

The Origins and Genesis of Soviet Art Production Factories in the Baltic Countries

Rasa Dargužaitė

Lithuanian Culture Research Institute

Saltoniškių g. 58, LT-08015, Vilnius, Lithuania

rasadarguzaite@gmail.com

During the Soviet era, government and political authorities supervised and directed all artistic activities. The regime actively used what is often described as soft power to establish influence in the territories it occupied. To achieve this, it turned to the fine and applied arts by creating a state-controlled institution known as the art production factory. These enterprises combined professional and folk art, large-scale projects, and mass production. Art factories were able to produce the entire visual identity of an institution or event—from monumental works to small-scale graphic design. This article examines the origins and genesis of art production factories in the Baltic countries that operated during the Soviet era. To date, the art production factories of all three Baltic states have not been studied collectively. Thus, the aim of the paper is to reveal the general strategies the regime applied in establishing art production factories in the occupied territories.

Keywords: art production factories, *kombinat*, Art Fund, *Vsekokhudozhnik*, Soviet period, Baltic countries.

Scholarly interest in the activities of art production factories emerged alongside efforts to conceptualize and articulate the trajectories of design history in the Baltic states. It is worth mentioning the 2010 conference, “Modernization: Contexts of 1960s–1970s Baltic Art, Architecture, and Design” (held at the National Gallery of Art in Vilnius), the aim of which was to evaluate and present the uniqueness of design produced in the Baltic States during the Soviet era in an international context.

A year later, in 2011, the exhibition *Modernization: Baltic Art, Architecture, and Design 1960s–70s* (also at the National Gallery of Art in Vilnius) featured production from the Lithuanian *Dailė* (*Art* in Lithuanian), Latvian *Māksla* (*Art* in Latvian), and Estonian *Ars* (*Art* in Latin) factories. The 2020 exhibition, curated by Estonian design researcher Triin Jerlei, *Ornament and Baltic Modern Design. 1955–1985* (originally held at the Estonian Museum of Applied Art and Design in Tallinn and later transferred to the Kaunas County Public Library), along with its accompanying catalogue,¹ is also worth mentioning. However, the texts in those exhibition catalogues² do not thoroughly examine the principles of operation of art production factories and related organizational issues.

In examining the origins and development of art production factories in the Baltic States, Galina Yankovskaya’s article on the *Vsekokhudozhnik*³—which was issued in Soviet Russia and served as a model for similar institutions established under the Soviet regime in the occupied Baltic states—proved to be a valuable resource. In this text, the author highlights the economic, political, ideological, and social aspects of *Vsekokhudozhnik*, which were also adapted into the functional model of art production factories in the Baltic States.

A significant publication compiled by Estonian design historian Kai Lobjakas, *Between Art and Industry. The Art Products Factory*,⁴ is dedicated

1 Triin Jerlei, *Ornament and Baltic Modern Design, 1955–1985* (Vilnius: Vilniaus universiteto leidykla, 2020).

2 *Modernizacija. XX a. 7–8-ojo dešimtmečių Baltijos šalių menas, dizainas ir architektūra / Modernisation. Baltic Art, Architecture and Design. 1960s–70s*, ed. Lolita Jablonskienė (Vilnius: Lietuvos dailės muziejus, 2011).

3 Galina Yankovskaya, “The Economic Dimensions of Art in the Stalinist Era: Artists’ Cooperatives in the Grip of Ideology and the Plan,” *Slavic Review* 65, no. 4 (Winter 2006), 769–91.

4 *Kunsti ja tööstuse vahel. Between Art and Industry: The Art Products Factory*, ed. Kai Lobjakas (Tallinn: Eesti Tarbekunsti- ja Disainimuuseum, 2014).

to the *Ars* art production factories that operated in Estonian SSR during the Soviet era. The establishment of Latvian art production factories is discussed by art historian Ilze Konstante in her monograph *Staļina garāēna Latvijas tēlotājā mākslā. 1940–1956* (*Stalin's Long Shadow over Latvian Fine Arts. 1940–1956*).⁵ The author of this paper completed a dissertation on the art production factories in the Lithuanian SSR,⁶ in which the cases of Estonian and Latvian art production factories are also mentioned episodically.

Soviet-era informational and advertising catalogues and brochures proved valuable while studying the structure of art production factories. These resources made it possible to identify the types of workshops that operated within art production factories across various Baltic countries.

The term *kombinat*

First, this paper introduces the fundamentals of the term *kombinat*, which has no direct English equivalent. The term *kombinat* (from Latin *combinatus*—coordinated, combined) refers to a production conglomerate whose operation is based on the merging of the production processes from different but related industries into a single enterprise. This principle of industrial organization was widely used in Soviet republics. Consequently, the term *kombinat* typically appears only in former socialist countries, where such Soviet-ideology-based structures functioned. For example, in Russian—*комбинат*, in Lithuanian—*kombinatas*, in Estonian—*kombinaat*, in Latvian—*kombināta*, in Germany—*Kombinat*, etc. Countries outside the Soviet sphere of influence do not have an equivalent term; only approximate analogues exist. The concept, developed in the Soviet Union, carries the specificity of its time, political regime, and geographic context.

Therefore, it is difficult to translate the term *kombinat* accurately into English, particularly in a manner that reflects the specificity of the period and political background. A review of various English-language translations reveals several historical usages. For example, catalogues and

5 Ilze Konstante, *Staļina garāēna Latvijas tēlotājā mākslā. 1940–1956* (Rīga: Neputns, 2017), 65–72, 260–69.

6 Rasa Dargužaitė, *Lietuvos Dailės kombinatai 1945–1990: dizaino aspektai ir kontekstai* (Lithuanian Dailė Art Production Factories in 1945–1990: The Aspects and Contexts of Design), doctoral supervisor prof. dr. (hp) Giedrė Jankevičiūtė, doctoral dissertation, Lithuanian Culture Research Institute, 2025.

brochures from the Soviet era frequently employed terms such as “applied art complex,”⁷ “combine,”⁸ or “art enterprise.”⁹ Contemporary exhibition catalogues, however, often feature alternative descriptors such as “art goods manufactory,”¹⁰ “manufactory,”¹¹ “art products factory,”¹² or “art factory.”¹³ For the purposes of this paper and its associated research, the most prevailing translation—*art production factory*—has been adopted.

Who created these factories and why were they established in the USSR? During the first Soviet occupation of the Baltic countries in 1940, the nationalization of private property began. After the reoccupation of the Baltic countries in 1944, the Soviets continued the process of nationalization, merging large and small businesses, factories, and workshops into larger formations called *kombinat* (production factories). Both large and small private enterprises were absorbed into large state-run companies under a centrally planned economic model. After the Second World War, the USSR and the Baltic states established various state-run industries (textiles, food, furniture, etc.), including the so-called art production factories. This development illustrates how the Soviet authorities regarded art as being equivalent to other industrial sectors and integrated its production into the broader economic system. Galina Yankovskaya, in an article on artists’ co-operatives in the Stalinist era, describes this Soviet ideological and political construct as an economic mechanism of art.¹⁴ According to her, “[...] the economic mechanism of art developed during the years of Stalinism turned

- 7 Latvijas PSR Mākslas fonda Lietiškās mākslas kombināts „Māksla” (Rīga, 1983): 8.
- 8 Eesti NSV Kunstifondi Tallinna Kombinaat „Ars” (Tallinn, 1984); ARS. ENSV Kunstifondi Tallinna Kombinaat (Tallinn: Kirjastus „Perioodika,” 1985).
- 9 Latvijas PSR Mākslas fonda kombināts „Māksla” (Rīga, 1970).
- 10 Lietuvos taikomoji dailė ir dizainas 1918–2015 / *Applied Arts and Design*, ed. Jūratė Meilūnienė, texts by Gražina Gurnevičiūtė, Živilė Intaitė, Jūratė Meilūnienė, Danutė Skromanienė, Lijana Šatavičiūtė-Natalevičienė, Giedrė Uzielienė, and Nijolė Žilinskienė (Vilnius: Lietuvos dailės muziejus, 2018).
- 11 Lijana Natalevičienė, „Nuo ‚Marginių‘ iki ‚Dailės‘ kombinato“ / “From *Marginiai* to *Dailė* Manufactory,” in *Daiktų istorijos. Lietuvos dizainas 1918–2018 / Stories of Things. Lithuanian Design 1918–2018*, eds. Karolina Jakaitė, Giedrė Jankevičiūtė, Ernestas Parulskis, and Gintautė Žemaitytė (Vilnius: Lietuvos dailės muziejus, 2018): 58–59.
- 12 Jerlei, *Ornament and Baltic Modern Design, 1955–1985*, 27–28.
- 13 Lolita Jablonskienė, “A Brief History of the ‘Art into Everyday Life’ Movement,” in *Mabb: Art into Everyday Life*, ed. Simon Rees (Vilnius: Šiuolaikinio meno centras, 2006), 44; *Modernizacija. XX a. 7–8-ojo dešimtmečių Baltijos šalių menas, dizainas ir architektūra*, 9.
- 14 Yankovskaya, “The Economic Dimension of Art in the Stalinist Era,” 771.

out to be more amenable to sociopolitical changes and thus endured until the end of the 1980s.”¹⁵ Moreover, Yankovskaya discusses the emergence of a new professional jargon that reflected the new social model produced by Soviet propaganda ideology, in which, at least in theory, the working class occupied the central position. The following terms became widespread: “visual arts workers” (*izorabotnik*), “service to the people” (*obslyzhivanie naseleniia*), “visual arts brigade” (*izobrigada*), and “production art” (*proizvodstvennoe isskustvo*).¹⁶ This terminology was also used in the occupied Baltic countries, where Soviet-founded art cooperatives operated.

The origins of art production factories

Art production factories were established through the merging of interwar enterprises and private workshops, utilizing their material base and human resources across all three Baltic countries. During the initial Soviet occupation, those entities were first referred to as art cooperatives. Such cooperatives had already been functioning in Soviet Russia under the name *Vsekokhudozhnik*, an All-Russian union of cooperative partnerships for workers in fine, applied, and decorative arts. It existed from 1928 to 1953 and united artels of artists, sculptors, and craft masters¹⁷ across the RSFSR and the USSR. *Vsekokhudozhnik* was an acronym for *Vserossiyskoye kooperativnoye obiedineniye Khudozhnik*, meaning the All-Russian Cooperative Association Artist or the All-Russian Cooperative Union of Fine Arts Workers.

According to Yankovskaya:

The All-Russian Union of Artists' Cooperatives, *Vsekokhudozhnik*, was the first organizational embodiment of the compromise involving ideology, creativity, and money. <...> It was <...> also the first organization to promote mass artistic production. The economic mechanisms of art, many of which were of

15 Ibid.

16 Ibid., 772.

17 Galina Yankovskaya writes that “[it] was founded by fifty-seven private and legal entities and thirty-nine cooperatives from Moscow and Leningrad. In the course of two years, this initiative undertaken by artists in the capital cities was transformed into a national organization. <...> *Vsekokhudozhnik* received the production facilities and studios of both private individuals and various organizations. In time it acquired an artistic production center and publishers that issued informational bulletins”. See Yankovskaya, “The Economic Dimension of Art in the Stalinist Era,” 775.

art preserved until the break-up of the Soviet system, were first worked out in *Vsekokhudozhnik*. <...> cooperatives were the main producers of standard socialist realist visual media: street sculptures, designs for parks of culture and rest, the All-Union Agricultural Exhibition, visual propaganda, objects of daily life, and other artistic assortments.¹⁸

However, it is worth noting that the idea of bringing different artistic disciplines and crafts together had already been pursued by the Arts and Crafts Movement in England in the late nineteenth century as well as later by the German *Werkbund*. This vision was reflected in the structure and activities in *Vsekokhudozhnik* and later in the art production factories—artists from various disciplines (painters, sculptors, graphic artists, architects, ceramicists, leatherworkers, jewellers, textile artists, and folk artisans) were brought together within a single institution. The art production factories developed urban decoration projects, designed public events and exhibition displays, created museum expositions and interiors for public buildings, and produced mass-market ceramic, leather, jewellery, and other decorative objects.

Thus, after the Soviet occupation of the Baltic States in 1940, art cooperatives were established there. In Lithuania, the main component of the *Dailė* cooperative was the cooperative company *Marginiai* (1930–1941). This organization was one of the most important and influential enterprises for the production, support, popularization and distribution of works of folk artists in the interwar period. The company was engaged in the manufacture, purchase, and sale of folk-art items, as well as the development of models for mass production. The infrastructure of *Marginiai* (a chain of stores) and its operating model (the organization of folk-art masters and craftsmen, distribution of their production, and coordination of work orders) were taken over by the Soviets. Such enterprises were useful to the Soviet authorities due to their existing production base, which was employed in the creation of propaganda supporting Soviet ideology through various means of visual art. Therefore, during the first Soviet occupation, in 1941, the *Marginiai* company became part of the *Dailė* cooperative and

later, accordingly, of the *Dailē* art production factories. Thus, the nationalized ceramic manufactory *Eglē*, the toy factory *Šviesa*, and the artel *Audējas* were incorporated into the *Dailē* cooperative.¹⁹ Consequently, the activities of the *Dailē* cooperative were highly diverse. Both professional artists (painters, sculptors, graphic and applied arts artists) and folk artists participated in it, engaging in the production, sale, and distribution of orders. The cooperative also operated its own manufactory, provided financial support and raw materials, and contributed to the organization of exhibitions.

The circumstances of the establishment of art cooperatives in Latvia were discussed by art historian Ilze Konstante.²⁰ According to her, during the formation of the artworkers' cooperative organization in Latvia, *Vsekokhudozhnik* was cited as a model to be followed. Thus, in 1941, the organizing committee and statutes of the artworkers' cooperative were approved, and premises were allocated for an art and applied arts salon and a materials store at Valņu Street 9, Riga.²¹ As stated in the Latvian press:

The cooperative will unite artists, sculptors, graphic artists, applied art workers. The purpose of the cooperative is the organization of members on a socialist basis, to fulfill the tasks and orders of the state and public institutions. <...> The cooperative will systematically organize the creation of high-quality works of art for the masses of working people.²²

Similar rhetoric appeared throughout the press across all occupied countries, and a substantial number of comparable articles can be identified.²³

In Estonia, applied art enterprises established during the interwar period were likewise nationalized under Soviet rule. For example, the *Kodukäsitöö* workshop (1926–1940), which focused mainly on textiles and pottery, was incorporated into this process. National crafts and knitwear

19 Rasa Dargužaitė, „Kooperatyvo ‚Dailė‘ 1941–1945 m. veikla: Lietuvos dailės gyvenimo organizavimas okupacinių režimų metais“, ed. Giedrė Mickūnaitė, *Acta Academiae Artium Vilnensis* 110–111 (2023): 499.

20 Ilze Konstante, *Stalīna garā ēna Latvijas tēlotājā mākslā. 1940–1956* (Rīga: Neputns, 2017): 65–72, 260–69.

21 Ibid., 67.

22 Ibid., 67.

23 „Dailės Kooperatyvas pradeda veikimą“, *Tarybų Lietuva* (April 23, 1941): 6.

inspired by folk art were especially popular and were produced and marketed here. Later, a pottery manufactory was opened, which operated in a manner very similar to *Marginiai* in Lithuania. Other nationalized companies included the Eduard Taska leatherwork firm (1923–1940), the textile company *Veskaru* (1932–1942), Joseph Kopf's jewellery manufactory, Nikolai Langerbaum's porcelain decoration firm, and several others.²⁴ It is likely that these enterprises were merged into an art cooperative, as in the other two Baltic states. Further analysis is necessary to determine the specific institutional unit into which these companies were incorporated. However, it is known that these manufactories later became the basis of *kombinats*, using the same locations, craft experience and skills, equipment, and human resources.

The art cooperatives operated throughout the Second World War and during the Nazi occupation of the Baltic States. After the Soviet reoccupation of the Baltic countries in 1944, the cooperatives were reorganized into art production factories [Fig. 1].



1. Tõnu Lauk, *Daile—Maksla—Ars* badge, Tallinn Art Production Factory Ars Fine Metal Studio (manufacture), 1975, Tallinn City Museum, Estonia, CC0. www.europeana.eu/en/item/401/item_YQEP6ZM-KUDNVMBAB5USZGQKBJ-WUPNXAO

Tõnu Lauk, Ženklelis *Dailė—Māksla—Ars*, Talino dailės kombinato „Ars“ meninio metalo dirbtuvės (gamintojas), 1975, Talino miesto muziejus, Estija

The continuity and transformations

The establishment of art production factories began with the founding of the Art Funds in all three states—central administrative bodies subordinate to the Artists' Union. These Baltic Art Funds were the branches of the USSR Art Fund. The USSR Art Fund, founded on February 4, 1940 in Moscow,

<...> duplicated the work of *Vsekokhudozhnik*, which also defended the professional interests of artists along trade union lines, organized exhibitions, displays, and sales, and, like an art dealer, acted as intermediary between purchasers and creators of artistic work. The Artistic Fund was given to several enterprises that had earlier belonged to the cooperatives and housing complex of artists in Moscow. It is also acquired seven sculpture factories in Moscow, Mytishchi, Kolomna, Kalyga, Kyiv, Odessa, and Sverdlovsk, a painting-sculptural enterprise, and the central bureau of artistic exhibitions.²⁵

Vsekokhudozhnik was finally liquidated in 1953, and its functions were transferred to the USSR Art Fund. Subsequently, the art funds of all republics were included into this structure. The Art Fund owned manufacturing enterprises (art production factories and workshops), exhibition salons (showrooms), and creative houses, and also provided material support and organized exhibitions. Thus, the art production factories were production conglomerates created by the prevailing political system, bringing together specialists from various fields: administration, personnel, engineering, production planning, artists, architects, craftsmen, and manual workers. These were the largest art enterprises, encompassing nearly all artistic disciplines and employing a wide range of artists. They functioned as the main institutions that employed and controlled artists' creative output. This organizational model was attractive due to the social guarantees it provided. However, it also required artists to adapt to Soviet ideological demands.

Following Latvia's reoccupation, the Art Workers' Cooperative functioned as the cooperative for fine arts and applied arts artists of the Latvian SSR. On December 5, 1944, by a resolution of the People's Commissars of

25 Yankovskaya, "The Economic Dimension of Art in the Stalinist Era," 771–72.

26 Ibid., 261, 263.

the Latvian SSR, the Latvian branch of the USSR Art Fund Branch was established. Thus, for a short time, both the Art Fund and the Artists' Cooperative functioned in parallel. On October 3, 1945, after the reorganization of the Artists' Cooperative, the art production factory *Māksla* was established under the system of the Art Fund.²⁶ Workshops that had operated during the interwar period were also incorporated into this structure. For instance, Jānis Krievs's ceramics workshop (founded in 1926) in Tukums remained a division of the art production factory until 1953.²⁷ From 1954, the ceramics studio in Ķīpsala (founded in 1945, Riga), likewise became a division of the *Māksla* art production factory. It should be mentioned that the bronze foundry was transferred to *Māksla* in 1946, as were the textile manufactory and other units. Weaving, ceramics workshops, and the artistic processing of wood and leather began to operate within a single production sector. The *Māksla* art production factories [Fig. 2] were located in Riga and Liepāja.



2. Catalogue of the Latvian
SSR Art Production Factory
Māksla, 1970, Riga

Latvijas TSR dailēs kombināto
katalogas *Māksla*, 1970, Ryga

In the Lithuanian SSR, on November 26, 1944, the general assembly of *Dailė* cooperative members adopted a resolution to merge the *Dailė* cooperative and all its divisions into the Lithuanian SSR Art Fund system,

establishing the *Dailė* art production factory with its centre in Kaunas. The Art Fund itself was founded as a branch of the USSR Art Fund on January 29, 1945, with its center in Vilnius. Three art production factories operated in the Lithuanian SSR under the Art Fund system—in Kaunas from 1945, in Vilnius [Fig. 3], and in Klaipėda from 1946, as well as a network of salons and stores and an exhibition fund. Thus, the *Dailė* cooperative became the foundation of the *Dailė* art production factory, which operated throughout the second Soviet occupation period, continuing the state-controlled organization and production of art that had begun during the war.



3. Catalogue of the
Vilnius Art Production
Factory *Dailė*, 1978,
Vilnius

Vilniaus dailės
kombinato katalogas
Dailė, 1978, Vilnius

According to the Estonian design historian Kai Lobjakas, the Tallinn Art Production Factory was established immediately after the Second World War.²⁸ From 1944 to 1946, it operated under the name Estonian SSR Centre for Applied Arts of the Council of People's Commissars of ESSR, and from 1946 to 1947 as the ESSR Centre of Applied Arts of the Art Fund of the Soviet Union. The art production factories of the ESSR Art Fund

were given the name *Ars* [Fig. 4] in 1975.²⁹ Thus, art production factories operated in both Tallinn and in Tartu in the ESSR.



4. Catalogue of the Tallinn Art Production Factory *Ars*, 1984, Tallinn

Talino dailēs kombinato katalogas *Ars*, 1984, Talinas

It is evident that the Soviet system applied a similar model of art production factories across all occupied countries, based on nationalized arts and crafts manufactories and workshops that operated in the interwar period. The Soviet authorities appropriated their infrastructure and production equipment. In the post-war period, these manufactories were dispersed across various urban premises. Therefore, purpose-built buildings for art production factories began to appear in the 1960s. The manufactories and workshops that had previously operated in different parts of the cities were subsequently relocated to these new facilities.

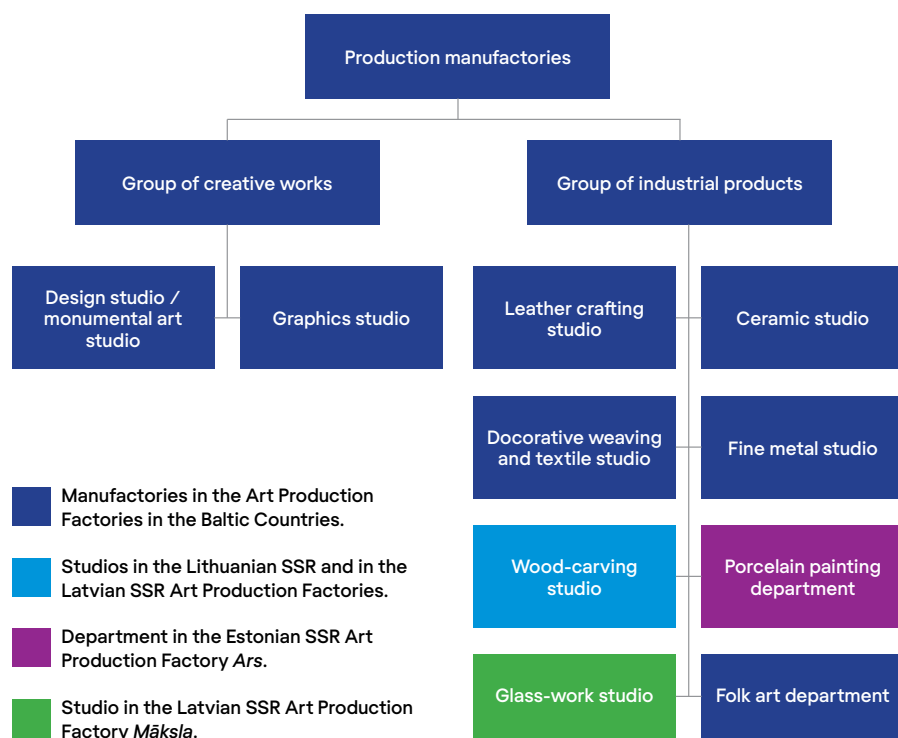
The structure of the art production factories

What was the organizational structure of the art production factories in the Baltic states, and which workshops comprised them? Art production factories primarily consisted of a work division for creative labor

²⁹ Ibid., 40.

and a work division for industrial production [Table 1]. The activities of the creative labor division were based on so-called complex design, implemented through the design and creative works manufactory. A group of architects, together with artists of various specializations, developed a so-called visual-thematic scenario, according to which architectural spaces were organized and sites for artistic accents were determined. These teams undertook projects for the decoration of urban environments (for example, city streets and squares), as well as large-scale monumental projects, such as sculptural compositions. They were also responsible for designing festive events, including propaganda parades, songs, dances, and sports festivals. Professional artists painted portraits of Soviet leaders in advance for those events. Demonstrations were held and organized annually with great pomp. City streets and building facades were decorated with Soviet campaign paraphernalia, and banners with portraits of Soviet commanders and politicians were carried during demonstrations. All such materials were produced in the art production factories.

Table 1



The work division for creative labor also designed exhibitions, fairs, and museum expositions. It created interiors and exteriors of public buildings, including decorative accents, busts, tapestries, stained glass, mosaics, metal-plastic, ceramic, and leather relief panels. It also produced smaller scale design solutions such as notice boards, shop windows, and related elements, alongside graphic design work, including art posters, signs, logos, certificates of honor, letters of thanks, postcards, occupational safety posters, labels, emblems, boxes, diagrams, and others. In conclusion, it produced both large- and small-scale artworks and design projects. All necessary equipment for these projects was produced locally in the art production factories.

Another division was the work party for industrial production. Similar or identical manufactories existed within the art production factories in the Lithuanian SSR, Latvian SSR, and Estonian SSR. These included leather, ceramics, textile, and fine metal workshops. However, jewelry incorporating amber or woodcarving was produced only in the Lithuanian SSR and Latvian SSR. A porcelain painting department existed only in the Estonian SSR art production factory. Nikolai Langebraun's porcelain painting manufactory had operated successfully in the interwar period and was later subordinated to the art production factory under Soviet administration. Meanwhile, porcelain production developed separately in the Latvian SSR and the Lithuanian SSR. The history of Riga porcelain production was rooted in two distinct enterprises—the Kuznetsov Factory and the Jessen Factory—dating back to the nineteenth century. These were nationalized during the Soviet period and later merged into a single enterprise, the Riga Porcelain and Faience Factory, in 1963. In the Lithuanian SSR, porcelain production began only in 1981 with the establishment of the *Jiesia* ceramics factory in Kaunas.³⁰

The organizational structure of the art production factories in the Latvian SSR differed somewhat, as a glass workshop was included there, where unique glassware, stained glass, and lighting elements were produced. The stained-glass technique was particularly popular during the Soviet period. The stained-glass studio of the Lithuanian SSR art production factory

30 For further information, see Aldona Keturakienė, *Porcelianas Lietuvoje* (Vilnius: Vilniaus dailės akademijos leidykla, 2013).

purchased part of the glass required for production from the Riga *Māksla* art production factory, as glass for stained-glass production in Lithuania began to be manufactured only in 1969 in the glass factory *Raudonoji aušra* (Red Dawn).

In the case of the Lithuanian SSR, Latvian SSR and Estonian SSR, only the internal structure of the workshops differed. Almost all art production factories included design and creative works units (although sometimes under different names), as well as workshops for monumental art and sculpture, and departments for leather, metal, textiles, and folk crafts. However, there were no glass or porcelain workshops in the Lithuanian art production factories, as such workshops, together with the necessary equipment and specialists, had not existed in the interwar period. The structure of the art production factories was largely determined by the fields of applied art that had developed during the interwar period.

Conclusions

It can be argued that, in the Baltic countries, the activities of the art production factories were inseparable from the political, economic, and ideological context of the Soviet regime. Like factories in other industrial sectors, the art production factories were established through the merger of companies and private manufactories that had operated during the interwar period, utilizing their production facilities and human resources under the Soviet system. Such large organizational structures were well suited to the implementation of the planned economy imposed by the Soviet government, in which private property was abolished and the state determined the range of products, pricing, and wages. This model also offered certain advantages to artists, providing social guarantees and a regular income. Nevertheless, artists were subjected to continuous supervision and were required to align their work with the regime's directives, often producing works of a propagandistic nature. It may be observed that, in all three Baltic countries, the art production factories operated according to the same principles and fulfilled similar functions. Both the execution of large-scale works, such as sculptures and decorative painting compositions, and mass production

were organized within these factories under strict state supervision. In this way, the art production factories functioned as instruments of the regime, serving the implementation of Soviet ideology.

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Santrauka

Sovietinių dailės kombinatų ištakos ir genezė Baltijos šalyse

Rasa Dargužaitė

Reikšminiai žodžiai: dailės kombinatas, dailės fondas, „Vsekochožnik“, sovietinis laikotarpis, Baltijos šalys.

Sovietiniu laikotarpiu meninė veikla buvo griežtai kontroliuojama valstybės. Sovietų režimas aktyviai išnaudojo meną kaip minkštosios galios priemonę, siekdamas įsitvirtinti okupuotuose kraštuose. Todėl įvairios dailės sritys buvo sujungtos į vieną valstybės kontroliuojamą institucinę sistemą – dailės kombinatus. Šios įmonės apėmė profesionalų ir liaudies meną, didelius projektus ir masinę taikomosios dailės dirbinių gamybą. Dailės kombinatai buvo pajėgūs parengti visą organizacijos ar renginio vizualinį apipavidalinimą – nuo monumentalių kūrinių iki nedidelių grafinio dizaino darbų. Straipsnyje aptariamos sovietmečiu veikusių Baltijos šalių dailės kombinatų ištakos ir genezė.

Analizuojant šių institucijų veiklą, pirmiausia iškilo termino kombinatas vertimo į anglų kalbą problema. Įvairiuose šaltiniuose jis verčiamas skirtingai. Gamybinį susivienijimą reiškiantis terminas kombinatas aptinkamas tik buvusiose SSRS okupuotose ar kontroliuotose teritorijose, kur veikė tokio pobūdžio sovietinės ideologijos sukurtos struktūros. Tai rodo, kad sukurtam terminui būdinga laikmečio, politinės santvarkos ir vietos specifika.

Baltijos šalyse per pirmą sovietų okupaciją 1940 m. pradėtas privačios nuosavybės nacionalizavimas. Po reokupacijos 1944 m. sovietai tęsė pradėtus nacionalizavimo procesus – stambias bei smulkias įmones, fabrikus ir dirbtuves jungė į stambesnius gamybinius vienetus, kuriuos pavadino gamybiniais kombinatais. Po Antrojo pasaulinio karo SSRS ir okupuotose Baltijos šalyse veikė įvairių valstybinių pramonės šakų (tekstilės, maisto, baldų ir pan.) kombinatai, taigi buvo įkurti ir vadinamieji dailės kombinatai. Tai atskleidžia sovietų režimo požiūrį į dailę, kuri prilyginta kitoms pramonės šakoms, o meno gamyba integruota į ekonominį lauką. Kaip taikliai mini kultūros

istorikė Galina Jankovskaja, tai buvo ekonominis meno mechanizmas, kuriame persipynė politinis, ideologinis, ekonominis ir kūrybinis dėmenys.

Pritaikius Sovietų Rusijoje veikusio „Vsekochožnik“ (veikė 1928–1953) modelį, pirmosios sovietų Baltijos šalių okupacijos laikotarpiu buvo įkurti dailės darbuotojų kooperatyvai, reokupavus – dailės kombinatai. Lietuvos SSR veikė trys „Dailės“ kombinatai Vilniuje, Kaune ir Klaipėdoje, Latvijos SSR – du „Māksla“ (liet. dailė) kombinatai Rygoje ir Liepojoje, Estijos SSR – taip pat du „Ars“ (liet. dailė) kombinatai Taline ir Tartu. Visų trijų Baltijos šalių dailės kombinatų struktūra ir veiklos kryptys iš esmės buvo vienodos. Juose veikė vadinamoji kūrybinių darbų grupė ir pramoninių masinės gamybos dirbinių grupė. Kūrybinių darbų grupės cechuose buvo įgyvendinami dideli projektai: įrengiami visuomeninių pastatų interjerai, kuriamas eksterjerų dekoras, apipavidalinami šventiniai renginiai, parodos, muziejų ekspozicijos ir pan. Pramoninių, masinei gamybai skirtų dirbinių grupės cechuose (odos, keramikos, juvelyrikos ir kt.) buvo gaminami autoriniai mažo ir didelio tiražo dirbiniai.

Baltijos šalyse dailės kombinatų veikla buvo neatsiejama nuo sovietinio režimo politinio, ekonominio ir ideologinio konteksto. Kaip ir kitų pramonės šakų gamyklas, dailės kombinatai įkurti nacionalizavus tarpukariu veikusias privačias įmones ir dirbtuves, pasinaudojant jų gamybine baze, patalpomis ir žmogiškaisiais ištekliais. Tokios didelės organizacinės struktūros buvo tinkamos sovietų valdžiai siekiant įgyvendinti planinę ekonomiką, panaikinusią privačią nuosavybę; valstybė nustatydavo produktų asortimentą, pardavimo kainas ir atlygį. Dailės kombinatai visose trijose Baltijos šalyse veikė pagal tuos pačius principus ir atliko tas pačias funkcijas. Jų vykdoma kūrybinė ir gamybinė veikla buvo griežtai prižiūrima ir kontroliuojama valstybinių institucijų. Taigi darytina išvada, kad dailės kombinatai, sukurti pagal vieningą sovietinio režimo modelį, buvo vienas iš ideologinės propagandos instrumentų, skirtų sovietų valdžiai įtvirtinti okupuotose Baltijos šalyse.