



Media Release



World Press Photo Contest winners on show at NSW State Library

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A poignant picture of an 85-year-old Brazilian woman being hugged for the first time — through a transparent ‘hug curtain’ — is among more than 150 powerful and evocative images on display at the State Library of NSW from TOMORROW [Saturday 15 May], as part of the World Press Photo Exhibition.

Danish photographer Mads Nissen’s image of that moment ‘The First Embrace’ was named the World Press Photo of the Year. “If you look at the image long enough,” said 2021 World Press Photo Contest jury member Kevin WY Lee, “you’ll see wings: a symbol of flight and hope.”

The annual World Press Photo Exhibition presents important stories about the world we live in. This year, award-winning images by 45 photographers from 28 countries are being exhibited in only a handful of galleries and institutions around the world due to Covid-19. Australian sports photographer Adam Pretty is among this year’s winners.

According to Joumana El Zein Khoury, executive director of the World Press Photo Foundation, this year’s winning images were selected for the “personal, human and hopeful angles visual storytellers gave to very difficult issues such as the Covid-19 pandemic, the Israel-Palestine conflict, and the Black Lives Matter protests following the murder of George Floyd.”

For the first time, exhibition visitors will be able to use their own mobile devices to listen to a selection of photographers talking about their award-winning work.

According to State Librarian John Vallance: “Standing between fact and fiction, realism and reality, press photography is uniquely important in times of crisis. I hope you will all come and see the 21st World Press Photo Exhibition at the State Library to see what some of the world’s best photographers are making of our current situation and the situation of our brothers and sisters around the world.”

The State Library’s commitment to photography and visual storytelling is underlined by its recently-announced plans to establish a large, permanent gallery — set to open mid-2022 — to display works from the Library’s extensive photographic collection.

“From artistic photography to documentary photojournalism, the new gallery will display dynamically 180 years of photographic evolution in Australia,” said Dr Vallance.

The World Press Photo Exhibition 2021 is free at the State Library of NSW, 1 Shakespeare Place Sydney, from 15 May to 14 June 2021. www.sl.nsw.gov.au

MEDIA INQUIRIES:

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WORLD PRESS PHOTO

THE FIRST EMBRACE, MADSS NISSEN, DENMARK, POLITIKEN/PANOS PICTURES

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