

OPINION

By Prof. Dr. Radostina Neykova

In connection with the competition, announced by the Institute of Art Studies - BAS
for the academic position ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

On Art Studies and Fine Arts (fine arts from the period of People's Republic of
Bulgaria),

Professional field 8.1 Art Theory for the needs of Department Fine Arts, RG Modern
Bulgarian Art at the Institute of Art Studies, BAS

Senor Assistant Dr. Katerina Gadzheva is the only candidate for the competition in
Art Studies and Fine Arts (visual art from the period of People's Republic of
Bulgaria).

K. Gadzheva has graduated New Bulgarian University – BA and MA programs on
Art History and has received qualification as art studies expert. Immediately
afterwards she defended her doctoral thesis entitled "Between the Desired and the
Real. Photography and "Visual Propaganda" in Bulgaria 1948 - 1956". Since 2012
she has been appointed as a senior assistant at the Institute of Art Studies - BAS.

Gadzheva has lectured at New Bulgarian University, Sofia University "St Kliment
Ohridsky". She continues her lecturing activity at NBU. Her teaching areas include
History and Theory of Bulgarian and World Photography, Philosophy of
Photography, History and Theory of Photography, History of Bulgarian Art from the
second half of the 20th century.

Editor-in-Chief editor of "Art Studies Readings" - scientific publication of the
Institute of Art Studies - BAS, member of the organizing committee of the scientific
conference: Art Studies Readings, organizer, and participant in such projects as:
"Bulgarian Artists for Children", "Platform for Arts", etc.

The following materials have been submitted for the competition: research paper
"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", in a
volume of 168 pages; 6 articles published in refereed and indexed scientific journals;
4 articles published in specialized journals in the field of art; leadership of 3 national
scientific, educational, and artistic projects, as well as participation in 3 more. She
has also led two workshops about Bulgarian artists for children.

The submitted by the competition by Sen. ass. Dr. Katerina Gadzheva's 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", a publication of the IAS – BAS, Sofia, 2022, ISBN 978-619-7619-21-8 is
an interesting and thorough study.

The text comprehensively analyses key examples of the interpreted and recorded wise and illuminating stories conveyed through written text and the artists' work on them, which "conveyed the content of the text according to the specific publication to which it was addressed and the specifics of the period in which it existed" (quoted in K. Gadzheva, p. 7).

Gadzheva explores the nature of the transfer of a story from a literary, narrative, to a visual version and questions the use and development of the different authorial style, characteristic of the era, nationality, etc. in this visual construction.

"Achieving a balance between text and image, both in terms of meaning and visual aspect, is a complex and responsible task," Katerina Gadzheva writes in her analyses (p. 9). Developing her reflections in the direction of the analysis of the different conceptual specificities used for "illustrated books".

Even though the habilitation thesis is mainly based on the classics of the Brothers Grimm, Charles Perrault, the author also uses examples from the new literary works of Angela Carter, Jane Yolen, Anne Sexton, etc., in which the familiar protagonists of Red Beard, Cinderella, The Frog Prince, etc. are found. Gadzheva combines the approach of focusing the study primarily on the illustrations on the one hand, with that of emphasizing the key functions of the texts on the other. The guideline of "tracing author-image, text-image, image-historical era, image-readership relationships" (p. 33) works and is well found. The use of comparative analysis and interdisciplinarity helps the author to develop her analyses very appropriately. The focus is centered on four of the most popular stories, "Little Red Riding Hood," "Sleeping Beauty," "Cinderella," and "Bluebeard." Gadzheva carves out a new and interesting field of scientific study in Bulgarian art history and uses specific scientific terminology related to the creation of the illustrations. In addition to its theoretical contribution, the monograph would also be useful for practitioners and students working in the field of fine art and literature.

Very interesting and fruitful is the elaboration of the problem also on national Bulgarian territory with the chapter "The Tales of Charles Perrault and the Brothers Grimm in Bulgaria" and the development and "translation" into image of the familiar texts in different times.

The presence of auxiliary tables, which enrich and systematize the study, fits well with the scientific text.

And let me conclude with a quote from Gadzheva again: "Despite the contradictory opinions of contemporary researchers on whether illustrations help or hinder readers, especially children, we must not forget that the very authors on whom this book is focused, Charles Perrault, and the Brothers Grimm, insisted that their recorded stories be accompanied by images" (p. 11).

The scientific scope of the candidate's publications and papers is focused on the topic of the history, specificity and aesthetics of photography and the photographic image, as well as the classic children's story and their illustrations. It is noteworthy that in both scientific fields the candidate works with academic seriousness, fervor, and

dedication. Some of the texts have been presented to the public at conferences. In addition to the 10 scientific articles submitted to the competition, 17 more were presented, which add to the very good impression and overall perception of the candidate's work. The articles are in Bulgarian and English, which gives an idea of the knowledge of the research of the Sen. Ass. Dr. Katerina Gadzheva in international field. They have been published in various journals in Italy, Hungary, Germany, Slovakia, and France.

The candidate's scientific works have been cited 12 times in 8 publications, two of the citations are in foreign language publications. Which again shows the recognition of the candidate by the scientific community.

Katerina Gadzheva's expert activity is marked by her active participation and leadership of the long-term project "Bulgarian Artists for Children", presenting to adolescents several significant artists such as Ivan Penkov, Binka Vazova and Alexander Bozhinov. The projects have been supported by the Audiences Program of the National Culture Fund and the Culture Program of Sofia Municipality.

Katerina Gadzheva is also a long-time lecturer in the field of history, theory, and aesthetics of photography at universities such as NBU, SU "St. Kliment Ohridski" and the National Academy of Arts.

I cannot fail to mention the valuable scientific monograph "Between the Desired and the Real. Photographic Illustrations in Bulgarian Periodicals 1948-1956" - published as a dissertation by Katerina Gadzheva in 2012. The publication is bilingual, in a volume of 208 pages.

In view of the valuable scientific, expert and teaching work of the Sen. Ass. Dr. Katerina Gadzheva, I vote YES and propose to the Honorable Scientific Council of the Institute of Art Studies to elect her to the academic position of ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR in Art Studies and Fine Arts (Fine Arts of the Period of the People's Republic of Bulgaria), Institute of Art Studies - BAS.

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Prof. Dr. Radostina Neykova