

COURAGE

across continents

Museene i Akershus
mia.no

MiA

BOOKLET DESIGN

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KJERSTI LILLEBØ

CAND. POLIT. ANTHROPOLOG

& KIRSTEN LINDE

CURATOR NMF

MUSEUMS IN AKERSHUS, NORWAY

“Courage is the first of human qualities because it is the quality which guarantees the others” Aristotle (384 BC – 322 BC).

The question of how to define and understand the concept of courage has been pondered over by great thinkers since the time of the ancient Greeks, if not earlier. Philosophers have struggled with the topic, as it cuts to the very core of our human existence. Both Aristotle and Plato defined courage as a moral virtue – for Plato courage was that which allows reason to rule, both on an individual and societal level, while Aristotle saw it as a quality in the human soul leading to good actions and the ultimate fulfilment of human life: happiness.

Since we were informed that courage would be the theme of this year’s exhibition, we have been excited to see how contemporary interpretations of this age-old puzzle might compare with those from generations past. With contributions from students from both Australia and Norway, we’ve also been curious to see if the courage means something different on opposite sides of the globe. Thought-provoking and insightful, at times playful, at times deadly serious, the students’ contributions are impressive. Here we see courageous acts as actions with consequences - stepping outside one’s comfort zone, acknowledging insecurity, overcoming fear, being true to oneself, going against the grain, standing out in a crowd, challenging societal expectations. In a sense, it would seem courage involves leaving something behind in order to gain something else.

The young photographers are very aware that courageous acts can result in serious damage to the body and even death. We see anxiousness in a young surfer setting off into the ocean and in a ski-jumper in mid-air. We see images recalling sacrifice, and a willingness to serve something greater than oneself - a war veteran’s act of selflessness, a fire fighter’s saving others, a mountain climber continuing his sport despite surviving an accident, a bride’s act of love, and a young girl battling cancer. With examples varying from one part of the world to another, we still recognize the quest to locate something inside oneself in order to face the unknown. These photos visualize the internal struggle to keep fighting, to push through, and to not give up in the face of adversity and injustice. The students’ rich body of work impresses us this year!

ØIVIND SØRLIE

PRINCIPAL

LILLESTRØM VIDEREGÅENDE SKOLE, NORWAY

Lillestrøm Videregående Skole and MiA (Museums in Akershus) have collaborated in a photography project over a period of 8 years. The students at Lillestrøm are annually given a school task involving a theme to be interpreted through photography. This challenge then grants them the opportunity to exhibit their art to a larger audience. Throughout the years our talented young photographers have had their work acknowledged and enjoyed by a larger audience as the photographs are presented in a yearly exhibition at the museum. This year, the exhibition also includes works produced by students at Brighton Secondary School in Australia, as a result of teacher collaboration between the Australian teacher, Narelle Brennan and the Norwegian teacher, Stian Green.

Parallel exhibitions will be presented in Strømmen and Brighton, respectively, representing the works of students of photography from Brighton and Lillestrøm Secondary Schools. The craft of photography is universal, however, the interpretation of this year's theme 'Courage' may perhaps vary according to differences in cultural approach, or perhaps not? This remains to be seen. In the end, the art is presented to and interpreted by an audience. It is my wish that this year's exhibition will stir curiosity as well as stimulate reflection.

My extended thanks go to students and teachers in Brighton and Lillestrøm, as well as to MiA for giving the students this unique opportunity to exhibit their works in a professional setting and before a large audience.

OLIVIA O'NEILL

PRINCIPAL
BRIGHTON SECONDARY SCHOOL, AUSTRALIA

Brighton Secondary School is delighted to join with Lillestrøm Videregående Skole and the Museums in Akershus for an exhibition of photographs depicting courage across the continents.

We are living in an age that values creativity and communication. To develop these skills in our 1550 students and to prepare them for an unpredictable future, we focus on nurturing their character qualities of curiosity, courage and citizenship.

In a world that is in danger of becoming fragmented and fragile, this exhibition demonstrates how may we all, as global citizens, embrace a positive growth mindset and enjoy the riches that come from diversity. Through the photographs, the students have contributed to a way of seeing and knowing that challenges our sensibilities and encourages us to look for meaning. In so doing, we look into ourselves to be better people.

I commend the dedication of the teachers and students who created this unique intercultural experience for Brighton Secondary School in Australia and Lillestrom Videregående Skole in Norway.

STIAN GREEN

PHOTOGRAPHY TEACHER
LILLESTRØM VIDEREGÅENDE SCHOOL, NORWAY

This is the eighth time I have had the pleasure of co-operating with Kirsten and MiA (Museums in Akershus) on an exhibition with my photography students. Each year there is a new word to interpret into an image. We have worked with words spanning from water, through shame and now courage. Each exhibition gives surprising results. The exhibition project is also a sociology study. To interpret words into images give us as adults a wonderful way to see how the teenagers think. Will they think differently than a person that is around 40? Every time some surprises come to the surface – how did that person come up with that idea?

This year we are getting big. Two exhibitions, with the same photographs, shown on both sides of the globe. Will there be big differences in what teens from Norway and Australia sees as courage, or are we more alike than we think? Even though Australia is on the other side of the world, both countries are part of the western cultural circle. What would happen if we invited teenagers from Egypt, Japan, China or other countries that we know have different cultural values than the European circle we both belong to? Maybe it would be different or maybe the language of the youth is more universal than we think?

The world is getting smaller, with the technology of today we can communicate freely over the borders through social media and e-mail. What we see and read shapes us. Maybe it also shapes our culture. We are getting closer to being one united people all over the globe. With over 1.5 billion users worldwide, Facebook is one big nation across continents. We are getting friends from all over the globe – some we never meet face to face. Talking about Facebook, without this platform this exhibition would never come to life. Being able to communicate in real time (when both teachers are up - Adelaide is after all eight hours ahead of Norway), has been essential. The internet is a useful tool, but it is also a big dark place where standing up for yourself and your ideas demands courage.

NARELLE BRENNAN

PHOTOGRAPHY TEACHER
BRIGHTON SECONDARY SCHOOL, AUSTRALIA

Past and present students at Brighton Secondary School are very excited to be collaborating with students from Lillestrøm Videregående Skole in their annual photographic exhibition. The broad and complex theme of courage has challenged the students, both in Australia and Norway. It has been fantastic to see the varied outcomes, not only in the interpretation of courage, but also in the photographic techniques explored.

This has been an invaluable opportunity for all the students to exhibit their work on a global platform, with a authentic and diverse audience. Such an experience impacts student confidence and provides a valuable insight into the photographic industry.

To make this collaborative event possible, many hours have gone into organising an exhibition on this scale, from both staff and students. Students from both countries have been heavily involved in all aspects of the exhibition on top of providing the photographs. From the statements explaining their work, the design of the booklet and promotional material to the filming and editing of the exhibition video. For students at Brighton, the option to participate was completely voluntary and required them to work outside of school time. I would like to thank them all for their excitement, commitment and professionalism.

Finally, many thanks to Lillestrøm Videregående Skole and MiA for the opportunity to participate in in this exhibition.

ZEPHYR WILLIAMS

PEACE WITHIN UNCERTAINTY

Courage is finding resilience in the things that have the potential to tear you apart, and showing bravery in the face of fear. An act of courage can be perceived differently through the eyes of each individual. The clearest and most conspicuous display of courage to me is the ability to find peace within uncertainty. Finding a way to be comfortable in uncomfortable situations. Overwhelming conditions can make us feel as though we don't have the power to breathe, constricted by our surroundings and forced down a rabbit hole. To have courage is to be able to be calm and to not let the fear of sinking get the better of us, keep a peaceful and composed mindset as we face our greatest fears, milestones and most complex life decisions.

To show this, I have photographed a model underwater. The model is calm and peaceful, despite the fact that she is submerged in a large body of water. Demonstrating her inner peace within the uncertain situation.



TOBIAS MEHMET ENGBRETSEN

ONE GUITAR

My view of courage is doing many different small deeds or a few big deeds. Someone could help out when a person drops something, be with someone when they need a friend or motivate someone to be courageous themselves. Having a job that saves lives such as a Fire-fighter, Policeman, Doctor and so on leads to a great responsibility. Having responsibility and to use it well requires courage.

My photograph is named "One Guitar". It consists of an audience watching a person play the guitar in front of them, cheering him on. Everyone gets performance anxiety when conveying something to an audience, some more than others. Getting on stage and performing something so vulnerable as music takes a lot of courage.

Encouragement is the keyword in my picture.



ELLA BRUIJN-GOURD

HAYLEY

Mental Health and anxiety is a difficult topic to open up about. Anxiety is more than feeling stressed or worried. When you get anxious the feelings don't go away and it's difficult to control. It's a serious condition that affects many people's daily life. On average, one in three women will experience some form of anxiety in their life.

The girl pictured, Hayley, experiences it sporadically and has both good and bad days. There will be days where moving from bed isn't an option and socialising becomes a chore. On other days she will feel on top of the world and will go out and enjoy time with friends and family. This photo shows Hayley standing outside, proud of overcoming her anxiety, on a good day. The white tones in the image represent the good days of anxiety whilst the black tones represent the bad days, alluding to the continual battle of anxiety.



SIGRID LOUISE F. JOHNSEN

FIRE FIGHTER

Courage is a small word with a huge meaning. It is hard to define what the word means, because it can mean something different to everyone. For some, courage is to get out of bed and start the day, while for others, courage is to help another person. For some; courage might be going to the store alone, and for some, it is doing something they are scared of. It is not a set answer to what courage is, because it can mean a million different things. For me, courage is being yourself, a fellow human being and lending a helping hand, both for the people who need it, but also for the ones who need it a little less. I think courage is being there for someone else and although it is important to take care of the people around you, it is just as important to take care of yourself.

My photo represents having the courage to help others. Fire-fighters are people who put their own life in danger, just to save others; whether it is out of burning buildings or houses, but also saving the memories left inside. It takes a lot of courage to do something like that. When I look at my photograph, I see a different story each time. Only imagination can put a stop to what you see.



GEORGIA HEATLEY

SURFER

Courage is the ability to do something that frightens you. It's your inner strength and bravery that helps you overcome your fears. My photograph demonstrates courage as it shows the fear of the unknown. Surfing simply takes courage, each day the surf is different you don't know the conditions out in the water.

The contrast of the black and white in my photo creates a gloomy feel, which connects to danger. I took this image of the surfer standing on the rocks looking out into the horizon to capture the moments before she enters the water. This composition portrays the inner courage shown, as she approaches into the rough and dangerous surf.



MIKAYLA STEWART

LETTING GO

This photo symbolises the courage to let go.

It takes great courage to let go of someone or something that can mean so much to you. Sometimes it's necessary to let go of such things because it could be holding you back from better things. The beginning is always the hardest part and it may leave you feeling like you're lost, alone and falling.

The falling girl symbolises and recognises the falling, spiralling feeling you can feel when making the courageous decision to let go of something you may be better off without. The plain and empty background resembles the feeling of being lost and feeling alone on the fall down. The giant hands catching the girl symbolises that there will always be someone there in the end to catch you and support you, even if that person is yourself.



KAJA BRÅTEN

CANCER

Courage for me is to keep fighting even if it can be difficult or hard sometimes and not give up. Even if you feel scared and tired you keep fighting to the end. It could be to fight for your life, keep fighting to get up in the morning and go to school, it could also be to fight to save others' lives. For me courage is also being able to be yourself and not think about what other people think of you and not be afraid to stand out. Also if you have something you want to try out, but you are afraid if you can do it keep trying and not be afraid to fail. If you are out with your friends and they are going to do something you really do not want to do, I think you have courage if you can say no.

My photo is called Cancer and is of my cousin who had cancer a few years ago, but is healthy now. What I wanted to show with my photo was the courage she had when she was sick and how she managed to fight her way through it all. I wanted it to be two faced, one side of her face where she looks like she did when she was sick and the other side of her face is how she looks today.



FRANCESCA OLDS

FIGHT LIKE A GIRL

Courage is the act of defeating all doubt and diffidence in order to make change.

Gender, in itself, is irrelevant. It's the image and purpose attached to it that has the power to influence masses. The female gender has been flagged as frail, forgiving and submissive. Women have been viewed as the weaker gender and deterred from individualism so that it's become second nature. Misogynist concepts are embedded into society, separating man from woman almost irreparably when in reality, women are just as capable as men. 'Fight Like A Girl' de-constructs an age-old insult that subtly tears down female strength and ability.



ADRIAN RANGNES

A SOLDIERS SACRIFICE

The photograph is based on the idea to have the courage to stand up for something you believe in, the courage to risk your life for a greater purpose. Military operations are inextricably linked with the risk of the loss of lives. Putting the interests of her own life and welfare aside to carry out the task, it requires both physical and moral courage, to take appropriate action in the daily service and combat. Courage is the ability to resist pressure from emotions such as fear and hatred, and to dare to speak out when an action is contrary to what is right, even when we are faced with difficult choices. Courage requires good judgment, self-awareness and humility. Courage is not the absence of fear, but the ability to defy fear, and do it anyway.



ALEXANDER LONG

DAVID

Courage is often thought of in a single and spontaneous act that is a split second decision, these are indeed courageous acts. However, for me courage is more often expressed through those who make very calculated decisions to join the Armed Forces and go to war in defence of their country or the defence of other venerable communities. These individuals often face repeated adversity and horrific acts of atrocity, yet still find the courage to carry on in their belief that freedom comes above all else despite the personal cost to them.

I sought to capture this in my image of a war veteran who whilst humble of his own service, wearing his military medals, also proudly wears those of his father and his grandfather. In the image David is saluting with his left hand due to him suffering a stroke that paralysed the right side of his body, on Christmas Eve in 2014. This is a great display of courage as it required him to swallow his pride as an ex Royal Marine who wanted to do it by the book and use his right hand.



BROOKLYN LINKE

ROCKY WATERS

Courage is defined as the state of mind that allows one to face their fears and express bravery. Having the ability to accomplish a task or activity that frightens someone, courage is looked up to, and is seen as honourable and brave.

I believe my image represents this idea of courage by having my model face one of her biggest fears, the ocean. I used a slow shutter speed to blur the motion of the water, allowing it to look as if my model now believes there's nothing to be afraid of. To portray this concept even more, my model's arms are raised and flexed, as if she's showing the ocean she's no longer afraid. The warm colours in the sunset also help the water look more calming and somewhat welcoming.



JESSICA MEGGISON & JASMINE ENGLAND

OVERCOME

The definition of courage is “the ability to do something that frightens one” or “Strength in the face of pain or grief”, the ability for someone to overcome their fears to better themselves. Our series of two photos called “overcome” demonstrates this as the concept is showing a girl that is experiencing a hard period in time and struggling with bullying an issue that is all too common in our society and she is seen to move past this and get in a better mind space.

While the first photo alone shows the absence of courage in a bad situation, the introduction of the second image shows the growth this girl has gone through and how she used courage to vanquish the negative feelings that surrounded her. Together these two images convey an inspirational message of self-empowerment and the courage to have your own self-confidence.



AGNETHE KORSELL

CLASS OF '18

Courage comes in many shapes, sizes and forms. While fighting for your country in a war is a heroic and worthy act of courage, smaller occurrences can be courageous too. For example, asking someone out on a date, doing something risky like skydiving, or just being yourself is brave.

Today we live in a world that tells you to be a certain way, and it takes courage to stand out and be yourself. This is what I want to express through my photograph. Be a flamingo in a flock of pigeons, and dare to be yourself no matter what everyone else is thinking or saying.

I truly admire everyone that has the courage to stand out and be different in today's society, and this is the reason why I wanted to make this picture. I only used one model in my photograph to emphasize that most of us are similar, and we tend to stick to what is safe and mainstream. I also think it makes the boy in the middle even more prominent than he would be if it was just an ordinary group photo.



NEVENKO SARUNIC

ASCEND

Courage is an act of stepping outside your own unique comfort zone and committing to an action that is frightening to oneself. We all have a different threshold of what scares us, which means being courageous is a personal achievement.

In this situation, a seventeen-year-old hobbyist rock climber, stepped outside his comfort zone to free climb a cliff face he has never been exposed to before. During his eight years of experience, he has faced one major injury that has stuck with him until this day. Dislocating all five fingers on his right hand from one little slip, causing the joints to never be as strong as they were before. He still has the drive to ascent cliff faces and rock walls without fear or discouragement.



ANDREAS LEKANG

JUMP

Courage for me is to not be afraid of failure. Whether it is to move out from you parents' house, ask someone on a date, ride a bike for the first time or in this case, jump into the fog. Sometimes, you need to take a leap of faith. Hope for the best. If you never take any chances you might end up living a life where you regret that you did not do enough. I would rather make a mistake and learn from it than not doing it because I did not have the courage.

My photograph "Jump" shows a man jumping straight into the fog with a lot of courage. He does not know how or where he is going to land, but he does it anyway. This is what I think is courage, jumping into things without knowing what is going to happen next.



BETHANY SEYFANG

UNCONDITIONAL

Courage means stepping out of your comfort zone to inspire, help and challenge yourself and others, and becoming open and honest in your strengths and weaknesses. Courage means to love all people unconditionally. Courage is also putting everything you have on the line for someone you love.

I chose to photograph a bride on her wedding day, because I believe that getting married is a huge step out in faith and love. To intertwine your life with someone else and to completely trust in another person is so uncommon and rare, so for two people to take the biggest step in their life that they may ever take, no matter who they are, is so courageous and incredible.



ALICE KITAHARA

NUDITY

Courage is the act of defeating all doubt and diffidence in order to make change.

Female objectification has grown to be commonplace. Women are perceived as poster girls, a marketing image, a composite of sexual desire used to please men. Nudity is the most natural human form, we are born into the world unclothed. The human body is a biological process. Sexualisation is a concept. It is not sexual to walk across a road, it is not sexual to breastfeed a child, it is not sexual to consist of the same anatomy as a man, so why are we being punished for it? It's not the female body that's sexual. It's how society chooses to dress it up.



LAUREN COBB

STAYING AFLOAT

Life throws many things at us that we are unprepared for. This photo portrays one having the courage to face their fears and traverse the unknown without knowing the outcome of what could possibly happen. Thalassophobia is a fear which many people can suffer from. It is a fear of the ocean and other large bodies of water.

This photo demonstrates a person going into the ocean facing the fear of the unknown. Due to past experiences, he not always felt comfortable going into the sea. But through bravery he accomplished his goal and no longer has his fear of the ocean.



ARIFUR RAHMAN

GUEST SPEAKER, CARTOONIST

Cartoonist Arifur Rahman has paid a high price for defending values of freedom. Rahman worked for one of the biggest newspapers in Bangladesh when he was arrested in 2007, for a cartoon the Islamic Party had found controversial. Amnesty International designated Rahman a prisoner of conscience. After six months in prison, Rahman was released, but faced threats of being arrested again. He had to flee his home country and came to Norway as a guest cartoonist of ICORN - International Cities of Refuge Network. This means that cities collaborate in giving persecuted writers, artists and cartoonists new homes, and protect them. Currently, Arifur Rahman is associated with Avistegnernes hus - The Norwegian Cartoonist Gallery – in Drøbak, Norway. The gallery is part of MiA-Museums in Akershus.

As a person who has indeed felt the consequences of one's courageous actions, we are very proud to present here a brand new cartoon from Rahman, drawn especially for this project: Courage across continents.



ANSEL ADAMS

ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVIST, PHOTOGRAPHER
(1902–1984)

"I am sure the next step will be the electronic image and I hope I shall live to see it. I trust that the creative eye will continue to function whatever technological innovations may develop."

Akershus bygningsvernsenter
Asker Museum
Aurskog-Høland bygdetun
Avistegnernes hus
Besøksenter våtmark Nordre Øyeren
Eidsvoll museum
Fetsund lenser
Follo museum
Gamle Hvam museum
Grinimuseet
Hurdal historielags samlinger
Kommunikasjonsavdelingen
Kulturringen
Linderud gård
Lommedalsbanen
Lørenskog bygdemuseum

Museumsfabrikken Strømmen

Museumstjenesten

Nes samlinger
Oslofjordmuseet
Roald Amundsen hjem
Skedsmo bygdemuseum
Son kystkultursenter
Ullensaker museum
Urskog-Hølandsbanen

