

## Monument to the cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin



Foto autors Ventspils Tūrisma informācijas centrs

It is unknown why Ventspils was chosen for the installation of a monument to Yuri Gagarin\* in Soviet times (metal cast head of the cosmonaut in a helmet).

*Author: Sculptor Ojārs Šiliņš, Architect Ivars Bumbiers*

Year: 1972. 13 October (at the edge of Vasarnīcu Street, near the former Recreation, Yuri Gagarin, Park).

The attitudes of the city's population towards the monument's personality, which had nothing to do with the town at the Venta estuary, were soon reflected in a joke: "Where's the hardest land in Ventspils? In the Large Square, because Lenin stands on a high pedestal there. But where's the softest? On Vasarnīcu Street, because there's only Gagarin's head out there!"

The monument to Gagarin stood near the park until 1992, when it was dismantled. **After dismantling, the monument was in storage until the summer of 2021, but in June 2021 it was moved to the International Radio Astronomy Centre in Irbene.**

*\*Yuri Gagarin is the Russian cosmonaut of Soviet times. He was the first man to get to orbit around the Earth. During the Mission Vostok-1 on 12 April 1961, Yuri Gagarin became the first person to be sent into space by the people.*

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