

A collection of medallic art at Dundaga Castle

Vineta Skalberga



Fig 1. Permanent Medallic art exhibition hall in Dundaga Castle
Photo: Vineta Skalberga

The history of Latvian medallic art begins 100 years ago when the first medals were created by professional artists. Still, it is the 1970s and 1980s that could be called the golden age for small forms of sculpture, as a lot of exhibitions were organized during these decades. Regardless of the fact that exhibitions of small sculpture works and medals were regularly organized, and even triennials of Baltic medallic art, no permanent exhibition of medallic art had been created in any Latvian museum. The acquired and donated pieces lay in museum collections and were rarely lent to create more important collective or private exhibitions. At the beginning of the 2000s exhibiting contemporary art was still a topical subject, as it was crucial to find a permanent home for a future collection of medallic art, as well as a place to develop medallic art and ensure its succession.

History of the exhibition

At long last a chance to create a permanent exhibition of contemporary medals presented itself in 2007 when Dundaga municipality and members of the Latvian Medallic Art Club, including its president Jānis Strupulis, started discussing the topic. The beginning seemed promising and the goals were far-reaching, one of them being the creation of a Museum of Medallic Art in

Dundaga Castle in the future. Owing to the fact that active artists lived in Dundaga at the time, namely the sculptor, engraver and medal artist Jānis Mikāns and ceramist and medal artist Velga Eizenberga, a very successful cooperation between sculptors and representatives of the local council was created. This included the administration of Dundaga Castle, Dundaga parish council and the local Tourism Information Centre.

Dundaga Castle which is also an architectural monument of national importance is located in Northern Kurzeme, in a place surrounded by beautiful landscape and a place long known for its historical and cultural importance. The castle was built in the second half of the 13th century by order of the Riga Cathedral chapter (*Domkapitel* in German) as a castella type castle. From 16th to 20th century the Medieval castle belonged to barons, the Maydel and Osten-Sacken families. Following the 1920 agrarian reform, it was expropriated and given to the municipality. It is still the property of the local municipality which is located in the castle. The castle also features ceremonial and exhibition halls, as well as accommodation and even the Dundaga Children's School for Music and Art.

On 10 May 2008 a crucially important event in the history of Latvian medallic art took place: the first permanent exhibition of medallic art in the whole of the Baltics was opened in one of the vaulted halls of the castle (fig. 1). The head of Dundaga parish council Austris Kristapsons spoke at the opening, sculptor Jānis Mikāns talked about the creation of the exhibition and Jānis Strupulis, president of the Latvian Medallic Art Club, added to his account praising the now existing possibility for any interested party to witness contemporary medals in Latvia. Alanda Pūliņa, head of the Tourism Information Department, had put a lot of work into organizing the exhibition.¹

Creating the exhibition

The permanent exhibition was based on a conceptual approach, namely, to exhibit all of the medals, plaquettes and coins of the medallic art collection acquired so far. Jānis Strupulis explained it this way: 'My goal is to make



Fig 2. In Riga, 13.6.2010 after visiting Dundaga Castle
Left to right: collector Richard Peterhänsel (Germany), artist Jānis Strupulis (Latvia), Gunter Seifert (Germany), artist Masaharu Kakitsubo (Japan)
Photo from the personal archive of J. Strupulis.

the collection internationally recognized and popular, so that artists feel that donating and exhibiting their work here is a thing of prestige and honour. This exhibition is flowing, it is alive, it will never be complete. The most important principle is that absolutely all pieces are available for viewing all year round.'

The set-up is mostly created according to the times items have been gifted and not according to topic or author. Jānis Mikāns, the mind behind the design of the exhibition set up a thread press for forging small coins at the centre of the hall, so that anyone interested would be able to forge themselves a Dundaga coin about the size of the 2€ coin in white metal using engraved steel embossing plates. The obverse of the medal features the Dundaga Castle and the reverse has two versions: a capercaillie from the coat of arms of Dundaga or the 'Money Oak,' a great tree still growing in Dundaga Castle park which was also featured in a project by Hermanis Grīnbergs in 1919 for the design of the 100 rouble banknote. J. Mikāns was assisted by artist Velga Eizenberga in arranging the medals.

The most important additions to the medal collection arrived from 2008 to 2012 and they were correspondingly mounted for being exhibited in glass cases and on wall plates. The most important and numerically most valuable part of the collection is comprised of medals and plaquettes by Jānis Strupulis, followed by the works of local Dundaga artist Jānis Mikāns. There are also a few internationally known Latvian artists among the exhibited authors of medals, namely Bruno Strautiņš, Ģirts Burvis, Nellija Skujeniece, Ligita Ulmane-Franckēviča, Māra Mickēviča and Andris Bērziņš.

In May 2009, 44 medals were exhibited, half of which were works by J. Strupulis and the other half were medals by foreign authors from eight different countries. Among them there were eight medals by Belgian artist Paul Huybrechts and two by the Danish sculptor Bent Jensen.² In 2010, as part of the Art Days exhibition, a third ceremonious donation of medals took place. Jānis Strupulis and then head of Dundaga town council Aldons

Zumbergs took part in the event. Forty nine medals were added to the collection, 24 of which were Latvian and 25 by foreign artists.³ The exhibition at the castle was also visited by guests from Japan and Germany (fig. 2). The artist Masaharu Kakitsubo donated his work *The Philippine Eagle* and medals by brothers Satori and Jusaku Kamekura.⁴ The German medal collector Richard Peterhänsel donated run coins in which one can recognise German architectural monuments, such as the Brandenburg Gate, Nefertiti from the Egyptian Museum, as well as portraits of people important to the history of Germany.

On 14 May 2011 the exhibition was ceremoniously complemented a fourth time when 21 Latvian authors donated their medals to it. The older generation of Latvian sculptors was represented by Jānis Zariņš and Kārlis Baumanis and the younger by Baiba Šime and Ligita Breģe who were still students at the time. A generous donation consisting of ten medals was presented by Vija Mikāne, but the biggest number of pieces once again came from Jānis Strupulis: he gave the exhibition 27 medals cast in bronze. Three of these had been dedicated to important people from the Dundaga area: the doctor and linguist Juris Bārs,⁵ teacher Ernests Dinsbergs⁶ and Jānis Princis, master of the Livonian language.⁷ In addition to the cast medals also forged medals were exhibited, created by Jānis Mikāns, Arvīds Jansons and two artists from the workshop Kalvis⁸ – Kārlis Grundmanis and Juris Egle.

The international part of the medallic art exhibition was made up of medals from thirteen different countries. Most of them came from neighbouring Lithuania via the collection of J. Strupulis. The only Estonian medal this time was given by Aina Pūliņa, researcher of Dundaga local history. The foreign medal part of the collection was also complemented by a few pieces by Danish and German authors. A varied acquisition was the collection gifted by collector Oskars Jumtiņš, mostly containing forged medals: works in bronze by Latvian artist A. Jansons, as well as medals in tombac by Ukrainian, Russian, Czech, German, Italian and Austrian artists.

In the summer of that year donations were being collected for buying the medal collection from the widow of a collector for a symbolic price. Thirteen donors supported buying the collection and presenting it to Dundaga Castle to be added to the permanent medallic art exhibition there. Thus it was possible to add both cast medals and Latvian medals forged at the Māksla factory during Soviet times. On 25 June J. Strupulis wrote about this to Baiba Dūda, head of the Culture Department at Dundaga Castle: 'We, too, see and feel the Dundaga medal depository as ours, therefore the response was real. The Latvian Medallic Art Club wishes continuous prosperity and development to our future Medal Museum. I have not yet seen these Latvian medals which have been gathered for several decades, but the words of Jānis Mikāns make me think there is hardly a collection of minted medals as complete as this one in any other museum. It would be a shame if it were to be divided and if it were to disappear from the



Fig 3. *Botticelli*, 1978
Jānis Strupulis
Bronze, 43 x 38 mm
Photo: Jānis Strupulis

cultural circles.⁹

The next biggest donation arrived on 27 October 2012 when J. Strupulis presented 54 medals, 30 of which were his own works.¹⁰ Medals by Czech, Russian and Lithuanian authors were also added to the exhibition.

Topics and values of the collection

This year I have begun researching the Dundaga Castle medallic art collection by taking photographs and describing the medals according to the requirements for cataloguing museum items. Firstly, I catalogued the exhibited items which make up a total of 426 pieces. That, however, is not the total number of collected works, as over the years new pieces have been added to the collection, mostly forged medals, which have not yet been incorporated into the exhibition.

Most of the exhibited items of the collection are, of course, pieces by Latvian authors: a total of 32 artists are featured in the exhibition. Thanks to the charisma, enthusiasm and encouragement of J. Strupulis, medals were made not only by sculptors, but also by potters, painters, graphic artists and designers. They do not give a chronological or complete impression of contemporary Latvian medallic art, even though the featured pieces have been created over the period from 1970 to 2023. They do, however, present the viewer with an overview of the diversity of topics, materials and styles of individual artists. Most of them are cast or sculpted medals and plaquettes displaying the creative ideas of artists, interpretations of free topics and the search for new shapes and compositions, also allowing experiments with original, unusual materials. The group of chiselled medals, on the other hand, is mostly comprised by medals given as awards or souvenirs, or made to commemorate something.

To emphasize the prestige of this collection, the opportunity to exhibit internationally renowned pieces of Latvian medallic art should be found. As first of such pieces the triptych *Immortality* (1987) by L. Griķe, cast



Fig 4. *Ita Kozakiewicz*, 2000
Ligita Franckēviča
Bronze, 120 mm
Photo: Vineta Skalberga

in bronze, made its way to Dundaga this summer. The artist received the 'Best medal on the theme «Heaven and Hell»' award for it in XXIII FIDEM 1992.¹¹

The dominating genre in medallic art is portraiture which is historically known for commemorating important people or their creative work. Jānis Strupulis is the leader in this genre, representing people known for their work in literature, art, science or music. For example, the British mathematician, philosopher and engineer Charles Babbage, Persian doctor and philosopher Avicenna, Baltic German natural scientist Theodor Grotthuss, Japanese artist Hiroshige, German poet Johann Wolfgang von Goethe *et al.* Among those exhibited we see also celebrities that have a connection with Italian culture, such as composer Arturo Toscanini, Pope John Paul the Second, writer Dante Alighieri, Renaissance painters Girolamo Romano (Romanino) and Sandro Botticelli. The small *Botticelli* plaquette features an unusual compositional solution for a portrait: on the one hand, it is a realistically captured moment, but on the other it emanates a tangibly lyrical feeling which emphasizes the value of the portrayed person (fig. 3). Strupulis is familiar with portraying Dante. He has done it several times, successfully taking part in Dante Biennials and even receiving the Mantua municipality Gold medal in the 12th Dante Biennial in Ravenna. One of the Biennial medals can also be seen in Dundaga, as well as the medal the author has dedicated to the Dante Alighieri Society in Latvia, of which he is also a member.

A rare example of sunk relief in sculpture is a piece by Ligita Franckēviča, the portrait of *Ita Kozakiewicz*.¹² All attention is centred on the tension in the woman's face, further emphasized by her expressive, thick hair. It symbolically represents the harsh destiny of the politician, as she perishes swimming in the Tyrrhenian Sea near Gaeta. This happened during a visit to Italy she undertook



Fig 5. *Skulpturen Quadrennial Riga*, 1976
Bruno Strautiņš
Bronze, 90 mm
Photo: Vineta Skalberga

in October 1990. Kozakiewicz went to Italy and the Vatican in order to take part in a world-wide conference of Polish societies abroad (fig. 4).

A synergy of art and music flows from the works of Andris Bērziņš: it can be said of his favourite represented characters Beethoven and Kārlis Frīdrihs Amenda, a close friend of the composer.¹³ They are presented together on the medal *Amenda and Beethoven in Vienna*. Baiba Šime in turn, in one of her earliest works *Marilyn*, featuring a very pictorial patina, has represented the world-famous actress and model Marilyn Monroe.

Often the artist J. Strupulis created medals for various award ceremonies, three of which are featured in the collection: the award of *Margarita Stāraste*, a famous children's book illustrator,¹⁴ the award of radio astronomer *Arturs Balklavs*¹⁵ (2008) and the award of Baltic German lawyer *Dr. Dietrich Loeber*¹⁶ (2009). The front sides of these medals feature the faces of these people made in classical style. The portraits and the rhythmically set letter fonts create a harmonious work of art.

Some of the exhibited works have already gained culturally historical significance: these are the works dedicated to events promoting sculptural creativity. Amongst them is the work of Vija Mikāne created for the IV International Symposium in the Slovakian town of Kremnitz (1994), as well as a medal/award of Bruno Strautiņš for the Sculpture Quadrennial in Riga (1976) (fig. 5). B. Strautiņš could be named as one of the greatest interpreters in creating form and coming forth with original ideas, and also as a master of the language of image semantics. The collection features a medal he dedicated to his teacher Emīls Melderis, a lecturer at the Sculpture Department of the Latvian Art Academy, who supervised his graduation work. The uniting elements in both their creative work are



Fig 6. *Rye bread*, 2005
(from the cycle *Trades in Dundaga and Livonian villages in the 1930s*)
Velga Eizenberga
Terracotta, 85 mm
Photo: Vineta Skalberga

a constructive shape formation and solid tectonics.

The portrayal of domestic episodes is also worth mentioning. Velga Eizenberga has created a collection of works, *Trades in Dundaga and Livonian villages* (2005), consisting of 11 medals in which she represents everyday activities that were once very familiar: baking bread, fermenting cabbage, catching and smoking fish, tarring boats. Nowadays these activities are little known or have fully disappeared from our lives, for example, rye sheaving, depicted in one of the plaquettes, is no longer done (fig. 6).

An excellent example of the animalism genre is J. Strupulis' series *Eastern calendar* in terracotta (1990–2008), where animal character portraits are exquisitely depicted in low relief.

After the exhibition *Sun in ex libris and medals* which took place in the Sun Museum in Riga in 2012, several artists donated associatively figurative works about the image of sun, symbol of eternal movement and all life. *The sun tree* (2006) by M. Kalniņa, *The gait of the sun* (2009) by V. Dzintare, *Sun sign* (2007) by N. Skujeniece and *Hot summer day I, II* (2003) by A. Urtāne reflect the power of the sun, the warmth it gives to plants and the joy of existence and inspiration it gives to people.

The dominating material in the exhibition is bronze. Silver, steel, terracotta, tombac, stone and wood feature less frequently. Anatolijs Vasiļjevs has used an unusual material for medallion art: he has created a triptych *Captain, sailor and ship owner* (2005) using polystyrene which is light but firm and is the most widely used type of plastic. The only plaquette made in mahogany, *Worshippers of stupidity* (2003), is the creation of Zigurds Galūns and can be considered a rarity, as there is only one of it!

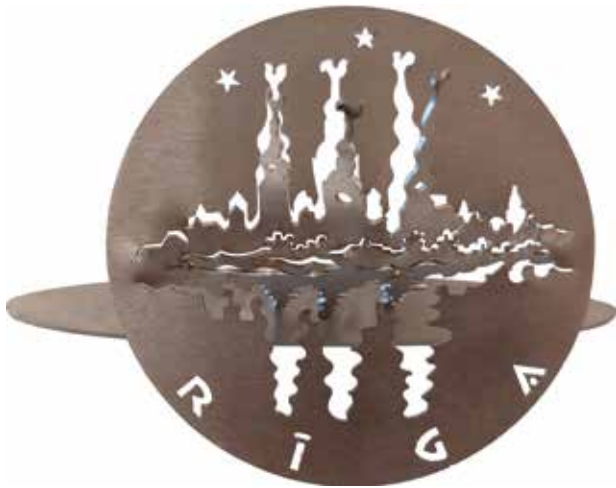


Fig 7. *Reflections of Riga*, 2010
Ģirts Burvis
Stainless steel, 126 x 85 mm
Photo: Vineta Skalberga

Exquisite compositional solutions in steel are created by Ģirts Burvis who is used to working with this material and usually makes monumental pieces. He uses miniatures to show off the great technological qualities of steel, as well as its plasticity which allows one to produce the necessary shapes in constructions of various sizes using the cutting method, which the author calls origami in metal. *Reflections of Riga* (2010) shows the traditional view of the city dominated by old church towers, as seen from river Daugava (fig. 7).

The array of medals chiselled in brass, cupronickel and copper, the authors of which are the engravers Juris Egle, Kārlis Grundmanis and Jānis Mikāns, mostly shows dedications to anniversaries of architectonic buildings or important sports competitions in Riga (world championships in ice-hockey, a chess tournament), as well as various societies, for example, *Lilium Balticum*, a society uniting growers, collectors and breeders of lilies. The collection includes works by J. Mikāns dedicated to sports: *Athleticism*, *Sumo fighters*, and also the double-sided medal *The Baltic Swimming Championship* (1988), one side of which shows a fantastic water creature, a mermaid playing a harp, and the other shows figures of half-naked young people holding hands, symbolizing a friendly competition among the swimmers of the three countries (fig. 8).

The permanent exhibition also features medals from the Netherlands, Belgium, Georgia, Uzbekistan, Denmark, Sweden, Hungary, Estonia, Lithuania, Romania, Czechia, the USA, Italy, Bulgaria, France, Finland, Russia, Poland, Japan, Portugal, Austria, Germany, Slovakia and the Republic of South Africa. Foreign pieces have been placed in glass cases in the central part of the exhibition hall. Researching the foreign pieces has proved to be



Fig 8. *Baltic Swimming Championship*, 1988
Jānis Mikāns
Copper, 60 mm
Photo: Vineta Skalberga

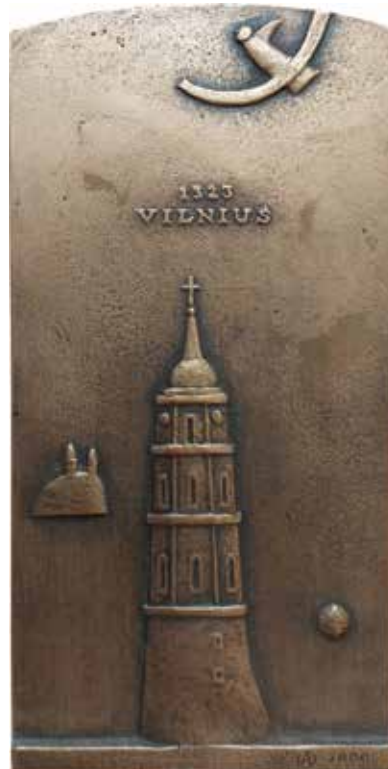


Fig 9. *Vilnius 1323*, 2000
Antanas Olbutas
Bronze, 78 x 156 mm
Photo: Vineta Skalberga

more difficult, as the authors of the works or the subjects featured in them are not known. Some I have managed to decipher and I will continue to try and find out more about the rest of them as well, in order to diminish the number of unknown elements. The artistic quality of the foreign exhibits varies: the collection features both high-quality works of art and run items made for sporting events, social organizations or communities and musical events, for example, the cast medal in white metal for a musical chapel event in Loreto made by Edgardo Mugnoz (1993).¹⁷

The most frequent topics are the documentation of an event or an important building which have created an emotional experience for the artist.

Strong traditions and professionalism in representing historic events are shown by Lithuanian Skaiste Jūrate Žiliene in her medal to commemorate the 600th anniversary of the Battle of Grunwald (2010).¹⁸ It features the portraits of cousins and governors Vytautas the Great, ruler of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, and Polish king Władysław II



Fig 10. *Sá de Miranda*, 1981
José Pedro Croft
Bronze, 80 mm
Photo: Vineta Skalberga



Fig 11. *Ali-Shir Nava'i*, c. 1980
Saidialim Scharipov
Terracotta, 85 mm
Photo: Vineta Skalberga

Jagiello, as well as a fragment of victory over the German forces in the 1410 battle.

Documentation of architectural buildings can be seen both in the terracotta medal by Lithuanian artist Tamāra Janova featuring the Gothic pearl that is the church of St Anna, and in Vilnius as depicted by the famous art historian and artist Antanas Olbutas, a patriot of the city. He marks the year 1323 when the Lithuanian capital was first mentioned in written sources. Vilnius celebrates its 700th anniversary in 2023. The laconic composition of the plaquette features symbols of the city: the tower of Vilnius Cathedral and Mount Gediminas (fig. 9).

The works of this collection show the interest various artists take in celebrities of previous centuries, for example, the medal *Sá de Miranda* (1981), by the Portuguese sculptor José Pedro Croft, to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the poet.¹⁹ A graphic frame featuring a sketched circle and square holds the silhouette of the poet. It is a great example proving that conditionality and minimalistic techniques can create an idea of the character's look without showing their facial features, as is usual (fig. 10). The singular writer *Franz Kafka*²⁰ has been depicted by



Fig 12. *Hans Christian Andersen*, 2005
Bent Jensen
Bronze, 95 mm
Photo: Vineta Skalberga

Stanislav Nechvolodoff, an artist residing in Estonia. The front of the double-sided plaquette (1993) features a youngish looking writer which emphasizes his large eyes full of wonder, whereas on the back one can recognize the house on Golden Lane in Prague where the writer lived during his youth.

An example of classic medal art is the double-sided medal by artist Masjutin. The medal is dedicated to *Roxelana*,²¹ wife of the Ottoman Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent. She was a beauty of Ukrainian origin and became an influential person in Islamic history. The obverse features her portrait in profile, whereas the reverse shows her being captured as a girl.

Representing the exotic East in the collection are the terracotta plaquettes *Ali-Shir Nava'i*²² and *The Poetry*



Fig 13. *Oscar Bonnevalle*, 1988
Paul Huybrechts
Bronze, 35 mm
Photo: Vineta Skalberga



Fig 14. *David and Goliath. An ageless symbol of heroic youth triumphing over the forces of evil*, 1970s
(medal from series *The Genius of Michelangelo*)
Pietro Monassi
Silver, 44 mm
Photo: Vineta Skalberga

of *Ali-Shir Nava'i* (1980) by the Uzbek artist Shaidialim Sharipov. These were given to J. Strupulis by the artist himself as a present of friendship at the beginning of the 1980s, when a Latvian medal artist exhibition was organized in Tashkent (fig. 11).

Dundaga can be proud to have a rare medal by of Bent Jensen dedicated to the 200th anniversary of *Hans Christian Andersen*, of which there are only ten copies. The front side features an expressive, realistic profile of the fairytale writer, and for the back the artist has chosen one of Andersen's paper clips (fig. 12).²³

From the chiselled medals Alice Gallaoy, Julia Tulkens, General J. A. van der Meersch by the Belgian artist Paul Huybrechts, I would like to note medal for famous personality Oscar Bonnevalle,²⁴ who was also designer of stamps (fig. 13).

Often medal artists recreate fragments of other famous artworks, as can be seen in the medal series by Pietro Monassi (USA), in which he uses fragments of Michelangelo's frescoes in the Sistine Chapel as basis for his own art. The collection features two medals of this series: *The creation of Adam* and *David and Goliath* (fig. 14).

The first Dundaga Medallistic Art Symposium

Fifteen years have passed since the collection was created and a lot has changed in those years: both officials in the local municipality and the attitude of the local inhabitants have changed, and the initial enthusiasm of medal artists has subsided. Dundaga is located far from bigger cities



Fig 15. *Dundaga Castle*, 2023
(medal dedicated to Symposium of Medallistic Art 2023)
Ligita Franckēviča
Clay, 90 x 82 mm
Photo: Vineta Skalberga

and visitors mostly see the castle's exhibitions during the tourism season. Looking for information on Dundaga Castle on the Internet, the possibility of seeing medals is mentioned very briefly.

Still, donations alone are not enough to create a good museum of medallistic art. This has led to a need for a change in the exhibition, regarding both its content and concept. In order to maintain the topicality of contemporary medallistic art, symposiums must be organized in order to promote the creation of new pieces and preserve the succession of traditions.

The first Medallistic Art Symposium took place in Dundaga from 21 to 26 August 2023. The creative mind behind this event was Jānis Strupulis. Nine artists took part in the symposium, namely Jānis Mikāns, Aivars Riekstiņš, Ģirts Burvis, Edgars Grīnfelds, Līva Breģe, Laimdota Griķe, Arta Dumpe, Vija Dzintare, as well as the director of the symposium, an experienced participant of many international medallistic art workshops Ligita Franckēviča. Most of the works were created in clay right at the castle in the sculpting workshop of the local art school. E. Grīnfelds was incredibly productive during this short period, and his work also featured a very topical theme, the war in Ukraine, representing the liberation of Bakhmut and Kherson. After a 14 year break L. Griķe returned to sculpting. She created the profile of Latvian nonconformist Lidija Doroņina-Lasmane in the bas-relief technique. The youngest participant L. Breģe made

impressions of exquisite flowers in clay and dedicated a medal to her cat. Lately owls have been a favourite topic for L. Franckēviča. Her creation featuring *Dundaga Castle* will definitely be part of the collection as testimony to the first medallic art symposium which took place here (fig. 15). Even though the older sculptors V. Dzintare and A. Dumpe did not create on the spot at the castle, they sent in their newest medals for a common express exhibition. Sculptors Ģ. Burvis and J. Mikāns, as well as jeweller A. Riekstiņš chose stone as their material and worked in the craftsmen's workshop and the yard of the castle, using stone pebbles to create motifs and strokes characteristic to their respective art.

The symposium will be marked by more than just the initials of the participants engraved in the cobblestones of the castle yard: an addition of medals created by the participants to the permanent exhibition will also bear witness to the event. This symposium is an extremely important event giving hope for a future development of contemporary Latvian medallic art and the possibility of foreign colleagues taking part in future symposiums. Hopefully the next medallic art symposium in Dundaga gains more international recognition! Thus, the collection of foreign medallic art would acquire newer items emphasizing the topicality of contemporary art.

NOTES

1. Pastāvīgā medaļu izstāde [Permanent medal exhibition], *Dundadžnieks*, no. 5(74), May 2008, p. 4.

2. List of medals donated by J. Strupulis in May 2009. Private archive of J. Strupulis.

3. Donation acceptance certificate, 15 May 2010. Private archive of J. Strupulis.

4. Strupulis, J.: [Third medal collection donated to Dundaga Castle], Supplement of *Kultūras Forums*, *La Māsa*, no. 55, 28 May 2010.

5. Juris Bārs (also known as Georg Heinrich Baar, 1808–1879), doctor, poet, first Latvian linguist. Studied astronomy at the University of Tartu, graduated the Faculty of Medicine in 1842. Worked as a doctor in Dundaga from 1844 to 1855. The changes in Latvian spelling he suggested in 1847 are the basis of modern Latvian orthography.

6. Ernests Dinsbergs (also Ernests Dinsberģis, 1816–1902), schoolmaster, writer, poet, publicist. Author, compiler and translator of various types of books, dealt with all types of literature and a selected branches of science (Ethnography, History, Geography, Poetics).

7. Jānis Princis (Jānis Princis the Eldest, Princjānis – Prints in Livonian –, 1796–1868), keeper of Livonian culture, poet, translator. Self-educated.

8. Kalvis: a goldsmiths' workshop in Riga, founded in 1993 by J. Mikāns. They made various awards, for example, medals for the World Championship in Ice-Hockey and the highest state award, the Order of Lāčplēsis, from 1994 to 2005. The workshop closed in 2017.

9. J. Strupulis' letter to Baiba Dūda on 25 June 2011. Private archive of J. Strupulis.

10. J. Strupulis sent a list of medals he donated to A. Pūliņa on 29 October 2012. Private archive of J. Strupulis.

11. See *Médailles*, 1993, p. 111.

12. Ita Maria Kozakiewicz (1955–1990), Latvian-Polish philologist, journalist, translator and social activist, an active member of the board of the Popular Front of Latvia (1989), member of the Supreme Council of Latvia. Elected by the people as 'Woman in Latvia 90'. Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga, ex-president of Latvia called her the 'symbol of Latvian freedom and independence.' A polyglot, she knew Latvian, Russian, Polish, French, Spanish, German, Byelorussian, Ukrainian and Georgian.

13. Carl Friedrich/Ferdinand Amenda (1771–1836), violinist and priest at Talsi parish.

14. The medal *Margarita Stārase* was created in 2010 and is awarded every year on 2 February, the birthday of the artist and writer. The award is supported by Carl Foundation and the Santa Claus office in Ziemepe. The medal is an appreciation of a contribution in promoting children's kindness and generosity, helping solve children's problems, patronage and active work for the good of children.

15. Arturs Balklavs Grīnhofs (Arturs Balklavs until 1993; 1933–2005), Latvian radioastronomer, promoter of science, second director of the Radioastrophysics Observatory of the Latvian Academy of Sciences (1969–1997), first director of the Astronomy Institute of the University of Latvia (1997–2005), and second editor-in-chief of the popular scientific journal *Zvaigžņotā Debess* (1969–2005). The Balklavs award is given for great success in promoting science.

16. Dietrich André Loeber (1923–2004), lawyer, expert in rights, political scientist, historian, professor at the University of Kiel (1966–1989), foreign member of the Latvian Academy of Sciences. One of the initiators in starting the Latvian-Baltic German cultural centre *Domus Rigensis*.

17. The medal was donated to the collection by Oskars Jumtiņš in 2011 as the work of an unknown artist.

18. The medal is featured in the 5th list of donations made on 27 October 2012. Private archive of J. Strupulis.

19. Francisco de Sá de Miranda (1481–1558) was a Portuguese poet of the Renaissance. He introduced the sonnet, the elegy, the eclogue, the ottava rima and other classical poetic forms, adapting the Portuguese language. This medal was exhibited at the FIDEM 1983 in Florence (see catalogue *XIX Congresso FIDEM, Firenze 1983, esposizione internazionale di medaglie contemporanee*, Florence, 1983, p. 297, no. 1383).

20. Franz Kafka (1883–1924), a Bohemian writer of Jewish origin who wrote in German, one of the most important modernist writers.

21. Roxelana (~1500–1558) became one of the most powerful and significant women in the Ottoman history, as well as a person creating conflicting opinions in the Age of the Sultanate of Women.

22. Ali-Shir Nava'i (1441–1501), also known as Nizām-al-Din 'Ali-Shir Herawī, a Timurid poet, writer, statesman, linguist, painter.

23. H. C. Andersen medalje fra 2005 udgivet i anledning af HCA's 200 års fødselsdag, https://www.hcandersen-homepage.dk/?page_id=36420 [accessed 7.11.2023].

24. Oscar Bonnevalle (1920–1993), Belgian painter, draftsman, watercolorist, illustrator, designer of theater sets in Ghent, inspired in Flemish folklore and history.