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media release



Dan Solomon, *Untitled*, from *Witness*, 2013.

Witness **by Dan Solomon**

On view through January 19, 2014

The International Center of Photography presents *Witness*, a large-scale installation of Dan Solomon's ongoing conceptual art project *History*, in conjunction with the exhibition *JFK November 22, 1963: A Bystander's View of History* and the 50th anniversary of the assassination. It will be on view in the windows of the School at ICP's pavilion through January 19, 2014.

Through the selection, adoption, and manipulation of historical source materials, Solomon explores the nature of photography and memory. Bystanders extracted from the background of Abraham Zapruder's infamous home movie of the assassination of President Kennedy serve as silent witnesses to the violent events that unfolded that day. The portraits are juxtaposed with a detail from the blurry Polaroid snapped by one of the bystanders, Mary Ann Moorman, at the exact moment the President was struck.

Isolated from their original contexts, these shadowy figures become metaphors for the limits of memory. Their ethereal nature explore how memories are shaped by pictures, how eyewitnesses respond and adjust to events, how unreliable the camera can be as a record of reality, and how the meaning of representations change with time.

"In this series, I isolated and decontextualized individuals and groups of figures observing the tragedy from the film stills, press photographs, and personal snapshots so that we have to work hard to figure out what is happening. Once we know where the images come from we can begin to think about the tragedy from a fresh perspective," said Solomon. "I am taking iconic images that have become so familiar that they have lost much of their power and then reworking them in a novel way so they can regain their impact. For me, the way these images seem to be on the verge of coming apart evokes the experience of modernity and a world in perpetual disintegration and renewal."

(more)

“In Witness I alter the Mise-en-scene of the Zapruder film by disrupting character placement,” added Solomon. “Removing everything from the frame but the spectators shifts the focus away from the action of the assassination to the act of observation. No longer constrained by the temporal scene the viewer is freed from considering the historical event and made available to contemplate epistemological questions relating to the nature of knowledge and truth.”

A native New Yorker living in Monarch Beach, California, Solomon has been involved with photography as an artist, curator, collector, author, and publisher. He is guest curator of the exhibition *Surveying the Terrain* currently at the Contemporary Art Museum (CAM) Raleigh and previously curated *Edward Muybridge in Panama and Mexico*, *Edward Curtis: Sites and Structures*, *Stieglitz and his Circle the Art of the Photogravure*, and *The Beauty of the Albumen Print*. His personal photography collection is housed at the National Gallery of Art, and his book “Sites and Structures” was chosen as one of the best photography books of the year by The New York Times. He is currently working on a book of Idris Kahn’s photographs, which will be published early next year. “Witness,” his first book of photographs, will be published by Nazraeli Press in November as part of their One Picture Book series.

This installation of Witness is made possible by a generous grant from STUDLEY.

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About ICP

The International Center of Photography (ICP) is the world’s leading institution dedicated to the practice and understanding of photography and the reproduced image in all its forms. Through our exhibitions, educational programs, and community outreach, we offer an open forum for dialogue about the role images play in our culture. Since our founding, we have presented more than 500 exhibitions and offered thousands of classes, providing instruction at every level. ICP is a center where photographers and artists, students and scholars can create and interpret the world of the image within our comprehensive educational facilities and archive. Visit www.icp.org for more information.

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