

REVIEW

on the materials submitted for participation in a competition for „**Professor**“ in the field of higher education 5. Technical Sciences, professional field 5.13. General Engineering, scientific specialty „Ergonomics and Industrial Design“ in the discipline “Theory of Composition”

In the competition for professor, published in the State Gazette, No 26/21.03.2023 and on the Internet site of the University of Forestry with code WWI-P-0223-103 for the needs of the Department of “Interior and Furniture Design” at the Faculty of Forest Industry, as a candidate participates Assoc. Prof. Stela Borisova Tasheva, PhD., Arch., Faculty of Forestry, Department of “Interior and Furniture Design.”

Reviewer: Regina Pavlova Raycheva, Arch., Ph.D., Professor in Professional Field 5.13 General Engineering, retired

1. Brief biographical data for the candidate

Stela Borisova Tasheva, Arch., Ph.D., Assoc. Prof, was born on Oct. 11th, 1978, in Sofia. She graduated from the National Natural Science and Mathematics High School “Acad. Lyubomir Tchatalov” in Sofia. From 1995 to 2001, is studying Architecture Master Program at the University of Architecture, Building and Geodesy (UACG) in Sofia. She graduates at the Department of Residential Buildings in 2001. From 2003 to 2009 she practices as professional architect in different architectural studios in Botevgrad and Sofia. From 2009 till 2012 is a post-graduate student at BAS (Bulgarian Academy of Sciences), the Institute of Art Research. Her Doctoral Thesis was defended in 2012 and she acquired the Science Degree in Theory and History of Architecture. Later in 2012, she acquired the academic position of “chief assistant” and in 2015 she was granted the academic position of Associate Professor at the Institute of Art Research at BAS, and the academic position Associate Professor at the University of Forestry in 2018. As of 30.03.2023, her period of service at the University of Forestry at the Department of Interior and Furniture Design is 5 years 18 months.

2. Correspondence of the submitted documents and materials of the applicant according to the Rules of the Development of academic staff at the University of Forestry.

The submitted documents and materials of Assoc. Prof. Stela Tasheva fully comply with the requirements according to the Rules of Development of Academic Staff at the University of Forestry in Sofia. Documents and publications are neatly arranged; two monographs and bound printouts of works are presented in the order of Self-Rating Statement, without being numbered. For some of the printout pages are not arranged in order (No 20).

3. Assessment of the candidate’s educational and pedagogical activities (work with students and PhD students)

The candidate Stela Borisova Tasheva started teaching as part-time assistant as early as 2012 in “Theory of Composition” for the Engineering Design Bachelor Program. Her period of employment at the Art Research Institute at BAS (Bulgarian Academy of Science) is a total of 11 years, 3 months, and 23 days, of which 5 years and 8 months as Associate Professor. She acquired academic position “Associate Professor, High School” at the University of Forestry from 2018 till present. From 2018 till 2021, she is employed for part-time (4 hrs. a day), and after 2021 is

employed full-time, with a total period of employment till present of 5 years and 18 days as of March 30th, 2023. Candidate Stela Borisova Tasheva lectures and leads seminars in “Theory of Composition”, “Formbuilding” for Engineering Design (Interior and Furniture Design) Bachelor program; “Design Projects Presentation”, “Introduction to Urban Design” and “Lighting Fixtures Design” for the Engineering Design Master Program. The assessment for her teaching activity is very good. The candidate introduced collective assessment of students under “Formbuilding” and “Theory of Composition”, which is implemented in the presence of other invited lecturers of the Department of Interior and Furniture Design. Students present their course work in the so-called Video marathon to invited teachers and are assessed. The candidate also participates in the teacher team in the annual study module “Design Project”, carried out in Semester 5 with 3rd year design students. Assoc. Prof. Stela Tasheva also tutors diploma students in the Bachelor program, a total of 5 till present. The candidate also has three successful Ph.D. students: 2 from Bulgarian Academy of Science and 1 from the University of Forestry. This indicator totals 120 points in Self-Rating Statement.

4. Assessment of candidate’s scientific, scientific-applied and publishing activities

Candidate Stela Tasheva, Assoc. Prof., participates in the competition with all necessary documents and works (total of 43), summarized in the Self-Rating Statement (No 8) as follows:

A. Dissertation Thesis for acquiring the education and science degree Ph.D. Doctor – **50 points.**

B3. Habilitation Thesis – a Monograph, 126 p., **1 – 100 points.**

Г5. Published Monograph, which is not presented as basic habilitation thesis, co-authored, 176 p. **1 – 0 points.**

Г6. A published book based on defended Ph.D. Thesis for acquiring educational and science degree Doctor, **1 – 30 points.**

Г7. Science papers in referenced and indexed journals in world-renown databases with science information, **6 – 160 points.**

Г8. Science papers in non-referenced journals, peer-reviewed or edited collective volumes, total of **31 – 383,33 points.**

Г9. Published chapters in collective monograph, total of **3 – 15 points.**

The presented Self-Rating Statement for Compliance of Science Production with Minimal National Requirements (under No 8 in Document List) is done correctly and demonstrates the basic achievements (published monograph, books, papers, and reports at conferences at home and abroad and citations of science publications) with the following exceptions:

- The publication included under No Г5.1 is not a monograph but a collection of papers already published in English, Russian and Bulgarian languages and repeats their content in Bulgarian language. That is why I am of the opinion that the 15 points given by the candidate should not be accepted for the total points for indicator group „Г“.

- The theme “Building of BAS” is repeated in publications with numbers Г8.16, Г8.20 и Г9.2, of which the last publication should not be accepted (10 points), being almost fully identical with Г8.20, published in English. Thus, the total points for indicator group „Г“ is actually 588,33.

Total points for indicator group “A” – **50.**

Total points for indicator group “B” – **100.**

Total points for indicator group „Г“ – **588,33**.

Total points for indicator group “Д“ – **156**.

Total points for indicator group “Е” – **170**.

The total of all groups in such case equals **1064,33**, which significantly exceeds the required 600 points for academic position “professor”, according to Rules of Development of Academic Staff at the University of Forestry.

4.1 Participation in scientific, scientific-applied, and educational projects

The candidate participates in science project “Bulgaria’s Art and Culture in the 20th C”, financed by “Science Research Fund” in the framework of Contract №ДФНИ-КО2/9 from 12.12.2014. The results of this research are published in a collective volume with the same title, co-authored with 6 researchers.

In its essence, the work for the book “Architectural Images. Bulgaria in the second half of the 20th century” – Volume I, represents a research project, financed by the National Institute for Immovable Cultural Heritage and the Chamber of Architects in Bulgaria. This publication is introduced together with several exhibitions and events. It constitutes an important step towards the evaluation of Bulgarian cultural heritage of the 20th century.

Total points for indicator group “Е” are **170**.

4.2 Characterization of published scientific results.

The candidate Stela Tasheva, Assoc. Prof., has submitted the following publications, classified **by type**: Habilitation thesis – monograph, 1; co-authored monograph – 1; 40 publications in scientific journals as follows: papers in scientific journals with IF: none; papers in journals, referenced in Web of Science and/or SCOPUS – 6; papers in non-referenced journals – 23; in edited collective volumes – 8; in collective monographs – 3. **By significance**, the candidate submitted as follows: works in journals with IF – none, papers in journals, referenced in Web of Science and/or SCOPUS – 6; papers in non-referenced journals – 23; papers in edited collective volumes – 8; chapters in collective monographs – 3. **By place of publication**, the candidate submitted: published in Bulgaria – 27; published abroad – 13, a total of 40. Classified according to **publishing language**, the candidate presented 20 works in Bulgarian, 2 in Russian, and 18 in English. According to **number of co-authors**, the works are stand-alone – 11, with one co-author – 25; with two co-authors – 2; and with six co-authors is 1 publication.

In Indicator group „Г“, Assoc. Prof. Stela Tasheva accumulates a total of **588,33 points**, thus exceeding three times the minimum of 200 points according to Rules of Development of Academic Staff at the University of Forestry.

4.3 Reflection of Candidate's Scientific Publications in Literature (known citations)

Д12. Citations or reviews in journals, referenced and indexed in world-renown data bases with science information or in monographs or collective works, total of **10 – 100 points**.

Д13. Citations in monographs and collective volumes peer reviewed, **2 – 6 points**.

Д14. Citations or reviews in non-referenced journals peer reviewed, **10 – 20 points**.

Д15. Reviews in specialized journals for realized author products in the field of architecture or design, **3 – 30 points**.

In the group of indicators „Д”, the candidate has a total of **156 points**, and it exceeds the required 100 points and is proof that Assoc. Prof. Stela Tasheva is a well-known researcher both among the scientists in BAS and lecturers from UACG, UF and other higher education institutions, teaching architecture and interior design both at home and abroad.

4.4 Contributions in the candidate's work (scientific, scientific applied, applied)

The candidate Stela Borisova Tasheva, Assoc. Prof., has published in journals referenced in Web of Science and/or SCOPUS and has taken part in conferences of BAS, UF, and other universities. Her research work for large encyclopedic publications is very valuable from the point of view of evaluating Bulgarian architecture; they are of specific interest for other researchers of Bulgarian Cultural Heritage.

The scientific results come mainly in the field of theoretic research of architecture and its historical context; its links with other visual and applied arts; of important creators and significant developments in professional practice and architectural education. Questions of digital means in architectural and product design from the point of view of compositional principles. We need to specify that the candidate has looked mainly at design for architecture and interior design, and less so at product design.

Without being fully exhaustive, we could say that the work of the candidate demonstrates the following contributions:

1. Scientific Contributions:

1.1. In habilitation thesis (monograph), under No B3.1:

- a. Clarifying and analyzing the terms “Engineer and Architectural Graphics” and “Computer Graphics”.
- b. Tracing tendencies in contemporary compositional development of architectural works, influenced by the introduction of digital means in architecture. The following tendencies were established: that of perception of scale as compositional principle (over-scale in advertising and architecture), the use of Gestalt-Theory (the attitude towards illusion and ambivalence) and the representation of movement (by means of illusionistic lighting approaches or direct transformations in architecture).
- c. In the newest history of architectural profession and education, tracing the introduction of digital means. This is done by means of researching basic publications, the development of education and the professional practice of architects and product designers. The candidate is looking at three definite periods: before the 1990-s, the years between 1990-s and 2010; and after 2010.

1.2. In the submitted other publications, major contribution is the theoretic research in the field of contemporary Bulgarian and world architecture, and less so, of contemporary product design.

- a. Works that research the essence and significance of architectural developments at home and abroad and their interrelation for the period beginning of 20th C to the present, with accent on the second half of the century, in the works with numbers Г8.8, Г8.11, Г8.16, Г8.17, Г8.18, Г8.19, Г8.20, Г8.21, Г8.22, Г8. 24, Г8.26, Г8.28.
- b. The evaluation and analysis of Socialist period in Bulgarian and its links with world development of architecture is typical for the contribution of the candidate. This is true for works under numbers Г8.1, Г9.1, Г9.3, as well as for the publication “Architectural Images. Bulgaria in the second half of 20th C”. This work was not listed in her Self-Rating Statement under “Publications”, but under “Exhibition Reviews”.
- c. Analysis of works of famous architects. Here are both theorists from Antiquity (Vitruvius) and from the 20th C (Le Corbusier), Bulgarian 20th C architects (Pencho Koychev, Naum Torbov), in works numbered Г8.2, Г8.4, Г8.6, Г8.13, Г9.2. Here

also belongs the paper on couples in art and architecture (C.R. McIntosh and Margaret McDonald McIntosh, Robert and Sonia Delauney, Joseph and Annie Albers, Peter and Allison Smithson, Charles Eames and Ray Keiser) under No Г7.5. Of specific interest is the research entitled “Le Corbusier and After-War architectural Graphics in Bulgaria”, under No Г8.6. In this, the periods of ideologically imposed under-estimating or, on the contrary, the highly valued attitude towards the key figure of 20th C architecture is obvious.

- d. Research on forms and modifications in contemporary architectural graphics and its impact on artefacts and realizations (habilitation thesis under No B3.1);
 - e. Research on presence of architectural motifs on objects or products of art and design (co-authored with Assoc. Prof. Sasha Lozanova). In this field, cinematic architectural ambience is included, as the background for cinematographic actions, under numbers Г7.4, Г7.6, Г8.11.
2. Scientific-Applied Contributions:
 - a. Recording of work practices, forms of education and digital means techniques, works with numbers B3.1, Г8.3, Г8.9. The Habilitation Thesis points out three major periods of development of digital means at home: till the 1990-s, from 1990-s till 2010, from 2010 till present.
 - b. Introduction of tendencies in architectural composition by means of digital means in architectural lighting, illusionistic effects (mapping), Augmented Reality and other transformations, in works number B3.1 and Г8.24, Г8.26.
 - c. Establishing the presence of the following design tendencies: emotional design, narrative design, club design and intuitive design in work No B3.1.
 3. Applied Contributions:
 - a. Accessible and systematized representation of key terms and solution in architectural composition, such as symmetry and asymmetry, balance, harmony, hierarchy, statics, dynamics, Gestalt – perception, representation of space and movement in 2D-ambience, search of emotional or semiotic impact, etc. in work No B3.1. These are applied in the field of education (secondary and higher education), with the aim to effectively introduce students to Theory of Composition.

5. Assessment of the applicant’s personal contribution

After reviewing the submitted materials on the competition for the academic position ‘professor’ I believe the candidate has a good ratio of co-authored works (28) against single-authored ones (11). One Division Protocol is submitted for works co-authored with Assoc. Prof. Sasha Lozanova (50% division). For the three (in fact, four) large, collected works under numbers Г9.1, Г9.2, Г9.3, and the book and exhibition “Architectural Images. Bulgaria in the second half of 20th C”, accordingly listed as Reviews under numbers Д15.1, Д15.2 and Д15.3, there are marked separate chapters authored by candidate Assoc. Prof. Stela Tasheva. I find the personal contribution of the candidate to be very clear, and to be her own. The candidate is well-known in her capacity of researcher of Bulgarian architecture of the 20th C, she is cited both at home and abroad, and has duly earned the interest of community and specialists with the above-mentioned book and exhibitions.

6. Critical remarks

Despite her unquestioned achievements (participation in co-authored publications on history and theory of architecture in Bulgaria), I recommend more single-authored publications, as well as publishing in IF science journals.

I have the following remark, concerning the listing of contributions of work B3.1 (Digital means and Design: Theory of Composition, 2022): they are too short. On the contrary, in the Contributions Statement, the candidate managed to do so on 4 pages. The above-mentioned work puts forward the thesis, that (quote) “Digital means have their own significant contribution to the design process that exceeds “thinking by hand” (p. 15), typical for the “paper recording”. This thesis, though, contradicts the author’s statement on page 8, that in her work, she “is interested in the initial phases of the emergence of architectural composition”. It is namely in the initial phases of architectural design, that hand sketching (although it may be done on tablet) has key role. Computer graphics is of importance later in the design process for research on variants of already created solution and the precise development of documentation, as well as the multiple changes that must be done. These variations, though, emerge only after the first idea is generated. Many examples of famous designers’ work prove that the hand sketches come before digital means; such examples should be traced in the monograph. Last, but not least, in the monograph we see repetition of two other papers, under Г8.3 and Г8.9, although they are further developed in the monograph text.

Another remark is, that in the monograph under number Г5.1, entitled “Architecture in Art – Art in Architecture”, co-authored with Assoc. Prof. Sasha Lozanova, during reviewing it was noticed that 10 of total 11 chapters from the work coincided with 11 works with numbers Г7.4, Г7.6, Г8.11, Г8.14, Г8.16, Г8.17, Г8.23, Г8.31, Г8.33 и Г8.36. This publication, be it with nice graphic design, in fact is a collection of already published papers under the theme of architecture and art. That is why I cannot consider it to be a monograph, but only as collective volume.


As a recommendation, it would be useful for the candidate, in her capacity of lecturer at the UF, to publish study textbooks or study aid materials and further research interior and product design.

7. Personal impressions

I know Assoc. Prof. arch. Stela Tasheva in the capacity of part-time assistant in 2015, and later as lecturer in “Theory of Composition” and “Formbuilding” for the Bachelor program of “Engineering Design”. As a colleague, the candidate demonstrates communication skills, research interests, and good relations with other colleagues in “Interior and Furniture Design” Department. I value highly her enthusiasm with regards to the use of novel teaching methods for the Engineering Design students, as well as her work with Doctoral students. The candidate has three successful Ph.D. students, one in UF and two in BAS, her previous place of work. I can wish the candidate successful work further in all fields as a lecturer and researcher.

8. Conclusion

In spite of the critical remarks made, which are not meant to depreciate the achievements of the candidate, and in connection with the above mentioned results of research and publishing activity, teaching activity and scientific contribution, I propose that Stela Borisova Tasheva, Arch., Ph.D., Assoc. Prof be elected as a „Professor“ in the discipline “Theory of Composition” in Professional Field 5.13 “General Engineering”, scientific specialty “Ergonomics and Industrial Design”

Signature of the reviewer:  7
(Regina Raycheva, arch, Ph.D., Prof.)

Review submitted on:

27.07.2023