

## STORY OF LIBRARY - EDUCATIONAL CENTER “MOSS”

By Goda Narkutė, 2<sup>nd</sup> year Architecture student, Kaunas University of technology

*"Ah, how beautiful, how resonant is our forest, our grove..."* - these words of Lithuanian poet A. Baranauskas echo in my head as I approach the riverbank. I am standing here, on the south edge of Kaunas, where the Nemunas flows slowly past meadows and thickets, where birds circle around greeting the guests, where fishermen lead the path to the river, stopping at their small clearings by the water. For decades this part of the city bore the signs of industry – heavy sounds, never sleeping factories, cold metal and clay bricks. But we shouldn't judge a book by its cover as this place hides true mystery by the river.

Leaving the factories behind, greenery and birds lead the way to south. Here, “MOSS”- four gentle volumes, like petals, rise from the ground, reminding me of sculpture, growing out of the land itself. Just like a mossy bed, *that “draws your head in and sways it gently”*, this biophilic shape mimics an intricate, repeating structure of moss fragments. I step on light pavement and approach the building. Warm toned wooden beams flowing like river on façade catch my eye. As I knock on one, the sound brings me back to childhood – it's oak! In my early years my father taught me how durable and timeless it is, for instance he gave me Stelmužės Oak - one of the oldest oak trees in Europe located here in Lithuania. Its importance is rooted in all our hearts.

I step through the main entrance. I feel the warmth of the sun on my skin, sunlight is falling through the glass roof illuminating the library. Wide wooden stairs rise ahead, quiet study rooms and focus on people's faces fill the air with knowledge and ambition to learn. Taking just a few steps up to the second floor I breathe in the scent of clay, damp and earthy - it recalls childhood, when my hands pressed soil in the countryside. In the ceramics hall touch becomes the strongest sense: everything invites me to feel, to shape, to create. Right next door my eyes linger on vibrant colors reflecting on white walls – art room filled with paintings, children's imagination layered on canvas – art in its purest form.

I return to first floor, the smell here is unmistakable - books, paper, wood. Southern branch beholds the library – wooden shelves hold the heavy weight of books and their knowledge, people are gathered in circles, wooden beam partitions form private spaces mimicking fisherman clearings in the woods by the river. I turn my head to the right as I smell fresh coffee, made on the corner - a small café inviting to enjoy it outside in the sun, reminding me of late summer mornings in the garden with my mom.

It felt like the current flowed me through all the spaces and took me westward - *"Ah, homeland of forests and fields..."* – the journey led me outside, where bees are gathering their nectar from garden flowers, where people spend their time reading on the benches, where children are running around intricate paths, playing hide and seek between the trees.