

## OPINION

ON THE COMPETITION FOR ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR AT NBU

by Prof. Dr. Martin Venets Dimitrov, Department of Audiovisual Production

Faculty of Screen Arts, NATFA "Kr. Sarafov", Professor in professional

direction 8.4. Theater and film art, scientific specialty Cinema studies,

cinematography and television (film and television broadcasting)

on the artistic-creative and teaching activities of Encho

Naydenov Naydenov, PhD, candidate in the competition for the academic position

of Associate Professor in professional direction 8.4. Theater and film art

(photography), as announced in SG no. 92/18.11.2022

Ch. Assist.Prof. Encho Naydenov has a doctorate in professional field 8.4. Theatre and Film Arts with diploma No/date: 184 / 02.10.2013. The subject of his doctoral thesis is "The influence of digital photographic technologies on professional lighting"; it has been defended at the Cinema, Advertising and Show Business Department. He has been teaching in the programmes of Photography, Advertising and Graphic design since 2000. He is currently a full-time teacher at the School of Undergraduate studies to NBU. Since 2001 to date he is a Chief Assist. Prof at the School of Undergraduate studies to NBU teacher at NBU with full-time teaching commitments. Dr. Encho Naydenov has submitted documents for the announced competition, and he is the only candidate. The scientific jury for the competition is determined by order of the Rector of the NBU No. 3-PK-78/22.12.2022

Categorically, Dr. Naydenov has an educational background teaching experience and a doctoral degree in the relevant professional field, thereby he meets the requirements of the competition and this makes him a suitable candidate for the announced competition.

Regarding the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (art. 27, par. 5), the Conditions and Procedure for occupying the academic position Associate Professor for academic specialties in the Arts artistic creative works can count for research work. The presented set of materials and documents supporting the application for

participation in the competition are in accordance with these requirements, as well as with the Ordinance on the Development of the Academic Staff at NBU (Art. 58, Para. 1)

### **I. Assessment of compliance with minimum national requirements and the requirements of New Bulgarian University**

The attached report testifies that Dr. Encho Naydenov does not only meet the minimum national requirements and the requirements of NBU but also exceeds significantly the required points in sections B, D, D, E, G, I. The total score he achieves categorically meets and exceeds the requirements for holding the position of Associate Professor.

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

For the purposes of the competition, Dr. Naydenov presents artistic and creative material in the form of an extended creative summary: "Specific photographic expression and technical means of staging photography". It is divided into three main parts: "Red Apple Project" on the occasion of 15 years of the EVA magazine, "Photographic expressive and technical means" and solo exhibition *Latent Portraits*, supported by a rich illustrative author material. Encho Naydenov examines the creation of various projects: commissioned, technical or authored ones as an artistic assemblage of a theme, creative idea, technical support and realization. Final show and concluding introspection. All three parts were created after obtaining the Ph.D.

The valuable thing in Encho Naydenov's reasoning is that he performs a dissection of his professional approach to the given topic. In my opinion, it is very rare for an author to reveal the exact conceptual and technical manner in which he has created a certain product. He reveals the tasks set, the overcoming of the inevitable ups and downs in the implementation of the "Red Apple" project, as well as how the photographer handles them. "EVA" is a lifestyle magazine, in other words, it shows the way man chooses to live his life. It is a great temptation for any author to be "different", to stun viewers, his clients, with his many "creative techniques", with the ability to work impressively with light or angle.

In keeping with the concept of "EVA", as well as the choice of shooting location, Naydenov creates a unified visual style when shooting celebrities. Thus he creates a "lifestyle" of photography image for the media in question. The only adequate creative solution for the case is the very vision we are witnessing. Everything is subordinated to a

single and organic lighting style, i.e. the stylistics of the place, of the environment, of the mood, not so much of the individual character. Naydenov solves the location problems by resorting to an original approach for the uncompromising vision he achieves. If we compare what he does with, say, some of Benetton's advertising photographs, huge budgets and a controlled studio environment in which they create similar but rougher images, the aesthetics of our photographer stands out.

The second part "Photographic Expression and Technical Means" does not consider the technique as a set of engineering solutions nor does it make comparisons between decisions. What we have here are considerations about how to create an image through the technical provision with lighting and photographic equipment. Why is it necessary, from a purely creative point of view, for the photographer to have a choice of different devices? Encho Naydenov is one of the few Bulgarian photographers whom I know who does not bother to work with lighting devices with constant light, used in TV and cinema productions. Here again Naydenov reveals behind-the-scenes information, how he created each frame, as well as reasons and decisions when, how and whether to use a natural light source or pulse lighting. Furthermore he comments on the attitude towards the model and how to create comfort for the model when working with these light fixtures. The portrait photos complementing and illustrating the author's thought are wonderful. Or as Naydenov says, "Each one of the described techniques, as well as the shooting technique itself, are a prerequisite for getting good photography, creating content filled with the author's desired emotion'.

The third meaningful part of the summary is, perhaps, the most personal (so far) project by Encho Naydenov, i.e. Latent Portraits. Not only is the lighting method analyzed, with different lighting schemes and characters, but he also talks about the connection - face - light - character - mood. Unlike "Red Apple", the work of the artist with a camera is radically different here: a very controlled camera environment, professional models, building a concrete independent light scheme with an accurate drawing of the facial features. We contemplate various portraits moods, points of view, according to the physical characteristics of the photographed. Perfect command of composition, colour tones and black and white shades have been achieved.

The red thread in this topic is the creative symbiosis between model and photographer. The former creates a certain posture and emotional state, the latter transfers it to the viewer's

perception through light and camera. The way to predispose the model, to relax them, so that they can be that emotional being to conquer the pages of magazines, is part of the "latent" magic for the viewer of how exactly a nice picture is shot. The thing is the way in which the photographer makes his model be at ease. Working with natural lighting or with large and powerful artificial lighting devices and modifiers frees the photographer from the need to constantly correct them.

The lack of interference in the development of the model's emotions helps them to focus on focusing on the exact desired emotional state. I would like to quote Ivan Gore here: "Here, in photography, a strict law rules: the one of light." And then you get Encho Naydenov's wonderful portrait photographs.

### **III. Learning and teaching activity**

Chief Assistant Encho Naydenov, PhD is a long-time teacher at NBU, conducting numerous courses in the department of "Cinema, advertising and show business". He has authored over 11 courses, for Bachelor's and Master's programmes, including: Photography, Photographic Art, Advertising, Advertising Management and Visual Branding, Graphic design. The electronic training module "MOODLE NBU" contains author's trainings and more than 200 presentation slides and illustrations with detailed content, links, videos, additional materials, tailored to the requirements of NBU. Dr. Naydenov participated in the creation of MP Photographic Art. His work with the students includes both the scientific guidance of graduates, as well as academic mentoring of many students (20 per project "Student practices") as well as 11 graduates, all of whom have defended successfully their thesis.

One of the valuable qualities of a teacher-practitioner as he is, is that his students can learn the ins and outs of their specialty on the go and at the shooting location of numerous photographic and video projects.

For students majoring in Photography, the visualization of the learning process and the acquisition of quality practical experience from your teacher, outside the academic environment is invaluable as it gives them opportunity to establish professional contacts.

Dr. Encho Naydenov also conducts lectures in English.

The authority of Dr. Encho Naydenov among his students is also confirmed by their high satisfaction rating - 4.72 (out of 5) for the last 5 years.

#### **IV. Administrative and public activity**

Encho Naydenov is known not only as an active teacher, but also as an active member of the council of the "Cinema, Advertising and Show business" Department. In the period 2014-2017 he was a program consultant to the department for the Photography program. Currently he is also a member of the Program Council at the same department and a member of the faculty council of the School of Undergraduate studies. I have already mentioned his participation in the development of different courses. He is also involved in the organization, selection, the final selection, the preparation for printing a retrospective exposition of the Photography programme on the occasion of 20 years of the program, as well as in the organization, selection, the final selection, the preparation for printing a jubilee photo exhibition on the occasion of 30 years NBU. He regularly takes part in committees, moderations, reviews and various administrative positions. Every year he participates in seminars, as a guest speaker or gives various private lectures and workshops. As a constantly evolving personality in 2021 Naydenov also graduated with a master's degree in "Sound Direction",NBU.

Work that is in the process of development by Encho Naydenov are:

- publication of a second book on studio technique and studio work
- creation of a new methodology for training in use and application of light in photography as a basis for future doctoral thesis
- developing a new course for short video forms through hybrid filming
- preparation of the first edition of an annual photography event in NBU with working title "Visual Workshop"
- in future professional engagements, Naydenov will continue to involve photography students from NBU in real shooting conditions for the purpose of their professional development

## **Conclusion:**

Among peer photographers Naydenov's name is associated with fashion, advertising, aesthetics, searches, beauty, elegance of the image according to the photographs model. In academic circles, he is known for his willingness and ability to teach the students of the subtleties of light painting, sculpting the aesthetics of the image through work with light. Creative and dedicated, quality teacher, fully responsive to the high requirements for acquiring the academic position of Associate Professor.

Based on the above said I categorically vote YES on his candidacy. I recommend to the respected colleagues from the scientific panel to elect Encho Naydenov Naydenov the academic position of ASSISTANT PROFESSOR in the department of "Cinema, advertising and show business" at NBU, scientific direction 8.4. Theater and film art (photography).

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Prof. Martin Dimitrov, PhD