

The Image and the Witness

Frances Guerin

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Submissions are invited for an edited book with the working title THE IMAGE AND THE WITNESS, which will explore the twin concerns of the image as witness and images of witnesses to traumatic historical events. In recent years photographic, film, video and televisual images have played an increasingly important role in the formation and documentation of historical events. Similarly, archival images of past traumatic events have become ever more accessible. At the same time however, the computer generation and manipulation of media images problematize the notion of the "original" image that witnesses historical events. Parallel to developments in image production and dissemination, scholarly interest in the aesthetics and politics of imaging trauma has understandably burgeoned. At the center of this literature has been concern for both the psychological and political significance of witnessing historical trauma. In the ever-expanding field of image studies, there has also been a continued interrogation of the ethics and aesthetics of images which document the traumatic historical event. This collection will examine the urgent concerns raised by analogue and digital images of traumatic historical events, concerns that lie at the intersection of image studies and trauma studies. Such events could include: the Holocaust; Hiroshima/Nagasaki; wars, such as the Gulf War, the Balkan wars or World War II; the Intifada; September 11; the AIDS epidemic; the rise and fall of political dictatorships, such as those of Milosevic, Pinochet and Ceausescu; colonization; mediated catastrophes or crises; and human rights abuses.

We envision contributions that explore the image and the witness from within a variety of conceptual sites. The collection will be organized according to these sites. Possible sites include: the aestheticization of the event/witness; the politics of framing and/or narrativizing the witness/event; challenges to notions of realism mobilized through witnessing; the indexicality of the image; the image as a form of documentary evidence for the writing of history; the presence, absence and appearance of the event and/or image; authorship and ownership of the image; the status of the body in the

act of witnessing; the assertion of identity through witnessing; the politics of the image archive in narratives of witnessing; the appropriation of images for uses other than those for which they were designed; the relationship between the image and linguistic or textual testimony; the ethics of image production, reproduction and dissemination; the ethical responsibility for remembering.

Through the intersection of images of traumatic historical events and a variety of conceptual sites, the collection will both contribute to ongoing debates about the politics and aesthetics of witnessing, and better assess the role of the still and moving image within contemporary history and culture more generally.

The book will be edited by Frances Guerin (University of Kent, Canterbury, UK) and Roger Hallas (New York University, USA).

Send a 500 word proposal and brief resume by October 1, 2002 to:

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<<https://arthist.net/archive/24873>>.