

## Lifestyle | Features

## Lithuania wraps tree in plastic to protest Christmas consumerism

Lithuanian artists yesterday said they have placed a giant plastic bag over a fir tree in the capital Vilnius to warn against consumerism taking over the holiday season. "This is a Christmas tree but we are using it as a piece of art to protest against the negative effects of hyper-consumerism," reads the message printed on the plastic. Adorned with breathing masks, the art installation is located at the Vilnius railway station, which the city has turned into an alternative Christmas market this year.

"People who do not feel comfortable at traditional Christmas markets or shopping malls are most welcome here," said

Dominykas Ceckauskas, one of the artists behind the installation. "Our message is that consumerism does huge harm to the environment during the holiday season," he told AFP. The youth-oriented market also features train cars used as bars and restaurants, techno music instead of Christmas pop songs and local street artists, designers and second-hand merchants selling their wares. Vilnius mayor Remigijus Simasius said the event represents the "liberty, tolerance, and openness" of the city. — AFP



A wrapped Christmas tree (center, in the background) can be seen at the Independent Christmas Town located at the Vilnius Railway Station in Vilnius, Lithuania. — AFP photos

## Paintings of working women by a leading suffragette acquired for Britain

Four paintings by one of Britain's leading suffragettes, Sylvia Pankhurst, documenting the conditions of female workers in the early 20th century, have been acquired for the nation as it marks 100 years since women were allowed to vote. The watercolors by Pankhurst, a key figure in the women's suffrage



Two of Pankhurst's paintings: In a Glasgow Cotton Mill Minding a Pair of Fine Frames, and In a Glasgow Cotton Spinning Mill Changing the Bobbin. — Photo by Sylvia Pankhurst

movement that was founded by her mother Emmeline, were painted during a tour of industries in 1907 to highlight the poor conditions and low wages faced by working-class women.

They have now been purchased from her family by the government-sponsored Tate gallery network. "At a time when gender pay gaps and women's rights at work remain urgent topical issues, these images remind us of the role art can play in inspiring social change," Ann Gallagher, director of collections for British art, said in a statement.

Pankhurst, who died aged 78 in 1960, was among the leading figures in militant organizations in the early 20th century pushing for women's rights and votes. It was not until 1918 that Britain granted women aged over 30 who met a property qualification the right to vote and to run for parliament. They had been able to contest local elections since 1907. Pankhurst used her art as a campaigning tool, and created the four paintings during a trip to research and document the lives of poor working women in northern England and Scotland.

Two of the watercolors show cotton mills in Glasgow, Scotland, where Pankhurst later described "the almost deafening noise of the machinery and the oppressive heat", saying she was "so hot and airless that I fainted within an hour". The other two show Staffordshire potteries, in northern England, where women were often restricted to lower-paid jobs and exposed to flint dust and fumes from lead glaze.

The pictures were purchased from her grandchildren, Helen and Alula Pankhurst, and will go on display at the Tate Britain in central London in 2020, the gallery said. "Sylvia was an artist as well as a champion of working women's rights, her first passion not as well-known as her second," Helen Pankhurst, who is also a women's rights campaigner, said in a statement. "In these beautiful pieces these interests are powerfully combined." —Reuters

## George Lucas's film empire tops Forbes list of richest US celebrities

Filmmaker George Lucas's "Star Wars" empire - the movie franchise, not Darth Vader's fictional galactic government - planted him firmly atop Forbes magazine's third annual ranking of the wealthiest US celebrities which was released on Tuesday. The net worth of the 74-year-old writer, director, producer and creator of the enduring space saga was estimated at \$5.4 billion, leading a list that also included athletes, musicians and one wealthy illusionist.

Most of Lucas's wealth came from the \$4.05 billion sale of the LucasFilm production company to Walt Disney Co in 2012, Forbes said. The figures on the list are Forbes' estimates based on the celebrities' known holdings of real estate, art and shares of companies both public and private, as well as other assets and estimated lifetime earnings. Reuters has not independently confirmed the figures. Fellow filmmaker Steven Spielberg, who turned 72 on Tuesday, came in second, with an estimated \$3.7 billion net worth. Spielberg's career as director, writer and producer spans some 50 years with credits that include "Jaws," "E.T.," "Raiders of the Lost Ark," "Schindler's List" and "Saving Private Ryan."

The celebrities on the list had estimated combined assets of \$18.7 billion, more than the gross domestic product of Iceland, Forbes said. The richest female celebrity was Oprah Winfrey, 64, whose acting and media enterprises have yielded her a net worth of an estimated \$2.8 billion, third overall. Basketball legend Michael Jordan boosted his net worth by an estimated \$400 million in the past year, mostly off his 34-year-long sneaker deal with Nike Inc and his stake in the Charlotte Hornets. His estimated \$1.7 billion net worth ranked him fourth.

New to the Forbes list this year was Kylie Jenner, whose growing wealth from her Kylie Cosmetics are on track to make the 21-year-old the youngest ever self-made billionaire, the magazine said. Jenner was tied with Rapper Jay-Z at No. 5, each with fortunes estimated at \$900 million. Rounding out the list were illusionist and entertainer David Copperfield, who amassed his fortune through a grueling pace of 600 shows per year in Las Vegas, rapper Diddy, golfer Tiger Woods and author James Patterson. — Reuters

