

OPINION

By Prof. Dr. Milena Nikolaeva Nikolova, National Academy of Arts, Scientific Field 8.2. "Fine Art" on the scientific works and the artistic and creative production presented by Dr. Ivanka Dimitrova Dobрева-Dragostinova – a candidate in the competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the Scientific Field 8.2. "Fine art" (Visual Composition, Form, and Color in Design) announced in State Gazette No. 15/14.02.2023.

I. Assessment of compliance with the minimum national requirements and the requirements of the New Bulgarian University (NBU)

The candidate Ivanka Dobрева-Dragostinova presents a table of evidence showing the minimum requirements for the scientific, teaching, and artistic and creative activities for the academic position "Assistant Professor", in line with the Regulations for the implementation of the Law on the development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (PPZRASRB) and the requirements of the New Bulgarian University. According to the first Article in the presented table, the candidate has a defended dissertation thus earning the necessary 50 points.

In accordance with the third Article "C" (accomplished works in the field of arts), the candidate has recorded 2 solo exhibitions, with which she earned the required 100 points.

In accordance with Article "D", Ivanka Dobрева points to an article in a publication, referenced and indexed in a world-renowned scientific information database, which earned her 30 points. In addition, she indicates 28 articles published in specialized publications in the field of arts, which earned her 420 points. In line with to this Article "D", the author has shown 9 realized projects, three of which are co-authored, and therefore here she earned 225 points. For independent creative performances in the field of arts, which are not the main habilitation work, Dobрева indicates five solo exhibitions, for which she earned 175 points. The candidate participated in 17 group exhibitions, where she earned 170 points. She also has a published chapter in a collective volume, which earned her another 10 points. In total, in accordance with Article "D", the candidate earned 1030 points while the requirement is 120 points.

In accordance with the Article "E" and under the heading "Citations in monographs and collective volumes under scientific review", Dobрева presents 7 citations, with which she earned 70 points. Within "Reviews of realized author's products or creative works in specialized publications in the field of arts" the author presents 4 articles that earn her 40 points. In total, according to this Article "E", she earned 110 points, which is 70 more than the required 40.

In accordance with Article "F", the candidate presents evidence of participation in two educational projects, which earned her 30 points. Taking part in a separate artistic and creative project, Dobрева earned another 30 points, while organizing and managing 7 workshops she earned another 140 points. The candidate presents a "Research and creative program for the development and upgrading of her professional competencies and skills", which earned her

another 10 points. Thus, according to Article "F", Dobрева earned 200 points, with 50 points required.

In accordance with Article "G", the author indicates her membership in various professional organizations (40 points); shows 6 scientific publications other than those presented at the completion of the doctoral studies; points out 8 public lectures delivered on behalf of the NBU at the invitation of higher education schools or prestigious national organizations, She created a new "Product Design for Interior" program, and refined "Interior Design" and "Spatial Design" programs. The total number of points earned for this Article "G" is 205 points, with a required 50 points.

The average rating from the surveys of student satisfaction with the course and the teacher is 4.76, on a five-point scale (Article "H"). In accordance with this article, the author also indicates, the study materials developed by her for a course in "Moodle NBU"; the 4 joint works with students in creative projects; the reviews, guidance of graduates, and participation in state examination boards. Dobрева ensured the performance of students in 12 creative events and projects outside the NBU. In line with this Article "H", the candidate earned 360 points against a requirement of 70 points.

In accordance with Article "I" "Participation as a trainee in the training program for the teaching and administrative staff of the NBU", "Performance of academic duties", "Participation or management of a project for which external funds or students are involved at the NBU" the candidate earned 205 points against a required 50 points.

In accordance with Article "J", the candidate has presented an extended summary of independent creative performances and earned 40 points.

In conclusion of this analysis, it must be said that Dobрева, in compliance with many of the Articles, exceeds the minimum national requirements and the requirements of the New Bulgarian University for becoming an "Associate Professor" and has presented the necessary evidence for this.

II. Creative activity and results

1. Evaluation of the habilitation thesis.

The presented habilitation thesis consists of scientific analysis and theoretical justification of the author's works presented in two exhibitions. The theoretical part accompanying the two exhibitions contains 61 pages, of which 47 pages are of text with illustrations, 12 pages of illustrations, and 2 pages of bibliography.

The text part includes the development of the author's scientific motivation for creating the works for the exhibitions. The following are the methodological approaches that have been used, namely:

- Creating color compositions using basic principles adopted in the study for the purpose of experimental research and verification in practice of predetermined principles.

- Using unusual combinations of shapes, and applying unconventional, lateral thinking.
- Implementing the principles of form building, color science, and composition, with the aim of their specific manifestation in the presented works.

The presented creative projects are the product of an in-depth research based on compositional techniques and they show the connection between arts and design. The purpose of this study is to develop the creative process on a scientific basis. In this sense, the theoretical part examines the elements of composition that are used in the specific works presented at the exhibitions. In the elements of the composition, Dobрева defines background, shape, line, and contrast. As a way of organizing the elements in the composition, she considers symmetry, asymmetry, meter, rhythm, and dominant. Also, here I would add tectonics, nuance, scale, and proportions.

The candidate claims that the works shown by her are the result of applied compositional techniques, but their prototypes are structures from nature. The use of the color of the blue range is purposefully sought by the author, in order to show the richness and variety, and the possibilities of achieving unexpected results in one tonality.

The exhibitions show works done in oil paints, as well as those done in colored pencil paints. Both purely abstract compositions and compositions that reflect a connection with nature are presented. Thus the richness of the possibilities of the composition is demonstrated through the concepts researched by the author. In the presented creations, she aims to show, on the one hand, the connection with nature as a prime source and, on the other hand, the possibilities for rich visual perceptions based on the application of the principles of composition.

In the theoretical part, the candidate examines the problems of color, discussing its main characteristics, as well as its role in the construction of the composition. In further research and publications, basic color schemes could be studied in order to build harmonious color compositions. The author considers and justifies the choice of color in her compositions and marks the historical presence of the color blue in art and life, as well as the impact of the color blue. She also points out several principles for building the composition - subordination, tension, unity, balance, proportionality, similarity or relationships.

The following contributions can be noted in the research work carried out by the candidate:

- In the works presented in the habilitation thesis, color compositions were created based on the main principles adopted in the study, and experimental research and verification in practice were conducted.
- The creative process in executing the presented works is founded on a scientific basis.
- The work will be beneficial for the training of NBU students studying composition, form, and color in design.

- The research carried out by the author will increase the quality of education in the field she teaches.
- The work can be used both by students and by specialists working in the field of composition and color studies.

2. Evaluation of the remaining attached materials dated after the appointment as "Chief Assistant", citation by other authors, evaluation of the results of participation in research and creative projects.

In the period 2011-2023, after Dobрева was elected as Chief Assistant, she delivered reports at 22 scientific conferences, took part in exhibitions in which she touched on current topics related to ecology, showed innovative thinking, applied ecological materials in the presented creative projects (building kits for children, recyclable furniture for children, and lighting fixtures from natural materials). She also organized 4 solo exhibitions.

The candidate has numerous publications, both in refereed and specialized publications in the field of arts (27 in this period). Dobрева has been cited by other authors (7 items), which speaks of the high quality of her publications. Her participation in a number of academic projects allows her to better her qualifications, as well as the level of her teaching activity. These achievements are discussed above and are evaluated according to the requirements.

III. Educational and teaching activity

Ivanka Dobрева has extensive teaching experience. In 2005-2006, she worked as a part-time teacher in the Department of Plastic Arts at NBU, from 2008 to 2011 she was a part-time lecturer in the "Design and Architecture" department. Since 2011 she has been the Chief Assistant in the "Design" department in the "Design", "Spatial Design", "Product Design for the Interior" programs. She participated as an academic mentor in student practices, and organized and managed 6 workshops in the period 2013-2019. Dobрева took part in founding the "Product Design for Interior" program, designed materials in "Moodle NBU", and developed 4 creative projects together with students. The candidate has supervised 18 graduate students, written 18 thesis reviews and regularly participated in state examination boards. Her student survey rating is 4.76 points out of maximum 5 points. Dobрева guides and supervises the creative performances of students outside NBU.

IV. Administrative and public activity

Ivanka Dobрева participates in the faculty council of the Faculty of Basic Education. The candidate works together with students and engages them in creative performances inside and outside the NBU. She has secured and managed 12 such projects with the participation of various foundations and organizations, as well as the Sofia Development Museum. She has

organized and managed projects allowing for student participation in various exhibitions, and in the Technobel exhibition for several years.

Dobreva takes part in the training program for the teaching and administrative staff of the New Bulgarian University, and fulfills her academic duties by regularly engaging in the departmental council, the University's open days, and other administrative and public activities.

V. Personal impressions of the candidate

I knew Ivanka Dobreva during her studies at the National Academy of Arts. As a student, Dobreva showed a sense of responsibility, persistence, initiative, desire for excellent performance, and competitive spirit. She showed high results in the presentation of the projects she developed, as well as a desire to upgrade, and awareness beyond what was required in the curricula.

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

I present the recommendations regarding the text attached to the habilitation work and in the analysis of the habilitation work, which in no way diminishes its qualities.

Conclusion:

After a thorough examination of the materials provided for review by the candidate, Chief Assistant Dr. Ivanka Dobreva-Dragostinova, as well as noting the indisputable qualities of the habilitation work, I give a positive assessment of her academic activity and suggest with conviction that she be admitted to selection and selected for "Associate Professor" by the Academic Council under the announced competition in a Scientific Field 8.2. "Fine Art" (Visual composition, form, and color in design).

Date: 30/06/2023

Signature:

Prof. Dr. Milena Nikolova