

Opinion

for the dissertation work

for acquiring the educational - scientific degree “doctor”,

PF 1.2. Pedagogy (Theory of education and didactics - Theory of education)

Theme:

„Educational - therapeutic aspects of photography“

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The dissertation of Rusana Gadjanova is dedicated to specific functions of photographic art in the context of educational interactions with a therapeutic effect - a topic that undoubtedly has actual dimensions in a pedagogical context.

The text as a whole reveals a wealth of possibilities in educational work through the functions of photography as a „language for self-expression and self-statement“ (p.3), realized through the application of a „view of photography other than the mass uses“ (p.7).

I believe that this is a very timely dissertation – insofar as photography is widely accessible thanks to the extraordinary technological development, transforming itself as a means of “effective self-expression (communication about oneself) in the broad framework of the social environment” (p.6). It undoubtedly contributes to the issues related to self-education, which in recent years has not been the object of serious interest by researchers in the field of pedagogy, in contrast to the dynamic development of research in the field of self-development in the context of psychology.

Positive characteristics of the dissertation:

- Multi-layeredness of the theoretical presentation and argumentation, skillful combination of information and interpretations from different scientific fields - philosophy, psychology, pedagogy, art studies. Very good justification from the point of view of the philosophy of the image and presentation of the phenomenology of the photographic image through the prism of hermeneutics, postmodernism, through interpretations of Roland Barthes, Gaston Bachelard and other key authors of the contemporary philosophy, not as an end in itself, but by transforming them into the foundations of the educational and therapeutic applicability of photography as art, everyday life, practice.
- Clarifying the role of photography through the multifunctionality of the photograph as a product of human activity, regardless of whether it is interpreted in the context of art or not, in the universal quality of the image in it as “evidence of the existence of man” (p.28).
- Very good integration of the theoretical analysis through the prism of combining historicity and modernity, outlining educational projections in the past of the development of photography and in the most current contemporary dimensions of the photographic image, highlighting their specificity, directed increasingly “more categorically towards emotional content, social phenomena and the modeling of messages” (p.27) - through advertising content, popularization of ideologies, of oneself ("selfies"), publishing on social networks, and even now photographic images made by/through artificial intelligence, etc.
- Synchronization between argumentation and descriptiveness of the educational-therapeutic aspect of photography, e.g. “one of the leading threads in the author's understanding of photography as a guardian of time and connections - a characteristic that allows us to work educationally and

therapeutically with topics such as connectivity, heredity; group affiliation, cultural appearance and awareness of the processes that developed in the past, influencing the present and determining the future" (p.17).

- Demonstrated high competence in the field of photography as an art – through historicity, phenomenology, areas of influence.
- In addition to the role of photography in the field of aesthetic education, highlighting its significance in other areas of education - patriotic, religious, intercultural, in the context of self-education, development of emotional intelligence, etc.
- Skillful differentiation between the role of the means of photography, its function “to extract meanings, record and decode symbols” (p.32), and the content of the photographed object in an educational context.
- Detailed highlighting of the multifunctionality of photography in an educational - therapeutic context (including through the prism of various psychological schools), outlining a wealth of its applicabilities through its diverse functions, presented as real possibilities that could be realistically feasible in a practical environment (e.g. pp. 60-64).
- Good argumentation for the methodics of the conducted empirical research
- Identifying specifics of direct, face-to-face and remote educational-therapeutic interaction.
- Outlining a picture of the use of photography by contemporary adolescents - not only as an application, but also as an attitude towards the photography and photograph, highlighting specifics reflecting the contemporary lifestyle and the dominant use of the phone as the main means of recording.
- As a result of this – reaching conclusions that go beyond commenting on the specific age group, having a phenomenological character regarding the place of the photographic image in the consciousness of modern man, e.g.: “In the digital format, with a swipe of the finger, the gallery of images passes kaleidoscopically in front of the viewer's eyes, who may be unable

to capture the details and meanings in this virtual *existence* of connections, memories, people. This peculiarity of the sub-level review involves the viewer in a fragmented perception of various events, phenomena and relationships, leaving him in a kind of *aufact* of the experience without the possibility of completing either the memory or realizing his own meaning from what he saw” (p.203).

- The empirical part presents opportunities for the development of creative abilities within an organized educational process, the basis of which is photography as a phenomenology and methodology.

Regarding the abstract – structurally and contently, it reflects the main aspects of the dissertation work. I accept the presented scientific contributions.

Conclusion: Based on the undoubted research achievements of the dissertation work, I support the awarding of Rusana Gadjanova the educational - scientific degree "Doctor", PN 1.2. Pedagogy (Theory of Education and Didactics - Theory of Education).

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Signature:

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