

OPINION

on competition for the academic position of Associate Professor, specialty Photography 8.2. Fine Art, for the needs of the Faculty of Fine Arts, Department of Fine Arts - Church Painting, promulgated in State Gazette No 63/25.07.2023

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In the competition announced for the needs of the Department of Fine Arts, specialty Church Painting at the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts, one candidate appeared - Assistant Mariana Todorova Dafova, PhD.

Mariana Dafova PhD presents the mandatory certificate, from which it is clear that she meets the minimum national requirements. Graduated with Master's degree in Photography at the Faculty of Fine Arts, AMDFA "Prof Asen Diamandiev" Plovdiv in 2006. And in 2021 successfully defends the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" with a thesis titled *Time and Transformation in Photography* in the same specialty and faculty.

The documents submitted by the candidate for this competition are comprehensive and diverse. Mariana Dafova PhD is well known in the professional guild for the visual solutions she realizes while standing behind the camera, characterized by a memorable and thoughtful vision. The number of participations, solo exhibitions and professional forums in the country and abroad in which the candidate takes part is sufficient.

Among the candidate's scientific and applied interests, one can distinguish her specific attitude to "*time and the transformation of the object*" as a graphic and artistic tool, through which the image goes beyond the level of being a fixed framed space. This is evident in the publications of Mariana Dafova, as I will highlight *Time and Transformation in Photography*, published by Intel Design 2022 based on the successfully defended dissertation thesis. The text examines a problem covering the parallel aspects of the technological exposure time, the time interval between the moment of photographing and observing the photograph, etc. In the specific situation, the candidate analyzes the connecting segment in these aspects, namely the perception of "time" as a relation, an object of the transformation and the carrier of the photographic image. The look at the idea of transformation of the complex subjective states presented through the means of photography and the professional use of technology as a tool for the realization of the creative project define the style, creative and theoretical searches of M. Dafova.

The documents submitted for the competition show that Mariana Dafova is an active artist with a number of realized individual projects: *My Big Friends* in the TRAKART Gallery (2009), Plovdiv *through My Heart* (2012), *Hvoyna in Four Seasons* (2013), *We Were Here* (2017), *Mom, How Are You, Mom* (2021) – within the framework of the International Photographic Meetings Plovdiv.

Participations in collective projects of the professional guild include: *Borders of the Image* from International Photographic Meetings, *Layers and Masks* and *Ancient Plovdiv - A Heritage of Millennia* Bulgarian Cultural Institute Warsaw, *Plovdiv - the Oldest Living City in Europe*, International Cultural Weeks Leipzig, *Photography Now* a long-term project of M. Romenska, etc.

Along with her creative works, for participation in the competition, Mariana Dafova presents evidence of her academic commitments related to the education of Photography students. These are guidelines and participation in scientific and educational projects and workshops to develop new perspectives and upgrade the qualifications of students. She is project manager of *Black and White Evening* assigned by the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts "Prof Asen Diamandiev". She participates in the *Black and White Photo 2020*, a project also assigned by the Academy, under the guidance of Dr. Sonya Stankova, workshop "Stage costume in the photography studio" held with students from the major Stage Design, etc.

All declared activities testify to the research and creative potential necessary for the specifics of the subject matter taught by Mariana Dafova PhD. Her teaching work exceeds the administrative requirements and actively takes place not only within the mandatory classes, but also in additional seminars and extracurricular projects. Her priorities include the creation and updating of curricula for the specialty introduced with professional dialogue.

All of the above gives me reason to state that Mariana Dafova PhD – candidate in the competition for the academic position of Associate Professor, in professional field 8.2 Fine Art, Photography, possesses the necessary professional expertise and qualities, which gives me reason to give a positive evaluation of the application and I recommend that the respected scientific jury award her the academic position of Associate Professor.

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