

## **REPORT**

By Prof. Dr. Bissera Vasileva Valeva, SU „St. Kliment Ohridski“,  
Higher education field 8. Arts 8.2. Fine Arts,  
On the artistic creative production  
For participation in a contest for filling the academic post of professor,  
Professional direction 8. Arts  
8.2. Fine Arts,  
Announced in the State Gazette No. 8 dated 28.01.2022  
Applicant Assoc. Prof. Dr. Elena Georgieva Todorova

### **I. Compliance estimation with the minimal national requirements and the requirements of the New Bulgarian University:**

The materials submitted for the habilitation of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Elena Georgieva Todorova completely cover the minimal national requirements, and comply with and cover the requirements of the NBU for habilitation for filling the academic post of „professor“. Assoc. Prof. Elena Georgieva Todorova has the necessary number of points on all groups of indices in the table of minimal requirements to the scientific, teaching and/or the artistic and creative activities of applicants for filling an academic post in professional direction 8. Arts, 8.2. Fine art, in compliance with the ASDLRB and the requirements of the NBU.

Beside her remarkable achievements in the field of visual arts, she is also the author of the mandatory and necessary theoretical works, researches and texts in a specific professional field – the art of jewelry. Her doctor work “Symbol and functionality in the coin design”, defended in 2018, under the scientific guidance of Prof. Dr. Emilia Panayotova, founded on various theoretic aspects of her creative work, is the basis of her habilitation thesis.

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

*1. Assessment of the monography, creative exhibitions or other publications, conforming in size and thoroughness to a monography, comprising estimations of author's scientific and scientific-applicable contributions:*

In this contest Assoc. Prof. Dr. Elena Todorova, for the aims of habilitation, has presented a creative collection of jubilee coins, as well as coins in series. Her work, also subject of an argumentative theoretical research of two recourses – an artistic and a social- cultural one, unavoidable in a product of jewelry art, such as coin design. The purposeful research and creation

activity of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Elena Todorova is based not only on artistic intuitivism and technical routine but is also supported on a broad survey of a multitude of textual and visual sources. For the author the realization of a coin or a series of coins (XXVIII Summer Olympic Games, Athens (Greece), 2004, Pierre de Coubertin; *Gymnastics; Tennis on court; Biking; Bow shooting; Swimming; Running; Weight lifting; Fencing; etc.*) has to do with a detailed analysis of concrete symbolism in the context of its connection to other symbolic systems to do with the visual problem and their functional importance.

The coins she designed keep not only the authenticity of the image (Stoyanka Mutafova, Boris Christov, Nikolai Gyaurov, etc.), but also give an opportunity to the observer – customer for a meaningful and emotional interpretation. In the composition of the memorial coin „100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Stoyanka Mutafova“ Elena Todorova has chosen to create a generalized portrait of her thus rendering it possible to generalize also the scope of interpretation features of the actress concentrated in the coin’s small size. The author argues that in order to achieve the effect „the image is made in a classic relief on a mat surface, contrasting to the background gloss“, and on both sides of the coin she uses the OPAL font, clean and without serifs. It was chosen for the obligatory inscriptions; thus they become unintrusive and one focuses on the image.

The choice for the coin dedicated to the theme „Boris Christov“ from the „Famous Bulgarian Voices“ series is also very interesting. The author, unlike Stoyanka Mutafova’s portrait, has chosen to present the great Bulgarian opera singer in one of his most memorable roles. It is his „crown“ role of Boris Godunov. It is a logical choice, because after Chaliapin „only Boris Christov’s performance enjoys world recognition and has a long scenic life“. Unlike the composition of Mutafova’s coin where the accent is on the portrait, and the additional elements are auxiliary and toned down, here, on the contrary, the frame around the head is an important element for the wholeness of the composition. The additional mixing of materials as colors and treatment achieves the effect of a picture created in the style of I.Repin. The portrait relief has a mat surface however projected on a clean background of a shiny glossy surface. It strengthens the contrast between the figure, the background and the surrounding dark edge, thus underlining the afore-mentioned picture effect focusing the attention to the scenic portrait which is the effect the author has attained to.

The artistic visual approach in the work of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Elena Todorova gives meaning to the conventions in the complex and delicate realization of jewelry art by leaning on a mixture of classic and untraditional means. Thus she achieves originality of the artistic language and a tangible author’s presence. Creating concentrated compositions of limited coin series is a logical ground for the change of their functions and turns them into unique sculptural reliefs whereas their face value does not spoil their artistic impact. These jewelry products – coins have not only a symbolic but also semiotic meaning, generated by their function in a changed social –

psychological ambiance. Elena Todorova duels on this problem in her theoretical researches and formulations in the part where she refers to Ch. Peers and R. Craypot..

Her consistent creative interest is concentrated on the originality and the personal designer's solutions using the aggregation of composing and technological parameters vital for the creation of the jewel-like plastics. In her theoretical texts Assoc. Prof. Dr. Elena Todorova clarifies in detail the transformations needed for a specific image, as they require idea compactness in their visual interpretation. For the author, a coin designer's creative process is set against basic approaches, aimed at an artist's untraditional creative thinking – a jeweler against the inevitable change of the symbolic of the depicted story. Her compositions are a wonderful example of the application of new technologies in coin design and achievement of recognition in the artistic repetition of coin series. For Elena Todorova the ratio between technological and author's processes is fundamental for the originality of interpretation in coin design, an in general – of each work of art at all. She draws similar conclusions in all her theoretical texts – both in detailed researches and in brief articles. For her the creative and theoretical focus on the art of jewelry plastics combines artistic practice and inter-active knowledge. The author regards these ideas of hers both as a theoretical formulation and as specific realization.

Elena Todorova's collection presented for the habilitation impresses by her deep professional interest towards the connection between symbolism and realization in coin design - the thing she supports with arguments, in her author's detailed summary and in her further analyses and generalizations on the theme.

In some of them, as well as in the finished products, the author focuses on technological processes and their inseparable connection to the creative process of coin designing; she strives for finding a sufficient quantity of unusual artistic /creative/ recourses tied up with the practical experiments for searching a different visuality. In the analysis of her compositions Elena Todorova is capable of taking advantage and interpreting to the maximum the opportunity of creative mastering of the limited coin space, also with the help of modern technologies. She analyses in detail the individual image elements (of the coin), as well as their combination in an optimal harmonic scheme.

In the explanatory text to the collection the author summarizes the psychological impact of jubilee coins from the viewpoint of individual psychology and from a social – psychological viewpoint. A similar approach can be applied not only to the composition and realization specifics of jewelry art. It can also be applied to other objects of miniature art. In her detailed summary Assoc. Prof. Dr. Elena Todorova notes „The creation of design, especially the creation of coin design, requires that the author not only knows the technical means but also the methodological foundation for making it. The realization of a valuable piece of work requires also creative search of new visual means, finding new objects, „breaking“ the existing „canons“ in design“ (p. 57).

2. *Estimation of contributions in the other publications submitted (creative works and exhibitions), made after filling the academic post of „associate professor“ (for professor applicants):*

Beside the coins presented in the habilitation collection, following realizations of the author in 2019 are worth mentioning: golden coin design "Albrecht Durer", the first of 24 golden coins "Deutsche Persoenlichkeiten". The series is dedicated to the most famous German culture workers since the Renaissance, Bulmint One; Design of a silver medal "Hissar Kapia", a part of a memorial emission of silver medals titled "#Together", dedicated to Plovdiv – European Capital of Culture 2019, Bulmint One; Silver medal design "Kapana", a part of a memorial emission of silver medals titled "#Together", dedicated to Plovdiv – European Capital of Culture 2019, Bulmint One; Design of a honorable necklace "Doctor Honoris Causa", "G.S.Rakovski" Military Academy; Design of a festive necklace "Honorable Professor", "G.S.Rakovski" Military Academy; Design of a special distinction - "Annual award for the students of the American University in Bulgaria", established by Her Highness Maria-Luisa, American University in Bulgaria – Sofia; Design of ceremonial necklaces for the rector, deans, Doctor Honoris Causa of the NBU; Design of „Plaquette of Honor of the Rector of NBU“; Design of a „Plaquette of Honor of the NBU“, etc.

Beside her work in jewelry art as a coin designer, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Elena Todorova is also the author of voluminous plastics - the „Best Actor“ Statuette for the „International |Festival of Travelling Theaters“- town of Slivnitza, editions 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, also the statuette for „The entire creative work“ International |Festival of Travelling Theaters“- town of Slivnitza, editions 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019; design for a memorial medal for „International |Festival of Travelling Theaters“- town of Slivnitza, editions 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019; design of an “Ivan Vazov” literary award, established by the Slivnitza Community, etc.

Most impressive is her individual exhibition „JEWELRY“ from 2018 in the Art Alley Gallery, Sofia, part of the “Museum night 2018” program. The exposition shows the author’s striving to unusual, post-constructivist plastic solutions, the use of, at first glance, incongruous materials, and the transformation of jewels into conceptual artefacts. The separated spaces of the gallery helped outline various visual accents, additionally increasing the total artistic impact. Elena Todorova’s creative provocations united the exhibition and re-formed the exposition area into a wholesome installation.

3. *Citations by other authors:*

Based on her theoretical works, Assoc. Prof. Elena Todorova has a sufficient number of citations, as seen by the reference presented by her for NACID. I attach five cites: 1. *Todorova, Elena (2017). "Slow and fast fashion in accessories" "Textile and clothing" Magazine STU on TOK, ISSN: 1310-912X; No. 3, p. 74. – 15 Cited by: Vasileva Yana, (2020) „The role of lino-engravings in the design of contemporary fashion illustration“, Eastern Academic Journal ISSN:*

2367–738, Issue 4, pp. 31 - 35, December, 2020, Indexed in: Google Scholar, CEEOL, CiteFactor, Open Academic, Journals Index, ResearchBib; 2. Todorova Elena, (2020), *Jewells as signs and symbols. BULGED*, ISBN 978-619-188-362-2, p. 144-155, **Cited by:** Panayotova Emilia, (2020), „Design – how to make it out“, *Eastern Academic Journal* ISSN: 2367–738, Issue 4, pp. 42 - 50, December, 2020, Indexed as: Google Scholar, CEEOL, CiteFactor, Open Academic, Journals Index, ResearchBib; 3. Todorova Elena (2019). *Social symbolism of jewels. "Textile and clothing" On-line magazine STU on TOK*, ISSN 2535-0447(tok-bg.org), No. 8, p. 21. **Cited by:** Panayotova Emilia, (2020), „Social function of fashion“, *Eastern Academic Journal* ISSN: 2367–738, Issue 4, pp. 51 - 59, December, 2020, *Индексира се в:* Google Scholar, CEEOL, CiteFactor, Open Academic, Journals Index, ResearchBib; 4. Todorova E. *Jewels as signs and symbols. Bulged 2020*, ISBN 978-619-188-362-2 p.64-65, **Cited by:** Vasileva Yana, (2020), „Application of stencil printing in the design of ladies' accessories at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century“, *Eastern Academic Journal* ISSN: 2367–738, Issue 4, pp. 36 - 41, December, 2020, Indexed in: Google Scholar, CEEOL, Cite Factor, Open Academic, Journals Index, Research Bib; 5. Todorova E..(2017) *Fast and slow fashion in accessories. Textile and Clothing. STU on TOK*, ISSN 2535-0447(tok-bg.org), No.3, p.74-77 **Cited by:** Vasileva Yana, „Fashion illustration in the period of Belle Epoque“, *Eastern Academic Journal* ISSN: 2367–738, Issue 1, pp. 127 - 134, April, 2021; etc.)

#### 4. *Estimation of participation in scientific and creative projects and application in practice of the results obtained:*

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Elena Todorova has taken part in a multitude of academic and creative projects at home and abroad, they are presented in the reference for NACID. Impressive is her participation in the international creative project „Student participation in the international fashion exposition Textailor EXPO2018“, November 8-11, 2018, financed by CFSD of the NBU (project manager Dr. Stefania Temelkova), and in PRACTICAL SEMINAR “FASHION”, 2014, Working seminar of Mrs. Gunda Bornkessel, fashion designer, expert of “Senior Experten Service” – Foundation of the German Industry for International Collaboration, funded by CFSD of the NBU, (project manager Tatyana Pencheva- Georgieva), in the project: „Design Days in May 2016“, funded by CFSD of NBU (project manager Prof. Dr. Boris Serginov). She has been the project manager of an international project titled „Participation of students from the BP “Fashion” and MP „Fashion and business strategies“ in the international fashion event „Fashion fiesta 2017“, Albena Resort (with the financial support of CFSD of the NBU), as well as the project titled „Travelling seminar „WHO'S NEXT 2017 – Paris“, in 2017, (with external financing).

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Elena Todorova participated also in the three stages of the project: Multi-disciplinary art symposium "DESIGN AS MULTI-DISCIPLINARY COMMUNICATION AND CULTURE" 2019, with the participation of SWU „Neofit Rilski“, Blagoevgrad, SWU students and Prof. Dr. Maria Blajeva; NMA "Pancho Vladigerov", Assoc. Prof. Dr. Maria Ilieva; SU „Kliment Ohridski“, SU students and Prof. Dr. Laura Dimitrova – Visual Arts Department, Faculty of sciences on education and arts; TK „Lyuben Grois“, students of „Lyuben Grois“ and Prof. Dr. Maria Blajeva; funding by the „Education programs“ at the BF and FBO of NBU.

### **III. Education and lecturing activities :**

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Elena Todorova has the required lecturing hours. She has full lecturing load in BP Fashion and in BP „Web design and graphic advertising“. She teaches both in the Moodle platform and in attended courses on „Designer methods of drawing“, and in „Experimental drawings“. The “Experimental drawings” course has been created and organized by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Elena Todorova. She was the scientific supervisor of three successful doctor candidates (Yana Dvoretzka, Kristina Savova, Dinka Yakimova). At present she has two doctor candidates, one of them from Kosovo, University of Pristina. She has evident organization skills attained by the management of projects and the organization of multiple student exhibitions, fashion shows and seminars.

#### **IV. Administrative and social activities:**

At present Assoc. Prof. Dr. Elena Todorova is a member of the Faculty counsel at the BF since 2018. She is also member of the Program Counsel at the Design Department from 2014 to-date. Between 2009 and 2011 she was member of the NBU Academic Counsel; between 2009 and 2012 she was member of the Faculty counsel at the BF.

#### **V. Personal impressions from the applicant (if any):**

I have known Elena Todorova for a long time, and her comradeship and professionalism have always impressed me. Regardless of her academic devotion and load, she is able to realize a substantial quantity of creative work. As a result of her artistic activity I cannot help mentioning her multiple awards / after 2006/. They are:

First prize for a jubilee coin on the topic: „Medieval Bulgarian rulers. Tsar Ivan Assen II“, 2018; First prize for a jubilee coin: „140 Years since Bulgaria’s Liberation“, 2018; First price for a jubilee coin on the topic: „Medieval Bulgarian rulers – Khan Tervel“, 2017; First prize at a BNB national competition for a silver memorable coin on topic: „St. Kliment Ohridski“, 2016; First prize at a BNB national competition for a silver memorable coin on the topic: „140 Years since the April Uprising“, 2016; First award for a jubilee coin on the topic: „250 Years since the Writing of the Istorija Slavnoblgarska“, 2012; First award for a jubilee coin on the topic „Bulgarian churches and monasteries – Zograf Monastery“, 2011; First award for a jubilee coin on the topic: „Medieval Bulgarian Rulers – Kham Krum“, emission 2011; First award for a jubilee coin on the topic: „Traditional Bulgarian crafts – pottery“, emission 2009; First award for a jubilee coin on the topic: „130 years since Bulgaria’s liberation“, 2008; First award for a jubilee coin on the topic: „Famous Bulgarian Voices – Boris Christov“, 2008; First award for a jubilee coin on the topic: „Famous Bulgarian Voices – Nikolai Gyaurov“, 2007; as well as the NBU Rector’s prize, 2009, for high creative achievements.

**Conclusion:**

As a conclusion, based on my general positive assessment of the creative production presented so far, I propose to the well-respected members of the scientific jury to elect for the academic post of professor as per 8.2. Fine arts, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Elena Todorova, and to address this proposition – election to the Academic Counsel of the NBU.

Signed: Prof. Dr. Bissera Valeva

Дата:

06.06.2022г