

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

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**Assessment of the Bachelor's Thesis**

Author of thesis: Antti Karlaja

Title of thesis: SUBJECTIVE AND PERSONAL: THE DIARISTIC APPROACH IN PHOTOGRAPHY

Assessment of the primary advisor ☐

Assessment of the opponent X

Author of the assessment (first name, last name, workplace): Mgr. Josef Ledvina  
Ph.D.

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.....B.....  
Ability to critically evaluate and use scholarly literature.....B.....  
Logicality of the thesis structure, connection of its chapters.....A.....  
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).....B  
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.....B  
Overall evaluation of the thesis.....B.....

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

Anti Karlaja's thesis is an intelligent defence of a strand of art photography that engages a viewer in an "empathic dialogue". Karlaja sees this approach as an alternative to the more text-based practices and as an antidote to postmodern irony and cynicism. Main point of reference is for him the revaluation of the notion of authenticity in Lucy Soutter's book *Why Art Photography?* As explained in the chapter on theory the kind of authenticity under examination is "defined as performed, enacted and negotiated subjectivity" and as such it shall be "intricately linked to the diaristic mode". Two case studies follow – one dedicated to Nan Goldin, the other to Boris Mikhailov.

The thesis is clearly structured, the literature referred to is not voluminous but appreciably always referred to for a reason. In theoretical section and in chapter on “aesthetic of vernacular photography” Anti Karlaja opens some intriguing questions related to the notion of authenticity. Thus, he rightly claims that “project of striving for authenticity can easily slip into self-indulgent promotion”. He also describes how the affect of the intimacy is in photography often related to the snapshot and family album aesthetic and how this aesthetic has been appropriated in fashion and advertisement industries. Because of that authenticity shall be understood as a never-finished quest and require from the artist “constant vigilance”. What I would object to is when Karlaja relates the danger of falling into the trap of posturing summarily with the world of social media. In principle, I do not see any reason why social media cannot be one of the arenas where this quest takes place. After all social media is a major place for sharing vernacular pictures and new forms of affect-inducing vernacular aesthetics are being born there. I mention this point because I see there a danger of reifying authenticity – anchoring it to a certain kind of media or technique that should be for some reasons inherently more authentic than other techniques and media. This view of authenticity than easily slips to a conservative “jargon of authenticity”, that presents authenticity not as an embodied quest but as something that we are losing in bad present times.

I propose grade B.

Question:

I would ask the author if he could briefly discuss one more recent, non-analogue example of diaristic mode in art photography.

Date: .....

Signature:.....