



New environmental object “THE LATS” to be opened on Ventspils Castle Mound

On Tuesday, 10 January at 11.00 a.m., the contemporary art environmental object “THE LATS”, dedicated to the memory of the Latvian currency – the lats – lost at the end of 2013, will be officially opened on the Castle Mound of the Ventspils Port Promenade, next to the Livonian Order Castle, informs Sīgita Helēna Blumberga, Public Relations Specialist at the Ventspils Municipal Administration.

Participation by the managerial staff of the Ventspils State City Council and authors of the memorial – Gļebs Panteļejevs, a well-known sculptor in Latvia, and the architect Andris Veidemanis. The idea to commemorate Latvia’s national currency was brought to the City Council in 2014 by Armands Vijups, Leading Researcher and Deputy Director of the Ventspils Museum. . The location of the sculpture on the Mound was deliberately chosen because it overlooks the Ventspils Port – the place where some of the silver two-lats coins minted at the Royal Mint in the UK were unloaded in 1925-1926, thus landing on Latvian soil for the first time in Ventspils. It is therefore symbolic that Ventspils is the first and so far the only place in Latvia where the memory of the lats has been immortalised in the form of a contemporary art object.

To preserve the cultural and historic significance of the lats as a form of public piece of art, in 2021, the Ventspils City Municipality launched a design competition where out of 22 designs, the project “Evolution” by sculptor Gļebs Panteļejevs and architect Andris Veidemanis was announced as the winner. The urban environment object made from cast aluminium was created for the 100th anniversary of lats, based on the design of the one-lats coin of 1992, with a diameter of 3 m and active and varied silhouettes that change the configuration depending on the viewpoint. The image of the salmon is three dimensional and realistic.

The Latvian lats, as the national symbol of our country, formed and “lived” in a difficult time. The first phase of its existence lasted a little over 18 years: created in 1922, it circulated as a means of payment of an independent state until the spring of 1941, experiencing only slightly the existence of an independent Latvian state. In 1993, coins and banknotes of the renewed national currency entered the wallets of Latvians. The second phase of circulation of the national currency did not last long either: transition to the euro in 2013 marked the end of the existence of this national symbol.

1993. gadā Latvijas iedzīvotāju makos nonāk atjaunotās nacionālās valūtas monētas un banknotes. Arī otrais nacionālās valūtas apgrozības posms nav ilgs – pāreja uz eiro 2013. gadā iezīmē šī nacionālā simbola pastāvēšanas beigas.