

STANDPOINT

for the submitted work of

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Monika Petrova Popova

in connection with the competition for the obtaining of

academic position "Professor"

in "Art Ceramics", Department of Fine Arts,

NBU, in the direction of 8.2.

by Prof. Dr. Bisera Valeva, Sofia University

In connection with the announced competition for the academic position of "professor" in a professional field 8.2. Fine arts (artistic ceramics), field of higher education 8. Arts, the only candidate is Assoc. Prof. Dr. Monika Petrova Popova. The competition has been announced for the needs of NBU in SG, issue no. 51 / 18.06.2021. By order Z-RK-230 / 22.07.2021 of the Rector of NBU the scientific jury for the competition was determined.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Monika Popova presented as a standpoint a habilitation thesis, which consists of seven creative projects (exhibitions), which were realized in the period 2014 - 2021. The exhibitions have been exhibited in prestigious galleries in Bulgaria, such as:

- "Raiko Alexiev" Gallery, UBA (125 GS Rakovski Str.), Sofia;
- "Gallery of Contemporary Art", of UBA (6 Shipka Street), town of Sofia;
- "Red Dot" Gallery, St. St. Cyril and Methodius ", 24, Sofia;
- Gallery "Industrialna", 11 "Industrialna" Str., Sofia;
- "Art Alley" Gallery, 51A Gladstone Street, Sofia;
- "Arosita" Gallery, 12 Vrabcha Street, Sofia;

- "Intro" Gallery, 28 Tsar Samuil Str., Sofia;

All of them are an up-to-date reading of the conceptual tendencies in art from the beginning of the XXI century. The candidate has sufficient pedagogical experience at NBU (since 2001). She is a long-term lecturer in ceramics in the Department of Fine Arts, initiator and creator of the programs in ceramics at NBU, creator of the course GENB "Means of expression in the fine arts". She is the founder and sponsor of a 3D ceramic laboratory for printing at UPIZ-ceramics of NBU.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Monika Popova leads UPIZ "Ceramics" at NBU.

Her creative biography is respectful. She is the author of solo exhibitions at home and abroad. In addition to the marked exhibitions that make up her habilitation work, Monika Popova has participated in various national and international projects and art forums.

This creative activity is reflected in numerous curatorial projects (organizer of all student exhibitions in ceramics at NBU), directly related to her teaching work, as well as to the various awards, nominations and recognitions. In 2014 she defended a dissertation on the topic: "Development of sculpture during the time of the Theban kings (XII, XVIII dynasties)", which consolidates and summarizes her artistic pursuits, defining her subsequent creative realizations.

Monika Popova's habilitation works create the impression of a common, voluminous and complete work. This could be most clearly seen in the large-scale exhibition "Vacuum". According to the author, these are embodied various emotional states that cannot be separated or differentiated from each other. Therefore, drawings, ceramics and conditionally called paintings form a complete conceptual space in which the viewer is an active participant. The stylistics in the ceramic works is subordinated to the sign and the generalization. In this concentrated artistic image one

can find references to ancient and exotic cultures that are interpreted through the prism of the author's personal visual philosophy. A cursory glance at the works of Monica Popova could define them as surreal, magically realistic or even close to the style of Jose Clemente Orozco and Frida Kahlo. A deeper look and analysis, however, would reveal substantial emotions, tense and experienced drawing, creative summaries that are as ancient as they are modern.

Among the presented habilitation works, the exhibition "Maximum degree of pain" (2014), inspired by the emotion - deeply personal and dramatic - is particularly impressive.

To this exhibition can be attributed the judgment of J. Lotman, to some extent paraphrased, about the creative inspiration, which, according to him, is the extreme tension that pulls the artist out of the realm of concreteness and logic and "sends him into the realm of unpredictable creativity.". In the space of the "Industrialna" Gallery, the author not only creates certain, corresponding works-elements, but each of them is too emotional and suffering. Frida Kahlo says that red is the color of both death and life. The presence of red in Monika Popova's works is just as dualistic.

From the candid and painful carmine in the drawings to the deep-dramatic red ocher in the ceramic works, the color is present in the emotional and peculiar "author-spectator" alloy as an inevitable link.

The ceramic works of the author, in all presented projects in the habilitation work, impress with their professionalism and artistic message. They preserve and develop the good traditions in the Bulgarian artistic ceramics, being simultaneously in the context of the generalizations of Venko Kolev, of the polyvalence of Krassimir Dzhidrov and at the same time imposing the recognizable visual form of Monika Popova.

The strength of her work as a ceramist is that works created by traditional technology act as an ancient totem and as a sign in a purely conceptual environment.

In addition to her work as a valuable artist, in 2015. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Monika Popova publishes a monograph based on her defended dissertation (Popova, M. Sculpture in Ancient Egypt during the XII and XVIII dynasties. 256 pages, Sofia, 2015, ISBN 9789545359019). She also has publications in specialized editions in the field of arts.

I believe that the presented habilitation work meets the requirements of ZRASRB, the Regulations for its application and the Regulations for development of the academic staff of NBU, as well as the scientometric requirements of NACID. The candidate meets the minimum national requirements for holding the announced academic position (Professor).

In conclusion, I propose to the esteemed members of the scientific jury to grant the academic position "Professor" of ceramics, for the needs of NBU to Assoc. Prof. Dr. Monika Petrova Popova.

.....

/Prof. Dr. Bisera Valeva/