If you are accompanying pupils to the World Press Photo 2015 exhibition, the ‘My Album’ workbook will help them get more out of the exhibition without your guidance. It’s up to you if you want to discuss the answers with them afterwards. All the questions have been designed so that discussions will arise spontaneously as your pupils are studying the photographs. By answering the questions, the pupils will learn what news is, what photojournalism is, and what freedom of the press means. They will also learn how to appreciate photography better.

The lesson consists of general questions and detailed questions. The detailed questions are intended for the older pupils who can work quickly, and for pupils who will stay at the exhibition for longer than normal (more than an hour). You are the best judge of whether your pupils can handle the detailed questions, but make sure you tell them beforehand if they have to answer them or not.

To help you with any discussions you have before and/or after the exhibition, and to answer any questions during the exhibition itself, here is some more information about press photography, news, the World Press Photo of the Year, and the World Press Photo organisation.
What is news exactly?

News tells us about an event or situation that meets one or more of the following criteria:

- **It’s different from the normal situation**
- **Little or nothing is known about it yet**
- **It’s important for a large group of readers or viewers**
- **To the reader or viewer, it feels as though it happened somewhere close by**
- **It’s about a contemporary theme**
- **It has a big impact**
- **It evokes emotions and excitement in the reader/viewer**
- **It concerns well-known people**

In de les voor de leerlingen in de definitie van ‘nieuws’ versimpeld. In de les staat:

In the lesson for the pupils, the definition of news has been simplified. This is what it says in the lesson:

Press photos are not like the photos you see in advertising or art. Press photos show us news. Everyone has their own ideas about what news is exactly, but two things are important.

1. **News is something that hardly anyone knows about yet, and has just happened.** For example, that a storm has just devastated a block of houses, or that a plane has crashed.

2. **News is something that has a huge impact for a lot of people.** For example, that major flooding has occurred in a densely populated area. Or that a war has broken out.

It’s difficult to give a brief description of ‘news’. What one person considers to be news may not be at all important for another person. The hottest news item in Buenos Aires may not be news at all in Beijing. Because so much is happening all the time all around the world, it’s impossible for the media to broadcast or publish everything. This is why editorial teams and press agencies use the above guidelines to help them make a quick selection of the news.

For example, an item is more likely to be labelled as news if the event is exciting or totally new, or if it concerns important or famous people. Sometimes these guidelines for news are extremely specific. A fire will only be considered news by a certain number of people have been injured.

The reader – and therefore the medium – is also a significant factor when deciding what news is. The readers of the Financial Times for example will be more than averagely interested in economics, and will therefore consider events in the financial sector and in industry to be more important than events in other fields. But a website about the wellbeing of animals will lead with the collapse of the roof of a chicken farm.

What is press photography?

Press photographs are photographs that have been taken by photojournalists, and that comply with the journalistic codes. Photographers merely record what they see, and are not allowed to manipulate or influence what is happening in front of the camera. A press photo must always portray the truth. And the photographer is only allowed to edit the photo only slight-ly once it has been taken. The rule is: the essence of the content of the photo must not be changed by manipulating it (digitally or otherwise) after it has been taken. So you are not allowed to add or remove any elements. But the boundary can be very thin. For example, adjusting the contrast of a photo or modifying the colours slightly is generally accepted, but making the background so dark that you cannot see it anymore is considered to be going too far by many people.

A press photo shows the viewer the state of the world, making the viewer part of the event itself. The main driving force for many press photographers who work in extremely difficult circumstances, like war zones or areas in the world where famine or natural disasters occur, is: to show the world what is happening. Because maybe there’s a chance that the world can help.

A press photo always shows news or focuses attention on an important social theme in a new way, like the series on pollution in China. If it’s not about a recent or remarkable event, then it’s often about a subject or story that very few people know about. The series on Chollywood, the Hollywood of China, and the series about crocodile leather are good examples of this. Another category of press photo is the one where background reports are added to the news. Such as the Ebola in Sierra Leone series. The photos not only show the dead and dying, but also how the community deals with the disease. This way, the photos form an illustration accompanying the daily news about the numbers of deaths.

Press photography is different from art and advertising photography because it shows reality. An exception to this rule is portrait photography. In a portrait, photographers are allowed to alter the situation and to show the person or persons being portrayed in the way they wish to portray them.
The press photographer’s responsibility

It is the press photographer’s responsibility to take photos and make a selection so that a balanced view of the subject is presented, just like a journalist writer has to do. Just as a journalist writer has to show both sides of a conflict, a photojournalist also has to show that there are more sides to the same story. This responsibility increases as the number of journalists and photojournalists on location decreases. He or she is then the only person who can show what is happening and the viewer or reader has to be able to trust that the journalist is being objective and is informing the public fully.

This means that a photojournalist must always remain critical. Is the regime trying to hide information? Is the government leader really as healthy as he looks or has he just left his hospital bed for the photo to be taken? Have the angry demonstrators been paid by the regime? Have the victims of demolished buildings been removed from the streets beforehand?

Many wars are also fought via the media. The world’s outrage can help to get extra support on your side. It’s simple to organise a demonstration just for the news station cameras. It’s the job of a good press photographer to show this aspect too, to provide a context.

Manipulating an image via the computer so that the photo’s meaning changes is also breaking the rules of ethics. It can be a thin line – when does making the background a little darker result in a better photo, and when does the darkening change the content? This year, the jury studied the photos that qualified for the final round very carefully, checking for digital manipulation. As many as twenty percent of the photos failed the test. According to the jury, too much of the image had been changed after it had been shot.

The ethical code of behaviour for journalists is laid down in the Code of Bordeaux, drawn up by The International Federation of Journalists in 1954. These are four of the nine principles:

1. Respect for truth and for the right of the public to truth is the first duty of the journalist.
2. The journalist shall observe professional secrecy regarding the source of information obtained in confidence.
3. The journalist shall be aware of the danger of discrimination being furthered by the media, and shall do the utmost to avoid facilitating such (…).
4. The journalist shall regard as grave professional offences the following: plagiarism, slander, libel, calumny, unfounded accusations, acceptance of a bribe in any form (…).

Freedom of the press

Freedom of the press means that journalists and press photographers can report on important events without being obstructed in any way, without being taken prisoner or being murdered.

Freedom of the press is laid down in article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: ‘Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.’

Subjectivity

Of course press photos are also always subjective. A photo will often tell you about the photographer’s view on the world, and about specific issues. Has the outstretched helping hand been removed from the photo or not? Is the photo of the old man taken from above, making him look insignificant, or from below, making him look physically powerful?

With his photo of a scene at a religious school for transgenders in Indonesia, Fulvio Bugani won third prize this year in the category of Contemporary Issues. This photo illustrates the term subjectivity very clearly.

Within certain cultures, countries and religions, transgenders are looked down upon. For example, many transgenders in Indonesia live on the edge of society. Bugani has portrayed this group of transgenders as a normal group of people. They eat, laugh, and chat. One of them is staring into space, while a baby hangs in a sheet. The photographer shows a community no different to many other communities. Young and old together, serious and light-hearted. It is an everyday scene, one you might photograph anywhere else in the world on a busy street corner.

If Bugani had considered transgenders to be strange and sick people, he could have portrayed them in a totally different way. He could have taken a photo just when they were having a huge argument. Or when one of them was distressed. Or when the baby was crying all on its own, while a little further along a small group of transgenders were laughing together. But Bugani chose this image to show to the world. And by doing this he is also influencing the mind of the viewer.

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It often happens that a regime or an organisation does not want journalists or press photographers to come to their country to record what is happening. In some countries, press photographers have to register when they enter the country. This way, the government can monitor the issues the photographers are exploring. Sometimes, press photographers are deported, on other occasions they are put in prison or kidnapped. Reporters Without Borders (www.rsf.org) maintains a list of how many journalists are murdered every year. Last year as many as 69 were killed, including 15 in Syria and 6 in Ukraine.

The story behind the iconic photo shown above is a good example of what freedom of the press is. In 1989, photographer Charlie Cole travelled to China to report on the student demonstrations for democratic reforms. With much bloodshed, the army brutally put an end to the demonstrations. Cole took the famous photo of a young man on the square of Heavenly Peace (Tiananmen Square) standing in front of a row of tanks of the People’s Liberation Army. At that time, China was an extremely isolated country. Any news that extended beyond the country’s borders almost always originated from the ruling communist party. This photo changed all that. The photo showed the world how dissatisfied the Chinese people were with the situation in their country. Cole took the photo from a hotel room that overlooked the square. Later, Chinese secret service agents stormed into his room and took all of Cole’s rolls of film and his passport.

They didn’t know that Cole had hidden the roll of film containing the photos of the young man in front of the tanks in a plastic tube in the toilet tank. He later succeeded in sending it to the AP press agency and the American magazine Newsweek.

World Press Photo

World Press Photo is an independent non-profit organisation that was founded in the Netherlands in 1955. Its most important goal is to support and promote the work of professional press photographers on an international scale. Over the years, World Press Photo has grown to become an independent platform for photojournalism and the free exchange of information.

Every year, in order to achieve its goals, World Press Photo organises the biggest, most prestigious photography contest for press photographers. This year, 5,692 photographers from 131 different countries sent in 97,912 photos. They were judged by an independent, international jury consisting of recognised professionals in the field of press photography. They awarded 41 photographers from 17 nationalities in 8 categories.

The prize-winning photos are all included in this travelling exhibition, which is visited every year by some 3 million people at 100 different locations in 45 countries.

The yearbook in which all the prize-winning photographs are published appears annually, translated into several languages. As well as organising the extensive exhibition programme, World Press Photo also closely follows the developments in the field of photojournalism. Educational projects also play a key role in the activities of the organisation. In countries where the training opportunities in the field of journalism and photojournalism are limited, seminars and workshops are held that are accessible for individual photographers, photo agencies and image curators.

In the Netherlands, World Press Photo also organises the annual Joop Swart Masterclass, especially for talented photographers just starting their career. They receive practical instructions and professional advice from prominent professional photographers. In recent years, in addition to the photography competition, World Press Photo has been organising a competition for multimedia productions in which different journalistic disciplines have been combined.

The World Press Photo website, www.worldpressphoto.org, contains all the winning stories in their entirety, including technical information about the photos, information about the photographers, and interviews with some of the winners. It also contains prize-winning multimedia productions and of course more information about the organisation.

To download the lesson, go to www.worldpressphoto.org/schoolvisits

The photo shows a young gay couple, Jon and Alex, in Alex’s small flat in Sint Petersburg. Life for gays, bisexuals and transgenders (LGBT) is becoming increasingly difficult in Russia as a result of a law passed in 2013 that makes it a criminal offence to promote homosexuality.
► The jury’s clarifications

Jury member Alessia Glaviano:
“The photo has a message about love being an answer in the context of all that is going on in the world. Today, terrorists use graphic images for propaganda. We have to respond with something more subtle, intense and thoughtful. [This photo] is about love as a global issue, in a way that transcends homosexuality. It sends out a strong message to the world, not just about homosexuality, but about equality, about gender, about being black or white, about all of the issues related to minorities.”

Jury member Donald Weber:
“We wanted to make a statement. The past year was indeed an extreme year for news, and we have had to judge many extreme images. During our discussions, we came to the conclusion: you don’t need to travel to a war zone to win the World Press Photo. There are more subtle ways to document a complex issue. Violence against gays is an enormous problem in Russia. Via photography, we hope to stimulate the debate.”

► Mads Nissen on his own foto

The Danish photographer, born in 1979, was interviewed by several media channels about his winning photo. He told them, amongst other things, that he had been working on a story on homophobia in Russia for quite a while. He took photos of gays being attacked, and portrayed people who had made short films in which gays were being physically abused. “There came a point when I realised that there was something missing in my story. And that something was love.”

An acquaintance of Nissen introduced him to Jon and Alex, and after spending an evening drinking beer with them, Nissen asked if he could accompany them home. “They agreed.

When Nissen heard that this photo had won the World Press Photo of the Year, one of the first things he said was that the prize would mean a lot to Jon and Alex. “The more I become involved with this topic, the more I understand how serious it really is. This issue is one of the most crucial battles in the field of human rights at the moment. To protect the freedom of communities throughout the world, and especially that of the communities in Russia.”