

Latvian History Competition 2021/2022

“A Forgotten Historical and Cultural Monument”

As they link past and present in a very distinctive way, monuments offer an interesting way of confronting history – as was the case in Latvia during this year’s history competition “A Forgotten Historical and Cultural Monument “. On 18 August 2022 the Riga Latvian Society House, which can be seen as a monument itself, was the venue of the concluding award ceremony. Fourteen winning entries were chosen from a total of 43 works that tackled the above topic. The 14 winners and their supportive tutors were invited to the historical site to have their their winning entries honoured.



*Latvian prize winners, their tutors and competition organisers at the award ceremony in Riga
Photo: Emilija Vuskarniece*

The entries comprised a very diverse group of historic sites strewn across Latvia – from a water mill in Bēne, located in the Semigallia region, to the Galēni Manor complex in the eastern Latgale region of the country. All entries benefited from the same historic approach of viewing monuments as glimpses into an era’s zeitgeist, preserved over time and solidified in space.

The significance of the history competition's topic was underlined by the recent debate about the demolition of Latvia's Victory Monument – a Soviet era memorial complex featuring a monolithic obelisk, commemorating Riga's recapturing from Nazi Germany by Red Army forces. How do monuments connect the past with the present? In what way do they symbolise society's grappling with history and collective identity? Monuments lend themselves to such questions which the students asked to tell unique stories with their own material.

Baiba Atmane and her colleagues from the History Teachers' Association of Latvia (HTAL) congratulated the winners on the results of their works and presented the main prizes: history books, signed and personalised by Latvia's State President Egils Levits, the competition's patron. Stella Līpīte, Head of the Riga Latvian Society Office, also admired the research works and introduced the prize winners to the history and hidden secrets of the Riga Latvian Society House.

Liene Ozoliņa, a member of HTAL, additionally gave some insights into the organisation's plan to further adapt the competition to upcoming Latvian school curriculums. They aim to present multiple opportunities for students to write their compulsory school projects in the subject of history and furthermore utilise the works as competition entries as well.

Katja Fausser, Managing Director of EUSTORY, emphasised the relevance of the current Latvian history competition. She invited all competitors to share their perspectives and results with prize winners from other European countries by joining EUSTORY's international youth activities, starting in October 2022.