

OPINION

of Professor PhD Svetla Yordanova Hristova

New Bulgarian University

Professional direction 8.4. Theatrical and Film Art

for participation in a competition announced by New Bulgarian University in the State Gazette (Darzhaven Vestnik) edition 38/24.04.2020 for holding the academic post of Professor in Professional Direction 8.4. Theatrical and Film Art with a sole candidate Associate Professor, PhD Petia Alexandrova Alexandrova

I. Evaluation in conformity with the minimal national requirements and the requirements of New Bulgarian University

From the reference made it is seen that Assoc.Prof. PhD Petia Alexandrova fully meets the minimum national requirements as well as the requirements of New Bulgarian University for holding a post of professor in professional direction 8.4. Theatrical and Film Art, even surpassing the necessary number of points in the groups of criteria required by law.

2 Research / creative work and results

The research work of Assoc.Prof. PhD Petia Alexandrova, offered to our attention in this competition, is a natural continuation of her contribution as a tireless journalistic critic and research worker. She is among the distinguished Bulgarian film critics not only in the journalistic critique but also in the field of extensive research on topical questions of film industry in Bulgaria. The work with which she applies for Professor is entitled *Advantages and challenges of short forms. Models and practices in Bulgarian short films*. The structure of her text is trying to encompass accurately film industry – film distribution – showing – media coverage – aesthetic results of the Bulgarian shorts of 30 to 60 minutes: novellas, omnibuses, screen versions, experiments. The author herself defines her work as “an original work in progress” process while examining chronologically the period from 1989 to the beginning of 2019, where the book finishes. The benefit of such research strategy, which reflects all specific industrial, media and aesthetic

aspects of short film cinema in Bulgaria is undeniable. This strategy and methodology also opens up an opportunity for more films to be added in time. The text might be also characterized as interdisciplinary, making use of her knowledge of the history of the world and Bulgarian cinema, culture patterns, sociology, media knowledge, psychology of perception, etc. Her knowledge of the cinema history is shown in an unostentatious way, as a means to develop the story about the advent and problems of the shorts in the dawn of the cinema, but also to outline categorically the main problems of the cinema as technology, business and art up to the present day. It is particularly valuable that the author not only aesthetically appreciates the qualities of the shorts but also presents them as socially responsible media, which create moods, attitudes and role models. Her talent for discovering trends is obvious. Petia Alexandrova is interested in shorts not so much as a type of cinema (feature, animated cartoon, documentary, popular science) but as an alternative of the mainstream in its industrial, social, aesthetic and communicative aspect. As a responsible professional she reaches definitions while making a series of distinctions in the different kinds of shorts such as independent, alternative, experimental, avantgarde, underground, etc., and analyzes in detail the financial logic and aesthetic strategy of the films of these classifications. She manages to set each one of the above mentioned types of shorts in contemporary world cinema context, in this way making clear the perspective of these works. I consider a special quality of her work the fact that she pays attention not only to the interpretation and ratings of the professional and research workers and cinema critics of shorts but also to institutions of strong influence in popularization and development of world cinema, namely The American Film Academy and American Film Institute, British Academy of Film and Television Art (BAFTA), the Berlinale Film Festival, the festivals in Cannes and in Sundance. One of the contributions of her work is also the documentation of all financial

sources for film making and of all the opportunities for short films' distribution in Bulgaria at the moment, as well as the specific enumeration of the titles of these films together with their authors and the year of production. This fact itself is remarkable and significant because it actually compensates the lack of electronic catalogue of the films available in Bulgarian National Film Library, the institution responsible for storing the visual memory of Bulgarian cinema. Arranging analytically and in detail the advantages and challenges in the strategies of all existing Bulgarian institutions, platforms, specific websites, connected with the production, distribution and release of shorts, Associate Professor Petia Alexandrova reaches the conclusion that the more unnoticeable the Bulgarian feature films are on the big cinema screens in the multiplexes, the more so are the festivals, websites and platforms where shorts are screened. She leaps to the sad conclusion that although good shorts aren't absent, they – like the feature films – cannot claim to be of originality in the world of cinema. I will repeat once again that the presented monograph possesses qualities that form a basis for a future research and upgradation in the subject matter and problems of the Bulgarian short films. For each future research of Bulgarian shorts this work of Assoc.Prof. PhD Petia Alexandrova is a must. Quotations from her works can be often found in the Bulgarian cinema literature (in monographs and collective volumes with academic reviews), which reiterate her professional authority and scientific research significance in that field.

3. Educational and teaching activity

Assoc. Prof. PhD Petia Alexandrova is a respected and esteemed lecturer of New Bulgarian University where she has been teaching for the last 8 years. The students assess the quality of her courses for the last 12 terms at 4.47 out of maximum 5.00. She succeeds in attracting her students' attention by ensuring teaching materials for all her courses from *MoodleNBU* platform. Presentations with detailed contents, links,

videos, additional resources in conformity with the requirements of the New Bulgarian University are available for each course. For the aims of teaching the Assoc. Prof. PhD Petia Alexandrova's books are also available in the library and in the Book Centre of the New Bulgarian University. The reference shows that all her 15 graduate students have defended their theses successfully. She is an active participant in the *Students' Practices* project in all its phases, having been an academic tutor of 30 students. She contributed to the second signing of the contracts between New Bulgarian University and Bulgarian Telegraphic Agency, Bulgarian National Radio and Bulgarian National Television. She provided for practice and training of students during a few festivals, mostly at Sofia Film Fest. As one of the select committee for the International Festival for Students' Films *Early Bird* (2008 – 2015) she included films, made by students of NBU and did the same for the festival *Golden Rose* (2015, 2016, 2017, 2018), regularly including films made by students from the NBU in the shorts section.

4. Administrative and Social Activity

Assoc.Prof.PhD Petia Alexandrova exercises her professional expertise in the academic administrative posts she holds as Head of the Programme Council (2015 – 2017) in *Media and Communication* department, as a participant in the Programme Council (2017 -) of the *Media and Communication* department, as a member of the faculty council of the Faculty of Basic Education (2015 -), as a member of the Academic Council of NBU (2017 -) as a participant in the Commission of Quality at the Board (2017 -).

5. Personal impressions of the candidate (if there are any)

It is my pleasure to have known Petia Alexandrova for a very long time as a competent, exceptionally hard-working and industrious professional, remarkable for her ethics as a colleague.

6. Opinions, recommendations and comments about the candidate's activity

On the basis of the aforementioned qualifications, as well as documents and

,papers presented, I have no reservations in giving the candidacy of Assoc. Prof.
Ph D Petia Alexandrova Alexandova my highest recommendations for holding the
academic post of Professor in Professional Direction 8.4. Theatrical and Film Art.

30.07.2020

(Prof.PhD Svetla Hristova)