

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

Assessment of the Bachelor's Thesis

Author of thesis: Josip Smodej

Title of thesis: Slovenian contemporary photographic art

Assessment of the primary advisor ☐

Assessment of the opponent ☒

Author of the assessment (first name, last name, workplace): Václav Janoščík, KF
FAMU

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.....C
Relative completeness of the literature used for the selected topic.....D
Ability to critically evaluate and use professional literature.....D
Logicity 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).....D
Sufficient extent of image attachments, justifiability and suitability of attachments,
graphic layout.....C
Originality of the thesis, contribution to the development of the field of study.....C

Overall evaluation of the thesis.....D

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

Bachelor thesis of Josip Smodej declares focus on contemporary contemporary
Slovenian artist using photography. After dealing with general delimitation of
Slovenian contemporary art and the role of photography within.

Later on the author describes "Fotopubes" with brief characterization of its main
protagonists and then he analazyes one particular exhibition "THE NEW
GENERATION OF SLOVENIAN ARTISTS" that he later on qualifies as "a breaking
point in Slovenian photographic production and the beginning of new Slovenian
contemporary photographic art." (p. 36).

In fifth part Smodej describes Fotopub festival and few other activities of designated
artist. And just before conclusion he turns to the concept of "the photographic" that he

coins to be a theoretical basis of Fotopubes activities. Conclusion itself is purely descriptive and very short.

This may be the biggest point for a critique. The concept of the photographic is clearly meant to present an attitude opposed to simple use of the medium of photography, but other than that there is just little information. Author exemplifies this approach mainly on audio instalation *You Talk About It* by Hussein Nassereddine. that extrapolates “ambiguous nature of memory in contrast to the ubiquitous nature of photography” (p. 35). It is “obviously non-visual, this artwork was extremely photographic in its nature.” (p. 34). Conclusively this for the author presents the problem of photographic as the “most 'objective' medium in contrast to the subjectivity of the spoken word.” (p. 35) I find this conceptualization very vague. As if anything that challenges photography (and its “objective” status or “ubiquitous” presence) can be incorporated to “the photographic”.

It remains clear and sympathetic, nonetheless, that the acitivities of Photopubes are based on expanding artistic horizon beyond the medium of photography itself.

Regeretably, in theoretical respect the text does not offer more conceptualizations than this one. Some claims and most of the introductory passages remain too general (*“The beginnings of Slovenian contemporary art were widely influenced by the sociopolitical changes that affected Slovenia in the nineties;”* s. 10).

From formal point of view we must note that references very often lack proper form and essential details (See for instace:

³ *Photography of the Maribor Circle*

⁴ *New Photography 1 - Aspects and Directions*

⁵ *New Photography 2 - Photography as Art*

⁶ *Themes and Functions of the Photographic Medium*

p. 16)

Another issue I struggle with is apparent selfinterest or self-centredness of author. The author basically writes about himself (explicitly for instance in p. 22), which is not a vice in itself; but the research then lacks a critical distance.

This is even more apparent in the self-celebratory tone of these evaluations (For instance: *“The group's first intention was the creation of a chaos of expectations. In a show of moderate artistic self-aggrandizement, they all wished to create something new, something contrary to the old. They founded an institution that was meant to fight the institutional through its own institutionalism.”* p. 28).

Moreover, I cannot help myself not to mention morphological issue present in the very title of the work. Without actuall know about the “Fotopubes” phenomena before I think should be spelled “fotopubs”, derived from pubs, as opposed to fotopubes, that gives the impression it is derived from “pubes” (pubic hair).

The work offers rather brief introduction of Slovenian contemporary art oriented on photography with two main limitations – lack of proper theoretical grounding and selfinterested scope.

Therefore, I recommend the thesis to be approved with the overall evaluation D.

Question for the defense:

1. Have you had some intention of getting into critical distance from your own work?
How?
2. Can you compare Fotopub(es) with other artistically or geographically relevant undertakings?

Date:

Signature:.....