

BOOKS

FROM LITHUANIA

2020–2021

FICTION and NON-FICTION

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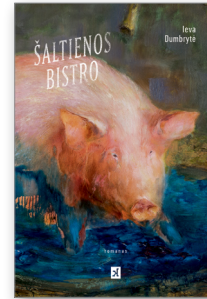
F I C T I O N a n d N O N - F I C T I O N

The period between the fall of 2020 and that of 2021 was filled with tensions, anxiety, sometimes even with dealing with coronavirus symptoms and safely enclosed life in the cage of the pandemic. It seemed that not only was life coming to halt, but so too was publishing, and yet here they are in front of you – seventeen Lithuanian books of fiction and non-fiction which include, among other things, the first texts to have sensitively recorded that catastrophistic mood, the weight of changes, the feeling of the end commencing, determined by the present and remembered from the past. This time, unexpectedly, the list includes more debut works and historical reconstructions of the inter-war period, that golden age of the first free independent Republic Lithuania, than ever before. Thus, this list presents a panorama of Lithuanian fiction and non-fiction from the past year, wherein readers will find gold and hope, trauma and obliteration, memory and oblivion, historical perspectives and snapshots of the present but, most importantly, in all these works a grain of redemptive beauty can be found, that is not merely literary or fictitious.

FICTION

IEVA DUMBRYTĖ | ŠALTENOS BISTRO

A novel, Vilnius: Kitos knygos, 2021, 214 pp.



Meat Jelly Bistro

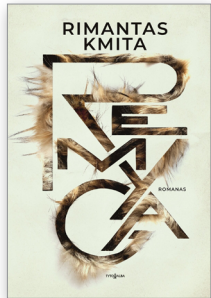
This debut novel talks about the life that comes after university graduation, about a non-elite job that knocks a person face-down into the reality of life and the grounds of existence.

“Blue Blood” (2016), a painting by Meda Norbutaitė used on the cover, suggests to the reader that the book is not about high-brow culture or high education, but rather about life – viewed ironically, sometimes grotesquely, and perhaps even anatomically meatily. The story begins with the voice of a nameless young man, who will remain nameless throughout the entire novel – it is his university graduation ceremony featuring somewhat lukewarm relationships with parents, just as anyone else’s, differences in expectations, reflections on life and history studies. And suddenly, there is a call to “Meat Jelly Bistro” Ltd. – having expected to work as a chef, on the very first day he ends up doing anything but that: “I was washing, carrying, peeling, boiling, broiling, grinding. And observing.” Observing is what makes the style and tone of the book so unique, filled with revelations about the food industry, ironic reflections on life, existential epi-crises, accurate portraits, and an in-depth characterization of golods – the new race.

IEVA DUMBRYTĖ – a debuting author who describes herself as someone who “had dreamt of studying Lithuanian philology but only managed to get accepted into history; had been wanting to publish a poetry book but, having printed a booklet with her poems, only distributed it among her neighbours. [...] I am an unaccomplished author but also someone who has always lived beside a dream.”

KEYWORDS: the parody and anatomy of life; the cocktail of irony and grotesque; social critique; the meat industry; CV for a new race.

RIMANTAS KMITA | REMYGA
A novel, Vilnius: Tyto alba, 2020, 287 pp.



Remyga

A rather sad and melancholic story about a man who has returned from war, and about the war itself – not just the Soviet-Afghan War but also the mundane war of the everyday which takes place in the light of collapsing regimes and lives – about those fighting this war, and about their unhealing wounds, “watched over” by the frightening, everlasting and omnipresent evil.

Rimantas Kmita's second novel, 'Remyga' has a very different mood and narrative from that of his debut best-seller 'The Southerner's Chronicles'. The action, once again, takes place in Šiauliai, again at the turn of the 1980s and 1990s, and yet again we hear Šiauliai slang (intermingled with standard Lithuanian); however, this time the stories being told are quite different. The writer recreates the “atmosphere of knocked out fuses” of those times: the gradual collapse of the Soviet Union, the Sąjūdis protests, the transition from militia to police, the first Lithuanian parliamentary election after the restoration of independence, and the visit of Pope John Paul II to Lithuania. It was during this time of uncertainty, chaos and strange hopes and losses that Remigijus Volkūnas-Remyga was trying to re-build his life, having just returned from the Afghan War. He is haunted not only by the ghosts of war, but also by his painful past, filled with loss, which determines his inner war that is making his current life bitter and pushing him further away from his family. In this novel, Kmita resurrects not only the era of the 1990s but also the mythology of Šiauliai, thus creating a lightly phantasmatic narrative permeated by surreal visions, in which resurrected symbolic figureheads of Šiauliai assist Remyga – a militiaman-turned-policeman, though still a soldier – who is now learning to come to terms with a new reality, to fight his father-in-law (the petty criminal Buratin), to make peace with himself, and rediscover a past that is unrecorded in any archive.

RIMANTAS KMITA is a literary scholar, poet, and writer. He has been awarded the Zigmas Gėlė and Jurga Ivanauskaitė awards for his creative work. In his scholarly works, Kmita studies Lithuanian literature of the Soviet period. Author of three poetry collections – “Nekalto prasiđėjimo” (Of Immaculate Conception, 1999), “Upės matavimas” (Measuring the River, 2002), and “Švelniai tariant” (To Put It Mildly, 2009), Kmita attained fame with his first novel “Pietinia kronikos” (The Southerner's Chronicles) – a modern living monument to Šiauliai. In 2017, “Pietinia kronikos” was selected as the Book of the Year in the adult category.

KEYWORDS: the 1990s; wild capitalism; “facing the past”; self-exploration; traumatic experiences of war; Šiauliai mythology; stories as power and capital.

AWARDS: Lithuanian Writers' Union Prize, 2020.

SOLVEIGA MASTEIKAITĖ, SKIRMANTA JAKAITĖ |
JSTABUSIS VILNIAUS MIESTAS
A legend, Vilnius: Aukso žuvys, 2020, 72 pp.



The Marvelous City of Vilnius

“Vilnius is a city that was once built in a forest, right there among the trees, animals, birds, and Secret Forest Beings.”

This bilingual book, linking text with image in a single unity and written in Lithuanian and English, shows how Vilnius could have come into being. The founding of Lithuania's capital city is legendary, and this legend, the dream had by Duke Gediminas, is recounted in the 21st century by Solveiga Masteikaitė and Skirmanta Jakaitė, looking back at the Forest and animals and creatures inhabiting it, at Lizdeika and at the Iron Wolf. And at that single word – the city, or Vilnius, which undoubtedly must have been marvellous. So it was, but how much of this marvel remains today? This book can be read as a retelling of the pact and as an answer to the question “What, indeed, is Vilnius?”, while pondering on which the readers are invited to find their own personal relationship with this city, its legend, and its history.

SOLVEIGA MASTEIKAITĖ – a poet, writer, and screenwriter. Skirmanta Jakaitė – an animation director, animator, and illustrator. This is their third joint work. Their animated film, “Non-Euclidean Geometry” (Neuklidinė geometrija, 2013), won the “Silver Crane” Award in 2014 and international awards in Germany, Japan and Latvia. The book, “Slow and Silent Matters” (Lėti ir tylūs dalykėliai, 2015), in 2016 won the award for the most beautiful book for children and young people. It also received the Domicelė Tarabildienė Award for the most beautiful illustrations.

KEYWORDS: Vilnius; the city's founding legend and its new version; the Forest and its animals; marvellous city; textual and visual unity.

DOVYDAS PANCEROVAS | MEDŽIOJANT TĖVĄ

A novel, Vilnius: Alma littera, 2020, 253 pp.



Hunting the Father

The story starts according to the best traditions of Nordic Noir – a passenger in a lonely taxi cab, thrusting its way through the darkness of an autumn forest, and a house in which the body of Edvart Dylert, whom the journalist Tomas Urbonas was supposed to be meeting, is found.

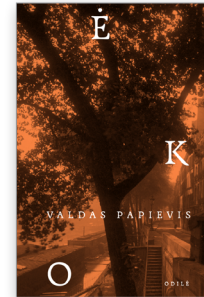
A debut novel by Dovydas Pancerovas who has carried out several journalistic investigations that have resonated widely with the public. The main character is Tomas Urbonas – the head of the investigative journalism house ‘Scarabs’. Together with his colleagues, he is working to untangle a complex knot which links a Belize-based company and Lithuanian businesses behind which there linger the shadows of corrupt politicians, and human desires and feelings. Having found Dylert’s body, Tomas begins to investigate the circumstances of his death. In the novel, Pancerovas tells several different stories revealing the behind-the-scenes of investigative journalism and investigators’ uncertainties; uncovering political games and schemes and unpacking the topical fake-news issue; depicting, subtly, the character of Lithuania’s coastal region and its architecture; and, simultaneously, constructing a literary narrative structured in unexpected and surprising ways (for this, he creatively exploits several different points of view) which demonstrates how Tomas Urbonas, scrambling through the lives of others, is utterly incapable of scrambling away from the shadows of his own past.

DOVYDAS PANCEROVAS is among the greatest investigative journalists in Lithuania. He has participated in international investigations such as The Russian Laundromat, Paradise Papers and many others. A winner of numerous Lithuanian and international awards in journalism, the most important being the Peter Greste Freedom of Speech Award (2017). “Medžiojant tėvą” (Hunting the Father) is his first work in fiction. Previously, Pancerovas has written two non-fiction best-sellers: “Kyborgų žemė” (The Land of Cyborgs, 2017), a testimony of the war in Ukraine, and “Kabinetas 339” (Room 339, 2019), written together with Birutė Davidonytė, on the investigations into the activities, connections, and immediate environment of Lithuania’s then prime minister Saulius Skvernelis.

KEYWORDS: investigative journalism; Nordic Noir; suspense; fake news; the harsh character of Lithuania’s coastal region; inner darkness.

VALDAS PAPIEIVIS | ĖKO

A novel, Vilnius: Odilė, 2021, 134 pp.



Ecco

The story of the beauty and neglect of a Paris falling into ruins, and about the “joy of the unfortunate – to be happy about mere existence”, whispered by a nameless narrator.

The latest novel by Valdas Papievis – a text of waning subtlety about loneliness, loss of self, and obliteration, about the nature of writing and creative work, about literature being born when reality collides with imagination. The action takes place in Paris which, this time, drastically frees itself from the festive sheen of its imagery, creating the text’s memorable melancholy and the slightly apocalyptic mood. As in Eugène Atget’s photograph, which decorates the cover of the book, the city is empty, rather misty, and nostalgically surrendering itself to nature: the Medici Fountain is stagnating, the Luxembourg Gardens are overgrowing and returning to their virgin state. The nameless narrator of the novel, Papievis’s flâneur, wandering around the crumbling Paris encounters the dog Ėko, who becomes his devoted companion, the echo of his internal world, thoughts, and memory, and the witness of today’s *ecce homo*. Roaming around the city, the two meet Emili, reflect upon the refugee crisis and climate change, observe nature’s exhaustion with man, and man’s with the pursuit of success. Throughout the text, which aims to “capture moments of the crumbling time”, runs a vein of anxiety about the present day, while memories turn into imaginings, and lives into plot matrixes. With Paris crumbling and falling into the dust of memory, together with Ėko, almost all Papievis’s characters from his past novels fly by, his previous thoughts and reflections resurface in a new light, foregrounding a point of view that is deeply concerned with life and its fragile beauty.

VALDAS PAPIEIVIS – a Paris-based prose writer, author of six novels and two short story collections; recipient of the Institute of the Lithuanian Literature Award, the Liudas Dovydėnas Award, and the Antanas Baranauskas Award. For the expression of existential and renewed aesthetics in novel writing, Papievis was awarded the Lithuanian National Prize for Culture and Arts in 2016.

KEYWORDS: obliteration and the crumbling Paris; the beautiful ephemerality of life; anxiety in the world and mind; the power of letters and script; poetic apocalypse; utopia fulfilled in dystopia.



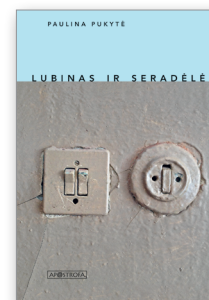
Time crimes

A literary spree of intertexts and clichés, catchy cinematographic textual montage, turning into an action movie upon the screen of the reader's mind, in which one encounters gunfire, chasing, persecution, an occasional death, the mystery of beheadings, three diamonds and, surely, the philosophy of life.

2003–2020 – this tell-tale time reference, found in the novel's final pages, betrays how long it took Parulskis to write a venture-laden novel, the Lithuanian *pulp fiction*. The author writes that “these events took place in Lithuania at the beginning of the 21st century” but an attentive reader will find here traces of the 20th century with its wars and unspoken behaviours and secrets. Jelizaras Poplavskis dies in a swimming pool at the same time as his childhood friend Petras Brazauskas lands in Vilnius, and the two stories, each having evolved independently from the other, suddenly converge into one too difficult to disentangle. In the story, where we find no shortage of mafia, fist-fights, shootings, playful uses of clichés, Hollywood-like plot twists and montages, the most important, still, are ruthless timecrimes – the crimes committed by youth against civilization, by the ageing body against the spirit, and by memory against history, which “like paper – can endure anything”, even the fact that the crimes of the past do not disappear in time but become embodied in other forms of reality instead. In this novel by Parulskis, prominent literary and cultural figures and political events acquire these different forms of reality, and, with the novel approaching its culminating point, even Gediminas Castle, the cornerstone of Vilnius mythology, comes under threat.

SIGITAS PARULSKIS – a poet, prose writer, playwright, columnist, and one of the most best-selling contemporary Lithuanian authors. In 1990, he made a debut with his poetry collection “Iš ilgesio visa tai” (All of This from Longing), and soon afterwards he wrote his first plays. In 2002, Parulskis published his first works in prose – the essay collection “Nuogi drabužiai” (Naked Clothes) and the novel “Trys sekundės dangaus” (Three Seconds of Heaven). During the 30 years of his literary career, he has written 20 books. A recipient of the National Prize for Culture and Arts. In the past decade, he has been writing prose and publishing opinion articles.

KEYWORDS: pulp fiction; Eros and Thanatos; timecrimes; patricide; play with clichés; action movie in text.



Lupin and Seradella

Lupin and Seradella, him and her, Circe and Scylla, Odyssey and Homer, thesis and antithesis – oppositions, as the key components of (mis)communication, once again come under the aim of Paulina Pukytė's literary work and ironic gaze.

Paulina Pukytė continues the play with dichotomies that she started in her previous book “Bedalis ir labdarys” (A Loser and a Do-Gooder, 2013) and that captures instances of miscommunication, thoughts going past one another in time and space, language slipping out of the frame of understanding. In the centre – drama, as a genre and as a form, as a way of existing, as the engine and brakes of relationships. Pukytė weaves the dramaturgy of her texts from different literary genres (play, novella, poem), conjoining them firmly with the irony and the grotesque. “Lubinas ir seradėlė” (Lupin and Seradella) is an illustration, a negation and a proof, of a thesis best expressed in a simple every-day phrase *why such drama*, which is filled with phrasal ping-pong, speedy verbal retaliation, theatricality, and intonational nuances. All this is properly detached from Lithuanian literary traditions, which proves once again that, with her literary work, Pukytė has carved herself out not only a unique niche, but also an authentic genre.

PAULINA PUKYTĖ is a writer and artist. She graduated from the Vilnius Academy of Art and the Royal College of Art in London. She writes experimental fiction, poetry and plays, as well as critical and satirical articles on cultural issues. In her interdisciplinary practice, Paulina Pukytė uses various appropriation and recycling/upcycling techniques, metatextuality and intertextuality. Her literary works have been described as “word sculptures constructed from found (language) objects”. “Lubinas ir seradėlė” (Lupin and Seradella) is her fourth book.

KEYWORDS: war and harmony of oppositions; him and her; drama as lifestyle; layers of miscommunication; frenzy of irony.



Peter's Empress

“Peter's Empress” explores the story of Lithuanian Marta Skowrońska: an impoverished noblewoman turned laundress, a sex-slave and prisoner of the Great Northern War, who became the second wife of Peter the Great - the first ever Empress of Russia, Catherine I.

Voltaire called her incredible ascent ‘the Cinderella of the 18th century’ but in this novel Catherine’s I and Peter’s I story is a cultural clash of the East and the West in one toxic royal marriage, with a good measure of a Greek tragedy. It is a her story to the well known history of Peter the Great. It is also a love triangle, which includes Peter’s best friend and favourite Alexander Menshikov. The novel is narrated in the first person, inhabiting the dying empress’ body and takes place during the last 24 hours of Catherine’s life. The novel comes in 2 parts: the first part of 12 hours on May 5th, 1727, the second part from on May 6th, 1727.

KRISTINA SABALIAUSKAITĖ has a PhD in the history of art and the novel combines scientific research, a pro-found knowledge of Russian language and culture, the depiction of Western and Eastern mentalities with a high suspense literary narration. As soon as it was published in August 2019 it became a sales-record-breaking No1 bestseller. Today Kristina Sabaliauskaitė is the most read Lithuanian author, with her previous internationally acclaimed and award winning novels “Silva rerum I–IV” (Silva Rerum I–IV, 2008–2016) having sold over a quarter of a million copies.

KEYWORDS: Peter's Empress; women's history; toxic marriage; cultural history of Eastern and Western mentality.



City Fest

“Sometimes one wishes to believe that even the saddest moments can be frozen as if in a film, a painting above a sofa-bed, or a photograph. In this frozen moment in time, one could come up with a new ending, even imagine that these frightening shadows on the walls are not at all perilous but instead carry a promise of something good, [...]” (p. 69)

Lina Simutytė’s debut collection of short stories demonstrates how evocatively the author exploits her chosen genre – in the form of a classic short story, the recent past of the 2000s comes back to life, with all the features of those days: elements of kitsch, televised American pop-culture, and stories of a small provincial town. These stories’ characters move along narrow geographical perimeters, attempting to inhabit them, as well as their own vast internal landscapes, to overcome their circumstances and, often, their own selves. In a sensitive and accurate manner, Simutytė reflects on the present and modernity, which, in her texts, are filled not with the façade of celebration or a sense of exaltation, but with sooty existential depths, fears, and discomfort. Through her distinctive imagery, precise language, character development, and narrator’s stance, the author manages to transfer the experiences of anxious episodes, panic attacks, schizophrenia, suicidal behaviour – mental disorders which her generation now battles openly rather than in hiding – into the realm of literature.

LINA SIMUTYTĖ – writer, active in literary circles, professional script writer and playwright. Author of numerous film scripts, organizer of musically-accompanied literary readings. Author of the literary project “Blunkanti sofa” (A Fading Sofa) which, employing the personal experiences of a young generation of Lithuanian artists, explores the theme of anxiety. “Miesto šventė” (City Fest) is Simutytė’s first published book.

KEYWORDS: short stories; the 2000s; anxiety; self-exploration; provincial life; pop culture and its markers; a not so joyful celebration.

AWARDS: Jurga Ivanauskaitė Award, 2021.



Oder

A not-too-distant future, the 2050s, and the story of Oder – a town built on the foundations of social and political experiments. The investigation of the town's inner workings is undertaken by the secret B., whose correspondence records one of the plot lines, along with the interrogation protocols, quotations from an essay collection by Truman More, and Allan's story which shows how quickly one's life can come crumbling down.

A debut novel, in which Dainius Vanagas uses the genre of dystopia to reflect on the present with all of its crises: the migrant crisis, the crisis of unemployment, the crisis of homelessness, and the climate crisis. He rethinks the present time that is filled with schemes of success and utility, and the contagious ambition to “employ” or “facilitate”. As an image of modernity in the not-too-distant future, this book, according to the author, is inspired by the radical political movements currently intensifying in the Western world, and their influences. By transplanting the “diseases” of present times to three decades in the future, the author reveals what happens when society comes to be constructed with great radicalism and vehemence, when the world is being consciously changed and modified, and not necessarily for the better. With his work, Vanagas poses the question of what freedom is, and asks: how does it look in Oder, with its own distinct regime under which everything is arranged according to the *functionality criteria*? What is, or can be, considered functional by society? Can every human movement be controlled? Finally, how much utopia is contained within every dystopia, and vice versa?

DAINIUS VANAGAS completed his Cultural History and Anthropology studies at the University of Vilnius, later acquiring a master's degree in Semiotics at the A. J. Greimas Centre for Semiotics and Literary Theory. His works of literary criticism and prose have been published in various cultural publications. The dystopic novel “Oderis” (Oder) is his first book.

KEYWORDS: Oder; dystopia; utopian city-building; simulation; modernity in the future; social engineering; the pursuit of a better world.



A Murder in the Cobbler's Workshop: The First Case of the Executioner's Apprentice

One day in June 1558, Adas, an apprentice of a Vilnius executioner, sets off to the Town Hall prison to find out when the city is going to need the executioner's services – a bloody crime has been carried out but the murderer, luckily, has been captured. Upon seeing her and finding out more about the circumstances surrounding the crime, Adas unexpectedly begins an investigation.

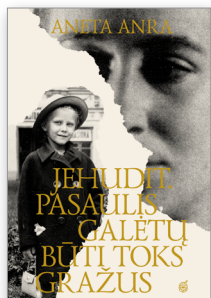
“Žmogžudystė batsivio dirbtuvėje” (A Murder in the Cobbler's Workshop), as described by the author, is a crime story of olden-day Vilnius, and the first book in a trilogy, dedicated to Vilnius's 700 year anniversary which the city will be commemorating in 2023. On a Sunday in 1558, after Mass and lunchtime, a shoe manufactory's senior master Kleopas – a great cobbler but not so great a man – is found murdered in his workshop. A young servant Benigna, who had served him for under a year, is charged with the master's murder. Upon seeing her, the executioner's apprentice Adas has a flash of doubt as to whether such a beautiful girl could ever be a murderer. In an attempt to help her escape beheading, Adas gradually begins a crime investigation, filled with behind-the-scenes intrigues of shoe manufactory and wars over footwear that were raging in those days, the passions and desires of noble Vilnians, the medieval life of Vilnius and its prominent historical figures – Vilnius vogt Augustinas Rotundas and Vilnius bishop Valerijonas Protasevičius.

GINA VILIŪNĖ – historical novelist, has spent many years studying the history of Lithuania and her native Vilnius. Her debut novel in 2012 was a historical thriller “Karūna be karaliaus” (A Crown Without a King). “Žmogžudystė batsivio dirbtuvėje” (A Murder in the Cobbler's Workshop) is the sixth novel by this author and her eighth book.

KEYWORDS: life in Vilnius in the 16th century; murder investigation; executioner's craft; shoe manufactory; fashions and passions; first love.

NON-FICTION

ANETA ANRA | JEHUDIT. PASAULIS GALĖTŲ BŪTI TOKS GRAŽUS
Documentary novella, Vilnius: Odilė, 2021, 240 pp.



Jehudit. The World Could Be So Beautiful

“You shall live and tell the world what they have done.”
Such is the guiding line of this documentary narrative which presents two testimonies of World War II – one by Dita Sperlingienė, a Jewish woman and Holocaust survivor, who was imprisoned and held in captivity in Kaunas Ghetto and Stutthof concentration camp, and the other one by Hana Strużanowska-Balsienė, a Polish woman who witnessed World War II through the eyes and feelings of a child and who helped Jews to hide.

The book's heroes, interviewed by Aneta Anra, recounting their memories and guiding us through them, take us to the most catastrophic period in the 20th century – World War II, which unfolds through the memories of Jehudit, named Dita in the book, who was the wife of the Juda-Julius Zupavičius, the head of the Kaunas Jewish Ghetto police (the world's only police force that carried out underground activities), that she had kept hidden for the entirety of her almost one-hundred-year long life in order to survive and live. The self-preservation mode of Dita's narrative, that retained the purity of her experiences, serves as a vector of memory retention in the story of the other protagonist Hana, the Polish woman: how the war was witnessed and experienced by a Polish military officer's eight-year-old daughter, who stayed in Vilnius during the war, and not in Warsaw, which was being bombarded by the Nazis; how courageous her mother Janina was in helping Jews to hide; and how the Vilnius of the period looked when it was regained from Poland – not for Lithuania but for war and hardship instead. “Women in the Vortex of Life” – such should be the title of the book, according to Dita, that is about her, Hana, and Hana's mother.

ANETA ANRA – a writer and a playwright. Her plays “Bestija žydrom akim” (Blue-Eyed Beast) and “Katinas Temzėje” (A Cat in the Thames) have been shown at the State Youth Theater. Anra has published books such as “Niki: dvigubas portretas” (Niki: A Dual Portrait), “Paleistuvės, arba Meilė pagal Niurnbergo mergele” (Prostitutes, or Love According to the Maiden of Nuremberg), in which the author's autobiographical fragments are woven into fiction.

KEYWORDS: memory; oblivion; safety; WWII; ghetto police; testimonies of the survived war and Holocaust; women's voices.

JOLITA BERNOTIENĖ, INGRIDA JAKUBAVIČIENĖ |
PONIOS SMETONIENĖS VIRTUVĖ
Vilnius: Aukso žuvis, 2020, 294 pp.



Mrs Smetonienė's Kitchen

A gracefully woven historical and gastronomical story about interwar Lithuania and its first lady Sofija Chodakauskaitė-Smetonienė, the wife of Lithuania's then-president Antanas Smetona.

Contrary to its title, this is not just a book about the kitchen and recipes, though they are abundant. It is a book about the interwar era and Sofija Chodakauskaitė-Smetonienė, the first lady of the Independent Lithuania (1885–1968), the roles she undertook in her life, and her life's undertakings. Brought up in a manor house, she got married to Antanas Smetona, the first president in Lithuania's history, and became the first lady who developed the etiquette, traditions, customs, and attitudes of the presidential palace. Much of the book is dedicated to explorations of the historical and political context, whereas the episodes of the personal history, and the character portraits, are intermingled with a discussion about cookery and the culinary life, as well as a presentation of the typical dishes and festive menus of the interwar period. Striking the right balance between the personal history and that of the epoch, the publication is full of photographs, and decorated with illustrations by Vanda Padimanskaitė that accompany the pages of the recipes of those times, which have been modified to accommodate the times and ingredients of the present day.

JOLITA BERNOTIENĖ works as a tour guide around the city of Vilnius, has a strong interest in the biographies and stories of the dukes and rulers of the Great Duchy of Lithuania. Ingrida Jakubavičienė – a historian who works at a Historical Presidential Palace of the Republic of Lithuania in Kaunas; carries out in-depth research into the political, social, and cultural life and the biographies of the most prominent political figures of the First Republic of Lithuania (1918–1940). Author of books about the Smetona family.

KEYWORDS: history; culture; recipes; gourmet; Lithuania's first lady; life and fashion in interwar Kaunas; the Smetona family.

NORBERTAS ČERNIAUSKAS | 1940. PASKUTINĖ LIETUVOS VASARA
A study, Vilnius: Aukso žuvys, 2021, 259 pp.



1940. Lithuania's Last Summer

A documentary reconstruction of independent and fast-growing interwar Lithuania, written in an optimistic tone and with literary inspiration.

On 15 June 1940, the Soviet Union occupied Lithuania, thus upending the existence of the modern Lithuanian Republic (1918–1940). Its zenith in early 1940 is the focus of Norbertas Černiauskas's exploration, in which he reconstructs, from rich and abundant sources, the ordinary, personal, social, political, and civic, life in the Lithuania of the day. Discussing the most prominent issues of the 1940s, the author reveals the process of state-building that took place not only in the corridors of power, but also in communities and in everyday life, which was being increasingly impacted by World War II, which had just started, and the premonitions of imminent catastrophe. The author turns the final fifteen days of the still-free June and still-free Lithuania into fifteen chapters, in which he shows people and the state – still autonomous, but already being pulled deep into the vortex of history's hardships.

NORBERTAS ČERNIAUSKAS – a historian and lecturer at the University of Vilnius, co-author of several research publications. In 2019, he published a children's book "Apie šaulius, riterius ir drakonus Lietuvoje" (On Riflemen, Knights, and Dragons in Lithuania). "1940. Paskutinė Lietuvos vasara" (1940. Lithuania's Last Summer) is his first scholarly study – published in June 2021, this book at once became a Lithuanian non-fiction best-seller.

KEYWORDS: 1940; life in independent Lithuania; imminent Soviet occupation; documentary reconstruction; optimistic tone.

DANUTĖ GAILIENĖ | KĄ JIE MUMS PADARĖ
Vilnius: Tyto alba, 2021, 246 pp.



What Have They Done to Us: The Life of Lithuania from the Perspective of Trauma Psychology

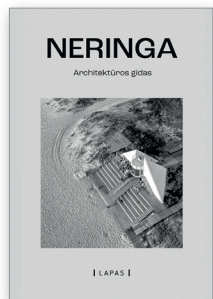
This book is one of the most consequential pieces of research in the field of contemporary Lithuanian psychology, which investigates the historical traumas experienced by Lithuania throughout the 20th century, the greatest and the most fateful being the fifty-year-long Soviet occupation.

The second edition of Danutė Gailienė's monograph "Ką jie mums padarė" (What have they done to us, first published in 2008) has been published in 2021 as a response to high demand from the readership born during the Sąjūdis years and at the beginning of Independence (1990). This is the first generation of free independent Lithuanians, who seek to rethink their own history and identity, to comprehend their parents' and grandparents' generations, all of their behaviours and lived experiences while facing brutal turning points in history. Written from a professional point of view, using subject-specific vocabulary, but nonetheless in a lucid style, this book discusses psychological trauma, its consequences and manifestations, and presents the history of the research into trauma psychology, as well as looking back at the specific historical traumas conditioned by World War II – Holocaust, Soviet and Nazi occupations, repressions, mass-deportations. Discussing the topics of acknowledging and overcoming trauma, Gailienė persuades us that conformation to a totalitarian regime does much greater psychological harm than the endured repressions themselves. The title of the book suggests that we are not yet aware of the answer to the question *what have they done to us?* – we are yet to grasp and reflect fully on the fifty years of the Soviet era, the effects and consequences of this criminal totalitarian system, which continue to have an impact upon our present. That is why this book invites us to a dialogue about historical memory and experience.

DANUTĖ GAILIENĖ – psychologist, habilitated doctor of Social Sciences, and professor at the University of Vilnius. Her research focuses on clinical psychology, the psychology of trauma and crisis, and suicidology. Her monograph "Jie neturėjo mirti. Savižudybės Lietuvoje" (They were not supposed to die. Suicide in Lithuania, 1998) has drawn the society's attention to the field of research into suicide and psychological pain. Gailienė is a pioneer of suicide prevention in Lithuania and has been awarded numerous prizes and grants for her research, including the Knight's Cross of the "Order for Merits to Lithuania".

KEYWORDS: trauma psychology; WWII; consequences and overcoming of trauma; life under a totalitarian regime; Soviet occupation and its impact on the present.

MARIJA DRĖMAITĖ, MARTYNAS MANKUS,
VILTĖ MIGONYTĖ-PETRULIENĖ, VASILIJUS SAFRANOVAS,
PHOTOGRAPHER NORBERT TUKAJ | NERINGA
Vilnius: Lapas, 2020, 255 pp.



Neringa: Architecture Guide

VILTĖ MIGONYTĖ-PETRULIENĖ, LIUTAURAS NEKROŠIUS,
VAIDAS PETRULIS, MARTYNAS MANKUS, MARIJA DRĖMAITĖ,
PHOTOGRAPHER NORBERT TUKAJ | PALANGA IR ŠVENTOJI
Vilnius: Lapas, 2021, 320 pp.



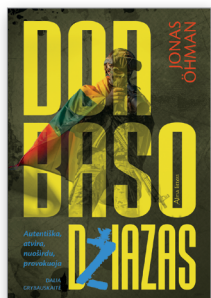
Palanga and Šventoji: Architecture Guide

The architecture guides of Neringa, Palanga and Šventoji, that took five years to make and a team of architectural historians and researchers, serve as pocket-guides to the histories of Lithuanian coastal towns, filled with stories about the most interesting and significant buildings, and the personal histories of their creators.

The architecture guide is quite a peculiar but engaging genre of architectural literature – a collection of footnotes accompanying buildings that shape a town's identity, parts of the puzzle of its history, architectural revision and the documentation of development, and finally, a business card telling the buildings' stories and thus making a town's name famous worldwide. The architecture guides of towns situated on a memorable if rather compact (the coastal line is just 90 km long) Lithuanian coast present three such business cards recounting the most interesting stories on how the coastal strip of fishing villages of Kuršių Nerija has become the most expensive one in Lithuania; how Palanga, once a private resort of the Count Tiškevičiai family, became the centre of interwar Lithuania's intelligentsia's recreation and, of course, gossip; how Šventoji was to become Lithuanian Gdynia if it had not been for WWII. There are 90 buildings and objects, their photographs and plans in Neringa's architecture guide; 117 buildings and objects, plans and photographs in that of Palanga. Many of them are archival, accompanied by the recounted histories of now timeless buildings.

Among the editors of the coast's architecture guide, who have prepared a number of such publications, we find the names of prominent historians and researchers of architecture – Prof. Dr. MARIJA DRĖMAITĖ, Dr. VILTĖ MIGONYTĖ-PETRULIENĖ, Dr. VAIDAS PETRULIS, Dr. LIUTAURAS NEKROŠIUS, experienced practitioner Dr. MARTYNAS MANKUS, and historian Dr. VASILIJUS SAFRANOVAS. Illustrations are by the photographer NORBERTAS TUKAJ, and the publication's distinct layout is by designer AURELIJA SLAPŠYTĖ.

KEYWORDS: architecture guides;
Lithuania's coast and its identity; towns'
history; visions and reality of urban
development; society's mirror image.



Donbass Jazz

The ongoing war in Ukraine since 2014 is the central theme of this story by Jonas Öhman, which has determined the jazzy quality inscribed in the title – one must give in to improvisation or else there is no other way to survive.

Written in the catchy spoken register of a Swede based in Lithuania, this story is not only about present-day Ukraine, but also about Lithuania, both the contemporary one and the one from thirty-two years ago when it was courageously aiming to set itself free from under the Soviet Union's yoke. It is also about Latvia and Estonia but, most importantly, about Russia – of the past and the present – and its means of operating. Öhman admits that when “Russia suddenly occupied Crimea and invaded Eastern Ukraine, I realized that we, the Baltic States, would be next on the list.” Guided by this thought, he began to organize and transport humanitarian support to the Ukrainian soldiers in Donbass. All the stories, seen, heard, and experienced during these years, wind up in the pages of this book, which is a personal and societal narrative about a never-ending fight for freedom, inseparable from war, despair, and the fear of dying. At the same time, it is also a reflection on what hybrid war means in the 21st century and what role in it is played by... jazz.

JONAS ÖHMAN – a Lithuania-based Swedish journalist, translator, documentary film-maker, and theologist. Head of “Blue/Yellow” – an NGO which has supported Ukrainian armed forces and civilians affected by war since 2014.

KEYWORDS: Ukrainian-Russian war; hybrid war; Russia's means of operating; the reality of war; personal testimonies; the jazz of existence.

TRANSLATION GRANT PROGRAMME

The aim of the Translation Grant Programme is to promote Lithuanian literature abroad. Grants are available for the translation of fiction, nonfiction, poetry, drama, children's and young adult books, as well as the translation of other important books and publications.

There are 3 grants available: The Books Translation Grant, The Illustrated Books (Children's Picture Books and Graphic Novels) Grant and The Sample Translation Grant.

WHO CAN APPLY?

The Translation Grant Programme is open to foreign publishers for the translation of Lithuanian literature or literary works related to Lithuania.

Sample Translation Grant is open for authors, translators and publishers living in Lithuania or abroad.

WHEN TO APPLY?

Deadlines for the submission of applications are 1 April and 1 October.

WHAT DOES THE GRANT COVER?

The Books Translation Grant covers up to 100% of translation costs,

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The Sample Translation Grant covers up to 100% of translation costs.

WHAT MUST THE ILLUSTRATED BOOKS GRANT APPLICATION INCLUDE?

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- a copy of the contract with the translator (if translation costs are applied for),
- the translator's qualifications (e.g. CV, previous translations) (if translation costs are applied for),
- a brief presentation of the publishing house,
- a short cover letter justifying the proposed application.

WHAT MUST THE BOOKS TRANSLATION GRANT APPLICATION INCLUDE?

- a completed application form,
- a copy of the contract with the owner of the rights,
- a copy of the contract with the translator,
- the translator's qualifications (e.g. CV, previous translations),
- a brief presentation of the publishing house,
- a short cover letter justifying the proposed application.

WHAT MUST THE SAMPLE TRANSLATION GRANT APPLICATION INCLUDE?

- a completed application form,
- a motivation letter justifying the choice of the proposed application,
- translator's (or translators') CV and list of previous translations,
- a letter of agreement from the text's author or the rights' owner (or owners) for the text to be translated.

Applications can be submitted only by e-mail.

For further information, please contact Kotryna Pranckūnaitė:

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