

SUPERVISOR'S ASSESSMENT OF A WRITTEN THESIS

Thesis title: Fungi in Art
Thesis author: Eva Palčíč
Programme of study: Photography
Programme type: Bachelor's

Definition of objectives and their fulfilment; Topicality of the thesis topic (and relevance of the selected methodology in the case of a Master's thesis):

The thesis topic is contemporary bio art, specifically focusing on the role of fungi in art. Eva Palčíč is interested in specific examples of the use of fungi in art (whether in a material or metaphorical sense – often concerning the mythological, spiritual, and cultural significance of fungi), and she also focuses on the relationship between science and art, namely in the field of fungal biotechnology. In particular, she approaches the topic by analyzing the artworks of artists who use fungi in their creative work. One of the aspects highlighted in the thesis is the environmental and ecological context of using fungi in art (explicitly relating it to the Anthropocene), which is then related to another important theme: the ethical aspects associated with the use of living organisms in art.

Scholarly contribution, originality of the thesis, and its utilisation in practice:

The thesis is a good overview of the use of fungi in art. It is beneficial, among other things, because this area has received relatively marginal attention. Also significant are the connections with the Anthropocene, which are repeatedly recalled and emphasized in the thesis.

Logical construction and structuring of the thesis:

The thesis is clearly and logically structured.

Formal requirements and requisite contents of the thesis, including its length:

From the formal point of view, the thesis is correct.

Level of language, style and terminology:

The thesis is very well written, readable, and terminologically correct.

Reviewer's opinion on the result of the check by the Theses system:

An automated plagiarism check did not reveal any flaws. The thesis correctly uses an acceptable number of relevant scholarly sources and online artists' portfolios.

Evaluator's overall summary:

The thesis is an interesting probe into the use of fungi in art. By introducing selected artworks and artists, the author satisfactorily summarizes the critical areas of the use of fungi in art, especially concerning the ability of these artworks to point to the character of our current Anthropocene situation and sometimes even to propose partial solutions to mitigate the consequences of the current environmental crisis.

Questions and topics for discussion at the oral defence:

One of the themes related to using fungi, mycelium, and bacterial cultures as a medium in art is the role of chance associated with their use. This aspect is mentioned in the thesis, but is not elaborated on in detail. I wonder to what extent artists employ the autonomy of fungi (e.g., its growth) and to what extent they try to regulate and control this autonomy. Also, works made from fungi are usually temporary, as fungi are living organisms. What problems does this pose for the artworks that use them (e.g., archiving the artworks, exhibiting them, or selling them)?

Recommendation of the thesis for the oral defence: I recommend the thesis for defence.

Recommended grade: A

Date of elaboration of this assessment: 4/6/2023

Michal Šimůnek

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Name of the thesis supervisor

4/6/2023 

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(date and signature)