authors active in the Latvian SSR, encompassing the period from the end of WWII and Latvia's re-annexation by the USSR in 1945 until the renewal of Latvian independence in 1991. In the framework of the research, the author has compiled theoretical architectural writings from the period, composed a historical overview,

Since the 2000s, this has been evidenced by a "reappraisal" of Soviet heritage in various monographs, exhibitions and retrospectives in Latvia and abroad dedicated to individual architects and Soviet modernist architecture, for instance, in the context of the Latvian Pavilion of the 14th Venice Biennale of Architecture.

identified prominent and prolific authors, and carried out a systematisation and interpretation of the predominant issues and ideas.

The concept of architectural theory

To determine the selection criteria for the research material and understand the origins of the term *theory* and its interpretation under the Soviet regime, it is necessary to explain the notion of architectural theory. The word theory can be defined as a conception or perception, a mental scheme for implementing something, a method, or systematic conditions or principles that need to be followed (Johnson, 1994). "What was seen could enter into the public discourse" - such is the origin of the polysemantic Greek word theoria [2]. Aristotle used the term *theoria* to denote the process of contemplation or reflection and its object and differentiated between three concepts: theoria - an activity whose goal is to obtain knowledge of the universal and eternal; poiesis an activity resulting in concrete objects rather than knowledge; and praxis - an activity that initiates changes in the source material. In his view, humans have a natural longing to know and understand reality as fully as possible. Plato, meanwhile, spoke of theory as a unique construct, a superior form of "higher" seeing as only a philosopher can see (Fisher, 1998). In neoplatonic thinking, theory was treated as a scientific category denoting observation and reflection (Fisher, 1998). In bridging the gap between the understanding of the concept in ancient Greek philosophy and how it is understood today, it is important to note the legacy of postmodernism starting in the 1970s, when theory became an ideology among artists and architects and it was difficult to separate art and architectural objects from theory - the reference became more important than the idea.

The Roman author, architect and engineer Vitruvius differentiated between intellectual and practical knowledge in architectural education as early as the first century in his essay De Architectura (Vitruvius, 1960), but it is assumed that the term architectural theory was first used starting at the beginning of the 17th century, when division between theory and practice was truly introduced in architecture. Harry Mallgrave (2005) speaks of modern architectural theory starting in the second half of the 17th century, when the terms theory and modern appeared. He confines modern architectural theory to specific years [3] – 1673 to 1968 – yet as late as the first half of the 19th century, architectural theory was considered together with architectural history. In 1818 architectural history and theory were separated into distinct yet complementary disciplines at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris with the creation of two separate departments (Scruton, 2007).

Until the 1950s theoretical writings were mainly related to architecture's visual aspects or *venustas* as Vitruvius referred to them (Scruton, 2007), and they were perceived as a component of general art history. Only after this period did architectural theory come to be regarded as a much more complicated field, one that ought to be a discipline in its own right.

In further clarifying the term theory, it is interesting to consider Jonathan Culler's (2007) work, where, in looking for an answer to the question of what *theory* is in the context of literary theory, he indicates two directions: theory as a consolidated body of assertions and theory as "speculation". If we apply this to architectural theoretical writings, we find that theory can also be mere conjecture, written thinking about a topic and exploration of future possibilities. Theory constitutes works that succeed in unsettling and reorienting thinking in fields to which they seem not to apply; theory often comprises "criticism of selfevident concepts", analytical and speculative attempts to question habits, reflexive thinking about thinking which looks into the categories

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Related Greek words include "theoros" – spectator in a theatre or at athletic competitions or public events; "theorein" – watch carefully, contemplate (defines sight as central among the senses); "theos" – divine being (describes seeing from a divine perspective); "theatron" – theatre; "theoria" – official delegation from one Greek polis to another that was witness to an event.

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In 1673 Claude Perrault, in officially translating Vitruvius's texts, started to use the word "theorie", which became the standard in all architectural theoretical discussions.

we use in interpreting literature, and other discoursive practices – such are Culler's (2007) considerations related to what theory is. One can agree with the author that a hallmark of theory is its limitlessness - that it is an immeasurable mass of texts that keeps on growing (Kalers (Culler), 2007) - since, firstly, new texts appear with original contributions or answers to predecessors' ideas and, secondly, as evidenced by Soviet-era architectural texts, the same ideas and topics often repeat themselves.

In general, architectural theory in the Soviet context can also be defined as written viewpoints on architecture. Architectural theory analyses ways in which architecture can be created, experienced, perceived and critically evaluated - theoretical ideas reflected in a written text that is published or available in a manuscript - taking into account the segregation of architectural theory, architectural criticism and architectural history. Writings that can be regarded as architectural criticism (critical observations, reviews, reports, written portraits, interviews, analyses or evaluations of architectural objects) and studies related to architectural history are used as sources if they express original generalisations or help in revealing interconnections and serve as references for historical facts. Regarding the selection of materials and choice of writings, criteria include authors' suppositions, opinions, innovative relationships with architecture, universal ideas and original conceptions. Like other cultural phenomena in the Soviet Union, architectural theory was strongly ideologized and it developed, as the Lithuanian philosopher Arunas Sverdiolas (2012) writes, in a closed space that can be compared to a bottle isolation and public life artificially maintained in a restricted space. Architects' theoretical thinking in Soviet Latvia was influenced by the ubiquitous presence of bureaucracy and by the manipulation of public opinion, which would later leave a mark on the lifestyle and mentality in the post-Soviet milieu as well.

Architectural historian Epp Lankots (2012), in her article The neo-avant-garde and historiographic activity, which looks at the historiography of Soviet Estonia's modern architecture in the context of the concept of contemporaneity, confirms a problem that

the present study also had to reckon with in the course of its development: "In getting to know historical texts [...] one must face a series of questions about how to interpret the tangible presence of the past." In other words, assessment of such texts is encumbered by Soviet Marxist-Leninist doctrine, which transforms them into formal essays with architectural theories founded on Soviet-era intellectual baggage - that is, questionable information - which is why a critical approach is needed in reading and interpreting them.

In researching this topic, studies and other texts were used that were published by various authors - including architects, city planners, art historians, and philosophers - in the Latvian SSR from 1945 to 1991 and fall within the scope of architectural theoretical writings. Most often the texts were published in periodicals. The following selection criteria were applied: articles related to architecture, city planning, trade and construction that focus on theoretical issues of architecture and city planning and general questions of art and aesthetics. Writings conceived by Latvian architects in exile are not analysed as a full-fledged component of Soviet Latvian architectural theory in the framework of this study.

Chronology

One of the tasks in the course of the research was creating a clear chronology to show the political and socioeconomic turning points in the Latvian SSR, the changes in power in the USSR, the most significant buildings, projects and architectural events for instance, architectural exhibitions or critical decisions - and turning points in theoretical thought originating outside the USSR. In examining architecture as a complex phenomenon, it is necessary to look at the respective historical period, also taking into consideration the volume, influence and nature of information coming from "outside". The study critically evaluates the influence of ideology and compares it with major ideas in architectural theory in the global context, their relevance today and their assessment by later scholars. In analysing the writings, it was also necessary to consider the dependence of Latvia as a Soviet republic on common

architectural and construction norms and the totalitarian ideological and aesthetic demands that went along with this. Such dependence defined architects' thinking and manifested itself in their writings. The study is divided chronologically into four sections:

- 1. a look at architectural theory at the beginning of the 20th century;
- 2. Soviet Latvian architectural theory in the post-war context until 1954;
- a survey of theoretical ideas from 1955 until 1960;
- 4. the 1970s and ideas in the period of 1980-1991.

Given that architectural developments are also influenced by the priorities of those in charge, in the course of the research characteristics of the time contingent on the persons in power in the USSR were also considered. Ways of systematising the writings that would divide the theoretical material into specific topics were rejected as unsuitable [4]. Such a division would not be able to provide an objective idea of the research topic, though it could be used to analyse the work of a single author or study a specific thematic orientation.

A survey of architectural theoretical writing at the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century

This study's chronology begins at the end of WWII, when Latvia experienced re-annexation and, together with 13 other countries, was forcibly included in the Soviet "family" for nearly half a century. The instability and confusion wrought by six years of war also meant a hiatus in the architectural theoretical thinking and writing that had started in Latvia at the beginning of the century and matured during the interwar period. Pre-war and interwar Latvian architectural and theoretical thinking developed alongside that of other European countries, so that before turning to the main purpose of the study – analysis of architectural theoretical writings in Soviet

Latvia – it is necessary to look at the second half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century.

Research dedicated to architectural history and emphasis on architectural theoretical issues began in Latvia in the 1870s with the theoretical work of pedagogues at the Riga Polytechnic Institute (RPI), founded in 1869. The German-Latvian architect Gustav Hilbig's work Ueber architektonische Formenbildung (On architectonic forms) was published in several instalments in the newspaper Riga(i) sche Stadtblatter. A manuscript on the history of construction norms was written by the architect Julius August von Hagen, but the 1908-dated document has not survived (Latvijas Enciklopedija, 1995). The architect and art historian Wilhelm Neumann distinguished himself with notable research work; starting with his earliest known publication in 1885 (Grosmane, n.d.), he completed more than 60 books and treatises, concentrating on such topics as Baltic art history or medieval architecture in Riga and the Baltics, the Riga Cathedral in particular (Latvijas Enciklopedija, 1995). The architect Heinz Pirang, a professor at RPI from 1910 to 1915, was the author of around 100 publications related to issues surrounding architectural theory and history as well as city construction and monument protection (Latvijas Enciklopedija, 1995); he also authored a study of mansions in the Baltics, Das baltische Herrenhaus (The Baltic manor house) (1926-1930). The architect Eduard Kupffer, also on the faculty of RPI, authored several publications, including the monograph Das Arbeiter-WWohnhaus (The workers' tenement house) (Buka et al., 1995).

The architect Eizens Laube [5] began his extensive theoretical activity in 1908. His work in architectural theory spanned almost sixty years, ending in 1965 with the philosophical publication *Cilveks – sevi* (*The human being – in himself*) in the exile journal *Architekts* (*Architect*). Sandra Levane (2009) has researched

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For instance, architectural language, national or regional identity, the relationship between the new and the old, architecture's social objectives, the home, the architects' profession.

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Eizens R. Laube (1880-1967) – architect, RPI professor, LU Faculty of Architecture professor, architectural theorist; went into exile in 1944, first to Germany, then to the US.

Laube's theoretical oeuvre, counting more than 60 publications of varying length in the professional and public press, two books and an unpublished English-language treatise, Manifestation of Architecture. Laube's main interests were "fundamental insights on the subject of architecture" (Levane and Krastins, 2009) and looking for answers to the question "what is architecture?". In acquainting oneself with Eizens Laube's writings, one is inclined to agree with Levane and Krastins (2009) that his "legacy in Latvian architectural theory is unique in its volume, in its topical and temporal scope, and in the depth of its content". During the interwar period Laube continued to write about issues surrounding national architecture, Latvian national architecture in particular, and about the general understanding of architecture, for instance Latvijas arhitekturas radisana (The creation of Latvian architecture) (1922), Arhitekturas izpratne (Understanding architecture) (1930), Latviskais arhitekturas stils tagadne (The Latvian style of architecture today) (1936), and Arhitekturas gars atjaunota Latvija (The spirit of architecture in sovereign Latvia) (1939).

In general, publications at the beginning of the 20th century before WWI mostly dealt with building in practice, questions of style, modern construction and home design. The press reflects architects' discussions on city planning issues and large construction projects, for instance the Riga Latvian Society House or the Riga City Art Museum. 1919 saw the founding of the University of Latvia's Faculty of Architecture (a regrouping of the RPI), which became the centre of all architectural life and hosted the principal movements of the time: neo-eclecticism, functionalism and national architecture (Krastins, 1992). In the 1920s, given the publishing opportunities and freedom of the press in the newly democratic Latvia, the amount of writing and the breadth of topics grew - architects "had something to say". The most important event of this period was the publication of the monthly professional journal Latvijas Arhitektura (Architecture of Latvia) starting in 1938 (Krastins, 1992). The journal covered a broad range of architectural issues and, as Liga Alksne (1989) writes, addressed not only practical matters but also theoretical problems, "taking them to the level of philosophical generalisations". The journal's

activities were discontinued in 1940.

Regarding the interwar period, the work of art historian Boris Vipper should also be mentioned; from 1924 to 1940 he published research not only on art history, but also on architecture, for instance, the essay Arhitekturas valoda (The language of architecture), which came out in the volume Makslas likteni un vertibas (Art's fortunes and values) in 1940 (republished in 2005). The architect Pauls Kundzins authored a synopsis of the history of art and styles and a compendium of the rules of perspective. He actively researched folk building in his dissertation Dzivojama rija Latvija (The residential barn in Latvia) (1933) and his other writings. The architect and pedagogue of artistic spatial forms Pauls Kampe theorised on issues surrounding the variety of architectonic forms and architectural and art history in his work Dazadu materialu arhitektoniskas formas (The architectonic forms of different materials) (1922). The architect Arnolds Lamze can be regarded as the founder and pioneer of urban construction theory in Latvia. Theoretical work was also carried out by Arturs Krumins, Aleksandrs Birzenieks, Janis Rutmanis, Pavils Dreijmanis, Peteris Arends, Teodors Rusins and Janina Jasenas.

As Janis Krastins (1992) writes, the main issues in theoretical writings during the period of the Latvian Republic were "profiling architectural styles of the time and the problem of a national style". 1940, which marked the first Soviet occupation of Latvia during WWII, brought drastic changes in political orientation and, along with them, an interruption of the work accomplished until then. 1945, when Latvia was re-occupied by the USSR, marks the starting point of this study's focal period. The onset of the war was the beginning of a time that has been called the hardest in the history of the architectural profession (Dripe, 1989) more than 50 years of occupation. In 1941, in lieu of the journal Latvijas Architektura, the magazine Tehnika un Celtnieciba (Technology and Construction) became the monthly edition of Latvian SSR Engineering Technological Workers and Architects, but only one issue came out (1941) that included a section on architectural issues, and it was introduced with an appeal from the Organising Committee of the Latvian

SSR Architects' Union to "All Latvian SSR architects" to come up with a new architecture, the formula for which would be the same throughout the Soviet period: "national in form, socialist in content".

1945 to 1954: Ideologization

WWII and the occupation of Latvia interrupted the development of architectural theoretical thinking in writings and studies that had begun at the end of the 19th century and had already progressed quite far at the beginning of the 20th century and in the interwar period, having taken place, until the war, alongside that of other European countries. Any succession in theoretical work was broken off in 1944, when three-fourths of the around 200 professionally educated Latvian architects fled the regime and went into exile in Sweden, the US, Canada, Australia and other countries, including architects that had distinguished themselves with notable theoretical achievements in the interwar period, such as Eizens Laube, Pauls Kundzins, and Pavils Dreimanis.

All cultural activities and artistic fields. including architecture, were tailored to the ideological requirements of socialist realism and, as art historian Maija Rudovska (2010) writes, in the evaluation of postwar architecture it is important to take into account these newly introduced socio-political and ideological conditions. The doctrine of socialist realism was the only permissible creative method, as stipulated by the USSR starting in 1932 based on Soviet aesthetic theory (Pelse, 2003). Its central idea was mass education and "learning from the classics", which was understood as a return to the formal language of classical order architecture. 1948 is regarded as the beginning of the introduction of Stalinism's "strict guidelines" in the cultural world, including architecture, where anything bourgeois, capitalistic and functional was condemned, while there was a return of neoclassicism, order architecture, and a compiling of styles from other epochs, leading to such conclusions as the one made by architect and pedagogue Sergey Antonov, that "architecture cannot survive without order" (Lejnieks, 1998). Socialist realism was created to fill the need for realistic art and architecture

that would be understandable and easy to perceive for the socialist people.

Texts reflecting architectural developments – along with the socio-political and ideological stipulations of Soviet leader Stalin's totalitarian regime, the application of socialist realism to architecture, and the introduction of censorship – can be regarded as the most direct outcome of the ideology propagated by the regime. In the course of the research, it was found that the political background shaping theoretical thought in the Soviet Union was a powerful and inextricable influence and that it is impossible to avoid the presence of propaganda in the texts; thus, a critical approach is needed in reading them.

Within this period, texts of interest are found mainly in periodicals: the weekly newspaper Literatura un Maksla (Literature and Art), published from 1945 until 1992 as a newspaper for artists' unions, including the Architects' Union, with the subtitle *The Newspaper for* Unions of Soviet Latvian Writers, Composers, Artists and Architects; the newspapers Padomju Students (Soviet Student) and Cina (Struggle) and the journal Maksla (Art), which came out from 1952 until 1994. Certain scientifically grounded studies related to the research topic can also be found in Latvijas PSR Zinatnu akademijas vestis (Annals of the Latvian Academy of Sciences), issued by the Latvian SSR Academy of Sciences. Not a single professional architectural journal was published in the period. In the first five years after the war, i.e. until 1950, architecture-related texts were largely ideologized appeals from the communist regime, encouragements to struggle against the bourgeoisie, and declarations of Soviet architectural objectives – or they were informational publications regarding admission to the Faculty of Architecture, descriptions of architects' studies, information on competitions and new buildings, and job advertisements for architects. Within the framework of the regime, publications were censored and subject matter was strictly regulated.

It was important for Stalin's regime to cultivate an active struggle with supporters of capitalism, to fight the national bourgeoisie and spurn Latvian nationalists for the purposes of ideological education, and to criticise any nonMarxist approach to science and any seepage of bourgeois ideas into thought. It seems that for these reasons, at the end of 1950, the University of Latvia Faculty of Architecture was closed, and the following year architects could continue their education at the Faculty of Construction Engineering. This goes to show that architects, once creative personalities, were now not only functionaries but also humble construction workers. In terms of education, the fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism stood above all else, and architectural theory was understood as a scientific activity in the study of history rather than the expression of independent thoughts and ideas.

During this period, architects tried to find answers to the questions of how to construct Soviet architecture and what the nature of such architecture was to begin with. For one thing, in the period of the Soviet system, it seemed essential to raise public understanding of general and professional issues in architecture, since communist ideology was aimed at educating the people and the masses. Soviet architects had to perform "a hard, grandiose and lofty task", because "the people are expecting [...] comprehensive, practical and at the same time architectonic - that is, artistic solutions to the most important problems in contemporary construction" (Padomju Jaunatne, 1945). The answer to the question "how should we build?" was "good, fast, cheap and neat" (Dmitrijevs, 1947). Ernests Stalbergs (1951), at the time chairman of the Soviet Latvian Architects' Union, defined the practical tasks of Soviet Latvian architects precisely: planning workers' villages, designing kolkhoz centres, exploring the social realist method, seeking out and researching the national form, designing city square and highway ensembles, standard design, using standard units in designing residential buildings and facades, adhering to socialist economics in construction, and obeying government decisions.

The Soviet architectural and urban construction ideas established by Stalin, which were comparable to urban planning methods in other totalitarian and authoritarian states, were applied at a complete remove from any real context - they did not take into account cities' economic development, the prospects for

territorial development, the natural conditions, the dynamics of the building processes and the spatial features of the given locations. The Riga General Plan, completed in 1952 under the leadership of Russian émigré Jevgenijs Vasiljevs, fully reflected the communist government's conceptions of the ideal city (Lejnieks, 1998), where ensembles and squares became the main elements. Architecture historian Jurijs Vasilievs (1953) explained the ensemble as a spatial category that creates harmony and unity, formulating the main principles of its design: an ensemble must blend the artistic with the practical, its main element is the square, an ensemble must include public buildings, as a rule one should construct buildings of the same height with the same components, and the principal enemy of ensemble construction is private property. With the aim of providing housing to residents, so-called standard design was developed, which was still technologically and stylistically different from the evolution of standard projects in later years. This period also saw the beginning of a contempt for historical styles and wooden architecture that lasted into the mid-1980s.

Although Soviet rhetoric, with its all-embracing formula "socialist in content, national in form", gave official permission to speak of national stylistic features in architecture, the concept of national and explanations of its interpretation in architects' texts of the Soviet era are vague and ambiguous. As architect Ivars Strautmanis confirmed in a conversation [6], the aforementioned slogan could encompass all sorts of things, it could be interpreted according to one's wishes, and without the context of the Soviet regime, it was nothing bad in itself, since, for example, it granted permission to study history. According to the theory of socialism, the emphasis on national features was based not on a sense of national supremacy but on Soviet patriotism, which would unite peoples' national features and traditions in a "friendly" manner; therefore, it was necessary to write especially about the uniqueness of Latvian culture, its antiquity, its distinctiveness and special features compared to the cultures of other peoples, and its "benefits". Architects were advised to follow the development of architectural forms, to approach architectural heritage creatively and critically and, in creating architecture,

to unite inherited cultural-historical values. elements of national art, and progress as the concept was understood in Soviet rhetoric. Architects needed to manoeuvre among these abstract stipulations, to avoid praising pre-Soviet architectural heritage too much, to draw inspiration from historical constructions and interpret them in the "correct" spirit of socialist realism. The theoretical writings of authors of the time (architects Karlis Pluksne, Peteris Berzkalns, Ernests Stalbergs, Alberts Bajars, Valentina Valeskalne, Emma Aizsilniece, Velta Ramane, Voldemars Susts, Gunars Priede, construction engineer Janis Jagars and others) dealt with events in the architectural field, yet publications within this ten-year period were saturated with demagogy, ideological slogans, and empty pathos, while the "endless possibilities for growth" remained only words.

1954-1955 is taken as the endpoint for this period and section, as it was marked by dramatic changes in the USSR, including in the architecture of Soviet Latvia. In general, it should be concluded that in the first ten years following the war, theoretical thought was radically different from what Latvian architects had begun in the first half of the 20th century. It constituted a complete renunciation of personal judgment and vision, given the introduction of compulsory propaganda into publications and the adherence to subject matter determined by centralised Soviet authorities.

The second half of the 1950s and the 1960s: Excess prevention and international modernism

The de-Stalinization process and the decree of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the USSR Council of Ministers signed by Khrushchev in 1955 On the Prevention of Excess in Design and Construction drastically changed the course of development of Soviet architecture, also marking a transition to a new period of architectural theory. Stalinist architecture was replaced by late international modernism, with its most characteristic features: simplicity, dynamics and asymmetry of forms and scales; rejection of facade décor;

contemporary materials; and the aesthetics of machinery. From then on, the attractiveness of buildings and constructions was to be achieved by organically coupling the architectonic form of the building with its task, which could be identified as the relationship between form and function celebrated by modernists; indeed, modern architecture was officially legalised.

Most texts of interest in the second half of the 1950s and in the 1960s are still found in periodicals - the highest percentage of relevant articles for researching the topic is found in the weekly newspaper Literatura un Maksla and the journal Maksla. But compared to the previous decade, this period can already be regarded as including noteworthy publications in the form of books and article collections. In 1958, the book *Latvijas PSR arhitekturas* mantojums (The architectural heritage of the Latvian SSR) was published with six solid historical studies of architecture, covering such topics as Riga's medieval architecture, stone and wooden architecture in Latvia, 18th and 19th-century architecture in Riga, and features of manor architecture and sites. In 1962, the State Publishing House of Latvia published Igor Bartenev's Parrunas par arhitekturu (Architectural discussions), which was translated from Russian and intended as a guide for students of people's universities (adult education centres). However, the book's significance for architecture students and professionals in Latvia is unclear. 1966 saw the publication of *Laikmetiga arhitektura* Padomju Latvija (Contemporary architecture in Soviet Latvia), which, as written in the book's description, "recounts the development of contemporary architecture in Soviet Latvia from 1955 to 1965". In 1967, Telpa, kas sakas ar mums (Space that starts with us) came out - a collection of thematic articles by architects Ivars Strautmanis and Bruno Artmanis that was quite innovative for its time. In 1958, on the basis of the State University of Latvia, the Riga Polytechnic Institute was reinstated, and in 1969 it published a bilingual collection of articles, Arhitektura un pilsetbuvnieciba Latvijas PSR (Architecture and urban construction in the Latvian SSR).

In the first five years after the "upheaval", architects' texts were dominated by discussions on the changes made in architecture by the aforementioned decree. Ivars Strautmanis (1957), a young architect at the time, noted that "none of the creative activities in recent times has undergone such dramatic changes as architecture". The new style of socialist architecture in Soviet Latvia was called "post-war", "contemporary" or "today's" architecture, avoiding use of the term modern. The main topics of architecture-related texts of the 1960s are as follows:

- the essence of Soviet architecture and the tasks of architects:
- territorial zoning ideas in urban planning, compositional planning of housing estate ensembles and the multiplicity of spatial organisation;
- standard design and industrialisation;
- small towns and rural settlements, where the main idea was to abolish the difference between the city and the countryside;
- coming up with a conception of the contemporary home;
- the creative working method of the Soviet architect, principles for creating new types of public buildings and organising space, architectural composition;
- architectural aesthetic concepts and questions of taste and its cultivation;
- issues of national form, preservation of heritage;
- the synthesis of art and architecture;
- the standpoint on capitalist countries' architecture.

The Khrushchev thaw made it possible to get current information on Western architectural developments inside the Iron Curtain. Authorisations were given to travel to Western countries, books obtained with difficulty were passed from hand to hand, architects enthusiastically studied publications in the available architectural journals. Starting in 1959 architecture-related articles were officially allotted space in the newspaper *Literatura* un Maksla, but in spite of architects' wishes, a specialised professional journal would not appear until the 1990s. Various functionaries still had the duty to officially indicate and instruct on what topics were desirable and acceptable and which ideas and trends were to

be considered "correct". An architect had to be able to "correctly" interpret "the features of societal life, to perceive and experience the conception of beauty characteristic of the era, to find expressions characteristic of the cultural spirit of one's people, and to synthesise and fuse all this into a uniform trend and embody the idea in new buildings" (Miezis, 1958).

It was officially assumed that the principles of open space planning postulated by international modernism met the needs of the socialist population - the Soviet people's environment should also be shaped as "a broad and unified continuation of free and natural space" (Driba and Susts, 1964). Flowing and floating space were terms introduced to describe the new methods of organising space and to create functional boundaries not for physical space, but for psychological space. In reality, these principles underpinned the desire of the authorities to "screen" each person's private life by minimising the possibilities of private space, since this was where ideas unfavourable to the regime could arise.

From the 1950s to the 1970s, residential neighbourhoods in the Latvian SSR were constructed according to standard design as in the rest of the Soviet Union. Soviet urban construction ideas followed international modernism's city planning principles, which envisaged the rejection of perimetrical construction and the transition to so-called free planning. By the end of the 1960s, authors were already writing critically about ornamental building layouts that could only be perceived from a bird's-eye view and about the degree of artistic expression afforded by utilitarian housing estates' architecture (Vasiljevs, 1968), maintaining that an architectonic ensemble could not be created from mediocre buildings and that buildings of a single type created monotony. In the 1960s, the future of small towns, villages and rural settlements was determined by the objective of making the Latvian countryside more like the cities (Lejnieks, 1990). The exchange of ideas regarding the future of small towns and rural settlements intensified with the question of whether to build "nicer and better" or to build with preservation of architectural heritage in mind. Today, the results of collectivisation and

rural urbanisation can be seen in the semiabandoned kolkhoz centres that were artificially created.

Permission to study historical architecture was granted by Lenin's theory of the importance of individual cultures in the development of the newly created Soviet culture as well as by the assertion that national forms in Soviet culture could not be genuine and true if they ignored Soviet architectural heritage. Architects' writings in the 1960s also included reflections on how to interpret the slogan "socialist in content, national in form" - in such contexts as the necessity of respecting the aesthetic traditions of the people, finding an appropriate use for every material, or of lending tasteful harmony to a structure through simple and restrained means of expression. However, the national could be interpreted in various ways and discarded as uneconomical and obstructive if necessary.

Discourse on the perception of architecture and the psychological effect of buildings on their users became relevant. Living in the Soviet space could be compared to life in a "work camp", where a well-rested and efficiently functioning workforce was important; thus, there was official discussion of the influence of architecture on a person's capacity to work. In Latvia and throughout the USSR architecture was posited as a cultivator of the Soviet population's aesthetic tastes, lifestyles, and opinions. In the socialist milieu, beauty was generally placed in the same category as convenience and cheapness; accordingly, the qualities of a beautiful home were usefulness and purposefulness.

Commemorative architecture and sculpture flourished throughout the USSR. Artistic improvements were also needed in the unified housing estates. In the 1960s, the concept of synthesis entered into architects' theoretical writings, and Ivars Strautmanis is rightly considered to have played a central role in this regard, relating the concept to both the interaction between architecture and art and interdisciplinary collaboration in the practical realisation of buildings. An acting professor and doctoral candidate at the time, Strautmanis composed the thesis *Sintezes loma*

jaunas telpiskas kvalitates radisana (The role of synthesis in the creation of new spatial quality), which may be regarded as the beginning of the synthesis concept's scientific-theoretical use in architecture (Davidsone, 1967).

The 1970s: In search of expression

In the 1970s, which are remembered in Soviet history as Brezhnev's era of stagnation and for the Soviet economic crisis, architects' theoretical writings were generally engaged with the search for expression, with efforts to enhance the informational and emotional potential of architecture, and with the possibility of finding diversity in the framework of standard design. Such was the result of rapidly constructing homogenous and unattractive residential developments, of the unfinished housing estates, of the utility structures left half built, and of the lack of historical and cultural strata. Nevertheless, the answers to the question of how to create a multifaceted, finely tuned environment were rather general, and one of the means called for was the use of architectural heritage and the preservation of historical continuity.

The Western world had entered into a situation where the principles of modernist architecture and urban planning turned out to be inadequate in terms of the zeitgeist. The stylistic tendencies of the period were termed postmodernism, as in Charles Jencks's 1975 essay The Rise of Post-Modern Architecture and his 1977 bestseller *The Language of Post-Modern Architecture*. Although the concept figured as early as the 1930s, Jencks was the first theorist in the 1970s to apply it to the paradigm shift in architecture – from modern to postmodern. The term quickly took root, becoming a "label" in Western architectural theory. But the spirit of postmodernism was not yet "felt" in Soviet Latvia in the 1970s – not in the architecture, not in architects' theoretical writings (Strautmanis, 1983). Architects were tired of prefabricated standard design structures and frustrated with the quality of construction. Since renouncing the principle of usefulness was not an option for the Soviet authorities, in the 1970s there was frequent criticism of Western architecture that in its search for individuality, it was turning into a curiosity; that the irrational factor of

emotional effect was becoming an end in itself. The paradox of the architectural profession under the socialist system in that decade, "lots of design, little construction", contributed to the formation of informal avant-garde and "paper architecture" groups. As Janis Lejnieks (1998) writes: "At the end of the 70s, the utopia of official Soviet architecture had created its anti-utopia - in the form of young architects' conceptual projects."

The Soviet Latvian periodicals that already published texts on architecture in the 1970s -Literatura un Maksla, Cina, Padomju Jaunatne, the journals Maksla, Zvaigzne (Star), Karogs (Flag) – were joined in the period of 1978-1981 by the thematic periodical acd (arhitektura, celtnieciba, dizains) (architecture, construction, design), published by the Latvian Scientific and Technical Information Research Institute. The publication's subtitle heralded *The work* experience of Latvian SSR architects, builders and designers. In 1977 a Latvian-language version of Ivars Strautmanis's doctoral dissertation came out, Dialogs ar telpu (Dialogue with space) (Figure 1), followed in 1978 by the Russianlanguage edition.

Regarding urban construction in the 1970s, it is possible to distinguish several predominant issues of varying scale: the question of the architectonic spatial composition of the development of Riga's centre, architects' reflections on high-rise silhouettes in Riga's centre (the "city and sky" dialogue), and the concept of how building compositions are perceived at high speeds. Evalds Fogelis, taking the zoning scheme in Limbazi as an example, believed that a city's individuality could be exploited and elevated to a new quality as a "different self" (Lejnieks and Redberga, eds., 2007).

Under the system of Soviet collectivisation, former farmsteads were not considered suitable for workers' everyday life. Although the official objective was to make the countryside more like the city, architects could not ignore the historical logic of the opposite. Overall in the course of the decade, respect for historical buildings among both architects and the authorities grew, as if foreshadowing the changes of the 1980s that led to the

rehabilitation of historical styles and wooden architecture and the reassessment of Old Riga as a valuable and unified historical whole. Publications continued to address the synthesis of architecture and the arts; the reasons for this concept's appearance in socialist society could be purely practical: the empty walls, the rough unplastered concrete and the bleak open spaces were not acceptable to the Soviet people, so the easiest official response was incorporating applied art elements into interiors. There were often critical remarks that the synthesis of art and architecture was mostly limited to the interior design of cafés and restaurants and that it was always the same decoration, only with a different name.

In the future, the tasks of Soviet and Western architects will include solving an increasingly complex set of issues, which will facilitate the development of architecture as an interdisciplinary field – such was the prediction made by Voldemars Susts (1970), and in the course of that decade, theoretical studies and writings also proved it. As a theoretical field, architecture became increasingly complex, architects also had to be sociologists, statesmen and economists, and thinking about architecture involved interdisciplinary research on humankind: sociology, medicine, physiology, psychophysics, psychophysiology, ecology, ergonomics. Research was done on issues of subjective perception, on sense of proportion, on the peculiarities of objective sense of sight. The concept of *synthesis* that came into fashion in the 1960s did not lose its relevance in architects' writings in the seventies. At this time architects' interest in semiotics reached a peak, and it became a seemingly ideal tool to criticise modernism for its lack of symbolic meaning. The most important publication in this time and context was Ivars Strautmanis's Dialogs ar telpu - the aforementioned Latvian-language version of his doctoral dissertation Arhitekturas informativi emocionalais potencials (The informative-emotional potential of architecture), which he defended in 1972. Here he describes architecture as an important medium for information about the spatial environment: it creates a dialogue between society and the environment. Strautmanis (1977) viewed the built environment as a perpetual source of signals and visual background, allowing the

beholder to read and interpret its aesthetic and semantic information based on his / her experience or preconceptions.

The transition to the next decade was marked by the Days of Architecture in 1979 with their slogan "For each city and each inhabited place, its own face", which offered an assessment of the preceding period and accurately reflected the wishes and interests of society - people wanted to live in comfortable, distinctive homes and they were not indifferent to the courtyard and the street (Strautmanis, 1979). International modernism was gradually replaced by the search for regional character. The exhibition What will be the fate of regional architecture? initiated the topic of regional architecture, which became an important discourse in Soviet Latvian architecture in the eighties and remains relevant for architects in the 21st century.

1980 until 1991: Postmodernism, the search for regional character

"In observing the new architecture of the last few years, it must be concluded that it is saturated with the spirit of our time, unfortunately from a rather murky ditch. Though we can think along with the spirit of the eighties, we are often forced to realise the spirit of the seventies, sixties or even earlier years."

Hardijs Ledins (1986)

The Soviet Union was gradually approaching its collapse: the 1980s brought changes in the countries of the union, from war to liberalisation of art policies, and a long-lasting political crisis set in. The politics of Gorbachev, the last Secretary General of the USSR, comprised two basic elements: openness (glasnostj in Russian) and reorganisation (perestroika in Russian). In the mid-1980s in Latvia this helped pave the way for the Third Awakening and other events that led to the factual restitution of independence in 1991. Architects' publications still criticised the unfinished construction ensembles and residential districts in Riga, as the two-thousandth-scale building concepts developed by the planning bureaus were rarely

implemented in full. To save money, many of the planned structures were never completed, and resources were missing for the development of outdoor utilities. Janis Lejnieks (1990), in studying the architecture of the occupation, writes that the 1980s witnessed "a fading of architectural theory in the Soviet sense, where an academic science sets out to tailor architects' work to official aesthetics" and that such architectural theory was supplanted by professional philosophy and, to a certain degree, ethics. Architectural theoretical and research activities continued to be pursued by Ivars Strautmanis, Gunars Melbergs, Gunars Asaris, Olgerts Buka and others, while Janis Krastins, Janis Lejnieks, and Janis Dripe began their research and publicistic work. As Lejnieks [7] recalls: "It seems that around 1978, Inta Lehmusa-Briede invited me to write a commentary on the diploma papers of RPI (Riga Politechnic Institute – author's note) architects in Padomju Jaunatne, then Miks (Mihails author's note) Savisko was invited to write on the relationship between architecture and the environment in the journal Maksla, and that's how it went... Those responsible for architecture on the editorial boards of newspapers and journals proposed topics that were deemed suitable. Censorship continued." Still, the 1980s were also the heyday of one of the most expressive and - outside the context of the Iron Curtain – one of the most contemporary architectural thinkers in terms of both his ideas and his research methods (Figure 2): the architect and multimedia artist Hardijs Ledins.

In the course of the decade there was no change in the roster of periodicals that published architects' writings. However, in 1989, an attempt was made to revive the journal *Latvijas Arhitektura* (editor-in-chief Uldis Pilens). Only one issue came out, and that was the end of the story until 1995, when the publishing house *Baltika* started a journal for the architectural profession: *Arhitektura*. *Dizains*. *Interjers*. *Darzs* (*Architecture*. *Design*. *Interior*. *Garden*). In 1981, Ivars Strautmanis, by then a professor in the Faculty of Architecture and Construction of the RPI, came out with the book *Profesija – visa dzive* (*Profession – all of life*), which described

the specifics of the architectural profession, its place and role in society, and the broad scope of architects' activities; it was intended for anyone interested in architecture. In 1987 Olgerts Buka and Uldis Volrats published the first urban planning book in the context of Latvia, Pilsetbuvnieciba (Urban construction).

In the context of the eighties, it seems important that at least theoretically, social responsibility came to the attention of Soviet architects; under the slogan "nature - a human being's home", architects tried to demonstrate their responsibility to the environment. We can also speak of a continuation of the ideas of the avant-garde and paper architecture begun in the 1970s, when young architects' encounters with bureaucratic reality in the planning bureaus led to a desire to express their ideas in conceptual proposals.

At the beginning of the 1980s, reflection on the organisation of the spatial structure of the city played an important role in theoretical writings; an attempt was made to determine the optimal layout for high-rise buildings in light of Riga's topography: architect Evalds Fogelis's Rigas telpiskas organizacijas shema (Riga's spatial organisation scheme) seems noteworthy in relation to urban planning theory. Architects' writings deemed that high-rises constructed in Riga's centre were a failure. In the 1980s, Janis Krastins re-established the relevance of art nouveau and eclectic architecture through his studies, and in the second half of the decade architects began to protest against the demolition of 19th-century wooden architecture.

The changes that took place in Western architecture in the 1960s and 1970s reached Latvia while it was still part of the Soviet Union in the 1980s, and the stylistic designation postmodernism finally appeared in its architectural lexicon. From 1983 until the 1990s, architect Hardijs Ledins undertook a mission to expound on postmodernism in his publications, using the "bible" of theoretical ideas and postmodern concepts - the writings of Charles Jencks that were available to him. Ledins's theoretical studies and discussions dealt with human living space and the need to improve the quality of the residential environment in

housing estates. Expressions of postmodernism in the context of Soviet Latvian architecture can be interpreted as regionalism or national architecture, and the search for Latvian identity in the context of the Third Awakening was realised as an exploration of Latvian folk building and heritage. The results of collectivisation, the urbanisation of rural areas, the replacement of historic country estates with three-story standard design constructions all this was deemed a foolish mistake in publications of the time. At the beginning of the 1990s, the architects' group Maja (House) entered the scene. With the quintessence of its activities, the manifesto Centrs (Centre), it advocated a return to the traditional Latvian lifestyle, rejecting architecture as a mere game of forms and seeking out orderly premises as the basis for an orderly life (Literatura un Maksla, 1991).

At the end of the 1980s, shortly before independence was regained, architects reflected in their writings on the intellectual shortcomings of the past (Pilens, 1988) and on the developments in communist politics, economics, society, culture and architecture. Janis Dripe (1988), in his article Lielais barjerskrejiens (The great hurdle-race), acknowledged the general discomfort in facing the absurdity of the past, what with buildings that were "out of place" and "completely unnecessary" and the grandiose and unfulfillable promises and plans of the party – the metro, the target programmes for housing construction, the cultural venues that never got beyond the planning stage. As for Soviet architecture itself, Janis Lejnieks (1990) asked rhetorically: "[...] why is it that for the past 50 years we have been looking for architecture in construction? Can an abnormal society give birth to normal architecture?" To this day, the ruins of residential, public and agricultural buildings resulting from Soviet mismanagement remain a feature of Latvian cities and the countryside, and the distorted thinking of the time has left lasting impressions on society. While a nihilistic assessment of Soviet architectural heritage was characteristic amidst the awakening in the late 1980s and the return of independence in the 1990s, in the 21st century, Soviet architecture is being assessed from a greater distance, so that original and

valuable features can also be seen in it. Just like the architecture, the theoretical writings composed in the Latvian SSR are regarded as Soviet architectural heritage, and exploring the theoretical positions of the time allows for a better understanding of the history of Soviet architecture. In the course of this research, we could firmly establish that architectural history cannot be regarded separately from the theoretical ideas of a period, and vice versa: theoretical ideas cannot be examined if they are "pulled" from their historical context. In the Soviet era, architecture was impacted by the ideological and economic directives established by the regime. The effects of this were equally reflected in architects' writings. At that time, it was not possible to avoid the presence of propaganda clichés in texts, but by recognising the ideological footprints we can read the theoretical articles through a critical lens.

Conclusion

Architectural thinking in the Latvian SSR developed in isolation from architectural ideas in the West, thus significantly impeding the theoretical development of architecture in the post-Soviet milieu. However, in general, the period from the end of WWII to the restoration of Latvian independence in 1991 cannot be described as homogeneous or as a time without theoretical views on architectural changes and development. The beginning of the period marked a drastic break in the development of theoretical thought, when it was restricted to the doctrines of Stalin's socialist realism. Another cardinal turning point was Khrushchev's de-Stalinization policy and the prevention of architectural "excesses", bringing Soviet architecture closer to the principles of modernism in Western architecture. In the 1970s, the search for individuality in architecture came as a response to the homogeneity of housing estates; architects formulated views on urban construction that were, to a certain degree, innovative. The 1980s, in turn, gave rise to ideas of postmodernist regionalism, a search for architectural character that involved a return to Latvian national consciousness. The period of the Latvian SSR was also interwoven with certain concepts and architectural problems that, though interpreted in line with the ideology of the Soviet regime,

were nonetheless related to theoretical discussions that took place both before the occupation and after the restoration of Latvian independence, for example, the synthesis of art and architecture or the language of architecture, which was addressed by Boris Vipper in the interwar period, developed by Ivars Strautmanis during the occupation, and further addressed in the 21st century by Janis Taurens.

If we take architectural theory to mean an author's original, independent views and the search for new theoretical concepts, then the writings of Ivars Strautmanis on the semantics of architecture or the theoretical work of Hardijs Ledins could represent some of the rare examples of such theoretical writing in Latvian SSR architectural theory. However, the term architectural theory can also be understood as comprising views that justify the buildings architects design, general thinking on architecture and the prevailing discourse of the age, and in this way architectural theoretical material becomes broader, and it is possible to make generalisations and classify ideas even when their origin lies not in the author's personal conviction, but in the ideological stipulations and standardised phrases of the regime.

The main problem encountered in the course of this research was the great number of architectural theoretical articles and the research scope that covered more than half a century. For this reason, in continuing the research, it would be necessary to more thoroughly explore certain topics that are essential to architectural theory - as in a study devoted exclusively to the synthesis of art and architecture. Continuing this work might also require greater insight into individual authors' personalities and the genesis of their theories. Also, further development of the work would require broader reflection on historical aspects and global developments in architecture. Research on the elements of Soviet ideologies, of Leninism-Marxism and Stalinism, and their influence on art and architecture would also be important for a more complete understanding of the subject, and it would be useful to identify members of the architectural bureaucracy and their role in architectural developments.

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Figure 1. The cover of Ivars Strautmanis's book "Dialogs ar telpu" (Riga: Dina Suhanova, 2016)



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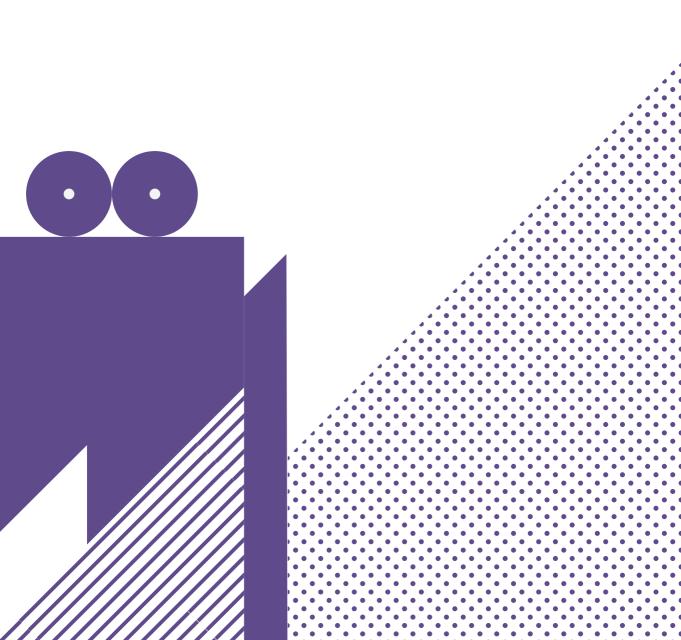
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Audiovisual Media Arts

Aigars Ceplitis The Impasse of **Current Narrative** Typologies and the Aesthetics of 360° 3D Filmmaking

Abstract

The core purpose of immersive technologies is to provide their users with a state of full psychological and physical "immersion". Yet immersion is a binary phenomenon, as post-digital filmmaking gravitates towards the breakdown of orthodox narrative structures where audiovisual works shot in 360° 3D oppose the very type of experience they strive to deploy. To crack the code of narrative design in the new 360° 3D medium, the author advocates the deployment of *vizome*, a blend of *virtual reality* (VR) and *rhizome*. Based on the concept of rhizome, as introduced by French philosopher Gilles Deleuze and psychoanalyst Félix Guattari, who had determined rhizome as a *modus operandi* of a centered... [and]... nonsignifying system that "has no beginning or end; ...always in the middle, between things, interbeing, *intermezzo*" (Deleuze, 1987), akin to a mass of roots, and having simultaneously multiple exit and entrance points, the vizomatic narrative is in conflict with a pure linear progression of the object-oriented, cause-and-effect, hierarchal story line.

Vizome is evaluated on the grounds of *connection*, *heterogeneity*, *multiplicity*, *asignifying rupture*, *cartography*, and *decalcomania*, whereas a classic narrative is decoded via a number of widely accepted narratological canons. For virtual reality cinema to operate properly, the Deleuzoguattarian schemata must go from being a mere metaphor to a practical post-digital utility that arrests the imposition of outdated cinema aesthetics by blending the binaries of vizome with the established narratological canons such as *summary*, *scene*, *omission*, *pause*, and *stretch*, to name a few, which, in turn, renders 360° 3D films a truly immersive experience.

Keywords

vizomatic taxonomy, narrative design, 360° 3D cinema, virtual reality, embodiment

Introduction

Chris Milk, the owner of WITHIN, a celebrated virtual reality company, shot Clouds Over Cidra in a lauded breakthrough proprietary 360° 3D spherical technology; it follows a twelve-yearold girl in the Zaatari refugee camp in Jordan in her innate human quest for freedom, allowing viewers to be "physically" present (immersed) at the scene. Chris Milk's works are displayed in many renowned art galleries - in London, New York, and Beijing, to name a few - and he is considered to be the master par excellence of the VR medium, also giving various interviews and partaking in virtual reality summits across the globe. It would be considered an insult to question his cinematic and virtual reality expertise if this only concerned the technical aspects of his work. What is rarely appraised, however, is the depth of immersive experience his films provide since the principal aspiration of virtual reality, in whatever form it takes, is to bestow upon the audience a sense of "being there".

In this regard, Clouds Over Cidra, like many other films currently shot in 360° 3D video, appears to oppose the very form of experience it strives to deploy. While the quality of cinematography in the film is commendable, the construction of its narrative within the spherical space soon becomes problematic, as it violates the freedom of the viewer by which he / she has accepted the rules of immersion. The narrator in the film, presumably a homodiegetic one, spoken in the voice of a twenty-six-year-old, speaks in the present tense, thus making the narrative effectively analyptical (in contrast to the immediate now), unless she is utterly unreliable. Moderately rapid cutting between perception images and affection images amplifies the narrative confusion, as the spherical frame is much more accommodating to both types of images in a single shot without delineating them compositionally, a technique often used in flat screen cinema. In fact, the film suffers in its choice of format and adds very little to the core of visual information that could have benefited more from an IMAX 2D frame, both in style and scale. The problem is also in its narrative duration, which creates "a knock-out effect" whereby an immersive experience is lost by virtue of imposition of

the next sequence for which the audience is not ready, mentally or physically, since fast intercutting does not function well in a fully spherical video. Clouds Over Cidra also shows the limits of the established narrative taxonomy as regards summary, pause, anachrony (prolepsis (flashforward) and analepsis (flashback)), and the interaction of an "immediate now" (immersion) because flashback sequences, so widely used in flat screen films, take the audience out of an "immediate now". Thus, it becomes obvious that the 360° 3D viewing frame inherently objects to classical film editing techniques and narrative structures, calling for a new, unorthodox narrative configuration to be deployed in order to provide viewers with a truly immersive and psychosomatically full experientiality.

I propose that the new narrative design has to be "vizomatic by default" to resolve the aesthetic impasse of current 360° 3D filmmaking and display the immersive capacities of spherical video in full. The ultimate success of rhizomatic narrative configuration largely depends on the accomplishments of a field experiment, for "to create a [vizome] is an experiment that must be risked" (Wallin, 2010), yet the encouraging sign is that a vizomatic spectatorship prototype already exists. Before such a model is discussed, it is important to note the binaries of vizome and classical narrative taxonomy.

The binaries of vizome and narratological canons

Vizome is a fairly novel conceptual blend of rhizome and virtual reality (Cudworth, 2016). The inception of *rhizome* was fleshed out in the seven-year project A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia by French philosopher Gilles Deleuze and psychoanalyst Félix Guattari, which confirmed rhizome as a modus operandi of "an acentered, nonhierarchical, nonsignifying system" that "has no beginning or end; ...always in the middle, between things, interbeing, intermezzo" (Deleuze, 1987), forming a mass of roots, and having multiple exit and entrance points simultaneously, as it resists a pure linear progression of object-oriented, cause-and-effect, hierarchal movement.

Unlike narrative design, found in graphic arts, photography, or drawing, the vizomatic narrative may be split at any given plot point but it will reconstruct itself on "one of its old lines, or on new lines...[just as one] can never get rid of ants because they...can rebound time and again after most of it has been destroyed" (Deleuze, 1987). Or to use the narratological framework of the preeminent literary critic Seymour Chatman, it may be said that vizomatic structure does not contain satellites (minor plot events), only kernels: major "narrative moments that give rise to cruxes in the direction taken by events" (Chatman, 1980), with the logic of connection, but in absence of hierarchy. Chatman departs from the traditional view that events in narratives are radically correlative and thus causative; instead, he asks whether there may be a "mere sequence, a depiction of events that simply succeed one another but in no sense owe their existence to each other" (Chatman, 1980). In doing so, he proposes a classification of "revealed" plots versus "resolved" plots (Chatman, 1980), whereby the former, not requiring causative sequences, transpire analogously to the processes of the vizomatic root, in a "pattern of the postmodern multiplication" of multiplicities (Habibi, 2013).

Multiplicities, along with the rest of the six Deleuzoguattarian principles intrinsic to vizome (connection, heterogeneity, asignifying rupture, cartography, and decalcomania), form the core of the analytical context that has been successfully used to decode various artefacts, whether Seyed Habibi's (2013) Rhizomatic Dissemination of Postmodern Ethical Decadence in Ian McEwan's Amsterdam or Sarah Culler's Rhizomatic Narratives. Embodied Form and Formlessness (Habibi, 2013), to name a couple. However, a revealed plot analysed ex post facto is not a revealed plot *en construcción*, particularly in the domain of virtual reality and 360° 3D cinema. In this, the Deleuzoguattarian schemata must morph from being put forward as "the rhizomatic thought process" (Habibi, 2013) and a "remedy to an inadequacy in narrative theory" (Habibi, 2013) into a post-digital utility that ceases to conduct violence against viewers by imposing visual norms of the orthodox cinema, displayed in a classically understood community-mediated setting (Wilson and Nash, 2011).

The current inquiry into the feasibility, merits and scope of vizomatic narrative configuration in 360° 3D cinema is a section of the theoretical part within the qualitative content analysis of a larger field experiment, currently in the development phase. What is clear from the onset of the inquiry is that the Deleuzoguattarian principles and the elements of the narrative taxonomy, such as *focalization*, *voice*, *narrative distance*, *narrative levels*, *duration*, and *space*, are, in fact, binaries, no matter how justifiable the use of vizome is in the "escape from the straightforward single-thread analysis of traditional narrative theory" (Habibi, 2013).

The difficulty in fusing the binaries while discussing the vizomatic narrative configuration is that they seem to operate according to the parameters of two entirely different classes of taxonomy. This is why, in spite of the rather brilliant assessments Seyed Habibi comes up with in his take on Ian McEwan's Amsterdam, or Sarah Culler comes up with in her evaluation of Kafka's *The Trial*, Chris Marker's *La Jetee* and Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner*, the reading of vizomatic narrative construction, without a solid acknowledgment by the creators of the work surveyed, remains deeply speculative.

Vizome is evaluated on the grounds of connection (any point of a vizome is connected to another), heterogeneity (a vizome propagates itself when one multiplicity (a part of the vizome), while connecting to another, changes its nature), *multiplicity* (a vizome is neither subject nor object, only its magnitudes, expressed in numbers, as they connect with other multiplicities), asignifying rupture (a vizome can be broken at any point but will reconstruct itself since its breakdown is its unity), cartography (multiplicities connect with others from multiple entryways in an exploratory fashion like a map, which is "connectable, detachable, reversible, and susceptible to constant modification"), and *decalcomania* ("a rhizome is always an aggregation that actively resists rigid organization and form") (Deleuze, 1987).

A classic narrative, in turn, is decoded via a number of established narratological canons, three of which – *narrative voice, focalization* (perspective), and *duration* – are at the

forefront of narrative discourse for 360° 3D filmmaking. Voice is a fundamentally quadruple arrangement in which a narrator is either a homodiegetic narrator (appearing as a character in the story-world) or a heterodiegetic one (outside the story-world), operating on an extradiegetic plane (first-level narration) or an intradiegetic one (second-level narration) with a metadiegetic plane taken into account when an embedded narrative occurs within second-level narration on an intradiegetic level (Huhn et al., 2014). The configuration is, in some way, an extension of focalization because (a) a homodiegetic narrator is innately tied to first-person narration (Nieragden, 2002), embodied on both an external and an internal level as a focalizer (Fludernik, 2009), and (b) external focalization is persistently heterodiegetic (Nieragden, 2002), forming a nexus between a third-person narration and an extradiegetic plane. The residual effect of such schemata is that narrative voice here in no way addresses its cognitive, emotive, and ideological positioning. To view voice as an auxiliary to focalization would be inaccurate. It is only when ideological perspective and stylistic idiosyncrasies attributed to various characters are added that voice has weight and proper designation in taxonomy, because focalization depends exclusively on visual perspective (more on internal / less on external) and access to consciousness (as in zero focalization) (Fludernik, 2009). The authenticity of "voice(s)", however, due to dependence on the ideological and psychological angle, may only be assessed in correlation with that of the implied author, who, as an incarnation of the omniscient narrator, mediates all other voices.

An implied author is inferred from the tonal variations, stylistic choices, and idiosyncratic motif of his narrative design, and the entire range of signs, signature-specific, to his artistry that creates a clear mental image of him (Hale, 2009). The image of the implied author in many other instances, where the film is the work of a collective effort, is rather opaque, although a few scholars, such as Chatman (1980), would still find an implied author to always be present.

Apropos to the case, it should suffice to look at the closing, botched airplane hijacking scene in Niels Mueller's The Assassination of

Richard Nixon, a film "about social alienation in America... in its attempt to connect society's dysfunction and popular misery with the actions of a hypocritical, mendacious ruling elite" (Laurier, 2005). As the scene progresses, its final moments are accompanied by the voiceover of the main protagonist, hijacker Sam Bicke, who explains the chief rationale for his actions at the moment of his death. Yet it is a peculiar narrative instance, recounted by the unreliable narrator (told by Sam, in a flashback, after the death has occurred), where amidst the majority of shots via Sam's focalization, there is a sequence of frames from the perspective of the approaching airport police, something Sam could not have imagined and cannot focalize. The perspective of the police is not defined until the very moment Sam is shot (once the police are seen), which makes the alternative focalization ambiguous, unless, of course, it is seen as the perspective of an implied author, a narratorial link between the director Niels Mueller and homodiegetic narrator Sam Bicke.

While narrative voice, focalization and duration are paramount in the discourse of 360° 3D cinema filmmaking, sequentiality is another aspect which is currently problematic in virtual reality films. What occasionally works is blended sequentiality, the mixing of anachronies with analepsis in a more complex ordering. It does not pose structural incompatibilities as long as it preserves the logic of a story, except in 360° 3D cinema, where editing techniques may overcomplicate the narrative configuration, since "cuts" (elliptical by default) could potentially be mistaken for anachronies (elliptical in form) (Chatman, 1980).

As to the duration, Gerard Genette (1983) outlined four principle relations between the story time and discourse time that govern it: summary (narrative time is shorter than story time), scene (narrative time equals story time), ellipsis (narrative time has gaps and is therefore closer to zero in story time), pause (story time stops) (Genette, 1983). The scheme does not end with Genette. Chatman (1980) and Jahn (2005) extend a fifth principle to its core: stretch (narrative time is longer than story time), and, thus, the five categories – scene (Genette, 1983; Chatman, 1980) / congruent presentation / isochrony (Jahn, 2005), as well

as speed-up | acceleration | panorama (Genette, 1983) | summary (Genette, 1983; Deleuze, 1987), ellipsis | cut | omission (Genette, 1983; Chatman, 1980; Jahn, 2005), and stretch (Deleuze, 1987) | slow-down | deceleration (Genette, 1983) – are used interchangeably in today's debates. Apropos to 360° 3D filmmaking, ellipsis, stretch, and pause are of special concern, since it is the scene that seems to be a preeminent natural habitat for immersive experiences in virtual reality.

In a classic film narrative pause is pre-determined by its narrative, unless, of course, another pause is added when an audience member simply steps out, in which case the discourse still continues but unintended ellipsis sets in. The total discourse time is not affected. A pause in reading is determined not only by the narrative itself but also by the reader, who can take time off the discourse for as long as desired; hence, discourse time, however, is extended. By contrast, the virtual milieu is still fresh terrain to compellingly assert how pause functions, for the variables can be manifold, depending on the particular type of VR technology used. When 360° 3D films are viewed on portable devices, the effect of discourse time and pause is closer to that of reading, although it can be further extended by rewinding a sequence to view another angle. In a community-mediated setting for 360° 3D cinema, discourse time is not extended, but pause and ellipsis begin to coalesce.

"Freeze frames" as a pause and narrative device for a "pure description... when the film actually 'stops'... [such as in] Joseph Mankiewicz's All About Eve" (Chatman, 1980), especially accompanied by a voice-over, are contradictory to immersivity, which calls for a scene in the present tense by default. Because even traditional "cinema can only occur in the present time. Unlike the verbal medium, film in its pure, unedited state is absolutely tied to real time" (Chatman, 1980). Classical films are edited elliptically, although cuts and ellipsis are demarcated in cinema, with cuts being a mere ellipsis derivative: "the manifestation of ellipsis as a process in a specific medium... more precisely, a cut may convey ellipsis, but it may simply represent a shift in space" (Chatman,

1980). Cases where ellipsis and cuts merge are rare, but they do exist, such as in Michelangelo's film *La Notte*, where cuts are deliberately used as serious gaps in chronology. Even so, ellipsis, cuts, and pause (regardless of which one is used and how often) do not operate properly in 360° 3D film, the contemporary medium that prefers immersivity and scene as the propelling engine of its narrative experience.

Spherical cinematic preference for the here and now is further boosted by its "ressentiment" with respect to the opposite: speeding up the events, where the "directors often resort to gadgetry...[and] 'montage-sequence'" (Chatman, 1980), which could not be construed as an authentic summary. Unless made as a collagelike montage sequence à la Cocoon (a 360-degree by 220-degree spherical immersive video installation at the SAT Immersion Experience Symposium in Montreal in May 2015) and accepted at face value with no particular narrative present, immersivity (a required element of the VR experience) is lost. Which leaves not only the application of summary but also the use of stretch, which is rather moot in a 360° 3D space. Stretch is a rare enough phenomenon in literature (Jahn, 2005), but often used in film as a "slow motion" effect or a repetitive editing and overlapping (Chatman, 1980). While not currently employed in mainstream 360° 3D films, it is feasible enough that it might be used in the future, for instance, in a narrative event that simulates, for viewers, a state of cognitive impairment (such as being under the influence of a controlled substance), without the loss of their full experience in immersivity.

Finally, regarding frequency, a third possible tension between narrative time and story time, Genette (1983) distinguished three narrative representations of an event: singulative (describing once what happened once), repetitive (describing several times what happened once), and iterative telling (describing once what happened a few times). Chatman (1980), furthermore, divided singulative representation into singulative and multiple-singulative, which gives "several representations, each of one of several story moments, as in 'Monday, I went to bed early; Tuesday, I went to bed early; [not to

be confused with repetitive representations "of the same story moment, as in 'Yesterday I went to bed early; yesterday I went to bed early; yesterday I went to bed early,' etc.".

The positioning of narrative frequency is not limited to literary works only; to a certain extent, cinema deploys frequency as a reflective, non-empathetic, and "alienating or decidedly modern factor" in storytelling (Huhn et al., 2014), most remarkably in *Rashōmon* (1950) (repeating a single event from different angles to accentuate various focalizations by four characters) or Run Lola Run (1998) (repeating a single introduction of an event that eventually forks into three different endings). However, the singulative form remains the principal and obligatory form in cinema, with repetitive representations deployed relatively infrequently, merely as special effects (Chatman, 1980) or as a patterning device in flashbacks or thoughtform sequences through the post-classical editing style. Iterative retelling of a single allegation that describes several repetitions of the same event is seen even more seldom. It is mainly used to choose a particular concept over the story, as in Steve McQueen's Shame (2011), which portrays a morning routine to stress the dullness of the repetition for pornography and sex addiction that is meant to desensitize both the main character Brandon and the film viewer in chorus. It is important to note that repetitive sequences appear particularly displeasing in 360° 3D films, when the content is viewed with VR optical glasses instead of desktop computers.

The above illustration raises a few fundamental questions for 360° 3D cinema, however: first, through what devices does one even up the sense of 'being there', which is coloured by a viewer's personal, pre-conditioned experience, with that of the first-person perspective, which is frequently authorial and, thus, does not correspond with the viewer's; and, second, how does one reconcile "a deep personal embodiment" (a viewer's first-person point of view) with the perspective of another character / player present who may focalize the perspective of the narrator / author?

A blueprint for a 360° 3D vizomatic viewing experience

Mark Lombardi, an American neo-conceptualist artist, used pencil-drawn diagrams for six years before his death in 2000 to map the "charts of shady deals and shaky agents, and org charts of world-class con men, revealing the genealogy of wickedness in the highest places of corporate and government power" (Dowbenko, 2003). The diagrams, entitled Narrative Structures, interpret this interconnectedness of banks, corporations, private individuals, military and government by "juxtaposing and assembling... [loops with] a set of stacked, parallel lines to establish a time frame, the flow of money and other key details as indicated by a system of radiating arrows, broken lines" (Lucarelli, 2012). The key is to look at the sheer multitude of size in drawings ranging from small prints to those measuring 5 x 12 feet as if to mirror a multitude of private corporations, federal agencies involved and the size of their influence over the world's function mechanism. The established social order revealed "is a political underground stem" (vizome), where connections are made within the narratives of the diagrams (Figure 1) and, outwardly, with the audience (Figure 2). One cannot simply approach Lombardi's paintings and then merely walk away: the drawings Narrative Structures are tied to the spectators, who are chained by them, and they, in turn, are tied with each other in time and space, even after the exhibition is over. The act of psychosomatic immersion is therefore complete.

Such is also a residual psychological effect after having watched Mark Lombardi-Kunst and Konspiration, directed by Mareike Wegener in 2012, which examines the legacy of Lombardi's work in the contemporary art scene. Comprising mostly of interviews by art critics and Mark Lombardi's friends, immediate family and associates, the film rarely ventures beyond the zone of information widely available in print and on the net. It does, however, feature a rare interview with the artist immersed in his creative pursuits and at the apex of his fame; perhaps it is the only remaining video record of him alive and the unexpected visual prowess of his presence might only inflate the conspiracy theories surrounding his death, as he

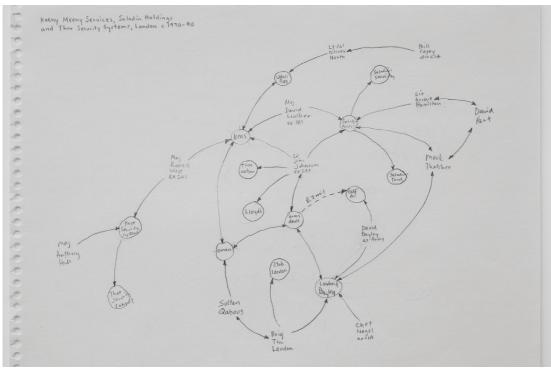


Figure 1. Keeny Meeny Services, Saladin Holdings and Thor Security Systems (London: Mark Lombardi, c. 1970-90)

comes across in the film as being just an artist instead of a political preacher with an agenda in sight. The senselessness of his departure is underscored even more by the monochromatic soundtrack and the never-ending stream of museum visitors of all ages and from various strata of society as seen in the film's closing shots.

What emerges at the end is the concept of vizomatic narrative kinetics and its propagation in public space, which, in itself, becomes a default model for 360° 3D cinema; as the drawn lines switch into active verbs that expand dynamically as they connect in multiplicities, each of the dots or circles (representing a legal entity or an interested party), too small in size to be legible from a distance, "pulls" the spectator "in". In pondering each dot, one actually contemplates all of them simultaneously; the focal points are not the loops, but the lines that connect them, which in turn connect to the audience and generate a further movement within (Figure 3). The audience is a constantly shapeshifting mass of "viewer bees", cross-connecting along the x, y, z axis and becoming a part of the

Narrative Structures: a metaphor for vizomatic connections in 360° 3D space.

A very similar vizomatic connection occurs in Dennis Del Favero's Scenario, the world's first interactive video installation, shot and displayed in 360° 3D format. Although it is an installation, Del Favero regards his work as a film, written by playwright Stephen Sewell and entered into the Sydney Film Festival in 2011. The narrative was based in part on the notorious Fritzel case of 2008: an Austrian father kept his daughter in the basement of his home for 24 years, raping her repeatedly and thus fathering her 7 children. The interactive configuration of the installation depended on a proprietary artificial intelligence system that tracked the movement of the viewers who had to help the daughter, in an interactive game, to collect her disembodied parts in her escape from the offender. The interaction between the humanoid story characters and the audience was intensified by its 3D format, as the audience psychosomatically became a part of the story space, initially centred as a fascicular root tree, yet, as the story progressed, it morphed into a 'kinetic vizome'.



Figure 2. Audience examining Mark Lombardi's work (Riga: Aigars Ceplitis, 2018)

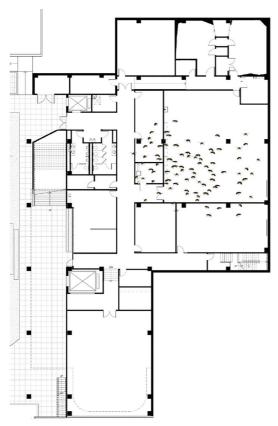


Figure 3. Simulation of Mark Lombardi's exhibition at Pierogi Art Gallery in New York (view from above) (New York: author unknown, n.d.)

Scenario is a model illustration of a well-functioning vizome because its interactive narrative exhibited at least four of the six underlying principles by which vizome is defined: connection (the audience constantly switches between being a focalizer and a focalizee, depending on the course of action pressured by interactivity), heterogeneity (in Scenario, narrative levels propagated via metamorphosis), asignifying rupture (the main storyline could be broken but it would spring up again along new lines), and cartography (in helping the raped humanoid daughter to get out of her confinement, the audience connected the meta narrative levels of the story with the multiple entryways in an exploratory fashion).

Conclusion

Regardless of the advancements, the configuration of machinery to control the flow of a narrative is expected to stay the same in

years to come, generally via a sensing device, a projection screen, or a head-mounted display. They all provide a heightened sense of personal presence (a), an emphasis on transformation (b), a social element or "social architecture" at its core (c), a serial structure (d), an interactive gaming environment (e), an "absence of a discrete, 'completed' product" (f), platform affordances (*g*), and multiple proscenia (*h*) (Alexander, 2011). However, even the most celebrated 360° 3D films, such as those of Chris Milk (today's mainstream in spherical filmmaking), do not meet all the necessary parameters, as their lack of transformative (b) and open-ended (f) factors, along with the rather unsophisticated narrative design, limit the depth of immersive experience for the viewer. Unless their narrative strategies mimic the shapeshifting vizome of Lombardi's Narrative Structures or Del Favero's Scenario, both of which display a stronger social architecture (c) by the sheer virtue of the intermingled audience setting and "separate iterations over time and space" (Alexander, 2011) (d), springing up simultaneously en masse, on multiple exhibit platforms (h), the artistic and functional value of such films will not have a lasting appeal. The need, therefore, is, first, in the vizomatic narrative taxonomy, a fusion of the Deleuzoguattarian principles with the established narratological cannons, and, second, in the fission of the 360° 3D frame from the clutches of flat screen narrative techniques.

Fortunately, new narrative circumstances are coming into play, the observational and interactive visual frames of a vizome, whereby the audience has become *focalizees* in the total narrative schemata. Such a shift should result in vizomatic immersion, which, just as in video games, is sensual and multi-medial in nature, but, unlike games, moves away from a cause-and-effect, gratification-oriented storytelling environment towards a full psychosomatic embodiment.

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Rasa Smite, Raitis Smits Artistic Research in the Network Society: from New Media to Post-media Art

Abstract

Artistic research today is challenging knowledge creation in contemporary society. Located in the contested territory between academic knowledge traditions and contemporary art practices, artistic research today has become an independent form of knowledge on its own. Although artistic research has entered academia quite recently, there are artists who have been actively working with new media technologies for several decades, using scientific approaches and combining art with science.

We will be tracing the phenomenon back to new media art and artistic explorations in the early stage of the Internet in the 90s, considering these in a way as predecessors of artistic research. We will also be focusing on the most important developments of the early Internet cultures and networked digital art, analysing them from the post-media perspective of today. What was so unique about the 90s Internet cultures and networked art that was exploring and developing new concepts such as immateriality, process-based, collaborative creation, real-time presence, and feedback mechanism? And what has changed today, when we have entered the age of post-media, characterized by rather different concepts – new aesthetics, neomateriality, objecthood, data visualization, and social network "imagery"? And last but not least, how do digital media technologies provide new tools and facilitate new contexts for artistic research?

We will be studying the cases of several exhibition projects by the Riga-based RIXC Center – *Fields* (2014) and *Data Drift* (2015) – as well as analysing artwork from *Open Fields* (2016) and the related young artist show *Impulses* (2016). These cases show that artistic research that uses science and technology as well as data as a new artistic medium is capable of creating new knowledge and reflecting on current realities, the complexity of our society, and the challenges of our time.

Keywords

artistic research, digital technologies, new media, post-media, network society, data visualization

Introduction

Artists who have already been using digital technologies and science for decades are among pioneering artists-researchers. Unlike more traditional artists, whose primary intention is to reflect on reality (natural, social or cultural), digital artists and artists-researchers are engaged in constructing new realities and envisioning new worlds. Artists who have been working with new media since the advent of the Internet have been actively involved in both developing the critical Internet cultures and new theoretical discourses in the 90s and pushing the boundaries of the new media through their own creative practices. Creative use of digital information and communication technology is based on different logic than more traditional forms of artistic creation. Hence, new media art requires that new knowledge should be used, obtained and produced. This makes new media and digitally networked art very different from other contemporary art fields. Manovich (1996) has described these two parallel lines of development in contemporary art practices as two separate "lands" in an analogy with Disneyland - "Duchamp-land" is represented in conceptual contemporary art, whereas "Turing-land" is based on the information technology paradigm and refers to new media art.

Today, the Internet is no longer a marginal phenomenon in society nor the avant-garde of contemporary arts. Currently, all media is becoming convergent, and digital technologies are deeply embedded in our lives. According to various authors, we have entered the postmedia age (Krauss, 1999; Guattari, 1996; Manovich, 2000; Weibel, 2005; Quaranta, 2010). Today, there is also no longer a single medium dominating in contemporary media art practices, which are rather engaged with contemporaneity and critical thinking. However, there still exists a gap between the two lands described by Manovich, and different types of approaches are used. Christiane Paul (2016) suggests that "more traditional fine art forms and digital media arts would mutually benefit from more integration within educational institutions". We agree that this is also an institutional and infrastructural question, as any intersections are rather difficult to

integrate into traditional single discipline fields. Yet we believe that more interdisciplinary methods and approaches as well as more open and more susceptible ways of thinking are crucially important for application in all fields if we would like to understand our networked societies and the complexity of our time and to find less hazardous routes into the future. We claim that artistic research is among the interdisciplinary fields which are capable of facilitating very important intersections and crossovers.

In order to show the transformative potential of artistic research, we will be tracing the phenomenon back to one of its origins, namely networked digital art. We will be analysing our own experiences with the early Internet cultures and net.art of the 1990s from the postmedia perspective of today, analysing the most important developments and qualities that have contributed to new knowledge creation. Hence, "artists have not only taken up art criticism and negotiations, they now also integrate research methods and scientific knowledge into their artistic process to such a degree that it even seems to be developing into an independent form of knowledge on its own." (Busch, 2009)

Theoretical Background: from New Media to Post-media Conditions in Art

"By creating mobile ad-hoc networks or by pointing antennas towards outer space or the depth of oceans artists literally open up the horizons towards the possibilities of a new way of seeing and interacting with the world."

Armin Medosch (2006)

In the mid-90s artists were among the first who were keen on using the new digital technologies and exploring the conceptually new space the Internet. Artists of all times have been interested in new means and mediums, but many of them have turned out to be very limited for artistic use. For example, the fax is nearly forgotten today, and you can make only a few interesting works of art with this tele-technology. Yet with the advent of the Internet, it soon became clear that this time it is different and that the Internet has much greater potential. In 1996, when Manuel Castells (2000 [1996]) was introducing the concept of

"network society", he was also arguing that "the new information technology paradigm provides the material basis for its pervasive expansion throughout the entire social structure". And artists in the 1990s were fully aware of this: they not only experimented with new media tools and new possibilities, but also built trans-local collaboration networks, connecting Western and Eastern European artists, theorists and thinkers. Hence, artists had an important role in building "critical Internet cultures" in their very beginnings. However, it happened around 1998 that net.artists were "kicked out" of the nettime mailing list. Neither their confrontative artistic actions nor other self-expressive experiments within the nettime list were recognized by the community. At around the same time nettime, initially an open platform, turned into a moderated and serious discussion-only forum. Net.artists decided to leave nettime, instead creating their own platform, the 7-11 mailing list, where they could experiment with new concepts, forms and aesthetics, referencing the specific contexts and features of new media and the Internet (Smite, 2011). However, critical theorists of *nettime* were also partly right: for example, it was due to the single artist that the most important forum for artists working in new media was closed down in the late 90s, thus also showing how fragile our networks are (Smite, 2011). In this regard, greater success was achieved by Faces, a cyberfeminist community which united women working with new media – academics and hackers, feminists and activists, artists and designers; their mailing list is still used by the community today, and it is still a very responsive social environment. Meanwhile, another mailing list-based translocal artist community - *Xchange*, initiated by the Riga-based *E-Lab Center* (founded by ourselves in 1996) - was pushing the boundaries of the new electronic space by using sound and online streaming possibilities. Trans-local, collaborative and artistic projects such as Xchange (which received the Prix Ars Electronica in 1998) or Makrolab, a project by Marko Peljhan (exhibited at Documenta 1997), showed the potential to be embodied in an arts context as well as the capability of carrying out in-depth research on the implications of the network society. Yet these artistic research achievements didn't succeed in bridging the huge gap between Manovich's "Duchamp-land" and

"Turing-land". With "Duchamp-land" Manovich was referring to the art world represented by galleries, museums and art journals as well as to contemporary conceptual art, originated by the artist Marcel Duchamp and later represented as "relational aesthetics" – as Bourriaud (2002) has termed contemporary art practices in the 90s, which are located on "social interstice". "Turing-land" refers to new media art, which researches the new aesthetics and concepts of algorithm and computation.

"What we should not expect from Turing-land is art which will be accepted in Duchamp-land. Duchamp-land wants art, not research into new aesthetic possibilities of new media."

Lev Manovich (1996)

On the one hand, Manovich was right – convergence between those two lands during the past twenty years did not happen or happened just occasionally. On the other hand, the situation today is different, as we have entered the post-media age, and we are witnessing media convergence on a larger scale. Artists who in the information technology era at the close of the 20th century were on an emerging art avant-garde - experimenting with information technology aesthetics, discovering the new cyberspace borders and creating immaterial art in wireless networks, radio waves and the universe - are now "returning" to social reality and addressing sustainability issues. It is not new that media art critically addresses socially political questions; however, the perspective revealed by this setting is. Digital technologies today are deeply embedded in all daily spheres of life, and social networks have become an intrinsic element of daily routine and professional life, creating a new type of complexity for social relations.

According to Peter Weibel (2005): "This state of current art practice is best referred to as the post-media condition, because no single medium is dominant any longer; instead, all of the different media influence and determine each other. The set of all media forms a universal self-contained medium." According to Weibel's deliberations, today "all art is already post-media art". For instance, when RIXC together with Jens Hauser curated the exhibition *Transbiotics* in 2011, we aimed at

tracing a shift in the bioart field too, where art is not only converging with biology but also engaging with socio-technological discourse. Weibel (2005) also argues that "the new media were not only a new branch on the tree of art but actually transformed the tree of art itself". The post-media situation is at the heart of the "contemporization" tendency in contemporary media art. In contrast to other contemporary art movements, which are mostly oriented toward social deconstruction and reflection, media artists are profoundly interested in technology and science, collective working, creative experiments and processual art. And contemporary media art not only mixes media, it also seeks out new contact zones between traditionally different disciplines unrelated to art, continuing to bring innovation into contemporary art and changing the role of art in society.

Artistic Research Methodology and Case Studies

With regard to methodology, as early as the 90s new media opened up new possibilities for creative explorations and artistic inquiry. Today, the post-media situation offers an even greater variety of possibilities for artistic research through convergence, intersections and crossovers. Art has always been a reflective practice, but we would also like to argue that the very important potential of artistic research also lies in its transformative and interdisciplinary qualities, or as Bourriaud (2002) has put it contemporary art practices work as catalysts (rather than centres). Either way artistic research is shown to be capable of creating new knowledge. We will be analysing three major approaches of knowledge creation through art practices here.

The first approach we will use here is to reflect upon our own artistic practices; we will be analysing our own works of art as well as the contexts within which they have been created. For two decades we have been actively working with new media, using scientific approaches and combining art with science. The second approach which we will use in studying postmedia conditions in art is exhibition curating. We will be studying cases from some of the more recent exhibitions organized by our RIXC Center. And last but not least, we will introduce artistic research from the perspective of academic education.

Creating the context, establishing new collaborations and networking have always been as important for us as the creation of our own artwork. Our first artistic initiative was the Xchange net.radio network (1997), which united about sixty different pioneering Internet streaming initiatives from all over the world - sound artists, DJs, electronic musicians, independent radio activists, etc., who were engaged in exploring the "acoustic cyberspace". Over the decades, we have also initiated several other networks and collaborative artistic projects. More recently, together with our RIXC Center and partners from Nordic and Baltic countries, we founded Renewable Network (2009), where artists have teamed up with scientists and both rural and urban communities to develop new ideas for more sustainable and more imaginative futures. We organized a series of Renewable Lab art and science workshops, experimenting with different sustainable technologies. As a result, we used one of the most innovative technologies - the "bacteria battery" - in our artwork series Biotricity. We set up small bioelectricity power stations in a pond outdoors and created live "bacteria battery" installations indoors. We created real-time sonification and visualizations from recorded data, thus making visible the invisible activity in nature - e.g. how bacteria produce electricity at the bottom of the pond. In this way we also aimed to show how contemporary aesthetics such as data interpretation can reveal the complex structure of the ambiguous relations between nature and technology, ecological systems and electronic networks, and human and micro-worlds.

Bacteria battery as well as a wide selection of other "post-media" artwork could be seen at several exhibitions in Riga in recent years, the largest of which was Fields (2014), which we curated together with artist and curator Armin Medosch, founder of the Technopolitics initiative in Vienna. The exhibition took place in the Arsenals exhibition hall at the Latvian National Museum of Art in the framework of Riga 2014 - European Cultural Capital. Medosch (2014) explains: "Fields is a curatorial





Figure 2. "The Exceptional and the Everyday: 144 hours in Kyiv", "Data Drift" exhibition, kim? Contemporary Art Center, (Riga: Lev Manovich, Alise Tifentale, Mehrdad Yazdani, and Jay Chow (photo: Kristine Madjare), 2014)



Figure 3. "Pond Battery", "Open Fields", RIXC Festival exhibition (Riga: Rasa Smite and Raitis Smits (photo: Kristine Madjare), 2016)

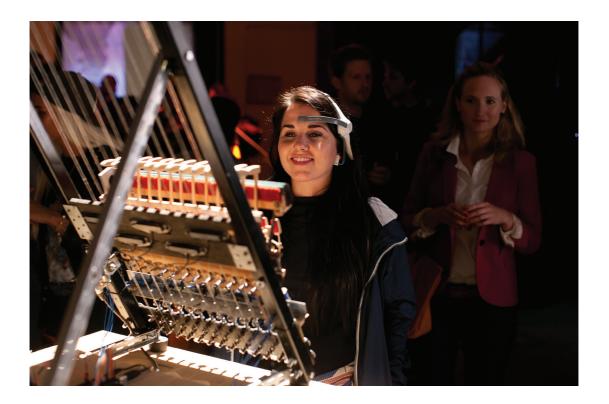


Figure 4. "Brain Messages", "Impulsi" exhibition, RISEBA H2O 6 Architecture and Media Center (Riga: Gunta Dombrovska (photo: Kristine Madjare), 2016)

research project that engages with the works of selected artists in order to explore generative concepts - concepts that do not simply describe what exists in a static way but are contextual seedbeds for new practices." Fields was one of the largest manifestations of post-media art, featuring more than 40 works of art, which showed that art in post-media conditions has highly transformative and visionary potential. However, symbolic and aesthetic qualities as well as critical, investigative and confrontational aspects also proved to be just as important for "post-media art" in maintaining a line between physical and mental realities and utopias. We curated the Fields exhibition with the intention of creating a "post-media" and "techno-ecological" perspective, showing how art today is changing its role in society – it is not only creating new aesthetics, but also getting involved in scientific, social and technological transformations. Medosch (2014) puts it as follows: "Fields seeks a novel approach for the mapping of potential new territories for artistic explorations." These new art practices often work as connections, they cross borders and interact with different fields, social groups, people's perception of the world and the world beyond them, whilst the artistic language is a key element and the "shortcut" to initiating a dialogue with society, reaching the public's awareness and creating feedback with it.

Data Drift (2015) was an exhibition which we curated together with Lev Manovich at the kim? Contemporary Art Centre. While Fields explored "post-media" conditions, Data Drift focused on another big issue of contemporary media culture, namely data. Regarding this exhibition Manovich (2015) claimed: "If painting was the art of the classical era, and photography that of the modern era, data visualization is the medium of our own time. Rather than looking at the outside world and picturing it in interesting ways like modernist artists (Instagram filters already do this well), data designers and artists are capturing and reflecting on the new data realities of our societies." Hence, data visualization has not only become an important approach in contemporary culture, it is also creating a new aesthetics of its own. The Data *Drift* exhibition showcased works by some of the most influential data designers of our time as well as by artists who use data as their artistic

medium.

"How can we use the data medium to represent our complex societies, going beyond 'most popular', and 'most liked'? How can we organize the data drifts that structure our lives to reveal meaning and beauty? How to use big data to 'make strange', so we can see past and present as unfamiliar and new?"

Lev Manovich (2015)

Most often in the art and culture field research is carried out in the framework of either cultural studies or critical theories. Manovich suggests that there is also a third way, cultural sociology, which could help us to analyse a large amount of visual data – from museum archives to social media "imagery". Data visualization opens up new possibilities for archiving as well as reinterpreting and exhibiting artwork because it allows one to study a large number of works together. And "when we bring many works together and compare them, we acquire the capacity to look at the past and present from other unfamiliar and novel perspectives" (Manovich, 2015).

In recent years artists have shown an interest in studying at a higher academic level and receiving a doctoral degree. Yet if the curriculum for doctoral studies in the arts is designed for researchers, i.e. art historians, this means that the field of art is in fact missing one of the most important facets – discovery, which can only be obtained through practice. Therefore, for more than a decade practicebased, practice-led artistic research on a doctoral level is entering academia, aiming to invent and integrate into the academic system a new knowledge-creation methodology which is based on artistic practice. According to Carole Gray and Heather Delday (2009), artistic research is a reflective practice: "Reflective practice attempts to unite research and practice, thought and action in a framework which involves practice as an active agent for inquiry, and which acknowledges the particular and special knowledge of the practitioner." Professor Carole Gray is an expert on artistic research, and she has been involved in establishing the New Media Art programme in Liepaja since its very beginnings in 2007. This new education programme was a collaboration between Liepaja University, the RIXC Center

New Media	Post-media
Immateriality	Neomateriality
Process-based	Object-oriented
Collaborative	Individual
Self-referential	Self-referential
Internet-based	Media convergence
Shared autonomous infrastructures	Web 2.0 social network sites
Networked digital technologies	Social media-based "imagery"
Interdisciplinarity	Data visualization

Main principles of new media and post-media

Figure 5. Summary of the main principles of new media and postmedia, based on "Fields", "Open Fields", "Data Drift" exhibition case studies (Riga: Rasa Smite and Raitis Smits, 2018)

for New Media Culture in Riga and the K@2 cultural centre in Karosta. Liepaja's case is unique in Latvia and the Baltics: it is a fullcycle education programme in new media arts - from bachelor's to master's to doctoral studies. The programme is academic, modulebased, and primarily designed by integrating the artistic research approach into the academic education system. During the past 10 years, the programme has grown and developed, achieving great results, such as their annual iWeek festival (since 2009) and Sound Days (since 2013). The graduate student exhibition Impulses (2016) was also a great achievement by this programme, as it showed fifteen conceptually interesting and technically quite advanced interactive works of

The Impulses exhibition was part of Open Fields (2016), an international artistic research conference and exhibition. Artists of the Open Fields and Impulses exhibitions aimed to explore how art can meaningfully contribute to the environmental, scientific and technological challenges of our time. Open Fields also challenged traditional academic disciplines, engaging with "open fields", that is with interchanges and crossings between practices that are barely sustained by one discipline alone. With the Fields exhibition in 2014 we have opened multiple conversations about how art

has the potential to not only criticize society and thereby provide a mirror for it, but also to more directly intervene in material and social structures. In these exhibitions, we could also experience the post-media situation, with new materiality and object-orientated outcomes.

"The concept of neomateriality is proposed [...] to describe an objecthood that incorporates networked digital technologies, and embeds, processes, and reflects back the data of humans and the environment, or reveals its own coded materiality and the way in which digital processes see our world."

Christiane Paul (2015)

Hence, artists of the Open Fields and Impulses exhibitions were challenging the notion of contemporary aesthetics. They were moving across, bringing together and combining different kinds of knowledge, various media and diverse fields as well as using scientific, cultural and social data as new artistic mediums and interpreting them in new and meaningful ways.

Conclusion

Today, two decades after the terms were coined, in entering the post-media age, we can witness some tendencies of "Turing-land" and "Duchamp-land" converging. But as we would

like to argue, art has also become an important domain in itself; it has become capable of serving its own table and inviting other disciplines to join in and contribute. With regard to academic education, we also see that artistic research approaches have great potential, particularly if we agree with Christiane Paul (2016), who has suggested that more traditional fine art forms and digital media arts would mutually benefit from intersections as well as from integration within educational institutions. Artistic research also challenges more traditional types of knowledge production, as artists-researchers often carry out their research not only within the walls of a university, but also at contemporary media art festivals, exhibitions, symposiums, and residencies. We would also like to argue that art today is not only critical, it also comprises the

capability of envisioning more positive future scenarios and inspiring its audiences. Yet we also claim that today new aesthetics such as *objecthood* and *neo-materiality* are increasingly replacing previously well recognized concepts such as process-based and "immaterial". Also, we have experienced that data visualization is not only used as a new artistic medium; it also comprises new capabilities for studying visual culture represented by large amounts of data and archives.

Overall, we can say that art in the age of postmedia has transformative potential and critical, investigative, symbolic and aesthetic qualities. Hence, artistic research is among the disciplines that reflect on current realities, the complexity of our society, and the challenges of our time.

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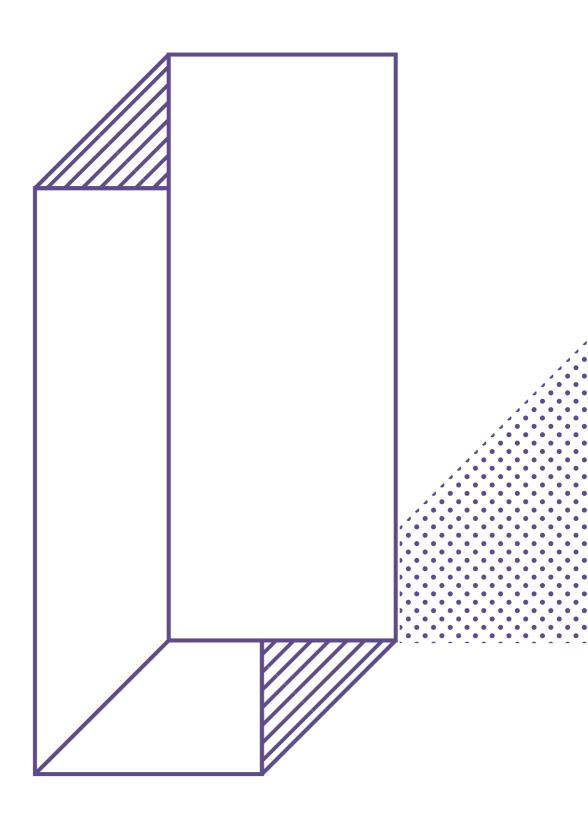
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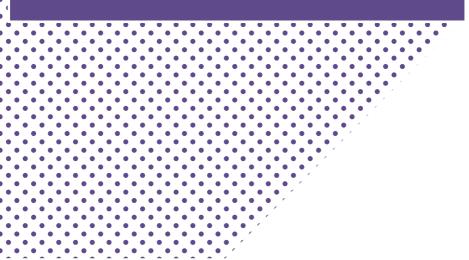
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Reviews



Anita Uzulniece Spiritual Dimensions of Film Art

"The sensation of infinity is recorded with the help of an image, the spiritual is expressed by the material, and endlessness is expressed by the transitory."

Andrei Tarkovsky

I am grateful for and pleased by every opportunity to participate in the work of the Ecumenical and Interfilm Juries at festivals, and the joy and satisfaction is even greater if our jury's decision coincides with the main jury's appreciation of a film and if there is a possibility later on to screen this work in my country in the programme of the Film Forum *And the Word Became a Film*.

Reygadas's "sealed time"

The Mexican filmmaker Carlos Reygadas's film Silent Light surprised and thrilled the Cannes Film Festival in 2007 and was awarded the Jury Prize. Developments in a Mexican Mennonite community address the audience in an unusually expressive cinematic language that attests to the unity of nature and man and shows the consequences of breaking the law of God. Johan, the deeply devout father of an Anabaptist family, falls in love with another woman. The tragic events that follow not only highlight the important idiom "Thou shalt not judge!", but also confirm the great power of forgiveness and the possibility of resurrection. One can see a clear reference to the visionary Johann from the Danish master Carl Theodor Dreyer's film The Word, included in the programme of the first film forum And the Word Became a Film in Riga, 1999.

Carlos Reygadas is regarded as one of the most promising and controversial young directors of the beginning of the 21st century. Following his first film *Japon*, opinions of audiences and critics were divided: some regarded him as a radical who had broken the last remaining taboos in modern cinematography and religion, while others accused the director of skilled parasitizing of the achievements of such masters as Antonioni, Bunuel and Tarkovsky. Reygadas was also accused of not expressing any personal position with the film's storyline or aesthetics. This work was also entered into the Cannes Film Festival but did not receive any prizes. The director's next work was quite different

in nature – the film *Silent Light* is a deeply saturated and highly poetic work about love, death and resurrection. It takes place in Mexico, in a village populated by Mennonites (adherents of an austere form of Protestantism). The village inhabitants were in front of a camera for the first time; thus, the film provides a unique record of their lifestyle. The story follows a married man who falls in love with another woman. In the course of the film this seemingly domestic drama grows into a parable that shows how a destructive passion that runs contrary to religious feelings ultimately leads to a force that is able to accomplish the impossible and become creative. This work has made Reygadas a prominent contemporary artist. The conflict between responsibility and passion forms the basis of the film. In the exposition of the film, time seems to stop and everything shown further could be Johan's internal conflict. The dilemma, his feelings for two women at the same time: is it a manifestation of love of God or Satan's work? Magical realism as a means of style and expression raises the film's events above everyday reality. Therefore, it enables an alignment between the two women, and Johan can again be the father of his family. The parable – the film's contemplative story – constitutes a huge aesthetic fascination.

The director shows himself to be a poet of landscapes and visual density and a master of contemplation. Sensory, mental, living spaces, the disappearance of a dream – with amateur performers and original shooting sites and through his formal, *artificello* style, the director has created a quasi-documentary living space. With such artistic motivation *Silent Light* has acquired an ethereal radiance where time seems abolished, as in Philip Groening's film *Great Silence*. And God said: "Let there be light!" and there was light (Genesis 1:3).

The film recounts a spiritual and existential crisis. A miracle happens at the end, made possible not so much by faith in God as by faith in cinema, where, in the great Danish master Carl Theodor Dreyer's film *Ordet*, such a miracle (the resurrection) has already happened once. The grand landscapes are reminiscent of John Ford's widescreen (*Cinemascope*) westerns, where God seems to be close, and the people who work in these fields seem truly to be God's



Carlos Reygadas, "Silent Light" ("Stellet Licht") (Mexico, France, Netherlands, Germany: Bac Films, 2007)



Xavier Beauvois, "Of Gods and Men" ("Des Hommes et de Dieux") (France: Sony Pictures Classics, 2010)

servants, living according to His message in a pre-Christian spirit. Reygadas as an enigmatic (mysterious) visionary put great trust in his actors from various Mennonite communities, so they managed to lend their characters the whole weight of their existence, and this is why the director's unobtrusive testimony of faith turns out to be so convincing.

Reygadas believes in the sincerity of cinematography. This story of spiritual pain and agony of conscience is also a story of love and passion. And it is also about a miracle. Like his first films Japon and Battle in Heaven, Silent Light is interwoven with a longing for salvation and formed of the landscape in which it occurs. Silent Light radiates peace that arises from something existing outside the earth's banality, and the breath-taking finale truly expresses the notion of the title of the film, Silent Light - that is, the light of truth and, breathtakingly, also the light of love that is stronger than death. Silent Light is a film that does not show existence and time in pictures but creates it; as Reygadas's idol Tarkovsky would say, it simulates it.

"I want everything in cinema to happen like in real life – spontaneously, by itself, without any previous explanations. I film life in its natural form - real people and their passions – which even gives rise to physical pain. In Silent Light the resurrection miracle happens by itself, it is of the same order as natural phenomena – the morning, the sunset, the rain and the wind. The only reason this miracle could happen is love, which expresses a higher form of existence. For me, the natural coincides with the divine. I'm trying to show that the physical world is a miracle."

Carlos Reygadas

At the 65th Cannes Festival Carlos Reygadas won the Best Director Award for his film Post Tenebras Lux. The director, who astonished the world in 2002 with his first film Japon and reaped laurels in 2007 with Silent *Light (Stellet Licht)*, was among the most anticipated participants in that year. The semi-autobiographical film Post Tenebras Lux is a series of episodes about a family of city dwellers becoming familiar with the conditions and habits of Mexican rural life. The magical fascination of different episodes and the fusion of reality and dreams intensified by the use of optical lenses still do not give a full impression of (as one may suspect) the characters' search for identity - in their marital relations, in the children's process of growing up - at that time and in that place. Reygadas continues to use cinema as a visual art that can express something inaccessible to other art forms something that was so captivating in Silent Light. In one of the most interesting recent discussions about cinema in the magazine Rigas *Laiks* (#1, 2016) article *Film – an event*, Davis Simanis and Janis Putnins mention Reygadas as one of the most significant contemporary directors [("...like some lonely island" (D. Simanis), "...the film has left me with a secret some 'sediment' of conflict between the proletariat and high society" (J. Putnins)].

The power of love

Xavier Beauvois's film Of Gods and Men (Des hommes et des dieux) is based on real events in 1996, when Islamic fundamentalists killed seven Trappist monks who lived in their monastery



Michael Haneke, "Amour" (Austria, France, Germany: Sony Pictures Classics, 2012)

in peaceful harmony with God and local people in the mountains of Algeria. The excellent ensemble of actors, who perceived filming as "a time of grace" (as director Beauvois and actor Lambert Wilson, who played a prior, affirmed at the Cannes Film Festival press conference), have created a stunning work of art that received the Grand Prix and the Ecumenical Jury Prizes at the 2010 Cannes Film Festival. To go or stay, to triumph or keep silent? This is the dilemma faced by the characters in the film Of Gods and Men by French director and actor Xavier Beauvois - eight Christian monks who live in North Africa and get along well with the Muslims there. Although one brother (Michael Lonsdale) selflessly serves as a doctor for the entire neighbourhood and the group's leader (Lambert Wilson) knows the Koran and can discuss Islam intelligently even with the leader of a terrorist group, violence prevails. The film is based on actual events in 1996, when seven monks were killed (one escaped, hiding under a bed) in Tibhirine (Algeria), where French people repatriated from France were living. The film's peaceful flow - subsistence farming, bee-keeping, prayers and chants - reaches its culmination when the monks decide to stay in the monastery and come to an understanding as they drink wine together. The close-ups of their faces and eyes as music from Tchaikovsky's

Swan Lake plays shatters the depths of the heart, and the haze of winter morning when they are taken away is beautiful and at the same time full of terrible foreboding. The contemplative message of Beauvois's film recalls the style of Bresson and Pialat. Similar to *Great Silence*, a German documentary film about Trappist monks, this French film captivates with its spiritual concentration and power, which can only grow with time. The "Gods" are in the details – as beautifully commented in *Variety*.

Michael Haneke's film Amour was awarded not only the *Palme d'Or* in Cannes, 2012, but also the Golden Globe and the Oscar for the best foreign film. It is difficult to do justice to the range of emotions evoked by actors Emmanuelle Riva and Jean-Louis Trintignant, whose characters Anne and Georges express their feelings after their long life spent together in careful sensitivity and tenderness, though the wife has already suffered several heart attacks. A life full of love for music in which the couple has followed the careers of their talented students and suddenly Anne, once a beautiful and spiritual being, is transformed into a helpless, paralysed body. Though the prologue of the film - breaking into a seemingly abandoned flat where a deceased woman is seen in a bed adorned with flowers - already announces the

outcome, the passage to it, the film itself, is touching, full of discoveries and, one might say, instructive. Only the chosen actors, who both already seem to personify love - Emmanuelle Riva after the Alain Resnais film Hiroshima. mon amour and Jean-Louis Trintignant after Claude Lelouch's A Man and a Woman - could have succeeded in embodying in such a serene and unassuming manner those ordeals, those nuances that their love has gone through, what with them being in their eighties. Anne's condition is worsening, she does not want her daughter Eva (Isabelle Huppert) to see her, Georges has to fire the insensitive hired nurses, and they both remain face to face... Now and then a pigeon appears in the flat who does not want to leave - in the end Georges manages to capture it with a blanket. The director expressed his motivation after receiving the *Palme d'Or*: he and his wife have promised each other not to suffer excessively. Love.

British and Danish humanism

In his film Another Year Briton Mike Leigh continues "to sing the praise of ordinary people" whose rhythm of life is defined only by the change of seasons, while in moments of interaction they tend to be both comic and tragic. It seems that this British director is assured a place in film history; moreover, he is known not only by film critics at festivals (Best Director in 1993 for Naked; Palme d'Or and the Ecumenical Jury Prize in 1996 for Secrets & Lies) - the British Council in Riga has also shown Leigh's films, and Happy-Go-Lucky, shot in 2006, remained in the programme of the Cinema Riga for a long time as a nice conclusion to the lecture cycle The Ones That Should Be *Known*. An unsurpassed perceiver and depicter of ordinary people's joys and sorrows and melancholy and hysteria, the director holds all sorts of excesses in a peculiar balance this time. The only island of harmony in the film is the middle-aged couple Gerri and Tom, and all sorts of unlucky wretches seek shelter with and around them, fixing themselves up nicely with the help of alcohol, chatter and other forms of false optimism. Gerri's colleague Mary, a flirty and girlish divorcee of about fifty (actress Lesley Manville also deserves some praise!) visits here often, "passing by" the friend of her youth, flirting with the couple's thirtyyear-old son and always drinking too much. If the festival had one more prize for the best supporting part (such as at the Latvian Night of Players), it should certainly be presented to Leigh's regular actress Imelda Staunton (also starring in Vera Drake), who appears only at the beginning of the film – as a patient of a doctor from whom she wants to get sleeping pills. Such a grey facial expression with which the woman responds to every question – after all, the task of a psychiatrist is to find out the underlying cause! It is like the essence of all the world's frustration, the graveyard of all feelings and hopes - leave me alone, I just want to be able to fall asleep! The director's renowned technique of improvisation, which allows each actor to implement their own ideas in depicting characters and give them unique gestures and body language, could be compared to a ballet production. The most amazing thing is that Mike Leigh is able to refrain, if I may say so, from correcting, condemning and judging. The Cannes Film Festival Grand Jury under Tim Burton's lead did not appreciate the film, but it was noted by the Ecumenical Jury – for the excellent directing and acting work which reveals how simple people are able to maintain friendship and tenderness in their daily lives. In a word: humanism.

2012 at the Cannes Film Festival was a year of great returns. After his triumph in 1998 - the Palme d'Or for his film Celebration (Festen) – director Thomas Vinterberg returned there with his new work The Hunt (Jagten) and the lead actor Mads Mikkelsen won the Jury Award as Best Actor. A pertinent topic - how hard it is to wash off false suspicions, especially of a sexual nature - emerges in The Hunt even more keenly as the film takes place in a small town. The suffocating atmosphere here gets even more electrified with rumours that the teacher Lucas (Mikkelsen) has molested his little pupil Klara. Why children behave in such a way when they feel undervalued, even rejected (Klara herself spreads the rumours and lies) – this is something that makes the crime-thriller element of the film even more essential. It is satisfying that the excellent actor has won international recognition through a Danish film – after all, his best work includes roles in Anders Thomas Jensen's trilogy and in Susanne Bier's and other Danish directors'

films – and not through large-scale Hollywood productions which are often mentioned in the media. *The Hunt* also received the Ecumenical Jury Prize.

The most outstanding films in Venice

Freddie Quell (Joaquin Phoenix), the protagonist of Paul Thomas Anderson's film The Master (Lion d'Or in Venice, 2012, for the best director; FIPRESCI Prize for the film), is incapable of connecting with the surrounding world and its people. Is it the trauma from WWII or his own character that leads him to all possible dependencies? Even Freddie's talent for invention cannot save him from burnout and solitude, he has to burn all his bridges before one day he is rescued by the great Master Lancaster Dodd (a splendid performance by Philip Seymour Hoffman), only to become dependent on him. Besides being a psychological investigation into the consequences of war experiences, the film spotlights Scientology, lately a pertinent topic what with some well-known actors under its spell. While the sex guru played by Tom Cruise in Anderson's Magnolia could still be perceived with some irony and even pain (the disclosure of the causal relationship in the finale), Hoffman's charismatic Dodd, as a messiah and leader of a Scientology-like sect, presents us with a more serious question – is he not simply a charlatan? A journey in time during hypnosis? By what powers can this master recruit traumatised guys like Freddie, is he indeed able to cure those like him, or maybe just enslave them for something else. The performance of both actors was awarded the Volpi Cup. Phoenix is so convincing in the role of Freddie – even his posture and gait changes (fully on par with our own Kaspars Znotins as poet Imants Ziedonis!).

For me, as a rare visitor at the Venice festival, Joaquin Phoenix has become quite like a *leitmotif*: at the 2010 festival I saw the hoaxumentary film *I'm Still Here* by Phoenix's sister's husband Casey Affleck, where he played himself, himself of those days, declaring that he was leaving the acting profession in order to focus on rap (in *Walk the Line* Phoenix himself sang the Johnny Cash hits, one of which, *Ring of Fire*, has, by the way, accompanied him since 1997, when, still young, he took part in

Stone's film *U Turn*, where this song plays), while in 2012 I saw the shocking *The Master*. Eager, enthusiastic, one who does everything *va banque*, not afraid to show his characters and himself in the most unappealing situations – that's how this actor is – and even if it has the potential to undermine him, it has colossal results. *The Master*, as one colleague has put it, leaves the spectator with some perverse optimism.

It was a pleasant surprise and coincidence that one of the best and most interesting achievements at the 2010 Venice Film Festival came from Russia: Aleksey Fedorchenko's film Silent Souls or The Buntings (Ovsjanki). Already in 2005 his work For the First Time on the Moon (Vpervije na lune) was recognized as the best in the section Horizons. Fedorchenko's latest film is about a factory director in a Russian provincial town whose wife dies, and he tells only one colleague about it, inviting him to take part in his beloved wife's funeral. In this peculiar road movie we learn about love verging on obsession. It turns out that his work and travel companion was also captivated by the young woman's charm. The film highlights (from the depths of historical memory) an ancient Finno-Ugric tradition surviving in the memory of the Mari, a small nation assimilated by the Russians, according to which the dead are burned and their ashes are scattered over water. The pain that somehow suppresses the protagonist's passion, inflamed during his wife's lifetime by jealousy, the magic of the pagan burial ritual, the landscape of Russia, the exquisite soundtrack (not just the music), the actors' existence as if in a forgotten corner of the world and close to Mother Nature - all this logically leads to the finale, where a fatal role is played by small birds in a cage carried along everywhere by the factory director's colleague. This new Russian cinema, though evolving in a different direction than Zvyagintsev or Popogrebskiy with his film How I Spent Last Summer (Berlin Film Festival Award), captivates with its intangible spiritual substance, which, as it turns out, is preserved in outwardly plainlooking individuals and which the filmmakers managed to show in a nuanced fashion. As the director explains, buntings, green-yellow birds which resemble American sparrows, are quite common in Russia, yet are plain and



Andrey Zvyagintsev, "Leviathan" (Russia: Sony Pictures Classics, 2014)

unnoticeable. Just like his film characters only looking deeper into their souls... Though the official Festival Jury chaired by Quentin Tarantino gave the Osella Award "only" to Mikhail Krichman for best cinematography, the film was recognized as the best by the FIPRESCI Jury and noted by O.C.I.C. (the Catholic Jury).

Diverse faces of injustice

Though eleven years have already passed since the striking appearance of another Russian director, Andrey Zvyagintsev (Lion d'Or in Venice for his film *The Return*), his works are always anticipated with great interest and hope. As in The Return and The Banishment, in his new film Leviathan (presented with the Best Screenplay Award by the Cannes Festival Jury in 2014), a biblical likeness can also be surmised with the dragon / serpent mentioned in the Old Testament. Nonetheless, the plot itself is quite prosaic and very topical: in the far north of Russia, a mayor of a little town by the Barents Sea intends to develop his business in the same place where protagonist Kolya (Aleksey Serebryakov) has his car service, family home, his beloved ones and environment. But

the mayor leaves no stone unturned to gain his end. No one can help Kolya, not even his lawyer friend who comes out from the centre of town. At times the harsh message seems counterbalanced by the beautiful seascape, at times dramatized by violent waves that even engulf Kolya's young wife. While a monster's skeleton cast ashore might seem a too direct symbol ("In that day, the LORD will punish with his sword - his fierce, great and powerful sword -Leviathan the gliding serpent, Leviathan the coiling serpent; he will slay the monster of the sea."), the context of events allows for it - the evil done by those in power, the injustice experienced by humble folk, some kind of punishment is in order. The director expresses his conviction that sooner or later anyone born into a country is faced with a choice - to live like a slave or a free person. Original sin, state power, corruption our times in a biblical perspective – is there hope for justice on earth? – Zvyagintsev asks. Surprising news from the Kinotavr festival: Leviathan has not been licensed for screening in Russia.

In the same year, Bennet Miller was acknowledged as the best director for his film Foxcatcher. In fact, it is also a story about great injustice and complexes. Millionaire John du Pont, who thinks that money can buy anything, invites wrestler Mark Shultz to train the American team for the Olympic Games in Seoul, 1988. The young athlete hopes in this way to come out from under the shadow of his older brother Dave. Instead, he becomes dependant on du Pont, whose aim of "fatherly care" turns out to be something else entirely - to get rid of his complexes by asserting himself in front of his imperious mother; aside from this, he also gets Mark hooked on drugs. When the wrestler no longer succeeds in competitions, du Pont starts to humiliate him and dismisses him altogether. His place is taken by his brother Dave, who cannot be subjugated (that is, bought). Steve Carell (as du Pont) would merit the *Palme d'Or* as best actor – changed beyond recognition, with his chin high up, he speaks in a nasal voice and imagines he holds all the "threads" to manipulate people like marionettes in order to satisfy his whims and mitigate his complexes. But in real life it does not happen like that. The film, which is based on a true story, has a tragic outcome - the one who cannot be subjugated arouses the sharpest hatred. Du Pont was sentenced for murder, vet nine years after the investigation the psychological motivation remained wrapped in fog: he was in a bad mood, that's why he fired three times at Dave...

The young ones are coming – active and with love...

Italian director Alice Rohrwacher, whose second film, The Wonders, received the Grand Prix, is only 32 years old. It was the only Italian film at the 2014 Cannes Festival. Her first film, Corpo Celeste, was incorporated into the Director's Week section of the 2011 Festival. It was shown and received an award at the Riga film festival Arsenals and, more recently, at the film forum And the Word Became a Film as well. The Wonders is about an extraordinary family in which former students and "revolutionaries" (a German father and an Italian mother) are trying to bring up their four daughters in an alternative fashion - at an apiary and farm. The action takes place on the border of Tuscany and two other regions - in places where the director grew up and now lives herself. Her sister Alba



Xavier Dolan, "Mommy" (Canada: Lionsgate, 2014)

Rohrwacher plays the role of the mother. A family production, so to speak. Along with the oldest sister Gelsomina's hormonal drama, a wonder comes into the almost documentarily filmed girls' life amidst the bees, in the secluded world created by their father (to save his family from the "end of the world"). A TV show - a competition for the best farm produce with its big prize Village Wonders, which the girls dream of getting in order to tear themselves away from this restricted life – is depicted like a dream, with the advertising clip's diva (Monica Bellucci) almost like a goddess. Both the name Gelsomina and the dream episodes are reminiscent of Fellini's La Strada. The place of traditions and rituals in our day, the strength or weakness of family and kinship ties, the influence of mass media - actually, no need to define the range of themes of a film that flows so naturally and unconstrained. Rohrwacher continues her cooperation with the excellent cinematographer Hélène Louvart (who also worked on *Pina* by Wim Wenders). Never captivated by any habits, she is always open to experiments and to something new. The Wonders is dedicated to the legendary producer Karl Baumgartner ("Baumi", as everyone dearly called him, was one of the founders of Pandora Film), who passed away the same year before the completion of Rohrwacher's film. "Along with him the practice of filmmaking changed", the director believes. As one colleague has put it neatly: "While Sorrentino's The Great Beauty is a modern opera, Rohrwacher's The Wonders is intimate contemporary chamber music."

The young Canadian director Xavier Dolan's film *Mommy* belongs to the greatest discoveries and surprises of the festival. It is

an extraordinary story, full of hysterical energy, about the relationship between a mother, Diane, and her 15-year-old hyperactive son Steve, and a depressed neighbour, the teacher Kyla, who involves herself in it. Youthful, early widowed Diane has to act as her son's mother, father and teacher at the same time since Steve is unable to hold out in any school. The challenging, provocative and destructive behaviour of each character when everything breaks and falls to pieces interchanges with small islands of peace and happiness - sometimes thanks to Kyla's paradoxical "therapy". And still, notwithstanding all the hardships and failures, the film is not about "losers, but about courage, love and friendship," as stressed by its director as well. Because a person is not defined by their failures but by their feelings and dreams. The admirably committed presence (I can't bring myself to write "performance") of actors Anne Dorval, Suzanne Clement and Antoine Olivier Pilon, captured by an "elastic" camera, the colourfulness, richness and even some playfulness in details do not allow one to perceive the film as acting, but as the real life of such characters in some Canadian (actually any) suburb. Authenticity seems to be the right word to apply to everything that happens and can be seen in this film, from the interior, clothing and music to emotions and feelings. Dragged into the whirl of "insanity" of the film we may miss the way the format of the screen changes - it "calms down", becoming "normal" (rectangular) only during harmonious moments of happiness or illusions and remains square during the rest of the episodes. And, having believed the first version of the finale (the happy end), we may even decide, say, let everyone be as crazy as they like - only to get thrown back into harsh reality. Dolan's *Mommy* is like a revanche to his mother after the semiautobiographical film I Killed my Mother (2009, already several Cannes prizes back then) in which his mother was portrayed by Anne Dorval and he portrayed himself.

It seems that a "new wave" has appeared on the horizon of cinema - the 25-year-old actor, writer and director has four full-length films and has already won the Cannes Festival Jury Prize. It was shared with the first French "new wave" master Jean-Luc Godard, who received the award for his Adieu au langage. A telling coincidence, like the one recounted by Dolan

during his acceptance speech: in his early youth someone strongly advised him to see Jane Campion's *The Piano* – and now a Jury chaired by this Australian director has honoured his film. The self-confidence of this guy of small stature combined with his good knowledge of film history, true openness about personal feelings and emotional experiences and, of course, talent, yields good results. Such is Xavier Dolan's case.

Mommy has already been shown on Latvian TV, and now our cinemas are screening the latest film by the young director, It's Only the End of the World (Juste la fin du monde), which received the 2016 Cannes Grand Prix and the Ecumenical Jury Prize on the following basis: "What cannot be said by words can be communicated by the face, rendered transcendental by Xavier Dolan's cinematic language. In what is not said, the screams and the looks, we find the history of a family where love is unspoken and where people yell so as not to reveal what is essential. Upon his return, Louis, the prodigal son who came to announce his impending death, chooses instead to inspire love and hope in his relatives."

"See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ" (Colossians 2:8), quoted professor Sergey Averintsev in his lecture on Christian philosophy at the scientific conference Christianity in World Culture, stressing that it is the sole place in the Bible where the word "philosophy" is found. Such words as "culture" and "art", of course, are not used here at all; in early Christianity they could only be connected with pagan cults and other "ostentations", and for a Christian, both philosophy and culture mean only one thing - placing something above the faith. Yet today it is hard to imagine that a person could abandon cultural values created over centuries; therefore, the professor stressed further on that a person of today is destined to choose between more or less high quality culture and, conditionally, a lack of culture (simply very low quality culture...). To accentuate, to my mind, the ever-growing importance of "commentary" (in practice called "review", "critique", "analysis", "estimation"), I would like to recall the introduction of

Professor Averintsey's lecture. Because in the new millennium a wider population is more actively and even aggressively undergoing the "propagation" (that is, the hard sell) of that other, so-called "mass culture", which, in his essays, Estonian poet Jaan Kaplinski pointedly calls "civilisation as a drug" and "the total game, or glorification of adaptation". And in this process quite a big role is played by mass media, where rather seldom the voice of theorists, among them philosophers, is heard, and therefore by people's spirits, minds and moods being dependent on "vocation" and "belief" (in its broadest sense) and, respectively, on commentary – as I would like to say out of my own professionalism and honesty and that of my colleagues. Painful as it may be to compare the correspondence of our situation with what Averintsev calls "an open barbarity, similar to Nazism or Bolshevism, equally hostile towards faith and culture", one has to see the positive symptoms as well, that is, "for a moment faith and culture look at each other with a growing understanding, even falling into each other's arms" (unfortunately, this does not last for long, though...). We could only wish that these "embraces", namely mutual understanding, perfection, enrichment and fruitful co-operation in the world and here in Latvia would last longer!

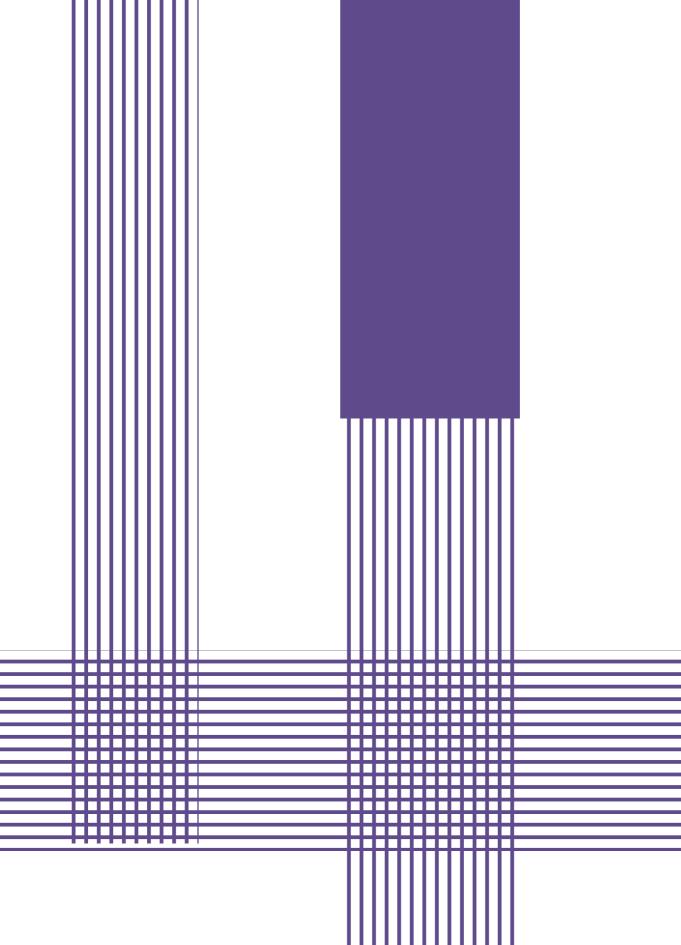
I am interested in the message of a work of art. Not only the works in which the Gospel (the Good News) is propagated directly and literally, but anything that stimulates a person to think of their place in life, analyse their relationships with people around them and also with God, and that can awaken this love and hope. As a person that has "returned" – found myself in belief and confidence in God - slowly and comparatively late, I may testify that art has been of great importance in this process; at one point it was Bulgakov's The Master and Margarita and Rainis's Joseph and His Brothers, later it was the films of Dreyer, Tarkovsky, Bresson, Pasolini, Fellini and von Trier, music by Part and Vasks. Possibly this is why, in my articles as well, I am

trying to both share what has impressed me in some work of art and cipher and accentuate the author's message in it. I am convinced that films of high artistic quality – where the director's position and creative impulse is real – contain within them a certain positive message. Even if they are about the negativity or the evil in this world created by God. The very message expressed in the films was the main principle in choosing them for this article.

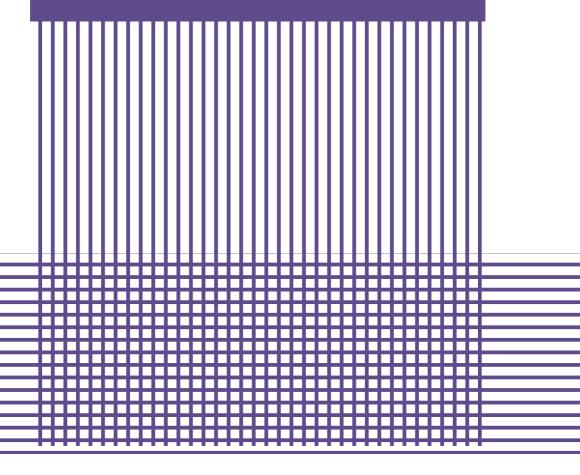
They all are works of art that pose questions, affecting our feelings and consciousness intensely, making us think, and maybe changing us or even making us better - whether cinema as the rehabilitation of visual art, the question of judging and forgiveness (as in Reygadas's Silent Light), or the greatness of spiritual strength and firmness of belief (as in Beauvois's Of Gods and Men (unfortunately, since 1996 and 2010 the film's relevance has only increased)), or the dimensions of feelings (as in Haneke's Amour and Dolan's Mommy), or small islands of optimism for ordinary people (as in Leigh's Another Year), or the pressure of the masses upon an individual's truth (which will make you free, as written in the Bible) (as in Vinterberg's The Hunt), or pitiless dissection of the relationship between a leader and a dependant (as in Anderson's *The Master*), or the confluence of passions and rituals (as in Fedorchenko's Silent Souls), or modern-day Russian happenings in the shadow of Leviathan (as in Zvyagintsev's *Leviathan*), or the revelation of the destructive force of complexes (as in Miller's Foxhunt), or the fragility of the family unit (as in Dolan's It's Only the End of the World), or its strength (as in Rohrwacher's The Wonders).

The Ecumenical and Interfilm Juries, which participate at Cannes, Berlin, Venice, Locarno, Montreal, Karlovy Vary and other festivals, evaluate films according to their artistic quality and their creators' humanistic stance, which expresses ideas of the Gospel or encourages a discussion about them, paying attention to current spiritual, social and ethical values.

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Chronicle



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FACULTY OF ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN



Photo: Andra Marta Babre

AWARDS FOR THE BEST WORKS BY YOUNG ARCHITECTS FROM THE BALTIC STATES

On 3 November 2017, the best works by young architects from the Baltic states received awards in a ceremony held in Vilnius, Lithuania. The award for the best master's-level work was given to Marten Peterson (Estonian Arts Academy, Estonia), and the award for the best bachelor degree work was given to Juta Davidovska (RISEBA University, Latvia) for her thesis Visitor Centre for the Lost Valley of the Daugava (tutors: Dina Suhanova, Didzis Jaunzems). The event, organized for the 5th time by the Baltic Architects' Unions' Association (BAUA), aims to highlight the best young professionals presenting the best graduation projects of all the architectural schools in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia.

ARCHITECT AND FAD TUTOR ANDRIS KRONBERGS RECEIVES THE TITLE OF HONORARY PROFESSOR OF RISEBA

Within the framework of the 25th anniversary events of RISEBA University on 20 October 2017, architect Andris Kronbergs was awarded the title of RISEBA Honorary Professor for personal and institutional support in the process of creating the second architecture school in Latvia as well as for contributing to the improvement of its professional and educational content.

FAD STUDENTS TAKE PART IN THE INTERNATIONAL STUDENT RESEARCH AND ARTISTIC CREATION CONFERENCE – "THE CHANGING WORLD: IN SEARCH OF NEW SOLUTIONS – 2017" The 7th of June 2017 marked the conclusion of the RISEBA and *Rietumu Banka* AS international student research and artistic creation conference *The Changing World: In Search of New Solutions* – 2017. More than 60 students and pupils presented their research and introduced their creative work in four sections in the course of two days.

In the section Business Psychology and Human Resource Management, two recent graduates of the Bachelor Programme in Architecture received recognition: Ervins Gorelovs for his research *The Applicability of the Satellite City* Model in the Current Town Network of Rezekne and Environs as a Sustainable Solution for the Development of Latgale's Central Region and Martins Mals for his work *Design Approaches* and Principles for Autism Spectrum Disorder. In the section Advertising Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow, graduate Alona Purvlice received recognition for research developed from her bachelor thesis, Contemporary Tendencies in the Development of Circus Architecture: The Riga Circus.

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1ST AND 2ND-YEAR ARCHITECTURE STUDENTS EXPLORED FINNISH ARCHITECTURE ON THE ANNUAL STUDY TOUR, 4-9 JUNE 2017 From 4-9 June 2017 architecture students in their 1st and 2nd years went on the annual study tour to Finland. The road trip started with a bus tour to Helsinki, then continued to Tampere, Jyvaskyla, Seinajoki, Rauma and Turku. Students were accompanied by tutors Bart Melort, Gosia Olchowska, Dina Suhanova and Ints Mengelis.

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STUDY TRIP TO ITALY FOR 3RD-YEAR ARCHITECTURE STUDENTS

In June 2017 the study trip destination for 3rd-year students was a country with a rich history – Italy. During the tour we visited several cities: Milan, Genova, Bologna and Rome. The trip was guided by RISEBA FAD tutors Viesturs Celmins (LV) and Thomas Stellmach (DE). Taking into account the study task for the last semester in the *Education | Knowledge* component, the main research topic in Italy was university campuses.

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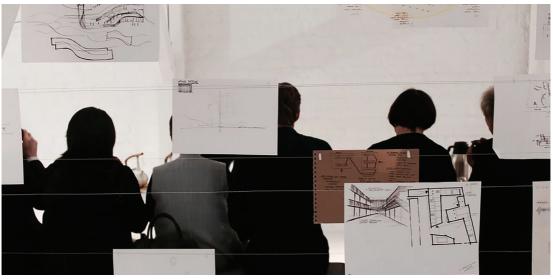


Photo: Dina Suhanova

"PROCESS 17": RISEBA FAD AND RTU AF ARCHITECTURE STUDENT CREATIVE PROCESS EXHIBITION

The architecture student work exhibition PROCESS 17 showcased the development stages of study projects by recreating a typical architecture studio interior with student sketches and scale models. Among the students' works, there were also drawings from the works of this year's Architectural Award of the Year nominees. The exhibition opened on 16 May 2017 in the Cupola Hall of the Latvian National Museum of Art. The exhibition was a collaboration between the RISEBA University Architecture programme and RTU Faculty of Architecture students.



Photo: RISEBA FAD

THE FIRST FIVE YEARS OF THE ARCHITECTURE SCHOOL IN ONE BOOK – THE FAD BOOK

In early March 2017, the first extensive edition by RISEBA FAD was published – *THE FAD BOOK. The First Five Years of FAD.* 2011–2016. The publication is a school book in three languages covering the period from the establishment of the architecture school in 2011 under the leadership of architect Oskars Redbergs until 2015, when the first fifteen graduates defended their BA thesis projects and the fourth incoming class finished their first-year studies. Insight into the 2015/2016 study year is also provided.

The book assembles the best architecture student projects among first through third-year students during the five years of the faculty as well as the architecture bachelor projects and looks back on the life of FAD's community. The FAD book reveals the scope, diversity and typology of the study tasks, which have considered actual urban and socioeconomic processes in Riga and beyond. Editors and authors of the concept: Dina Suhanova, Igors Malovickis.

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Photo: Krists Luhaers

"RE-CREATION" – RISEBA UNIVERSITY ARCHITECTURE PROGRAMME BA THESIS PROJECT EXHIBITION AT THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF LATVIA

On 6 March 2017, the RISEBA University Faculty of Architecture and Design architecture BA graduate project exhibition *RE-CREATION* was opened in the first-floor exhibition hall of the National Library of Latvia. The 15 bachelor projects on exhibition shared the common ambition to discover, revive and recreate abandoned buildings, industrial heritage building complexes that have lost

their original function, former production or recreation buildings, or deficient urban space. The exhibition also displayed a 21 m2 model of the 2nd-year architecture student project RIGA LOWER EAST SIDE. The exhibition was accompanied by two special events: an open lecture by architect Dirk Jan Postel (NL) and a guided tour of the library.

IN FEBRUARY 2017 RISEBA LAUNCHED THE PROFESSIONAL MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAMME IN ARCHITECTURE

The 2-year professional MA Programme in Architecture (120 ECTS) is a follow-up to the 7-semester BA Programme (210 ECTS) in Architecture. Altogether Architecture Studies at RISEBA (bachelor + master's) will comprise 330 ECTS or 5.5 full-time study years, thus meeting the general requirements of the EU standards for the architectural profession.

INSTALLATION - "MITS. MUSDIENU ALA" ("MYTH: A CONTEMPORARY CAVE")

1st-year architecture students from FAD teamed up with artists Julien Morel (FR) and Maris Grosbahs (LV) and architects Didzis Jaunzems and Dina Suhanova (LV) to reveal a new art installation in the front yard of RISEBA Architecture and Media Centre H.O 6. The installation became a part of the Staro Riga 2016 festival events and programme taking place across Riga from 17 to 20 November 2016. Author of the design: Karine Bagdasaryan.

Participating faculty: Julien Morel (FR), Maris Grosbahs, Didzis Jaunzems, Dina Suhanova. Participating students: Karine Bagdasaryan, Linda Bertule, Anete Binke, Zanda Bojare, Anastasija Kockina, Beatrise Luse, Valerija Petrova, Liva Purmale, Anastasija Ragulina, Viktorija Reva, Ksenia Sapega, Dita Vanaga, Raivis Veisbergs, Camila Yakubova, Marta Zile.

Technical realisation and construction: Hansa Film Services together with the students. Light installation and projection: Girts Ozolins. Photo, video: Kostas Margiavicius.

Partners: RISEBA University in cooperation with Design Innovation Centre. Financed by: the French Institute in Saint-Etienne and Riga, RISEBA University, La Fabrique, Region Auvergne-Rhone-Alpes.

WORKSHOP IN THE AIZPUTE LIVONIAN ORDER CASTLE

From 11-13 November 2016, architecture students from RISEBA University and Riga Technical University and landscape architecture students from the Latvia Academy of Agriculture (currently - University of Life Sciences and Technologies) were invited to participate in a three-day open-air workshop on visions of the Aizpute Livonian Order Castle and the future development of its urban surroundings. The workshop was led by invited experts and tutors: architect and cultural heritage expert Peteris Blums, Kuldiga city architect Jana Jakobsone, architect and researcher Professor Janis Lejnieks, structural engineers Janis Kreicburgs and Tomass Kidiks, architects Janis Dripe, Dina Suhanova (RISEBA FAD), and Egons Berzins (RTU APF), and landscape architect Professor Aija Ziemelniece (LLU).

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Photo: Kostas Margiavicius

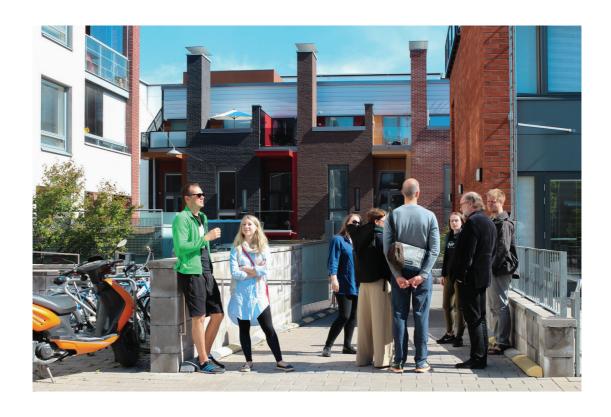
WORKSHOP AND DESIGN HACKATHON "DESIGNSMASH RIGA" AT RISEBA UNIVERSITY The first *DesignSmash RIGA* contest organized by the RISEBA University Faculty of Architecture and Design in cooperation with *DesignSmash* and *Mass Portal* was held on 15 September 2016. 11 teams of designers came together and worked on design prototypes using 3D modelling software and 3D printers provided by *Mass Portal*. The event challenged the

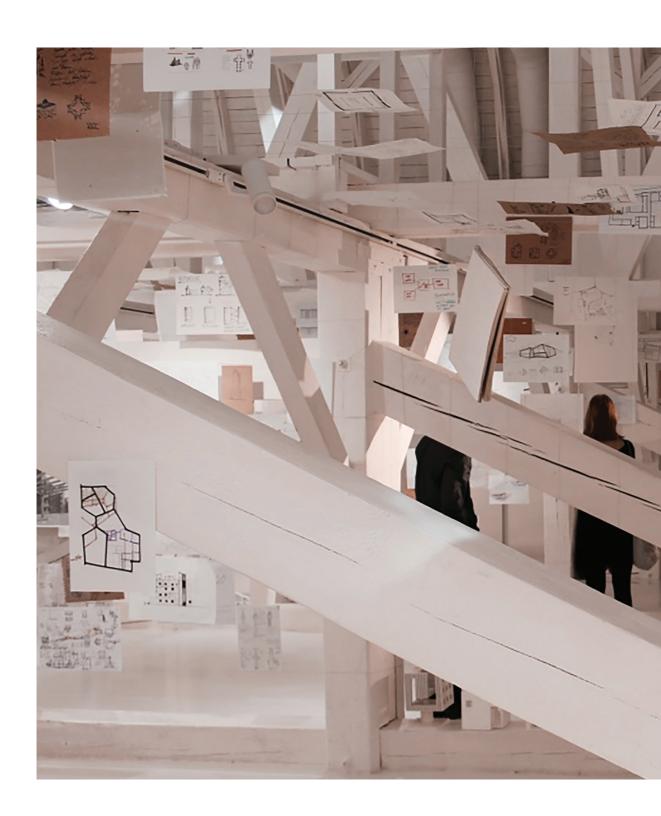
designers to come up with a design prototype in just one day.

The workshop started in the morning with an on-the-spot briefing and concluded with the presentation of the working prototypes, the idea of which was to significantly increase or even change the functionality and use of a selected everyday product found on a designer's desk. During the work process and at the end of the presentations, all the teams received valuable feedback from the invited guests: Aldis Circenis (designer and architect, RedDot award winner), Enlai Hooi (designer), Janis Dripe (architect and researcher), Didzis Jaunzems (architect) and Juris Klava (Head of Product Development at Mass Portal). The winning team of the DesignSmash RIGA contest was RISEBA FAD architecture students Arta Lace and Helena Laura Bindemane. The designers eventually managed to solve the issue of tangled wires and cables in everyone's pockets and bags. Project manager: Dina Suhanova.

SLICE OF ARCHITECTURE OPEN LECTURES HELD AT FAD (SEPTEMBER 2016 TO DECEMBER 2017)

Architect **Rudolfs Dainis Smits** (US, LV) Architect Matti Rautiola (FI) Architect Andres Alver (EE) TARKETT manager Anna Claudia Ricci (IT) Architect **Dirk Jan Postel** (NL) 3rd-year students with tutor Ilze Paklone (LV) Architect **Bart Melort** (BE) Architect and graphic designer Gosia Olchowska (PL, BE) Architect, urbanist **Cees Donkers** (NL) Architecture student Helena Laura Bindemane (LV) Architect Martins Osans (LV) Landscape architect Girts Runis (LV) Sustainability expert **Hadley Barrett** (UK) Architect Liene Griezite (LV)







RISEBA FAD and RTU APF architecture student exhibition "PROCESS 17" at Cupola Hall of the Latvian National Museum of Art. Photo: Dina Suhanova

September 2016 – December 2017

FACULTY OF MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS

RIXC "OPEN FIELDS" **CONFERENCE 2016**

The RIXC Art Science 2016 Festival was held from 29 September to 1 October 2016, and focused on new aesthetics, contemporary conditions, networked responses to geophysical, socio-political and cultural shifts in European landscapes, digital practices and the post-media situation. It presented 25 works by 35 artists, artists-researchers and data designers and took place in the new Exhibition Hall of the National Library of Latvia along with select exhibitions at RISEBA Centre for Architecture and Media H₂O 6. The Open Fields festival edition presented the most innovative approaches in artistic research to address the changing role of the arts, their transformative potential, and their relation to the sciences.

SATELLITE EVENT: YOUNG ARTISTS' EXHIBITIONS AND PERFORMANCES -**IMPULSES**

On 30 September 2016, the New Sound Days Performances took place along with a guided tour by new media artists from Liepaja University's Art Research Lab (MPLab), which currently represents a segment of RISEBA's Audio-Visual Media Arts Master's Programme.

ARTISTIC RESEARCH IN THE BALTICS

On 30 September 2016, at the National Library of Latvia, Parallel Session B, moderated by Ilva Skulte, PhD. Aigars Ceplitis, Assistant Professor in RISEBA University's Faculty of Media and Communications, presented his academic research paper Rhizomatic Structures in Spherical Cinema.

JOINT PREPARATION AND VIDEO SHORTS FOR THE PREMIERE OF GEORGES BIZET'S **OPERA "CARMEN"**

From October to December 2016, students in the RISEBA Audiovisual Media Arts Bachelor Programme participated in a joint project with the Latvian National Opera and Ballet in preparation for the opening of Georges Bizet's Carmen at the LNOB on 2 March 2017. 3rd-year students of the RISEBA programme had the task of creating video essays on the theme of *Carmen*: they were given the freedom to create their own works in the context of the images and stories in Bizet's opera and to come up with original stories about love, passion, betrayal, life and death – the themes depicted in

Carmen. In January 2017, the best student video works were published on the LNOB website as well as on various social networking sites.

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STUDENT-LED PUBLIC RESEARCH FORUM – MEDIA TRANSFIGURATION IN RESEARCH

In February 2017 at the Theatre Pavilion of RISEBA Centre for Architecture and Media H₂O 6, Aigars Ceplitis, Assistant Professor in RISEBA University's Faculty of Media and Communications and a researcher at Liepaja University's New Media MPLab, organized a broad-based forum intended as an informal gathering of doctoral students from the leading Latvian universities in arts, film, and media and their artistic peers and mentors to probe the tension between artistic practice and thesis writing within the context of today's complex socio-geopolitical milieu in order to push the boundaries of media arts constrained by contemporary art programmes. The forum was also open to master's students who plan to enter doctoral programmes in media arts. The forum featured a keynote speech by Nigel Newbutt (PhD, Associate Dean of the Bristol School of Art and Design, the University of the West of England, Bristol, UK), titled The origins of digital media technology used by people with autism as well as the following presentations:

- "Slow" media art and "deep" sustainability: creating a social hybrid platform, by Maija Demitere, MA, Doctoral Programme New Media Art, University of Liepaja;
- Electric art: Electricity as a material in media art and the influences of the history of natural philosophy and information technology on media art in the 20th and 21st century, by Paula Vitola, MA, Doctoral Programme New Media Art, University of Liepaja;
- Identity construction for people with disabilities in the discourse of the Latvian political landscape, by Baiba Baikovska, MA, Doctoral Programme Communication Culture & Multimedia, Riga Stradins University;
- Inclusion of Children and Young People with Functional Impairments in the New Media Art Project I see the world, by Silga Svike, MA, Doctoral Programme New Media Art, University of Liepaja;
- Narratology and the Phenomenon of Film Editing: Theory and Practice, by Antra Cilinska, MA, Doctoral Programme Cultural Theory, Latvian Academy of Culture;
- Rhizomatic Narratives in 360° 3D

ARTS SGEM 2017

4TH INTERNATIONAL **MULTIDISCIPLINARY SCIENTIFIC** CONFERENCE ON SOCIAL SCIENCES AND

- Cinematography, by Aigars Ceplitis, MFA, Doctoral Programme New Media Art, University of Liepaja;
- Immersive environments for live staging of hybrid events with self-adapting interfaces, by Janis Garancs, MFA, Doctoral Programme New Media Art, University of Liepaja.

From 28 to 31 March, 2017, in Vienna, Austria, Aigars Ceplitis, Assistant Professor in RISEBA University's Faculty of Media and Communications, participated in a peerreviewed multidisciplinary conference that provided a platform for academicians and professionals with cross-disciplinary interests related to modern science, ancient science, cultural studies, language and treasure, international relations, art and architecture. His research paper The Friction of Aesthetics and Narrative Taxonomy in 360° Films was published in the conference proceeding and submitted for evaluation and indexation in the biggest scientific databases: ISI Web of Science, Thomson Reuters, SCOPUS, ELSEVIER Mendeley, EBSCO, ProQuest, the British Library.

Photo: Aigars Ceplitis

LATVIAN PREMIERE OF ARTHUR KOPIT'S "BecauseHeCan" - RISEBA REPERTORY THEATRE

On the 28th and 29th of April 2017, at RISEBA's Architecture and Media Centre H,O 6 in Riga, BecauseHeCan was presented fully in English with a cast made up of students from the RISEBA Bachelor Programme in Audiovisual Media Arts. Acclaimed by the critics as the best new play at the 1999 Humana Festival of New

American Plays in Louisville, BecauseHeCan is an edgy, erotically charged information-age thriller. The play by award-winning playwright Arthur Kopit exposes the control that computers can have over our lives, morality, and even bank accounts. While BecauseHeCan does show the horror of identity theft and the dangers of privacy invasion in the digital age, the main theme is how revenge can take on a new form through digital technology. From his depiction of unscrupulous federal agents to his portrayal of an implacable computer hacker, Kopit shows that power corrupts. He places the focus on the abuse of authority, which happens simply because it is possible. The play was directed by RISEBA Creative Director Aigars Ceplitis. The RISEBA Student Repertory Theatre is the only theatre company in Latvia that puts on productions exclusively in English and focuses on presenting the latest award-winning American and British plays.

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STUDENT ACADEMIC RESEARCH CONFERENCE - "THE CHANGING WORLD: IN SEARCH OF NEW SOLUTIONS - 2017" RISEBA University, in cooperation with *Rietumu Banka* AS, held the international student research and artistic creation conference *The Changing World: In Search of New Solutions – 2017.* Within the framework of the conference, students from the Audiovisual Media Art Bachelor Programme participated in the video competition. Of the thirty-four video works submitted, ten were selected for the main show. First place was won by a documentary entitled *The Complete Rock and Roll* (directed by P. Zvirbulis).

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DIRECTING WORKSHOP BY THE AWARD-WINNING THEATRE AND FILM DIRECTOR DEBORAH LAVINE, CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE OF THE ARTS (US) From 5 to 10 June 2017, Deborah LaVine, an award-winning theatre and film director and Acting Head of the Directing Division at the California Institute of the Arts (CalArts), California, USA, held a film directing workshop with students from the RISEBA Audiovisual Media Arts Master's Programme and a select group of BA students. Her recent feature film Wild Prarie Rose premiered at Geena Davis's Bentonville Film Festival and has subsequently been playing at festivals across the US, winning numerous prizes, including the Heartland Film Festival in Indianapolis (James Stewart Legacy Award), Sedona International Film Festival (Audience Award for Best Feature), Omaha National Film Festival, Black Hills FF (Best



Photo: Aigars Ceplitis

Feature), Sioux Empire Film Festival (Best Feature), La Femme International Festival, Cinema St. Louis-St. Louis Film Festival, Cinema Falls Cinematheque, and many others. Deborah's most recent work is the short film Unintended. The film features Jeff Perry, a founding member of the Steppenwolf Theater Company and co-star of the television series Scandal. Theatrically, Deborah has directed over 300 professional productions across the United States, for which she has received many prestigious awards, including 4 Ovation awards, 16 Drama-Logue / Backstage West awards, and an NAACP Image Award citation.

5TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE EUROPEAN NARRATOLOGY NETWORK "NARRATIVE AND NARRATOLOGY: METAMORPHOSING THE STRUCTURES"

The 5th International Conference of the European Narratology Network was held in Prague, Czech Republic from 13 to 15 September 2017. Its main focus was narrative and narratology itself and metamorphosing structures. The aim of the conference was to offer a space for revision and for the discussion of the metamorphoses of the study of narrative, of its further potentials and boundaries, but also of older and current conceptions of narratological studies. Aigars Ceplitis, Assistant Professor in RISEBA University's Faculty of

Media and Communications, participated in this peer-reviewed conference with his research paper *The Paradox of Embodiment and Narrative Schemata in 360-Degree Spherical Cinema*.

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"VIRTUALITIES AND REALITIES" – RIXC 2ND INTERNATIONAL "OPEN FIELDS" CONFERENCE 2017 The RIXC Art Science 2017 Festival was held from 19 to 20 October 2017 and focused on establishing a space for artistic interventions and conversations about the complex implications of immersive technologies coupled with superior virtual environments, artificial intelligence algorithms, faster processors, and biometrics, which are launching a new era in virtual experiences, entertainment and storytelling. The 2nd Open Fields conference on artistic research, as well as workshops, performances and exhibitions exploring the theme Virtualities and Realities, took place at Riga's most significant contemporary art venues: kim? Contemporary Art Centre, RIXC Gallery, the Art Academy of Latvia, and the Latvian National Museum of Art, and the closing performance night was held at RISEBA Centre for Architecture and Media H₂O 6. At this peer-reviewed conference, Aigars Ceplitis, Assistant Professor in RISEBA University's Faculty of Media and Communications, presented his study The Tension of Temporal Focalization and Immersivity in 360° Spherical 3D Virtual Space.

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100TH ANNIVERSARY OF LATVIA'S
INDEPENDENCE – MULTIMEDIA PROJECT
"LATVIA IN ITS PERMANENCE"

In the fall of 2017, students in the RISEBA Audiovisual Media Arts Bachelor Programme contributed to the 100th anniversary of Latvia's independence at the invitation of *Vides Filmu Studija*, where the students participated in the multimedia project *Latvia in Its Permanence*, in the section *History in a Single Frame*. The idea behind the project was to create an educational platform that allows students to participate in the creation of historical memory stories in a one-frame format. The best student video works will be published on the project's web platform throughout 2018.

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RISEBA Student Repertory Theatre performance "Gloria" in 2018, director: Aigars Ceplitis. Photo: Kristaps Mozgirs

Biographies



LINDA LEITANE-**SMIDBERGA**

Master of Architecture leitane.linda@gmail.com Linda Leitane Smidberga is an architect with a master's degree in architecture from the Riga Technical University (Latvia). She has worked in architecture offices in Riga, most notably SZK and Partners and NRJA, and has participated in more than 30 local and international architecture competitions. She was also a co-curator (NRJA) of the Latvian national exhibition *Unwritten* at the 14th Venice Biennale of Architecture in 2014, dedicated to extensive research about modernist architecture in Latvia. She was a member of the board at the Latvian Association of Architects (2015-2017), curating architecture competitions.



LIGA TREIJA

Bachelor of Architecture liga.procel@gmail.com

Liga Treija holds a bachelor's degree from the RISEBA University Faculty of Architecture and Design and is currently continuing with master's studies at RISEBA. Liga has worked for several architecture companies in Riga, including AMB Architects and Designers and Procel Pro, thus gaining valuable experience in working on projects of national and international scale. Apart from being a full-time university student, she also holds a position as a territory planner in Salacgriva Municipality.



ANDIS ALKSNINS

Bachelor of Architecture andis.alksnins@yahoo.com

Andis Alksnins is a graduate of the RISEBA University Faculty of Architecture and Design BA Programme in Architecture. Since 2007 Andis has worked at the architecture practice *ARHIS Architects*, participating in large-scale project development and numerous competitions. During his studies Andis took part in various summer schools and workshops, receiving the award for personal growth in the design studio at RISEBA University.

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ATIS KAMPARS

Master of Arts atiskampars@apollo.lv

Atis Kampars is an artist and art theorist with academic drawing, colour theory, and visual composition as his main fields of research. Atis graduated from the Art Academy of Latvia and I. Repin St. Petersburg State's Institute of Fine Arts. In 2010 he started his doctoral studies at the School of Arts, Design and Architecture of Aalto University, Finland, with the thesis *Culture* of Academic Drawing - History, Problematics, and Context. Atis was a professor of drawing until 2010 and Vice-Rector of Academic Affairs of the Art Academy of Latvia till 2007. Since 2011 he has held a lecturer's position at the RISEBA University Faculty of Architecture and Design. Atis is also currently a member of the Committee for Accreditation of Studies of Latvia.



DINA SUHANOVA

Professional Bachelor of Architecture, Master of Arts dina.suhanova@riseba.lv

Dina Suhanova is an architect with a professional architect's diploma from the Riga Technical University Faculty of Architecture and Urban Planning. In 2013 Dina received a master's degree from the Art Academy of Latvia, Department of History and Theory of Visual Arts and Culture. She has also studied abroad and worked for local and international architecture firms. Since 2010 Dina has worked in cooperation with the Latvian architectural design studio MAILITIS Architects. Currently she is the Director of the BA Programme in Architecture at RISEBA and a tutor in the architecture design studio. Dina also leads her own research and design projects.



AIGARS CEPLITIS

Master of Arts acglobalfilms@gmail.com Aigars Ceplitis is the Creative Director of the Audiovisual Media Arts Programme at RISEBA University, where he teaches film editing and film narratology. He is a graduate of CalArts and formerly served as an editor and assistant to the established Hollywood director Randal Kleiser and headed a film and video programme for disadvantaged children of Los Angeles under the auspices of the Stenbeck Family. Currently Aigars is a PhD candidate at the New Media MPLab, Liepaja University, where he is investigating narrative taxonomies for 360° 3D spherical cinema. Aigars holds an MA in film arts from the California Institute of the Arts and a BA in art history from Lawrence University. He has also studied theatre directing at the John Goodman School of Drama of DePaul University and continues the Anglo-Saxon theatrical tradition as an artistic director of the RISEBA Student Repertory Theatre.



RASA SMITE

PhD in Sociology rasa.smite@rixc.org



RAITIS SMITS

PhD in Visual and Media Arts Rasa Smite and Raitis Smits are artists, researchers and founders of Riga-based RIXC Center for New Media Culture.
Rasa holds her PhD in sociology and is a Professor of New Media Art at Liepaja University. She also teaches and leads the New Media and Audiovisual Arts research direction at RISEBA University.

Raitis Smits holds his doctoral degree in visual and media arts and is an Associate Professor at the Art Academy of Latvia. Currently, in 2018, they are also visiting lecturers at the MIT Art, Culture and Technology Program in Boston, USA.

Website: http://smitesmits.com

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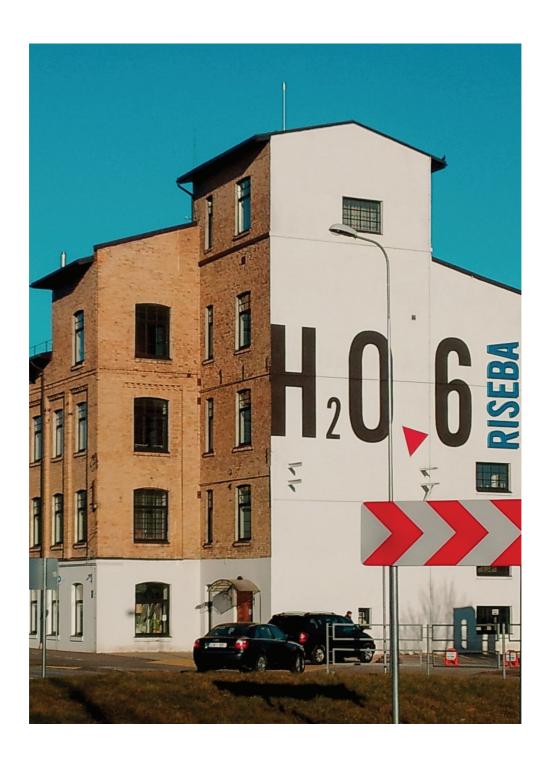


ANITA UZULNIECE

PhD in Arts anitauz@inbox.lv

Anita Uzulniece is a film critic with a PhD in Arts. She studied German philology at the State University of Latvia, film sciences at the Film institute in Moscow and theology at the Luther Academy. Anita is a co-author of the book *Film History in Latvia*, published by the Academy of Sciences of Latvia, and *Marija Leiko* (a film and theatre actress). She is also a writer of film critiques, reviews, articles on films, and festival reports.

Anita is an Assistant Professor at RISEBA and the University of Economics and Culture (film history). Since 1999 she has organized the film forum *And the Word Became Film* in Riga. Anita is also a member of FIPRESCI, of the SteerCom INTERFILM, and of several FIPRESCI (Cottbus, Berlin, Chicago, Moscow, Riga), INTERFILM (Lubeck, Riga) and Ecumenical Juries (Berlin, Cannes, Karlovy Vary, Montreal, Locarno, and Cottbus).



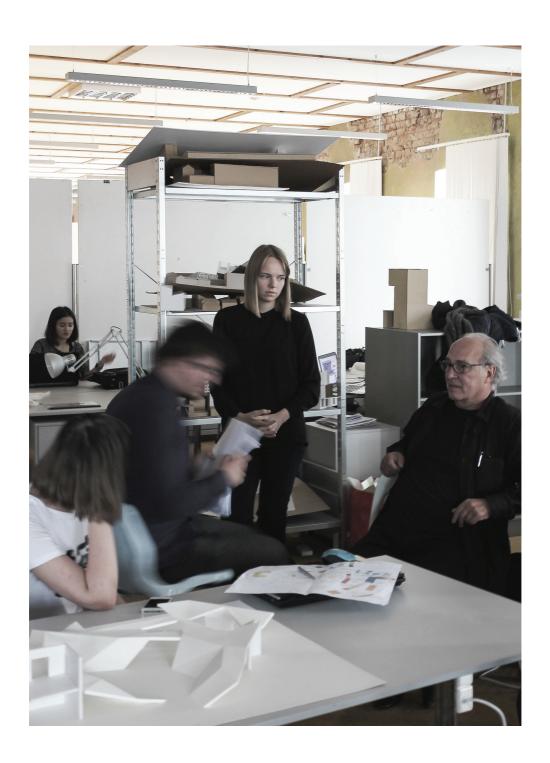
About RISEBA University

Already in its 25th year, RISEBA University of Business, Arts and Technology in Riga, Latvia, offers its students contemporary and high-quality education. RISEBA is an interdisciplinary and multicultural private higher education institution fully accredited by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia.

As one of the first private higher education institutions in Latvia, RISEBA is now among the 10 largest higher education institutions in Latvia (both public and private) with almost 3000 students, including 200 international students, who attend 20 study programmes of different levels and directions, and more than 9000 alumni. Since its foundation in 1992, the mission of RISEBA has been "to be a gateway to international careers".

The university facilitates the development of creative personalities, preparing students and graduates for entrepreneurial careers at the international level, offering a wide range of undergraduate and postgraduate business and creative programmes as well as doctoral studies. In the last decade RISEBA has opened studies in communication, audiovisual media arts and architecture, thus transforming the institution into a place where "business meets art".

RISEBA stands out with its clear international focus and is distinguished by the exclusivity of the study programmes offered and variety of languages of instruction. The programmes are taught in Latvian, English and Russian, with both full and part-time tracks.



About the Faculty of Architecture and Design

RISEBA University's Faculty of Architecture and Design was established in 2011 and offers architecture studies in international settings in Latvia in two successive cycles – the Bachelor's Programme in Architecture (3.5 years, 210 ECTS) and the Professional Master's Programme in Architecture (2 years, 120 ECTS). Since its foundation the faculty has combined the best architecture education standards and teaching experience in Europe in pursuit of academic excellence and international recognition. Both programmes are fully accredited by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia.

The Bachelor's Degree of Engineering Sciences in Architecture is the first step in preparing students for further studies in the fields of architecture and urban planning and professional architectural practice. In 2017 RISEBA University established the 2-year Professional Master's Programme in Architecture; thus, the total length of architecture studies at RISEBA comprises 330 ECTS or 5.5 full-time study years, meeting the general requirements of EU standards for practicing the architectural profession.

The aim of the programmes is to provide students with the theoretical knowledge, practical skills and necessary competences to work in the field of architecture, design and urban planning. During studies students advance their abilities in analytical thinking and problem solving and acquire the research skills to approach design tasks in a variety of contexts and to work out concepts while being socially responsible young professionals.



About the Faculty of Media and Communications

The Faculty of Media and Communications offers bachelor's and master's programmes designed to produce highly qualified, competent and competitive audiovisual specialists and develop a new type of entrepreneur who can achieve a symbiosis of business and creative thinking.

The Bachelor's Programme in Audiovisual Media Arts is targeted at young people with comprehensive secondary education and those who want to attain a professional qualification in the field of audiovisual media arts related to television, Internet media, cinema and new media. The Bachelor's Programme offers a well-balanced mix of theory, methods and practice in the audiovisual field and is supported by the latest technology and advanced equipment. Study courses are taught in Latvian, Russian and English.

The Master's Programme offers in-depth training in new media and audiovisual arts. Alongside the traditional practices of directing and cinematography, students apply more innovative forms, such as arts research, interactive 2D and 3D production, sound design, experimental fine arts, performance studies, extended and virtual reality, 360° video production, culture analytics, and data visualization. The programme is implemented in collaboration with Liepaja University. The Master's Programme offers four majors: Audiovisual Media Arts, Multimedia Performance Art, Digital Art and Sound Art and Electronic Music.



About ADAMarts

ADAMarts is a double-blind peer-reviewed academic journal dedicated to architecture, design and audiovisual media arts from the Baltic Sea region, published once a year by RISEBA University, both in print and online. ADAMarts aims to bring together leading academic scientists, researchers, scholars and practitioners from around the world.

ADAMarts encourages a variety of approaches to the urban phenomenon – from urban planning to architecture, design and digital media. We are interested in papers reviewing the connections between various countries and cultures of the Baltic region. We invite submission of articles based on theoretical investigations, design research and alternative exploration on the following topics:

- Architecture and interior design design theory research, education and practice, exhibition architecture, crowd management planning, design of the interior environment, design innovations for aging, coloured exterior and interior lighting, environmental psychology and other related topics;
- Planning urban planning and development, urban affairs, planning education & research, innovative planning programmes and techniques, preserving large landscapes,

- planning & environmental law, public budgeting and finance and other related topics;
- Audiovisual media arts digital media design, art practices in global digital culture, immersive experiences in virtual space, film, television, and new media in the post-digital era, audiovisual strategies on portable platforms and social media, 360° cinematography and production, 3D stereoscopic film production in communitymediated environments, producing in local and international markets, audiovisual media branding and niche marketing, animation and CG integration in audiovisual settings, multimedia performing arts, video installation and net art, game design and ludology theories, narratology in film and media and other related topics;
- Any topics from the related fields of design, production and consumption.

The first edition of *ADAMarts* was published in 2018. Further contributions and papers will be welcome from academicians, post-graduate students, architects, designers, planners, media artists, anthropologists, historians, psychologists, sociologists or others interested in the fields named above.

ADAMarts Volume 1

ADAMarts is a collection of articles reviewing the connections between different countries and cultures, especially of the Baltic region. Texts included in ADAMarts are invited through a public call for papers. Only original papers that have not been previously published may be selected for publication.

Submission of articles:

Proposals are welcome from academicians, post-graduate students, architects, designers, planners, media artists, anthropologists, historians, psychologists, sociologists or others interested in interior design at any level in the fields named above.

The paper should not exceed 8000 characters and should include a title, an abstract and keywords in English. Illustrations (up to 10 for articles and up to 3 for reviews) should be submitted in TIFF, JPG or PDF format (resolution at least 300 dpi in the final size). Copyright of images should be cleared by the author of the article prior to submission. A full list of captions should be given at the end of the article or review. For reference formatting, the Harvard system should be used.

If the paper fulfils the requirements, including those of the journal's editorial guidelines (provided in the respective call for papers), it is double-blind peer reviewed. All evaluators are external and anonymous.

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The opinions expressed in this issues's articles are entirely the responsibility of their authors and are not necessarily shared by the editors of this journal.

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