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## **Influence of Lithuanian Jewish artists on Lithuania Art modernization in period of 1918-1940**

Main field of my research concentrates around Lithuanian Jewish art and artists in interwar period. In considerably short period, of a little more than 20 years, were different models of coexistence of Lithuanian and Jewish artists - from pursue of autonomy in 1918-1924 to assimilation and integration in late thirties. These processes, among others, determined the significance and place of Jewish art in period of first Lithuanian independence. The key goal of research is to place vivid and dynamic professional Jewish Art in context of Lithuanian interwar culture.

In conference I would like present a time between 1918 and 1924, when Jewish authorities created a Jewish autonomy in Lithuania, or as historian Šarūnas Liekis calls it, “State within a State”. It was an example of collision between Jews who pursued vision of Jewish identity and Jews who chose to assimilate and work in Western European tradition. The Ministry of Jewish affairs supported cultural progress and tried to organize an exhibition of Lithuanian Jewish artists in Berlin in year 1920. Also, they became mediators for creating opportunities to send young artists such as Sara Gorschen and Bencion Zukermann to study in Berlin with supervision of Hermann Struck and Joseph Budko. After I World War very few of Lithuanian Jewish artist lived in Lithuania, so to sustain their seek of autonomy Jewish authorities welcomed artists from movement-organization *Kultur Lige*, such as Issachar Ber Ryback, Mark Chagall and Max Kaganowich. Sadly, these artists didn't make such an impact on progress of Jewish cultural autonomy. Due to complicated political climate process of Jewish autonomy was ended in 1924. Not all Jewish artists joined this path, for example, Josefus Levinsonas after returning from Russia in 1919 became one of the members of bohemian artistic life. He had multiple occupations, he was an architect, a designer and he was involved in theatre. To confirm his assimilation, he even was christened in 1923 and became Juozapas Maria Benari.

This very short and abstract paragraph showed only little hint of processes of that period in Lithuania. But it demonstrates main problems which surfaced in research. First of all, it's a bond between nationalism and transnationalism. Especially transnationalism, in my opinion, is most fitting analytical approach for explaining Jewish cultural processes in early twenties. Search of identity in Jewish art is another topic which brings wide possibilities for discussion. In my research I use mainly social art history with formal or structural analysis for description and comparison of artworks and styles.

Jewish autonomy in Lithuania was analyzed from historical and political perspectives, but lack of cultural research (mostly studies about literature and theatre) limits the knowledge of this unique period. Connecting Lithuanian example with similar in Ukraine, Russia, Poland and other countries will expand perception about this subject.