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Istituto Internazionale LBT  
by FONDAZIONE ROMUALDO DEL BIANCO

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HERITAGE FOR PLANET EARTH 2018 INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM

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## MUSEUMS – A CULTURAL HERITAGE FOR THE FUTURE OF URBAN ENVIRONMENT

Jānis Krastiņš

Riga Technical University, Riga, Latvia

Important tourist attractions in any city are museums. A number of museums that became world-wide known landmarks are constructed in many cities. These buildings usually stand out with its unique architecture and innovative technological solutions. The same concerns also to a number of alterations and extensions of historic buildings. The well-known transformation of the Louvre in Paris (1989) doubled a number of visitors. The National Gallery Singapore, created by rebuilding and connecting two important historic buildings (2008–2015), has become an active place of public venues and a very popular sightseeing.

Several modifications and extensions of historic museum buildings have been implemented in Riga, the capital city of Latvia. From 2008 to 2011, a building of the Riga Stock Exchange (1852–1855) was restored. The inner courtyard was covered with a glass roof, creating a comfortable recreation area, but all the historic premises were adapted to the needs of the newly created Art Museum Riga Bourse. All rooms provide good accessibility and create an astonishing atmosphere for visitors. The building, which was previously only for the financial elite, is now serving a wide audience. In 2013, the European Museum Forum has included the Riga Stock Exchange in the list of newly opened most successful European museums and awarded it with **Special Commendation**.

The building of the Latvian National Museum of Art (1903–1905) located in the central part of the boulevard district of Riga was repaired for more than 100 years. The building was renovated and extended from 2012 to 2015. New underground premises containing necessary auxiliary rooms and a spacious exposition hall, as well as museum's repository located behind transparent walls are placed under the adjoining park. New exhibition rooms are arranged into the roof floor. The building has completely preserved its historical shape, but useful space has doubled.

The Museum of Decorative Arts and Design is located in a medieval building, housing both the church and the warehouse during different periods. This building was restored and adapted for the needs of the museum from 1981 to 1988.

A small, but one of the most visited museums in Latvia is the Riga Art Nouveau Center, which was opened in 2009. After intensive restoration, it was installed in the former apartment of architect Konstantīns Pēkšēns at Alberta iela 12. The building, which belonged to the architect, was built in 1903. In 2016, a basement was built under it and auxiliary rooms necessary for the museum – an auditorium, a museum shop and a cafe, as well as interactive digital exhibition spaces – were arranged there.

Extension of the *Museum of the Occupation of Latvia* is planned in the near future. The museum building (1969–1970) has become one of the symbols of the post-war Modern Movement architecture, but remarkable transformation of it was proposed in the extension project worked out in 2001–2007. After many years of public debate, a solution has been reached that will preserve the cultural values of the modern time and transfer them to future generations.