

> Teacher's Guide 2011

Perhaps you will be taking your students to the 2011 exhibition of World Press Photo. At the exhibition, students set to work on their own using the workbook, which is called My Album. Whether or not you grade the answers to the questions is up to you; the questions are formulated so as to stimulate discussion among the students as a group while they are viewing the photos. By working on the questions, the students learn things such as: what news is, what press photography is, and what press freedom means.

To help you answer questions at the exhibition, and to help you plan any class discussions before or after your visit, you'll find more information below about press photography, news, the winning photo, and the work that World Press Photo does.

WORLD PRESS PHOTO 11

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Educational Packet Secondary School
13 to 16 years



> what is news?

News is an event or situation that:

- > 1 *Is unusual*
- > 2 *No one - or hardly anyone at all - knew about it before*
- > 3 *Is relevant to the reader or the viewer*
- > 4 *Feels like it has taken place close by (distance-wise)*
- > 5 *Deals with a topic of current interest*
- > 6 *Has major impact*
- > 7 *Arouses emotion and/or interest*

It's difficult to come up with a concise definition of what "news" is. What one person considers is news might not be relevant to someone else. News of an event in Buenos Aires today might not be considered news at all in Beijing. Because there is continuous going on in the world, it's impossible for the media to cover it all. That's why editors and news agencies employ the above-mentioned guidelines - so they can quickly decide what is, and is not, going to be news. A report is more likely to be regarded as news if it concerns an exciting or brand new event, or if it deals with celebrities or other important people.

These guidelines can be quite specific at times. Some media outlets, for example, will only cover a fire if it causes at least a million dollars in damage, or will only report on traffic accidents when they result in fatalities or a large number of wounded.

The reader himself - and thus the medium - is also a key factor in determining what's news. Readers of The Financial Times are bound to be inordinately interested in the economy, and because of this are going to pay more attention to things going on in the business and financial world than they would to other events. The local newspaper in your town might devote in-depth coverage to whether or not a new railway line will be built between two cities in your region because that's something that is relevant to its readers.

The explanations that follow have been included with the "news list" in the lesson material for the students.

> *For #1:* What happens is an everyday event. If somebody important gets sick, then that's news, because that person was healthy up until now (and perhaps because of #6 and #7 as well).

If a heat wave strikes, then it's news, because it's not usual for the weather to get that hot.

> *For #2:* something that has been

going on for a long time can also be news, as long as hardly anyone knows about it yet. If a new planet is discovered, or dead bodies are exhumed from a mass grave, or it's revealed that the president is having a secret love affair - all of these things would be news.

> *For #3:* To readers of a financial newspaper, financial issues are important. To readers of a local newspaper, local news is important.

> *For #4:* The closer something happens to us, the more important we find it to be. One grim rule of thumb is: 1 death that occurs nearby is just as important to us as 1000 deaths that take place further afield. News about Brazilian politics is more relevant to Brazilians than it is to Russians. Russians want to read news about their own country's politics.

> *For #5:* If there are a lot of people concerned about climate change, then everything that has anything to do with climate change will be news. If unemployment goes up, stories that have something to do with unemployment are newsworthy.

> *For #6:* If an event ends up bringing a lot of people either grief or pleasure, then it's news. If a factory closes, a lot of people lose their job. If a new highway is built, some people are forced to move, while still other people enjoy a shorter commute. If an oil spill occurs, it has major consequences for the environment.

> what is press photography?

Press photos are photos taken by photojournalists in accordance with journalistic codes of conduct. A press photo shows the reality as it existed when the photo was taken - nothing in the photo may be manipulated. Press photographers limit themselves to documenting the world around them, and in this way they distinguish themselves from fine art and commercial photographers. One exception to this is the portrait. When shooting a portrait, the photographer is permitted to get more involved in the situation and render the subject of the portrait in the way he or she wants to. A press photo shares the state of the world with the viewer and makes the viewer a witness. A lot of press photographers who work in difficult circumstances like war zones, famines and natural disasters are motivated by the desire to let the rest of the world know what's going on. Because then the world might

3 just be able to do something about the situation. A press photo almost always depicts news. If it doesn't deal with "spot news" - something sensational that just occurred which hardly anyone knows about or has seen anything about - then the subject of the photo is likely to be something that only a very few people are aware of (the series on the children's prison in Sierra Leone is a good example of this). This could be something that may very well have been going on for some time, but which the reader or the viewer knows little or nothing about. It could also be that the photo is portraying a subject that everyone is already familiar with, but is portraying it in a new light (such as the series on the swans).

> responsibility of the press photographer

It is the responsibility of the press photographer to take photos and to select those that tell the story in a realistic way, just like a print journalist is supposed to do. A print journalist's job is to write about both sides of a conflict, and a photojournalist should also show that there are multiple sides to the story. When there aren't so many photo(journalists) available on site to cover a story, this

responsibility is even greater the more large. He or she is then the only one that can tell the world what's happening, and the viewer or the reader has to be able to trust that the journalist is being biased, and it tells the full story. A photojournalist should constantly be looking at things with a critical eye as well. For just as you would rather look good than look bad in a photo yourself, so would everyone else. Everyone would like to keep bad things about themselves secret, and could set out to ruin someone else's reputation by spreading lies about them. Sometimes people will put on a dramatic show for photojournalists in the hope that the photo will appear in the newspaper and end up making the other side look bad. In this case the photo wouldn't depict reality, but would instead be a lie. It's the press photographer's responsibility to figure out whether what they are shooting is true or not. This is why press photographers should thoroughly familiarize themselves with the place that they are working in, and with the circumstances and the people that they are covering.

> press freedom

Often it's the case that a regime or an organization doesn't want journalists and press photographers documenting what's going on. They are often afraid of things being revealed that will end up making people angry - people who might then choose to interfere with the status quo. Some countries require press photographers to be registered before they can enter the country. In this way the authorities can keep track of what they might be investigating. Sometimes press photographers get deported from the country, and sometimes they are imprisoned. It can also happen that a journalist or a press photographer is murdered because they are on the trail of something that others would prefer to keep secret. Freedom of the press means that journalists and press photographers have the freedom to report on any significant event without being restricted in their efforts, and without being taken prisoner or murdered.



A good way to illustrate freedom of the press is by telling the story behind the iconic photo above. In 1989, Charlie Cole traveled to China to report on protests that were being held there by students demanding democratic reforms. The protests ended up being crushed in a bloody crackdown by the army. Cole took the now renowned photo of a young man standing opposite a column of People's Liberation Army tanks in Tiananmen Square (Gate of Heavenly Peace). At that time, China was a country that was very closed-off from the rest of the world. News that did manage to make it out of the country came for the most part from the ruling Communist Party. This photo changed that. It showed the world how dissatisfied the Chinese people had become with the situation in their country. Cole took the photo from a window of his hotel room that looked out onto the square. Agents of the Chinese secret police later raided his hotel room, seizing his rolls of film as well as his

5 passport. But Cole had managed to hide the roll with the images of the man standing in front of the tanks in a plastic container, and stash it in the toilet tank. Later he sent the roll to the Associated Press and to the American magazine Newsweek. During the uprisings in the Middle East in the spring of 2011, journalists found it difficult to do their work in some places. Among them was one of this year's winners. Marco di Lauro won a prize for his photo of the flesh of dead cattle in drought-ravaged Niger. This photo can also be seen in the exhibition. Di Lauro went to Yemen earlier this year to cover the protests against the regime. Like a few other of his fellow (photo) journalists, he was detained, held for a few days, and eventually deported from the country.

> using a critical eye

The media publish photos to help illustrate the news and to prove that something actually happened. But they also do this to draw attention to something, or to evoke an emotional response. Press photos should offer us a view of (a portion of) reality. When publishing a photo, newspaper

and magazine editors need to be confident that the photo is an accurate representation of the event. After all, any journalistic medium derives its right to exist from the credibility of the news that it delivers.

News media are increasingly using amateur photography covering the news. More and more people are carrying mobile phones equipped with cameras, which allows amateur eyewitnesses to document events as they happen, often even before a photojournalist can get to the scene. This has led news agencies such as Associated Press (AP) and Reuters to strike deals with amateur photo websites like iStockphoto or Flickr. The use of amateur-produced images, however, does entail risks. How can a newspaper or news website determine the reliability of these images? What if someone staged the photo in order to damage someone else's reputation? This is why the source of these photos needs to be thoroughly checked out by the editors. And you should keep a critical eye to this as well: In what publication am I seeing this photo? Is this a reliable medium? Is this photo telling the whole story, or just a part of it? This is why it's also good to read the caption and any news copy that

accompanies the photo as well; don't limit yourself to just looking at the photo.

> about world press photo

World Press Photo is an independent nonprofit organization, founded in the Netherlands in 1955. Its main aim is to support and promote the work of professional press photographers internationally.

Each year, World Press Photo invites press photographers throughout the world to participate in the World Press Photo Contest, the premier annual international competition in press photography. All photographs were judged in February 2011 in Amsterdam by an independent international jury composed of 19 professionals recognized in the field of photojournalism. Winning images are displayed in an annual exhibition that visits 100 locations in some 45 countries, and is seen by around 2.5 million people worldwide.

Educational projects also play an important role in World Press Photo's activities. The annual Joop Swart Masterclass is aimed at talented photographers at the start of their careers, and seminars and workshops

open to individual photographers, photo agencies and picture editors are organized in developing countries. For more information on World Press Photo, about the prizewinning images, the photographers and for an updated exhibition schedule, please visit: www.worldpressphoto.org

> the winning photo

The 2010 World Press Photo of the Year is the portrait taken by South African photographer Jodi Bieber of a young Afghan woman named Bibi Aisha.

> the story of Bibi Aisha

Bibi Aisha (18), was disfigured as retribution for fleeing her husband's house in Oruzgan province, in the center of Afghanistan. At the age of 12, Aisha and her younger sister had been given to the family of a Taliban fighter under a Pashtun tribal custom for settling disputes. When she reached puberty she was married to him, but she later returned to her parents' home, complaining of violent treatment by her in-laws. Men arrived there one night demanding that she be handed

7 over to be punished for running away. Aisha was taken to a mountain clearing, where, at the orders of a Taliban commander, she was held down and had first her ears sliced off, then her nose. In local culture, a man who has been shamed by his wife is said to have lost his nose, and this is seen as punishment in return. Aisha was abandoned, but later rescued and taken to a shelter in Kabul run by the aid organization Women for Afghan Women, where she was given treatment and psychological help. After time in the refuge, she was taken to America to receive further counseling and reconstructive surgery.

> motivation of the jury

Jodi Bieber's evocative portrait of Bibi Aisha is that combination of horrific and beautiful: the power of the picture lies in the dignity of its subject and in the thoughtful treatment by the photographer. It speaks not only of Aisha's own case, but also to that of women in many places around the world, whose lives remain in jeopardy. Yet the jury chose this picture not because of any political agenda, but simply because we felt it made a strong statement photographically,

and did what all photographers strive for: to challenge the viewer not only to contemplate this moment for what it is, but also to desire more. More information. More understanding.

> story behind the photo

In the interview below, Jodi Bieber explains in her own words how she took the photo.

Can you describe the circumstances behind the winning photo?

I was sent to Afghanistan on an assignment from Time to take photographic portraits of different women. The journalist Aryn Baker had found and interviewed the women already, and set up a meeting at the Women for Afghan Women shelter in Kabul, where Aisha was at the time. I knew her story from Aryn, so made the decision not to interview her again. I didn't want to put her through the trauma of reliving her experience. She was in a small room, with just a carpet on the floor and cushions around the walls. I had just my camera, tripod and a reflector. First I tried small talk, to help her to relax, but I could see I wasn't achieving anything, so put down the camera for a while. While we had been talking, I'd noticed

how beautiful she was, but also shy and sad. But when she released a little of something inside her, there really was a beauty, so I said: "You are really very beautiful. I want to capture that, your power and inner beauty. Think of something that makes you feel good, that gives you your power." That was the photo. I could never have created those eyes, that look she gave me.

What issues does the photo raise for you?

For me it is 100% about violence against women. Maybe it works because you see Aisha as a woman first, before you see her disfigurement. If I had photographed her in a vulnerable or distressing position, I think people would have just turned the page, and not responded in the way they have. I think that twenty, even ten years ago, I might not have taken a photo like that, but I have changed as a photographer. These days I enjoy collaborating with the person I'm photographing, which means talking in the way I did with Aisha, bringing myself and my beliefs in slightly, rather than being invisible.

How did you become interested in photography?

It didn't come naturally. At school in South Africa we were encouraged

either in an academic or a sports direction. The creative side didn't come into it. After school I went straight into a job in marketing—working during the day and studying at night. I got to quite a responsible position at a young age, but then decided I really needed some time off, so I took a ten-month break traveling around Turkey, Egypt and Europe. My father gave me his old camera, and instead of writing a diary I took very bad photographs. But the camera became my vehicle for expression. When I returned home, it became the means for me to explore a South Africa outside of my previous experience, the way for me to really discover the country I was living in, and its people.

How did you make the move into photo-journalism?

At first, after I came back to South Africa, I worked in advertising, and then one day I saw a leaflet for a photography workshop at the Market Theatre in Johannesburg. I thought, perfect! I'll work during the day and after hours I can pursue what I'm really excited about. This was at a very historical time for the country, in the early 1990s. Every free moment I had, I would go to a township or cover a march or demonstration.



- 9 I took a portfolio to Ken Oosterbroek, chief photographer at The Star newspaper, and he offered me a place in a training program. I gave up the advertising career for just three months guaranteed at The Star. I got a front-page on day three. From that moment, there was no turning back.

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> Charlie Cole
 USA, Newsweek
World Press Photo of the Year 1989

Colophon:

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