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Review of the doctoral dissertation of Mr Walter Rindone, entitled *The imprinted and the reprinted image* the field of art in the discipline of fine arts and art conservation

1. Basic information about the doctoral student

Mr Walter Rindone is a graduate of the two-cycle study programme at the Academy of Fine Arts of Catania, where he studied in the years 2009 -2017 obtaining a Bachelor's degree in the Multimedia Faculty in 2014 and a Master's degree in 2017 in the second level programme, in the Graphic Design Faculty. In the years 2015 - 2017 he studied at the Combined Techniques Studio at the Władysław Strzemiński Academy of Fine Arts in Łódź as part of the Erasmus+ programme. In the academic year 2017 - 2018 he completed an internship in the Combined Techniques Studio supervised by Professor Sławomir Ćwiek, at the Faculty of Printmaking and Painting. In 2018, he started his doctoral studies at the Eugeniusz Geppert Academy of Art and Design in Wrocław. During the course of his doctoral studies he served as an assistant in the Serigraph Studio supervised by dr Marta Kubiak. His doctoral thesis supervisor is prof. **Christopher Nowicki.**

2. Evaluation of artistic achievements as well as didactic and organisational activities

The documentation presented for evaluation comprising a list of achievements and activities of Mr Walter Rindone is complete and meets all the requirements, and it should be emphasised that some of his achievements are of an international character. The list

is a testimony to the progression of the doctoral student's artistic development during his work on the doctoral dissertation. Particularly intense exhibition activity occurred in the years 2018, 2019 and 2020. During this time, the artist participated in 8 exhibitions, including 3 solo exhibitions and 5 group exhibitions at home and abroad. In 2018 he presented the exhibition *Shadows of Babylon* at the Centre for Artistic Initiatives in Łódź, in late 2018 and early 2019 he presented his works at the Górna Cultural Centre in Łódź at the exhibition *Villains Armageddon*. In January 2020, his exhibition *The Tide* was shown at the Imaginarium Gallery of the Łódź House of Culture. In 2020, the artist presented his works at the international exhibition organized by the Graficom Graphic Laboratory, the Experimental Graphic Studio in Kazan, and at the Zeniths exhibition, a presentation of students' works at the Wrocław Contemporary Museum. It should also be mentioned that since spring 2020 exhibition activity has been limited due to the pandemic.

The documentation also includes a list describing his teaching experience, publications and information on activities for the benefit of the university. Considering the wealth and diversity of achievements as well as academic and artistic activities carried out, I evaluate this part positively.

3. Interpretation and reflections on the doctoral work, including the artistic work and the written dissertation.

The work of Walter Rindone does not allow for a short and concise summary, defining its basic characteristics, assumptions and ideas. It is impossible to make it explicit, to extract its essence, to reduce it to the simplest and most important ideas, observations, reflections and visions. It requires a close examination and analysis of its various manifestations in their complex and complicated formal and semantic structure. This work is consistent and coherent in its message, revealing the artistic maturity of the author, who formulates conclusions about the surrounding reality in a suggestive and convincing manner. The author has created his own catalogue of codes and symbols referring to the chaotic and changeable contemporary reality in its social dimension.

The first obvious layer of the artist's work is the technical one. The works are made

in the anastatic reprint technique, which has not yet gained a firm foothold in contemporary artistic printmaking. This technique still remains within the realm of experimental techniques. Anastatic reprint is a method of image transfer originally used to transfer a drawing onto a lithographic stone, i.e. a technique which supports the basic function of lithography. The doctoral student elevates this technique to the role of the main means of expression. In Mr Walter Rindone's artistic practice, reprinting is a means and an end at the same time, the printing in his case taking place from a paper matrix directly onto paper, without transferring the image onto the lithographic stone. One could say that we are dealing here with planographic printing in which the transfer process takes place, as in lithography, on the basis of the varied level of inkiness of certain planes of the image. The printing planes (toner from the photocopier) are the printing area, while the areas devoid of toner pigment (not inky) do not transfer the image, leaving white spots. This is quite a unique printing technique, still unpopular and therefore of interest in the printmaking community. However, it probably enables the doctoral student the best, fullest embodiment of his own method of creating an image which is based on a collage.

Already during his studies at the Academy of Fine Arts in Catania, Mr Walter Rindone showed a strong inclination to develop his artistic message based on the collage technique. Watching his current works, I get the impression that he consistently and genuinely follows his creative perspective and working method established during his studies. This is a specific form of narration, requiring imagination and skill in putting together elements making up a composition of human figures, landscapes, fragments of architecture and objects, often taken out of completely alien historical and cultural contexts. In this method of work there is a considerable risk of being incoherent, but also of reducing the message to the level of banality. The doctoral student avoids this risk, and what is more, he does it in an extremely efficient and mature way. He makes use of the available iconosphere - printed magazines and Internet sources, which he then processes by cutting elements from their original sources and placing them in new, often completely surprising contexts, creating his own original, unpredictable and thought-

provoking narratives. But these are not unambiguous, illustrative motifs, but rather an ambiguous message, opening the viewer up to a variety of reflections, and expanding the field of interpretation. It should be added that in the technical layer the juxtaposed elements are printed perfectly, as if they had never been torn out of their original environments. This is an important feature of the printmaking work of Mr Walter Rindone - the precision in transferring the image from the matrix to the paper, but also the perfection in operating with distant contexts in order to build a suggestive visual message.

And finally the semantic layer. Walter Rindone wants to draw attention to thinking about images as carriers of information as well as their metaphorical meaning. The subject of reflection in the dissertation is the role of images in the process of spreading aestheticization, caused by ever more rapidly developing social systems, and the resulting implications, such as the misuse of images to create distorted manifestations of reality. This declaration points to the conceptual framework of the doctoral student's printmaking work. I believe that this self-interpretation is accurate, but it does not exhaust the essence of Mr Walter Rindone's doctoral dissertation. At the heart of his work there is a particular perception of reality, revealed both in the narrative of the works and in their form. It is a radical, Manichean dualism, based on the extreme oppositions of black and white, as well as a profound scepticism towards material reality. The baroque atmosphere of the prints is created by developing grotesque landscapes of the contemporary world, in spectacular, wide, panoramic presentations filled with human figures bogged down in the waste of civilisation. There is something theatrical in this collage-like representation of disintegrating human relationships and social and political orders falling into increasing chaos. Walter Rindone is an artist whose work refers to Romanticism. One can see in his compositions a distant echo of such artists as Eugene Delacroix, William Blake, Francisco Goya and, above all, Gustave Doré, to whom the doctoral student refers directly. But at the same time his work is extremely autonomous, original and bold. It is manifested in many aspects of his work, in the epic panache of large formats, in the elementary formal decision to limit the means of expression to the

juxtaposition of black and white. But also in the juxtaposition of extremely alien contexts, and consequently, in creating suggestive images of reality.

The dissertation contains information concerning the assumptions and particular stages of the process leading to the completion of the project. The dissertation is divided into three thematic sections: in the first, the author presents the ideas and sources of reflection that lay behind the project; in the second, there are the historical, theoretical and practical results of research on the experimental printing process within the framework of anastatic printing, as well as the experience gained during the improvement of this technique. The third, concluding part is a presentation of the printmaking works that make up the Black Series. The structure of the written work is clear, the individual chapters are arranged in a form corresponding to the initial assumptions and follow one another in a logical, legible manner. The author comprehensively describes his own doctoral cycle. The clarity of the statement, the ability to efficiently associate facts and events for a clearer communication of the conceptual assumptions, as well as the extensive use of illustrations, which evocatively describe the presented issues, testify to the very good preparation of the author to explore the topic.

#### 4. Conclusion.

On the basis of the analysis of the presented documentation comprising the artistic achievements and the doctoral dissertation, I conclude that Mr Walter Rindone possesses qualifications which allow him to construct a coherent and original artistic message. He meets the requirements set out in the Act of 14 March 2003 on academic degrees and title and on degrees and title in art. The materials presented constitute a mature, professional and interesting approach to the subject, both from the thematic and formal point of view. Thus, I support Mr Walter Rindone's application and his efforts to obtain a doctoral degree in the field of art in the discipline of fine arts and art conservation

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