



Latvian Garden of Destiny – the Place for Inspiration to Implement Dreams

Topic: Architecture

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Abstract

On an island in Koknese on the Daugava there is a place where the past, the present and the future of the people as well as the nation merge to give solace to the past, strength to the present and inspiration to follow your dream in the future. Landscape artist Shunmyō Masuno from Japan has visualised the Garden of Destiny, which is an architectural ensemble of monumental landscapes and has been shaped as the metamorphosis of the choir suite – it consists of the prelude and six parts, which are divided in three zones. Each zone relates to its own time and space, but all-in-all it symbolizes eternity. Latvian architects Andris Kronbergs and Raimonds Saulitis along with the “Design Bureau ARHIS” and the people of Latvia are all helping to implement this dream. The Garden of Destiny was created for the memory of all the inhabitants of Latvia whom Latvia lost during the 20th century, the ones who perished in wars, the repressed one, the ones who were forced to go to exile or suffered any other way due to their political views. Almost in every family there is a victim. The Garden of Destiny is a symbol of nation’s continuous growth and development, as well as a place, which tells us in a symbolical way what the cost for Latvian national freedom and independent state was, simultaneously confirming independence and power of Latvian nation, which has enabled it to endure and anticipate better future. The Garden of Destiny, founded on August 11, 2018, gives us not only joy with the blue waters of the Daugava and changeable gradations of the sky, but also cheers us up with the saturated green shades.

What inspires the human nowadays to find strength and implement intentions? How to reveal completely the architectonically organized environmentally emotional qualities so that they would address the human? Where is the power of symbols hidden?



Latvian architect Andris Kronbergs, landscape artist Shunmyō Masuno from Japan, the Garden of Destiny (photo by Jānis Brencis and Gatis Balodis)

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Key words: Andris Kronbergs, architectural ensemble, Latvian Garden of Destiny, symbol, Shunmyo Masuno

Main References: http://latvia360.com/tour-resources/koknese/apskates_objekti/liktendarzs/5/tour.jpg

Latvian Garden of Destiny as Place for Inspiration to Implement Dreams

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Abstract

On an island in Koknese on the Daugava there is a place where the past, the present and the future of the people as well as the nation merge to give solace to the past, strength to the present and inspiration to follow your dream in the future. Landscape artist Shunmyō Masuno from Japan has visualised the Garden of Destiny, which is an architectural ensemble of monumental landscapes and has been shaped as the metamorphosis of the choir suite – it consists of the prelude and six parts, which are divided in three zones. Each zone relates to its own time and space, but all-in-all it symbolizes eternity. Latvian architects Andris Kronbergs (*Fig. 4*) and Raimonds Saulītis along with the “Design Bureau ARHIS” and the people of Latvia are all helping to implement this dream. The Garden of Destiny was created for the memory of all the inhabitants of Latvia whom Latvia lost during the 20th century, the ones who perished in wars, the repressed one, the ones who were forced to go to exile or suffered any other way due to their political views. Almost in every family there is a victim. The Garden of Destiny is a symbol of nation’s continuous growth and development, as well as a place, which tells us in a symbolical way what the cost for Latvian national freedom and independent state was, simultaneously confirming independence and power of Latvian nation, which has enabled it to endure and anticipate better future. The Garden of Destiny, opened on August 11, 2018, gives us not only joy with the blue waters of the Daugava and changeable gradations of the sky, but also cheers us up with the saturated green shades.

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Introduction

In the middle of the River Daugava on the Island Krievkalns, which was formed in 1966 when the Pļaviņas Hydroelectric Power Station was built near the Koknese Castle ruins, till the 100th Anniversary of the Proclamation of Independence of Latvia the monumental landscape architectural ensemble was created. During the Soviet era, this territory was used for agriculture and an aerodrome. In 2005, Koknese municipality renamed ‘Krievkalns’ as Koknese Island (*Fig. 1*). In 2008, this island became a part of the Garden of Destiny.

There is archaeological evidence of wars including World War One, 1914, which has left its mark of trenches in the garden territory. It is a place, which tells us symbolically how much the freedom and independent state cost the Latvian nation, at the same time also confirming independence and power of the Latvian nation, which has enabled them to endure and look with hopes into the future (Fig. 2).



Fig. 1 The Island Krievkalns in the middle of the River Daugava (source: http://liktendarzs.lv/f/images_list/1500w/071fec2d554ecf755e730ccb4c761315.jpg)

Fig. 2 The island gives us not only joy with the blue waters of the Daugava and changeable gradations of the sky, but also cheers us up with the saturated green shades (source: <http://www.designblog.lv/wp-content/uploads/2010/03/Picture-945-475x315.png>)

Almost in every Latvian family there are the victims – somebody who perished during the wars, somebody who was repressed or was forced to go to exile due to their political views. In order to commemorate all people who Latvia lost in the 20th century, in 2005, Marta and Vilis Vītols (Fig. 3) founded the “Koknese Foundation” and they started to form a symbol of the nation’s continuous growth and development – Latvian Garden of Destiny, which unites different generations and is also the victims’ memorial of the Latvian occupation and Nazi occupation regime. Demography experts of Latvia, taking account the whole time people worked in Siberia and somewhere else in exile, lived there, the harm to their health, affect on the birth and other factors, estimate that the loss created by the USSR occupation regime can be measured as about 10 million man-years. It is known for sure that the number of the killed, deported, imprisoned in the concentration camps and the forced ones to go to exile exceeds 600 000 lives, apart from the unborn children. According to the national census, the number of Latvians living in the territory of Latvia from 1 467 035 (77% of the total population) in 1935 decreased up to 1 387 757 in 1989.



Fig. 3 Founder of the “Koknese Foundation” Vilis Vītols and Valda Auziņa (source: https://encrypted-tbn0.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcROj6TJs4Uf3JHKfgbmxEw3tRSIlm5YDqt-dMjeEfbj_H0dkrn1)

Fig. 4 Latvian architects Andris Kronbergs and landscape artist Shunmyō Masuno during the opening enterprise of the Garden of Destiny on August 11, 2018 (photo by Jānis Brencis)

In 2006, an open international tender was organized for the Garden of Destiny artistic and philosophical concept solution. 207 applications of ideas were received: 112 were submitted from Latvia, but 95 from other countries (18 from Italy, 13 from France, 7 from Switzerland, 5 from the USA, Chile and Spain, but 4 from Belgium and Lithuania, 3 from Brazil, Denmark and Sweden, 2 from Croatia, China, Great Britain, Poland, Germany and Turkey and 1 application of ideas from Australia, Bosnia and Hercegovina, Indonesia, Israel, Japan, Qatar, Lebanon, Macedonia, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Slovakia and Finland). Applications were assessed by a Commission of International Jury, which on March 23, 2006 made a decision and announced results. The first prize was awarded to the project “Meisō” (meditation) by the world-recognized Japanese landscape architect, manager of the design company “Japan Landscape Consultants” Ltd., Professor of Tama Art University Shunmyō Masuno. The second prize was awarded to Andis Blūms from Latvia, but Claudio Zappia and Rosanna Law from Great Britain received the third prize. Lauma Garkalne, Ligita Tomiņa, Loreta Erele and Gunta Rozenberga from Latvia obtained the Incentive Bonus. Out-of-competition regulation the jury awarded a special award to four-year-old Christopher Rubin from Latvia.

What inspires a human being nowadays to find strength and implement intentions?

Chief Priest of the Sōtō Zen Temple Kenkō-ji, guest lecturer at Harvard, British Columbia and other universities, author of lots of publications and books, landscape artist Shunmyō Masuno (*Fig. 4*) has created gardens in Berlin, Stuttgart, Frankfurt, Bergen, Ottawa, Singapore, Hong Kong and elsewhere. He has been motivated to take part in the project competition by the fact that also Japan has lost about 600 000 people in the Gulag camps. Before designing a garden, Masuno first meditates and establishes a dialogue with the space. This requires emptying of the self in order to “hear” elements of the garden speak. He explained his perspective on the ethics of gardening, saying that gardening brings about gentleness in the designer, builder, and caretakers. The garden teaches suchness or the intrinsic value of each thing, connectedness, harmony, tranquillity, and sacredness of the everyday. Developing a sense of respect for all things is no small step in becoming an ethical human being, both with respect to other humans and the environment at large.

In 2006, Shunmyō Masuno arrived in Latvia for the first time and in cooperation with “Japan Landscape Consultants” Ltd. He made the sketch project of the Garden of Destiny (*Fig. 5*). The monumental landscape architectural ensemble has been created as a metaphor of a musical piece, which includes the prelude and six parts. Each part is divided into three zones, but each zone is related to its time and space. The Garden of Destiny as a whole is like a symphony in seven parts, which symbolizes harmony and eternity of nature and the human being (*Fig. 6*). The first is the “Zone of Memory,” which is orientated towards the past and consists symbolically of two parts. The first part “Promise” or “Silver Sunset” starts with a stone paving, followed by a water canal which symbolizes victims’ tears, and it is closed by a monument hill made of 600 000 grey stones. The sunset is not in the usual colour, but rather grey – as a tragedy and emotional experience about what has happened. A path through this part and over the bridge takes to the sacred place at the Daugava – the memorial amphitheatre. The second part is the “Prayer” or “Light of Soul.” In the place, where we pray so that what happened to us would never ever repeat again, one can watch the sunset in the evening, but on November 18, the Proclamation day of the Republic of Latvia solemn national celebrations take place. The second one is the “Healing Zone” dedicated to the future. The third zone is the “Destination – Latvian’s Heart.” The Garden of Destiny is a symbol, created in nature for a constant renewal and growth of the nation – here the past, present and future of both the human and the state meet. An outstanding environmental architecture with nature of the island and beauty of the Daugava’s flow have been combined.



Fig. 5 The sketch project of the Garden of Destiny (architect Shunmyō Masuno)

Fig. 6 The model of the Garden of Destiny (architect Shunmyō Masuno in cooperation with “Japan Landscape Consultants” Ltd., source: http://liktendarzs.lv/f/features/300w/slide_29538.png)

Where is the power of symbols hidden?

A garden is not so much a place for pleasure, recreation or socializing, as a way to achieve a certain state of human spirit, peace of mind and balance of consciousness. In the garden preparation for it begins. In the Japanese garden, elements for landscape design are secondary to invisible philosophical, religious, and symbolic elements – water, stone islands, plants, and traditional small forms. Any element of the Japanese garden very rarely carries any additional, symbolic load, but then especially high aesthetic requirements are placed on it. The refined simplicity of things has the strongest artistic impact on the audience. Aesthetic characteristics are naturalness, refined elegance, the use of hints of information transfer. A state when “there is nothing”, but still it is not emptiness. The concept of “not exist”, “not have”, “absent” in practice can be expressed in an extensive gravel field. An exceptionally positive quality – endurance, ripeness, juiciness, as well as naturalness as opposed to artificiality and violence. This principle prohibits the use of complex, intricate, decorating design and does not welcome too small elaboration of details. In the garden, it implies the active use of darkness and in general dark colours as a background for the lighter part of the garden and welcomes monochrome as opposed to colour. Aesthetic principles are quite universal and applicable in any Japanese garden, be it small, or a garden for walking, consisting of changing species and therefore requiring constant movement of the viewer, or a static landscape designed for equally motionless contemplation form. Japanese landscape designer is guided by a suggestive design approach. What the viewer sees should indirectly express thoughts of the creator, not to depict and not to explain, but to offer, hint, direct to certain reflections. Some aspects of the garden can be hidden from the viewer for the time being, other things can be made so that they cannot be seen at all, but one could guess about their presence. The desire to show an expensive (in the literal and figurative sense) object should be suppressed in all its glory, just as bright colours should give way to a restrained and natural one. It is necessary to ensure that everything that can be re-read, was in odd quantities. In Japan, Time is always considered the co-author of the garden and the assistant designer. Develop a garden so that its beauty responds to the place and course of time, as leaves respond with a breath of breeze, so that there is nothing bulky and coarse in it. Instead of absolute dimensions, the consciousness and the subconsciousness are completely affected by the “three forces”: horizontal, vertical and inclined planes. We react to each of them in a completely different way: the horizontal is associated with the earthly expanse or a water mirror, with a calm, slow motion and, consequently, spiritual tranquillity. The vertical is the tension and energy needed to move up to the sky, but a clean, accented vertical is quite rare in a Japanese garden. The diagonal, or inclined plane, most often in form of an old tree, bent under the weight of years, or slopes with stone debris

and bistro running streams causes dynamic associations. Art and man-made should not bulge compared to the natural. The result of creative and hard work should look easy and at ease as a result of the work of the genius of nature, and not of human hands [2].

How to reveal fully the informatively emotional qualities of the architecturally organized environment in order to address a human being?

Design of Japanese gardens accompanies aesthetic and philosophical ideas, avoids artificial ornamentation and highlights the natural landscape. Worn, aged materials and plants are generally used to suggest an ancient and faraway natural landscape and to express the fragility of existence and time's unstoppable advance. It was considered good to use in the Japanese garden local plant species – those that are accessible and feel better than the exotic ones brought from afar. In the middle climatic zone, only a few Japanese plants are able to pass the winter. Many of them are quite adequate replacement [2].

The Japanese garden with winding paths is never revealed to the viewer immediately. The speed of movement, the rhythm of the pitch and the perception of the garden depend on how they are arranged. The location of stones on the track is made to move relatively slowly, looking down at one's feet. Uneven steps avoid attention from unwanted views or will help to see something important. Stones not only create the look of the garden, but also dictate its perception. At the junction of the diverse medium, stones indicate that a completely different story begins. In the garden we do not walk, but travel along roads, do not wander without a goal, but move from Place to Place, from Discovery to Discovery. A garden should occupy a large area in which we travel through time and space. The central part has a bizarre-shaped pond with islands, surrounded by man-made hills and valleys, along which travel routes are laid. In gardens hills and the pond are recreated landscapes in miniature in order to make imaginary journeys along paths for walks, which should evoke feeling of going on a long, mysterious journey. Routes for walks should lead uncharted spaces and spheres out of the garden to external to it – to distant places and even, perhaps, to far times. Garden views should be revealed to visitors as successive frames of a film that has never been seen before, and the design of tracks prompts the viewer where to look and where to stop. In the garden, depending on its size and mastery of execution, such pictures can be from two or three to several dozens, in order not only to depict the deep purpose of the garden for walking, how to interpret and find the essence of beauty, to explain the reason for the attractiveness of the garden [2].

Implementation of the Garden of Destiny

The place, where the Garden of Destiny has been implemented, could tell us lots of interesting facts, as during the course of time it has experienced unique things. In 1935, in Koknese the Harvest Festival took place the first and only time, in which President of the Republic of Latvia Kārlis Ulmanis also participated. Anyone could take part in the Garden of Destiny development with their work, time, good thoughts and means. The "Silurs" Ltd. Carried out the engineering geological research, "JMI Birojs" Ltd. Made the project for the Daugava's bank reinforcement in the Amphitheatre's 402 neighbourhood, but the "Polyroad" Ltd. Prepared technical projects for construction of the Perimeter Road and the Amphitheatre. Architects Andris Kronbergs and Raimonds Saulītis form the design office "ARHIS" Ltd. Developed the project for the multifunctional public building and its adjoining territory.

Implementation of the Garden of Destiny was divided into 10 stages, and in 2008, the Garden of Destiny was opened with the planting of the Apple-tree Alley. In April a hundred apple-trees were

planted, and every apple-tree has got the planter's message to someone close person or group of people. Romantic apple-trees surrounded the life artery of the Garden of Destiny and it takes to the central part of the garden – the Amphitheatre at the Daugava (Fig. 7). President (1993–1999) of the Republic of Latvia Guntis Ulmanis together with his grandson planted one of the first apple-trees. Since December 11, 2008 President (2007–2011) of the Republic of Latvia Valdis Zatlers has been the guardian of the Garden of Destiny.



Fig. 7 The central part of the garden – the Amphitheatre at the Daugava (source: <http://i9.tiesraides.lv/1200x0s/pictures/2016-07-25/2016-07-25 liktendars ugis nastevics.jpg>)

Fig. 8 On both sides of the Apple-tree Alley or the Friends Road of the Garden of Destiny the land was levelled in about 10 ha and grassland was planted (source: https://www.celojumubode.lv/uploads/country/500x_image-liktendarzs-liktendarz.png)

In 2009, Koknese farm “Roplaini,” managed by Aivars Dambītis, carried out bulky earthworks with a great precision for the Amphitheatre's building site preparation. The location of the Amphitheatre was outlined in nature, footpaths, envisaged in the project, were created, the territory of the gravel-pit was cultivated, opposite Koknese Evangelic Lutheran Church the bank of the Daugava was cleaned up and a carpark for visitors' cars was made. With the helpers and local entrepreneurs' from Koknese support on both sides of the Apple-tree Alley (2008) or the Friends Road of the Garden of Destiny, the land was levelled in about 10 ha and grassland was planted (Fig. 8).

In the late summer and autumn about 30 individual joint work activities took place, in which 2 000 people from whole Latvia took part. Shunmyō Masuno had sketched the View Terrace in his project, therefore in 2009 the “Koknese Foundation” organized the project tender for students of the Art Academy of Latvia and Riga Technical University. The jury evaluated 24 applications. The prospective architects from Riga Technical University Laura Laudere and Didzis Jaunzems together with their cooperation partner architecture office “Jaunromāns un Ābele” won. During the Forest Days, President of the Republic of Latvia Valdis Zatlers with his spouse Lilita Zatlere planted an oak-tree.

In spring 2010, a temporary information building, where to meet visitors and introduce them with the project, was made in the Garden of Destiny. The main event of the year in the Garden of Destiny was the beginning of the Amphitheatre construction on April 15. More than 500 stones from different parts of Latvia were delivered for the stone layer “Silver Sunset”. In 2010, Didzis Jaunzems and Laura Laudere in cooperation with architects from the architecture office “Jaunromāns and Ābele” Mārtiņš Jaunromāns and Māra Ābele developed the technical project for the boat marina with the View Terrace in the riverside grove of the Daugava. The jury marked the pavilion's successful blending with the landscape of the Daugava and its intimate link to the nature. “JMI Birojs” Ltd. and Juris Marnauza offered their solution for the river bank reinforcement as a donation. In the summer, using the material, excavated in the part of the Amphitheatre, the “Little Mountain” (Fig. 8) was made. According to Shunmyō Masuno's plan, on the hill a spiral

memorial house will be built, in which visitors will be able to climb the spiral stairs in order to look at 60 000 perished for Latvia people's names engraved on the walls. The technical project for the House of Silence, which will be a place for contemplation and memories, was developed by students of Riga Building College, who intended their work as a donation to the Garden of Destiny [1]. Several lists of the politically repressed people have been made, but the information has not been collated yet to show anybody an available and clear list. On November 18, 2010 a presentation of the work accomplished during that year was demonstrated. The founder of the "Koknese Foundation" Marta Vītola was awarded the title of the Honorary Citizen of Koknese.

On January 20, 2011 a bonfire was kindled in the Garden of Destiny to commemorate the ones who were killed during the barricades in January, 1991. In 2011, it was planned to develop the five zones designed by landscape architects and planting of trees on the prepared relief was continued. Plants are the flesh of any garden. In Japanese gardens the main material is a stone in a form of gravel and pieces of rock of different sizes. In rock gardens there are plants – grassy plants and moss or groups of trees. In a single Japanese garden, a rather limited set of plants is usually used, although the wild flora of Japan is by no means poor. Many species that are often used in the world's horticulture originate from the Japanese archipelago. Usually in the garden several plant species are repeated many times, which in the best way affects the colour unity, general integrity and rhythm of the composition. In the Japanese garden, little attention is paid to plant diversity and overseas, rare or valuable species. Preference is always given to native species of trees, shrubs and grasses. The main structural tree is a pine – a symbol of happiness and longevity. The base of the Japanese garden is most often coniferous, including "black pine" and "red pine". Plants are often used as carriers of a symbolic load, closely related to spiritual and physical life.

In 2012, the first 1 000 stones were cobbled in the path of the Apple-tree Alley. The path was covered with grey pavement (Fig. 9), applying boulders, which were searched for all over Latvia. Mostly the dark grey ones were necessary, which were envisaged in the design of the Garden of Destiny (Fig. 10). First of all, they were looked for in the nearest neighbourhood, as transportation of big stones is expensive.



Fig. 9 The first stones, cobbled in the path of the Apple-tree Alley (source: http://laikraksts.com/raksti/foto/LL258/Liktendarzs_394.jpg)

Fig. 10 The path was covered with grey pavement (source: <https://encrypted-tbn0.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcQtm8eUObMZ533QfKEtvsQBly5zGbgxoBRvbPt5cuiB8Q05HYAiVQ>)

In 2012, all pupils from comprehensive and vocational schools of Latvia were invited to prepare little plates of wishes for the Anniversary of Latvia. Five best ones from every school of Latvia were sent to the "Koknese Foundation", which received in total 334 dispatches with 1 739 plates that on November 9 were placed in the Garden of Destiny. Next year everybody was invited to proceed with the tradition, started by pupils, and leave their wish to Latvia (Fig. 11).



Fig. 11 Everybody was leave their wish to Latvia (source: <http://www.ovg.lv/sites/default/files/Liktendarzaa3.JPG>)

In August, “Dreamway” Ltd. under Andris Ozoliņš’s guidance started to build the View Terrace (Fig. 12), architecturally conforming to the forest relief of the Garden of Destiny, which is the result of lots of people and countries’ good will and cooperation, where one can feel the flow of time and find their strength.



Fig. 12 The roof of the View Terrace for looking at the River Daugava (source: <https://www.designboom.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/DJA-view-terrace-+-pavilion-designboom03.jpg>)

When looking at the river of destiny from the terrace, it is possible to see a picturesque view over the Daugava. The View Terrace, which is one of the most with love replete objects (Fig. 13), is an often-chosen venue for wedding ceremonies by new couples.



Fig. 13 Interior view of the View Terrace (source: https://images.adsttc.com/media/images/534b/740f/c07a/8005/6100/0097/large_jpg/View-Terrace-13.jpg?1397453823)

Two paths take to the terrace (Fig. 14, 15), which wind on two levels – one of them reaches the Daugava, but the other one merges with the building and takes to the roof of the View Terrace. The first permanent building of the Garden of Destiny – the View Terrace (Fig. 16), which was opened for public on November 9, received the Latvian Architecture Award. The greenery of the terrace was made by Romāns Streļčūns, the specialist from Dendroflora Department of the National Botanical Garden of Latvia and project manager Bruno Cīrulis. The photo of the View Terrace was published in the international landscape magazine “International New Landscape” in the autumn, 2015.



Fig. 14 Two levels of the View Terrace (source: http://travelnews.lv/gallery/5672/mid_129345.jpg)



Fig. 15 Two paths take to the terrace (source: <https://inhabitat.com/wp-content/blogs.dir/1/files/2014/03/View-terrace-and-Pavilion-DJA-2.jpg>)



Fig. 16 The Garden of Destiny and the View Terrace in wintertime (source: <http://www.fold.lv/uploads/2013/05/LAS-Liktendarza-paviljons1-1007x706.jpg>)

Not far from the View Terrace, the Hiroshima Peace Stone (Fig. 17), presented to the patron of the Garden of Destiny, President of the Republic of Latvia Valdis Zatlers, was placed on May 25, 2010, which is calling for peace all over the world. The unique heart-shape boulder, chosen by sculptor Ojārs Feldbergs – the Heart Stone (Fig. 18), has become the symbol of love of the Garden of Destiny and beloved place for wedding ceremonies. It calls you to feel the energy of stones accumulated through centuries and enjoy the picturesque landscape. Not far from there the Wedding Grove has been created, where newly-weds plant trees on their special day.



Fig. 17 the Hiroshima Peace Stone (source:

<https://f8.pmo.ee/linKunoCAtkiZ6deTwrtYAbJhzY=/685x410/smart/nginx/o/2018/07/04/7998401t1h64d6.jpg>)



Fig. 18 Architects Shunmyō Masuno and Andris Kronbergs and the Heart Stone (photo by Jānis Brencis)

The apple trees of the Destiny Garden's Friends Alley, which stretch their branches over the cobbled path, are overseen by the leading specialist of Institute of Horticulture, Doctor of agronomy Māra Skrīvele, and in the autumn 2011, the first fruits were harvested. On November 18, the path of the Apple Alley towards the Amphitheatre was illuminated for the first time by the initiative and support of the "Dreamway" Ltd.

In 2013, paving of the Apple-tree Alley, planting of the Destiny Garden's Grove, construction of the car parking and the Amphitheatre, in whose centre Shunmyō Masuno placed ten big boulders from Latvia, were continued. In the Japanese garden, stones are used to imitate wildlife and they are designed to evoke associations with natural landscapes. The garden creator must be able to see the beauty of nature and in an ideal way to create it in the garden space. Abstract compositions that have nothing in common with the natural landscape are endowed with powerful symbolism that leads the mind far beyond the limits of the garden fence to philosophical depths and spiritual heights. Large stones can be a visual obstacle – to divide, complicate the space, close unwanted species, protect from the wind or someone else's gaze. Stones can be a neutral background (Fig. 19) for other elements of the garden, serve to fix the shore or slope, hold and mark turns of

the water channel, mark and make more natural changes in the direction of paths and adjust the speed of movement, on the stairs and ramps prevent soil flushing.

The stone, located separately from the others, must be with character, so that one would like to look at it. Raw and processed stones are used for paving and bridges. From 2013 till 2017, the Latvian Association of the Politically Repressed Persons together with 72 members of Latvia municipalities planted 40 oak-trees. In order to commemorate the politically repressed ones from their towns and regions they formed the guard of honour around the Amphitheatre (2010–2018), which concentrates in itself the blooming love of the Apple-tree Alley, eternal peace of the stone layer and power of the donated stones and separates symbolically the past and future part of the garden. The grey stone layer “Silver Sunset” around the Amphitheatre consists of more than 50 000 boulders (Fig. 20), which were taken there by inhabitants of Latvia for their relatives and family remembrance. The River of Tears (Fig. 19) flows along the external side of the stone layer (Fig. 21, 22) and symbolizes victims’ tears and faith that what happened in the past will never ever recur. To arrive in the heart of the Garden of Destiny, one has to let the river with its eternal and soothing water flow to find consolation.



Fig. 19 The model of the Amphitheatre (source: <http://www.alausa.org/media/files/infogram-sep-2015/liktendarzs.jpg>)

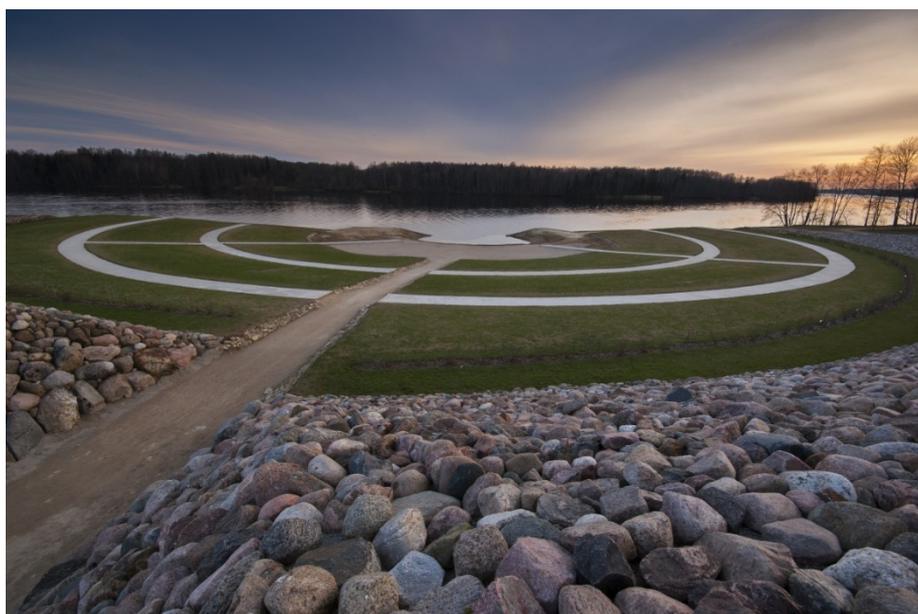


Fig. 20 Stones can be a neutral background (source:



Fig. 21 Amphitheatre consists of more than 50 000 boulders (source: www.lv/liktendarzs)



Fig. 22 The stone layer (source: https://encrypted-tbn0.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcQTlwBd8AUHBGRUabJVH_m3XmZVpiXa94Og5FyCaj3So70MiFqV5w)

In the Garden of Destiny not far from the Apple-tree Alley, in order to honour the most outstanding athletes' of Latvia remembrance, a special memorial was made with the Latvian Veterans & Seniors Sports Association and Latvian Sport Museum's initiative and support. On July 13, 2013, the memorial "For Athletes of Latvia – Victims of Different Repressions" was consecrated by Priest of Koknese Evangelic Lutheran Church Valdis Baltruks. "The Garden of Destiny is necessary for the small Latvia in order to commemorate the victims having suffered from superpowers. I have also suffered – my father was shot by a Russian soldier already after the capitulation on May 14, 1945. I have planted an apple-tree for my dad in the alley," said the outstanding Latvian sportsman, Olympic Champion (1968) in the javelin Jānis Lūsis. The "stone gardener" Ojārs Feldbergs felt honoured after being invited to create the memorial, which consists of eight boulders particularly chosen and placed by the sculptor. The words written by Latvian poetess Ārija Elksne (1928–1984) on the memorial plate in the sculptural group "From them inextinguishable foot of light" can also be read in the title of the book dedicated to Latvian sports

workers and athletes having suffered from repressions. “The goal of the publication is confirmation of dignity to the hundreds of people who represented Latvian sport in different historical conditions. Today we are proud of 1 331 medals which in the Olympic Games, World and European Championships and Cups during 1912 to 2012 have been won by Latvians and athletes of Latvian origin. We are proud of 537 Olympians, 27 Paralympians, who during 30 years have won 30 gold, 50 silver, 28 bronze medals,” the opening address, written by President of the Latvian Veterans & Seniors Sports Association Daumants Znatnajs, was read by experienced sports journalist and commentator Gunārs Jākobsons.

In 2014, strengthening of the Daugava bank was implemented and the Central Entrance of the Garden of Destiny was opened. The physical distance between stones and groups of plants not only divides, but also connects them, provides an ensemble perception, because it should not be too small – then it turns into a gap, and also should not be too large, because in this case it loses the connection between objects. To make the journey seem long, the small space between the Central Entrance Gate and the main object includes not only the winding path itself, but also a system of symbolic thresholds, each of which is intended to raise and sharpen the feeling of distance and penetration into more and more internal circles of the world. The first threshold coincides with the entrance to the garden and separates the garden from the outside world. Guests are given time to finally bring the spirit and thoughts in a reliable state in order to achieve inner harmony and tune in to peaceful perception of spiritual realms. Particular attention is paid to aesthetic qualities and the device of the road leading to the main object. The symbolic threshold beyond which the sense of unity between those is added to the transcendental purity of the spirit – is an expectation. Guests participating in the ceremony, halfway between the Central Entrance to the garden and the Amphitheatre, will pass from the external garden through the next, middle threshold, and enter the internal space. Having gone all the way with his real and symbolic thresholds, ablutions and bows, the guest enters the Amphitheatre as a completely different person – not who he was outside the garden gate a few minutes ago. His spirit is calm, and his senses are refined and tuned to the perception of matter, inexpressible in words.

In 2015, the campaign of earth collection for the 12,5 m high Big Mountain was started in order to create it between the Friends Alley and the Grove. The shape of the Big Mountain will reflect the passage of time and nature – its southern slope will be adorned with a mixedwood forest, but the northern slope will be covered with a meadow of wild flowers from Latvia. In winter the flower field will symbolize the past, but in spring – the life energy and courage to unfold for the future. In 2015, reinforcement of the Daugava bank and construction of the car parking for visitors were completed. On the 100th Anniversary of Latvian Rifle Regiment Establishment, sculptor Ojārs Feldbergs with the support of the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Latvia and the Art Academy of Latvia, creating the memorial for riflemen in the Grove of the Garden of Destiny, in the trenches, which still have remained next to the road as a reminder of World War One, placed boulders from Latvia, which symbolize Latvian riflemen. The memorial has two parts: a composition of Latvian boulders, symbolizing the ones who stayed at home, and a line of boulders placed in trenches symbolizing Latvian riflemen. The memorial was opened by Minister of Defence of the Republic of Latvia Raimonds Bergmanis on August 8, 2015. In the Garden of Destiny (*Fig. 23*) oak-trees were planted by presidents of the Republic of Latvia Andris Bērziņš and Raimonds Vējonis with his spouse Iveta Vējone.



Fig. 23 Overview of the Garden of Destiny in 2015 (photo by Gatis Balodis)

An asphalted road section of the historical Riga-Moscow highway takes to the Friends Alley of the Garden of Destiny, and it gets “interrupted” in front of the entrance into the Daugava Bay opposite the church. In the 1960s before the Pļaviņas Hydroelectric Power Station construction it took further up the hill past Koknese Castle Ruins. In 2016, according to the project developed by the design office “ARHIS,” construction of the multifunctional public building (2016–2018) on the side of the highway opposite the church was started with the support of the parliament of the Republic of Latvia. This building has been made like a hill or beginning of a bridge (*Fig. 24, 25*) and it symbolically expresses the idea of the Garden of Destiny – the national path from the past to the future. The building’s roof will be a place for walking and an viewing platform overlooking the garden and the Daugava. In the public building there are planned two conference and event halls, a café and restaurant, which will provide an opportunity to organize concerts and other activities all through the year. Natural ventilation, application of the earth heat and solar energy has been envisaged in the engineering solutions. The local material – dolomite will be used for the wall finish on the north side of the building, but the south façade will be put in glass. At the façade turned towards the garden, the Wall of Wishes with more than 2 000 plates of wishes to Latvia has been created. Here everyone can leave a wish to Latvia and Latvian nation. Good wishes in exchange of donations are added to the wall and closely next to each other are waiting for a better tomorrow.



Fig. 24 Construction of the multifunctional public building (source: <https://pbs.twimg.com/media/Da44HK0X4AEBk9B.jpg>)

Fig. 25 The multifunctional public building (source: http://www.staburags.lv/uploads/thumbnails/680x455/articles/2016/11/142663__581f44f2b2f7b.jpg)

Formation of the Big Mountain was commenced by the help of the Latvian Environmental Protection Fund and the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development of Latvia. The top will be a place where everyone can observe the Daugava and surrounding

landscape of a garden. For the mountain formation 169 160 m³ soil of different structure was necessary. In 2016, supporters of the Garden of Destiny delivered about one third of the necessary soil. Every soil charge was registered. The Big Mountain will be decorated with flowers from the Latvian meadows and a grove. The garden, in spite of the lasting draught in 2016, gave us joy not only with the clear blue waters of the Daugava and changeable gradations of the sky. It also gave us joy with its saturated green shades. When looking from above at photos taken by the Japanese language teacher, translator, an active supporter of the Destiny Garden's development Uģis Nastevičs, one can see small oak-trees, apple-trees, fir-trees, rowan-trees, maple-trees and other trees, which remind us of pins in the green grassy plaid and after warm spring winds and mild sunshine grow vivacious. The Big Mountain of Meadow is waiting for its turn to become mightier. However, the biggest pleasure was for the 14 128 paved grey cobblestones, sawed from Latvian boulders, that decorated the Apple-tree Alley, creating an original belt of patterns. The path of cobblestones symbolizes the national community in the past, present and future. Engraving took the most of time, thus, starting from July 1, all notified cobblestones were handed over to masters, thus supplementing the road to the Amphitheatre (*Fig. 26*). Using 18 265 cobblestones, one fifth of the path was paved in 2016. However, more than 114 000 grey cobblestones with donators, their relatives and friends' names were necessary for the profoundly symbolical eight-metre-wide and more than 200-metre-long Friends Alley. Board member of the "Koknese Foundation" Bruno Cīrulis: "The Garden of Destiny is a place where we can find consolation to the past, obtain strength for the present and inspiration for our future dreams. It is a place which we are creating for next generations – the future of Latvia. The Path of Friends, in which we have a chance to incorporate cobblestones with people's names, will give the Garden of Destiny a special value. Each cobblestone is like a message, in which we will feel who we were yesterday even after several years. We are glad about every family, sports team and work group, who contribute to the sense of community and thoughts about Latvia in the Path of Friends."



Fig. 26 Overview of the Garden of Destiny in spring 2016. An outstanding environmental architecture with nature of the island and beauty of the Daugava's flow have been combined (source: <http://g1.delphi.lv/images/pix/659x380/XNBs0IPxjh/liktendarzs-2016-gada-pavasari-3-47440561.jpg>)

During March 24 till April 2017, the campaign "Record Your Name in Latvia!" took place, and cobblestones with all presidents of the Republic of Latvia and their spouses' names were added to the Friends Alley. A special event was the opening of the Pedestrian Bridge on the right side of the Amphitheatre. Thanks to the funding of the Riga International Rotary Club and Jurijs Šteinbuks's initiative, the Pedestrian Bridge was made, so that it would be easier for visitors to reach the View Terrace. The central object of the "Memorial Zone" is the digital exposition Liktnens Gāte or the Path of Destiny, which consists of 12 symbolical informative stops, and each of them is dedicated to a turn in the 20th century destiny of Latvia. Each historical event is supplemented with people's

life stories. The exposition has been made in cooperation with philosopher Artis Svece, Head of Latvia National Library Information Service Sector Ginta Zalcmāne and “DD Studio” Ltd. The Patyh of Destiny was opened on the day of the donation campaign “Let there be the Latvian Garden of Destiny! Tell Us about Your Grandfathers” by Latvian Television on June 17, 2017. The digital path takes to the memorial site dedicated to the people lost for Latvia and having suffered in repressions in the 20th century. The exposition will be placed in the environment. However, broader information will be available on the mobile gadgets. The content will be available only on the spot, it will not be possible to study it sitting at home, – you will have to go to the Garden of Destiny. At the moment the visitor, when walking, will come to the virtual House of Silence. Nevertheless, it is planned to build a real house according to the Garden of Destiny architect’s intention. In the House of Silence there will be a list of the people’s names: we commemorate all who have perished for Latvia during the 20th century – the ones who suffered from repressions, perished in the war conditions, were forced to leave their fatherland and became refugees or died, resisting the violent totalitarian regimes. On November 18, in the Friends Alley it was possible to see all till September 24, 2017 registered cobblestones, on which donators’ names are engraved.

In spring 2018, the registered cobblestones during the campaign “Warm up Latvia” were added to the Friends Alley. In the society beloved musicians Kārlis Kazāks, Jolanta Gulbe, Aija Andrejeva, Jānis Holšteins Upmanis, conductor Ints Tatarovskis, athletes Raimonds Bergmanis, Aigars Apinis and their coach Aldis Šūpulnieks, the Dukurs Family and the Lūsis Family. The team of ice-hockey Club Dinamo Rīga have manifested their support to one of the most beautiful and extensive projects of the Garden of Destiny with their cobblestone. “The personalized cobblestone can be a great form how to thank to people who have supported us or helped altruistically to others. It can be a sincere Christmas present to friends, relatives and colleagues or an opportunity to create own family’s message for the future generations. We would like to believe that supporters’ names, which will be paved in the road of the Friends Alley, will be able to create an impression about the today’s value of Latvia, its inhabitants – strong families, beloved athletes, creative personalities and unselfish people,” thinks Zita Siliņa, head of the trade centre “Galerija Centrs”. In 2018, construction of the multifunctional public building, the virtual House of Silence with the digital path, the Amphitheatre, the Big Mountain of Meadow and the Friends Alley were completed. The Garden of Destiny was opened on August 11, 2018.

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