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ARTIST MIGRATION AND CULTURAL TRANSFER IN OPPOSING POLITICAL SYSTEMS: THE IMPACT OF THE LITHUANIAN DIASPORA IN THE WEST ON LITHUANIAN CULTURE

Summary. Cultural communication channels were open between Lithuanian diaspora communities in the Western world, particularly the United States of America (USA), and Soviet Lithuania during the Cold War. Cultural transfers took place from the West to the East. This is an intriguing yet understudied area of art history concerning Lithuanian migration and diaspora. The aim of this article is therefore to discuss the peculiarities of the transatlantic migration of Lithuanian diaspora artists and to investigate the processes of cultural transfer and their influence on Lithuanian art between 1960 and 2000. Based on Lithuanian archival sources and press reports, the research aims to discuss the peculiarities of the transatlantic migration of Lithuanian diaspora artists, and to investigate the processes of cultural transfer and their influence on Lithuanian art during this period. The study focuses on cultural relationships developed through the private initiatives of Lithuanian emigrants, which were controlled by heads of state museums at an institutional level. This meant that cultural transfers during the soviet period were controlled from the centre of the Soviet empire, and had a strong political element. This article is based on the concepts of *cultural anthropology* and *intercultural communication*. *Cultural transfer* is viewed as a method of mediation between different cultures, providing an opportunity for communication between artists in free and totalitarian regions. Cultural objects (works of art) and information were transferred to the target audience, i.e. cultural users in Soviet Lithuania, in the second half of the 20th century. Although it was a one-way process initially (with exchanges, visits and exhibitions beginning later), a real transfer of artwork in the form of exhibits, deposits and donations took place between 1960 and 1990. When communicating with Lithuanian artists in occupied Lithuania, US Lithuanians transferred a worldview and information about modernist art that influenced soviet ideology. In this way, the Lithuanian diaspora in the USA made a significant contribution to the dismantling of the socialist system from within. This study uses unpublished original archival material: correspondence between Lithuanian art institutions and Lithuanian diaspora communities in the USA.

Keywords: Lithuanian emigrants, Lithuanian diaspora art, cultural transfer, the Cold War, art and war, migration of art in the 20th century.

INTRODUCTION

The formation of a politically and culturally engaged Lithuanian diaspora in the United States is a direct consequence of World War II (1939–1945). Secret political nazi and soviet agreements, or more precisely, the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact (1939),¹ led to the soviet occupation of Lithuania in 1940. Sovietisation, repression, and deportation of Lithuanian citizens to Siberia soon followed. Soviet Russians were then pushed out of Lithuania by the nazi Germans in June 1941, and the nazi occupation began. About 80,000 Lithuanians left Lithuania and retreated to the West in the middle of 1944, in the belief that their withdrawal from their native

country would be temporary: in fact, it lasted almost 50 years. Although the war in the Europe had ended, Lithuania remained occupied by the Soviet Russia, being turned into a satellite soviet republic ruled from Moscow. In the world of 1946, divided by an “Iron Curtain”,² political confrontation became a factor influencing Lithuania’s future. Refugees of WWII, having been overwhelmed by displaced persons’ camps in Germany, could no longer go back home. After the United States opened a gate for war refugees in 1947, Lithuanians, Latvians, Estonians and Ukrainians settled in various areas of the USA. The largest Lithuanian community was

around Chicago. Most of them, the so-called DP (Displaced Persons) generation, carefully guarded their cultural traditions, nurtured them within their national communities; their works – mostly in church architecture, interior decoration, stained glass windows, and the development of alternative cinema – vividly entered USA art history. Creators of particular note include the ambient artist Aleksandra Kasuba (1923–2019), film artist Jonas Mekas (1922–2019), painters Kazys Varnelis (1917–2010), Vytautas Kazimieras Jonynas (1907–1997), Elena Urbaitytė (1922–2006), and one of the pioneers of the Fluxus movement, Jurgis Mačiūnas (George Maciunas, 1931–1978). Over time, a strong USA Lithuanian diaspora was formed, with very rarely occurred acculturation phenomena.

Only after Stalin's death, during the tenure of Nikita Khrushchev (1953–1964), USA Lithuanian diaspora ties with occupied Lithuania became possible. Under Khrushchev, it was no longer forbidden to correspond with relatives in the West, and separated families were allowed to reunite.³ Meanwhile, correspondence (letters, parcels with books and items) was controlled by the KGB.⁴ Although direct communication was impossible, no forces could prevent the initiation of cultural connections and thus suppress the collective memory. Around 1985 in the Soviet Union, a political reorganisation began, in the period called *glasnost* or *perestrojka*.⁵ Finally, around 1988, the Soviets opened the borders to the West. The people of a particular nation, who had not seen each other for about fifty years because of the war and subsequent political decisions, were finally able to meet. It should be emphasised that cultural relations between the Lithuanian diaspora and their native land had been taking shape since the 1960s, as part of soviet cultural policy: Lithuanian diaspora artists moved back and forth between the USA and Soviet Lithuania (until 1990). They formed friendships, strengthened social relationships among artists, and had a positive influence on the creativity of some artists remaining in occupied Lithuania.

Literature and methodological access. Historian Arūnas Streikus, and musicologists Rūta

Stanevičiūtė, Danutė Petrauskaitė and Vita Guodytė, are probably the most knowledgeable about the USA diaspora relations with Soviet Lithuania, in which they analysed the problems of cultural transfer.⁶ The history of the Lithuanian diaspora is already well researched,⁷ with texts by art historians Ingrida Korsakaitė, Elona Lubytė, Laima Laučkaitė and Vaidas Petrulis showing the national cultural significance of Lithuanian diaspora artists and their place in the international art context.⁸ The fact that donated works were delivered to Lithuania was evaluated by art critics as insignificant, something could be further explored in the future. However, it should be understood that both the migration of artists and the works of art themselves are component parts of cultural and political relations. In Lithuanian art studies, this relationship has been seriously under-investigated: too little attention has been paid to the migration of diaspora artists, their cultural activities in Lithuania and the surrounding circumstances. In this light, the subject of this study is the cultural relationship developed at both private and institutional levels (under the watchful eye of the KGB). Private initiatives of cultural transfer included giving their works for art museums, and establishing personal relationships with artists and museum leaders. The analysis of the institutional aspects makes the subject of this article very specific and complicated due to the need to talk about cultural policy led “from the top” within soviet foreign culture policy, that the imperial centre (metropolia) realised in a colonised country. Therefore, the purpose of this article is to discuss the peculiarities of the transfer of Lithuanian diaspora artists from the West to Lithuania and their influence on the Lithuanian art during the long period between 1960 and 2000. The article aims to show how soviet policy, and its implementers, tried to turn culture into an instrument of their influence, to use it for the indoctrination of Lithuanian society and establishment of soviet ideology. However, the result was the opposite – the cultural field practitioners used soviet culture policy not only to transfer their personal art works from the West to Lithuania, but also to disseminate democratic ideas, to prepare personal exhibitions, to revive family ties broken by the WWII, to

establish personal art galleries, and finally to enrich the funds of Lithuanian museums. The “transcultural mediation” project, which was taken over by the Soviets, failed to frustrate political goals. The positive impact and benefits of the cultural transfer in Lithuanian culture are positively felt even today.

The relationship between the imperial centre (metropolia) and the colony has already been mentioned: hence, this text adheres to the principles of classical post-colonial theory, which states that culture can be used as a means of resisting colonisers. In this case, there is resistance on both sides: from colonised Lithuania and from the Lithuanian diaspora in the USA. This article applies the idea from post-colonial studies that a work of art is, among other things, a means of communication.⁹ This approach is dominated by the anthropological concept of culture, which includes art, knowledge, traditions and abilities acquired by an individual as a member of a particular society. In anthropological terms, culture is a collective phenomenon because “it is at least partially shared with people who live or live in the same social environment, that is, where this culture was absorbed”.¹⁰ In this anthropological concept of culture, the focus is on behavioural patterns. In studying two cultural groups of one nation (in these cases of individuals and institutions), separated by an “Iron Curtain”, behavioural patterns reveal quite a few differences. Before some people left Lithuania, both groups lived in the same social environment. But after spending several decades in emigration, the old behavioural models are concealed by other social factors: other behavioural patterns emerge. According to the professor of contemporary anthropology Geert Hofstede, one group of people is distinguished from the other through “exactly the collective programming of the mind”.¹¹ The question is, how do you talk about behavioural patterns and groups where one group of actors-characters is heavily influenced by a democratic world, and the other is constantly exposed to totalitarianism? In this case, the issue of

the execution of foreign policy by a totalitarian system needs to be incorporated into the study of art. While cultural and artistic research usually avoids discussing politicians’ decisions, there are some topics where political decisions are too important to ignore, such as in research on art and war and their influence on culture. While Lithuanian art historians have already studied cultural phenomena in the context of WWI and WWII,¹² in other work, Polish scientists have written about German-Polish culture in Europe, drawing attention to the role of foreign policy after 1945 in culture, a study relevant to this research.¹³ In this paper, cultural transfer and cultural policy issues are discussed in an even more complex context – that of transatlantic migration between North America and Lithuania, and their two different political systems.

MIGRATION AS THE SEARCH FOR A RELATIONSHIP WITH THE HOMELAND

After relocation to a foreign country, memories of one’s homeland never disappear; they may dim, intertwined with a sense of longing. Such longing encouraged post-war immigrants to look for relations in and with Lithuania. A significant number of expatriates who came to Lithuania as tourists in soviet times were looking for contact not only with relatives, but also with cultural media (e.g. museums, cultural people).

Artist Viktoras Vizgirda came to Vilnius from Boston USA in 1966, on the first of several visits to his home country,¹⁴ invited to the exhibition of his early (1923–1944) creative works in Lithuania.¹⁵ The exhibition was officially opened at the Lithuanian Art Museum (LNDM),¹⁶ which was then operating at the former Vilnius Town Hall. Vizgirda’s performance was a big event for Lithuania: it was extremely important for the people who lived in the occupied country to see a Lithuanian from the West.



Fig. 1. Painters Antanas Gudaitis, Leonardas Kazokas and Viktoras Vizgirda in Palanga. M. K. Čiurlionis National Museum of Art, ČDM M 1-56-6/65. Photo by Algimantas Kunčius, 1971

This visit was even more significant for the artists' community, as before WWII Vizgirda had participated in the Lithuanian Modernist Group "Ars" (1932–1934).¹⁷ "Ars" members admired German expressionism and the Paris School (*École de Paris*), proclaimed the ideas of artistic freedom, and defended the creative artist's subjective attitude to the world. In Soviet times, when artists were pushed to work in the socialist realism style, the modernity of the "Ars" members' works, and the links between their creative work with Western European art, were a very important spiritual counterweight. Viktoras Vizgirda's appearance in Vilnius attracted a great deal of attention from his compatriots. Vizgirda held many private meetings with artists, who hung on his every word about Western art. Returning to the United States, Vizgirda gave an interview in the USA Lithuanian press, speaking quite positively about the situation of culture in Soviet Lithuania.¹⁸ Newspaper clippings of those articles travelled to Lithuania along with letters to relatives, being distributed "hand to hand". For the artists of occupied Lithuania, each mention of their names on the other side of the Iron Curtain was an event of very special importance and spiritual support. For Vizgirda himself it was the first journey (there were further visits in 1971 and 1977), which made a huge impression on him – his imagination was fired by images, meetings and conversations experienced in Lithuania.¹⁹

The expatriates' visits to their occupied birthplace were motivated by sensitive emotional incentives – a constant longing, sentimental memories, and the

desire to help those close and beloved. However, returning to America from Lithuania was often uncomfortable, with insults in the USA Lithuanian press from a variety of political viewpoints. Vizgirda, for example, whose visits had been welcomed artists in Soviet Lithuania as a flash of hope that something would change, by was vilified as a "cynic and traitor" in American Lithuanian newspapers.²⁰ Learning of visits to Lithuania often caused annoyance in the American Lithuanian community, which was politically united against the soviet Russian occupation. Nonetheless, some thought it was necessary to engage with the political situation, while others were categorically against any contacts with the occupied land. In its way, the USA Lithuanian press was an active participant in the Cold War of information.²¹

For those who did determine to visit their homeland, who was really waiting there to see them? In Lithuania, all arrivals from the West, no matter what their views, came under the searchlight of Soviet KGB agents. Even relatives and friends did not escape surveillance, as they interacted with "the American" and sometimes dared to break the Soviet-dictated rules, such as taking a visitor to his/her native place, far from the routes prescribed for foreign tourists. But for some Lithuanian expatriates, especially artists, even these difficulties neither deterred them from visiting nor diminished their noble intent to help change their homeland's cultural field, devastated by the ideology of socialist realism. When Lithuania was under Soviet occupation, the group of expatriate artists promoting culture with ideas of patronage, charity and understanding included Vytautas Kazimieras Jonynas (1907–1997), Vytautas Kašuba (1915–1997), Beatričė Kleizaitė-Vasaris (1925–2023), Magdalena Birutė Stankūnienė (1925–2017), and Algimantas Kezys (1928–2015).

On his first trip to Soviet Lithuania in 1974, the New York sculptor Vytautas Kašuba (1915–1997) inspired new creative ideas. He visited the recently restored Trakai Island Castle, the residence of the Lithuanian dukes in the 14th–15th centuries, although at the time of the visit it was a symbol

of Soviet pride: Soviet ideologists claimed that the rebuilding of the castle evidenced Soviet concern with national culture. However, Kašuba noticed a paradox in Trakai Island Castle: there was no information in the expositions about the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. What was presented was the castle of the princes, without any ducal artefacts. Given that he thought Lithuanian history was being distorted, Kašuba returned to New York to execute an idea born in Trakai Castle – the creation of five large format medallions: King Mindaugas and four Grand Dukes of Lithuania: Gediminas, Kęstutis, Vytautas and Algirdas.



Fig. 2. Medallions by Vytautas Kašuba “Vytautas – Didysis Lietuvos kunigaikštis 1392–1430,” 1976. A poster, lead, diameter 65 cm., in Trakai History Museum

Currently, all the medallions are kept at Trakai Island Castle, though sometimes exhibited elsewhere in Lithuania. These works, like most of Vytautas Kašuba’s 1987–1992 creative heritage, were donated to Lithuania, and now are stored in museums. The monument to Duke Gediminas, designed by Kašuba, and commissioned by a patron from the USA, Beatrice Kleizaitė-Vasaris, is now in Vilnius Cathedral Square.²² Kleizaitė-Vasaris also donated her own art collection, now exhibited in Marijampolė and Anykščiai.

In 1983, for the first time, photo artists Algimantas Kezys and Magdalena Birutė Stankūnienė came to Vilnius as foreign tourists; Stankūnienė entered the

trail to the then Lithuanian Art Museum (LNDM). Staying at the Amber Hotel, where the “walls had ears and eyes” (i.e. KGB spies), she asked the administrator to call the Art Museum to arrange for two US citizens to visit the museum’s director; the latter immediately sent the museum’s Volga²³ car to the Amber Hotel. At that time, only the Soviet car brands Zhiguli, Moskvich, Zaporozec and Volga were driven on the streets of Lithuanian cities. The Volga badge then meant the highest status in society, and in this case the director of the museum was paying special attention to unexpected guests from the USA. According to Stankūnienė, as a passenger in the Volga with Algimantas Kezys, they did not talk because they were very afraid of Soviet KGB spies.²⁴ Later everything went smoothly – the director of the LNDM, Romualdas Budrys, showed them the exhibits and fascinated the visitors with his energy and friendliness. After that, both guests became caught up in the desire to contribute more to the cultural life of Lithuania.²⁵ For Stankūnienė, working for Lithuania and its culture became her life:

*I first returned in 1969, after my mother’s death, because she asked me: “Visit Lithuania.” This is where such sadness, compassion, desire to help. From that longing, the series of my works “Woman’s Works,” in part, even the “Flower’s Cycle”.*²⁶

Later, Stankūnienė visited her homeland frequently and became a patron of culture. She donated her paintings to museums and universities, generously providing funds for book publishing and museum buildings. She spent a great deal of money on the Paežeriai manor in Vilkaviškis district, a classicist architectural complex near Šunskai, the patron’s hometown in southern Lithuania. Before the war, the manor belonged to Jonas Vailokaitis, a signatory of the Lithuanian Independence Act. The manor was badly damaged during the Soviet era. After Lithuania regained its independence, the manor was given to the then Lithuanian Art Museum in Vilnius (LNDM), even though Paežeriai is 115 miles distant from Vilnius. Romualdas Budrys, Director of the LNDM, was able to convince Stankūnienė to contribute significantly to the restoration of this

impressive manor, which today is the Vilkaviškis District Suvalkija (Sūduva) Culture Centre-Museum. It stores and exhibits Stankūnienė's works and personal belongings, from furniture to her ornate clothes and hats.

Photo artist Algimantas Kezys photographed in Vilnius, Kaunas, Druskininkai, and Rumšiškės, depicting travelling companions and local people on his first trip to Lithuania in 1983. He captured the Old Town of Vilnius, which at that time was very deserted and quite derelict. Returning to Chicago, in 1985 Kezys published a photography book "Lithuania Through the Wall: Diary of a Ten-day Visit to My Native Land".²⁷



Fig. 3. Wooden fence on Ukmergės Street, Vilnius. Photo by Algimantas Kezys, 1983. LNDM, Fm 883

This book did not escape the eyes of the Soviet security guards. Of course, the photographs were disliked by Soviet ideologists because they contain not only the Vilnius Baroque Church, but also the greyness and poverty of everyday life. Kezys' accurate comments exposed the propaganda image of a thriving Soviet country: the reality in occupied

Lithuania was rather less beautiful and optimistic than Soviet propaganda declared. In the introductory text, a painful realisation for each emigrant is revealed. As Kezys wrote:

*Lithuania is an occupied country. Only certain narrow paths are laid out for those who make the effort and receive the permission to visit. Their time is limited. Ten days is, in fact, the maximum. A guide is provided. Some unobtrusive KGB operatives are assigned to watch from the background.*²⁸

Of course, for all this, the artist was punished by the Soviets – he did not get a visa to Lithuania for a long time. The road to his homeland was reopened only during the years of *perestrojka* (1985–1989), when, with the disintegration of the Soviet economy, it was decided to reorganise in Moscow at the centre of the empire, and allow everyone a breath of freedom. From 1989 onwards, Kezys came to Lithuania almost every year, organising about ten solo exhibitions of his work – photographs of American skyscrapers – which interested Lithuanian photography art experts and critics. After the exhibition in Vilnius art gallery *Vartai* (Gates), he was called “the best Lithuanian photo artist in the field of urban photography”,²⁹ although, in fact, there was no real urban photography at the time in Lithuania. Photography critic Skirmantas Valiulis felt and emphasised the peculiarity of Kezys in the context of Lithuanian photography. He wrote: “Kezys shows that not only nature but also man’s reality can be seen. The city of Chicago emerges in this context. The city of skyscrapers looks humane in his photographs”.³⁰ Valiulis well understood Kezys’ aesthetics, impressed by the beauty of the Chicago skyscrapers, which almost no one had seen in Lithuania, where skyscrapers did not exist. Soviet individuals were not permitted to travel to the Western world, and Soviet propaganda pushed views about the dullness and antihumanism of American big cities.

Kezys the photographer radiated optimism and friendliness for people, becoming very popular with artists, and undertaking joint creative projects

with Lithuanian photographers. When Lithuania achieved freedom, Kezys helped Lithuanian photographers to attend exhibitions in the USA, and contributed financially to the release of their books in the West. Kezys' support actually helped Lithuanian master photographers to integrate into the global context. Now, part of Kezys' legacy is stored in several Lithuanian museums and in his hometown, Kybartai.

ARTISTS AND SOVIET AUTHORITIES

In Druskininkai, there is a gallery dedicated to the works of the famous exiled artist Vytautas Kazimieras Jonynas.³¹ The gallery was built in 1989 by the artist, partially financed by the Soviet authorities. Behind this fact lies a long and complex history, surrounded by the artist's love for his homeland, his personal goals, and his compromises with the Soviet authorities. The case of the Jonynas Gallery in Druskininkai testifies that the Soviet authorities were thankful for the liberal attitude towards them, thanking the artists, preparing their exhibitions, and publishing their books. In reality, the Soviets were using the names of exiled artists as propaganda to strengthen their position and to present "socialism with a human face".³²

Jonynas first arrived in Lithuania in 1974 as a foreign tourist from the so-called "capitalist West". He was taken to the Druskininkai resort in the Dzūkija forests to show him how workmen from all over the Soviet Union enjoy their leisure. Druskininkai was considered as a famous resort for the entire Soviet Union, hence Lithuanians were in the minority there. The city is also famous for the fact that at the turn of the 19th/20th century the most famous Lithuanian artist Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis lived there,³³ his home-museum was operating and still operates in the city. One day in 1974, Jonynas, coming from New York, visited the museum. His first question to the head of the museum's subdivision was: "Do you have the portrait I made of Čiurlionis? Then I shall bring it to you".³⁴ This event began active communication between Jonynas, Soviet Lithuania artists and museum leaders. An

exhibition of works by Jonynas and his wife Irena Griežė was organised in 1979 at the Lithuanian Art Museum in Vilnius (LNDM). Jonynas' photo portrait with flowers was printed on the first page of the newspaper "Gimtas kraštas (Native Land)" No. 40 (660),³⁵ leading to the photographer's being specially favoured by the Soviet authorities. Consequently, Jonynas received a barrage of accusations of evil in the USA Lithuanian press, because he had thanked the Soviet authorities for the opportunity to organise an exhibition in Vilnius.

Jonynas was also prominent through his role as illustrator for a variety of published books.³⁶ His illustrations for the poem "Metai" (The Seasons) by Kristijonas Donelaitis (c. 1760) were created during his life in Lithuania in 1939, and exhibited in Vilnius, Tallinn, and Moscow, earning awards in "most beautiful book" competitions. Soviet authorities, in apparent friendly cooperation, fostered cultural relations with refugees, but in reality they were manipulating the feelings of the exile, drawing in Lithuanian emigrés as participants in the Soviet propaganda machine. That propaganda machine operated in two directions. First, for the regime, all cultural relationships, and especially the fact of the return of emigrants, had great value, increasing regime legitimacy inside the country,³⁷ suppressing local dissatisfaction with the political, economic, and cultural situation. Second, cultural relationships formed a positive image of Soviet governance in the West, projecting an illusion that the Iron Curtain did not exist.

It was in this illusory cultural climate that Jonynas and fellow artist Kazimieras Žoromskis were persuaded to return to permanent residence in Lithuania. Both were tempted by the promises of new housing and galleries in exchange for works donated to museums. Žoromskis arrived in Vilnius in 1986, initially housed in an apartment in the centre of Vilnius, with his paintings stored at the LNDM, and the promised new house under construction. This house, in the centre of Vilnius, was finally completed in 1995, as an expressive postmodern-style villa next to the park, its interior adapted as exhibition space for Žoromskis'

paintings. However, this plan met an unexpected obstacle – the Lithuanian National Art Museum (LNDM) already considered those paintings the property of the state, and did not want to return the artworks to the artist. Žoromskis was adamant that his works were his own property. Conflict with museum management persisted up to (and beyond) Žoromski's death in 2004. The artist's wife is currently taking care of the house-museum.

Vytautas Kazimieras Jonynas communicated with the Soviet authorities much more smoothly: after he donated his works to Lithuania in 1987, the Soviet authorities rewarded him with a considerable amount of money.³⁸ Jonynas, who had been born in the Dzūkija region of South Lithuania, chose Druskininkai as the location of the house he would build with the funds. He had the foresight to build his home-gallery next to the M. K. Čiurlionis Memorial Museum,³⁹ so that Druskininkai would benefit from the expanded cultural space with a variety of events.⁴⁰ Jonynas' vision was fully realised in 1992, when his house became the state gallery – a subdivision of the M. K. Čiurlionis National Art Museum (NČDM).

The gallery exhibits stained glass windows and drawings by Jonynas, together with exhibitions by other professional artists. Also, as part of the cultural experience, visitors to the house and gallery are encouraged to learn about the paths of

Lithuanian artists in the world, and their return to their homeland.

The Soviets tried not only to bring back emigrés, but also to take over their accumulated cultural assets, and to show them at exhibitions – though subject to serious censorship of, for example, abstract art. Through cultural contacts, the regime aimed to demonstrate that Soviet Lithuania was thriving, nothing was amiss; as if there had been no Soviet occupation in 1940, and officially there had been no war refugee and political emigration to the West in 1944.

“Working with Exile” was an actual programme for the cultural engagement of Lithuanian emigrés, though in reality a work-plan for agents of the KGB.⁴¹ One major activity of the plan was the organisation of personal art exhibitions in Vilnius: invitations from Lithuania were issued by Romualdas Budrys, mentioned earlier as director of the LNDM. In support, Vilius Kavaliauskas, a correspondent of the Soviet newspaper “Moscow News”, was active in New York and Chicago.⁴² After the exhibitions, expatriates received an incredible bouquet of attention, with official paeans in newspapers, including interviews, portraits, and reproductions of their works. Such attention was stunning, as not all Lithuanian artists were successful in foreign countries. In addition, Lithuania-based artists, their professional “brothers”, showed



Fig. 4. Vytautas Kazimieras Jonynas Art Gallery in Druskininkai. Project by architect Algimantas Kančas, 1989. Photo by Lina Preišegalavičienė, 2019

sincere interest and wanted to receive information about Western art. For example, during the meeting with Jonynas and Vizgirda in 1977, the Artists' Union Hall was filled to capacity with listeners. Once the applause had died down, the acclaimed artists received invitations to donate their works to the Lithuanian authorities.

Representatives of the Soviet authorities in North America were interested not only in artists, but also in diasporate literature, targeting, for example, the Lithuanian-born Franciscan monk and editor of the magazine "Aidai", Leonardas Andriekus. Furthermore, Bronius Kviklys⁴³ in his letters actively called on owners of private archives,⁴⁴ and invited the famous American artist and serious collector of Lithuanian artefacts, Kazys Varnelis, to organise an exhibition in Lithuania.⁴⁵ According to his son, Varnelis began in 1965 to look into how to visit occupied Lithuania.⁴⁶ He travelled to Vilnius frequently from 1984 onwards. By 1987 he already decided to accept an invitation to hold a retrospective exhibition at the Vilnius Exhibition Hall.⁴⁷ At that time, new and favourable political winds were blowing on both sides of the Atlantic, and the period from 1987 to 1989 was a time of revival and hope for the Lithuanian nation. Cultural figures started to communicate and meet in Lithuania and the USA, and the Lithuanian Artists' Exhibition and Culture Congresses were organised in Chicago and Vilnius.

However, from 1987, the Soviets were even more active in cultural activities, aiming for a "transfer of cultural values".⁴⁸ Why it was so important for the Soviets to acquire as many works of art as possible and attract Lithuanian diaspora back to Lithuania? During the Iron Curtain period, the Soviet side wanted a solid diaspora, to neutralise it and prevent it from interfering with Soviet actions in Lithuania. The Soviets realised that strong and educated Lithuanian emigrants were of symbolic significance to their compatriots in occupied Lithuania. The activities and creative work of the most prominent personalities interested people in occupied Lithuania, and for some expatriates, the works of emigrants were already familiar through illegally

transported books, USA press cuttings, and Lithuanian shows on the American Voice radio station. As political winds changed, around 1987–1988, the Soviet authorities began to contact emigrants even more actively, as the Soviet system was weakening and nearing collapse. These were the last chances for the KGB work with the Exile programme. Some "Soviet characters"⁴⁹ tried to communicate with the expatriates to improve their image in the eyes of their compatriots.

THE FIRST EXHIBITION OF DIASPORA ARTISTS' WORK IN LITHUANIA

In 1988, an interesting stage of cultural contacts between Lithuanian authorities and expatriates began when the Iron Curtain collapsed, and the entire Soviet empire disappeared within two years. In the same year, an important event for Lithuanians was the "Exhibition of Lithuanian Diaspora Artists' Work", held in Vilnius, at the LNNDM.

In January 1988, a message about the Lithuanian Art Museum "Exhibition of Lithuanian Diaspora Artists' Work" was posted in the Soviet newspaper "Gimtasis kraštas" (Native Land). A month later, knowing how few emigrants in the West read this Soviet newspaper, LNNDM director Budrys and his assistant⁵⁰ sent over 200 letters to western countries with an invitation to Lithuanian artists to participate in an exhibition of Lithuanian exile artists. Budrys asked for the works, slides of the works, and for information about the artists. Every letter ended with the same note: "At your request, we shall return the works back to you".⁵¹ This subtly conveyed their wish to keep the works, and their expectation that artists would donate their artwork to the state museum. It should be noted that most of the invited artists were mature people who had left Lithuania in 1944, in childhood or at a very young age. By the end of the 20th century, they were interested in their legacy, and the fate of their works of art. Obviously, not all the works were of interest to their relatives, let alone museums or the art market. So, maybe it is worth giving your creativity to your homeland? The seed was sown – the exhibition was

attended by 77 artists, and 260 works of art were exhibited. After the exhibition ended, most artists decided to leave their works in Vilnius.

This exhibition in Lithuania aroused great interest among the cultural intelligentsia. It was an obvious sign that the world is changing for the better. According to the press, the exhibition opened up a new phase of Lithuanian art, which had been artificially divided into two ideological confrontations, and that the event would be a “hopeful prediction of national art unity”.⁵² The first page of the cultural weekly magazine “Literatūra ir menas” featured photos of works by Vytautas Kazimieras Jonynas and Akvilė Zavišaitė, who had emigrated from Lithuania to Australia in 1983.

During the period of 1979–2006, in Vilnius and Kaunas, exhibitions were organised of diaspora artists: Vytautas Kazimieras Jonynas, Irena Griezė, Kazys Varnelis, Adomas Galdikas, Viktoras Vizgirda, Adolfas Valeška, Juozas Bagdonas, Vytautas

Ignas, Magdalena Birutė Stankūnienė, Vytautas Sakalas, Elena Urbaitytė, Janina Monkutė-Marks. These exhibitions attracted great interest from citizens and art experts alike, and high attendance rates. Creative work from other countries inspired Lithuanian artists to come up with new creative ideas and to discuss the role of contemporary art, as well as the contribution of diaspora artists to both Lithuanian national culture and Western art.

CULTURAL VALUES TRANSFERRED TO LITHUANIA

After dreaming of a free homeland for fifty years, Lithuania became independent in 1991, and on this occasion the expatriates made their donations. State museums in Lithuania received a great deal of financial support and valuable works of art. It was a time when both sides of the Lithuanian nation – in Lithuania and in the West – looked at each other with open and endless affection. Now, reflecting on those stormy years, it can be said that the Lithuanian diaspora has strongly enriched Lithuanian culture.

As part of the cultural transfer, several thousand books were donated to Lithuanian libraries;⁵³ it was very important for the younger generation to move away from the world of Soviet ideology. Most of the books arrived at Vytautas Magnus University (VMU), to which USA Lithuanian scientists Liucija Baškauskaitė,⁵⁴ Algirdas Avizienis⁵⁵ and Bronius Vaškėlis⁵⁶ contributed significantly, while also becoming the first leaders of the restored VMU.

Pictures by the expressionist Pranas Domšaitis⁵⁷ from Chicago were sent to Lithuania between 1989 and 2006. Also, in 1992, a substantial financial injection of 300,000 USD from the Lithuanian Foundation in Chicago reached Lithuania, and was dedicated to protecting the legacy of Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis.⁵⁸ This enabled the installation of Čiurlionis’ works in exhibition halls, and works storage facilities that meet global standards. The museum consulted with specialists from Danish, French and German museums,



Fig. 5. The first page of the weekly “Literatūra ir menas (Literature and Art)”, 3 September 1988, with the works of the emigrants Akvilė Zavišaitė and Vytautas Kazimieras Jonynas

while leaders and architects visited and learnt from reconstructed European museums. But not everything went smoothly. It turned out that the money donated by the Chicago Lithuanian Foundation would not be enough. Construction took a very long time because the Lithuanian government was in no hurry to provide additional funding. The director of the museum expressed gratitude to the Lithuanian Foundation board, whose members visited the museum in Kaunas and understood the necessity and importance of the complex reconstruction of the building: they were not only very patient but also tried to significantly accelerate the country's government's decisions "by convincing influential persons in Lithuania".⁵⁹ Representatives of the Lithuanian Foundation also provided additional sums of money for the frames and antireflexive glass for Čiurlionis' paintings.⁶⁰ In this way, the most prominent Lithuanian artist gallery in the NČDM was renovated substantially, and Čiurlionis' pastel and tempera works were given the best storage conditions.

During the period 1990–2010, artworks from private collections and the Čiurlionis Art Gallery in Chicago reached Lithuanian state museums;⁶¹ some 400 exhibits came from the Čiurlionis Art Gallery in Chicago to Kaunas at the end of 2001.⁶² Transfer of works from the Čiurlionis Art Gallery in Chicago to Lithuania is a noble endeavour: M. K. Čiurlionis National Museum of Art (NČDM) acquired works by artists who in their youth (before WWII) had studied or worked at Kaunas Art School. In this way, their works, after many years in Chicago, have again been integrated into the whole of Lithuanian art. Since their return, the art of expatriate artists has been explored by scientists and featured in regular exhibitions. Valuable exhibitions include "Chicago–Kaunas: Return of the Gallery" (2002), "Chicago–Kaunas: the Dreamland Lithuania" (2003), and "Meridians of Exile Art: From Europe to Australia" (2006).

THE CREATION OF DIASPORA ART MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES IN LITHUANIA

The return of American artists to a free Lithuania after the 1990s acquired the features of a dynamic and interesting cultural movement. While the country was economically weak, with much difficulty and uncertainty, the poverty of everyday life was illuminated by the almost incredible awareness of the establishment of private museums or galleries and donation of art collections. Antanas and Anastasia Tamošaitis, who returned from Canada, gave the Vilnius Academy of Arts a rich collection of Lithuanian folk textiles. The Tamošaitis Gallery "Židinys" (Fireplace) is in the Old Town of Vilnius – and has become a real treasure for Lithuanian folk-art researchers and students interested in 17th–20th century Lithuanian fabrics, bands and hand-weaving technologies.

In October 2001, Janina Monkutė-Marks, from Chicago, opened a gallery in her native land in Kėdainiai. She had purchased shabby buildings in the city centre, reconstructed them and, and with the help of a relative, created a lively art island in a city that had never had an arts centre. The Janina Monkutė-Marks Museum-Gallery is both a permanent exposition of textiles and paintings and also a space for current art exhibitions. The museum's profile is prominent in the context of Lithuania, and, as the centre for modern textiles in the country, it is especially loved by the young generation of artists and textile design students, for whom the venue has a widely developed art education system. The museum hosts contemporary textile art exhibitions, attracting artists from all over the world. By family decision following the artist's death in 2010, the museum became part of the Kėdainiai Regional Museum.

One of the most outstanding museums in Vilnius is the Kazys Varnelis House-Museum – the first museum of a large private collection in Lithuania. Varnelis, while living in Chicago and Stockbridge, accumulated collections of high cultural heritage value – Lithuanian artefacts and books – which are now on display and accessible to visitors. These

include maps and old graphics, Western European painting and sculpture, Far Eastern art, stylish furniture, and finally Varnelis' own abstract paintings; the artist's private library of rare books was also moved to Vilnius.

After organising a huge painting exhibition in Vilnius (1988), Varnelis had decided to move to Lithuania and began to look for a place for his collection. His attention was first attracted to the Radvilos Palace in the Old Town of Vilnius and the home of Doctor Joseph Frank,⁶³ the location nowadays of the *Institut Français de Lituanie*. However, the search for premises continued for several years, until finally Varnelis chose a complex of Gothic buildings at the Didžioji g. 26. It is noteworthy that the first exhibition at that house had been held even before the future owners, Kazys and Gabrielė Varnelis, had arrived. This exhibition had been dedicated to the 200th anniversary of the Vilnius Academy of Arts, and curators had included a bold installation of Varnelis' opart canvases.⁶⁴ At the end of the show, Varnelis personally set up exhibitions in his new home, adapting the displays to the medieval premises, in which he created a most genuine labyrinth of art, spreading through more than 40 rooms. This combination of new and old – modern painting, historical furniture and ancient architecture, had never before been seen in Lithuania.⁶⁵ The Kazys Varnelis House-Museum has become a surprising and inspiring example of exposition culture, one of the most beautiful art museums in Lithuania and the Baltic States.

CONCLUSIONS

In respect of the return of exiled artists and their works to Lithuania, each case is different, complicated and very significant in its own way. From today's perspective we see that expatriates enriched their homeland with works of art, new museums and galleries, and financial help. Their visits to their still-occupied native country gave hope that someday everything would change for the better, with culture and art as the most appropriate means to overcome stagnation and fear. In fact, as soon as it

became possible within the political circumstances, the diaspora built channels of communication with Lithuania. The patterns of the emigrants and their philanthropic activity made a great impression on Lithuanians, and gave an example of sharing. The works of expatriates enriched Lithuanian art with examples of "true art", expanding the understanding of Lithuanians regarding the interesting and valuable art of modernism, abstractionism or post-modernism. Those works of the emigrants, created abroad, are already an important part of Lithuanian artistic culture today.

The process of the transfer of culture by Lithuanian diaspora artists was a slow and complicated process. Cultural goals were constantly intertwined with the political insinuations of the Soviet government on both sides of the Atlantic. Study of the archival material clearly showed the ways in which Soviet policy and its executors tried to indoctrinate the culture through the "transcultural mediation" project, using it for political-ideological purposes. As noted earlier in this text, the result was the complete opposite – the actors in the cultural field used Soviet cultural policy not only to transfer their personal works from various countries of exile to Lithuania, but also to rebuild the connections broken by WWII, to develop personal exhibitions and to establish their own art galleries – all with sustained beneficial effects in Lithuanian culture.

Abbreviations

LNDM – Lithuanian National Museum of Art

LNDMA – Archive of the Lithuanian National Museum of Art

NČDM – M. K. Čiurlionis National Museum of Art

VMU – Vytautas Magnus University

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Notes

¹ The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, signed on 23 August 1939 in Moscow, was a Treaty of Non-Aggression between Germany and the USSR and included secret protocols on the division of Central and Eastern Europe. Initially, Lithuania was to be part of Germany's sphere of interest, but on 28 September 1939, after the outbreak of World War II, Germany and the USSR signed another treaty, the so-called Boundary and Friendship Treaty, which placed Lithuania under the sphere of influence of the Soviet Union.

² The Iron Curtain is a metaphor first used by Winston Churchill in 1946. It signified the political, military, informational, and ideological self-isolation of the Soviet Union and its allies from the West.

³ Hollywood actress Ruta Lee (Rūta Mary Kilmonis) managed to secure an exit visa for her grandmother, Ludvisė Kilmonis, to emigrate to the United States, https://www.lrytas.lt/stilius/atvirai/2021/05/22/news/holivudo-lietuves-rutos-lee-sirdis-ilgisi-kova-su-sunkia-liga-pralaimėjusio-mylimojo-19402445#google_vignette

⁴ Russ. – *Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti* – the Committee for State Security was the main security agency of the Soviet Union from 1954 to 1991.

⁵ *Glasnost* and *perestroika* (translating from Russian: *openness* and *restructuring*) is a concept relating to transparency. In the Soviet Union, these were the names given to the political and economic reforms launched by Mikhail Gorbachev in 1985 to democratise the Soviet Union. Gorbachev's reforms had a major impact on the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union. Lithuania used *perestroika* as an opportunity to separate from the Soviet Union and became an independent country again on 11 March 1990. The Soviet Union finally collapsed in 1991.

⁶ Arūnas Streikus, "Soviet Lithuania and the Emigré Community: a Project for Cultural Ties," *Studies of Lithuania's History* 20 (2007), 42–63. Rūta Stanevičiūtė, Danutė Petrauskaitė, Vita Gruodytė, *Nailono uždanga: Šaltasis karas, tarptautiniai mainai ir lietuvių muzika [Nylon Curtain: Cold War, International Exchange and Lithuanian Music]* (Vilnius: Lietuvos muzikos ir teatro akademija, 2018).

⁷ Egidijus Aleksandravičius, *Karklo diegas: lietuvių pasaulio istorija [Willow Sprout: A History of the Lithuanian World]* (Vilnius: Versus Aureus, 2013).

⁸ Rasutė Žukienė, Dalia Kuizinienė, *Equatation with Unknowns. Lithuanian Artists in Germany from 1945 till*

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⁹ Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, Helen Tiffin, *Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts* (London: Routledge, 2013), <https://doi.org/10.4324/978023777855>

¹⁰ Geert Hofstede, *Interkulturelle Zusammenarbeit: Kulturen, Organisationen, Management* (Wiesbaden: Gabler, 1993), 19.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Rasutė Žukienė, "Trying to Survive: The Art of Exiled Baltic Artists in Germany in 1945–1950," *The Art of Identity and Memory: Toward a Cultural History of the Two World Wars in Lithuania*, ed. by Rasutė Žukienė and Giedrė Jankevičiūtė (Boston (Mass.): Academic Studies Press, 2016), 139–174.

¹³ *Kulturtransfer und auswärtige Kulturpolitik: Akteure und Faktoren polnisch-deutscher Beziehungen 1949–1990*, Hrsg. Julia Röttger, Regina Wenninger, Paweł Zajas (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2023).

¹⁴ Viktoras Vizgirda visited Lithuania in 1966, 1971, and 1977. On his last visit, he donated paintings to museums. In 1984, the M. K. Čiurlionis National Museum of Art hosted the Jubilee Review Exhibition, which the artist considered to be the most significant celebration of his life.

¹⁵ The personal exhibition by Viktoras Vizgirda featured more than 90 of his paintings, created between 1923 and 1944. The paintings were gathered from the Lithuanian Art Museum (now – Lithuanian National Art Museum), the M. K. Čiurlionis National Museum of Art, and private collections.

¹⁶ Since 1997 the museum has been called the Lithuanian National Museum of Art (LNDM).

¹⁷ *Ars* was a group of Lithuanian modern artists active in the 1930s. The group included painters Viktoras Vizgirda, Adomas Galdikas, Antanas Samuolis, and Antanas Gudaitis, graphic artists Vytautas Kazimieras Jonynas, Telesforas Kulakauskas, and Jonas Steponavičius, sculptor Juozas Mikėnas, and set designer Mstislavas Dobužinskis. The *Ars* members met different fates. Viktoras Vizgirda, Adomas Galdikas, Vytautas Kazimieras Jonynas, and Mstislavas Dobužinskis moved to the West. Antanas Gudaitis, Juozas Mikėnas, and Telesforas Kulakauskas remained in Soviet Lithuania.

¹⁸ "Dail. V. Vizgirdos išpūdžiai iš kelionės į Lietuvą [Impressions from a trip to Lithuania]," *Keleivis [Passenger]* (19 October 1966), 4. "Dail. Viktoras Vizgirda apie Lietuvos dailininkus ir jų kūrybą [Artist Viktoras Vizgirda about Lithuanian artists and their work]," *Keleivis [Passenger]* (7 September 1971), 2.

¹⁹ Vida Mažrimienė, *Sugrįžusi dailė [Returned Art]* (Kaunas: Nacionalinis M. K. Čiurlionio dailės muziejus, 2002), 13.

²⁰ "Dailininko V. Vizgirdos žingsnis [Step by artist V. Vizgirda]," *Laisvoji Lietuva [Free Lithuania]* (20 October 1966), 2.

²¹ The position was that there should be no communication with Soviet Lithuania. It was thought that this would undermine the cause of Lithuania's liberation, and that the USA would change its policy by not recognising Lithuania's occupation. Interestingly, the pro-Communist newspapers (*Laisvė [Freedom]*, *Vilnis [Wave]*, *Laisvoji Lietuva [Free Lithuania]* and even the Catholic *Draugas*, published by the Marian Fathers, all sang the same tune, but with varying degrees of intensity. *Tėviškės žiburiai [The Lights of Homeland]* took a middle position. The magazine *Metmenys [Outline]* did not get involved in disagreeable internal disputes. The newspaper *Akiračiai [Horizons]*, founded to foster relations with Lithuania, took a liberal stance.

²¹ Medallions by Vytautas Kašuba from the Trakai Museum were exhibited in Marijampolė in late 2023, at the Beatričė Kleizaitė-Vasaris Art Gallery, as part of the project "The History of Old Lithuania in the Art of Vytautas Kašuba". Eight hundred schoolchildren from the Marijampolė Gymnasium visited the exhibition, and Lithuanian history lessons were held there.

²² The Beatričė Kleizaitė-Vasaris Art Gallery is in Marijampolė. A collection of angels is exhibited at the Anykščiai Art Centre.

²³ The Volga was produced in GAZ: Gorkovskiy Avtomobilny Zavod.

²⁴ Magdalena Birutė Stankūnienė, *Vieškelis mano dienų [The highway of my days]* (Chicago, 1999), 149.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Vida Mažrimienė, *Magdalena Birutė Stankūnienė: spalvų siuita Lietuvai [Magdalena Birutė Stankūnienė: a suite of colors for Lithuania]* (Kaunas, 2005), 4.

²⁷ Algimantas Kezys. *Lithuania through the Wall: Diary of a Ten-day Visit to My Native Land* (Chicago, 1985).

²⁸ Ibid., VII.

²⁹ "Tarp senojo ir naujojo pasaulio [Between the old and new world]," *Gimtas kraštas [Homeland]* (11–17 May 1995), 7.

³⁰ Skirmantas Valiulis, "Algimanto Kezio sugrįžimas [The return of Algimantas Kezys]," *7 meno dienos [7 Days of Art]* (26 May 1995), 1.

³¹ Now – V. K. Jonynas Gallery, the filial of M. K. Čiurlionis National Museum of Art (NČDM).

³² The expression "Socialism with a human face" appeared in Czechoslovakia in 1960s.

³³ Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis (1875–1911) was Lithuania's most famous artist, composer, and painter. A small museum has existed in his family home in Druskininkai since 1963. The synthesis of art and music is prominent in Čiurlionis' paintings, expressed in the series titled Sonatas, Preludes, and Fugues. Čiurlionis' art belongs to the Symbolist movement and contains hints of abstraction. These features of his work caused considerable controversy in the Lithuanian American press in the 1970s and 1980s. Aleksis Rannit, Kazimieras Žoromskis, Stasys Goštautas, and others actively debated the subject. In general, this Lithuanian artist is considered to be one of the founders of Central European modern art. In 2005, Čiurlionis' paintings were shown in the "Visual Music" exhibition at the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art, alongside works by Wassily Kandinsky, James McNeill Whistler, and Paul Klee. Čiurlionis' music bears similarities with Neo-Romanticism.

³⁴ Adalbertas Nedzelskis, M. K. Čiurlionio memorialiniame muziejuje 1963–1997 [At the M. K. Čiurlionis Memorial Museum 1963–1997] (Druskininkai, 2014), 73.

³⁵ The newspaper *Gimtas kraštas* was aimed for the diaspora and Lithuania. In 1967–1991, it was published by the *Tėviškė [Homeland]* Society for Soviet Lithuania's cultural relations with compatriots abroad. The society was engaged not only in cultural relations, but also in surveillance of visiting émigrés and recruitment of agents among them.

³⁶ The publishing house "Vaga" in the 1980s published three books illustrated by Jonynas: *Metai [The Seasons]*, by Kristijonas Donelaitis (1983), *Jaunojo Verterio kančios [The Sorrows of Young Werter]*, translation to Lithuanian of the work by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe; and *Lyrika [Lyrics]*, by Stasys Santvaras (1984). For more see: "Kada dailininkas keliauja kartu su rašytoju. Ingrida Korsakaitė kalbina Vytautą Kazimierą Jonyną [When an artist travels with a writer. Ingrida Korsakaitė interviews with Vytautas Kazimieras Jonynas]," *Literatūra ir menas [Literature and art]* (8 December 1984), 6.

³⁷ Arūnas Streikus, "Sovietų valdžios "Darbas su išeivija": manipuliavimas kultūriniais ryšiais [The work of the Soviet government with the diaspora. Manipulation of cultural ties]," *Naujasis židinys-Aidai [The New Hearth-Echoes]* 4–5 (2006), 168.

³⁸ Nedzelskis, 144.

³⁹ Now – M. K. Čiurlionis House-museum.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 153.

⁴¹ Streikus, 166–169.

⁴² Ibid., 167.

⁴³ Bronius Kviklys was an economist, lawyer, journalist, editor, and ethnographer. While living in the United States, he accumulated a valuable archive of Lithuanian studies, including newspapers, books, numismatics, philately, and photographs. Bronius Kviklys compiled several fundamental encyclopedic publications: *Mūsų Lietuva [Our Lithuania]* (four volumes) and *Lietuvos bažnyčios [Lithuanian Churches]* (seven volumes). In 1984, Pope John Paul II awarded Bronius Kviklys with the Order of Gold for his merits in educational activities. After his death in 1993 Kviklys' archive was transferred to Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas.

⁴⁴ Streikus, 169.

⁴⁵ "Letter from Kazys Varnelis to museum director Romualdas Budrys, January–September 1987." Archive of the Lithuanian National Museum of Art, f. B-8, ap. 2, b. 95, p. 18, 21.

⁴⁶ Kazys Varnelis. "Abstraktusis klasicistas [Abstract Classicist]." *Kazys Varnelis*. Ed. by Daiva Vaišnienė (Vilnius, 2022), 71.

⁴⁷ "Letter from Kazys Varnelis to Romualdas Budrys, 24 January 1987." Archive of the Lithuanian National Museum of Art, f. B-8, ap. 2, b. 95, p. 21.

⁴⁸ Streikus, 168.

⁴⁹ After Lithuania regained independence, Soviet figures such as Algirdas Mykolas Brazauskas (1932–2010), Justas Paleckis Jr. (1942–), and Vilius Kavaliauskas (1951–) became patriotically engaged activists. Some of them remain active in public life today.

⁵⁰ Morta Ulpienė, an employee of the Lithuanian Museum of Art, corresponded with the diaspora. She compiled the catalogue for the "Exhibition of Lithuanian Diaspora Artists" (Vilnius, 1988).

⁵¹ “Letter from Romualdas Budrys to Arvydas Algiminas, 1 February 1987.” Archive of the Lithuanian National Museum of Art, f. B-8, ap. 2, b. 81, p. 8.

⁵² Laima Bialopetravičienė, “Išėivių dailė Lietuvoje [The Art of diaspora in Lithuania],” *Literatūra ir menas [Literature and Art]* (3 September 1988), 10.

⁵³ The library of Vytautas Magnus University was enriched with about 16,000 books and periodicals from the collections of the Sisters of St. Casimir Convent in Chicago, Prof. Vytautas Kavolis, and Aleksandras Štromas.

⁵⁴ In 1988, anthropologist Liucija Baškauskaitė made a major contribution to the restoration of Vytautas Magnus University. She became the first Vice-Rector and later briefly headed the Faculty of Social Sciences. Baškauskaitė founded the first private television station in Lithuania Tele-3 (now TV3).

⁵⁵ More information about Prof. Algirdas Avizienis: <https://www.vdu.lt/en/person/algirdas-avizienis/>

⁵⁶ More information about Prof. Bronius Vaškėlis: <https://www.vdu.lt/en/person/bronius-vaskelis/>

⁵⁷ Letter of appreciation from Romualdas Budrys, “Director of the Lithuanian Art Museum, to the Lithuanian Institute of Fine Arts in Chicago. Vilnius, 15 February 1990,” Archive of the Lithuanian National Art Museum, f. 4, ap. 1, b. 7. Pranas Domšaitis’ work was exhibited in Berlin in the early 20th century together with the works of German Expressionists. Nazi

ideologues in 1936 included his works in a travelling exhibition of “degenerate art” and removed them from German museums. After World War II, Pranas Domšaitis lived in South Africa. After his death, his paintings were brought to Chicago. In 1990, they were transferred to Lithuania.

⁵⁸ *Kolekcijų istorijos [Collections Stories]*, ed. by Daina Kamarauskienė (Kaunas, 2013), 220.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 199.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 256.

⁶² The full list of donated works can be found in the book *Sugrįžusi dailė [Returned Art]*, ed. by Vida Mažrimienė (Kaunas, 2006), 158–164.

⁶³ “Letter from Kazys Varnelis to Romualdas Budrys, 10 November 1987,” Archive of the Lithuanian National Museum of Art, f. B-8, ap. 2, b. 95, p. 10.

⁶⁴ Acrylic paintings by Kazys Varnelis were exhibited together with drawings from the Academy Museum by Pranciškus Smuglevičius, Jonas Rustemas, Stasys Ušinskas, Bronius Pundzius, Antanas Gudaitis, and Algimantas Švėgžda. For more see: Andrius Jankūnas, “Pirmoji paroda Kazio Varnelio namuose [The first exhibition at the Kazys Varnelis House],” *Respublika [Republic]* (17 November 1997), 6.

⁶⁵ More about the history of the building see in *National Museum of Lithuania*, <https://lnm.lt/en/museums/kazys-varnelis-house-museum/>

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MENININKŲ MIGRACIJA IR „KULTŪROS PERDAVIMAS“ PRIEŠINGOSE POLITINĖSE SISTEMOSE: LIETUVIŲ DIASPOROS VAKARUOSE POVEIKIS LIETUVOS KULTŪRAI

Santrauka

Šaltojo karo metais tarp lietuvių diasporos Vakaruose (labiausiai JAV) ir sovietinės Lietuvos asmenų ir įstaigų vyko kultūrinė komunikacija, kultūros perdavimo iš Vakarų į Rytus procesai. Tai yra intriguojantis ir menkai ištirtas lietuvių migracijos ir diasporos meno istorijos puslapis. Tad šio tyrimo tikslas – remiantis Lietuvos archyviniais šaltiniais ir spauda, aptarti lietuvių diasporos menininkų transatlantinės migracijos ypatumus ir ištirti kultūros perdavimo procesus bei jų įtaką Lietuvos meno laukui ilgu periodu – 1960–2000 m. Tyrimo objektas – kultūrinių ryšių praktikos, vystytos privačia lietuvių imigrantų iniciatyva ir instituciniu lygmeniu, kurias valdė valstybinių muziejų vadovai. Tai reiškia, kad kultūros perkėlimas (*Kulturtransfer*) sovietiniu periodu buvo valdomas iš centro ir turėjo ryškų politinį dėmenį. Šiame straipsnyje remiamasi antropologine kultūros samprata ir tarpkultūrinės komunikacijos bei kultūros perdavimo koncepcija. Į kultūros perdavimą (*Kulturtransfer*) žiūrima kaip į tarpininkavimo tarp skirtingų kultūrų būdą ir galimybę bendrauti laisvo ir totalitarinio krašto menininkams. XX a. antrojoje pusėje, 1960–1990 m., vyko vienakryptis kultūros objektų (meno kūrinių) ir informacijos fizinis perdavimas tikslinei auditorijai – kultūros vartotojams sovietų Lietuvoje. JAV lietuvių diasporos atstovams bendraujant su vietiniais okupuotos Lietuvos menininkais, buvo perduodama informacija apie Vakarų modernizmo meną, įtakotas sovietinio žmogaus pasaulėvaizdis. Taip per kultūrinę veiklą lietuvių diaspora stipriai prisidėjo prie socializmo sistemos ardymo iš

vidaus. Tyrime naudojama niekur neskelbta archyvinė medžiaga – korespondencija tarp Lietuvos meno institucijų ir lietuvių diasporos JAV atstovų.

Reikšminiai žodžiai: lietuvių išėivija, lietuvių diasporos dailė, kultūros perdavimas, Šaltasis karas, menas ir karas, meno migracija XX amžiuje.

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31

• ARTIST MIGRATION AND CULTURAL TRANSFER IN OPPOSING POLITICAL SYSTEMS:
• THE IMPACT OF THE LITHUANIAN DIASPORA IN THE WEST ON LITHUANIAN CULTURE

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