



The Book “Lībiešu [kultūr][kultūr]telpa Zanes Ernštreites sarunās un Agneses Zeltiņas fotogrāfijās” to Be Launched at the Ventspils Main Library

Friday, June 2 at 17:30 Ventspils Main Library will open the book Liv [Cultural] Space. In the conversations of Zane Ernstreite and in the photographs of Agnes Zeltina”, in which the stories of the custodians of the living heritage of the Libyan people are read and their portraits are shown.

The Livonian Cultural Space (*Līvōd īlma*) is the living heritage of the Livonians, encompassing the Livonian language, traditions, farming practices and modern culture. 2018. In November 2018, it was included in the National List of Intangible Cultural Heritage as one of Latvia’s treasures. But what keeps these treasures alive? A number of people connected to this cultural space keep them active and viable. They are the heroes of this book.

The book contains twenty conversations by Zane Ernštreite with Edroms Velde, Ausma Ernestovska, Ēriks Kāpbergs, senior, Jēkabs Raipulis, Dagmāra Ziemele, Ilmārs Geige, Māra Zirņīte, Ingrīda Šneidere, Mārite Zandberga, Baiba Šūvcāne, sisters Maija Norenberga and Aina Emule, Helmī Stalte, Ieva Ernštreite, Zoja Sīle, Baiba Damberga, Rasma Noriņa, Ģirts Gailītis, Māra Vīgerte, Julģī Stalte and Valts Ernštreits – people with Livonian roots and Livonian consciousness, as well as those who have been active, long-standing and continuously working for the benefit of the Livonians. Two photographs by Agnese Zeltiņa are dedicated to each of them.

Four of the people immortalised in the book are long-time members and activists of the Ventspils Branch of the Livonian Union – Ausma Ernestovska, Livonian public worker, head of the Ventspils Branch of the Livonian Union, chair of the board of the Ventspils Livonian Association *Rānda*, founder and long-time member of the ensemble *Rāndalist*; Ilmārs Geige, Livonian public worker, former member of the Supreme Council of the Republic of Latvia and a deputy of the 7th Saeima, Ēriks Kāpbergs, senior, maintainer of Livonian fishing traditions, Māra Vīgerte, Livonian public worker, one of the founders of the Ventspils Livonian Association *Rānda*, organiser of Ventspils Livonian Culture Days, promoter of Livonian cultural traditions.

In addition, the people of the Livonian Cultural Space, both those included in the book and those mentioned in the conversations, are valuable not only to the Livonian community itself, but have also been noticed and appreciated by the Latvian society and the country – they have received state awards, letters of recognition and other honors. The achievements of these people have been appreciated by their own counties and municipalities, as well as by related nations – Estonians and Finns. The conversations are complemented by comments and explanations about developments, events and institutions related to Livonians, as well as a large directory of persons.

The author of the book idea and conversation maker Zane Ernštreite writes:

“Understanding that the Livonian Cultural Space – people who continue to keep, nurture and show others the knowledge related to Livonians – is also a value to be preserved, I went after their stories, attracting the photographer Agnese Zeltiņa to the idea, who captured in photographs the moment when they were addressed and allowed themselves to be portrayed in a very personal or chosen fragment of the world that is important to them.

However, the book is not only about the Livonians and their feelings, but also about those who have led many years with them singing, collecting life stories, creating family trees, collaborating. The conversations reveal how they see the Livonian community and cultural space. I hope that I have managed to unravel what people have told me and present it in a way that makes it seem worth remembering. So that it creates a sense of the Livonians, their self-confidence and their ability not to get lost in the big world.

The book is a tribute to my inner Livonian, which I haven’t found yet, but which is definitely there. Māra Vīgerte, the conversation with whom you can read in this book, had written on her social network profile after the first road sign in Livonian and Latvian was revealed: “It is like giving a voice back to the mute who has been silently present, but has never been noticed by the majority, because silence can only speak to those who hear with the heart”. It is not my voice that is being returned, but with this book I can help it to be heard even more. There are no Livonians? There are, and they, their legacy and continuation shall be!”

The book **LĪBIEŠU [KULTŪR] [KULTŪR]TELPA Zanes Ernštreites sarunās un Agneses Zeltiņas fotogrāfijās** is published by the Support Society of the UL Livonian Institute / *LI Līvōd institūt tigtimiz seļtš* and the foundation “Ventspils Livonian Association *Rānda*”

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2023. The UL Livonian Institute together with the Latvian National Commission for UNESCO and the Latvian National Centre for Culture have declared 2023 as the Year of Livonian Heritage, and the book launch event is one of the highlights of the programme.

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