

Review

on the presented work

of Chief Assistant Professor Christina Georgieva Savova, PhD
in reference to the competition for position Associate Professor
in professional field 8.2.

Fine arts (Fashion)

by Prof. Bisera Valeva, PhD. Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski

In her habilitation work Chief Assistant Professor Christina Georgieva Savova, PhD has submitted for review a monograph (Contemporary Fashion Styles Formation Development Trends), as well as articles in the field of fashion (fashion design) under the announced in the State Gazette (is. 62/06.08.2019) competition for attaining an academic rank Associate Professor, for the needs of Design Department, Faculty of Basic Education, New Bulgarian University (NBU), professional field 8.2 Fine Arts, in which competition she is the only candidate.

Ch. Ass. Prof. Christina Savova, PhD graduated from 151 SOUPI in 1997, and in 2001 Bachelor's Degree in NBU, specialty Fashion. In 2004 she graduated in Masters Degree in Fashion Design of Apparel at NBU, Sofia. Her creative and teaching work is tied to design, and in particular to fashion design. In the period 1999-2002 she worked at ANDI (Association for New Design Initiatives), since 2001 she is a freelance designer with focus on designing garments and accessories for individual clients and fashion brands. In the period 2001 – 2003 she was a freelance assistant professor of artistic design and construction of apparel at New Bulgarian University. In the years 2003 – 2004 she was a director of Experimental Design Atelier at NBU. Between 2004 – 2009 and 2012 – 2016 she was Program Director/Consultant at NBU, administrating the study process of the programs of Design Department. Since 2014 she is a chief assistant professor (art design and

construction of apparel. As a fashion designer (from 2001 until now) she works with individual clients as well as with the fashion companies OurBarcode BG, Matissa BG, Aris BG, Adria BGF, NBU BG, Ri.Se SV, New Wave Group SE, Eton SE, Curatorz NL, Textilia SI, 4Tailors MT, Vakko TR, Alda GR, Gatta TR, Textailor Expo BG, Athens Fashion Trade Show GR, Fresh Trend MK, Ana Locking ES and others. Chief Assistant Professor PhD Kristina Savova has participated in various conferences in the field of fashion design and its teaching, and her activity is reflected in the collections of scientific reports on the scientific events attended. These are: Contemporary Fashion Styles. Formation, Development, Trends, Graphmax2, Sofia 2017; Fashion according to a graphite of a woman from the Temple St. Sofia in Constantinople (online). 5/2018, Sofia 2018; Silk and the Fashion Design. IV Collection of Scientific Papers Crafts, traders, markets: Socio-Economic Development of Thracian lands. Historical Museum – Svilengrad (under printing); A Woman's Grafitto Drawing From Hagia Sophia, Constantinople. Zbornik Radova Vizantoloskog Instituta. Belgrade, CAHY (under printing); Fashion Trends and Forecasting. Textile and Garment Magazine, is. 10/2017 (Special Issue), Sofia 2017; Fashion Trends, Trends and Forecasting. Collection of scientific works (under printing), Sofia 2017; The Alexander McQueen Phenomenon Life After Death Savage Beauty Summer School PR Collection of works – 2016, CD, Sofia 2017; Fashion and Public Communications. Summer School on PR Works Collection 2015 CD, Sofia 2016; Military Style - collection of scientific texts on project No.BG051PO001-3.3.06.-0060 issued in Sofia 2015; Men's apparel at the end of XIX and beginning of XX century. Collection of scientific publications, issue 3/2014, page 147 - 154, Sofia, 2014; Classic Style: Origin and Development. Textile and Attire Magazine, is. 1/2014, (January 2014), page 15 – 19. Sofia 2014; Sports Style in Apparel at the end of XIX and early XX century, Scientific Reports Collection, p. 68 – 73 Sofia 2013; XIX century: Industrialization in the Fashion.

Scientific Publications Collection is. 2/2013, p. 99 – 106, Sofia, 2013; General terms in Fashion Theory, Collection of scientific publications is. 1/2012, p. 67 – 72 Sofia 2012; Basic Styles in Attire, Textile and Attire Magazine is. 6/2012, (June 2012) p.30 – 35 Sofia 2012; Bulgarian Fashion between the Russian-Turkish Liberation War and World War I. 2011; Korea-Russia International Conference Grand Fashion. Korea. Art in Dress and Dress as Art: Art Deco Fashion. 2008 Korea-Bulgaria International; Conference Fashion Adventure. Korea; Ch. Ass. Prof. Christina Savova has a PhD and serious scientific publications. The dissertation Fashion Styles and Structures from Worth to Dior (1850 – 1950) (NBU, 2013) reflects her focused research interest as well as her personal artistic viewpoint in the field of fashion. It is the result of creative research by the author as a designer in such a specific field as fashion. The scientific research by the author as the object of work, combine the visual and aesthetic searches of the author related to her teaching activity in NBU. The quality of her research is the belief that the applied methodology in the considered century is adequate for the succeeding period as well, and it would make it possible the performance of a complete tracking and analysis of the two main fashion styles – classical and sports. This line of research is embodied in her monograph.

Ch. Ass. Prof. Christina Savova PhD has a very rich artistic biography. She is the author of a solo exhibition, participates in collective and group exhibitions, organizes and participates with students in art projects and competitions.

The works presented in the habilitation thesis are in two mutually reinforcing directions – theoretical and artistic, Subject of the review is: a monograph *Contemporary Fashion Styles Formation Development Trends*, 28 articles in the field of fashion design, as well as works of art.

The presented monograph *Contemporary Fashion Styles Formation Development Trends* (2017) is an interdisciplinary study. The work integrates

scientific issues in the field of fashion design, history, sociology, philosophy, and psychology and design theory. In the core of the text are considered basic directions in the development of contemporary fashion styles. Already in the introduction, the author analyzes basic theories of stylistic change in historical context, referring to Anne Hollander and Valerie Steel. She draws a parallel between the contemporary fashion and contemporary art, in which there are identical style trends directly influenced by fashion. The text focuses on the main directions in the classification of contemporary fashion styles, their characteristics and chronology of study. Ch. Ass. Prof. Ch. Savova PhD emphasizes on the understanding that fashion is a statement of individuality, summarizing various psychological and sociological studies.

In her monograph, she interprets the context and understanding of fashion design and contemporary fashion styles from two perspectives – professional and popular. In both cases, she demonstrates a responsible approach to the explanation and complexity of the social and artistic phenomenon of ‘fashion style’. Therefore, in the work’s exposition, the author, without ignoring professional criteria, deals with a language accessible to a wider range of readers.

The monograph, which contains 160 pages of text and illustrations, is divided into three main parts, which logically develop the idea of the appearance of a particular fashion style, psychological, social and creative processes, structural elements and occasions that cause the processes of imposing of a particular fashion style. The work’s bibliography contains 34 sources in Cyrillic, 93 in Latin, 21 online sources.

At the beginning of the monographic study, the first part, *Style and Fashion*, looks at the concepts of ‘fashion’ and ‘style’ as part of the toolkit through which it is possible to trace the history and art of apparel. The author emphasizes the difference in the use of the concepts, saying at the beginning of the chapter that fashion is

changing and style is more sustainable as a phenomenon. From this perspective, she makes a concentrated historical overview that logically focuses on modernity. Interesting in this chapter is the focus on the phenomenon of ‘fast fashion’, which further complicates the understanding of fashion trends, and hence the differentiation of styles. The author makes the point that the definitions of ‘fashion’ and ‘style’ are often fuzzy. The reflections in the chapter on the fashion cycle process, as well as the judgment in the last paragraph of the same chapter, which focuses on socio-cultural factors, the economic conditions, different subcultures, illustrated in the rest of the monograph are really impressive. The text as a whole, filters the large amount of literature on the subject and focuses on the essence in this area of fashion design

The second part of the monograph *Style and Fashion Trends* is in line with current fashion research. At the very beginning of this chapter, the toolkit for tracking the movement of fashion changes is noted: for the vertical propagation of trends – from the street to the user and the horizontal one when there is mass in the adoption of style. The quality of the text is the author’s strong position expressed in relation to the existing view of fashion changes as an elementary process, without taking into account the complex interaction between socio-cultural factors, forecasts for changes in economic conditions, as well as the product characteristics. The analysis in the chapter focuses on the ways in which fashion trends are disseminated and popularized. The main conclusion the author formulates is the broad spectrum of the fashion forecasting process, its main steps related to understanding the vision of the business and the target user’s profile, the research process (information) on the available goods, the production of information, the identification of trends and selection of an adequate design product.

Ch. Ass. Prof. Christina Savova PhD quotes very relevant J.K. Achillies concerning the fashion forecasting (p.22), as well as Paul Nystrom on the cyclical nature of fashion. In the analysis of the fashion style (p.26-28) and its life cycle, the

author goes into detail that helps to refine important points for its development, popularity and frequency of acceptance. The illustrations in the chapter that support the author's thesis on the subject presented make a good impression. The quality of the text is the detailed presentation of the problems of fashion and style in the specialized literature in Bulgarian language.

In part three, *Style and Zeitgeist* is discussed the 'spirit of the times' focusing on the transformations and changes of fashion styles in Western Europe and North America. The author refers appropriately to the philosophical productions of Herder, Jagdman, Caliste, to relate them to the specifics of changes affecting the problems of fashion design and style. Interesting is the example she gives with the 'separate cultural segment' generating a specific fashion style, stated through visible appearance. It is curious, but also significant, the reference to Ted Polemus summarizing this phenomenon with the new term 'Style tribes'. Another important finding is related to the concept of pop culture, which is inseparable from fashion, fashion style and through which apparel is recognized as a mediator in the social space. It is argued that in modernity, fashion is being realized 'as an accessible and flexible means of expressing modernity' (p.36).

In the next part of the monograph, pages 39 to 145 selected styles are presented: avant-garde, boho, vintage, grunge, dandy, ethno, casual, classic, military, punk, romantic, retro, safari, sports, unisex, folklore, and hippie. All of them reveal the corresponding similarities and differences of fashion and style, the influence of fashion trends and their formation. Each style is presented with examples of relevant designers and personalities promoting the style, such as for the avant-garde – Paco Raban, Alexander McQueen, Vivian Westwood, Helmut Lang, Antwerp Four, etc.; for the classic style – C. Chanel and later G. Armani, C. Kline, D. Karan, etc.; for

the romantic style – Diana Spencer and her wedding dress designers David and Elizabeth Emanuel, as well as collections by K. Lagerfeld, Ch. Lacroix, G. Fere, A. Molinari, etc. In the text of her monograph Ch. Ass. Prof. Christina Savova PhD clarifies the motivation for presenting appropriate styles by focusing on those that have been encountered in fashion trends in recent years and others that have a significant influence on the development of contemporary fashion. The quality of the monograph is that the content presentation structure enhances the reader's perception, while developing and supporting the author's thesis.

In the conclusion of her work Ch. Ass. Prof. Christina Savova PhD summarizes the directions of her research and artistic bias. She launches several conclusions, among which are the refinement of the concepts of style and fashion, their formation, pattern and duration. There is an argument for challenging the view of fashion change as an elementary process. The author proves her thesis on the basis of the complex interaction between socio-cultural factors, product characteristics and their connection with consumers, who, in turn, tend to quickly adopt new trends. In the last paragraph of the chapter is the belief that 'fashion becomes the connective tissue of the cultural organism, which is essential for the world of mass communication and modernity'. (p. 150)

Several articles are presented in the materials of the habilitation work, which are entirely in the field of fashion and fashion design. Many of them are published in the Textiles, Garment, Leather and Technology Magazine, of which international editorial board Ch. Ass. Prof. Christina Savova PhD is a member.

The author's artworks interpret her artistic philosophy by transforming the artist's drawings and fashion graphics into intelligent realization. The ability to manipulate the image creates two products – graphic drawing and utilitarian realization. On one hand, the authenticity of the image (sketch) is preserved, while

allowing the viewer (free interpretation) of the realized product.

All works submitted for habilitation is a consequence of the research and artistic pursuits of Ch. Ass. Prof. Christina Savova PhD, from her emphasized interest in current productions in fashion design and aspects of her teaching. The materialization of her creative philosophy is expressed in her teaching activity, in her artistic understanding of the complexity in the perception of the products of fashion design, in the creation of new visual imagery that brings closer the fashion and the contemporary art.

In conclusion, I suggest the honorary members of the scientific jury to choose Chief Assistant Professor Christina Georgieva Savova PhD on the academic position **Associate Professor** in fashion.

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