

SUPERVISOR'S ASSESSMENT OF A WRITTEN THESIS

Thesis title: 08. Bún bò Nam Bộ
Thesis author: Mike Ma
Programme of study: Photography
Programme type: continuing Master's

Definition of objectives and their fulfilment: A

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

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

Logical construction and structuring of the thesis: A

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

Level of language, style and terminology: A

Reviewer's opinion on the result of the check by the Theses system: this is an original work with all sources properly acknowledged

Evaluator's overall summary:

Globalization is often viewed as a process of cultural standardization and unification. Mike Ma's thesis challenges this schematic narrative and demonstrates the necessity to analyse cultural exchange instead in terms of circulation and negotiation, creolization and domestication, giving and taking. He opens his thesis by situating himself as an outsider, stranger or alien thus referencing the tradition of extraterritorial cultural criticism that emerged with Georg Simmel or Siegfried Kracauer, who both paid attention to the "surface" of reality and investigated seemingly marginal, unimportant and mundane phenomena as symptoms of complex and directly invisible social tendencies. Mike chose the low-brow images on menus and signage of Vietnamese bistros in Prague that we look at, pass by and use every day without noticing to disentangle the complex web of images, food, geography and ethnicity and offers a rich and thought-provoking reading of the Vietnamese diaspora in Central Europe.

In a masterly manner, the thesis zooms in and out to explore various strands of the story, offering original readings of the genealogy of food imaging and modelling, restaurant display as well as of the dishes and recipes as they mutually remediate one another. The analysis of the SAPA advertising studio, based on field research and interviews, is brilliant. I especially appreciate that the theoretical thesis was developed hand in hand with the author's final artistic project.

Questions and topics for discussion at the oral defence:

Could your research be extended to include, e.g., local printed recipe books or social media profiles of the diaspora members?

**Recommendation of the thesis
for the oral defence: YES
Recommended grade: A
Date of elaboration of this
assessment: 4.6.2024**

.... Tomáš Dvořák.

Name of the thesis supervisor

.... 4.6.2024. 
(date and signature)