

Abstract

This master's thesis deals with a symbolism of tortoise in fine art. The text is limited to the European art only, to keep the range of the thesis sustainable. The thesis is divided into three parts. The first chapter focuses on literature, as a source of meanings for fine art. There are in detail described beginnings of literature about turtles and development of the dominant lines of their symbolism until 17th century. It is about "Tortoise-Lady", "Tortoise-Beast & Heretic" and "Slow Tortoise". Within the second part there are briefly mentioned the shades of turtle meanings that were not specified in the previous chapter due to the time period limitation. The third section includes a case study of the painting "Bathers with a Turtle" by Henry Matisse. It contains also occurrence of "Tortoise-Lady" within the history of art.