Rebellious Construction: The Movement for Freedom of Expression in Soviet Construction

250 Word Project Description

During a time of social and economical oppression conducted by the Soviet Union, Lithuanians generated a movement for individuality through the means of architecture.

In a state where all aspects of life were controlled and monitored by the government, people started to feel a sense of freedom of expression through the shelters they were able to build on their given land. They had acquired
this land on the outskirts of town through their employer. It is highly unlikely any of them had an architectural or design background, as majority of the population were factory workers.

Due to city housing being designed and distributed by the government, the residents took this opportunity to design makeshift dwellings in the outskirts of the city to compensate for the lack of personalization in their homes.

It can be argued that after the most basic needs like water, food, and shelter are fulfilled; there is a secondary need for freedom to design. In this instance, there was a necessity to express individuality and personality through architecture. This was a movement against communistic architecture and its social constraints.

Although, the political ideologies of communism have been replaced with a democracy, the communist architecture still scars the country to this day. Due to the structures being built so fast and so poorly, they are starting to significantly deteriorate. It is an opportunity for Lithuania to tear down the ghosts of communism and to create an architectural fresh start; even the shelters are being torn down to be replaced with modern residential homes. This project stresses the importance of documenting these structures before they and their stories are all gone.

This is a topic that I have been interested in ever since I was a small child wandering the streets of Lithuania's Garden Towns. This is a topic that I would like to focus my career on after I graduate. The Martin Roche Scholarship would provide the opportunity to do so.

Itinerary

June 1-- Fly out to Vilnius, Lithuania.

June 2-- Settle into the site location in Panevezys, Lithunia.

June 6 through June 10 – Extensive documentation of Shelters in Ekranas 1 Gardens through photographs, sketches, 3D modeling, drawings.

June 11 through June 14- Extensive documentation of Soviet Construction in Panevezys, Lithuania through photographs, sketches, 3D modeling, drawings.

June 15 through June 20- Extensive documentation of other garden shelters in Panevezys, Lithuania through photographs, sketches, 3D modeling, drawings.

June 21 through June 30- Extensive documentation of other garden shelters in other cities in Lithuania such as, Vilnius, Kaunas, Utena, Siauliai, Palanga, etc.

July 5- Fly back to Chicago.

During my year off- Develop research into drawings and models, which will be exhibited in the future. I would like to collect all my finds into a publication.

Overall the research exploration and documentation will be conducted over a month in the summer. The research and development of the project will continue to be explored over the course of my year off. This is a topic that I have began to explore and believe I will continue to research for many years to come.

Budget

Flight: **$1,300**

Housing for 5 weeks: **$700**

Car Rental for transportation across Lithuania for 5 weeks: **$800**

Gas for Rental Car: **$500**

Food for 5 weeks: **$700**

Materials to build models: **$1,000**

Plotting and printing of drawings: **$200**

Books on Soviet Union Construction: **$300**

Total: **$5500**