

Courage – Online Exhibition 1.1.–31.12.2024

Learning material

Background information and activities:

The online exhibition is a scrollable whole that combines visual art, moving image and poetry. Artworks from the collections of Oulu Art Museum are juxtaposed with three invited artists of the new generation who all explore the boundaries of poetry, literary art and song lyrics. Their works open different perspectives to the notion of courage.

Is courage same as bravery?

What does it take to be brave?

Do I have courage?

The flow of images and poetry convey the viewer from one emotion to the next through different shades of courage. The works by Hassan Maikal, Elsa Tölli and Minkki Nurmi explore the subject in relation to their own voices, how to find it, and how to have the courage to use it.

The exhibition has been designed for a smartphone, a tablet or web browser. You can click the text link below each artwork for more information about the artworks and the artists.

This learning material includes suggestions for discussion topics and four suggested activities. The number and the sequence of the activities can be selected freely. The self-portrait task and the writing task require more time and some materials (listed). Recommended time for viewing the exhibition and doing all the tasks is 2.5–3 hours.

Suggested topics for discussion in connection with the exhibition:

- How are the artworks linked to the notion of courage? Look at the artworks and discuss what themes or clues related to courage you can identify.
- The artworks of the exhibition evoke different moods and emotions. What moods or emotions can be related to courage?
- Watch and listen to the video poems by Hassan Maikali and Elsa Tölli. What kind of courage do they talk about?

Ideas for activities:

OPINION SCALE (20 MINUTES)

Sheets of paper with words “AGREE” and “DISAGREE” are pinned up on opposite walls of the space. An imaginary scale runs between the two sheets of paper with the middle ground standing for “I don’t know”. Anyone in the group can lead the activity. The task of the leader is to read out loud the following statements, after which the participants move on the scale closer to the sheet of paper that matches their opinion on the statement.

After each statement, you can have a short discussion on thoughts raised by the statement and on factors that influenced the decisions where to position yourself on the scale.

The statements:

There have been times when I have been brave.
I am brave enough to voice my opinions in a group of friends.
Courage and audacity (taking unwise risks) are the same thing.
It takes courage to be true to yourself.
Courage is something that you can see in a person.
Courage is always good.
It takes courage to defend those who are weaker than you.

DREAMING (5 MINUTES)

Dreaming is fantasizing and thinking about things and goals that are important to you. All you need to dream is time. Stop for a moment and listen to yourself. What do you need? What are you dreaming of? How can you fulfil your dream? What are you hoping for?

This activity can be done alone without any sharing.

SELF-PORTRAIT (20–30 MINUTES)

Watercolour paper, watercolours and waterproof pens or crayons

Or: smartphone, computer or tablet and online application: <https://wordart.com/create>

Minkki Nurmi’s Many Instead of One (a spread from the sketchbook) (2021) can be thought of as the artist’s self-portrait. Try to produce a self-portrait in a similar style. Pick ten words that describe you from Minkki Nurmi’s artwork. Add any twenty words you like that you feel describe you.

If you work on paper, write the words you choose on A3 paper using a waterproof pen, such as permanent marker, pencil or crayon. Pay attention to the overall composition, the shape you arrange your words in and the size of your letters. Do you use print letters, roundhand or some other style? After you have written the words use the watercolours to paint the background of your self-portrait to your liking.

If you work digitally, open the online application: <https://wordart.com/create>

Type the words you selected from Nurmi’s artwork and the twenty words you have thought up yourself. Choose a font, a background, style and shape for your self-portrait.

An excerpt from the text in Minkki Nurmi's *Many Instead of One (a spread from the sketchbook)* (2021):

"I give myself permission to be: boring, fun, tired/energetic, cute, ugly, hot, beautiful, handsome, lucky, happy & unhappy, wise, silly, funny, weird, similar/different, right & wrong & not know, opinionated/opinionless, strong and weak, soft/hard, romantic & rational, emotional & less so, calm/unsettled, noisy or quiet, (peaceful/restless) I also give myself permission to be none of the above = undefined, now and always."

WRITING ACTIVITY (20–30 MINUTES)

Pen and paper or smartphone, computer or tablet.

Choose one or more artworks from the exhibition as the starting point of your text. Write what you see when you look at the artwork, what it makes you feel or what you would like to say to the artwork.

If you have trouble starting, you can use the Malay pantoum rhyming scheme: a poem of four verses where repeating verses change positions and meanings. The quatrains of the Pantoum consist of four verses (lines of poem, such as A–D), and the poem usually has four stanzas (1 to 4).

Click this link to read an example Pantoum called "pantoum: landing 1976" by Evie Shockley:

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/55870/pantoum-landing-1976>

First stanza:

A
B
C
D

Second stanza:

B
E
D
F

Third stanza:

E
G
F
H

Fourth stanza:

G
C
H
A