

# INTRODUCTION

The third part of the multi-volume *Dictionary of Lithuanian Artists* presents the biographies of the artists who worked between the years 1918 and 1944. For the first time in the history of Lithuanian art research, the artists of that period are brought to notice, facts pertaining to the biographies of outstanding creators are ascertained, and less distinguished artists are included into the sphere of Lithuanian artistic research.

The artists, whose biographies figure in the present volume, lived through the turbulent times, which were dedicated to the creation of a new modern state. On regaining its independence in 1918, in the interwar period Lithuania was laying its economic foundations and fostering its national culture. Lithuania also became an equal member of the international community. The centre of the artistic life of the country came to be its capital Kaunas. Main institutions of culture were established there. A new Art School was opened, and prominent Lithuanian artists got settled and were creating their works in Kaunas as well. The *Dictionary* brings to notice not only the artists who lived in the Republic of Lithuania but also those who worked in the Vilnius region, which belonged to Poland at that time. The latter were mostly artists of non-Lithuanian origins, those who were later ignored in Lithuanian historiography or ascribed to the Polish artistic culture. The authors of the *Dictionary* consider the Lithuanian art, created in between the two World Wars, to be a unified cultural space, where the artistic efforts of the multicultural communities merge.

The group, engaged in the preparation of the *Dictionary*, summed up the work of their forerunners. The work entailed encyclopaedic, historiographic and bibliographic editions, monographs and catalogues as well as scientific and popular articles – all of which were made ready by earlier art researchers. They specified creative and life facts pertaining to earlier artists, whose biographies they supplemented with the information derived from the archives.

Investigations into the creation of the artists of independent Lithuania were started between the two wars. Important artistic questions were discussed by art historians, people working in museums, ethnographers, writers, and even the artists themselves.

Compilers of the *Dictionary* considered the informative and encyclopedic publications, issued both in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and in the beginning of the 21<sup>th</sup> century, to be very useful for their purposes. Monographic studies and articles dedicated to the creation of the artists living in between the two wars, reminiscences of their contemporaries, the catalogues of personal and group exhibitions as well as the catalogues of the museum collections and of the collections systematizing the cultural legacies of those days were regarded to be beneficial by the compilers of the present *Dictionary*.

Presentations of the artists who created in between the years 1918 and 1944 would be unimaginable without the data published in the academic *History of Lithuanian Art of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (XX a. lietuvių dailės istorija*, vols 1–3, Vilnius, 1982–1990; compiled by Ingrida Korsakaitė and Irena Kostkevičiūtė). Jolita Mulevičiūtė's monograph *Towards Modernism: The Art Scene in the Republic of Lithuania in 1918–1940 (Modernizmo link: Dailės gyvenimas Lietuvos Respublikoje 1918–1940*, Kaunas, 2001), as well as Giedrė Jankevičiūtė's monograph *Art and State: The Art Scene in the Republic of Lithuania in 1918–1940 (Dailė ir valstybė: Dailės gyvenimas Lietuvos Respublikoje 1918–1940*, Kaunas, 2003) were permeated with a social approach towards the phenomenon of art. The book *Under the Red Star: Lithuanian Art in 1940–1941 (Po raudonąja žvaigžde: Lietuvos dailė 1940–1941 m.*, Vilnius, 2011) by G. Jankevičiūtė reflected the experience under the first soviet occupation.

An important source of information was supplied by informative editions, such as *Assemblage of the Students of Kaunas Art School (Kauno meno mokyklos mokinių sąvadas*, Vilnius, 2006), compiled by Dalia Ramonienė and a biobibliographical dictionary *Illustrators of Lithuanian Books for Children (Lietuvių vaikų knygų iliustruotojai*, Vilnius, 2009) compiled by Vida Narščiuvienė. An important material has also been discovered in the monographs dedicated to the activities of institutions, the best of which could be illustrated by Apolonija Valiuškevičiūtė's books *Kaunas Art School (Kauno meno mokykla*, Vilnius, 1970; supplemented edition was published in Vilnius in 1997) and *Kaunas Art Institute in 1940–2000 (Kauno dailės institutas 1940–2000*, 2<sup>nd</sup> vol., Kaunas, 2002). The publication by Jonas Umbrasas and Egle Kunčiuvienė *Organisations of Lithuanian Artists 1900–1940 (Lietuvių dailininkų organizacijos 1900–1940*, Vilnius, 1980) also have to be mentioned.

The artistic legacy of the artists from Vilnius region could be best served by the presentation of catalogues published

both in Lithuania and Poland, such as *Wileńskie środowisko artystyczne 1919–1945. Malarstwo, grafika, rzeźba, rysunek, fotografia* (Olsztyn, 1989) and *Vilnius Art School and its Traditions (Vilniaus meno mokykla ir jos tradicijos*, compiled by Jerzy Malinowski, Michał Woźniak, Rūta Janonienė, Torunė, Vilnius, 1996; the same edition was also published in Polish). The presentation of the interwar artists of Vilnius region was based on the investigatory data introduced by Irena Jakimowicz, Dariusz Konstantynów, Jan Kotłowski, Józef Poklewski.

The compilers of the *Dictionary* studied not merely the publications of Lithuanian authors, but they also directed their attention towards encyclopaedic editions which happened to appear in Poland, Germany, France and everywhere else, where the biographic and other data, pertaining to Lithuanian artists, were mentioned. Among the most important ones to be noted are the following: Ulrich Thieme, Felix Becker, *Universal Dictionary of Creative Artists from the Antique to Present Times (Allgemeines Lexikon der Bildenden Künstler von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart*, vols 1–37, Leipzig, 1907–1950), *Polish Biographical Dictionary (Polski słownik biograficzny*, Kraków, still being published since 1935), Hans Vollmer, *Universal Dictionary of Creative Artists of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century (Allgemeines Lexikon der Bildenden Künstler des XX Jahrhunderts*, vols 1–6, Leipzig, 1953–1962), *Universal Dictionary of Artists (Allgemeines Künstlerlexikon*, München, Leipzig, still being published since 1992), *Artists of the Nations of the Soviet Union. Biobibliographical Dictionary (Художники народов СССР. Биобиблиографический словарь*, vols 1–4, Moscow, 1970–1983), *Dictionary of Polish and Other Artists Working in Poland (Słownik artystów polskich i obcych w Polsce działających*, vols 1–8, Wrocław, Warszawa, 1971–2009), Emmanuel Bénézit, *Critical and Documentary Dictionary of the Painters, Sculptors, Designers, Engravers of all the Times... (Dictionnaire critique et documentaire des peintres, sculpteurs, dessinateurs et graveurs de tous les temps... Dictionnaire critique et documentaire des peintres, sculpteurs, dessinateurs et graveurs de tous les temps...*, vol. 1–14, Paris, 1999) and others.

While preparing the *Dictionary*, the creative funds of the Lithuanian Art Museum, of the National Museum of Lithuania, of the Lithuanian Theatre, Music and Cinema Museum, of the National M. K. Čiurlionis Art Museum and of its subdivisions, such as of the Adelė and Paulius Galaunė House, of the Antanas Žmuidzinavičius Creations and Collections Museum, as well as those of the Šiauliai “Aušra” Museum, of the Samogitian Museum “Alka” in Telšiai, of the Museum of Vilnius Academy

of Arts and the creative funds of the Rokiškis Area Museum, as well as the material and iconography, safeguarded in the libraries and archives, were analysed and ascertained. Important documents were discovered in the Lithuanian Archives of Literature and Art, in the Lithuanian State Central Archive, in the Lithuanian Special Archives, in the archives of the Lithuanian Artists Association as well as in the Manuscript Departments of the Wroblewski Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences, Vilnius University Library and in the Manuscript Department of the Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania.

The compilers of the *Dictionary* also worked in the funds of the National Museum in Warsaw (*Muzeum Narodowe w Warszawie*) and of the National Museum in Krakow (*Muzeum Narodowe w Krakowie*). They also discovered valuable material in the National Library in Warsaw (*Biblioteka Narodowa w Warszawie*), in the Warsaw University Library (*Biblioteka Uniwersytecka w Warszawie*), as well as in the Library and of the Institute of Art of the Polish Academy of Sciences (*Biblioteka Instytutu Sztuki Polskiej Akademii Nauk*) and in the Library of Nicolaus Copernicus University in Torun (*Biblioteka Uniwersytecka w Toruniu*). In Krakow, they gathered the material in the Jagiellonian University Library (*Biblioteka Jagiellońska*), as well as in the Scientific Library of the Polish Academy of Sciences (*Biblioteka Naukowa Polskiej Akademii Umiejętności i Polskiej Akademii Nauk*).

## DATA SELECTION

### Chronological boundaries.

The third volume of the *Dictionary of Lithuanian Artists* introduces the artists whose major creative activity belonged to the interwar period as well as to the time of the Second World War. The above indicated time limits are very relative, though. A great number of the artists figuring in the *Dictionary*, had started their creative careers in the interwar period but later they kept on working in Soviet Lithuania, for example, Vytautas Jurkūnas, Antanas Gudaitis and Juozas Mikėnas or in exile (such as Vytautas Kazimieras Jonynas, Vytautas Kasiulis, Viktoras Petravičius and Viktoras Vizgirda). With regard to the aforementioned cases, the decision has been reached not to divide the biographies of artists, but to present their entire biographies in the third volume, which is mostly concerned with the mature manifestations of the artists' creativity.