

STATEMENT

by Assoc. Prof. PhD Marina Teofilova Teofilova
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for awarding the educational and scientific degree PhD on

Scientific field: 2. Humanities,
Professional field: 2.3. Philosophy,
The scientific specialty: 05.01.06. Aesthetics

Dissertation topic:

“THE ART OF THE XXI CENTURY BETWEEN VALUE AND PRICE”

Author:

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Research supervisor:

Prof. Dr. Habil Ivanka Stapova

The dissertation of Nikolina Deleva, PhD presented for consideration on the topic: “The art of the XXI century between value and price” is a comprehensive study with acute relevance regarding the "values" of established and unestablished categories in contemporary art, which is an extremely ambitious task. Usually, doctoral students limit themselves within topics with fixed frameworks and explore processes and phenomena with a local scope, but it is not in this case. Getting to know the research in depth, I was left with the feeling that it examines contemporary art based on two mutually exclusive perspectives: values and the market, which as a rule we consider as incompatible dimensions, that is why I find the research of Nikolina Deleva extremely timely and intriguing.

1. Data on the doctoral studies

Nicolina Deleva is a doctoral student at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, BAS - order No. RD-09-20/ 13.01.2020, with study period: 01.01.2020 - 31.12.2022.

All necessary regulatory documents are presented: a list and copies of the publications about the dissertation work - 9 copies, a reference to the scientific and scientific-applied contributions in the dissertation work, dissertation work, Author's abstract, etc.. From the presented reference, **Assistant Professor Nikolina Deleva, PhD meets the minimum national requirements** for obtaining the educational and scientific PhD degree.

So far, I do not co-author publications with Nikolina Deleva.

2. Data on the doctoral student:

I will dwell only on certain moments of the undoubtedly active biography of the doctoral student, which can outline her interdisciplinary development as a scholar closely related to the study of contemporary and experimental practices in the performative and visual arts, as well as cultural and social processes, having a direct connection with the development of the visual and performing arts. First, I would like to emphasize the fact that Nikolina Deleva has already been awarded the educational and scientific degree “Doctor” in “Theatre Science and Theatre Art” in 2012., after successfully completing studies in a doctoral program at The National Academy of Theatre and Film Arts “Kr. Sarafov” (NATFA) with a dissertation: “Bulgarian drama from the 90s of the 20th century- new aesthetic theories and dramaturgical practices”. A fact emphasizing the preparedness of the dissertation student to carry out in-depth and systematic scientific research. The fact above all, revealing an inner need to expand the research field and discover common trends and interactions in the field of art studies, as a driving force in the doctoral student's motives.

A long time ago, the boundaries in the theory and practice of performative arts were crossed in two directions, and the implementation of a hybrid study in which performativity is considered as a mode of existence of art is extremely relevant and timely. And although in the current study the doctoral student emphasizes the axiological side of the problem, in the dissertation he convincingly poses questions about the essence of art in modern times, around which gravitates the main discourse of its dematerialization, conceptualization, trans-, hyper-, inter-medialization, etc. That is why the memberships in the following professional organizations such as The Union of Bulgarian Actors (UBA), Bulgarian community of Eurodram (European network for drama in translation), Union of Scientists in Bulgaria and others are only a certificate of the candidate's interdisciplinary training and erudition. What's more, in harmony with the stated scientific interests is the expert and editorial activity of Nikolina Deleva as a member of the editorial board of the “Theatre” journal, as an expert at the National Employment Agency - Sofia, her work as a playwright at the Theater and Music Center Kardjali and in the Drama and Puppet Theater - Silistra, etc.

As a natural stage in the unfolding of her scientific path, the fact that since 2023 Nikolina Deleva, PhD is an assistant in the “Culture, Aesthetics, Values” section of the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology at the BAS, where the current procedure is carried out.

3. Data for the dissertation:

The dissertation “The art of the XXI century between value and price” was discussed of scientific jury from the “Culture, Aesthetics, Values” section of the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology at the BAS on April 25, 2024.

The text of the study has a volume of 263 pages in general. It contains 310 titles, specialized and non-specialized sources, etc., of which 55 Cyrillic and 189 Latin sources and 64 non-specialized sources (content analysis of results from profiled sites and platforms, electronic and print media, etc.).

The dissertation contains an introduction, three chapters and a conclusion. Conclusions are formulated and the contributions of the study are presented. The individual parts of the dissertation are structured harmoniously, and their logic of development gradually examines the relationship between contemporary art, values and money as a factor determining the art market, art institutions and the freedom of art creation in their oscillation.

As the doctoral student points out, the relevance of the problem stems from the understanding of the factors that form the value of art, which is not appreciated through the senses, has no aura and authenticity, is completely abstract, non-psychological and immaterial. (p. 6)

Of the axiological paradigm, the doctoral student tries to clarify the subjective and objective factors that determine the evaluation of the creative act in its dichotomy: on the one hand, creativity as a free and in this sense invaluable process in its primary independence from market mechanisms, and on the other - its valuation as a commodity in the field of the art market and contemporary art institutions. The time span (1900-2023) is an extremely dynamic and controversial century in terms of the values, extending literally to the present day, which makes the doctoral student's task of a very high degree of difficulty.

In the introduction, the object, subject and scope of the research are formulated. The reasons for choosing and the relevance of the researched topic, the goals, tasks, methods and tools of the research are clearly indicated. Moreover, the doctoral student convincingly defends the choice of a specific point of view from which all the research material will be presented, and processes and phenomena related to the creation of art will be analysed in times of total immersion in new media that completely dominate the modern world.

The doctoral student's conviction that "The connections and mutual conditioning between art, value and price have been broken" (p. 7) is the main thesis. This claim is developed in the first chapter through the discourse: "contemporary art", in the second chapter through the factors legitimizing the appreciation of art and, accordingly, in the third chapter through the art-value-price relation in the context of the morality of the market and the marketing of art in the Western societies. In the conclusion are formulated generalizations based on the researched historical processes affecting the art of the last century and related to the author's conviction that the connection between the value and the work is broken, insofar as "...the absence and destruction of the work become legitimate forms of art. The only connection of the annihilated work with reality is only the price." (p. 235)

4. Publications:

The presented of the doctoral student list on the publications related to the subject of the dissertation greatly exceed the threshold of the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria number for such a procedure.

The list is composed of nine titles, five of which have been published in prestigious peer-reviewed journals and collective volumes, and four have been included in scholarly publications, referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases of scholarly information. A fact that, added to the comprehensiveness of the study, should be distinguished and evaluated on merit and which speaks of a possible development of the study into a habilitation thesis.

5. Contributions:

The analysis that Assistant Professor Nikolina Deleva, PhD makes of the current state of the problem is respectable, tracing a large volume of theories and reflections from modernity to today, which can be attributed to the attempt to clarify the scope and content of the concept of "contemporary art" as a social phenomenon.

That is why I fully approved the main contributions of the dissertation, which reflect the theoretical and scientific results achieved:

“1. Exploring the question of the indistinguishability of art from non-art as an epistemic and axiological problem.

2. Analysis of the evaluative functions of price, discourse and symbolic capital.

3. Conceptualizing the disconnect between art, value and price”. (p. 235)

To this list of contributions, I would add the timeliness of this study. I applaud the PhD student for having the courage to address this avoided topic and bring into circulation controversial and intellectually treacherous questions that at first glance only concern art in its contemporary projections, but which concern the main question of art studies - that of art and its essence.

6. Conclusion:

Given the merits, contributions and practical applicability of the discussed dissertation: “**The art of the XXI century between value and price**”, I give my positive assessment and fully convinced recommend the respected members of the scientific jury to award Assistant professor Nikolina Dimitrova Deleva an educational and scientific degree PhD in the Scientific field: 2. Humanities, Professional field: 2.3. Philosophy, The scientific specialty: 05.01.06. Aesthetics.

14. 06. 2024.

M. Teofilova