

## **OPINION**

by Prof Svetozar Benchev

Regarding: Dissertation work for the acquisition of educational and scientific degree  
Doctor on topic Time and Transformation in Photography  
with author Mariana Todorova Kamburova.

I start my opinion with a quote from the story *The Devil's Drool* by the Argentine writer Julio Cortazar, used by Michelangelo Antonioni as basis of his outstanding film *Blow Up*.

“ One of the many ways of contesting level-zero, and one of the best, is to take photographs, an activity in which one should start becoming adept very early in life, teach it to children since it requires discipline, aesthetic education, a good eye and steady fingers... when one is walking about with a camera, one has almost a duty to be attentive, to not lose that abrupt and happy rebound of sun's rays off an old stone, or the pigtails-flying run of a small girl going home with a loaf of bread or a bottle of milk. Michel knew that the photographer always worked as a permutation of his personal way of seeing the world as other than the camera insidiously imposed upon it but he lacked no confidence in himself, knowing that he had only to go out without the Contax to recover the keynote of distraction, the sight without a frame around it, light without the diaphragm aperture or 1/250 sec.”

Today, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, everyone carries a camera with them with the ability to save time or perhaps try to transform it.

Mariana Kamburova's research is relevant, the problem is modern and very interesting, and the approach is scientific and in-depth. It also asks important questions about the contemporary art (photography) which can be further studied.

### **Object of the study:**

“This dissertation is focused entirely on the requirements of the notions of time in photography and the transformation of objects in space that are subject to time, through the means of expression in photographic language - both technical and artistic”. Perhaps this is the shortest definition of the many issues that the author tries to clarify in her work.

On the one hand - the scientific and practical part - exploring the possibility of the photographer behind the increasingly sophisticated camera to capture the moment.

On the other hand – aesthetic and conceptual problems faced by photography related to the subject of the thesis. And on third – photographic interpretations of time.

Extremely interesting and factually substantiated, the author introduces us to the history of the creation of the camera and the first photographs, the gradual improvement of technology, which changes the importance of photography in life. If in the 19th century photography resembled painting, in the 20th and 21st centuries painting resembled photography - as a document, as a means of expression closer to the masses, as a concept and as a specific view of reality.

Does photography "mummify" the moment (Andre Bazin), or can it capture the spirit and aura (so-called ghost photography), or if decomposes the movement (Muybridge) creating the ability to show time in close-up (Pudovkin) - many questions that need to be answered in the dissertation.

The rich bibliography and in-depth study of the problems show the high level of the candidate.

The topic allows further development and expansion, but within the reviewed work, I find that Mariana Kamburova has done an excellent job.

**Contributions:**

Among the contributions, the candidate notes that the work is the first theoretical study of time and transformation in photography in Bulgaria.

She also "selects, analyzes and systematizes authors that make time leading theme of their works, which can be used for future research in outlining a new photographic field".

Mariana Kamburova presents and systematizes in a table basic concepts for understanding time from the considered photographic theories, which will serve to facilitate the study of the problem.

The doctoral thesis can be used in the teaching of photography students in higher education in Bulgaria, as well as photographers and artists.

These contributions, the relevance of the topic, as well as the intelligent and informed interpretation of the problem in this paper, give me reason to strongly recommend the distinguished jury to award the scientific and educational degree Doctor to Mariana Todorova Kamburova.

Respectfully yours,      Prof. Svetozar Benchev