

R E V I E W

of the habilitation thesis by Assoc. Prof. Anna Tzolovska,
on the procedure for occupation of the academic position "Professor"
Higher Education Field 8. Art, Professional Area 8.2. Fine Arts,
(Sculpture and Art Constructions)
Faculty of Educational Studies and the Arts,
Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"
by Prof. Bissera Valeva, PhD

In connection with the announced competition for the academic position of "Professor" under 8.2 Fine Arts (Sculpture and artistic constructions), announced in State Gazette, issue 63 / 30.07.2021 for the needs of the Department of Visual Arts of the Faculty of Educational Studies and the Arts, the only candidate is Assoc. Prof. Anna Iltcheva Tzolovska PhD. She has presented for review the habilitation thesis "Foundations of Creative Reality", which consists of several solo exhibitions, various additional (supporting) works, as well as visual results and examples of her teaching work with students in the sculpture studio at the Faculty of Educational Studies and the Arts at Sofia University.

The candidate has sufficient teaching experience in the field of visual arts at the Sofia University (since 2011). After entering as an Associate Professor of Sculpture and Artistic Structures at the Department of Visual Arts at the Faculty of Educational Studies and the Arts, she has classes in all bachelor's courses in Fine Arts and Graphic Design with compulsory and elective courses, as well as in the specialty "Special pedagogy", in which she is a leading academic lecturer in the discipline "Tactile Creativity". Since her occupation of the position of Associate professor, she has been teaching the course "Basic Directions and Trends in the Significant Character of Sculpture in the 20th Century" in the MA

"Pedagogy and Semiotics of Fine Arts" (specialists), "Pedagogy and Semiotics of Fine Arts" (for graduates of other specialties). It has compulsory disciplines in both versions of the MA of Graphic Design. Assoc. Prof. Anna Tzolovska is the head of the MA "Visual Arts" (2021). Apart from her teaching activity reflected in the final part of her habilitation work, the author has an impressive creative biography. She is the author of 17 solo exhibitions in Bulgaria and abroad (since 2011): 2021 - Exhibition "The Garden" in the gallery "Stubel", Sofia; Exhibition "Total Meditation" in Arosita Gallery, Sofia; BALANCES exhibition, <https://artinitiativesproject.com/balance>; 2019 - Exhibition "My travels are beyond travel" in the gallery "Alma Mater", Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski "; Exhibition - participation in the festival "Le Traverse de Mare" with "Supra humanum - beyond the human", studio of the Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris, France; Exhibition - Open studio - open day - presentation of "Reasoning", studios of the Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris, France; 2018 - Exhibition "MENTAL VAGABOND", gallery of BCI - Budapest, Hungary, supported by a project under NSF No. 38 - "HOMO SIMULACRUM +"; Exhibition "HOMO SIMULACRUM +, CEREBRUM SIMULATION - AI" - improvisations, Alma Mater Gallery at Sofia University; 2016 - Exhibition "Crosspoints", in the gallery "Look" of the Academy of Arts of Lodz; 2015 - Exhibition «WODA DZIELI, WODA LACZY», Bulgarian Cultural Institute, Warsaw, Poland; 2015 - Exhibition DIGITAL GRAPHICS "Generated in the computer, created by hand" at the Alma Mater Gallery of Sofia University; 2014 - Exhibition "Observers - 2", Bulgarian Cultural Institute, Budapest, Hungary; Exhibition "Objects and the River" (together with Bisera Valeva), gallery "AROSITA", Sofia; Exhibition "FOSSILI" (together with Desislava Deneva), GALLERIA "VIA LARGA", Florence, Italy; 2013 - Exhibition "FOSSILS" (together with Desislava Deneva) in IMPRESSION ART Gallery - Sofia. In addition to the mentioned solo exhibitions, Assoc. Prof. Anna Tzolovska has a numerous of participations in joint exhibitions, symposia and art forums. Some of them (for the last four years) are:

2021 - International Landart Plein Air "Between Sand and Foam - II", Kiten, organized by Sofia University "ARTel"; International Symposium "KEVIS` 2021, ETER "Ethnographic Open-Air Museum, Gabrovo; Joint exhibition from the landart plein air "Between sand and foam" 2021, gallery-bookstore "SofiaPress", Sofia; Joint exhibition "11th Lessedra International Painting & Mixed Media Competition 2021" at Lesedra Gallery, Sofia; Joint exhibition from the festival "Process - Space" "Rearrangement of Layers" in the gallery of the Cultural Information Center "Mill", Balchik; 2020 - Group Exhibition "Winds and Insomnia II", Online Exhibition, Sofia; Joint exhibition "WorldWide Prints", Italy; International exhibition "ArtRosaliada 2020" at the gallery "Rafael Mihailov", Veliko Tarnovo; Group exhibition "Winds and Insomnia I" in ETUD Gallery, Sofia; International Exhibition "Daily News / East Meets West", Silesian University, Katowice, Poland; Joint exhibition VIII forum "Small graphic forms 2020", gallery KO-OP, Sofia; Virtual exhibition "The Tree of Life Today and Tomorrow", International Exhibition "Art Initiatives 2020" in "Onsekiz Mart", Canakkale, Turkey; University of East Sarajevo, Trebinje, R. Srpska; Group online Exhibition "Roads", at the Department of Visual Arts; Joint virtual exhibition FOUR WALLS 2020 Artspace Luna; International Annual Exhibition-competition Mix Media organized by Lesedra Gallery, Sofia; International Landart Plein Air "Between Sand and Foam" in Kiten; 2019 - Joint International Exhibition "8th International Triennial of Graphics Sofia" in the gallery space of "Shipka" 6, Sofia; International Exhibition "ArtRosaliada 2019" in the gallery "Rafael Mihailov", Veliko Tarnovo; group exhibition, "Bulgarian graphics and art book", gallery "WAUMCS" - University "Maria Skłodowska-Curie", Lublin, Poland; International Exhibition "Graphic Transformations - Bulgarian and Polish Graphics and Art Book", BCI Warsaw, Poland, 18th International Annual Exhibition - Competition Graphics Small Format - MINI PRINT, Lesedra Gallery, Sofia, Joint Exhibition VII FORUM SMALL GRAPHS FORMS, in ART ALLEY Gallery, Sofia, National Exhibition "Graphic Forum", Bayer Gallery,

Stara Zagora, group exhibition "25 years of specialty "Fine Arts" at Alma Mater Gallery, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", Sofia; International Exhibition from symposium "FORM 2019", in the gallery "Gabenski", Tryavna; participation in the International Symposium KEVIS` 2019, ETER - Ethnographic Open-Air Museum, Gabrovo; 2018 - Joint exhibition Graphic Transformations at SAN STEFANO Gallery, Sofia; Group exhibition Graphic Transformations at ETUD Gallery, Sofia; Group Exhibition TRANSFORMACIE, BCI Bratislava, Slovakia, International Exhibition 9TH PAINTING & MIXED MEDIA COMPETITION 2018 "Lesedra Gallery, Sofia; Joint Exhibition" Sixth Forum "Small Graphic Forms", Art Alley Gallery, Sofia; international exhibition "Entrance - exit" in the gallery "Metodi Meta-Petrov", Tsaribrod, R. Serbia; International Exhibition "14 International biennial of miniature art", The Modern Gallery, The cultural center Gornji Milanovac, R. Serbia; "Entrance - exit", Gallery "Officers' House", Nis, R. Serbia; Exhibition "Art Rosaliada", Veliko Tarnovo, 2017 - Group Exhibition "Fifth Forum "Small Graphic Forms" in the Gallery Art Alley, Sofia; Group Exhibition "ARTiculations - visual chronicles - WANDERERS" in ETUD Gallery, Sofia; Participation in the Second Edition of the National Graphic Exhibition named after Georgi Gerasimov, in HG "Stanislav Dospevski", Pazardzhik; Competition and exhibition between the members of UBA for an artist-in-residence in Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris in 2018, second place, in the Gallery of UBA "Shipka" 6, Sofia; Participation in an International Exhibition at the Embassy of the Republic of Serbia, Sofia; Group Exhibition "DAILIES" in Bayer Gallery, Stara Zagora; International Exhibition "Art Rosaliada", Veliko Tarnovo and etc.

As a result of her creative activity, Assoc. Prof. Anna Tzolovska is the winner of various awards and nominations from the exhibitions and art forums in which she has participated.

The habilitation thesis of Assoc. Prof. Anna Tzolovska "Foundations of Creative Reality" consists of visual examples of her plastic searches based on spatial forms, their relationships with other arts and their overall impact on the viewer. The main characteristic of the work is its focus on the artistic experiments that the author makes in the period 2011-2021. The essence of her work is the provocation in the impact of the final image, through the combinations of incompatible materials, concepts and types of art.

Undoubtedly, the focus of the work is on four voluminous exhibitions - "WANDERS", "BALANCES", "MEDITATION", "GARDEN". For the three of them (without "Balances") the author's opinion about her artistic inclinations, about the essence of her author's position and her motivation for the experiment is relevant. She clarifies that this line of artistic behavior "correlates between the three-dimensional space, the two-dimensional plane and the multidimensional mental spaces", in their meetings, in their graphic equivalents and general plastic expression (p. 5).

The vision of the mentioned expositions influences not only through the individual works, but as a complete interactive installation, in which the sculptures and objects are "looked at" and multiplied in the accompanying graphic works based on CGP and silligraphy. The Balances exhibition is different as a concept. It can be seen both as a post-constructivist exhibition, and as a classical kinetic sculpture, and as an object-occasion for conceptual experiments (capturing objects with a camera, p. 34).

Perhaps with the exhibition "Wanderings" (2019, Alma Mater Gallery, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski") Assoc. Prof. Anna Tzolovska confirms her line of creative interpretation and development, which becomes recognizable in her next exhibitions, united by the habilitation thesis. The individual elements of

the exhibition are sculptures, spatial objects and graphic prints in mixed media. The exhibition "merges" its components into a complete work, which ironically interprets art, values, social relations - life in general. In such a context are the sculptures "NAIVE READING OF DEVALUATED CONCEPTS ALSO CALLED" INFANTILE VALUES ", (57/80/75 cm, 2019)," THE FALLEN BATMAN OR "WOLVENIE / 40" WERVERINE 95 - GER!" , 2019), "ADONIS WITH A WREATH OF SUNSHIPS EXPECTS TO BE KISSED", (40/30/14 cm, 2019). In these works the clash of illusions with reality, of the launched values, which turn out to be profaned by excessive and out of place use, of dissimilar materials, which, however, are absolutely necessary for reading the general visual and emotional impact, is compelling. The amalgam of desired reality, elements of easily digestible pop culture and replicated images provoked by mental wanderings, liberate the visual melancholic and self-ironic feelings in the viewer, pushing him to a different-uncomfortable view of himself.

In the works presented in the exhibition "Balances", the feeling of a consciously sought suggestion of post-constructivism is initially imposed. The impression of interpreting the visual images of A. Rodchenko, N. Gabo, A. Pevzner and other cubo-futurists is inevitable. In fact, the author's formal visual search for "balancing" the compositional elements grows into conceptual artifacts. And in this, at first glance, abstract sculptural exhibition, the "mikado" elements are in fact the basis through which the basic constructive-compositional principles are simultaneously demonstrated, which, in turn, become an occasion for the development of conceptual thinking. The author notes that "the interrelationship between the elements of each art object in this exhibition determines its integrity and visualizes the dynamic and static states of the work, composition, their interactions and finding an artistic balance between them." (p. 9). The presented works, in the order of the names from B-1 to B-9, demonstrate stability and ephemerality, a search for compositional balance as obligatory for each work of

art, as well as a continuing transformation of the final work according to its form and location in space.

In the exhibition "Total Meditation", in which the sculptural works are leading, the graphic prints (CGP and silygraphy) preserve the emotional findings of the consciousness, creating the illusion of mirror images and strengthening the belief that the imaginary is the only refuge at the moment. The spatial language of the author forms an artistic approach in which different interpreted textual quotations are found in their visual-narrative aspect, unification of diverse, opposite elements, as well as ironic superimposition of meanings. The sculptural works from the exhibition are made up of contrasting, at first glance, difficult-to-combine volumetric elements. For the embodiment of her personal meditation Anna Tzolovska uses ceramics and glass - OBJECTS OF MEDITATION / IONS (warm blown glass, ceramics, 25/13/10 cm, 2018), OBJECTS OF MEDITATION / LINGAM (warm blown glass, ceramics, 10) 23/12 cm, 2018), OBJECTS OF MEDITATION / WINE VESSEL (hot blown glass, ceramics, 32/22/18 cm, 2018), etc .. Of course, the author uses the definition of "meditation" in ironic and auto-ironic aspect. The titles of the sculptures themselves are inseparable from their overall general perception. The elements of the technical structure of the work, as well as their combination, create the physical feeling of both lightness and down-to-earth materiality. In some of the works, the sheet - scroll of clay naturally continues in the fragile glass form, becoming an object for focusing, for contemplation, for crossing the border of mortality (clay) in the transcendental illusion (glass) and the happiness of creation. In other sculptures, the earth-reality fails to break the illusion which like inspiration, like a balloon, tries to detach itself and acquire its own existence. Some of the sculptures, such as "A lily has sprouted in the heart", combine incompatible symbolism, but through the change in materiality, Anna Tzolovska also changes their semantic message. The flowers are dense, materialized by the earthly material, and the heart is as pure as it is

fragile and fragile, filled with light (or emptiness). Completely realized from glass are the sculptures "Rabbit" and "Chain", through which the author ironically challenges the viewer. It inspires the contemplative to one, in the words of Roger Fry, creative way of perceiving works-objects, which "as such seem to disappear, lose their independent unity and take their places as separate stones in the overall mosaic of the image", which generates in the perception-imagination of the viewer.

Undoubtedly, the exhibition "Garden", as part of the habilitation work of Anna Tzolovska, impresses with the development of the experiment and the cohesion between spatial and graphic works. In the sculptural works from the exhibition, the author is even more extreme in combining diverse materials. To the results of her work can be attributed the thought of Henry Moore about the creative habit, which, in his opinion, is "like a drug, because the specific mania changes, but the excitement, the thrill of creation continue". For the author, this exhibition connects the personal microcosm with the "real materiality of the idea" and allows for the development and more complete perception of the realized image.

In The Flower and The Fountain, the combination of cast iron and glass, shocking at first glance, emphasizes the feeling of originality and impermanence, returning the viewer to the shifted layers of reality and illusion. In the compositions "EVE OR THE GIRL" (cast iron, textile, glass fusion, 60/40/30 cm, 2021), "FLOWER - ARCH", (cast iron, glass fusion, 90/43/6 cm, 2021), "FLOWER - FOUNTAIN" (cast iron, glass-fusing, 58/30/6 cm, 2021), colored glasses and their combination with the deliberately roughened silhouette of the body-base make the impact of the final composition both provocative and technologically-professional. Or as the author mentions in her concept: "The garden dominates, summarizes, it is a conceptual, future, but foreseeable goal, whose most sincere and perfect quality is the idea of it."

In addition to the main habilitation thesis, Assoc. Prof. Anna Tzolovska presented additional works. In them she continues to work with diverse materials and categorical (contrasting) intervention in the environment in which the sculptural installations are exposed. Impressive "THE WAY FORWARD", wood, metal, 160/100/20 cm, Kevis, Ether, 2021, "HELIX", wood, metal, 100/85/80 cm, Kevis, Ether, 2021, "SHADOW OF THE SUN" (Wood, plaster, 220/80/14 cm, landart plein air, Kiten, 2020). And in these additional compositions the author's concept imposes a "surrealistic" perspective on imposed clichés, controversial aesthetic norms and pop culture. In the volumetric installations, the author realizes the controlled intervention of the artist in nature, as well as her cooperation with it in the final independent artistic result.

Apart from her specific creative pursuits, Anna Tzolovska's activity and interests are also focused on various seminars, workshops, participation in conferences, lectures at universities in Bulgaria and abroad. In the period 2016 - 2018 she is a co-author of several textbooks in fine arts (Marieta Petrova Savcheva, Elena Veselinova Panayotova, Blagomir Kirilov Papazov, Anna Iltcheva Tzolovska, Fine Arts 9th grade, ISBN: ISBN 978-954-324-201-6, Pedagogue 6, Sofia; Marietta Petrova Savcheva, Elena Veselinova Panayotova, Blagomir Kirilov Papazov, Anna Iltcheva Tzolovska, Book for the teacher of fine arts for 9th grade, ISBN: ISBN 978-954-324-179-8, Pedagogue 6, Sofia, Marieta Petrova Savcheva, Elena Veselinova Panayotova, Blagomir Kirilov Papazov, Anna Iltcheva Tzolovska, 8th grade, Fine Arts, ISBN: ISBN 978-954-324-162-0, Pedagogue 6, Sofia, Marieta Petrova Savcheva, Elena Veselinova Panayotova, Blagomir Kirilov Papazov, Anna Iltcheva Tzolovska, Book for the teacher of fine arts for 8th grade, ISBN: ISBN 978-954-324-148-4, Pedagogue 6, Sofia, Marieta Petrova Savcheva, Anna Iltcheva Tzolovska, Fine arts 5th grade, ISBN: ISBN 978-954-324 -129-3, Pedagogue 6, Sofia). The attached examples from her teaching work

in the sculpture studio are very interesting. It can be seen from them that her direction of work with students develops both the classical understanding of sculpture and various conceptual spatial forms.

I believe that the presented habilitation thesis meets the requirements of the Law for the development of the academic staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for its implementation and the Regulations for the development of the academic staff of the Sofia University, as well as the scientometric requirements of NACID. The candidate meets the minimum national requirements for holding the announced academic position (professor).

In conclusion, I strongly suggest to the esteemed members of the scientific jury to award the academic title of "Professor" of Sculpture and Art Constructions, for the needs of the Department of Visual Arts of Faculty of Educational Studies and the Arts, Sofia University, to Assoc. Prof. Anna Iltcheva Tzolovska PhD.

Prof. Bissera Valeva, PhD

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