

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

Assessment of the Master's Thesis

Author of thesis: Wenbin Liu

Title of thesis: PHOTOGRAPHER'S UNCONSCIOUS IMAGES: FROM
SURREALISM TO CONTEMPORARY PHOTOGRAPHY

Assessment of the primary advisor ☐

Assessment of the opponent ☒

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

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.....D.....
Ability to critically evaluate and use scholarly literature.....D.....
Logicality of the thesis structure, connection of its chapters.....D.....
Language and stylistic level of the thesis.....C.....
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.....D.....
Overall evaluation of the thesis.....D.....

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

Topic of Wenbin Liu's thesis is, in his own words, "representation of the unconscious
in photography". Divided into three sections, the thesis deals first with "pre-
surrealist" use of photography in the "science" of physiognomy and with spirit
photography, then with the surrealism proper and finally with contemporary Chinese
and Japanese photographers that work with some aspects of European surrealist
aesthetic.

The relationship among the three chapters is rather loose. It remains, for
example, unexplained how precisely the discussion of physiognomic studies of

psychiatric patients form 19th century relates to the topic of the “representation of unconscious” in Surrealism proper. Also, Wenbin Liu’s understanding of the relationship between photography and surrealism is rather limited, from the rich scholarly literature to the topic, I would expect at least some reference to Rosalind Krauss’ canonical essay *The Photographic Conditions of Surrealism*. The final chapter that deals with the influence of surrealism on Chinese and Japanese photography could similarly benefit from such publications as is Majella Munro’s *Communicating Vessels: The Surrealist Movement in Japan 1925-70*.

Despite the above raised objections, I appreciate Wenbin Liu’s genuine commitment to the topic and propose grade D.

Date: 30.5.2021

Signature: 