

Opinion

by

Prof. Monika Popova, Ph.D.

full-time teacher at New Bulgarian University

in Professional Field 8.2 Fine art

on the materials submitted for participation in the competition for the academic degree "Associate Professor" at the New Bulgarian University, Sofia

By field of Higher Education 8. Art, Professional direction 8.2 Fine art (graphic design)

In the competition for "Associate Professor" in the design of print advertising, book publications, and web products, announced in the State Gazette, SG no. 22/18.03.2022 for the needs of the "Design" Department as the only candidate participating Ch. Assistant Professor Sofroni Georgiev Varbev, Ph.D.

New Bulgarian University

I. Brief biographical data of the candidate

Ch. Assist. Sofroni Georgiev Varbev, Ph.D. was born on 08.12.1960 in Gabrovo.

He graduated from the National Academy of Arts in 1986, majoring in "Industrial Forms".

In 2013, he defended his doctorate at NBU on "Corporate Identity in the Interior."

From 2006-2013, he was a part-time teacher in the Department of "Design and Architecture" at the NBU.

Since 2013, he has been a full-time teacher (chief assistant) in the "Design" department of the NBU.

Awards:

2007 - Winning competition for the logo of the State Commission for Energy and Water Regulation (now EWRC);

2006 - Second place in the logo contest of the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works;

1999 - Yomiuri International Caricature Competition Award, Osaka, Japan.

1997 - Yomiuri International Caricature Competition Award, Osaka, Japan.

Ch. Assistant Professor Sofroni Varbev, Ph.D. has many years of professional activity, numerous awards, and excellent teaching experience in one of the most preferred specialties of the NBU – BA "Interior Design," as well as MA "Spatial Design" MP and "Product Design for the Interior."

The professional and expert activity of the colleague is directed in the fields of advertising, graphics, interior, and product design.

I. General presentation of the procedure and the applicant

(Evaluation of compliance with the minimum national requirements and the requirements of the New Bulgarian University)

In the competition for "Associate Professor," Ch. Assist. Prof. Sofroni Varbev, Ph.D. submitted documents that follow the scientometric indicators laid down in the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, as well as the Regulations for its implementation and the requirements of the NBU.

The candidate for the academic position "Associated Professor" - Ch. Assistant Professor Sofroni Varbev, PhD, meets the requirements under Art. 2b, para. 2 and 3 of the Law on evaluating the academic staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and those of the NBU for participation in the announced competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor."

II. General characteristics of the applicant's activity. Research (creative) activity and results.

Ch. assistant professor Sofroni Varbev has a vast professional and creative activity, an exceptional number of realized design projects, and a ten-year teaching activity at the NBU.

Varbev has enviable experience in creating any design. It covers a vast range of activities in contemporary design, fully demonstrated in the main work and the accompanying creative material.

In the extended summary of the artistic work "**Advertising Vision of National Autumn Exhibitions, Plovdiv" 2014 - 2022**", Ch. Assist. Professor Sofroni Varbev, Ph.D., has described the theoretical framework and methodology of creating the overall advertising design of one of the most prestigious forums for Bulgarian contemporary art, curated by the festival emblem - Prof. Dr. Galina Lardeva.

The proof part is the complete branded version through the bilingual catalog, a large format poster for each edition, banners, flyers, invitations, etc.

The summary covers nine "National Autumn Exhibitions" editions, collected in 93 pages of photographic material and text. In addition to the significant habilitation thesis, colleague Varbev also presents other professional creative activities, as well as the author's works, which are an excellent example of Varbev's incredible flair for caricature, grotesque, illustration, comics, animation, and drawing in general. He mainly uses one of the most complex painting techniques - watercolor.

His sense of humor and associative thinking are stunning.

As I mentioned, along with the basic habilitation, Ch. Assistant Professor Varbev has presented many book publications, advertisements, and design projects in recent years in parallel with the teaching activity. A large part of them is related to the publishing activity of the NBU. Almost every large-scale and prestigious edition of the NBU goes through Varbev's aesthetics.

The characteristic of the editions realized is that they are highly recognizable due to the effect of the color range, which is never intrusive and is delicately tonally measured. Varbev loves color, embedded in his watercolor works, but the tones are pastel and balanced. His graphic combinatorics in his work is architectonic, always ordered, clear, and logical, without excesses, but modern.

As it became clear, Sofroni Varbev defends the habilitation degree "docent" with a professional and creative project dedicated to one of the largest forums for Bulgarian contemporary art, such as the "National Autumn Exhibitions" in Plovdiv. Nine of these releases are dressed in the full suite of graphic visuals, showcasing the festival's branding. This is a massive test for any artist. Only through such influential projects can the author expand but at the same time prove his professionalism.

Such projects are outsourced to graphic design giants. Sofroni Varbev is just like that. This is achieved with hard work, dedication, and a keen sense of aesthetics, which is especially necessary in graphic design.

The measure is the most crucial feature of Sofroni Varbev. The benchmark reflects intellect, spiritual impermanence, labor, and talent. The measure is Varbev's most outstanding quality. That is why the realized graphic projects are so practical and, at the same time, delicate.

But the main fundamental feeling about the look is that it is contemporary.

III. Educational and teaching activities:

Ch. Assistant Professor Sofroni Varbev, Ph.D. is one of my favorite professors and colleagues at NBU.

IV. Personal impressions of the candidate:

I have known Sofroni Varbev for many years as an author and nearly ten years as a colleague at the NBU, and my impressions are delightful. My feeling towards him is that of a great professional, beloved teacher and colleague. I admire his gigantic professionalism and creative energy—an author with vast experience, which experience is invaluable for NBU students.

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

The candidate's presentation is highly dignified and an example of outstanding professionalism. Its overall presentation creates an impression of modern vision and aesthetic refinement.

The feeling is of visual integrity and graphic lightness!

I have no critical remarks about the general presentation of the candidate - Ch. Assistant Professor Sofroni Varbev, Ph.D.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I express my positive opinion about the outlined contributions to the creativity and research activity of Ch. Assistant Professor Sofroni Varbev, Ph.D., and his teaching activities correspond to the field and professional direction of the announced competition.

In front of us is the work of one of the big names in graphic design and design in Bulgaria in general.

I fully share the contributions of the scientific work and call on the respected members of the scientific jury to support his candidacy and to propose to the Academic Council of the NBU, Ch. Assistant Professor Sofroni Georgiev Varbev, Ph.D., to be elected "Associate Professor" in professional direction 8.2. Fine art /design/.

With respect:

19.09.2023 г.

/Prof. Monika Popova, Ph.D./