

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

Assessment of the Master's Thesis

Author of thesis: Ekaterina Fonina

Title of thesis: Opaque Motion: Dance Movement and Optical Unconscious

Assessment of the primary advisor

Author of the assessment (first name, last name, workplace): Tomáš Dvořák, KF
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.....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.....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:

Ekaterina Fonina's thesis focuses on the problem of movement, namely dance
improvisation in terms of the unconscious and black box. She traces the historical
development of the black box concept, analyses the threshold of sleep and phenomena
of sleep paralysis and hypnagogia, and dance improvisation and the relationships
between dance and photography and film.

In a thought-provoking and resourceful manner, the thesis combines several
seemingly distinct cultural realms. The first one is the concept of the black box, a
notorious metaphor for modern technology emphasizing the fact that we often interact
with devices via their inputs and outputs without any knowledge of its internal
workings. The author expands this traditional understanding both in technical terms,
by linking it to the emergence of the control button, as well as in conceptual terms by
outlining its use within behavioural psychology. She further proposes a comparison

between the black box and phenomena of the threshold of sleep – although I understand the point to be made here, I find the sections on sleep rather redundant in view of the overall argument of the thesis. (It seems to me that one of the reasons it has been brought up is the inclusion of the author’s artistic project – otherwise a very useful and refreshing strategy.) By contrast, when the author moves to the discussion of dance improvisation, her narrative becomes powerful and compelling. She outlines the moment of emergence of modern dance, one that strived for liberation from highly mannered codes of motion. This new kinaesthetic coincides with the development of new imaging technologies, namely chronophotography and cinema providing a unique constellation of artistic, cultural and bodily media and techniques that influence and shape one another. Based on their analysis, the author managed to demonstrate the interweaving of expressing and disguising, exposing and black-boxing typical for our visual culture.

I recommend the thesis for defence and suggest A as the final grade.

Date:31. 5. 2022.....

Signature:..........