

Laurentina Miksiene - Beyond Measure
Examining Physically and Psychically
Disabled People integration in Society and
visibility in Social Media.

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***Beyond Measure: Examining Physically and Psychically Disabled
People integration in Society and visibility in Social Media.***

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Project Summary

People with disabilities are members of our society with the same rights as others. They must be given the same opportunities for education, work, leisure, participation in culture, politics, and the community. Although these principles of social integration of the disabled are enshrined in the Law on the Social Integration of the Disabled, the disabled have not yet been able to integrate into society and feel a valuable member.

Table of Contents

List of Figures.....	4
Introduction.....	8
Chapter 1.....	11
<i>Chapter 2.....</i>	15
<i>Chapter 3.....</i>	21
<i>Chapter 4.....</i>	24
<i>Conclusion.....</i>	35
<i>Bibliography.....</i>	45

List of Figures:

Figure 1: Project Citizenship (2021): *Disability and Social Movements* (Author and year unknow). Available at: <https://projectcitizenship.com/disability-social-movements/> (Accessed: 9 December 2021)

Figure 2: *Young people (ages 15-34) who are neither employed or enrolled in any form of school, by nation and handicap status, 2011.* Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Archive:Disability statistics - access to education and training&oldid=413588](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Archive:Disability_statistics_-_access_to_education_and_training&oldid=413588) (Accessed: 4 December 2021)

Figure 3: Kahlo, F. (1932) *Henry Ford Hospital*. Available at: <https://www.fridakahlo.org/henry-ford-hospital.jsp> (Accessed: 26 November 2021)

Figure 4: Islam, S. (2010-2012) *Baba 1 sketch book*. Available at: <https://disabilityarts.online/magazine/opinion/sanchita-islam-on-improving-support-for-mothers-experiencing-post-partum-psychosis/> (Accessed: 26 November 2021)

Figure 5: *Theatrical release poster (1932)*. Available at:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freaks_\(1932_film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freaks_(1932_film)) (Accessed: 28 November 2021)

Figure 6: *Mary Ann Bevan*. Available at:

https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mary_Ann_Bevan (Accessed: 23 November 2021)

Figure 7: Wallis, L. (2020): *The disabled activist who led a historic 24-day sit-in*.

Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/stories-54794408>

(Accessed: 9 December 2021)

Figure 8: Stehle, B.F. (1985) *Incurably Romantic*. United States of America. Temple University Press, Philadelphia 19122

Figure 9: Stehle, B.F. (1985) *Incurably Romantic*. United States of America. Temple University Press, Philadelphia 19122

Figure 10: Miksiene, L. (2021) *Portraits of disabled people at Valakampiai Social Service Home* (Lithuania)

Figure 11: Miksiene, L. (2021) *Portraits of disabled people at Valakampiai Social Service Home* (Lithuania)

Figure 12: Miksiene, L. (2021) *Portraits of disabled people at Valakampiai Social Service Home* (Lithuania)

Figure 13: Thomas, T. (2021): *Top Disabled Models Making Change*. Available at: <https://fashionindustrybroadcast.com/2021/04/09/top-disabled-models-making-change/> (Accessed 9 December 2021)

Figure 14: *Personal archive* (Year unknown)

Figure 15: Arbus, D. (1923-1971) *Untitled (1)*. Available at: <https://www.sothebys.com/en/buy/auction/2020/photographs-2/diane-arbus-untitled-1> (Accessed: 9 December 2021)

Figure 16: Miksiene, L. (2021) *Portraits of disabled people at Valakampiai Social Service Home* (Lithuania)

Figure 17: Miksiene, L. (2021) *Portraits of disabled people at Valakampiai Social Service Home* (Lithuania)

Figure 18: Miksiene, L. (2021) *Portraits of disabled people at Valakampiai Social Service Home* (Lithuania)

Figure 19: Miksiene, L. (2021) *Portraits of disabled people at Valakampiai Social Service Home* (Lithuania)

Figure 20: Miksiene, L. (2021) *Portraits of disabled people at Valakampiai Social Service Home* (Lithuania)

Figure 21: Miksiene, L. (2021) *Portraits of disabled people at Valakampiai Social Service Home* (Lithuania)

Introduction

“Equality is the public recognition, effectively expressed in institutions and manners, of the principle that an equal degree of attention is due to the needs of all human beings.”

(Weil)



Figure 1: Disability and Social Movements. Author and year unknown

As society becomes more consumerist and dominated by a cult of beauty, youth and health, disabled people who do not meet beauty norms are clearly disadvantaged. In the

scientific literature on the disabled, (Parliament, 2021) it is widely said that the most significant and main obstacle to integrating disabled people into society is a negative attitude towards them, and that on the contrary, a positive attitude is one of the prerequisites for successful integration. Addressing a case study from Lithuania, this thesis explores the representation of disabled people and the relationship with photography to their integration into society. People with disabilities are far less visible on social media, so how does this affect public consciousness, as a negative public attitude towards them hinders their integration into society? Otherwise, these people are not visible, and the community cannot see or understand their needs. The thesis discusses what a "positive attitude to the disabled" means, what it might be, what its parameters are, and how to put it into practice by having direct contact and more significant opportunities for cognition towards a person with an intellectual disability. The photograph is one of the possibilities to prove our existence that cannot be ignored, and it does not discriminate over the physical look and social level of the subject. All that matters is the subject in front of a camera. He was, and he is, and there cannot be less or more worthy people that are supposed to be or not to be remembered by the community.

Within the context of the developments that are occurring, a new dimension is emerging - the implementation of human rights, which begins with a change in the way people are treated - as an invaluable asset. Assessing the integration of disabled people into society in Lithuania, it is impossible not to notice that the problem of the social situation and quality of education of the disabled can no longer be limited to unique educational and social assistance. (By Human Rights Monitoring Institute, 2016) Persons with

disabilities are frequently unable to fight for their rights, therefore, their well-being and quality of life are directly affected by the dominant attitude toward disability in that culture.

The issues of the paradoxical social situation of the disabled that have arisen in Lithuania today are extremely relevant. On the one hand, with the establishment of democratic processes and the spread of modern Western ideas, we are increasingly seeking to integrate people with disabilities into society. It is recognized that there can be no marginalized people in civil society. The ideas of humanism and unconditional respect for another person are rightly promoted universally in the country, which rightly makes it indecent to express an unfavourable attitude towards the disabled. (Sumskiene, 2021) However, despite good initiatives to integrate people with disabilities, some psychological barriers make integration into society still problematic. Lithuanian society, like many other countries, is characterized by some social issues. The concept of social problems changes over time. Unemployment, social distinction, and the status of the disabled have been recognised as an individual problem. ' About 8% of the Lithuanian society or 224,000 people are classified as disabled, and most are outside of the labour market' (Segers, 2018)

Some argue that the cause of social problems lies in the people themselves. There are certain types of people who are perceived as a potential problem for society as a whole. For example, the unemployed may be seen as incapable of finding a job. (National Audit Office of Republik of Lithuania, 2020) Proponents of this view argue that the success of the social adaptation of a person with a mental disability depends on the degree of intellectual disability: the milder the disability, the more likely social integration is. However, with the rapid integration of people with disabilities into society, it is realized

that this process will only be successful if members of society have a positive view of the presence of such people in the general social environment. On the other hand, it is worth noting that against the background of social fractures and value conflicts in Lithuania in the last decade, the social integration of the disabled started spontaneously, which society was not ready to accept adequately. Both among the public and professionals, manifestations of negative attitudes towards the meaningfulness and purposefulness of these processes became apparent.

If due to the degree and nature of his disability, a person cannot exercise all his rights knowingly, it must be decided in each case to what extent and how they must be restricted. In addition, adequate legal safeguards must be put in place to prevent possible abuses of the rights of people with disabilities. (Natlex, 1991)

Chapter 1: Disabled person and education

Across Europe, people with intellectual and mental disabilities face significant stigma and prejudice and face significant obstacles to exercising their fundamental human rights. (European Commission, 2018) Discrimination against people with intellectual and mental disabilities is deeply rooted and widespread, preventing positive change. Often people with disabilities generally do not agree with the use of the term 'disability'.

The Spanish actor Pablo Pineda is Europe's first university graduate with Down Syndrome. Pineda effectively dealt with discrimination against people with this disorder as well as rigorous academic standards while studying. He emphasises the

value of communication, participation in group activities, and the development of independence. According to Pineda, (Universitat de Barcelona, 2018) for everyone who comes to campus, it is obvious that you are doing what they want to do, and no one has power over you. Being in an institute heightens this sense of liberation. His impairment does not prohibit him from leading a regular life. There is a need for a change in mindset, a transformation in the way of thinking: the difference must be recognised as a value and respected, because the advancement of civilization is based on this distinction. It is critical to recognise that we all have abilities, albeit different skills. "I always say I am Pablo Pineda and that I have Down's Syndrome. There is a significant difference between 'having' and 'being.' 'Being' can crush you down and 'having' shows it is only one feature" he stated in one of his interviews (Universitat de Barcelona, 2018) It is gratifying that young people with disabilities set big goals for themselves, but no matter how high their sense of value, it is worth remembering that in reality they must prove their strengths with concrete actions. Thus, it can be said that in the area of equal opportunities, people with disabilities face the most challenging task every day - to prove their worth. (Autism Europe, 2018)

According to statistic "In the EU-28 countries, almost one disabled person out of 10 aged 15-64 participated in education and training (formal and non-formal education)" (Eurostat Statistic Explained, 2018).

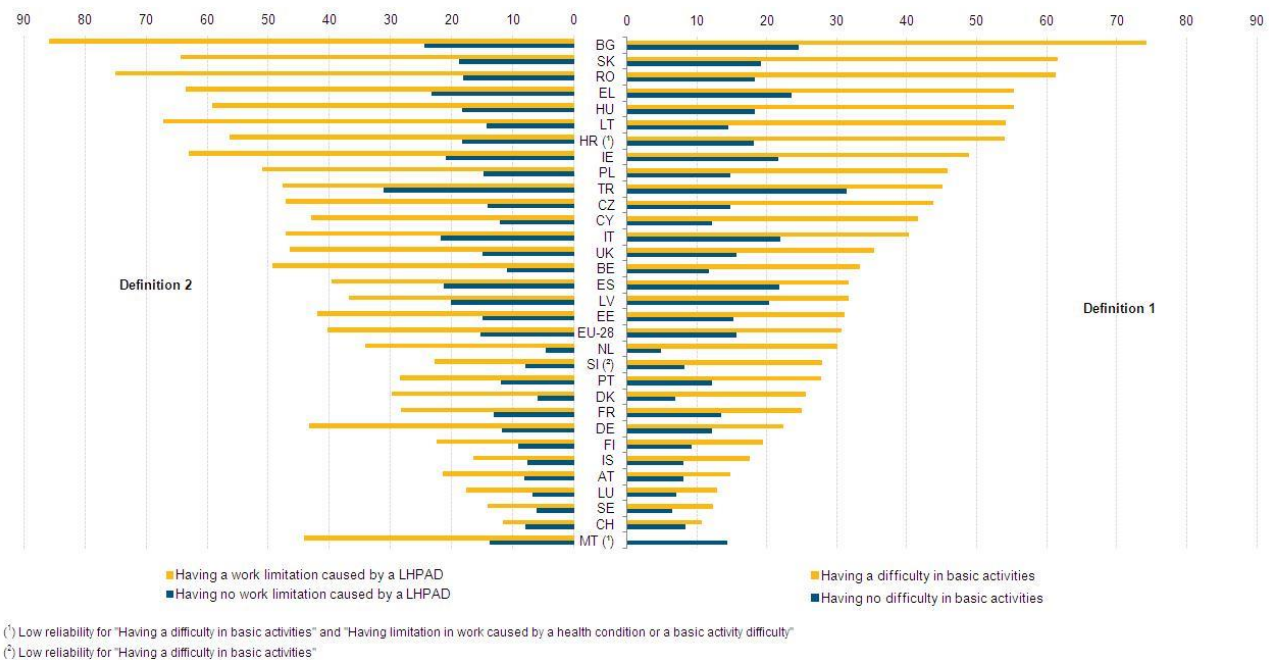


Figure 2: Young people (ages 15-34) who are neither employed or enrolled in any form of school, by nation and handicap status, 2011

People with intellectual disabilities also want to live independently can be valued and accepted; unfortunately, they are not independent enough to live and participate in society without the help of others.

The road to integration has begun, but many people with disabilities work in degrading jobs, living in special environments, boarding schools or communities where no one is interested in their existence, abilities, or talents. (Bruyere, 2017) Simple things to remember when you interact with people with disabilities:

- he does not need pity.
- a person with a disability wants to communicate because he / she is interested in the interlocutor and is interesting as a person.
- it is not appropriate to appease the interlocutor solely because of his or her physical uniqueness.

- efforts should be made to be an equal participant in the conversation.
- you should not be afraid to compete on the level of knowledge and experience.
- you should talk to a friend with a disability, not an accompanying person.

(Queensland Government, 2018)

“The universe doesn't allow perfection.” (Hawking, 1998)

Perfection is only human illusion it is a myth.

Dr. Stephen Hawking is known to many for his impressive achievements and significant contribution to modern science. When he was just in his thirties, he was diagnosed with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), but he exceeded the life expectancy of doctors by half a century. Hawking died at the age of 76 on March 14, 2018 (Penrose, 2018) He was mysterious, but in a charming voice, he gave people the motivation to overcome obstacles. Hawking has inspired many people by coming up with unusual ideas and pursuing a goal despite the challenges ahead. He remained engaged in his studies and personal life because he devised effective procedures for personal care, speaking, writing, and research that compensated for the functional restrictions imposed by ALS. His experiences exemplified the following: People, from being healthy and being beautiful can become disabled at any age, from infancy to senior years.

Accommodations for persons with degenerative disorders evolve with time. Assistive technology can compensate for mobility and speech difficulties. People with disabilities are not barred from discovering and pursuing their life's ambitions.

Chapter 2: Disabled woman and disabled men. What the difference?

Disability is a criterion that distinguishes not only people with disabilities from healthy people but also men and women. (Pistorius, 2020) It can be argued that women with disabilities face double discrimination. On the one hand, women with disabilities are excluded from public life as women; on the other hand, they are discriminated against because they do not meet the standards of 'normal' femininity and the prevailing standard of beauty in society. (Maury, 2020) How do we determine what makes a person beautiful? While it may seem today that current standards of beauty must be universally universal, the opposite is true. Beauty concept can be just a myth in a society.

Women, be therefore courageous, free; play at being men, write like them; but never get far from them; live under their gaze, compensate for your books by your children; enjoy a free rein for a while, but quickly come back to your condition. One novel, one child, a little feminism, a little connubiality. Let us tie the adventure of art to the strong pillars of the home: both will profit a great deal from this combination: where myths are concerned, mutual help is always fruitful. (Barthes, *Mythologies*, page 53)

It is as if women's lives are to be defined solely by these three dimensions: 'The Outside World,' 'Home Life' and 'Romance,' which he refers to as "prison houses" that are

adjacent, possibly even linked, but must never contaminate one another. Based on etymology, Barthes describes the myth primarily as a saying that says to see, to perceive things in a certain perspective. Myth, he says, is a communication system, a message made up of pre-processed material prepared for public perception. Mythologisation is the foundation of modern media. The media itself can become the creator of new modern myths and construct the myths behind their ideological power. Like ancient myths, they are an integral part of religion, objects of faith, so modern myths are considered to be traceable and unquestionable, because they create a deceptive sense of naturalness, the illusion that they fully correspond to reality. It should be emphasized that the myth may not be accepted in the same way and may provoke different reactions: sympathy or antipathy. The notions of gender inequality that are alive in society are constantly fuelled and supported through socially constructed ideas of masculinity and femininity, which are perceived as necessary aspirations. The different treatment of women and men with disabilities is also evident. (LSE BPP, 2019) Women with disabilities are primarily negatively affected by the key elements of the female gender stereotype: the traditional ideal of beauty and the belief that helping, and caring is a female activity. Women with disabilities face negative public perceptions not only because they cannot take care of their partner or husband (often only imagined that they cannot), but also because of motherhood. It is unlikely that a woman with a disability can perform the social roles assigned to a woman. (Bradley University, 2021)



Figure 3: Henry Ford Hospital, 1932

Due to the imaginary passivity of a disabled woman, her desire to have a child becomes particularly problematic. Healthy women are advised not to terminate their pregnancies, while disabled people are advised to do so. There are fears not only that a disabled woman will not be able to take care of her child, but also that her child may be disabled. In this respect, it can be argued that there is a return to the tendency to exclude people with genetic disorders before they are born, rather than to take care of their social integration. Diagnosis causes many practical psychological and especially ethical problems. (Habib, 1995)

It is especially important to mention the moment of becoming disabled. Women who have experienced a childhood disability are more tolerant of it, more "tamed" of their

bodies and less complicated because of the disability itself. Women who become disabled in the course of their lives (and especially in old age) have a harder time coping with disability. This is also revealed in the words:

“I am not sick. I am broken. But I am happy to be alive as long as I can paint”. – Frida Kahlo (Art: Mexican Autobiography, 1953)

Frida Kahlo's painting of herself (Figure 2) is full of pain after she lost her unborn child. Her body, that is supposed to be strong, is helpless. Her body failed her. At the age of six, the future artist contracted polio. Her aching leg became noticeably shorter and thinner, so the other children made fun of her. Life continued to be indifferent: a tragic accident while driving a bus had left Kahlo in bed at just eighteen, and she was suffering from chronic pain. The accident caused her to suffer fractures of the spine, clavicle, and right leg; she survived about 35 surgeries, was unable to walk and have children.

Paradoxically, it was disability that became a source of inspiration for her work. The body weakened, waned, but art was born. Lying in bed, she started painting. In the drawings he depicted himself, often surrounded by symbols of death; bleeding, wounded, suffering. The self-taught artist's work received worldwide recognition, and Kahlo organized exhibitions in New York, Paris, Mexico. (Frida Kahlo Biography, 2009)

“Nullum magnum ingenium sine mixtura dementiae fuit” (There has not been any great talent without an element of madness), Seneca (azquotes)

From ancient times, artists have been considered influenced by insanity. However, there is no need to understand the term madness directly; mental disorders, and melancholy, are more often mentioned here, for people not meeting the norms of society. Society tends to reject such people as antisocial, abnormal. Creativity can also be driven by super-sensitivity. Super-sensitive individuals are characterized by a more subtle perception of the environment around them, and by taking certain actions they process more information. It is because of such perceptible impulses that they experience extremely strong emotions of both joy and sadness. Such individuals are often accompanied by felt anxiety or sadness, although they do not understand the cause of these emotions themselves.



Figure 4: Sanchita Islam, Baba 1, 2010-2012

When we think about artists, we typically think of their talent, uniqueness, and vision. Famous artists are usually lifted to a pedestal of brilliance in our minds, therefore isolating them from ordinary people, most notably ourselves. However, many renowned artists have remarkable skill while simultaneously dealing with disabilities. (Thackara, 2021) Work created under the influence of impulses of mental disorders, becomes more valuable for the health of the artist, during which the impulses are suppressed, and the quality of the work becomes more valuable. The function of art as art therapy or self-healing becomes therapeutic in both cases. Because it is during creation that verballity is replaced by symbols, images, or a destructive emotion is spontaneously expressed in an artistic form. The impulses that arise in mental disorders encourage the creation, the artistic form of talking about the current situation. The act of creativity suppresses the symptoms caused by mental disorders. Sanchita Islam discusses her experience:

In 2003, when I was diagnosed with my mental health condition, I was never forewarned that I could be vulnerable to psychosis, not once. I didn't even know what psychosis was, and when I was in a psychotic state at one point, those close to me, didn't think I would come back to the real world. (Turnbull, 2016)

Suffering from the annoyance of varied visions and without access to mental health care, Islam realised that the only thing that could help her was to draw. She started by diligently sketching her child when he slept or breastfed (Figure 3), completely drowning out the negative voices in her head. She allows her child to participate in her

artwork on occasion in order to both repress the illness that threatened their relationship and to create something memorable.

Chapter 3: Freak Show

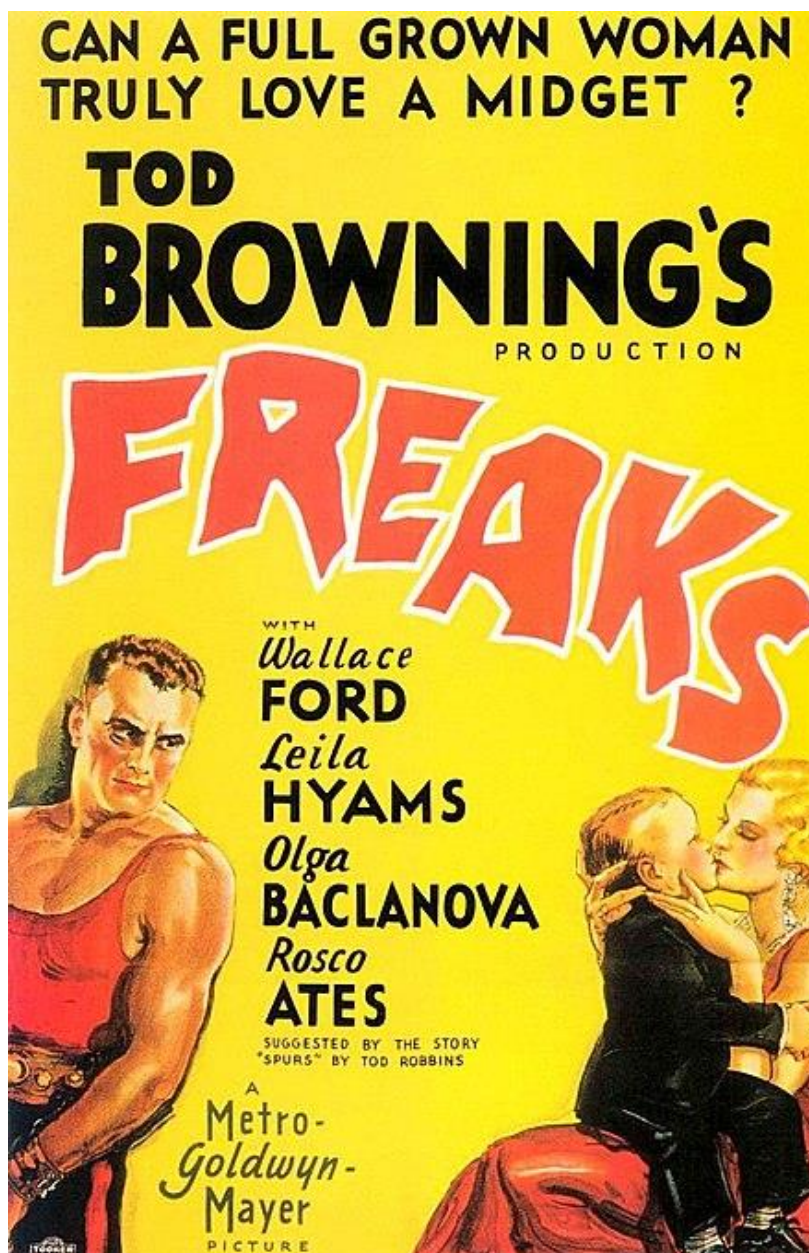


Figure 5: *Freaks* (1932 film)

In the 19th century, technology was developing incredibly, as in the fields of medicine and the arts, but the attitude towards the disabled remained extremely poor. The most prominent representative of music was the composer Ludwig van Beethoven.

Interestingly, the greatest masterpieces are considered to be the works he created in his sixties when he was and completely deafened, the most famous of which are the fifth and ninth symphonies. (Knapp, 1996) In terms of art and culture, we must also mention events where people were entertained by watching disabled children and adults. 'Freak show' performers shed light on society's attitude toward persons with disabilities, as well as the horrifying fate that awaited people born with birth abnormalities or psychical retardation.



Figure 6: Mary Ann Bevan

Mary Ann Bevan who suffered from acromegaly which caused her body to produce growth hormones won “The ugliest woman” title in “freak show”. (Tapalaga, 2018) Until her death in 1933 she also worked in the circus and became the object of ridicule in order to feed her four children after her husband's death had left her in a desperate situation. It should be said that despite such difficulties as health problems, loss of a loved one, bullying, Bevan was a strong woman and a loving mother who, by sacrificing herself, did not leave her children in poverty. Due to the importance of physical beauty for women, women with disabilities find themselves in an ambiguous situation, as it is ‘self-evident’ what that beauty should be. On the one hand, the formation of the definition of disability depends on social and cultural phenomena, on the other hand, on sociological, political, and psychological processes. (Peters, 2014)

Each epoch and each culture distinguish or constructs a specific “different” person or image, calling in its own way a deviation from a social norm. (Momene, 2015) The development of human self-awareness and self-esteem depends on the attitude of the people around them and on living conditions. (Scope, 2018) A person who is valued by society can successfully improve and raise their self-esteem. In today’s society, in order not only to survive but also to live to their full potential, a person is forced to redefine his or her relationship with a changing world and develop the ability to accept the demands of life in order not to be socially excluded. In society, attitudes towards social problems as individual disorders seem to have shaped terribly negative attitudes towards those left behind by a very rapidly evolving world. It is obvious that such an approach to social problems, attributing their causes to the inability of individuals to

adapt, creates even greater social problems. However, modern social theories show that the cause of social problems is not individual disorders, but a radical change in social structures (like COVID-19) that inevitably affects the lives of individuals. (Wagner, 2021) Addressing these issues is associated with individual social participation, which can be defined as the active involvement of members of socially excluded groups in community life, and learning becomes an essential form of social participation.

Chapter 4: Disability visibility



Figure 7: Heumann, J. demonstrating, 1970

When I started working on my project to photograph physically and psychologically disabled people, the book *Incurably Romantic* by Bernard F. Stehle caught my eye. The

book was released 1985 and the author addresses problems that still relevant today. *Incurably Romantic* is an aesthetically appealing and strong statement about persons who are physically disabled, some seriously with various ailments, but who are still lovers and are loved. People from The Philadelphia Home for the Incurable share their stories of intimacy, joy, hope, and tragedy with us. Our society, according to Stehle, places a significant importance on appearance: those who are thought 'beautiful' or 'handsome' become our personal models or aspirations. Those who are deemed 'unattractive' or physically 'abnormal', on the other hand, are seen as less personally valuable. Such interpretations even contribute to our belief that love - both being a lover and being loved - is incompatible with physical and, most significantly, mental problems. Stehle spent four years shooting handicapped individuals in order for his work to help the reader comprehend their experience, because society overlooks their needs, skills, and feelings. Photographs that illustrate the stories of persons with disabilities are extremely useful. They are beneficial not only in that they legitimise the need of the disabled to be a part of culture and art, but also in that they give an opportunity to view a more complete image of the world. A universe in which you may identify not just with perfect-looking superheroes, but also with real-life heroes. Looking at these photographs, you recognise that independence, maturity, and a sense of responsibility for others are all attributes that are not always dependent on intrinsic human data. This is an important lesson in a society where we continue to judge a lot based on opposing oppositions such as 'normal/abnormal,' 'healthy/unhealthy,' and so on. (Stehle, *Incurably Romantic*, 1985)



Figure 8: Bill and Betty (p.58)



Figure 9: George and Arlene (p.91)

I created photographs with the purpose of not ignoring or exacerbating people's obvious physical limitations. These infirmities are commonly depicted in the images since they are part of the explanation for their presence in the world. That is why instead of suppressing the questions and fears that their physical attributes sparked, I articulated them. Often this was the starting point from which we delved deeper into the more important aspects of them, which in turn had an impact on my photography. In the same way that they gained trust in my interest in them as persons, they gained self-confidence in front of the camera. Acceptance was a common objective, and so were some of the difficulties that came with it. One woman with intellectual disorder told me she has three brothers and how she missed them. Also, she revealed that her mother was killed by her grandmother and so on. I listened to her with some visible wonder as her life story sounded overly dramatic. Mostly her story revolved around her childhood and brothers, and she could not stop sharing her memories with me. After I finished to photographing her, social worker stated that this woman does not have any brothers. Being there, it is hard to understand where the truth is. Intellectual disorders can include many conditions and intellectual disorder is a broad term that encompasses a variety of problems caused by mental / physical disorders. Individuals with intellectual disabilities may encounter difficulties with basic life skills such as speaking, moving, learning, self-help, and independent living. (American Psychiatric Association, 2021)



Figure 10: Ramune, 2021

Ramune, 46 years old. Intellectual disorder. Ramune is a culinary, knitter and seamstress. She enjoys traveling with her best friend Paulius. Cares for cats sheltered from the street.

"Nice day, good mood, I just wanted to smile"- Ramune

Pets and especially cats play a significant role in the life of a disabled person.

Researchers in the UK surveyed more than 50 people with chronic mental illness about the importance of pets in their lives. Many of them said that the constant presence of a

pet gives them peace of mind. For some, they help divert attention away from the symptoms of the disease, such as audible voices or suicidal thoughts. (Health News, 2016)

At a time when the integration of people with disabilities is being discussed more widely, there is a need to gather as much information and knowledge as possible about the means and methods of communication for people with moderate to severe intellectual disabilities; as well as their needs, aspirations, and desires. People with disabilities (those with major and moderate intellectual disabilities) have a particularly difficult time integrating into society due to communication problems in addition to mental retardation. Furthermore, society is more inclined to focus on physical disability, despite the fact that a person with a disability need at least basic communication. Due to the inability of verbal connection with these people, there is a lack of understanding about the needs those with moderate and severe intellectual disabilities, awareness of what is relevant to them, and knowledge of what they want and want and need. (Huizen, 2020)

The natural growth of man is hampered by intellectual disorders, particularly the development of cognitive ability and language. Understandably, intellectual disability limits verbal expression and communication, but it should be emphasised that a person with an intellectual disability has the power of feelings - not only undisturbed, but also particularly vivid and obvious, so artistic language can help overcome barriers to communication and self-expression.



Figure 11: Leonid and Aliona, 2021

“Glad we captured our love. We are very happy.” Leonid and Aliona

Leonid 30 years old, Aliona 40 Years old. Intellectual disorder. Leonid and Aliona met each other in Valakampiai Social Service Home. They simply enjoyed spending time together and planning their wedding next year. Aliona has two sons, one of whom has severe disability and lives with foster parents in Lithuania. Another son is adopted and lives in Canada. Aliona loves her kids and talks a lot about how she proud she is of them, and that they are doing great. Because of Aliona’s psychical disability, she lacks feelings about responsibility for her kids and has extremely low superficial ability to take care of her sons.

I tried not to either emphasize or downplay people's obvious physical handicaps in my images. Such limitations are part of the information provided regarding their presence; hence they are frequently present in the images.



Figure 12: Raisa, 2021

Raisa 21 years old. Intellectual disorder. Likes to communicate, loves to draw, is interested in photography. She loves animals and currently cares for three homeless cats.

"It simply came to our notice then. The mood was great because I will have photos for memory. In the future, I would also like to be a photographer because I like to capture beautiful moments, happy people's faces"- Raisa

Art is an exceedingly archaic form of human self-expression that allows a person to express themselves and their experiences in the form of a symbolic form of creative metaphor. Self-expression is a vital tool for each individual, to search for the self, to make individual experiences meaningful, where profound, often previously unconscious sensations and thoughts are expressed through images and symbols. The creative process becomes highly significant when it assists in revealing the author's experiences, internal conflicts, hidden sentiments, stages of personal development, possibilities for change, allowing him or her to notice them themselves, and assisting them to change in a personal good direction. Making verbal contact is often a less successful, and there is a need to search for other ways to communicate. (Paz, 2017) Art is the oldest way of human creativity, an emotional expression of feelings and thoughts, allowing for the revelation of man's perceived and unfathomable inner and outward world. Art, in this sense, becomes a very appreciative venue for achieving the goals of this activity.

Intellectual disability - (otherwise defined as 'developmental disorder' or 'mental disability') describes a lifelong condition, usually from birth. It is a persistent condition with significantly lower than average intellectual abilities and manifested in their noticeable functional limitations and behavioural characteristics expressed in general, social, and practical adaptive skills. (Able Magazine)

Living in two different countries – Lithuania and United Kingdom - helped me to see the difference between disabled people here in UK and in Lithuania. Starting from financial support, medical care, education, and integration. In terms of integration and visibility, social media playing huge part in disabled people life's giving them possibilities to communicate, unite like-minded people, share information, and increase creativity, expand knowledge. When it comes to cultures, it is possible to communicate with foreign representatives, take an interest in and learn a lot about innovations about other cultures and traditions. Disabled person can become a blogger, influencer, or work as fashion model and be visible worldwide.

This makes the rise of models with disabilities revolutionary, calling into question an acceptable form of discrimination in the industry. (Brown, 2018)

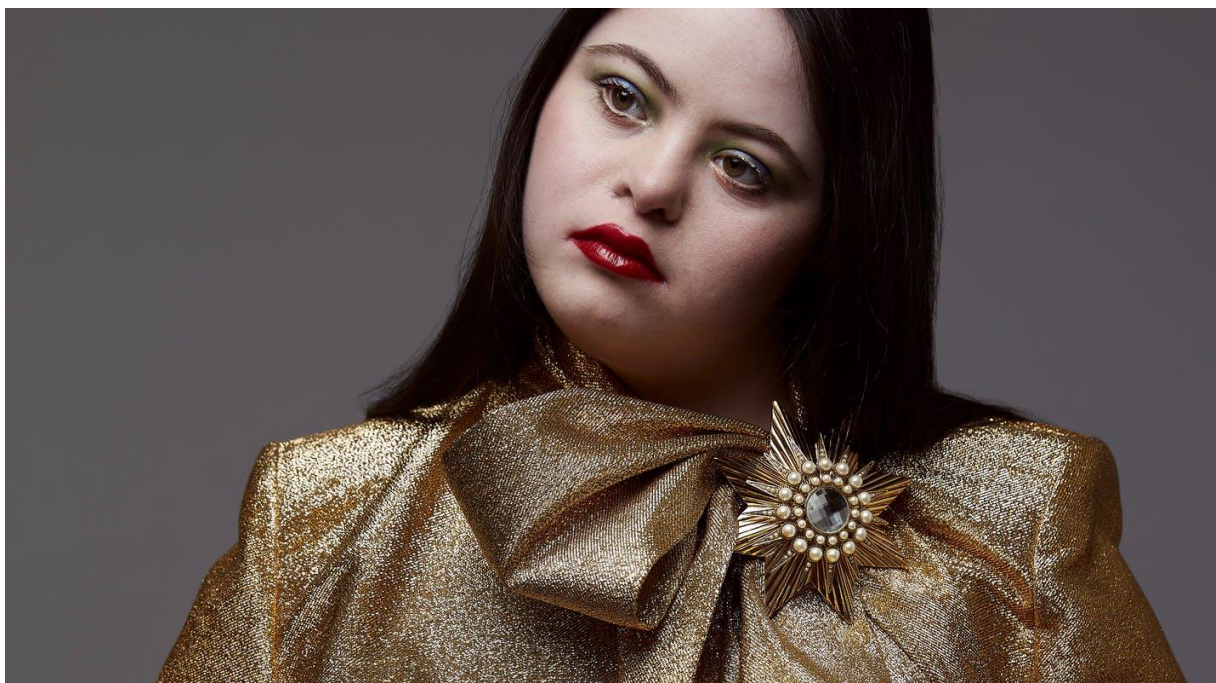


Figure 13: L'Officiel Baltic: *Ellie Goldstein (2021)*

In 2020 I had opportunity to work with disabled models. Zebedee Management is the agency that represent people who been excluded from social media. After the photoshoot I asked some people to share their thoughts about why they need to be visible, what does it means to them?

I am a UK disabled model; I chose this route as I strongly believe that the industry needs more diversity on their screens. A person with a disability should not be stopped from doing what they love, it takes one person to stand out from the crowd to support others who desire to do modelling too. It is not my fault that I have to live with a disability for the rest of my life, I cannot help who I am. But what I can do is change people's views about being different and modelling, the industry needs a better twist to allow people like myself to become the norm and not feel any different to other models out there.

(Hussain, A.)

One of my aims with my career is to be a role model for the younger generation with disabilities, in fact to anyone with a disability because when I was growing up and facing all these new changes and challenges, I had no one to look up to who was like me which left me feeling somewhat of an outsider. I hope to reduce that feeling for others so I hope I can be someone to aspire to. I want to be visible because I needed someone like me so if I can be that someone, that guidance for even just one person, then that would truly make everything worth it. I feel that disabled people are not represented enough in the media, but I am determined to help change that. (Wasdall, G.)

Man cannot exist in isolation. Because community life is a necessary requirement for its full existence, the individual's place in society and interpersonal relationships are important at all phases of human development. People with limited opportunities have always been treated differently than other members of the community, ranging from utter rejection to acceptance. The ability of a disabled person to live a full life in the

community is dependent on mutual interaction: the community's willingness to tolerate someone different and the disabled person's own attempts to be active. Such circumstances cannot occur by themselves. This necessitates mutual understanding and trust, which is feasible when individuals communicate and act in concert. (SA Federation for Mental Health, 2020)

Conclusion

This whole research is in memory of my disabled family member who died many years ago. Jurate's mother's biggest fear was to die before her daughter. Their bond was extraordinarily strong, and she was the only person who took care of her daughter. Jurate loved attention, even though she was very shy, she loved watching people just standing by the wall outside her home. Unfortunately, the only attention she received was in form of bullying and hate. Seeing her life from close perspective was a sad experience, so my main aim is to highlight disabled people to let them to be heard and feel important. Depiction through both art and documentary photography is one of many ways to prove and celebrate our existence.



Figure 14: Jurate and her mother (Year unknow)

My photographs can be described as created accurately to the standards, or provocation, even poetic, but mostly emotionally expressive. One of my favourite photographer Diane Arbus was passionate by photography.

Arbus' photographs penetrate the psyche with all the force of a personal encounter and, in doing so, transform the way we see the world and the people in it. (Aperture, 2021)

By a public she was labelled 'the photographer of freaks. (Kim, 2021)



Figure 15: Untitled (1), 1923-1971

Art is the best method to integrate the disabled because modern life is so sophisticated and modernised, art plays an important function. (Templeton Religion Trust, 2021) It

promotes society by transferring experiences across distance and time. It impacts people's opinions through visual inspiration. Art is engaged in influencing the fundamental self-awareness. Art does not tell people what they should do. It reforms by projecting a fusion of fantasy and reality, influencing how individuals think and live. It has the ability to make individuals feel as though they are in another universe. The emotions evoked by art may elicit thought, involvement, and even action.

In terms of my photographs, the colours of the subjects might be distracting and detract from the core idea of the photograph at times, for this reason, I chose black and white photography to represent my work and represent the people. Black and white photographs tell the story more efficient; they are deeper and more expressive.

(Preston, 2019)



Figure 16: Twins 21 years old, 2021



Figure 17: Hands, 2021



Figure 18: Justyna, 2021



Figure 19: Routine, 2021



Figure 20: Feelings, 2021



Figure 21: Joy, 2021

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