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PHOTOGRAPHY AFTER THE FACT

Photojournalism is often thought to have a special relationship to the real. It records the important political and social issues that affect our world, and because of its assumed immediacy to the palpable "facts," we tend to believe that it is reliable and, hence, authentic. The legendary advice of photojournalist Robert Capa substantiates this assumption: "If your pictures aren't good enough, you're not close enough." In this statement, Capa implied that photojournalism's reportorial powers derive largely from the physical and emotional proximity of the photographers to their subjects and their ability, thereby, to witness events firsthand.

Due, however, to the recent influx of such technologies as television, video, and digital media, contemporary photojournalism seems to have lost much of its witnessing authority. A number of scholars have attributed this shift in photojournalism's identity to the Gulf War of 1991. Because most of the images from this war were taken by digital imaging systems and then dispersed through military spokespeople, often via television, many argue that photojournalism relinquished the traditional position of witness that it had previously served, especially during Vietnam.[1] Photography historian David Campany explained: "Today it is very rare that photographs actually break the news. The newspaper constitutes only a second wave of interpreted information or commentary."[2]

1. The bibliography about the highly orchestrated nature of the Gulf War as spectacle is extensive; on its implications for photography, see David Campany, "Safety in Numbness: Some Remarks on the Problem of 'Late Photography,'" *Where is the Photograph?*, ed. David Green (Manchester: Photoworks / PhotoForum, 2003), pp. 123–32; Ian Walker, "Desert Stories or Faith in Facts?" *The Photographic Image in Digital Culture*, ed. Martin Lister (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), pp. 236–52; John Taylor, *Body Horror* (New York: New York University Press, 1998); William J. Mitchell, *The Reconfigured Eye: Visual Truth in the Post-Photographic Era* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992); and Fred Ritchin, "The End of Photography as We Have Known It," *PhotoVideo: Photography in the Age of the Computer*, ed. Paul Wombell (London: Rivers Oram Press, 1991), pp. 8–15.

2. Campany, "Safety in Numbness," p. 127.

A number of contemporary photographers have responded to this situation by forgoing traditional photojournalism's reliance on the lightweight, 35mm or digital handheld camera with its ostensible ability to freeze events quickly. Instead, they have turned to medium- or large-format cameras, the larger frames and cumbersome sizes of which require a slower process and produce more detailed images of what comes "after."[3] The large-scale, panoramic photographs entitled *History* that former Magnum and *Newsweek* photographer Luc Delahaye began in 2001 seem consistent with this tendency (**PLATE 4**). This series depicts such newsworthy subject matter as the war zones in Afghanistan and Iraq, the G8 summit in Genoa, and a memorial service at Ground Zero, to name just a few. Yet, rather than photograph these subjects spontaneously, as he had done in numerous images taken while on assignment for *Newsweek* (**PLATE 3**), Delahaye instead depicted them from the distant and oblique perspective assumed as intrinsic to his medium-format Linhof Technorama 612 panoramic camera.

A number of critics have read this shift in Delahaye's production as a direct confrontation of traditional photojournalism and, more particularly, its voyeuristic tendencies. Photography curator Carol Squiers, for instance, argued that the "slowness" and "detachment" of the Linhof panoramic camera enable Delahaye to focus on peripheral information frequently "excised or ignored by the media's focus on sensational incident." In so doing, Squiers claimed that Delahaye overturns Capa's insistence on the "immediacy" and "instantaneity" of photojournalism and the sensationalism that she believes is implicit to this approach: "By implementing this reversal, Delahaye alters his relationship to the human subjects caught in newsworthy events, often refusing to spectacularize the pain written on the faces and bodies of the strangers he photographs."[4] Likewise, art historian Michael Fried maintained that the "distance" and "withdrawal" that Delahaye adopted in relation to his series *History* cause viewers to become "aware that a basic protocol of these images rules out precisely the sort of feats of *capture*—of fast-moving events, extreme gestures and emotions, vivid momentary juxtapositions of persons and things, etc.—that one associates with photojournalism at its bravura best."[5]

Delahaye has also contributed to this reading of *History* as an implicit challenge to photojournalism. According to Delahaye, he prefers the Linhof panoramic camera because of the explicit distinction that it makes between art and photojournalism and the responses required of them. In particular, Delahaye believes that the monumental and highly detailed images produced by the Linhof panoramic camera counter the diminution of meaning that occurs in photojournalism, especially when its images are reproduced in the print media. Because of the smaller frame of photojournalism's 35mm or digital handheld cameras, which have a 3:2 aspect ratio, Delahaye maintains that these prints promote rapid scanning when reproduced in the chaotic context of newspaper or magazine pages. The generous proportions and 1:2 aspect ratio of the Linhof frame, on the other hand, encourage a more detached relationship to the subject matter—one that is necessarily, as Delahaye explained, "incompatible with the economy of the press"—especially when, as in *History*, they are enlarged into eight-by-four foot prints and placed within the context of an art museum or gallery.[6]

In making these distinctions about *History* and its relationship to photojournal-

3. In "Desert Stories or Faith in Facts?" (p. 240), Ian Walker used the term "post-reportage" to define this shift in photography: "I use that term 'post-reportage' to suggest not what photography cannot do, but what it can: document what comes after, what has been left when the war is over." David Campany, "Survey," *Art and Photography* (London and New York: Phaidon, 2003), p. 27, reiterated this observation: "Whatever its indexical primary, photography is now a secondary medium of evidence.... This is the source of the eclipse of the realist reportage of 'events' and the emergence of a photography of the trace or 'aftermath.'"

4. Carol Squiers, "The Stranger," *Strangers: The First ICP Triennial of Photography and Video* (New York: International Center of Photography and Göttingen: Steidl, 2003), p. 17.

5. Michael Fried, "World Mergers," *Artforum* 44, no. 7 (March 2006): 64.

6. Luc Delahaye, quoted in Bill Sullivan, "The Real Thing: Photographer Luc Delahaye," *Artnet Magazine* (April 10, 2003) www.artnet.com/magazine/features/sullivan/

ism, these critics—as well as Delahaye—assume that photojournalism and art involve, as Squiers elucidated, "Different preoccupations and different freedoms."[7] Since photojournalism remains bound to newspaper or magazine pages, its photographers necessarily and automatically "capture" the real without any self-reflexivity or critical detachment. Artists, on the other hand, due to the self-sufficiency and distance of their images from the real, can think about the nature of representation and its depiction of reality in a more oblique and, hence, contemplative manner. Delahaye explained this in relation to *History*: "To voice the real and at the same time to create an image that is a world in itself, with its own coherence, its autonomy and sovereignty; an image that thinks."[8] In other words, whereas photojournalism must adhere to the "immediacy" and "instantaneity" of the "facts," the "slowness" and "detachment" of art allow it to function, as David Campany further explained, "Both as and of a trace."[9] Such distinctions, however, imply that these systems of image making and the types of responses that they elicit are both steadfast and resolute. Photography's ability to bear witness cannot be reduced to either a "trace" of the real or even a "trace of a trace" of the real. Instead, the evidentiary and testimonial authority of the medium depends on complex habits of observation and a set of assumptions and beliefs that continually shift according to the culture and interests of those who use and read them, as well as those who make them.

7. Carol Squiers, quoted in Nancy Princenthal, "Forty Ways of Looking at a Stranger," *Art in America* 91 (December 2003): 42.

8. Luc Delahaye, quoted in Susan Bright, *Art Photography Now* (New York: Aperture, 2005), p. 181.

9. Campany, "Survey," p. 27.

EVIDENCE

Having worked extensively as a Magnum and *Newsweek* photographer, Luc Delahaye has had firsthand experience with the loss of meaning that occurs when photographs are reproduced in the print media. For a project on post-Communist Russia, for instance, he spent four months during the winter of 1998–99 riding with a translator on the Trans-Siberian railroad from Moscow to Vladivostok. Along the way he stopped to photograph the daily hardships of the Russian people whom he encountered and the equally stark and dreary landscapes of a nation struggling to survive economic crisis. In 1999, four photographs from this trip were published in *Newsweek* with the headline "The Faces of Russia's Agony" and a text describing the "grit and grim fatalism" with which Russians "scrape by."[10] Through this format, *Newsweek* editors used Delahaye's pictures to illustrate Russia's bleak and damaged existence, as the letter of one reader attested: "Your dark and moving photographs convey far more despair than words ever could."[11]

Not all *Newsweek* readers, however, appreciated the anguish depicted in Delahaye's photographs. The letter of another reader, for instance, criticized the images for focusing exclusively on the squalor and suffering of Russia and its people: "Yes, there are many harsh realities, but there is also a beauty about Siberia, Novosibirsk, and the Russian people that was not fairly credited. I urge you to take a deeper look."[12] What this reader did not realize (since *Newsweek* editors neglected to disclose it) was that Delahaye's four photographs actually represented only a small portion of a larger, more extensive project on Russian life. Like many of his predecessors and contemporaries—including Mary Ellen Mark, James Nachtwey, and Sebastião Salgado—Delahaye frequently used his photojournalistic assignments as the basis of larger, more personal projects.[13] Thus, the same photographs

10. "The Faces of Russia's Agony," *Newsweek*, December 20, 1999, pp. 24–6.

11. Timothy Shenk, "Letters," *Newsweek*, January 31, 2000, Atlantic Edition, Lexis-Nexis http:web.lexisnexis.com/universe/form/academic/s_guidednews.html

12. Grigory Ioffe, "Letters," *Newsweek*, January 31, 2000, Atlantic Edition, Lexis-Nexis http: web.lexisnexis.com/universe/ form/academic/s_guidednews.

13. Mary Ellen Mark addressed the relationship between her personal and commercial work: "I am always thinking of the different ways that I can finance my own work. Because without personal projects, what's the point? The self-assigned project is your heart and soul.... The ideal situation is when a magazine assignment overlaps with your body of personal work." "Mary Ellen Mark: Streetwise Photographer," *Witness in our Time: Working Lives of Documentary Photographers*, ed. Ken Light (Washington, D.C: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2000), p. 82.

by Delahaye that appeared on the pages of *Newsweek* also circulated as part of a larger project, in a traveling exhibition as well as in the more intimate format of the art book *Winterreise*, which he designed.[14] Within these frameworks, the images were not appended with descriptive captions fixing their meaning; instead, they were placed within a larger sequence of photographs that led viewers along a more visually complex journey through Russia than allowed by the photo-essay in *Newsweek*.

Realizing that merely re-situating his photographs from a photojournalistic to an artistic context was not enough to offset the supplementary and frequently compromising purposes of the print media, Delahaye took a different approach for *History*. During his tenure in Afghanistan in 2001, for instance, Delahaye decided to produce two different sets of images. He made one set as a photojournalist; this set was subsequently circulated, among other frameworks, in *Newsweek* and on its web site as well as in such publications as Magnum Photo, Inc.'s *Arms against Fury: Magnum Photographers in Afghanistan*.[15] Delahaye concurrently took another set of images as an artist, using his Linhof panoramic camera; these photographs have been exhibited in art museums and galleries as well as reproduced in art books.[16] These distinctions—as well as the announcement in the January 31, 2004, issue of the British newspaper *Guardian* that, as of three years before, he had "officially" become an artist—reflect Delahaye's ongoing effort to extricate himself and his pictures from photojournalism and the "distracting" context of the print media to which this field is inexorably tied.[17] In short, Delahaye believes that this shift in his identity will ensure that his photographs "have [their] own coherence, are a world in themselves."[18]

In spite of Delahaye's effort to position his series *History* as art, many precepts considered fundamental to photojournalism continue to inform his work. For instance, even though Delahaye has rejected the "immediacy" and "instantaneity" of photojournalism and its use of the quicker and more immediate 35mm or digital cameras, he still remains influenced by its ostensible commitment to "bear witness." For Delahaye, though, "bearing witness" does not include a moral obligation. Unlike many photojournalists, he claims not to be driven by a desire to communicate social ills or to use his images to produce social change: "The majority of photojournalists tell themselves they do this work because it is important, that if people can just see these problems in these parts of the world they will do something about them. I have never believed this. I even think that that is a con."[19] What has instead attracted Delahaye to photojournalism's "bearing witness" is the privileged relationship to the real that he assumes is implicit in this approach. In other words, Delahaye wants to separate the evidentiary function of "bearing witness" from the "sentimentality" and "vulgarity" that he believes arises when it is used as a form of testimony. To do this, Delahaye has chosen to align himself as an artist with the "reticent, understated, and impersonal" documentary practice of Walker Evans.[20] In so doing, Delahaye believes that, like Evans, he can remove himself from his picture-making process and thus allow his camera to create detached and impartial representations: "I am not making commentaries on the battlefield. My approach is direct, like a simple recorder."[21]

What Delahaye fails to realize is that this self-effacement, along with the panoramic format and monumentally sized prints of *History*, which he likens to "tableaux," are not the

14. Luc Delahaye, *Winterreise* (London: Phaidon, 2000).

15. "The Fall of the Taliban," *Newsweek*, November 26, 2001, pp. 22–9; and Robert Dannin, ed., *Arms against Fury: Magnum Photographers in Afghanistan* (New York: PowerHouse Books, 2002), pp. 166–185.

16. Images from Delahaye's *History* series have been circulated in exhibitions at the Ricco/Maresca Gallery, New York City; The Cleveland Museum of Art; National Museum of Photography, Film & Television; International Center of Photography, and the Huis Marseille, among other places. They have also been reproduced in the limited edition *History* (London: Chris Boot, 2003) as well as in Brooks Johnson, ed., *Photography Speaks: 150 Photographers on Their Art* (New York: Aperture; Chrysler Museum of Art, 2004); and Bright, *Art Photography Now*.

17. Peter Lennon, "The Big Picture," *Guardian*, January 31, 2004, p. 24.

18. Luc Delahaye, quoted in Patrick Henry, "Luc Delahaye: Photographs," *RPS Journal* 144, no. 3 (April 2004): 122.

19. Delahaye, quoted in Sullivan, "The Real Thing."

20. Luc Delahaye cited the importance of Evans to his work: "Walker Evans was important to me, as his work showed me that there were possibilities other than those with which I had grown up: the vulgarity of sentimentalism, the dumbness of trying to have a 'style.'" Chris Booth, ed., *Magnum Stories* (London and New York: Phaidon, 2004), p. 106.

21. Delahaye, quoted in Henry, "Luc Delahaye: Photographs," p. 122.

product of his camera's unique vision or photography's supposed intrinsic documentary capacity; instead, they are formal conventions whose meanings cannot be separated from the circumstances in which they were made or circulated. For instance, Delahaye took **Taliban** (PLATE 4) in November 2001, while traveling on foot with Northern Alliance soldiers as they forged their way into Kabul, Afghanistan. Before taking the picture, he spent two weeks living with these soldiers on a farm not far from the Taliban front line. When the Taliban began to yield their positions and the Northern Alliance initiated their final assault on Kabul, Delahaye accompanied the soldiers and took pictures of the fighting, surrender, and death—including the recently killed Taliban soldier depicted in the image.[22]

FIGURE 1
LUC DELAHAYE, TALIBAN FROM *NEWSWEEK*, 26 NOVEMBER 2001

FIGURE 2
LUC DELAHAYE, *A TALIBAN SOLDIER LAY DEAD NEAR THE KABUL FRONT LINE*, 2001

Yet, as I mentioned previously, **Taliban** was not the only photograph that Delahaye made while traveling with the Northern Alliance in Afghanistan. Since he was still functioning at this point as a *Newsweek* and Magnum photographer, Delahaye also took a series of pictures that were subsequently published in an article in *Newsweek* entitled "The Fall of the Taliban" and in the book *Arms against Fury*.[23] Included in these publications are images by Delahaye whose straightforward point of view and blurring of subject matter suggest the "immediacy" and "instantaneity" of traditional photojournalism and its use of the smaller and quicker handheld 35mm or digital cameras (see PLATE 3).[24] At the same time, the publications also included images by Delahaye that are remarkably similar in form and content to his artistically conceived **Taliban**, which he took with his Linhof panoramic camera. Specifically, the *Newsweek* article included a photograph of another dead Taliban soldier reproduced as a double-page spread (FIG. 1), which Delahaye took from the same oblique and detached point of view as **Taliban**. Likewise, *Arms against Fury* includes a different version of the dead solider depicted in **Taliban** but nonetheless still photographed from a comparable perspective (FIG. 2). The visual affinities suggest that Delahaye made both of these images with his Linhof as opposed to a handheld camera. Why, then, were these images not included in Delahaye's series *History*?

According to Delahaye, the images in *History* "needed to be seen in a different way. The format of the image decided how it should be used."[25] Delahaye implied here that these photographs were the product of the clear-eyed, dispassionate view imparted by his camera's panoramic format. Therefore, it was the Linhof camera, as opposed to human agency, that dictated the photographs' use in Delahaye's lavish, limited-edition, and oversized book *History* as well as in the various museum and gallery exhibitions where they appeared as eight-by-four-foot, "tableau" color prints. Still, even if the panoramic format mandated these decisions, the question of why Delahaye elected to only reproduce as art

22. Delahaye described the making of "Taliban" in Delahaye, "Luc Delahaye: Snap Decision," *Art Press* 306 (November 2004): 29.

23. See note 15 above.

24. Delahaye's *Newsweek* photograph of the Northern Alliance troops ambushed by retreating Taliban won first place in Spot News Singles in the 2001 World Press Photo Contest. This further attests to the extent to which the convention of spontaneity is privileged within the field of photojournalism. Delahaye's *Newsweek* photographs from Afghanistan also won the Robert Capa Gold Medal, in 2001.

25. Luc Delahaye, quoted in David Schonauer, "Fallen Enemy," *American Photo* 13, no. 5 (September 2002): 23.

certain photographs taken with the Linhof camera while relegating the rest to photojournalism remains unanswered.

Delahaye wants to define his photographic practice as "reticent, understated, and impersonal" to perpetuate the idea that his images transparently reflect the real: "I restore [the suffering] more effectively if I am able to adopt a certain detachment."[26] Here, Delahaye assumed that the oblique and distanced perspective provided by his Linhof camera allowed "the suffering" in his images to "speak for itself." Yet, how Delahaye actually encodes "the suffering" in his pictures, and the manner in which it is subsequently decoded, are not intrinsic to the photographs that he takes, to the camera that he uses, or even to the subjects that he photographs.[27] Delahaye may attempt to establish the objectivity and impartiality of his *History* series in terms of the "slowness" and "detachment" of his Linhof camera and its generously sized prints. However, like the "immediacy" and "instantaneity" of traditional photojournalism, these are visual tropes whose meanings are shaped as much by the culture and interests of those who read them as by the intent of those who make and use them. As Victor Burgin explained: "Regardless of how much we may strain to maintain a 'disinterested' aesthetic mode of apprehension, an appreciation of the 'purely visual', when we look at an image it is instantly and irreversibly integrated and collated with the intricate psychic network of our knowledge."[28]

Many critics, nonetheless, continue to read the clarity, precision, and detachment of images such as **Taliban** as unmediated and the product of a "neutral" vision. As one critic noted: "This mode of absence is what allows Delahaye to act 'without presumption' and 'without regard for outcome'; to become in-phase with the situation and open to its possibilities; in short, to become as present as possible to the reality before him."[29] In arguing that Delahaye's detachment facilitates more "realistic" depictions, this critic assumed that the "slowness" and "detachment" of the Linhof necessarily enabled him to objectively and impartially record his subject matter. In actuality, this "slowness" and "detachment" are visual conventions that offer little insight into the intricacies of how the subject, in fact, appeared in front of the camera or what a viewer would have seen had she or he "been there." This is in part because, as photography historian Joel Snyder remarked in reference to the tendency to interpret the sharply focused compositions of Walker Evans as "real," "We do not—because we cannot—see things in this way."[30] Human vision is immensely more complex than what the camera records; yet, because Delahaye has chosen pictorial strategies—"slowness" and "detachment"—that, due largely to our habits of looking at pictures, seem transparent to the subject of a dead Taliban soldier, the photograph appears unmediated and hence "real."

If Delahaye had depicted the Taliban soldier in a blurred or distorted manner or photographed an American soldier, the picture would have likely engendered a different response. The reaction to the photographs of bloated and decaying bodies that Sally Mann took in 2000 for her series **What Remains** (**PLATE 19**) speaks in part to this bias. According to *The New York Times* critic Sarah Boxer, Mann's photographs of decomposing corpses "have something of the grave robber in them."[31] Boxer attributed this irreverence to two causes. First, she argued that Mann, like all who photograph the dead, violated "the privacy of the decency of the dead." Here, Boxer couched her critique in terms of the ethics of representing

26. Delahaye, quoted in Sullivan, "The Real Thing."

27. I use the terms "encode" and "decode" to refer to the dual process through which meaning is produced and received. See Stuart Hall, "Encoding/decoding," *Culture, Media, Language: Working Papers in Cultural Studies*, 1972–79 (London: Hutchinson in association with the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, University of Birmingham, 1980), pp. 128–38.

28. Victor Burgin, "Photography, Fantasy, Fiction," *Screen* 21, no. 1, (Spring 1980): 70.

29. Paul Tebbs, "Conflict Zone," *Art Review* 1, no. 11 (2003): 62.

30. Joel Snyder, "Picturing Vision," *Critical Inquiry* 6, no. 3 (Spring 1980): 505.

31. Sarah Boxer, "Slogging Through the Valley of the Shutter of Death," *The New York Times*, July 23, 2004, p. E30. For a counterpoint to this article, see Eleanor Heartney, "The Forensic Eye," *Art in America* 93 (January 2005): 50–55.

the dead. This criticism is frequently evoked when photographers depict the dead without showing them proper respect. The conviction and imprisonment of Cincinnati photographer Thomas Condon, in 2001, is a case in point. When Condon, without obtaining the proper formal permission, took photographs at the Hamilton County morgue for an art project on the cycle of life and death, he was arrested and tried for "corpse abuse."[32] Since, as Boxer knew, Mann had permission to photograph the dead in her pictures, and since, unlike the photographs by Condon confiscated by the police, none of their identities are discernible, it would seem that morals were not really what were at stake for Boxer.

According to Boxer, the second irreverence of Mann's images stemmed from "the dreadful things that Mann has done to surfaces of her photographs." Here, Boxer criticized Mann's photographs in terms of aesthetics. But what began as a critique of representational choices quickly turned back to the morals of representing the dead. This was largely because, for Boxer, Mann's prints distort instead of clarify her subject matter and thus create ambiguity rather than certainty: "You have to stare at some of them for quite a while to make out what exactly is in the picture." Implicit in Boxer's argument is the idea that, since photography is a mechanical medium that shares a unique relationship to the real, it should provide an accurate or "factual" record of the dead that, as the image is enlarged, should only get more exact. Accordingly, the dead bodies in Mann's photographs, even if in a state of decomposition, should be clearly defined. This of course is the opposite of what happens in Mann's photographs, since, as Boxer further complained, "The larger the photograph, the coarser and harder it is to read, as if the eyes, opened wide in horror, can't see at all."[33] This criticism then led Boxer, in a manner similar to the charges of "corpse abuse" levied against Condon, to accuse Mann of literally committing violence to the bodies she represents: "In many ways it's hard to see where the violence of death itself ends and where the violence in the picture making begins. Ms. Mann seems to be assisting in the decomposition."[34]

To some, the circumstances under which Mann initially took her photographs of the decomposing corpses may justify Boxer's complaints. Even though these images have been exhibited and published as part of her series **What Remains**, Mann first took them while on assignment for *The New York Times Magazine*.[35] Mann generally does not accept editorial work, but she made an exception in this case because the subject matter—decomposing bodies at the University of Tennessee Forensic Anthropology Facility, or Body Farm—aligned closely with work on death and decay that she had begun a year earlier when her beloved greyhound Eva died.[36] As part of this project, Mann had wanted to photograph corpses at the Body Farm, but as an artist, she had been denied permission. With the access provided by the *Times Magazine*, Mann was able to enter the facility and photograph the decaying human corpses for a story about scientists who study these bodies so as to better learn how to assess, from decomposition, times of death.[37]

In taking her photographs, however, Mann did not act like a traditional photojournalist. She neither depicted the bodies instantaneously nor did she use a 35mm or digital camera. Instead, she photographed them with an eight-by-ten-inch view camera and then developed the negatives using the time-consuming, nineteenth-century process

32. For information on Thomas Condon, see Stephen Kinzer, "In Cincinnati, Art Bows to the Privacy of Death," *The New York Times*, August 3, 2002, p. 7; and Eleanor Heartney, "Is the Body More Beautiful When It's Dead?" *The New York Times*, June 1, 2003, p. 37.

33. Boxer, "Slogging Through the Valley," p. E30.

34. Boxer, "Slogging Through the Valley," p. E30.

35. A selection of Mann's photographs of decomposing corpses is reproduced in Lawrence Osborne, "Dead Men Talking," *The New York Times Magazine*, December 3, 2000, pp. 105–108. Even though Mann initially took these photographs under the aegis of *The New York Times Magazine*, the director of the Body Farm allowed her to return several times to photograph for her personal project *What Remains*.

36. Sally Mann, *What Remains* (Boston: Bulfinch Press, 2003).

37. For more information on this assignment, see Heartney, "The Forensic Eye," p. 53.

known wet-collodion printing. In using this large-format camera and the antiquarian process as well as focusing on the remains of the dead, Mann seems to share commonalities with Delahaye's "slow" and "detached" approach to photography. What distinguishes her is an interest in photography's memorial capacities. For Mann, photography is not determined by its relationship to the real. Instead, it is a form of representation that allows her to "fashion an object" from the real.[38] Accordingly, her use of the "bearing witness" of photojournalism offers not a way of "being there"—she is, after all, not a forensic scientist who photographs the bodies every three hours to record how the body rots—but as a means to memorialize and remember the dead.

Mann's use of a large-format camera and the wet-collodion process visually enhances this quality in her prints. Mann does not try to create clear and concise prints. Refusing to be a slave to technique, she instead embraces the inconsistencies and accidents that occur in the printing process. For Mann, these irregularities and ambiguities in the surfaces of her prints are formal devices that allow her to heighten the physicality of her photographs and, in so doing, to explore the process through which one remembers the dead. The problem for Boxer was that Mann's interest in these memorial capacities of the medium compromises the assumed indexical nature of photography. Yet, what Boxer failed to realize is that photography's evidentiary authority cannot be reduced to its relationship to the real. Instead, as Eleanor Heartney elucidated in relation to Mann's photographs, it is determined "as much in memory and imagination as in fact."[39]

Due to the high level of clarity in Delahaye's **Taliban**, this image seems to more closely meet Boxer's expectations for representing the dead in photography. At the same time, since every detail of the dead corpse, including his face, is rendered with absolute precision, and since it is doubtful that Delahaye acquired "formal" permission to photograph him, one could argue that Delahaye should have also been condemned as a "grave robber." Interestingly, this ethical complaint is distinctly absent from the critical responses to Delahaye's photograph. Instead, as I have already mentioned, critics maintained that the "slowness" and "detachment" provided by his Linhof panoramic camera enabled Delahaye to impartially record "the reality before him." But is the objectivity of his Linhof camera in fact what has absolved Delahaye from discussions about the ethical quandaries of representing the dead?

In *Regarding the Pain of Others*, Susan Sontag argued that "the more remote or exotic the place, the more likely we are to have full frontal views of the dead and dying."[40] Sontag alluded here to a contradiction in recent photographic representations of the dead and dying. The print media will, largely out of moral decency and respect for families, obscure the faces of American and European dead. But, as Sontag further explained, "This is a dignity not thought necessary to accord to others."[41] Delahaye's "full-frontal" photographs of dead Taliban soldiers, published in November 2001 as part of the *Newsweek* article, "The Fall of the Taliban," substantiate Sontag's claim (see **FIG. 1**). No one has questioned the ethics behind the widespread circulation of these images. Instead, along with other images of dead Taliban soldiers distributed concurrently in the print media, they have provided one of the most popular means through which the American public has learned about the

38. Sally Mann, "The Angel of Uncertainty: An Interview with Sally Mann on the Lure of the Poured Image," in Lyle Rexer, *Photography's Antiquarian Avant-Garde: The New Wave in Old Processes* (New York: Harry Abrams, Inc., 2002), p. 81.

39. Heartney, "The Forensic Eye," p. 55.

40. Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003), p. 70. The representation of foreign, dead and dying bodies by the Western press is also discussed in John Taylor, "Foreign Bodies," *Body Horror*, pp. 129–56.

41. Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others*, p. 70.

war in Afghanistan and, more particularly, about the defeat of Islamic fundamentalism by the Northern Alliance.[42]

Delahaye believes that, once in front of *History*, the audience will suspend all of these prior habits and expectations of looking just as he does when taking pictures. "Witnessing wars and mayhem," Delahaye explained, encourages "a sort of cool indifference to myself, which lets me have a cool sensibility to the world."[43] Yet, just as the "slowness" and "detachment" are visual tropes used by Delahaye to signify the real, so too is the ostensible "realism" of **Taliban** dependent upon larger interests and assumptions about the representation of the dead, and more particularly Afghan dead, in photography.

42. For more information on journalism's photographic coverage of the killing of the Taliban by the Northern Alliance during the war in Afghanistan, see Barbie Zelizer, "Death in Wartime: Photographs and the 'Other War' in Afghanistan," *The Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics* 10, no. 3 (2005): 26–55.

43. Luc Delahaye, quoted in Vince Aletti, "Making History," *Village Voice*, March 11, 2003, p. 46.

TESTIMONY

Like Delahaye, Alfredo Jaar also has expressed dissatisfaction with the circulation of photography in the print media. Yet, whereas Delahaye dislikes photojournalism because it compromises photography's assumed evidentiary authority, Jaar objects to the manner in which its distribution promotes passive and disinterested viewers: "I have always felt that we suffer from a bombardment of images through the media, a bombardment that has completely anesthetized us."[44] Because of this aversion, a number of critics have interpreted Jaar's work (**PLATES 50** and **51**) as a direct confrontation of photojournalism. "Implicit in his approach," argued H. Ashley Kistler, "is a critique of 'concerned' photography and the patented responses to social tragedy that its distancing, voyeuristic stance too frequently provokes."[45] Kistler implied here that Jaar intends his work to render explicit the moral inadequacies of photojournalism and more particularly the ethically suspect form of photojournalism known as "concerned photography." Madeleine Grynsztejn extended this argument when she claimed that "Jaar's works are driven by the desire to expose 'the misrepresentation' that 'lies' beneath the surface of photographic representations...the most insidious ways in which our dominant western culture has misrepresented the Other is through 'concerned photography'."[46]

44. Alfredo Jaar, "Violence: The Limits of Representation," an interview in Rubén Gallo, *Trans Arts, Cultures, Media* ¾, 1997), p. 59.

45. H. Ashley Kistler, "Re-Visions: An Introduction to Geography=War," *Alfredo Jaar: Geography=War* (Richmond, VA: Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, 1991), p. 4.

46. Madeleine Grynsztejn, "Illuminating Exposures: The Art of Alfredo Jaar," *Alfredo Jaar* (La Jolla, CA: La Jolla Museum of Contemporary Art, 1990), p. 21.

In making this argument about Jaar's practice, both Kistler and Grynsztejn rely on the definition of "concerned photography" posited by Martha Rosler, which identified this practice as "the weakest possible idea of [substitute for] social engagement, namely *compassion*."[47] Whereas documentary photography had once functioned as a form of social and political critique as well as an oppositional practice, Rosler—along with critics such as Allan Sekula and Abigail Solomon-Godeau—argued that "concerned photography" has brought attention to the sensibility (compassion) of the photographer at the expense of the subjects depicted. Such photography, Rosler further argued, "Leans toward the self-congratulatory and the cathartic and invites projection and puts the viewer into a voyeuristic position to the depicted."[48] Rosler ignored here the specific set of historical conditions under which the practice of "concerned photography" was actually developed and instead uses the term to substantiate the moral corruption of documentary photography through its appropriation into the tradition of "fine art" photography.

47. Martha Rosler, "in, around, and afterthoughts (on documentary photography)," in *3 Works* (Nova Scotia: The Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 1981), p. 83, n1.

48. Martha Rosler's remarks made during a lecture, "The Look of War Photography," at Walker Art Center, November 16, 1981. Quoted in Adam D. Weinberg, *On the Line: The New Color Photojournalism* (Minneapolis: Walker Art Center and the University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986), p. 31. See also Allan Sekula, "On the Invention of Photographic Meaning," *Artforum* 13, no. 5 (January 1975): 45; and Abigail Solomon-Godeau, "Who is Speaking Thus? Some Questions about Documentary Photography," *Photography at the Dock: Essays on Photographic History, Institutions, and Practices* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), p. 301, n11.

When Cornell Capa coined the term "concerned photography," he intended it as a way to memorialize his brother Robert Capa and Cornell's friends and colleagues, David

(Chim) Seymour and Werner Bischof, who had all been killed while on assignment in the 1950s. Due to the diminishing interest in their work after their deaths, Cornell Capa wanted to preserve their archives and to cultivate public awareness in the production of these and other recently deceased photojournalists. Yet, the function of this term quickly exceeded this purpose. With television increasingly placing restraints on—and even replacing—picture magazines, Capa realized that photography, as a form of witnessing, was dying. In 1967, to offset this situation, Capa founded The Fund for Concerned Photography so that photojournalists could "bear witness" without having to worry about the constraints imposed on them by the print media.[49] "It is my personal conviction," Capa explained, "that the production demands and controls exercised by the mass communications media on the photographer today are endangering our artistic, ethical, and professional standards and tend to obliterate the individuality of the witness-artist."[50]

Like Capa, Jaar also has objected to the restrictions that the print media impose on photojournalists and to the manner in which these limitations tend to prohibit them from "bearing witness" to their subjects. "Photojournalists," Jaar noted, "always maintain a certain distance because they work in a hurry."[51] Wanting to get as physically and emotionally close to his subjects as possible, Jaar instead adopted an approach much like a "concerned photographer," whose role—as Capa declared in the introduction to the catalogue of his 1967 exhibition *The Concerned Photographer*—"is to witness and to be involved with his subject."[52] This commonality is evident in the amount of time and emotional energy that Jaar spends getting to know his subjects and the circumstances in which they live. To prepare himself for this involvement, Jaar conducts research, often in several languages, about a place or situation. After reading extensively about the subject, he then travels to that location to develop direct contact with the people and the particularities of their situation before he begins to photograph them.[53] Jaar adopted such an approach for his 1986 installation *Gold in the Morning*. Before traveling in 1985 to Serra Pelada to photograph there the workers who were mining for gold, Jaar read at length about the discovery of gold in what was then Brazil's largest, open-pit mine. He then traveled to Brazil, and after getting to know the miners, he took more than one thousand images of them and their surroundings.[54]

Bearing witness, however, is not the only function of "concerned photography." Lewis Hine's quotation in Capa's definition of "concerned photography" clarifies this distinction: "There were two things that I wanted to do. I wanted to show the things to be corrected. I wanted to show the things that had to be appreciated."[55] This dual concern of social reform and aesthetics is also evident in photographs that Jaar took of the Serra Pelada miners. In many of these pictures, Jaar used such formal devices as cropping, the close-up, and lighting to construct highly composed images that simultaneously attest to his intimate knowledge of the plight of his subjects and to his admiration of the formal properties of their mud-covered bodies (**PLATE 50**). Thus, despite Kistler's and Grynsztejn's claims, Jaar's work appears to share numerous parallels with "concerned photography." The formal similarities between Jaar's Serra Pelada images and those taken of the same miners by "concerned photographer" Sebastião Salgado further support this reading (**FIG. 3**). In fact, the commonalities between their photographs are so extensive that, despite the fact that Jaar took his pictures a year

49. It is generally assumed that Capa coined the term "concerned photography" in 1966. However, he did not actually use this term until 1967, when he changed the name of the Fund from "Werner Bischof—Robert Capa—David Seymour Photographic Memorial Fund" to "The Fund for Concerned Photography, Inc." to signal the broadening of the Fund's goals. In 1970 Capa changed the title again to "The International Fund for Concerned Photography, Inc." See Cornell Capa, "The Concerned Photographer," *Infinity* 16, no. 10 (October 1967): 5–6; and Harvey V. Fondiller, "ICP: Photography's Fabulous New Center," *Popular Photography* 76 (April 1975): 49–53, 110–11, and 114–15.

50. Cornell Capa, "To the Concerned Photographer," *Camera* 48 (May 1969): 9.

51. Jaar, "Violence: The Limits of Representation," p. 59.

52. Cornell Capa, introduction to *The Concerned Photographer* (New York: Grossman Publishers, 1968), not paginated.

53. For more information on Jaar's picture-making process, see Alfredo Jaar, "Acts of Responsibility: An Interview with Alfredo Jaar," interview by Stephen Horne, *Parachute* 69 (January/March 1993): 28; Jaar, "Violence: The Limits of Representation," pp. 55–7; Alfredo Jaar, "The Art of Inclusion: Alfredo Jaar—an Interview," interview by Kate Davidson, *Photofile* 46 (Novemer 1995): 15–16; and Alfredo Jaar, "The Aesthetics of Witnessing: A Conversation with Alfredo Jaar," interview by Patricia C. Phillips, *Art Journal* 64, no. 3 (Fall 2005): 12–14.

54. For more information on Jaar's *Gold in the Morning*, see Grynsztejn, "Illuminating Exposures," pp. 12–17.

55. See Capa, introduction to *The Concerned Photographer*, not paginated. David Vestal elucidated this dual concern: "These photographers have more in common than their involvement with the people and places in their pictures. Each brings an intimately personal vision to his work: the concern is photographic as well as human." "Concerned Photographer," *Popular Photography* 61 (October 1967): 106.

prior to those by Salgado and used a different type of film, a number of Jaar's photographs of the Serra Pelada miners have been mistakenly attributed to Salgado.[56]

The confusion between the Serra Pelada photographs taken by Jaar and by Salgado is largely a product of their distribution. Even though Salgado also dislikes the limitations and, more particularly, the rapid working conditions required by most picture magazines, he—unlike Jaar—actively distributes his work in the print media. Issues of funding have partially driven this decision. For instance, to finance the photographs that he took of the Serra Pelada miners, Salgado used money that he received working concurrently on assignments in South America for two German magazines.[57] Salgado has also used the circulation of his images in the print media to secure funding for future projects. This was the case for his Serra Pelada images that, because of their distribution in London's *The Sunday Times*, led twenty-five other picture magazines, including *The New York Times Magazine*, to buy and circulate these photographs. As a result, as British photography editor Colin Jacobson explained: "[Salgado] made his name on that story."[58] This recognition allowed Salgado to secure financial backing for his personal project *Workers: An Archeology of the Industrial Age*, for which he spent six years photographing manual laborers in twenty-six countries.[59]

FIGURE 3
SEBASTIAO SELGADO,
SERRA PELADA MINE, BRAZIL,
1986

Finances are not the only reason that Salgado distributes his work in the print media. For him, photography's greatest potential lies in its ability to depict the human dimension of a situation in a natural and uncomplicated way: "Everything that happens in the world must be shown and people around the world must have an idea of what's happening to the other people around the world. I believe this is the function of the vector that the documentary photographer must have, to show one person's existence to another."[60] Newspapers and magazines, despite their limitations, remain fundamental to this communication process, since they ensure the most extensive circulation of photography. Here, Salgado assumed that viewers would instinctively identify with the humanistic content of his images, provided that the images were distributed to as wide an audience as possible. This belief in the intrinsic communicative potential of photography parallels that of Capa, who, in spite of his reservations about the print media, also believed in the transparency and universality of the medium. Capa elaborated: "[Photography] provide[s] an undistorted mirror of man's actions, thereby sharpening human awareness and awakening conscience."[61] For Jaar, on the other hand, the act of "bearing witness" cannot be separated from issues of distribution, consumption, or the marketplace. And so, while he may initially approach his subjects like a "concerned photographer," he differs in terms of the control he exerts over how his images are seen and experienced.

In preparing his *Gold in the Morning* installation for the 1986 Venice Biennale, Jaar spent close to a year perusing more than one thousand photographs that he took in Serra

56. Jaar, "The Art of Inclusion," p. 16.

57. To finance his Serra Pelada photographs, on the other hand, Jaar used funding that he received in 1985 from the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation.

58. Collin Jacobson, quoted in Ian Parker, "A Cold Light: How Sebastião Salgado Captures the World," *The New Yorker*, April 18, 2005, p. 154.

59. For his *Workers* project, to ensure that he could work without the constraints imposed by the print media, Salgado secured annual guarantees from magazines and newspapers against the photographs he was taking. He also secured a generous grant from Kodak. See Liz Jobey, "Elevating the Common Man," *Independent*, November 28, 1993, p. 12; and Parker, "A Cold Light," pp. 15456. In 1993 Salgado's *Workers* project, which included the images he initially took at Serra Pelada, was published as a 400-page book and was circulated internationally as an exhibition of the same name. See Sebastião Salgado, *Workers: An Archeology of the Industrial Age* (New York: Aperture, 1993).

60. Sebastião Salgado, "Sebastião Salgado: Workers," in *Witness in our Time: Working Lives of Documentary Photographers*, ed. Ken Light (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2000), p. 111.

61. Cornell Capa, introduction to *The Concerned Photographer 2* (New York: Grossman Publishers, 1972), not paginated.

Pelada. From them, Jaar selected five images that he then displayed as color transparencies in thirty-by-forty-six-inch light boxes, four of which he appended with like-sized, gilded-metal boxes (**FIG. 4**). By placing his images within these light boxes and in a darkened room, Jaar heightened the aesthetic appeal of the miners by using the light that emanates and reflects against the boxes to emphasize the sculptural qualities of the workers' bodies. At the same time, Jaar disrupted the visual pleasure of looking at the miners by installing the sets of boxes above or below eye level. In relegating the miners to the peripheral spaces of the room, Jaar physically obstructed their passive consumption as art and forced viewers to interact with the representations in ways that were difficult and unfamiliar. Jaar's placement of an ornate, gold-leaf picture frame filled with gold nails on the floor directly in front of one of his light boxes facilitated this active involvement as well (**FIG. 5**). Like the formally composed yet marginally positioned miners, the lavishly carved, golden frame—enclosed by a wide band of abrasive, black nails—simultaneously seduced and frustrated viewers, encouraging them to become more self-aware of the process and conventions through which people and objects are transformed into and read as art.[62]

FIGURES 4 AND 5
ALFREDO JAAR, INSTALLATION VIEWS OF *GOLD IN THE MORNING*, VENICE BIENNALE, 1986

In placing his Serra Pelada photographs within the space of this intricately conceived installation, Jaar created a physical and conceptual framework—or mise-en-scène—to engage viewers and to provide a context for them to begin to think about some of the political and aesthetic ramifications of representing the "other."[63] Yet, not everyone has interpreted Jaar's works in this manner. For instance, in response to the inclusion of one of Jaar's Serra Pelada photographs entitled *Unframed* in the exhibition *1 Plus 1 Plus 1: Works by Alfredo Jaar* (**FIG. 6**), Roberta Smith, *The New York Times* critic, argued that the plight of the miners "would be better elucidated by an exhibition of many normal-size photographs or of a newspaper article." Smith contended here that the installation strategies that Jaar used—pinning the life-sized image to the wall unframed and then placing a black frame (half mirror and half glass) over each of the miners—detracted from the image's ability to effectively communicate information about the social circumstances of the miners: "*Unframed* is impressive without being either completely convincing or, in the end, very visually satisfying." In other words, Smith was troubled because the representational strategies that Jaar chose for his photographs of the miners did not seem to match the plight of their social circumstances. As Smith further explained: "The miners themselves end up seeming glamorous, like exotically costumed and made-up *Vogue* models."[64]

To ensure that the social circumstances of the miners were made explicit, Smith believed that their photographs should be circulated in a straightforward and transparent manner. The images that Salgado took in Serra Pelada—and which circulated in such contexts

62. For more information on this installation, see note 54 above and Jaar, "Acts of Responsibility," p. 30.

63. Jaar frequently cites the following quotation by Jean-Luc Godard: "It may be true that one has to choose between ethics or aesthetics, but it is no less true that, whichever one chooses, one will always find the other one at the end of the road. For the very definition of the human condition should be in the mise-en-scene itself." See Jaar, "The Aesthetics of Witnessing," p. 15; and Jaar, "Alfredo Jaar: A Conversation," pp. 41 and 46–47.

64. Roberta Smith, "Alfredo Jaar's Work: 'Us' and 'Them'," *The New York Times*, January 17, 1992, p. C29.

as *The New York Times Magazine* and *The Sunday Times* of London as well as in the exhibition and catalogue *Workers*—seem to meet such expectations (**PLATE 49**).[65] Even though one could argue that the miners in Salgado's photographs are depicted in an equally "glamorous" and "exotic" manner, their circulation as like-sized images in the pages of news magazines and on museum walls—with accompanying texts that elucidate the particularities of their social circumstances—is more in keeping with the passive consumption that Smith expects when she encounters depictions of the "other." For Smith, Jaar's *Unframed* was "visually" dissatisfying precisely because it forced her to acknowledge such conventions and standards as "glamour" and "exoticism," which would otherwise go unnoticed in the picture-reading process.[66]

Jaar believes that controlling the environments in which his photographs are exhibited and experienced will lead to more attentive and more critical viewers. In so doing, Jaar does not try to prescribe what viewers see; instead, he attempts to slow down their habits of consumption and make them more aware of how they see and, by extension, of what they cannot see. This sensitivity to the nature and complexity of the representational process is most apparent in the series of works that Jaar made in response to the Rwandan genocide. As with his Serra Pelada photographs, Jaar initially approached this project like a "concerned photographer": he informed himself about the situation; traveled to Kigali, Rwanda, in August 1994; and spent time getting as "close" as possible to his subjects before he photographed them. As part of this process, Jaar spent two or three hours speaking at length with his subjects about the tragedies that they had experienced. For Jaar, these interviews—"the feelings, words, and ideas" that the people he met used to describe their horrific experiences—rendered explicit the sheer impossibility of representing this tragedy.[67] To begin to address this inadequacy among what his subjects had experienced, the personal impact on him of these stories and what he saw, and the photographs that he took in Rwanda, Jaar initially decided not to show any of the images. Instead, in 1995 he created his first "Real Images" installation at Chicago's Museum of Contemporary Photography, carefully selecting his "best" Rwanda photographs and then "burying" them in one hundred, black, linen archival photo-storage boxes with a description of the picture silk screened on the top of the box. The boxes were then arranged within the darkened space of the gallery so as to create a "cemetery of images" (**FIG. 7**).[68]

In 1996 Jaar decided to try a different representational strategy for circulating his Rwandan photographs. Rather than exhibit the devastation and suffering that he had witnessed there, Jaar selected two photographs for his installation **The Eyes of Gutete Emerita**, each depicting the eyes of a woman he had met in Rwanda (**PLATE 51**).[69] In a manner similar

FIGURE 6
ALFREDO JAAR, NEED TYPE TO GO HERE

Alfredo Jaar, *Let There Be Light: The Rwanda Project* 1994–1998 (Barcelona, Spain: ACTAR, 1998), not paginated.

FIGURE 7
INSTALLATION VIEW OF *REAL IMAGES*, MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY PHOTOGRAPHY, CHICAGO, 1995

65. See "In the Hellhole," *The Sunday Times*, May 24, 1987, pp. 26–31; "An Epic Struggle for Gold," *The New York Times Magazine*, June 7, 1987, pp. 34–41; and Salgado, *Workers: An Archeology of the Industrial Age*.

66. It is interesting to note that while Jaar incorporated commercial strategies from advertising into installations such as *Rushes*—in which he temporarily displayed computer prints of his Serra Pelada photographs in an advertising space in the Spring Street station of the New York City subway—Salgado approached the advertising photographs that he took for Silk Cut cigarettes and Le Creuset as a "concerned photographer." For more information on *Rushes*, see Grynsztejn, "Illuminating Exposures," pp. 17–18. For more information on Salgado's advertising work, see Matthew Soar, "The Advertising Photography of Richard Avedon and Sebastião Salgado," *Images Ethics in the Digital Age*, ed. Larry Gross, John Stuart Katz, and Jay Ruby (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), pp. 269–93.

67. Alfredo Jaar, quoted in David Levi-Strauss, "A Sea of Griefs Is Not a Proscenium: On the Rwanda Projects of Alfredo Jarr," in

68. For more information on "Real Images," see Levi-Strauss, "A Sea of Griefs;" Debra Bricker Balken, *Alfredo Jaar: Lament of the Images* (Cambridge: List Visual Arts Center, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1999), pp. 24–6; and Jaar, "Violence: The Limits of Representation," p. 61. For a critique of this work in terms of its use of Western-based art strategies to represent subaltern culture, see Nicholas Mirzoeff, "Invisible Again: Rwanda and Representation After Genocide," *African Arts* 38, no. 3 (Autumn 2005): 87–8.

69. For more information on *The Eyes of Gutete Emerita*, see Balken, *Alfredo Jaar*, pp. 28–39; and Strauss, "A Sea of Griefs."

to that used for his Serra Pelada photographs, Jaar displayed these two photographs as color transparencies in quadvision light boxes mounted next to each other on the wall. At the same time, Jaar did not limit the light boxes only to photographs. Prior to the images of Emerita's eyes, three sets of text transparencies appear in the light boxes for forty-five seconds, thirty seconds, and fifteen seconds, respectively. These texts describe, from the point of view of Emerita, the brutal killing of her husband and children. After the texts, the photographs of Emerita's eyes flash in the light boxes for a fraction of a second, after which the sequence of texts begins again.

Several critics have interpreted Jaar's use of texts and images in **The Eyes of Gutete Emerita** as an explicit critique of photojournalism. Photography critic Mark Durden, for instance, argued: "The eyes of Gutete provide a subjectivized counterpart to the objectivity and distance of media coverage."[70] Durden implied here that looking into the eyes of Emerita necessarily allows viewers to bear witness to the pain and horror of the Rwandan genocide in ways that the "distanced" and "dehumanizing" images of the print media have prohibited. Though Jaar is also concerned about the print media's lack of coverage of the genocide in Rwanda, in this installation he was less interested in having viewers "see" or even "feel" Emerita's pain than in making them aware of their inadequacies as witnesses. The placement of the two light boxes within an enclosed and darkened twenty-by-sixteen foot space reinforces this distinction. In order to access the light boxes, viewers must first enter a narrow, dark corridor. After they walk through this passageway and turn the corner, their sight is momentarily impaired by the light emanating from the boxes. In placing his images from Rwanda within this space, Jaar physically disrupts their easy or immediate consumption. He heightens this effect by giving viewers sufficient time to read about Emerita's painful experiences but then allowing them to see only for a fraction of a second the eyes that witnessed this tragedy. This disruption again frustrates viewers and forces them to consider that which they cannot see and by implication that which remains impossible to represent.

By using his installation to call attention to the limitations of representation—or its "failure," as Jaar claims—he is not suggesting that images have completely lost their power or function in today's society. In fact, Jaar recently said that he "believe[s] images are more necessary than ever."[71] For Jaar, then, the problem lies not with photojournalism or "concerned photography" per se but with the contexts in which these images are disseminated and consumed. This is because, according to Jaar: "Journalistic information and presentation actually discourage action. Much of the media overwhelms us with a sense of being present; we feel we know, and because we think we know, we think we care. But it stops there."[72] Jaar implied here that, since we are continually confronted with such a vast number of images in the print media, there is a tendency to pass over them quickly and without much critical awareness. To counter this situation, Jaar believes that it is the responsibility of artists who use "the real" in their works to create alternative frameworks for their images, ones that encourage viewers to become aware, in an active and inquiring manner, of the nature of representation. But the question remains: Can such an environment—one that implicates viewers as critically engaged participants—be produced within the context of the print media, the traditional vehicle for distributing and consuming photojournalism?[73]

70. Mark Durden, "Eye-to-Eye," *Art History* 23, no. 1 (March 2000): 128.

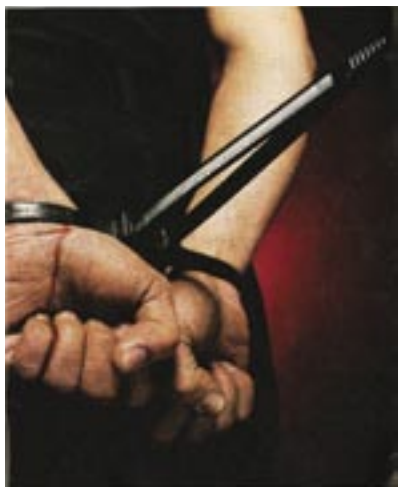
71. Jaar, "Alfredo Jaar: A Conversation," p. 47.

72. Alfredo Jaar, "The Peripatetic Artist: 14 Statements," *Art in America* 77 (July 1989): 131.

73. It is important to note that Jaar is not completely opposed to the distribution of his work in the print media. For instance, his public project "How can I make art out of information that most of you would rather ignore?" was reproduced in *Saturday Night* 106, no. 3734, (September 1991): 27–30; and "Rwanda, 5 years later" was published in *Wereldwijd* 293 (April 1999): 1–13. In allowing his work to be distributed in these contexts, however, Jaar assumed complete control over its layout and design. The extent to which more well-known newspapers and magazines would be willing to grant such authority remains in question.

FABRICATION

The June 12, 2005, cover of *The New York Times Magazine* featured an unidentified figure dressed in black (**PLATE 53**). Represented up from the shoulders and positioned in the center of the composition, the figure shared certain formal parallels with individuals depicted in mug shots. But a mug shot typically uses—to disclose an individual's unique and distinguishing features—even and consistent lighting, a neutral background, and a fixed distance between camera and sitter. In this photograph, however, an angular, green sandbag covering the figure's head and neck masks the subject's identity. Moreover, the dramatic lighting; the intense, red-painted background; and the shallow depth of field lend the figure an ominous and dominating presence. This association is reinforced by the four sets of questions, printed in small, white type, that flank the figure's head as well as by the headline: "What We *Don't* Talk About When We Talk About Torture," which runs along the bottom of the page. Containing such words as intimidation, interrogation, prison, and torture, the *Times Magazine* cover leaves unclear whether one should read the figure as the subject or the object of torture.



FIGURES 8 AND 9
ANDRES SERRANO,
NEW YORK TIMES MAGAZINE,
12 JUNE 2005

The visual parallels between the angular, green sandbag and those depicted in the widely circulated photographs of tortured Iraqi prisoners at Abu Ghraib (**PLATE 57**) offset this ambiguity and encourage one to read the hooded figure as suffering and in pain.[74] The article, "Interrogating Ourselves," to which this *Times Magazine* cover photograph referred and the two additional, full-page color photographs that accompanied this essay corroborate this association.[75] Unlike the cover picture, both the article and the images explicitly referenced tortured subjects. In the essay, for instance, Joseph Lelyveld discussed the coercive techniques that Americans have used to interrogate detainees in the war on terror. The photographs seem to provide graphic visual support for this discussion: the first image depicts a close-up of a figure's arms, which have been forcefully handcuffed behind his back, while the second depicts the head of a reclined figure whose face is covered with a wet, white cloth over which water is being poured from a canteen (**FIGS. 8** and **9**).

At the same time, the article and its accompanying photographs also contained certain ambiguities. For instance, rather than offering a clear, moral position regarding the use of interrogation procedures, Lelyveld instead raised many perplexing and uncomfortable questions about our beliefs and assumptions regarding what constitutes torture when it is used in the war on terror. The stylistic conventions used to depict the figures in the photographs parallel these uncertainties. The sheer beauty and scrupulous details of the

74. The caption for the cover image in "Back Story," *The New York Times Magazine*, June 12, 2005, p. 6, further supports this reading: "The hooded figure has a long history as an icon of torture. But what once indicated the executioner has now come to symbolize the prisoner."

75. Joseph Lelyveld, "Interrogating Ourselves," *The New York Times Magazine*, June 12, 2005, pp. 36–43, 60, and 66–67.

photographs; the use of rich saturated colors and dramatic overhead lighting; and the manner in which the compositions are meticulously composed—right down to a trickle of blood running down one of the handcuffed hands—suggest that the suffering may, in fact, not be "real." That the photographs were taken by artist Andres Serrano—whose name appears in a caption on the table-of-contents page as well as on the first page of Lelyveld's article—heightens this association. Known for highly stylized and carefully staged images that often depict bizarre, morbid, and what some consider offensive subject matter (**PLATES 22** and **23**), Serrano's name—one that many *Times* readers would find familiar—also placed into question the "realism" of what is depicted.[76]

This ambiguity between the real and the fabricated in Serrano's torture photographs has troubled a number of individuals. For instance, *The New York Times* public editor, Byron Calame—whose job entails responding to complaints and comments from the public and monitoring the paper's journalistic practices—criticized the *Times Magazine* editors Kathleen Ryan and Gerald Marzorati for not appending more concise labels to Serrano's pictures. Finding the "realism" of the handcuffed arms especially perplexing, Calame argued that the inclusion of Serrano's name and "Backdrop painting by Irina Movmyga" in the caption on the table-of-contents page failed to clarify for readers what the images actually depicted. According to Calame, a more appropriate credit line would have read "Depiction by Andres Serrano," since this text would make clear that his photographs were fabrications. To support his argument, Calame cited *The New York Times* "Guidelines on Our Integrity," which states that "images in our pages that purport to depict reality must be genuine in every way," and those in which "the slightest doubt is possible" must offer an explanation.[77]

In response to Calame's critique, editors Ryan and Marzorati called attention to the "conceptual" nature of Serrano's images and to their "over-the-top" qualities, which they felt would ensure that no one would mistake them as "real."[78] Moreover, the *Times Magazine* editors argued that a vast majority of readers had interpreted them as such; as one of the published responses to Calame's column suggested, this was the case at least for some readers: "I am astonished by your suggestion that a typical *Times* reader could look at the Andres Serrano photographs and not realize that they were staged."[79] For Calame, however, the readers of *The New York Times* should never have to question the authenticity of images; instead, he believes that consistent labels should make readily apparent to readers "whether images are real or manipulated." Moreover, Calame maintains that the *Times* should establish a standardized system that can "be used across all parts of the paper and online to describe the various categories for images, depending on the way they have been created or manipulated."[80] This conviction mirrors the goals that Calame stated, when he took over as public editor in June, 2005, of making the journalistic process "more transparent to readers" and holding "the *Times*' news staff more accountable."[81]

Calame's support of explanatory captions is largely a product of his belief in the fundamental truthfulness of the journalistic field—hence his citation of the *Times* "Guidelines on Our Integrity." Therefore, what ultimately rendered Serrano's photographs problematic for Calame was their relationship to the real, or more accurately, how they compromised the integrity of photography's assumed realism. After all, the *Times* Magazine editors went

76. Besides the notoriety of *Piss Christ* (1987), Serrano is frequently commissioned to take portrait photographs for the *Times* and his name is often listed in its captions.

77. Bryon Calame, "Pictures, Labels, Perception and Reality," *The New York Times*, July 3, 2005, p. 10.

78. Calame, "Pictures, Labels, Perception," p. 10.

79. John S. Hall, "Photographs and Labels," *The New York Times*, July 24, 2005, p. 12.

80. Calame, "Pictures, Labels, Perception," p. 10.

81. Bryon Calame, "The New Public Editor: Toward Greater Transparency," *The New York Times*, June 5, 2005, p. 14.

to great lengths—securing "authentic" sandbags and constructing, for instance, the water-torture composition in terms of "actual" photographs taken in Vietnam—to ensure that what Serrano depicted was accurate. What concerns Calame, then, is not what Serrano represents but how he depicts it, and more particularly, how these representational strategies weaken what former *Times Magazine* picture editor Fred Ritchin labeled "photography's putative capacity for reliable transcription" and—by extension—the overall journalistic integrity of the *Times*.[82] Calame believes that, like *The New York Times*, photography has a moral obligation to render reality transparent and understandable; he is troubled by Serrano's photographs because of the uncertainty that they raise in terms of photography's evidentiary and testimonial authority.

82. Fred Ritchin, "Photojournalism in the Age of Computers," *The Critical Image*, ed. Carol Squiers (Seattle: Bay Press, 1990), p. 28.

What Calame fails to realize is that it is not Serrano's photographs that have compromised photography's ability to bear witness; instead, it is the photographs from Abu Ghraib to which Serrano's photographs refer—and, more particularly, the circumstances under which these images of torture were taken and circulated by American soldiers—that have undermined longstanding beliefs in photography's position as witness. A number of critics—Susan Sontag, Brian Wallis, and more recently, Andy Grundberg—have addressed this aspect of the production and distribution of the snapshots from Abu Ghraib. "Where once photographing war was the province of photojournalists," Sontag argued, "now the soldiers themselves are all photographers—recording their war, their fun, their observations of what they find picturesque, their atrocities—and swapping images among themselves and emailing them around the globe."[83] As deliberate acts of maltreatment, humiliation, and domination that were not supposed to be seen (at least by the larger general public) the Abu Ghraib photographs, these critics maintain, represent a direct violation of the traditional function of photojournalism. Grundberg elucidated: "These photographs tell us that the codes of objectivity, professional ethics, and journalistic accountability we have all relied on to ensure the accuracy of the news—at least in rough draft form—are now relics. In their place is a swirling mass of information, written as well as visual, journalistic as well as vernacular, competing to be taken as fact."[84]

83. Susan Sontag, "Regarding the Torture of Others," *The New York Times Magazine*, May 23, 2004, p. 27.

84. Andy Grundberg, "Point and Shoot: How the Abu Ghraib Images Redefine Photography," *American Scholar* 74, no. 1 (Winter 2005): 108.

For Grundberg, the most disturbing aspect of this "uncontrollable flow of digital images" is the manner in which it compromises a crucial feature of how we make sense of the world—namely, "our ability to distinguish what is real from what is fabricated and what is important from what is irrelevant."[85] Calame's critique of Serrano's torture photographs seems to parallel this concern. At the same time, in making this association, Calame overlooked a crucial difference between the two sets of images. Whereas recognizing the ambiguity between the real and the fabricated is intrinsic to the meaning of Serrano's photographs, the uncertainty of the Abu Ghraib photographs is much more troubling, since, as Grundberg also pointed out: "No one (at least no one this side of paranoia) has questioned the veracity of what they depict...the pictures never ask to be read as anything but snapshots."[86] In today's free-floating and over-saturated media world, it is precisely this distinction that lends their import to Serrano's photographs of torture.

85. Grundberg, "Point and Shoot," p. 109.

86. Grundberg, "Point and Shoot," p. 108.

By staging images that reference the torture at Abu Ghraib and elsewhere but do not literally represent them, Serrano's photographs ask viewers to think more carefully about

what the representation of torture means, and if it is even something that can be depicted. This is a different kind of work than that performed by the recent widespread and rapid appropriation into contemporary art and public displays of photographs from Abu Ghraib (**PLATES 55** and **56**).[87] Instead of offering a space in which to object and to resist the horrific actions that the snapshots from Abu Ghraib both depict and represent, the visual ambiguities in Serrano's photographs provide a framework in which viewers can think critically about their assumptions and expectations regarding the use of coercion tactics and the extent to which we believe that these techniques, like Serrano's photographs, "actually" constitute torture. The conflict between the real and the fabricated in Serrano's images—a tension heightened by their circulation in the ostensibly reliable journalistic context of the *Times Magazine*—forms an essential part of this representational strategy. Assigning Serrano's photographs a caption like "depiction," "illustration," or something similar limits this potential, since it necessarily defines them in relation to what they are not—the "facts." Rather than undermining photography's ability to bear witness, the circulation of Serrano's photographs in *The New York Times Magazine* poses a more challenging task: it encourages viewers to more closely examine the conventions and the set of beliefs upon which photography's evidentiary and testimonial authority ultimately depend.

87. For a discussion about how the Abu Ghraib photographs have been appropriated and transformed into protest images by such artists as Salaheddin Sallat, Forkscrew Graphics, and Richard Serra, and others, see Dora Apel, "Torture Culture: Lynching Photographs and the Images of Abu Ghraib," *Art Journal* 64, no. 2 (Summer 2005): 94–100.