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# The Ecosystem of Culture and Arts

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# The Ecosystem of Culture and Arts

Anda Laķe, Edīte Tišheizere

This volume of the journal includes articles that address a topical issue in cultural research — namely, the ecosystem of culture and arts, its boundaries, uniqueness, and diversity. The articles have been developed within the framework of several sub-projects of the National Research Program *Cultural Capital as a Resource for the Sustainable Development of Latvia* (CARD).

The theoretical models of the ecosystem hold the potential to enable a deep analysis of the mutual impact and dynamics of complex phenomena. Scholars from social sciences, humanities, and arts have adjusted these models for the study of development preconditions of the cultural and creative sector. Within the framework of the CARD project, the ecosystem approach elaborates on the idea of culture and creative activity as a dynamic network of mutual connections — productive or hindering — which create and transform the cultural capital as an essential resource for national development. The ecosystem viewpoint enables an open and interpretive stance with regard to both historical and contemporary processes as well as toward value flows. It also allows the identification of boundaries of phenomena and sub-sectors, the functional ties of sub-sectors and actors, and the role of boundaries in interrelations and transformations. CARD was the first time that five Latvian scientific institutions collaborated in the name of joint scholarly, social, and communicative goals; this collaboration was conducive in nurturing the conception of the national academic and scholarly community of culture and the arts as part of the ecosystem of the cultural and creative sector.

The current volume of *Letonica* includes ten articles, which 1) open a discussion on the methodological suitability of the ecosystem concept in research concerning Latvia's cultural and creative sector, including the study of cultural heritage; 2) provide contextual spotlights on the developmental trajectories and dynamics of individual art branches — theatre, film, music, architecture — emphasizing the role of change, connections, and boundaries; 3) provide close-up views of notable phenomena of the cultural and creative ecosystem, highlighting its diversity.

The first section of the volume is entitled Identifying the Ecosystem of Culture; it comprises three articles.

Anda Laķe, Ilona Kunda, and Baiba Tjarve provide a comprehensive analysis of the range of ecosystems' theoretical and methodological approaches and solutions, in order to identify the conditions of practical application of these approaches and solutions in the study of Latvia's national-scale cultural and creative ecosystems. Although the complex nature of the ecosystem concept does not currently lend itself to a conclusive systematization of theoretical postulates and methodological standards, the authors uncover the factors of the political and cultural context that blur the boundaries of the cultural and arts domain, simultaneously hindering a successful identification of the development stimuli and varieties of resources of the ecosystem.

Regional and functional aspects of the ecosystem are the focus of the article by Annette Naudin, Ieva Zemīte, and Agnese Hermane. Their article explores cultural intermediaries,

which act as a part of cultural and creative industries, enhancing relationships and shaping and strengthening the local cultural and creative ecosystems. The authors emphasize that the identification of key local participants in cultural and creative industries may be a decisive precondition in the shaping of local policies and in the advancement of collaboration between state authorities and the sector's actors.

Local community self-initiatives and participation have a special role in the development of the cultural and creative ecosystem. In their article, Rūta Muktupāvela and Ieva Vītola highlight the value of participation and self-organization in the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage. Using as a theoretical background John Holden's theory of the roles of ecosystem participants, the authors analyze the activities of a non-governmental organization, identifying an unclear allocation of responsibilities between the state and the non-governmental sector in the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage.

The second section of the volume, entitled Shifting the Focus/Paradigm, comprises scholarly articles from the study of four branches of art: theatre, music, film, and architecture. These articles emphasize the role of radical change and transformation in the development of the ecosystem.

Zane Kreicberga, Edīte Tišheizere, and Līga Ulberte present the results of the study of transformation of contemporary theatre art in three dimensions — from the point of view of the text, the actor and/or performer, and the space and movement. The goal of the article is to identify the characteristic features of 21st century Latvian theatre, exploring these in the context of the key change of focus occurring due to Latvian theatre artists' contextualizing their work through Western theatre processes and moving away from Soviet and post-Soviet expression. Simultaneously, the authors note the epistemological risks that may surface when including diverse and contradictory performative practices in a piece of theatre art. These processes demand an ongoing redefinition of the theoretical and methodological concepts of the scholarly study of theatre, adapting these to the specific conditions of the Latvian theatre ecosystem.

Ilze Liepiņa-Šarkovska uncovers the open nature of the music ecosystem and the transfer of the Western music language to Latvian society, analyzing the musical activities of the Latvian Brethren congregations of the 18th century. The article addresses the adaptation of the Brethren congregations in the Latvian environment at the start of the first missions in Vidzeme in 1729. The author notes that the *Herrnhuter Brüdergemeine* teachings became attractive in the Latvian environment owing to the new, contemporary, Sentimentalism-related pre-Classical music language, which became organically integrated in the local cultural space.

The study by Dita Rietuma addresses the transformative role played by international factors in the development of the film art ecosystem. The author analyzes the role of co-production films in the building of the artistic, communicative, financial, and social capacity of the film industry. The author provides an assessment of Latvian co-production experiences within

the context of the transformations of time and ideology; in addition, Rietuma highlights the dominant trends in co-produced films (feature films, documentaries, animation films). The article outlines the challenges of the international reception, distribution, and audience attraction of co-production films, thus explicating the context of network formation of the ecosystem of film art.

The focus of the article by Silvija Grosa and Agnese Tambaka is the role of ornament in architectural decor. The study examines pertinent architectural artifacts from the turn of the 19th/20th centuries. The focus of the study was grounded in assumptions of the paradigm change in ornament studies, the attempts of foreign art scholars to re-interpret theories on ornaments, and the conclusion that these issues often take central position in debates on artistic practice and art history. The scholars conclude that during the period under study, the motifs in tile design were mostly grounded in classical art heritage, and that confirms the assumption that the decorative finish of late Art Nouveau rent house entrance-halls mostly fits the stylistics of freely interpreted neo-Classicism.

The third section of the volume, Zooming in on Elements of the Ecosystem, addresses unique cultural phenomena. This is prompted by the close relationship of the complexity of the cultural and creative ecosystem with the role of authenticity of artistic products, with the simultaneousness of the creation of artistic experience and other values linked to uniqueness. In their article, Inese Sirica and Elīna Veilande-Apine address the convergence and interaction processes characteristic of Latvia's professional and amateur art. The study zooms in on the interaction of professional textile art and amateur textile art (*or people's applied art*) in Soviet Latvia. The conclusions emphasize that the People's Applied Art studios, as well as the Department of Textile Art of the Latvian Academy of Art established in 1961, adhered to global contemporary trends of amateur and textile art in the 1960s–80s. The study concludes that people's applied art studios were a legitimate way of using amateur art, or "people's art," to safeguard Latvian traditional practices in a totalitarian system. The authors call for more in-depth studies on amateur art practices, highlighting such practices' role in the formation of trends in contemporary amateur art.

Līga Goldberga's article focuses on photographic postcards as a specific element of culture and heritage. Widely represented in private collections, memory albums, libraries, archives, and museum collections, these can be used in research as documentary heritage, a memory tool, and historical evidence. The article provides insight into examples of researching the materiality of photographs, but also critically assesses the hierarchy-forming processes of collection. The author proposes a view that does not set apart the value of certain collection items over others, but that forms an inclusive, ecosystem model.

In her article, Zane Šiliņa analyzes the artistic features of an outstanding cultural personality — Latvian People's Poet and Playwright Rainis. Rainis created a distinctive ecosystem of ideas, values, and goals in Latvia's culture, which continues to draw scholars of culture and arts to analyze the role played by this cultural leader. Juxtaposing the darkness/light and day/night present in the works of Rainis, the author analyzes how the clash of contrary forces

develop and transform the basic principles of drama. The author concludes that Rainis was interested in the idea of elevating the struggle of contrary forces from the level of relationships between the play's protagonists to a cosmic level.

The articles in the volume — taken separately and viewed together — demonstrate not only the diversity of the cultural and creative ecosystem, but also the variety of approaches in its study and the diversity of scholars as individuals. This continues to highlight the topicality of the question of the integrity of the ecosystem, its inclusive or excluding nature.

The program's shortened title is CARD (or Cultural (C) and Arts (A) Resources (R) for Development (D)). Its implementation partners from October 1, 2020, until October 1, 2022, are five leading higher education and cultural heritage institutions in Latvia — the Latvian Academy of Culture (Lead partner), Jāzeps Vītols Latvian Academy of Music, the Latvian Academy of Art, the National Library of Latvia, and the Institute of Literature, Folklore, and Art of the University of Latvia. The goal of the program's project is to create an interdisciplinary foundation of human capital and knowledge based on 1) the diversity and value of the cultural capital and 2) the processes forming the vitality of the cultural sector's ecosystem, each as a resource for Latvia's sustainable development.

CARD — as a platform transferring values and experiences — has expanded in both an administrative and human sense the mutual resource-exchange opportunities for scholars, students, and representatives of creative branches. One of the manifestations of this collaboration is the production of this Special Issue of *Letonica,* for which Program participants are especially grateful to the Institute of Literature, Folklore, and Art of the University of Latvia.

# Identifying the Ecosystem of Culture

# Theoretical Approaches and Methodological Challenges in the Study of the Cultural and Creative Ecosystem

## Anda Laķe, Ilona Kunda, Baiba Tjarve

# Introduction

Analytical reflection and research questions on growth, evolution, and resilience in culture, as well as the inclusive nature of the creative economy and conditions for its sustainability, have prompted researchers from various disciplines to seek answers by means of ecological approaches, especially the concept of the ecosystem. The epistemological value of the ecosystem concept has grown in conjunction with researchers' attempts to expand and humanize the understanding of societal transformation and conditions of its development, decreasing the role of market and economic values. These ideas are concisely expressed in John Clammer's definition of "holistic development," which refers to "forms of development that far exceed the purely economic or material and involve the development of culture, the pursuit of social and cultural justice, concern for the environment as the essential context for the maintenance and flourishing of both human and non-human life forms and ideas of both material and cultural sustainability and the links between all of these" (Clammer 2015). The need to understand the relationship between culture and development is consistently present also within the context of policy-making, especially so in discussing support conditions and contributions for inclusive and sustainable growth. It may be precisely this discourse that has promoted the development of a new, inclusive and at the same time actionable understanding of culture. A possible answer for this call may be the ecological understanding of culture — "one that can embrace the many interconnections and interdependencies involved in processes of valuing, and experiencing value for oneself" (Wilson et al. 2020). The study of the cultural and creative ecosystem often also includes the development of policy recommendations. On various levels of policy-making (local, national, European Union (EU), international), the agenda has contained discussions on the best ways of governing the mutual dependence of this complex adaptive system and on making decisions about the kinds and concrete instances of cultural and artistic manifestations to be promoted, supported, and developed. These issues became as topical as ever during the Covid-19 pandemic, as the social distancing measures had a particular impact on the cultural domain.

However, notwithstanding the demand for new knowledge on the dynamics of the cultural and creative sector's development, no universal analytical models have been put forward suitable for being integrated into the practice of analysis and monitoring of the national-level cultural and creative ecosystem. The research surrounding these issues is characterized by an active discussion on the meanings

of key concepts by their contextual mobility and the selection of criteria for case studies. Scholarly literature and prior research demonstrate that the concepts of ecosystem and ecology may be used interchangeably or in a metaphorical way; the concept of the "cultural and creative sector" similarly is used in varied meanings and is often replaced by a number of other terms. The imprecise definitions of the phenomenon being studied illustrate both the temporal dynamic changeability of the phenomenon, the diversity of its manifestations, the plurality of contexts, and the differences in research discourses. Prior research is dominated by local-level case studies. Researchers acknowledge the value of these local-level studies, as they examine the connectivity of the actual players of the sector and often provide an in-depth view of the dynamic processes that happen within the sector. These studies tend to address either a concrete place or a region (e.g. Markusen et al. 2011 — California), or a specific branch of the sector (e.g. Ooi, Comunian 2019 — art entrepreneurship ecosystems in Singapore). At the same time, scholars point out that there is a relative scarcity of such studies (Blackstone et al. 2016); in addition, their methodology is not always replicable for the limitations of the selected area of analysis, its scope, the constraints of data sources, and other considerations.

The necessity of studying the problem issues of the cultural and creative ecosystem on a national scale became particularly salient during the time of COVID-19, when conventional connections and value flows between the sector's operator groups were deformed or discontinued. In this paper, the authors will also discuss the situation in Latvia. Alongside discussions on the adjusting of national scale support instruments to the network of diverse operators, there appeared in the public sphere several new questions, such as "Who belongs to the cultural and creative sector?" and "Who can be eligible for the state support instruments allocated for the cultural and creative sector?"

In Latvia several issues of the scope, scale, and boundaries of the cultural and creative sector became topical in the spring of 2020, when the measures for limiting the spread of Covid-19 made it necessary to simultaneously identify the most effective mechanisms of political and financial support for diverse operators of the cultural and creative sector. This was needed in order to ensure the continuous process of creative activity in both the public and private sector and in professional and amateur art. It is at that time that discussions surfaced in the media and policy agenda on operators "belonging" and "not belonging" in the cultural domain, framed by Latvia's cultural policy. The discussions addressed the need for state support, its kinds and sources, the differences between private and public operators of the cultural and creative sector, the specific operators of various branches of culture and arts, as well as the commensurability of support for state- and municipality-founded cultural organizations. The discussion of support measures was supplemented by calls for the government to expand the field of political responsibility, integrating into cultural policy not only support initiatives for state, municipal, and non-governmental-sector players, but also those for commercial operators. A pertinent example arose in popular music, where in October 2020 self-employed representatives of popular music established the Association of Self-Employed Musicians (https://www.muzikubiedriba.lv/#par-biedribu), to jointly substantiate and express the call for granting support payments to professional, non-academic musical artists during a time when the

government had enforced downtime. Prior to Covid-19, these artists worked under market conditions and had much less access to public funding instruments than did state- and municipality-founded organizations, for whom financial conditions were more predictable and stable.

In addition, a survey of cultural and creative sector representatives[1] uncovered pronounced differences (more details later in the text) in the self-assessment of the representatives of various cultural and creative sector branches (music, theatre, dance, visual and audio-visual art, film, design, literature, photography, circus, heritage, publishing, media, arts and cultural education, etc.) regarding opportunities for continuing professional artistic activities, the scope and sources of income, and other conditions of professional activity. Thus, Covid-19 illuminated the heterogeneity of the varied legal statuses, the specificity of the production cycle of the creative products, and the distinctive traits of the cultural and creative ecosystem as such.

The goal of the article is to appraise the theoretical approaches in studying ecosystems and the methodological principles of related empirical studies, which can be used in the analysis of a national-scale cultural and creative ecosystem and the identification of the indicators enabling its vitality and growth. According to the goal, in this article we will answer three core research questions: 1) What are the key conceptual traits of the theoretical approaches to the study of ecosystems? 2) What is the prior tradition in the use of the ecosystem concept in the exploration of the cultural and creative sector? What methodological solutions have been used in determining the scale of the cultural and creative ecosystem? 3) What analytical models and methodological solutions can be used in the study of a national-scale cultural and creative sector ecosystem? What are the preconditions and barriers of their application? The paper is a synthesis review, based in the study of theoretical literature and prior empirical research. Its goals are to provide a comprehensive analysis of extant approaches and solutions and to outline the necessity for new research. In addition, the paper aims to identify the preconditions for the application of said approaches and solutions in the study of national-level ecosystems.

## The theoretical approaches to the study of ecosystems

There are varied definitions of the ecosystem concept and its related ecological perspective, its analytical structure. Responding to the increased popularity of this approach,

1   To determine the impact of the Covid-19 on the cultural sector, the Latvian Academy of Culture in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture, the Latvian Council of Artists' Associations, and the Association of Contemporary Culture NGOs in May 2020 initiated and implemented a survey of representatives of the cultural and creative sector. A total of 3222 respondents provided their assessment, including 1824 creative persons and 1398 representatives of organisations, state- and municipality-founded institutions and commercial enterprises in the cultural and creative sector (accessible there: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1MPAQjNl5tdgxvBKq9qLoy3g26ItBVlw5/view).

several literature reviews have been published on the ecology and ecosystems of various sub-sectors. Scholars who have used one or both terms in their studies have not used common research methods or applied a consistent understanding of what elements constitute an ecology or ecosystem. The dominant discourse posits that the research object is the ecosystem, while ecology is the science that studies it. Ecosystem in its initial meaning is defined as "a biological system composed of all the organisms found in a particular physical environment, interacting with it and each other." (Oxford English Dictionary 2017, as cited in Tsujimoto et al. 2018). However, as already mentioned, the concept is used also in its broader meaning, denoting various complex systems whose working principles resemble the biological ecosystem. Although the ecosystem conception has been generated in biology, scholars have compared and discussed similarities and differences between societal and biological ecosystems in numerous studies. The scholarly interest in the use of the ecosystem concept for the analysis of social phenomena has grown rapidly in the previous three decades. One of the earliest instances of the use of the concept was in 1996, when Ulov Spilling wrote about the complexity and diversity of the actors, roles, and environmental factors that determine the level of entrepreneurship in a region or a place. Although in this case the subject was entrepreneurship, the aspects of complexity and mutual influence could be related to ecosystem activities of other subject areas. Researchers from the University of Tokyo (Tsujimoto et al. 2018) conclude that the number of scholarly articles with the keyword "ecosystem" started to increase already in 2004 and became a dominant concept in entrepreneurship literature in 2016, considerably outpacing the use of the concept of "environment" (Malecki 2018). Victoria Barker (Barker 2018: 55) points out that in the analysis of entrepreneurship processes the theoretical concept of the ecosystem has been used in three ways: for the analysis of individual firm strategies, for the analysis of support systems of specific companies/organizations/sectors, and (this mostly in the cultural and creative sector) for identification of the focus of the necessary policy support actions.

The societal ecosystem approach is grounded in several disciplines — it joins ideas from economics, strategic management, entrepreneurship, economic geography, and many other branches (Loots et al. 2020). In any case, most often the objectives of ecosystem research are to find the decision-making principles and behavioral chains that strongly affect the growth and decline of the ecosystem under specific boundary conditions. Viewing the ecosystem as a complex actor network, each actor has a different background and attributes. The decision-making principle means the mechanism and priority of the decision may be very different among actors in an ecosystem (Tsujimoto at al. 2018). While the ecosystem approach emphasizes linkages between action and territory, various ecosystem studies attest that the analytical boundary of ecosystems more often is the systems of products/services. That is, the boundary does not always coincide with the boundaries of state or regional communities. The linkages of ecosystem elements are created and influenced by concrete resources which are present or absent in specific territories, including various capitals and demand, highly skilled professionals, services, suppliers, and governance systems (ibid). The review of prior studies attests that in the

cases when the ecosystem concept is used in entrepreneurship research, ecosystems are categorized in three ways: emphasizing companies, products, or territorial units (Lehtonen et al. 2020). In addition, sometimes researchers use industrial districts, clusters, and innovation systems, strategic alliance networks with the same meaning (Tsujimoto et al. 2018). An essential aspect of the ecosystem approach is the necessity to identify the elements or resource groups of the ecosystem. A well-known theoretical framework is that by Daniel Isenberg (Isenberg 2011); it is often used for ecosystem mapping. Isenberg points out that the key groups of resources in the environment that the ecosystem needs are as follows: funding (capital and investors), culture (local success stories, societal norms, attitude towards risk), supports (infrastructure promoting actual linkages, including various organizations, governmental and non-governmental, professional organizations), human capital (labor with the needed skills level, educational institutions), market/demand, leadership, and local policy (of various kinds). Overall, there are almost 50 individual elements.

While there are varied study scales and approaches, it is possible to identify the analytical potential of the ecosystem concept and its benefits for research. Firstly, it allows reaching deeper analysis on the mutual influence and dynamics of various phenomena in complex networks (Barker 2018). Secondly, in the opinion of numerous researchers, analysis of the ecosystem allows to view the essence of the goals, traits, and decision-making of each participant actor, as well as engage in complex analysis of both commercial and non-commercial actors (Tsujimoto et al. 2018). Thirdly, it allows the analysis of organic, self-constituting networks, also taking into account negative traits at the system level.

Scholars (Brydges, Pugh 2021; Loots et al. 2020) note that until now ecosystem researchers have been more focused on high-tech industries, which narrows the epistemological potential of the concept. Although the ecosystem approach is less used in the study of the cultural and creative sector (for examples, see Jeffcut 2004; Brydges, Pugh 2021; Loots et al. 2020; Ooi, Comunian 2019), one may discern a certain tradition there.

Thus we conclude that the analytical models of ecosystems focus on identification of linkages in complex networks and key development resources for operator groups, which have various goals and decision-making models. Such an approach in studies may promote the creation of new knowledge on development scenarios of the internally heterogeneous cultural and creative sector. In addition, the ecosystem concept has to include a sufficient breadth of understanding of the creation and identification of value in the making of a creative product (Barker 2018). So far, a formal theoretical model has not been created that would include such an extended view of the values created in the network and which could be used universally for data analysis with regard to the cultural and creative sector. It is important to take into account that cultural and creative ecosystems are special in that they include linkages which are not directly related to the creative product (Barker 2018) but serve the need of developing new products and promote the overall development of the system in the long term.

## The use of the ecosystem concept in theoretical and empirical studies of the cultural and creative sector

Both in the policy and entrepreneurship spheres there is a generally positive assessment of the contribution of the cultural and creative sector to the economy — both with regard to its economic footprint, providing employment, producing and transferring innovation, and in other aspects including social impact. Simultaneously it is acknowledged that not all governments have been successful in adjusting the support policies during the Covid-19 pandemic, since the non-traditional business models and employment forms of the sector have hindered the provision of support. To increase the economic and social impact of the cultural and creative sector, experts call on policymakers at the EU and national levels to increase the sector's innovation capacity and promote the crossover of innovation to other sectors. Critical is the removal of digital deficiencies to help recognize new business opportunities. Experts also call for improving the access of the cultural and creative sector to funding and integrating cultural and creative communities into broader regional and local strategies of regeneration. Often it is the fragmentation of funding sources and models that hinders the development of the cultural and creative sector; therefore, studies focus on this sector's value chains, resource bases, sources, and flows. The EU level expert group (European Union, Goethe-Institut 2020) considers that a vital and integrated financial ecosystem of the cultural and creative sector should include four balanced pillars: 1) access to sufficiently diverse financial and non-financial instruments; 2) capacity-building both in the cultural and creative sector and in the financial sector; 3) the joining of the current funding opportunities with special funding needs (funding combination); 4) suitable policies at various governance levels.

Now we will turn to the question of whether and how one can use the ecosystem approach not only for the analysis of the funding flows of the cultural and creative sector, but also for the sector development as a whole. Studies conclude that the cultural and creative sector ecosystem approach is a solid choice for future studies not only because it includes a broad array of research designs and research objects, but also because these studies simultaneously activate discussions about key concepts. Studies initiate discussions on the relationship between "creative industries" and "cultural industries," making visible the concurrent value issues by incessantly examining these and maintaining in the sector a certain generative tension.

The literature review by de Bernard et al. (2021) comprehensively characterizes the prior research tradition of the cultural and creative sector ecosystem, analyzing 56 publications relevant to the cultural and creative sectors. The authors (Bernard et al. 2021) increase the analytical value of the review by presenting a scheme of categorization of published items, which at the same time allows the assessment of the research designs dominant in the prior ecosystem research. The array of publications has methodological variety, as a little less than half (43%) are characterized as theoretical and conceptual (of which 66% are academic publications and 34%, policy reports), while the majority of publications (57%) contain new primary empirical data. Of these, 13% are based on quantitative methodology, 30% on qualitative, and in 14 publications a mixed-methods strategy is used. The new empirical data differs by their epistemological character, in that they allow either macro- (25%), mezzo- (66%),

or micro-level (9%) analysis. This data attests that researchers most often choose to carry out mezzo-level analysis including the analysis of networks and network-like phenomena. In addition, the authors conclude that publications can be categorized by the scale attributable to the empirical data. The authors of the review point out that among the empirical investigations, the favored geographical scale of analysis is the city (37.5%), followed by region (21.88%), neighborhood (15.63%), and nation (12.50%). Lastly, both cluster-level analysis and other scales accounted for 6.25% each. Thus, we may conclude that there is a certain balance between the theoretical and empirical contribution. However, we must admit that in cultural and creative sector ecosystem research there is a relatively large proportion of publications that include only a theoretical analysis of the phenomenon. This shows that the theoretical approaches to the study of cultural and creative sector ecosystems remain in an active process, and the research agenda continues to include numerous unclear, complex issues on the research design in each new study. The applied value of the approach may be illustrated with the fact that one-third of the publications are policy reports. This indirectly points to a stable demand from policymakers and their role in policymaking, especially in decision-making on the most suitable support instruments for the growth of the cultural and creative sector. Analyzing the designs of the empirical studies, we note that there are few studies with a crosscutting quantitative design, while there is a relatively large number of qualitative studies. This fits the conclusions of other scholars on the value and suitability of the case study design for ecosystem analysis. The survey of prior studies attests that network analysis methods have a special importance in ecosystem studies, as these methods are well adapted to the measuring of ecosystem actor linkages and attitudes, and scholars predominantly use them for mid-level/mezzo analysis. A certain informative "demand" is evidenced by the fact that scholars most often use the territorial scale of the city for their analysis. We believe that such research statistics attest to the ecosystem researchers' striving to map and analyze quantitative data sets, to acquire a photographic view of the cultural and creative sector. However, the diversity and the shortage of comparable data form barriers to such crosscutting studies and often limit scholars' goals, making it necessary to adjust the case study design in accordance with research questions.

## The inclusive nature of the cultural and creative ecosystem concept

The development of the ecosystem approach in the study of the cultural and creative sector has continued and provoked academic discussion on not only the meanings of the concepts of ecosystem and ecology, but also on the meanings of the cultural and creative sector, creative and cultural industry, and other terms.

In the study of culture-related phenomena, the discussion on the meanings of concepts and their interpretations and definitions has been a long-standing part of scholarly thought. There are several reasons. Firstly, authors of scientific papers and participants in public

and academic debates often fail to explicate the reasons for choosing to use the concepts of culture, creativity, art, cultural industry, creative industry, cultural sub-sector, creative sub-sector, art sub-sector, the cultural sector, and the creative sector. Second, the definitions of concepts are formed within the context of diverse research questions and designs, which makes scholars either choose comprehensive, relatively abstract, and inoperative definitions or to accentuate a specific aspect of the cultural and creative sector, to the exclusion of others. Thirdly, the conceptualizations are of course influenced by the scholar's affiliation with the traditions of either the social sciences or humanities. De Bernard, Comunian, and Gross 2021 argue that as there are competing understandings and definitions, the issue of the boundaries of the cultural and creative sector remains unclear. Some of the definitions are relatively exclusive — that is, they regard only the "production" dimensions of the cultural and creative sector. Others are so inclusive that there is a risk of their being difficult to implement in research or policymaking. These divergent approaches often reflect the disciplinary roots of the authors and their arguments — economics and business in the former case and anthropology, cultural studies, and humanities in the latter. However, these differences also have the potential to create radically different directions in policy and practice, including divergent ideas about the key agents in creating cultural and creative products (de Bernard, Comunian, and Gross 2021).

Regardless of the diversity of the definitions of the cultural and creative sector, one can identify a common trend. That is, the "culture" part of the concept "the cultural and creative sector" usually denotes non-profit activities (most often carried out by the public and non-governmental sector), while the "creative" part often relates to market-oriented and commercial activities. The understanding of concepts in scholarly study is certainly related to the diversity of the phenomenon as such. It is precisely the diversity of the cultural and creative sector, the mutual dependence of the various "cultural and creative branches[,] that may substantiate the scholars' decision to use the ecosystem approach and the key assumptions, primary terms and concepts of ecology" (Gross, Wilson 2018).

The academic debate on the definition of creative industry and the notion of the cultural sector is in part also an issue of values. Are these spheres of activity considered important, based on their contribution to employment and GDP? Does the value of the cultural sector stem mostly from its being the main space of meaning-production, helping to make life good and pleasant, and even in some sense providing the basis for social life and political and economic change? (Gross, 2020).

The analytical value of ecology as a fundamental scientific paradigm and of ecosystem's epistemological means is most often substantiated by their suitability for the study of complex systems. It has been emphasized in various contexts that the use of the ecosystem approach is desirable and productive, as it allows the broadening of the units of analysis used in the conventional/traditional study of the cultural and creative sector. Such a broadening mostly manifests itself as a striving to include in the analysis not only the features of the sector related to market and economic effects, but also non-profit, social, and community activities. This allows one to pay attention to a more extensive range of ecosystem participants

(geographically and by the legal status). It also allows one to analyze the flows of more diverse values (not only market-related ones), and expands the idea of the connections and relationships between the ecosystem operators (de Bernard, Comunian and Gross 2021).

The discussion on the concepts and their meaning has largely determined both the theoretical assumptions regarding the phenomena and approaches in empirical studies.

Theoretical study of the cultural and creative sector ecosystems is characterized by several core terms and concepts. First, the concept of the boundaries of the cultural and creative ecosystems; second, the concept of the ecosystem participants, or actors; and third, the conceptualization of the relationships, linkages, and networks.

The issue of boundaries — that is, which participants and resources should be included in the cultural and creative ecosystem — is interpreted as one of the most unclear elements of the ecological approach. In assessing the general opportunities for studying the cultural and creative ecosystem, a considerable number of scholars are in agreement that the issue of what cultural and creative actors and resources must have to be included in analysis is situational. There are no clear methodological guidelines. Generally, the ideas on the boundaries of the cultural and creative ecosystems have been developing towards the broadening of elements to be included. In modeling the cultural and creative ecosystem boundaries, scholars discuss whether the ecosystem should include (in addition to cultural organizations and artists) cultural and arts education institutions, the premises of cultural and art events, communities of amateur art, infrastructure, archiving institutions, and other operator groups.

Similar to the defining of the cultural and creative sector, in determining the cultural and creative ecosystem and its scale and boundaries there is a trend for including in the ecosystem analysis both commercial and non-profit operators, as well as an attempt to develop an approach that could join the processes of profit-generation with non-market activities.

One of the most productive suggestions in recent years with regard to defining the cultural and creative ecosystem boundaries is to draw the analytical boundary at the product system rather than the national boundaries, regional clusters, contractual relationships, cultural and creative sub-branches, or other segments (Tsujimoto et al 2018). In the opinion of Tsujimoto et al, the analysis should also include non-commercial actors, and the system development must be viewed longitudinally. One such case has been implemented in the Portuguese city of Porto for 15 years (Loots et al 2020). Researchers of creative economy, modeling the five steps of cultural product production, have used the model of cultural product production as a tool for drawing ecosystem boundaries: creating, making, distributing, exchanging, and archiving. In each of the steps, the scholars grouped the participants of the ecosystem and visualized their relationships in the network (UNESCO, World Bank 2021).

To avoid the danger of nonconstructive discussions and fruitless relativism, several scholars have emphasized the need to leave open the issue of the cultural and creative ecosystem's boundaries and to define smaller-scale ecosystem boundaries according to the goals of each

concrete study. For example, Barker points out that it is not possible to determine the "true boundaries" of the cultural and creative ecosystems, as they are boundary-less systems: tracing any perimeter is artificial and inconclusive. She suggests determining the cultural and creative ecosystem boundaries in connection with a specific broader ecosystem to suit the goal of the concrete study (Barker 2019): for example, the ecosystem of the creative industries or the theatre sector. Certainly, such an approach is a step forward; however, it leaves open several questions as to specifying what should be included. Because of these unanswered questions, the boundaries of the cultural and creative ecosystem are often set according to not only the principle of inclusion of diverse cultural and creative participants, but also in response to practical, methodological, and feasibility considerations for data collection and analysis. This uncertainty and inability (or refusal) to define what is included or excluded reveals an important trait of the cultural and creative ecosystem.

Studies also pay special attention to various categories that comprise the context of the cultural and creative ecosystem. The importance of the concept of context is substantiated by the previously mentioned ideas on the inclusive nature of the concept of the cultural and creative ecosystem and the trend of expanding boundaries. For instance, Jeffcutt in his analysis of creative enterprises points out that the context is characterized by a mixture of social, cultural, and professional relationships and networks that the enterprise has or can access. He emphasizes that in the production of the creative product the broader material and social context is important, as it generates the value chains and sustains them (Jeffcutt 2004: 77–78). Often the scholars view the operators' international cooperation dimensions as the context, as well. Although the context of the cultural and creative ecosystem is a widely used term in research, the elements creating the material and social context of these ecosystems are currently defined in a relatively fluid and situated manner — that is, they have not been sufficiently researched. One has to admit also that the "context" is more often than not determined by the research questions and limitations of the concrete study, and not theoretically substantiated principles.

As the issue of the cultural and creative ecosystem boundaries is particularly complicated, most prior studies analyze a certain segment of the ecosystem. Quite often this narrowing refers both to the territorial, sectoral, and temporal aspects. For example, scholars implicitly consider that the ecosystem boundaries are the territorial boundaries, calling the ecosystem by the name of the territory — for example, Singapore's artepreneurship system (Ooi, Comunian 2019), Porto's creative ecosystem (Loots et al. 2020), California's cultural ecosystem (Markusen et al. 2011), and others. In some studies, the ecosystem boundary is drawn at a set of concrete operators or an art/cultural sector. For example, the study by Brydges and Pugh (2021) provided new data and conclusions on the Toronto fashion environment, identifying fragmentation of the ecosystem, duplication of the activities of institutions, and the isolated activities of fashion designers. The boundaries of the Toronto case allowed an in-depth analysis of operators, connections, and context, as well as the obtaining of valuable data on the spaces of the cultural and creative ecosystem activities that happen outside of the traditional "places of development" — incubators, universities, and other institutions — in more mundane places like shops, homes, and studios, within the fluid and changing boundaries between work and life (Brydges, Pugh 2021: 18).

Thus, we conclude that if the cultural and creative ecosystem boundaries are drawn at too broad a scale, attempting to include distinctly diverse groups of operators, there may be a risk that researchers have to analyze an excessively large number of interacting factors. This may be a reason why ecosystem studies sometimes limit themselves to an enumeration of these factors (for example, participants, connection, etc.) (Loots et al 2020). We conclude that overall, studies of cultural and creative ecosystems reveal a certain entropy of their participants and connections which largely influences the strategies of boundary definition. In boundary definition, one can notice the expansion of both the cultural and creative ecosystem boundaries and their context. The propensity to include increasingly diverse operators and their connecting elements in the cultural and creative ecosystem both changes the idea of ecosystem importance and hinders its empirical study.

The issue of the cultural and creative ecosystem boundaries is simultaneously the issue of the operator groups, which scholars epistemologically categorize as belonging to said ecosystem. The categorization of the ecosystem participants is especially important in the case of an empirical study, when one has to determine the data sources and methods of data collection and analysis. A typical approach entails categorizing the operators in accordance with concrete subfields of the cultural and creative sector.

For example, a UNESCO and World Bank study singles out seven cultural domains: Audio-visual and Interactive Media; Literature and Press; Performing Arts; Visual Arts and Crafts; Intangible Cultural Heritage; Design and Creative Services; and Heritage and Tourism Activities (UNESCO, World Bank 2021). One of the best-known theories that attempts to circumvent the traditional typology of actors, subordinated to the belonging to a specific branch of the cultural and creative sector, is John Holden's model of cultural ecology, which offers another typology of ecosystem actors (Holden 2015). It is John Holden who, in his report "The Ecology of Culture" (2015), called for viewing the cultural sphere not an economy but an ecosystem. Based on a qualitative study, Holden derived roles that in his view were present in a cultural ecosystem — Guardians, Connectors, Platforms, and Nomads. Role-analysis may show that a given micro-ecology and its development may be hindered by insufficient activity of Connectors or the non-existence of a needed Platform (Holden 2015: 33). Connectors are especially important, as they interact with all other roles and may signal the problems and weaknesses of the system.

Categorization approaches of the cultural and creative ecology operator groups continue to develop; they are subordinated to the research goals of concrete studies.

The third strand in the conceptualization of the cultural and creative ecosystem is related to the goal of emphasizing the importance of relationships, connections, networks, and researchers' attempts to categorize the relationships between the system's actor groups. Firstly, these are attempts to point to the complexity of the existing interrelations (Gross, Wilson 2019: 19) in the processes the cultural and creative practices (Jung, Walker 2018; Schippers 2016), as well as the processes of supplying the cultural and creative products (Markusen et al. 2011). The relationships between actors in cultural and creative ecosystems differ from

other sectors and the reasons for actor cooperation are endlessly diverse (Lehtonen et al. 2020), as the foundation for value-creation is aesthetic and cultural signs and symbols are closely connected with the context and the place (Loots et al. 2020). The ecosystem approach focuses on the relationships in the broader system, showing the way in which careers develop, ideas cross borders, funds flow, and products and their content move to and from various sub-sectors. The diversity of attitudes in this ecosystem follows from the imperfection of culture as a system and its non-linearity. For instance, John Holden suggests the "view from above," as it allows the appreciation of "flows." He examines flows of four types: careers, ideas, money, and products (Holden 2015).

Several scholars point out that the number and quality of connections between and among participants is an indication of the general healthiness of the "system," emphasizing that the main objective is the maintenance of the number and quality of these relationships (Barker 2019; Gross, Wilson 2019; Holden 2015). Such an argument calls for paying special attention to the examination of relationships, connections, and networks, as these connecting elements allow describing a domain as an ecosystem. In analyzing a similar phenomenon — creative clusters — Andy Pratt points out (Pratt 2004) that the most suitable way of viewing interrelated economic units is not a linear chain, but a network, and that the traits to analyze are the content and quality of links, relationships, and resource flows. This is a considerably more complicated task than identifying the quantitative indicators of the network nodes — for example, the number of jobs created (Pratt 2004: 60).

Thus, the theoretical approaches of the cultural and creative ecosystems are not characterized by stable and endlessly verified postulates and clear definitions, but rather by dynamic study of new empirical cases, redefinition of concepts, and testing of the ecosystem theoretical approach in the context of ever new research goals and issues.

## Methodological approaches to the empirical study of cultural and creative ecosystems

The mobility of the theoretical basis of the cultural and creative ecosystem has influenced the designing of empirical studies and the development of methodological solutions. Cultural and creative ecosystem studies use diverse methodological tools — qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods, and those enabling effective data visualization. Regardless of the above-mentioned difficulties in defining the boundaries of cultural and creative ecosystems, which create barriers to collection of representative data and implementation of crosscutting studies (as it is not possible to define the general sample), a considerable number of quantitative studies is carried out. Quantitative study usually includes work on developing indicators of ecosystem operators' activities and connections, formulating hypotheses to measure correlations between significant internal parameters of the ecosystem or the effects caused by operator activities. A quantitative approach is often applied in the first phase of ecosystem

research, presuming operator mapping within specific territorial boundaries. However, as in many studies it has not been possible to develop credible hypotheses and study the causal relationships of the complex cultural and creative ecosystems, some scholars successfully use qualitative methods. These have allowed the study of factors and phenomena that influence the development of concrete cultural and creative ecosystem, and the in-depth study of participants' notions and experiences (Jung, Walker 2018). Scholars have used qualitative research methods in a considerable number of studies to identify the opinion of informants on their links with other ecosystem participants, their involvement in the cultural and creative processes and activities, on the connections of specific ecosystem sub-sectors with broader societal context and more. The dominance of qualitative research methods is to a large degree determined by the decision to use case study design when encountering difficulties in determining boundaries of the cultural and creative ecosystems.

Similar to practices in the study of other phenomena, the empirical study of the cultural and creative ecosystem by means of either the quantitative or qualitative approach have their own limitations. The limitations of the quantitative approach are predominantly determined by the difficulty in forming representative samples, as well as by using too general variables in the measurements. A qualitative approach, in accordance with the features of the methodology, does not allow the generalization of data and conclusions. These limitations have allowed the developing of diverse mixed-method designs that are widely used in the study of cultural and creative ecosystems. The simultaneous belonging to various operator groups by the ecosystem operators — both organizations and individuals — hinder the precision of operator mapping. Therefore, qualitative data are often needed for the interpretation of quantitative data, as it enables the explaining of interconnections or collecting additional information on the operators that have low representation but substantial impact.

The complexity of the cultural and creative ecosystem has created a situation in which many scholars attempt to reflect the ecosystem elements and their interrelations and hierarchies in such data sets that lend to effective data visualization. Many scholars have rendered the complexity of elements through visualizations, which comprise overlapping or interactive elements (see Bernard de et al. 2021 for an overview). The importance and epistemological value of data visualization (for example, of the network analysis results) has been debated on a relatively wide scale, by critical assessment of possible simplification of empirical reality in these visualizations. However, scholars rate highly the opportunity to reveal and communicate data on participants' relationships, resource exchange, and hierarchies.

The main substantiation of the research design and methodological choices, however, is the research goal put forward by scholars in each concrete case. For example, the study by UNESCO and World Bank exploring the cultural and creative cycle of production in the study of music industry ecosystem is used to identify and analyze culture and creativity as city assets and resources (UNESCO, World Bank 2021).

Finalizing the analysis of the prior theoretical research tradition of the cultural and creative ecosystem and the survey of the methodological solutions of empirical studies, we conclude

that the dynamic and complex nature of this phenomenon does not allow a conclusive systematization of the basic theoretical postulates and methodological standards of the cultural and creative ecosystem. However, it does not lessen the need for data, which enable the understanding of sources of ecosystem development. Scholars admit that they should abandon hope of acquiring a definitive "helicopter view." Instead of that, an understanding of the cultural ecology from several perspectives should be developed, including and constantly responding to the emergence, growth, and evolution that is a characteristic trait of ecosystems. The constant developing of co-created knowledge is both an epistemological and political necessity (Wilson, Gross 2017). As emphasized by John Holden, ecological metaphors — regeneration, symbiosis, fragility, feedback, and interdependence — provide epistemological opportunities for a much more nuanced view of culture and enable the development of new typologies, visualizations, and modes of thinking (Holden 2015: 2).

## The study of a national-level cultural and creative ecosystem

What analytical models and methodological solutions should be applied in studying a national-level cultural and creative ecosystem? What are the preconditions and barriers in their application? These are the kinds of questions to ask when we attempt to address the development conditions of a country's cultural and creative sector as a whole and debate the most effective development tools for the cultural and creative sector. In 2021 the research team of the Latvian Academy of Culture started the National Research Program "Cultural Capital as a Resource for Sustainable Development of Latvia" /CARD (No. VPP-KM-LKRVA-2020/1-0003), https://lka.edu.lv/en/research/research-projects/national-research-programmes/cultural-capital-resource-sustainable-development-latviacard/, and within this program established a dedicated component to identify, map, and typologize operator groups of the Latvian cultural and creative sector ecosystem and their interactions, as well as to evaluate the role of these operators in the context of accumulation of the cultural capital and attainment of national scale cultural policy goals. In the planning of the research design and methodology, the issues of data collection on cultural and creative ecosystem operators and the definition of the ecosystem context caused considerable challenges to researchers.

In the empirical study of the Latvian cultural and creative ecosystem, regardless of the existence of clear-cut geographical boundaries, there remains the question of which participants and resources should be included in the ecosystem. It is especially pertinent when taking into account prior studies, which identify methodological risks that arise in studying ecosystems whose boundaries are drawn in a broad scale not only in territorial terms but also because of the diversity of participants and complexity of contexts. In the Latvian case, too, considerable limitations in data access, collection, and analysis were identified when developing methodology for the study of the Latvian cultural and creative ecosystem. It was necessary for the sector-mapping and network analysis to collect and analyze data on operator groups that have divergent statistical systems: some of these have considerable shortcomings or are

nonexistent. For example, in Latvia the data-gathering systems on the remuneration of representatives of the public and private sector are divergent to the degree that the remuneration levels are incomparable. There are shortcomings in the NACE code system of creative enterprises, in the methodology of the identification of the number of cultural NGOs, in the possibility to determine the number of representatives in a concrete art sub-sector, and more. It is impossible to collect comparable data on the investments in the products of concrete art sub-sectors, as statistical systems do not collect such data.

As mentioned, the ecosystem context definition has an important role in studying cultural and creative ecosystems; it is an essential methodological condition in ecosystem research. However, there are considerable epistemological barriers. The trend of context expansion, which characterizes the dynamics of any ecosystem, in our opinion is particularly prominent in the analysis of a national-level cultural and creative ecosystem. In attempting to identify the context of the Latvian cultural and creative ecosystem, two substantial aspects were found. Firstly, an insufficiently analyzed, yet existent trait of the cultural and creative ecosystem context is the role of culture in the history of national state formation. That history has created the system of societal opinion and political values precisely with regard to the role of culture and art in the existence of individuals, communities, and statehood. These discourses, which do not yield well to rationalization, often serve as a strong argumentative basis for decisions on the cultural and creative ecosystem support tools in Latvia. Secondly, in our opinion, the ecosystem context framing is created by development goals for the cultural and creative sector, which are defined in Latvia's national- and local-level development and policy-planning documents. This trend is influenced by terminologically and temporally divergent definitions of the cultural and creative sector development goals in national development planning documents, in which the concepts of "culture," "national culture," "cultural and creative industries," "creative industries," and so on are defined in divergent, often metaphorical, and semantic scopes that yield divergent interpretations. This hinders the clear-cut operationalization of operator groups and the processes and interactions related to the above concepts. The lack of comparable operational definitions in the Latvian national-level planning documents makes it difficult to give unequivocal answers to another methodologically important question: *What is the development goal and role of the whole of the national level cultural and creative ecosystem and of its concrete operators?* For example, state- and municipality-founded cultural organizations act in accordance with objectives, functions, and public funding which is set in pertinent regulations. However, these organizations enter the cultural and creative product market and compete with the supply offered by the commercial and non-profit sector, whose market conditions and financial instruments are different. In addition, the Latvian state policy tends to fail to define conditions for supporting popular and contemporary art products, as well as their place and role in the national-level cultural and creative sector development. Prior cultural and creative-sector research in Latvia demonstrates that in the former case, the product has a potential to reach a large audience scale and profit, although it does not always have a high artistic merit, while in the latter case niche products are created. These are characterized by experimental nature and attempts to find development paths for a concrete art sub-sector or an inter-sectoral initiative. There are in Latvia especially numerous problems with regard to the definition of

roles and scale of national level ecosystem participants who engage in interaction between professional and amateur art. Support policies for amateur art in national and local cultural policy may be quite diverse, and demonstrate an insufficient rationalization of their goals. The population's motivation to engage in these forms of cultural participation is divergent; the boundaries between professional and amateur art become increasingly fuzzy. In addition, the role of concrete art sub-sectors as cultural and creative ecosystem operators is hard to analyze in a comparable way, as they differ by artistic forms — individual (literature, visual arts, etc.) and collective (theatre, film, etc.). The features of the diversity of the national cultural and creative ecosystem operators are supplemented by another fact that hinders empirical research: In Latvia, as elsewhere, an individual may act in divergent ecosystem operator statuses. For example, she may be a director in a state-founded or non-profit non-governmental theatre and be an artist creating a product of popular culture or contemporary art, etc. The latter factor may have a particular impact on the study of internal connection in the ecosystem.

Simultaneously, the above-mentioned barriers to empirical study of the Latvian national-level cultural and creative ecosystem do not cancel the demand for effective and tailor-made support instruments for each operator group in the sector. This necessitates the illumination of various aspects of ecosystem functioning, as well as the precise determination of long-term, medium-term, and short-term operational goals and values of cultural and creative ecosystem development. External crises, for example the epidemiological crisis brought on by Covid-19, as well as military and digital security risks, which may endanger various development aspects further exacerbate the need for effective support policy instruments. The complicated nature of the national level cultural and creative ecosystem and defining the boundaries of its context demands the continuation of a multilevel dialogue between scholars and policy-makers on the improvement of the development goals, results, and indicators of the cultural and creative sector. This is needed to identify, within the context of limited resource availability, the sector's support instrument, which would allow the development of the cultural and creative sector in accordance with the development goals of the concrete country.

## Conclusions

In answering the research questions of this paper, we have reached a number of conclusions on the conceptual traits of the theoretical study of ecosystems, in particular regarding the exploration of the cultural and creative ecosystem and the methodological solutions used in determining the scale of that ecosystem.

The cultural and creative ecosystem as a concept has the ambition to overcome the preceding discourse, which is neoliberal, growth-oriented, dominated by market and economic imperatives, and focuses on supply chains and clusters. In contrast, the ecosystem analysis

also includes activities by non-profit entities and communities; it contains a broader range of participants, relationships, and geographical scales.

The objectives of ecosystem research are to find the decision-making principles and behavioral chains that affect the growth and decline of the ecosystem under specific boundary conditions. The analytical models of ecosystems focus on identification of connections in complex networks and key development resources for operator groups, which have diverse goals and decision-making models.

The ecosystem model may promote the creation of new knowledge on the internally heterogeneous cultural and creative sector, as the model includes a broad array of research objects and designs and activates a generative tension through discussions on the key concepts. However, currently the model fails to include the dimension of value and consideration of linkages, which serve long-term goals of a system's development rather than the specific creative product.

Theoretical study of cultural and creative ecosystems is characterized by several core terms and concepts: the boundaries of the cultural and creative ecosystems, the ecosystem participants or actors, and the conceptualization of the relationships, connections, and networks.

The ideas on the boundaries of the cultural and creative ecosystems have been developing in the direction of the broadening of elements to be included. These boundaries are often set in response to practical, methodological, and feasibility considerations for data collection and analysis. The uncertainty and inability (or refusal) to define what is included or excluded in the ecosystem is an important trait of the cultural and creative ecosystem research.

The issue of the ecosystem boundaries is simultaneously the issue of the operator groups, which scholars epistemologically categorize as belonging to said ecosystem. Categorization approaches of the operator groups continue to develop, subordinate to the research goals of concrete studies.

Scholars define the elements creating the material and social context of ecosystems in a relatively fluid and situated manner — that is, they have not been sufficiently researched. The "context" is often determined by the research questions and limitations of the concrete study, and not by theoretically substantiated principles.

Overall, the theoretical approaches of the cultural and creative ecosystems are characterized by dynamic study of new empirical cases, redefinition of concepts, and testing of the theoretical ecosystem approach in the context of new research goals and problem issues. That is, it remains in an active process and the research agenda continues to include numerous unclear, complex issues on the research design in each new study. The main basis of the research design and methodological choices is the research goal defined by scholars in each concrete case.

As to empirical study solutions, there are few studies with a crosscutting quantitative design, as the diversity of data and the shortage of comparable data form barriers to these. However,

there is a relatively large number of qualitative studies, which is to a large degree determined by the decision to use case study design. Studies using mixed methods have made the most innovative contribution.

Network analysis methods have a special importance, as they are well adapted to the measuring and visual representation of ecosystem actor linkages and attitudes, reflecting the complexity of the cultural and creative ecosystem. Development of visual data models both reveals the limitations of the current understanding of ecosystem and the need to create new ideas, which make visible ecosystem participants, hierarchies, and relationships.

The dynamic and complex nature of the cultural and creative ecosystem does not allow for a conclusive systematization of the basic theoretical postulates and methodological standards. Instead of striving for a "helicopter view," scholars should develop an analysis of the cultural ecology from several perspectives. Overall, ecological metaphors provide epistemological opportunities for a nuanced view of culture.

In studying the national-level cultural and creative ecosystems, all of the above-mentioned barriers manifest themselves. In addition, several types of boundaries are increasingly fuzzy, which impedes clear-cut methodological solutions. However, evidence-based policy demands that scholars illuminate various aspects of ecosystem functioning. External threats to the cultural and creative ecosystem further exacerbate the need for effective support policy instruments. Thus, scholars and policy-makers must continue a multi-level dialogue on the complicated nature of the national-level cultural and creative ecosystem and its boundaries.

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# Kultūras un radošās ekosistēmas izpētes teorētiskās pieejas un metodoloģiskie izaicinājumi

## Anda Laķe, Ilona Kunda, Baiba Tjarve

Raksta mērķis ir analizēt teorētiskās pieejas un metodoloģiskos izaicinājumus kultūras un radošo ekosistēmu izpētē. Raksts veidots kā sintezējošs pārskats ar mērķi visaptveroši analizēt pastāvošo teorētisko un metodoloģisko pieeju un risinājumu klāstu un iezīmēt nepieciešamību pēc jauniem pētījumiem, kā arī identificēt minēto pieeju un risinājumu praktiskās lietošanas nosacījumus nacionāla mēroga ekosistēmu izpētē. Rakstā secināts, ka ekosistēmas jēdziena iezīme ir centieni pārvarēt līdzšinējā neoliberālā diskursa rāmjus un tirgus imperatīvu dominēšanu, pētījumos iekļaujot daudz plašāku dalībnieku, attiecību un ģeogrāfisko mērogu klāstu. Kopumā ekosistēmas modelis ir piemērots kultūras un radošā sektora pētniecībai, taču pašlaik tas vēl atrodas konstituēšanās posmā. Rakstā identificēti vairāki pamatjēdzieni, kas metodoloģiski strukturē ekosistēmu izpēti: robežas, aktori un saites. Katram no šiem aspektiem jārod metodoloģisks risinājums, kā arī praktiski un īstenojamības apsvērumos balstīti pieņēmumi attiecībā uz datu ieguvi un analīzi.

Raksta autores norāda, ka kultūras un radošo ekosistēmu teorētiskās bāzes "kustīgums" ietekmē empīriskos pētījumus, radot ierobežojumus (piemēram, šķērsgriezuma pētījumiem) un arī risinājumus (piemēram, tīklu vizualizāciju). Rakstā secināts, ka ekosistēmas jēdziena kompleksā daba pašlaik nedod iespēju pārliecinoši sistematizēt teorētiskos postulātus un metodoloģiskos standartus. Norādītās ekosistēmu izpētes īpatnības attiecas arī uz mēģinājumiem noteikt nacionāla līmeņa kultūras un radošās ekosistēmas izpētes risinājumus. Rakstā, pamatojoties Latvijas kultūras un radošā sektora līdzšinējos pētījumos, raksturotas Latvijas mēroga KRE izpētes metodoloģiskās barjeras. Atzīts, ka Latvijā nacionālā līmenī kontekstu būtiski ietekmē neviennozīmīgi racionalizējami pieņēmumi par kultūras vērtību, kā arī sektora attīstības mērķu atšķirīgi interpretējamās

definīcijas plānošanas dokumentos. Tāpat konstatēts, ka Latvijas gadījumā izpētes iespējas ietekmē dažādu operatoru grupu robežu saplūšana un hibrīdformu veidošanās gan mākslas nozaru, gan operatoru juridiskā statusa, gan radošo produktu, gan citās ekosistēmas izpausmēs. Liela nozīme ir arī tam, ka atsevišķām aktoru grupām nav valstiski definēta loma, kā arī ir nepietiekamas salīdzināmās statistikas datu ieguves iespējas. Rakstā secināts, ka jāturpina daudzlīmeņu dialogs starp pētniekiem un politikas veidotājiem.

# A framework for exploring cultural and creative industries in regional contexts: the role of cultural intermediaries

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## Introduction

The overarching goal of this article is to contribute methodological frameworks for identifying Latvia's cultural and creative ecosystem and its key actors. The authors reiterate the significance of the cultural and creative industries (CCI) and the complexities of defining and analyzing the CCI. The main research question of the article is to ask: what concepts need to be considered when researching Latvia's CCIs ecosystem? This leads to the following questions: 1)What are the characteristics of regional, national and global perspectives of CCI and how that might help in the exploration of regional CCI in Latvia; 2)Who are the key actors and what are their roles in CCI ecosystems? In exploring these questions the authors propose some theoretical frameworks and concepts for understanding CCI in Latvia.

In the first part of this article, the authors re-assess definitions of the so-called 'creative industries' to clarify what has become a confusing term for researchers and policymakers alike (Hesmond-halgh and Pratt 2005; Chapain, Clifton, Comunian 2014; Dobreva, Ivanov 2020). For the purposes of this article, the authors use the term 'cultural and creative industries' (CCI) which, as explained below, encompass the relevant debates and meanings. Then, the authors reflect on the CCI in regional contexts: ideas of 'locality' and place-making in small towns and regions. Finally, attention is drawn to the role of cultural intermediaries, which are described as entrepreneurial professionals working as part of the CCI, facilitating relationships, shaping and contributing to local cultural and creative 'ecosystems' (Neelands et al. 2015). By emphasizing the position and role of actors engaged in intermediation, this article argues that it is important to highlight local social interactions and tasks, which are sometimes hidden or perceived to be inconsequential by policymakers, CCI practitioners, and scholars alike. To begin this discussion the authors review key scholarly debates for defining the CCI.

## Challenges in defining the cultural and creative industries

The last 20 years have seen an explosion of research into the CCI and cultural policy, across academic disciplines ranging from urban geography and sociology to management and business studies. The rise of the so-called 'creative industries' in contemporary cultural policy

has caused confusion by conflating social, cultural, and economic policies, with an emphasis on the latter (Hesmondhalgh 2008), but also by bundling together sectors which do not necessarily share the same core characteristics (Kong 2014). In this first section, the authors outline the challenges for academic research exploring the sector and suggest that despite these arguments being well rehearsed in some disciplines, there is value in re-examining what the authors, as researchers and for policymaking, mean by 'cultural' and 'creative' industries. The historical development of both terms and the differences between them are summarized below, focusing predominantly on a European context (Caust 2003; Hesmondhalgh, Pratt 2005; Galloway, Dunlop 2007; Kong 2014) which, the authors acknowledge, does not capture global perspectives of CCI research and practice.

The term 'creative industries' is perceived as a British political innovation of the 1990s (O'Connor 2007; British Council 2010), although the concept of the 'creative industry' emerged also in Australia around the same time (Commonwealth of Australia 1994). Putting together the spheres that in political discourse were traditionally perceived separately (e.g. culture, arts, media, IT) was an attempt to change the debate about the value of arts and culture (British Council 2010), and re-brand culture (Galloway, Dunlop 2007: 17). By changing the language, the use of words to describe the arts as an industry, politicians were able to make the economic case for the arts (Caust 2003:54). According to Caust, *language is a powerful tool for re-invention of a world order where formerly valued ideals have disappeared and new ones given precedence* (Caust 2003:56). For instance, the sector is also referred to as the *creative industry, cultural industries, content industries, content-based industries, copyright industries, copyright-protected industries, creative business sector, creative entrepreneurship, experience industry, the creative and digital industries, cultural or cognitive-cultural economy*, or as a specific field within the *creative economy*, and in Latin American countries, the field is also called the 'orange economy.' The different labels reflect the analytical and ideological approach in which the field is studied and can be debated. Since any of these terms are widely used in cultural policy circles, its interpretation and use by actors across creative fields might be determined by political motivations or freely interpreted and changeable depending on the activities of cultural operators. In some environments, identifying with the CCI sector is thought to be a means of securing greater investment and political support (United Nations Development Programme, 2013). In that context, one of the main discussions is whether to make a distinction between 'cultural industries' and 'creative industries' or use the combination of both.

Defining the concept of CCI is partly hidden in the complexity of the terms 'culture' and 'creativity' (Galloway, Dunlop 2007; Pratt 2014) which can be interpreted as encompassing both broad and narrow definitions of each term. Often, the cultural sector is subsumed in a more economically driven 'creative industries' agenda and there is a risk of being lost amongst more commercially driven activities (Galloway, Dunlop 2007: 17; Caust 2003). According to Galloway and Dunlop most definitions of cultural industries include combinations of five main criteria: creativity, intellectual property, symbolic meaning, use value, and methods of production. They argue that two factors define the distinctiveness of cultural products: the political/ideological and the economic. These factors differentiate cultural

goods from the wider set of creative industries and have important consequences for public policy towards the cultural industries: 1) symbolic ideas and freedom of expression; 2) market failure in the market for culture. Recognition of these two distinctive characteristics of culture help to separate the cultural industries and what is often described as the 'arts' from the wider notion of creative industries (Galloway, Dunlop 2007: 18–27). The use of the term 'creative industries' by governments and policymakers tends to emphasize the generation of creative content, the creative value chain, intellectual property, and copyright; commercialization; wealth and job creation; et cetera. The ambiguous concept of 'creativity' augments the problem by suggesting many different sectors who perceive themselves as 'creative' could be part of the creative industries and new cultural and creative activities are emerging adding further complexities for those measuring the sector (Cunningham 2009). Hesmondhalgh rejects the label 'creative industries,' arguing that the term 'cultural industries' is part of an important theoretical tradition which seeks to demonstrate 'contradiction and complexity.' According to him 'creative industries' appears to accommodate neoliberalism, in comparison with critical discourses associated with the cultural industries approach (Hesmondhalgh 2008).

At the EU level of policymaking, a clear distinction between the 'cultural' and 'creative' industries is articulated in the *Green Paper — Unlocking the potential of cultural and creative industries* (2010). The paper argues that the 'cultural industries' produce and distribute goods that embody or convey cultural expressions, irrespective of the commercial value they may have and besides the traditional arts sectors (performing arts, visual arts, cultural heritage — including the public sector). Such industries include film, DVD and video, television, radio, video games, new media, music, books, and press — whereas 'creative industries' are those industries which use culture as an input and have a cultural dimension, although their outputs are mainly functional, and include architecture and design, which integrate creative elements into wider processes, as well as sub-sectors such as graphic design, fashion design, and advertising (European Commission 2010: 5–6). Parallel to the discussion of sub-sectors, CCI discourse includes such aspects as cultural tourism, city branding, the motion of creative cities and creative quarters, major events, creative work, creative class and creative professionals, co-working, etc. Furthermore, scholarly research suggests that an understanding of 'culture' might encompass 'a whole way of life, as observed by Raymond Williams (1958). It is important to also acknowledge an anthropological sense, that for many people culture is reflected in aspects of everyday life (Oakley et al, 2018). Indeed, this is helpful when exploring the fluidity of language associated with the CCI in a regional context, where local players might collapse these meanings.

The Regulation of the Creative Europe Programme (2014- 2020) provides an example at EU levels, in which this discussion is resolved by using the concept of *cultural and creative sectors* — these include:

> *...all sectors whose activities are based on cultural values and/or artistic and other creative expressions, whether those activities are market- or non-market-oriented, whatever the type of structure that carries them out, and irrespective of how that structure is financed.*

*Those activities include the development, the creation, the production, the dissemination and the preservation of goods and services, which embody cultural, artistic or other creative expressions, as well as related functions such as education or management. The cultural and creative sectors include inter alia architecture, archives, libraries and museums, artistic crafts, audio-visual (including film, television, video games and multimedia), tangible and intangible cultural heritage, design, festivals, music, literature, performing arts, publishing, radio and visual arts* (The European Parliament and the Council of the European Union 2013).

Building on the challenges of defining the sector, EU policy document *The New Agenda For Culture* (2018) introduces the concept of the 'ecosystem,' demonstrating the significance of connections and relationships across the CCI. According to *The New Agenda for Culture* (2018), ecosystems play a role in attracting new markets and new audiences, strengthening links and cooperation (European Commission 2018). Within that ecosystem, the authors are interested in actors which can be defined as 'cultural entrepreneurs,' their role and contribution in regional environments. Again, it is difficult to find an agreed-upon definition of cultural entrepreneurs, but scholars suggest that the notion of a cultural entrepreneur depicts a mode of work which embraces autonomy, flexibility, and connections across networks through freelance or small-business practices. Cultural entrepreneurs might be involved in CCI work as project managers, fundraisers, and in marketing CCI activities (Naudin 2018). However, the characteristics of a cultural entrepreneur encompass some ambiguity, reflecting a broad involvement in social and cultural activities (Anheir, Raj Isar 2018).

For the purpose of this article the authors refer to CCI as arts, culture, and creativity-based business / entrepreneurial activities that play a significant role in regional development in terms of social and economic impact. In a regional context, the authors emphasize the role of locally driven CCI products, services, and experiences with the potential to impact communities and reflect local narratives.

## The cultural and creative industries in regional settings

Agreeing on a shared understanding of the CCI was always going to be a difficult task, considering different international contexts, histories, and political priorities, but acknowledging this challenge is an important aspect of developing research capacity and methodologies relevant to Latvia's context. Although, as Kong states, t*he 'creative turn', with its shift in focus to the creative industries, creative economy, creative labour and developing creative cities, has been welcomed with enthusiasm by policymakers at municipal and national levels in many countries* (Kong 2014: 3), a critical re-evaluation of CCI developments in regional settings is necessary to draw attention to the specificity of localized CCI activities and the role of key players.

Policymakers have argued that the integration of culture and creativity in local and regional development strategies can promote creative ecosystems and multidisciplinary environments, encouraging cultural and creative crossovers at the local and regional level (The Council of the European Union 2015). According to KEA: *Cultural and creative expressions and products are deeply rooted in the territories where they have been created — echoing, incorporating, and being inspired by local symbols, traditions, knowledge, materials and practices — they become crucial, powerful site-specific resources for territorial development* (KEA PPMI 2019: 17). Consequently, cultural and creative sectors contribute to the economic development of territories, increasing territorial attractiveness, and can be used to achieve specific social and economic goals, as explored by scholars such as Throsby (2001), Laundry (2001), and Florida (2002). On the political agenda, the link between culture and local development was strongly established by the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, stressing the significance of local developments in various aspects of CCI developments (UNESCO 2013). Although it should be acknowledged that interpretations of CCI in metropolitan areas have a tendency of transferring 'urban-centric' creative economy policies and practices to rural locations. Policy to support cultural activity and enterprises in non-urban contexts continues to be fractured and remains underdeveloped compared to its urban counterpart (Cruickshank 2016). These subtle differences and contextual understandings are a challenge for CCI research, which draws on wide-ranging academic literature, and for scholars undertaking empirical studies. There are also historical contexts which determine the relationship between policy and local CCI ecosystems or the lack of policy intervention.

State funding for culture and related industries is not new. The use of the term CCI is more actively used and adopted in countries with a tradition of state support for culture and less widespread in countries where cultural life is mainly market-determined, such as the USA (Galloway, Dunlop 2007; Moore 2014). State-level support was equally important to the management of cultural sectors as part of the Cold War, when communist authorities in Eastern Europe developed a range of state interventions through unions and other organizations to foster specific cultural production (Rindzeviciute 2021). After the fall of the Soviet Union, cultural policy in Eastern European countries had to respond to a complex set of rationales partly linked to the idea of state transformation and state-building, but also to shifts in contemporary culture and the rise of entrepreneurial activities (Rindzeviciute 2021). This environment creates fertile ground for highly localized engagements with cultural and creative activities, which sometimes operate outside or regardless of national government initiatives but which all potentially contribute to the CCI ecosystem.

Although the locations of CCI studies range from the Arctic (Petrov 2016) to tropical Australia (Kerrigan, Hutchinson 2016), rural communities in South Dakota, USA (Gallagher, Ehlman 2019), rural territories of Europe (Mahon, McGrath, O'Laoire 2018), and cities of China (Liang, Wang 2020), the common understanding of the importance of CCI is mainly linked to urban or national contexts. This is an arduous task due to *huge heteroscedasticity*

*among cities in each respective region and country* (Liang, Wang 2020: 55), leading to an over-simplification of the nature of CCI and the roles of cultural and creative actors. Yet, the shift in emphasis towards the creative economy has made the race for talent, space, and attention a more common feature of regional development. At the same time, CCI are unevenly distributed across regional spaces, national and international, mainly due to their production networks (Daubeuf et al. 2020) which tend to cluster in large urban spaces such as capital cities. To discover the driving forces behind CCI developments, policymakers and scholars have focused on connectivity, knowledge spillovers, and multiplier effects, stimulating not only consumption but also production, as well as the production of creative experiences, creative spaces, and new niche markets (Collins, Mahon, Murtagh 2018; Selada, Cunha, Tomaz 2012; Van Heur 2010).

At a regional level, inclusivity has been indicated as one of the main characteristics of creativity in small towns and rural areas. Local stories, place-based identity, and local symbolic capital are specific strategies for adding value to products and services (Van Heur 2010). Local activities using their geography and heritage value (Collins 2018) foster CCI developments, as such development is closely linked to a shared sense of place where community is as important as the individual (Kerrigan, Hutchinson 2016). At the same time CCIs have been recognized as important contributors to innovation, socio-economic growth, sustainability, and smart regional transformation (Gerlitz, Prause 2021). In that sense, creativity has been an important tool to manage the leveraging of local attributes and resources for export and for new forms of consumption and production (Collins, Mahon, Murtagh 2018). Other contributions include the sharing of tacit knowledge and open innovation (Selada, Cunha, Tomaz 2012). Importantly, the opportunities for participation (community pursuits, social regeneration) attracts other CCI workers to the region, driving the regeneration of local areas and regional branding (Collins, Mahon, Murtagh 2018). Entrepreneurship may be the mechanism which fosters knowledge and talent spillover from cultural and creative actors into the local economy. However, studies have shown that there may be tensions between newcomer-creatives and local communities (Oakley, Ward 2018), possibly resulting in 'bubbles' with little potential for broader interaction and the exchange of skills, ideas, and other resources. Other contested issues may be newcomer-exacerbated challenges to local identity. In some cases, newcomers pose a threat to the ideas of community-building and local identity, while in others they expand experiences by contributing new approaches and ways of living (Bell, Jayne 2006).

National or EU investment to achieve regional economic growth tends to omit the significance of individual actors and of both social and cultural perspectives, which encourage the CCI to thrive in less easily defined ecosystems (Neelands et al. 2014). As Lee et al. (2014) suggest, there is a danger that a focus on innovation, competitiveness, and economic benefits overshadows the social value of cultural development. Given the well-documented informality of networks across the CCI sector, there is a need to draw attention to the nature of social interactions, the characteristics of key players, and these players' potential impact on local CCI developments and ecosystems.

## The conceptualized role of local facilitators, also known as cultural intermediaries

If social interactions are perceived to be of importance to CCI ecosystems, specifically for an analysis of regional developments, how can this relational role be defined? Social network theories indicate the complexities of connections in the sector (Mould, Joel 2010), demonstrating the links between actors. However, this tends to omit the social nature of those relationships and the qualities which shape them, significantly, the role of individuals who facilitate these connections. This article draws attention to this role, described as that of a facilitator or cultural intermediary, and argues that methodologies for measuring the social and economic impact of Latvia's cultural ecosystems need to take them into account. Often acting as gatekeepers and mediating between the economy and producers of cultural and creative products, cultural intermediaries bring a specific dynamic to shaping CCI developments (Maguire, Matthews 2012).

The point of reference for a definition of this actor is Pierre Bourdieu's concept of the cultural intermediary and his influential work in field analysis that helps us understand the role of key individuals in society. Contemporary sociologists Savage and Silva (2013) argue that a close analysis of Bourdieu's concept of 'fields' allows for a more dynamic understanding of the relationship between structures and agents, with a focus on how agents integrate and simultaneously shape the field in which they are involved. These concepts can be deployed to analyze the role of cultural intermediaries in the development of regional CCI, by revealing their interactions and position within or between key players. As distinct from national or global perspectives, this highlights the specificity of local geographical characteristics, such as how actors might collectively share a passion for local heritage or an interest in shaping activities taking place within local social and physical spaces (Nettleton 2013).

A Bourdieusian understanding of cultural intermediaries emphasizes the connection between taste and cultural goods, as well as the role of the intermediary in constructing a personal lifestyle to act authoritatively, relying on his/her cultural and social capital to 'sell' cultural goods (Maguire, Matthews 2014). As tastemakers, cultural intermediaries draw on their cultural, social, and symbolic capital to act as gatekeepers by favoring certain products, services, or experiences over others. The position of cultural intermediaries in a milieu, as a local player, is demonstrated through their actions between institutions, such as policy organizations or governments, and local actors such as CCI micro-entrepreneurs, freelancers, or communities engaged in CCI activities. While Bourdieu's conceptual framework is often deployed to demonstrate competition within fields and the resulting inequalities (Patel 2019), this understanding can lead to a critique and an oversimplification of the role of cultural intermediaries. It suggests less opportunities for agency and more subtle outcomes derived from their entrepreneurial endeavours or the potential for subversive strategies (Adkins 2004).

The authors argue that sharing some characteristics with the cultural entrepreneur (Naudin 2018; 2021), cultural intermediaries are motivated by their passion for the CCI and their

position within and commitment to the local community. Their role suggests an engagement in a variety of activities including marketing, branding, and lifestyle, but also combining *a set of social and ethical duties and responsibilities* (Lewis 2014: 141). Ethical and moral positions inform the cultural intermediaries' decision-making, reinforcing their powerful place within social networks and relationships (Naudin 2021) in ways which have the potential to benefit the CCI ecosystem. A critique might interrogate where this authority is located and what that means in terms of the outcomes of their actions. For instance, there is room for nepotism or favoring some CCI activities or individuals over others.

In their study of Manchester's CCI, O'Connor and Gu describe the challenges associated with the cultural intermediaries' being part of culture-led regeneration. As the authors state, issues of local voice and representation can be achieved through cultural intermediaries whose role can be that of 'translators.' In the example described by O'Connor and Gu, intermediation takes place between public sector bodies and different elements of the local CCI, and there are plenty of opportunities for developments to be 'lost in translation' given the complexity of local relationships, histories, and cultural traditions. Despite the problems presented in their study, cultural intermediaries appear to bring together both economic and sociocultural concerns, allowing for a wider set of values to be considered as part of CCI developments. In this instance, it becomes apparent that creative clusters develop beyond a purely economic logic or a simplistic relationship between cultural producers and institutions in the form of local authority support. Instead, everyday practices, negotiations, and expertise derived by an appreciation of the locality, a form of symbolic capital, enables intermediaries to gain legitimacy amongst key local players (O'Connor, Gu 2010). By being involved in a variety of cultural projects, fundraising, and marketing activities, intermediaries can both restrict and broaden local CCI activities (Maguire, Matthews 2014). Indeed, in discussing reflexivity and alternative positions for the CCI, Banks (2007) suggests that cultural intermediaries demonstrate an ability to be oppositional and to be experimental in their approach. Instead of being perceived as market-driven and competitive, cultural intermediaries can be political, moral, and ethical, broadening cultural taste and opportunities for the CCI and their audiences. As Naudin's research (2021) demonstrates, their role as translators between groups, institutions, and policymakers can address important gaps in equal access to public funding and to local CCI communities. Cultural intermediaries can demonstrate an understanding of communities in which they themselves are often embedded, exploring local narratives, priorities, and CCI developments.

In an attempt to further understand the character and role of intermediaries, the authors suggest that the attributes of cultural entrepreneurs (Bilton 2006; Katre 2015; Klamer 2011; Naudin 2018) might offer helpful insights. This might be achieved by acknowledging that the notion of the cultural entrepreneur is itself broadly an academic concept and merely an attempt to engage critically with cultural and artistic activities which draw on entrepreneurial or business practices. The authors identify two vital attributes associated with the idea of the cultural entrepreneur which help us conceptualize the contemporary cultural and creative industry intermediary (CCII). Firstly, the idea of connections, networks, and being socially embedded as an aspect of both cultural and entrepreneurial development. It

is acknowledged that despite the proliferation of literature, which refers to the entrepreneur as a lone genius (Naudin 2018), cultural entrepreneurs do not operate in a vacuum but respond to their context, whether that be markets, audiences, funding opportunities, or their relationship to other cultural producers. Within this environment, moral and ethical perspectives, specifically in relation to others in a locality, can be a significant motivating factor for transforming entrepreneurial activities (Banks 2006) into more socially engaged activities. Secondly, authors identify an optimistic ambition to balance sociocultural values with economic sustainability, even if that proves difficult over time. Entrepreneurial success is not guaranteed, but there is an attempt to create sustainable models through a variety of means that might include public funds, philanthropy, or commercial success through flexible and innovative practices. The entrepreneurial ecosystem takes into consideration not only the individual characteristics of the entrepreneurs, but also the context, the environment, and the social features where the phenomenon occurs (Stam 2015; Alvedalen, Boschma, 2017). The territory, traditions, and culture is part of that ecosystem. Stam (2015) defines entrepreneurial ecosystem as a set of interdependent actors and factors coordinated in such a way that they enable productive entrepreneurship. This leads to the concept of creative entrepreneurship: a concentration of creative activities in the ecosystem, which claims to enhance the dynamic evolution of creative interactions and evolutionary networks of collaboration between entities (Paraskevi 2011; Comunian 2010). Cultural intermediaries appear to embody these characteristics, as they operate across cultural ecosystems and engage in entrepreneurial processes: connecting actors, shaping tastes, translating agendas, and mediating between agents and institutions.

## Conclusion

While scholars have analyzed CCI companies, creative cities, and cultural policies, there are significant gaps in the understanding of those whose activities are on the margins of CCI development, particularly in regional contexts. This article argues that in building methodologies for understanding Latvia's cultural and creative ecosystem, it is important to note three key factors: 1) understanding the complexities of defining the CCI; 2) differentiating between regional CCI activities and national or global perspectives; and 3) identifying and defining key local players whose position is significant in shaping CCI developments. This article contributes to debates which seek to investigate the challenge with definitions for policymakers and scholars by highlighting underpinning arguments and concepts. In doing so, the authors draw attention to the potential significance of cultural intermediaries, who share attributes with cultural entrepreneurs through their connectivity and relational role. In order to explore the dynamics which shape regional CCI ecosystems, scholars might investigate the role of local CCII and their entrepreneurial actions within communities.

Discussing CCI developments in regional settings and drawing attention to the specificity of localized CCI activities, the authors have identified three key dimensions: 1) cultural (local

stories, identity of the place, symbolic capital, connectivity, knowledge spillovers); 2) social (communities, social interactions, social inclusion, social regeneration); and 3) economic (locally produced, narrative laden, authentic, but export oriented, new niche markets, open innovation, multiplier effects).

Research findings show that in order to act as gatekeepers and mediators within cultural, social, and economic dimensions, CCII brings a specific dynamic to foster CCI development. CCII are motivated by their passion for the CCI, their position within the wider local community, and a mission to translate the complexity of local relationships, histories, and cultural traditions. CCII operate in a wide entrepreneurial ecosystem, broadening cultural taste and opportunities for the CCI and their audiences by everyday practices, negotiations, and expertise. They are involved in a variety of cultural projects, fundraising, and marketing activities, being translators between groups, institutions, and policymakers.

As scholarly literature shows, definitions of the CCIs are complex and highly contextual, leading us to suggest three key issues for future research. Firstly, definitions are framed by political, academic, or practice-based perspectives which are not always fully revealed and can be implicit (for instance, implicit in understandings of sub-sectors of the CCIs). Secondly, when exploring the potential benefits and impact of the CCI, the focus can be economic, social, and cultural or any of these elements combined, which can be helpful for policymakers but difficult for researchers to unpack. Finally, it is important to acknowledge that the role of the CCII might be best described as revealing tensions, highly localized ecosystems, and opportunities for development.

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# Kultūras un radošo industriju reģionālā konteksta teorētiskais ietvars: starpnieku loma

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**Atslēgvārdi:** kultūras un radošās industrijas, kultūras starpnieki, kultūrpolitika

Raksta mērķis ir sniegt ieguldījumu jaunu zinātnisku atziņu tapšanā par kultūras un radošo nozaru darbību un izaugsmi reģionālā kontekstā. Vispirms tiek pārvērtētas radošo industriju definīcijas, secinot, ka radošo industriju jēdziens kļuvis samērā mulsinošs gan pētniekiem, gan politikas veidotājiem (Chapain, Clifton, Comunian 2014; Hesmondhalgh and Pratt 2005). Rakstā lietotais termins "kultūras un radošās industrijas" visprecīzāk atspoguļo aplūkojamās jomas specifiku. Pēc tam tiek analizētas kultūras un radošās industrijas reģionālā kontekstā – diskutējot par "vietas ideju" un vietu veidošanos mazpilsētās un reģionos. Visbeidzot, uzmanība tiek pievērsta starpniekiem, kuri raksturoti kā uzņēmējdarbības profesionāļi, kas darbojas kā kultūras un radošo industriju daļa, veicinot attiecības, veidojot un stiprinot vietējās kultūras un radošās "ekosistēmas" (Neeland et al. 2015). Noslēgumā tiek secināts, ka identificēt nozīmīgākos vietējos dalībniekus, kuriem ir būtiska loma kultūras un radošo industriju attīstībā un kuri palīdz politikas veidotājiem saskatīt un novērtēt dažādās vietējās un nacionālās tradīcijas, var būt izšķirošs priekšnosacījums atbilstošas vietējās politikas izveidē, valsts un nozares sadarbības sekmēšanā.

# The Role of Non-governmental Organizations in Ensuring the Sustainability of Cultural Heritage: A Case Study of the SERDE Art Residency Centre

Rūta Muktupāvela, Ieva Vītola

# Introduction

Without cultural heritage in all its diversity — natural, tangible, intangible, and digital — it is hard to imagine the existence of any full and viable cultural ecosystem. The cultural ecosystem can be conceptualized as a set of interdependent elements: organizations, groups, and individuals, whose activities are aimed at the balanced and productive existence of the whole society. Awareness and understanding of the role and the importance of each of its actors is essential for the successful functioning of an ecosystem and for any meaningful, innovative, and development-oriented initiative to be valued and, where appropriate, supported. All players — the government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), communities, and individuals — are equally important in the management of cultural heritage. There are three levels of policymaking and implementation — the national, regional, and local (European Commission 2021). The aim of this article is to analyze the experience of cultural NGOs focusing on intangible cultural heritage to reveal their potential and role in cultural heritage management processes by applying a case study approach, thus identifying factors that promote sustainability and factors which contain risks. The research was carried out using the ethnographic approach, conducting participant observation and in-depth interviews and identifying documentary evidence and the norms regulating the activities of the non-governmental sector relevant to the research.

The theoretical framework is based on the four-role model developed by John Holden, a cultural policy researcher. These roles are normally performed by members of the cultural ecosystem, which has a certain significance for *guardians,* caring for the culture of the past, for *platforms* that provide the cultural expressions of places and spaces today, and for *connectors* that connect parts of an ecosystem. In this way cultural processes are promoted, so that the *nomads*, the cultural citizens — as artists and as the audience — can act in all the above three roles (Holden 2015a: 29). J. Holden emphasizes that usually each participant plays one role; however, the examples of Latvia reveal that NGOs, working in the cultural heritage sector, at the same time provide several roles — those of the guardian, platform, and connector or process facilitator — thus serving as an essential resource for supporting and enhancing cultural heritage (Eiropas Reģionu komiteja 2015), and in this way ensuring the creative circulation of cultural heritage, becoming a source and breeding ground for innovation and new forms of culture (Holden 2015b).

The Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia until 2030 emphasizes:

> "The people of Latvia have a common tangible and intangible cultural heritage accumulated through centuries of creative work. Culture lays the foundation for what we are and what we want to be. Common cultural heritage, language, traditions, and an understanding of values are key components which provide a sense of belonging to a particular community and promotes social cohesion."

In turn, a cohesive society is characterized by its involvement in cultural processes, and NGOs will continue to play a significant, active role in the future (Saeima 2010: 16).

## Concepts and definitions

In a modern democracy, the development of any sectoral policy is difficult to imagine without the active participation of the non-governmental sector; cultural heritage management processes are no exception. Despite conceptual diversity — grassroots, community-based, or civil-society organizations[1] (Willetts 2011: 22) — the main characteristics of NGOs are independence from public administration institutions, non-profit status, non-political status, non-violent and non-criminal status (Willett 2006; Davies 2014: 3).

Despite the deep historical roots in Western culture dating back to the 18th century, when anti-slave and republican-based public organizations were founded (Davies 2014: 24), the NGO designation, along with a now-recognizable format, became relevant only as late as 1945. In accordance with Article 71 of the Charter of the United Nations, it was recommended that the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the Member States, when coordinating international cooperation, consult with non-governmental organizations concerned with matters within its competence (United Nations [n.d.]). Since then, the functions of NGOs have been and continue to be mainly focused on development, humanitarian aid, the environment, and human rights. Naturally, UNESCO (The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), as a specialized UN body, also envisages a close partnership with NGOs in all areas of UNESCO's competence. The 2012 UNESCO National Commission Charter Directives require NGOs to become official partners in the design and implementation of UNESCO programs. They must also adhere to the principles of independence from the state, democracy, and non-profit-making activities (UNESCO 2012: 155–159).

1    As P. Willett points out, there is no general agreement on the criteria for distinguishing an NGO from a CSO (civil society organizations) or CBO (community-based organizations). It is easier to use one term for NGOs and to divide them into global, regional, national, and local NGOs (Willett 2011).

Based on UN normative analysis and historical evidence of concept development, the political scientist Peter Willett offers a universal and easy-to-understand definition of an NGO: an association of independent volunteers working together on a permanent basis to achieve a specific common goal, other than seeking public office, making money, or engaging in illegal activities (Willett 2006).

The World Bank, an international financial organization for the reduction of inequality and poverty in the world in support of developing countries, emphasizes the importance of values, donations, and volunteering in NGO activities and extends the concept to any non-profit organization independent of the state, defining an NGO as a private organization working to alleviate suffering, protect the interests of the poor, protect the environment, provide basic social services, or develop communities (Malena 1995: 7).

As an alternative to the international development discourse of the 1990s, the concept of civil society is defined by the World Bank:

> "a wide range of non-governmental and non-profit organizations participating in public life, expressing the interests and values of their members and others based on ethical, cultural, political, scientific, religious, or philanthropic considerations" (World Bank [n.d.]).

At the same time, scientists point out the operational uncertainty of the two concepts, differing only in trends: namely, NGOs are larger, formal, multinational organizations; civil society organizations, on the other hand, are smaller, informal, national, or local organizations that are, moreover, functionally similar to community-based organizations. However, for the sake of simplicity, Mr. Willett calls for the concept of an NGO to be used as a unifying factor, indicating contextually whether it is a global, regional, national, or local organization (Willett 2011: 22). Terminological diversity is also noted by A. Vakil, who points out the alternative concepts found in scientific literature, such as private voluntary organizations and non-profit organizations, the differences of which are not convincingly analyzed and determined (Vakil 1997: 2059).

Regarding the types of NGOs, it must be acknowledged that their criteria overlap, change, and hybridize, thus complicating typological clarity. The type of NGO can depend on a wide range of factors, such as the purpose and type of activity, the number of staff involved, the extent of geographical spatial impact (local, national, international), ideological orientation, social affiliation, diversity of initiative agents, etc. (Vakil 1997; Charlton, May 1995; Korten 1990; Hilhorst 2003).

In this respect, it is useful to refer to the World Bank's basic classification of NGOs based on the NGOs' objectives, which can be divided into two types: operational and advocacy NGOs.

Operational NGOs implement development-related projects on a national, international, or local scale. They can be divided into three main types:

- community-wide organizations serving a specific population in a small geographical area;
- national organizations operating in selected developing countries;
- international organizations, normally headquartered in developed countries, with operations in more than one developing country.

The main goal of advocacy-type NGOs is to deal with a specific case; they try to increase awareness and knowledge by carrying out various activities, such as lobbying the issue, publicity, and activist events (Malena 1995: 15–16).

The NGOs which, alongside the state, municipalities, communities, and individuals, are involved in the council (Xxyy 2018: 10), should be defined as cultural NGOs in terms of interests and scope. On the other hand, it is rather difficult to answer the question of what cultural NGOs are for two reasons: the fragmentation of the common conceptualization of the NGO sector described above and the functional diversity of the NGOs themselves, where cultural and artistic activities may overlap with education, entertainment, sports, health, and other areas (Providus 2021; Laķe et al. 2018: 12). In 2018, researchers from the Latvian Academy of Culture conducted a study on the socio-economic impact of non-governmental organizations in the field of culture. The researchers formulated criteria for cultural NGOs to enable further study and to put forward precisely applicable principles for obtaining empirical data. Firstly, it must include the following keywords in the formulation of the objective of its activity to be defined as a cultural NGO: "culture, art, creative industries, cultural industries, cultural education, cultural events, intercultural co-operation," in the Register of Associations and Foundations of the Republic of Latvia; secondly, it must functionally correspond to one of the types of institution defined in the Law on Cultural Institutions, one which "ensures the preservation and supplementation of cultural heritage, as well as promotes creative and economic initiative, professionalism, and artistic quality and which meets the cultural needs of society." (Saeima 1998) Hence, in order to qualify as a cultural NGO, the activities of an association or foundation must be directly related to investment in one or more areas managed by the Ministry of Culture: "architecture, archives, libraries, circus, dance, design, films, cultural education, cultural monuments, literature, museums, music, creative industries, folk art and intangible cultural heritage, theatre, visual arts" (Laķe et al. 2018: 17).

In the context of this article, one of the key findings is that cultural NGOs are particularly successful in specific areas, niches, and in some ways "filling in the gaps" where state or municipal institutions fail to do so, including the field of cultural heritage management (Laķe et al. 2018: 107). When observing the activities of NGOs in the cultural heritage sector, it can be concluded that interest groups are often structured around them, which reveals the role of NGOs as a connecting link: they serve as a bridge between public administration institutions and self-initiated group and individual activities.

## Cultural heritage, its understanding and management in Latvia

Despite the dominant dimension of the concept of heritage in the semantics of the past, cultural heritage is becoming an important stabilizing, tolerant, and inclusive factor in the face of the global turmoil and challenges of the 21st century. The European Strategy for Cultural Heritage for the 21st Century emphasizes that cultural heritage and all its components, both tangible and intangible, are crucial for our society to find new landmarks based on intercultural dialogue, respect for identity and diversity, as well as a sense of belonging to a values-based community. Cultural heritage can play a key role in shaping, agreeing on, and strengthening identity (Eiropas Padome 2018: 10).

The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) defines the tangible and intangible cultural heritage as an expression of a way of life that the community has developed and passed on from generation to generation, including customs, cultural practices, places, objects, and artistic values. Cultural heritage values refer to aesthetic, historical, research, social, spiritual, or other features attributed to a particular place, object, or habit by present or future generations (ICOMOS 2002: 21). The Council of Europe's Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society, or the Faro Convention, marks a major turning point in the treatment and management of cultural heritage (Eiropas Padome 2005). Under the Faro Convention, "cultural heritage is a group of resources inherited from the past which people identify, independently of ownership, as a reflection and expression of their constantly evolving values, beliefs, knowledge and traditions. It includes all aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time" (Eiropas Padome 2005).

Just as culture is not possible without people, cultural heritage does not make sense if it is not identified, recognized, valued, and used by people. Public attitude towards cultural heritage in 2019 was studied by researchers of the Latvian Academy of Culture, conducting a specialized representative sociological survey, with the aim of "find[ing] out the understanding of the Latvian population of tangible and intangible cultural heritage and their attitude towards it" (Laķe et al 2019: 5). The target group of the study surveyed 1,027 people who were permanent residents of Latvia older than 16. The study was conducted in order to gain insight into the general knowledge of the Latvian population in respect to cultural heritage, as well as to identify people's comprehension, knowledge, and experience of the intangible cultural heritage in Latvia. According to the survey data, Latvians have a good understanding of the concept of cultural heritage: 65% admitted that they had heard about the concept of tangible cultural heritage, while 59% indicated that they had heard the concept of intangible cultural heritage (Laķe et al 2019: 5).

The survey reveals that Latvians are aware of "the important role of cultural heritage in the development of the travel industry (4.61 out of 5 points); they feel proud of Latvia's cultural heritage (4.46) and consider that the state should support any form of cultural heritage that is important to a large part of society (4.47)." Despite the importance of

cultural heritage, the population evaluates personal involvement in its preservation on average: a rating of 3.14 on a five-point scale, with the responsibility for its preservation being shifted mainly to public authorities. The answers to the question *Who should make the greatest effort to preserve cultural heritage?* reveal that the Ministry of Culture is most often indicated (55%), followed by local regional authorities, municipalities (45%), while every inhabitant takes up the third place (37%).

The opinion that NGOs should take care of cultural heritage has been voiced by 13% of respondents, while other groups present better results: educational institutions (27%), the Latvian National Commission for UNESCO (18%), the National Cultural Heritage Board (18%), which is responsible for tangible cultural heritage, and the Latvian National Centre for Culture (16%), whose activities are purposefully focused on the management of intangible cultural heritage. Hence, it can be concluded that despite a fairly good understanding of the importance of cultural heritage for society and the economy, the population shows a relatively passive personal involvement in the preservation of cultural heritage (Laķe et al. 2019: 35). This situation could be addressed with the help of NGOs as actors in the sustainable development of cultural heritage, where NGOs are formed as intermediaries between state institutions on the one hand and cultural heritage communities on the other (UNESCO 2013: 10; Zeijden 2014: 355).

In Latvia, the institutionalization of ideas for the protection of tangible cultural heritage values has deep traditions, dating back to the 17th century; in turn, the establishment of a system of professional protection of cultural heritage began in the very first years of the establishment of the new national state. In 1923 the Law on the Protection of Monuments was adopted, which provided for the establishment of the Board of Monuments. At present, the management of Latvia's tangible cultural heritage is ensured both by the regulatory framework set by the state and by structures, such as the National Cultural Heritage Board, which exercises state control over the protection of cultural monuments, carries out their identification and research, and performs inventory of cultural heritage (Dambis 2021).

Preservation and development of intangible cultural heritage in Latvia is coordinated by the Latvian National Centre for Culture, an institution subordinated to the Ministry of Culture (Ministru kabinets 2012) which, on the basis of the  definition of the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, defines intangible cultural heritage as a source of cultural belonging, identity, and self-confidence, "including customs, games and forms of oral expression, knowledge and skills, as well as related instruments, objects, artifacts and cultural spaces, which are recognized by communities, groups and in some cases individuals as part of their cultural heritage" (Latvijas Nacionālais kultūras centrs, Kultūras informācijas sistēmu centrs 2021).

The processes of protection, preservation, and management of the intangible cultural heritage are regulated by the Latvian Intangible Cultural Heritage Law, adopted in 2016 (Saeima 2016; Vaivade 2016), which is based on the UNESCO Intangible Cultural

Heritage Convention. NGOs at the national and international levels were assigned an important role in the processes of preserving the national cultural heritage during the debate that arose during the drafting of the 2003 Convention (Intangible Cultural Heritage 2021). The convention delegated to them an advisory function in the evaluation of international nominations, as well as the identification and definition of ICH in the national context (Bortolotto, Neyrinck 2020: 155; UNESCO 2003; UNESCO 2020: 45). According to the guidelines for the implementation of the Convention (UNESCO 2020: 45), non-governmental organizations must have proven competence, knowledge, and experience in the protection of ICH, as defined in Article 2, Paragraph 3, of the Convention, which means carrying out activities aimed at "ensuring the viability of the intangible cultural heritage, including the identification, documentation, research, preservation, protection, promotion, enhancement, transmission, particularly through formal and non-formal education, as well as the revitalization of the various aspects of such heritage" (UNESCO 2003).

UNESCO regulations provide for the accreditation procedure and criteria for NGOs, which require NGOs to be able to demonstrate their competence, knowledge, and experience in the field of ICH in order to operate at the local, national, regional, and/or international levels in a manner consistent with the spirit of the Convention and to be able to:

> "cooperate in a spirit of mutual respect with communities, groups, and, where appropriate, individuals that create, practise and transmit intangible cultural heritage; possess operational capacities, including a regular active membership, which forms a community linked by the desire to pursue the objectives for which it was established; an established domicile and a recognized legal personality as compatible with domestic law; and having existed and having carried out appropriate activities for at least four years when being considered for accreditation" (UNESCO 2020: 46).

In Latvia, two organizations have been accredited in the field of ICH: the World Ethnosport Society[2] and the interdisciplinary art group SERDE, the latter of which was accredited in 2016 and can be considered an example of good practice in view of its scope and quality. In accordance with UNESCO regulations, the principles of good ICH management practice apply to those activities that demonstrate innovative, creative, and effective approaches to the protection of ICH in the form of projects, activities, and programs and ensure the participation of relevant stakeholders, such as communities or practitioners. These activities are aimed at developing, identifying, documenting, researching, preserving, protecting, promoting, transmitting, and restoring ICH, reflecting the spirit of the 2003 UNESCO Convention (UNESCO 2020).

2    This organization was founded in 2012 in Montreal, Canada, by two organizations: the Canadian Ethnosport Association and the Ethnosport Federation of Russia and Traditional Games. In 2018, the headquarters of this organization was moved to Riga and in 2020 it received UNESCO accreditation (Ethnosport 2021).

## A case study of the interdisciplinary art group SERDE

The interdisciplinary art group SERDE is an association founded in 2002. It is a cultural NGO, classified as an operational non-governmental organization by its type of activity (Hilhorst 2003: 15–16) — although the main goal of the association is to promote the development of professional art in Latvia, "by developing regional and international co-operation between cultural and artistic organizations from different sectors and individuals, offering a real functioning environment and infrastructure outside the usual central urban environment" (SERDE 2018: 92). The interdisciplinary art group SERDE focuses on the preservation, research, and promotion of both tangible and intangible cultural heritage.

The interdisciplinary art group SERDE operates in the cultural and historical centre of Aizpute[3], a small town in Kurzeme, in an artists' workshop and a residence centre at 9 Atmodas Street. As the residence centre is housed in a building that has been an architectural monument[4] of national significance since 2015, SERDE regularly organizes restoration workshops and educational events on the preservation of cultural heritage. The historic building managed by SERDE not only provides a working environment and conditions during the restoration workshops, but it has also become a 1,500 m² restoration object itself (SERDE 2018: 92). In 2007, SERDE received the Cultural Heritage of the Year Award in the nomination "Society Award" for its work in the field of preservation and restoration of cultural heritage. In 2010, 2015 and 2020, the SERDE Residence Centre was included in the programs of the European Heritage Days.

One of the three directions or programs of SERDE, alongside art activities (artist residency program) and restoration activities, is the preservation and promotion of ICH. Since 2005, SERDE has been active in organizing ethnographic fieldwork, intangible cultural heritage workshops, and creating publications in the "Tradition Notebook" series, which has produced 22 books since 2007 (SERDE 2008). Tradition Notebooks feature descriptions of values of individual ICH, the most vivid and characteristic parts of oral testimony, recorded in fieldwork, preserving the peculiarities of the language[5] of the narrators and interviewers (Pucena 2015).

In order to bring to life the traditional skills and knowledge documented in research, SERDE collaborates with artists and cultural heritage researchers and encourages and provides an environment for artistic interpretations of different traditions. This collaboration has resulted in several presentations and practical workshop cycles on topics such as

3    The historical centre of Aizpute is included in the list of cultural monuments of national significance as a unique urban planning monument No 7347, see: https://is.mantojums.lv/monument/7437.

4    In 2015, a building complex in Aizpute, at Atmodas Street 9, a residential building and a warehouse (dated 18th century, 1st quarter of the 19th century, the 1940s), was entered into the List of State Protected Cultural Monuments No 9104: see https://is.mantojums.lv/monument/9104.

5    The thematic series "Tradition Notebook" publishes the results of field research, which include two main themes: preservation of traditional skills and of personal experience stories, and oral testimonies (Pucena 2015).

soap-cooking, candle-casting, beer-brewing, collecting herbs, and more. Internationally, the projects created by SERDE, which are closely related to traditional culture in Latvia, have also been presented at several art and culture festivals around the world.[6]

For its achievements in preserving the intangible cultural heritage (ICH), the interdisciplinary art group SERDE received the Folklore of the Year Award in the nomination "Creativity in Tradition" for the project "Točka" in 2007, and in 2015 it received the "Time for Ziedonis" award in the nomination "Kedas." In 2016, as mentioned above, SERDE was accredited as an advisory body to the UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (Intangible Cultural Heritage 2021; UNESCO Latvijas Nacionālā Komisija [n.d.]).

## Analysis of the activities of the interdisciplinary art group SERDE, according to J. Holden's cultural ecosystem model

Analyzing the activities of the interdisciplinary art group SERDE, it can be concluded that its impact manifests in three main ways:

*1. The function of identifying, preserving, and passing on cultural heritage(the role of guardians)*

When working in the field of both tangible and intangible cultural heritage, the projects implemented by SERDE and their results reveal that the authenticity of tradition is considered a priority in the process of identifying and preserving cultural heritage. The complex of historical buildings at 9 Atmodas Street in Aizpute is being restored and renovated very carefully and gradually, respecting the cultural, historical values, and historical profile of the building. In restoration, when renovating the facade parts of the buildings (including the lattice structures for the warehouse building in the yard), windows, doors, and furniture, professional restoration specialists are involved who are attracted by ancient buildings and who possess craftsmanship, and/or who own a building of cultural and historical value. As Signe Pucena, the founder and board member of the association, said in our interviews with her[7], "everything related to the restoration, maintenance, and inclusion of ancient build-

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6    For example, in Finland (at the Kiasma Museum and Botanical Gardens in Helsinki; in Tampere — for members of Herbology /the Collectors' Network); in Germany (ISEA in Duisburg and Über-lebenskunst in Berlin); in Switzerland (Belluard Bollwerk in Friborg and Berne (Auawirlieben)); in Sweden (Art & Agriculture in Åland, and Supermarket Art Fair in Stockholm); in Ireland (Future is Domestic in Ennistymon); in Lithuania (Shakotis in Klaipeda and Res Artis in Nida), and in Estonia (Art Depo in Tallinn) (SERDE 2018: 94).

7    In-depth interviews with Signe Pucena, founder, board member, and CEO of the interdisciplinary art group SERDE, were conducted in 2021 as part of this study, exploring the involvement of SERDE as a cultural NGO in the protection, preservation, transfer, communication, and management of heritage, as well as

ings in modern life takes place here. [...] Yes, we also organize wooden window restoration workshops. Every year we have one or two windows, which we restore during the workshops. Our people are hard-working!" Architect Ervīns Krauklis writes in "Būvkultūra," an edition of the European Culture Heritage Days 2020: "The SERDE experience presents a different approach: lively, creative, at the same time researching, caring, and complementary. A slow and thorough approach has been taken here to maintaining the heritage of wooden architecture, which is akin to the one adopted in the Scandinavian countries." It is characterized by continuous education and an honest attitude towards the historical building material, doing much of the work on one's own (Krauklis 2020: 15–18). In the field of preservation and restoration of historical wooden architecture, the cooperation project "We live with Cultural Heritage," launched in 2015, has been significant for SERDE, which took over good practice from significant examples of the preservation of ancient wooden architecture in Northern Europe: in Rauma, Visby, and Kuldīga[8].

Uģis Pucens, founder and chairman of the board of the interdisciplinary art group SERDE and the manager of restoration works, explains:

> "Now, as we can see, there are few people who take real interest in the way old buildings can be restored. Throughout Latvia, there are only a number of specialists who could be easily counted. [...] Our builders do not quite understand what restoration means in the Nordic sense. In Visby, Sweden, for instance, it has recently been the practice for a designer and builder to bring in a craftsman who really knows how they worked in the Middle Ages, what tools and what technologies were there. It helps in the design and construction process because architects do not know it all. It's nothing complicated, if you do it all correctly, ask the specialists, it can all be learned. It matters how conscientiously you approach it all. Everyone has built their own house that way" (SERDE 2018: 80).

Respect for the authenticity of the tradition is also shown by the fact that, in the case of intangible cultural heritage projects, the approach of the interdisciplinary art group SERDE is based on fieldwork or a current short-term ethnography, which, working intensively, allows for a quick and deep knowledge of the subject under study (Pink, Morgan 2013: 351–361). Folklore researchers, artists, students, and schoolchildren have been invited to participate in these research activities; thus, evidence of ICH values is documented directly from the carrier of tradition, be it traditional knowledge and skills, or experience stories and oral folklore. The results of the research are used not only in the development of the contents of the SERDE Tradition Notebooks, but also in various events, presentations, and practical

identifying the place and role of non-governmental organizations in the cultural ecosystem at local, regional, and national levels. Here and below, the most vivid and thematic quotations from her story are used in italics.

8    The cooperation project "Living with Cultural Heritage" as part of the EU INTERREG programme "Central Baltic" funding (LiviHeri, managing partner of Old Rauma) was implemented over the period of three years. For more see at: https://www.rauma.fi/kaupunki-ja-hallinto/hankkeet/living-with-cultural-heritage/

workshops, in which documented craft skills and lifestyle knowledge, including recipes, are reconstructed and tested. Signe Pucena, who is also an academically educated researcher in folklore, says:

> "We try to ask questions about different things during fieldwork, so that we can reconstruct their tradition. That makes sense, mostly. [...] We have put many pieces of research together in such an artistic installation where there is research data, but we also present it so that it is interesting for a person to participate. For instance, the project 'Folk Pharmacy' about plants. We drove around with four wall stands, which looked like shields, covered with wax cloth to make people feel at home. Then we had pictures of the plants and then those little sticky notes, on which people could write their own prescription that comes to mind first when they fall ill, and in return we gave them a copy of the newspaper 'Folk Pharmacy.' Then the person is motivated because the newspaper is not given just like that, it is given for a recipe. In this way we collected a whole section for the booklet 'Folk Pharmacy,' which contains modern prescriptions. There is black balsam, ginger, and lemon. But still, it is a modern tradition!"

Thus, by involving the bearers of tradition in the process of reconstruction and verification, the preservation of ICH values is ensured so that they see, perceive, and interpret for themselves.

*2. Function of social influence: initiators of cultural processes (the role of connectors)*

SERDE's activities in the area of ICH are welcomed by individuals and communities who, as mentioned above, are actively involved in research. Even if there is reluctance on the part of the local community to embark on a research project, it usually tends to change over time: "At first the local community is skeptical. Well, that's simple, just water the herbs! But then, you can see that they feel proud. And you see that's a tradition!" To get feedback and keep in touch with communities, narrators whom we meet during the expeditions are invited to attend SERDE's presentations of Tradition Notebooks: "The notebooks are opened and presented to the person who has been invited. Then he is happy, he can show them to his children. See what I've got! And the children are happy."

The experience of SERDE reveals how the preservation of ICH values affects the participants of the process themselves — informants, who are the bearers of the tradition: "The acquired dignity becomes added value to their knowledge, and a link is formed between different generations. Experience has it that workshops often attract visitors who also want to share their knowledge. The events are also of interest to the younger generation who want to learn something new, thus continuing to inherit knowledge and retain skills" (Pucena 2015: 18). The results of the fieldwork carried out by SERDE do not tend to "settle" in archives, audio, and video files on computers, but are immediately returned to the public for inclusion in the content of publications, presentations, and workshops, thereby preserving the ICH and raising awareness of the importance of the ICH at local, national, and international levels. In this case, SERDE acts as an intermediary between the state and the communities, ensuring a full process of inheriting the ICH.

The SERDE experience shows that the activities of cultural NGOs can stimulate the formation of national interest and practice-based communities. For example, in the period from 2007 to 2010, when learning about the tradition of brewing beer at home: this tradition had almost disappeared. Only one brewer was identified who still brewed beer at home, even though in many places they had kept the inventory in their farmsteads, while people's memory had preserved knowledge and stories about brewing beer (Pucena 2015: 24). The results of the fieldwork were summarized and published in 2009 in the third Tradition Notebook, "Alus gatavošana" ("Beer Making"), which aroused great interest; a year after publication, at the SERDE headquarters in Aizpute, the first meeting of home brewers, who restored this tradition in practice, was held:

"And that's the way the first meeting of home brewers took place in 2010. It was quite small. Then everyone came who brewed something at home. All of them allowed to taste their products. Yes, it seems to me, also those home producers who now have small breweries [in Riga] — *Malduguns*, *Labietis*, and *Indiānis*. They have all been here with us as experimenters. What a joy!"

Another case study is related to the history of Aizpute and the disappearance of a once fairly large Jewish community in this small town. In 2008, SERDE published a Tradition Notebook "Aizputes ebreju stāsti" ("Stories about Jews, told by the people of Aizpute"), which gave oral testimonies documented in 2005 and 2006, which are eyewitness accounts of Jewish times in Aizpute, which do not only reflect the views and attitudes of the local population towards the Jewish people, their way of life and traditions, but also provides eyewitness accounts of genocide in Aizpute. The publication encouraged a voluntary initiative of Ināra Dinne, who had lived in Aizpute but had been forced to leave Latvia. Now she has returned and has translated these stories into English — the Tradition Notebook "Narratives about the Jews of Aizpute" was published in 2012. This edition, in turn, activated the descendants of Aizpute Jews around the world, providing feedback on the work done by SERDE:

> "When we translated this booklet, it was really the case that several Aizpute Jewish families came and inquired whether it was possible to show where a certain ancestral property lies, because the names of Aizpute streets had been changed. And they also sent their family albums with photos, and names of their relatives. They wrote to us and asked if we could help them to find a relative. How touching! So touching that you really understand."

Another example where SERDE has spurred impetus to revitalize ICH values in the wider community, which is related to Suiti culinary heritage in Alsunga:

"I have a lot of feedback that I'm happy about. Well, it seems to me, when I see the Suiti woman Laila Puķīte, for instance, in the Gamblers' Pub. When I happen to be there with a group, she starts telling me. That's how it all started. Because she participated in the project 'The Suiti explore the Suiti,' when we traveled with Alsunga Suiti to Jūrkalne within the

framework of the UNESCO Associated Schools program to study the Suiti of Jūrkalne, and to interview them. And that's exactly how Suiti cooking, which she now practices at the Gamblers' Pub, arose from this expedition! In this way, this initiative and the recipes come from its expedition! There now, if you say in the pub that you want to bake *sklandrauši* (traditional Latvian tartlets with rye pastry and carrot filling) yourself or boil sour porridge, then most likely it will be Laila Puķīte, who will be waiting for you, nicely dressed, will sing something, and make *sklandrauši*"!

Despite the generally positive social impact, the promotion of ICH values and practices can some-times create profanation, carelessness, and degradation of tradition. As Signe Pucena admits:

> "Uģis Pucens and I think we have done a bad job by giving impetus to all this movement, I mean all these intangible cultural heritage workshops. We started them around 2007, with moonshine and beer, then with collections of plants. At first it was quite good, a workshop like any other, people came to our yard to participate and study. Then we had a series of workshops, cycles, and we also made soap there. And then museums joined us. In the beginning, each doing their own thing! And butter was made there, and then they made all sorts of nonsense, like stone painting workshops, didn't they? And then you can't figure out what the hell is going on. A whole new genre has opened up that makes me feel like I'm a little complicit in all this madness, because they have changed it that way, all this has been seen on YouTube, but these are skills workshops."

With regard to the operation of SERDE, it should also be noted that the involvement of the local community in heritage conservation can be uneven and often even passive. Nineteen years of experience of working in Aizpute reveal that "there is no local community; it is simply a community interested in specific activities. It is good to note that there are people in Vidzeme and Latgale who know what we are, and they come to see us. But it is also the case that the local people in Aizpute do not even know what is going on here."

*3. Function of cultural events and education (the role of platforms)*

The interdisciplinary art group SERDE is an active initiator of various international projects and a participant in the network of artist residencies, for instance, "M4m" ("Tanec Praha", European Pépinières Programme), "Frontiers in Retreat" (HIAP), and others; SERDE is also a member of the "Res Artis" platform. During its existence, SERDE has created a place and space in Aizpute that is recognized by a considerable international audience: artists from more than 20 countries around the world have been here and have shared their experience! SERDE has organized and implemented around 200 different cultural projects and events in the fields of visual arts, cultural heritage, and traditional culture and folklore (SERDE 2018: 92). Moreover, it should be noted that throughout its existence, one of the priorities of SERDE has been cooperation with the regions, implementing projects that promote cultural diversity and decentralization in Latvia. SERDE activities are non-commercial. The attention of the association is focused on implementing quality projects in the regions and making their results available to the widest possible audience.

The SERDE Residence Centre has also become one of the most popular destinations among guests of Aizpute, a small town in Kurzeme:

> "Usually, those people who know SERDE apply with an aim to see the house (Atmodas Street 9). SERDE has recently become one of the attractions in Aizpute. Sometimes you can't understand whether it is SERDE or us that they want to see! (Laughs.) This is because there aren't many funny people who have persevered. [...] Of course, I also appreciate when a person has come a long way! Oh my God! Of course, I'm trying to tell him ardently all that has happened here. What I like best is that Americans, when they come, visit an old house, and admire it, as it is even older than America itself!"

Not only did the restoration work performed on the complex of historic buildings at Atmodas Street 9 attract visitors who are able to appreciate the charm of a historic building, but it also attracted the works of art of the residents of SERDE. Currently, the city tours also include environmental objects created in SERDE, for instance, the sculpture "Pandas" by the Japanese artist Yasushi Koyama, the sculpture "The Knight" by Karl Alain, and the painting "Apples" based on the sketch of the Canadian artist Sylvia Grace Borda.

The annual events organized by SERDE have a well-known and stable place in the calendar of cultural events in the region: the cast-iron art symposium, which usually takes place during the city festivities, and the *Āboļošana* (Apple picking) fair. The latter takes place in mid-September and marks the end of the SERDE season; it is a well-attended event for the townspeople, bringing together local and resident artists as well as artisans and home producers. The event also includes an open-air market and a range of traditional skills workshops, in which the autumn harvest of apples turns into juice, wine, jam, and other products.

The fact that SERDE has become a platform for educating and raising public awareness in the field of cultural heritage is evidenced by the publications in the "Tradition Notebook" series, by various events and workshops, and by the array of excursions offered around the complex of the historical centre, introducing SERDE activities and experiences to those who are interested. SERDE has had a successful cooperation with the UNESCO Associated Schools Program, implementing joint projects for the preservation and promotion of the intangible cultural heritage together with Alsunga Secondary School and Riebiņi Secondary School.

An important field of SERDE activities refers to attracting a youth audience, providing an opportunity to acquire new knowledge and skills for the local young people in the Aizpute region. One of the most important activities took place in 2010, when SERDE organized the first international fieldwork and workshop, "Herbology." It was attended by more than 30 participants from Latvia, Lithuania, Finland, Sweden, Poland, Spain, and Belgium. The foreign guests were divided into groups, which included a Latvian interviewer and an interpreter, who helped the expedition participants to understand the local people — the informants. Most of the Latvian participants were from the Aizpute Youth Centre "House of Ideas" who took on the role of interpreters during the interviews; moreover, the interviews were later transcribed and translated into English:

"It was as powerful as it was in 2010, when an international herb expedition was organized! Actually, if not for these young people, I would have ended my life in an apple tree long ago, for sure! Because they interpreted all the nonsense we asked for and the answers of the narrators; it was simultaneous interpreting for a foreigner, standing by and watching the interview. And then in the evening, all these interviews were transcribed and translated into English. At the end of the expedition, there was already an English version. I don't understand at all how we got it ready!"[9]

One of the recent joint activities with the youth of Aizpute took place in 2017, creating a publicly available interactive map, "The Path of Tales," which depicts legends collected by the local historian Mirdza Birzniece, linking them with specific places.

Lifelong learning activities is another area in which SERDE operates. Since 2020, with the support of the State Culture Capital Foundation, so-called Local History Schools have been organized in Aizpute, bringing together local researchers, teachers, librarians, museologists, and other people interested in cultural heritage from all over Latvia to gain new theoretical knowledge, experience, and practice in obtaining empirical data during the week when performing fieldwork. In 2020, the theme of the School of Local History was "The disappearing of farm-work today," while in 2021 it was "Culinary heritage in Lower Kurzeme."

An important field of activity of SERDE is expertise provided by representatives of society who not only have experience and practical knowledge, but also academic education in traditional culture, folklore, or restoration. They are invited to participate at conferences, discussions, and seminars, as well as to express their views on the evaluation of various cultural heritage issues. The members of the Association have been experts of the State Culture Capital Foundation, the National Cultural Heritage Board, and the Latvian Intangible Cultural Heritage Council. They have been involved in the preparation of applications for the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage and evaluation of nominations. However, it must be acknowledged that, paradoxically, the role of a SERDE specialist advisor has not existed in Aizpute. This is probably related to the mentality of Kurzeme residents, the specifics of a small town, or the reaction caused by competition:

"You see, here everyone is used to not saying anything bad to anyone else. If they say something like that, it is a grumpy detail, but not a constructive suggestion or an indication. These are not well received; things are not corrected as the people get irritated. With your rating, which is not based on the likes/dislikes that is typically used by municipalities, and never analyzed, you remain alone and on the opposite front. Although, it seems to me that the museum would benefit if they were wise enough to see us as advisors in one area or another."

9     The expedition data were processed in two weeks and were therefore named "expedition sprint," because in this short period of time 22 interviews were transcribed and translated, and photo and video materials were selected. A selection of stories was published in 2010 in the publication "Vācēju kultūra Viduskurzemē" (Collecting Culture in Central Kurzeme) (Pucena 2015: 30).

# Risk assessment of the interdisciplinary art group SERDE

Assessing the cross-sectoral art group SERDE in the context of the sustainability of cultural NGOs, a number of factors have emerged, including risks. It is a positive fact that the cultural NGO sector provides an opportunity to work and implement ideas in the cultural sector independent of public administration institutions. The mission of cultural NGOs is to contribute to the development of innovative, experimental ideas, works of art, and products; that is why creative freedom in the generation and implementation of ideas is highly valued among the NGO members themselves:

> "Like in our society, we always follow some of our interests: that is, what we are interested in at a given moment. They see work in the NGO sector as a mission: It just happened that we got our house at Atmodas Street 9 in Aizpute on a long-term lease at the right moment. Our work has been voluntary, really voluntary, and conscientious, we have always worked with a sense of a mission. Well, it is a phenomenon that some people have a superior sense of mission to do something that is not for the sake of their property but for the benefit of society."

It should be noted that SERDE has been a successful cultural NGO for almost twenty years. This fact is important, keeping in mind that in most of Latvia, where there is no state support for cultural NGOs, the average lifespan of associations and foundations is six to 10 years (Laķe et al. 2018), which is a length of time in which a driving force, based on enthusiasm and initiative, usually runs out. In the case of SERDE, it is important that it is a family-based organization, the core of which is formed by Signe and Uģis Puceni; moreover, their daughter, Trīne, has been involved in the activities of the association from an early age. Both are artists: Uģis Pucens is a ceramist, a graduate of the Latvian Academy of Arts, while Signe Pucena received her secondary education at the Liepāja School of Applied Arts, Department of Textiles and Design. They value independence highly: the opportunity not to follow the general flow of society, to be different and, in a sense, to be at the forefront. It is these aspects that are provided by activities in the non-governmental sector.

The international dimension is another important aspect that has ensured the sustainability of SERDE so far, namely, the experience and satisfaction gained from the implementation of the artist residency program:

> "And it is the ecosystem that ensures diversity; if you do not have international circulation, you have nothing [...] However, I think that we, Latvia, are small. If we close ourselves off, that's our way of thinking; our ideas go up in the air; and then it's very good to have someone on the sidelines. [...]. It seems to me that we need to think more about foreign cooperation. It is an essential channel that makes some sense."

Communication with the local government is essential for the success of cultural NGOs. A survey of non-governmental organizations in the field of culture conducted by researchers of the Latvian Academy of Culture in 2018 shows that the support of the municipality

significantly contributes to the activities of NGOs (Laķe et al. 2018: 48). Unfortunately, the experience of SERDE in cooperation with the municipality has been very uneven and mostly passive:

> "Well, cooperation, I would say, is not really cooperation. But at the same time, it may be good not to interfere in the activity too much. On the one hand, it's good that you can be so independent, but at the same time, of course, you also expect at least to gain appreciation of what you're doing."

It must be admitted that at the beginning of its existence, in 2005, SERDE received a letter of commendation from the Aizpute municipality in the category "I Am for My City." However, depending on local priorities and funding opportunities, assistance has been sporadic, mainly practical, related to the removal of construction and restoration waste or the provision of manpower during the activities within the framework of the so-called "Hundred Lats Program." At present, the cooperation can be described as awkward, communicating with the municipality mainly in the field of tourism. On the one hand, this is due to the fact that the SERDE artists and the workshops centre have become a popular attraction in the city; on the other hand, there is the fact that Signe Pucena is also Head of the Aizpute Region Tourism Centre:

> "It is also my side job, because I have been the tourism manager of the Aizpute Region for several years. We, SERDE, are a tourist attraction. But here again, the municipality accuses me of advertising my own object. But at the same time: What if it is a municipal object and a public object, and a non-profit object? Then there are constantly different interpretations by people. As in a small place, of course, there is a lot of different, personal opinions that are voiced, and they sound harshly."

A case of unsatisfactory cooperation with the municipality can be established in relation to the management of art objects created in the SERDE residence center and donated to the city, to be displayed in the urban environment:

> "When we say that we are giving this art object to the city, they never think about maintenance, even though we point it out. But with its maintenance it is like that: everyone looks and says, "You put it here and, have a look, the statue of the panda has started cracking!" Alright! Then we restore the statue, but this should be in the city budget, as should the maintenance of the streets, the removal of garbage, as well as the care of the works of art."

At the same time, potentially successful forms of cooperation can be seen, not only in the development of tourism, but also in the creation of cultural material and art and in the preservation of the cultural and historical heritage of the region:

> "We could also do quite a lot for the region in the field of local studies, and in the field of restoration [...] We have repeatedly suggested that the restoration workshop

centre could also be located here, well, based on the experience of SERDE. We have the premises, and we already have some tools and equipment. This is simply an issue in which the local government should show some initiative and interest. That there should be an employee, at least one, who does the work here, and, of course, investment in the infrastructure and technological provision is also needed."

SERDE desires more support from the municipality and from the state, both financially and informatively: e.g., a coordinated flow of information, as well as the delegation of functions:

"In my opinion, the local government and state institutions should also understand that their resources are not comprehensive either. That is why there is already an ecosystem there. When we talk about ecosystems, in this sense, there are simply sharks (meaning the municipality) in the whole ecosystem. There is no diversity, it is simply a monoculture floating on top of everything and everyone else — they are no higher than mud. That's just the way it is."

The participants of NGOs themselves, when assessing the role of NGOs in the common cultural ecosystem, point to the lack of mutual communication:

"While working in the municipality, I have realized that an employee in a municipality thinks he is there for everyone else to come to see him. Let the NGO come, who wouldn't let them come!?[...] I would expect to have some more cooperation someday. Everyone is waiting for them to come. So do we: We are also waiting! We just have no resources. In general, Uģis and I are the supporters of this centre in the physical and the practical sense, which means the maintenance of the premises. Nobody helps with that."

The unpredictability of financial resources and the lack of a stable, guaranteed income have been a serious threat to the sustainability of cultural NGOs. The budget of the interdisciplinary art group SERDE mainly consists of funding gained by winning tender projects: "We start each year with a zero budget. If the State Cultural Capital Foundation[10] grants us some funding, it is cool! We can function. But we have absolutely no annual budget. As to next year too, nobody knows whether there will be some money or not. Everything depends on projects." During the season, income is also provided by renting the premises of the artists' workshops in the residence center and the payment for accommodation. However, this operating income is seasonal, from May to September. In historic buildings in Aizpute, it is not possible to install heating and a frost-free sewerage system in the autumn-winter period, which, in turn, does not allow to extend the season of the center: "We might as well have an ambition to become a traditional culture and folklore centre for the whole of Kurzeme — there would be no problems — but then

10    In Latvia one of the most important sources of funding for cultural NGOs is the State Cultural Capital Foundation. The "Target Programme for the Support of Professional Non-Governmental Cultural Organizations," which is announced once a year, in fact, is the only way for cultural NGOs to obtain core funding for administrative expenditure within the framework of one year.

there should be some kind of partnership in providing the infrastructure." The lack of funds, in turn, is closely related to the problem of human resources, namely, the board of the association consists of three members: Signe Pucena, Uģis Pucens, and Jānis Zvirgzds-Zvirgzdiņš. In the season, two employees are employed part-time, while art, restoration, and ICH research projects are implemented by five to six project managers, depending on the attracted funding. It is natural that in such a model each person is employed to the maximum. For example, Signe Pucena, who is officially the executive director of the interdisciplinary art group SERDE, has a wide scope of activities and functions: she draws project applications, she is a project manager, communication specialist, clerk, accountant, cleaner, and driver. There exist significant potential risks for the future existence of the association: overwork and fatigue caused by the multifunctional role of NGOs in providing their activities, along with insufficient and unpredictable funding, as well as weak or non-existent cooperation with the local government and unclear support mechanisms from the state. It is worth mentioning here that in 2021 the Puceni family planted a large vineyard on their private property as an investment in future business, which is a clear indicator that an alternative to working in cultural NGOs is being sought. While the grapes are growing, it may be time for the state to improve cooperation with the cultural NGO sector, which is mentioned in national cultural policy documents as an important player  in and one of the cornerstones of the cultural ecosystem (Kultūras ministrija 2014; Kultūras ministrija 2021: 37).

## Conclusion

In conclusion, it should be emphasized that NGOs play an important role in the Latvian cultural ecosystem, as they are able to perform communal functions which often are not the responsibility of the public sector. The main problems for NGOs involved in the identification, preservation, and transfer of intangible cultural heritage are precarious financial conditions and a lack of human resources, which jeopardizes the qualitative and systematic operation of NGOs; thus, it is necessary that the public sector change its approach towards and view of NGOs. NGOs should not be seen as marginal structures the success of which is based solely on individual initiative and personal enthusiasm. If this attitude does not change, the state will fail in its duty to cover a very important aspect in the management of ICH.

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# Nevalstisko organizāciju loma kultūras mantojuma ilgtspējas nodrošināšanā. Starpnozaru mākslas grupas SERDE piemērs

## Rūta Muktupāvela, Ieva Vītola

Bez kultūras mantojuma visā tā izpausmju – dabas, materiālā, nemateriālā un arī digitālā – daudzveidībā mūsdienās ir grūti iedomājama jebkuras pilnvērtīgas un dzīvotspējīgas kultūras ekosistēmas eksistence. Kultūras ekosistēma konceptualizējama kā savstarpēji atkarīgu elementu – organizāciju, grupu un indivīdu – kopums, kuru aktivitātes ir vērstas uz sabalansētu un produktīvu visas sabiedrības pastāvēšanu. Veiksmīgai ekosistēmas funkcionēšanai ir būtiski apzināties un izprast katra tās dalībnieka lomu un nozīmi, kā arī novērtēt un, ja nepieciešams, atbalstīt ikvienu jēgpilnu, inovatīvu un uz sabiedrības attīstību vērstu iniciatīvu. Kultūras mantojuma pārvaldībā visi spēlētāji – valsts, nevalstiskās organizācijas (NVO), kopienas un indivīdi – ir vienlīdz nozīmīgi, kā nosacīti atšķirīgu var iezīmēt tikai politikas veidošanas un īstenošanas līmeni – nacionālo, reģionālo vai vietējo (European Commission 2021). Šī raksta mērķis ir ar gadījuma izpētes pieeju analizēt tādu kultūras NVO pieredzi, kuru darbība vērsta uz nemateriālo kultūras mantojumu, atklāt to potenciālu un nozīmi kultūras mantojuma pārvaldības procesos, kā arī noteikt ilgtspējības veicinātājus un riska faktorus. Pētījums veikts kvalitatīvajā dizainā, izmantojot etnogrāfisko pieeju, veicot ietverto novērojumu, padziļinātās intervijas, apzinot dokumentālās liecības un pētījumam aktuālos nevalstiskā sektora darbību regulējošos normatīvus.

Par teorētisko pamatu tiek ņemts kultūras politikas pētnieka Džona Holdena (*John Holden*) izstrādātais četru lomu modelis, kas attiecas uz kultūras ekosistēmas dalībniekiem. Tajā sava funkcija ir *sargātājiem*, kas rūpējas par pagātnes kultūru, *platformām*, kas nodrošina vietu un telpu kultūras izpausmēm mūsdienās, *savienotājiem*, kas sasaista atsevišķas ekosistēmas daļas, veicinot kultūras procesus, un *nomadiem*, kas esam mēs visi – kā mākslinieki un kā auditorija – un kas varam darboties visās trijās iepriekšējās lomās (Holden 2015a: 29).

Dž. Holdens uzsver, ka parasti katrs dalībnieks pilda vienu lomu, tomēr Latvijas piemēri liecina, ka NVO, kuras strādā kultūras mantojuma sektorā, vienlaikus nodrošina vairākas – sargātāja, platformas un savienotāja jeb procesu veicinātāja – lomas. Tādējādi tās kalpo par būtisku resursu kultūras mantojuma atbalstam un tā vērtības celšanai (Eiropas Reģionu komiteja 2015), kā arī nodrošina kultūras mantojuma radošās aprites funkciju, kļūstot par inovāciju un jaunu kultūras formu inspirācijas avotu un augsni (Holden 2015 b).

# Shifting the Focus/Paradigm

# Defining Contemporary Theater: Global Experiences and Latvian Practices

## Zane Kreicberga, Edīte Tišheizere, Līga Ulberte

# Introduction

The Western culture introduces several traditional variations for the discourse on the paradigm shift in theater that was rooted in processes of the 1960s through the 1970s. The most popular theories, which have also gained support in the theoretical thought of Latvian theater, are the concepts of postdramatic theater by German theater researcher Hans-Thies Lehmann (Lehmann 2006), the performative turn, proposed by Erika Fischer-Lichte (Fischer-Lichte 2008), and the studies of French theater theorist Patrice Pavis (Pavis 1993, Pavis 2013, Pavis 2016). Latvia as a post-Soviet territory, where theater had been a strictly institutionalized and controlled area, experienced significant changes starting from the country regaining its independence in the 1990s. Nowadays, Latvian theater cannot be analyzed in isolation from international processes — both because their presence in Latvia is influential and affects the practice of local theater-makers, and because obvious similarities and parallels can be seen in the development of theater models and the approach to the creative process. Latvian contemporary theater widely uses interdisciplinary artistic practices, amplifies the research and documentary components of theater, applies a collective creation approach, breaks the boundaries of professions and hierarchies, refuses the domination of dramaturgical text (as is characteristic of postdramatic theater), evolves aspects of performativity in actors' work, and changes the role of the audience. Therefore, processes and phenomena in Latvian theater should be analyzed with reference to current theories of theater and performance. However, given the strong lingering dominance of institutionalized repertory theaters and the vast tradition of dramatic theater, Latvian theater can be described using Hans-Thies Lehmann's observation that drama "lives on as a structure — however weakened and exhausted — of the 'normal' theatre: as an expectation of large parts of its audience, as a foundation for many of its means of representation, as a quasi automatically working norm of its drama-turgy" (Lehmann 2006: 25).

Theater theory in Latvia has sought to accommodate postmodernist concepts to new theater phenomena in the 1990s (Radzobe 2004) and to approbate Lehmann's theory of postdramatic theater (Zeltiņa 2008 and Radzobe 2015) for analyzing twenty-first-century Latvian theater phenomena. The latest collective study on Latvian theater, *Latvian Theatre Since Restoration of Independence. Phenomena and Personalities at the Turn of the Century and in the 21st Century* (Tišheizere et al. 2020), fortifies this approach. However, there is a general lack of specific studies in Latvia which could contextualize

processes of Latvian performing arts in relation to current theories in the field and solidify a clear and consolidated terminology. It must be noted that the issue is further exacerbated also by the fact that there are very few translations of theater theory texts, and there is no unanimous understanding regarding the use of key terms even among teachers of theater. Several research projects have been started recently, which should result both in translations of theater theory texts and a Latvian dictionary of performing arts terminology. The purpose of this article is to identify prevailing discourses, in which Latvian theater research has historically included three classical elements of theater — the text, the actor, and the space — to highlight issues of theater terminology in relation to the changing practice of performing arts, and to outline perspectives for further research.

Contemporary Russian theater theorist Anton Sergeev believes that historicity is one of the key issues in consolidating theater terminology and creating absolute meanings for specific terms. In his collection of articles titled *Introduction to Theater Theory*, published in 2011 at the Russian State Institute of Performing Arts, he proposed four groups to classify all theater terms:

1) 'direct' theater terms — *actor*, *stage*, *role*, etc. Even though they have varying functionality in different theater models, they stem directly from the practice of theater, even though theorists may assign them with some figurative meaning;

2) terms that have been forged as part of specific theater systems or models, e.g., Konstantin Stanislavski's *super-objective*, or the *alienation* in Bertolt Brecht's epic theater;

3) terms derived from other aesthetic or philosophical systems not directly related to theater, e.g., *structure*, *deconstruction*, *text*;

4) specific terminology of theater theory, which has been either purposefully created by theater theorists or has gained a specific meaning and context within the process of describing theater. E.g., *direction theater*, *psychological theater*, *performance reconstruction*, etc. (Sergeev 2011: 175–178).

## The Text, or Dramaturgy

In the Latvian language, the Greek-origin word *dramatourgia* — *dramaturģija* (E. – *dramaturgy*) — has two basic meanings: 1) the theory and art of the construction of drama (dramatic) works; 2) a collection of plays (in an author's bibliography, literature of a nation or an era) (Zuicēna, Roze 2013–2019). The English- and German-speaking European space understands the notion of dramaturgy in different ways. Encyclopedia Britannica primarily strictly separates 'dramatic literature' as a readable text from 'drama' as something that is performed on stage: "Dramatic literature, the texts of plays that can be read, as distinct from

being seen and heard in performance. The term *dramatic literature* implies a contradiction in that *literature* originally meant something written and *drama* meant something performed. Most of the problems, and much of the interest, in the study of dramatic literature stem from this contradiction. Even though a play may be appreciated solely for its qualities as writing, greater rewards probably accrue to those who remain alert to the volatility of the play as a whole." (Encyclopedia Britannica: Dramatic literature) The British understandably use the German tradition to define the concept of *dramaturgy*: "Dramaturgy, the art or technique of dramatic composition or theatrical representation. In this sense English *dramaturgy* and French *dramaturgie* are both borrowed from German *Dramaturgie,* a word used by the German dramatist and critic Gotthold Lessing in an influential series of essays entitled *Hamburgische Dramaturgie* (*The Hamburg Dramaturgy*), published from 1767 to 1769. The word is from the Greek *dramatourgía,* 'a dramatic composition' or 'action of a play'" (Encyclopedia Britannica: Dramaturgy).

Accordingly, in Latvian, the term *dramaturgi* mainly refers to authors of plays, whereas both in English (*dramaturgs*) and in German (*Dramaturgen*) it refers to the creators of theater and the doers of dramaturgy — a set of practical tasks that help to deliver the text of the play first to the theater and the director, and then to the audience. In twenty-first-century European theater, the responsibilities of dramaturgs mostly include selecting and editing texts, contacting authors, researching various supplementing materials for the needs of the creative team, following the rehearsal process, preparing performance booklets and other print materials, working with media and public relations, moderating conversations, and meeting audiences or supporters before and after performances.

Authors of plays, or dramas, are called *dramatists* or *playwrights* in English and *Dramatiker* in German, and Germans call the collection of plays or theater texts *Dramatik*. Latvian terminology of literature and theater, which was formed under a strong influence of the German language, started using the terms *dramatiķis* and *dramatika* in the first half of the nineteenth century, and they remained in use until the Soviet occupation. During the Soviet period, they were completely replaced by *dramaturģija* and *dramaturgs*, inspired by the respective terms in Russian. This change and confusion is evidenced in the only published (post-Soviet-era) Latvian dictionary of theater terminology, published in 1997: "*Dramatists*. Author of plays. For referring to a creator of stage work, the German-origin word *dramatiķis* may also be used. In any instance, the creator of the work must be distinguished from its assessor, or the *dramaturgs*, which is incorrectly used to refer to an author of a play under the influence of the Russian language. E. *dramatist, playwright;* F. *auteur dramatique;* D. *Dramatiker;* H. *dramaturgo;* I. *drammaturgo;* R. *драматург*"[1] (Straumanis 1997: 46). In the post-Soviet period, the terms *dramatika* and *dramatiķis* have been used on several occasions by literature theorists Viktors Hausmanis and Benedikts Kalnačs, as well as playwright and director Lauris Gundars in their respective studies. Nonetheless, they have not been assimilated by everyday theater jargon. However, theater practice in the second decade

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1    The dictionary was compiled by an author living in emigration, working in separation from the Latvian language and the development of Latvian professional theater.

of the twenty-first century, even in Latvia, marks a more defined understanding of the shift of the role of a dramaturg — from being a composer of readable plays, or a dramatist, to a theater practitioner who participates in the rehearsal space or on stage.

In the historiography of Latvian literature and theater, national dramaturgy, from its origins in the 1860s–1870s until the end of the Soviet occupation in the 1990s, has traditionally been perceived as a type of literature — a collection of independent texts of fiction. Play analysis in Latvian was mostly done by literature theorists within the framework of a theoretical or historical discourse[2] and theater theorists within the context of specific productions[3].

A turning point in the development of both Latvian dramaturgy and its research is the year 2001, when the first class of Theater, Film, and Television Dramaturgy under playwright and director Lauris Gundars graduated from the Latvian Academy of Culture. Being a director and screenwriter by education and dominant practical experience at the time, Lauris Gundars had already expressed the idea of dramaturgy as a non-literary phenomenon in the late 1990s: "…dramaturgy is a rather peculiar type of writing, and it cannot be classified under literature since it is not an end product and is subject to further completion. One can be a very good writer, but it does not mean one can write plays…. Dramaturgy is a type of theater (or cinema) activity rather than a writing one. We all know that what the character says is not quite what they actually mean. But if we all know that, why do we insist that dramaturgy is a type of writing? Structure is more important after all: without explicitly stating but rather hinting at what the character really means. It is a craft." (Gundars 1998: 80) In the context of the National Awakening, Lauris Gundars's invitation to view the historical development of Latvian dramaturgy had a provocative tone for its era: "We cannot speak of any national dramaturgy whatsoever merely because the dramaturgical construct cannot be national. Of course, an author will mostly write about people and events surrounding them, and they can expose a Latvian spirit or a German spirit, but the construct is all the same. In this respect, for example, the works of Blaumanis[4] are typical German dramaturgy of their era. And Blaumanis is a perfect craftsman…. If we speak of tradition, we must speak of craft, not topics." (Gundars 1998: 79)

Ten years later, Lauris Gundars substantiated his methodology for creating dramaturgical text in his book *Dramatica or Rational Poetics* (2009)[5], which was based on his practical and

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2  Benedikts Kalnačs is the author of the most prominent compilation of studies in literary theory: *Latvian Drama. The First Half of the 20th Century* (2004) and *Latvian Drama. The Second Half of the 20th Century* (2006, both together with Viktors Hausmanis), *Baltic Postcolonial Drama* (2011), *20th Century Baltic Drama: Postcolonial Narratives, Decolonial Options* (2016), etc.

3  This type of analysis of separate plays can be read in studies on theater history by theater theorist Silvija Radzobe: *Latvian Theater. The 1970s* (1993), *Latvian Theater. The 1980s* (1995), *Theatre Directing in the 20th Century in the World and in Latvia* (2002), *Theatre Directing in the Baltics* (2006), *Theatre Directing in the World I* (2009), *Theatre Directing in the World II* (2011), etc.

4  Rūdolfs Blaumanis (1863–1908) — playwright, one of the founders of Latvian national dramaturgy.

5  The book was republished in a new author's edition in Latvian in 2015, in English in 2017, and in Russian in 2020.

pedagogical experience and is still the most extensive Latvian original book on matters of drama technique and theory in Latvian since the collection of articles *Drama as a Criterion* by playwright, director, and theorist Pēteris Pētersons (Pētersons 1987):

a play, unlike a text of poetry or prose, is not an end product, but is rather intended for further interpretation: "The direct recipient at whom the text of the play is aimed is the director, the producer, the actor, or even the omniscient cloakroom attendant. It is only after making its way through the wall of these *intermediary recipients* of various calibers that the work of a playwright reaches its *end user*: the spectator. Consequently, the end product of playwriting is a completely different matter: a theater production." (Gundars 2017: 18)

dramaturgy is primarily a *technical* type of writing, which can be learned by acquiring certain skills of the craft: "Any base for a dramatic text-based work intended for public performing is significantly more like a refrigerator manual than a novel.... Clearly, the more straightforward the instructions, the greater the odds that the refrigerator will be functioning even in the home of the technically unsavvy consumer — and functioning exactly as intended by the constructor at that.... Dramatic material is a technical instruction that lays out the way to reach the soul of the end addressee — the viewer/listener." (Gundars 2017: 20)

As early as 1979, Pēteris Pētersons also spoke of the necessity to expand the boundaries of aesthetic perception: "I use the word *drama* neither to refer to the respective type of literature, nor to a genre of dramatic poetry. Going back to the original Greek meaning of *drama* as *action*, I use it to designate the deep flow of circumstances and events, the type and method of a writer's thought, an important aesthetic criterion. Some have suggested calling it dramatism to avoid reproach. But why call an action dramatism, or actionism, thus diluting the power of the word, reducing its capaciousness? All the *isms* have always seemed to me less meaningful than the base term to which this popular suffix has been added. Therefore, I ask of you — when you read the word *drama*, do not instantly see 60 pages of some play, but try to regard some wider aesthetic horizons beyond the Greek variant of the concept of action." (Pētersons 1987: 313) Lauris Gundars' theoretical and practical approach, in turn, rather specifically expanded the understanding of the term of dramaturgy from a literary text to a text written for the needs of the theater (cinema, television), including transitional genres like librettos, dramatizations, scenarios, collages, and others, which had previously not been defined in Latvian theory of literature and theater.

Theater practice also fundamentally influenced the shift in the understanding of the concept of dramaturgy. It was mostly achieved by devised productions created through the collaboration of Alvis Hermanis and actors of the New Riga Theatre, starting with *The Long Life* (2003) and continuing throughout many works of the so-called Latvian Cycle[6]. *The Long Life* is the most recognized Latvian theater performance internationally, and it has participated in many international theater festivals. Actors Baiba Broka, Vilis Daudziņš, Ģirts Krūmiņš,

6    NRT productions *Latvian Stories* (2004), *Latvian Love* (2006), *Marta from the Blue Hill* and *Grandfather* (both in 2009), *Black Milk* and *Friedhofsfest* (both in 2010), *History Research Commission* (2019).

Guna Zariņa, and Kaspars Znotiņš, together with the director and with no participation from a dramaturg, have created a story of one day in the lives of five elderly Latvians within the confines of one communal apartment. The performance has no text, the characters have no names written out in the pamphlet, and yet one of the most important German playwrights of the second half of the twentieth century, Tankred Dorst, invited *The Long Life* to *Neue Stücke aus Europa*, his festival of contemporary European dramaturgy in Wiesbaden, Germany. The main selection criterion for the festival — an interesting staging of an original play written no more than two years ago. When asked about the compliance of *The Long Life* with the dramaturgy format, Tankred Dorst replied: "I believe it is most definitely a play. Even though it contains no text, the performance tells us a story. In this case, dialogue is not even needed…. This is a play without text, just like there are songs without lyrics." (Rutkēviča 2004: 84)

The fact that the general focus of perceiving dramaturgy has drastically and most probably irreversibly changed from dramaturgy as a type of fiction literature to the theater text as an element of a performative phenomenon, is evidenced by several processes:

plays are rarely published anymore, therefore dramaturgy is gradually disappearing from the scope of Latvian literature award nominees. Instead, since 2013, annual achievements in dramaturgy have been evaluated as part of the Latvian Theater Awards season, awarding the author of a specific text.

The landscape of Latvian contemporary dramaturgy is formed by a generation of authors educated in the twenty-first century both in Latvia and in other European countries in close relation to theater practice, and many have worked on international collaboration projects: Inga Ābele, Jānis Balodis, Ivo Briedis, Rasa Bugavičute-Pēce, Artūrs Dīcis, Matīss Gricmanis, Justīne Kļava, etc.

the creation of text during the staging process by participation of the entire team and a focus on a specific theme has become widely accepted practice. Apart from Alvis Hermanis, directors Reinis Boters, Krista Burāne, Mārtiņš Eihe, Andrejs Jarovojs, Kārlis Krūmiņš, Klāvs Mellis, Vladislavs Nastavševs, Elmārs Seņkovs, Valters Sīlis, and others have worked in a similar manner.

For a long time, it was mostly experienced directors like Adolf Shapiro or Māra Ķimele[7] who publicly spoke about their practical experience in the creation of dramatic texts, but now, playwrights themselves do that increasingly often. Aside from Gundars, Jānis Balodis, Matīss Gricmanis, and Rasa Bugavičute-Pēce have also reflected on their working methods.[8]

7    See more: Šapiro, Ādolfs (1991). *Starp-brīdis*. Rīga: Liesma; Zole, Ieva (2007). *Sarunas ar Māru Ķimeli*. Rīga: Jumava.

8    See more: Bugavičute, Rasa (2013). Preface. Zeltiņa, Guna, Reinsone, Sanita (eds.) (2013). *Text in Contemporary Theatre: The Baltics within the World Experience*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing, pp. xi–xii; Gricmanis, Matīss (2019). True Dramaturgy vs. Fictional Autobiography. Pērkone-Redoviča, Inga (ed.).

The analysis of dramaturgical processes has moved from literature history books to studies dedicated to theater. Separate articles on the role of text in theater can be found in almost every history of Latvian theater.[9]

A broader understanding of dramaturgical text allows us to stop treating the literary material of a performance with expectations of the mandatory characteristics of classic dramaturgy: dialogue, cues, a causal development of events, etc. One of the most extreme examples of this type of contemporary dramaturgy is Austrian Nobel laureate Elfriede Jelinek's texts for theaters, staged in theaters all over the globe. Inga Rozentāle, the translator of *Bambiland* (2003) (the only play by Jelinek available in Latvian), describes Jelinek's texts as 'polyphonic text fields' where indications of the time and space of action and specific personalities disappear and speakers' voices seemingly blend into one: "A basic principle of dramaturgy that a person reveals their character with the help of speech is replaced with a ceaseless act of speaking" (Rozentāle 2008: 69). So it essentially becomes a characteristic of both content and form — the text does not lay any claim on revealing any objective truth, but deliberately changes perspective, sometimes even within the same sentence. Jelinek liberally and easily quotes other texts without any effort at making them recognizable; they are often redone and repurposed for the rhythm of the author's own language. Therefore, the reader must find their own way in the polyphony of the text to figure out who is talking to whom — is it the characters to each other, to the audience, or to the author? For now, such *text fields*, *text spaces,* or *text territories* so typical of postdramatic theater practice have been rarely used in Latvian dramaturgy and theater and therefore little reflected upon in theater research. But, sooner or later, they will have to be named.

## The Actor, or the Performer

Latvian acting education continues the tradition of the so-called 'Russian school,' which is based on the Stanislavski system with variations and interpretations, and it is still considered the basis of theater art. The criterion for its results is the actor's ability to become incarnated in a role, which is the creative interpretation of a dramaturgical character created in the collaboration of the director and the actor within the context of the performance. This robust foundation is indisputable among the majority of the younger generation of theater makers

*Culture Crossroads*, Vol. 14, pp. 104–109; Balodis, Jānis (2020). text means anything, text means nothing. Mellēna-Bartkeviča, Lauma (ed.). *Contemporary Latvian Theatre*. Rīga: Zinātne, pp. 154–168.

9   See more: Zeltiņa, Guna, Reinsone, Sanita (eds.) (2013). *Text in Contemporary Theatre: The Baltics within the World Experience.* Cambridge Scholars Publishing; Uzula-Petrovska, Maija (2015). Jauno režisoru un dramaturgu sadarbība. Radzobe, Silvija (red.). *Latvijas jaunā režija*. Rīga: Latvijas Universitāte, 303.–313. lpp.; Jonīte, Dita (2020). Dramaturģija. Tagadnes dokumentēšana un politika teātrī. Tišheizere, Edīte, Rodiņa, Ieva, Jonīte, Dita, Mellēna-Bartkeviča, Lauma. *Neatkarības laika teātris*. Rīga: LU LFMI, 342.–381. lpp.; Ulberte, Līga (2020). Methods of Text Production in Latvian Contemporary Theatre. Mellēna-Bartkeviča, Lauma (ed.). *Contemporary Latvian Theatre*. Rīga: Zinātne, pp. 62–73.

and teachers as well, and it must be kept in mind when looking at the transformation of acting in twenty-first-century Latvian theater.

Theater theorist Līvija Akurātere's *Acting in Latvian Theater* (Akurātere 1983) is a fundamental study which, despite the partly antiquated terminology it uses, still reads with interest and provides a structured insight into the development of acting in Latvia from the beginnings of theater in the nineteenth century up to the 1980s. It is still the only full-volume scientific monograph about acting in Latvian theater. Continuing the opposition of two acting techniques expanded upon by Denis Diderot in his opus *Paradox of the Actor* (Diderot 2018) to a certain extent, Akurātere describes a separation between an actor's types of existence: "Until now, theater history has known two leading principles in acting: a theater of displaying and a theater of feeling. In practice, these two directions often coexist and fuse even in the performance of one and the same actor. In theory, however, they were already divided when Latvian theater began." (Akurātere 1983: 20) In modern times, we would rather adapt the terms of histrionic and verisimilar acting codes proposed in Roberta Pearson's film analysis (Pearson 1992). They could be relevant considering the still large proportion of dramatic theater traditions in Latvian theater, which also determines the type of acting. Contrary to Patrice Pavis' opinion who, reflecting upon modern acting, notes that "the actor does not always have to imitate, or even to represent, a character" because "we are no longer in an aesthetic of imitation" (Pavis 2014: 5), Latvian theater is at least partly still in it, and an actor's ability to mimic or impersonate a dramatic character is considered a criteria of their professional capability. At the same time, the practices and techniques of acting in our country have become more varied and developed in agreement with the pursuit of a new theater language in directing. The effect of this pursuit on the transformations of acting will be reviewed below.

Cinema theorist Inga Pērkone uses and explains the histrionic and verisimilar performance codes in her monograph *Stage of the Screen: on the Acting in Latvian Cinema* (Pērkone 2020: 44–47). Her study is considered the second fundamental scientific monograph on acting in Latvian. Moreover, Pērkone has vast knowledge and an ability to layer various current cinema, theater, and cultural theories to view acting principles in theater and cinema conjointly. Such an approach in the Latvian context is unique and very rewarding because, as the author of the book remarks, Latvian cinema and theater are very closely connected, and "the bonding elements of both fields are actors." (Pērkone 2020: 11).

The collaborative work of 22 authors *100 Outstanding Latvian Actors* (Radzobe 2018a and Radzobe 2018b), published in 2018 for the centenary of the Republic of Latvia, features two substantial volumes which rather focus on issues related to the theoretical reflection on acting. The entire publication contains no reference to any acting theories except for Stanislavski's opus *My Life in Art* (Stanislavski 1972), mentioned in a single article, and citations of Līvija Akurātere's research in some articles. The portrayal of actors is mostly dominated by a biographical approach, and the analysis of actors' performances is largely concentrated on interpreting the role in the context of a literary or dramaturgical material, rather than an exploration of the methods and techniques of acting itself. Paradoxically, the

one author who has most closely approached any conclusions on the 'backstage' of acting is journalist Ivars Kleins, who published the book *Embodiment: between Art and Personal Life* (Kleins 2016) based on in-depth interviews with 20 Latvian actors of different generations, which is occasionally quoted in the aforementioned collective work of Latvian theater researchers. It can be concluded that there is quite a bit of work yet to be done in Latvian theater research so that current theories are approbated in theoretical reflection on acting and appropriate terms are introduced.

The demand for a new type of actor in Latvian theater arose as early as the 1990s with the arrival of a new generation of talented directors. At the time, they had separated themselves from the previously ruling tradition of psychological realism in Latvian theater on principle, although these directors all returned to it in one way another at later stages of their creative journeys. The brightest among this group were Alvis Hermanis, Regnārs Vaivars, and the trio of Dž. Dž. Džilindžers, Viesturs Kairišs, and Gatis Šmits, who initially presented themselves as the *Nepanesamā teātra artelis* (*Artel of Unbearable Theater*). In their first productions, they seemed to 'forget' the rules of psychological theater acting which they had learnt as students, and they made their actors 'forget' them as well, thus making them free and available for a new type of existence, experiences, and functions in their performances. These approaches draw parallels with Lehmann's definition of "the structurally changed quality of the performance text," which he uses to describe the 1980s–1990s phenomena in Western European postdramatic theater: "it becomes more presence than representation, more shared than communicated experience, more process than product, more manifestation than signification, more energetic impulse than information" (Lehmann 2006: 85). It was not that actors were not playing parts, but the representation of qualities in a logically constructed and complete plot was not the primary objective anymore, and it gave way to other tasks and functions. For example, an actor could become a sign, like in productions by Vaivars[10] or Kairišs[11], also several productions by Hermanis[12], which present a dominance of visuality and semiotic puzzles. Or an actor who fully merges with the atmosphere of the performance by physically embodying it, like in Gatis Šmits' productions[13]. Or, as theater researcher Ilze Kļaviņa accurately characterizes Džilindžers's approach[14]: "The director declines the demonstration of an artistic attitude towards what is happening onstage and replaces it with the self-expression of actors, and demands the self-expression of the audience." (Kļaviņa 2004: 175) Or an actor who assumes the intimacy of the text to an extent where it becomes almost

10  For example, in: Tadeuš Ruževič's *White Wedding* (Theater Skatuve, 1996), *Alice* is based on Lewis Carroll's works (Theater Skatuve, 1996), Hārdijs Lediņš' and Kaspars Rolšteins' *Rolshtein on the Beach* (Soros Center for Contemporary Arts, Rīga, 1997).

11  For example, Alexander Pushkin's *The Stone Guest* (Nepanesamā teātra artelis, 1996), Mircea Eliade's *Virgin Christina* (New Rīga Theater, 1997), Fyodor Dostoyevsky's *The Idiot* (New Rīga Theatre, 1999).

12  For example, Yukio Mishima's *Madame de Sade* (New Rīga Theatre, 1993), Oscar Wilde's *The Portrait of Dorian Gray* (New Rīga Theatre, 1994).

13  For example, *Richard III, or the Winter of Yorks* based on William Shakespeare's play (Nepanesamā teātra artelis, 1996), David Harrower's *Knives in Hens* (Dailes Theatre, 2006).

14  Dž. Dž. Džilindžers *Three Sisters. Not Chekhov* (Nepanesamā teātra artelis, 1997).

documentary in its nature and the character fully fuses with the actor's personality to turn the viewer into a witness of an intimate self-revelation — as in Hermanis' productions[15]. Or a deliberate use of elements of performance art, popular culture, and subculture in Vaivars's productions[16], which combine actors and non-actors in the same performance and execute the relativity of professionalism so characteristic of postdramatic theater.

Even though these pursuits of the 1990s looked innovative within the context of Latvian theater and may be perceived as a protest against the former homogeneity of theater, they did not appear out of nowhere. On one hand, they have a background in Soviet-era alternative culture practices, which were mainly implemented within private initiatives or amateur movements — artist performances (central figures: Andris Grinbergs in the 1970s and Hārdijs Lediņš in the 1980s) such as *Rīgas Pantomīma*, led by actor and director Roberts Ligers, the theater of director Ilmārs Ēlerts, etc. They have parallels with the development of performance art and the search for a new theater language in the Western world[17]. In the 1990s, it was continued by several noticeable personalities who became the formal and informal teachers of the young generation of actors and directors (e.g., Modris Tenisons, Ansis Rūtentāls, and Māra Ķimele) or collaborated on separate projects, thus spreading their experiences and worldviews (e.g., collaboration between Hārdijs Lediņš, Kaspars Rolšteins, and Regnārs Vaivars[18]).

On the other hand, at least two brilliant acting teachers, Māra Ķimele and Pēteris Krilovs, must be mentioned as important educators of a generation of contemporarily thinking and open actors. Diploma works staged by Krilovs and his students[19] in the 1990s were surprising, with a new and fresh level of genuineness in acting; in these works, psychologically substantiated motivation and expression was often combined with eccentricity. Actors coming from Krilovs's school were at the core of the New Riga Theatre ensemble led by Alvis Hermanis[20]. In the first decade of the new century, as a result of Hermanis's documentary project

15  For example, *Like a Slow and Lazy River is the Return* based on Steven Soderbergh's script for the film *Sex, Lies, and Videotape* (New Rīga Theatre, 1993), *Like a Calm and Peaceful Voice* based on the novel *Vox* by Nicholson Baker (New Rīga Theatre, 1996).

16  For example, *Alice* based on Lewis Carroll's works (Theater Skatuve, 1996), Hārdijs Lediņš' and Kaspars Rolšteins' *Rolshtein on the Beach* (Soros Center for Contemporary Arts, Rīga, 1997), Oscar Wilde's *Salome* (New Rīga Theater, 1998).

17  For example, one can draw parallels with the distrust in text and a shift of focus towards the pursuit of an intense and ultimately authentic presence of the actor, which is characteristic of theater-creators of the 1960s and has been captured by American theater theorist Elinor Fuchs (mentioning examples like Grotowski, Brook, Julian Beck and Judith Malina, Chaikin, Schechner, etc.). In the 1970s, it was joined by 'performance theater' (term coined by Fuchs, directors like Foreman, Wilson, LeCompte, etc.) (Fuchs 1999).

18  Hārdijs Lediņš, Kaspars Rolšteins *Rolshtein on the Beach* (Soros Center for Contemporary Arts, Rīga, 1997).

19  William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* (Latvian State Conservatory Class of Daugavpils Theatre, 1991), Fyodor Dostoyevsky's *Demons* (Latvian State Conservatory Class of Daugavpils Theatre, 1993), Fyodor Dostoyevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov* (Acting and Directing Class at the Latvian Academy of Culture, 1997).

20  Baiba Broka, Vilis Daudziņš, Andris Keišs, Ģirts Krūmiņš, Kaspars Znotiņš, etc.

researching the human essence (the so-called Latvian Cycle), he and his colleagues become cardinally new types of actors/researchers/storytellers, who could simultaneously handle the 'higher elevation' of traditional psychological theater. Māra Ķimele, being both a student of the famous Russian director Anatoly Efros and a participant of performances by 1970s alternative artist groups, organically combined methods of classical dramatic psychological theater and the necessity to experiment and search for new types of actorial existence, both in her productions and her pedagogical work[21]. The range of her creative work, including the influence of her teaching on theater processes in Latvia, is a rich source for further research.

In the twenty-first century, young generations of directors and playwrights have further expanded the spectrum of acting expressions. One can merely sketch out a few of the directions. Firstly, due to an increase in the application of principles of devised theater, the actor becomes a co-author of the performance more and more often. Pavis notes that "the status of an actor within the dramaturgy also changes: the actor no longer says the text as a role, from her point of view, but she sometimes acts as a narrator" (Pavis 2014: 6). Therefore, the acting sways between a dramatic actor who impersonates a character and an epic storyteller who speaks about the character. The changing and interaction of these positions enhances the significance of presence in acting, matching it to Lehmann's idea that "the actor of postdramatic theatre is often no longer the actor of a role but a performer offering his/her presence on stage for contemplation" (Lehmann 2006: 135). Secondly, in devised theater the playwright, director, choreographer, or other non-actors often perform themselves. It follows that the significance of an actor's skills is made relative — and the presence of the respective personality emerges, as well as its close relation to the theme and contents of the production. Thirdly, Latvian theater also has examples of 'performance theater'[22], which are characterized by a "continuous awareness of itself as performance, and [in] its unavailability for re-presentation" (Fuchs 1999: 79). The participation of actors in such projects might have a reverse effect on their future portrayals in dramatic theater. Lastly, it must be noted that the principles of a physical theater and contemporary dance-based thinking have an increasing impact on the process of theater creation, which also means the distancing of acting from the 'forms of life itself' characteristic of realism. Director Vladislavs Nastavševs's productions are the most prominent examples of the approach of exaltation of actors' physical actions (oftentimes even to the point of serious difficulty or even danger)[23]. In this way, he accomplishes a heightened sense of the (physical) presence of actors, while also preventing or even making it impossible for them to lay back on pure representation of character.

21   Some indicative examples of productions: *The Book of Ruth* (NRT, 1994) based on Bible stories, which could be described as an attempt to approach the expressions of ritual theater, where the collective process is superior to the individual performance of any single actress, and *Shakespeare Loves Me. Sonnets* (NRT, 1996) and *Poetry* (NRT, 2014), where actors master a seemingly infinite number of Shakespeare's sonnets or verses by Latvian poems and continuously improvise.

22   Interesting pursuits in this area have been accomplished, for example, by director Mārtiņš Eihe in his *Freedom* (New Theatre Institute of Latvia, 2007), *Sarah Kane* (Artistic Collective Nomadi, 2011), *Tanya's Birthday* (Gertrude Street Theater, 2016).

23   For example, *Mitya's Love* by Ivan Bunin (*Dirty Deal Teatro*, 2010), August Strindberg's *Miss Julie* (Valmiera Drama Theatre, 2012), *Black Sperm* (Gertrude Street Theater, 2015), etc.

Collaboration between directors and contemporary dance choreographers to create move-ment scores for performances and fine-tune the psychophysical expressions of actors has become nearly standard practice in twenty-first-century Latvian theater[24].

After watching Latvian theater performances, foreign professionals often remark on the fine quality of acting. One might explain it with the amalgamation of various acting techniques without fully denying the foundation of Stanislavski's methods. In further theoretical re-flection, we might use American performance researcher Philip Auslander's approach, who, in his book *From Acting to Performance* (Auslander 1997), examines the changes in acting in the second half of the twentieth century with the expanse of the concept of theater to include various performative expressions. His view has developed "from an original com-mitment to theatre toward a broader conception of performance and its genres" (Auslander 1997: 1). This sentence provides a certain juxtaposition of theater as a term for a narrower phenomenon, and performance as a broader definition of on-stage phenomena which in-clude theater as well. Most likely, an actor's transformation into a performer, a performance's transformation into an event, and a viewer's transformation into a participant, which has already been approbated in the practice and theory of contemporary theater, will not annul the presence of conventional dramatic theater in Latvia. This makes theoretical reflection on acting in Latvia intriguing because the same actors often work in both areas.

## Space

Space, as an integral and often integrating component of a performance, is a defining char-acteristic of twenty-first-century contemporary theater. As Lehmann writes, as a result of the destruction of the logocentric hierarchy in postdramatic theater, any other component of the performance can become dominant, and it applies to space to the greatest extent. "Instead of text-based dramaturgy, we often see visual dramaturgy." (Leman 2013: 151) It is characteristic of Lehmann to include space and movement when writing about visual dramaturgy. This combination is one of the essential innovative ideas in Lehmann's theory of postdramatic theory, and it gives an intriguing focus for further research of contemporary theater.

It must be noted that the interpretation of space in Latvian theater has corresponded with contemporary paradigms and current pursuits of visual and performative arts at a relatively early stage of professionalization — at the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, when professional theater was but 40 years old. The performance *Fire and Night* (1991) at the New Riga Theatre (whose name would be taken over at the end of the twentieth century by a theater with international recognition thanks to its leader, Alvis Hermanis) marked a

24    See the chapter 'Contemporary Dance and Art' by contemporary dance researcher Dita Jonīte in the collecti-ve monograph *Theater of Independence* (Jonīte 2020: 441–448).

revolutionary step in the synergy of directing and scenography. In the 1920s–1930s, Dailes Theatre worked in pursuit of the contemporary, and they managed to get in line with the trends of both modernism and historical avant-gardism in terms of the usage and development of space. Brilliant scenographers, representatives of modernism, worked in other theaters as well, developing what modern avant-garde scholars define as the 'dramaturgy of space' (Kosinski 2018: 85), even if not necessarily in combination with directing.  Theater of this period and its use of space has recently been brought up in several studies, especially underlining the importance of these phenomena in an international context and their closeness to Western movements of avant-garde and modernism, as well as their link to twenty-first-century dramatic and postdramatic theater (Rodiņa 2020, Tišheizere 2018; 2020; 2021).

Space and its significance in Soviet-era Latvian theater, however, has not been adequately researched. Separate studies have been dedicated to stage costumes, examining them in a visual arts context (Blūma 1988) or as analyses of officially recognized works by certain artists such as Ilmārs Blumbergs (Berjozkins 1983). Yet there are hardly any publications about alternative Soviet-era processes in Latvian performance art which deviated from the canons of socialist realism. Only in the first decade of the twenty-first century was evidence of youth counterculture collected (Valpēters 2010) and performative expressions theoretically examined in the context of visual arts (Matule 2009) without relating them to theater. The lack of such studies regarding theater has left a substantial void in the general understanding of art of the period. Alternative culture of the 1970s–1980s is a vast territory for research not only in the field of theater, but also, in a broader sense, in the field of performing arts. It is hindered by a lack of evidential matter. Alternative culture rarely was assigned the status of professional and thus officially researchable art. For example, the internationally acclaimed ensemble *Rīgas Pantomīma* never left their amateur status behind. Those productions and other events at professional theaters which did not conform with the socialist realism paradigm were either not recorded/reviewed at all or received negative critiques instead of analytical ones. Alternative or experimental, officially unrecognized theater pieces were often documented only on non-professional video recordings with no sound, in photos, or in contemporaries' memories, which may be both selective and imprecise.

However, new currents and innovative aesthetic ideas were found precisely in the depths of informal, alternative art. They were often formed through a peculiar adaptation of non-systematic and fragmented information from the outside word: standalone articles, films, and 'samizdat' publications did not make up a complete informational landscape, but they inspired interpretation and independent and unique development which could hugely deviate from the original intention. In such an indirect manner, Latvia learned about Jerzy Grotowski's programmatic performances and received a Russian translation of his late-1960s theoretical work on the 'poor theater,' replicated by typewriter. It was independently perceived, interpreted, and added upon by director, scenographer, and mime Modris Tenisons.

Studies of this period would be particularly important because alternative culture of the 1970s and 1980s, which resonated with current art processes of the West and also of aesthetically and politically more-liberated socialist countries, had a significant impact on youth

counterculture and, through it, on rising talents who reached their professional peak at the turn of the twenty-first century and went on to dictate major processes. Alvis Hermanis, who was Modris Tenisons's student for a while, has admitted that Tenisons's explorations were physically and spiritually equivalent to Jerzy Grotowski's aesthetics (Vējš 2021: 81–85). Hermanis invited Tenisons to be the co-author to one of his most programmatic stagings, *By Gorky* (2004), which utterly changed the understanding of space in recent Latvian theater.

It must be mentioned that twenty-first-century researchers from other post-socialist countries are also attempting to fill similar voids in their theater histories, and they are facing the same challenges in finding facts and evidence and sometimes even longer periods of alternative culture, because, as early as the first post-war decade, one could observe "the flourishing of what we now like to refer to as 'unofficial' artistic practices…within the monolithic 'Eastern' aesthetic and social code which…tried to create a parallel theatrical art, freed from both ideology and the grip of state theatres, and thus also from the aesthetics of socialist realism" (Svetina 2010: 15). Unofficial, alternative culture that diverged from the canon of socialist realism allows one to see the many similarities between Western trends and processes in Eastern and Central European socialist countries.

This applies to theater in Soviet Latvia as well. Characteristically, representatives of visual arts and the new age of scenography such as Ilmārs Blumbergs and Andris Freibergs were actively involved or at least participated in Latvian Soviet-era performing arts — not only theater, but also movement arts, which were most prominently presented by the ensemble *Rīgas Pantomīma* under Roberts Ligers, as well as the works of Modris Tenisons both in Latvia and Lithuania. They brought the spirit and innovativeness of contemporary theater to the 'big' state theaters where they worked, and they trained mainstream audiences for art that demands much larger individual involvement, thus laying the aesthetic foundation for creative explorations of the 1990s and the early twenty-first century already under the circumstances of an independent Latvia and its open information space.

A zenith of such a synthesis between alternative culture and official art was the staging of Henrik Ibsen's *Brand* at Dailes Theatre (1975, dir. Arnolds Liniņš). The performance, which, apart from Latvia, was only ever shown in socialist Bulgaria and USSR capital Moscow, most clearly featured the destruction of a logocentric hierarchy and had a plot structure "formed by simultaneously communicated signs through various channels" (Radzobe 2015: 138). This structure was characteristic of postdramatic theater, which was experiencing its bloom in the West. These 'channels' were music — choir recitatives containing parts of Ibsen's text; movement — which was shaped by a Modris Tenisons' movement score for the protagonist and the moving choir; and a scene design created by Ilmārs Blumbergs — a low, inverted pyramid with a single point of support. It not only embodied the main character's creed of 'all or nothing,' but directly affected the type, rhythm, and range of movement of the actors and the moving choir. The simple construction had infinite expressive possibilities which manifested only through interaction with the moving choir. This performance precisely matches Lehmann's thesis on integral visual theater, which was experiencing its rise in the West in the 1970s and 1980s: "Scenography…reveals itself to the eye of the spectator

as a certain text, a scenic poem where a human body has become a metaphor, and movement itself — an orthography, an 'inscription' rather than a 'dance'" (Leman 2013: 152). This staging could easily be a match to the opuses of Robert Wilson, Jan Lauwers, Pina Bausch, Tadeusz Kantor, and other masters of postdramatic theater.

Performance art was a momentous phenomenon of alternative culture which left no trace in contemporary criticism or research, yet had an impact on the aesthetic views of the new generation of artists, including views on the possibilities of using space. Representatives of performance art followed the same path as Serbian multimedia artist Marina Abramović, albeit in a less radical way. Artist Andris Grinbergs initiated over 30 performances, called *happenings* at the time, which involved many prominent art personalities, including director Māra Ķimele. The range of such *happenings* was very vast, and their boundaries were nearly undefinable — from meticulously prepared stagings to spontaneous campaigns, from street pantomime and informal music concerts to walks along specific routes.[25] As one of the performance participants, Imants Lancmanis, recalls, "we liked playing around with reality" (Valpēters 2010, 138). This playfulness corresponds with the marks of Western contemporary performance described by German theater theorist Erika Fischer-Lichte: (1) artists "aspire to create not a work of art (artefact), but rather an event"; (2) the aim of the performance is to make audiences not (or not only) to "understand, but to experience and delve into the gained sensual experience, which transcends the boundaries of comprehension"; (3) the audience are an active part of the performance, and they may participate and change its course; (4) the performance is an event that cannot be reproduced or repeated (Fisher-Lihte 2015: 27–38). At the same time, they were a particular prototype of site-specific theater, especially wedding ceremonies and other performances at Rundāle Palace, which raised awareness of non-theater spaces and made "the space 'talk' and reveal itself in a new light" (Leman 2013: 250).

Despite the Iron Curtain, Latvian theater exhibited many trends which were also current in Western art, even during the years of the so-called Era of Stagnation under Brezhnev and in isolation from international information. When the Iron Curtain fell and Latvia gained its independence, space and its prospects for performative arts reached the most rapid development, simultaneously marking a certain divide among directors and scenographers of the younger generation. New principles for the use of space arrived thanks to the opportunity to frequently participate in the Prague Quadrennial, which was a melting pot of innovative ideas. However, practical implementation of those ideas only began in the late 1990s with the end of the economic crash brought about by the change of the social order, which also affected the theater. They were objective circumstances which have been analyzed in studies concerning Latvian theater during the shift of the social and political system (Tišheizere

25    A notable example is the wedding of Imants and Ieva Lancmanis at Rundāle (1971). The Lancmanis couple were heading the restoration of the Baroque palace, designed by Rastrelli and demolished in the war and Soviet times, and both they and the guests wore Baroque costumes and wigs and acted appropriately — it is evidenced not only in photographs but also Maija Tabaka's painting *Wedding in Rundāle*. The following year, Andris Grinbergs used the wedding ritual format to stage his own as the Wedding of Jesus Christ with a marital bed on the sea shore; the entire ceremony was open and captured by the best photographers of the time.

2020) and in the context of twenty-first-century directing and theoretical thought (Ulberte 2015), as well as in the monograph about the luminary of the Latvian scenography school, Andris Freibergs (Zieda 2016).

Another impactful event was the arrival of Latvian director Baņuta Rubess in Latvia in the early 1990s — she was born, raised and educated in the Western world, had a postmodern worldview and a background in postdramatic theater. Her contributions and key impulses for the development of Latvian theater are still underrated. Rubess arrived with considerable experience in alternative theater and attempted to graft many of its techniques onto Latvian theater. Since institutional theaters were still dominant in Latvia with their heavy and inert management, many of the principles initiated by Rubess did not take root right away, but only came to life at a later time and in the creative works of others.

Rubess constantly worked with the method of devised theater, which aspires to lessen the expressions of logocentric and hierarchical theater, but most importantly demands an active and equal creative initiative from each participant of the performance. Later on, this principle blossomed in the collective works of Alvis Hermanis and the New Riga Theatre, which in turn influenced a generation of young directors in the second decade of the twenty-first century and radically changed their attitudes towards space, including drawing the audience into it.

Rubess staged one of the first interactive performances, *Hotel Kristina* (2006) at the Latvian National Theatre, where audience members could vote on the possible finales via text message. Ten years later, this type of theater and space was significantly developed by Mārtiņš Eihe in *Tanya's Birthday* (2016) at Gertrude Street Theater — in it, actors and viewers, who were also participants, literally sat around a celebration table in honor of Tanya's (whom anyone could become) birthday, sharing various memories of the past. Anyone could step into the actors' dialogues or monologues with their own story, thus changing the course of the conversation or discussion. Moreover, the 'performative space,' as defined by Fischer-Lichte, was significantly expanded: it included not only the specific area of performance, but also two separate parts of Latvian society — Latvians and the so-called Russian speakers, and therefore different fields of historical perception.

Similarly, in her practice, Rubess steadily worked on bringing theater out of the stage box as the only legitimate space. The first attempts to perform plays in other spaces besides the stage were made as early as the mid-1970s, when Māra Ķimele staged Jean Anouilh's *Médée* with the Valmiera Drama Theatre not inside the theater itself, but in the Sīmanis Church next to it (which was a museum at the time), and Uldis Pūcītis staged *The Boys of the Moss Village* in the courtyard of the Youth Theater. However, the principle of site-specific theater is deliberately applied in Rubess's productions.

Rubess implemented an immense site-specific theater project titled *Escape from Troy* (New Theatre Institute of Latvia, 2004) by compressing several chronological and geographical layers into the same time and space — the former military territory of Karosta in Liepāja:

the real coast of the Baltic Sea, where refugee boats had departed at the end of World War II, events of Euripides' *The Trojan Women* and the tragedy of 9/11, which was still a fresh memory. Rubess continued with this activation of time and space in *Mrs. Benjamin: Tips for Modern Living* (Arts and Music Support Foundation, 2009), where she folded the consciousness/unconsciousness and wakefulness/nightmare realities into the life story of a specific woman — Emīlija Benjamiņa, the queen of press in interwar Latvia. The experience was amplified by the performance space — a house belonging to the Benjamiņš family. This production and its artistic impulses inspired numerous productions about important personalities of Latvian culture and art in the following decade[26], performed under nearly authentic conditions — in museums, exhibition halls, and the like — thus developing the various opportunities of site-specific theater. The Latvian theater landscape is, of course, riddled with the accomplishments of many others besides Baņuta Rubess; however, she was an important and encouraging player in its development for over two decades.

The non-governmental sector plays an important part in the newest reality of Latvian theater and the advancement of theoretical thought. A different understanding and usage of space continues mostly in the alternative (in this case, not so much politically denied as deviating from the psychological mainstream of state repertory theaters) productions and regular festivals of the so-called independent theaters — the main example being the international festival Homo Novus[27] organized by the New Theatre Institute of Latvia (since 1995).

One of the most developed directions for the pursuit of theater spaces in new Latvian theater practice is site-specific theater, which manifests differently in each performance, making the space 'talk' in different ways, imposing new rules for interaction upon their audiences, making them an integral, active, and effective component of a united time and space. A successful and innovative example of site-specific and environmental theater is Valmiera Summer Theater Festival (since 2016), which has selected an entire town as its performance area, using schools, the fire depot, a pool, a night club, public parks, construction sites, and backyards, thus removing the traditional boundary between actors and viewers and making this type of interaction a common and understandable form of communication.

Director Valters Sīlis has also developed site-specific theater in his performance walks *Mārupīte* (Dirty Deal Teatro, 2012) and *Forest* and *City* (Latvian National Theatre, 2020), where he combines the performance with principles of immersive theater. Site-specificity principles were used by Mārtiņš Eihe at Rēzekne's *Joriks* theater, in the urban performance *My Neighbor, a Jew* (2021) — collaborative stories about this Eastern Latvian town in Latgale and its Jewish inhabitants who became victims of the Holocaust. The performance takes place in various places in town surrounding the renovated Green Synagogue, and audience

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26    For example, performances dedicated to Latvian artists, developed by producer Laila Baumane and the Arts and Music Support Foundation, such as *Pauļuks. Frames* based on Zigurds Konstants' book (dir. Inese Mičule, 2012), Ivo Briedis' *Padegs and Padegs* (dir. Varis Piņķis, 2015), Ivo Briedis' *From Rozentāls* (dir. Paula Pļavniece, 2016), *Lightning Thoughts. Irbīte* (dir. Inga Tropa, 2018) etc.

27    http://homonovus.lv/

groups travel from one 'nest' of the performance to another. In this performance, the notion of space is expanded by the inclusion of time — a past which continues in the present. The performance thus becomes an exploratory study on the threshold of documentary theater.

Director Krista Burāne consistently works in the urban environment as her creative space, and she largely bases her works on people living in the environment, encouraging them to make an art object of their lives or fragments thereof as well as to change the attitudes of society. Krista Burāne's works *The Reading Room* (in collaboration with Mārtiņš Eihe, 2015), *The Borders* (2016), *Fortress* (2017), and *trees have stopped talking since then* (2020) feature the principle described by Lehmann on the performance space of Jan Lauwers, where "actors often are like viewers and look at what the other performers are doing" — namely, "it functions as 'gaze direction' in painting" (Lehmann 2013: 249). Krista Burāne, however, uses this technique while blending it with a real-life event, nearly erasing the boundary between the involved performers and their observers.

It can be concluded that in contemporary Latvian theater the concept of space has been substantially broadened — it has changed from a specific place of performance, a theater building and stage, to the outside world, the urban environment, and involves not only the present, but history as well. But most significantly, it has changed the relationship between the audience and actors and has united them as components of the same space of action which are equally important for the course and meaning of the action. Considering the growing variety of theatrical expressions, adequate professional terminology should be implemented and developed.

## Instead of the Conclusion

Klāvs Mellis — Latvian actor, director, and playwright, artistic and intellectual leader of the non-governmental theater group *Kvadrifrons* — clearly represents the universal artist of the postdramatic era: he can write performance texts, create a space, produce, perform, and administer the theater group as well. Reflecting on the challenges of a pandemic-stalled theater, in the spring of 2021, Klāvs Mellis wrote: "The question of where theater begins and ends is not new at all — various conflicting performative practices and trends are rather difficult to gather under the umbrella of a single term. Even Hans-Thies Lehmann's popular concept of postdramatic theater essentially confirms only one thing: yes, many things are happening, and all of it counts, more or less. Over the last hundred years, formulating theater has been one of the essential components of the performing arts process: contemporary, postdramatic theater has become one of its most interesting phenomena, and arts research and exploration one of the main tasks of this trend" (Mellis 2021). The analysis of new and changing phenomena in Latvian theater in the context of contemporary theories helps one see its connections to global theater culture and implement new terminology for a more adequate communication with the audience.

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# Laikmetīgā teātra definēšana: pasaules pieredze un Latvijas prakse

## Zane Kreicberga, Edīte Tišheizere, Līga Ulberte

Raksta fokusā ir jaunās parādības laikmetīgajā Latvijas teātrī un to definēšanas nepieciešamība, balstoties gan uz starptautisko kontekstu un teorētiskajiem pētījumiem, gan uz Latvijas performatīvo mākslu praksi. Skatot teātri trijās hipostāzēs – no dramaturģijas jeb teksta, aktiera un/vai performera un telpas un kustības aspekta, tiek uzrādītas jaunās, 21. gadsimtam raksturīgās parādības, to iespējamie definēšanas veidi, kā arī vēsturiskās saknes daudzām laikmetīgā teātra parādībām, bez kuru izpētes un izpratnes nav iespējama terminoloģijas radīšana. Apzināta jau pastāvošā teorētiskā literatūra un tajā piedāvātie definēšanas veidi un struktūras.

# Contribution of the Latvian Brethren Congregations to the Musical Culture of the 18th Century: Preliminary Research Results, Basic Research Directions, and Perspectives

Ilze Šarkovska-Liepiņa

The origins of Latvian national art music are most associated with the beginnings of the Jānis Cimze Vidzeme[1] Teachers' Seminary (also Zimse, 1814–1881) in 1839 in Valmiera/Wolmar (1839–1849) and later in Valka/Valk (1849–1881), as well as with the teachers whose activities laid the foundations for the subsequent growth of Latvian and Estonian professional music: choir music foremost, but also the tradition of organ-playing as well as the skill of playing the violin and wind instruments and the popularization of these instruments among Latvians.

According to the memoirs of Jānis Cimze, mixed choirs were already considered old-fashioned in Livonia by 1843 (Cimze 1874). They had started in parish schools. Cimze's memoirs reveal that as a child in 1822 he listened to multipart singing at a Bible festival and, in about 1830, he sang in a choir himself — Joseph Haydn's (*Seven Last Words of Our Saviour on the Cross*, as well as excerpts from George Frideric Handel's oratorios (*Ibid.*). Rauna/Ronneburg, where Jānis Gaiķe (also Gaiķis, 1796–1858) worked as a teacher, was a particularly important place for choral singing, as was Krimulda/Kremon. Choral scores circulated from Rauna to Dzērbene/Serben, both Piebalgas (Vecpiebalga/Alt-Pebalg and Jaunpiebalga/Neu-Pebalg), Straupe/Groß-Roop, Trikāta/Trikaten, Āraiši/Arrasch and Valmiera. Pēteris Inzelbergs (also Inselberg, 1806–1894), a teacher in Liezēre/Losern from 1829 onwards, recollects that, in the early 1820s, he sang four-part songs at Rubene/Papendorp School with teacher J. D. Apīnis, and also later at the Valmiera Kreutz School (Inselberg 1874). The choirs were small, initially performing in churches and mostly monophonic. But a decade later an organ was installed at the Liezēre Church and then six singers sang four-part harmonies. Inzelbergs added currently lesser-known composers such as Friedrich Ludwig Aemilius Kunzen (1761–1817) (or Carl Adolf Kunzen, 1720–1781), Ludwig Erk (1807–1883) and David Hermann Engel (1816–1877) to the opuses of Joseph Haydn and Handel (*Ibid*.).

The most intensive singing practice, however, took place in schools where multipart singing was common. An article in an 1823 edition of *Latviešu Avīzes* (The Latvian Newspapers) mentions the consecration of the new Zeltiņi/Seltinghof Church, which featured the performance of a song with 'new music.' Musicians had led the procession to the new church, followed by 12 trained singers from

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1    Latvian: *Vidzeme*; Estonian: *Liivimaa*; English: *Livonia*, German and Scandinavian languages: *Livland*; Russian: *Лифляндия / Liflyandiya*).

the Alūksne/Marienburg parish and, according to the correspondent, 'a thousand voices harmonised well in song' (*Latviešu Avīzes* 1823). Although the 'thousand voices' is most likely an exaggeration, the article points to the massed format of the singing.

The scores were mostly acquired and hand-copied. Teacher Pēteris Ulpe (1810–1884) recalls the 1830s: 'There was not much printed music available back then. Much sweat was exerted and people's eyesight deteriorated from the hand-copying process' (Ulpe 1874). These and other testimonies raise a number of questions. Where did this passion for teaching and studying music and singing originate? Why is it that the majority of testimonies of choral singing originate in Livonia? (Although such testimonies are also abundant in Courland.) Why was multipart singing so popular even before Jānis Cimze became involved? Which Latvian teachers and music experts managed to lay the groundwork for choral singing among Latvians?

These questions are indirectly addressed in a number of research papers in the areas of history, literature, and book studies, analyzing the history of the Brethren movement in Latvia (Adamovičs 1963; Apīnis 1987, 1982; Ceipe 1995, 2006; Dunsdorfs 1973; Grudule 2011; Harnack 1860; Johansons 1975; Kaudzīte 1877; Krēsliņš 2006; Krodznieks 1914; Sloka 1925–1927; Straube 2000, 2005, 2017; Strautiņa 2016; Štolls 2016; etc.). A more or less guiding principle in these studies is the concept of the special place music and singing holds in the lives of Brethren congregations. Livonia was the most active region and centre of Brethren congregations in the Baltics: this was where the culture of Brethren congregations was expressed most strikingly (an ecosystem of sorts), and these were the earliest choir movement centers in Latvia.

The aim of this publication is to seek answers to the aforementioned questions both by analyzing previous studies, publications, and sources and by presenting the results of the initial research from a musicological angle. The article will outline perspectives and directions for further research into the musical heritage of Brethren congregations.

## Latvian Brethren Congregation Activities as Reflected in Latvian Musicology

The musical traditions of Brethren congregations have been practically ignored in Latvian music historiography. Volume I of *Latvian Music History* mentions

> 'the struggle of the Lutheran church with the Moravian Brethren congregations that passionately denounced secular songs and folk music instruments, practicing instead in their gatherings the multipart singing of sacral songs' (Vītoliņš, Krasinska 1972: 122).

The same source mentions that the Latvian Brethren congregations already started printing hymnals in the eighteenth century, and, in the 1830s, the Brethren congregations in Livonia

began using the book of choral melodies, published in 1831 in Gnadau, titled *Auszug aus dem bisher in den evangel. Brüder-Gemeinden gebräuchlichen Choral-Buche mit ausgeschriebenen Stimmen der Choral-Melodien* and consisting of 223 songs in four-part harmony (sans Latvian texts). The authors go on to say that

> 'the questions of the development of singing in the Latvian Brethren congregations require additional, dedicated research to evaluate the role of the Brethren congregations in the development of Latvian choral singing' (Ibid.: 122).

Half a century has passed since then, but in Latvian musicology circles to date there has not been an interest in the music of this Protestant-inspired religious and social movement. This is partly due to the legacy of the Soviet occupation and the consequences of that regime — the negative attitude towards religion in general and towards specific religious movements — and partly due to the negative attitude rooted in Latvian music folklore studies towards anything that replaced or overshadowed the foundations and forms of traditional ethnic music. Folklore collectors are quite justified in their opinion that where Herrnhutism had taken root, there is no point searching for ancient Latvian folklore, and 'Latvianness' has been reduced to imitations of German ('foreign') musical sources. This ignores a musical tradition that has been created and developed over several centuries, and which functions in society as part of a strong and massed religious-national movement.

The musical legacy of the Brethren is only briefly touched upon in a publication by musicologist Joachim Braun (Brauns 1958: 130–132), which analyzes Latvian and Czech musical connections, as well as in an article by musicologist Zane Gailīte, analyzing the contribution of Juris Neikens, a Latvian song festival organizer and Lutheran priest with a Herrnhutic background (Gailīte 2008). The basic tenets of this specific musical tradition are outlined in a publication by historian Gvido Straube (Straube 2017: 9–13). The content of Herrnhutian hymnals has been examined by literary historian Māra Grudule (Grudule 2011: 133–148).

## Pietism and the Beginnings of Brethren Congregation Activities in Latvia

As early as the seventeenth century, an Enlightenment movement called Pietism became popular in Latvia, emerging as a form of religious opposition of the German middle classes to orthodox Old Lutheranism. It reached its peak in the first half of the eighteenth century; however, it continued in Latvian literature and publishing until the end of the century and developed a new concept of the individual (Apīnis 1987: 23). Pietism regarded man and the world as manifestations of the Divine spirit, emphasizing the value of the individual and the significance of individual good deeds. The Pietists' requirement for individual personal growth was a new principle: They cultivated moral perfection and religious meditation and

sought to make the believer experience his faith in a deeply personal way. The Pietists added an introduction to the Bible, published in Königsberg in 1739, intended for the residents of Livonia and Courland. The introduction was a program and methodology for cultivating the emotions that urged to not only 'consider' God's words, but also 'to enjoy how sweet they are' (Apīnis 1991: 75). Pietism founded a new movement; however, the real coup was achieved by its more radical form, Herrnhutism: a new religious-philosophical and social movement that was looked upon favorably by Pietist priests. Internal opposition within the Lutheran church and nobility led to ambivalent attitudes towards both Pietism and Herrnhutism, but both had a considerable number of followers in Latvia.

The Brethren congregation movement came to Livonia from Germany — in the 1720s the *Unitas Fratrum, Herrnhuter Brüdergemeine* (Moravian Church, Moravian Brethren) became active in this area. Its founder and first leader, Count Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf und Pottendorf (1700–1760), continued the Protestant tradition of the Taborite Brethren from Bohemia, as well as the ideas of Pietism, popular in many parts of Europe in the second half of the seventeenth century. One of the main objectives of the movement was to do missionary work in regions where Christianity had not yet been fully established, including the 'diaspora,' as it was called by the Herrnhutians — people from the Baltic region, Latvians and Estonians. After the Great Northern War (1700–1721), converting the Russian-conquered Baltic provinces of Livonia and Estonia became the mission's objectives.

The first mission in 1729 led to Livonia, then Barbados in the Caribbean, Greenland, North America (where a colony was established), Suriname in South America, and finally, Africa, both to the Copts in Egypt and to South Africa.

The foundation for Brethren congregations in Livonia was laid by a Baltic German noblewoman of Swedish descent, a General's widow, Magdalene Elisabeth von Hallart (1683–1750), in Valmiera — she maintained close ties with Count Zinzendorf. In a short period of time following her decree, a compound of several buildings was erected in Valmiermuiža/Wolmarshof which became the centre of the Brethren congregation and was named Jērakalns (*Hill of the Lamb*), in accordance with Herrnhutian traditions. A Latvian teachers' seminary operated here (1738–1749) under the leadership of German brother Magnus Friedrich Buntebarth (1717–1750), who quickly mastered the Latvian language. The compound also hosted gatherings for Latvian peasants, agape meals, meetings of the leadership of the Brethren church movement, and meetings of the organizers and leaders of the Latvian movement (Adamovičs 1963: 520–540, Straube 2005: 12).

The seminary began preparing teachers among local peasants to teach the local children, recruiting them not only from Livonia but also from Courland. Nobility and clergy sent the most talented young Latvian men to Valmiermuiža to become teachers, providing the necessary financial support and books, and at the same time established schools for peasant children (in 1740 alone, in manors in Mārsnēni/Marzenhof, Liepa /Lindenhof, Kūdums/Kudum, Jaunmuiža / Adsel Neuhof, Anciems/Autzem, Rozula/Rosula, and elsewhere). From 15 pupils in 1739, the number of Latvian seminarians increased to over 100 by 1742 (Straube 2000: 58).

The materials preserved in the Latvian State Historical Archive — mostly documents of church visitations[2] — show that the first teachers from the parishes of Āraiši and Cēsis/Wenden) started working in 1739/1740 — Salenieku (Salniešu) Miķelis taught in schools in Kūdums and Ungurmuiža/Orellen, as well as Grestes (Grošu) Miķelis at the manor school in Anciems. Among the first teachers mentioned were also Gavēņu Andžs from the Cēsis Castle district, Daukšu Jānis from Priekuļi/Freudenberg, Staļa Juris from Jaunrauna/Ronneburg-Neuhof. By 1739, approximately 3,000 people had joined the Herrnhutians in Livonia — both men and women — and the number of adherents to the faith was growing (Straube 2000: 59). 'The fire' spread to the neighboring parishes of Cēsis, Trikāta, Rauna, and Smiltene/Smilten, too. The most impressive revival took place among the Latvians of Kaugurmuiža/Kaugershof, where the whole forest resounded in song and everyone was praying for God's mercy. 'The fire' spread even further, to parts of Courland and the Lithuanian border (Straube 2000: 54).

The Valmiermuiža compound had the capacity to accommodate several thousand people who flooded Jērakalns each weekend. To overcome innate Latvian shyness and insecurity, joint German and Latvian agape meals were organized in order to promote friendships and sing songs together. The Herrnhutian tradition of mutual reconciliation and humility was the washing of each others' feet, as described in the New Testament. These were entirely new experiences for Latvian peasants. The 'awakened' Latvians began to mission among their own countrymen, telling them that Christ was not only a God of the Germans but also the Savior of the Latvian people, that he loved the needy in the world, that he had been one himself once, just like the Latvians were, and that all men and nations were equal before God without distinction between high and low (Adamovičs 1963, Straube 2000 *et al.*).

Latvian self-organization began in 1742 with landowners taking the lead, joined by the less-wealthy commoners. The hierarchy of the congregation strictly prescribed the status and role of its members in three groups — 'the ones who are moved' or, in other words, those still waiting (the majority), 'the awakened', and, the highest group, 'the forgiven.' The division of duties in a group included the elder, the elder's assistants, and those who served. Social mobility was possible — via a ballot it was possible to ascend to a higher social standing. There was also gender division in the congregation. Since women were also active members of the congregation, the choirs were mixed — this explains why mixed choirs were a 'common thing' in Livonia. The emancipation of women was concomitant with the activities of Brethren congregations. The organizing of various events was a part of the congregation's objectives, and these were organized frequently. Over time, children were also involved in singing — children's choirs became regular participants in Herrnhutian events. Herrnhutians valued communication and fellowship; therefore, letter-writing became popular, as well as singing at gatherings. Aleksejs Apīnis has pointed out that the writings of the Brethren contain hundreds of self-composed songs — dialogues between man and Jesus about his feelings in a markedly private tone — a most striking expression of the Herrnhutian 'religion of the heart,' where the relationship with God is characterized by the feeling that Jesus is not *the* Lord but 'one's friend' (Apīnis 1987: 15–35, Grudule 2011: 134–135).

2    The State Historical Archive of Latvia. LVVA 233 f., 237 f.

At the Valmiermuiža Seminary, along with other modern teaching methodology programs that were based on the principles of the founder of contemporary pedagogy, Moravian Brother Komensky, musical upbringing had a special role. Since Latvians had not yet developed their singing skills, according to Buntebarth, the German brother Magnus Friedrich taught them to read musical scores so that they could hold their voices correctly. The autobiography of a Herrnhutian named Skangaļu Jēkabs (1722–1801) reflects his deep awe of singing and organ-playing at Jērakalns, where Buntebarth seemed to enter the prayer hall like a fair angel, bringing to his brothers the Latvian translations of the hymns. Buntebarth himself also recalled that his translations were received in the congregation with great devoutness. The musicality of their singing was praised in numerous reports (Philipp 2011: 24).

Learning musical notation and score-reading for singing made a radical impact on Latvian singing, as evidenced by church visitation documents before and after teachers trained at Jērakalns started working in their respective churches. In 1742/1743, the Livonian Church Visitation Commission concluded that the singing skills of peasants had improved so much that they were able to prepare multipart songs (Straube 2005: 14).

In many Latvian literary sources and autobiographies, the first impressions that authors have from their childhood and youth about the Moravian Church are connected with singing.

The ideology of Brethren congregations and its emphasis on the importance of moral and emotional lives also determined the use of appropriate music material, which was stylistically part of the sentimentalism movement.

The leaders of Brethren congregations addressed their congregation members as if they were children, using diminutives and nature allegories; in this aspect the expressivity of Herrnhutian songs had significant similarities with Latvian folklore. Meanwhile, tears, Jesus' blood, the naturalism or aestheticization of suffering, jubilant joy, exalted expression, affects, an eroticized perception of Jesus and his life, a religious experience that is likened to a sexual act — these aspects point to the presence of Baroque elements in the texts of Brethren congregations (Apīnis 1987: 18–19, Grudule 2011: 137–138).

Brethren congregations also encouraged the playing of instruments: An organ was accessible at the Jērakalns compound, and violin and wind instruments were taught there. The organ accompanied chorales sung by the congregation and the choir. Instrumental skills were also required at school and were developed alongside vocals (Straube 2005: 14 *et. al.*).

## The Use of Music

As previously mentioned, music had a significant role in both the religious and everyday life of the Herrnhutians, encompassing several forms of musical practice and cultivating its own

ideology and aesthetics. Music was perceived as a gift from the Holy Spirit to be used by the congregation as a means of communication and education — part of the religious routine (and the whole rhythm of life). Single-voice and multipart singing became the focal genre. However, singing with instrumental accompaniment and cantatas were considered the highest forms of musical expression. Instrumental musicianship was widely practiced — primarily organ music, but also keyboards (clavichord, harpsichord), guitar, zither, lute, harp, and wind instruments such as the French horn, bassoon, and trumpet. Herrnhutian congregations (especially in Germany) established baroque orchestras (*Collegium musicum*) as well as organist and singing (music) teachers' institutes (Wehrend 1995: 33–51).

Stylistically, the musical legacy of eighteenth-century Brethren congregations falls within the transitional period between the Baroque and Classical styles — as the Pre-Classical period (until 1750), in which Baroque expression and stylistic elements play an equally important role as the elements of Classicism with predominantly homophonic harmonic structures (Wehrend 1995: 27). In the context of the Latvian and Estonian musical milieu, it could be said that this was an adaptation of the contemporary Western style of art music.

Among the Herrnhutians there were a number of distinguished music personalities and composers: Carl Otto Eberhard (1711–1757), Johan Michael Graff (1714–1785), Christian Gregor (1723–1801), Johann Daniel Grimm (1719–1760), Johann Friedrich Hempel (1716–17??), Philipp Heinrich Molther (1714–1780), Friedrich Wenzel Neißer (1716–1777), Ludolph Ernst Schlicht (1714–1769), Johann Friedrich Schmidt (1722–1756), Johann Friedrich Bonneval de La Trobe (1769–1845) —  the latter also worked in Rīga for a brief period of time, subsequently spending his life in Dorpat (Tartu). At the same time, the Brethren equally accepted and highly regarded musicians from outside the Herrnhutian movement: Georg Friedrich Händel (1685–1759), Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach (1714–1788), Wilhelm Friedemann Bach (1710–1784), Joseph Haydn (1732 –1809), Carl Philipp Stamitz (also Karel Stamic; 1745 –1801), Luigi Boccherini (1743–1805), and others. The names of these composers often appear in nineteenth-century Livonia, especially in school and church repertoires.

Johann Daniel Grimm (1719–1760), a composer, theorist, and teacher from Herrnhut, developed the foundations and aesthetics of music tuition for Brethren congregations. In 1753, he wrote in his manual that the education of the congregation must include the teaching of notes and intervals, scales (circle of fifths), harmony, general bass, timbre (or the understanding of meter and rhythm), instrument performance (especially clavichord), music history, an introduction to musical genres, and sound systems (Grimm 1753; Wehrend 1995: 71). Numerous German Brethren sources (lesson plans) reflect the activities that formed the basis of daily music-making: the so-called 'singing lesson' (*Singstunde¸* singing of songs), liturgy, 'singing choir' (*Sängerchor,* choral singing), *Collegium musicum* practice, music lessons at school and elsewhere — in church, at school, and at home (Wehrend 1995: 72).

To date, research of written music sources of the Herrnhutians in Livonia has found evidence of the widespread practice of singing, the singing of choral music, and efforts to

provide and advance the role of a musical education as well as the instrumental traditions of playing the organ, violin, and wind instruments. Rare examples of iconographic materials provide evidence of this, including a page from a handwritten manuscript, *Krusta skolas grāmata* (The Book of the School of the Cross, 1797)[3], by Latvian author Juris Natanaēls Ramanis (1742 or 1743–approx. 1801). Ramanis was a teacher in Krimulda, forced to leave for unknown reasons. He is later mentioned as a teacher in Bērzaune/Bersohn, Cesvaine/Sesswegen, Dzelzava/Selsau. Born circa 1743, he took over his deceased father's teaching position. According to both Edgars Ceske and Aleksejs Apīnis, Ramanis was not a Herrnhutian himself, but his works were recognized by the Herrnhutians and found their way into their writings (Ceske 1995: 15–17, Apīnis 1987:51). The book contains religious prose and 18 songs — song lyrics and notes on which melodies should be used for singing them. The manuscript contains illustrations — 22 in total, mostly of Biblical scenes. The morning song illustration depicts a room with a kokle on the wall and a trumpet on the wardrobe. An example of a song from the book, *Viena dziesma no Bībeles tiem svētiem dieva rakstiem* (One Song from the Bible, God's Holy Scriptures):

| | |
|---|---|
| Tā kokle man par žēlošan',<br>Tā stabule par raudāšan'<br>Iekš manām prieka dienām<br>No dieva tapus' dota man. | The kokle for my lament,<br>The flute for my crying,<br>On my days of joy,<br>Were given unto me by God. |

The Latvian traditional instrument, the kokle, takes on a dual or even contradictory role here, if we perceive the Herrnhutian musical tradition as opposed to traditional music. Like the Lutheran Church, the Herrnhutians also turned against Latvian 'silly songs' (*blēņu dziesmas*), aiming to eradicate from peasant life the specific folklore which was connected with ancient customs or eroticism. In this case, the semantics of the kokle — and its status as a sacred instrument in Latvian traditional music — is incorporated and accepted in the context of Christianity.

In numerous sources, including the autobiographies of Herrnhutians and persons associated with them, the playing of instruments (the organ, violin and others) is mentioned. The first professional musician of Latvian origin, whose name can be found in the lexicon of Baltic German historians Johann Friedrich von Recke (1764–1846) and Karl Eduard von Napiersky (1793–1864) (Recke, Napiersky, 1829: 8), is also believed to be connected with Brethren congregations. Miķelis Gailis (also Gail, Mikkel; 1749–1827) was born in Skulte/Adiamünde with an extraordinary desire to learn. He worked as a servant on a farm, learned to read and write in German and in Latvian, and

3    LU Academic Library, Manuscripts and Rare Books Section, R Ms 1065.

was particularly fond of reading the Holy Scriptures. From 1782 to 1810, he worked in Skulte as a teacher. He was a verger and head singer at Matīši / St. Matthäi and Skulte churches and was skilled in mechanical works. He was self-taught in clock and piano repairs; he built a small organ. With support from the Pietist-minded pastor Friedrich Bernhard Blaufuß (1697–1756), Gailis's book, *Dr. Mārtin Luterus mācības, visiem par labu* (Dr. Mahrtin Lutherus' Teachings for the Benefit of Everyone), was printed in 1793. The book contained Blaufuß's interpretations of Luther's sermons in an abridged format. This publication is a typical popularizer of the idea of human inner rebirth. Gailis emphasized that the reader must reflect on himself — moreover, not just with one's mind but also with one's heart (knowledge and faith are nothing without love). Miķelis Gailis was renowned as an avid reader. According to Aleksejs Apīnis, not only was literacy surprising for that time, but the large print runs of books were also unusual. In 1735, the pastor in Skulte (before the birth of Miķelis Gailis) wrote that he did not know two households in the Skulte district where every single peasant was not skilled in reading and would not be able to, despite their own naivety, uplift themselves by reading the word of God (Apīnis 1991:112).

The limited information available on Gailis as a writer, musician, and instrument-builder is nevertheless very significant, as it confirms several trends of his era: influenced by the Enlightenment and inspired by the ideologies of Pietism and Herrnhutism, many Latvians became educated. Some were self-taught: the education system was developing and promoting literacy, encouraging self-development and self-initiative. The frame of this ideology facilitated the formation of a Latvian intelligentsia, with a central teacher and expert in choral singing and music tuition. And lastly, Gailis' personality reflects the instrument-building traditions characteristic of that era in Latvia — according to Grauzdiņa, such self-taught organ builders emerged in Livonia, also building instruments for local needs and for individual households (Grauzdiņa 1987: 58–59).

The existence of various instrumental ensembles in Livonia is another specific issue to be looked into. There is evidence of larger orchestras playing in Herrnhutism centers in Germany, formed by professionals and self-taught musicians (Wehrend 1995: 75–77). Instrumental and vocal instrumental ensembles of various sizes and types were widely popular in the households of the nobility, as well as among the Brethren. Zinzendorf himself had mastered the clavichord, and his wife was a lutist. Ensembles with all the aforementioned instruments, including wind instrument 'choirs,' played in Herrnhut and in other centers. We can assume that in Livonia, too, instrumental music was played at home in the houses of Pietist landowners and priests, given that among them were educated intellectuals and very wealthy individuals, such as the Herrnhutian benefactor, lieutenant-general, church warden, and owner of the Ungurmuiža/Orellen manor, Johann Balthasar von Campenhausen (1689–1758). In 1744, he founded a new manor school in Lenči/Lenzenhof, aspiring to continue the tradition of the closed Valmiermuiža teachers' seminary (Johansons 1975: 148). The status of this nobleman and his environment could have been conducive to home musicianship as well; however, the topic of whether it was prevalent in the houses of the wealthy and the priests in Livonia requires further research.

## Hymnals

The hymnals of the earliest period of Brethren congregation activities were published from 1501 onwards in Czech, Polish, and German. The hymnals of the Herrnhutians or renewed Brethren congregations, however, appeared in the first half of the eighteenth century. Initially they were collections written and compiled by Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf himself, from 1725/1726 onwards.

*Garīgu dziesmu grāmata* (The Book of Spiritual Songs), consisting of 'the essential old and new songs' as well as lesser-known melodies (Volume I in 1704 and II in 1714), compiled by the musical leader of the Halle school of Pietists, Johann Anastasius Freylinghausen (1670–1739), gained importance within Herrnhutian congregations of both Germany and Livonia. A number of publications by the Herrnhutians themselves followed: *Gesang-Buch der Gemeine in Herrn-Huth. Zu finden im Weysen-Hause 1735*, and its second edition in 1737, contained 1000 songs, 472 of which originated from Freylinghausen's volume. It was followed by *Christliches Gesang-Buch, der Evangelischen Brüder-Gemeinen von 1735 zum drittenmal aufgelegt und durchaus revidirt* in 1741, 1743, and 1751, as well as the song collections *Ein Kleines Gesang-Büchlein, Zum Gebrauch der Pilger*, published in Frankfurt am Main in 1736 with 264 songs, and *Hirten Lieder Von Betlechem. Zum Gebrauch Vor alles wass arm ist, Was klein und gering ist*, published in 1742 with 360 songs. The so-called *London Books* are also worth noting — *Etwas vom Liebe Mosis*, published in 1753 at Westminster Abbey and containing 2168 songs, and *Das Evangelischen Lieder-Buch* of 1754 with 1096 songs.

In 1739, Latvian Brethren congregations started publishing their own song books. The first one was published with the financial support of General Hallart's widow, printed in Königsberg and titled *Kādas izlasītas garīgas jaukas dziesmas* (A Selection of Nice Spiritual Songs), translated and arranged by Magnus Friedrich Buntebarth, and published together with two revised, printed Bibles. According to information available from the *Archiv der Brüder Unität Herrnhut*, the number of published song books by the Brethren congregation in the Latvian language in the eighteenth century reached seven (eight, according to the author's sources); the same number of books was printed throughout the following century, and only three were published in the twentieth century (Kröger 2011: 187–200). The first song book contains only 30 songs — lyrics with suggestions on which melodies should be used from the German volumes, mainly from the publication by Freylinghausen. However, it contains three songs the source of which has not been hitherto identified. We can assume that these are original compositions, confirming that the new songs were creative works from Livonia.

The second, supplemented edition was printed in Reval (Tallinn) in 1742 — *Kādas izlasītas garīgas jaukas dziesmas, otrā reizi driķētas un no jauna pavairotas tām pēc savu mūžīgu izglābšanu meklēdamām dvēselēm par labu* (A Selection of Nice Spiritual Songs, Printed for the Second Time and Copied Anew for the Benefit of the Souls that Seek Eternal Salvation), or the so-called *Ort Book* (titled after its price — one ort, or 30 kopecks in silver). This book

already contained 234 songs, and 41 of these had no German original titles indicated, hypothetically also making them original compositions.

The next publication, *Common Prayer*, was printed in Marienborn circa 1747 and included liturgies and 14 litanies; its two addenda contained the translations of 50 songs authored by Buntebarth and corrected by Skangaļu Jēkabs (1722–1801) (Grudule 2011: 137). The book was commonly known as *Cērpulis* (from the first letters of the English title) and included lyrics to 93 new songs.

In 1755, the book *Kādas izlasītas garīgas jaukas dziesmiņas visām pēc savu mūžīgu glābšanu kārām dvēselēm* (A Selection of Nice Spiritual Songs for Souls Seeking Eternal Salvation*)* was printed in Barby, borrowing unnumbered songs from the German *Kleinen Brüdergesangbuch*, translated by Peter Hesse. It also had liturgies as appendices. The volume titled *Viens krājums no jaukām litānijām, svētku un amata dziesmiņām tāpat vecām, kā arī jaunām* (One Volume of Nice Litanies, Festive and Labour Songs, Old as well as New) was printed in the same place in Barby in 1759 — a supplement to Hesse's book, compiled together with his co-worker, German Baltic theologist and Herrnhutian Friedrich Justin von Bruining (1707–1774).

In the late eighteenth century, several books were published by the Kurzeme-born Herrnhutian leader, theologist, doctor, and deputy director of the Livonian Herrnhutians Georg Heinrich Loskiel (1740–1814). The first one was titled *Garīgas dziesmas Dievam par godu un slavu* (Spiritual Hymns Honoring and Praising God) — also called the *Petersburg Book* or *Dahler Book* (*Dāldera grāmata*) — and printed in Petersburg in 1790. The volume of over 500 pages contains 400 hymns; moreover, Loskiel was not only the publisher of these songs, but also their author or co-author. *Liturģijas jeb slavas dziesmas un lūgšanas, piesaukšanas un aizlūgšanas* (Liturgies or Hymns of Praise, Prayer, Invocation, and Intercession) and *Simts garīgas dziesmiņas* (One Hundred Spiritual Songs) were printed in 1797 in Barby with an introduction by Loskiel (publisher and author).

In 1780, the song books by Pietist Freylinghausen were criticized by Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803):

> 'A certain pious German school has weakened and ruined the church songs. It adjusted the songs to chamber singing with sweet and weak melodies, full of tender feelings and little jokes. Here the church song lost all its majesty and became a playful weakling.' (Kümmerle 1888: 435).

However, the songs of this tender style gained acceptance throughout the Baltic region. The Pietist, later Herrnhutian ideology, which emphasized the importance of one's moral and emotional life, also determined the use of appropriate musical material that conformed stylistically with the direction of sentimentalism.

Since the entire lives of the Brethren were perceived as a service to God, the repertoire permeated all aspects of their life. Similar to the tradition of singing whilst working, which was

widespread among Latvian peasants, the Herrnhutians practiced a similar approach and made the hardships of work easier by singing (Hahn, Reichel 1977: 227). Thus, songs intended for various situations of daily life were often sung in Brethren congregations (Straube 2017: 12).

## Reception

The books quickly found their target audience, as opportunities for basic education contributed to high literacy rates — in this respect, the Latvian population (with the exception of Latgale/Inflanty) was among the most educated in Europe (Krēsliņš 2006: 402). The literacy rate among peasants in Livonia, where Brethren congregations were dominant, was around 75% in 1780, and already over 90% in 1800 (Apīnis 1991: 110). Similar rates were evident in the Herrnhutian districts of Estonia. Literacy in itself did not open the doors to higher education, as it was not available in Latvian — German was dominant at the higher levels — however, it stimulated an unusually wide array of handwritten literature, a large part of it comprising of transcribed song lyrics.

The new way of teaching became popular among Latvians not only due to its democratic nature, but also because of the new, contemporary language of music, which often differed in its sentimental character from the basic repertoire of Lutheran hymnals. The to-and-froing between Brethren congregations and the Lutheran church also contributed to the migration of repertoire, as the Herrnhutian songs were occasionally also sung in the official Lutheran church. Clergy attitudes towards the Brethren varied from church to church. Priests responded favorably to the Brethren's deep Christian faith and their aspiration towards virtue; however, at the same time many churches had become half-empty.

Yet the movement was responsible not only for emptying the Lutheran churches. The popularity of the songs of the new Brethren congregations gradually led people to turn away from their own folklore, which had been handed down from generation to generation yet was now considered undesirable among the Herrnhutians. It was the district of Livonia that proved to be the poorest region for folk heritage in the second half of the nineteenth century, as traditional heritage had largely been replaced by the musical repertoire of Brethren congregations.

## Concluding Remarks

All of the aforementioned sources, as well as the numerous hand-written songs in the Latvian language, still require substantial musicological evaluation (see the digitalized corpus of Herrnhutian hymns in the Latvian National Library collection, the Latvian State Historical

Archive, and other sources — for example, in 1782 Kalnieša Jēkabs authored several handwritten books of songs from Aloja/Allendorf or Puiķele/Puikeln, located now in the National History Museum of Latvia collection[4]). The number of collections and individual records reaches into the thousands. The transcripts also often contain indications of the song melodies to be used with the lyrics, and sometimes sheet music, usually anonymous, is included. It is clear that this is multi-layered musical material, since alongside completely new songs is the repertoire of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, and in many cases Lutheran chorale melodies are included with the lyrics. It cannot be ruled out that some traditional music elements have found their way into this cultural ecosystem, as Herrnhutian lyrics sometimes share similarities with traditional texts (folk songs) in their use of diminutives and allegories of nature. In their music-making, the Brethren may have used traditional musical instruments (e.g., kokles).

Answering the questions raised at the beginning of the article, one can argue that the rapid uptake of the Herrnhutian movement in Vidzeme (Livonia), which became widespread, determined the religious, social, and ideological identity of a large part of the Latvian population. It contributed to the education and literacy level of peasants, as well as to the improvement of singing and instrument-playing skills. It is important to emphasize the role of the Wolmarshof Teachers' Seminary in training musically educated teachers. We can find similar manifestations of the musical life in Vidzeme in other Brethren congregation centers, for instance, in Herrnhut, with the differences that professional music-making skills had not yet taken root in the Latvian environment, *Collegium musicum* orchestras were absent, and there were not yet any local professional composers. At the same time, singing had become established at the center of religious life, hymnals were published, and polyphonic singing was also mastered. It is in hymnals that we can also look for expressions of creativity. The first Latvian intellectuals who were self-taught, such as Miķelis Gailis, gained a certain influence in the life of their society.

Taking all of this into account, future research will address such issues as (1) the interception and manifestation of Herrnhutian ideology and musical aesthetics in the Latvian environment, (2) the analysis of musical sources (and local manifestations in the Latvian repertoire), (3) the search for points of contact between Czech-German-Latvian-Estonian musical cultures in the Herrnhutian repertoire, (4) the reception of the music of Brethren congregations among their contemporaries, (5) an insight into some of the more well-known Brethren personalities and the reflection of their musical interests and skills in historical sources.

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4 CVVM VN 13579.

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# Latviešu brāļu draudžu devums 18. gadsimta mūzikas kultūrā: pirmie pētniecības rezultāti, pamatvirzieni un perspektīvas

## Ilze Šarkovska-Liepiņa

Rakstā tiek aplūkota latviešu brāļu draudžu muzikālā darbība 18. gadsimtā, kā arī atspoguļoti pirmie hernhūtiešu mūzikas mantojuma pētniecības rezultāti muzikoloģijā. Tiek aplūkota brāļu draudžu tradīcijas pārtvere latviešu vidē, aizsākoties pirmajām misijām Vidzemē 1729. gadā. Par nozīmīgu muzikālās izglītības centru kļūst Valmiermuižas skolotāju seminārs (1738–1749) vācbrāļa Magnusa Frīdriha Buntebarta (*Magnus Friedrich Buntebarth*, 1717–1750) vadībā. Seminārā tiek sagatavoti skolotāji no latviešu zemnieku vides, ievadot viņus arī mūzikas mācībā, nošu raksta apguvē un dziedāšanā. Paralēli Valmiermuižā notiek pat vairāku tūkstošu cilvēku lielas reliģiskās sanāksmes ar dziedāšanu, pulcējot vietējos iedzīvotājus no tuvākas un tālākas apkārtnes. Nošu raksta apguve un dziedāšana pēc notīm radikāli ietekmē latviešu dziedāšanas prasmes, ko pārliecinoši demonstrē baznīcu vizitāciju dokumenti periodā pirms un pēc tam, kad attiecīgajā draudzē sākuši darboties Jērakalnā sagatavotie skolotāji. Brāļu draudzes veicinājušas arī instrumentu spēli – Jērakalna kompleksā bijušas pieejamas ērģeles, apgūta vijoļspēle un pūšaminstrumentu spēles prasmes. Hernhūtiešu centros noturētās tā dēvētās "dziedāšanas stundas", "dziedāšanas kori" (kordziedāšana), *Collegium musicum* prakse, mūzikas nodarbības skolā, draudzē un mājas apstākļos demonstrē visai plašu mūzikas žanrisko spektru. Līdz ar izglītības un pašizglītības veicināšanu no hernhūtiešu vides izaug muzikāli izglītotas personības, kā, piemēram, Miķelis Gailis (1749–1827).

Liela nozīme repertuāra veidošanā ir Johana Anastāzija Freilinghauzena (*Freylinghausen, Johann Anastasius*, 1670–1739) sastādītajai "Garīgu dziesmu grāmatai"(Halle, I sējums –1704, II – 1714). No 1739. gada uzsākta latviešu brāļu draudžu dziesmu grāmatu izdošana – 18. gs. iznāk astoņas dziesmu grāmatas latviešu valodā, no kurām pazīstamākās ir "Kādas izlasītas garīgas dziesmas" (Kēnigsbergā, 1739), t. s. "Orta grāmata" ( "Kādas izlasītas garīgas jaukas dziesmas", 1742), kā arī

"Common Preyer" jeb t. s. "Cērpulis" (1747). 18. gs. beigās dienasgaismu ierauga Kurzemē dzimušā hernhūtiešu līdera, teologa un ārsta, Vidzemes hernhūtiešu priekšnieka palīga Georga Heinriha Loskīla (*Georg Heinrich Loskiel*, 1740–1814) grāmatas (1790, 1797). Tūkstošiem dziesmu, galvenokārt dziesmu tekstu, uzglabātas rokrakstos.

Hernhūtiešu mācība kļūst pievilcīga latviešu vidē, lielā mērā pateicoties jaunajai, laikmetī-gajai, ar sentimentālismu saistītajai priekšklasicisma mūzikas valodai. Tās adaptācija nozīmē rietumu mūzikas valodas pārnesi latviešu sabiedrībā.

# Cinematographic Co-productions between Latvia and the Baltic States: Experience and Trends

## Dita Rietuma

Co-productions have been a very important instrument in the development of the European audiovisual sector and in the cross-border circulation of European films since the beginning of the 1990s; the relevance of this topic was highlighted in 2019 by creating the document *Council Conclusions on Improving the Cross-border Circulation of European Audiovisual Works with an Emphasis on Co-productions*.

'A large proportion of films produced in the EU are European co-productions and point to the advantages of co-producing, namely the possibility to reach larger audiences and markets than national films and to benefit from more financing sources, including public funding. Furthermore, co-productions [...] build bridges between different geographic and linguistic areas and contexts, having positive effects on both majority and minority co-production partners and on the entire audiovisual sector.' (The Council of European Union 2019).

Since the European audiovisual sector is characterized by geographical and linguistic differences, which cause market fragmentation, co-productions may foster international circulation and distribution of films, promote the production and distribution potential of national cinemas and increase the competitiveness of national film industries. This stance is confirmed by data from the European Audiovisual Observatory — co-productions of a European scale have three times larger audiences than films produced in a single European country. It should be noted that, in 2019, 1881 films were made in the European Union, 1135 (60%) of which were feature films. 20% of the films produced in Europe during that year were co-productions (European Audiovisual Observatory 2020).

In present-day Europe, co-productions by several countries are not only creative, but also a legally framed project, where a balance must be struck between the filmmakers' creative vision, film producers' interests, and the share of financial contributions by various countries. To attract public funding for the production of a film in several European countries, project applicants (usually film studios) have to convince the experts of the potential of the conceived film, the compliance of the fundraising with international regulations, as well as detail the creative contribution of each participating country — representatives of various professions who will participate in the film project. This is one of the decisive criteria in the assessment of film projects by various European funds (Rietuma 2021: 111). At the same time, co-productions are regarded as an important form of international cooperation in the film industry, important for the development of national film industries as well as for a wider

distribution of the films. In order to understand co-production practices in present-day European cinema, a brief historical overview is needed, outlining the experiences of international cooperation in the Latvian film industry in a broader historical context.

At the beginning of the 1990s, the socio-political changes and the restoration of Latvian independence also marked significant changes in the film production and funding system. The Latvian film industry, from being centrally financed and organized according to a planned economy during the Soviet occupation, when films were made in the only state film studio (Rīga Film Studio), became an open and democratic system. Since then, filmmaking has been in the hands of small studios — creative groups. The way in which funding was attracted for filmmaking changed: instead of the previous Soviet institutions, which had centrally ensured the financing of films, new institutions where created, the task of which was to allocate state support — public funding — for film production. The National Film Centre, established as an institution subordinate to the Ministry of Culture in 1991, became such an institution in Latvia. Though the first decade of independence of Latvian cinema was characterized by minimal state support for film production, the beginning of the 1990s can also be considered the return of Latvian cinema to Europe. While practices of co-production can also be found in Latvian filmmaking of the pre-occupation period, in those days it was minimal (for more detail, see Rietuma 2021: 112). Yet, it is impossible to compare the making of co-productions in Latvia during the pre-occupation era with contemporary European practices, where co-production is regulated by international laws — since 2017, that law has been the Council of Europe Convention on Cinematographic Co-production (revised), replacing the Convention adopted in 1992.

It should be noted that the beginnings of international cooperation can be found in the experience of the Rīga Film Studio during the Soviet period. Typically, in the Soviet period, international cooperation of Latvian cinema manifested itself in including the creative forces of neighboring countries in film crews — yet even in such cases, films were funded from the budget of one particular film studio. Cooperation among Baltic filmmakers during the Soviet period is most obviously illustrated by the involvement of actors from neighboring states. Directors of the Rīga Film Studio frequently used Lithuanian actors in their films — for example, Vytautas Tomkus, a Lithuanian actor, played the protagonist in Aloizs Brenčs's drama *Redundant* (*Liekam būt,* 1976*)*, and Rimanta Krilaviciute, a Lithuanian actress, in Gunars Cilinskis' film *Early Rust* (*Agrā rūsa,* 1980).

By the same token, Latvian actors have played important parts in films of other Baltic States: Uldis Pūcītis — in the Estonian postmodern film noir *Dead Mountineer's Hotel* (*Hukkunud alpinisti hotell*, dir. Griogri Kromanov, 1979, Estonia); Vija Artmane — in the Lithuanian film *Nobody Wanted to Die (Niekas nenorejo mirti*, dir. Vytautas Žalakevičius, 1965, Lithuania); Ingrīda Andriņa — in the Estonian film *The Last Relic* (*Viimne reliikvia*, dir. Grigori Kromanov, 1969, Estonia). It is also worth mentioning Juris Strenga and Harijs Liepiņš's memorable supporting roles played in the Estonian *shelf film,* or a film banned by censorship, *Madness* (*Hullumeelsus*, dir. *Kaljo Kiisk*, 1968, Estonia), with a Latvian scriptwriter, Viktors Lorencs (Rietuma 2021: 112).

## Practices of European co-productions

The European Convention on Cinematographic Co-production, adopted at the beginning of 1992 and joined by Latvia as early as 1993, plays a crucial part in strengthening practices of European co-production. In 2017, a revised Council of Europe Convention on Cinematic Co-production was adopted; it was joined by Latvia in 2019.

The first Convention, adopted in the early 1990s, stipulated the amount of funding to be invested in the film project by each co-producing country. According to the Convention, in the case of a multilateral co-production, the minimum investment may not be less than 10% and the maximum must not exceed 70% of total production costs. In the case of a bilateral production, the minimum investment may not be less than 20% and the maximum must not exceed 80% of total production costs (Latvijas Vēstnesis, 1992). The required amount of investment was an important reason why, for a long time, it was problematic for Latvia to cooperate with filmmakers of the larger European countries, ensuring the necessary share of the funding. This is one of the reasons Latvian filmmakers' international cooperation developed with film industries of a comparable output and capacity — Estonia and Lithuania. The amount of financial investment was revised in 2017, stipulating the minimum investment of a co-producing country in a film's budget to be 5% and the maximum investment not exceeding 80% of the film's total budget, whereas in co-productions of two countries, the minimum investment may not be less than 10% and the maximum investment not more than 90% (The Council of Europe 2017). These changes are essential for countries with small film industries or low-capacity countries (a term which is used in regard to the film industries of small countries such as Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania).

A major milestone in the development of co-productions in Europe was the *Eurimages* Fund, created by the Council of Europe in 1989 with the aim of promoting the development of the European film sector and international cooperation. The annual budget of the Fund (about 27.5 million euros) consists of contributions from Council of Europe Member States; funding is allocated in a competitive process to co-produced film projects. Feature films whose production involves at least two countries from the circle of *Eurimages* members, which includes 37 European countries and (as of 2017) Canada, are eligible to receive financial support from the Fund (Council of Europe). Latvia has been a *Eurimages* member since 2002.

The principles of funding of European cinema are an important reason for creating co-productions. For film production, European filmmakers use allocations from funds which basically consist of public funding and government grants. However, according to the conditions set by the European Commission, assessing the compatibility of national support categories with the internal market of each individual country, a film project may receive only a limited amount of public funding (50%–80%) (European Commission 2014).

The amount of support is also restricted by the total amount of funding available in the country for film production. Consequently, the film's producer has to raise the remaining

funds necessary for production by seeking other sources of funding, including film funds of other European countries. In addition, support from other countries for a specific film project is undeniably a proof of quality and a matter of prestige, as well as an opportunity to apply for additional funding in the *Eurimages* Fund (Rietuma 2021: 116).

Co-productions are classified as either minority or majority co-productions, depending on which country provides the predominant funding in the budget of the particular film. It is also important that the co-productions — both minority and majority — are recognized as national films in all those countries that have financed the film in question. For a co-production to be eligible for public funding in Latvia, it has to comply with the definition of a Latvian film according to the Film Law, meeting certain criteria (Likumi.lv).

## The Origins of Baltic Co-productions

In the late 1990s, an intensive cooperation of Latvian filmmakers with their Baltic neighbors — Lithuania and Estonia — began, creating the first co-produced films. During this time, there was a tendency for more active cross-border cooperation in the production of feature films, which can be explained by the high costs of this type of film. The budgets of feature films and animation films often are higher than the budgets of documentary films.

One of the first co-productions of the Baltic States was the film *Three Stories About…* (*Trīs stāsti par…,* 1999), which was conceived at studio F.O.R.M.A. by producer Gatis Upmalis as a collaboration between the three Baltic States; however, it became a cooperation project between Latvia and Estonia.

The film consisted of three novellas: *Tristan and Isolde* (*Tristans un Izolde*) by Askolds Saulītis, and the works of two Estonians, Peeter Simm and Ervin Õunapuu — novellas *Aida* and *Der Mond*. Successful cooperation with Estonia was continued in the production of the film *The Good Hands* (*Head käed,* 2001), with the action set near the border of Latvia and Estonia; this film, too, was directed by Estonian Peeter Simm, who, in two successive years, won the Latvian National Cinema's *Great Kristaps (Lielais Kristaps)* Award for Best Director (2000 and 2001). The third cooperation project by the studio F.O.R.M.A., a co-production with the Estonian studio *Allfilm*, was a family film, *Waterbomb for the Fat Tomcat* (*Ūdensbumba resnajam runcim* 2004, director Varis Brasla).

The year 2002 became an important point of reference in the practice of co-production, when Latvia became a member of the Council of Europe's *Eurimages* Fund. Compliance of the financing with the international criteria defining the status of each particular country in the co-production (a majority or minority producing country) became an important condition for the creation of subsequent co-productions. In addition, compliance with these criteria makes co-production film projects eligible for *Eurimages* funding. After Latvia's

accession to *Eurimages* in 2002, co-productions have been made on regular basis, though not all co-production projects with Latvian involvement have gained support from the Fund due to substantial international competition (for details, see the database of supported projects (Council of Europe. *Eurimages*)).

Between 2002 and 2020, the National Film Centre allocated funding, through a competitive process, to 56 film projects in which Latvia participated as a majority or minority co-producer. And, while a rapid development in the creation of co-production films was hampered by the modesty of total funding available to the film industry, since the early 2000s co-productions have been made regularly, with the majority being co-productions with other Baltic states. 47 films have been produced in collaboration with at least two Baltic states (including cooperation with other European countries) (NFC).

According to quantitative data, 25 of the 47 films are feature films, 18 are documentaries, and four are animation films. 23 of the films can be classified as Latvian majority co-productions, and in 24 films, Latvia is a minority co-producer (NFC).

Even though most of the co-produced films are feature films, at the beginning of the 2000s a number of documentaries were made as cooperation projects among the Baltic states. These projects are characterized by themes that are attractive to wider audiences — not only to audiences in Latvia, but also in Lithuania and/or Estonia — which made it possible to attract national funding as well as creative forces from the respective countries. The documentary by Laila Pakalniņa, *Bus* (*Autobuss*, 2004) — a co-production of Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, and Finland, in which Latvia was the majority co-producer — is one such example. This documentary, told in an observational style, captures a bus journey from Tallinn to Kaliningrad — a route which was once within the borders of a single country (USSR) and which, in the early 2000s, traversed four countries. Pakalniņa is one of the first who started creating co-productions, regularly cooperating with Estonian cinematographer Arkko Okk. He was also the director of photography in Pakalniņa's second feature film, *The Hijacker* (*Ķīlnieks*, 2006), which was funded by Latvia, Estonia, and Slovenia. Notably, Laila Pakalniņa is one among a group of directors that has been regularly creating international co-productions since the 1990s. Pakalniņa's first feature film, *The Shoe* (*Kurpe,* 1998), was also created as an international co-production, attracting funding not only from Latvia but also from Germany and France.

The documentary *Herdsman's Time* (*Gana laiks*) by Latvian director Dainis Kļava was made in 2007; *Nazis and Blondes* (*Nacisti un blondīnes*), a film by Estonian director Arbo Tammiksaar exploring the phenomenon of Baltic actors who were often entrusted with Nazi roles in Soviet-era films, was made in 2008. Both documentaries were co-productions of Latvia and Estonia. The documentary *Singing Grandmas* (*Vecmāmiņu koris*, dir. Ilze Ramāne, 2010) was made in cooperation with Lithuania.

One of the most financially intensive types of film is animation, particularly animated feature films. Therefore, cooperation in the production of such films is particularly important

for countries with lower-budget film industries. In 2006, the first Estonian and Latvian co-produced animated feature film, *Lotte from Gadgetville* (*Lote no izgudrotāju ciema / Leiutajateküla Lotte*), was released, launching a successful collaboration between the animation studios Eesti Joonisfilm (Estonia) and Rija Films (Latvia).

It was continued in two other animated feature films, *Lotte and the Moonstone Secret* (*Lote un Mēness akmens noslēpums / Lotte ja kuukivi saladus*, 2011) and *Lotte and the Lost Dragons* (*Lote un pazudušie pūķi / Lotte ja kadunud lohed*, 2019). This is considered to be the most important cooperation of the Baltic States in the field of animation; animation is the area with the fewest co-productions. Vladimir Leschiov's short film *Villa Andropoff* (2012) was another film made in cooperation between the Baltic States.

However, in the period between 2003 and 2010, only eight co-production films were created in cooperation with the other Baltic States; in six of them, Latvia was the majority co-producer — the film's budget was based on Latvian funding and its creative team mainly consisted of Latvian staff. This period can be considered as an initial, preparatory phase for the much more intensive cooperation that occurred in the second decade of the twenty-first century, during which 39 films were financed with the participation of Latvian studios, including majority and minority co-productions.

## Co-productions of All Three Baltic States

Over the past decade, Latvian filmmakers have had intensive cooperation with filmmakers from both Estonia and Lithuania. This decade is also marked by the first films that have been made as official co-productions of all three Baltic States, involving creative as well as financial resources of all three countries. Among these films are documentaries and feature films.

One of the first cooperation projects among all three Baltic states was implemented in 2014 — the documentary film *Over the Roads, Over the River* (*Pāri ceļiem un upei*). It was followed by the documentary *The Master Plan* (*Ģenerālplāns*, 2016). The majority co-producer of both these films was a Latvian studio, Mistrus Media, and the films were thematically designed to appeal to wider audiences, including in Lithuania and Estonia. For example, the theme of the film *The Master Plan* was Russia's soft power.

The successful cooperation among documentary filmmakers of the Baltic States continued with the film *Bridges of Time* (*Laika tilti*, 2018). This project was launched by VFS Films (Vides Filmu studija) and producer Uldis Cekulis, attracting funding in the competition for the creation of Latvia's centenary film program. Subsequently, the project was also funded by Lithuania and Estonia and received support from *Eurimages*. In co-production practices, this is one of the rare films with collaboration between two directors from two different countries — Kristīne Briede (Latvia) and Audrius Stonis (Lithuania). The theme of this

documentary is an exploration of documentary film history in the Baltic States, analyzing the tradition of so-called poetic cinema, which was typical for documentary filmmakers in Latvia as well as Lithuania and Estonia during the 1960s. Conceptually, this is one of the most important Baltic cooperation projects in the field of cinema, which has also gained significant international acclaim (the film won an award at the Shanghai Film Festival; it premiered at the Karlovy Vary Festival in 2018). VFS Films (Vides Filmu studija) has successfully continued collaboration with its Lithuanian partners, creating the film *The Jump* (*Suolis / Lēciens,* dir. Giedrė Žickytė, 2020), which portrays Simas Kudirka, a Lithuanian dissident and defector from Lithuania to the USA in 1970. In this film, Latvia is a minority co-producer — Krišs Roziņš and Gatis Belogrudovs participated in its editing process. Latvia is a minority co-producer, together with France and Germany.

Films with Latvia as a minority co-producer have been more intensively made since 2015, when the National Film Centre started to organize competitions to support international projects of this kind, annually allocating 300,000 euros for this purpose; the support for a minority co-production project typically ranges from 25,000 to 95,000 euros (database of projects supported by NFC). This amount of funding covers some specific creative necessities (for example, the work of the Latvian professionals involved in the project — director of photography, artist, composer), as well as other costs related to the film's shooting or post-production (Rietuma 2021: 119).

Even though feature films are the most financially intensive type of films, collaboration between all three Baltic States in the production of feature films started late — only in 2016, with the feature film *Pretenders* (*Teesklejad,* 2016), with Estonia as the majority co-producer and Latvia and Lithuania as minority co-producers. The film was included in the program of the prestigious San Sebastián Film Festival, introducing an international audience to an artistically idiosyncratic contemporary relationship drama, directed by the Estonian Vallo Toomla. Latvia's artistic contribution was music by composer Kārlis Auzāns. Auzāns also wrote the score for another internationally recognized film, *Motherland* (*Gimtine*, 2019, dir. Tomas Vengris), which was made as a co-production of Lithuania, Latvia, Germany, and Greece.

In 2021, at the Tallinn International Film Festival, another feature film made in collaboration between the three Baltic States was premiered — a film by Lithuanian director Kristijonas Vildžiūnas, *Songs for a Fox* (*Dainos Lapei / Dziesmas lapsai*, 2021), with a rock musician in crisis as its protagonist. In this film, Latvia made a major creative contribution — the cinematographer is Jurģis Kmins, the production designer is Jurģis Krāsons, and the actress portraying the protagonist is Agnese Budovska (Cīrule).

In 2021, Latvia (the National Film Centre) allocated funding to a children's film by Estonian director Ilmar Raag, *Eric Stoneheart* (*Erik Kivisūda*, 2022), which is currently still in production, with Latvia and Lithuania, along with other countries, participating as minority co-producers. Latvia's creative contribution in this film, among other things, is music by Renārs Kaupers.

However, instances of films — both documentaries and features — financed by all three Baltic States are relatively rarely, as film producers do not treat the cooperation among the three Baltic states as an end in itself if there is no conceptual or creative justification for it.

## Cooperation Projects between Two Baltic States

The number of films where film studios of two Baltic States have collaborated is much higher, often involving filmmakers from other countries as well. Since 2003, 23 film projects have been supported in which Latvian studios have collaborated with Lithuanian film studios, and 24 film projects where Latvian studios have collaborated with Estonian film studios (This does not exclude the participation of studios from other countries). Predominantly, these have been feature films with Latvia as a majority or minority co-producer (see Table 1).

Traditionally, at least in the local audience, more attention has been given to films which started as Latvian projects and subsequently attracted international funding; in other words, to films in which Latvia is a majority co-producer. *Oleg* (*Oļegs*, dir. Juris Kursietis, 2019), a film produced by the Latvian studio Tasse Film, can be considered one of the most successful co-productions of this kind. It should be noted that the film was made as a co-production by four countries: Latvia, Lithuania, France, and Belgium. It premiered at the prestigious Cannes Film Festival. The protagonist of this harsh social drama is a Russian from Latvia, a guest worker in Brussels, convincingly played by Lithuanian actor Valentin Novopolskij.

Similarly, the historical drama by Latvian director Dāvis Sīmanis, internationally known by the title *Exiled* (*Pelnu sanatorija*, 2016), was created as a co-production with Lithuania, Latvia being the main producing country. The action of this artistically complex film takes place in Latvia during World War I; the central character is played by German actor Ulrich Matthes. Notably, this director's latest film, *The Year Before the War* (*Gads pirms kara*), set in the chaotic time preceding World War I, was made in cooperation with Lithuania, too.

Both films were produced by Latvian studio Studija Lokomotīve, headed by producer Roberts Vinovskis and the Lithuanian company Uljana Kim Studio with producer Uljana Kim. The collaboration of both studios started with Latvia's participation in the Lithuanian film *The Gambler* (*Lošéjas*, 2013, director Ignas Jonynas), with Jānis Eglītis as cinematographer. Between 2013 and 2020, six feature films were made as a result of collaboration of these studios, with participation of Estonian co-producers in some individual projects: *The Gambler* (2013, Lithuania, Poland); *Exiled* (Lithuania, Latvia); *Seneca's Day* (*Senekas dienas*, 2016, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia); *Pretenders* (*Lomu spēles*, 2016, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania); *The Year Before the War* (2020, Latvia, Lithuania); *Songs for a Fox* (*Dainos Lapei / Dziesmas lapsai*, 2021, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia). Two of the films are historical dramas by Dāvis

Sīmanis, with Latvia as the majority producer, whereas two others, *Seneca's Day* and *Songs for a Fox*, are films made by Lithuanian director Kristijonas Vildžiūnas; this indicates sustained creative partnerships in the co-production filmmaking process.

Other Lithuanian studios, too, have participated in the creation of other Latvian feature films — Ināra Kolmane's film *Bille* (2018) was made in collaboration with Lithuania (Studija 2) and Czechia. This was one of the films of the Latvian centenary film program, with a little girl in the pre-war Latvia as the protagonist, based on Vizma Belševica's memoirs. The film *January (Janvāris)* by director Viesturs Kairišs, which tells about the events in 1991 Latvia — the time of the barricades and the struggle for independence — and is rooted in the director's own autobiographical experience, was made as a co-production with Lithuania (and Poland). Both aforementioned films have the features of historical dramas, and both have received financial support in Lithuania and have been created as co-productions. Director Laila Pakalniņa has had successful collaboration with Lithuanian partners — her radical feature film *In the Mirror* (*Spogulī*, 2020), which uses selfie aesthetics, was made in partnership with Lithuanian studio Just a Moment and producer Dagne Vildžūnaite. *In the Mirror* premiered at the Tallinn Black Nights Film Festival in 2020; it has also been screened at a number of other international festivals. Lithuania was one of the co-producing countries (the other was Norway) of Laila Pakalniņa's documentary film *The Spoon* (*Karote*). The latter film follows the process of the making of a spoon from the moment of oil extraction to the moment when the plastic spoon is thrown into a landfill. Similar to other films by director Laila Pakalniņa, this film premiered at an important festival, the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival. The feature film *Ausma*, which offers and original vision of post-war Latvia, was made in 2015 by the same director as a co-production with Estonia and Poland.

As minority co-producers, Latvian studios have participated in the production of a number of Lithuanian feature films. In most cases, these are feature films with international film festivals as the principal audience. For example, *Breathing into Marble* (*Kvėpavimas į marmurą,* 2018), a drama by Lithuanian director Giedrė Beinoriūtė, is a co-production of Lithuania, Latvia, and Hungary. The film's score was written by Latvian Vestards Šimkus, and it was premiered at the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival in 2018, whereas the 2018 program of San Sebastián International Film Festival included the work of Lithuanian director Ignas Jonynas *Invisible* (*Nematoma*, 2019). In this film, a contemporary drama, Latvian studio Studija Lokomotīve was a minority co-producer; the music for the film was written by Latvian composer Toms Auniņš.

Most of these films belong to auteur cinema, and international festivals play a significant part in their distribution; thus, most of the co-production films are premiered at important international festivals. However, from time to time, Baltic filmmakers also collaborate to create projects with the purpose of attracting larger audiences — commercial genre films. One such project is the spy thriller *Dawn of War* (*Suflieris,* with the original title *O2,* 2020), with the action set in the 1930s; the film was made as a co-production of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Finland, with participation of Latvian actors Kaspars Znotiņš, Agnese Cīrule (Budovska), and others. The majority co-production of Studija Lokomotīve, *Christmas in the Jungle*

(*Ziemassvētki džungļos*, 2020), made by Latvia and Estonia and directed by Estonian Jaak Kilmi, is a children's film. This director has made a few other films with Latvia as the main funder, documentaries produced by studio Mistrus Media: *My Father the Spy* (*Spiegs, kurš mans tēvs*, 2019) and *Over the Roads, Over the River* (*Pāri ceļiem un upei,* 2014), one of the seven parts of the film).

## Distribution of Co-productions

It has already been mentioned that co-productions promote the international distribution of films and provide for an approximately three times larger audience, as internationally produced films are premiered in all cooperating countries. (For a long time, the principal condition for allocating public funding was the release of the film to cinemas. However, the COVID-19 pandemic in 2019–2021 introduced changes to this requirement, when institutions allocating public funding started accepting film-screening on digital platforms as well).

Despite the optimism of European institutions and statistical data, the release of minority co-production films in Latvian cinemas remains a challenge. So far, animation films for family audiences and comedy films have proven to be most successful. For example, *Lotte and the Lost Dragons* gathered an audience of 76,680 in Estonia and 23,435 in Latvia (Rietuma 2019); the film was successfully distributed on various internet platforms.

So far, the most successful minority co-production feature film released to Latvian cinemas has been *The Dissidents* (*Sangarid*, 2017), with Estonia as the majority co-producer and Latvia and Finland as minority co-producers. The director of photography of this film is Latvian cinematographer Aigars Sērmūkšs. This is also the only film from the Baltic States available on the global platform Netflix.

The film's appeal to the audience is ensured by its genre (comedy), as well as by the nostalgically created settings of Soviet Estonia during the 1980s. It tells the story of three young men who escape from Soviet Estonia to the West. In Estonian cinemas, the film had an audience of 85,306, while in Latvia the number was 4,605; this audience gap illustrates a trend that is typical of screening co-produced films in countries which are minority co-producers.

The practice of cooperation among Baltic filmmakers confirms that the main audience of co-produced films is to be found in the country which is the major co-producer, as the film's plot, principal actors, director, and other creative forces, in most cases, come from the country which has contributed the major part of the funding to the film. These conclusions are linked to the results of the film's release to cinemas.

That *The Dissidents* has become the first feature film from the Baltic States to attract Netflix's attention highlights the current developments in film demonstration and distribution,

where a film's release at cinemas constitutes only one of the forms of film distribution. Film screening on various online VOD platforms plays an increasingly important role, and international co-productions have a greater potential to be noticed. This is evidenced by the film *The Dissidents* coming to the attention of Netflix three years after the film's active release to Latvian and Estonian cinemas.

A different example of international collaboration is the project *Swingers* (*Svingeri*) by director and producer Andrejs Ēķis. Having successfully premiered in Latvia in 2016, Ēķis started exporting the film to other European countries, repeatedly re-filming the script by Rasa Bugavičute–Pēce with the involvement of actors of the respective countries. Versions were made in Estonia, Ukraine, Poland, Norway, Russia, and the Netherlands. In 2017, the Estonian version of *Swingers*, directed by Andrejs Ēķis, became the second most popular 'Estonian' film at Estonian cinemas, gathering an audience of 79,346, only slightly smaller than the audience of the aforementioned Estonian, Latvian, and Finnish co-production film *The Dissidents*.

However, this initiative cannot be regarded as a co-production practice typical for Europe; besides, there is no public funding invested in the commercially oriented project which is the *Swingers* franchise.

## The Importance of International Co-productions

International co-productions provide an opportunity for Latvian film studios to attract additional funding and creative forces to Latvian film projects as well as to participate in projects of internationally acclaimed directors, and the authors of these films have the potential to gain wider recognition. There are successful examples of filmmakers' collaborations among the Baltic States and between the Baltics and other European states.

For instance, the film by Lithuanian classic Šarūnas Bartas, *In the Dusk* (*Sutemose*, 2019), was included in the Cannes official selection in 2020. This harsh drama, its action set shortly after World War II, was created as a co-production of six countries: Lithuania, France, Czechia, Serbia, Portugal, and Latvia. The Latvian studio Mistrus Media was one of its minority co-producers; in fact, the entire film was shot in Latvia.

Participation in successful co-production films ensures the international prestige of the state and its film industry, and the recognition gained at festivals is equally essential. In recent years, Latvian film studios have successfully participated in projects of this kind, demonstrating the industry's ability to work on an international level.

## Conclusions

Even though the creation of international co-productions is a complex task in terms of production, where it is necessary to balance both financial and creative contributions, this practice promotes the development of the film industry, increases the number of films produced by each individual country, and expands the market and audience for these films.

As the capacity and market scale of the film industries in the Baltic states are limited, it is very important for these countries to cooperate, offering films — stories with appeal to a larger audience, by no means excluding but rather fostering cooperation with other European countries. Similar historical experiences, cultural heritage, and remarkable collaborations among professionals and institutions of the film industry are beneficial factors for continuing to create co-produced films in the Baltic States.

Even though it is easier to appeal to audiences with films targeted to child and youth audiences and with commercially oriented films, it is essential to continue the cooperation to create films that show a signature style of the director — *auteur* cinema.

Cooperation of the Baltic States in film production offers material for further studies, which should also include an analysis of the creative and artistic aspects of such collaboration.

It should be concluded that two of the principal tasks of film institutions and professionals are to intensify the circulation of Baltic films across both Baltic and European distribution networks (cinemas, TV and internet platforms) and to promote the interest of the Baltic people in the films produced in the Baltics, including co-productions.

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# Appendix No 1. Table 1

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Latvian co-productions in cooperation with the Baltic states 2001 - 2020 | | | | | | | | | |
| Year | Type | LV Major | LV Minor | Bal-tic | Title EN (LV) | Director | Latvian producing studio | Producer | Co-producers |
| 2003 | documentary | | 1 | 1 | The Wounded Sun (*Ievainotā saule*) | Urmas E. Liiv | VFS Films | EE | LV |
| 2004 | documentary | 1 | | 1 | The Bus (*Autobuss*) | Laila Pakalniņa | Kompānija Hargla | LV | EE |
| 2004 | feature | 1 | | 1 | Waterbomb for the Fat Tomcat (*Ūdensbumba resnajam runcim*) | Varis Brasla | F.O.R.M.A. | LV | EE |
| 2006 | animation | | 1 | 1 | Lotte from Gadgetville (*Lote no izgudrotāju ciema*) | Heiki Ernits, Janno Poldma | Filmu Studija Rija | EE | LV |
| 2006 | feature | 1 | | 1 | The Hostage (*Ķīlnieks*) | Laila Pakalniņa | Kompānija Hargla | LV | EE, SI |
| 2007 | documentary | 1 | | 1 | Herdsman's Time (*Gana laiks*) | Dainis Kļava | VFS Films | LV | EE |
| 2008 | documentary | 1 | | 1 | Nazis and Blondes (*Friči un blondīnes*) | Arbo Tammiksaar | Subjektiv Filma | LV | EE |
| 2010 | documentary | 1 | | 1 | Singing Grandmas (*Vecmāmiņu koris*) | Ilze Ramāne | VFS Films | LV | LT |
| 2011 | animation | | 1 | 1 | Lotte and the Moonstone Secret (*Lote un Mēness akmens noslēpums*) | Heiki Ernits, Janno Poldma | Filmu Studija Rija | EE | LV |
| 2012 | animation | 1 | | 1 | Villa Antropof | Vladimirs Leščovs, Kaspar Jancis | Lunohod | LV | EE |
| 2012 | feature | | 1 | 1 | Lonely Island (*Vientuļā sala*) | Peeter Simm | F.O.R.M.A. | EE | LV, BY |
| 2013 | feature | | 1 | 1 | The Gambler (*Spēlmanis*) | Ignas Jonynas | Studija Lokomotīve | LT | LV |
| 2014 | documentary | 1 | | 1 | Over the Roads, Over the River (*Pāri ceļiem un upei*) | Ivars Seleckis and 6 others | Mistrus Media | LV | LT, EE |
| 2014 | documentary | | 1 | 1 | Radviliada | Ramune Rakauskaite | Vides filmu studija | LT | LV |

| 2015 | documentary | 1 | | 1 | Hey, Rasma! (*Čau, Rasma!*) | Laila Pakalniņa | Kompānija Hargla | LV | EE |
|------|-------------|---|---|---|------|------|------|----|----|
| 2015 | feature | 1 | | 1 | Dawn (*Ausma*) | Laila Pakalniņa | Kompānija Hargla | LV | PL, EE |
| 2016 | documentary | 1 | | 1 | The Master Plan (*Ģenerālplāns*) | Juris Pakalniņš | Mistrus Media | LV | EE, LT |
| 2016 | documentary | 1 | | 1 | Close Relations (*Radinieki*) | Vitaly Mansky | Ego Media | LV | DE, EE, UA |
| 2016 | feature | | 1 | 1 | King's Shift (*Karaliskā maiņa*) | Ignas Miškinis | Film Angels Productions | LT | LV |
| 2016 | feature | | 1 | 1 | Pretenders (*Lomu spēles*) | Vallo Toomla | Studija Lokomotīve | EE | LV |
| 2016 | feature | 1 | | 1 | Exiled (*Pelnu sanatorija*) | Dāvis Sīmanis | Studija Lokomotīve | LV | LT |
| 2016 | feature | | 1 | 1 | Seneca's Day (*Senekas diena*) | Kristijonas Vildžiūnas | Studija Lokomotīve | LT | LV |
| 2017 | documentary | | 1 | 1 | Wonderful Losers. A Different World (*Gladiatori. Cita pasaule*) | Arunas Matelis | Vides filmu studija | LT | LV |
| 2017 | feature | 1 | | 1 | Foam at the Mouth (*Ar putām uz lūpām*) | Jānis Nords | Tasse Film | LV | LT, PL |
| 2017 | feature | | 1 | 1 | The Dissidents (*Ātrie igauņu puiši*) | Jaak Kilmi | Film Angels Productions | EE | FI |
| 2018 | documentary | 1 | | 1 | Bridges of Time (*Laika tiltī*) | Audrius Stonys, Kristīne Briede | Vides filmu studija | LV | LT |
| 2018 | feature | 1 | | 1 | Bille | Ināra Kolmane | Filmu Studija Deviņi | LV | LT |
| 2018 | feature | | 1 | 1 | Motherland (*Dzimtene*) | Tomas Vengris | Studija Lokomotīve | LT | LV |
| 2018 | feature | | 1 | 1 | Breathing into Marble (*Elpa marmorā*) | Giedre Beinoriute | Mistrus Media | LT | LV |
| 2019 | animation | | 1 | 1 | Lotte and the Lost Dragons (*Lote un Pazudušie Pūķi*) | Heiki Ernits, Janno Poldma | Filmu Studija Rija | EE | LV |
| 2019 | documentary | 1 | | 1 | My Father the Spy (*Spiegs, kurš mans tēvs*) | Jaak Kilmi | Mistrus Media | LV | DE |
| 2019 | documentary | 1 | | 1 | The Spoon (*Karote*) | Laila Pakalniņa | Kompānija Hargla | LV | LT, NOR |
| 2019 | documentary | | 1 | 1 | Delta Zoo (*L-komanda*) | Andrius Lekavicius | Tanka | LT | LV |

| 2019 | documentary | | 1 | 1 | Immortal (*Nemirstīgie*) | Ksenia Okhapkina | Vides filmu studija | EE | LV |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2019 | feature | 1 | | 1 | Oleg (*Oļegs*) | Juris Kursietis | Tasse Film | LV | BE, LT, FR |
| 2020 | documentary | | 1 | 1 | The Jump (*Lēciens*) | Giedre Žickite | Vides filmu studija | LT | FR, LV |
| 2020 | feature | | 1 | 1 | At Dusk (*Mijkrēslī*) | Šarunas Bartas | Mistrus Media | LT | LV, FR, RS, CZ |
| 2020 | feature | 1 | | 1 | City on the River (*Pilsēta pie upes*) | Viesturs Kairišs | Ego Media | LV | CZ |
| In the making | documentary | | 1 | 1 | THI Tomas Hendrik Ilves (*THI Tomass Hendriks Ilvess*) | Jaan Tootsen | Ego Media | EE | LV |
| In the making | feature | | 1 | 1 | Invisible (*Neredzams*) | Ignas Jonynas | Studija Lokomotīve | LT | UA, LV |
| In the making | feature | | 1 | 1 | Songs for a Fox (*Dziesmas lapsai*) | Kristijonas Vildžiūnas | Studija Lokomotīve | LT | LV, EE |
| In the making | feature | | 1 | 1 | Tsoy (*Cojs*) | Aleksejs Učiteļš | Mistrus Media | RU | LV, LT |
| In the making | feature | | 1 | 1 | Eric Stoneheart (*Ēriks Akmenssirds*) | Ilmar Raag | Studija Lokomotīve | EE | LV, LT, EE, FI |
| In the making | feature | | 1 | 1 | Dawn of War (*Suflieris/O-2*) | Margus Paju | Film Angels Productions | EE | LV, FI |
| In the making | feature | 1 | | 1 | Lovable (*Mīlulis*) | Staņislavs Tokalovs | Tasse Film | LV | CZ, EE |
| In the making | feature | 1 | | 1 | January (*Janvāris*) | Viesturs Kairišs | Mistrus Media | LV | LT, PL |
| In the making | feature | 1 | | 1 | The Year Before the War (*Gads pirms kara*) | Dāvis Sīmanis | Studija Lokomotīve | LV | LT |
| | | 23 | 24 | 47 | | | | | |

# Latvijas un Baltijas valstu kino kopražojumi: pieredze un tendences

## Dita Rietuma

Pēdējo trīsdesmit gadu laikā kopražojumi ir kļuvuši par būtisku Eiropas kino daļu un dažādu valstu kinematogrāfistu sadarbības jomu. Mūsdienu Eiropas kino industrija nav iedomājama bez pārrobežu sadarbības, kas ir būtisks faktors gan filmu producēšanā un finansējuma piesaistē, gan to starptautiskajā izplatīšanā. Kā liecina Eiropas Audiovizuālās observatorijas dati – 20 % no Eiropā 2019. gadā saražotajām filmām ir veidotas kā starpvalstu kopražojumi (European Audiovisual Observatory 2020).

Kopražojumu praksē būtiska nozīme ir sadarbībai Baltijas valstu vidū, veidojot filmas – kopražojumus un tādējādi apvienojot gan vairāku valstu radošos, gan arī finansiālos resursus. Šī raksta mērķis ir analizēt kopražojumu praksi, akcentējot Latvijas studiju veidotās filmas, kurās ieguldīts Latvijas publiskais finansējums un kuras ir tapušas kā vairākuma vai mazākuma kopražojumi ar Baltijas valstīm – Lietuvu un Igauniju. Sadarbība kino jomā starp Baltijas valstīm ir bijusi gan neatkarīgās Latvijas laikā, gan arī padomju okupācijas laikā. Tomēr pēc neatkarības atgūšanas aizsākās jauns posms Latvijas kino starptautiskajā sadarbībā un arī kopražojumu veidošanā ar Eiropas, to skaitā – arī Baltijas valstīm. Aktīva sadarbības prakse Latvijas, kā arī Baltijas valstu, kino iezīmējas jau kopš 90. gadu beigām. Intensīvāka šī prakse kļūst kopš 21. gs. sākuma – 2002. gada, kad Latvija kļūst par Eiropas Padomes fonda *Eurimages* dalībnieci, pilntiesīgi iekļaujoties Eiropas kino starptautiskās sadarbības struktūrās.

Analizējot kvantitatīvos datus (skat. Appendix No 1. Table 1), rakstā izvērtēta Latvijas kopražojumu pieredze ar Baltijas valstīm, novērtēta kopražojumu attīstības dinamika, faktori, kas ietekmē filmu kopražojumu veidošanu, kā arī dominējošās tendences, veidojot kopražojumus – dažāda veida filmas (spēlfilmas, dokumentālās filmas, animācijas filmas). Akcentētas filmas, kas tapušas kopš 2002. gada un kuru veidotājas studijas un filmu producenti pārstāv gan Latviju, gan vismaz vienu no Baltijas valstīm – Lietuvu

vai Igauniju, neizslēdzot arī filmas, kuru veidošanā piedalījušies partneri no citām Eiropas valstīm. Rakstā izmantoti kvantitatīvie dati, kurus ir apkopojis Nacionālais kino centrs, kā arī Eiropas Padomes dokumenti, kas ir saistoši starptautisko kopražojumu veidošanā. Rakstā tiek ieskicēta arī problemātika, kas ir saistīta ar kopražojumu starptautisko rezonansi, to izplatīšanu un skatītāju auditorijas piesaisti.

# The 'Ornament Grammar' of Neoclassicism in Late Art Nouveau Interiors of Rīga

Silvija Grosa, Agnese Tambaka

# A Paradigm Shift in Ornament Research

In recent decades, ornament studies have been on the rise in Western art history. This is evidenced by a number of significant publications examining ornament from various perspectives[1]. Also noteworthy are conference materials that deal with ornament[2] in terms of analysis and reinterpretation of earlier theories in this field. One has to agree with leading Dutch researcher of the Late Middle Ages and Renaissance, Ethan Matt Kavaler, who notes that the situation of ornament studies today is much as it was at the end of the nineteenth century (Kavaler 2019: 1275), where the matter of ornament 'has become so important as to occupy center stage in the debates about art practice and art history' (Vandi 2018: 40). At that time, the industrial revolution and mass production of richly decorated items had urged a reassessment of the principles on which the creation and use of ornament were based. With the publication of Owen Jones' *The Grammar of Ornament*[3] in the mid-nineteenth century, followed by numerous other editions in the second half of the nineteenth century, ornament had become not only the object of research in the context of historical styles, but also a catalyst for cultural belonging, a sign of social and intellectual difference, as 'ornamented artefacts were understood to reveal the DNA of cultures' (Necipoğlu, Payne 2016: 2). This 'revision,' along with in-depth studies of nature that flourished in the second half of the nineteenth century, proved useful quite soon when, at the turn of the twentieth century, masters of Art Nouveau turned to motifs from several historical styles (Gothic and Rococo) alongside stylized natural forms, thus creating a specific ornamental Art Nouveau world. Ornament permeated all kinds of

1    Alongside classical works (Gombrich, Ernst (1979). *The Sense of Order: A Study in the Psychology of Decorative Art*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press), one should mention collected articles from recent years: *Ornament and European Modernism. From Art Practice to Art History* (2018). Ed. by Loretta Vandi. New York: Routledge; *Histories of Ornament: From Global to Local* (2016). Ed. by  Gülru Necipoğlu, Alina Payne. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

2    Among specialised periodicals prepared by professionals of various countries, one can mention *La revue de l'INHA*, (2010-1), *Ornement/Ornemental*; *Revista de História da Arte* (2019), *The Art of Ornament: Senses, Archetypes, Shapes and Functions*, etc.

3    Jones, Owen (1856). *The Grammar of Ornament*. London: Day and Son, 1856 (later editions: (2001). A Dorling Kindersley Book; (1972). New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, etc.). For more information on this subject, see: Frank, Isabelle J. (2018). Owen Jones's Theory of Ornament. *Ornament and European Modernism. From Art Practice to Art History*. Ed. by Loretta Vandi. New York: Routledge, pp. 56–148.

art and was very important in the architecture of the era. However, the overabundance of ornamental décor inspired the famous 1908 essay *Ornament and Crime* (*Ornament und Verbrechen*) by Adolf Loos, which is seen as one of the points of reference for modernist architecture (Payne 2010: 79) and also marks a paradigm shift in the assessment of historical styles and especially Renaissance architecture. This approach, groundlessly ignoring the role of ornament, discarded the balance between the aspect of spatial-technical solution and the overall aesthetic conception. 'In the wake of contemporary art's rejection of ornament, historical scholarship also abandoned this topic by the mid-twentieth century, by which time it had been practically excised from scholars' repertoire of interests' (Necipoğlu, Payne 2016: 2).

Publications dealing with ornament as well as studies published in the last decades in the West about industrial design, including ceramic tile[4], have inspired the subject choice for this article. While exploring ornament as a catalyst for stylistic trends in Late Art Nouveau interior décor of apartment house vestibules in Rīga, the authors of this article pay attention also to the terminology of ornamental motifs. Industrially produced ceramic wall tile and panels thereof are examined, and information on producers is provided.

## Neoclassicism in the Late Art Nouveau Architecture of Rīga

Neoclassicism was the third major stylistic trend in Rīga during the early twentieth century, alongside Nordic National Romanticism and Art Nouveau. Neoclassicism was also flourishing in European architecture of the time, indicating that coherent Historicism had been overcome and previous manifestations of Art Nouveau had become outdated as well. Neoclassicism also appeared in the largest centers of the Russian Empire back then, first of all in St. Petersburg, and the capital became the main center from which Neoclassicism spread throughout the Empire. The emergence of Neoclassicism in the architecture of St. Petersburg was fostered not only by general artistic trends in Europe but to a great extent also by Aleksandr Benua's (1870–1960) articles in a series of publications in the journal *Mir Iskusstva*, where he criticized the city's new buildings and praised its outstanding early-nineteenth-century architecture (Bass 2018). Neoclassicism in St. Petersburg was expressed by and large in universally abstract forms, leaning towards an Empire-style tradition. This orthodox version of Neoclassicism did not prevail in early-twentieth-century Rīga, as the period's Neoclassicism in Europe and Rīga also was characterized by merging classical heritage and regional traditions. This factor was crucial in Rīga architects showing interest in the so-called 'Burgher Classicism' and its main representative Christoph Haberland's (1750–1803) works with their typical freely interpreted classical tradition (Bruģis 1996: 197–200). This liberal approach to classical tradition was typical for early-twentieth-century architecture

4    Baeck, Mario, Hamburg, Ulrich, Rabenau, Thomas, Verbrugge, Bart, Kamermans, Johan, van Lemmen, Hans (eds.) (2004). *Industrial tiles 1840–1940*. Otterlo: Nederlands tegelmuseum.

Figure 1. Building of Embassy of Germany in Saint Petersburg. Architect Peter Behrens, author of Dioskouroi sculptural group Eberhard Enke. 1912. From: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Botschaft_Petersburg_Fassade.jpg

in Rīga and its décor. Greatly different from St. Petersburg's was also the attitude towards décor in Rīga regarding modernized versions of classical tradition. Innovations in German artistic centers were followed, as evidenced by architectural examples in Rīga; noteworthy is the description in local German press (*Die neue deutsche Botschaft in Petersburg* 1913) of the German Embassy in St. Petersburg (1911–1913), designed by Pether Behrens (1868–1913). The building was later recognized as one of the first examples of the so-called 'stripped Classicism' in European history of architecture (Anderson 1991). Intellectual circles in the Empire's capital were critical of the completed building, while the *Rigasche Zeitung* article described it excitedly and extolled as a masterpiece the building's architectural sculpture — the five-meter-high Dioscuri sculptural group, centered in the attic and crafted by German sculptor Eberhard Encke (1881–1936), who created the work as a generalized interpretation of Greek masters' subjects from the Classical era. The composition was destroyed in 1914 when the German Embassy was demolished at the beginning of World War I (*Dom German-skogo posolstva* 2007–2021) (Figure 1).

Although information about artistic processes not only in Europe but the entire world was widely available in Rīga, Germany was the most important center of ideas for Rīga architects. This is indirectly confirmed by the critical publications of Jūlijs Madernieks (1909) and the fact that Germany was among the main suppliers of those modern decorative finishing materials that were either not produced in Rīga or produced in small amounts (such as wallpaper (Lūse 2016) or ceramic wall tile[5]), despite the fact that Rīga was one of the major industrial centers of the Russian Empire at the turn of the twentieth century.

Looking back at Rīga's historical architecture and décor in older periods, one can notice the important role of freely interpreted classical decorative motifs as well as an interest in lavish décor. Among major examples are the splendid Reutern and Dannenstern houses built in the so-called Dutch Classicist style. According to architectural researcher Anna Ancāne, their façades 'differ from Dutch examples…. Greater attention is paid to decorative details, acanthus ornament, especially in the finish of portals' (Ancāne 2010). She continues: 'It is noteworthy that the artist has achieved maximum harmony between the reserved tone of the façade and some of its parts where the rich décor and details are concentrated. This can be considered the local specificity of Rīga's Baroque' (Ancāne 2010). This specificity was somewhat taken over in the mid-nineteenth century when the fortifications of the city were removed and it underwent rapid growth and transformation into an industrialized locale whose presentable, newly constructed public building façades featured plastic décor, allegorical figures and groups thereof which displayed buildings' functions by using the imagery of classical antiquity.

During the last years of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, characterized by the so-called 'ornate' Historicism and Early Art Nouveau, rich architectural sculpture became very trendy not just for public but also for residential and commercial buildings. Their façades and interior solutions became the owners' signs of prestige, revealing historical parallels with the aforementioned Reutern and Dannenstern houses. The process was fostered by increasing technical possibilities, accessible specialized workshops, and craftsmen, as still-present Symbolist trends prompting house owners and commissioners to convey their perspective on the order of things (Grosa 2019: 193–235). The Neoclassicist period that followed the rise of Art Nouveau was suitable for such purposes. Along decorative finishing with traditional, classical ornamental motifs on public and apartment buildings, Renaissance and Baroque-inspired allegorical narrative compositions still appeared on some façades (Grosa 2021).

Motifs of classical antiquity already were favored in Rīga façade décor in the Historicism period and were retained during Early and High Art Nouveau as well — Rīga Art Nouveau

5    Historian Inta Štamgute carried out partial inventory of wall tile in residential buildings of Rīga in the last years of the twentieth century. In her dissertation *Wall and Floor Tile Finish in the Architecture of Rīga at the Turn of and Early Twentieth Century*, started in 2020 (AAL, supervisor Silvija Grosa), Agnese Tambaka has now examined vestibules and stairwells of 182 apartment buildings in Rīga with either fully or partly preserved ceramic wall tile. She has attributed them as far as possible and also inspected vestibules and stairwells of 451 apartment houses with either fully or partly preserved ceramic or cement floor tile.

did not emerge as an anti-classical style or an 'opposite to Historicism' (Brancis 1994: 25). However, the interpretation of traditional motifs changed in the early twentieth century. Their scale increased, and the compositional arrangement on the plane was different, abandoning minute details in favor of the aesthetic value of solid surfaces. Material explored thus far demonstrates that a similar approach was used also in decorative interior finishing, including vestibules and stairwells of apartment buildings. Considering the large number of such buildings (according to architect Jānis Krastiņš, about 600 masonry buildings were constructed from 1910 to 1914 (Krastiņš 2018: 15)) and the fact that a visual inspection of private apartment buildings and even their vestibules is somewhat complicated, this material still provides further opportunities for in-depth and specialized studies.

Industrial production — wall and floor tile, ready-to-use plaster casts for walls and ceilings — were utilized for the interior finishing in apartment buildings. However, even despite favoring mass-produced materials and stenciled wall paintings, architects and decorative finishing firms searched and, surprisingly, also found solutions that were artistically as unique as possible. Ideas of *Gesamtkunstwerk*, or a synthesis of all arts of the period, were implemented through combinations of various finishing materials. Even with the use of the same materials, variations of arrangement or colors allowed for distinct results, and no two vestibules in Rīga are identical. Combinations of materials and stylistic solutions in the Late Art Nouveau period demonstrate that, while following modern European, especially German, trends, architects and decorators retained a free approach to the classical tradition typical of Rīga. In choosing appropriate ornamentation, vestibules and stairwells were created, keeping in mind the famous English saying, 'My house is my castle'; its realization, of course, depended on the commissioner's financial resources.

## Ornamental Motifs of Classical Antiquity in the Apartment Building Vestibules of Rīga

At the turn of the twentieth century, rapid growth of construction and mastery of new technologies introduced new finishing materials throughout the Western world. Rīga was no exception, and tile floors appeared in vestibules and stairwell landings as early as the late nineteenth century. The main sources of inspiration for the decorative solutions for floor tile were Hellenistic and Roman mosaic floors. Similar to classical antiquity, vestibule floors in the examined period were covered in ornamentally arranged tiles, combining and repeating one or several motifs (such as rosettes). Perimeter were framed by band ornaments. Although there are Art Nouveau-inspired motifs on the period's floor tile, more commonly used were different variations of geometric band motifs appropriated from classical art (meander, wave motif or the so-called Vitruvian Scroll, also known as the running dog motif[6]

6    The motif, known in German as *Vitruvianische Veloute*, refers to the Roman architecture historian Marcus Vitruvius Pollio, active in the 1st century BCE.

Figure 2. Fragment of floor tiles produced by the Polish
company "Marywil" in the vestibule in a building
at Rīga, Kalēju Street 14 (arch. Max von Osmidoff).
Photo: Agnese Tambaka

(Levis, Darley 1986: 318), palmette bands, guilloche, etc.) (Figure 2). Sometimes, the main motif would even be emphasized in the center of the floor (the so-called *emblema*). Such motifs in high-quality color illustrations were included in the aforementioned *Grammar of Ornament* by Owen Jones, and they were most likely examples later followed in numerous industrial floor tile designs as late as the early twentieth century. Floor tile was both imported to and produced in Rīga; one of the main local producers was the cement factory *Carl Ullmann Rīga.* This firm was founded in 1899 and operated until its bankruptcy in 1931 (Grosa 2019: 92). Though tile was the most common type of floor finishing throughout the Art Nouveau period, the spread, diversity, and compositional and ornamental solutions of this material are yet to be studied in depth.

Although the original decorative finishing of apartment building vestibules in Rīga is often only partly preserved, the material inspected thus far demonstrates that, regarding decorative wall finishing and ceramic tile panels in particular, interest in ornamental motifs of classical antiquity emerged as early as the beginning of Late Art Nouveau (no later than 1906/1907). The earliest examples are vestibules in apartment buildings at 5 Peitavas Street (1906,

architect Paul Mandelstamm, 1872–1941) and 13 Stabu Street (1907, architect Wilhelm Hofmann). By the end of the Late Art Nouveau period, freely interpreted classical tradition began to prevail in vestibule styles. Parallel to this mainstream trend, Late Art Nouveau vestibule interiors featured other trends, including modifications of the geometric Art Nouveau and vernacular motifs such as the vestibule of Aleksandrs Freijs' apartment and shop building at 37 Brīvības Street (1909, architect Eižens Laube); interpretations of older artistic periods were present as well. Perhaps the most prominent example of these is the vestibule of 64 Aleksandra Čaka Street (1909), designed by architect Aleksandrs Vanags (1873–1919). Here, the space is enclosed by monumental clustered-papyrus pilasters joined by a narrow ceramic tile band to create an atmosphere reminiscent of an Ancient Egyptian temple.

One of decorative finishing examples where a favorite classical motif was emphasized is the vestibule of the building contractor Jānis Virsis' house at 62 Brīvības Street (1908, architect Eižens Laube (1880–1967)). Here, wall finishing consists of wooden panels alternating with a frieze of plaster garlands (the finishing is only partly preserved today).

Garlands (Italian *ghirlanda*, French *guirlande*), festoons (Latin *festa* — celebration), and wreaths are decorative motifs that date back to ancient times. According to archaeological findings, flower garlands were used in religious rituals in Ancient Egypt. Yet, the main source of these motifs was the Greco-Roman tradition of adorning spaces with garlands of flowers, foliage, and fruits bound by ribbons and attached to walls, placed over doors or between columns during festivities and religious rituals. One needed special skill to make these complex braids, which were created in a specific way (Smith 1875). The garland motif was taken over in decorative arts already in antiquity and represented in the most varied materials, including plastic décor. A festoon as well as garland could be subject to multiple variations and used in the frieze in turns with other elements, for example, putti, cornucopias, wreaths, and bucrania (Latin *bucranium* — skull of an ox sacrificed in a religious ritual). In other cases, the festoon was enriched with imitated draperies or made entirely as an imitation of fabric. Garlands and festoons were much favored in Renaissance-era Italy, gradually joining the spectrum of the most popular ornamental motifs in architecture and decorative arts. They retained their role over the next centuries, including in ceramic tile panels in the vestibules of Rīga. One of the most splendid and chronologically earlier examples of combined festoons and wreaths has survived in Miķelis Teters's apartment building vestibule at 60 Ģertrūdes Street (1908), designed by architect Rudolf Dohnberg (Figure 3). Motifs are arranged on a relief frieze, turquoise blue against a dark blue background with yellowish accents, therefore standing out on a background of smooth white tile. The upper panel is decorated with a band harmonized in color with the frieze motif. This is the only known interior in Rīga where festooned wall tiles have such coloring. It is noteworthy that floor tile in the vestibule of Teters's building features arrangements of red flower motifs with green accents on a lighter background, framed by a stylized and rhythmically arranged tulip frieze in line with Art Nouveau.

Tile panels were also used in vestibules of later buildings designed by Rudolf Dohnberg, demonstrating his enthusiasm for this finishing material that had not been adequately

Figure 3. Vestibule at Miķelis Teters' apartment building at Ģertrūdes Street 60 (arch. Rudolf Dohnberg, 1908). Wall tiles: NSTG, floor tiles: Carl Nevermann & Co Riga. Photo: Agnese Tambaka
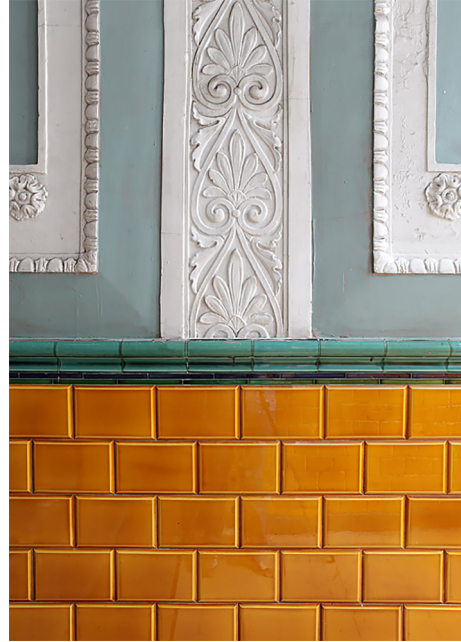


Figure 4. Vestibule at Rūpniecības Street 3 (arch. Konstantīns Pēkšēns, 1908). Photo: Margarita Fedina

considered before. In several vestibules of Dohnberg's buildings, decorative solutions are based on classical antiquity; tile panels were oftentimes thematically enhanced with corresponding motifs in plastic décor, using industrially produced elements for the decoration of upper interior walls. An example of such a combination is the vestibule of the apartment building at 19/21 Ģertrūdes Street (1909), where, above ceramic tile panels with festoons and wreaths, there are wall-dividing frames in the shape of classical palmette friezes (Figure 4). Identical cast panels of plastic décor were used by architect Konstantīns Pēkšēns for apartment building vestibules at 4 Vīlandes Street and 3 Rūpniecības Street (both in 1908), choosing ceramic tile panels for both buildings that are monochromatic but differ in detail coloring, thus giving each premise a different overall spirit.

Freely interpreted art of classical antiquity (with modifications of later centuries as well) was a rather safe and universal resource for decorators of apartment buildings in Rīga, as evidenced by the variations on traditional ornamental motifs in vestibules. There could be sculptural acanthus garlands on wall planes as well as motifs derived from classical orders — dentils, egg-and-dart friezes, bands of guttae or palmettes, coffered ceilings. Such motifs were also repeated

on tile panels in the most diverse combinations, even including stylized bucrania (such as the wall panel frieze of the vestibule at 30 Aleksandra Čaka Street, 1911, architect Aleksandrs Vanags). Variations of the aforementioned motifs and color selections created different images of the spaces, even if the tiles used were identical. For instance, the vestibule finishing in the apartment building at 62 Stabu Street (1909), designed by Solomon Nudelmann (1877–?), has retained a tile panel with a stylized festoon and laurel wreath motif, given an Art Nouveau accent by a series of small squares. The overall impression of a space oriented towards eighteenth-century Classicism is achieved through plastic finishing of the upper wall — a division into frames with rhythmically arranged vases, acanthus garlands and strings of pearls in the centre as well as a guilloche motif in the upper wall plane. Analogical tile panels are present in the apartment building vestibule designed by Eižens Laube at 119 Dzirnavu Street (1912). Here, the walls above the tile are decorated with a plastic festoon frieze, and the plafond edges are coffered, while its center, marked by a wide oval egg-and-dart moulding, is left vacant, thus creating an Empire-style atmosphere for the space. It is noteworthy that the first-floor vestibule of the same building has its walls painted in the so-called marbleization technique, which imitates marble panels in line with First Pompeian Style paintings. These examples point to the fact that architects of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were skilled in artistic expressions of historical styles.[7] Therefore, they could masterfully handle themes of classical ornament, as evidenced by the choices and diverse combinations of ceramic tile panels.

## The Attribution Problem of Wall Tile of the Vestibules of Rīga Apartment Buildings

Ceramic wall tile appeared in the interior décor of Rīga's vestibules no later than 1901 and became a very popular type of finishing within a few years, especially during the Late Art Nouveau period. Not much attention has been paid to ceramic tile panels in previous publications dealing with Rīga Art Nouveau architecture and interiors, as ceramic wall tile was mainly imported to Rīga.

In the last two decades, significant research on the turn-of-the-twentieth-century tile in Europe has been carried out. It helps in the attribution of previously little-known producers of Rīga's interior tile and allows one to view this material in a wider context and in correlation with the production history in Western European factories.

Industrial production of tile began in Europe around 1850, mainly in already operating factories of ceramic items. Factories specializing in tile production emerged only later in England, Germany, Belgium, and elsewhere, as demand for architectural ceramics was on the rise in the

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7    Mastering artistic styles and their ornament is evidenced not only by practice but also in architects' publications. One of the most important: Laube, Eižens (1921). *Krāsu un formu loģika*. Rīga: Ekonomists.

late nineteenth and especially early twentieth centuries. This demand was related to architects' interest in polychromatic accents in façades (numerous examples are found in Rīga as well) and in bright colors and a richness of ornamental motifs created by wall tile panels in interiors. Thanks to technical innovations and modern production methods, wall tile could be manufactured in large quantities and be moderately priced, thus affordable to broad social circles.

It has been assumed that all tile factories published catalogues presenting various tile motifs and also recommending arrangements. Today, such catalogues are rarities, and cooperation among researchers in different countries is necessary to specify producers. It is known that, during the Art Nouveau period from 1890 to 1914, ceramic tile was produced in large factories as well as in small workshops, creating in all about 8,000 variations of various wall-tile motifs. Themes of Art Nouveau and other historical styles were used (Simermacher 2000); however, typical Art Nouveau motifs appeared much more rarely that ornamental themes influenced by historical styles[8].

In comparison to wallpaper and other types of decorative finishing, wall tile had many advantages, including hygienic considerations — tile is easy to clean, thus it is often used not only in apartment building vestibules, kitchens, and bathrooms but also in public buildings such as train stations, hospitals, schools, etc.

Tile is a type of industrial production whose attribution is hampered by the fact that turn-of-the-century tile design examples were commonly used for a long time (often even after World War I) because production required serious financial investments in the preparation of metal moulds, stencils, etc. Thus, typical Art Nouveau motifs remained on the market even when the style itself was no longer seen as 'avant-garde' (Baeck 2013).

To date, wall tiles of nine German factories have been found in Rīga[9]. On the eve of the World War I in 1914, thirty-five factories in Germany specialized in tile production. German tile factories played an important role in the artistic and technical development of the field in Europe (Patruno 2017: 141).

The largest number of preserved tiles in Rīga come from the Northern German Faience Factory in Grohn (near modern Bremen), *Norddeutsche Steingutfabrik Grohn*

8    Belgian art historian Dr. Mario Baeck has studied early-twentieth-century wall and floor tile for many years and inspected over 100 catalogues of different producers from various collections. He has concluded that only a few dozen tile motifs were typical of Art Nouveau even in the golden age of the style. Most (several hundred) motifs comply with the neo-styles of Historicism. See: Baeck, Mario (2013). *The Flourishing of Belgian Ornamental Tiles and Tile Panels in the Art Nouveau Period*. Available: https://www.academia.edu/3768750 [Accessed 10.08.2021.].

9    *Boizenburg, Ernst Teichert G.m.b.H., Grohner Wandplatten Fabrik, Meißner Ofen- und Porzellanfabrik, NSTG Actiengesellschaft Norddeutsche Steingutfabrik Grohn bei Bremen, Sächsiche Ofen- und Chamottewaarenfabrik SOF/SOMAG, Tonwarenfabrik Mügeln GmbH - Bezirk Leipzig, Villeroy & Boch Mettlach, Wessel Bonn.*

(hereinafter — NSTG[10]).  The joint-stock company NSTG was founded in 1869 and produced various ceramic goods. Wall tile production was launched here only twenty years later, in 1889 (Weisser 1978). A substantial number of tiles have also survived from the Grohn Wall Tile Factory (*Grohner Wandplatten Fabrik*).  It was founded in 1906 and produced various ceramic items, including floor tile (Weisser 2012).

It is possible to conclude now that wall tile produced by NSTG is the most widespread in Rīga. To establish the tile producer, it is important to determine their distributors in Rīga, who delivered ceramic wall tile to their commissioners. Inspected materials suggest that the trade company *Velten-Berlin*, located at 21 Great Maskavas Street in Rīga, was a significant market player. This firm is believed to have distributed NSTG tiles and possibly also tiles from other German factories in Rīga (Štamgute [1986]). However, information gathered[11] about *Velten-Berlin* thus far is scarce and does not allow one to establish all potential tile producers that cooperated with the company.

Regarding the wall tile panels of Rīga's apartment building vestibules inspected so far, ornamental motifs are compositionally most often arranged in bands. Motifs are diverse, including typical Art Nouveau floral stylizations alongside abstract motifs whose origins are related to historical styles. Often repeated are chevrons, egg-and-dart motifs, palmette friezes, stylized antefixes, the running dog motif, and others in different combinations, sizes, and color ranges (Figure 5).

Among the favorites are variations on the classical festoon and garland, thirteen in total and six of them found repeatedly. In most cases, the festoon motif in tile panels is combined with the wreath motif.

At least nine vestibules[12] have retained wall tile produced by NSTG with a festoon motif from model No. 869[13]. The festoon is a low relief depicting not only laurel leaves but also laurel

10    NSTG is the abbreviation used in specialized literature to refer to the Northern German Faience Factory in Grohn near Bremen (*Aktiengesellschaft Norddeutsche Steingutfabrik Grohn bei Bremen*).

11    Advertisements in early-twentieth century press, including *Jahrbüch fur Bildende Kunst in den Ostseeprovinzen* [6 Jg.], (1912). 7 Jg., (1913), *Rigasche Zeitung*, Nr. 103 (1912), as well as the informative advertisement with the company address on apartment building vestibule panels in Rīga.

12    Such tiles are discovered in vestibules at 34 Aleksandra Čaka Street (architect Eižens Laube, 1911), 114 Brīvības Street (architect Nikolai Nord, 1912), 43 Cēsu Street (architect Edmund von Trompowsky, 1910), 66 A Dzirnavu Street (architect unknown), 23 Marijas Street (architect Jānis Frīdrihs Baumanis, Aleksandrs Vanags, 1910–1911), 6 Raiņa Boulevard (architect Karl Ehmcke, 1881), 71 Stabu Street (architect Rudolf Dohnberg, 1910), 15 Strēlnieku Street (architect unknown) and 59 Tallinas Street (architect Paul Mandelstamm, 1910). Three different colors are seen in Rīga — green-blue, blue and hazy violet. According to Inta Štamgute (Štamgute [2001]: 76), tiles of this design also existed at 77 Tallinas Street (architect Jānis Gailis, 1911) and 73 Stabu Street (architect V. Štams, 1913) but they have been lost.

13    Here and below, production numbers of tile models are established thanks to a collaboration between Agnese Tambaka and Dr. Mario Baeck. Tile model numbers are found in historical catalogues of factories, sample sheets, often on the tile verso, etc.

Figure 5. Tiled panel detail in the vestibule at Miera Street
101 (arch. Eižens Laube, 1910). Photo: Margarita Fedina

drupes arranged in consecutive straight lines. The festoon looks attached to the wall by large square buttons. The upper edge of the two-tile composition is decorated with a two-tile long string of twelve dots and one centered dot below. The tile composition is enclosed by a frame.

One of the two vestibules of the building at 45 Baznīcas Street, designed by Konstantīns Pēkšēns (1859–1928), features wall tiles produced by NSTG. The panel is high and consists of eighteen rows of tiles. Four types of shiny glazed tiles are used, with a monochromatic bluish tile block above the base, topped with a small band of dark tiles. Below it is an ornamental band with alternating two types of tiles in two rows. Smooth, almost black tile alternates with a tile harmonized with the overall arrangement, featuring a relief, lighter festoon framing an oval laurel wreath. It must be noted that a similar oval laurel wreath is rhythmically repeated in the plastic décor of the façade between windows.

In some of Rīga apartment building vestibules, wall tile features only the wreath motif in its décor. A laurel wreath is used most often; rose wreaths can also be found, and sometimes the motif is so stylized that a specific plant is undeterminable (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Façade décor of the apartment building at Baznīcas Street 45 (arch. Konstanīns Pēkšēns, 1909). Photo: Margarita Fedina

Large wreaths on wall tiles at 8 Mednieku Street (architect Aleksandrs Vanags, 1908) and 32 Krišjāņa Barona Street (architect Solomon Nudelmann, 1910) create a reserved, elegant impression (Figure 7). The motif consists of laurel leaves and drupes; it is round, and its lower part is tied with a decorative ribbon. The wreath is a relief consisting of eight tiles. In the vestibule at Mednieku Street, eight such laurel wreaths are composed of wall tiles (one has been partially lost today). One wreath contains an advertisement tile with an inscription that these are NSTG tiles distributed in Rīga by the firm *Velten-Berlin*. An identical inscription has survived also in the vestibule at 32 Krišjāņa Barona Street. In some examples inspected thus far (such tile panels are found at 5 Hospitāļu Street (architect Konstantīns Pēkšēns, 1910) (Figure 8), 15 Strēlnieku Street (architect unknown) etc.), *Velten-Berlin* advertisement tiles reveal information about the producer in Germany, which is NSTG.

Advertisement tiles are among the sources allowing one to answer questions about the producers and distributors of wall tile in Rīga, even though such examples are rare (Štamgute [2001]).[14] One can only speculate about the conditions for placing advertisement tiles in private vestibules; possibly, this gave the owner some material benefits, such as a discount for tile purchases.

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14    Advertisement tiles are exceptions in tile panels, according to the material inspected during this research as well as to an earlier survey by Inta Štamgute (Štamgute [2001]). Out of 166 vestibules, eight featured advertisement tiles.

The attribution of NSTG tile is complicated by the fact that identical tile designs were used by the Belgian *Célestin Joseph Helman* factory. It is known that the *C. J. Helman* factory combined forces with NSTG in around 1910; they had a cooperation agreement on tile production as Germany produced wall tile for Belgian customers as well.[15] In such cases, tiles of identical design can be made by different producers; therefore, the verso of the tile is particularly important, as it may contain the company's seal. Sometimes, a missing tile provides the opportunity of establishing its producer if the verso has left an imprint on the wall. Such an example is found in one of Rīga's vestibules at 131 Dzirnavu Street (architect unknown), allowing one to confirm a German producer. Conversely, a small detail in the tile panel indicating the producer is located in three vestibules — at 119 Dzirnavu Street (architect Eižens Laube, 1912), 10 Vīlandes Street (architect Kontantīns Pēkšēns, 1908) (Figure 9), and 5 Peitavas Street (architect Paul Mandelstamm, 1906). This is a small horizontal tile with a garland, designated as the C model in NSTG sample sheets.[16] It confirms that tiles in the vestibules at 62 Stabu Street (architect Solomon Nudelmann, 1909) and 60 Ģertrūdes Street (architect Rudolf Dohnberg, 1908) were manufactured by this producer. As the small horizontal NSTG tile is found also in four other vestibules — buildings at 19/21 Ģertrūdes Street and 54 Miera Street, designed by Rudolf Dohnberg in 1909, at 30 Hospitāļu Street, designed by Eižens Laube in 1914, and at 3 Blaumaņa Street, designed by Jānis Alksnis in 1912 — one can assume that these panels are related to the same producer. Their tiles demonstrate variations of a single motif featured on tile panels of different heights. Thanks to varying plafond finishing and floor tile, the vestibules are different. Three of them feature dark green tile with relief laurel festoons bound with contrasting light ribbons and enhanced with rose wreaths. To create such a composition, four different types of tile were needed. In the apartment building at 54 Miera Street, the vestibule panel consists of twelve rows of ceramic tile. A distributor's advertisement tile has also survived here[17]. In the vestibule at 19/21 Ģertrūdes Street, tiles are installed in fifteen rows, and at 30 Hospitāļu Street, in eleven rows, while at 3 Blaumaņa Street, there are tiles with an analogous motif in a different lettuce-green color, arranged in ten rows.

Three buildings — at 129 Brīvības Street (architect Jānis Alksnis, 1911, both vestibules), at 10 Krišjāņa Barona Street (architect Jānis Baumanis (1834–1891)), 1879, vestibule finished around 1911) and at 59/61 Tērbatas Street (architect Bernhard Bielenstein (1877–1959), 1911) — feature wall tile from the Grohn Wall Tile Factory (model Nos. 2592 and 2593). Various compositions are arranged in these vestibules by applying wall tiles with laurel festoons and wreaths, illusively mounted on the wall with two decorative ribbons. The festoon tiles are compositionally similar to NSTG model No. 869, as two tiles are needed for a motif. The festoon is bound with ribbons in the middle. Stylized laurel leaves are placed in separate layers alternating with laurel drupes. The tile décor is relief, thus enhancing the decorative effect.

15    Correspondence between Agnese Tambaka and Mario Baeck. [04.03.2021.]. See also: Baeck, Mario (2015). La Maison Helman Céramique un Demi-siecle D'histoire de L'enterprise. *Bruxelles Patrimoines*, No. 15–16, pp. 63–77.

16    Attributed by Mario Baeck. [21.05.2021.]

17    Text on the tile: Sklad kafel i plitok Felten-Berlin Rīga Bolsh. Moskovskaja ulica nomer 21 Telefon nomer. 1852. [Wall and stove tile warehouse *Velten-Berlin Rīga* at 21 Lielā Maskavas Street, phone number 1852.]
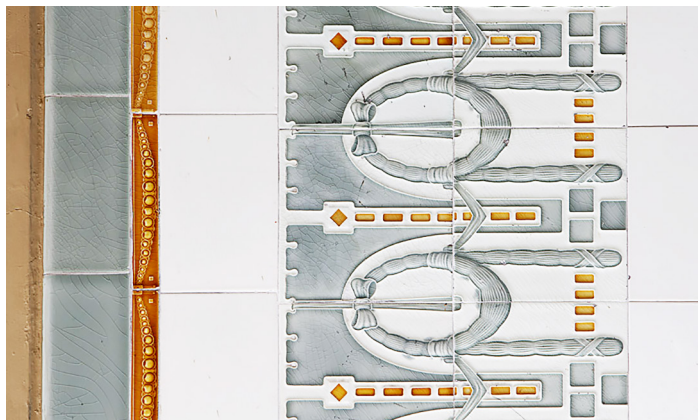
Figure 9. Fragment of wall tile panel produced by German NSTG at Rīga Vīlandes Street 10 (arch. Konstantīns Pēkšēns, 1908). Photo: Margarita Fedina



Figure 8. Signature tile "Velten-Berlin" on tiled panel in the vestibule at Hospitāļu Street 5 (arch. Konstantīns Pēkšēns, 1910). Wall tiles: NSTG. Photo: Margarita Fedina
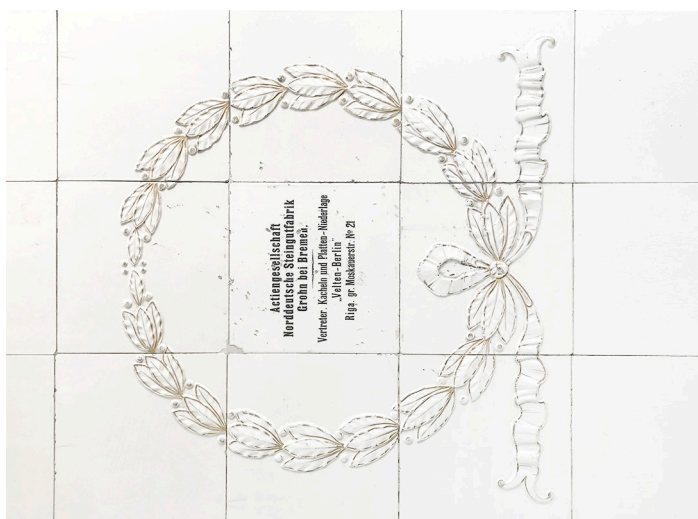


Figure 7. Signature tile "Velten-Berlin" on tiled panel in the vestibule at Mednieku Street 8 (arch. Aleksandrs Vanags, 1908). Wall tiles: NSTG. Photo: Agnese Tambaka

Twenty-two vestibules are known in Rīga where wall tile has come from the Meissen Stove Tile and Porcelain Factory (*Meißner Ofen und Porzellanfabrik*). The factory was founded in 1863. In 1879, it was renamed *Meißner Ofen- und Porzellanfabrik v. Carl Teichert Meißen*, and, in 1891, it began the production of wall tile (Weisser 2012). Among the most spectacular examples in Rīga, there are wall tile panels with relief oak garlands decorated with ribbons[18] preserved in the vestibule at 39 Krišjāņa Valdemāra Street (architect Friedrich Scheffel (1865–1913)), where the motif is accentuated with white glaze on a red background. In the vestibule of the apartment building at 17 Miera Street (architect Jānis Alksnis, 1911), the same garland is white on a blue background.

Tile from the Meissen Factory could be purchased in Rīga from the warehouse of *Carl Nevermann & Co Rīga*, as is known from an advertisement sign in the apartment building vestibule at 76 Brīvības Street (architect Jānis Alksnis, 1908–1910) (Štamgute [2001]: 108–109)[19] as well as from advertisement in the 1909 yearbook *Bildende Kunst in den Ostseeprovinzen.* Advertisement of the sculpture and decorative finish workshop *Lotze & Stoll* in the 1911 edition of the same yearbook indicates that the workshop distributed Meissen Factory[20] products in the Baltic Provinces. This would suggest that tile produced by *Meißner Ofen- und Porzellanfabrik v. Carl Teichert Meißen* was installed in the interiors of buildings whose finishing was carried out by *Lotze & Stoll.* However, while this firm was responsible for the façades of the Neoclassical Craftsmen's Mutual Credit building at 3 Krišjāņa Barona Street (1911) designed by Jānis Alksnis, one of its two vestibules features tile panels that, according to Belgian tile researcher Mario Baeck, were produced by NSTG, thus indicating the complexity of attributing tile manufacturers.

Industrially made wall tile is often the single evidence of the original interior finishing in early-twentieth-century vestibule and stairwell décor. Although all decorative elements need to be considered to comprehensively describe the interior's stylistics, tile often becomes a very important reference point. At the same time, the study of tiles and establishing their manufacturers is often complicated.

Although catalogues of several early-twentieth-century producers have survived until modern times, they are bibliographical rarities in private collections; only in some lucky cases can individual researchers can access, enabling the study of these materials. However, one has to consider that the decorative motif of a wall tile alone, even in the factories' original catalogues of tile supply, is not sufficient proof of a particular producer; the verso of the tile and the producer's seal have to be seen as well. As tiles are installed on walls, this is possible only on very rare occasions. Therefore, information about the tiles used in the buildings of Rīga can be enriched through collaboration with foreign specialists as well as through searching materials in archives. Consequently, the material inspected up to now remains open fur further studies.

18   Model No. 141 a-f.

19   The advertisement sign in the vestibule at 76 Brīvības Street mentioned by Inta Štamgute has been lost today.

20   *Meissner Fussboden- und glasierten Wandpatten und Ofen.*

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# Neoklasicisma "ornamenta gramatika" Rīgas vēlā jūgendstila perioda interjeros

## Silvija Grosa, Agnese Tambaka

Pēdējās desmitgadēs rietumu mākslas vēsturē tapuši nozīmīgi pētījumi par ornamenta lomu arhitektūras dekorā, pieaugusi arī interese par 19. un 20. gadsimta mijas rūpnieciski ražoto produkciju, tai skaitā par keramiskajām sienu flīzēm, kas bija viens no iecienī-tākajiem apdares materiāliem Rīgas 19. un 20. gs. mijas dzīvojamo namu vestibilos. Latvijas industriālā dizaina vēstures kontekstā keramiskajām sienu flīzēm kā apdares materiālam līdz šim nav veltīti būtiski pētījumi. Šajā publikācijā, pamatojoties uz tipoloģisko, kā arī ikonogrāfisko metodi, meklētas atbildes uz jautājumiem par kera-misko flīžu ražotājiem Vācijā, jo pēdējo gadu laikā jauna informācija ir papildinājusi Rīgas namu vestibilos izmantoto keramisko sienu flīžu klasifikāciju un to ražotāju sarakstu. Šajā rakstā materiāls skatīts saistībā ar vēlā jūgendstila periodā iecienītajiem, no antīkās mākslas pārmantotajiem ornamentālajiem motīviem. Veiktā salīdzinošā un stilistiskā analīze parāda, ka flīžu dizaina motīvi visbiežāk balstīti klasiskās mākslas mantojumā un apstiprina pieņēmumu, ka vēlā jū-gendstila perioda īres namu vestibilu dekoratīvā apdare galvenokārt iekļaujas brīvi interpretēta neoklasicisma stilistikā.

# Zooming in on Elements of the Ecosystem

# Textile Artists of the 1970s—1980s—Leaders of Folk Applied Art Studios

Inese Sirica, Elīna Veilande-Apine

The aim of the article is to draw attention to the interaction between professional textile art and handicrafts or folk applied art in Soviet Latvia. In 1961, within the State Academy of Arts of the Latvian SSR (now the Art Academy of Latvia, hereinafter — the Academy) was established the Department of Textile Art. In the 1960s, it began to award the honorary title of the Master of Folk Crafts and Folk Applied Art Studios (hereinafter — the Studio or FAAS). The descriptions of the activities of the Studios mostly emphasize that they continue folk art traditions, but the experiments with craft techniques and inspiration from contemporary textile art are mentioned in a generalized and vague way. The study shows the presence of contemporary textile art in the works of FAAS and the leaders of the Studios as a link between the two. Nine textile artists with the Academy education managed Studios from the 1970s and 1980s.

Research methods: literature studies, comparison of textile art and textile crafts, interviews with textile artists. Examples of musealized art by these textile artists in the museums of Latvian Artists' Union, the Museum of Decorative Arts and Design, as well as in the National History Museum of Latvia.

## Textile art and textile crafts in the 1960s to the 1980s. History, terminology and significance of crafts

In the middle of the 20th century, the issue of ancient and contemporary crafts was topical in Europe, including the territory of the Soviet Union, and also in the United States of America. A new approach was being sought, as is indirectly noted in the description of examples of Riga Secondary School of Applied Arts students' works in the publication *Latviešu tēlotāja māksla* (Latvian Fine Arts) from 1958 (Grīnvalde 1958: 197). What is this new approach to crafts? This can be explained by the example of art patron Aileen Osborn Webb (1892–1979). During and after World War II, Webb promoted the craft or craftsmanship movement in the United States to help them cope with economic hardships. In 1944, Webb founded the School of the American Craftsman and in 1956 — the Museum of Contemporary Crafts in New York (since 2002, the Museum of Arts and Design). There were organized conferences, exhibitions devoted to crafts issues, and the new approach to crafts appeared in academic arts programs. In 1964, with the support of Webb, an international

World Crafts Council was held at Columbia University. It was attended by specialists in various fields related to the widest range of crafts, such as Rudolf Arnheim (1904–2007), the Finnish designer of the second half of the 20th century Tapio Wirkkala (1915–1985), architect Louis Kahn (1901–1974), as well as crafts theoretician Czesław Knothe from Poland (1890–1985) and others (Adamson 2021: 199). Although the focus of the Council's discussions was on world crafts, it was also devoted to the application of ancient crafts and techniques to the lifestyle of the respective period of time. The general tendencies in the field of crafts in the world in the 1960s were observed there. These ideas were probably well-known in the Soviet Union, and they were assimilated by the arts of the numerous ethnic groups living in the territory of the USSR.

Just as in Finland after the Second World War, in Latvia the renewal of applied arts and crafts took place on the basis of the pre-war experience. Already by the end of the 19th century, in Finland were formed crafts societies and schools based on the ideas of the arts and crafts movement (Aaltonen et al. 64). But by the end of the 1940s, in Finland as in other countries, new professions emerged — interior designer, furniture designer, textile designer, etc. The new type of standard architecture contributed to their emergence. In the 1950s, handicrafts and industrial art that were based on folk art became fashionable in standard interiors. In Finland, for example, in the 1950s, the applied artist and designer Kaj Franck (1911–1989), in his quest for the form of new industrially produced everyday objects, was inspired by Finnish folk art (Svenskberg et al. 91). After the Second World War, the search for beauty in everyday things was en vogue. It was found in folk art, adapting it to industrial production, as well as in appreciating the aesthetics of handicrafts. A significant turning point in Latvian applied art was marked by the Baltic Republics Conference of Applied and Decorative Arts and exhibitions in Tallinn in 1955. During the conference there were discussions about the importance of decorative and applied art, industrial art, as well as about the application of folk art in new forms of applied art (Tass 1955: 2). It was concluded that in Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia the most important type of applied art is textile crafts. In the early 1960s in the Soviet Union, the possible ways of furnishing of new architecture were much pondered. There were mostly small-sized standard apartments, and solutions for their furnishing were sought both in professional applied art and in folk applied art. Therefore, in 1961, new study fields were established at the State Academy of Arts of the Latvian SSR: interior and equipment; industrial art; and textile art. The movement of folk applied art studios was also of great importance.

In 2007, the National History Museum of Latvia hosted a scientific conference *Tautas lietišķā māksla Latvijā no 20. gs. vidus līdz mūsdienām. Šodiena. Pieredze. Rītdiena* (Folk Applied Art in Latvia from the mid-20th century to the present day. Today. Experience. Tomorrow). A collection of articles was published in 2008. The message expressed there emphasizes the issues of preserving the traditional crafts characteristic on the territory of Latvia, as well as terminology issues; however, the works of the studios show the trends in art of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. In the 1950s, the use of the term 'folk applied art' became more widespread in Latvia (Ziņģīte 2008: 19). The modern craft theoretician Howard Risatti (1943) avoids the use of the term 'applied arts,' which was brought in at the end of the 19th century, as it relates to industrially produced items that were specially decorated to be more attractive for the consumers. Risatti

associates the concept of craftsmanship with human handiwork, the ability and knowledge to manage certain raw materials to create an object (Risatti 2007: 19). In the period of Soviet Latvia, the term "folk applied art" used in the descriptions of crafts refers to a peculiar "production" of crafts.

In the 1960s, there were formed craft or folk applied art groups which mainly operated in houses of culture, schools, museums, and other suitable premises. Each group had a leader. In 1963, a regulation was adopted on awarding the title of 'Folk Applied Art Studio' (hereinafter — the Studio) to the groups that have reached a certain level of craft and artistic growth. The status of the Studio was discontinued in 2000, but the groups which received the title of the Studio until then are still active today (Rubena 2018: 84). The origin of the Studios is related to the processes in Latvia in the second half of the 1940s, when nationalization and centralization of private companies, including craft enterprises, took place. There appeared the concept of 'amateur' artists and associations that were engaged with 'contemporary folk art' (Sudmalis 1949: 3). The associations or groups were supervised by the Folk Art House established in 1945 (renamed as Emils Melngailis Folk Art House in 1953, in 1980, renamed as Emils Melngailis Folk Art and Culture — Education Work Scientific Methodological Centre of the Republic, today — Latvian National Centre for Culture) (Cimermanis 2006: 12). The first group in Soviet Latvia to be considered is the group of textile craftsmen established around 1948 in the village of Blome (nearby Smiltene), the leader of the group — Valija Nadziņa (1922–2020) (Rubene 1965: 4).

Participation in exhibitions played an important role in raising qualification, and masters of folk crafts created high-quality works for exhibitions and works for sale in art salons. The name of the Studio and participation in exhibitions in the 1960s sparked competition and an increase in the technical and artistic level of work. In the early 1960s, there was a tendency to exhibit works created by artists and craftsmen together with industrial products. However, with the development of the Studios and activities of professional craftsmen, later exhibitions were organized separately. The most popular crafts in the 1960s-80s were textiles, ceramics, decorative wood, leather and metal art (Ivanova 1980). Although in the Soviet Union so-called folk art was centrally supervised, still for each ethnic group it was a legitimate way to preserve cultural memory through the practical pursuit of crafts. Estonian folk-art researcher Anu Kannike emphasizes that in Soviet Estonia, folk art or "self-employed" crafts were subject to the centralization of the totalitarian political system, but essentially embodied a strong anti-Soviet position (Kannike 2016: 510). Presumably — in Soviet Latvia, Studios and folk groups worked with a similar approach. It has been emphasized also by the folk art expert Linda Rubena: 'During the Soviet years, it maintained the idea of Latvianness' (Rubena 2018: 84).

Since 1960, Emils Melngailis People's Art House, which was subordinate to the Ministry of Culture of the Latvian SSR, awarded the title of Master of Folk Arts (hereinafter MFA) for high-quality performance (Rubena 2008: 40). In 1960, about 458 people gained this status. In order to obtain the status, it was necessary to exhibit one's works at the district and state exhibitions. A special jury of specialists formed by the Ministry of Culture of the Latvian SSR evaluated them. In 1960, the inventory of Masters of Folk Arts was begun with the aim of grouping them together (Vidrika 1960: 4). Between 1960 and 2000, a total of 4,020 artisans

obtained the status of MFA, and their performance in the field of contemporary Latvian crafts is still under research (Sirica 2022). It was essential that the status of MFA facilitated access to the raw materials needed for the craft, which was a big problem from the 1960s-80s.

The activity of folk applied arts studios is related to the concept of folk art. Modern researchers are beginning to re-evaluate the use of the term 'folk art' at different stages of history. For example, the Polish researcher Ewa Klekot, analyzing aspects of Polish folk art and craft and the socially constructed narrative since the second half of the 19th century, focuses on the 21st century concept of 'ethno-design' (Klekot 2010: 71): Namely, things that formally create associations with a certain ethnic group. Kleckot emphasizes that the concept of 'folk art' was assigned to the things used by peasants by the ethnic elite, the intelligentsia, and researchers. Selectively chosen things in folk art narrative are usually decorative and tend to be attributed to 'timelessness' (Klekot 2010: 72).

The concept of folk applied art, which stabilized in Latvia in the 1950s, is related to the end of the 19th century's and early-20th-century efforts of the Latvian intelligentsia to define the art of its people. These are examples of Latvian or peasant folk art through which a story about the things used in the pre-industrial period is created. The modern researcher must take into account that the term 'Latvian folk art' reflects the taste and understanding of a small group or a personality. For example, from 1904 to 1905, the graphic artist Rihards Zariņš (1869–1939) organized a column *Mahksla un Amats* (Art and Craft) in the magazine *Austrums*, in this way continuing the ideas of the Arts and Crafts movement of the end of the 19th century in the form of a search for the national art character of the art intellectuals of Eastern Europe. Zariņš emphasized that artists should get inspiration from the examples of Latvian peasants' crafts (raw materials, shape, colour and ornament) and create art for the needs of the Latvian intelligentsia of the time. In reality, it marks the beginning of folk or peasant art aesthetics' adaptation to the interiors of city and private houses of intelligentsia. Creating a new work in this vein expressed an idea that 'What we can use unchanged, we will not change' (Zariņš 1904: 148). In the introduction to the publication on history of art dedicated to applied art (i.e., *Purvīša mākslas vēsture* (Purvītis Art History), 1936), the concepts of folk and national art are separated. It is emphasized that folk art is characterized by tradition and it can be called ethnographic art, but national art is created by professional artists with the aim of creating a nationally unique art (Peņģerots 1936: 9). The conceptual and ideological separation dominates also the applied and folk applied arts of the 1960s–80s. Folk applied art was created to fit into the private or public interiors of the newly built standard projects of the time, as well as to be displayed in exhibitions. The source of inspiration for it was folk art. A similar approach was taken in the 1920s–30s, when national art was created. In both of these periods, a new art appropriate to its time was being created, where the source of inspiration has been folk art and the current art trends of that time.

National and folk applied art is a theoretically complicated issue. It includes crafts that contrast with industrially produced materiality, it is not only a functionally valuable thing, but also contains social and cultural value (Risatti 2007: 152). The need for handicrafts (in handicraft techniques) is closely linked to human psychology (Risatti 2007: 55). Especially at the time when industrial production is rapidly advancing. In his publication 'The Invention of Craft,'

Glen Adamson analyses the example of craft as a storage medium that helps to cope with traumatic experiences (Adamson 2013: 185). Adamson used the idea of memory to describe the revival of crafts in the mid 19th century, promoted by the fast process of industrialization in England. In the context of Soviet Latvia, the traumatic experience can be associated with the totalitarian regime and the crafts included the cultural values of the ethnic group.

The life of applied art and textile craft exhibitions in Soviet Latvia in the 1960s–80s was rich. Art historian Gundega Ivanova (Andersone, b. Putniņa, 1928–2017) has emphasized that since 1947 folk applied art exhibitions have become 'an integral part of our artistic life' (Ivanova 1981). Already in the second half of the 1950s, applied art exhibitions featured uniform interior sets for multi-story standard buildings. For example, offers developed by textile craftsman Erna Rubene (1910–1990) and architect Marta Staņa (1913–1972). In 1971, the Open-Air Museum began the practice of organizing a fair of folk applied artworks on the first weekend of June — an opportunity for the participants of the Studios to exhibit and sell the objects created for the interior (Sirica 2018: 63).

Gundega Ivanova is the compiler and author of the text of the books *Latviešu mūsdienu lietišķā māksla* (Latvian Contemporary Applied Art) and *Latviešu mūsdienu tautas māksla* (Latvian Contemporary Folk Art), published by the publishing house *Liesma* in 1980 and 1981. The publications are similar, but there is a distinction between applied arts (meaning by that the works of academically educated artists) and folk applied arts. The 1981 edition features mainly examples of folk applied art created in the 1970s by the participants of the Studios. Ivanova has emphasized that 'great changes have taken place in contemporary folk art,' meaning that new things and artistic solutions are emerging (Ivanova 1981: 6). This thought was continued with the statement that 'the stylistic direction and artistic level of textiles are still determined by qualified Masters of Folk Art' (Ivanova 1981: 9). In the descriptions of applied art, textile crafts play an important role in interior ensembles, where, as it was observed in the 1970s, there has been an 'Interpretation of the National Heritage' — respectively, a creative approach towards new frontiers in folk art heritage (Ivanova 1981: 10). This article seeks to broaden the perspective on the 'interpretation of national heritage' in textile arts, emphasizing the contribution of the Academy graduates — textile artists to the work of the Studios, to the training and inspiration of their participants.

## Crafts in world university programs from the 1950s. Department of Textile Art at the Academy: study content

After the Second World War, the term 'design' was introduced to describe industrially produced things. Rapid industrial production contributed to the re-evaluation of man-made objects or crafts. In search of the identity of craft in the post-war world, crafts entered European and American higher education programs and more frequently appeared in academic discussions (Risatti 2007: 281). At this point it should be emphasized that the Latvian

Academy of Arts has been organizing training in crafts since 1924 in the pottery workshop. It is possible that with this program the Rector of the Academy Vilhelms Purvītis (1872–1945) managed to predict the tendencies of art education in the 1950s and 1960s. If until the 1940s the center of world art was Paris, then after World War II it was New York. It is worth reminding that it was New York where the identity of crafts was discussed, and in 1956 even the Museum of Contemporary Crafts was established. In 1961, the Department of Artistic Design of Textiles was opened at the State Academy of Arts of the Latvian SSR. The establishment of the speciality of textile art is a natural necessity of the time in Soviet Latvia, which facilitated the studies of textile crafts, academic discussions and a broader view of it in the history of art and culture. The training content: studies of Latvian folk art (techniques, composition, decorative solutions), tapestry, experiments in mixed techniques: short fringe, long fringe, wickerwork, knotting, applique, as well as knitting and crochet. The batik technique also played a role. From 1961 to 1992, the Head of the Department was Rūdolfs Heimrāts (1926–1992). He had gained attention with his creative activities in the second half of the 1950s, when art historian Jānis Pujāts (1925–1988) called the young artist a successful route finder and experimenter (Pujāts 1957: 196). Even later, in the late 1970s, art historian Ināra Ņefedova (1930–2022) emphasized that R. Heimrāts's 'work is continuous studies and experimentation' (Ņefedova 1979: 5). Most likely, the Head of the Department promoted creative experiments in textile art and weaving in the broadest sense — in fiber — already during the study process, and such an approach influenced textile art students and graduates in their further creative activities. It is significant that a year after the establishment of the new speciality, in 1962, the first international textile biennial took place in Lausanne, Switzerland, which was the epicenter of the latest trends in this branch. The Department of Textile Art was created following the biennale, which was organized until 1995.

The model of obtaining textile art education in the period of Soviet Latvia was initially characterized by the task of preparing decorative applied art specialists for decorating public interiors. Mostly functional textile art was created: wall and bedspreads, floor paths, curtains, tablecloths, pillows and wall decors. In the 1960s, tapestry became the dominant textile art technique at the Academy, which was suitable for the expression of abstract art in the textile art of Soviet Latvia (Jakuša-Kreituse 2011: 14).

Rūdolfs Heimrāts wanted to create a program of the artistic design of textiles which would differ from the programs of similar departments in other republics of the Soviet Union, such as the industry-oriented training in Moscow and Vilnius. R. Heimrāts' concept in creating the study program was to 'prepare artists with high professional thinking and the ability to grow (Burāne 1989: 95). From the very first years of the program, the emphasis in the tasks was on the development of students' creative thinking, as R. Heimrāts emphasized in his 1981 interview: 'In five years' time, we wanted the students to develop themselves into comprehensive creative personalities' (Burāne 1981: 3). Several of the first graduates of the department were invited to teach in this program — e. g. 1967 graduates Aija Baumane (1943–2019) and Rita Eglīte (b. 1941). In 1963, Gaida Vecvagare (1920–1983), a weaver and a long-time weaving teacher at Riga Secondary School of Applied Arts, started working as a foreman. The teaching process of textile art was gradually supplemented, changed according

to the trends of that period. In textile art, there were four aspects to the study program: research and adaptation of Latvian art and also the art of other nations to the needs of textiles of the time, nature studies, and the fine arts — drawing and painting.

In the first year, once a week, students visited the repositories of the Ethnographic Open-Air Museum (nowadays the Latvian Ethnographic Open-Air Museum) and the History Museum of the Latvian SSR (nowadays the National History Museum of Latvia), getting acquainted with the oldest examples of Latvian textiles, also items of ceramics, metal jewelery, and wood carvings and their ornaments. The students used the creative impulses from the folk art heritage for abstract compositions and interpretations of geometric ornaments (Bankovičs 2010: 43). From 1972 to 2016, ethnographer Ilze Ziņģīte advised students in their research of the collection of the National History Museum of Latvia.

In the second year, an increased attention was paid to the studies of the structure and forms of nature. The stylization of flora and fauna motifs formed an understanding of the transformation of real nature studies into decorative compositions (Baumane 2011: 6). An important part of the nature study process was the participation of students in annual summer plein-air activity in small towns (Bankovičs 2010: 47). For one month, under the guidance of both the department and the painting teachers, the students created a collection of sketches and compositions for later use in practical classes—weaving, batik, and fabric printing. The themes of natural phenomena in the works of Latvian textile artists were and still are of interest for many authors.

In the Department of Textile Art, one of the goals of R. Heimrāts was to develop modern textiles and an individual style of the artist—experiments in material (LVA f442: 11–12). The acquisition of art, art history, architecture, textile patterns, colors, structures, and technological development of different ethnic groups was essential to ensure a continuous process of improvement and to identify the wide range of textile possibilities (Ņefedova 1979: 5). In the program of the third study year, R. Heimrāts created a lecture course, 'Experiment in Material.' The aim of the course was to encourage students to experiment with a variety of materials, techniques, and styles. The course basically consisted of demonstrating the impressions of R. Heimrāts' experience from traveling abroad: slides of foreign exhibitions, the exhibition catalogues and magazines. For example, the Czech magazine *Umění a řemesla* (Arts and Crafts), the German *Kultur im Heim* (Home Culture) (Heimrāts [no date.]). The influence of foreign magazines on Latvian textile art is a separate research topic, because in conversations with textile artists, getting acquainted with these magazines is often mentioned, but specific analogues are missing. Despite R. Heimrāts' belief that experimentation is necessary because it suggests artistic liberty, freedom, and courage, at the same time he pointed out that an artist cannot invest resources and time to create an unnecessary and useless thing (Kalniete 1986: 4). This statement confirms the importance of creative experimentation and practical application of textile work.

For textile art students, the number of academic drawing and painting classes per week corresponded to the intended number of hours in the painting department. In addition to

practical skills with teachers — painter and graphic artist Aleksandrs Stankēvičs (1932–2015), painters Boriss Bērziņš (1930–2002) and Indulis Zariņš (1929–1997)—students acquired various styles and theoretical knowledge in the use of composition and coloring, became acquainted with the latest trends in painting, and produced copies of works by prominent artists. The drawing and painting tasks developed the students' visual language and diversified their means of expression in order to apply the acquired knowledge in the creation of figural composition and, more broadly, in visual imagery. Painter and interior artist Jānis Andris Osis (b. 1943) introduced students to the principles of interior and design, developing their spatial thinking that was needed in the 1970s–80s course, placing textiles in the interior.

In the third semester, for one month, every day from 8:00 a.m. until 17:00 p.m., third- and fourth-years students gained experience in industrial practice in the printing house of the Academy. During this practice, students acquired the use of color, mesh, template and fabric printing technology. The experience gained during this practice was useful for several textile artists — Aina Muze (1943–2017), Ilma Austriņa (b. 1940), Ruta Bogustova (b. 1935) — in their first job at the textile factory *Rīgas audums* (Knāviņa 2019: 64).

## Textile artists / Studio and group leaders

From the first graduation of 1967 until 1989, 133 women and 22 men textile artists graduated from the Textile Department of the Academy. In the period under study, only nine textile artists have been Studio leaders. The data were obtained from the Textile Art Department 50th anniversary edition *Tekstils LV* (2011), as well as from the materials of the Latvian Textile Art Association. From 1970 to 1984, Rūdolfs Heimrāts, the Head of the Textile Art Speciality, offered students in their final year of study and textile art graduates the opportunity to lead one of the Folk Applied Art Studios in Riga or in its suburbs. Sometimes young artists looked for a job in the studios themselves or created a new group, perceiving it as a natural continuation of their creative activity. Despite these calls, back in 1983, it has been written that 'few professional textile artists run Folk Studios' (Karlova 1983: 3).

Māra Brākše (1942–2009), a graduate of 1970, led a group of weavers at Bulduri Culture House from 1974 to 1984, while Skaidrīte Leimane (b. 1941), a graduate of the same year, from 1984 to 1999 took over leadership of Studio *Līgatne*, although at that time she also worked as a methodologist at the Academy. Lilita Postaža (1941–2011) graduated from the Academy in 1971. A year later she established a tapestry weaving group, *Gobelēns*, in Zvejniekciems Culture House. Irisa Blumate (b. 1948) still a fifth-year student in 1972, started and is still running the Studio *Draudzība*. 1974 graduate Emīlija Kazakevičute (b. 1949), from in the second year of study (in 1971), began to lead the Studio *Saiva* of Ogre Region Culture Centre and did so until 1991. Vija Ābele (b. 1946) also started running the Studio *Krimulda* during her studies in 1976. In the magazine *Zvaigzne* it is emphasized that V. Ābele studied 'in her third year, when Rūdolfs Heimrāts once asked whether she would

agree to take the lead of the weavers' group. He had named half a dozen places — leaders were needed everywhere. Vija had chosen Krimulda — it had been closer and better known as she had spent summers there with her parents when she was little' (Sērsna 1985: 12). It should be emphasized that Vija Ābele's contribution to folk applied art is broader than her work at the Studio, because from 1985 until 2000 she worked at Emils Melngailis Folk Art Centre as an expert in folk applied art. In her third year of studies, Astra Rubene (b. 1956) taught preparatory courses at the Studio led by I. Blumate. In 1981, A. Rubene graduated from the Academy and until 1991 she ran Ilģuciems Studio *Austra*. In an interview in 2021, she emphasized that in the work of the Studio the methodological materials for weaving were based on notes made by herself during the lectures of Gaida Vecvagare at the Academy (Veilande-Apine 2021). Astrīda Freimane (b. 1943) ran the Studio *Sigulda* from 1983 to 2019. In 1983, Marina Sproģe (b. Ivanova, 1958) became the head of the Studio *Kamene* in the fourth year of the Academy and is still continuing this work.

In all Studios and groups, textile artists taught textile crafts and techniques, and encouraged creative experimental solutions in textiles. Ilze Ziņģīte, Studio researcher and ethnographer, has emphasized the important role of the Studio leaders: 'The long-term leaders of Folk Applied Art Studios, bright personalities, often with the education of an artist, are advisors and stimulators of creative work' (Ziņģīte 2008: 25). The main craft in textile Studios was weaving, but people also engaged in embroidery and knitting. In Ogre they specialized in knitting, while in some other Studios works were made via batik technique. Chronologically, the oldest group in Soviet Latvia led by one of the Academy's textile art graduates is *Krimulda*, established in 1955: the Studio was established in 1980. The group *Draudzība* (Riga) was established in 1959 but acquired the status of Studio in 1965; so I. Blumate led a group of professional craftsmen who had already acquired the status of Studio. The group *Saiva* in Ogre was established in 1960. In 1969 it was granted the status of the Studio, and E. Kazakevičute already managed a Studio. The weavers' group in Ilģuciems was established in 1969, but it received the name *Austra* and the status of Studio it 1984. The group *Līgatne* was established in 1969, its Studio status was obtained in 1980. The group *Kamene* was established in 1978, in 1986 it obtained the status of Studio. Textile artists as Studio managers organized training in the crafts, creation of works for exhibitions and qualification of craftsmen for the status of Masters of Folk Crafts. For example, in 1984 the pedagogical merit of Vija Ābele was emphasized in obtaining the qualification of Masters of Folk Crafts by the Studio participants Māra Polāne, Vija Kosarenoka, Inta Drozdova, and Valentīna Garais (Sērsna 1985: 12).

The original art and work of textile artists in Studios or groups are likely to have interacted. It is peculiar that Soviet-era textile researcher S. Kalniete, in her 1989 book *Latvju tekstilmāksla* (Latvian Textile Art), does not indicate textile artists' work and contribution to Studios or groups. Lilita Postaža has worked in the tapestry technique and no exhibition of Soviet Latvian textile art has taken place without her works. In the 1980s, Postaža turned to the depiction of Latvian folklore in the technique of tapestry (Kalniete 1989: 172). Emīlija Kazakevičute is the only one who has consistently created works of art in the technique of knotting (Kalniete 1989: 148). The publication does not mention the textile artists / leaders of textile art Studios: Māra Brākše, Vija Ābele, Astrīda Freimane, Skaidrīte Leimane, Astra

Rubene, and Marina Sproģe. Māra Brākše was an active representative of the Jūrmala group of artists; along with woven tapestries, she has also developed textile miniatures. Skaidrīte Leimane's work is very little noticed among art researchers—an ascetic composition and a pictorially laconic interpretation of the Latvian landscape and nature color tones. Leimane's original compositions are made in techniques similar to those the artist offers the Studio participants to learn, such as dyeing yarn with natural materials. After graduating from the Academy, Vija Ābele, Marina Sproģe, and Astrīda Freimane shared their creative ideas with the participants of the Studios they were leading.

## Textile art and textile craft techniques, textile artists, and examples of folk applied art

During the period under review, textile craft techniques include weaving, tapestry, batik, and knotting. Weaving on hand-looms is important in the history of Latvian folk art and culture. Textile crafts can also be explored from the point of view of the raw materials used—in Latvia, often wool and linen. As to application, textile crafts are related to interior decoration (bed or sofa cover, wall cover or table cloth, curtains, artistic wall decor), accessories (scarf, jewelry, bag). Woven fabrics have a characteristic rectangular shape, and knotting allows for variations in shapes. The word 'technique' comes from the Greek word *tékhnē* and means specific knowledge and skills of how to do something. In order to create a thing in handicraft techniques, specific knowledge is required regarding the preparation of raw materials for creating the desired thing by hand (Risatti 2007: 99). The usual method of emphasizing the technical knowledge used in the classification of crafts is related to the heritage of the history of crafts today. The raw material, working methods, and technical skills were important in the medieval guild system and still influence the view of crafts in universities and classifying things in museums today (Risatti 2007: 16).

Latvian textile crafts are often associated with the term 'tradition' or 'traditional.' The program of the speciality of textile art included studies of textile crafts of Latvian and other ethnic groups. At the Lausanne Biennial of Textile Art in the 1960s–70s, artists and theoreticians drew attention to ancient or traditional textile craft techniques. In the early 1960s, they were the old and modern examples of tapestry technique. A new approach to tapestry technique gained attention at the Lausanne Biennale in the mid- and late1960s. Unlike French artists who designed cardboard samples, tapestries were woven in material by craftsmen; textile artists from Eastern Europe (Poland, Yugoslavia, Romania, and Czechoslovakia) created their original compositions in material themselves. They were mostly young artists who had just graduated from art school, and such an approach at that time disrupted the usual tradition of tapestry weaving. The young textile artists stood out as they prepared and dyed the fibers themselves. They also made use of unusual raw materials such as sisal, cotton, hemp, goat wool, etc. It was typical to be carried away by 'internal' impulses driven abstract composition and to create the work without previously prepared cardboard (Cotton, Junet

2017: 50). This approach also prevailed in the textile art of the Academy, especially after the 1969 exhibition of contemporary Polish textile art at the Museum of Foreign Art in Riga. The reviewer of the exhibition, V. Sproģe, emphasized: 'Indeed, tapestry occupies an increasingly visible place in contemporary art and thus enters everyday life' (Sproģe 1969: 16). The experiments with fiber seen at the Lausanne Biennale and the fiber art movement of the late 1960s and 1970s were also included in the Academy's Textile Art training.

Tapestry weaving group. The weaving group *Gobelēns* in Zvejniekciems is unique. It was established by Lilita Postaža in 1973, a year after her graduation from the Academy. The bright peculiarity of the group is that L. Postaža taught tapestry technique to the interested inhabitants of Zvejniekciems. Reading an article in the newspaper *Dzimtenes Balss* from 1982, it can be felt that the acquisition of tapestry technique has been successful and the self-made tapestries or textile paintings have decorated several interiors of Zvejniekciems in the 1970s and 1980s. The exhibition, which was held in honor of the tenth anniversary of this group, encouraged the newspaper journalist to conclude that 'Many of the houses of the collective farm *Zvejnieks* are decorated with tapestries which are works of art made by the landladies themselves — wives of fishermen, collective farm workers — in their spare time' (S. A. 1982: 8). It is still not yet known how long the tapestry weaving group lasted and what the group participants' work looked like. The latest evidence is from 1989, when the group's exhibition took place in Saku, Estonia, in honor of the Art Days of the Baltic Republics (Jumis 1989). L. Postaža encouraged the participants of the group to create their own sketches in the drawing and colors — 'to express their thoughts, emotions, to understand the basics of the drawing, the composition...all the tapestries are woven according to the sketches drawn by the authors themselves' (S. A. 1982: 8). Regīna Puķīte, a member of the group, in 1977 won the title of Master of Folk Crafts for woven tapestries (Boguša 1982: 3). Unfortunately, there is a lack of detailed information about the first tapestry weaving group in Latvia led by Lilita Postaža, but perhaps the artist continued to work, in the formulation of textile artist Georgs Barkāns (1925–2010), observing 'the unwritten rules in tapestry — to depict not a frozen moment in figural compositions, but to show the sequence of actions and events, giving the figures themselves ambiguity and elevating them to the symbolic level' (Barkāns 1982: 16). It is possible that in a similar way the leader of the group encouraged the participants to think in the material. In the early 1980s, L. Postaža addressed the themes of Latvian folklore and probably they were reflected in the tapestry weaving group she was leading. The influence of the group led by L. Postaža should be taken into account and studied in more depth. Māra Vektere, a member of L. Postaža group, was inspired by the teacher and established a tapestry weaving group in Roja in 1980. M. Vektere emphasized that Zvejniekciems tapestry weaving group was the first in the Soviet Union and participants from different countries of the Union were coming to study there (Boguša 1982: 3).

Woven fabrics — color transitions and op art. In their interviews in 2021, textile artists Irisa Blumate, Astra Rubene, and Skaidrīte Leimane recalled that they and many of their contemporaries — artists, since the mid-1960s, had been inspired by the geometric pattern and color expression of the op art — the direction in the field of fine arts popular in Europe and the

Figure 6. Emīlija Kazakevičute, Skaidrītes Rieksta (born 1913), handwoven blanket, 1980. Folk Applied Art Studio "Saiva". S. Rieksta become Master of Folk Crafts in 1975. Wool, cotton. 186×150. National History Museum of Latvia, accession number 186803

Figure 2. Rasma Jēkabsone (born 1931), handwoven blanket (fragment), 1981. Folk Applied Art Studio "Draudzība", R. Jēkabsone become Master of Folk Crafts in 1975. Wool, cotton. 207×124cm. National History Museum of Latvia, accession number 189738

Figure 1. Emma Rone (born 1913), handwoven blanket, 1973. Folk Applied Art Studio "Draudzība", E. Rone became Master of Folk Crafts in 1960. Wool, cotton. 222×150cm. National History Museum of Latvia, accession number 175686

United States at that time. Hungarian and French artist and textile art theoretician Victor Vasarely (1906–1997) can be mentioned here. His work *Zebra* from 1937 is believed to be one of the earliest forerunners of the op art. Vasarely developed geometrically abstract compositions also in the field of textile art at Obison experimental tapestry weaving workshop. In the 1960s, Vasarely's compositions were also made in techniques of textile crafts. Textile artists have used op art's abstraction techniques in the works of their own and their Studio participants (Veilande-Apine 2021). During the time of management of the Studios, for the textile artists, the basic principle of op art or optical art was a method to study the ornament woven in drill pattern. Geometric abstraction and attention to detail formed a new approach to the creation of ornamental patterns, thus combining a world-famous and topical art direction and the craftsmanship skills characteristic of Latvian folk art of the 18th through early-20th centuries. In the Studios led by the artists, the interpretation of drill patterns turned into a friendly competition between them, looking for new solutions both for the proportions of squares and, in a new method at that time, for the inclusion of colored stripes in the composition of patterns. Textile art graduates and leaders of the Studios, in their interviews, emphasized the importance of color. When starting their work in the Studios, the participants used to work more with a range of neutral tones, but the textile artists encouraged the Studio participants to think about and create works that are tonally saturated, nuanced in colors.

Weaving of the 19th century Vidzeme double weaved graded color blankets was restored in the Studio *Draudzība* led by Irisa Blumate (Figure 3). In 1972, I. Blumate started running the Studio, but already in 1973 at the Republican exhibition dedicated to the centenary of the Song Festival in the Museum of the History of the Latvian SSR were displayed the graded color blankets woven by a participant of her Studio, Emma Rone (Figure 1). Participants of the Studios returned to experiments and yarn dyeing with natural dyes; there were created works based on folk craft research (Figure 2). The leaders of the Studios play an important role, as evidenced by the example in the collection of the National History Museum of Latvia—the leader of the Studio could create the composition of the woven fabric, while the participant could carry it out in the material. For example, Master of Folk Crafts Skaidrīte Rieksta wove a blanket *Daugavas akmeņi* (Stones of the Daugava River) according to a composition developed by the leader of the Studio *Saiva* E. Kazakevičute (Ziņģīte 2008: 24) (Figure 6). Transitions nuanced in colors—the principle of the graded color blanket.

Knotting. The knotting technique can be explained by the importance of fiber art in the world of textile art in the 1960s and 1970s. The fiber art movement began in the United States in the 1960s and is associated with the work of Lenore Tawney (1907–2007). Tawney experimented with textile crafts of different ethnic groups, developing spatial textile art (Porter et al. 2017: 173). In 1967, examples of fiber art were already on display at the Lausanne Biennale. Emīlija Kazakevičute's knotted textile works are unique in the overall picture of Latvian folk applied art and textile art (Figure 4). The artist justified the choice of knotting technique with the possibility to work without sketches and drawn cardboard samples (Karlova 1983: 3). In the 1970s, textile artists hardly ever used the knotting technique as an independent technique in their work, but E. Kazakevičute chose to knot compositions

Figure 3. Irisa Blumate (born 1948), The March
("Marts"), 1987. Wool, flax, metal, mixed techique.
175×240cm. Museum of Decorative Arts and Design,
accession number 677

from multicolored coarse wool and linen yarns. Most likely, under the influence of E. Ka-zakevičute's art, in the 1970s, the technique of knotting came into textile crafts and Studio works. Ilze Ziņģīte also emphasizes that the desire to work in knotting techniques in the Studio 'seems to have been ignited by the ideas found in professional textile art exhibitions' (Ziņģīte 2008: 30). Knotted works were especially popular among textile craftsmen in the 1970s and 1980s (Figure 5). In the studio *Saiva*, participants actively worked in knotting technique. The decorative solutions created in the knotted technique appeared on the tablecloths and towel ends. The knotting technique was used to make wall decorations and blankets, flower pot holders, handbags, belts, and even jewelery. In the Studio, E. Kazak-evičute taught folk art heritage (today we would call it intangible cultural heritage), compo-sition, and technique while also helping to develop the individual style of each participant (Karlova 1983: 3). Ingrīda Ozolniece, head of the Studio *Dardedze*, in her book for practical use *Mezglošana* (Knotting), published in 1988, cooperated with this famous practitioner of the knotting technique in Latvia: E. Kazakevičute was the scientific reviewer. It should be emphasized that E. Kazakevičute is still training those interested in knotting techniques — for example, at the annual event *Satiec savu meistaru* (Meet Your Master).

Batik. In Latvia, one of the first descriptions of hot wax batik technique can be read in the magazine *Latvju Zeltene* No. 45 in October, 1962. Its place of origin was Java, Indonesia, at the end of the 19th century; the technique was introduced to Europe via the Netherlands. The idea expressed in the *Latvju Zeltene* article: until the 1940s, the batik technique in Europe was used only in handicrafts, but from the 1940s it was used in the fine arts, is worth further research (Grasis 1962: 26). In the 1960s, the technique of batik suddenly entered the

Figure 4. Emīlija Kazakevičute (born 1949), from the triptych the Meadow ("Pļava"). The Scorrel ("Skābene"), 1983. Wool, wood, knotted. Diameter 23cm. Museum of Decorative Arts and Design, accession number 808

Figure 5. Ida Bērziņa (born 1923), knotted wool hanging (fragment), 1987. Folk Applied Art Studio "Saiva", I. Bērziņa become Master of Folk Crafts in 1970. Flax. 138×49cm. National History Museum of Latvia, accession number 204665

fine arts of Soviet Latvia. According to the magazine *Māksla* (Art), around 1962 compositions drawn in the batik technique were created by the painter and stained-glass artist Tenis Grasis (1925–2001) (Pujāts 1962: 49). In 1962, decorative textile art compositions created in the batik technique were shown for the first time at the 1st Republican Applied Art Exhibition in Riga. Gundega Ivanova has emphasized that this exhibition was a turning point in the life of applied art exhibitions. In the following decades it was followed by exhibitions in separate fields of applied art (Ivanova 1980). In the exhibition of 1962, Rūdolfs Heimrāts exhibited for the first time a wall covering with decoratively designed birds and leafy branches. The reviewer of the exhibition, Ilga Kreituse (1919–2001), in his application of batik technique saw R. Heimrāts' desire to experiment 'in order to expand the decorative functions of fabrics up to a thematically imaginative solution' (Kreituse 1962: 10).

In the 1960s, in the newly established Department of Textile Art of the Academy, work has been done also in the batik technique — there have been created works of fine art suitable for interior decoration. Written evidence about the batik work of a student of the Textile Art Department (R. Cīrule), which was shown in the exhibition of works of schools of applied

arts (Ozols 1962: 4), is preserved from 1962. Around 1965, the students of the Department of Textile Art in the batik technique designed curtains for the diesel ship *Latvija* based on the designs of the artist Aleksandrs Stankevičs (1932–2015) (Strautmanis 1965: 54). In the 1960s, textile works created in batik technique appeared in the exhibitions of fine arts. For example, the 1966 exhibition *Sports mākslā* (Sports in Art) at the State Art Museum featured athletes and sports reproduced by Georgs Barkāns (1925–2010) (hockey, rope pulling, checkers and water polo) (Āķis 1966: 2). The batik technique was introduced also in the Riga Model House. The artists of the House developed fabrics in the batik technique for the spring-summer collection of 1966 (Gramoļina 1966: 3). Around 1966, the batik technique was introduced in the printing of fabrics in the factory *Rīgas audums* (Švarcberga 1966: 2). In its turn, in the late 1960s, in the reviews of the exhibitions of the Studio *Draudzība*, the batik technique was noted, especially the modern and bright batik composition in curtains and kerchiefs of Studio participant, the 1965 Master of Folk Crafts Vilhelmīne Bodniece (Līduma 1969: 4). Pupils and students of the Textile Art Department continued to work in the batik technique until the end of the 1980s, participating in exhibitions with textile art compositions created in the batik technique (Kalniete 1987: 60). Ilze Ziņģīte emphasizes that the popularity of batik technique in textile crafts in the 1970s is also related to the influence of professional textile art. For example, in the Studio *Draudzība* (Friendship), the batik technique was promoted by its leader, Irisa Blumate. Batik technique was used by the members of the Studios *Bārbele*, *Rītausma* and also *Draudzība* (Ziņģīte 2008: 31).

In the 1990s and also today, several Studios and groups are run by textile artists who are graduates of the Academy. Marina Sproģe became the leader of the Studio *Kamene* in 1986 and still continues the work today. The Studio Draudzība is still run by Irisa Blumate. Until 2003, Daiga Štālberga Senoussaoui was leading the Sigulda Parish Studio *Vīgrieze*. Aija Krūmiņa has been running the Studio *Rota* since 1991. Baiba Osīte has been running the Studio *Gundega* since 2000. From 2003 to 2016, Antra Auziņa led the weaving group *Talse* in Talsi. From 2003 to 2014, Antra Saliņa led the Studio *Saiva* in Ogre. Liene Ratnika has led the Studio Ķekava since 2013, and Baiba Vaivare, Limbaži Studio *Dzilna* since 2014. From 1992 to 1996 Dace Martinsone-Lukševica taught weaving theory in the studio *Draudzība*, and since 2019 she has lead the weaving studio *Līgatne* in Līgatne Crafts House.

The work of the Academy's textile art graduates in children's and youth art schools should be studied separately. In the course of the research, it was revealed that since 1972 Rita Gustiņa (b. Krūze) all her life has worked in Saldus Children's and Youth Centre as the weaving and drawing group leader. In turn from 1989 to 1991, Vija Jansone was the head of the weaving studio at Lapmežciems Culture House, and from 1994 to 2019 she was a teacher at the textile art studio *Vijumiņš* of the Youth Center *Altona*. Inese Jakobi was a teacher of composition at Madona Children's Art School from 1975 to 1986.

The article refers to the graduates of the textile department of the Academy as textile artists. In the catalogue of 1987, compiled by the Scientific Methodological Center of Folk Art and Cultural Education of the Republic named after Emils Melngailis, there are noted 35 studios related to textile arts and crafts (Kargāne 1987). In the above-mentioned catalogue, 16 artists

who were graduates of Rīga, Liepāja, or Rēzekne Secondary Schools of Applied Arts are named as managers of these studios. Their activities have not been described in this review; however, taking into account that during the period under review, in the programs of art secondary schools, students acquired the skills of Latvian folk crafts while developing new approaches, their contribution to the work of the Studio should be analyzed in a separate article.

## Musealized Textile Art and Folk Applied Art Works Research Issues

In 1947, the exhibition of folk applied art at the Central State History Museum of the Latvian SSR was organized by Mērija Grīnberga (1909–1975), and the works purchased at the exhibition marked the beginning of musealization of the new craft (Ziņģīte 2008: 19). In Soviet Latvia, works of handicrafts and textile art of their time were included in the collections of various museums. There was not established a Museum of Contemporary Crafts, where the works could be found together, and a contemporary researcher would have the opportunity to reconstruct the periods of modernization of crafts. In comparison, in 1956, a special Museum of Contemporary Crafts was established in New York with the aim of creating a collection of works by craftsmen and artists of the time.

In the course of the research, it has been established that the works of the above-mentioned textile artists are found in the collections of the Latvian Artists' Union (LAU), the Museum of Decorative Arts and Design (MDAD) and the National History Museum of Latvia (NHML). Attention has been paid to the issue of musealized items, as works of art most likely have ended up in museums after the so-called republican exhibitions. Interesting and high artistic quality works have probably been purchased for museum collections. It should be noted that the collection of the Latvian Artists' Union has been compiled starting from 1957, but the Union itself was established in 2001. The Museum of Decorative Arts and Design, initially called the Museum of Decorative Arts, was established in 1989. Creation of the museum's collection began in the 1980s. The National History Museum of Latvia began to compile the crafts of its time in the museum's collection the earliest — already in the second half of the 1940s.

The collection of Latvian Artists Union includes a total of 16 works of art created by textile artists / leaders of the Studios in the 1970s–80s: three large-size compositions in the knotting technique created by Emīlija Kazakevičute in the 1980s; three works by Irisa Blumate; five works of art by Lilita Postaža; two small-format tapestries of Māra Brākše; two compositions by Skaidrīte Leimane from the 1970s; and one by Astra Rubene. Wool, linen, sisal, and metal are used as raw materials. Techniques used include tapestry, knotting, and batik, in addition to mixed techniques. Nature themes (*Rudens, Atvasara, Papardes zieds, Pavasaris kāpās* (Autumn, End of Summer, Fern Flower, Spring in the Dunes)), history and memories (*Astoņpadsmitais gadsimts, Atmiņas, Rīgas gailis* (The Eighteenth Century, Memories, Rooster of Riga)), local

folklore and cultural traditions (*Siena laiks, Par folkloras tēmu, Baltmaize* (Hay Time, About the Folklore Theme, White Bread)), and space themes (*Planētas* (Planets)) predominate.

The collection of the Museum of Decorative Arts and Design includes works of art by 60 textile artists — Studio leaders — created in the 1970s–80s, some in the early 1990s (Raudzepa 2006). The collection includes nine textile works of art created by Emīlija Kazakevičute in the 1970s and early 1980s, almost all created with knotting technique. It also includes thirteen compositions by Irisa Blumate, of which in the composition *Rožceliņš I–II* (Rosepath I–II) (1981) there is noticeable inspiration from the Latvian traditional weaving technique and decorative solutions. If the title of the work were removed, the combination of three abstract squares in grey and red contrasts would form a rectangular composition. Art researcher Ingrīda Burāne highlights two directions in Irisa Blumate's artistic style: special coloristic subtleties and a materialization of natural phenomena, which are reflected in a wide range from classical weaving techniques to contemporary solutions (Burāne 2005). The collection of the Museum of Decorative Arts and Design contains twenty-nine tapestries by Lilita Postaža. Several of them depict storyline compositions of Latvian celebrations, as well as the themes of Zvejniekciems. It also contains five works by Māra Brākše; three works by Skaidrīte Leimane (two tapestries and one work in mixed techniques); and one work by Astra Rubene in tapestry technique. In the interview, Rubene emphasizes that the Latvian ethnographic heritage was the main theme in her tapestries woven in the 1980s. The work in the Studio organically merged with the textile art she created — the combination became a creative experiment. The museum collection does not include examples of textile art by Vija Ābele, Astrīda Freimane, or Marina Sproģe.

The collection of the National History Museum of Latvia includes a collaborative work of Emīlija Kazakevičute, leader of the Studio *Saiva*, and Sandra Rieksta, a weaver, created around 1980 — the blanket *Daugavas akmeņi* (Stones of the Daugava River). The composition of the blanket was developed by E. Kazakevičute, but it was carried out in material by S. Rieksta. The blanket is woven in rosepath with shaded color bands. The collection includes a towel made by E. Kazakevičute with the knotting technique. The work was obtained through a purchase from an exhibition at the History Museum of the Latvian SSR in 1988. The collections of the National History Museum of Latvia contain several hundred examples of art created by Latvian Studio participants. Ethnographer Ilze Ziņģīte at the 2007 conference *Tautas lietišķā māksla Latvijā no 20. gadsimta vidus līdz mūsdienām. Šodiena. Pieredze. Rītdiena* (Folk Applied Art in Latvia from the Middle of the 20th Century to the Present Day. Today. Experience. Tomorrow) drew attention to the so-called typological groups of folk applied art collections found in the collection of the National History Museum of Latvia. Ceramics, fabrics, jewelery, knitwear, wickerwork, handicrafts, wood and birch bark products, leather goods, forgings, as well as items of interior furnishings (Ziņģīte 2008: 23). If the works of textile artists can be identified in the Museum of Decorative Arts and Design, as well as in the Museum of the Latvian Artists' Union, then the works of the Studio participants can be found in the National History Museum of Latvia. However, a list of musealized works of the Studio participants is missing; therefore, it is not possible to notice the experiments and the creative influence of the leaders in full.

## Closing, Conclusions

In the 1970s-80s, nine graduates of the Academy's Textile Art speciality led folk applied arts or crafts Studios: Māra Brākše, Skaidrīte Leimane, Lilita Postaža, Irisa Blumate, Emīlija Kazakevičute, Vija Ābele, Astra Rubene, Astrīda Freimane, and Marina Sproģe. The Studios and groups were located in Riga and Vidzeme towns: in Ogre, Līgatne, Zvejniekciems, Krimulda, and Sigulda. Tapestry, batik and knotting — the techniques that came into the folk applied art from the textile art of the contemporary world. Textile artists, on the bases of the knowledge and methods acquired at the Academy, encouraged Studio participants to experiment with textile craft techniques, to indulge in the development of original compositions, and to experiment with the weaving techniques traditional in Latvia. Interviewing textile artists, the influence of the 1960s op art in woven drill fabrics became clear, as did the devotion to unusual color nuances. Woven fabrics, tapestries, batik, and knotting works created by the participants of the Studios and groups should be studied separately, in order to identify the contribution of the leaders of the Studios in a more nuanced way.

The group created by Lilita Postaža in Zvejniekciems is unique. In this group, local women had the opportunity to acquire the tapestry technique and develop their original compositions to complement their living spaces. At present, there are no known examples of the works of the members of the tapestry group led by Lilita Postaža. Emīlija Kazakevičute introduced Studio participants to an example of fiber art — knotting technique. Knotting soon was widely practiced throughout Latvia. In further research, it would be necessary to determine which Studio participants have received the title of Master of Folk Crafts, how intensive the life of the Studio exhibitions was/is, and what works are in the collections of Latvian and non-Latvian museums.

It can be observed that the works of several textile artists/Studio leaders are not in the collections of the reviewed museums (Vija Ābele, Astrīda Freimane, and Marina Sproģe), while the works of other textile artists are widely represented (Lilita Postaža, Emīlija Kazakevičute, Irisa Blumate, Māra Brākše, and to a lesser extent, the works of Skaidrīte Leimane and Astra Rubene). At present, it is difficult to identify the musealized works of the Studio participants in order to see the creative interaction between contemporary textile art and folk applied art. We must be satisfied, however, that samples of contemporary textile art and crafts are stored in our museum collections.

Folk Applied Art Studios, as well as the Department of Textile Art established at the Academy in 1961, fit into the trends of the contemporary crafts and textile art of the world in the 1960s–80s. Studios were a legitimate way, through crafts or 'folk art,' to preserve and promote the memory of Latvian culture in a totalitarian system. An analysis of the craft practices of the peoples of the former Soviet Union is undeservedly lacking in the publications of the leading craft theoreticians of today.

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# 20. gadsimta 70.–80. gadu tekstilmākslinieces – Tautas lietišķās mākslas studiju vadītājas

## Inese Sirica, Elīna Veilande–Apine

**Atslēgvārdi:** tekstilmāksla, amatniecība, tautas māksla, tehnika, muzealizācija

Raksta mērķis ir pievērst uzmanību profesionālās tekstilmākslas un amatniecības jeb tautas lietišķās mākslas mijiedarbībai Padomju Latvijā. 1961. gadā Latvijas PSR Valsts Mākslas akadēmijā (mūsdienās – Latvijas Mākslas akadēmija, turpmāk – Akadēmija) tika izveidota Tekstilmākslas nodaļa. 20. gadsimta 60. gados sāka piešķirt Tautas daiļamata meistara goda nosaukumu, veidojās Tautas lietišķās mākslas studijas (turpmāk – Studija vai TLMS). Aprakstos par Studiju darbiem pārsvarā uzsvērts, ka tās turpina tautas mākslas tradīcijas, bet eksperimenti amatniecības tehnikās un laikmetīgā tekstilmāksla kā iedvesmas avots pieminēta vispārināti un neskaidri. Pētījumā uzrādīta laikmetīgās tekstilmākslas klātbūtne TLMS darbos un Studiju vadītāji kā saikne ar to. 20. gadsimta 70. un 80. gados Studijas vadīja deviņas tekstilmākslinieces ar Akadēmijas izglītību.

Pētniecības metodes: literatūras studijas, tekstilmākslas un tekstilamatniecības salīdzinājums, intervijas ar tekstilmāksliniecēm. Tekstilmākslinieču muzealizētās mākslas piemēri Latvijas Mākslinieku savienības, Dekoratīvās mākslas un dizaina, kā arī Latvijas Nacionālajā vēstures muzejā.

# Postcards in the National Library of Latvia: Options for the Interpretation of Photographic Materials

Līga Goldberga

Real photograph postcards are widely found in private collections and scrapbooks, serving as commemorative objects; in libraries, archives, and museum collections as documentary heritage, memory tools, as testimonies to and proofs of historical events. In the history of Latvian photography, real photograph postcards, their circulation, and their accrual in memory institutions have been little studied and interpreted through contemporary theories. This paper problematizes the question of how to interpret large photographic collections consisting of photographs taken by professionals and amateurs which, in memory institutions, have been reduced to their visual content, serving as reference material. At the center of the research are the 1920s–1930s postcards, produced by photographic techniques, in the postcard collection of the Konrads Ubāns Art Reading Room of the National Library of Latvia (NLL KUML).

The paper is part of the early stage of a larger study, the aim of which is to afford real photograph postcards a role in research into the history and theory of Latvian photography, utilizing the NLL KUML collection as an example. Accordingly, the tasks of the paper are: to introduce the collection and its systematization practices; to appraise the theories current in photography; and to find an interpretative model for a large-scale collection of printed images that treats real photograph postcards produced by both professionals and amateurs equally.

The research methodology is derived from materiality studies of photographs, a field which has developed in the last decades, based on new materialism and post-humanism theories. Materiality studies address the agency of photographs, material aspects and storage conditions, and social circulation, as well as attempt to overcome the hierarchical model for interpreting photographs, which is based on authorship, originality, and art-market value. The research utilized qualitative research methods: research into historical sources; identifying periodical resources from the 1920s–1930s; case studies, analyzing sample postcards from the KUML collection; discourse analysis, analyzing the fluidity of the significance of KUML real photograph postcards in different social contexts.

## Real photograph postcards in the NLL KUML collection

The NLL Special Collections Department[1] holds various types of photographic materials — negatives, art, documentary and press photography, albums and postcards, photographs taken by professionals, amateurs, and unknown persons. These objects are classified

1    The photo collections are held in the Aleksejs Apīnis Rare Book and Manuscript Reading Room, the Konrads Ubāns Art Reading Room, and the Lettonica and Baltic Reading Room.

according to their historical, artistic, substantive, content worth, etc. The evaluation process is determined by the circulation and functions of the collection as well as by the institution's regulations. Two models for the systematization of the NLL photographic collections can be distinguished. The first involves capturing the stories associated with objects and preserving the linked meanings of objects. For example, in the Aleksejs Apīnis Rare Book and Manuscript Reading Room collection, real photograph postcards, along with other documentary materials, are linked with a person, event, or correspondence. Meanwhile, in the KUML collection, each object is an individual unit, which is systematized by subject, for example, landscapes, Latvian cities, Rīga streets, portraits, plants, animals, etc. Sorting is determined by the demands of the collection's users, which are most often requests for visualizations. Information, stories and histories about the previous affiliations of real photograph postcards are not recorded in the KUML postcard collection, as the postcards are stored as visual text serving a wide range of subject references. The ability to fulfill subject references is this collection's main function.

The responsibilities of the KUML postcard collection are to collect and store postcards and greeting cards — produced by photographic techniques or issued by printing houses — to reflect the changes in Latvian postcard media from the end of the 19th century to the present day, as well as to serve, through its visual content, as informative reference material for specialists in various disciplines. The KUML postcard collection comprises more than 100,000 units in total, and this volume continues to grow.

Typically, printed postcards and greeting cards are acquired by means of legal deposits (LD)[2]. This is printed matter which must be handed over, free of charge, to national book repositories in accordance with a procedure prescribed by law, for the purpose of accruing and making available to the public the national output of printed matter. The systematic practice of acquiring national printed works in Latvia can be considered to have started with the 1919 Decree on Libraries (Limane 2007). However, date stamps, indicating the systematic acquisition of postcards, have only been affixed to the reverse of postcards in the KUML collection since the early 1930s. Most of the backs of older postcards feature correspondence, which rules out LD status — they were acquired as donations. Commercially printed postcards and greeting cards make up the bulk of the collection, and the study only considers the KUML collection in terms of general and comparative features.

Postcards produced by photographic techniques, which are the core of this paper and research,[3] have been acquired through donations and purchasing and comprise less than 10% of the total collection. The way the collection is divided by subject, its arrangement in boxes,

2    The history of LD in memory institutions can be traced back to the 16th century initiative of King Francois I of France, and to the 17th century in what is now Latvia. See Limane, Lilija (2007). Legal Deposit through the Ages. *Bibliotēku Pasaule* (Library World), Nr. 38, 01/01, pp. 34–37; see also the Legal Deposit Act [in Latvian] at: https://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=136682 [Accessed 02.06.2021.].

3    As the starting point for the study, the KUML collection imposes its own limits — the paper does not seek to describe the history of Latvian postcards since their introduction into what is now Latvia, but to interpret postcards created by photographic techniques and their systematisation within the KUML collection.

and the typology of its content enable us to suggest that initially, the collecting priorities for real photograph postcards were souvenirs, depictions of vistas and popular people. If the original purpose of the postcard collection was to preserve the evidence of LD and documentary cultural heritage for future generations, then, from a contemporary point of view, collecting principles have been supplemented with the recognition of content and the potential for the images to be converted into a visual complement to research in various fields. In recent years, photographers' and studios' stamps have been take into account in acquisition categories (not thought relevant previously, but does not change systematization by subject), and anonymous portraits and views of social life recorded by unknown photographers have been considered. These variations in collecting policies are driven by changes in photographic research and curatorial work, as well as by the requests of reading-room visitors and research interests addressing micro-histories and the history of social life. The ranges of visitors and research fields are extensive — historians, art historians, students, researchers into and enthusiasts of the history of photography, artists, curators, etc.

Practice in organizing the substantial KUML postcard collection has not been consistent — it has varied with the scale of postcard circulation and changes in media. In general, it has been structured by subject, but a small part — commercially printed reproductions of works of art — are arranged by the author of the reproduced artwork. Authorship is not considered in the systematization of real photograph postcards, they are arranged by subject — unknown landscapes, Latvian towns and regions in alphabetical order, notable public buildings in the capital city, monuments, artists, actors, writers, politicians, musicians, unknown persons, etc. The division of postcards according to their production technique is ill-defined — each photograph has a bibliographic code (IAt 77) and most are stored in separate boxes, but this system is not consistent. In addition, since the digitization of postcards was commenced, those scanned have been sorted into another separate system — by catalogue-number order,[4] defining only four subject groups: views, portraits, art and greeting postcards. Digitized postcards are not issued to readers, and they are available on digital collection sites,[5] while unscanned ones are selected on demand. It is important to note that although online platforms store only the digital surrogate of the original, they allow users to systematize their selection in the digital environment by their own criteria, based on metadata information about authorship, date, geotagging, content keywords, and other aspects. These different examples of changes in collection organization indicate that systematization practices vary with the circulation of the collection, for example, digitization has facilitated the formation of selected collections in the historical collection by other systematization principles. Similarly, some segments of the collection point to a change in media, such as the popularity of photographic paper in the first half of the 20th century, which was replaced by the cheapest publishing model for printed postcards after the Second World War. Unfortunately, since

4    The ALEPH library information processing system is used in the processing of the NLL collection, making the collections accessible in online catalogues. Postcards are assigned a unique ALEPH system number during the cataloguing process. Bibliographers are tasked with identifying postcard content and describing it using a common template. A digital copy of the postcard is attached to the catalogue entry.

5    For example, https://zudusilatvija.lv/ ; https://lndb.lv/ ; https://ainavudargumi.lv/ ; https://runa.lnb.lv/

the collection's existence, its collection policies and systematization practices have not been addressed in studies or recorded in reports, so the history of the nearly hundred-year-old collection can only be modeled by generalizing observations from its current physical condition and various traces of systematization.

## Definition of a real photograph postcard

The definition of real photograph postcards may vary between memory institutions, depending on the postcards' functions and utilization, as well as the systematization applied to each collection. In this paper, the definition of real photograph postcards is based on the KUML collection's acquisition policy and the circulation of the collection.

The NLL KUML definition of real photograph postcards is broad: all photographs that feature the form of a postcard on their reverse are included in the postcard collection.[6] This definition is determined by two aspects. Firstly, the collection is part of Latvia's documentary heritage, and it serves as reference material for specialists in various fields of culture and art. Consequently, the usefulness of the real photograph postcard collection is enhanced by the diversity of the range of subjects, allowing the inclusion not only of souvenir postcards, but also anonymous and amateur photographs. Secondly, postcard photographic paper, produced both in and outside Latvia, was popular in the 1920s–1930s domestic market. It was distributed, for example, by the commercial photographer and publisher Mārtiņš Buclers (Figure 1), and from 1935, postcard paper was also produced by the VEF factory ([anon] 1935: 1). Postcard photographic paper was used by a wide range of studio photographers, such as Jānis Rieksts, Roberts Johansons, Vilis Rīdzenieks, Lūcija Alutis Kreicberga, Kārlis Bauls, Mārtiņš Lapiņš, and others who were commissioned to produce portraits of both popular cultural figures and private individuals on postcard paper; souvenir postcard publishers, such as Valdemārs Upītis, Andrejs Saule, Krišjānis Vīburs, Juris and Ģirts Bokumi, etc. reproduced view postcards; amateurs and photography enthusiasts captured their surroundings and experiences in photographs for personal use, for correspondence and recollection (Figure 2); sector professionals such as archaeologists and heritage conservation professionals used photography to document the evidence they required; photographic artists such as Rīdzenieks and Johansons undertook studies, both formal and by subject (Figure 3). All of the above examples can be found in the KUML postcard collection and at present are requested for inquiries by subject. Consequently, the definition of the collection's real photograph postcards is determined by the circulation of 1920s–1930s photographs in history and contemporary research.

6    In comparison, the Latvian Museum of Photography holds souvenir postcards in its postcard collection, but all other photographs made on postcard paper are classified as photographs. In the archives of the National Cultural Heritage Board, the definition of a postcard is not important, because all documentary materials on cultural heritage sites are held in integrated folders — the medium is not relevant to systematization.

Figure 1. 1930s. Velorekords [postcard]. Photographer Mārtiņš Buclers. NLL K. Ubāns Art Reading Room. NBA04-000048040

## Problems in researching KUML
## real photograph postcards

Before reviewing the development of materiality studies, it is important to look at the issues faced by researchers of the KUML real photograph postcards. In the 1920s–1930s, the accessibility of photography encouraged the recording and reproduction of private and public life, creating a database of material objects that, to date, have been accrued in museum and library collections as documentary heritage. Since the discovery of photography, theorists have striven to simultaneously seek and criticize the place of photography in art, drawing a distinction between art (aesthetics, abstraction) and testimony (objectivity and documentary value); later in the second half of the 20th century, postmodernist criticism of formalism sought to place photography between art and politics (Emerling 2012: 22; 41). These theoretical discourses have determined the compilation, systematization, and evaluation of photograph collections, where an object's value is frequently determined by its authorship, originality, and value as an exhibit. In this hierarchy, collections of large-scale standard graphic productions hold a low status — consequently, because it has been compiled by art-history methods based on authorship, the NLL KUML collection also cannot be considered an autonomous unit for research purposes. For example, the KUML real photograph postcard collection — compared with the works of photographers accrued in the NLL Rarity Collection (Roberts Johansons, Vilis Rīdzenieks, Mārtiņš Sams, etc.) — has no direct agency in the art discourse. In other cases, the work of curators and artists with archives[7] can provide such agency for large-scale image collections,

7    For example, exhibitions: *Pazudis arhīvā* (Lost in the Archives), 2016), curators Inga Lāce and Andra Silapētere; *Tev pienākušas 1243 ziņas. Dzīve pirms interneta. Pēdējā paaudze* (You have received 1243 messages. Life before the Internet. The Last Generation, 2017), curators Kaspars Vanags, Zane Zajančkauska and Diana Franssen; *2020: Mūžības perspektīva* (2020: A Perspective on Eternity, 2020), curator Anete Krūmiņa in partnership with the *Orbīta* text group; as well as artists who use archives in their works, such as Andrejs

Figure 2. 1930. Woman on horseback [postcard].
Photographer unknown. NLL K. Ubāns Art Reading
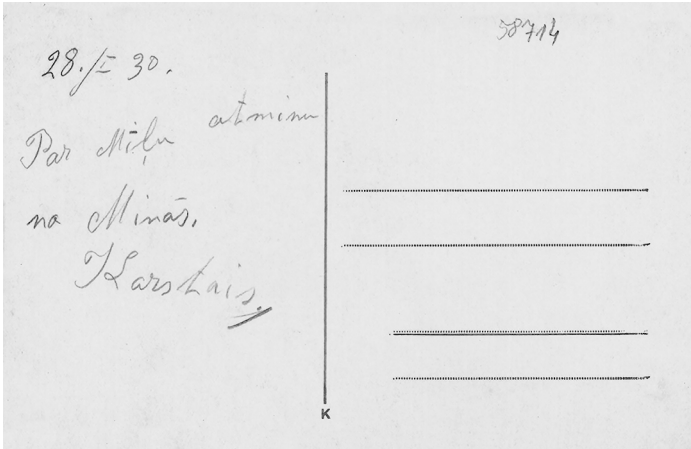Room. NBA04-000058714



Figure 2. 1930. Woman on horseback [postcard].
Photographer unknown. NLL K. Ubāns Art Reading
Room. NBA04-000058714



Figure 3. 1930s. Rural landscape [postcard].
Photographer Roberts Johansons. NLL K. Ubāns Art
Reading Room. NBA04-000053094

but, to date, the KUML real photograph postcard collection has not been considered in art discourse, in authorship and aesthetic categories, nor has it been presentably used in practice in contemporary art projects. Similarly, research into the artistic practices of individual photographers within the KUML collection would not be fruitful, as the real photograph postcards available cannot provide sufficient information about the creative activity of photographers, as a monographic study looking beyond the collection would. For example, some twenty real photograph postcards by Roberts Johansons in the KUML collection, which are kept under various landscape subject keywords, or studio portraits by Jānis Rieksts, placed under subjects covering representatives of cultural professions, are very narrow facets of these photographers' activities, providing only a very small perspective for research into their legacy. Also, considering the history of the real photograph postcard medium itself, a review of the KUML collection by subject cannot provide complete information on the circulation of all real photograph postcards, as the postcards reproduced as photographs have not been acquired as legal deposits and therefore the collection does not provide a complete representation of the medium. Only a comprehensive study, including analyses of both private collections and archive, library and museum collections of various profiles — the subject range of real photograph postcards in museums dedicated to war, medical history, also memorial and local history museums, is subordinate to the recollections each institution is relating.

Until now, in the acquisition, systematization strategies, and reader service practices of the NLL KUML postcard collection, a postcard's value has been determined by how the diversity and recognizability of its visual content — lost manor houses, portraits of musicians, writers, actors, politicians and other famous people, railways, cityscapes, the aftermath of wars, etc. — fits in with the discourse of photographs as testimony. The collection has not yet been studied as an autonomous unit, as postcards in research areas based on vertical authorship and originality have low status. However, the move toward studies on that has developed in the last decades allows new layers to be uncovered in the interpretation of large-scale photograph collections.

## Studying the materiality of photographs

Materiality studies in the research of large-scale photography collections and archives became popular at the end of the 20th century. The historiography of this movement includes the changes in the methodologies of art history and theory since the end of the 19th century; the discussions of the actual discoverers and practitioners of photographic processes about the technical aspects of photography, its role in art and culture (Emerling

Strokins, Inga Erdmane, Kristaps Epners, Viktorija Eksta and others. For the use of the archives in art projects in the Baltic region, see Skuja, Anete (2020). The utilization of archive materials in contemporary art in the Baltic region. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

2012); cultural and social anthropology studies addressing material culture and post-colonial criticism; as well as debates about relationships between popular culture and authority, institutional criticism in the disciplines of philosophy and cultural theory (Caraffa 2020).[8] Elizabeth Edwards, a researcher of English visual and historical anthropology, finds the origins of studying photographic materiality in the field of Marxist feminism theories, which, from the second half of the 20th century, looked at the relationships of photography in private and public spaces, also encompassing body representation issues. This course did not yet articulate the materiality of photography and social biographies; nevertheless, it was an important turning point, as it examined the relationship of photography with the environment and its recipients (Edwards, Hart 2004: 8). And that is where the interest in representation fits into the new direction of materialism and in post-humanist methodological practices. These no longer consider humans to be the center of world cognition, but rank them as one of the agents, and articulate the agency of the material world in similar fashion (Neimanis 2018: 242).[9] The agency of inanimate objects is their ability to create an affect, or in other words, the object world encourages us to interpret it according to our experience and knowledge of the world as a whole and the object we are examining. Thus, in studying the materiality of photographs, the meanings of objects are not fixed, but change in different contexts — in the hands of owners, collectors, and researchers.

This study's theoretical framework is formed by a group of authors who are expanding research into criticism of colonial anthropology,[10] into interpretations of postmodernist

8    Costanza Caraffa's historiography *Photographic Itineraries in Time and Space* (2020) summarizes the genesis of materiality studies of photographs, which is based on colonial anthropological and institutional criticism, the reassessment of the role of photography in power relations, and applying the concept of agency to hitherto rarely interpreted museum, archive, and library collections. See also J. Emerling's essays *The Thing Itself* and *The Archive as a Producer* (2012), in which the author views photography as a discourse and offers critical readings of frequently cited texts, at the same time interpreting the history of photography and changes in theoretical methodologies. Emerling discusses the reflections of Charles Baudelaire, W. H. F. Talbot, Benjamin's texts on photography, as well as important works by Michel Foucault, Allan Sekula, Geoffrey Batchen and others.

9    The new materialism is mentioned in this paper as one of the frameworks for photographic materiality studies. For more information on the new materialism, see Neimanis, Astrida (2018). *Material feminism*. Braidotti, Rosi, Hlavayova, Maeia (eds.). *Posthumanist Glossary*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, pp. 242–243; also, for photography and body representation, see Brettle, Jane, Rice, Sally (1994). *Public Bodies: Private States: New Views of Photography*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

10   Colonial anthropology used photography as a documentary tool in research on indigenous peoples. Today, these practices are being reviewed in the discourse on power relations. See, e.g., Porto, Nuno (2004). *Under the Gaze of Ancestors. Photographs and Performance in Colonial Angola*. Edwards, Elizabeth, Hart, Janice (eds.). *Photographs. Objects. Histories. On the Materiality of Images*. London: Routledge. pp. 113–131. The rise of Latvian identity and national self-consciousness at the beginning of the 20th century can be seen as a local example of self-determination. Local organizers of the photography scene used the photographic press to call on amateurs to engage in photographic ethnography rather than entrusting local culture to foreign interpretation. See, e.g., [Anon] (1913). *Latviešu fotogrāfiskās dzīves kārtējā sapulce 30. aprīlī* (Regular meeting of the Latvian photographic scene on 30 April) *Stari* (Rays), Nr. 5, 152. lpp.; Mednis, A (1921). *Pašceņa* (Self-respect). *Fotogrāfijas Mēnešraksts* (Photography monthly), Nr. 6–7, 147.–151. lpp.; Sams, M. (1921). *Par etnogrāfisko fotogrāfiju* (On ethnographic photography). *Fotogrāfijas Mēnešraksts*, Nr. 1, 17.–18. lpp.

and poststructuralist texts on power relations, institutional criticism, social biographies of things, and the visual economy. One of the principal authors in the photographic materiality field is the already-mentioned Edwards, who studies the representation of photography in museum and archive collections. Edwards and her collegial authors are guided by the works of philosophers, anthropologists, and photography theorists of the second half of the 20th century. For example, Michel Foucault's[11] ideas on relationships between archives, institutionalization, and authority allow us to see the bureaucratic processes of collections as part of changes in the materiality and significance of photographs (Edwards 2004: 50). In Pierre Bourdieu's ideas, people's relationships with the material world are embedded in social practices.[12] How photographs should be taken, aesthetic expectations, and attitudes towards artifacts are socially taught (Caraffa 2020: 84). In Allan Sekula's considerations, an archive comprises a link between knowledge and power and constructs significance, functions, and values.[13] Sekula examines the relationships between photography, the economy, and culture (Emerling 2012: 123, 124). The theoretical basis of this and other authors' works enables materiality study researchers to interpret large-scale photograph collections, opening up a more nuanced photographic media landscape and overcoming the hierarchical view of dualities between the categories of content and technology, art and documentary. Addressing materiality means including not only formal, authorship, and originality aspects in research, but also collection systematization practices, the subject framework and retention practices, the institutional context, and utilization or circulation. Thus, if to date the KUML real photograph postcards have been used solely as reference material, visualizations and sets of instruments, then in materiality studies the whole collection and its circulation becomes the object of research and interpretation.

In the last decade, researchers and curators of photography in Latvia — for example, Katrīna Teivāne-Korpa, Pēteris Korsaks, Lauma Lanceniece, Alise Tīfentāle, Šelda Puķīte, Evita Goze, Anete Skuja, Kārlis Vērpe, Liāna Ivete Beņķe, and others — have conducted significant studies on the history, theory, and curatorial practice of Latvian photography. Micro-histories and broader historical processes in Latvian photography have been illuminated and an important research base created in the hitherto fragmented sphere of the history of Latvian photography. Nevertheless, the photographic materiality discourse remains relatively little-studied. In art-based research, among others, amateurs' photographs, anonymous archives, and large-scale photograph collections have been utilized, for example, in projects by Viktorija Eksta, Andrejs Strokins, Inga Erdmane, the *Orbīta* group, and other artists, revealing the authors' conceptual vision and selections. Baiba Tetere, on the other hand, in recent years has addressed the missing theoretical basis in research on the institutionalization of photography.[14] Similarly, curatorial practices have shown an

11    See Foucault, Michel (1989). *The Order of Things*. London: Routledge.

12    See Bourdieu, Pierre (1990). *Photography: A Middle-brow Art*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

13    See Sekula, Allan (2003). *Reading An Archive: Photography Between Labour and Capitalism*. Wells, Liz (Ed.). *The Photography Reader*. New York: Routledge, pp. 443–452.

14    See Tetere, Baiba (2020). *Top pētījums: Fotogrāfija un atmiņas institūcijas* (A Study being launched:

interest in institutional activities, for example, in the exhibition organized by the ISSP Gallery in 2021, reproductions from the Strenči collection were exhibited together with records from the Joint Catalogue of the National Holdings of Museums in the installation *Stikla Strenči dažos vārdos* (Glass Strenči in a few words); the KIM? Contemporary Art Centre exhibition *Es neko neatceros: ienākot ZDZ izvairīgajā arhīvā* (I Don't Remember Anything: Entering ZDZ's Elusive Archive, 2021) featured the archive of artist and photographer Zenta Dzividzinska, which was systematized during the exhibition, displaying the invisible work of the archivist to visitors. Consequently, in the photographic materiality discourse, research into memory institution collections is still an open field in terms of academic research. In the remainder of the paper, case studies of the KUML real photograph postcard collection provide insights into the potential for materiality study methods in the research of large-scale photograph collections, considering the evaluation, systematization, and curatorial practice of collections, as well as digitization and object biography aspects.

## Values and biographies of photographs

Acquiring and managing collections is a hierarchy-producing process — the work of collection specialists is to evaluate objects in various contexts, make choices about their inclusion in the collection, restoration, and digitization, and to promote content of use to researchers. Valuation in collections is largely determined by authorship, market value, and originality. As KUML holds high-quality and unique works of art[15] alongside its postcard collection, real photograph postcards stand low in this hierarchy. In order to find a place for large-scale image collections in the history and theory of photography, researchers of materiality propose that collections and archives should be viewed as ecosystems. This model does not emphasize the value of individual objects over others, but looks at all collection management practices, including the work of the collection manager, institutional and subjective factors, as well as the materiality of the objects, their classification, and other aspects as a whole (Edwards, Lien 2014). This analogy is also used by other researchers of materiality, referencing the theoretical works of Elizabeth Edwards. For example, for art historian Costanza Caraffa, the ecosystem concept enables research to encompass not only the objects themselves, but also work with the archives and the infrastructure created around them; also, another essential principle of the ecosystem view is that it breaks down the vertical hierarchical view based on authorship. (Caraffa 2017: 134). Visual arts researcher Teopisti Stylianou-Lambert, on the

Photography and Memory Institutions). *Creative Museum*. Available (in Latvian): http://www.creative-museum.lv/lv/raksti/dienasgramata/baiba-tetere-top-petijums-fotografija-un-atminas-institucijas [Accessed 10.07.2021.].

15 In addition to the postcard collection, the KUML repository holds a variety of collections, including Latvian posters, Latvian and foreign graphic art. The Aleksejs Apīnis Rare Book and Manuscript Reading Room collection has works by photographers, such as Roberts Johansons's art photographs.

other hand, argues that, just as ecosystems are dominated by certain life forms, collections also have dominant objects. This predominance is largely determined by usage practices. (Stylianou-Lambert 2019: 380). Of course, the ecosystem view does not exclude the evaluation of the authorship, aesthetic, originality, or other properties of objects. It forms an inclusive overview of both the dominant photographs currently in circulation and the invisible part of the archive and the work related to it.

In the case of the KUML collection, the value and dominance of objects is determined by the recognizability of their content, and this surpasses authorship, artistic value and originality. This can be seen in the systematization of the collection — authors' photographs are not stored together, but sorted by subject. Similarly, the recognizability of the displayed content is crucial in acquiring the collection — if the town, building, or person shown in the real photograph postcard is not known, this significantly reduces the postcard's potential circulation. In recent decades since postcards have been catalogued and digitized, there has been no consistent methodology for deciphering and describing their content. On the one hand, the scale of keyword usage, or subject indexing,[16] is changing, ensuring that the image can be found on digital platforms. Similarly, the detailed elaboration of the image-content description field differs from reading room to reading room and depends on the expertise, initiative, and other factors of the person writing the description of a graphic production. For example, one description writer will create a detailed historical summary for the Alūksne fortress island postcard, including information about the location's cultural history, which is not visible in the image itself, while another will record information about the post-office stamp, correspondence, or photographer's stamp. Consequently, the circulation and useful capacity of real photograph postcards is largely determined by the subjective factor of bibliographers' work. Subjectivity also influences collection policy — for one bibliographer the recognizability of content is important for a postcard to be included in a collection, for another it is authorship (although cards are stored by subject on shelves, the importance of authorship has grown in digital databases where images can be selected by metadata). Conversely, in the most recent KUML collections, selection paid equivalent attention to storylines that illustrate the diversity of postcard media, such as portraits of wedding groups, portraits of unknown persons in nature and interiors, scenes from military history, and various views of social life.

The turn to materiality emphasizes that photography's role, functions, and the significance it is accorded in the discourse on art and culture; its aesthetic expectations, evaluation, and status are not fixed categories in memory institutions, but change with context and research directions. Art historian Glen Willumson describes the fluidity of this significance as photographs' trajectories — it is the movement of objects over time, in cultural processes and changes in assigned significance in the institutional framework (Willumson 2004: 65). For

16   Subject indexing is the selection of records from an authoritative database when preparing a postcard description for the ALEPH cataloguing system. Authoritative database records are unified headings, such as persons, places, events, classifiers. For the NLL, a separate structural unit — the Institute of Bibliography — is responsible for subject-indexing methodology. The Institute compiles these unified headings and data systems in line with international bibliographic standards.

example, the KUML postcard collection recently added a postcard with a view of the castle ruins in Cēsis, which was acquired as part of a consignment from an antique shop in Germany. The reverse features correspondence with an addressee in France; the postcard was sent from Latvia. It is not known how it came into the German cultural space — sold, donated, or through the activities of a private collector. However, through the acquisition practices of the NLL, it returns to the Latvian cultural space as documentary heritage. Other examples of real photograph postcards relating to an earlier period include the sale of greeting cards published abroad in the domestic market. Postcard publishers' logos can be traced back to France, Germany, England, Spain, and other countries. Sometimes local distributors printed greetings in Latvian, German, and Russian on the obverse. It should be noted that the KUML postcard collection holds relatively fewer items imported during the interwar period than souvenir postcards from local publishers. Currently, real photograph postcards issued in Latvia are the most actively circulated part of the collection, and their trajectories are expanding with the potential of digital collections. Although the physical objects are stored in the repository, the postcards' digital surrogates have the potential to gain wide circulation.

A related term used by curators and materiality study researchers, such as Elizabeth Edwards and her followers, is the case of anthropologist Igor Kopytoff's social biographies. The trajectories mentioned above relate more to how the significance of photographs changes within certain structures and institutional frameworks. For its part, the biography concept includes the aspect of objects' social agency. Kopytoff sees this as the alternation of commodity and singularity status in different cultures and systems. A single object can have several biographies (Kopytoff 1986: 68); for example, a KUML real photograph postcard possesses historic, artistic, economic, and personal-use biographies, a research-paper biography, etc. These alternate with the perspectives of users and the corresponding values assigned by individual users, as well as by larger or smaller groups. For example, a real photograph postcard's personal-use biography may be its sentimental value that can be read from correspondence in the KUML collection. In the usage of the Library collection, the real photograph postcard has a research-paper biography, which accords it research and information value. This is reflected in its usage statistics. In the same way, a real photograph postcard can be given an exhibition biography, so including it in the art discourse. It should be noted that postcards are not afforded exhibition value to the same extent as, for example, Roberts Johansons's art photographs, which are held by the NLL's Rarity Collection. Most photographs held by memory institutions are accrued as documentary heritage, which is in active usage circulation, but most often interpretation stops at their visual content. Another value of the KUML postcard collection is its ability to inform and diversity, but materiality studies also consider the postcards' biographies, place in different systems (personal, economic, in institutions, etc.), and their ability to embody Latvia's cultural history in a palm-sized object — 9×15 cm.

The biographies mentioned above are part of the singularization process, when a photograph, a commodity, acquires a unique status and the postcard becomes a part of national cultural heritage. At the same time, its economic biography does not end with its inclusion in the collection. It might be assumed that items in the collection no longer have commodity status, but this is revised by at least two more examples. First of all, National Collections must

be valued in monetary terms, as prescribed by the Law on Museums. This practice varies between institutions: for example, the NLL records market value. For their part, the Regulations Regarding the National Holdings of Museums provide valuation guidelines where the value of an object is determined by the equation: the sum of the historical, commemorative, authenticity, antiquity, and material-value coefficients is multiplied by the initial market value (Cabinet Regulation No 956, 2006). This economic value is fully determined by the vertical hierarchy of the valuation — the higher the originality and authenticity coefficients, the greater the economic value. Secondly, returning to the NLL KUML postcard collection, in the circulation of research work, postcards still possess economic value from the frequency of their reproduction — the costs of copyright and library digitization services.

The use of biographical methods in interpreting KUML real photograph postcards has one drawback, owing to the collection's systematization traditions. Performing a reference function does not require objects' legends to be recorded, nor their interrelations. Consequently, the postcard repository enters a state of liminality, waiting for its new significance in the illustration of local history and cultural heritage. The existence of previous biographies is evidenced only by marks on the reverse of real photograph postcards — correspondence, dates, authors' trademarks, postcard-paper producers' logos, and the stamps of private collectors and institutions. In recent years, donors' names have been recorded in pencil on the reverse. This is a new practice — an initiative of bibliographers to capture a small fragment of the lives of objects within their previous collection. More detailed recording of legends is not useful because of the systematization and scale of the collection. In terms of content, correspondence on the reverse may be related or unrelated to the postcard image. For example, one sender's story about the road over the Balvi bridge and falling into the mud was sent to Miss Ž. Kļaviņa on a postcard with a view of the scene (Figure 4). The image in this real photograph postcard serves as testimony to the incident. The photographer is unknown — it could have been the sender themselves or any other distributor of real photograph postcards. In another postcard addressed to Miss Ž. Kļaviņa, the image on the obverse and stories in the correspondence are unrelated (Figure 5): a real photograph postcard on which photographer Jānis Rieksts has captured the scene of the funeral of Latvia's first President, Jānis Čakste, has culturally and historically significant content. Conversely, the reverse has a relatively trivial note: "Since you have a pressing need to submerge yourself in reading, I am just a nuisance, and that reminds me to go and leave you alone." The date the photograph was taken is clear thanks to the event shown, but the time of the correspondence is unknown — the postcard does not have a postmark and the sender has entered a miserly "Here" in the address field.

Researchers of materiality have reviewed Walter Benjamin's essays as well as Roland Barthes's ideas, expressing the criticism that these authors' standard and still frequently cited works placed typical photographic materials at the bottom of the evaluation hierarchy, also reducing photographs to an indexical function (Caraffa 2020: 80). Although Benjamin's concept of the aura is complex and multifaceted, one aspect of it deals with the collapse of the aura in the reproduction process and may be applied to objects in the KUML collection. On the one hand, it could be argued that the reproducibility of a postcard, its commodity status, and unrelated correspondence shatter the Čakste funeral event's aura of celebratory sanctity, as the

Figure 4. 1920s. Bolwa (Balvi) [postcard]. Unknown photographer. NLL K. Ubāns Art Reading Room. NBA04-000053644. Obverse.
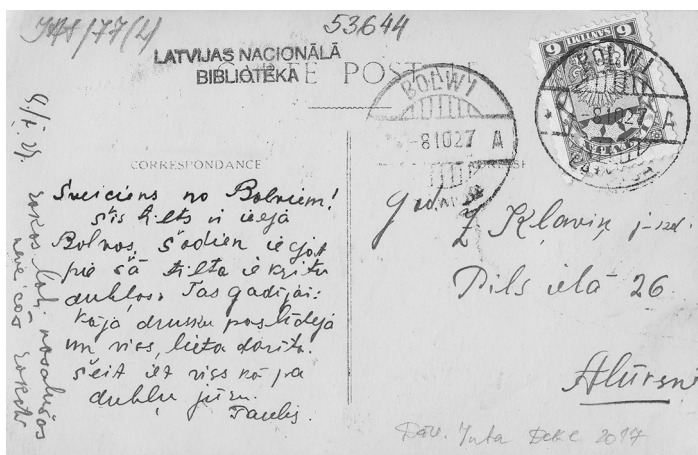


Figure 4. 1920s. Bolwa (Balvi) [postcard]. Unknown photographer. NLL K. Ubāns Art Reading Room. NBA04-000053644. Reverse.

photograph's medium is accompanied by repeatability and uniformity in an effort to bring the surrounding world closer to the masses (Benjamin 2005: 159). The real photograph postcards of Rainis's funeral taken by Vilis Rīdzenieks are a related example — the series consists of at least five views, in several copies, from the poet's funeral service in Rīga. Some of them are even intimate moments from his widow, Aspazija's, farewell. One reverse has traces of an album page and glue, indicating the inclusion of the event in a private collection. On the other hand, contemporary readings offer new examples for interpreting the aura concept,[17] where the encounter of social circulation and documentary cultural

17  For example, in Hito Steyerl's interpretation, the aura of poor images is in their circulation and in the social bonds they create, rather than in the category of originality. See Steyerl, Hito (2013). *In defence of poor images*. Steyerl, Hito (ed.) *The Wretched of the Screen*. Sternberg Press, pp. 31–45.
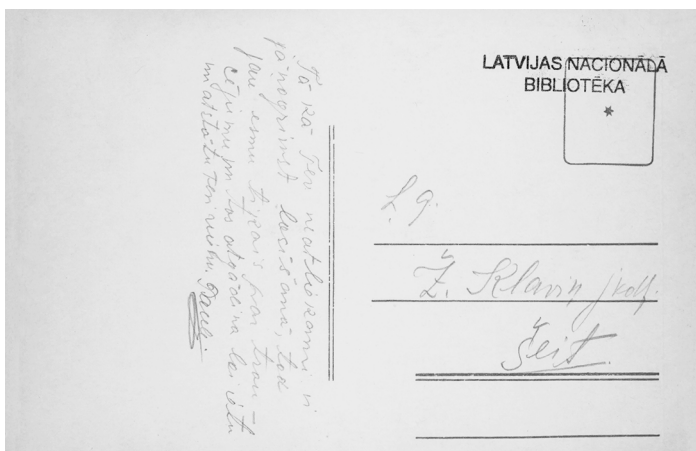
heritage could be interpreted as the aura of this object and the essence of the postcard's medium. This equivalent significance between photograph and correspondence can be seen in artists' efforts to portray both sides of the medium in their projects. For instance, at the *Izdzīvotāji* (Survivors) exhibition, held as part of the *Marīna 2021* biennale in July and August this year, graphic designer Anitra Eglīte-Poikāne had chosen to reproduce postcards on magnets and affix obverses to reverses, creating an interactive experience for exhibition visitors. In another example, Vienna-based artist Sophie Thun reproduced a postcard by the photogram technique within the *All things in my apartment are smaller than 8×10 inches* project, causing the obverse and reverse to merge into a single plane. These last examples show how real photograph postcards acquire a biography and the capacity to act in artistic discourse, and the focus of artistic interest is on media circulation and the fusion of the obverse and reverse.

Returning to the postcard of J. Čakste's funeral issued by Rieksts, it is currently stored in a box of portraits, because the association of the content with a cultural-historical event and person is more important than the accuracy of the genre in classifying the collection. Digital reproductions of the postcard continue their biographies in various collections and researchers' interpretations, including this one's. For example, putting a digital reproduction of a Rieksts photograph in a web image search engine shows that one history enthusiast has used the postcard as a visualization, to enumerate the cost of Čakste's funeral wreaths. It is becoming clear that after digitization and publication of images in online collections, all the trajectories of digital surrogates can no longer be identified, just as when the postcards came to the NLL previously. In the example of the Čakste funeral scene, the real photograph postcard serves as a tool for social memory, but at the same time includes personal memories. The ambiguity of the relationship between the obverse and the reverse points to the fluidity of significance in an individual communication, as well as to the smaller and larger groups that own the photographs and their reproductions.

## Collecting as a narrative

The object of the researcher's interpretation may be the visual content of the photograph, its technology, form, biographies, or history, as well as its collection and/or other aspects. Narrative analysis as a method of interpreting a collection can be viewed in at least two aspects. Firstly, the content's narrative by subject: the KUML real photograph postcard collection reflects the history of Latvian culture, in the historical and technological aspects of postcards and photography. Secondly, collecting as a narrative, which will be discussed in more detail in the following paragraphs, reflects the institutional framework in which the trajectories of real photograph postcards take place and their biographies are interpreted.

One example of collecting as a narrative is taken from cultural theorist Mieke Bal, who expresses the potential of narratology methods to interpret the object world. Narrative is able to coexist both objectively as reproduced text, for example in a book; and subjectively, as written by the author and perceived by the reader. Bal asks, *Can objects themselves be stories or express them, and can objects be included as elements in a narrative?* (Bal 2006: 270–271). It should be noted that Bal does not view collecting in the sense that objects form a narrative in a certain order, for example, about a historical event. She is interested in the collecting process itself as the narrative — the motives for acquiring objects, assigning significance, systematizing, etc. Bal's interdisciplinary model of interpretation can be viewed in the photographic materiality discourse, as it indirectly involves changing the biographies of objects. Bal's analysis does not touch on objects' own capacity to act, but on the motivation of their acquirers. Nevertheless, her analysis model allows the framework — under which objects are systematized, evaluated, and their trajectories changed — to be understood.

To align the Bal model with the example of the KUML collection, it is important to briefly look at the author's analysis, which defines the narrator, looks for the beginning of the collecting narrative, and interprets viewpoints and the end point. In her judgment, Bal interprets the activities of private collectors. She argues that when using narratology methods, it is difficult to define the beginning of the narrative — at which point does the acquisition of objects become collecting. Bal argues that on the one hand, this can be determined retrospectively — the beginning is not the first acquired object, but the moment when the gathering of objects acquires the import of collecting, and collectors become self-aware of being narrators who disclose certain events and their sequence through objects. On the other hand, the beginning of collecting is explained by man's relationship with the material world, which is inherited culturally and has been relevant since childhood. For Bal, collecting is an essential human characteristic — stories are reproduced through the objective world. However, Bal notes that one important category is socio-economic status, which determines the motivations for collecting. Bal refers to a list of motivations compiled by museologist Susan Pearce, which includes 16 categories such as rivalry, aesthetics, risk, prestige, community awareness, and perfection. For each category, motivation culminates in the attainment of immortality. Bal combines the entire list under one motivation — fetishism, which enables her to interpret collecting with psychoanalytical and Marxist theories (Bal 2006: 275). Freudian collecting is based on visual experience and underpinned by endeavours to return to wholeness through accumulating objects. Conversely, Marx's fetishism views objects as the products of human labour, the objective appearance of public relations. In Marx's story, the collector is an agent of history, and the collecting impulse is created by being part of a capitalist society (Bal 2006: 277–281). Borrowing the toolset of Bal's analysis, memory institutions' collecting aligns with the Marxist motivation for collecting, where in the case of state institutions, the narrator would be the state and the viewpoints would be the interpreters of the institution's acquisition policy and history — the developers and users of the collection.

The majority of museums, archives, and libraries, more or less, cite the same mission, where the accumulation of objects is the preservation of national cultural heritage for future generations. It has already been mentioned that the focalization concept could be applied to institutional acquisition policies — in narratology, the function of focalization on the author's writing is to manipulate the reader by changing the viewpoints through which events are revealed in the story (Ozoliņš 2021). This shift in viewpoints, referencing Bal's analysis, can be attributed to the fluidity of the meanings of real photograph postcards as they fall into the hands of different custodians and interpreters. On the one hand, this is revealed at the level of object biographies. In a hypothetical example, in 1930, someone bought a real photograph postcard with a view of Rīga and sent it to relatives with greetings. Ninety years later, this postcard does not evoke a sense of belonging in those relatives' grandchildren, and the postcard is donated to the Library. At the Library, this real photograph postcard reaches the KUML collection, where the connection with the correspondents is not relevant, but a new connection is created — in the mutual relationships between objects in the collection. This change of significance is an event in the collecting narrative that includes a violent dimension, as in order for an object to become part of a collector's story, some of its original significance is taken away (Bal 2006: 282). It could be said that this "violence" in change of significance

also continues while the collection is being used intensively. Each time a postcard is used in a reference, its significance changes in relation to other objects in the collection and its previous significance.

Another example of a change of viewpoints that can be considered is the acquisition and systematization of memory institution collections affected by a change of government. For example, the KUML postcard collection still shows traces of the Soviet occupation, which, in terms of collection content, was determined by the publishing culture of postcards in that period. For several decades, through legal deposit, the collection received postcards with references to the political system of the time. This can be seen, for example, in the subject boxes: Greetings on Victory Day, Greetings on Soviet Army and Navy Day, etc. Similarly, the imprint of the occupation period has also remained in the design of the boxes — some subject dividers are still in Russian. In these examples, the materiality of the KUML collection still retains a 50-year-long viewpoint of the collecting story.

Although Mieke Bal's analysis does not touch on materiality, interpreting the collection as a narrative allows us to look at an important aspect in the study of photographic materiality: the institutional frame in which postcards are classified is in flux, and, in the collecting narrative this can be interpreted as focalization or changing viewpoints. If in terms of content, the-subject-oriented postcard narration scene reflects the postcard medium and the history of Latvian culture, then addressing collecting itself as a narrative shows how memory institutions organize the discourses on collective memory and history.

The last category listed in Pierce's collecting-motivation inventory is the attainment of immortality. In some ways, this resonates strongly with museums' missions — to preserve cultural heritage for future generations. Bal explains that the end of the collecting narrative is death, which is a completed collection or the attainment of perfection. The end of the overall NLL collecting meta-story would possibly mean a fundamental turning point, such as the end of the institution's existence. However, certain parts of the KUML collection have possible endings; for example, the 1920s–1930s real photograph postcard collection can only include as many objects as the number of photographs that were created during this period. Although this is a significant number, it is a scale with limits. Another turning point in the collection's story is the change in postcard media. For example, postcards are no longer produced on photographic paper; they are printed and reproduced in printing houses. They are also losing popularity as a correspondence medium, and in our time, postcards are often produced as advertising handouts — on the reverse, the space for a postage stamp remains, but open space for a letter is replaced by advertising text.[18] These examples show that the end of the postcard collection's story is dependent on the aspects of changes in the medium's social circulation and its reproduction technologies.

18    Examples include the *Bad Dog* advertising agency's postcards, as well as those for exhibitions and concerts.

## Conclusion

The paper problematizes the research opportunities of large-scale photograph collections with a case study of the NLL KUML postcard collection, based on the study of photographic materiality. This trend has emerged as a criticism of the hierarchical view of circulation and art history in museum collections, which largely judges photograph collections by their authorship, aesthetic, and formal features. Documentary heritage photograph collections make up the bulk of museum, archive, and library collections. In essence, however, they perform invisible work and are not seen as autonomous research objects, although they are in active circulation and serve as reference material for researchers in various fields.

The paper is part of an early stage of a larger study, the aim of which is to make real photograph postcards relevant in research on Latvian photography's history and theory, examining the case of the NLL KUML collection. The paper set out to develop the fundamental basis for such research: to characterize the real photograph postcard section of the KUML collection; to define real photograph postcards on the basis of the circulation of 1920s–1930s real photograph postcards, as well as with regard to compiling the KUML collection; to formulate research issues posed by the KUML collection; and to expand the examples of interpretation based on photographic materiality studies.

The KUML definition of real photograph postcards is broad — they are all postcards produced by a photographic technique, featuring a space for correspondence on the reverse. During the 1920s-1930s period, postcard photographic paper was widely available to both professional and amateur photographers, and consequently the collection consists of both souvenir postcards and amateur photographs. The KUML real photograph postcard collection is evaluated and systematized by usage function — it is documentary heritage of Latvia's cultural history and serves as visual material for a broad range of references by subject. However, to date the KUML real photograph postcard collection has not been considered a self-contained research object, because it occupies a low place in the hierarchical view of the collection, which is based on authorship and originality. In order to get an idea of the overall history of real photograph postcards, the activities of specific publishers and photographers, and the historical circulation of real photograph postcard media, any study should include a number of memory institutions that accrue this type of material. Unlike postcards produced by printing, which have been compiled as legal deposits at the NLL since the 1930s, real photograph postcards have been included in the KUML collection through donations and purchases. Consequently, a review of the KUML collection alone cannot represent the history of the medium. However, the KUML real photograph postcard collection can be interpreted in the discourse of materiality studies. This means selecting the collection itself as the research subject and addressing objects' economic, private-use, artistic-agency, technological, and photographic histories; other biographies and trajectories; systematization practices; and collecting as a narrative.

Materiality studies enable large-scale collections of standard photographs to be studied — collections that are not included, for example, in discourses on art photography research. The direction is based on interpreting the agency, circulation, and representation of objects.

Turning to materiality proposes that memory institution collections be viewed as ecosystems, forsaking the hierarchical view. This interpretative model is interdisciplinary and includes art history and theories and the history of photographic technology, museological, cultural, and social anthropology, philosophical and cultural theories, and other disciplines related to the circulation of photographs. In research on the history and theories of Latvian photography, the study of photographic materiality has only been applied relatively recently; some cases also can be observed in curatorial practice. This paper uses the material approach to consider the evaluation aspects, social biographies, and circulation of KUML collection photographs. In the same way, borrowing terminology and analytical elements from the discipline of narratology, collecting has been considered as a narrative and an institutional framework under which real photograph postcards undergo trajectory changes and experience a fluidity of significance.

The innovation of the paper is in its characterization of the compiling and systematization of the almost century-old KUML postcard collection, as well as subjecting it to interpretation by qualitative research methods — case studies and discourse analysis based on current and interdisciplinary photography theories. The purpose of this study is not to write the history of the real photograph postcard medium, but to problematize research questions about how the photograph collections of memory institutions participate in writing histories

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# Pastkartes Latvijas Nacionālajā bibliotēkā: fotogrāfisku materiālu interpretācijas iespējas

## Līga Goldberga

Fotopastkartes ir plaši sastopamas gan privātās kolekcijās un atmiņu albumos, kalpojot par piemiņas objektu, gan bibliotēkās, arhīvos, muzeju krājumos kā dokumentārais mantojums, atmiņas rīks, vēstures liecība un pierādījums. Tomēr līdz šim Latvijas fotogrāfijas pētniecības laukā to aprite un uzkrāšana atmiņu institūcijās ir maz pētīta. Raksts problematizē profesionāļu un amatieru radītu liela apjoma attēlizdevumu kolekciju interpretēšanas iespējas. Pētījuma centrā ir Latvijas Nacionālās bibliotēkas Konrāda Ubāna Mākslas lasītavas (LNB KUML) atklātņu kolekcijas 20. gadsimta 20.–30. gadu pastkartes, kas izgatavotas fotogrāfijas tehnikā.

Raksts ir daļa no plašāka agrīnas stadijas pētījuma, kura mērķis ir aktualizēt fotopastkartes Latvijas fotogrāfijas pētniecībā, pievēršoties fotopastkaršu sociālajai apritei, nozīmju plūstamībai un materialitātei. Raksta uzdevumi ir: iepazīstināt ar KUML atklātņu kolekciju un tās sistematizēšanas praksēm; apzināt fotogrāfiju teorijas un rast interpretācijas modeli liela apjoma attēlizdevumu kolekcijai, kas pamatā kalpo tematisko uzziņu izpildei, taču autorībā un oriģinalitātē balstītā fotogrāfijas pētniecībā paliek neredzama.

Šajā rakstā vēsturisku avotu izpētē apzināti 20. gs. 20.–30. gadu periodikas resursi, gadījumu izpētēs analizēti KUML kolekcijas pastkaršu piemēri, kā arī diskursa analīzē interpretēta KUML fotopastkaršu nozīmju plūstamība dažādos sociālos kontekstos. Raksts sniedz ieskatu fotogrāfiju materialitātes pētniecības piemēros, aktualizē krājumu pārvaldīšanas hierarhizētājus procesus un to vietā piedāvā skatījumu, kas neizceļ atsevišķu krājuma priekšmetu vērtību pār citiem, bet veido iekļaujošu ekosistēmas modeli.

# Interpretation of the Theme of Night:
# A Case Study of Rainis's Creative Laboratory

Zane Šiliņa

The writings of Latvian poet and playwright Rainis (real name Jānis Pliekšāns, 1865–1929) are characterized by deep roots in world culture, extensive creative ideas, a continuous artistic quest, and an effort to cultivate individual artistic expression. Rainis was not only a writer and translator, but also an active supporter of socialism and national statehood. In 1897, due to his political beliefs, he was arrested and exiled to Pskov and later to Slobodsk in Vyatka Governorate (1898–1903). After the tragic events of 1905, Rainis, along with his spouse, the poet Aspazija (real name Elza Rozenberga, 1865–1943), abandoned Latvia, going into exile to Castagnola in Switzerland and returning to Latvia only in 1920.

A wide range of sources has been used in research about Rainis. These include his finished and published works in various editions, their translations into foreign languages, and translations of other authors' works by Rainis himself. His literary heritage also includes his unfinished works and variants of manuscript texts, his correspondence and diaries, and various documents of the era. There are also his so-called creative thoughts[1] or notes, in which the poet has identified both purposefully developed and sometimes spontaneous ideas arising from contemplation on a particular work to be created, as well as focusing on the development of themes and artistic images that, due to their idealistic ambition and expansion, exceed materials to be included in individual works. This rich set of texts reflects Rainis's creative laboratory: the birth of ideas, the evolution of ideas, themes, and artistic images, the search for the form of a literary work, the contradictions faced by the poet in the creative process, resolved and unresolved artistic issues, and the creative impulses that have guided the poet on this complicated course. Research of Rainis's creative laboratory is important not only as a separate case in the history of literature and drama, but also as a significant contribution to the research of artistic creative processes, especially in the changing cultural paradigm that Latvia experienced in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

There are particularly important images of morning, day, and light, particularly the sun, which symbolize life, freedom, and courage of spirit. They represent the highest ethical ideals in Rainis's writing. The steady use of light imagery is typical of all of Rainis's writing at various stages of its development, which is certainly diverse, broad and has to be treated symbolically. But do we have a stable definition of night imagery in Rainis's

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1    In Latvian, *radāmās domas*.

fiction? The purpose of this article is to find out whether changes in the theme of night are manifested in Rainis's plays, and if so, which. The article also seeks to highlight the dynamics of the theme of night in the evolution of Rainis's creative intentions. The article will mainly analyze Rainis's creative thoughts regarding plays, in particular two of his plays — *Fire and Night* (*Uguns un nakts*, published in 1905) and *I Played, I Danced* (*Spēlēju, dancoju*, 1915). However, contextual trends will be researched in relation to the most important nocturnal theme developments in the works of the Latvian poet and playwright Aspazija as well as of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832), focusing on some aspects of Rainis's translation of J. W. von Goethe's tragedy *Faust* (1808, 1832).

Rainis has turned to the theme of night and darkness several times in his plays. In his play *Fire and Night*, whose subtitle is *An Old Song in a New Sounding*, the Black Knight talks about 'final darkness': 'Where the unmentionable almighty night reigns/ The eternal, uninitiated night'[2] (Rainis 1980: 184); he also mentions 'Unmentionable night' (Rainis 1980: 184) and 'a sluggish night/ Which is weighing down everything/ Without moving'[3] (Rainis 1980: 186). Similar trends in forming the image of night are also observed in the materials of his unfinished play *Īliņš* (or *Kurbads*)[4]. The unfinished play is a rich store of creative ideas, in which Rainis has identified ideas and themes that have also been used in other works, including the play *Fire and Night*. According to researchers of Rainis's writing Viktors Hausmanis and Gundega Grīnuma, it is unfortunately not possible to determine precisely when Rainis started his work on the play, but the dated pages show that he worked particularly intensively on the ideas of *Īliņš* in 1900–1902, during his exile to Slobodsk, returning to the play purposefully during the Castagnola exile, and in 1926 had still not abandoned the idea (Hausmanis, Grīnuma 1981). Īliņš, the protagonist of the unfinished play, is the son of a bear and a captive woman. The young man has spent years lacking strength and lying on top of the furnace. When he regains his physical strength, he aims to reshape the world and struggles with narrowness and numbness, both in the space of life and in the minds of the people. In the dialogues between Īliņš and his bride Ziedīte in Act 1, the protagonist is described as the spring wind[5] whose task is to free the earth from the winter freeze (Rainis 1981c: 168), while in Act 3, Īliņš calls on people to come closer to the sun and go out to learn a new, wider room of life[6]. Thus, confronting the protagonist and his aspirations with images of night and darkness is inevitable.

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2    *Kur valda neminamā, pārvarīgā,/ Mūžīgā, nesāktā nakts.*

3    *[..] kūtrā nakts,/ Kas spiezdama guļ pār visu pāri/ Un nekustas.*

4    Rainis changed the title of the play several times. In the oldest outlines, Rainis called his work in progress *Sonnenkind* (or 'the Sun Child'), later the play was called *Īliņš* or *Īls* (parallel forms), but in October 1917 the name *Kurbads* appeared in several notes (Hausmanis, Grīnuma 1981). As Īliņš is the protagonist's name most often used in Rainis's notes, the play will be further on called *Īliņš*, not *Kurbads*, although the compilers of the academic edition of Rainis's Collected Works chose the latter, which is chronologically the last title.

5    The word *īliņš* means 'sharp wind, breeze'. Linguist Konstantīns Karulis gives two versions of this word, explaining it (1) as a borrowing, (2) the legacy of the Proto-Indo-European language. (Karulis 1992: 341–342)

6    For instance, 'in Act 3 is also culmination of Īl.'s hope and plans, full power, unrestricted possibilities, fullness of strength: [...] the plan to go to the warm lands, to get the sun.' (Rainis 1981b: 221)

For example, in a page of creative thoughts dated 15 August 1907, the poet outlined a sketch for a dialogue that he intended to include in Act V of the play, in which one of Īliņš' opponents is either his own antagonistic internal voice or sands which devour the protagonist[7] and, according to one of Rainis's final variants, symbolically represent the protagonist's struggle with the multitude of people who are cowardly and mentally inert. According to Rainis's intention, the following thought would be varied in the text of his opponent: 'Only what does not move, lives forever, what doesn't spend, it is the night that wins everything: the past, god, fate, death' (Rainis 1981b: 287). This interpretation of the image of night is also found in a stylistically unfinished poetic piece, which Rainis seems to have planned to incorporate into Īliņš' monologue marked as *Klage der Sehnsucht* or a 'cry of despair':

> 'Out of the night we come, and we go on
> Towards the great infinite final night
> We look back into the night to see our lifetime
> And we see the same night ahead of us.
> A tiny ray of light flashes up like lighting,
> A single moment in the ever-long darkness,
> And you are the ray and the moment'[8] (Rainis 1981a: 207–208).

As we see, both the lines of the Black Knight in *Fire and Night* and the quoted snippets from Īliņš' text feature the night not only treated as inscrutable, inert and depressing, but also associated with the eternal. In contrast to this, the idea of human life appears in the materials of *Īliņš* as a short-yet-bright moment, with the task of at least breaking the inert mass of an all-encompassing darkness for a moment.

In general, we can find interesting pieces of material written for *Īliņš* and developed in the form of poetry and fragmentary outlines of ideas, which present variations of the image of the night, in particular in Act V of the play, providing remarkable evidence not only of the options discussed by Rainis but also of the contradictions the poet came across.

Although the materials of Act V of *Īliņš* also contain fragments of text in which the night is associated with aggressive activity (e.g., 'comes a fierce black night' (Rainis 1981a: 200)), in Rainis's treatment, the night is mostly frightful not because of its chaotic whirlwind of

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7    See, for instance, the idea written down in the Slobodsk period, Īliņš 'is victorious over antagonists of mass: the coarse force, a giant, then a spiritual force — God, then wants to raise the mass itself, the time, the small things — but the mass outweighs him, against the sand, the 10000, he is powerless.' (Rainis 1981b: 251)

8    *Iz nakts mēs atnākam un ejam atkal*
     *Uz lielo, nebeidzamo gala nakti.*
     *Uz mūžu naktī atskatāmies atpakaļ*
     *Un priekšā redzam vis to pašu nakti.*
     *Kā zibens pazibsnī sīks gaismas stars,*
     *Viens vienīgs mirklis garā, garā tumsā,*
     *Un tu tas stars, tas mirklis.*

elements, but, on the contrary, because of its emptiness and lack of form. For instance, in a voluminous poetic passage of the tragedy that was written for Act V, the poet writes the following on the cosmic proportions of the battle of day and night:

'Night eels itself between the earth and heaven
Its body gross and without form
It stretches out dark shadows as its arms.
Sun does defend with whips of rays
But night brings forth the rolling clouds
As big as mountains, heaps them up
And pushes them in all the room,
The green earth now loses breath
And the fair joy grows pale in heavens.
Now sun bleeds out from thousand wounds
And red from her blood they trod
The cloud giants stand —

The sun has fought for thousand years
But night falls back, but only to return
And cover all beyond the realm of sun.
Night rules unchallenged since older days
And night has nothing to fear in this battle
It only wins and never loses
Because it has nothing, only the void.

Her body does not grow old from birthing
Her child does not suck life from her breast.
She holds on to her power, spending nothing,
She creates not, she only does destroy,
She has no passion of creator,
She does not burn when warming others
She sows no seed form all that she has gathered
She does not bleed for her brothers'[9] (Rainis 1981a: 199) [emphasis by Z. Š.].

9    *Starp debesi un zemi spraucas nakts*
     *Ar rupjo bezveidīgo ķermeni,*
     *Kā rokas izstiepdama tumšas ēnas.*
     *Gan saule gaiņās staru pātagām,*
     *Bet nakts tai pretim atveļ mākoņus*
     *Kā milzu kalnus, kaudzēm kraudama*
     *Un visu telpu pilnu piebāzdama,*
     *Kā zaļai zemei dvaša aizraujas*
     *Un gaišais jautrums nobālst debesīs.*
     *Jau saule asiņo iz tūkstots vātīm*
     *Un, asnīs nobridušies sarkani,*
     *Stāv mākoņmilži —*

In his creative thoughts from the exile in Slobodsk, Rainis also notes that 'the night and the emptiness are without love, they do not create and bear fruit' (Rainis 1981b: 249), while 'light wants to overcome the night, the world, the content — the void' (Rainis 1981b: 249). However, the poet, looking at night in another context, also comes to a different theme of the night: 'Day and night or void. A man and a woman. The woman is empty, the man must create, then she gives him back. (Substance. V The night is empty, but it is forced to give birth, the beam of light is the creator, thus the day overcomes the night.) Power and substance, or everything is merely energy, emptiness' (Rainis 1981b: 248). Rainis continues this idea in another note of the Slobodsk period, developing an ideal outline of the main character of the play *Īliņš*, in the context of cosmic developments:

'In Īl. [*Īliņš*] denotes strength and forgiveness coming from the earth that turns, hurrying forward, not knowing where.

The natural forces originate from the earth, from their opposite that is the dormant, primeval night, and yet from it: from the rest, from nothing, from the night, all the present, every movement, the light. Īl. is the existing struggle in itself, against itself, it is its own development. Where does it go? Who knows but still: forward! Revolution' (Rainis 1981b: 252).

Thus, although Rainis remains faithful to the inherent symbolic system where light is unambiguously positive and victorious; night is no longer formidable, inert, because of its void and passivity, a hostile force to eternal development. Night is a mysterious ambivalence, as it also conceals an unrealized creative potential, which only requires a strong external impulse. It is possible, therefore, that Act V of the play also contains extraordinarily poetic lines devoted to the wonderful beauty of the night and which do not have even a hint at the destructive functions of the night:

> 'Night's deep dark ornament of holy darkness,
> You silver veil that weaves above

> *Jau tūkstots, tūkstots gadu saule cīnās,*
> *Bet nakts tik atkāpjas, lai atkal nāktu*
> *Aiz pasauls telpām visā plašumā.*
> *Jau sen bez pretestības valda nakts —*
> *Un naktij nau no cīņas jābaidās,*
> *Tā var tik uzvarēt, bet nevar zaudēt,*
> *Jo viņai nau nekā — tik tukšums vien.*

> *Tās miesas neveco no dzemdēšanas, —*
> *Tai bērns iz krūtīm nesūc dzīvību.*
> *Tā savu spēku cīņai neizlaiž,*
> *Tai radīt nevajga, bet tikai postīt,*
> *Tā nekvēl radītāja kaislībā,*
> *Tā, būtes sildot, pate nesadeg,*
> *Tā sēklu nekaisa iz sava pūra,*
> *Priekš brāļiem nelej savas asinis*

And stretches subtle strings of rays
On meadows pale, on scintillating brooks'[10] (Rainis 1981a: 200).

It is no secret that Rainis's creation of the world of artistic efforts and ideas has been strongly influenced by the creative personalities of two poets. They are his spouse, Aspazija, and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, especially his tragedy *Faust*, the translation of which Rainis worked on in 1896–1897.

In Aspazija's writings, the image of the night was interpreted in a diverse manner, both in the play *The Witch* (*Ragana*, 1894) and in other dramatic pieces and in her poetry at various stages of life. Saulcerīte Viese writes: 'There is the 'bewitched,' nightmare night in her *The Twilight of the Soul* (*Dvēseles krēsla*) from which the lyric hero cannot get out. There is the blossoming night in *The Sunny Corner* (*Saulainais stūrītis*) when 'trees yield their juice' and a young heart is fairly embarrassed. There is *An Armful of Flowers* (*Ziedu klēpis*) containing the inspired *Moonlight* (*Mēnessnakts*), a true anthem to the beauty of the Moon and the translucent delicacy of the soul. There is a deep nocturnal loneliness in *Wings Widespread* (*Izplesti spārni*) when 'no one hears you, no one is holding you.' And this is the perfect cosmic dynamic night of life and transformation.' (Viese 1985: 18) Aspazija has been drawn to focus on nocturnal themes so often, not only by the possibilities of symbolic treatment of night, but also by its obscurity and the rich spectrum of feelings. Frequently, in Aspazija's writings, it is at night that the deepest parts of a person's soul open up, it is honored as a great moment of creation. In 1910, Aspazija conveys this feeling of excitement in her fantasy *How Roses Blossom* (*Kā rozes plaukst*):

> 'We think of the night as a heavy, shapeless giant who lies on the whole life and stops all the movements. But the night is not like that.
> The night is infinitely subtle and invisible; she walks so gently that she does not touch upon the ground.
> In her hand, she carries a gold dish tied with a black blanket that keeps the secret of the great creation.
> All the fine threads of the tissues of life, which pass and cross in the workshop of Nature, are woven into the night.
> All that is great becomes the night.
> […]

The greatest thoughts are thoughts at night. That is why everyone bows in respect for the night. We often despise the grey mundanity, but no one has complained about the black nocturnity'[11] (Aspazija 1988: 171).

10   *Nakts dziļi tumšās segas svētā rota,*
     *Tu pāri austais sudrabotais plīvurs,*
     *Kas smalkās staru stīgas izstiepis*
     *Pār blāvām pļavām, dzirksteļainiem strautiem.*

11   *Mēs iedomājamies nakti kā smagu, bezveidīgu milzeni, kurš uzguļas virsū visai dzīvībai un visas kustības*

This complete fantasy of poetic passion, which also contains a subtle discussion with Rainis, reveals the influence of German Romanticist literature on Aspazija. We can see similarities to *Hymns to the Night* (*Hymnen an die Nacht*, 1800) by Novalis (real name Georg Friedrich Philipp von Hardenberg, 1772–1801), where the unusual, passionate vision is characterized by an ecstasy of love and death, which is typical of the author:

> 'Aside I turn to the holy, unspeakable, mysterious Night. Afar lies the world, sunk in a deep grave; waste and lonely is its place. In the chords of the bosom blows a deep sadness. I am ready to sink away in drops of dew, and mingle with the ashes. [...]

'What springs up all at once so sweetly boding in my heart, and stills the soft air of sadness? Dost thou also take a pleasure in us, dusky Night? What holdest thou under thy mantle, that with hidden power affects my soul? Precious balm drips from thy hand out of its bundle of poppies. [...] How poor and childish a thing seems to me now the light! How joyous and welcome the departure of the day! [...]

'More heavenly than those glittering stars we hold the eternal eyes that the Night hath opened within us. Farther they see than the palest of those countless hosts. Needing no aid from the light, they penetrate the depths of a loving soul that fills a loftier region with bliss ineffable'[12] (Novalis 2005).

Although the fantasy of Aspazija does not include the complex religious symbolism of Novalis' writings, nor its complicated poetic texture, the two poets are united in the excitement of the mysterious and creative potential of the night.

In Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's tragedy *Faust*, there are many scenes that take place at night. One of the most magnificent examples is the Walpurgis Night on Harz Mountain, another scene features a night in his study where Faust calls the Spirit of the Earth, and in

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apstādina. Bet tāda viņa nebūt nav.
*Nakts ir netverami smalka un nesaredzami daiļa; viņa iet tik maigi pāri pār zemi, ka to nemaz neaizskar.*
*Rokā tā nes zelta trauku, pārsietu ar melnu segu, kurā glabā lielo radīšanas noslēpumu.*
*Visi dzīvības audu smalkie pavedieni, kuri rit un krustojas dabas darbnīcā, tiek ievērti naktī.*
*Viss, kas liels, top pa nakti.*
*[..]*
*Arī vislielākās domas tiek domātas pa nakti. Tādēļ ikviens jūt it kā bijību un cienību pret nakti. Bieži dzird gan ar nicināšanu minam pelēko ikdienību, bet neviens vēl nav sūdzējies par melno iknaktību.* (Aspazija 1988: 171)

12    *Abwärts wend ich mich zu der heiligen, unaussprechlichen, geheimnisvollen Nacht. Fernab liegt die Welt – in eine tiefe Gruft versenkt – wüst und einsam ist ihre Stelle. In den Saiten der Brust weht tiefe Wehmut. In Tautropfen will ich hinuntersinken und mit der Asche mich vermischen. [..]*
*Was quillt auf einmal so ahndungsvoll unterm Herzen, und verschluckt der Wehmut weiche Luft? Hast auch du ein Gefallen an uns, dunkle Nacht? Was hältst du unter deinem Mantel, das mir unsichtbar kräftig an die Seele geht? Köstlicher Balsam träuft aus deiner Hand, aus dem Bündel Mohn. [..] Wie arm und kindisch dünkt mir das Licht nun – wie erfreulich und gesegnet des Tages Abschied. [..] Himmlischer, als jene blitzenden Sterne, dünken uns die unendlichen Augen, die die Nacht in uns geöffnet. Weiter sehn sie als die blässesten jener zahllosen Heere – unbedürftig des Lichts durchschaun sie die Tiefen eines liebenden Gemüts – was einen höhern Raum mit unsäglicher Wollust füllt.* (Novalis 1998)

another night scene, when Faust takes a walk, his poodle turns into Mephistopheles. At night, Faust also comes to a forest cave. When beholding it, he expresses his passionate desire to immerse into the depths of his soul:

> '[...] Then to the cave secure thou [Mephistopheles] leadest me,
> Then show'st me mine own self, and in my breast
> The deep, mysterious miracles unfold' (Goethe 2005).

On the other hand, Part II of the tragedy includes the classic Walpurgis Night, in which the eternal transformation and creation force manifest chimeric, semi-finished, mono-chrome-shaped creatures — griffins, sphinxes, Arimaspi, sirens, the centaur Chiron, pig-mies, doddles, Nereids, Lamia, Empousa, Mirmidons, tritons, eternal shape-shifter Proteus, hippocampi, etc. The activities also involve Grays, the earth-changer volcanic Seismus, and Anaxagoras and Taless discuss the origins of life.

In his essay *The World as Black Magic: On the Philosophy of Goethe's Creativity*, Estonian writer and literary critic Jaan Undusk explains the understanding of light, darkness, and twilight in Goethe's writings. He writes that the author of *Faust* is 'a hunter in the kingdom of creative twilight' (Undusk 2002: 21) and admits that Goethe 'is never going to hunt the obvious, the reality of the daylight, he is more likely to be attracted by the dark potential and what may result from it' (Undusk 2002: 21). Jaan Undusk concludes that Goethe's 'night is never empty, it just keeps aloof, something budding in the dark. [...] A young mother's lap (thus, the night for Goethe is also a young mother) can also bring forth horrible things in the world, but it is a miracle in itself. There's always something being born in the night, it's not the end of this world' (Undusk 2002: 23).

Indeed, Faust's infinite craving for perfection begins to materialize in collaboration with Mephistopheles, who says:

> 'Part of the Part am I, once All, in primal Night,—
> Part of the Darkness which brought forth the Light,
> The haughty Light, which now disputes the space,
> And claims of Mother Night her ancient place'[13] (Goethe 2005).

Rainis translates this as follows:

> *Tās daļas daļa es, kas pirmāk visa bija,*
> *Tās tumsas daļa, kas sev gaismu dzemdēja,*
> *To lepno gaismu, kura, nakti mākdama,*
> *Gandrīz vai valsti viņai nolaupīja* (Gēte 1982: 51).

13    *Tās daļas daļa es, kas pirmāk visa bija,*
      *Tās tumsas daļa, kas sev gaismu dzemdēja,*
      *To lepno gaismu, kura, nakti mākdama,*
      *Gandrīz vai valsti viņai nolaupīja.* (Gēte 1982: 51)

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe used a delicate phrase 'Mother Night' in this passage of text, which specifically accentuates night as capable of creation:

> *Ich bin ein Teil des Teils, der anfangs alles war,*
> *Ein Teil der Finsternis, die sich das Licht gebar,*
> *Das stolze Licht, das nun der Mutter Nacht*
> *Den alten Rang, den Raum ihr streitig macht* [...].
> [emphasis by Z. Š.] (Goethe 19--: 172)

Although Rainis did not retain this essential nuance[14] in his translation of *Faust*, we should not believe that he did so for any particular purpose. Another — in a way similar — inaccuracy can also be observed in another fragment of *Faust* translated by Rainis: namely, in his translation, Faust speaks to Mephistopheles, saying '*tu ērmots gars, kas dzimis peklē [...]*' (Gēte 1982: 52) ('an odd spirit born in hell [..]'), although in the original Goethe calls Mephistopheles the son of Chaos: '*[...] Des Chaos wunderlicher Sohn!*' (Goethe 19--: 173). Rainis used the word 'hell' in his translation, but it clearly has a negative connotation, suggesting something frightening and destructive. On the other hand, the word 'chaos' used by Goethe — although it refers to a structure that differs sharply from the cosmic order of the Lord and his angels in the *Prologue in Heaven*, rather represents an unpredictable and ambivalent environment, which includes not only destructive but also creative forces. It was noticeable that Rainis had corrected this imprecision in his comments on *Faust*. In explaining the word 'chaos' used in the classic Walpurgis Night, he added, 'Mephistopheles, as we have seen before, is also called chaos's son.' (Rainis 1982: 461) Although Rainis seems to have forgotten some of his own notes in Part 1 of the tragedy, it is important that he considers it necessary to remind us of Mephistopheles's connection with chaos.

The purpose of this article is, of course, not a critical analysis of the translation of *Faust* by Rainis. The inaccuracies found in the translation have been considered in order to highlight the context of the creative laboratory of his writings and to emphasize that the poet not only made an invaluable contribution to the wealth of the Latvian cultural space by translating *Faust*, but also gained a creative impulse for his own writing. It is possible that without the scenes of Walpurgis Night, as shown in Part I of *Faust*, or the scenes in the The Mountain King's cave in *Peer Gynt* (1866) by Henrik Ibsen (1828–1906), Rainis would not have been able to write, for instance, Act III in his play *I Played, I Danced*.

From insights into Rainis's writing, let us turn to the theme of the night occurring in his works. I would like to mention conclusions made by Janīna Kursīte in her study *Rainis's Poetry*. She points out that, around 1910, in terms of time and space, Rainis's poetry

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14    Valdis Bisenieks translates it thus:
    *Es daļa daļas, kura sākumā bij viss,*
    *Es daļa tumsas, kurai bērns bij piedzimis,*
    *Par gaismu aug tas, lepni kļūst kam prāti.*
    *Kas padzīt grib nu nakti, savu māti [..].* (Gēte 1999: 48)

underwent significant changes[15]: 'In his collection *The End and The Beginning* (*Gals un sā-kums*)[16], Rainis has already waived binary oppositions in his early poetry, where, for instance, the night (also darkness) is unequivocally associated with death and the negative, while the day (also light) is associated with life and the positive. During the second stage, the night is deeper than the day because:

> 'In the day you hide yourself,
> And you hide your pain much deeper.'[17]

In *Dagda Sketchbooks* (*Dagdas skiču burtnīcas*) the night is often the time when the most concealed thoughts are not afraid to reveal themselves; it is also the time when the spirit and soul are able to recover. The link between night, darkness and death does not disappear in *Dagda Sketchbooks*, but it is rich in comparison to the previous stage. The night is also death, but only as part of cycle, followed by a renewal' (Kursīte 1996: 175).

The borderline of 1910 referred to by Janīna Kursīte also chronologically separates two highly vivid plays by Rainis: *Fire and Night*, written in 1904 and 1905 (the prologue in prose 1907), and *I Played, I Danced*, whose text was created through intense work in 1915.

In the text of the play *Fire and Night*[18], the word 'night' (also 'midnight') occurs 26 times, and, as noted above, night and darkness are mainly related to the image of the Black Knight; accordingly, night and darkness are treated as inert and immobile, hence as a destructive and all-devouring stiffness. The word 'night' occurs 10 times in Act I, which includes the essential dialogue of the Black Knight and Spīdola, ending with the message expressed by the Black Knight: 'Yet, night will once devour a handful of light!'[19] (Rainis 1980: 186). However, night is also when the action takes place. Each of the five acts of *Fire and Night* takes place in a different location; moreover, thinking both of the symbolic significance of all the elements used in the play and of the visual aspects of the possible stage setting, Rainis changes the background along with the colors and lights that characterize it within a single act. Act I takes place in Aizkraukle

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15   In the introduction to the chapter *Time and Space in Rainis's Poetry*, J. Kursīte writes: 'In the sense and treatment of the time-space, Rainis poetry is divided into two stages. The first covers the collections *Distant Moods in Blue Twilight* (1903), *Storm Seed* (1905), *Quiet Book* (1909), *Those who don't Forget* (1911), the poem *Ave, Sol!* (1910); and the second, *The End and The Beginning* (1912), *Dagda Sketchbooks* (1920–1925). The approximate boundary between the first and second stages: 1910.' (Kursīte 1996: 166)

16   *Gals un sākums*

17   *Dienā slēp tu sevi pats,*
     *Vēl jo dziļāk savas sāpes..*

18   In the play *Fire and Night*, originally written for an opera libretto competition, Rainis creatively developed the plot of Andrejs Pumpurs' (1841–1902) epic poem *Bearslayer* (*Lāčplēsis*, 1888), deepening its ideological dimension. The protagonist Lāčplēsis embodies the nation's strength and the struggle for freedom; his bride Laimdota symbolizes Latvia; the Black Knight represents the forces of darkness; the chieftain Kangars betrays his nation. A controversial, but very important image is the beautiful and witchlike Spīdola who symbolizes the freedom of the spirit, the eternal transformation and development.

19   *Nakts tomēr reiz aprīs saujiņu gaismas!*

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Castle on the banks of the Daugava River, its opening remark indicating that 'evening is setting in' (Rainis 1980: 199); Act II takes place at night in the Burtnieki Castle, which has sunk to the bottom of the lake. The action of the rest of the play takes place in a completely different location; the time of the events is either day (Act III in the newly established city of Rīga and Act V in the Lielvārde Castle on the bank of the Daugava), or a setting whose specific boundaries of time and space are imposable to draw (Act IV on the seashore of the Death Island). It is noteworthy that in Act II the events of the night are not only happening in the Burtnieki Castle at the bottom of a lake — which Rainis, following a tradition set by Andrejs Pumpurs (1841–1902) in his epic *Lāčplēsis* (1888), treated as a lost storage of folk treasure but that the lake also becomes the setting of the three symbolic stages of Lāčplēsis' fight: driving devils out of the castle, his victory over the dragon, and his encounter with a corpse lying in a coffin, symbolizing the spiritually inert and numb 'ego' of Lāčplēsis. Act II contains references to visual effects intended by Rainis, such as the glowing flames of devils' forks and the fire created by the dragon. The details, which are mentioned in the introductory note to the scene of the meeting of Lāčplēsis and the dead body, symbolize overwhelming stiffness: 'Then a pale, eerie light sets in: occasional snowflakes, icing in the windows, crackling frost.' (Rainis 1980: 216)

Unlike the dominating juxtaposition of light and darkness in *Fire and Night*, the interpretation of the theme of night is far from unambiguous in the play *I Played, I Danced*[20]; moreover, Rainis's notes at the time of writing the play reflect an evolution of the poet's insights, which also affects the expansion of the theme of night.

Chronologically, the first creative thoughts for *I Played, I Danced* date back to 1904, when Rainis wrote down ideas for a new play in his notes that would show the night of the devil and the devils' feat in the devils' threshing barn. At this stage, it was intended that the main character be a resourceful young man named Ansis. The title of the play is not referenced yet. A comparison of early creative thoughts, which were put down in 1904, with the text of the 1915 play, yields the conclusion that the concept of the place of the action changed in the process of creating the text of the play; moreover, essential changes have affected the depiction of the devils' threshing barn, the setting of Act III.

In 1904, Rainis planned to describe the devils' feast as 'a parody on the threshing of grain' (Rainis 1984: 293) and 'the devils' ballet' (Rainis 1984: 294), which depicts terrible infernal orgies, which, of course, take place at night:

> 'The devils' feast in a threshing barn or a swamp
>  They eat worms out of skulls [...]
>  Drink blood and tears.
>  Ravens and crows surround them' (Rainis 1984: 293).

20   The plot of the play is partially based on the Latvian folklore and partially — on the legend of Orpheus and Eurydice. The protagonist of the play Tots is a musician, who has to bring back his beloved girl Lelde (the symbol of Latvia) from the Underworld, where she was brought by the dead Master (*Kungs*). To do this, Tots has to face not only the Master, but also the devils whose  habitation, the  devils'  threshing barn, is interpreted as the world of Chaos.

However, in the creative thoughts that came approximately in January 1904, there are also ideas that characterize the threshing barn not as a fantastic environment, but as a rigid and realistic location: 'In the threshing barn. Threshing songs. The overseers with a whip, weary, the Master enters, yells: strong threshing, flogging' (Rainis 1984: 294). These creative thoughts of 1904 do not show a contradiction in the creative ideas or the author's difficulty in deciding in favor of one or the other variant of representing the threshing, but rather a more complicated concept: namely, to show Rainis's intention to present scenes in the barn within the framework of the same act as a change between two different planes: both in the fantastic context (the devils' feast in the threshing barn, the swamp in the devils' castle) and in a realistic, historical close-up context of an everyday situation (the threshing of grain under the cruel supervision of an overseer). This is reflected in the wording of the basic idea found in the notes — 'The threshing barn turns into the devils' castle and vice versa' (Rainis 1984: 294), as well as 'The devils' castle disappears, and the threshing barn appears again' (Rainis 1984: 295).

The devils' feast was unequivocally treated as something scary, inhuman, and destructive. Despite the complexity of Rainis's intention, recorded in his creative thoughts in 1904, the barn is shown as the place of action and, consequently, night is the time for threshing and the devils' feast. Moreover, the historically recognized and realistic plan, as it were, dominates in the poet's early drafts by lending a specific tonality of evil, based in socioeconomic conditions, to the night events plotted in the play.

On the other hand, in the final version of the play written in early 1915, night has received another interpretation. In this short and intense period of the development of the play, it acquired not only the well-known title *I Played, I Danced*, which was first recorded on 28 January 1915 (Rainis 1984: 293), but also its significant subtitle, *The Devils' Night in Five Acts*, which appeared in Rainis's notes on 25 February 1915 (Rainis 1984: 293), highlighting the special importance of the theme of night.

However, in the play itself, the word 'night' cannot be frequently found. The word 'night' (also 'midnight') is used in *I Play, I Dance*: 7 times in Act I, 15 times in Act II, 14 times in Act III, 2 times in Act IV and 3 times in Act V, including stage directions. The word is mainly used repeatedly in the text of Tots's song and when indicating the time of an action or event. Clearly, the word 'night' is most-used in Acts II and III. It is only logical, as the action of the play is directed according to the time of the day, starting with the events of the wedding in a decorated peasant room late in the evening in Act I until the rise of the sun in the courtyard of the wedding house at the beginning of a new day in Act V. This chronological direction within an incomplete day has given Rainis an opportunity to make the night both the architectural focus of the play and, most importantly, the basis of ideas for the development of the main character, Tots.

In Act III, Tots goes into the devils' threshing barn in order to save Lelde, who was murdered by the Master; the stage directions at the beginning of the act portray a wild environment for the action:

'The front of the threshing barn in a fantastic style.
Only vague signs of the large parts of the building are seen: roofs,
work room, gates. Trees all around.
It is the dead of night' (Rainis 1981d: 339)[21].

However, the night is essential not only as the framework for a specific act. In the case of *I Played, I Danced*, the functionality of the theme of night should rather be viewed in the context of the general concept of the play. In Acts II and III of *I Played, I Danced*, Rainis reveals the ambivalence of the night, because, on the one hand, it is related to the dangerous, the destructive (the revival of the vampire Master, the presence of infernal forces), and the dangerous static state of the inert (the depressing loneliness of the devils' threshing barns, boredom and inertia before Tots' arrival), while on the other, the action of Act III and the dialogues between Tots and the Three-headed King of the devils emphasize night and the connection of the devils' threshing barn to the creative and destructive potentials of primeval Chaos (for more, see Šiliņa 2004).

Returning to *Fire and Night*, written in 1903–1904, it is important to dwell on some significant nuances in Act IV of the play, which takes place beyond a specific time and space on the Island of Death. In this act, the word 'night' is used only twice, but in one instance it is mentioned in the powerful and poetically saturated lines of Spīdola, in which she tells Lāčplēsis about the road on which the two will be taken by the unity of beauty and strength:

'There's more — it's not the end of the road.
Beyond land's edge and heaven's fringe
Spreads a sea with no islands;
No waves, no storm, no day, no night —
Where all ends and danger is standing on guard'[22] (Rainis 1986: 62–63).

In this fragment of Spīdola's text, night is treated as the opposite of light and as a destructive cosmic force while also being one of the elements in the process of eternal creation and transformation, and it is precisely in this respect that the creative potential of the night is implemented. In her essay, published in installments in 1921, Aspazija also referred to Spīdola's text in the Scene on the Island of Death of Act 4 in *Fire and Night*. She interprets the night

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21    In comparison, the opening directions for Act 2, which only indicate that it is dark and the moon appears in the sky during the Act:
'An ancient cemetery. Old graves and crosses, tall trees; everything is overgrown by bushes and creepers. There are some graves in the foreground, like knolls. It is quite dark.
Later the moon comes out, dark red.' (Rainis 1981c: 301)

22    *Vēl tas nau viss, tas ceļš vēl īss:*
*Aiz zemes malas, aiz debess malas*
*Vēl plešas jūra, kur nau ne salas,*
*Ne viļņu, ne vētras, ne dienas, ne nakts,*
*Kur beidzas viss un stāv briesmas uz vakts.* (Rainis 1980: 267)

as one of the basic elements of Rainis's play as follows: 'Night, eternity, it is nature itself, this is an elementary lap of love, it is the great secret from which everything emerges and is born. The world of our light, woven from time and space, would melt into infinity if it were not once again linked and connected by the night where it gets warm to give birth to new worlds' (Aspazija 1987: 604). Of course, it should be borne in mind that, in this case, Aspazija's view is based on the subjective feelings and her own creative ideas; however, it should not be forgotten that Aspazija not only shared Rainis's artistic ideas, but also understood him as an artist and contributed to the development of many an artistic idea or image in his writings.

Despite the fact that the dark/light and darkness/daylight generally dominate in *Fire and Night*, Spīdola's text in Act IV forms a deviation from the understanding of night as an unambiguous destructive element, giving it ambivalence and highlighting the idea of interactions of these opposites as eternal creation, change, and development. Thus, it can be concluded that in both Rainis's unfinished and completed plays he fully developed this concept by the year 1910, when the related changes were reflected in his poetry. During his time in Slobodsk, the creative thoughts on the play *Īliņš* reveal that Rainis recognized the ambivalence of the imagery of night — and as noted, he does not always consistently stick to the unambiguous negative image of the night as a motionless, all-destructive cosmic force. This may be explained in two ways. First, Rainis considers that the collision, struggle, or interaction of opposites is one of the basic principles of drama. Second, early in his dramaturgy, Rainis gets interested in the idea of raising the struggle of opposites from the level of relations of characters to the cosmic level, thus highlighting one of the most important topics in his writing: namely, the eternal movement of spirit within the great harmony of the universe. For example, in his undated creative thoughts, Rainis remarks the following:

> 'Darkness beats the brilliant sun. But once in space two dark and dead suns will collide and fire will break out again, and suddenly a twice larger dazzling new sun will shine. It will also be extinguished after eternity, when eternity will be fulfilled. If it is after eternity, there is still much time' (Rainis 1981b: 320).

Perhaps, in the creative thoughts for *Īliņš*, we see the beginnings of ideas which were not only developed within his plays, such as *Fire and Night* and *I Played, I Danced*, but also later around 1910, when they also appear in Rainis's poetry.

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# Nakts tēmas traktējums kā Raiņa radošās laboratorijas piemērs

## Zane Šiliņa

**Atslēgvārdi:** luga, radāmās domas, dzeja, nakts ambivalence, gaisma, pretstatu mijiedarbe

Gan Raiņa (Jānis Pliekšāns, 1865–1929) dzejā, gan dramaturģijā īpaši nozīmīgi ir ar rītu, dienu un gaismu saistītie tēli, sevišķi saule, kas viņa daiļradē simbolizē dzīvību, brīvību, gara plašumu un reprezentē visaugstākos ētiskos ideālus. Lai gan niansēs daudzveidīgs, tomēr plašs un savā simboliskajā traktējumā stabils gaismas tēlu izmantojums raksturīgs visai Raiņa daiļradei dažādos tās attīstības posmos. Šī raksta mērķis ir  noskaidrot, vai un kādas izmaiņas nakts tēmas risinājumā vērojamas Raiņa dramaturģijā, kā arī iezīmēt nakts tēmas dinamiku Raiņa radošo ieceru evolūcijā, tādējādi raksturojot Raiņa radošo laboratoriju – ieceru dzimšanu, ideju evolūciju, tēmu un māksliniecisko tēlu attīstību, pretrunas, ar kurām dzejnieks radošajā procesā saskāries, atrisinātos un neatrisinātos mākslinieciskos uzdevumus, kā arī radošos impulsus, kas viņu vadījuši sarežģītajā ieceru tapšanas gaitā. Rakstā galvenokārt analizētas Raiņa lugu radāmās domas, kā arī pabeigtās lugas "Uguns un nakts" (publ. 1905) un "Spēlēju, dancoju" (1915), taču kontekstuāli iezīmētas arī būtiskākās nakts tēmas traktējuma tendences Aspazijas (Elza Rozenberga, 1865–1943) un Johana Volfganga fon Gētes (*Johann Wolfgang von Goethe*, 1749–1832) darbos, pievēršot uzmanību arī dažām Raiņa veiktā J. V. Gētes traģēdijas "Fausts" atdzejojuma niansēm.

Rakstā secināts, ka, neraugoties uz Raiņa dramaturģijā un daiļradē kopumā nozīmīgo tumsas/gaismas un dienas/nakts pretnostatījumu, jau Slobodskas (1898–1903) laikā tapušajās lugas "Īliņš" ("Kurbads") radāmajās domās Rainis ieskicējis, kā arī vēlāk lugās "Uguns un nakts" un "Spēlēju, dancoju" tālāk attīstījis arī ideju par nakts tēla ambivalenci un ne vienmēr konsekventi pieturējies pie viennozīmīgi negatīva nakts kā nekustīgā, visu iznīcinošā kosmiskā spēka traktējuma. Iespējams, tas izskaidrojams divējādi. Pirmkārt, Rainis uzskata, ka pretstatu sadursme, cīņa vai mijiedarbe ir viens no drāmas pamatprincipiem. Otrkārt, viņu kā dramaturgu visai agri sāk interesēt ideja par pretstatu cīņas pacelšanu no lugas varoņu attiecību līmeņa kosmiskā līmenī, lai tādējādi izgaismotu vienu no viņa daiļrades svarīgākajām tēmām – gara mūžīgo kustību lielajā Visuma harmonijā.

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# LETONICA

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The Role of Cultural Intermediaries

Ensuring Sustainability of
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Defining Contemporary Theater

Latvian Brethren Congregations

Cinematographic Co-productions

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