AKADEMIE MÚZICKÝCH UMĚNÍ V PRAZE
DAMU FAMU HAMU

OPPONENT'S ASSESSMENT OF A WRITTEN THESIS

Thesis title: Iconoclasm, semiotics of Leninfall
Thesis author: Maksym Toussaint
Programme of study: Photography
Programme type: continuing Master's

Definition of objectives and their fulfilment:

The thesis of Maxim Toussaint examines the so-called Leninfall in Ukraine and, in a broader historical context, analyses iconoclasm on several other examples: statues and symbols of, for example, Dzierzynski, Stalin, Bamiyan Buddha, or Saddam Hussein.

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

The work is particularly topical given the current war in Ukraine. The author very well places the manifestations of iconoclasm in Ukraine in the context of historical events, especially the Maidan protests and the re-erection of Lenin statues in the territories currently occupied by Russia.

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

The work is a good study of contemporary forms of iconoclasm based on an analysis of historical events.

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:

The thesis meets the formal requirements.

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 good.

Evaluator's overall summary:

I appreciate the detailed presentation of the historical context in which the author anchors the interpretations of the studied acts of iconoclasm. The text meets the expectations associated with this type of thesis.

Questions and topics for discussion at the oral defence:

In the conclusion of the thesis, you justify acts of iconoclasm. However, at the same time, you suggest that at least some of the statues symbolizing the past should always be preserved (e.g., in museums), especially to preserve the symbolic layer of the part of history they represent. In such a case, how would you ensure these symbols do not become objects of adoration in museum exhibitions? Furthermore, would it not be possible to consider the relocation of a statue from one public space (e.g., a square or a park) to another public space (e.g., a museum) as contrary to the purpose of iconoclasm, which usually calls for a decisive rejection of the condemned past?

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   4/6/2023

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Name of the thesis opponent   (date and signature)