

11<sup>th</sup> Litvak Days in London  
**JEWISH LIFE & ARCHITECTURE IN INTERWAR KAUNAS**  
20 October 2022  
Jewish Community Center JW3

Litvak days in London is an annual event that has been organized by the Embassy of the Republic of Lithuania in the United Kingdom since 2011. Litvak Days are at the centre of the Embassy's efforts to learn more and to deepen the understanding of the Lithuanian Jewish community's history, art, culture and other aspects of life. It is especially important in the current context of historical misrepresentation, denial and oblivion. This year, the 11th Litvak Days are dedicated to the unique modernist interwar architecture of Kaunas city, the European Capital of culture 2022, and its vibrant Jewish cultural scene.

During the interwar period Kaunas was the centre of concentration for Litvaks - there were numerous yeshivas, two Hebrew high schools, five Yiddish daily newspapers, theatres with Yiddish plays produced, Jewish hospitals and other welfare institutions founded, and youth movements of all stripes had branches in the city.

The event Programme in 2022 explores the daily lives of the Litvak community in interwar Kaunas and the urban landscape that they were surrounded by. Kaunas' architecture is dominated by flat roofs, smooth surfaces, economy and modernity, in other words the sort of architecture largely regarded as "Jewish". Most of the architects in interwar Kaunas were of Jewish heritage who have studied abroad in the best universities in Europe. Hence, it is not surprising to find aspects of both the classicised modernism of modern Rome and Weimar German flamboyance in the temporary capital.

Unlike other old towns in the region, Kaunas' historic city centre was largely unaffected by World War I and World War II, and safeguarded by reconstruction and regeneration plans in the decades afterwards. In 2017, Kaunas modernist architecture was included in the Tentative list of the UNESCO World Heritage and it is expected that this unique site will be inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List by 2023.

This year's topic of the Litvak days is an occasion to awaken the multicultural memory of Kaunas, remind of its rich history and reflect on the significance of the Jewish legacy in this city and beyond.

The Litvak Days in London 2022 are organized by the Embassy of Lithuania in the United Kingdom in partnership with the Lithuanian Cultural Attaché in the United Kingdom and the Jewish Community Center JW3 in London.

## **PROGRAMME**

18:00–20:45 (GMT+1)

Jewish Community Center JW3

341-351 Finchley Road, London, NW3 6ET

18:00 **Reception in the Restaurant**

18:30 **Opening remarks by**

H.E. Eitvydas Bajarūnas, Ambassador of Lithuania to the United Kingdom

William Galinsky, JW3 Programming Director

Mekella Broomberg, JW3 Head of Arts and Culture

18:35 – 19:45 **Discussion on Jewish Life & Architecture in Interwar Kaunas**

Moderator: Paulina Pukytė, Lithuanian artist, poet, essayist and critic

Panellists:

Dr. Daiva Citvarienė – Price

Professor at the Faculty of Arts, Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas

Curator of the program Memory Office, Kaunas Culture Capital 2022

Dr. Vaidas Petrulis

Head of Research Centre of Architecture and Urbanism, Kaunas

University of Technology

Shira Levy Benyemini

CEO and Artistic Director of the Liebling Haus, The White City Center,

Tel-Aviv

19:45 – 20:00 Break

20:00 – 20:45 **Concert by Apartment House**

Pieces:

Mikalojus K. Čiurlionis Prelude Op. 7 No. 4

Julius Aglinskas In Between Silence

Philip Glass Head On

Vidmantas Bartulis I'm Seeing My Friend Off and We are Taking One Last Look  
at the Snow-covered February trees...

Morton Feldman Extensions I

Žibuoklė Martinaitytė Inhabited Silences

Laurence Crane Trio for Ros and Peter

Performers: Kerry Yong (piano), Gordon MacKay (violin), and Anton

Lukoszevieze (cello)

## ABOUT THE PARTICIPANTS

**Dr. Daiva Citvarienė - Price** - a curator, researcher, and a cultural producer working in the field of art, memory, and museum studies.

Besides her work at Vytautas Magnus University, Faculty of Arts, Dr. Citvarienė - Price is the creator of several projects based on memory, storytelling, and micro-histories: an oral history platform called Sites of Memory [www.atmintiesvietos.lt](http://www.atmintiesvietos.lt); an audio guide to historic Kaunas, "The Spirit Guide to the Old City"; and multiple art projects.

Since 2017, Dr. Citvarienė - Price has been a part of the creative team planning the events related to Kaunas' role as the European Capital of Culture in 2022. In particular, she is the curator of the "Memory Office" platform, which aims to overcome collective amnesia and transform Kaunas' memory narrative by awakening the multicultural consciousness of the city. She was also the curator of one of the largest Kaunas 2022 events "Litvak Culture Forum", which took place in Kaunas on 29-30 September, 2022.

**Dr. Vaidas Petrulis** - a senior research fellow at Kaunas University of Technology, Lithuania. He teaches different subjects related to history of architecture and built heritage interpretation, is co-author of a books "Architectural heritage of the interwar period in Lithuania: the combination of tangibility and intangibility" (2015), "Architecture in Soviet Lithuania" (2012).

Published a series of articles and conference presentations on history and heritage of modern Lithuanian architecture. Since 2009 develops the project for a digital internet archive of architectural heritage [www.autc.lt/en](http://www.autc.lt/en).

Member of ICOMOS International Scientific Committee on 20th Century Heritage. Member of Governing Board of JPI Cultural Heritage: A Challenge for Europe. Curator of the platform "Modernism for the Future" in the program of Kaunas European capital of culture 2022 <http://modernizmasateiciai.lt/EN>.

Head of the team for the preparation of UNESCO WHL dossier "Kaunas 1919-1939: The Capital Inspired by the Modern Movement".

**Shira Levy Benyemini** - a CEO and Artistic Director of the [Liebling Haus](#), The White City Center, Tel-Aviv. Levy- Benyemini has an MA in City Planning and Public Policy from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and Diploma of Curatorial studies and Museology from the Tel-Aviv University. Levy-Benyemini is an expert on urban regeneration processes, community planning and urban conservation. In her thesis Levy Benyemini explored the interconnections of urban transformation, particularly involving cultural and artistic activities. As a City planner she explored the modern architecture of Tel-Aviv and led the implementation of the White City conservation among other city plans. Her main activity in recent years is in creating projects that connect urban planning and heritage with culture and art.

**Paulina Pukytė** - an artist, writer, curator and cultural commentator originally from Lithuania and based in London. She writes experimental fiction, poetry and plays, as well as critical and satirical essays on cultural issues, and has published four books. In her visual art practice she makes site-specific interventions, moving image, and conceptual projects, exploring perception and memory, deconstructing socio-ideological myths and clichés.

**Apartment House** – the group ('compelling beautiful', The Guardian) has been captivating audiences with performances of avant-garde and experimental music for 25 years. Created by cellist Anton Lukoszevics in 1995, it has performed all over the World with performances in Russia, Berlin, New York City, Canada and a nine-concert series in Melbourne, Australia.

The ensemble has been a firm fixture on the British concert scene, with regular performances at Café Oto, South Bank Centre, London Contemporary Music Festival and as an Associate Ensemble at the Wigmore Hall.

Over the years, Apartment House has gradually increased its recording output, focusing on key releases by experimental composers such as George Mačionas and Laurence Crane, which have received widespread acclaim. The group has a long-term relationship with the UK label Another Timbre, releasing albums of music by Joseph Kudirka, James Saunders, Luiz Henrique Yudo, Chiyoko Slavnic, Linda Catlin Smith, Olivier Messiaen, Ryoko Akama, Julius Eastman and Martin Arnold.

In 2012, they received a Royal Philharmonic Award for outstanding contribution to chamber music.