BULGARIAN "DIALECT" OF DESIGN EDUCATION: PERSPECTIVES IN THE YEAR OF ITS ANNIVERSARY

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Abstract: The report aims to examine and analyze the framework of the Bulgarian "dialect" development in design education on one hand and to mark the main overlap in cultural cooperation on the other. It does reveal the social responsibility of design in Bulgaria and highlights Bulgarian design organizations. The report also identifies the nature of design research, direction and management. It provides vision and proposals for future development of design education. Furthermore, focusing on historical events contributed to the development of design structure, in timely short retrospective fashion, the report succeeds in shedding light upon major stages in the Bulgarian design development. One can distinguish three main periods, which play key roles in its development: 20s - 40s, 60s - 80s, and since 90s to date. Although the first two no longer exist, nowadays various forms and types of design disciplines are taught in more than 15 universities and several specialized high schools. Each year, hundreds of Bulgarian designers graduate and contribute with their creativity to the Bulgarian industrial production. The most significant value of creative development is the continuous evolutionary path followed by designers - the path built up on the achievements of these artists devoted to the noble cause of improving the quality of life. The paper also lists the results obtained from the design practice for the last fifty years. While focusing on the future development of design and education, it covers the impact of multiple factors - social, cultural, political, technological and market as well.

Keywords: third industrial revolution, resource-based economy, aesthetic functionality, stress design, eco-design, design education, Bulgarian "dialect" in design It is difficult to define what exactly the "dialect" or cultural identity of the Bulgarian design and its education is in just one sentence. Bulgarian design is certainly not as famous as the emotional Italian design, nor is as elegant as the English one, punctual and pedantic as the German design or as practical as the Scandinavian design is. Nevertheless, its 50-year anniversary lets us do a review and a concise survey in order to attempt to identify the general factors context that influences its formation. Could one really accept the aforementioned administrative act of the Bulgarian Council of Ministers for its general establishment? Was this act timely accepted or rather late to be incorporated?

250 years ago, the blooming first industrial revolution in Western Europe and sound economic conditions, altogether favored the formation of a new art – design. Meanwhile, under the light of a candle one pale Athonite monk wrote a small booklet, which he called "Slavonic-Bulgarian History". That little paper booklet was shortly copied many times and began to pass from hand to hand, thus setting the beginning of the very Bulgarian Revival. People soon awakened from a centuries-long standstill and it was difficult to further restrain their innate strive for education and economic prosperity. Under the reign of the Ottoman Empire, the first manufactories established by Bulgarians appeared and soon others followed suit. Until the Bulgarian liberation, they already numbered 20. Since then until today, the political and historical vicissitudes formed three main periods (monarchy, socialism and democracy), which are more or less directly related to the emergence and development of the phenomena "dialect" in Bulgarian design:

1. 1878 – 1944 (period of formation) – from a little fragmented agrarian principality to an intensive economic development of Bulgarian Kingdom between the two World Wars). Initially in the young Principality, there was a strong necessity for specialists, called to establish and organize the industry of the country. Principal training handicraft school was established as to prepare the masters in the various crafts. The latter attracted numerous teachers from the Czech Republic, Austria and Germany. The need for staff to support the emerging industry is one of the main arguments of the then Minister of Culture Konstantin Velichkov to establish a Drawing School, now known as the National Art Academy (NAA). The famous Czech painter Mrkvička was appointed as the first school director, yet many foreigners and Bulgarians who studied abroad became teachers. During that period, many Bulgarians graduated in different European countries. They also studied in the first European design schools. For instance, Mara Uchkunova-Aubiok studied in Bauhaus and even became Johanes Eten's assistant.¹ Nikolai Diulgerov, famous for his Italian futurism, also studied in the school.² Alexander Zendov studied in VHUTEIN (Russia), and Stefan Badzov - in UMPRO (Prague). Unfortunately, most of them lacked realization in Bulgaria due to the economic circumstances. Prof. Stefan Badzov later became the first graphic and exposition designer in Bulgaria. During the Socialism, he was persecuted for his links with the Royal family of Bulgaria – being a royal court painter. However, Prof. Bazdov managed to prepare very talented students (Haralambi Tatchev, Nicolas Tusuzov, Al. Poplilov, etc.) – all working in the field of graphic and exposition design. At first – these were the only design needs required in Bulgaria since Fine Art was highly appreciated. And although Applied Art appeared some 20 years later, it was considered a "second hand" art at the time. Nobody talked about "design", not even artists and critics in arts. In this first period, BIAD (Bulgarian engineering and architectural association) was established and it united virtually all creative professions related to the design of living environment. During the same period, engineer Vladimir Shopov became the first Bulgarian style designer of industrial products. He developed a number of models of aerody-

¹ Stoilova, "Bulgarians in foreign art life" – Mara Uchkunova–Aubiok and Nina-Lulia Simidova-Praun, Problems of art, 2, 1999, 57–61.

² Bozkov, "Two Bulgarian artists in Italy" (N. Dulgerov), Izkustvo, 10, 1986, 34-39.

namic cars, even published in German technical magazine in 1932.³ Between the two world wars, people conducted some lively discussions regarding the "new objectiveness" while critically reflecting on the modern European styles at the same time. Machinery, equipment, futuristic phenomena and projects soon became subject to Bulgarian art life as well.

2. 1944 – 1989 (period of Socialism – development under political, economic and military domination and influence of USSR). This second period we could divide into 2 main parts: 405–50s and 60s–80s. Initially, Bulgaria was in post war depression and rationing system (aka on coupons). Despite the unbearable difficulties and under the influence of Stalinism, Bulgaria began establishing its metallurgy, energetics/ power engineering and heavy engineering industry. Design, however, declined steadily and its development was abandoned. Applied Arts were condemned as petty bourgeois lower middle-class activities, whereas focus shifting back to the familiar crafts with strong traditions. At this stage due to the cooperation within CMEA and participation in the Warsaw Pact, a crucial concept was implemented: the idea of intensive design development so as to make the domestic production generally competitive on the international market. Bulgaria accepts the commitment to specialize in manufacturing forklifts, electric hoists, agricultural machinery and electronics at the time. That process first began in East Germany, Poland and the Soviet Union in 1961–1962. A bit later on, in May 1963, the Bulgarian Council of Ministers issued a Decree by which it officially established several important structures:

- "Artistic and technical Council on the aesthetics of industrial products" within The State Committee for Science and Technical Progress;
- Department "Industrial Aesthetics" within The State Committee for Mechanical Engineering;
- "Center for industrial aesthetics and art design" within The Ministry of Industry;
- "Center for new products and fashion" and "Packaging center" were also established within Scientific Research and Experimental Work on Packaging (NIERA);
- A special prize for excellence in design called "Golden Hands";
- The first major called "Industrial Forms" in Higher Institute for Fine Arts "Nikolay Pavlovich", today "National Art Academy" (NAA);
- Since 1965, Bulgaria has become an associated observer member in ICSID Section "Design" within The Union of Bulgarian Artists.
- In 70s were established a number of art design schools and "Engineering Design" was included as a discipline in the program of Technical University Sofia (MEI).

During the following years exhibitions focused on fine design and art were periodically organized. The best examples of excellence in design, exhibited at the International Plovdiv Fair, were awarded the "Golden Hands" prize.⁴

In this period of 25 years, regardless of the political situation and the state administration of design, a number of leading Bulgarian designers managed to find their way to a professional realization, by supporting the idea that they had to design for all people and the welfare of society as a whole. Bulgarian design finally received its "own personification" and began to make statements as a subject. Many products designed during this period have enjoyed generally good acceptance by their users and they are yet to be marked as old-fashioned.

3. 1990 – to date (Post-communist period of democracy and gradual integration and acceptance of the European values). The last period begun with a rather unexpected breakdown of the Socialism and

³ Ivanova, From crafts and artistic skills to design, Sofia, 1985, 108.

⁴ Ivanova, Design History, Sofia,1984, 67.

its system. However, that post-communist transition occurred to be quite long and difficult. As far as design is concerned, it translated into overall abduction of the state and total refusal to further follow the current state policy of protection and administration any longer. Thus, many of the established to that date structures had to collapse, and designers were left behind to compete freely, driven by their personal self-initiative and incentives. Last, but not least, all that was further complicated by a severe economic depression and turmoil. loss of old traditional markets and economy which is in standstill indefinitely. Fortunately, the most vital element of the whole design structure appeared to be education and it soon began to develop intensively. Many universities have opened specialized "Design Departments" and as a result – today there are more than 15 universities in Bulgaria teaching various design fields (e.g. industrial, engineering, fashion, graphic, communication, interior, advertising, silica, children environment, etc.). What is more – one could also study design in another 4-5 secondary vocational schools. With its 8-9%, the design profession is the second most preferred field of occupation by Bulgarian children – right after the medical profession. A number of design agencies and larger associations of Bulgarian designers have also been established (e.g. National Association of Design and Advertising (NADA), Chamber of Designers in Bulgaria (CDB), etc.) and other informal youth groups of interests. In addition, design exhibitions have opened once again after a break of nearly 10 years as even two editions of the Biennial of Bulgarian Design take place as well. Universities, where one can study design, also have been organizing periodic science conferences and seminars. Sofia design week and Sofia architecture week have been taking place for four years now. Since 90s, the policy makers have adopted many important laws, thus protecting the copyright of design products and the fair pay of designers' labor.

Today the design education tries to summarize and combine all of the positive strong points in the very development and history of design. Design is currently being taught at all grades in education:

- Initially separate topics related to industrial, graphic, advertising and fashion design are included in the program of discipline 'Arts' in primary education up to 7th (8th) grade.
- In the secondary education (high schools) teaching in various design fields is based on the secondary specialized art schools and on schools teaching advanced design where students go in for an entrance examination, study in a special program and graduate with a diploma work.
- There is no doubt that the most advanced system, however, is the one of higher education. Design is taught in three degrees (bachelor's, master's and doctoral) in the National Academy of Arts and universities with art, humanities and technical profiles (public and private) as well as in colleges with two-tier higher education system. In the most universities, one can study design only as adjunct discipline complementary to the primary professional focus (architecture, pedagogy in the field of fine arts, etc.).⁵ Universities are also involved in long-term programs of student and staff mobility as well as events organized within the departments' contracts with partner universities abroad. Although there are still some difficulties and hindrances, contacts with business start to develop and extend, and students manage to get some real work experience within creative practicums conducted in various manufacturing companies. Thus, students participate in workshops, seminars and competitions in Bulgaria and abroad, and many of them have already won prestigious awards. A number of new forms of education have recently emerged and been broadly adopted ongoing continuing education, distance-learning courses, postgraduate specializations and additional qualifications, etc.

⁵ Draganova, D. "Practice of student competitions and placing specific orders for design and implementation in the specialized departments of the State School of Arts and Art-Industry School (since the beginning of XX century to 20s)" (part of diploma thesis "The beginnings of designing for industry in 'Association Native Art' "), *Izkustvo*, 1–3/96 (appendix), 38–40.

National Art Academy is not only the first university, which began to teach design in Bulgaria, but it is also one of the leading ones. NAA has recently received the highest score in the last state institutionalized accreditations (10/01/2013) – rated 9.03 and granted six-year validity of its bachelors, masters and doctors programs. Besides the compulsory "Industrial Design" in NAA there are also separate departments specializing in "Fashion", "Design of Children's Environment", "Advertising Design", "Silicate design", "Book and Print graphics" and "Poster", which cover virtually all of the extensive individual design fields. Separate problems of design are included in subjects such as "Metal", "Textile", "Ceramics" and "Wood-plastics". Curriculum of "Industrial Design" department is organized based on the principle of credit system of teaching with mandatory and elective courses focused on the following three main areas:

- Major artistic courses design (design methodology, design products, interior design of living environment, industrial design, design of exterior public environment), theory of composition and morphology, drawing, painting, sculpture.
- General artistic and educational courses history of art, aesthetics, philosophy, plastic anatomy, perspective, foreign languages and optional sport. All students may opt to take parallel courses in a second degree called "Theory and practice of art education." This allows them to gain profession-al qualifications required for becoming a fine art teacher in general secondary and specialized art schools.
- Support artistic and technical courses engineering and technology, engineering design, computer design, ergonomics, applied graphics, space-color-design, public spaces and design, photography, multimedia arts, history of design and contemporary design trends.⁶

Profeesional-academic field "Industrial Design" is generally broad, with applications in all areas of diverse design activities. Graduates of the academic degree "Bachelor" of course can work independently or in a team in all areas of industrial design – from design to implementation. Graduates of the academic degree "Master" may further opt for one of five specialized areas of design: "Mechanical and Automotive Design," "Interior and Exterior Design," "Design of communication media", "Package Design" and "Design for People with Disabilities". Within one / two semesters, they attend a cycle of lectures on the psychology of creativity, art-management, modern design tools, etc. They can solve individual and complex tasks in all areas of industrial design. After graduation, they can exercise leadership, management and teaching functions, and to continue their education in the educational and scientific degree "Doctor". Teachers and students in the department participate together in the Research program of the National Art Academy via various projects; organize workshops, seminars and exhibitions themselves. Each year via the program for student and staff mobility "Erasmus" NAA not only accepts guests from foreign universities but also sends its own students to reside and study abroad. Teachers work as leading practitioners, designers and authors of specialized publications in design in Bulgaria. The department has an individual contract with similar Department of Product Design at the University of Arts in Belgrade - Serbia and continuously looks for establishment of similar contacts with other foreign universities.

The curriculum of the main "Design" course in this 50-year period has gone through several major revisions. Originally, the one who organized and planned was the pioneer of Bulgarian design – Prof. Vassil Stoyanov, being very familiar with the legacy left by design schools Bauhauz, Ulm and VHUTEMAS/ VHUTEIN. During the 70s period, once many colleagues specialized in the East Germany, Czechoslovakia and Poland (Prof. Serafim Seraphimov, Prof. Rumen Raitchev, Prof. Dimitar Ermenkov and Prof. Ognian Shoshev), they joined the faculty as lecturers; the program was further updated and supplemented

⁶ Year books of NAA

by the concept of integrated design, basic, core and auxiliary (liberal art studies) disciplines, additional courses, etc. Yet, the most important changes occurred after the major political changes in 1990. Thus, under the influence of external factors, universities introduced three-tier educational and credit systems. Virtually all courses were also revised as many new subjects and classes replaced the unnecessary excluded and abandoned ones. Addendums and revisions have been included in the following accreditations of the National Art Academy in 1994, 2000, 2007 and 2013.

Design education allows us to accumulate, cultivate and transfer all knowledge in the field of design to the next generation. We should pass on our knowledge and experience in two ways – first of all as a principle, and then as a trend. The first (i.e. the principle) allows the next generation to use the principle in any possible environment and environmental condition. The second (i.e. the trend) allows it to succeed in deriving its own principles to pass on to the oncoming future generations.

Nowadays, the challenges facing design education are many and they would never cease to exist. That certainly has its positive aspects – namely cultural progress of humanity. The design is one of the fundamental core means for cultural, economic, and why not say, for the spiritual progress of humanity.

Consequently, the obvious question that arises is how an educational system – conservative in nature, can be used to educate non-standard alternative-thinking professionals? The crux of the matter reveals that there is a fundamental contradiction due to the fact that one can draw information only from the past and present knowledge while it is always directed towards the future.

Information is the main challenge facing global education all over the world. All studies certainly pass through an exchange of increasing amounts of information. Education is trying to incorporate and even promote the work and search for information on the Internet. What do I mean? Internet provides saturation of information, often in telegraphic form. Thus, the overall amount of information received by students in one single day exceeds (in both quantity and quality) what any university may provide. This generally leads to a loss of interest in traditional schools. And because there is not a single university that can compete with the intensity and accessibility of global information and discussion forums, education ought to rely very much on practical skills, alternative thinking, challenges and creativity.⁷

The educational process should be continuously renovated so as to keep the very learning process up to date. Conservatism really has no place in such a rapidly changing profession – essentially featured by constant innovations. Regardless of renewal due to the dynamic development of society, the obtained knowledge very quickly devalues and graduates, i.e. designers must constantly refresh and keep their erudition and learning up to date. Since the very foundation of design education in Bulgaria, it's always been open to exchange and cooperation with other systems and countries.

Changes in the world today take place very fast. Everything is globalized. These events certainly affect design as well. We stand on the threshold of a new industrial and cultural revolution. This is a great moment in the history of mankind. Should we unravel that we'd be much better prepared to respond appropriately and stay focused in the aspect of design. To have a look in the near future and oncoming trends, we should consider several factors that have a strong influence on design. These are social, cultural, political, technological and market factors. Hardly could we isolate the latter based on the areas of their impact due to the high dependence of each other. Therefore, these factors are present everywhere:

⁷ Fresco, The Venus Project: The Redesign of Culture, Fla.: Global Cyber-Visions, 1995, 45.

INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

In 2011 Some authors such as Jeremy Rifkin (advisor to the European Union and the bestselling author of The New York Times) called it: "Third Industrial Revolution: How Lateral Power is Transforming Energy, the Economy, and the World". He has presented it on May 24th 2011, at the 50th anniversary congress of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in Paris and consists of five main section guidelines:

- 1. Shifting to Renewable Energy
- 2. Converting Buildings into Power Plants
- 3. Hydrogen and other Energy Storage Technology
- 4. Smart Grid Technology
- 5. Plug in, Electric, Hybrid, and Fuel Cell based transportation⁸

This revolution is associated with the resources and energy that mankind uses. Revolution is generally accepted as an idea to equalize the burden of the free market and social model. For the analysis in the book authored by Jeremy Rifkin "Third Industrial Revolution" suggests that self-management of the market economy eventually leads to global economic crisis as the one we experience today. According to data provided, such economic crises happen every 10 years or so, and their effects last for another 10 years. What is more – one should consider this Third Industrial Revolution as a revolution of the very way we think. It seems that the idea of free market and the TINA doctrine (There Is No Alternative) signed by Margaret Thatcher failed to achieve the capitalist ideal and turned into no more than another utopian model of global economic balance. Essentially, market economy needs all available resources in order to maintain the system stable and turns humanity into a consumer society accordingly.⁹

The main idea of the third industrial revolution is to shift the center of power production – that is to move from a pyramidal structure of power distribution to spherical one. What does this mean? The current pyramidal model represents a power supply plant that distributes energy in a given perimeter or a country. This plant is in most cases a source of pollution. Therefore, by switching to a spherical energetic structure, each building would produce the energy it needs and any surplus it would then transfer back to the electrical network for powering additional needs of cities. This energy must be green by default. Inevitably, all this will have a significant impact on economy, culture and design altogether. We should be note that in the last few decades humanity has increasingly focused on the use of electricity. Moreover, with the new electricity storage technologies available in the past few months, this revolution seems even more and more real. Many countries not only in Europe but also in America and Asia initiated experimental projects following this direction. According to the researches and data provided, it seems certain that the Third Industrial Revolution will be taking place in the next 10 years.

Yet again, Bulgarian design is not afraid of changes and turmoil. It has taken and passed the test of time. Although the political situation and social shocks, the design has always sought balance and sustainability during the different stages of development. To a certain extent, namely education has managed to preserve Bulgarian design dialect, which in turn has become the motor behind four economic and political systems of governance taken place over the years in Bulgaria. Design never remained closed within itself, and tried to combine many of the positive aspects and specifics of the design common in the leading European countries – emotional Italian design, elegant English one, punctual and pedantic German design

⁸ Rifkin, The Emerging Order, 1983, 89.

⁹ Fresco, Designing the Future, Fla.: The Venus Project, Inc., 2007, 111.

and practical Scandinavian design. Bulgarian design is very lively, tough and resistant to any external and internal problematic factors in the first place. Because of its geographical position and historical destiny, Bulgaria has always played the role of a cultural bridge between Europe and Asia. Today, we accomplish that in the field of design with education – one of the main key instruments in this process.

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Димитар И. Добревски БУГАРСКИ "ДИЈАЛЕКТ" ОБРАЗОВАЊА У ОБЛАСТИ ДИЗАЈНА: ПЕРСПЕКТИВЕ У ГОДИНИ ЈУБИЛЕЈА

Резиме: Од бугарског ослобођења, па све до данас, политичке и историјске прилике формирале су три главна периода (монархија, социјализам и демократија), који су мање или више директно повезани са појавом и развојем појаве "дијалекта" у бугарском дизајну: 1. 1878. – 1944. (период формирања) – од мале уситњене аграрне кнежевине до интензивног економског развоја Бугарског краљевства између два светска рата (министар културе Константин Величков заслужан је за оснивање Цртачке школе, која је данас позната као Национална уметничка академија – НАА); 2. 1944 – 1989 (период социјализма – развој под политичком, економском и војном доминацијом и утицајем СССР-а). У мају 1963. године, бугарско веће министара издало је уредбу којом је званично успоставило неколико важних структура – Уметничко-техничко веће за естетику индустријских производа у оквиру Државног комитета за науку и технички напредак; Одељење за индустријску естетику при Државном комитету за машинство; Центар за индустријску естетику и уметнички дизајн при Министарству индустрије; итд; 3. 1990 – до данас (посткомунистички период демократије и постепене интеграције и прихватања европских вредности). Многи универзитети су отворили специјализоване департмане за дизајн и као резултат данас у Бугарској постоји више од 15 универзитета који покривају различита поља дизајна (нпр. индустријски, инжењерски, модни, графички, комуникацијски, унутрашњи, рекламни, керамика и стакло, дечија околина итд.).

Национална уметничка академија није само први универзитет на коме је почео да се предаје дизајн у Бугарској (1964), већ је и један од водећих. Поред обавезног индустријског дизајна у НАА, постоје и одвојена одељења специјализована за моду, дизајн дечјег окружења, графичке комуникације, дизајн керамике и стакла, графику књиге и штампарство, као и плакат, која покривају практично сва могућа појединачна поља дизајна. Наставни план и програм одсека Индустријски дизајн организован је по принципу кредитног система наставе са обавезним и изборним предметима подељеним у следеће три групе:

- Главни уметнички предмети дизајн, теорија форме, цртање, сликање, скулптура.
- Општи уметнички и образовни предмети историја уметности, естетика, филозофија, пластична анатомија, перспектива, страни језици и опционо спорт.
- Подршка уметничким и техничким предметима инжењерство и технологија, инжењерски дизајн, рачунарски дизајн, ергономија, примењена графика, употреба боја у простору, дизајн у јавним просторима фотографија, мултимедијална уметност, историја дизајна и савремени трендови дизајна.

У раду су такође наведени резултати добијени из дизајнерске праксе у последњих педесет година. Фокусирајући се на будући развој дизајна и образовања, рад покрива утицај више фактора – друштвених, културних, политичких, технолошких и тржишних.

Кључне речи: трећа индустријска револуција, естетска функционалност, дизајн стреса, еко-дизајн, образовање о дизајну, бугарски "дијалект" у дизајну.