

OPPONENT'S ASSESSMENT OF A WRITTEN THESIS

Thesis title: Thomas Demand: Manipulation of Photography and Semiotics
Thesis author: Yu-Cheng Lin
Programme of study: Photography
Programme type: Bachelor's

Definition of objectives and their fulfilment:

The thesis is a case study of the work of Thomas Demands; it aims to subject this author's work to semiotic analysis in the sense of Peircean semiotic theory (his famous semiotic triad – index, icon, symbol) and especially his conception of the sign (representamen, object, and interpreter). In this context, the author further reflects on contemporary visual culture influenced by the digitalization of the photographic process and the overproduction of technical images in contemporary smartphone culture.

Topicality of the thesis topic (and relevance of the selected methodology in the case of a Master's thesis):

In a broader sense, the thesis contributes to the debates about photography's current status and changing nature.

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

The work is a satisfying interpretation of the work of Thomas Demands (and several other artists mentioned in developing partial arguments), using well-applied concepts of Peircean semiotics. I also appreciate the ability to think more broadly semiotically (references to Barthes's distinction of studium and punctum, etc.).

Logical construction and structuring of the thesis:

The thesis has a standard and logical structure.

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

From the formal point of view, the work is, in principle, correct, but the author could have been more thorough in the final editing of the text (there are, for example, empty spaces between some paragraphs).

Work with information sources:

An automated plagiarism check did not reveal any flaws. The thesis is original. With regard to the given type of thesis, the author uses well enough relevant sources of a scholarly nature.

Level of language, style and terminology:

The linguistic and stylistic quality of the thesis is not very good. The text deserves proofreading. In some parts, the text is almost incomprehensible.

Evaluator's overall summary:

The thesis is a good presentation of the connections between semiotics and art or the application of selected semiotic concepts to interpret the work of Thomas Demands. The author also reflects on the changing nature and status of photography. Apart from the level of language, the text meets the requirements of this type of thesis.

Questions and topics for discussion at the oral defence:

In the thesis, you suggest, among other things, that photography is losing its that-has-been nature and that it can no longer capture the decisive moment. Could you elaborate on what is replacing these "qualities" of photography? Furthermore, how does the work of Thomas Demands challenge these qualities?

Recommendation of the thesis for the oral defence:

I recommend the thesis for defence.

Recommended grade: B

Date of elaboration of this assessment: 3/6/2023



Michal Šimůnek

3/6/2023

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Name of the thesis opponent

(date and signature)