

1 ADELĖ NEZABITAUSKAITĖ-GALAUNIENĖ (1895–1962)
Galaunienė Family House-Museum, Vyduo 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 Galaučė, the future director of the Ciurlionis Museum. Settling in a house designed by Armas Funko just outside Ažuolynas, the family hosted the social elite, for whom the prima donna herself would sing. Galaučienė 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. 9

The pioneer of free dance in Lithuania brought this novelty from Berlin, where she graduated from J. Klant 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 despite 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 JACKEVICAITĖ (1891–1977)

Kaunas District Court, Laisvės al. 103

Nowadays, female judges are nothing 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. This 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-Garbačiauskiė 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-Garbačiauskiė 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.

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 2016 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 Varpos 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 g. 91

Beekeeper, fieldsher, 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 theater 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 Obelyne Homestead-Memorial Museum, Obelynės g. 8, Akademija, Kaunas raj.

Not only a naturalist and educator, but also a puppeteer and one of the first riflemen in Lithuania! The wife of Tadas Ivanauskas, together with Emilia 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 TÜBELIENĖ (1891–1988)

Kaunas Art Gymnasium, Dainavos g. 1

Sofja loved cards, while her younger sister Jadviga loved bowling. But of course, these fun little titbits are just an excuse to take a closer look at the Chodakauskaitė sisters, and specifically Jadviga, 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 GOLBERGAIČIŪTĖ) (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 Schwab'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 Kazužilis around the spot where the Goldberg family lived.

12 MAGDALENA AVIETĖNAITĖ (1892–1984)

Valdas Adamkus Presidential Library-Museum, S. Daukanto g. 25

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 Varpos printing house on Gedimino Street, and historians believe she deserves to be among the likes of Stulginskis, Smetona, and Grinius in history books.

13 MARIJA PUTVINSKAITĖ-ŽMUIDZINAVIČIENĖ (1876–1959)

V. Tumėnienė Children's Early Development Center of the Children's Clinic, Klaipėda, Ž. 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 son 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, Nekrausomybės 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 "Aegipit", 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. Truiškis 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 Truiškis, 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)

Vyduo 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 Binkis home at Vytauto 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 kario" (Soldiers Without Weapons), was published.

17 SOFIJA KYMANTAITĖ-CIURLIONIENĖ (1886–1958)

Žemaičių g. 90

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 Vaizgantas. Later, after meeting Ciurlionis, she taught him Lithuanian as well. In a modernist villa designed by Vytautas Landsbergis-Žemkalnis, "Ciurlionienės stüdienai" (Saturdays at Ciurlionienė'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, Vilnius 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 Jadviga, she headed for the West. You can get to know both of them better by reading "DIEVĖ. Sofija Smetoniene ir Jadviga Tübelienė: modernybės vėjai ir lietuvių intelektuojant" (TWO. Sofija Smetoniene and Jadviga Tübelienė: 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 Balaš Šruoga) 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 Panėvezys and Šiauliai Union theatres.

20 VANDA MINGAILAITĖ-TUMENIENĖ (1880–1976)

V. Tumėnienė Children's Early Development Center of the Children's Clinic, Klaipėda, Ž. Putvinskio g. 64

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 "Pieno laisė" (Drop of Milk) ("Kovos su dzīvo") (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)

Lithuanian Sports University, Sporto g. 6

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 Šleivytė. In recent years, Šleivytė, 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 Beatričė Grinčevičiūtė 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 Balaš 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 PŪKELEVICIŪTĖ (1923–2007)

Kalnaičių 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 Metigės, which explored the loneliness of a young woman living in a large Canadian city. Her first novel, Astuonių 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 (1923–2007)

Kalnaičių g. 14

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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 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, "Vaičiūtės veidrodė" (In the Mirror of Childhood), published in 1996: "The house is three stories high, brick, with an oriel 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 NORVAIŠIENĖ (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 Norvaišiai are also the founders of the legendary club "Sūkūrys", 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 (1950)

Kaunas Picture Gallery, 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 desimtukas" (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

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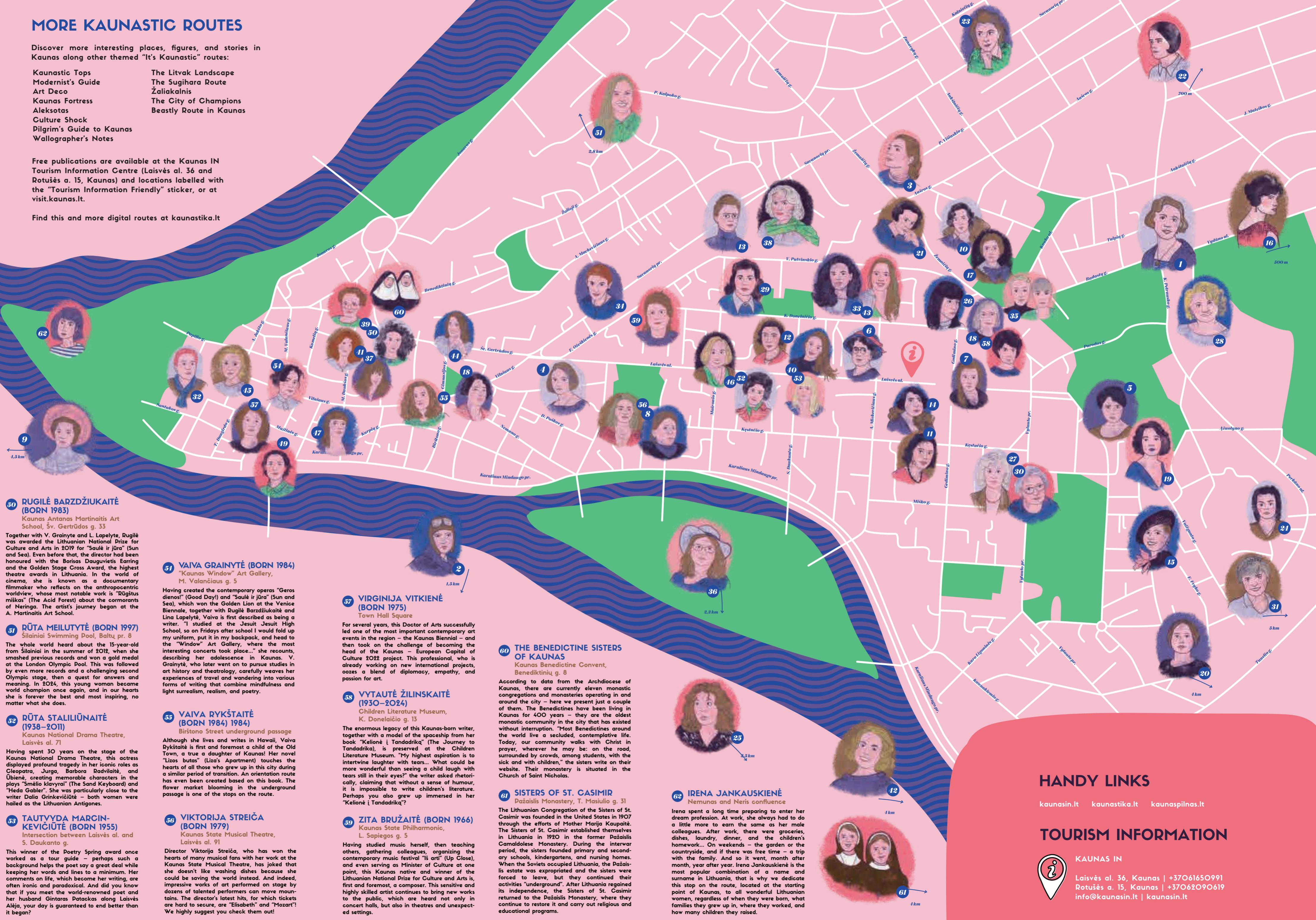
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