

OPINION

By Assoc. Prof. Dr arch. Malvina Rousseva, Institute of Art Studies – BAS

CONCERNING: the competition for acquiring the academic position of associate professor in Theory and History of Architecture (Digitalization of Architectural Heritage), professional direction 5.7 Architecture, Construction and Geodesy for the needs of the Fine Arts Department of the Institute of Art Studies - BAS, State Gazette issue 52 from 18.06.2024 with one candidate – Dr architect Dimitrina Popova

Dr. Arch. Dimitrina Popova holds the position of Senior Assistant Professor at the Institute of Art Studies from 2015 until now. In the period 2011 - 2013 she was a full-time PhD student at the same institute, and in 2014 she successfully defended her dissertation thesis entitled: "Boundaries of the Roman Empire's Intervention through Architecture in Thrace" for the award of PhD in Theory and History of Architecture.

Ph. D. in History and History of Thracian Architecture. Ph. Dimitrina Popova participated in the competition with:

- Monograph "*Architectural Heritage in a Collection of Architectural Photographs from the Period 1949-1962*",
- Chapter of a book dedicated to the architecture of the building of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.
- 20 scientific articles in scientific journals, of which five (5) are refereed in ERIH PLUS, two (2) in Web of Science and one (1) in Scopus. (One of the articles is co-authored)
- Participation with papers in 13 national and international scientific conferences
- Participation in three (3) academic research projects
- realized architectural projects for the preservation and socialization of the architectural heritage of the Bulgarian lands and projects in the field of education, renovation and improvement of the urban environment.
- More than ten years of active teaching activity in two universities.

The habilitation thesis "*The Architectural Heritage in the Collection of Architectural Photographs from the Period 1949-1962*" consists of an introduction, two parts, each of which includes three chapters, a conclusion, a bibliography in Cyrillic and Latin with 116 titles, a list of figures and a summary in English, or a total of 224 pages.

Dimitrina Popova's monograph offers for the first time in Bulgarian architectural science a contemporary analysis of a collection of architectural documents that are part of the architectural archive of the Institute of Art Studies at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. The collection consists of architectural photographs of houses from Bulgarian lands built in the 19th century. The process of their digitization raises questions about a radical change in the content of the documents, a change in thinking, methods of research and analysis different from the traditional ones for archival science. The search for a new approach implies new knowledge and original results. Arch. Popova created and tested a scientific methodology for three-dimensional reconstruction of old buildings. In the book, she traces the role of new digital media, and specifically virtual reality, which makes it possible to revive our irretrievably destroyed architectural heritage.

The first part of the work focuses on the foundation of the architectural archive, while the second part on the digital product - the three-dimensional reconstruction of 19th century houses. The methodological tools in the study of the collection of architectural photographs are based on a comparative and contextual analysis based on selected hierarchical scales S, L, M and XL, the content of which is explained in the text. Regarding the grouping of the architectural archival documents, Arch. Popova introduces the new terms "array" and "collection".

The interdisciplinary approach of research and analysis is academic and applied. The scientific literature used from different fields of knowledge includes architectural, historical, literary and philosophical publications directly or indirectly related to the subject. Derrida's methodology, which arch. Popova follows gives her the freedom to examine and present the archive as a sensation and experience, which is relevant in the virtual walk through the ancient houses she has reconstructed.

A virtue of the monograph is its theoretical and applied character, thanks to which the work can be used not only by scholars, but also by a wide range of specialists in the fields of architecture, urbanism, sociology, municipalities and students.

The presented scientific articles, which have academic and social significance, show the path that architect Popova from the theoretical research of architectural heritage to its digital reconstruction.

From the academic year 2011/2012 until now, arch. Popova gives lectures and exercises in Bulgarian and English to students at two universities. The lectures include topics on *Architectural Heritage Conservation, Aesthetics and Architecture* at the European Polytechnical University as well as exercises on *Architecture* at the University of Architecture, Civil Engineering and Geodesy.

Dr. arch. Popova realizes academic and applied research activity within scientific projects in a team or independently. She participates in three scientific projects, e.g. at the *Scientific Research Fund* and at the National Scientific Program *Bulgarian Studies*. She won grants in competitions for the development of applied science projects, for example *The Five House* from the European Alliance of Academies in 2021 and at the Centre for Artificial Intelligence in Bremen, Germany in 2024.

Senior asst. Dr. arch. Popova actively participates in the academic life of the Institute of Art Studies. For the period 2015 – 2024: the seminars organized by her are distinguished by the originality and importance of the topics that have not been discussed systematically and extensively in professional architectural circles, such as *architectural heritage presented in virtual reality*.

The key contributions in the scientific and scientifically applied works of Dr. arch. Dimitrina Popova are in *revealing new scientific problems* in the discipline of Theory and History of Architecture and proposing *guidelines for their solution, creating scientific methodologies* for the study of current issues raised by her, clarifying terminological problems and *introducing new terms* consistent with the entry of new digital technologies in architectural science.

CONCLUSION

The presented for the competition by senior asst. Dr. arch. Dimitrina Popova monograph *The Architectural Heritage in the Collection of Architectural Photographs from the Period 1949-1962*, scientific publications and projects contain original contributions, further develop and enrich the scientific knowledge in the specialty "Theory and History of Architecture". The academic achievements of arch. Popova over the last ten years demonstrated all the qualities necessary to hold the academic position of Associate Professor. They meet the requirements of the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, its Implementing Regulations, the Regulations of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences on the Conditions and Procedure for Acquiring Scientific Degrees and for Holding Academic Positions, and the Regulations on the Conditions and Procedure for

Acquiring Scientific Degrees and for Holding Academic Positions at the Institute of Art Studies - BAS.

In view of the above and considering the overall scientific creativity, teaching and expert activity, the presence and authority of the candidate in the academic circles in our country, I recommend the Scientific Jury to propose to the Scientific Council of the Institute of Art Studies at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, senior asst. Dr. arch. Dimitrina Popova to be elected to the academic position of Associate Professor in the scientific specialty Theory and History of Architecture of the professional field 5.7. Architecture, Civil Engineering and Geodesy, for the needs of the Fine Arts Department of the Institute of Art Studies at BAS.

Opinion presented by

Prof. Dr. Arch. Malvina Rousseva

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