

REVIEW

from PROF. DR. VESSELINA VALKANOVA
Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication
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for obtaining the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in scientific field 3.5. Social Communications and Information Sciences with a dissertation on the topic: „CREATIVE COMMUNICATIONS AND NEW MEDIA FORMATS IN THE CONTEXT OF EXTRAORDINARY VIRTUALITY. THE NEW MEDIA ART”

presented by ATANAS ATANASOV LOZANOV, full-time doctoral student in the Department "Press Journalism and Book Publishing" of the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication with supervisor: Assoc. PROF. DR. SIMEON VASSILEV

PRESENTATION OF THE DOCTORAL STUDENT ON THE BASIS OF THE SUBMITTED DOCUMENTATION

ATANAS ATANASOV LOZANOV was enrolled as a full-time doctoral student in the scientific specialty "Effective Communications in an Online Environment" in the Department of "Communication and Audiovisual Production" on February 18, 2021 with scientific supervisor Prof. Dr. Teodora Petrova. From 19.02.2021, following the decision of the FS from 11.02.2021 – protocol No. 07, and Rector's order RD-38-109, the doctoral student works under the scientific supervision of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Simeon Vasilev. Atanas Lozanov completed the activities according to the individual plan, successfully

passed the exam in the specialty, was awarded with the right of defense on February 10, 2023.

After the preliminary discussion of the dissertation work, on May 22, 2023, at the Department of “Communication and Audiovisual Production”, a procedure for public defense of the dissertation work “Creative communications and new media formats in the context of extraordinary virtuality. The New Media Art” was opened.

Atanas Lozanov holds a bachelor's degree in “Film and Television Art” from the New Bulgarian University and a master's degree in “Journalism” from the Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” – FJMC. The colleague has professional experience as: manager of cultural and social projects and in the development of multimedia programs; director and producer of digital content; in digital marketing and public relations; in creating content for online communication channels; in the execution of virtual online campaigns; in project development; as a reporter and editor, in the production of audiovisual content, in the administration and programming of a web platform and the publication of media content in social networks and TV broadcasts, etc.

DISSERTATION AND AUTHOR ABSTRACT INFORMATION

The dissertation “CREATIVE COMMUNICATIONS AND NEW MEDIA FORMATS IN THE CONTEXT OF EXTRAORDINARY VIRTUALITY. THE NEW MEDIA ART” has a total volume of 146 pages, structured in a preface, three chapters, a conclusion, a bibliography of 82 titles, of which 18 in Bulgarian, 1 in Russian, 61 in English, 1 in German, a basic reference for scientific contributions and a list of publications and scientific communications related to the topic of the dissertation. Sixteen figures and nine infographics are included in the main text. The paper is accompanied by an appendix (survey for empirical research).

On the topic of the dissertation, Atanas Lozanov has indicated his publications of five articles in scientific journals and collective volumes with scientific peer review, thereby satisfying the requirements for communicating the results of scientific research for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree doctor.

The abstract, attached to the defense documentation, has a volume of 34 pages and presents the dissertation work through a description and analysis of: the theoretical and practical need for the research, the motivation for choosing it. The object and subject of the research are outlined, the main scientific problem and the leading research thesis are formulated, as well as the verified hypotheses, objectives, limitations, approach, methods, methodology, structure of the dissertation work, its content, contributions and summaries. The abstract is adequate to the dissertation, reflects essentially the structure, approach and main summaries and meets the requirements for auto-referencing a dissertation work.

ASSESSMENT OF THE ACTUALITY OF THE PROBLEM

From the conceptual designs of the modernists and especially of dreamers such as El Lissitzky with his "Electro-library" (1923), the use of electronics and machines in the cultural activities of man and as a universal means of education and development has mastered creative minds and created visions and ideas for the future, in which knowledge, information, is accessible to all, and technology influences culture and art.

In recent years, we have witnessed the rapid development of new media art, moving beyond traditional forms and entering virtual spaces with interactive media formats based on computer technologies, virtual reality, augmented reality and other innovative means of visual expression.

It is about new ways of communication and expression, providing an opportunity for interaction and participation of the viewer. At the same time, the creation of artificial algorithms capable of autonomously generating works, interpreting and analyzing data opens doors to new forms of creativity and inspiration, allowing artists to use unexpected means of expression, enabling them to create innovative and interactive projects that are able to react to viewer actions and change in real time.

The dissertation is dedicated to a current topic – the new media art and its means of expression, the technical determinants, its development and improvement, as well as the influence of creative communications on users. Special emphasis in the dissertation is placed on the new generations of Digital Natives with new interactions with the world around them, new communication, experiences of reality, interpretation of information in art and “neo-communication”.

The innovative approach meets and juxtaposes smart technology and art, thereby exploring “objective complexity and perceptual complexity.” What's more: new media art is tied “in perspective” to the resources of computer intelligence and to the understanding of the development of creative communications in a high-tech environment and the impact of “extraordinary virtuality” on the audience – as behavioral patterns, but also as creative and social perceptions. In this sense, the line of not just media literacy, but of digital pedagogy and the prospective field of development of critical reflections regarding the development of techniques and technologies and their influence not only on human activities, but also on the human essence, is palpable in the dissertation.

The author's motivation to focus on the mechanisms, results, consequences, benefits, risks of the so-called a collaborative process of art creation by artists and by intelligent algorithms, proves to be fruitful for

bringing out current trends and for outlining perspectives in the field of communication, media arts, media formats in a virtual environment.

ASSESSMENT OF THE QUALITIES OF THE DISSERTATION TEXT

The dissertation formulates specific research hypotheses and objectives related to the scientific problem and the study of new media art in the light of technological development. I especially want to emphasize the **NON-LINEAR APPROACH AND COMPLEX RESEARCH SECTIONS OF THIS DISSERTATION** – on the one hand, in-depth synchronic and diachronic cultural and social analyzes are systematized and made, through which new media art is viewed as a “spiral process”, on the other hand, comparisons are made with the pre-analog and analog eras with their representations and myths, in the end, new media art is seen as a “hybrid between communication channel, medium and means of expression”, not just questioning traditional forms, but also having the prospect “to cause an evolution of consciousness”. In this regard, the chosen approach proves to be worthwhile: the systematically extracted and structured databases, on the basis of which the researches on the ontology and discourses of media art and its forms and development are carried out, are combined with a survey of a wide range of sources and a critical analysis of different theories and concepts of the subject combined with an interdisciplinary methodology.

To fulfill the goals and tasks, the doctoral student relies on a methodology that includes **THEORETICAL OVERVIEW, METHODS OF DIRECT OBSERVATION: DISCOURSE ANALYSIS AND COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS ON A SYSTEMATIZED CORPUS OF COMMUNICATION UNITS, EMPIRICAL RESEARCH**. The research perspectives are through social sciences, communication science, art studies, cognitive psychology and information technology science.

In the first chapter of the dissertation “**ONTOLOGY AND DISCOURSES OF THE NEW MEDIA ART**”, the doctoral student deals with the important theoretical review of the scientific problem from the point of view of its history, level of research, presentation in scientific sources, authors who have considered it. The main concepts used to describe the signs of the problem situation are defined.

Consistently and systematically, the dissertation presents fundamental definitions, views and concepts, which are key to the topic and object of the study – the creation and development of new media art; its stylistic and narrative features are determined – “interactive presentation, hyper-speed creation and the destruction of the usual perception of technical means”; the conceptual and technical tools and means of expression of generations of artists and artists are systematized.

In this part, the research possibilities and skills for scientific interpretation on the subject of the dissertation are clearly demonstrated, based on deep theoretical accumulations and broad knowledge of the researched problem with its sides, connections and regularities in a wide time span.

The second chapter “**THE NEW ALGORITHMS OF CONSCIOUSNESS: CREATIVE APPLICATIONS, TECHNOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL CONNOTATIONS**” focuses on researching the most current processes, phenomena and developments in new media art, the result not only of conventional means of expression, but also of the development of technologies and the use of intelligent algorithms. The thoroughly researched theoretical sources on the subject are summarized, the modern applications of artificial intelligence are brought out, while the author defines its role in the new media art, subjects the technological and creative collaborations between man and intelligent technologies to a cultural and philosophical analysis, considers both the ethical challenges in the use of

AI in the creation of creative content, as well as the strong social impact of these processes, especially in relation to new generations.

And because, just like the pop art and youth culture of the 60s of the twentieth century, and the postmodern in general, they also seek self-expression through new interpretations of modern styles, turning the game with historical quotations into a non-chronological, “simultaneous” stylistic adaptation, into nostalgic escapes from reality or critical reflection on the present, and postmodern artists borrow the dynamism and unconventional approaches of the modernists, defining the time as the “new futuristic era”, Atanas Lozanov logically seeks the roots of the new art in Dadaism, which, according to him, provided its conceptual infrastructure.

Decisive for proving theses are the results of research in the third chapter of the dissertation “**EMPIRICAL RESEARCH “INFOXICATION AND COGNITIVE RESISTANCE, MODELS AND DEVIATIONS OF THE NEW TIME”**”. Here, the author summarizes the results of two conducted studies and undertakes his own research by means of a questionnaire and an interdisciplinary experiment among Digital Natives respondents. On this basis, the validity of the hypotheses of the dissertation was confirmed and a model of the new media art was derived.

QUALITIES OF THE DISSERTATION PAPER

The dissertation clearly demonstrates the doctoral student's professional reflection and his lasting interest in the research field to which he has devoted himself.

The text is read with interest and ease, there is a marked analyticalness. The tasks of the research are precisely and concretely formulated, the scientific problem is stated in the preface, clear scientific hypotheses and thesis are formulated, the assumptions and questions made

are examined and proved in the chapters. The bibliography is accurate and precise, as is the overall design and presentation of the dissertation. The parts are logically and meaningfully connected. The obtained results are described and analyzed comprehensively, the fulfillment of the set tasks is proven.

The dissertation represents a definite contribution to the researched field. The research and theses are original, the doctoral student has demonstrated a high level of critical thinking and original interpretations of the researched problem.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- To correct the wording of the object of research – the object is not “genres, technologies and forms of contemporary art” - p.12. The object of the research is a certain field of communications, chosen by the doctoral student on the basis of the analysis of the research problem, which is defined in a conceptually unified and logically complete way – e.g. digital communication and media arts. The subject of the study, in turn, are those essential properties and relations of the object, the knowledge of which is particularly important for solving the theoretical or practical problem. Creative communications, new media formats, genres, technologies, forms of contemporary art, etc. can be defined here.
- With a view to future publication, I recommend avoiding repetitions of these and optimizing the structuring of the text.

CONCLUSION:

- With his theorizations on the paradigm and ontology of new media art through different perspectives and scientific fields;
- with synchronic and diachronic analyzes of creative communications;
- with the in-depth research on the communication, creative and media environment and its convergent influence on the cultural industries;
- with the analyzes of moral-ethical dilemmas and challenges regarding the role of technology and artificial intelligence;
- with comparisons and conclusions on current research on the subject

the current dissertation work has a certain contribution to research in public communications and information sciences, in media studies, art studies, digital communication.

The above-mentioned contributing points of the research give me reasons to support the awarding of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" to the esteemed members of the scientific jury under 3.5. Public Communications and Information Sciences – Media and Communications of Atanas Atanasov Lozanov for his dissertation work "**CREATIVE COMMUNICATIONS AND NEW MEDIA FORMATS IN THE CONTEXT OF EXTRAORDINARY VIRTUALITY. THE NEW MEDIA ART**".

