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Vilnius Centre Becomes Art Gallery: 100 Art Objects Displayed in Open-Air Exhibition



"Peru II" by Jurgis Tarabilda © JCDecaux Lietuva

Lithuanian capital Vilnius has turned its centre into an open-air art gallery. The outdoor advertising exhibition contains 100 works of local art. Art lovers may contact the artists through the special website. The website contains images and descriptions of art objects, their prices and contacts of authors.

July 7th, 2020. Lithuanian capital Vilnius has come up with yet another innovative solution for the post-pandemic social and cultural life. The city has turned its centre into a huge "Art Needs No Roof" using billboards to exhibit 100 works of Lithuanian artists.

"Although art galleries are already open, the restrictions for social gatherings remain in place," said Remigijus Šimašius, the mayor of Vilnius. "Therefore, Vilnius "takes its roof off." We have turned the city centre into a huge open-air gallery. It is one of the largest art exhibitions in Vilnius containing the works of 100 artists. We hope that the project will stimulate creativity and some works will find their way into people's homes."

Quarantine, which lasted three months in Lithuania, has been hard on local artists, as art galleries were closed, and many international events and exhibitions were canceled. Thus the city has come up with an idea to invite artists to expose their works of art in the city free of charge, all costs being covered by the city and the partnering outdoor advertising operator "JCDecaux Lietuva."

Among the authors are artists of international renown, such as Vilmantas Marcinkevičius, Vytenis Jankūnas, Laisvydė Šalčiūtė, Svajonė and Paulius Stanikas (SetP Stanikas), as well as Algis Kriščiūnas and Živilė Žvėrūna - a digital artist, known for her interest in mythology and the development of human spirit.

"The quarantine was a special time for me as an artist," said Ms. Žvėrūna. "It was a time of reflection, when you can stop to think deeper about our society and the role that art plays in it. The pandemic made us find new ways to experience culture. That's why this project is so interesting: for several weeks billboards are filled with works of art. I can now clearly see that curiosity and new experiences is replacing the universal fear of the first days of the pandemic."

All in all, over 500 artists have submitted their works for review, most of them in just 4 days after the announcement. The objects for the exhibition were selected according to several criteria: the portfolio of the author, the visuality of work and its integration with the landscape of the city. The selecting committee had a goal to compose an exhibition that would best represent the Lithuanian art in all its variety.

Citizens and city guests can use a virtual [map](#) to navigate through the exhibition. Mr. Kriščiūnas, who is an artist of multiple talents, including music, photography and painting, thinks that the "Art Needs No Roof" exhibition is a great way of exploring the city. As an artist, he is known for the ability to combine art with social function. In 2019 he made an installation "We Are Kings of Garbage" in one of the shopping malls. Now Mr. Kriščiūnas suggests the "Trip of Hundred Art Objects" - a trip around all objects of "Art Needs No Roof," combining physical and mental exercise.

"That could be a whole day trip," - he explained. "Such a day could change the entire perception of the city. I think that this project is a new window to the hearts of the audience. When art is exhibited only in galleries, the artists are excluded from society: not everyone will take time to come and see the exhibition. But the art objects of "Art Needs No Roof" will be seen by all people on the street."

The display is not the only purpose of the exhibition. All art objects are sold. The prices and artist contact details may be found on the special website. There are several hundred works of art on the website, including those from the open-air exhibition.

"People had no access to galleries for quite some time," said Jolita Vaitkutė, a young artist whose work may be found on the website. "We still face many challenges, and the "Art Needs No Roof" exhibition offers a welcome respite. Not only does it create an opportunity for artists to display their work and reach the audience, it is also an opportunity for the audience to be inspired by pleasant and thought-provoking visuals in unexpected spaces."

Jolita Vaitkutė uses food and other everyday objects for installations, performances and illustrations. Her work includes a depiction of dinner of football stars Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi made of 658 objects, such as oysters, shrimps, grapes, desserts and drinks.

The organizing partners of "Art Needs No Roof" expect to help the artists widen their audiences and at the same time to open art to citizens and city guests. With the opening of borders inside the EU, Lithuania becomes accessible to foreign visitors and is recognized as one of the safest travel destinations this summer.

As individual people and businesses suffered losses during COVID-19 pandemic and quarantine, Vilnius became known for solidarity and innovative solutions. The city gave up huge public spaces for use of open air cafes. Mannequins filled empty spaces at restaurants' tables and were used to display the collections of local clothes designers. The use of billboards to compose a huge open-air art exhibition in the city centre is yet another such solution.

"Art Needs No Roof" will last for three weeks, until July 26th.

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ABOUT GO VILNIUS

Go Vilnius is the official tourism and business development agency of the City of Vilnius. The agency provides visitors, investors, relocating talent, entrepreneurs and businesses with all the essential information they need to know about the Lithuanian capital. Go Vilnius offers information on everything from real estate to leisure activities in Vilnius, simplifying the process of traveling, relocating to, or investing in Vilnius.

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