

## ASSESSMENT

by Prof. Miglena Nikolchina

of the application of Assistant Professor Dr. Silvia Emilova Borisova - Spasova for the position Associate Professor in 2.3. Philosophy (Aesthetics) at the Section "Culture, Aesthetics, Values", Institute of Philosophy – Bulgarian Academy of Science (SG, issue 67 / 28.07.2020).

Silvia Borisova is a member of the Union of Scientists in Bulgaria and the Bulgarian Philosophical Society and an active participant in the scientific community. She has rich a teaching, editorial, and consultant experience. For the application, Silvia Borisova has presented the monograph *The Aesthetics of Silence* (2019), as well as articles in Bulgarian and English in prestigious scientific journals. She has also significant award-winning contributions as a translator in the field of the humanities.

The main place among these publications is occupied by the monograph *Aesthetics of Silence*, which in many respects is a continuation of Borisova's previous monograph *Boundaries of Aesthetic Consciousness* (2017). The specific direction that this sequel chooses - to elaborate silence as a new aesthetic category - is provoked, as the author points out, by the inevitable presence of silence as an aspect, a technique and a specific kind of materiality in contemporary art. This presence, according to the author, is not sufficiently studied in aesthetics and art theory in its double manifestation as objective silence and subjective refraining from speech (in Bulgarian there are two different words to designate these two types of silence and Borisova is mindful of this distinction throughout the whole study). The task of addressing this lack determines the two main trends that intertwine in the study: the major focus is on the practices of Western art of the 20th and 21st centuries, but there is also a persistent interest in the artistic practices of other epochs and cultures. This allows the superimposition of many theoretical perspectives. This explains the richness and is part of the charm of this book, which relies on a heterogeneous and colourful erudite palette, while nevertheless containing it in its interdisciplinary approach and subjecting it to a stringent philosophical methodology.

The double conditionality – in terms of reflection and experience, as precisely formulated in the preface to the book by Ivanka Stapova - predetermines the composition of the study. The very titles of the chapters seem to follow metaphorical "paths" (to put it in Borisova's term) dominated by lyrical figures: metaphors, anaphors, alliteration, rhythm, which of course relies on pauses... However, this lyrical configuration follows a philosophical logic: its starting point is Borisova's articulation of "aesthetic consciousness" in her previous book, which then moves from the general philosophical perspective to the specific aesthetic problematic and, finally, to the phenomenology of silence with its concrete manifestations in art.

If one impetus for Borisova's research is the way in which the art of the last hundred years includes silence, the other is conceived by her as a counteraction to the media noise, acceleration and information garbage of the modern age. Upholding silence as negativity is conceived as resistance and as "preserving the value of human integrity" (22). This type of assessment of silence, the way in which the Earth, the garden and other similar concepts are present in the study; the archaic tendency in the conceptual apparatus and in the language itself betrays a strong Heideggerian presence, although the

author explicitly links her argument with many other authors from Kant to Susan Sontag. This is a clearly articulated choice in the face of

"... questions about the end of art (Hegel, Danto), the end of philosophical aesthetics as a self-proclaimed autonomous field (Adorno), the end of the classical aesthetic categories (Fr. Schlegel, Adorno, Lyotard - the end of beauty, the end of the sublime along the line E. Burke-Kant; the abandonment of some ossified structure like old skin). "(27)

To quote Deleuze, when asked the question of the death of art and philosophy, "there is no death, there are assassinations." It is in the logic of this question and, so to speak, of foreclosing assassination, that Borisova turns to the axiological theory of consciousness as that explanatory mechanism which allows the preservation of the classic aesthetic categories, filling them with new relevant content. Departing from here, she follows the "paths" of a search which at all times bears the imprint of her individual style shifting as it does from one chapter to the next: from philosophical argumentation in the first part to the lyrical impressions that constitute the last pages of the book. Thus, the first chapters examine various philosophical, cultural, religious stances on silence, which are then transferred to specific analyzes of artistic works from recent years. In all cases, the innovative nature of Borisova's monograph, its relevance, the richness of ideas and the originality of the approach must be emphasized. Her publications in philosophical periodicals have the same qualities. I would like to single out the article "Is 'absolute metaphorology' an 'absolute mythology'? The bridge between Losev and Blumenberg," which presents an insightful comparative perspective on the two thinkers.

In conclusion: Silvia Borisova's publications in are significant contributions to the field of aesthetics. She has also contribute greatly to various other aspects of academic life, including teaching, translation and organization of scientific events. On the basis of this, I propose that the scientific jury award Assistant Professor Dr. Silvia Emilova Borisova - Spasova the position of "Associate Professor" in the professional field 2.3. Philosophy (Aesthetics) for the needs of the Section "Culture, Aesthetics, Values", IFS - BAS.

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Prof. PhD Miglena Nikolchina