

Roche
Latvia
Yesterday,
Today,
Tomorrow



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Foreword

Roche is a traditional pharmaceutical company with a hundred-year-old history, and it operates with the precision of a Swiss watch – that’s what I thought when I came to a job interview back in 1996. Today, my view is much more personal – *Roche Latvia* is a place where one can experience fulfillment from sharing the same values as one’s colleagues. As the general manager, I would like our workplace to be an environment where employees set themselves goals and tasks that give them a sense of happy satisfaction once they are attained. I would like everyone to merge with their work – much like a violinist does with his violin, or a surgeon who concentrates

on saving lives instead of counting the hours he has worked. I would like it if like-minded colleagues would unite in the name of common goals. I don’t have much in common with those who only ‘work to eat’; I am of like mind with those who work because they are fascinated by what they do, and because it brings them joy and satisfaction.

I am convinced that *Roche* employees have a unique opportunity to help both patients and the people of Latvia. I have worked as a doctor, and I know that there are cases when it is not in the power of the medical practitioner to influence decisions being made about people’s lives – so much is dependent on bu-

reaucracy and government budgets. But we do have the opportunity, time, and duty to assure what is best for a patient in Latvia – for example, to identify mutations in cancer genes that lead to the prescription of accurate therapies instead of financially wasteful blanket treatments.

The idea behind the ancient La Roche surname – to be ready for battle – is as strong as ever. Likewise, in a doctor’s line of work, if there is at least a one percent chance of saving a life, then one must fight for that outcome. I have experienced this situation, and when something first appears to have little hope of success, once it is finally accomplished, it elicits an enormous sense of strength

and satisfaction – a feeling I wish everyone to experience.

This book is a story about an ideal workplace; it is about the joy and satisfaction that *Roche Latvia* has brought to people; it is about our goals and endeavors; and it is about zeal, honesty, and courage.

Dr. Rauls Vēliņš,
General Manager of SIA *Roche Latvia*

Congratulatory Note

It is with sincere pleasure that I address the reader of this book – a book about traditions and innovations as well as on the wide and diverse connections between Switzerland and Latvia.

Both Switzerland and *Roche* are proud of their traditions. Just to name a few from my country: the democratic participation of citizens, Switzerland's four linguistic regions, solidarity, human rights and justice, an open and export-oriented economy, and constructive relations with other countries. These values enable Switzerland's brightest minds to find a modern approach to solving existing problems as well as preventing new ones from arising in the future.

Whether solutions are developed by start-ups or small and medium-sized enterprises, or subsequently advanced by large multinationals such as *Roche*, their implementation is possible due to the free and open environment that Switzerland offers.

Switzerland spends 3.4% of its GDP on investment in research and development. These innovative solutions can also be seen in Latvia, a country with which Switzerland traditionally has very good and friendly relations. This was also emphasised during the 2018 state visit of Alain Berset, President of the Swiss Confederation, to Latvia.

In addition, in 2021 we will celebrate 100 years since Switzerland recognized the Republic of Latvia, and 30 years since the resumption of our diplomatic relations.

The pharmaceutical company *Roche* confirms its commitment to tradition by having renovated its historic headquarters located on Miera iela in Riga. Investing in architectural monuments is a business model that the company implements not only in Riga but also in my native city of Basel, which boasts the tallest building in Switzerland – *Roche* Tower, the home of *Roche's* global headquarters.

Konstantin Obolensky,
Ambassador of Switzerland
to the Republic of Latvia

Roche worldwide

- 1 https://www.roche.com/sustainability/access-to-healthcare/ath_who.htm
- 2 <https://www.roche.lv/lv/jaunumi/17112020.html>
- 3 Krastiņa B. Sees development opportunities in Latvia. Interview with Chief Executive Officer Roche Group Severin Schwan. *Diena*. Nr. 174 (8410), p. 5



F. Hoffmann-La Roche Ltd. is a global pharmaceutical and diagnostics company that has set as its main task the development of science for the purpose of improving people's lives. Thanks to a combination of pharmacy and diagnostics under one roof, *Roche* has become a leader in personalised healthcare – the core of its strategy is to find the most appropriate treatment for each patient with the best possible results.

Roche is the world's largest biotechnology company providing specialty drugs in oncology, immunology, infectology, ophthalmology and neuroscience. *Roche* is also a world leader in laboratory (in vitro) diagnostics and tissue-based

cancer diagnostics, as well as a key roleplayer in diabetes care and genetic engineering.

Founded in 1896 by Fritz Hoffmann and Adèle La Roche, the company continues to look for better and more effective ways to prevent, accurately diagnose and successfully treat disease, in addition to making a sustainable contribution to the health care system and society as a whole. The company aims to improve access to medical innovation for patients by working with all stakeholders.

The World Health Organisation's Model List of Essential Medicines includes 30 *Roche*-developed drugs, including life-saving antibiotics, antimalarials and can-

cer drugs.¹ According to the Dow Jones Sustainability Index, *Roche* has been a recognised leader in pharmaceuticals, biotechnology and life sciences for many years in a row.²

The Roche Group, headquartered in Basel, Switzerland, operates in more than 100 countries and employs more than 90,000 people. Every year, *Roche* invests billions of euros into science and research.

Roche is a healthcare solutions company. *Roche* offers both medicines and diagnostics, but at the same time it seeks and offers solutions to the situations and challenges that the 21st century continues to bring to the healthcare sys-

tem and society. One of the company's latest endeavors is to create a so-called antibody cocktail that will help treat Covid-19. In order to overcome a viral pandemic, companies need to work together rather than compete with one another.³

Jānis Siliņš,
SIA *Roche Latvia* Market
Access Manager



The History of *Roche*

Of course we are proud of our past
and present achievements. But what
really drives us is the future.

Severin Schwan

Chief Executive Officer of *F. Hoffmann-La Roche Ltd.*

The Creation of Roche

Kamena Kaidaka



On April 8, 2019, a capsule containing Swiss and Latvian state symbols, a letter to future generations from Severin Schwan, Chief Executive Officer of *F. Hoffmann-La Roche Ltd.*, and a group photograph of the *Roche Latvia* team was laid in the cornerstone of the historic *Roche* office building located at Miera iela 25 in Riga. The ceremony was attended by Alexander Lukas Bieri, curator of *Roche's* historical collection and archives (serving not only as the custodian of *Roche* traditions but as a representative of the board of directors) and Konstantin Obolensky, Ambassador of Switzerland to the Republic of Latvia. *Roche Latvia* is currently facing new challenges. In describ-

ing *Roche's* work, Severin Schwan says that 'Of course we are proud of our past and present achievements. But what really drives us is the future'.¹

The coming years for *Roche Latvia* will be closely linked with the historic building in which it now resides, a structure whose ancient stairs still bear the footprints of its builders. It will be a special place for both *Roche Latvia* employees and all visitors, for Miera iela 25 will become a place where yesterday, today and tomorrow coexist in harmony. In 2020 *SIA Roche Latvia* was celebrating its fifteenth anniversary. The management of the company is in the hands of Rauls Vēliņš. In order to document *Roche's* his-

tory, in 2010 the company published the book 'Roche 1896-2011'. Time has passed since then, and every day has brought new changes that should be identified and immortalised.

Respect and honour towards the company's history, which is closely linked to that of the La Roche family, is also reflected in the fact that research into the company's history continues to take place alongside all of the many new discoveries in the medical field. A historical treasure is the coat of arms of the La Roche family, which depicts a knight with a sword ready for battle. Alexander Lukas Bieri, the curator of *Roche's* historical collections and archives, is often

↑ In 1896 in Basel, Switzerland, spouses Fritz Hoffmann and Adele La Roche founded *F. Hoffmann-La Roche & Co.*
Photo from the *Roche* archives, Basel.



Logo of *F. Hoffmann-La Roche & Co.*, founded on 1 October 1896. Photo from the *Roche* archives, Basel.

1 www.roche.de/en/about/strategie/index.html (2020)

asked how the Roche name arose as its founder, Fritz Hoffmann-La Roche, was apparently not born with that name. Alexander Bieri's explanation goes back to the time of Louis XIV.²

Fritz Hoffmann married Adèle La Roche on May 2, 1895, and under Swiss law became Fritz and Adèle Hoffmann-La Roche. The families of both had come to Switzerland from southern Germany – the Hoffmanns in 1489, and the La Roche family in 1580. La Roche is not a traditional German surname – the original family surname was Hebdenstreit, which translates from Old High German as 'ready for a fight or dispute'. Adèle's ancestor, Johann Jacob Hebdenstreit

(1654–1717), served as a mercenary for Louis XIV (also known as the Sun King), and it was His Majesty who gave his mercenary the right to add the sonorous 'La Roche' to his surname, meaning that its bearer would be like 'a rock'. The cumbersome medieval surname Hebdenstreit was abandoned in favor of the nobler La Roche in the 19th century. Fritz Hoffmann-La Roche quickly realised that the shortened 'Roche', which is easy to pronounce in all languages, would be the most suitable for successful operation and marketing of the company, and began to use it widely as the company's brand. This is also the case today – the original name continues to live on as a

symbol in its own right. The family's ardent love of art and science also continues to live on, so although generations may have long since replaced each other, the tradition of supporting creative people has not been abandoned by neither the global *Roche* nor *Roche Latvia*.



Coat of arms of the Hebdenstreit-La Roche family. 17th century.
Photo from the Roche archives, Basel.

² Alexander Bieri entry in the *Roche G+* community platform 06.06.2018.

Between Two World Wars

Juris Salaks, Kamena Kaidaka, Marina Kāne

From 1918 to 1945, the area in which the *F. Hoffmann-La Roche* company did business extended from Basel to Latvia. *Roche's* operations in Latvia were also affected by Latvia's favourable geographical situation and the population's relatively high level of education. When evaluating and analysing *Roche's* operations in Latvia, one must take into account the historical events and economic development of the company from its very beginnings – back to 1896, when Fritz Hoffmann and his wife Adèle La Roche established a company in Basel, Switzerland to produce standardised medicines for pharmacies. As a successful entrepreneur and tradesman, Fritz

Hoffmann soon realised that a multinational sales network would make it possible to sell their products outside the relatively small Swiss market.³ Within a few years, *Roche* opened branches in Germany, Italy, France, the United States, Spain, Austria, and the United Kingdom, and in 1925 – in Japan. As early as 1897, *Roche* Representative Josef Aronstamm (1864–1929) began his work in Russia.⁴ In pre-war Tsarist Russia, *Roche* had offices in Moscow, Odessa, Rostov, and Kazan. In 1910, the St. Petersburg agency became the Russian branch of *Roche*, which also conducted its trade in the then Russian Baltic provinces. Josef Aronstamm continued to run the Russian

branch. After the October 1917 Bolshevik coup in Russia, the situation worsened, and in 1919 the *Roche* branch was nationalised, losing an important market that had made about 20% of *Roche's* total profits.⁵ Despite this loss, *Roche* continued to open new offices and branches outside of Switzerland, including in Riga. And so in 1920 Josef Aronstamm, whose hometown was Liepāja, began *Roche's* operations in an independent Latvia, in 1921 becoming *Roche's* official representative in three new countries on the world map – Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. In his memoirs, he describes how doctors and chemists at the time were delighted that *Roche* medicines were

3 Peyer C. H. *Roche. A company History 1896–1996*. Basel, 1996, p. 54.

4 Historical Archive Roche (HAR), AR: PE.1.A-101834.

5 Ibid., PE.1.H-101825.



Josef Aronstamm
Roche in Riga 1920-1928



Abraham Aronstamm
Roche in Riga 1929-1932



Viktor Aronstamm
Roche in Riga 1931-1940

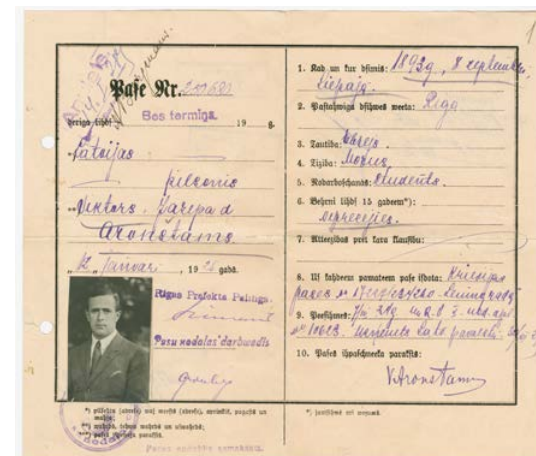


Dr. Gregor Aronstamm
Roche in Riga 1932-1936

← Representatives of the Aronstamm family whose activities at Roche were closely connected with Riga: Josef Aronstamm (Riga, 1920-1928), Abraham Aronstamm (Riga, 1929-1931), Victor Aronstamm (Riga, 1931-1940), Gregor Aronstamm (Riga, 1932-1936). Photo from the Roche archives, Basel.



← Passport of Latvian citizen Josef Aronstamm (Jozefs Aronštams), issued on 29 July 1920. Photo from the National Archives of Latvia.



← Passport of Victor Aronstamm (Viktors Aronštams), the eldest son of Josef Aronstamm, a Latvian citizen, issued on 12 January 1920. Photo from the National Archives of Latvia.



← Passport of Abraham Aronstamm (Abrahams Aronštams), younger brother of Josef Aronstamm, a Latvian citizen, issued on 24 February 1921. Photo from the National Archives of Latvia.



← Passport of Gregor Aronstamm (Grigorijs Aronštams), son of Josef Aronstamm, a Latvian citizen, issued on 3 February 1925. Photo from the National Archives of Latvia.

available again in the Baltic market.⁶ The company focused its efforts on overcoming the drop in sales following the loss of the Russian market. In 1925 the first small office of *F. Hoffmann-La Roche* was established in Riga, headed by Josef Aronstamm.⁷

The pharmaceutical market in the Baltics, especially in Latvia, was successful. *Roche* sold 30 drugs in the Baltic market, including Allonal, Sirolin, Redoxon, Saridon, Pantopon and Larosan. Riga also became an important *Roche* business centre because Latvia was the only country that had the necessary trade agreements with Soviet Russia.⁸

The main tasks of the office were to promote *Roche* products, distribute brochures and samples of Allonal and Thiocol, and visit doctors and chemists in pharmacies. Evaluating the results of the first quarter of 1925, it was planned that the annual turnover in Latvia would be 100,000 Swiss francs. As the business rapidly grew, it became clear that the operations in Riga needed to be expand-

ed, and in 1926 a new, larger office was opened at M. Monētu iela 3⁹ and later, at Valņu iela 3/5.¹⁰

The period from 1925 to 1931 was a time of rapid growth for *Roche* in the Baltics. Profits increased by a factor of 4.5, and 60% of the Baltic market was concentrated in Latvia.¹¹ These were the preconditions for the opening of the *Roche* Riga branch on August 1, 1929. The articles of organisation for the branch, 'Noteikumi par Šveices akc. sab. „F. Hoffmann-La Roche un Co., Bāzelē” darbību Latvijā’, were published in issue 15/16 of the Latvian journal *Ekonomists*. They were approved on June 21, 1929 by the Minister of Finance, A. Petrevics. The articles state:

– 1. The goal of the Swiss joint stock company *F. Hoffmann-La Roche and Co., Basel* branch in Riga, Latvia is: pharmaceutical and chemical product production and trade.

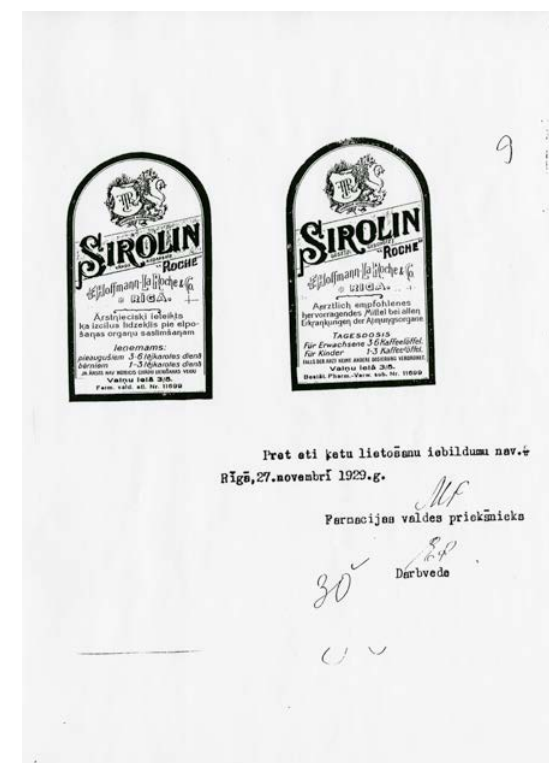
– 2. A share capital of 100,000 lati has been set aside for operations in Latvia, which must be permanently

located in the Latvia branch of the company in cash, goods, goods and money documents or real estate.

– 4. The company may lease and acquire movable and fixed property in Latvia only for the needs of its business, in accordance with the legislation in force in the country. Real estate can be acquired only with the permission of the Minister of Finance and Justice.

– 6. The company shall appoint a person (or several persons) with permanent residence in Latvia as its authorised and responsible agent in Latvia, granting this agent the following rights and obligations: a) to answer on behalf of the company in all court cases that may arise in connection with the company's activities in Latvia; b) to independently resolve all issues related to the activities of the company in Latvia. (...)

– 7. (...) The branch of the company in Latvia uses the following company name: akc. sab. „F. Hoffmann-La Roche and Co., Basel” filiāle Rīgā.¹²



↑ Acceptance of the Sirolin label by Mārtiņš Pusbarnieks, Head of the Pharmaceutical Board, 27 November 1929. Photo from the archives of Pauls Stradins Museum of the History of Medicine.

6 Ibid., LG.LV-102017a.

7 Latvian State Historical Archives (LVVA), 6687. f., Apr. 1, p.

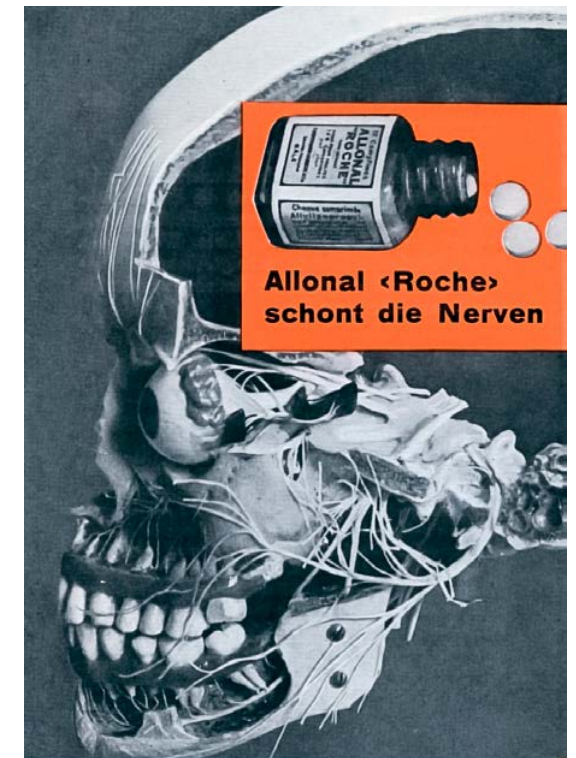
8 Ibid., 6687. f., Apr. 1, p. 16.

9 Ibid., 6687. f., Apr. 1, 139 p.

10 Медицинская адресная книга Латвии. Рига, Аргус, 1925, стр. 53.

11 LVVA, 6687. f., Apr 1. 1, 95. l.

12 Noteikumi par Šveices akc. sab. „F. Hoffmann-La Roche un Co., Bāzelē” darbību Latvijā. *Ekonomists* 1929, No. 15/16, p. 665

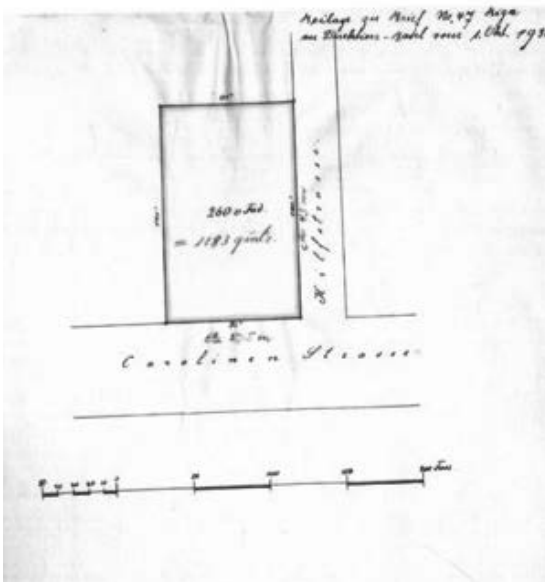


↑ In the 1920s, Roche sold 30 different drugs in the Baltic market, including Allonal, Redoxon, Saridon, Pantopon and Larosan. Pictured: Allonal advertisement. Photo from the archives of Pauls Stradins Museum of the History of Medicine.

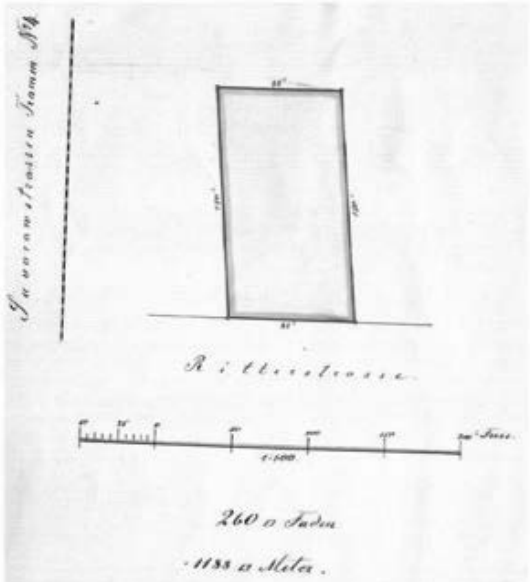
← Two Roche products were produced in Riga: Sirolin Roche and Tonikum Roche. Pantopon-Scopolamin, Redoxon, Saridon and Tonikum Roche. Photo: Anete Krūmiņa

Although the purpose of the *Roche* branch in Riga was to produce pharmaceutical and chemical products, only two products were produced in Riga – the orange-flavoured cough syrup *Sirolin*, and *Tonikum "Roche"*. It was also planned to start production of *Saridon* (a painkiller) and *Redoxon* (vitamin C), but that did not come to pass.

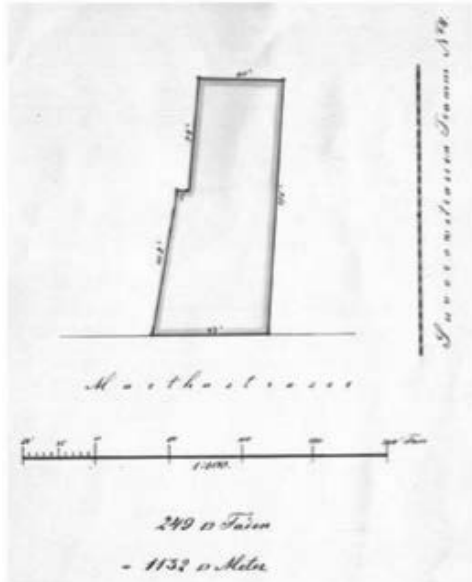
The *Roche* Riga branch, run from July 1, 1928 by Josef's younger brother, Abraham Aronstamm (1876–1931), needed more space. In October 1930 three properties were available in Riga from which the possible location of the new *Roche* laboratory and office could be chosen. *Roche* chose property on Karlīnes iela (now Miera iela) near Riga 1st Hospital, the oldest civil hospital in Latvia, as the most suitable place for its operations. As property prices were expected to increase in Riga, the issue of site selection had to be addressed urgently. The total budget for the purchase of real estate and the construction of the new buildings for *Roche's* office was approximately 200,000 Swiss francs. The properties on Martas iela and Bruņinieku iela were inhabited, but the property on Karlīnes iela was uninhabited, although there still was a wooden building there. *Roche* chose the property on Karlīnes iela because it had a lower price and was close to the tram line and the city centre. The size of this property was 1183.5 m², with a to-



Karlīnes iela/Palīdzības iela,
38 Swiss francs/m2



Bruņinieku iela/Barona iela,
50 Swiss francs/m2



Martas iela/Barona iela,
50 Swiss francs/m2

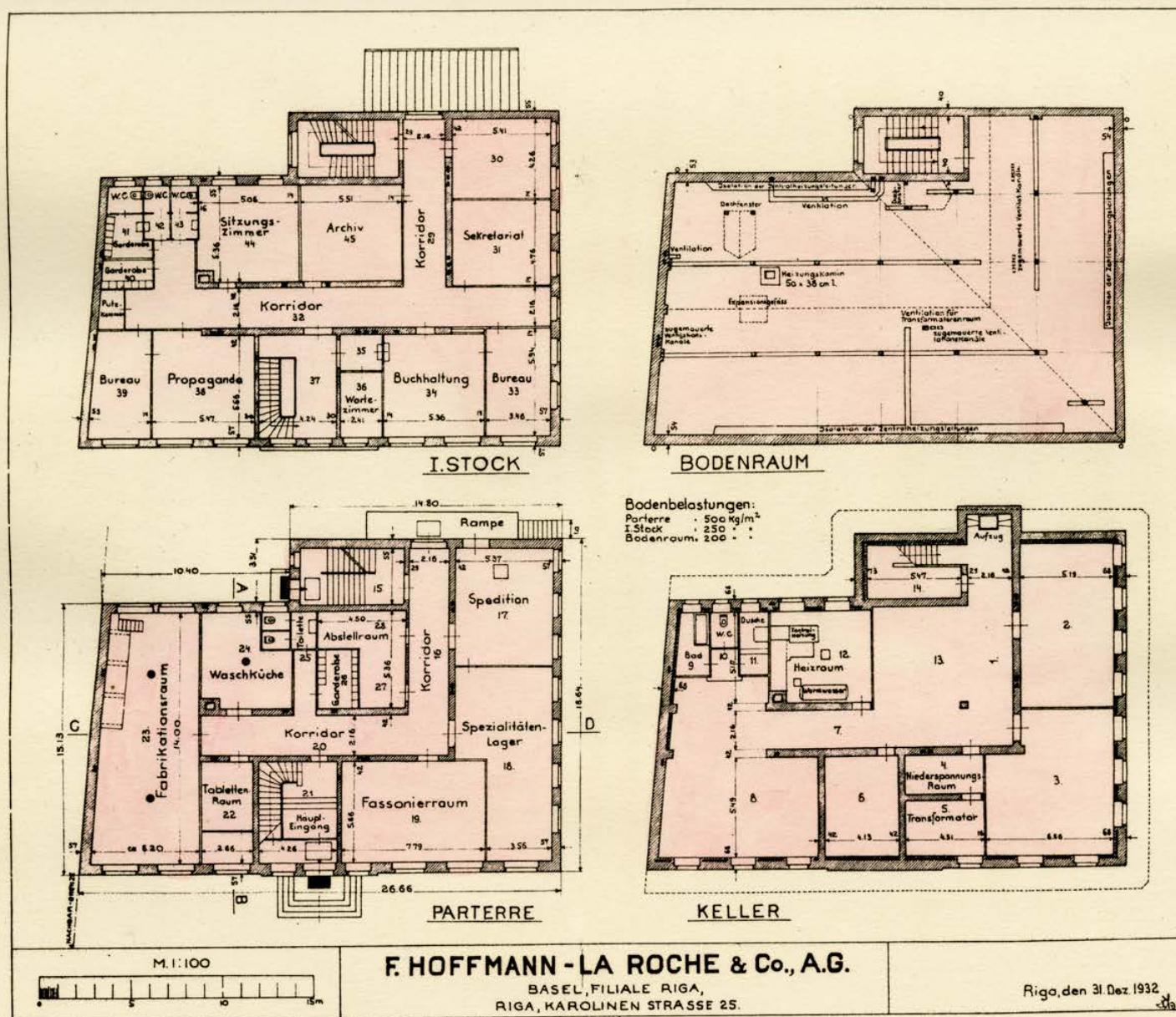
tal price of 45,000 lati.¹³ In October 1930 *Roche* paid the owner, Marian Pieslak, a reservation fee of 2,000 lati to retain the right to purchase the property until the end of the year. *Roche's* lawyer in Riga convinced the company's management that foreigners also have the opportunity to buy property in Riga. His personal contacts with the Latvian Minister of Finance and the Minister of Justice were useful in arranging the transactions. In November an additional reservation fee of 2,000 lati was paid to preserve the right to purchase the property until the end of January 1931, as the final decision had not yet been received from *Roche's* management in Basel. It was not until December that

Roche's board officially approved the acquisition of the property on Karlīnes iela, allowing Abraham Aronstamm to complete the transaction. On December 16, 1930 a purchase agreement was signed. It should be noted that *Roche* bought the property at a lower price than the original owner had paid in 1914.

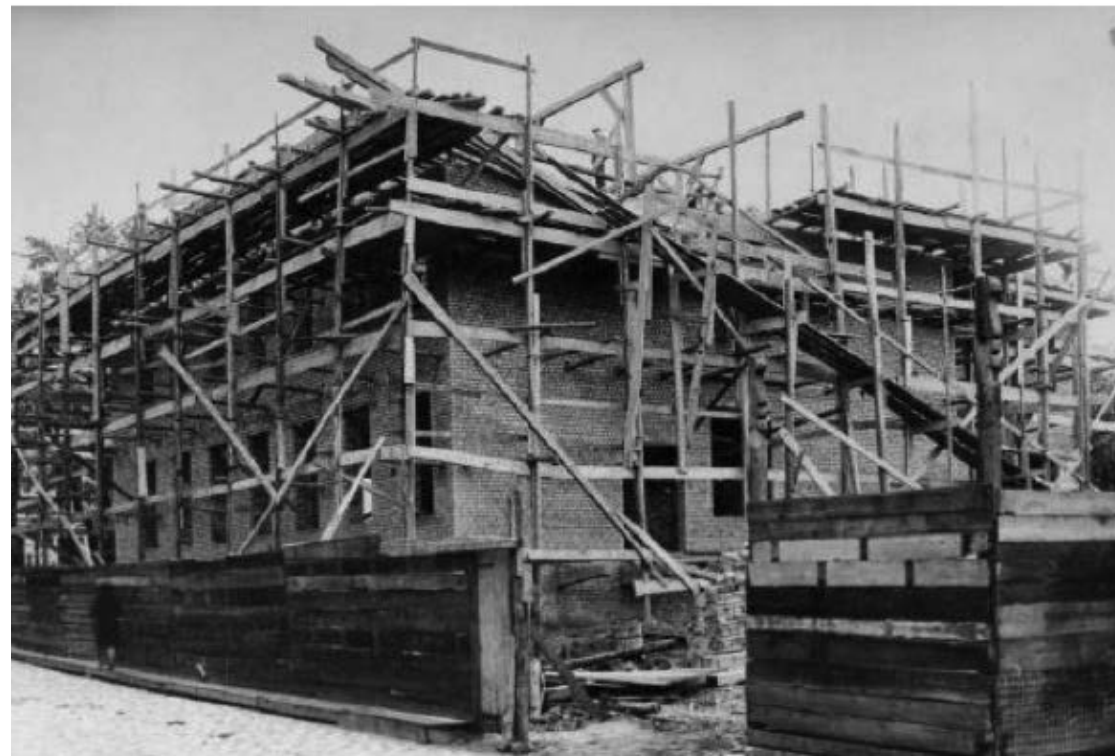
Construction work began on May 27, 1931.¹⁴ The building was designed by the Latvian architect Aleksandrs Klinklāvs, for whom it was one of his first jobs after having graduated from the University of Latvia's Faculty of Architecture. In the years that followed, his design was used for the construction of many other health care buildings. The main facade

↑ Possible locations for *Roche's* new office in Riga. 1930. Photo from the *Roche Latvia* archive.

13 HAR, LG.LV-102017d.
14 LVVA, 6687. f., Apr. 1, 195. l.



← Floor layout. 1930s.
 Photo from the National
 Archives of Latvia.



was planned to be on Karlīnes iela, and the loading ramps on Palīdzības iela. After the death of Abraham Aronstamm on November 20, 1931, the leadership of Roche's branch in Riga was taken over by Victor Aronstamm (1893–1941), the eldest son of Josef Aronstamm.

Special ceramic tiles (Siegersdorfer Baukeramik Platten) for the construction of the building were ordered from Germany. Approximately 500 m² of these tiles, which weighed 19,000 kg and cost almost 4,000 German marks, had to be delivered. The tiles were ordered in two colours – light brown for large surfaces and dark brown for the entrance and exposed foundation of the building. It was

estimated that the facade would be tiled by two or three tilers, working for about three weeks. As this was the first time that this construction material was to be used in Latvia, the plan was to hire German specialists to perform the task.¹⁵

During this time, Victor's brother Gregor Aronstamm (1895–1934) began working as the head of marketing at Roche in Riga. A statement was published in the 5th issue of the journal *Economists* in 1932: the Swiss company *F. Hoffmann La-Roche & Co.*, Basel, has authorised Latvian citizens Victor Aronstamm, residing in Riga, Blaumaņa iela 12, apt. 47, and Gregor Aronstamm, residing in Riga, Tērbatas iela 55, apt. 33, as the managers

of their branch in Latvia. The address of the company's Latvian branch remains the same: Riga, Valņu iela No. 3/5¹⁶

The construction work was closely supervised by Victor and Gregor Aronstamm. A water boiler that also provided the central heating system, worth 690 lati, was ordered from the company *Thermo. Roche* had to monitor this company in particular because in the previous order, the sink colours had not been correct. *Roche* meticulously looked after all of the details during construction. Some problems also arose as construction was coming to a close – the electric wiring was still not reliable, there were doubts about the safety of the roof structures,

↖ ↗ Construction of the Roche office building. 1931. Photo from the National Archives of Latvia.

← Roche office building construction project at Karlīnes iela 23, approved by the Riga City Construction Board on 28 May 1931. Photo from the National Archives of Latvia.

15 LVVA, 6687. f., Apr. 1, 109. l.

16 Notice. *Economist*. 1932, no. 5, p. 200.

and the mailbox had been placed in the wrong place and had to be moved to the entrance gate. A safe was purchased for 350 lati from *Geldschrankfabriken AG* and a special cabinet for alkaloids was ordered. In May, the fire insurance policy's coverage had reached 40,000 dollars, and more than 200,000 lati had already been spent on construction. In June a plaque with the inscription 'F. HOFFMANN-LA ROCHE & Co, Aktiengesellschaft, Bāzele, Filiāle Rīgā' was installed at the entrance to the building. On July 23, Gregor and Victor Aronstamm wrote in a letter to *Roche* HQ in Basel that the company had moved to the new building, and that the new address was Karlīnes iela 23. The design and construction of the administrative building and a small production plant at Karlīnes iela 23 (now Miera iela 25), with a total area of 1050 m², was completed within two years. At that time, the *Roche* Riga branch had 11 employees.¹⁷

The *Roche* branch in Riga used its new building for several purposes, including the production and storage of preparations as well as marketing. There was also a bathroom and toilet on each floor. A staircase in the centre of the building that led from the first floor to the second gave the interior of the building a special majesty, and would go on to become an architectural trademark of *Roche*.

Unfortunately, flaws began to ap-

pear over the years, and in September 1940 an extensive renovation of the building was undertaken.

Although a global economic crisis was going on in the early 1930s, *Roche's* activity in Riga was successful. Having a wide range of products and its own production facility in Riga, as well as the skillful work performance of branch manager Victor Aronstamm, were the major factors that allowed *Roche* to maintain positive growth until September 28, 1940. And then history repeated itself. Just like 20 years ago in St. Petersburg, *Roche's* Riga branch was nationalized when the USSR occupied Latvia. How quickly and unexpectedly the act of nationalisation hit *Roche* becomes clear when one looks at the activities that took place on the following timeline: in mid-September 1940, *Roche* had completed the renovation of the building's tilework and was readying to pave the walkways; on September 28, the entrance door to the building was sealed by members of the People's Militia;¹⁸ and on September 29, the Decree of the Supreme Council of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Latvia on the nationalisation of trade enterprises was published, listing all 1144 nationalised enterprises. A complete inventory had to be recorded within two days, including all *Roche* products, raw materials, chemicals, packaging materials, appliances and furniture.¹⁹ In December, it was announced that the



↑ Building interior. 1930s.
Photo from the National Archives of Latvia.

17 LVVA, 6687. f., Apr. 1, 110. l.

18 LVVA, 6687. f., Apr. 1, 124. l.

19 Decree on the nationalization of trading companies. *Cīņa*. 1940, No.94, p. 1.



↑ Building interior. 1930s.
Photo from the National Archives
of Latvia.

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↑ Building interior. 1930s.
 Photo from the National Archives
 of Latvia.
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building on Miera iela must be quickly vacated. The laboratories and production facilities were evacuated, but the office and warehouses were moved to Riga centre. Shortly after nationalisation, Victor Aronstamm disappeared. He died in 1941. During the Soviet occupation, the nationalised *Roche* buildings housed a military bacteriological laboratory. In the spring of 1941, after the German army invaded Latvia, the Germans confiscated the inventory as foreign property and used it in animal research. It took more than half a century for *Roche* to return to Riga as a company.

The Aronstamm family is now scattered all over the world, but Abraham Ar-

onstamm's granddaughter Marina Kane is from Riga and lives very close to her grandfather's former workplace on Miera iela 25. Marina remembers as a child going to Mežaparks with her mother, Eleonora Frederika Kane, and her siblings. When they would pass the house on Miera iela, Eleonora would tell the children that their grandfather once worked there. Marina was born in 1945, and during the Soviet era the family did not talk much about the pre-occupation period. It was only after *Roche* celebrated its 100th anniversary in Riga in 1996 that Eleonora Kane spoke more freely about her father. At the anniversary event, the Kans family received a gift from *Roche* –



a book on the history of *Roche*, as well as photographs and documents from the company's early days.

Abraham had three daughters. The eldest daughter, Mara (1902-1988), left for Palestine as a young woman. Her husband, Aaron Zvi Propes, was a prominent Israeli patriot and politician who had a street named after him in Tel Aviv. Abraham's middle daughter, Roza Bella, was born in 1905 and died in Uzbekistan in 1942, where she had moved to during the war. Marina's mother, Eleonora Frederika, was born in St. Petersburg on May 10, 1918.

Abraham died when Eleonora was only 13 years old, and when her mother

↑ Facade of *Roche* office building, view from Miera iela and Palīdzības iela. 1930s. Photo from the National Archives of Latvia.



died four years later, Roza Bella took care of the girl's upbringing. Although Abraham was not a pharmacist, he had left Latvia to work for his brother Josef as an accountant at the *Roche* branch in St. Petersburg. It was only because Abraham was a member of the first guild of merchants that he had the right to live in a large city like St. Petersburg regardless of his ethnic group. Abraham returned to Riga with his family in early 1919. Abraham's wife was from Odessa, and this was the primary force in setting the family's traditions. Although Abraham's family was considered to be religious, they always had a New Year tree at home. While living in Riga the family

spoke both Russian and German, but after the horrors of the war they switched to Russian exclusively. Eleonora's husband, Anatolijs Kans, was well versed in languages and worked as an editor at a news agency (now LETA). There were two children in the Kans family – Marina and Jurijs. After marrying in 1986, Jurijs moved to Minsk, Belarus. His son Anton moved even further away – to the United States, but the Kans family has never lost touch with one another. As much as distance and her years allow, Marina also maintains close contact with the daughter of Roza Bella's son. The branches of the Aronstamm family also extend to Israel and Sweden.²⁰ The family tree has

grown, but its roots are closely connected with Riga and the building on Miera iela. Over the years, one of the family's most prominent qualities – grace – has never been lost.



↑ Mrs. Marina Kāne's visit to the *Roche Latvia* building. She is standing by the room named after her grandfather, Abraham Aronstamm. 29 September 2020. Photo: Laura Lemkina.

↖ From left: Louis de Lassence, *Roche* Pharma International Financial Manager (1993-2000), Pierre-Etienne Weber, *Roche* Global Marketing Manager, Wulf Schwerdtfeger (1941-2010), Manager of *Roche* Baltics, at the building on Miera iela in Riga. 26 September 1996. Photo from R. Šīmanis' archive

20 K. Kaidaka's interview with Marina Kane. 31.08.2020

Roche in Latvia after the restoration of independence

Juris Salaks, Ieva Ābele, Eva Marksa

Roche resumed operations in Latvia in 1993. This was a time when many young doctors were looking for job opportunities in pharmaceutical companies, as salaries for treating patients were very low. Dr. Līvija Caune visited *Roche* and started working there in the spring of 1994, but in October of the same year, Raimonds Sīmanis took over the baton; Sīmanis would go on to later become the Country Manager for the Basel-based company's office in Latvia. In the spring of 1996, Wulf Schwerdtfeger (*Roche*'s manager in several eastern European countries) visited the Latvian office and participated in job interviews, including those for future long-term *Roche* employees Marika Millere, a biologist, and Rauls Vēliņš, a physician. Both were hired on the same day, April 1, or April Fools' Day. Initially *Roche* used the services of Guntis Belēvičs' firm, and *Roche*'s limited staff worked from a small room in the *Pharma Service Riga* building. As *Roche*'s return

to Latvia coincided with *Roche*'s 100th anniversary, on September 26, 1996 a grand-scale event took place in the Riga Small Guild. This event could be considered to be the de facto resumption of *Roche*'s operations in Latvia after the company's forced departure in 1941. It was also one of Raimonds Sīmanis' first major projects. All major clients of the company were invited, for the event was a confirmation that the company is returning to Latvia with very serious intentions. Wulf Schwerdtfeger gave a lecture on *Roche*'s hundred-year-plus history, and Pierre-Etienne Weber was present as were financial manager Louis de Lassence and *Roche*'s chief lawyer, Felix Amrein. Among the event's guests were Eleonora Frederika Kane, the daughter of Abraham Aronstamm, whose brother Joseph Aronstamm had founded *Roche*'s Russian and Latvian offices; and Aleksandrs Neilands, a Baltic German who was a historian, expert on Riga, and a friend of *Roche*.²¹



↑ Dr. Līvija Caune, the first *Roche* representative in Latvia after the regaining of independence. 1994. Photo from L. Caune's personal archive.



↑ Raimonds Sīmanis, Head of the *Roche* representative office (1996–2004) in the offices on Skolas iela in Riga. December 1996. Photo from R. Sīmanis' personal archive.

21 Salaks J. *Roche. 1896-2011*. [Latvija], 2010.



← Meeting at the *Roche* stand at a pharmaceutical exhibition. From left: Anatolijs Kāns, Raimonds Sīmanis (representative of *Hoffmann-La Roche Ltd.* in Latvia), and Eleonora Frederika Kāne (the youngest daughter of Abraham Aronstamm, brother to Josef Aronstamm). May 1995.
Photo from R. Sīmanis' personal archive.

↑ Summer 1996 in Jūrmalciems – the 1997 budget formation process in Nīca. From left: Armands Kronbergs from Jūrmalciems (salmon-smoking master), Wulf Schwerdtfeger, Manager of *Roche Baltics*, Raimonds Sīmanis, Marika Millere and Rauls Vēliņš – *Roche's* new contenders.
Photo from R. Sīmanis' personal archive.

← Dace Oliņa, *Roche* branch manager in Latvia from 2005 to 2008. Photo from D. Oliņa's personal archive.

← Dr. Rauls Vēliņš, General Manager of *Roche Latvia* since 2008.
← Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.



↙ Eleonora Kāne and Wulf Schwerdtfeger, Manager of *Roche Baltics*, on a visit to Riga in 1996.
Photo from R. Sīmanis' personal archive.

↗ *Roche's* chief lawyer, Felix Amrein, visiting Riga near the *Roche* historic office building at Miera iela 25 in 1996.
Photo from R. Sīmanis' personal archive.



↖ Welcoming Roche's 100th anniversary guests in Riga. From left: Raimonds Sīmanis, Rauls Vēliņš, Mr. Schneider and Mrs. Schneider, Wulf Schwerdtfeger. Hotel Riga. July 1996. Photo from R. Sīmanis' personal archive.

↑ Roche centenary celebrations at the Riga Culture and Folk Art Centre 'Mazā Ģilde'. From left: Rauls Vēliņš, Pierre-Etienne Weber (Roche Head of Global Marketing). 1996. Photo from Roche Latvia archive.

← From left: Mārcis Bajārs, Rauls Vēliņš, Ieva Ābele, Raimonds Sīmanis, Linda Irbe, Zane Degro, Marika Millere, Aivars Zvaigzne, Jānis Siliņš. 1990s. Photo from Roche Latvia archive.

Just like in Estonia and Lithuania, a representative office was established in Latvia in 1997; it was located at Skolas iela 20, Riga. On 19 February 1997, *Roche Holding* legally recovered the historic plot of land at Miera iela 25, but the court ruled that the historic building will remain state-owned.

Latvia's new and promising crew believed in themselves, and the Basel staff wholly put their trust in them. By 1997 it was no longer just a group of individual *Roche* employees but an organisation in itself. In 1997 Ieva Ābele joined the team as office administrator, and by the end of the year Vineta Volkoviča and Māris Belte had also come aboard. In 1997 Riga again became the home of *Roche's* Baltic headquarters. To some extent this was possibly due to the historical background of the Baltic office that once stood at Miera iela 25, but the main arguments were definitely related to the rebooting of *Roche* in the 1990s and the achievements of the *Roche* Latvian team. In 1998 the first *Roche* Baltic conference, *Team Building*, took place in Sigulda. Since then such meetings have become regular. The Basic Ethical Course for new Baltic employees was no longer held in Cyprus, but took place in Latvia.

The number of *Roche* employees in the Baltics was not large: five to six employees in Latvia, the same in Lithuania, and two to three in Estonia. *Roche's* office in Riga was one of the few representative offices of a pharmaceutical company in Latvia that was directly subordinated to its headquarters outside of the country.

Due to the adoption of a law in Lithuania restricting the economic activities of representative offices, *Roche* branches were established in all three Baltic States. In 2003 the Riga branch moved to Baznīcas iela 20. Dace Oliņa took over the management of the company from Raimonds Sīmanis, and was the manager of *Roche Latvia* from January 1, 2005 to June 30, 2008. She believed that *Roche* had become the best pharmaceutical company due to its good portfolio of future products and its uniqueness. The beginning of the 21st century also saw changes in the legal status of *Roche Latvia* – on September 1, 2005 *Roche Latvia* became SIA *Roche Latvia*. This time of change was led by Dace Oliņa, a physician who had also attended the Riga Business School. Ieva Ābele and Ināra Bužinska also helped to bear the weight of the transition period.



↑ Advertisement for the antibiotic Rocephin (Ceftriaxone). 1990s.
Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.

The content of the book is designed as a testament to the history and development of the company. All the information contained in the book is included as illustrative historical material.



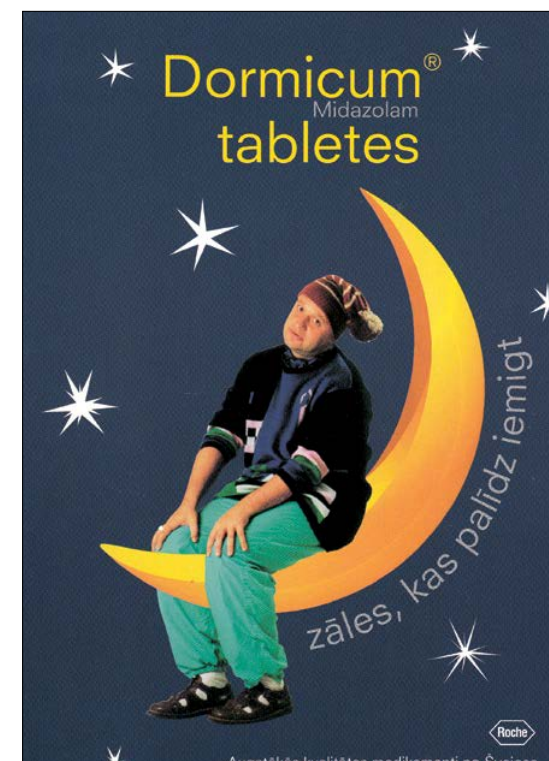
↑ Dormicum (Midazolam) advertisement. 1990s. Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.



↑ Lexotanil (Bromazepamum) advertisement. 1990s. Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.



↑ Actor Juris Strengs in an advertisement for anti-Parkinson's drug Madopar (Levodopum, Benserazidum). Photographed on the ice of Lake Ķīsezers. 1990s. Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.



↑ Actor Jānis Jarāns in an advertisement for the sleep medicine Dormicum (Midazolam). 1990s. Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.

The content of the book is designed as a testament to the history and development of the company. All the information contained in the book is included as illustrative historical material.



The office space on Skolas iela had become too small since it was now necessary to find room for employees who would be handling the entire Baltic structure of *Roche*. Office space for the financial director from Switzerland was also lacking at the premises on Skolas iela. It became clear that it was necessary to move to a larger space, and an office setup was procured in the Purvciems district of Riga, at Gunāra Astras iela 8b. In 2006 the company moved house.

In the summer of 2008 Rauls Vēliņš, one of *Roche Latvia's* first employees, returned to the firm's fold, but now as the head of the limited liability company. Sandra Toma served as the Head of

the Medical Department from July 2008 to May 2009; in September of that year Jana Migleniece took up the position of Medical Director, staying until 2015, which is when Kaspars Losāns took over the position.

Previous work and assignments continued, and new challenges lay ahead.

On November 1, 2009 the plot of land at Miera iela 25 was registered in the Land Register; in 2012 a land lease agreement was signed with the Road Traffic Safety Directorate (CSDD) under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Transport; and in 2015 negotiations began on the purchase of the building at Miera iela 25. In 2016 *Roche* exercised its pre-emp-



tion rights and entered into a purchase agreement. The purchase of the building was a serious investment in *Roche Latvia*. The year 2020 brought great changes, as *Roche Latvia* once again experienced a move of house to the historic *Roche* building at Miera iela 25. *Roche* honours its past, and considering that the building built in Riga in the 1930s had served as the architectural prototype for other *Roche* office buildings in Europe, the decision was made to overhaul the original building instead of building a new one from scratch. From April 27, 2020, the new address of *Roche Latvia* is Miera iela 25, Riga, LV-1001.

↑ The *Roche Latvia* office was located at Gunāra Astras iela 8b in the Riga district of Purvciems from June 2006 to 2020. *Roche Latvia* employees at the office. 10 September 2013. Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.

↖ Jennifer Cook, *Roche* European Regional Manager, visiting Latvia. From left: Ieva Sedleniece, Agnese Dimante, Jānis Siliņš, Eva Marksa, Kaspars Losāns, Mauricio Silva de Lima, Jennifer Cook, Agneta Didrihsone, Jānis Kalnājs, Ieva Ābele, Rauls Vēliņš. The historic *Roche* office building at Miera iela 25. 21 June 2016. Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.

Roche Latvia – People And Events

Motivated, talented and highly qualified staff are essential to finding new opportunities for our patients. We value people who: focus on challenges and goals, are open to lifelong learning and new things, are happy to innovate, and are willing to try something new.

Eva Marksa

Personnel Manager at *Roche* Baltic Region

Roche Latvia – the best place to work

Eva Marksa, Ieva Ābele,
Laura Lemkina

In 2019 the Pharmaceutical Division of *Roche Latvia* was still located in the offices at Gunāra Astras iela 8b in Riga, while the Diagnostics Division was stationed at Dunties iela 17a, but since 2020, the entire *Roche Latvia* team of 50 people has been able to call *Roche's* historic office building at Miera iela 25 home. The office has grown both in terms of space and people. However, the greatest attention has always been paid to ensuring that *Roche* has a well-trained workforce, that their work is creative, and that there is room for opportunities in a variety of areas that may not be directly related to job responsibilities. That is why all of *Roche's* informal activities have become

so popular, and it is why guests have always come to visit *Roche Latvia* – the company's employees have never been ones to hole up at home. Always being willing to help is another characteristic that characterises our *Roche Latvia* colleagues. At the suggestion of the employees, the Latvia State Blood Donor Centre organised Donor Day trips to the office on Gunāra Astras iela for several years. Employees of neighbouring offices, as well as local residents, were also invited to participate in Donor Day. This tradition is here to stay.

Employee education projects have aroused great interest among colleagues. Not all employees of *Roche Latvia* are

physicians, but everyone wishes to have a good understanding of the health field, i.e. to understand the environment in which we live and work. Pursuant to this goal, *Roche* regularly welcomes to its office guests who are experts in various fields, such as: Juris Šteinbergs and Liene Ņikitina-Zaķe, who introduced us to the world of genes; Ilze Zaharāne, a multiple sclerosis patient and speech therapist; financial specialist and writer Toms Kreicbergs; cardiologist and Member of Parliament Andris Skride; Professor Māris Balčiņš, Director of the State Language Center; writer Inguna Dimante; Rūta Dimanta, head of the charity organisation *Ziedot.lv*; Marianna Milovska, proj-



↑ The *Roche Latvia* team pictured together with architects, designers and Italian builders at the historic office building at Miera iela 25. 14 September 2018. Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.



ect leader of *Dr. Klauns*; Laura Vanaga-Mickeviča, who taught the study course *Self-discipline, Motivation*; nephrologist Linda Mičule; and LU professor Mārcis Auziņš. Special educational seminars are also held for *Roche* employees' children who are nearing the age at which they will soon have to choose their future career path.

Our colleagues are creative and enthusiastic; together they have: created a beautiful annual calendar featuring photos taken by themselves; made Latvian ornaments for Christmas; planted trees and tidied up parks; celebrated Midsummer and New Year; and have explored both Latvia and foreign countries on

group trips. Every year the *Roche Latvia* team celebrates World Quality Day, reminding ourselves of the importance of performing every task responsibly and professionally. We are all especially proud and happy with the sense of fulfillment that comes from the social projects in which employees participate every year and even organise themselves.

As a company, *Roche* is characterised by stability, product reliability, and loyalty to its employees. Every day is interesting as it is shaped by versatile and inspiring colleagues, a dynamic environment, uniqueness, intelligence, innovation, courage, concern for employees, and concern for society. That is how the



employees of *Roche Latvia* think about the organisation for which they work.

'Motivated, talented and highly qualified employees are very important in finding new opportunities for our patients. We value people who focus on challenges and goals, are open to lifelong learning and new things, are happy to participate in innovations, and are ready to try something new,' says Eva Marksa, Baltic HR Manager. Each *Roche* employee is not only an outstanding expert in their field, but also a great person. Every employee is unique in their talent, which is why our approach to employee education and growth is individual. Employees have the opportunity to improve and pro-

↑ *Roche Latvia* blood donors. 2013. Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.

↙ *Roche Latvia* staff in the National Library of Latvia.
Row 1, from left: Zane Degro, Ginta Nažinska, Jana Migleniece, Eva Marksa, Kristīne Voitkēviča, Elīna Dzērve, Edīte Krūmiņa, Sandris Sabajevs; Row 2: Linda Irbe, Agnese Dimante, Inese Zīra, Guna Mežule, Anita Ločmele, Gundega Auziņa, Ināra Bužinska; Row 3: Matīss Māsēns, Rauls Vēliņš, Jānis Kalnājs, Jānis Siliņš, Laura Šuspāne, Solvita Verkēviča, Ieva Ābele, Ilze Muižniece, Ieva Sedleniece. 24 February 2014. Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.



mote their growth through experience exchange trips as well as various *Roche* talent programmes and courses. *Roche* offers its employees both on-site training and a very wide range of online training. We also offer unlimited remote learning through LinkedIn. This helps us stay one step ahead of the curve and is a very important part of our daily work at *Roche*. Globally, every 12 seconds one of *Roche's* employees undergoes training, thereby totalling more than 3.5 million completed training courses each year. Continuous self-improvement allows us to better address patients' needs and provide them with the best care. Employee development does not only end with training -

it also offers exchange experiences and career opportunities in other countries of the world.

Several *Roche Latvia* employees have had the opportunity to work at other *Roche* branches: Sanita Goba – Switzerland; Ilze Bāra – Switzerland and the USA; Dace Oliņa and Ieva Palma – Finland; Edgars Landsbergs – Russia; Rets Renemanis – Ireland and Russia; Mārtiņš Rauda – Germany. Our branch also hosted employees from other *Roche* branches. *Roche* invests not only in employee growth but also in tools and environments that are highly valued by our employees. We believe that *Roche* is the best workplace both in Latvia and abroad, as evi-



↙ *Roche Latvia* employees have been blood donors for many years. From left: Agnese Dimante and Elīna Dzērve. 2015. Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.

↑ *Roche Latvia* has its own Midsummer honorees – Jānis Kalnājs and Jānis Siliņš. 20 June 2014. Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.



← Both kids and adults had a good time at the *Roche Latvia* Christmas party for employee families. Matīss Māsēns, father of four, with his twins. 22 December 2013. Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.

↑ University of Latvia professor Mārcis Auziņš at the *Roche Latvia* office for the 'Friday Breakfast' event. From left: Jānis Kalnājs, Jānis Siliņš, Linda Irbe, Zane Degro, Ilze Muižniece, Guna Mežule, Dace Butlere, Mārcis Auziņš, Rauls Vēliņš, Solvita Verkēviča, Ieva Sedleniece, Zane Lielausē, Kristīne Voitkēviča, Anita Lova. 2016. Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.

← Decorating the *Roche Latvia* office for autumn. From left: Jānis Siliņš, Sandris Sabajevs, Ilze Muižniece, Daiga Briņķe, Ieva Sedleniece, Guna Mežule, Gundega Auziņa, Zane Lielausē, Marta Jagnieza, Agnese Dimante. 26 October 2017. Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.



↖ The *Roche Latvia* team visiting the Mercedes-Benz General Distributor in Latvia. Row 1, from left: Mārtiņš Rauda, Jānis Siliņš, Sandris Sabajevs, Rauls Vēliņš, Matīss Māsēns, Jānis Kalnājs, Kaspars Losāns; Row 2: Inesa Kozlovskā, Guna Mežule, Ginta Nažinska, Agneta Didrihsone, Elīna Dzērve, Eva Marksa, Zane Degro, Edīte Krūmiņa, Solvita Verkēviča, Ieva Ābele, Gundega Auziņa, Agnese Dimante, Kristīne Voitkēviča, Dace Butlere, Zane Lielaide. 21 June 2016.
Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.

← *Roche Latvia* leaving their footprints. Salacgrīva. July 2015. Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.

↑ During a volunteer project at the Admission Department of Riga East Clinical University Hospital (RAKUS), *Roche Latvia* employees create a conifer garden. Shrubs were sourced from the coniferous garden created in Pļieņciems by neurosurgeon and hobby gardener Āris Auders (Latvia's Minister of Health 2002–2003). A memorial garden comes to life. From left: Zane Degro, Mārtiņš Rauda, Dace Butlere, Ginta Nažinska, Linda Irbe, Inese Zīra, Eva Marksa, Sandris Sabajevs, Edīte Krūmiņa, Elīna Dzērve, Jānis Kalnājs, Agneta Didrihsone, Agnese Dimante. 29 September 2016.
Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.



denced by various awards and the high annual scores of our employee opinion survey. Employee satisfaction and engagement has been regularly measured through the employee survey since 2007, when we had a historically low employee engagement score of 43%. By working on the issue in a targeted way, our score improved significantly, reaching 63% in 2009 and a peak of 100% in 2011. Since then our engagement rate has always been above 80%, the optimal range among the best employers: 2013 – 91%; 2014 – 85%, 2017 – 88%; 2019 – 85%. Roche Latvia has also received awards in various categories, such as the Baltic TOP Employer Award, the Latvian Min-

istry of Economics Award for Leader in Innovation, and the Latvian Ministry of Welfare Award for Family-Friendly Company Status. Roche Latvia has also attained the Gold Category in the Latvian Sustainability Index.

For a company to be successful, we need to take care of our people, and that is why we try to provide the best possible conditions for our employees. The employee support system is not generalised but instead is focused on the needs of each employee. As a company, Roche is aware of the importance of employee stability, which is why we take care of our employees' health, life and accident insurance. During Wellbeing Week we



The Roche Latvia team participates in the Nordea Riga Marathon 5 km run. From left, row 1: Niklāvs Nažinskis, Kārlis Vēliņš, Markuss Māsēns, Reinis Ločmelis, Roberts Dzērve, Sandris Sabajevs. Row 2: Edgars and Ginta Nažinski, Jana Migliniece, Anita Ločmele, Evita Ločmele, Gundega Auziņa, Elīna Dzērve. Row 3: Rūdolfs Nažinskis, Jānis Kalnājs, Matīss Māsēns, Rets Renemanis, Kaspars Dzērve, Mārtiņš Miglinieks, Viktors Miglinieks. 20 May 2012. Photo from Roche Latvia archive.



The Roche Latvia team comes together for both work and holidays. From left, row 1: Mārtiņš Rauda, Guna Mežule, Laura Šuspāne, Elīna Dzērve, Agnese Dimante, Ieva Sedleniece. Row 2: Solvita Verkēviča, Linda Irbe, Ilze Muižniece, Zane Degro, Jānis Siliņš, Ieva Ābele. Row 3: Kaspars Losāns, Matīss Māsēns, Anita Ločmele, Linas Karpicius, Eva Marksa, Jānis Kalnājs, Ginta Nažinska, Agneta Didrihsone, Sandris Sabajevs, Inesa Kozlovskā, Inese Zīra, Kristīne Voitkēviča, Edīte Krūmiņa, Rauls Vēliņš. 17 March 2016. Photo from Roche Latvia archive.



COVID-19 virus testing of Roche employees at the Latvian Centre for Infectious Diseases; zero positive cases. From left: Kaspars Losāns, Inesa Kozlovskā. 21 October 2020. Photo from Roche Latvia archive.



additionally provide educational opportunities by organising various lectures and activities related to a healthy lifestyle. One of the important support systems that we give our employees is the opportunity to undergo genetic screening for ovarian and breast cancer as well as for familial hypercholesterolemia. In order to maximise employee protection during the Covid-19 pandemic in the spring of 2020, a 3-phase plan was established, which, taking into account the situation in the country and respecting government guidelines, restricted employee contact, office visits and business trips, and introduced various preventive regulations.

Employees were provided face masks, disinfectants and boot swabs, and logistics were set up so that employees could successfully perform their work duties remotely. Issues faced by families with young children were recognised with great understanding. Employees received various types of support, both in terms of education and in terms of reducing stress through psychological support. All employees were also given the opportunity to undergo free Covid-19 testing and an antibody test on a voluntary basis.

'Roche stands out for its creativity in maintaining a pleasant and conducive work environment not only in emergency



situations but also in everyday circumstances. We are currently in a process of transformation, and each employee can influence how we will work together in the future - both within the company and with our customers. We have the opportunity to learn from each other within the Roche global network as well as from other companies in the industry. We truly have the newest tools and methods at our disposal, and we will experiment and find the most successful model for our company,' emphasises Eva Marksa.

↑ Roche Latvia employees at the White Tablecloth Festival at the Ethnographic Open-Air Museum of Latvia in Riga. 4 May 2017. Photo from Roche Latvia archive.

↙ The Roche Latvia team celebrates World Quality Day. Interactive tasks always show that accuracy and a responsible approach ensure quality. From left: Rauls Vēliņš, Dace Butlere, Mārtiņš Rauda, Zane Degro, Anita Ločmele, Jānis Siliņš, Ieva Ābele, Linda Irbe, Ginta Nažinska. The office staff is inspired by Elīna Veilande-Apine's textile mosaics. 10 November 2016. Photo from Roche Latvia archive.

Transformation

Jānis Kalnājs, Eva Marksa

In 2019 the *SIA Roche Latvia* team began the process of organisational transformation. The goal of the transformation is to become more efficient and faster as well as ensure closer cooperation with customers. We want to have a quicker response time to the problems and needs of our customers and partners. We want to be proactive in our actions by changing the things that hinder both decision-making and, subsequently, the implementation of these decisions. *Roche Latvia* has acquired and implemented the Agile project management method, a process commonly used in the field of information technology. This approach allows one to react to changes

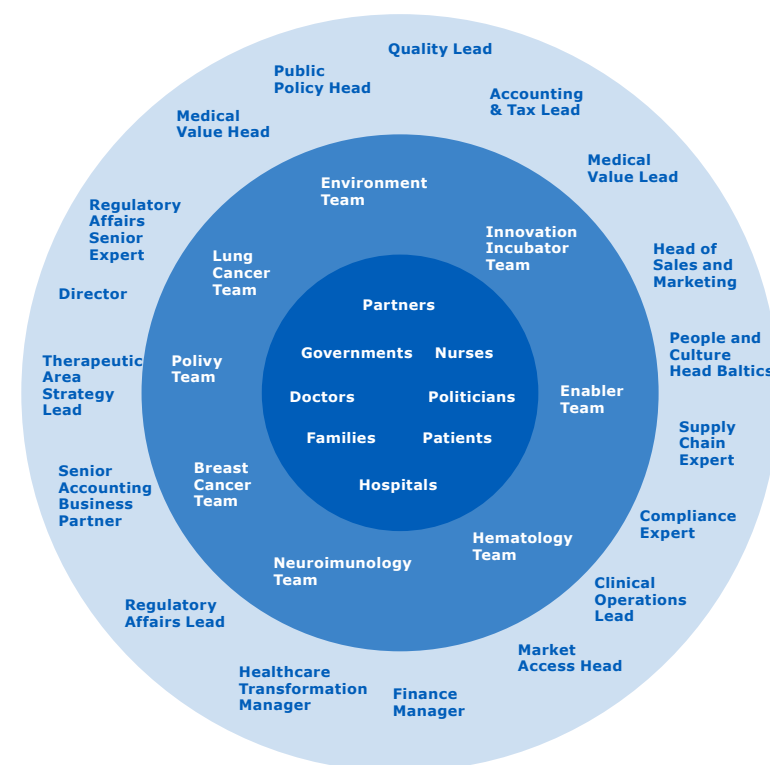
by evaluating what has been done and making subsequent decisions based on the results achieved, then quickly implementing changes if necessary. The level of responsibility is high at all stages – everyone is responsible for their personal decision and its outcome. Three complementary structures have been set up in which the members are not isolated in their activities but cooperate in the decision-making and implementation processes:

– 1. The formal structure – reflects the position and role of all employees within the mechanism. Its coordinated operation ensures quality much like that of a Swiss watch – every gear has its job

and everyone is important.

– 2. The value-delivering structure – these are the eight units (teams) in which the actual work in different fields is performed: lung oncology, breast oncology, indication oncology, hemophilia, hematology, neuroimmunology, the environment, and work organisation. The work organisation unit is overseen by a team of enablers. The value-creation structure represents teams that, by working with people with a variety of competencies, develop solutions that create value for customers. This structure allows the company to respond more quickly to changing customer needs.

– 3. The informal teams structure –



↑ Company structure of *Roche Latvia* after its transformation in 2020.



these are joint-interest and competence groups (guilds) that are formed as needed and in which skills and abilities in a certain field are developed. This is where ideas are born and innovative solutions emerge in an informal atmosphere.

To ensure that decisions were made as quickly as possible, the enabler team (formerly known as the management team) gave over their authority to the field specialists and experts who have closer contact with clients. In the Agile project management model, processes that take place in the company are similar to careful gardening, where it is the gardener's responsibility to allow each plant to form and produce its yield.

We are now working as a unified *Roche*, looking for ways in which both divisions (pharmaceuticals and diagnostic solutions) can best provide the most value to our customers and patients. *Roche* is a healthcare company whose vision for 2030 is to deliver 3-5 times more benefits to patients while reducing the cost to society by 50%. *Roche's* goal is to offer future solutions to today's problems.

Regional Manager Luc Dirckx has made a significant contribution to the development of *Roche Latvia*, earning great respect and a special place in our hearts. Dirckx studied biology at KU Leuven in Belgium. He then became a full-time assistant at the Faculty of Medicine there,



in addition to acquiring his doctorate.

Luc Dirckx joined *Roche* in 1988. He gained experience in strategic marketing, then moving on as General Manager at both *Roche Greece* and *Roche Spain*. In 2014 the European Region was established, and Dirckx worked as the Regional Head for twelve EU branches, including Latvia. From 2018, he headed the Europe North division of *Roche*, which again included Latvia. At the end of December 2019, after a 32-year-long career at *Roche*, Luc decided to retire from the company.

Respect, gratitude and dignity are the qualities that Luc Dirckx brought out in his colleagues. His sense of humour,



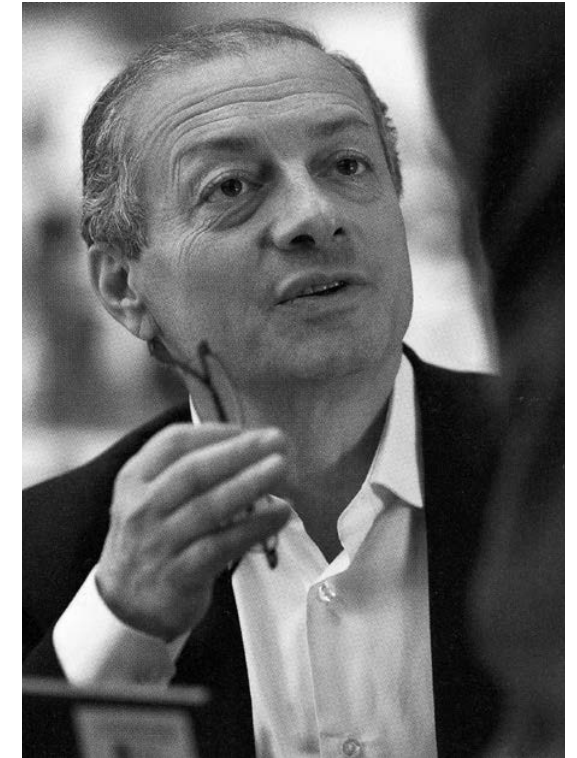
↑ Ewa Grenda, Head of *Roche's* Management Center (including the Baltics) from 2011 to 2014.
Photo from E. Grenda's personal archive.

↖ Martin Hangarter, responsible for *Roche's* business in the Baltics from 2008 to 2011.
Photo from M. Hangarter's personal archive.

↖ ↘ *Roche* management visit to Latvia.
From left: Karsten Kruse (European Regional Financial Manager), Luc Dirckx (*Roche* Regional Manager), Alan LeVoguer (Product Manager), Kaspars Losāns (*Roche Latvia* Medical Director), Jānis Siliņš (*Roche Latvia* Market Access Manager). March 2018.
Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.



↑ Luc Dirckx and Rauls Vēliņš on the construction site at Miera iela 25. 14 October 2019. Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.



↑ Tuygan Göker. *Roche's* Global Regional Manager from 2008 to 2013. Photo from the book "Roche: 1896-2011"

which deftly quenched unnecessary tension at the right time and place, was especially appreciated.

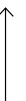
Luc was a unique leader who unleashed the energy and ingenuity of employees based on the positive qualities and professional competencies of each individual. He was also a member of the board of

the *Roche Latvia* Historic Building Restoration Commission, and in many ways, this project has succeeded thanks to him.

Other managers who over the years have been responsible for *Roche* operations in Latvia are: Wulf Schwerdtfeger, Dragan Soljakovski, Laurent Kapp, Tuygan Göker, Ewa Grenda, and Ehab Yousef.

Roche Latvia 2021
Roche Pharma

Rauls Vēliņš	General Manager	Inesa Kozlovska	Patient Journey Partner
Kaspars Losāns	Medical Value Head	Dace Butlere	Healthcare Systems Partner
Jānis Siliņš	Market Access Head	Edīte Krūmiņa	Patient Journey Partner
Eva Marksa	EpiCX Network Lead (Baltics & Poland)	Elīna Dzērve	Therapeutic Area Strategy Lead
Jānis Kalnājs	Portfolio Strategy Head	Gundega Auziņa	Compliance Expert
Solvita Verkēviča	Clinical Operations Lead	Anita Ločmele	Accounting & Tax Lead
Ieva Ābele	Finance Manager	Aija Ozoliņa	Accounting Business Partner
Zane Degro	Medical/Drug Safety Value Lead	Zane Lielausē	Senior Accounting Business Partner
Ginta Nažinska	Medical Value Lead	Kristīne Voitkēviča	Supply Chain Expert
Alise Krūmiņa	Healthcare Systems Partner	Laura Lemkina	Business Support Manager - SHE officer
Ieva Valpētere-Dzirkale	Strategic Digital Lead	Ieva Sedleniece	Quality Lead/Qualified Person
Rūta Kalniņa	Digital Marketing Specialist/Marketing Assistant	Viktorija Ageičenko	Health Data & HTA Solution Expert
Ilze Muižniece	Regulatory Affairs Lead	Sanita Gūtmane	Patient Journey Partner
Linda Irbe	Regulatory Affairs Senior Expert		



Roche Latvia 2021
Roche Diagnostics

Dalimil Žůrek	Country Manager <i>Roche</i> Diagnostics Baltics	Kristīne Linere	Product Manager Baltics
Agnese Dimante	Sales and Marketing Assistant/Tender Specialist	Kristīne Soboļevska	Product Manager Baltics
Anda Zukule	Senior Sales and Customer Support Specialist	Māris Kumermanis	Service Engineer
Daiga Briņķe	Purchasing Specialist	Mārtiņš Augstkalns	Service Engineer
Dana Erciņa-Užāne	Marketing Director at <i>Roche</i> Diagnostics Baltics	Mārtiņš Beinārovičs	Service Engineer
Gunita Varblane	Applications Systems Engineer - Pre and Post-Sales	Mihails Auziņš	Healthcare Transformation Manager
Gustavs Pētersīlis	Information Security Manager	Rets Renemanis	Sales Director Baltics
Ilvars Kalniņš	Service Engineer	Sigita Kokoreviča	Service Assistant
Ilze Folkmane	Administrative Assistant	Uldis Braunfelds	Senior Service Engineer
Indulis Zālītis	Head of Medical Scientific Affairs & Healthcare Development	Ilze Saukāne	Application Specialist
Inga Neļķe	Business Controller	Rolands Plinta	Field Service Support Engineer
Iveta Zauska	Senior Client Manager for Immunology	Arvis Reimanis	Field Service/ Support Engineer
Jānis Leimans	Technical Service Manager	Juris Pudāns	Customer Support Specialist
Kārlis Kocers	Digital Solutions Specialist	Linda Jegorova	Administrative Assistant
Kristaps Herings	Hema & Coag Senior Key Account Manager	Reinis Balodis	Purchasing Specialist



Kaspars Losāns. Medical Value Head.
Photo: Guna Rubule.



Jānis Siliņš. Market Access Head.
Photo: Guna Rubule.



Eva Marksa. EpiCX Network Lead
(Baltics & Poland).
Photo: Guna Rubule.



Jānis Kalnājs. Portfolio Strategy Head.
Photo: Guna Rubule.



Solvita Verkēviča. Clinical Operations Lead.
Photo: Guna Rubule.



Ieva Ābele. Finance Manager.
Photo: Guna Rubule.



Zane Degro. Medical/Drug Safety Value Lead.
Photo: Guna Rubule.



Ginta Nažinska. Medical Value Lead.
Photo: Guna Rubule.



Alise Krūmiņa. Healthcare Systems Partner.
Photo: Guna Rubule.



Ieva Valpētere-Dzirkale. Strategic Digital Lead.
Photo from I. Valpētere-Dzirkale's personal
archive.



Rūta Kalniņa. Digital Marketing Specialist/
Marketing Assistant.
Photo: Guna Rubule.



Ilze Muižniece. Regulatory Affairs Lead.
Photo: Guna Rubule.



Linda Irbe. Regulatory Affairs Senior Expert.
Photo: Guna Rubule.



Inesa Kozlovskā. Patient Journey Partner.
Photo: Guna Rubule.



Dace Butlere. Healthcare Systems Partner.
Photo: Guna Rubule.



Sanita Gūtmane. Patient Journey Partner.



Edīte Krūmiņa. Patient Journey Partner.
Photo: Guna Rubule.



Elīna Dzērve. Therapeutic Area Strategy Lead.
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Aija Ozoliņa. Accounting Business Partner.
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Zane Lielausē. Senior Accounting Business Partner.
Photo: Guna Rubule.



Kristīne Voitkēviča. Supply Chain Expert.
Photo: Guna Rubule.



Laura Lemkina. Business Support Manager – SHE officer.
Photo: Guna Rubule.



Ieva Sedleniece. Quality Lead/Qualified Person.
Photo: Guna Rubule.



Viktorija Ageičenko. Health Data & HTA Solution
Expert.
Photo: Guna Rubule.



Dalimil Žůrek. Country Manager *Roche* Diagnostics Baltics.
Photo: Guna Rubule.



Agnese Dimante. Sales and Marketing Assistant/Tender Specialist.
Photo: Guna Rubule.



Anda Zukule. Senior Sales and Customer Support Specialist.
Photo: Guna Rubule.



Daiga Briņķe. Purchasing Specialist.
Photo from D. Briņķe's personal archive.



Dana Erciņa-Užāne. Marketing Director at *Roche* Diagnostics Baltics.
Photo from D. Erciņas-Užāne's personal archive.



Gunita Varblane. Applications Systems Engineer - Pre and Post-Sales.
Photo: Guna Rubule.



Gustavs Pētersīlis. Information Security Manager.
Photo: Guna Rubule.



Ilvars Kalniņš. Service Engineer.
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Ilze Folkmane. Administrative Assistant.
Photo: Guna Rubule.



Indulis Zālītis. Head of Medical Scientific Affairs
& Healthcare Development.
Photo: Guna Rubule.



Inga Neļķe. Business Controller.
Photo from I. Neļķe's personal archive.



Iveta Zauska. Senior Client Manager for
Immunology.
Photo: Guna Rubule.



Jānis Leimans. Technical Service Manager.
Photo: Guna Rubule.



Kārlis Kocers. Digital Solutions Specialist.
Photo: Guna Rubule.



Kristaps Herings. Hema & Coag Senior Key
Account Manager.
Photo: Guna Rubule.



Kristīne Linere. Product Manager Baltics.
Photo: Guna Rubule.



Kristīne Soboļevska. Product Manager Baltics.
Photo: Guna Rubule.



Māris Kumermanis. Service Engineer.
Photo from M. Kumermanis' personal archive



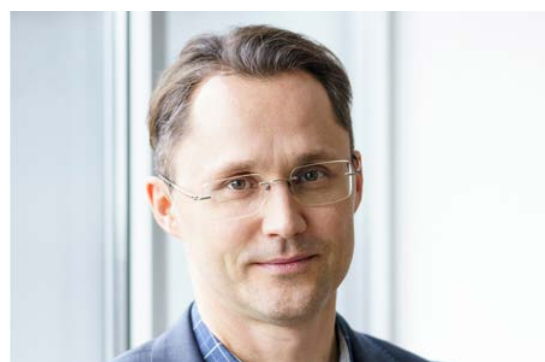
Mārtiņš Augstkalns. Service Engineer.
Photo: Guna Rubule.



Mārtiņš Beinardičs. Service Engineer.
Photo: Guna Rubule.



Mihails Auziņš. Healthcare Transformation
Manager.
Photo: Guna Rubule.



Rets Renemanis. Sales Director Baltics.
Photo: Guna Rubule.



Sigita Kokoreviča. Service Assistant.
Photo: Guna Rubule.



Uldis Braunfelds. Senior Service Engineer.
Photo from U. Braunfelds' personal archive.



Ilze Saukāne. Application Specialist.
Photo: Guna Rubule.



Rolands Plinta. Field Service Support Engineer.
Photo: Guna Rubule.



Arvis Reimanis. Field Service/ Support Engineer.
Photo from A. Reimanis' personal archive.



Juris Pudāns. Customer Support Specialist.
Photo from J. Pudāns' personal archive.



Linda Jegorova. Administrative Assistant.
Photo from L. Jegorova's personal archive.



Reinis Balodis. Purchasing Specialist.
Photo from R. Balodis' personal archive.

The Role Of *Roche* In The Economic Development Of Latvia

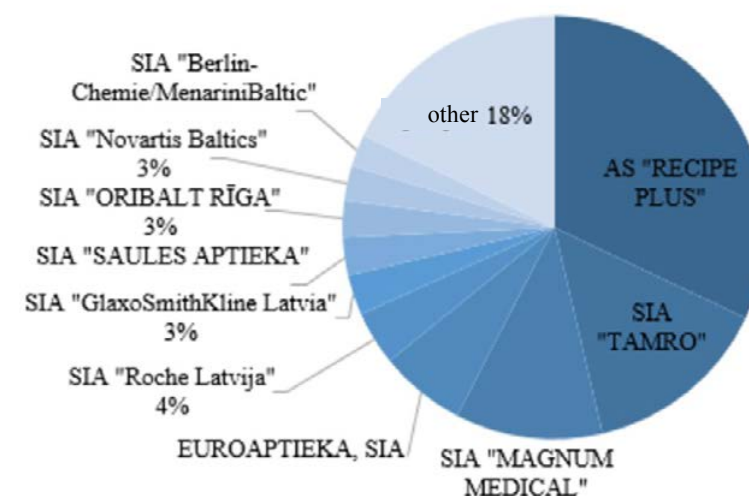
The company's most important contribution to the national economy is the benefits of its innovative medicines for the treatment of various diseases, including oncology, hematology, neurology, nephrology, rheumatology, and pulmonology.

Jānis Siliņš

Roche Latvia Market Access Manager

The Role of the Pharmaceutical Industry in Latvia

Ieva Ābele, Jānis Siliņš



Distribution of market share for wholesale drug manufacturers in Latvia, 2018.¹

Pharmaceutics is one of the most important sectors of the Latvian economy. This is indicated by its contribution to the Latvian economy – treatment of the country's population (including the provision of medicines), job creation, payments to the state budget, and the education of both medical staff and the public. *Roche Latvia's* direct investments into the economy manifest as tax payments and payments to state institutions (i.e. the State Treasury, the State Agency of Medicines, the National Health Service, etc.). For example, in 2018 such payments amounted to approximately EUR 1.9 million, whereas in 2019 they had reached approximately EUR 4.6 mil-

lion. *Roche* is a healthcare partner for both public and private institutions. As a result of this cooperation, patients recover faster, go home to their loved ones faster, and return to work faster. Thanks to effective therapy, even stage III and IV oncology patients can return to work and participate in the national economy.

According to data from the State Agency of Medicines, in 2018 SIA *Roche Latvia* held 4% of Latvia's prescription drug market.

SIA *Roche Latvia* provides jobs for highly qualified and competitive professionals. Personalised training programmes have been created for employees. Since 1994 *Roche* has been

participating in the education of Latvia's physicians by organising local seminars and conferences, as well as creating opportunities for key specialists to attend international professional meetings where they can share their experience and scientific research.

Roche Latvia is one of the companies that responded to the call of the Latvian State Revenue Service (SRS) and in 2016 submitted all necessary documents to qualify for the in-depth cooperation programme known as the White List – a new form of cooperation with taxpayers implemented by the SRS. On 1 January 2019 the programme was improved and renamed as the In-depth Cooperation

1 Zāļu lieltirgotavu apgrozījums 2018. gadā. Zāļu valsts aģentūra. Source: <https://www.zva.gov.lv/lv/jaunumi-un-publikacijas/jaunumi/zalu-lieltirgotavu-apgroz-ijums-2018-gada>

Programme. Programme participants are divided into one of three levels according to common criteria – Bronze, Silver or Gold. Participants at each level have access to a variety of benefits and are provided with a simplified process for programme administration and monitoring. Advantages of the so-called White List depend on the programme level and are related to the shortened wait times for programme participants to receive, among other things, SRS answers and consultations as well as reimbursement of eligible expenses and VAT. The inclusion of new programme participants and any changes in programme level take place once a year, on 1 January. Programme participants are evaluated quarterly, and in case of non-compliance, are excluded from the programme. In order for a programme participant to qualify for a higher level, they must spend at least one year at the Bronze level and two at the Silver level. SIA *Roche Latvia* has qualified for the Gold level. According to *Roche Latvia* Finance Manager

Ieva Ābele, who has been working for the company since 1997, it is difficult to get on the list, but easy to fall off of it. Ieva Ābele has experienced all of *Roche's* transformation processes together with the company, and believes that *Roche's* greatest value as an employer is how it provides good jobs and ensures health insurance and flexible working hours for all of its employees.

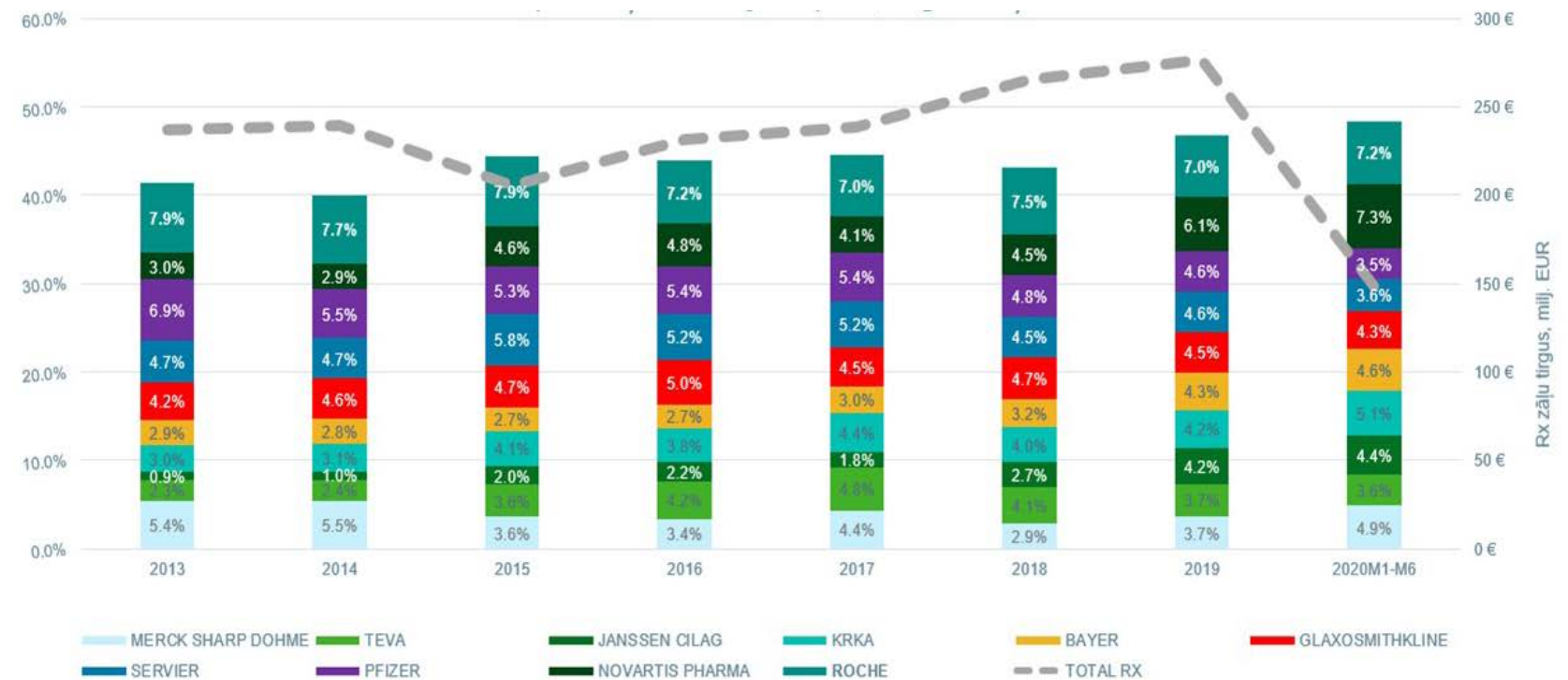
Every year, *Roche Latvia* makes significant investments in educating the public on health-related issues, thereby helping people be as healthy and economically active as possible; this, in turn, reduces overall healthcare costs.

Another aspect of *Roche's* work is philanthropic projects. This is extra work for all employees of the company, but at the same time it also gives one a great sense of fulfillment. *Roche's* philanthropic project, Let's Save 100 Children, is an important initiative that brought to the public's attention a number of serious problems related to child mortality in Latvia. *Roche Latvia* was the originator of

the initiative, and later the idea was co-opted by public and government organisations as well as public media. *Roche* has undertaken many such socially important projects during its history.

The most important contribution of the company to the national economy is related to the benefits provided by its innovative medicines for the treatment of various diseases in the fields of, among others, oncology, hematology, neurology, nephrology, rheumatology and pulmonology, emphasises Jānis Siliņš, Market Access Manager at *Roche Latvia*. *Roche Latvia* provides the people of Latvia with effective diagnostics and innovative medicines, thereby prolonging patients' quality of life and preventing premature death. For example, in the treatment of HER2-positive metastatic breast cancer, the use of Pertuzumab in combination with Trastuzumab may increase patients' life expectancy by an average of 56.5 months, which is an average of 15.7 months or 1.31 years more than treating patients with just Trastuzumab².

2 Swain S. et al. Pertuzumab, Trastuzumab, and Docetaxel in HER2-positive metastatic breast cancer. *N Engl J Med*. 2015; 372 (8): 724-34. Available here: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/25693012/>



This enables patients to live longer and lessens the disease’s negative impact on the national economy. There is no precise methodology for estimating the annual value of a person’s life, but GDP per capita is often used; for example, in 2018 this value was €15,328 at current prices³. This is the amount that the national economy loses for each year of life lost. In the case of Pertuzumab, applying this calculation to all breast cancer patients treated in one year results in a savings of at least €1 million.

Ocrelizumab can also be expected to prolong wheelchair disability by at least seven years in patients with early primary progressive multiple sclerosis⁴.

This allows patients to stay active longer and add value to the economy.

Roche’s innovative medicines are recognised and requested in Latvia – according to IQVIA, *Roche* has been the pharmaceutical market leader in the prescription medicine segment for several years in a row.

Roche is one of the first companies to make significant changes to the way cancer patients are treated, recommending that cancer gene mutations be identified before treatment, thereby allowing patients to be treated with personalised treatments that will be the most effective for them.

In cases where Latvian physicians deem it necessary, *Roche Latvia* has the opportunity to provide physicians with anonymised real-life data of patients from other countries and their analysis in order to select the most appropriate treatment tactics. It is essential to ensure that the public and the medical environment are prepared for these new advancements provided by scientists and manufacturers in both diagnostics and therapies.

↑ Top 10 prescription drug manufacturers, % of market share. IQVIA data, 2020

3 Iekšzemes kopprodukts pavisam, uz vienu iedzīvotāju un uz vienu nodarbināto. Centrālā statistikas pārvalde. Available here: [https://data.csb.gov.lv/px-web/lv/ekfin/ekfin_ikp_IKP_ikgad/IKG10_010.px/table/tableViewLayout1/\(2020\)](https://data.csb.gov.lv/px-web/lv/ekfin/ekfin_ikp_IKP_ikgad/IKG10_010.px/table/tableViewLayout1/(2020))

4 Butzkueven, H. et al. Risk of becoming wheelchair-confined in patients with primary progressive multiple sclerosis: data from the oratorio trial and a long-term real-world cohort from msbase registry, Eur. J. Neurol. 2018 Jun; 25:320-321. Pieejams: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/ene.13700>

Roche activities in medicine – treatment and diagnostics

Kaspars Losāns

Roche's philosophy

Roche is committed to turning scientific excellence into effective medicines for patients. Thanks to its wide product portfolio, *Roche* is one of the world's leading suppliers of clinically differentiated drugs. *Roche* is proof that scientific invention creates products that truly save patients' lives and improve their health. By focusing on oncology, immunology, ophthalmology, infectious diseases, and neuroscience, *Roche* is turning its vast scientific potential into therapies that reduce human suffering and help us live longer and healthier lives. In its pursuit of scientific excellence, *Roche* relies on four key elements: a particularly broad and deep understanding of

molecular biology, the integration of drugs and diagnostic capabilities, a variety of approaches (to intensify innovation), and long-term orientation.

Cancer is still the second leading cause of death in the industrialised world, and its incidence is rising. If detected early enough, many forms of the disease can be treated effectively. *Roche* has been at the forefront of cancer research and treatment for more than 50 years. *Roche* drugs treat breast, skin, colon, ovarian, lung and many other cancers. *Roche* now supplies patients with a number of innovative cancer drugs that give them the most important thing in life – time in which to live.

Thirty drugs developed by *Roche* are included on the World Health Organisation's Model List of Essential Medicines. By developing products that increase the level of care for diseases with significant unresolved needs, *Roche* is able to meet its obligations not only to shareholders, but to society as a whole.

Roche – Moving towards personalised healthcare

By focusing more on innovation and biotechnology, it has been possible to make significant advances in diagnostic methods and medicines with molecular targets. Consequently, many diseases can be detected earlier and treated more

accurately. Genentech, considered the founder of the biotechnology industry, came under 100% ownership of the *Roche* Group in 2009. The combined portfolios of the two concerns created the world's largest biotechnology company focusing on the use of human genetic information in the development of medicines for patients with serious or life-threatening health conditions. The development of innovation is enhanced by the sharing of intellectual property and technology while also preserving the diversity of research approaches. This strengthened *Roche's* access to new technologies that ultimately make personalised healthcare a reality. Based on a unique combination



of pharmaceuticals and diagnostics and a deep understanding of molecular biology, *Roche* puts personalised healthcare and the use of clinically differentiated drugs at the heart of its business strategy.

Diagnostics for personalised cancer treatment

In order to expand cancer patients' access to comprehensive genomic profiling, in 2018 *Roche* entered into a merger agreement with Foundation Medicine. The philosophy of *Roche* and Foundation Medicine is based on the principle that every cancer patient should have access to personalised care based on validated molecular information because just like

every human being, every tumor is also unique. The comprehensive genome profiling approach extensively analyses a tumor's genome to identify clinically relevant genome changes and potentially expand the patient's treatment options.

FoundationOne CDx is a diagnostic tool based on next-generation genome sequencing that, using DNA, detects alterations in 324 genes as well as typical genomic signatures, such as MSI and TMB. FoundationOne CDx can be used as an adjunct diagnostic tool in patients with certain types of malignancies, as well as in the identification of patients who may benefit from treatment with a target drug after the detection of abnormalities



in various genes. FoundationOne Liquid is a circulating tumor DNA (ctDNA) liquid biopsy test for solid tumors that allows for genome profiling in cases where tissue biopsy is not possible, there is insufficient tissue for analysis, and/or disease progression is suspected⁵. FoundationOne Heme is a comprehensive genetic profiling test for haematological malignancies and sarcomas.

↑ Prof. Valdis Pīrāgs and Prof. Andrejs Ērglis at the Personalised Healthcare Conference held in the Great Hall of the University of Latvia. 1 February 2020. Photo: Jānis Brencis

↖ Personalized Health Care Conference jointly organized by the University of Latvia and *Roche Latvia*. Ilmārs Dūrītis, Member of the Parliament of the Republic of Latvia, and Alise Krūmiņa, *Roche* Public Policy Head, in the Great hall of the University of Latvia. February 1, 2020. Photo: Jānis Brencis

5 Olšteina I. Onkoloģijas eksperti vērtē šķidro biopsiju vēža atklāšanā. 08.01.2020. Available here: <https://www.santa.lv/raksts/ievasveseliba/arstesana/onkologijas-eksperti-verte-skidro-biopsiju-veza-atklasana-4436/>



↑ Dr. Ilze Aizsilniece, President of the Latvian Medical Association, in conversation with Prof. Andres Metspalu, Head of the Estonian Biobank, at the Personalised HealthCare Conference in the Great Hall of the University of Latvia. 1 February 2020. Photo: Jānis Brencis



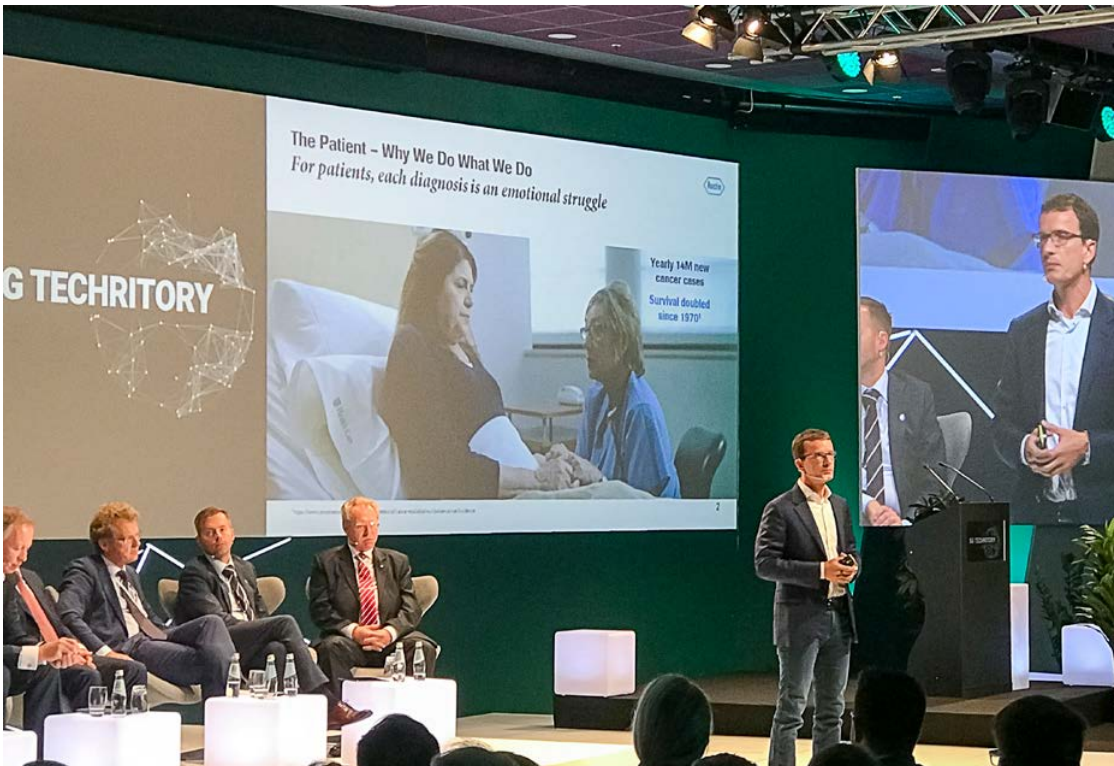
↑ Gabriele Beer, Senior Director of Strategic Partnerships. Meeting with scientists from the University of Latvia. 5 December 2017. Photo from Roche Latvia archive.



↑ Prof. Sergei Isajev on a science trip to Roche in Basel, Switzerland. The Roche Children's Walk charity event took place at the time. Proceeds go to children living in poor conditions. 15 June 2018. Photo from Roche Latvia archive.



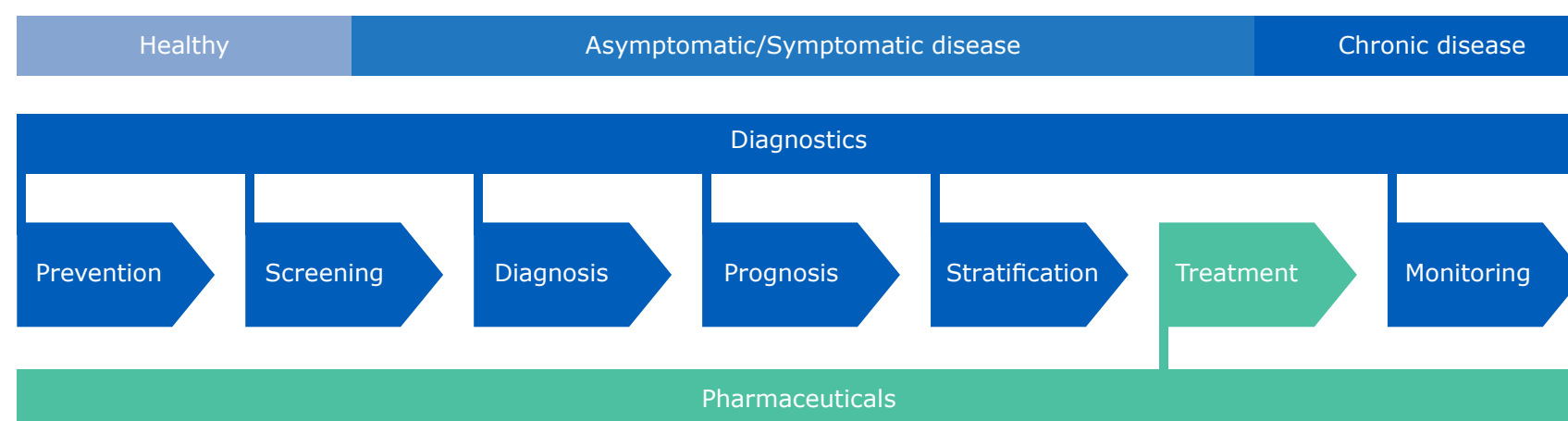
↑ Dr. Rafails Rozentāls, institutor of organ transplantation in Latvia. Gramado, Brazil, 2005. From the Roche Latvia archive.



← Tim M. Jaeger from Roche Diagnostics speaks at the 5G Nordic-Baltic Summit in Riga. 28 September 2018. Photo from Roche Latvia archive.

Roche diagnostics

Dalimil Žůrek



Use of IVDs along the healthcare value chain⁶

At the end of 2018, a purchase agreement was signed between *Roche Latvia* and Medilink for the acquisition of Medilink's distribution businesses – *Roche* diagnostic solutions and Sysmex hematology solutions – by *Roche Latvia*. On 7 January 2019 an agreement was signed and *Roche* Diagnostics began

operating in Latvia as a structural unit of SIA *Roche Latvia*, thus expanding its operations and increasing the number of employees. According to Peter Matton, Head of EMEA Subregion South-East, the decision to acquire one of *Roche's* core businesses from Medilink was carefully prepared and taken after Baltics Man-

ager Gregory Essert and his team had analysed various opportunities to expand *Roche's* operations in Latvia. From 2013 to 2016, Mark Osewold had been responsible for running *Roche* Diagnostics Baltics. The decision to expand was made by *Roche's* senior management.

Performed on blood, tissue or oth-

er patient samples, in vitro diagnostics (IVDs) are a critical source of objective information for improved disease management and patient care.

⁶ https://diagnostics.roche.com/id/en_us/about-roche-diagnostics.html



↑ *Roche Diagnostics* becomes a structural unit of SIA *Roche Latvia*. The agreement was signed on 7 January 2019. From left: Lauris Liepa (Cobalt Legal), Rauls Vēliņš (General Manager of *Roche Latvia*), Ieva Ābele (Finance Manager, *Roche Latvia*). Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.



↑ Dalimil Žůrek, Country Manager *Roche Diagnostics* Baltics (since 2018). Photo: Guna Rubule.



↑ Peter Matton, Head of *Roche Diagnostics* Subregion South East (since 2016).
Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.



↑ Gregory Essert, Country Manager *Roche Diagnostics* Baltics (2016–2018).
Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.



↑ Mark Osewold, Country Manager *Roche Diagnostics* Baltics (2013–2016).
Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.

In modern healthcare, in vitro diagnostics go far beyond simply telling a doctor whether a patient has a certain disease or not, emphasises Dalimil Žūrek, Country Manager of *Roche* Diagnostics Baltics. Today, they are an integral part of decision-making along the entire continuum of a patient's health or disease, enabling physicians to make full use of IVDs along the healthcare value chain.

IVDs have long been considered the "silent champion" of healthcare, influencing over 70% of clinical decision-making, while accounting for only about 2% of total healthcare spending.

Diagnostics allows laboratories to be the reliable partners that healthcare

professionals need. It empowers doctors to make the right decisions for their patients at the right time; it allows people to have improved control over their health and wellbeing, and it gives payers and policymakers the confidence that they are investing in the right solutions for patients and the future of healthcare.

Modern diagnostics reduces costs by diminishing subsequent health problems, reducing hospitalization and avoiding unnecessary treatment. The future of sustainable healthcare depends on diagnostics.

In 2008 *Roche* acquired Ventana Inc., a US company that manufactures diagnostic tools and reagents used in

abnormal tissue research, including cancer cell recognition. This type of equipment was installed in early 2019 at the Pathology Centre of Riga East Clinical University Hospital. One of *Roche's* priorities is early cancer diagnosis, so the range of available tests is constantly being supplemented with new and innovative ones. In 2013 *Roche* was awarded the Swiss Prix Galien for Best Diagnostic Tool or Device for the development of the Cobas HPV (human papillomavirus) Test, which can identify cervical cell changes at an early stage, when treatment is most effective. One of *Roche's* objectives is to stop the spread of cervical cancer in Latvia.



↑ The Cobas 6800 system is ready for COVID-19 testing at the Latvian Centre of Infectious Diseases. *Roche Latvia* employees Indulis Zālītis, Jānis Leimans and Ilvars Kalniņš participated in the system's installation and start of testing. March 2020.
Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.

The content of the book is designed as a testament to the history and development of the company. All the information contained in the book is included as illustrative historical material.

In 2009 a diagnostic system for clinical chemistry and immunology tests, Cobas 8000, was introduced. This system has been designed for laboratories that process a large number of tests, allowing for the examination of approximately 8,400 tests per hour. The first such system in Latvia was installed in late 2017.

In 2020 the Covid-19 pandemic took over the world. During this difficult time, *Roche's* molecular SARS-CoV-2 test was approved by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA). We are really pleased to be able to provide Covid-19 testing kits for Latvia's laboratories that use the *Roche* instruments Cobas z480 and Cobas 6800. In March 2020, testing for

SARS-CoV-2 with the Cobas 6800 diagnostic system began at the Latvian Centre of Infectious Diseases. *Roche Latvia* employees Indulis Zālītis, Jānis Leimans and Ilvars Kalniņš participated in the installation of the special software and the start of testing.

At the request of national organisations and reference laboratories, in April 2020 *Roche* began providing institutions with the more specific and sensitive antibody test. In a short time, *Roche* began supplying anti-SARS-CoV-2 antibody tests to Latvia's leading medical institutions. This test is designed to detect collective immunity, i.e. it is a screening tool for determining the spread of the vi-

rus in the community. Such a test aids in the making of informed decisions about mechanisms for controlling the spread of the virus.



↑ Employees of SIA *Roche Latvia* after *Roche Diagnostics* has joined the team. From the left, row 1: Ilze Folkmane, Ieva Sedleniece, Dana Erciņa-Užāne, Kristīne Voitkēviča, Eva Marksa, Jānis Leimans, Agnese Dimante, Gatis Galejs, Martynas Kubilius. Row 2: Ilvars Kalniņš, Rets Renemanis, Jānis Stašulāns, Jānis Siliņš, Kristaps Herings, Iveta Zauska, Linda Irbe, Dalimil Žūrek, Rauls Vēliņš, Klāvs Freidenfelds, Mihails Auziņš, Indulis Zālītis, Sigita Kokoreviča, Solvita Verkēviča, Ieva Ābele. Row 3: Daiga Briņķe, Zane Degro, Elīna Dzērve, Aija Ozoliņa, Dace Butlere, Jānis Kalnājs, Ginta Nažinska, Edīte Krūmiņa, Inesa Kozlovskā, Kaspars Losāns, Anda Zukule, Agris Laizāns. Not pictured: Agneta Didrihsone, Anita Ločmele, Annija Tula. 8 April 2019. Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.

Clinical Studies

Solvita Verkēviča

Roche is an innovative company that has always created new medicines. The development of new drugs is a complex and time-consuming process, with only a small proportion of newly discovered active substances going on to be registered as medicines. It takes at least ten to fifteen years to get from an idea to an approved medicine. Clinical trials are an integral part of the process of discovering and developing new medicines. Clinical trials evaluate the clinical effect, side effects, safety, and efficacy of new drugs to determine the benefit to risk balance of new medicines. Existing medicines are also being studied to obtain additional data and determine their efficacy in new diagnoses.

Research is usually initiated by scientists who initially develop and test new medicines – active substances – in laboratories. Only those drugs that have been shown to have the best laboratory performance are included in further clinical trials. *Roche's* research centres at which scientists look for new active molecules

are located in the EU, the US, and Japan. Clinical trials have four stages, each with its own objectives.

The duration of research varies from field to field, from a few months to several years. Patient participation is voluntary. To participate in a study, a patient must meet all the inclusion and exclusion criteria developed for each study that are related to the intended purpose of the drug.

Patient safety is paramount in all studies – observations are done and test results are carefully documented throughout the course of each study, and beyond, in order to record possible adverse reactions. Each patient participating in a study is provided with all known safety data of the study drug to date.

All research documentation is systematised and stored in a database, and by analysing it, it is clear whether the primary and secondary goals of the research have been achieved. Many studies and different hypotheses can be performed simultaneously with one mol-

ecule, in which case these data are again compared and analysed.

Clinical trials also involve ethical issues and risks, and their impact on the patients involved is carefully assessed. Clinical trials are conducted in accordance with international guidelines and good clinical practice. These guidelines govern the various aspects of clinical trials, according to which it must be demonstrated that the clinical trials are conducted in accordance with ethical standards and that the rights of the participants involved are protected. Clinical trials are monitored throughout the trial, and each trial participant is assigned a coded trial number to protect his or her personal data.

Only medicines that have been evaluated and approved by the European Medicines Agency and the State Agency of Medicines of Latvia enter the market. Registration is a multi-step process, including the evaluation of pre-clinical and animal and human data, as well as safety and efficacy studies.

Recent research has focused on personalised therapy. In order to be able to evaluate the most effective therapy for specifically selected patients, patients with a specific biomarker are sought. In the case of the same diagnosis, treatment with the same drug may differ in terms of efficacy between those patients with specific biomarkers and those without.

Clinical trials have been conducted at *Roche Latvia* since 2003. Phase II, III, and IV studies are carried out in Latvia. The number of patients in a study can range from a few dozen to several thousand, and they occur in several countries at the same time. On average, about 15 *Roche* trials take place in Latvia each year. Research is performed both at P. Stradiņš Clinical University Hospital and Riga East Clinical University Hospital, as well as in centres outside of Riga – Valmiera, Liepāja, Daugavpils, and Madona. In order to participate in a study, a centre must have the required technical and human resource capacity,



as this is additional work. A centre must also have access to the defined patient profile. *Roche Latvia* has extensive clinical research experience in a variety of therapeutic areas – oncology, hematology, rheumatology, virology, nephrology and neurology.

In the period from 2007 to 2020, 48 trials involving 639 patients have been performed in Latvia. In 2019 the clinical trials taking place in Latvia cost more than €350,000.

Roche's clinical research manager, Solvita Verkēviča, who has been with *Roche* since 2007, has complete trust in *Roche's* drugs and emphasises that participating in a trial is an opportunity

for patients to receive state-of-the-art therapy, as well as an opportunity that patients can use even after the trial has come to a close. The greatest satisfaction comes from knowing that we have managed to help specific people. It is a great feeling to see how metastases disappear from an oncology patient, and how their quality of life improves during the trial – and even more so when the drug under trial is finally registered as a medication, opening up more opportunities for many more patients to recover and/or stay healthy.



↑ Representatives from the Ministry of Economics (ME), the Ministry of Health, the University of Latvia, *Roche Latvia*, Microsoft, and BGI at a seminar on data processing and storage organised by the ME. 2018.
Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.

↖ *Roche* Regional Interdisciplinary Conference on Medical Compliance in Budapest.
From left: Jurate Daubariene (Market Access Manager at *Roche Lithuania*), Ilze Muižniece (Drug Regulatory Affairs Manager at *Roche Latvia*), Mauricio Silva de Lima (*Roche* Medical Affairs Director, Europe), Ieva Sedleniece (Quality Lead at *Roche Latvia*), Solvita Verkēviča (Clinical Trial Manager at *Roche Latvia*), Rasa Jakubcioniene (Clinical Trial Manager at *Roche Lithuania*). 5 June 2017.
Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.



← Aleksandra Boikova, student of biochemistry and molecular biology at the University of Cambridge who completed her clinical research internship at *Roche Latvia*. From left: Jānis Kalnājs, Linda Irbe, Klāvs Freidenfelds, Daiga Briņķe, Solvita Verkēviča, Ilze Muižniece, Guna Mežule, Dace Butlere, Inese Zīra, Edīte Krūmiņa, Elīna Dzērve, Gundega Auziņa, Aleksandra Boikova, Rauls Vēliņš, Kaspars Losāns, Anita Ločmele, Ginta Nažinska, Jānis Siliņš, Agnese Dimante. July–September 2018. Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.

An Evaluation of *Roche Latvia*

Agnese Dimante, Ieva Ābele

As a global company, the Swiss pharmaceutical company *Roche* sets high standards for its healthcare operations, and these are both achieved and valued. In 2014 the Swiss pharmaceutical company *Roche* was recognised as the most sustainable healthcare company in the Dow Jones Sustainability Index. *Roche* has been recognized as the group's leader in sustainability in the pharmaceutical, biotechnology and life sciences industries for the sixth year in a row. Inclusion in the Dow Jones Sustainability Index is based on an in-depth analysis of the company's economic, social and environmental performance by assessing issues such as corporate gov-

ernance, stakeholder involvement, risk management, supply chain standards, and the work environment.

In 2009 *Roche* defined a number of five-year corporate goals, with Key Performance Indicators enabling it to measure the progress. Amongst them, *Roche* introduced a diversity objective to increase the percentage of women in key positions by at least 50 percent, plus an energy efficiency goal of a 10 percent reduction in energy consumption and an increase in energy efficiency by end of 2014. *Roche* met its diversity target by the end of 2013, a year earlier than planned, and its energy efficiency target in 2012, two years earlier than planned.

The company is working on new Sustainability goals for inclusion into *Roche's* next five-year Corporate Goals. In addition, as access to healthcare is an issue in many parts of the world, *Roche* is actively working with governments, healthcare professionals, NGOs and other organisations with over 100 initiatives globally to improve access to our medicines and diagnostics.

The operating principles of SIA *Roche Latvia* are in accordance with the general principles of *Roche*, and this has been recognised in Latvia as well. In the Sustainability Index 2018 competition organised by Latvia's Institute of Corporate Sustainability and Responsibility⁷, *Roche*

⁷ <https://www.incsr.eu/par-mums/>



Latvia received a gold category rating for business practices in accordance with the principles of sustainability. *Roche Latvia* was the only pharmaceutical company to receive the Sustainability Index 2018 award, and the gold category rating was *Roche Latvia's* second year in a row at that level. It should be noted that *Roche Latvia* has participated in the sustainability index competition organised by Latvia's Institute of Corporate Sustainability and Responsibility several times. Previously, in 2015 and 2016, the company received a silver category rating.

In 2018 *Roche Latvia* attained not only the gold category of the sustainability index, but also, for the second year in

a row, the status of Family-Friendly Entrepreneur. This award is given with the aim of promoting the strengthening of family values in society and improving the living and working environment to make it suitable for families. 'We are pleased that our work on improving the sustainability of *Roche Latvia's* operations and the level of corporate responsibility has been appreciated. We plan to continue working in such a way that these results are not only maintained, but also improved,' emphasises *Roche Latvia* General Manager Rauls Vēliņš. Vēliņš points out that it is a special pleasure to re-acquire the status of Family-Friendly Entrepreneur, as it goes hand in hand with the



↙ *Roche* Global Viva 2013 Valuable Innovation and Vision Award for excellence in communication with *Roche Latvia*. From left: Stephan Feldhaus, Head of *Roche* Group Communications, Sandris Sabajevs, Communications Manager of *Roche Latvia*. Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.

↗ *Roche* Pharma in the Baltics receives the award for the best employer in 2013. Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian *Roche* Pharma participated together as the Baltics, as the company must have at least 50 employees. From left: Kęstutis Šerpytis, CEO of Lietuvos draudimas, Evaldas Gustas, Minister of Economy of Lithuania, Eva Marksa, *Roche Latvia*, Thomas Borgen, CEO of Danske Bank. 13 October 2013. Photo: OVC Consulting. Best Employers of 2013 announced.

Roche Academy's social responsibility project Let's Save 100 Children.

In 2017 during Responsible Business Week, which had been organised by Latvia's Institute of Corporate Sustainability and Responsibility, *Roche Latvia* received a special, inaugural Innovation Leader 2017 award from Latvia's Ministry of Economics.

Roche Latvia has been recognised as a forthcoming and reliable partner by healthcare institutions, patient organisations, and other representatives of the social non-governmental sector. In 2017 *Roche Latvia* received a letter of thanks from the charitable giving organisation Ziedot.lv.

Within Global *Roche*, the quality of the *Roche Latvia* affiliate operations in the area of medical compliance is evaluated quarterly by several criteria and measurements. For 21 consecutive quarters, i.e. for 5.25 years, the *Roche Latvia* affiliate has received the highest quality rating - the so-called affiliate "green passport". This means that all quality criteria are 100% met and the overall assessment of the affiliate's compliance is 3 stars. This assessment confirms the sustainability of *Roche Latvia*, stability and consistently high quality standards.



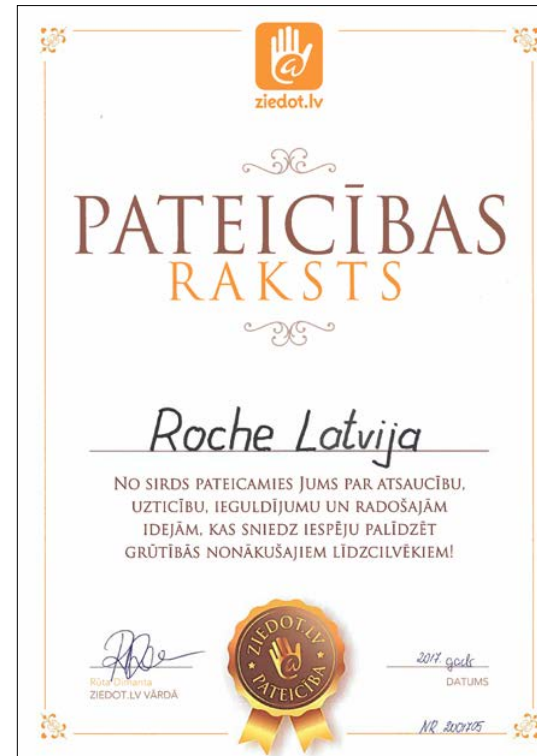
↑ *Roche Latvia* Medical Compliance Committee, which oversees medical compliance and quality systems in the branch.
The committee meets quarterly. LMCO (Local Medical Compliance Office) meeting. From left: Ieva Sedleniece, Kaspars Losāns, Solvita Verkēviča, Ilze Muižniece, Zane Degro. 22 May 2017.
Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.



↖ Rauls Vēliņš, General Manager of SIA Roche Latvia, and Dana Reizniece-Ozola, Latvia's Minister for Finance. 2017. Photo from Roche Latvia archive.

← SIA Roche Latvia being presented with the status of Family-Friendly Entrepreneur 2018. The award is being presented by Jānis Reirs, Latvia's Minister for Welfare, and is being received by Agnese Dimante, Roche Latvia's Office Manager. Photo from Roche Latvia archive.

↑ SIA Roche Latvia receives the Sustainability Index 2017 award (gold category) and the Innovation Leader 2017 award from Latvia's Ministry of Economics. From left: Sandris Sabajevs (Roche Latvia Communications Manager), Rauls Vēliņš (General Manager of Roche Latvia), Agnese Dimante (Roche Latvia Office Manager), and Arvils Ašeradens (Latvia's Minister for Economics). Photo from Roche Latvia archive.



↑ Certificate of appreciation from Ziedot.lv. 2017. Photo from Roche Latvia archive.

↖ Roche Latvia's certificate for Family-Friendly Entrepreneur 2018. Photo from Roche Latvia archive.

← The Sustainability Index 2018 award. Photo from Roche Latvia archive.

↑ Roche Global Viva 2013 Valuable Innovation and Vision Award for excellence in communication with Roche Latvia. Photo from Roche Latvia archive.

Cooperation for Achieving Progress in Healthcare

Roche Latvia supports socially responsible projects organised by patients' associations that promote public awareness of disease, its prevention, problem solving, and improvements in health care.

Jānis Kalnājs

Roche Latvia Head of Sales and Marketing

Directions in Cooperation

Rauls Vēliņš, Jānis Kalnājs, Kaspars Losāns

Roche Latvia wishes to be a reliable partner for healthcare professionals so that patients in Latvia receive the most effective treatment. *Roche* educates physicians on current issues in the company's operations, follows the development of the pharmaceutical market, and defends the company's interests. Company resources are also donated to socially significant projects and activities that affect the health of the population, as well as to support young scientists and medical students.

Roche Latvia has many areas of cooperation – state institutions, public medical organisations, healthcare institutions, medical support funds, pub-

lic patient organisations, pharmaceutical wholesalers, pharmacies, and other pharmaceutical companies in both Latvia and the international arena.

The main task of *Roche Latvia* is to promote the availability of precision drugs and innovative medicines to patients in Latvia. Most of these drugs are intended for the treatment of cancer patients. Thanks to *Roche's* initiative, during the Latvian Presidency of the EU in 2015 a meeting was held in Basel which saw the coming together of *Roche's* strategic science group and CEO Severin Schwan with a delegation from Latvia that included: representatives from Latvia's Ministry of Health – Minister Guntis Belēvičs and Dep-

uty Secretary of State on Health Policy Matters Egita Pole; President of the Latvian Academy of Sciences Ojārs Spārītis; Chairman of the Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis (LOSI) Ivars Kalviņš; and Aija Linē, Group Leader at the Latvian Biomedical Research and Study Centre (BMC). During the meeting between Minister of Health Guntis Belēvičs and *Roche* management, the possibility of establishing a reference centre of regional significance in Riga – the State Pathology Centre – was considered. This was followed by consultations with *Roche* engineers on how to turn the existing laboratory into a competitive centre with digital export capacity.

In recent years, several important meetings have taken place between representatives of the Latvian government and *Roche*.

On 27 May 2015, a delegation from *Roche* was received at Latvia's Ministry of Economics. The *Roche* delegation included: Dr. Gerd Maass, Head of Strategic Partnerships; Dr. Gabriele Beer, Senior Director of Strategic Partnerships; Rauls Vēliņš, General Manager of SIA *Roche Latvia*; and Agneta Didrihsone, Director of Communications. The very next day, on 28 May, the *Roche* delegation was received by the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia, where *Roche's* representatives were met by Prime Min-

Sadarbība ar Šveices zinātniekiem un uzņēmējiem

Tieši pirms Eiropas Savienības veselības ministru tikšanās Rīgā grupa zinātnieku – Latvijas Organiskās sintēzes institūta (LOSI) Zinātniskās padomes priekšsēdētājs Ivars Kalviņš, Latvijas Biomedicīnas pētījumu un studiju centra (BMC) zinātniskā direktore Aija Linē, kā arī veselības ministrs Guntis Belēvičs, Veselības ministrijas valsts sekretāra vietniece Egita Pole, uzņēmuma ROCHE Latvija direktors Rauls Vēliņš un LZA prezidents Ojārs Spārītis Bāzelē 14. un 15. aprīlī iepazīs ar Šveices uzņēmuma ROCHE darbu ārstniecisko preparātu izstrādē un iepazīstināja ar Latvijas līdzšinējo sekmīgo pieredzi jaunu ārstniecisko preparātu izstrādē un starptautiskā patentēšanā.

Nemaz neizbrīnīja LOSI ilggadējā direktora Ivara Kalviņa prezentācijas sekmes, redzot cik aktīvi Šveices zinātnieki klausījās un pierakstīja Latvijas farmakoloģijas veiksmes stāstu noslēpumus. Savukārt pēc BMC zinātniskās direktoras Aijas Linē uzstāšanās Šveices zinātnieki izrādīja lielu interesi par jaunām sadarbības iespējām onkoloģisko paraugu datu bankas izmantošanā. Ļoti reti pēc Latvijas neatkarības

atjaunošanas mani ir pārņēmis tāds lepnums par savu nozari profesionāli pārzinošu un valstiski domājošu politiķi, kā tas bija šoreiz, piedaloties vairākkārtējos sarunu raundos un redzot, kā par abu pušu sarunu līderi kļuva veselības ministrs Guntis Belēvičs.

Šveices farmakoloģijas nozares speciālisti un atbildīgie par starptautiskās sadarbības veicināšanu bija gandarīti par tikšanos ar Latvijas delegāciju un tās atbildīgo sniegumu, iepazīstinot ar abpusēji izdevīgām sadarbības iespējām nākotnē. To apliecināja arī koncerna ROCHE Valdes priekšsēdētājs Dr. Severins Švāns (*Severin Schwan*), kurš pārliecinoši izvirzīja konkrētus sadarbības pasākumus onkoloģisko slimību laboratorisko izmeklējumu centra izveidei Latvijā un kopā ar veselības ministru Gunti Belēviču izvērtēja reālās iespējas atbalstīt preventīvās diagnostikas principu, kā arī farmakoloģisko preparātu izstrādi sadarbībā ar Latvijas Zinātņu akadēmiju un Latvijas zinātniekiem.

Ojārs Spārītis, LZA prezidents



No kreisās: Aija Linē, Ivars Kalviņš, Severins Švāns, Guntis Belēvičs, Ojārs Spārītis, Egita Pole, Rauls Vēliņš



↑ Publication in Issue 9 (488) of the newspaper *Zinātnes Vēstnesis*. 2015. Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.

↑↑ Daniel O'Day, Ojārs Spārītis and Guntis Belēvičs exchange handshakes and souvenirs. 15 April 2015. Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.

← Meeting of the Latvian delegation with the leadership of *F. Hoffmann-La Roche* in Basel during the Latvian Presidency of the Council of the European Union. From left: Gerd Maass, Ivars Kalviņš (Chairman of the Scientific Council of the Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis), Daniel O'Day, Guntis Belēvičs (Latvia's Minister for Health), Aija Linē (Scientific Director of the Latvian Biomedical Research and Study Center), Ojārs Spārītis (President of LAS), Egita Pole (Deputy State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs), and Rauls Vēliņš (General Manager of *Roche Latvia*). 15 April 2015. Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.

↑ Negotiations on cooperation opportunities between Latvian and Swiss scientists and entrepreneurs at *F. Hoffmann-La Roche* offices in Basel. From left: Nathalie Stieger, Severin Schwan (CEO of the *Roche* group), Luc Dirckx (Area Head Europe North), Rauls Vēliņš (General Manager *Roche Latvia*). 15 April 2015. Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.



ister Laimdota Straujuma. The establishment of a Northern European regional laboratory based upon the State Pathology Centre was discussed. According to various estimates, a total investment up to EUR 8 million was planned. It was intended to be a regional centre for diagnostics, education and science.

In 2015, the General Manager of *Roche Latvia* received a message from Regional Manager Luc Dirckx that *Roche Latvia* had been selected for the official state budget presentation to Daniel O'Day in Basel, Switzerland¹. This took place on 14 October 2015, and it was the first and only event of its kind in the history of *Roche Latvia*. The entire *Roche Latvia* management team was involved in preparing the business report concerning the innovative initiatives of *Roche Latvia*. The following points were reflected in the summary of the presentation:

1 – Thanks to its activities impacting the healthcare environment, *Roche* has become the No. 1 company in Latvia.

2 – The business targets for 2015

will be met, and strong growth is expected in 2016.

3 – Sustainability and responsibility are an integral part of *Roche's* business. They ensure the creation of consistent and lasting benefits for patients in Latvia.

4 – Market access is *Roche's* key priority. Thanks to *Roche's* leadership, the Ministry of Health, the Academy of Sciences and the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations (EFPIA) signed a letter of intent to increase the budget for essential services for oncology patients.

5 – *Roche* has been selected as a collaboration partner for the establishment of a National Pathology Centre that would provide opportunities for personalised health care, enable complex scientific projects, and establish a regional centre of excellence in education.²

The presentation was very well received in Basel, and *Roche Latvia* was thanked for its successful work.³

In November 2016 a *Roche* team led by Gerd Maass visited Latvia's Minis-

try of Economics where the guests were received by Arvils Ašeradens, Minister of Economics. Recognised professors in Latvia – Valdis Pīrāgs, Jānis Kļoviņš, Sergejs Isajevs, Andrejs Ērglis, and Ilze Štrumfa – also took part in the discussion. Professor Štrumfa's critical opinion on the possibilities of quality diagnostics and therapy at P. Stradiņš Clinical University Hospital had been published in the newspaper 'Diena' in November 2015, and had at the time provoked a public stir on the topic of cancer diagnosis and therapy. The *Roche* delegation introduced the Latvian side with the modern next-generation gene sequencing method, a cancer gene map with the possibility of mutation profiling, and the use of big data for personalised treatment of cancer patients in Latvia.

In June 2017 *Roche Latvia*, together with employees of Latvia's Ministries of Health and Economics, participated in a visit to Microsoft headquarters in Redmond (USA) to discuss the use of big data in oncology, the development of a

1 Correspondence with Luc Dirckx. 30.06.2015

2 *Roche Latvia* presentation in Basel on 14 October 2015.

3 Correspondence with Luc Dirckx. 14.10.2015



lung cancer risk calculator, and recruiting scientists from the University of Latvia to take part in the creation of a data lake.

Active cooperation with the University of Latvia began in 2018. This is in line with *Roche's* vision of personalised medicine. On 18 and 19 January 2018, the first expert seminar for launching the project took place in Latvia; it was attended by representatives of Microsoft Research and the Microsoft Health segment, as well as representatives of the pharmaceutical company *Roche*. Professor Signe Bāliņa, President of the Latvian Information and Communication Technology Association (LIKTA), emphasised that the aim of the seminar was to get

a sense of the possible opportunities in which Latvia could cooperate with international companies. The launch of the project put Latvia on the world map of gene research that uses innovations in information technology and big data analysis.

In December 2018 representatives from Latvia's Ministry of Economics visited the *Roche* Molecular Diagnostics centre in Pleasanton (USA), where the perspective of using big data in science and clinical decision-making was discussed.

The first pilot projects in Latvia were planned to start in 2020. They would test a possible cooperation model between the parties for establishing in



Latvia a Northern European centre of excellence in genomics with a suitable infrastructure, a body of researchers, and the necessary technological support and data availability. The centre would carry out applied research in genomics and provide services to healthcare institutions and companies, as well as create an environment for the development of new companies in the field of genomics.

On 5 July 2019, Indriķis Muižnieks, Rector of the University of Latvia (LU), and Rauls Vēliņš, General Manager of SIA *Roche Latvia*, signed a cooperation agreement on projects involving cancer risk assessment, early diagnostics, and prediction technology development.

↑ Konstantin Obolensky, the Ambassador of Switzerland to Latvia, visiting the *Roche Latvia* office. From left: Matīss Māsēns, Daiga Briņķe, Gundega Auziņa, Sandris Sabajevs, Jānis Kalnājs, Jānis Siliņš, Agnese Dimante, Kaspars Losāns, Ieva Ābele, Dace Butlere, Ginta Nažinska, Solvita Verkēviča, Rauls Vēliņš, Konstantin Obolensky, Ieva Sedleniece, Zane Lielausē. 21 June 2016. Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.

↖ Markus Niklaus Paul Dutly, the Ambassador of Switzerland to Latvia, visiting the *Roche Latvia* office. From left: Rets Renemanis, Jānis Kalnājs, Guna Mežule, Rauls Vēliņš, Markus Niklaus Paul Dutly, Ieva Ābele, Eva Marksa, Sandris Sabajevs. 25 November 2014. Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.



↖ XVIII World Lung Cancer Conference in Yokohama, Japan. Meeting with Shinya Unno, Executive Vice President at Chugai Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd. From left: Rauls Vēliņš, Shinya Unno. 19 October 2017. Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.

← Indriķis Muižnieks, Rector of the University of Latvia, and Rauls Vēliņš, General Manager of *Roche Latvia*, sign an agreement on projects involving cancer risk assessment, early diagnostics, and prediction technology development. 5 July 2019. Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.

↑ State visit of the President of Switzerland Alain Berset and Mrs. Muriel Zeender Berset to the Republic of Latvia. A state dinner with the President of Latvia Raimonds Vējonis was held at the Presidential Palace, which was attended by a representative of *Roche Latvia*. 14 May 2018. Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.



← Meeting between *Roche* management and the *Roche Latvia* team in Riga in 2017. From left: Jānis Silīņš, Agnese Dimante, Alan LeVoguer, Karsten Kruse (European Regional Financial Manager), Ieva Sedleniece, Zane Lielausē, Ieva Ābele, Jānis Kalnājs, Inesa Kozlovskā, Eva Marksa, Katarzyna Stadnicka (Regional Medical Director, 2014–2018), Linda Irbe, Zane Degro, Daiga Briņķe, Marta Jagnieža (Human Resources Manager from *Roche Poland*).
Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.

'*Roche* is one of the best-known and largest pharmaceutical companies that invest heavily in research, which is why this is a very important contract for the University. It will involve not only cooperation with *Roche Latvia*, but also joint work between various fields and specialties at the University of Latvia. Physicians, geneticists, and data processing technology scientists will take part in the projects,' asserted Muižnieks during the signing of the agreement.

LU and *Roche Latvia* will cooperate on several innovative cancer diagnostics projects. One of them will be a national genome project that will help identify high-risk groups for cancer.

As in other countries, such as Iceland and the UK, epidemiological studies could ascertain, for example, the risk of breast cancer for women in Latvia, or the prevalence of familial hypercholesterolemia in Latvia. High-risk groups could be identified. Women who have been found to carry the BRCA gene (breast cancer gene) or who have a family history of increased risk of breast cancer could be screened more frequently. The resulting benefits would include a decrease in intrusive procedures, money savings, and, above all, more women's lives being saved.

In addition, one of the cooperation projects envisages the establishment of a



Latvian lung cancer biobank that will contain tissue samples, freshly frozen tissue samples, blood and plasma, as well as clinical, laboratory and histopathological data. If realised, this would create public health infrastructure. Lung cancer is just one example where the usefulness of this sort of data collection can be seen. In Latvia, more than 80% of patients with lung cancer are diagnosed at stage 3 or 4, which is a gross delay; 50% of these patients die within the first six months. This would be an effective way to save these patients.

An innovation incubator has been established in the renovated *Roche Latvia* offices, where the first new company

↑ Visit to Latvia's Cabinet of Ministers with Prime Minister Māris Kučinskis. From left: Prof. Andrejs Ērglis (Chief of the Latvian Centre of Cardiology), Jean Philippe Bogardi (Senior Project Manager EMEA-LATAM Digital Initiatives at *Roche*), Dr. Kaspars Losāns (Medical Director at *Roche Latvia*), Gregory Essert (Commercial Director at Illumina), Andre R. Rey (Transformation Head – Pharma International Foundation Medicine at *Roche*), Rauls Vēliņš (General Manager of *Roche Latvia*). 18 January 2018.
Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.



that will use artificial intelligence in lung cancer research has already found a home.⁴

On 22 January 2020, during the World Economic Forum in Davos, a meeting between Egils Levits, President of Latvia, and Christoph Franz, Chairman of Roche's Board of Directors, took place. They discussed important healthcare issues faced by the Latvian population, as well as opportunities for scientific cooperation. Subsequently, in July 2020 the Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis (OSI) gave a remote presentation on its scientific capacity and potential research studies to European- and US-based Roche researchers. The presenta-

tion was chaired by OSI Director Osvalds Pugovičs.⁵

Cooperation between Swiss and Latvian scientists in the 21st century is a natural continuation of historical events. The Roche Archive in Basel contains a photograph taken on 31 January 1978. Chemist and academician Jānis Stradiņš, a member of the delegation of the Latvian Academy of Sciences of the USSR Academy of Sciences and representing the Institute of Organic Synthesis, visited Roche headquarters in Basel. The meeting was covered in *Roche Nachrichten* 1978/2.



↑ On 22 January 2020, during the World Economic Forum, a meeting between Egils Levits, President of Latvia, and Christoph Franz, Chairman of Roche's Board of Directors, took place in Davos. During the bilateral conversation, important healthcare issues being faced by the people of Latvia, as well as opportunities for scientific cooperation, were discussed. Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.

↖ On 31 January 1978, second from the right Jānis Stradiņš, a member of the delegation of the Latvian Academy of Sciences of the USSR Academy of Sciences and representing the Institute of Organic Synthesis, visited the Roche headquarters in Basel. The original photo is in the Roche archives in Basel.



↑ Meeting of the heads of healthcare and pharmaceutical companies with the management of the University of Latvia. From left: Jānis Dobelis (Country Manager at AstraZeneca), Anda Blumberga (Country Manager at Sanofi-Aventis), Rauls Vēliņš (General Manager of Roche Latvia), Mārcis Auziņš (Rector of the University of Latvia), Ingrīda Rumba (Dean of the Faculty of Medicine at UoFL). 15 October 2010. Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.

4 Atlāce-Bistere Z. Miera ielā top Roche Latvia birojs un inovāciju laboratorija. Dienas bizness. 09.04.2019. Available here: <http://www.db.lv/zinas/foto-miera-iela-top-roche-latvija-birojs-un-inovaciju-laboratorija-486025>; Nodibināts Roche Inovāciju inkubators un izsludināts pirmais projektu konkurss. Dienas Bizness. 29.07.2020. Available here: <https://www.db.lv/zinas/nodibinats-roche-inovaciju-inkubators-un-izsludinats-pirmais-projektu-konkurss-497772>

5 E-mail correspondence between Ehab Yousef and Rauls Vēliņš. 18.12.2019.

The Association of Biopharmaceutical Drug Manufacturers in Latvia

Jānis Siliņš

Aware of the growing importance of biotechnology in the pharmaceutical industry and the potential of biological drugs in solving acute problems in healthcare, *Roche Latvia*, together with colleagues from Amgen Switzerland AG Vilnius Branch and Swedish Orphan Biovitrum, established in 2012 the [Association of Biopharmaceutical Manufacturers in Latvia](#) (BRAL). Jānis Siliņš, Market Access Manager at *Roche Latvia*, has been on the Association's board since its founding. The main goal of the Association is to unite both Latvian and foreign legal and physical persons whose activities are related to the availability of biopharmaceuticals in Latvia in order to

promote the use of innovative and effective solutions in healthcare. In 2019 the Association had united 11 members. Since its establishment, in cooperation with professional pharmacist and doctor organisations the Association has organised or supported educational events on topical biopharmaceutical issues. The Association is a member of the Pharmaceutical Advisory Council of the Ministry of Health, as well as a member organisation of the Cooperation Memorandum Between NGOs and the Cabinet of Ministers. Since 2019 BRAL has been a member of the Employers' Confederation of Latvia. BRAL regularly provides opinions and proposals for the improvement of

the healthcare regulatory framework. In 2015, at the invitation of the Ministry of Health, BRAL representatives engaged in activities related to achieving the goals set in the Memorandum of Understanding. This Letter of Intent was signed by the Ministry of Health, the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Companies and Associations, the Association of International Innovative Pharmaceuticals Producers, and the Latvian Academy of Sciences. Members of the Association participated in all four working groups (oncology, contracts, data, and science) developing proposals and action plans to facilitate access to innovative medicines, thereby promoting the improvement of

healthcare outcomes in Latvia. One of the most important activities of BRAL is related to implementation of the requirements of the Falsified Medicines Directive in Latvia – the members of the Association supported the establishment of the Latvian Medicines Verification Organisation (LZVO). Special thanks is due to Ieva Sedleniece for her contribution in representing the interests of BRAL members in communicating with the LZVO.

Support for Socially Responsible Projects

Rauls Vēliņš, Jānis Kalnājs

Roche supports socially responsible projects that raise public awareness of diseases and their prevention, problem solving, and improvements in healthcare. The primary areas in which the company has invested in supporting such projects are oncology, hematology, virology and rheumatology.

After the regaining of independence, a medical information vacuum had developed in Latvia as medical literature printed in Russian was no longer usable and very few publications were published in Latvian, but it was expensive to buy foreign literature, not to mention technically difficult to do so. *Roche* actively supported the publication of medical lit-

erature, including domestically produced literature, in Latvian. A major project was translating into Latvian the voluminous Lippincott Manual of Nursing Practice, the Latvian version of which was published in 2001. Since then *Roche's* name has increasingly been associated with public interest projects in the field of health preservation and recovery.

Over the years, *Roche's* collaboration with healthcare professionals and healthcare organisations and patients' organisations has made progress in many areas of medical importance to patients. *Roche* continues this collaboration to create innovative medicines and diagnostic equipment in areas that require signifi-

cant improvements in patient healthcare. As an innovation-oriented biotechnology company, *Roche* is committed to investing in new drugs and diagnostic equipment that will help patients live longer and healthier lives.

This type of cooperation is important because it:

- aids in acquiring knowledge about the treatment of various diseases and if there are any gaps in treatment;
- complements the assessment of a possible new treatment method focusing on certain elements of the disease and the development of new research programmes;

- can indicate at which stage of disease *Roche* drugs can be used, as well as aid in understanding what information needs to be identified so that the physician can choose the right treatment for a specific patient;
- and helps physicians continuously develop their skills and knowledge through supporting their education and training.

'We are confident that we will achieve more if we work together; we are proud of the progress we have made over the years in many areas of medical care important to patients. *Roche* has many marketing projects that are targeted



← With the support of *Roche Latvia*, many educational booklets and brochures have been created, including [*General advice for oncology patients and their relatives*](#), [*What you need to know about bowel cancer and how to prevent it*](#) and [*Melanoma. Questions and Answers*](#). 2019. Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.

educational and sales activities. We are able to support the professional education of Latvia's doctors by supporting the meetings of associations and inviting internationally recognised guest lecturers. The knowledge of languages and accumulated experience allows doctors in Latvia to better understand lectures given in foreign languages and to participate in discussions,' says Jānis Kalnājs, Head of Sales and Marketing at *Roche Latvia*, who has been working for the company since 2009. The international experience and knowledge that a physician has also determines the quality that colleagues expect from any educational project. At a time when borders are open, it is good

to gain a broader insight into topics that have not yet been so deeply studied in Latvia, such as cancer immunotherapy. That is why *Roche* supports the participation of Latvia's doctors in international congresses, seminars, and other training opportunities. As a global company, *Roche* has ample opportunities to work with world-renowned professionals in various fields. Many outstanding specialists have visited Latvia as guest lecturers, including Prof. Dr. Paul Declerck from the University of Leuven in Belgium, Prof. Dr. Eric Van Cutsem from University Hospitals Leuven in Belgium, Prof. Dr. Maurice Perol from the Centre Léon Bérard in France, Prof. Dr. Sylvie Lantuejoul from

the Centre Léon Bérard in France, and Prof. Dr. Nir Peled from Sheba Medical Center in Israel.

The main strategic marketing directions of *Roche Latvia* are related to the range of medicines offered by *Roche*, but this is not an axiom, and we have projects where coming up with the best solution is the dominant factor, and that have nothing to do with *Roche's* interests as a distributor of drugs.

Roche Latvia's dominant directions are oncology (HER + breast cancer, colorectal tumors, lung cancer), rheumatology, and infectology. *Roche Latvia* prepares informative materials about its drugs for physicians, whereas public ed-

ucation booklets are prepared in cooperation with industry specialists. With the support of *Roche*, 2-3 such booklets are published yearly in two languages. They are free publications and are distributed to patients and their relatives in both patients' associations and medical institutions. The following educational materials and books can be found on *Roche's* list of good works: [*A practical guide: What you need to know about breast health*](#); [*General advice for oncology patients and their relatives*](#); [*What you need to know about bowel cancer and options in prevention*](#); [*Melanoma. Questions and Answers*](#); [*What is Lymphoma?*](#); [*Rheumatoid Arthritis. A patient's guide*](#); [*Nutrition ad-*](#)

vice for oncology patients during treatment; I Want to Be a Mom; I Want to Be a Dad, We want to be a family. With the support of *Roche Latvia*, a breast health newspaper is published every year titled *Check your breasts to live!* Extensive and useful information can also be found on the website www.onko.lv.

Roche has many years of experience in cooperating with non-governmental patient organisations, as they are the ones who most directly face the problems in treatment, rehabilitation and diagnostics that exist in Latvia's healthcare system. *Roche Latvia* supports socially responsible projects organised by patients' associations that promote pub-

lic awareness of diseases, disease prevention, problem solving, and improvements in healthcare.

As a socially responsible company, *Roche Latvia* has supported patient organisations for many years, including SUSTENTO – Latvia's cooperative organisation for people with special needs, and the charity foundation Ziedot.lv.

In 2017 *Roche* received a letter of thanks for this cooperation: 'Thank you very much for your responsiveness, trust, contribution and creative ideas, which provide an opportunity to help fellow people in difficulty!' Irīna Januma, the director of the foundation VITA, the creative group Divi Gani, and Edgars

Šneps, the secretary general of the Latvian Basketball Union, sent the following message: In 2019 we would like to sincerely thank the *Roche Latvia* team for years of support for the *Check your breasts to live!* campaign. Together we can do more!

Our extensive cooperation with patients' associations may not be quite as visible to the general public, but our work with the Hepatitis C Society lies in stark contrast to that. The *Roche* team took part in the *This is a story about life* campaign launched by the Hepatitis Society in August 2012 for the support of hepatitis C patients. As a direct result of the campaign, the Latvian government ac-



↑ 20,000 copies of Prof. Dace Rezeberga's book *I Want to Be a Mom* were printed with the support of *Roche Latvia*. It is a gift to all families in Latvia and anyone interested. With the help of the Latvian Association of Local Governments, it has been distributed free of charge in many regions of Latvia. 2013.
Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.



cepted changes in the conditions for the reimbursement of drugs.

Since 2004 The Hepatitis Society (now known as the Hepatitis C Patients Association) has been bringing together hepatitis patients, their relatives, medical staff and others interested in joint action to address the disease, improve the state-funded treatment system, and provide information on hepatitis C. In order to draw the attention of both the public and responsible decision-makers to the rapid spread of the hepatitis C virus in Latvia, on 14 August 2012 a special installation with dolls, titled *This is a story about life*, was set up in four Riga locations. The dolls and the real-life stories

attached to them told about how people become infected with hepatitis C, how they live with it, and what the consequences are. The Hepatitis Society launched the initiative to drum up support for an online petition at www.manabalss.lv requesting that the state reimburse 100% of hepatitis C patient treatment costs. The association started the petition because about half of those who had been infected with hepatitis C could not afford treatment. The collected signatures were submitted to Parliament with a request that the state pay for hepatitis C treatment in full. The first installation was placed near the Parliament building – it depicted the story of one fam-



ily: Miks, a 13-year-old boy, was infected with hepatitis C from a blood transfusion during surgery for a ruptured appendix. Similar installations were placed in the Domina and Origo shopping centres, and by the University of Latvia.

The Hepatitis Society has repeatedly emphasised that the number of people infected with hepatitis C is increasingly growing – 1 in 53 people in Latvia have hepatitis C. About half are forced to give up treatment because they cannot afford it – in 2012, which is when the campaign was held, the state reimbursed only 75% of treatment costs. Jānis Kalnājs confirms that back then, hepatitis C was widespread, poorly

↑ Participants at the *Check your breasts to live!* march, including Minister for Health Ingrida Circene (2011–2014) and Roche Latvia employees. 2012. Photo from Roche Latvia archive.

↙ The Roche Latvia team participating in the *This is a story about life* campaign initiated by the Hepatitis C Society for the support of hepatitis C patients. 14 August 2012. Photo from Roche Latvia archive.

diagnosed, and poorly treated in Latvia. Only patients who had already reached stage III or IV were treated with the most effective drugs. The situation has now improved and treatment with effective drugs is begun at the F1 stage, and a register of hepatitis C patients has been introduced – a very important step in assessing the effectiveness of treatment. Unfortunately, the incompleteness of the register prevents us from drawing evaluative conclusions about the effectiveness of therapy. *Roche's* initiative was joined and then taken over by other pharmaceutical companies, with the main beneficiaries being hepatitis C patients. After the conditions for receiving state-reimbursed treatment were changed in 2017, the number of patients who can receive fully paid treatment increased significantly. We are currently facing the next challenge in the treatment system – the rapid increase in patients has caused congestion in the healthcare system, forcing patients to wait in long lines to see a specialist. In

recognition of World Hepatitis Day, on 25 July 2019 health policy makers and patient association representatives came together in Riga to work on finding ways to optimise existing treatment regimens, as well as outline directions for the development of the industry in the coming years.

The Latvian Multiple Sclerosis Association was established in 1995 with the aim of coordinating and supporting patients with multiple sclerosis as well as their relatives, caregivers, and persons who want to help patients with MS and promote their integration into society. In 2018 *Roche Latvia* provided support to the association in the amount of €550, or 1.38% of the association's annual turnover.

The Latvian Cystic Fibrosis Society was established in 2012 to support families with children and adults with cystic fibrosis disease and disability, defend their rights and legitimate interests, and cooperate with Latvian and foreign public and professional organisations, state

institutions, medical organisations/authorities, and the media. In 2018 *Roche Latvia* provided support to the society in the amount of €800, or 1.78% of the society's annual turnover.

The Latvian Society of Bone, Joint and Connective Tissue Disease Patients was founded in 1998. The main goals of the association are to help people with rheumatic diseases and disabilities integrate into society, to improve the quality of life of such patients, to defend their rights, and to educate the public about the prevention of rheumatic diseases and the possibilities of increasing patient co-responsibility. In 2018 *Roche Latvia* provided support to the society in the amount of €1,000, which is 4.8% of the society's annual turnover.

The Latvian Association of Kidney Patients was established in 1994. The main goals of the association are to organise help and protection for kidney patients, to increase public awareness about various kidney diseases, and to promote measures for the prevention of

kidney diseases. In 2018 *Roche Latvia* provided support to the association in the amount of €300, which is 6.29% of the association's annual turnover.

The oncology patient support society *Dzīvības koks* (Tree of Life) was founded in 2004, bringing together people who have or have had cancer. *Dzīvības koks* implements informative measures and participates in decision-making processes that aid in Latvian patients receiving healthcare services that are on the same level as in the rest of Europe. In 2018 *Roche Latvia* provided support to the association in the amount of €400, which is 0.18% of the society's annual turnover.

Founded in 2014, the main goal of the charity foundation *Rozā vilciens* (Pink Train) is to help women in Latvia who have been diagnosed with breast cancer receive individual consultations with a psychologist or psychotherapist, as well as physiotherapy sessions. In addition to publishing informational materials for women with breast cancer, the foundation also aims to promote the exchange

10 GADI RŪPĒS PAR SIEVIETES VESELĪBU PĀRBAUDI KRŪTIS, LAI DZĪVOTU!

AVĪZE SIEVIETĒM PAR KRŪTS VESELĪBU — 2020



Ilze Viņķele
Latvijas Republikas veselības ministre

Vairāki šā gada mēneši aizvadīti salīdzinoši lielā neziņas zīmē – kā mainīt ierasto komunikāciju ar radiniekami, vai iespējams satikties ar draugiem, kā turpināt rūpēties par savu un savu līdzcilvēku veselību? Pēdējais no uzdotajiem jautājumiem jau ilgstoši nezaudē savu aktualitāti, neskatoties uz dažādām izmaiņām. Ar pāris vienkāršiem ikdienā veicamiem soļiem mēs varam palīdzēt gan sev, gan saviem tuviniekiem.

Desmit gadu garumā ar dažādu informatīvu kampaņu palīdzību esam spējuši mainīt mūsu ieradumus un pieeju, tostarp izprotot nepieciešamību regulāri un rūpīgi pārbaudīt savas krūtis. Sievietes Latvijā ir kļuvušas

atbildīgākas pret savu veselību, taču joprojām redzam vietu uzlabojumiem.

Vēl aizvien ir daudz sieviešu, kuras rūpējas par citiem, taču aizmirst parūpēties par sevi. Lai profilaktiskās pārbaudes kļūtu pašsaprotamas, ir vajadzīga visas sabiedrības, bet jo īpaši mūsu dzīvesbiedru iesaiste, tostarp emocionālā līmenī. Viņu sniegtais iedrošinājums var kļūt par ļoti nozīmīgu iemeslu pārvarēt bailes, uztraukumu, neziņu un jau laikus doties pie ārsta, lai veiktu izmeklējumus.

Mums visiem ir jāsaprot arī visnotaļ vienkārša aksioma – jo ātrāk tiek diagnosticēta saslimšana, jo ātrāk iespējams uzsākt ārstēšanu.

Latvijā šobrīd ir pieejamas inovatīvas tehnoloģijas, kas, izmantojot augstas izšķirtspējas attēlus, spēj agrīni un precīzi noteikt diagnozi. Radiologu un radiologu asistentu zināšanas ļauj iegūt kvalitatīvus mamogrāfijas attēlus un veikt to aprakstus. Drīzumā mamogrāfijas rezultāti tiks arī starptautiski standartizēti, izmantojot BI-RADS klasifikācijas sistēmu, taču tam visam nepieciešama vēl aktīvāka sieviešu iesaiste.

Tādēļ vēlos aicināt visas sievietes – ja jums ir atnācis uzaicinājums veikt valsts apmaksāto krūšu skrīningu vai ir radušās kaut mazākas šaubas vai aizdomas par savu veselības stāvokli, dodieties pie sava ārsta uz izmeklēšanu! Ikvienam no mums ir atbildīgi jāizturas pret savu veselību. Pārbaudi krūtis, lai dzīvotu!



Mums ir svarīgi, lai Latvijas sabiedrība būtu atvērta un solidāra, esot kopā gan priekos un uzvarās, gan brīžos, kad nepieciešama palīdzība. Latvijas Basketbola savienība aicina ikvienu sievieti un viņām līdzās esošos vīriešus regulāri doties uz profilaktiskajām pārbaudēm un rūpēties par savu veselību, lai mēs kopā veidotu vienotu, veselu un spēcīgu nāciju!

— RAIMONDS VĒJONIS



Šogad atzīmējam informatīvās kampaņas “Pārbaudi krūtis, lai dzīvotu!” desmitgadi. Kampaņa ir bijis nozīmīgs

rupors desmit gadu garumā, runājot par krūts veselību un ārstēšanu. Sadarbībā ar vadošajiem speciālistiem Latvijā esam regulāri informējuši sabiedrību par jaunākajiem sasniegumiem gan krūts vēža diagnostikā, gan ārstēšanā. Esam izveidojuši reģionālo vēstnešu kustību, kas apvieno vairāk nekā 70 cilvēkus no visas Latvijas, kuri brīvprātīgi palīdz nodot kampaņas vēstījumu ikvienai sievietei Latvijā.

— IRĪNA JANUMA



KAUT ARĪ LĒNĀM, UZLABOJUMI ONKOLOĢIJAS JOMĀ NOTIEK



Onkoloģija ir tā joma, kurā vajadzības pieaug ātrāk kā finansālās iespējas tās apmierināt. Kaut arī uzlabojumi nenorīt tik strauji, kā gribētos, tie tomēr

notiek. Arī šogad ledus ir sakustējies – Veselības ministrija ir apstiprinājusi, ka tiks veidots Veselības aprūpes pakalpojumu onkoloģijas jomā uzlabošanas plāns 2021. – 2023. gadam. Par to, kas ir sasniegts šajā gadā un kas varētu mainīties tuvākajā laikā, stāsta Latvijas Onkologu asociācijas vadītājs Jānis Eglītis.

TURPINĀJUMS | 2. lpp →

← In cooperation with leading specialists in Latvia, a newspaper for women about breast health is created every year. [Check your breasts to live!](#), which provides information to the public on the latest advances in both breast cancer diagnosis and treatment. Photo from Roche Latvia archive.

of experience between hospital staff and specialists working with breast cancer patients. The objectives of *Rozā vilciens* are in line with Roche's socially responsible policy, which is why it has also received support from Roche.

In 2018 the Latvian Women's Volunteer Association VITA, founded by legendary surgical oncologist Dr. Sarmīte Baltkāje, celebrated its 25th anniversary. Roche, together with VITA and the Latvian Basketball Union, have implemented the *Check your breasts to live!* campaign since 2011. Irīna Januma, director of the VITA Breast Cancer Support Society, says of the society's mission: 'VITA started its activities by providing hundreds of Lat-

vian women who had undergone mastectomies free breast prostheses from Sweden, as well as giving support to patients in hospital wards. Dr. Baltkāje, with her eternal joie de vivre and fighting spirit, set the tone of the society to one of victory and optimism - and it still prevails. VITA's call is to educate, support and encourage women who are struggling with breast cancer. Society needs to be educated. We, the association VITA, want to encourage the whole of Latvian society to be more proactive by being aware of one's health on a daily basis and regularly undergoing screenings. And if you have been diagnosed, you should not wait and hesitate to start treatment. You



must go to an oncologist who will select and apply the most gentle and effective treatment method for you.⁶ Jānis Kalnājs is proud and pleased that *Roche's* support has made the pink ribbon campaign a tradition. Latvia's Minister of Health, Ilze Viņķele, has also highly assessed the campaign: 'Nine years is long enough to be able to, by way of an informative campaign, change our habits and approach to various problems. The opportunities offered and the provision of a helping hand have achieved their goal – women in Latvia have become more responsible for their health.'⁷

Roche Latvia has repeatedly received confirmation that it is a family-

friendly company, which is why it is only natural that its employees have enthusiastically joined the association Dr. Klauns in its call for help in bringing joy to children who find themselves in hospital. Through the campaign *Smaids rada smaids* (Smiles Create Smiles), *Roche Latvia*, in cooperation with the Latvian Association of Dietitians, raised support for the 'clown doctors' working in hospitals. The association Dr. Klauns has been operating as a public charity since 2012, and 30 professionally trained representatives travel daily to Children's Clinical University Hospital and other hospitals in Latvia to help children make their daily life a bit more fun. The project is imple-

↖ Breast cancer patient support association VITA, Latvian Basketball Union and company's *Divi gani* gratitude to *Roche Latvia* for helping women take care of their health. 2019.
Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.

↖ With the support of *Roche Latvia*, the booklet *Nutritional Recommendations for Oncology Patients during Treatment* was published.
Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.

↑ The *Roche Latvia* team supports the Dr. Klauns campaign 'Smiles Create Smiles' dedicated to children's hospital patients. From left: Ilze Muižniece, Ieva Sedleniece, Anita Ločmele, Jānis Siliņš, Kristīne Voitkēviča, Ginta Nažinska, Jānis Kalnājs, Inesa Kozlovskā, Rauls Vēliņš, Ieva Ābele, Jana Migleniece, Eva Marksa, Gundega Auziņa, Agnese Dimante, Edīte Krūmiņa, Sandris Sabajevs, Zane Degro, Matīss Māsēns, Linda Irbe, Rets Renemanis. 14 October 2014.
Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.

mented by the Dr. Klauns association in cooperation with Children's Clinical University Hospital. It is supported by the Israeli Embassy in Latvia, the Food Union food company group, and the Pēteris Avens charitable foundation *Paaudze*.

- 6 Biedrība VITA – 25 gadi ar krūts vēža pacientiem. Available here: https://onko.lv/assets/files/pdf/Avize-parbaudi-krutis-2019_FIN.pdf
- 7 https://onko.lv/assets/files/pdf/Avize-parbaudi-krutis-2019_FIN.pdf

Roche Academy

The goals of *Roche Academy* have been, and still are, to support the development of science and to promote the growth and education of new professionals in various fields of medicine. The social initiatives of *Roche Academy* are no longer the activities of a single company, for they have gained wide public acclaim.

Zane Degro

Medical/Drug Safety Value Lead at *Roche Latvia*

Support for Young Scientists

Zane Degro

One of *Roche Latvia's* operating principles has always been to support the development of medicine in Latvia. This is manifested by participating in various social projects, conducting clinical trials in Latvia, and by supporting young, active physicians in their growth and progress. In 2006, discussions on how to support young physicians led to the idea of setting up an independent non-business and non-sales body – the *Roche Academy*. It was the brainchild of Dace Oliņa, the General Manager of the branch at the time, and Renāte Helda, Medical Manager; of course, support and acceptance also came from Tuygan Göker, *Roche's* global regional manager

at the time. *Roche Academy* was formally established on 7 September 2007. Its objectives were and are to support the development of science and to promote the growth and education of new professionals in various fields of medicine. *Roche Academy* is managed in cooperation with the Scientific Council of *Roche Academy* and the authorised representatives of SIA *Roche Latvia*. *Roche Academy* would not have been able to exist without the support of the academic staff of Rīga Stradiņš University (RSU). From its inception, *Roche Academy* has been staffed by Prof. Aivars Lejnieks, Prof. Sandra Lejniece and Prof. Jāzeps Keišs. During the thirteen years of the Acade-

my's existence, members of its Scientific Council who have carefully reviewed submitted applications include: Prof. Aivars Pētersons, Prof. Valda Staņēviča, Prof. Iveta Kudaba, Assoc. Prof. Haralds Plaudis, Prof. Harijs Čerņevskis, Prof. Guntars Pupelis, Prof. Jānis Eglītis, Prof. Daina Andersone and Assoc. Prof. Alinta Hegmane. *Roche Academy* helps new colleagues implement research projects by supporting them financially. Many former students of *Roche Academy* have become lecturers in university medical faculties. Currently the Academy's Scientific Council, headed by Aivars Lejnieks, consists of professors from eight medical fields, including internal

medicine, surgery, hematology, oncology, rheumatology, nephrology and infectology. 'Once again, I would like to thank all the members of the Scientific Council for the time and effort they have put into this project,' says Medical Manager and curator of *Roche Academy* Zane Degro, who has been with *Roche* since 1998. It is a selfless act of outstanding teaching that these professors have donated to young scientists. As an invaluable contribution, some students may only fully appreciate the experience after several years. A number of former *Roche Academy* students have themselves become professors and highly regarded and recognised physicians. Two of the very first



students of *Roche Academy* were Assoc. Prof. Ieva Tolmane, currently the Department Head at the Infectology Centre of Latvia, and Assoc. Prof. Haralds Plaudis, Head Specialist in Surgery at RSU.

For more than a decade, *Roche Academy* has provided financial support for student, resident and doctoral research, including epidemiological research (e.g. the prevalence of viral hepatitis C (HCV) in Latvia, HCV prevalence among healthcare professionals in ICUs, neonatal mortality in Latvia, etc.). A total of 49 projects have been reviewed since *Roche Academy* was established, 35 of which have been financially supported. An average of five scientific projects are

supported each year. *Roche Academy* projects cover a variety of medical fields, including gynecology, surgery, rheumatology, oncology, genetics, and nutrition. The resulting novel research works have been a practical contribution to both medicine and patient wellbeing. In 2016 a project on the evaluation of hepatic steatosis in patients with type 1 diabetes was completed, as was a project on identification of genetic factors influencing Wilson's disease. Projects have been initiated to evaluate clinical hyperandrogenemia in adolescent girls, and to determine the efficacy and clinical course of electrocardiography in patients with atrial fibrillation. Research results are present-



ed at clinical and scientific conferences, and published in scientific journals. On 6 October 2017 in the Great Hall of RSU, the Latvian Association of Internists, together with *Roche Academy*, organised the scientific conference 'First Steps in Medical Science Together With *Roche Academy*'. Once again, some of the many outstanding scientific works produced with the support of *Roche Academy* could be heard in public. Scientific projects implemented by *Roche Academy* and presented at the conference:

- I. Tolmane et al. The prevalence of viral hepatitis C in Latvia: a population-based study.
- E. Fridrihsone. Prevalence of Viral

↖ *Roche Academy* informational stand during Career Days. Pictured: Zane Degro, *Roche Academy* curator. 28 October 2014. Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.

↑ Inesa Kozlovska and Jānis Kalnājs at the *Roche Academy* stand during Career Days. 22 September 2017. Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.



Prof. Aivars Lejnieks, Head of *Roche Academy's* Scientific Council.
Photo from A. Lejnieks' personal archive.



Prof. Aivars Pētersons, Member of *Roche Academy's* Scientific Council.
Photo from A. Pētersons' personal archive.



Assoc. Prof. Alinta Hegmane, Member of *Roche Academy's* Scientific Council.
Photo from A. Hegmane's personal archive.



Prof. Daina Andersone, Member of *Roche Academy's* Scientific Council.
Photo from D. Andersone's personal archive.



Assoc. Prof. Haralds Plaudis, Member of *Roche Academy's* Scientific Council.
Photo from H. Plaudis' personal archive.



Prof. Iveta Kudaba, Member of *Roche Academy's* Scientific Council. Photo: Ieva Andersone, Publishing House 'Žurnāls Santa'.
Photo from I. Kudaba's personal archive.



Prof. Jānis Eglītis, Member of *Roche Academy's* Scientific Council.
Photo from J. Eglītis' personal archive.



Prof. Jāzeps Keišs, Member of *Roche Academy's* Scientific Council.
Photo from J. Keišs' personal archive.



Prof. Sandra Lejniece, Member of *Roche Academy's* Scientific Council.
 Photo from S. Lejniece's personal archive.



Prof. Valda Staņēviča, Member of *Roche Academy's* Scientific Council.
 Photo from V. Staņēviča's personal archive.



↑ RSU Student Union's Award 'Golden Horseshoe' 2016 for 'Supporter of the Year'.
 Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.

Hepatitis C among Healthcare Professionals in Intensive Care Units in 2015: a Cross-sectional Study from Latvia.

- V. Veisa. Iodine provision for pregnant women in Latvia, and its connection with thyroid function, course and outcome of pregnancy.
- V. Skuja. Gut colonization with extended spectrum beta-lactamase producing Enterobacteria (ESBL-E) in ulcerative colitis (UC) patients.
- J. Zepa. The relationship between clinical and radiological manifestations of ankylosing spondylitis and cytokine profiles.
- L. Meija. Metabolism of alkylresor-

cinols and lignans in prostate cancer patients and a control group.

- L. Gailīte. Characterization of the UGT1A1 gene mutation (TA) 7 in the general Latvian population and its association with viral hepatitis C, susceptibility to it, and the effectiveness of therapy.
- D. Auziņa. The role of bone biochemical markers in the development of bone lesions in myeloma patients.
- J. Sokolovska. Validation of a non-invasive hepatic steatosis assessment tool in type 1 diabetes.
- I. Rudaka. Determinants in effective electrical cardioversion in pa-

tients with atrial fibrillation.

- L. Pike. Manifestations and causes of clinical hyperandrogenism in adolescent girls in Latvia.

Roche Academy has repeatedly supported the winners of the *Zelta stetoskops* (Golden Stethoscope) olympiad. The top three finishers are given the opportunity to purchase medical literature. This olympiad for 4th-, 5th- and 6th-year students of internal medicine was founded by Rīga Stradiņš University (previously known as RMI) in 1970, and traditionally takes place every May. The olympiad's founder and long-term director was Jūlijs Anšelevičs, Professor of Internal Medicine. Anšelevičs was head of RSU's De-

partment of Therapy from 1967 to 2000, and was one of the students' favourite teachers. In his days as a med student, Rauls Vēliņš, the current General Manager of *Roche Latvia*, was personally awarded the Golden Stethoscope award by Professor Anšelevičs. Since 2007 the Golden Stethoscope olympiad has been renamed after its founder and long-term director, Professor Jūlijs Anšelevičs, and is organised by RSU together with the Support Fund of Riga East University Hospital. The aim of the olympiad is to find the most talented students studying at RSU Faculty of Medicine through a competition that illustrates their academic knowledge of internal diseases. Winners (one in each



study year) are awarded an honorary diploma, a cash prize for the purchase of books, and other valuable prizes.

Roche Academy is also open to other types of collaboration besides research projects. In 2014 and 2015 it participated in and supported the RSU student conference, as well as participated in the RSU student interest group meeting at which *Roche Academy* reps informed students about the Academy and the opportunities it offers. Several RSU doctoral students have received support from *Roche Academy*. In 2016 *Roche Latvia* received the RSU Student Union's annual award *Zelta Pakavs* (Golden Horse-shoe) for 'Supporter of the Year'.

Under the auspices of *Roche Academy*, significant social projects related to maternal and child health, as well as the improvement of the demographic situation in Latvia, have been implemented. One of the most ambitious *Roche Academy* projects is *Let's Save 100 Children*.

Also taking place at the same time was Dr. Vija Veisa's project 'Iodine provision for pregnant women in Latvia and its connection with thyroid function and the prenatal and postnatal periods', the aim of which was to review the situation regarding prescribing pregnant women iodine and to develop recommendations for adequate iodine intake for expectant mothers.



Roche Academy initiatives are no longer the activities of a single company – they have now gained wide public acclaim.

↑ *Roche Academy* Discussion Club. From left: cardiologist Prof. Andrejs Ērglis, oncologist-chemotherapist Signe Plāte, and physician, researcher and developer Uģis Klētnieks. 2017. Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.

↙ MP Dr. Romualds Ražuks visits *Roche Academy*. From left: Agneta Didrihsone, Sandris Sabajevs, Romualds Ražuks and Rauls Vēliņš. 27 April 2016. Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.

Roche Academy Discussion Club

Sandris Sabajevs

For several years the *Roche Academy* Discussion Club served as an educational and informative project for healthcare journalists. 'The idea of organising a media breakfast-like event had been floating around since 2012, when I started working as communications manager at *Roche Latvia*,' says Sandris Sabajevs, 'but a clear concept and the implementation of the project took place only several years later, thanks to the support of *Roche Latvia* General Manager Rauls Vēliņš and the encouragement, zeal and faith in the idea of the Discussion Club that came from my colleague Agneta Didrihsone, Director of Communications. For the years that it lasted, the Discus-

sion Club would not have been such an interesting, engaging and successful project in terms of topics without the support of my colleagues at *Roche Latvia*, especially the contributions of Medical Directors Jana Migliniece and Kaspars Losāns, Office Manager Agnese Dimante, and Finance Manager Ieva Ābele. The project was a challenge as the number of journalists writing about healthcare decreased in the changing media environment, but the event was nevertheless well received and attended by journalists. In its later years, the content of the Discussion Club directly reached a wider audience thanks to its live broadcasts.



↑ In December 2020, the American Chamber of Commerce in Latvia (AmCham Latvia) announced *Roche Latvia* as one of the winners of the annual prize. The annual participant award is awarded in recognition of the company's contribution to the work of the Chamber of Commerce, participation in events, working groups and general support throughout the year. AmCham members have contributed to a better business environment and have made a major contribution to making AmCham a stronger, more influential and more efficient organization.

Roche initiatives in Public Healthcare

One of the many facets of the work done by *Roche* is the social projects. They mean extra work for everyone at the company, but at the same time they are also a great source of satisfaction. As a result of such projects, serious health problems are coming to the attention of the public – *Roche Latvia* may be the initiator and/or supporter of an initiative, but the ideas go on to be taken over by both public and public sector organisations as well as public media.

Ieva Ābele
Finance Manager at *Roche Latvia*

Check Your Breasts to Live!

Inesa Kozlovskā

The *Sirdsdraugi* volunteer movement played an important role in *Roche Latvia's* active involvement in socially important projects. This movement brings together people who have been affected in some way by a diagnosis of breast cancer, either personally or via a loved one. Its participants are united by the belief that medical advances in the fight against cancer are half the battle, while the other half is humane support. In order to attract public attention to the problem of breast cancer, in 2010, with the support of *Roche*, an exhibition was organised in the Spice shopping centre; the exhibition was ceremoniously launched by former Latvian president Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga,

who would go on to become a patroness of *Sirdsdraugi*. In an effort to support breast cancer patients at the time of diagnosis, and to encourage them to ask for help from people close to them, in 2010 *Sirdsdraugi* launched the campaign *Vispirms es izraudājos* (At first, I cried). The campaign took place all over Latvia and had the participation of all physicians treating breast cancer patients at Riga East Clinical University Hospital, P. Stradiņš Clinical University Hospital, and the Daugavpils and Liepāja oncology centres. The campaign was made possible thanks to the financial support of the pharmaceutical company *Roche Latvia*.

At the close of 2010, *Roche Lat-*

via supported a charity event at Riga's Torņakalns Church featuring the Riga Cathedral Boys Choir. The 916 lati collected at the charity concert were donated to the oncology patient support organisation *Tree of Life* to support the establishment of a breast cancer rehabilitation centre.

In 2011 the next campaign dedicated to the early diagnosis of breast cancer was launched – *Check your breasts to live!* In June 2011, with the support of *Roche Latvia*, the Latvian National Women's Basketball Team and *Tree of Life* organised a breast cancer march. The goal of the march was to raise public awareness of the need for, and importance of, early diagnosis of breast cancer, and that

some health problems can be avoided by reacting in time. Breast cancer can be successfully treated today but mortality rates in Latvia are still high, which is largely due to late diagnosis. The march finished at Arena Riga, where then a concert and a test match between Latvia's and Slovakia's women's basketball teams took place. All proceeds of the game (LVL 1961.55) were donated to the Ziedot.lv project that covers the public transport costs incurred by low-income women in rural regions when travelling to free breast cancer screenings.

The campaign *Check your breasts to live!* has now become an annual tradition. Inesa Kozlovskā, who has been the



← Roche Latvia employees and their families have been active members of the breast cancer awareness campaign since 2011. From left, row 1: Kristīne Voitkēviča, Ralfs Kiršteins. Row 2: Artūrs Priede, Anita Ločmele, Reinis Ločmelis, Marta Valkovska, Edīte Krūmiņa, Luīza Stībe, Elizabete Krūmiņa. Row 3: Rauls Vēliņš, Evita Ločmele, Zane Degro. Photo from Roche Latvia archive.



↑ Inesa Kozlovskā, Roche Latvia representative and coordinator for the Social campaign "Check your breasts to live!"
Photo: Guna Rubule

↖ The image on the stamp was designed by artist Ģirts Grīva. 2013.
Photo from Roche Latvia archive.

curator of the project since 2012, points out that although it is organised by the Latvian Basketball Union and the VITA Breast Cancer Support Society, The Association of Latvia's Oncologists and all Roche employees also consider themselves owners of the campaign. Every year the slogan of the campaign slightly changes by adapting it to the yearly topic, but the colour pink and the basketball game remain as they were. Every year a special event related to the campaign takes place, and everyone is invited to join the friendship march *Ejam kopā, lai dzīvotu!* (Let's march together to live!).

In 2012 the campaign's slogan was *Es iešu* (I will go). Hundreds of people

gathered at the Freedom Monument on 27 May to march in solidarity and express their support for the breast health initiative. *Ievas Aerobika* and *Elvi Soulsystems* warmed the marchers up and set a festive mood. Inspiring speeches were given by the initiative's organisers – members of the Latvian Women's Basketball Team, as well as by: Ingrīda Circene, Minister of Health; Inga Bite, Member of Parliament; Inguna Sudraba, State Comptroller and the campaign's patroness; and Judith Garber, US Ambassador to Latvia. The charity basketball game that year was between the Latvian and Lithuanian women's basketball teams. During the campaign, 1503 lati were donated for

breast cancer patient rehabilitation retreats in Latvia.

To address women between the ages of 50 and 69, the slogan for the 2013 campaign was *Check your breasts to live!*. Every year almost 200,000 women in this age bracket receive a letter from the government inviting them to undergo a free mammogram, but only ~30% of women take up the offer. This is a critically low percentage given that women between the ages of 50 and 69 have an increased risk of developing breast cancer. The campaign invited every person – daughters, friends, sisters, sons and husbands – close to a woman in that age bracket to encourage and/or

offer to take her to have a mammogram done. 'Ask your mother if she received a letter, ask if she has had a mammogram. Tell her that she is important to you and that you care about her health!'

With October being the month globally recognised as Breast Cancer Awareness Month, in October 2013 *Latvijas Pasts*, a socially responsible company, issued a special stamp with the aim of bringing awareness to women's health. On 30 October 2013, at the 'Sakta' branch Post Office in Riga, *Latvijas Pasts* held an event marking the first-day issue for the new 'Breast Cancer Diagnosis' stamp. Taking part in the event were: Ingrida Circene, Minister of Health; Dins Merirands, Deputy State Secretary at the Ministry of Transport; Arnis Gulbis, Member of the Board of *Latvijas Pasts*; and Jānis Siliņš, who represented *Roche Latvia*. The pink ribbon depicted on the stamp – which emerged as a symbol in the early 1990s in the United States – represents understanding, support and solidarity with people affected by

breast cancer. The image on the stamp was designed by artist Ģirts Grīva, and 1,500,000 stamps were printed. The special postage stamp was created with the support of *Roche Latvia*.

The 2014 informative campaign *Check your breasts to live!* began with the exhibition 'Woman. Breasts. Health'. That year the campaign was strengthened by regional ambassadors in various Latvian cities and counties – active and conscientious people from Madona, Ikšķile, Ogre, Jēkabpils, Strenči, Jelgava, Skrunda, Garkalne, Jūrmala, Nīca, Saldus, Gulbene, Rundāle, Vecāķi, Ķekava, Ozolnieki, Tukums, Iecava, and Daugavpils. They not only distributed campaign materials but also personally spoke to, called and encouraged women to undergo breast cancer screening. Back then, 21 people from different cities and counties of Latvia responded to the invitation to become a volunteer regional ambassador of the campaign; currently there are almost 100 regional ambassadors. The regional ambassador

movement brings together people who have experienced breast cancer themselves or are close to someone who has, as well as health professionals, local government representatives and many other people from all over Latvia. The call to become an ambassador was answered by: Aija Zīle, Aiga Sietiņa, Aija Garkalne, Aivija Stugle-Govore, Anete Urka, Anete Saulīte, Anita Dimanta, Anita Veronika Grigorjeva, Ausma Dzintare, Baiba Drone, Baiba Kondriča, Baiba Pranks, Baiba Rasa, Baiba Tonne, Biruta Daugule, Daina Ābele, Diāna Āriņa, Diāna Lao Lodiņa, Egija Jevdokimova, Egija Kārklīņa, Elīna Arāja, Elīna Lūsiņa, Elīna Rubule, Elīna Tolmača, Elga Grota, Elvira Pizāne, Emīlija Kozuba, Eva Zālīte, Gaida Malaņina, Ginta Kažoka, Gita Gintere Kikuste, Guna Poikāne, Gunita Bogdanova, Gunta Zinberga, Helga Kudule, Ieva Cīrule, Ilze Biseniece, Ilze Brakmane, Ilze Čiščakova, Ilze Konstante, Ilze Prūse, Ilze Vītola, Inata Štāle, Inese Ivāne, Inese Kalniške, Inese Lapiņa, Inese Nipere, Inita Ozoliņa, Inga Biteniece,

Inguna Skoliņa, Ingūna Bedikere, Ingūna Kažmere, Ingūna Svarāne, Irīna Januma, Iveta Deiko, Iveta Stare, Jana Morozova, Jautrīte Siliņa, Jautrīte Asupe, Jolanta Lasmane, Kaspars Udrass, Karolina Lankovska, Kristere Kristena Balode, Kristīne Brūvele, Laura Krastiņa, Leontīne Selezņova, Liene Cipule, Liene Veide, Liene Rence, Linda Bēta, Linda Sevastjanova, Linda Šēniņa, Linda Račika-Rezgale, Lita Keiša, Lūcija Grundāne, Regīna Kalniņa, Rudīte Kaņepāja, Ruta Hūna, Sabīne Fon Zviedre, Santa Ūdre, Sigita Āboltiņa, Signe Grūbe, Signe Subatniece, Silvija Putnika, Sintija Andrejeva, Sintija Giptere, Solvita Rubene, Una Liberte, Valentīna Svilāne Dūda, Vija Tirzmale, Vija Vārtukapteine, Vita Kusiņa, Zane Brente Brantiņa, Zane Siliņa, Zinta Uskale, and Žanete Tiltiņa. The ambassador movement is now a tradition, and *Roche* supports the opportunity for these selfless people to supplement their knowledge by providing educational materials as well as lecturers from the professional community.

During the campaign that lasted through April and May, an informational telephone hotline was set up to provide answers about breast cancer screening. 'We can all be healthy. Think about it – perhaps a woman in your team is silent and hiding that she has received this diagnosis. Don't hide it. When you disclose your diagnosis, the body's healing abilities are released, the bloodstream begins to function better, each of our cells are oxygenated, and with that we begin to heal ourselves. Cancer loves stagnation – it gives it warmth and comfort. That's why I urge women to smile more often and to not hide their pain if they have any! Smile!' said Irina Januma, head of the VITA Breast Cancer Support Society, in her address to the media. Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga also gave an emotional video address urging women not to be afraid of undergoing a breast exam, to do it regularly, and, in case of bad news, to use all treatment options available. A participant and supporter of the movement for many years now is Prof. Jānis

Eglītis, Head of the Breast Surgery Department at the Latvian Oncology Centre. 'I really like this year's new idea of regional ambassadors who will be able to greatly increase the numbers of women participating in the national mammogram programme in the future. We doctors are not very happy about the recent trend of negative articles on mammograms appearing in the media. This test appeared as a screening method in New York in the early 1960s and was initiated by insurance companies to reduce the cost of breast cancer treatment. What were the results? The method reduced mortality by 30%. Their example was followed by the whole of Scandinavia, where more than 90% of women go in for a mammogram. In Latvia, women have been receiving letters inviting them to go in for a mammogram since 2009. Unfortunately, the response rate is low. One third comes in, two thirds do not. My heart hurts for women who come to us later than they could have. But we are very happy that every week there is a new patient whose

tumor is only 3-4 millimeters in size. This is a success story that we would like to see practically every day, because a 3-4 mm tumor is absolutely curable.'¹ Liene Cipule, a regional ambassador from the Ikšķile region, says about the campaign: 'I am really proud to have become one of the regional ambassadors. I hope that every year there will be more and more ambassadors. There is a great need for women addressing other women. It is important not only to put up a poster and leave pamphlets, but also to ask them – have you been checked? I invite you to address GPs and each other in April and May, and, of course, take care of yourself.'²

In 2015 the *Check your breasts to live!* campaign's aim was once again the addressing of women between the ages of 50 and 69. During the campaign, a newspaper titled *Lai dzīvotu!* (So that you live!) was published; it contained explanatory articles on what to do and when to do it for earlier diagnosis and more successful treatment of breast cancer.

¹ <https://www.la.lv/regionalie-vestnesi>

² Ibid.



Issuing the newspaper is a tradition that began in 2013, and its editions can also be read on the website www.onko.lv.

The slogan for the 2016 campaign was 'Perform a breast self-examination once a month!'. Our mission is to address women of all ages, especially young girls, by encouraging them to regularly do a breast self-exam because this is a method by which we ourselves can detect breast changes in a timely manner and see a doctor if necessary. During the campaign a special breast self-examination point was opened in the fashion and entertainment centre Rīga Plaza at which women could learn how to do a proper breast self-exam under the guidance of a

specialist. The public's reception and interest was unexpectedly high, but unfortunately there were also cases in which women were told to urgently go see their physician for additional followup, says project curator Inesa Kozlovskā.

In 2017 breast cancer was still the most common oncological disease in women and, unfortunately, the most common cause of death in women of childbearing age. Early detection of the disease means a greater chance of being completely cured, but a successful outcome is based on two essential conditions: regular breast examinations (mammograms, ultrasound, and self-exams) and the availability of effective,



appropriate treatment in case of illness. Unfortunately, in Latvia the new generation of effective medicines was not included on the list of state-reimbursed medicines, so during the campaign special attention was paid not only to the need for regular breast exams but also to securing the most effective treatment for each patient. Inesa Kozlovskā emphasises that the 'Green Corridor' initiative for early cancer diagnosis must not end at the moment of diagnosis, but must also include a full course of treatment and the possibility to receive free assistance if needed.

The longstanding *Check your breasts to live!* campaign has been jus-

↑ Players of the Latvian National Women's Basketball Team (in specially made pink jerseys) with fans. 2017.
Photo from Roche Latvia archive.

↖ Irina Januma (director of VITA Breast Cancer Support Society), Iveta Vējone (wife of the president of Latvia), and Alinta Hegmane (chemotherapist at RAKUS) at the *Check your breasts to live!* Campaign event. 2018.
Photo from Roche Latvia archive.



tified – women in Latvia have become more responsible for their health, and the number of women who perform regular breast self-exams and preventive exams is growing yearly. The number of regional ambassadors has also tripled. The aim of the 2018 campaign was to talk about the importance of early diagnosis and treatment of breast cancer, as well as to draw attention to the role of men in breast cancer awareness. That year the pink ribbon symbol was created from pink men's neckties, emphasising that the encouragement and support that a man can give a woman can contribute to both early diagnosis of breast cancer and early initiation of treatment, which is

especially important to make the treatment as effective as possible. Each ambassador received a brooch made from a tie donated by a member of parliament. On 10 June everyone was invited to take part in an event at the Freedom Monument, which was followed by the solidarity march *Let's go together – to live!*. The march finished at the Daugava Sports Centre where then a charity basketball game between the Latvian and Finnish women's teams took place.

The 2019 campaign highlighted the role of genes in oncology and the importance of personalised, patient-specific cancer therapies. On 7 June the *Check your breasts to live!* campaign came to



a close at Arena Riga, where the Latvian women's basketball team played the Pink Ribbon game with the Turkish national team. The game was the last played by the Latvian team's long-term captain Gunta Baško (her 195th with the national team), who then retired from her career as a professional athlete. A record number of supporters – 2,231 fans – came to see Baško's Pink Ribbon farewell game. All proceeds from the game were donated to the VITA Breast Cancer Support Society.

The *Check your breasts to live!* campaign has provided many direct and indirect benefits to cancer patients. Women and the people close to them

↑ Map indicating the regional ambassadors for the *Check Your Breasts to Live!* campaign. In 2020 there were almost 100 such ambassadors. Photo from Roche Latvia archive.

↖ Social Campaign "Check your breasts to live!" march from the Freedom Monument to Arena Riga participants. From left: breast cancer patient support association VITA manager Irīna Januma, Deputy Communications Advisor to the Minister of Health Inese Dābola, Minister of Health Anda Čakša. July 3, 2017. Photo: Juris Beikmanis

are no longer afraid to talk about cancer, public perception has changed, and empathy and sympathy have replaced denial. There has also been a change in the attitude of public policy makers and implementers. In 2014 the signatures collected during the campaign for additional funding for the provision of modern breast cancer treatment yielded results – Parliament provided funds in the following year's (2015) budget. On 30 May 2017, the Cabinet of Ministers approved the 'Plan for improving healthcare services in oncology for years 2017 – 2020' as developed by the Ministry of Health. The plan was designed to improve primary diagnosis and treatment of the most common malignancies, improve the coverage and quality of screenings, and expand the availability of palliative care. The plan provides additional funding for the diagnosis of oncological diseases and reimbursable medicines. Personalised medicine, including in oncology, is a common trend in healthcare and in the future it will be mainstream, believes

former MP Romualds Ražuks, long-term head of the Saeima's Oncology Patient Support Group, former chairman of the Saeima's Public Health Subcommittee, and a lecturer at the University of Latvia since 2018. However, without denying that there are many positive plans and goals, Dr. Med. Armands Sīviņš, head of the RAKUS Surgical Oncology Clinic, has a critical opinion: 'Compared to the way oncology patients are treated elsewhere in Europe and the world, in Latvia the situation is very complicated. Healthcare is still not in good order and it is not being adequately funded. The 'Green Corridor' was a slogan for a short time, but the 'corridor' itself is getting longer. Access to examinations and chemotherapy is critically deteriorating, and only patients with suspected malignancies are routed through the 'Green Corridor'. Patients with pre-existing cancers and who require re-examination during their treatment, relapse, and follow-up stages do not meet the 'Green Corridor' criteria. It is not possible for them to have all nec-

essary examinations, get to a specialist, and receive the necessary treatment – neither within ten days nor after two months, for that matter.'³

Roche continues its support for projects aimed at the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of breast cancer in women.

3 Ārstēšanu nepieciešams centralizēt. Available here: https://onko.lv/assets/files/pdf/Avize-parbaudi-krutis-2019_FIN.pdf

Ride 4 Women

Elīna Dzērve

Since 2014 the European Association of Gynecological Oncology, in cooperation with the European Network of Young Gynae Oncologists, has been organising an annual anti-cancer campaign in Europe – the bicycle tour *Ride 4 Women*. Its aim is to increase public awareness and education about prevention, early diagnosis, and treatment options regarding gynecological tumors, especially cervical cancer; the initiative also promotes a healthy and active lifestyle. The bicycle tour is an extensive, informative cancer-awareness campaign that takes place in the countries through which the bicyclists ride. Predicated on the poor oncological disease statistics of

the Baltic States (and especially in terms of cervical cancer), in 2018 a special cycling tour was organised that crossed the Baltic States. Starting in Tallinn and finishing in Vienna, the tour took place 2–15 July and had a total length of 1758 km; the Riga–Siauliai segment of the route was 130 km long.

Acutely aware of the poor statistics for cervical cancer, the Latvian Association of Gynecologists and Obstetricians, in cooperation with the Ministry of Health and the Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (CDPC), participated in organising the Latvian stage of the bicycle tour. The Latvian stage of the tour began on 4 July, and started from the



Riga East Clinical University Hospital. The Traffic Police took care of safety issues. As a socially responsible company, *Roche Latvia* decided to participate in the international project. A press conference outlining what people should know about cervical cancer was held before the start of the tour; speakers included: Imants Paeglītis, Chairman of the Board of Riga East Clinical University Hospital; Prof. Dace Rezeberga, one of the initiators of the *Ride 4 Women* campaign; Rene Laky, oncology gynecologist at the University of Graz; Gunta Baško, cancer-awareness campaign supporter and ambassador; and Ronalds Mačuks, gynecologist at Onkoklīnika.

↑ The *Roche Latvia* team participating in the *Ride 4 Women* bike tour. Start of the Latvian stage at the Riga East Clinical University Hospital (RAKUS). 2017. Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.



Well-known women in Latvia – Prof. Dace Rezeberga, Dace Matule, Ieva Bondare, Katrīna Puriņa-Liberte, and Gunta Baško – encouraged women to perform early preventative exams. 2018. Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.

Short, touching videos featuring well-known women in Latvia – Prof. Dace Rezeberga, Dace Matule, Ieva Bondare, Katrīna Puriņa-Liberte, and Gunta Baško – encouraged women to perform early preventative exams. Elīna Dzērve curated this important project: 'I undertook to organise the participation of *Roche Latvia* employees, relatives, friends and

acquaintances in the cycling tour. It was a great responsibility because, first of all, safety precautions had to be taken: helmets, appropriate clothing, and ensuring safety on the road. I discussed all this with the participants and also provided the necessary equipment. The Traffic Police also took care of our safety while on the road. It was very nice that our col-

leagues were so forthcoming and took part in the cycling tour with their families, relatives and friends – we were a large group! Once it was over, the sense of accomplishment was great – together we had done a good thing: supported the campaign and brought public attention to a serious health problem, encouraged everyone to take care of their own

and others' health, and gave ourselves a decent dose of physical exercise. What a wonderful event with which to strengthen team spirit! We also received a letter of thanks from the Latvian Association of Gynecologists and Obstetricians for our support and participation in organising the Riga stage of the *Ride 4 Women* campaign.'

Let's Save 100 Children

Zane Degro

- 4 Ražuka-Ebela D., Kreicberga I., Rezeberga D., Stūrmane A., Franckeviča I., Matule D., Ebela I., Lejnieks A., Ivanovs A., Trapencieris M., Vēliņš R. Perinatālā mirstība Latvijā 2010. gadā – *Roche* akadēmijas pilotprojekts. Latvijas Universitātes Raksti. Rīga, 2015, 806. sēj. 85.–104. lpp.

In reviewing the list of good works done by *Roche Latvia*, it is clear that *Roche* employees are extremely proud of the *Let's Save 100 Children* social project, and for good reason. *Let's Save 100 Children* is an outstanding initiative that has raised and publicly highlighted a number of important issues related to newborn health. *Roche* started the initiative, but over time the idea and subject were taken over by other organisations and the media. Now, almost ten years after the project's very first activities, it is no longer a project exclusive to *Roche Latvia*. Although the long-term consequences of the project have not been tracked, and there is no comparative data

on how women's perceptions of the importance of prenatal and postnatal care have changed, a number of good things have been done.

Led by Prof. Dace Rezeberga, in 2010 the most prominent obstetricians in Latvia came together for the *Let's Save 100 Children* project to reduce the high perinatal mortality rate in Latvia. The project was also supported by the Swiss Embassy. The first activity of the project was a large-scale study of the causes of perinatal mortality in Latvia, carried out under the guidance of Prof. Dace Rezeberga, Lead Specialist in Obstetrics and Gynecology for Latvia's Ministry of Health. The project was launched in 2011 and

the results of the study were published in 2012. The large-scale study found that pregnant women living in rural regions undergo ultrasounds irregularly and less frequently, leading to fetal pathologies and developmental disorders not being detected in time – one of the main causes of high perinatal mortality rates. Taking into account the recommendations of the involved specialists on how to improve the state of things, Prof. Rezeberga submitted to the Ministry of Health several proposals for the reduction of perinatal mortality in Latvia, most of which have been implemented. According to Central Statistical Bureau data, the perinatal mortality rate in Latvia decreased from

0.6% in 2011 to 0.3% in 2018. The article 'Perinatal Mortality in Latvia in 2010 – *Roche Academy* pilot project', authored by D. Ražuka-Ebela, I. Kreicbergs, D. Rezeberga, A. Stūrmane, I. Franckeviča, D. Matule, I. Ebela, A. Lejnieks, A. Ivanovs, M. Trapencieris, and R. Vēliņš, was published in Volume 806 of *Scientific Papers. University of Latvia*.⁴

Under the auspices of SIA *Roche Latvia* and the Support Fund of Riga East University Hospital, 20,000 copies of the guide for expectant mothers titled *I Want to Be a Mom* were published in 2013. The author of the handbook is Dace Rezeberga, and the illustrations were done by Jānis Bremmers. The guide is aimed spe-

5 F. Hoffmann-La Roche Ltd. Roche Annual Report 2012, 105. lpp. Available here: <https://www.roche.com/dam/jcr:45312786-0a0c-4152-a67e-c18f252629d8/en/gb12e.pdf>

cifically at young women living in rural areas. At present, the entire first printing of the handbook has been distributed to expectant mothers, leading the Centre for Disease Prevention and Control to order a second printing of it. The electronic version of the handbook is available at www.roche.lv and can be freely distributed. Roche is the publisher of this material, but does not control or monitor its dispersal; it is freely available to all interested parties.

In 2013 Roche Latvia received international recognition for the project *Let's Save 100 Children* in the form of the Roche Group award for 'Excellence in Communications'. The award was in

the category for 'Best Corporate Sustainability & Responsibility Programme'. All applications were evaluated by Roche Group's communications management and two external experts – BBC journalist Sally Eden and the experienced and internationally recognised public relations expert Björn Eglund. Special thanks to Roche Communications Manager Sandris Sabajevs.⁵

With the support of Roche Latvia, in 2014 an educational programme and round table discussion for children's pathologists on necessary improvements in the field took place. Several Latvian specialists were able to supplement their knowledge on the subject by go-

ing abroad. 'We are looking for cooperation with professionals,' emphasises Rauls Vēliņš in describing the project. 'If we want to reduce mortality, education must play a big role – both in society and among physicians. In cooperation with Dace Rezeberga, we want to introduce an exam for ultrasound specialists on the most common causes of death. There are good physicians out there, but some could become even better physicians. As a company, we have invested in the education of pathologists because there is less support from other organisations being directed into this field.'

In cooperation with the Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (CDPC),

in 2015 special pregnancy calendars were distributed to expectant mothers living in rural areas; the calendars were developed so that women could plan their necessary doctor visits during the prenatal period accurately and according to the recommended schedule. The calendar has two sides – one side is a guide for the expectant mother, the other is for the child and its development. Latvian ethnographic symbols that correspond to a certain period of pregnancy were used in creating the calendar's design. Latvian folklorist Valdis Celms helped the creators of the calendar better understand the symbols and their meanings. 20,000 calendars were printed with the



← Launching of the pregnancy calendar created as part of the *Let's Save 100 Children* project, at the Ministry of Health. From left: Agneta Didrihsone (Director of Communications at *Roche Latvia*), Dace Matule (President of the Latvian Association of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists), Minister for Health Guntis Belēvičs, Astrīda Tirāne (author of the *Let's Save 100 Children* pregnancy calendar, gynaecologist, endocrinologist), Irīsa Zīle (statistical specialist at CDPC). 2015. Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.

support of *Roche Latvia*. Beginning with March 2015, the CDPC helped to ensure that the calendars were available free of charge and accessible at municipal service centres and regional branches of the National Health Service and the CDPC. On 9 March 2015 the Ministry of Health hosted the launching of the calendar; attending the event were: Guntis Belēvičs, Minister of Health; Dace Matule, President of the Latvian Association of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists; Dr. Astrīda Tirāne, gynaecologist, endocrinologist, and author of the pregnancy calendar; Irīsa Zīle, statistical specialist at CDPC; and Agneta Didrihsone, Director of Communications for *Roche Latvia*.

At the launch of the calendar, Minister of Health Guntis Belēvičs said that the pregnancy calendar published by *Roche Academy* will be an important foothold for women at a time when they need to take care of not only their own health, but also that of their unborn child. 'Latvian legislation provides pregnant women several free medical services, including ultrasound exams. It is gratifying that *Roche* has developed a calendar that will serve as a reminder to its users that it is time to visit a doctor or specialist so that their medical care during pregnancy and the development of the baby is accurate and according to schedule,' the Minister emphasised.

Dace Matule, President of the Latvian Association of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, emphasised the positive trends in perinatal and neonatal health indicators, noting that over the past five years, the number of births has increased by an average of 600 per year. The proportion of antenatally neglected mothers is also decreasing every year, i.e. an increasing number of women are starting pregnancy care by the 12th week. Dr. Matule acknowledged that indicators still vary regionally, and therefore it is necessary to establish closer cooperation with obstetricians in rural areas.

Regional differences in indicators were also emphasised by CDPC statisti-

cian Irīsa Zīle, who pointed out that pregnant women in Riga and its suburbs start antenatal care much sooner compared to their counterparts in rural regions. The proportion of pregnant women who are still teenagers or in their early 20s is also higher in rural areas than in Riga and its suburbs. Rural areas also have a higher proportion of pregnant women with a delayed first antenatal visit, incomplete antenatal care, and harmful habits (smoking and alcohol and psychoactive substance use). Accordingly, neonatal health outcomes are worse in rural areas than in cities. Zīle pointed out that the public's knowledge regarding health-related issues should be improved in order to pro-

mote individual co-responsibility. Professionals should pay more attention to the education of women of childbearing age.

Dr. Astrīda Tirāne, author of the pregnancy calendar, shared that she was happy to participate in a project that resulted in a pregnancy calendar that corresponds to the Latvian mentality. 'With this calendar, you can plan and follow along with your pregnancy, maternity leave, and expected due date. This is especially important for today's busy women,' explained Dr. Tirāne.

She also emphasised how important the 1st trimester screening, which should be performed at 11 to 13 weeks of pregnancy, is for a successful pregnancy outcome. 'This is the decisive screening that gives us information about what the pregnancy and childbirth will be like,' explained Dr. Tirāne. Given the importance of screening, Dr. Tirāne revealed her initiative of providing a first trimester Doppler ultrasound screening, free of charge, to two expectant mothers from rural areas per week.

A digital version of the pregnancy calendar is available for prospective parents at the government website www.grutnieciba.lv.

Appreciating the many positive reviews received about the book *I Want to Be a Mom*, the creative team at Roche Latvia concluded that the same care and attention should also be given to

fathers, and so they began working on a new project. On 8 September 2017, the Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments hosted the launch of the book *I Want to Be a Dad*. The newly published book was intended to educate the inhabitants of Latvia's rural regions on the importance of both parents' health when planning for the birth of a child. The number of children born per year in Latvia is declining. 19.3 thousand children were born in 2018, which is 1.5 thousand fewer than in 2017. 'Replacement level fertility' is the total fertility rate – the average number of children born per woman – at which a population exactly replaces itself from one generation to the next. This rate is roughly 2.1 children per woman; in Latvia, this rate was 1.61 in 2018 (and 1.70 in 2017), which is far from the desired number of children needed for generational replacement, i.e 2.1–2.2. The book *I Want to Be a Dad* is a continuation of the *Let's Save 100 Children* initiative and a call for fathers to take responsibility for their own health, because both conception and the development of a healthy baby depend on it. The book contains useful information that will help future fathers become more actively involved throughout pregnancy, childbirth, and care of the newborn; it also includes interviews with well-known fathers in Latvia, allowing the reader to learn what it means for a man



↑ Pregnancy calendar for women to help to plan the necessary visits to the doctor during the waiting period and do necessary examinations in time. The calendar has two sides. One of them concerns the expectant mother, the other - the child (development). Latvian ethnographic signs that correspond to a certain period of pregnancy are used in the design. Latvian folk wisdom researcher Valdis Celms helped calendar creators to better understand the signs and helped to create the calendar. Photo from Roche Latvia archive.

to become a father through personal stories. In the book, Raimonds Bergmanis, Kaspars Simanovičs, Jānis Holšteins-Upmanis, Jānis Sprukts, Kaspars Zlidnis, Haralds Plaudis, Jānis Zaržeckis, and Gatis Kokins share their experiences of being a father. The book was created in cooperation with the Latvian parents' organisation *Mammamunteti.lv*, and several specialists have given their advice in the book: gynaecologist Daiga Baranovska; andrologists Juris Ērenpreiss and Jurijs Filins; psychologist and family psychotherapist Vita Kalniņa; breastfeeding consultant Sandra Lase Keple; doula Ilze Kuduliņa; and physiotherapist Jekaterina Bovtramoviča. In cooperation with the Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments, the book is distributed free of charge throughout Latvia, with a concentration on men in Latvia's rural regions. An electronic version of the book is also available.

In a joint celebration with Father's Day, the book *I Want to Be a Dad* was launched on 8 September 2017. Well-

known fathers, such as musician Jānis Holšteins-Upmanis and businessman Gatis Kokins, also took part. Thanks to event moderator Ansis Bogustovs, the father of four children, the book launch ended with an interesting discussion in which guests shared their thoughts on today's role of fathers, as well as stories from their personal experience. A dad is more than just the biological father – this was the accepted conclusion of the lovely discussion that took place at the headquarters of the Latvian Association of Local Governments. One of the common denominators that the participants agreed upon was that the most important qualities that make somebody a good father are the ability to take responsibility and being emotionally involved in your child's life. Children do not need 'superdads' who never make mistakes and who can deal with everything that comes at them. Instead, they want a loving dad who tries to be present in his child's life and takes care of his family the best he can.

According to musician and father

Jānis Holšteins-Upmanis, a child is a logical continuation of the relationship and the next stage of development for a couple, and brings the partners even closer. 'There comes a time when you realise that being happy in old age will not be because of the positions you attained or the money you made, but because you have shared your life with the people in your family. Of course, there are times when this is difficult, especially when children are close together in age and struggle for parental attention. But there is also something extremely nice about it. In a way, children are like a testing ground, allowing parents to experiment and see how this or that action will change their behaviour. It's a very interesting experience.' Jānis revealed that he also sometimes gets tired of his children and thinks about having to endure it for only 18 more years. However, despite all the difficulties, he does not regret for a moment that he is a dad.

Vija Veisa, gynaecologist and obstetrician as well as the book's medical



**LATVIJAS
ĀRSTU
KONGRESS
2013**

Latvijas Ārstu biedrība
ielūdz Jūs uz apaļā galda diskusiju
„Demogrāfija – Latvijas problēma nr.1”,
kas ar “Roche Latvija” SIA atbalstu
notiks Latvijas Ārstu 7. kongresa laikā
viesnīcas Islande konferenču zālē,
20.septembrī no 09:00 līdz 11:00.



8.30.-9.00. Viesu reģistrācija
9.00.-9.05. Valda Dombrovska, LR Ministru prezidenta, Demogrāfisko lietu
padomes priekšsēdētāja uzruna.
9.05.-9.15. Veselības ministrijas aktualitātes dzimstības palielināšanā un
mirstības samazināšanā Latvijā. LR Veselības ministre I.Circene
9.15.-9.25. Ievadlekcija par demogrāfiju un mirstību, tās galvenajiem cēloņiem.
I.Mešs, demogrāfs
9.25.-9.35. Tāriņi veselībai un demogrāfiskie procesi. Prof. G.Briģis
9.35.-9.45. Vai zivju eļļa izglābs Latviju? Sirds un asinsvadu slimības.
Asoc.prof. A.Ērglis
9.45.-9.55. Vēzis – no nāves sprieduma uz hronisku slimību. Doc. J.Ēģitis
9.55.-10.05. Infekciju slimību izraisīto mirstības gadījumu samazināšana.
Prof. L.Vilsons
10.05.-10.15. Svarīgākie soļi perinatālās mirstības samazināšanai Latvijā.
Dr.med. D.Rezeberga
10.15.-10.25. Bērnu mirstības samazināšana līdz 1. gada vecumam.
Asoc.prof. Dz.Mozģis
10.25.-10.35. No izglītības skolas solā līdz mātes mirstības samazināšanai.
Dr.med.D.Matule
10.35.-11.00. Neformālas diskusijas kafijas pauzē



↑ 2013 Latvian Physicians Congress.
Izglābsim 100 bērnus (Let's save 100
children) project. Poster.
Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.

editor, admitted that a man does not become a father in one day. It is a process that begins when people decide to become parents and continues for a long time after the baby is born. Becoming a dad requires some preparation, and it can take up to nine months or even more. In her practice, doula Ilze Kuduliņa has noticed that a father who is educated and prepared, in terms of both childbirth and the postpartum period, feels much more confident and can be more of a help to his partner than a father who is not. In addition, they usually do not faint. Kuduliņa expressed her pleasure at having a book that will help prepare both mothers and fathers for the birthing process. According to Kuduliņa, the father's presence at childbirth allows the couple to experience a magical moment that will be shared and remembered for the rest of their lives.

Gatis Kokins, entrepreneur and father of five, expressed his belief that being a father means not only physically creating a child but also participating in the child's life. Latvia does not need men who can be called biological fathers by their children, but fathers who participate in raising children. 'Unfortunately, in our country there are a lot of divorced families in which only one parent raises the children. A single parent can raise one child, if they're especially heroic – two, but if we want three, four

or five children, we need a family that is whole.'

One of the authors of the book *I Want to Be a Dad* is Rauls Vēliņš, General Manager of *Roche Latvia*. He considers the large proportion of divorced families in Latvia one of the country's most significant problems. It is difficult for young men who have grown up without a father to identify with the role of a father because they do not know what it means to take care of children. That is why it is very important to educate future fathers and set good examples for them.

Inga Akmentiņa-Smildziņa, head of the Latvian parents' organisation *Mamamunteti.lv*, admitted that they often receive letters from men whose former partners try to exclude them from their children's lives after the divorce. 'Even if we are a broken family, the father is still very important,' says Akmentiņa-Smildziņa. 'A child needs both parents, so the father must be involved in raising the child as much as the mother. Women often do not trust men enough. It seems to them that the father will not learn, will not be able to do things, but the moment they allow him, for example, to put the child to sleep, it turns out that Dad can really do everything.' Akmentiņa-Smildziņa is convinced that we don't have to be supermoms, and that Father's Day is a good reason to honour and thank fathers.



↑ Creators and supporters of the book *I Want to Be a Dad* at the book's launch event held at the headquarters of the Latvian Association of Local Governments. From left: Rauls Vēliņš, Vija Veisa, Andris Jaunsleinis, Inga Akmentiņa-Smildziņa, Jānis Holšteins-Upmanis, Ilze Kuduliņa, Gatis Kokins, Sandra Kokina, Sandra Lase. 8 September 2017. Photo from the archives of the newspaper *Latvijas Avīze*.



↑ According to the opinion of musician and also father Jānis Holšteins-Upmanis, the child is a logical continuation of the relationship and the next development stage that brings partners even closer.

A video recording of the launching of the book is also available on the website of the Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments.

A lot has been accomplished. Work has just been finished on the book *We Want to Be a Family*. So what will be Roche's next project? Kaspars Losāns

has an idea – a book titled *I Want to Be a Baby*, and another one that combines both points of view – the mother's and the father's. *Seriously, With a Smile* could be the name of a future project. Our work continues.

Roche's Support of the Arts and Science

Music – merciful, loving, and doer
of good!

Uģis Brikmanis
Director

Devotion From the Heart

Rauls Vēliņš

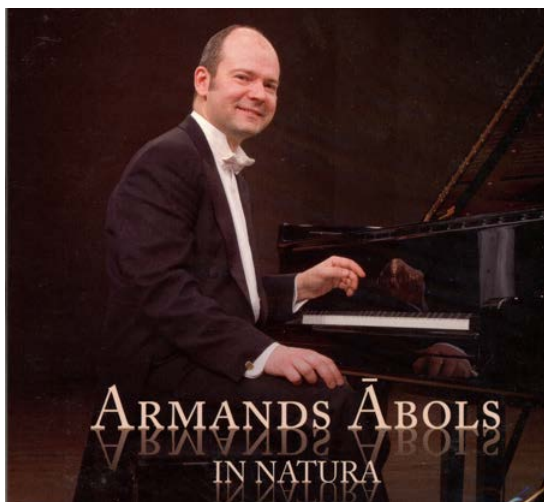
Among *Roche's* protected and nurtured values, there has always been art in all its forms. Perhaps the most well-known *Roche*-sponsored art project is the Lucerne Festival in Switzerland, which has been taking place since 1938. The names of Latvian musicians have also been heard there – in 2014 the Lucerne Festival orchestras were conducted by Andris Nelsons, and pianist Vestards Šimkus made his debut at the autumn festival. The company also supports the Lucerne Festival Academy and its orchestra, an educational project founded in 2004.

Roche Latvia is following the example of the global *Roche* Group in its

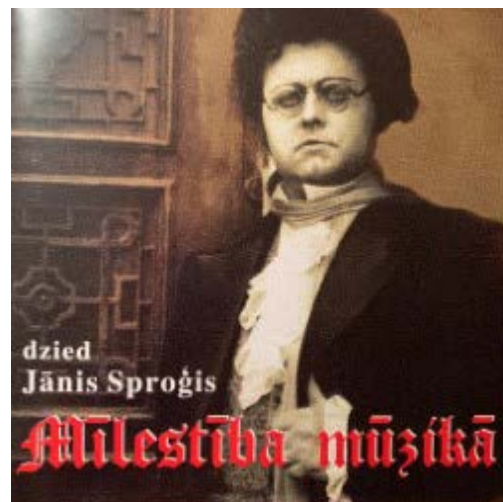
support of art projects and artists. The charity concert *Sirds veltījums* (Devotion From the Heart), organised by world-famous opera singer Maija Kovaļevska and held on 12 September 2016 in the Great Hall of the Latvian National Opera and Ballet Theatre, was unforgettable. The aim of the concert was to provide support to people who have turned to the charity Ziedot.lv in the hope of receiving the latest cancer-fighting drugs. 'Each of us in the throes of illness is lonely and in need of protection, but when faced with a cancer diagnosis, this support is doubly needed. The charity organisation Ziedot.lv is honoured to cooperate with the outstanding opera singer Maija



↑ On 12 September 2016, the charity concert *Sirds Veltījums* (Devotion from the Heart) took place in the Great Hall of the Latvian National Opera. It was organised by the world-famous opera singer Maija Kovaļevska in cooperation with *Roche Latvia*. Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.



↑ Armands Ābols. *In Natura*. Piano. Featuring recordings from concerts in Riga in 2004 and 2009 . Photo from Roche Latvia archive.

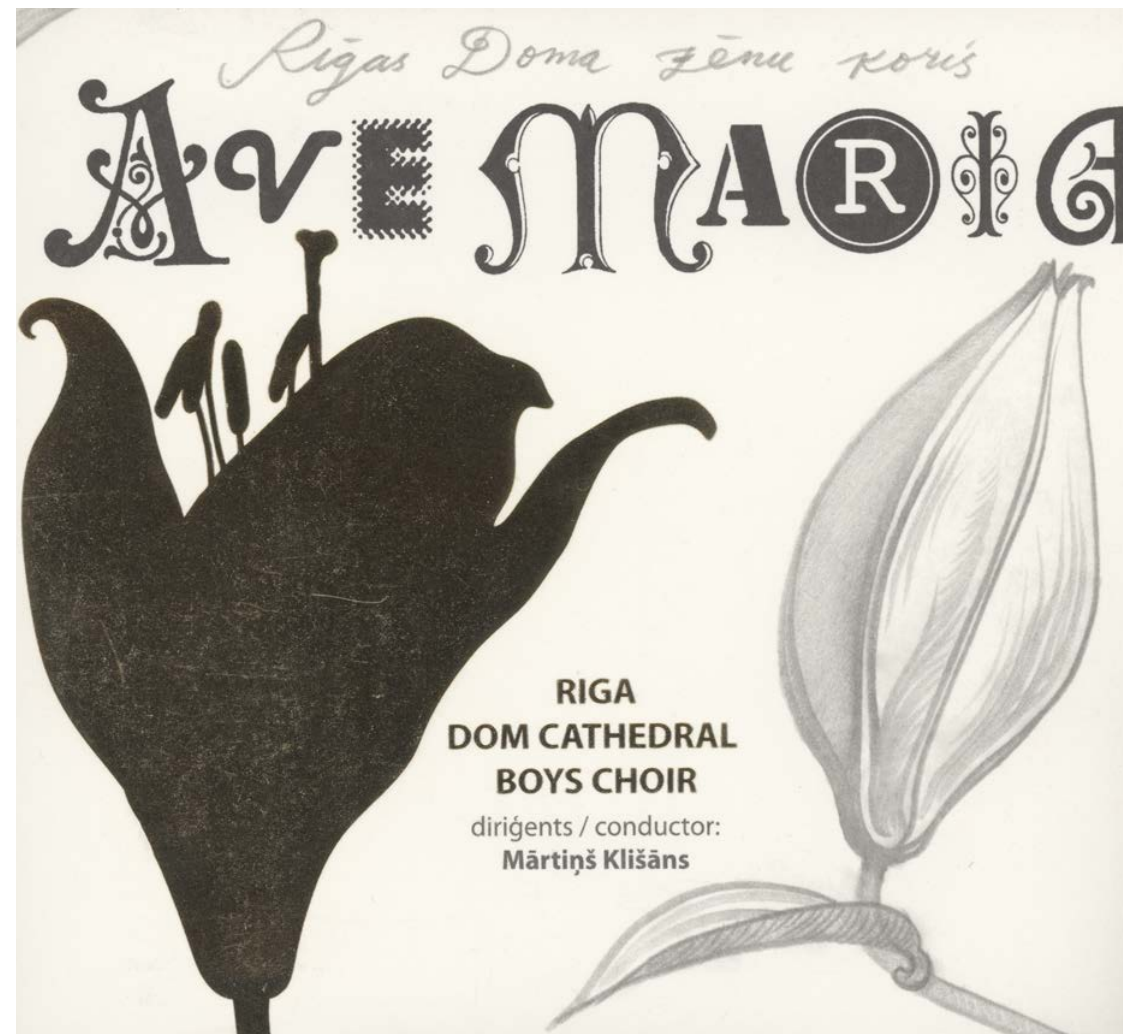


↑ The first album released with the support of Roche Latvia – *Mīlestība mūzikā: dzied Jānis Sprogis*, 1998. Photo from Roche Latvia archive.

Kovaļevska in supporting her initiative for a charity concert. 100% of the concert's proceeds will go towards providing practical help to oncology patients,' confirmed Rūta Dimanta, the director of Ziedot.lv.

The charity concert featured opera music, Latvian chamber music, and sacred music performed by: Maija Kovaļevska, winner of a number of international competitions; Sonora Vaice of the Latvian National Opera; world-renowned Latvian National Opera soloist Krišjānis Norvelis, bass; Italy's rising star Ricardo Gato, tenor; and at the piano – Elena Larina (Austria). The director of the concert was Uģis Brikmānis,

and it was produced by Spartaks Leimanis. 'Music – merciful, loving and doer of good,' said director Uģis Brikmānis about the concert. The charity concert was also supported by the Latvian National Opera and Ballet Theatre, the charity organisation Ziedot.lv, the television channel Rīga TV24, and many other forthcoming companies. The very first music disc released with the support of Roche Latvia was *Mīlestība mūzikā: dzied Jānis Sprogis* (1998). This was followed by a solo recording of the Riga Cathedral Boys Choir in CD format, and a CD by Latvian pianist Armands Ābols.



↑ *Ave Maria* Riga Cathedral Boys' Choir. Conductor Mārtiņš Klišāns, organist Aija Ziņģīte. 2011. Photo from Roche Latvia archive.

Danse Macabre

Juris Salaks



↑ During the *Danse Macabre* exhibition on 1 and 2 December 2016 at the Pauls Stradins Museum of the History of Medicine, a workshop was held at which Belgian medical artist Pascale Pollier-Green taught participants how to make death masks as well as the craft of reproducing dermatological diseases. Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.



↑ Medical historian Prof. Juris Salaks has his own mask presented to him by Pascale Pollier-Green. 2016. Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.

From 28 October 2016 to 20 May 2017, the exhibition 'Danse Macabre' (Dance of Death) was on display at the Pauls Stradins Museum of the History of Medicine; it was accompanied by a series of events titled *Nāvīgi interesantas sarunas* (Deadly Interesting Conversations). The concept of the exhibition covered the historically changing attitude towards human mortality and death, as well as the visual representation of these attitudes in European and Latvian art and medical history, by exhibiting two 'memento mori' traditions: the allegory of the Danse Macabre in engravings and lithographs, and the phenomenon of death masks in Latvia.

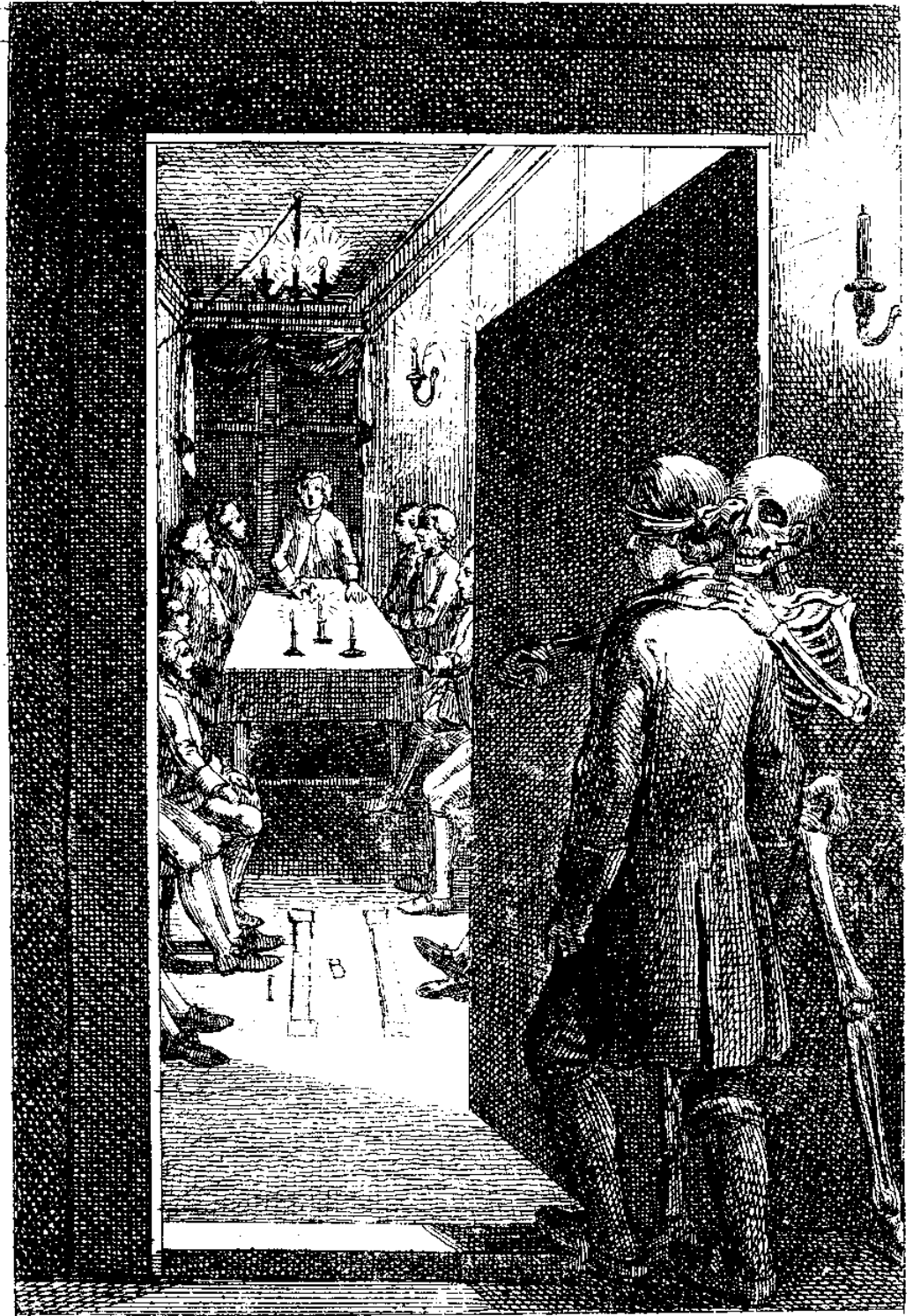
Thanks to Alexander Bieri, curator of *Roche's* historical collection and archives, visitors to the exhibition were able to see the original illustrations of the Danse Macabre (Dance of Death) as created by Swiss artist Johann Rudolf Schellenberg (1740–1806) – the first modern rendition of the death dance, 'Freund Heins Erscheinungen in Holbeins Manier' (Apparitions of Death in the Manner of Holbein) (1785). 'Freund Heins' (friend Heins) is a traditional German allegorical personification of death. Schellenberg's 24 engravings were supplemented by verse written by German author and satirist Johann Karl August Musäus (1735–1787). Schellenberg's drawings and

Musäus' texts revolutionised the Danse Macabre genre, breaking both medieval and renaissance traditions. A modern Dance of Death emerged, one with new content and in a new form. Schellenberg dispensed with Holbein's images and scenes, as well as the social hierarchy in which the Dance of Death characters had previously been depicted. For the stories in his woodcuts, Schellenberg chose contemporary events and depictions of various types of death – accidents, suicides, hot-air balloon disasters, falls from a rope, death from too much wisdom or too much gluttony, etc. – and in which friend Heins is a cruel and well-disguised joker.

During the exhibition, on 1 and 2 December 2016 a workshop was held at the museum – Belgian medical artist Pascale Pollier-Green taught participants how to make death masks as well as the craft of reproducing dermatological diseases.

The curators of the exhibition were Ieva Lībiete and Ilze Sirmā; the set designer was Mārtiņš Kalseris. Together with *Roche Latvia*, the project was also supported by the State Culture Capital Foundation, the Riga City Council, and Uldis Mākulis.

Johann Rudolph Schellenberg. *The Box of Silence*. 1785. Engraving from Roche's historical engraving collection. From the exhibition *Danse Macabre*, held on 1 and 2 December 2016 at the Pauls Stradins Museum of the History of Medicine. The engraving depicts the work of the Freemasons. Photo from Roche Latvia archive.



The Photography Exhibition

Rokas / Hands

Edīte Krūmiņa

The photography exhibition *Rokas* (Hands) was a social project that brought together Latvian and foreign photographers to support people with rheumatic diseases. The artists donated their works to the project. In late 2016, this travelling photo exhibition was on display in Rīga, Cēsis, Jelgava, Rēzekne, Jēkabpils, Valmiera, Tukums and Liepāja. The documentary and art photographs in the exhibition depicted the importance of movement and hands in people's daily lives. Liepāja was the last of the Latvian cities to see this photo exhibition, where it was displayed on the premises of Liepāja Regional Hospital. Viewers saw the exhibition as an exciting, thought-provoking

and unique opportunity to simultaneously enjoy the magic of quality photography and become aware of the importance of hands and movement in different stages and situations of human life. The exhibition was organised by the Latvian Society of Bone, Joint and Connective Tissue Diseases' Patients (LKLSSB) in cooperation with *Roche Latvia*, which ensured the delivery of the works of Slovenian photographer Manja Zora to Latvia. The aim of the exhibition was to use photography to get across the message that for many arthritis patients, daily movements and activities such as photography, climbing stairs, peeling apples, running, or playing table tennis are like a dream they can

never attain. Klāvs Vasiļevskis, one of the artists whose photographs were on display in the exhibition, says: 'Movement. It makes us feel free. It is a freedom that is truly valued only by those who don't have it.' The exhibition featured photographs donated by Aigars Jansons, Valts Kleins, Evija Trifanova, Ilmārs Znotiņš, Klāvs Vasiļevskis, and Manja Zore which, in an understandable and exciting way, showed the importance of movement in people's daily lives, e.g. the hands of musicians Boris Grebenshchikov and Vestards Šimkus; the hands of cheerleaders on the basketball court; and the hands of a person with rheumatoid arthritis as they peel an orange. These are just a few



↑ *Hands of a Pianist. Vestards Šimkus.*
From the photo exhibition *Rokas* (Hands) organised by *Roche Latvia* and dedicated to the support of rheumatoid arthritis patients. 2013.
Photo: Valts Kleins.

examples from the range of works that were on view in the exhibition.

After the exhibition, Signe Paula Ozoliņa, a volunteer at LKLSSB who helped organise the exhibition, emphasised that she often thinks about such a simple thing as dexterity. Who has dexterity? Athletes, of course. Peo-

ple who control their body. People who have strength. However, strength can be gauged not only as a physical measure, but also as a mental measure. The mental strength of rheumatology patients is the factor that determines if they can maintain their physical strength. In the photos that were shown in the exhibi-

tion *Rokas*, one could see the hands of both healthy people and those who suffer from joint disease. Both are united by strength – both physical and mental.¹

1 <https://www.rekurzeme.lv/foto/foto-izstade-rokas-slimnica-67318?image=5>

The 5G Techritory Forum in Riga

Kaspars Losāns

During the 5G Techritory forum in September 2018, Riga became the capital of the European 5G network. 5G is now the latest generation of mobile communications, creating completely new opportunities in every industry and sector. The Baltic Sea Region 5G Ecosystem Forum 5G Techritory took place on 27 and 28 September in Riga, at the Radisson Blu Hotel Latvia. The forum was organised by SJSC Electronic Communications in close co-operation with the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development, the Nordic Council of Ministers, and other partners. One of the supporters of the event was *F. Hoffmann-La Roche*.



A Riga Presentation of Nobel Prize-winning Work

Rauls Vēliņš



In honour of the 6 October 2014 announcement of the Nobel Prize in Medicine being awarded to John O’Keefe, May-Britt Moser and Edvard I. Moser, on 8 December 2014 the above-mentioned scientists’ prize-winning work was presented at the Latvian Academy of Sciences.² 263 scientists had been nominated for the 2014 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine, 46 of whom were nominated for the first time. The Riga event was organised by the Latvian Academy of Sciences, the Swedish Embassy in Latvia, and *Roche Latvia*. The main lecture of the event was on the discovery of cells that form a positioning system in the brain, or, to put it more simply, about humans’

ability to orientate themselves in space. The discovery’s importance in both Latvia and the world was emphasised. Although there is a strong tradition for medical science in Latvia, the only Nobel Prize winner to hail from the country is Wilhelm Ostwald, born in 1853 in Riga. Along with a few more scientists, he is considered one of the founders of the field of physical chemistry; in 1909 Ostwald received the Nobel Prize in Chemistry. Although Ostwald is mentioned in the Nobel database as a scientist of the German Empire, it is clear to everyone that he was born in Riga.

Even today world-class scientists work in Latvia, for example, at the Latvi-

an Institute of Organic Synthesis, which invented the active substance for a US-registered anticancer drug, and at the Latvian Biomedical Research and Study Centre, which discovered a method for detecting gastric cancer in its earliest stage. The aim of the event was to stimulate scientific thought and encourage young scientists to work on Nobel Prize-worthy discoveries.

↑ *Roche Latvia’s* presentation of the 2014 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine held in Riga at the Latvian Academy of Sciences. In the centre, an original Nobel Prize medal from the repository of the P. Stradins Museum of the History of Medicine. 8 December 2014.
Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.

² http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/medicine/laureates/2014/

Supporting young musicians

Kristīne Balanas, Margarita Balanas,
Roberts Balanas

From the 18th until the 20th of December 2020, the Roche Latvia historical building hosted the “Balanas Sisters and Roche Christmas Charity Masterclasses” for young violinists and cellists. For the first time in Latvia, the masterclasses were taught by internationally renowned musicians Kristīne and Margarita Balanas. In total, 20 participants took part, with 13 being from Latvian music schools and secondary schools. Additionally, 11 young musicians had the opportunity to have a separate private lesson with Kristīne and Margarita. This was a unique experience for not only the 7- to 18-year-old participants but also for their teachers, because traditionally musicians recognized in masterclasses mostly work with older students.

The masterclasses finished on the evening of the 21st of December, 2020 with a virtual Gala Concert with performances by participants which attracted five thousand viewers via live-stream video. In honour of the masterclasses, violinist Roberts Balanas also created a

special arrangement for Mārtiņš Brauns’ song “Saule, Pērkons, Daugava”, which the participants recorded individually. With a heartfelt performance by the Balanas family and the young musicians, they invited people to participate in the charity campaign “Angels over Latvia” to help create a Christmas miracle for 113 children all over Latvia who wish to take steps independently, express their words, enjoy each new day and, most importantly, be happy and healthy.³

At the end of December 2020, Roche Latvia created a [virtual musical Christmas greeting](#) in which the Balanas Sisters, the group Carnival Youth and Kaspars and Anda Zemīši participated. The greeting was dedicated to Latvia’s medics to express our gratitude for their on-going fight with Covid-19.⁴

3 www.facebook.com/BalanasClassical/videos/239516314361223

4 <https://fb.watch/2yZtqe29ji>



← Participants in "Balanas Sisters and Roche Christmas Charity Masterclasses". From the left in the 1st row: Markuss, Elizabete, Paulis, Kristīne, Roberts, Margarita Balanas; 2nd row: Evija Auziņa, Tanel Daniels, Selīna, Vivjēna, Katrīna, Sofija; 3rd row: Reinis, Rainers, Ankit, Sāra, Rebeka, Elza; 4th row: Arnolds, Taisija, Agnese, Elza, Madara, Rafaels; 5th row: Lūcija, Mare Malvīne, Marta, Marta, Laima, Olīvija; 6th row: Romans, Egons, Terēze, Marks, Aleksa Nadīna.
Photo collage: Guna Rubule

Roche Latvia's Historical Building

The renovated building is very environmentally friendly – it uses sustainable solutions. *Roche's* vision is to improve health and quality of life. To achieve this, the company starts with its commitment to its own employees of providing them with a friendly and sustainable work environment. Now the building at Miera iela 25 is the home of SIA *Roche Latvia*. It is an updated and inspiring office environment for both *Roche* employees and guests!

Roland Faessler

Lead architect at *Roche* until 2020

The International Architectural Design Competition

Roland Faessler

The engineering services of international pharmaceutical companies not only participate in large, long-term investment projects, but also support industry-related projects around the world. A good example is the reconstruction of the *Roche Latvia* office building in Riga at Miera iela 25. The building was renovated and the *Roche Latvia* office moved into it on April 27, 2020.

The building has a long history. Construction of the building began on 29 May 1931, and it was completed and opened as *Roche's* office on 1 August 1932. The architect was Aleksandrs Klinklāvs (1899–1982). He is considered to be the most prominent architect specialising in

the design of healthcare institutions in the history of 20th-century Latvian architecture. Unfortunately, the building was soon expropriated – first by the Soviets, then by the German authorities. After WWII, the building no longer belonged to the *Roche* family – it was completely taken over by the Soviets. After the restoration of Latvia's independence, *Roche* repurchased it from the Latvian state by joint decision of the family.

To select an architect for the renovation of the building, a closed international architectural design competition was held. Two Latvian architects and a Swiss architect were invited. The jury, chaired by Dr. Rauls Vēliņš, selected the

winner of the competition in February 2017. The submission from SIA *Didrihsons arhitekti* was the best. *Roche Latvia* commissioned architect Gatis Didrihsons and his office for further planning work.

As *Roche's* lead architect from 1989 until my retirement in 2020, I supported this project and was a frequent visitor to Riga. Engineers representing *Roche's* headquarters were also part of the steering committee – at first, Uwe Bank, and later, Yann Berchoux. Alexander Bieri, curator of the *Roche* History Collection and Archive, also represented the Basel headquarters.

All aspects of the building's renovation were monitored and reviewed by

Roche engineers, and this included frequent site visits.

The renovation project faced many technical problems: the building had settled and tilted, so it was necessary to lift and stabilise the whole building. The Italian company that was hired for the job managed to raise the building by 60 cm. It was also important to preserve the building's historic features and use new, environmentally friendly construction methods, such as renovating already existing windows. The renovated building itself is very environmentally friendly – it uses sustainable solutions. For example, the building's cooling system uses fresh, cool outdoor air to cool the indoors at



night. In addition, the indoor air temperature can be decreased by at least two degrees Celsius by using the well-known adiabatic, or evaporative, cooling method. Taking into account the problems of global warming, the renovation of the building used advanced methods. The layout of the premises is adapted to the needs of a modern and contemporary office building environment. Common spaces facilitate interaction and communication. *Roche's* vision is to improve health and quality of life. To achieve this, the company starts with its commitment to its own employees of providing them with a friendly and sustainable work environment.

Now the building at Miera iela 25 is the home of SIA *Roche Latvia*. It is an updated and inspiring office environment for both *Roche* employees and guests!

↑ Submissions in the competition for renovating the historical *Roche* office building at Miera iela 25, as displayed at the *Roche Latvia* office. 17 February 2017.
Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.



↑↑ A historic time capsule was laid in the cornerstone of the building at Miera iela 25. The capsule contains Swiss and Latvian state symbols, a letter from *Roche* CEO Severin Schwan to future generations, and a group photo of the *Roche Latvia* team. From left: Konstantin Obolensky, Ambassador of Switzerland to the Republic of Latvia; *Roche Latvia* General Manager Rauls Vēliņš; Gatis Didrihsons, lead architect in charge of restoration. 8 April 2019.
Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.

↑ Roland Fesler, lead architect at *Roche*, and Uwe Bank, senior project manager at *Roche*, at a working dinner in Jūrmala. 12 July 2017.
Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.

Miera iela 25 in Riga – A Vibrant ‘Figure’ in architecture

Alexander Lukas Bieri

It may seem strange to call a building – a passive object – a ‘figure’, because in that case it should be given the form of a human being. This building is unique because in achieving its goal of restoration, it has been able to bring together a wide variety of people. Over time, working relationships have grown into friendships. It is unusual or even a little crazy to say that a building that is not a living being can create friendships between people. However, there is no doubt that the building at Miera iela 25 has talked to the people involved in its fate, and after four years of working with and for this building, I should not be derided for the esoteric idea of the building having a personality.

When we started the project in 2016, there was a lot of confusion. The problem was that the building had partially sunk and it was not clear what condition the walls were in – but that was only one part of the difficult puzzle. That’s why the architectural competition was rather a shot in the dark and more of an attempt to find out the possibilities of reusing the building. We chose a concept that preserves as much as possible the original structure and texture of the building while also respecting its functional nature, which there was no need to change. Although this did not mean that the jury thought the chosen project ideal, it did lay a solid foundation for

further work. And as things turned out, *Roche’s* expectations were fully met by the talented team of *Didrihsons arhitekti*.

In a way, the building at Miera iela 25 had already been built with the idea of bringing people and countries together. After the turmoil of the October Revolution, Josef Aronstamm, formerly *Roche’s* representative in Russia, returned home and settled in Riga. About ten years later, the idea arose to build a building for *Roche* in Riga. Although the choice of location was not very clear given the narrow Baltic market, documents found in *Roche’s* archives revealed that the real objective behind the project was to enter into business with the Soviet Union, and

Riga had been chosen as a suitable location from which to do so.

The October Revolution was a profound blow to *Roche* as a global organisation, leading to almost complete bankruptcy for the company. Working hard and following the strictest austerity regime, the company recovered in the late 1920s. The huge courage of *Roche* can be seen in the fact that the first major investment project after these difficult years was made with the Soviet market in mind, i.e. the country that had been the root cause of the problem. During the difficult period from 1919 to 1929, the company had undergone significant changes. After the death of founder Fritz



← Guests from Basel – *Roche* archivists Alexander Bieri and Svenja Egli observing construction of the building at Miera iela 25. 21 June 2019.
Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.



Hoffmann-La Roche in March 1920, the company was managed by his confidant, Emil Christoph Barell. Unlike Hoffmann, who had come from very wealthy circles, Barell was a naturalist and a modern man who had achieved everything on his own and respected functionalism. Together with Josef Aronstamm, Barell entrusted the design of the building to the young architect Aleksandrs Klinklāvs. It became *Roche's* first building in the modernist style and was the beginning of an architectural tradition that is still a hallmark of the company's corporate style. This project was so important to Barell that he personally went to Riga in 1931 to sign the necessary agreements. This

was the first time that a senior *Roche* official had visited Riga – the second visit would take place almost 90 years later, when Severin Schwan would participate in the opening of the renovated *Roche* building in August 2020.

The Klinklāvs building can be called modern for many different reasons. First, it is located on a street corner away from other buildings, a fact that gives balance to the size of the building and its surrounding property. The building is covered with Siegersdorfer Baukeramik ceramic tiles from Silesia (in what is now Poland). These tiles allow the facade of the building to be easily washed and make it resistant to mud and weather

conditions – it was the first, and to this day one of the very few, buildings in Riga with a ceramic tile finish. It is very important that the layout of the building allows it to be easily adapted to different uses. Its backbone is formed by a central corridor, and the rooms behind the facade can be divided into smaller rooms as needed. The building also had the important technical innovations typical of modernist buildings at the time – electrical systems for opening the door, the latest heating system with an accelerator system for hot water circulation, etc. In general, this building, built of brick and reinforced concrete, can be considered one of the first modernist buildings in the

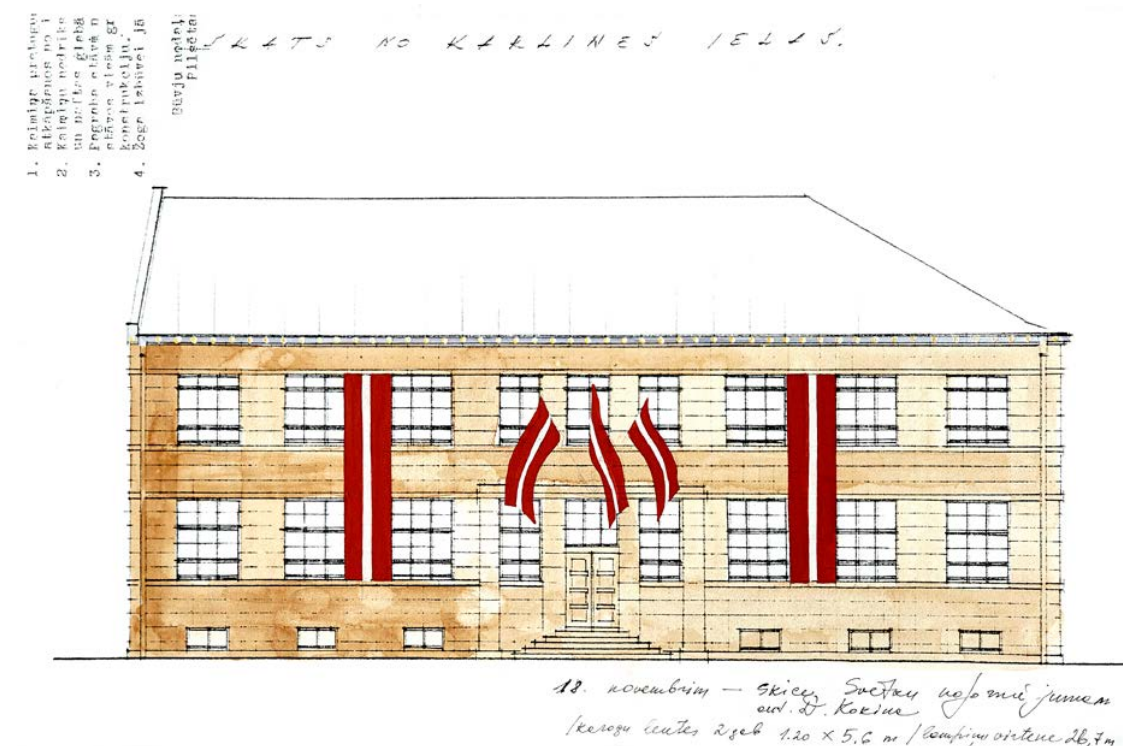
↑↑ Ehab Yousef (first from the right) at the Miera iela 25 site. 23 January 2020.
Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.

↑ Andris Kreislers (first from the left) at the construction site with guests from Basel and Latvia. 21 June 2019.
Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.

Baltic States, which gives it considerable value from both an architectural and historical point of view.

Following the nationalisation of the Roche branch in Latvia and the expropriation of the building in the 1940s, Roche made constant efforts to legally secure its claim to the land and the building. Finally, in 1998, the claim was accepted and Roche's ownership of the land was restored. This was the first step in correcting a historical injustice. After the repurchase of the building in 2016, there were no obstacles for reusing it to fit Roche's needs in Latvia. Miraculously, this was also facilitated by several coincidences: Roche Latvia urgently needed

new office space, General Manager Rauls Vēliņš had great reverence for the historic building, and Roche executives in Basel openly accepted the unusual idea of acquiring ownership of and renovating a building of purely commercial significance. It was also perceived as a good sign that, after many decades, a cache of extra façade tiles was found under the building's staircase (very typical for Roche engineers). These extra tiles were now very useful for the restoration of the building's plinth. There were many difficulties, but the skilled people involved in the project overcame them, working with precision and a great love for the building and a positive attitude towards the Basel



oversight committee, whose demands could sometimes seem peculiar. The resulting project is unique, and the positive and constructive atmosphere at all stages of the process is reflected in the positive atmosphere of the beautiful building. Roche Latvia – just like Aronstamm and Barell – rests on the shoulders of Roche's brave predecessors. The new building is a solid foundation with which Roche Latvia can identify and honour its roots as it moves towards a bright future with confidence.¹

↑ Decoration of the the building at Miera iela 25 for 18 November, as directed by the Road Traffic Safety Directorate. Festive design by D. Kokina. Sketch. Early 21st century. Photo from CSDD archives.

1 Bieri L. A. The Homecoming. Roche in Riga: a Historic Remediation. F. Hoffmann-La Roche AG, 2020, p. 170.



← Gatis Didrihsons' project model of the facade of Miera iela 25. 2017.
Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.



← Renovated *Roche* office building,
overlooking the intersection of Miera
and Palīdzības streets. 2020.
Foto: Guna Rubule

Life As a Symphony

Andris Kreislers

Is life a series of various coincidences and events? Or is life a symphony in which everyone has their place? If so, the reconstruction of the *Roche* office building was certainly a vivid part of this symphony, one in which each performer had a role to play – very precisely and just at the right time.²

I placed a Bible into the time capsule as the building's cornerstone was laid. Both then and now, when the building has been opened for use, there is a feeling that everything – from the design and raising of the sunken building to the reconstruction process – has been guided by a gracious, invisible hand.

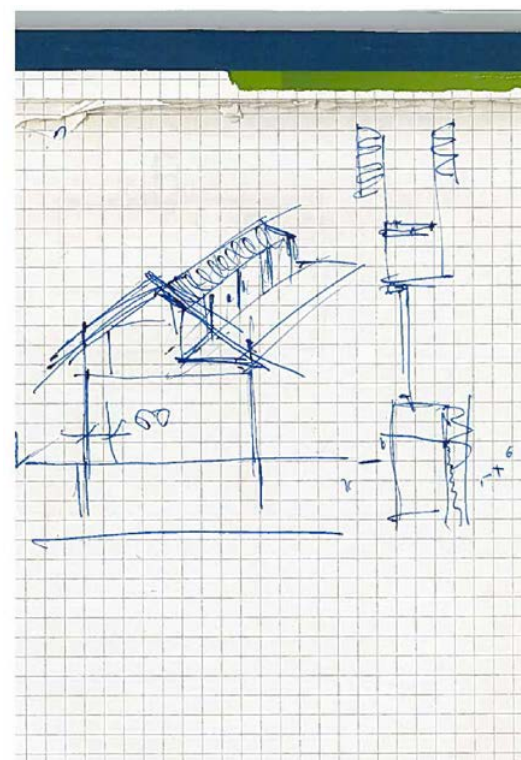
When the building had just been

bought at auction, Ieva Ābele and Rauls Vēliņš invited me, as an expert in the field of architecture and construction, to a meeting. I looked at the historic building and tried to imagine *Roche's* modern-day activities taking place in it. As we sat in a café, sharing our visions for the building, I drew on a napkin a sketch of the building with a new roof terrace, which I thought would be a fine place for *Roche* employees to take a break after a busy period of work. We all fancied the idea, and today the building has a new, comfortably set-up roof terrace.

A significant problem was that the building was excessively leaning. The idea arose to straighten the building – in

effect, raise it – but no one in Latvia had any information on either how or who in the world could do something like that. An Austrian building design firm suggested that the company *Novatek* might be able to do something of the kind. There was a lack of information on where this company was located and what it could do. Time passed, but it was impossible to make a decision on whether to: a) correct the slope of the building with a falsified straightening of the floors and windows; b) level each room individually; or c) actually raise and level the building. There was just one year left until reconstruction work would begin. There was no solution at hand, so we had to search

2 Db.lv redakcijas sleja. Iegulda 5 miljonus eiro vēsturiskas ēkas atjaunošanā Miera ielā. 26.08.2020. Available here: <http://www.db.lv/zinas/iegulda-5-miljonus-eiro-vesturiskas-ekas-atjaunosana-miera-iela-498313>



← The roof terrace at Miera iela 25.
2020. Photo: Guna Rubule.

← Andris Kreisler's initial sketch of the
roof terrace.
Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.



← Gatis Didrihsons' project model of the
roof terrace at Miera iela 25. 2018.
Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.



for *Novatek* on the internet and try to make contact.

On 15 December 2017 I googled *Novatek* – everything that came up was related to the ‘Novatek’ Russian natural gas company. I continued with ‘Novatek Austria’. We could not understand what exactly this Austrian company did – they said that they worked with building design. After a long internet search, I finally found that *Novatek GmbH* had a number for a German landline, and the description of the company even mentioned ‘strengthening of buildings’. I was overjoyed and called the number; the call was diverted to Italy. A woman answered in English – I would later find

out that the voice belonged to Angelika Stefanska, the assistant to the owner of *Novatek*. I told her who we are and our needs. The phone conversation raised my hopes. I had also sent *Roche* the available information about the technical condition of the building, as well as the technical survey performed by Kaspars Bondars. Weeks of silence followed. I again called the German landline, which was again answered by the same pleasant voice. She explained that the head of the company does not have time for our project. I would later learn that Renato Canteri, the head of *Novatek*, hadn’t taken our request seriously at first. After a third persistent call, I received confir-



mation that negotiations with the project developer can begin, and after short but constructive coordination, real collaboration began on 6 February 2018, which is when the owners of *Novatek* and their engineers arrived in Latvia to see the building at Miera iela 25 for themselves.

Novatek’s offer to raise, level and strengthen the building – all by the end of 2018 – seemed impossible to us. A project for the demolition of the non-load-bearing structures of the adjacent and main buildings was immediately developed. *Novatek’s* promise had to be double checked, however. On 28 February 2018, together with Uwe Bank from *Roche*, we went to see and learn as much

↑ Bruno Gemmi, construction manager of the Italian company *Novatek*, planning the raising of the building. 14 September 2018. Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.

↙ Roche Latvia employees at the construction site at Miera iela 25. August 24, 2017. Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.



← Roche Latvia employees at the construction site at Miera iela 25. 24 August 2017. Photo from Roche Latvia archive.

as we could about the process that *Novatek* had devised. We were convinced by the technology developed by Renato Canteri, and agreed to sign a contract for the raising of the building.

At the end of August the Italian engineers had arrived in Riga, and when they asked if the construction permit had

been procured, we answered that it soon would be. Three days later the permit was received. Raising of the building began on 31 August 2018, and finished in early December 2018.

Italian engineer Bruno Gemmi worked well with our local builder Jānis Popils, who provided all kinds of support

work on the site – from excavation work around the building to the installation of a ramp so that the specially designed drilling machine could enter the basement of the building.

Based on my 30 years of experience in construction, I can say that the construction of this building is a success

story. It was achieved through the work of a great team and led by an invisible conductor who exists beyond any human influence.

Reconstruction of the Historical Building at Miera iela 25

Gatis Didrihsons

In 2017 an architectural competition was held for the renovation of the building at Miera iela 25. The competition had several rounds, with Swiss specialists also submitting their design ideas. In the second round of the competition there were three teams of architects left – two from Latvia and one from Switzerland. The jury's decision was to entrust the renovation of *Roche's* historic office building to Gatis Didrihsons, chief architect of the *Didrihsons arhitekti* office, and his team.³

Much could be said about the renovation of the building at Miera iela 25 – it is both historically interesting and a complex construction project. I had known

about the building for a long time; I passed by it daily, and to me it seemed one of the most beautiful buildings in Riga. I also knew the work of [Aleksandrs Klinklāvs](#), but I began to research the history of the La Roche family business only when I had to start thinking about our office's commission to renovate the building and the responsibility that came along with that.

The office building for the Riga branch of Basel-based *F. Hoffmann-La Roche & Co* was built in the functionalist style. The architect Klinklāvs had been looking for a new aesthetic in which to house the company's office, and the functions of the building were many and

broad – it was to be a factory, an office, and a pharmacy, i.e. a space accessed by the public.

Almost a century later, the task of the renovator was to now preserve the old building, not build a new one – all ideas about extensions and changes to the facade were to be abandoned. From the outside, the building had to look as if there had been no fundamental changes – just a cleaned facade and tidy and improved utilities. However, now that this has been done, I can say that implementing the project was much more complicated than it initially seemed. Renovating the building is and was a fantastic challenge – a completely crazy

3 Funkcionālisma stila pērle – *Roche Latvia* birojs un inovāciju laboratorija. Interior. 22. jūlijs, 2020. Available here: <https://interiormagazine.lv/funkcionalisma-stila-perle-roche-latvija-birojs-un-inovaciju-laboratorija/>

idea, in truth, because the building had thoroughly tilted through settling. One corner was almost 60 centimetres lower than the other. The lopsided building had to be levelled, but at 300 tonnes and four storeys that span 350 m² each, it is a large and robust building.

In the 1930s, specialists had already suspected that the ground where the building was to be built was not stable enough, and perhaps it is for this reason that, for the first time in the company's history, the design and construction process of one of its buildings was documented in such detail. Subsequently such record keeping became a business tradition, but this case was the very first. As a result, we had detailed information from 1932 onward. For example, in 1940 the first settling of the building was already recorded to have reached 10 cm. These archival materials helped us do what we did – which is straighten the building.

Turning to local specialists in this field, the most common advice we received was that the only real way to

straighten the building was to demolish it and rebuild it on a pile foundation. To preserve a historical legacy, which was the purpose of this project, one does not resort to this kind of action, so we continued to search for a solution. The house had to be straightened. It was a practically insurmountable task, believed to be surmountable only by us – even though we didn't know exactly how we were going to do it. We have official letters saying that it is impossible to straighten the building – there will be cracks and serious damage. But we were so crazy that we did not believe these letters and we did indeed raise the building – all sunken 60 centimetres – without sustaining any cracks or damage.

This is a unique event in the world of construction. The Italian construction company *Novatek* from Verona, who carried out this job and has a great deal of experience in such work, acknowledged that they had never raised such a large house, adding that they had also never worked with a building that had such a



strong foundation and that was so sturdy itself. It is a world-level achievement in engineering – 340 piles were drilled into the original foundation, and the building is now supported by the piles and completely level. No one in our region had done anything like that before. *Novatek's* manager Renato Canteri and construction manager Bruno Gemmi were the people who, with their knowledge, fanatical enthusiasm and high sense of responsibility, straightened the building in three months' time. I hope that one day we will be able to tell this story to the world of architects and civil engineers.

The *Roche* office building has its own distinctive structure that was typical

↑ History coexists with the future in the interior design of the building at Miera iela 25. Project model by Gatis Didrihsons. 2017.
Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.



for the time in which it was constructed – dusky corridors with rooms on both sides of the corridor. Such a layout no longer met the current requirements for an open-plan office of a 21st-century company. Because we, as architects, wanted to inflict as little damage as possible on what had survived, we gently redesigned the interiors with small ‘cuts’ that created additional light and space to make the building more open and have a greater sense of spaciousness.

The building’s roof needed to be replaced, so we took the opportunity to build the new roof higher, thereby gaining extra usable space and coming closer to Klinklāvs’ original plan. In the original

design, the roof was 80 cm higher than it was actually built in the thirties. Back then the attic was what is called a cold loft and not used. The roof has now been raised 95 cm. Taking into account Riga’s strict requirements regarding changes in the roof shapes of culturally and historically valuable buildings, we had to prove to the Council for the Preservation and Development of Riga’s Historical Centre that the changes would not reduce the cultural and historical value of the building but would even increase it. With models and sketches, we proved not only this but that all changes would also conform to UNESCO Commission requirements. Our proposal was accepted and a



construction permit was issued. We also solved the problem of the building’s accessibility by installing a lift.

I can say with complete confidence that only people who are local, understand all relevant circumstances, and are highly motivated can come to terms with the building and construction authorities when such additional nuances are heaped upon an already very complex project. It was our faith in the project and our professionally prepared arguments that led to our success in this case.

In the 1930s most of the buildings in Riga were built in the Art Nouveau style, but the building on Miera iela was quite ascetic for the times – one could

↑ A group of artists in the building on Miera iela. From left: Ineta Solzemniece-Saleniece, Ieva Krūmiņa, Anda Kļaviņa, Jānis Avotiņš, Anna Gobzeme-Nulle, Diāna Jefimova, Olga Šilova, Elīna Šteinberga, Jūlija Jerjomina, Līva Vilcāne. 27 January 2020. Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.

↖ Employees of *A Studio* install artworks in *Roche Latvia*’s new office at Miera iela 25. From left: Raivo Jakovēlis, Maksims Zverevs, Kaspars Rjabovskis, Anda Munkevica. In the foreground – Dainis Gudovskis. May 2020. Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.

even say innovative – and very high-quality materials were used in its construction. When we began renovating in 2018, the building was measured in three dimensions in order to fully understand what had survived and in what condition. The German-made ceramic facade tiles, the radiators and the large wooden staircase were the greatest values that had been preserved. There was nothing else of great value because the previous owners of the building had already changed everything in the many repairs that had been done over the years. Causing minimal interference in the existing structure, we added new value to the building. The building now contains both the 21st century and the 1930s, and the two eras get on very well together. It is precisely this contrast – and no compromising – that is the building's best feature now. We have made it clear what is new and what is old. Contrast gives it charm.

The La Roche family and the company itself have always been art patrons and collectors, and one of the rules that

all *Roche* buildings must adhere to is the presence of art. The principle of integrating a place for art into architecture is increasingly spreading to public buildings, and the Miera iela building will also have the opportunity to display art collections. The plan is to find a place for contemporary art both in the courtyard and indoors so that the establishment has a Latvian flavour that affects the users of the building.

This project can serve as a template in the field of building reconstruction because all project documentation was carefully developed, and everything was researched, drawn and described. Of course, building reconstruction has its own specifics, but there were no major unexpected revelations that significantly changed the course of our work. From day one, our goal was quality. Our Swiss colleagues who oversee large *Roche* construction projects also come and check up on us, but it is a peaceful and enjoyable process because everyone and everything is going according to plan.



The interior design for the *Roche Latvia* building has also been entrusted to our office, and my fellow architect Ineta Solzemniece-Saleniece is the most careful supervisor of the construction and furnishing of the building. In order to create an interior that corresponds to the essence of the house and is top-quality down to the very last detail, we have joined forces with interior designers Kristians Drande and Kaspars Ķīsis. We look for cooperative partners whose work style suits this particular place, and with whom we will be able to achieve the level of quality desired. Our partners in improving the outdoor landscaping is ALPS studio with Ilze Rukšāne and Māris



↑ Ieva Ābele, project manager for restoration of the historic *Roche* building, on site during construction work. 25 March 2020. Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.

↙ The Miera iela 25 project team. From left: Laura Lemkina, Andrei Nahkala, Luc Dirckx, Rauls Vēliņš, Ieva Ābele, Andris Čerņavskis, Gatis Didrihsons. Autumn 2019. Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.



Bušs. We preserved as many existing trees as possible and have supplemented the greenery. We've installed a convenient bicycle parking spot for employees, as well as benches and other places to sit outside in the fresh air. Another special outdoor space is the roof terrace on the top floor of the building, which, along with the kitchen and informal meeting rooms, is sure to become a favourite place in which the *Roche Latvia* team and visitors of the building can relax.

As architects and construction project managers, we have always been by *Roche's* side in the construction process. When we started work on the project in 2017, there was little competition

between contractors because the project was considered small and quite complicated for builders, but now I can say that we were a good team and that by working together, we were able to complete the project by the spring of 2020. From April 2020 the new address of SIA Roche Latvia is Miera iela 25. A good aura is very important for a building to have and it is given by the people who work in it. It is what Miera iela 25 deserves.⁴

↑ Opening ceremony of the historic *Roche* building. From left: Dr. Rauls Vēliņš, Ilze Viņķele, Severin Schwan. 26 August 2020. Photo: Guna Rubule.

↑↑ Opening ceremony of the historic *Roche* building. A concert of popular film music was performed by Andrejs Osokins and the Balanas sisters. From left: Kristīne Balanas, Andrejs Osokins, Margarita Balanas. 26 August 2020. Photo: Jānis Brencis.

↑ Opening ceremony of the historic *Roche* building. Severin Schwan receives from Prof. Juris Salaks the historical drawings of the building. From left: Alexander Bieri, Juris Salaks, Severin Schwan. 26 August 2020. Photo: Lauris Vīksne.

⁴ Martinsone I. House with karma. *Roche*. Latvian Architecture. 2020, no. 149, 58.-61.p



← Opening ceremony of the historic *Roche* building. Address by André Hoffmann, Roche's Vice-Chairman. 26 August 2020. Photo: Lauris Vīksne.

← Opening ceremony of the historic *Roche* building. Address by Rauls Vēliņš, General Manager of *Roche Latvia*. 26 August 2020. Photo: Lauris Vīksne.



← Visiting the President of Latvia, Egils Levits. From left: Severin Schwan, André Hoffmann, President Egils Levits, Rauls Vēliņš. 26 August 2020. Photo: Ilmārs Znotiņš, Chancellery of the President.



↑ Opening ceremony of the historic *Roche* building. Address by Jānis Reirs, Minister for Finance. 26 August 2020.
Photo: Jānis Brencis

↙ Opening ceremony of the historic *Roche* building. The State Choir 'Latvija' and Raimonds Tiguls perform the compositions *Mīlestības jūra* (Sea of Love) and *Mēnesgaismas skaņa* (The Sound of the Moonlight). Conductor: Māris Sirmais. 16 August 2020.
Photo: Lauris Vīksne.



↑ Opening ceremony of the historic *Roche* building. From left: Per-Olof Attinger, Ambassador of Switzerland to Latvia Konstantin Obolensky, Prof. Indriķis Muižnieks. 26 August 2020.
Photo: Jānis Brencis.

↙ Opening ceremony of the historic *Roche* building. From left: Severin Schwan and Vija Veisa, gynecologist and obstetrician, president of the Latvian Association of Gynaecologists. 26 August 2020.
Photo: Jānis Brencis.

← Opening ceremony of the historic *Roche* building. From left: Rolands Strazdiņš, Prof. Mārcis Leja, Prof. Signe Bāliņa, Prof. Valdis Segliņš, Prof. Valdis Pīrāgs. 26 August 2020.
Photo: Jānis Brencis.



↑ Opening ceremony of the historic *Roche* building. From left: André Hoffmann, Per-Olof Attinger, Rolands Lappuķe, Rauls Vēliņš, Prof. Guna Laganovska. 26 August 2020.
Photo: Jānis Brencis.



↑ Opening ceremony of the historic *Roche* building. From left: André Hoffmann, Rolands Lappuķe, Valts Ābols. 26 August 2020.
Photo: Jānis Brencis.



↑ Opening ceremony of the historic *Roche* building. A look back at history with a speech by the Curator of the Roche Historical Collection and Archives, Alexander Bieri, and a lecture by Prof. Juris Salaks. From left: event manager Kaspars Breidaks, Prof. Juris Salaks, Alexander Bieri. 26 August 2020.
Photo: Lauris Vīksne.



↑ Excursion to the renovated *Roche* building. From left: Ārija Brīze, Dace Matule, Imants Paeglītis, Aleksejs Višņakovs, Žanete Zvirbule, Guna Laganovska, Iveta Kudaba. 26 August 2020.
Photo: Jānis Brencis.



↑ Opening ceremony of the historic *Roche* building. From left: Egita Pole, Imants Paeglītis, Mārcis Leja, Jānis Siliņš, Ilze Viņķele, Rolands Lappuķe. 26 August 2020.
Photo: Guna Rubule.



↑ Opening ceremony of the historic *Roche* building. Dace Butlere, Vitālijs Orlovs, Gunta Purkalne, Andris Skride, Signe Vēliņa, Vita Švarcberga. 26 August 2020.
Photo: Lauris Vīksne.



↑ Opening ceremony of the historic *Roche* building. From left: *Roche Latvia* employees: Elīna Dzērve, Klāvs Freidenfelds, Eva Marksa, Jānis Kalnājs. 26 August 2020.
Photo: Jānis Brencis.



← Roche Latvia team photo at the opening of the Roche historic building at Miera iela 25. From left, row 1: Valentinas Lukosevicius (RDC Manager in the Baltics), Eva Marksa, Roland Faessler (Lead Architect at Roche), Alise Krūmiņa, André Hoffmann (Roche Vice-chairman), Rauls Vēliņš, Severin Schwan, (Roche's Global CEO), Per-Olof Attinger (Secretary of Roche's Corporate Executive Committee), Dalimil Žůrek (Country Manager Roche Diagnostics Baltics), Dana Erciņa-Užāne, Mihails Auziņš, Rasa Jonušienė (General Manager Roche Lithuania), Laura Lemkina. Row 2: Ginta Nažinska, Zane Lielaide, Kristīne Voitekviča, Anita Ločmele, Iveta Zauska, Gundega Auziņa, Zane Degro, Elīna Dzērve, Inesa Kozlovskā, Edīte Krūmiņa, Aija Ozoliņa, Solvita Verkēviča, Agnese Dimante, Inga Neļķe, Ilze Folkmane, Gunita Varblane, Anda Zukule, Ilze Muižniece, Kārlis Kocers, Rūta Kalniņa, Linas Karpicius (IT specialist Baltics). Row 3: Kristaps Herings, Ilvars Kalniņš, Jānis Siliņš, Rets Renemanis, Kristīne Linere, Ieva Ābele, Jānis Kalnājs, Dace Butlere, Linda Irbe, Kristīne Soboļevska, Klāvs Freidenfelds, Jānis Leimans, Indulis Zālītis, Daiga Briņķe, Ieva Sedleniece, Rolands Plinta. 26 August 2020. Photo: Lauris Vīksne.

The *Roche Latvia* Art Collection

Every art collection always has multiple values: it expresses the cultural, historical, artistic and economic attitudes of its time as well as the ethical and educational attitudes of the people who have put the collection together. The goal of creating the *Roche Latvia* Art Collection is not just to collect, preserve, and display the works of art publicly, but also to identify and popularise art values with a focus on the future.

Agita Gritāne
Art historian

The Collection, Artworks, Artists

Agita Gritāne

Putting the contemporary art collection of *Roche Latvia* together began in 1997. The first work of art is the plastic sculpture *The Little Dancer* created by the sculptor Ilze Emse. In the following years the art collection expanded, with an increase in the number of works and artists represented, as well as in the diversification of art forms. Currently, the *Roche Latvia* Art Collection includes 10 authors and their works in various fine art techniques: painting, sculpture, textiles, and glass art.

The contemporary art collection is created to support the creativity and innovation of artists both in the global art world and in the individual creativ-

ity of each artist. The collection features the works of art by internationally acknowledged artists whose signatures are recognised not only by Latvian art lovers, but also by connoisseurs around the world. The works of art created by the selected artists have been exhibited in prestigious world exhibitions, galleries, and collections. The collection also represents artists who are currently embarking on their creative search for art, and who have a very expressive, individual artistic vision. When choosing artworks to compose the collection, the values that the artist expresses in their work is of the utmost importance for the *Roche Latvia* team.

Any art collection always has multiple values: it expresses the cultural and historical, artistic and economic attitude of its time, as well as the ethical and educational attitude of the people who put the collection together. The goal of creating the *Roche Latvia* Art Collection is not just to collect, preserve, and display the works of art publicly, but also to identify and popularise art values with a focus on the future.

Roche Latvia is a part of the Swiss company *Roche*, which has been successfully working in the field of pharmacy for more than 120 years. In Latvia, the company wishes to bring the global values of *Roche* closer to the local com-

munity. Creativity, uniqueness, and traditions are important for the company's daily work. It is these three components that are the overall guiding principle of the company's everyday work. A structured and developed system of values has been of the greatest significance to the company since its foundation. Progress, innovation, responsibility, and humanity at the heart of everything have become the hallmarks of the company. These are just a few keywords that describe the *Roche* attitude towards life, work, everyday life, and society in general. Cultural heritage, national history, and awareness of one's nation is crucial for every *Roche* employee. Philosophical,

seemingly elusive values are those that have been the basis and meaning of the company's daily work for years. Culture, art, music, and education are the company's priorities that promote innovation, progress, and the future development of society. This is evidenced by several support programmes and goals of the company. *Roche* is the main sponsor of the prestigious Lucerne Festival of classical music, which has been taking place in this Swiss city since 1938. The company also supports an educational project founded in 2004, the Lucerne Festival Academy and its orchestra. Every year it gathers new musical talents and organises master classes and concerts available to the general public. This section of the festival programme is open to the contemporary world of sound, allowing experiments and improvisations in which music merges with other art genres.

Roche is also proud of the Emanuel Hoffmann Arts Foundation, established in 1933, which is now in its third generation, carefully following the founders' goal of

supporting contemporary art and making it accessible to the general public.

Roche Latvia continues and complements the overall direction of the company by including the significant works of a number of contemporary artists – e.g. Jānis Avotiņš, Ēriks Apaļais, Barbara Gaile, and Olga Šilova – in its art collection. Equally important is the diversity of the collection, which is complemented by authors whose works are created in special formats and techniques, e.g. Anda Munkevica's glass art and Elīna Veilande-Apine's textile works. At present, when supplementing the art collection, preference is given to young artists who are not beginners in their field but have already gained a certain level of education, recognition, and prestige. This way, the company supports not just the ideas of young artists, but also promotes their creativity and recognition in the art world.

During the writing of this book, the next work of the *Roche Latvia* Art Collection is being created under the leadership of Ieva Krūmiņa, the head of

the Textile Department of the Art Academy of Latvia, professor, and outstanding textile artist. The textile work in the process of creation is intended as a composition of many mosaics. Each of them will represent a cell in one whole artwork in which each part will have its own author, its own message and understanding of the field of medicine, its historical development, philosophy, and the set of values of *Roche Latvia*. More than twenty authors are involved in the creation of the work: students, experienced teachers, and textile artists. Everyone is united by the common idea that art and science are the creative processes of a human being. Thoughts cannot always be expressed in words; they can often be expressed through visual images. Imagination, passion, and the energy of creative processes creates a balanced unity in the emerging map of inspiration for art and science. The personal associative experience of each author develops a composition map, where the mixing of different elements during the building of

organic forms creates an idea of unique processes of seeking. When creating ideas and sketches for the work, future textile artists reflect on the new-generation medicines, the pharmaceutical industry, its technological development and future visions, as well as genetic engineering and its visual reference in history, cultural heritage, ethnography, and ornamental patterns. The author of each emerging art cell is free in their creative expression and chosen technique. The size of the work in progress will be 9 x 6 m; it will consist of 22 separate compositions of different sizes (50 x 50 cm and 100 x 40 cm). The artists will choose to use classic weaving, embroidery, and felting techniques, as well as digital tapestries and screen printing techniques. It is expected that one part of the mosaic of the whole composition will be created by *Roche Latvia* employees, thus embedding their message and ideas into the artwork.

The *Roche Latvia* Art Collection is intended as a communication tool with



which the company supports and promotes the diversity of contemporary Latvian art. On a daily basis, the works of art are available to enjoy for the *Roche Latvia* employees, as well as guests and partners of the company.

One of the elements of the company's visual identity is the work done in watercolour technique by the artist Ieva Lapiņa, and which represents the renovated office building of *Roche Latvia* at Miera iela 25, Riga. In this artwork, the reflection of the historic building on the pavement adorns the testimony of its transformation into a modern home for *Roche Latvia* office employees that meets the requirements of the 21st century. The

great consideration for the preservation of the historical heritage, the significant architecture, and the skilful use of modern technologies allow the building to be assessed as one of the most successfully restored modern buildings. Using the transparency of watercolour technique, the artist adds extra lightness and airiness to the building in her artwork. The illuminated windows of the building invite you to enter and feel the hospitality, responsiveness, and concern for the present and future of our society. The artist Ieva Lapiņa (1963) graduated from the Department of Stage Design at the Art Academy of Latvia. She has implemented many projects in exposition and museum



exhibit design, and currently works in the field of design and decoration.

↑ Artist Ieva Lapiņa with watercolours of the historic *Roche* building. 2020. Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.

↖ Watercolour of the historic *Roche* building. Ieva Lapiņa. 2020. Photo: Artūrs Lapiņš.

Olga Šilova.

Swing.

2020. Bronze, corten steel, electric motor, bronze casting, steel sheet welding

The kinetic urban sculpture *Swing* has been created in accordance with Roche Latvia's wish to create a piece of art that would welcome employees and guests at the entrance to the building every morning, creating a sense of joy and openness. Passers-by on Miera iela can also enjoy the artwork.

The swing symbolises joy. When swinging on a swing, a person feels a momentary feeling of happiness, overcoming gravity and enjoying the freedom of flight; daily worries and problems are forgotten. When moving up and down with the rhythm of the swing, the body becomes weightless, and the joy of momentary weightlessness relaxes the

mind. The composition tells a story about the figures sitting on a swing: a man and a woman. Both sculptural images address lightness and fragile emotionality, inviting people to stop and observe uneven and finely sensitive surfaces. The slim and flexible figures are created expressively, without claiming the completeness of realistic forms, which gives the work an additional philosophical dimension.

Thanks to the sculptor's interest in the relationship between the artwork and space as a special phenomenon of human perception, the work blends seamlessly into the environment. Using the rectangular shape of perfectly groomed



greenery, it seems to emerge from the green pedestal.

Glances filled with love and joy accompany the pair on the swing, and the rhythmic movement mesmerises passers-by like slow-motion footage. Then the moment becomes an eternity, and an especially gentle, loving look at the world around you becomes a positive start for your day.

↑ Olga Šilova. *Šūpoles* (Swing). 2020. Bronze, corten steel, electric motor, bronze casting, steel sheet welding. Photo: Artūrs Lapiņš.

Olga Šilova (1966)

Olga Šilova is one of the most famous contemporary Latvian sculptors. She has been working in sculpture creatively and in a versatile manner since the 1990s, with equal success in creating both small and fragile works of art and monumentally strong and large-sized compositions. The artist's working material is metal, most often bronze and aluminium. Wood can be seen in some works, and stone often serves as a base.

The sculptor's handwriting features surface roughness, porousness, chiselled texture, irregular polishing, fingerprints, or other artistic methods of material processing.

The compositions created by Olga Šilova are featured by a generally uncharacteristic means of sculptural expression: a line. However, lines are never absolutely straightforward in the artist's work; they are always deliberately uneven and natural, thus giving the work character and uniqueness. Equally interesting are the sculptor's games with geometric shapes. The artist creates balanced compositions by bringing harmony to the shapes or rhythmically arranging different elements.

When describing the sculptor's work, art historian Laima Slava has said: '(...) it can be considered that Olga continues the line that Teodors Zalkalns began in Latvian sculpture with his bronze

art works at the beginning of the century: the sensitively modelled portrait *Adelīna* (1908), in a volatile mood, and *Lamb* (1933), the embodiment of the fragility of life.¹

Olga Šilova's works are united by an interest in stylisation of the human figure, simplifying the images and searching for different poses. The figures are elongated, often deformed, which gives them elegance and sophisticated movement. The sculptor tends to vary freely with figurative and absolutely abstract shapes. Her work is generally distinguished by a very wide range of stylistic features, which testifies to the ability to individually adapt the necessary means of artistic expression to each sculpture, choosing the most appropriate shape and material.

In 1991 Olga Šilova graduated from the Art Academy of Latvia with her graduate work *Themis*. She currently works at the academy as an associate professor and transfers her knowledge and experience to future sculptors. Šilova has participated in numerous group exhibitions both in Latvia and abroad. Since 1994 she has regularly exhibited her works in solo exhibitions in Riga, Ventspils, St. Petersburg, and elsewhere.

Olga Šilova's works can be found in collections both in Latvia and around the world. Her works complement collections in museums, institutions, and pri-

vate collections: *Little Shepherd* (1993), *Milky Way* (1999) – the collection of the Latvian National Museum of Art; *Angel* (2002) – the collection of the Jūrmala Art Museum; *Portrait of Inese Dumpe* (2001) – the collection of the Latvian National Opera; several works are part of the collection of Swedbank Rīga: *Rain* (1994), *Flutist* (1994), *Don Quixote* (1994), and *Bird* (1998); and the Ventspils Nafta art collection owns: *Fish*, *Horse*, and *Trophy* (all 1998). Her works in foreign art collections include: *Sunset* (1997) – Organising Committee of the Toyamura International Sculpture Biennale (Hokkaido, Japan); and *Vacationer* (1994) – Royal Copenhagen Collection (Copenhagen, Denmark). Šilova's works are found in private collections in Latvia, Cyprus, Sweden, Denmark, Germany, the USA, France, and elsewhere. Olga Šilova has also designed several recognisable awards (Pride of Latvia and the Ziedonis Award).

Sculptures created by Šilova are located in the public spaces of several Latvian cities, e.g. *Rīga Tower Counter* (2007), *Leste* (2016), the memorial plate for poet Eduards Veidenbaums (2017) in Rīga, the water fountain *Mug* (2004), *Mermaid and Swimmer* (2005), *Aspazija* (2020) in Jūrmala, the fountain *Horse* (1998) in Ventspils, the environmental object *Kissers* (2003) in Limbaži, the fountain *Water Bollard* (2004) in Cēsis, *Amber Clock* (2004) in Liepāja, etc.

Olga Šilova's works feature grace of form and reverence for the material. Much attention is paid to the silhouette, textures, and volume ratios of composition. Šilova's current work shows equally great interest in the creation of abstract forms and in the reproduction of real images. The language of sculpture manifests itself by focusing on shape and compositional solutions while, at the same time, maintaining emotional fragility, strength, and influence upon the viewer.

1 Slava L. Skūpstā distance: Olga Šilova. Studija. 2002, No. 5(26), pp.10.–15.

Anda Munkevica.

Awakening.

2020. Semi-frosted glass, molten, rolled.
1300 x 500 x 220 mm, 1070 x 420 x
220 mm, 32 kg

Anda Munkevica. *Flying Companions*. 2020. Semi-frosted glass, molten in a cast. 700 x 200 x 200–300 x 200 x 150 mm, 300–900 g

Initially, artist Anda Munkevica created both artworks as two separate compositions. However, by placing them in the new office premises of *Roche Latvia* at Miera iela 25, Riga, the two works of art allegedly merged and became complementary to each other. Due to the verticality of the room, the works were organically synthesised, becoming a whole for a specific place, environment, and people. Every morning at the entrance, the company's employees are greeted by a glittering ensemble of glass

images that invite them to look up and think further and broader.

The artwork *Awakening* symbolises the beginning of the new. Like every morning and every new room. The depicted images of two people invite us to remember the ideas of humanism. The idea of the artist's work encourages you to wake up to something new, to wake up to yourself, light and life. This is like a symbolic awakening to light. The work symbolises the call for everyone to find a human being within themselves.

The work *Flying Companions* speaks about the good, about immortality and joy. Munkevica's work was inspired by the delicate and fast flight of birds, how they



↑ Anda Munkevica working on the artwork *Pamošanās* (Awakening) in her studio. April 2019. Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.

↖ Artworks *Pamošanās* (Awakening) and *Lidojošie pavadoņi* (Flying Satellites) by Anda Munkevica in *Roche Latvia* office interior. 2020. Photo: Alexey Murashko

soar high in the air, and their ability to belong in the space between heaven and earth. It is a symbol of divine nature, the sun, life, ascension, and inspiration. The subtle glass images invite the viewer to think of birds as messengers of destiny, as companions of the soul, as a symbol of freedom of the spirit.

At the entrance to *Roche Latvia*, the company's employees and guests are greeted and accompanied by 12 free-flying, twinkling glass birds rising up to the sun.

Anda Munkevica (1974)

Anda Munkevica is an outstanding and bright master of glass art whose fundamental knowledge and search for new means of artistic expression in glass art technologies allow her to be ranked among the best in the world of Baltic and European glass art. Experience, creativity, and imagination are complemented by the artist's love and interest in nature, the philosophy of life, and her work. Munkevica can perfectly feel the materiality of glass, the shape of the work, and its relationship with space. The presence of nature and harmony with the representations of natural forms is important in her works. Some artworks are made using just natural materials, e.g. glass moulds cast in oak bark. Anda Munkevica's works cover a very wide range of forms, techniques, and content used. She is a master of great monumental forms, and works equally creatively and freely with glass as a form of sculpture or architecture. Her ideas are equally expressive, allowing small-scale works to shine.

Munkevica's work is based on the traditions of Baltic glass, with special emphasis on the uniqueness of Latvian stained glass artists, the Lithuanian monumental glass school, and the minimalism of Estonian glass design. Anda Munkevica gained her knowledge of glass art at the Art Academy of Latvia; later, she supplemented her experience at Pil-

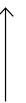
chuck Glass School, Eastlake Glass Studio, and Pratt Fine Arts Center (all in the USA), as well as at glass art centres in Finland, Russia, Denmark, Lithuania, and elsewhere.

Munkevica has her own glass art studio, *AM Studio*, a place for gaining practical experience, knowledge and skills; it is always open to young glass artists and students.

Anda Munkevica's works are regularly featured in glass art forums and international art fairs in Europe and elsewhere in the world: Glass Kanazawa (Japan), Glass Zwiese (Germany), Kiln-formed Glass (the Netherlands), European Glass Context (Denmark), the International Glassart Biennale (Belgium), and the International Glass Forum Ningbo (China). Munkevica has participated in numerous group exhibitions in Latvia, the Baltics, Europe, and elsewhere in the world. Audiences have had the opportunity to become acquainted with her work at several solo exhibitions in Riga, Valmiera, Jūrmala, Sigulda and elsewhere in Latvia, as well as in Kiev, Pskov, St. Petersburg and Seattle. Munkevica's works of art are included in the collection of the Latvian Museum of Decorative Arts and Design, as well as in the collections of many important foreign museums: the Corning Museum (USA), Coganezaki Glass Museum, Notojima Glass Art Museum and Design Centre (Ishikawa,

Japan), the All-Russian Museum of Arts and Crafts in Moscow and Nikolsk Museum of Glass and Crystal (Russia), the European Museum of Modern Glass in Rodental (Germany), GlazenHuis Lommel (Belgium), and elsewhere. Her works are also in private collections in Latvia and around the world.

The art created by Anda Munkevica is highly valued. She has received several awards of international and national significance and prizes of recognition and excellence. In 2020 she was nominated to become an honorary member of the Russian Academy of Arts.



Ilze Emse-Grīnberga.

The Little Dancer.

1995. White clay, underglaze, glaze.

Author's technique. 47 x 28 x 6 cm

This is one of the first ceramic works of artist Ilze Emse-Grīnberga, made in 1995 during her studies in California (USA) and later exhibited in her first solo exhibition, *The Other Side of the Globe*, at the gallery Jāņa sēta in Riga.

Recalling the time when the work was created, the artist describes it as follows: '*The Little Dancer* is like a sparkling generalisation of the feelings of a twenty-five-year-old apolitical person born and raised under the auspices of the Soviet Union, and who, only five years after the restoration of Latvia's independence, is participating in an art study exchange programme for a short time in the wonderland of America, in the state of California'.²

The shape, colour and technique of the work of art testify to the professional skills acquired in Latvia, then perfected on the other side of the globe, in America.

Ilze Emse-Grīnberga (1970)

Ilze Emse-Grīnberga is a professional ceramicist who specialises in the creation of porcelain artwork. Her work features diverse content, a subtle variety of shapes, and experiments with different technologies. In ceramics, the artist is interested in the structure of materials, most often porcelain, from which a shape can be formed while maintaining its fragility, tension, and graphic quality.



Emse-Grīnberga studied in the Ceramics Department of the Riga Secondary School of Applied Arts, continued her studies at the Art Academy of Latvia, and then apprenticed in the master workshop of the outstanding artist and founder of Latvian contemporary ceramics, Pēteris Martinsons (1931-2013). Emse-Grīnberga obtained her master's degree by defending her diploma thesis, *Totems*, under the supervision of Pēteris Martinsons. After obtaining the L. R. Prickett Foundation scholarship (USA), she supplemented her experience in ceramics and screen printing at the Department of Ceramics and Graphics at Humboldt University (California, USA).



↑ Opening ceremony of the historic Roche building. Signing of the guest book by artist Ilze Emse-Grīnberga. 26 August 2020. Photo: Lauris Vīksne.

↖ Ilze Emse-Grīnberga. *Mazā dejotāja* (The little dancer). 1995. White clay, underglaze paints, glaze. Author's technique. 47×28×6 cm. Photo: Artūrs Lapiņš.

2 Author's interview with Ilze Emse-Grīnberga. 20.05.2020

Since 1989 Emse-Grīnberga has participated in many international porcelain and ceramic symposia in Latvia, Poland, Estonia and Lithuania. The public can regularly enjoy artworks made by Ilze Emse-Grīnberga at her many solo exhibitions both in Latvia and abroad. Her first solo exhibition took place in the gallery Jāņa sēta in Riga (1996), which was followed by exhibitions at: the gallery Čiris in Riga (1997), the Ainaži Maritime School Museum (2000), the Ģederts Elias Jelgava History and Art Museum (2000, 2009, 2010), the Salacgrīva Local History Museum (2003), the gallery TegelSten in Jerfall, Sweden (2004), the Madona Museum of Art and Local History (2004), the Riga Porcelain Museum (2008), the Open Studio in Loviisa, Finland (2010), and the Šiauliai City Art Gallery in Lithuania (2013), among others. Emse-Grīnberga has regularly participated in various exhibitions featuring both local and international groups of artists.

Since starting her studies at the Riga Secondary School of Applied Arts,

Ilze Emse-Grīnberga has always felt that ceramics are the closest of her creative activities. For more than eleven years, she has purposefully devoted her professional education and practical experience to the medium, which has then allowed her to express herself freely and in a variety of ways to fulfil her creative ideas and goals in art. The creation of ceramic works requires serious and thorough education, as a knowledge of physics and chemistry must be acquired. Often the artist's creative idea is subjected to the complex influence of technology, as well as to fire, which largely determines the final result. In this process, everything becomes dependent on the artist's accumulated experience and knowledge gained through experimentation.

Emse-Grīnberga's study experience in screen printing at the American university and working as an art editor at one of Latvia's leading periodicals have given her uncompromising confidence in developing book designs and creating illustrations for children's and adult

poetry collections. Ilze Emse-Grīnberga presented herself as a book illustrator in 2010 by creating colourful, multidimensional fantasies for the children's book *Dzejoliši/Little Poems* (publishing house *Jumava*). Her artistic signature style can be attributed to a sense of irony and her use of amazing shapes and lines that surprise the reader. The illustrations in Emse-Grīnberga's books are artistically vivid, bright, and encourage imagination.

However, Emse-Grīnberga admits that 'the medium of ceramics has always been my great love, and I have never allowed it to be neglected.'³ By participating in exhibitions, symposia, and artist residency programmes and creating environmental objects, the artist 'maintains a sensitive form'. This helps when working with ceramics, which have the least resistance compared to other materials.

Emse-Grīnberga's creative versatility is also evidenced by her work in creating animated images. She has used figurines, the basis of visual expression in plasticine animation, to fulfil her most

³ Author's interview with Ilze Emse-Grīnberga. 20.05.2020

daring creative ideas. Her figures have been used both at J. Podnieks' studio and elsewhere, and she has created plasticine animated images for movies, commercials, and educational clips. Emse-Grīnberga is the author and artist of the animated films *Raganas poga* (2005), *Burvīga diena* (2010), and others.

A diversity of creative activity and technological knowledge have been featured in Emse-Grīnberga's interest and work over several years involving the restoration of majolica and terracotta tiled stoves. In turn, the patience gained from years of doing restoration work has been very useful when working on chamotte sculptures in Latvia and elsewhere in the world. These sculptures are created for a limited period of time and are displayed out in the open, despite the possibility of adverse weather conditions. Māris Brancis, an art historian, has described Ilze Emse-Grīnberga's chamotte sculpture *Wind Chime*, a laced construction created in Jelgava Park in 2015: 'It is built almost architecturally rationally and precisely:

the ribs of the building, the frame, rise up to flow together at the top, pouring together in the form of a roof. The middle of the reinforcement is filled with arched windows, which allow air and sunlight to flow freely. The work could well be called *The Power of Fragility*'.⁴

Emse-Grīnberga transfers her knowledge and skills to future artists while working at Jelgava Art School.

When creating works of art, Ilze Emse-Grīnberga is interested in shapes that can be viewed and visually interpreted both from the inside and the outside. An unfinished form that has hundreds of transformative variations and has almost nothing to do with functional porcelain.

Although Emse-Grīnberga admits that it is not important for her to cultivate a special signature style for the sake of recognition, her ceramic works are nevertheless highly recognisable by their special shapes, lines, and delicate fragility.

4 Brancis. M. Kustībā augšup. *Latvietis*. 2015, No. 377



Ēriks Apaļais.

Little Hare's Bathhouse II.

2006. Canvas, oil. 30 x 40 cm

This work in the collection belongs to the early works of Ēriks Apaļais. The works of this period are featured by colours, a sunny mood, and vibrant joy. *Little Hare's Bathhouse II* addresses its subject with a plastic modelling stroke, a slightly enchanted nocturnal mood, and deliberately open innocence. Back then, the differences in perception of the world of the child and that of adults, in which the same events are treated very differently, were of the utmost importance to the artist. Mythologically, the childish is contrasted with the conscious and the intelligent, thereby revealing a desire for a recognisable and idealised symbol that gives impetus to a new con-

struction of image-forming culture.

The work in the collection was created when Ēriks Apaļais was focused on his memories related to the cartoons and books of his childhood. The work was exhibited for the first time in Apaļais' solo exhibition *Searching for the Strongest Birch* at the Alma gallery in Riga. The exhibition featured ten current works, and viewers also had the opportunity to watch the cartoon *Little Hare's Bathhouse* (*Zaķīšu pirtīņa*), which was created during the Soviet era.

The painting in the *Roche Latvia* Art Collection comes from this exhibition, the creation of which was based on the similarity of memory structures with an

archive in which various files are stored. The content of each file allows you to return to a certain moment, feelings, and emotions in the past. This time it was *Little Hare's Bathhouse*, which back then, in the artist's childhood, was not easily accessible at all, but now anyone can watch it freely through various online resources. These kinds of memories are part of our culture, a part of our collective memory. Today an adult can watch a cartoon from their childhood, recalling a moment and the mixture of feelings that was typical for that time. Watching childhood cartoons again and again revives memories that, at the same time, are losing their magic in our consciousness.



↑ Ēriks Apaļais. *Zaķīša pirtīņa II* (Little Hare's Bathhouse II). 2006. Canvas, oil. 30x40 cm. Photo: Artūrs Lapiņš.

Confronted with the visual material of historical cartoons, today's impressions of 'looking through the eyes of an adult' and those experienced with the 'eyes of a child' intersect, and the meaning of the cartoon is transformed.⁵

The artist delves into the question and allows the viewer to answer it for themselves – how these memories are translated, interpreted, and transformed, how the recording of a visual memory that is now freely available to everyone on the internet affects each individual as well as all of society. The viewer returns to the memory space, its various places and times. It is up to each person to decide whether to linger, and although the authenticity of the found memories is not always certain and reliable, they do, however, provide a new experience of living through the process.

Ēriks Apaļais (1981)

Ēriks Apaļais is one of the most internationally recognised and original Latvian artists in the arena of contemporary art.

He is an artist who admits that he is not very interested in the formal aspects of painting, but rather in the images and words of memories and experience, which are much more important. Speaking about his works, Ēriks Apaļais has mentioned that he has always been interested in the image itself: how it is possible to read it, and how the image is able to depict reality.⁶ We can say that textual matter is present in the works of Apaļais, both in the forms of the depicted objects and in the references to various literary works, authors, and essays. His painting is a way of writing down and documenting the illusory gap between desire and the found word-image, between the non-bodily essence and the form of desire.

Ēriks Apaļais' works reveal what he has experienced, felt, understood,

and been interested in. His perspective reflects on society, inviting us to think about how we understand ourselves and the environment, how we converse and become aware of the world at large. Several years ago, when creating the 2013 exhibition *Vārdi* (Words) at the *KIM?* Contemporary Art Centre, Apaļais supplemented his recently created paintings with the essay *The Desire for Expressing in Words, and an Autobiography* (*Vēlme izteikt vārdos un autobiogrāfija*). In the essay he tried to explain how the theory of textual self-expression has guided his thinking when painting, and how the desire to say something can be injected into both written words and in the painted image as an autobiographical reflection.⁷ He describes the approach to painting as a tool of thinking.

There are several stages in his current work, and verbal language is an important component in all of them. Art historian and critic Santa Hirša has said that Ēriks Apaļais' art is based on questions of how to depict something not

5 Dzalbe A. Atmiņu zaķīši no YouTube. *Kultūras Forums*. 2008, No. 35, p. 9.

6 Kusiņa-Šulce L. Vēsture nav relatīva. *Latvijas Avīze*. 2020, No. 28, p. 14.

7 Apaļais Ē. Vēlme izteikt vārdos un autobiogrāfija. *Satori*. 2013, No. 1, pp. 102–107.

by staying within the boundaries of the usual languages of form, but by creating a new grammar of painting – the relation, or syntax, of visual elements.⁸ In his early artworks Apaļais is deliberately playful – sincere snowmen, much-loved toys, a gingerbread man, gnomes, and various images of the natural world – naïve and wise at the same time – appear in his paintings. They seem to resonate with memories of childhood, yet they include a more subtle psychological space of consciousness, one with many ambiguous questions, uncertainties and contradictions.

In Apaļais' later stages, monochrome compositions in which black and white dominate, sometimes merging with grey, play an increasingly important role in his work. The works become more abstract and fragmentarily laconic. The artist's passion for literature becomes important.

At this stage, the references to various literary works, the diversity of meanings, and the reflections generated by

what has been read are important. The image becomes a symbol for the read text. A levitating book, a typewriter, letters, a snowman, silhouettes and others seem to take the viewer out of everyday life and existence and invites them to indulge in a space with the unknown.

'Ēriks Apaļais' creative activity is often contrasted with local Latvian art traditions, emphasising his focus on intellectual rather than emotional phenomena. It is a scientifically scrupulous attitude towards depiction, one in which artistic tasks are closely related to conceptually cognitive ones. (...) An analytical attitude towards visual structures and their transformation into linguistic models are the features that distinguish Apaļais' works, not just in the context of Latvian art, but also in the much broader space-time scale of Western artistic traditions.⁹

Ēriks Apaļais studied English philology at the University of Latvia, which he later followed with studies at the University of Fine Arts Hamburg (HfBK) under the artist Prof. Andreas

Slominski. He graduated in 2011 with the Karl H. Ditze Prize for the Best Final Work for that year and the DAAD Prize for outstanding achievements from the German Academic Exchange Service.

Since 2008 Apaļais has participated in the international art fairs Art Basel, Art Berlin, Artissima (Turin), and ArtCologne Neumarkt (Cologne), as well as in group exhibitions in Riga, Vilnius, Cologne, Hamburg, Berlin, Milan, and elsewhere. His first solo exhibition, *Losing Balance*, took place at the Latvian Railway History Museum in 2005, followed by several solo exhibitions in Riga: *In Search of the Strongest Birch* (2008), *Le Cygne* (2016), *Institutional Games* (2017) at Alma gallery, *Vārdi/Words* (2013) at the Kim? Contemporary Art Centre, and *Branches* (2014) at the LNMM Exhibition Hall Arsenāls. Solo shows in Germany include *Confessions* (2011) and *Inscribed Silhouettes* (2014) at Gallery Vera Munro in Hamburg. In the spring of 2020 he had an ambitious solo exhibition at the Latvian National Museum of Art, which was

curated by the internationally renowned art historian, writer and lecturer Catherine Gregg.

In 2011 Ēriks Apaļais was nominated for the German Young Artists Award *Ars viva 11/12*, and in 2019 for the Purvītis Prize for his series of paintings titled *Earth Diaries* at the Riga International Biennial of Contemporary Art RIBOCA.

Apaļais' works can be found in prestigious international collections in Latvia, including those of the Latvian National Museum of Art (LNMM), the Swedbank Art Collection, the BTA Art Collection, the J. Zuzāns Collection, and the M. Vītols private collection.

8 Hirša S. Patības topogrāfija. Available at: <http://www.punctummagazine.lv/2020/05/19/patibas-topografija/>

9 Hirša S. Patības topogrāfija. Available at: <http://www.punctummagazine.lv/2020/05/19/patibas-topografija/>

Madara Neikena.

Untitled (Rural Landscape).

2018. Canvas, oil. 150 x 200 cm



Madara Neikena often leaves her works untitled so as not to limit the viewer's imagination. What is important to Neikena is the colour itself, its substance, materiality, taste, smell, touch, and feelings...which would be possible if one could step into the painting and give oneself up to the world created in it. Neikena looks for a way to convey this emotional message to the viewer. Her work consists of a set of many things: colour, form, and line, as well as all the formal means of expression of painting, the meaning of which is always present, regardless of the contextual shape of the idea. Neikena admits that her primary priority is 'how' rather than 'what'.¹⁰

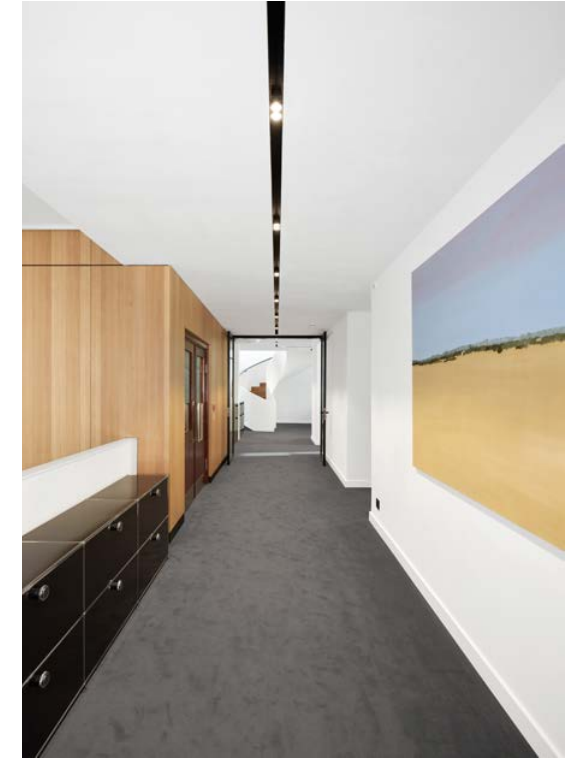
Both paintings in the collection vividly characterise Neikena's interest in the variability and fragility of nature, in darkness and light. She patiently observes the rhythm of nature and the variability of natural light, paying less attention to man-made environments and light. With her laconic, fragile and delicate broadness of composition, Neikena allows the viewer to see and feel the various moods that can be encountered at the moment when the first and last rays of the sun meet the layers of the atmosphere. Physical and metaphysical fluctuations.

The place and time depicted in the painting *Untitled (Rural Landscape)* is

crucial to Neikena, whereas to the viewer it can be any personal or imagined place.

Madara Neikena (1988)

One of the few painters of the younger generation for whom painting the presence of nature is important. Her sketches and works are made in the open air, and she often uses the *alla prima* approach. Landscape is the main genre in Madara Neikena's paintings. Marine and seaside landscapes play a special role in her current creative work. Keeping in touch with nature and a carefully chosen environment, Neikena creates paintings that transmit lightness, freedom of presence, and harmony. The works feature



↑ Artwork *Untitled (Rural Landscape)* by Madara Neikena in Roche Latvia office interior. 2020.
Photo: Alexey Murashko

↖ Madara Neikena. *Untitled (Rural Landscape)*. 2018. Canvas, oil. 150×200 cm.
Photo: Artūrs Lapiņš.

¹⁰ Author's interview with Madara Neikena. 03.06.2020

laconic compositions – interactions of colour and light which the young painter transforms into a conditional landscape, one which has a meditative nature at the level of both art creation and reception.¹¹

As Madara Neikena emphasises, presence is important in painting. Being in nature and feeling the events of nature and their variability, she is fully present in these events, and through her works she allows the viewer to feel them as well. Sometimes just a few lines, a slight interaction of light and a minimalist pictorial expression, are what feature in the aeriality of the landscapes painted by Neikena.

Madara Neikena is a professional painter who has received both her bachelor and master's degrees from the Painting Department of the Art Academy of Latvia. In 2014 she both received an SEB scholarship in painting (Latvia) and was awarded the *Premio Marina di Ravenna* residency (Italy). Since 2010 she has been participating in exhibitions, plein airs and residencies both in Latvia and abroad. Neikena's most significant solo exhibitions have taken place in the gallery Art XO, Riga (2016), the Madona Local History and Art Museum (2018), the



↑ Madara Neikena. *Untitled*. 2018.
Canvas, oil. 75×55 cm.
Photo: Artūrs Lapiņš.

11 Madara Neikena. Artists. Galerija XO.
Available at: <https://www.makslaxogalerija.lv/lat/makslinieki/madara-neikena-2/>

Elīna Veilande-Apine.

Degsme. Godīgums. Drosme.

(Passion. Honesty. Courage.)

2013. Author's technique. 110 x 170 cm

gallery Daugava, Riga (2018, 2020) and the Jūrmala Museum (2020).

Elīna Veilande-Apine created this work while thinking about the values and responsibility of *Roche Latvia*. The work is based on the entirety of the company's values, activities and attitudes as they have developed over the years. It is well known that it is people who make the company. Therefore, it is symbolic that the employees of *Roche Latvia* became involved in the project by obtaining the necessary fabrics through donating their own clothes and textiles. The materials used give an emotional charge to the textile work; they supplement it with secret stories, histories and wishes; they com-

bine and make the joint process more significant. This made the work of art personal and individual, as the soul of the company attitude was now woven into it.

Speaking about the concept behind the work, Veilande-Apine emphasises that the path to change begins with awareness. In order not to lose confidence and trust in your abilities, it is important to be aware of core values, and to set both individual and shared priorities.

The idea to visualise the core values of *Roche Latvia* in a textile work gave Elīna Veilande-Apine the opportunity to once again study Latvian ethnographic symbols/signs and find unifying meanings that could be integrated into the work. In

collaboration with Latvian ethnographer Valdis Celms, appropriate symbols/signs were selected for each core value:

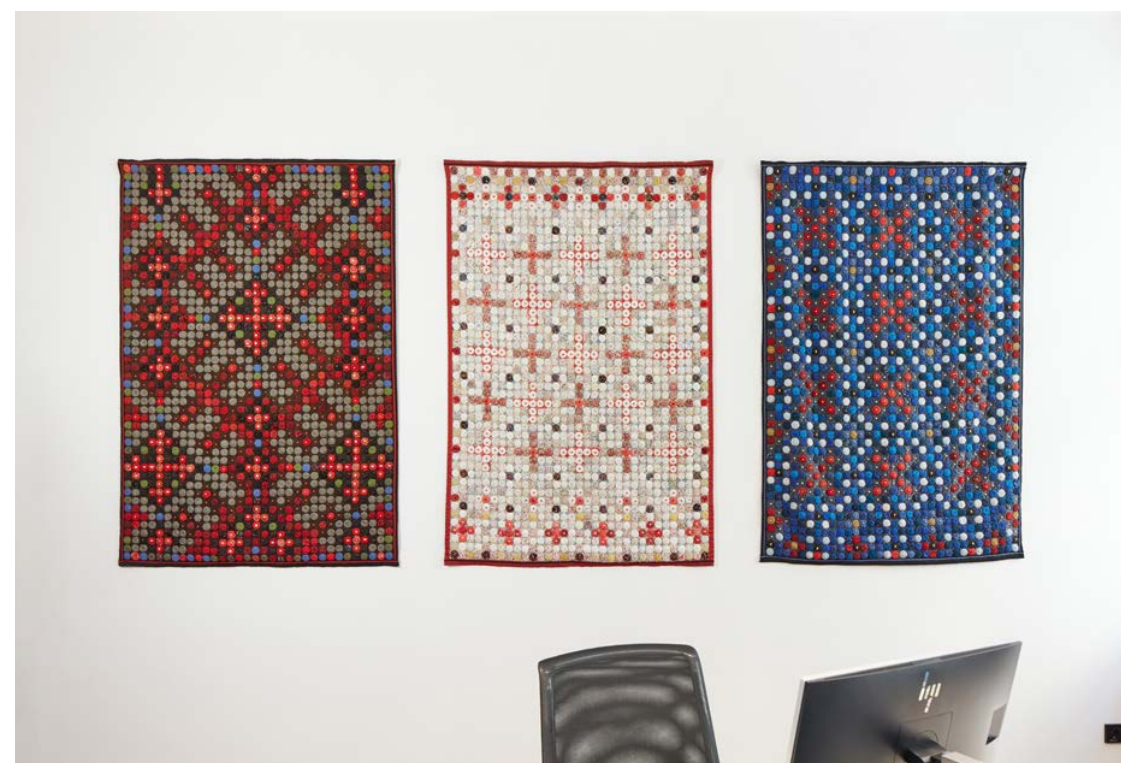
God's sign: Honesty

Māra's sign: Courage

Laima's sign: Passion

Each of these powerful signs makes one think about, understand and feel the values of the Latvian people that have been passed down from generation to generation.

In order to keep the meaning of these values, a symbolic interpretation is required. The work is based on the research of ideas, materials, and techniques. In the process of researching the signs, Veilande-Apine discovered the



↑ Elīna Veilande-Apine. *Degsme. Godīgums. Drosme.* (Passion. Honesty. Courage.) 2013. Author's technique. 110x170 cm. Photo: Alexey Murashko.

identity of each sign not just in a graphic visualisation, but by giving each work its own tonal mood through emphasising the uniqueness of the sign and its essence.

The sources of inspiration for Veilande-Apine's technique that developed in the work can be found both in the process of recycling and in the technique of sewing ancient patchwork mosaics. By linking these techniques together and combining the structures of the different materials, the importance of the core value chosen to implement the idea and its interaction with a graphically formed character is highlighted. The uniqueness of this work stems from the combination and original use of all aforementioned techniques.

Elīna Veilande-Apine (1974)

Elīna Veilande-Apine is an artist whose works feature ideas that have been woven into a textile material. Each work and collection made by a textile artist has its own story. In telling hers, Elīna Veilande-Apine experiments and looks for new methods and materials. Endless creative quests and subtle nuances of detail are what appeal to and surprise the viewer.

Veilande-Apine uses various textile assembly techniques in her work. Her approach to the work of art is intuitive, giving the viewer the opportunity to feel and interpret the created piece while continuing the process of creation. She also acknowledges the material itself as fascinating, often becoming the source of an idea.

Elīna Veilande-Apine has a master's degree from the Department of Textile Art of the Art Academy of Latvia and is currently continuing her doctoral studies by researching the development of textile art in Latvia at the end of the 20th

century and in the beginning of the 21st century.

Textile art is one of the most diverse branches of art. In its specifics, it includes free expressions of art, design and variation with materials, a diverse and complex range of technologies, and experimental and free artistic expressions chosen by the artist. In textile art, the artist is unlimited in the implementation of their creative ideas, artistic freedom, and opportunities to work with various materials and technologies. Elīna Veilande-Apine admits that she is still continuing to improve by learning about the dynamic and multi-layered processes of the textile art industry.

The process of creating the work itself – the material, its structure and the combination of different structures – is of the utmost importance for the artist. One of the textile art techniques that Veilande-Apine uses in her work is sewing. She is fascinated by fabric as a material and the diversity of its variations, such as a very thin and fragile fabric

combined with a thick and voluminous, glossy one with a matte finish. She likes to watch how several layers of transparent fabrics create new shades, sizes, and structures.

Veilande-Apine often uses assemblies of ready-made materials in her artworks. The origin of a material – which can range from completely new to old, and from anonymous to filled with personal significance – is crucial. When creating a work of art, the same material or texture often acquires completely new ideas and meanings when placed within a collage.

Elīna Veilande-Apine regularly participates in group exhibitions in Latvia and around the world: in Lithuania, Estonia, France, Finland, Germany, the United Kingdom, Russia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Taiwan, and the USA. Her works can be found in the collection of the Latvian National Museum of Art, as well as in private collections in Latvia, Germany, and the USA.

Diāna Jefimova.

M25.

2020. Canvas, oil. 104 x 180 cm

Diana Jefimova created this painting while thinking about the place and the building where it will be hung on the wall. Her idea was to create a light work as a tribute to the white walls of the room. The renovated *Roche Latvia* office building on Miera iela 25, Riga, was built in 1932. The building is one of the first and most outstanding examples of functionalist architecture in Riga. It was designed by the architect Aleksandrs Klinklāvs (1899–1982). In the 1930s, functionalism entered architecture as another contrast to the previously dominant styles that had been based on classical heritage. Rooms became sunnier and more open, the planes

of walls – monochrome and light. Jefimova's painting *M25* perfectly complements and accentuates the modern renovated premises.

Diāna Jefimova (1984)

Diāna Jefimova is a young and promising painter whose works feature observations and quests regarding herself, thoughts, art, painting, and the world that surrounds her. Jefimova devotes herself to painting as a process of thinking and feeling. She rarely does sketches and often starts painting without knowing where the work process will take her and what the result will be. She paints slowly and just a little at a time,



allowing the concept to mature. Prior to creating each work, the process of thinking is crucial to Jefimova. In order to create, the conditions must be perfect: privacy, her inner world, and surrendering to the flow of thoughts.

Diāna Jefimova is currently studying in the Painting Department of the Art Academy of Latvia and is actively absorbing new knowledge, skills, and opportunities.

The painting process itself is of great significance to Jefimova. Seeing as she feels that the process of painting is her mission, she cannot imagine herself without it. Through her artworks she illustrates things that are important

↑ Diāna Jefimova. *M25*. 2020. Canvas, oil.
104×180 cm.
Photo: Alexey Murashko.

to her, without thinking about pleasing anyone else.

She often paints series of artworks, for example, her series of paintings titled *Stalker*. The first ideas came from observing a quiet house in Ķīpsala. Jefimova gazed at the building in the twilight, in the dark, in the rain, and illuminated by the sun – never approaching it, yet deeply feeling its mood. Later, Jefimova turned her attention to another building, now observing this one from early spring to late autumn. Seeing and thinking about a particular place day in and day out, the place gradually becomes personal. It is no longer just a view of the facade of the building; these are thoughts,

visions and dreams about what the interior of the house might look like, who are the people living and working there, what is the atmosphere like, the lighting, the mood... Each artwork by Diāna Jefimova is deeply personal; she feels responsible for the ideas and emotions that are expressed through the colours. And yet she does not paint specific places – each viewer recognises or sees in it whatever they understand best. Often the viewer can feel the environment or surroundings that have inspired Jefimova to reflect and create the moods that she has.

When creating the artwork *M25* for the *Roche Latvia* Art Collection, Jefimova felt unconsciously inspired by the

ideas behind her painting series *Stalker*. In *M25* she has painted a specific environment and its characteristic mood, but this information has been kept undisclosed and is therefore left as a mystery to the viewer.¹²



↑ Diāna Jefimova. *Aicinājums (The Urge)*. 2019. Canvas, oil. 69.5×79.5 cm. Photo: Artūrs Lapiņš.

12 Author's interview with Diāna Jefimova. 15.05.2020

Jānis Avotiņš.

Untitled (Ballerina).

2019. Fabric, oil. 126 x 97 cm

This work in the collection continues the series of paintings *Untitled (Ballerinas)*, started by the artist Jānis Avotiņš in 2016. The series was first exhibited at Galerie Vera Munro in Hamburg. It then travelled to IBID galleries in London and Los Angeles, to Galerie Rüdiger Schöttle in Munich, and to the following art fairs: Art Basel (Switzerland), Frieze London (UK), and Frieze New York (USA).

The atmosphere of the work is created by a multi-layered grey; it is illuminated and merges with the image that penetrates throughout the composition. Dynamic, seemingly volatile movement resonates with the fragile but definite abstraction of the image. Volatile stairs

allow the viewer to live through a guesswork of the broadest range of senses and moods without the attraction of specific place or time references.

The volatile ballerina becomes Avotiņš' version of the motif proposed by Marcel Duchamp (1887–1967) in his modernist classic *Nude Descending a Staircase, No.2*, which was further interpreted in 1965 by the outstanding German artist Gerhard Richter (1932) in *Woman Descending the Staircase*. Avotiņš' artistic signature unusually and surprisingly reveals seemingly simple motifs in complex and mysterious compositions. At first glance, the viewer is pulled out of everyday attachment and engaged in an

unknown and slightly scary adventure. Fantasies lead not just to the physical movement of the ballerina, while observing and merging with the moment. The viewer can indulge in an elegant and unknown flow of movement.

Jānis Avotiņš (1981)

Painter Jānis Avotiņš is one of today's most internationally known and appreciated Latvian artists. For many years he has drawn inspiration and motives for his work from the visual heritage of the past, thus encouraging an awakening and receiving of our collective memory.

In studying Avotiņš' work, art historian Harald Kunde writes that he is one



↑ Jānis Avotiņš. *Untitled (Balerīna)*.
2019. Fabric, oil. 126×97 cm.
Photo: Artūrs Lapiņš.



of the last artists to embody the hope that European painting can meet modern requirements.¹³

The visual culture archive of the 20th century has become the most direct source of inspiration for Avotiņš. He uses the family albums of unknown persons, antique collections, public archives, Soviet-era press images, retouched city images in guides, and political photographs to transfer the cultural and historical evidence into his works, thereby giving them a view of his time and space. However, Jānis Avotiņš does not paint direct historical evidence and memories in his monochrome works. He frees historical images from unnecessary layering, punctuation,

and semantic meaning, often by deliberately erasing the features and references of a particular time and space. Thus, the work of art created by him becomes free: it becomes atemporal, and the images painted in it acquire an indefinite dimension of time and space. The viewer is given a free opportunity to interpret them with their own perceptual experience. Those familiar with Avotiņš' work will see in it a carefully researched and conscious reference to societal memory, to what has been lived and experienced together. Undoubtedly, the images painted by Avotiņš evoke the processes of collective memory, the origin of which is the witnesses of history used by the artist

and identified in the research processes: photographs, films and newspapers. Using artistically powerful techniques, these fragments of memory float to the viewer on a sensory level, most likely in various intensities and versions.

Jānis Avotiņš' monochrome visual language, based on the aesthetics of recognisable minimalism, attracts us with its mysterious atmosphere. This is what art historian Inese Riņķe says about his work: 'Light touches of the brush, colour washes, blank backgrounds of paintings with portraits of strange characters create a tense atmosphere. These paintings visually resemble images from the Soviet-era press, which is also Avotiņš'

↑ Artwork *Untitled (Balerīna)* by Jānis Avotiņš in Roche Latvia office interior. 2020.
Photo: Guna Rubule.

13 Kunde H. Foreword. Jānis Avotiņš. [Bielefeld: Kerber Verlag, 2008]

source of inspiration and a strong sign of collective memory'.¹⁴

Jānis Avotiņš admits that he is interested in reflecting on a complex image, one '(...) which includes the fact that I want to go further, we have to go further. We need to be aware of that collective memory, we have to play with it'.¹⁵

The potential of shared memory used in this manner allows the widest possible audience to understand the specific artworks and to communicate with each other in an open and understandable way. In recent years, more references to the Soviet era have come to the attention of Avotiņš. However, as he has pointed out himself in interviews, he never tried to adapt to any local or national connection between consciousness and understanding, but instead applied the ideas recorded in his works to the scales of much broader and deeper understanding. He mentions that 'I have never had the slightest connection with local folklore. Local examples of art have always been nearby, but it never seemed that I wanted to grow through it as an artist, to identify myself through it. The archives of the mass media of the 20th century (newspapers, magazines, television, private photos) proved to be a stronger influence on my imagination. Of course, nature is also the nature of the Soviet era'.¹⁶

Collective memories, like celebrations, unite us in common feelings, un-

derstanding, memories, and experience. Until recently, celebrations were a powerful tool of manipulation in the hands of the Soviet authorities. Avotiņš' works invite you to look and look back... over and over again. To feel, understand, and think.

Avotiņš reduces the images in his works to being hazy and isolated, as if they are volatile forms with a disappearing existence. Often the compositions have been created artistically grainy, creating the effect of a photo that has faded over time. Significant in his works is the light that radiates an elusive, enigmatic mood, allowing the image to flow and flow out of the viewer's sight. However, the images and compositions created by Avotiņš will not provide the viewer with answers or explanations about history; they cannot be read as personal or nostalgic references.

Avotiņš regularly participates in group exhibitions and has organised more than thirty solo exhibitions in museums and galleries in the USA, Austria, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Germany, Lithuania and other countries of the world over the last decade. Jānis Avotiņš graduated from the Painting Department of the Art Academy of Latvia, later continuing his studies in the Department of Visual Communication of the academy, as well as at the University of Manchester and the Paris Interna-

tional School of Art. For several years he has collaborated with the IBID Gallery in London and Los Angeles, Galerie Rüdiger Schöttle in Munich, Galerie Vera Munro in Basel, and the AKINCI Gallery in Amsterdam. His work has been featured in major private collections in Europe and the United States, including the collections of renowned collectors such as Francois Pinault, Charles Saatchi, Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, and The Rubell Family Collection.

Jānis Avotiņš has won several prestigious international art awards, including the Prix Jean-François Prat in 2016.

14 Purvīša balvas nominanti. *Arterritory.com* 11.04.2017. Available at: https://arterritory.com/lv/vizuala_maksla/aktuali/19011-purvisa_balvas_nominanti_2017_gada_pirmais_ceturksnis/

15 Avotiņš J. Hopeless substance, depressing characters. The conversation was written and introduced by the author Vilnis Vējš. *Kultūras Diena un izklaide*. 2017, No. 49, pp. 4–6.

16 Conversation with Purvītis Award nominee Jānis Avotiņš: "Mākslinieks palīdz skaidrot pasauli". *Arterritory.com* 29.09.2017. Available at: <http://www.purvisabalva.lv/lv/intervijas/intervija-ar-Jani-Avotinu>

Barbara Gaile.

NOBLE.

2008. 54 x 72 cm, pigment,
acrylic on canvas

The painting was exhibited in the 2010 solo exhibition *Pearls* at the Latvian National Museum of Art, and was selected for the catalogue of the LNMM exhibition *Pearls* (p. 28).

In writing about the 2010 exhibition *Pearls*, Leonid Bazhanov, art critic and, at the time, the artistic director of the Russian State Centre for Contemporary Art, said that in her paintings, Gaile '(...) avoids, guards against the painting finish, prefers texture; in colour, she accentuates the beginning of light, preserving the self-worth of the pigment, keeping its "sound", not its materiality.'

Barbara Gaile (b. 1968)

Barbara Gaile is a painter who has consistently represented abstract minimalism since graduating from art school. Her exquisite colour nuances, multifacetedness of materiality, and meditative moods are recognisable to viewers both in Latvia and far beyond its borders. In her works, Gaile invites the viewer to a conversation about the beautiful, in all its diversity and the changing course of time.

Gaile's works feature exceptional and strong nuances of colour and mood. Art historian Prof. Dr. habil. art. Eduards Kļaviņš has said about Gaile's work: '(...) the tonality of colours changes depending on the lighting and on the viewer's

movement along the painting, and thus its elusively mysterious life acquires additional qualities.' (Kļaviņš E., Catalogue for the exhibition *Discoveries* at Rīga Gallery. 28.02.-22.03.2008)

Gaile graduated from the Jānis Rozentāls Riga Art School in Riga, later studied Fine Arts at the University of Sunderland in the UK, and obtained a master's degree from the Department of Painting of the Art Academy of Latvia in 1995.

Barbara Gaile has been participating in exhibitions since 1988. Since then her works have regularly been part of important group exhibitions in Latvia, France, Germany and elsewhere in the world. She has received several impor-



↑ Barbara Gaile. *Noble.* 2008.
Pigment, acrylic on canvas. 54x72 cm.
Photo: Artūrs Lapiņš.

tant art awards: the Eva Lange Award, Sweden (1994), the Painting of the Year award, Agija Sūna Gallery, Latvia (1995), Grand Prize at the Soros Centre for Contemporary Art – Riga, at the exhibition GEO-GEO, Latvia (1996), Médaille d'Argent aux titres des arts du Mérite et dévouement français (France, 1998), and Prix Bornhauser-Molinari, France (2000).

Although Gaile has been living and working in Paris for more than twenty years now, Latvian viewers have had the opportunity to regularly follow the development of her work in both solo and group exhibitions. She has had solo exhibitions in Riga, Daugavpils and Paris several times over, the most notable ones being: *Quelques peintures* – Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris (1996), *Absolutely Red* – M6 Gallery, Riga (1995), *Discoveries and the Mysterious Life of Paintings* – Rīga Gallery, Riga (2004, 2008), *Pearls* – Latvian National Museum of Art (2010), and *Heaven* – Daugavpils Mark Rothko Art Centre (2016).

Barbara Gaile's paintings are sensitively saturated – they pay close attention to mood. Māra Lāce, Director of the Latvian National Museum of Art, has described Gaile's progress, saying: 'We can define her painting as a continuous path in the study of colour matter. As a result, the viewer enters a fascinating and engaging world of art which has arisen in a complex and laborious procedure of

processing the surface texture of paint and the painting, submitting to the author's idea and emotional essence'. (Lāce M., Catalogue for the exhibition *Pearls*, LNMM 28.10.-05.12.2010 p. 5).

The paintings seem to invite the viewer to see the illusion of the beautiful; they talk about people's desire to find and stick to something illusory, noble, and beautiful as the fulfilment of life. However, Gaile herself admits that when looking for the fulfilment of a perfect form, she usually comes to the conclusion that the opposite – ugly and rough – is important. Subsequently, in Gaile's work the viewer should look for a moment of contrast between the beautiful and the ugly, because in the life of the artworks themselves and in their interaction with the viewer, the nuances of colours and moods are crucial.

References to the abstractionists Mark Rothko (1903-1970), Yves Klein (1928-1962), and Agnes Martin (1912-2004) are often seen in Gaile's work. Leonid Bazhanov also mentions Louise Bourgeois (1911-2010), Rachel Whiteread (1963), and Mona Hatoum (1952), artists whose works, like those of Barbara Gaile, feature a special and unusual suggestion. The above-mentioned artists are united by a heightened attention to the technology of creating art, turning the process of creating a work into a peculiar ecstatic procedure that appeals



↑ Artwork *Noble* by Barbara Gaile in Roche Latvia office interior. 2020. Photo: Guna Rubule.

to adequate perception (Bažanovs L. Barbaras Gailes organiskie darbi // Catalogue for the exhibition *Pearls*, LNMM 28.10.-05.12.2010).

Dina Ābele.

Marija ar putniņu (Mary with Bird).

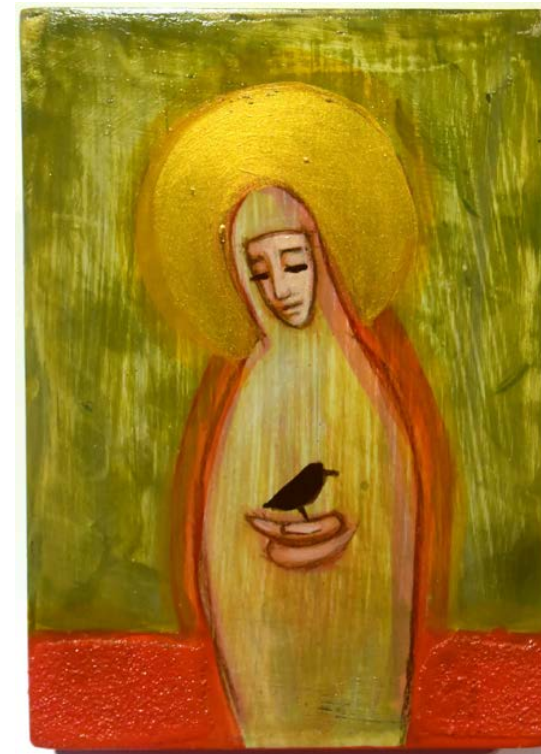
2020. Acrylic, wood. 20 x 14 cm

Dina Ābele – an artist whose work is characterised by lively colours and saturated emotions, clarity of composition and purity of form. Her works address harmony, peaceful mystery and the depth of abstract thought. In her works, Ābele often depicts spiritual experiences and inner states of the soul that surprise the viewer with their revelation of close personal quests and discoveries. The paintings tell of the supremacy of light over darkness, and call for not losing faith and hope in moments of darkness. The artist's form of expression is laconic and clear. In the paintings, ideas are revealed in simple lines, clean areas of colour, and spatial forms.

Dina Ābele (1969)

Dina Ābele graduated from the Department of Graphic Art at the Art Academy of Latvia and is currently an associate professor in the Department of Drawing. She has been participating in exhibitions since 1991, with almost twenty solo exhibitions in both Latvia and Poland; Ābele has also participated in group exhibitions in Latvia, Lithuania, Germany, Poland, France and elsewhere. The artist's works can be found in several private collections. Her graphic works have been highly praised in competition exhibitions, and in 2002 she received the Annual Prize in Book Publishing for Creative Achievement in Book Art.

The work in the collection addresses the viewer very personally, inviting each of us to feel like a little bird in the hands of the Mother of God, and thereby actualising the common desire and need of each member of society to be protected and loved. To feel oneself being closer to love and closer to home, trust and faith. Lightly interpreting references to the basic principles of icon painting, the artist depicts a stylised Our Lady surrounded by radiating warm shades of sunshine – one in whose caring hands each of us can take refuge. The work quietly calls for an understanding of how much everyone needs trust and faith in the outside world in order to preserve and protect the fragility and beauty of their inner soul.



↑ Dina Ābele. *Marija ar putniņu (Mary With a Bird)*. 2020. Acrylic, wood 20×14 cm.
Photo: Artūrs Lapiņš.

Jean Tinguely.

Memoire de la liberte.

1990. Acrylic, lithography, collage
(42/100). 88 x 67 cm

Jean Tinguely (1925–1991)

Jean Tinguely has left an outstanding and diverse artistic heritage. The artist was born and raised in Basel, where there is now a large museum dedicated to his work – Museum Tinguely. His work is characterised by movement – its rigidity and subtlety, as well as movement as the essence of life. Tinguely began his career in a Basel department store as a freelance window dresser. While studying at the Basel School of Design, he became fascinated with the early ideas of the avant-garde and developed an interest in Dadaism, Constructivism and Suprematism. Tinguely began to enthusiastically experiment with sculptures in motion. He was one of the most active and progressive creators of European art in the second half of the 20th century. While living in Paris in the mid-1950s, he turned to kinetic art, and is now considered to be one of the founders of this direction. In the summer of 1954 his first solo exhibition opened at the Arnaud gallery in Paris, in which the first group of continuously

changing and moving kinetic sculptures were exhibited. Tinguely was interested in mechanical disturbances and endless changes – he did not try to create precise, automatic rhythm in his works. In the late 50s Tinguely worked with Yves Klein (1928–1962) and they created a joint exhibition. Tinguely was not satisfied with the static nature of art – he wanted to enliven the movement in his works. At first, inspired by Kazimir Malevich (1879–1935) and Jean Arp (1886–1966), Tinguely operated his abstract compositions with hidden engines. But he soon abandoned abstract art and turned his full attention to machines and their mechanisms of operation. In his 1959 manifesto, *For Static*, Tinguely declared that 'only in movement, we find the true essence of things. We are afraid for movement, because it stands for decomposition and our own disintegration. I believe in change. Do not hold anything fast. It is beautiful to be transitory. Live in time, with time. It flows through your fingers. Time is movement and cannot be checked.'



↑ Jean Tinguely. *Memoire de la liberte.*
1990. Acrylic, lithograph, collage. (42/100)
88x67 cm.
Photo: Artūrs Lapiņš.

← Opening ceremony of the historic *Roche* building. A gift from *Roche* in honour of the opening of *Roche Latvia's* renovated building. Artwork: *Mémoire de la Liberté.* Jean Tinguely. From left: Severin Schwan, Per-Olof Attinger. 26 August 2020.
Photo: Laura Lemkina.

Tinguely's work is generally characterised by innumerable compositions of mechanical sculptures, videos, and graphic works in which he reveals his artistic development – from love to absurd play, from ridiculing the art world to fas-

cinating destruction and the shortness of time. The work by Tinguely in the *Roche Latvia* collection was created on a very important date for the Republic of Latvia – 4 May 1990.

**Šarlote Baškevica, Jana Purmale, Santa Grigus,
Madara Purena, Una Valtere, Līva Vilcāne,
Jūlija Jerjomina, Janta Meža, Anna Gobzeme–Nulle,
Sabīne Ansone, Elīza Kleine–Šablinska, Ella Mihailova,
Maruta Konceviča, Elizabete Klints, Elīna Šteinberga,
Laura Ščedrova, Anete Pekse–Špaka, Kintija Avena,
Sabīne Azlauska, Inga Brūkle, Anna Kamaldiņa.**

A large-format textile work consisting of 22 separate compositions of different size (either 50x50 cm or 100x40 cm). The artwork is like a multifunctional structure combined from several parts, each part of which is created with its maker's own associative message about medical science, history and philosophy and their role in society, whereas the large-format composition itself was created in collaboration with the Textile Department at the Art Academy of Latvia. *Roche Latvia* employees made one part of the mosaic composition, thereby embedding their messages and ideas into the overall artwork. Each student's composition was created in close cooperation with experi-

enced textile artists and lecturers from the Art Academy of Latvia – Prof. Ieva Krūmiņa and Assoc. Prof. Elīna Ģibiete.

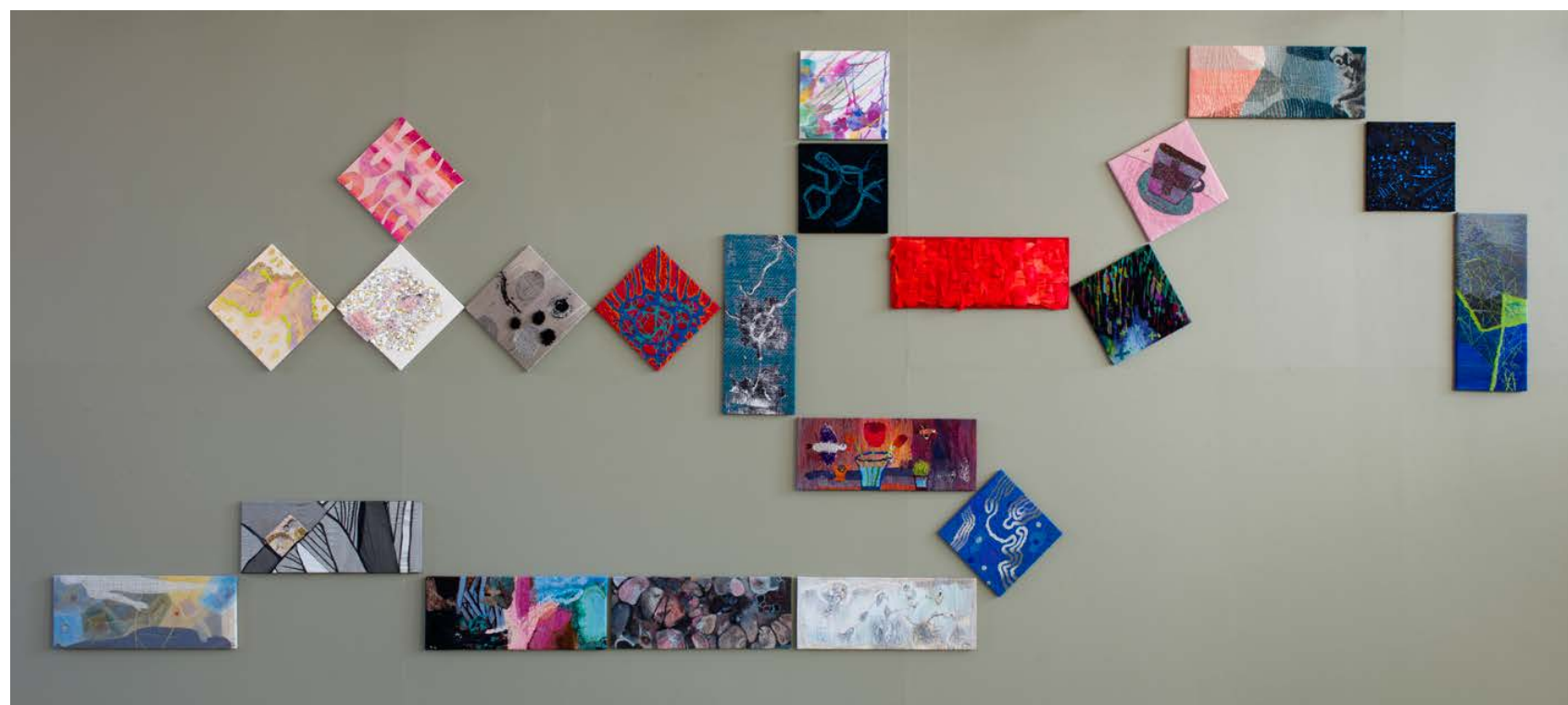
The materiality of a textile and its structure – an interacting, growing system that starts from a tiny fiber and grows into a strong and unified system – is related to science, a field in which revolutions can be caused by the finest of details as by carefully managed long-term work. The interaction of textiles and science manifests not only in the systemic similarity of the two fields – here, the associative stories of more than 20 artists form a unique and unrepeatable set of cells, a research map depicted in a language of art that expresses the united

idea that both art and science are clearly creative processes.

All of the composition's cells speak as one about a common idea – art and science as human creative processes. Thoughts cannot always be expressed in words, but they can often be expressed through visual images. Imagination, passion and the energy of creative processes create a balanced unity in the future map of inspiration for art and science. The personal associative experience of each artist develops a composition map on which the mixing of different elements, through the building of organic forms, creates a notion of unique seeking processes. In this work, emerging



↑ The joint artwork created by teaching staff and students of the Textile Department of the Art Academy of Latvia, led by Prof. Ieva Krūmiņa – a sketch of the tapestry project. 2020. Photo from *Roche Latvia* archive.



textile artists have reflected on the new generation of medicine and the pharmaceutical industry and its technological development and future visions, including genetic engineering, and visual referenced them through elements of history, cultural heritage, ethnography and ornamental patterns.

The work is a diverse and dynamic composition whose concept is based on the interaction of several artistic values. It has been executed in a wide range of textile art techniques and materials, thereby providing a new perspective on communication with science. The artwork reveals the broad and diverse range of technical possibilities in textile art and

features the following techniques: classic, digital, and French traditional tapestry; fabric melting; digital and thermal printing; textile mosaic; applique; hand embroidery; machine embroidery; fabric painting; and both dry and wet felting. Each textile artist freely chose the most suitable materials for their idea based on their feelings, experience, and how it would fit into the composition as a whole. This approach diversified the range of materials incorporated into the finished work, spanning from absolutely natural ones to synthetics and industrially produced materials.

Implemented jointly by *Roche Latvia* and the Art Academy of Latvia, the

project encourages artistic creativity among emerging artists, promotes interdisciplinary cooperation between art and science through the creation of a research-based large-format textile work, and supports the development of the textile art industry in Latvia.

↑ Joint work of the teaching staff and students of the Textile Department of the Art Academy of Latvia, led by Prof. Ieva Krūmiņa – a tapestry project. 2020.
Photo: Reinis Hofmanis.



Joint work of the teaching staff and students of the Textile Department of the Art Academy of Latvia – detail. 2020. Photo: Reinis Hofmanis.

Artist: Jūlija Jerjomina



Joint work of the teaching staff and students of the Textile Department of the Art Academy of Latvia – detail. 2020. Photo: Reinis Hofmanis.

Artist: Jana Purmale



Joint work of the teaching staff and students of the Textile Department of the Art Academy of Latvia – detail. 2020. Photo: Reinis Hofmanis.

Artist: Una Valtere



Joint work of the teaching staff and students of the Textile Department of the Art Academy of Latvia – detail. 2020. Photo: Reinis Hofmanis.

Artist: Elīza Kleine-Šablinska



Joint work of the teaching staff and students of the Textile Department of the Art Academy of Latvia – detail. 2020. Photo: Reinis Hofmanis.

Artist: Janta Meža



Joint work of the teaching staff and students of the Textile Department of the Art Academy of Latvia – detail. 2020. Photo: Reinis Hofmanis.

Artist: Anna Gobzeme-Nulle



Joint work of the teaching staff and students of the Textile Department of the Art Academy of Latvia – detail. 2020. Photo: Reinis Hofmanis.

Artist: Elizabete Klints



Joint work of the teaching staff and students of the Textile Department of the Art Academy of Latvia – detail. 2020. Photo: Reinis Hofmanis.

Artist: Elīna Šteinberga



Joint work of the teaching staff and students of the Textile Department of the Art Academy of Latvia – detail. 2020. Photo: Reinis Hofmanis.
Artist: Maruta Koncēviča



Joint work of the teaching staff and students of the Textile Department of the Art Academy of Latvia – detail. 2020. Photo: Reinis Hofmanis.
Artist: Ella Mihailova



Joint work of the teaching staff and students of the Textile Department of the Art Academy of Latvia – detail. 2020. Photo: Reinis Hofmanis.
Artist: Anete Pekse-Špaka



Joint work of the teaching staff and students of the Textile Department of the Art Academy of Latvia – detail. 2020. Photo: Reinis Hofmanis.
Artist: Madara Purena



Joint work of the teaching staff and students of the Textile Department of the Art Academy of Latvia – detail. 2020. Photo: Reinis Hofmanis.
Artist: Līva Vilcāne



Joint work of the teaching staff and students of the Textile Department of the Art Academy of Latvia – detail. 2020. Photo: Reinis Hofmanis.
Artist: Santa Grigus



Joint work of the teaching staff and students of the Textile Department of the Art Academy of Latvia – detail. 2020. Photo: Reinis Hofmanis.
Artist: Sabīne Azlauska



Joint work of the teaching staff and students of the Textile Department of the Art Academy of Latvia – detail. 2020. Photo: Reinis Hofmanis.
Artist: Sabīne Ansone



Joint work of the teaching staff and students of the Textile Department of the Art Academy of Latvia – detail. 2020. Photo: Reinis Hofmanis.

Artist: Kintija Avena



Joint work of the teaching staff and students of the Textile Department of the Art Academy of Latvia – detail. 2020. Photo: Reinis Hofmanis.

Artist: Anna Kamaldiņa



Joint work of the teaching staff and students of the Textile Department of the Art Academy of Latvia – detail. 2020. Photo: Reinis Hofmanis.

Artist: Inga Brūkle



"Idea map" 2021. 50x50 cm. Embroidery. Wool, silk, polyester.

Authors: Rūta Kalniņa, Inesa Kozlovskā, Alise Krūmiņa, Laura Lemkina, Eva Marksa, Dana Erciņa-Užāne, Solvita Verkēviča, Anda Zukule, Rauls Vēliņš (*Roche Latvia*). Ieva Krūmiņa (Art Academy of Latvia).

Photo: Guna Rubule.



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Joint work of the teaching staff and students of the Textile Department of the Art Academy of Latvia – detail. 2020. Photo: Reinis Hofmanis.

Artist: Šarlote Baškevica

←

Joint work of the teaching staff and students of the Textile Department of the Art Academy of Latvia – detail. 2020. Photo: Reinis Hofmanis.

Artist: Laura Ščedrova



Wish tree. 2021. Ideas: Laura Lemkina, Rauls Vēliņš, Eva Marksa, Anda Zukule, Rūta Kalniņa, Inesa Kozlovskā, Solvita Verkēviča, Dana Erciņa-Užāne.

Performance: Art Academy of Latvia. Department of Textile Art and Elīna Veilande-Apine.

Photo: Guna Rubule.



Presentation of *Roche Latvia* textile "Inspiration DNA" in the hall of the Art Academy of Latvia. (AAL), with the participation of authors and lecturers. From the left: Līva Vilcāne, Šarlote Baškevica, Elīza Kleine-Šablinska, Sabīne Azlauska, Madara Purena, Kintija Avena, Ella Mihailova, Janta Meža, Jana Purmale, Una Valtere, Prof. Ieva Krūmiņa, Prof. Kristaps Zariņš, Anete Pekse-Špaka, Sabīne Ansone, Elīna Šteinberga, Laura Ščedrova, Elīna Ģibiete, Anna Kamaldiņa, Jūlija Jerjomina, Inga Brūkle, Santa Grigus, Elizabete Klints, Elīna Veilande-Apine. Photo: Reinis Hofmanis, 11.2020.

Afterword

If you, like me, are fascinated by the intersection of science, culture and health, this book will hopefully be a source of inspiration. It is more than a story about the company's operations in Latvia. This book touches upon a series of outstanding achievements in a society that truly values healthcare and strives to work together for innovation.

Roche is pleased to see itself as part of Latvia's incredibly interesting history, and we are proud of what we have achieved here along with many respected partners.

It has not always been easy. Our journey began between the two world wars, in 1940 our activities temporarily came to a halt, but we returned in 1993, 'right on the heels' of Latvia's independence. Today our work is taking place in the context of a global pandemic and geopolitical turmoil. Nevertheless, we are still determined to work for increasingly better healthcare for every inhabitant of Latvia as well as other countries of the world.

Positive changes are expected to take place in healthcare. Recent advances in science and technology have led to countless innovations indicating that we are one step away from personalised healthcare. This means even more innovative and accurate diagnosis capabilities and a deeper scientific and clinical understanding due to more comprehensive data and the emergence of ever-new radically transforming drugs. Unlocking the potential of personalised healthcare will undoubtedly put new pressure on all countries of the world, as the availability of such opportunities coincides with the growing public demand for healthcare. This means that significant changes will have to be made at the system level, but the potential benefits are so significant that they cannot be ignored.

Roche understands the challenges that healthcare systems face on an ongoing basis. The next stage of our company's development envisages even deeper cooperation and support for our health system partners. In this regard, our long-term efforts aim to double the

rate of medical progress by ensuring that society pays only half of the costs of helping to build future efficient and sustainable healthcare systems. We will do all of this in a sustainable and ethical way, acting as an environmentally friendly organisation and fighting for diversity in each of our business sectors.

As public expectations change, there will be new shifts at the intersection of science, culture and health. Our company is lucky to operate worldwide and to be a leader in terms of diagnostic potential, understanding, and drug development. This means that we can implement a tailor-made, unified *Roche* approach in helping individual healthcare ecosystems around the world.

This also means that our position allows us to share the experience of the most advanced countries in order to ensure the development of all health systems on a global scale. Thanks to such interconnections and deepened relations as we have in Latvia, the future of healthcare seems brighter than ever.



Ehab Yousef,
Roche's Head of Europe Area North

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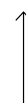
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Roche Latvia YESTERDAY, TODAY, TOMORROW



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Compilation Editor: Rauls Vēliņš, Rūta Kalniņa

Text authors: Ieva Ābele, Alexander Lukas Bieri, Zane Degro, Gatis Didrihsons, Agnese Dimante, Elīna Dzērve, Roland Faessler, Agita Gritāne, Ehab Yousef, Kamena Kaidaka, Marina Kāne, Jānis Kalnājs, Inesa Kozlovskā, Andris Kreislers, Edīte Krūmiņa, Laura Lemkina, Kaspars Losāns, Eva Marksa, Sandris Sabajevs, Juris Salaks, Jānis Siliņš, Solvita Verkēviča, Rauls Vēliņš, Dalimil Žůrek, Kristīne Balanas, Margarita Balanas, Roberts Balanas.

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