

**Film and TV School of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague**  
**Department of Photography**

---

**Assessment of the Bachelor's Thesis**

Author of thesis: Minghui Zheng

Title of thesis: The consumption of banality: live-streaming China

Assessment of the primary advisor

Assessment of the opponent

Author of the assessment (first name, last name, workplace): Photojournalism in the age of social media

Evaluation of the content and final form of the thesis (A/excellent – B/very good – C/good – D/good with objections – E/satisfactory – F/unsatisfactory – not recommended for defence)

Suitability of the selected objective and work approach.....	A
Relative completeness of the literature used for the selected topic.....	C
Ability to critically evaluate and use professional literature.....	C
Logicality of the thesis structure, connection of its chapters.....	B
Language and stylistic level of the thesis.....	B
Compliance with citation norms (should the text repeatedly contain adopted passages without citing the source, the work cannot be recommended for defence) .....	A
Sufficient extent of image attachments, justifiability and suitability of attachments, graphic layout.....	A
Originality of the thesis, contribution to the development of the field of study.....	B
Overall evaluation of the thesis.....	B-C

Verbal evaluation of the thesis including questions that the diplomate must address in his/her thesis defence:

The bachelor thesis of Minghui Zheng deals with interesting and actual topic: live-streaming (in China) and banality in contemporary popular and vernacular visual culture. The structure of the thesis is logical, Minghui Zheng in essayistic style more or less chronologically traces the development of live-streaming technologies in China focusing on the key companies, platforms and social networks which have been taking important part in the formation of Chinese live-streaming culture. This descriptive layer of the thesis is quite well written, informative and sufficiently detailed. But the critical, analytical and conceptual (theoretical) layer of the thesis should be much “thicker” and “deeper”. Minghui Zheng rightly interprets some aspects of live-streaming culture through her knowledge of Chinese culture and history (“dick hair culture”, “the accompany economy”) and through some artistic interventions (e.g. Vito Acconci, Sophie Calle). She also rightly mentions several conceptions (e.g. banality, surveillance, blurring of private and public space, chance, everyday) but these are very poorly discussed and vaguely used for analytical purposes. Particularly the conception of banality should have been discussed in detail as it is closely connected to the modernity, the history of vernacular and popular

visual culture and to the contemporary “user generated” culture. Despite this conceptual “shallowness” I consider the thesis of Minghui Zheng as acceptable and I recommend it for the defence. I propose B/C as the final grade, pending the outcome of the oral exam.

Questions for the defence:

Could you please find and choose any conceptual/theoretical commentary on the relation between banality and photography (technical images, visual culture, post/modernity) and use it as an “analytical frame” for interpreting any aspect of Chinese live-streaming culture? You can make your own selection, but some possible examples could be as follows: There are many considerations of the relation between banality and photography (technical images) in Roland Barthes *Camera Lucida*, where he also very aptly comments on blurring of public/private meanings in photography (“the age of Photography corresponds precisely to the explosion of the private into the public, or rather into the creation of a new social value, which is the publicity of the private: the private is consumed as such, publicly...”); G. Agamben’s conception of “bare life”, “the destruction of experience” and his idea of life as something that can be documented but not immediately experienced could be fruitful when thinking about contemporary Chinese live-streaming culture; many other remarks can be found in Guy Debord’s writings; John Roberts’ book *Photography and Its Violations* considers in detail “the snapshot’s intimacy with the banal”; contemporary research on camera phones usage (see e.g. Larsen’s & Sandbye’s anthology *Digital snaps: The New Face of Photography*) very often mentions the relation between contemporary “mass-image” and banalisation of visual culture etc.



Date: 04/09/2018

Signature:.....