

STORY OF “THE RIVER OF WISDOM: SCIENCE CENTER, MUSEUM AND LIBRARY”

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As soon as I arrive in the southeastern part of Kaunas, where the Nemunas gently meanders between slopes and plains, the *River of Wisdom* opens before my eyes – a Science Center, a Museum and a Library. It is not a massive volume, but rather an extension of the landscape: horizontal, undulating, blending with the ground and greenery. The facades of the building are not static but alive, echoing the curves of the nearby Nemunas and the flow of human movement. My eyes catch the glass surfaces – they reflect the sky, the trees, and, when I approach, even myself. I feel that this building does not compete with its surroundings but listens to them. Stepping into the central alley, I hear only a light whisper of the wind – it comes from the west, passes through the greenery, and bounces off the wavy facades. Here, the noise of the city does not dominate, but rather a microclimate created jointly by nature and architecture. Along the path flows a stream – not a decoration, but a rainwater collection system that has become part of the architectural form. Its murmur reminds me that even functional details here are alive. Even in the library, I do not hear the hum of fans but the quiet breath of the environment – an acoustic calm meant for knowledge. As soon as I enter inside, I sense the smell – not of synthetic materials, but of something real: basalt, fresh air. Outside, the scent of sandy soil, the typical aroma of riparian alluvial land, remains untouched. The difference in smells is especially distinct between seasons – in summer, the air carries warmth and dust of the earth, in autumn – the dampness of fallen leaves. On the roof, where I walk along paths among plants, my nose catches the scent of life – here, the soil once again becomes part of architecture. Scents tell me that everything here breathes together with the cycles of the year. My hands slide across the facade. Basalt, found locally, with its texture – rough, natural – reminds me of Lithuania’s geological foundation. It is strong, but not alien. Holding onto the handrails or sitting on a bench in the inner courtyard, I feel warmth. Every surface – from the library’s shelves to the museum’s walls – invites the hand to explore, not just to use. Even the roof, where vegetation grows above architecture, spreads its textures to the feet – as if I were walking forest paths above the center of knowledge. Here, I experience taste – intellectual. Every detail – from the foundations adapted to sandy soil, to the roof that drinks rain and returns it to the stream – has its own logic, its own “flavor” in terms of sustainability. Drinking water, I know it is part of the same cycle. Visiting the museum, which explores the urban history of Petrašiūnai, or reading in the library, I understand that this complex not only unites functions but also conveys values. It is the taste of place: not invented but heard. I realized that this science center is not a static structure – it is an architectural river that

adapts to the geographical relief, follows natural contours, preserves trees, and merges into the terrain, as if it were an obvious act, not a compromise. Its location near main roads makes the complex accessible, yet it remains like a refuge between city and forest, where nature flows into knowledge, and man – into a silent relationship with the environment.

I leave, but the sensations remain. And I know: the *River of Wisdom* continues to flow. And it invites me to return.