

ithuania is among the most dynamic European states. The largest of the Baltic countries (covering roughly a quarter of Italy's surface-area), it has a short coastline on the Baltic Sea. It is a very young parliamentary Republic, the first to proclaim its independence from the Soviet Union on 11 March 1990. Historically disputed between Germany and Russia, this country has always been influenced by numerous countries and cultures, thus slowing the formation of its national artistic identity. While this year marks the thirtieth anniversary of independence, for some years, Lithuania has taken every opportunity to become better known in Italy and other countries through its rich and particularly far-sighted cultural programme. We need only mention the Golden Lion received at the 58th Venice Biennale of Art.

GREAT MASTERS AND MID-CAREER ARTISTS

Lithuania has produced extraordinary artists such as **Jonas Mekas**, a reference figure of New American Cinema, founder of *Film Culture* magazine and the Filmmakers' Cooperative, which would later evolve into the prestigious Anthology Film Archive; and **George Maciunas**, architect, writer, composer and performer, as well as one of the founders and main forces behind Fluxus.

The next generation seems to be fundamentally concerned with recent historical memory, which highlights the critical relationship of contemporary art with social, political, and cultural phenomena linked to post-Soviet (artistic) identity. The main themes of **Deimantas Narkevičius's** works, for example, are the memory of the utopia of modernism, history, and social memory, which create a dichotomy between memory and oblivion.

The artistic activity of **Nomeda** and **Gediminas Urbonas**, a couple in life and in art, also starts from archival research and then expands into issues of collaborative participation, raising questions about the community and economic and environmental awareness. In 2018, Studio Urbonas curated the *Swamp Pavilion* for Lithuania's first national participation in the Venice Biennale of Architecture.

THE NEXT GENERATION

A new generation of artists is emerging with strength and determination. The topics they investigate focus on contemporary ideological, economic, and cultural conditions, through research of a historical, sociological, anthropological, and psychological nature, combined with interdisciplinary and scenographic artistic skills.

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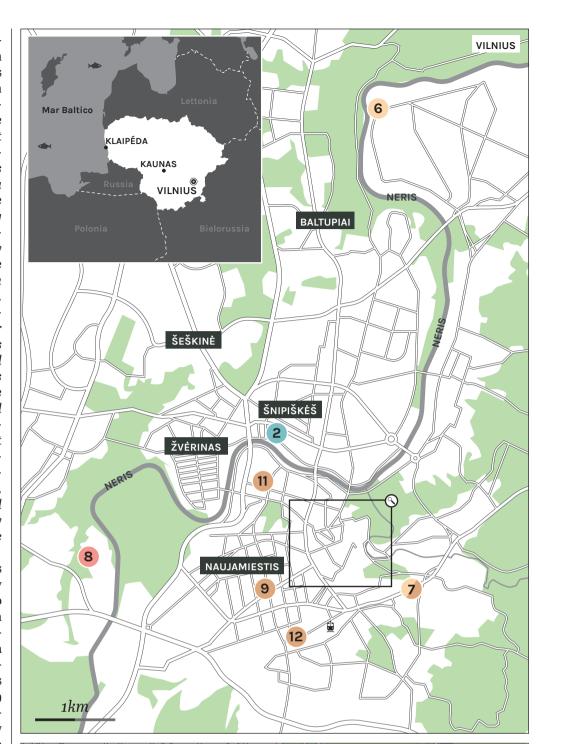
LITUANIA

Francesco Urbano Ragazzi, a curatorial collective that has collaborated from New York with Mekas on various projects and that this year edited the publication for Humboldt Books of Jonas Mekas Transcript 04 44' 14": Lithuania and the Collapse of the USSR, explains: "The Lithuanian art scene owes a great deal to nomadic, prophetic and global figures such as Jonas Mekas and George Maciunas. There is a certain Fluxus spirit that hovers among the emerging artists of the area. I am thinking of the Beer Metaphysics by Vytenis Burokas, the Young Girls Reading Group by Eglė Kulbokaitė and Dorota Gaweda or the sculptures by Augustas Serapinas, which often insist on lateral or interstitial spaces. But I am also thinking of the Autarkia canteen in Vilnius: a place that brings together the new generations of artists and thinkers with the previous ones in an informal and specific way. This particular attitude is increasingly recognized and recognizable on the international scene - as evidenced by the Golden Lion at the last Venice Biennale - but it is the result of a collective effort which the Lithuanian community has managed to develop in these decades of newfound independence. In true Fluxus style, Lithuanian art has woven connections and affinities throughout the world, not only creatively but also through very energetic cultural policies".

Among the most interesting artists born between the 1980s and the early 1990s, in addition to Lina Lapelytė (who created the award-winning Lithuania pavilion at the 2019 Venice Biennale together with Rugilė Barzdžiukaitė and Vaiva Grainytė) and the aforementioned Augustas Serapinas (one of the youngest artists invited to the main exhibition of the 2019 Biennale, represented by the APalazzo gallery in Brescia and exhibitor of a solo show at Cura basement in 2018), we should note Gintarė Minelgaitė (GoraParasit), Ieva Savickaitė, Andrej Polukord, Kristina Inčiūraitė, Eglė Budvytytė and Gintaras Didžiapetris. Also worthy of note are Julijonas Urbonas and Emilija Škarnulytė (the latter was chosen to represent Lithuania at the XXIII Triennale di Milano in 2019), both of whom deal in an original way with complex current issues such as denuclearization and climate change.

INTELLECTUALS AND RESEARCH

Among the most active and stimulating intellectual figures of international scope, we should cite Raimundas Malašauskas whose curatorial work is modelled around trust in the public's creativity; Laima Kreivytė, who is interested in the interaction between text and image, in curatorship as an artistic and critical practice; and Kristupas Sabolius, a researcher at MIT in Boston and professor of philosophy at the University of Vilnius, who has





SPAZI ISTITUZIONALI

- 1 CAC CONTEMPORARY ART CENTRE
- 2 NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART
- 3 MO MUSEUM
- 4 LITHUANIAN ARTISTS' ASSOCIATION ldsaiunga.lt
- 5 ISTITUTO ITALIANO DI CULTURA iicvilnius.esteri.it

RESIDENZE

- 6 RUPERT, rupert.lt
- 7 LTMKS letmekoo lt

FIERE

ART VILNIUS 2-4 ottobre artvilnius com

SPAZI NON PROFIT

- 7 LTMKS | SODAS 2123 letmekoo.lt
- 9 AUTARKIA autarkia.lt
- 10 EDITORIAL editorial.lt
- 11 LITHUANIAN PHOTOGRAPHERS ASSOCIATION photography.lt
- 12 LOKOMOTIF facebook.com/hi.lokomotif/

FORMAZIONE SUPERIORE

- 13 VILNIUS UNIVERSITY
- 14 VILNIUS ACADEMY OF ARTS

GALLERIE PRIVATE

- 15 (AV17) av17gallery.com
- 16 MENO NIŠA
- 17 THE ROOSTER roostergallerv.eu
- 18 VARTAI galerijavartai.com

particularly close links to the Italian intellectual scene.

An indispensable tool for delving further into the Lithuanian cultural scene is the Lithuanian Culture Guide, published and updated periodically by the Lithuanian Culture Institute. It provides a detailed survey on cinema, theatre, architecture, art, design, music, dance, and literature and is entrusted to professionals and scholars who recount the historical roots and the contemporaneity of each area of research.

A LOOK AT THEATRE

The theatrical scene is particularly prolific and stimulating. As the theatre critic Kristina Steiblytė explains, "given that Lithuanian professional theatre did not begin to take shape until the end of the 19th century, it was forged together with the figure of the theatre director that was already established. The role of the director then evolved by entrusting the interpretation of a selected text to a single actor, a device that often helped to circumvent censorship in Soviet times, while it now offers the audience unique theatrical experiences".

Contemporary Lithuanian theatre debuted on the international stage in 1984, when Eimuntas Nekrošius's production, Pirosmani, Pirosmani... was invited to BITEF - the Belgrade International Theatre Festival. Valentina Valentini, an attentive scholar of the work of the

A new generation of artists is emerging with strength and determination.

Lithuanian director who died in 2018 while working on *Edipo a Colono* for the Napoli Teatro Festival Italia, and with whom she had been collaborating for several years, tells us about the specific identity of Lithuanian theatre and how Nekrošius's direction was original: "The reference universe for Nekrošius's theatre was the classics of literature, from Shakespeare to Dostoevsky, Gogol, Kafka and Chekhov. His performances, however, do not start by addressing the problem of the text's interpretation. The organic link between word and action, between character and actor. found in Nekrošius's productions stems from a work process in which the text is not interpreted independently by the director according to ideological, historical or philosophical interpretations (as is the practice of directing criticism in Italy), but evolves through the work of the actors and with the actors. This research takes place on several levels: physical, psychological and spiritual, and is guided by the director but never pre-packaged, and the execution remains with the actor". She continues: "Nekrošius's ability to tell a | economic transformation that followed the

population 2.793.397 (2019)

 $65.200 \, \mathrm{km}^2$

density 54 ab./km²

GDP pro-capite (PPA) 34.825 \$ (2018 | 48°)

story through the actor and the stage space means that the spectators are involved in a scenic story that absorbs their attention with a soap opera plot, a vaudeville rhythm and the gags of a comic film. Nekrošius represents a peculiar trait of Lithuanian theatre, the vocation towards a visual and self-reflective narrative through which it expresses its critical dimension, as its performances trigger conflicts that clash with the values of post-Soviet Lithuanian society. Nekrošius thus restores a vital relationship between theatre and society: opposing the dominant powers means affirming universal values through literature, opposing the mass media covering of multinational neo-capitalism, and homologation to the aesthetic values of Euro-American theatrical production".

Following the reconquest of independence, Oskaras Koršunovas stands out among the most important personalities of contemporary Lithuanian theatre: his unique and recognizable style of direction creates a world of the absurd in which interest in the individual's position in society merges with aesthetics influenced by postmodern thinking. The current scene boasts a highly fertile terrain in which several young directors, whose visions are already clearly characterized, stand out: Agnius Jankevičius. Paulius Ignatavičius, Artūras Areima, Kamilė Gudmonaitė, Jonas Tertelis, Olga Lapina and Paulius Markevičius. Among the foreign directors who constantly work in Lithuania, we should note the Poles Krystian Lupa and Łukasz Twarkowski. the Latvians Valtris Sīlis and Yana Ross. and the Hungarian Arpad Schilling.

A LOOK AT ARCHITECTURE

As Julija Reklaitė, architect and former director of the Lithuanian Architecture Foundation, as well as cultural attaché for several years in Italy and now director of the Rupert space in Vilnius, explains: "Lithuanian architecture did not develop as a true evolution but from the specific, contingent historical situation. The

LITHUANIA CALLS ITALY

For several years, the Lithuanian Culture Institute has embarked on an energetic studytravel programme that has invited numerous international professionals to discover the richness of the country's contemporary visual culture. We, therefore, asked some of the people from Italy who have first-hand experience of Lithuanian culture, for a reflection on its art scene and an indication of the names we should be looking out for.

BENEDETTA CARPI DE RESMINI

art critic and curator, director of Latitudo Art Projects

My encounter with Lithuania was initially filtered by a novel that I loved very much, Baltic Souls by Jan Brokken, and later by the writer Roman Gary, a naturalized French Lithuanian Jew. What sets the latest generations apart is their precise deconstruction of historical rhetoric in search of a language that does not conform to the ideological forces or the homologating power of the mass media. In particular, I would say that female artists are continuing to develop interesting themes. One such is **Lina Lapelytė**. one of the artists I worked with several years ago. I also follow the work of Kristina Inčiūraitė with interest: it always evokes new elements that are not only related to issues of identity or violence against women. Finally, I would like to mention Mykolas Juodelė, very young photographer who did a residency in

Rome for the Magic Car-

pets platform, and who

important career as a pho-

I am sure will have an

tojournalist.

CRISTINA COBIANCHI

founder and director of AlbumArte. Rome

Lithuania is a young country that plans investment through culture and art, including contemporary art. The museum directors, the theatre public and that of exhibitions as well as those managing independent spaces like ours, are all young. Those of my generation, who in our old and dormant Western Europe still shamelessly occupy all the positions that count, have almost disappeared. The community is made up of structured. well-trained, passionate, receptive, and curious artists. The vounger artists seldom speak directly of their own recent past in their works, but some show delicate, indelible traces of it, which often turn into something dreamlike or fundamental archetypes, ours as well, of the "short century".

restoration of Lithuanian independence in 1990, finally generated private demand. The influx of new materials and the late arrival of echoes of postmodernism created a unique situation in which architects had the opportunity to interpret, create and study with courage". The names of those she indicates as being of "very high quality, variety of style and intentions" are Audrius Ambrasas. Rolandas Palekas and Gintautas **Natkevičius**, while among the vounger architects she cites **Do architects**, **Ake**turi. SA atelier. Office de Architectura o Isora x Lozuraityte studio. Processoffice, IMPLMNT and PU-PA. "In 2016 Lithuania participated in the Venice Biennale of Architecture", continues Reklaitė, "where it inaugurated a large exhibition together with Latvia and Estonia, the Baltic Pavilion; in 2018, under the guidance of about fifteen emerging architects. of the curator-artists Nomeda and Gedi-The intent was partially successful. minas Urbonas, it tackled a broader idea, a swamp that has no physical or national borders. At the 17th Biennale, Lithuania

present A Planet of People, a project by Julijionas Urbonas". Pippo Ciorra, senior curator for architecture at MAXXI in Rome, tells us | construction of a new, temporary pavilion

will be exhibiting an even more original

idea: the Lithuanian Space Agency will

about The Swamp School, the Lithuanian | on a small 'buildable' body of water at the pavilion for the 16th Biennale of Architecture, which he commissioned. "The Swamp School was conceived from a small, synthetic utopia. The idea was to combine the already widely recognized vitality of the Lithuanian art scene with the nascent, but not yet internationally known, vitality of the new generation of Lithuanian architects. The Urbonas team of artists and curators of the pavilion had the two-fold merit of having already won an award at the Biennale of Art and of being very interested in spatial and environmental issues. As for the architects, given that it was basically a Biennale of architecture and that in Lithuania (fortunately) there are still no local, "star" architects, we chose to seek a collective commitment from a group

The curators were able to use an "espace trouvé" to give shape to their spatial idea of ecological and urban commitment. The architects - myself included - did not manage to produce what we had hoped would be the real "coup de théâtre" of the first independent Lithuanian participation in the Biennale of Architecture, namely the corner of the Fondamenta dei Giardini. The defeat suffered (due to Venetian bureaucracy and the available budget) was partially offset by the excellent success achieved. A publication is being prepared that describes the whole project and the overall experience". What would you say about the comparison between Italy and Lithuania? "The architectural community in Lithuania is small, modernist, optimistic and agile; it is certainly not rich, but it occupies a recognized and usable space in society", Ciorra replies. On the other hand, "the Italian community is huge, impoverished, unable to take risks and blackmailed by bureaucracy; like almost everything in our country, it is always subject to the reason of State".

THE CONTEMPORARY PERIOD IN MUSEUMS

The spaces dedicated to the contemporary period, often built in the early years of independence under the impetus of the initial enthusiasm, are now numerous, especially in Vilnius and Kaunas. The Contemporary Art Centre (CAC), that opened in 1992, became the first contemporary art institution in the country to be financed

TERESA MACRÌ

art critic, independent curator and writer

The trip to Vilnius and Kaunas fully confirmed my expectations of this Baltic country: it is very orderly, but also has great potential from a creative point of view. Moreover, if you consider that this territory gave birth to three great cultural figures - George Maciunas, Jonas Mekas and Emmanuel Lévina - you become aware that beneath this subdued order is a fervour that frequently explodes, producing fantastic figures. The political memory of the vicissitudes, conflicts, continuous occupations and then the independence in 1990 from the former Soviet Union, still influences the Lithuanian artists' reflections and the historical reconnaissance that fuels the passionate cultural debate. In recent years, I have noticed that the Lithuanian government

provides a great deal of support to the world of art: the merit of the success of the Lithuanian pavilion at the 58th Venice Biennale of Art can also be attributed to the interactions they have managed to weave over the

by the state. Directed from its earliest days

by **Kestutis Kuizinas**, it has distinguished

itself for providing new visions and strat-

egies in art, offering unprecedented con-

cepts for the local art audience. A year lat-

er the Soros Centre for Contemporary Art

(SCCA), was founded. Financed by **George**

Soros, it has greatly influenced the devel-

opment of the Lithuanian art scene by sup-

porting and disseminating contemporary

art projects internationally. In 2000, the

Soros Centre was reorganized as the Con-

temporary Art Information Centre (CAIC),

under the Lithuanian Art Museum and lat-

er became part of the National Gallery of

Art, which opened in 2009 in the former

Museum of the Revolution. The National

Gallery is a multifunctional cultural cen-

tre that houses Lithuanian works of art

from the 20th and 21st centuries, while

temporary exhibitions usually combine

Lithuanian art with international art. The

brand-new MO Museum, which started

its activity in 2010 as the Modern Art Cen-

tre, supported by collectors **Danguolė** and

Viktoras Butkus, is the most ambitious

private initiative of the last twenty years.

It houses an art collection that covers the

period from the 1960s to the present day,

within an avant-garde, intimate and iconic

MANUELA PACELLA

historian and art critic

The impression I received during my trip to Lithuania was of great vitality and a strong organization and desire to spread knowledge of Lithuanian contemporary art abroad. Among the positive consequences of this enormous energy and economic investment are certainly the numerous international awards that Lithuania has earned in recent years. It is absolutely no coincidence, in fact, that the names of certain very gifted artists have emerged on occasions such as the 2019 Venice Biennale, Among the artists I found most interesting. I would certainly cite Lina Lapelytė and Gintarė Minelgaitė (GoraParasit).



ALESSANDRA TRONCONE

art historian and curator

Compared to other countries of the former Soviet bloc, Lithuania is perhaps the one that most clearly speaks a truly European language. The signs of its recent history are clearly visible, and this endows an indisputable charm; at the same time, we perceive a push towards the future that the new generations are pursuing with great responsibility and seriousness. Although there are galleries that operate at an international level and despite the growing international role of the ArtVilnius fair, I believe that the commercial circuit is still rather limited, partly due to the Soviet heritage and partly to the absence of widespread collecting. Mainly, artists work thanks to government grants from the Lithuanian Council of Culture and this perhaps facilitates a more experimental attitude, particularly regarding fluid languages such as performance and video.



Vilnius and Kaunas now have many spaces dedicated to contemporary art that were often created in the early years of independence.

structure, designed by **Daniel Libeskind**. created in collaboration with the Lithuanian studio **Do Architects** and inaugurated in October 2018.

ASSOCIATIONS AND ACAD EMIES

The Lithuanian Artists' Association "is the successor of the Lithuanian Artists' Association founded in 1935, which continues its creative and public activity, and actively defends and implements its cherished values in the independent Republic of Lithuania", its statute reads. Founded in 1989, it has territorial divisions in Kaunas, Šiauliai, Panevėžys and Klaipėda and manages four galleries in Vilnius.

Founded in 1568, the University of curators and writers.

Vilnius is considered the oldest university in Eastern Europe. For a long time, it was the only higher education school in Lithuania, and it has safeguarded cultural and scientific tradition, playing a significant role in the cultural life not only of Lithuania but also of neighbouring countries.

The Vilnius Academy of Arts is a state university with a tradition that dates back to 1793 when the Department of Architecture was established at the University of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. It offers programmes in different study areas (art, design, architecture, and theory and history of art). It has four campuses in the cities of Vilnius, Kaunas, Klaipėda and Telšiai. It manages a museum, several galleries and exhibition spaces, including Titanikas (Titanic), which opened in 2009, as well as the renowned Nida Art Colony, opened on the Baltic coast in 2011. Together with Rupert, an artistic centre and residence built on the Neris River in Vilnius in 2013 in a building designed by the award-winning Lithuanian architect Audrius Ambrasas, and the Kaunas Artists' House, inaugurated in 2018, these facilities are the flagship of the Academy's programme in Lithuania of international residencies for artists,



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ARTIST AND AMBASSADOR: AN INTERVIEW WITH SILVIA GIAMBRONE

We discuss Lithuania with the Italian artist Silvia Giambrone, winner of the ninth Kaunas Biennial in 2013 with Teatro Anatomico and, in 2016, appointed ambassador for Kaunas 2022. What was your impression the first time you visited Lithuania? My first experience of Lithuania was very significant, not only because its history intersects with the most crucial moments in European history, but also because I was deeply touched by the palpable need of the people I worked with to write their present time and future through the languages of art and culture, to free themselves from a complex past and transform it into a conscious present. The thirst for culture that I found in Lithuania is something that has long since faded in Italy.

From a personal and identity point of view, did Teatro anatomico touch issues to which the Lithuanian community is sensi-

Teatro anatomico belongs to a series of works on embroidery and is a performance influenced by my Sicilian origins. I have an embroidered collar sewn onto my skin to bring out the performative relationship between certain so-called feminine activities and the politics of identity. In Lithuania, the embroidered collar possessed another story: during the Soviet occupation it was compulsory to wear one at school, so much so, that one of the first gestures of protest was to tear it off both literally and symbolically. Therefore, Teatro anatomico represented a moment of truth for them too, a truth that can still not be spoken. This experience showed me the ambiguous nature of the truth of images. Jacques Lacan argued that

telling the truth is impossible, it is the words that are missing. The Lithuanian artistic experience, on the other hand, made me think that truth exists, but it is ubiquitous.

What art system did you find in Lithuania?

A predominantly public system, with some associations and a huge desire for renewal from the students in the Academies of Fine Arts. The bureaucratic cage of the Soviet machine is still apparent and there is much effort underway to streamline it and make it more dynamic. Museums, especially in Kaunas, still suffered from being unsuitable as containers of contemporary art. I think there is a lot to learn from countries like Lithuania that have not vet tamed culture as entertainment or a bearer of status, as is increasingly the case with us.

Could you give us an anticipation of Kaunas 2022 European Capital of Culture?

Starting from its history, Kaunas is working on rethinking what it means to be a contemporary city, what are the real definitions of "contemporary" and how should these be structured. The performative aspect and the involvement of citizens will be central because, for Kaunas, art has an important mission of redefining identity but without losing the specific peculiarities of art, of its poetic and aesthetic tools. What is central to the mission of Kaunas2022 is the urgent question that concerns all European cities at a time when the constituent values are in crisis, namely: what does it mean to be a European capital?

The Italian Cultural Institute of Vilnius, inaugurated on January 10, 2000, is located in the city's historic centre, in the ancient ecclesiastical academy of the Alumnatas. It occupies a strategic position for the promotion and dissemination of the Italian language and culture in Lithuania through the organization of courses and cultural events.

NON-PROFIT SPACES

Non-profit spaces are a particularly active and stimulating feature of the Lithuanian cultural scene. These include the Lithuanian Inter-disciplinary Artists' Association (LeTMeKoo, LIAA, LTMKS). Founded in 1997, this is an artist-run organization that has more than one hundred and twenty members among younger and already established professionals. It organizes and produces exhibitions, events and residencies as well as distributing various publications and representing artists in various social and political situations. Until 2014, the LTMKS organized its projects in various spaces throughout the city. It later set up a gallery project space that has an annual calendar. The newest gallery, Atletika, opened in September 2019 and is LTMKS's largest exhibition space so far. All these galleries are located in Sodas 2123, a multifunctional cultural centre managed by the Lithuanian Interdisciplinary Artists' Association which provides workshops, artist studios,

ArtVilnius is the only contemporary art fair in Lithuania and the largest visual arts event in Eastern Europe.

exhibition spaces and organizes workshops, performances and residencies for a wide variety of disciplines.

The Lithuanian Photographers' Association promotes Lithuanian photography and protects the copyrights of its members; it organizes exhibitions in Lithuania and abroad, as well as seminars (since 1973 an international seminar in Nida). conferences, meetings, debates and publications. The association and its departments manage four galleries in Vilnius. Kaunas and Klaipėda.

Autarkia is a visionary place and, as its statement says, "an artists' day-care centre, a club of interests, an office space for putative experiences and imaginary solutions, a bistro for experimental gastronomy, a gallery and a project incubator". Editorial, founded in 2017 by Neringa Černiauskaitė and Vitalija Jasaitė, respectively editor-in-chief of the magazines Artnews. lt and Echo Gone Wrong, is a project space that hosts the editorial offices themselves. It focuses on emerging Lithuanian and international artists, inviting them to exhibit their visions in a non-institutional and non-commercial context; it also organizes a series of talks and performances and events. Lastly, Lokomotif is a very special space for contemporary art exhibitions, workshops, residencies, and concerts. Opened in spring 2019 on the second floor of the Lentvaris railway station building, in the apartment built in 1862 as the residence of the Tsar, it is located fifteen minutes by train from the centre of Vilnius.

THE PRIVATE GALLERIES

The transition from a planned economy to a free-market economy has also encouraged the creation of several private galleries: firstly, Vartai. Opened in the early years of independence, it represents emerging and established artists, among others, Žilvinas Kempinas and Aidas Bareikis.

Among the youngest and most enterprising galleries, (AV17), founded in 2011, is one of the few Lithuanian galleries that exclusively exhibits contemporary art objects, sculptures and installations. Contour Art Gallery is, instead, a travelling gallery that aims to enhance its artists' production by finding the most suitable locations for each work, creating new contexts for their ideas and different perspectives and approaches to the works of art.

BEHIND THE SCENES OF THE GOLDEN LION: AN INTERVIEW WITH CATERINA AVATANEO



Rugilė Barzdžiukaitė, Vaiva Grainytė e Lina Lapelytė, Sun & Sea (Marina) Biennale Arti Visive, Venezia 2019. Photo Andrej Vasilenko © Courtesy the artists

Associate curator at Arcade and DEMO Moving Image Festival, assistant curator at Serpentine Galleries in London, as well as assistant curator at the 2019 Lithuania Pavilion curated by Lucia Pietroiusti, Caterina Avataneo tells us what you still don't know about the Lithuanian performance that won the last Venice Biennale.

How did you become involved with the Lithuanian art scene?

I first visited Lithuania, and specifically Kaunas, at the Creature Performance Art Festival in 2015. Since then my interest in the Lithuanian art scene has remained very much alive. In 2018, I was lucky enough to be involved in the production of a Jonas Mekas screening and Q&A at the Peckhamplex Cinema in London. The event was organized by Serpentine Galleries and the Lithuanian Cultural Institute, and that was when Lucia Pietroiusti and I met.

What steps led to the pavilion's success?

The Lithuania Pavilion was located in a Marina Militare warehouse, a few minutes from the Arsenale. The choice of space was fundamental when creating Sun & Sea (Marina) because the performance developed on an artificial beach that was populated for eight hours a day by singers and extras (including dogs) and observed from a minstrels' gallery above. The singing team included many local voices, and even the vinyl record and catalogue was a project designed by Åbäke, and produced and printed by Grafiche Veneziane and MaleFatte - Rio Terà dei Pensieri, a cooperative that works with inmates of the Santa Maria Maggiore prison.

How would you explain the interest of a large part of the young generation of Lithuanian artists (and not just them) in performative language?

For purely interpretative purposes, I would refer to Rosalind Krauss, who was already speaking of Post-Medium Condition in the late nineties, not only referring to Lithuanian artists but to the growth of artistic practices that were, in general, abandoning interest in the purity of the medium to focus on different ways of articulating the complexities of today's world. Art and aesthetics are increasingly demonstrating an interest in interdisciplinary contributions and the use of performance facilitates this crossover. More recently, Dorothea von Hantelmann, speaking of performative language rather than performance, has observed that today's audience is more inclined to attribute meaning to the experience that a work produces than to the work itself. It is, therefore, interesting to observe how artists are negotiating their involvement with the capitalist system in a conscious way. Robertas Narkus's work fits perfectly here, but also that of Augustas Serapinas, Anastasia Sosunova and others.

Meno Niša Gallery is one of the main contemporary art galleries in Lithuania, based in the historic centre of Vilnius. The director, Diana Stomienė, is president of the Lithuanian Art Galleries association and has been the director of ArtVilnius since 2009. The gallery represents both established artists and promising young newcomers, with particular attention paid to the promotion of new media, installations and performances. The Rooster Gallery focuses on young Lithuanian artists. By adopting new schemes, such as the rental of works of art, it is not bound to a permanent location but exhibits the works of each artist in a different space each time.

FAIRS AND BIENNIALS

ArtVilnius is the only contemporary art fair in Lithuania and the largest visual arts event in Eastern Europe. Inaugurated in 2009, it was one of the flagship products of Vilnius European Capital of Culture, Over the past decade, the fair has expanded and is carving out a place on the international art scene. Every year ArtVilnius welcomes about 23,000 visitors, with about sixty galleries from different countries. This year it was postponed due to Covid. Kaunas, the second-largest city in Lith-

uania by population, was the provisional capital during the Polish invasion between 1920 and 1940, a time of considerable industrial and urban development. Its history has been scarred by several events: invaded first by Soviet troops in 1940, then by the Germans in 1941, it witnessed the massacre of its entire Jewish population (about 40,000 people) at Fort IX, as well as thousands of Jews deported from Germany and Austria. The city's long tradition in textile manufacturing led to the inauguration, in 1997, of the Textile Biennial. In 2013, the Biennial expanded its horizons to include visual arts, video, performance, contemporary dance and sound art and changed its name to the Kaunas Biennial. In 2015, Nicolas Bourriaud curated the main exhibition while the 2019 edition was entrusted to a team of international curators, including the Italian Alessandra Troncone. Kaunas was also chosen as the 2022 European Capital of Culture. The Baltic Triennial, on the other hand, is one of the main contemporary art events in Northern Europe. Founded in 1979 when the country was still occupied by the Soviet Union, after the restoration of independence in 1990, the CAC became both organizer and host, while the international aspect of the Triennale gradually expanded. The 13th edition, in 2017, was directed by the French curator Vincent **Honoré** while the next one, scheduled for 2021, will be curated by Valentinas Klimašauskas and João Laia, pandemic per-

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