

Sent: Sunday, June 17, 2012 11:31 AM

Subject: Photoshop fake in China's woman-astronaut portraits?

1. As China's first woman in space on 'Shenzhou-9' heads for a linkup Monday morning [EDT] with a space laboratory, there's now some question that one of her 'official portraits' is a photoshop-type fake.
2. One is a formal military picture, in uniform. The other is a space program portrait, in spacesuit.
3. The spacesuit photo appears to have a face absolutely identical to the military portrait, right down to stray hairs on her forehead, eyeball reflections, and facial hotspots. Some slight hairline differences [lower right] may be associated with the cut-and-paste process.
4. The two pictures are here: <http://bbs.qx818.com/thread-141564-1-1.html> The link was first published by a poster on the private discussion thread at the www.nasaspacespaceflight.com website, where I saw it a few hours ago before checking the images out in detail and consulting my own experts.
5. If this is genuine photographic forgery, it really is only of the 'cosmetic' variety. The faked view does NOT stand as backing for a false claim of historical fact or other event. It's just a 'nicer' image of what we have no doubt is really true: Liu Yang is in space.
6. But there remain rumors that Liu was a last-minute addition to the crew, replacing a rookie male astronaut who had trained for years. The first woman-in-space for China had long been described as planned for the SECOND spacelab docking, Shenzhou-10, now set for late 2012.
7. Then, only a few months ago, there reportedly was a high-level political decision to advance this mission. This in turn required intensive catch-up training for Liu Yang, and that could well have contributed to the need to take short cuts in formal portrait production.
8. In the past, photographic forgeries of space pilots was much more deceptive, and the Soviets were masters of the game, airbrushing failed cosmonaut candidates out of group photos for subsequent publication --but often forgetting that the original versions had already been published, so the before-after views were striking. I was the guy who detected most of those faked photographs. See <http://www.jamesoberg.com/cosmonot.pdf>
9. Several years ago, Iran forged a photograph of space tourist Anousha Ansari, an Iranian-born American citizen who got wealthy on Internet

technology and purchased a ticket on a Russian 'Soyuz'. One photograph of her with her space helmet folded open and back apparently revealed two much of her hair for the morality police, so a fake helmet was painted OVER her head to preserve her modesty [while the real helmet was still seen folded back behind her head].

10. Cosmetic retouching of photographs is widespread and generally accepted to present better images, as long as it doesn't fake reality [best recent example, a PR photo of Katie Couric with a waistline reduced]. Removing moles and wrinkles may be one thing, removing body mass probably was excessively vain.

11. The pictures can be published side by side with identical features blown up in insets. It is visually striking, compelling, and humorous.

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Sent: Tuesday, June 19, 2012 5:40 PM

Subject: Taiwan newspaper: "Picture of woman-astronaut Liu Yang appears to be doctored"

1. The story is leaking into the world press.

2. As mentioned Sunday, the picture is faked -- I'm advised that "nobody's hair is ever that neat after crawling into a spacesuit". Another example has been found where a photo of her and her husband exists also in a version with the husband airbrushed out -- but incompletely, leaving in a patch of his sleeve seen through her transparent helmet visor.

3. These aren't 'fake history' forgeries -- she really IS in space -- but just 'cosmetic aesthetic rearrangement' of original shots that could be made to look prettier.

4. Two spacesuited views of the two astronauts on Shenzhou-6 several years ago have also been located and the men's heads are obviously pasted clumsily onto the same spacesuited body. Again, the flights and astronauts were real -- just the photos were faked to make them look better.

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"Xinhua picture of Liu Yang appears to be doctored"

"Want China Times" Staff Reporter, Taipei, Taiwan

2012-06-19 // 13:26 (GMT+8)

<http://www.wantchinatimes.com/news-subclass-cnt.aspx?id=20120619000071&cid=1101>

"A photo of Liu Yang, China's first female astronaut, published by state news agency Xinhua has been found to be remarkably similar to another photo in which she wears a military uniform, prompting speculation on the internet that the picture of Liu in a spacesuit may have been modified from the earlier photo. "