DOPPIOZERO

Mengele’s Skull

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Cosa legge una fotografa di professione, una che insegue in giro per il mondo architetture, oggetti, spazi, persone, quando legge un libro illustrato? Cosa vede con il suo obiettivo davanti agli occhi, quando guarda un libro del genere? La nuova rubrica di Giovanna Silva inaugura un nuovo modo di recensire i libri, leggendo e guardando, non solo parole ma anche immagini, immagini che sono parole: leggere, guardare, scattare.

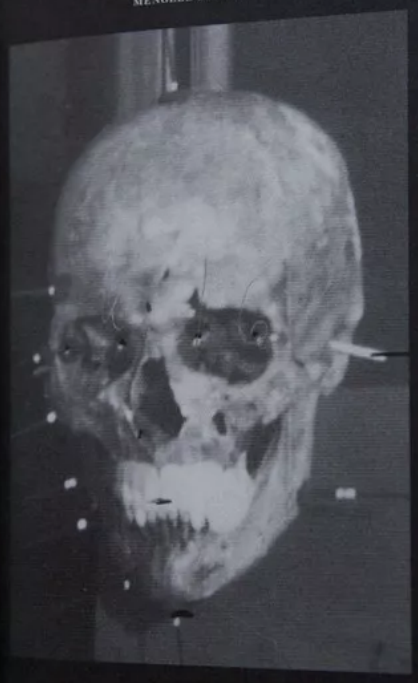
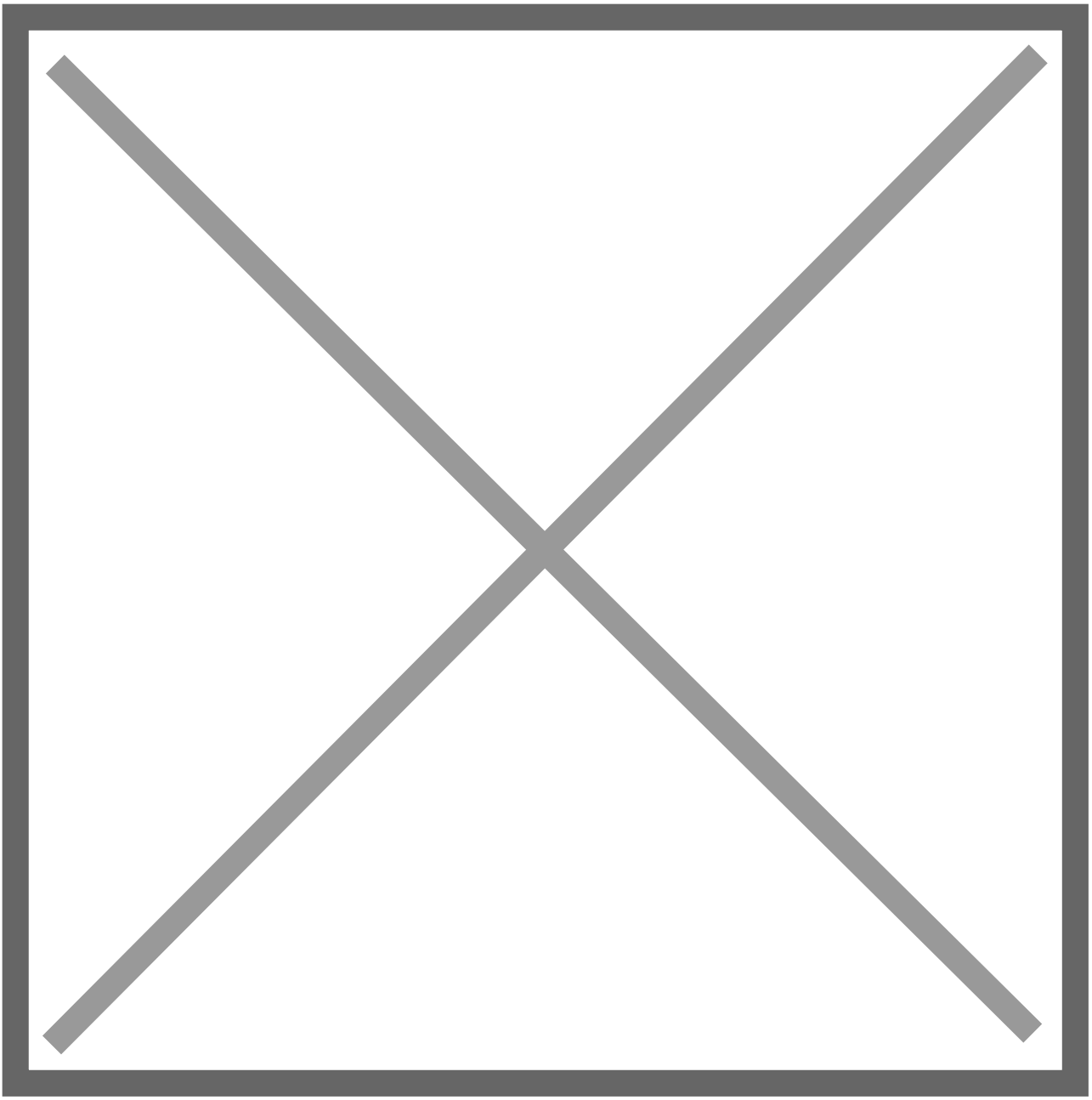
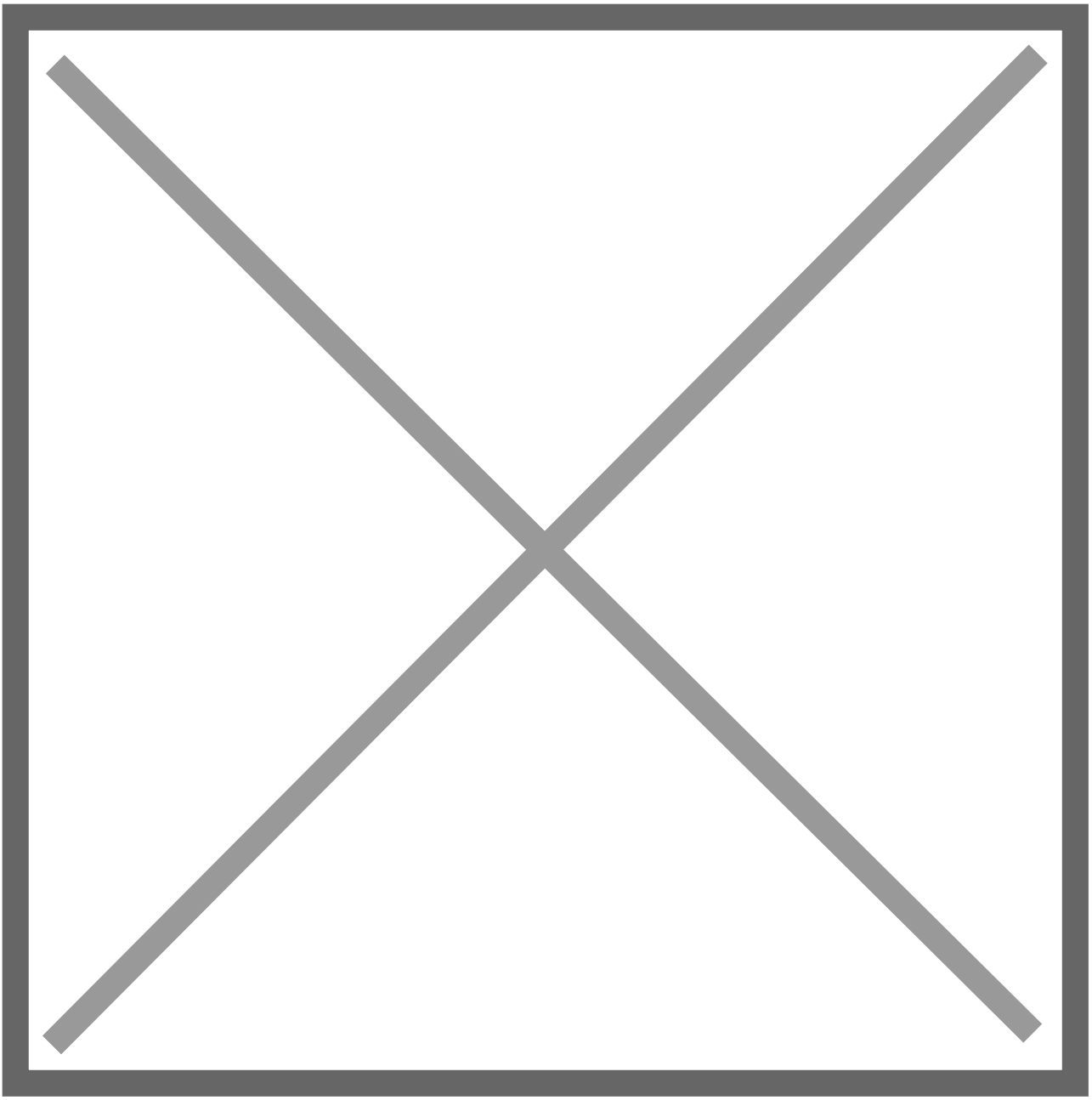
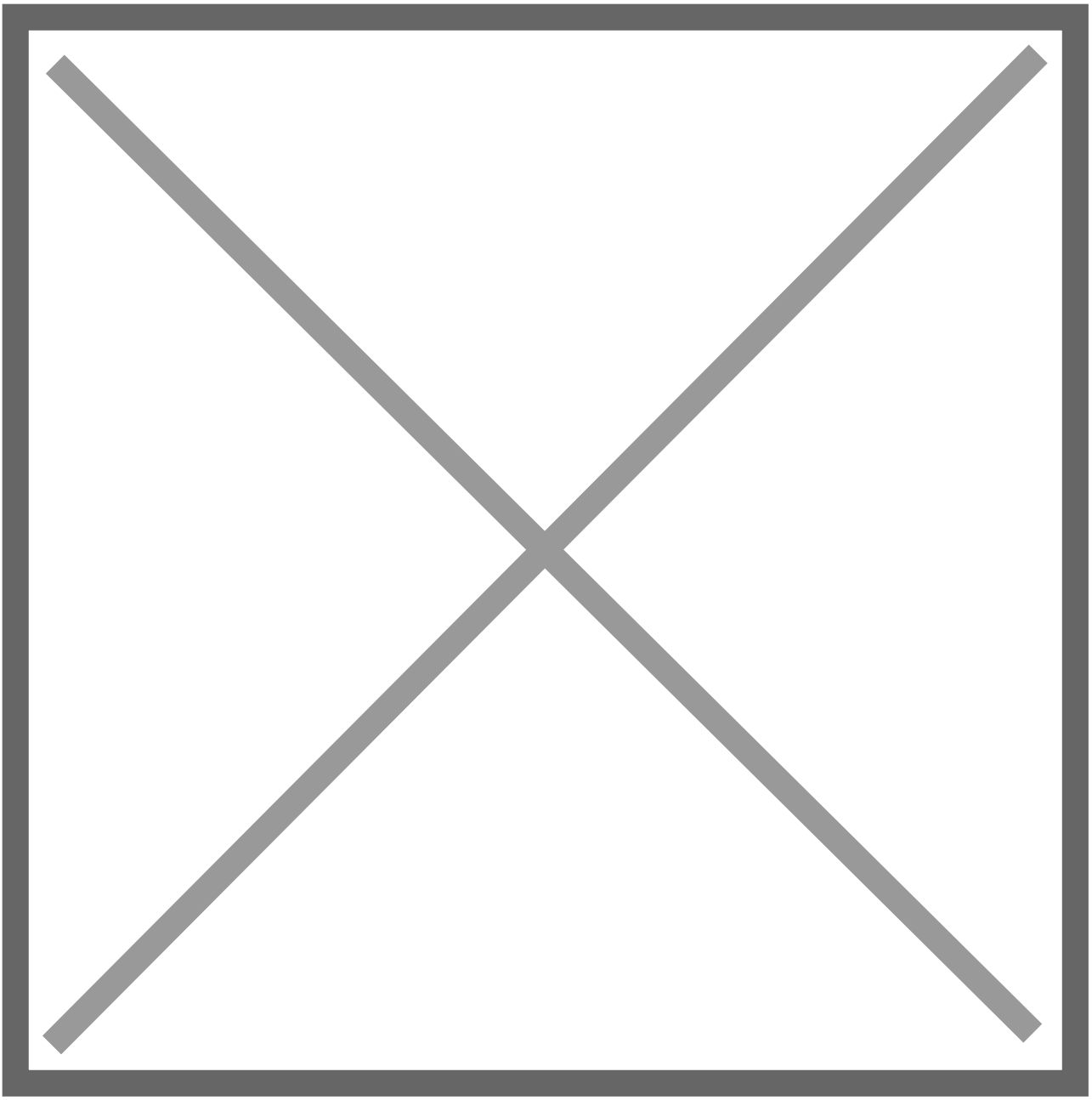
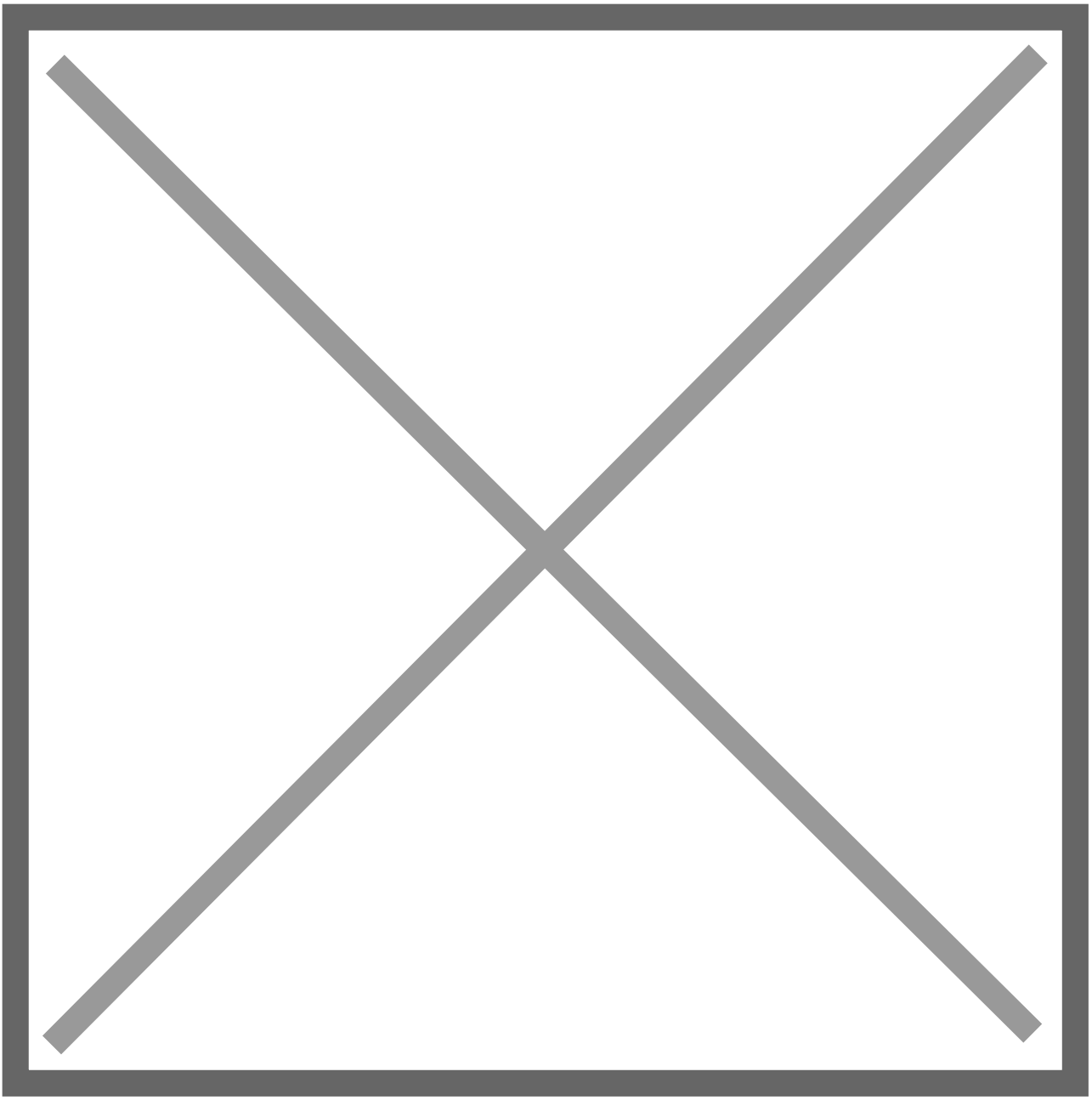
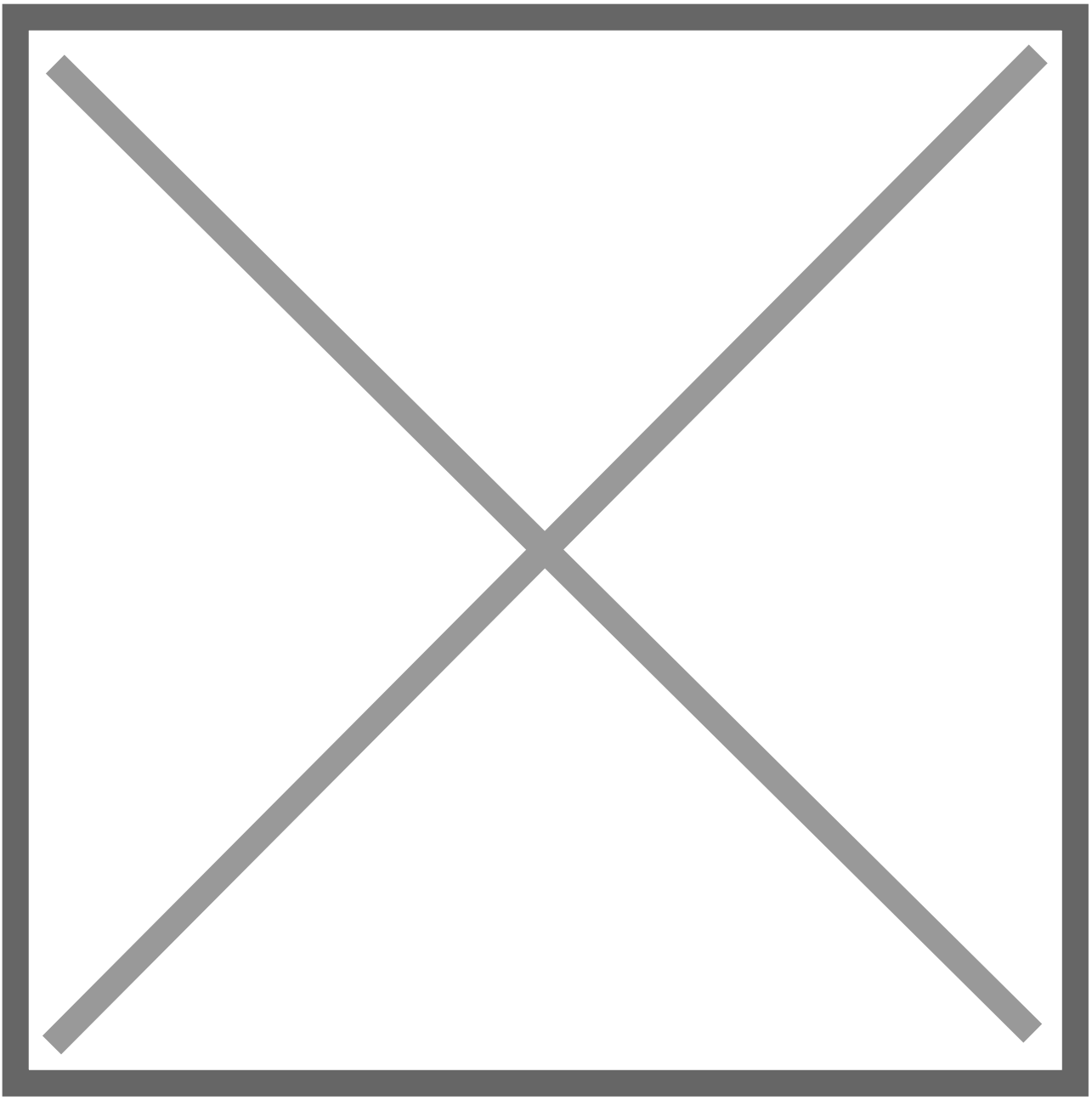
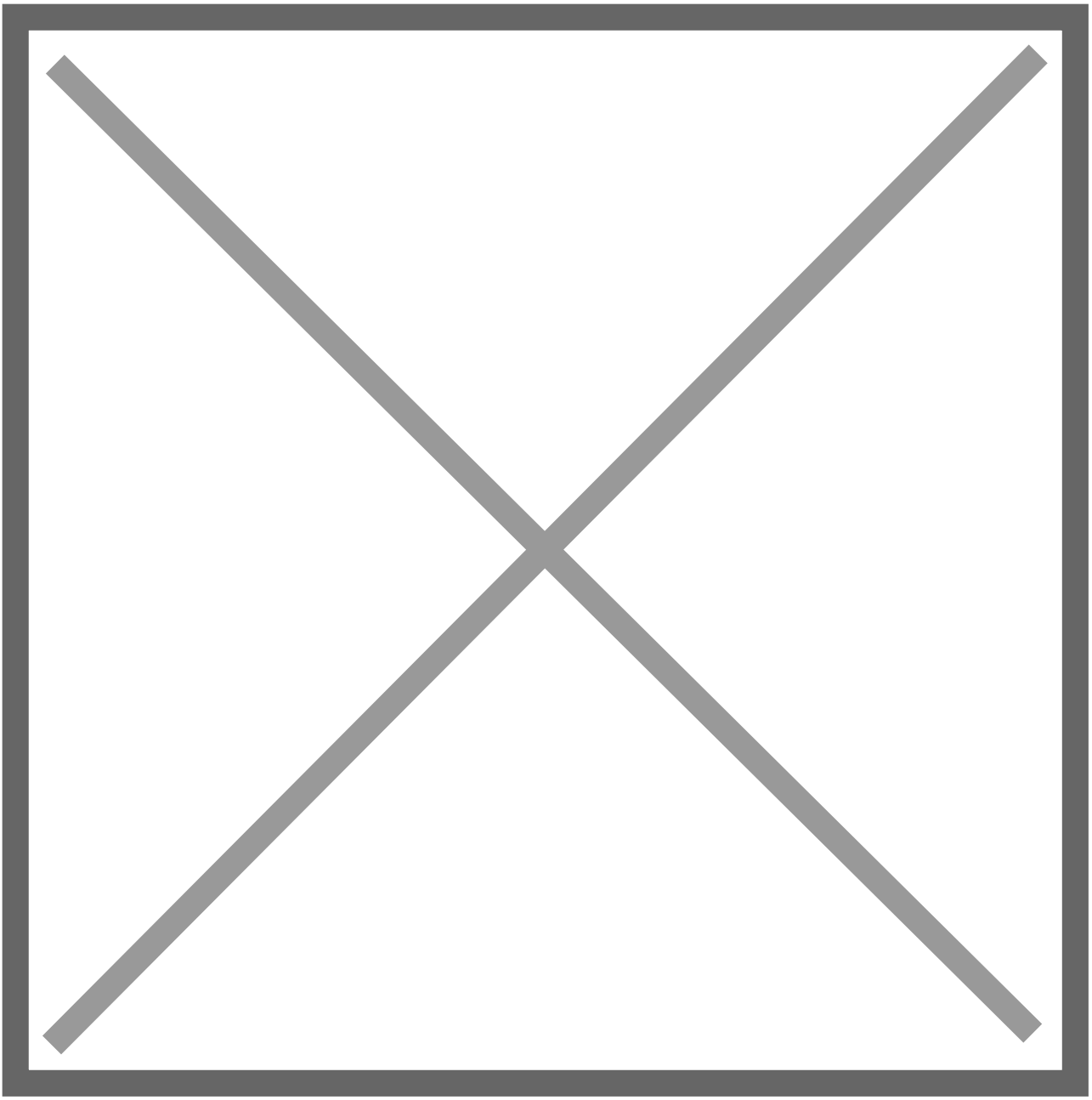
Il libro recensito è *Mengele’s Skull: The Advent of a Forensic Aesthetics*, della casa editrice Sternberg Press.

Se continuiamo a tenere vivo questo spazio è grazie a te. Anche un solo euro per noi significa molto.
Torna presto a leggerci e SOSTIENI DOPPIOZERO

video image of the photograph was precisely imposed over the video image of the skull. It was a face wrapped over a skull, subject over object, an image of life over an image of death.

These were the missing images. While the results of Helmer's technique pushed the probability calculation further in the direction of a definitive identification, it also did more.[57] It was the appearance of a previously unseen image that produced the potential for conviction. At the press conference the following day, the forensic team presented their conclusions—"It is [...] our opinion that this skeleton is that of Josef Mengele"—and showed photographs of their methods, including Helmer's decisive superimpositions.[58] Ralph Blumenthal of the *New York Times* reported from what he called the "raucous news conference in federal police headquarters" that,

> the international experts cited various bits of evidence in support of their conclusion. Most decisive, many agreed, was an innovative West German photographic comparison

Richard Helmer (right) with Ali Hameli (left) and the skull of Josef Mengele, as prepared for face-skull superimposition demonstration, Medico-Legal Institute labs, São Paulo, Brazil, June 1985. Courtesy of Maja Helmer.

Following pages: Images produced using photographs of Mengele and images of his skull in Richard Helmer's face-skull superimposition demonstration, Medico-Legal Institute labs, São Paulo, Brazil, June 1985. Courtesy of Maja Helmer.