PRO-TEST LAB (2005 - ongoing)

The Lietuva cinema (1968)

The Lietuva cinema (2006)

Since independence in 1990, Lithuania has been caught up in a mad period of privatisation, property development and demolition. Like a Wild West land-grab or a gold rush, speculators and real-estate tycoons have joined forces with corrupt municipal bureaucrats to redevelop the country at an insane pace. Profit has been their only motive. Their method is simple: tell the population that a market economy is good for everything. Convince them that capital is king. Remind the public that making Lithuania look like any big capitalist city is the best way to erase the Soviet past – and to make the country attractive to even more investment and development.

Cultural and political change shattered Lithuania as all of post-Soviet space was hit unexpectedly by the ultra-rapid implementation of a shock doctrine.[1] The trans-formation from Soviet planned economy to capitalism mixed neo-liberalist privatisation and the effects of globalisation with the potency of a Molotov cocktail. Today, all would agree that "independence did not bring freedom".[2] Freedom and modernisation in post-Soviet space is uniquely understood as the free market and privatisation. The concept of a free market serves, here, as an imperative which guarantees that one's Western tutors will not be disappointed.[3] Put simply: the totality of one regime has been exchanged for another. This totality became a natural law implemented by a new ideological institution: the notorious Free Market Insti-tute[4] – which exerts undue influence over government. Under this rubric, public space, landmark buildings,

Cinema Pergale (1952)

Casino (2007)

The Maskva cinema (1975)

Shopping centre (2006)

Cinema Vilnius (1963)

Benetton (2006)

cultural life, and public opinion have been the main victims. Who needs a municipal park in the light of wild capitalism? Under the former Soviet regime the idea of public space was introduced via notions of architecture and city planning that captured the contemporaneity of the moment during the period of "Socialism with a human face".[5] Cultural entities, facilities for recreation and sports, and premises for gathering and socialising used to be planned in the centre of the city. Despite their modernist aesthetical value and utility, examples of Soviet architecture are now considered to be derelict monuments of the past, memorials to Soviet ideology.

There were those who hated Soviet architecture, hated modernism, longed for the multiplex experience, those who claimed that public squares were a deformation affecting the old parts of the city. The ideal of the Soviet modernist infrastructure and its concept of common space was suddenly reconstituted in an idealisation of privatised, closed off space. Without being romantic about the past or defending modernism, a thorough assessment is needed of the ideological premises that replaced it – namely, the destructive rhetoric of today.

During the Soviet period cinema was crucial to the cultural life of the country, with huge movie theatres being built in the centre of many Lithuanian cities.[6] These cinemas played an important role as places for public gatherings. After independence, as Soviet structures crumbled in a wholesale fashion, cinema buildings became a focus of attention for the real-estate market. In a short period of time private enterprise managed to take over and destroy almost all the cinemas in Vilnius, turning them into apartments, supermarkets, casinos and shopping centres.

More than twenty cinemas disappeared, including such urban landmarks as the Ausra (Dawn), Zvaigzde (Star), Spalis (October), Pionierius (Pioneer), Pergale (Victory), Tevyne (Motherland), Kronika (Newsreel), Aidas (Echo), Planeta (Planet), Neris, Vingis, Lazdynai, Vilnius and Maskva (Moscow). As a poor replacement, and echoing the tragedy of cities the world over, two huge multiplex cinemas were constructed: the Coca Cola Plaza in the suburbs and the Akropolis Cinemas beyond the city limits. The latter, which is part of Lithuania's largest shopping mall, is representative of the *mallification* of the country.

With the multiplexes came multiplex Hollywood movies: thus, the demolition of cinematic space encoded the demolition of independent film programming.

It is symbolic that the last cinema to be privatised and destroyed during the past decade is named after the country: Lietuva.

"Let's meet at the Lietuva"

On the lost battlefields of privatisation Lietuva has become a significant rallying point. The Lietuva was built in 1965 as a piece of Soviet modernist architecture, becoming the biggest cinema in Lithuania with more than 1,000 seats and a 200-square-metre screen (offering an ideal image size). It was home to the Vilnius Film Festival and as such has played an important role in the imaginative life of a whole generation of local people. Its name, Lietuva, is also an important signifier of national identity, as it never bore any Soviet overtones (i.e. it wasn't called the cinema of the Soviet Republic of Lithuania). To say to somebody "Let's meet at the Lietuva" really meant something during the Soviet occupation. In front of the cinema a vast public square offered an ideal space for gathering, debating, chatting and hanging out.

In 2002, the Vilnius municipal authorities quietly sold the cinema to private property-developers with a caveat that it had to operate as a cinema for a three-year period.[7] That term ended on 1 July 2005. Is it not strange that during all these years no voices of protest were raised in Lithuania? Why were people silent, indifferent, during this time of change? Why has there been no protest at all since the years of "singing revolution"? [8]

It might be thought that the cultural, urban, activist practices that call for protest, for the reclaiming of public space, come from the Western cultural tradition of democracy. A repressive Soviet past simply erased such activities from people's memories. Nowadays, the discourse of protest is not possible. Protesting means looking over one's shoulder, longing for a past; it connotes Stalinism and the massive repression deriving from the Gulag. Hence the notion of protest, and Leftist practice as such, has a negative meaning for many people in the post-Soviet world.[9]

Lietuva. Sold out

When I was a child I enjoyed going to this cinema. It seemed so big to me, so modern, so desirable. There was that cafe, where I'd always get my favourite milkshake. The huge facade could tell a tale about endless Soviet optimism, one big utopia.

The word *Lietuva* on the facade seemed outrageous in Soviet times. As a sign at the border crossing, as a border post, it marked the forbidden world, where Fellini, Antonioni, Visconti, Godard, Kieslowski, Tarkovski and even Buñuel dwelt.

Only through cinema could you see another culture, the Western one. The cinema was like a bridge, like a mediator between this and another reality.

There was also a planetarium near the cinema, where teachers would take us to gaze at the celestial sphere. We would sit in the darkness and watch the planets go round. Just like in the cinema. It seemed as if I could touch the Moon, feel its skin with my hand. The planetarium and the cinema together. They were like a local dream factory. Cosmos and cinema. Two big Soviet passions. A bridge between two systems where Communism and capitalism meet.

People would always gather in the square in front of the cinema. They would queue from dawn to dusk to get tickets. Tickets for what?

Films were important to people since they created the illusion that things were better elsewhere. Or that everything was going to be alright. Or...

The square near the cinema used to be a popular place for dates... Like bridges favoured by suicides, wailing walls and poets' graves, this place had a good aura.

Everything was happening so fast, all that stuff... I don't know when it

Participants' meeting (2005)

The state and market forces also stand in the way of protest. But democracy is conflict and antagonism, not consensus. Are we maybe dealing here with an imitation of democracy that rejects antagonism? Neoliberal conformity means, of course, avoiding antagonism while at the same time making use of it. In such a context it is very difficult to speak of protest.

If protest is impossible, if resistance is unimaginable, what kind of artistic strategy might be used in order to generate some kind of protest? And if there is no protest, can we maybe bring it about, make it happen? How do we open up the contradictions hidden on site?[10]

Towards the collective action

In March 2005 the former Lietuva ticket office in Vilnius was squatted and converted into a *Pro-test Lab* inviting people to propose different protest scenarios; to both inspire action and make it happen. Beginning as a case study of the destruction of the Lietuva movie theatre – the largest Soviet modernist pavilion-type building in Lithuania – it has developed into a space and an archive of various forms of protest (and legal proceedings) against the corporate privatisation of public space.

Talk show with politicians (2005)

Artistic praxis ought to reflect change, let's say. Although the question is, once more, how does it contribute to change, in fact? Is it possible to construct a work that wouldn't just analyse or reflect change but actually generate it? How does one organise the capacity to provoke it?[11]

The *Pro-test Lab* addressed collective production and participation and was aimed at creating a community to activate people's cultural and political imagination. The citizens of Vilnius who've joined the *Pro-test Lab* come from different, sometimes antagonistic, communities and social groups, young and old, students and pensioners, intellectuals and workers – but all trying to imagine what a positive kind of protest might be. With a bit of dash, turning *pro* and *test* into action, they have constructed a new identity for the place, as well as creating a site for testing the potential of protest.

Talk show with architects (2005)

Sold out action using banners (2005)

was sold. I even failed to notice when the cinemas disappeared. They were privatised in a moment. In my childhood Vilnius had a lot of them, maybe twenty. Vilnius was the city of cinemas. Dziga Vertov, Ladislaw Starewicz, Werner Herzog. Sartre, Greimas. Structure and cinema city. Had Mekas not gone to the West, he'd now be talking about Vilnius, not New York.

It was a hard time for cinema then. After the Fall of the Berlin Wall, the cinemas began falling, too. All that time people were silent. Nobody noticed. Everybody minded their own business. That's normal. Competition. We reject the past. We take steps towards the free market. Struggle for survival. Attempts of adaptation. Ultimately, mutual distrust.

No kind of protest is possible. There aren't protests in Lithuania like they have in France. Is it a grim aftermath of occupation?

The great euphoria after reclaiming independence. Today we are free and nobody forces us to march in demonstrations. Not like in the recent past. We are free in our choices. Finally, we have a possibility to choose.

Finally we don't have to protest. Finally, we no longer have to march in demonstrations. People don't like Soviet architecture today. It brings back depressing and even painful memories about the empire. This architecture: concrete, massive walls, grey monsters. Extremely thick walls. Now it is a ghost that should be banished from the city. Just like what happened to the monuments of Soviet ideology.

I like skyscrapers and all that is new. I've heard that the cinema is going to be demolished and that some people set up a community to save it. I felt sceptical like most of my acquaintances.

"Join in, participate, offer your own protest scenario."

To set the ball rolling a mailing-list forum[12] programmed debates and a space to do with the search for contemporary forms and formats of disobedience against the scenario of a single system. At the same time the site was opened up to conflict, as small groups of architecture students, Green Party activists, anarchists, musicians, students from TV and cinema school, animators, filmmakers and producers, theatre students, Social Democrat party members, community leaders, casual passers-by and regular hangers-out opposed, collaborated, argued with and resisted each other. This was a space to socialise and make mistakes in, not a place of consensus but one of production.

The *Pro-test Lab* archive

The *Pro-test Lab* archive organises a collection of images and props, and the relationships they produce with the act of protest. The archive maps attempts to stage an autonomous platform for action through an art project that can penetrate reality through political acts. This develops both inside and outside the art system by simultaneously considering the tension that such a relationship produces.

The *Pro-test Lab* has performed the function of a recording device, and gradually built up an identity and a scenario for both space and archive. Referring to the early model of the Lumière Brothers' camera, which had a twofold function (to shoot film and to project it), this

recording device has generated actions and registered different forms of protest. It captures the protest, which accumulates, matures, and yet remains unidentified, unvoiced, ever in search of a format and a way of becoming vocal. It has developed into a rallying point that extends artistic claims into political resistance.

The archive is constructed through the events of artistic production staged as a campaign of reclaiming public space as their method of protest. It acts to initiate the debate elicited by the conflict between privatisation and publicness, art and ethics, activism and production. Starting as an art project that investigates the energies of the productive side of protest, the *Pro-test Lab* is archiving all the possibilities of impossible protest that rally people against the privatisation of public space.[13]

From art project to juridico-political process

It was apparent from the outset that the public effectiveness of the *Pro-test Lab* would be tested against its profile in the mainstream media. Popular media in Lithuania – and around the world – is retreating from hard news coverage and in-depth issue-based reportage. And a strategy for finessing the media to put a positive – and constant – spin on an essentially insur-

With such words the group of young utopians invited everyone to protest. Students, the Greens, artists, fun-seekers.

Lanky youngsters, enjoying their temporary freedom. Some weirdos, doing nothing, waiting for their hour of success. Exhibitionists who experience sexual satisfaction fighting for the truth.

I didn't feel like the right person for all this action.

Of course, most people saw them as some kind of freaks. But they were attractive.

Every day on my way to work I would observe the young guys gathering near the cinema. They played Monopoly in the street. They put the city on sale. Everyone in this game was able to buy the cathedral or city hall of Vilnius. It's good to be rich.

I joined in. Everyone was overwhelmed by a sort of collective enthusiasm. I felt solidarity with them. Together we arranged events. A lot of events.

Somebody brought some old wallpaper. We made enormous posters and wrote *Parduota* (Sold out) in huge letters.

On Sunday morning at 7 am I went with people I didn't know yet and hung huge *Sold out* posters on the bridges of Vilnius. I walked the streets of this city and my voice cried "Sold out!"

I was surprised that so many people came to stand up for Lietuva. They chatted, danced, drank and smoked, cooked, just spent time together. Then I realised that they just wanted to identify their place. That place was as important to them as their own place. As the place created by themselves. The place of spending time together.

Was I an observer or a participant? Did I participate in this action as a collaborator?

It was really interesting to understand what other people thought. What are their intentions? Why do I hear their voice only now? Why were they silent before, when it was possible to change something?

Today is not 1968, and the Lietuva is in Lithuania. Here, protest is understood as a demon, only not black but red. And instead of horns it has a hammer and sickle.

I'm a sceptic. A realist. A grown-up. I will not protest against Bush. I want safety for my small country.

Anyway, you can't change anything. Barking dogs will not disturb the clouds. We arranged such an event near the cinema. The Lietuva will be pulled down, nobody doubts it anymore. Now this building is really grey and dead, like an alien body from another planet.

rectionist project was needed. The *Pro-test Lab* had to make sure that the media was regularly supplied with attractive and newsworthy material, so a series of performances and events that manipulated populist forms were developed to keep the project in a constant state of animation and "going public". (The inverse is also true; property developers and neo-liberal politicians can bury information by *not* scripting a press release and *not* posting information on websites.)

The Internet has become a bona fide news source and stories that begin life in cyberspace are re-reported in the dailies and on television, so significant efforts were also channelled into building a constant electronic information profile for the *Pro-test Lab*. And the profile of the Internet chat resource, and linking to other sites and discussion spaces, was constantly being built: as was the issue of public space via constantly commenting in the webblog resources of other web portals. In this way a shadow identity for the *Pro-test Lab* could be constructed within public discussion taking place in other quarters. At a certain point an online interview was republished on several websites and in a number of newspapers, which started the broader public dissemination of information.

The invitation to participate in the international exhibition *Populism* – taking place in Vilnius, Amsterdam, Frankfurt and Oslo – also delivered a strategic platform to the project. Firstly, the *Pro-test Lab* would be reported on in the framework of the exhibition (the Lithuanian media always concentrate on local participating artists) and would be delivered to a larger international audience. The *Pro-test Lab* archive has also been presented in major exhibitions in Austria, Italy, the Republic of Korea, and Russia. Appeals could also be made to international solidarity as the issue of redevelopment is a contested topic throughout Europe. Moreover, as in many small countries, Lithuanian corporate executives, politicians and bureaucrats set disproportionate store by international opinion – lest it threaten future inbound foreign investment. And high levels of investment are drawn from Norway, the Netherlands, and Germany where *Populism* was being presented.[14]

As the electronic and media profile of the *Pro-test Lab* began to rise, new names and new activists began to appear within the web-community specifically associated with the project. This was manifested in June 2006 when a call for a public citizens' meeting of cultural producers was held at the Contemporary Art Centre (CAC), Vilnius, and sixty producers attended with the aim of generating an alternative vision for the site of Lietuva cinema, which culminated in a weekend-long workshop.[15] At the same time, opinions began to appear accusing the *Pro-test Lab* of instrumentalising, or becoming, "the authority of protest" and "privatising" the discourse of protest and harnessing the potentials of networking to a selfish end.

A month later the owners of the Lietuva site, Plot 17, Pylimo Street, made their mandatory public presentation of the plans for the site. Outside the Municipal Offices appeared several figures dressed in full black *burqa*-like costumes, staged by a new group of protesters associated with the *Pro-test Lab*. In Lithuania (which is mono-cultural) the sight of a *burqa* potentially triggers associations with Islamic terrorists, or freedom fighters, among them a group known as *shakhidi* or "black widows" that were first active in Afghanistan and more recently in Chechnya.[16] The following month the citizens' movement *For Lithuania without quotation marks* addressed an open letter to the members of UNESCO World Heritage Committee expressing concerns that the building was being developed in contravention of the Vilnius World Heritage Protection Order (the Lietuva is located within the boundary of the World Heritage Zone).[17] In stark contrast, the Lithuanian Green Party, supposedly representative of shared concerns, rejected a protest action coinciding with a public protest action that they were making (and had got proper permission for), arguing that it placed them in a negative light.

The next step, and as a reflection of the growing public support for the actions being taken, a public petition *For the Lietuva cinema and the cultural policy relating to it* was launched, the intention being to present the petition to the Government and to initiate two laws: one to pursue a definition of "public space" and the other to define "public interest".[18] In one month the petition was signed by 8,000 citizens and was presented to the government of the Republic of Lithuania for mandatory future deliberation.

It turned from the centre of attraction into a grey spot. Now nouveaux riche types will have apartments here. Maybe scenes from old movies will haunt them, maybe they will hear voices.

I work a lot. Sometimes during weekends, too. It's important for me to rest. To recover. I like to relax well. I'm still looking for new experiences. New emotions.

I liked protesting on behalf of the Lietuva. It was like a vacation at the same time. To compensate what I do every day.

I met people with other ways of thinking here. What is the product they produce? Is action essential?

It's good to feel united. To have an idea worthy of your effort, worth fighting for. To feel important and to do something meaningful. Unfortunately, it's no longer possible.

Protest is based on a logic different from my job. It gave me the possibility to be in someone else's shoes. I felt as if I did something forbidden. Something illegal, beyond what's normal. The strange excitement that you feel when crossing the line of what's allowed. It's been a long time since I last experienced it. Maybe way back when I skipped classes because of the cinema.

Am I a rebel? No, it's just a kind of masquerade. I'm a weekend rebel. On Fridays, after work is a good time. I buy a strange sort of pastime.

Protest highlights my style very well.

Lietuva. Sold out, 2006
Script for the film, based on the narratives posted on the mailing list generating *Pro-test Lab* space and its activities.

At this point, entering the national legislative arena, the actions of the *Pro-test Lab* began to test the limits of an art project and also defied the temporal limitations of what is commonly understood as the work of art: a clearly defined and delineated *gestalt* object and action (concerned with aesthetic institutions). It also began to question the matter of public interest and who, if anyone, is responsible for it in Lithuania as 8,000 signatories represent a voting block or constituency large enough to influence a public election – yet no politician associated themselves with the movement. It also started a debate about what constitutes public interest, who has a right to represent public interests, and their proper value in relation to private concerns.[19] (Profit and not the people remains the mantra.) So why not an artist as a public representative?

For Lithuania without quotation marks

The *For Lithuania without quotation marks* movement began a campaign of writing open letters to the shareholders and trustees of the holding company controlling the Lietuva cinema site (to deflect attention from the ultimate owners of the concern). Private space in this case is equal to privacy, as corporate directors don't want to besmirch their public political image and damage possible future influence over matters involving the public domain. And their profit motives want to maintain the status of Lithuanian public space as "for sale" to the highest bidder.[20]

From October 2006 to January 2007 the Petition Committee of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania addressed the petition of 11 July submitted by the movement *For Lithuania without quotation marks*. The Committee instructed the Ministry of Culture to form an advisory sub-committee on the matter of the nature of public space and cultural artefacts, that included members of *For Lithuania without quotation marks*.[21]

In full exercise of their citizens' rights, the *For Lithuania without quotation marks* movement made a submission to the Vilnius District Administrative Court pursuing an "abrogation of responsibility by the Vilnius District Planning Commission for rewarding redevelopment rights and building consent for the Lietuva cinema site".

America Will Help Us (2005)

Parliament House and the monument to the fallen heroes of independence, this is becoming an urgent question for Lithuanians and their political representatives. Particularly as Vilnius is going to be caught in the glare of being European Capital of Culture in 2009: a politically motivated project that is supposed to celebrate the national spirit of creativity and to be a public celebration – which needs public spaces – of Lithuanian national culture. And not its wrecking by the forces of privatisation and consumption.

And on 8 May 2007 the four principal members of the movement were subpoenaed to appear before the Court to address their submission to delay the development of the site. And in support of the claim the *Pro-test Lab* made an action at the site, measuring the effects of the granted permissions in terms of scale, to prove to the public just how intrusive the proposed new building would be: obscuring the view of neighbouring properties and subsuming both the square and footpaths used by thousands of pedestrians every day. Their daily commuting routes, and space, were clearly set to disappear into the belly of the developer's beast.

In counter-claim the developers counter-sued the four principals of the movement in the District Civil Court[22] for loss of trade valued at hundreds of thousands of Euros as development has been halted while the courts make their findings. And that is where the process stands, straddling the legal divide: in a public face-off between a commercial Goliath and an activist citizens' David.

The Lithuanian political and legal system is being forced to confront the monster and decide between the spatial will of the agora or the atrium: which simulation of public space is enclosed within a commercial complex. Is public space a space of ambulation and aggregation free of commercial imperative, or is the space to wander through necessarily linked in the future to the necessities of consumption? As private glass-and-steel monuments to consumption start to hem in the Lithuanian

NOTES

1. Naomi Klein: *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*. New York: Metropolitan Books/Henry Holt, 2007.

2. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak: *Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988.

3. Slavoj Zizek: "What Is To be Done (with Lenin)?", *These Times* (21 January 2004).

4. The statutes of the Lithuanian Free Market Institute clearly encourage that freedom is the right of access to a free market, the rights of the individual to own private property, the rights of the market to set value.

5. "A process of mild democratisation and political liberalisation that would still enable the Communist Party to maintain real power" (Wikipedia).

6. By the time that Lenin dispatched *agit-trains* (with Dziga Vertov films on board) to propagandise about the revolution, cinema was already considered to be the most important of all the arts in the Soviet Union. As part of Communist policy, but also due to Stalin's personal fascination for cinema, a great many film theatres were built around the country. It would be too reductive to say that cinemas were merely places of ideology. Those built in Lithuania played a crucial role as places for public gatherings and for the production of cultural awareness.

7. The Lietuva was privatised by the company VP Market, a national supermarket chain. VP Market has made inroads into other fields, such as real estate, the supply of energy, etc. As well as its overall domination of the Baltic market, it also extends as far as Bulgaria and Rumania.

8. "The Singing Revolution is the commonly used name for events between 1987 and 1990 that led to the regaining of independence of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania" (Wikipedia).

9. Here we should mention that all Leftist discourse in Lithuania smacks of Stalinism and of state-controlled demonstrations. It just so happens that during the last fifteen years no serious attempt has been made to reintroduce Leftist discourse into politics. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, all the one-time Communists became hardcore capitalists. They were capitalists in the Soviet period, too, having all the privileges that European Union bureaucrats have in Brussels today. After the re-establishing of independence, the ex-Communists merely changed the name of their party, since the CP was made illegal, just like the National-Socialist Party was in Germany after the Second World War. The Communists became Social Democrats. And those who did not change their name – the real Communists, so to speak – are now in prison.

10. The site is always structured symbolically, architecturally and ideologically, and the job in hand is to reveal hidden contradictions.

11. We started discussing the idea of creating an experimental model for resistance in the autumn and winter of 2004 with the curators of the *Populism* exhibition.

12. vilma@vilma.cc, which had almost two hundred participants.

13. More than seventy events have been organized at, or in relation to, the *Pro-test Lab* from April 2005 till now.

14. As part of the *Pro-test Lab* programme, on the 23 August 2005 there was a TV bridge between Vilnius and Oslo organised by the Office for Contemporary Art (OCA) in collaboration with Atelier Nord. It brought together artists, architects, activists and politicians from both countries for comparative study of gentrification processes in Norway and Lithuania and how they lead to the privatisation of public space.

15. The workshop titled *Bezpridel* was organised as a three-day session discussing the proposal for the Gwangju Biennial brought by curator Cristina Ricupero. Reflecting upon the notion "the abundance of Asia," it was interesting to think about the constraints framing Europe and Asia. This kind of thinking about two positions is essential for the local Vilnius and Lithuanian context as it is striving to resolve historical bonds with Asia and articulate its relations with Western Europe. It is thought that Europe constitutes itself as a constant building of borders, whereas Asia is borderless,

and it could be framed as *Bezpridel*, a Russian word that is hard to translate, meaning "go as you please".

16. Several figures dressed as "black widows" of Islam (although they were not only women), with their faces covered, all except the eyes, walked through the main streets of the capital, visiting a large supermarket and spending some time at the fountain next to the Parliament. An hour after they paid a visit to the Parliament fountain the participants were apprehended by the security services.

17. An appeal to UNESCO *Concerning the Destruction of Cultural Heritage and Cultural Open Spaces within a Cultural Heritage Object: the Historic Centre of Vilnius* was presented during the UNESCO World Heritage Committee 30th session in Vilnius on 8-16 July 2006.

18. A Lithuanian version of the petition http://www.culture.lt/peticija/ was signed by more then 8,000 citizens. There is an ongoing version to express international support for this petition at: http://www.culture.lt/petition/

19. Such a discussion was organised in October 2007 by the Parliamentary Committee for Law and Order in collaboration with the Free Market Institute to analyse the decree that defines the "defence of public interest" and came to the conclusion that "as regards the often occurring complex economic, social processes in society, it is difficult to identify public interest and to distinguish it from private interest or the interest of marginal groups of people."

20. In October 2005 VP Market sold their shares of the Lietuva cinema to a real-estate developer, Rojaus Apartamentai (Paradise Apartments), and today the owners of Lietuva are: Cinema Scotland shareholders Peter Baker (Chairman); M2Invest shareholders, Arthur Simonsen (Vice-chairman) Dalius Kaveckas, Amit Majithia and Per Moller (shareholders).

21. The committee decided to partially meet the demands of the petition and to approach the Government to create working groups at the Ministry of Environment, including a working group to initiate a law that would define a public space within the framework of "territorial planning and consent", and to organise, at the Ministry of Culture, a survey of cultural spaces in the urban environment.

Lithuanian pavilion, 52nd Venice Biennale (2007)

Fluxus East, Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin (2007)