

# REVIEW

By Prof. DSc Peter Tzanev

Lecturer at the Bulgarian National Academy of Arts

**On the competition for the academic position *Associate Professor***

On Art Studies and Fine Arts

(Fine art from the period of the People's Republic Bulgaria)

8.1 Art Theory

for the needs of Department Visual Arts, RG Modern Bulgarian Art at the Institute of Art Studies, BAS

the competition has only one candidate

**Senior Assistant Dr. Katerina Gadzheva**

## **I. Data on the candidate:**

Sen Ass. Dr Katerina Gadzheva

### **Education:**

**2009** - Defended her PhD at the Bulgarian National Academy of Arts in Sofia with a dissertation entitled "Between the Desired and the Real. Photography and "Visual Propaganda" in Bulgaria 1948-1956". Scientific supervisor - Prof. Chavdar Popov.

**2004** - Master's degree at New Bulgarian University, Sofia.

Art History of the Second Half of the 20th Century

**2002** - Bachelor's degree at New Bulgarian University, Sofia. History of Art

### **Academic positions held:**

**2012** - Senior Assistant at the Institute of Art Studies, Sofia.

**2009** - Visiting lecturer in *History and Theory of Bulgarian and World Photography* at the Faculty of Fine Arts, Department of Art Studies, Master's Program in *Photography* at the Bulgarian National Academy of Arts, Sofia.

**2008** - Visiting lecturer with lectures in *History and Theory of Photography* and *History of Bulgarian Art of the Second Half of the 20th Century*, at New Bulgarian University

2008 - Visiting lecturer in *Philosophy of Photography* at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski.

## **II. Data on the habilitation thesis submitted by the candidate:**

### **Habilitation thesis:**

Published monograph entitled *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*, Publishing house: Institute of Art Studies, BAS, 2022

### **Articles and papers published in scholarly journals, refereed, and indexed in world-renowned databases of scholarly information:**

Ten articles published in prestigious international and national scientific journals.

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* focuses on how the interpretation of fairy tales changes depending on the cultural and social situation and how certain layers of meaning are displaced by others, as well as the way fairy tales are accompanied by images that further complicate and expand their messages. The research focus of the monograph is on Bulgarian children's book illustration of the second half of the twentieth century, and in particular on the images accompanying four of Charles Perrault's and the Brothers Grimm's fairy tales - "Little Red Riding Hood", "Sleeping Beauty", "Cinderella" and "Bluebeard".

Possible external and internal motivations are interpreted in terms of how artists "translate" well-known texts into images, what they emphasize, what they conceal, and how (or whether) they manage to convey universal narratives in such a way that they acquire local meaning, to start "speaking" the language of Bulgarian readers.

The habilitation thesis is a theoretical authored text that can be seen as an innovative research program that brings together key questions, approaches and ideas that engage the disciplinary fields of art studies, visual studies, and cultural anthropology in a new and original way.

The articles and papers presented cover a wide range of research interests related to the development of fine art, photography and visual advertising and propaganda in Bulgaria in the second half of the twentieth century.

## **III. Data on the candidate's scientific activity:**

Added are the necessary: INDIVIDUAL SCIENTIFIC INDICATORS

Minimum required scores per indicator group for the different degrees and academic positions

Citation reference with full bibliographic description of cited and citing publications /ref. peer-reviewed and reviewing publications/

Indicators related to teaching.

Indicators related to academic research:

#### **IV. Scientific contributions:**

I will take the liberty to summarize the scientific contributions of the materials presented by Sen Ass. Dr. Katerina Gadzheva, commenting on them grouped in two main directions:

1. The first direction is outlined by a habilitation thesis with a clearly stated innovative research program, based on a synthetic approach, which locates art studies in the field of visual art studies and cultural anthropology by experimenting with concepts and categories from the field of psychoanalytic aesthetics and archetypal psychological hermeneutics, reaching through the symbolism of the children's fairy tale and its visualization in a specific historical period in Bulgaria to valuable for art studies historiographical results and thematic findings.
2. The second direction is united by articles that bring together research studies focusing on the role of photography as public art in the historical framework of ideological culture in Bulgaria in the second half of the twentieth century.

The first direction is defined by a seemingly eccentric and marginal research object, which, however, Dr. Katerina Gadzheva manages to turn into a highly complex and effective key that deciphered the deep cultural and psychological attitudes determining the aesthetic sensibility and the hidden universal mechanisms of the art of illustration in Bulgaria during the period under consideration.

I must share that the methodological toolkit used by Dr. Gadzheva, in my opinion, contains two very important contributions that I hope will have their deserved recognition and future development in Bulgarian art studies.

The first contribution concerns the imposition of psychological research discourse and critical psychoanalytic aesthetics as full-fledged tools in academic art studies in Bulgaria.

The second contribution relates to the generation of evidence through psychological and psychoanalytic research of the symbolism of certain narrative structures and archetypal narratives historically as a micro-events complex that remains unstudied temporally and largely invisible in terms of the internal dynamics and development of certain genres.

In this case, the peculiar psychogeography of certain fairy tale characters unlocks universal psychological stereotypes that influence the formation of a certain type of imagery in Bulgarian children's book illustration of the second half of the twentieth century.

Thus, Dr. Gadzheva's research outlines interesting new trajectories of interpretation that find their center outside the generally accepted stylistic descriptions of the period under consideration.

The monographic study also provides a highly original vision of the intersection of multiple cultural and psychological codes in the development of Bulgarian illustration, which has hitherto been read primarily through the individual graphic penmanship and own creative development of the unique artistic language of significant and emblematic artists of the second half of the twentieth century such as Simeon Venov, Borislav Stoev, Petar Chuklev, Ivan Kyosev and Rumen Skorchev (whose works are included as specific examples in the monograph).

Regarding the second direction, which is united by a relatively homogeneous corpus of articles focusing on the role of photography as public art in the historical framework of ideological culture in Bulgaria in the second half of the twentieth century, we encounter Dr. Gadzheva's very rich and focused professional research practice, which can be defined as an undisputed contribution to the contemporary history and theory of Bulgarian art.

Here we must certainly mention the scholarly studies *Women in Bulgarian Photography. Focus on the 1970s* (2019), *The Street in Bulgarian Photography of the 1960s. The Socialist City in a European Context* (2019), *The Role of Photography in the Formation of the Rational Socialist Consumer in 1960s Bulgaria* (2019), *Socialist Fashion and Photography. A Look at Lada Magazine in the 1960s* (2021).

## **V. Evaluation of the submitted materials:**

The competition submissions fully comply with the requirements of the LASDRB.

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* is an ideal example of a successful result of a very serious research work in a specific and innovative direction in the field of art studies, related

to the successful convergence of multiple approaches from different disciplinary fields.

I would like to point out the extremely multifaceted and thoroughly developed over the years by Dr. Gadzheva line of linking art historical analysis with cultural, informational, sociological, ethnographic, anthropological, and psychological strategies from the register of fieldwork outside museums with heterogeneous printed publications, urban subculture, advertising materials and everyday materiality. All of this adds up to an original, creative position with an authentic and respectable charge.

## **VI. Conclusion:**

The materials submitted by Katerina Gadzheva for the announced competition for the academic position of *Associate Professor* are based on remarkable knowledge and research skills in the field of the theory of fine arts.

In her scientific and teaching development Katerina Gadzheva has achieved a rich and respectable result with its convincing and original characteristics.

In conclusion, I believe that the materials submitted for review in the competition meet the requirements for the academic position of *Associate Professor* by the Sen. Asst. Dr. Katerina Gadzheva.

Sofia

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/Prof. DSc Peter Tzanev/