

Abstract:

The subject of this thesis is to analyze the perception of a naked female body in French society of the 2nd half of the 19th century. The work focuses on discovering, highlighting and interpreting the theme of female nudity in artistic works of this period, which provoked strong reactions and influenced contemporary culture. The first part is consecrated to the position of women in the 2nd half of the 19th century society on historical, social and cultural backgrounds and its changes in the ambience of the first wave of the women's movement. The attention is brought to some significant representatives of early feminism and to the goals and innovations these personalities were aiming to achieve. The second part of the thesis describes and analyzes selected works of art on the theme of female nudity. First, it deals with the works of academic painters who were the bearers of traditional artistic ideals and academic rules for displaying naked female body. Their artistic production is nowadays somewhat underestimated. In art history, however, it plays an important role. Therefore, the value of their work for the study of the perception of a naked female body is not omitted. The interest then turns to the Impressionism, the outstanding 2nd half of the 19th century art movement. In the center of attention stand impressionist painters Édouard Manet, Auguste Renoir, Paul Cézanne, Edgar Degas and their works. The place of the female nude in Impressionism is analyzed as well as the importance of female nudity for the birth of modern art. The third part introduces the woman as an artist's model. Attention is paid to the position of nude models in society, their relationships with artists and their contribution to the visual arts. Based on the study of works of art and lives of artists and their models, this thesis aims to depict how French society during the 2nd half of the 19th century perceived a naked female body. The work systematically describes evolution in displaying naked female body in art in the context of modernism and the growing importance of feminist thinking. The thesis is established on a comparative analysis of art history texts, sociological, historical and cultural anthropological studies, such as the mainly French publications and anthologies and a smaller amount of English and scholar sources translated to Czech.