

WORLD PRESS PHOTO

EXHIBITION
2022

**SCHOOL
GUIDE
2022**



© Irina Werning, Pulitzer Center

Visual thinking:
questions from
the stories

Name: _____

School: _____

Welcome to the World Press Photo Exhibition 2022.

This lesson will help you understand more about photo-journalism. We invite you to not only look at a photograph, but to actually see it, to think about what the photograph depicts and the story behind the photograph.

You will think about how a press photo represents the news, how a photograph's meaning is influenced by its form, and the importance of press freedom.

The lesson offers questions that prompt discussion. Fill in your answers in the empty spaces under the questions. Make sure you have a pen or pencil ready at hand.

What do the credits tell me?

Each photograph contains credits. These credits tell us the title of the image, the name of the photographer, his or her country and the agency or media where the photo was first published or commissioned.

Why is press freedom important?

Slingshots

Making, publishing, and seeing visual stories depends upon a series of freedoms: freedom of expression, freedom of inquiry, and freedom of the press.

There are many places in the world where these freedoms do not exist. Even in countries regarded as open, these freedoms are often under threat and cannot be taken for granted.

This photograph, *Slingshots*, was submitted anonymously and shows protesters using slingshots and other homemade weapons in a clash with security forces in Yangon, Myanmar.

On 1 February 2021, military leaders staged a coup in Myanmar, hours before a newly elected parliament was to have been sworn in. Huge protests erupted nationwide, and were met with a harsh military crackdown.



Protesters use slingshots and other homemade weapons in a clash with security forces in Yangon, Myanmar, on 28 March 2021

Slingshots © Anonymous for *The New York Times*.

International media organizations and a UN official reported that the military were firing live ammunition at civilian protesters and into people's homes. The photographer remains anonymous for reasons of personal safety. The day before this photograph was taken saw 114 civilians reported killed.

The threats to press freedom take many forms such as killing and imprisonment of Journalists: in 2021, 41 Journalists were murdered and 367 are imprisoned for their work up to this day.

Questions

- 1 What do you think are the biggest dangers to freedom of expression, freedom of inquiry, and freedom of the press?

- 2 Why would a photographer need to maintain anonymity to publish this image?

- 3 Is there freedom of expression, freedom of inquiry, and freedom of the press where you live?

How can complex issues be photographed?

Amazonian Dystopia

Lalo de Almeida’s long-term project, Amazonian Dystopia, documented between 2013 and 2021, sheds light on the variety of consequences that the exploitation of the Amazon has had in recent years.

Long-term projects are shot in a minimum of three years, which allows photographers to capture the multiple layers and dimensions behind complex issues. Amazonian Dystopia shows that the threat that the Amazon is facing has environmental, economic, social, and political consequences.

Overall this project shows that complex issues need to be studied and documented for long periods of time in order to paint an accurate and complete picture of such situations.



Members of the Munduruku community line up to board a plane at Altamira Airport in Para, Brazil, on 14 June 2013. After protesting at the site of the construction of the Belo Monte Dam on the Xingu River, they traveled to the national capital Brasilia to present their demands to the government.

Amazonian Dystopia © Lalo de Almeida
for Folha de São Paulo / Panos Pictures.

Questions

1 Complex issues, such as the influence of humans’ activities on the environment, occur in many places over a long time. How can we visualize the effect of these on the people who suffer from them?

2 In what other ways can complex issues be photographed?

3 How can photographers create a cohesive story through long-term projects?

How can we discern fact from fiction in an age of misinformation?

The Book of Veles

The Book of Veles was published in April 2021 as a documentary project on the production of fake news in Veles, a provincial North Macedonian town which placed itself on the world map in 2016 as an epicenter for fake news production.

Six months after its publication, Jonas Bendiksen revealed the project itself was a forgery - all the people portrayed are computer-generated 3D models, and all text was written by an AI. Bendiksen uses photography as a tool to comment on the state of photography and highlight how vulnerable we are to fake influences.

In the process of discerning fact from fiction, both journalists and audiences have a responsibility in the production and distribution of reliable news. Independent Journalism should be truthful, accurate, and objective. Bendiksen shows that the industry and consumers are equally responsible in the production of reliable news in an age of misinformation.



© Jonas Bendiksen.

Questions

1 What is misinformation? And what forms could it take?

2 What are some examples of the production, circulation, and acceptance of fake news?

3 How does the presence of fake news affect the trust of audiences in the media?

Can stories focus on solutions as well as problems?

Saving Forests with Fire

One of the themes that we commonly see in the World Press Photo Exhibition is the ongoing climate crisis. *Saving Forests with Fire* by Matthew Abbott addresses the increase of wildfires but from a perspective that offers solutions to the problem.

His project documents the indigenous Australian practice of cool burning which consists of creating slow fires that burn only the undergrowth, and remove the build-up of fuel that feeds bigger blazes.

As a result, these traditional burns prevent larger, more destructive fires from occurring in the hotter, dryer months of the year. In doing so, they have successfully decreased the amount of climate-heating CO₂.

The series can be considered an example of visual journalism with a solutions approach. Rather than focusing only on problems, solutions journalism documents situations where people are already taking action to deal with difficult issues.



Nawarddeen elder Conrad Maralngurra burns grass to protect the Mamadawerre community from late-season wildfires, in Mamadawerre, Arnhem Land, Australia. The late-evening fire will die out naturally once the temperature drops and moisture levels rise, on 3 May 2021.

Saving Forests with Fire © Matthew Abbott
for National Geographic / Panos Pictures.

Questions

1 How does this series differ from other images you have seen about the climate crisis?

2 How do you think visual stories about the climate crisis should be presented?

3 What effect does a story presenting solutions have on the audience?

How can a personal story give us insights into the world?

The Promise

In August 2020, Antonella (12), who lives in Buenos Aires, Argentina, vowed to cut her long hair only when she could resume in-person classes at school, which had been suspended as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Promise by Irina Werning offers an alternative, refreshing perspective of the challenges of the COVID-19 lockdowns in South America. The project’s many layers address the long-term effects of the pandemic on children and calls into question how they can engage in demanding equal access to education.

Through playful and humorous visual elements, the photographer highlights Antonella’s creative and personal form of resistance in a way that transcends cultural boundaries, in a way that is relatable to viewers.



Antonella studies via Zoom, using her mother’s mobile phone, in her room at home in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on 13 June 2021.

The Promise © Irina Werning, Pulitzer Center.

Questions

1 What elements of storytelling make the story relatable for audiences?

2 What do we learn about the COVID-19 pandemic through this personal story?

3 What are the different ways a personal perspective could affect the accuracy of a story?

How does a photographer develop a relationship and get consent from the people they photograph?

The Cinema of Kabul

In *The Cinema of Kabul*, Bram Janssen documented the Ariana Cinema in Kabul, Afghanistan, after the Taliban took control of the country in mid-August 2021. The cinema has since then remained closed.

The Ariana Cinema is government-owned, and therefore, in order to document this story, Janssen spent several weeks trying to get permission from the Taliban to photograph the cinema. Once granted, he spent weeks inside the space, getting to know the staff, communicating through a translator, and trying to gain their trust in order to document their most genuine selves.

To gain the trust and get consent of those photographed requires a sense of sensitivity and professionalism on behalf of any photographer, especially if this concerns people in a vulnerable situation. Spending a lot of time and effort on the story while attentively observing it establishes stronger connections between the photographer and the subjects.



Gui Mohammed, who works as an usher in the Ariana Cinema in Kabul, Afghanistan, poses for a photograph nearly three months after the Taliban closed the cinema, on 4 November 2021.

The Cinema of Kabul © Bram Janssen, The Associated Press

Questions

1 What is the responsibility of the photographer in getting consent for those she/he photographs?

2 What are the risks of not having consent from the people photographed?

3 Why is having the subject's consent important? What can consent add to the process of storytelling?

Why are captions important in photojournalism?

Kamloops Residential School

The photograph by Amber Bracken documents the long-term legacy of historical crimes that are not directly visible today but which continue affecting the lives of First Nations in Canada.

The image is full of visual symbolism: the children’s dresses hanging on the crosses refer to the crimes of the Church, and the opening sky and the rainbow that lands where the graves were found symbolize the current process of reparation and reconciliation between the Church and Indigenous communities.

While the photograph is full of visual cues about the history of residential schools, the background and history still need to be explained for viewers to capture the complexity behind the photograph.

This explanation is done through the text that accompanies and explains the nature and/or meaning of each photo. In the world of photography, this text is called a “caption”.



Red dresses hung on crosses along a roadside commemorate children who died at the Kamloops Indian Residential School, an institution created to assimilate Indigenous children, following the detection of as many as 215 unmarked graves in Kamloops, British Columbia, on 19 June 2021.

Kamloops Residential School © Amber Bracken, for The New York Times.

Questions

1 What gives meaning to a photograph?

2 Why is context so important?

3 How do you document a historical event that is not physically there anymore?
