

OPINION

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For the competition for acquiring the academic position Associate Professor in Film Studies, Film Art and Television (History and Theory of Film Industry), 8.4, at the Institute of Art Studies at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, published in State Gazette issue 97, 10.12.2019 for the Department of Screen Arts for the candidate Dr. Alexander Donev Angelov

Documents for the competition have been submitted by the only candidate - Dr. Alexander Donev.

I accept as essential the documents and publications for the competition for Associate Professor by Dr. Alexander Donev as follows:

- Habilitation work - published monograph "Independent Cinema. From Edison to Netflix" (FunTesia publishing house, 2019, 306 pages)

The proposed seven academic articles and studies in English and Bulgarian in collections of conferences, anniversaries, national, international and academic journals, from the total list of over 55.

The proposed seven citations in Bulgarian and international publications of the total list of 17.

The proposed 6 participations at academic forums.

Alexander Donev is a researcher with academic experience, who has been working in the field of film criticism, film history, specialized journalism for over 30 years. He is a lecturer at the National Academy of Theater and Film Arts "Kr. Sarafov", as well as New Bulgarian University for the period (1998 - 2016)

I consider his monograph "Independent Cinema. From Edison to Netflix" as the main habilitation material. Alexander Donev gives an overview of the problem of independent cinema in its various forms from its first appearance to modern times. I believe the monograph contains a wide range of film facts, and a comprehensive study of key film processes in the field of independent film production. The titles span over an impressive period of "more than 110 years: from the time Edison was the first movie mogul to the present day, when Netflix turns out to be the most powerful partner of independent filmmaking." Independent cinema is presented in the context of most of

the cinema genres in the specific thematic area. Explored are examples of world cinema in various aspects. The focus of attention is the independent cinema of generalized countless definitions; by distinguishing the term independence in its cinematic sense; as an integral part of the entertainment economy; as an academic analysis of its practical problems and values; through historical review of development and specificity; through the Bulgarian context of the problem, to the current aspects in the relations between the independent and dominant structures of the film industry and streaming independence. And all this in the natural and in-depth academic field of research of Dr. Alexander Donev. His research, teaching and creative work as a film producer, lecturer in higher education centers and art historian has its effect in this text. One distinguishes his qualities as a scientist working with a system of concepts, to present in his argumentation the results of theoretical and practical skills, as well as analytical abilities to consider contextually the problems of independent cinema in the context of screen art from its beginning to modern "digital transformations" (p. 29). At the outset, the author states the direction where the bases of the monograph is "the idea of outlining a credible, convincing and valid concept of 'independent cinema' in a sufficiently large-scale historical perspective." (p. 13) The evolution of film aesthetics in parallel with the development of modern screen technologies and the characterization of the receptive attitudes of the audience.

The author convincingly distinguishes his scientific territory in the studies of world independent cinema, paying sufficient attention also to "the actual examination of independent cinema with an emphasis on its principal characteristics and ways where its functioning is dictated by some distinct processes in contemporary Bulgarian cinema" (p. 32).

I accept the contributions of the author for analyzing independent cinema, above all in its "non-institutional character", insofar as it is created and developed outside established, commercially dominant or state institutions, examining in depth the history of the film industry, sociology and social anthropology of filmmaking. As well as the emphasis on the importance of digitalization as an incentive for independent filmmaking, for the democratization of film production and distribution on the one hand, and for the use of digitalization to consolidate the business of big companies on the other.

In the aforementioned list of seven academic publications in Bulgarian and English, I find the same essential qualities to comment on a wide range of classic and contemporary screen phenomena in a specific, clearly reasoned research area.

Without making extensive analyzes of their qualities individually, I will emphasize the variety of topics available and the wide scope of the analyzes in the multifaceted film territory, which determines Dr. Donev's overall presence as a research scientist and

educator, able to convey to his audience his analytical and practical ideas about the history and specifics of screen art.

Drawing attention to the applicant's citation, I believe that his academic texts are of interest not only to colleagues working in the field of screen art and cinema, but also for those working in the field of marketing, the market dimensions of modern digital media, social studies and knowledge (such as quoting Stefan Ivanov in the journal *Philosophical Alternatives* 2018), visualizations and the specifics of the recent past (cited by Stoyanova, V. in the collection *Remembering Communism: Private and Public Recollections of Lived Experience in Southeast Europe*, 2014), language of slogans (quote Gergana Furkova in her monograph 2018) and others.

Although it is not part of the competition materials, his monograph on the basis of a dissertation thesis for the awarding of the educational and academic degree "Doctor" "Help from the public. Bulgarian feature films from the beginning of the 21st century and their cinema viewers", which, in 295 pages, examines how national cinema offers and develops adequate images of the nation, analyzing and promoting what is identified with national culture, supporting its sustainability in spiritual terms." (p. 14). This work is the first Bulgarian wide-ranging study of the problem of cinema audience, based on various analytical methods - cinematic, cultural, sociological, statistical.

I should also pay attention to the many useful applications, tables and diagrams used as supplementary applications in the various academic texts of Alexander Donev, by using which we get a clear, concretely and clearly reveal idea of the fundamental links in the contextual aspect, annual reviews of the most characteristic and important processes and phenomena are presented that outline different profiles, trends and comparisons.

I would also like to mention the appreciative feedback of fellow teachers and students of cinema at the National Academy of Theater and Film Arts about the long-term work of Dr. Alexander Donev.

The overall presentation in the competition for Associate Professor in the professional field 8.4. Theater and Film Art, for the needs of the Screen Arts Department, Institute of Art Studies - BAS, with its rich publication list, published monographs and studies, his habilitation work, citations, participation in academic forums in Bulgaria and abroad, as well as by the lectures by Dr. Donev at the National Academy of Theater and Film Arts "Kr. Sarafov" creates in me the conviction that he is a candidate who fully meets the requirements for occupying the position of Associate Professor and I

strongly suggest that Dr. Alexander Donev be selected in the competition announced by the Screen Arts Department of the Institute of Art Studies - BAS .

25. 04. 2020

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