

## REVIEW

For the Dissertation “*The Art of the XXI Century between Value and Price*”

By **Nikolina Dimitrova Deleva**,

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Department “Culture, Aesthetics, Values” at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology – BAS

For the acquisition of educational and scientific degree “Doctor”

In the professional field 2.3. Philosophy

By Associate Professor Dr. Silviya Kristeva, South-West University “Neofit Rilski”

Nikolina Deleva’s dissertation unquestionably announces an extremely relevant nowadays topic – the aesthetic legitimation and processes in the field of art from our century and systematically and comprehensively constructs the complex picture of contemporary art. It is immeasurable a clear, innovative and productive focus as a starting point to go through such heterogeneous and new phenomena of contemporary understanding and creation of art – it is an analysis and presentation of these processes from the point of view of the problem of values and for the spectrum of evaluation of the works of contemporary artists. This focus turns out to be extremely interesting and productive and gradually brings out a comprehensive presentation of the development of the art of the 21st century and its destiny to annihilate and replace almost everything found and recognized as value and aesthetic and artistic parameters, while at the same time Nikolina Deleva succeeds with erudition and systematicity to present the complex social and civilizational process behind the processes in contemporary art and to emphasize the main problems in the general outlines of a contemporary theory and philosophy of art.

All these tasks are successfully realized in the wonderfully constructed and developed structure of the dissertation work and in the purposeful resolution of the research hypothesis set at the beginning: the distance between value and price in contemporary art.

The dissertation has a volume of 235 pages of main text, to a high degree fulfilling the requirement for the volume of a dissertation work. The three chapters are unfolded gradually, with a systematic development of the problems and a thoughtful and multifaceted placement of the issues under each chapter and bringing out the thematic aspects. The dissertation is a mature and detailed developed and constructed work, the fruit of systematic work and excellent knowledge of the subject. This is guaranteed by the numerous examples from contemporary

art. It is also evident from the extensive bibliography of a total of 308 sources, of which 55 in Cyrillic and 189 in Latin are theoretical sources, and 64 non-specialized sources providing an empirical and data basis for the study.

The first chapter is wonderfully constructed and follows the various aspects and proposals of a number of researchers for terminological self-reflection and definition of the current era. N. Deleva presents the ambivalence in the definition of “contemporary” through the wealth of proposals: post-postmodern, hypermodern, post-contemporary, post-discursive, etc. – all uniting in the tendency to go beyond the *modern* to an entirely new conceptual framework. Very interesting here is the analysis of the new philosophical direction of speculative realism – a return to the reality of objects, but as a new ontological situation of complete exit and annihilation of subjectivity and the subjective point of view, to a new absolutism and a completely non-human way of representation. Here, N. Deleva shows the paradoxical situation at the basis of this new ontological projection – the presentation is through the human point of view and as directed at the person, but at the same time completely searching for new expressive and constructive possibilities. In this direction of destruction and entry into a new reality, even as a structure of different types of realities, N. Deleva wonderfully shows the destruction of the traditional understanding of the relationship author – work – recipient, I will also add material, manner and object of art itself. This is a “non-classical“ aesthetics of the entirely relative, contextual, practical-effective, which does not have a center and a single subject, there is no unified understanding of artistic, of a product of art – N. Deleva presents vivid examples of this exchange and even destruction of all structuring positions in the process of making and perceiving works of art. The tendency towards a transition from the sensory, even from the visual, to the conceptual, to the contextual is wonderfully demonstrated – art becomes a fluid and complex phenomenon, liberates the position of what is presented and perceived as an artistic work even to the point of annihilation of the work of art itself, as N. Deleva shows us more than once in a completely literal sense and as an “artistic” act. But then, as she raises the question, what should be then the purpose and the perspective of art in the present century?

This problem is discussed in the course of the second chapter with the study of the attitude towards values and the process of evaluating contemporary art. N. Deleva derives the analysis of values from the full situation of relativization of values: in the chaotic and not recognizing absolute or normative value practice of contemporary art, the evaluative criteria for bad and good art, for elitist art and kitsch, for original and copy are exchanged and mixed, even for unique and massive. Contemporary art acquires a strong cognitive function and a

pronounced epistemological value. Everything can become a subject of art: ordinary objects, the virtual image in social networks, the negative in its entire spectrum, expressed freely, as long as more and more subjects are involved, reflecting and aware of the given work of art. There are no criteria for evaluation, for perception, the only sustainable criterion is that the work is something done or invented for the first time, which no one has thought of. Contemporary art breaks with value and evaluation, as N. Deleva demonstrates how art transforms itself into a leading and only social, not aesthetic, presented phenomenon for global society.

Therefore, naturally, N. Deleva comes to the comprehensive analysis of the economic transformation of contemporary art – as one of the leading industries of contemporary civilization. The third chapter explores in its entirety the special place of contemporary art in the global world and demonstrates the gradual and almost complete replacement of the aesthetic value and evaluation of the work of art by the market value and the price, unfolding the picture of the complex and multifaceted global phenomenon that art is becoming. This draws the new situation of the legitimization of the artist through mediating agencies and media, and of what he/she imposes as his/her works and art, presenting the globalization and digitization of art and the very interesting examples with established contemporary artists, among which the analysis is particularly interesting of the works and life of the world-famous Bulgarian Christo Yavashev. Thus, N. Deleva successfully completes her study of contemporary art, demonstrating her initial hypothesis of the complete interruption of the relationship between art, value and price. My question to N. Deleva is also in this aspect: which styles and types of contemporary art will remain as classic examples and will this give rise to the projection of a new aesthetics and new purely aesthetic values?

Doctoral student Nikolina Deleva meets to a high degree the national minimum requirements for the acquisition of the doctoral educational-scientific degree with 9 scientific publications on the subject of the dissertation work.

The submitted abstract corresponds to the dissertation. I agree with the formulated contributions. I have no joint publications with the PhD student. I found no plagiarism in the dissertation.

In general, N. Deleva's dissertation meets to the highest degree the requirements for a dissertation work and for scientific research. Given the demonstrated merits and precise work on developing and arguing the thesis of the dissertation work, given the systematic and eruditely presented overall vision for the art of the 21st century and the heuristically deduced subject matter, in terms of the relationship "art – price" innovative for Bulgarian research in the field

of philosophy and theory of art, I will vote with categorical conviction “**YES**” the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree “Doctor” to Nikolina Dimitrova Deleva for her dissertation on the topic: “*The Art of the XXI Century between Value and Price*”.

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Assoc. prof. Dr. Silviya Kristeva