



Exiled for refusing to undergo the circumcision that was a rite of passage for preteen girls in her Ethiopian tribe, Abay came back to her village to work for the non-governmental organization CARE. After five years there, she was able to videotape a circumcision.



Male tribal leaders watched the footage and were horrified; they had never seen one performed before. They voted two weeks later to end the practice. Abay's portrait will hang as part of the Bumbershoot exhibit.

Bumbershoot photo show captures
diverse examples of bravery

PEOPLE'S POWER

By JENNIFER WARE,
Contributing Writer

Ever wonder what you would do if you had the power to change the world?

In an upcoming exhibit, *The Power of One*, curator Marita Holdaway of Seattle's Benham Gallery explores the impact we have on our surroundings.

Using the stunning images of five award-winning photographers, Holdaway hopes the exhibit will inspire viewers to discover their own inner hero.

The exhibit runs Aug. 29 - Sept. 1 as part of Bumbershoot and will highlight work by artists Phil Borges, Nina Berman, Katharina Mouratidi, Jackie Renn and JF Houzel.

Holdaway says the theme of the *Power of One* exhibit is something that has been brewing in her since she first saw the short documentary *Powers of Ten* by Charles and Ray Eames many years ago.

Then in 2004, frustrated by the war in Iraq and feeling as though her country was being taken over, Holdaway said she was inspired by the work of Katharina Mouratidi, whose images focus on the power of ordinary, individual people to effect change.

"Katharina does her portraits on huge, six-foot-tall canvases; it is very empowering to see," says Holdaway. "I started thinking more and more about what we can do as individuals."

The *Power of One* exhibit will include images from Mouratidi's series, "The Other Globalization," featuring life-sized portraits of people from 43 different countries.

Mouratidi has a strong interest in the global justice movement and has said she hopes that people will take home the message that every human being has the power to make a difference.

Holdaway chose four other artists in creating the exhibition, and though they all have distinct styles, the theme of the exhibit runs deeply through the work of each. "I

chose these artists because they had all done an important documentary project and each of the people they portray has a story... an act of bravery," said Holdaway.

Nina Berman's multimedia piece titled "Purple Hearts: Back from Iraq" will be part of the installation, in addition to her acclaimed "Marine Wedding" photos. Holdaway fashioned a chapel-like space for Berman's iconic and poignant wedding photo of a disfigured veteran and his bride.

Jackie Renn's "Portraits of Conscience: Celebrating the First Amendment During a Time of War 2002-2007," documents the actions of conscientious objectors through photos, many of which were taken in Seattle during the massive war protests before and after the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq.

Images from Phil Borges' newest project, "Women Empowered," are part of the exhibit as well. The Seattle-based humanitarian photographer describes the series as a collection of portraits of "women in the developing world who are breaking through gender barriers and conventions in order to enhance their well-being and the well-being of their communities."

Borges, who hails from Seattle, has won international acclaim for his portraits

of people from all over the globe. He is the recipient of many prestigious awards and honors and has been highly praised for taking portraits that illuminate the human spirit of his subjects. Renn also lives in Seattle and has been a volunteer photographer for *Real Change*.

Holdaway said that the exhibit will not be a typical linear art exhibition, but rather an installation: "It will be set up like a maze, so you have choices about where to go."

She says she has created a quiet, contemplative space for people to write down their feelings and reactions to what they've seen on a scroll of paper — messages that she hopes to collect and incorporate into the exhibit in some way.

And though many of the images in the installation deal with controversial themes, Holdaway says she is not trying to dictate morality through the show but instead wants to foster dialogue in the community.

"Right or wrong is not the point of the exhibit," she says. "After all, we are only as right or wrong as our personal morals and values lead us to believe we are."

Holdaway explains that the important thing is for people to stand up for what they believe in, whether that is the soldier en route to war or the person protesting that same war.

"My hope is that when people see this exhibit, they can find their own power and realize that... if you take action, you can change the world." ■

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SEE IT: The *Power of One* exhibit will be in the Olympic and Orcas rooms at Seattle Center, Aug. 30 - Sept. 1 from 11 a.m. - 8 p.m. On Fri., Aug. 30, the exhibit will be free to the public.