



NEW RELEASE KEHRER VERLAG

Kazimieras Mizgiris *Wind + Sand: Curonian Spit*

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Impressive landscapes by the Lithuanian photographer and amber collector

According to a Lithuanian legend, the beautiful giant Neringa shook sand out of her apron and scattered it into a spit that was intended to separate the Curonian Lagoon from the open sea and protect Curonian fishermen from the violence of the sea god Bangputis. The 96 kilometer-long dune strip of the spit, which is only 380-meters-wide at its narrowest point, was once used as a connecting route between East Prussian Königsberg (today Kaliningrad) and Memel (today Klaipėda). Today, the Curonian Spit is a UNESCO World Heritage Site whose northern 52 kilometers belong to Lithuania and the southern 46 kilometers to the Russian oblast Kaliningrad. Somewhere in the middle, close to the present-day border between Lithuania and the Russian enclave, lies Nida, an idyllic fishing village.

The intimate knowledge of sand-dune formations on the Curonian Spit of **Kazimieras Mizgiris** (b. 1950), renowned Lithuanian photographer and amber collector, is unrivalled. After studying photography in Vilnius, he was banished to «exile» in Nida in 1974 by the Soviet secret service. Here, he visited the annual photographic summer seminars held by Lithuania's best-known photographer Antanas Sutkus. And for decades, took pictures of the shifting dunes of the «Baltic Sahara» – located just outside his front door – early in the morning, primarily in spring and autumn. He captures short-lived, bizarre formations reminiscent of prehistoric creatures produced daily by wind, sand, and ice.

In his book *Sand and Wind* (Smėlis ir vėjas, 2000) Mizgiris writes: *»You need persistence to catch the moment when a miracle is performed by the sea, the wind, the sun, and the clouds. You have to wait until the little cloud over the dunes takes the shape and casts the shadow you want. I have my favorite paths and spots in the dunes. I can feel them, because they are alive. They move and shift, dropping for a hundred meters. The east wind carries the sand to the top; the west wind brings it down.«*

In addition to photography, Kazimieras Mizgiris's devotes himself to his other passion: Amber. Today, he has a seat on the advisory board of the World Amber Council, and, together with his wife Virginija, he runs a true amber empire with museums in Nida and Vilnius, as well as an artists' house that offers residencies to artists working with amber.

Exhibition

100 years of bauhaus IV: THE CURONIAN SPIT

Kazimieras Mizgiris | Alfred Ehrhardt

Alfred Ehrhardt Stiftung, Berlin

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