

REVIEW

by Prof. Boris Kirilov Serginov, PhD

on the competition for awarding the academic position of “Associate Professor” in the professional field 8. “Arts”, 8.2 "Fine arts", scientific field 05.08.04, Department of Design, NBU

of Assistant Professor Ivo Popov, PhD

Asst. Prof. Ivo Popov, PhD was born in 1964, Sofia. In 1991, he completes his master's degree in “Artistic Spatial Design” at the National Academy of Arts under Prof. Georgi Petrov, Prof. Lachezar Lozanov and Prof. Dimitar Tasev. Asst. Prof. Ivo Popov, PhD works in the field of design, spatial design, interior design and graphic design and has participated in exhibitions since the beginning of his studies. He receives numerous awards, completes dozens of projects, and in 2012 he receives an award for stand design. His composition is honored as the most modern and aesthetically pleasing complex object. The awards ceremony takes place at the exhibition “MachTech & METAL 2012” in “Inter Expo Center”, Sofia. Between 2010 and 2020, he takes part in numerous joint student and teacher exhibitions in the capital's “Art Alley” gallery; he also participates in the common exhibitions of the editions of the “Biennale of Bulgarian Design” where his participation is admired and noted in the design periodicals of that period. Asst. Prof. Ivo Popov, PhD is also the author of a project for a mobile pavilion for public appearances of the President of Bulgaria. In 2011, his works participate in the exhibitions of the “Advertising Design” section in the exhibition spaces of the SBH, Sofia, 6 Shipka Street. In the period after the defense of his doctoral theses at NBU, PhD Program “Design”, with a scientific supervisor Prof. Boris Serginov, PhD, his research interests are directed more deeply into the field of techno culture and experiments with form and space in visual arts and design, which builds upon his scientific and creative pursuits, and definitely shape his author's approach.

At the New Bulgarian University, he creates a specialty close to the ideas embedded in the concept of spatial design and its use in the cultural industries. On the one hand, we could call Asst. Prof. Ivo Popov, PhD an alumnus of this concept and environment, but on the other, a successor. As we have already

noted, there he defends his dissertation and the topic of his doctoral theses in the PhD program "Design", but he also teaches in the programs of the Department of Design at the New Bulgarian University. From that moment on, the main direction in his work as a creator is changed and inextricably linked with his practice as a teacher. He teaches disciplines related to the practice and theory of visual arts, design, spatial design, interior design, exhibition design, the graphic design of books and logos, as well as overall graphic brand design. He is part of the team of the creative association "Save Coral" and works in similar associations together with other like-minded partners, with whom they actively change the cultural layer in terms of art and spatial design, graphic design and interior design. Asst. Prof. Ivo Popov, PhD also participates in numerous initiatives of the New Bulgarian University, in exhibitions, festivals and expositions outside the country. He is a participant and a project manager of "Exposition of Contemporary Art and Science in Barcelona" - a project held in 2019 with a great success. The works and projects that he presents are the result of many years of research and practical work of an indisputable author, such as Asst. Prof. Ivo Popov, PhD. They have stepped on a wide platform of artistic forms and means of expression characteristic of him, a large set of knowledge and skills of the designer Ivo Popov and his maturity as a creator.

In his dissertation and the accompanying documentation, he clearly presents and outlines his pursuits as an author. The context in which his works are created is excellently described by Assoc. Prof. Venelin Shurelov, PhD in the following way: "In the context of the Bulgarian artistic space, it seems to me that we have inherited a fairy-tale and idealistic model of creation, based on some undefined mystical inspiration and other various ideological speculations with a creative meaning. Modernity requires an approach based on the analytical and critical nature of the researcher. Therefore, I set out with the intention of creating an informal, pseudo-theatrical structure (SubHuman Theatre), based on the combination of social reflection and empathy. The historically inherited polarizations of spirit versus matter, sympathy versus judgment, feeling versus reason, East versus West, I prefer to see systems where these distinctions are overcome in favor of synthesis." All this fully applies to Asst. Prof. Ivo Popov, PhD as an author. The means, which Asst. Prof. Ivo Popov, PhD uses to express himself, are quite wide-ranging both in external and internal signs, and

interdisciplinary both in terms of means and in the way of working with these means. Prof. Rumen Raichev perfectly describes a similar practice and creative situation on the occasion of Asst. Prof. Troanski's dissertation. He says: "His work contains the optimistic trends for a large-scale development, and staying on this subject he sets the condition to mark the significance and role of technology in development of the form. For this purpose, Troanski sets the following conditions that will form the structure of his entire work. These are a historical overview of the significance and will of technology and the author's share in the process of form-making. Tracing styles and trends in art arising from development. Factors influencing form in fine ceramics for function and artwork depending on the relationships between these factors for a more in-depth analysis of form formation. Dependencies between function and artistic work through factors such as author and technology". Although Asst. Prof. Ivo Popov, PhD works in a different branch of design, these dependencies between function and artwork, through the factors - author and technology, are also clearly expressed in his work. His active work as a graphic designer complements the plastic-visual basis with narrative and performative elements, deepens his attitude to spatial arrangement and form, to spatial design and graphic design. It combines approaches applicable to alternative spaces and site-specific. The experience in design and production process allows him to easily work in a team and fully cooperate with like-minded partners, to form effective teams according to the specifics of the given project. The experience and contacts that Asst. Prof. Ivo Popov, PhD has built up are to the advantage of the educational process at the New Bulgarian University in the course of implementation of student projects.

In conclusion, I would like to say that I highly appreciate the creative work of Asst. Prof. Ivo Popov, PhD. I value the contribution of the author as a creator towards overcoming certain limitations existing in the Bulgarian artistic environment and practice. I believe that the candidacy is worthy and excellently supported by creativity and scientific work. According to our basic experience, it is impossible for a university lecturer to habilitate at the New Bulgarian University, if he does not fully meet the three main aspects of university and academic work: creativity or scientific work, teaching practice and administrative work. Last but not least, I would like to note that Asst. Prof. Ivo Popov, PhD is the head of the Department of Design in some very difficult times through which he successfully

leads the department. It is for this reason that I can confidently recommend to the Honorable Members of the Scientific Jury to award Asst. Prof. Ivo Popov, PhD the academic position of “Associate Professor”.

And I would like to add that beyond having creative and conceptual experience, Asst. Prof. Ivo Popov, PhD has been involved with the classes and programs of the Interior Design Program as a program director, for years. Apart from the concern for the programs and courses, I would like to emphasize that the fact that he also implements teaching interdisciplinary projects as a creative gesture with a huge contribution, should carry a great weight with the Honorable Jury; because with Asst. Prof. Popov, PhD this program breathes more easily and exists more easily, and the current competition has been announced precisely for the needs of this same program and department, namely the Interior Design Program, Department of Design. And last but not least, I would like to emphasize that in the works presented for the habilitation, it is again a matter of interdisciplinary objects and projects related to the design of space, interior and graphic solutions, and in this way the works and the presented documents unquestionably correspond to the profile of the current competition announced by NBU. This is precisely why I give my positive assessment for the contribution nature of his works and dissertation, as well as the presented documents of Asst. Prof. Ivo Popov, PhD, their social significance and their very clear connection with the announced profile of the competition for “Associate Professor”.

I strongly recommend to the Honorable Members of the Scientific Jury to award Asst. Prof. Ivo Popov, PhD the academic position of “Associate Professor” in the Professional Field 8. “Arts”, 8.2 “Fine Arts”, Scientific Field 05.08.04 for the needs of the Department of Design at New Bulgarian University, Sofia.

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Sincerely:

Prof. B. Serginov, PhD

