

OPINION

By Prof. Svetla Yordanova Hristova, PhD, Department Cinema, Advertising and Show Business, scientific direction 8.4. Theatre and film art regarding the participation of Chief Assistant Prof. Encho Naydenov Naydenov, PhD in the competition for the academic position of Associate Professor for the needs of New Bulgarian University, in professional direction 8.4. Theatre and film arts (Photography), as announced in State Gazette, issue 92 of 18.11.2022 and ordinance of the Rector of NBU No. 3-RK-78 of 22.12.2022.

One candidate has applied for participation in the competition for the academic position of Associate Professor in Professional Direction 8.4. Theatre and film art (Photography) of New Bulgarian University, namely Chief Assistant Prof. Encho Naydenov Naydenov PhD.

The candidate has long term exposure and interests in the field of photography and exceeds the minimum national requirements under Art. 2b of the Act on Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria regarding scientific field 8.4. Arts, Professional Direction 8.4. Theatre and Film Arts (Photography), as well as the respective requirements of New Bulgarian University.

Chief Assistant Prof. Encho Naydenov's professionalism in his artistic, teaching and research work alike impresses and respects. It is quite likely that Naydenov builds on his two higher education degrees (in Economics and Engineering) leading him towards impressive performance in his 20 years of practice to successfully converge his photographic skills into products at a time when the media convergence process is at a stage, in which we can hardly separate photography from film, video, graphics, etc.

Naydenov has implemented campaigns for many a leading brands in our country. The list includes Actavis, Alen Mak, Mtel, Vivacom, DSK, MKB Union Bank, First Investment Bank, Bulgartabac, Bella, Black Ram, Danone, Eurocom, Flirt, Delfina, Grabitov, Hilma, Lazarin, Melini, Nestle, Penelope, Prista Oil, Raphael, Savoy, TSUM, Teo, Everbell, Terter, Pufis and many others. He has worked for magazines such as *EVA*, *Amika*, *El*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *MODA*, *Beauty*, *Madame Figaro*, etc.

It is evident from the submitted documents for this competition that Chief Assistant Professor Encho Naydenov, PhD is an active artist with a number of realized solo

exhibitions: *35mm* in Vivacom Art Hall, (2014); a solo exhibition in Soul Kitchen (2019), a continuation of the *35 mm* exhibition; *Wild Nature of Sozopol* (2016), *Latent Portraits* Solo exhibition at NBU (2022). Positive reviews of the *Latent Portraits* exhibition have been published in *Kultura* magazine, April 2020, (Ilia Kozhuharov - Encho Naydenov - the jazzman photographer), *Sledva* magazine, May 2022, (Kristiyan Postadzhivan - Encho Naydenov's exhibition), *Cinema, Advertisement and Show business Department Yearbook 2020 -2021* (Angel Kotsev – Review of *Latent Portraits*).

The candidate participated in and realized the following projects: *Red Apple* to celebrate 15 years of *EVA* magazine; the *9 Marys* Project, a series of 4 covers for *Eva* magazine (2016). These participations of Dr. Naydenov illustrate his activity as a photographer and creator. As early as in his doctoral thesis entitled: "The influence of digital photographic technologies on professional lighting" the candidate declares his field of scientific interests. Dr. Naydenov is a recognized authority in the professional guild of photographers and is therefore often invited to public lectures and demonstrations, introducing the audience to new technological possibilities of lighting and photography. Group E shows descriptions of his many participations in workshops in the field of photographic art: in the Photosynthesis studio he delivers a lecture and demonstration on the topic "Better portrait: control of flash system"; in Photovacation (2018) he leads a workshop on advanced skills in "Working with light in the studio"; a live and online lecture organized by Fotoworld "Why do we shoot portraits?" (2019); a lecture "Advertising photography as a business", delivered in Pomorie at the International Forum for Photographers and Videographers" (2022) or a lecture on "Architectural Photography" held on 27.10.2017 in hall 226 of the UASG.

Dr. Naydenov is the main operator of the videos for Dimitar Marinov's Master Class and the advertising clip for the Photography program with the participation of students.

In the bibliographic description of the minimum requirements for scientific, teaching and artistic-creative activity, section D, Chief Assistant Professor Encho Naydenov presents two of his articles that describe the scope of his theoretical studies in the field of photography: "Role of the development of digital technologies in the creation of visual content" and "Peculiarities in photographing portraits on a white background". They are published in the Yearbook of the "Cinema, Advertising and Show business Department (2021) and in the "Collection of scientific publications" under project BG051PO001-3.3.06.-

0060, published in volume 2 of part 1.

All these activities of the candidate testify to his research work: a creative spirit that achieves excellent results in the field of portrait, advertising and commercial photography. Furthermore these results rest on a well-considered strategy and scientific developments in the field of modern photography, which are summarized in his theoretical work "Specific Photographic Expressive and Technical means of stage photography". The essence of this text introduces us to the basic considerations of the photographer in the realization of any photographic project: theme, creative idea, technical support, preparation, realization, presentation and analysis of the finished product.

In this theoretical framework, 2 projects are detailed: the Red Apple project on the occasion of 15 years of EBA magazine and the Latent Portraits exhibition are presented. The above are examples of analysis drawn from the vast experience of the photographer in his creative activity, and he has rightly chosen them as the basis of his theoretical-practical model, when he reflects on the specific photographic expressive and technical means of staged photography. It was as intriguing to me as it is for his audience to understand his arguments as to why he took pictures with a camera and not a camcorder in the *Red Apple* project on the occasion of 15 years of *EVA* magazine. In theory, I'd say that capturing a still or moving image shares common optics, only the software is different, and with one press of a button or menu change, we're taking pictures or shooting video. So why photos and not video? Both are technological records. But the stage of technical provision is always specifically related to the conditions of implementation, or as the author says - "with physical reality and financial expression. This stage resembles a mathematical equation, which aims to solve the task with the available financial means, without obtaining negative or imaginary values from the photographic task, after the very creative invention of a theme and idea, because here the inventiveness and combinatorics of his taste and mastery of technological possibilities are decisively important. As is mandatory compliance with the final media on which the project will be shown.

The second part of his theoretical work is dedicated to the professional technological tools of photography, the mastery of which to perfection is mandatory, since the specificity of this art is technological recording. Dr. Naydenov convinces us that this technique is only a means to achieve the artistic idea of the photographer. Particularly conclusive evidence in this direction is the impactful emotional effect of the 30 portraits of his solo exhibition *Latent*

Portraits. Sharing and analyzing his creative approach to these objects, the author arrives at a seemingly paradoxical yet actually logical conclusion: "Every time I try to make the light different, not as it was in the previous shot. But no matter how hard one tries, the light in a portrait can be divided into several categories such as: sharp or soft, contrasting or calm, theatrical or atmospheric, minimalist or rich, spectacular or inconspicuous, colourful or monochrome. In the end, the general feeling of the light in the frame will fall into the combination of these categories." Thus, in his artistic practice, Dr. Naydenov affirms the theory of the language of light: the photographer's main means of expression, which he uses each time in accordance with the specific object for a photo. Quite logically, following his own practical experience, the author comes to the important conclusion that "regardless of whether it will be commercial, social or personal, a topic must have great potential and importance, it must reflect in the consciousness of a larger group and be of interest to a wide group of people, not only in the close circle of the author's environment."

The applicant's scientific and artistic-creative interests fully correspond to the specifics of the courses he teaches. The candidate fully meets the requirements of the scientometric indicators. Dr. Encho Naydenov develops courses in various programs: BP Photography, MP Photographic Art, BP Advertising, MP Advertising Management and Visual Branding, BP Graphic Design at the Department of "Cinema, Advertising and Show Business". For the last 7 years Ch. Assist. Professor Encho Naydenov has created more than 11 author's courses, as well as numerous extracurricular projects. The average evaluation score of Dr. Encho Naydenov for the last 5 years is an excellent 4.72. Dr. Naydenov provides most of his courses with learning materials through the NBU Moodle platform: nearly 230 presentation slides and illustrations structured and presented in view of the goals of the respective courses. When he photographs, he takes his students to the field and locations where they see the meaning and application of theory, and often it is there that the students make contacts for their future professional appearance.

Dr. Encho Naydenov enjoys respect and trust among his colleagues in the department, where he is a member of the Department's Program Council with an active role in discussing changes in programs or the need to develop new courses.

In conclusion, I declare that the creative, scientific and teaching achievements of Chief Assistant Prof. Encho Naydenov Naydenov, PhD fully meet the requirements for occupying the academic position of Associate Professor in professional direction 8.4. Theatre

and film art (Photography). I therefore propose him for election by the NBU Academic Council and I strongly recommend that the respected scientific panel award Dr. Encho Naydenov the position of Associate Professor, to which I vote "YES".

28.02.2023

Prof. Svetla Hristova, PhD