



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are grateful to Jolita Kančienė, an architect and expert on the architecture of interwar Kaunas, for her help compiling this route and revealing the unheard stories of the buildings. Our other sources were “Kaunas 1918-2016. An Architectural Guide” (called Kaunas Architectural Guide in the descriptions) by LAPAS publishing house, research material by KTU IAC Architecture and Urbanism Research Centre, and “Kaunas - European Capital of Culture 2022” project “Modernism for the Future”.

OBJECTS

1 ART DECO MUSEUM GEDIMINO G. 48

The house of doctor Dranas Gudavičius is best known today for the Art Deco museum housed in one of the apartments. As early as 1929, the building was already distinguished by the expressive architectural language created by Edmundas Frykas. “The angular position of the house has resulted in both facades being equally presentable and ornate, and its eaves have been adorned with an expressive Art Deco turret,” states historian Žilvinas Rinkšėlis. In 2017, the apartment on the third floor was purchased by entrepreneurs Karolis Banys and Petras Gaidamavičius, who decided to invest their funds and time in the interwar heritage. Their journey of discovery and inspiration awakened the history of the apartment. It became a private museum and a living testament to Kaunas's golden era, narrated in Art Deco and Nouveau dialects. Join an experiential tour and not only look and listen but also try authentic household utensils, sit on restored furniture and truly breathe the spirit of the Temporary Capital.

2 AMSTERDAM SCHOOL MUSEUM VYTAUTO PR. 58

This is the only building in Lithuania representing the Amsterdam School architectural style, which borrows Art Deco and Art Nouveau elements. Its façade is characterised by remarkable plasticity, curve angle, segmented windows and sculptures. For the project, the owners of the textile factory Liteksas, Moses Posvianskis and Giršas Klisas, employed architect Jokūbas Peras. The house was the home of many prominent citizens of interwar Kaunas.

In 2019, the façade, main door and windows of the staircase were restored, and the staircase was given back its bluish-golden hues.

In January 2023, the founders of the Art Deco Museum opened the Amsterdam School Museum in apartment No. 6. The 136 sqm, 5-room apartment has 2 balconies and a terrace facing the slopes of Žaliakalnis. Queer theory is used to help explain the very colourful and bright palette of the room walls and the mannered sculptures decorating the building. The Jewish culture of Kaunas, interrupted by the Holocaust, is an integral part of the story. The museum's experiential tours present sustainable solutions for recreating the interiors, which can be compared with images from the apartment's previous eras and even footage from the HBO series Chernobyl. The condo features Art Deco and Amsterdam School-style furniture.

3 RESIDENTIAL HOUSE LAISVĖS AL. 3

The apartment house at the foot of Vytautas Park can be easily distinguished by a facade reminiscent of Dutch aesthetics. Reminding of a screen covering the house, it hides the plinth and the gabled roof. Look closely - the ornate white arched window surrounds are decorated with tulips on top. During the Soviet occupation, the house's original layout was altered, and the spacious apartments were divided into communal flats.

4 RESIDENTIAL HOUSE KEŠTUČIO G. 16

The geometrical block in the New Town was built during the Kaunas Fortress period, so this building is distinguished by its modernist aesthetic. Designed by Antanas Jokimas and owned by Julius Tiknevičius, the two-storey house built in 1935 has a unique feature - a turret with a modernised crown. The element emphasising the street corner could have been a decorative solution or used as a covered terrace.

5 STATE INSURANCE COMPANY BUILDING (NOW CENTRAL BUILDING OF LITHUANIAN UNIVERSITY OF HEALTH SCIENCES) A. MICKEVIČIAUS G. 7

The palace for the State Insurance Company was designed by Aleksandras Gordevičius. Built in 1932, it is best viewed from Miško Street. According to the Kaunas Architectural Guide, the solidity of the symmetrical façade is highlighted by the half-columns of coursed stone, decorated at the top with peculiar insurance symbols, the salamanders, reptiles that do not burn in fire. Both these sculptural compositions and the reliefs symbolising the prosperity of the First Republic were created by prominent artist Juozas Žikaras. After the war, the building housed architecture students and was later transferred to the Institute of Medicine (now the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences).

6 RESIDENTIAL HOUSE A. MICKEVIČIAUS G. 15

The “Tulpė” (Tulip) cooperative building is one of the rare examples of the use of folk architecture and ornamentation in brick construction. This tradition was not continued due to professional criticism. For example, Mstislav Dobuzhinsky wrote: ‘It is an architectural attempt to imitate the characteristics of wood in stone, stucco and plaster.’ The Kaunas Architectural Guide notes that the building, dating back to 1926, is also essential as a pioneer of cooperative construction. The cooperative was founded by the author of the project, Antanas Macijauskas and Vytautas Rackauskas. The main façade of the building features stars, tulips and corbels reminiscent of traditional carving and a sun-like window with a crescent-shaped skylight in the centre of the pediment.

7 RESIDENTIAL HOUSE A. MICKEVIČIAUS G. 17

This example of work by Edmundas Frykas is the closest neighbour of the famous Kaunas Garrison Officers' Club. The Kaunas Architectural Guide points out that the apartment block was commissioned by a building contractor and brick workshop owner Saliamonas Gudinskas. Each floor had two large apartments with premises for doctors, lawyers, etc. The design of this building has a solid historicist tradition, enriched with Art Deco features. The central axis is the most prominent in the composition of the three-axis façade, expressed by an arched staircase window, a portal and a triangular pediment. An oval window in the pediment is decorated with a bird's head surrounded by decorative eagles.

8 RESIDENTIAL HOUSE LAISVĖS AL. 31

According to Jolita Kančienė, the house, decorated with historical and national decorative plastic motifs, was built in two stages: in 1928 and 1937. The first floor was occupied by commercial enterprises, and the second was for residents. The house, like the one next door (Laisvės al. 29), belonged to Chasé Monasevičienė. The latter is characterised by its Art Nouveau (Art Nouveau) style and its green glazed tile decoration, unusual for Kaunas.

9 “DAŽANGA” PALACE LAISVĖS AL. 53

Among the most impressive buildings in the centre of Kaunas is the palace for the interwar “Dažanga” company. As well as the central post office and many other architectural highlights of the interwar capital, it was designed by Feliksas Vizbaras. Erected in 1934, the then-called skyscraper housed various organisations and institutions associated with the ruling Nationalist party. An elevator took the visitors up to the terrace on the flat roof. The expressive volumes of “Dažanga” blend national motifs with Art Deco features, including the geometric zigzags of the balcony railings, the imitation of wood carvings in the interstitial windows, the stylised plant motif cornice in the eaves, and the stepped open-work wall that covers the roof terrace.

During the Soviet occupation, the palace housed various institutions and apartments. The building was later handed over to the restored Vytautas Magnus University and sold at auction in 2019.

10 “ROMUVA” CINEMA LAISVĖS AL. 54

The history of “Romuva” dates back to 1938 when businessmen Antanas and Petras Steikūnas purchased land on Laisvės alėja. The movie theatre, which opened in April 1940, was said to be the most spacious, modern and original cinema in Lithuania and one of the best in the region. The structure of the building was reminiscent of the streamlined aesthetics typical of American cinemas of the time, with features of historicism or national style. At the same time, modernity was emphasised by the glass turret. During the reconstruction, the tower was decorated with the signature of the project's author, Nikolajus Mačiulskis. Today, “Romuva” is the only cinema built in interwar Lithuania that still shows movies.

11 RESIDENTIAL HOUSE S. DAUKANTO G. 14

In a local newspaper in July 1929, a photograph of this building was accompanied by the sentence ‘One of the most beautiful new facades of Kaunas.’ The owners of this beauty were a wealthy couple, Berelis (Boris) and Frida Šlapoberskis. Like several others built at the same time, the building is characterised by elaborate decoration typical of the period. The later projects of its designer Leonas Ritas are more restrained in appearance. The façade of this house has both northern modern and Art Deco features. The Kaunas Architectural Guide notes that the vertical rhythm is emphasised by narrow windows connected by relief ornaments. The axis of the façade is highlighted by pediments and ancient walls, and the decorative solution of a mask is essential here, as are motifs reminiscent of ancient Egypt and massive balconies.

12 RESIDENTIAL HOUSE LAISVĖS AL. 69

Since Laisvės alėja dates back to the 19th century, the boulevard is home to examples of several architectural eras. However, there are only a few with Art Deco features. This 1930 building, then owned by businesswoman Mina Kotkauskienė, is not typical of the Lithuanian context, but it is charming with expressionist ideas, expressed in the zigzag wall and balconies projecting from it. The ground floor of the building was then and is now occupied by shops. As the Kaunas Architectural Guide notes, it is like a pedestal for the dynamic volume composition of the building. The architect of the building has not yet been identified.

13 FIRE STATION (NOW KAUNAS FIREFIGHTING AND RESCUE OPERATION HEADQUARTERS) I. KANTO G. 1

The curved building is undoubtedly the most distinguished of all fire stations in Lithuania. It was built in 1932 to a design by Edmundas Frykas. It is no coincidence that the location of the palace next to a fast-flowing Nemunas river was chosen. The Kaunas Architectural Guide calls attention to the fact that the curve of the palace forms an oval square, the concave façade is made up of repeated vertical segments, and the symmetry is emphasised by the two towers. During the interwar period, it was also the seat of the town library for a time.

14 RESIDENTIAL HOUSE PRIEPLAUKOS KRANTINĖ 6

Designed as the headquarters of the Inspectorate of Shipping (also known as Kaunas Waterways District), the house was built in 1927. The author of the project was the head of this institution, engineer Artemijus Snarskis. The building also housed the Water Police and the chief's apartment. According to Jolita Kančienė, the expression of this house combines Western and Lithuanian traditions – there is a sense of a desire to create an architectural logo.

15 RESIDENTIAL HOUSE V. PUTVINSKIO G. 70

Antanas Gravogkas, an engineer, a nobleman, and one of the main organisers of the Klaipėda region uprising, was the burgomaster of Kaunas in 1932-1933. Around that time, he moved into a new house on a prestigious street. He designed it together with Edmundas Frykas. The Kaunas Architectural Guide reveals an interesting detail: the first two floors of the building, which has both historicist and Art Deco features, are made of bricks from the objects of the Kaunas fortress. The main façade is fascinating with its heterogeneous composition. The lower central part is crowned by a balustrade with crown-like cusps. The eastern edge has Art Nouveau moldings and a tall narrow portal decorated with bronze bas-reliefs by Juozas Žikaras.

16 RESIDENTIAL HOUSE K. DONELAIČIO G. 77

As Žilvinas Rinkšėlis writes on the website “Modernism for the Future”, in 1924, the architect Edmundas Frykas designed a three-storey house with historicist forms for the famous lawyer Petras Leonas. In the same year, the engineer Leonas Ritas took over the work. He raised the house, creating a new expressive composition for the upper part. The interior of the house was adapted to the owners' activities, with separate offices for private practice next to the main staircase.

17 RESIDENTIAL HOUSE K. DONELAIČIO G. 79

The north façade of the three-storey apartment building opens onto the Vytautas the Great War Museum, which, like this building, was designed by the famous architect Vladimirus Dubeneckis. Leonas Ritas was the technical supervisor on the site. In 1922, the plot was acquired by Mausa and Natanas Feinbergas (the latter served as head of the Ministry of Jewish Affairs in Lithuania from 1919 to 1921 and then was the principal founder of the Faculty of Law at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem), but it was not until 1929 that construction began. The front of the house is eye-catching: the recessed entrance and ground floor divided by different rhythmic strokes create an illusion of inclusiveness, while five-sided balconies, the toothed profile of the eaves above and the third floor also draw the eye. As Robertas Motuzas notes, the textures of the geometric stripes dividing the windows give the building a distinct Art Deco character.

18 RESIDENTIAL HOUSE E. OŽEŠKIEŅĖS G. 11

The house of Jokūbas Šusteris was designed by engineer Aleksandras Golovinskas in 1923.

19 RESIDENTIAL HOUSE SAVANORIŲ PR. 1

Jolita Kančienė notes that the apartment block with commercial premises, built in 1931 according to the design of engineer Naach-Ber Joffe at the intersection of the most essential Kaunas streets, is characterised by its geometric composition and the interplay of planes and lines. The rounded corner is framed by blades with stylish flat vases. The house was owned by Chana and Faivušas Kenigsbergas. The husband was a well-known goldsmith, cutlery maker, and watchmaker, and in 1933, with his son Borisas, he founded the joint-stock company “Šalina” (the Swiss Watch House). His daughter Raja was the wife of the famous constructor Anatolijus Rozenbliumas.

20 FORMER “PASAKA” CINEMA SAVANORIŲ PR. 124

One of the last cinemas built in the First Republic was opened in the spring of 1940. Its owner was Jurgis Štomas, who later became a victim of the Lietūkis massacre. His granddaughter, Jenny Kagan, commemorated her grandfather's memory when Kaunas became the European Capital of Culture in 2022 by including the cinema's neon sign (the title means ‘fairytale’) in her exhibition. According to the Kaunas Architectural Guide, the authors of the project, Juozas Segalaukas, Jokūbas Rabinavičius, and A. Paškevičius, designed a building that may not have been perfect for its intended purpose but which was expressive with Art Deco features. The central plane of the façade still resembles a cinema screen: the entrance is incorporated into an open porch, with a decorative balcony serving as a canopy. The structure of the interior spaces has not been preserved; after the war, it was used as a gym, then again for cinema and in recent years as a leisure club.

21 RESIDENTIAL HOUSE K. PETRAUSKO G. 25

Around 1930, the house was built according to a design by Vsevolodas Koppylovas, a construction technician who later became an engineer. It was owned by Juozas Berniūnas and contained several apartments and a bar-restaurant, “Ąžuolynas” (named after the Oak Grove park nearby). It was the first restaurant in this part of Žaliakalnis. In the evenings, ‘radio music’ was played for the public's pleasure, and the food was inexpensive and accessible to the middle class. During the Soviet occupation, the restaurant was replaced by a beer hall with vending machines and later by grocery shops. The laconic façade is decorative thanks to the geometric partitioning, accentuated by the staircase turret and the open-work balco-

22 KAUNAS CITY MUSEUM M. AND K. PETRAUSKAS HOUSE K. PETRAUSKO G. 31

In 1925, according to a project by A. Golovinskas, the house was built by the brothers Mikas Petrauskas, composer, conductor, and Kipras Petrauskas, opera soloist. A street was later named after the latter, reflecting his popularity in interwar Kaunas. The musicians rented out some of the flats, and you can still see the splendid interiors of the time today, as it is a branch of the Kaunas City Museum. The building's artistic exterior is also eye-catching. The corner of the building at the intersection of the streets is truncated and surrounded by a large balcony. The main entrance is accentuated by floral braids. According to the Kaunas Architectural Guide, these and other ornaments can be called ‘national Art Deco’.

23 RESIDENTIAL HOUSE M. JANKAUS G. 32

Among the rather traditional wooden buildings of this part of Žaliakalnis, this two-storey apartment building is worth noting in terms of its volumetric composition, variety of elements and decor. It was built around 1928, and the first owner was A. Šutas.

24 RESIDENTIAL HOUSE E. FRYKO G. 38

At the beginning of the 1930s, the architect Edmundas Frykas designed several houses on the divided territory of the former Frykas manor. The alley in the upper part of the slope was named after him in 1935. In the house he designed for Jonas Pivonas in 1934, the architect used his favourite concrete blocks, which also had a decorative function and were interestingly combined with the silicate brick surfaces. A similar combination can be seen in the nearby house at E. Fryko g. 11.

25 VILLA “EGLUTĖ” VAIŽGANTO G. 25

The villa was designed for the diplomat, signatory of the Act of Independence Petras Klimas and his family by Feliksas Vizbaras, one of the most famous promoters of the ‘national style’ of the First Republic. The Renaissance-style house, built in 1929, was named “Eglutė” after the diplomat's daughter. However, Klimas did not have much time to enjoy this modern villa, as he constantly worked abroad. After being imprisoned and tortured by the Gestapo during the Second World War, he returned to Kaunas and stayed in his sister-in-law's house across the street. He continued to live there after his return from exile. His vila was divided into smaller flats.

26 RESIDENTIAL HOUSE STAKIŲ G. 8

The house on the narrow Stakių street on the slope of Žaliakalnis catches the eye with its volume and arched staircase window. The façade is unplastered, as is rarely the case in Kaunas, so the visible rhythm of the blocks draws attention. As Marija Oniščik and Žilvinas Rinkšėlis have been able to establish, architect Edmundas Frykas, who lived nearby, designed and built this house as compensation for his stepmother Apoloniya Frykienė, to whom his father owed 3000 litas after his death. Major Jonas Juknevičius of the General Staff also lived in the house between the wars.

27 RESIDENTIAL HOUSE K. BÜGOS G. 1 / ŠIAULIŲ G. 43

The one-storey residential house stands out in the modernist K. Būgos street and emphasises its corner with a decorative domed tower. Built in 1931 to a design by engineer Boruchas Klingas and construction technician M. Cukermanas, the house belonged to pharmacist Jonas Putna, who had a drugstore in the Lietūkis building at Vytauto pr. 43. The small one-apartment house is characterised by its expressive appearance and ornate, historicist décor.

28 RESIDENTIAL HOUSE KAUNAKIEMIO G. 30 / ŠIAULIŲ G. 2

The house was designed in 1930 by engineer Dovydas Kurickis for brothers Chachellis and Natanas Galperas. The building, emphasising the corner of the street with its expressive combination of volumes, is also notable because it has been home to the “Žaliukė” restaurant since 1966.

29 KAUNAS EDUCATION INNOVATION CENTRE VYTAUTO PR. 44

The high school for Russian students was designed by Aleksandras Gordevičius, next to the main Kaunas cemetery (today a park). The building near two Orthodox churches, the architecture of which may have been influenced by such a neighbourhood, is perhaps the only civilian example of Russian historicism, freely interpreted, in the city. According to the Kaunas Architectural Guide, the southern part of the main façade is well-decorated, with prism-rusted blades and a portal, ornamentation in exotic patterns, and decorative triangular pediments. Until it was plastered, the red brick façade resembled the ‘brick style’ typical of many other buildings from the time of Kaunas Fortress. The building today houses the Kaunas Education Innovation Centre.

30 SYNAGOGUE SODŲ G. 36

It is the only modernist synagogue in Lithuania and one of only two synagogues built during the First Republic that are still standing. The side facades are dominated by stylised elements of medieval and Moorish architecture. In contrast, the composition of the buttresses on the rear fronts with broken contour planes is typical of modernism. According to the Kaunas V. Kudirka Public Library directory, the red brick building was left unplastered as planned in the project: ‘The moulded attic and the narrow verticals of the rectangular windows show the author's attempt to adapt the modernist style, while the pointed windows and the arches of the cornice decorations show the connection with the traditional architecture of European synagogues.’

During the Soviet occupation, the synagogue's exterior was altered, the arched windows were bricked up, and a bakery was set up inside. The building is currently unused and abandoned.

31 VILLA “GRABYTĖ” GAILUTĖS G. 19

Panemunė was an official resort in the interwar period. It was also the location of a military school, so the houses in the block between Vičiūnų, Gailutės and Vaidilos streets were often built by military officers. In 1933, Colonel Damas Grabys, an engineer, and his wife Bronislava bought this villa, which was built in good timber by a forester. With its distinctive interpretation of Baroque elements, the villa is set back from the streets and surrounded by a garden. The central part of the façade features a decorative carved pediment with volutes and an octagonal skylight in the centre.

When the Soviets occupied Lithuania, Grabys was arrested and later executed. The family fled Kaunas, but the daughters returned to the villa in the post-war period. That is why the recently renovated building, which has been turned into an exclusive guest house, is called “Villa Grabytė”.

32 RESIDENTIAL HOUSE VIČIŪNŲ G. 9

In the quiet neighbourhood of Panemunė, look out for this luxurious, chalet-like two-apartment villa, made up of various contrasting volumes: angular buttresses, terraces, balconies, complemented by decorative balustrades and windows of different shapes. The residence was most probably designed in 1934 by its owner, the engineer Feliksas Dobkevičius, Chief Director of Lithuanian Railways. His brother, Napoleonas Dobkevičius, an engineer and founder of one of the first driving schools in Lithuania, also lived in the house.

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The most distinctive feature of Kaunas architecture is modernism. In 2015, Kaunas' interwar modernist architecture was awarded the European Heritage Label, and the city became a member of UNESCO's Design Cities network.

The boom in architecture and design between the two world wars was caused by the change in the city's status: after the occupation of Vilnius, Kaunas became the capital of the newly reborn state. The situation sparked the establishment of institutions and businesses, and inhabitants settled in new apartment houses and villas. Today, we appreciate the urban carpet of Kaunas that was kneaded at that time. Art Deco is not the only, but a crucial and visually appealing trend that shaped interwar Kaunas, a temporary capital striving for Westernness. Let's explore how much of this decorative trace can be seen in Kaunas' modernist heritage.



MORE KAUNASTIC ROUTES

Wondering what to do next? Here are some of the themed routes available in English:

Modernist's Guide	A Hanseatic Merchant's story
Wallographer's Notes	Kaunas Fortress
The Litvak Landscape	Pilgrim's Guide to Kaunas
The Sugihara Route	Wooden Stories
Kid-Sized Kaunas	Interwar Student
The City of Champions	Around Kaunas with a Diplomat
Culture Shock	Kaunas Between the Lines

For free publications, visit the Kaunas IN tourist information centre (Laisvės al. 36, Kaunas), or locations labelled with the "Tourism Information Friendly" or visit.kaunas.lt. Digital versions of the routes are available at kaunastika.lt

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