

OPINION

On the competition for acquiring the academic position Associate Professor
Acc. to 8.1 Theory of Arts, announced by the Institute of Art Studies, BAS,
published in State Gazette issue 27 from 5th April
with candidate Senior Assistant Katerina Zdravkova Gadzheva PhD
by Professor DSc Emmanuel Moutafov, Institute of Art Studies, BAS

Competition and nomination

The competition has been approved by the AC of the IAS-BAS at the request of the Fine Arts Department and submitted for consideration by the Director of the Unit. The only candidate in it is senior assistant Dr. Katerina Zdravkova Gadzheva and she applied for the academic position of *associate professor* with a habilitation thesis - "From Text to Image. Cultural and Artistic Aspects of Four Fairy Tales by Charles Perrault and the Brothers Grimm in the Second Half of the Twentieth Century", 167 pages, as well as 27 articles and studies published in Bulgarian and foreign academic publications (including English and French). The production subject of the competition was realized after the defense of her dissertation "Between the Desired and the Real. Photography and "Visual Propaganda" in Bulgaria 1948-1956", 2009. The quality and volume of the materials submitted for the competition meet the national and institute's criteria for habilitation.

Katerina Gadzheva obtained her *BA* and *MA* degrees in *History and Theory of Art* at NBU in 2004 and successfully defended her PhD at the same university in 2008. The same dissertation she has defended at the NAA in 2009 (in accordance with the active at that time HAC). Since 2012 Dr. K. K. Gadzheva is a senior assistant professor in the RG the *Modern Bulgarian Art*, at the *Fine Arts Department* of the Institute of Art Studies at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. She teaches simultaneously at NBU, National Academy of Fine Arts and Sofia University "St Kliment Ohridski". Has the necessary asset of participation in projects with external funding and has recently become a member of the editorial board of Art Studies Readings, module "New Art".

In this sense, the competition and the application are in line with the LDASRB.

Competition Monograph

The habilitation thesis "From Text to Image. Cultural and Artistic Aspects of Four Fairy Tales by Charles Perrault and the Brothers Grimm in the Second Half of the Twentieth Century" (under print with the decision of the AC of the Institute of Art Studies at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences) does not repeat the topic of the PhD thesis of senior assistant Dr. Katerina Gadzheva. The core of the eponymous

monograph is presented as the result of a two-year planned project of the RG *Modern Bulgarian Art* at the *Fine Arts Department*, which was discussed, reviewed, and approved as successfully completed by the AC of the Institute of Art Studies at BAS. The text has since undergone changes, refinements, and additions in accordance with the recommendations of the council.

The monograph "From Text to Image. Cultural and Artistic Aspects of Four Fairy Tales by Charles Perrault and the Brothers Grimm in the Second Half of the Twentieth Century" is a serious study of the children's fairy tales based indicatively on plots and images from fairy tales by Charles Perrault and the Brothers Grimm. And since the work touches on the problems of the relationship between *text* and *image*, and I have been working for years on the relation of (God's) *Word* and *image* in Christian art, I take the liberty of commenting on the procedure (I also have amateur experience in the illustration of two poetry collections and other publications, but in adult publications where the images do not necessarily have a direct relation to the text). The methodology of the research is interdisciplinary, which is evident from the cited and analyzed publications from different fields of science, such as cultural anthropology, philosophy, semiotics, pedagogy, psychology, set as instruments in a voluminous introduction. In it, by the way, Dr. Gadzheva emotionally states that she will consider the illustrations of fairy tales as an art historian, a woman, a mother, and a child, which gives a certain direction to the whole exposition. Her latter "role" undoubtedly also takes the reader back to his/her childhood years, especially when looking at the illustrations from children's books from the 1970s and 1980s. As a scholar of mediaeval studies, I was also impressed by the aspect of Christian (specifically Protestant) symbolism presented in the monograph, which is unavoidable in an analysis of the Brothers Grimm's work. In this regard, I would like to point out that the idea of linking the name Mara from Mara Cinderella on Bulgarian soil to the "Christian cult of the Virgin Mary" (p. 115) is a bit of a stretch, but I attribute it to the author's distinctly feminist perspective, as well as to her culturalist inclination to problematize such phenomena. According to the classics of this same cultural studies of the generation of Frazer and Propp, however, everything is folklore, even the Old Testament, and it could be that St. Mary is the archetype of Mara Cinderella but quite the opposite ... Particularly interesting and contributory in Dr. Gadzheva's research are the ideas of the social construction of male and female roles in childhood, the suggestion of the national idea, etc. through the translations of fairy tales and their illustrations. The offering of comparative (auxiliary) tables of the themes in the different versions of the tales, which also reflect on the details in the images, is positive, as it demonstrates a serious under-representation of the author's approach to facts in the humanities. I consider it a great advantage of the text that all the problems are considered retrospectively and material from the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century is also included, since the study implies a historical approach, which is obligatory for any art historical research. The monograph "From Text to Image. Cultural and Artistic

Aspects of Four Fairy Tales by Charles Perrault and the Brothers Grimm in the Second Half of the Twentieth Century“ by Katerina Gadzheva is the first work of its kind in Bulgarian science that explores in a multifaceted, clever, and engaging language the nature and place of the magic fairy tale in our country. I therefore believe that the above-mentioned book has all the characteristics of a habilitation work that will be used by generations of expert on humanitarian studies for their future research.

Accompanying publications submitted to the competition

The 27 publications submitted are sufficient for the competition. The most significant of them are the ones on photography, because so far Dr. Gadzheva has established herself as a specialist in the study of photography with her own profile and contributions. However, they also show her marked interest in the period of socialism, the contribution of women photographers to the processes, etc., again supported by a cultural analysis combined with an art historical vision. The other line of interest already highlighted in the years since 2009 is the study of artists involved in children's book publishing in this country. Notable among them are: Gadzheva, K. The first illustrations to the fairy tale "Little Red Riding Hood". – *Art Studies Quarterly*, 2019/ 2; Eadem, The Doll in the World of the Bulgarian Socialist Child. A look at the illustrated books of the 1950s - In: *The Doll - Artistic and Educational Aspects*, IAS, 2020; Eadem, "One day he will find and save me". The dream of the prince, known from the fairy tales of Charles Perrault and the Brothers Grimm and the accompanying illustrations - *Balkanisticheski Forum*, 2021/4; Eadem, Bulgarian illustrations to the fairy tale "Little Red Riding Hood" - a look at the twentieth century - In: *Art Studies Readings. Module "New Art". Personalia*, 2022. The cited titles only show that her interest in fairy tales and their illustrations dates back at least four years and does not coincide with the request and execution of her planned project.

It is also obligatory to note that senior as. Dr. Katerina Gadzheva over the years participated and implemented the so-called children's projects of the Institute of Art Studies at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, funded by Sofia Municipality, which with their meaningfulness and attractiveness (work with preschool children), were traditionally proposed and approved as a scientific and applied achievement of the Institute. Moreover, they have become one of its emblems in recent years. And together with her teaching activities, they paint a portrait of an undisputed authority in the guild who should have been habilitated long ago in order to contribute even more fully to the work of the RG *Modern Bulgarian Art*, to train doctoral students, to participate in scientific juries, to lead projects, etc.

Based on the above, I strongly believe that the senior assistant Dr. Katerina Zdravkova Gadzheva with her habilitation thesis, the accompanying 27 publications, teaching and project activities deserves to be elected to the academic position of *Associate Professor* in 8.1. Art Theory at the Institute of Art Studies at the Bulgarian

Academy of Sciences, recommending as much to the members of the Scientific Jury as to the members of the AC of the Institute of Art Studies at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences to vote positively for her election. I will vote with great pleasure “yes”.

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