

Five Sentences about Soviet Art

Alise Tīfentāle, art historian

The art of the past is usually understood using the conventions of the present, therefore the art of the past is misunderstood.¹

Sol Levit

As Latvian art from the Soviet era is at the centre of my academic research, I regularly encounter questions which are necessary to explain and solve. To what extent do the artworks from this era display a "Soviet" influence, how much is there "Latvian" art, and how much is there simply "art"? Should the fact that photography at this time was included in the field of "amateur art" be the defining factor for its interpretation in a contemporary context? Is it necessary to have a broad insight into the institutional structure of Soviet art, and into critiques of Soviet art published in ideological texts and the press? Or alternatively, is it necessary to have a distanced outsider view, concentrating only on the art works, rather than the circumstances of their creation? Can the era in question be entitled the "Soviet period", or perhaps it is enough to simply mention the decade in which the work was created? But isn't it important to remember that it was created under Soviet rule, which resulted in self-censorship and the inhibition of information exchange, personal movement and other restrictions? Art historian Aleksis Osmanis, referring to Latvian painting of the 1960s, writes: "In the 20th century structuring principles of the artistic image began to be divided into two differing social systems – democracy and totalitarianism. Europe gained two different types of art history – both equally intolerant. And between these was Latvian painting".² Not to mention other artistic media.

What next? One of the reference points is Western art history with its canon. Within this framework the same old "key works" demonstrate particular processes, phenomena and tendencies, publication after publication. A canon of this type, ever maintaining openness to new additions, is a flexible instrument which introduces at least some clarity and allows one to systematise the material in question. In the case of Soviet era art one can say that there have been various isolated cases of canonisation. Until now they have been promoted mostly by the Soviet, officially sanctioned inspections of art – through the exhibitions of painting of the Artists Union of Latvia, and the work of individual artists (mainly painters) in exhibitions and monographs. As this process is based on the hierarchy of Soviet art, then, of course, additional explanations are necessary (one exception is the establishment of Latvia's cultural canon, although the Soviet era has been assigned an insignificant role within the canon³).

It is possible to endlessly continue scholarly discussion about whether a particular painting can be considered to be a part of the "official" Soviet era art⁴. However, currently there are a number of far-reaching directions that can be discerned in the Latvian Soviet-

period art history, in which productive work, new conclusions and discoveries can be expected. For example:

1. To reject the model of the art world that is centred around painting. During the Soviet era the hierarchy of art or the pyramidal structure had taken root too firmly, with noble, fine art at the apex: painting, graphic art, sculpture, with a particular emphasis on painting in the case of Latvia.

Decorative art, environmental design, interior design and other genres were situated a lot lower down this pyramid. The social prestige of these genres might have been lower, however, it was possible to have relatively more artistic freedom. In the eyes of artist Ojārs Ābols the largest portion of decorative art was labelled as "trivial phenomenon: kitsch"⁵, while contemporary publications emphasise the discrimination against various art media in the Soviet art hierarchy, and accent the influence of Western modernism in genres outside the earlier-mentioned trinity of fine art. "As it turned out, an abstract composition in a tapestry was to be celebrated, but Lord forbid the same thing to be painted in oil on canvas – this was considered to be an ideological diversion,"⁶ remembers artist and art critic Jānis Borgs.

Art historian Anita Vanaga also emphasises that "less resistance was to be overcome in fields where ideology did not directly demand dues to be paid. An anaesthetising distance was provided by restoration, immersion in the microstructure of an artwork and the restoration of its original state. Stage design gained popularity, which allowed innovative artistic practices to be played out on the basis of text, to forget about oneself and think about the plasticity of an idea, a printing plate, which could be credited with a resistance of material, as well as decorative art – well, what can you expect from a lump of clay or a skein of wool?"⁷ That which was labelled "communal design"⁸ or "unique design"⁹ in the Soviet era was also re-evaluated and re-classified (including the concepts of kinetic art, light art and cybernetic art¹⁰), assuming that today there is a series of works that are now considered to be independent works of art rather than design.

By including broader fields of creative and artistic work in research and discussion, and not subordinating them to categories used in painting reviews, the perspective on the art of the era would broaden significantly. It is debatable, how far this concept is worth broadening. One could ask, for example, whether a costume party and/or taking photographs can always be included in the genre of performance or is it only then when well-known artists participate in the event? That means that looking from a contemporary perspective (determined by Western art history) traits of art works can be identified in such a wide range of activities and artefacts that in real life it becomes impossible to differentiate Umberto Eco's "notes of a washerwoman" from that which is truly important.

2. To review an equally deep-rooted institutional division: professionals and amateurs, graduates of the Academy and non-graduates, members of the association and non-members, etc. By critically

evaluating this division, the general impression of art is embellished with many new facts. Vilnis Vējš, the curator of the exhibition *Un citi...* ('And others...') which took place in late 2010, reminds the reader in the exhibition catalogue that "whole genres of art were discriminated against, being denied the status of professional art by the strictly controlled art system during the stagnation years."¹¹ This can be applied to, for example, the activities of the "Rīga Pantomime" in the early 1960s, as well as – to a large degree – photography throughout the whole era of the Soviet rule, the boundaries of which were strictly defined on an institutional level by ascribing photography the status of amateur art.

The absence of authoritative structures, institutional detachment from other art forms and an "amateurish" status were the reasons why after regaining Latvian independence, practically all of the photographic art shown during the Soviet era was to a large degree discredited and subjected to misleading generalisations, with no attempt at an analytical approach to the body of photographic works as a whole.

Only gradually have we come to the conclusion that the "amateurish" status of an art form within the hierarchy of Soviet cultural policy cannot automatically be equated to "amateurish" content, form and quality of this art form.

Research of the creative work of those authors who Eduards Kļaviņš calls "outsiders, whose activities did not appear in the social space"¹² is nowhere near being finished. Significant steps in this direction were achieved in research of Mark Allen Svede in the early 21st century, as well as within the framework of the recent project, "Documentation and preservation of Soviet period non-conformist cultural heritage for the collection of the Contemporary Art Museum of Latvia", which is undertaken by the Centre for Contemporary Art with the financial assistance from the European Economic Zone (EEZ) and Norway Grants. The results of research undertaken for this project were partially compiled in the exhibition curated by Vilnis Vēja, *Un citi...*, and they will also be published in the upcoming collection of articles *Patība. Personības ceļā uz laikmetīgo mākslu – Padomju Latvijas 1960–1980 gadi*. ('The Self. Personalities on the Road to Contemporary Art – Soviet Latvia in the 1960s–80s.'), compiled by Helēna Demakova.

One problematic aspect in this work is associated with the fact that scholars need access to a wide range of unpublished material held in private archives. The survey of this material is time consuming, difficult work which is often unrewarding, but it should not cease after the EEZ and Norwegian financial support has been used up. Here one can only make an appeal to the individual enthusiasm and determination of particular scholars.

3. Rethink the choice of terminology and methodology. Firstly one needs to define the main culprit – Socialist realism – as well as its place, role and meaning in Latvian art of the Soviet period. No one, it seems, doubts "that not all Soviet art should be labelled Socialist realism"¹³. Art historian Elita Anšone argues that "art which was not specifically Soviet was also produced in the Soviet state – it was not

heroic, optimistic, or monumental, nor did it contain the necessary ideological content, or sport cunningly added titles. Today we no longer need to label this art "Socialist realism", as was done by Soviet critics, even if it has a realistic form. (...) Socialist realism should only be applied to art that is political."¹⁴

At the same time "it is becoming more and more difficult to precisely define Socialist realist art"¹⁵ and even more difficult to distinguish "official" from "unofficial" art, as is indicated by Mark Allen Svede in his collection of articles "Art of the Baltics: the Struggle for Freedom of Artistic Expression under the Soviets, 1945-1991"¹⁶. Svede has also emphasized the surprising diversity of stylistic directions in Latvia during the Soviet period.¹⁷ In the catalogue of the exhibition *Un citi...* art historian Irene Bužinska refers to the "fragmentation and parallelism of various stylistic tendencies"¹⁸. Latvia's Soviet art historians have a large and responsible task ahead of them – to continue unravelling this stylistic multilingualism and offer their own solutions.

The question of whether we can use the terminology of Western art history when examining local material is well grounded. It is possible that this is necessary in order to translate the results of one's research into a language which is understood in an international environment. In this way, for example, Elita Ansons indicates that "Soviet art in Latvia is not confined only to the so-called Socialist realism, but also contains modernism, postmodernism, realism and conceptualism (often consecutively in the work of individual artists). However, considering that the whole Socialist system was based on punitive measures and art was under the control of constant censorship, these differing styles could not be called by their real names."¹⁹ At the same time one cannot but agree with Aleksis Osmanis, that "it is difficult to refer to postmodernism in a culture which has not seen modernism"²⁰.

Another similarly well-founded question: is it necessary to create specific terms to be used in the small field of Latvian art history? Scholars abroad would have access to these terms only with the assistance of explanations; however, the use of this terminology has become self-explanatory in the local context. These kinds of locally-specific terms were created and adopted in the lexicon of art criticism both during the Soviet era (for example, the so-called "harsh style" of the 1960s), and even at a later time, when looking back retrospectively (for example, the "border crossers" of the 1980s). In turn, Eduards Kļaviņš offers terms such as "socmodernism" and "socpostmodernism".²¹

When choosing methodological approaches today, art historians use various perspectives, not just post-structuralism (this could also be applied to the approach of Mark Allen Svede, which, it seems, has also been uncritically adopted by scholars in Latvia). Svede, writing about the Soviet art in Latvia, emphasises the impossibility of defining one common, all-encompassing, generalised approach to art history. This can be compensated by a number of perspectives – semiotics, psychoanalysis, feminism, cultural anthropology, gender studies and even Marxism.²² Theoreticians who have enjoyed contemporary education in Europe or the USA are tempted to mention, for example, feminist or colonial

discourse when speaking of aspects of Latvian art in the 1960s and 70s, particularly regarding those works which are found outside the direct influence of institutions (performance, photo, film and video and others). If this perspective is not an end in itself and does not stand in stark contradiction to the surveyed material, new horizons are discovered and a new perspective can be offered even for well-known art works. For example, the curator Bojana Pejić's wide-ranging exhibition *Gender Check* should be mentioned, the theoretical justification being based on feminism and gender studies.²³

4. Critically review the internationally available body of text about "Soviet art" and, based on this, confidently advance new ideas, because in the West "Soviet art" is generally understood to be Russian art, while in reality the Latvian (and that of the three Baltic States) situation is not similar to Russian art history. Each scholar who wishes to comment on Latvian art during the Soviet period is faced with an absence of quotable scholarly literature. A broad overview of the work of leading scholars of Soviet art (Boris Groys, Igor Golomstock, Evgeny Dobrenko, Ekaterina Degot and others) and the inherent problems are outlined in the art historian Andris Teikmanis' article "Discourse of Socialist Realism – Politics and Aesthetics".²⁴ Nevertheless, there is still a shortage of international publications which could provide an alternative to the western "romanticized impressions about unofficial artistic activities in the Soviet Union"²⁵ or an alternative to generalised Sovietisation and politicization, which could adequately reflect events in Latvia. Researchers have a great opportunity to critically view previous studies and cast doubt on these, revisit the original sources and search for new sources, instead of adopting ready impressions or theoretical approaches.

5. Turn to a wider cultural context, because art works are not meant to be viewed in isolation from their time, society, political or economic conditions. In his time Ojārs Ābols commented that "to read art is to read the context of life, which we don't wholeheartedly want to do."²⁶ Sergejs Kruks, *Dr. soc.* in information and communication sciences, insightfully writes that "today research of Soviet cultural history is dominated by an unsystematic philological approach, explaining politics as the struggle of a despotic power against art works that are dangerous to the regime, created by a lone, genius artist. Under the influence of romantic intellectual tradition this interprets culture in isolation from society, attributing greater meaning to the former in the life of the people. A new perspective on the meaning of cultural policy can be achieved by adding sociological factors to the analysis – the aims of the customer, the dominant aesthetic discourse, the utilitarian tasks of art in communication, the economic interests of artists, and the tactical use of questions of art in political debate."²⁷

This approach allows one to avoid extremes: both the frequently seen "aesthetic cynicism"²⁸ and praises of "simply good painting", and the opposite view, that "nothing valuable happened in art or culture during the Soviet era, because it was totally subjected to the needs of the occupying regime and ideological

tenets, totally controlled and engaged. All artists were forced to serve the system, and only those who were strongest in spirit and the most resilient occasionally worked in an underground movement of dissidents."²⁹

New discoveries and conclusions can be offered by a perspective that allows one to analyse artworks and art tendencies not as local, hermetical facts divided off from the context of the world, but using a much wider viewpoint, examining cultural communication in the Soviet period and its specific features more thoroughly (which has a particularly great significance in the development of photographic art in the mid and late 1960s and 1970s). These viewpoints are to a large extent mentioned in passing, but their examination would allow defining more precisely the actual field of information and sphere of influence in which the artists worked in Latvia. One of the examples of this wider contextual view (although this does not relate to Soviet art) is the exhibition *Dialogues of Colour and Sound. Works by Čiurlionis and His Contemporaries* at the Lithuanian Art Museum.³⁰

Concluding this survey of the problems of interpreting art of the Soviet period, one can refer to Ojārs Ābols and agree with the opinion that "... the truth of art is renewed every day, and we try to uncover this and enlighten ourselves with the glitter of the eternally changing world."³¹

1 Levits, Sols. Teikumi par konceptuālo mākslu (nr. 18). In: Levits, Sols. *Paragrāfi par konceptuālo mākslu. Teikumi par konceptuālo mākslu*. Translated by J. Taurens. Rīga: kim?, 2010, p. 11.

2 Osmanis, Aleksis. Varas ideoloģija un metamorfozes latviešu glezniecībā. In: *Glezniecība: Laikmeta liecinieki: 20. gadsimta 60., 70. un 80. gadi: Latvijas Mākslinieku savienības mākslas darbu kolekcija*. Compiled by I. Baranovska. Rīga: Latvijas Mākslinieku savienība, 2002, p. 24.

3 It should be noted that in the visual arts section the Soviet era is represented by only one painting by Boriss Bērziņš and a series of photographs by Egons Spuris, while in terms of architecture (which is traditionally also studied in art history) there are no buildings built during the Soviet era. See: *www.kulturaskanons.lv*.

4 I have considered this problem after evaluating the exhibition dedicated to "alternative" phenomena in art of the Soviet era. "Un citi... virzieni, meklējumi, mākslinieki Latvijā 1960-1984" (And others... directions, search, the artist in Latvia 1960-1984"), which could be viewed at the Riga Art Space 17 November – 30 December 2010. Contradictory and inconsistent criteria of "difference" combined in one exhibition both the most authentic underground works, which did not even exist in the art world defined in the Soviet era, with art works that could be considered as in their own way belonging to "official" art. An overview of these arguments can be seen: Tifentāle, Alise. *Revizijas rezultāti. Studija*, 2011, No. 76.

5 Ābols, Ojārs. Topi tas, kas tu esi (1979). In: *Ojārs Ābols. Uz mūsu nemierīgās planētas: Raksti un gleznas*. Authors: O. Ābols, G. Repše, Dž. Skulme. Rīga: Neputns, 2006, p. 14.

6 Borgs, Jānis. Pētergailja agrā dziesma. Brīva māksla – padomju produkts? In: *Daba. Vide. Cilvēks. 1984-2004*. Compiled by I. Baranovska. Rīga: Latvijas Mākslinieku savienība, 2004, p. 25.

7 Vanaga, Anita. 3. nodarbība. Noklusētais iestatījums. In: *Un citi virzieni, meklējumi, mākslinieki Latvijā 1960-1984: [Catalogue]*. Compiled by V. Vējš. Rīga: Laikmetīgās mākslas centrs, 2010, p. 9.

8 See: Ostenbergs, Oļģerts. Komunālais dizains. In: *Latvijas dizains*. Compiled by M. Lācis. Rīga: Liesma, 1984, pp. 44-54.

- 9 See: Opule, Velga. Unikālais dizains. In: *Latvijas dizains*, pp. 71–79. The design discussed in this article by Juris Krievs, Artūrs Rīņķis and a group of artists (Anda Ārgale, Māris Ārgalis, Valdis Celms) were included in the exhibition *Un citi..*
- 10 Opule, Velga. Unikālais dizains, p. 72.
- 11 Vējš, Vilnis. 1. nodarbība. Spēles mākslas. In: *Un citi..*, p. 5.
- 12 Kļaviņš, Eduards. Socreālisma mutācijas: socmodernisms un socpostmodernisms Latvijā. In: *Muzeja raksti: 1. Starptautiskās zinātniskās konferences "Sociālistiskā reālisma mākslas interpretācijas problēmas" rakstu krājums*. Compiled by E. Ansonē. Rīga: Latvijas Nacionālais mākslas muzejs, 2009, p. 105.
- 13 *ibid.*
- 14 Ansonē, Elita. *Padomjzemes mitoloģija*. Rīga: Neputns, 2008, pp. 13–15.
- 15 Bužinska, Irēna. 2. nodarbība. Gleznniecība un grafika. In: *Un citi..*, p. 6.
- 16 Svede, Mark Allen. Many Easels, Some Abandoned: Latvian Art after Socialist Realism. In: Dodge, N.T., Rosenfeld, A. (General eds.). *Art of the Baltics: The Struggle for Freedom of Artistic Expression under the Soviets, 1945–1991*. New Brunswick, New Jersey and London: Rutgers University Press, 2002, p. 185–274.
- 17 *ibid.*, pp. 185–186.
- 18 Bužinska, Irēna. 2. nodarbība. Gleznniecība un grafika, p. 6.
- 19 Ansonē, Elita. *Padomjzemes mitoloģija*, p. 9.
- 20 Osmanis, Aleksis. Robežas pārkāpjot: identitātes labirintos. In: *Gleznniecība: Laikmeta liecinieki: 20. gadsimta 60., 70. un 80. gadi: Latvijas Mākslinieku savienības mākslas darbu kolekcija*, p. 216.
- 21 Kļaviņš, Eduards. Socreālisma mutācijas: socmodernisms un socpostmodernisms Latvijā, pp. 103–113.
- 22 Svede, Mark Allen. Many Easels, Some Abandoned: Latvian Art after Socialist Realism, p. 185.
- 23 The exhibition *Gender Check* could be viewed at the Modern Art Museum MUMOK in Vienna from 13 November 2009 – 14 February 2010 and at the National Art Gallery Zachęta in Warsaw from 19 March – 13 June 2010.
- 24 Teikmanis, Andris. Sociālistiskā reālisma diskurss – politika un estētika. In: *Muzeja raksti: 1. Starptautiskās zinātniskās konferences "Sociālistiskā reālisma mākslas interpretācijas problēmas" rakstu krājums*, pp. 79–101.
- 25 Svede, Mark Allen. Many Easels, Some Abandoned: Latvian Art after Socialist Realism, p. 186.
- 26 Ābols, Ojārs. Mākslas apslēptais saturs (1979). In: *Ojārs Ābols. Uz mūsu nemierīgās planētas: Raksti un gleznas*, p. 27.
- 27 Kruks, Sergejs. "Par mūziku skaistu un melodisku!": *Padomju kultūras politika, 1932–1964*. Rīga: Neputns, 2008, p. 16.
- 28 Osmanis, Aleksis. Varas ideoloģija un metamorfozes latviešu gleznniecībā, p. 24.
- 29 Borgs, Jānis. Pētergaila agrā dziesma. Brīva māksla – padomju produkts? p. 20.
- 30 The exhibition could be viewed from 19 June – 23 August 2009, and the opening, combined with the opening of the new building of the National Gallery was one of the central events in the Vilnius – European Capital of Culture programme. The exhibition accented parallels between Čiurlionis and artists from the neighbouring countries (including Pēteris Krastiņš from Latvia), and works from the world classics such as Edvard Munch, Wassily Kandinsky and composer Arnold Schoenberg offered a deep impression of a specific trend in European modernism, the creation of which was also influenced by Čiurlionis.
- 31 Ābols, Ojārs. Tēla dimensijas (1979). In: *Ojārs Ābols. Uz mūsu nemierīgās planētas: Raksti un gleznas*, p. 22.

20th century. Modris Ģelzis. Architect.

Ilze Martinsone

I have always striven for clarity and simplicity in both construction and forms. These relate to our folk architecture, which is not typically decorative.

Modris Ģelzis

Today it is not possible for Latvian architects to even theoretically repeat the professional heights reached by Modris Ģelzis since the Second World War: the first modernist interior (the shop "Mākslas grāmata" on K. Barona Street in Riga, 1958); the first contemporary building (the Ģelzis family summer cottage at Pabaži 1959–1962); the first experimental large panel building (Saulgožu Street, Riga 1958). The extension to the Dzintari Concert Hall (1959, 2003–2006) was valued at the time by his colleagues, and today it has been included in the Latvian Cultural Canon.

Scholars are now finally trying to build a new frame and to arrange a hierarchical structure of Soviet phenomena within it – including cultural phenomena. This process is perhaps the most difficult for architecture. Buildings always reflect elements of the current regime or social formation, and the time in question is associated with an imposed ideology in the consciousness of the people: amongst these the frightening quality of Soviet buildings and their extensive scale, which were amassed due to the State's emphasis on industrialization. This stimulates memories of an anti-human and degraded environment. Strangely enough, in this context the achievements of architects should be particularly celebrated: who excelled despite the deficit of information, limited technology and within the legendary labyrinths of Soviet bureaucracy.

The fact that architect Modris Ģelzis deserved a place on a pedestal was obvious not only due to the above mentioned achievements. The first more extensive study to survey Latvian Soviet Era architecture was dedicated to Ģelzis. Jānis Lejnietis' monograph *Patiesa Forma. Tīrs Stils* ('True Form. Clean Style') revealed the personality of the architect, while also outlining the historic context due to which the Latvian architecture of the time was created the way it was, while some portion of outstanding designs remained on paper only. Society judges the work of an architect according to their completed buildings, which have been preserved. The process in which ideas of a particular epoch are created and developed often remains behind the scenes: sketches, drawings, unrealized designs, and notes. A plan to hold an exhibition of the work of Modris Ģelzis circulated while the master himself was still alive, although he regarded this idea with scepticism. However, not long before passing away, it seems that Ģelzis made a decision, because he donated his entire creative legacy – drawings, manuscripts, building models and photographs – to the Latvian Museum of Architecture. In order to appreciate how carefully Modris Ģelzis considered this step, one must know that the architect

acted responsibly towards his work on all levels; his carefully arranged archive was never shown to foreign eyes, not even to his family members. The importance of Ģelzis' donation for the history of Latvian architecture can be likened to the will of painter Boris Bērziņš, who similarly entrusted his work to the Latvian National Museum of Art. The memorial exhibition displayed in the Riga Art Space is both a show of gratitude to the master, which is confirmed by the architect's biographer and exhibition curator Jānis Lejnietis in collaboration with the Latvian Museum of Architecture of the State Inspection for Heritage Protection (VKPAI), and an opportunity for society, through the personality of Modris Ģelzis, to uncover the heights of cultural heritage which were created during the time we have marked with the label of "Soviet". Ģelzis' creative heritage was not limited only to buildings and their plans, however. The architect also established his own school, whose circle – Andris Kronbergs, Zaiga Gaile, Viktors Valgums, Juris Paegle and others – has made a lasting mark on Latvian architecture. Furthermore, Modris Ģelzis has also passed on his talent in a very personal way, through his genetic code: the designer and author of the idea of the exhibition is his son, Kristaps Ģelzis, who has just proved his place in the Latvian art world by gaining the honour of representing Latvia in this year's Venice Art Biennale.

Early years

The curator Jānis Lejnietis has arranged the heritage of Modris Ģelzis into different parts of the exhibition. **The Early Years.** Fate smiled on Ģelzis, because in contrast to other "lost" generations, he was born in the right place and time. Architecture cannot exist in isolation from its socio-political context, and during the era of "Stalin Baroque" Ģelzis only had to manoeuvre during his studies. **Breaking Free.** The floodgates were opened with the death of Stalin and the resulting changes in the nation, stemming from party directives and government resolutions that influenced economics and culture. The new generation embraced the newly-gained freedom with open arms: Modris Ģelzis seized the opportunity and became a leader of Soviet Latvian modernist architecture. The architect implemented several innovative projects in the late 1950s and early 1960s. While working on the interior of the shop "Mākslas grāmata" the architect rejected the usual double shop windows, and visually merged the space of the shop with the street by using large display cases. Accessible bookshelves made the interior of the shop a customer-friendly place.

The overarching roof of the Dzintari concert hall and its open summer concert hall embody the best of modernist ideas. Clean lines, a humane scale, a feeling for the environment, also the "heavy" roof overhangs make this a contemporary translation of identity in the Latvian cultural landscape. The utopian experiment of the Soviet system did not succeed, although in some historical turns it did accumulate hope. One of the historic resolutions "About industrialization, the improvement of quality and reduction of building costs" not only anticipated the satisfaction of the needs of the masses, which had been attributed to modernist theories, but also spoke of quality. The first large panel building designed by Modris Ģelzis remained at an experimental level, and was followed