

Textile Artists of the 1970s—1980s—Leaders of Folk Applied Art Studios

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The aim of the article is to draw attention to the interaction between professional textile art and handicrafts or folk applied art in Soviet Latvia. In 1961, within the State Academy of Arts of the Latvian SSR (now the Art Academy of Latvia, hereinafter — the Academy) was established the Department of Textile Art. In the 1960s, it began to award the honorary title of the Master of Folk Crafts and Folk Applied Art Studios (hereinafter — the Studio or FAAS). The descriptions of the activities of the Studios mostly emphasize that they continue folk art traditions, but the experiments with craft techniques and inspiration from contemporary textile art are mentioned in a generalized and vague way. The study shows the presence of contemporary textile art in the works of FAAS and the leaders of the Studios as a link between the two. Nine textile artists with the Academy education managed Studios from the 1970s and 1980s.

Research methods: literature studies, comparison of textile art and textile crafts, interviews with textile artists. Examples of musealized art by these textile artists in the museums of Latvian Artists' Union, the Museum of Decorative Arts and Design, as well as in the National History Museum of Latvia.

Textile art and textile crafts in the 1960s to the 1980s. History, terminology and significance of crafts

In the middle of the 20th century, the issue of ancient and contemporary crafts was topical in Europe, including the territory of the Soviet Union, and also in the United States of America. A new approach was being sought, as is indirectly noted in the description of examples of Riga Secondary School of Applied Arts students' works in the publication *Latviešu tēlotāja māksla* (Latvian Fine Arts) from 1958 (Grīnvalde 1958: 197). What is this new approach to crafts? This can be explained by the example of art patron Aileen Osborn Webb (1892–1979). During and after World War II, Webb promoted the craft or craftsmanship movement in the United States to help them cope with economic hardships. In 1944, Webb founded the School of the American Craftsman and in 1956 — the Museum of Contemporary Crafts in New York (since 2002, the Museum of Arts and Design). There were organized conferences, exhibitions devoted to crafts issues, and the new approach to crafts appeared in academic arts programs. In 1964, with the support of Webb, an international

World Crafts Council was held at Columbia University. It was attended by specialists in various fields related to the widest range of crafts, such as Rudolf Arnheim (1904–2007), the Finnish designer of the second half of the 20th century Tapio Wirkkala (1915–1985), architect Louis Kahn (1901–1974), as well as crafts theoretician Czesław Knothe from Poland (1890–1985) and others (Adamson 2021: 199). Although the focus of the Council's discussions was on world crafts, it was also devoted to the application of ancient crafts and techniques to the lifestyle of the respective period of time. The general tendencies in the field of crafts in the world in the 1960s were observed there. These ideas were probably well-known in the Soviet Union, and they were assimilated by the arts of the numerous ethnic groups living in the territory of the USSR.

Just as in Finland after the Second World War, in Latvia the renewal of applied arts and crafts took place on the basis of the pre-war experience. Already by the end of the 19th century, in Finland were formed crafts societies and schools based on the ideas of the arts and crafts movement (Aaltonen et al. 64). But by the end of the 1940s, in Finland as in other countries, new professions emerged — interior designer, furniture designer, textile designer, etc. The new type of standard architecture contributed to their emergence. In the 1950s, handicrafts and industrial art that were based on folk art became fashionable in standard interiors. In Finland, for example, in the 1950s, the applied artist and designer Kaj Franck (1911–1989), in his quest for the form of new industrially produced everyday objects, was inspired by Finnish folk art (Svensberg et al. 91). After the Second World War, the search for beauty in everyday things was en vogue. It was found in folk art, adapting it to industrial production, as well as in appreciating the aesthetics of handicrafts. A significant turning point in Latvian applied art was marked by the Baltic Republics Conference of Applied and Decorative Arts and exhibitions in Tallinn in 1955. During the conference there were discussions about the importance of decorative and applied art, industrial art, as well as about the application of folk art in new forms of applied art (Tass 1955: 2). It was concluded that in Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia the most important type of applied art is textile crafts. In the early 1960s in the Soviet Union, the possible ways of furnishing of new architecture were much pondered. There were mostly small-sized standard apartments, and solutions for their furnishing were sought both in professional applied art and in folk applied art. Therefore, in 1961, new study fields were established at the State Academy of Arts of the Latvian SSR: interior and equipment; industrial art; and textile art. The movement of folk applied art studios was also of great importance.

In 2007, the National History Museum of Latvia hosted a scientific conference *Tautas lietišķā māksla Latvijā no 20. gs. vidus līdz mūsdienām. Šodienā. Pieredze. Rītiena* (Folk Applied Art in Latvia from the mid-20th century to the present day. Today. Experience. Tomorrow). A collection of articles was published in 2008. The message expressed there emphasizes the issues of preserving the traditional crafts characteristic on the territory of Latvia, as well as terminology issues; however, the works of the studios show the trends in art of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. In the 1950s, the use of the term 'folk applied art' became more widespread in Latvia (Ziņģīte 2008: 19). The modern craft theoretician Howard Risatti (1943) avoids the use of the term 'applied arts,' which was brought in at the end of the 19th century, as it relates to industrially produced items that were specially decorated to be more attractive for the consumers. Risatti

associates the concept of craftsmanship with human handiwork, the ability and knowledge to manage certain raw materials to create an object (Risatti 2007: 19). In the period of Soviet Latvia, the term “folk applied art” used in the descriptions of crafts refers to a peculiar “production” of crafts.

In the 1960s, there were formed craft or folk applied art groups which mainly operated in houses of culture, schools, museums, and other suitable premises. Each group had a leader. In 1963, a regulation was adopted on awarding the title of ‘Folk Applied Art Studio’ (hereinafter — the Studio) to the groups that have reached a certain level of craft and artistic growth. The status of the Studio was discontinued in 2000, but the groups which received the title of the Studio until then are still active today (Rubena 2018: 84). The origin of the Studios is related to the processes in Latvia in the second half of the 1940s, when nationalization and centralization of private companies, including craft enterprises, took place. There appeared the concept of ‘amateur’ artists and associations that were engaged with ‘contemporary folk art’ (Sudmalis 1949: 3). The associations or groups were supervised by the Folk Art House established in 1945 (renamed as Emils Melngailis Folk Art House in 1953, in 1980, renamed as Emils Melngailis Folk Art and Culture — Education Work Scientific Methodological Centre of the Republic, today — Latvian National Centre for Culture) (Cimermanis 2006: 12). The first group in Soviet Latvia to be considered is the group of textile craftsmen established around 1948 in the village of Blome (nearby Smiltene), the leader of the group — Valija Nadziņa (1922–2020) (Rubena 1965: 4).

Participation in exhibitions played an important role in raising qualification, and masters of folk crafts created high-quality works for exhibitions and works for sale in art salons. The name of the Studio and participation in exhibitions in the 1960s sparked competition and an increase in the technical and artistic level of work. In the early 1960s, there was a tendency to exhibit works created by artists and craftsmen together with industrial products. However, with the development of the Studios and activities of professional craftsmen, later exhibitions were organized separately. The most popular crafts in the 1960s–80s were textiles, ceramics, decorative wood, leather and metal art (Ivanova 1980). Although in the Soviet Union so-called folk art was centrally supervised, still for each ethnic group it was a legitimate way to preserve cultural memory through the practical pursuit of crafts. Estonian folk-art researcher Anu Kannike emphasizes that in Soviet Estonia, folk art or “self-employed” crafts were subject to the centralization of the totalitarian political system, but essentially embodied a strong anti-Soviet position (Kannike 2016: 510). Presumably — in Soviet Latvia, Studios and folk groups worked with a similar approach. It has been emphasized also by the folk art expert Linda Rubena: ‘During the Soviet years, it maintained the idea of Latvianness’ (Rubena 2018: 84).

Since 1960, Emils Melngailis People’s Art House, which was subordinate to the Ministry of Culture of the Latvian SSR, awarded the title of Master of Folk Arts (hereinafter MFA) for high-quality performance (Rubena 2008: 40). In 1960, about 458 people gained this status. In order to obtain the status, it was necessary to exhibit one’s works at the district and state exhibitions. A special jury of specialists formed by the Ministry of Culture of the Latvian SSR evaluated them. In 1960, the inventory of Masters of Folk Arts was begun with the aim of grouping them together (Vidrika 1960: 4). Between 1960 and 2000, a total of 4,020 artisans

obtained the status of MFA, and their performance in the field of contemporary Latvian crafts is still under research (Sirica 2022). It was essential that the status of MFA facilitated access to the raw materials needed for the craft, which was a big problem from the 1960s-80s.

The activity of folk applied arts studios is related to the concept of folk art. Modern researchers are beginning to re-evaluate the use of the term 'folk art' at different stages of history. For example, the Polish researcher Ewa Klekot, analyzing aspects of Polish folk art and craft and the socially constructed narrative since the second half of the 19th century, focuses on the 21st century concept of 'ethno-design' (Klekot 2010: 71): Namely, things that formally create associations with a certain ethnic group. Klekot emphasizes that the concept of 'folk art' was assigned to the things used by peasants by the ethnic elite, the intelligentsia, and researchers. Selectively chosen things in folk art narrative are usually decorative and tend to be attributed to 'timelessness' (Klekot 2010: 72).

The concept of folk applied art, which stabilized in Latvia in the 1950s, is related to the end of the 19th century's and early-20th-century efforts of the Latvian intelligentsia to define the art of its people. These are examples of Latvian or peasant folk art through which a story about the things used in the pre-industrial period is created. The modern researcher must take into account that the term 'Latvian folk art' reflects the taste and understanding of a small group or a personality. For example, from 1904 to 1905, the graphic artist Rihards Zariņš (1869–1939) organized a column *Māksla un Amats* (Art and Craft) in the magazine *Austrums*, in this way continuing the ideas of the Arts and Crafts movement of the end of the 19th century in the form of a search for the national art character of the art intellectuals of Eastern Europe. Zariņš emphasized that artists should get inspiration from the examples of Latvian peasants' crafts (raw materials, shape, colour and ornament) and create art for the needs of the Latvian intelligentsia of the time. In reality, it marks the beginning of folk or peasant art aesthetics' adaptation to the interiors of city and private houses of intelligentsia. Creating a new work in this vein expressed an idea that 'What we can use unchanged, we will not change' (Zariņš 1904: 148). In the introduction to the publication on history of art dedicated to applied art (i.e., *Purviša mākslas vēsture* (Purvītis Art History), 1936), the concepts of folk and national art are separated. It is emphasized that folk art is characterized by tradition and it can be called ethnographic art, but national art is created by professional artists with the aim of creating a nationally unique art (Peņģerots 1936: 9). The conceptual and ideological separation dominates also the applied and folk applied arts of the 1960s–80s. Folk applied art was created to fit into the private or public interiors of the newly built standard projects of the time, as well as to be displayed in exhibitions. The source of inspiration for it was folk art. A similar approach was taken in the 1920s–30s, when national art was created. In both of these periods, a new art appropriate to its time was being created, where the source of inspiration has been folk art and the current art trends of that time.

National and folk applied art is a theoretically complicated issue. It includes crafts that contrast with industrially produced materiality, it is not only a functionally valuable thing, but also contains social and cultural value (Risatti 2007: 152). The need for handicrafts (in handicraft techniques) is closely linked to human psychology (Risatti 2007: 55). Especially at the time when industrial production is rapidly advancing. In his publication 'The Invention of Craft,'

Glen Adamson analyses the example of craft as a storage medium that helps to cope with traumatic experiences (Adamson 2013: 185). Adamson used the idea of memory to describe the revival of crafts in the mid 19th century, promoted by the fast process of industrialization in England. In the context of Soviet Latvia, the traumatic experience can be associated with the totalitarian regime and the crafts included the cultural values of the ethnic group.

The life of applied art and textile craft exhibitions in Soviet Latvia in the 1960s–80s was rich. Art historian Gundega Ivanova (Andersone, b. Putniņa, 1928–2017) has emphasized that since 1947 folk applied art exhibitions have become ‘an integral part of our artistic life’ (Ivanova 1981). Already in the second half of the 1950s, applied art exhibitions featured uniform interior sets for multi-story standard buildings. For example, offers developed by textile craftsman Erna Rubene (1910–1990) and architect Marta Staņa (1913–1972). In 1971, the Open-Air Museum began the practice of organizing a fair of folk applied artworks on the first weekend of June — an opportunity for the participants of the Studios to exhibit and sell the objects created for the interior (Sirica 2018: 63).

Gundega Ivanova is the compiler and author of the text of the books *Latviešu mūsdienu lietišķā māksla* (Latvian Contemporary Applied Art) and *Latviešu mūsdienu tautas māksla* (Latvian Contemporary Folk Art), published by the publishing house *Liesma* in 1980 and 1981. The publications are similar, but there is a distinction between applied arts (meaning by that the works of academically educated artists) and folk applied arts. The 1981 edition features mainly examples of folk applied art created in the 1970s by the participants of the Studios. Ivanova has emphasized that ‘great changes have taken place in contemporary folk art,’ meaning that new things and artistic solutions are emerging (Ivanova 1981: 6). This thought was continued with the statement that ‘the stylistic direction and artistic level of textiles are still determined by qualified Masters of Folk Art’ (Ivanova 1981: 9). In the descriptions of applied art, textile crafts play an important role in interior ensembles, where, as it was observed in the 1970s, there has been an ‘Interpretation of the National Heritage’ — respectively, a creative approach towards new frontiers in folk art heritage (Ivanova 1981: 10). This article seeks to broaden the perspective on the ‘interpretation of national heritage’ in textile arts, emphasizing the contribution of the Academy graduates — textile artists to the work of the Studios, to the training and inspiration of their participants.

Crafts in world university programs from the 1950s. Department of Textile Art at the Academy: study content

After the Second World War, the term ‘design’ was introduced to describe industrially produced things. Rapid industrial production contributed to the re-evaluation of man-made objects or crafts. In search of the identity of craft in the post-war world, crafts entered European and American higher education programs and more frequently appeared in academic discussions (Risatti 2007: 281). At this point it should be emphasized that the Latvian

Academy of Arts has been organizing training in crafts since 1924 in the pottery workshop. It is possible that with this program the Rector of the Academy Vilhelms Purvītis (1872–1945) managed to predict the tendencies of art education in the 1950s and 1960s. If until the 1940s the center of world art was Paris, then after World War II it was New York. It is worth reminding that it was New York where the identity of crafts was discussed, and in 1956 even the Museum of Contemporary Crafts was established. In 1961, the Department of Artistic Design of Textiles was opened at the State Academy of Arts of the Latvian SSR. The establishment of the speciality of textile art is a natural necessity of the time in Soviet Latvia, which facilitated the studies of textile crafts, academic discussions and a broader view of it in the history of art and culture. The training content: studies of Latvian folk art (techniques, composition, decorative solutions), tapestry, experiments in mixed techniques: short fringe, long fringe, wickerwork, knotting, applique, as well as knitting and crochet. The batik technique also played a role. From 1961 to 1992, the Head of the Department was Rūdolfs Heimrāts (1926–1992). He had gained attention with his creative activities in the second half of the 1950s, when art historian Jānis Pujāts (1925–1988) called the young artist a successful route finder and experimenter (Pujāts 1957: 196). Even later, in the late 1970s, art historian Ināra Nefedova (1930–2022) emphasized that R. Heimrāts's 'work is continuous studies and experimentation' (Nefedova 1979: 5). Most likely, the Head of the Department promoted creative experiments in textile art and weaving in the broadest sense — in fiber — already during the study process, and such an approach influenced textile art students and graduates in their further creative activities. It is significant that a year after the establishment of the new speciality, in 1962, the first international textile biennial took place in Lausanne, Switzerland, which was the epicenter of the latest trends in this branch. The Department of Textile Art was created following the biennale, which was organized until 1995.

The model of obtaining textile art education in the period of Soviet Latvia was initially characterized by the task of preparing decorative applied art specialists for decorating public interiors. Mostly functional textile art was created: wall and bedspreads, floor paths, curtains, tablecloths, pillows and wall decors. In the 1960s, tapestry became the dominant textile art technique at the Academy, which was suitable for the expression of abstract art in the textile art of Soviet Latvia (Jakuša-Kreituse 2011: 14).

Rūdolfs Heimrāts wanted to create a program of the artistic design of textiles which would differ from the programs of similar departments in other republics of the Soviet Union, such as the industry-oriented training in Moscow and Vilnius. R. Heimrāts' concept in creating the study program was to 'prepare artists with high professional thinking and the ability to grow' (Burāne 1989: 95). From the very first years of the program, the emphasis in the tasks was on the development of students' creative thinking, as R. Heimrāts emphasized in his 1981 interview: 'In five years' time, we wanted the students to develop themselves into comprehensive creative personalities' (Burāne 1981: 3). Several of the first graduates of the department were invited to teach in this program — e. g. 1967 graduates Aija Baumanė (1943–2019) and Rita Eglīte (b. 1941). In 1963, Gaida Vecvagare (1920–1983), a weaver and a long-time weaving teacher at Riga Secondary School of Applied Arts, started working as a foreman. The teaching process of textile art was gradually supplemented, changed according

to the trends of that period. In textile art, there were four aspects to the study program: research and adaptation of Latvian art and also the art of other nations to the needs of textiles of the time, nature studies, and the fine arts — drawing and painting.

In the first year, once a week, students visited the repositories of the Ethnographic Open-Air Museum (nowadays the Latvian Ethnographic Open-Air Museum) and the History Museum of the Latvian SSR (nowadays the National History Museum of Latvia), getting acquainted with the oldest examples of Latvian textiles, also items of ceramics, metal jewelry, and wood carvings and their ornaments. The students used the creative impulses from the folk art heritage for abstract compositions and interpretations of geometric ornaments (Bankovičs 2010: 43). From 1972 to 2016, ethnographer Ilze Ziņģīte advised students in their research of the collection of the National History Museum of Latvia.

In the second year, an increased attention was paid to the studies of the structure and forms of nature. The stylization of flora and fauna motifs formed an understanding of the transformation of real nature studies into decorative compositions (Baumane 2011: 6). An important part of the nature study process was the participation of students in annual summer plein-air activity in small towns (Bankovičs 2010: 47). For one month, under the guidance of both the department and the painting teachers, the students created a collection of sketches and compositions for later use in practical classes—weaving, batik, and fabric printing. The themes of natural phenomena in the works of Latvian textile artists were and still are of interest for many authors.

In the Department of Textile Art, one of the goals of R. Heimrāts was to develop modern textiles and an individual style of the artist—experiments in material (LVA f442: 11–12). The acquisition of art, art history, architecture, textile patterns, colors, structures, and technological development of different ethnic groups was essential to ensure a continuous process of improvement and to identify the wide range of textile possibilities (Nefedova 1979: 5). In the program of the third study year, R. Heimrāts created a lecture course, 'Experiment in Material.' The aim of the course was to encourage students to experiment with a variety of materials, techniques, and styles. The course basically consisted of demonstrating the impressions of R. Heimrāts' experience from traveling abroad: slides of foreign exhibitions, the exhibition catalogues and magazines. For example, the Czech magazine *Umění a řemesla* (Arts and Crafts), the German *Kultur im Heim* (Home Culture) (Heimrāts [no date.]). The influence of foreign magazines on Latvian textile art is a separate research topic, because in conversations with textile artists, getting acquainted with these magazines is often mentioned, but specific analogues are missing. Despite R. Heimrāts' belief that experimentation is necessary because it suggests artistic liberty, freedom, and courage, at the same time he pointed out that an artist cannot invest resources and time to create an unnecessary and useless thing (Kalniete 1986: 4). This statement confirms the importance of creative experimentation and practical application of textile work.

For textile art students, the number of academic drawing and painting classes per week corresponded to the intended number of hours in the painting department. In addition to

practical skills with teachers — painter and graphic artist Aleksandrs Stankēvičs (1932–2015), painters Boriss Bērziņš (1930–2002) and Indulis Zariņš (1929–1997)—students acquired various styles and theoretical knowledge in the use of composition and coloring, became acquainted with the latest trends in painting, and produced copies of works by prominent artists. The drawing and painting tasks developed the students' visual language and diversified their means of expression in order to apply the acquired knowledge in the creation of figural composition and, more broadly, in visual imagery. Painter and interior artist Jānis Andris Osis (b. 1943) introduced students to the principles of interior and design, developing their spatial thinking that was needed in the 1970s–80s course, placing textiles in the interior.

In the third semester, for one month, every day from 8:00 a.m. until 17:00 p.m., third- and fourth-years students gained experience in industrial practice in the printing house of the Academy. During this practice, students acquired the use of color, mesh, template and fabric printing technology. The experience gained during this practice was useful for several textile artists — Aina Muze (1943–2017), Ilma Austriņa (b. 1940), Ruta Bogustova (b. 1935) — in their first job at the textile factory *Rīgas audums* (Knāviņa 2019: 64).

Textile artists / Studio and group leaders

From the first graduation of 1967 until 1989, 133 women and 22 men textile artists graduated from the Textile Department of the Academy. In the period under study, only nine textile artists have been Studio leaders. The data were obtained from the Textile Art Department 50th anniversary edition *Tekstils LV* (2011), as well as from the materials of the Latvian Textile Art Association. From 1970 to 1984, Rūdolfs Heimrāts, the Head of the Textile Art Speciality, offered students in their final year of study and textile art graduates the opportunity to lead one of the Folk Applied Art Studios in Riga or in its suburbs. Sometimes young artists looked for a job in the studios themselves or created a new group, perceiving it as a natural continuation of their creative activity. Despite these calls, back in 1983, it has been written that 'few professional textile artists run Folk Studios' (Karlova 1983: 3).

Māra Brākše (1942–2009), a graduate of 1970, led a group of weavers at Bulduri Culture House from 1974 to 1984, while Skaidrīte Leimane (b. 1941), a graduate of the same year, from 1984 to 1999 took over leadership of Studio *Līgatne*, although at that time she also worked as a methodologist at the Academy. Lilita Postaža (1941–2011) graduated from the Academy in 1971. A year later she established a tapestry weaving group, *Gobelēns*, in Zvejniekiems Culture House. Irisa Blumate (b. 1948) still a fifth-year student in 1972, started and is still running the Studio *Draudzība*. 1974 graduate Ēmīlija Kazakevičute (b. 1949), from in the second year of study (in 1971), began to lead the Studio *Saiva* of Ogre Region Culture Centre and did so until 1991. Vija Ābele (b. 1946) also started running the Studio *Krimulda* during her studies in 1976. In the magazine *Zvaigzne* it is emphasized that V. Ābele studied 'in her third year, when Rūdolfs Heimrāts once asked whether she would

agree to take the lead of the weavers' group. He had named half a dozen places — leaders were needed everywhere. Vija had chosen Krimulda — it had been closer and better known as she had spent summers there with her parents when she was little' (Sērsna 1985: 12). It should be emphasized that Vija Ābele's contribution to folk applied art is broader than her work at the Studio, because from 1985 until 2000 she worked at Emils Melngailis Folk Art Centre as an expert in folk applied art. In her third year of studies, Astra Rubene (b. 1956) taught preparatory courses at the Studio led by I. Blumate. In 1981, A. Rubene graduated from the Academy and until 1991 she ran Ilguciems Studio *Austra*. In an interview in 2021, she emphasized that in the work of the Studio the methodological materials for weaving were based on notes made by herself during the lectures of Gaida Vecvagare at the Academy (Veilande-Apine 2021). Astrīda Freimane (b. 1943) ran the Studio *Sigulda* from 1983 to 2019. In 1983, Marina Sproģe (b. Ivanova, 1958) became the head of the Studio *Kamene* in the fourth year of the Academy and is still continuing this work.

In all Studios and groups, textile artists taught textile crafts and techniques, and encouraged creative experimental solutions in textiles. Ilze Ziņģīte, Studio researcher and ethnographer, has emphasized the important role of the Studio leaders: 'The long-term leaders of Folk Applied Art Studios, bright personalities, often with the education of an artist, are advisors and stimulators of creative work' (Ziņģīte 2008: 25). The main craft in textile Studios was weaving, but people also engaged in embroidery and knitting. In Ogre they specialized in knitting, while in some other Studios works were made via batik technique. Chronologically, the oldest group in Soviet Latvia led by one of the Academy's textile art graduates is *Krimulda*, established in 1955: the Studio was established in 1980. The group *Draudzība* (Riga) was established in 1959 but acquired the status of Studio in 1965; so I. Blumate led a group of professional craftsmen who had already acquired the status of Studio. The group *Saiva* in Ogre was established in 1960. In 1969 it was granted the status of the Studio, and E. Kazakevičute already managed a Studio. The weavers' group in Ilguciems was established in 1969, but it received the name *Austra* and the status of Studio in 1984. The group *Līgatne* was established in 1969, its Studio status was obtained in 1980. The group *Kamene* was established in 1978, in 1986 it obtained the status of Studio. Textile artists as Studio managers organized training in the crafts, creation of works for exhibitions and qualification of craftsmen for the status of Masters of Folk Crafts. For example, in 1984 the pedagogical merit of Vija Ābele was emphasized in obtaining the qualification of Masters of Folk Crafts by the Studio participants Māra Polāne, Vija Kosarenoka, Inta Drozdova, and Valentīna Garašs (Sērsna 1985: 12).

The original art and work of textile artists in Studios or groups are likely to have interacted. It is peculiar that Soviet-era textile researcher S. Kalniete, in her 1989 book *Latvju tekstilmāksla* (Latvian Textile Art), does not indicate textile artists' work and contribution to Studios or groups. Lilita Postaža has worked in the tapestry technique and no exhibition of Soviet Latvian textile art has taken place without her works. In the 1980s, Postaža turned to the depiction of Latvian folklore in the technique of tapestry (Kalniete 1989: 172). Emīlija Kazakevičute is the only one who has consistently created works of art in the technique of knotting (Kalniete 1989: 148). The publication does not mention the textile artists / leaders of textile art Studios: Māra Brākše, Vija Ābele, Astrīda Freimane, Skaidrīte Leimane, Astra

Rubene, and Marina Sproģe. Māra Brākšē was an active representative of the Jūrmala group of artists; along with woven tapestries, she has also developed textile miniatures. Skaidrīte Leimane's work is very little noticed among art researchers—an ascetic composition and a pictorially laconic interpretation of the Latvian landscape and nature color tones. Leimane's original compositions are made in techniques similar to those the artist offers the Studio participants to learn, such as dyeing yarn with natural materials. After graduating from the Academy, Vija Ābele, Marina Sproģe, and Astrīda Freimane shared their creative ideas with the participants of the Studios they were leading.

Textile art and textile craft techniques, textile artists, and examples of folk applied art

During the period under review, textile craft techniques include weaving, tapestry, batik, and knotting. Weaving on hand-loom is important in the history of Latvian folk art and culture. Textile crafts can also be explored from the point of view of the raw materials used—in Latvia, often wool and linen. As to application, textile crafts are related to interior decoration (bed or sofa cover, wall cover or table cloth, curtains, artistic wall decor), accessories (scarf, jewelry, bag). Woven fabrics have a characteristic rectangular shape, and knotting allows for variations in shapes. The word 'technique' comes from the Greek word *tékhnē* and means specific knowledge and skills of how to do something. In order to create a thing in handicraft techniques, specific knowledge is required regarding the preparation of raw materials for creating the desired thing by hand (Risatti 2007: 99). The usual method of emphasizing the technical knowledge used in the classification of crafts is related to the heritage of the history of crafts today. The raw material, working methods, and technical skills were important in the medieval guild system and still influence the view of crafts in universities and classifying things in museums today (Risatti 2007: 16).

Latvian textile crafts are often associated with the term 'tradition' or 'traditional.' The program of the speciality of textile art included studies of textile crafts of Latvian and other ethnic groups. At the Lausanne Biennial of Textile Art in the 1960s–70s, artists and theoreticians drew attention to ancient or traditional textile craft techniques. In the early 1960s, they were the old and modern examples of tapestry technique. A new approach to tapestry technique gained attention at the Lausanne Biennale in the mid- and late 1960s. Unlike French artists who designed cardboard samples, tapestries were woven in material by craftsmen; textile artists from Eastern Europe (Poland, Yugoslavia, Romania, and Czechoslovakia) created their original compositions in material themselves. They were mostly young artists who had just graduated from art school, and such an approach at that time disrupted the usual tradition of tapestry weaving. The young textile artists stood out as they prepared and dyed the fibers themselves. They also made use of unusual raw materials such as sisal, cotton, hemp, goat wool, etc. It was typical to be carried away by 'internal' impulses driven abstract composition and to create the work without previously prepared cardboard (Cotton, Junet

2017: 50). This approach also prevailed in the textile art of the Academy, especially after the 1969 exhibition of contemporary Polish textile art at the Museum of Foreign Art in Riga. The reviewer of the exhibition, V. Sproģe, emphasized: 'Indeed, tapestry occupies an increasingly visible place in contemporary art and thus enters everyday life' (Sproģe 1969: 16). The experiments with fiber seen at the Lausanne Biennale and the fiber art movement of the late 1960s and 1970s were also included in the Academy's Textile Art training.

Tapestry weaving group. The weaving group *Gobelēns* in Zvejniekciems is unique. It was established by Lilita Postaža in 1973, a year after her graduation from the Academy. The bright peculiarity of the group is that L. Postaža taught tapestry technique to the interested inhabitants of Zvejniekciems. Reading an article in the newspaper *Dzimtenes Balss* from 1982, it can be felt that the acquisition of tapestry technique has been successful and the self-made tapestries or textile paintings have decorated several interiors of Zvejniekciems in the 1970s and 1980s. The exhibition, which was held in honor of the tenth anniversary of this group, encouraged the newspaper journalist to conclude that 'Many of the houses of the collective farm *Zvejnieks* are decorated with tapestries which are works of art made by the landladies themselves — wives of fishermen, collective farm workers — in their spare time' (S. A. 1982: 8). It is still not yet known how long the tapestry weaving group lasted and what the group participants' work looked like. The latest evidence is from 1989, when the group's exhibition took place in Saku, Estonia, in honor of the Art Days of the Baltic Republics (Jumis 1989). L. Postaža encouraged the participants of the group to create their own sketches in the drawing and colors — 'to express their thoughts, emotions, to understand the basics of the drawing, the composition...all the tapestries are woven according to the sketches drawn by the authors themselves' (S. A. 1982: 8). Regīna Puķīte, a member of the group, in 1977 won the title of Master of Folk Crafts for woven tapestries (Boguša 1982: 3). Unfortunately, there is a lack of detailed information about the first tapestry weaving group in Latvia led by Lilita Postaža, but perhaps the artist continued to work, in the formulation of textile artist Georgs Barkāns (1925–2010), observing 'the unwritten rules in tapestry — to depict not a frozen moment in figural compositions, but to show the sequence of actions and events, giving the figures themselves ambiguity and elevating them to the symbolic level' (Barkāns 1982: 16). It is possible that in a similar way the leader of the group encouraged the participants to think in the material. In the early 1980s, L. Postaža addressed the themes of Latvian folklore and probably they were reflected in the tapestry weaving group she was leading. The influence of the group led by L. Postaža should be taken into account and studied in more depth. Māra Vektere, a member of L. Postaža group, was inspired by the teacher and established a tapestry weaving group in Roja in 1980. M. Vektere emphasized that Zvejniekciems tapestry weaving group was the first in the Soviet Union and participants from different countries of the Union were coming to study there (Boguša 1982: 3).

Woven fabrics — color transitions and op art. In their interviews in 2021, textile artists Irīsa Blumate, Astra Rubene, and Skaidrīte Leimane recalled that they and many of their contemporaries — artists, since the mid-1960s, had been inspired by the geometric pattern and color expression of the op art — the direction in the field of fine arts popular in Europe and the



Figure 1. Emma Rone (born 1913), handwoven blanket, 1973. Folk Applied Art Studio "Draudzība", E. Rone became Master of Folk Crafts in 1960. Wool, cotton. 222×150cm. National History Museum of Latvia, accession number 175686



Figure 2. Rasma Jekabsone (born 1931), handwoven blanket (fragment), 1981. Folk Applied Art Studio "Draudzība", R. Jekabsone became Master of Folk Crafts in 1975. Wool, cotton. 207×124cm. National History Museum of Latvia, accession number 189738



Figure 6. Emīlija Kazakevičute, Skaidrītes Rieksta (born 1913), handwoven blanket, 1980. Folk Applied Art Studio "Saiva", S. Rieksta became Master of Folk Crafts in 1975. Wool, cotton. 186×150. National History Museum of Latvia, accession number 186803

United States at that time. Hungarian and French artist and textile art theoretician Victor Vasarely (1906–1997) can be mentioned here. His work *Zebra* from 1937 is believed to be one of the earliest forerunners of the op art. Vasarely developed geometrically abstract compositions also in the field of textile art at Obison experimental tapestry weaving workshop. In the 1960s, Vasarely's compositions were also made in techniques of textile crafts. Textile artists have used op art's abstraction techniques in the works of their own and their Studio participants (Veilande-Apine 2021). During the time of management of the Studios, for the textile artists, the basic principle of op art or optical art was a method to study the ornament woven in drill pattern. Geometric abstraction and attention to detail formed a new approach to the creation of ornamental patterns, thus combining a world-famous and topical art direction and the craftsmanship skills characteristic of Latvian folk art of the 18th through early-20th centuries. In the Studios led by the artists, the interpretation of drill patterns turned into a friendly competition between them, looking for new solutions both for the proportions of squares and, in a new method at that time, for the inclusion of colored stripes in the composition of patterns. Textile art graduates and leaders of the Studios, in their interviews, emphasized the importance of color. When starting their work in the Studios, the participants used to work more with a range of neutral tones, but the textile artists encouraged the Studio participants to think about and create works that are tonally saturated, nuanced in colors.

Weaving of the 19th century Vidzeme double weaved graded color blankets was restored in the Studio *Draudzība* led by Iriša Blumate (Figure 3). In 1972, I. Blumate started running the Studio, but already in 1973 at the Republican exhibition dedicated to the centenary of the Song Festival in the Museum of the History of the Latvian SSR were displayed the graded color blankets woven by a participant of her Studio, Emma Rone (Figure 1). Participants of the Studios returned to experiments and yarn dyeing with natural dyes; there were created works based on folk craft research (Figure 2). The leaders of the Studios play an important role, as evidenced by the example in the collection of the National History Museum of Latvia—the leader of the Studio could create the composition of the woven fabric, while the participant could carry it out in the material. For example, Master of Folk Crafts Skaidrīte Rieksta wove a blanket *Daugavas akmeņi* (Stones of the Daugava River) according to a composition developed by the leader of the Studio Saiva E. Kazakevičute (Ziņģīte 2008: 24) (Figure 6). Transitions nuanced in colors—the principle of the graded color blanket.

Knotting. The knotting technique can be explained by the importance of fiber art in the world of textile art in the 1960s and 1970s. The fiber art movement began in the United States in the 1960s and is associated with the work of Lenore Tawney (1907–2007). Tawney experimented with textile crafts of different ethnic groups, developing spatial textile art (Porter et al. 2017: 173). In 1967, examples of fiber art were already on display at the Lausanne Biennale. Emīlija Kazakevičute's knotted textile works are unique in the overall picture of Latvian folk applied art and textile art (Figure 4). The artist justified the choice of knotting technique with the possibility to work without sketches and drawn cardboard samples (Karlova 1983: 3). In the 1970s, textile artists hardly ever used the knotting technique as an independent technique in their work, but E. Kazakevičute chose to knot compositions



Figure 3. Irisa Blumate (born 1948), *The March* ("Marts"), 1987. Wool, flax, metal, mixed technique. 175×240cm. Museum of Decorative Arts and Design, accession number 677

from multicolored coarse wool and linen yarns. Most likely, under the influence of E. Kazakevičute's art, in the 1970s, the technique of knotting came into textile crafts and Studio works. Ilze Ziņģīte also emphasizes that the desire to work in knotting techniques in the Studio 'seems to have been ignited by the ideas found in professional textile art exhibitions' (Ziņģīte 2008: 30). Knotted works were especially popular among textile craftsmen in the 1970s and 1980s (Figure 5). In the studio *Saiva*, participants actively worked in knotting technique. The decorative solutions created in the knotted technique appeared on the tablecloths and towel ends. The knotting technique was used to make wall decorations and blankets, flower pot holders, handbags, belts, and even jewelry. In the Studio, E. Kazakevičute taught folk art heritage (today we would call it intangible cultural heritage), composition, and technique while also helping to develop the individual style of each participant (Karlova 1983: 3). Ingrīda Ozolniece, head of the Studio *Dardedze*, in her book for practical use *Mezglošana* (Knotting), published in 1988, cooperated with this famous practitioner of the knotting technique in Latvia: E. Kazakevičute was the scientific reviewer. It should be emphasized that E. Kazakevičute is still training those interested in knotting techniques — for example, at the annual event *Satiec savu meistarū* (Meet Your Master).

Batik. In Latvia, one of the first descriptions of hot wax batik technique can be read in the magazine *Latvju Zeltene* No. 45 in October, 1962. Its place of origin was Java, Indonesia, at the end of the 19th century; the technique was introduced to Europe via the Netherlands. The idea expressed in the *Latvju Zeltene* article: until the 1940s, the batik technique in Europe was used only in handicrafts, but from the 1940s it was used in the fine arts, is worth further research (Grasis 1962: 26). In the 1960s, the technique of batik suddenly entered the



Figure 4. Emīlija Kazakevičute (born 1949), from the triptych *the Meadow* ("Pļava"). The Scorrel ("Skābene"), 1983. Wool, wood, knotted. Diameter 23cm. Museum of Decorative Arts and Design, accession number 808



Figure 5. Ida Bērziņa (born 1923), knotted wool hanging (fragment), 1987. Folk Applied Art Studio "Saiva", I. Bērziņa become Master of Folk Crafts in 1970. Flax. 138×49cm. National History Museum of Latvia, accession number 204665

fine arts of Soviet Latvia. According to the magazine *Māksla* (Art), around 1962 compositions drawn in the batik technique were created by the painter and stained-glass artist Tenis Grasis (1925–2001) (Pujāts 1962: 49). In 1962, decorative textile art compositions created in the batik technique were shown for the first time at the 1st Republican Applied Art Exhibition in Riga. Gundega Ivanova has emphasized that this exhibition was a turning point in the life of applied art exhibitions. In the following decades it was followed by exhibitions in separate fields of applied art (Ivanova 1980). In the exhibition of 1962, Rūdolfs Heimrāts exhibited for the first time a wall covering with decoratively designed birds and leafy branches. The reviewer of the exhibition, Ilga Kreituse (1919–2001), in his application of batik technique saw R. Heimrāts' desire to experiment 'in order to expand the decorative functions of fabrics up to a thematically imaginative solution' (Kreituse 1962: 10).

In the 1960s, in the newly established Department of Textile Art of the Academy, work has been done also in the batik technique — there have been created works of fine art suitable for interior decoration. Written evidence about the batik work of a student of the Textile Art Department (R. Cīrule), which was shown in the exhibition of works of schools of applied

arts (Ozols 1962: 4), is preserved from 1962. Around 1965, the students of the Department of Textile Art in the batik technique designed curtains for the diesel ship *Latvija* based on the designs of the artist Aleksandrs Stankevičs (1932–2015) (Strautmanis 1965: 54). In the 1960s, textile works created in batik technique appeared in the exhibitions of fine arts. For example, the 1966 exhibition *Sports mākslā* (Sports in Art) at the State Art Museum featured athletes and sports reproduced by Georgs Barkāns (1925–2010) (hockey, rope pulling, checkers and water polo) (Āķis 1966: 2). The batik technique was introduced also in the Riga Model House. The artists of the House developed fabrics in the batik technique for the spring-summer collection of 1966 (Gramoļina 1966: 3). Around 1966, the batik technique was introduced in the printing of fabrics in the factory *Rīgas audums* (Švarcberga 1966: 2). In its turn, in the late 1960s, in the reviews of the exhibitions of the Studio *Draudzība*, the batik technique was noted, especially the modern and bright batik composition in curtains and kerchiefs of Studio participant, the 1965 Master of Folk Crafts Vilhelmine Bodniece (Liduma 1969: 4). Pupils and students of the Textile Art Department continued to work in the batik technique until the end of the 1980s, participating in exhibitions with textile art compositions created in the batik technique (Kalniete 1987: 60). Ilze Ziņģīte emphasizes that the popularity of batik technique in textile crafts in the 1970s is also related to the influence of professional textile art. For example, in the Studio *Draudzība* (Friendship), the batik technique was promoted by its leader, Iriša Blumate. Batik technique was used by the members of the Studios *Bārbele*, *Rītausma* and also *Draudzība* (Ziņģīte 2008: 31).

In the 1990s and also today, several Studios and groups are run by textile artists who are graduates of the Academy. Marina Sproģe became the leader of the Studio *Kamene* in 1986 and still continues the work today. The Studio *Draudzība* is still run by Iriša Blumate. Until 2003, Daiga Štālberga Senoussaoui was leading the Sigulda Parish Studio *Vīgrīze*. Aija Krūmiņa has been running the Studio *Rota* since 1991. Baiba Osīte has been running the Studio *Gundega* since 2000. From 2003 to 2016, Antra Auziņa led the weaving group *Talse* in Talsi. From 2003 to 2014, Antra Saliņa led the Studio *Saiva* in Ogre. Liene Ratnika has led the Studio *Ķekava* since 2013, and Baiba Vaivare, Limbaži Studio *Dzīlņa* since 2014. From 1992 to 1996 Dace Martinsone-Lukševica taught weaving theory in the studio *Draudzība*, and since 2019 she has lead the weaving studio *Līgatne* in Līgatne Crafts House.

The work of the Academy's textile art graduates in children's and youth art schools should be studied separately. In the course of the research, it was revealed that since 1972 Rita Gustiņa (b. Krūze) all her life has worked in Saldus Children's and Youth Centre as the weaving and drawing group leader. In turn from 1989 to 1991, Vija Jansone was the head of the weaving studio at Lapmežciems Culture House, and from 1994 to 2019 she was a teacher at the textile art studio *Vijumiņš* of the Youth Center *Altona*. Inese Jakobi was a teacher of composition at Madona Children's Art School from 1975 to 1986.

The article refers to the graduates of the textile department of the Academy as textile artists. In the catalogue of 1987, compiled by the Scientific Methodological Center of Folk Art and Cultural Education of the Republic named after Emīls Melngailis, there are noted 35 studios related to textile arts and crafts (Kargāne 1987). In the above-mentioned catalogue, 16 artists

who were graduates of Rīga, Liepāja, or Rēzekne Secondary Schools of Applied Arts are named as managers of these studios. Their activities have not been described in this review; however, taking into account that during the period under review, in the programs of art secondary schools, students acquired the skills of Latvian folk crafts while developing new approaches, their contribution to the work of the Studio should be analyzed in a separate article.

Musealized Textile Art and Folk Applied Art Works Research Issues

In 1947, the exhibition of folk applied art at the Central State History Museum of the Latvian SSR was organized by Mērija Grīnberga (1909–1975), and the works purchased at the exhibition marked the beginning of musealization of the new craft (Ziņģīte 2008: 19). In Soviet Latvia, works of handicrafts and textile art of their time were included in the collections of various museums. There was not established a Museum of Contemporary Crafts, where the works could be found together, and a contemporary researcher would have the opportunity to reconstruct the periods of modernization of crafts. In comparison, in 1956, a special Museum of Contemporary Crafts was established in New York with the aim of creating a collection of works by craftsmen and artists of the time.

In the course of the research, it has been established that the works of the above-mentioned textile artists are found in the collections of the Latvian Artists' Union (LAU), the Museum of Decorative Arts and Design (MDAD) and the National History Museum of Latvia (NHML). Attention has been paid to the issue of musealized items, as works of art most likely have ended up in museums after the so-called republican exhibitions. Interesting and high artistic quality works have probably been purchased for museum collections. It should be noted that the collection of the Latvian Artists' Union has been compiled starting from 1957, but the Union itself was established in 2001. The Museum of Decorative Arts and Design, initially called the Museum of Decorative Arts, was established in 1989. Creation of the museum's collection began in the 1980s. The National History Museum of Latvia began to compile the crafts of its time in the museum's collection the earliest — already in the second half of the 1940s.

The collection of Latvian Artists Union includes a total of 16 works of art created by textile artists / leaders of the Studios in the 1970s–80s: three large-size compositions in the knotting technique created by Emilija Kazakevičute in the 1980s; three works by Iriša Blumate; five works of art by Lilita Postaža; two small-format tapestries of Māra Brākše; two compositions by Skaidrīte Leimane from the 1970s; and one by Astra Rubene. Wool, linen, sisal, and metal are used as raw materials. Techniques used include tapestry, knotting, and batik, in addition to mixed techniques. Nature themes (*Rudens, Atvasara, Papardes zieds, Pavasaris kāpās* (Autumn, End of Summer, Fern Flower, Spring in the Dunes)), history and memories (*Astoņpadsmitais gadsimts, Atmiņas, Rīgas gailis* (The Eighteenth Century, Memories, Rooster of Riga)), local

folklore and cultural traditions (*Siena laiks, Par folkloras tēmu, Baltmaize* (Hay Time, About the Folklore Theme, White Bread)), and space themes (*Planētas* (Planets)) predominate.

The collection of the Museum of Decorative Arts and Design includes works of art by 60 textile artists — Studio leaders — created in the 1970s–80s, some in the early 1990s (Raudzēpa 2006). The collection includes nine textile works of art created by Emīlija Kazakevičute in the 1970s and early 1980s, almost all created with knotting technique. It also includes thirteen compositions by Iriša Blumate, of which in the composition *Rozceļņš I–II* (Rosepath I–II) (1981) there is noticeable inspiration from the Latvian traditional weaving technique and decorative solutions. If the title of the work were removed, the combination of three abstract squares in grey and red contrasts would form a rectangular composition. Art researcher Ingrida Burāne highlights two directions in Iriša Blumate's artistic style: special coloristic subtleties and a materialization of natural phenomena, which are reflected in a wide range from classical weaving techniques to contemporary solutions (Burāne 2005). The collection of the Museum of Decorative Arts and Design contains twenty-nine tapestries by Lilita Postaža. Several of them depict storyline compositions of Latvian celebrations, as well as the themes of Zvejniekiems. It also contains five works by Māra Brākšē; three works by Skaidrīte Leimane (two tapestries and one work in mixed techniques); and one work by Astra Rubene in tapestry technique. In the interview, Rubene emphasizes that the Latvian ethnographic heritage was the main theme in her tapestries woven in the 1980s. The work in the Studio organically merged with the textile art she created — the combination became a creative experiment. The museum collection does not include examples of textile art by Vija Ābele, Astrīda Freimane, or Marina Sproģe.

The collection of the National History Museum of Latvia includes a collaborative work of Emīlija Kazakevičute, leader of the Studio *Saiva*, and Sandra Rieksta, a weaver, created around 1980 — the blanket *Daugavas akmeņi* (Stones of the Daugava River). The composition of the blanket was developed by E. Kazakevičute, but it was carried out in material by S. Rieksta. The blanket is woven in rosepath with shaded color bands. The collection includes a towel made by E. Kazakevičute with the knotting technique. The work was obtained through a purchase from an exhibition at the History Museum of the Latvian SSR in 1988. The collections of the National History Museum of Latvia contain several hundred examples of art created by Latvian Studio participants. Ethnographer Ilze Ziņģīte at the 2007 conference *Tautas lietišķā māksla Latvijā no 20. gadsimta vidus līdz mūsdienām. Šodienā. Pēdējā. Rītdienā* (Folk Applied Art in Latvia from the Middle of the 20th Century to the Present Day. Today. Experience. Tomorrow) drew attention to the so-called typological groups of folk applied art collections found in the collection of the National History Museum of Latvia. Ceramics, fabrics, jewelry, knitwear, wickerwork, handicrafts, wood and birch bark products, leather goods, forgings, as well as items of interior furnishings (Ziņģīte 2008: 23). If the works of textile artists can be identified in the Museum of Decorative Arts and Design, as well as in the Museum of the Latvian Artists' Union, then the works of the Studio participants can be found in the National History Museum of Latvia. However, a list of musealized works of the Studio participants is missing; therefore, it is not possible to notice the experiments and the creative influence of the leaders in full.

Closing, Conclusions

In the 1970s-80s, nine graduates of the Academy's Textile Art speciality led folk applied arts or crafts Studios: Māra Brākše, Skaidrīte Leimane, Lilita Postaža, Iriša Blumate, Emīlija Kazakevičute, Vija Ābele, Astra Rubene, Astrīda Freimane, and Marina Sproģe. The Studios and groups were located in Riga and Vidzeme towns: in Ogre, Līgatne, Zvejniekciems, Krimulda, and Sigulda. Tapestry, batik and knotting — the techniques that came into the folk applied art from the textile art of the contemporary world. Textile artists, on the bases of the knowledge and methods acquired at the Academy, encouraged Studio participants to experiment with textile craft techniques, to indulge in the development of original compositions, and to experiment with the weaving techniques traditional in Latvia. Interviewing textile artists, the influence of the 1960s op art in woven drill fabrics became clear, as did the devotion to unusual color nuances. Woven fabrics, tapestries, batik, and knotting works created by the participants of the Studios and groups should be studied separately, in order to identify the contribution of the leaders of the Studios in a more nuanced way.

The group created by Lilita Postaža in Zvejniekciems is unique. In this group, local women had the opportunity to acquire the tapestry technique and develop their original compositions to complement their living spaces. At present, there are no known examples of the works of the members of the tapestry group led by Lilita Postaža. Emīlija Kazakevičute introduced Studio participants to an example of fiber art — knotting technique. Knotting soon was widely practiced throughout Latvia. In further research, it would be necessary to determine which Studio participants have received the title of Master of Folk Crafts, how intensive the life of the Studio exhibitions was/is, and what works are in the collections of Latvian and non-Latvian museums.

It can be observed that the works of several textile artists/Studio leaders are not in the collections of the reviewed museums (Vija Ābele, Astrīda Freimane, and Marina Sproģe), while the works of other textile artists are widely represented (Lilita Postaža, Emīlija Kazakevičute, Iriša Blumate, Māra Brākše, and to a lesser extent, the works of Skaidrīte Leimane and Astra Rubene). At present, it is difficult to identify the musealized works of the Studio participants in order to see the creative interaction between contemporary textile art and folk applied art. We must be satisfied, however, that samples of contemporary textile art and crafts are stored in our museum collections.

Folk Applied Art Studios, as well as the Department of Textile Art established at the Academy in 1961, fit into the trends of the contemporary crafts and textile art of the world in the 1960s–80s. Studios were a legitimate way, through crafts or 'folk art,' to preserve and promote the memory of Latvian culture in a totalitarian system. An analysis of the craft practices of the peoples of the former Soviet Union is undeservedly lacking in the publications of the leading craft theoreticians of today.

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20. gadsimta 70.–80. gadu tekstilmākslinieces – Tautas lietišķās mākslas studiju vadītājas

Inese Sirica, Elīna Veilande–Apine

Atslēgvārdi: tekstilmāksla, amatniecība, tautas māksla, tehnika, muzealizācija

Raksta mērķis ir pievērst uzmanību profesionālās tekstilmākslas un amatniecības jeb tautas lietišķās mākslas mijiedarbībai Padomju Latvijā. 1961. gadā Latvijas PSR Valsts Mākslas akadēmijā (mūsdienās – Latvijas Mākslas akadēmija, turpmāk – Akadēmija) tika izveidota Tekstilmākslas nodaļa. 20. gadsimta 60. gados sāka piešķirt Tautas daiļamata meistara goda nosaukumu, veidojās Tautas lietišķās mākslas studijas (turpmāk – Studija vai TLMS). Aprakstos par Studiju darbiem pārsvarā uzsvērts, ka tās turpina tautas mākslas tradīcijas, bet eksperimenti amatniecības tehnikās un laikmetīgā tekstilmāksla kā iedvesmas avots pieminēti vispārīgā un neskaidri. Pētījumā uzrādīta laikmetīgās tekstilmākslas klātbūtne TLMS darbos un Studiju vadītāji kā saikne ar to. 20. gadsimta 70. un 80. gados Studijas vadīja deviņas tekstilmākslinieces ar Akadēmijas izglītību.

Pētniecības metodes: literatūras studijas, tekstilmākslas un tekstilamatniecības salīdzinājums, intervijas ar tekstilmāksliniecēm. Tekstilmākslinieču muzealizētās mākslas piemēri Latvijas Mākslinieku savienības, Dekoratīvās mākslas un dizaina, kā arī Latvijas Nacionālajā vēstures muzejā.