

## LETTER OF OPINION

by **Assoc. Prof. Krasimira Borissova Droumeva, PhD,**

“St. Cyril and St. Methodius” University of Veliko Tarnovo  
**on the academic position “ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR”**

at the Faculty of Educational Studies and the Arts

to Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”, Higher Education Field 8. Art,  
Professional Area 8.2. Fine Arts

(Graphic Design) for the needs of the Department of Visual Arts,

announced in State Gazette no. 103 /12.12.2023

candidate **Chief Assistant Professor Yavor Spasov Grancharov, PhD**

Yavor Grancharov was born in 1982 in the city of Sofia. In 2001, he graduated from the “Iliya Petrov” Secondary School of Fine Arts, Sofia. He graduated with a bachelor's degree in 2005, majoring in “Pedagogy of Fine Art Education”, SU “St. Kliment Ohridski”, where in 2007 he completed the master's program “Pedagogy and Semiotics of Fine Art”. In 2017, he became a full-time lecturer in the Department of Visual Arts in Faculty of Educational Studies and the Arts at the Sofia University. He is currently a Senior assistant in the same department. In 2019, he defended a dissertation on “Modern trends in graphic design and its application in the creation of textbooks, teaching aids and advertising materials”. His professional interests are in the field of graphic design, digital graphics and advertising. In his work he uses different ways of artistic expression, visualizing his ideas by combining traditional art techniques with 2D and 3D digital technologies. He is the author of publications in the field of graphic design. He has had three solo exhibitions and has participated in a large number of joint national and international exhibitions, art projects and plein airs. He is a member of the Union of Bulgarian Artists and the “Art in Action” association.

Yavor Grancharov is an author with a rich portfolio. In his habilitation thesis “Graphic design – modern trends, aesthetics, functionality” he presents his work as

a graphic designer, artist and teacher in the field of 2D and 3D digital technologies. Works created between 2020 and now are included. Undoubtedly, we can ascertain his dedication to the Department of Visual Arts, Faculty of Educational Studies and the Arts at SU “St. Kliment Ohridski”. A large part of his works in the field of graphic design are devoted to the creative and publication activities of the academic unit where he works. Over the years, he has managed to build his own graphic style, which makes his works recognizable among the audience. I would define it as clean and functional, but also highly expressive depending on the context of the release. There is a tendency to search for innovative techniques for creative expression, for which he applies specialized software. His projects bring the spirit of the new age and trends in graphic culture. The author demonstrates a precise sense of aesthetics that harmonizes pictorial spaces into a common, coherent and original vision. He manages to find the right approach to the typographic composition, which communicates adequately with the pictorial elements. It definitely shows knowledge and conscious application of graphic design principles and components.

The artistic part of the habilitation thesis is particularly intriguing. Presented is a series of 18 digital prints created for a solo exhibition “Integration in Algorithms”, presented at the “Alma Mater” Gallery, SU “St. Kliment Ohridski” in 2023. The leading concept of the works is related to the problems surrounding artificial intelligence and its impact on the development of modern society. The author is greatly intrigued by the technological advances of recent years, realizing the great possibilities for evolution and innovation. He boldly experiments with 3D software and technology to recreate his ideas in the greatest depth. At first look, the silhouettes seem primitive and artificial, but by contemplating the variety of textures we sink into a world of sensuality, touch, coexistence between intelligence and feelings. I can interpret the author's idea as a hurricane from the emotional and mental world, in which the power of thought and the desire for evolution overtakes the spiritual growth of the person. The machine is more and more like a person, and the person

is like a machine. The affected problems will undoubtedly concern humanity more and more, will we be able to manage these new processes or will we melt into timelessness. Certainly, the digital works provoke philosophical judgments about technological trends, which gives rise to many ethical cases in the context of artificial intelligence. In her review of the “Integration in Algorithms” exhibition, Associate professor Milena Blazhieva very succinctly describes the reaction to the artworks:

*“Yavor Grancharov's exhibition is a kind of artistic oracle – at first sight, perhaps somewhat ironic, but in reality completely serious – which outlines a possible perspective for humanity. We also face the extremely important question that we will probably have to redefine what is human and how far its boundaries extend.”* In: Information Bulletin of Union of the Bulgarian Artists, no. 04/2023, p. 68.

The specific author's aesthetics of the plastic and compositional construction of the artistic image is impressive. The volumes are monolithic, situated in the sterile environment of the imaginary to emphasize the expressiveness of the leading figure. The color scheme is muted to bring us into deep contemplation of the present and the future. The figures are covered by web and flesh, the inside is their spiritual being – invisible and indescribable. This emptiness creates a feeling of silence and unspokenness, figures frozen in the vast space of consciousness.

I consider that the presented creative product has a significant contribution value in the field of mastering digital technologies for the needs of art and visual communication. The author with deep awareness applies the capabilities of graphic software to recreate feelings, desires and existential reflections. His work reveals new horizons and opportunities for expression and enrichment of the artistic image through the creation of three-dimensional forms and structures. He succeeds in imparting this competence and confidence in the means of expression to his students. His works are also a key moment in his teaching work, showing the realization of new creative searches in the creation of digital images. The developed methodical

materials reveal in detail the way of mastering the technologies, but not as an end in itself, but a conscious study of the tools and its adequate application.

In addition to his creative achievements and dedication, Yavor Grancharov presents himself as a teacher and as a brilliant scientist. I consider his research work to be a contribution to the habilitation work. He has a number of publications in refereed editions, and “The semiotics in graphic design and visual communication” studio is an in-depth analysis of an area directly related to the graphic design. Here he reveals the essence, place, role and meaning of the semiotics as a science of signs, its application in graphic design, the relationship between semiotics and visual communication and the resulting role of the graphic designer as a visual communicator. This research helps those working in the field of visual communications to understand and anticipate the emotional reactions or interpretations that the user may have when experiencing the visual image.

After everything said so far, I can define the habilitation work as a terminal of interweaving between art, design and technologies. Undoubtedly, the foundation of Yavor Grancharov's creativity rests on his curiosity for innovations, ambition and need to visualize his inner world, refracted through the prism of the problems of our time. I can confidently define the author as a talented artist who with his work defends with dedication the high values in art. His work as a lecturer is distinguished by innovation and high competence in the field of graphic design and digital technologies. Unselfishly imparts his professionalism and creativity to his students. It provoked them to participate in prestigious forums for contemporary art, which undoubtedly had an important contribution to their formation as free-thinking and self-advocating artists.

Bearing in mind the broad-spectrum artistic-creative, scientific and teaching work of Chief Assistant Professor Yavor Spasov Grancharov, whose volume and contributions fully correspond to the legal requirements, I suggest to the members of the respected Scientific Jury to categorically vote “Yes” for his candidacy in the

competition for the academic position of “associate professor” in Higher Education Field 8. Art, Professional Area 8.2 Fine Arts (Graphic Design) for the needs of the “Visual Arts” Department, Faculty of Educational Studies and the Arts at SU “St. Kliment Ohridski”.

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Veliko Tarnovo

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