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National Design
Award of Latvia

Information for mass media representatives
Riga, June 5, 2023

The winners of the National Latvian Design Award of Latvia 2023 have been determined

On Friday, June 2, the winners of the five categories of the National Design Award of Latvia (NDAL) 2023 were announced at the cinema "Splendid Palace", honoring the best product, services, communication, environment, and digital solutions in the design field. The Grand Prix and the money prize of the Ministry of Culture in the amount of 2,000 euros were awarded to the architectural bureau «Ēter» for the set design of the exhibition «Weird Sensation Feels Good: The World of ASMR» at the London Design Museum. The jury also presented four special awards, and the creative industries platform FOLD presented its award.

Winners of the National Design Award of Latvia:

- Winner in the environmental design category and Grand Prix winner of the National Design Award of Latvia 2023: exhibition «Weird Sensation Feels Good: The World of ASMR» at the Design Museum in London. Authors: «Ēter».
- Winner in the category of digital solutions: video game «The Case of the Golden Idol», Author: «Color Gray» – Andrejs and Ernests Kļaviņi.
- Winner in the category of communication design and winner of the FOLD award: the visual identity of the youth organization «Young Folks». Author: Rūta Jumīte.

- Winner in the service design category: design studio for children at the Museum of Decorative Arts and Design. Authors: LNMM Department of Education and Accessibility - Kristīne Šica, Elīna Bērziņa, Kortnija Māra Gurtlava in collaboration with designer Lāsma Kondrate and illustrator Kristīne Martinova.
- Winner in the product design category: military vehicle «VR-1-FOX». Author: Edijs Ļaksa.

Special recognition of the jury, for an excellent solution of a certain aspect in the work went to:

- **The exhibition «Room no. 13» in ISSP Gallery** of Reinis Hofmanis, Aleksejs Beļeckis un Iveta Gabaliņa was awarded for high-quality small-scale design intervention.
- The jury's special recognition for promoting local pride through design was presented to **the Riga patriots' month communication campaign**. Authors: Eva Abduļina, Jānis Klaučs, Dārta Apsīte.
- **The clothing collection "Vaguely Latvian"** by Sabīne Skarule was highlighted as an ethical and sustainable design.
- As a design with educational and social impact, **the educational board game "Save the Handwriting"**, created by Līga Rīga Bērziņa, Agrita Rinkeviča and lecturers of the Art Academy of Latvia - Maija Rozenfelde, Barbara Ābele, Liene Jākobsone, Martin Foessleitner, Ilze Kundziņa, was awarded.

Graphic designer Rūta Jumīte received the special award of the Latvian creative industry communication platform FOLD for the **visual identity of the youth organization «Young Folks»**.

Winner in the environmental design category and Grand Prix winner of the National Design Award of Latvia 2023: exhibition «Weird Sensation Feels Good: The World of ASMR» at the Design Museum in London. Authors: «Ēter»- Kārlis Bērziņš, Niklāvs Paegle, Dagnija Smilga, Mārtiņš Starks. Contractor — The London Design Museum, in collaboration with the Swedish Centre for Architecture and Design “ArkDes”.

The exhibition's architecture attempts to synthesise the creative field of ASMR and its rich material world into a legible spatial language. Drawing influence from traditional spa cultures, flowing water is replaced by streams of contemporary media, aiming to create an atmosphere of safety and privacy in public, in which multiple people can be triggered to relax simultaneously. The design of the exhibition offers a new public space — an acoustically saturated environment, allowing the exhibit's visitors to immerse themselves in a multi-sensory experience of looking, listening, and feeling closely.

Winner in the category of digital solutions: Video game «The Case of the Golden Idol».

Authors: «Color Gray» - Andrejs and Ernests Kļaviņi

The Case of the Golden Idol is a digital detective game in which the player must find out the causes and interrelationships of twelve mysterious deaths over a period of forty years. The game's visual style features pixel art stylization with grotesque characters that evoke associations with 1990s adventure games. The game works even on low computer systems and does not require quick reactions or previous computer gaming skills to play it, thus is accessible and potentially enjoyable to anyone.

Winner in the communication design category and FOLD award winner: The visual identity of the youth organization "Young Folks". Author: Rūta Jumīte. Contractor: «Young Folks»

Young Folks is a youth organization in Latvia which consists of more than twenty sub-organizations created and managed by young people. Its new visual identity helps to create individual recognition, as well as a common visual language for all Young Folks sub-organizations, including any that would be created in the future. The visual identity has a dynamic headline design and a simple applicative illustration design that anyone in an organization can use, derive, and bring to life, regardless of their graphic design skills, age group and access to digital tools. The new visual identity is a system of tools that is used and developed by the young people themselves and that evolves alongside the organization.

Winner in the service design category: Design studio for children at the Museum of Decorative Arts and Design. Authors: Education and Accessibility Department of the Latvian National Museum of Art – Kristīne Šica, Elīna Bērziņa, Kortnija Māra Gurtlava – in cooperation with designer Lāsma Kondrāte and illustrator Kristīna Martinova. Contractor: Latvian National Museum of Art.

The Museum of Decorative Arts and Design has become an even more child-friendly and exciting place because of its new activity studio where children can explore design creatively. The design studio for children allows young museum visitors to try their hand at ceramics, kinetics, poster design, weaving, to feel the differences of various design materials and listen to stories told by the interactive speaker Babbit. The new design studio invites children to explore the topics covered in the museum in an engaging way and for families to build a closer connection with design in their everyday life.

Winner in the product design category: Military vehicle «VR-1-FOX». Author: Edijs Laksa.
Contractor: «VR Cars»

VR-1-FOX is a military vehicle with an open-top chassis designed and manufactured in Latvia and commissioned by the National Armed Forces of Latvia. This car is unique in its performance and combines the manoeuvrability of a light buggy and the durability of an off-road vehicle. Capable of taking on even the most challenging off-road missions, it is particularly suited for rapid transportation of personnel and cargo. The car's design speaks about the values of purposefulness, intransigence, and the ability to adapt. Since a military vehicle must blend in with its surroundings, the car's colour reflects the natural landscape of our area and observes NATO guidelines.

The jury's special recognition for high-quality small-scale design intervention was received by the exhibition «Room No. 13» at the ISSP Gallery. Authors: Reinis Hofmanis, Alexey Beļeckis, Iveta Gaba.

The idea of the exhibition's scenography uses the archaeology of the gallery space — the peculiarities of the existing partition walls, adjacent external spaces and shop windows — to reinforce the concept of the artist's work. The transformation of the space stems from a series of works by the photographer Reinis Hofmanis, who has captured public interiors transformed by ordinary people. The scenographic solutions take over Hofmanis' visual observations of the relationship between humans and the environment — about how interiors' aesthetic and functional transformation and adaptation have created a strangely illogical yet heartfelt outcome.

The jury's special recognition for promoting local pride through design was presented to the Riga patriots' month communication campaign. Authors: Eva Abduļina, Jānis Klaučs, Dārta Apsīte.

In terms of content, the communication of the city of Riga during the month of national holidays combines stories about the national flag of Latvia from various private and historical sources and poems by Knuts Skujenieks about everyone's inner sense of freedom. Alongside the lines of poetry about freedom which state that freedom must be sustained individually and nurtured regardless of external circumstances, there are collected stories about the guardians of our flag – people who during the

occupation years hid, kept, dismantled and took the Latvian flag with them when they left, thereby becoming the guardians of a free Latvia. Complementing each other, these two concepts form a metaphorical braid of freedom.

The clothing collection «Vaguely Latvian» received the jury's special recognition for ethical and sustainable design. Author: «Skarule».

The clothing collection Vaguely Latvian is a continuation of the story that designer Sabīne Skarule began in her previous collection about “slow time”. The slow pace of everyday life during the pandemic inspired the author to study people's habits when it comes to doing nothing and the longing that accompanies this state of being. How could doing nothing – killing time – be more productive than doing anything? The clothing collection was created in Latvia, in collaboration with local craftspeople, and is the result of experimentation with new materials and their combinations.

The jury's special recognition for design with educational and social impact was given to the educational board game "Save the Handwriting". Authors: Līga Rīga Bērziņa, Agrita Rinkeviča, lecturers of the Art Academy of Latvia -Maija Rozenfelde, Barbara Ābele, Liene Jākobsone, Martin Foessleitner, Ilze Kundziņa.

Save Handwriting is an educational board game for developing writing skills for children from the age of four. The aim of the game is to develop and interest in children to write by hand and to teach them the correct spelling of printed and written letters and letter combinations at an early age in an exciting way. The game is designed like a standard board game with a playing field and 185 task cards. Each task card has an embedded QR code that directs the user to instructional video animations. The animations explain in a simple way how to write each written or printed letter of the alphabet. The players must then reproduce the letters on a transparent board.

A total of 159 works were submitted for the National Design Award of Latvia 2023, which is the highest number of entries submitted for the highest design award in Latvia to date. For participation in the second round of the competition, the selection jury nominated 59 works, which were evaluated by the members of the final jury in intense discussions during a face-to-face meeting at the premises of the Latvian Investment and Development Agency's Creative Industries Incubator on May 30 and 31. The final jury consisted of seven experienced design professionals. In addition to representatives of Latvia, three foreign experts also evaluated the works:

- **Mike Bond** (London, United Kingdom) — chairman of the final jury, design strategist, co-founder and director of brand design consultancy agency «Bond and Coyne»

- **Audronė Drungilaitė** (Vilnius, Lithuania) — product designer, Director of the Design Innovation Centre at Vilnius Academy of Arts.
- **Brigita Bula** (Riga, Latvia) — head architect of «Brigita Bula architects» and board member of the Latvian Association of Architects
- **Emil Roman Frøge** (Kopenhagen, Denmark) — designer, creative director and partner of «Archival Studies» agency
- **Ingūna Elere** (Riga, Latvia) — head designer in design studio «H2E», professor in the Art Academy of Latvia, co-founder of SEGD Riga Chapter
- **Kristaps Šteimanis** (Riga, Latvia) — art director of digital design, production, and consulting company «Cube»
- **Liene Drāzniece** (Riga, Latvia) — graphic designer, co-founder, and head designer of organic skin care company «Madara Cosmetics».

The final jury evaluated all submitted works in accordance with the regulations, assigning one to ten points to each of following quality criteria:

- originality and novelty of the idea,
- setting of the problem and conformity of solutions to the work task,
- co-creation, stakeholder involvement and cooperation in the work process,
- functionality and technological solution,
- aesthetics and other dimensions of quality of experience,
- economic importance, sustainability and circularity,
- social relevance, inclusion, availability and accessibility.

The National Design Award of Latvia 2023 is the highest award in the design field in Latvia, which is presented with the aim to identify, evaluate and promote the best achievements of Latvian designers and advance the development of the Latvian design industry. The competition from 2022 to 2025 is organized by the Latvian Design Centre.

Latvian Design Centre is a member of the *Bureau of European Design Associations (BEDA)* and an official partner of the European Commission's New European Bauhaus Initiative. Latvian Design Centre is involved in design policy making, research and education, and initiates cooperation and strategic partnerships with other design organizations, designers, companies and design users. With the support of the Ministry of Culture, Latvian Design Centre maintains the creative industry communication platform FOLD (www.fold.lv).

National Design Award of Latvia
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