

# POSUDEK OPONENTA PÍSEMNÉ KVALIFIKAČNÍ PRÁCE

**Název práce:** Psychiatry and Photography: Visibility is a Trap  
**Autor/ka práce:** Sarah Marie Kidder  
**Studijní program:** Fotografie  
**Typ studijního programu:** magisterský

**Vymezení cíle a jeho naplnění:**

A

**Aktuálnost tématu (a relevance zvolené metodologie v případě diplomové práce):**

A

**Odborný přínos, původnost práce a její případné využití v praxi:**

B

**Logická stavba a členění práce:**

B

**Formální úprava a náležitosti práce včetně jejího rozsahu:**

A

**Práce s informačními zdroji:**

A

**Jazyková, stylistická a terminologická úroveň:**

A

**Celkové/vlastní shrnutí hodnotitele:**

Sarah Kidder's thesis critically evaluates what role has played the medium of photography in the medical specialty of Psychiatry. Unsurprisingly, Kidder pays particular attention to the classical case of Jean-Martin Charcot's Salpêtrière. Charcot's practice serves her also as an ideal place for presentation of her main argument about the limits of the photography as a diagnostic tool. The idea that photography should have objectively record behavioral phenotypic expression of "hysteria" falls apart when we realize to what extent the pictures of "stars o Hysteria", such as Charcot favorite Marie Blanche Wittmann, were performative in nature. Thus, in case of

photographic portraits of another Salpêtrière patient, Louise Augustine, Kidder describes how Augustin's for-the-camera performances "become progressively more haunting and kinetic" and that "her gaze intensifies as she appears to gain confidence in her own performance". On one of the pictures Augustine shall even "cooly confront her audience in an almost seductive manner".

Other, more recent, chapters form the history of relationship between photography and Psychiatry follow: among them the one dedicated to the so called antipsychiatry movement of the 60s and its famous photobook presentation *Morire di Classe*. I appreciate that also here Kidder does not abandon her critical stance: first, when she discusses the societal consequences of the period experiments at simply disbanding psychiatric institutions, and then while analyzing the photobook itself. Rather than giving an "impartial record" of life of patients internalized in psychiatric hospitals, it served as a political instrument or even a piece of propaganda in the struggle for institutional change.

All in all, Kidder's thesis provides us with a great overview of the engaging topic that is moreover underlined with a clear, and still unfinished, agenda of bettering the treatment psychiatric patients in general.

#### **Otázky a náměty k diskuzi při obhajobě:**

The tendency to objectify the psychiatric diagnostics appears to be still current, only the photography was replaced with the algorithmic fMRI. I would ask Kidder to comment on these more recent currents in Psychiatry and how it fits (or doesn't) into her overall argument.

Doporučení práce k obhajobě: *yes*  
Navrhovaná klasifikace: A  
Datum vypracování posudku: *4. 6. 2023*

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Jméno vedoucího práce  
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(datum a podpis)