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Activity conditions of the artists in the first half of the 20th Century in Latvia:

Example of Jekabs Bine (1895-1955)

The proposed theme of the conference is the study of diversity and conditions of the artist's creative activity in the first half of the 20th century in Latvia. The author wants to study what influence was left by professional and social activities of a specific period in the artist's creative life. How art and politics relationship of the era influenced the artist's life, creative activity and creative work interpretation.

The basis of the study is biographical analysis of the artist Jekabs Bine. The artist lived in very tense and difficult time. Bine experienced at least five different changes of political regimes, regular changes of power, war and repressions in the first half of the 20th century. The artist's life and work phenomenon is based on facts that despite the regular changes of political regimes in the first half of the 20th century in Latvia, the artist expressed and implemented the efforts to search and study of the Latvian identity during all his life and creative work, based on research of historical facts and originality. Being politically and socially active promulgator of his national thoughts, personal character traits and success of Bine made it possible not only to escape from the Soviet repression, but also receive international awards and recognition, as well as to create essential works and national verities in the history of art of the first half of the 20th century in Latvia.

Jekabs Bine also was one of the founders and the most active leaders of the Latvian national religious movement (*Dievturība*) founded in the 20's of the 20th century. It became the artist's strong conviction and educational source. Bine is known as a convinced keeper of Latvian ideas, the researcher of folk history and identity, versatile artist and art theorist.

Jekabs Bine worked in different genres in the field of painting; his creative work is widely represented by still lives, landscapes, portraits, acts and works of social life and compositions of mythological and religious essays. In general, scrupulous academic drawing and

compositional clarity characterize all works. Bine remained loyal to academic painting being interested and aware of the new stylistic currents in art at the same time.

Bine tried to express people's national identity and power via the realistic form in his works. His artistic content was Latvian identity, which he tried to find in folk mythology, history and synthesis of ancient ornament. The artist was confused and broken while searching of this content during the Soviet era. The paintings painted during the Soviet years are more illustrative, less emotional and narrative. The artist replaced quality with quantity being unable to realize neither his content ideas nor find new ones that would be suitable for the Soviet beliefs and principles. Bine painted a lot, he experimented and searched, but there was not the result that would meet the needs of his own. It was not about to paint. A number of still lifes and landscapes, as well as works of social genre and he painted ordered portraits. Occasionally, the artist re-painted versions of the works created in recent years.

Bine experienced the reality of life of a Soviet artist during the Soviet years. At work, the artist led a stained glass department and made the works ordered by Soviet propaganda that portrayed both utopian future of life promised by communism and portrayed Stalin and other heroes of that time. In contrast, he tried to paint and study the topics close and essential for him during his leisure time, for example, secretly returning to his topical theme of *Dievturība*. Jekabs Bine tried to multiply divide his talent and imagination both between power twists and artistic directions. The painter revealed his truer and deeper nature in his works; he painted events, people and places significant to himself and gave them his emotions and feelings. The artist tried to purposefully combine pleasant to his heart with the reality of life throughout his life.