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Violence, War, Borders. X-Rays: Evidence and Threat

The book to the exhibitions:

X-ray Diagnostic of Violence

Country's Borders. Drugs, Arms, Men. Search by X-Rays

Terror and Terror Prevention. X-Rays Serving Security

Travel, Transport, Terrorism. The Radiograph as Time Document

Wounds and Weapons. Radiology of War

X-Rays and Society: Perception, Threat, Torture

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Violence, War, Borders. X-Rays: Evidence and threat

The book teaches how X-rays document the effects of society's shaping forces: *In war*, radiographs show the injuries and allow identifying the employed cluster bomb; they prove *torture and child abuse*. At *countries' borders*, with X-rays, weapons, explosives and drugs are detected, which are hidden under the clothing, in the body, in the luggage, and in shipped goods; humans are visualized in cars, containers, and railway wagons. The images of these controls prove that *terror* and *terror prevention* and *illegal immigration* has become a prime political issue. X-ray imaging produces evidence. Reacting to *terrorist attacks*, these controls have been intensified: The catastrophe of Lockerbie induced luggage control; British citizen Richard Reid, who attempted to ignite explosives hidden in shoes, provoked fluoroscopy of shoes; 09.11.2003 and the terrorist attacks in London and Madrid lead to luggage control with computed tomography at airports and search of persons with transmission and backscatter imaging.

The book makes apparent with its images that and how the *perception of X-rays, of privacy and of the human body* has changed since the discovery of the X-rays by C. Röntgen in 1895: The pioneers of radiology had radiation induced damages, which they accepted bravely and they were honored as heroes. In 1957, 12 years after Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Miss Atomic Bomb posed in a bathing costume. Before 1900, Edison offered X-ray units for home use, with the allusion to make the thoughts and wishes of husband or neighbor visible by fluoroscopy. Today, advertising shows the „Transparent Traveler“ together with his transparent luggage, and advertising for mammography shows the breast of the woman.

The search of the persons with X-rays seems justified by the necessity to prevent crime and terrorist attacks; conservatives may refuse this procedure which shows the controlled person practically naked on the screen: Privacy can be considered being threatened. This argument is difficult to discuss and corresponds to a feeling of uneasiness. Unexpressed, it may be hidden behind the argument that search of a persons with X-rays means exposure to ionizing radiation, which is potentially dangerous and is considered a *threat*. The allusion that in Chernobyl died as many as in Hiroshima remains often undisputed. Fear is provoked and this fear is exploited. X-rays are put on a level with nuclear rays (alpha-, beta-, and gamma-rays and neutrons). The magnitude of the radiation risk is known only by few. The danger is not quantified; on the contrary, it is taken as absolute. It is evident that the radiation risk is complex and that its description is demanding; simplifications are common in the discussion. Those who oppose nuclear technology often refuse risk calculations; they appeal instead to emotions.

The book proves that *X-rays can be read as documents of our culture, our society and our time, that X-rays produce evidence, and that they can be considered a threat*. The book contains explaining articles and the posters of five exhibitions: "X-Ray Diagnostic of Violence", "Wounds and Weapons, Radiology of War", "Terror and Terror Prevention. X-Rays Serving Security", "Country's Borders. Drugs, Arms, Humans. Search by X-Rays", and "X-Rays and Society. Perception, Threat, Torture". The exhibitions started in 1997, when Amnesty International prepared an initiative and asked Hermann Vogel for radiographs to attract public attention; the exhibition have been created in cooperation with the Deutsches Röntgen-Museum and the European Congress of Radiology; they have been shown more than 50times in Europe, Asia, Africa and America: