

## OPINION

**In a competition for the academic position of "Professor" in the scientific specialty Art Studies and Fine Arts (Fine Arts and Synthesis with Architecture), professional field 8.1 at the Higher School of Civil Engineering "Lyuben Karavelov"**

**with candidate Assoc. Prof. Blagovesta Ivanova Ivanova**

**From Corresponding member of Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Prof. Ivanka Gergova, Institute for the Study of Arts at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences**

The only candidate in the competition announced by USEA "Lyuben Karavelov" is Assoc. Prof. Blagovesta Ivanova Ivanova. She participated in the competition with an impressive volume of scientific production: two printed monographs and a chapter from a published book, three catalogs, 3 studies, 27 articles and 3 textbooks. The publications are related to four main areas: architecture, art of the Bulgarian Revival, Modern art, and finally - publications created to help the teaching process. I will pay attention to one circumstance: the presented works have not been used in the previous competitions, in which Blagovesta Ivanova has appeared, and the previous one - for a doctor of sciences – which was only a year ago. Some of the publications are referenced and indexed in world database editions. It is also important that some of them are the result of participation in international scientific forums.

Naturally, the subject of the publications is related to the creative biography of Blagovesta Ivanova and her diverse interests. Since 2005 she has been a lecturer at the Higher School of Civil Engineering (USEA), which determines her orientation towards the problems of architecture, architectural heritage and the synthesis of architecture with the fine arts, as well as the connection of the textbooks presented in the competition with the educational process. Her work as a curator and chief curator in the National Art Gallery, in the Graphic Department and in the Department of Bulgarian Art is much longer. In both institutions she has initiated and led research projects, she has been a participant in others, which has directed the focus of scientific interest to certain specific topics.

The first group of the presented publications is directly related to the topic of the competition and the profile of the higher school that announced it. The main monograph here is *Monastery and settlement temples in the Sofia diocese. Monitoring, condition, analysis, accessibility 2015 - 2017 S., 2018* (ISBN 978-954-331-100-2). The book is the result of a field research to 64 churches in the Sofia diocese, both monastery and parish. The churches date from the different times - from the XVI to the beginning of the XXI century and have various architectural solutions. The analyzes concern both the initial plan and subsequent changes over the time, which allows us to draw conclusions about the typical solutions for the region. The interior decoration of the temples is also examined, with varying degrees of detail. Observations of both the current state and the accessibility of the temples are valuable. Some of the churches visited have been well researched and published in the past, but there are some that are presented in the book

for the first time. The weakest interest in Bulgarian literature is to the churches built in the XX and XXI century and the monograph of Bl. Ivanova makes her contribution in this area.

Most of the other publications with architectural themes are related to the Bulgarian church "St. Stefan" in Istanbul and other "Bulgarian " sites in the city. And here an important circumstance is the personal contact with the monument. However, the use and introduction of archival documents into scientific circulation should be emphasized, as well as some laboratory tests, which ensure the authenticity and reliability of the presented information and the proposed theses. The authorship of the projects for the iron church, the place of execution of its parts, the persons and companies involved in the design and implementation, its interior and exterior decoration, the conditions of the building, its role in the architectural context are studied. It should be emphasized that Blagovesta Ivanova is the leading researcher of the history, architecture and art of the iron church "St. Stefan" in Istanbul.

B. Ivanova's second main interest in the field of architecture, urban planning and synthesis is related to Sofia. In this group of publications, the beneficial influence of the author's archival research is again manifested.

The problem of the synthesis of architecture with the arts includes several publications dealing with equestrian monuments and sculpture in urban space in general and facade monumental painting (G-9: 21,23,26). Nowadays, the candidate is the only art critic in Bulgaria who deals consistently and purposefully with architectural problematics.

Blagovesta Ivanova is one of the few researchers of secular arts of the Bulgarian Revival. Her in-depth researches of the artist Nikolai Pavlovich's work are evident from two of the presented publications, one of which clarifies important details from the period of the artist's studies in Vienna and Munich, and the other reveals the sources of his inspiration in creating lithographs from the series of Rayna Bulgarian princess (B-9: 2; B-11,1). These are the last contributions to the study of the work of the great Revival artist, long studied and seemingly exhausted. The research of the lithographs stored in the National Library "St. Cyril and Methodius" in Sofia is of great interest. Bl. Ivanova turns to another intriguing topic - the wall decoration in Balkan architecture in the XIX century, drawing good parallels between Islamic, Christian and secular monuments in present-day in Bulgaria, Turkey, Northern Macedonia and Albania (B-9: 19). Contributing to the study of our Revival art is the article presenting for the first time archival documents from the legacy of the painter Lazar the Icon Painter (B-9: 1).

The Modern Bulgarian art, the works of authors from the twentieth century, are treated in the third group of publications. Here I will highlight the monograph on Trapko Vassilev (B-6) and his first art gallery in Sofia. The research, again based on rich archival material, is comprehensive - it refers to the personality of Trapko Vassilev, his environment, character and creativity, as well as to the gallery, the building, its place in the urban environment, the interior, the exhibitions arranged in it. In a unique way, part of the picture of the cultural life of Sofia from the first half of the twentieth century is revealed.

Three catalogs of the exhibitions with studios (B: 9) of the creative works from the rich collection of Al. Kerezov is the result of the museum involvement of Blagovesta Ivanova. They introduce into the public space the works of new quality of Bulgarian artists, some of which are not known.

Important for the competition is the educational activity of the candidate. As can be seen from her autobiographical reference, she conducts lecture courses with a wide range of topics - art history, history of architecture, related to artistic heritage, museology and more. In support of teaching Bl. Ivanova has published three textbooks - two in art history, *Art history for architecture students. Ciela, S., 2015, vol. 1, First Edition, Second Edition* (ISBN: 978-954-28-1723-9) ;. *Art history for architecture students. Ciela, S., 2017, vol. 2.* (ISBN: 978-954-28-2255-4) and a entitled *Historical Context of Architecture in the Bulgarian Lands. USEA, S., 2018* (ISBN 978-954-331-082-1). The three textbooks are unique in Bulgarian educational practice. Her study in the collection *Thessaloniki-Sofia. Comparative study of architectural monuments from Antiquity and the Middle Ages. VSU "Lyuben Karavelov", S., 2015, 117 pp.* (ISBN 978-954-331-070-8) is also intended for the education of students at the Higher School of Civil Engineering (USEA). Her interests in the museology and museum legislation are evident in several of the presented works, such as Bulgarian Museums and Museum Legislation: History and Modernity. - *Questions of Museology, 1 (5) / 2012, pp. 148 - 160.* (ISSN 2219-6269) and Leading Museums in Sofia: concept, strategy, situation. - *Questions of Museology, 1 (7) / 2013, pp. 148 - 155* (ISSN: 2219-6269).

In conclusion:

1. It is important that the candidate in the competition is a doctor of sciences.
2. The presented publications are a very large number, published independently or in the authoritative collections and periodicals. The topics are extremely diverse. In some research areas Blagovesta Ivanova is the only one in modern Bulgarian science.
3. The methods of work are characterized by direct contact with the monuments or work, the widespread use of archival sources and the placement of monuments and works in a broad context.
4. The contributions are in several directions: introduction into scientific circulation of unknown and new material; correction of obsolete or incorrect ones; addressing poorly popular topics; culturological approach; help for the learning process.

All this gives me reason to propose to convincingly be awarded the academic position of "professor" in the scientific specialty of Art History and Fine Arts (Fine Arts and Synthesis with Architecture), professional field 8.1 at the Higher School of Civil Engineering "Lyuben Karavelov" to Assoc. Prof. Blagovesta Ivanova Ivanova.

Sofia,

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