

## REVIEW

by Professor Svilen Stefanov, DSc on the habilitation thesis of the candidate for the academic position of “Associate Professor” Assistant Professor Ivo Nikolaev Popov, PhD.

The competition is announced in professional field 8.2. "Fine Arts" for the needs of the New Bulgarian University. The candidate Asst. Prof. Ivo Nikolaev Popov, PhD, current lecturer in the Department of Design, NBU, takes part in the announced competition.

Asst. Prof. Ivo Popov, PhD is among the most established contemporary authors in the field of spatial design (which consists of many design components), with a substantial professional biography. Numerous respectable implementations, exhibitions, publications and participation in scientific conferences can be noted in the creative work of the candidate. They unequivocally prove that their author is in the highest professional circles of modern design.

Ivo Popov does not limit himself only to his lecture courses. He is also an active organizer of various student and doctoral exhibitions and workshops at NBU, which makes his presence at this university extremely valuable.

About his professional work, Ivo Popov writes: “During my 29-year creative career, I have mainly worked in the field of corporate design. My exhibition design projects have been realized both here and in Boston (USA), Chicago (USA), Los Angeles (USA), Toronto (Canada), Nuremberg (Germany), Milan (Italy), Sydney (Australia), Skopje (Republic of North Macedonia), Tirana (Albania). I have implemented advertising and exhibition design projects for the Presidency of the Republic of Bulgaria (2013), the Bulgarian National Bank, and large Bulgarian and foreign companies. I have won a number of competitions for corporate graphic design, including a competition for the coat of arms of Elin Pelin Municipality. I am the prize winner of an exposition design award for the most attractive exhibition stand of the LAZATEK company for the MachTech & InnoTech Expo Exhibition at the Inter Expo Center, Sofia, 2012.

I have been a member of the Union of Bulgarian Artists since 1991 and I am a member and co-founder of the Chamber of Bulgarian Designers since 2012. In all my accomplished projects, I have strictly adhered to the methodology of design construction, following the design phases from the concept design through the detailed design to the final implementation”.

I personally know Asst. Prof. Ivo Popov, PhD and I can confirm that everything stated above is accurate. All these impressive activities are described in detail in the absolutely correct references, including scientometric indicators, applied by the candidate.

The main contribution in the creative work of Asst. Prof. Ivo Popov, PhD consists of his artistic and technological developments in the area of modern constructive design of contemporary exhibition areas. Asst. Prof. Ivo Popov, PhD has published a number of texts representing an indisputable contribution in this field. I am acquainted with his doctoral thesis, also dedicated to similar scientific problems. But the series of his activities is too long to repeat verbatim in this review.

Precisely for the habilitation work presented in the current competition, it can be said that Asst. Prof. Ivo Popov, PhD is an author who intentionally heads for expanding the stereotypes of creating modern spatial design. The work is widely applicable, but in the topic “Corporate Design of Shopping Center and Showroom “LABIRINT”, Sofia”, Asst. Prof, Ivo Popov, PhD describes the theoretical framework and methodology of the process of creating a complete corporate design (graphic, advertising, exterior, exhibition and interior), in the case of the LABYRINTH shopping center and showroom. The habilitation thesis comprises of 31 pages of text and 84 pages of photographic material. The text is divided into “Introduction”, “Exposition Design”, “Corporate Design of “Labyrinth” Shopping Center”, “Completion of Renovation and Furnishing”, "The Period from 2007 to 2016”, “Conclusion”, “Contributions” and “References”.

The present work summarizes his research studies of recent years. Text and visual material are distinguished by a clear, logically constructed internal structure that brings out their independent meanings, qualities and possible uses.

Consecutively, the habilitation thesis unfolds a complete, logically constructed artistic and technological interpretation. In the “Introduction” part, the various fields of corporate design are presented - graphic and brand design, exhibition

design, advertising design, web design, outdoor advertising, interior design of public spaces, clothing design, textile design, etc.

The “Exposition Design” part is dedicated to the large range of spaces and sections involved in exposition design. The difference in the principles of designing and constructing residential and public interiors, and in particular the exhibition spaces as part of the public ones, is analyzed. The creative framework in exposition design, which combines four main elements - space, form, color and light, is examined.

The “Corporate Design of Shopping Center “Labyrinth” section describes the preparation and design of the corporate design of the shopping center, all phases - the trademark, visual communication and corporate identity, the exposition design of the entire complex, outdoor advertising, graphic, advertising and interior design.

The “Completion of Renovation and Furnishing” section describes the finishing works and furnishing of the trade center. The absence of professional arrangers and decorators in the shopping complex after its opening is critically approached. The author writes: “Here I consider as a serious mistake of the investors the fact that the arrangement, decoration, overall display of the goods was entrusted to the staff and the manager of the shopping center.”

The next part “The Period from 2007 to 2016” follows the development of the shopping complex after its opening in December 2007, the strong influence of the financial crisis of 2009-2012 and the troubles that the “LABYRINT” shopping center and showroom has gone through until today. By its nature, that is a very interesting sociological part of the habilitation thesis

In the “Conclusion” part, the author draws conclusions about the creative work of designers, and in particular corporate and exposition designers.

The last part describes the contributions of this creative product. The author states that: “For the first time in Bulgaria, and perhaps on a global scale, a complete corporate design of such a site is made by a single designer. Similar projects are designed by large teams of narrow specialists - architects, graphic designers, exposition designers, interior designers, outdoor advertisement designers, brand designers, designers of commercial furniture, artistic lighting

specialists, author supervision, etc.” He also notes that conclusions are drawn based on shared experience and the practical application of corporate design, which can serve the professional development of each designer.

The enclosed abundant photographic material gives a comprehensive idea of the content of the habilitation thesis.

That is why, in conclusion, I strongly suggest to the Honourable Scientific Jury to award the academic position of “Associate Professor” to the candidate Assistant Professor Ivo Nikolaev Popov, PhD.

Professor Svilen Stefanov, PhD

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