

## OPINION

**By Petya Alexandrova Alexandrova, Department of *Cinema, Advertising and Showbisness* at NBU, Professor and Doctor of Sciences in direction 8.4 Theatre and Film Art**

**on the scientific and creative works for participation in a Competition for the academic position of *Associate Professor* in Professional Direction 8.4 Theatre and Film Art as announced in State Gazette issue 92 of 18.11.2022, with candidate Chief Assistant Prof. Encho Naydenov Naydenov, PhD.**

### **I. Assessment of compliance with the minimum national requirements.**

As evident by the attached reference Ch. Assistant Prof. Encho Naydenov Naydenov, meets the minimum national requirements, and in some paragraphs, particularly in terms of creative accomplishments, exceeds them.

### **II. Research and (or) creative activity:**

For the purposes of the competition, Encho Naydenov has presented an impressive list of authored works with an emphasis on two solo exhibitions and the special project entitled *RED APPLE* 15 years of *the EVA* magazine. I will not dwell on his works piece by piece but shall instead try to make a few generalizations that highlight the candidate.

The first one is the realization of Encho Naydenov in various types of photography. He is hard to be connected with one type of photography. Barely has one decided to label him a portrait or commercial photograph, and here he comes out of the cliché with his solo exhibition entitled *35mm* in Vivacom Art Hall where there is no trace of human presence, or surprises us with the exhibition *The Wild nature of Sozopol* presenting non-traditional photos of flora and fauna.

Secondly, if you would allow me to play around with Encho Naydenov's musical interests and activities, as well as with the titles he chooses for his performances, what stands out are his various variations on the portrait theme: from latency to storytelling, from fashion to lifestyle, from light to architecture.

The third aspect I would like to draw attention to is Encho Naydenov's firm belief in going beyond the limits of traditional photography and realizing it in short video forms: with the advertising clips of the KRISH program, with the newly developed courses, but also with

the *Nine Marias* project (9 clips of celebrities from the field of arts with the name Maria). This more modern notion of the photographer's work responds to the hybrid dimension in contemporary art forms and the liberality of the creative act.

The fourth point worth mentioning is the candidate's ability to partner with artists, media and organizers with a markedly different style, which shows a skill to adjust to the ever changing requirements of the environment, the type of photography, professional teams and the specific work. In terms of teaching this means versatile experience to share with students and flexibility when there is a specific task. When Encho Naydenov talks about commercial photography, it sounds like a challenge to provoke imagination within the limitations of certain parameters.

Naydenov chooses "**Specific photographic expressive and technical means in stage photography**" as the topic of his research, starting from the premise that "in most arts, the realization of the creative idea is connected with physical objects, their place in space and appropriate light". Therefore, he divides his photographic activity into stages: technical provision (physical reality and financial expression), preparation for the photographs themselves, realization (the actual shooting), final media (often more than one) and analysis, which includes achieved, but also missed opportunities. He elaborates on these stages in two of his realized projects, most of the details being on the edge between ingenuity, precision and artistry. What impresses me in the 15 years of EVA magazine *Red Apple* project are some "juicy" details such as the importance of heating, ignoring "flat" lighting, gathering characters in post-production, avoiding high resolution when photographing people, shooting in low light for naturalistic effect, the comfort of LED lighting, the increased dynamic range. As for his other project, the solo exhibition *Latent Photographs*, I would like to highlight the analyzes of the types of light and possible plans, the technique of "continuing the painting light" and filling light, the importance of the model itself, or the use of natural light from a studio window. I especially like Joe McNally's comparison of light to mercury in the finale: fast moving and changing. Encho Naydenov's entire text demonstrates his individual and precise approach in each commissioned portrait in search of the most adequate solution for the situation and object of shooting.

### **III. Other activities of the candidate.**

#### ***Educational and teaching activities:***

Ch. Assistant Professor Encho Naydenov, PhD has completed and exceeded the required number of classes taught. The average student satisfaction rating is quite high, i.e. an excellent 4.72. His profile in the Moodle platform of NBU contains uploaded presentations on the courses with links, tests, and additional materials. Encho Naydenov's activities are diverse, but always aimed at including young people and colleagues alike (the retrospective exhibitions on the occasion of 20 years of the Photography Programme or 30 years of NBU). Regardless of whether it is about own or team projects, internal or external to NBU, the candidate never fails to support students as current and future professionals in the field of photography and videography, facilitating contacts in the field or organizing practical exercises for them.

*Administrative and public activity.*

Since his appointment, Encho Naydenov has been a program consultant, a member of the departmental council, the program council. He is currently the head of the "Cinema, Advertising and Show business department. As the reference shows, he has repeatedly been a member of examination boards and supervisor of Bachelor's and Master's theses.

My only recommendation is for the candidate to focus on written scientific texts and, accordingly, citations. Judging by his analysis of specific photographic expressive and technical means in stage photography, he would easily be able to rise to this challenge.

My personal and work impressions of the candidate are complex, not only in his capacity as a photographer and teacher, but also as a fascinating interlocutor when it comes to films and music. He has a wealth of erudition, a critical thinking mind and a constant drive to innovation and development. I believe that the activities listed in the attestation papers declare him as a well-rounded personality both in terms of his artistic performance and from a socio-pedagogic point of view. I am looking forward to his book on studio technique and studio work.

What has been said so far gives me every reason to conclude that **Chief Assistant Professor Encho Naydenov, PhD has the necessary qualities to be awarded the academic position of Associate Professor to which I vote "YES"**.

**Sofia, 16.02.2023**

**Sincerely:**

**Prof. Petya Alexandrova, DSc**