

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

Assessment of the Master's Thesis

Author of thesis: Quynh Nguyen

Title of thesis: Break time Exchanges: Visual and Media Ethnography of Ethnic Identity Construction in the Vietnamese-Czech Community in the SAPA Market and Cultural Centre

Assessment of the primary advisor ✓

Assessment of the opponent ✕

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

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
Logicity of the thesis structure, connection of its chapters.....A
Language and stylistic level of the thesis.....A
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:

Quynh Nguyen's diploma thesis explores ethnic identity construction and preservation of the Vietnamese cultural traditions in the Vietnamese-Czech community in Prague's SAPA market. At the beginning of my review, I would like to stress that Quynh Nguyen's thesis is exceptional as it meets all the criteria of excellent qualitative research. Based on intensive and multi-sited (physical and online resting areas) field research in the Vietnamese-Czech community, Nguyen's thesis is a convincing piece of ethnography.

I do not intend to summarise here the content of her thesis (a concise summary is given in the abstract of the thesis). Instead, I would like to outline that what makes Nguyen's thesis outstanding.

Sound empirical research should always be based on the deep knowledge of what is already known about a given topic. This knowledge is a prerequisite for complicating the common ground by pointing to the empirical, methodological,

conceptual or whatever gap. Further, it should explain why it is crucial to fill the given gap and find how this gap could be filled via a proper research design. If the researcher meets these criteria, he or she has to enter the field, collect, analyse and interpret data. Finally, all this has to be put together into a written research account appealing to readers to find the research findings convincing.

All these criteria are present in Quynh Nguyen's thesis. She found an interesting gap in research, as most of the research has studied the Vietnamese community from the perspective of immigration and the business activities of community members. Much less attention has been paid to how members of the Vietnamese community preserve their Vietnamese cultural identity in the context of the Czech-Vietnamese diaspora. Quynh Nguyen decided to fill this gap by using a n/ethnographic research design and employing visual methodologies. During the intensive field research, she brilliantly realised to focus on apparently banal everyday rest time areas (both physical and online areas) that she identified as crucial for maintaining and preserving ethnic identity. Quynh Nguyen is a gifted storyteller, and thus her ethnographic storytelling meets all requirements for authentic, plausible and convincing ethnography: the argumentation is grounded in the thick and vital description of the field situations; findings are rooted in rich and various data, strengthened by theoretical, methodological and ethical reflexivity; the relationship between the researcher and community members is properly delineated; the banal and ordinary (break time exchanges) is shown as significant and extraordinary.

Although Quynh Nguyen shows only a few photographs in her thesis, the visual methods were crucial in her research. In the early stages of the field research Quynh Nguyen heavily photographically documented the SAPA market, trying to identify the key places and situations in which original Vietnamese culture is reproduced and preserved. The crucial idea to focus on resting areas came from looking at, analysing and sorting photographs. These in-between places revealed their importance on the intersection of photography and field experience. In this regard, Quynh Nguyen thesis is also an excellent example of visual ethnography. In her research, photography is not restricted to its illustrative role but plays a crucial exploratory role.

I recommend Quynh Nguyen's thesis for the defence and propose A as the final grade.

Date: 25/06/2021



Signature:.....