

**Evaluation of Bachelor Thesis *Stitching New Belarus: Folk Embroidery Art as Resistance Strategy against Authoritarian State* by Krystsina Zhuk, Prague, Faculty of Humanities, Charles University, 2024**

Krystsina Zhuk's bachelor thesis deals with the analysis of the political and personal functions of Belarusian traditional embroidery as a form of political art in the wake of the massive political protests in contemporary Belarus during the failed revolution of 2020.

The research design of the bachelor project is clearly presented and specified. The methodological frame is very well justified. The main source of the presented research, interpretation and related analysis is Rufina Bazlova's embroidery art projects (so called *vyshivankas*, as a main case study of the research).

The key research question is how collective folk embroidery art-making can challenge the authoritarian state in passive, non-confrontational, and even non-heroic ways while direct and open political expression is not possible. The main goal of the study is to examine the influence of collective embroidery art-making on the lives of protesters in the post-protest context of continuous political repressions, frustration, and forced migration (in Poland in other countries for example).

The author also applies Ewa Majewska's concept of "weak resistance," Judith Butler's theory of vulnerability in resistance, and other related concepts.

The structure of the bachelor thesis is very coherent. There is an explanation of historical context of contemporary Belarus and its protests, overview of literature and sources, theoretical framework including description of the limitations of study (such as volume of primary source material and others). The next part of the research is devoted to two interpretative analyses: analysis and interpretation of the art works by Rufina Bazlova and letters of the participants' of Rufina Bazlova's projects (i.e., former participants' of Belarusian protests).

The research questions of the project have been clearly identified (see p.21-22, (i) "how can the collective folk embroidery art-making challenge the authoritarian state" and (ii) "what influence does embroidery art-making have on the lives of protesters"). Later they have been answered in the Conclusion.

I consider the bachelor thesis by Krystsina Zhuk as extraordinary, presenting high quality of analysis, sound reasoning, and enriching our understanding of the analysed phenomena of art expression and political protests with new insight and new findings.

For the final grade I recommend "A" ("excellent").

Prague, September 17, 2024

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