



CREATIVE
KURZEME



LATVIA



Latvia is a small country in Northern Europe, with little more than 2 million inhabitants. In our short period of independence we have proven to be a strong and creative nation. Although it's a relatively new sector of the economy, at the state level innovations and creative industries are perceived as the basis for the future economic growth. Creativity that comes from culture and arts combined with business knowledge is a key resource for the economic growth by creating products with high added value.

KURZEME

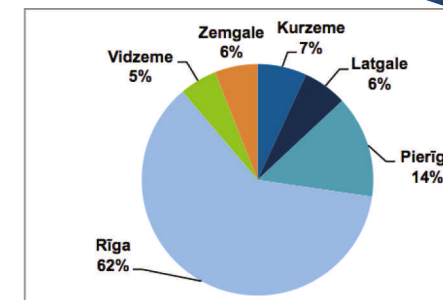


Its long sea border with large and small harbors, sandy beaches, coastal fishing villages and towns historically determines the uniqueness of the Kurzeme Region. The two port towns - Liepāja and Ventspils are regional and national development centers. Major production companies are concentrated around these cities. Rich cultural heritage, castles and manor houses, old coastal fishing villages and long cultural traditions differentiate the Kurzeme Region from other regions in Latvia. The strong, harsh and unique character of the inhabitants of the Region is also displayed in unique and original culture and business. This booklet will provide a first glimpse into the creative life of the Kurzeme Region.

THE CENTERS OF CREATIVE INDUSTRIES



International practice shows - creative industries are evolving and developing in urban environments. Riga, the capital and its suburbs contribute almost 80% to Latvia's creative economy. The biggest number of creative companies are registered and operate in this territory.



The number of creative and support sector enterprises in Regions and Rīga (2011). CSP data.

Still the Kurzeme Region has a good basis for growth for creative industries with 5 regional towns that have an average of high creative potential. Currently, creative industries play a role in shaping the economic structure in the three biggest towns - Liepāja, Ventspils and Kuldīga. In each of these municipalities more than 20 creative enterprises are registered. In the Saldus and Talsu municipalities respectively 15 to 17 entrepreneurs are registered and operate. In the remaining 15 counties of Kurzeme only up to 5 creative companies per county is declared. The major industries in the region are textile manufacturing, furniture manufacturing and the supporting industry - paper production.



LIEPAJA

The main creative industry in Liepāja is fashion- in particular lingerie production, where currently for a long time SIA "Lauma Fabrics" - a world known brand - is playing a leading role and shaping the trends.

It must also be mentioned that Liepāja is known as the music capital of Latvia. A historically developed community of musicians laid the foundations for the development of the music industry. Nowadays the city attracts record labels, musicians, sound companies, entertainment organizers and different thematic festivals.



KULDIGA

This city is famous for its ancient aura. The town has managed to maintain centuries old wooden houses and create a unique atmosphere. Not surprisingly, ten out of the twenty-three creative companies registered in the Kuldīga municipality provide architectural services.

Currently Kuldīga and its Restoration Center has become a real treasure chest for knowledge seekers of wood restoration and other specific construction works.



VENTSPILS

This port and transit city with great economic potential and high ambitions also proves itself in the creative field. Ventspils is one of the most technologically advanced cities, not just in the Region but also in the entire Baltic Region. The driving force and base for creative activities in the city is Ventspils High Technology Park (VHTP), around which a strong IT industry community has been established.



TALSI

Currently 17 creative companies operate in the Talsi municipality -consisting of publishers of periodicals, internet service providers, architects and others. However, the greatest creative potential of this municipality is rooted in nature. The area around Talsi is rich with forest resources that have enabled the development of the timber industry and timber exports.

In the future, if the local government and business sectors pay more attention to and invest more in the wooden furniture design field, more valuable products, instead of the export of raw materials, could be brought into the local economy.





CREATIVE INITIATIVES



CREATIVE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES IN LIEPAJA

In 2007 in the University of Liepaja, a new educational programme "New Media Arts" was launched. Degrees can be attained at both the bachelor's and master's levels. The master's programme has two directions - "Digital Media and Network Art" and "Sound Art and Electronic Music". In 2013, studies in arts doctoral programme will begin as well.

The programme offers new teaching method based on practice. The meeting and lecturing facilities for students and faculty is a cellar where studies run 24/7. Well-facilitated work premises are available for students, including an analogue photography laboratory and studio, a media laboratory for working with 2D, 3D, video and digital photography, a sound studio, an experimental room, a media library of books, magazines, magazine catalogues, sound and video records.



The activities of the University are also reflected in the creative environment of Liepaja.

The Art Research Laboratory of the University of Liepaja organizes regular meetings of representatives of various arts - an area of open ideas serving as a communication and co-operation platform. This platform is designed for new artists to share their experience and search for co-operation partners in terms of new media culture. In order to promote and implement the ideas presented at the area of open ideas, the best ideas are granted small financial support for their implementation.

An excellent example of promoting international co-operation is the project implemented by the University „i-week" that is an arts week of new media, during which both students and other interested persons are invited to take over the role of spectator and participate in the various creative workshops, lectures, performances, exhibitions and installations offered. It is also possible to follow these activities on-line.



Apart from the University of Liepaja, it is also possible to master creative professions at the Liepaja Secondary Art School, where pupils are trained in various design programmes - design of clothing, interior, metal ware, textile and multimedia.

The school completes the first semester of each school year with a clothing fashion display of emerging new designers supplemented by videos created by pupils of the multimedia department. Sometimes there is also co-operation with other schools, for instance, with Liepaja Emilis Melngailis Music School, where new musicians supplement the fashion display with a performance of compositions.





FESTIVAL ROJAL



The Film and Arts Festival ROJAL has been taking place in the small town of Roja in Kurzeme since 2011. During the festival, there are exhibitions, art objects, and installations, as well as campaigns and happenings held in several impromptu open-air cinemas. At the three day festival, Latvian documentary, action and animated films, as well as foreign films are shown at the beach during free of charge open-air night sessions.



KINO • MĀKSLA • KULTŪRA

An essential part of the ROJAL festival is the student film competition held over two evenings – films are shown to the jury which immediately evaluates the films. In 2012, members of the jury consisted of the artist of the Werner Herzog's films Ulrich Bergfelder, film director Juris Pakalniņš and operator Uldis Jancis. Public evaluation of the films, in the presence of the author, adds excitement, and provides dynamic elements to the event.

The festival also contributes to the concept of the nine year long art project "Rojaraku". Artists of various fields from different countries come to Roja, and for more than a fortnight they work on the spot and create their works for Roja.

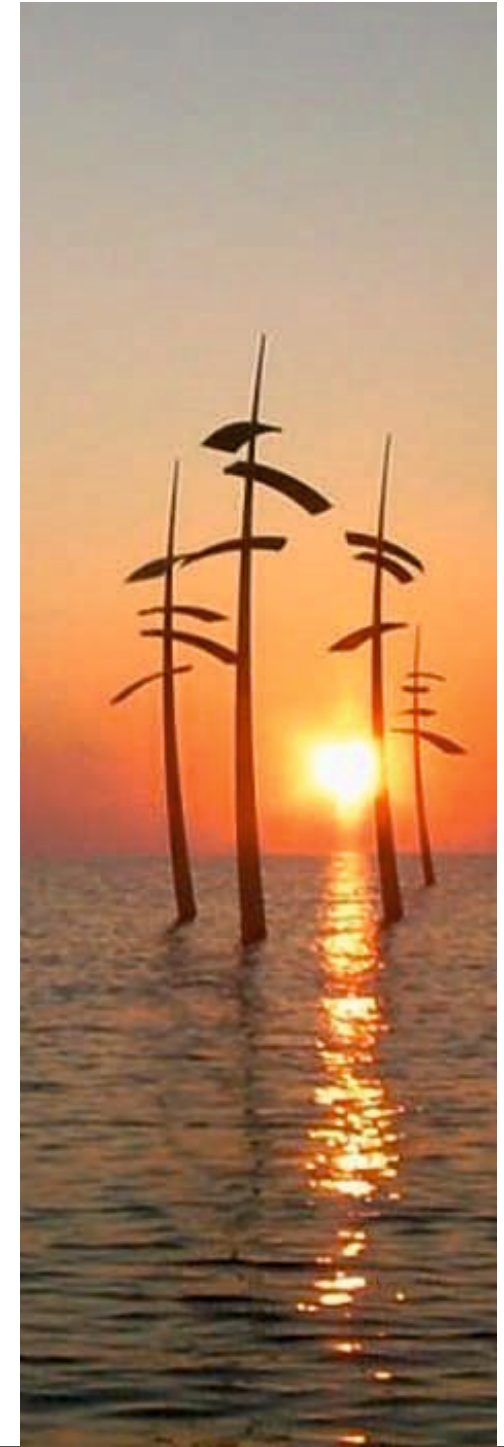




PHOTO KULDIGA



Already the seventh year the International Photography Summer School (ISSP) is held, and it is evaluated by professionals as the best one in Europe. Every August about one hundred professionals and interested parties from all over the world come together. By the second year the school was permanently formed and now takes place in Kuldiga every year.

During the Photography Summer School, master classes are offered to photography students from all over the world. They participate in lectures given by highly valued international photographers. All week long students work on creating a new photography series, by experimenting and defying the environment and opinions about themselves thru photography. The Summer School is an event not only for photography professionals, but also for anyone with an interest in photography. They are invited to attend a free of charge evenings of public lectures, presentations and creative meetings.



Kuldiga was not chosen as a venue for such an amazing event by chance – both the beautiful architecture of the town and local activities contributed to it being the chosen venue for this event. The Kuldiga County Council, Kurzeme Tourism Association and with the support of the European Union, established the Kuldiga Creative Photography Workshop.

In the workshop, one can master basic photography, work in the studio and in the analogue laboratory, and participate in open air exhibitions. The aim of this program is to provide insight to the participants on the process of creating photos and give everyone a chance to fall in love with the art of photography.



MUSIC, ARTS AND THE LOCAL HARVEST FESTIVAL "ZEMLIKA" IN DURBE



Zemlika is the time when the autumn harvest is over. The spirits of the dead have been honoured the new harvest collected and the people can enjoy this festival by celebrating the things they've accomplished during the year and gaining inspiration for new work ahead. In this way the organizers of the festival can honour traditions that have been forgotten in other communities, while trying to add a modern touch to the festival.

At the festival, music is the main attraction. During the two day festival concerts given by foreign and local musicians are held at the Lutheran Church of Durbe, the Cultural Centre and other locations throughout Durbe.

The music is performed in a wide spectre of genres – from guitar music to contemporary music, folk music to electronic dance music.

A special role in the festival is granted to the market of local products produced by farmers, and craftsmen with honest and environmentally friendly manufacturing, thus showcasing products grown on the farm and goods made in the workshops and factories of Durbe and the surrounding communities during the year.

Apart from the concerts, the festival organizers hold art and national craft workshops, a specialty film program, theatre performances and other interesting activities.





HIGH TECHNOLOGIES IN VENTSPILS



In Ventspils High Technology Park (VHTP), electronic systems are produced, applications for smartphones are elaborated, the prototyping laboratory of the Ventspils University College, as well as the only clean-room of the Kurzeme Region and a software testing laboratory are based. A range of companies related to technologies are working in the Technology Park.

One of the most essential operations of the VHTP is supporting, consulting and promoting new businessmen ideas in the marketplace. In the Business Incubator, about 50 new enterprises are assisted at the same time regarding various business related issues. At the early stage of a business idea, when the company has not yet been established, the creators of new ideas can utilize the services of the Ideas' Workshop. This is a specially created environment that provides an opportunity for young entrepreneurs to develop their products in a facilitated office premises, together with an excellent support team providing consultations related to startup entrepreneurship.

Interactive science centres are gaining extreme popularity all over the world becoming both TOP tourism destinations in their home countries and serving as exciting educational and career promoting centres. VHTP is also creating the Kurzeme Democentre, which will become a significant science and education project for the region in the future.



THE ONLY INDEPENDENT THEATRE OUTSIDE RIGA



Independent and experimental theatres are starting to play a more significant role in Latvian theatre life – although not long ago, they all were based in Riga. In Liepaja in addition to the professional theatre, the actor Kaspars Gods has created an alternative playground – the Gods Theatre.

Gods Theatre acts as both a project theatre for new staging and a place for other independent theatre's travelling performance troupes. The independent theatres of Liepaja claim that children and young people are their main audience, whom, according to the opinion of the inhabitants of Liepaja, other theatres pay too little attention to.





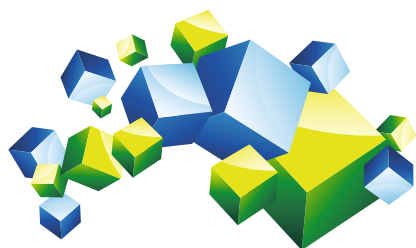
CREATIVE ENTERPRISES



PROMOTION OF LOCAL PRODUCTION

Not long ago the website www.razotskurzeme.lv was launched. It contains information about large and small active producers and service providers in the Kurzeme Region and its neighboring counties.

Entrepreneurs are encouraged to take the opportunity to promote their products and services thru this joint website. This offer is especially attractive to small businesses that do not have their own home page. When the company registers with this site it acquires a catchy internet address and is promoted with other local entrepreneurs.



Another great pilot project that was initiated in the year 2011 is ELEMENTI. This is an industrial design competition and exhibition, whose aim is to showcase the best industrial design products created in the Kurzeme Region, as well as to inform a larger audience about the type of design Latvia can be proud of.

WOOLY WORLD TEDDY BEARS



Wooly World is an outstanding example of social business. The company's philosophy is based on creating respect for each other and social equality. The employees of the company are members of the Liepaja Association for the Blind. They make teddy bears from natural sheep's wool. The little bears are produced in Liepāja and are sold in Latvia and abroad - about one third of the production is sold in Japan, with the remainder sold in Germany and Latvia.





ANNAHOUSE CREATIVE TOYS



Adults who built houses from chairs and blankets during their childhood would probably want to be children again to try out the ANNAHOUSE products. They manufacture folding cardboard houses for kids.

ANNAHOUSE produces flexible cardboard toys - dollhouses, pirate ships, planes and other toys. They create a very simple toy that inspires the imagination and develops creativity during playtime with parents and friends. ANNAHOUSE toys are not finished, or painted. This toy provides children with a canvas to express their emotions, imagination and virtually every game, idea or artistic whim thru art. The concept that the child is the one developing and creating their own play world can be empowering and is important to a child's development.



Lithuania, Switzerland, Australia and New Zealand have already shown interest about these eco-friendly cardboard houses. In year 2012 99, 9% of the production is exported to Germany, and already 54 000 houses exported to Germany.



AN INOVATIVE BABY-MONITORING DEVICE



B phone is an innovative baby's guardian, which is linked to a parents' cell phone. The idea for a new product developed when the future manufacturers observed that the traditional product no longer met the needs of today's parent.

The uniqueness of the B-phone - its transmitting radius being unlimited because the device operates within a mobile operator's network. When a child moves or creates a sound, the B-phone calls or sends an SMS to the cell phone connected to it. The parents can respond to their child using the device, which enables them to communicate with and listen to their baby.

AUDIO GIDE FOR MODERN TOURISTS



In recent years the demand for electronically guided tours for tourist who wish to explore cities, museums, exhibitions and other events has increased dramatically. The reason for such demand is simple - a personal guide is a luxury which not everyone can afford due to expense, time, or availability.

Company develops implements and manages various electronic and audio solutions for the tourism industry. The development team consists of well travelled people who love all things pertaining to travel who make use of their experience and passion while creating new innovative solutions for tourists.

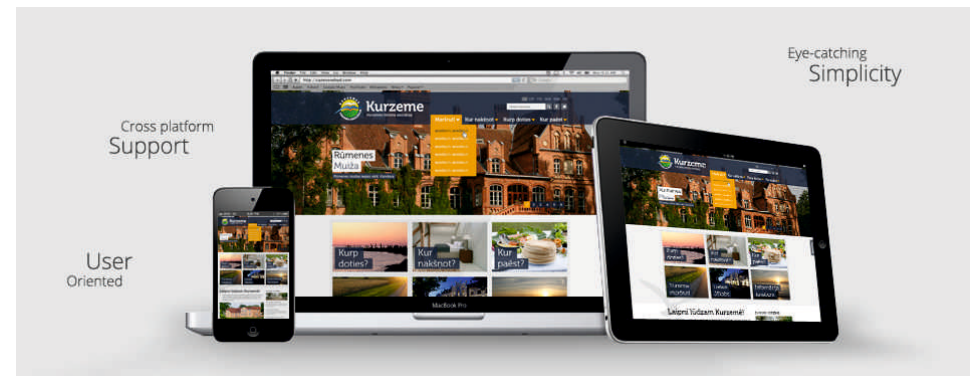


CREATORS OF VIRTUAL HOMES



The main task behind ConcepticHQ work is to turn customer's ideas into attractive and user-friendly applications. Be it an Internet, cell phone or social network application.

The latest product company offers the market is the creation of a 360-degree panoramic virtual tour. A virtual tour is a simulation of a real space that allows the visitor to freely look at the full visual spectrum. Virtual tours are useful tools in the tourism, real estate and leisure sectors, which allow potential visitors to get a virtual view of the selected location or service. There are many unused advantages of virtual tours in the real estate market as well. By creating a 360-degree panoramic view of the property, it is possible to save valuable time and money while offering potential buyers guided tours.



conceptic



PALLY CHAIR – TOY



The mission of MWF is to create new, competitive products with an added value and modern, functional design. The company's core business is the production of furniture made of solid wood. With the creation of The Pally chair, company is starting to operate in a new sector- production of industrial design products in cooperation with designers.

Pally chair is the first functional design product to be introduced to local and export markets. Pally are both- furniture and a toy at the same time which helps to develop logical thinking of a child, helps them to understand color thru the use of colorful ornaments. This toy develops the creative and logical thinking of a child, improves children's eye and hand coordination.

Pally's chair is the first functional design product produced by MWF and certainly not the least to be distributed throughout the EU.



FURNITURE MADE OF LATVIAN WOOD



The belief of the Big Tree Company is that the quality of trees that are grown in Latvia cannot be replaced with laminates or other wood imitations. Oak, birch, pine, apple, cherry trees all grow in Latvia. There are so many different options to create beautiful wooden furniture for your home or office.

Big Tree produces a wide range of furniture ranging from doors, kitchen appliances, cabinets, beds and chairs to fine carvings. The key of success lies in the experienced and passionate employees who are create their designs using modern equipment and multifunctional devices.





INNOVATIONS IN MECHANIKA



Ltd. "Mechanika" has a clear mission - to develop and introduce new and innovative products to the market. The company operates in different phases of product development - beginning with the creation of an idea of a new product to developing very particular technical details of the product and finishing with the organization of production process. The company has created a number of unique and innovative products. For example they have made a number of innovative food processing equipment, photo and video tools for video production as well as products related to waste management.

A product that is currently in the development phase and has a lot of potential is a solar powered lawn mower that can be used for the maintenance of residual gardens. This is a unique product due to the fact that it powered by green energy and besides that it is very safe - lawn mower is being developed to be able to avoid animals, children, flower beds and other objects that shouldn't be cut.

mechanika
engineering



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