

STATEMENT OF OPINION

by Prof. Veneta Doycheva Ivanova, PhD, NATFA Kr. Sarafov,

Regarding the candidacy of Petko Alexandrov Tanchev, participant in the competition announced by AMDFA Prof. Asen Diamandiev – Plovdiv, for Associate Professor in the specialty Scenography, higher education field Arts, professional field 8.2, Fine Arts, **Stage Technique and Technology and Scenography**, announced in State Gazette issue 30 of 27.03.2026.

Petko Tanchev, PhD, belongs to the young generation of Bulgarian artists who move freely and successfully across different fields of the performing arts. He works as a visual artist, as a theater scenographer, and is actively present in the field of theater pedagogy. His professional path has been shaped by his culture, education and talent. He completed a master's degree in scenography (2010) and defended the educational and scientific PhD degree in digital arts (2023) at the National Academy of Art in Sofia. Throughout his creative career, one clear and consistent line stands out: broad and deep interests in the field of digital technology and in weaving these tools into the expressive means of theater, spectacle forms and purely visual artistic provocations. I would particularly stress that Petko Tanchev combines the creative specifics of classical stage arts (theater) with the most advanced developments in the field of image-making and technologically generated imagery, achieving impressive aesthetic results and thereby expanding and enriching the dimensions of theatricality and stagecraft. This feature of his work is also his most important contribution and a unique creative quality.

What stands out in the candidate's biography is the range of aesthetic horizons and the variety of creative tasks he has carried out. Among his many projects, the artistic actions connected with the program of Plovdiv 2019, European Capital of Culture, stand out in particular. The same distinguished series includes the engagements noted in his biographical summary: in 2022 he created the visual environment for the opening of the Tesla Light Festival in Novi Sad, Serbia, part of the official program of Novi Sad 2022, European Capital of Culture, and in 2023 he designed the lighting design and mapping installation for Mystery 0, Mysteries of Transition, a special event for the opening ceremony of Eleusis 2023, European Capital of Culture in Greece. These projects undeniably confirm that Petko Tanchev is an artist with an international presence at some of the most prestigious cultural forums. He has received numerous awards both in Bulgaria (the Union of Bulgarian Actors' Ikar awards for scenography and technical execution, and the Plovdiv Award for audiovisual art) and abroad.

He is also active in creating installations for various commercial and media brands, and has taken part in numerous festivals, workshops and international exhibitions.

I will focus in more detail on the projects he has realized on the stages of leading Bulgarian drama and opera theaters. It is notable that Petko Tanchev works in a stable, ongoing collaboration with the creative team of director Diana Dobрева, and that his distinctive style contributes to the striking spectacle characteristic of her directorial signature. I have in mind above all the productions *Odysseus* and *Silk* at Plovdiv Drama Theatre, and *Moby Dick* at the Ivan Vazov National Theatre, for which he authored the media design. I would also note the productions submitted for the competition: the opera *The Magic Flute* at Plovdiv State Opera and the ballet *Cinderella* at Ruse State Opera.

The strongest quality of his digitally generated visual-stage solutions is how well they harmonize with the overall theatrical style of each production. Petko Tanchev offers digital imagery that doesn't merely resonate with the dramatic unfolding of events, but manages to extend and intensify the line of the stage action. Striking, surprising and assertive as they are as visual solutions, his visualizations never stand apart; instead, they become woven into the very fabric of the productions. The approaches range is impressive. In some cases, the digital planes serve as an active and pulsating dynamic background. In others, the images shimmer thanks to the plastic surfaces, textures and colors onto which they are imprinted, instantaneously transforming the visible toward the metaphorical, and even the metaphysical. The active weaving-in of digital imagery creates striking effects at culminating moments, while over the course of the narrative it plays the role of a visual storyteller, a commentator reinforcing emphasis; the production often uses his solutions as a heightened visual equivalent of key parts of the narrative (prologue, dramatic climax, epilogue). Beyond these more formal and functionally legible uses, the images generated by Petko Tanchev's creative talent also register on the level of dramatic relationships between characters. The visual world creates a virtual web in the especially delicate connections and emotional experiences of the characters, an expression of inner personal life, a poetic bridge to the characters' emotions, fears, hopes, defeats and victories over themselves. The audience seems drawn in by the richness of the visual experience. This is the most significant merit of Petko Tanchev's style as a visual-stage artist: he opens up surprising directions within the stage environment. Paradoxically, through this virtual dimension he intensifies the fleeting, ephemeral essence of theatrical art, and thanks to this doubled immateriality, he arrives at the very core of stage art as a synthesis of word, gesture and visible image.

Petko Tanchev could be counted among the creators of striking visual theater, but he could equally be described as an artist working in the field of immersive theater. Above all, what remains is a theatrical sensibility expressed through means that expand and enrich the dimensions of contemporary theatricality. The most advanced technologies lend new communicative power to the stage environment and engage with present-day sensibility. It is especially important that this technological dimension gives rise to emotional impact, and this is one of the faces of theatrical art today.

Here, too, Petko Tanchev's research activity matters. The book *Visual Programming: Creative Tools in TouchDesigner*, written on the basis of his defended dissertation, makes a contribution on both the theoretical and the applied level. Evidence of this can be seen in the citations of his research ideas, which he offers as knowledge toward clarifying new concepts, the application of skills in stage technology, and above all, toward understanding the possibilities for artistic impact and stage potential inherent in digital technology. On the academic level, these positions are useful and necessary.

Petko Tanchev works successfully as a tutor at the National Academy of Art, Sofia, and at the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts, Plovdiv.

The submitted documents show that he meets the scientometric requirements for the position of Associate Professor.

I am convinced that he possesses the qualities of both a creative artist and an educator, and that he thereby fully meets the high criteria for the announced competition position.

I vote YES.

05.08.2026

Prof. Veneta Doycheva, PhD