

Rasa Dargužaitė

Lithuanian Culture Research Institute

Lithuanian Dailė Art Production Factories in 1945–1990: The Aspects and Contexts of Lithuanian Design

During the Soviet period, so-called art factories on a similar principle as the factories operating in other industries such as textiles, food, furniture, etc., were founded. The structure of the art factories was adapted and used in Soviet-occupied countries. There were three *Dailė* Art Production Factories in Lithuania: in Kaunas (since 1945), Vilnius and Klaipėda (both since 1946). This type of organization functioned and was possible only in the socialist countries. In the USSR, there were about 150 factories of this type, for example, in Latvia – *Māksla* Art Production Factories in Riga and Liepāja; in Estonia – Tallinn (since 1944), Tartu (since 1957) *Ars* factories, etc. The institution of the art production factory was created, where works of art and design products are created, identified with other industries; art is equated with production and at the same time, Soviet propaganda ideas are spread through art.

The origins of *Dailė* Art Production Factories emerge from the structure of *Marginiai* (1930–1941) company created in the interwar period to support folk art and houseware industry. In 1941, during the first Soviet occupation, it was reorganized into *Dailė* cooperative. The cooperative worked (1941–1945) during a very turbulent period, when one occupation regime in Lithuania changed another, and World War II took place. *Dailė* cooperative was established also on the basis of the model of the Soviet Art Fund, which, by centralizing the material support (materials, tools, distribution of orders and remuneration for the work performed) provided to artists, controlled their creation. It should be noted that *Dailė* cooperative has preserved *Marginiai* infrastructure as regimes have changed; the company's premises were used, a nationalized workshops were connected. The cooperative brought together artists and folk artists, took care of the trade of their works, had workshops, provided financial support, and contributed to the organization of exhibitions. Actually, it is important to note that in the statutes of *Dailė* cooperative even the artists are called art *workers*, referring to the working class, who put forward the principles of Soviet ideology. *Dailė* cooperative activities were not suspended, restricted, or terminated during the Nazi occupation. This shows that this type of institution

and the principle of its operation (centralized management) were acceptable to both regimes.

After the end of World War II, *Dailė* cooperative became the basis of *Dailė* Art Production Factories, which were founded in 1945 and operated throughout the period of the second Soviet occupation. After the reorganization of the cooperative into *Dailė* Art Production Factories, it became subordinated to the Art Fund. The Art Production Factories *Dailė* united artists from various fields. Here, the urban environment decoration projects were formed and realized; the festive events, exhibitions (Expo 67 Montreal, Expo 70 Osaka, etc.), museum expositions were designed; the interiors and the exteriors of public buildings were created, and here the industrial art – decorative and utilitarian products – developed and evolved. The products of the manufactory art industry were exhibited in Lithuanian and foreign exhibitions and fairs; sold in stores belonging to the Art Fund, exported to other countries. The products produced in *Dailė* Art Production Factories, covered almost all areas of art and design. Soviet propaganda was spread in many ways and the role of art was very important from the first days of the Soviet occupation. The totalitarian regime used both gigantic monuments and small mass-produced objects to spread propaganda. That is why it was important for the Soviet regime to combine all areas of art into one centralized organization, which was much easier to control.