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

Assessment of the Master's Thesis

Author of thesis: Evgenii Smirnov
Title of thesis: INFRARED IMAGING AS ARTISTIC MEANS 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.....A.....
Ability to critically evaluate and use scholarly literature.....A.....
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).....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.....A...

Overall evaluation of the thesis.....A.....

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

The thesis under consideration deals with the uses of infrared imaging in art photography practices. The analysis proceeds in a systematic and clearly structured way: from the analogue film-based black and white infrared techniques and the digital infrared photography to the complex data visualisation of thermography. Firs of all, a special merit deserves Smirnov's ability to present clearly technological basis of each of the discussed technologies. And this understanding of the technology is at the same time clearly related to a following analysis of the relevant art practices. Smirnov demonstrates how infrared pictures get with the rising complexity of the technology more and more "divorced" from the indexicality of the photographic image. Thus, in case of "psychedelic" infrared photography "medium that is tightly connected to the

concept of photographing ‘invisible’” enables “the allegorical level of reading”. Vivid colours of infrared photographs can be on the one “read” by an educated viewer as a source of information about the wavelengths of the reflected light but this “emancipated” colour can be also read “allegorically”, as expression of “invisible subjective experiences” in psychedelics-induced states. The final stage of this process represents “thermography” in the case of which the image is a result of complex algorithmic processing of the data input and where limited colour scale represents temperature values of the objects of depiction. Smirnov argues that already through “transition into the digital realm the infrared image lost its indexicality and has become iconical”.

The last quote rises some more general questions about the distinction between icons and indices that fall outside the scope of the thesis but that deserve to be mentioned. It could be argued that digital infrared pictures regardless of what happens in the “black-box” are still used as reliable traces (i.e. indeces) of spatial organisation of things in the real-world space. Indeed, for example thermovision aparata used in military are designed to be such reliable “tracers”.

I consider the thesis of Evgenii Smirnov to be a significant achievement and propose grade A.

Question:
I would as author to comment on the distinction between iconicity and indexicality and explain how this distinction can be applied to the case of thermal imagining.

Date: ..... Signature:.....