

SYNOPSIS :

## P.F. Perforation by Firearms

Photographs by **Aude CHEVALIER-BEAUMEL**  
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**For anyone living in Rio, it is difficult to ignore death. Its presence is felt through explosions, in newspaper headlines, at each road intersection, in prayers, votive offerings, in the distress of people especially when it occurs with provocation in areas where law and order have broken down.**

**Its smell exudes from the pavements of the historic centre of Rio near the Medical Institute with its overworked refrigerated system in the morgue.**

In my previous work, death was present in the rituals of trance in Umbanda and Candomble ceremonies with their incorporation of entities and spirits of the past.

Why and how have I got to photograph gunshot victims?

The first reason is certainly that of indignation mixed with curiosity. Who are these people that are shot dead?

What is their history? Why them?

The other reason, more existential, is the inevitable question: what is death?

At the beginning of June 2007, I had been living in Rio for eight months. I used to pass regularly in front of the Medical Institute and I decided to meet families waiting on the street for the bodies of their dead.

The death portraits that I create are an artistic and sociological witness of the expressions of death.

Every time, it is with intense emotion that I meet and photograph a new face.

Inanimate matter, injured, then carefully made-up and presented with flowers, sand and formol.

Sleeping faces, handled, sublimated then mourned, caressed... Odd and delicate pictures of this visual and disturbing area, I immortalize an eternal expression... A head issued from a crown of flowers... How life became death....

Photographers, at the beginning of the XXth century, used to capture the last pictures of dead people. Considered as a religious event such baptism, solemn communion or a wedding, death was ritualized and celebrated.

Is it still the same to day ? Why is death no longer present in our photo albums?

The living body, highly sanctified in Brazil, is also sanctified after death.

It is important to show and to touch it. Even though the faces of the loved ones of the deceased appear worn out after the funeral wake, they seem somehow more relaxed than before.

In this presentation of a succession of gunshot victims, the families are also present with their distress, their revolt and their inability to change the course of events.

Anonymous, forgotten, hidden pictures of dead and living people in a war without name... In order to take these pictures, I have had to establish special relationships with families, without trying to find the cause of death but by watching, analyzing pain and injustice, sometimes in comforting...

In fact, the reason for death is not as important as its repercussions...