

Dear Dr. Michele Aaron and Dr. Tiago de Luca,

It is my pleasure to recommend Karolina Nugumanova for the Practice as Research Ph.D., which is based in Film and Television Studies at the University of Warwick. I am acquainted with Karolina since 2020 when she entered the Sociology Department of the European University at St. Petersburg as a MA student. At that moment, Karolina was taking the course on the History of Sociology, that I teach at EUSP. During this academic year, she wrote her master's thesis under my supervision. She currently delves into the study of documentaries drawing on the Actor-Network Theory, visual research, and film studies perspectives. Karolina's research interest is focused on the production of the 'effect of nonfictionness' in documentary filmmaking. She innovatively translates the lessons from the studies of scientific objectivity within Actor-Network Theory into her research on the production of documentary films in Russia. During her fieldwork, despite pandemic disruptions and more recent devastating political circumstances, Karolina managed to gather valuable empirical materials that shed some light on how documentary filmmakers in contemporary Russia deal with such hot and acute topics as gendered inequality and discrimination in IT and ambivalence of current military and patriotic narratives. She interviewed well-known directors and producers, followed the circulation of the various documents in the filmmaking process, and observed documentary film festivals to demonstrate how the 'effect of nonfictionness' is constructed in practice.

By the time of entering EUSP, Karolina already has gained extensive academic experience and demonstrated her motivation for sociological and visual studies. She successfully defended her bachelor's thesis, was twice awarded a scholarship for winning the reputed Russian competition "Ya Professional" in sociology, and received experience in the international company Ernst & Young. In addition, she took part in a variety of online courses, academic competitions, forums, and summer schools. In 2019, Karolina successfully completed the online course Feminism and Social Justice (Santa Cruz University) and in 2022 was selected to attend the SPS Summer Academy (European University Institute, Florence) on (In)equality, Democracy and Solidarity in Europe and was awarded a scholarship. During the last two years, she was the organizer of a film club at the EUSP and also gave public lectures on filmmaking in St. Petersburg. Now she is writing an article examining the BDSM practices from the perspective of the new materialism of Karen Barad and Donna Haraway.

In addition, the previous year she combined her studies at EUSP with the position of (online) visiting student at the globalization program at the Venice International University (VIU). Despite the difficult epidemiological conditions and the inability to study offline in Venice, Karolina managed to complete the academic requirements of the two universities. It is worth noting that at the final exam at VIU, Karolina achieved high results in all courses, including the courses on the 1) Italian Contemporary History in Films; 2) Gender Studies: Gender, Nation, Migration; 3) Identity, Heritage and Globalization. She was also awarded a scholarship for a film research internship at Duke University in 2022, but, unfortunately, she was unable to go due to the political situation in Russia.

I know Karolina as a creative, responsible, and inquisitive student who is always eager to expand the scope of her academic knowledge. She is a perfect candidate for the PhD in Film and Television Studies. I believe that this position will contribute to Karolina's research interests and will help her to elaborate on the topic of filmmaking in her studies. I recommend her without reservations.

Best wishes,

Andrei Kuznetsov

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