CULTURE CROSSROADS

CONTENT

UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' HUMOUR IN DIGITAL ENVIRONMENT: INTERNET MEMES AS A FOLKLORE GENRE

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Introduction

Internet memes, created by present-day students, are in the focus of this study. Internet memes are multimodal messages, and most often they appear as images complemented with short sentences, which in a humorous way reflect some actual ideas, concepts, situations, events or emotions. Memes are usually presented as a picture, a gif, a video, or a collage. On the Internet, memes are distributed mostly via social networks and/or via email, and one can find them on specially designed websites or blogs.

In the framework of this study, Internet memes are analysed as a genre of contemporary folklore, as digitally distributed witty multimodal reports which can be compared to traditional jokes and anecdotes. Analysing Latvian student memes, their thematic continuity has been revealed in comparison with student folklore, namely, jokes, and the basic source of these jokes has been the academic collection of Latvian anecdotes, published in 1929–1930 by Pēteris Birkerts; jokes from various modern websites with humorous content have been used as well.

Student jokes and Internet memes are also united by their thematic content and functions. Student memes, like traditional jokes, not only feature the peculiarities of students' lifestyle and entertain. They also criticize and reduce the tension, created by hierarchical relationships that are typical for the academic environment, by self-discipline required for acquiring knowledge, by constant shortage of financial resources for living, and by other aspects. Thus, through the analysis of student memes it has been revealed that they have become a new genre of contemporary folklore, determined by innovative environment. New technologies create modern forms of communication, which marginalize the textual and prefer the visual way of information transmission, at the same time, as the research shows, the traditional content has been preserved with minor changes through different historical periods.

Discussion

Both in public and scientific discourse, folklore is usually related to peasant culture. Under the impact of globalization and rapid development of information technologies this kind of culture inevitably becomes marginal and gradually turns into an object of interest for tourism industry. Nowadays, as the sociocultural situation in Western societies becomes more and more indefinite and fragmented, the understanding of folklore and of subject of folklore studies is also changing and expanding its boundaries. As it was envisaged by American folklorist and anthropologist Alan Dundes, folklore research becomes more complicated, but none the less exciting [Dundes 2005]. Modern folklorists study the folklore of urban "tribes" and subcultures, they go together with migrants, in order to record and analyse forms and phenomena of folklore that have originated outside "native cultures", they log on the global web and look for tales, legends, superstitions, incantations and curses rambling in the virtual space. To keep pace with the time, folklorists get acquainted with methodology of such disciplines as semiotics, anthropology and sociology, they are acquiring theories of narratology and performativity, principles of cognitivism and communicology for deciphering cultural codes of different social strata, communities and groups. In this context of ever-changing environment, it is only natural to focus on new forms of cultural expression, folklore created by technology, including the Internet memes.

Meme is a concept created by the British evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins and presented in his book "The Selfish Gene" in 1976. According to Dawkins, "'Mimeme' comes from a suitable Greek root, but I want a monosyllable that sounds a bit like 'gene'. I hope my classicist friends will forgive me if I abbreviate *mimeme* to *meme*. If it is any consolation, it could alternatively be thought of as being related to 'memory', or to the French word *meme*. It should be pronounced to rhyme with 'cream'" [Dawkins 1976: 167]. The term *meme*, as a parallel with *gene*, denotes elementary particle of cultural information (idea, behaviour or artefact), which exists in a particular sociocultural environment and which spreads through imitation and copying within culture or among different cultures. Despite criticism from the evolutionary biologists, cultural and semiotic theorists, the concept of meme turned out to be quite viable, and is currently most commonly encountered in the Internet environment. The creator of the concept himself does not object to it: "How do you feel about your word meme being reappropriated by the internet? The meaning is not that far away from the original. It's anything that goes viral. In the original introduction to the word meme in the last chapter of The Selfish Gene, I did actually use the metaphor of a virus. So when anybody talks about something going viral on the internet, that is exactly what a meme is and it looks as though the word has been appropriated for a subset of that" [Solon 2013].

Internet memes can be defined as multimodal messages, which most often appear as images complemented with short sentences, and which in a humorous way reflect some actual ideas, concepts, situations, events or emotions. Memes are usually presented as a picture, a gif, a video, or a collage. Internet memes are distributed mostly via social networks or via email. One can find them on specially designed websites or blogs. Thus, memes as multimodal messages are presented as verbally visual hybrids: in respect to their content they can be classified as jokes, but in respect to their form – as derivatives of comics and caricatures.

Internet memes, regardless of the unlimited environment of their existence – the virtual space, have cultural boundaries or conditionality: they are created, perceived and interpreted only by understanding, using and sharing certain cultural codes, based on values, knowledge and experience recognized by a certain group, would it be ethnos, nation, adepts of a religion, social stratum, interest group etc. This cultural determination is a precondition that allows us to analyse Internet memes as a genre of contemporary folklore, as digitally distributed witty multimodal reports, which can be compared with traditional jokes and anecdotes.

My inspiration and theoretical premise that allows to draw parallels between traditional jokes and Internet memes is mainly based on the ideas of two researchers – Alan Dundes and Simon Bronner. Anthropologist and folklorist Alan Dundes has marked in his works folklore's sustainability and its ability to adapt to any kind of sociocultural changes. Describing traditional understanding of what was meant by the term *folk* at the beginning of the 19th century, at the time when folklore studies began their formation process, Alan Dundes presented as opposing two different Western social groups – folk or peasant as lower stratum versus civilized or elite as literate urban upper stratum, where "Folk as an old-fashioned segment living on the margins of civilization was, and for that matter still *is,* equated with the concept of peasant" [Dundes 1980: 2]. However, according to Alan Dundes, folklore is not a monolithic, complete and stagnant system. Along with sociocultural changes, also changes of the understanding of what is the *folk*, and, accordingly, of the concept of folklore, took place. On the basis of his vast fieldwork experience, in his article named "Who Are The Folk?" Dundes points out that different social groups, be it baseball players, coal miners, cowboys, fishermen, lumberjacks or railroadmen, have their own folklore, such as professional jargon, legends, and in-group jokes: "Moreover, as new groups emerge, new folklore is created. Thus we have the folklore of surfers, motorcyclists, and computer programmers. From this perspective, it would be absurd to argue (..) that industrialization stamps out folk groups and folklore" [Dundes 1980: 7]. This may be due to the fact that we are accustomed to linking folklore with only one, that is, the traditional way of life of peasants, which gives the impression that time of folklore is over. Despite the fact that during the

age of industrialisation the number of peasants began to decline rapidly, according to Dundes, we have to keep in mind, that peasants constitute only one type of folk, which also means only one sort of folklore. According to Dundes, worries that technological development will destroy folklore are not really justified, on the contrary, for instance, computers help folklore to spread even faster and, moreover, become an inspiration source for the generation of new folklore forms: "The rise of the computer symbolizes the impact of technology upon the modern world. My point is that there is folklore of and about the computer. Among computer programmers, one can find elaborate, quite technical in-group jokes, some involving pseudo-programs and others involving the specialized terminology of various computer languages" [Dundes 1980: 17].

Elaborating the idea about the role of technologies in the process of folklore transmission, and pointing out that using the Internet has become both an essential tool of everyday life and a cultural practice, sociologist and folklorist Simon J. Bronner emphasizes the importance of Internet regarding creation, preservation and development of folklore, especially among young generation or so-called "digital natives" [Bronner 2017a: 17]. Internet, because of its basic features of netting and communicating, has become a channel of spreading folklore, despite the worries of "technopundits who were sure that the vampire machine would suck users dry of their culture and creativity" [Bronner 2011: 402]. Moreover, according to Bronner, "Internet incorporates the symbolic and projective functions that folklore distinctively provides. And when people e-mail or post to a message board, they often invoke, and evoke, folklore as a cultural frame of reference for creatively relating experiences, particularly in narration and images that respond to ambiguity and anxiety" [Bronner 2011: 402]. Thus, Internet has become a platform for making a new kind of "open, democratized and decentered communities of prosumer commerce individuals, which creates and shares with repeatable, variable forms of expression, such as fake news, rumour panics, cat videos, memes, etc." [Bronner 2017b]. Becoming a cultural space, Internet serves as a platform for creating process of a new kind of folklore, such as memes: "Many memes are in fact folkloric because they often take the form of catchphrases, rumours, schemes, and legendary material" [Bronner 2011: 448].

Student folklore

Returning back to the broad definition of folk, offered by Dundes, we must agree that "the term 'folk' can refer to *any group of people whatsoever* who share at least one common factor. It does not matter what the linking factor is – it could be a common occupation, language, or religion – but what is important is that a group formed for whatever reason will have some traditions which it calls its

own" [Dundes 1980: 6–7]. Accordingly, students are also representatives of a particular cultural group or community, which can be determined by sociocultural characteristics such as age, urban environment, cultural consumption, intellectual capacity, values, interests etc.

The origin of the name *student* is from Medieval Latin *studiare* "to study" and is related to Latin *studium* "eagerness, zeal", *studiosus* "devoted to study, assiduous, zealous". The late 14th cent. meaning of *studious* has been "eager to learn, devoted to learning", also, as noun, "those who study or read diligently" [Etymonline]. Nowadays the term *student* usually denotes the highest step of professional or academic education. A distinct social group of students has formed in mediaeval period, simultaneously with the first universities, and is traditionally regarded as social avantgarde because of its intellectual capacity, active social position and solidarity. At the same time, students' life is unimaginable without revelry, entertainment and adventures, without immatriculation rites and other traditions, which consequently get reflected in student folklore. According to Bronner, student cultural practices and traditions help young people to cope with liminality, as they get separated from their parents' care and are becoming self-dependent, adult personalities [Bronner 2012: XV]. Student culture is rich and varied, it consists of both universal and local traditions and folklore, rooted in the autonomy of universities. Usually, the corpus of college and university student folklore consists mainly of legends, songs, rituals, poetry, drawings, and humour – jokes and anecdotes.

Jokes and anecdotes – two different forms of folklore, differing only in nuances. Within the Aarne-Thompson folktale classification system, they are allotted a special section 1200–1999 "Jokes and anecdotes" [Green 1997: 17–19]. In context of folklore studies, jokes are interpreted more broadly as formed by verbal, visual or physical communication of performative and humorous character, and are presented in the form of a short narrative – as stories, anecdotes, comics, riddles, gestures, inscriptions, pictures etc. Anecdotes (from Latin *anecdota*, Greek ἀνέκδοτα "not to be published"[1]) are short, mono-episodic humorous stories, related to situations and events, considered as typical and having happened to popular historic or modern personalities or characters. Anecdotes often involve stereotypical characteristics of appearance, temperament, mentality of certain ethnic, religious, professional, interest and other groups. Nevertheless, in spite of concretization of individuals or groups, they reflect general human shortcomings or advantages such as stupidity, keen wit, arrogance, credulity, carelessness, stinginess etc. [Green 1997: 19].

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[1] The French *anecdote* "private stories" have been related to Byzantine historian Procopius from Caesarea (6th cent.) and to his work "Ἀποκρύφη Ἰστορία" ("Secret history"), found in the Vatican Library and published in the 17th cent. as "Ἀνέκδοτα", where Justinian and his wife Theodora are portrayed as prodigal and cruel rulers.

The author of the most extensive collection of anecdotes in Latvia, folklorist Pēteris Birkerts calls them simply "witty folktales" [Birkerts 1, 1929: 3]. His collection of Latvian anecdotes consists of four volumes, published in interwar period and having two sources – "people's memory and literature". In these four volumes more than 4,000 narrative units have been collected and classified into two series: "orderly and naughty" anecdotes [Birkerts 1, 1929: 10]. The classification of the orderly texts, referred to by the author as "natural", is based on social criteria and social grouping of Latvian inhabitants at that time. Thus, nine groups were defined: Family and courting; Village, peasants and rural folks; Manor and its folks; Town and urban folks; State, administration and institutions; Art institutions and intelligentsia; Ethnic groups and languages; Phenomena of ethical character and crimes; Miscellaneous (historical, witty answers, misunderstandings etc.). Pēteris Birkerts has consciously refrained from Antti Aarne's folktale classification, already adopted in folklore studies at that time, because of his opinion that this classification was applicable to fairy-tales, whereas he considered anecdotes as a different genre, impossible to be included into Aarne's "Schwänke" or the category of joke tales [Birkerts 1, 1929: 11]. It should be mentioned that in Birkerts' third volume one can find alphabetical indices of informants and of collectors, as well as a comparative catalogue of Latvian folk anecdotes with a reference to Antti Aarne's system [Birkerts 3, 1929: 645–650].

As his main goal to publish anecdotes Birkerts defined the intention to broaden the field of folklore studies: "Anecdote as a folkloric unit has a broad and multi-sided value: scientific, pedagogical, social, cultural. As the collection of folklore materials is published, it is generally used and adopts social significance. People lacking such published collections suffer from a serious lack of ideological values." He also claimed that the purpose of the publication was to get better knowledge of people's spiritual watchfulness and humour [Birkerts 1, 1929: 13]. Birkerts' intention was to prove that anecdotes as a genre of folklore are no less serious and important than folksongs, proverbs and fairy-tales [Birkerts 3, 1929: 652].

Anecdotes about students can be found both in the category of "orderly", as well as "naughty". The "orderly" anecdotes about student life are included in the chapter "Intelligentsia, school, spiritual life" and its subchapter "Academic intelligentsia" [Birkerts 1, 1929: 370–379]. Topics characteristic for the study environment such as mutual relations of students, attitude to the study process and professors, their wit in examinations, revelry in pubs, misery, shortage of money and food are reflected there. Conversely, anecdotes about student sexuality and jokes of medicine students are included into the "naughty" category, where the formal subdivision is the same as in the "orderly" category [Birkerts 4, 1930: 582–586].

In view of modern student folklore, a project "Collection of student folklore" of the Centre of Ethnic Culture of the University of Latvia, led by folklorist Guntis Pakalns and financed by the State Culture Capital Foundation and the University of Latvia, should be mentioned. During two-year period different narratives and texts of student life – superstitions related to academic process, memories, professors' expressions, inscriptions on walls and auditorium tables, stories about professors and exams, and of course, jokes and anecdotes – were collected. These materials were acquired from published sources, from interviews and questionnaires of former and present students, as well from persons having only stereotypical notions about students and nothing in common with real student life [Pakalns 2001: 30–31]. There has been an intention to publish volumes of student folklore, thematically covering such topics as exams and sessions, life in dormitories, student festivities, intimate life etc.; nevertheless, the results of this project have not been published until now, except a small collection, covering mostly such topics as student wit, eating, drinking, partying and entertainment [Kūla-Braže 2000]. It should be noted that student anecdotes included in this collection can be regarded thematically as continuation of the topics marked in previous studies.

As it was said before, the development of technologies affects folklore, and student jokes are moving to the virtual space. New themes, related to the development of science, emerge, these themes were impossible in the time when there were, let us say, no computers or no knowledge about quantum physics or similar matters [Anekdotes.eu, Anekdotes.oho, Anekdotes.tanks]. In terms of content, the jokes and anecdotes in Internet portals continue such topics as shortage of money resources, exams and sessions, perpetual lack of food[1], entertainment and partying. At the same time, new topics, related especially to IT[2] or to the newest science discoveries[3], appear.

Yet, contacting with students on a daily basis, watching their daily life, communicating with them, one has to conclude that modern students' life is not essentially different: shortage of sleep, money and food, evasion from academic tasks, ingenuity in relations with professors, entertainment are the topics, without which one can hardly imagine my own study years, neither can be imagined full-blooded student

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[1] Student breakfast – nothing, student lunch – the same, student dinner – the same, only warmed up! (Anekdotes.tanks).

[2] Tell me, what is your method to write a graduation work??? – Ctrl C, Ctrl V! (Anekdotes.tanks).

[3] Two students talk before the exam: – What are you reading? – Quantum physics theory book. – But why are you reading it upside-down? – It makes no difference anyway. (Anekdotes.oho).

life nowadays. Nevertheless, one difference can be marked very clearly – modern students practically do not tell anecdotes, and this is what they admit themselves in informal discussion. Some time ago, upon entering auditorium almost every morning one could hear a phrase "did you hear the joke about xx?", and it was axiomatic part of each party to tell new anecdotes. Evidently, the developing technologies and ever-increasing presence of visuality in daily life forces verbal communication to lose its position. Today students willingly express their worries and joys, using the tools of virtual space: "During the 1990s, when the graphical interface of the World Wide Web became widely available, the Internet took on the characteristics of a visual culture rather than an electronic post office or business tool" [Bronner 2011: 406]. Thus, the function of jokes and anecdotes has been overtaken more and more by memes.

To get a clearer picture of this tendency, the study of one particular Latvian situation has been done, and in the framework of this study visual material has been collected from students of the Latvian Academy of Culture[1] during the 2017/2018 academic year. Before the current study, for several years during seminars within the course of cultural and art studies, genetic and cultural interaction topics had been analysed, but so far this approach was limited to more theoretical aspects of the Dawkins's book "The Selfish Gene". The above-mentioned year, because of increasing number of questions about the interaction of Dawkins's term *meme* with the *internet memes*, students were invited to express their own ideas and attitudes towards this cultural phenomenon. Student memes were designed according to the assignment in the framework of the course mentioned above. Besides, their viewpoints were not restricted either thematically or aesthetically. It should be noted that students responded quite actively, and as a result 194 Internet memes were created by 97 students in November of 2017 – a basic corpus of empirical data for this study.

Exemplification

The corpus of Internet memes displays all universal topics characteristic for student jokes: study environment and process, lack of food, lack of resources (money), lack of sleep, laziness, entertainment (partying), students' keen wit, overload, session, attitude towards professors etc.

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[1] The Latvian Academy of Culture is state-founded higher educational institution – an arts university implementing BA, MA, and Doctoral programmes in study direction "Arts".

University is the best time

to acquire new contacts

AUGSTSKOLA IR
LABĀKAIS LAIKS,

LAI IEGŪTU JAUNUS
KONTAKTIS

as the pizza delivery
was agreed after half
an hour

but now it has already
taken 32 minutes

kad picas piegādātājs teica,
ka būs pēc pus stundas

bet pagāja jau 32min

Make a Meme!

how much can you get by selling your kidney

when you are not in the budget, and have to pay for tuition yourself
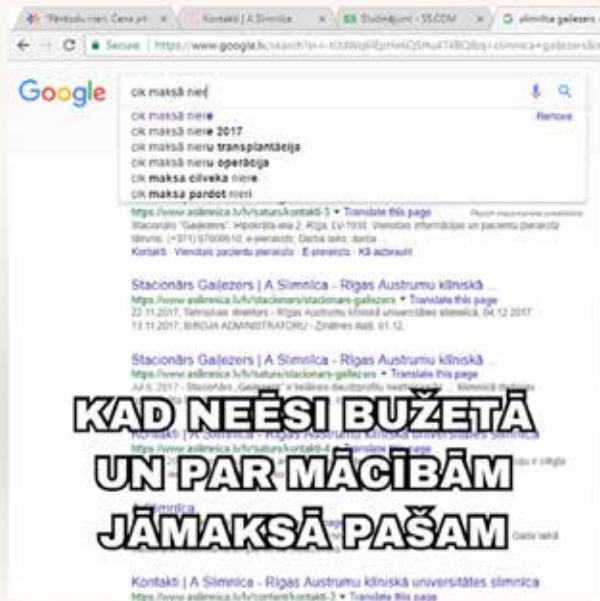
when you have to get up for your morning class

at 6:35 AM

when your stipend has been transferred to your account

KAD IESKAITA STIPENDIJU

mematic.net

how do I look like in December

KĀ ES IZSKATOS DECEMBRĪ

MĒĢINOT IZVAIRITIES NO SKOLAS DARBIEM

trying to avoid University assignments before exam session

when accidentally

you start thinking about your first exam session

kad netīšām

iedomājies par pirmo sesiju

LATVIJAS KULTŪRAS AKADĒMIJA

Septembris, sākums...   Decembris, sesija...

September, beginning...   December, exam session...

professor, who is completely sure that you have not prepared for the exam and hope for a miracle

pasniedzējs, kuram pilnīgi skaidrs, ka neesi gatavojies eksāmenam un ceri uz brīnumu

I'VE BEEN EXPECTING YOU

when somebody asks you

what are you studying in those creative industries

kad tev pajautā

ko tu mācies tajās radošajās industrijās

Make a Meme

Conclusions

New forms of communication create new genres of folklore, which can be perceived and interpreted only by understanding certain cultural codes, based on values, knowledge and experience recognized by a group or community. While analysing Latvian students' memes, their thematic continuity was revealed in comparison to traditional student anecdotes and jokes. Students' anecdotes and Internet memes are united by their content and functions. The function of students' memes, like that of anecdotes and jokes, is not only to feature the peculiarities of students' lifestyle, to cause emotions and to entertain, but also to criticize and reduce the tension created by the hierarchical relationship and attitudes that are typical for the academic environment, by the self-discipline required for acquiring knowledge, by constant shortage of financial resources for living, and by other aspects.

The analysis of students' memes has revealed that they can serve as a kind of elicitation technique, and provide symptomatic information that is not usually articulated in higher education quality assessment surveys or in students' direct communication with academic or administrative staff. Future research of students' memes might be related to the development of this new approach in the framework of cultural studies.

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TOWARDS SOCIAL CINEMA:
EXTENDING OF RIGA POETIC STYLE IN THE 1970s

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Abstract

In the 1960s, a group of young and very gifted documentary filmmakers established themselves at Riga Film Studio and developed a poetic style, based on visual metaphors which they named themselves as Riga Style but later in the Soviet and East European context the style and its creators came to be known as Riga Poetic Documentary Film School. Yet in the 1970s one can identify pronounced focusing by the documentary filmmakers on social issues, the aspirations to offer in their films analysis of the problems existing in the society and sometimes offering their solution without losing the artistic qualities of the films. The article written in 1971 by Armīns Lejiņš, the script writer and theorist of the poetic cinema, "Poetic Cinema + Scientific Cinema = Social Cinema" can be perceived as their manifesto. Lejiņš was convinced that by combining poetry and science, Riga documentary filmmakers could facilitate henceforth logical, analytical and dialectical thinking culture in their films.

Within the framework of my article, I'll provide a broader insight into the social angle of films by Latvian documentary filmmakers, into their thematic and aesthetic aspects, and also offer a more detailed analysis of the film "The Woman We Expect?" (*Sieviete, kuru gaida*?, 1978) – the concept, the process of its making, relations with censorship and its reception.

Keywords: *Latvian cinema**,** documentary film, Riga Poetic Documentary Film School, Ivars Seleckis.*

Drawing of exact chronological borderlines among trends and phenomena in art history is sometimes hard or even impossible, yet these borderlines became quite clear in the documentary film of Latvia at the turn of the 1960s and 1970s. Riga poetic style that was based on visual metaphors and subjective capturing of reality reached its peak possibly at the end of the 1960s in Riga Film Studio's feature-length

documentary "The Catch" (*Lomi*, 1969, Aivars Freimanis). With 1970 documentary film "Girls from Valmiera" (*Valmieras meitenes*, director and cameraman Ivars Seleckis), a new thematic stage started in Latvian documentary film making – an in-depth interest about the temporal and spatial social system of those times, about their problems, interaction between the individual and society. The social dimension of the documentary films facilitated also a deeper interest in theoretical issues which resulted in establishing of an International Documentary Film-makers' Symposium. The Symposium that included both screenings and theoretical analysis of films was organized since 1977 once in two years in Latvian resort Jūrmala, and during the socialist period it was one of the most prestigious documentary film events in Eastern Europe. Significantly, the theme of 1979 symposium was "Social Problems in Documentary Film. Representation and Analysis", looking back at the achievements of the previous decade and outlining the prospects of development of cinema about topical issues. Ivars Seleckis' film "The Woman We Expect?" became the "main" film at the symposium becoming a peculiar evidence of significance and quality of the social cinema.[1]

"Girls from Valmiera" seems to be the first feature-length Riga Film Studio film in whose explication the director defined its genre as "**socially-psychological cinematic study**" [LVA 208: 153], in which the dramatic intrigue was going to be developed by interaction between two main lines: observation and analysis [LVA 208: 154]. Initially the study field had been described in general terms – "formation of the contemporary young generation of workers" [LVA 208: 153], but gradually an analytical story crystallized, it was a story about a town in Latvia where a glass fibre plant had been built to which women from the entire USSR came to work – women workers that unsettled the community's demographic and ethnic balance, and caused also other social and economic problems, for example, shortage of flats and kindergartens.

The author of the idea and the script of the film of "Girls from Valmiera" Armīns Lejiņš was one of the Riga poetic style founders in the 1960s, so was Ivars Seleckis who was the leading cameraman of the poetic cinema in the 1960s. But at the end of the 1960s, as Ivars Seleckis remembers later: "A pause set in, a sense of emptiness set in. (..) Many rushed into making sociological films since that was something new and interesting, you can choose different approach in comparison to the previous period, and you can look for correlations" [Jēruma 2009: 123].

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[1] Symposia history continued also in the post-soviet time by setting up the organization European Documentary Film Symposiums in 1993, see: https://dokweb.net/database/organizations/about/011a61da-41b0-4e21-8be6-5228568e4b74/european-documentary-film-symposiums. Symposia history and materials have been collected in a book [Matīsa, Redovičs 2007].

Armīns Lejiņš got his inspiration for a new kind of film at the end of the 1960s in Ukraine at Kiev Popular Science Film Studio (*Київнаукфільм/Киевнаучфильм*), with which at that time Riga documentary filmmakers had established close contacts: "Kiev filmmakers perhaps were the first ones to turn to social sciences seriously and they brought their science films closer to modern life. A series of social publicist films were made (..) that instead of merely informing about science and its research, they used the soviet sociology and psychology achievements in a way becoming part of the research process by analysing, looking for causes, comparing and generalizing..." [Lejiņš 1971]. Such films are not based on the authors' poetic perception of phenomena but a on fact-based scientific material [Lejiņš 1970].

The film "Girls from Valmiera" was made "under direct influence of Kiev filmmakers, particularly during the preparatory stage when the authors had to identify the key issues and the main problems in the life of almost two thousand young women workers. They even used literature suggested by Kiev colleagues about the sociological research done in our country among the working youth" [Lejiņš 1971].

Looking back at the film "Girls from Valmiera" 30 years later, Armīns Lejiņš is much more critical about the use of "sociological method" in the film: "Questions that are asked in the film showed my understanding about sociology in those days. And also that of the epoch. Perhaps today it sounds amateurish but that was the way it was. Approximation psychology was in fashion" [Krūmiņa 2000/2001].

It should be noted that sociological data and statistics was information of restricted access in the USSR because the soviet power essentially evaded any kind of generalizations, and the documentary filmmakers were also asked to emphasize that the problems identified in their films were not typical, that they were short-lived and the party was solving them.

From today's perspective one can see that by its artistic language "Girls from Valmiera" had not been a radical turning point, instead the visual metaphoricity acquired an additional dimension combining it with reflexive analysis characteristic for *cinema verite* style and reportage of *direct cinema*. The well-known theorist of Riga documentary cinema Mihails Savisko wrote as follows: "The films devoted to the theme of the working class very clearly and explicitly reveal one of the most important creative problems of the contemporary stage of development of soviet documentary cinema. In brief, it can be formulated as follows: how to eliminate the contradiction between fact and image? (..) The so-called direct cinema that can most effectively meet the demands for factual credibility obviously cannot uncover the <u>essence</u> of processes of reality, their reflection in the internal world of people. It can be done only by artistic approach that offers generalizations on the basis of concreteness" [Savisko 1972].

Compositionally the film "Girls from Valmiera" begins with a symbolic image: weathervane in the shape of a rooster that is installed on a tower of a small-town church, becomes a proto-model for the majority of subsequent films by Ivars Seleckis, in which impassive reportage interacts with intimate portraits of people, the narrator's voice-over with honest conversations and the director always chooses a special recurrent image or images that become symbols in the film. Since his directorial debut, unlike the majority of representatives of Riga Style, for Seleckis the voice-over narrative has been an organic part of the film. While working with the sound recording in the film the director had made the following entry in his diary: "We are writing the text. (..) Armīns "proves" that you cannot talk over the image and therefore nothing should be said. I certainly can't agree to that" [Jēruma 2009: 128].

Film Studio administration in Riga, according to the director's memories, had been very negatively disposed to the film calling it "a slap in the face of working-class" [Jēruma 2009: 128]. There is no such evidence preserved in the archival materials, but one can see that the Cinema Committee in Moscow evaluated the film positively and approved it for screening in the entire USSR. Before dubbing the film in Russian some changes were still suggested, for example, to remove the scenes in which the girls on their way to work crawl under train carriages[1], to shorten birthday celebration and wine drinking scenes in the hostel and the like [LVA 208: 5]. It was typical for the soviet documentary cinema to put the right ideological accents with the help of the voice-over text. As for "Girls from Valmiera" the USSR Cinema Committee recommended that in "the episode The Weaving Workshop the voice-over text should be supplemented with the phrase that the girls like the chosen profession and the work gives them sense of gratification" [LVA 208: 5].

"Girls from Valmiera" was a stimulus for further development of the social cinema at Riga Film Studio: already in 1971 two films that were to strengthen the fundamentals of analytical cinema were made; it was a full-length documentary "Your Pay Day" (*Tava algas diena*, script and director Herz Frank, camera Ivars Seleckis) and the short film "Faces" (*Sejas*, Imants Brils).

"Your Pay Day" was highly appreciated by the contemporaries but since then it seems to have disappeared from cultural cinema memory of Latvia, perhaps the reason was its minimalistic style that was less impressive than subsequent documentary

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[1] This episode was left in the film. It is interesting that in the most renowned film in the world by Ivars Seleckis "Side Street" (*Šķērsiela*, 1988) inhabitants of Riga suburbs also had to crawl under cargo trains to get home. The author of the present article spent a period in her life in this side street and crawling under the train that could start moving any moment is one of the most horrifying and still living memories.

films by Herz Frank that were artistically very expressive and thematically open and devoted to acute topics.

In the application submitted for his film in January 1970 Herz Frank wrote: "For the fifth-year economic reforms have been implemented in the country. The focus in economics is on economic growth, production efficiency, and intensification of economics" [LVA 245: 129]. Economic reform was started in the Soviet Union in 1965 that was called unofficially by the name of the Chairperson of the Council of Ministers of the time Alexey Kosigin (*Алексе́й Косы́гин*) – Kosigin's reform. The goals of the reform were generally as described by Frank but the soviet authorities tried to achieve intensification of economy practically without changing the already established socialist economy foundations, therefore the success of the reform was limited and its implementation was inconsistent.

Frank indicates that his film genre is going to be a publicist and psychological research whose main theme will be linked to the sense of proprietorship in one's land, to building of economic austerity and sense of responsibility for production. Dramatic tension of the film is to be a collision between publicly active, ideologically convinced people and the ones who are passive, undisciplined and slovenly [LVA 245: 129–132].

As for the dramatic elements, it must be noted that there are no black/white oppositions as described in the initial application for the film, the same as they were not in "Girls from Valmiera", Frank was even criticized for it in the Studio that one "does not see real battle between the good and the bad" [LVA 245: 116]. The location of the film was changed too, initially the director had planned to focus all the action of the film in the largest and most successful factory of Latvia called VEF (State Electro-technical Factory) that manufactured radio sets, phones and other things but the main plot line in the final version of the film was the flow of money from bank to an individual and back, thus studying whether and how money is invested, what people want and what can actually be bought for the earned roubles, how big the role in manufacturing process for the work pay is and what other aspects influence the work efficiency, and so on. It is interesting that both in this film, as well as in the subsequently described film "Faces" a number of phenomena unpleasant for the ruling ideology have been captured – lack of quality goods in shops, huge queues, for example, for bananas, discrepancy between words and deeds in the daily life of the factory and so on, but in this case practically all the footage made and selected by the director was accepted and an additional commentary was demanded in the voice-over only in the episode "Interview with VEF manager", in which the Communist party decision "On Improvement of Organizing Socialist Competition" was to be mentioned [LVA 245: 92].

Herz Frank considered that the interview mentioned above with VEF manager in which he tells how reality differs from what is written in party decisions to be one of the most successful episodes in the film. In general filmmakers avoided using synchronous sound because straightforward and open discussions were still rare in Soviet cinema, during the filming people automatically resorted to ideologically approved phrases or *shrank into themselves* altogether. This was quite the opposite case. In his book on documentary film "Ptolemy Map" Frank wrote: "While interviewing Vsevolods Birkenfelds, we put the main emphasis on the synchronous interview with him. And we seem to have made no mistake. Externally the simplest episode causes the strongest reaction. And not only by the harshness of the mentioned problems is the talk about the ways of economic reform. The conversation revealed the manager's personality, directness, sense of involvement, trust in documentary filmmakers and the spectators. Character was revealed. Yes, neither expression nor rhythm – nothing in human portrait can replace his live word pronounced from the screen!" [Franks 1975: 101–102].

Like in Seleckis' films, in Frank's "Your Pay Day" also there was to be a character that had to become symbolic from the initial idea of when film's theme was formulated: "Is it easy to bring up a person only paying him roubles? No, forgetting about the moral side (..) it will lead to a consumer's psychology: That only money matters!" [LVA 245: 130].

At the beginning of the film were shown two sides of a coin: on one side we see a number, on the other – the coat of arms, and later in the film the director has tried to examine the problems both from the perspective of state and moral interests and also from perspective of profit and consumption. Although later Frank said that he did not like "Your Pay Day" too much because something in it had been too artificial, too much of a construct [Frolova 1978].

An expression in subjunctive mood "analytical cinema foundations should have been strengthened" was used in regard of films made before 1971 and specifically was a phrase applied to the documentary film "Faces" that became the so-called "film on the shelf" because it was allowed to be screened only to "selected audience" [LVA 250: 2].

The destiny of this film quite clearly reminded the filmmakers that socialist realism was not the same as reality, thus reducing for some time their wish to express themselves openly and critically. By its intention "Faces" is close to the world-renown *perestroika* manifesto made 15 years later: the film "Is it Easy to be Young?" (*Vai viegli būt jaunam?*, 1986, Juris Podnieks). "Faces" was announced as "sociological cinematic observation about the life of young people", the film that was to study the micro-world of youth groupings [LVA 250: 53]. It turned out that in Latvia, mainly in Riga, there were many informal communities that could be externally recognized mainly by their long hair and dressing style similar to hippies and who had a common

interest in Western music and other manifestations of capitalist culture. The voice-over text of the film summed it all up in a critically pathetic voice: "It all has one stamp. Borrowed! Borrowed! Borrowed!"

Unlike the young people in mid-1980s, who openly and freely talked with Juris Podnieks, the young people at the beginning of the 1970s were not disposed to candid conversations either with the script-writer of the film Ilgonis Bite, or with the director Imants Brils. Therefore the Studio decided to film with a secret camera,[1] by observing the gatherings of the young people in the city cafes, by participating in the militia raids during which separate long-haired guys were arrested (ironically, that along with the *long-haired men* another guy has been filmed who had a clean-shaven head and was treated with equal disapproval), as well as small groups in unsanctioned places of gathering, they also arrested the so-called idlers, the young men who were unable to name a specific place of their work or studies.

It all resulted in an expressly ambivalent film. On the one hand, the images documented a generation whose considerable part completely denied the values and life style offered by the soviet ideology, on the other hand, the didactic voice-over narrative tried to tell us that those were only very few, separate individuals, but their chosen life-style was dangerous to society and therefore should be combated. The contrast between images and the verbal text is particularly explicit in an episode which today is hard to judge whether it appeared in the film because of the authors' lack of knowledge or it was a part of an intentional and cunning plan of the authors to deconstruct the imposed didacticism: the narrator declares that everything that has been borrowed from the West is "merely a form without any real joy of experience" and therefore also Angela Davis' portrait on a shirt brought from abroad has no meaning... But the portrait on his T-shirt was that of Jimi Hendrix...

The positive elements intended in the film (students of the Academy of Arts; a long-haired yet very talented and *socially obedient* young physicist) that had to illustrate that uncommon external looks do not necessarily mean opposition to social values, were cut to the minimum when the film was finished. Yet despite all the cuttings and explaining of everything by the narrator in ideologically correct way, the images of the film apparently seemed too blasphemous, perhaps they also documented too obviously the intolerance and brutality of the soviet power to the otherness, therefore the film was banned from screening and as years went by it became a legend, a cult object inaccessible during the soviet times.[2]

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[1] It was filmed with 16 mm camera; afterwards it was copied on 35 mm film print. As can be read in documentation of the film it had been done for the first time in the USSR [LVA 250:3].

[2] The author can present evidence that in the 1970s and 1980s this film was regularly discussed in "kitchen talk" as an essential opposition to hippie culture although no one of the speakers had seen the film.

The first Latvian documentary block-buster, this is how the film "The Woman We Expect?" was named by Inga Jēruma in her book about Ivars Seleckis and his wife Maija Selecka, film editor [Jēruma 2009: 185]. The designation is not an exaggeration because no other Latvian documentary film had caused such a resonance before. During two years (1978–1980) the film had been watched by 273 thousand people in cinemas of Latvia [Margēvičs 1980], it was shown on TV and in the entire territory of the USSR (unfortunately it was impossible to get exact data), the film was discussed in work places and in press showing that sex and gender issue was extremely topical in society. It was also the first time when a literary magazine (possibly for the first time ever in Latvia!) published the literary script of the documentary film whose authors were Andrejs Dripe and Tālivaldis Margēvičs [Karogs 1978].

The consultant of the film "The Woman We Expect?", doctor of economic sciences, Viktor Perevedentsev wrote in his review on the film: "It is in general the first full-fledged demographic documentary film in soviet film art" [LVA 485: 84].

Later Ivars Seleckis said: ""The Woman We Expect?" facilitated popularity of the documentary cinema itself, the art form as such. (..) Prestige of the documentary film depends on whether films that appeal to the audience's demand are made. (..) The existence of documentary film depends on publicist films, because those weak, glorifying films are not watched by anyone anymore" [Jēruma 2009: 196–197]. "The Woman We Expect?" became the winner of the newly established Professional film award "Lielais Kristaps" in 1978 in the category "Best documentary" (now – the National Film Award).

Similarly to the film "Girls from Valmiera" the reception of artistic expressivity has changed over the years. The lack of metaphoricity for the film in making was reproached by Film Studio colleagues [LVA 255: 76], but when the film was finished it was perceived as one of its merits. For example, Armīns Lejiņš stressed that the director had chosen to make the film black and white and it was characterized by "Minimalistic camera expressivity if we evaluate it from a formal point of view. Refusal from "pictorial approach". Shots that are even quite crude. So openly documentary that they resemble pictures of material evidence gathered in a folder of an investigator. (..) Because the film was intended to be **consistently documentary** cinematic study" [Lejiņš 1978]. After a few years Maija Selecka saw the film differently: ""The Woman We Expect?" is such a romantic film: beautiful music and images, seriousness and problems, social issues and at the same time it possesses metaphoricity and visual beauty" [Jēruma 2009: 194], and one should agree to that today: symbols, visual and meaningful metaphors run throughout the film, and in general it is characterized by very well-balanced combination of fact and image.

Today the film has become a useful reference to a certain epoch in a prose work as well. Laima Kota's novel "The Room" (2016) which is part of the series "We.

Latvia, XX Century" is set in the 1980s during the times of Gorbachev's *perestroika* when it was allowed to set up co-operative stores and do home craft. A woman who looks of an age of recent retirement[1] appears in the lobby of the communal flat with a fascinating voice, the inhabitants of the flat have hired her for the "phone sex" business. One of the characters introduces her: "She is a celebrity – do you remember the most valuable and funny excerpts from the film "The Woman We Expect?". Here she is – the woman waiting on a bench. I have found a real professional!" [Kota 2016: 171].

It is interesting to note the so-called *bench episode* – in which prostitutes are interviewed in the park (this word certainly was not used in the film because officially there were no prostitutes in the USSR, in the same way as there was supposed to be no censorship) links the film "The Woman We Expect?" with "Faces". In the latter film too, the young people who idle away their time on the park benches became a signifier of sloth and lewdness, a mode of life unacceptable for the soviet style of life. In the film "The Woman We Expect?" her life *on a bench* is spent perhaps by the most excruciating and powerful briefly-appearing image of the film – Mērija, an elderly woman alcoholic whose portrait in the soundtrack is accompanied by a nostalgic hit of the 1920s.

When the editing of the film "The Woman We Expect?" had been already finished, the USSR State Cinematography Committee had particularly strong objections to this episode: "The episode *On the Bench* must be removed from the film because by its essence it is not an organic part of the film since it deals with morally ethical problem which is not connected to the overall theme of the film and does not concern only women. Besides, its visual presentation is naturalistic without providing the cause of her situation" [LVA 485: 80].

An interesting evidence for the soviet state demographic policy is a suggestion by the consultant Victor Perevedentsev *to change slightly the tonality* in the novella about the teacher, a mother of ten: "Many children are not our demographic and social ideal at all. A family with three children is an optimum family for reproduction of society which should be propagated. We know very well from the letters sent to the editorial office that propaganda about large families causes explicitly negative reaction among women. True, there is no particular large family propaganda but the attitude towards it is entirely positive which hardly would be correct" [LVA 485: 84–85]. Apparently, the official attitude by the state had been fully accepted by society because when a mother of many children had been asked about the attitude to her family, she mentions even hate mail.

The film (this episode had been actually made before the consultant's advice) features also a family with three children so desirable for society: it is represented

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[1] Retirement age at that time in the USSR was 55.

by a doctors' family from a well-known doctors' dynasty in Latvia. Doctor Lūkina perhaps is the most suitable for an ideal woman imagined by the authors of the film, she is "the woman we expect", because she does work that is interesting for her, and apart from that she had created a family as she wished – at least that is what she says in the film. And yet Ivars Seleckis has made a note in his diary during the filming: "I examined materials of doctor Lūkina. It seems that she offers to us for filming those episodes in which she knows she looks well. In fact, she is manipulating with us like with trained rabbits while we thought we are the ones to set the tune!" [Jēruma 2009: 194].

And still this story contains an ample amount of bitterness: from the narrator's commentary we find out that initially the doctor was predicted a brilliant surgeon's career but she gave it up since excellence in her professional activities would take up her entire life. Lūkina's episode shows a pattern of a woman's daily life that in the film has not been revealed sufficiently enough, and this was one of the criticisms expressed by the audience to the filmmakers: we see how the doctor after her work goes from one shop to another one to buy food for the family, she is queuing up, takes clothes to the dry-cleaners and so on. She stresses herself in the film how disproportionally large part of her time is spent on daily chores. Yet the film never shows a hint of doubt that the daily chores are exclusively the responsibility of a woman…

Evidence on incompatibility of outstanding scientist's career with private life is provided by the film authors in the story of scientist and chemist Milda Pormale who does not have her own family and children. The scientist's episode seemed ethically problematic for the filmmakers already during the making of the film. Apart from her work in the laboratory she was filmed also indulging in her hobby the angling (traditionally considered to be male prerogative) – and this episode is made in a way as to emphasize *non-femininity* of the scientist and her loneliness. It is completely obvious what the authors wanted her to say during the interview, and the scientist says that, admitting that in general the mission of a woman is to be mother, someone who is to continue human race. Ivars Seleckis has made an entry in his diary about making this episode: "Tālis [Tālivaldis Margēvičs] asks an unexpected question about femininity and woman of the future, and then one can see she understands what is expected from her. She gets covered in sweat and says that a woman's life without family would not be welcome, i. e., she admits that her life is not full-fledged for this reason" [Jēruma 2009: 193].

A similar pressure by the filmmakers – to admit the role of family and children in woman's life – can be seen also in other episodes. Margēvičs asks a chairperson of a collective-farm about her plans and she says that she would still like to study in the future. When the interviewer keeps insisting by mentioning children, the chairperson gives in, by saying that she should have children, too, but education for

her would be of primary importance. Ironically, also the conversation with one of the women *on the bench* is almost identical. Margēvičs asks her if she would like to get married and the woman responds by saying: "Is marriage the most important thing?" She is asked what an ideal of a woman is and she describes it exactly as the filmmakers expect her: a woman with a husband and children. "But then you will not reach this ideal", says the script-writer. "No, and I don't even want it", the woman *on the bench* answers.

The director of the film remembers of approval of the film at the Board of documentary, popular scientific and educational films of the Cinematography Committee of the USSR as a very difficult process: "The ruling opinions of the state and society clashed with the views expressed in our film" [Jēruma 2009: 195], namely, the officially declared equality of women with the actual women's situation in daily life in which apart from the highly appreciated work for the benefit of society, women were also the ones to be responsible for upbringing of children and the domestic life. This latter work, as clearly shown in the film, had no official value. To quote the mother of ten in the film: "People think if you live at home you are not doing anything at all."

Before approval of the film the Cinematography Committee of the USSR indicated at some other drawbacks they saw in the documentary: "In the proposed edition of the film certain phenomena of life are only named and therefore interpretation of many episodes gains subjective negativism (..), many objective factors hampering solution of many problems are not taken into consideration, including the issue how to exempt women from hard jobs and the jobs causing health hazards. The Board considers that the following additions are required: 1) to re-consider the voice-over commentary clearly outlining in it not only problems but also their solution from the position of the state and the party. Besides, the commentary must be of analytical character with emotional attitude of the author to the problematic issues; 2) we recommend to represent in the film in an adequate balance not only the negative phenomena but provide also examples when the women live in harmony with themselves, to show the care of the state to the situation of women in our society; (..) the Board deems it necessary to remove the prologue of the film that shows military training of troops since it has been filmed in a manner since it does not comply with our documentary film tradition of representation of daily life of the Soviet Army" [LVA 485: 80–81].

It must be stressed that in the finished film all the episodes that administration considered to be censored are still there! The film editor Maija Selecka later commented: "Eventually we removed four shots from the film, one from each episode. Formally no one could give us orders, only make suggestions – the artist in the Soviet Union was an important person!" [Jēruma 2009: 196].

It is interesting that one of the reproaches by film administration had not so much to do with the contents but aesthetics – the training of paratroopers shown in the prologue of the film was indeed filmed in a non-typical way for soviet cinema – as a fascinating and brutal dance with demonstrations of strength (breaking of bricks by palm), with elements of acrobatics and combat. The voice-over narrator makes a comment: "The transient heroism of man is rooted in the life-long heroism of woman", masculinity becomes a point of reference in the film. The starting point of the film is determined by the subject – the man. At the very beginning the declaration comes from the perspective of man "Tender, loving – **we** want her to be like that **next to us**" (*bold – I. P.*), and all the subsequent – analytical, contradictory, diverse episodes in fact purposefully lead to the idea that has been clear to the authors from the very beginning that the mission of a woman is to be a mother. In the final episode the idea is represented by a poetic image: a young woman is breastfeeding a baby against the backdrop of an old farm house.

After the film was finished, its authors declared on several occasions their opinions about woman's role in society also in press. For example, Ivars Seleckis said as follows: "Sometimes lack of skills and desire to probe the essence of these issues leads to vulgarizing of woman's rights, and that causes a big harm. Every woman who thinks logically and reasonably should understand that she has all the advantages and equalities, only they have to be used in a balanced way. (..) One should be able to apply legal rights sensibly not to harm oneself and the future society. (..) Woman must understand her mission on this earth by herself" [Jēruma 1978].

Conviction that woman cannot be happy without man is declared also by Tālivaldis Margēvičs: "Men like feminine women, and nothing can be done about it. If the woman is not like that, and men don't like her that she will never be really happy. (..) Woman's main task is to be mother. No one can deprive her of this function and it cannot be mechanically exchanged for any other function that superficially judging could be more useful for society" [Jēruma 1978].

An interesting comment about the film "The Woman We Expect?" was to be found among emigre press publications (although for the soviet readers it was not available at the time!). Ojārs Rozītis, a Latvian born in Germany, who had been studying women's situation in Soviet Latvia, wrote in 1984: "If one looks through Latvian periodicals after the film "The Woman We Expect?" then we can find innumerable letters in which women write with indignation – we are unable to identify with this film, it shows our problem in a completely wrong way. (..) Women have learned to stand on their own two feet and try to resist what is being attempted to impose upon them" [Elja 1984].

By the word "imposed" Rozītis means *driving back the women into their homes*: "An observation can be made that during the last few years women are driven back

more. They are removed from public production motivating it by the fact that in the nearest future there would be shortage of labour force – it must be given birth to. This stimulus fostered by the state coincides very well with general attitude of men to women in Soviet Latvia" [Elja 1984].

Ojārs Rozītis saw in the activity among women facilitated by the film the same kind of seed from which women's emancipation movement could grow in the same way like in West [Elja 1984]. Keeping in mind that the number of publications was small in the Soviet Union and they all were censored the number of reviews about "The Woman We Expect?" was indeed considerable: in a couple of months at the turn of 1978/1979, 19 large articles were published [Films in Soviet Latvia 1978: 42–43], besides some of them summarized opinions expressed in the spectators' letters.

Opinions about the film were largely dependent on the commentators' gender, all in all women as if tried to defend themselves by using in most cases offensive tactics. A female reader wrote as follows: "The film seems to be made to defend women but actually it accuses them. (..) Is it worthwhile to give birth to children if you have no conviction that their father will be a genuine helper and support to you? Well, this is the reason why children should not be given birth to" [Kino 1979].

A surprisingly open discussion among experts from different fields had taken place in the editorial office of the weekly *Literatūra un Māksla* ("Literature and Art") revealing also a demagogical element in the film. For example, the economist Pārsla Eglīte mentions episodes filmed with hidden camera at the maternity hospital: "A young female worker is asked – why do you refuse from your child? She explains the conditions, that she has remained alone. Then the worker is told – "You will receive benefit". But single mother's benefit is only 5 roubles per month, and the partly paid maternity leave is to be introduced only at the end of the five-year period. But if the woman remains alone, she cannot work" [LM 1978].

Journalist Marina Kosteņecka adds (a similar argument is expressed also in the readers' letters) that the episode about refusal from the child "completely lacks the idea about the father's guilt in this situation" [LM 1978].

Discussions about the film voiced the idea which was equally accepted by film critics, experts and "common" spectators. It was represented in one of the readers' letters: "In order to depict the problem touched by the authors precisely and truthfully it seems to me that another full-length documentary is to be made whose contents might be expressed in the title "the man as we want to see him"" [LM 1979].

In 1981, Tālivaldis Margēvičs and Ivars Seleckis indeed prepared a treatment for the film whose working title was "The Man and the Man"**.** Yet the film under the title "Looking for a Man" (*Meklēju vīrieti*) came out in cinemas only in 1983. According to Ivars Seleckis: "The Studio did not want us to make a film about men

at all. There were big problems in the Soviet Union with them. For example, men's mortality rate was the highest in Europe, and they tried to hide it in all kinds of ways, since it influenced the strategic plans of the state" [Jēruma 2009: 241].

The structure of the film "Looking for a Man" is generally similar to that of "The Woman We Expect?" – the film begins with an emblematic image – a drunkard who is unable to sit up straight on a bench (again a bench!) and the film finishes with another emblematic image (father with twins in a pram), the narrative of the film combines sociological type of information with different models of life represented by specific individuals. Yet unlike the film about women in this case the authors have no clear and unequivocal insight what an ideal man should be like and answers to this question cannot be provided by the surveyed women either. Therefore, there is much less didactics in the film and it poses questions but does not provide ready-made answers and recipes. In its own time this conceptual looseness was the reason for criticizing the film, and the resonance it caused was smaller. But today, I believe, these drawbacks have become the values of the film – it is still a topical human life document in which the codes and gender stereotypes have quite a little significance.

Summary

In the present article I have attempted to give an insight into trends of Latvian documentary film in the 1970s, which is an interesting period when filmmakers tried to represent in their works of art the topical problems of society in those days often getting into conflicting situations with the official ideology and institutions administering art. When Riga documentary filmmakers who in the 1960s had established a distinctly poetic film language based on visual metaphor, turned to social issues, they still considered important not to lose the previous imagery: attempts to combine facts and images became an essential problem in the context of social cinema of the 1970s.

An in-depth analysis of Ivars Seleckis' film "The Woman We Expect?" (1978) has been offered in the present article – it was a film that caused unprecedented resonance in the sphere of documentary film by that facilitating also interest in documentary film in general, and also exposing the acuteness of gender issues in the Soviet Union.

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IMAGINED RESIDENCE: REPRESENTATION
OF RIGA'S RESIDENTIAL APARTMENT IN SOVIET MOVIES

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Abstract

This study contributes to the field of the human geography by conducting a content analysis of a vast number of Soviet movies with focusing on development and spatial organization of living spaces in Riga. In this article, the author sheds light on the construction of meaning of space and cultural politics, where relation of dominance is defined and contested in visual representation of Riga's residential apartments. The aim of this article is to examine the portrayal of lived space of Riga through the movies of the Soviet period. During this research, the author has used a qualitative research methodology based on the best practices of human geography data transcription and coding.

The research consists of the analysis of 290 movies. The main findings show that living spaces are frequently portrayed in the Soviet cinema and they form an integral part of the Soviet urban perception. However, state-imposed censorship throughout the Soviet period strictly regulated geographical disposition in representing living spaces through intensifying or neglecting particular areas of Riga. The images of Riga and of living space found in films are often ideologically charged.

Keywords: *mikrorajons*, *communal apartment*, *the Soviet Period*, *cinema*, *representation*, *interior*.

Introduction

Cinema developed at a time when our relation to space was undergoing important changes: the 19th century colonialism; the development of ethnography; the emergence of travelling leisure class and of tourism; and most importantly, the discovery and aesthetic appreciation of novel locations [Lefebvre 2006: 12]. Landscape as text is the dominant metaphor in film geography because it provides a means to explore the intersection between narration of films and geography

[Lukinbeal 2005: 3]. For the great Soviet filmmaker Sergei Eisenstein, film landscape is very much like film music. Both film landscape and music share the ability to express, what is otherwise inexpressible [Lefebvre 2006: 13], thus telling a story about surrounding and referring to the location where the narrative is supposedly set.

In studying cinematic landscape, acknowledgment of cultural values and historical background of particular geographical location is important, that allows to understand and interpret a place of residence [Kennedy & Lukinbeal 1997: 36]. Moreover, visual representation of a city creates perspectives that allow researchers to interpret the built environment and enables to understand a space, which is culturally created and territorially organized. Geographers' interest in film arose simultaneously from two streams of thought: firstly, humanism and landscape studies, and secondly, sociocultural studies [Kennedy & Lukinbeal 1997: 34]. In addition, analysis of visually represented city-space is one of the main approaches in human geography, where systematisation of geographical motifs, classification of sights and identification of urban signs are considered [Kraftl & Horton 2009: 97].

Riga's residential space with large-scale panel housing, a typical imprint of the Soviet time, has changed Riga's urban environment significantly [Marana & Treija 2002: 50]; at the same time influencing people's perception of lived space in general. Moreover, sociopolitical connotation and spatial arrangement of living spaces are changing continuously, which in result challenges geographers to undertake new research methods in describing living spaces. There is no coherent framework within which to discuss cinema in its entirety. In addition to that, several theoretical and methodological approaches are used in studying cinematic landscape [Kennedy & Lukinbeal 1997: 34], for example, author-centred or text-centred study approach, movie content analysis or connotation of representation and politics.

Representation of the Soviet past is ambivalent and contradictory [Shcherbenok 2011: 145]. In a study of Soviet history and design, historian Susan Reid found that the domestic life has hardly been the dominant angle from which to study the Soviet Union [Reid 2009: 466]. Neglect of human comfort was also one of the questions that was hidden from official ideology but coded into the movies. Few researchers have addressed the problem of urban development processes of Riga. However, no previous study has investigated how living spaces were depicted in the movies of the Soviet period.

Research methods

The mixed method approach has been used in this article, which exposes different elements and processes about the formation of Soviet Riga's cinematic landscape. Spatial analysis of Soviet Riga interrogates which sites were transformed in cinematic places but also acts as an archaeological tool that explores hidden residential setting

during the Soviet period. Features of residential development and living space of the socialist city were identified through extensive analysis of literature, especially studying residential complexes of the largest Soviet Latvia cities – Riga, Daugavpils and Jelgava.

Content analysis of movies was accomplished, in which each movie was divided into five-minute intervals [Hazan et al. 1994]. Cinematic content analysis consisted of two genres – fiction and documentary – movie stratified sampling; establishment of informative, comprehensive and exclusive categories for five-minute movie interval study; and comparison and analysis of results achieved. Movies were divided into three main groups depending on their geographical location of residential structure: city centre of Riga, suburb *mikrorajoni* and other area of Riga or countryside.

Mapping and analysing filmed sites reveals stratigraphy of texts written across residential living space during the Soviet Riga. Collected quantitative data was stored in a spatial database (QGIS software), in order to employ geographical information systems methods on analysing and visualization of data. Various geographical information system methods, including cartographical approach and spatial autocorrelation, were used to acquire more precise and data-based results.

Soviet apartment: a semi-private living space

City planning in the Soviet Union was a political process where the city growth complied with normative locational guidelines. The 1940s were years of limited urban growth and starting only with the beginning of the 1950s urban growth took place more rapidly [Bater 1980: 63]. The first apartments of socialism cities were centrally located small and arranged in small clusters among already existing urban structures [Gentile & Sjöberg 2010]. During the Stalin era Soviet cities experienced a shortage of living space. Moreover, apartments were granted only for privileged citizens – engineers, industrial managers and award-winning workers – whose enjoyment of material perquisites was supposed to inform the behaviour and redeem the privation of everyone else [Reid 2006 a]. The time-frame during which an attempt to implement Stalinist stylistics in architecture in Latvia took place was too short. In many cases, it was either organically synthesised with local features, or was introduced as a foreign body [Rudovska 2012: 80].

Even though initially residents were forced to live in crowded apartment blocks, a new cultural revolution began in the wake of Khrushchev's "secret speech" to the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1956 that set the goal of resolving the housing shortage [Bunkše 1979; French 1995; Grava 2007]. The decade of the Thaw signalled a decisive rupture with the aesthetics of everyday life of the preceding, Stalinist era, a purposeful search for new socio-aesthetic ideals, and a conscious attempt to form a contemporary style, both in "pure" art and in

the applied arts that organize real life [Gerchuk 2000: 98]. During this period the configuration of private and public changed: prefabricated mass blocks with apartments for separate families were constructed, ownership of private transport increased, and orientation towards circles of friends that led to rebirth of friendship intensified [Gerasimova 2002: 210].

Subsequently, starting from the mid-1960s, the five-story housing model was replaced with nine to twelve floor residential slabs in many urban outskirts, also termed as *mikrorajoni*, causing architectural simplicity, horizontally and equalization of forms and functions [Alexandrova et. al. 2004; Varga-Harris 2008]. Buildings of these areas were regularly organized, with parallel or perpendicular spatial structure and identical apartment conditions. The fact that representatives of various strata of the Soviet society lived in a particular *mikrorajons*, in the same apartment building, did not necessarily result in social interaction between members of those various strata [Bater 1980: 111]. Moreover, the hasty process of construction led to the decline of living standards by the end of the Soviet period [Grava 2007].

The main unit of the Soviet society was the family and its primary dwelling cell – the apartment [Reid 2006 a: 231; Reid 2006 b: 147]. In order to advance sociospatial homogeneity, each living space was provided with equal supplies. This resulted in neglecting basic human needs and demands [Reid 2009: 466]. Moreover, the Soviet Union home was an antipode to official Soviet values of the idea of progress and contentment [Grava 2007; Roth-Ey 2007]. Yet Soviet culture, especially of the Khrushchev era, became obsessed with the idea of homemaking and domesticity. The domestic interior was presented not only as a place to carry out everyday reproductive functions, but also as a site for self-projection and aesthetic production [Reid 2006 a; Reid 2009].

Studies of the Soviet living space also show the importance of domestic-spatial arrangement and qualities of appliances. Thus, the central domestic spatial unit of the Soviet period was the kitchen. The kitchen became mythologized as the heart of private home life and the site of authentic social relations. It was an *ideology-free zone* of sincerity and spontaneity [Reid 2005: 289]. Moreover, kitchen propelled Soviet citizens into modernity [Harris 2006: 172]. By contrast, the symbol of socialism's ability to deliver the *good life* was a television set in a Soviet apartment. Radio has also been shown as a *necessity*; however, it was not a new technology and did not change the life of Soviet individual [Roth-Ey 2007].

Cinematic apartment: representation of living space in Soviet movies

Russian revolutionary Anatoly Lunacharsky has noted that "communist who is not able to dream, is unreliable communist" [Hurina 2015: 106]. This idea exemplifies that socialist realism depicted reality of imagination. The purpose of socialist realism

was to limit cinematic representation to a specific and highly regulated faction of creative expression that promoted Soviet ideals. Moreover, tragedy and negativity were not permitted in urban representation. Instead, sentiment about flawless living standards was created, by presenting common images, such as satisfied factory workers, youth, industries, new technology and standardized living space [Prokhorov 2001]. Throughout the Soviet period, both urban and rural areas were passive and distracted from the main cinematic character, and Soviet cinematography did not reveal genuine urban space with historically controversial objects, marginalized communities, untidy courtyards or garbage on the streets, but cities were portrayed from above or a distance, idealizing the space and prohibiting arbitrary representation of dwellings [Näripea 2003; Näripea 2004].

Living space in the cinema of the mid-1940s and during the 1950s is depicted monotonous, continuing Stalin's artificial *grand style* with submissive crowds and enormous buildings [Matvejs 2017: 55]. A great number of movies from this period interpret the heroic scenes of the World War II [Kaganovsky 2013: 237]. By contrast, the intention to maintain national identity is depicted by the activities that are taking place in the countryside (*Mājup ar uzvaru*, A. Ivanovs, 1947) [Näripea 2012: 255]. Cinema supports the main policy of Stalin's regime of the 1940s, rejection of the class struggle within the country and declaration of the creation of the united Soviet people, who had no ethnic, national, race or class problems (*Padomju Latvija Nr. 17*, A. Jevsikovs, 1949). Genre modification of this period: generally, a war or historical drama and news-reel.

The movies of the 1960s aim to illustrate the living space as anti-monumental [Prokhorov 2001]. Starting with the 1970s, cinematography brings harmonious representation of the Soviet urban space to the end and creates a metaphor of *enclosure* by contrasting historical buildings of the Old Town with newly-built modern architecture in the suburban areas [Novikova 2015: 196]. The living space also turns into a social epicentre where characters feel both secure and create mutual friendship by forgetting material and mental damages caused by the war [Mazierska 2008]. Genre modification of this period is more diversified, including historical drama, tragic comedy, melodrama and news-reels.

Soviet movies of the 1980s depict city in a manner of a dystopic representation outlining aimless movement through the city [Näripea 2003: 422]. Cinematography increasingly declines the portrayal of living spaces into monotonous architecture of the Soviet city and diverts its attention to the forbidden forms of living spaces: run-down neighbourhoods, waste-lands and wooden houses [Näripea 2003; Novikova 2015]. The main themes of this period are gradual rejection of the censorship and free exchange of people and ideas. This tendency of portraying everything negative in everyday life, along with imperfect dwelling space, is described by

Russian term *chernukha*, popularized in the late 1980s. This genre was perceived as quasi-documentary portrayal of life as it really was (*Šķērsiela*, I. Seleckis, 1988) [Shcherbenok 2011].

Research results

The research about representation Riga's living space consists of the analysis of 290 movies. The data for this study was collected using the database of the National Film Centre of Latvia. Moreover, classification of reviewed movies is based on periodization of residential area construction processes and geographical location of apartments. The content analysis was developed based on movie review approach of A. R. Hazan et al., where movies are coded into five-minute intervals and each interval is described by nine indicators, such as geographical location, social description, furnishing, appliances, spoken text and others.

City centre of Riga experienced large construction processes, especially in the war-destroyed Old Town. In addition, during the Soviet times living space of the city centre was considered as an undesired location by the official ideology. One of the main residential structures in Soviet Riga was communal apartment (*kommunalki*). From the mid-1940s the number of such apartments had increased due to improvement of industrialization and rural-urban migration. *Kommunalki* were created in apartments that had belonged to middle-class and aristocratic families, situated in city centres in tenements. Usually they consisted of 3 to 6 rooms [Gerasimova 2002].

At the end of the 1940s and during the 1950s only two fiction movies illustrate living space in the Old Town of Riga (fig. 1). Both movies shed light on wealth and
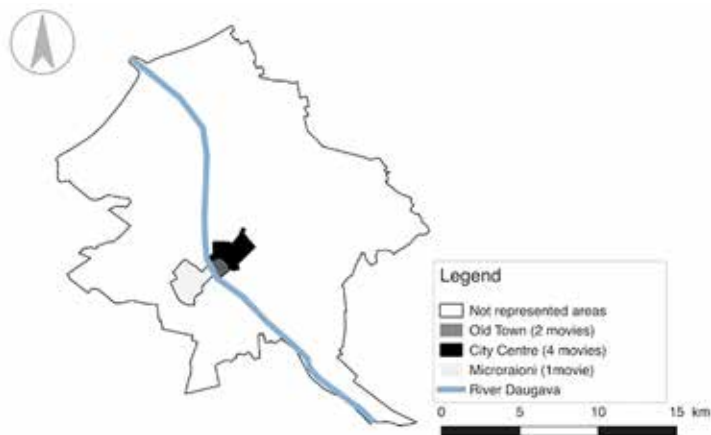

Figure 1. Represented living spaces in reviewed movies from 1945 to 1957
[Image: J. Matvejs].

everyday life of inter-war *intelligentsia*. Also, four documentaries from this period depict satisfied residents and residential building construction process. In newsreels, apartment scenes are characterized by spoken text that highlights anniversaries and accomplishments of Five-year plans. For example, in *Padomju Latvija Nr. 16* (M. Čardiņina, 1948) building process is idealized: "the first 56 apartments will be ready at the day of the Anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution". An apartment in the Old Town is portrayed as a socially uneven space, contrasting living spaces for persons in different occupations or marginalizing living space by divergence of scenes of elegant Old Town with neglected worker area in suburbs (*Kā gulbji balti padebeši iet*, P. Armands, 1957).

At the end of the 1950s and beginning of the 1960s representation of living space in the city centre and Old Town is dichotomous. While interior is spacious and splendid in the movies that portray inter-war period (*Latviešu strēlnieka stāsts*, P. Armands, 1958), living space is narrow with limited appliances in movies that illustrate Soviet time. In contrast to the previous stage, starting with the mid-1960s depiction of the Old Town decreased and the space is rather identified with poor people. Moreover, interior in the apartments of Old Town is narrow, dark and with limited household objects (*Divi*, M. Bogins, 1965). Also, representation of the city centre experiences sociospatial transformation. The idealized living space of *intelligentsia* from the previous period, now transforms into a communal apartment, where all residents share the use of the kitchen, hallway, bathroom and telephone. Sociologist Katerina Gerasimova states, that communal apartments associate with the institutionalization of the spatial structure brought about a system of horizontal control [Gerasimova 2002: 214]. The movie *24-25 neatgriežas* (A. Brenčs, 1968) emphasizes that neighbours of the apartment do not know what happens around them, however, they always hear everything. This phenomenon suggests crucial quality of the Soviet living space: synthesis of public and private spaces.

Period between the 1970s and the mid-1980s is characterized by an increased depiction of living spaces in the centre of Riga (fig. 2). Fiction movies show obstacles related to space-sharing and neighbouring in the communal apartments (*Tās dullās Paulīnes dēļ*, V. Beinerte, 1979). From the end of the 1980s, representation of private space of the city centre has decreased. The research of Soviet cinema has also shown that the central space of apartment is the kitchen. It is worth noting that kitchen is depicted as an ideology-free zone where woman arranges the space (*Dubultnieks*, R. Pīks, 1986; *Svītas cilvēks*, A. Rozenbergs, 1987). The kitchen of one-family apartment becomes mythologized as the heart of a private home life and the privileged site of social relations in the Soviet period [Reid 2005: 289].
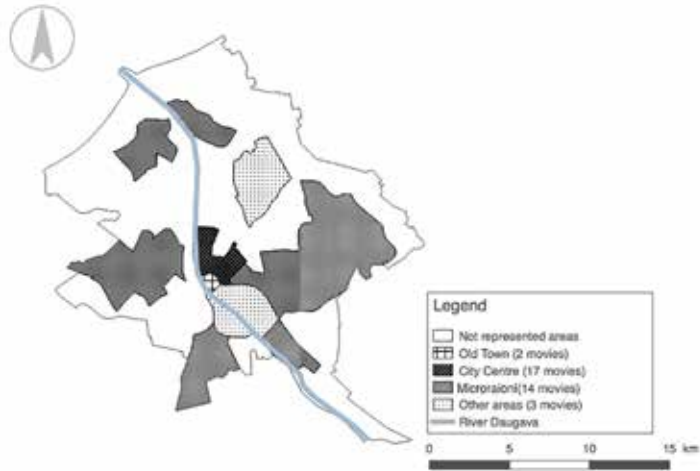
Figure 2. Represented living spaces in reviewed movies from 1972 to 1985
[Image: J. Matvejs].

Second spatial configuration reviewed in Soviet movies is residential complexes or *mikrorajoni*. Around 40% of Riga's housing stock is multi-storeyed panel block apartment buildings that were surrounded by public service structures, such as pre-school establishments, secondary school, grocery stores, personal service shops, playgrounds and building maintenance offices [Pedece et.al. 2004: 9]. To name a few of residential structures: Ķengarags (built between 1961–1971), Imanta (built between 1965–1975), Purvciems (built between 1965–1975), or Mežciems (built between 1977–1985).

During the 1940s and 1950s, only three documentaries (*Padomju Latvija Nr. 52*, N. Karmazinskis, 1946; *Padomju Latvija Nr. 43,* V. Šeļepeņs, 1949; and *Padomju Latvija Nr. 14,* H. Šuļatins, 1949) portray construction of five-storey residential apartment. Each movie emphasizes the necessity of apartment allocation for industrial workers. Starting with the end of the 1950s and beginning of the 1960s, for the first time, private space of *mikrorajoni* is depicted in two fiction movies (*Šķēps un roze*, L. Leimanis, 1959; *Kārkli pelēkie zied*, G. Piesis, 1961). Soviet residential structures are represented more spacious, with more than one room and the newest appliances. Moreover, these living spaces are resided by progressive young adults who conform with Soviet ideology. For example, when Daiga, the main female character in the movie *Šķēps un roze*, moves in a new apartment, located in Āgenskalna priedes, she declares that "we should live so well now as no one has ever lived before". Representation of private space is avoided in documentaries from this period. Filmmakers rather portray construction process of five-storey dwellings in newly-built factory workers' residential areas of Āgenskalna priedes, Iļģuciems

and Jugla (*Padomju Latvija Nr. 9*, 1960). All five documentaries from this period illustrate both satisfied residents who appreciate infrastructure of *mikrorajoni* while meeting friends, visiting cafes and walking around streets near dwellings (*Padomju Latvija Nr. 28*, 1961), and idealized house assemblage where gender-equal, diverse and multicultural labour force builds "better future for the Soviet citizen" (*Padomju Latvija Nr. 13*, 1959).

From the mid-1960s the focus was set on the continuous expansion of prior enterprises in order to reduce deficiency of commodities and services. Accordingly, these conditions advanced construction of residential houses. Living space of *mikrorajoni* is portrayed in four movies (*Četri balti krekli*, R. Kalniņš, 1967; *Meldru mežs*, E. Lācis, 1971). However, due to limited information about filming location and fragmented depiction of these spaces, it is impossible to determine exact districts in Riga, where the interiors were recorded. The current study found that *mikrorajoni* already make an integral part of the city, where courtyards and front entrance to the living space becomes a space of social conflict. Moreover, movies illustrate new sociocultural tradition – housewarming party or *sālsmaize* (fig. 3). Housewarming is an important component in representing living space of *mikrorajoni*, and it plays a key role in a mutual communication in the Soviet period. Apartments of *mikrorajoni* are represented as something desired for a long time. For example, the main character

Figure 3. Housewarming party in the movie *Četri balti krekli*
[Image: Riga Film Museum Archive].

in the movie *Karalienes bruņinieks* (R. Kalniņš, 1970) asks her husband, "when do you think we will get our own apartment?" On the contrary, documentaries during the mid-1960s and beginning of the 1970s, tend to portray interiors in combination with other private and public structures: balconies, kindergartens, schools and stores (*Padomju Latvija Nr. 3*, 1971).

Between the early 1970s and mid-1980s, lack of apartments was gradually decreased, however, there was an increasing concern about the quality of living (fig. 4). Depiction of living space in *mikrorajoni* was increased. Besides interior, movies also represent interrelated and complex groups of spaces in these neighbourhoods: courtyards, playgrounds and parks, that supplement portrayal of home-room (*Dāvanas pa telefonu,* A. Brenčs, 1977). Moreover, it is possible to compare the interior in Soviet movies with French philosopher Michel Foucault's social theory of panopticon, where the main character acts as a watchman, who rationally observes the external space (*Laika prognoze augustam,* L. Ločmele, 1983; *Pēdējā indulgence,* A. Neretniece, 1985). However, at the end of this period, residents in interiors of *mikrorajoni* are depicted dissatisfied. It is related to several flaws in the living space, such as narrowness of rooms, uniformity of the space and the poor quality of construction materials (*Novēli man lidojumam nelabvēlīgu laiku*, V. Brasla, 1980).

Figure 4. Model of interior for the movie *Laika prognoze augustam*
[Image: Riga Film Museum Archive].

For example, Ilmārs, the main character in the movie *Laika prognoze augustam* expresses: "There is no water again! Why is there no water?"

Period from the mid-1980s is characterized by the shift from centrally planned to market economy. Political reforms and the national revival movement also changed the perception of living space with emerging priorities of living standards and ecological solutions. During this period, filmmakers tend to depict neglected multi-storey apartment buildings from the distance, emphasizing the presence in urban structure of this type of dwelling. However, none of the reviewed movies represents interior of the building.

Third reviewed geographical area of cinematic landscape is *countryside*. Although starting with the mid-1940s part of the existing state resources was distributed between the construction of socialism architecture, living space in the movies is represented more as an important component of rural and not urban landscape. These aspects also appear in 11 reviewed movies between the 1940s and 1950s. Living space in the countryside is depicted as war damaged place with limited household objects in dwellings and older generation being the only individuals who reside on the property. In comparison, people in the rural areas are represented as humble and accepting ongoing political changes (*Dēli*, A. Ivanovs, 1946). Main spatial configuration in countryside of this period movies is dim living room with limited appliances.

Significant modification of depicting rural residential space came into view starting with the 1970s. Representation of rural spaces increased. Moreover, this study has shown that dwellings in the countryside are mostly portrayed together with episodes of Riga's centre or *mikrorajoni*. These movies emphasize the necessity of escape from the urban environment (*Trīs dienas pārdomām*, R. Kalniņš, 1980). In most movies that depict rural houserooms, central elements of the space consist of a large table in the guestroom, a loaf of bread and elders who arrange the space. This both defines a family and tradition space and becomes an antithesis to more advanced and modernized living space in the capital.

Conclusion

This research set out to determine the manner and practices of representing living spaces of Riga in the Soviet period. This study has found that living spaces have been frequently portrayed in the movies of the Soviet period and thus form an essential part of Soviet urban structure. The Old Town, city centre, *mikrorajoni* and suburban areas of Riga are an integral part of the Soviet urban perception frequently represented in cinema.

The analysis of movies has shown that between the mid-1940s and the end of the 1950s movies depicted living spaces of inner-Riga and rural areas. The themes

of war-caused damage and splendid interiors of Riga's centre apartments dominated throughout this period. *Mikrorajoni* began to be substantially represented at the start of the 1960s. A common character amongst these movies was the idealization of reinforced concrete panel residential apartments and depiction of progressive Soviet residents. Moreover, in this period, the portrayal of the Old Town decreased and apartments of city centre experienced change from wealthy properties to communal living spaces, thus *sovietising* apartments and erasing the border between public and private spatial realms.

Starting with the 1970s and throughout the 1980s, an apartment in a *mikrorajons* is a space where both to secure oneself from Soviet utopian everyday life and advance opposition to political control. During this period, residents are also preoccupied with the idea of cosiness, thus rearranging and improving the domestic space. At the end of the 1980s, representation of living space was dichotomous: while apartments in Riga were modernized and emphasized future of the communism, rural housing was a space where to escape from Riga's monotony.

The most obvious finding to emerge from this research is that *mikrorajoni* have been frequently depicted in fiction movies, thus becoming an integral part of visually represented space in the Soviet period. However, living space in *mikrorajoni* is not cinematic and portrayal of the Soviet apartments is limited. Filmmakers rather depict more spacious rooms in the countryside or luxurious interiors of the city centre. Moreover, this study has shown that although Soviet movies have not accomplished their primary goal of restricting perception of urban space and the fact that both residential districts and living spaces have experienced numerous improvements in the recent years, it can be stated that the Soviet cinema is a crucial evidence that illustrates achievements in home arrangement and cinematography, as well as qualities and expectations of society of that particular period.

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TOWARDS THE VALUE OF THE EMERGING ART.
THE CASE OF THE ART ACADEMY OF LATVIA

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Abstract

As the notion of the art market, employability and social economic impact drives higher art education even more towards art market and art world centred approaches, the role of emerging art and artists in art education and research rises. The research addresses the value of emerging art and emerging artists, particularly, the alumni of the Art Academy of Latvia and the Painting department of the Art Academy of Latvia in the period 2006–2010. It discusses the use of the terms of the emerging art and the emerging artists, methodological approaches towards the foundation of values of art and culture, applying of the institutional theory and never-established role of emerging art in the culture and creative industries. It also discusses necessity to further develop approach that would allow to establish value of the emerging art and the role of emerging artists inside cultural and art institutions, namely, art education institutions.

Keywords: *The Art Academy of Latvia, the emerging art, the art value, an art market, creative industries.*

Methodology

The research was part of the doctoral thesis "The socioeconomic impact on the Art Academy of Latvia: the example of the alumni from Art Academy of Latvia Painting Department Master studies between 2006 and 2010" that was elaborated at the Art Academy of Latvia during studies at the Doctoral study department. The research question discussed in this paper will cover the subject on how the Art Academy of Latvia as institution affected the value of the emerging art created within its walls. The emerging art is by no means an important part of the contemporary art market primary, secondary segment and contemporary art world. The borders between the contemporary art and the emerging art are blurry, but it is the fact that even more highlights the necessity of institutional research done on the emerging art defining.

Necessity to address highly interdisciplinary field also determined necessity to construct methodological approach combining several research fields, educational, art history and creative industries. The methodology used to answer the question above will be the analysis of the literature, which includes the theoretical framework of the origin and development of the creative industries, institutional theory, historical comparison between the micro-environment at the Art Academy of Latvia and impact of the art world and art market outside the Art Academy of Latvia. Sources like the Master diploma works unfold the main employment fields of the Art Academy of Latvia graduates. These fields are grounded by the data from surveys made at the Art Academy of Latvia from 2013 to 2015 on such topics as quality of studies offered and future employment or employment during the studies. The survey was continued by the author from 2017 to 2018 questioning emerging painters on how confident they felt in the field after their graduation.

Economic reports from the Ministry of Economics, Central Statistical Bureau, recent research and projects related to emerging art, newspapers reflect the sociological and economic factors of interest. In some cases, the sources give data for the qualitative analysis made in conclusions.

Introduction

The paper discusses the value of emerging art of the alumni of the Painting department at the Art Academy of Latvia in the period 2006–2010. The art by emerging artists has never-ending potential to become not only the creative core, but also the brand of the contemporary art in Latvia. The emerging art has specific value that needs to be traced in the light of art market and institutional theory to be able to monitor the dynamic of emerging art value. Limited research has been done on the value of the emerging art. This paper offers a research on methods to fill the gap on emerging art value.

Emerging art and artists

The definition of the emerging art as the art produced by the young artists, who have recently graduated from their educational institutions, is not generally accepted in the academic research. It has been often used to describe new art markets [Kraeuss, Logher 2010: 301–318], new or arising art-related industries and institutions [Komarova, Velthuis 2018: 1, 1–21], or contemporary art practices in emerging markets [Kanzaki Sooudi 2016: 149–166]. And while researchers have generally accepted applying the term of emerging artists [Fillis, Lee, Fraser 2015: 245–255] to those who are young, are still studying or have recently graduated, the term has established itself outside the realm of academic research.

Even more, the necessity to define the term of the *emerging artist* brings forward the question on what is *new art*, where these artists work. The Jerome Foundation offers this definition:

"Emerging artists have done more than simply aspire to create a work in a given discipline: emerging artists have already created work(s) in the discipline in which they are applying. Moreover, in the case of those artists who have been enrolled in degree training programs, work(s) have been created in the period following their graduation.

An artist may be considered emerging for multiple years" [Jerome Foundation 2017].

In this definition *emerging artist* is distinguished from the *pre-emerging artist* and *post-emerging artist*. In art practice and theory *emerging artist* is always associated with the new artist still in his or her studies, or a short time after the graduation, who is trying to reach the local and international art world. The fact is also highlighted in the definition of the *artist* of the Canada Council of Arts:

"(..) The person can demonstrate formal training, recognition by peers and a history of public exhibit or performance" [Murray, Pipper, Robertson 2014: 136].

These definitions outline the term giving the basic characteristics of the *emerging artist*. Although there may be several definitions and more general understanding of the artist, the main issue in this paper is to focus on the term of the emerging artist, highlighting that in every country, where institutions offering higher education in this study field are located, there is a certain level of emerging artists still studying or having already graduated from their universities or academies.

There is a certain level of research of the art market including art from ancient times to the 21ˢᵗ century, and a certain amount of research concerning creative industries and creative economy. However, little research has been done on emerging artists, their socioeconomic activity and impact; and both of them should be mentioned.

In their 2016 paper, Soo Hee Lee and Jin Woo Lee addressed the practices of the emerging artists through the branding theory considering the role of art fairs, namely, Frieze London in their research. Soo Hee Lee and Jin Woo Lee proposed that the uncertain value of contemporary art requires particular "layer of constructing belief in understanding the meaning of works of art" [Lee S. H., Lee W. J. 2016: 103], which in their research were called *cultural branding*, offering the model of cultural branding that "delineates the holistic contributions of constructing the meaning by intermediaries between artists and recipients" [Lee S. H., Lee W. J. 2016: 103]. And while the model proposed by Soo Hee Lee and Jin Woo Lee could be considered as certainly being valid, researchers admitted, "Frieze London does not embrace the majority of young and emerging artists" [Lee S. H., Lee W. J. 2016: 103]. Therefore,

further research into alternative platforms that "to enable more young and emerging artists to deliver the symbolic value of their work" [Lee S. H., Lee W. J. 2016: 103–104], and in the terms how these alternative platforms branding young and emerging artists are suggested.

More important contribution was research published in 2015 by Ian Fillis, Boram Lee and Ian Fraser. In their analysis of cultural value of the Royal Scottish Academy New Contemporaries Exhibition, Ian Fillis, Boram Lee and Ian Fraser assessed the institutional role in shaping emerging artists and their careers and also their cultural value. To deliver their analysis researchers adopted a multi-layered case study approach conceptualizing of culture value "compromising interdependent instrumental, institutional and intrinsic dimensions" [Fillis, Lee, Fraser 2015: 246]. They evaluated "the Royal Scottish Academy's perspectives on intrinsic and extrinsic value" [Fillis, Lee, Fraser 2015: 248], intrinsic and instrumental aspects of price setting and selling, expected versus experienced value of the exhibition and the artworks and financial and related values created by the exhibition [Fillis, Lee, Fraser 2015: 249–252]. While considering expected versus experienced value, researchers asked respondents to assess aesthetic value, education value and symbolic value of exhibited artworks [Fillis, Lee, Fraser 2015]. Meanwhile assessing intrinsic value of artworks researchers choose the term of the *true value* instead of *intrinsic value* avoiding the confusion that would arise with the view that "the intrinsic value of art can be measured according to economic criteria" [Fillis, Lee, Fraser 2015: 250]; while later they decide even to blur lines between intrinsic value and instrumental value [Fillis, Lee, Fraser 2015: 250] considering that it is, giving with *Measuring the value of culture* written by O'Brien in 2010, the value "generated by the social and economic policy uses of culture" [Fillis, Lee, Fraser 2015: 246]. As the researchers established it, the main cultural value created by the exhibition for *the artists is high-visibility publicity*, at the same time cultural value that usually personal to the viewer is expressed in contemporary art "through artistic production systems and its messages" [Fillis, Lee, Fraser 2015: 254].

It may be therefore assumed that there are just few researches done in the direction of emerging artists entering the art market. This step, however, is quite serious, taking emerging art into the new – institutionally appropriate – level, building the brand of the emerging artist name and creation as well ranging the popularity, setting prices of the artworks. This is particularly the most challenging stage in the individual artist's career and it obviously generates awareness among educational institutions and their organizations. Although there may be apprehensions on whether the only way, how to position the emerging art in the art market is through art institutions, the method has proved to be effective. Several examples of respective institutional practices were collected by the European League of Institutes of the Arts [ELIA 2018]. The research

that would approach the emerging artists from the point of the institutional theory as defined in the art history is about non-existent. Even the research done by Ian Fillis, Boram Lee and Ian Fraser, which focused on the institutional role establishing the value of the institutional theory, avoided the institutional theory of art.

The institutional theory as the direction in the 20th century aesthetics pointed out the unlimited power of the art institutions to define the art world, the operation of the art market, the look of the contemporary art and the top-level artists. One of the major goals of the art institutions as the experts of the art field is to set the value of the art, including the emerging art. In the light of leftist movements in the 1970s and student protests the institutional theory offered a potential solution how to harmonize relationship between different players in the art market on democratic basis. This was the goal also for the new institutionalism to try to develop more objective view on the processes and formula, how to value art on the aesthetic principles.

Institutional Theory

George Dickie, the founder of the institutional art theory, declares that it is an art institution, which brings an object the status of the art work and the value of institutionally appropriated work.

"According to the newly-imagined institutional theory, the same institutional practice can have two different outcomes: 1) the creation of things that succeed in being aesthetically good and are, therefore, art; and 2) the creation of things that fail to be aesthetically good and, therefore, fail to be art" [Dickie 2001: 98].

In the case of emerging artist and the contemporary art made in the 21st century the institutional impact is the same. The research observes that art world is nowadays strictly and formally structured to keep the project management around the institutional players. The art world even more unifies the most events, exhibitions and opportunities for the emerging artists in the biggest cities like New York, Beijing and London, which we know also as the largest economics in the art market [Forrest 2016]. The emerging artists try to follow the advice of professionals, for example, curators and gallerists, who say to go to the openings, network with the right people and the activity will give the result. The recipe does not work in all cases.

Significant details of emerging or unknown artists entering the art world are now observed in literature. The most important step is to be introduced properly even before participating in the art markets. The emerging artist just as a fresh talent is in the hands of strictly organized network, which on the level of art fairs, recognition, art awards or a positive review of the latest exhibition, sees that there is no contingency in the art world development or at least this development has a straight intended direction.

"In other words, the cooperative network of all intermediaries enforces the meaning of presenting works of art and ends up creating its agreeable value (Becker 1984). In order to be presented at art fairs, moreover, young and emerging artists should first be selected by initial gatekeepers, or dealers" [Lee S. H., Lee J. W. 2016: 19].

The contemporary art in the 21st century has pluralistic directions thanks to the postmodernism, post-digital age, movements of transhumanism, bioethics etc. The contemporary art also has the largest quantity of working artists, including emerging artists, for example, making the proportion extra-large in New York applications for the grants – 5 million artists to 100 grants [Ruciņa 2016]. The life of the professional artist is estimated around three years [Ruciņa 2016]. The artists are creating the largest amount of the artworks ever experienced in the art history. When the serious competition is one of the touchstones to keep making contemporary art and its qualities to support, the models to be able to value contemporary art are still developing.

It is issue to enter the major auction houses for the emerging artists. From Latvia there are few artists, who have entered such galleries – auction houses like "Sotheby's", "Saatchi" etc. In the Sotheby's there are old masters like Vilhelms Purvītis, Mark Rothko, Sergei Arsenevich Vinogradov, Oļegs Auzers, Nikolai Petrovich Bogdanov-Belsky. Some of the visual art, especially art from the Old Masters and the Soviet period, is still linked as the Russian art. The same situation is in the "Christie's" auction house with Gustavs Klucis' poster and collage art.

Contemporary artists such as Ritums Ivanovs, Barbara Gaile and others from the 1990 artist generation after the collapse of the USSR were able to use mobility for professional means. Other artists from the recent generations are Sergey Diomin, Indriķis Ģelzis, etc. From the alumni of the Master study programme in the period of 2006–2010 16 people were mentioned in Saatchi Gallery: Kaspars Perskis, Laura Ozola, Ilze Zemīte, Juris Libeks, Ansis Butnors, Anda Lāce, Baiba Rēdere, Jurika Bakāne, Verners Lazdāns, Reinis Liepa, Viktorija Valujeva, Alise Mediņa, Anna Laicāne, Katrīna Gaile, Aija Vinkelmane, Evija Kūlmane [Saatchi Art 2017]. Almost the third part of the 80 painters is in the online gallery offering an electronic platform for unified promotion of artists. But there are very few data on the estimated prices for these works unless it is an auction house with an upcoming auction.

What can be said undoubtedly, the market value of the emerging artists is lower than the appropriated artists, including Old Masters. For example, the most expensive work in art fair "Jarmarka" was "Muleta" by Krista Kononova, worth 7380 euros in 2015, but in 2016 art fair "Jarmarka", the most expensive artwork was a large-scale painting for only 3000 euros [Ābelīte 2016]. Other examples of art fairs like "Mākslas Bardaks", "Mākslas Medības", auctions in the gallery "Jēkabs"

have similar price range for the emerging art not reaching the level of 50,000 euros for one piece. Still the segment of emerging art in Latvia holds its potential to be included in the appropriated contemporary art segment and the potential to be discovered.

The aesthetic value of the contemporary and emerging art is one of the most discussed subjects of the art history and art critique. The aesthetic value cannot be based only on the perception and the categories of the taste. Institutional theory put up a formula for unified aesthetic artwork evaluation. One of the ways was proposed by George Dickie [Yanal 2010:112].

$$Aesthetic\ Value = \frac{Vividness + Visual\ Intactness + Unity}{3} + Visual\ Uniqueness$$

Figure 1. The formula of aesthetic art work value by George Dickie.
Author: Linda Teikmane. 2017.

Reflecting on figure 1 formula authors of the field noted that it was not complete. Dickie regarded that the aesthetic or symbolic art value or before-mentioned notion of intrinsic art value is not the same as the art market value, but it is necessary to put up some criterion for the symbolic value in the art theory. For use of this formula should be the scale of the quotient to make the categories of vividness, visual intactness, unity and visual uniqueness quantifiable and comparable. In the situation of variety of global and local emerging and appropriated artist indexes working already, it is not clear how detailed and useful this artwork evaluation method could be. The general level summarizes the elements for the artwork evaluation known and discussed for centuries, but the lack of capacity does not give more information in depth to value artwork.

The institutional theory sets the framework for the emerging and appropriate artist interaction in the art world including art market. The theory is basis for the method of the qualitative field literature study to experiment on developing a method on the emerging artist promotion and emerging art evaluation scheme. The observations show that in the case, when there are data on the emerging artist selling percentage or the prices of the artworks, the data are misleading. Mostly there is no collected evidence on the emerging art price dynamics of the first art fairs and five years after the alumni have graduated from the art university or academy. With few exceptions, when fixed prices appear in some irregular events; in the five years after the graduation there is no attention to the emerging artist as a valuable art creator in the primary art market. Meanwhile, other axiological possibilities, not only financial value of emerging art, are still needed to be considered further. While research into

cultural policy has been done tracking the value of art from the point of wellbeing [Lles Cymru Wellbeing Wales 2014], no researchers have touched upon the value of wellbeing in the realms of emerging art.

The case of the Art Academy of Latvia

As the research is focused upon emerging artists that have graduated from the Art Academy of Latvia, an insight into the history of the Art Academy should be valuable. Particularly because the history of the Art Academy of Latvia illustrates the development of the art market and several stages it has passed through. Frequently the stages of the art market development did not take the linear order of the evolution. The Art Academy of Latvia was the major and still is the most important art institution in Latvia. The institution was established in 1919. At the beginning of its establishment, the Art Academy of Latvia was in the centre of dispute. Academic art institutions with classical art education techniques were the ideal of the art education, but the modernist movements demanded more liberal, expressive approach. The discussion culminated in the false modernist art exhibition "Ballism" in 1920, which was the peak of the fight between the traditional painters and the modernist group [Kļaviņš 2016: 57]. Although there were newly established educational standards on the basis of the foreign Art Academies set by the rector Vilhelms Purvītis, the Art Academy of Latvia was seen as the major player of the conservative art. Collisions of this kind did not end in the first period of operation of the Art Academy of Latvia.

The war and inter-war period changed the shift towards other dominant questions like survival of the national art school, revival of the art world and the art market, but the post-war period reflected the culture and art politics of the USSR. With the change of the status of the Republic of Latvia, the Art Academy became the State Art Academy of Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic. The staff of the Art Academy tried to implement the demands of the new Ministry of Culture, which required depiction of fixed themes in painting and socialist realism style. The era between 1944 and 1956 was significant with attempts to fulfil the requirements of the new government and to maintain the artistic freedom in spite of censorship.

After Khrushchev's Thaw (1956–1959), it became a little easier for the art world to maintain its liberty in the Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic. The dominant style in the painting was still socialist realism, but the repressions towards the tutors in the Art Academy of Latvia and the artists in the Artists' Union of Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic ended. The rise of the culture, poetry, music brought the "Singing Revolution" in 1990 and the collapse of the USSR. The character of the contemporary art at that time switched from collective figurative compositions to individual, from urban and hard work themes to poetic reflections, from

historic battle scenes with heroes of the USSR to hyperrealism, seemingly senseless contemporary art performances.

These events took the Republic of Latvia into the society of the independent states and made the conditions of founding independent art world and art market possible. The era after 1990 was a transition period with the necessity to adapt to the new situation. The Art Academy of Latvia did its best to overcome the market fluctuations, the USSR market crash, the monetary and educational reforms. It is easily assumed that the new conditions of symbolic and cultural value of art and art education were set.

The Fine Arts Master studies at the Art Academy of Latvia were established in 1993. Several groups of young painters have entered the art world since then. The beginning of the 2000s came with the next wave of internationalization: artist, staff mobility through entering the European Union and accessing new Eastern markets. However, the crisis of 2008 dramatically reshaped the outcome. As it is seen in figure 2, which reflects the dynamics of the emerging artist graduation in the period of the research, the peak of the graduation was at the same time when the crisis of 2008 started. Therefore, it could be assumed that it was impacted by crisis, as the graduation in 2009 shows dramatic decrease from 28 artists to 9 artists. The figure 2 also shows that this kind of fluctuations took place at the beginning (2006 had 4 alumni, 2007 had 17 alumni) and at the end of the period (2010 had 24 alumni) without any stable quantity of graduated artists.
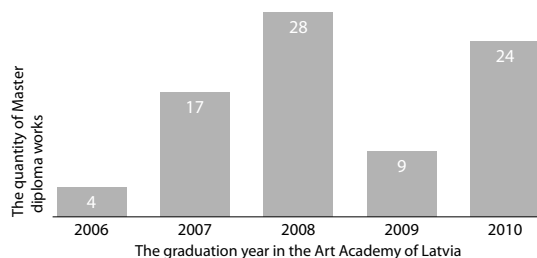
Figure 2. The number of alumni of Painting Department
Master studies 2006–2010. Author: Linda Teikmane. 2017.

In total, 80 young painters have graduated during this period, who could be promising new names in the art world, but the reality shows a different picture. A little number stays to work in the visual art field as the long-term employment and many of the alumni get two or more workplaces.

The crisis of 2008–2010 was the first serious challenge to the Art Academy of Latvia, when the Art Academy of Latvia started next stages of its strategic tasks. Although Latvia has experienced several reforms and crisis in transition time, the

crisis of 2008 appeared unexpected to the art world, and art market of Latvia suffered a serious impact of this crisis, and the impact affected all segments of the art market and art world. The art market was still very young and small before the crisis of 2008 and crisis certainly did not help to improve any of its aspects. Even nowadays many practitioners of the art market say that they still do not feel that the crisis ended in 2010, and as a result, the art market hardly exists at all outside the big centres of art market.

The recently published Macroeconomic Review of Latvia shows that the group "art, entertainment and relaxation" continues its development from 5% in 2016 to 8.5% in 2017, and to 4.6% in the first half of 2018 [Ministry of Economics 2018: 17]. The employment level in Latvia increased to 64% in 2018 in all employment categories [Ministry of Economics 2018: 30]. The group "art, entertainment and relaxation" had a significant role in maintaining the employment of 3% in the field [Ministry of Economics 2018: 32] and had increased fully employed workplaces by 0.8% in quarter II in comparison with quarter II in 2017 [Ministry of Economics 2018: 32]. By the Informative report on medium and long-term labour market forecasts, the graduated students from 2015 to 2018 in the group "humanities and art" reached 9% [Ministry of Economics 2018: 31] of the total number of students. The forecast proposes to have growing numbers of employees in the group "humanities and arts", from 25,700 in 2017 to 27,200 in 2025, and to 29,800 in 2035, or by 2.6% in 2017, 2.7% in 2025, and 3.1% in 2035 [Ministry of Economics 2018: 51]. The demand and offer for employment in the group "arts and humanities" will constitute 24,300 employees and 27,200 new specialists making accordance in 90% in 2025 [Ministry of Economics 2018: 61]. To look upon 2035 the offer and demand will make 23,600 employees and 29,800 new specialists making the accordance 79% [Ministry of Economics 2018: 61]. Statistics also show the following picture on the whole employment dynamics under 35 years in figure 3.

Number of employees in thousand												
	2006	**2007**	**2008**	**2009**	**2010**	**2011**	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**
All	1030.9	1057.4	1054.9	908.5	850.7	861.6	875.6	893.9	884.6	896.1	893.3	894.8
15–24	120.9	129.3	123.3	87.2	74.9	70.8	72.4	71.2	69.1	69.4	62.2	59.1
%	11.7	12.2	11.7	9.6	8.8	8.2	8.3	8.0	7.8	7.7	7.0	6.6
25–34	235.7	236.8	236.6	209.0	205.8	205.1	208.4	215.4	214.1	219.3	218.1	217.9
%	22.9	22.4	22.4	23.0	24.2	23.8	23.8	24.1	24.2	24.5	24.4	24.3

Figure 3. Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia. The Employment and Unemployment – the Economic Activity. 2006–2017. Author: Linda Teikmane. 2018.

The number of full or part-time employment among youths falls. Partly the demographics shows the declining number of youths, but partly the employment options for youths without higher education stay significantly lower than the employment options for those with higher education. Eurostudent report says that Latvia has one of the largest levels of the student employment in their study period. 49% of students are in the full-time job, 12% of students have irregular or part-time job [Hauschildt, Vögtie, Gvosć 2018: 132]. The recent surveys of the Art Academy of Latvia alumni employment indicate that almost all alumni are employed [The Art Academy of Latvia 2013], [The Art Academy of Latvia 2014–2015], [Teikmane 2017–2018]. In 2013, from 143 respondents 15.38% were employed and 11.19% students engaged in the study process [The Art Academy of Latvia 2013]. In the survey of 2014–2015, 427 respondents reported that 81.03% were employed and 12.65% were still studying [The Art Academy of Latvia 2014–2015]. The survey of 2017–2018, specifically addressed to the alumni of the Painting department, recorded the fact of 98.44% employment after their studies [Teikmane 2017–2018]. The alumni are employed as self-employed or in mostly small legal entities, but there are also exceptions with alumni working in well-known public institutions. Still the question remains concerning the alumni who are strictly employed in the visual art segment. There are very little data on their employment or their working lives, partly because it is an institutional blank gap and partly because the alumni are busy with their careers and mostly do not connect their employment expectations with the Art Academy from which they have graduated.

Meanwhile the Department of Painting of Art Academy of Latvia is the largest department in the Baltic States. In the time between 2014/2015 and 2019/2020, the number of students of the institution is expected to rise from 850 to 1000 students [The Art Academy of Latvia 2012: 12]. Every year around 300 alumni end their studies at the Art Academy of Latvia. The number of alumni and new artists graduated in the past years makes a significant percentage of the emerging artists. Therefore, the necessity to address the notion of emerging art and artists from the contextual position of creative industries arises.

Focus on impact on the creative industries

The creative industries theory was developed on the basis of the creative capital notion and the term of cultural industries as the political construct. Creative industries as the part of the creative economy created a framework for industries from very different fields to connect on common basis and to foster an economic development in 1990. From the theoretical point of view, the creative industries system for promotion is incredibly one-way thinking – orientated by the market,

but does not pay attention to the institutional hierarchy in the art world. Creative industries include visual art in the areas of creative industries, but mostly theoretic in the long way of dispute over which industries are creative and which are not creative have lost the part in which the institutional theory is strong.

The creative industries do not set the direction of the artistic style or the artistic movements. In the position just to appropriate the "product" that is in the market the creative industries are unable to affect the content. Prehistory of establishing creative industries in Latvia could be seen in my previous researches done on the operation of the Artists' Union of Latvia [Teikmane 2013] and Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic Art Fund Exhibition Directorate [Teikmane 2015]. The transition of the art market from the socialist economics to the market economics was unpredictable and formally unresolved. The formal independence meant that the system of art market having worked for almost 50 years did not exist anymore, but the art market of the region and the working artists remained as employees.

The other example of the Art Fund Exhibition Directorate, which operated from 1989 to 1992, shows similarities with the same type institutions under the respected Artists' Union in different republics [Teikmane 2015]. The Exhibition Directorate by its functions took care of the Art Fund and Artists' Union commission for new artworks to the Artists' Union collection, organized exhibitions of different authors and different media, sold tickets, publications, organized social events, communicated on common interests with other 8–10 art enterprises in the Art Fund system. In the market changes in 1992 the Exhibition Directorate institutionally united with other enterprises under Artists' Union of Latvia. The example of the Exhibition Directorate highlights the fact that Artists' Union had the art enterprise system even before the term of the creative industries was born in the UK, as the system of creative enterprises of the Latvian SSR Art Fund was founded around 1950.

The creative industries declare that the artworks by emerging artists are the products of visual arts, which are included as a field of the creative industries. Still there are differences on how much artist is orientated towards market or towards fine art. Ieva Zemīte in her PhD thesis says that fine art is not creative industries [Zemīte 2016: 44]. The terms *art industries* and *culture industries* incorporate the fine art. The DCMS definition [British Council 2010: 16] of 1998 originally included fine art as the creative industry, this scheme stayed also in 2001 and later definitions. The UNESCO based on the initial DCMS definition includes fine art, visual art and crafts as the creative industries.

"The UNESCO defines cultural and creative industries as sectors of organised activity whose principal purpose is the production or reproduction, promotion, distribution and/or commercialisation of goods, services and activities of a cultural, artistic or heritage-related nature" [UNESCO 2018].

The fine art and the visual art are the employment fields and industries without which creative level of creative industries would be impossible.

During the period from the millennium to 2010 the theory of creative industries experienced several transformations in connection with the visual art. An industry requires some quantifiable data on the products, production, prices, gross domestic product (GDP), turnover, export and import. The industry needs some statistics which is collected through years, on the local and global business environment, number of small, medium and large enterprises, number of self-employed, but not all industries are collecting statistics in a unified way.

The term *creative industries* in Latvia was established in 2006 along with the development of the culture policy-making documents. Creative industries were seen as the main stimulus to gain the economic growth. Since that time creative industries have employed several thousand people and gained the market turnover of about 6% [Ministry of Culture 2013: 28].

The other side of the topic is creative industries in Latvia, which does not have the strong basis as an industry. Creative industries are still struggling to prove that it is as significant sector as any other in the market economics. Creative industries prove that it makes turnover, it has import and export, percentage of GVA (Gross Value Added), enterprises or self-employed. But the data are not collected in all of the sectors of creative industries on the same level or have equally long history. The same case can be mentioned with the methodology of the creative industries analysis. Several methods of quantitative and qualitative analysis such as comparison between statistical data, comparison between the creative industries in the creative sector, supply chains, mapping, size of the creative enterprises, success of individuals in the creative industries, localization or internationalization, were employed in research dedicated to the creative industries and their statistical analysis. For most of the industries the criteria are easy to meet, because of the systemic counting on percentages through the decades. The art market statistics has been collected since the late 1990s in relation with the success story of Great Britain. The art market works differently from the market of traditional industries, and the segment of creative industries still has several unformulated processes going through the trade, income and outcome, salaries etc.

Nevertheless, the number of self-employed working in the creative industries rose in the next decade of the 2000s. The fields of creative industries like design, fashion design, publishing, electronic media, television, performing arts, museology have less creative input than visual arts. In a recent survey made in Great Britain, artistic creation industry stands out with 91.5% of creative intensity [Department for Culture, Media and Sport 2015: 34]. The translation and interpretation activities stay in the second place with 82.2% of creative intensity [DCMS 2015: 34], performing arts stay in the third place with 78.8% of creative intensity [DCMS 2015: 34].

There has always been a collision between the needs of the market or industry and the required originality in the visual arts. The industry wants only originality and aesthetics, which could be nicely wrapped up and used for increase of sales rates or product demand. The industry does not care for specific problem solving in contemporary or emerging art. The usage of art instrumental values with an aim to make an "art-product" should fit in the category for commercial, design, pretty books, or CDs etc. If financial outcome were not expected, there would be no necessity for taking risk or large financial investments. Unique qualities cannot cost anything by itself.

The art market itself has become an industry. The project managers, designers, curators, theoreticians, gallery and museum staff are creating a huge bubble around the artist. The artist is still a creator of the contemporary artworks, and the reason why exhibitions are set up regardless of style in which the individual artist works as the author. The artist does not have any fees in the exhibition project unless it is a case of specific mobility programme where the creation of specific artwork is included. The 20% of the project fees go to the staff, which provides the project management. The reality of the freelancer world is that no project is possible now in the freelancer world. If the project needs to have some support, for example, a grant, the project needs to be affiliated to an institution and the institution can grant it to the individual. The institution, as George Dickie stated, defines that this is good art.

The artist gets some percentage of sales price in the auction house if he is still alive. The hammer price and the estimated price of the artwork may differ largely. The art market after the crisis of the 2008 to 2010 has gone through stagnation and a lack of capital to invest in the art. There are few auction houses in Latvia. Major of the artworks were sold by the minimal hammer price not reaching the estimated price. The example of gallery – auction house "Jēkabs" shows that not only the art fairs of the contemporary art in Latvia have had low prices.

The same situation is with the copyright. To be able to work in creative industries and/or art market, the great necessity is to have the on-going question of the copyrights solved. In many places of Europe, the copyright has its own normative legislation which is solved for every industry independently. The situation in Latvia is that artists have their authorship on their artworks, but they do not get remuneration for it. The artists of the music industry fight over their copyright against piracy resulted as the Directive 2014/26/EU of the European Parliament and European Council of 26 February 2014, *On collective management of copyright and related rights and multi-territorial licensing of rights in musical works for online use in the internal market*. For the visual arts there are some normative basis for the copyright usage, but the usage of these copyrights, except the authorship, still does not bring much significance. Creative industry has a more precise understanding of

the creativity as intellectual property industry. Every artwork in this sense also fits as an object of intellectual property.

From all the above-mentioned we can clearly see that new artists consider it worth testing themselves not only in the visual art field, but also in the creative industries. The history of work in the creative industries from 2006 is very poor. Since the theory and popularity of creative industries grew, the alumni of the Art Academy of Latvia started to make side projects in their study time and after graduation. The industries in which emerging artists were engaged were:

1) The visual arts, basically implementing orders in monumental paintings, or other original artworks.

2) The curator of art exhibitions.

3) The design, including the graphic design, the fashion design.

4) Pedagogy as the activity in studios or the main profession in secondary schools, academies or universities (this is exception from creative industries, but worth mentioning as it is a strong field in the alumni professional life).

5) Some of them doing the restoration, scenography for short-term projects [Appendix I Master's diploma thesis 2006–2010].

After 2010, the alumni of Painting department in their study process were strongly affected by digitalization and new media. Some diploma works and creative industry projects were made in the light of IT possibilities before 2010, for the alumni in the functional design, visual communication, graphic programmes and in their last year the study programme "Motion. Picture. Sound." (*Kustība. Attēls. Skaņa – KAS*) being especially close to the wave of digital and process art. The emerging art as well as the projects in creative industries continued interdisciplinary approach. However, while emerging art and artists form part of culture and creative industries, the public policy documents that govern culture and creative industries do not approach emerging art and artists as particular culture and creative industries field or, what is even more worrisome, as particular culture and creative industries resource.

Discussion

The research was intended to create and evolve new methodical approach based on the synthesis of the socioeconomic impact or emerging art and artists, combining the institutional theory of the art history and the creative industry as the intellectual property industry. The copyright theory and the institutional theory could make way to a more precise copyright object and creative industry definition in Latvia. Emerging artists mostly do not link their creative skills with the management skills or self-promotion skills, but they develop these skills *ad hoc* together with the representatives of the institutions and dealers.

The evidence shows that institutionally through different networks and modes of interaction in the global society the emerging art value is made. The higher education institutions, art market and art world institutions should notice the high willingness of emerging artists to work professionally in the field also after the hypothetical five years after the graduation from art academy or university ending the status of emerging artist. There is an urgent need to make a roundtable and discuss solutions for the emerging art promotion. On the state level there is a necessity to develop an emerging art promotion strategy for near and further future. When every state institution has its own view on how the alumni should be pushed towards their next big success in career, a united proposition for establishing a strategy for emerging art promotion should be voiced.

The initial proposition was the wish to verify that the alumni of the Art Academy of Latvia create a significant part of the market. In the course of the work, many aspects and many questions on the status of the emerging art arose, the role of the creative industries about 20 years after the creation of the term as well as the signs of reviving or letting the new institutionalism to function on evolving the ways of more democratic decision-making tools. The higher educational institution in visual art as the most important learning and training institution for students should keep in mind that creative problem-solving is not only skill that is necessary for the young specialists in their working life. Soft and hard skills need to be harmonised and integrated in the study process making the alumni ready to use these skills creatively.

Conclusions

For decades there has been a struggle between economic and aesthetic side of contemporary art and contemporary art market. There has always been the necessity to keep the creative and artistic basis for every kind of economic processes, including creative industries and art market. On the other side, it is impossible to keep living from art only as a freelancer in unstable economic situation when art lovers and collectors also have different purchasing power. The small art market and large number of working artists, large quantity of artworks never end well. The decrease of activity in the art market has a direct impact on living and emerging artists, because the sale of the artworks and pedagogical work have been the strongest professional directions for centuries.

The big change for the emerging artists now is the growing significance of the creative industries. The creative industries keep the intellectual property and originality in the centre of the creative industry product, creative industry business and individual organization. The positive example of the United Kingdom keeps other countries motivated to implement the model and experience from the United Kingdom into their art markets and creative economy. But the market fluctuations

show that the fragments of the models which worked well in one country not necessarily work well in the other. Testing a specific model takes time in the creative industry environment and to take necessary regulations on the government level. The creative industries and the art market must be based on the local identity of the country and the local art world.

The emerging artists try various steps to differ in their professional creativity, their artwork value and reach their professional goals. The examples viewed in the paper indicated that answering the research question the Art Academy of Latvia affects the value of the emerging artists, the Art Academy of Latvia makes the emerging artists, offers necessary skills and the first exhibition, competition, internationalization possibilities. For many of the graduates, short-term projects end with long-term or permanent employment in the field. The value of the emerging art stays under 50,000 euro in Latvia although the price of contemporary art had risen before the crisis of 2008 and slowly rose after the 2010. Still the art market is small, the share of contemporary art is small, but in the light of recent biennials, international artists and contemporary art coming to Latvia, the art lovers slowly start to appreciate emerging art.

The main question, which future holds, is whether this scenario will be effective? The future with its geopolitics, market economy and creative economy challenges, the future of contemporary art gives many collision points. The fact is that contemporary art, especially emerging art, will not lose its interdisciplinary character. Meanwhile the creative industries will stop being creative in the moment when they lose creativity. This means that future dystopia holds certain threats for the development of creative industries and art market. However, for the sake of the future, what these artists will experience, there must be continued work with the identification and experimentation of the emerging art and creative industry future scenario.

Limitations of the research

The research holds limitation in the chronological period to maintain short period and keep concrete on the viewed issue. The same can be said about the alumni of the Art Academy of Latvia. The alumni mostly did not stress their creativity in the creative industries although these works mark the potential history of ideas, patents and projects made in recent history of creative industries outside the Art Academy of Latvia. For the future knowledge there is necessity to trace back these projects and it can be carried out in the future researches regarding the creativity of all Master, Bachelor departments. More or less precise review of the Art Academy of Latvia student artistic creativity and the employment rates in the creative industries could be seen as the result.

The research question focuses on the value of the emerging art made at the Art Academy of Latvia keeping the history and development of the creative industries for other publications.

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Appendix I

Master's diploma thesis by Art Academy of Latvia alumni 2006–2010

Adamaite, D. (2007). Transmitters and receivers. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Arbidāne, A. (2008). The feast. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Audere, A. (2009). On the way to Marseilles. An evening in Italy. Sarkandaugava. Chimneys. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Avotiņš, J. (2010). – (untitled). Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Avramenko, V. (2008). The nude. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Bakāne, J. (2008). The time of pink elephants. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Baklāne, A. (2008). My family and other animals. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Balode–Bandeniece, Z. (2010). The soul of the city. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Baņķiere, L. (2006). The Pļavnieki district. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Bērziņa, A. (2008). The communication as an illusion or light. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Bērziņš, A. (2009). Untitled (folk romanticism). Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Blunavs, J. (2010). Signalstrengthexcellent.lv. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Boče, A. (2008). The imagination. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Brasliņš, A. (2008). Paris. The evening. The champs Elysees; Paris. The street in Montparnasse. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Brekte, P. (2008). Al Maghreb Al-Aqsa or the land of the sunset. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Bukovska, E. (2010). Therein. Hereabouts. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Butnors, A. (2009). The attack. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Dāniele, A. (2008). The unbelievable adventures. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Dukāts, J. (2010). Two reflections. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Fedjukova, F. (2009). People in the night. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Freiberga, L. (2008). My Dominican treasures. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Gaile, D. (2010). Masks. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Gaile, K. (2010). Strawberries in the snow. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Gintere, L. (2008). In the frames of mind. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Gribulis, J. (2008). The road. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Guščika, M. (2007). The video surveillance. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Jākobsons, A. (2010). Insomnia. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Kalniņa, A. (2008). The self-portrait with pumpkins. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Kalniņš, J. (2008). Three paintings on biblical themes. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Kalnroze, I. (2008). How I learned to bestride or horse life. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Karnauha, M. (2007). The summer by Theodosia. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Kosenko, V. (2006). The piece for mechanical piano. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Kovaļovs, R. (2009). The human body and colour. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Kūlmane, E. (2010). The mirror of the moment. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Kupčs, J. (2008). The invented landscapes. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Kvitka, K. (2010). Murales. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Ķečāne, V. (2010). The Seven Sleepers. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Lāce, A. (2008). The happy end. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Laicāne, A. (2010). The summer dress. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Lapiņa, I. (2007). Altera pars. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Lazdāns, V. (2008). The human pepper. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Lazdiņa, L. (2010). Such time – Berlin. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Libeks, J. (2010). Inhalation – exhalation. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Liepa, R. (2009). The cycle. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Līgate, L. (2006). The dreamers. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Ļevkoviča, N. (2006). An interrelation. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Maderniece, E. (2007). The dream – an illusion, a revelation, a truth. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Mediņa, A. (2010). The bare silence. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Mucenieks, E. (2008). The sea of solitude. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Muižniece, M. (2008). The transition. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Ņesteroviča, J. (2007). The memories of Ophelia. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Okonova–Treice, G. (2008). The painting experience in creating a book's design. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Ozola, L. (2007). The Physical body cage. The Barn bath. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Pankratjeva, N. (2008). The water. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Paranjanca, K. (2007). The feast. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Perskis, K. (2007). The carnival. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Pētersone, I. (2010). The crosscut. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Poikāns, K. (2007). The triptych of the Christ's suffering. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Poplavska, S. (2010). Landscapes of perception. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Purcens, J. (2008). That have eaten enough, that have drinken enough. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Raičiņevska, T. (2009). The CONSPIRACY or story of the dot. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Raistere, L. (2010). The girl of the city. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Rēdere, B. (2008). Behind the visible: melting depth. The gravity. The flight direction. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Rjabovska, A. B. (2008). The tempters. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Rogačevska, N. (2007). I am what I am not. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Rusmanis, R. (2008). Let's fly? Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Silabrama, A. (2007). A letter to friend. The colour and sensation game. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Stabiņa, A. (2009). Guests. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Stepāne, L. (2007). The location. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Tulpežņikova, L. (2010). The colour of the rain. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Ūlande, L. (2010). Improvisations. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Uzulniece, J. (2008). The city. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Valujeva, V. (2010). Irresponsibility. Youth. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Vasiļjeva, A. (2009). How do you know that I am called a Light? Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Veita–Breidaka, I. (2010). Fiction. Nature. Serial number 119. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Vēvere, E. (2007). The shame. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Vinkelmane, A. (2010). Twins. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Višņakovs, V. (2007). The landscape. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Zemīte, I. (2008). The brilliant rose. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Zunde, E. (2010). The tenderness. Master's thesis. Art Academy of Latvia.

Appendix II

List of figures

Figure 1. The formula of aesthetic art work value by George Dickie. Author: Linda Teikmane. 2017.

Figure 2. The number of alumni of Painting Department Master studies 2006–2010. Author: Linda Teikmane. 2017.

Figure 3. Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia. The Employment and Unemployment – the Economic Activity. 2006–2017. Author: Linda Teikmane. 2018.

PRINCIPLES AND LOGIC OF THE DEPICTION OF FLOWERS IN VANITAS PHOTOGRAPHY

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Abstract

Art must reflect something that cannot be called trivial or perceived by rational means, as well as what we cannot experience in reality – the borderline between life and non-existence, death among other things. Certainly, ways of depiction vary – there are works of art where the temporariness of life and the inevitability of death have been modelled as a type of a game and there are also those works of art that bear an indirect reminder of death – through allegories or metaphors. Vanitas belongs to the latter. Vanitas is an allegorically presented still life that emerged as an independent genre in about 1550 and became most widespread in the 16th and 17th centuries in Belgium and Flanders. Traditionally the composition of a still life of this type included a human skull, a burnt-out candle, small cut flowers as well as other objects that all seemed to say – everything and anything is transient.

The purpose of the paper is to undertake the comparative analysis of vanitas still lives by artists from the USA, Japan and Germany. The photographs of flowers will be used to read the cultural historical message contained in them as well as the technical means of expression used in photography that are enhanced by a profoundly personal depiction. The perceivable designation created by the photographer and the *aesthetic object* registered by the collective consciousness will be defined and described taking into consideration, as far as possible, the social context that has led to the creation of the given artefact. Works of art will be summarised according to different principles of depiction and the main trends that are reflected in contemporary art photography and have not been encountered before will be outlined. It will result in a general overview through applying acceptable norms that will make it possible to determine whether the picture is or is not contemporary as well as to establish criteria characterising the concept of *the contemporary*.

Keywords: *photography, contemporary, still life, artefact, vanitas.*

Introduction

The research focuses mainly on the contemporary art forms of photography, particularly on such phenomenon as still life of a floral photography and asks basic question: what does it mean for a flower when it is *inhabiting* a globalized art world? In fact, a vanitas is a symbolic work of art showing the transience of life, that is of images of photography which bring the message of the certainty of death. Art historian William John Thomas Mitchell emphasized the dominance of pictures and metaphors surrounding us. According to W. J. T. Mitchell (*the studies of W. J. T. Mitchell discovered the pictorial turn of human sciences and introduced the phrase pictorial turn in the March 1992 issue of Artforum*) the pictorial turn is about that the pictures that surround us do not only transform our world and identity, but also form them more and more. (...) Mitchell demonstrates the signs of the pictorial turn in Pierce's semiotics, Nelson Goodman's analytic art philosophy, Derrida's criticism of logocentrism, the work of the Frankfurt School and Michel Foucault [Hornyk 2002]. However, the etymology of the Latin noun *vānĭtās* (from the Latin adjective *vanus* – empty) means *emptiness* [Lewis and Short 1958] and the different meanings of the noun *emptiness* vary with the particular context and the cultural tradition in which it is used. A number of photographs have depicted emptiness in the vanitas genre in the 21st century. Each artist has a different proposal of how the vanitas theme should be illustrated, what artefacts to present, what story to tell. The theme of vanitas has been used in modern still life images of photographers German-born Vera Mercer, British artists Mat Collishaw and Alexander James Hamilton, American Tanya Marcuse, Dutch artists Julia Hetta and Maurice Scheltens, Swiss-born Brigitte Lustenberger, Dutch-born German Annet Van Der Voort, Israeli-born Ori Gersht within a relative period of a few years. Photography medium itself has a close connection to themes like melancholy, memory, decay, mortality and death. Robert Burton pointed out that the fact of the death and the phenomenon itself was the main cause of melancholia and melancholy in this sense was the character of mortality in 1621 [Burton 1989–2000]. The main issue in the research is the fact that the creator of a photograph is most often triggered by a cultural background and collective memory. Data for this research have been collected by focusing on the works the following artists: Americans Joel-Peter Witkin, David La Chapell and Erin Perfect; contemporary German photographers Agelinde Scholl, Luzia Simons and Michael Wesely; Japanese artists Kenji Shibata, Yumiko Izu and Azuma Makoto. Through studying authors' working experience and by analysing individual motivations, cultural backgrounds and artefacts the main trends over the past several years will be outlined. What makes something interesting is that it can be seen to be like, or analogous to, something else. There is an art and there are fashions of seeing things in order to make them interesting; and to supply this art, these fashions, there is

a steady recycling of the artefacts and tastes of the past [Sontag 1979: 137]. Moreover, by studying the main topics, we can discover important insights and inspiration for perspective of the irreversible process of globalization in the 21st century that brought cultural enrichment to visual arts. What tendencies has a vanitas genre exerted in the globalization *game*? What impact does the innovation have on the artist's concepts of photography? The findings may be useful in understanding:

1. The logic and different principles of depiction of flowers.

2. The opposition and contrast between artefacts of Western world and the Far East.

3. The acceptable norms that will determine contemporariness of the photography.

4. The identification of the main trends that are reflected in contemporary art photography.

5. The role of the vanitas genre in the tendencies of the future perspective of art.

The *staged reality* by Joel-Peter Witkin, David La Chapelle and Erin Perfect in the USA

The 21st century is a brilliant period for the still life photographers to visualize the American way of life that give a hint of an awareness of some of the ideas of transhumanists, who are scientifically constructive in ensuring immortality. Artists regard the expression of the vanitas theme somewhat positively, even though some geographical and cultural differences of background exist. They use photography as an important tool for raising their voice. Still life photographs from the USA show a lot of creativity led by cultural elites. The paper actualizes Joel-Peter Witkin, whose artworks are a cultural obsession that defined the *decadence*; also Erin Perfect's viewers' confrontation with her artwork *Untitled* from the series *Suspending Belief;* and David La Chapelle's arrangement *Late Summer* 2008–2011 signifies the artist's interest not only in commercial visuals, but also in the concept of the kitsch – where it is a part of the American life characteristics. **Joel-Peter Witkin** (b. 1939), an American artist of mixed Italian and Hebrew parentage, builds a figural scene and still life arrangement of fruits, flowers and dismembered parts of corpses, introduces religious allusions. Witkin's main topic is death that emphasizes Heaven, Hell, and salvation of the soul in the afterlife, based on a deep interest and knowledge of the history of art. "In order to know if I were truly alive, I'd make the invisible visible" [Witkin 1985]! He undertakes every idea by sketching on paper to depict all the details before doing photography work on analog camera and transforming the negatives into image in the darkroom. "My purpose is to acknowledge the wonder of being part of Creation. Though I myself don't create anything, I make from what has been created" [Horvat 1989]. The detail of the work

The Bone House (fig. 1) is used on the artist's cover of the catalogue *Photology by Davide Faccioli.* "What I'm trying to say is that I know who I am and I also know why I'm here and what comes after death. And even if that sounds like a very rebellious assertion, I guess that what I do is the meaning of my life" [Witkin 2010].

Figure 1. Joel-Peter Witkin, Davide Faccioli.
Catalogue *Photology* (2007), cover.

David La Chapelle's (b. 1963) still life photography is focused on the theme of mortality using natural and artificial specimens in photograph *Late Summer* 2008–2011, C-Print, 152 × 110 cm, courtesy of the *Artist ROBILANT + VOENA*, London – Milan. The arrangement for the photograph *Late Summer* signifies the artist's interest in kitsch. He focused on the extreme kitsch form arranging still life from well-known food packages, banknote, cut flowers, artificially made fruits and other ready-made items of the consumer society. "I feel that we are living in a very precarious time, with environmental devastation, economic instability, religious wars waged, and excessive consumption amidst extreme poverty. I have always used photography as a means to try to understand the world and the paradox that is my life. I reintroduce my personal ideas of transfiguration, regaining paradise, and the notion of life after death" [La Chapelle 2018].

Figure 2. Erin Perfect. *Untitled*, from the series *Suspending Belief* (2012)
© courtesy of Erin Perfect.

By choosing to highlight arrangements of still life *Untitled*, from the series *Suspending Belief* 2012 (fig. 2), American photographer **Erin Perfect** assigns the tulip to the role of the impossible mission. This masterly photograph shows the box falling on the fragile tulip's stem so gently as if no gravitational pull existed. The arrangement of the tomato, the berries, the box and the tulip has been used with the purpose to confront the viewer. These images deal with naivety, in that there is an innocence in us that wants to believe something contrary to what our minds deem plausible. I am interested in questioning the intersection between naivety and optimism as well as scepticism and pessimism. These images challenge the viewer to allow contradictory ideas to co-exist within their minds by questioning their own relationship to scepticism and naivety [Perfect 2016]. However, by analysing context (table 1) we find the artefact of death, kitsch and scepticism in American artworks.

The German contribution of Michael Wesely, Agelinde Scholl and the still life photography by Luzia Simons

This piece focuses on Central-European contemporary photography – German still life variations of the vanitas genre. Artist's task in Agelinde Scholl's *Küchenstillleben* series, Luzia Simons' scannogramm *Stockage* and Michael Wesely's *Stilleben* project visualizes idea in a way that changes the viewer's attitude to life, changing one's perception of matter. According to German artist **Agelinde Scholl's** (b. 1943) graphic and photography works, her topic is the *secret life of things* – so

Figure 3. Agelinde Scholl. *Küchenstillleben* (2013)
© courtesy of Agelinde Scholl.

familiar with the individual character of the objects that portrayed the essence of the aging process (fig. 3).

In the *Küchenstilleben* (courtesy of Erin Perfect) project Scholl observing the biowaste in compost by looking for structure of aesthetic objects and dealing with the phenomenon of time. She works in series, often over the years, which has become a part of the theme of *time*, in order to do justice to the *simultaneity of a multitude of moments* and also to the constant change of appearances [Scholl 2013]. Brazilian-born German **Luzia Simons** (b. 1953) using modern scanning techniques produces scannogramm *Stockage 113* (2011) in size 180 × 126 cm of tulips – a cultural symbol – an artefact of globalization and a metaphor for mobility. Once the much sought-after flower was worth its weight in gold, and developed into a cultural symbol in both the Occident and Orient. Originating from the Orient, it was brought to Europe and altered by cultivation in Holland; finally, it returned to its ancient origins in new varieties – thus becoming an example of cultural migration, a symbol of exchange and of insidious changes in aesthetic significance [Simons 2006]. In this way, Simons' increased images come to include the beginning

of irrevocable decay, intercultural identity and malfunctions. **Michael Wesely's** (b. 1963) pioneering techniques have allowed him to capture uniquely long exposures of still lives. For *Stilleben* project (2001–2007) Wesely used a special pin-hole camera to create his photographs (fig. 4) that are related to ideas of temporality and ephemera, and present still images that literally embody the passage of time.

Figure 4. Michael Wesely. *Stilleben (17.1.–29.1.2007).*
München: Schirmer/Mosel, p. 33.

The vase of tulips in the photo illustration becomes completely abstract after thirteen days of exposing, while time itself becomes visible. It is no longer the motif alone that counts – that is often a more invisible than visible, merely looming presence. But peripheral conditions such as light, movement, and other atmospheric elements emerge differently as focal points [Wesely 2007]. By way of the capacity we are currently gaining of seeing something solid in the most abstract things (particles). This does require us to stop trying to tell real from fictional and concern ourselves with the difference between concrete and abstract [Fluss 2011: 170]. To the extent that disturbing the superficial naturalism emphasizes the symbolic character of the image, reference can be made to that classical theme of transience such as was so loved by the 17th century Dutch painters of still lives. Apart from such references, they can also be seen as extraordinary pictures that encourage us to think critically about images, their content, and the way we approach them on the one hand in mass culture and, on the other, in art: writes F. W. Kaiser [Wesely 2007: 94]. The widespread presence of time in photography is expanding the boundaries of still life

photography. German's artworks represent the idea of the vanitas (table 1) through the following artefacts: the aging process, the mobilization, the intercultural identity in globalization process and the phenomena of passing time. In this perspective, looking at Wesely's works, the movement is reached in two dimensions of the photography; it will matter more and more in the future.

The Japanese term *mono no aware* in art of Kenji Shibata, Yumiko Izu and Azuma Makoto

The emptiness and the nothingness of the Oriental and Western world describes the first Japanese author to receive the Nobel Prize for Literature award, Yasunari Kawabata (b. 1899): "My own works have been described as works of emptiness, but it is not to be taken for the nihilism of the West. The spiritual foundation would seem to be quite different" [Kawabata 1969]. Most of Japanese artistic photographs evoke in the viewer a gentle sadness of the images of flowers characterized by the term *mono no aware* – awareness of the transience of all things heightens the appreciation of their beauty. Nevertheless, Japan's traditional culture is still so powerful that it continues to be the prevailing force in modelling and tuning the national character of the Japanese, with the result that they still have two faces – one modern and rational, and one traditional and emotional [DeMente 1994: 13]. This paper focuses on Japanese artist Kenji Shibata's photograph *11:53:36* from the series *Locked in the Ether*, Yumiko Izu photograph *Secret Garden Blanc 72* and *Azuma Makoto Exobiotanica – Botanical Space Flight.* **Kenji Shibata** (b. 1972) uses *mono no aware* – in storytelling style and creates a photo image by freezing flowers into a large block of water, for example, photograph named *11:53:36* from the series *Locked in the Ether* (2014) lambda print, 72.1×96.4 cm. Shibata's artefact for photograph *11:53:36* is a single moment towards the inevitable passing of all things. The flowers he photographs are well cemented in the ice structure and dead, but their last breaths are immortalized in the ice. They're floating in limbo, lost somewhere ineffable, blushing still with colour and life [Chan 2014]. Japanese-born photographer **Yumiko Izu** (b. 1968) finds her roots in Japan's visual culture, she currently lives and works in Rhinebeck, New York. By choosing to highlight the detail of a fully opened white tulip in softened monochrome tones against a white background Yumiko Izu's *Secret Garden Blanc 72* (2008) photograph is rich with associations. She has been producing large-scale pigment prints for studying the interplay of life and death, which were published in the monograph *Resonance* by *Serendia Contemporary* in 2016. Yumiko Izu's Resonance pulsates with the life-memories of one woman's time here on earth. It is an inner wilderness where the sediments of time, washed by water and cleansed of all impurities, stretch to limitless horizons. In this landscape, flowers without roots and skulls without flesh sing

paeans to life [Kodemari 2016]. The cultural heritage of her native memory allows working originally with the basic concept – in nothingness, there is everything. The pieces from Yumiko *Secret Garden* series are sensitive in texture, very light coloured in halftones. When it became fashionable to talk in the Western world about the East and its aesthetic qualities, they were verbalized in spatial or physical terms, that is, half-light, semi-darkness, halftones, weak light, deep shadows. Since we only know how to divide the world into contrasts, awakened phenomena is its half to us [Teters 2010: 13].

Figure 5. Azuma Makoto *Exobiotanica – Botanical Space Flight*
(July 15, 2014). Black Rock Desert, Nevada, USA © AMKK.

Flower artist **Azuma Makoto** (b. 1976) uses experimental methods to fuse nature and sees the beauty in the whole circle of life. In Japan, in ikebana (Japanese art of flower arranging, or the way of flowers) they say you listen to the voice of the flower, so to speak. It's important to live as such. The point is not to see flowers as objects, but as living things. Listen to the plant's voice. Be conscious of it [Mazurek 2017]. The artist founded an experimental laboratory Azuma Makoto Kaju Kenkyusho (AMKK – Azuma Makoto Botanical Research Institute) with the mission of expanding art activities pursuing infinite potential of plants in 2009. In 2012 it also published flower works in the *Encyclopedia of Flowers* photographed by Shunsuke Shiinoki. The chapter *Appearance* of the book is dedicated to the flower's existence, look, posture – appearance: with time held in abeyance, a portrait that captures the moment of a life's blossom in full glory, gradually withering and changing [Makoto 2012]. "I wanted to take flowers and plants into an impossible environment where they could never exist. And seeing this very striking visual visualization – this juxtaposition – really makes you think. People who were never interested in flowers before will now see this and become interested" [Mazurek 2017].

With an avant-garde approach to flower bouquet space flight *Exobiotanica*, Makoto Azuma celebrated creativity's role in the contemporary art world. Azuma designed the frame to dangle beneath a helium balloon that would carry a lavish bouquet of flowers into stratosphere. He used brightly coloured flowers from around the world so that they contrast against the darkness of space. Volunteers from JP Aerospace in California helped Azuma rig the unlikely satellites with GPS sensors and GoPro cameras to record the voyage [De La Cruz 2014]. The arrangement of flowers made it up to 30,000 metres and the flowers were never found, though, the device was retrieved about 8 km from the launch site. Making just an art object was not a goal at all. I thought I could make more beautiful flower art in the world of minus 60 degree Celsius: says Azuma [McCafferty 2016]. After the space flight *Exobiotanica,* Azuma felt deeply connected to his dream and said: I always wanted to travel to space. This is a dream come true [De La Cruz 2014].

Photographers in Japan are more likely to see creativity coming from their national context, the global art experience and the traditional culture. Japanese cultural background has a positive impact on the symbolic dimension as well as on the still life's creativity and innovation of the idea of the *memento mori*. The artefacts for Japanese artists (table 1) are life-memories, a single moment and space flight,

Table 1. Table of used artefacts, aesthetic objects and the author's individual context. (2018) © courtesy of Līga Sakse

Author	Nationality	An artefact	Aesthetic object	The context
Joel-Peter Witkins	Hebrew-born American	Death	The scene of corpse parts, flowers, fruits and drapery	The wonder of being part of Creation
David LaChapelle	American	The kitsch	Food packages, banknote, cut flowers, artificially made fruits	Very personal ideas of transfiguration, the notion of life after death
Erin Perfect	American	Scepticism	The arrangement of the vegetable, berries, falling wooden box and the tulip	Confront by questioning the intersection between naivety and optimism
Kenji Shibata	Japanese	A single moment	Freezing flowers into large ice blocks	The inevitable passing of all things
Yumiko Izu	Japanese	Life-memories	Light colored flowers without roots	Studying the interplay of life and death
Azuma Makoto	Japanese	Space flight	A bouquet of flowers into the stratosphere	To see flowers as living things
Agelinde Scholl	German	The aging	Biowaste, natural objects in compost	Transience
Luzia Simons	Brazil-born German	Globalization	The scans of tulips	Intercultural identity and malfunctions
Michael Wesely	German	The passage of time	The time alone is more invisible than the vase of tulips	With uniquely long exposures encourage to think critically about images

more effectively, Azuma's principle of depiction flowers into the atmosphere and photographed with satellites suspended against the edge of the earth outlined the new trend in the contemporary art world.

Conclusion

Looking at the images in an alienated way – other than how it is often done, we experience the *mental* image: at first, allegoric reality creating with objects and then the artefact appears in the concept of artist's vision. Data collected through the publications and interviews with artists indicate that despite their distinct cultural background the theme of life and death is an important for each of the authors. The approaches to death, kitsch, scepticism of American artists dealing with the objective world (table 1) show personal ideas of transfiguration. Thereby, the work of German photography represents our world through a single moment, the aging process and the phenomenon of passing time. As a matter of fact, the members of Japanese nation have been identifying the idea of *emptiness* through life-memories, single moment and space flight. However, artefacts impacting innovative photographic culture play an important role in a globalized world and the findings point out the interconnections from the USA, Germany and Japan:

1. The logic of depicting flowers preserved ancient elements incorporated with an individual concept of artwork and the principles of depiction are influences of the modern content and innovations.

2. The contrast between artefacts of the Far East provides access to the Japanese gentle sadness identity, regardless of Oriental background. And for the modern Western world German artists are working to show the dimension of time more than that of national heritage. Following Central-Europeans, still life floral photography particularly flourished during the later years. At the same time American artists have one of the greatest impacts on the vanitas renaissance in visual communication and the contemporary photographers, who now have turned into *researchers* themselves.

3. The idea of *emptiness* is a mechanism that develops contemporary culture. The sentiment of nothingness remains relevant in the contemporary photography, moreover, the vanitas theme is not an ancient relic, but a living element in a modern context.

4. Importantly, the main trends outline the importance of vanitas, that everything and anything is transient among the artists and is still reflected in the contemporary art photography nowadays.

5. Therefore, by creating a totally new way of expression, it is clear – the tendencies of the vanitas genre exerting influence have a future perspective in art.

The awareness of the fact that art is a social function and that, in the meantime, it became primarily a business, grew gradually. The de-constructivist approach to the

whole set of modernist *constructs*, including art, presented a significant contribution to developing this awareness, as did the vanishing acts that occurred within the artistic practice itself [Džalto 2015: 674].

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Appendices

MODERN HOLY PLACES
OF EUROPEAN AUTOCHTHONOUS RELIGIONS:
THE SACRED SPACE OF LATVIANS AND DIEVTURĪBA

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Abstract

The breakthrough of the newly built sacred structures of European autochthonous religions activated in recent decades indicates the topicality of the sacred space studies in these emerging places of worship as well as the historical background. While focusing particularly on Latvians and *Dievturība*, the paper encompasses the sanctification of trees and house thresholds, the case of Rāmava, analysis and classification of sacred structures, and an insight into *Dievturi* shrines.

Keywords: *architecture, ethnic religion, Dievturi, Latvian, place of worship, sacred space.*

Introduction

Autochthonous, indigenous, nativistic, ethnic, folk etc. – these are the relevant terms applied to describe the type of non-Abrahamic religions studied in this paper. Gausset et al. distinguish that autochthonous people are anchored in their territory, from which they are said to originate; the term *indigenous* tends to be used for people who are already marginalized, whereas *autochthonous* is generally reserved for people who are dominant in a given area but fear future marginalization [Gausset, Kenrick & Gibb 2011: 138–39]. According to ECER[1], ethnic religion is a "religion, spirituality, and cosmology that is firmly grounded in a particular people's traditions ... this does not include modern occult or ariosophic theories/ideologies, nor syncretic neo-religions." From a monotheistic point of view a non-Abrahamic religion has been referred to as 'Paganism' and its adherents

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[1] The *European Congress of Ethnic Religions* (ECER) was established in 1998 to "express our solidarity for the ethnic, indigenous, native and/or traditional religions of Europe (..) serve as an international body that assists ethnic religious groups in various countries and oppose discrimination against such groups" [ECER 2014].

have been referred to as 'pagans'. However, the 3rd Declaration by 34 delegates from 12 countries of ECER issued on 9 July 2014, states: "We urge all European governments to ... refrain from granting preferential treatment to some religions over others. We also ask that this equality of religious preference be reflected in the European educational systems ... We object to the use of the term 'pagan' ... as it reflects negatively on our reputation" [ECER 2014]. Yet, Morgana Sythove, co-editor of the magazine *Wiccan Rede*, argues that: "The emergence [of ECER] revealed that the 'ethnic' view may be very non-tolerant to what they perceive as 'imported' religions – and Wicca most certainly falls into that category in their eyes. I think we must be wary of Pagan fundamentalism, which is focused on creating rigid identities which may under certain circumstances beget nationalism, racism and bias" [Galtsin 2015]. In case of *Dievturība*, the revival fostering Latvianness systematized and canonized during the 1920s of (primarily) ethnic religion of the Latvians before Christianization, the recent expansion of seekers and adherents among people from other descent groups implies a viable paradigm shift in terminology from exclusive (***latviešu*** "Latvian") *ethnicity* to inclusive (***latviskā*** "Latvian-like") *autochthonity*, and from *primeval* "ethnic religion" to its *revival* "national religion" (***nacionālā reliģija***). Adherents, however, advocate the use of the endonym *dievestība* (Latvian for "theism", like *shintō* 神道) over allochthonous term *reliģija* ("religion") [Nastevičs 2018]. The **purpose** of this paper is to provide an insight into modern holy places of *Dievturība*. The **tasks** are: to consider the historical background of the sacred space and places of worship of the Baltic people, and to analyze the contemporary *Dievturi* places of worship in the context of other modern holy places of European autochthonous religions.

Legacy of the sacred space of ancient Balts

Latvians and Lithuanians are the two contemporary ethnolinguistic groups retaining the heritage of several ancient Baltic peoples including Old Prussians, Galindians and Yatvingians which are extinct by now. The Baltic religious worldview as recorded in chronicles, folklore and archaeological finds provides source for studying the sacred space.

Lithuanian folklorist Norbertas Vėlius pinpoints the regional differentiation of Balts between the Eastern sky-oriented (*Perkūnas*, *Saule*), the Central earth-oriented (*žemėpačiai*, *aitvarai*), and the Western water/underworld-oriented (*Patulas*, *kaukai*) mythology and symbolism of flora and fauna; the Eastern area (dominant ideology of warriors) favours summer solstice, and the Western area (priests) – winter solstice rites, while the Central area (farmers) prefer equinoxes which are linked with the fertility [Vėlius 1983: 275–77]. Archaeologist Vykintas Vaitkevičius attests: the stringent attempts to destroy ancient sacred places or to give a Christian sense to

their existence perpetrated after Conversion (Christianization of Lithuania) in 1387; the association of sacred places with the territorial complexes of dwelling, defensive and burial sites; he distinguishes 8 types – *hills* (e.g. frequent hillforts-temples of the Dnieper-Daugava Culture with round or oval cult buildings from 1000 BC – 500 AD), *fields*, *groves*, *trees*, *stones*, *waters*, *hollows*, *caves* – and 6 ranks of Baltic sacred places – *home*, *village*, *regional*, *interregional*, *state* [Vaitkevičius 2003: 257–71]. Suffice it to mention that Latvians and Lithuanians did not worship forests, fire, grass-snakes (*Natrix natrix*) and stones as such; instead, they viewed them as holy and revered them as abodes of gods, likewise Prussians regarded the oak as sacred because chief gods lived in it [Vėlius 1996: 71].

In the Cabinet of Folksongs (*Dainu skapis*), which has been inscribed on the UNESCO Memory of the World Register, more than a hundred betrothal folksongs (including #13250-n, #13373-0 and #33625-n) reveal a peculiar narrative of metempsychosis – a linden tree (or a rose) with dense canopy grows out of the resting place of human remains, yet the *kokle* (Latvian psaltery) which has been carved out of a single piece of that tree, whenever played, keeps reminding the bereaved people of the deceased one. The tree continues to grow both above and below the ground, and acts as a medium interconnecting the two realms.

> "*... Jūra viņu nepanesa, Izskaloja maliņā. <u>Tur uzauga kupla liepa</u> Deviņām galotnēm. No devītās galotnītes <u>Bāleliņš kokles taisa</u>. <u>Sak' bāliņš koklēdams: Tās koklītes koši skan</u>; <u>Sak' māmiņa raudādama</u>: Tā dziedāja pastarīte, Tā dziedāja pastarīte, <u>Kas noslīka upītē</u>*" #33625-9 [LFK 2002].

According to the folk beliefs [Šmits 1941], a piece of a lightning-struck tree is sacred and kept as a hereditary charm for household prosperity; yet, if a tree breaks, withers, falls or is felled in a dream, someone of relatives will die. In Latvian folklore trees (grammatically) imply gender of a person (masculine trees: oak, birch, ash, willow, osier; feminine trees: linden, pine, spruce, bird-cherry, apple tree [Rūķe-Draviņa 1985]); when a child is born, a respective tree customarily gets planted in backyard, becoming his or her peer (of the same age), and gradually undergoes further sanctification by supplying a personalized bond with the very ancestor resting under it.[1] The distinctive Latvian attitude towards trees manifests when somewhere tree cutting is expected – the peculiarity of mindset rooted in the ancestor worship

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[1] Note that in recent years several initiatives, such as *Urna Bios* (1997) in Spain, *jumokusō* (1999) in Japan, *Capsula Mundi* (2002) in Italy, *Promession* (2001) in Sweden, *Resomation* (2007) in Scotland and *Émergence* (2012) in France [Anstett 2015], have encouraged environmentally friendly biodegradable burial practices where a seed or sapling (planted with the remains) uses the nutrients that emerge from the corpse to develop into a tree.

prompts many to stand up for the preservation of trees – as an ancient Baltic relic it dates back more than a thousand years:

> "April 23, 997. Adalbert of Prague ... after he converted Hungary, he was sent by the Pope to convert the heathen Prussians ... It was standard procedure to chop down sacred oak trees, which they had done in many other places, including Saxony. Because the trees were worshipped and the spirits who were believed to inhabit the trees were feared for their powers, this was done to demonstrate to the non-Christians that no supernatural powers protected the trees from the Christians. When they did not heed warnings to stay away from the sacred oak groves, Adalbert was martyred for his sacrilege on the Baltic coast. It is recorded that his body was bought back for its weight in gold" [Della-Piana 2010: 118].

The papally sanctioned destruction of sacred groves in the territory of present Latvia since the 12th century, despite the aggravation after the Reformation, could not be accomplished even in the 19th century when the First Latvian National Awakening and nationwide collecting of folklore began in full swing laying the foundation for *Dievturība* [Nastevičs 2017: 46]. Ernests Brastiņš suggests that Latvian theism has been maintained in a detached manner: "everyone could be a celebrant of family rites and celebrations – it fits the Latvian character likewise detached homesteads, curt Dainas (folksongs) and gruff adornment ... Each Latvian on his own can have a talk with Dievs, Laima or Māra and each spot in Latvia can be the exact sacred place for holding rituals" [Brastiņš 1937]. The rural landscape of Latvia commonly features separately growing oaks and tree clusters in an open field. Removal of them would practically resolve the encumbered tillage process, yet more determinant than a mere biodiversity-boosting eco thinking may, in fact, be the motives of deeply aesthetic magical thinking. Wilhelm Mannhardt affirms that among Latvians "it was usual even up to the present century to find beside the homestead a small grove which was regarded as the dwelling-place of the *Mājas kungs* ("lord of the home") and honored it with small offerings" [Chadwick 1900: 32].

Rāmava – constructing the sacred space
Visual depictions of the sacred structures of ancient Balts are rather scarcely found. German historian Caspar Hennenberger provides the first colour illustration of a place of worship *Romove*[1] (*Rāmava*, a derivation from *rāms* "calm" – a calm,

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[1] *Romove* – first mentioned by Peter von Dusburg in the *Chronicon terrae Prussiae* (1326, i.e. 90 years after the Battle of Saule where the Livonian Brothers of the Sword (*Fratres militiæ Christi Livoniae*) were defeated by the united forces of Baltic tribes) as *Romow* with a leader called *Criwe* [Dusburg 1861: 53].

peaceful place for worshipping the ancestral deities, with a sacred (oak) grove around, where cutting of trees and intrusion by strangers was prohibited [Visendorfs 1893a: 489]) – in the Sambia Peninsula inhabited by Old Prussians and *Kursenieki*[1] – consisting of a fire offering and a jug in front of an oak, with dense canopy and cult images (busts) of three deities[2] in its trunk, enveloped by an angular curtain with a frontal opening and firewood stacks around the site [Hennenberger 1584: 7]. A century later Prussian historian Christoph Hartknoch reproduced the illustration in a higher detail in black and white [Hartknoch 1684: 116]. Baltic German writer Garlieb Helwig Merkel in the section on the Latvian religious views and the chief deities before the 13th century featured a similar setting, supplemented with three spears stuck in the ground with a skull on top of each, where the chief priest *Criwe* was prostrating in front of the fire with *Waidelotte*, the distinguished priests and priestesses, present aside. According to Merkel, the curtain was octagonal, covered with carpets, forming the sacred space inside – hidden from unfaithful eyes – to be unveiled and entered just by priests and for the ritual occasions only [Merkel

Figure 1. Romove [Hartknoch 1684].

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[1] *Kursenieki* (also *Kuršininkai*) – a Curonian ethnic community referred to as "Prussian Latvians", spoke a language related to the Latvian language of Courland (*Kurzeme*) from where their ancestors had migrated mainly during the 15th–17th cent. [Kapenieks 2012].

[2] Triad of deities resemble Patrimps, Pērkons and Patuls in the flag of Widewuto (Waidewuti) first published [Hennenberger 1584: 22], based on description in the *Preußische Chronik* by Simon Grunau.

Figure 2. Romuva [Balkūnas 2016].

1798: 154]. Yet another century later Latvian folklorist Henrijs Visendorfs argued that the equivalence of customs and religious basics of the kindred nations – Old Prussians, Lithuanians and Latvians – implied their respective pantheon and cult practices, such as holding rites in dedicated places of worship, i.e. *Rāmavas*, should hardly differ either. In his case the elements of previous depictions had been merged together with the exception that the curtain had become a conical tent around the trunk of the oak and the fire offering was brought outside the frontal opening of the curtain [Visendorfs 1893a: 489, 1893b: 2]. Hartknoch's *Romove* (fig. 1) seems comparable to the setting of the place of worship of *Romuva* during the festival *Mėnuo Juodaragis 2016* [Balkūnas 2016] in Lithuania (fig. 2) – in both cases there was a sacred tree with a fire offering in the centre, and a fabric curtain that indicated the boundary between the sacred and the profane realm.

Threshold as the boundary of the sacred space

The awareness of the boundary is likewise present in the dwelling architecture, marked by the threshold at the main entrance as well as between the rooms. Among Latvians there is a still-intact custom to "avoid stepping on the threshold", which has been once present in several other cultures (Russian, Karelian [Keinänen 2010], Anatolian, Chinese, Kyrgyz, Mongolian, Turkish [Yaşa 2017], Buddhist,

Thai [Cavanagh 2013], Japanese [斗鬼 2009] etc.), yet rebuked by Judaism and Christianity (cf. *Zephaniah 1:9* and *1 Samuel 5:4–5*). The frequent stepping on physically wears the threshold out, causing exposure to *caurvējš* (a cold draft, air leakage under the door), which not only lowers the energy efficiency of the building, but is also believed to make people more susceptible to health issues. Another reason is the low *paloda* (door head)[1], which requires to step over the slightly raised *slieksnis* (threshold)[2] while bowing each time in order to pass through the door smoothly, otherwise it poses a head-hitting hazard for the unwary. Yet, the next reason might be the crucial one. Social anthropologist James George Frazer thinks of the threshold as an abode of spirits – a Russian custom suggests that peasants bury stillborn children under the threshold, hence the souls of the dead babies haunt the spot; in northern India when a child dies it is usually buried under the house threshold in the belief that as the parents tread daily over its grave, its soul will be reborn into the family; a custom in Central Africa also regards the afterbirth buried under the threshold of the hut as the twin of the infant whom it follows – mother hopes that as she steps out of and into the house the spirit of the child or of its supposed twin will pass into her womb and be born again – on this hypothesis the widespread belief in the reincarnation of the dead would explain the sanctity of the threshold [Westermack 1914: 369]. Andrzej Szyjewski pinpoints a Slavic belief that due to the cumulative potential of unrealized life the stillborn fetus turned into a protective house spirit *kłobuk* instead of a malicious demon *poroniec*, if it was buried properly under the threshold of the house [Szyjewski 2003: 195]. Rūta Muktupāvela affirms that "burying the dead under the hearth or threshold for [ancestral] protection and help in daily lives is a practice likewise observed by ancient Balts" [Upīte 2014]. The boundary of the chthonic realm as well as the entrance of the sacred space can be marked by a stone. Peculiar stones have been chosen for sacrifices, offerings and other rites, especially for ancestral household deities [Nastevičs 2017: 38,49]. Multifold thresholds mark the diversified sanctity zones in both dwelling architecture and places of worship – awareness of those largely determines the attitude towards the dead, the ancestors and their tutelary significance, as well as those who breach the boundaries.

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[1] *Paloda* – a door head in the traditional Latvian architecture, usually significantly lower than the ceiling (cf. the *kamoi* (鴨居) and the *nijiriguchi* (躙り口) of a Japanese tea house), improves the energy efficiency, considering the principle of convection, i.e. warm air rises, cold air sinks.

[2] *Slieksnis* – a slightly raised threshold (cf. the *agarikamachi* (上り框) at the entryway of a Japanese dwelling) in the traditional Latvian architecture keeps mud, dirt and dust out of one's room.

Newly built sacred structures of the European autochthonous religions

The data was gathered by collating the public information of the ECER members, their peers and personal communication with representatives[1] in April, 2018. For the Lithuanian and Latvian sacred structures, a field study was conducted, including observations and interviews with Valdis Celms in Klintaine (6 May 2017), Inija Trinkūnienė in Dvarčiškiai (15 August 2017), Liena Eidone in Talsi (20 November 2017) and Ilze Kļaviņa in Grant (4 August 2018). The European religious nativistic (or, in a broader sense, revitalization) movements [Wallace 1956], such as *Трескейа* BG, *Radzimas* and *Родовичи* BY, *Slovanský kruh* CZ, *Germanische Glaubens-Gemeinschaft* DE, *Forn Siðr* DK, *Maavalla Koda* EE, *Groupe Druidique des Gaules* FR, *Societas Hesperiana* and *Movimento Tradizionale Romano* IT, *Društvo Veles* and *Slovenski staroverci* SI, etc., have activated in the last three decades for holding rituals at open-air ancient cult sites, sacred groves and other places of worship in nature[2] (fig. 3); yet the actual extent of ritual activities is still veiled as several groups refuse to disclose the exact coordinates of their sites: "we don't want to have guests there." Nonetheless, since the 2000s, there has been an unprecedented breakthrough of the
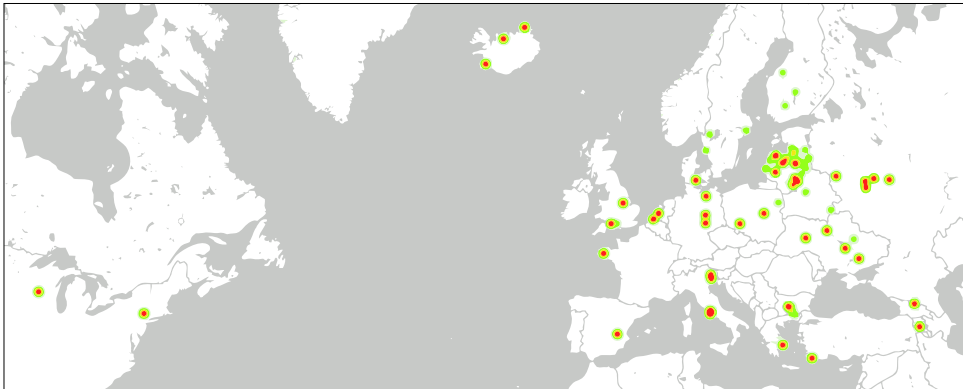

Figure 3. Newly built sacred structures (red spots) and other active places of worship (green spots).

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[1] Informants: Evangelos Bougadakis GR, Inija Trinkūnienė LT, Johan De Vriendt BE/DE, Leonid Vladimirovič PL/RU, Federazione Pagana IT, Noemi Marinelli Barbera IT, Rafał Merski PL, Svetozara Pronina and Александр Севастьян RU, Владимир Куровский UA (personal communication, April, 2018).

[2] Informants: Аляксандр Мікус BY, Ene Lukka EE, Georgi Mishev BG, *Germanische Glaubens-Gemeinschaft* DE, Irena Petrič and Matija Kenda SI, Ivars Logins LV, Per Varg Brandt Rasmussen DK, Zdeněk Ordelt CZ, *Societas Hesperiana* and *Movimento Tradizionale Romano* IT (personal communication, April, November, 2018).

newly built structures and places of worship of the modern revivals of European autochthonous religions in Europe and diaspora [Nastevičs 2017: 7]. Each structure (table 1; fig. 3) falls into either of these categories: *sacred **grove*** – a small wooden area or plantation; ***kapishche*** (*капище, kapiše*) – a site encircled by stones or wooden poles with a cult image and offering stone in the centre; ***pirca*** – a stone wall enclosure; ***henge*** – a circular structure of upright stones; ***shelter*** – a small roofed building to protect underneath from bad weather; ***hall*** – a one-room building; ***house*** – a multi-room building; ***naos*** – a building in shape of Greco-Roman temple; or ***room*** – a part inside a building that is separated from other parts by walls, floor and ceiling.

Table 1. Newly built sacred structures of the European autochthonous religions

newbuilt sacred structure[1]	*location*	*year*	[2]	*organization, key person*	[3]	*type*
Dzintari	Lībagu pagasts, Talsu novads	**1930**		Latvijas Dievturu sadraudze	LV1	room
Գառնու տաճար (Garni tachar)	Garni, Kotayk	1975		Հեթանոսություն (Hetanosutiwn)	AM	naos
Skandava, **Dievsēta**	Grant, Monroe County, Wisconsin	**1979**		Latvju Dievturu sadraudze	US1	house
Святиня Оріяна (Temple of Oriyana)	Spring Glen	1983		Рідна українська національна віра (RUNVira)	US2	house
Slawische Tempel	Groß Raden, Sternberg	1987		Archäologisches Freilicht-museum Groß Raden	DE1	hall
Dievturu draudzes sēta	Salaspils	**1990**	p	Latvijas Dievturu sadraudze	LV2	house
Tempel van Nehalennia	Alphen aan den Rijn	1994	m	Archeon	NL0	naos
Senovinė dangaus šviesulių stebykla	Kulionys, Molėtų rajonas	1996	u	Romuva	LT1	kapishche
Святилище Реком[4] (Rekom shrine)	Цей, Северная Осетия–Алания (Cej)	1997		Уацдин (Uacdin)	RU1	house
Капище (Kapiše), Славянский мифологический лес	Томская писаница, Писаная, Кемеровская область (Pisanaâ)	1997	u	Томская писаница (Tomskaâ pisanica)	RU2	kapishche
Larario della Gens Julia Primigenia	Roma	1998		Movimento Tradizionale Romano	IT1	room

[1] The transliteration of Cyrillic conducted according to the ISO 9 standard by using www.translit.cc interface.

[2] p – projected sacred structure, yet to be constructed; u – unsheltered, roofless, open-air sacred structure.

[3] ID is abbreviation of country as in country code top-level domain (with a numeral in case of several instances).

[4] Rekom shrine for men, first built in 1936, renovated in 1997 after being destroyed by lightning strike in 1995. The nearby Women's shrine (Святилище Мады Майрæм) and Maidens' shrine (Девичье святилище) were built in the 1990s.

newbuilt sacred structure[1]	location	year	[2]	organization, key person	[3]	type
Bosco Sacro di Jesolo	Jesolo, Veneto	2000	u	Federazione Pagana	IT2	grove
Heimskautsgerðið	Raufarhöfn	2003	u	Ásatrú, Jónas Friðrik	IS1	henge
Святиня Різдва Лева Силенка (Temple of the Nativity of Lev Sylenko)	Олександрівка	2004		Рідна українська національна віра (RUNVira)	UA1	house
Ringheiligtum Pömmelte / Sonnenobservatorium Goseck	Pömmelte / Goseck	2005	u	Himmelswege	DE2	kapishche
Славянский храм (Slavic temple)	Славянский Кремль, Валищево (Vališevo)	2005		Rodnovery, Виталий Сундаков (Vitalij Sundakov)	RU3	hall
Nehalennia Tempel	Colijnsplaat	2005		Corbvlo	NL	naos
Chram Mazowiecki	Nowa Wieś	2007		Rodzimy Kościół Polski	PL1	shelter
Tautisks Dievnams	Zaķusala, Rīga	**2008**	p	Latvijas Dievturu sadraudze	LV0	house
Templo de Gaut	Albacete	2009	u	Ásatrú	ES	pirca
Ναός (Naos)	Oraiokastro	2009		Ομάδα E (Omada E)	GR1	naos
Le Rick	Saint-Goazec, Bretagne	2010	u	Kredenn Geltiek Hollvedel	FR	kapiše
Капище (Kapiše)	Григорьевка, Запорожский район, Запорожская область (Grigor'evka)	2011	u	Rodnovery	UA2	kapishche
The White Spring Water Temple[4]	Glastonbury	2012		The White Spring Glastonbury Foundation	UK1	house
Šventykla	Dvarčiškiai, Švenčionių rajonas	2012		Romuva	LT2	hall
Соборный Храм (Sobornyj hram)	Київ (Kyiv)	2012	p	Родовое Огнище Родной Православной Веры (Rodnovery)	UA3	house
Многофункциональный комплекс "Капище" (Kapiše)	Хабаровск (Habarovsk)	2012	p	Rodnovery, architect Александр Севастьян (Aleksandr Sevast'ân)	RU4	house / kapishche
Капище (Kapiše)	Смоленское Поозерье, Пржевальское (Smolensk Lakes)	2013	u	Утро Сварога (Utro Svaroga)	RU5	kapishche
Ásheimur hof	Efri-Ás	2014		Ásatrú, Árni Sverrisson	IS2	hall
Newark Odinist Temple	Newark	2014		Odinist Fellowship	UK2	hall
Святинна хата (Svâtinna hata)	Старокостянтинів (Starokostiantyniv)	2014		Рідна українська націо-нальна віра (RUNVira)	UA3	house
Храм огня Сварожича (Hram ognâ Svarožiča)	Красотынка (Krasotynka)	2015		Союз Славянских Общин Славянской Родной Веры (Union of Slavic Native Belief Communities, Rodnovery)	RU6	hall

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[1, 2, 3] Ibid.

[4] Originally a Victorian-built well house erected in 1872; water temple of the Co*mpanions of the White Spring*.

newbuilt sacred structure[1]	location	year	[2]	organization, key person	[3]	type
Hof Ásatrúarfélagsins	Reykjavík	2015	p	Ásatrú	IS3	hall
Óðinshof (Odinshof)	Brownsville, California	2015		Asatru Folk Assembly	US3	house
Οίκος (Oikos)	Koskinou	2015		Ύπατο Συμβούλιο των Ελλήνων Εθνικών (ΥΣΕΕ / YSEE)	GR2	shelter
Baltu senreliģijas centrs	Esplanāde, Rīga	**2016**	p	Latvijas Dievturu sadraudze	LV3	house
Świątynia słowiańska, Centrum kultury słowiańskiej	Wrocław	2016	p	Watra	PL2	hall
Valheim hof	Faaborg	2016		Ásatrú, Jim Lyngvild	DK	hall
Aukuras	Šatrijos kalnas	2017		Šatrijos Romuva	LT3	shelter
Lokstenes svētnīca	Klintaines pagasts, Pļaviņu novads	**2017**		Latvijas Dievturu sadraudze	LV4	hall
Svētnīca[4]	Svētes pagasts, Jelgavas novads	**2017**	p	Svētes dievturu draudze	LV5	hall
Templum Iovis / Tempio di Giove	Roma	2017		Associazione Tradizionale Pietas	IT3	naos
Ναός (Naos)	Athens	2017		Ύπατο Συμβούλιο των Ελλήνων Εθνικών (ΥΣΕΕ / YSEE)	GR3	room
Святилище Велеса (Veles shrine)	Зубово, Рязанская область (Zubovo)	2018		Велесов Круг (Velesov Krug)	RU7	hall
Templum Apollinis	Ardea, Lazio	2018		Associazione Forza Vitale	IT4	naos
Templum Minervae Medicae	Fontanafredda, Friuli-Venezia Giulia	2018		Associazione Tradizionale Pietas	IT5	shelter
Място за почит (Place of worship)[5]	Старосел (Starosel)	2019		Трескейа (Threskeia), Георги Мишев (Georgi Mishev)	BG	hall

Presence of a sacred tree or *grove* as the primeval type of places of worship [Chadwick 1900] is a common feature in most of the cases listed here. For instance, the grove of IT1 was newly planted in 1995 and has been active as place of worship since 2000, yet a new wood area was planted in 2017 to enlarge the first one; the site also features several sculptural cult images, comparable to those in GR1–3. The *kapishche*, *pirca* and *henge* as the wooden or stone enclosures distinctly mark the boundary of the sacred space; a number of these serve as solar observatories. A common feature in Lithuanian (LT1 LT2) and Slavic (PL1–2 RU2–6 UA2) sacred structures are the wooden sculptural cult images: the former include Perkūnas, Žemyna, Milda, Sotvaras, Pramotė, Protėvis, etc., whereas the latter include Rod, Dažbog, Mokoš, Perun, Svetovid, Veles etc. The *shelter* as the subsequent type

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[1, 2, 3] Ibid.

[4] The framework of the conical hall has been completed; further construction work is underway as of December 2018.

[5] Thracian temenos encircled by a wall with a red tile roofed stone-built hall dedicated to Hekate and Dionysus.

protects the cult images and worshippers under the roof, which can be further developed into a walled *hall*, *naos* or *house*. For instance, Greek, Italian, Armenian (AM anastylosed in 1975, actively used for rites as the central shrine since the 1990s) and Dutch temples are *naos*. In case of limited needs or resources, especially in an urban area, a *room* can be furnished or rented as a solution for ritual occasions (LV1 GR3). Regarding the architecture of *halls* and *houses*, they tend to be based on either the local traditional architecture (US1 LV2 RU1 RU3 LT2 UA3 IS2 LV4 LV5 RU7), the archaeological evidence (DE1 RU6 PL2), or both (DK BG); nonetheless, some of the new projects (RU4 IS3 LV3), which are yet to be constructed, rather contribute to the modern trends in architecture with little influence from the aforementioned. Last but not least, US1 and US2 deserve a special mention – both shrines have been built by, serving as sanctuaries and community centres for, and are still maintained by the adherents' societies, who sought refuge in exile due to the persecutions by the Soviet occupation at home.

Characteristics of the sacred structures of *Dievturi*

Examples of the traditional architecture, such as *rija* (threshing barn), *klēts* (granary) and *istaba* (dwelling house, room) have been well preserved, yet the extirpated Latvian shrines have been scarcely featured only in chronicles as wooden buildings with ancient Latvian cult images and stones on the site. Viktors Eglītis once theorized on a future *Dievturi* shrine, suggesting the implementation of: the Latvian column (so-called "Curonian Kings' column") as the peculiar architectural element inherited in colonnaded porches of *klēts* and *rija*; the forked roof finials on the ridge ends in shape of horse (or rooster) heads; a light, beautiful and noble atmosphere with enough room for open space in the interior; ceiling supported by a row or two of Latvian columns; a sacred tree marking the altar; mythical folktales illustrated on the walls and sculptural cult images [Eglītis 1934]. The reinvention of tradition, which had once been interrupted for a long time, is inevitably innovative yet firmly limited to the Latvianness (i.e., the Latvian character), as *Dievturība* is based on sources in the extensive Latvian folklore.

A private house ***Dzintari*** (Ambers) built in 1930 with a multi-partitioned sacred room (*svēttelpa*) on the first floor is the first sacred space furnished and dedicated exclusively for the *Dievturi* rites. Landlord Tīcs Dzintarkalns involved painter Kārlis Sūniņš to adorn the antechamber, the Room of Worship, and the Room of Offerings with the altarpiece [Audzis 1936] on the west side behind the woollen curtain (fig. 4). The interior features a cross crosslet-shaped central light fixture, frescoes of the Tree of the Sun, Pērkons and other deities – everything designed in the National Romanticism style; behind the wall of the Room of Worship there is the Room of Folktales with 10 colourful frescoes featuring scenes and heroes well known

Figure 4. Room of Offerings at *Dzintari* [Audzis 1936].

to Latvian children. In the backyard there was also a wooden cult image of Pērkons (now nonextant). At the *Dievturi* property abroad – **Dievsēta** (God's Homestead) in the USA, there is the **Skandava**, collectively designed and built in 1979 as the *house* for rites, featuring a prominent cross crosslet ✠ (the religious symbol of *Dievturība* since its inception) on gable, forked roof finials and the Latvian colonnaded porch (fig. 6). On the easternmost[1] wall of the *hall* hangs a cross crosslet tapestry as an altarpiece, two prominent light fixtures shaped as the sign of the Sun, and the whole wood-furnished interior is adorned with traditional decorations (fig. 4). In a sacred

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[1] In case of the USA, the easternmost side constitutes the direction Latviawards – the direction of the swearing of an oath ("*Vai Tu, ___, uzņemoties vadoņa pienākumus, apņemies iet dievāju ceļu, censties izvairīties no svešu mežu maldugunīm un meklēt pareizās atslēgas, ar kurām atvērt latvisko zinšu vārtus, un centīsies daudzināt un stiprināt latviešu dievestību, latviešu tautas nākotni un latviskās Latvijas labā? Ja tā, tad vērsi seju mūsu svētās Latvijas zemes virzienā, uz cietā un nemainīgā akmens pamata zintēdams, apliecini to savu apņemšanos – klātesošo liecinieku, dievturu vecāko, saviešu un draugu priekšā!*") at the *Dievturi* overseas leader inauguration rite [Pone 2007]. It resembles the concept of Qibla, in this case, symbolizing the unity of Latvians worldwide.

Figure 5. *Skandava* [Dievsēta 2014].

Figure 6. Interior of *Skandava* at *Dievsēta* [Nastevičs 2018].

Figure 7. *Rāmava* at *Dievsēta* [Nastevičs 2018].

grove within the grounds of the property, there is also an outdoors place of worship **Rāmava** with the Oath stone for inauguration and other rites (fig. 7).

There have been 4 projects which have not materialized yet. **Dievturu draudzes sēta** (Homestead of *Dievturi* congregation) – an architecture graduation project by Ineta Butāne in 1990, proposed to be built in Salaspils. The shape of the thatched roof of the *house* (16 × 16 m) resembles a pyramid reflecting in nearby water-reservoir to create a rhombus (fig. 8); a northeastward glass wall with a view of an oak outside serves as an altarpiece of the central *hall* (*Skandava*, fig. 9), during the summer solstice the Sun appears rising from behind the oak. In a cyclic order there are rooms dedicated for rites of Namesgiving, Wedding and *Veļi*[1] arranged in corners of *Skandava* which has a skylight ceiling. A basement for storage purposes is included. Through the roof overhang above the entrance emerges a *torii*-like gate with the cross crosslet on it [Butāne 1990]. **Tautisks Dievnams** (Folkish shrine) – a multipurpose venue proposal by Jānis Siliņš in 2008 for *Dievturi* congregations, the National Studies, *kokle* ensembles, folklore and dance groups to be built on Zaķusala Island in Rīga. The *house* – a log building of Latvian traditional architecture. Square, hexagonal or round *hall* features a transformable amphitheatre with a capacity of 400 persons and a cross crosslet-shaped central light fixture as an elevatable altarpiece. Other facilities such as rehearsal, conference and class rooms, basement etc. are also to be included [Siliņš 2008]. **Baltu senreliģijas centrs**[2] – an architecture graduation project by Andis Alksniņš in 2016 – a multipurpose venue to be built

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[1] *Velis* (pl. *Veļi*) – a shade, ancestral tutelary, spirit of a dead person (viable yet-to-be reincarnated into a lineal descendant); a part in the *Dievturi* concept of triune being of man, i.e. *augums* – *velis* – *dvēsele* (body – *velis* –soul).

[2] The English title of the project is "The Cultural, Educational and Science Center of Baltic Nations".
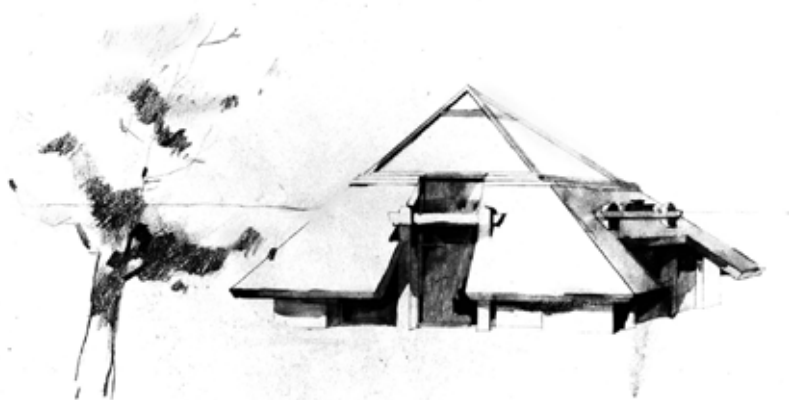
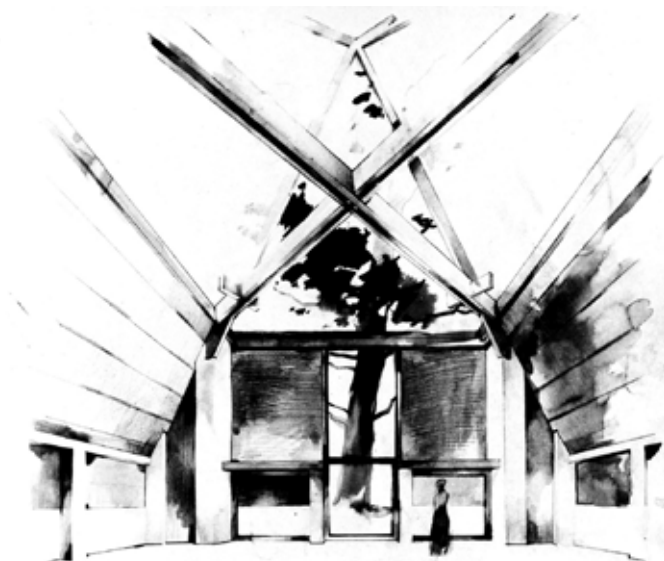Figure 8. *Dievturu draudzes sēta* (project) [Butāne 1990].

Figure 9. Interior of *Skandava* at *Dievturu draudzes sēta* (project)
[Butāne 1990].

in Esplanāde[1]. The C-shaped *house* resembles a hillfort with a continuous circular mobility symbolizing the idea of infinity (fig. 10). A part of the inclined one level building volume is raised up, it has a publicly accessible roof, and several facilities including basement [Alksniņš 2016; Mārtuža 2016]. **Svētnīca** (Shrine) – a conical

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[1] The formerly uneven ground of nowadays Esplanāde was filled with the earth from the Mons Antiquus (*Kubes kalns*) hill – a historic landmark of Rīga until it was levelled in 1785 [Alksniņš 2016].
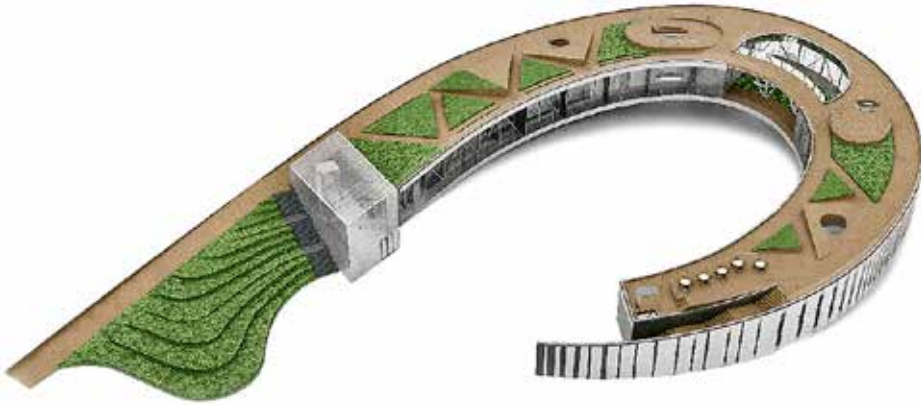
Figure 10. *Baltu senreliģijas centrs* (project) [Alksniņš 2016].

Figure 11. Framework of *Svētnīca* (under construction)
[Žukovskis 2017].

hall project for *Svētes dievturu draudze* by Andris Žukovskis in 2017, currently under construction in Svēte (fig. 11), with a capacity of 30 persons, aspen shingle roof with forked roof finials, a fire offering in the centre and an altarpiece placed at the west wall, exactly opposite to the entrance [Žukovskis 2017].

The first *hall* for Dievturi rites in Latvia completed since the restoration of independence is **Lokstenes svētnīca** (Lokstene shrine), designed by Andrejs Broks, Valdis Celms, Ainars Markvarts, supported by Dagnis Čākurs and consecrated in

Figure 12. *Lokstenes svētnīca* [Nastevičs 2017].

2017, in a scenic location on an island on the Daugava River in Klintaine parish (fig. 12). The wood-frame *hall* (15 × 8 m) with thatched roof and forked roof finials, features full height windows and doors on all sides ensure good daylighting, the main entrance faces the sun at midday and the longitudinal axis runs east-west. A fire offering altar marks the centre. In the *hall* there is a cross crosslet stand, a trunk drum, a pair of large *puzuri* (traditional Latvian straw mobiles) hanging from the ceiling supported by Latvian columns, a bookshelf of Dainas (Latvian folksongs), a historic *Dievturi* wooden candelabrum, tapestries adorned with Latvian ornaments symbolizing deities and verses of Dainas. Pilgrims cross the river by boat to reach the island; a path from the dock towards the shrine goes through the Square of Flags, the Stone of Ancestors and the Gate of the Sun – each serving as a landmark boundary to stop by.

Conclusions

Latvians have inherited several sociocultural traits from the ancient Baltic tribes. The plausible tree burials (*jumokusō* 樹木葬) and belief in the metempsychosis, i.e. transmigration of human souls into the trees and *kokles*, causes both latter to become sanctified and cherished as media interconnecting the living with the dead. Hence the forest bathing (*shinrinyoku* 森林浴) and environmentalism are not a mere trend but rather an indispensability for Latvians derived from an immanent spiritual ecology. The *Rāmava* constitutes a transitional type of place of worship between the sacred groves and the shrine buildings. The sanctity of the threshold, causing

a custom to "avoid stepping on" in many cultures, dates back to the infant burial practices underneath it, hoping for the ancestral protection and rebirth of the soul into the family. The awareness of multifold thresholds of the boundaries between the inner sacred space and the outer profane space determines the behaviour.

Several (nativistic) European autochthonous religions have been activated recently, still the wish to keep the places of worship secret implies the prevalent sense of danger, especially enduring in countries with an overwhelming majority of the members of Abrahamic religions. There has been a breakthrough of the newly built sacred structures which can be classified as: *grove*, *kapishche*, *pirca*, *henge*, *shelter*, *hall*, *house*, *naos* or *room*. Most cases feature a sacred tree or grove, while *halls* and *houses* tend to be based on the local traditional architecture; Lithuanian, Slavic, Greek and Italian sites are prone to cult images; in urban areas a *room* often serves as a solution for ritual occasions. There are also significant shrines built by adherents in exile due to Soviet occupation at home.

Dievturi have 3 extant sacred structures (*room*, *house* and *hall*) and 4 projects yet to be materialized. Certain common features can be distinguished – the use of the cross crosslet and other Latvian ornaments symbolizing deities, principles of Latvian traditional (wooden) architecture including forked roof finials and Latvian columns, a sacred tree or grove nearby, the east-west orientation (cf. *ad orientem* and *versus populum*), and, above all, the ageless pursuit of Latvianness. These may be regarded as the key elements of the emerging tradition of *Dievturi* sacred architecture.

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ARCHAEOLOGY AND ART IN LATVIA

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Abstract

The correlation between art and archaeology in Latvia can be traced in various ways. First, despite all technical innovations there are still professional artists that work on field with archaeologists and are directly involved in the recording of archaeological evidence. Furthermore, art-related work is being done in reconstructions, book illustrations and museum exhibitions. In addition to those who devote their artistic skills to scientific and educational purposes under the supervision of archaeologists, we can see quite a lot of artwork that represents something archaeological while being the free fruits of artistic imagination.

Archaeological science is of the opinion that inaccurate stylisations of archaeological costumes in movies or arbitrary depictions of some archaeological period in literary or any other work of art can very easily lead to false impressions and misunderstandings that endure for decades. On the other hand, scientists have no right to restrain the public from interpreting its own past as it deems fit.

The aim of this paper is to discuss the relations and crossroads between art and archaeology by examining how they historically have developed, coexisted and influenced one another in the territory of Latvia from the 19th century till nowadays.

Keywords: *archaeological thought, history of archaeology, art, ideology, representation, visualisation.*

Art and archaeology do have things in common, especially since both concentrate on communication of ideas through material objects [Barrowclough 2004: 3]. The relation between archaeology and art in this paper will be viewed through the perspective of archaeologist by focusing on the representation of Latvian archaeological heritage in Latvian art throughout history. By "archaeological" in this paper I will mean specifically "prehistorical", because in Latvia archaeology is most often recognised as a science that studies mainly prehistory. Since there are few extant

written sources about territory of Latvia before the 13th century AD, prehistory in Latvian archaeology lasts till the Crusaders invaded the lands of Latvian tribes.

In contemporary Latvian archaeology and heritage protection many problems and controversies can be discerned between the public and the so-called experts or professionals. Public media and Internet comment sections display a disconcerting attitude towards the archaeological heritage [Sprūde 2015; Sprūde 2016; www. DELFI.lv 2015; etc.]. The overall picture indicates the inability of institutions in charge to protect the heritage, furthermore, archaeologists as a scientific community most probably have failed to educate society and explain the meaning and value of heritage. Little of professional scientific work has actually reached the public. Metal detectorists and treasure hunters justify their actions by claiming that scientists are interested only in their cabinet work and meanwhile all the antiquities would rot if someone did not dig them up. It can be noticed that our typology studies and development of scientific methodology hardly impress the general public. While science is struggling to prove its utility, art on the other hand has almost always fulfilled its purpose to address the public.

When researching the history of Latvian archaeological thought, it is hard not to see the strong impact of visual characters, music and literature on the public. They are crucial and important for Latvian national consciousness, although not always quite historically precise.

Artists with their work have almost always sided with the public; correspondingly, their work has shaped the perception of the past much more than the efforts of professional archaeologists. That is a good reason why archaeologists should consider art very seriously by not always picking a fight or ignoring it, rather trying to reflect on possible deeper cooperation in order to achieve common goals.

There is no doubt that it is hard to imagine archaeologists' work without close cooperation with artists also directly during fieldwork. Significantly, the interest about ancient monuments first arose in the artistic not scientific milieu. During the 19th century the very first interest about Latvian archaeology, influenced by romanticist ideas, appeared among Baltic German intelligentsia. Historical, mythological and religious themes were a topic of the day in the field of academic painting in the 19th century as well. Historical genre was seen as a high style which reflected the aesthetic concepts of the age. Romanticism which originated in art and literature allowed focusing on national histories and heroes.

Since old ruins and untouched landscapes were perceived as aesthetically pleasing, we can assume that artists loved such archaeological objects as old castle ruins and hillforts even before scientists had noticed their relevance. For example, Mežotne hillfort can be seen already in lithograph made in 1823 by Baltic German painter Karl Jacob Reinhold Minckeldé (1790–1858), while in scientific publications it was

mentioned only at the end of the 19th century [Broka-Lāce 2016: 31–33]. The idea that past was at first hand deeply imbued with aesthetic and artistic presumptions seems credible when we remember that even one of the first known archaeologists in Latvia – Julius Döring (1818–1898) – was a professional artist in the first place. Obviously, inspired by the same romantic and national ideas dominating philosophy and literature, archaeology as a science became noticeable all over Europe [Trigger 2010: 110–114].

The first known amateur-scientific attempt to depict the Late Iron Age inhabitants of the territory of Latvia, based on archaeological material, was made by Friedrich Karl Hermann von Kruse (1790–1866) already in 1839 [Kruse 1842: Tab. 78] (fig. 1). The reconstruction (or interpretation) of the appearance of a man, woman and child was based on archaeological artefacts that were found along the river bank after a big flood. The lack of burial context led to many – as we now know – wrong assumptions and heavily distorted the general look of ancient people. For example, man can be seen wearing a lot of jewellery pertaining to women, he has bracelets on his knees and ankles, and the child is wearing a neckring as a belt, etc.

Figure 1. The first known attempt to depict the inhabitants of territory of Latvia, based on archaeological material (original title: *Waräger-Russen nach den Grabern sich findenden Uberresten zusammengestelt*) by Friedrich Karl Hermann von Kruse (1790–1866) [Kruse 1842: Tab. 78].

Figure 2. The reconstruction of "warrior's helmet" by Kruse
[Kruse 1842: Tab. 19, No. 1].

When considering the lasting influence of visual information, in this case we must stick to one particular detail. The man is wearing a helmet-like thing on his head, actually consisting of several different artefacts put together, and basically a head ornament usually worn by women. Kruse, based on then-dominant Norman theory, thought that he had found the remains of some Rus people, although they were actually belonging to Latvian tribes (11th–12th century AD). However, after this unfortunate reconstruction (fig. 2) we see the same "helmet" appearing again and again in future artists' works as well as in publications purporting to show a specific armament component characteristic to Latvian warriors [LNVM 2017]. Despite the inaccuracies, this very image has left indelible traces in the cultural history of Latvia, so the National History Museum of Latvia has preserved this artefact as a historical witness.

By examining the iconography of the so-called "Ancient Latvians", we can notice similarities and influences both in independent artwork and educational illustrations. One of the first professional Latvian artists Ādams Alksnis (1864–1897) had also probably seen the work of Kruse, because near the end of the 19th century he drew Latvian warriors with such "helmets" constructed by Kruse [Sūniņš 1964].

The first school history books in independent Latvia also were in need to show some depictions of prehistoric Latvian ancestors (fig. 3). It is interesting to see that even the book from 1925 still displays oddly analogous remake (fig. 4) of the same picture made by Kruse in 1839 [Švābe 1925: 80] (and later adopted by Mikus Skruzītis (1861–1905) in "*Austrums*"), as well as the photo of the "helmet" (fig. 5) with a caption: "Helmet of a warrior in Aizkraukle" (*Karavīra bruņu cepure Aizkrauklē*) [Švābe 1925: 15].

Still in 1932 we see the ongoing tradition in graphic works by Kārlis Krauze (1904–1942) – *Senlatvju taurētājs* ("Ancient Latvian trumpeter") [Krauze 1932:

Figure 3. Feast of Ancient Latvians (*Senlatviešu svētki*).
Illustration from school history book [Paegle 1924: 80].

32] (fig. 6) and even in his diploma work at the Academy of Art – *Latvieši atstāj Tērveti* ("Latvians leave Tērvete") [Krauze 1932: 25].

The same influence can be seen in the works by Rihards Zariņš (1869–1939), who is known as the founder of Latvian national school of graphic art and etching and who has made some well-recognized contributions to National-romantic style in Latvian art history [Ducmane 2016]. Kruse's helmets can be identified, for example, in the graphic *Dzīras pie latviešu virsaiša* ("Feast by Latvian Chief") (1920s–30s) or even on a Donation sign (1928) for National Freedom Monument (*Brīvības piemineklis*) [Ziedojumu karte. 1928. gads. LNA LVVA, 1303. f., 4. apr., 5. l., 210. lp.] (fig. 7). Even in the Latvian Freedom Monument (finished in 1935), designed by Kārlis Zāle (1888–1942), national mythological hero *Lāčplēsis* (Bear-Slayer) is not adorned with bear's ears but instead wears the same "helmet". Obviously, that is the commonly accepted and immediately recognisable appearance of an ancient warrior.

In the exposition of Latvian War museum (*Latvijas Kara muzejs*) we can see that even the border guards of Dagda have included the said "helmet" as a symbol of heraldic value in their flag (1937), along with other reconstructions of archaeological weaponry. It is fascinating how this single small detail started and gained a life of its own. Examples such as these in educational materials, artwork and other media

Figure 4. Warrior and Ancient Latvian woman (*Karavīrs un senlatviete*).
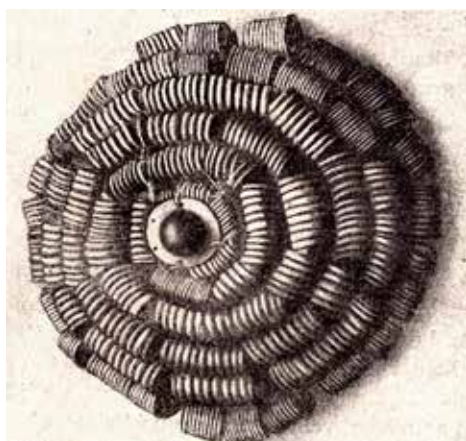Illustration from school history book [Švābe 1925: 80].

Figure 5. The "helmet" of a warrior in Aizkraukle
(*Karavīra bruņu cepure Aizkrauklē*) [Švābe 1925: 15].

Figure 6. Graphic drawing by Kārlis Krauze (1904–1942) –
Ancient Latvian trumpeter (*Senlatvju taurētājs*) [Krauze 1932: 32].

Figure 7. Donation token (1928) for National Freedom Monument
(*Brīvības piemineklis*). Graphic work by Rihards Zariņš (1869–1939)
[Ziedojumu karte. 1928. gads. LNA LVVA, 1303. f., 4. apr., 5. l., 210. lp.].

could be mentioned again and again, but in this particular case it is important to note that by the 1920s and 1930s scientists were absolutely certain that the artefact in fact was a woman's crown, but it seems that, despite the ascertained fact, artists just did not want to break the iconographic tradition.

As we look back at the history of artistic representation, besides the overtly heroic depictions of ancient Latvians there were also attempts to draw Late Iron Age Latvians as barbaric but noble savages: shaggy, dressed in furs, wild and untaught – half naked and armed with wooden maces as seen in paintings by Artūrs Baumanis (1867–1904). By the end of the 19th century the "Ancient Latvian" theme had experienced a steady rise in Latvian painting. Notably the oil painting by Baumanis in 1887, *Likteņa zirgs* ("The Horse of Destiny") is supposedly the very first composition of its kind in Latvian national painting, made by Latvian artist. Baumanis has depicted the events of the 12th century when a monk Theodorich von Treyden (ca. 1150–1219) came to preach the Christianity but Livonians (*līvi*) wanted to sacrifice him to their gods. Only the white horse of destiny that made the first step with the right foot, the foot of life, saved the monk from death. Baumanis depicted Livonians as corresponding more to Stone Age stylistics. It is also notable that some characters there are wearing women's neckrings exactly as the same man in Kruse's drawing; we also recognise the same "helmet" on one man's head. In another painting by Baumanis, *Jauns līvu kareivis* ("Young Livonian Warrior", 1889), its subject is also depicted as a not very civilised person – half naked and, obviously, inspired by Kruse, wearing the traditional Latgallian woman's necklace.

After the First World War, when Latvia gained its independence from the Russian Empire (18.11.1918.), in context of Latvian War of Independence in the 20th century, it was more than essential to show the greatness of Latvian warriors also back in the Iron Age. The political order was felt in archaeological research as this science was financially well supported by the government; seemingly the artists had also caught the *Zeitgeist* by depicting vibrant battle scenes. For example, Voldemārs Vimba (1904–1985) *Saules kauja* ("The Battle of Saule", after 1930), *Senlatvieši* ("Ancient Latvians", after 1930), *Cīņa ar krustnešiem* ("Fight against Crusaders", 1938), Kārlis Stepe (1900–1945) *Senlatvju kareivis* ("Ancient Latvian Warrior", 1937), Uga Skulme *Pēc kaujas* ("After the Battle"), and many others.

As mentioned previously, archaeological themes were also embodied in sculpture. Besides the Freedom Monument, one of the greatest Latvian sculptors – Kārlis Zāle – included ancient warriors in the sculptural ensemble of Warrior's cemetery, thus showing the continuity of Latvian heroism from Crusades against ancient Latvians till the First World War and subsequent Latvian War of Independence. In compositional group *Senči* ("Ancestors", 1936) in *Brāļu kapi* (Brethren cemetery),

we can see an ancient Latvian bowman – the Heracles-like character of manly hero with focused look and tense body that expresses a stern determination.

Although the trend for the depiction of Late Iron Age (supposedly the "golden age" in Latvian history) was already popular, it seems that even more Latvian archaeological heritage was reinvigorated in art and everyday life after the authoritarian regime was established by Kārlis Ulmanis (1877–1942) in 1934. Small naive pictures of romanticised past adorned the interior of President's Castle. It was decorated with scenes of Latvian hillforts, like *Pilskalna nocietināšana* ("The fortification of hillfort", 1930s,) by Ģederts Eliass (1887–1975), ancient warriors, and, what is most important – ancient rulers. The spirit of the age is embodied in such paintings of Ludolfs Liberts's (1895–1959) as *Nameise, Rex Semigallorum*, *Westhardus, Rex Semigallorum*, *Lamechinus Rex* (1936), etc. The author showed them as westernised kings, even though, based on sources, scientifically it is only possible to talk about chiefdoms and kinships, not necessarily centralised governments ruled by kings.

Overall, during the interwar period, after the First World War, proclamation of independence, and – undoubtedly – in the context of Independence War, a pronounced accent on Latvian militancy was represented in Latvian art with archaeological weapons and hillforts even in book vignettes, bookplates (*Ex Libri*) and many other forms of art. Of course, there have also been other aspects of the archaeological in Latvian art. For example, mythological, in *Senatne* ("Antiquity", 1908–1909) by Voldemārs Matvejs (1877–1914), *Upurkalns* ("The Sacrificial Hill", ca. 1910) by Gustavs Šķilters (1874–1954), Latvian gods (1931) by Ansis Cīrulis (1883–1942), etc.

Furthermore, Latvian archaeological heritage has not been the only one exclusively depicted. We see great Egyptian stylisations in Latvian stage design art such as Ilmārs Blumbergs (1943–2016) set piece and costume design for Giuseppe Verdi's (1813–1901) "Aida" (1871) at Latvian National Opera in 1998, or the precise and delicate illustrations for Homer's Odyssey [Ģiezens 1943] done by Sigismunds Vidbergs (1890–1970).

Obviously, the relationship between art and archaeology in Latvia has been ambiguous. Judging from the viewpoint of archaeologist, there have been both good and bad examples. Probably, one of the most notable conflicts between art and archaeology in Latvia has been influenced by the legend (actually – the invented tradition [Misāne 2016: 138]) of Namejs' ring (*Nameja gredzens*). Aleksandrs Grīns (real name: Jēkabs Grīns, 1895–1941) published a pseudo-historical novel [Grīns 1931] in 1931 that included the interpretation of Semigallian fights against crusaders in the 13th century. The story quickly became very popular, thus giving a new opportunity for Latvian archaeological material to reach stage art, as "Namejs' ring" was adapted for stage by Voldemārs Zonbergs (1905–1973) with stylised outfits and reconstructions of historical times. Along with the popularity of the story during the

1930s, accidentally, one specific type of archaeological jewellery – a ring with braided front part – started to be associated with Grīns' legend (it actually was most common in Latgallian not Semigallian material culture), thus later becoming a symbol important to Latvian national identity. After the Second World War and among Latvian émigrés the ring became a sign of identity, although it is not really scientifically correct to call it "Namejs' ring" [Broka-Lāce 2018]. During Third Latvian National Awakening (*Trešā Atmoda*) this ring regained its popularity also in occupied Latvia as a national symbol, was widely produced and also discussed [e. g., Urtāns 1989].

From jewellery art we come to cinematography. Namejs' ring is trending again. On 17 January 2018, a historical fiction action film "The Pagan King" (*Nameja gredzens*) (the initial English title: "The King's Ring") was released [Grauba, Kinnings 2018], which gave way for new discussions about the authenticity and "red lines" that should not be crossed when artists use historical and archaeological material. Reviews show very different and contradictory opinions about the new production [Tomsons 2018; Matīsa 2018; Kuzmins 2018; Portāls nra.lv 2018]. The public mostly is satisfied to have so colourful visualisation of the 13th century Semigallians as never seen before, while archaeologists fall in despair regarding all the inaccuracies and ignorance of historical truth. Even though today archaeology has plenty of information about the depicted period, little of that is seen in the movie (for example, costumes with details from the Stone Age or the 19th century claiming to belong to the 13th century and the overall aesthetics tell more about contemporary fashion, ignoring the historical setting). This movie is a typical example of non-existent discussion between art and science, between professionals and public. The problematic part of such movies is that authors are well aware *how little this historical period has been depicted in cinematography, and they really believe* that their work will influence the way how people see and understand the ancient Semigallians and our prehistory in general. Unfortunately, such artists are not even ready to listen to suggestions by professionals. By claiming that the story will promote public interest in the past and increase the pride about their ancestors, authors actually give preference to cheap commercial tricks. Knowing the popularity of "Vikings" (TV Series (2013–) [Hirst 2013], we can easily see the overt similarity (fig. 8) that authors, in fact, are not hiding by personally pointing out that the film is a "Viking-style story about the Semigallian freedom fights in the 13th century" [LETA 2017]. While the "Viking" series depict period from the 8th to the 10th century, we proudly present a movie in exactly the same style about the 13th century. Without trying to question the artistic freedom one must remember that this movie was financially supported by the government as a part of projects devoted to hundred years of Latvian statehood, and is widely presented as carrying a didactic relevance for national patriotic teaching [Aizsardzības ministrija 2016; *Nameja gredzens* 2017], but needless to say that, as a political commission, it should also show some accountability towards historical truth.

Figure 8. Semigallians from The Pagan King, initially The King's Ring
(*Nameja gredzens*, 2018) (on the left) [DELFI 2017], and Vikings from Vikings TV
(2013 to present) series [*Vikings* (2013 TV series) 2014].

Another interesting example of the way how contemporary art influences
and teaches the past is the huge popularity of folk metal music [*Skyforger; Varang
Nord* etc.] in Latvia. These bands always use strong iconography with replicas of
archaeological costumes, merchandise and album covers with archaeological themes.
For example, the cover illustration by Māris Āboliņš of music album *Latvijas metāls*
("Latvian Metal") (fig. 9) shows oddly exaggerated warrior figures wearing a lot of

Figure 9. *Latvijas metāls* (Latvian Metal) music album
cover illustration by Māris Āboliņš [lsm.lv kultūras redakcija 2015].

archaeological material as much out of context as in Kruse's picture in 1839 [lsm.lv kultūras redakcija 2015]. The lyrical content also often plays with historical truths, repeating such common stereotypes and myths as 700 years of slavery or Latvian kings. These bands undoubtedly are a lot more popular than archaeologists, so people are more prone to listen to their version of the story rather than hearing out sometimes dull hypotheses of official scientists. Since it is easier to sell well-known myths than new scientific proofs and truths, general public will see the history differently than the scientists trying to write it.

If we try to follow the evolution of iconography of the imagined warrior's helmet in Latvian art, we will ascertain how deep and lasting the influence of one single image can be, especially when we know that already in the 1920s archaeologists came to a conclusion that Kruse was mistaken. There is one interesting phenomenon which should be further researched that I highlighted before – namely – our story of archaeological in art tends to focus exclusively on the Late Iron Age. Even if artist claims to depict the "once upon a time" ancient and mythological ages, we will there always recognise the same romanticised iconography of Iron Age Latvian tribes. Although Latvian archaeology has accumulated quite a big amount of Stone and Bronze Age material, it is hard to identify any artwork pertaining to these periods. Due to inertia of national romanticism everyone concentrates on considerably the most heroic "golden era" of our history.

Another characteristic feature is that in Latvia archaeological themes in art are often strongly supported by government, and appear in such ideologically important artworks as the Freedom Monument, paintings of President's residence, and also in a movie created to celebrate the anniversary of independence. Art and identity of a nation are deeply connected [Rogers et al. 2016]. It is worthwhile to think about the correlation of archaeology, art and ideology.

Summarizing, the relations of archaeology and art in Latvia can be described as complicated, the dichotomy between professional and public archaeology in Latvia today also shows some symptomatic contradictions with historically entrenched roots. The representation of the archaeology-related themes in Latvian art can be seen on several different levels. First of all, there are depictions of archaeological objects, sites or artefacts that really exist. On the opposite side we see the reconstructions of objects, artefacts, buildings, and clothing. There are reconstructions created for scientific purposes or didactics, and other for artistic purposes. The artistic reconstructions can be divided into those claiming to depict historical truth and those having no claim for authenticity and are purely fantasy-based. But one always influences another, archaeology inspires artists, and they create archaeological visualisations; we can find archaeological discoveries in artworks as well as current tendencies of art in publications of archaeologists.

The general public in Latvia has a tendency to view and perceive their earliest history in a way different from what archaeology experts would like. All the notions are amalgamated in one postmodern, eclectic view on prehistory where scientists do not always have the last word. Each subsequent representation is based not on a historical source material but on a whole iconographic tradition – unlike science where discoveries and interpretations tend to change faster. It often seems that the truth in the popular culture is getting even further away from us.

The one thing that archaeologists often forget to mention is the fact that all our discoveries and conclusions about past are also our interpretations. Another archaeologist with different experience can interpret the same material differently, after all, archaeologists today are also products of their own time, their own social, historical and psychological backgrounds, and in such a perspective there cannot be a single truth, a single way to paint the past. The reconstructions of past cannot be 100% accurate. Our stories are always about ourselves – no matter how scientifically correct we would try to be, after some time another researcher will say how terribly wrong our ideas were. But after all, at the same time we as historians or artists are all still responsible towards the people we are talking about and their truth.

Latvians, of course, are not the only ones whose archaeological heritage encounters commercialisation. Similar tendencies can be seen with Viking or Celtic art. One element over time becomes a permanent and characterizing tradition and symbol of a whole culture, no matter how inaccurate towards the historical truth it is. Discussions all over the world [Perrin 2012; Howlett-Martin 2017; *NEARCHing Factory*] show that past cannot be monopolised by science, and compromises should be reached at some point. In general, there is a modern trend in contemporary archaeological thought to engage in more visual articulation of archaeological material, more representations, more public participation, that is not language-textually centred, but more based on visual material [Russell, Cochrane 2008; Bailey 2017: 246–256; Renfrew 2003]. Art provides a better ability for people to connect to the past than texts and it can deliver narratives that archaeologists at first reconstruct. It is the duty of archaeologists to think about how to represent archaeology, provide public outreach, and do informational art. Archaeologists must reclaim their voices, become authors themselves [Rogers et al. 2016].

In the end, it is important that professionals are not the only ones concerned about archaeological heritage, as well as it is crucial to promote awareness that the history of Latvia is not only reducible to the 20th century or the Second World War. Is caricaturing really the best way to show respect for Latvian ancestors? That is an interesting question, for example, artist and enthusiast of Latvian early history Agris Liepiņš on his own initiative has made visualisations of the past connecting them to the present by illustrating Latvian epic poem *Lāčplēsis* [Pumpurs 2016] with stylized archaeological elements and even creating his own textbook for children

about the ancient Latvians [Liepiņš 2017]. We could debate about the precision and other minutiae, but the most important thing is the fact that people have their own initiative and interest about the past that is not led by some kind of ideology or economic benefit.

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THE ART AS RESEARCH: THE CASE OF HISTORICAL FANTASY "MECHANICAL VEIDENBAUMS"

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Abstract

This article is artists' statement. It deals with several theoretical questions surrounding the art performance *Mehāniskais Veidenbaums* ("Mechanical Veidenbaums", 2017). The performance was based on E. Veidenbaums' (1867–1892) "Discourse on Mechanics" (*Apcerējumi iz mekānikas*, 1894). An introductory remark about relations between research and art is given in the first part of the article. The second part argues about historical fantasy and its application in historical and philosophical research. The final part describes historical details used in the performance.

Keywords: *art as research, performance "Mechanical Veidenbaums", historical fantasy, hauntology, failed future.*

General remarks on "Mechanical Veidenbaums"

Eduards Veidenbaums (1867–1892) is one of the most famous poets in Latvia. Veidenbaums' poetry was always quite popular with general audience mostly because of relative simplicity of his verses and topics: he often described drunken bacchanalia, desperation and suicides, and also occasional revolutionary outbursts. In spite of popularity he was not always seen as a serious poet.

Mehāniskais Veidenbaums ("Mechanical Veidenbaums") was a multimedial performance created by three philosophers – A. Balodis, A. Hiršs, A. Kamoliņš. It was

made specifically for annual Latvian poetry festival which celebrated Veidenbaums' 150 years anniversary. Usually focal point of the festival is poetry readings with or without musical accompaniment in different urban settings. We decided to make two substantial deviations from the usual format. First, the focus would be on his scientific works and his student life in Dorpat (now – Tartu, Estonia). Our main source material was Veidenbaums' *Apcerējumi iz mekānikas* ("Discourse on Mechanics", 1894). Thus we were able to contextualize his body of work within historical and scientific framework. It enabled us to show that we would not make clear distinctions between poetry and other works. Second, our presentation would be multimedial – utilizing music, theatre and live puppet performance (fig. 1, 2).

Figure 1.

Figure 2.

"Mechanical Veidenbaums" was presented four times in three months in different Latvian cities. We also recorded and performed a song *Radioaktīvais Veidenbaums* ("Radioactive Veidenbaums") in later two performances. The song was basis for our next performance "Radioactive Veidenbaums" at radio Naba 15 years anniversary celebration.

Conceptually "Mechanical Veidenbaums" consisted of three layers. The first one described Veidenbaums' departure in train from Dorpat to Cēsis and his subsequent death at home. The second one described suicides in former Russian Empire in general and Dorpat in particular. In our presentation we unravelled the impact of suicide culture on Veidenbaums' poetry and scientific works. The third layer introduced the concept of historical fantasy. We brought in deceased Dorpat professor Gustav Teichmüller (1832–1888) who followed Veidenbaums on his last journey home. It helped us to make allegorical narrative about tensions between materialists and idealists at the time in Dorpat. We made it clear in interviews and public presentations that the first two layers were based on our research and facts. Apart from reading and interpreting Veidenbaums' works we also decided to go to Tartu and his family home near Cēsis. Although the trip did not provide us with substantial new information, it can be seen as a necessary step to gain experience needed for creating artwork.

Art as research

Most research-based art projects come across similar dilemmas and questions. Should our project be art-used-as-illustration of the research? Or should one treat his/her research as a reality effect to the performance? That is, facts are just a background in order to push forward artist's narrative. These questions are especially apparent in many art and science projects. Art is almost always used either as illustration of scientific results, or sometimes results are faked in order to demonstrate a theoretical point. The same goes for pedagogical aspects of presentation: is it always necessary to make an art object in order to provide information or provoke discussions? Without doubt we were concerned with the above-mentioned questions. On the one hand, lectures and articles are better tools in order to give insight into Veidenbaums' mechanical philosophy. On the other hand, artwork sometimes is better for pedagogical purposes. Instead we decided to recontextualise Veidenbaums' body of work. Firstly, we defined ourselves as historical fantasts, but our task was not just to fill missing pages with more or less improbable fantasies and narratives (more on the method see below). Secondly, we tried to define our stylistic approach.

A lot of artworks are result of researching in archives. These artworks often deal with what we might call futures that have been lost or **failed futures** [Foster 2004]. In a sense, Veidenbaums failed in many ways to finish and implement his ideas in society.

Failures were often beyond his control, for example, after Veidenbaums' death the unfinished "Discourse on Mechanics" has not been chosen to be a school material.

Sometimes we could connect the concept of failed futures with the concept of **hauntology** [Derrida 1994]. Namely, spectres of the past somehow hauntingly represent themselves in the present. Every now and then hauntology is represented as a style – literally haunting sounds of music, eerie images and so on [Fisher 2012]. We soon understood that our conceptual style should be steampunk, because it imaginatively fantasizes about Victorian and the 19th century technologies. Obviously the time frame was right for our purposes. The concept of steampunk allowed us not only to recontextualise simple mechanisms mentioned in "Discourse on Mechanics". It allowed us to invent our own imagined technologies, for example, steam-bidet.

Hauntological facet was represented through retelling true stories about suicides in Dorpat. These stories literally were spectres of the past – either forgotten suicides or reanimated brains of prof. G. Teichmüller. Thus, stylistic choices and haunting stories allowed us to avoid simple lecturing on Veidenbaums or using his works and biography for independent artistic purposes. As a result, our research and performance could give another look at failed future.

Methodology

In the history of thought, unlike other areas of historical research, it is often necessary to rely on indirect references and marginal side-notes because historical texts or sources may give incomplete and inaccurate picture of ideas presented in them. It is therefore much more challenging to learn what people thought in the certain age x than to find out what they ate, wore, practised, pursued, etc. Due to this difficulty in regard to history of human thought it is often claimed that there are no facts, only interpretations.

Our research departs from the opposite stance, it is rather hermeneutical than postmodern. By combining hermeneutics, intellectual history and history of problems methodologies, we developed a method of **historical fantasy**. The key premises of this approach are following: (i) it is necessary to respect the distance between researcher and the object of research and by doing so to admit the problem of interpretations that arises from two distinct horizons of meanings; (ii) it is not the case that any attempt is seen as "one of the interpretations" but there is standard that makes some interpretations more reasonable and viable; (iii) appropriate research needs to reject two extremes – radical constructivist or the belief that our knowledge of the past is constructed [Hacking 1999: 6–7] and presentism or the belief that evaluates historical facts from today's point of view; (iv) to recognize the main challenges of any research in the field of intellectual history, namely, how to accurately assess the origin, the sources, the influence and the significance of ideas,

their role in formation of other ideas and the impact on social and political realm.

This problem (iv) is faced by many historians, and our project concerning with late 19th century ideas and context is no exception. As the reconstruction of age-specific beliefs, ideas and biographical facts became seemingly unsolvable issue, we developed a method of **historical fantasy** as a special tool for this special study.

The method of historical fantasy within our project serves as a creative research method, i.e. it has both a research and an art function. First of all, this method requires quite scrupulous work in archives, thorough study of correspondence, attentive reading of footnotes, comments and references that may have gone unnoticed in concurrent studies, collection of testimonies of contemporaries and complete examination of private documents such as diaries, journals, notebooks, etc. Secondly, the method is used in creation of art performance. When the new historical facts had been discovered in our study, we compiled them to make short stories about Eduards Veidenbaums, Latvian poet and thinker, object of our research and the main character in the multimedial performance. These stories became a backbone for dramatic plot and directly influenced the direction and the production of performance "Mechanical Veidenbaums". Even though we found out plenty of facts and reliable information that helped to reconstruct past events rather accurately, some areas were still lacking. Hence the method of historical fantasy was introduced in order to fill the "blank pages" in history books and make events of the past comprehensible for the potential audience.

Historical fantasy is an original, collectively developed method by the authors of this project and it combines elements of several humanities methodologies: hermeneutics [Gadamers 1999; Ricoeur 1981], intellectual history [Gilbert 1971; Mandelbaum 1965] and history of problems [Canguilhem 2007, During 2004]. This method grants access to the historical context of ideas in cases when the textual sources and biographical data are rather scarce to make any unambiguous conclusion. It is important that fantasy here is not understood as the invention of history, but rather as a creative and a resourceful reconstruction of given historical texts, events or facts that provides justified and reasonable explanation.

Our project consisted of two activities: scientific research and producing the content for the art performance that was based on given research. The starting point of the project was the study of E. Veidenbaum's article "Discourse on Mechanics", in order to discover its context and the main themes by using the methodology of intellectual history. Intellectual history is approach that explores the relationship between ideas and human activity with emphasis on individual cognition, groups and communities, ideas and their sources and connections. Essential part of intellectual history is a genealogical approach, including focus on personalities in history, evolution of their thought and contribution to society (as in our case).

Several intellectual historians (Mauritius Mandelbaum, Ulrich Johannes Schneider, Frederick Beiser, etc.) note that the advantage of this approach lies in the effort to avoid artificial teleological constructions such as: a) triumphalism or a tendency to see past periods and cultures as the stages of development to the present moment, b) presentism, which is manifested in the tendency to select some historical facts, the connection of which is nowadays evident and to give up on others because their effect on today's thought is not obvious.

In our study the approach of intellectual history has been complemented by the methodology of the history of problems, which examines formation of ideas through emphasis on the "blank spots" in history and the interruptions of discourse and knowledge. According to the history of problems, it is the disruptions in knowledge and confused and obscure problems that may give rise for the most effective explanation of the emergence and genesis of the ideas in the history of the humankind [Foucault 2007: 14]. The traditional approaches in the field, such as the history of ideas [Lovejoy 1933], fail to grasp this concept as they mainly are occupied with established, well-known, "grand ideas" and simply connect them in "the Great chain of being".

Two images that illuminate intellectual setting of the late 19th century became the key elements in our study and played a crucial role in the production of the art performance. The one is the **phonograph** as an analogy between the human brain and memory, an archetypal metaphor of human mind in the era which appears also in Veidenbaums' texts. The other is the fact about the frequency of **suicides** committed in the academic circles in Russian Empire in the late 19th century shedding light on metaphysical, existential and socioeconomic aspects of the phenomena. Thus, our research, which was originally intended as an academic enterprise, later had remarkable effect on artistic form and aesthetics of the performance "Mechanical Veidenbaums".

I. Phonographic mind

At the beginning of the article it was mentioned that the performance "Mechanical Veidenbaums" displayed our attempt to imagine poet's final and homecoming journey from studies in University of Dorpat (now Tartu). His return was overshadowed by his eventually fatal illness, depression, setbacks in private life and struggle with his studies because of the lack of resources he needed for graduation. A phonograph is a key metaphor we use in the performance in order to portray the poet's mindset, streams of thought found in his verses and essays, flashbacks and recollections presented in letters and in a diary.

A phonograph is a device for the mechanical recording and reproduction of sound and was invented in 1877 by Thomas Alva Edison. By the late 19th century phonograph was employed as a metaphor to describe human mind and memory. In

1888 Jean-Marie Guyau published an article *Le mémoire et le phonographe* ("Memory and Phonograph") where he presented the analogy of sound-recording device and workings of memory [Guyau 1880].

In the same way as the phonograph records sound vibrations by engraving them on wax or metal plates, the human memory registers oscillations of outer world and carves them incessantly into the brain cells. Guyau described mechanism of memory as analogous to that of phonograph. Phonograph makes recordings of sound by the means of a small copper disk that is designed to do both, i. e. to engrave lines that correspond to uttered sounds on metal plates and to reproduce already imprinted lines and replay them as voice, words, and melodies. Human memory according to the philosopher performs in a similar manner. Cerebral stuff of the human brain stores the physical vibrations in forms of impression, but memory serves as tool to recognize recollections or existing impressions from newly formed ones.

This is quite common for philosophers to address a difficult and hard problem of mind and consciousness by modeling it in accordance with some most advanced technological equipment of the time. In the texts of the 19th century philosophers there are great deal of such examples. Jean-Marie Guyau refers to two similes that have been used to understand mental abilities and functions. Herbert Spencer compared human brain with player-pianos that can reproduce infinite number of melodies. Hypolite Taine made of the brain a kind of print shop that produces and stores innumerable images or clichés [Guyau 1880: 319–320]. There are plenty of such widespread technological metaphors in the turn of the 19th and the 20th centuries. For example, Henri Bergson, one of the most notable philosophers of the time, mentioned some more – analogy of the human brain as the bureau of telephone exchange [Bergson 2008: 26], or the telegraph office [Bergson 2008: 111], or the camera and the photographer [Bergson 2008: 148]. According to Friedrich Kittler, with the invention of phonograph take on memory represents clear break from the previous tradition in the history of thought [Kittler 1999: 33]. Instead of describing memory as the innate capability of the soul that operates by some obscure spiritual and mystical powers, phonograph serves as a plain and an obvious yet quite suitable model for the mechanism of remembrance. It incorporates two indispensable features of any functioning memory: retention of the present and recollection of the past. A phonograph is a machine that is capable of both activities at once "writing and reading, storing and scanning, recording and replaying" [Kittler 1999: 33].

This is an astonishing fact that E. Veidenbaums made use of this metaphor in a letter to his brother Kārlis Veidenbaums. His letter expresses somewhat exaggerated sense of guilt and attempt to apologize for disappointment he brought to the family due to insufficient efforts in studies and indulging in entertainment. E. Veidenbaums admitted that in his periods of drinking bouts and debauchery he had been like "a

sleeping man", but he still relied on his mind where "his thoughts as in a phonograph will engrave in the cerebral matter and that will resolve his issues overnight" [Veidenbaums 1926: 94]. Despite his very unrealistic evaluation of powers of phonograph, since it is just a hardware and it does not solve any existential problems but can only file and record them, the use of the analogy by E. Veidenbaums is still striking. Hence came our decision to make this resemblance of the human mind and the phonograph as a leitmotif in the performance "Mechanical Veidenbaums", where the story of a poet and a thinker is seen through one of the most powerful metaphors of his time.

II. The Darkness of Dorpat

The University of Tartu is one of the science centres in the Baltic States. In the 19th century, the University attracted students from all over Russia [Dhondt 2008: 115]. In the mid-19th century, an increasing number of Latvians started studying at the University of Dorpat. The first generation of Latvian intellectuals were educated there, such as linguist and poet Jēkabs Lautenbahs-Jūsmiņš (1848–1928), the first Latvian philosopher Jēkabs Osis (1860–1920), theologian Jānis Sanders (1858–1951), etc. Nevertheless, in the opinion of Veidenbaums Dorpat was quite a dark and depressing place.

The young poet was deep in debt during his years of studies. Veidenbaums was struggling to survive, and he criticized some aspects of University life. For example, he had a negative attitude towards student corporations because of boozing [Veidenbaums 1961: 287]. However, according to a close friend of the poet Aleksandrs Dauge (1868–1937), Veidenbaums himself took to drinking because of his depression. The reason was one of the suicide cases in Dorpat.

In the letters he wrote to his brother, Veidenbaums mentioned three cases of suicides among the students. The first one was some Baltic German student who killed himself by hanging. Veidenbaums wrote to his brother: "No one can understand reason behind his suicide. One day before his death, he paid all his debts and visited his friends" [Veidenbaums 1961: 294]. One year later another young man put an end to his life. Veidenbaums stated: "he considered it necessary to discharge himself from life". One of the most discussed suicide at that time took place in 1889. A Russian student named Vyacheslav Stratonov was found dead with a bullet in his heart. Veidenbaums expressed an opinion that cause of his suicide was his ideological beliefs. Stratonov was a member of the Society of Russian Students. Some members of this group were inclined to marxism. But after Stratonov committed suicide, the society broke up [Исаков 1972: 299].

The Baltic German press reported about "suicide wave" in Dorpat. But suicide statistics showed a slight increase in number of suicides in all parts of tsarist Russia

at that time. Tanya Jukkala, one of the researchers at Stockholm Centre on Health of Societies in Transition, notes that "From the late 1860s onwards, the subject of suicide was given extensive attention in public debate (..) Despite the incomplete and unreliable statistics of the time, the idea that suicide mortality was increasing in Russia, as in Western Europe, became generally accepted in the 1870s" [Jukkala 2013: 39]. In 1897, Emile Durkheim (1858–1917), one of the founding fathers of sociology, published a book "Suicide. A study in sociology" (*Le Suicide: Étude de sociologie*, 1897). It was a groundbreaking book in the field of sociology. Durkheim demonstrated how, though it had been previously thought that suicide was an individual experience, it was a social fact. Russian scientists argued about the causes of an outbreak of suicide. Some of them blamed overwhelming studying schedule, also the decline of moral and physical strength. Others noted that this "suicide wave" might have been caused by the spreading pessimistic philosophy represented by Arthur Schopenhauer (1788–1860) and Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche (1844–1900) [Покровский 1892: 33].

Some of Veidenbaums' poems deal with themes of death and suicide. The poet translated a story "Two Women Or One?: From the Mss. of Dr. Leonard Benary" by novelist Henry Harland (1861–1905). The story revolves around a physician who learns that a young woman is an escaped convict. She suffers from depression and suicidal thoughts. Physician operates on her in an attempt to rid her of her dark past. What drew Veidenbaums' attention to this story? Veidenbaums as materialist believed that mental states were causally dependent on physical processes. This idea about synergy between physical body and consciousness was used in the performance "Mechanical Veidenbaums", in an episode where three characters have a conversation that this idea could be a way to find a cure for suicidal tendencies:

"*A1: Why are there so many suicides in Tartu?*

A2: Maybe it's just part of nowadays trend.

A1: Possible. However, we can save ourselves from this fashion if we drill holes in our heads.

A3: What do you mean?

A: You know, change the physical state to change personality.

A3: Is there any precedent?

A1: Yes, there was this story about a woman who was suffering from suicidal thoughts. Physician drilled a hole in her brain.

A2: Oh yes, I have read this story in newspaper.

A3: So, did it help?

A1: Yes, it did. But you know I'm not sure that it would save us.

A2: Why not?

A1: By changing one person, we are not changing the whole environment.

A3: So what should we do?
A1: We must drill a hole through the whole city, through bars, university, brothels and corporations."

Concluding remarks

Veidenbaums was influenced by socialism and marxism movements. However, he was not a supporter of radical revolution. Young Russian students who propagated violent revolution were called "criminal idiots" by the poet [Dauge 1927: 885]. Only gradual progress could bring positive change in society. Moreover, an important role in this progress must be played by mechanic science that reveals the right proportion between input and output energy. The problem of right usage of energy is one of the main topics in Veidenbaums' "Discourse on Mechanics". If we look at the world as machine, the causes of suicides and other troubles can be perceived as defects of incorrectly adjusted mechanism.

This article gives an overview of the art performance "Mechanical Veidenbaums" that was staged in several culture spaces in Latvia during year 2017. It was an interdisciplinary project that included various activities such as research in the field of intellectual history, collaboration of philosophers, artists and musicians, taking part in academic conferences and communication of the research outcome and its application to the general public. In this paper we have focused mainly on the research work done in the project. First, the article contains a brief resume about the project as a whole, its participants and carried out activities. The centrepiece of the project is art performance *Mehāniskais Veidenbaums*. It was designed in the aesthetics of steampunk in order to represent the concept of failed future which was our vantage point to E. Veidenbaums' heritage. Second, we described the realization of the project, from its very beginning to the final stages as the genuine case for *art as a research*. One of the prominent research themes was hauntology. Third, we discussed the main methodological guidelines that have been key in this study. And last but not least, this article offers an insight into some of our research findings that provided us with vast material for creative and artistic side of the project. Here we singled out two central figures – the **phonograph** as a metaphor of the human mind and the image of **dark and gloomy Dorpat** of that time that enabled us to embody experiences of E. Veidenbaums and his contemporaries and to present them to the modern audience. The performance "Mechanical Veidenbaums" and its underlying study offers an example how to combine rather diverse approaches of the humanities and arts in a joint art-research project guided by single methodology, i.e. historical fantasy, that serves both purposes scientific and aesthetic.

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