



WORKSHOP OF ARCHITECTURE
STUDENTS '24

starlarch

03-06 09 2024



Introduction

The architect should have a good understanding of the plot features and its context in order to create meaningful relationships between the new building and the environment. Therefore, the aim of the "starTarch" - Architecture student workshop'24 was to explore the context and understand the spirit of the plot near Nemunas River in Petrašiūnai neighbourhood.



This year's assignment was unusual for architecture students. For analysis, students had to use their senses, i.e. during the visit to the territory, to hear the sounds, feel the textures, and see the connection between a human and nature. Usually, architecture students learn to analyse the territory from drawings, maps, historical facts or plans, and this time, by

photographing, filming, scanning, and recording sounds, an attempt was made to understand what is most important in this territory; what elements can become significant when integrating the territory into the urban fabric; how to maintain a balance between the natural and human influences. Also, unlike during the semester, when students mainly work individually on their own projects, during the workshop, students worked in mixed groups (formed from 2-4 study years students). This helps them share experiences, learn to cooperate, search for common solutions, find friends among older or younger colleagues and acquire new skills (for example, this year - video editing).



This year's workshop "starTarch" joined the theme of the **Lithuanian Pavilion 2025 for the Venice Biennale of Architecture - Tree / Architecture**. According to Gintaras Balčytis, architect, KTU professor, and curator of the Lithuanian Pavilion, such a theme was chosen due to its local and global relevance: the ongoing climate changes, the need to encourage the adoption of environmentally friendly and greener decisions, the problem of preserving the local spirit.



The Architecture students' workshop is the result of cooperation with the French Institute in Lithuania. Like last year, this year's workshop was led by French architects Colin Reynier (DATA architectes) and Mike Fritsch (l'AUC). Colin Reynier also teaches at the ENSA Paris-Malaquais School of Architecture, and Mike Fritsch is one of the curators of the Luxembourg Pavilion at the Venice Architecture Biennale 2025. The analysis methodology chosen for the workshop by the tutors perfectly reflected this year's workshop theme, helped students to feel the place and prepared for designing the new building during the autumn semester of 2024.



6 Information about the Plot

The selected plot is located in Kaunas City Municipality, Petrašiūnai eldership, Petrašiūnai micro-district. The Petrašiūnai eldership comprises four micro-districts - Petrašiūnai, Palemonas, Amaliai and Naujasodis. It is the largest in terms of area of all Kaunas city elderships and covers an area of 28.46 km². The population of the eldership is over 13000 inhabitants. The plot is located in the heterogeneous Petrašiūnai micro-district, which is rich in natural and cultural heritage objects, has a unique landscape, a connection to the Kaunas Lagoon, engineering objects - the Kaunas hydroelectric power plant, many industrial objects and residential buildings. Until the 19th century, the territory of Petrašiūnai developed gradually, with the railway line between Amaliai and Petrašiūnai at the end of the 19th century and the construction of the Kaunas Hydro Power Plant in 1954 providing a big boost to its development. Along with the railway, industrial areas began to grow in Petrašiūnai. At the beginning of the 20th century, there were many different factories: the glass factory "Stiklas", later "Elnias", the "Bitukas" brick factory, and a paper factory. In 1930, the Petrašiūnai Thermal Power Plant was built. Residential buildings for workers were built next to the factories. This led to the development of the area during the Soviet era when Petrašiūnai was shaped as an industrial district with residential buildings next to the factories and plants.



8 Information about the Plot

The plot is bounded from the west by the largest river in Lithuania - Nemunas, in the southern part of the territory - a stream, in the eastern part of the territory - a former/ existing industrial territory and a base for technical sports with an area of 600 m², in the north - an object of cultural heritage - a place of remembrance of the victims of the Holocaust. A little to the south of the selected territory, the Nemunas River is dammed by the Kaunas Hydro Power Plant of the name of A. Brazauskas, built in 1959 forms the Lagoon of Kaunas. Behind the Kaunas Hydro Power Plant is the Kaunas Lagoon Regional Park (included in Natura 2000 sites), and the site itself falls within the Kaunas Ornithological Reserve, which was established in 1988 and covers an area of 63 ha. The Reserve protects the wintering sites of waterbirds located in the lower reaches of the Kaunas Hydro Power Plant dam. In recent years, about 5000 waterbirds have wintered in the reserve. In this context, the site is of interest not only to naturalists and scientists but also to visitors who like to observe wildlife and birds.

The area is quite natural and undeveloped, dominated by mixed wetland riparian vegetation (willow, alder, maple, etc.). Pine, birch and ruderal communities and plant species are also found in the higher parts of the terrain. In terms of vegetation quality, the recreational potential of this green area at this moment is not high but it is of great ecological importance as a stabilising habitat at the local level.

The territory is crossed by a channelised stream. The area is used by fishermen, who have built some temporary facilities: they have fenced-off fireplaces, set up resting and set up resting and sitting areas, and there are paths leading along and towards the Nemunas River.











Project name:

CONTRAST

Team name:

BALANCE



Team members:

Akvilė Deveikytė, Kamilė Ožalaitė, Andrė Ožečkauskaitė,
Gerda Marija Petraškaityė, Roberta Rudminaitė



Industry often clashes with nature, and the contrast between these two forces is evident at a simple glance. The short film is set in Petrašiūnai, Kaunas, and seeks to highlight this contrast by focusing on strong opposing concepts, such as “black and white,” which often correspond with the theme of “good and bad.” On a surface level, nature is portrayed as entirely “good” and perfect, full of vibrant colours, while human-made industry is depicted as “bad”—colourless, dull, and damaging to the planet as if it has no redeeming qualities.

The film aims to evoke emotion and provoke thought in the viewer. It begins with highly saturated nature imagery contrasted with colourless industrial imagery shown one after the other. This technique creates a much stronger sense than the human eye typically grasps. As the film progresses, the scenes start to change saturation, turning what is perceived as “good” into “bad,” and vice versa, with an explanation of how one thing can be comprehended as both positive and negative at the same time. This quick alternation between colours is intended to make the viewer question their perception of what is being shown. The culmination of the movie shows some new scenes mixed with the very first ones, while the saturation of all scenes seems to blend into the same level. Eventually, the viewer is directly told, “Life is not always black and white. Together, order and chaos create a balance between two worlds.” The underlying idea and symbolism suggest that many things, whether industrialism or nature, possess both beneficial and harmful qualities. The expectation is that the viewer will look beyond the stark contrast in the beginning and recognise that grey areas exist in all things. “Good” and “bad” are merely matters of perspective. The movie encourages the viewer to draw their own conclusions about the balance of life and to consider whether the contrast between experiences truly exists at all.









Notes



Project name:

PATHS

Team name:

ŠILELIS



Team members:

Lidija Bagdonaitė, Lukrecija Jankauskaitė, Gustė Janušauskaitė,
Ugnė Stonkutė, Kamilė Šiupšinskaitė



Petrašiūnai is a district crossed by a railway, surrounded by the river, and near the roadway to the capital. The video "Paths" expands the idea of Petrašiūnai having distinct paths in its small area near the shore of Nemunas. We roamed the place and encountered numerous trails. All were distinct in function, materials, dimensions, users, surroundings, and destinations. We examined the feelings, senses, and sounds of each path, focusing on the crackling, crumbling noises of the surfaces and the chirping, howling, and splashing that we could hear while walking, engaging with sandy, stony, gravelly, and grassy textures of trails, sensing the ambience, observing the view and various treasures of various colours the paths offered. We pondered who could be using the trails while observing the footprints of vehicles and humans and picturing small mammals that could have made the narrow glass paths. We determined that paths there may be a way to have fun, traverse the wooded meadow, do sightseeing, find places to relax, and feel nature. All to try and understand the character of the shore of Petrašiūnai, imagine the life happening here behind the scenes and unfold its identity.









Notes



Project name:

COLOUR SHIFT

Team name:

TREEHAUS



Team members:

Ieva Dantė, Darya Maniuk, Dmytro Oleksienko,
Barbora Placková, Pavol Turza



Project Description

Our project is dedicated to the study and demonstration of the diversity of colour shades in the environment, aimed at paying public attention to how diverse and picturesque the world around us is. We explored the design site, discovering nature's spectrum of bright colours, which is not limited to the usual green and brown shades.

Research

During our work, we visited several locations in the study area and collected data on colours and shades found in nature. The analysis showed, that in addition to the usual green shades, the following groups of colours can be found in the natural environment:

Red shades: found not only in berries and flowers, but also in soil, leaves in autumn, and in rust on objects left by previous inhabitants.

Yellow shades: sunlight reflecting off objects or the yellow shades of certain types of moss and lichen on stones.

Blue and light blue shades: can be found not only in the sky and water but also in unexpected places, such as the surface of certain stones or man-made objects.

Violet shades: rare, but can be found in flowers or in unusual natural patterns, such as traces of metals in the soil.

Black and grey shades: often present as shadows but also found in stones, old trees, and charcoal traces from previous open fireplaces.





Goal of the work

The main goal of the work is to show a wide audience that even though the environment is very uniform in colour when looking at it from afar, it is, in fact, very bright and varied in colour. The project aims to:

Raise visual awareness — help people see more than the usual shades of green and draw attention to the smallest of details, in order to find the entire colour spectrum.

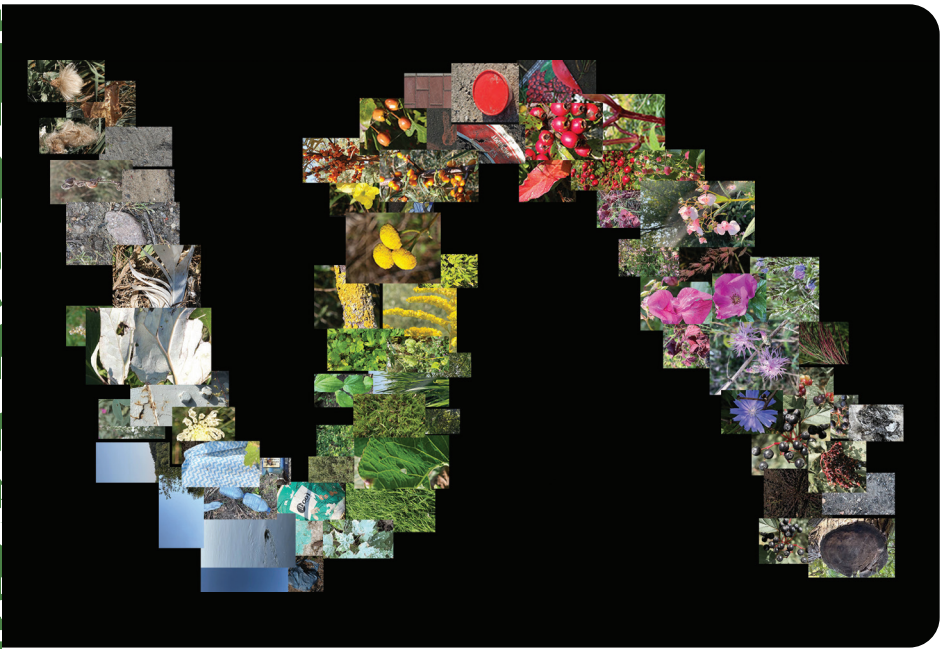
Environmental education — draw attention to the importance of interaction with the environment in a safe and mannered fashion, in order to preserve its uniqueness and picturesqueness.

Formation of artistic perception of the world — show, that in nature you can in fact find all the colours, that we are used to seeing in art and thus inspire a new artistic perception of the environment around us.

Conclusion

Our work aims to rethink how we view nature, expand the horizon of perception and show that our surroundings are not only green but also a huge range of shades that can be found everywhere. The project emphasises the importance of observation, the ability to see beauty in small things and a reminder that nature is an inexhaustible source of inspiration and admiration.









Notes



Project name:

NATURE

Team name:

SCOUTS



Team members:

Orinta Aleknaite, Miglė Brazdžionytė, Emilija Čepinskaitė,
Emilija Karaseva, Meda Masaitytė, Ignas Miseičius



Nature, like humans, has its own distinct personality—wild and untamed, yet nurturing and full of life. This captivating blend of characteristics serves as a reminder to appreciate and protect its remarkable beauty. We aim to highlight “nature extraordinaire” and its elements in one specific location: the wilderness area in Kaunas, Petrašiūnai.

This area is full of natural and cultural heritage. Its unique landscape invites us to explore its intricate details, offering a perfect opportunity to reflect on the richness and power of nature. Here, the wilderness converges with the nearby Kaunas Lagoon, creating a harmonious blend of water and woodland that adds another layer of depth to the area's beauty. The connection between the land and water not only shapes the physical terrain but also forms a vital ecosystem that supports an array of wildlife.

One of the most significant features of this region is its role as a wintering ground for birds, such as grey heron, common chiffchaff, Eurasian treecreeper, common kingfisher, hooded crow, European starling, grey wagtail. Among these birds are some that are listed in the Lithuanian Red Book, emphasizing their rarity and the importance of conservation efforts. Each of these species contributes to the extraordinary natural tapestry of Petrašiūnai, showcasing the area's ecological importance.

Yet, it's not just the birds that make this place extraordinary. The forest floor is teeming with life, from bugs and critters to fungi and mosses, all playing their part in the grand design of the ecosystem. Every creature, no matter how small, adds to the vibrancy and complexity of this wilderness.



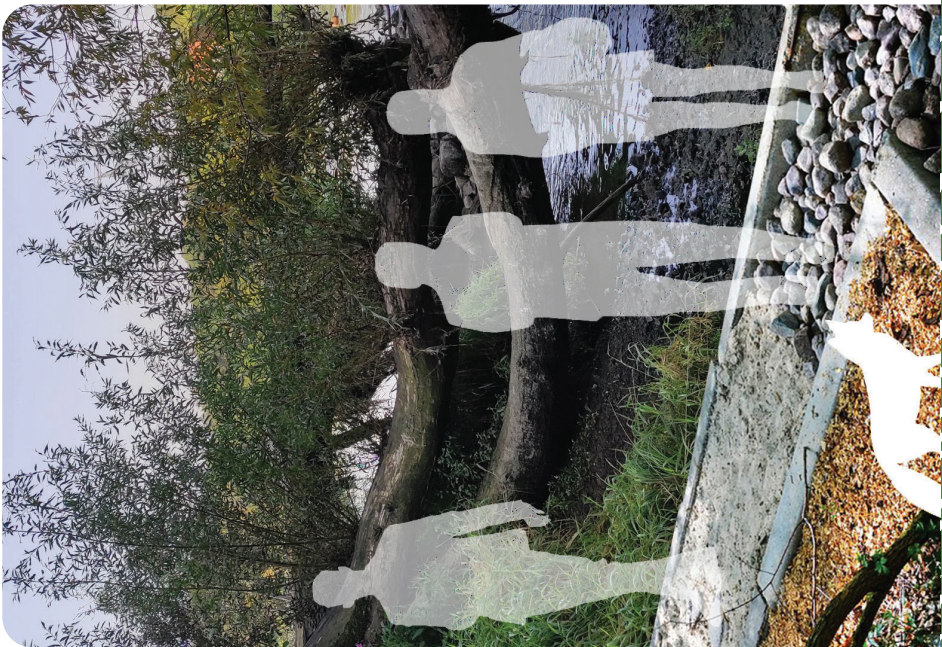


Nature here is not only awe-inspiring but also playful, with trees forming intricate, sometimes whimsical structures that make you pause and reflect on the inherent creativity of the natural world. In some instances, these trees seem to take on personalities of their own, bending and twisting in ways that seem almost human, inviting us to embrace the fun and spontaneity of nature. In essence, this project seeks to capture the “extraordinaire” in the sights, sounds, and smells of Petrašiūnai’s wilderness. By immersing ourselves in this landscape, we aim to shed light on the delicate balance between the wild and the serene, the small and the grand, and the interconnectedness of all living things.











Notes



Project name:

SILVER LINING

Team name:

UTOPIJA



Team members:

Viltė Ažukai, Ugnė Bačinskaitė, Ernesta Gėgžnaitė,
Juras Jurgelionis, Nedas Lynykas, Goda Narkutė



Silver Lining by Utopija

On the morning of the 4th of September, our huge group of architecture students went to quite an empty and naturally beautiful place near the Nemunas River. The site is located in Petrašiūnai municipality. The space is undoubtedly impacted by a hydroelectric power plant nearby. It led to catching the attention of fishermen by creating a perfect environment for various types of fish to pass by. While they spent time fishing there, we can say they adjusted and used nature even a little bit for themselves. While our team Utopia consisting of students with diverse experience in the architecture field was visiting the site, we saw several campsites and fireplaces of those fishermen. To have a better understanding of the surroundings and objects of the place, we took videos, and photos, recorded the sound and for the first time used a 3D scanning tool. Walking through those desire paths which are trampled by fishermen coming to the river and going back home helped us to come up with the idea of our video. Our group decided to use clips of paths as transitions. Wandering around in this tiny forest between bushes and naturally growing herbs, where nature growing freely makes it as wonderful as it is, we had an amazing opportunity to explore the site which provided us with a lot of food for thought for our future project ideas.









Notes



Project name:

**RETURN TO
NEMUNAS**

Team name:

SMOG+H



Team members:

Gunavarthan Ramesh, Mylana Titovska, Ogulcan Eryigit,
Supragaya Pandey, Suthan Harish

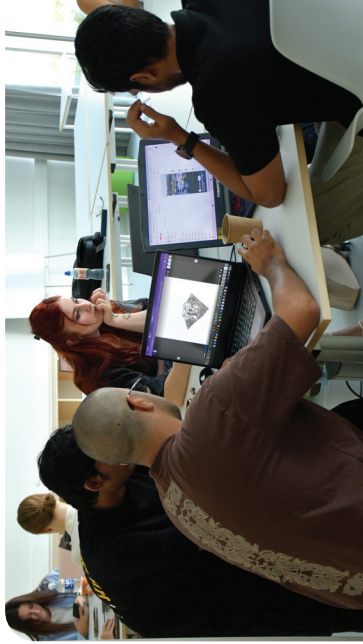


Return to Nemunas by Smog+H

Kaunas buzzed with chaos—car horns and hurried footsteps filled the city. Seeking escape, the fisherman headed to the serene banks of the Nemunas River in Petrašiūnai. The morning sun bathed the area in a golden glow, where the grass swayed gently and ducklings followed their mother across the water. Swans glided gracefully, and the occasional splash of a fish broke the calm.

The fisherman set up by the fishing dock and, using stones and wood, built a small fireplace near the riverbank. As the fire crackled, he cooked his lunch, savouring the peace. By sunset, he carefully extinguished the fire and packed up his gear. Every wrapper, bottle, and piece of fishing line was collected, and even the fireplace was dismantled, leaving no trace.

Feeling fulfilled, the fisherman left the riverbank pristine, knowing he'd return to this tranquil haven. The ducks and swans continued their serene existence, undisturbed by human presence.







52 Return to Nemunas by Smog+H



Notes



Project name:

THE GROWTH

Team name:

ALPINISTS



Team members:

Livija Balsytė, Kornelija Brazytė, Edgaras Cegelskas, Aleksandra Gaidamavičiūtė, Ugnė Girkontaitė, Toma Mockutė



The Growth by Alpinists

Our short film invites viewers on a journey through a vibrant ecosystem, where we walk through and inspect the surrounding nature. The camera captures a rich variety of vegetation, from the tiniest sprouts clinging to the ground to the trees that define the skyline. We begin with the smallest plants—moss and delicate grass blades—who symbolise near silence, their sounds are almost unnoticeable, blending seamlessly into the forest. As we continue our exploration, the scene gradually transitions to larger flora. Small shrubs and young saplings come into view, their leaves rustling faintly in the gentle breeze. Each step forward reveals the progression of life, sorting the vegetation by size and age, showcasing how even the smallest organisms contribute to the overall vitality of the environment.

The film pieces together the big picture of the site's ecosystem, highlighting the diverse tapestry of life that shapes the atmosphere. With every new layer of growth, the sounds evolve—the quiet patter of leaves, the occasional chirp of insects. The soundscape grows richer and fuller, mirroring the increasing complexity of the plants themselves.

Finally, we arrive at the largest and oldest members of this living community: the trees. Their tall trunks and moving branches command attention, their sounds no longer whispers but robust voices in the wind. Leaves rustle loudly, branches creak, and the wind whistles through the canopy, creating a symphony of nature that fills the air. The video culminates with these giants, whose presence and sound define the essence of the ecosystem.





Through this journey, the film reveals the connected ecosystem, illustrating how each element—from the smallest, quietest plants to the biggest, loudest trees - plays a crucial role in shaping the atmosphere. It's a visual and auditory exploration that captures the beauty, diversity, and harmony of nature, offering viewers a deeper appreciation of the environment around them.





58 The Growth by Alpinists







Notes



Project name:

HUMAN NATURE

Team name:

TREE OF LIFE



Team members:

Faustas Rugys, Artūras Karasiovas, Aistė Simonavičiūtė,
Austėja Diliūtė, Evelina Junevičiūtė, Gabija Kuzmickaitė



Human Nature by Tree of Life

Nature plays an essential and irreplaceable role in human life, offering countless pleasures and resources. It serves as a shelter from the hustle of daily life, providing peace and a deep sense of connection to the world around us. However, despite the undeniable benefits we receive from nature, many people continue to disregard the impact of their actions on the environment. Too often, we take nature for granted, failing to recognise the harm we inflict on it.

One striking example of this can be found in a hidden nook located in the Petrašiūnai district. This place has incredible potential to be a beautiful, serene spot for people to enjoy. With its lush greenery and peaceful surroundings, it could easily become a popular destination for nature lovers and families. Sadly, it has become an abandoned and neglected area. The only regular visitors nowadays are fishermen and a few solitary wanderers, who come from time to time.

However, rather than respecting this hidden gem, they leave behind piles of trash that mar the landscape. Upon our team's arrival at this site, we were immediately greeted by the sight of discarded clothes, bottles, plastic bags, and other garbage thrown into the bushes.

As we ventured further along the trail, the situation did not improve. Though some of the litter was more subtly hidden among the trees and grass, we still encountered cans, candy wrappers, and various other "treasures". The contrast between the natural beauty of the site and the mountain of waste was disheartening, reminding us of the negative impact humans can have on even the most pristine places.

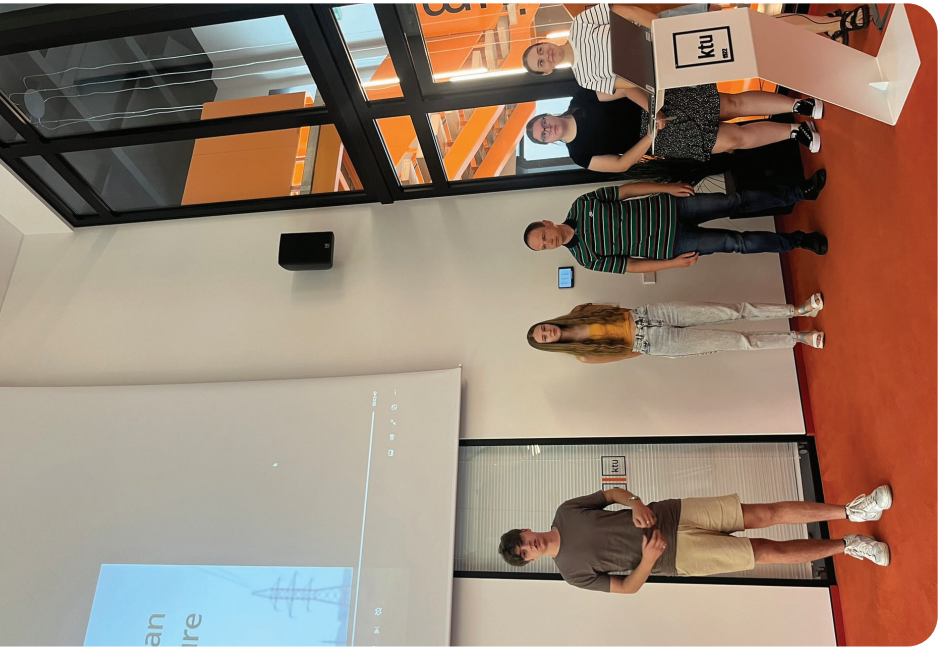




The jarring contrast between the trash and the site's beauty inspired our team to take action. We decided to create a short film about human nature. In our film, we focused on the scraps left behind by careless visitors. However, we also highlighted how nature should look and feel—pure and harmonious. By showing both the current state of the location and what it should be, we hoped to raise awareness about the importance of preserving our natural spaces. Our goal with the film was not only to document the damage but also to spark conversations about how we can protect and restore nature. Through this project, we hope to inspire others to take responsibility for their actions and to treat the environment with the respect and care it deserves.











Notes



Project name:

**COAST OF
NEMUNAS**

Team name:

**GAMOS
JUOSTA**



Team members:

Alina Zerr, Augustina Lapinskaitė, Domantė Blažaitytė,
Meda Gelažiūtė, Rytis Sakalauskas, Rusnė Apolonskytė



Coast of Nemunas by Gamtos juosta

Kaunas is infamous for the rivers Neris and Nemunas that flow through it. Although these rivers flow through Kaunas and some of the riversides are dense with infrastructure and urban life, there are several locations where the riverside features only mild human intervention.

One specific example is the coast of Nemunas in Petrašiūnai. While exploring this territory, it was apparent that it is incredibly rich in biodiversity and featured human activity that depicted a perfect balance between humans and nature. This showed us that in this location people, animals and plants coexist with each other. Fascinated by this observation, we were inspired to create a short film emphasizing the harmony here.

The film begins by showing the contrast between densely populated urban areas and then showing territories with little to no human intervention. With this contrast displayed, we move on to showing the coast of Nemunas, where both humans and wildlife exist in harmony together. Guided by a map of the coast, we delve into precise spots like pathways, campsites, the riverside where we show different elements like human activity, various plants, animals and insects. Ultimately, the goal of our project is to depict how flawlessly humans and wildlife can coexist with one another, providing food for thought for the viewer to consider respecting wildlife and instead of destroying it, learn to adapt to it.

The Coast of Nemunas

The coast of the Nemunas River reveals a rare harmony where both human life and wildlife thrive together. Our goal is to design a space more appealing for humans while maintaining this balance and respect for the wildlife.













Notes



TUTORS AND ORGANIZERS



Tutors



COLIN REYNIER

a graduate of the Ecole Boulle Applied Arts program in 2003, architect DE + HMONP at ENSA Versailles, founder with Léonard Lassagne of DATA Architectes in 2010 and Teacher at ENSA Paris-Malaquais, received the Prix d'architecture de la revue d'A in 2022 for the Rue Abel Hovelacque building designed for the RATP. In 2018, he was awarded a special mention in the équerre d'argent prize for the Galeries Lafayette foundation, created in association with the OMA - Rem Koolhaas agency. He also curated the "immeuble pour automobile" exhibition for the Pavillon de l'Arsenal in 2018. His main projects include the refurbishment of Hangar Y in Meudon, the construction of 144 housing units in the new Chapelle International district in Paris in collaboration with Armand Nouvet, the "centre national des Arts plastiques" in collaboration with BRUTHER or the refurbishment of the Pavillon de l'Arsenal in Paris.



**MIKE
FRITSCH**

is a French-Luxembourgish architect and civil engineer who graduated from the École Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture de Marseille France. He is currently leading the architectural and territorial projects at l'AUC in Paris France.

Tutor at the RAvB Rotterdam and the ÉNSA Marseille where he teaches territorial and urban topics focusing on multiscale reuse and social interactions of the “dè-jà-là // already there”.

He was the curator of the Bulgarian Pavilion at 2023 Venice Architecture Biennale where he researched the interaction between depopulation, degrowth, sustainability and their socio-territorial implications within the Bulgarian study case.

Now he is one of the curators of the of Luxembourg Pavilion at Venice Biennale of Architecture 2025.





Organizers



**LAURA
JANKAUSKAITĖ-
JUREVIČIENĖ**

is an architect and lecturer at the Faculty of Civil Engineering and Architecture of the Kaunas University of Technology. Also, she has a Master of Social Sciences (Applied Sociology). She is not only teaching architectural design modules but also has extensive experience working on research and study projects and conducting various non-formal education programs for children and youth at the university. Her research fields of interest are the topics of cultural heritage protection, spatial justice, public participation in urban planning processes.



INGRIDA POVILAITIENĖ



is an urbanist and Head of Architecture program at the Faculty of Civil Engineering and Architecture of the Kaunas University of Technology. Her teaching and research interests primarily lie in understanding the relationships between people and their environment including quality and uniqueness of habited areas. The influence of sociocultural, psychological, physical and historical dimensions in defining holistic cityscape identity was analyzed in her doctoral thesis "Assessment and Modelling of the Cityscape Identity".

Organizers



**JURGA
VITKUVIENĖ**

is a lecturer at the Faculty of Civil Engineering and Architecture of the Kaunas University of Technology and a member and lecturer of the center for contemporary didactic competence development EDU_lab (KTU). She has extensive experience working in the fields of design thinking and challenge-based learning.



Special thanks to
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