



Portraits of Strength: Women Defending Human Rights

Statement from the jury

Statement on the winning photograph

The winning portrait of Baia Pataraiia by Salome Sagaradze stood out with its strong visual language portraying a woman human rights defender in action during a demonstration.

Baia Pataraiia, whose poise, presence and defiant gaze into the camera, immediately captures your attention. She is the embodiment of feminism, strength, confidence and determination.

This powerful presence, along with absolutely magical lighting which backlights hair with an almost halo-like effect, lends itself to a composition that is reminiscent of classical paintings. There is a lasting quality to this image, a feeling of eternity. All of the great images in history have an air of intrigue - an atmosphere that this photograph has no shortage of.

The photograph has a documentary quality, there are imperfections in the composition, but these imperfections communicate the credibility and the reality of the situation that the photograph takes place.

Taken during a moment in time in Georgia where protesters have been seriously injured, some losing eyes due to rubber bullets being used against them, Salome Sagaradze has captured an important moment in history. At this particular protest, water cannons were used against the crowd. The protests, the smoke, the people, this photograph is an action-reportage and a portrait combine into one. In this setting, both women, Baia Pataraiia and photographer Salome Sagaradze, were under pressures of this environment, both at risk for doing their job.

Statement on the competition

It was inspiring and uplifting to see photographs of such a variety of brave women human rights defenders fighting for their causes across so many countries, each expertly captured by a local female photographer.

Each photographer brought their own energy to the images, and it's clear that they spent the time needed to know these women and to truly capture the essence of who they are.

Although each defender was portrayed in different settings and styles, determination and strength were common themes among all of the photographs.

While there were several very good contenders, the winning photograph stood out among good company, and truly captivated our attention.

Maria Fuglevaag Warsinska-Varsi

Norwegian photographer and filmmaker, chair of the jury

Daro Sulakauri

Georgian photographer, winner of 2014 "Portraits of Strength" contest

Christine Tolpinrud

Gallery manager, Fotografiens Hus (Oslo, Norway)