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Artists' Community in Soviet Lithuania: Case Study of the Vilnius Jeruzalė Sculpture Garden

Keywords: Vilnius Jeruzalė Sculpture Garden, artists' community, sculptor's studio, decorative sculpture, small-scale sculpture.

In Soviet Lithuania, like in the entire Soviet Union, the gathering of artists into informal groups was not tolerated, but instead, artists were encouraged to become members of the state-controlled Artists' Union of the USSR. However, informal communities of like-minded colleagues would assemble in private spaces, artists' homes and studios, where the goals of creative and political freedom were pursued. "Particularly in the period of official Socialist Realism, which began and ended at different times in different Eastern bloc countries, independent-minded artists made the autonomy of art their key postulate. Similar demands emerged all over Eastern Europe, from the GDR to the USSR, from Romania to Poland. [...] It was a reaction to the official politicization of culture, or, to be more precise, to the use of art in communist propaganda. Autonomy was therefore understood as a condition for the liberty of art, for its right to concentrate on itself, and on the intimate, existential problems of the artist [...]"¹ The goals of the autonomy of art were strengthened by the fact that the occupational authorities never succeeded in completely severing the links of Soviet Lithuanian artists with the culture of independent interwar Lithuania. Those Lithuanian artists of the interwar period who had not retreated to the West and had not been deported to Siberia taught at the State Art Institute of the Lithuanian SSR in Vilnius. After Stalin's death,

¹ P. Piotrowski, From the Politics of Autonomy to Autonomy of Politics, *Menas ir politika: Rytų Europos atvejis / Art and Politics: Case Studies from Eastern Europe. Meno istorija ir kritika / Art History & Criticism*, 2007, no. 3, p. 18.

in the period of Khrushchev's thaw, interwar intellectuals returned from deportation, and those who retreated to the West in 1944 came to visit their homeland. The Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis Boarding School for the Arts for talented children founded in 1960 in Vilnius became an important shelter for artists seeking the autonomy of art, and a *citadel of modernism* – many of them studied or taught in its art department.

The official climate of art in Soviet Lithuania was affected by the attention of the ruling nomenclature to national identity during the commemoration of the country's most important events (the 650th anniversary of the founding of Vilnius in 1973; the 400th anniversary of Vilnius University in 1979, etc.), and paying homage to historical personalities (commemorations of the 250th anniversary of poet Kristijonas Donelaičius's birth in 1963; the centenary of composer and painter Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis's birth in 1975, etc.). In the 1970s, some culture-loving members of the political nomenclature of that time started to support artistic work representing the new tendencies with state funds. For example, thanks to the efforts of the long-time chairman of the Klaipėda Executive Committee, Alfonsas Žalys, symposiums of granite sculptures began to be held in Smiltynė from 1977, and sculptures created during these symposiums were erected in Klaipėda's former German cemetery, which was gradually converted into a park of decorative sculptures. The head of the Juknaičiai sovkhos in the Šilutė district, Zigmas Dokšas, built an exemplary settlement with contemporary infrastructure, modern architecture and works of art.

About the Jeruzalė Sculpture Garden in Vilnius

In 1946, two nationalized Polish villas from the interwar period on Pašvaistės street in a remote suburb of Vilnius, Jeruzalė,² were transferred to the Artists' Union of the Lithuanian SSR by a decree of the Council of People's Commissars of the Lithuanian SSR. They were meant to be used

² The name of the suburb is related to the Baroque ensemble of the Church of the Discovery of the Holy Cross and the Stations of the Cross in Verkiai, which was built in the 17th century.

by artists for recreation and work, and served as summerhouses for the members of the Artists' Union of the Lithuanian SSR and their families. From 1956, artists began to move in. One of the houses, newly occupied by printmakers Birutė Žilytė (b. 1930) and Algirdas Steponavičius (1927–1996), became the first informal *hub* of like-minded artists' gatherings in Jeruzalė. In 1962, the family of sculptor Vladas Vildžiūnas (1932–2013)³ and printmaker Marija Ladigaitė (b. 1931)⁴ rented a part of the house on Lobio Street in the vicinity. Their home became the second *oasis of freethinking*⁵ in Jeruzalė. Having returned from Siberia, Marija's mother Sofija Ladigienė⁶ moved in, and anti-Soviet intellectuals who had come back from deportation and remained under close watch by the KGB (Committee for State Security) – publisher and editor of the interwar cultural magazine *Naujoji Romuva*, Juozas Keliuotis,⁷ Catholic priest Petras Rauda, and self-educated philosopher Justinas Mikutis – would stop over. The Vildžiūnas family hosted Lithuanian Americans who came to visit to their homeland: artists Viktoras Vizgirda, Kazimieras Varnelis, archaeologist and anthropologist Marija Gimbutienė, and England-based sculptor Elena Gaputytė. Frequent guests were friends of the Vildžiūnas, researcher of M. K. Čiurlionis's work, future leader of the Lithuanian Reform Movement *Sąjūdis*, musicologist Vytautas Landsbergis, theatre

³ Vladas Vildžiūnas studied sculpture at the State Art Institute of the Lithuanian SSR from 1952 to 1961. In 1958–1960, he was expelled from the Institute for behaviour incompatible with the name of a Soviet student, as in 1956, after the events in Hungary, he participated in a patriotic procession to the Rasos cemetery. In 1964–1969, Vildžiūnas worked as a teacher at the M. K. Čiurlionis Art school. In 1961, he joined the Artists' Union of the Lithuanian SSR, in 1977–1982 was the chairman of its Sculpture Section, and in 1988–1993 was the head of the Department of Sculpture of the Vilnius Academy of Arts.

⁴ Marija Ladigaitė, a printmaker, illustrator of children's books, daughter of a general of independent Lithuania, Kazys Ladiga (1893–1941), who was killed by the Soviets.

⁵ L. Pociūnienė (ed.), *Vladas Vildžiūnas*, Vilnius, 2001, p. 25.

⁶ Sofija Ladigienė, a member of the Lithuanian Seimas in 1926–1927, a journalist.

⁷ Juozas Keliuotis (1902–1983), a journalist, was arrested in 1945, and deported to Pechora labour camps. In 1947, he returned to Lithuania, but in 1952 was arrested again, and came back from Solikamsk labour camps in 1956. Keliuotis remained under surveillance by the KGB from 1965 to 1985; four volumes of his operational files are held in the Special Archives of Lithuania.



1. Rūta Staliliūnaitė in the costume of Queen Barborą Radvilaitė at the model of Vladas Vildžiūnas's decorative sculpture *Barborą* in the Jeruzalė Garden. 1972

researcher Irena Veisaitė,⁸ and theatre director Jonas Jurašas, who stayed with the family from 1972 to 1974 before emigrating to the West. In 1972, he produced the historical drama *Barborą Radvilaitė* (Barbara Radziwiłł⁹) by Juozas Grušas at the Kaunas Drama Theatre, but censors made cuts in the play because of its national patriotic allusions, and the director was expelled from the theatre. Having moved in with the Vildžiūnas, Jurašas brought along a bohemian theatrical vibe. The garden became the site for the celebration of the pagan midsummer festival, St. John's Eve, where bonfires were burned and oak-tree wreaths were twined. One of the guests, actress Rūta Staliliūnaitė, appeared dressed in

⁸ Irena Veisaitė (b. 1928), rescued from the Kaunas ghetto in the years of World War II, found refuge in the home of Sofija Ladigienė, and made friends with her daughter Marija Ladigaitė.

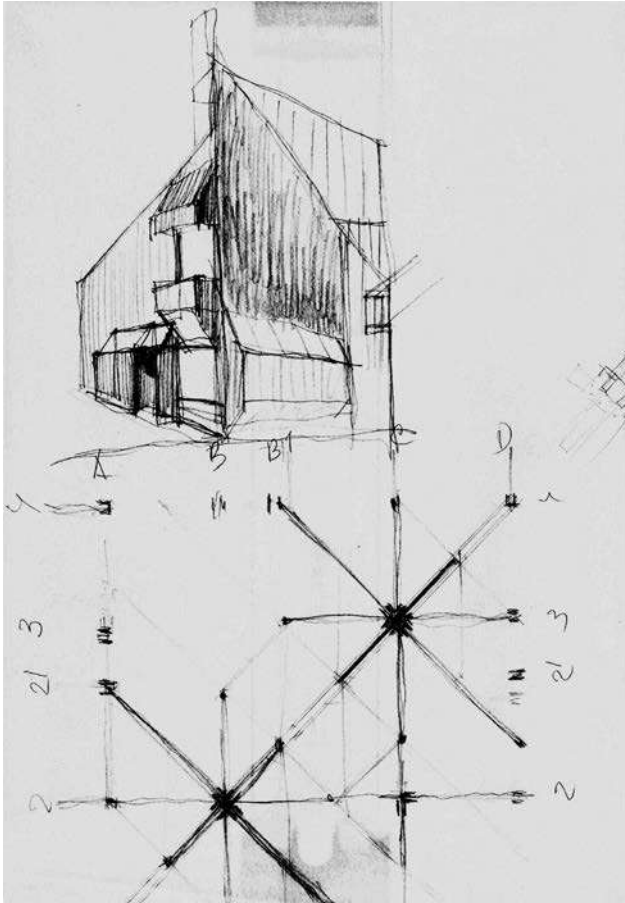
⁹ Barborą Radvilaitė (Polish: Barbara Radziwiłł), Queen of Poland and Great Duchess of Lithuania, was the second wife of the king of Poland and Great Duc of Lithuania Sigismund August II, the last male representant of the Jagiellonian dynasty. She came from a distinguished Lithuanian family. According to the legend she had been poisoned by the enemies at court.



2. Marija Ladigaitė and Vladas Vildžiūnas on the set of the film *A Trip to Paris*. 1973

the Renaissance costume of Queen of Poland and Great Duchess of Lithuania Barbora Radvilaitė (Barbara Radziwiłł), who became the prototype (fig. 1) for Vildžiūnas's decorative sculpture *Barbora* (1972–1982, Vilnius). On Jurašas's initiative, and with participation of the members of the household and mime Zigmās Banevičius-Kūdra, a short film *A Trip to Paris* – a reference to a virtual trip that was absolutely impossible in the reality of Soviet Lithuania of that time – was filmed with Vildžiūnas's 16 mm camera in 1973 (fig. 2). Jurašas helped Vildžiūnas carve from sandstone a decorative composition *Lithuanian Ballad* devoted to the 650th anniversary of the founding of the city of Vilnius (1973). Frequent guests in the Vildžiūnas's home were artists, Vildžiūnas's fellow student, sculptor Teodoras Kazimieras Valaitis (1934–1974), printmaker Rimtautas Gibavičius (1935–1995), textile artist, painter Kazimiera Zimblytė (aka Kazė, 1933–1999) and others. In 1968–1975, an alumnus of the Čiurlionis Art School, Stasys Kuzma (1947–2012), and his wife, ceramic artist Lida Kuzmienė (b. 1948) lived there as well. These were artists, whose way of thinking and work did not fit into the official discourse, and who were trying to break free from its boundaries.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, an informal community of sculptors of the Jeruzalė Garden began to be formed around the Vildžiūnas's home. Circa 1970, Kuzma brought to the Vildžiūnas his fellow students sculptors Gediminas Karalius (b. 1942) and Petras Mazūras (b. 1949), and circa 1973 – a then student of the Sculpture Department of the State Art Institute, Mindaugas Navakas (b. 1952), to whom he taught drawing. Somewhat later, Navakas's fellow students, sculptors Vladas Urbanavičius (b. 1951) and Ksenija Jaroševaitė (b. 1953) joined in. The latter reminisced: “Today, it is not so easy to explain the significance of Jeruzalė and the Vildžiūnas's home, where various interesting people would gather, at the time. In that home people lived a different life than in public. They talked about trivial things, and also discussed very serious matters from politics to art. It was not only the information and the feeling of being in touch with the world, brought by the Vildžiūnas's guests, books and slides, but also a possibility to speak out freely and share your thoughts that could not be expressed anywhere else, that was so important. Not only because



3. Česlovas Mazūras. Draft of Stanislovas Kuzma's temporary studio in the Jeruzalė Garden. 1972–1973

it was dangerous. It was difficult to find concerned listeners and interlocutors. The Vildžiūnas's oasis was very important for us, young artists, and really helped us break the ground.¹⁰

Thanks to Vildžiūnas's support for young talent, active efforts and diplomacy, in 1970 the Executive Committee of the City of Vilnius

¹⁰ G. Jankevičiūtė (ed.), *Ksenija Jaroševaitė: tradicinė skulptūra XXI amžiuje* [Ksenija Jaroševaitė: Traditional Sculpture in the Twenty-First Century], Kaunas, 2004, p. 29.

decided to transfer a 3.4-hectare plot of an old fruit garden in Jeruzalė to the Art Foundation of the Lithuanian SSR. The plot was assigned “for building an outdoor sculpture studio, [...] and its project must be validated according to the procedure prescribed by the Board of Construction and Architecture.”¹¹ Vildžiūnas’s acquaintance, architect Česlovas Mazūras (b. 1942)¹² prepared a standard project of a temporary studio, which could be adapted according to an individual sculptor’s wishes (fig. 3). In 1972–1973, Karalius and Mazūras built the first temporary studios in the Jeruzalė Garden. The latter also built an annex to the studio, where he lived with his wife, ceramic artist Kristina Karkaitė (b. 1948), from 1972 to 1976.¹³ In the mid-1970s, Stasys Kuzma cast the foundations for a studio and gave them over to his then-assistant Mindaugas Navakas, who built himself a studio circa 1980.¹⁴ In 1974, Vildžiūnas built a temporary studio, where he created a model of the monument to Čiurlionis in Druskininkai, and later used it as a studio and a temporary exhibition venue. In 1982, Vladas Kančiauskas (b. 1945), and in 1986, Rimantas Sakalauskas (b. 1951) and Algis Lankelis (b. 1964) followed suit. Later they built residential annexes attached to the studios. In 1988, they were joined by Šarūnas Šimulynas (1939–1999) and Marijonas Šlektavičius (b. 1957), in 1990 – by Artūras Raila (b. 1962), and in 1991 – by Gediminas Akstinas (b. 1961). In 1998, Ksenija Jaroševaitė and Vladas Urbanavičius began to build a studio, but having realized that they would not be able to keep both an apartment and a studio, they built themselves a house. This is how a “colony” of sculptors was formed in Jeruzalė (fig. 4).

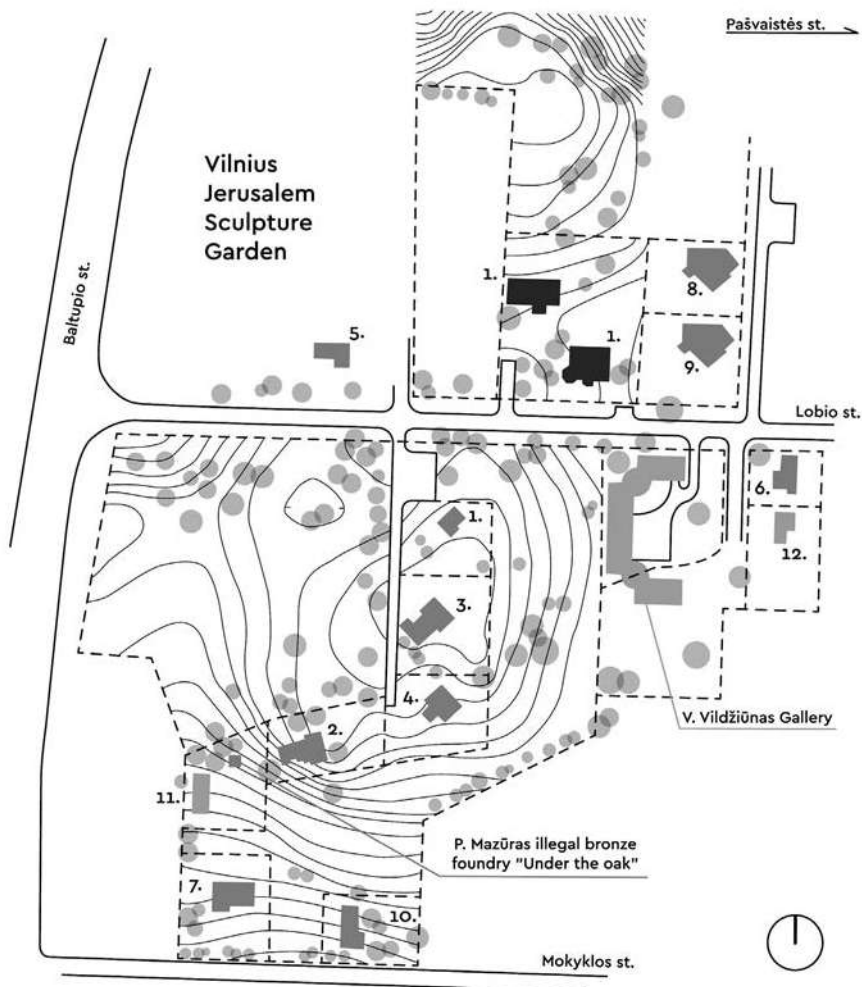
In 1989, in the period of Gorbachev’s *perestroika* and the first cooperative enterprises, Vildžiūnas established the Limited Liability Company

¹¹ Decree of the Executive Committee of the Council of Workers’ Deputies of the City of Vilnius No. 581 (13 11 1970). Artūras Raila’s private archive.

¹² Vladas Vildžiūnas together with architect Česlovas Mazūras took part in the competitions for a monument at the 9th Fort of Kaunas in 1968 and 1989.

¹³ In 1976, the family moved into a new studio and apartment provided by the Art Fund of the Artists’ Union of the Lithuanian SSR on Šilo St. in Vilnius.

¹⁴ In 1980–1981, Stasys Kuzma moved into a studio and apartment provided by the Artists’ Union of the Lithuanian SSR on M. Margytės St. (today, Krivių St.), and gave over the foundations for an outdoor studio to sculptor Mindaugas Navakas.



4. Plan of the Jeruzalė Sculpture Garden: 1 – Vladas Vildžiūnas's house, studio and temporary studio; 2 – Petras Mazūras's temporary studio (today a residential house); 3 – Gediminas Karalius's temporary studio (today a residential house); 4 – Mindaugas Navakas's temporary studio; 5 – Vytautas Kančiauskas's temporary studio (today residential cottages); 6 – Rimas Sakalauskas's temporary studio, converted into a residential house and a studio in 2004; 7 – Algis Lankelis's temporary studio, converted into a residential house and a studio in 1997; residential houses and studios of: 8 – Šarūnas Šimulynas, 9 – Marius Šlektavičius, 10 – Artūras Raila, 11 – Gediminas Akstinas, 12 – Ksenija Jaroševaitė and Vladas Urbanavičius.

“Vilnius Jeruzalė Sculpture Garden”. In 1992, the company changed its status into a condominium (members: Vildžiūnas, Kuzma, Mazūras, Navakas, Akstinas, Lankelis, Raila), and today, it operates as a public institution. In 1990, a gallery was built in the garden (architect Rimantas Dičius). After a reconstruction of 2010–2016, it was called Vladas Vildžiūnas’s Gallery.

Chronologically, the history of the informal “colony” of sculptors in Jeruzalė falls into three periods: beginning (1962–1970), growth (1970–1990), and legitimization (from 1990). This publication aims to discuss the activity of the Jeruzalė Sculpture Garden from 1962 to 1990 and the goals of the autonomy of art, as well as the works of late Modernism and Postmodernism that appeared in the environment of Socialist Realism.

The Autonomy of Art of the Jeruzalė Sculptors from the 1960s to the 1980s

In the 1960s–1980s, the landscape of sculpture in Lithuania ranged from official monumental pieces to decorative and small-scale sculpture, which was more open to creative freedom.¹⁵ In the mid–1970s, decorative sculpture, according to Giedrė Jankevičiūtė, already “quite widely represented the newest tendencies of the stylistic development of Lithuanian art, embodying the search for authentic self-expression. Along with small-scale sculpture, it became one of the most interesting fields of not only sculpture, but also Lithuanian art of that time in general.”¹⁶

An important impulse for the evolution of decorative sculpture in the 1960s–1980s was provided by the decision of local authorities “to assign 1–3 per cent of the total budget of public buildings to works of decorative art. [...] Artists (usually for interior and environmental landscaping works) were not imposed on architects. Architects themselves would

¹⁵ A sculpture not higher than 80 cm fell into the “small-scale” category. In the late Soviet period, this criterion served as a kind of shield that allowed artists to distance themselves from large-scale, monumental, politicized sculpture.

¹⁶ G. Jankevičiūtė, Įvadas [Foreword], *Skulptūra 1975–1990* [Sculpture 1975–1990], ed. by Giedrė Jankevičiūtė, Elona Lubytė, Vilnius, 1997, p. 111.

choose their collaborators.”¹⁷ Cooperation with architects, particularly those who had been recognized all over the Soviet Union, helped the sculptors of the Jeruzalė Garden deal with the requirements of their clients, the ideologists of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, the Council of Ministers, the Ministry of Culture and the Artists’ Union of the Lithuanian SSR.

In discussing the activity and creative pursuits of the informal community of sculptors of the Jeruzalė Garden from the 1960s to the 1980s, attention is focused on two aspects of the autonomy of art – the role of technology and the presentation of works.

Role of Technology

The Jeruzalė sculptors came to regard the goal of technological independence as an important precondition for the freedom of visual expression. This goal was bolstered by the weak technological basis of art production factories, which were only accessible to sculptors loyal to the regime, and the lack of masters skilled in the technologies of working with different materials. The practical know-how allowed the sculptors to implement creative ideas on their own, without the help of assistants and censorship of clients. “The wish to see their works completed and the pleasure of coming to grips with inert material”¹⁸ gave birth to a new type of sculptor. According to Navakas, this type could be called a sculptor-technologist who implements a creative idea all on his/her own from the beginning of the work (a sketch) to its execution in granite, marble or metal. “Being well familiar with some technology of sculpture production, the artist creates a work bearing it in mind. Moreover, a certain technology

¹⁷ N. Šepetyš, Apie intelektualų kūrėją, (ne)palankų laiką, įšakinančius kontekstus, (ne)peržengiamas ribas [On an Intellectual Creator, (Un)Favourable Time, Ingraining Contexts and (Un)crossable Limits], *Teodoras Valaitis 1934–1974. Parodos katalogo priedas* [Teodoras Valaitis 1934–1974. Supplement to the exhibition catalogue], ed. by Giedrė Jankevičiūtė, Vilnius, 2014, p. 10.

¹⁸ M. Navakas, Medžiagos dialektika [The Dialectics of Material], *Literatūra ir menas*, 1980 09 27, p. 7.



5. Vladas Vildžiūnas. *Three Kings* at the new wing of the Kaunas M. K. Čiurlionis Art Gallery. 1968

determines the artistic expression of the sculpture [...].”¹⁹

In 1967–1968, having fitted up a studio in an auxiliary building attached to his house on Lobio St. in Jeruzalė, Vildžiūnas welded copper plates on a five-metre steel frame for the decorative sculpture *Three Kings*, which was meant for the new wing of the Čiurlionis Art Museum in Kaunas (fig. 5). This original technology allowed the sculptor to make a large but quite light and easily transportable work from stable materials. Its innovatory form was influenced by Lithuanian folk art and the works of the classics of Modernism, Henry Moore and Jacques Lipchitz. The sculptor’s arbitrary and generalized treatment of form displeased his clients. “In a year, thirteen committees of all sorts assessed the work. [...] Finally, the then minister of culture

Šepetys took efforts to have the sculpture erected.”²⁰ Šepetys wrote in his memoirs what arguments were given for the installation of the work: “[...] in this composition, the spirit of eternity and the intricate mystery of our artist and composer’s work were adequately expressed. Thus, in its

¹⁹ M. Navakas, op. cit., p. 7.

²⁰ L. Pociūnienė, op. cit., p. 34.

style of expression the work did not ‘fit’ within the narrow boundaries of Socialist Realism: angular metallic sculptures without customary faces, without noses and hands... Had anyone ever seen similar figures in these parts at that time? I proposed a compromise to the artist: to display *The Three Kings* not as a separate independent sculpture, but move it closer to the museum’s wall and treat it as a decorative sculptural embellishment. There will be fewer bones to pick. The artist understandingly agreed with the idea of an ‘embellishment’²¹

In the 1960s–1980s, Lithuanian monumental sculpture developed according to the general guidelines of monumental propaganda of the Soviet Union. In 1966, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Soviet Union and the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union passed Decree no. 481, in which three main types of monuments were distinguished, their hierarchy was established, and institutions responsible for the building of monuments were appointed. Monuments of general all-union standing could be commissioned exclusively by the Central Committee of the Communist Party and the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union. Memorial busts could be built at the discretion of separate republics by a decision of local Central Committees of the Communist Party and the Council of Ministers. Monuments of figures of Lithuanian culture and history most often had to be defined as busts. Approval of the Central Committee of the Lithuanian Communist Party and the Council of Ministers of the Lithuanian SSR was needed, but usually competitions were not announced in order to avoid much fuss, and works were commissioned for concrete artists.²²

Thus, in 1974, in preparation for the 100th anniversary of Čiurlionis’s birth, it was decided to build a monumental bust in the town of the artist’s youth, Druskininkai. Having received the commission, sculptor Kazys Švažas carved it from marble. Yet, his work did not appeal to the chairman of the Committee for the Commemoration of the

²¹ L. Šepetys, *Neprarastoji karta. Siluetai ir spalvos. Atsiminimai* [The Un-Lost Generation. Silhouettes and Colours. Memoirs], Vilnius, 2005.

²² E. Lubytė, Paminklai [Monuments], *Skulptūra 1975–1990* [Sculpture 1975–1990], ed. by Giedrė Jankevičiūtė, Elona Lubytė, Vilnius, 1997, p. 39–41.

rooth anniversary of Čiurlionis's birth, the minister of culture Šepetyš. He decided to address Vildžiūnas, who already in 1964–1968 carved from wood a portrait of Čiurlionis with a crown. Šepetyš recalled: "After work I took a car and went to see him in Jeruzalė. I turned into his driveway, and saw a man coming out of the house, a bona fide sculptor – thickset, with longish hair and a beard, dressed in a thick hand-knit sweater. 'Fine', he said, 'but only on condition that nobody supervises me while I work, and secondly, the ministry buys my works that are available.' 'We will buy them right away, but as to supervision, I'd like to reserve myself the right to check on what you are doing.' 'Okay, Minister, you are free to come'. The Central Committee agreed not to interfere. And Vildžiūnas made one of the finest sculptures in Lithuania"²³.

"We cast it in Leningrad and built it," Šepetyš continues. "What made the Central Committee concede? I had different power than my predecessors. When I was appointed a minister, for the first time in the Soviet Union they decided to make the minister of culture a member of the Presidium of the Council of Ministers. I took part in all sessions of the Presidium, and my voice in administering the budget was as important as that of the minister of finance, Sikorskis. Certainly, I did not abuse this position, but sometimes used it to good advantage."²⁴

A romantic view of a historical personality is characteristic of Vildžiūnas's monuments *Barbora* (1972–1982, Vilnius) and *Classicist Architect Laurynas Stuoka Gucevičius* (1986, Vilnius). According to Giedrė Jankevičiūtė, she sees the commemorated figures "in the historical perspective, and extols their tragic conflict-ridden fate and sacrifice for the nation's interests. [...] In modelling a figure, the sculptor contrastingly combines the positive and the negative, concave and convex geometrized segments. The artist himself calls this method 'vital constructivism', emphasizing that he seeks the activeness of visual expression and emotional suggestion also by indirectly asserting a propensity to conflict not

²³ In 1976, Vildžiūnas was awarded a republican prize of the Lithuanian SSR for his monument to Čiurlionis in Druskininkai.

²⁴ G. Jankevičiūtė (ed.), *Teodoras Kazimieras Valaitis 1934–1974, Exhibition catalogue*, Vilnius, 2014, p. 344.



6. Gediminas Karalius. *Morning* at the Lazdynai shopping centre. 1982

only as a means of visual expression, but also as one of the basic personality traits that are of interest to him, showing the power and remarkability of the represented person.”²⁵

Other sculptors also used the technology of welded copper plates. In 1974–1975, in his studio in the Jeruzalė Garden Karalius welded a decorative composition *Morning* from copper plates for a shopping centre in the Lazdynai residential district (fig. 6). A tenant of Vildžiūnas, Kuzma helped him weld the copper plate sculpture *The Three Kings*. Kuzma used the experience of their joint work later, in 1977–1981, while creating a decorative copper plate composition *The Feast of Muses* for the façade of the reconstructed Vilnius Drama Theatre. A closer look at Kuzma’s

²⁵ G. Jankevičiūtė, Žmogaus įvaizdžio kaita šiuolaikinėje Lietuvos skulptūroje [The Change of the Image of a Human Being in Contemporary Lithuanian Sculpture], *Šiuolaikinės lietuvių dailės horizontai* [Horizons of Contemporary Lithuanian Art], ed. by Pilė Veljetaga, Vilnius, 1992, p. 65.

small-scale wooden 'scarfed figures' reveals similarities to the sculptures of *The Feast of Muses*. "A vision of a women-mother, a women-goddess, has been taking shape in my mind for a long time. When I was a teenager at an art boarding school, longing for my home and my mother, I used to write poetry about my mother's scarf. I longed for cosiness and security. It all sank into my subconscious and assumed totally different shapes, and formed my way of thinking as a sculptor, transforming itself into a recurring shape of a woman with a scarf."²⁶ The sculptor further developed this motif in 1976–1985, when, having quit his position as a teacher at the Drawing Department of the Vilnius Art Institute, upon an invitation from Zigmas Dokšas, head of the Juknaičiai sovkhos in the Šilutė district, he moved to the new settlement in 1976. In collaboration with architects Rūta and Alfonsas Kiškis, he began to create large-scale decorative sculptures for public spaces.²⁷

In the 1970s–1980s, the sculptors of the Jeruzalė Garden independently mastered the technology of bronze casting. This was made possible by the England-based Lithuanian sculptor Elena Gaputytė, who sent to Vildžiūnas a manual of bronze casting after her visit to Jeruzalė in 1969.²⁸ Navakas, still a student of the State Art Institute of the Lithuanian SSR, was the first to use it. Having consulted with ceramic artist Egidijus Talmantas, he cast his first small-scale bronze sculptures. In his studio in the Jeruzalė Garden, he fitted up a small (up to 20 kg) foundry, which was called *a tub*. There he cast his small-scale sculptures, the first abstract compositions by himself and Urbanavičius, and figurative compositions by Jaroševaitė.

In 1977–1983, referring to the manual sent by Gaputytė, Mazūras built his personal foundry in the Jeruzalė Garden under an oak tree

²⁶ K. Šapoka (ed.), *Stanislovas Kuzma*, Vilnius, 2011, p. 108.

²⁷ On the recommendation of Stasys Kuzma, other sculptors of the Jeruzalė Garden also created in Juknaičiai. Gediminas Karalius built the decorative sculpture *Flight* in 1983–1985. Artūras Raila assisted him in creating a gypsum model of the work in the Jeruzalė studio. In 1989, together with his former fellow students Lankelis, Vytautas Umbrasas and Gintaras Gailius, Raila created wooden sculptures in Juknaičiai.

²⁸ J. W. Mills, M. Gillespie, *Studio Bronze Casting: The Lost Wax Method*, London, 1969.



7. Mindaugas Navakas at the cast of his *Dedication to Kazimieras Būga* “under the oak”. 1978

growing at his studio (‘under the oak’, fig. 4.). Sculptures weighing up to 150 kg, circa 1 m high, could be cast there. In the casting process, Navakas and Urbanavičius assisted Mazūras in overseeing the crucible and heating the bronze. The works *Mother Earth* (1978) and *The Milky Way* (1979)²⁹ by Mazūras, and *Swimmers* (1979) and *Children* (1980) by Navakas were cast in that foundry.

In 1979, in commemoration of the 400th anniversary of Vilnius University, Navakas’s sculpture *Dedication to Būga* (fig. 7) cast in Mazūras’s foundry ‘under the oak’ was erected in the Kazimieras Būga Room of the Philological Faculty. The sculpture featured a detail of Būga’s face multiplied six times and set on a column, which also had examples of the old Baltic language personal pronoun *aš* (I) carved on it.³⁰ This was the sculptor’s way of visually and semantically

expressing his relation to the famous linguist and his work. The conceptual treatment of the dedication perplexed even more tolerant

²⁹ In 1986–1987, a five-metre tall replica of the sculpture *The Milky Way*, titled *The Human*, decorated the façade of the first building of post-modernist architecture in Lithuania, the Mykolas Žilinskas Gallery in Kaunas (architect Simas Miliūnas). From the technological viewpoint, it was a unique “lost wax” cast of a twelve-part model.

³⁰ The idea of *revitalising* the old university buildings with works on the theme of Lithuanian language studies had been proposed in the 1960s by Albinas Kentra, a member of the staff of the Foreign Language Teaching Centre. This programme of *Lithuanianising* the university was supported by its rector, Jonas Kubilius. He managed to ensure that commissions for artists would be approved by a committee consisting exclusively of the university staff rather than members of the Artists’ Union, the Central Committee of the Communist Party, the Council of Ministers or the Ministry of Culture of the Lithuanian SSR.



8. Petras Mazūras assembling *Genius* at his studio. 1983

Nike) reaching up to the ceiling [a 300 kilogram cast was produced by using two interconnected crucibles]. In the context of our sculpture, it is an extraordinary work indeed: spectacular, with obvious philosophical claims and, in terms of form, one of the most complicated pieces in the entire history of Lithuanian sculpture. [...] It is emotionally quite a powerful work impelling us to think about the artist's relation to reality

clients at the time. The university committee accepted the sculpture only after the linguist Vyacheslav Ivanov remarked that the dedication was the shortest dictionary of the extinct Baltic languages.³¹

The last work cast in the foundry 'under the oak' was Mazūras's post-modernist composition *Genius* (1980–1983, interior of the Alytus Children's Art School, fig. 8). "There were quite a few people who racked their brains trying to understand what the artist sought by placing on a low-rise classicist column of pale rose marble a fanciful-looking fragment of a green-eyed human head carved from black basalt, and by 'growing' from the latter a hollow bronze figure (clearly reminiscent of ancient Greek

³¹ The author's conversation with Albinas Kentra, a lecturer of Vilnius University and an initiator of a number of artworks created on the occasion of the anniversary of Vilnius University, on 14 November 1996.

and himself, and about a certain ambiguity of an artistic personality and the ensuing dramatism.”³²

Moscow-based art critic Igor Svetlov shared his impressions about what was happening in the Jeruzalė foundry ‘under the oak’ with the readers of the Soviet publication *Sovetskaya skulptura* (The Soviet Sculpture). “I had a chance to watch two young sculptors, Mazūras and Navakas, independently casting their bronze works. They performed complex actions of controlling the fire and intently observing the casting process with great precision, without making any fuss. There was something pagan in their heroic strong figures and concentrated faces. The casting process does not allow relaxing and losing attention even for a minute. It takes strong will and patience to improve it at each stage and take it to a successful finish. As a challenge to sceptics, each new work by Mazūras and Navakas is better than the previous one. [...] Their aim is, with the help of different techniques, to make a better (more advanced) cast than can be made in art production factories. Another thing is also important: the artists want to implement their ideas without any delay, right away [...]”³³ (fig. 9)

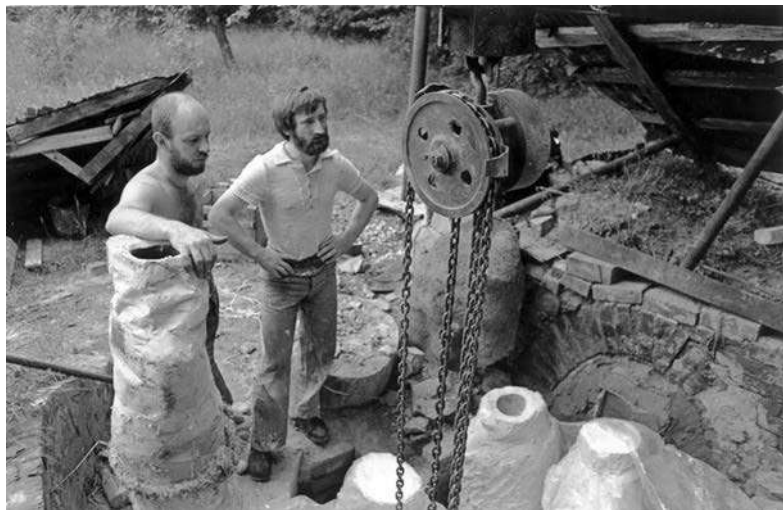
Following suit of his younger colleagues, Vildžiūnas also started to cast sculptures independently. “Mazūras fitted up the second foundry in the basement of the Čiurlionis Art School and began teaching the skills of bronze casting to his students taking sculpture classes. Jaroševaitė and Urbanavičius, who used to cast their works in Jeruzalė, later built their own foundry in the homestead of Urbanavičius’s parents in the Kelmė district.”³⁴

Navakas’s studio has been and still is an important venue for technological experiments in the Jeruzalė Garden. The sculptor not only cast bronze. In 1977, when working on his graduation piece *Wading Girl* at

³² A. Andriuškevičius, *Lietuvių dailė: 1975–1995* [Art of Lithuania: 1975–1995], Vilnius, 1997, p. 90–91.

³³ I. Svetlov, *Molodye skulptory Litvy* [Young Sculptors of Lithuania], *Sovetskaja skulptura* 79/80, Moscow, 1981, p. 207–208.

³⁴ G. Jankevičiūtė, Įvadas [Foreword], *Skulptūra 1975–1990* [Sculpture 1975–1990], ed. by Giedrė Jankevičiūtė, Elona Lubytė, Vilnius, 1997, p. 23.



9. Mindaugas Navakas and Petras Mazūras at the foundry “under the oak”. 1978

the State Art Institute of the Lithuanian SSR, Navakas tried his hand at carving granite. He continued his acquaintance with this material during granite symposiums in Smiltynė in 1977–1992. Participants of approximately two-month symposiums would be given a grant, accommodation in Smiltynė, meals and work tools and, on demand, assistants. The sculptors of the Jeruzalė Garden, Navakas, Jaroševaitė, Urbanavičius, Mazūras, Kuzma, Vildžiūnas and Lankelis, actively attended the symposiums. Works created during the symposiums were erected in Klaipėda, on the site of the former cemetery renamed as Martynas Mažvydas Park.³⁵

During these symposiums, Navakas created his first non-figurative sculptures inspired as their author himself acknowledges, “by so-called ‘secondary nature’, i.e. man-made objects: ‘I am very fond of architectural forms, above all, eclectic architecture or, more precisely, eclectic façades. One can find bizarre, illogical, but highly artistic things there’.”³⁶ In his

³⁵ www.mlimuziejus.lt/lt/ekspozicijos/skulpturu-parkas/parko-skulpturos/

³⁶ A. Andriuškevičius, op. cit., p. 241.



10. Mindaugas Navakas carving a granite sculpture *Shield* at his studio, in the foreground – concrete *Volumes and Involutés*, on the left – Gediminas Karalius's outdoor studio. 1984

studio Navakas not only cast bronze and carved granite, but also began to work with a new material – concrete – and cast a series of works *Volumes and Involutés* (fig. 10). His attention was drawn by the brutality and strength of this architectonic material. In 1985, Navakas in collaboration with architect Vytautas Jakubauskas and with intermediation of Gintaras Babravičius, the then deputy director of large-panel housing component production at the Vilnius Building Construction Plant, organized a concrete sculpture symposium in the Paneriai district of Vilnius (other participants included Jaroševaitė, Kęstutis Musteikis, Naglis Nasvytis, Mindaugas Šnipas and Urbanavičius). The works created during this event were the first objects of contemporary art to emerge in Lithuania's public industrial spaces. Somewhat later, Navakas sparked the interest of the

young sculptors of the Jeruzalė Garden, Akstinas, Lankelis and Raila, in the technological and visual possibilities of concrete.³⁷

When discussing the issues of the autonomy of technology, it is important to note that at that time the sculptors of the Jeruzalė Garden did not have a right to acquire work materials and tools; besides, they could not be found in shops. They were repurchased from illegal suppliers or exchanged for vodka. Brake compressors of engine locomotives could be obtained from the workers of the Vilnius railway depot, while the workers of stone processing plants could provide perforators and angle stone-cutting machines called 'bulgarka', as well as their spare parts. Raw materials for casting and bronze billets could be acquired in factories located in the Naujoji Vilnia suburb, and diesel fuel necessary for heating was bought from drivers.³⁸

Sculptor Urbanavičius gave a controversial description of the work conditions of that time and artistic results in the Jeruzalė Sculpture Garden: "The situation in the Soviet period was indeed paradoxical, and when I had a chance to go abroad and show what we were doing, I saw confused looks. How, where from? Having come to Lithuania in the grip of the Soviet regime, Vildžiūnas's guests were equally amazed when, upon their visit to the Jeruzalė studios, they saw what we made sculptures from. Granite, bronze, personal foundries.... And, alongside, totally meagre living conditions, ideological oppression, and information vacuum."³⁹

The Presentation of Works

A separate mention should be given to the activity of the sculptors of the Jeruzalė Garden, Vildžiūnas and Navakas, in legitimizing new practices

³⁷ In 1990–1992, Navakas organized group exhibitions "Concrete Sculpture: Algis Lankelis, Mindaugas Navakas, Artūras Raila" (1990) and "Sculpture. Akstinas, Lankelis, Navakas, Raila" in the park of the Artists' Palace (1992) and a symposium of concrete sculptures in Santariškės, a borough of Vilnius medicine institutions (1991).

³⁸ From the author's conversation with Mindaugas Navakas on 15 December 2016; the transcript is held in Elona Lubytė's private archive.

³⁹ G. Jankevičiūtė (ed.), *Skulptoriaus dosje: Vladas Urbanavičius* [Profile of a Sculptor: Vladas Urbanavičius], Kaunas-Palanga-Roma-Vilnius, 2009, p. 101.

of presentation of works, which brought diversity to the monotonous and ideologized pattern of republican and thematic exhibitions of the Soviet period. In 1972, on assignment from the Artists' Union of the USSR, Vildžiūnas took part in the international sculpture symposium in Villány, Hungary, where he carved a composition *Ecce Homo* from marble. In the Lithuanian SSR, unlike in the countries of the Warsaw Pact, creating a composition of religious content and such modern visual expression would not have been allowed.

In Hungary, Vildžiūnas got acquainted with the French sculptor of Hungarian descent, Pierre Szekély,⁴⁰ and his Japanese assistant Goichi Kitagawa. Having returned to Japan, the latter formed a group of sculptors called A Hum, and in 1976, held an eponymous international sculpture exhibition in Yokohama. In this exhibition, along with original works by local artists, photographs of small-scale sculptures by European sculptors, including Vildžiūnas, Karalius, Kuzma and Valaitis, sent by Vildžiūnas, were displayed. It was the first unofficial presentation of works of the Jeruzalė sculptors abroad, as at that time Lithuanian artists could send their works to international exhibitions exclusively by way of Moscow.

In 1977, Vildžiūnas went to the USA upon an invitation initiated by a professor of the University of California, a scholar of Lithuanian descent Marija Gimbutienė.⁴¹ During this trip, he cast works after his sketches in a private foundry, and gave one of them – a decorative sculpture *Bird Goddess* – to the Franklin D. Murphy Sculpture Garden in Los Angeles. During the trip, he also held solo exhibitions in several private art galleries in Long Island, Chicago and Los Angeles. After his return, in 1978, already as the chairman of the Sculpture Department of the Artists' Union of the Lithuanian SSR (he held this position from 1977 to 1982),

⁴⁰ Vildžiūnas received the address of the famous Lithuanian-born French sculptor Jacques Lipchitz from Pierre Szekély, and they exchanged letters in 1972. See T. Sakalauskas, Aštuoni laišakai ir penki post scriptum [Eight Letters and Five Postscripts], *Kultūros barai*, 1976, no. 2, p. 64–69.

⁴¹ In a conversation with the author in May 2011, Vildžiūnas asserted that he was allowed to go to the USA in 1977, as the quota for a trip to the USA assigned by the Artists' Union of the USSR remained unfilled after printmaker Stasys Krasauskas's (1929–1977) death caused by a severe illness.



11. Installation of *Sashes* by Kazimiera Zimblytė on the balcony of the house of Marija and Vladas Vildžiūnas. 1979

Vildžiūnas exhibited the works created during the trip in the Art Workers' Palace of the Lithuanian SSR in Vilnius, an exhibition space where Lithuanian artists could display their works uncensored by the political nomenclature in the 1980s. During the opening, Vildžiūnas showed filmed footage from American museums and sculpture parks. Although at that time some people occasionally had a chance to visit their relatives in the USA, information about the latest developments on the art scene reached Lithuanian artists from the other side of the Atlantic with much more difficulty. And Vildžiūnas's footage gave an opportunity to learn about it!



12. Sculptors at the exhibition of decorative sculptures in the courtyard of Medininkai Restaurant. From the left: Albertas Belevičius, Lionginas Virbickas, Aloyzas Smilingis, Algimantas Nasvytis, Tadas Baginskas, Vytautas Nasvytis, Mindaugas Navakas, Šarūnas Šimulynas, Vladas Vildžiūnas. 1978

Upon his return from the United States, Vildžiūnas began to stage exhibitions of his artist friends and *conceptual games* in his outdoor studio and home in Jeruzalė, during which artists' installations were presented in the garden. In 1978–1979, shows of works by textile artist Kazimiera Zimblytė that were not accepted into official exhibitions were held in the Jeruzalė Garden. She exhibited abstract drawings and paintings of minimalist style, titled *Sashes*⁴² (fig. 11), and installations made from rice paper.

⁴² Kazimiera Zimblytė began to create *Sashes* in the Palanga artists' residence. Her minimalist works of metaphysical expression were later installed in the interior of the Vilnius Palace of Ritual Services in 1987.



13. Front and back cover of the catalogue *Pirmoji respublikinė medalių ir mažosios plastikos paroda. 1979* [*The First Republican Exhibition of Medals and Small-Scale Sculptures. 1979*]

As the chairman of the Sculpture Department of the Artists' Union, Vildžiūnas sought to unite the forces of his *guild* and, alongside, present the newest works by the Jeruzalė sculptors. In 1978, on the initiative of the Executive Committee of the City of Vilnius and with Vildžiūnas in charge, an exhibition of decorative sculptures was held in the courtyard of Medininkai Restaurant⁴³ (fig.12). Vildžiūnas also initiated the First Exhibition of Medals and Small-Scale Sculptures⁴⁴ in 1979 (fig. 13), and the Republican Sculpture Exhibition in 1983 at the Art Exhibition Palace.

In 1984–1985, thanks to Vildžiūnas's efforts, an exhibition of small-scale sculptures and drawings by the 'sixsome' of Jeruzalė Garden sculptors was held in the Gallery of Soviet Art of the State Art Museum of the

⁴³ V. Vildžiūnas, Puošiam Vilniaus senamiestį [Decorating the Old Town of Vilnius], *Literatūra ir menas*, 1978 05 20, p. 2.

⁴⁴ I. Feldmanaitė (ed.), *Pirmoji respublikinė medalių ir mažosios plastikos paroda 1979* [The First Republican Exhibition of Medals and Small-Scale Sculptures 1979], Vilnius, 1982.



14. Exhibition “Jaroševaitė, Kuzma, Mazūras, Navakas, Urbanavičius, Vildžiūnas. Small-Scale Sculptures and Drawings” at the Gallery of Soviet Art of the State Art Museum of the Lithuanian SSR. 1984

Lithuanian SSR (fig. 14). It revealed a wide range of visual solutions of the sculptor and his younger colleagues. The exhibition was accompanied by a modern poster and a catalogue, edited and designed by Vildžiūnas (fig. 15).⁴⁵ The catalogue “appeared on the day of the opening, which was quite rare. Usually it did not happen until the exhibition was already over. There was never enough time to compile a catalogue, as exhibition organisers did not know until the very last moment what works the censors would allow to be exhibited, and which ones would have to go back into storage.”⁴⁶ Having become an extraordinary event on the artistic scene of Lithuania, the exhibition travelled to Šiauliai, Riga and Tallinn in 1985, and received favourable reviews from colleagues and art critics.

⁴⁵ V. Vildžiūnas (ed.), *Jaroševaitė, Kuzma, Mazūras, Navakas, Urbanavičius, Vildžiūnas. Mažoji plastika, piešiniai. Katalogas* [Jaroševaitė, Kuzma, Mazūras, Navakas, Urbanavičius, Vildžiūnas. Small-Scale Sculptures, Drawings. Catalogue], Vilnius, 1984.

⁴⁶ G. Jankevičiūtė (ed.), *Skulptoriaus dosje: Vladas Urbanavičius* [Profile of a Sculptor: Vladas Urbanavičius], Kaunas-Palanga-Roma-Vilnius, 2009, p. 49–50.



kaunība
jaroševaitē
darbības
kuzma
darbības
mazūras
darbības
navakas
darbības
urbanavičius
darbības
vildžiūnas

LEEDU SKULPTUUR
ЛИТОВСКАЯ СКУЛЬПТУРА

**MAŽOJI
PLASTIKA
PIEŠINIAI**

15. Poster of the exhibition "Jaroševaitē, Kuzma, Mazūras, Navakas, Urbanavičius, Vildžiūnas. Small-Scale Sculptures and Drawings". 1984

“This summer, we had several opportunities to visit interesting art exhibitions in Vilnius. At one of those, six sculptors showed small-scale sculpture and drawings. Five of the sculptors, Ksenija Jaroševaitė, Stanislovas Kuzma, Petras Mazūras, Mindaugas Navakas, Vladas Urbanavičius, were young, and one, Vladas Vildžiūnas, was slightly older. His participation in the exhibition was not an accident. He is well known for his regular and wide support, professional, moral and material, for young Lithuanian sculptors, and his close creative links with younger artists. The exhibition made a very good impression, both by the quality of the works (there are not many exhibitions in this country which, like this one, have almost nothing unworthy in them), the way they were displayed (we were able to see what difference can be made by good pedestals, the right height and lighting, and so on), and the revelation of the creative process and creative thinking (we were able to see sketches and small-scale versions of some works, having already seen life-size versions of them in parks and squares).”⁴⁷ With its focus on creative endeavours and a display of sculptors’ sketches along with their small-scale sculptures, the exhibition broke the representational canon of the display of sculptures in thematic and anniversary exhibitions.

In the 1980s, Navakas distinguished himself as an important figure on the exhibition scene. A major event testifying to the accelerating changes in the artistic thinking of that time was an exhibition of his *utopian* zincographs – photographic montages – in the Architects’ Union of the Lithuanian SSR in 1986. In twelve prints, “[...] his sculptures are placed next to huge buildings, shocking the viewer by the paradoxical juxtaposition of forms and the play with the scale. Having found themselves in the vicinity of well-known buildings (Opera and Ballet Theatre, Hotel Lietuva), or anonymous standard architecture, Navakas’s works encourage rethinking the familiar functions of a sculpture’s scale: an ideological highlight (monument) organizing the space, and a decoration (decorative sculpture) revitalizing standard architecture. [...] Several days

⁴⁷ A. Andriuškevičius, Šešių skulptorių kūryba [Works by Six Sculptors], *Pergalė*, 1984, nr. 10, p. 187–189, p. 187.



16. Exhibition of sculptures *Volumes and Involutes* by Mindaugas Navakas, and photographs by Alvydas Lukys and Gintautas Trimakas in the Alumni Courtyard in Vilnius. 1987

later [the exhibition] had to be dismantled, but, in any case, *The Vilnius Notebook* marked the beginning of conceptual sculpture in Lithuania.”⁴⁸ The joint exhibition of Navakas and photographers Alvydas Lukys and Gintautas Trimakas, held in the Alumni Courtyard in Vilnius in 1987, became the first project of site-specific sculptural objects. On the background of historical architecture, Navakas exhibited his concrete *Volumes and Involutes* – sculptural objects *seeking* a contextual dialogue with a public space – along with photographs capturing the material environment in various angles (fig. 16).

⁴⁸ L. Kreivyte, *Plastinės raiškos alternatyvų paieškos* [The Search for Alternatives in Visual Expression], *Skulptūra 1975–1990* [Sculpture 1975–1990], ed. by Giedrė Jankevičiūtė, Elona Lubyte, Vilnius, 1997, p. 35.

Another event in Lithuanian monumental sculpture, marking a deepening chiasmus between official and personal artistic practices in the Lithuanian SSR in the late 1980s, took place at the same time. In front of the Museum of Revolution of the Lithuanian SSR, a monument *In Commemoration of the Heroic Acts of Soviet People* was ceremoniously unveiled. To be more precise, it was a replica of the work *First Swallows* by a Lithuanian sculptor, Vildžiūnas's teacher, a neo-classicist artist of the interwar period, Juozas Mikėnas (1964), made by sculptors Konstantinas Bogdanas and Dovydas Zundelovičius. This allegoric work dedicated to the conquering of the cosmos decorated the Soviet pavilion in the World's Fair in Montreal in 1967 and represented Soviet monumental propaganda sculpture.

A year later, on 22 October 1988, the Constituent Congress of the Lithuanian Reform Movement *Sąjūdis* led the country to independence and anticipated the fulfilment of hopes of the sculptors of the Jeruzalė Garden in their search for creative freedom and the autonomy of art.

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Elona Lubytė

Dailininkų bendruomenė Lietuvoje: Vilniaus Jeruzalės skulptūrų sodo atvejis

Santrauka

Sovietmečio Lietuvoje, kaip ir visoje SSRS, menininkų būrimasis į grupes nebuvo toleruojamas. Vis dėlto privačiose erdvėse, menininkų namuose ir dirbtuvėse būrėsi neformalios bendraminčių bendruomenės, pildėsi kūrybinės ir politinės autonomijos siekiai. Straipsnyje aptariama Vilniaus Jeruzalės sodo istorija ir skulptorių veikla 1962–1990 m., socialistinio realizmo aplinkoje pasireiškę vėlyvojo modernizmo ir postmodernizmo kūrybiniai ieškojimai. Dėmesys sutelktas į du aspektus, susijusius su meno autonomijos siekais – technologijos vaidmeniu ir kūrinių pristatymu viešumoje.

1962 m. Vilniaus Jeruzalės priemiestyje, nacionalizuotų tarpukario lenkų vilų rajone, dalį namo išsinuomojo skulptoriaus Vlado Vildžiūno ir grafikės Marijos Ladigaitės šeima. Jų namai tapo neformaliu bendraminčių židiniu, aplink kurį susibūrė Jeruzalės sodo skulptorių bendruomenė. 1970 m. Vildžiūno palankumo jauniems talentams ir diplomatijos dėka, Vilniaus miesto vykdomasis komitetas perdavė LSRS dailės fondui senojo Jeruzalės vaismedžių sodo sklypą ir leido čia įrengti laikinas skulptūrų lauko dirbtuves. 1972–1974 m. pirmieji jas pasistatė skulptoriai Gediminas Karalius, Petras Mazūras, pamatus išliejo Stasys Kuzma, apie 1980 m. perleidęs juos Mindaugo Navako dirbtuvei. Dirbtuvių statyba Jeruzalės sode tęsėsi 20 a. 9–10 deš., 1998 m. namą su dirbtuve pasistatė Ksenija Jaroševaitė ir Vladas Urbanavičius.

Jeruzalės sode formavosi naujo tipo kūrėjas, *skulptorius technologas*, kuris, pasak Navako, *nuo darbo pradžios (eskizo) iki pat pabaigos savo kūrybinį sumanymą granite, marmure ar metale realizuoja pats*, be Valstybinių dailės kombinatų pagalbos ir užsakovų cenzūros. Čia 1967–1968 m. Vildžiūnas iš vario skardos suvirino dekoratyvinę kompoziciją „Trys karaliai“, skirtą naujajam M.K. Čiurlionio dailės muziejaus priestatui Kaune, vėliau šią technologiją sėkmingai naudojo Kuzma, Karalius. 20 a. 8 deš. Navakas, Mazūras, Urbanavičius ir Vildžiūnas įsivainavo autorinės bronzos liejimo technologiją. Galimybę tam suteikė Anglijoje gyvenusi lietuvių skulptorė Elena Gaputytė, kuri po 1969 m. apsilankymo Jeruzalėje atsiuntė Vildžiūnui vadovą apie bronzos liejimą. Pirmasis juo pasinaudojęs Navakas dirbtuvėje įsirengė mažą liejyklą, didesni darbai buvo atliekami Mazūro liejykloje, čia atlieta postmodernistinė kompozicija „Genijus“ Alytaus vaikų dailės mokyklos interjerui (1980–1983). Svarbia technologinių eksperimentų erdve Jeruzalės sode buvo ir šiandien tebėra Navako dirbtuvė,

kurioje jis ne tik liejo bronzą, kalė granitą, bet susidomėjęs nauja medžiaga pradėjo lieti iš betono abstrakčių „Tūrių ir išsklotinių“ seriją (1980–1987).

Reikia paminėti Jeruzalės sodo skulptorių Vildžiūno ir Navako veiklą įteisinant naujas kūrinių pristatymo praktikas, įvairinant monotonišką ideologizuotą sovietmečio respublikinių ir teminių parodų panoramą. 1977 m. tapęs LSRS dailininkų sąjungos skulptūros sekcijos pirmininku, Vildžiūnas stengėsi vienyti savo *cecho* pajėgas, pristatydamas naujausius Jeruzalės skulptorių darbus. Jo iniciatyva Dailės parodų rūmuose 1979 m. surengta „Pirmoji medalių ir skulptūrinės plastikos paroda“, 1983 m. – Respublikinė skulptūros paroda. O 1984–1985 m. LSRS valstybinio dailės muziejaus Tarybinio meno galerijoje buvo surengta Jeruzalės sodo skulptorių „šešiu-kės“ mažųjų formų plastikos ir piešinių paroda. Tuo pačiu metu Jeruzalės sodo dirbtuvėje Vildžiūnas rengė draugų menininkų, pvz., oficialiai nepripažintos tekstilinė kės Kazimieros Zimblytės abstrakčių, minimalistinių darbų parodas.

20 a. 9 deš. parodiniame gyvenime ryškiai dalyvavo Navakas. 1986 m. LSRS Architektų sąjungoje surengė *utopinių* architektūrinių cinkografijų-fotomontažų parodą „Vilniaus sąsiuvinis“, paženklusią konceptualiosios skulptūros pradžią Lietuvoje. O 1987 m. Vilniaus Alumnato kiemelyje Navakas su fotografais Alvydu Lukiu ir Gintautu Trimaku surengė parodą, kurioje eksponavo „Tūrius ir išsklotines“ – pirmuosius kontekstualaus dialogo su viešąja erdve *siekiančius* skulptūrinius objektus. Dar po metų, 1988 m. spalio 22 d., įvyko Lietuvos Persitvarkymo Sąjūdžio steigiamasis suvažiavimas, nuvedęs į Lietuvos nepriklausomybę, kūrybinės laisvės ir meno autonomijos siekusių Jeruzalės sodo skulptorių lūkesčių išsipildymą.