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Title of the report: Peculiarities of Site: Contemporary Lithuanian  
artist (sculptor) and Traditional Crafts

An abstract of the report for the theme: Artists and Craftsmen,  
This report, making use of illustrative materials (fifty colour slides)  
explains why and how the contemporary Lithuanian sculptors carry out the  
traditions of countryside crafts (folk art).

Lithuania has not possessed the crafts traditions characteristic to  
urban culture in Europe. The archaic surroundings of farming give rise  
to handicrafts - folk art: architecture, wood-carving, sculpture,  
textile, graphics. In wooden Lithuanian folk sculpture a pantheistic  
identity is specifically linked with nature, an emotional attitude close  
to Oriental culture, and traditional church art of iconography. Since  
XVII c. carved, engraved wooden commemorative pillars with chapels,  
roof pillars in their architectural design echoing the structure of  
cosmic nature of wood, with statues of patron saints embellished with  
Indoeuropean ornaments as guard signs used to be fixed by the dwellings  
house, cultivated fields and so forth. The sensible use of them makes  
handicraftsman's (folk artist/s) activity socially precise.

In the presence of political isolation, Soviet occupation the  
sculptors and other art professionals attitude to Lithuanian folk art  
contains the meaning of national opposition. In the process, reflecting:  
immanent efforts to incorporate general contemporary art in the move-  
ment of modernization, several stages are evident in their chronological  
development.

I. FORMAL - at the beginning of the 70-s disclaiming the canons of the socialist realism, the sculptors draw on the experience of local folk masters - their carving stylistics is repeated in wooden sculptures (Alfonsas Ambražiūnas, Vladas Vičkūnas).

II. SYNTHETIC - in the 80-s - 90-s, attempting to modernize sculpture form the motifs of Lithuanian folk art are incorporated with the methods of the XX th c. classics of modernism (H. Moore, Z. Lipchitz, and others). The achieved plastic stylistics is widely applied in oppositional monumentalistics, making monuments to prominent figures in Lithuanian culture, important historical events (Dalia Matulaite, Vladas Vičkūnas, Alfonsas Ambražiūnas). Various media are used (stone, concrete, bronze, tin of smelt copper). They are consciously worked up imitating the traditional folk sculpture medium - Wood. The phenomenon achieves a social meaning.

III. ASSOCIATIVE - in the 90-s, getting interested in abstract form, postmodernistically revived "ready made" traditions, the artists pay attention to Lithuanian folk household utensils, the structure of wooden architecture attributing their sizes various cultural associations (Mindaugas Navakas - the participant of the first Kwangju International Biennial, Mindaugas Snipas, Algimantas Lankevicius, Artūras Raila). It is interesting that the artists turn to polysemantic form is in part influence of by newly discovered classical Oriental religion, philosophy. A sculptor, as it used to be in the past, is a craftsman-technologist independently realizing his intention in medium.

With the end of political isolation, in the nowadays young artists' works the emphasis on national identity has lost its earlier social meaning, conceptualism tarnishes a boundary between traditional branches of art, classical craftsmanship is being choked by international ideas.

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