

LITUANUS

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A. SAVICKAS. *Self-portrait*, 2008, oil on canvas, 90 × 70

See article by Danutė Zovienė

Augustinas Savickas: Master Painter

DANUTĖ ZOVIENĖ

Life as an Adventure Novel

The life of Savickas is like an adventure book: he was the son of Jurgis Savickis (1890–1952), a diplomat and writer of Independent Lithuania; he was born in Copenhagen, lived in Finland, France, Belgium, studied in Geneva and Moscow, finished art studies in the Vilnius Institute of Art (1949), and travelled much of the world. The divorce of his parents and World War Two dispersed the family: Jurgis Savickis remained in France. Ida Trainer-Savickienė, his mother, returned with her son Augustinas to Lithuania from France via Belgium in 1940. Later, in 1943, his brother Algirdas, also an artist, was killed in the Kaunas Ghetto, and a year later, his mother died a tragic death. During the war years, fleeing Lithuania to the Soviet Union, Augustinas Savickis changed his name to Savickas since his diplomatic passport with the inscription “Augustinas de Savickis” was proof of his aristocratic descent and a direct ticket to Siberia. Nevertheless, the four years (1941–1945) he labored in a stone quarry not far away from Novosibirsk were no different from a forced labor-camp in terms of living and working conditions. He only disclosed publicly and more openly about the tragic fate of his family after the re-instatement of the independence of Lithuania, and, in a particularly touching and painful manner – in his memoirs *Žalia tyla* (Green Silence), 2002, published by *Tyto Alba*.

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Augustinas Savickas
Foto by D. Zovienė

The lavish creative heritage of Savickas and his multi-faceted personality are hard to cover: the artist lived for 93 years, more than 60 of which he devoted to creation, struggling through a long, complex, and very interesting life. He has left hundreds of canvases, thousands of drawings, and a great many of pages of memoirs: he was a very hard-working and productive creator. His uncontrollable free spirit, which manifested itself in a special sense of humor and various, even scandalous bohemian adventures, are not only preserved by those who knew him in their memories, but also have been remembered among artists, like legends, and in no way offset his disciplined creative process. Savickas has also left huge written archives that he prudently maintained himself and published, leaving no room for false or imaginable interpretations of his life events. While he did not avoid “inconvenient” topics in his memoirs, at the same time he confessed that “to be totally frank is impossible”. He was the frankest in his paintings.

Historical Signs of the Times

The development of Savickas' creative work is closely related to Lithuania's art history in the past century. Yet the erratically troublesome first decade of the twenty-first century was also a time of his life and creative work. The artist was a witness to the historical processes in Europe and Lithuania for nearly a century: born in the early years of Independent Lithuania, he matured as a personality in pre-war years, experienced the drama of World War Two and Lithuania's occupation, Soviet-time reality make-over and the reality of the reviving state in post-war years. His creative work is like a bridge joining Lithuanian pre-war art with twenty-first century developments. He studied at the Kaunas Art School and Vilnius Institute of Arts under the guidance of Justinas Vienožinskis (1886–1960), the founder of the Lithuanian school of modernist painting, lectured at the Institute of Art himself (1951–1972), and later, held a professorship at the Vilnius Academy of Arts (1985–1993), restoring to Lithuanian painting the most valuable features of Lithuanian pre-war modernist painting and developing them, as well as passing them on to his students in a creative manner.

As of the late 1950s, Augustinas Savickas' works were put on display at every larger exhibition in Lithuania and abroad. He was acknowledged and appreciated. Actually, Savickas did not experience the creative isolation or ideological compulsion that many artists whose creative career began in pre-war Lithuania were exposed to. Probably, because he was a leftist even before the war, or perhaps because the Soviet regime was impressed by the fact that the son of an independent Lithuanian diplomat had not remained in the West during the turmoil of the war, but returned to Lithuania.

The creative heritage of Savickas cannot be regarded unambiguously. The historical period, especially the 50-year period of Soviet occupation, has not only left deep traces and scars in the development of Lithuanian art, but in Savickas' artwork as well. The beginning of his creative work fatally coincided with the grav-



A. SAVICKAS. *Spring with an Angel*, 2007–2008, oil on canvas, 127 × 145

est period – the first post-war decade, when Stalin's regime and Soviet ideologists regulated not only people's political, economic, and social life, but also culture and art. The role of art supervisor was assigned to the Artists' Union and art councils, while these in turn were strictly supervised by party structures. It was then that the term "thematic painting" was coined, which served the imposed ideology as the synonym of the social realistic style.

Having painted pictures on the theme of war victims and refugees in the 1950s-60s, Savickas was acclaimed as one of the most publicly praised creators of the thematic figurative picture in the Soviet Union. Rejecting the artificially devised "order of themes and genres" characteristic of the Soviet period and the classification of genres that evolved historically in the development of art, Savickas' creative work obviously goes beyond the genre of thematic painting.

In the context of Soviet art, Savickas' compositions were quite divergent from the official thematic painting model: the artist managed to convey the trueness of personal experience in mandatory epic themes, which entailed a more universal and authentic plastic expression. In his compositions, he preferred emotional mood and pictorial thinking to literal. This mirrored the general artistic trend in Lithuania in the 1960s – a shift to the conditional poetic metaphor. Preconditions for that also stemmed from the expressive coloristic trend which had established itself in Lithuanian painting in the pre-war period, whose principles even the Soviet period failed to eliminate, and from the expressionistic pictorial style rehabilitated in the “warming” period, which permitted a more laconic and a more generalized view.

As an art historian and art critic of great insight, Savickas was well aware of where authoritarianism in official art and, later, in popular trends leads to. In shaping his particular style, the painter combined in a peculiar manner the principles of figure composition and still life based on the heritage of popular sculpture, the specificity of icon painting, and classical and modernist art tradition. He cherished his artistic individuality and formed a unique iconography of compositions: his large-format canvases are dominated by static compositions of several figures, with dramatic or lyrically natural metaphors prevailing, and portray specific “characters”, combining the features of Lithuanian wooden folk god figures and the Jewish type.

The Eternal Passenger

‘Anxious vagabond’ is Savickas’ peculiar *alter ego*. In his creative work, the journey can be interpreted as destiny: throughout his lifetime, the artist suffered the pain of the tragic doom and loss of his mother and brother. The journey meant not just a physical, but also a spiritual condition – suffering over the loss of the family and shattered illusions. He constantly reverted to this theme at different periods in his life. The leitmotif of the lost

family or of the *Paradise Lost* prevails in both Savickas' memoirs and paintings, where, according to him, the living constantly meet with the dead (*All Souls' Day*, 1988; *Meeting with the Dead*, 1998; *Meeting*, 2007). The painting cycles dedicated to the family lost in a maelstrom of war, merge with the universal drama endured by humanity in the face of World War Two as Europe turned into a Golgotha. The shattered world of younger days' illusions, the cruel war and post-war reality, and the genetic code of two cultures (the Lithuanian father and the Jewish mother) have informed the prevailing theme in his creative work that the artist himself aptly specified as "the man and his place on Earth".

The Roots of two Cultures

While the artist' creations are a peculiar mixture of signs and images of the Judaist and Christian cultures, Savickas seems not to have faced the dilemma of the choice between the two religions. His wide-ranging attitudes had been developed in the family he lost early on, and the culture of the city he matured and lived in. His parents never insisted on the children, Algirdas and Augustinas, choosing between the two religions (although his mother followed the Judaist tradition), expecting they would choose themselves in maturity. Unfortunately, because of the death of his brother, the choice was left to Augustinas alone.

The artist was close to the Jewish tradition through the natural line of his mother: it was from her that he had inherited not just his temperament, a subtle sense of humor, but also archetypal thinking and a peculiar world vision. On the other hand, the manifestations of the Jewish national spirit in Savickas' paintings mingle with the feeling towards nature inherent in Lithuanians – a romantic attitude charged with dramatic lyricism. This mingling results in a peculiar combination of a reserved emotion, melancholy combined with the power of color and the monumentality of image, all of which become the symbol of creative activity. Savickas paints states of being, creates another – conditional reality, in which he is looking for his *Promised Land*.



A. SAVICKAS. *Morning Has Broken*, 2007, oil on canvas, 127 × 145

The tragedy of human existence in Savickas' creative work is charged with a hard-to-describe sadness and melancholy – the traits inherent in the mentality type of the Jewish nation. The image of *Eternal Passenger* is embodied in a talented manner in Rimas Tuminas' performance *Nusišypsok mums, Viešpatie* (Smile Upon Us, Lord) staged on the motifs of the novel under the same title and the novel *Ožiukas už porą skatikų* (A Kid for Two Pennies) by Grigorijus Kanovičius (staged in the State Small Theater of Vilnius in 1994 and in the Yevgeny Vakhtangov Theater in Moscow in 2014; scenography by Adomas Jacovskis). These spiritual conditions bring Savickas close to the works of the great Lithvaks Chaim Soutine, Michel Kikoine, Neemia Arbit Blatt, Max Band, Théo Tobiasse, Jakub Messenblum and of today's Lithuanian Jews, e.g., Adomas Jacovskis, Aleksandra Jacovskytė. A fragile border between existence and life, the mild sadness of the

Eternal Passenger, and melancholy – these features are characteristic of Savickas' works as well, yet the sadness in his canvases is monumental. However, the open dramatics of his earlier canvases, especially those depicting war, in his later compositions, was replaced with more general images and a decorative color. Bright hopes rose in his search for the *Promised Land*.

Savickas' soul journey was no less turbulent than his physical one: the artist more than once stumbled, and rose again. He was no stranger to anything human (*Three drunkards*, 1988; *The Temptation of Saint Aurelius*, 1995; *Night shadows*, 1989–2001). It was not by coincidence that he called himself “a painter by the mercy of God and the Devil.” Through a peculiar interpretation of the signs and symbols of Judaism, Christianity, and Pantheism, Savickas created a *Promised Land* of his own. A land in whose colorful two-dimensional space (a painting) torment always goes hand in hand with love, pain with joy, light fights darkness, and angel fights Satan.

Wooden Folk Gods

In Soviet times, Lithuanian folk art was a peculiar precondition of preserving national identity. Some people collected works of the old god makers (sometimes obtained in not quite legitimate ways), others researched folk creative heritage (e.g., the Lithuanian ethnographer and researcher of religion Norbertas Vėlius), still others saw it as a source of inspiration or used it as an object for interpretation. Savickas had a special relationship with folk sculpture. By invoking the archaic, generalized and monumental shape of wooden folk gods, the artist developed a peculiar painting type which combined the principles of figure composition and the genre of still life. In his paintings, wooden god figures are as if personified (*The 21st century. I*, 1988; *The Signs of Suffering cycle*, 1988; *The Crucifix*, 1990–1991; *Pieta*, 1991) by giving them some psychological traits; and abstract human figures are generalized to a symbol (*All Saints' Day*, 1988; *Pain IV* from the



A. SAVICKAS. *Hello to the Morning*, 2007, oil on canvas, 127 × 145

cycle dedicated to January 13th, 1991). Such an interchange of the meanings of plastic images and interpretation of sculpture forms by means of painting is the mark of Savickas' creation.

Many of Savickas' compositions depict the Crucifix. Christ, as a biblical figure, definitely impressed the artist in different aspects: as the Savior, a historical figure, and as an object of folk art. The motif of the Crucifix in the artist's creations is not homogeneous – it changes both in terms of the meaning and plasticity, gaining the highest power of suggestion in the 1980s cycles of large-format canvases *The Signs of Suffering* (1988) and *The 20th Century* (1988). They reveal all the power of his painting, which is characterized by profound emotion, powerful expression of the brushstroke, and a masterful harmony of colors.

The underlying postulate of the Christian belief and the dominating plot in sacred art is Mother's natural bond with her son.

The iconographic prototype of Mother is one of the most important in the works of Savickas. Although the artist has not portrayed his ill-fortuned mother Ida Trakiner, the most similar type is probably the dark-haired, fair-complexioned beauty embodied in the canvases *My Mother. Killed by Fascists* from the *Dialog* cycle (1977), painted based on a picture from 1910, and *The Lithuanian Madonna* (2003–2012) painted in the last years of his life.

In Savickas' creative work, this natural bond with Mother opens up in a special way in the paintings depicting a Madonna. Her artistic image, taken over from folk figures, has from the traditional still-life motif over time become a capacious artistic metaphor, a general symbol of tenderness, suffering, ache, joy (*Pieta and the Crucifix*, 1988; *Madonna with a Child*, 2009; *The Crowning*, 2003–2011). The artist's admiration of icon painting has also had an impact on the formation of the prototype of Madonna as a mother (*Madonna with a Child*, *Among the Stars*, both 2009).

Savickas personifies not only the Crucifix, Madonna, but God's envoy on Earth – the Angel as well. The image of the Angel in the Bible is also related to the journey through life's desert to the *Promised Land*. Yet, for the artist who has confessed in his memoirs "not being a Catholic", 'Angel' meant a poetic image embodying a man's inner fight with himself, a victory of the good rather than a Christian figure.

Merging With the World

The relationship with nature is one of the most important reference points in Augustinas Savickas' creative work. Nature reveals itself in the artist's sight as a meaningful constant of existence with eternal values and feelings: love, tenderness, silence, sorrow, joy. The artist's particular feeling of nature was formed by his parents' intelligent home environment, the knowing of different cultures, travelling, personal experience, erudition, and inborn emotionality. In this aspect, one of the first and biggest inspirations was his father's, Jurgis Savickis, literary creative work. The artist called him the great painter in Lithuanian contemporary literature.



A. SAVICKAS. *Crowning Ceremony*, 2008–2010, oil on canvas, 89 × 110

By nature, the artist Augustinas Savickas is a man of the city. Unlike many twentieth century-Lithuanian artists and intelligentsia, he was not hatched in a hayloft. Nature affected him as a symbiosis of the environment and an individual, their feelings and experiences rather than nostalgic reminiscences. Savickas' relationship with nature kept changing throughout his long creative career: from its direct observation (*The Spring Evening*, 1974) and admiration to philosophical contemplations (*The Seasons* cycle, 1979) and spontaneous, unlimited fantasy (*The Morning*, 2001). In 1965, Savickas published the book *Landscape in Lithuanian Painting*, written on the basis of the thesis for which he had been awarded the Candidate of Sciences degree in Art Criticism. As an astute art critic, he realized that the traditional approach to landscape did not satisfy him as a painter. Nor did "thematic" painting.

This realization and the natural ambition to "speak" by color, brushstroke, and line were in tune with the onset of new trends



A. SAVICKAS. *Barbora Radvilaitė*, 2006, oil on canvas, 116 × 89

in Lithuanian painting in the 1960s. As well as his other contemporaries (Jonas Švažas, Jonas Čėponis, Silvestras Džiaukštas, Leopoldas Surgailis), despite official orders by the authorities, Savickas did not avoid experimentation, abstraction, conditionality, deformation, dramatic images or even hints at religious themes. Savickas' conditional perception of form not only links

his creations with the new trends in painting in the 1960s, but with the national painting tradition as well. Conditionality in his canvases is not, however, an end in itself: by changing the scales, proportions, and space relationships of figures, he creates a different logic of things and phenomena – associative, complicated, and subjective. In the two-dimensional plane of his paintings, the explicitness of phenomena and the time of events disappear. Generalization and decorativeness required canvases of a substantial format: in such, Savickas was able to reveal his temperament in full strength (the measurements of many of his paintings range from one to two meters).

Man and Nature

The human relationship with nature in Savickas' artwork, functions as if it has two codes of interpretation: a plastic view and a structural storyline. In his most mature compositions, man and nature are two equivalent players. It's just their roles in a painting's conditional two-dimensional space which are switched: people are de-personified and nature is personified. This explains the proportion ratios in the composition of paintings: both elements (a human being, tree, flower or architectural fragments) are equivalent objects. A stylized human figure in this narrative is perceived as one of the components of composition and coloring.

Savickas paints his favored character types in his compositions: a slightly bowed large-eyed Madonna (mother), a child (infant, later – his dearly beloved granddaughter), a man (wooden folk god, an old Jew), a family (the Sacred Family). The character types are not painted to the last detail, just large sorrowful eyes are highlighted. They are slightly reminiscent of Faiyum portraits. The proportions of figures are transformed and fragmented, the anatomic shapes are painted as if carelessly: a silhouette, a garment, hands, a stylized profile, an *en face* or a three-quarter turn of the head, highlighted with a contour line, are marked with a few brushstrokes (*A Woman*, 1990–1992; *In an Old City*, 1992;



A. SAVICKAS. *Revelation*, 2007, paper, watercolor

Grandmother with a Little Child, 1990; *An Old Man with a Little Child*, 1990–1992; *In the Home Country*, 1988; *A Green Evening*, 1989).

Over time, the artist creates as if he has formulated an iconography, composition schemes, symbols, and character types of his own. Yet the underlying specifics of Savickas' painting lies in his specific feeling of color, which is based on inexhaustible variations of the color green and its relationships with red, blue, white and black colors, highlighting the contours of shapes, and in the spontaneous gesture-like manner of putting paint onto the surface of a canvas.

A Hedonist in Painting

The artist's late period of creation, which covers the 1990s to the first decade of the twenty-first century, witnessed a peculiar transformation: sorrow and tragedy turned into lyricism, poetry and even sentimentality, with some degree of Savickas' kind of

humor (he always liked to make fun). The laconic and at the same time expressive character of his painting – deep, rather dark coloring – were replaced with consciously chosen primitivism, striking combinations of colors, and decorativeness. The freedom of expression which opened up, underpinned by professional mastership, serve as evidence of an aesthetic catharsis the artist was filled with towards the end of his life in painting flowers and happy people. Savickas seems to have exhausted his tragic outlook up to a limit: the perpetual agonizing and folk art, which used to inspire, seem to have been set aside. Wooden folk god figures in the paintings were being replaced with Biblical characters (Adam and Eve, Moses, angels and saints), and mythical fields and groves “populated” with girls, noblemen, and noblewomen reminiscent of large-eyed dolls.

Stylized character types remained almost unchanged, just the diversity of moods was changing. By the way, if, in the early period of creative work, the image of ‘woman’ was definitely associated with the image of the artist’s ill-fated mother, now, the artist felt affection for youth and beauty. The accent of paintings, emitting a powerful vital energy, is nonetheless the gaze of the portrayed character. The eyes in the type of the face of a woman, child or man are the main element of expression. They are big, black, and clearly portrayed in almost a roughly shaped oval (*Together*, 2007).

Even though Savickas was changing together with the changing life around him, he did not go too far, remaining loyal to painting. Nevertheless, he never gave up the meaning of an image and did not turn towards full abstraction for the sake of “pure” painting. He remained loyal to not only color, but his favored composition (large, fragmented figures whose silhouettes are highlighted with a contour line) and large-format canvases as well. The relationship between the two main characters in his compositions – environment and figure – remained, however, unchanged. Previously, the environment seemed to have enveloped the figures, while now it merged with exuberant nature, becoming one of its components. A new character, flower, was



A. SAVICKAS. *Passion I*. 1995, paper, mixed technique

introduced, which, in terms of both composition and coloring, is the component of a painting equivalent to a human figure and perhaps is even more important than it (*Among the Flowers*, 2002). These two “players” – a figure and a plant – are enlarged in a static composition and thrive in a space filled up with natural, architectural elements or ornaments of an abstract drawing.

Assessors saw in the changed painting style of Savickas not only signs of him being in his second childhood, but also manifestations of the grotesque, mannerism, or even kitsch. This position of a painter of venerable age was quite astonishing, sometimes even baffling, as, in Lithuania, the term *kitsch* has always been associated with bad taste, philistinism. Savickas does not create kitsch (although he had once given away that he was impressed by it), but is not afraid of it either: he was always fond of risk and game. He likes to take one by surprise, to intrigue, shock and even tease (he was always a bit of an actor). It pleases him to paint differently, unlike what viewers and critics are used to seeing and assessing. In painting primitive, “child-ish”, kitsch-like compositions, Savickas consciously provokes the

viewer. Especially in compositions where he paints smart noblemen and young noble ladies, “accommodating” them in mythical groves. Admiration for the Lithuanian nation’s honorable history should probably be associated with the artist’s bloodline, his father’s family: the numerous family of Jurgis Savickis (in addition to Savickas, the eldest, there were eleven children in the family, of which only five reached adulthood) was of noble origin. Yet, in his visions of Lithuanian history, the artist is searching for calm, comfort, and shelter rather than his roots.

Hence, in the last decades of his creative work, Savickas, like a Lithuanian Henri Matisse, took delight in painting flowers and children. He felt excited by human closeness, love and friendship. The inexhaustible theme in which he seems to find compensation for the loss of his mother, brother, and overall – his family, in his young days. He created the metaphors of romantic goodness, beauty and harmony – his own *Paradise Lost*, which he yearned for and dreamed of. This is a mystical space where nature is in constant renewal, reality merges with fantasy, flowers unfold in the most amazing colors and shapes, people live in love and harmony, playful angels fly, and there is heavenly whimsical music.

While not just a painter, but an art critic as well, Savickas had no ambitions to answer the question: What is beauty? He just painted that beauty all through his long life.

*Translated by DALIA ŠATIENĖ
and KERRY SHAWN KEYS*

Value of the Curonian Spit Cultural Landscape

DALIA TRAŠKINAITĖ

The value and significance of the Curonian Spit, a site of an outstanding cultural landscape created by natural forces, and human hands and mind, which is on the UNESCO World Heritage List, are integral when it comes to new constructions or the preservation of significant objects of heritage. This site is often perceived or analyzed without considering its integrity and cultural landscape. The article deals with the components, morphological structure, and dual architectural identity of the part of the Curonian Spit which belongs to Lithuania. It also tries to discuss the issue of the value of this outstanding natural object, which could help preserve it for future generations.

Introduction

Lithuania has four sites of Outstanding Universal Value on the UNESCO World Heritage List: the historical center of Vilnius, the Curonian Spit, the Kernavė Archaeological Site (the Cultural Reserve of Kernavė), and the Struve Geodetic Arc (a total of 34 station points, 3 of which are located in Lithuania). In addition to the sites mentioned above, there are two more on the country's Preliminary List of Heritage: the application of Kaunas Modernism Architecture "Kaunas 1919–1939: A Capital Inspired by the Modernist Movement" and the Trakai Historical National Park. The first site to appear on the UNESCO World Heritage List was the historical center of Vilnius in 1994, and later the Curonian Spit – for the authentic cultural landscape shaped by human interaction

with nature – in 2000. This territory stretching over Lithuania and the present-day Russian Federation was put on the World Heritage List under value criterion V, which defines that it must be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change.¹ The site's description in the World Heritage List indicates that

The Curonian Spit is an outstanding example of a landscape of sand dunes that is under constant threat from natural forces (wind and tide). After disastrous human interventions that menaced its survival, the Spit was reclaimed by massive protection and stabilization works that began in the nineteenth century and are still continuing to the present day.²

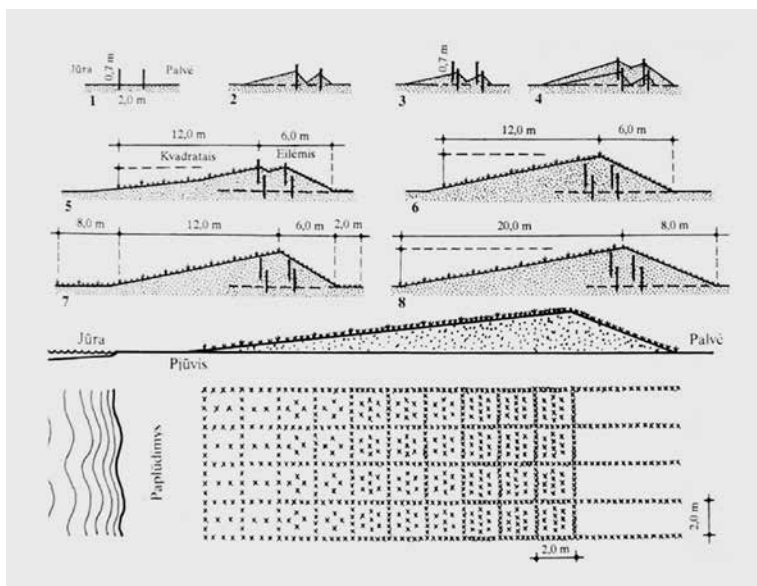
This article surveys the aspects to be taken into account in order to understand the importance of this site, its value, at the same time considering any type of activity in this territory: new constructions or conservation of significant heritage property, and how important the elements of the cultural landscape are in elucidating the identity of the protected site and analyzing new buildings being put up in this site, as well as their impact on this territory. One should bear in mind that the buildings put up illegally in this exceptional site have not only become objects of considerable ethical controversies, but of legal procedures as well. Despite the site's status, there have been efforts to date to build objects or to reconstruct existing ones in violation of the laws on protected areas, thereby impairing their value.

Formation of the Cultural Landscape

First of all, mind that the Curonian Spit is a site in Lithuania of Outstanding Value as a cultural landscape which is significant not only for the Baltic Region. The Operational Guidelines for

¹ UNESCO, *World Heritage Nomination, Curonian Spit*, 7.

² *Ibid.*, 4.



The plan and cross-section of protective embankment (according to M. Daujotas)

the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention (1996) define cultural landscape as a combined work of nature and man illustrative of the evolution of human society and settlement over time, under the influence of the physical constraints and/or opportunities presented by their natural environment and of successive social, economic and cultural forces, both external and internal. In this case, the Curonian Spit is a sand-dune peninsula, 98 km long and 0.4–4 km wide. Its survival to the present day has been made possible only as a result of human ecological wisdom, ceaseless human physical efforts, and financial expenses of the State to combat the erosion of the Spit. At first sight and without going into detail, one might think that this site is only protected in terms of its nature. It is namely due to its Outstanding Universal Value, the taking into account and use of its landscaping tradition, that it has been entered in the accounting of cultural sites and, in the Description of Properties, is marked with letter C, i.e. as Cultural, and not as Site Natural or

Site Mixed. The priority purpose of the Curonian Spit is public knowledge and use rather than nature conservation since the management of the site itself is implemented on the grounds of conservational management rather than prohibitions.³

From the historical perspective, one must understand that this territory was and has been under the influence of natural forces, and, in different historical periods, incessantly faced new challenges for its preservation. Imprudent deforestation in the sixteenth–seventeenth centuries subjected the sands of the peninsula to erosion by the winds, and 14 settlements were buried in the sand over the eighteenth century. In the nineteenth century, having realised the mistakes made, trapping of the wind-blown sands was undertaken, using the wind itself and the natural material, plants. Under the current dunes of the Spit, the plan for the conservation of which was drawn up by a professor of Wittenberg University, Johann Daniel Titius in 1768, lies a whole sand reinforcement system. Throughout the length of the peninsula, openwork wood pole barriers were installed to halt the drifting sands, plants taking deep root and growing perfectly in the sand were planted in the entire territory, and a 10–12 m high protective ridge, resilient to wind and water erosion, was shaped along the seashore.⁴ In implementing this plan, the sea *palve* (the sandy flat pre-dune coast) was afforested, thus mitigating the severe marine climate, while the lagoon *palve* (the sandy sea coast plane between the protective dune and the drifting dunes) was given to people's residential needs for good. This morphological structure of the landscape, consisting of four strips stretching along the Spit: three protective (the protective seacoast ridge, the seacoast *palve* forests, and the Great Dune Ridge with mountain pines) and one preservative (the settlements), should once again be stipulated by some legal acts so such a system of the Curonian Spit's cultural landscape, formed in the nineteenth century, given the ecological security created there and its visu-

³ Bučas, "Kraštotvarkinė problema Kuršių nerijoje," 71.

⁴ Ibid., 72–73.

al singularity, further serves as the basis for management and maintenance guidelines. Hence, the natural and cultural elements are integral to the Curonian Spit's values, and form its identity; therefore, when analyzing this site, it is crucial to realize it as a whole and to take into account its morphological structure.

The four-strip morphological structure along the Spit has historically a rather clear purpose which has justified itself for more than one decade. For landscape and landscaping factors, there should be no interventions of new buildings in the zone of the Great Dune Ridge, the protective seacoast ridge, and those built in these zones should be reconstructed since quite many of them have already changed their original architectural expression. Several sample areas have been left to demonstrate what the entire landscape of the peninsula could have been if it were not for the landscaping solutions adopted in the nineteenth century. The Grey (*dead*) Dunes, stretching between Juodkrantė and Pervalka, and the *living* dunes in the Nagliai Nature Reserve and more southwards of Nida should be considered as such examples, like peculiar reminders of potential consequences. In addition to the above-named structure, cultural landscapes have more components. As specified in the European Landscape Convention (adopted by the Council of Europe in 2000 and in force in Lithuania from 2002), complex objects, which may include rural settlements, historical landscape areas or fragments thereof whose cultural identity consists of various components of historical landscape: ground surface relief shapes, green areas, bodies of water, road network, constructions, historical land holdings, actively form a site's identity, which should also condition the construction of new buildings in a protected site. In art criticism, the role of landscape in cultural history, its composition and aesthetical features are important.⁵ It should be noted that by perceiving a landscape merely as the whole of its natural elements and green areas, and attributing to a cultural landscape just historical parks, we mislead and distort the general understanding of a protected area.

⁵ Jurevičienė, *Kraštovaizdžio kultūrinė vertė: išsaugojimo principai*, 32.

Rural and Resort Identity

In the Description of the Outstanding Universal Value, the Curonian Spit is defined as a UNESCO protected world heritage site, as

a sandy and wooded cultural landscape on a coastal spit which features small Curonian lagoon settlements. The Spit was formed by the sea, wind, and human activity and continues to be shaped by them. Rich with an abundance of unique, natural, and cultural features, it has retained its cultural and social importance.

Along with the importance of the landscape's morphological structure and the factors behind its formation discussed above as well as its general spatial structure, the scenic panoramas and the silhouette from the side of the Curonian Lagoon are singled out as the most valuable elements of this site.⁶ The settlements based in this lagoon *palve* strip are among the major elements of this cultural landscape forming part of the visible surviving silhouette of its panorama. Part of the cultural formations – sand-flooded villages, which have become archaeological heritage, are visible though mostly covered with sand. Unfortunately, only two archaeological sites are on the Cultural Heritage Register of Lithuania, although it is known that buildings in this peninsula were first buried in sand in 1588,⁷ which already corresponds to the concept of archaeological layer.⁸ This is one more part of the Curonian Spit, one more field awaiting archaeological and art criticism investigations.

The old fishermen villages forming the panorama of the Lagoon that have been transformed into seaside resort settlements, their planned spatial structure and architecture: the old wooden fishermen houses, nineteenth-century constructions of professional architecture – lighthouses, piers, churches, schools, villas, ele-

⁶ UNESCO, *Outstanding Universal Value of the Curonian Spit*, 1.

⁷ Bučas, *Kuršių nerijos nacionalinis parkas*, 18.

⁸ Braškytė and Prapiestienė, "Kuršių nerijos nacionalinio parko paveldo būklės vertinimas," 48.



Parnidis dune in Nida

ments of marine cultural heritage – all of them are among the most valuable elements of the cultural landscape.⁹ Four fishermen village settlements are of a more complex, planned structure: Juodkrantė and Nida are of a simple linear structure; Pervalka and Preila have, from former nineteenth-century fishermen settlements, over time developed into resort areas; Juodkrantė, already in the early nineteenth century, had the largest number of objects of resort architecture – villas, a large portion of which have survived until today; whereas in Nida, while currently the largest in terms of territory, this is not the case. Villas are the heritage of professional architecture in these settlements, already built not only of wood, but also brickwork, and are, of course, much larger than typical residential houses in fishermen villages. Such a combination of a resort and a village of a dual identity virtually opened the way for new architectural expression. To gain an even fuller picture of the activities of the residents of the Curonian Spit,

⁹ UNESCO, *World Heritage Nomination, Curonian Spit*, 15–16.

it should be noted that the first amber mine in Europe was opened in Juodkrantė in the mid-nineteenth century, and while it only functioned until the end of the century, the then focus on this industry has left some signs of its existence, the Amber Bay.

In the post-war period, these settlements were becoming increasingly similar to resort-type ones, gradually ousting the image of fishermen village. The settlements of Nida and Juodkrantė were densified and built all around with large-size Soviet buildings and the rest houses *Rūta*, *Auksinės kopos*, *Audėjas*, *Ažuolynas*, etc. All of these buildings at that time served the numerous flow of tourists and holidaymakers, while currently many of them are under reconstruction, some are standing derelict and disused to date. Construction on a massive scale in the direction of the pine forest in Nida, thereby destroying the rather large protective pine massif, had jeopardized the natural ridge discussed above, the dunes. With a view to a deeper inquiry into the site and stronger contextuality, the first complex plan for the management of Neringa approved in 1967 provided for the construction of buildings not higher than three-story, uniform color solutions, and covering of gable roofs with tiles; the use of traditional elements of décor for buildings was also recommended.¹⁰ A significant portion of buildings erected at that time have been more than once reconstructed or are to be reconstructed, and one of the most common signs of development is the replacement of flat roofs with gable ones, and volume partitioning into smaller volumes.

The Ethnographic Aspect in the Landscape of the Curonian Spit

In Western Europe, an interest in ethnographic studies and rural studies (the studies of rural culture) in general was first taken up in the eighteenth century. It was then that ethnology and the studies of sites and regions flourished, the fundamentals of sci-

¹⁰ Ramanauskienė, "Kuršių nerijos architektūra po 1945 m.," 478.



New dwelling house in Pervalka

entific ethnography formed, and different works describing the peculiarities of the then village and its historical development, as well as rural life were written.¹¹ Information about Baltic villages was gathered in the nineteenth-early twentieth century by Western researchers; the rural life in Lithuania Minor and different aspects of it began to be described somewhat earlier. Wider and more extensive ethnographic research, research of traditional architecture was carried out in the interwar period, when there was a focus on the idea of a state based on the Lithuanian nation,¹² and the development, construction technologies, and the elements and decoration of residential houses were explored. The empirical research peaked in Soviet Lithuania, dividing it into ethnographic regions and recording them, as well as singling out their peculiarities: the color, size, scale, the internal plan, decorative elements, the situation of homestead buildings and other elements in the homestead plan were explored. The publications that are followed in designing new objects in protected

¹¹ Purvinas, *Lietuviškosios kaimotyros raidos bruožai XIX–XX a.*, 3.

¹² Varanaukaitė, “‘Savo’ ir ‘kito’ skirtys,” 14–15.

areas as well as in the Curonian Spit national park are based largely on the practice of this research.

This and subsequent ethnographic research dictated the further model of the site's architectural cherishing. We can more or less presume what a fisherman's dwelling was like in the thirteenth century, but we definitely cannot have the general picture today; therefore, we can only refer to the knowledge accumulated in the late nineteenth-early twentieth century, which should likely help those designing new buildings in this area. In all four settlements, there have survived fishermen homesteads that are on the list of the Register of Immovable Cultural Heritage of the Republic of Lithuania; also on the Register, as historically the oldest, are parts of the settlements falling under double protection, as owing to the status of urban reserve they also have the status of protected area or national park. The present-day homesteads are witnesses to fishermen's former lifestyle, building technology, the regular structural plan, small volume proportions, the shapes of the gable or four-slope roof with a ridge; those later – to a change after 1933, when the settlements were assigned the resort status and the residential house changed its traditional structural plan and view at the same time. These buildings have also retained quite many ornamental decorative elements near the roof ridge, and their coloring is based on the contrast principle: the details are lighter – white, blue, and the façade plane is dark brown. The issue of the extent to which such principles are adhered to when building new objects compared to the houses that are protected remains topical.

Protection of the Site and the Importance of the Social Impact

The Curonian Spit is a UNESCO World Heritage site regulated by certain directives and monitored by the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS); expert visits to it are also made. When it comes to globally significant heritage sites, it is also important to know and to stick to the guidelines based on



Panorama of Nida's coastline. Photos provided by the courtesy of the author

which objects are conserved for future generations. In addition to international documents, the Curonian Spit is also a national park to which the Republic of Lithuania Law on Protected Areas and the park management regulation are applied, and these are probably the key legal documents effective in this area. They regulate the concept of the area which is in line with the sustainable development ideology,¹³ whose priorities include preserving the site's natural and cultural heritage, authenticity and integrity, and securing the planning experience. The vast majority of solutions pertinent to the Curonian Spit are aimed at preserving the site's valuable properties and the integrity of its components. To preserve the identity of the landscape, a regulation on the solutions to the correction of the resulting visual disharmony in the protected management area has been adopted.¹⁴ The regulation sets forth tight requirements for new objects in the two largest national park settlements, Nida and Juodkrantė, changing

¹³ Resolution of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania "On the amendment of Resolution No 702 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania of June 6, 2012 'On the change of the approval of the management plan for the Curonian Spit national park'," 1.

¹⁴ Ibid., 5.

them somewhat, the main requirements being related to not increasing their volume, disjoining of connecting points, and the change of materials. In the landscape renewal areas: parts of the Curonian Spit settlements with the general value of a landscape, also parts of the historical and urban reserves¹⁵ where the historical network of streets and paths, and the urbanistic structure are conserved, it is forbidden to change the landscape's spatial composition, its panoramas and silhouettes, in order to prevent the background of forested dunes from being obscured by buildings. In this area, significant attention is also given to the management of new objects in line with the above-named requirement: not to increase building density and the height of a building.

In addition to preserving this cultural landscape for future generations, it is also very important to understand that strong technological development entails an increase in the physical quantities of heritage and that, historically, each period in time leaves its own trace and more or less changes objects that had occurred in that place before, which also change inevitably. Conservative conservation of heritage is currently ineffective; it no longer ensures the use of cultural values since their use does not interfere with the preservation of those values and extends their functioning.¹⁶ Therefore, the existence of a viable community in the conserved site, its willingness to be there, and to value and cherish the old traditions, in this case, the fishing tradition too, are also becoming crucial.

Under the influence of considerable demographic change on the site's landscape, with an increasingly substantial decline in local population, both the landscape and the identity of the Curonian Spit itself have been perishing as well. The seasonal mode of living that has established itself does not encourage emotional attachment to one's environment, local communities are no longer strong, and permanent penalties and prohibitions do not encourage them to cherish the heritage or be devoted to tra-

¹⁵ Ibid., 6.

¹⁶ Bučas, "Naudoti saugant ar saugoti naudojant?" 3.

ditional activities and ethno cultural living. Over time, this leads to the vanishing of heritage which can no longer be reclaimed. According to Gregory Ashworth and Peter Howard,

The Lithuanian landscape, in terms of the world heritage cultural landscape categories, is a unique depository of mixed heritage that has emanated over hundreds of years in consistent interaction between nature and culture, like a cultural and natural park of mini urbanistic and rural (ethno cultural) Eastern European heritage for the use of which we are responsible.

According to the Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (the Faro Convention), it is important that society itself would be directly involved in the protection of the site, in social influence, and in social willingness to preserve the heritage and the site. A natural question arises, how many residents in the Curonian Spit are willing to cherish the fishing tradition, which was one of the main conditions for maintaining the cultural landscape as it is when the Curonian Spit has already established itself as a recreation area.

The UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, with regard to the landscape aspect, indicates the importance of the cultural and social factor, which helps in shaping local culture and contributes to human well-being and the enforcement of European identity. Maintaining a cultural landscape is possible through permanent residence and traditions rather than environmental prohibitive regulations. For these words to come true and become reality and for us to have the site preserved and usable, a valuable part of local and national identity, further legal action is necessary so society can take part in cultural heritage assessment processes and reveal valuable properties of the heritage through the community prism; also, ratification of international heritage documents by the country and active education and motivation of the community and society are necessary. Spiritual bonding with heritage sites, the understanding of their value, and identification of the community with the site itself is an aspiration which is created by local residents. Thereby an active community become

the protectors and cherishers of a heritage site directly participating in the protection of the site's viability and continuity. The voice of society in coordinating various proposals prepared by state and local government institutions should not remain a handicap, but become significant in the solution of heritage protection issues arising for the community in a heritage site.

Conclusions

The UNESCO World Heritage site, the Curonian Spit, created by interaction between humans and nature, has the Outstanding Value of a cultural landscape and the nineteenth century-morphological system with already created ecological security and visual identity, could become an even stronger base for its management and maintenance guidelines. Natural and cultural elements are integral to the whole of the Curonian Spit's values, shaping the outstanding identity of this unique site in the Baltic region. Therefore, in analyzing, protecting, using, taking good care of or designing new objects in this area, it is important to understand (and to take account of) all components of the landscape including the ground surface relief shapes, green areas, bodies of water, road network, constructions, and historical land holdings, which ultimately form the identity of this site. The protected silhouettes of the Lagoon panoramas of the settlements that have grown in the protective strip areas have a dual architectural identity – rural and resort (the latter somewhat outweighing), while in the main national park documents, in terms of the buildings' expression, the principal focus is on the description of ethnic architecture. Preservation of the site's structure, heritage values, and engagement in traditional crafts and businesses are impossible without active participation of the local community for which this site is important, and without motivating the public for which their willingness to get involved in heritage processes becomes natural. It can hardly be expected that the heritage will be maintained and conserved if the local

community does not care about it and does not interfere in the destruction of natural structures by human hand. Only then will the Curonian Spit be maintained sustainably and taken due care of, taking into account the significance of the values of the cultural landscape. In such a manner, the beauty of this site can be expected to be preserved for future generations.

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*Translated by DALIA ŠATIENĖ
and KERRY SHAWN KEYS*

Curonian Spit: Sand Calligrams

PHOTO ESSAY BY ROMUALDAS VAIČEKAUSKAS

Natural paradox: not an oasis between sands, but a desert between waters.

Wind churned unsustainable landscape – sand beyond my feet and clouds above my head.

The first day of creation of the world when footprints tell a story about a human being yet to appear or sand pictures about forms to come.

The longer I look at the sand, the stronger impression I get that each tiny piece of it is alive.

A star no longer provided light in the sky? A bird who ascended to the sky never gets back?

Don't worry – you won't disappear without leaving your footprint. Most probably you have been memorized by the sand and someday you will be remembered by the wind...





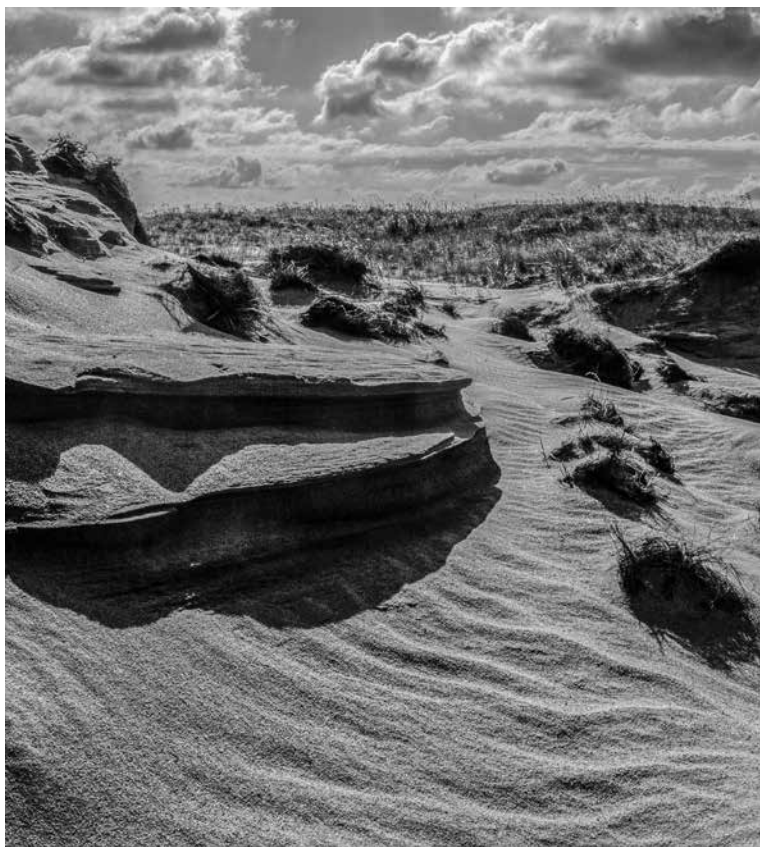




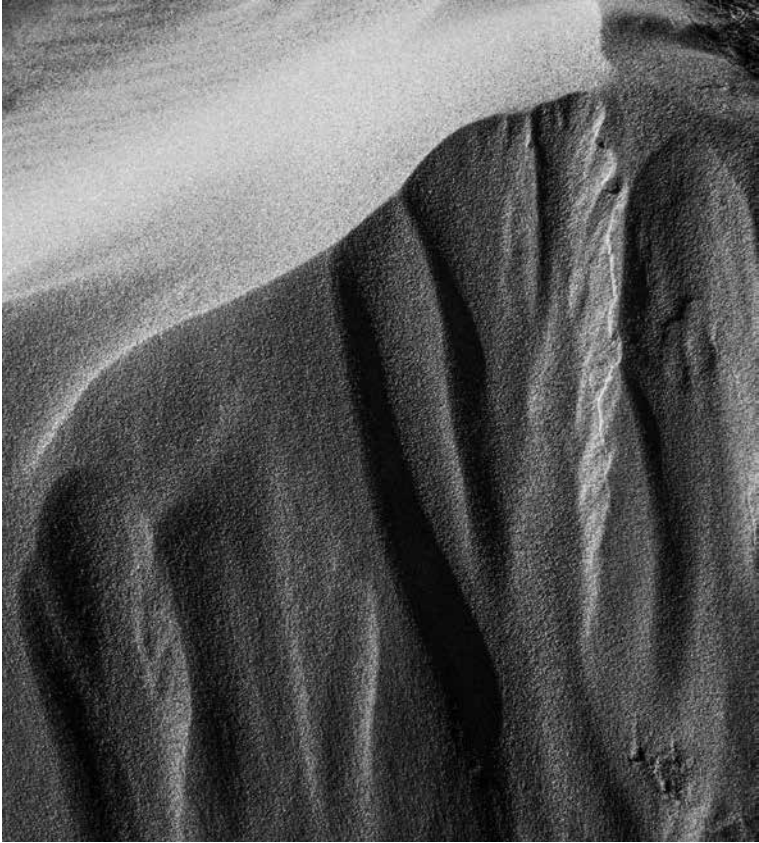


















Lithuanian Paths in Modern Architecture: Structuralism in the Creative Work of Rimantas Buivydas

GODA SŪDŽIŪTĖ

The development of architecture in Soviet Lithuania, as you may well know, experienced complex transformations. After WWII, in the epoch of Stalinism, the Soviet ideology tried to curb its development by pushing a classicist expression. The regime saw this expression as the handiest for the adoption of the Soviet system and the communist ideology through monumental works of art. Over time, the pseudo classicist canon (which was officially referred to as “socialist realism”) was renounced. The Soviet ideologists realized that, in order to “catch up with the West and surpass it”, it was necessary to change the trajectories of artistic ideology and let in the Modernist Movement of in architecture, which, in the first post-war decades, was considered an expression typically and exclusively of “bourgeois” Western culture. Upon the change in the ideological climate, architectural modernism, from a bitter enemy, turned into a convenient friend. By encouraging architects to undertake new, progressive means of expression, it was aimed at achieving multiple purposes: to make the creators more loyal to the system, to demonstrate to the West that the Soviet Union was not alien to the modern ideology, and, at the same time, with the support from the creators of architecture, to essentially change the townscape of the cities and the cultural scenery of the occupied and colonized states (both the whole of

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the Baltics and Lithuania). Not surprisingly, as of the 1960s, the Lithuanian architects welcomed the Modernist Movement of architecture, delighted in the seemingly more liberal climate of the architectural policy, and wishing to make up for the period when the authorities would ideologically establish what the architecture of the state creating communism was to be.

However, the aim of this article is not to discuss the entire development of architecture in the Soviet period either (this in part has been done by authors of monographic studies on the development of Soviet Lithuanian architecture), although the analysis of the all-embracing cultural changes in that complex and multi-layer period will likely be a project for the future. In this article, we shall confine ourselves with one case of architectural creation – an overview of the trajectories of the creative work of the renowned Lithuanian architect and researcher of architecture, Rimantas Buivydas. I believe that the overview can help give a more general picture of the changes in the architecture of the time. On the other hand, it obviously shows that modernism in the architecture of Soviet Lithuania was multifaceted and thus it cannot be classified and catalogued easily. The case of Buivydas is also interesting in that the architect, who had gained recognition among his colleagues for his particularly modern architectural expression, later not only consciously deviated from the principles of modernism, but also engaged in smaller scale projects, focusing on the field of the design of public spaces and monuments.

Rimantas Buivydas (1945–2017) started out on his professional career in the 1970s when modernism in the architecture of the Soviet period was no longer a taboo. After finishing his studies of architecture at the State Art Institute of Lithuania in Vilnius (currently the Vilnius Academy of Arts) in 1969, he embarked on a fast and rather successful career as an architect, undertaking lecturing in addition to architectural activities. In 1971–1985, he taught various disciplines at the Department of Architecture of the State Art Institute in Vilnius. In 1981, he defended a doctorate of architectural science in architectural theory at the Ilya Repin Institute of the Academy of Arts of the USSR in St. Petersburg (formerly Leningrad). In 1985, he became an associate professor

of this Institute and its vice-rector a year later, and held this position until the dramatic changes in 1989, when the revolt of the lecturers and students against the Institute rector, who was very loyal to the then authorities (and was famed for his authoritarian inclinations), painter, professor Vincentas Gečas made the young lecturer, who was very popular among the students, not only resign from his office, but also look for work in other institutions. So the later academic career of Buivydas developed in another institution of higher education. After taking on lecturing at Vilnius Gediminas Technical University, he became an associate professor in its Department of Architecture, later a professor. Working in this University, he made a major contribution not only as a lecturer of architectural disciplines, but as a scientist and administrator as well, founding the sole Lithuania Department of the Basics and Theory of Architecture, and became its Head. He led this Department for more than a decade. As the Head, he prepared 13 doctoral candidates, all of whom defended the dissertations of Doctor of Architecture. In 2003–2014, he was the Dean of the Department of Architecture of Vilnius Gediminas Technical University. He has written four monographs on architecture and a number of scientific articles, including more than ten on the expression of symbolism in architecture. In 1996, together with the architect Leonardas Vaičys, he established one of the first professional magazines of Lithuanian architecture – *Archiforma/Lithuanian Architectural Review*, which continues to date, and was its editor until 2005. In 2019, the Department of Architecture of Vilnius Gediminas Technical University paid tribute to the architect and the former Dean by organizing a special scientific conference in his memory.

Structuralism and its Reception in Lithuania

In this article, we are interested in the trajectories of professor Buivydas' professional activities as an architect. Among other things, they reflect how the paradigm of modern architecture formed in Lithuania. The early period of the architect's creative



Holiday home Guboja, Šventoji

work was closely related to the aesthetics of structuralism. Structuralism flourished in the West with the creation of structural linguistics thanks to Ferdinand de Saussure, and had an impact on other branches of art, including architecture. In architecture, structural linguistics established itself when the crisis surrounding the International Style, proclaimed widely by Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson in the 1930s, surfaced in the 1940s, and the creators of Western architecture took on new directions. In the 1960s–80s, Lithuanian architects also took an interest in the perspective of structuralism from the perspective of architecture, moreover since the Soviet authorities ceased to consider architectural modernism a forbidden fruit. According to Buivydas, Lithuanian architects' knowledge of structuralism at that time was fragmented rather than comprehensive. The biggest source of inspiration for them was not the theoretical paradigm of structuralism, but specific creations of Western architecture.¹ "Whatever the evaluation, it was the tangible suggestiveness of the creations of this [structural] architecture that was observed,

¹ Buivydas, *Architektūriniai struktūralizmo idėjos reflektai*, 114.



Holiday home Guboja, Šventoji, axonometric drawing

analyzed, and adapted the most. It was namely their morphological attributes, from the most general shapes to individual details, that first attracted our attention, becoming the prototypes of local interpretations,” the architect wrote.²

In spite of the superficiality of influences, the effects of structuralism on the then architecture in Lithuania were clearly appreciable. Under the umbrella of structural architecture, fairly dissimilar and individual architectural projects received more than one award; for example, the building of the secondary school in the Lazdynai residential district in Vilnius (architect Česlovas Mazūras, 1974) or the Wedding Palace in Vilnius (architect Gediminas Baravykas, 1974). In conclusion, we could say that the manifestations of structuralism in the works of architects who designed in Soviet Lithuania and had mastered Modernist aesthetics were characterised by rationality and methodical, systemic composition, which allowed them to

² Ibid.



Monument to the people shot during WWII, Eržvilkas

break from, according to Rimantas Buivydas, “the morphotype of a plain ‘box’ divided by horizontal or vertical stripes which had prevailed in local modern architecture until then”.³ The architect pursued this aim by invoking grid compositions and “spatial blocks” (or modules). Modules were connected into continued configurations developing in space even beyond the designed territory. In comparison with the traditionally designed single-volume buildings of a closed composition, they have a closer relationship with nature. According to Buivydas, such modules enabled one to

highlight the components, lay bare the functional and constructional composition, respect the specificity of the purpose of the object, affirm the principle of “façadelessness”, and shape a structure moving on the ground surface freely and plastically in a vertical direction.⁴

³ Ibid., 107

⁴ Ibid., 115.

The principles of geometrical spaces, as defined by Herman Herzberger,

as well as in chess, offer a great number of possibilities following fairly well-defined game rules. Regarding architecture, this allows the creation of something sustainable, something that can adapt to new circumstances.⁵

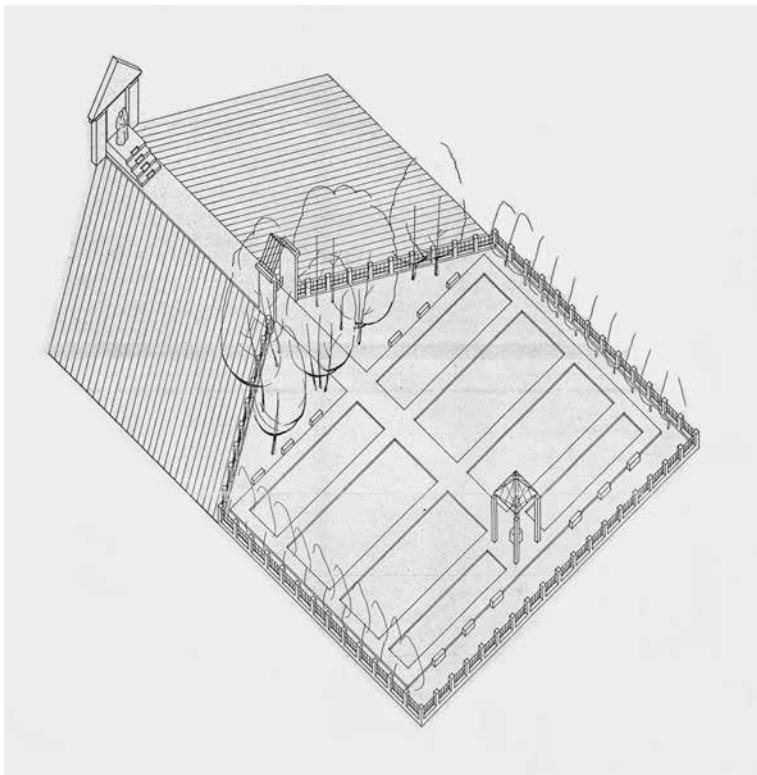
This modelling method, defined by the literary critic Terence Hawkes as the core principle of structuralism,⁶ attached little significance to six individual elements in a composition, since the whole meaning of a creation lies in its ratios rather than elements. The principles of a structuralism composition are similarly explained in Buivydas' texts; on the other hand, they are no less obvious in his early architectural works, at the same time contributing to the understanding of a more general context of this trend in architecture in Lithuania in the late Soviet period.

Structuralism in Rimantas Buivydas' Architectural Designs

Both artistic and conceptually structuralism principles of composition are probably best reflected in the architect's design for the holiday home *Guboj* (Šventoji, 1976), created following the ideas presented by Moshe Safdie's pavilion in the world exhibition Habitat 67 in Montreal 1967. The Lithuanian architect who aimed to express a semantic content in many of his works, in creating this seashore complex, also appealed to the expression characteristic of bionics: by emphasizing analogies with natural shapes, he interpreted the image of wind-drifted dunes in his construction. Different researchers of Lithuanian architecture who analyzed works of this trend found the result a success, and the author himself explained his aim as follows: "To not straightforwardly conceptualize the general expression of the object".

⁵ Herzberger, "Structure is not Structuralism".

⁶ Hawkes, *Structuralism and Semiotics*, 17–18.

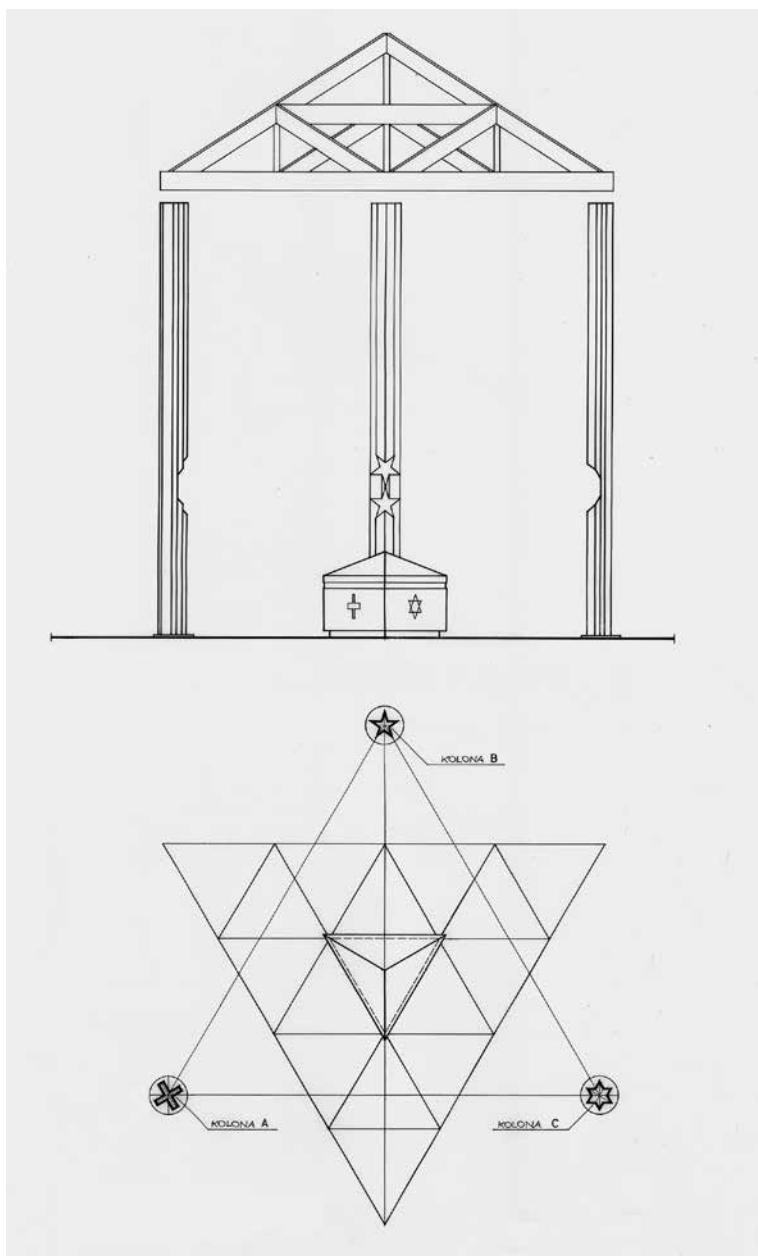


Memorial to the victims of war, Mažeikiai, plan

Therefore, the metaphoric level of this design was to be associated with what we consider '*genius loci*'.⁷

If we look at this architectural construction on location and analyze its drawings, it is obvious that the structure of the object grows in space not just at a horizontal level. The plan of the plot is divided by invoking a regular grid and is filled with residential blocks composed of six to seven modular blocks raised on pylons. The roofs of the modules rising in one direction become the terraces of the blocks above. While these, according to the architectural historian Liutauras Nekrošius, who analyzed the

⁷ Buivydas, *Architektūriniai struktūralizmo idėjos reflektai*, 115.



Memorial to the victims of war, Mažeikiai, axonometric drawing of the monument



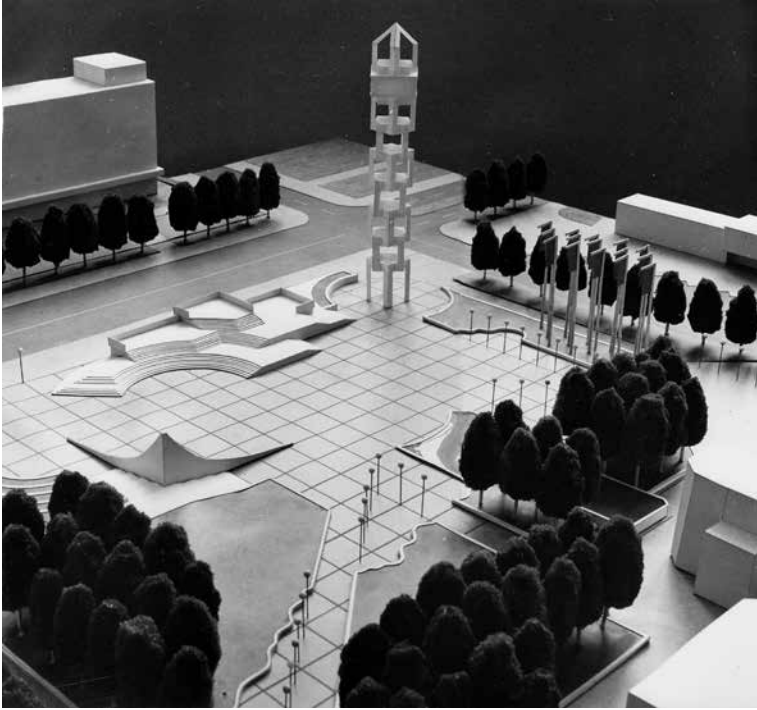
Monument to Jogaila and Jadvyga in Budapest, Hungary. Sculptor: Dalia Matulaitė; architects: Jūras Balkevičius and Rimantas Buivydas

development of structuralism in architecture in Lithuania, reflect “the idea of residential blocks, as a flat/garden, suggested by Le Corbusier as early as 1922”.⁸ The remaining free space was used as a public recreation space, providing the whole of the holiday

⁸ Nekrošius, *Struktūralizmo idėjos šiuolaikinėje Lietuvos architektūroje*, 97.

complex with multi-functional elements. By extending the composition, not only the use of the space for functional purposes was resolved rationally, but the artistic expression of the whole structure revealed in a suggestive way as well.

However, structuralism in module design is most easily recognizable in Buivydas' designs for buildings (using similar principles, the boathouse in Palūšė was designed in 1971; unfortunately, the project has not been implemented). The residential block in Akmenė district (1971) is also attributable to the creative work of this type. On the other hand, the principles of structuralism can also be observed in the designs for public spaces and examples of the Architecture Minor produced by the architect. Among them is the monument to the people shot during WWII, in Eržvilkas (architect Buivydas, sculptor Vladas Urbanavičius, 1980), which is a clear example of a grid plan. Nevertheless, this concept of structuralism was probably best conveyed in the unimplemented design for the central square of the city of Mažeikiai (architects Buivydas and Juras Balkevičius, 1986). The site for this square was chosen near the cinema and the Culture House, frequented objects at that time; therefore, the authors were looking for a solution that would make the square a space used actively for different needs. The two axes crossing the square askew are combined with an evenly divided grid, and on this foundation, local centers are formed. An easily understandable geometrical shape, a circle, lifted to several different levels and adapted to different functions – a stage for public events and elevated platforms for the audience to sit – became the module for the composition of this public space. The multifunctional spaces were intended for both active and passive recreation, and social gatherings of a different scale. Although the object was designed in the Soviet period, the pomp and officialism characteristic of the period have been avoided. The repeating shape creates the effect of an integral space and ensures that the observer sees it as a single space rather than separate areas. The structure of the public space also correlates with the high (45m) sculpture from assembled reinforced concrete el-



Model of the square of the city of Mažeikiai

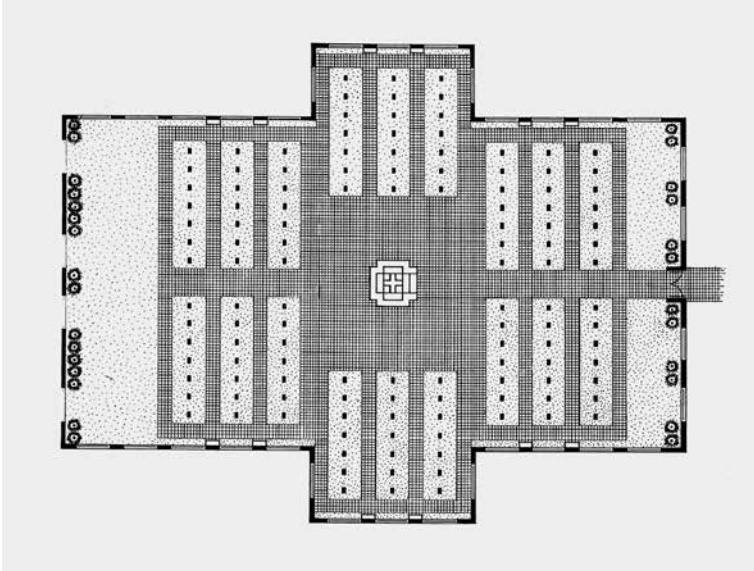
ements. As the starting point for expression, a module which can be combined indefinitely was chosen; plenty of combinations are also reflected in the structure of the square.

The Principles of Structuralism in the Architect's Unimplemented Designs

The term "architecture on paper" was very characteristic of the past century. Many modern architectural visions, for good or for ill, have remained on paper. However, in the West and the East, this phenomenon was conditioned by different circumstances. Architects who designed in the Soviet period were obliged to

put up with the fact that only a small part of their designs would finally be implemented; furthermore, they would be fairly different from their original vision. Hence, the political and ideological context of the time dictated specific conditions for the creative work of both Buivydas and other architects of his generation. The restrictions that existed during the Soviet period changed over time, but even though the regime began over time not just tolerating, but also encouraging modernist expression, the themes of architectural designs continued to be restricted, and architects were obliged to renounce many of their artistic ideas. This applies to competition designs in particular. As a result, a fair amount of the quite interesting architectural designs of Buivydas can be attributed to the genre of “architecture on paper”: they are full of interesting ideas and bold solutions, yet they have survived just as witnesses of creative conceptions and aspirations and thus the surviving wholeness of the architect’s creations is fragmented. Today, we can just fancy the architect’s creative biography if all of his conceptions would have reached the stage of implementation. On the other hand, the designs and competition materials surviving in the architect’s archive enable us to better understand those aspects of composition and artistic expression that were of particular importance for him.

For a few decades, the architect produced designs for the transformation of public spaces. One of the most eloquent examples of this genre is the design for the sculpture of the heroine Gražina described in the poem by Adomas Mickevičius, which reveals, among other things, the progress of the initial idea (sculptor Dalia Matulaitė, architects Juras Balkevičius and Rimantas Buivydas, 1991). The sculpture was to be erected in Birštonas, on the embankment of the River Nemunas, in the public space formed by the architects. However, over time, this design was renounced, giving priority to another monument dedicated to the Grand Duke Vytautas of Lithuania (sculptor Gediminas Jokūbonis, architect Vytautas Čekanauskas). It was implemented in 1998. Later, efforts were made to offer Gražina to



Cemetery for German soldiers, Kretinga, plan

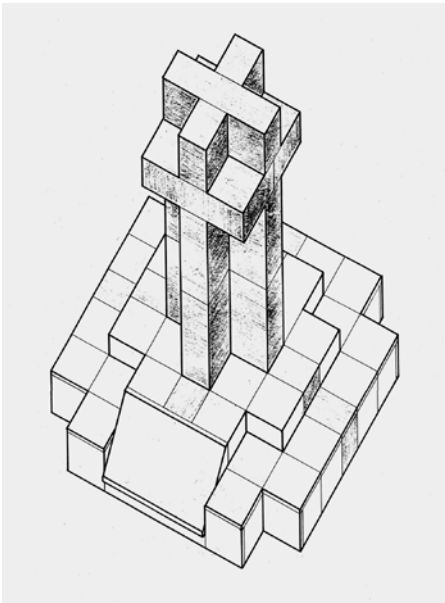


Fig. 9. Cemetery for German soldiers, Kretinga, drawing of the pergola

Vilnius, yet the design of a substantial volume would be outtrivalued by other, ideologically more favored conceptions; hence, the sculpture of Gražina one day occurred in the yard of the Lithuanian Seimas, yet the design was implemented on a much smaller scale and without referring to the architects.

The original design for this monument is nonetheless interesting to us as an example of structuralism aesthetics in the creative work of the architect. His notes reveal that the dynamic center of a composition was of great importance for him:

The phenomenon of dominance emerges in the purposeful implementation of a multifaceted complex of the possibilities of architecture and sculpture: by accentuating the message of artistic contents, highlighting environmental features, exactly identifying the point of maximum tension, and emphasizing expressively the subordinating origins. This way, a sculpture is given an exceptional meaning and a compositional value. All energy of the artistic suggestiveness of the environment is concentrated in it, as a peculiar focus.⁹

The significance of such a center in this sculpture's spatial composition, which was designed by the architect with a co-author, is emphasized through the trajectory of the observer's movement in space. In this design, the sculpture is passed round when climbing up the ramp, and upon finding themselves in front of Gražina's martial figure, observers view her rising majestically above themselves. The whole of the surrounding space gains a dramatic character by invoking passagesways that are several meters-high.

On the other hand, not every design of Buivydas' is characterized by so close a physical relationship with its environment. The center is highlighted when the public space does not have a very expressive context to which it could be related both visually and physically. A task of this nature had to be solved by the architect in designing his unimplemented memorial to the victims

⁹ Buivydas. *Pozityvai ir negatyvai*, 122.



Monument for first Lithuanian newspaper Aušra in Šiauliai, Lithuania. Sculptor Dalia Matulaitė, architects: Jūras Balkevičius and Rimantas Buivydas, 2003

of war in Mažeikiai (architects Buivydas and Jūras Balkevičius, 1989) and the cemetery for German soldiers in Kretinga (architects Buivydas and Jūras Balkevičius, 1993).

In both cases the urban environment was not yet created, so the architect had to form an independent space. In both cases, he employed the strict symmetry that the architectural historian Rudolf Wittkower has described as an inspiring unity in its parts and wholeness.¹⁰

In the design for the cemetery for German soldiers, the geometrical center is formed at the cross-section of the transverse and the longitudinal axes, thereby enhancing the feeling of order and serenity inherent in such an object. In the center of the design, reproducing the plan of a Catholic church, there rises a peculiar “altar” – a granite cross assembled from cubic-shaped modules. Orderly grave lines could extend from it in every direction if they were not restricted by a rigid metal fence.

Structuralism principles in the formation of wholeness, typical to the creative work of Rimantas Buivydas, manifest themselves in his memorial for the victims of war as well. He highlights the longitudinal composition axis, and designs centers, complementary to each other, at its different poles. The rigid composition of the memorial accentuates its semantic expression. The project is bipolar. One part of it is the space of a multinational cemetery, with a pergola in its dynamic center. The overall volume combines religious and secular symbols concealed in the cross-sections of the columns: a cross, a pentagram, and a hexagonal Star of David – an allusion to the national and religious identity of the buried people. The other part of the design is an open space with a sculpture of a family waiting in a doorway. The spaces that have a partly preserved independence are combined by means of a path and a gate, thereby creating a strong semantic/symbolic connection between Heaven and Earth – the earthly world and life eternal.

¹⁰ Wittkower, *Architectural Principles in the Age of Humanism*, 240.

Summing Up

As mentioned above, structuralism in Lithuania was one of the manifestations of the Modernist Movement in architecture, which flourished in the 1960s–1980s and which goal was to dissociate from the aesthetics of the International Style. Though local architects were lacking in theoretical sources, the information was fragmented, their desire to connect their creative work with the paradigm of modernism, to synchronize with Western trends in architecture was very strong. Many architects from the late Soviet period surrendered to this attraction, including Rimantas Buivydas, who, unlike many of his colleagues, was purposefully interested in architectural history and theory. Not surprisingly, he was one of the first architects to begin implementing the principles of structuralism in the context of architecture in Lithuania. His work, the recreation complex *Guboja*, is considered one of the most outstanding examples of structuralism in Lithuanian architecture. In many of his designs (both for buildings and public spaces), grid and modular design can be seen. Although the architect has designed relatively few objects more or less large in volume, in Lithuania's architectural history, he remains not only the pioneer of structuralism, but also a particularly creative architect who aimed to implement the theoretical principles of the art of architecture in practice and, apart from other things, combined modernism with tradition and symbolism.

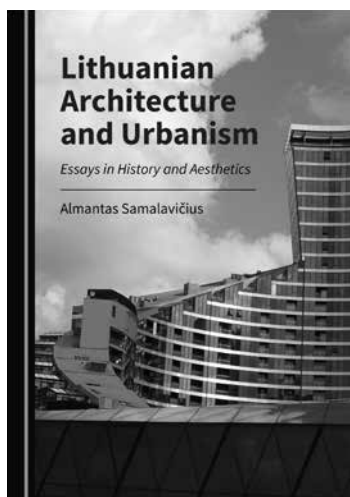
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Translated by KERRY SHAWN KEYS,
DALIA ŠATIENĖ

BOOK REVIEWS



Almantas Samalavičius
*Lithuanian Architecture
and Urbanism*
Cambridge Scholars,
2019, 210 pp.
ISBN 978-1-5275-2228-2

It is refreshingly encouraging that Almantas Samalavičius – a philosopher with broad interests in the arts and architecture – has taken it upon himself to examine one of the most essential aspects of cities, namely the sense of place. This is particularly significant when most contemporary architects place their individual self-expression over and above the architectural expressions that collectively make for the sense of place. As Samalavičius candidly notes, the architectural expressions called Gothic, Renaissance, Baroque and Neo-Classical architectures, have collectively marked the architectural landscape of Vilnius, his hometown. And although he notes the disruption brought to Lithuanian architecture following the colonial periods of Tzarist Russia and the Soviet Union, as well as the devastation of World War Two, he is clear-eyed in acknowledging that these periods did also leave some positive marks, architecturally speaking, despite the deleterious social effects.

Drawing on the idea of *genius loci* (the spirit of a place, as outlined in Christian Norberg Schultz's seminal phenomenolog-

ical study), the book begins (Chapters One, Two, and Three) by explaining the main features of Vilnius' Old Town. Samalavičius rightly links the neglect and destruction of the urban character of Vilnius and the erosion of its public spaces with the rise of Modernism and its later association with the consumer society. The case of Vilnius was particularly acute because of the conjugated effects of modernist planning and Soviet planning practices after the War.

Samalavičius then turns his attention (Chapters Four, Five, and Eight) to the most important aspects of the sense of place – the urban space, the square – as he examines successful squares like Vilnius' Town Hall Square and Cathedral Square. Citing Camillo Sitte's important urban study, *Der Städtebau nach seinen künstlerischen Grundsätzen*, Samalavičius criticizes the primacy of technical, or engineering thinking that reduced many cities into urban wastelands, and recommends the use of Sitte's ideas in the formation of meaningful urban space. He is rightly concerned with the privatization of Vilnius' squares and the detrimental effects on the form and use of urban spaces, on the very notion of the public realm. This notion is particularly concerning because of the lack of civic monuments, as the author notes, as he discusses the commemorative role played by public sculpture in retaining the memory of a place (neighborhood or square).

Chapters Six, Seven, and Eight consider how, in the name of progress, highways and high-rise buildings caused barriers and discontinuities between various quarters in the city. Furthermore, they injured the connection between Vilnius and the surrounding hills, and thus the city's formerly clear panorama. Quite importantly, two images in the book show the striking contrast between the typological clarity and varied architectural characters of St. John's Street with the alienating high-rises of the new center of Vilnius. The first belongs to a place, the second is placeless. It could be in Buenos Aires, Nairobi, or Chicago. So much has been transformed in the city, and so many continuities have been interrupted, that the author wonders if one can truly speak of a sense of place.

This opinion can be seen as a wake-up call to the public, to architects and architecture students alike who are interested in maintaining and continuing the architectural characters that gave Vilnius its former sense of place. Samalavičius spends the remaining chapters of the book in examining some of the architectural characters that distinguished Lithuanian architecture, the very qualities that distinguish Lithuanian Gothic or Baroque, and the Italian influences. The author examines also the symbolic role played by sculpture in articulating church interiors, and culminates his reflections with notes about the importance of proportions in the architectural elevations of civic buildings.

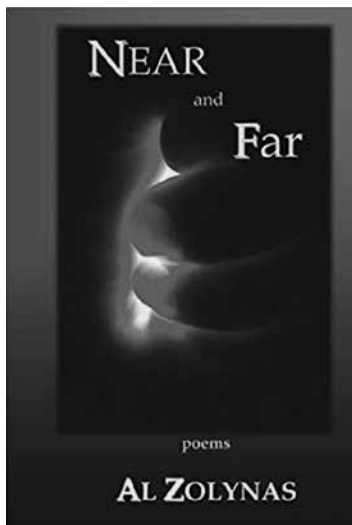
A caring and educated public will be well-served by this very approachable book, in particular because it is presented by an intellectual who is not an architect, but who worries deeply about his native city. Architects, Lithuanian or abroad, need a philosopher in order to remind them of three very obvious conclusions:

- 1) An architecture that is the result of the purely private expressions of architects that serve the consumer society has yet to produce anything that one can remotely call a sense of place.
- 2) Agglomerating multiple architectural combinations in the name of a certain pluralism without using clear urban typologies – streets, squares, blocks – is a recipe for chaotic juxtapositions.
- 3) There are rationally achieved common agreements that can indeed produce a sense of place. One has but to look at the rich multiplicity of architectural characters that are usually called “historical”. They are historical not because of their age, but because of some intrinsically proven qualities that have stood the test of reason, and because rational minds have reflected upon them and added to them. Architectural tradition is not only inherited, it is also improved and renewed by rational minds.

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Near Enough



Al Zolynas

Near and Far: Poems

Garden Oak Press, 2019, 143 pp.

ISBN 978-1-7323753-6-9

I first encountered the poetry of Al Zolynas many years ago in a lovely anthology called *A Book of Luminous Things*, edited by Czesław Miłosz. There, among so many poets of renown, was a Lithuanian-American! When I moved to Vilnius in 2013, I encountered his work again as a translator of Lithuanian poetry. Also, the poet Marius Burokas told me how he translated Zolynas' poems for the Druskininkai Poetic Fall Festival. Thus, it was with pleasant anticipation that I opened his fourth collection, *Near and Far*.

It has been over two decades since Zolynas published a collection, and this work does not disappoint. We can discern many of the themes that have preoccupied the life of this itinerant immigrant. Born in Austria to Lithuanian parents in 1945, Zolynas grew up in Australia before moving to the United States and finally settling in San Diego where he taught literature at Alliant International University, taking up an interest in Zen along the way. Here we can find two of the primary thematic concerns of his poetry: the life of the Lithuanian immigrant, replete with issues of assimilation and nostalgia, and the prac-

tice of Zen Buddhism, with its focus on the present moment, passing beauty, the wonder of existence, and a critique of consumerist and materialist values. These themes work themselves out through accessible poetry (read: not avant-garde, not densely packed with symbolic figuration) written in the now-standard American narrative-lyric style, occasionally interspersed with the odd formal verse. Some of the rhyming poems are indeed a bit odd, but delightfully so, such as the witty “Half-Baked Sonnet” that is exactly half a sonnet (7 lines), while “Villanelle of the Iron Bell” surprises as a well-wrought Zen Villanelle (that complex, repetitive verse form inherited from the French, and one in which nary a Zen poem was written before – as far as I know, anyway).

Many of the best poems in the collection involve a nostalgic and knowing gaze at the past, whether the author’s past as an immigrant boy, or the more distant past of his ancestors’ life in Lithuania. Here are the closing stanzas of “Near Šunsakai, Lithuania”, relating a trip to his ancestral home:

Perhaps this water that she
now drinks, drawn up from fifty feet
below the earth’s surface, perhaps
this same water came down as rain
in my mother’s youth—why not even on the same day,
the first day my father brought her home
to meet his parents, and his father charmed
and amazed my mother with his fiddle playing

and his fabled story-telling, and that silly trick
he was famous for among the children
of the region, where he would laugh uproariously
and then, passing his hand down over his face,
stop abruptly, and freeze his face
into stone for a few seconds
until the children started to get

edgy, and then he’d smile and tickle their ribs
and play them another song or tell them
another story, perhaps the one about

the time he encountered the Devil
when he was mushrooming in the forest
and had lost his way.

The use of water an imaginative trigger, bringing up the past (as from the well the character drinks from) is especially nice, even Proustian. Water is our body's vital essence, connecting us to earth and sky, and memory (imagination?) may play that role for the soul, tying together our otherwise fragmented lives, past to present, self to other. A good number of poems here have this imaginative power, some in relation to Lithuania and immigrant life and some not. The end of the book (perhaps the last thirty poems or so), however, is a bit weaker than the first two thirds. There is not as much at stake in these poems, emotionally or philosophically (spiritually, if you prefer). They introduce what I would call a third theme of the book: the bourgeois complacency of a satisfied middle-class retiree. There are poems about playing tennis, cats, nice trips to Europe, and other pleasures of retirement: they read well, but are, how shall we say, a bit tame, domesticated, or self-satisfied. We can be happy for the author, but he doesn't show us anything really new, or bring us to any unexpected places of poetic experience. Yet, even here, Zolynas' imaginative powers can latch onto a banal experience and pull us into a more elevated space, such as this little piece of nostalgia:

An Old Story

Across from the house
where I grew up
lived an old couple
whose shadows slowly
passed behind windows
as we children
played in the street
crying out in our joy and wonder.

And here I am now
half of an old couple
behind winter windows listening

to children play in our cul de sac
as a dark sky
deepens and settles
and I swear I can hear
my own voice
calling out in the street.

Although I believe the book would be stronger without many of the final poems, they do not present any hindrance to the reader, and may in fact touch on issues that many find more near than far from them. So, whether Lithuanian, Zen, aging or suburban, readers will find in this collection experiences they can relate to, pleasantly and insightfully transformed by the magical well-water of art. May we all drink so deeply.

RIMAS UZGIRIS
Vilnius University

Costume Dramas of Kristina Sabaliauskaitė



Kristina Sabaliauskaitė
Silva Rerum. Vol. I–IV
Vilnius: Baltos lankos
2008–2016

Kristina Sabaliauskaitė became extremely popular in Lithuania almost overnight as soon as the first volume of her historical novel titled *Silva Rerum* was published back in 2008 and since then the circle of her admirers grew considerably with each new volume published, making her one of the most popular Lithuanian authors both at home and in neighboring countries (like Poland and Latvia) during the last decade. Her appearances at Vilnius International Book Fair drew crowds of admiring readers queuing up for book-signing sessions, and the novel made impressive sales with each volume eventually reprinted several times. One might suspect that the success of her first book propelled her to write a sequel; however, as the author insisted in one of her numerous interviews, she had initially planned to write a sequence of novels made up of four volumes and the clue to this *quarto*, according to her, can be found in the very first volume where the family of Jonas Motiejus Norvaišas, a lesser Lithuanian provincial noble, is introduced to the readers for the first time.

All four of Sabaliauskaitė's novels are focused on the 17th and 18th centuries – an extremely dramatic, historically and culturally important and otherwise eventful and colorful period in the history of the Lithuanian Grand Duchy. This was a period of several devastating wars (notably with Sweden and Russia) when hordes of foreign troops occupied the territory of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, killing civilians, raping women, devastating towns and villages and taking their prey after demolishing palaces, manor houses, churches, monasteries and synagogues. It was a period when the country's capital – the city of Vilnius – was lost to the enemy's army for the first time in its history. These events were accompanied by several other equally devastating events – several outbreaks of plague and fires sweeping large parts of the country, including its capital Vilnius. On the other hand, the 17th century witnessed the ascent of Baroque in various manifestations. After the devastating wars with Sweden and Russia, occupied, robbed and essentially destroyed by the invading army, Vilnius came back to life with busy and bustling building enterprises, and some of the most important Baroque architectural monuments were erected during this particular period, including Vilnius SS. Peter and Paul's Church and the so-called Antakalnis Versailles – a suburban area where Lithuanian nobility built grand villas surrounded by parks and orchards, some of which – like the recently restored Sapieha's palace can still be found there.

However, during the two decades of independence before WWII, writers hardly considered this epoch a worthy subject for writing about, as the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth according to the prevailing cultural ideology was then viewed as a "foreign" period, during which the Lithuanian nobility lost its national roots, language and the country was gradually polonized. During the Soviet era, panoramic historical views were discouraged and even suppressed. At the end of the Soviet period, some writers set their eyes on the 17th century. At least one of them – Jurgis Tornau, who happened to be a general director of the library of Vilnius University, wrote a successful two-vol-

ume historical novel titled *Žveng žirgelis*, published back in 1985–1986 under the pseudonym of A. Telšys.

Despite the fact that a few novels depicting these events were written and published in Lithuania several decades ago, none of them can presently rival the four volumes of Sabaliauskaitė's novel *Silva Rerum* in its impact on the public or the number of sales. The publication of the sequential volumes of *Silva Rerum* was indeed an important literary event in Lithuania where sales of national fiction have largely shrunk during the recent decades after the enormous success of the Lithuanian novelist Ričardas Gavelis, whose *Vilnius Poker* (coincidentally recently translated into Polish) sold nearly 100,000 copies in just two editions back in 1989. Not a single Lithuanian author has managed to set a new sales' record since then.

The plot of the first novel of the *Silva Rerum* sequence starts unfolding when the two children of Norvaiša – Uršulė (Urszula) and Kazimieras (Kazimierz) witness the phenomenon of death for the first time. This happens in the summer of 1659. Though it happens to be the death of their cat, the event is described in full detail that also initiates the reader into the life of the family of a lesser provincial nobility. The reader also learns how the father and mother of these two children escaped Vilnius during the very moment when the city was occupied by foreign troops for the first time in its history (in 1655), and when hordes of Cossacks, loyal to the Russian tzar were plundering the city, killing old and young people and raping women no matter their age and laying their hands on property. Immediately after these events, the tone of the narrative slows down and the reader can catch glimpses of the nobility's life in a Lithuanian province where the family of Norvaiša continue to dwell in their manor house after a dramatic escape from occupied Vilnius during the Russian onslaught.

The narrative unfolds further and we can follow how the two siblings who had pains burying their cat grow up. Jonas Motiejus Norvaiša and his wife take their almost adult children to Vilnius where their daughter Uršulė intends to become a nun,

and their son Kazimieras is expected to attend the university... This is how the novel proceeds, introducing more and more characters, and describing new localities like Vilnius – the historical capital of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.

The second part of the sequence of volumes written immediately after the publication of the first one, takes its readers into the eighteenth century, and starts with the fire of Vilnius and eventually the plague hitting the city and the whole country, ending with the disastrous consequences. This volume also introduces a number of new characters, a Jewish doctor Aarnas Gordonas (Aaron Gordon) being one of the most colorful and interesting. It is this character through which Sabaliauskaitė provides some interesting glimpses into the every-day culture of the Jewish community and local doctors – depicted with historical accuracy.

The first and the second volume of the sequence among many other things demonstrate at least a few qualities of Sabaliauskaitė's writings: first and foremost she seems to know the epoch, its culture and everyday life pretty well. This comes as no surprise as in a professional capacity she is an art historian who wrote a doctorate on this particular period in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and had studied the material and literary sources seriously; secondly, she knows how to create an impressive and captivating narrative and let it unfold in a breath-taking manner that involves the reader. Having in mind the scope and manner of her writing, it is no surprise that the four novels making up *Silva Rerum* have sold spectacularly and not only in her home country but also abroad.

These two qualities are most probably sufficient to make her sequence of novels best-sellers in several countries; however, I personally think that there is something more than just the professional handling of the writing material. I believe that one of the reasons for Sabaliauskaitė's success is a careful choice of material: the 17th–18th centuries are quite suitable for locating problems that are of interest to contemporary readers. The other thing is her extremely masterful handling of the subject material: being

an art historian with a PhD focused on the period, she skillfully uses her knowledge of historical material, depicting everyday-life, manners, clothing, culinary, book titles and the like. On the other hand, she has a gift for an unveiling narrative that captures the reader. Unlike most other Lithuanian fiction (except a few authors renowned for their unique ability to narrate the events depicted in their prose), she has a true gift for story-telling and literary composition, breaking her narrative into pieces, sustaining the suspense and relocating her stories from one century to another without losing the general plot line. To cut it short – her writing is anything but boring and as we all know contemporary readers just hate to be bored.

Despite the fact that the novel contains a well-constructed plot, an attractive narrative capturing historical descriptions as well as characters that are not one-dimensional, I nevertheless have some skepticism about its aesthetic value or longevity for various reasons, and I don't believe it will be much read in some ten or fifteen years. Like Jostein Gaarder's *Sophie's World*, it is a timely book that might become extremely popular with one generation and then slowly fall into oblivion after the thirst for this literary genre gets satisfied. It is certainly not a type of literature that outlives a certain time and a certain context. As a matter of fact, few people today continue to read the historical novel *Žveng žirgelis* coincidentally focusing on the same era and penned under the pseudonym of A. Telšys (aka Jurgis Tornau) in 1985–1986, though it has some parallel qualities and was generally well-composed as well as equally entertaining.

Some books seem to be destined to remain the reading material for one generation only because in their form and aspiration they remain just pieces of civilized entertainment (or to that matter – popular education) and not much more beyond that. I guess it applies to Sabaliauskaitė's tremendously popular sequence of novels *Silva Rerum* as well.

ALMANTAS SAMALAVIČIUS

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Aurelijus Gieda
*Manifestuojanti Klėja:
Istorikai ir istorika Lietuvoje
1883–1940 metais*
(Clio in the Manifest:
Historians and 'Historics'
in Lithuania in 1883–1940)
Vilnius: Vilniaus universiteto
leidykla, 2017, 640 pages
ISBN: 97860945986616

Historians, historical research, and writings on historical topics are also part of history. In each era, they present narratives interpreted by the respective generation. Jörn Rüsen argues that without the cognitive dimension, or knowledge of the impact of the past events on the present and future, the memory of the past cannot be effectively incorporated into the discourses concerned about the interpreted experiences of time.¹

In the classical era, grand narratives found in the works of Herodotus and other historians became part of everyday life. In modern societies, this cognitive dimension has emerged as a science. The historical scientific narrative of the 19th–20th centuries had an impact on a society (or at least its elite) becoming, along with the historians who created it, an important subject of science. Paradoxically, with the emergence of the new medium, the Internet, which embodied democracy, their voice had lost its former power in the polyphony of non-professional interpretations.

¹ Jörn Rüsen. *Istorika. Istorikos darbų rinktinė*. Compiled and edited by Zenonas Norkus. Vilnius: Margi raštai, 2007, p. 49–50.

Historians Povilas Lasinskas, Audronė Janužytė, Valdas Selenis, and Aurimas Švedas have written extensively on contemporary Lithuanian historiography. Lasinskas discussed the establishment of the discipline of history at the University of Lithuania in Kaunas (now Vytautas Magnus University) in a monograph, *History as A Discipline at Vytautas Magnus University in 1922–1940*.² Janužytė examined the impact of historians' political thought on state-building.³ Selenis, using prosopography, attempted to determine the historians who were active during the twenty years of the first independent Lithuania, as well as their connections.⁴ Švedas presented a study about Soviet Lithuanian history in which he analyzed the rules historians had to obey, highlighting the fact that some of them succeeded in producing valuable work in spite of strict ideological settings.⁵

Aurelijus Gieda has provided the broadest research in terms of both the issues discussed and the chronological boundaries of the period in question. The subject of his monograph is historians and 'historics', or theory of historiography. The problem of defining chronological boundaries indicates how difficult it has been to accommodate these two elements which, in comparison to the author's doctoral thesis,⁶ have been broadened.

In fact, depending on the issue of the research, the chronological frames can vary. To represent the beginning of the formation of the modern Lithuanian historical narrative, one can

² Povilas Lasinskas. *Istorijos mokslas Vytauto Didžiojo universitete 1922–1940 metais*. Vilnius: Vaga, 2004.

³ Audronė Janužytė. *Historians as Nation State-builders: The Formation of Lithuanian University 1904–1922*: academic dissertation. Tampere: University of Tampere, 2005.

⁴ Valdas Selenis. *Lietuvos istorikų bendrija 1918–1944 metais. Kolektyvinės biografijos tyrimas*. Vilnius: Vilniaus pedagoginio universiteto leidykla, 2007.

⁵ Aurimas Švedas. *Matricos nelaisvėje: sovietmečio lietuvių istoriografija (1944–1985 m.)*. Vilnius: Aidai, 2009.

⁶ Aurelijus Gieda. *Istoriografija ir visuomenė: istorika, istoriko profesijos ir istorinės kultūros aspektai Lietuvoje 1904–1940 m.*: daktaro disertacija. Vilnius: Vilniaus universitetas, 2013.

choose Simonas Daukantas and his *Būdas senovės lietuvių kalnėnų ir žemaičių...* (The Character of Ancient Lithuanians and Samogitians...) published in St. Petersburg in 1845, or in Gieda's case, the newspaper *Auszra* (The Dawn) which Jonas Basanavičius began publishing in 1883 and in which pages Daukantas spoke to a growing number of Lithuanian readers.

Searching for the beginning of professional Lithuanian historiography or for the students who were among the first ones to study history at universities, the year 1904 could be the reference date. That year Jonas Totoraitis defended his dissertation on King Mindaugas in Fribourg, Switzerland. In the same year, the ban on the Lithuanian press in the Latin alphabet was lifted by the Russian Empire, and in 1905, the very same Totoraitis raised the need for the Historical Society and the journal.

If we were to look when Lithuanian historiography became institutionalized, we would have to choose the interval between 1918, 1920 and 1922. On November 29, 1918, the State Council of Lithuania discussed the issue of the restoration of the university, where the establishment of a department of history was also mentioned. In 1920, the Courses of Higher Learning, the first institution of higher education in independent Lithuania, offered a course on history. The university, which opened in 1922, already had the Department of History.

Gieda invites one to cross the threshold of the historians' *guild* and to view and study the culture of Lithuanian humanities in a more complex way. The author uses the term 'manifesto' which functions as the backbone in this book. For him, manifesto is an example of radical texts of various genre (review, polemic, pamphlet, program, and etc.), which were plenty in professional Lithuanian historiography in 1883–1940. Gieda's conclusion that Lithuanian historians of the middle generation were learning from German historiography, most likely in a 'French way,' by paying attention to a methodical, rigorous, and systematic approach to historical sources, while ignoring the theoretical and philosophical issues of historicism, is worth noting. I would like to add that the 'French way' was not necessarily taken directly

from France, as Lithuanian historians began studying history in France only in the 1930s.

The 124 page-long book's bibliography is very comprehensive. Without a doubt, it is extremely useful for researchers, as it contains all the major works on this rather broad subject. Gieda's monograph is a synthetic work, which covers the development of professional Lithuanian historiography and presents it in an international context. It also displays the features of the dissemination of history and formation of historical culture. Researchers of Lithuanian historiography will have little to add to what is written in this book, unless the author would decide to write a sequel, entitled *Clio in Exile* about the historiography of the Lithuanian diaspora from 1944 to 1990.

Dr. VALDAS SELENIS

DANUTĖ ZOVIENĖ

Augustinas Savickas: Master Painter

The classic of Lithuanian painting Augustinas Savickas (1919–2012) is an exceptional figure in Lithuanian art. A very erudite creator with a keen intellect, he is one of the most outstanding Lithuanian artists of the second half of the twentieth century, included in different Lithuanian and foreign art encyclopedias and directories; he is mentioned in art history publications, his works have been acquired by different museums in Lithuania, Russia, Germany, Italy and other countries, as well as by private collectors. Savickas was not only a talented artist, but also a deep thinker, interesting writer, shrewd art critic, and commanding educator.

The aim of marking his 100th birth anniversary in 2019 in Lithuania was to raise public awareness of the artist's creative heritage: on September 4th in Vilnius, the exhibition *Eternal Passenger* was opened at the Pamėnkalnis Gallery of the Lithuanian Artists' Association (curator – the author of this article Dr. Danutė Zovienė); on November 15th at the National Gallery of Art – the exhibition *The Study. Genesis of Artwork. Augustinas Savickas* (curator – Dr. Viudas Poškus, architect – Marija Repšytė); the monograph *I am Savickas. And This is Enough* was issued (text by Dr. Danutė Zovienė, compiled by Danutė Zovienė and Raimondas Savickas); the documentary *Connector of the Ages* (The Lithuanian National Radio and Television, LRT; screenplay and director – Edita Mildažytė) was made; a commemorative plaque was unveiled in Trakai (sculptor – Zigmas Buterlevičius), where the artist spent the last years of his life; and a painting event *en plein air* was organized by the Savickas Art School during the summer. The centenary was also marked by the Lithuanian Jewish community.

DALIA TRAŠKINAITĖ

Value of the Curonian Spit Cultural Landscape

The value and significance of the Curonian Spit, a site of an outstanding cultural landscape created by natural forces, and human hands and mind, which is on the UNESCO World Heritage List, are integral when it comes to new constructions or the preservation of significant objects of heritage. This site is often perceived or analyzed without considering its integrity and cultural landscape. The article deals with the components, morphological structure, and dual architectural identity of the part of the Curonian Spit which belongs to Lithuania. It also tries to discuss the issue of the value of this outstanding natural object, which could help preserve it for future generations.

GODA SŪDŽIŪTĖ

Lithuanian Paths in Modern Architecture: Structuralism in the Creative Work of Rimantas Buivydas

The article deals with one of the trends in architectural modernism in Lithuania – structuralism, which established itself in Lithuania's architecture in the 1980s–90s. By invoking the creation of the renowned architect Rimantas Buivydas, the most essential features of this aesthetical phenomenon are discussed. The author gives an overview and analyzes the major creations of the architect – the holiday home *Guboja* in Šventoji and several interesting unimplemented objects. She concludes that the architect Buivydas was the pioneer of structuralism in Lithuania's architecture and one of the key representatives of this trend who has left a notable trace in the architecture of the late Soviet period in Lithuania.

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Monument to writer Ieva Simonaitytė in Priekulė

Sculptor: Dalia Matulaitė, architects: Rimantas Buivydas and Jūras Balkevičius

MOVING?

We need your old as well as your new address, to correct our records.

FRONT COVER: A view of Curonian Spit

Photo by Almantas Samalavičius