

OPINION

by Assoc. Prof. Christina Georgieva Savova, Ph.D.,

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on a competition procedure to attain an academic rank „**Professor**“ of the New Bulgarian University, Sofia
in the Field of Higher Education 8. Arts
Professional Field 8.2 Fine arts (artistic ceramics)

In the competition for „Professor“, announced in the State Gazette, **SG is. 51 / 18.06.2021** for the needs of the Department of Fine Arts as the only candidate participates **Assoc. Prof. Monika Petrova Popova, Ph. D.**, New Bulgarian University.

I. Research (creative) activity and results

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Monika Popova began her career of creative and academic growth in 1996 at the National Academy of Arts, when she completed the course of Prof. Kasimir Dzhidrov, majoring in Ceramics. She has been a lecturer at the New Bulgarian University since 2000. She has been a full-time assistant since 2001 in the programs „Graphic Design“ and „Plastic Arts“. She successfully defended his doctoral dissertation in 2014 on „Development of sculpture during the Theban kings of the XII and XVIII dynasties“. So far, she has about 40 solo exhibitions and over 90 participations in group exhibitions in the country and abroad for the period 1992 - 2021.

For habilitation work Assoc. Prof. Dr. Monika Popova presents a catalog edition „Monika Popova – exhibitions“, 2019 (ISBN 978-619-188-278-6), which includes the last five years of her creative and teaching activities (2014 - 2019). It contains texts about the artist and many of her works from her most active period, including her latest series of drawings.

In addition to the catalog through which one can trace the creative path of Monika Popova, who shows the ability to „juggle“ with drawing, scale, and form, the author presents several original exhibitions with high artistic values.

The „Drani i Shiti“ exhibition at the Art Alley Gallery is a creative project dedicated to her favorite theme, „The Heads“. „Not a solo“ exhibition of Monika

Popova and Ivan Kulekov „1 + 1 = 1 + 1“ at UBA is a project created by communication between two authors from different creative fields, but with respect for the other and with equality between them. Exhibition-project „The Sieve“ in the gallery „Raiko Alexiev“ is another creative project that presents everything created during the stay of Monica Popova and Metodi Popov in the studios of GEDOK-Munich, as well as the continuation of the idea for the embroidered paintings, which the author transfers and on metal sieves. In the artistic circles, Monika Popova is known for her embroidered art, which is significant for her work.

Assoc. Prof. Popova presents four more leading creative performances in the field of art - an exhibition of paintings „Upper layer points“ in the gallery „Red Dot“, Sofia in 2019; exhibition „Drawings before going to bed“ in Art Alley Gallery, Sofia; exhibition of paintings and ceramics „The Swimmer“ in the gallery „Intro“ in 2020; exhibition „Maximum degree of pain“ in the gallery „Industrialna“, Sofia in 2014 - as well as a published book based on her dissertation „Sculpture in Ancient Egypt during the XII and XVIII dynasties“, published in 2015 by publishing house of NBU. For habilitation, she presents many additional creative performances and participation in collective products in the field of arts. She is the author of a separate chapter in Petya Alexandrova's monograph „I am a Bulgarian“, ed. Ciela, 2019.

The list of presented research and creative performances of the candidate covers her rich creative activity, awards, and distinctions, participation in seminars and lectures; organizing and participating in curatorial projects. The index is presented in a very coherent and logical sequence.

The materials provided by the candidate Assoc. Prof. Monika Popova, Ph.D. prove that the quantitative requirements of Law on the evaluation of the academic staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and of the New Bulgarian University for holding the academic rank „Professor“ have been met.

II. Teaching and learning activities

Associate Professor Monika Popova, Ph.D. is very active in her teaching activities involving students and graduates in many projects, as well as encouraging their participation in various creative events and projects related to artistic ceramics. She has been actively teaching in the programs at NBU since 2000, and since 2001 she has been a full-time assistant. Successfully manages national and international

educational projects, workshops, and creative ateliers such as the International Festival of Contemporary Ceramics; „Wonderful color - wonderful world“ (psychology of the world) with the German lecturer Reinhild Gerum or the workshop with lecturer Henri Kriensberg from the company BITUEN / B2N, who are importers of 3D technology and teach students to improve their practice with the 3D process.

III. Administrative and public activity

Assoc. Prof. Monika Popova Ph.D. is the founder of the specialty „Ceramics and Porcelain“ at NBU in BA and MA. With which a school of the most numerous students and the most serious creative achievements in art has been developed in Bulgaria. I dare say that "Ceramics NBU" is in the first place as a modern level of teaching and creative results of the last 7 years, as well as with the most awards for youth participation in national and international festivals.

The public activity of the candidate should include the establishment of the First Laboratory for 3D Ceramic Printing at NBU, which is the only one in Bulgaria and the Balkans, currently sponsored by herself. Thus, the ceramics at NBU differs not only from that in other higher education institutions but also throughout Bulgaria.

Its active participation in the popularization of Egyptology in Bulgaria is also of great public importance. She is the creator of over 10 exhibitions dedicated to the interpretation of the ancient Egyptian image. One of her most emblematic works is the modern sewn cuboids, inspired by her personal research of the ancient Egyptian cuboids, which became a trademark in her work.

Since 1996, Assoc. Prof. Popova has been a member of the Union of Bulgarian Artists. Participated in the board of the board in 2006 during the presidency of Prof. Ivaylo Mirchev. She has been a member of the Association of Egyptologists in Bulgaria since 2009.

IV. Personal impressions of the candidate

I can express my personal extremely positive impressions of Assoc. Prof. Monika Popova, Ph.D. is an erudite colleague - teacher and talented artist - ceramicist. Her handwriting is highly recognizable, especially characteristic, sometimes social and provocative, but always artistic. An artist who burns with a bright flame, but also a teacher who burns for his students. Extremely positive person.

V. Opinions, recommendations and notes on the activity and achievements of the candidate

I have no critical remarks on the general performance of the candidate. I recommend she continue her teaching and creative work in the same professional spirit and with the same inspiring enthusiasm.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I express my **positive opinion** about the contributions to the creativity and research activities of Assoc. Prof. Monika Popova, Ph.D., as well as about her teaching activities, which correspond to the field and the professional direction of the announced competition. I recommend the esteemed members of the scientific jury to unanimously support and vote positively for the election of **Assoc. Prof. Dr. Monika Petrova Popova** to the academic rank of "**Professor**" in the professional field **8.2. Fine arts (artistic ceramics)**.

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/Assoc. Prof. Christina Savova, Ph.D./