

LETTER OF OPINION

by **Prof. Snezhina Koleva Bisserova, PhD,**

member of a Scientific Jury on the procedure for occupying an academic position “**associate professor**” in the 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, Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”.

The competition was announced in the State Gazette no. 103 / 12. 12. 2023.

The competition procedure is in full accordance with the requirements of the state and university normative documents regarding occupation of the academic positions.

At the first meeting of the jury, the normative requirements for present and absent participation in the meeting were observed and reviewers were selected, as well as members of the jury, to prepare opinions.

In the competition for the occupation of the academic position "Associate professor" in the Professional field 8.2. Fine Arts (Graphic Design), one candidate participates – Chief assistant professor Yavor Spasov Grancharov, PhD.

The candidate has interests in the subject area of the competition “Graphic Design” and fulfills the minimum national requirements under Art. 2b of LAW ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ACADEMIC STAFF IN THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA for Higher Education Field 8. Arts, Professional Area 8.2. Fine Arts.

1. Candidate data

The biography of Yavor Spasov Grancharov testifies to deep professional interests and competences in the field of graphic design in all its aspects. With a focus on the candidate's contributions and achievements, I will highlight some

essential moments from it that can serve as a basis for arguing his qualities in the context of the current competition.

In 2005, Yavor Grancharov graduated from a bachelor's program in a specialty “Fine Art” at SU, Faculty of Primary and Pre-school Education (currently – Faculty of Educational Studies and the Arts – FESA)

Since 2007, Yavor Grancharov has a master's degree in “Pedagogy and Semiotics of Fine Art”, specialty “Fine Art” at Sofia University (SU) “St. Kliment Ohridski”, Faculty of Primary and Pre-school Education (currently FESA), Department of “Visual Arts”.

In 2019, he obtained the educational and scientific degree “doctor” in 1.3 Pedagogy of education in (Methodology of education in fine arts), after a successfully defended dissertation work at the Department of “Visual Arts”, Faculty of Educational Studies and the Arts of Sofia University. “St. Kliment Ohridski” on the topic: "Modern trends in graphic design and its application in the creation of textbooks, teaching aids and advertising materials.

Since 2017, Yavor Grancharov has been a full-time assistant in "Graphic Design" and “Graphic Design Software” at SU “St. Kl. Ohridski”, FESA, Department of “Visual Arts”.

Since 2020, he is the main assistant in professional direction 8.2. Fine Arts (Graphic Design Software, Graphic Design and Visual Communication, Graphic Design).

From 2002 until now, he has been working as a freelancer in the field of graphic design and advertising for various companies and institutions.

From 2020 to 2024, Yavor Grancharov participated in numerous national and international group exhibitions and realized two solo exhibitions: “Integration in algorithms”, “Alma Mater” Gallery, Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”, 2023 and “Graphic Design – Visualization of Ideas”, solo exhibition, Hall 12 of the University of Niš, Serbia, 2023.

2. General assessment of the candidate's habilitation thesis and the contributions therein

The habilitation thesis is based on the publication of the same name “Graphic design – modern trends, aesthetics, functionality”, (catalogue), University Publishing House “St. Kliment Ohridski”, Sofia, 2023 and contains three separate sections that comment on and visualize the main contributing aspects of Yavor Grancharov's work as a graphic designer and lecturer in the Department of Visual Arts at FESA. The presented artistic production fully meets the specifics of the competition in terms of volume and content.

The first section is devoted to activities and implementations in the area of graphic design and web design, including graphic layout of various book and online publications. Yavor Grancharov has over twenty years of experience in the field of graphic, advertising design and pre-press preparation. The designs presented here stem from his professional commitment to the Department of Visual Arts and the Faculty of Educational Studies and the Arts, and have been selected to focus primarily on the author's teaching and practice activities. In general, they are highly aesthetically durable, innovative in design and bear a specific author's signature, regardless of their diverse functionality. Graphic designs mainly of book and digital editions are applied here. A typographical contribution to the layout of the editions is the use of typefaces with the Bulgarian Cyrillic form of the letters. The editions comply with reading hygiene standards.

– Among the presented designs of printed materials, the layouts of the catalogs “Graphic transformations. Bulgarian and Dutch graphics and art book” and “A/SYMETRIA”, as well as the overall design of the three electronic magazines of

FESA “Visual arts and music”, “Pedagogical and social studies” and “Special pedagogy and logopedy”, distinguished by an elegant style and visual identity.

– This section also contains various works from the area of advertising design - (headers of calendars, notebook covers and souvenirs for FESA), as well as visual materials that have been specially developed for the Department of Visual Arts – the new logo of the Department of Visual Arts, distinguished by cleanliness and a modern look; posters created on the occasion of various exhibitions of the Department. With their stylistic-aesthetic durability, visual attractiveness and, at the same time, masterfully brought out identity, they fit in the best way into the overall strategy of the Faculty and, in particular, of the Department of “Visual Arts” to attract students and maintain relations with the educational community.

– Web design

Yavor Grancharov is the author of redesign of the official website of the Faculty of Educational Studies and the Arts, which is not only distinguished by an aesthetically attractive vision, but also facilitates navigation and functionality in the presentation and access to the information and activities of FESA in the online space and digital media.

The web design of the “Artprojects” site at the Faculty of Educational Sciences and the Arts, intended for the presentation of artistic projects, exhibitions, etc., which was created by Yavor Grancharov on the basis of a specially developed template and which until now manages and maintains.

3. The second section “Creative performances” contains works from the field of digital graphics presented in individual and group exhibitions.

The main focus of this section is the series of 18 digital graphic sheets created especially for the solo exhibition "Integration in Algorithms", presented at the Alma

Mater Gallery, SU “St. Kliment Ohridski”, 2023. Created entirely through the possibilities of applied digital software and realized as a digital print, the series interprets the problem of artificial intelligence in a particularly innovative way, using the artistic expressiveness of 3D renderings and the inclusion of various textures, graphic elements and filters.

The main highlight of the exhibition are the 10 graphic sheets “Integration in Algorithms I-X”; large-scale in their format (147 x 105 cm), attractively fragmented, the works bear to a large extent the declarativeness of posters, which at the same time generate a complex and multi-layered impact on the viewer in the context of the current social, scientific and purely moral aspects of the discourse on artificial intelligence in the modern world. Combining them skilfully with the square, masterfully reframed cavalcade compositions (8 in number, with a format of 40 x 40 cm), the artist organizes the space of the exhibition in a way that provides a rhythm of loading and pauses, so necessary for a complete and full viewer perception. Subsequently, the series was supplemented with 3 more graphic sheets, in which the main plastic problem was further derived and enriched graphically.

All works submitted by the candidate in this section of the habilitation work are distinguished by a distinct author's handwriting, a contemporary sound and testify not only to the virtuoso knowledge of the diverse capabilities of a wide range of applied digital software products for graphic design, but also to the artist's aspiration to continuous search for new expressive possibilities, development and upgrading in a stylistic-aesthetic aspect.

Yavor Grancharov's experimental technological and plastic discoveries in the use of 3-D printing to create three-dimensional art artifacts, manually superimposed, should also be emphasized here. (CONTEMPORARY 5 – 3D print, wood, acrylic,

40 x 29.5 x 15 cm, presented at the exhibition “Spirit and Matter. Inspirations”, Alma Mater Gallery, 2024). Here, a particularly significant contribution is the implementation of work with 3D programs directly into the teaching process in the "Graphic Design" specialty, which will provide new opportunities in the creation of "interactive and visually more complex projects in the field of graphic design".

4. Evaluation of the pedagogical and educational activity of the candidate

The third section of Yavor Grancharov's habilitation work contains evidentiary material directly related to his teaching and learning work at FESA, Department of Visual Arts. The remarkable competences and experience of the author in the use of a wide range of applied graphic software products and his ability to convey them in an accessible and creative way to students I can point out as an important contribution point in his teaching work. His activity as a lecturer includes many activities: creation and updating of curricula for a number of compulsory and optional disciplines in the educational and qualification degree “Bachelor”, specialty “Graphic Design”, his participation in the team for the development of a new curriculum for the specialty “Graphic Design” in 2021; the management of an international artistic project and its active participation in other projects, which include the participation of teachers and students from the “Visual Arts” Department of the Faculty of Educational Studies and the Arts of the Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”; conducting lectures, workshops and master classes in Bulgaria and abroad, etc. All this indisputably proves the contribution of Yavor Grancharov as a lecturer in the Department of Visual Arts. He also creates a set of author's presentation materials, visualizing and structuring step-by-step mastering of graphic design software products, as well as important stages of logo design and pre-press preparation of various types of publications, which is undoubtedly of considerable

benefit to the students. Developed specifically to adapt the process of teaching various disciplines online during the COVID-19 pandemic, these study materials have not only fulfilled their purpose magnificently, but also currently have their place and importance in working with the students, encouraging their interest in developing of various products from graphic, corporate and advertising design.

5. Conclusion

Based on the analysis of the habilitation thesis made so far, with which Chief assistant professor Yavor Grancharov appears in the current competition, I have the grounds to confirm his, in general, contribution character. In the documentation provided for the competition, the candidate clearly formulates and proves the points of contribution in it, which I consider to be objective, categorically argued and I fully support them.

As a result, I give my positive assessment to the candidature and I confidently propose to the respected Scientific Jury to elect Yavor Spasov Grancharov to the academic position of “Associate Professor” in the Higher Education Field 8. Art, Professional Area 8. 2. Fine Arts (Graphic Design) for the needs of the Department of Visual Arts, Faculty of Educational Studies and the Arts, SU “St. Kliment Ohridski”.

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Sofia