

REVIEW

by **Professor Svetoslav Angelov Kosev, PhD,**

for artistic, research and academic activity of

Chief assistant professor Yavor Spasov Grancharov, PhD,

on the occasion of competition for the academic position “**associate professor**”,

by professional direction 8.2. Fine Art (Graphic Design),

announced in State Gazette No. 103 from 12.12.2023

1. GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CANDIDATE'S PUBLICATIONS

The candidate Chief assistant professor Yavor Grancharov has presented a large number of participations in exhibitions, as well as the realization of numerous projects in the field of graphic design, including WEB design, for the period 2020 to the beginning of 2024, which confirm him as an extremely productive and in-demand artist and graphic designer. In the list of publications, a significant part is also occupied by the materials that he created for the purpose of teaching students at the Faculty of Educational Studies and the Arts (FESA). In addition to the visual output, the candidate has also provided a theoretical publication that clearly shows the direction of his scientific interests. This publication, however, is not included in the list of scientometric indicators, but summarizes the creative assets that the candidate Chief assistant professor Yavor Grancharov, PhD, submits for review as a habilitation thesis.

What distinguishes him as a creator in his author's works is the specific combination of conceptual art and design, which is clearly purposeful, as the candidate emphasizes it in the justification of his creative pursuits. In some of the works he submits for review in connection with the current competition, namely the series entitled "Integration in Algorithms", he demonstrates skills in working with 3D software, creating a number of compositional solutions by visualizing characters from different angles. It should also be noted that for the creation of the compositional elements in this series, he also used techniques for three-dimensional animation of organic models, which shows the object of his professional interests in the past years.

The rest of the works, which he quite naturally makes the focus of his habilitation, are entirely related to graphic design. I specify here that I consider the focus in terms of the minimum scientometric indicators that the candidate has indicated. This is quite logical, taking into account the nature of competition, as well as the practical long-term activity in this field on the part of Yavor Grancharov. The body of the book shows a number of projects related to the advertising campaign of the Sofia University and, in particular, FESA, which cover a wide range of activities in the area of graphic design – print and WEB design, accidental materials, advertising products, etc.

The teaching activity of the candidate is also particularly impressive, as in this regard he has prepared a number of materials, supported by rich visual material, created in an accessible and understandable language.

2. ASSESSMENT FOR ACCORDANCE WITH MINIMUM NATIONAL REQUIREMENTS.

Quantitatively, the artistic projects and realizations, as well as the candidate's publications, significantly exceed the minimum national requirements set out in the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff and related regulations. The presented artistic production corresponds to the profile of the competition - it is significant in terms of volume and content.

The problem for a large part of the candidates for academic growth, group of indicators "D", is also adequately and well lined, which also applies to group "E".

3. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ARTISTIC, SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH AND ACADEMIC ACTIVITY OF THE CANDIDATE

I divide the applicant's merits or demerits into three main groups of activities, which give grounds for approving or rejecting the candidacy for the position of "associate professor" and are accordingly indicated in the title of the section, namely: artistic, scientific research and academic activities.

For the profile of the competition, artistic activity is of crucial importance, which of course should not minimize the other two components. I have already mentioned some of the characteristics of some of the creative activities and manifestations of Yavor Grancharov. In the process of his creative development, he acts systematically

and progressively. His interest in mastering technologies that are used differently in the creation of a visual product also leads to the specific look of his works. His progressive mastery of software products for vector, raster and 3D graphics makes a very good impression. In his work, he strives to use each of the listed technologies in a diverse way, which also leads to the specificity of his activity, which makes an impression even at first glance. In the "Integration in Algorithms" series, Yavor Grancharov touches on a very controversial issue for today, namely artificial intelligence and its influence on the future of art in particular and all of humanity, in general.

Since I have a general idea of the activities that the candidate has carried out in the area of graphic design during his previous period of creative activity, I realize that the projects submitted for review are a small part of what he has had the opportunity to create. As also noted in the body of the book presenting his work submitted for consideration in connection with this competition: "The author has over twenty years of experience in graphic, advertising design and prepress. Through the visual materials presented here, the focus is primarily on designs that stem from his professional commitment to the Department of Visual Arts and the Faculty of Educational Studies and the Arts." Based on this, I can say that the selected materials show high quality and an effort to emphasize to the maximum extent the advantages of the institution for which the materials were prepared. Again, I can note that the style of work is recognizable in this case as well, despite the effort to make maximum use of the capabilities of Adobe Photoshop, as well as the other software products with which it works.

Another essential part of the candidate's work is the materials he prepares in connection with the educational process at the Faculty of Education and Arts. I can say that they are systematized in a very accessible and comprehensible way, which is of essential importance for learning the material, especially when it refers to the past pandemic situation of COVID - 19, in which it was imperative to find the most appropriate way to teach. Naturally, it should be emphasized here that fine art is not among the things where such a task can be easily accomplished.

4. METHODS AND APPROACHES IN THE CANDIDATE'S WORK

Chief assistant professor Yavor Grancharov, PhD, uses his own technique to create the works, presented as free works, created in the period 2020 – 2024 and

proposed by him as a basis for the habilitation procedure. In them, he demonstrates skills in working with a number of software products for vector, raster and 3D graphics. These skills also play an important role in his teaching activities with students. It is important to mention that he has a constant desire for self-improvement and follows the latest developments in graphic work technologies. His enthusiasm for his own development, he tries to convey to the students as well, passing on his knowledge both in terms of the technologies he has mastered and striving to educate their aesthetic views.

In the projects that Yavor Grancharov presents, as a basis for academic growth, an extremely professional attitude is observed. It can be stated that he easily handles WEB design programs as well.

In the materials prepared for teaching activity, it can be seen that he also has serious knowledge regarding the font, which is one of the obligatory components in graphic design. In a systematic way, the materials that refer to the construction of a trademark, pagination in printed publications, color modes in printing and design of displays, etc., are also presented.

5. TEACHING ACTIVITY IN SOFIA UNIVERSITY “ST. KLIMENT OHRIDSKI”

In the verification from the "Human Resources" Department of Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” of Chief assistant professor Yavor Grancharov, PhD, it is clear that since 2017 he has been on a permanent employment contract there, and before that, since 2012, he also taught as a part-time lecturer, and in the period 2008-2011 he led exercises there as well. From the reference to the mentioned evidence, it can be noted that the teaching workload of the candidate is very high and in most cases significantly exceeds the standard norm. In addition, he is heavily involved in the development and updating of a number of curricula. His teaching activity also includes the organization and conduct of artistic practice with students from the “Graphic Design” specialty of the Faculty of Educational Studies and the Arts of Sofia University, as well as the inclusion of doctoral students and students of the "Visual Arts" Department of the Sofia University in the project “ECO- art / ART-eco (ECO-art / ART-eco)”, of which he is the head. He also participates in a number of projects at the national and international level.

6. PRINCIPAL CONTRIBUTIONS ACCORDING TO THE PUBLICATIONS

The candidate for the academic position “associate professor” Chief assistant professor Yavor Grancharov, PhD, has indicated a number of contributing moments, the result of his previous artistic, research and teaching activities. The contributions are summarized and grouped into nine main points: contribution to updating the curricula; contribution to the creation and use of visual materials in graphic design education; contribution to the promotion of work results in the field of graphic design; contribution to the graphic layout of book and online issues; contribution to the preparation of advertising, visual materials and souvenirs for FESA; redesign of the official website of FESA; organizing a workshop; participation in exhibitions; semiotics in graphic design and visual communication. I will agree with each of them, paying attention mainly to the things that made the strongest impression on me.

Each of the contributions that the candidate Ch. assistant professor Yavor Grancharov indicated, can be classified as a result of artistic, research and teaching activities, and in some cases as an intersection of each of them. Since the competition is for an academic position, perhaps here special attention should be paid to the teaching activity of the candidate, especially since he himself shows a special attitude to it. This activity of his is also the intersection of each of the mentioned aspects, which I myself consider decisive in such a competition. As a first contribution, he points to the updating of the curricula of the majors of the Department of Visual Arts. All programs in which he took part in the update process are related to graphic design to one degree or another. As he himself notes, this is a field that is dependent on the development of technologies and therefore needs constant updating. Bearing in mind his attitude to each of the processes in his activity, I am convinced that the educational process is adequately aimed at the modern trends in graphic design, both from the point of view of technology and aesthetic currents in this field, and I am convinced that this done in collaboration with other team members. The second contribution, which Yavor Grancharov emphasizes, can again be attributed to his teaching activity, since it is about the visual materials he prepared in graphic design education. In fact, I have taken a stand on this matter more than once above, and I can undoubtedly say that the way in which he has approached this activity deserves admiration. Materials have a wide

range of specific aspects, the subject of graphic design, and in addition, they themselves have a high aesthetic value.

Undoubtedly, it can be said that the third of the mentioned contributions is strictly individual and specific. The promotion of the specializations and activities of the Department of Visual Arts at the University of Niš, through the lecture “Graphic Design Software and its Use in Creating Visual Images and Messages”, gives reason to respect this asset, which is again primarily related to teaching activity, but also demonstrates the candidate's commitment to the Institution.

The contribution to the graphic layout of book and online editions is directly related to his activity as a graphic designer, and there he shows high professionalism, as well as a wide range of the used possibilities of the software products he works with. This undoubtedly applies to the next of the contributions listed.

The redesign of the official website of the FESA definitely adds another asset to the professional qualities of Ch. Assistant Professor Yavor Grancharov, PhD, which he tries to pass on to his graduates.

The organization of external trainings such as workshops show his ability to adapt in an environment different from his comfort zone, which is also a valid contribution, synchronised with the goals of the announced competition.

Participation in the arts forums is one of the obligatory elements required for attestation, such as academic growth, and the candidate certainly demonstrates versatile capabilities that are well complemented by Yavor Grancharov's broad interests.

In my opinion, each of the listed contributions is well-founded and synchronized with the objectives of the announced competition for the academic position of "associate professor", in Professional direction 8.2. Fine Art (Graphic Design).

7. PERSONAL IMPRESSIONS OF THE CANDIDATE

I know Chief assistant professor Yavor Grancharov, PhD, for a long enough time and I have had the opportunity to hold talks with him on both professional and personal topics. We have worked together with various courses from the "Graphic Design" specialty at FESA. My convictions are that he is an extremely ethical person who seeks to find a solution to problems of a different nature in the most dialogic and delicate way possible. His professional attitude towards his artistic, research and

teaching activities do not allow him to look at the work he has undertaken below the necessary level.

8. CRITICAL NOTES, OPINIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE CANDIDATE'S ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

I have no critical remarks regarding the materials provided to me for the preparation of a review.

9. MOTIVATED CONCLUSION

After having familiarized myself with the materials presented in the competition and based on the analysis of their significance and the artistic, research and teaching contributions contained in them, I confirm that all achievements meet the requirements of LAW ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ACADEMIC STAFF IN THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA and the Rules of Procedure for the Acquisition of Scientific degrees and for occupying Academic positions at SU “Kliment Ohridski”.

In particular, the candidate satisfies the minimum national requirements in the professional direction and no plagiarism has been found in the materials submitted for the competition.

I give my positive assessment to the candidature.

General conclusion

After familiarizing myself with the materials and scientific works presented in the competition, analyzing their significance and the artistic, research and teaching contributions contained in them, I find it reasonable to give my positive assessment and recommend that the Scientific Jury propose to the Faculty Council of Faculty of Educational Studies and the Arts (FESA) to choose Chief assistant professor Yavor Grancharov, PhD, to take the academic position of “associate professor”, by professional direction 8.2. Fine Art (Graphic Design).

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Prepared the review:

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