Art Academy of Latvia

IDEAS AND MATERIALS: CULTURAL HYBRIDITY OF THE BALTIC AND OTHER REGIONS

ART ACADEMY OF LATVIA, 2021

ACTA ACADEMIAE ARTIUM

Conference Proceedings
of the Doctoral Study Programme
Art Academy of Latvia

Edited by Ojārs Spārītis, Agita Gritāne

IV

Riga, 2021

Art Academy of Latvia
Collective Monograph of the Conference Proceedings "Ideas and Materials: Cultural Hybridity of the Baltic and Other Regions", 2021. Riga: Art Academy of Latvia, 2021

Editorial Board:

Juhan Maiste, Dr. habil. art, Professor (Tartu University, Estonia)
Ruth Sargent Noyes, PhD (Denmark, National Museum of Denmark)
Basia Sliwinska, PhD (University of the Arts London, UK and University of Gothenburg, Sweden)
Laine Kristberga, PhD (University of Latvia, Latvia)
Ojārs Spārītis, Dr. habil. art, Professor (Art Academy of Latvia)

Peer Review Statement: All submissions are subject to a rigorous peer review process, based on initial editor screening and are anonymously peer-reviewed by a minimum of three specialist referees.

In case of re-publishing, permission from the Art Academy of Latvia is required.
If quoted, the reference to the edition is compulsory.

Editors-in-chief of the monograph: Ojārs Spārītis and Agita Gritāne
Proof-reader and technical editor: Laine Kristberga
Design and layout editor: Sabīne Vernere
Publisher: Art Academy of Latvia

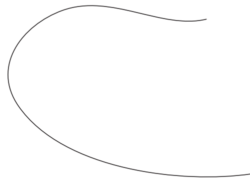
The Collective Monograph has been approved in accordance with the decision of the Science Council of the Art Academy of Latvia on 13 November 2021

The Conference "Ideas and Materials: Cultural Hybridity of the Baltic and Other Regions" was supported by Signet Bank, Riga Latvia

The Conference and the Collective Monograph are deliverables of Project No.1.1.1.5 / 18 / I / 014 "Raising Research and Innovation Capacity of the Art Academy of Latvia and the Institute of Art History"

©Art Academy of Latvia, 13 Kalpaka Boulevard, Riga Latvia LV-1050
©Authors of articles, 2021
©Sabine Vernere, 2021

ISBN 978-9934-541-62-9
ISBN 978-9934-541-63-6 pdf



Ojārs Spārītis, Agita Gritāne

PREFACE

The conference of the Art Academy of Latvia is the result of our creative brainstorm and reaction on the theoretical discourse of Professor of the University of Cambridge Peter Burke, dealing with the phenomenon of cultural hybridity in the majority of his theoretical works. Since 2013, the translation of Peter Burke's book *Cultural Hybridity* has been available for scholars of humanities and social sciences in Latvia (translated by Dr. philol. Pauls Daija, publishing house "Mansards", 2013); however, its impact on new research methodology and conclusions is not yet noticeable in the theory of culture and art. The ambitions of the Art Academy of Latvia resulted in inviting the world-famous researcher of cultural phenomena to the annual conference organised by the Department of Doctoral Studies. The conference was organised as a platform for exchange of ideas at an international level. The goal of the conference was manifested not only in the need to provide insight in methodological approaches for research in art history carried out by lecturers and doctoral students alike, but also to help formulate a theoretical platform and offer innovative approaches for both research in traditional art disciplines and the ecosystem of interdisciplinary studies.

The organizers of the conference express their gratitude to Professor Peter Burke for the theoretical guidelines and for raising awareness of cultural hybridity in the context of contemporary culture studies. We would also like to thank each participant in this exchange of ideas for being interested in the analysis of art history, theory and interdisciplinary subjects. Following the assessment of an international Editorial Board, ten most outstanding papers in English have been included in the collective monograph, revealing each researcher's individual perspective on the research problem. The conference papers that were presented and written in Latvian are included in a separate compilation. Along with the compilation in English, the range of all studies is thus documented and offered to readers. It also encourages colleagues to test the hybridity theory as a method in art analysis. The compilers of the collection and the Editorial Board are of the opinion that the factual material included in the collective monograph, as well as the interpretation and application of the hybridity theory and the conclusions drawn will contribute to the Baltic and European space of knowledge production.

IDEAS AND MATERIALS: CULTURAL HYBRIDITY OF THE BALTIC AND OTHER REGIONS

Ojārs Spārītis, Agita Gritāne. PREFACE

I THEORETICAL PLATFORM

Peter Burke. SIX THESES ON CULTURAL HYBRIDITY 10

II HYBRIDITY IN TIME, SPACE, CONSTRUCTION, FORM AND CONTENT

Juhan Maiste. THE BALTIC VILLA RUSTICA 20
IDEOLOGY AND FORM

Ojārs Spārītis. IN SEARCH OF FORMAL AND 28
THEOLOGICAL HYBRIDITY

Sanita Bitko. THE RIGA CATHEDRAL ORGAN 40
FAÇADE: DIGITAL ANALYSIS OF
STYLISTIC HYBRIDITY

Ruth Sargent Noyes. SELF-FASHIONING 50
AT THE CROSSROADS OF EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY EUROPE. EXPLORING
SPATIAL AND TEMPORAL DIMENSIONS IN ELITE PORTRAITS
BETWEEN ITALY AND INFLANTY

Katriona Luīze Rožlapa. INTERPRETATIONS 64
OF HISTORICAL ARCHITECTURE
BY ARCHITECT VLADIMIR SHERVINSKY

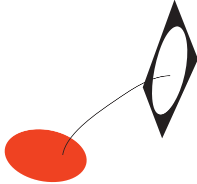
III INTERMEDIALITY AND INTERDISCIPLINARITY

Agita Gritāne. REFLECTION OF NATIONAL 74
RELIGIONS IN BALTIC ART IN THE FIRST HALF
OF THE 20TH CENTURY

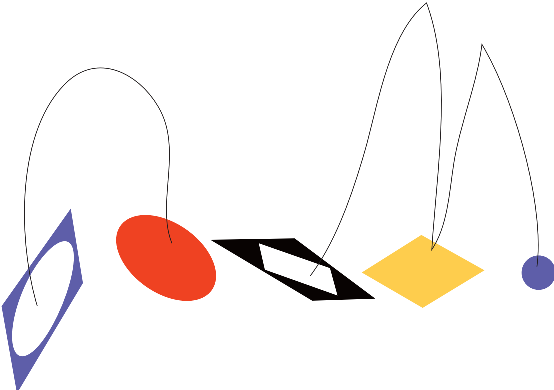
Andra Silapētere. "WHEN YOU GET TO BARREN NEW YORK, / 84
YOU WILL SHARE OUR OPINION:/ WE MUST AFFOREST IT!"
LATVIAN EXILE ARTIST COMMUNITY
IN NEW YORK CITY

Jana Kukaine. AFFECTIVE HYBRIDITY IN ANDA MAGONE'S 94
PHOTOGRAPHY SERIES *FORGIVENESS*

Paulius Petraitis. NETWORKED MEANING-MAKING 101
AND HYBRIDITY: A FEW NOTES ON CONTEMPORARY
ART PHOTOGRAPHY FROM THE BALTICS



I THEORETICAL PLATFORM



SIX THESES ON CULTURAL HYBRIDITY

Peter Burke
Emmanuel College Cambridge CB2 3AP, UK
upb1000@cam.ac.uk

ABSTRACT

This article argues that every culture is hybrid; that some domains are more hybrid than others, especially cuisine, language and music; that some places are more hybrid than others, notably ports and frontier zones; that the process of hybridization is faster or more far-reaching in some places and periods than others; that the process is not always conscious, though it depends on agency; and finally that the phrase 'cultural hybridity' remains a current and perhaps an indispensable one despite the force of some of the objections that have been made to its use.
Keywords: *culture, hybridity, purity, selection, translation*

ONE. EVERY CULTURE IS HYBRID, INCLUDING THE ONES WHO MOST CLAIM TO BE 'PURE'

Edward Said has suggested that "The history of all cultures is the history of cultural borrowing, [that] all cultures are involved in one another; none is single and pure, all are hybrid [and that] there are no insulated cultures" (Said 1993, XXIX; 2001, 587). A historian such as myself wants to add that hybridity was both analysed and celebrated in the early twentieth century, especially in Latin America, notably by the Cuban sociologist Fernando Ortiz and the Brazilian polymath Gilberto Freyre, who opposed attempts to 'whiten' his country by encouraging immigration from Europe and emphasized the contributions of both the indigenous 'Indians' and African slaves to Brazilian culture (Burke and Pallares-Burke 2008).
The idea of a pure, ancestral culture, free from foreign elements, is a myth, indeed a dangerous one that as we now know, encourages extreme nationalism and hostility to minorities. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it was a romantic dream (Leerssen, 2006). The dream appealed in particular to the middle-class intellectuals who went to the countryside to learn from the people, like the Russian populists, or at the least to collect folksongs and folktales (Venturi, 1952; Burke, 1978, 23-48).
However, it has turned out again and again that items of popular culture, from songs to ceramics, despite their regional colouring or tone, belong to a repertoire that stretches across Europe from Galway to the Urals and sometimes beyond Europe's borders. We simply have to accept the fact that our everyday life includes an assemblage of borrowed items. We may notice recent examples of hybridization but most of us remain unaware of earlier cases in our own culture.
For example, most Europeans drink either coffee, originally from Yemen or Ethiopia, or tea, originally from China. We eat tomatoes and chocolate without thinking about their origin in the Americas. We tread on carpets that came originally from the Middle East. Some people live in bungalows without associating them with Bengal, from which the name originated. Many of us wear jeans that have lost both their original connection with Genoa and their long-standing association with work in the fields.

TWO. SOME CULTURAL DOMAINS, NOTABLY CUISINE, LANGUAGE AND MUSIC, ARE MORE HYBRID THAN OTHERS

In the case of cuisine, it is difficult not to think of the rapid spread of ethnic restaurants in many parts of Europe after the Second World War, especially in countries with a history of empire (Indian restaurants in Britain offer an obvious example, like North African and Vietnamese restaurants in France). Chinese and Italian cuisines in particular spread almost everywhere from the 1950s onwards. More recently, a second wave of culinary hybridization has expressed its self-consciousness with the term 'Asian Fusion', combining elements from China, Japan and South-East Asia. No wonder then that cultural mixing is sometimes described in metaphors from the kitchen. For example, Fernando Ortiz described Cuban culture as a kind of 'stew', thinking of a favourite national dish, ajiaco (Ortiz 1993, 5).

The language in which I am writing now is a hybrid language, which came into existence following the Norman Conquest of 1066, in which the Normans, speaking a form of French, defeated the Anglo-Saxons, whose language was Germanic. Thanks perhaps to this original hybridity, English has continued to be hospitable to foreign words. Proposals for the foundation of an academy on the French model that would accept or exclude new words have always been defeated. In any case, both the rise and the fall of the British Empire have contributed in different ways to a variety of 'Englishes' in the plural – American, Australian, Irish, Asian, African, 'Singlish' (from Singapore), 'Spanglish' (from Spain), 'Swinglish' (from Sweden) and so on (Schreier et al. 2020). The opposite trend is difficult to miss, the invasion of other languages by English words (today, mainly American English words).

In our age of 'world music', hybridization is more visible, or should I say 'audible' than ever before, in cases such as 'Celtic rock' or the fusion of Indian and western classical music. However, mixed music has a much longer history. Like language and cuisine, music has no respect for national frontiers, even though many attempts have been made to 'nationalize' particular tunes and genres.

For example, the Hungarian composers Béla Bartók and Zoltan Kodaly are famous in their own country not only for their own modernist compositions but also for their contribution to ethnomusicology. From 1905-1906 onwards they collected and recorded folksongs and music, especially in Transylvania, which was part of Hungary until the end of the First World War, a frontier region where popular traditions had lasted longer than elsewhere. According to Kodaly and Bartók, this folk music expressed the spirit of the nation, making it a valuable resource for "the endeavor to establish a national musical style" (Eősze 1962, 47-60, at 53). This idea was supported by the fact that the Hungarian word nép means both 'folk' and ' nation', thus encouraging a dangerous slide from one meaning to the other.

The problem in this case was the fact that a majority of the population of Transylvania, especially its rural population, was Romanian. There was also a significant number of Germans who had been living in the region since the Middle Ages, not to mention the Roma (Iorga 1915; Makkai 1946). In the case of music, gypsy bands made an important contribution to musical life in Transylvania from the eighteenth century onwards, both in villages and in the great houses of the Hungarian-speaking aristocracy. Musicologists have also noted the influence of Turkish music in this region, whose princes paid tribute to the Ottoman Empire in the seventeenth century (Sarosi, 1980; Rajeczky et al., 1980; Alexandru, 1980).

THREE. SOME PLACES ARE MORE HYBRID THAN OTHERS, NOTABLY PORTS AND FRONTIER ZONES

Transylvania is a frontier zone. Frontier zones and cities, especially ports but also some capitals, especially capitals of empires – London, for instance, Paris and Vienna – are particularly likely to develop hybrid cultures because they are meeting-places for people of different origins. It would be too simple to call these places 'melting pots'. Some melting does indeed occur, but resistance to melting should not be forgotten.

It is worth recalling here the origins of that influential metaphor, coined by a French diplomat in the USA, Hector St John de Crèvecoeur, and popularized by a play, The Melting Pot, which had its première on Broadway in 1908 and received a warm reception from the American public, including ex-President Theodore Roosevelt. Incidentally, the playwright, Israel Zangwill, had been born in London, the child of Jewish immigrants from the Russian Empire (in his father's case, from Latvia). The success of the phrase may be attributed to a misunderstanding. It was intended as a metaphor for hybridity, but was understood by many Americans as a metaphor for assimilation, a process in which the immigrants received a new culture but did not contribute to it. It was for this reason that the journalist Randolph Bourne argued in 1916 that "The time has come to assert a higher ideal than the 'melting pot' … We act as if wanted Americanization to take place only on our own terms, and not by the consent of the governed" (Rumbaut 2005, 2).

In the case of language, a lingua franca is often spoken in ports, Mediterranean ports such as Venice or Marseilles, Baltic ports such as Riga and Tallinn. In cities and frontier zones, code-switching often occurs. Individuals who are more or less bilingual move from one language to another as the situation around them changes, sometimes within the same sentence, as I could not help noticing when I visited Transylvania in the 1960s, especially the city known to Romanians as Cluj (or Cluj Napoca) and to Hungarians as Kolozsvár. It is commonplace for words from one language to be 'borrowed' or appropriated by speakers of neighbouring languages, whether these languages belong to the same family or not. Turkish words are present in Hungarian, for instance, Slavic words in Romanian, and so on. The traditional folktales of Transylvania are also intertwined, notably the story of a building that crumbles as fast as it is built until the mason kills his wife and mixes her remains into the mortar. Romanian speakers call the tale 'Manuel the Mason' (Meşterul Manole), while Hungarians call him 'Clement' (Kőműves Kelemen) but the tragic outcome of the story is the same.

The visual culture of frontier zones is also hybrid. When I visited the Calvinist church in Kolozsvár (I am employing the Hungarian name on this occasion, since the Calvinists in that part of the world are Hungarian, while the Romanians are Eastern Christians), I noticed the floral decorations on the pulpit, which reminded me of the ceramics of Iznik. At the time (1967), the Hungarian friend who was showing me her city was shocked at the comparison, although when I made it again in 2013, in a lecture on the hybrid Renaissance given at the Central European University in Budapest, it no longer seemed surprising to the audience. The presence of cultural hybridity in the past as in the present is coming to be taken for granted.

For example, Spanish scholars are now in general agreement on the importance of the interaction of Islamic and Christian art and architecture in medieval Spain, another frontier zone, especially Andalucía. Yet this topic was a taboo in the 1960s, when Franco was still in power and the official ideology was National Catholicism. For example, copies of the exiled scholar Américo Castro's study of medieval Spain as the crossroads of three traditions (Jewish, Christian and Muslim) were not allowed to enter the country (Castro 1948). It was

surely no coincidence that the first conference on mudéjar art and architecture to be held in Spain took place in 1975, which was also the year of Franco's death.

FOUR. EVEN THOUGH HYBRIDIZATION OCCURS ALL THE TIME, THE PROCESS IS FASTER OR MORE FAR-REACHING THAN OTHERS IN SOME PERIODS, INCLUDING OURS

Hybridization is encouraged, to say the least, by the globalization of trade and communications and it is assisted by migrants, however much they may try to retain their traditional way of life in a new land. As the process of hybridization continues, it becomes, like the migrants, more visible and so provokes more resistance. This resistance obviously helps explain the success of far-right political parties in Europe today, as well as both the ideology and the practice of so-called 'ethnic cleansing'. In the long term, however, resistance to hybridization is gradually overcome, as what was originally perceived as alien becomes assimilated into the local culture and perceived as local (as suggested in thesis number one). Resistance declines, at least until the next wave of migration and hybridization takes place. Hence historians should distinguish between periods when the process is slow and periods when the process is rapid. In England, for instance, it was particularly rapid between 1066 and 1100, following the Norman conquest, and again from 1950 to the present, following immigration first from the former British Empire and then from the European Union.

FIVE. ALTHOUGH IT IS THE PRODUCT OF A MULTITUDE OF HUMAN ACTIONS, HYBRIDIZATION IS NOT ALWAYS A CONSCIOUS ONE

In many cultures hybridization has been discussed for centuries, whether to praise it or to reject it. On the one hand, we find what may be called 'xenophilia', especially among elites who view their own culture as backward or peripheral and wish to imitate the culture of more progressive or central places. On the other, we find xenophobia, the rejection of the 'foreignizers' as traitors to their native culture. There have been many such discussions and debates in European history. In the Renaissance period, for instance, Italy was a model that provoked both enthusiasm and disgust, the disgust being summed up in phrases such as "an italianized Englishman is a devil incarnate", a phrase that, ironically enough, used to be quoted in Italian, Inglese italianato è diavolo incarnato (Barycz 1967, Balsamo 1992). In the 17th and 18th centuries, it was the turn first of Spain and then of France to serve as models for other countries, once again provoking a backlash by Italians against hispanizing, Germans against frenchifying, and so on (Croce 1917, Heitz et al., 2011).

In the nineteenth century, Russia was the scene of a more sophisticated debate between the westernizers, who supported borrowing, and the Slavophils, who rejected it. This debate is particularly interesting because it raised two questions that seem to have been somewhat marginal earlier. One was the question of what we might call 'cultural selection' (on the analogy of 'natural selection'). Why do borrowers select some traits from the donor culture but not others? (Foster 1960, a pioneering discussion). The other was the question of what has become known as 'cultural translation', in other words the adaptation of what was borrowed to the traditions of one's own culture.

Both questions were discussed in Ivan Turgenev's novel *Smoke* (Дым), which dramatizes the debate between Westernizers and Slavophils. Two Russians, Litvinov and Potugin, meet in a café in Baden and immediately begin discussing Russia's problems. Potugin makes

fun of the Slavophils and asserts that "what we ought to do is … to borrow from our elder brothers what they have invented already and better than us!" Litvinov replies: "You say that we ought to borrow from our elder brothers. But how can we borrow without consideration of the conditions of climate and of soil, the local and national peculiarities?" To this Potugin retorts that "you steal what belongs to another man ... because it suits you; so it follows that you consider, you make a selection" (Turgenev, 1867, 29). Potugin might also have added that you can alter what is borrowed in the same way that tailors make clothes, to make them suit you.

In the 20th-century Brazil, the second point was made in an even more dramatic fashion by the writer Oswald de Andrade in what he called his 'Cannibal Manifesto' (Manifesto Antropófago) of 1928. Playing with the old European stereotype of Brazilians as cannibals, Andrade recommended his compatriots to "digest" European cultural models, thus transforming them and making them their own (Jauregui, 2008).

Discussions of globalization often express the fear that the world's culture will become homogenous, that the whole world will be Americanized (in English, the term 'Americanization' has been in use since 1907, if not before). Almost equally often, these discussions take the example of the spread of Coca Cola. However, a British anthropologist who has studied the Caribbean, Daniel Miller, has written an article about the way in which Trinidadians use the drink, adapting it to their culture (indeed, digesting it both literally and metaphorically) by mixing it with local rum (Miller, 1998).

Missionaries also hybridize, but the other way round, adapting their own culture in order to appeal to converts from elsewhere. Jesuit missionaries referred to this practice as the 'accommodation' of Christianity to local customs such as the veneration of ancestors in China or the use of the sacred thread by Brahmins in India. Hence one might describe Matteo Ricci, the Italian Jesuit who worked in China (Hsia, 2010), as the first theorist of hybridity (Bettray 1955, Mungello 1985, Liu 2008).

SIX. HYBRIDITY REMAINS "ONE OF THE MOST WIDELY EMPLOYED AND DISPUTED TERMS IN POSTCOLONIAL THEORY"

This quotation comes from the Australian culture theorist Bill Ashcroft, who has done his bit to spread the term (Ashcroft 1989, 118). It is worth noting the hybrid cultures of the leading theorists themselves. Edward Said was a Palestinian who became a professor in New York but felt 'out of place' everywhere, as he put it in his autobiography (Said 1999). Homi Bhabha was born in Bombay (now Mumbai), educated at Oxford, and is now a professor at Harvard. Paul Gilroy is a Londoner whose mother came from Guyana. The writer Salman Rushdi, also from Bombay, has celebrated hybridity. Indeed, Rushdie considers a hybrid identity to be the only possible one in the postmodern, postcolonial world.

A question worth asking at this point is the following: Why is the term 'hybridity' disputed? There are at least three main reasons. In the first place because the term is a metaphor, originally from botany. The metaphor is sometimes taken literally and it has often been repudiated for its associations with organisms and evolution (Young 1995). In the second place, the concept is disputed because it is what British philosophers like to call an 'umbrella term', covering so many different states and processes that its use leads to confusion. A third reason is that the concept implies that the process of hybridization is an impersonal one.

My own response to this debate is – perhaps appropriately – a mixed one. Critics of the term are, I think, right to emphasize the need to bring people back in, in other words to recognize their active roles in the process of hybridization. Hence the growing popularity in the

academic world of the phrase ‘cultural translation’, since it implies active translators, just as the old term, ‘borrowing’, implied active borrowers (not to say ‘thieves’).
On the other hand, in my view, the strength of the concepts of hybridity and hybridization is precisely their emphasis on what is not the product of individual action. The adaptation of something alien to one’s own purposes may not even be conscious. It may be the product of misunderstanding. In its turn, misunderstanding may be the product of an unconscious desire to domesticate the alien.
To conclude. When we discuss cultural change, we need terms to describe both individual or collective processes and also both conscious and unconscious ones. The term ‘hybridization’ does the job. I don’t know of an effective alternative, at least in English (in Spanish, for instance, there is also mestizaje and mestización). For this reason, despite the criticisms that have been made of it in the past, I don’t believe that this concept should be abandoned. We should, however, be discriminating when we employ it. If we view everything as hybrid, the term loses both its meaning and its usefulness. On the other hand, describing some places, practices, objects or individuals as more hybrid than others may often be illuminating.

References

Alexandru, T. (1980) *Romania: Folk Music //New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. London: MacMillan, vol.16, pp. 129-39.

Ashcroft, W., Griffiths, G. and Tiffin, H. (1989) *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*. London: Routledge.

Balsamo, J. (1992) *Les rencontres des muses: italianisme et anti-italianisme dans les lettres françaises de la fin du xvie siècle*. Geneva: Droz.

Barycz, H. (1967) *Italofilia e Italofobia nella Polonia del Cinque- e Seicento*// Italia, Venezia e Polonia tra umanesimo e rinascimento//Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy Imienia Ossolińskich, pp. 142-148.

Bettray, J. (1955) *Die Akkomodationsmethode des M. Ricci in China*. Rome: Universitas Gregoriana.

Burke, P. (1978) *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe*. Third edn, Farnham: Ashgate, 2009.

Burke, P. And Pallares-Burke, M. L. (2008) *Gilberto Freyre: Social Theory in the Tropics*. Oxford: Peter Lang.

Castro, A. (1948) *España en su Historia: Cristianos, Moros y Judíos*. Buenos Aires: Losada.

Croce, B. (1917) *La Spagna nella vita italiana durante la rinascenza*. Bari: Laterza.

Eősze, L. (1962) *Zoltán Kodály: his life in pictures and documents*. London: Collet’s.

Foster, G. (1960) *Culture and Conquest*. Chicago: Quadrangle Books.

Heitz, R., Mix Y.-G., Mondot J., Birkner N. (eds., 2011) *Gallophilie und Gallophobie*. Heidelberg: Winter.

Hsia, Ronnie Po-chia (2010) *A Jesuit in the Forbidden City: Matteo Ricci, 1552-1610*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Iorga, N. (1915) *Histoire des Roumains de Transylvanie et de Hongrie*. Bucharest: Socec.

Jauregui, C. (2008) *Canibalia. Canibalismo, calibanismo, antropofagia cultural y consumo en América Latina*. Madrid: Vervuert.

Leerssen, J. (2006) *National Thought in Europe: A Cultural History*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Liu, Y. (2008) *The Intricacies of Accommodation: the proselytizing stragegy of Matteo Ricci* //Journal of World History 19, pp. 465-487.

Mungello, D. (1985) *Curious Land: Jesuit Accommodation and the Origins of Sinology*. Stuttgart: Steiner.

Makkai, L. (1944) *Histoire de Transylvanie*. French translation, Paris: PUF, 1946.

Miller, D. (1998) *Coca-Cola: A Black Sweet Drink from Trinidad//Material Cultures: Why Some Things Matter*. London: University College) pp. 169-187.

Ortiz, F. (1993) *Etnia y Sociedad*. Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales.

Rajeczky B. et al. (1980) *Hungary: Folk Music //New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. London: MacMillan, vol. 8, pp. 803-811.

Rumbaut, R. G. (2005) *The Melting and the Pot: Assimilation and Variety in American Life //Incorporating Diversity: Rethinking Assimilation in a Multicultural Era*. Boulder CO: Paradigm Publishers, 154-173. p.2.

Said., E. (1993) *Culture and Imperialism*. London: Vintage.

Said, E. (1999) *Out of Place*. London: Granta Books.

Said, E. (2001) *Reflections on Exile*. London: Granta Books.

Sarosi, B. (1980) *Gypsy Music //New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. London: MacMillan, vol. 7, pp. 864-870.

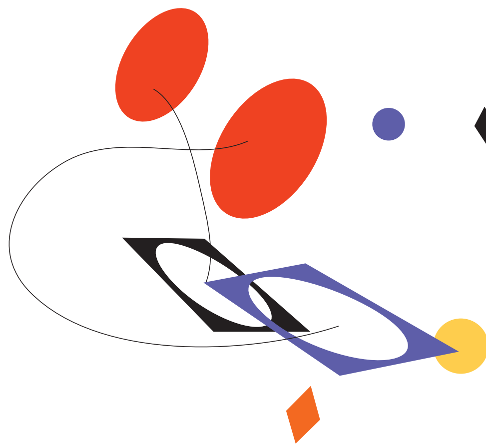
Schreier, D., Hundt M., Schneider E. W. (2020) *The Cambridge Handbook of World Englishes*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Turgenev, I. (1867)*Дым*: English translation, London: Heinemann,1896.

Venturi, F. (1952) *Il Populismo Russo*. Torino: Einaudi.

Young, R. J. (1995) *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race*. London: Routledge.

II HYBRIDITY IN TIME, SPACE, CONSTRUCTION, FORM AND CONTENT



THE BALTIC VILLA RUSTICA. IDEOLOGY AND FORM

Juhan Maiste
University of Tartu, Department of Art,18 Ülikooli, 50090, Tartu, Estonia
juhan.maiste@ut.ee

ABSTRACT

Idea and form (in Latin *esse* and *essentia*) are the main categories of every iconological study. The deeper strata of Baltic culture lie in the cultural layers of Estonian and Latvian history, leaving behind many monuments, including the manor architecture common both to Estonia and Latvia. In this paper I analyse the role of the *Baltic villa rustica* as a mediator between the cosmopolitan traditions tightly connected to the history of European art, and its part in the process of the construction of the idea of national identity. It is crucial to study not only the reflections but also the recorded verbal and visual meanings. To read the lines in the thick book of Baltic culture, manor ensembles alongside Hanseatic culture still offer us both the window into the past and a *Facebook* for communications in the future.
Keywords: *Baltic villa rustica, manor architecture, 'own world' (Umwelt), lifestyle, national awakening*

Every country has its own visual identity, and it is exemplified by visual characteristics. Talking about England, Nikolaus Pevsner highlights the medieval Tudor style and the English garden of the Enlightenment era. The visual metaphors for Estonia and Latvia could well be manifested through Hanseatic art and manorial architecture – the so-called *Baltic villa rustica*. Similarly, to the towers of the castles of the German Order, the Hanseatic town walls and the spires of local country churches, the manor ensembles shape the Baltic landscapes. Peeking out from behind the ancient trees in parks, we find manor houses featuring columned porticoes, which can be compared to Greek temples as well as to the grandiose palaces of Russian magnates and the colonial villas somewhere in New England or Virginia. The Baltic manor is part of a larger picture with the roots stretching back for thousands of years. The Baltic manor grew and blossomed in very specific incubative circumstances within German cultural sphere and behind the concealing curtains of the Russian Empire in the 18th–19th centuries.

According to *The History of Baltic Poetry*, "the Baltic people were born in a troubled period of the Great Northern War, grew up during the reign of Catherine II, and found themselves during the reign of Alexander I. Culturally, the Baltic nobility enjoyed a high tide under Alexander II, reaching their tragic midsummer times during the rule of Nicholas I. What we today call the Baltic tradition, is merely 200 years old. Everything else is precious relics, but not a living tradition" (*Grundriss einer Geschichte der baltischen Dichtung* 1928, 31–32). Nonetheless, architecture is only one, albeit more salient, side of the coin – a façade that is ambivalent by nature. It hides various strata and conflicts of history, whose deep layers of meanings no one has really dared to face to this day. The manor speaks to us in two languages, following the radical ideas of Rousseau and Raynal. Garlieb Merkel has written about the hypocrisy coded into it – which meant that fervent speeches could be made against trading black slaves, while simultaneously, without blinking an eye, no regard was shown for their own manor staff and their own chattel slaves often received lashings (Seume 1807, 61).

Today we are separated from the manorial life by a century filled with pathos and horror, wars and collectivisations, plunders and restorations, evaluations and re-evaluations. Yet again we stand at a milestone that makes us look in the mirror. *Quo vadis*, Baltic culture? How should we regard one of the symbols of the Baltic identity – the manorial architecture? What meaning does it have on the axis of our history, which has led the local indigenous people out of the dark Gothic woods into the Renaissance, Enlightenment and national awakening. How old is the manorial culture and who owns it?
Estonians have a saying, *'Kus mägi seal mõis, kus küngas, seal küla'* (Where there's a mountain, there's a manor; where there's a hill, there's a village). Basically, the Estonian word 'mõis' – 'manor' is of Finno-Ugric origin. Through centuries and even millennia, the manor has shaped our worldviews and our image. The roots of the manor stretch into depths which are accessible to linguists and archaeologists only. According to Paul Ariste, the etymology of the manor predates the Crusades, when the manor represented a single farm or plots of land separated from the village fields, where land was made arable (Ariste 1965, 105). Valter Lang posits that the development of the more affluent farm, or the ancient manor, can be traced back to the Iron Age (Lang 2007, 270), which in turn raises an important question with regard to our national histories – where exactly do we, Estonians and Latvians, come from? The Estonian term *'mõis'* (manor) answers to the Latvian word *'muiža'* and the North Russian *'mõza'*. First mentions of the creation of the Western style feudal allodia in Estonia date back to 1238, and a couple of decades earlier in Latvia. In 1267, rules were established which ordered the head of a farm to toil hard for the lord in the manor fields. According to Axel von Gernet, chattel slavery in Old Livonia took shape in the 15th century, and like in Prussia, Mecklenburg and elsewhere along the Baltic coast, was officially abolished only in the beginning of the 19th century, inspired by the French Revolution and Napoleonic reforms. However, the manor as a form of property consisting of land and buildings persisted in the Russian Empire. The blue-blooded lifestyle also remained, and its anachronistic nature affords comparisons with quite a few other European peripheries – Transylvania and Sicily, which Tomasi di Lampedusa discusses in his novel *Il Gattopardo*. In the 19th century, Estonia was enveloped in the Biedermeier-style peace called *"baltische Stilleben"* (Eckardt 1868, 398). This is attested to by old photos in family albums – ladies in white hats,

Fig. 1. and Fig. 2. Left: Memorial column in the Mõdriku manor park. Dedicated to the Napoleonic war in Russia in 1812. Right: Memorial obelisk in park of Aaspere manor. Photos: Author.

gentlemen in riding gear; these melancholy-tinted memories that do not speak to us directly, like the architectural legacy, but indirectly through the spell of a place that is not fully understandable, making every place unique, tempt one to write about a red tulip that blossomed in the backyard of the Raikküla manor of the Keyserlings (Keyserling 1902, 301).

Every building is a portrait of the people who built it, and of those that were born in it, fell in love, raised their children. Just like a researcher cannot step outside the frame of their own subjective experience, an object cannot be extracted from its cultural background. Whether we like to admit it or not, to Estonians the manor is never completely their own, it's something "that has not grown out of this land nor taken deep roots in it, but just like granite boulders in our fields, it has come from the outside and remained there". Plainly speaking, the manor signifies colonisation, associations with conquests, crusades and the subsequent feudal model. Searching for a counterpart for 'manor' in Latin, instead of *terra* as undividable territory, we should turn to area, i.e. land which has been bounded, bought and sold, which has been declared one's own. In German, 'manor' is *'Gut'* (a very good thing that the liege lord gave to his loyal subject to use), in Swedish it is *'god*', in English 'manor' and in Russian *'usadba'*. They all have their historical and national cultural connotations, which should definitely be considered as we further explore the topic. To Estonians, the manor has always signified a lack of something, a hunger for land, which has always evaded us like a tempting oasis in the desert sand, the closer we have gotten to it.

In 1905, Estonians sang, *'Mõisad põlevad, saksad surevad'* (Manors are burning, lords are dying). Over a few days, hundreds of manors were burnt in Estonia and Latvia, which regardless of the violence of the act (or perhaps exactly because of that) precipitated the need for communication for the first time. On the one hand, this gave food for thought to local nationally-minded cultural intelligentsia, and meaning to the words of poet and later professor at the University of Tartu, Gustav Suits, "Let's be Estonians, but let's also become Europeans". On the other hand, the revolution and subsequent land reform which took away privileges and ultimately also homes from the nobility, filled the hearts of the emigrees with a dream of their own little homeland (*Heimatländchen*), and gave the manor as a mental phenomenon a kind of an afterlife (*Nachleben*), which in its delicate beauty drove people to consider, collect and publish materials, giving bread and butter to the Baltic German cultural societies, archives, historians. Thus, misunderstandings and conflicts have been in one way or another written into the genetic code of the Baltic historical consciousness, which is why we need at least bifocals to study our local culture.

Paradoxically, the collapse of one house of cards was swiftly followed by the construction of the next one, and the final act of the great play was performed in that shadow puppet theatre. In 1924, following the initiative of baron Friedrich Wolff-Lettin, the Society of Ancient Monuments in Riga organised a manor-themed photo exhibition, whose goal and reach became visible also in the neighbouring countries. An idea arose to compile a monograph of manorial architecture based on the collected material, which would address all three former Baltic Provinces, i.e. Estonia, Livonia and Courland. In 1926–1930, architect and historian from Riga, Heinz Pirang published *The Baltic Manor House* (Das Baltische Herrenhaus) in three volumes – undoubtedly one of the most grandiose treatments of the subject to this day in Europe (Pirang 1926–1930). The book is supplemented by genealogies of individual manors, compiled by respected historians Paul Johansen, Heinrich Laakman and Oskar Stavenhagen.

All in all, 630 manors were mentioned in the volume, 155 of which were located in today's Estonia. Inspired by one of his favourite authors, Cornelius Gurlitt, Pirang also saw a national historical (Volkstum) monument in manors (Gurlitt 1884, 8). "The more multifaceted the past, the more intricate is the history revealing itself through it. [..] Even the simplest

history with no salient features or mentions in written records, can achieve a meaning thanks to new interpretations through which time, building types and styles speak to us" (Pirang 1926, 3). Pirang's treatment opened a view into the manorial world through a scientific and aesthetic window, paving way to the rehabilitation of aristocratic architecture, and levelling chasms between different historical memories of the past.

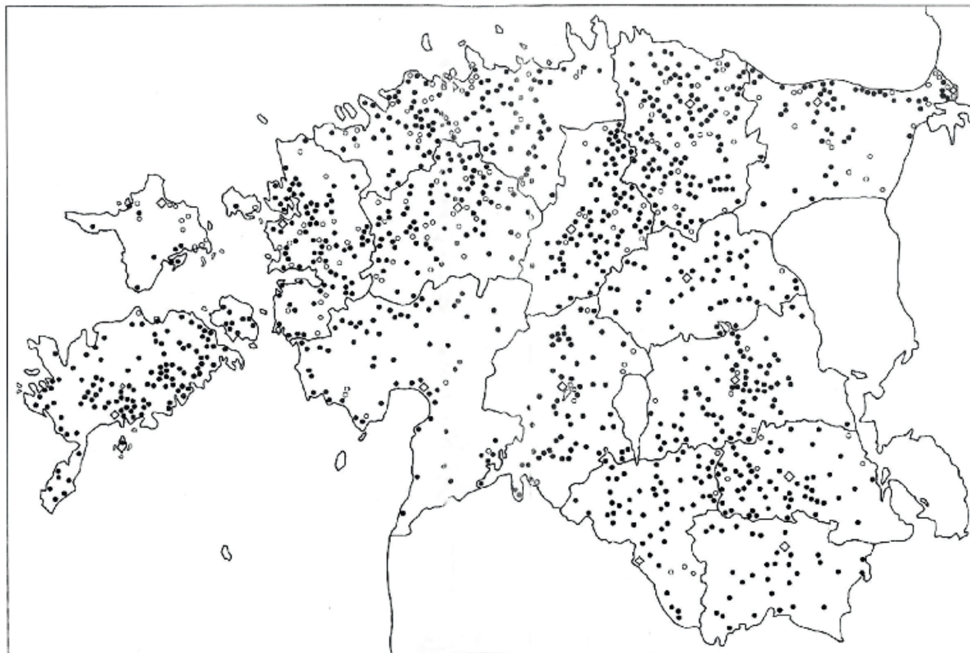


Fig. 3. Map of Estonian manorial architecture. Compiled by Lea Hein, Juhan Maiste (1978).

In 1965, Helmi Üprus published the first extensive treatment of manorial architecture in Estonia. In 1976–1979, manorial architecture was inventoried, and material on over 2000 manors and 9153 buildings in total was collected; half of those buildings were still usable back then. The inventory registered 854 former manor houses. A new list of monuments was compiled, designating 472 buildings and 197 individual manors as memorials. Starting from the 1970s, it became customary to view the manor as an aesthetic metaphor for cosmopolitan culture. This new tradition's grandiloquence and value-oriented rhetorical tropes started pushing aside memories of the seven-hundred-year-long 'dark night of slavery', as it had been depicted in the 19th century by romantic nationalist authors beginning with Jakob Hurt, and which had been appropriated with joyful enthusiasm by Marxist authors later on. Copious scientific works were produced on the tidal wave of the re-discovery of manorial architecture. Monographs on manorial architecture were published by both yours truly and many other authors, in which a 'Paradise lost' and Atlantis in the bottom of the ocean were thoroughly elucidated.

However, regardless of dozens of new treatments which gave the manorial architecture a new place both in the Baltic culture and Estonian consciousness, one important question remained unanswered. What is the Baltic 'own world' (*Umwelt*), which Jakob von Uexküll wrote about in the 1930s, and how can we define it? This topic is understudied. Just as

without Hanseatic culture, so too without the manor there would be no Estonians or Latvians. Thanks to the German cultural exchange, we have been able to share the continent's thousands of years of cultural legacy, which in one way or another helps us find our own way to the Castalian Spring at the foot of Mount Parnassus, where Helios' chariot once took off to the blue skies and broader world. Originally, the concept of the manor – villa – is of Roman heritage. Martin Luther's homily – how can we earn our daily bread in the harsh political climate of a border state between West and East – has been internalised by Estonians giving rise to a longing for peace, quietude and earthly paradise, where instead of hard labour there is enough space for utopia and dreams. *Otium* – oh, sweet and honourable leisure time, lovelier than any busy *negotium*, has said Pliny the Younger. *'Otium reficit vires'* is the motto for academic leave on the Angel's Bridge in Tartu. In the manor it was possible to focus on the important things, to compose poetry and read, meet up with friends, take a barefooted walk across the fields and meadows before the roosters start their morning songs, listen to the sounds of cowbells as the cattle go to graze on dewy grasslands.

The villa culture that we dream of sprung from the blue light of the Mediterranean, matured under emperors in Rome, left remnants of itself in Emperor Hadrian's huge refugium – Hadrian's villa – where the Canopus with its reflecting pool and the caryatids surrounding it, the philosophers' avenue and the library, the theatre and heated baths united culture and dreams of innocent bucolic life in Arcadia, the erotic call of love and the lethargic peace of death in the Elysian Fields blessed by gods. Thus, the villa is first and foremost an idea –

Fig. 4 and Fig. 5. Left: Herakles in the Saue Manor Park. Right: Belvedere Apollo in the Alatskivi Manor Park (today in the Kadriorg Park, Tallinn).

a form of utopia that perhaps does not exist in reality, something which we can travel to without ever getting there. How much, however, are we willing to concede that the manor as we know it may not even exist in reality at all.

Memories of Palladian palaces in the middle of low-cut grass. The Italian-style pillared palaces of Courland. The Tudor castles in Alatskivi and Sangaste. Are we any smarter today than those who in the fervour of Enlightenment optimism built themselves homes with dozens of rooms and constructed avenues of tens of kilometres? To what extent are we today ready to realise that the deeper meaning of the manor is meaninglessness, something which cannot be set in front of a plough or a cart. To find an answer to the question – who are we, Balts? – we must travel away, find a mirror which will reflect the European art metropolises and the measuring tape that was used to measure miles and kilometres from the Baltic Provinces to Weimar, Berlin, Milan, Rome and Cairo.

"Very few had witnessed the Dutch cultural riches and Firenze of the Medicis", wrote Heinrich Johann von Jannau in 1781. "Our architecture is nothing more than copies. Everything that exists in Rome, Naples, Dresden, must exist here too. Even barn buildings and saunas have not been built to suit our climate. It would be better if we could come up with something ourselves. True art galleries are in Riga, a few individual collections can be found in aristocratic manors [..] usually for paintings we are presented with pictures that are ugly as night or talentless as some stove maker's sketches. A barn in Valmiera is worth more in my eyes than the most expensive manor buildings" (Jannau 1781, 65).

"The thick coniferous forests of the Baltics can provide shelter for poetry and music, and 'natural poetry' (*natürliche Poesie*) is part of the local peasants' character, the 'mild national temperament' (s*anftes Nationaltemperament*) is their identity, but there is no room here for a refined art scene. [..] Where are our northern Raphaels, Michelangelos, Canovas?" asks Rome-bound Livonian artist and poet Carl Grass ([S.n.] 1831, 89). In the 19th century the cultural trips became akin to pilgrimages where one could meet kindred spirits and bring back souvenirs to store like pearls in treasure chests. According to Charlotte Konstantia Elisabeth von der Recke (1754–1833), born in Jaunpils (Neuenburg) in Courland in the family of count Friedrich von Medem – one of the first female poets of the Baltic states –, she found solace in Europe's art meccas. After Dresden in Rome, where she "felt sweetly youthful [..] surrounded by decaying aqueducts, ancient fields of the dead and overgrown graves, my soul is filled with the same blissful peace that I have experienced both in my youth as well as now admiring the red glow of the evening sun on the dome of St Peter's Basilica" (Recke 1817, 19).

In the Vietinghoff Manor in Aluksne, following the serpentine paths along the lake shore, one would reach the ruins of an artificial castle, where the journey would continue towards the small temple of the god of the wind Aeolus, the temple of Apollo, the granite obelisk to Otto von Vietinghoff, a grand cascade, a Venetian bridge and a magnificent palm house or orangery. Lord of the Heimtal Manor, Peter Reinhold von Sivers (1760–1835), before commencing the construction of a new manor house, turned to Goethe via his children's teacher, composer Friedrich de la Trobe. To what the grand master replied, "Your Nordic correspondent, who as I understand is an admirable man who can express himself not only through his dreams, but also give concrete content to those dreams, however, remains a mystery to me [..] What is it that he wants exactly?"

When in 1808 the sister of Sivers, Hedwig Dorothea von Berg travelled to a mineral springs resort in Carlsbad, Goethe gifted her a jasmine flower that rooted in a vase. To Lady von Bock of the Loodi Manor the master left a small drawing, signed with a dedication on the reverse 'In memory of the joyful hours. 21 July 1808'. Years later the family gave the rare document to the Viljandi Literary Society (Petersen 1930, 17ff).

In this spirit of nostalgic memories, filled with melancholy, we could continue reminiscing for hours. However, what remains unanswered is the question, what does this history – full of inspiration and secret love of beauty, mean in this day and age when the world has turned to values which instead of intangible ideas reflect tangible things, where one has to be cautious when using the word 'idealism'? Living in a time when art is increasingly limited to things one can use and easily understand, I consider the task of every educated person to find a way out of the dark linguistic forests of academic research and find a new path in the light of beauty and truth where instead of particulars we discuss the purpose of our being, i.e. *essentia* and *esse*, the meaning of human existence. The world we equally desire and fear begins at our doorsteps. Maybe it would be wise to reread the letters of Reinhold von Sivers and Dorothea von Berg. Being an Estonian and a Balt begins the moment we stand in the Sistine chapel in Rome and feel that we are home. On my *Facebook* page, should I ever have one, I would like to post just one, the most important word – beauty, to simultaneously mean – truth and revelation.

References

Ariste, P. (1965) *Moo ja mõis // Emakeele Seltsi Aastaraamat II*. Tallinn: Teaduste Akadeemia Kirjastus, p. 105.

Eckardt, J. (1868) *Die baltischen Provinzen Russlands // Politische und culturgeschichtliche Aufsätze ([Zweite, vermehrte Auflage]*. Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, p. 398.

Grundriss einer Geschichte der baltischen Dichtung, hrsg. von Arthur Behrsing, unter Mitarbeit von André Favre, Otto Greiffenhagen und Arthur Knüpffer (1928) // *Institut für Auskunde, Grenz- und Auslanddeutschum*. Leipzig: Fernau, p. 31–32.

Gurlitt, C. (1884) *Klassiker der Baukunst: Baukunst des Mittelalters* // Bd. 1. Leipzig: Bruno Lemme, p. 8.

Jannau, H. J. (1781) *Sitten und Zeit. Ein Memorial an Lief- und Estlands Väter.* Riga: J. F. Hartknoch, p. 65.

Keyserling, A. (1902) *Ein Lebensbild aus seinen Briefen und Tagebüchern zusammengestellt von seiner Tochter Freifrau Helene von Taube von der Issen*. Bd. I. Berlin: Georg Reimer, p. 301.

Lang, V. (2007) *Baltimaade pronksi- ja rauaaeg*. Tartu: Tartu Ülikooli Kirjastus, p. 270.

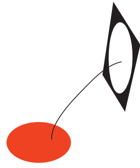
Petersen, O. (1930) *Goethe und der baltische Osten*. Reval: Kluge und Ströhm, p. 17ff.

Pirang, H. (1926–1930) *Das baltische Herrenhaus, I–III*. Riga: Jonck & Poliewsky.

Recke, E. (1817) *Tagebuch einer Reise durch einen Theil Deutschlands und durch Italien, in den Jahren 1804 bis 1806*. Bd. 4. Berlin: Nicolai, p. 19.

Seume, J. G. (1807) *A tour through part of Germany, Poland, Russia, Sweden, Denmark, &c. During the Summer of 1805*. London, p. 61.

[S.n.] (1831) Carl Grass an T – nn. Rom 28. Juli 1811 // *Caritas: Ein Taschenbuch zum Besten der Unterstützungs-Casse des Frauen-Vereins zu Riga*. Riga: W. F. Häcker, p. 89.



IN SEARCH OF FORMAL AND THEOLOGICAL HYBRIDITY

Ojārs Spārītis
Art Academy of Latvia, 13 Kalpaka Boulevard, LV-1050 Riga, Latvia
osparitis@gmail.com

ABSTRACT
With reference to Peter Burke's analytical theories put forth in his book *Cultural Hybridity*, this article examines the original theological and iconographic conception of the altar in the Ēdole (Edwahlen) Lutheran Church (Latvia), with special focus on unconventional elements, including the location of biblical characters and assemblage of the images. The sculptural form of both the New Testament evangelists and Christ, as well as the characters of the Old Testament – Moses, the Archangel Michael – are complemented by uncharacteristic attributes. The 'reading' of their symbolic meanings, however, creates a singular story, loaded with subjective connotations. The article's analysis of these elements' specific meanings reveals that the holistic altar programme is characterized by the integration of complex theological notions and symbolic meanings in the sculptural forms, thus creating a peculiar hybrid of Christian content and artistic form. The concept of such an extraordinary altar could not have arisen merely as a sum of refined means of allegorical expression, only to assert the erudition of a pastor and artistic advisor expert in Christian theology. Assessing the message of the altar sculptures from the point of view of visual and verbal content, it unfolds as a conceptually literary work of art with a certain inner drama. Reading the sculptures' iconography against the biographical chronology of the church's patrons, the von Behr family, the interaction of these two parallel plot lines becomes apparent. By contextualizing the metaphorical meaning of the tragic fact in von Behr family history – that the son murders his father over their different confessional views – within the altar's otherwise anomalous hybrid programme, the sculptures' religious and didactic intent are clarified.
Keywords: *iconography, sacral art, hybridity, Ēdole (Edwahlen) Lutheran Church, von Behr Family, sculpture*

1. INTRODUCTION

Issues taken up in Ulick Peter Burke's *Cultural Hybridity* (Burke, 2013), first published in 2009, perfectly correspond to the concept of the scientific conference *Ideas and Materials: Cultural Hybridity of the Baltic and Other Regions*, held on June 16–17, 2021, under the aegis of the Doctoral Department of the Art Academy of Latvia. The conference undertook to delve into the changing nature of art disciplines and creativity, operating from that assumption that every work of art is the result of the interaction or hybridization, melding previous artistic experience and means of artistic expression. In this context, Burke's theoretical principles can be used as analytical tools and at the same time a method for their evaluation. The discourse of interdisciplinarity furnishes an appropriate backdrop for the example of Latvian sacral culture taken up in the present article: namely, the question of the attribution of the altar sculptures of the Ēdole Church in current-day Latvia. This investigation explores the altar programme's synthesis combining theological iconographic traditions, the desires of the patron-clients desires regarding content, and

Fig. 1. Altar at the Ēdole Lutheran Church.
Photo Vitolds Mašnovskis.

the altar makers' artistic mastery. What follows applies Burke's notions of hybridity to test the feasibility of theoretical constructions, and to identify certain formally stylistic borderline cases. Although the Ēdole Lutheran Church, as one of the most picturesque churches in Kurzeme (the historical territory of the Duchy of Courland), has attracted many travellers and art connoisseurs to examine the altar sculptures, their message largely remains to be examined in detail. In 2019, Ralfs Kokins (professor at the University of Latvia and doctor of theological sciences) focused on the Ēdole Church's history, architecture and interior in an article in Academic *Life* (Kokins 2018/2019, 38–55). This article will attend to a single artefact amongst the Ēdole Church furnishings, the main altar, and possible interpretations of its unusual programme, as a case study in concepts of cultural hybridity in the sacral arts to contribute to the larger discourse of Latvian art history and questions of form and content in 17th-century sacral art.

2. ICONOGRAPHIC AND THEOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF THE ARTEFACT

Traditional aspects of the altar's iconographic programme include a composition focused around a relief tableau depicting Lord's Supper in the centre of the retable, surrounded by sculptures of biblical characters who are arrayed on several levels of the construction and can be identified by their attributes (Fig. 1). Flanking the scene of the Lord's Supper are sculptures of evangelists on the altar's first and lowest level. The evangelist John in the niche on the left side of the altar is depicted as the youngest of the canonical authors of the New Testament - beardless, with a book in his hand. However, here he lacks his traditional attribute, an eagle, which could symbolize (among manifold meanings) both the miracle of Christ's ascension and the divine spirit's ascent to the higher realms of heaven (Biedermann 1989, 129). In the niche on the right side, the evangelist Luke is identified by the carved bull at the sculpture's feet, symbolic as a sacrificial animal of Christ's martyrdom (Sachs et al 1996, 129), although the attributes held by the apostle may have several other meanings. The middle-aged bearded apostle of venerable appearance also holds a book and a slim 'writing utensil', which should be a pen and thus justifies Luke's right to be honoured as the author of the gospel. That the attribute in the evangelist's hand does not look like a bird's feather, but rather resembles a painter's brush, allows to ascribe the biblical story of the

creation of the portrait of Our Lady to Luke and personify him as a painter, who in medieval art was often depicted at the easel (Spitzing 1989, 114). Sometimes, with the image of Luke, artists used to identify themselves with patron saints of their guilds, as was the case with the Guild of St. Luke in Antwerp during the time of Jan Brueghel the Elder and Peter Paul Rubens. In the case of a complex work of art like Ēdole, in Baroque sculptural tradition the image of the evangelist Luke could also disguise the actual artist or gesture to the altar maker (or makers) – the conglomerate woodcarving workshop.

The presence of a significant number of theologians who had studied at European universities and the University of Königsberg is characteristic of the seventeenth-century religious life in the Duchy of Courland. Georg Mantzel, the author of many theological articles, sermon books and linguistic works, held the position of pastor at the court of Duke Friedrich of Courland. The epitaph above the pulpit in the Ugāle (Ugahlen) Church includes a surprising memorial poem in Latin saturated with mythological quotations commemorating Johan Simon, son of Pastor Franz Joachim Simon, who died in 1710 during the Great Plague (Spārītis 2005, 11–13). That many Lutheran pastors of the Duchy of Courland were excellent Latinists and scholars of classical philosophy and literature is testified by their diverse cultural heritage. A cycle of emblematic paintings on the benches of the Gaiķi (Gaiken) Church is an exclusive phenomenon in Latvian sacral art, although completely appropriate to the cultural milieu of 17th-century European intellectuals. The thematic choice of images both allegorical and didactic and their literary commentaries was at the discretion of Nikolai Wittenburg, Gaiķi parish pastor, an outstanding scholar of classical languages and the founder of a school for peasant children (Kallmeyer 1890, 542). However, to realise such a unique concept rooted in the culture of spiritual education required the secular patron's understanding and acceptance. In the case of the Gaiķi Church, this was the educated lord of the manor, Christian Wilhelm von Hörner. The contribution of Johann Langius, pastor for Nīca (Niederbartau), Bārta (Oberbartau) and later Kandava (Kandau), to Baltic linguistics is evidenced by the manuscript grammar of the Latvian language and the Latvian-German dictionary.

These and other similar examples show that theologically educated pastors could be the main authors of the concept of the thematic content of altars, pulpits and other church furnishings. Following the order issued on February 28, 1567 by first Duke of Courland Gotthard Kettler to form parishes on manor lands and build 70 new churches, the interiors of the churches under the patronage of the nobility became a cooperative project between the landed gentry as client-patrons and pastors serving the parishes. Lutheran pastors were the most erudite scholars of the prescribed organisation of worship and the principles of church construction and furnishing. In this context, the refined altar sculptures of the Ēdole Church could not have emerged haphazardly. It is significant that the building of the church coincided with the period when Ēdole parish had been without its own permanent pastor for a long time, 1643–56, before which Cornelius Fresserus had held the position (Behr, Senning 1979, 329). The Landze (Landsen) pastor and church historian Theodor Kallmeyer (1809–1859) in his book *Die evangelischen Kirchen und Prediger Kurlands* mentions Johann Heinrich Schunke as Fresserus's *locum tenens* and provides extensive information about him. J. H. Schunke studied philosophy and law at the University of Frankfurt am Oder, but before moving to Courland as a governor, he resided in the university towns of Leiden and Königsberg. In Courland his exceptional rhetorical skills in the field of theology developed to such an extent that Schunke's sermons gained great social acclaim (Kallmeyer 1890, 477–478). It is therefore quite possible that due to this gift and Schunke's good reputation that Johann Dietrich von Beer attracted the erudite Johann Heinrich Schunke to replace the late Cornelius Fresserus. Although J. H. Schunke is not mentioned in the documents of the von Behr family as a permanent parish pastor, he could have occasionally held services in the Ēdole Church

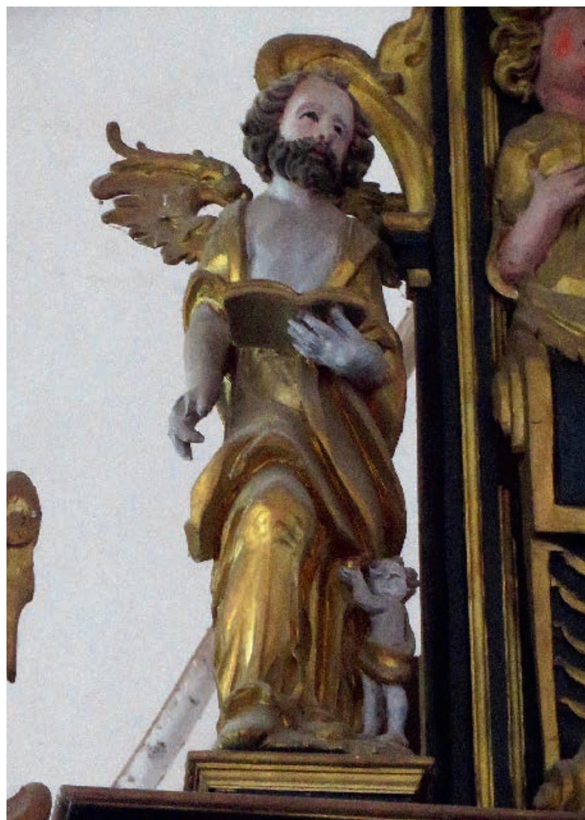


Fig. 2. Sculpture of Evangelist Matthew. Photo by Ojars Sparitis

and engaged in intellectual dialogue with the lord of the manor. It is further possible that Schunke made a significant contribution to the theological conceptualization of the church's interior design and ornamentation.

Further reflections on the meaning and theological significance of the Ēdole Church altar sculptures inflected by iconographical research adduces a more complete understanding of the Ēdole programme. It is worth noting professor Ralfs Kokins's cautious view of the sculptures of biblical characters on the altar, that "the author has, either deliberately or out of free artistic and compositional interest, demolished clear identification boundaries of apostles and evangelists" (wingless figures below, winged figures above) (Kokins, 2018/2019, 46). Taking Kokins's caution as a point of departure, this article engages with issues of iconography and artistic creation.

On the second level of the altar are two sculptures of winged evangelists: Matthew on the left and Mark on the right, who can be identified by the carved symbols at their feet. The miniature human figure on the left can be identified with Matthew, thus pointing to the role of the Gospel author in the revelation of Christ's human nature (Fig. 2). A tiny lion at the feet of the saint on the right serves to identify this sculpture as the evangelist Mark, eliciting an exegetical tradition connecting the lion to Mark's courage and Christ's resurrection (Sachs et al 1996, 129). There remains the question of Mark's physical location in closer to the sculpture of the Resurrection at the top of the altar, if this proximity should be connected to the description of Mark's eye-witness account of the event (Mark 16: 1–7), and if such a connection can be attributed to the altar's conceptualizers. However, a still larger question remains: why have these upper evangelist sculptures been given wings, while the sculptures placed in the niches on the lower level have no wings?

In the Christian iconographic tradition, evangelist personifications are identified by and associated with a symbolic entity that can be depicted either alone or together with the figure of the evangelist. These evangelist symbols have a long and rich exegetical history, with nuances from ancient Eastern cultures about the four cardinal points, four winds, four seasons, and their relationship to specific zodiac constellations that were held to significantly influence Earth and man. Thus, the constellation of Aquarius is personified by an angel; that of Taurus a bull; Leo a lion; and Scorpio a man-like being (Biedermann 1989, 128). |Kabbalah texts also mention personifications of winged entities - man, ox, lion and eagle - in the context of beings endowed with supernatural abilities. Following the biblical tradition,

Fig. 3. Sculptures of Moses, John The Baptist/Christ and Archangel Michael on the top of Altar. Photo by Ojārs Spārītis.

evangelist symbols were visualized as beings with four faces and four wings whose description is found in the first chapter of the Book of the prophet Ezekiel (4–10):

> "Then I looked, and I saw a windstorm coming out of the north – an immense cloud with flashing lightning and surrounded by brilliant light. The centre of the fire looked like glowing metal, and in the fire was what looked like four living creatures. In appearance their form was that of a man, but each of them had four faces and four wings. Their faces looked like this: Each of the four had the face of a man, and on the right side each had the face of the lion; and on the left the face of an ox, each also had the face of an eagle" (NIV 1994).

Over time, however, the images in Ezekiel's vision have been depicted differently according to individual artists across media. In the 5th century the four evangelists were equated with the four angels of the throne of God, thus acquiring the designation of a tetramorph, a man-like being endowed with four different natures. In etymological terms, the Greek word 'angelos' ('message' or 'messenger') could imply the evangelist as 'a bearer of the message of Christ'.

Christian theology tendered a theory of anthropomorphic angels who, along with their symbolic attributes, are identifiable with the evangelists and with Christ, thus conjoining the essence of all four evangelists (Sachs et al 1996, 129). This theoretical tradition helps explain the addition of wings to the sculptures of the evangelists Matthew and Mark on the Ēdole altar, whereas the lack of wings on John and Luke in the lower niches can be credited to practical considerations, rather than incompetence or theological misunderstanding on

the part of woodcarver and sculptor Franz Hoppenstaedt (Behr, Senning 1979, 322)[1]. The reason for this asymmetry amongst the evangelists is the fact that the altar's architectural composition and overall integrity led the artistic masters to adopt the most appropriate solution in terms of the structure's coherence and harmony amongst its proportions and parts. As the middle section of the altar's first lower level is occupied by an impressively sized oval relief with the scene of the Lord's Supper, the narrow niches on both sides of the altar resulted as too narrow for winged sculptures. Thus, in order to fit into the niches, these figures were made without wings.

The three sculptures arranged in a pyramidal composition at the very top of the altar complete its composition and also crown the altar's overall conceptual meaning, following the thematic development of altar programmes which unfolds horizontally and vertically from left to right, according to European reading practices (Fig. 3). Even without the tablets with the Ten Commandments in his hands, the figure of Moses can be easily identified on the left, with his hair curling like 'horns' on his head. While it is to be expected that an Old Testament figure such as Moses would not be sculpted with wings, his missing stone tablets may have been lost over time. That this Mosaic attribute may have been attached to the sculpture but was since lost is evidenced by the positioning of Moses' palms facing down with his fingers open as if to hold something. Moses's location at the very top of the altar is inconsistent with theological and artistic traditions in Courland churches. Typically, the sculpture of Moses is most often placed on the lower level to underscore the Old Testament prophet's importance in delivering the commandments or the basic laws of social cohabitation, and the fact that the old law was superseded by Christ.

To the right at the top of the altar is a sculpture of the winged archangel Michael, whose role as celestial warrior against Lucifer (in the form of a dragon) was visualized in by a fiery sword or spear in the archangel's hands (Biedermann 1989, 121–122). In early Renaissance works of art, angels were depicted as androgynous, i.e. feminine beings, and although Baroque and later art does not emphasize angels' gender, there is a sustained emphasis on their youth, which did not contradict their militancy, zeal, and guardianship role. The sculpture of the archangel on Ēdole altar expresses the flexibility of a body twisted in a mannered spiral; however, it reflects a distinctly masculine warrior type who strikes the dragon down according to Revelation 12:7–9 (NIV 1994). The sculpture's theological message is clear, but its situational meaning at the top of the altar requires further contextualization.

At the apex of the altar should be a quintessential image expressing the entire programme's compositional structure and theological concept. This is required both by the logic of the altar's architectural composition and by the dramaturgy aiming to reveal the theological content. In church interiors in Latvia and most other Protestant lands, the altars' topmost section most often displays the Resurrection [St. Anne's in Liepāja (Libau), Usma (Usmaiten), Jamaiķi (Jamaiken), Durbe (Durben), etc.], the Crucifixion [Valdemārpils (Sasmacken), Zlēkas (Schleck), Zemīte (Samiten)], Christ the Ruler of the World [Subate (Subbath), Dundaga (Dondangen), Vecpils (Altenburg) catholic Church], the Holy Trinity [Liepāja (Libau) Holy Trinity Church, Apriķi (Appricken) Church], or the Angel of Judgement Day [Priekule (Preekuln)]. Thus Ēdole Church is a peculiar exception, whose altar is crowned

1 The author of the article relies on the archives of the Ēdole barons von Behr in Stade (Niedersächsisches Landesarhiv Stade) as the primary source. Ulrich von Behr and Alexander Senning, authors of the book Edwahlen und die Behrsche Ecke in Kurland, name Franz Hoppenstaedt as the master woodcarver of the Ēdole Church altar while, based on the artistic manner, the altar is ascribed to Christoph Söffrens.

by a sculpture difficult to reconcile with tradition consisting of three elements: a male figure grasping a book, angel's wings, and the victory banner of Christ's Resurrection. These elements bespeak a complex approach to the conceptualization of the image and its complex polysemous theological and social message.

From the time of the Roman Emperor Constantine, when Christian canonical teachings and theology were officially developed, the visual image of John the Baptist was presented as half-naked, clad in a leather-strapped camel's-hair cloak or covered with a leather loincloth (Lexikon 1990, 166). The authors of German Christian iconography, Hannelore Sachs, Ernst Badstübner, and Helga Neumann, refer to John 1:36, which describes the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River and mentions the Savior's designation as the 'Lamb of God' (Sachs et al 1996, 197). They also describe the most common attribute of John the Baptist in Christian art: either a lamb on the book in the preacher's hands or at his feet, or a shepherd's crook with a cross at the end (Sachs et al 1996, 197). Given its attributes, the sculpture at the top of Ēdole altar, which also presents a bearded man covered with a loincloth, a book in his hand and a figure of the Lamb of God on it, can only be John the Baptist.

Following Lucas Cranach the Elder's early 16th-century images of the Resurrection, a composition was established in Lutheran art whereby Christ was shown rising from the tomb holding the victorious flag like the spear that prevailed over Death and Satan. A cross or a monogram of Christ is depicted at the top of the flag, while the flag itself may have a rectangular form or a swallowtail shape (Lexikon 1990, 202, 215). In the hands of the topmost figure on the Ēdole Church altar, this flag of victory is the only attribute that indicates the personification of Christ, but in the construction of the overall image it is only one part of a more complex picture.

The meaning of the sculpture's wings can be found in the account in Mark's Gospel (16:1–8), of the three women at Christ's tomb who encounter an angel in the guise of a young man robed in white, a messenger of Christ's resurrection, who said, "Don't be alarmed. You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen, He is not here" (NIV 1994). The scene is well known in Renaissance art where a cell wall of Convent of San Marco in Florence is decorated with a fresco by the Italian artist Fra Angelico in 1442 entitled "The Resurrection of Christ and the Pious Women at the Sepulchre," depicting an episode of the resurrection of Christ without the presence of the Saviour himself. Similar compositions in the late 16th and early 17th century copper carvings have been created by Dutch, Italian and French graphic artists. Summing up the observations on the crowning sculpture of the altar, it must be concluded that it combines three different symbols, the conceptual meaning of which is the product of the synthesis of religious images created by hybridization. This iconographic overview of the altar's crowning sculpture suggests the figure combines three different symbols, whose meaning results from the synthesis of religious images created by hybridization.

3. THE ALTAR AS A VISUAL AND VERBAL MESSAGE

Reference to concepts outlined in Peter Burke's *Cultural Hybridity* proves helpful to deifying the terms of and clarifying an interpretation of the Ēdole Church altar's conceptual programme. In this context, the notion of syncretism should be excluded, because the hybridity of the altar sculptures results neither from insufficient iconographic or theological knowledge, nor unprofessional artistic performance (Burke 2009, 47–48). Moreover, the concept of adaptation also does not hold, due to the absence of foreign and discrepant cultural archetypes. Likewise should be excluded the theory of diffusion, here understood as

Fig. 4. Relief of The Lord’s Supper. Photo by Vitolds Mašnovskis.

the influx of foreign cultural elements into the system of 'fundamental' or Christian cultural images (Burke 2009, 46–47). Thus the question remains of what creative method(s) was or were used to construct the Ēdole Church altar ensemble, whose components are found in the Christian exegetical and iconographic tradition, but in these circumstances tend to express some paradoxical content in an atypical composition.

An answer can be found in the hyper-localized historical-biographical milieu specific to the von Behr family during this period, which when read against the altar's iconography result in its unfolding, in the manner of a moralizing sermon, of an allegorically expressed religious and didactic message. What follows undertakes a parallel reading of the family's history and the altar sculptures' iconographic content in the context of cultural hybridity, to disclose the implications of Ēdole's unusual artistic content. Directly above the mensa (altar table), where Latvian Lutheran church altars commonly depict the Lord's Supper, is the polychrome inscription Memento mori (Fig. 4). This is an unusual feature in altar design, and its aphoristic expressivity brings out the dramatic black painting of the altar and visually parallels attributes of period memorial culture such as tombstones, epitaphs, and emblems that commonly complemented sepulchral design. The dramatic mode of evocative direct address draws attention to the altar's holistic artistic concept, urging consideration of the whole altar programme in metaphorical relation to the inscription's message.

The activities of the family of Baron von Behr date back to the mid-16th century and events of the Reformation in the region of Livonia (corresponding to areas of current-day eastern Latvia and Estonia). To save the property of the Catholic Church in Livonia from secularization, in 1559 Bishop Johann von Münchausen sold the diocese of Courland and part of the Saaremaa-Viki (Ösel-Wiek) diocese to King Friedrich II of Denmark, who bought it for the benefit of his brother, Duke Magnus. As early as 1561, Ulrich von Behr, who until then had held the position of bailiff in Aarensburg (Ahrensburg), was promoted to the post of Governor of Saaremaa and Piltene (Pilten). Accordingly, Ulrich von Behr became a vassal of Prince Magnus of Denmark and recognized him as his liege lord and bishop. In compensation for this political reverence, Ulrich von Behr acquired "Ēdole, Zlēkas, Pope (Popen), Ugāle and other large manors, as well as Aizpute (Hasenpoth) Castle Court and, after the departure of the Minorite monastery, Aizpute Monastery and Cīrava (Zierau)" (Schmidt 1907, 22–24). His successor Johann von Behr in the hierarchy of Duke Magnus' officials held the position of diplomat and adviser, and was a consistent opponent of Catholicism and Polish royal power. Although Poland constantly used diplomatic methods to include the bishopric of Piltene in the middle of the Duchy of Courland in the Polish Kingdom and to this aim even involved the army, on May 23, 1583, the regiment led by Colonel Johann von Behr opposed the Polish forces. After defeating the Polish troops, in 1585 Johann von Behr concluded a peace treaty favourable for King Friedrich II of Denmark, the Duchy of Courland and the Piltene region. His son Werner von Behr continued his father's diplomatic and operative struggle against Poland's claims to the lands of the bishopric of Piltene. The last drop in the Polish King's proverbial cup of patience was Werner von Behr's victory over Polish troops at Piltene on July 13, 1619, which brought Courland another period of peace, but made Johann von Behr enemies at the Polish court.

Prior to these events, on November 21, 1608, Johann von Behr, the owner of Ēdole and other manors, had approved an important family document, the so-called 'Behr Pact,' a legal and economic document with the significance of a cultural and historical decision that cemented the unity of the aristocratic family. The 'Behr Pact' established the basic legal principles of family property management, delegating to all von Behr's descendants the responsibility of maintaining common property in an indivisible whole, and requiring every owner of von Behr's name to honour their rank and family and hold in respect their land (Behr, Senning

1979, 397). Johann von Behr left his proportionately valued inheritable properties to his four sons: to Dietrich and Johann, property in Germany; to Werner and Friedrich, manors in Courland (Vogell 1815, 99).

Historical details of the von Behr family's political and religious views and juridically and symbolically motivated action to strengthen their property and inheritance rights clearly illustrate the unity of the family based on the aristocratic culture and value system of the period, which can be viewed as an allegorical parallel to the sacramental communion depicted in the relief of *The Lord's Supper*. Christ also sought to create among his followers a sense of spiritual unity and moral responsibility, strengthened by a new tradition of symbolically combining material and divine substances in the ritual of partaking of bread and wine.

However, another parallel emerges from the biographical events at von Behr's house. This can be illustrated by John 13:21, wherein Christ singled out one member of his 'family' of disciples: "After he had said this, Jesus was troubled in spirit and testified, 'I tell you the truth, one of you is going to betray me'" (NIV 1994). At Ēdole this warning comes from the mouth of the evangelist John, whose sculpture is placed in the niche on the left side next to the *The Lord's Supper*. Might these fateful words be addressed to a member of the von Behr family? While it must remain in the realm of speculation, based on a cross-reading of the aforementioned Behr family property document against family events and the biblical narrative, such an supposition cannot be ruled out with regard to the altar's conceptualization.

Art of the premodern Medieval, Renaissance and Baroque eras, following the Christian traditions of typology and parable, often employed typological or metaphorical imagery to obscure direct meanings, such that historical, political, or personal messages were subsumed behind and replaced by literary, mythological, or biblical motifs. Such an approach was advantageous in cases when clichés of cultural memory had created a need to produce an art object, and this veiling function could be achieved by metaphorical means which could be deciphered by initiated members of a given society.

The history of the relations within the von Behr family is unusual and includes tragic peripeteias, with the plot line of dramatic domestic events clearly marked with the logic of a well-written sermon, and could be revealed through the iconography of the Ēdole altar sculptures. I would argue that in the mid-17th century, when the Ēdole Church its furnishings were under construction, the altar became the custodian of this family's secret, known to a narrow circle of people. Legends and stories are told to this day about the curse of the von Behr family, but the objectively most plausible version is found in *Edwahlen und die Behrsche Ecke in Kurland* (1979), co-written and published by renowned representative of the Courland Knights Ulrich von Behr and historian Alexander Senning, based on documents preserved in the family archives.

The book reveals the fact that a von Behr son and staunch Catholic perpetrated violence against his Lutheran father. Only ten years after Lutheran Werner von Behr inherited Ēdole and other manors, on July 26, 1623 he was seriously injured by a servant at the instigation of von Behr's own son Philip, and then fatally stabbed by Philip himself. After this event, Philip von Behr fled to Poland, where he found refuge in a Jesuit monastery and thereafter vanished from the records. Information of the interrogation protocols found in the archives of the Duchy of Courland enables a partial understanding of some motives for the murder. They state that Philip had wanted to convert to Catholicism, but his father had not allowed it and locked his son in the Ēdole Castle tower (Behr, Senning 1979, 80–81). Werner von Behr's brother initiated legal proceedings, which sentenced the convicted servant to death on the wheel, but the investigation, initiated by Duke Friedrich was unsuccessful too because Philip fled to Poland and hided in a Jesuit monastery. After his father's death, the estate was taken over by Werner von Behr's eldest son, Johann Dietrich, who was also the patron for

the construction of the Ēdole Church, and as a witness to the family tragedy was also able to influence the concept of the design and programme of the church furnishings.
Seen in the context of the above events, the sculptures at the top of the altar should be accorded special significance; indeed, it is not accidental that at the top of the altar appeared Moses as a metonymic reminder of the Ten Commandments, with the first, fourth and fifth commandments carrying the greatest symbolic significance in the destiny of the family. The first commandment's caution that "You shall have no other gods before me" evoked the actions of Werner von Behr's son Philip who, in changing denomination thereby gave preference to 'another god'. Through such a reading, family events became a cautionary lesson for both aristocratic family members and the wider parish. The fourth commandment's exhortation to "Honour your father and your mother" was directly relevant to Philip's offense to his family's honour and the nobility's prestige, while its counsel "that you may live long in the land the Lord your God gives to you" modelled the consequences of failing to fulfil the commandment's condition. To those privy to Philip's deeds and resulting loss of religion, honour, property and familial and social standing, Moses' message bespoke a grave prophecy. The universal fifth commandment "You shall not murder" held a special resonance within the context of the von Behr family acute recollection of the shameful event, which was variously discussed across all levels of society.
The second sculpture at the top of the altar, that of Archangel Michael, recalled Revelation 12, which tells of an angel who led God's trustworthy angels in the battle with Satan and other fallen angels: "The great dragon was hurled down – that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him" (Rev. 12: 9, NIV 1994). From its prominent place on the Ēdole altar, this biblical text's reminder of the divine power to punish those who rebelled against God's will could have instilled a conviction of the inevitability of punishment in the minds of the von Behr family and members of the congregation.
The sculpture at the very top of the altar, whose integrated image combines the symbolic attributes of several biblical characters, reifies a kind of quintessence of iconographic and religious meanings eliding theological and local familial meanings inhering in the Ēdole Church altar. This figure refrains from refined theological expression and instead appeals to the common parishioner, who would have perceived sacral art in terms of domestic life. The sculpture conveys a maxim of Protestant values: **faith in the message of resurrection** (the flag of Christ's resurrection, the angel's wings) **is the prize to be obtained through baptism** (John the Baptist) i**n this denomination, for which the lords of Ēdole have paid a very high price** (emphasis mine).
The method of analysis of the issues addressed in the article offers an opportunity to look at the interrelation between the iconography of the Ēdole Church altar sculptures and the biographical events of the von Behr family. The author considers that it has yielded an adequate result and has set a theoretical and methodological precedent for art historical research. In-depth historical and social background studies guarantee new opportunities in prior research and can provide new interpretive insights regarding singular works of art.

References

Behr, U. von.; Senning, A. (1979) *Edwahlen und die Behrsche Ecke in Kurland* // Verden-Aller, S. 329.

Bērks, P. *Kultūru hibriditāte* // Rīga: Mansards, 2013

Biedermann, H. (1989) *Knaurs Lexikon der Symbole* // Muenchen: Droemer Knaur, S. 129.

Burke, P. *Cultural Hybridity* // Polity, 2009

Kallmeyer, Th. (1890) *Die evangelischen Kirchen und Prediger Kurlands* // Mitau: J.F. Steffenhagen und Sohn, S. 542.

Kokins, R. (2018/2019) *Ēdoles baznīcas iekārta: koktēlnieka Tobiasa Heinca 1647./1648. gadā darinātā altāra un kanceles teoloģiskie vēstījumi* // Akadēmiskā Dzīve. Rīga, Latvijas Universitāte, Nr. 54, 38-55.lpp.

Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie. (1990) // Rom, Freiburg, Basel, Wien: Bd. 1, S. 708.

Sachs, H.; Badstuebner, E.; Neumann, H. (1996) *Christliche Ikonographie in Stichwoerten* // Muenchen – Berlin, Koehler & Amelang, S. 129.

Schmidt, O.E. (1907). *Album Balticum. Landschafts-, Cultur- und Reisebilder als Beiträge zur baltischen Heimatskunde* // Bd.1, Riga: Ernst Plates, S.
22, 24.

Spārītis, O. (2005) *Ugāles evanģēliski luteriskā baznīca* // Ugāle: Ugāles evanģēliski luteriskā draudze, 11.-13. lpp.

Spitzing, G. (1989) *Lexikon byzantinisch-christlicher Symbole. Die Bilderwelt Griechenlands und Kleinasiens* // Muenchen: Diederichs, S. 114.

The HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION, International Bible Society, 1994

Vogell, F. (1815). *Versuch einer Geschlechtsgeschichte des hochadelichen Hauses des Herren Behr im Hannoverschen und Curländischen aus theils bereits gedruckten, theils ungedruckten Urkunden entworfen* // Zelle: bei Schweiger und Pick, S. 99.

Websites:

https://literatura.lv/lv/person/Johans-Langijs/872902

http://priekavests.lv/lasisanas-plans/marka-evangelijs-16-nodala/

https://www.meisterdrucke.uk/fine-art-prints/Fra-Angelico/245481/The-Resurrection-of-Christ-and-the-Pious-Women-at-the-Sepulchre,-1442-.html

THE RIGA CATHEDRAL ORGAN FAÇADE: DIGITAL ANALYSIS OF STYLISTIC HYBRIDITY

Sanita Bitko
Art Academy of Latvia, 13 Kalpaka Boulevard, LV-1050 Riga, Latvia
sanita.bitko@gmail.com

ABSTRACT
The history of the Riga Cathedral organ façade began in 1601 with its oldest dated part, and over more than 400 years the façade has experienced several phases of reconstruction, crucially changing its visual and compositional exterior and supplementing it with new stylistic elements. Today the organ façade can be considered an exceptional art object paradigmatic of stylistic hybridity in Latvia. Recent restoration work materials and various solutions for computer programmes enable individual analysis of each of the construction phases and exploration of the diversity of the façade's ornamental, sculptural and architectural features. Using visualization, the most detailed changes that have affected the organ façade are revealed.
Keywords: *organ façade, ornaments, Mannerism, Renaissance, Baroque, Rococo*

More than 400 years have passed since the completion of the Riga Cathedral organ and its façade in 1601 (Grosmane 2017, 66). During this period the façade has undergone numerous repairs and reconstructions. As a result, the façade's visual and compositional exterior has crucially changed. This history of modifications explains the stylistic diversity of ornamental, sculptural and architectural features (Lūsis et al. 2008).

Fig. 1. Example from the Internet project

During the last restoration campaign undertaken on the Riga Cathedral organ façade from 2000 to 2018, the elements of wood carvings were photographically documented, allowing detailed exploration (Riga Dome 800 2021). However, considering each of the ornaments individually, they are merely presented as isolated ornaments and do not form a proper holistic image. For this reason, the author of the article has created a website (Bitko 2021), which combines a joint plan for the organ façade with the possibility to verify the location of each element (Fig.1). The website (furtheron – the Internet project) contains a photograph of the organ façade with many red dots marking it. When a user hovers over

one of these dots, the matching ornament appears in an enlarged format, enabling a broader audience interested in the topic to explore the richly decorated organ façade on their own.
A more careful viewer will notice that a band of Baroque ornaments or a wide range of Rococo ornaments are incorporated among the Renaissance style carvings. These modifications are related to different periods of the façade construction, and such changes can be identified on the basis of historical information and restoration materials, which will allow to decode the time of origin of each ornament and the corresponding art style of the given period.
Several colour-coded zones can be demarcated on the façade that correspond to phases or periods when the façade's compositional and stylistic form was changed (Fig. 2). The periods listed below are divided according to artistic styles, because in the given period the façade obtained stylistic additions (Lūsis et al. 2008):
The Renaissance period. The uncoloured central zone is the oldest part of the organ façade dated to 1601.
The Baroque period. Blue-coded areas denote the changes made during the period 1707–1709, when the organ was damaged after a stroke of lightning. At this time, serious repair work was carried out and the façade's composition was altered, represented by blue colour-colour-coded elements added to the oldest section of the façade. The green colour-coded section denotes the changes made after several complaints in 1738, when the organ balcony was repaired and new paintings were created on the gallery banisters. Minor changes to the carvings were also made.
The Rococo period. The red colour-coded areas can be dated to 1776, when the new organ structure was completed, crucially changing the composition of the façade; two large pipe towers were built on either side.
The Historicism period. The yellow colour-coding marks changes that occurred in the beginning of the 20th century, when the raising of the organ was carried out, entailing the creation of support columns.

Renaissance

The history of the Riga Cathedral organ and its façade began on 21 May 1547, when a fire broke out at the Cathedral, destroying both the tower and the organ. As a result of these circumstances, preparatory works were carried out in 1571 to restore the perished objects. The Riga City Council represented by Franz Nyenstaede (1540–1622) made a donation, which was also provided to purchase oak beams for the new organ. Bodeker's chronicle states that in 1594 the Riga Cathedral organ cost 5686 state thallers and 3 marks. The organ construction was commenced in 1595 and completed in 1601. The newly created organ reflected the latest European achievements of the time, which came via the Netherlands, Northern Germany, and Prussia, reaching the present territory of Latvia and bringing large-size instruments into churches (Grosmane 2017, 63–65). The organ style corresponded to the Hamburg-type organ façade consisting of basic elements including the large instrument (*Hauptwerk*) and the small instrument (*Ruckpositiv*), which were located on the banisters of the gallery. Both instruments consisted of three pipe towers framing smaller pipes between them. These instrument pipes were decorated with a variety of sculpted ornaments and statuettes, and the decorative front is known as the organ façade. Looking at the organ from the perspective of the church altar, both façades seem to converge, supplementing each other.
Closer inspection of the organ façade reveals the following inscription: *"Ich Meister Jakob Rab genant / Hab dvrch Gottes Gnad und Beistand / Uz seiner Ehrn dis[es] Werk fvndirt / Die Gmein hir dvrch auch schon gezirrt. / 601. die Jahrzahl wahr / Da solches all ist worden klar* ("Myself, Master Jakob Raab, at the mercy of God and according to His will

Fig. 2. The Riga Cathedral organ façade (photo: Muzikants U., stylistic analysis coloration: Bitko S).

in honour of Him created this piece, that also beautifully decorates the parish, in 1601, it all became clear") (Grosmane 2017, 67). Because of this inscription, it is known that the organ was built by Jakob Raab (Jacob Rabe, d. 1609), an organ builder from Northern Germany (Bush, Kassel 2006, 539). In this context, the organ as a musical instrument and its mechanical parts are inseperable from the decorative organ façade and its ornamental features. Until 1597 Jakob Raab was an apprentice of master Gotschalk Johansen (d. 1588), also called Burkhard or Borhert, which means that Raab was unable to conclude the contract for the organ construction by himself. Concurrent to work on the Riga Cathedral organ, Raab worked in Lubeck enlarging the organ in St. Mary's Church from 1596 to 1598, which means that he could not be in Riga at this time. In general, Raab had worked on the Cathedral organ contruction over different periods of time starting in 1594. First, he worked as an assignee of Borhert's workshop and after the master's death he took over his workshop. Organ construction was finished in 1601, when Raab was running the workshop (Lusis et al. 2008, 128). This is possibly the reason why the inscription carved in the façade emphasizes Raab as the builder of the organ. Therefore, it is important to point out that Jakob Raab was a master of organ's musical instrument components, but the name of the wood sculptor of the façade remains unknown.

The oldest part of the façade (Fig. 2 [uncoloured zone]) corresponds to the Renaissance style. It is rich in serpentine, stylized vegetal motifs, yet with a very pronounced Mannerism aspect in the diversity of grotesque masks and various mythical characters. For example, a musical character (Fig. 3 [3]) blowing the trumpet is depicted according to a mannerist spirit, with stylized trumpets seemingly emerging from the mouth of a grotesque mask, blowing schematized twisted plant tendrils instead of sound. Among similarly stylized ornaments, attention should also be paid to the carving (Fig. 3 [6]) of a man entwined together with a cornucopia horn from which various plants and flowers are pouring out. Closer examination reveals a singing bird on the plant. The entangled Renaissance ornaments also depict dolphin figures in the style of Mannerism (Fig. 3 [4]).

In addition to the façade's stylized botanical ornaments, a considerable part of the carvings is also covered in the rolverk pattern (Fig. 3 [9]), followed by associations with iron-chiselled sheets contrasting with other slightly twisted ornaments in the organ façade's oldest section. Among the grotesque masks in the style of Mannerism (Fig. 3 [1]) covering a substantial area of the entire organ façade, in the course of the reconstruction history many of the masks were damaged or completely lost following damage caused by lightning. Though stylistically they correspond to Mannerism, not all of them date back to 1601. Many of them were also made anew in later periods, but in complete imitatation of the earlier style. Since the grotesque masks have also been rearranged over time, it is difficult to determine the precise periods when each of these masks were made (Lūsis, Podzina 2010). Among the monstrous grotesque masks, the small façade includes a number of masks created in a very realistic manner, although it is not possible to speak of them as personal portraits (Fig. 3 [2]).

Architectural and sculptural features play a major role in the façade's overall composition. The central pipe tower includes at its end the sculpted figures of four town councillors (Fig. 3 [8]) attired in appropriate period clothing of a dark tone with black coats and white collars. The town councillors are placed at the end of the central tower in the round rotunda (Fig. 3 [5.1.]), surrounded by stylized columns with corinthian capitals. Another architectural element (Fig. 3 [5.2.]) is placed above the town councillors similar to the above mentioned rotunda, only instead of columns there are caryatides whose stylistic design shows a significant influence from the works of sculptor Hans Vredeman de Vries (1527–1607).

Lastly but no less important are the sculptures placed at the ends of all three pipe towers in the large façade. The central section depicts the resurrected Christ flanked by dancing angels

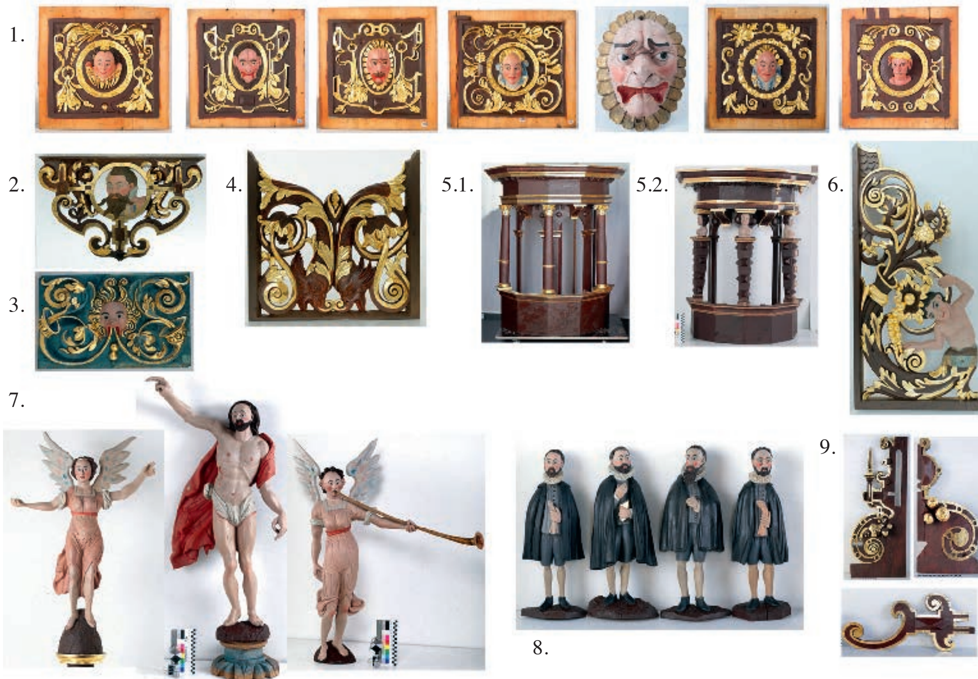


Fig. 3. The Renaissance period

playing pipes (Fig. 3 [7]). Close examination of these figures discloses how masterfully they were made, with the fluttering angels' gowns seemingly moving along in rhythmic dance, and the cloak of the newly resurrected Christ blown by a breeze.
Assessing the overall qualities of the organ façade, it can be concluded that it comprises a wide range of masterfully executed carvings in both the lighter and dynamic elements of plants, flowers and strings typical of the Renaissance, and the more ponderous rolverk elements. The rich range of ornamentation skilfully included grotesque masks along with reproductions of more realistic portraits. Amidst a tangle of tendrils, fruits and flowers are cleverly hidden frightening goblins, while birds sing and compete with the organ sounds. As an integral element, the closing architectural elements and sculptural renditions of the pipe towers complement the façade's composition, rendering it airy and light.

Baroque

The Baroque style is associated with two phases of the façade reconstruction. The first compositional change (Fig. 2 [blue]) incurred to the organ façade after 31 July 1707, when lightning struck the organ causing severe damage totalling 600 Albert thallers. During repair works, the façade was embellished with new Baroque ornaments, authored by Riga sculptor Johan Gerwin (Grosmane 2017, 88–89). The small façade obtained ornate floral and acant ornaments on its sides, and the side-pipe towers of the large façade – new Baroque ornaments (Fig. 4 [1]). While many of the damaged Renaissance ornaments were restored in the same style, others were re-created according to the more current stylistic trends, resulting in a Renaissance façade with a baroque band of ornaments. A vivid example in the small façade is the lost section of the lower area of the medium tower. This restored portion was made not

Fig. 4. The Baroque period

according to the style of Renaissance or Mannerism, but rather following the Baroque, with decorative acanthus leaves that compared to adjacent ornaments marks a stylistic distinction (Fig. 4 [2]).

The next period that incurred noticeable changes to the façade relates to 1738, when repairs were carried out following complaints about the condition of the organ (Fig. 2 [green]). During this period, new paintings were added to the gallery banisters (Lūsis *et al*. 2008, 129). Unfortunately, the painter's name is unknown today, with only the caption "Ano 1738:/Factum est" (Grosmane 2017, 89). The original organ gallery was adorned with frontons with hidden small sculptural heads (Fig. 4 [3]). When creating the new paintings, the frontons with sculptural heads were out of place on the gallery banisters, so they were moved to the top of the side pipes of the large façade, where they conform well visually. Positioned in the small pediments, these sculptures appear as of part of a previous existing programme. Although the compositional position of these elements was changed in 1738, they can be added to the Renaissance period after the date of their creation.

Changes were also made to the Baroque ornaments in the large façade on both sides of the medium pipe tower. In the schematic image (Fig. 4 [3]) other ornaments were made instead of the red colour-coded elements.

Rococo

The most significant changes affecting the composition of the organ façade pertain to reconstruction completed in 1776. The first complaints in 1773 about the organ's poor condition were followed by storm damage (Lūsis *et al*. 2008, 129). The renovation marked major changes to the visual design of the organ, because two large bass towers (Fig. 5 [3.5 - dark blue coloration]) were built and decorated with elements in the Rococo style. The

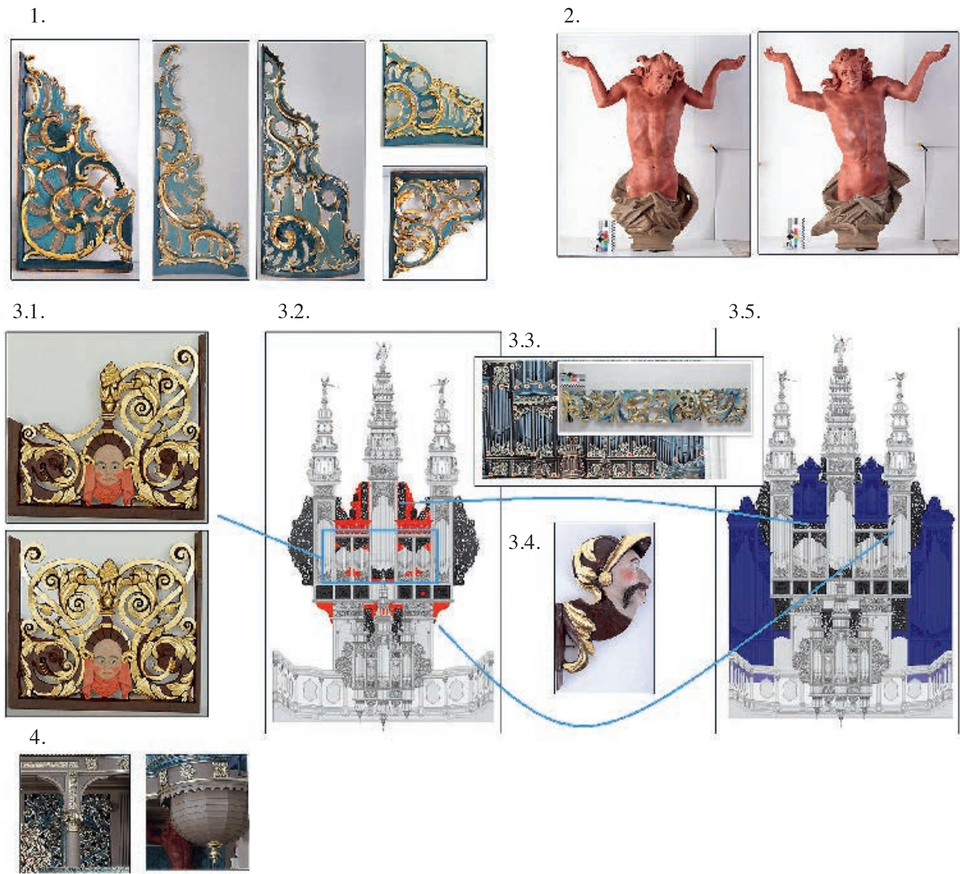


Fig. 5. The Rococo and Historicism period

reconstruction work was conducted by the organ builder Heinrich Andreass Contius (1708–1795) (Grosmane 2017, 89–90).

The reconstruction also resulted in the dismantling and relocation of some ornaments for preservation purposes. These included a sculpted head (Fig. 5 [3.4]) previously located on the side of the façade that was displaced by the new pipe towers and transferred from its original place to the pipe tower on the right side of the large façade. A similar method was also applied to carvings in the large façade located on either side of the medium pipe tower (Fig. 5 [3.2]) recreated in the restoration campaign of 1738, less than 40 years later the parts of these carvings were sawn and moved to the large façade between the pipe towers (Fig. 5 [3.3.]). These changes already impacted the façade's oldest section, as the Baroque bar is inserted between the Renaissance style ornaments until today.

Reconstruction of the organ resulted not only in ornate Rococo ornaments (Fig. 5 [1]), but also two spectacular sculptural figures of Atlas (Fig. 5 [2]) bearing the new pipe towers on their shoulders. The graceful and light Rococo elements visually reduce the gravity and massiveness of the newly constructed pipe towers. This visual effect is also enhanced by the Atlas figures, whose soft facial features suggest they carry on their shoulders the weight of something light and elusive, like musical sounds, rather than heavy and massive organ-pipe towers.

The storm damaged the ornaments of the oldest section between the three central pipe towers (Fig. 5 [3.1 and 3.2]). The technical drawing (Fig. 5 [3.2]) shows that the edges of the

ornaments were broken off (marked in red and the location on the façade delineated with a blue rectangle).
Upon closer inspection, these ornaments show what was a prior symmetric composition. Given that the whole façade respects the principle of symmetry, parts of the lost ornaments were similar to those that remain today. To better present the ornament's appearance, which also significantly changes the façade's overall composition, the author of the article offers a hypothetical reconstruction, assuming that this principle of symmetrical composition was observed (Fig. 5 [3.1 - upper original, lower possible reconstruction]).

Historicism
Stylistic analysis of the organ façade does not end with the Rococo period. By the 19th century, only seven pipes out of 51 were functional in the mighty organ, which led to ordering a new organ. In 1881, the new instrument was ordered from the German company *E. F. Walker & Comp*. in Ludvigsburg at Stuttgart (Grosmane 2017, 99). In 1884, the new instrument was installed behind the historical organ façade (Lusis et al. 2008, 130). Today we can thank the skilful masters who appreciated the historical, glamorous and richly ornamented façade and decided to preserve it.
During the period circa 1907–1908 organ builder Emil Martin (1848–1922) completed reconstruction of the organ, which entailed moving the façade forward by 1.4 m. This necessitated new supports in form of two newly constructed columns according to the Historicism style, also new hemispherical ends was attached to the lower section of the towers (Fig. 5 [4]) (Lūsis *et al*. 2008, 130).
These works marked the end of major stylistic and compositional changes to the organ façade. Over the centuries reconstruction of the façade has involved numerous master artisans and artists, each contributing to changes according to their degree of mastery and style, and ornaments in accordance with evolving aesthetic styles. Together, however, they have succeeded in creating a compositionally consistent organ façade wherein the variety of styles is not contradictory but rather complimentary, such that the styles mutually supplement each other, forming a phenomenal art object of stylistic hybridity in Latvia. In site for over 400 years, this object has long escaped detailed scrutiny, which is now possible thanks to the ambitious restoration work and digital technologies.

References

Bush, D., Kassel R. (2006) *Encyclopedia of keyboard instruments*. The Organ. New York:

Bitko, S. (2021) Rīgas Doma baznīcas ērģeļu prospekta digitalizācijas projekts, https://ceturtapriede.lv/. Available at: https://ceturtapriede.lv/doma-ergelu-prospekts/ (accessed 02.09.2021)

Grosmane, E. (2017) *Rīgas Doms gadsimtu gaitā*. Rīga: Jumava, pp. 63-99.

Lūsis, R., Melbārdis, A., Podziņa, A., Putriņš, K. (2008). Restoration of the organ facade of Riga Cathedral // 8th International Triennal meeting for conservators of the Baltic States. Tallin, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/265560105_Restoration_of_the_Organ_facade_of_the_Riga_Cathedral (accessed 04.08.2021)

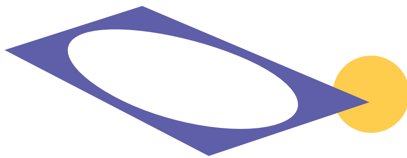
Lūsis, R., Podziņa, A. (2010) Rīgas Doma ērģeļu prospekta restaurācija Pārskata periods no 03.05.2007 līdz 01.10.2009 // *Atskaite*, Nr. RDAn-2010/02. Rīga: Nacionālā kultūras mantojumu pārvalde (VKPAI Pieminekļu dokumentācijas centrs).

Websites

https://doms.lv/lapas/200

http://doms800.lv/maza-ergelu-prospekta-kokgriezumi-2/

http://doms800.lv/liela-ergelu-prospekta-kokgriezumi/



SELF-FASHIONING AT THE CROSSROADS OF EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY EUROPE. EXPLORING SPATIAL AND TEMPORAL DIMENSIONS IN ELITE PORTRAITS BETWEEN ITALY AND INFLANTY

Ruth Sargent Noyes[1]

National Museum of Denmark, Frederiksholms Kanal 12
1220 Copenhagen, Denmark
rno@natmus.dk

ABSTRACT.
This essay examines a pair of portraits by Italian immigrant artist Filippo Castaldi of the Count and Countess Plater, elite patrons from the period of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment who reigned in the historical territory of the Inflanty Voivodeship, also known as Polish Livonia, Livonia, or Inflanty (current-day Latgale), taking into account that the portraits under discussion here were produced during the critical years prior to the First Partition (1772), when the Plater were vigorously constructing a notional 'Livonian Empire' as noble lords of a self-fashioned semi-autonomous region with a distinctively cross-cultural history and identity. I explore questions of how the portraits and the circumstances surrounding their production interwove multiple cultural allusions inflected by spatial and temporal modes tied to geographical concepts of place and space as well as notions of deep time and antiquity that both anchored their subjects to ideals of elite Polish-Livonian selfhood, and also connected their subjects to Italy and ancient Rome.
Keywords: *Latgale, Polish Livonia, Krāslava, portraiture, Enlightenment*

This essay examines a pair of portraits of elite patrons from the period of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment who reigned in the historical territory of the Inflanty Voivodeship (Polish: Województwo inflanckie), also known as Polish Livonia, Livonia, or Inflanty. Inflanty was a distinct administrative division of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (also known in the pre-modern era as the *Rzeczpospolita*) that was jointly managed by Poland and Lithuania and roughly aligns with the present-day Latvian region of Latgale, marking then as now the crossroads interconnecting Europe, Russia, and lands to the east (Zajas 2013). Livonia drew cultural, political and economic importance from its location along the River Daugava, a major waterway and trade thoroughfare rising in the Valdai Hills of modern-day Russia and flowing through Belarus and Latvia into the Gulf of Riga and the Baltic Sea, during the eighteenth century linking

1 Research for this article is funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under the Marie Sklodowska-Curie grant agreement No 842830 (TRANSLATIO), hosted by the National Museum of Denmark. Additional support for field research has been generously provided by the following: Böckler-Mare-Balticum-Stiftung Travel Grant, Latvian State Fellowship for Research, Fritz Thyssen Stiftung Travel Grant, Bourse Robert Klein (Kunsthistorisches Institut Florenz – INHA Paris – Villa Finaly Chancellerie des Universités de Paris-Sorbonne), and Archimedes Estonian National Scholarship. Aspects of this research have been presented at the Art Academy of Latvia Annual Conference of the Doctoral Study Programme. Special thanks to Dr. Ojārs Spārītis and Agita Gritāne, Art Academy of Latvia. Unless otherwise indicated, translations are the author's own.

Fig. 1. & 2. Filippo Castaldi, *Count Konstanty Ludwik Plater* (L) & *Countess Augusta Ogińska Plater* (R), c. 1760. Oil on canvas. St. Ludwig Catholic Church, Krāslava, Latvia. Photos by the author.

Russia and the Grand Duchy's northern interior with the Baltic sea ports and making its resident magnates powerful and wealthy patrons (Mantueffel 1901). The portraits, life-size portrayals of Count Konstanty Ludwik Plater (1722–78) and his wife Countess Augusta Ogínska Plater (1724–91), represent the noble scions of Krāslava, a private Plater town, epicentre of Inflanty political and cultural life and an aspirant court centre, where the portraits are preserved today in their original frames (Zielińska 1981; Figs. 1, 2). The Plater portraits were painted by Italian artist Filippo Castaldi (1734–1814), who was born in Arpino in the Roman province of Frosinone and later immigrated to the Commonwealth, where from c. 1760 he worked for over fifteen years as a Plater protégé (Kaminska 2004 & 2013). His career at Krāslava is a testament to the Plater's international cultural horizons, their particular cultivation of Italian and Italianate art that gestured to Rome, and their wealth and ambitions in supporting Castaldi as an Inflanty court artist. Concurrent to their employment of Castaldi, the Count and Countess Plater also initiated prestigious building projects to transform Krāslava to become the new seat of the Catholic Bishopric of Livonia, for which they engaged as court architects the Paracca, family of immigrant architects and master masons from the region of Lake Lugano in north-easternmost Italy (Kamuntavičius & Noyes forthcoming). Their campaign entailed projects associated with the Paracca including St. Ludwig Catholic Church (where the Plater portraits under discussion here can be found today), library (where the portraits were originally displayed), and palace (where Castaldi painted additional family portraits) (Kaminska 2009; Figs. 1–3). The Paracca's work inflected northern Italian (Piedmontese) high baroque architectural prototypes through East European forms, though it remains unclear whether elite patrons like the Plater identified this architecture specifically with its actual northern Italian provenance, or recognized it more generally as reflecting Italian currents

and styles (Karpowicz 2008). Magnates like the Plater who were amongst the richest and most powerful members of the Polish-Lithuanian szlachta (nobility) owned and in reality governed much of the Rzeczpospolita territories, which were subdivided into patrimonial latifundia—conglomerate autonomous estates with private towns, taxes, laws, armies and currencies, linked by clientage and familial alliances (McLean 2011). The above-mentioned architectural monuments and the portraits at the focus of this essay were produced during the years just preceding the watershed period of the Partitions of Poland-Lithuania (1772, 1793, 1795), when territorial divisions perpetrated by Russia, Prussia, and Austria progressively fractured the Commonwealth until the conglomerate state ceased to exist altogether, and Inflanty was subjected to the Czarist Russian rule (Lukowski 2014).

While the Plater maintained a palace in Warsaw and held properties across the Commonwealth, their latifundium was concentrated in Polish Livonia, though their impact extended beyond their vast Livonian estates in the period politics during the years immediately preceding and during the crucial era of the Partitions of Poland-Lithuania, when Inflanty and their family's holdings were forcibly annexed by the Russian Empire (Jeziorski 2014). This essay will take into account the fact that the portraits under discussion here were produced during the critical years prior to the First Partition (1772), while the horizons and fortunes of both Inflanty and the Rzeczpospolita remained unclear, Livonia was still within the Commonwealth's purview, and the Plater were vigorously constructing a notional 'Livonian Empire' as noble lords of a self-fashioned semi-autonomous region with a distinctively cross-cultural history and identity. What follows will explore questions of how the portraits and the circumstances surrounding their production interwove multiple cultural allusions inflected by spatial and temporal modes tied to geographical concepts of place and space as well as notions of deep time and antiquity that both anchored their subjects to ideals of elite Polish-Livonian selfhood, and also connected their subjects to Italy and ancient Rome. These modes, I will argue, were particular to self-fashioning in the intercultural frontier zone of Livonia during the age of Partition, thematizing the temporal passage between ancient and modern and the geographic distance between Italy and Inflanty in a way that reanimated the grandeur of the past in honour of powerful patrons and deployed mediated forms of knowledge about the lost empire—appealing to diverse and entangled geographical and chronological cultural and historical references as fluid, malleable ideas or concepts, rather than fixed, specific points or places.

The Livonian Romanism associated with Castaldi and the Paracca had a double meaning, since it might refer either to the Plater's taste for the antique and claim to ancient origins, or their Roman Catholic sympathies. Castaldi's portraits should be read against the Plater's particular status amongst noble families in Livonia to hold the titles of Counts of the Holy Roman Empire, having descended from German houses who immigrated north centuries earlier in the medieval Baltic crusades and became thoroughly Polonized and embraced elite Polish culture, while also vigorously cultivating their crusader origins and ties to the Roman Catholic Church (Jeziorski 2019). In an 1792 address to one of the Commonwealth's final meetings of the Sejm (parliament), Konstanty Ludwik Plater's son Count Kazimierz Plater maintained that the Livonian Nobility—of which his family ranked amongst the oldest lineages—descended from the venerable thirteenth-century Ordre des Chevaliers Porte-Glaive (Livonian Brothers of the Sword), a Catholic military order of German 'warrior monks' sanctioned by the Pope to fight pagans in the area comprising modern-day Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania (Plater 1792, 11–18). Plater claimed that the Order's last Master Gotthard Kettler traded the territory of Livonia for protection from Polish-Lithuanian King Sigismund II Augustus in 1561, such that the Grand Duchy of Lithuania seized what would become Inflanty and thereby deprived its nobility of the chance for self-governance as an

independent "Livonian Nation" (Urban 2003, 259–73). His account echoed that set forth in a 1750 history of Inflanty written by Konstanty Plater's brother-in-law Jan August Hylzen (1702–67) that delineated the region's distinctive history and character (Hylzen 1750, "Przedmowa" [n.p.]). Among the wealthiest magnates in the Grand Duchy, the Hylzen like the Plater held their estates concentrated in Inflanty, and similarly cultivated a particular sense of pious Catholic noble identity and imperium specific to Livonian szlachta (Hylzen also employed Castaldi and the Paracca) (Rostworowski 1962–64).

Castaldi executed numerous portrait sketches of the Plater and members of their extended family, some of which are preserved in an album of sanguine (red chalk) drawings today in Warsaw (National Museum, Department of prints and drawings: Album Obywateli Inflant, Rys.Pol.12141). This collection includes amongst a gallery of szlachta sitters multiple likenesses of Konstanty Plater as a young, middle-aged, and elderly man (one of these mis-identified as a distant Szadurski cousin); Augusta Ogińska with their youngest daughter Rozalia Honorata Plater (1750-?); Rozalia at a slightly older age; Józef Jerzy Hylzen (1736–86), son of Konstanty Plater's sister Konstancja Plater Hylzen (1720–?); Jesuit Father Florian Markowski, retained by the Plater as an estate agent and administrator (Kaminska 2006 & 2009); and Castaldi himself (Ryszkiewicz 1965). Around the time of the First Partition the Plater travelled to Italy—not in person but by proxy, dispatching the Paracca in 1770 to recruit skilled masons from their home region in Lombardy, and in 1774 sending Castaldi to Rome on their behalf to bring back prestigious catacomb relics of the ancient soldier martyr-saint Donatus (Noyes et al. 2021). Built from masonry brick construction overlaid with stucco, the Paracca's buildings were (and still are today) highly visible against Inflanty's sweeping rural landscapes, signalling a strong aesthetic departure from the wooden construction traditionally used in the region. Visually ostentatious as imposing entities foreign both culturally and temporally, this architecture evoked concepts of translatio imperii between disparate places and times (Kaminska 2008; Heinz 1997).

The life-size portrayals of the count and countess of Krāslava exemplify the notion of what art historian Rūta Kaminska terms a synthetic "principle of ensemble" articulated in the local architecture built under their purview, with new projects integrating construction and stucco ornament as well as paintings and furnishings, their scope limited mainly by patrons' financial resources (Kaminska 2011, 477). Castaldi's likenesses in matching Rococo stucco frames likely made by artisans from the Paracca workshop were first displayed in the so-called library (c. 1759), a flamboyantly Baroque-Rococo library attributed to Antonio Paracca on the grounds of their Krāslava estate that held a vast collection of about 20,000 volumes, since lost (Karpowicz 2008, 11–13, 17–18). Here, the full-length canvases may have featured amongst a portrait gallery of notable local figures, family members and allied szlachta, before being moved in 1775 to the church, where they functioned as donor portraits and still remain today. The portrait pair performed a similar function, while also manifesting the Polish Livonian elite culture's assimilation of Eastern Orientalizing Ottoman forms and Western European stylistic conventions, revealing the "multi-directional cultural entanglements that transcend the binary logic of centre and periphery…[highlighting] a plurality of inspirations, challenging the theories of local, regional, and national styles as either inherent or self-contained" (Jasienski 2014, 182). These aspects assumed a heightened resonance in Inflanty in this period, as the Plater simultaneously undertook to enrich their regional estates through development and trade, and define a uniquely Livonian sense of noble identity while facing increased Russian incursion and threats to their territory and hegemony, and balancing tensions and complex allegiances within the increasingly unstable political landscape of the *Rzeczpospolita* (Dybaś/Jeziorski/Wiśniewski 2018).

Such tendencies are most immediately apparent in Konstanty Plater's portrait, where Castaldi deployed a sophisticated elision of Eastern and Western style and iconography that concretized what might be described as a local Livonian visual language marked by modes of interculturation drawing together ostensibly disparate symbols and signs of empire (Kaminska 2004, 23–25 & 2013, 230–31, 239). Castaldi contrived a heroically monumental composition setting Plater in a contrapposto pose against a landscape panorama, and integrated this format with an elegant Rococo color palette. Plater wears around his neck the red cruciform badge of the Order of Saint Alexander Nevsky (awarded by the Russian Empire in 1758) and the cross and great ribbon and star (on his left chest) of the Polish Order of the White Eagle (awarded 1754), draped over a dark delia outer coat, worn over a rich red kontusz (long robe) girded by a multicoloured silken kontusz woven sash belt, from which hangs a curved karabela Turkish-style sabre with ornamented handle. Fig. 3. These items, together with Plater's close-cropped hair and moustache, were all representative of Sarmatism, a phenomenon defined by modern scholarship as a supranational cultural formation "encompassing ideological self-definition, political life, and everyday culture" (Uffelmann 2015, 325), whereby the nobility of Poland-Lithuania mythologized their origins from ancient Sarmatians, a bellicose civilization north of the Black Sea that supposedly migrated to settle the area that would eventually become the Commonwealth (Orzeł 2010). Scholars have further maintained that Sarmatism revealed through the adoption and appropriation of 'Orientalizing' Ottomanizing material culture (including costume and grooming) derived from Persian and Turkish sources (Koutny-Jones 2008, Jasienski 2014, Grusiecki 2018, Guile 2018). Recently, scholars have turned an increasingly critical eye towards disentangling modern teleologies of Sarmatism from manifestations of 'Sarmatica' and Sarmatian self-fashioning in pre-Partition culture (Uffelmann 2016, Sowa 2018, Grusiecki forthcoming). For purposes of the present discussion, two recent lines of analysis with regard to the pre-Partition Sarmatian cultural discourse are worth highlighting: on the one hand, Sarmatism as a mode for constructing noble masculinity by marshalling a visual vocabulary of martial victory against the Turkish threat; on the other hand, Sarmatism's geographical functionalism (what might be termed Sarmatism's cartographic or chorographic impulse) as a means of representing an ancient (even classically inspired) past, while actively assimilating an ethnically and culturally pluralistic and heterogeneous present (Jasienski 2014, Uffelmann 2015, Grusiecki forthcoming).

Plater's right hand grasps the ceremonial staff symbolic of his role as a marshal at the 1758 *sejmik* (local parliamentary gathering of nobles) of Livonia, which met in nearby Daugavpils and was critical to the authority of regional elites like Plater. That this portrait commemorates Plater's leadership at the Livonian *sejmik* and likely dates to shortly after 1758 is supported by the senatorial tent where the *sejmik* deliberated rising just behind him, its strict monumental symmetry drawn from the Renaissance tradition of precise geometrical renderings and signifying the hegemonic order of the Rzeczpospolita embodied by Plater as Marshall. Likely composed not from life but rather from the artist's internalized formal lexicon, conceived as an imposing semi-abstract icon evocative of Ottoman tents prized as war trophies by Sarmatian military leaders, the tent motif invoked manifold meanings of Turkish style tents as *spolia* (both actual and invented) in period culture symbolic of martial victory, noble masculinity, political autonomy, and the safeguarding of Catholic Chistendom—all meanings especially pertinent to Count Plater's situation in Inflanty during the watershed period when this likeness was painted Dimmig 2019). In the background a chorographic view of a cityscape and the River Daugava can be glimpsed, while the topography of the distant hills suggests that Castaldi re-imagined his subject in Krāslava, not Daugavpils. The portrait's strong sense of place, its recourse to landscape, and mapping

function, all resonate with Tomasz Grusiecki's recent account of the cartographic or chorographic origins and tendencies intrinsic to Sarmatism as an inherently geo-spatial cultural construct (Grusiecki forthcoming).

If Konstanty looks a little old-fashioned here, this was due to the adoption of an intentionally archaizing visual strategy, to fashion Plater, a Baltic German, as true heir and guardian of an only recently discursively fashioned notional Livonian dominion and the venerable but fragile *Rzeczpospolita*, and his Inflanty domain at the Commonwealth's north-eastern frontier as a Antemurale *Christianitatis* (Bulwark of Christendom) defending the Roman Catholic Church in Livonia against manifold threats (Srodecki 2015). It merits note that all of Castaldi's surviving portraits of Konstanty Plater depicted him in similarly typical Sarmatian style, while other period likenesses (such as that of Józef Hylzen) of male subjects showed the sitter fitted out according to Western fashion. In keeping with a deliberately archaizing illusion, Castaldi worked his first-hand knowledge of ancient Roman martial imagery on Plater, posing the count's left arm in an oratorical gesture as if he were addressing the beholder in a scene of *adlocutio* (emperor addressing his troops), adapted from an imperial pose made famous on the Arch of Constantine, a monument dedicated to Konstanty's own namesake. The Constantinian theme was repeated in Castaldi's monumental mural for the high altar of Krāslava Catholic church St. *Louis departs for the Crusades* (c. 1774), which sets the crusader king (another namesake of Count Plater) against a monumental antique triumphal arch (Kaminska 2006, 21–22; 2007; 2009, 234–37; 2019). Evoking ancient military statuary and surrounded by material accoutrements of Sarmatian aristocracy, Plater bodied forth a conjunction of West and East, past and present, translating him into a figural allegory for the Inflanty borderlands that were the locus of his increasingly contested dominion.

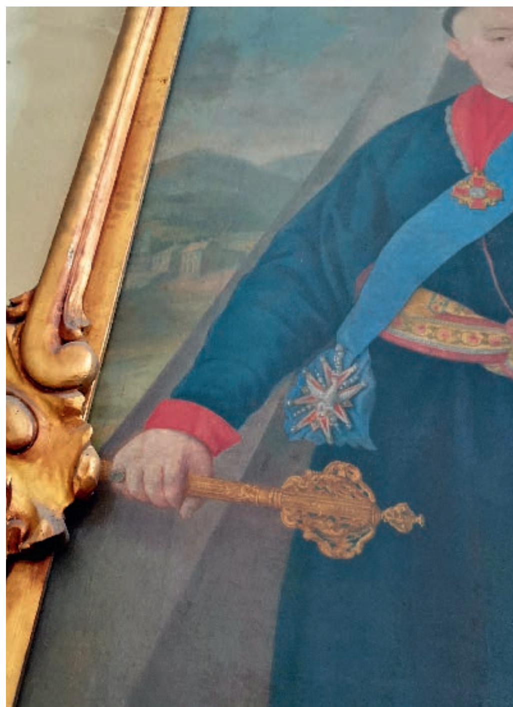


Fig. 3. Detail, Filippo Castaldi, *Count Konstanty Ludwik Plater*, c. 1760. Oil on canvas. St. Ludwig Catholic Church, Krāslava, Latvia.

Count Plater's rhetorical gesture and the subtle turn of his contrapposto posture gesture to the pendant portrait of his wife Countess Augusta Ogińska Plater, whose position mirrored his. However, her culturally interstitial status was signalled more subtly, given the lack of codified Sarmatian gendered material culture in the female sphere. Castaldi placed Augusta within a palatial Rococo interior that may have evoked the architecture of the Krāslava Palace, set against a massive red curtain contrasted against her poised stately figure, composed porcelain face, and frothy ivory lace. At first glance her dress, hairstyle and accessories look entirely in line with the eighteenth-century Western fashion, but the composition's centre is marked by a lavish mink fur muff dyed a brilliant shade of crimson, echoing the red of her husband's Sarmatian *kontusz*. The fur marks an electrifying contrast against the deep green of her sumptuous mantua, a version of Western

European formal dress consisting of a *robe* overgown worn with elaborate lace *engageantes* (false-sleeves) and *fichu* (neckerchief-shawl) typically worn only on court occasions, and likely made from imported silk and lace, perhaps for the 1758 *sejmik* where her husband presided (Cullen 2003). Closer scrutiny reveals that her mantua is a hybrid of imported and local facture: the overgown and petticoat beneath were pieced from ermine fur, with the curves of the black-tipped tails echoing the arc of the Count's sword, recalling that sable and ermine—desirable both alive and as pelts—were intrinsically linked to the history of western European relations with Poland-Lithuania and the wider region, fuelled for centuries by a robust trade in furs (Martin 1986, Etkind 2011).
As a multivalent symbol of wealth, dynastic longevity and fertility evoking coronation robes and fertility talismans, on one level her luxurious ermine mantua captured her high socio-economic standing and courtly ambitions. Augusta Ogińska came from one of the largest and most influential princely families in the Grand Duchy, with her brother Michał Kazimierz Ogiński (c. 1730–1800) a noted musician and composer who would famously cultivate French and Italian culture, theater and art at his estate in Słonim (today in the Grodno Region, Belarus). She was also a powerful patroness in her own right: after her husband's death, she bequeathed funds for construction of a large chapel annexed to the Krāslava Catholic Church to safeguard the Roman catacomb relics of ancient soldier-martyr St. Donatus that Castaldi had obtained in Rome (Kaminska 2009). On another level, Augusta's ermine mantua also instantiated her Sarmatian geographic origins, and her particular victory as a matriarch who successfully mothered eight children in what was held to be an inhospitably cold and barren environment according to period medical theory, thus recalling the ornamented animal accessories fashioned from sable fur and traditionally worn by European women to promote childbirth (Clark 2018, 158–207).

Fig. 4. Detail, Filippo Castaldi, *Countess Augusta Ogińska Plater*, c. 1760. Oil on canvas. St. Ludwig Catholic Church, Krāslava, Latvia. Photo, author

Sarmatian regal bearing and fecund abundance echoed in the green vegetal embellishment of the skirt, floral pattern of her *fichu*, and pink silk flowers adorning her bonnet, and were reiterated, in miniature, in Castaldi's sanguine double portrait sketch of Augusta with her youngest daughter Rozalia Honorata Plater, where both sitters attired in mantua gowns and floral crowns exchange a small bouquet of posies (Fig. 5). The floral iconography and the sitters' names alluded to the Roman fertility goddess Flora and the ancient Roman commemorative tradition of *Rosalia* or *Rosaria*, a festival of roses cultivating pious family lineage celebrated with the floral adornment of familial burial sites, imperial and patrimonial statuary, religious sanctuaries and cult statues, and military standards (Phillips 1996, 1335). By the eighteenth century, Rococo portraiture elided these ancient conventions in

ubiquitous depictions of courtly women bedecked with rose crowns and surrounded by roses as personifications of female sexuality (Campbell 1983). In the Countess's monumental solo portrait, she towers inscrutable above the beholder, simultaneously a stately vision of a matronly personification of Flora and a living marble statue crowned in the Rosalia floral rituals. Thus, like her husband the Countess was fashioned as a re-embodiment of ancient Roman cultural virtues and practices, as well as sculptural prototypes, inflected by Sarmatist resonances. Towering above the beholder, a stately vision of a personification of Flora and a living statue, Augusta represented the perpetuation of a lineage of Roman empresses (amongst whom Austa was a traditionally favoured name), just as Konstanty reincarnated his imperial namesake.

In portraying a prolific mother who was approaching or had already passed the end of her child-bearing years, Castaldi struck a delicate balance, wielding a light touch with his brush to soften and veil her features, and counterbalancing her figure's classicizing statuesque refinement and traditional compositional structure, rich with illustrious antique resonance, against the eighteenth-century elicitations of theatricality and sensuality, demonstrating awareness of current Rococo styles in female court portraiture. The Countess is flanked by a pair of lapdogs which are most likely Phalène (or Phalène Papillon), a breed of miniature spaniel (also called 'toy' or 'dwarf' spaniel) a breed of miniature spaniel of Italian origin first made famous in Titian's Venus of Urbino and popular amongst European elites of the period (Roberts/Roberts 1959). Since the Renaissance period, small dogs in portrait paintings historically signalled the human sitter's high social standing and symbolized diverse meanings ranging from marital fidelity and fecundity to luxury and sensuality, particularly in portrayals of women (Milam 2015). Lapdogs specifically, however, became ubiquitous in the eighteenth-century century portraiture and genre scenes, inflecting contemporary Enlightenment literary and philosophical discourse that refuted the Cartesian beast-machine and instead theorized the existence of a sensationist animal soul (Cohen 2004, Senior 2007). Depictions of lapdogs in above all Rococo female portraiture of this era not only offered a visual corollary of nascent philosophies of happiness and changing ideas about the relationship between animal and human, physical pleasure in human motivation, but also enacted "a visual experience exposing Enlightenment anxieties about gender differences and the subjectivity of response" (Milam 2015, 192).

Castaldi's sensitive portrayal of the nervously attentive Phalène Papillon perched at the Countess's right elbow, whose black-and-white fur creates a visual rhyme with the ermine-lined skirt, may gesture to an awareness of this cultural discourse surrounding notions of interspecies sensuality and the recognition of alterity intrinsic to the companion species relationship. In contrast to the noble woman's placid detachment in keeping with carefully guarded displays of emotion in period courtly society, emotion is concentrated in the apprehensive imported pets, who outwardly resemble the slaughtered indigenous mustelid pelts pieced into her mantua and share with the stylish Sarmatian fur a similar bodily intimacy with their mistress. This dynamic exploration of the connections and interstices between human subject, canine companion, and beholder is further perpetuated by the private enclosed space of the setting, the self-contained composition with its circular flow of pose and gesture interconnected through tactile conflations and juxtapositions of flesh and fur, and the emphasis on material things that intersected geo-cultural spheres and on Augusta as conjoined illusion of a fleshly woman and animate statue. These aspects in turn resonated with concepts dividing genders and gender roles, including nascent gender norms of pet keeping, and more generally of theorizing and depicting difference in the broadest sense and the discursive construction of intersubjective experiences of diverse kinds of alterity—including not only human and animal, male and female, East and West, but also

Fig. 5. Filippo Castaldi, *Augusta Ogińska Plater and Rozalia Honorata Plater*, c. 1760. Red chalk on paper. National Museum, Warsaw, Poland, Department of prints and drawings, Album Oby wateli Inflant, Ryspol 12141.3. Photo courtesy of National Museum.

Enlightenment hierarchies of authority such as the nobility and the third estate, Catholic and Orthodox or Jew, which were particularly salient in Partition-era Polish Livonia.

Taken together, this portrait pair shows that Sarmatizing and Romanizing cultural and ideological currents could coexist and be discursively marshalled to different ends—arbitrated, legitimated and transformed through the intermediating agency of migrant artists,

architects, and objects, as well as styles and forms. More importantly, these works also reified the special status of Inflanty as a privileged liminal or intersectional (rather than peripheral) area that drew continued discursive, cultural, diplomatic and economic potential from its construction as a site of vestigial cultural memory and geographic location at a crossroads conjoining storied and modern models and modes of perceiving and interacting with the 'other'. Crucially, Castaldi's Plater portraits should be understood within the context of the Plater palace complex in Krāslava, an environment filled with the artist's mural paintings of the papal city, framed in architectural *quadrature* imitating ancient monumental architecture and sculpture, and Roman *vedute* illustrating Roman views adapted from prints by Italian master Giovanni Battista Piranesi (Kaminska 2004, 23–24 & 2013, 241–42; Strupule 2011, 268-70). The Plater substituted their likenesses for ancient statuary and populated their Krāslava estate with Romanizing *spolia*. Castaldi's portraits represent one part of a broader Plater programme of self-fashioning that aimed to project a notion of aspirational empire.
I would argue, the intent of this approach was to depict the Plater as scions and mediators of the geopolitical, spiritual and cultural crossroads at the interstices of Eastern and Western Europe. They chose this strategy at a crucial historical moment when emerging divisions of European conceptual geography gave rise to the notion of an 'Eastern Europe', and the Commonwealth was approaching a horizon of dissolution by foreign imperial powers (Wolff 1994). These circumstances further suggest that the Plater may have fashioned themselves the successors (or even conquerors) of Italian splendour, to project an aspirational Livonian empire through the staging of a material, cultural and visual *translatio imperii* between Italy and Inflanty (Noyes forthcoming). These noble patrons conceived of a mode of intercultural hybridity that gestured to notions of the grandeur of the Polish-Lithuanian past on one hand (the adoption of Sarmatist aspects) and the splendour of Rome and Italy past and present on the other. Their particular iteration of Inflanty hybridity operated according to concepts of time and place. These concepts in turn were spatially drawn together, synthesized and syncretized in Krāslava. This was achieved through the production *ex nihilo* of an entire self-sufficient artistic and cultural ecosystem in the town by means of commissioning art works and architecture by Italian-Livonian immigrés. These artists' and architects' own biographical trajectories recapitulated processes of cultural hybridization which were reiterated in their works for the Plater.

References

Campbell, R. (1983) *The Sacrifice of the Rose by Jean-Honoré Fragonard: A Late Eighteenth-Century Inflection of a Traditional Erotic Symbol* // The Minneapolis Institute of Arts Bulletin, 66, pp. 18-47

Clark, L. R. (2018) C*ollecting Art in the Italian Renaissance Court: Objects and Exchanges*.
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Cohen, S. (2004) *Chardin's Fur: Painting, Materialism and the Question of the Animal Soul* // Eighteenth-Century Studies 48, no. 1, pp. 39–36

Cullen, O. (2003) *Eighteenth-Century European Dress* // Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/eudr/hd_eudr.htm.

Dimmig, A. (2019) *Substitutes and Souvenirs: Reliving Polish Victory in "Turkish" Tents* // The Mobility of People and Things in the Early Modern Mediterranean. New York: Routledge, pp. 70-90

Dybaś, B./Jeziorski, P.A./Wiśniewski, T. (2018) *Szlachta polsko-inflancka wobec przełomu: materiały z dyneburskich akt grodzkich i ziemskich z lat 1764-1775. Torun*: Towarzystwo Naukowe and Polska Akademia Nauk. Instytut Historii im. Tadeusza Manteuffla.

Etkind, A. (2011) B*arrels of fur: Natural resources and the state in the long history of Russia* // Journal of Eurasian Studies 2, no. 2, pp. 164-71

Grusiecki, T. (2018) *Uprooting Origins: Polish-Lithuanian Art and the Challenge of Pluralism* // Globalizing East European Art Histories: Past and Present. New York: Routledge, 2018, pp. 25-38

Grusiecki, T. (forthcoming) *Sarmatia Revisited: Maps and the Making of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth* // Diversity and Difference in Poland-Lithuania and Its Successor States. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Guile, C. (2018) *Reflections on the Politics of Portraiture in Early Modern Poland* // Globalizing East European Art Histories: Past and Present. New York: Routledge, 2018, pp. 83-97

Heinz, T. (1997) *Translatio Imperii* // Lexikon des Mittelalters. Munich: LEXMA Verlag, 8, pp. 944–946

Hylzen, J. A. (1750) *Inflanty w dawnych swych i wielorakich aż do wieku naszego dziejach i rewolucyach, z wywodem godności i starożytności szlachty tamecznej, tudzież praw i wolności z dawna i teraz jej służących, zebrane i polskiemu światu do wiadomości w ojczystym języku podane...* Vilnius: W Drukarni J. K. M. Akademickiey Societatis Jesu.

Jasienski, A. (2014) *A Savage Magnificence: Ottomanizing Fashion and the Politics of Display in Early Modern East-Central Europe* // Muqarnas: An Annual on the Visual Cultures of the Islamic World, 31, pp. 173-205

Jeziorski, P. A. (2014) *Wydarzenia z lat 1768-1772 w województwie (księstwie) inflanckim w świetle korespondencji rodziny Broel-Platerów* // Litwa i jej sąsiedzi w relacjach wzajemnych (XVII-XIX w.). Olsztyn-Gdańsk: Instytut Historii i Stosunków Międzynarodowych Uniwersytetu Warmińsko-Mazurskiego w Olsztynie, pp. 25-40

Jeziorski, P. A. (2019) *Z dziejów luteranizmu w Łatgalii w tzw. czasach polskich (1561–1772)* // Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce, 63, pp. 119-154

Kaminska, R. (2004) *Filipo kastaldi un viņa mantojums* // Mākslas Vēsture un Teorija, 2, pp. 20-28

Kaminska, R. (2007) *Painted interior decorations of the eighteenth - early nineteenth century in the churches of Latgale (the Polish Livonia)* // Acta Historiae Artium Balticae, 2, pp. 99-109

Kaminska, R. (2008) *The Re-Catholisation of Eastern Latvia and its Influence upon the Churches in Polish Livonia // Art and the church: religious art and architecture in the Baltic region in the 13th - 18th centuries*. Tallinn: Eesti Kunstiakadeemia, pp. 280-300

Kaminska, R. (2009) *Construction History of Krāslava St. Louis Church in the Historical and Artistic Context of the Region* // Tridento visuotinio bažnyčios susirinkimo (1545–1563) įtaka Lietuvos kultūrai. Susirinkimo idėjų suvokimas ir sklaida Vidurio Europos rytuose. Vilnius: Publishing House of the Lithuanian Academy of Science, pp. 90-112

Kaminska, R. (2011) T*he Late Baroque Church Interiors of Livonia within pre-Partition Poland* // Biuletyn Historii Sztuki 73, no. 3-4, pp. 453-478

Kaminska, R. (2013) *Filippo Castaldi (1734–1814) and his heritage in Polish Livonia (Latgale)* // Stan badań nad wielokulturowym dziedzictwem dawnej Rzeczypospolitej, V. Białystok: Instytut Badań nad Dziedzictwem Kulturowym Europy, pp. 225-248

Kaminska, R. (2019) *Conservation of Painted Church Interior Decorations of the Late Baroque Period in Latgale (2004-2018)* // Acta Academiae Artium Vilnensis, 92/93, 2019, pp. 180-206

Kamuntavičius, R./Noyes, R. S. (forthcoming) *'An innovation in this territory:' the Paracca family of architects in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Polish Livonia during the Age of Partition* // Interpreting Italians Abroad. Milan: Officina Libraria.

Karpowicz, M. (2008) *Antonio Paracca. Architetto del Rococò estremo*. Valsolda: Comune di Valsolda.

Koutny-Jones, A. (2008) *Echoes Of The East: Glimpses Of The 'Orient' In British And Polish-Lithuanian Portraiture Of The Eighteenth Century* // Britain and Poland-Lithuania. Leiden: Brill, pp. 401-419

Lukowski, J. (2014) *The Partitions of Poland 1772, 1793, 1795*. New York: Taylor and Francis.

Manteuffel, G. (1901) *Krasław w Inflantach Polskich*. Warsaw: Wydawnictwo "Kroniki Rodzinnej".

Martin, J. (1986) *Treasure of the Land of Darkness: The Fur Trade and Its Significance for Medieval Russia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

McLean, P. (2011) P*atrimonialism, Elite Networks, and Reform in Late-Eighteenth-Century Poland* // The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 636, pp. 88–110

Milam, J. (2015) *Rococo Representations of Interspecies Sensuality and the Pursuit of Volupté* // The Art Bulletin 97, no. 2, pp. 192-209

Noyes, R. S. (forthcoming) *Translatio reliquiae and translatio imperii between Italy and north-eastern Europe in the Age of Partition (c. 1750-1800): the case of the Plater in Polish Livonia* // The Migration of Artists and Architects in Central and Northern Europe 1560–1900. Riga: Art Academy of Latvia.

Noyes, R. S., et al. (2021) *'Baltic catacombs.' Translating corpisanti catacomb relic-culptures between Rome, Polish Livonia, and the Lithuanian Grand Duchy circa 1750-1800* [version 1; peer review: 5 approved]// Open Research Europe 1, 18, https://doi.org/10.12688/openreseurope.13259.1.

Orzeł, J. (2010) *Sarmatism as Europe's Founding Myth* // Polish Political Science Yearbook, XXXIX, 2010, pp. 149-57

Phillips, C.R. Rosalia // *The Oxford Classical Dictionary 3rd edition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Plater, K. (1792) *Quelque chose concernant la Suzeraineté du Roi & de la République de Pologne, sur les Duchés de Courlande & de Semigalle*. Warsaw: published by the author.

Roberts, P./Roberts, B.R. (1959) *The Papillon Handbook: Giving the Origin and History of the Breed, Its Show Career, Its Points and Breeding*. London: Nicholson and Watson.

Rostworowski, E. (1962-64) *Hylzen h. własnego Jan August* // Polski Słownik Biograficzny, https://www.ipsb.nina.gov.pl/a/biografia/jan-august-hylzen-h-wlasnego (accessed 03.08.2021).

Ryszkiewicz, Andrzej. "Filippo Castaldi – malarz nieznany". In: Biuletyn historii sztuki, 27, 3, 1965, pp. 220-227

Senior, M. (2007) *The Souls of Men and Beasts, 1630–1764* // A Cultural History of Animals in the Age of Enlightenment. Oxford: Berg, pp. 23-45

Sowa, J. (2018) *Spectres of Sarmatism* // Being Poland: A New History of Polish Literature and Culture since 1918. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, pp. 30–47

Srodecki, P. (2015) *Antemurale Christianitatis: Zur Genese der Bollwerksrhetorik im östlichen Mitteleuropa an der Schwelle vom Mittelalter zur Frühen Neuzeit*. Husum: Matthiesen Verlag.

Strupule, V. (2011) *Reflections of antique art in the interior paintings of residences and manor houses in Latvia. The second half of the 18th century – the first quarter of the 19th century* // Baltic Journal of Art History, 3, pp. 253-280

Uffelmann, D. (2015) *'Here You Have All My Stuff!' Real Things from a Mythical Country: Ottoman 'Sarmatica' in Enlightened Poland* // Präsenz und Evidenz fremder Dinge im Europa des 18. Jahrhunderts. Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, pp. 323-338

Urban, W. (2003) *The Teutonic Knights: A Military History*. St. Paul, Minn.: MBI Publishing.

Wolff, L. (1994) I*nventing Eastern Europe. The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Zajas, K. (2013) *Absent Culture: The Case of Polish Livonia*. New York: Peter Lang.

Zielińska, Z. (1981) *Plater (Broel-Plater) Konstanty Ludwik* // Polski Słownik Biograficzny, https://www.ipsb.nina.gov.pl/a/biografia/konstanty-ludwik-plater (accessed 03.08.2021).

INTERPRETATIONS OF HISTORICAL ARCHITECTURE BY ARCHITECT VLADIMIR SHERVINSKY

Katriona Luīze Rožlapa
Art Academy of Latvia, 13 Kalpaka Boulevard, Riga, Latvia, LV-1050
rozlapakatrionaluize@gmail.com

ABSTRACT
The architectural language and stylistic diversity of architect Vladimir Shervinsky (1894–1975) constitutes a peculiar example in the context of Latvian art and architecture. Aspects of cultural hybridity are represented in the architect's professional work and variations of historical architecture stylistics adapted to modern construction practices of the period. Shervinsky studied at the Faculty of Architecture of the Riga Polytechnical Institute, under the supervision of professor Eižens Laube (1880–1967), and was influenced by his father Max Shervinsky (1859–1909), director of the Riga School of Crafts. As a result, Vladimir Shervinsky appreciated the architectural style of Historicism and used it in a wide range of variations and compilations, despite his proficiency in the style of Functionalism. During the 1920s and 1930s dominant features in Shervinskys' design included Russian style, National Romanticism, Swiss style, and ethnographic architecture. Taking the position of the main architect of the Latvian Orthodox Church Synod in 1924, Shervinsky gained the opportunity to travel to nearby countries, discovering vernacular architecture and artistic variations of historical Orthodox churches. These impulses contributed to the distinctive form of the architect's design, creating a unique example of cultural hybridity in the context of Latvian architectural history.
Keywords: *architecture, Historicism, Russian style, ethnography, National Romanticism, cultural hybridity*

During the 1920s and 1930s, Latvian art and architecture were shaped by Modernism and Functionalism, on the one hand, and by the upswing of new forms of Realism in painting and Neoclassical architecture, on the other. Against the backdrop of this particular stylistic syncretism, the young architect Vladimir Shervinsky (1894–1975) established his bureau and started a professional career as the main architect of the Latvian Orthodox Church Synod.
Shervinsky had an artistic background. His father and his grandfather from his mother's side were acknowledged architects of their time. Grandfather Otto Jacob Simonson (1829–1914) who became the head architect of Tbilisi (Georgia), was born in Dresden, Germany to a Jewish family, and later travelled for work to Saint-Petersburg, Russia, where he met his Latvian wife Maria Lacarius (1840–1898). Their children were born in Georgia and raised in Orthodoxy according to period custom in the Russian Empire. Vladimir's mother Olga Simonson (1862–1918) had a distinctive nationality of her own, while his father, architect Max Shervinsky (1859–1909), was from a Polish noble family that had fled to Austria. After graduating and receiving an architect's diploma, Max Shervinsky soon received an offer for commissioned work and thus a new opportunity to travel and work in Latvia, where he started a life in Riga with his wife Olga. Vladimir Shervinsky's own national background is quite complex as a peculiar example of genealogical and cultural hybridity.
Following his father and grandfather's footsteps, Vladimir Shervinsky chose a career in architecture. During his studies, he developed an interest in National Romanticism, earlier

Fig. 1. Family house of Vladimir Shervinsky. From the personal archive of Vladimir Eihenbaum.

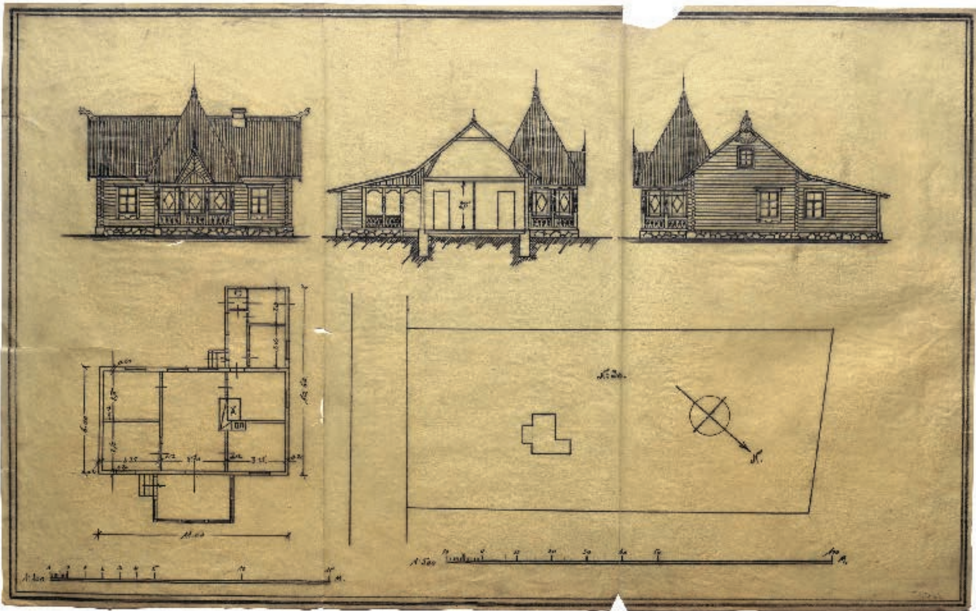


Fig. 2. Project of Liutov's residence in Ogre. Source: The History and Art Museum of Ogre.

practiced by his tutor Eižens Laube (1880–1967) at the Faculty of Architecture in the Riga Polytechnical Institute. He also practiced new design inspired by historical architecture in the Russian Empire. Even though the architectural scene in Latvia of that time represented different stylistic tendencies, Shervinsky mostly found his voice in Historicism. His father Max Shervinsky and his work likewise left a great impact on Vladimir Shervinsky. Max curated the largest exhibition of the time in Latvia dedicated to the 800th anniversary of Riga, showcasing industrial achievements and different variations of architecture that served as pavilions for entrepreneurs. Alongside other prominent architects of his time, Max Shervinsky made design, replicating different styles of architecture, mostly historical and Art Nouveau. In his memoirs, Vladimir Shervinsky admitted the major influence of this event, the architecture, and his father's competence to operate in diverse range of styles.

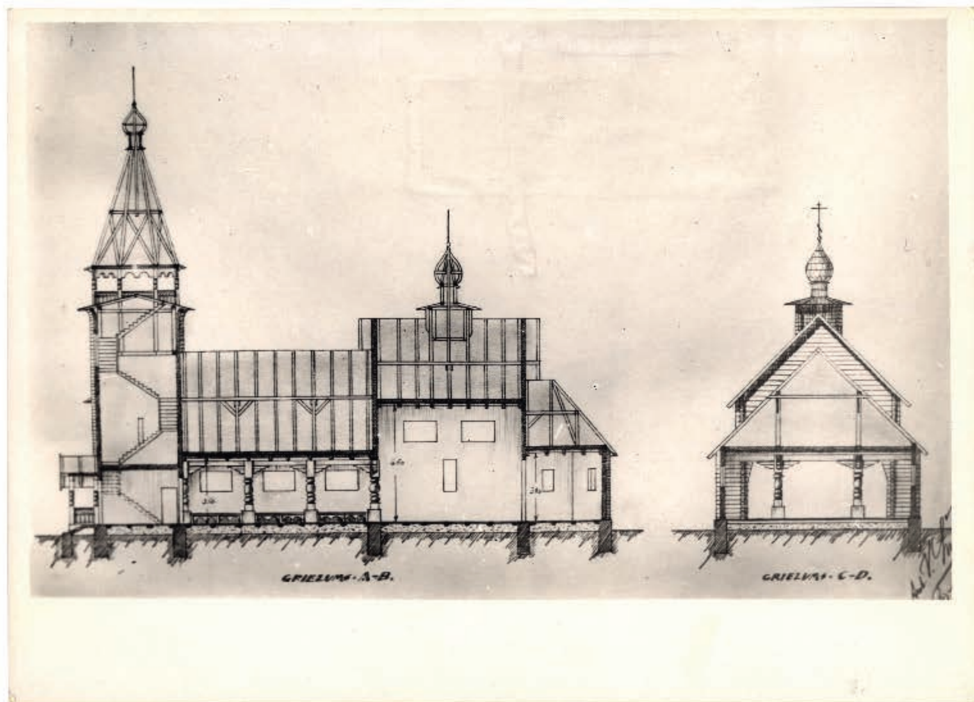
After finishing studies, Vladimir together with engineer Mikhail Krivoshapkin (1888–1943) opened an architectural bureau on 9 Šķūņu street, Old Riga. Involvement in the student fraternity *Fraternitas Arctica* provided commissioned work from the members of fraternity to design private houses. The city of Ogre holds most of Vladimir's family houses. Alongside one of his own [Fig. 1] and the house for the Krivoshapkin family, there is a major complex of his projects executed in one part of the city. Already for his first commissioned works, Vladimir Shervinsky explored his abilities to create his distinctive style. He used features of Russian-style architecture that had captivated him in his student years, combining these with National Romanticism and creating simultaneously modern architecture and decorative forms inspired by folk art. His style is characterised by hypertrophied pediments similar to traditional Russian architecture combined with minimalistic wooden decorative elements of Swiss style, while also introducing elements from National Romanticism. It is not often that there can be found such compilations of different stylistics in one architectural object. However, in this case, Shervinsky showcased an exceptional ability to combine seemingly diverse styles in a harmonious way, creating a unique language in Latvian architectural

landscape. His own house and that for Krivoshapkin family are the most important objects in the Ogre complex, since they are made as twin houses across the block. Mikhail Krivoshapkin was not only Vladimir's colleague, but also his brother-in-law. Therefore, this is a twin-house designed for relatives. These two houses showcase Shervinsky's distinctive approach to design, achieving a special feeling that is displayed through the use of romantic and fairy tale decorative features in architecture. This mode is similar to that found in projects by the Russian Style architects Ivan Ropet (*Иван Павлович Ропет,* 1845–1908) and Viktor Hartman *(Виктор Александрович Гартман,* 1834–1873), although their possible inspirational influence remains unclear. Furthermore, the most eccentric example of Shervinsky's architecture is the Liutov's villa in Ogre [Fig. 2], which precisely appropriates the Russian style. It is an evident example of his interests not only in the Slavophil movement in the Russian Empire, but also traditional Russian architecture of the North. Likewise, he executed projects in Riga, Mežaparks, where he focused on using a combination of Neoclassicism and National Romanticism, using classical elements in designs for family houses depicting decorative features of Art Nouveau and National Romanticism. Shervinsky executed numerous commissions of family houses using his peculiar style.

A year after finishing his studies, Vladimir received a commission to reconstruct an Iconostasis from the Alexei Monastery that was transported to the Riga Nativity of Christ Orthodox Cathedral (Ogre History and Art Museum, 1994). His precise execution led archbishop Janis Pommers (1876–1934) to recognise the young architect's ambition to dedicate his career to the service of Orthodoxy. In 1924 Shervinsky was invited to accept the position of the head architect of the Latvian Orthodox Church Synod, a career path that entailed full responsibility for and awareness of the state of Orthodox churches in the Eparchy of Riga and included their restoration works after the damages incurred during World War I. As the main architect of the Synod, Vladimir was commissioned to lead construction on St. John the Forerunner Orthodox church (completed in 1934), suspended during the war. Overseeing all construction-related aspects that concerned the Synod, he received numerous new commission offers from the Orthodox congregation and Old Believers to design new churches and prayer houses.

Shervinsky also created design for Medieval Russian Orthodox churches such as those in Ikšķile (finished in 1936), Līvāni (1939) and Zilupe (not constructed) (materials from the personal archive of the Upmaņi family). Nevertheless, he expanded his interests towards the Russian North. Already in his studies, his design for a kindergarten and churches emulated principles of Russian wooden architecture. As part of the Synod, during his expeditions around Russia, Estonia, Finland, and many islands, he was eager to explore the surroundings, take pictures of the architecture, and gather materials unique to a particular location. He spent time exploring places and people, especially serving in Orthodox monasteries, and included significant reverence when creating the forms and stylistics. Guided by emotionally driven artistic features, Vladimir allowed himself to combine different styles, forms, shaping them into a new approach in sacred architecture.

One of the first examples of his design featuring his unique culturally and architecturally complex hybrid approach, was in the territory of contemporary Russia, the Grishino-Gora (*Грешина-Гора*) Holy Trinity Orthodox Church (consecrated in 1927), a large-scale log church with a high octagonal bell tower dominating the landscape (materials from personal archive of Vladimir Eihenbaum) [Fig. 3]. The spacious parish room terminates in a raised altar space and polygonal apse. The interior was made as a replica of the Russian style aesthetics, with decorative motifs of Russian ethnography, and thick, long columns. Even though the exterior outlook and the interior resembled the Russian style, Shervinsky attained a different approach in terms of construction solutions and the architectonic form, modifying



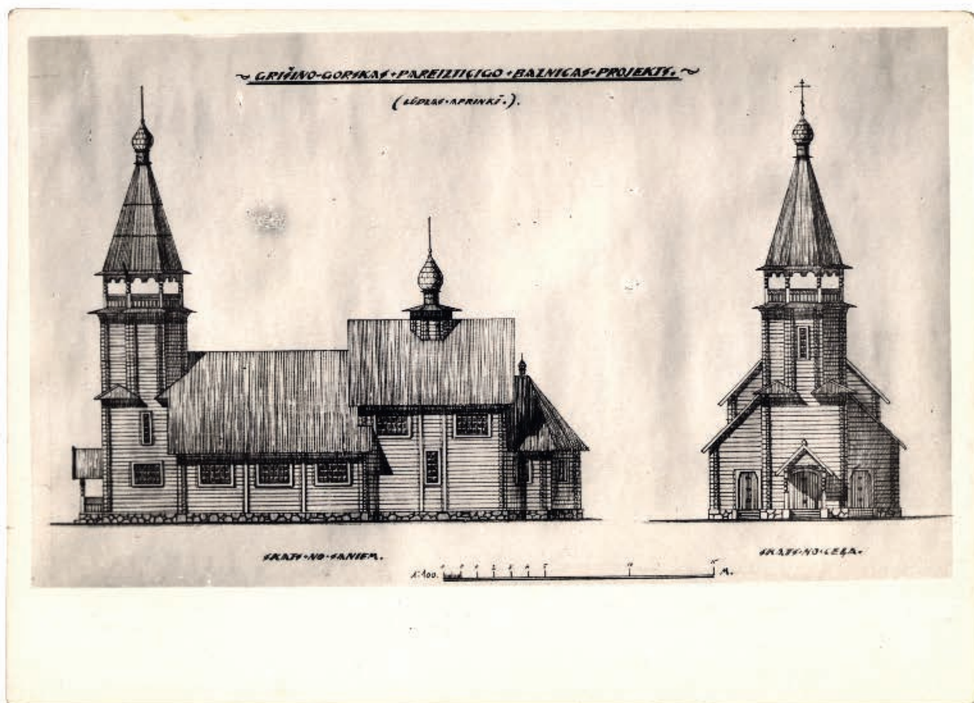


Fig. 3. The Orthodox church of Grishino-Gora. From the personal archive of Vladimir Eihenbaum.

Fig. 4. The Orthodox church of Grishino-Gora. From the personal archive of Vladimir Eihenbaum.

the classical ethnographic architecture and adopting aesthetics of Russian ethnographic architecture of the North.

The Orthodox Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Šķilbēni (finished in 1928, as dated in his memoirs) is another example of Vladimir's specific architectonic language (materials from personal archive of Vladimir Eihenbaum). This small-scale wooden log church with a high, octagonal bell tower and filigree decorative motifs in the façade has a rectangular layout completed with a polygonal apse. Šķilbēni is quite minimalistic in its decorative aspects; nevertheless, the architect used an extraordinary approach in terms of the architectonic aspects, which evince construction principles of the Russian medieval tent-type churches inflecting aesthetics of the ethnographic Russian North. The tent-type Orthodox churches are common in Northern Russia but are rarely used to this degree of complexity. Despite taking his inspiration from historical architecture, Shervinsky tended to design modern buildings referencing earlier period styles and forms. The Šķilbēni Orthodox Church is made as an arrangement of different height volumes, with a high bell tower and a higher altar space, and from the other side a lower church space and apse. While demonstrating principles of tent-type churches, the church design used these principles in a different manner, creating a hybrid form based on diverse architectural practices.

After the 2007 treaty of Border agreement signed by the Latvian Parliament, the Abrene region became a part of the Russian Federation, whereupon four churches designed by Shervinsky became part of Russia (Pytalovo county), including his most unique large-scale church, the Orthodox Church of Saint Nicholas [Fig. 4]. Consecrated in 1930, this is the most complex of the architect's churches, a unique example of Neo-Russian style in Latvia and one the most significant projects of his professional career (materials from the personal archive of the Upmaņi family). This was a commissioned work that led him to design and execute his ideas

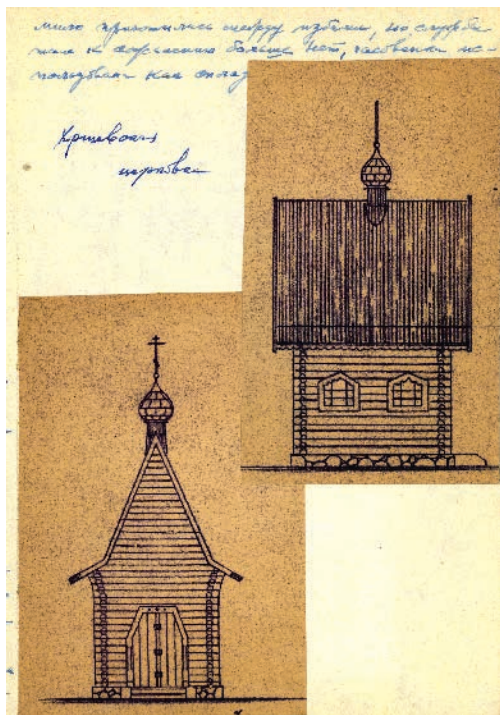


Fig. 5. The Orthodox church of Grishino-Gora.
From the personal archive of Vladimir Eihenbaum.

as he intended, despite some difficulties with the pastor, funding, and the complexity of the construction. Abrene embodies the architectural Neo-Russian style, reflecting traditional stylistics of Russian ethnography, exaggerating its decorative aspects and forms, and combining them with Art Nouveau. It is a peculiar style, combining the essence of National Romanticism and the modernity of Art Nouveau forms such that its main feature is a rather self-reflexive cultural hybridity collapsing modernity and history. The style is manifested as minimalism, yet with hypertrophied forms of *zakomaras* (a special form of pediment in Russian ethnography) and *kokoshnik* forms typical of the crowns worn in Russian traditional costumes. Similarly to Šķilbēni and Grishino-Gora, in designing this large-scale log church with a centric plan Shervinsky used the tent-type church principles in the whole form but introduced a different complexity through elements of decorative aesthetics. Using modern construction principles, workers were able to build the heaviest wooden cupola, complimented by numerous petite, filigree decorated onion-dome cupolas, fulfilling the complex volumes and forms of the church. On each façade a magnificent pediment in the *kokoshnik* form crowns each entrance. Vladimir provided attention to the slightest details, creating a defiant building. According to his hallmark combinatory approach, refined decorative motifs from traditional Russian ethnography were hypertrophied to a large scale, and modern aspects from the Neo-Russian style were integrated into a complex holistic building.

A different approach is seen in the design of Orthodox Church in Hrščeva (current-day Kščeva in Medumu parish) [Fig. 5] and Saint George Orthodox Church in Rogovka. Shervinsky was not fortunate to execute the church in Hrščeva due to the lack of funding (materials from the personal archive of Vladimir Eihenbaum). Nevertheless, with slight modifications he used the same aesthetics and forms in Rogovka. The commissioned work from Hrščeva entailed a miniature-scale church that could be used as a chapel, serving for small events and church services. The main aim was to create a place that would have ties with the surrounding nature, as the priest could deliver his sermon from inside for parishioners outside. Despite his inability to complete the 1929 Hrščeva commission, Vladimir re-used this design as background and inspiration for the new church in Rogovka consecrated in 1930. The latter is a small-scale log church built to a square plan, whose main attraction and uniqueness are manifested in its high, slender pediment, resembling the ethnographic architecture of the Russian North. Decorative aspects are minimal, as he emphasised unusual forms, wooden materials, wood shingle roof, and small-scale elements, achieving an elegant simplicity of folk art and architecture. This design appropriates purely Russian style, introducing the traditional architecture of a different national traditional with a completely different

aesthetic approach. There are not many Russian style churches in Latvia. Wooden houses with similar features found in the Latvian region of Latgale are hybridised and difficult to distinguish from the ethnography of the Latgale region and Russia. By introducing a different sense of traditions, architecture, and aesthetics from Russia to Latvian architectural scenery, Shervinsky expressed a unique artistic language.
With his complex familial genealogy and vision expressed as a stylistic combination, Vladimir Shervinsky's design appears balanced, logical, and originating naturally from historical and folk traditions. While his style synthesized echoes of the Swiss style, National Romanticism, and Art Nouveau, the Russian style prevails, reifying traditional ethnographic architecture of the Russian North. By revealing the possibilities of differentiation, yet also creating a harmonious vision, he pursued a goal of merging different aesthetics.

References

Arhitekta Vladimira Šervinska 100. dzimšanas dienai veltīta izstāde (1994). Ogre: Ogres vēstures un mākslas muzejs.

Kaminska, R., Bistere A. (2006) *Sakrālās arhitektūras un mākslas mantojums Daugavpils rajonā*. Rīga: Neputns.

Kaminska, R., Bistere A. (2011) *Sakrālās arhitektūras un mākslas mantojums Rēzeknes pilsētā un rajonā*. Rīga: Neputns.

Kaminska, R., Bistere A. (2013) *Sakrālās arhitektūras un mākslas mantojums vēsturiskajā Preiļu rajonā*. Rīga: Neputns.

Redaktors Cimermanis S. (1978) *Latvijas Etnogrāfiskais brīvdabas muzejs*. Rīga: Zinātne.

Sastādītājs Kuplais, M. (2015) *Latvijas Etnogrāfiskais brīvdabas muzejs. Ceļvedis*. Rīga:

Zinātne. Tjuņina, Ē. "Vladimirs Šervinskis", Latvijas krievi, <*http://www.russkije.lv/lv/lib/read/vladimir-shervinsky-repression.html*> accessed 10.01.2021.

Upmanis, E. 1996 "Latvijieša dzīves stāsts", *Latvijas arhīvi*, Nr. 1/2, p 111

Upmanis, E. *Makss Šervinskis (1859-1909) un viņa dzimta:* Balaško A., Krokša I. (2013) *Vācu arhitekti Latvijā*. Rīga: Latvijas Vācu savienība

Борисова, Е. (1997) *Русская архитектура второй половины XIX века*.
Москва: Наука.

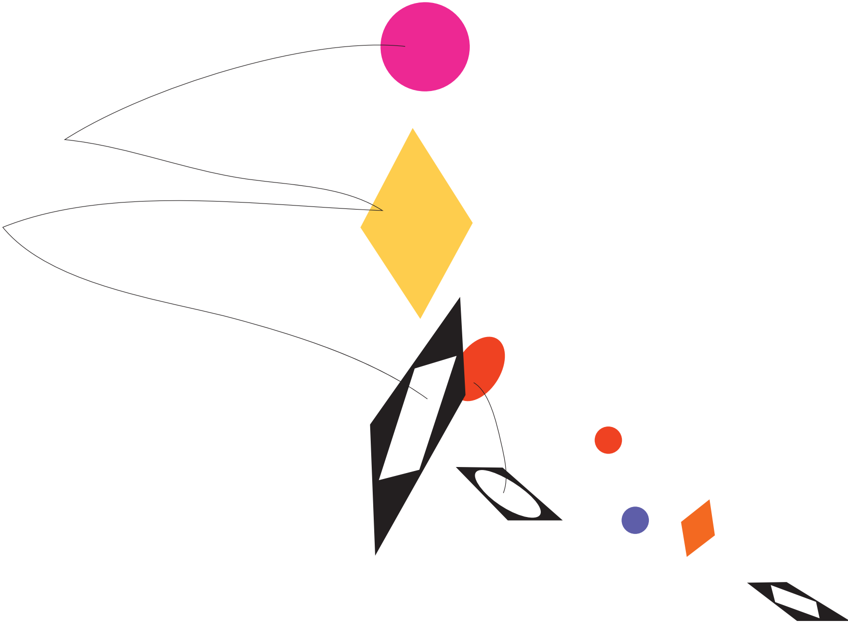
Сахаров, С. П. (1939) *Православные церкви в Латгалии: (историко-статистическое описание)*, Рига.

Упманис, Э. (2008) *Воспоминания архитектора В. М. Шервинского:* Ред. Гаврилин А. В. Православие в Латвии 7, Филокалия, Рига.

Борисова, Е. (1997) *Русская архитектура второй половины XIX века*. Москва:
Наука, p. 121

Kaminska, R., Bistere A. (2011) *Sakrālās arhitektūras un mākslas mantojums Rēzeknes pilsētā un rajonā*. Rīga: Neputns, p. 116

III INTERMEDIALITY AND INTERDISCIPLINARITY



REFLECTIONS OF NATIONAL RELIGIONS IN BALTIC ART OF THE FIRST HALF OF THE 20TH CENTURY

Agita Gritāne
Art Academy of Latvia, 13 Kalpaka Boulevard, Riga, LV-1050
agita.gritane@lma.lv

ABSTRACT
The growth of national self-confidence and the founding of the state of Latvia in the first half of 20th century were attended by societal awareness and re-evaluation of national and historical values. While the need to create a national religion based on the traditions of the past and historical heritage was discussed not only in the Baltics, but also in Europe, it was more pronounced in countries that had gained or regained national independence.
In the Baltic countries, first ideas about the restoration of the so-called ancestral religion became crucial already at the end of the 19th century; however, only in the 1920s-1930s organized religious movements emerged such as Ramava in Lithuania and *Dievturiba*[1] in Latvia, whose initiators declared the restoration of ancient respective religions. A similar example can be found in Estonia, where an organization that wanted to restore and study ancient Estonian religion joined the union *Hiis*.
That *Dievturiba* as a Latvian religion was created with the idea that it would provide a basis for a new stage in culture and art is evidenced by theoretical judgments and writings on goddesses, established traditions and future plans. The interests of the *Dievturi* included the history of Latvia, ethnography, mythology, folk art, ancient ornament, and traditions. *Dievturība's* founder and the author of its driving concept was artist Ernests Brastiņš (1892–1942), while the fixation of his close friend and companion, artist Jēkabs Bīne (1895–1955), on the ideas of *Dievturiba* changed Bīne's worldview and ethical values. In the 1930s, Bīne was a passionate *dievturis*[2] which is, of course, reflected in his works.
Representation of ancient Latvian deities in fine arts began during the interwar period. The issue of the creation of Latvian art, the content of works and their iconographic significance was essential for the *Dievturiba* artists. This research aims to reveal the most outstanding examples of depictions of national religions in painting.
Keywords: *National religions, Dievturiba, painting, Jekabs Bīne, national identity*

The study of national religions in the 20th century taken up in the present study builds on doctoral research on artist Jēkabs Bīne's (1895–1955) engagement in the so-called 'Dievturība' or Latvian national religion. His views and ideas regarding the notion of a 'Latvian Latvia', his search for national identity in history, ethnography, culture, and ancient traditions, all undoubtedly played an important and significant role in Bīne's life. When in the late 1920s, he actively sought what might be described as the 'Latvian way of life', the artist was well acquainted with research dedicated to the works of art and literature by young

---

1 *Dievturība* – hereinafter, the name of Latvian pagan (or national) religion.
2 *Dievturi* – the name of adherents of Latvian pagan religion movement

Latvians from the turn of the century for the preservation of the Latvian way of life and identity in the face of global and capitalist national systems.
The term 'dzīvesziņa'[3] first appeared on February 1, 1938 in the newspaper *Skolu Dzīve*, in Leonīds Brekšs' article *About youth - the bearer of new virtues. Reflections on the news of Latvian life* (Breikšs, 1938). In June 2014, the Saeima supplemented the Latvian Constitution with a preamble stating that "Latvia's identity in the European cultural space has long been formed by Latvians and Latvian traditions, Latvian ethno-cultural way of life, Latvian language, universal and Christian values" (The Constitution of the Republic of Latvia). Thus, the Latvian way of life today is considered one of the main values forming Latvian identity in the European cultural space. Whereas today this value is not questioned and is enshrined in the Constitution, in the early 20th century Latvia's creative intelligentsia began the search for this normative notion. With each driven by their own understanding and motivation, the political and social environment changed rapidly over time, often creating confusion and anxiety about individual actions and thoughts.
More than ten years before the aforementioned 1938 article, Bīne began to study, search for and describe the set of Latvian spiritual and moral values that he had cultivated in the course of the cultural and historical development of the Latvian nation, based on the study of Latvian songs, ornaments and Latvian writings. One of the ways Bīne tried to find his 'national/Latvian Latvia' was through active involvement in the movement of Latvian national religion (Gritane, 2020). During the period of Latvian independence, Bīne's passion and social activities were largely related to *Dievturiba*, which had a significant impact on the artist's work and perception of life in general.
In the early 20th century, the role of national religions increased significantly not only in Latvia and neighbouring countries, but across Europe, especially in states which had recently regained or gained national independence, such that the awakening of national self-confidence appeared simultaneous to that of national deities. In Latvia, societal awareness and re-evaluation of national and historical values attended the growth of national self-confidence and the founding of the state. The need to create a national religion based on the past traditions and foundations of historical heritage was discussed not only in Latvia, but across Europe. In neighbouring Estonia, the so-called Taarists were a movement of restorers of Estonian traditional religion based on popular spiritual traditions. Similar examples could be found in Lithuania and Western Europe: for example, in Great Britain there were followers of Druid traditions, while in Germany a national religious movement was formed under the leadership of General Ludendorf and Count Reventlov.

ESTONIA

According to the Taarist period revival of traditional religion in Estonia, ancient Estonians saw two forces of good and evil in the world, with Tara the bearer of the good force, true God and ruler of heaven and earth. Special scholars known as sages were involved in the religious cult. Linden and oak groves (sacred groves) were seen as sacred places. When the organization aiming to restore and study ancient Estonian religion joined the political union *Hiis*, articles of association were approved on June 3, 1931 (Rudzītis, 1937). Estonian Taarists published their own magazine and promoted their ideas in other periodicals of the era.
Taaru, or the aim of the Taaraism, was to restore Estonia's national culture and identity, and was originally founded in opposition to Christianity, which had become most popular in the

3 *Dzīvesziņa* – the term used for Latvian life wisdom, literally 'wisdom of life",

Fig. 1. Kristjan Raud *Ohver (Victim)*, 1935. Tempera on canvas, 160 x 191.6 cm.

country and was considered too cosmopolitan to meet the interests of the nation-state. They restored *hiis* (sacred groves), which became shrines and meeting places for churches, with the Sacred Grove of Tallinn among the first. *Taarausk* (Taara Faith) named for the Thunder diety Taara became a national faith of Estonia, based on a philosophy of monism holding that everything is based on one origin (matter or spirit). Historians refer to it as Neopaganism, but the Taaraists themselves have never considered themselves pagans. Similar to the situation in Latvia, in Estonia Taaraism was founded by intellectuals including poets, writers, and (in the minority) visual artists. By 1940, the Taaraists united several thousand like-minded people, but after the occupation of the Soviet Union, the movement was banned and many of its members and founders were arrested and killed.

The Taaraists popularized and talked about their religion through folklore and folk epics whose principal concept was man's responsibility for individual actions against the laws of nature, which also determined an individual's health, success, and life in general. Prayer rituals were obligatory, observed both in individual celebrations (birth, initiation, wedding, funeral) and in communal folk festivals. Obligatory elements of the ritual included the sacred fire, usually lit next to the sacred stones. The rituals could also take place indoors, in which case fresh flowers, twigs, etc. were used. The participants of the ritual were dressed in stylized folk costumes, mostly white or grey.

In this period in Estonia, works of art showing the history of the Estonian people, local myths and folklore were supported in addition to academically painted figural compositions, local landscapes and the cult of heroism. Estonian folk girls represented ancient goddesses;

athletic, strong Estonian men were the heroes of the *Kalevipoeg* epic. In the interwar period, heroism became an important propaganda weapon in Estonian art. Given that Taaraists included more writers and poets who popularized and based their religion on the epics, traditions, and history of the Estonian people, the intersection of several tendencies reveal Taaraist ideas in the works of individual artists (Prudence, Pennick, 1995)

For example, Kristjan Raud's 1934 illustrations for the *Kalevipoeg* epic and his later works featured folklore and epic themes. Raud focused on local depictions of rustic life, the countryside farm in its simplicity, and the rural lifecycle of preserving and passing on ancestral wisdom and defending their homes when necessary. A common topic in this period was likewise that of the landlord who sowed the fields, respected nature, and protected living creatures. The artist often transformed legend into an ostensible documentary work of art: for example, his *Into the War (Attack)* figuring a group of men going to fight to defend their land probably described the artist's emotions and thoughts about the War of Independence. Both Raud and other period artists stylistically referenced works of National Romanticism (Rasmus, 1965).

Ethnic elements and narratives of historical struggle were especially widespread in Estonian graphics and applied arts. Poster design incorporated vignettes featuring national ornaments and natural elements. Paul Luhtein (1909–2007) created several covers for the magazine Soldier, including the 1931 design featuring a soldier's sword wrapped in an oak wreath and decorated with folk ornaments. Painter and master of applied arts Erik Adamson (1902–1968) boldly interpreted natural and folklore motifs, reproducing them together with stylized human and geometric figures. Adamson's integration of national patterns and ornaments in his works showed national themes in a creative and modern way.

LITHUANIA

Similar to Latvia and Estonia, the issue of national identity became crucial after the declaration of independence in Lithuania, yet the formation of national religion in Lithuania occurred differently compared to the other Baltic States, firstly because the Catholic Church historically played a significant role in Lithuanian culture, society and the arts, a circumstance which continued through the early 20th century, when the Catholic Church did not lose significance. Secondly, *Romuva*, known as a local religion since the 14th century (believed to have been founded in 1387), did not emerge as a completely new national religion. Nevertheless in Lithuania themes of national identity, national history, and traditions were likewise relevant to artists since the turn of the century (Muktupavels, 2012).

Similar to Taaraism, Romuva is based on the unity of nature and man, whereby nature is sacred, and holiness is endowed with the elements of mysticism as the most important and characteristic feature of the world, uniting, harmonizing, and enlivening everything. Romuva's official song (psalm) speaks of the structure of the world, which, thanks to its ability to grow, acquires new forms, but does not lose touch with its beginning. The analogy of a tree with deep roots and growing branches with lush foliage is compared to life and death, with the underworld a zone of death, the foliage the living space, and anniversaries as a life cycle. Romuva's principles emphasize the cycle of life and death as a form of world development, linking the sanctity of nature and earth to the homeland and home, such that man cultivates the earth to live and neither man nor nation can survive without the earth.

Rituals take place in nature in holy places of desire, which include mountains, rivers, lakes, trees, rocks, etc. The sanctuary can be established with sacred objects (an altar) or based on special stories, events, or legends that may be related to the specific place. The ceremony usually takes place under the guidance of elders, with the presence of fire, singing, and moving rituals, after which holy drink and food are taken from shared containers. Romuva's

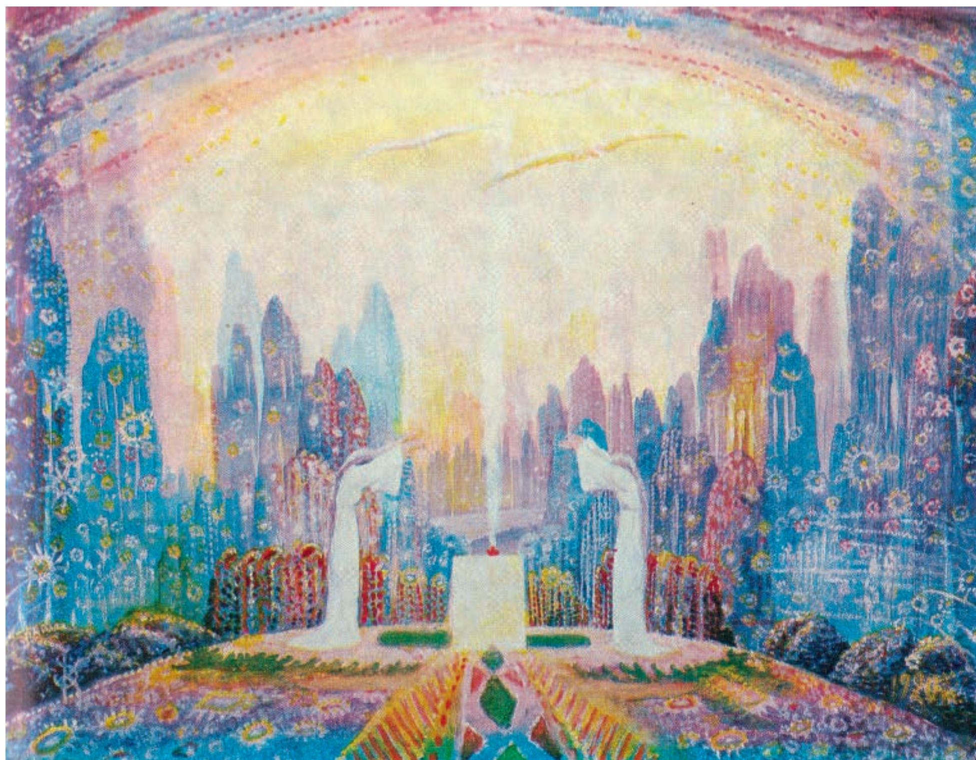


Fig. 2. Kazys Simonis, *Vaidilutes (Priestesses)*, 1920

ideas are based on the Lithuanian ethnic past and traditions as a source of spiritual strength, with the goal of organizing a harmonious daily life with the help of various deities. Like *Dievturiba*, Romuva existed in the United States and Canada during the Soviet era.

In Lithuania, pagan traditions have been studied much more than in Estonia. Lithuanians believe that we can speak of a unified Baltic religion, because despite different names for deities, their essence and location in nature are the same. Romuva nominates Perkunas (Thunder) as the main God, so Perkunas was often used as a characteristic element of history and national ideas. However, in Lithuanian art one cannot find direct reflections of Romuva's ideas or deities as is the case in Latvian art. Lithuanian artists used to depict views expressed by deities and national religions in a much more abstract way through symbols and allegories. Often mythological images were conjured up through visions, dreams, and longings, as for example in Paulius Gelaune's painting *By the Remains of the Milda's Altar* (1913). The work depicts a stylized natural landscape, setting sun and a wooden altar flooded with water, next to which stands a lonely girl.

The early 20th-century art community became more active and various associations were formed, including the first artists' associations, such as The Lithuanian Art Association (1907–1914), all of which raised the issue of Lithuanian culture. One of the most common questions was that of how to emphasize specific features of national culture in order to create a basis for a new modern culture. The newly established organizations came together to combine intellectual and creative forces to achieve the new goals.

Lithuanian artists very rarely used ancient ornaments, the symbols of the sun and the swastika (in Latvian the fire cross) being the most common. Both of these symbols are also located on the 1931 Lithuanian Freedom Monument in Rokiškis, which also features a female

figure evocative of Vaidilutė, the holy virgin priestess often found in art of this period, who according to Romuva attended to the temple. In a broader sense, this temple was the whole of Lithuania and often the Baltic region, with the altar of fire at its centre (Snyder, 2004).
In the works of Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis (1875–1911), Perkunas often appears along with lightning and fire, as in the 1909 works *Perkunas* and *Altar*, *Thunder*, and *Rex*. The altar of fire (*Aukuras*), which appears both in Čiurlionis and in later works by other Lithuanian artists, symbolizes ancient Baltic glory and the sacred worldview. These symbols also appear in the oeuvre of Kazys Šimonis (1887–1978), including the paintings *Vaidillutes* (1920), *Vaidilutes* (1927), *Soldiers* (1930).

LATVIA

Already at the turn of the 20th century, the intelligentsia was aware of the importance of religion for national cultural and spiritual development, and representatives of the creative professions began expressing notions of the restoration of Latvian deities. As this movement developed rapidly and gained broad social support, on July 26, 1926, the first congregation of *Dievturiba* was recorded in the official state register. As artists, writers, poets, and other creative culture specialists played a major role in raising awareness of godliness, the reflection of these ideas naturally influenced works of art. The ideological foundations of *Dievturiba* as a Latvian religion are based on ancient principles of folk traditions and customs. In this context, it is important to realize that in the views of its founders and followers it was shaped as a national religion. In the beginning, new religious currents were created by a small group of like-minded people, but their active work, regular publications, and ideological convictions soon gathered a significant number of supporters.
Dievturiba gained widespread support among the creative professions. Artists as well as writers and intellectuals became *dievturi* (followers) or supporters of Dievturiba. During the 1920s-30s several artists included representations of the ideological essence of Latvian deities, with some artists such as Jēkabs Bīne (1895–1955) and Ernests Brastiņš (1892–1942) themselves active supporters of Dievturiba. Others did not express their views so openly, but their art clearly reflected basic principles of Latvian deities and Latvian views, among others Ansis Cīrulis (1883–1942), Hilda Vīka (1897–1963), Alberts Kronenbergs (1887–1958), Jēkabs Strazdiņš (1905–1958), and Kārlis Sūniņš (1907–1979), several of whom have been called stylists who tried to transform the traditional perception of academic realism and sought a beautiful primitivism focused on mythological themes (Siliņš, 1998). Artists used ancient images of Latvian deities as sources of inspiration not only in painting but also sculpture—see Arvīds Brastiņš (1892–1942), Artūrs Bērnieks (1886–1964), and Jānis Plēpis (1909–1947)—as well as book graphics and especially applied art.
Examining *Dievturiba's* theoretical ideas against those depicted in painting demonstrates that the artists were not trying to illustrate the iconography of *Dievturiba*, but rather attempting to depict Latvian legends, folklore, and song figures based on interpretations of *Dievturiba* and inflecting *Dievturiba* concepts through these images. At the same time, that the beliefs of *Dievturiba* were based on the legacy of antiquity renders it difficult to draw a clear line demarcating between representation of Latvian folklore and legends, and depiction of religious tennets of *Dievturiba*.
An exception could be J. Bīne's work *Dievs, Māra, Laima*, in which the artist wanted to create iconographically a pantheon of Latvian deities. Underscoring that Bīne ranked among painters most interested in the world of mythological images and involved through *Dievturiba* in the creation of a religious system restored according to Latvian folklore, Skaidrīte Cielava's analysis of such artists in the 1920s-30s concluded that " [..] their activities influenced fine arts to such an extent that a local, peculiar mythological genre

Fig. 3. Jēkabs Bīne, *Dievs, Māra, Laima*, 1931. Oil on canvas, 64.5 x 75 cm.

emerged" (Cielava, 1990). Since each artist expressed his own particular style of formal expression, it is difficult to see similarities across works of these artists, but their substantive and ideological similarities can be more clearly detected, even as each made a different quest for form and style.

In E. Brastiņš's works, the idea of divinity is revealed in terms of content, such that the viewer must understand the ideological message based on his/her knowledge and feelings. E. Brastiņš's pictorial means of expression could be called more moderate modernism, whereby a certain influence of expressionism can be felt. In his early career, painting was delivered in a stylized and primitive way; over time, the brush strokes became more expressive. By attending more to content and meaning, the artist often balanced on the border of illustrative decorative features.

In the art of A. Cīrulis and K. Sūniņš deities are more static figures whose connection to the everyday people is less palpable; ornaments and Latvian motifs prevail, providing the ancient gods with decorativeness and a certain alienation. In A. Cīrulis and K. Sūniņš, divine figures' movements and clothes are more stylized and schematic.

Cīrulis's sunlit mythological images illuminate a sense of an idyllic world through the clarity of colours, populated by deities unaware of earthly life's evils and difficulties, Laima and dancers in the Sun-yard, as well as Janis, Thunder and children of God. At the same time, the images are marked by noticeably static figures and the high degree of stylization, rhythm and human liveliness. The deities of A. Cīrulis are often depicted with a hand raised as if

in the act of blessing people and earth. The composition of the mythological narrative contains rich decorations with Latvian ornaments, signs, and symbols.

Fig. 4. Ansis Cīrulis, *Laima*, 1932. Tempera on canvas, 30 x 20 cm.

J. Bīne gives the deities of H. Vīka an idealized anthropomorphic form whose life is analogous to human life on earth, depicting the kingdom of heaven in a farm, sauna, amongst the people and their daily work. Vīka's deities are interpreted through the world of dreams seemingly intertwined with real images. When painting a composition in an idyllic romantic mood, the artist introduced the divine Māra or Laima. Based on stylized drawing, Vīka's artistic expression is marked by a degree of decorativeness in the compositional details.

Bīne was generally a strict supporter of academic realism, eschewing innovative forms and new means of expression and instead basing figural compositions, landscapes and still lifes on an academic approach. Similarly, the concept and composition of imagery in his mythological works are firmly based on the foundations of Realism.

CONCLUSIONS

It must be concluded that the representation of the principles of *Dievturiba* in Latvian painting in the 1920s and 1930s cannot be identified as particularly popular or systematic. During this period, when Latvian and national style in art was sought, the dievturi actively tried to popularize their religious beliefs through various forms of propaganda. The quest for national identity in art aligned with the aims and tasks set by the dievturi. Publications in the press or in separate editions, presentations and gathering places of supporters, all crucially contributed to expressing individual views in creative work. Not all artists who focused on the representation of Latvian deities in their oeuvre were passionate *Dievturi* followers on a daily basis. Research of antiquity, studies of ornaments and Latvian signs, and their symbolic use were common in the respective historical period. From this point of view, *Dievturiba* as a representation of religion in art could be divided into two groups: (1) artists who were themselves active *dievturi* and (2) artists whose art was considered by dievturi as corresponding to the ideas of *Dievturiba*. Artists Ernests Brastiņš and Jēkabs Bīne were active and confident dievturi. The artist Hilda Vīka probably addressed the topic of *Dievturiba* in her works thanks to her husband Viktoras Eglītis, a confident dievturis. On the other hand, there is no information that allows conclusions regarding the views of Ansis Cīrulis and Kārlis Sūniņš. Although the quest for Latvian deities and their representation can be seen in their works, there is no written evidence that both artists were adherents of *Dievturiba*. It is possible that the content of their work developed in connection to research of antiquity, reflections on songs and proverbs, or a quest for Latvian art. However, as their

art was praised by art critics belonging to the dievturi group, A. Cīrulis and K. Sūniņš might be identified as artists whose works featured visual narrative corresponding to the ideas of *Dievturiba*.

Artists revealed these ideas in very different ways in terms of formal style, with each creating their own image of the deity, foreclosing on the possibility of a unified visual iconography of Latvian deities. Although artists use ancient signs, ornaments, and symbols to depict such divine figures, their combined variations do not form a unified system. It should be noted here that in songs, ancient legends, and in folklore more generally—considered the basis of *Dievturiba*—images of deities are assigned several meanings, tasks, and fields of activity. Accordingly, each deity can be characterized by different features, with diversity in terms of the use of certain characteristic colours, animals, and signs, resulting in iconic images of divine creatures within an individual artist's given oeuvre, but not a common iconography of godliness.

Thus artistic independence in the search for Latvian identity in painting's form and content represents a unifying tendency in reflecting the views of *Dievturiba* during this period. Artists solved completely new and complex tasks, depicting deities in mythological compositions and searching for the place and meaning of these images in human and earthly life. On the one hand, artists used iconographic material in the context of the ideas of *Dievturiba*; on the other, they solved stylistic tasks, looking for new methods of depicting Latvian deities and what form to give to these characters.

References

Ābele, K., Grosa S., Kļaviņš E., Villerušs (2014) V. *Latvijas mākslas vēsture IV.* 1890.–1915. Rīga: Latvijas Mākslas akadēmijas Mākslas vēstures institūts.

Ābele, K., Kļaviņš E., Martinsone I., Pelše S., Teivane-Korpa K., Rinka R., Šuste M.,Vanaga A. (2016) *Latvijas mākslas vēsture V.* 1915– 1940. Rīga: Latvijas Mākslas akadēmijas Mākslas vēstures institūts.

Biezais, H. (1998) *Seno latviešu debesu dievību ģimene*. Rīga: Zinātne.

Brancis, M. (1995) *Jēkabs Bīne*. – Rīga: Preses nams.

Brekšs, L. (1938) *Par jaunatni – jauno tikumu nesēju* // Skolu Dzīve. nr.6, p. 39

Breuilly, J. (1994) *Nationalisms and the State*. University of Chicago Press.

Celms, V. (2008) *Latvju raksts un zīmes*. Rīga: Folkloras un informācijas centrs.

Cekule, V. (1969) *Jēkabs Bīne* (1895-1955). Latvijas PSR Valsts Mākslas muzejs. Rīga.

Cielava, S. (1992) *Pozitīvisms un latviskas glezniecības problēma* (20.–30. gadi) // Latvijas Zinātņu Akadēmijas Vēstis. nr. 5 (538), p. 32

Cielava, S. (1990) *Folkloras un mitoloģijas zīmē* // Cīņa. nr.8

Gerharde–Upeniece, G. (2016) *Māksla un Latvijas valsts*. 1918–1940. Rīga: Neputns.

Gritane, A. (2020) *Jēkabs Bīne*. Rīga: Neputns.

Kalnačs, J. (2005) *Tēlotājas mākslas dzīve nacistiskās Vācijas okupētajā Latvijā*. 1941–1945. Rīga: Neputns.

Ņefedova, I. (1986) *Kārlis Sūniņš*. Rīga: Liesma.

Ogle, K. (2012) *Representation of Nature Spirits and Gods in Latvian Art in the First Half of the Twentieth Century* // Pomegranate. nr.1, p. 47–68

Jones, P., Pennick, N. (1995) *A history of Pagan Europe*, Routledge: Psychology Press.

Pourchier-Plasseraud, S. (2015) *Arts and a Nations. The role of visual arts and artists in the making of the Latvian identity* 1905-1040. Leiden/Boston, USA.

Rudzītis, L. (1937) *Igauņu tāristu kustības ideoloģiskie pamati* // Labietis. nr.3, p. 151–157

Siliņš, J. (1988) *Latvijas māksla*. 1915.–1940. I – Stokholma: Daugava.

Siliņš, J. (1990) *Latvijas māksla*. 1915.-1940. II – Stokholma: Daugava.

Snyder, T. (2004) *The Reconstruction of nations: Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania, Belarus*, 1569-1999. Yale University Press.

Kangro-Pool, R. (1961) *Kristjan Raud*, 1865-1943, Eesti NSV Kunst.

Rudzīte, A. (1990) *Latviešu tautas dzīvesziņa*. Rīga: Zvaigzne ABC.

Websites

http://bifrost.it/FINNI/Museo/Raud.html

https://kunstimuuseum.ekm.ee/en/art-collections/kristjan-raud-house-museum-collection/

http://www.culture.ee/yritus.html?id=32663&&op=muuseum

http://www.music.lv/mukti/Baltu%20mitologija.htm

https://romuva.lt

http://ciurlionis.eu/en/

http://www.kazyssimonis.lt

This research is funded by the Ministry of Culture, Republic of Latvia,
project “Cultural Capital as a Resource for Sustainable Development of Latvia”,
project No. VPP-KM-LKRVA-2020/1-0003, Acronym: VPP-KM-LKRV-2020

“WHEN YOU GET TO BARREN NEW YORK, / YOU WILL SHARE OUR OPINION:/ WE MUST AFFOREST IT!”

LATVIAN EXILE ARTIST COMMUNITY IN NEW YORK CITY[1]

Andra Silapētere
Latvian Centre for Contemporary Art, 13 Alberta Street, Riga, LV 1010
silapetere@lcca.lv / silapetereandra@gmail.com

ABSTRACT
What did it mean to be part of the post-war art scene in New York City and its international dynamic? What did it mean to become an ‘American artist’ if we acknowledge different identities and intercultural relationships within American art and culture system? While rethinking these questions I will discuss the Latvian exile literate and artist collective Hell’s Kitchen and its members: the writer, collector, and curator Mudīte Austriņa (1924–1991) and artists Daina Dagnija (1937–2020) and Rolands Kaņeps (1925–2011).

In Latvian exile history, the Hell’s Kitcheners have been surrounded by many myths that have also created an image of a bohemian group that experienced the beautiful and creative life of New York City. Unfortunately, the group’s activities were never systematically documented leaving a lot of space for speculation, but while studying their archives we see that it was not so much New York City and its art infrastructure that were important to their work, but firstly their collective and its members and secondly the Latvian diaspora. To its members, the group served as a laboratory that stimulated their individual work and created a platform for collaborations and a context in which they were able to strengthen their positions in the art world. Their work through connections with the Latvian diaspora and the internationalized art system allow to reinterpret their national history, culture and identity narratives and to question the artistic production system that was dictated by the dominant culture.
Keywords: *exile, belonging, national and cultural identity, diaspora, New York City*

The networks and connections that flourished in the post-war United States have shown that the international dynamic within the country led it to become the centre of the art world witnessing numerous significant moments in art and culture, as well as civil right movements that also challenged and redefined processes in the world. But what did it exactly mean to be part of this dynamics and what did it mean to become an ‘American artist’ if we acknowledge different identities and intercultural relationships within American art and culture system in the 20th century? In this paper I am interested in addressing the following questions: How the post-war art was related and responded to personal and political issues in terms of immigration and politics of identity? Could we say that the international status

1 Translation from the original poem by Gunars Saliņš. Published in the Latvian exile magazine Jaunā Gaita for the first time: Saliņš, Gunars (1959). Apmežosim Ņujorku. *Jaunā Gaita*, Nr. 20, p. 57

of American art both helped and hindered artists' careers during this period? How can we disrupt the tendency in the history writing processes to unify artistic practises under big movements (e.g., Abstract Expressionism, Pop Art, Conceptualism etc.) and identify difference and the ways to tell stories?

To shed light on what was, from the perspective of the exiled and emigree artist, essentially a parallel infrastructure within the New York art scene, I will discuss the Latvian exile artist and literary collective Hell's Kitchen, drawing a fragmentary portrait and revealing different creative approaches that were challenged by questions of belonging in the New York's internationalized environment.

Fig. 1. One of the first gatherings of the Hell's Kitchen collective on March 24, 1951. Photo: unknown.

The group to its members served as a laboratory that stimulated their individual work and created a platform for collaborations and a context in which they were able to strengthen their positions in the art world and put forward their ideas in their new environment. Unfortunately, the group's collective activities have never been systematically documented leaving a lot of space for speculation, yet research of their archives in Latvia and the United States opens doors to many fascinating findings. In this paper, I will focus on the work of the writer, collector and curator Mudīte Austriņa (1924–1991) and the artistic strategies of painters Daina Dagnija (1937–2020) and Rolands Kaņeps (1925–2011) registering ideas and values that developed and were strengthened by blending national and cultural identity with the dominant artistic movements in the United States.

The Hell's Kitchen collective in New York City associated themselves with Hell's Kitchen, a neighbourhood on Manhattan's West Side, where they most often met to organize poetry readings and actions such as those at the 41st Street apartment of the poet Linards Tauns (1922–1963) and at the 42nd Street basement studio of the painter Fridrihs Milts (1906–2007). By combining visual art and text-based practices, the group brought together more than fifteen artists, writers, and literary scholars on an on-and-off basis[2]. The history of 'Heavenly Pagan', as they called themselves, began some time round 1945 when many of the Baltic refugees were in the displaced person camps in Germany. The origins of the collective lead to Tübingen, a university town in southern Germany, where a group of young

2 The writer Mudīte Austriņa (1924–1991); the poets Gunars Saliņš (1924–2010), Linards Tauns (1922–1963), Jānis Krēsliņš (b. 1924), Teodors Zeltiņš (1914–1991), Roberts Mūks (1923–2006), Aina Kraujiete (1923–2007), Rita Gāle (b.1925), and Baiba Bičole (b.1931); the artists Daina Dagnija (1937-2020), Fridrihs Milts (1906–1993), Sigurds Vīdzirkste (1928–1974), Ronalds Kaņeps (1925–2011), Vilis Krūmiņš (1989–1959), Ilmārs Rumpēters (1929–2018), and Voldemārs Avens (b.1924); writer and artist Kāra Zāle (1911-2003), the photographer Bruno Rozītis (1914–1986); the literary scholar Jautrīte Saliņa (1924–2011); the writer and para-psychologist Kārlis Osītis (1917–1997); and the critic Vitauts Kalve (1913–1989).

Latvian exiles began their studies. The daily life was restricted in terms of basic needs; however, the community life flourished with great enthusiasm as the lost homeland urged to restore the feeling of belonging and life as it was before. This is also the context where we can find the first evidence of the Hell's Kitcheners' activities. Rare manifest of their shared interest includes two samizdat magazines *Mīstiklas* (1946) and *Kākslis* (1948), where with irony and humour, young writers and artists commented on the realities of the migrant and student life[3]. Despite the serious nature of the subject, both publications reveal creativity and humour as important tools in overcoming the trauma associated with forced emigration[4]. These tools were also vital components to the group in New York City, where the formation of the collective, as it is considered today, took place after 1948. The group's activities reached its peak in the end of the 1950s, but slowed down after 1963, when the poet Linards Tauns, a core member, unexpectedly died. The intellectual climate grew quieter, and yet an intense exchange of ideas continued through various gatherings, events, and exhibitions.

Through the activities, participants developed as a dynamic unit in its stance against rigid social norms and rationality. This self-declared opposition was a reaction to their exile situation and was at odds with the ideas prevailing in the Latvian diaspora, majority of which was generally more prone to conservatism and sometimes even radical nationalism, longing to return to the lost motherland[5]. A statement of their philosophy, their *Heavenly Pagan Cohabitation Manifesto*[6] (1956) contains thirteen points that, written with a great deal of absurdity and humour, demonstrate the group's creative approaches to the realities they were facing as artists in exile: the difficulty of getting their work published in the United States and the need for support from colleagues. In this context, their Latvian language and national identity become important points of reference in their creative production—despite their willingness to be integrated into local art and culture processes. Most of their writings and events were in Latvian, which can be interpreted as a rejection of the new context and obstinacy in terms of needing to prove their existence as a distinct community within the multicultural New York City environment. But we can read it also as a form of self-historicizing in the international art system of which they were part of. Pushed to search for their own historical, social, and cultural context, they found identity and language to be important tools in developing their collective history and establishing their own autonomous territory, one in which they could document and interpret their experiences. In this way, language, historical experience, and identity served not only as identifying, but

---

3 The titles of the magazines use old forms of Latvian words as metaphors for the messages delivered by the magazines. The Mīstiklas is an instrument used for linen and hemp cultivation, and in the context of the magazine title, suggests the harsh reality of student life, whereas Kākslis translates as Adam's apple and can be interpreted as a loudspeaker. Both magazines are part of the private collection of Ojārs J. Rozītis.

4 One of poem is by the long-term group member Jānis Krēsliņš under the pseudonym Zans Mijkrēslis, entitled Sirreālisma Kustība Tībingenā [Surrealist Movement in Tübingen]. It describes Two violet hat days, performances in which participants wearing violet accessories strolled through the city and then engaged in poetry readings. It mentions the following people as actively participating in the walks: Mudihari (Mudīte Austriņa), Gunda (Renāte Grāve, Austriņas's roommate), Tonis (a friend of the group and a student from Estonia), and Leonidas (an unknown person).

5 Part of the Latvian diaspora was culturally conservative and nationally oriented, stimulated by a belief during the 1950s that there was a possibility of return to Latvia in the not-too-distant future, a sense of duty toward the occupied Latvia and the people who remained there, and a sense of obligation to nurture Latvia outside Latvia.

6 *Heavenly Pagan Cohabitation Manifest*, written and signed on August 29, 1956, by Mudīte Austriņa, Linards Tauns, Gunārs Saliņš, Dzidra and Modris Zeberiņš. Original in the collection of the Literature and Music Museum.

Fig. 2. Commemorative event for Linards Tauns at the Estonian House in New York. View from the audience, from the left: Jānis Krēsliņš, Rita Gāle, Baiba Bičole, Rama Birzgale Vītola, Viktors Neimanis, Vitolds Vītols, Nikolajs Kalniņš, Gunars Saliņš. In the background drawing of Fridrihs Milts. 1966. Photo: unknown. Collection of the Literature and Music Museum

also as historicizing elements. The work of the writer **Mudīte Austriņa** (1924–1991), a core member, illustrates such self-historicizing both in a regressive and recuperative form. Austriņa's creative activities—writing, collecting and curating, blended tension between reality, memory and nostalgia creating a hybrid feeling of time and identity.

Austriņa was part of the Hell's Kitchen collective since its Germany period and later in New York becomes one of the main initiators of the group's activities. Her creative interests were broad, but surrealist art and literature were especially important, both aesthetically and conceptually. Austriņa's interest in Surrealism began while she was studying art history at the University of Tübingen, but the city's cultural environment contributed to its development7. The quintessence of Austriņa's surrealist expressions are her "baletiņi" (small ballets) - short absurd scripts that she wrote in New York from the the 1950s as theatre plays or scenarios for short films. She built the main characters from the Hell's Kitchen collective's personalities, looking at culture and identity in the context of exile—at its traumas and challenges—and documenting her own and her companions' experiences. These surrealist pieces signalled a will to escape the traumas of exile and to deal with displacement by irrationalizing it. Yet they also evoke the ambience of the group's context of New York, an environment they saw

7 Tübingen after WWII was part of the French occupation zone, and French culture was very strong. Her command of French stimulated her to study French literature, especially the work of André Breton (1896–1966).

as irrational—and their lack of a suitable social, political, and historical background within it, or a specificity that would have strengthened their position.
Another important segment of her work relates to the period between 1960 and 1980 when Austriņa moved back and forth from New York to California and Philadelphia working different jobs as well collecting and selling antique objects. During this period, she started her travels to Mexico, Peru, Europe and elsewhere that developed her interest in ancient cultures and search for uniting elements between them. An important context to these interests were the spiritual eclecticism and multiculturalism of California, her friendship with poet and yoga teacher Velta Sniķere (1920) and Indian dancer Ram Goppal (1912–2003). Through these connections she experimented with her writing, like her poems written circa 1968 in the Concrete poetry style[8], curated exhibitions bringing together artists from different backgrounds and uniting them under one 'universal concept' like the one in 1961 at the Tristamba Gallery titled *Sun Exhibition*[9] and she started to build her 'sun collection' with an idea to open a *Sun Museum*[10]. All these activities were echoed in imagery that combined Latvian national and folk traditions and symbols, something she was nostalgic for, with the ancient world heritage thatin the United States became more pronounced and attainable for her than before. This cultural confrontation not only asked for but also offered points of new becoming that she saw as quest for resembling elements between cultures that allowed to reinterpret her national identity and articulate it in terms of the multicultural environment
In 1951, Austriņa published an article in the Latvian exile newspaper *Latvija* about a painter whom she had met in New York through the Hells Kitchen's network. Describing his art, she compared it to a painting of the Middle Ages: "He works slowly and with high diligence" Austriņa, 1951, 3). She was writing about **Rolands Kaņeps** (1925–2011).
Rolands Kaņeps came to the United States in 1949 settling in New York City where he earned his living by making patterns for ties and later in the 1970s painting home interiors. He was also a devoted collector of antiques and artwork and turned his small studio apartment on 76th Street into a sophisticated antique shop (Krēsliņš 2018). In 1951, Kaņeps entered the US Army that provided an opportunity to return to Europe. This allowed him to travel to Germany, France, Italy, and Great Britain and study antique masters like Duccio, Simoni Martini, Piero della Francesca and Sandro Boticelli among many others. These interests and studies are manifested in his figurative compositions that mostly were with references to religious and mythological subjects, transforming them into allegorical and symbolic messages and providing them with contemporary backdrop. When examining his work, we see that biblical and mythical heroes were often depicted in his works naked or half-naked, and highly eroticized. Also, we notice the bright colours and compositions radiating joyful, playful, and imaginative world, but the overall tone suggests something combative, indicting, and angry and the manipulation with the symbols and images of well-known stories from the Bible and antique myths signal a question about gender norms and ethical values. His paintings were so uncompromising in his style that from time to time caused some raised eyebrows among the Latvian exile community at the time. Sometimes it was asked that the work from the exhibition is taken down or relocated to a place where they were less visible.

---

8 Mudīte Austriņa's letters to Velta Sniķere inform about these experiments in 1969. Also, we can find some examples in her archive at the Literature and Music Museum.
9 24.06.-1.08.1965. *Sun Exhibition*, Tristamba Gallery, Sausalito, California, USA.
10 Mudīte Austriņa. *Sauļu grāmata* [Sun Book]. Collection of the Orisare the Museum Union of Piebalga.

Fig. 3. Mudīte Austriņa on one of her trips purchasing works for the gallery. The 1970s. Photo: unknown. Private collection

Even though it was never openly announced, Kaņeps was homosexual. Nowadays it has become a significant part of his oeuvre and allows interpreting his 'shocking style' as a political opposition towards the existing norms in his exile community as well as broader United States context. Such an interpretation was not possible during his lifetime, as there was no rush to embrace queer communities within the society of the time. Besides, the community of Latvian exiles, where he was mostly known for his work, was rather conservative. A literary scholar and poet Kārlis Vērdiņš suggests that as most of Kaņeps' connections were in the Latvian exile community, it significantly limited his possibilities to be open about being gay (Vērdiņš, 2019, 11). At the same time Kaņeps needed his cultural core to be Latvian. His artistic activities provide evidence that Kaņeps, despite the conservative attitude towards homosexuality, felt diaspora as a 'safe spot' to escape the traditions of the post-war American art that he disowned. But it was an important condition to become part of the local art network. And even if we recollect such defining moments as Stonewall Riots (1969) that essentially influenced queer histories and art making

Fig. 4. Rolands Kaņeps. *Crucified*. 1976. Collection of the Latvian National Museum of Art

practices in the United States, Kaņeps' oeuvre sends a message that personal history and cultural background that differs from the dominant one can urge to avoid the uniform process of cultural production and choose a different path. When reading his work from this perspective, it may be more accurate to view Kaņeps as a moral crusader. His works show that he worked against the time to depict the contemporary society as he felt it, to portray the meaning of his own suffering to a country of refuge as well as his diaspora that did not seem to care.

Fig. 5. Daina Dagnija with her painting *Spring Collection* c.1967. Photo: unknown. Private collection.

The second wave of feminism and the gay liberation movements of the 1970s, while disrupting the structure of the history of the twentieth-century modernism, began a discourse that not only touched upon issues of identity but also directed public attention to things outside of what had been presented as norm. These ideas were important to the painter **Daina Dagnija** (1937–2019) – a late member of the Hell's Kitchen's collective. She became close to the group in the beginning of the 1970s after she moved to New York.

An important point of reference in her development as an artist, as she has stated (Daina Dagnija in conversation with Andra Silapētere. 20.07.2019. Record in the private archive of Andra Silapētere), was a trip with her husband who worked in military to the Japanese island of Okinawa. She spent there a year (1961–1962) and the landscape and people she met changed her painting style from abstract to figurative, starting to build her narratives around human bodies and incorporating colour as an important tool to emphasize emotions, struggles and hopes. Dagnija had her first New York solo show at the Herbert Benevy Gallery in East Village in 1971 where she showed large-scale canvas that combined her observations of the society in the United States with the pop culture imagery of the time: Jacqueline Kennedy and Aristotle Onassis, silent movie stars, the Pope and year 1922 candidates for *Miss America* (Šturma 1971, 3). Paintings radiated a need for a critical look at different social norms and paradigms especially emphasizing women's experiences. This critical gaze in later years grew into manifestations of her own experiences as a lover, mother and woman artist.

The feminist approach was very important to Dagnija in art as well as in life, though she has criticized movement as sometimes too aggressive in its imagery. She linked the aggressiveness with the rules of the competitive art market that asked for shocking figures that she felt were unnecessary to talk about a woman's position (Daina Dagnija in conversation with Andra Silapētere. 20.07.2019. Record in the private archive of Andra Silapētere). An aspect of her approach was brought to my attention by her two paintings *Tribal Portrait* (1975) and *Mother* (c. 1975) that both focus on black bodies. The experience of being a woman is often

related to the experience of the 'other' that in the case of Dagnija is also the identity of a refugee, thus relating to a socially subordinated role and implying affinity with her painting subjects. After escaping the Soviet regime in 1944, Dagnija's family was one of the many that spent years in refugee camps in Germany before moving to the United States. This experience became crucial for the artist, reflecting upon it in her paintings, transforming the personal into the symbolic and seeing parallels between her life and those of refugees and marginalised communities in other parts of the world, as well as the environment in the United States. In 1976 and 1977, Dagnija painted *Vietnamese Refugees*, depicting the migration of people seeking refuge from the Vietnam War (1955–1975). Afterwards in 1980 she painted *Afghan Refugees*. She likened these events to those in her own past, in that way emotionally and physically drawing attention to her community (Latvian diaspora) that she belonged to.

As regards *Tribal Portrait* and *Mother*, we can ask to what extent her gaze is complicit with the subject, and to what extent it conforms to a kind of objectification. It seems it was the question that Dagnija was reflecting on, and we see it taking a shape in the 1980 painting *Target Queen* (1980). The narrative and staging of the painting were inspired by Clint Eastwood's film *Bronco Billy* (1980). Dagnija is depicting a woman as a target in the darts game that was a direct reference to one of the episodes in the movie. The scene in the film led her to question the woman's position in the society: how women are represented and how it is possible to fight against the objectification. She was aware of the fact that notions of power, privilege and history cannot be erased from our behavior so easily but through the exposed woman's body in the painting she called for changes, solidarity, humanist principles and diversity.

The oeuvre of the Hell's Kitchen collective has shown how historical and cultural knowledge can be activated. Distancing from the new environment and the art scene leads to construction of new meanings and alternative forms of expression. These forms were penetrated with homesickness, yearning and melancholia, and as American poet and critic Susan Stewart has argued, "turned toward a future-past, a past which has only ideological reality" (Stewart 1984, 23). But these expressions were also strategies manifesting a different artistic and cultural identity in a dominant local culture and art infrastructure, a way of self-determination.

References:

Apinīte, M. (2005) *Mudīte Austriņa – radošas personas portrets*. Latvijas Universitāte, pp. 1–100

Augusts, G. (1991) *Mudīte Austriņa veļu valstībā* // ZK Apskats. Jūlijs-augusts, pp. 10-12

Austriņa, M. (1951) *Ciemos pie Rolanda Kaņepa* // Latvija. nr. 62, p. 3

Daina, D. (2004) *Daina Dagnija*. Rīga: Neputns, p. 38

Daina, D. (1981) *Paintings of Woman* 1965-1981. New Jersey: Maurice M. Pine Free Public Library, p. 2

Krēsliņš, J. (1986) *Rolands Kaņeps* // Latvju Māksla. Nr.12, pp. 1160-1170

Saliņš, G. (1999) *Jaunie un mūžīgi jaunie* // Jaunā Gaita. Nr.216, pp. 37-38

Silapētere, A. (2019) Baltic Exile and Eigrant Communities: Hells Kitchen Collective in New Yourk. Post.MoMa. Available: https://post.moma.org/baltic-exile-and-emigrant-communities-hells-kitchen-collective-in-new-york/

Stewart, S. (1984) *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection*. Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, p. 23

Šturma, E. (1971) *Dekoratīvs raksturs* // Laiks. 15. decembris, p. 3

Vērdiņš, K. (2020) *Somehow. Some day. Some Were. Rolanda Kaņepa svētie mocekļi. Rolands Kaņeps. Tēlu karuselis*. Cēsis: Pasaules Latviešu Mākslas Centrs, pp. 2-15

Private archives:

Daina Dagnija in conversation with Andra Silapētere. 20.07.2019. Record in the private archive of Andra Silapētere.

Jānis Krēsliņš in conversation with Andra Silapētere. 11.11.2018. Record in the private archive of Andra Silapētere.

AFFECTIVE HYBRIDITY IN ANDA MAGONE'S PHOTOGRAPHY SERIES *FORGIVENESS*

Jana Kukaine
Art Academy of Latvia, 13 Kalpaka Boulevard, Riga, LV-1050
jana.kukaine@lma.lv

ABSTRACT
The article develops the concept of affective hybridity through analysis of Anda Magone's photography series *Forgiveness* (2011–2019) and its intersubjective context. In this work, Magone captures her experience of spending a week in Berlin to assist her close friend who had had abortion and subsequent sterilization. Photographs and conversations reveal the artist's ambivalent feelings – a mixture of relief, care, confusion, sorrow and affection – associated with her friend's decisions. This article analyses the affective dynamics of Magone's series within a broader context, and the evocative qualities of contradictory but appealing worldviews that result in affective hybridity. While applying Clare Hemmings' idea of affective dissonance (2012) and Sara Ahmed's account of a feminist killjoy (2010), the article examines affective states connected to reproductive futurism, compulsory heterosexuality and motherhood. The notion of affective hybridity presents an epistemic privilege and political potentiality for feminist critique, especially for rethinking the appropriation of motherhood within nationalist and capitalist discourses.
Keywords: *feminist affect, contemporary photography, motherhood, feminist killjoy*

A variety of feminist scholars have claimed that without the affective dimension, feminism means "very little except as an intellectual exercise" (Stanley and Wise 1993, 66). Affects like feminist pleasure and passion, empathy and care, solidarity and labour, as well as anger and frustration have been foundational to feminist affect studies in particular and feminist politics in general (Pedwell and Whitehead 2012, Hemmings 2012). While the most visible work in feminist affect theory has been devoted to analysing particular affects – hate and fear (Ahmed 2001), shame (Probyn 2005), happiness (Ahmed 2010) and depression (Cvetkovich 2012) among many others – such approaches can be criticized for the framework of affective atomism that does not take into account that affects can mutually overlap, blur and contradict. The subject may lack awareness of her feelings and emotional states, since her 'inner world' might be only partially evident to her, or in some cases obscure and imperceptible. Likewise, it is possible to misinterpret affects or try to negate them. This article attends to one of the challenges of personal affect management – that is, the culturally sustained practises to identify, understand and live with affects – by outlining the possibility of affective hybridity. This notion will be foregrounded by analysis of Anda Magone's photography series *Forgiveness* made in 2011–2019. While elaborating on Clare Hemmings' idea of dissonant solidarity (2012) and Sara Ahmed's account of a feminist killjoy (2010), the article will engage with Magone's photographic work and its intersubjective context to highlight the epistemic privilege and political potentiality of affective hybridity for feminist critique, especially its capacity to resist the ideology of reproductive futurism that appropriates motherhood for nationalist and capitalist aims.

A Diary of Affective Dissonance

Anda Magone is a well-known photographer in Latvia, mostly acclaimed for her poetic documentary style developed in black and white photography. In multiple series the artist investigates the affective and embodied bonds sustaining her family and friends, as well as the affectionate and mutual relationships with the environment and non-human beings such as animals and plants. Magone's photographs often take the form of an intimate diary capturing details of everyday life, and *Forgiveness* is no exception.

Initially titled *Berlin. Bodies*, the series was taken in 2011, when Magone visited her friend Ieva in Berlin. The purpose of this visit was to support and nurture Ieva, who was then undergoing the procedure of abortion and sterilization – an operation to permanently prevent pregnancy – and to take care of Ieva's children and household. While performing the task of uncommodified affective labour (Oksala 2016), the artist also made photographs of everyday situations and the process of Ieva's recovery. In 2019, the series was published in a book and was on display in the exhibition *Home is Where the Heart Is* at the Culture Palace *Ziemeļblāzma*, Riga, curated by Jana Kukaine. The photo installation consisted of a book, a sofa and a white blanket for snuggling, since the show took place in the chilly days of autumn. It can be said that the arrangement of the installation was also an expression of the affective labor of the artist in an attempt to make visitors feel comfortable, warm and at ease while engaging in the story of her friend. The installation was then entitled *Forgiveness* (Fig. 1).

The series features a nuanced and judgment-free photographic gaze anchored in the artist's empathy which for the viewer not only opens "a window on the experiences of others" (Hemmings 2012, 151), that is, her friend Ieva, but also fosters a sense of connectedness and embodied knowledge. Since empathy also includes trust, it can grant epistemic authority to subjects coming from marginal or misrepresented social groups (Collins 2000). While telling a story about her friend, *Forgiveness* shows an aesthetic interest in everyday life and enclosed domesticity, and provides insights into the patterns of embodied care work and the multiple tasks of maintenance of not only Ieva's but also Magone's own body, revealing that both women were photographing each other (Fig. 2 and 3).

Fig. 1. Installation Forgiveness. Exhibition *Home is Where the Heart Is*, 2019. Culture palace *Ziemeļblāzma*, Riga. Curator: Jana Kukaine. Photography: Valdis Jansons.

The visual references to abortion and sterilization are rather vague, except for two explicit images, which expose Ieva's body after medical interventions, in both cases avoiding to reveal her face (Fig. 4). Her bodily transformations can also be traced via the representations of dolls featured in two other images with a similar composition, where Ieva and a doll are both lying in bed (Fig. 5). The affective function of these objects is rather ambiguous: the doll might be interpreted as a lifeless baby's body and thus become a source of horror, or, on the contrary, its presence and visible references to Soviet design can evoke memories of Ieva's childhood and be the source of consolation and comfort.

Magone's commitment to her friend, as testified by the photography series, can be perceived as an enactment of feminist ideas of support and care, sisterhood and solidarity. However, the displayed solidarity also includes a dissonant aspect, which forces the friends apart. The imagery and the title complicates its affective qualities, revealing a shadow of doubt and even reluctance to fully embrace Ieva's choice. Therefore, it can be argued that the series enlightens the perspective of affective hybridity, which results from seemingly contradictory opinions. Feminist arguments of women's reproductive rights, body's integrity and birth control are confronted and to a certain extent undermined by social norms, including pro-life standpoints and widespread perceptions of motherhood as natural and blissful. While Ieva's life choices might be viewed as an enactment of women's rights and evidence of women's liberation, the series also sustains a counternarrative, which (inadvertently?) makes Ieva into a sinner who needs to be forgiven. Both of these perspectives seem to be binding for Magone; in the series they overlap and merge.

It should be noted that Ieva had never questioned her choice. Retrospectively it can be said that these bodily manipulations turned out to be among the first steps in the sequence of her transformation into a non-binary person in the following years, although in 2011 this future prospect remained unknown. However, it is also important to note that, while performing the affective labour for Ieva, the artist had never shared her own mixed feelings, since she had prioritized her friend's well-being and successful recovery. Only in 2019 when the book was about to be published did Magone and Ieva discuss the implications of the title that revealed the presence of two worldviews: one that asserts women's reproductive rights and another that regards motherhood to be naturally good, an obligation and a gift that no sensible woman in any circumstances would refuse.

Fig. 2. Anda Magone. From photography *Berlin. Bodies*. 35 mm film. 2011. Courtesy of the artist.

Fig. 3. Anda Magone. From photography *Berlin. Bodies*. 35 mm film. 2011. Courtesy of the artist.

The ambivalence of the situation is also highlighted by the artist's awareness of her twofold position. One the one hand, during her visit she was just an observer taking random photographs, without any substantially grounded rights to interfere or doubt her friend's decisions. In addition, such a position would be incompatible with Magone's devotion to her friend and the character of affective labour she was offering her. On the other hand, Magone had also considered herself to be an active participant in the processes depicted in the images, facilitating her friend to implement the decisions. Thus, the artist started to regard herself as an accomplice – a sister in crime. A lingering feeling of distress and sorrow has been hovering until at least 2019, when, preparing the work for the exhibition, she could finally discuss it with Ieva (who was gradually becoming Lando). One of the issues that came up in the conversations was the awareness of the possibility (or the lack of

it) to resist social norms and dominant narratives. Capitalist and nationalist discourses often claim motherhood to be the solution not only to demographic problems, but also a way to keep unwelcomed immigrants away. By producing babies for the nation, the existence of the future labour force, consumers and taxpayers will be ensured, reducing the risk of poverty and national dissolution. This future is foremost advancing the model of a heterosexual nuclear family, whose duty is reproduction. Since these discourses are invested with deep affective meaning, their invocation of complex emotional engagements is not surprising.

Fig. 4. Anda Magone. From photography *Berlin. Bodies*. 35 mm film. 2011. Courtesy of the artist.

Fig. 5. Anda Magone. From photography *Berlin. Bodies*. 35 mm film. 2011. Courtesy of the artist.

According to feminist scholar Clare Hemmings, affective dissonance might start from realizing "how it feels to experience the gaps between self-narration and social reality" (2012, 154). While Ieva-Lando was certain about her determination to settle up accounts with motherhood, as a single queer mother, an artist and an immigrant from Eastern Europe who needs to rely on the help of her friend from another country for childcare and household support, Ieva was also in a vulnerable and socially marginal position, revealing the gap between her genuine life choices and the 'social reality'. That gap is reproduced by the photography series of Magone in an affectively hybrid way: her empathy provides a window on the experiences of Ieva, yet the shadow of doubt attempts to keep that window closed. While simultaneously drawing from both feminist and anti-feminist sentiments, *Forgiveness* supports the view on motherhood as a choice and as an essential obligation (a no-choice situation), mixing relief with disapproval, a feeling of gain with a feeling of loss. However, it would be oversimplified to claim that one view is a source of positive feelings, and the other only negative. The affective pattern is more complicated and diverse. Furthermore, the very simultaneous presence of both standpoints, their affective and ideological juncture and the impossibility to be clearly separated only enhances confusion.

The Joy of Being Joyless

In her study on happiness, feminist affect theorist Sara Ahmed explains how happiness is commonly associated with some life choices and not others, and these associations bear on how we are directed towards certain things. From Ahmed's point of view, the "science of happiness could be described as performative: by finding happiness in certain places, it generates those places as being good, as being what should be promoted as goods" (2010, 6). Since happiness is also used to redescribe social norms as social goods (2010, 2), it is not surprising that among the primary happiness indicators Ahmed mentions marriage,

heterosexuality, being a housewife and having kids. Motherhood, viewed as one of the social goods, also defines a good woman, since "A good woman is good in part because of what she judges to be good" (2010, 55). In other words, what makes a woman good is how she aligns herself to the socially accepted sources of happiness. From this point of view, Ieva's refusal to become a mother is a refusal of a socially accepted script of happiness, a script that is indicative of womanhood in general. She chooses to be bad and to be unhappy, to be the troublemaker who is irrevocably affected in a wrong way by the right thing, that is, motherhood. These decisions and affective states enable an identification of Ieva as a feminist killjoy.

A feminist killjoy, according to Sara Ahmed, is someone who 'spoils' the happiness of others, who ruins the atmosphere of well-being and creates tension. Even though there are many possibilities to kill joy, one simple way is related to questioning if the objects that are believed to promise happiness are indeed so promising (2010, 65). By doing so, a feminist killjoy "exposes the bad feelings that get hidden, displaced, or negated under public signs of joy" (Ibid.). In other words, a feminist killjoy reveals uncomfortable truths, as well as disrupts the prevailing narratives of happiness, sustained by nationalist and capitalist ideologies.

In *Forgiveness*, this narrative is motherhood. Ieva's choice for abortion and sterilization indicates that motherhood might not be the life choice associated with happiness and that one's happiness sometimes might include avoiding motherhood. The ambivalent relation of motherhood to happiness makes it a good example for affective hybridity: it is an object that simultaneously produces and kills joy. Since Ieva is perceived as social troublemaker, her actions expose some of the hidden feelings that are not noticed or acknowledged in the dominant narratives where reproduction has a particular social function to safeguard the political status quo. Both nationalism and capitalism share affinity to the idea of reproductive futurism (Edelman 2004) which views producing children to be the way to bestow value to life and maintain a hope for a (heteronormative, patriarchal and national) future. Consequently, a woman's value is attached to her ability and desire to contribute to that future. She is expected to judge that future to be good, redescribing social goods as social norms. By refusing or questioning this scenario, she is accused of making trouble, and perhaps even killing the future.

To become a troublemaker is challenging, as it implies becoming vulnerable and marginalized. As Ahmed observes, to inherit feminism means to inherit sadness. Being a feminist, according to her, also includes grief, a feeling of loss and hard labour to recognize "disappointment, when you are living a life [..] which is meant to be full, but feels empty" (2010, 75). The artist's mixed feelings about her friend's choice might in fact attest to both of them inheriting feminism. In being near her friend and affectionally taking care of her, she had experienced the shutting down of the possibility of the happy future and "the sadness that hopefulness postpones" (Ibid.). The positive affects of sisterhood and friendship, presented also in Magone's photographs (Fig. 2 and 3), are soaked with hopelessness and sadness (expressed, for example, in the post-surgery images or compositions with dolls, Fig. 4 and 5) and the awareness that the gap between the self-narration and the social reality is widening for both of them. The affective dynamic of feminism does not preclude ambivalence where different and even contradictory affects might be attached to the same object, for example, women's reproductive rights.

Yet the figure of the feminist killjoy is not doomed to be joyless, at least not permanently. As Hemmings has noted, affective dissonance may entail varying results, for example, suppression ("it could be worse"), fostered advantages ("if you continue to treat me like this, I will leave you") or justification of lack of care or withdrawal of labour (2012, 157).

However, the dissonance can be transformed into affective solidarity which is based on "feeling an ill fit with social descriptions and that same sense in considering others" (2012, 150). A sense of injustice incites a desire for social change and search for alternative values, counter-narratives and utopia. In the series *Forgiveness*, this desire is foregrounded by the emphatic photographic gaze of the artist that endows Ieva with an epistemic authority. It makes her life choices legitimate, instead questioning social forces that aim to marginalize and judge her.

From this point of view, forgiveness also acquires a hybrid function, offering a tactic of healing and repair. Rather ironically, it is achieved by the invocation of the stereotype of woman's generous heart, her merciful and all-forgiving nature, so similar to the image of the Holy Virgin, the model Mother. *Forgiveness* thus presents one more approach to motherhood and addresses its promise of comfort. It can be perceived as a counterstrategy to the feminist killjoy that forgives the sinner for killing happiness, or/and it can be read as a feminist strategy to counteract the standard of compulsory motherhood, by forgiving the exclusion of the troublemaker. However, another reading of forgiveness is possible: it could be a standpoint of a feminist killjoy that forgives (oneself) for inheriting sadness. Paradoxically, the recognition of unhappiness also entails a promise of togetherness, and a new solidarity in alienation that provides a possibility for joy. The affective hybridity of feminist might manifest itself as joyless joy.

While honest articulation of the contradictory affective states provides for the artist's investment in self-care and helps to maintain and strengthen her friendship with Ieva, it is crucial to recognize the importance of the affective hybridity for feminism and other social movements. Critique, resistance and troublemaking do not produce only positive feelings (like enthusiasm and devotion), but also foster loneliness, grief and isolation. The affective pattern of any social change can be composed of contradictory elements that merge, overlap and find hybrid forms of coexistence. A feminist subject thus can be affectively split, contradictory and dissonant. This goes against the view of an empowered, straightforward and self-confident feminist agency and acknowledges the presence of doubt, confusion and sadness.

Magone's work and its intersubjective context confirms the importance of attending to allegedly outdated, unacceptable, confusing and awkward feelings, since inquiry into their origins can be beneficial for both feminist theory and politics. Hybrid affects can reveal hybridity in other spheres of social life, for example, in the perception of social goods, distributed promises of happiness and scripts for the future. Of course, affective hybridity does not provide a direct access to the unmediated truth and authentic knowledge; however, it allows to examine how the social reality is constructed and to trace its gaps. In addition, the affective dimensions of dominant narratives like nationalism and capitalism are highlighted. Therefore, affective hybridity can offer an epistemic privilege, which can be used for political and social critique. In Magone's photographs it reveals how the dominant social narratives of motherhood – viewed as compulsory reproduction and investment in nuclear heterosexual family – foreground the affects of (un)happiness and maintain the standard of a good woman. Finally, the standpoint of affective hybridity acknowledges presence and co-existence of multiple worldviews, allowing to assess a feminist position as a spectrum instead of a clear and distinct affective state where only 'feminist' feelings are recommended or welcomed. Attuning to affective hybridity may also inject an additional ration of liveliness into the feminist movement, ensuring its capacity to offer unexpected encounters, affinities and openings of the futures.

References

Ahmed, S. (2004) *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Ahmed, S. (2010) *The Promise of Happiness*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Collins, P. H. (2000) *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*. New York: Routledge.

Cvetkovich, A. (2012) *Depression: A Public Feeling*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Edelman, L. (2004) *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Hemmings, C. (2012) *Affective solidarity: Feminist Reflexivity and Political Transformation* // Feminist Theory 13, no. 2, pp. 147–161.

Magone, A. (2019) *Berlin. Seven Days*. 2011–2019. Self-published.

Oksala, J. (2016) *Affective Labor and Feminist Politics* // Signs. Journal of Women in Cult and Society 41. pp. 281–303.

Pedwell, C. and A. Whitehead (2012). *Affecting Feminism: Questions of Feeling in Feminist Theory* // Feminist Theory 13, no. 2, pp. 115–129.

Probyn, E. (2005) *Blush. Faces of Shame*. NED-New edition, University of Minnesota Press.

Stanley, L. and S. Wise (1993) *Breaking Out Again: Feminist Ontology and Epistemology*. London: Routledge.

NETWORKED MEANING-MAKING AND HYBRIDITY: A FEW NOTES ON CONTEMPORARY ART PHOTOGRAPHY FROM THE BALTICS

Paulius Petraitis
Lithuanian Culture Research Institute, 58 Saltoniškių, Vilnius
lkti@lkti.lt

ABSTRACT
This paper explores the construction of meaning and hybridity in contemporary photography, focusing on examples from the Baltics. Today photography practitioners from Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia increasingly produce works that not only are intermedial and hybrid in nature, but also function as elaborate artistic 'systems', where meaning is to be found within a large field of cultural references. While traditionally meaning in photography was seen to emanate from the content of a photograph, today this process is multi-layered and intricate. Photography practitioners increasingly invest images with meanings that gesture to outside and beyond the frames. Meaning-making takes place within an ever-expanding and arbitrary cultural field, of which the viewer is expected to have some knowledge to 'unpack' meanings.
This has much to do with the network turn. Today photography is fluid, adaptive and interconnected, with networked capabilities enabling new functionalities for photography and a further expansion into our daily lives, all of which reflects in artistic practices. A traditional two-dimensional photographic image plays just one part in artistic systems, where it is intermixed with sculpture, installation, video, performative elements, and written word. This hybrid nature of practice marks Baltic photographers as part of a global generation and allows their work to tackle complex contemporary issues.
Keywords: *contemporary photography, hybridity, intermediality, Baltic art photography, photographic meaning*

This paper explores two interrelated tendencies in contemporary art photography: multilayered meaning-making and hybridity. While the focus here is on examples by photography practitioners from the three Baltic States of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, the research is informed by and applicable to a wider international context. What follows takes as a point of departure the proposal that the regime of meaning-making in a number of contemporary photographic works differs quite fundamentally from the way the meaning was ascribed and attributed in photography in the not-so-distant past. Traditional art-historical understanding of photography has emphasized an image's content, implicitly suggesting that meaning emanates first and foremost from that which is depicted in a photograph. A photograph was 'about' the visual matter, with the confines of the image delineated by the photograph's frame seemingly demarcating the site of meaning. This analytical approach was (and, to an extent, still is) continually reinforced by the reliance of visual studies, film, and photography on the assumption that the relationship between the photograph and its object is indexical: this bond has been further described as special (Batchen, 2000, 72), existential (Rosen, 2001, 18), and even outright physical or causal (Smith and Lefley, 2016, 175). A

sense of physical continuity, what cinema scholar Jean-Pierre Geuens vividly referred to as "an invisible umbilical cord" (2002, 20), supposedly connects each photograph to its originary scene or object. This has translated to an emphasis on visual analysis comprised of close and intent looking at an image to analyse its visual content – which, as suggested by the concept of photographic indexicality, was formed by the very rays of the object at the moment of capturing.

The historical establishment of the special existential-physical link between object-turned-content and its image has direct affinity with the traditional belief in the veracity of photographic images, which was not only an ally of photojournalism and documentary photography, but also key for artistic practices, where it helped to make photographic images distinct from other forms of visual images. One fitting example in the latter context is Henri Cartier-Bresson's idea of the 'decisive moment' – the flag-bearing slogan of the humanistic photography movement that flourished in the West following WWII – which has defined the photographic image as a careful and instinctive observation of the visible. A photograph was conceived as a mirror reflection of a moment when forms, shapes, and shadows meet in a composition that can supposedly reveal something true and genuine about reality. In other words, here the supposition that photographic capture is truthful is further infused with ideas about artistic vision and its symbolic elevation. Art photographers in the Baltic States successfully adopted the notion of 'decisive moment'.

Practitioners of the so-called Lithuanian School of Photography constituted a generation specifically influenced by Bresson and wider humanistic aesthetic-philosophical ideals. This prominent art movement, most active in the 1960s and 1970s, produced (mostly) carefully composed black and white compositions that sought to capture and display something metaphoric about human lives. The works focused on widely relatable anthropocentric symbolic categories, such as work, study, youth, beauty, etc. Even photographic practices at the time considered edgy or counter to dominant narratives, like those by Violeta Bubelytė or Vytas Luckus, can be seen as more poetic and surrealism-inspired versions of the broader approach. While somewhat complicating the imagined conceptual unity of Lithuanian photography at the time, their works still maintained the overall primacy of the image-content.

Despite some variance, works from the period can be characterised by the crucial bond between a scene and its image. The viewer does not need specific cultural knowledge to appreciate the photographs by Antanas Sutkus, Romualdas Rakauskas, or Aleksandras Macijauskas, or their Latvian colleagues Andrejs Grants and Inta Ruka (perhaps one reason why they were and remain popular). The popularity and accessibility are facilitated by the fact that humanism-, or more precisely, positivism-influenced ideas about certain qualities of humanity and togetherness, were often at the centre of their pictures. Not so much changed in the 1980s and 1990s. While Lithuanian photographers increasingly turned attention to scenes of the banal, producing what photography historian Agnė Narušytė described as an "aesthetics of boredom" (2010), the notion locating the source of meaning in the image itself remained, slightly twisted: by attending to that which most considered inconsequential and casual, photographers focused on the hitherto unnoticed. In spite of variances, we can say that in the case of the 20th century Baltic photography the regime of meaning was attuned to a rather simple formula: the photographic image largely is *what it depicts*, in tandem with a sought-after symbolic effectiveness coming from the artistic sensibility of its various operators.

This stance was further supported by the traditional system of presentation, meant to be equally accessible and emphasising the image-content. Standard display entailed a (framed) two-dimensional image, hung on or close to the wall, with its centre corresponding to the viewer's eye-level, all this emphasizing the neutrality of the setting and foregrounding the

Fig. 1. Various photographic illustrations from *Camera Lucida*.

importance of the image-content. Such a mode of presentation aimed to minimize distractions from what was a statement of the autonomy of the photographic image.

Roland Barthes' *Camera Lucida* is in many ways a classic text on photography that reflects its traditional ideals. For Barthes, the medium's ability to present things the camera once saw – encapsulated in his famous 'that has been' – is the pinnacle of photography's allure and power, and the kind of photographs reproduced in *Camera Lucida* visually manifest this quality. This presentation is imbued with presence: the depicted scenes come to life, pricking the reader with vestiges of a felt presence. In typically poetic language he writes: "It is as if the Photograph always carries its referent with itself, both affected by the same amorous or funereal immobility, at the very heart of the moving world: they are glued together, limb by limb, like the condemned man and the corpse in certain tortures" (1981, 5).

For Barthes, this fixed inseparability is the crux of photography's meaningfulness. In other words, the ontological source of photography's strength is in the bond it forms with the world via images. Both Barthes' 'that has been' and the indexical relationship, famously imported (or, one could argue, 'misimported') to photography theory by Rosalind Krauss and Peter Wollen from the semiotic framework by American philosopher Charles S. Peirce in the late 1960s–1970s, encapsulate the importance of what was in front of the lens at the moment of capture, providing theoretical ground for the idea that what the photograph depicts is where its true meaning lies. Effected by these and like-minded notions such as the concept of 'the trace', photographs were seemingly forever tied to their referents in a bond that became medium-defining. This helped ground photography's ontological uniqueness and academic stability, establishing the image's content as the site of meaning.

The meaning-within-an-image is a regime with clear boundaries; the frame around the image is the border that separates the site of meaning from what is not a photograph. This may seem almost self-evident, yet today practitioners increasingly invest their images with meanings that do not stem from what is in the photograph. There is a shift of emphasis moving the locus of meaningfulness away from the photograph's visual content, dispersing meaning into a wide cultural field. It is a shift from the primacy of the fixed and natural, towards the fluid, arbitrary, and

Fig. 2. Left: Paul Herbst, from series *Dream Material*, 2012–2015. Right: Cover of *Fantastic Man*, spring-summer issue, 2010.

context-contingent. Furthermore, functioning as part of a broader cultural field, the photograph asks to be decoded, thus actively engaging the viewer, who is tasked with activating the meaning via a combination of collateral knowledge, imagination, and understanding of cultural codes.

Dream Material (2012–2015), a series by Lithuanian photographer Paul Herbst, offers a useful case study in this phenomenon. As a classical photographic work in form presented as a sequence of framed images on a wall[1], its presentation only highlights its departure in terms of meaning-making. These photographs not only explicitly refer to cultural entities and topics beyond their frames, but also refer back to each other. The series as a whole operates as a body where a range of motifs recur, yet they repeatedly shape-shift or morph into something slightly different.

The sequencing of visibly constructed scenes across the series is highly deliberate. One motif morphs into another, weaving a dream-like narrative and acting as the unifying structure of the work as a whole. Looking at the first 6 photographs in the series, such inter-referencing, morphing and interconnectedness become evident. Characteristic of the conceptual character of the whole series, the first image shows a drawing fashioned after an iconic portrait of photographer Wolfgang Tillmans that graced the 2010 cover of *Fantastic Man* journal, and is thus a photograph of a drawing of a photograph. This multi-layered mediation in the opening image already suggests a rather complex set of operations whereby meaning is attained in the work.

The boomerang appears as a recurring visual motif across the series. Just decipherable in Tillman's shot, it reveals itself more specifically in images 4-6, varying in shape and size, and most prominently in the 6th photograph, one of a few genuinely black and white shots in the series. Here the boomerang is held by a topless young man, sitting cross-legged on

1 *Dream Material* was presented as part of Riga Photography Biennial 2016 central group exhibition *Restart*. It was on view 16 April–12 June, 2016.

a bed and looking pensively into the distance. This image is a direct reference to an iconic photograph by Larry Clark, on the cover of his then-controversial 1971 photobook *Tulsa*. While the gun in Clark's earlier portrait signifies the thrill and potential threat of the kind of life he and his young company were leading at the time, including gunplay and drug use, the boomerang seems to signify an elliptical network of references at play in Herbst's work, and can be seen as the central motif of his later series.

As a symbolic device to highlight shapes and motifs returning, the boomerang seems a suitable metaphor for the work and for the networked meaning-making in photography at large, not only gesturing to the repetition of objects and motifs in different photographs, but also functioning as a visual reminder of how external references are able to infiltrate or be 'thrown into' the photographic work after the fact.

Significantly, both the meaning-making and arguably the whole aesthetic pleasure of encountering these works remain restricted if the viewer fails to recognize references operating within the series. As the limited case studies here show, such gesturing beyond the photographic image itself is not restricted to extra-references to other photographic works alone, but can encompass visual and pop culture, film, even personal anecdotes and dreams. *Dream Material* may disappoint if the viewer encounters the work with the expectations of a beholder of traditional photography, for which meaning-making derives from the 'that has been' quality of the self-contained image. Herbst's series is more constructed than, for instance, works of the classical School of Lithuanian Photography. The demand on the viewer to actively engage with the work may partly explain why the audience of such work seems more limited.

Due in part to this complexity in meaning operations, photographic works can be successfully used to address today's urgent and complex issues. One example is the work of Estonian artist Kristina Õllek, regularly produced in collaboration with her partner Kert Viiart, which are research-based and do not shy away from politically-charged topics. *Nautilus New Era* (2018), a multi-layered installation that combines photographic images with video work and sculptural objects, draws from Jules Verne's classical fiction text *Twenty-thousand Leagues Under the Sea* (1870) to address the current problematic topic of deep-sea mining in the age of climate emergency. Whereas the *Dream material* series still adhered to the traditional mode of photographic display outlined above, Õllek emphatically departs from these conventionalities, instead creating a spatial installation using materials related to the mining industry to develop an artificial deep-sea-like environment, wherein questions concerning the ecosystem's fragility are brought closer to the viewer. In a related installation *Filter Feeders, Double Binds & Other Silicones* (2020), she explores marine ecology and man-made attempts at green-energy solutions, using traditional photographs whose simplicity is deceptive. In one particular image, for instance, a hand seeming holds a jelly-fish, which is in fact a water-bubble made by the artist herself based on current scientific experimentations to reduce plastic waste. This image is symptomatic of the depth of research and labour that may go unnoticed if we merely look at what lies inside the frame.

The opening-up of photography's meaning-making and its functioning within an ever-expanding field is intrinsically linked to the networked turn. Photography today is fluid, adaptive and interconnected, as networked capabilities enable a new functionality for photography and a further expansion into our daily lives, circumstances reflected in artistic practices. Images not only increasingly function on a wide plane of cultural meaning, but are also presented in mixed environments wherein a traditional two-dimensional photographic image (if it exists at all) is often just one element, intermixed with sculpture, installation, video, performative elements, and written word.

Fig. 3. Left: Larry Clark, *Dead*, from series *Tulsa*, 1970. Right: Paul Herbst, from series *Dream Material*, 2012–2015.

Some recent photographic work specifically reflects on the network and the logic of its operating principles[2]. Lithuanian artist Indrė Šerpytytė's *2 Seconds of Colour (2015)*, presented as an installation of multiple lightboxes with a specially commissioned sound[3], explicitly engages with *Google* image search. Writing the phrase 'Isis beheadings' into the engine, the artist focused on the brief moment while the visual information is not yet loaded and the interface instead displayed blocks of a dominant colour comprising the yet-to-be-loaded-photograph, as if slightly skewed giant coloured pixels. Showcasing this in-limbo moment and not the images of atrocities themselves, Šerpytytė engages in a philosophical dilemma taking up the issue of looking at atrocities, and the 'decision to not look' as a potent political gesture. These works actively not only engage with the viewer's imagination, but also require some knowledge of them. It would be hard to understand *2 Seconds of Colour* without being familiar with how *Google* image search operates or without personal experience of the characteristic moment of abstract blockness. The work simply could not function without the network. It also recalls that digital data is information-to-be that can transform into anything rather than existing in a fixed, solid state. Here images are as if in the moment of transition or latency, instead of being already formed and anchored by their visual appearance, as was the usual case with previous analogue photography. Engaging with the now-ubiquitous image search engine, Šerpytytė's work reminds us that the concrete shapes

2 A special 2018 issue of *Fotografija* journal and accompanying exhibition *New Tools in Photography: From Google to Algorithm* addressed this topic.
3 *2 Seconds of Colour* was presented in Šerpytytė's solo exhibition *Absence of Experience* at Contemporary Art Centre in Vilnius in 2017.

Fig. 4. Kristina Õllek, *Feeling With the Water Jelly*, installation view, 2020.

which digital photographs assume via networks are code-dependent and somewhat arbitrary. *Undecidability*, as Daniel Rubinstein and Katrina Sluis have put it in one of the pioneering articles on post-digital photography, is the "key property of the networked image" (2013, 151).

The examples of *Dream Material; Nautilus New Era; Filter Feeders, Double Binds & Other Silicones; 2 Seconds of Colour*, are united by virtue of their meaning referring to wider, more diffuse, and seemingly less relevant (at least, on first sight) cultural phenomena and processes. Here the meaning of the photographic image gets divorced from a strict bond to its subject matter to the extent that what is literally seen is not necessarily coupled to what it means. This results in something of a masked ball wherein something else masquerades as that which can be seen on the image's surface. The coloured blocks, boomerang, and jellyfish all point through cultural codes to something they are not strictly of, not to what they are per se. Put differently, the photograph may be about something totally different that its appearances reveal.

Today Lithuanian, Latvian, and Estonian artists increasingly produce photographic works that not only ask for the viewer's rather active engagement, but also function as elaborate hybrid 'systems'. While the expanded meaning-making is an invisible process, hybridity is a physical manifestation of the same underlying principles of fluidity and incipient links. The environments where photography is displayed today are becoming increasingly intermedial, hybrid, and site-responsive, including, among others, the settings for Marge Monko's *Stones Against Diamonds, Diamonds Against Stones* (2018); Liga Spunde's *When Hell Is Full the Dead Will Walk the Earth* (2019) and *What's A Girl Like You Doing In A Place Like This* (2017); Vytautas Kumža's *Shifting presence* (2021) and *Trust it, Use it, Prove it* (2016); *Trial and Error* (2017) by Reinis Lismanis. Sometimes hybridity may manifest in a rather straightforward and tongue-in-cheek way, as was the case with Robertas Narkus' recent solo exhibition *The Board* (2020), where the artist used characteristic humour to pit life-size photographs of objects with some of the objects themselves in a whimsical display.

Contemporary photography increasingly responds to and engages with the present via hybrid and multi-layered displays, wherein images function as nodes in elaborate artistic 'systems'. The meaning of photographs presented in these systems is likewise networked and multidimensional, not referring back to its referent as much as pointing to diverse and sometimes even contradictory nodes of meaning. When the photograph is divorced from its subject-matter and is 'undecided' it can be almost anything, context-dependent. Staking cultural associations, the photograph enables itself as an important currency in the cultural dialogue, able to shape-shift and act as a message of communication.

Intermediality and what has been framed here as a networked regime of meaning-making are noteworthy features of contemporary art photography from the Baltics and beyond. These phenomena are not isolated from wider social and cultural tendencies, but act as both reactions to and expressions of them. Culture is increasingly interconnected, such that fluidity, shape-shifting and adaptability are important cultural and practical principles. Today meaning itself is seemingly more changeable and fragmented. The real is less fixed, and reality is more about shaping notions, opining, and arguing. Contemporary works from the Baltic States correspond to these circumstances, showing that photography actively addresses and shapes complex social, political, and economic issues, while also raising philosophical questions and provoking thoughtful meditations. That this is increasingly done in hybrid forms is another aspect befitting our times. While no longer an unflappable and unflinching mirror of the physical world, photography remains an active mirror of the culture that makes it.

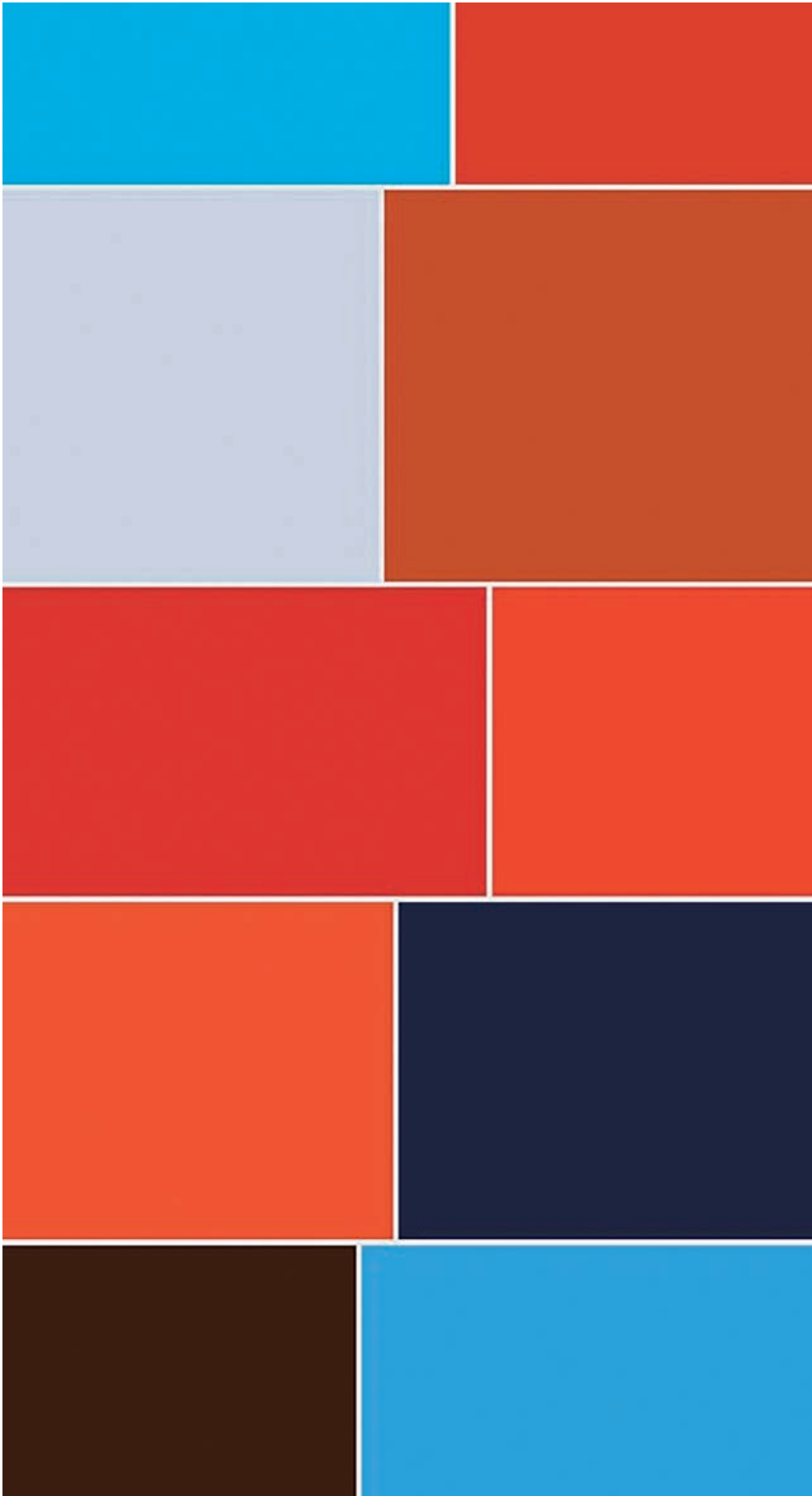


Fig. 5. Indrė Šerpytytė, from the series *2 Seconds of Colour*, 2016.

References

Batchen, G. (2000) *Each Wild Idea: Writing, Photography, History*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Barthes, R. (1981) *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*. New York: Hill and Wang.

Geuens, J. (2002) *The Digital World Picture* // Film Quarterly, Nr. 4, 16-27 p.

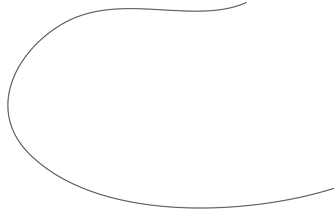
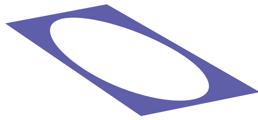
Narušytė, A. (2010) *The Aesthetics of Boredom: Lithuanian Photography* 1980-1990.

Vilnius: Vilnius Academy of Arts Press.

Rosen, P. (2001) *Change Mummified: Cinema, Historicity, Theory*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Rubinstein, D., and Sluis, K. (2013) *Notes on the margins of metadata: Concerning the undecidability of the digital image* // Photographies, Nr. 1, pp. 151-158

Smith, P., and Lefley, C. (2016) *Rethinking Photography: Histories, Theories and Education*. New York and London: Routledge.

Art Academy of Latvia
13 Kalpaka boulevard, Riga,
LV-1050, Latvia

www.lma.lv

E-mail: info@lma.lv
doktorantura@lma.lv
Phone: +371 67332202

ISBN 978-9934-541-62-9