

STATEMENT OF OPINION

on the body of research work of **Petko Tanchev, PhD**, submitted for participation in the competition for the academic position of Associate Professor, professional field 8.2, Fine Arts, Stage Technique and Technology and Scenography major (announced in State Gazette issue 30 of 27.03.2026)

Statement of Opinion

Prof. Venelin Shurelov, PhD

1. Information on the competition and procedure

This statement of opinion has been prepared on the basis of the materials submitted for participation in the competition for the academic position of Associate Professor, announced by the Department of Fine Arts at AMDFA Prof. Asen Diamandiev, Plovdiv.

The submitted documentation has been compiled in accordance with the regulatory requirements and allows for a comprehensive assessment of the candidate's research, artistic-creative, and teaching activity.

2. Information on the candidate

Petko Tanchev, PhD, is an author with a clearly recognizable professional profile in the fields of digital art, scenography, and interactive media. His development is marked by a consistent combination of artistic practice, research, and teaching, three directions that complement one another and together form a solid academic profile.

In recent years, the candidate has established himself as one of the authors working most purposefully at the intersection of the performing arts, visual programming, and generative technologies. His extensive artistic practice includes work in theater, opera, video mapping, interactive installations, and public space, while his teaching activity is directed toward building a new type of competency, tied to algorithmic thinking and digital artistic production.

An especially important quality of the candidate's professional development is that his research does not exist apart from his artistic practice, but arises directly from it. I regard this interdependence between theory and practice as one of the most essential characteristics of his academic work.

3. Description of the materials submitted for the candidacy

The main habilitation thesis, Visual Programming: Creative Tools in TouchDesigner, is the first comprehensive Bulgarian study devoted to visual programming as an artistic method. The text goes beyond the scope of a technical manual, offering a historical, theoretical and practical model for understanding algorithmic artistic production. The author convincingly shows how visual programming becomes a distinct artistic language with its own principles of composition, interaction and spatial thinking.

The publications submitted consistently develop this subject matter and outline a sustained interest in generative systems, interactive media and digital scenography. Alongside the academic texts, the competition file includes substantial artistic-creative output realized in theatrical, opera and ballet productions, multimedia installations and public-space projects. Particularly striking are the productions Moby Dick, The Great Gatsby, The Magic Flute, Rusalka, and Cinderella, as well as the video-mapping installation The Clock, which reached the finalist selection of the international 2024 Yifeng Light Art Open Competition.

4. Research and artistic-creative contributions

In my view, the main contribution of Petko Tanchev, PhD, is not exhausted by his introduction of a specific programming environment into artistic practice. The significance of his work is broader than that. Consistently and cogently, he builds a field of interaction between scenography, visual programming, interactive technology and generative art, offering a model for their application both in artistic creation and in academic teaching.

The candidate's artistic output is no less convincing. The stage works presented demonstrate a clearly recognizable authorial signature, grounded in the synthesis of scenographic thinking, digital technology and spatial composition. It is especially valuable that the technological solutions the author develops do not remain confined to the realm of experiment, but become a natural component of his artistic language and find convincing application across various stage genres.

I also see a substantial contribution in the candidate's teaching activity. His accumulated experience in the Digital Arts master's program at the National Academy of Art, his development of specialized disciplines, and his work with students all show a well-formed pedagogical concept and a consistent commitment to developing education in this new field.

5. Personal impressions of the candidate

I have known Petko Tanchev's professional work for years and have observed firsthand his development as an artist, scenographer, and tutor. My impression is of an author with clear professional consistency, analytical thinking, and the ability to turn complex technological processes into a convincing artistic tool.

Among the candidate's strongest qualities, I would single out his ability to build a connection between technological competence and artistic sensibility. In his work, digital technology never becomes an end in itself, but functions as a means of expanding artistic language and creating new forms of interaction between space, image and audience.

I am convinced that his accumulated practical experience, international activity and consistent teaching work make Petko Tanchev, PhD, one of the significant representatives of the new generation of lecturers in the field of digital and stage arts.

6. Conclusion

Based on the research submitted, the artistic-creative output, the teaching activity, and the candidate's professional development, I consider that Petko Tanchev, PhD, convincingly meets the requirements for the academic position of Associate Professor.

I particularly value the consistency with which the candidate develops the interrelationship between artistic practice, technological innovation, and academic teaching.

It is precisely this coherence that I regard as the most substantial contribution of his work, and as convincing grounds for supporting his candidacy.

On the basis of the above, I give my positive assessment and, with full conviction, propose that the esteemed scientific jury support the candidacy of Petko Tanchev, PhD, for the academic position of Associate Professor.

Prof. Venelin Shurelov, PhD,

Sofia, 2026

/signature: illegible/