

REVIEWER'S OPINION

**by Prof. Tatiana Batuleva, D.Sc., Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, BAS
for Competition Procedure for the Position of Associated Professor, Section "Culture, Aesthetics,
Values", Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, BAS, announced by State Gazette 67/ 28.07.2020**

Grounds for further review

This opinion follows ПД 09-464/28.09.2020, issued by Prof. D. Sc. Petrov, Director of the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, BAS

Information and impressions about the candidate

The only candidate in the Associate Professor's competition at the section "Culture, Aesthetics, Values" is Assistant Professor Dr. Sylvia Borissova. It is clear from the duly submitted documents that she meets all the formal requirements for holding this position: she has the necessary work experience and successfully defended a doctorate on "Limits of Aesthetic Consciousness" (2011). In terms of content, the submitted works fully correspond to "associate professor" in Philosophy (specialty "Aesthetics"). Since she was elected an assistant, I have known Dr. Borissova as an active participant in a series of philosophical forums, theoretical seminars, and research projects. Her texts are distinguished by their innovation, precise argumentation, and high scientific and linguistic style. I also have impressions of her entrepreneurship, collegial correctness, visible in academic communication, professional and informal contacts. Sylvia Borissova is also a translator and editor of philosophical and literary works from English - an important touch to a promising young scientist's image. It is no coincidence that in 2019 she was awarded the Prize of the Program for Support of Young Scientists and Ph.D. Students (session 2017) for the most successful individual research project [DFNP-17-175 "Aesthetics of Silence and Silence"] in the field of "Philosophy."

Publications and citations

The set of documents and scientific papers presented by Dr. Borissova, with which she participates in the competition, includes 1 monograph, 3 studies, and 5 articles. A list is attached to it with her academic appearances: 2 monographs, 8 studies, 25 articles, 8 scientific communications, 10 translations from English of scientific and artistic texts.

Her participation in research projects as a leader, coordinator, and consultant is also described (and a significant volume of lecture, editorial, expert, and compilation activities); over 20 participations in scientific forums and 6 participations in applied-aesthetic projects. Three of the studies are in indexed and four - in referenced specialized journals. From the presented reference, it is clear that the candidate fully meets the minimum national requirements of NACID, established for the academic position of

"Associate Professor." Her scientific works are cited in publications of other scientists: this is a significant touch to a future associate professor's achievements, testifying to his own image and recognition in the scientific community.

Characteristics of the candidate's research activity

In her main work (*Aesthetics of Silence*, Gutenberg Publishing House, 2019, 232 p.) Borissova explores the sources of silence and outlines its figures, carrying the poetics of Western melancholy and Eastern emptiness. One of the undoubted advantages of this provocative work, in which the conceptual is complemented by the poetic, is that it has managed to capture their various incarnations: silence/nature and space, language and image, play and love, at the "top of the senses "and beyond; denial of the visible and entanglement in a new relationship with the world. A multi-layered and dynamic concept, pushing towards non-existence, but also towards its opposite - fullness, silence, discreetly flattering or captivating, is a return to the starting point, keeping the secret of the beginning, but also a projection to a still elusive future in which words no longer exist. With this monograph, the author realizes her broader goal: to contribute to establishing the research field of negative aesthetics by explicating its specific projections in the field of silence and stillness. Borissova's consistent interest in the subject of negative aesthetics is also expressed in the attempt to outline its sources, subject field, and systematic potential. The candidate sought current interpretations of the contemporary cultural situation's aestheticized aspects, building a network of conceptual relationships between seemingly incompatible research areas such as nonclassical aesthetics, negative aesthetics, and neoclassical pragmatist aesthetics (*Systematic possibilities of negative aesthetics // Philosophical Alternatives 4/4*, pp.15–36).

The permanence of beauty as a category and the transience of its various incarnations as a dialectic, giving birth to new forms that have overcome the requirements for symmetry, is the subject of analysis in the article *Permanence of Beauty* (*Philosophia* 2014/8, 195–204).

An attempt for conceptual separation of the aesthetic in emotions and for a typology of this aestheticization in art from the perspective of its creators, interpreters, and users can be found in the study *Aestheticization of Emotions in Art* (*Philosophical Alternatives*, 2019/3, pp. 138–153).

The study "*Is the Absolute Metaphor "absolute mythology"?* *The bridge between Losev and Blumenberg* (*Philosophical Alternatives*. 2017 / 2-3, p.191–213) explicates the conceptual connections between "absolute mythology" (according to Losev) and "absolute metaphor" (according to Blumenberg) based on the dialectical dynamics between myth and metaphor and the ontological impossibility of one without the other. Schelling's philosophy of myth is explicating as a way to strengthen these ties.

Recommendation: Preparation of a future monograph in which to further develop the problem "body-clothing," set in the article *The problem "body-clothing" in the aesthetics of everyday life: restoring the balance between appearance and feeling: clothing as ambivalence; image and sign, giving and getting in shape, getting to know yourself and playing with yourself.*

I consider the author's reference for the **contributions** that I would synthesize in the following main axes to be substantiated and comprehensive:

First, the relevance and originality of the proposed texts. They are a philosophical reflection on the meaning and functions of the aesthetic in a new context, which requires a new type of philosophical reflection, combining the disciplining function of the conceptual with the artistic and figurative scope.

Second, a detailed terminological apparatus relevant to the aesthetic readings of silence is proposed, providing a successful transition from the theoretical foundation (classical categories) to its applied aspects - something necessary to preserve aesthetic knowledge's vitality and good modern readings.

Third, an innovative interpretation of nonclassical aesthetics as procedural aesthetics based on analogies between aesthetic heterotopias and procedural philosophy.

Fourth, an attempt to search for the interactions between aesthetic heterotopias and moral attitudes and challenges in today's multipolar world (something with which the candidate enriches the sectional orientation set by Prof. Ivanka Stapova).

Conclusion

The only candidate in the competition for associate professor in a professional field 2.3. Philosophy at the section "Culture, Aesthetics, Values," IPS, BAS, meets all the requirements for holding this academic position. Sufficient evidence has been provided that the minimum national requirements have been met. The research space and the quality of the candidate's scientific developments fully comply with PN.2.3. Philosophy and the scientific specialty "Aesthetics." The diverse and successful scientific, translation, editorial, and organizational-administrative activity of Dr. Sylvia Borissova as head of a section at the IPS are significant in every respect and outline the path of a serious researcher's innovative approach to philosophical issues. This gives me a reason to support her candidacy and call on the members of the esteemed Scientific Jury to propose to the Scientific Council of the IPS to approve the election of Sylvia Borissova as an associate professor.

Prof. D.Sc. Tatiana Batuleva

December 5, 2020