



The Invention of a Guilty Party

THE CASE OF LITTLE SIMONE OF TRENTO FROM PROPAGANDA
TO HISTORY

The exhibition *The Invention of a Guilty Party: The case of little Simone of Trento* from **propaganda** to history sheds light on a historical episode that left a deep mark on the history of Trento. The work admirably stimulates critical reflection on the construction of a hostile "other"; the **spread** of intolerant behaviour towards people of differing race, religion or culture, **stoked** by **prejudice** and **stereotypes**; and the power of propaganda and fake news.

In 1475, Trento was **witness** to the death of two-year old Simone resulting in the conviction of three Jewish families for '**ritual murder**' on the basis of confessions obtained under torture by anti-Jewish propaganda created by the Bishop of the period. Simonino da Trento was subsequently **worshipped** as a **martyr** well into the mid-20th century.

The re-examination of the court documents in 1965 led to the Church's abolition of the cult. Since then, the chapels devoted to Simonino da Trento had been closed and **iconographical** works relating to the cult were stored away from public eye. The Museum has now bravely picked up this historical thread and attached it to the present aiming to make the public aware of the dangerous re-emergence of racist and anti-Semitic **tendencies** and pointing to the importance of independent critical thought to combat intolerance.

This project reveals the creation of fake history and shows the value of **critical thinking**. It has great **relevance** in **combating** fake news and therefore has great relevance for the contemporary world.

GLOSSARY

Propaganda: Information, ideas, or rumors spread to help or harm a person, group, movement, institution, or nation.

Spread: in the sense of increase.

Stoked: add fuel to.

Prejudice: A preconceived opinion that is not based on reason or actual experience.

Stereotypes: Widely held but oversimplified and generalized beliefs about a particular group of people.

Witness: in the sense of observer.

Ritual Murder: The false accusation that a murder is committed as part of a ritual or religious practice.

Worshipped: in the sense of reverence and devotion.

Martyr: A person who is killed because of their beliefs or religion.

Iconographical: Relating to the visual images and symbols used in works of art.

Astray: Away from the correct path or direction.

Reverberations: Echoes or vibrations; the continuation or prolongation of sounds.

Relevance: The quality of being closely connected or appropriate to a particular situation.

Combat: To fight against; to struggle to overcome or eliminate.

Critical Thinking: The objective analysis and evaluation of an issue in order to form a judgment.