

**1 ADELĖ NEZABITAUSKAITĖ-GALAUNIENĖ (1895–1962)**  
Galaunė Family House-Museum,  
Vydūno al. 2

This woman became the first Lithuanian Violetta, singing in La Traviata in 1920 and performing in over 1,200 shows at the State Theatre over the course of 11 years. After her studies in Moscow, the young Lithuanian woman returned to her homeland and married Paulius Galaunė, the future director of the Čiurlionis Museum. Settling in a house designed by Arnas Funko just outside Ažuolynas, the family hosted the social elite, for whom the prima donna herself would sing. Galaunienė was also involved in social activities, devoting herself to teaching after the war.

**2 ANTANINA LIORENTAITĖ (1906–2003)**  
S. Darius and S. Girėnas Airport,  
Veiverių g. 132

Meet the first female pilot in Lithuania and the first female parachutist ever! According to records, she was introduced to aviation by her brother Jonas, and Antanina joined the Aeroclub of Lithuania as a telephone operator, practicing her skills at night. In 1935, she was assigned to a squadron of highly qualified pilots, qualified to fly in wartime conditions. Part of her family was exiled to Siberia, whereas she left for the US and settled in Chicago. Though there, she was never destined to take to the skies again.

**3 DANUTĖ MARIJA NASVYTYTĖ (1916–1983)**  
Kaunas Jonas Jablonskis  
Gymnasium, Aušros g. 3

The pioneer of free dance in Lithuania brought this novelty from Berlin, where she graduated from J. Klamt Free Dance School in 1939. In Kaunas, at the then Jonas Jablonskis Primary School, she succeeded in establishing a rhythmic gymnastics and free dance studio before the war, which was attended by about 200 students. In 1944, she moved to Germany and later to Australia. The traditions of free dance in Lithuania were continued by her students Kira Katerina Daujotaitė and Lidija Motiejūnaitė.

**4 ELENA JACKEVIČAITĖ (1891–1977)**  
Kaunas District Court,  
Laisvės al. 103

Nowadays, female judges are not strange, but after all, somebody had to be the first. In 1922, that person was Elena Jackevičaitė. It is said that this courageous, self-confident lawyer contributed to the legal education of other women and their opportunities to hold high positions in civil services. The judge was also a member of the organisational committee of the Lithuanian Women's Council, took part in the efforts of the Lithuanian Abolitionist Association, and spoke out against the legal restrictions on married women.

**5 ELENA KUBILIŪNAITĖ-GARBAČIAUSKIENĖ 1900–1996)**  
Vytautas Park

While this woman got to see Lithuania regain its independence, she did not get to revel in the recognition she deserved. Elena Kubiliūnaitė-Garbačiauskienė was one of the most prominent female pioneers of sports in Lithuania. She worked at the Ministry of Education and, recognising that young people lacked physical activity, sought ways to remedy this. It is very important to note that it was women, not men, who were the first to play basketball in Lithuania. E. Kubiliūnaitė-Garbačiauskienė brought them together on the court in Vytautas Park after learning about basketball from members of the Riga football team. Among her other achievements, she translated the rules of basketball into Lithuanian.

Hi,  
today we invite you to discover the feminine side of Kaunas. For those whom fate dares to be the first. For those whose talents shine even in the shadow of men. For those who were told, “That’s not fit for a girl.” For those whose hard work is only recognised after decades or centuries. For those who manage to get more things done than there are hours in the day. For those who keep trying when everyone else gives up. For those we too rarely remember and praise. For the women whose force makes this world go round. This kaunastic is dedicated to celebrating womanhood: sometimes too late, seldom in advance, but always from a place of sincerity and mutual support. The list, of course, could go on and on, limited only by the size of our paper.

PUBLISHED IN 2024, UPDATED IN 2026

**6 EMMA GOLDMAN (1869–1940)**  
Emma Social Center,  
K. Donelaičio g. 41

One of the brightest political activists of the 19th century, an anarchist and writer, left Kaunas for the US when she was only 16. Not much is known about her childhood and adolescence in Lithuania, but the memory of this historical figure lives on. This is reflected in the independent social center Emma, established in 1916 in one of the wooden houses on A. Mickevičiaus Street, which holds lectures, seminars, parties, and other social gatherings.

**7 FELICIJA BORTKEVIČIENĖ (1873–1945)**  
Gedimino g. 44

Publisher, book smuggler, politician, Freemason, and philanthropist, not just anyone could accomplish so much in one lifetime. Did you know that F. Bortkevičienė could have also been the President? She was a wholehearted democrat until the day she died, running the Varpas printing house on Gedimino Street, and historians believe she deserves to be among the likes of Stulginskis, Smetona, and Grinius in history books.

**8 GABRIELĖ PETKEVIČAITĖ-BITĖ (1861–1943)**  
Kaunas State Musical Theatre,  
Laisvės al. 91

Beekeeper, feldsher, assistant to her physician father, teacher of peasant children, contributor to banned Lithuanian press, producer of the first public Lithuanian play in Palanga, member of the Great Seimas of Vilnius, convener of the Congress of Lithuanian Women, chairwoman of the first session of the Constituent Assembly in the then theatre of the city... And, of course, writer. She may have also been the first female president in the world.

**9 HONORATA IVANAUSKIENĖ (1891–1949)**  
Tadas Ivanauskas Obelynė Homestead-Memorial Museum, Obelynės g. 8,  
Akademija, Kauno raj.

Not only a naturalist and educator, but also a puppeteer and one of the first riflemen in Lithuanian Theatre. The wife of Tadas Ivanauskas, together with Emilija Putvinskienė and Marija Žmuidzinavičienė, aspired to establish a women's division in the new Lithuanian Riflemen's Union, but the men found this irrelevant. H. Ivanauskienė, who worked with children, drew on the knowledge of Maria Montessori herself in Italy and brought back to Lithuania the idea of establishing kindergartens and playgrounds. Here, the precursors of day centres, children from poor families in Kaunas were educated.

**10 JADVYGA TŪBELIENĖ (1891–1988)**  
Kaunas Art Gymnasium, Dainavos g. 1

Sofija loved cards, while her younger sister Jadvyga loved bowling. But of course, these fun little tibits are just an excuse to take a closer look at what the Chodakauskaitė sisters, and specifically Jadvyga, who married the future prime minister, contributed to Lithuanian identity, statehood, relations with the church, and the status of women in a society undergoing modernisation. Incidentally, their former villa now houses the Kaunas Art Gymnasium.

**11 LEAH GOLDBERG (LIJA GOLDBERGAITĖ) (1911–1970)**  
Kęstučio g. 18

A classic of Jewish literature, poet, playwright, and Israeli social and cultural figure, she grew up in Kaunas, attending the Schwabe's Hebrew gymnasium (marked by a commemorative plaque) and later Kaunas University. In 1935, she settled in Palestine. You can read the poems of this beloved Israeli poet on the wall of a building on Kęstučio Street; this street art was created by Linas Kaziliūnis around the spot where the Goldberg family lived.

**12 MAGDALENA AVIETĖNAITĖ (1892–1984)**  
Valdas Adamkus Presidential  
Library-Museum, S. Daukanto g. 25

“Perhaps the only woman in pre-war Lithuania who broke through to a place where only men were welcomed at the time! She could have been a minister or a diplomat, but... she was a WOMAN!” – this is how museum curators introduced M. Avietėnaitė at an exhibition dedicated to the image-maker of the interwar state. Who knows how the career of this talented liaison officer would have turned out if it had not been for the war and emigration? M. Avietėnaitė worked at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for many years, and one of these locations now houses the Presidential Library-Museum of Valdas Adamkus.

**13 MARIJA PUTVINSKAITĖ-ŽMUIDZINAVIČIENĖ (1876–1959)**  
A. Žmuidzinavičius Creations and  
Collections Museum, V. Putvinskio g. 64

She was the sister of Vladas Putvinskis, the first commander of the Riflemen's Union, and was herself an active member of this organisation, heading its women's division for some time. Until the restoration of the state, she lived in Vilnius and helped her brother distribute banned press. A member of the boards of many societies, she studied as a stomatologist in Warsaw and Paris. Her and Antanas Žmuidzinavičius daughter was named by Marija's brother and soon Giedrė became one of the most popular names for girls. She set up her office at home, which today houses temporary exhibitions as part of the A. Žmuidzinavičius Creations and Collections Museum.

**14 MARIJA RUDZINSKAITĖ-ARCIMAVIČIENĖ (1885–1941)**  
Mykolas Žilinskas Art Gallery,  
Nepriklausomybės a. 12

An associate professor at the Faculty of Humanities at Vytautas Magnus University, she was the first ever Egyptologist in Lithuania and dedicated her life to researching the historical heritage of this region. She visited Egypt (or “Aigipt”, as it was called at the time) on three occasions and conducted excavations in Giza. However, it was only after her death that her work and collection were given proper recognition. Before its reconstruction, the collection of M. Rudzinskaitė-Arcimavičienė was on display at the M. Žilinskas Art Gallery.

**15 MARIJONA RAKAUSKAITĖ (1892–1975)**  
L. Truikys and M. Rakauskaitė  
House-Museum, E. Fryko g. 14

The Chicago-born singer arrived in the homeland of her parents and became a soloist at the State Theater in 1923. Her debut in the opera Carmen stunned everyone as she took to the stage barefoot, with her fingernails and toenails painted red. She continued this characteristic tradition long afterwards, in occupied Lithuania, maintaining her elegance even under the harshest conditions. She was accompanied throughout her life by set designer Liudas Truikys, and the couple lived together in a modernist apartment on E. Fryko Street, where a small museum preserving their memory was later founded.

**16 SOFIJA BINKIENĖ (1902–1984)**  
Vydūno al. 45

The journalist and translator married writer Kazys Binkis, but did not confine herself to home and family, continuing to work in print media and, in 1941, at the ELTA news agency. During the Nazi occupation of Lithuania, she hid Jews – the Binkiai home at Vydūno Ave. 45 was unofficially called the “Jewish hotel.” After the war, Sofija lived in Vilnius and worked for Lithuanian Radio. In 1967, she was recognized as a Righteous Among the Nations, and in the same year, her book of memoirs of those she had saved, “Ir be ginklo kariai” (Soldiers Without Weapons), was published.

**17 SOFIJA KYMANTAITĖ-ČIURLIONIENĖ (1886–1958)**  
Žemaičių g. 10

As a writer, educator, social activist, translator, and critic, she significantly expanded the field of Lithuanian literature with her multi-genre works. Her first Lithuanian language teacher was Vaižgantas. Later, after meeting Čiurlionis, she taught him Lithuanian as well. In a modernist villa designed by Vytautas Landsbergis-Žemkalnis, “Čiurlionienės šeštadieniai” (Saturdays at Čiurlionienė's Saturdays) took place, during which together with readings of various works and translations, new words were also coined.

**18 SOFIJA SMETONIENĖ (1885–1968)**  
Historical Presidential Palace,  
Vilniaus g. 33

The very First Lady of Lithuania was an ambitious woman from a landowning family, not only the wife of Antanas Smetona and mother of his children, but also his equal partner, a diplomat, and an active public figure. Incidentally, she enjoyed playing cards. Together with her husband and sister Jadvyga, she headed for the West. You can get to know both of them better by reading “DVIEŠ. Sofija Smetonienė ir Jadvyga Tūbelienė: modernybės vėjai ir lietuvių inteligentija” (TWO. Sofija Smetonienė and Jadvyga Tūbelienė: the winds of modernity and the Lithuanian intelligentsia) by historian Ingrida Jakubavičienė.

**19 UNĖ BABICKAITĖ (1897–1961)**  
Vaižganto g. 14

After studying in St. Petersburg, Unė Babickaitė (whose new name, fitting for her unique personality, was coined by Balys Sruoga) returned to Lithuania and introduced herself as a director and artist. Admittedly, it was difficult for one of the first female directors to work in the male-dominated world of theatre; she was advised to get married and have children instead. The woman left for the US, where she worked as both a director and an actress, later performing in European theatres, and upon returning to her homeland, she worked at the Panevėžys and Šaulių Union theatres.

**20 VANDA MINGAILAITĖ-TUMĖNIENĖ (1880–1976)**  
V. Tumėnienė Children's Early  
Development Center of the  
Children's Clinic, Kiaunių g. 2

A paediatrician, educator, social activist, and publicist, she established a state children's hospital and clinic in 1924 and served as its director until 1944, when the sanatorium was nationalised. V. Tumėnienė also participated in the activities of “Diano lasas” (Drop of Milk), “Kovas su diėvais” (Fight Against Tuberculosis), and other associations, served as a member of the Central Council of the Lithuanian Scouts Support Association, and was the first chairwoman of the Lithuanian Abolitionist Association (a movement to abolish prostitution). She sought to continue her professional activities after moving to the West, but had to give up her work as a physician in the United States.

**21 VERONIKA ŠLEIVYTĖ (1906–1998)**  
Žemaičių g. 11

An outstanding artist who tenaciously pursued education, was not afraid to experiment, and considered photography to be her lifelong companion – this is how art historian Agnė Narušytė introduces Kaunas-based artist Veronika (Vėra) Šleivyte. In recent years, Šleivyte, rediscovered, inspires contemporary artists and women who are simply fighting for the freedom to define themselves.

**22 BEATRICHĖ GRINCEVIČIŪTĖ (1911–1988)**  
Kaunas Pranas Daunys Special  
Education Center, Taikos pr. 6A

The very first concert of Beatrichė Grincevičiūtė took place on 24 November 1937 on Kaunas Radio. She studied and worked in our city, and later moved to Vilnius. “A difficult fate and a divine voice” – this is how the late singer, whose life was marked by blindness, is described. The owner of a unique lyrical voice, she performed frequently with Balys Dvarionas and was the first to perform songs for children by other composers. With her talent and achievements, she proved that disability is not a sentence.

**23 BIRUTĖ PŪKELEVIČIŪTĖ (1923–2007)**  
Kalnietičių g. 14

The writer, actress, and director was born and raised in Kaunas, but found herself in the West during the war. In 1952, she made her debut with a collection of poems entitled Metūgės, which explored the loneliness of a young woman living in a large Canadian city. Her first novel, Aštuoni lapai (Eight Pages, 1956), tells the story of her departure from Lithuania: “Here, images of the “white city” – Kaunas – unfold. Allow me to take in my hometown. To look at the bifurcated flow of the river, like hands folded in sorrow, at the white tower of the Town Hall, at the verdant slope of Aleksotas Hill, at the mighty maple trees of the Cathedral Churchyard: at the roofs, streets, and intersections. And at the three bridges, as though three chains, anchoring Kaunas to the opposite bank, keeping it from floating away downstream the Nemunas River.” Kaunas is mentioned 159 times in total in the book.

**24 DALIA GRINKEVIČIŪTĖ (1927–1987)**  
Perkūno al. 60

The physician and writer lived in Kaunas during her childhood and after her return from exile. She hid her memories of exile in her garden under a peony bush; she was exiled yet again, returned once more, could not find her manuscripts, and rewrote them anew... She managed to pass her texts on to the wife of academician Andrei Sakharov, Yelena Bonner, who arranged for them to be published abroad. The memoirs, entitled “Lietuviai prie Laptėvų jūros” (Lithuanians by the Laptėv Sea), have been translated into many languages. The manuscript was found only after Lithuania regained its independence.

**25 JANINA DEGUTYTĖ (1928–1990)**  
Kranto 6-oji g. 3

“I was born on the 8th of July (godparents mistakenly wrote down the 6th). July. In the field of clover, bumblebees buzz as if unseen. / Days consumed by thunder are fragrant with the fervour of poppies. / I came to this land in July – / To lose the sun each night and meet the dawn each morning. / I came to see the world with clairvoyant eyes / And crawl about blindly, bumping into stone walls. / Only to be quenched by ice and fire from the eternal spring of the forest.” This is what the poet wrote about her coming into the world in Sančiai in 1965 in her poem “Atėjau” (I Came).

**26 JUDITA VAIČIŪNAITĖ (1937–2001)**  
Gedimino g. 56

Most of the childhood and adolescence of the poet in Kaunas is preserved in her book of memoirs, “Valkystės veidrody” (In the Mirror of Childhood), published in 1996: “The house is three stories high, brick, with an oiel window, a tower, and streets twisting and climbing up the hill at its corner. One of its walls is blind, completely covered by a huge vine crowded with twittering birds, mostly sparrows. There were only no pigeons. (...) A thick winter fog weighs heavily on my heart. Easter bells pierce through it: the sound of the Garrison Church, yet to be closed, and Kaunas Cathedral. Uncertainty and a bright hope linger in my heart.”

**27 JŪRATĖ NORVAISIENĖ (BORN 1935)**  
Kauno kultūros centras, Vytauto pr. 79

The international dance competition “Amber Couple” is one of the cultural emblems of Kaunas. When Jūratė Norvaišienė and her husband Česlovas pioneered it in the 1960s, dancing was still referred to as ballroom, and this couple made a major impact on its popularity. The Norvaišas are also the founders of the legendary club “Sūkury”, which nurtured many dance couples who made Lithuania a household name. Jūratė was also both a medical professional and a politician involved in local government.

**28 JOANA BARTAŠKIENĖ (BORN 1950)**  
Lithuanian Sports University, Sporto g. 6

The pioneer of aerobics in Lithuania and multiple national gymnastics champion became even more famous in 2007 when she won the hugely popular TV show “Lietuvos šokių deimtasukas” (Lithuanian Dance Top Ten). The charismatic local from Kaunas enchants people with her youthfulness and positive energy; she has inspired many Lithuanians younger than herself to get off the couch and start moving.

**29 KAZIMIERA GABRIŪNAITĖ (1916–1990)**  
Vytautas the Great War Museum,  
K. Donelaičio g. 64

“An active, energetic, creative professional. Her mind was full of ideas. She gathered displaced historical artifacts in the museum, organised various exhibitions and displays, and went on ethnographic expeditions” – this is how one of the most productive representatives of this field in Lithuania is presented on the website of the Society of the Lithuanian Archaeology, who from 1949 to 1981 worked at the only institution in this area, known as the Kaunas State Military History Museum, which today is reborn as the Vytautas the Great War Museum.

**30 KIRA KATERINA DAUJOTAITĖ (1921–2013)**  
Kaunas Cultural Centre, Vytauto pr. 79

After teacher Danutė Nasvytytė left Lithuania, her talented student continued her work. A sensitive, vibrant artist and figure, creator of a unique dance language, who had herself had a taste of exile, she staged more than 200 dance performances. Her daughter is the brilliant and beloved actress Inesa Palilyūtė, and her students include Birutė Letukaitė, Aira Naginėvičiūtė, and others.

**31 BIRUTĖ MARIJA ALSEIKAITĖ-GIMBUTIENĖ (1921–1994)**  
Petrašiūnai Cemetery,  
M. Gimbutienės g. 28

Marija Gimbutienė, the best-known Lithuanian scientist in the world, who researched the prehistoric development of Europe, archaeologist, and pioneer of archaeomorphology, was born in Vilnius and lived with her parents in Kaunas. After graduating from the Aušra Girls' Gymnasium, she began her studies at the Faculty of Humanities at Vytautas Magnus University. At the outbreak of war, she fled to Germany and eventually reached the United States. In 1949, Gimbutienė wrote about the great matriarchal culture that once existed in Europe, where gender equality and balance prevailed. Yet, it was not easy: even at the prestigious Harvard University, the Lithuanian woman encountered sexism and the devaluation of female academics. Today, you can find a lecture hall named after her at the Faculty of Humanities at Vytautas Magnus University. She is buried in Petrašiūnai Cemetery, and the street leading to the cemetery is named after her.

**32 ALDONA RUSEKAITĖ (BORN 1950)**  
Maironis Lithuanian Literature Museum,  
Rotušės a. 13

Having headed the Maironis Lithuanian Literature Museum for many years, Aldona Rusekaitė will also go down as a brilliant writer in the history of our national literature. It is thanks to her quill that figures such as Salomėja Nėris, Vytautas Mačernis, Žemaitė, and Vincas Mykolasitis-Putnas are more than just black-and-white portraits in literary textbooks for countless readers. This woman, who holds numerous awards, is also quite the poet.

**33 AUDRONĖ TELEŠIENĖ (BORN 1978)**  
Faculty of Social Sciences, Arts and  
Humanities of Kaunas University of  
Technology, A. Mickevičiaus g. 37

A researcher at the Faculty of Social Sciences, Humanities, and Arts at Kaunas University of Technology and professor of sociology, she was appointed by the leaders of the UN Environment Programme to join nearly 100 scientists from around the world, tasked with developing the Global Environment Outlook by 2026. Her science-based views and insights are becoming more and more common in the Lithuanian media.

**34 BELLA SHIRIN (BORN 1946)**  
Yard Gallery, E. Ozeškienės g. 21A

Bella Shirin gimė Kaune, jau pasibaigus Antrajam pasauliniam karui. Jos tėvai išgyveno Holokaustą ir grįžo į Kauną – tiesa, vėliau šeima viena pirmųjų išsikraustė į Izraelį. Visgi Bella pasiroko dar kartą grįžti – ir, įsikūrusi vaikystės mieste, skleistė tolerancijos, empatijos, draugystės idėją. Ji buvo tiesiog puiki Kauno – Europos kultūros sostinės ambasadorė, kurios gyvenimo istorija net tapo teatro spektakliu.

**35 BETA IR NOMEDA KONDRATENKAITĖS (BORN 1980 AND 1985)**  
Café “Kultūra”, K. Donelaičio g. 16

People are best represented by their work, and the works of these two sisters are a joy to behold every day. For more than a decade, the epicentre of Kaunas' bohemian scene has been Café “Kultūra”, located in the Kaunas Picture Gallery. If you can spare the time to stay at the Kaunas Chamber Theatre after a show, you might find out where the city's best-kept cocktail bar is. Another place founded by the Kondratenkaitė sisters is located in... a former bank!

**36 BIRUTĖ MARIJA GALDIKAS (BORN 1946)**  
Kaunas Botanical Garden of Vytautas  
Magnus University, Ž. E. Žiliberio g. 6

Birutė Marija Galdikas is a world-renowned anthropologist, conservationist, and a leading orangutan researcher. She is an expert in modern primatology, nature conservation, and ethology, as well as the author of books on the endangered orangutan species. She was born in Germany when her family retreated to the West, and later moved to North America. In Lithuania, this woman is always welcomed by a crowd of fans and followers, and an oak grove named after her flourishes in the Kaunas Botanical Garden of Vytautas Magnus University.

**37 BIRUTĖ LETUKAITĖ (BORN 1952)**  
M. Daukšos g. 30A

No major event in Kaunas would be complete without a performance by “Aura”, the dance theatre led by Birutė Letukaitė. The contemporary dance festival of the same name is one of the major events on the calendar. And then there are the constant new performances, choreographed by Letukaitė herself or by renowned colleagues from abroad. The festival is now over 30 years old, the troupe has passed its 40th anniversary, and many would love to know where Letukaitė gets her energy and charisma.

**38 DALIA TEIŠERSKYTĖ (1944–2023)**  
Kaunas Artists' House,  
V. Putvinskio g. 56

Journalist, poet, politician, or public figure? One word is not enough to describe this woman, who left a lasting mark on the cultural life of Kaunas. Interestingly, in 1995, D. Teišerskytė was one of the founders of the Women's Party, serving as its chairwoman. It is important to remember that in the 1970s, she headed the then very young and particularly bohemian Kaunas Artists' House... And during her lifetime, she managed to write as many as 400 song lyrics!

**39 ELENA BALSUKAITĖ-BRAZDIŠIŪNIENĖ (BORN 1958)**  
Kaunas Antanas Martinaitis Art  
School, Šv. Gertrūdės g. 33

“Painter and teacher from Vilijampolė” – this is how this artist is introduced in art directories. However, Sančiai is equally important in her life, where colours gush and motifs materialise in a studio set up in the barracks. And of course, there is Žalialakis, where she studied at the so-called “Stepžukis”, and the Old Town, where she has been working for more than 30 years at the current Kaunas Antanas Martinaitis Art School. There is no mistaking Elena's style: bright, witty, pure, and unpretentious.

## Kaunas Cherchez la femme: STORIES OF THE WOMEN OF KAUNAS



**40 EMILIJA GELAŽNINKIENĖ (BORN 1993)**  
Intersection between Laisvės al. and  
S. Daukanto g.

What can you do if you have been dreaming about the Dakar Rally for ages? First, you convince your husband to participate, then you start training yourself and become the first female driver from Lithuania to participate in this legendary race. Finishing 9th! Emilija Gelažninkienė breathes stoic patience, facing every obstacle and sceptical comment with a gentle smile. Why here? Because this is where Emilija begins her every day.

**41 ERIKA DRUNGYTĖ (BORN 1971)**  
M. Daukšos g. 34

Poet, literary critic and translator, who observes life with a keen eye and draws parallels. She is also the lyricist of several well-known songs. In addition, she brought the legendary magazine Nemunas (its editorial office is now located above the former Small Theatre) back from its torpor. Interestingly, this Kaunas local has taught Lithuanian literature in Latvia and also does translations from the language of our neighbours.

**42 INDRA RAMANAUSKIENĖ (BORN 1975)**  
“Monte Pacis”, T. Masiulio g. 31

Just think how much imagination it takes to look at an old monastery and envision a thriving restaurant and hotel there. The creativity of Indra Ramanauskienė, founder of “Monte Pacis”, is matched by her sense of responsibility, and the results of her hard work delight not only the residents of Kaunas, but also celebrities from around the world. Actress Helen Mirren, writer Kristina Sabaliauskaitė, and the BC Žalgiris players have all given praise to “Monte Pacis”. Admiringly, the restaurant grows a significant portion of its produce right here in the monastery garden!

**43 INGA POPOVAITĖ (BORN 1985)**  
Kaunas University of Technology  
Faculty of Social Sciences, Arts and  
Humanities, A. Mickevičiaus g. 37

Researcher Inga Popovaitė of Kaunas University of Technology made headlines not only in the scientific media when she announced that a woman had lived and worked in a Mars simulation laboratory. The space sociologist, who studied gender roles in the US state of Utah, claims that stereotypes affect us even when we live in complete isolation from the rest of society.

**44 JENNY KAGAN (BORN 1965)**  
Gimnazijos g. 4

As Kaunas-born Margarita Štromaitė wrote in her memoirs, during World War II, the lives of her future husband Juozapas Kaganas, whom she met in the ghetto, and his mother Mira were saved by the family of Vytautas Binkevicius. After the young family moved to England, their daughter Jenny Kagan was born there, during the anniversary of the Great Action carried out in the Kaunas ghetto. The artist, who worked as a theatre lighting director for many years, sensitively recounts her family's story and reveals a layer of Kaunas history that is still unknown to many through her work. Although her exhibition “Iš tamsos” (Out of Darkness) at Gimnazijos Street 4 was only open for a few months, you can find detailed documentation of it online.

**45 JOLANTA ŠMIDTIENĖ (BORN 1966)**  
Town Hall Square

If you don't know this woman's name, you've definitely seen her creations – at least on your computer screen! Jolanta has been designing the Christmas trees of Kaunas for quite some time now, and they've not only made it onto news sites around the world, but also into the Guinness Book of World Records. This textile artist is also the founder of the cozy Gallery “Balta” situated in the Old Town.

**46 JŪRATĖ ONAITYTĖ (BORN 1954)**  
Kaunas National Drama Theatre,  
Laisvės al. 71

Jūratė Onaitytė's career spans more than 5 decades. Her biography includes over fifty roles, all of which she creates through her inner intelligence and absolute dedication to her profession. As an actress at the Kaunas National Drama Theatre, she has worked with the most famous directors in Lithuania. She also enjoys collaborating with the younger generation of theatre artists.

**47 LINA LAPELYTĖ (BORN 1984)**  
Muitinės g. 9

...and it all started with a violin! Yet, the artist soon expanded her classical education with studies in sound art and sculpture. Lina's work is mostly performative, blurring the boundaries between various genres. London is also an important destination for this composer, who has resided, created, toured, and received awards at various important cultural centres around the world. Her time in Kaunas is marked by the address of the now-defunct café “B.O.”

**48 MARIJA DRĖMAITĖ (BORN 1971)**  
A. Iljinienės's Home, K. Donelaičio g. 19

This Vilnius-based historian has contributed more than anyone else to ensuring that every resident of Kaunas feels a sincere love for modernist architecture, which transformed the face of the city when it unexpectedly became the capital during the interwar period. The team led by the professor worked hard to have Kaunas modernism included in the UNESCO World Heritage List, and we will always associate her with the term “the architecture of optimism”, which describes the most remarkable things about Kaunas. The iconic building that inspired the term is marked on the map.

**49 MONIKA ŽALTAUSKAITĖ-GRASIENĖ (BORN 1975)**  
Kaunas Faculty of the Vilnius  
Academy of Arts, Muitinės g. 4

Kaunas has been a textile city for many years. One of the most famous textile artists, who works at the Kaunas Faculty of the Vilnius Academy of Arts and is a member of the Kaunas Biennial Board, uses computer jacquard technology to transfer her spiritual ideas from the digital to the tangible. The artist, who all too rarely holds personal exhibitions in her hometown, is appreciated all over the world and... welcomes those arriving into it. Yes, Monika Žaltė's works are on display in the Kaunas Clinics Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology.



MORE KAUNASTIC ROUTES

Discover more interesting places, figures, and stories in Kaunas along other themed "It's Kaunastic" routes:

- Kaunastic Tops

Modernist's Guide

Art Deco

Kaunas Fortress

Aleksotas

Culture Shock

Pilgrim's Guide to Kaunas

Wallographer's Notes
- The Litvak Landscape

The Sugihara Route

Žaliakalnis

The City of Champions

Beastly Route in Kaunas

Free publications are available at the Kaunas IN Tourism Information Centre (Laisvės al. 36 and Rotušės a. 15, Kaunas) and locations labelled with the "Tourism Information Friendly" sticker, or at visit.kaunas.lt.

Find this and more digital routes at kaunastika.lt

50 RUGILĖ BARZDŽIUKAITĖ (BORN 1983)

Kaunas Antanas Martinaitis Art School, Šv. Gertrūdės g. 33

Together with V. Grainyte and L. Lapelyte, Rugilė was awarded the Lithuanian National Prize for Culture and Arts in 2019 for "Saulė ir jūra" (Sun and Sea). Even before that, the director had been honoured with the Borisas Dauguvietis Earring and the Golden Stage Cross Award, the highest theatre awards in Lithuania. In the world of cinema, she is known as a documentary filmmaker who reflects on the anthropocentric worldview, whose most notable work is "Rūgštis miškas" (The Acid Forest) about the cormorants of Neringa. The artist's journey began at the A. Martinaitis Art School.

51 RŪTA MEILUTYTĖ (BORN 1997)

Šilainiai Swimming Pool, Baltų pr. 8

The whole world heard about the 15-year-old from Šilainiai in the summer of 2012, when she smashed previous records and won a gold medal at the London Olympic Pool. This was followed by even more records and a challenging second Olympic stage, then a quest for answers and meaning. In 2024, this young woman became world champion once again, and in our hearts she is forever the best and most inspiring, no matter what she does.

52 RŪTA STALIŪNAITĖ (1938–2011)

Kaunas National Drama Theatre, Laisvės al. 71

Having spent 30 years on the stage of the Kaunas National Drama Theatre, this actress displayed profound tragedy in her iconic roles as Cleopatra, Jurga, Barbora Radvilaitė, and Ūbienė, creating memorable characters in the plays "Smėlio klavyrai" (The Sand Keyboard) and "Heda Gabler". She was particularly close to the writer Dalia Grinkevičiūtė – both women were hailed as the Lithuanian Antigones.

53 TAUTYDYDA MARGIN-KEVIČIŪTĖ (BORN 1955)

Intersection between Laisvės al. and S. Daukanto g.

This winner of the Poetry Spring award once worked as a tour guide – perhaps such a background helps the poet say a great deal while keeping her words and lines to a minimum. Her comments on life, which become her writing, are often ironic and paradoxical. And did you know that if you meet the world-renowned poet and her husband Gintaras Datackas along Laisvės Alėja, your day is guaranteed to end better than it began?

54 VAIVA GRAINYTĖ (BORN 1984)

"Kaunas Window" Art Gallery, M. Valančiaus g. 5

Having created the contemporary operas "Geros dienos!" (Good Day!) and "Saulė ir jūra" (Sun and Sea), which won the Golden Lion at the Venice Biennale, together with Rugilė Barzdžiuikaitė and Lina Lapelytė, Vaiva is first described as being a writer. "I studied at the Jesuit Jesuit High School, so on Fridays after school I would fold up my uniform, put it in my backpack, and head to the "Window" Art Gallery, where the most interesting concerts took place..." she recounts, describing her adolescence in Kaunas. V. Grainytė, who later went on to pursue studies in art history and theaterology, carefully weaves her experiences of travel and wandering into various forms of writing that combine mindfulness and light surrealism, realism, and poetry.

55 VAIVA RYKŠTAITĖ (BORN 1984) 1984)

Birštono Street underground passage

Although she lives and writes in Hawaii, Vaiva Rykšaitė is first and foremost a child of the Old Town, a true daughter of Kaunas! Her novel "Lizos butas" (Liza's Apartment) touches the hearts of all those who grew up in this city during a similar period of transition. An orientation route has even been created based on this book. The flower market blooming in the underground passage is one of the stops on the route.

56 VIKTORIJA STREIČA (BORN 1979)

Kaunas State Musical Theatre, Laisvės al. 91

Director Viktorija Streiča, who has won the hearts of many musical fans with her work at the Kaunas State Musical Theatre, has joked that she doesn't like washing dishes because she could be saving the world instead. And indeed, impressive works of art performed on stage by dozens of talented performers can move mountains. The director's latest hits, for which tickets are hard to secure, are "Elisabeth" and "Mozart"! We highly suggest you check them out!

57 VIRGINIJA VITKIENĖ (BORN 1975)

Town Hall Square

For several years, this Doctor of Arts successfully led one of the most important contemporary art events in the region – the Kaunas Biennial – and then took on the challenge of becoming the head of the Kaunas – European Capital of Culture 2022 project. This professional, who is already working on new international projects, oozes a blend of diplomacy, empathy, and passion for art.

58 VYTAUTĖ ŽILINSKAITĖ (1930–2024)

Children Literature Museum, K. Donelaičio g. 13

The enormous legacy of this Kaunas-born writer, together with a model of the spaceship from her book "Keliuonė į Tandadriką" (The Journey to Tandadrika), is preserved at the Children Literature Museum. "My highest aspiration is to intertwine laughter with tears... What could be more wonderful than seeing a child laugh with tears still in their eyes?" the writer asked rhetorically, claiming that without a sense of humour, it is impossible to write children's literature. Perhaps you also grew up immersed in her "Keliuonė į Tandadriką"?

59 ZITA BRUŽAITĖ (BORN 1966)

Kaunas State Philharmonic, L. Sapiegos g. 5

Having studied music herself, then teaching others, gathering colleagues, organizing the contemporary music festival "Is arti" (Up Close), and even serving as Minister of Culture at one point, this Kaunas native and winner of the Lithuanian National Prize for Culture and Arts is, first and foremost, a composer. This sensitive and highly skilled artist continues to bring new works to the public, which are heard not only in concert halls, but also in theatres and unexpected settings.

60 THE BENEDICTINE SISTERS OF KAUNAS

Kaunas Benedictine Convent, Benediktinių g. 8

According to data from the Archdiocese of Kaunas, there are currently eleven monastic congregations and monasteries operating in and around the city – here we present just a couple of them. The Benedictines have been living in Kaunas for 400 years – they are the oldest monastic community in the city that has existed without interruption. "Most Benedictines around the world live a secluded, contemplative life. Today, our community walks with Christ in prayer, wherever he may be: on the road, surrounded by crowds, among students, with the sick and with children," the sisters write on their website. Their monastery is situated in the Church of Saint Nicholas.

61 SISTERS OF ST. CASIMIR

Pažaislis Monastery, T. Masiulio g. 31

The Lithuanian Congregation of the Sisters of St. Casimir was founded in the United States in 1907 through the efforts of Mother Marija Kaupaitė. The Sisters of St. Casimir established themselves in Lithuania in 1920 in the former Pažaislis Camaldolese Monastery. During the interwar period, the sisters founded primary and secondary schools, kindergartens, and nursing homes. When the Soviets occupied Lithuania, the Pažaislis estate was expropriated and the sisters were forced to leave, but they continued their activities "underground". After Lithuania regained its independence, the Sisters of St. Casimir returned to the Pažaislis Monastery, where they continue to restore it and carry out religious and educational programs.

62 IRENA JANKAUSKIENĖ

Nemunas and Neris confluence

Irena spent a long time preparing to enter her dream profession. At work, she always had to do a little more to earn the same as her male colleagues. After work, there were groceries, dishes, laundry, dinner, and the children's homework... On weekends – the garden or the countryside, and if there was free time – a trip with the family. And so it went, month after month, year after year. Irena Jankauskienė is the most popular combination of a name and surname in Lithuania, that is why we dedicate this stop on the route, located at the starting point of Kaunas, to all wonderful Lithuanian women, regardless of when they were born, what families they grew up in, where they worked, and how many children they raised.

