

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

Assessment of the Master's Thesis

Author of thesis: Yeting Xu

Title of thesis: The "Phantom" in photography

Assessment of the primary advisor ✕

Assessment of the opponent ✓

Author of the assessment (first name, last name, workplace):

Michal Šimůnek, Department of Photography, 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.....	D
Relative completeness of the literature used for the selected topic.....	C
Ability to critically evaluate and use scholarly literature.....	D
Logicity of the thesis structure, connection of its chapters and theirs proportionality.....	D
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.....	E
Overall evaluation of the thesis.....	D

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

The Master thesis of Yeting Xu deals with a blur as a photographic means of expression. It aims to trace history, conceptions, meanings, perception and aesthetic appeals of blurred images, but the key objective of the thesis is to trace examples of different forms of blurriness and to propose a typology of blur in photography. Although the thesis' topic is interesting and its overall quality is good, I have several objections regarding the style, structure and argumentation.

Yeting Xu tried to consider and investigate too many aspects related to the blurred photographs, which rendered her argumentation eclectic, vague and questionable. It is not a good idea to deal with the history of blurred images just in two pages, to consider a relation of blurriness to the Japanese philosophy of Wabi-Sabi just in few

paragraphs etc. I would be much more convincing if the author would concentrate only on one narrower topic and subjected it to a more thorough consideration.

The English language should be proofread; it is particularly important to be clear about the terminology related to photography and art: what is, e.g., meant by "blanks" and "colour blocks" as forms of a blur? And what is meant by the sentence "Blanks, colour blocks, and shadows are all blurred expressions" (p. 4).

The author should also pay more attention when formulating generalising statements about the perception and meaning of blurred images. I would not agree, for example, that a blur is "often considered more artistic and appealing" than sharp images as it is mentioned in the abstract of the thesis. Consider for example photographs of the f/64 group (E. Weston, A. Adams, I. Cunningham, W. van Dyke) or, to give one contemporary example, large prints of Andreas Gursky.

The thesis of Yeting Xu could be improved in many ways, but it is still acceptable. I recommend her thesis for the defence and propose D as the final grade.

Questions for the defence:

In the chapter 2.2.2 Blur of title and text, you deal with image-text relation. Could you please choose one particular blurred photograph and analyse its relation to its title and other paratexts.

Date: 14/05/2019


Signature:.....