

THE PURPOSE AND USE OF THE RECONSTRUCTED PALACE

The National Museum – Palace of the Grand Dukes of Lithuania was founded in 2009 as an historic residence museum to showcase parts of the original castle and palace ruins and some of the most significant archaeological finds as well as restored period rooms and ceremonial halls with newly purchased or donated art objects and furnishings. The museum organizes temporary exhibitions, conferences, and concerts and pursues a very active education and publication program. In July, 2013 the palace opened its south and east wings to the public and is an important venue for state ceremonial events associated with the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

Currently there are two tour routes through the exhibition that can be accessed by visitors.

I tour route – a didactic exposition of the palace's historical and architectural development. Its most valuable and informative part are the authentic finds and the palace's surviving authentic walls and spaces therein. This exposition presents the evolution of the palace territory from the earliest times, to the most important stages in the development of this historic residence, to its destruction, introducing along the way the historical figures who lived here, and the research of the Lower Castle and palace territories, as well as the course of the residence's reconstruction.

II tour route – an exposition of the reconstructed historic interiors (late Gothic, Renaissance, early Baroque stylistics and the historic function the spaces served), for which from 2003 to 2013 a valuable collection of 15th–17th-century European applied

and fine art works was amassed, not to mention the collection of treasures associated with Lithuania.

In the future another two tour routes (III and IV) are proposed for which the palace's spaces are still being prepared.

III tour route is dedicated to the musical and everyday life of the palace. Visitors will have the opportunity to learn about the operas staged here first, before appearing on theatre stages in London or Paris, namely, *Il Ratto di Helena (The Abduction of Helen, 1636)*, *Andromeda (1644)* and *Circe delusa (1648)*, whereas the historicized performance hall shall play host to various cultural and educational events and conferences.

IV tour route centres around a temporary exhibition space meeting all international standards, where it will be possible to display Lithuanian and European heritage pieces in general that date to the period of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, as well as exhibitions of the palace's numerous archaeological finds.

For visitors' convenience, under the palace courtyard there is a vestibule with the ticket counters, an information centre, a bookshop and souvenir store, an auditorium, dressing room, toilets, and in the future a restaurant serving historical dishes and beverages. The concentration of the public services infrastructure in one location allows visitors to decide how they wish to explore the museum for themselves.

We invite you to come and learn about the history and cultural heritage of Lithuania and the whole of Europe in the Palace of the Grand Dukes of Lithuania in Vilnius!



Visualisation of Gothic antechamber, Vilija Mačiulytė, 2009, LDKVR



Early music concert held in the Renaissance audience hall, 2010, LDKVR



Educational activity at the Palace of the Grand Dukes, 2009, LDKVR



Visualisation of Renaissance audience hall, Vilija Mačiulytė, 2009, LDKVR



II tour route exposition. Third Mannerist antechamber, 2013, LDKVR



I tour route. Historical and architectural development

1–9. Castle period (from the earliest settlements until the 16th century); 10–14. Palace period (from the Renaissance to the early Baroque); 15–20. Destruction of the palace and its reconstruction (mid-17th century to the early 21st century)

II tour route. State rooms and private apartments

21–28. State rooms and offices; 29–31. Private apartments of the grand dukes; 32–33. Private apartments of the consorts; 34–39. State rooms; 40–43. Private apartments and offices of the grand dukes

III tour route. Music and everyday life exhibits and performance hall

44. Everyday life exhibit in former palace kitchen; 45. Music exhibit; 46. Information stands for programmes in the performance hall; 47. Performance hall

IV tour route. Exhibition halls and spaces

48–51. West Wing basement; 52–55. Exhibition centre; 56–60. Other public spaces
A–O. Visitor services vestibule underneath the Palace courtyard



I tour route exposition in the basement of the Palace of the Grand Dukes, 2013, LDKVR