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**Art Groups — the Novelty of the
Organizational Art Life**

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The purpose of the project was to select, collect and disseminate texts on contemporary art practices in the Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia, around Soros Centers for Contemporary Art, written in and about art of the 1990s. The coordination of the project was carried out by Janka Vukmir, SCCA – Zagreb, today the Institute for Contemporary Art, Zagreb.

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All of the texts we have collected at the time have been later published on the website of the I_CAN, International Contemporary Art Network, the short-lived successor of the SCCAN.

On the occasion of the exhibition **90s: Scars**, revisiting the art practices and social and political context of the 1990s in the postcommunist countries, the Institute for Contemporary Art is now reoffering a collection of **89 texts and a comprehensive list of then proposed further readings**, on the website of the Institute for Contemporary Art, www.institute.hr.

The exhibition 90s: Scars is curated by Janka Vukmir and organized by the Institute for Contemporary Art and the MMSU – Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in Rijeka, on the occasion of the **European Cultural Capital Rijeka 2020**. Originally planned to open May 14, 2020, at the MMSU in Rijeka, due to COVID-19 crisis, is postponed until further notice.

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Art Groups — the Novelty of the Organizational Art Life

At present, the greatest grouping by the artists is already over. The artists showed their most active attempts to rally up to 1993-1994. In the period between 1989-1997, in Lithuania there existed twenty-four officially manifesting themselves (through exhibitions, actions) groups of artists. Nearly 200 people participated in their activities.

In the course of time some of the artists dropped out or new members joined the groups and part of the gatherings stopped their activities. Therefore, in the present article, which sums up the groups as a certain phenomenon of artistic life, it is reasonable to specify the dates of the formation of groups as well as the names of the persons, who participated in the activities of the groups in the initial period. The aim of the present article - to register all the groups which more actively functioned in the mentioned period, to point out the reasons for groupings, the principle ideological orientations and the character of creative activities. While preparing for this task, questionnaires were sent to artists, unfortunately, not all of them were eager to respond. Therefore, the only sources of information were the Lithuanian press, exhibition catalogues and personal observations.

Groups as the whole of people united by common interests and matters do not present any novelty in artistic life of Lithuania. The first period of independent Lithuania's life (1918-1940) witnessed the functioning of groups and societies the members of which were the artists representing various trends. It should be mentioned that only in the 30's they began to solve not only organizational but also creative issues, contrary to the practice since the early 20th century. Part of the groups emerged due to ideological dispersion.

Quite a big part of Lithuanian artists, forming groups, declare their direct

creative links with Lithuanian prewar art, its principles and even organizational structures. Therefore, it is reasonable to briefly review some grouping facts of the prewar artists. Some of the parallels could clearly show how much prospective are analogous declarations at present and whether it is worth to look back when it is high time to march forward.

In 1930, the **Society of Independent Artists**¹ was established. The membership numbered 17. The major members: Vytautas Kazimieras Jonynas, Bernardas Bucas, Ceslovas Kontrimas, Adolfas Valeška, Viktoras Vizgirda, Adomas Galdikas, and others. The society was declaring the artists' ambition to free themselves from academism, naturalism, and dilettantism and to create modern art. The "independent ones"; managed to slightly stir up the stagnant atmosphere of artistic life in Lithuania.

In the period between 1932-1933 functioned the society **The Line**, the members of which were artists and writers. It was proclaiming antifascist, revolutionary ideas and propagating the art of the Soviet Union. Stepas Žukas, Petras Vaivada and Petras Tarabilda participated in its activities.

In 1922 the group **ARS** was established. Its members were: Antanas Gudaitis, Viktoras Vizgirda, Juozas Mikėnas, Vytautas Kazimieras Jonynas, Antanas Samuolis, Jonas Steponavicius, Telesforas Kulakauskas, Adomas Galdikas and Mecišlovas Dobužinskis. It was the first group to proclaim its manifesto: "to create means to march forward after having glanced backward"². The members of the group ARS associated the name of the group with the word "arsime" (in Lith. - we shall plough). They were greatly concerned about the application of the Lithuanian folk art traditions in professional art, and they made attempts to interpret them and fuse with the traditions of Western Expressionism and Fauvism. In respect of the most general artistic tendencies, the character of their art coincided with West European art.

The Society of Lithuanian Artists was established in 1932. Its aim was to be a counterbalance to a modern art of the young. Its members were Vladas Didžiokas, Jonas Mackevicius, Juozas Zikaras and other realists. Their exposition arranged in 1933 was characterized by Justinas Vienožinskis as an "abundant in quantitative but modest in qualitative respect exhibition by the representatives of the old-fashioned outlook in Lithuania". However, it was the period between 1938-1940 that witnessed the greatest conflict between different generations and different ideological views. The formation of several sections in the Lithuanian Union of Artists

¹ The data on interwar organizations are taken from the book: Kunciuviene E., Umbrasas J. Organizations of Lithuanian Artists. 1900-1940. Vilnius, 1980.

² ARS. Kaunas, 1932, pg. 5-6.

strengthened artistic differentiation. The principle of joining one or another section was of the "trend-type", i.e. on the basis of an original artistic ideology³. In 1939 was formed the Section of Individualists (Paulius Augustinavicius, Antanas Gudaitis, Antanas Vienožinskis) and the Section of Realists (Antanas Žmuidzinavicius, Juozas Zikaras, Adomas Varnas, Robertas Antinis, Matas Mencinskas, Vytautas Kašuba, Stepas Žukas and others). According to Jonas Umbrasas and Eglė Kunciuvienė, Lithuanian art historians, who have made a more thorough analysis of this period, the break-up of the Union of Artists started from the sections because they became independent and hard to be guided. In 1940 the Section of Individualists and some other members (21 artist all in all) withdrew from the UA⁴.

The art historian Elona Lubytė, who has justly noted that there was no alternative art in Soviet Lithuania, touched upon some specific issues concerning the grouping of artists during the Soviet period. There only existed small groups of like-minded artists who used to gather in the homes of the artists Judita and Vytautas Šerys, Marija and Vladas Vildžiūnas, Saulė and Vincas Kisarauskas⁵. The period between 1945-1987 did not witness any more radical manifestos or public groupings.

In the period between the 70-80's, small groups of artists bound by similar artistic views used to arrange group exhibitions. They can be conditionally called as a group movement of four or five artists, and associated with the birth of group phenomenon in Soviet Lithuania. For example, Kostas Dereškevičius, Algimantas Kuras, Arvydas Šaltenis and Algimantas Švėgžda arranged significant exhibitions, which produced a great enough resonance among artists, in 1979. In 1982, Kaunas hosted an important group exhibition of the works by Jūratis Zalensas, Alfonsas Vilpišauskas, Arūnas Vaitkūnas and Mikalojus Šalkauskas. One more group exhibition of the works by Bronius Gražys, Henrikas Natalevičius, Mindaugas Skudutis, Raimundas Sližys and Romanas Vilkauskas was held in Vilnius in 1986. The period between 1989-1997 saw the formation of a number of artists' groups. During this period, they served as significant attempts to reform creative life. It goes without saying that a group presents a more modern structure than the Soviet-type Union of Artists. Small groups of artists have played an important role in the decentralization of the creative life, though the status of some groups was in the nature of a mere compromise: some of the members of the groups did not leave the LUA, but they registered themselves in this organization as legal units.

³ Umbrasas J., Kunciuvienė E. *Organizations of Lithuanian Artists. 1900-1940*. Vilnius, 1980, pg. 173.

⁴ Op. cit., pg. 177.

⁵ Lubytė E. *Galleries. The Emergence of Art Market and its Problems* // *Literatūra ir menas*, June 15, 1996.

The Green Leaf (Žalias lapas) was established in Vilnius in 1988. Its members: Gediminas Urbonas, Aidas Bareikis, Artūras Makštutis, Julius Ludavicius, Gintaras Sodeika, Juozas Milašius and Linas Liandzbergis. The young artists, graduates from the Vilnius Academy of Arts (VAA), were striving for a conscious opposition to the romantic national traditionalism prevailing in Lithuanian art. The beginning of their creative biography coincided with the period of cardinal changes in society, its political power and institutional structures. The members of The Green Leaf made attempts to promptly join the context of international art, basing themselves on such prominent figures of contemporary art as Jurgis Maciūnas (1931-1979) and Joseph Beuys (1921-1986). The group creates actions and strives, according to the art historian Herkus Kuncius, "aestheticize existence or to effect it in another way"⁶. A characteristic feature of the actions performed by The Green Leaf is the fact that the artists do not rely on improvisation, they are eager to precisely realize the original idea. The messages of actions are universal and associative; they are open to intellectual interpretation. As the members of the group do not like to improvise during actions, they never make attempts to include spectators into them, though it is a common practice in the art of actions. The spectator plays the role of the one who perceives and touches the mystery of the action. Due to changes in certain objective circumstances, the joint activities of the group have stopped. Its existence, however, gave fresh impetus to the conceptualization process of Lithuanian art.

The group **24** was established in Vilnius in 1989. Its members: Alfonsas Andriuškevicius (art historian), Valentinas Antanavicius, Eugenijus Cukermanas, Kostas Dereškevicius, Bronius Gražys, Leonardas Gutauskas, Linas Katinas, Algimantas Kuras, Viktoras Liutkus (art historian), Raimondas Martinėnas, Henrikas Natalevicius, Vytautas Paukštė, Šarūnas Sauka, Algis Skackauskas, Leopoldas Surgailis, Arvydas Šaltenis, Vytautas Šerys and Ricardas Vaitekūnas. The name of the group implies the fixed number of the members. The artists of the group create painting, graphic works, assemblages, etc. The group 24 deservedly owns the laurels of the principle reformer, because in 1989, it was the first alternative to the Lithuanian SSR Union of Artists. Part of the members of the group - creative like-minded artists, used to arrange group exhibitions prior to the establishment of the group. Thus, one can state that the group 24 has its certain prehistory. The members of the group are the people with a similar conception of the "most general aims of art and principles of creation"⁷, which can be possibly considered to be the basis for the firmness of the

⁶ Kuncius H. Rituals of the Green Leaf // Krantai, March, 1991.

⁷ Group 24 // Šiaurės Atėnai, February 2, 1990, pg. 4.

group. Among members of the group rank recently titled artists, lecturers of the VAA, professors (Šarūnas Sauka - the National Prize winner). In the course of the formation of the group, the majority of artists already boasted their weighty creative biographies, at least within the limits of Lithuania. Therefore, the aim of the establishment of the group specified in its by-laws seems somewhat vague - "to unite for a joint activity creative and active artistic individualities". The aim of grouping was formulated in a particularly ambitious way: to represent elite art, not tolerate commercial creation and not to serve for utilitarian purposes. At the same time the group 24 at least declared a noble ethical position, which in the course of the shift and turning point was and has remained significant despite its slightly utopian character. The group 24 distinguishes itself by its exhibition activities. Some of its members have arranged solo exhibitions and the majority of them participated in exhibitions in Lithuania and foreign countries.

POST ARS was established in Kaunas in 1989. Its members: Ceslovas Lukenskas, Aleksas Andriuškevičius, Gintaras Zinkevičius and Robertas Antinis. The group has proclaimed its manifesto, denying traditional conservative art. POST ARS was one of the first groups in Lithuanian (beside The Green Leaf) to start the creation of group actions, installations and performances; however, they also create sculptures, graphic and photo art. The members share similar views and ideas, which R. Antinis, member of the group, characterized in the following way: "From animate to inanimate, from a thing to a body, from a concept to a movement, from an action to a sign and from something tangible to intangible. The element of the development of actions and installations - improvisation"⁸. They have arranged exhibitions in Chicago (USA), Hungary, Finland, Slovenia, Poland and Germany. At the 1992 Niederlausitz Biennial (Germany), they were awarded a prize for the work *The Score* (land art).

The New Communication School (Naujosios komunikacijos mokykla) was established in Vilnius in 1990. Its members: Ernestas Parulskis, Saulius Paukštys and Giedrius Jonaitis. The New Communication School (NCS) - an atypical group engaged in versatile activities. The creation of art is one of its many spheres of activities. The NCS is an alternative movement, the aim of which is a playful, easy communication, jolly actions, making use of such atypical medium of Lithuanians like piercing humor. The NCS - the structure taking its shape and undergoing transformation. It has its chancellor, sponsors, activities and even patronage gestures. The NCS declares links with mass culture and pop art. In the exhibitions of this

⁸ Antinis R. *A Stallion and Rider* // Santara, Summer, 1996, N 26, pg. 30.

group, stylistic rules do not play any limiting role. Exhibitions and other activities express the reaction of the group to public business. The themes of the exhibitions are conditioned by urgent problems - alcohol, pornography, elite art. Comical character manifests itself as the principle aesthetic category. The group has arranged ten exhibitions. A monument to Frank Zappa (sculpt. Konstantinas Bogdanas) was erected in Vilnius on its initiative.

Sel was established in Vilnius in 1990. Its members: Tomas Gečiauskas, Sigitas Lukauskas, Rasa Staniūnienė and Sigitas Staniūnas. The name of the group is an abbreviation of the term "super ex libris". Its meaning is widely interpreted and is associated with an ancient book sign, a print on the cover of the book. Sel - a conceptual group, which creates installations and objects. The originality of their joint projects is based on the fact that the objects are placed in specific spaces - the former ammunition depots, military fortifications or monasteries. Historical and social aspects are no less important than the artistic ones. It is also important how the works interact with cultural environment, what ideas they formulate in it and convey to the spectator. It should be mentioned that each work has only one formal title - Sel. The group has arranged eight exhibitions in Lithuania and foreign countries.

The Snake (Angis) was established in Vilnius in 1990. Its members: Jonas Gasiūnas, Vytautas Dubauskas, Kaestutis Lupeikis, Arūnas Vaitkūnas, Mikalojus Šalkauskas, Alfonsas Vilpišauskas, Henrikas Cerapas, Eimutis Markūnas, Ricardas Nemeikšis, Antanas Obcarskas, Raimundas Gailiūnas, Jonas Arcikauskas and Rimvidas Jankauskas-Kampas (died in 1993). They create painting, objects and installations. The common support of The Snake members - European Modernism since Expressionism to extreme tendencies of contemporary art. Expressionism, as the group leader J. Gasiūnas mentioned in one interview, is perceived not only as the style of their painting but rather as an acceptable spiritual state. The majority of the members are in close relationship with the traditions of the prewar group of painters ARS. The members of the group are painters "on a large scale", who took to the canvases of an extraordinary big format and established them in Lithuanian art. Painting is traditionally comprehended as a pictorial character and the process of painting and creation is often even mystified. It should be also pointed out that inside the group exist several subgroups, which by their ways of expression oppose one another. The most contrasting points on the one hand - the painting by Jonas Gasiūnas and Mikalojus Šalkauskas and on the other - by Ricardas Nemeikšis and Antanas Obcarskas. The Snake - one of the few contemporary groups

beside 24 which foster the traditions of Lithuanian school of painting. According to the members of the group, the aesthetics of Modernism, particularly Expressionism, is not completely used up and can manifest itself not only through painting but also by way of other contemporary forms of art. The Snake has arranged five group exhibitions. In 1996, The Snake exhibition hosted some guests - artists from Denmark.

The Four (Keturiuos) was established in Kaunas in 1990. Its members are only women artists: Aušra Andziulytė, Aušra Barzdukaitė-Vaitkūnienė, Judita Budriūnaitė and Elena Balsiukaitė-Brazdžiūnienė. They create painting, graphic works, objects and installations. The name of the group came to be used spontaneously in the process of arranging group exhibitions. The name as well as the activities of the group contains no limitations, feminist or other binding aspects. At first, as a kind of joke, the group was known under the name The Moth, wittily opposing the group The Snake⁹, which was formed at the same time and consisted only of male artists. An exceptional feature of the group is the fact that its exhibitions are always based on a certain conception, acceptable to all of them in advance. Therefore, the artists devote their works to that particular theme. Sometimes, The Four experiments a conceptual character of forms and sometimes that of the idea. Though there are also cases when the group is directly associated with feminism, but practically it is hard to notice in their creation any shades of the movement for the emancipation of women. Their painting is of a Neo-Expressionist orientation, and the artists rather wittily characterize it as "the phenomenon of a lyric, impulsive and coloring origin". In the period between 1990 and 1996, The Four arranged twelve exhibitions in Kaunas and Vilnius.

The Lost Generation (Prarastoji karta) was established in Klaipėda in 1990. Its members: Virgilijus Bizauskas, Rytis Martinionis, Romas Klimavicius, Justinas Mickevicius, Arūnas Jusionis, Arūnas Vasiliauskas, Aurimas Anusas and others. The name of the group reflects urgent social problems faced by today's generation of forty-year-old people. The members of the group create painting, graphic works, sculpture, assemblages and installations. These artists formed their group in 1987 and only in 1990 the group was registered at the municipality as a public organization. "Non-traditional visual thinking and a desire for a creative freedom" bind them¹⁰. The creative provisions of the group were formed as an alternative of the existing stereotypes in society. The group has arranged some exhibitions in Klaipėda.

⁹ The name The Moth also appeared in the press, therefore, it is reasonable to explain its origin.

¹⁰ Pšibilskis L. Exile of the Lost Generation / Literatūra ir menas, November 3, 1990.

Š. V was established in Vilnius. Its members: Ona Grigaitė, Svajonė Stanikienė and Paulius Stanikas. Š. V is a spontaneously born formula of the name without any definite meaning. Š. V - a small group of like-minded friends, who have been collaborating since 1987. They started with ceramic objects and later passed to the installation of space with postmodernist objects, sculptures and photographs. The ceramist Ona Grigaitė creates autonomous works and Svajonė Stanikienė and Paulius Stanikas are co-authors. The three artists are bound by the idea of the "Š. V grotesque spiritual values". These young artists were the first in Lithuania (about 1987) to consciously destroy the boundaries between the traditional branches and genres of art and to negate (or to present other) the functions of traditional material - clay. They distinguish themselves by a grotesque and exultant, mockingly lyric outlook on the things and environment. Both their installed spaces and separate objects possess the character of a theatrical scene, the most characteristic feature of which is optimism and the fusion of nausea. The group has arranged seven group exhibitions.

Good Evils (Geros blogybės) was established in Vilnius in 1992. Its members: Žilvinas Kempinas, Ieva Martinaitytė, Patricija Jurkšaitytė, Leila Kasputienė, Aidas Bareikis, Julius Ludavicius, Gintas Vaicys, Saulius Mažylis, Saulius Šumskas, Giedrė Lilienė, Saulius Kruopis, Artūras Raila and Evaldas Jansas¹¹. The members of the group are graduates of Prof. Kaestutis Zapkus studio at the VAA. A paradoxical logic hidden in the name of the group is characteristic of the creation by these young artists. The members of the group are original artistic individualities, who create painting of different stylistics as well as objects and installations. All are bound by a desire to express themselves at the level of conceptual ideas but not at that of the inner expression and national school. The first exhibition (1992) was a kind of declaration made by the group about the essential significance of conceptualism in contemporary art. At the same time Good Evils questioned the importance of the national school as the only regional system of art and presented a clear alternative of artistic thinking. It is a group of individualities, who as a group, want to accentuate a paradoxical, opposing combination to each other, without reducing a mutual creative tension. The group has arranged five exhibitions.

Group 1 was established in 1992 in Vilnius. Its members: Audrius Dzikaras, Adasa Skliutauskaitė, Danutė Jonkaitytė, Audrius Puipa, Kazimiera Zimblytė, Vytautas Jurkūnas, Dalia Kasciūnaitė, Aldona Dapkutė (art

¹¹ The three latter artists participated only in some group exhibitions and do not belong to the core of the group.

historian), Vytenis Jankūnas, Gintaras Giedrimas, Arvydas Pakalka and Rūta Katiliūtė.¹² They create painting, graphic works and drawings. The name of the group is associated with an idea that "in the presence of existence a creator is always alone". According to the art historian A. Dapkutė, member of the group, "the activities of the group are based on personal contacts and close collaboration", therefore, guests are also welcome to their exhibitions. The group is non-conceptual, its members are artists holding rather different views and representing even opposite artistic trends. What they have in common is the recognition of traditional values and traditional visual arts. The scale of their creation - "from absolute realism to absolute abstraction"¹³. Their works show a tendency towards minimalism and conceptualism. The group has arranged six exhibitions, mainly in Vilnius and one in Moscow at the Embassy of the Republic of Lithuania.

F-FC was established in the period between 1992-1994 in Vilnius. Its members: Giedrius Kumetaitis, Mindaugas Ratavicius and Simonas Tarvydas. They create installations and video installations. They engaged in artistic activities still studying painting at the VAA. Participated in exhibitions as well as in film and video festivals in Maastricht (The Netherlands), Glasgow (Great Britain), Vilnius and Riga. In 1994 the group created the installation *Transit*, which served as the basis for the diploma project of all the three artists. In 1994 the group changed its name to the Academic Training Group (*Akademinio pasiruošimo grupė*). After graduation the group did not stop its activities, as G. Kumetaitis states, due to a common creative atmosphere. The group is conceptual, does not observe any defined provisions, is open to various trends, ideas, ways and means of expression. Joint creation presents interest because "it makes possible to keep distance between a creator and created work and to more objectively estimate the work". The group works intensively, over ten projects have been already realized in the exhibitions held in Vilnius, Malmö and Stockholm (Sweden), Helsinki (Finland), Dessau (Germany) and other countries.

Individualists (*Individualistai*) established themselves in Vilnius in 1993. Its members: Svajūnas Armonas, Rimas Biciūnas, Jonas Ceponis, Jonas Daniliauskas, Jūratis Burkštaitis, Virginija Kalinauskaitė, Aloyzas Stasiulevicius, Leonardas Tuleikis, Vilija Kneižytė, Evaldas Malinauskas, Algimantas Švažas, Aleksandras Vozbinas, Juozas Vosylius, Stasys Žirgulis, Liudvikas Natalevicius and Romualdas Lankauskas. The members

¹² The three latter artists left the group in 1992.

¹³ Responses to the Opening Day / *Literatūra ir menas*, November 7, 1992.

of the group are from three Lithuanian cities: Vilnius (15), Kaunas (1), Klaipėda (3) and Šiauliai (3). They represent different generations, hold different artistic views but are bound by "friendship, school and attempts to survive in complicated historical circumstances". The group also pays attention to traditional forms of artistic expression - picture, print, sculpture - and classical ethical values. "We make an attempt to revive the importance of the artist's originality and exceptional character", states the painter A. Stasiulevičius, one of the most active members of the group. The program of Individualists is based on the ideas of the Section of Individualists, which functioned in the 30's of the 20th century. It accentuates the significance of the plastic world formed by the artist, but the program does not essentially state anything new. "Art in the expression of individuality, nationality and modernity", wrote Juozas Keliuotis in the exhibition catalogue of the Section of Individualists in 1938. This creative credo is practically repeated by today's individualists, pointing out the significance of the plastic world formulated by the artist as one of the greatest postulates. It seems to be strange that even fifty-five gone years have not left in the artists' consciousness any sign of the urgent creative and aesthetic perception for new generations and new times. The group has arranged several exhibitions in Vilnius and Kaunas.

Ė was established in Vilnius in 1994. Its members: Arvydas Baltrūnas, Ricardas Bartkevičius, Marius Piekuras and Vidmantas Jusionis. The name of the group - the authentic letter Ė of the Lithuanian alphabet, and according to the members of the group, no such letter can be found in any other alphabet. It took them long to find a visually vivid and polysemantic name. It is a paradox but the associations provoked by the sound and interjection Ė in the Lithuanian language are cardinally opposite to those noble themes and meanings which present interest to the members of this group. A great role in the creation of the artists of this group is played by religious themes, mostly - biblical tales. As a stimulus for the formation of the group Ė (as well as for The Table) was the group exhibition on religious subjects *A Day has Twelve Hours?* held in the Lithuanian Palace of Artists in 1991. The group has been associating its creation with a certain implication of Catholic ideology for two years now. Said implication means not only engagement for sacral art but rather an affiliation to the Catholic cultural tradition. From here arises attention to eternal truths and the origin of the good. The members of the group are like-minded artists; the same school and a similar understanding of painting bind them. It implies a priority to color, attention to form and a subject as a point of support. All of them are as yet faithful to oil painting on the plane and the traditions of the group ARS of the Lithuanian school of painting. Different from other

groups, the members of Ė do not hide their common economical and organizational interests. The group Ė has arranged six exhibitions in Kaunas, Vilnius and Kristianstad.

Experimental Guild of Artists (EMC - Eksperimentinis menininkų cechas) was established in Vilnius in 1995. Its members: Saulius Ercmonas, Aleksandras Guščenka, Dalia Žebenkienė, Rimvydas Žebenkas, Rasa Ercmonienė, Rimvydas Markeliūnas, Algimantas Maceina, Nijolė Vadopalaitė, Algirdas Galinskas and others (40 artists all in all). EMC bears the features of a creative organization and a firm. Among the members of the group - stained glass artists, wall painters, graphic artists, sculptors, musicians and a film director. Their artistic task - to synthesize art belonging to various spheres and to fill "form with spirituality". The core of the group also performs the functions of art managers as the group strives not only to realize its creative potential but also has its own commercial interests. In 1995, it participated in the industrial fair Construction and Repairs '95 in Vilnius.

Some more groups can be enumerated here. One or another piece of news about them appeared in Lithuanian press. Unfortunately, only their names and incomplete lists of members can be mentioned, because in many cases there is no exact information and it is impossible to say whether their existence lasted longer than the duration of the group exhibition.

Doooooris was established in Klaipėda in 1990. Its members: Raimundas Urbonas, Remigijus Treigys and others. **Without Shoes** (Be batrų) was formed in 1992 by the graduates of the Kaunas Institute of Art and the Vilnius Academy of Arts; **Narutis** was established in Kėdainiai in 1993; its members Vytautas Vanagas, Viaceslavas Evdokimovas-Karmalita, Vytautas Lionginas Galinis (1942-1985); **Gesture** (Mostas) was established in Palanga in 1993; its members Arvydas Šapoka, Saulius Pakalniškis, Juozas Meškys, Raimondas Daukša, Vytautas Kusas, Romas Paulikas, Juozas Gruišys, Edvardas Žiba; **3x** was established in Druskininkai; its members - Adalbertas Nedzelskis and others. **Aqua** was established in 1993; its members Vija Tarabildienė, Juozas Gelgudas, Saulė Urbanaviciūtė, Bronius Bernotaitis, Osvaldas Jablonskis, Eduardas Urbanavicius and Loreta Pladienė; **The Table** (Stalas) was established in Vilnius in 1994; its members Kęstutis Vasiliūnas, Vytas Narbutas, Jonas Vaitekūnas and Gediminas Piekuras.

The process of the formation of groups at the late 80s was rather spontaneous. The artists formed groups according to age, place of residence, creative interests, favorite art techniques, practical reasons and

group creations. However, the main reasons for grouping are practical (it is easier to survive and arrange exhibitions), but the main precondition - friendly relations and the same school.

It should be mentioned that the emergence of a new group in many respects did not mean any turning in the development of art. Therefore, no wonder why theoretical conventions deserved any concern. POST ARS announced the principal provisions of creation and new aesthetic positions in its manifesto. The group 24 declares its ethical position, where as the rest limit themselves by generalized phrases about a similar understanding of art and faithfulness to the national school. The absence of artistic orientations (first of all for themselves) practically makes the groups as friendly circles of familiar artists. It is hard, indeed, to say in what respect, for example, Individualists differ from the Group 1 and The Snake from the 24.

Qualitative scales of art, undoubtedly, would work without the sign of belonging to a group... Thus, in this respect Lithuanian groups (except POST ARS, The Green Leaf, The Good Evils and Academic Training Group) are anachronisms distorting the widespread concept of the group in the history of art as a gathering of the friends of idea.

The review of the majority of the existing groups or those, which had existed some time ago, makes possible to single out two types of groups. The groups of the first type are bound by broad cultural and social aims and the group of its members is perceived as a special form of collaboration. These are such groups as 24, The Snake, The Four, The Lost Generation, 1, Individualists, Ė and other small groups. The groups of the second type have their definite aesthetic programs and clear artistic aims, which are consistently being declared. They are: The Green Leaf, POST ARS, Sel, Š. V, Academic Training Group, Good Evils and The New Communication School. The groups of the first type have a stricter organizational system, their by-laws, the fixed number of members and they more actively arrange exhibitions. The artists of the second group are bound purely by the idea of creation and in most cases they do not pay any attention (except the NCS) to organizational formalities. They communicate with their colleagues in a more open and spontaneous way, invite them to participate in actions and exhibitions and easily separate facing the absence of common creative stimuli. They are concerned not about periodical presentation, but the criteria of the inner necessity concerning the very venture. The groups of such type may have better prospects, because they are rather creative units than organizational ones.

Thus, common ideas and a theoretical platform can rally individualities into a certain creative group. No such group existed in the prewar Lithuanian art. Even ARS in its Manifesto did not clearly formulate its artistic views, and the section devoted to artistic principles, which could be directed

towards the future, was greatly vague. Anyway, ARS and the writers and poets Keturvėjininkai introduced problematics of Modernism into Lithuanian art. With the establishment of the groups POST ARS, The Green Leaf, 24 and particularly of The Good Evils at the end of the 80's of the 20th century, the views on the future roads of Lithuanian art dispersed into two hardly adjustable extremes. Beyond any doubt, it gave new valuable impulses to the development of art in the current period.

Similarly to Keturvėjininkai and Kazys Binkis who in their lectures on new art as early as the 20's of the 20th century criticized the art of "the painters who drew peeled and unpeeled potatoes", Prof. Kaestutis Zapkus declared to his students at the VAA (he lectured at the Academy for half a year) that "provincialism is not an aesthetic category. Painting must be renewed and enriched with modern thinking, information, concepts and forms".

Due to the active work of the mentioned groups international conceptual art, which was progressing in Lithuania rather slowly, at last found favorable conditions for its flourish. Beside other trends, art also approached a Post-Modernist trend.

In the end - a futuristic prognosis. With the changes of conditions for the better, say, with the formation of the normal system of the guidance and management of art, the majority of the present groups will become redundant and a membership in them will lose its urgency. In the near decade, some two or three groups of the second type might survive, provided they manage to attract and keep the spectators' attention.