

An Artist Explores The Facial Image Of The Shroud Of Turin

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Abstract:

My interest in studying, and ultimately attempting to clarify, the image on the Turin Shroud was born from a curiosity to know better the likeness on the shroud and what my perceptions were causing me to experience. Noticeably the image looks quite different depending upon the degree of contrast the photograph being looked at provides. Depending upon the photographic intentions of the camera exposure, the image could range from extremely faint where the weave of the cloth is predominate, to that of a human anatomy which is rich in detail of recognizable form. So a question developed in my mind: which particular photographic version is the clearest and most accurate representation of what we see when viewing the image on the cloth? One of the most intriguing qualities to me was that there was more than one image to be gleaned in perceiving the visual data that constituted what was ultimately experienced by the viewer. In time this became a primary motivating force in my visual study of the shroud image, to make clear to the untrained eye that profound countenance I was perceiving. Other questions arose as this pursuit continued, not least of these was whether there was a limit on the clarity with which the image could be rendered? What would a clarified version reveal about other aspects of the cloth? Would a visual clarification of the image reveal a “definitive” likeness? What were the artistic implications of deriving a definitive likeness?

This study is richly illustrated with before and after sequence of images demonstrating how using the common photo tools of brightness and contrast, color channel and saturation, it is possible to adjust the areas that appear to be absent of visual data, making easier to perceive, revealing “essential shapes” within areas of low data pickup caused by the “banding effect”, irregular variations in the body-cloth distance ratio, and other elements of interference.