

OPINION

by Prof Iva Dosi Doseva, PhD

Institute of Art Studies – BAS

on procedure for the academic position Associate Professor,
field of higher education 8. Arts, professional field 8.2 Fine Arts, specialty Mural painting
announced by the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts "Prof Asen Diamandiev" – Plovdiv

I. Information about the competition. A scientific jury has been appointed for the competition by order of the Rector of AMDFA "Prof Asen Diamandiev" No RD-27-121/ 21.09.2023, pursuant to Art. 25 of Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act and a decision of the Faculty Council at the Faculty of Fine Arts with protocol No 2/ 18.09.2023. Documents for participation in the competition were submitted by the only candidate Stefka Ilieva Popova. They correspond to the provisions of DASRBA and the internal rules of the AMDFA. The data in the attached documents are adequate and comprehensive; the presented evidence is undisputed. All deadlines and requirements have been met; I am not aware of any violations of the procedure.

II. Information about the candidate Stefka Ilieva Popova is born on 04.07.1984 in Plovdiv, she completed her secondary education at Secondary School "St. St. Cyril and Methodius" - Plovdiv, and her higher education - at AMDFA "Prof Asen Diamandiev", where she obtained a Master's degree in Church Painting (2003 - 2009). She began teaching in the specialty Church Painting and Wall Painting at AMDFA, and in the period 2010 - 2016 she held the position of secretary of the Department of Applied Arts at the same Academy. Under the scientific guidance of Prof Zora Yanakieva, in 2020 she defended her dissertation on the topic *Creation of Creative Models for Decoration of a Modern Temple in the Education of Students* and acquired the scientific and educational degree "Doctor".

III. Description of the candidate's scientific and artistic work. The submitted documentation, shows that the candidate's work is versatile, both creative and scientific in nature; the two aspects successfully combine, complement each other and are inextricably linked with teaching at AMDFA. For example, Stefka Popova has created and updated two curricula in the disciplines of Iconography, Drawing, Theology, Painting, etc.

In general, for the period 2009 - 2020, apart from teaching, in itself a complex and responsible work, the activity of St. Popova – both individually and in a team – includes the wide range of research and publication of scientific problems in the field of teaching methodology in fine arts, contemporary trends in monumental art and icon painting, in the relevant architectural context. At the same time she deals with the design and practical implementation of monumental (mural) and easel (icons) works; with restoration of monuments (early Byzantine mosaics, revival icon). In connection with these interests are the participation in exhibitions and in creative-educational initiatives (workshops).

In the period 2009-2020 Stefka Popova participated together with prominent artists such as Prof D. Dechev and Prof E. Kantareva-Decheva in the painting of St. George the Victorious Church, Pancharevo, Sofia Region; she designed and executed the murals in churches (St. Nikolay in Church in the village of Yoakim Gruevo, St. Marina Church in the village of Pavelsko) and in secular buildings such as Paisiy Hilendarski Secondary School. She painted individual or cycle iconostasis icons (for St. Elijah Church in the village of Sinapovo, St. Dimitar Church in the village of Sarnegor, Holy Assumption in the town of Smolyan, the Ascension of Christ - village of Churekovo, St. Intercession of the Holy Virgin - the town of Smolyan and others).

Stefka Popova is a member of the team of Prof E. Kantareva-Decheva for the restoration and conservation of the Bishops's Basilica (2019-2020); she also restored an icon of St. Nicholas in the church of "St. Nikolay" - the village of Yoakim Gruevo.

In addition to her solo exhibition in the Sempre Gallery at the New Bulgarian University - Plovdiv, she is a regular participant in collective events – exhibitions of icons, works of teachers and students in an exhibition of the specialty Church Painting and Wall Painting in Plovdiv (galleries "V. Stambolyan", "St. Dimitar", Boris Hristov Hall, the Balabanov House, in Small Basilica, etc.), as well as in the Fifth Biennale of Church Arts - Veliko Tarnovo.

As a teacher, the candidate has participated with colleagues and students from the Church Painting specialty in the workshops The Art of Fresco (2017 and 2018) and others.

The scientific and creative work that St. Popova has described and some of which I have mentioned here meet the scientometric requirements (number of points according to Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act) for the position of "Associate Professor".

IV. Scientific and artistic contributions of the candidate. I find the applicant's outlined contributions of her publications to be adequate. The main quality of her works is the fact that they are based on her own practice and deal with the problems – iconographic, aesthetic, technical-technological, teaching-methodological – that the author faced, the achievements, the conclusions she made. In other words, they represent a scientific reflection of her creative and teaching activities. First of all, I would highlight the contribution analyses of the changing contemporary requirements for the decoration of the changing church interiors.

Conclusion. Considering her active teaching work and the diverse scientific and creative achievements, I propose to the respected scientific jury to award Stefka Popova the academic position of Associate Professor in professional field 8.2. Fine Arts.

I vote "In favour".

18. 09.2023, Assoc. Prof Iva Doseva, PhD