

Abstract

During the 16th century a new phenomenon occurred, that the physically disabled people were presented as curiosities or miracles because of their visage. Some cases were really incredible therefore their appearances gave an impulse for creating an artwork. The images were popular between all social levels, were collected by townspeople, scientists, nobles and kings.

The dissertation thesis „Homo deformis“. The fascination by appearance of deformed human body in the Lands of the Bohemian Crown between 1526 and 1620 aims to explore how the phenomenon of human curiosities was reflected in early modern visual art in the Czech lands.

This dissertation thesis bases on individual examples of human monstrosity in various art forms such as portraits, allegories, scientific illustrations and pamphlets.

It exams images of abnormal disabled people between 1526–1620 and focuses on their symbolic meaning, aesthetic interpretation. It summarizes the knowledge about perceptions of depicted abnormal persons in 16th century. It also shows the Early modern society reactions about „homo deformis“, their everydayness and social status.

This thesis studies reasons why the disabled body was a kind an inspiration for artists. It examines if the artists of 16th century were able to picture cases of physically deformed bodies correctly concerning the anatomy. It also focuses on the iconographic motive of the monstrosity and rendition problem of abnormal disabled people in 16th century.