

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

Assessment of the Bachelor's Thesis

Author of thesis: Taisiya Sharova

Title of thesis:

Assessment of the primary advisor

~~Assessment of the opponent~~

Author of the assessment (first name, last name, workplace): The Aesthetic of the Crime Scene Photography: The Case of Arthur "Weegee" Fellig

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

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

The bachelor thesis of Taisiya Sharova deals with forensic and crime scene photography, particularly it is focused on the visual rhetoric of crime scene photography and its adoption by tabloid photojournalism in general and Arthur "Weegee" Fellig in particular. The aim of the thesis is to find out why crime scene photographs distributed on the pages of tabloid press have been so successful in attracting attention of the masses.

The structure of the thesis is logical but at the same time rather simple as it has just only two main parts: in the first one Taisiya Sharova briefly summarises the history of forensic photography, in the second she focuses on Weegee's biography and analyses his photographs published in the book *Naked City*.

I have to say that it is difficult to evaluate the thesis as it is inconsistent in the quality of argumentation and style. The chapter 4.2 in which Taisiya Sharova analyses and interprets several Weegee's photographs is very well written and argued, the style is clear, interpretation of images is well situated in the social and cultural context of the Great Depression era, and several important aspects of Weegee's photographic practice are aptly mentioned (his notes he was adding to the photographs,

compositional features of his images, ethical issues, the role of flashlight and other technical equipment etc.). On the contrary, all other parts of the thesis are written in rather poor English full of spelling, typographic and syntax mistakes that makes the argumentation rather chaotic and obscured (these parts deserve substantial proofreading and editing as some sentences hardly make sense). The argumentation of the thesis is based only on seven sources (books and articles) and several important books on Weegee's photographic approach are not mentioned at all: e.g. Joseph B. Entin's book *Sensational Modernism*, Christopher Bonanos' book *Flash: The Making of Weegee the Famous* or Weegee's own autobiography.

Although I do not doubt the author diligently attempted to accomplish the objectives stated in the abstract and introduction chapter, I consider her thesis as only partially successful assessment of Weegee's photographic style. Despite my objections mentioned above, I consider Taisiya Sharova's thesis acceptable, I recommend it for the defence and propose C/D as the final grade, pending the outcome of the oral exam.

Questions for the defence:

Could you explain the significant differences in the quality of style and argumentation between the chapter 4.2 and the rest of your thesis?

Could you briefly summarise the key features of Weegee's approach to the crime scene photography? Do you think it would be ethically acceptable to publish photographs analogous to Weegee's images in contemporary (tabloid) newspapers (consider the case of civic photojournalism and platforms like e.g. <https://ua.korrespondent.net/>)?



Date: 05/08/2018

Signature:.....