

ART IN PUBLIC SPACE: CROSSROADS OF VISUAL ARTS, ARCHITECTURE , URBAN
DEVELOPMENT AND CIVIL SOCIETY

Riga / Latvia / April 25-26. 2012

VALUE INTEGRITY BETWEEN ARTISTS, PUBLIC
AUTHORITIES AND THE PUBLIC: ONE PROJECT CASE
STUDY OF “VILNIUS EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE
2009”

Prof. dr. Elona Lubyte,
Vilnius Academy of Arts, UNESCO Chair for Culture Management and Culture Policy, curator the project of Vilnius
sculpture on the right embankment of the river Neris of “VECC 2009”



or

SOS: BEWARE OF THE ART IN PUBLIC POST-SOVIET SPACES!

The national program “Vilnius – European capital of culture 2009” (hereinafter referred to as VEKS 2009) consisted of special events, conferences, congresses, programs.

The Visual Arts Program and its Public Spaces Humanization Program were launched as part of the European Art Program. The sculpture project on the Neris embankment was implemented within its framework, with the following works of art: “Semi-Hill” by Robertas Antinis, “Two-Storey” by Mindaugas Navakas, and “The Embankment Arch” by Vladas Urbanavičius (constructor Jūratė Vašeikienė, architect Linas Tuleikis, coordinator Elona Lubytė). Mediation and assistance in the implementation of this project was provided by VEKS 2009, namely by the head of the visual art projects Laima Kreivytė, and the coordinator of the visual art projects Eglė Deltuvaitė.

My motivation was to find possibility invited next creative artists to create permanent sculpture object in public city space

Robertas Antinis "Sacrifice field" in Kaunas (to remember Romas Kalanta), 2002



Mindaugas Navakas. "A Hook", at the Art League (Meno lyga) Vilnius (1994) and
"Grand Vase" 2005, in personal show "R Works",
Latvian National Museum of Art, Riga, 2006



Vladas Urbanavičius “Rafter” in front of the central railway station in Vilnius, 2005
“Suspended Stones” at the Zone of Sculptures („Skulptūrų zona“),
Kaunas, 2008



I have curated next project in site specific public space with this artist too:

Sculpture on the Neris River, Vilnius, 2003

Next sculptures in Vilnius University Botanical Garden, 2006-2007





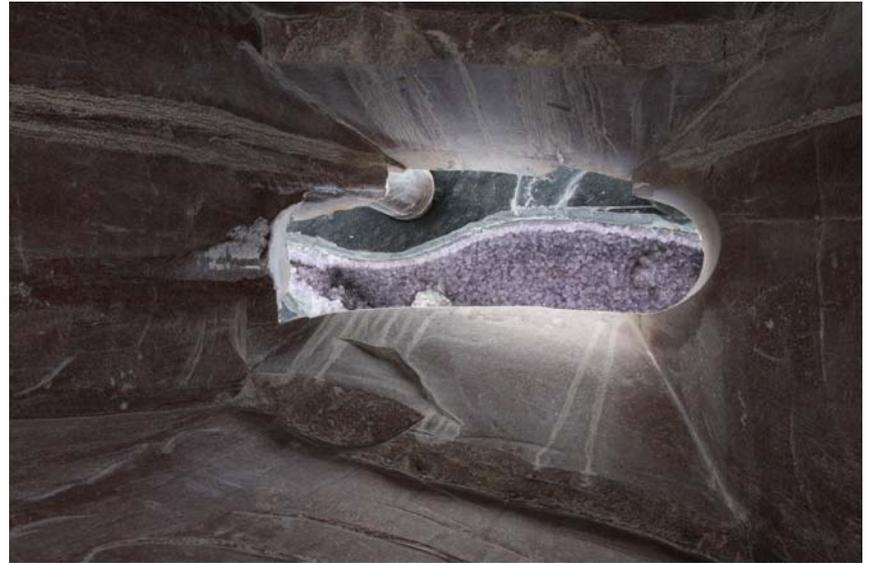
“Semi-Hill” by Robertas Antinis





“Two-Storey” by Mindaugas Navakas

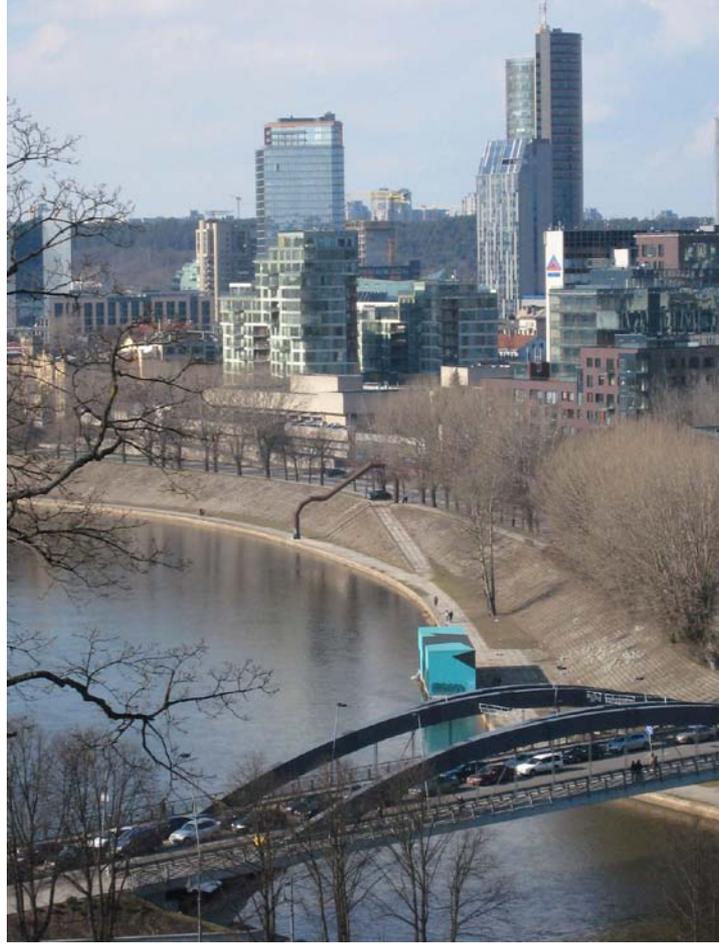






“The Embankment Arch” by Vladas Urbanavičius





My experience as a Project Coordinator has already been depicted in the book
"Impeachment of a Certain Project: the History of the Sculptures on the Neris Embankment as Part of
the VEKS 2009 Public Spaces Humanization Program"



R. Artnas, Puskaris, 2006. V. Balyčio fotografija



M. Navakas, Džiaubis, 2009. V. Balyčio fotografija



V. Udovalskis, Rantines jėga, 2008. V. Balyčio fotografija

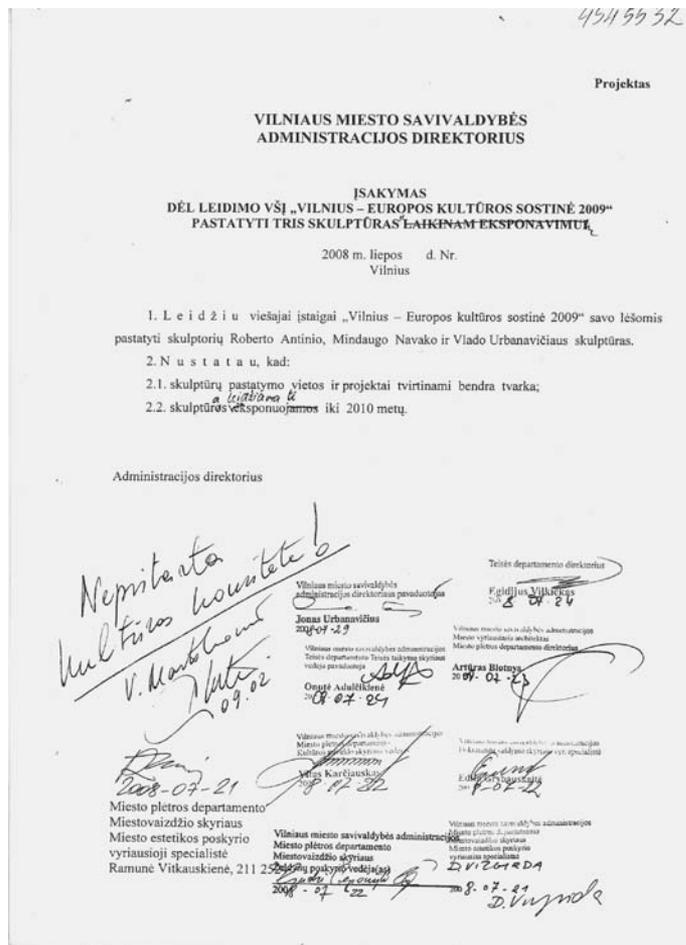
VIENO PROJEKTO APKALTA

VEKS 2009 VIENŲ VIEŠŲJŲ ERDVŲ HUMANIZAVIMO PROGRAMOS
NERIES KRANTINĖS SKULPTŪRŲ ISTORIJA

VIENO
PROJEKTO
APKALTA

Here 27 documents was gathered that evaluated the project either positively or negatively, including the media, bloggers comments (more than 110 figure) witnessing the juxtaposition of politicians, artists, media, and public into two camps either in favor or against the Project:

- Upon refusal of Vilnius City Municipality officials to issue sculpture building permits, the members of Lithuanian section of International Association of Art Critics (AICA) together with the artists participating in the Project have publicly opposed the political censorship of contemporary art. Sculpture Project was selected by the group of international experts;



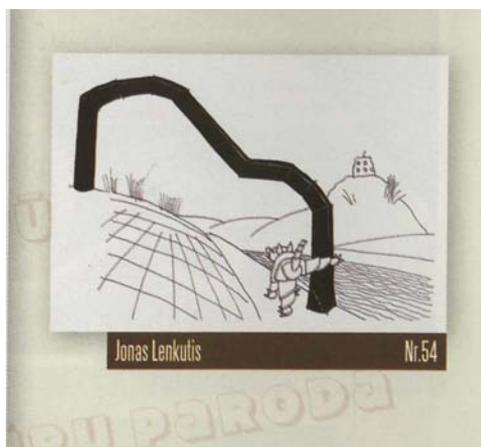
Jums, kaip politikui, turėtų būti žinoma apie glaudų estetikos ir ideologijos ryšį. Todėl, neleidami pastatyti parinktoje vietoje pagal VEKS programą sukurtos Vlado Urbanavičiaus skulptūros, jūs, prisidengdami pasiteisinimais apie grožį, bandote sugrąžinti į mūsų gyvenimą politinę cenzūrą. Mūsų kartos menininkai puikiai atsimena tuos apgailėtinus laikus, kai valdininkai nesibodėdavo koja paspirti į parodos atranką atneštus kūrinis. Mums atrodo, kad jūs vėl pradate šį pavojingą žaidimą. Rašydamas šias eilutes, nesitikiu, kad jos jus kaip nors paveiks, bet viljuosi, kad jūsų politinė karjera bus trumpa.

Mindaugas Navakas, skulptorius

- „7 meno dienos“ Nr.40 (822), 2008-11-07



- While criticality minded towards the project fellow artists were drawing caricatures of the project (...),



(...) the municipality of Vilnius Šnipiškės district creates Christmas greetings 2009 with the Picture of Vlad Urbanavičius' sculpture „Embankment arch“;



Upon publication of public inquiry on the Lithuanian Ministry of Culture's

website seeking to clarify the fate of the project sculptures

(whether leave them where they are; dismantle them or dispose or sold in auction)



Kultūros ministras
Remigijus Vilkaitis

Klausimas

Koks turėtų būti skulptūrų („Puskalnis“, „Dviaukštis“, „Krantinės arka“) palei Nerį likimas?

Palikti ten kur yra

Išmontuoti ir utilizuoti

Parduoti aukcione

Balsuoti

Balsavimo rezultatai

In the opinion poll during 9-20 December 2009 46,993 people participated at , where 52% of respondents stood for the status quo: that the sculpture of the Neris embankment would remain untouched after the 2009 events of VECC. 18,482 people , 39,3 % of respondent think, that the sculpture will can dismantie or dispose and 4,098 people, 8,7 % of respondent – that sculpture will can sold in auction.

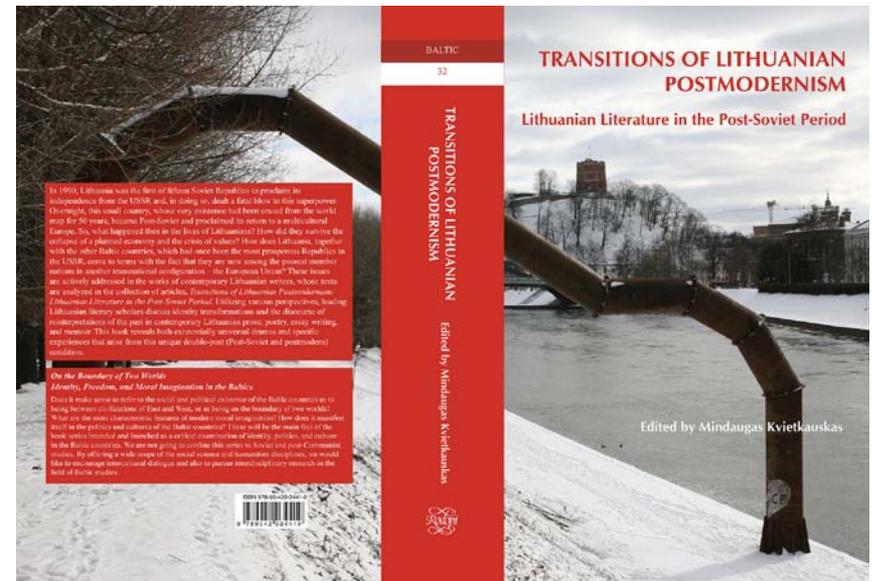
When upon this poll in the space of Facebook a movement "Let's save the Waterfront arch! " was initiated, it brought together 1472 members ,

Who launched an online petition ""Let's save the Waterfront arch! "" 732 of Lithuanian citizens spoke supported the idea of the preservation;

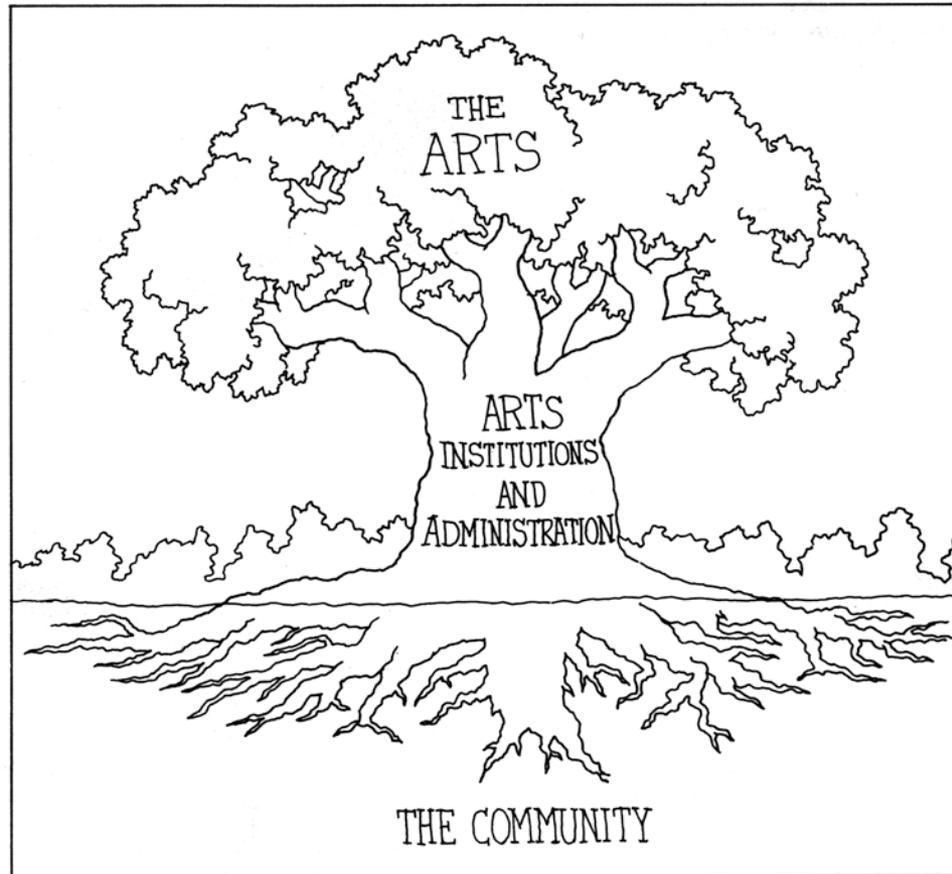
Upon the protest act of Critically minded young people who for a protest, one early morning had „hung“ , a jackstraw of someone called Felix on the Urbanavičius' "The Embankment Arch", he had left a suicide note putting attention at the depressing impact of the art and particular art work "The Embankment Arch" on the society (...)



Eventually, when receiving special public attention the art work becomes a popular object for publications dedicated to the changes in the Eastern and Central European art field , or an illustration for a cover for the . Lithuanian literature anthologies of the 20-21st, etc.



The project's organizing experience encourages understanding of the causes determining complex relations between contemporary artists, public authorities (customers/politics) and public.



I was born and grew up in Soviet Lithuania, having experienced possibilities brought by the independence, the breakdown of the Iron Curtain , the opening of the world of Western art and the creative freedom along with the challenges and responsibility.



On 13 February 2009, while rejoicing upon the victory against politicians and bureaucrats, and construction of Urbanavičius' "The Embankment Arch", I failed to predict the controversial public reaction that I will face.



As a result of these experiences, I realized that change is a social process which manifests itself in the main actor, namely, a human, and the success is due to human knowledge and understanding of what and why it is necessary to change, desire (desire) to change and the intention (a will) to change.

Within the Soviet society „beyond classes“, in which the property is single and belongs to all, as well as full social equality" (Marshal, G. 1994: 399), the diversity of different values based on diversity of interests was not recognized. This was contrary to human nature, as being different people have different needs, interests, values; or, to be more accurate, world-views expressing their desires.

If the during the Soviets art – demotic in form and , socialist in (ideological) content – in urban public spaces (monuments and decorative sculpture) depicted / represented the totalitarian state, the art creators loyal to the system were ready to serve with the creative decisions responded to the demands of the customer: a totalitarian state. At that time the public / audience relationship with the works in public spaces of the city was limited by mandatory participation in demonstrations, or rallies.



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Whereas upon the abolition of political censorship the independent media, or *the fourth power* plays an important role in forming artistic needs of the audience. However, with the acceleration of market relations, loss of cultural niche is seen, while the commercial / the tabloid or biased media is experiencing its heyday. It is becoming a platform for political populism and opposition between the public by scandals or *witch hunting* rather than a critical approach to public education.

VŽ. Elito naujienos

Vamzdžių vamzdis - išsaugotas!

Vilniaus miesto vicemeras Gintautas Babravičius paskelbė paskutinį savivaldybės norą: kad vamzdžių skulptūros liktų stovėti ten, kur jos yra dabar.

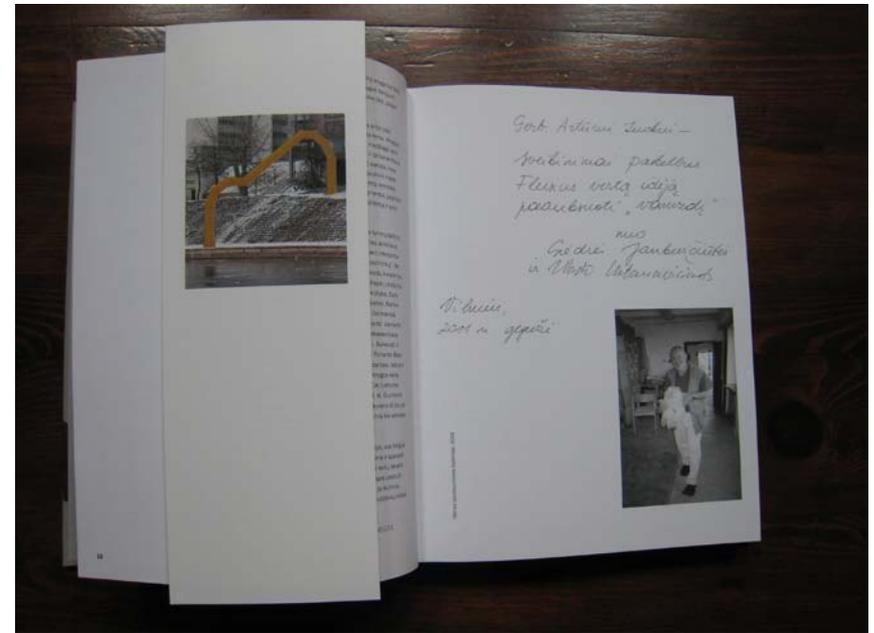
Koks siaubas, kai pagalvoji, kad vilniečiai galėjo netekti Vilniaus - Europos kultūros sostinės simbolio. Vamzdžių vamzdžio. Savivaldybės leidimas stovėti šedevrams Neries krantinėje nestojo galioti sausio 1-ąją.

Ačiū ponui Babravičiui ir kitiems sostinės vadovams, kurie nusprendė pratęsti leidimą. Visuomenei tai nieko nekainuos. O juk už vamzdžio išardymą būtų tekę brangiai mokėti. Gal net brangiau nei kūrinio sutvėrimas (100 tūkst. litų).

Reikia palikti jį! Tuo labiau kad šiuolaikinio meno šedevrą dar galima patobulinti, paversti taikomosios dailės pavyzdžiu.



JUSTO KRILAVIČIAUS FOTOMONTAŽAS



In the field of liberal arts any innovation occurs as a creative alternative rejected by general public, which is however gradually getting its recognition and long-term demand. Richard Serra's *Tilted Arc*, constructed in New York's Federal Plaza in 1981 – a giantate of rusted steel traversing the plaza. The site-specific object altered the routes of those crossing the square and the way they saw the environment. The litigation initiated by the objecting office workers and residents of nearby buildings went on for several years until the piece was finally dismantled in 1989. The artist did not give his permission to relocate the sculpture and demanded that it should be cut to pieces (...)



Meanwhile, his equally neobrutalist work “Clara-Clara” (1983), temporarily installed in Paris’ Tuileries garden in 2008, did not result in public outrage



Anyhow, yet in 1925 expressing efforts to look at the new art not through aesthetic but rather social aspects, the Spanish philosopher Jose Ortega y Gasset in his article "Dehumanization of art" notices that "[...] a characteristic feature of the new art in „terms of sociology“ is the collision of two classes of people: the understanding new art and non-understanding. [...] Please remember that in every era, in which there were two kinds of art: one of the majority and of minority, the latter has always been a realist "(Ortega y Gasset, J. 1999: 473-487).

Insights into the viability of the philosopher today can be confirmed by the fact that a „realistic“ sculpture in public urban spaces is much more favoured by politicians, the media and the general public.

Statue to Frank Zappa, author Konstantinas Bogdanas, Vilnius (1995), architect Valdas Ozarinskas
Cat a sculpture in the Jurga Ivanauskaitė square, author Ksenija Jaroševaitė, Vilnius (2008), architect Virginija Kurpienė

Statue to medical doctor Cemach Szabad, author Romualdas Kvintas, Vilnius (2006)



Gao Brothers /Gao Zhen and Gao Qiang, China “Miss Mao trying to poise herself at the top of Lenin’s Head”
Yue Minijun, China “A-maze-Ing Laughter”, in Vancouver Biennale 2009-2011



Juozas Laivys "Rabbit with wings", one day project in Žagare, 2010
Juozas Laivys "Seal of Rietavas", one day project in Rietavas, 2011



Netikėti menininkų darbai intrigavo žagariečius

2010 m. Rugpjūčio 31 d.

Loreta RĪPSKYTĖ

Oranžinis mobilus menininkų sukurtas zulkis su sparnais keliavo po Žagarę, o paskutinę dieną stabtelėjo prie spalviškai derančios Meno mokyklos filialo sienos.

Ištrauka iš Jonišio rajono laikraščio



Juozas Laivys “Nuclear power-station”, one day project in Seda, Lithuania, 2011



Whereas the contemporary sculptural objects significantly more likely to cause discontent in the society. The evidence to this can be seen in response to the work by Richard Serra's in New York, Waterfront sculpture project on the Neris River in VECC 2009 in Vilnius and "Artscape Nordland" (curator Maareta Jaukkuri) project in Northern Norway.