

# **A Lesson in Construction Culture. Selected Works of August Komendant 1934–1988**

Rare archive photos at the exhibition of the top Estonian-American engineer at Tallinn University of Technology

On March 12, at 4 p.m., an exhibition of the works of Estonian-American civil engineer August Komendant will open at Tallinn University of Technology (TalTech). The exhibition “A Lesson in Construction Culture: Selected Works of August Komendant 1934–1988” provides a photo-rich overview of buildings completed with Komendant’s participation in Estonia, Canada, the United States, and Venezuela.

The exhibition is a compact approach to high-quality construction. The display highlights that construction is not just a field based on economic logic and technical knowledge, but a cultural phenomenon that reflects what is happening in society more broadly. Construction is more than pouring concrete or laying a wall: it is a mirror of society, showing its level of development, value attitudes, and trends.

The exhibition focuses on buildings constructed with the participation of Estonian-American structural engineer August Komendant. Komendant, who was also a lecturer at Tallinn University of Technology from 1937 to 1939, achieved international fame as a refugee in the United States in the 1960s and 1970s. As an expert in concrete structures, his projects vividly reflect the challenges posed to construction culture by the modernizing society of the 20th century.

Among other materials, the exhibition also features rare color photographs from 1965–1968, recently discovered in the August Komendant family archive. The frames, originally taken as color slides, are by Komendant’s son George Jüri Komendant, who briefly worked at his father’s office as a young structural engineer and accompanied him on construction sites.

The photographs depict the construction of several landmark 20th-century architectural works: the Richards Laboratory, the Olivetti-Underwood Factory, and the Salk Institute, designed by architect Louis Kahn, as well as the Habitat '67 experimental apartment building designed by architect Moshe Safdie for the 1967 World's Fair.

This year marks 120 years since the birth of August Komendant. The exhibition is a tribute by Tallinn University of Technology to its former professor, who became a top engineer on an international level and whose influence continues to this day.

**Exhibition “A Lesson in Building Culture. Selected Works of August Komendant  
1934–1988”**

*In the foyer of educational building 6 (U-06) of Tallinn University of Technology,  
Ehitajate tee 5, Tallinn, open from March 12 to September 30, 2026*

Curator Carl-Dag Lige, Tajumaailm

Exhibition architecture Maria-Helena Luiga, kuidas.works

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**Additional information**

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