

PEER REVIEW

by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Iva Doseva, Institute of Art Studies
under a procedure for occupation of the academic position "Professor"
under Scientific field 8. "Arts", Professional field 8.2. "Fine Arts",
Specialty "Mural Painting",
announced by Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts – Plovdiv

Data about the candidate and about the procedure. Elena Nikolaeva Kantareva received her secondary education at Tsanko Lavrenov National Art High School in Plovdiv (1977-1982). She studied "Conservation and Restoration" specialty at the National Academy of Arts in Sofia (1984-1989) and obtained a Master's degree. She also specialized at the Art Conservation Center in Williamston (Massachusetts, USA) in "Conservation and Restoration of Paintings and Objects of Art" (1997) and "Analytical Techniques in Conservation" (2006). Elena Kantareva obtained the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" (2017-2020) at Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts– Plovdiv, under Professional field 8. "Arts", Professional sector 8.2. "Art".

As an artist-restorer, E. Kantareva-Decheva worked at the Mural and Mosaic Department with the National Institute for Cultural Monuments (1989-1994), Tsanko Lavrenov National Art High School (1994-1997), the Archaeological Museum in Plovdiv (1997-2000), as well as the Municipal Institute for Museum Activities in Plovdiv (2000-2002). As an educator, she started working at the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts on a part-time basis (2003-2005), later continuing as a full-time employee (2005-2008), and after a competitive selection process, she was appointed to the academic position of "Associate Professor" (2008 to present). Elena Kantareva-Decheva has twice served as Deputy Director of the Ancient Plovdiv Municipal Institute (2012-2013 and 2020-2021), and from 2021 until now, she has been its Director.

E. Kantareva-Decheva was the Chairman of the Management Board of the Bulgarian Cultural Traces Non-Profit Association (2007-2022). She is a member of the Union of Bulgarian Artists, Restoration Section, the Association of Restorers in Bulgaria, the International Association for the Study of Ancient Mosaics (AIEMA), and the International Committee for the Conservation of Mosaics (ICCM).

Among the objects, the restoration of which she has supervised (design and execution), are the mosaics in the Eirene Building (2003-2004), the Small Basilica (2011-2014), and the Bishop's Basilica of Philippopolis (2015-2020), all in the City of Plovdiv – ancient Philippopolis. The mosaics in the Bishop's Basilica were laid several times during the IV-VI centuries, and their total area is approx. 2,000 sq.m. Thanks to the efforts of Assoc. Prof. Dr. E. Kantareva-Decheva and her team, these three sites are included as a serial site in the Indicative List of the Republic of Bulgaria in UNESCO (2018).

Associate Professor Dr. E. Kantareva-Decheva has also restored murals, iconostases, and

icons in churches across Bulgaria, including those that are monuments of national significance, such as the Assumption of the Holy Virgin Church in Bachkovo Monastery and the Holy Virgin's Cathedral in Pazardzhik, among others.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. E. Kantareva-Decheva has also designed and executed the decoration of church interiors (murals and icon ensembles), including in the churches of St. George the Victorious in the Byala Cherkva Residential Complex, Pancharevo Region, Sofia – icons (24 pieces), 2008-2009, and murals (386 sq. m), 2011-2012, and of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker in the Sarafovo Region, Burgas – murals, 2018-2023.

She regularly participates in exhibitions and/or workshops, some of which she is the organizer of.

I acknowledge that the current procedure for occupation of the academic position “Professor” meets the legal requirements. The candidate has applied within the required period with the necessary documents and their list, with which I am familiar. By Order No ПД - 27-047, Plovdiv, 14.03.2024, based on Art.29a, para.1 of the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and a decision of the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Fine Arts, Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts (Minutes No 7), a Scientific Jury was appointed.

Scientometrics. According to the submitted report on scientometric indicators, Associate Professor Dr. Elena Kantareva-Decheva has fulfilled the national minimum requirements for occupation of the academic position “Professor.”

Group A, indicator 1 “Dissertation work for awarding the educational and scientific degree “Doctor” – *“Floor Mosaics from the Bishop’s Basilica of Philippopolis – Technology and Technique, Condition, Problems, Restoration”*, Diploma No 072, issued on 28.03.2022.

I am familiar with her work, having served as a reviewer during the procedure for awarding the educational and scientific degree “Doctor”, and I highly appreciated it at that time based on its merits. Some of these merits include the appropriate approach that the author has found, which is theoretical but oriented towards practice – the restoration and exhibition of a world-class site.

For Group A, indicator 1, 50 points were realized.

Group C, indicator 4 “Realized author’s product in the field of arts (film, performance, exhibition, concert, etc.)”

Associate Professor Dr. E. Kantareva-Decheva presents three author’s products for the period 2008-2023, namely: (1) Design and implementation of 386 sq.m. murals for the church St. George the Victorious in the Byala Cherkva Residential Complex, Pancharevo Region, Sofia, 2011-2012; (2) Design and execution of murals for the church St. Nicholas the Wonderworker in the Sarafovo Region, Burgas, 2018-2023; and (3) Design and implementation of 24 icons for the iconostasis of the church St. George the Victorious in the Byala Cherkva Residential Complex, Pancharevo Region, Sofia, 2008-2009.

For Group C, indicator 4, 150 points were realized.

Group D, indicator 7 “Published book based on a defended dissertation work for the

awarding of the educational and scientific degree “Doctor” or for the awarding of a scientific degree “Doctor of Science” – *“Floor Mosaics from the Bishop’s Basilica of Philippopolis – Technology and Technique, Condition, Problems, Restoration”*, Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts, 2022, ISBN: 78-619-7682-16-8, 178 pages.

For Group D, indicator 7, 150 points were realized.

Group D, indicator 9 “Articles and reports published in specialized publications in the field of arts” – five publications are noted, four of which are co-authored.

For Group D, indicator 9, 40.5 points were realized.

Group D, indicator 13 “Leading (or independent) creative expression in the field of arts, which is not a major habilitation thesis” – two restoration projects are noted.

For Group D, indicator 13, 70 points were realized.

Group E, indicator 17 “Citations in monographs and collective volumes with scientific review” – nine citations are noted.

For Group E, indicator 17, 90 points were realized.

Group E, indicator 18 “Citations or reviews in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals” – five citations are noted.

For Group E, indicator 18, 25 points were realized.

Group F, indicator 22 “Participation in a national scientific, educational, or artistic project” – participation in one project is noted.

For Group F, indicator 22, 15 points were realized.

Group F, indicator 24 “Management of a national scientific, educational, or artistic project” – four projects are noted, among which are the restoration of the Bishop’s Basilica and the Small Basilica in Plovdiv.

For Group F, indicator 22, 120 points were realized.

Group F, indicator 30 “Awards from competitions for creativity and performance, given by national professional forums and organizations” – minimum 10 points – received two awards relating, respectively, to the restoration and teaching activities of Assoc. Prof. Kantareva-Decheva.

For Group F, indicator 30, 20 points were realized.

In **conclusion**, Assoc. Prof. Dr. E. Kantareva-Decheva has fulfilled the requirements for scientometric indicators of the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts in field 8. “Arts” for occupation of the position “Professor”, as follows:

Upon a minimum number of points for Group A of 50 points, 50 points were realized;

Upon a minimum number of points for Group C of 100 points, a total of 150 points were realized;

Upon a minimum number of points for Group D of 150 points, a total of 185.5 points were realized;

Upon a minimum number of points for Group E of 80 points, a total of 115 points were realized;

*Upon a minimum number of points for Group F of 120 points, a total of 155 points were realized.**

Notes. The list of citations is incomplete. I would like to add a description of the works/citations that I have cited, but for the format of the current Peer Review, it would not be appropriate. I will only mention that the total number of points for Group E, sections 16 and 18, would increase by at least 75 points.

Scientific contributions. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Elena Kantareva-Decheva has attached a report on the contributions of her scientific and creative performances and her realized author's products in the field of arts, structured in three sections: for the creative performances presented as a habilitation thesis, the published book based on the defended dissertation work, and for five of her publications for the period from 2017 until 2023. I find that the references correctly reflect the content, character, meaning of the activities, the main problems, results, and contributions.

Conclusion. The presented documents confirm my conviction that the activity of Associate Professor Dr. E. Kantareva-Decheva is rich and versatile; it is based on in-depth knowledge in the field of ancient and modern techniques and technologies of wall painting, icon painting, mosaics, restoration skills, creative talent, teaching approach, administrative literacy, as well as the desire to preserve cultural heritage. It is also clear that the activities meet formally and in substance the scientometric and, accordingly, the legal requirements for occupation of the academic position "Professor" (Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria; 8. "Arts", Professional field 8.2. "Fine Arts"). Therefore, in good conscience, I vote for the Scientific Jury to propose to the respected Academic Council of Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts to award Assoc. Prof. Dr. Elena Nikolaeva Kantareva-Decheva the academic position of "Professor".

13.05.2024
City of Sofia

Respectfully,
/Signature: illegible/
(Assoc. Prof. Dr. Iva Doseva)

* <https://www.artacademyplovdiv.com/acad-career/min-iziskvane.html>