

BURDEN OF PROOF: THE CONSTRUCTION OF VISUAL EVIDENCE

At the exhibition I observed a presentation of eleven case studies starting at the period of the invention of 'metric' photography of crime scenes in the 19th century to the drone attack in Pakistan in 2012 using digital and satellite technologies to exhibit the work. Also as I have discovered that the exhibition examining the way how photographic images have been harnessed as evidence in instances of crimes or acts of violence. When you walking through the gallery, first that you see on the walls are Metric Photography of Crime Scenes that has been created by Alphonse Bertillon in the 19th century that includes scientific measurements and records of crime scenes methods in a way that would assist police investigations, judges and juries. What surprised me in his work was the fact that someone can actually take pictures and measurements of dead people and crime scenes. As I've noticed, there were titles under each image, stating a place and a year of the crime. All crimes happened between 1904-1914 years. The images were mostly black&white, but some of them were sepia toned, dead human's age is around 30-40 years old, all facing the camera and framed in a photographic metric paper.

The Man of the Shroud, also known as Shroud of Turin is a length of linen cloth bearing the image of a man that is believed to be the burial shroud of Jesus of Nazareth. On the images I observed a naked man silhouette with the stains on the cloth that he has been covered in. I could observe swelling of the face, streams of blood down both arms, punctures around the forehead and scalp. You can see and feel how scientists and investigators were working hard to identify and compare if this has been a real blood and how all of this process happened. Each image is showing detailed investigation and clear prints, revealing details that most people would not notice, and it is invisible to the naked eye.

Josef Mengele's skull images impressed me the most because of the terrifying story behind these portraits. I've been interested in research into him and was trying to observe and analyse as much as I could to actually understand the whole history and to explore what he did during Second World War. He was called Angel of Death that tortured and killed thousands of children in grisly experiments. Mengele would determine who would be killed and who would become a forced labourer and worked to death.

What I understood about the images at the show, was the way experts are bringing image into status of evidence, the exhibition was not about historical context as I first thought. The exhibition was trying to show and tell us how experts were going to invent a new protocol to make pictures of crimes and new shooting procedures. Also the exhibition is bringing us knowledge of new ways of reading, showing and shooting the images.